MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

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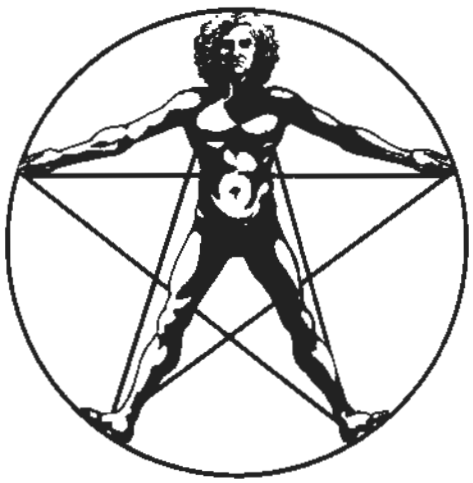

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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Professor E. R. Dodds; Professor Mircea Eliade;
William Sargant; John Symonds;
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PREFACE

Editing *Man, Myth and Magic* was an arduous and rewarding experience. It entailed planning and finding expert international contributors for articles from the Aberdeen Witches and the Abominable Snowman to Zoroastrianism and the Zulus – with half of human experience in between. Any project on so massive a scale demands hard work. The reward was the treasure of fascinating information and revealing insights which the articles bring together, in fields as far-ranging as comparative religion, history, anthropology, sociology, art and symbolism.

The encyclopedia covers a gigantic range of speculation, belief and behaviour: ranging in scale from the major religions of the world – Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam – with all that they have brought to human life, down to everyday common superstitions, such as touching wood or throwing spilled salt over one's shoulder. It deals with traditional rituals and ideas across the world, from the peyote cults of American Indians to the sacred dreamtime of the Australian Aborigines and the cargo cults of the Pacific.

Man, Myth and Magic extends in time from the roots of religion, mythology and magic in prehistoric ages to the new religious movements of our own century; from Stonehenge to modern Africa and Japan, from the ancient themes of the seasons, fertility, death and new life, to the modern interest in ways of expanding consciousness and exploring inner space. It has heroes from King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table to Samson, Sinbad and Robin Hood, quests from the Golden Fleece to the Grail, legendary monsters from dragons to giants and unicorns. It deals with myths from the creation of the world to the great flood and the eventual destruction of the universe, and with the constellations of belief and custom which have grown up around life's major crisis points, from birth through initiation and marriage to death. It explores magic and witchcraft, astrology and the Tarot, the lore of animals and plants.

What made it possible to create an encyclopedia of this kind was the fact that the last hundred years have seen a powerful revival of interest in these subjects at both the scholarly and the popular levels. The revival of scholarly interest has created the modern study of comparative religion, modern anthropology with its investigation of so-called 'primitive' or 'simpler' peoples and their beliefs and rituals (which are often neither primitive nor simple), the attempt to explore the hidden powers of the mind and to test objectively such phenomena as telepathy, poltergeists and ghosts, and the application of modern psychology to beliefs about the supernatural and the patterns and symbols in which these beliefs take shape. At the same time there has been a flourishing revival of popular interest in oriental religions and mysticism, in mythology, magic and alternative paths to truth.

Man, Myth and Magic, however, is not intended to proselytize any belief or set of beliefs and attitudes. The purpose of the articles is not to persuade or justify, but to describe what people have believed and trace the consequences of those beliefs in action. The editorial attitude is one of sympathetic neutrality. It is for the reader to decide where truth and value may lie. I hope that there is as much interest, pleasure and satisfaction in reading these pages as all those involved took in creating them.

Richard Cavendish
London, 1982

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Richard Cavendish

Richard Cavendish is a leading authority on the history of ideas, whose books have been acclaimed for their combination of clarity and insight on both sides of the Atlantic. He is author of *The Black Arts*, a study of the European tradition of magic; *The Powers of Evil*; *The Tarot*; *A History of Magic*; *Visions of Heaven and Hell*; *King Arthur and the Grail*; and *The Great Religions*, a study of the major religions in the world and their central beliefs. He is also the Editor of *The Encyclopedia of the Unexplained; Mythology – an Illustrated Encyclopedia*, and the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Legends*.

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Yvonne Deutch, B.A., Exeter; M.A. University of Kansas, was formerly an Assistant Instructor, University of Kansas. At present she is a London-based editor and she has produced a wide range of titles, on subjects as varied as folk medicine and forensic science. She is currently consultant editor to Marshall Cavendish Corporation.

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C. A. Burland, formerly of the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum, joined its staff in 1925 and retired in 1965. A specialist in the arts and religions of primitive peoples, he has conveyed his enthusiasm for these subjects to a wide audience in many excellent books. These include *The Magical Arts*; *The Ancient Maya*; *The Aztecs*; *Man and Art*; *The Arts of the Alchemists*; *The Magic Books of Peru*; *Peru under the Incas*; *Montezuma*; and *Peoples of the Sun*.

Glyn Daniel, a Welshman and leading archaeologist is well known as editor of *Antiquity*, and the Thames and Hudson *Ancient Peoples and Places* series. He is the author of several detective stories, and has appeared frequently on television. He is an expert on megalithic tombs and monuments, prehistoric art and the history of archaeology. His numerous books include: *The Idea of Prehistory*; *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe*; *The Origins and Growth of Archaeology*; *Megaliths in History*; and *A Hundred and Fifty Years of Archaeology*. He has been a Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and was Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge from 1974–1981, when he retired.

The late **E. R. Dodds** was Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford from 1936–1960. An exceptionally distinguished classical scholar, he was probably best known for his brilliant books *The Greeks and the Irrational* and *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Professor Dodds listed psychical research as his recreation in *Who's Who*, and was President of the Society for Psychical Research, The Classical Association and The Hellenic Society.

Mircea Eliade, Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago, is widely regarded as the world's greatest authority on comparative mythology and religion. A Rumanian, educated at Bucharest University, he taught at the Sorbonne from 1945, and moved to Chicago in 1956. He has over 30 titles listed in the 1981–1982 American *Books in Print*. These include *The Myth of the Eternal Return*; *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*; *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*; *Shamanism*; *History and Meaning in Religion*; *A History of Religious Ideas*; and *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*: *The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*.

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The late **Katharine Briggs** was President of the British Folklore Society, and a leading authority on folklore subjects. She published numerous books, her most monumental being her *Dictionary of British Folk Tales*.

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Douglas Hill is a Canadian writer and editor. He is co-author of *The Supernatural*, and wrote *Magic and Superstition*.

Francis Huxley is one of the most brilliant of British anthropologists. He is well known for his books *The Invisibles* (a study of voodoo); *The Way of the Sacred*; and *The Raven and the Writing Desk*.

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A READER'S GUIDE

Man, Myth and Magic, the Illustrated Encyclopedia of Religion, Mythology and the Unknown is presented here in a newly revised and updated edition. It is a fully comprehensive guide to the world's religions, mythologies and magical belief systems from the distant past to the present day. The encyclopedia is a twelve-volume work with a truly impressive range, and includes the major faiths, philosophies, legends, mythologies and folklore, as well as literature, symbolism, superstition and the supernatural. *Man, Myth and Magic* not only provides an excellent historical perspective, but also looks forward to the future, with discussions of how UFOs, parapsychology and psychic abilities are the subjects of ongoing research projects all over the world.

Objectives

The guiding principle of *Man, Myth and Magic* is, as far as can be achieved, the stance of unbiased exploration. It shows the myriad ways in which different cultures have questioned and described the mysterious forces of the world about them. Hopefully, it will lead teachers and students towards a broader understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and customs.

Text

Within the encyclopedia, editorial control has been exercised in such a way as to ensure that the following major areas are suitably covered:

- *World Religions:* Major world religions are examined in depth. They include Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Their origins and development are clearly explained and described.
- *Cults, sects, mystery religions:* Much of religious and supernatural belief is practised outside the mainstream of major world religions. Subjects included are Cathars, Communistic religious movements, Dervish sects, Druids, Gnostics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostalist movements, Shakers, Sufis, Theosophists, etc.
- *Ancient cultures and religious customs:* The Celts, Etruscans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians, Incas, Aztecs, Polynesians, Mexicans and Old Norse peoples are just some of the cultures described, each with their unique systems of religion, mythology and magic.
- *Magical beliefs:* The history of magic from prehistoric times to the present is fully explored in various articles. These cover such themes as alchemy, hunting magic, imitative, sympathetic and love magic, the theory of correspondences, ritual magic, talismans, black and white magic.
- *Witchcraft:* Individuals and organized groups of people have practised magic all over the world – and still continue to do so today. As well as describing witchcraft in Scotland, England, Europe, North America and Africa, entries include information on witch persecution, and subjects connected with witchcraft, such as familiars, flying ointment, broomsticks and spells.
- *Myths:* Myths deal with the creation of the world, with the origin of good and evil, and the journey of the soul. They feature gods and goddesses, and appear in a wide range of cultures and countries. Myths from Greece, Egypt, Rome, Scandinavia and the Orient are all described, as well as the rites and customs associated with the deities.
- *Legends, fables and fairy tales:* Handed down by word of mouth, these are stories of heroes, quests, places, animals and people derived from the earliest experiences of mankind. They have a timeless quality, whether they are taken from the Arabian Nights or the brothers Grimm. Entries include the stories of Achilles, Jason, Arthur, Merlin, the Grail legends, Hercules, Morgan le Fay, Cinderella, Brer Rabbit and many others.
- *Fortune telling and divination:* In a world where the future was precarious and nature full of mystery and power, human beings devised fascinating ways of looking into the past and future. Articles discuss dreams, astrology, fate, geomancy, I Ching, numerology, omens, oracles, palmistry, scrying – all ways of trying to 'control' destiny.
- *Psychic research:* Exploration of unknown phenomena still continues today in many countries. Articles include writing on dreams, automatic art, ESP, Freud, Jung, Uri Geller, poltergeists, faith healing, psychology, trance, psychokenesis, ouija boards.
- *Art, drama, poetry:* The urge to symbolize belief in forms such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, drama, etc., has resulted in a rich variety of creative achievement, including mystery plays, folk plays, children's games, nursery rhymes, Morris dances, science fiction and films; articles also cover Blake, Bosch, Breugel, Redon, Wagner, also various forms of symbolism.

Arrangement

The subjects are arranged alphabetically, and the depth of coverage varies from major articles of around thirty pages to concise, glossary-type definitive entries in short paragraphs. The work is fully cross-referenced, and subjects of major interest are provided with individual bibliographies of further reading on the subject.

Classified subject guides

In order to direct teachers and students towards the main subject areas of *Man, Myth and Magic*, a series of special classified thematic subject guides has been created, along with recommended sources of further reading to extend their range even further. The relevant entries in the encyclopedia are conveniently arranged and classified under major titles. These include topics such as The Many Forms of Magic; Witchcraft; Plants and Animals in Mythology; Major World Religions; Myths of Many Lands; The Hero's Quest; and so on. Ideas on how these can be used in teaching and studying are discussed later.

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The major thematic areas of the encyclopedia can be explored by following the classified subject guides. In addition, an excellent range of books for further reading is provided for in-depth study.

MAGIC—ITS MANY FORMS

"The question of magic is a question of discovering and employing hitherto unknown forces in Nature."

It is impossible to know precisely when human beings first tried to harness these forces—certainly the impulse to do so is expressed in prehistoric cave paintings depicting hunting scenes. From these early examples of imitative hunting magic, the whole history of magical rituals has developed, with its appendages of circles and pentagrams, chants and spells, all building up towards an identifiable tradition.

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WITCHCRAFT

Since supernatural forces have always been regarded with a mixture of fear and respect, these attitudes have carried over to those special people who put forward claims to being able to manipulate the natural world—for good or evil. Although we often think of witches as female, in fact many cultures have male witches. Witches have traditionally carried great authority—as healers, as seers and as wise advisors to people with problems. The fear that witches inspired led to such appalling reactions as the witch hunts in Europe and America, in which thousands of witches were put to death. Witchcraft continues to thrive in many cultures around the world—in recent years there has been a noticeable revival of interest in Europe and America.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Aberdeen Witches
All Hallows' Eve
Bamberg Witches
Basque Witchcraft
Broomstick
Canewdon
Channel Islands
East Anglian and Essex Witches
European Witch Persecutions
Familiars
Finding of Witches
Flying Ointment
French Witchcraft
German Witchcraft
Gowdie, Isabel
Hysterical Possession and Witchcraft
Italian Witchcraft
Kyteler, Alice
Lancashire Witches
Modern Witchcraft
North Berwick Witches
Nudity
Old Age and Witchcraft
Poisoning
Pricking
Sabbath
Salem Witches
Somerset Witches
Swedish Witchcraft
Weir, Thomas
Witchcraft

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GOOD AND EVIL

Many cultures have regarded the supernatural world in what can be described as a dualistic manner. The world becomes divided into extremes; good and evil are personified as God and the Devil in various forms, depending on the culture. A divided universe implies conflict—an interminable war between the powers of light and darkness, the spirits of Heaven and Hell. Many writers and thinkers have found this divided world an accurate mirror of the conflict that rages within their own selves, the inspiration for the great debate on the nature of the universe.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Ahriman
Aix-en-Provence Nuns
Angels
Antichrist
Armies
Asmodeus
Astarte
Auxonne Nuns
Baphomet
Beelzebub
Belial
Devil
Directions
Dualism
Elements and Elementals
Evil
Exorcism
Grandier, Urbain
Great Beast
Guardian Spirits
Headless Spirits
Herne the Hunter
Incubus and Succubus
Jinn
Lilith
Lucifer
Pact
Possession
Renata, Sister Maria
Revelation
Wild Hunt
Zombies

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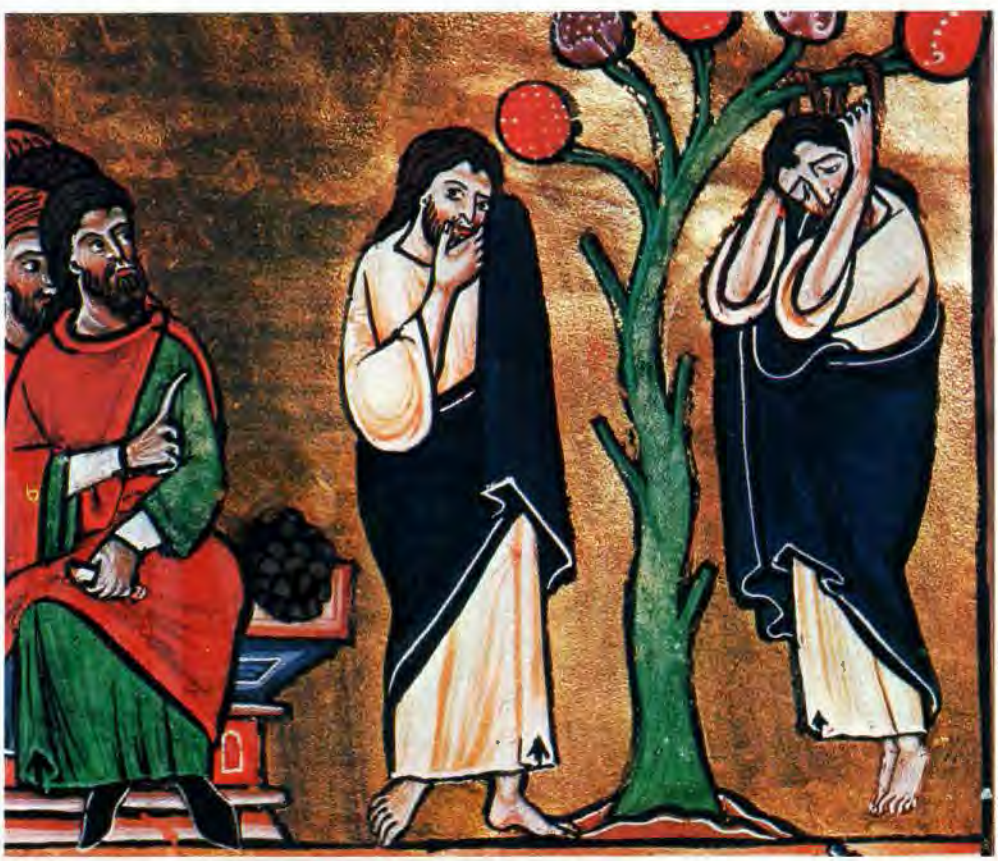

British Museum

FORETELLING THE FUTURE

"Today is tomorrow's yesterday, but who knows what tomorrow brings?" The urge to look ahead into the future is buried deep in the human consciousness. Perhaps it is a way of controlling events, or imposing a known pattern on time, even a way of expressing hope and faith in better times. Whatever the reasons for its existence, fortune-telling has myriad forms, each with its individual rules and rituals.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Alphabet
Aquarius
Aries
Astrology
Augury
Cancer
Capricorn
Cards
Divination
Dreams
Eight
Eleven
Fate
Five
Forty
Four
Gemini
Geomancy
I Ching
Jupiter
Leo
Libra
Liver
Lots
Luck
Mars
Mercury
Moon
Necromancy
Neptune
Nine
Numerology
Omens
One
Oracles
Palmistry
Phrenology and Physiognomy
Pisces
Pluto
Prophecy
Pyramidology
Sagittarius
Saturn
Scorpio
Scrying
Seven
Six
Sneezing
Stars
Sun
Taurus
Tea-Leaf Reading
Thirteen
Three
Twelve
Two
Uranus
Venus
Virgo

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NATURE MYSTERIES

The origin of all religious systems derives from man's early questionings of nature. Why do the tides ebb and flow? Why is there day and night? What explanation is there for the succession of the seasons—for springtime and the harvest, for rain and sun? In the richness of the earth and the immensity of the skies, human beings found the symbolic forms for these mysteries—they made powerful creatures in the zodiac; created holy places and legends. They told stories about the creation of the world and its peoples, all inspired by the variety and beauty of the natural world.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Bread
Breath
Creation Myths
Death
Dying God
Earth
Eclipse
Egg
End of the World
Evil
Fertility
Fire
First Man
Flood
Food and Drink
Ganges
Harvest
Head
High Gods
Honey
Horns
Light
May Day
Midsummer Eve
Moon
Mother Goddess
Mountain
New Year
Night
Rainbow
Sea
Sky
Spring
Springs and Wells
Stars
Stones
Sun
Time
Twins
Vegetation Spirits
Water
Winter

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PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN MYTHOLOGY

Human beings have always been fascinated by other living things on earth. In an all-embracing urge to perceive magic in everything, we have included plants and animals into our belief systems and folk tales, and this has provided us with a precious heritage. Flowers, herbs and trees have accumulated some wonderful stories—they can heal, lull you to sleep, bring you luck, ward off witches—and you can be enchanted in the uncanny forest. A similar tradition applies to animals—they have sometimes shared man's life on the most intimate terms. "The magical mimicry by which a man turns himself into a beast may also be the magic by which he transforms himself into a god."

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Animals
Apple
Ash
Bat
Bean
Bear
Birds
Boar
Bull
Cat
Cock
Corn
Cow
Crane
Crow
Cuckoo
Diver
Dog
Dolphin
Dove
Eagle
Elder
Elephant
Fig
Fir
Fish
Frog
Garlic
Goat
Goose
Hare
Hawthorn
Hazel
Herbs
Holly and Ivy
Horse
Houseleek
Hyena and Jackal
Insects
Laurel
Lily
Lion
Lizard
Lotus
Magpie and Rook
Mandrake
Mistletoe
Mushroom
Nightingale
Oak
Olive
Ostrich
Owl
Palm
Peacock
Pelican
Pig
Plants and Flowers
Robin
Rose
Rowan
St John's Wort
Salmon
Scarab
Scorpion
Seal
Serpent
Sheep
Spider
Stag
Stork
Swallow
Swan
Toad
Trees
Trout
Vervain
Whale
Wildwood
Willow
Woodpecker
Wren
Wryneck
Yew

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ORIGINS OF MYTHOLOGY, RELIGION AND MAGIC

The human race has occupied areas of the earth as sharply contrasted as Scandinavia and Egypt; Finland and India; Africa and America; China and Australia. Yet, wherever cultures have grown up, there are common universal themes running through their major religions and mythologies. These explore the mysteries of birth and death, the progression of the seasons, the riddle of the creation of the earth. In addition to these major themes there are also specific, national influences at work. It is this interweaving of the huge variety of local customs and experiences that makes up the marvellous tapestry of the world's religious systems.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Amazons
Animism
Aphrodite
Apollo
Astarte
Athene
Aztecs
Baal
Balder
Book of the Dead
Bran
Brigit
Brittany
Cauldron
Caves
Celts
Circe
Crete
Cronus
Cybele
Demeter
Diana
Dionysus
Dualism
Egypt
Eros
Eternal Return
Etruscans
Finland
Founding of Rome
Freyr
Germanic Mythology
Great Chain of Being
Greece
Grimm
Harranian Religion
Healing Gods
Hecate
Hephaestus
Hera
Hermes
History
Hittites
Horus
Ikhnaten
Imhotep
Incas
India
Ishtar
Isis
Janus
King
Lapland
Lares
Loki
Mabinogion
Malta
Man
Marduk
Mars
Maya
Mesopotamia
Mithras
Nibelungenlied
Oath
Odin
Ohrmazd
Osiris
Pan
Parthians
Persephone
Phoenicians and Carthaginians
Poseidon
Prehistoric Religion
Priests
Prostitution
Religion
Ritual
Rome
Sacrifice
Scandinavia
Serapis
Seth
Sibyls
Slavs
Stonehenge
Syria and Palestine
Tammuz
Tara
Thor
Venus
Woman
Zeus
Zoroastrianism
Zurvan

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SYMBOLS AND MEANINGS IN MYTHOLOGY RELIGION

Men employ symbols because they invoke powerful associations. We have only to think of our national flag to be aware of how strongly this can represent our feelings about our country—of love, nostalgia, awe, longing, pride, shame—a host of feelings. In the same way, we have used symbols in religion and mythology, again to express powerful emotions in a kind of shorthand. The cross must be one of the best known of all religious symbols. It is simple, direct and immediately recognizable. And it brings to mind the mystery of the crucifixion and the resurrection which lies at the heart of Christianity. Other symbols are found in art, in drama, in dance and in song—"Through symbols, dances, pictures, man has given shape to the intangible, form to the invisible, flesh to the shadow."

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Art
Bells
Blake
Bosch
Breughel
Carole
Cave Art
Children's Games
Costume
Cross
Dance
Dance of Death
Dancing Mania
Dante
Drama
Drum
Ensor
Feather
Films
Folkplays
Folktales
Fool
Games
Goethe
Hammer
Head-Dress
Helston Furry Dance
Hermaphrodite
Hobby-Horse
Horseshoe
Iconography
Landscape
Masks
Milton
Morris Dances
Music
Mystery Plays
Navel
Nursery Rhymes
Oil
Path Symbolism
Phallic Symbolism
Poets
Redon, Odilon
Religion
Riddles
Rossetti, D. G.
Science Fiction
Scottish and Border Ballads
Ship
Song
Steps and Ladders
Swastika
Sword
Symbolism
Trumpet
Wagner
Wheel
Wings

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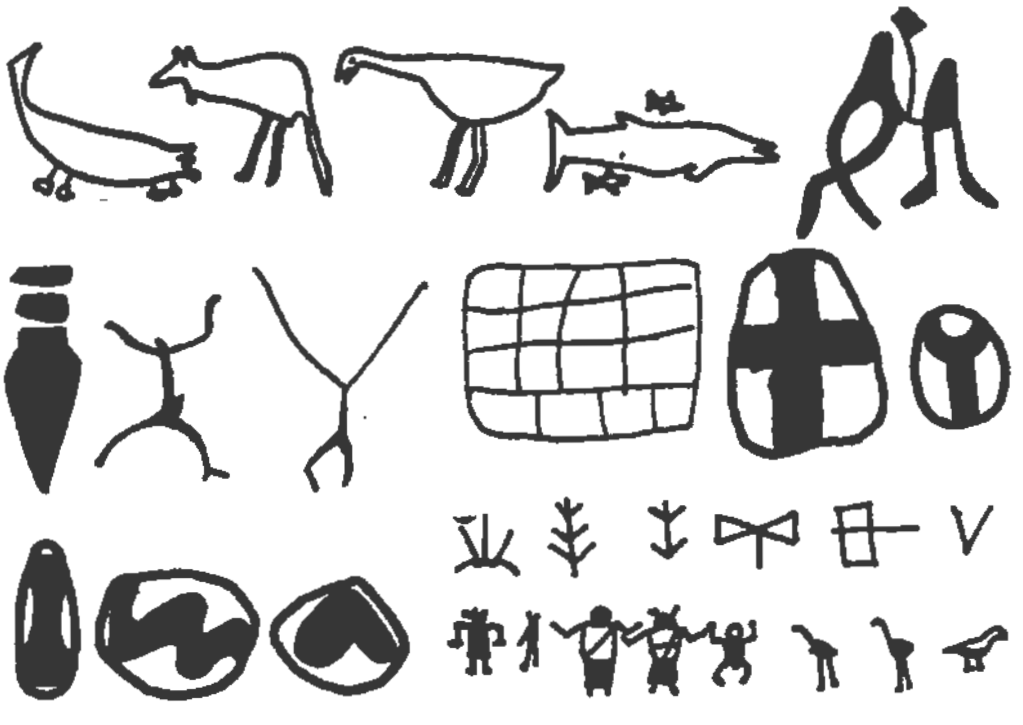

THE HERO'S QUEST

Human experience has mainly been turbulent and full of struggle. We have felt small and insignificant when ranged against the immensity of the universe about us. Yet, human beings have always displayed a remarkable capacity for imagination and expansiveness; the miracles of survival in the face of flood and famine could be translated into superhuman courage and valour—the slaying of the dragons that the universe pits against us. The other side of impotence is unlimited strength—the daring of Hercules; the valour of Galahad; the vision of the knight in search of the Grail. The vast majority of the human race may be weak and vulnerable, but heroic figures do emerge to echo our braver dreams.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Achilles
Alexander the Great
Arthur
Attila
Beowulf
Brendan, St
Camelot and Arthurian Britain
Cu Chulainn
Finn
Galahad
Gawain
Gilgamesh
Glastonbury
Grail
Gwydion
Hercules
Hero
Jack
Lancelot
Lleu
Merlin
Morgan le Fay
Parsifal
Prometheus
Robin Hood
Theseus
Tristan
Troy
Wandering Jew

FURTHER READING

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British Museum

MYSTERIOUS BEASTS AND LANDS IN MYTHOLOGY

Who has not shivered slightly at the thought of a vampire or a werewolf, or thrilled to the idea of visiting a completely new world, such as the legendary island of Atlantis, which is reputed to have disappeared beneath the sea. The creation of other lands and fabulous creatures to inhabit them is a natural extension of magical thinking. Fairy tales are rich in such ideas, and they represent some very powerful archetypes of human experience. Dragons, fairies, dwarfs and harpies all impinge on us in their different ways, showing us a glimpse of the terror, helplessness and enchantment that lurks inside us all.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Abominable Snowman
Atlantis
Centaur
Changeling
Chimaera
Cinderella
Dragon
Dwarfs
Fairies
Furies
Giants
Gorgons
Harpy
Kraken
Lemuria and Mu
Mermaids and Mermen
Nymphs
Phoenix
Puck
Roc
Satyrs
Sirens
Sleepers
Thunderbird
Trolls
Unicorn
Vampire
Werewolf

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BELIEFS AND RELIGIONS WORLDWIDE

One of the most astonishing features of the modern world is the sheer diversity of religious activity and belief that is still thriving in the shadow of space exploration and technology. It could be said that as we explore the outer limits of the physical universe with science, we seem to have a corresponding impulse to explore our inner universe with faith. Mythology, magic and folklore are still alive in different parts of the world, as are the so-called "primitive" beliefs of peoples in remote lands. The following articles demonstrate the wide range of religions, both in their major forms and more localized aspects.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Africa
Algonquin Indians
Altar
Amida
Ashanti
Atonement
Australia
Azande
Bahais
Baptism
Berbers
Bhagavad Gita
Borneo
Brahman
Brazil
Buddhism
Bushmen
Cargo Cults
Caste
China
Christianity
Christmas
Congo
Dahomey
Dead Sea Scrolls
Druzes
Easter
Election
Eskimo
Ethiopia
Fasting
Gautama Buddha
Ghost Dance
Great Plains Indians
Gypsies
Head
Heresy
Hinduism
Ibo
Incest
Iroquois
Islam
Jains
Japan
Jerusalem
Jesus
Judaism
Kali
Karma
Kikuyu
Krishna
Lamas
Madness
Mahatmas
Mana
Manitou
Maori
Mary
Masai
Mass
Mecca and Medina
Meditation
Melanesia
Menstruation
Mexico and Central America
Mohammed
Mutilation
Nagas
Navaho
Negroes
New Guinea
New Religious Movements
Nilotes
Nirvana
North American Indians
Nuer
Ozarks
Pacific North-West Indians
Parsees
Peyote Cults
Pilgrimage
Polynesia/Micronesia
Pueblo Indians
Pygmies
Race Myths
Sacraments
Saints
Self-Denial
Shaman
Shinto
Shiva
Sikhs
Sinhalese Buddhism
South America
Southeast Asia
Taboo
Taoism
Tattooing
Tibet
Tinkers
Totem
Touareg
Trickster
United States
Vedanta
Veddas
Vishnu
War, Holy
Yahweh
Yoga
Zealots
Zen
Zulu

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PARANORMAL RESEARCH

As interest in the paranormal has grown, a number of psychical researchers and psychologists have been investigating ways in which modern techniques of investigation can be used to explore this area. Statistics, double blind tests, laboratory neutrality have all been employed to examine such disparate experiences as ESP (extra-sensory perception); trance states; poltergeist activity; mediumistic powers; dreams; psychokinesis and faith healing. Some of the most fascinating work has been applied to astrology by statisticians and psychologists in an attempt to measure the impact on personality type of planetary positions at the time of birth.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Automatic Art
Conversion
Crookes, Sir William
Cross Correspondences
Davenports
Double
Dowsing
Doyle, Sir A. Conan
Dreams
Extra-Sensory Perception
Faith Healing
Freud
Gurney, Edmund
Home, D. D.
Homoeopathy
Jung, C. G.
Leonard, Mrs
Lourdes
Mediums
Miracles
Myers, F. W. H.
Object Reading
Ouija Boards
Out-of-the-Body Experiences
Palladino, Eusapia
Piper, Mrs
Poltergeists
Psychical Research
Psychokinesis
Psychology
Radiesthesia
Schneider Bros.
Spiritualism
Spontaneous psi Experiences
Superstitions
Trance
Visions
Willett, Mrs

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Giraudon

APPROACHES TO THE AFTER-LIFE

"Where do we come from, and where are we going?" The central issues concerning the meaning of our existence on earth always raise questions about the possibility of an after-life. The major landmarks of human experience—birth, marriage and death—are surrounded with rituals of powerful emotional resonance. They dramatize the recurring cycle of the renewal and destruction of life. As human beings we are uniquely concerned with the quality of our consciousness. Do we have a soul, a spirit? Can this part of the self survive the body's death? If so, to what purpose—are we reincarnated as so many people firmly believe? Every religion and mythology tries to explore these questions in some form or other.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Birth
Burial
Cremation
Cult of the Dead
Ghosts
Haunted Houses
Hell
Immortality
Incarnation
Initiation
Interrogation of the Dead
Judgement of the Dead
Marriage
Mummification
Paradise
Predestination
Purgatory
Reincarnation
Relics
Rites of Passage
Soul
Suttee

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VISIONARY PIONEERS

Orthodox religious beliefs and observances do not satisfy everyone. There are thousands of people all over the world who express their spiritual needs outside the mainstream religions. These individuals include mystics, gnostics, occultists, magicians, spiritualists and students of the Cabala, and they either practise alone or in small groups and sects. These explorers of untrodden paths and unusual spiritual techniques are often pioneers of new ways of thinking about the world. Their constant questioning and willingness to consider new issues makes their contribution to the spiritual life of the human race both fascinating and inherently valuable.

CLASSIFIED SUBJECT GUIDE

Acupuncture
Agrippa
Anandamayi Ma
Apollonius of Tyana
Besant, Annie
Black Muslims
Blavatsky, Mme
Boehme
Bogomils
Bruno, Giordano
Cabala
Cagliostro
Camisards
Cathars
Catherine of Siena
Cayce, Edgar
Christian Science
Cloud of Unknowing
Cokelers
Coleridge
Communistic Religious Movements
Conselheiero, Antonio
Convulsionaries
Crowley, Aleister
Daniel
Dee, John
Dervish
Dionysius the Areopagite
Divine Principles
Doukhobors
Druids
Ebionites
Eckhart, Meister
Ecstasy
Eddy, Mary Baker
Eleusis
Enthusiasm
Exclusive Brethren
Ezekiel
Fakir
Faust
Flagellation
Fludd, Robert
Flying Saucers
Fortune, Dion
Fox, George
Francis of Assisi, St
Freemasonry
Germanen Order
Ghazali
Gilles de Rais
Gnosticism
Golden Dawn
Gurdjieff
Guyon, Mme
Hasidism
Hermetica
Hildegard of Bingen
Hilton, Walter
Holiness Movement
Holy Rollers
Hutterian Brethren
Ibn Arabi
Illuminati
Irving, Edward
Jehovah's Witnesses
Jezreel, J. J.
Joan of Arc
John of the Cross
Julian of Norwich
Knights Templar
Lavater, J. K.
Law, William
Levi, Eliphas
List, Guido von
Lost Tribes of Israel
Lull, Raymond
Luria, Isaac
Lytton, Bulwer
Mahdi
Manicheans
Mankind United
Martinists
Masters
Medmenham Monks
Mesmer
Messianic Movements
Montanists
Moral Rearmament
Mormons
Mystery Religions
Mysticism
National Socialism
Neo-Pagan German Cults
Neoplatonism
Neumann, Teresa
New Templars
New Thought
Nostradamus
Old Believers
Omar Khayyam
Oriental Jewish Communities
Orpheus and Orphism
Ouspensky
Paracelsus
Peculiar People
Pentecostalist Movement
Plato's Myths
Plotinus
Prince, H. J.
Proclus
Pythagoras
Quietism
Ramakrishna
Ramana Maharshi
Rasputin
Rosicrucians
Rumi
Russell, G. W.
Sai Baba
St Germain, Comte de
Second Coming
Shakers
Simeon Stylites
Simon Magus
Sivananda
Skoptsy
Snake-Handling Cults
Southcott, Joanna
Speaking in Tongues
Steiner, Rudolf
Stigmata
Sufis
Swedenborg
Tantrism
Taylor, Thomas
Teilhard de Chardin
Teresa of Avila
Theosophy
Theurgy
Throne Mysticism
Thugs
Waite, A. E.
Waldenses
Walworth Jumpers
Wronski
Yeats, W. B.

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Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

Brian Shuel

Abbots Bromley
Scene of the annual Horn Dance in September; no one knows how old the dance is but its closest parallels are the ritual dances of primitive societies, reaching back to the Stone Age.
See HORNS.

After the executions of the Aberdeen witches in 1597, it was said that the black reek and stench of the burnings hung over the town for weeks. The victims were strangled to death before their bodies were burned. Many innocent people were undoubtedly accused but there is some evidence for the existence of a real witch organization in north-east Scotland

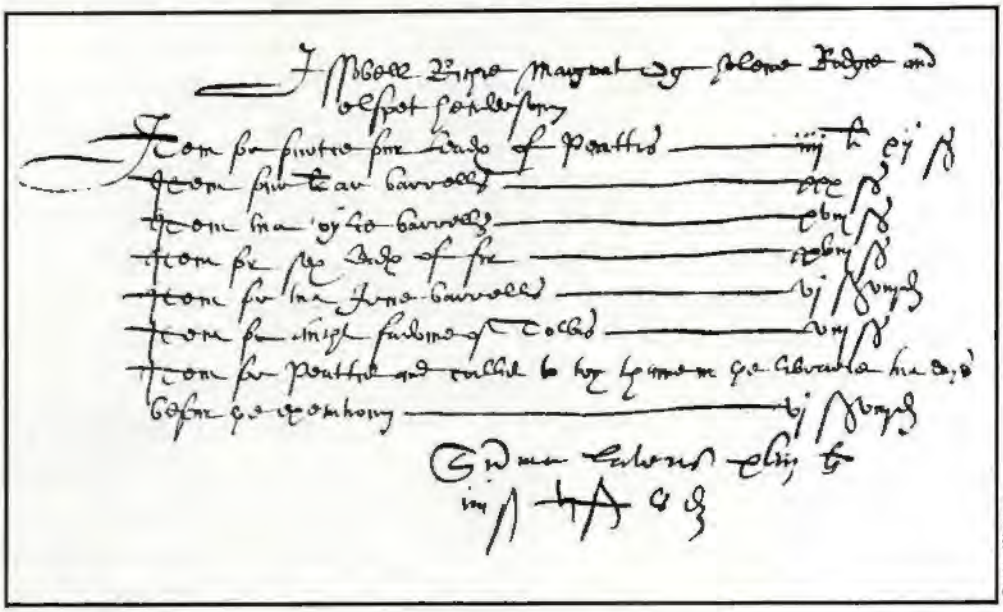
ABERDEEN WITCHES

IN THE ARCHIVES of the city of Aberdeen is a remarkable collection of documents *(Records of the Dean of Guild, 1596–1597)* which give details of the proceedings against many persons accused of 'the detestable practice of witchcraft and sorcery'. Marginal notes indicate that the documents were those used in court, most of them consisting of 'dittays', or charges against the accused.

The collection of evidence against those suspected of witchcraft and sorcery was made by the ministers and elders of the Reformed Church in the various parishes. Unhappily, suspects could be named by anyone – a feature that afforded full scope to the malicious – and many harmless old people were named. Suspects were summoned before the Kirk Sessions for examination and those considered guilty were remanded to Aberdeen Assizes. Even when allowance is made for the ignorance and superstition of the time, it is difficult to excuse the ministers of the Gospel, educated men, whose evidence was the means of sending many innocent people to a horrible end.

However, some of the evidence suggests that there existed a definite organization practising the black art in north-east Scotland; the group known to history as the Aberdeen witches.

Two main points can be established concerning the group. First, the practice of witchcraft was a confidential cult, almost a family concern, its secrets handed down from generation to generation. Secondly, it was well organized, and although each of its members operated individually in their own localities each was required to attend general meetings, to take part in the ceremonies and for instruction in 'working woe' (doing harm).



Fenton Wyness

Above **Part of the accounts of money spent on the execution of four witches. These include items for coal, peat, tar barrels, the stake, rope, and the fee of the executioner**

Below **Witches were frequently accused of paying bestial and revolting homage to the Devil by kissing his backside: from Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*, 17th century**

Mary Evans Picture Library

Mansell Collection

The European obsession with witchcraft raged for about 300 years. In Germany, as in Scotland and France, it was the custom to strangle or hang the witches before burning them to ashes. Burning three witches at Demeburg, Germany, in 1555

The Devil and the Queen of Elphen

The witches were organized in covens – groups of 13. At the general meetings the Devil himself presided, usually 'in the likeness of a great grey stag, boar or dog'. Presumably he was a man dressed as an animal. The meetings were said to involve dancing and sexual relations with the Devil – who went under the name of Christsonday – and with a woman called the Queen of Elphen (queen of the elves) who, 'is said to be very pleasant, and she can seem old or young when she pleases, and she makes whoever she likes king, and lies with whoever she likes'. They were accused of saluting the Devil and the Queen by kissing them on the buttocks. There seems to have been no age limit on entrance and many of the accused testified to having been introduced as young children.

Each member of a coven specialized in some particular form of sorcery and these covered a wide range. Isobel Cockie bewitched mills and livestock, while Margaret Ogg devoted her attentions to butcher-meat with dire results; Helen Rogie brought illness and death by modelling figures of her victims in lead or wax, and Isobel Strachan was notorious as a fascinator of nice young men; Isobel Ritchie made a special line in confectionery for expectant mothers, while Isobel Ogg's forte was the raising of storms. It would seem that the witches had one faculty which was common to all, that of causing 'the sudden sickness' whereby their victims lay 'one half of the day roasting as if in an oven, with an unquenchable thirst, the other half of the day melting away with an extraordinary cold sweat'.

Perhaps the most dramatic moment in the Aberdeen Assizes came when Andrew Man turned king's evidence against his colleagues. A witch from boyhood and the father of several children by the Queen of Elphen, he convinced the Court that, with his long and extensive experience, he was in the unique position of being able to identify any witch or warlock brought before him. Accordingly, he was appointed official witch-finder to the Assizes and with a three-inch needle pricked the suspects' bodies for the 'Devil's Mark' – a spot insensible to pain and believed to be inflicted by the Devil.

Strangled by the Executioner

While awaiting trial, the suspects were confined either in the cells of the Tolbooth or in Our Lady's Pity-vault, for the Reformation had brought degradation to this place of worship. A number of the accused took their own lives in prison and their bodies were thrown outside to be dragged through the streets until their battered, shapeless carcasses were unrecognizable.

When the Assizes closed in April 1597, 24 people – 23 women and one man – had been found guilty of witchcraft. All were condemned to death – 'to be taken out between the hills, bound to a stake, strangled by the executioner, and their bodies burnt to ashes'. The few whose guilt was 'not proven' were ordered to be branded on the cheek and banished. The final tragic scene took place 'between the hills', in the grassy hollow lying between Aberdeen's Castle-hill and the neighbouring Heading-hill – the depression now covered by Commerce Street – and the 'black reek and stench from the burnings hung over the burgh for many weeks'.

At one stage in the Assizes, it appeared that the number of executions would increase and the Dean of Guild, fearing rising costs might prejudice the burnings, took it upon himself to lay in a supply of coal to the value of £26 4s. His foresight paid dividends as shown by the final entry in the records dated 21 September 1597, which states that the provost, baillies and council 'considering the faithfulness shown by William Dun, the Dean of Guild, in the discharge of his duty, and, besides this, his extraordinary taking pains on the great number of witches burnt this year and to encourage others to work as diligently in the discharge of their office, grant and assign to him the sum of £47 3s 4d'.

Before the end of the year and while the subject of witchcraft and sorcery was still in people's minds, King James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) published his book *Demonologie* in defence of witch hunting. It proved to be a best seller.

FENTON WYNESS

ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN of the Himalayas is supposed to be a creature half-human and half-animal, hairy and about the size of a child of 12 or 14, which walks erect on two legs, swinging its arms. Its hair is described as reddish or light brown, and not very thick. European travellers called the snowman 'abominable' because of the horror with which the Sherpas, a Himalayan people, regard the creatures which they call *yeti*.

Expeditions have searched without success for the yeti. Mountaineers have found what were thought to be its footprints in the snow, but research has revealed that these tracks were made by other animals. Anthropologists have shown that the Sherpas' stories are questionable, and the view that the snowman is a legend is now widely accepted. Legends of hairy mountain-men have also been reported from the Gobi desert, Mongolia and the Rockies near Canada's Pacific coast.

According to Sherpa folklore a monkey king was converted to Buddhism and lived as a hermit in the mountains. An ogress fell in love with him and he abandoned his solitary life to marry her. The children she bore him were covered in hair and had tails, and they were the first yeti.

A Tibetan holding a cap allegedly made from the scalp of a yeti. It has been shown that these caps are really made of deer-hide

Popperfoto

ABRACADABRA

THE WORD ABRACADABRA has been so widely used in magic that it has passed into the patter of the stage conjuror and appears in dictionaries as a term for magical nonsense-words in general. Daniel Defoe, in his *Journal of the Plague Year*, published in 1722, says that many people who were terrified of the plague acted as if it was an evil spirit which threatened to take possession of their bodies. They tried to ward it off with 'certain words or figures, as particularly the word Abracadabra formed in a triangle or pyramid.'

In the Middle Ages the word was believed to cure fevers. The earliest instructions for using it come from a poem on medicine by Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, a doctor who accompanied the Roman Emperor Severus on his expedition to Britain in 208 AD. It has to be written down, dropping a letter in each line. The usual way of writing it is:

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

'Abracax', a demon with snakes for feet, associated with abracadabra. From Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 1863

The paper on which the word is written must be tied round the patient's neck with flax, worn for nine days, and then thrown backwards over the shoulder into a stream which runs eastwards.

The idea is evidently that as the word shrinks away to nothing, so will the fever. Several other shrinking charms of this kind are known, including a Jewish spell against a demon named Shabriri, thought to cause diseases of the eye. To get rid of him, you say Shabriri Briri Riri Iri Ri, whittling him away to nothing.

Abracadabra resembles, and may be descended from, a Jewish cure for fever:

Ab Abr Abra Abrak Abraka
Abrakal Abrakala Abrakal
Abraka Abrak Abra Abr Ab

And the people called unto Moses and Moses prayed to God and the fire abated. May healing come from heaven from all kinds of fever and consumption – heat to N son of N.

Amen Amen Amen. Selah Selah Selah.

This must also be hung round the patient's neck, and he must not look at it for the next 24 hours. It apparently builds the heat of the fever up to breaking-point and then makes it dwindle away, as 'the fire' abates.

Another possibility is that Abracadabra is connected with Abraxas, a god who appears on magical charms, gems and rings used to ward off evil from the 2nd century AD onwards. Abraxas originated with the followers of an eccentric Christian thinker named Basilides, who taught at Alexandria from about 120 to 140. One of his theories was that Jesus had not really been crucified.

The followers of Basilides seem to have constructed the name Abraxas for the god who ruled each year and its 365 days. The letters of the Greek alphabet also stood for numbers, and the Greek letters of Abraxas add to 365. Below this god were 365 orders of spirits, occupying 365 heavens, the lowest of which was the domain of the spirits who rule the Earth. The seven letters of Abraxas may stand for the seven planets known in antiquity, believed in astrology to control the workings of fate.

The central character of Homer's Iliad *was honoured as a semi-divine being, and his effect on Western ideas of 'the hero' has lasted to the present day*

ACHILLES

British Museum

The greatest of the Homeric heroes and the central character of the *Iliad*, Achilles was later worshipped as a semi-divine being. Famed for his savagery in battle, he is here shown slaying Penthesilea, the queen of the Amazons. From an Attic amphora

THE PLOT OF THE *Iliad*, one of the most blood-drenched stories ever told, turns on the pride and the ungovernable temper of Achilles (Achilleus in Greek), the most formidable of the Greek champions who laid siege to Troy. 'The Wrath of Achilles is my theme', Homer begins, 'that fatal wrath which . . . sent the gallant souls of many noblemen to Hades, leaving their bodies as carrion for the dogs and passing birds.'

The *Iliad* is usually dated to the 8th century BC. It is quite possible that Achilles was originally a real man, however legendary the exploits with which Homer and later authors credited him. Homer calls him 'the great runner' for his skill as an athlete and 'the city-sacker' for his prowess as a fighter. In Hesiod, who wrote some years after Homer, he is 'lion-hearted Achilles, the destroyer of men'. Later still, as a result of the fame which the *Iliad* brought him, he was honoured in many parts of the Greek world as a hero, a being halfway between a god and a man.

At the village of Achilleum near Troy there was a temple sacred to Achilles and a statue of the hero wearing, oddly enough, a woman's earring. At Elis on the Greek mainland he had a monument and on a certain day, towards sunset, the women of Elis honoured him by lamenting his death. He had a temple and a statue on Leuce, the White Island in the Black Sea opposite the mouths of the Danube, where offerings were made to him and games were held in his honour. It was said that passing sailors heard his voice across the water, reciting Homer to the accompaniment of the clash of battle and the thunder of horses' hooves.

The Wrath of Achilles

The story of the *Iliad* begins, in the tenth year of the siege of Troy, when the Greek supreme commander, Agamemnon, seized a beautiful slave-girl who had been allotted to Achilles as a prize of battle. Insulted, Achilles refused to fight any more and his absence gravely weakened the Greek resistance to fierce Trojan attacks. Agamemnon tried to make the quarrel up, offering to return the girl to Achilles with many splendid gifts. But Achilles was still nursing his fury and refused to be reconciled.

Lacking Achilles, the situation of the Greeks now became so dangerous that Patroclus, the dearly loved friend of Achilles, went out to fight the Trojans. Patroclus was killed by the best of the Trojan warriors, Hector. When this news was brought to him, Achilles became berserk with grief and rage, and readied himself for battle – in spite of the warning from his mother, the sea-nymph Thetis, that he was doomed to die after Hector's death.

Next day, bearing new arms given to him by the gods, Achilles 'chased his victims with the fury of a fiend, and the earth was dark with blood'. His horses trampled over dead men and fallen shields as he raged on in search of glory, until he found Hector and killed him in single combat, gloating over the Trojan's death agony.

Achilles maltreated Hector's corpse, dragging it in the dust behind his chariot, and he intended to throw it to the dogs to gnaw. But Hector's father persuaded him to return the body to the Trojans so that it could be decently buried.

The *Iliad* ends with the funeral rites for Hector but it is clear that Achilles has not long to live and that he will be killed by Hector's brother Paris and the archer-god Apollo. The *Odyssey* describes his death in battle, with the flower of the Greek and Trojan warriors falling round him in the struggle over his corpse. The sea-nymphs came from the ocean to weep salt tears for him and the nine Muses sang his dirge. His bones were mingled with those of his friend Patroclus and buried outside Troy.

Something Superhuman

Achilles has all the virtues of the Homeric hero. He is brave, passionate, ferocious in battle, beautiful to look at, intensely proud, fated to an early death. His failing is his uncontrollable anger. His treatment of Hector's corpse is so savage that Homer calls it 'shameful outrage' and condemns as 'an evil thing' his slaughter of a dozen Trojan prisoners at the funeral of Patroclus. When Hector's father comes to beg for his son's body, Achilles tries to console him and mercifully gives him the corpse. But even then he is sufficiently aware of his weakness to be afraid that he may suddenly fly into a rage and kill the old man.

Achilles' Heel

Many of the best-known stories about Achilles appear in later writers, including some which have parallels in folk tales all over the world, like the story that his mother tried to make him immortal by dipping him into a fire, but her husband thought she was trying to kill the child and stopped her. A famous variant of this is that she dipped him in the Styx, the river of the underworld, which made all of him deathproof except the heel by which she held him. It was in this heel that he received his mortal wound, from an arrow fired by Paris or Apollo.

His mother, Thetis, was so beautiful that both Zeus and the sea-god Poseidon desired her. But she was fated to bear a son who would be mightier than his father, and when the two gods heard this their ardour cooled, and they gave her in marriage to a mortal named Peleus. It was at the wedding of Thetis and Peleus that the apple marked 'for the fairest' was thrown among the gods, the apple of discord that caused the Trojan War in which Achilles met his death.

Achilles was only a boy when the Greek

armies gathered for the siege of Troy. His mother hid him on the island of Scyros, where he was dressed as a girl and brought up with the king's daughters. But the crafty Odysseus came to Scyros bringing presents of cloth for dressmaking and also a spear and a shield. Achilles revealed himself by ignoring the cloth and seizing the weapons. What name Achilles bore when hidden among the women is an old problem. One suggestion is that he was called Pyrrha, 'red-head', for the colour of his hair.

At Troy, after the death of Hector, Achilles is said to have defeated various other notable fighters, including Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons, a tribe of warrior women, who had come to fight on the Trojan side. When he had killed her with a spear-thrust, he was so smitten by her beauty that he made love to her dead body.

Some said that Achilles and Patroclus were homosexual lovers. There is no such suggestion in Homer but the accusation was made against many famous figures.

Most of these later stories, to a modern eye at least, tend to lessen the stature of the hero, as compared with the picture of him in Homer. But there is a suitably grim tale in the *Hecuba* of Euripides. After the fall of Troy, the ghost of Achilles rose in the sheen of golden armour and stood high on the crest of his tomb, demanding its share of the spoil, in the shape of Polyxena, daughter of the king of Troy. The Greeks slaughtered the girl on Achilles' grave-mound, so that she could accompany her new master to the after-world, and the blood welled from her neck over her golden robes.

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Achilles, on the left, gaming with another Greek leader, Ajax. Games and contests of all kinds were dear to the hearts of the warrior-aristocrats who were Homer's heroes. Achilles seems to have won, as beside him is written the Greek for 'four', while beside Ajax is 'three'. From an amphora, c 530 BC

Hirmer Verlag

ACORN

AS THE FRUIT of the oak tree, which is sacred to so many cultures, the acorn has found a place in a good deal of magical lore. It has been a fertility symbol, along with most other seeds, nuts and fruits – though acorns always imply a special kind of long-term, high-potency fertility. It has been widely used as a good-luck charm: even today replicas of acorns are found with other talismans on key rings or charm bracelets.

In an old European form of marriage divination, an anxious young girl might take two acorns. She would name one of them for herself and the other for her lover, and drop them into a basin of water. If they floated together, the lovers would marry happily. Otherwise, the omen was bad.

A traditional British belief states that acorns should be carried as a means of preserving youthfulness. In the southern USA, the acorn entered into folk medicine, as a cure for rheumatism.

The ancient Celtic Druids, who venerated the oak, ate acorns as part of their ritual preparation for foretelling the future. In Scandinavian myth, the oak was sacred to the thunder god Thor, and so acorns would be placed in windows to appease the god and protect the house against lightning. Some of this latter practice has lasted into quite recent times: the roller window blinds which were widely popular a few years ago often had tassels on them shaped like acorns.

The acorn fills a central role in the religion of many Californian Indian tribes. For them, acorns were the main staple food (aside from fish), as vital to their well-being as maize was to tribes east of the mountains. So tales about acorns abound in the mythology of tribes such as the Luiseño. Other tribes, like the Hupa or Yuki, held a great annual Acorn Feast as the central feature of their harvest celebrations. In that ritual, acorns were ceremonially cooked and eaten while prayers were made to the god of vegetation, to protect the stored crop and to ensure future harvests.

(See also OAK.)

This Chinese medical technique of jabbing the patient with needles seems to concentrate entirely on physical treatment of disease but in fact it is based on beliefs about supernatural forces at work in the body

ACUPUNCTURE

ACUPUNCTURE is a system of healing which is centuries old in China, is still used there and taught in medical schools, and has been practised fairly extensively in the West since the 1930s. Needles are inserted into the skin, to a depth of about a tenth of an inch. They are left for a few minutes and then removed. 'To the casual observer', says Felix Mann, a leading Western authority on the subject, 'it could appear that what had been done was negligible and yet, in the right kind of case (whether severe or mild), the result can be such as to give the impression that the cure was effected by magic.'

The impression of magic comes partly from the fact that the needles are often inserted at points which have no apparent connection with the ailment that is being treated. A needle stuck into the little toe can cure headache, for biliousness a needle may be inserted into the patient's shoulder, and acupuncturists usually attack hay fever by treating the liver. There is no doubt that acupuncture is sometimes effective but no satisfactory scientific explanation of it has yet been produced.

Philosophically, acupuncture is based on theories about forces which are believed to govern everything in the universe, including human health. Medically, it is based on the fact that points on the body's surface become tender as a result of illness. If you have a headache, for instance, you may develop tender spots at the junction of the neck and the back of the head. When these spots are pressed, the pain is relieved.

The Chinese discovered about a thousand points on the skin where stimulation relieves or cures disease. These points are divided into 12 systems. All the points belonging to any one system are connected by an invisible line called a meridian, and each meridian is linked with one of the major organs of the body, including the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and bladder.

The meridian of the liver runs from near the liver to the inside of the leg and down to the big toe. The heart meridian runs from the heart down the inside of the arm to the little finger, which is roughly the track along which you feel pain if you have a heart attack.

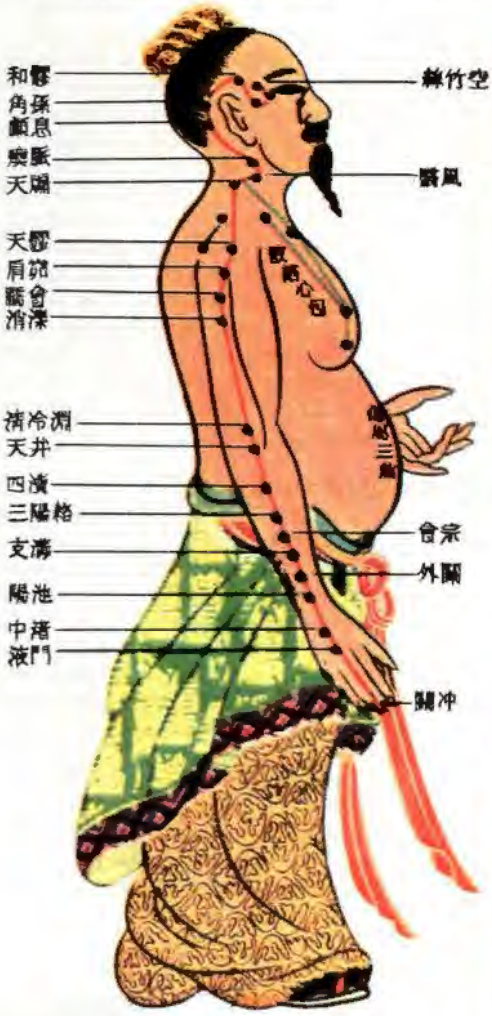
Each of the points has its own name. The point on the spleen meridian called Tian Xi, Heavenly Ravine, is connected with bronchitis, rebellious cough, throat noises, peptic ulcer and other conditions. The point Yung Men, Cloud Gate, on the lung meridian may be treated to relieve shortness of breath, asthma, rheumatism and swelling of the neck, tonsillitis or acne.

Some of the points correspond to the vital spots which are attacked in judo and karate. The two points on the neck at the base of the skull, which can be treated to cure headache and nosebleed, can also be struck to produce unconsciousness. Some points are related to those used in yoga. To promote efficient breathing on long walks, yogis may stimulate the point in the armpit which is on the lung meridian of acupuncture.

The Twelve Pulses

Acupuncture is concerned not only with healing but also with preventing disease. The Chinese attitude to medicine leans heavily towards keeping people in good health to begin with, rather than waiting for them to be ill and then trying to cure them: so much so that they produced a system which is the reverse of our own: Chinese patients paid the doctor as long as they stayed healthy and stopped paying him when they fell ill. When a disease first develops, before it takes hold and shows itself, there is a stage when the body's mechanism is slightly disturbed, but not enough for the patient to notice his symptoms. It is this type of condition which the acupuncturist tries to diagnose and halt.

Diagnosis is made by taking the pulse. The pulses at the left and right wrists are each divided into six sections, giving 12 pulses in all, corresponding to the 12 meridians. Each pulse may have any of 27 qualities, on which the doctor's diagnosis depends. The sensitivity required in taking the pulse is so fine that not only is the patient's present condition accurately determined but past illnesses described and future ones predicted.



John Adams

John Adams

In acupuncture needles are inserted into one or more of a thousand points on the skin, to relieve pain or cure disease. The points are divided into 12 systems and all the points in a system are connected by a line called a meridian *1* This chart shows some of the points and meridians. *2* and *3* Acupuncture has become popular in the West since the 1930s. A patient undergoing treatment, with needles placed in the neck and shoulders. *4* This box contains needles used by a modern Western acupuncturist

John Adams

Courtesy of Wellcome Trustees

The Flow of Qi

Acupuncture is extremely ancient and the oldest book on the subject, the *Nei Jing* or Book of the Yellow Emperor, dates from c 200 BC but contains material which is much older. It has been suggested that the system developed when people noticed that a warrior slightly wounded in battle by a blow from a stone or a sharp weapon, might be cured of some ailment by the wound.

Acupuncture depends on belief that in the healthy human body there is a continuous circulation of vital energy or 'life force'. This energy is called Qi (or Ch'I), which basically means 'air' or 'breath'. The identification of the life force with air, based on the simple observation that you cannot live without breathing, is found all over the world (see BREATH).

Qi circulates through the 12 meridians, starting from the lungs which draw breath, once every 24 hours. If it fails to flow properly, the organs of the body will suffer from a deficiency of energy or, where it is blocked, from a surplus of it. Acupuncture tries to bring the flow of life force back to normal by 'sedating' a meridian which has too much Qi or 'tonifying' a meridian which has too little.

If a meridian is 'empty', deficient in Qi, the previous meridian is tonified. Qi flows from the lungs through the large intestine, the stomach, the spleen and the heart to the liver. If the spleen is 'empty', the stomach meridian is tonified and the energy then flows on from it to the spleen. A secondary result is that because the stomach is now full of energy, the flow from the large intestine meridian is dammed back, so that there is an increase of energy in the large intestine.

Although taking the pulse is the main method of diagnosis in acupuncture, there are other signals which give the acupuncturist a clue to your physical condition. If you have a soft voice with a clear tone, this suggests that you have a satisfactory flow of Qi. A strong, rough voice suggests that you have too much flow of Qi, an excess of vital energy. A weak voice, lacking in resonance, suggests a weak and unstable flow of Qi. Similarly, a pure and umblemished skin with a rosy tint points to a healthy flow of Qi, a congested and reddish skin to too much Qi, a thick, fatty skin, greyish in colour, to too little.

Interplay of Yang and Yin

Qi is the product of two great forces, or principles or polarities, called Yang and Yin. These forces run through the whole universe and everything which exists depends on the interplay between them. 'Life', as Felix Mann puts it, 'exists as the result of tension between two extremes', and their different forms of combination with each other produce the five basic elements of which everything is made, the elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water. If they are thought of in terms of electricity, Yang is the positive charge and Yin the negative: if in terms of sex, Yang is male and Yin is female. The sun, light, strength, the right side, fire, dryness and many other qualities belong to Yang. Their opposites, the moon, darkness, weakness, the left side, water and wetness belong to Yin.

Western Views

Western interest in acupuncture first sprang up in France and Germany – in 1981 there were 1500 medically registered practitioners and 10 hospitals with acupuncture departments in France. Interest spread not only over the rest of Europe, but also to the United States. Following President Nixon's visit to China in the early 1970s some physicians in the United States began to study acupnncture to find out how its effects were achieved. During the President's visit, doctors travelling along with the party were invited to witness operations in which acnpuncture was the only analgesic used – the word 'anaesthetic' is not accurate in this context.

Modern practitioners generally follow the major Chinese precepts, but with one or two modern refinements. For example some use needles connected to an electrical source, and pass a mild current along the needles. Conditions treated include allergies, migraine, arthritis, rheumatism, etc. It is also popular as a treatment for addiction to drugs, alcohol and tobacco, since it alleviates withdrawal symptoms and helps to reduce the feeling of anxiety.

The organs and meridians of the body are classified in terms of Yang and Yin. The heart, lungs, spleen, kidneys and liver belong to Yin, and a patient who has a weak heart will be said to be suffering from a deficiency of Yin. The intestines, stomach, bladder and gall bladder belong to Yang. Health and a satisfactory flow of Qi depend on a perfect balance between Yang and Yin in the body.

When the Yang and Yin energies in a man's body are reasonably in balance, he is healthy. If one becomes too strong or too weak, he is ill. If the Yang and Yin energies become separated altogether, he is dead. The acupuncturist stimulates the appropriate points on the skin with needles, either to restore the flow of the weakened energy or to restrict the flow of the stronger energy, and so bring the two energies back into balance. (For a similar idea in the West, see MAGNETISM.)

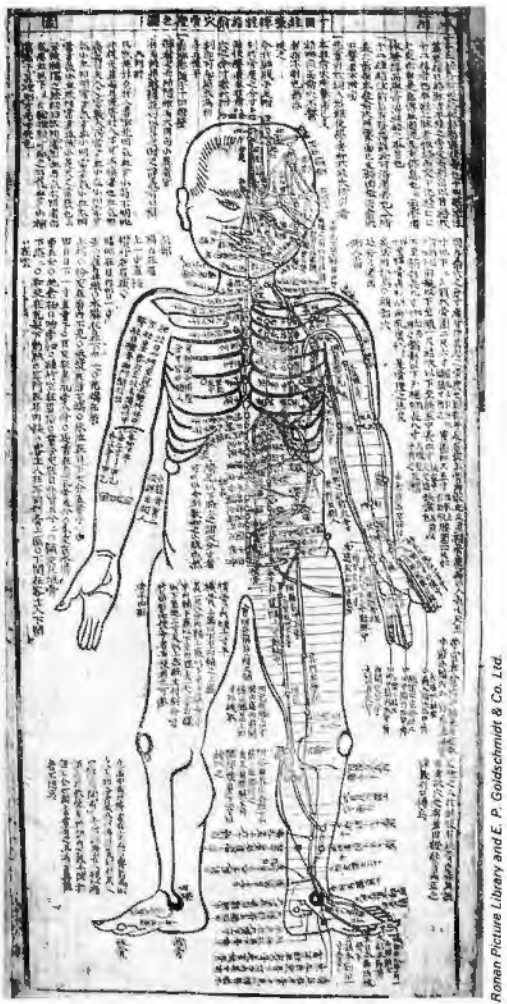
It is said that seasonal changes affect the flow of energy. The Yang is more active than the Yin in spring and summer: the reverse is the case in autumn and winter. The Yin energy is stronger than the Yang at the time of the new moon.

Opposites and Balance

The theory of Yang and Yin was systematized by a philosopher named Tsou Yen in the 4th century BC. But the belief that all things are made of opposites is not by any means confined to China.

Early Greek thinkers saw that the universe can be described in terms of opposites. Day gives way to night, summer to winter, heat to cold, youth to age. They also developed the theory that everything is made of four basic materials or elements, each combining two of the primary qualities, which are two pairs of opposites: hot and cold, dry and wet. The theory of the four elements and qualities was scarcely challenged until the 17th century. The idea that the world is made of opposites, with the consequent necessity for balancing and reconciling them harmoniously with each other, like Yang and Yin in the healthy body, was a basic doctrine of alchemy, also appears in astrology, and has remained one of the fundamental theories of occultism in the West (see OPPOSITES).

FURTHER READING: There are selections from the *Nei Jing* in I. Veith, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* (University of California Press, 1966). See also Felix Mann's excellent books, published by Heinemann in London, Peter Smith, U.S.A., *Acupuncture: The Ancient Chinese Art* (International Ideas, 1978), *The Meridians of Acupuncture* (1964) and *The Treatment of Disease by Acupuncture* (2nd edn, 1964), and J. B. Howland, *Acupuncture Principles & Your Health* (Auricle Press, 1981).



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Far left **This figure shows the points believed to control diseases of the heart and the sexual organs**

Right **Japanese chart, drawn in the 19th century, showing some of the points on the skin where acupuncturists insert needles to cure disease**

Mansell Collection

Adam

According to the book of Genesis, the first human being, created 'in the image' of God: the belief that man is a miniature copy of God has powerfully influenced European magic: Adam's disobedience in Eden was the 'original sin' and the belief that Christ was 'the second Adam', who came to free mankind from the consequences of Adam's crime, has been a major doctrine of Christianity.

See FIRST MAN.

Mansell Collection

Adonis

In Greek mythology, a handsome youth, the lover of the goddess Aphrodite; he spent part of the year with her and part underground with the goddess of the underworld; associated with fertility and vegetation.

See APHRODITE; TAMMUZ.

Radio Times/Hulton

Aesculapius

Roman name of the Greek god Asclepios, whose province was healing; patients came to sleep at his shrines and were cured by healing dreams.

See HEALING GODS.

Aetherius Society

Aetherius Society

Modern group which believes itself to be in touch with spiritually advanced beings who live on Venus, Mars and Neptune; the society has 'charged' 19 mountains all over the world with spiritual force.

See FLYING SAUCERS.

AFRICA

'You are useless, you gods!'

John Bulmer/Camera Press

Africa is a continent of many gods – pagan, Mohammedan and Christian – of spirits, magic, witchcraft, and prophecy. This article gives the background for later entries dealing with individual tribes and customs

THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA contains some 6,000 different tribes. So complex are African languages, races, cultures and religions that anthropologists cannot yet agree about many of the facts that are available to them.

It follows that where there are so many sorts of men, there are many gods, or concepts of God, and many religious sects with their peculiar rites, magical practices and traditional myths. Some idea of the enormous diversity involved can be seen by comparing the Egyptian Copt, a tall, fair-skinned Christian, with the Bushman of southern Africa, a stunted, black-skinned pagan. Both are Africans, and both are typical in their way of African racial types, cultural groups and religious beliefs.

But there are certain basic concepts which underly all African religions; and these concepts, far from being the mumbo-jumbo popularly associated with medicine-men, witch-doctors, black magic, fetishes, ju-jus and the rest of it, are still a powerful spiritual and social force.

Paganism: Gods of Nature

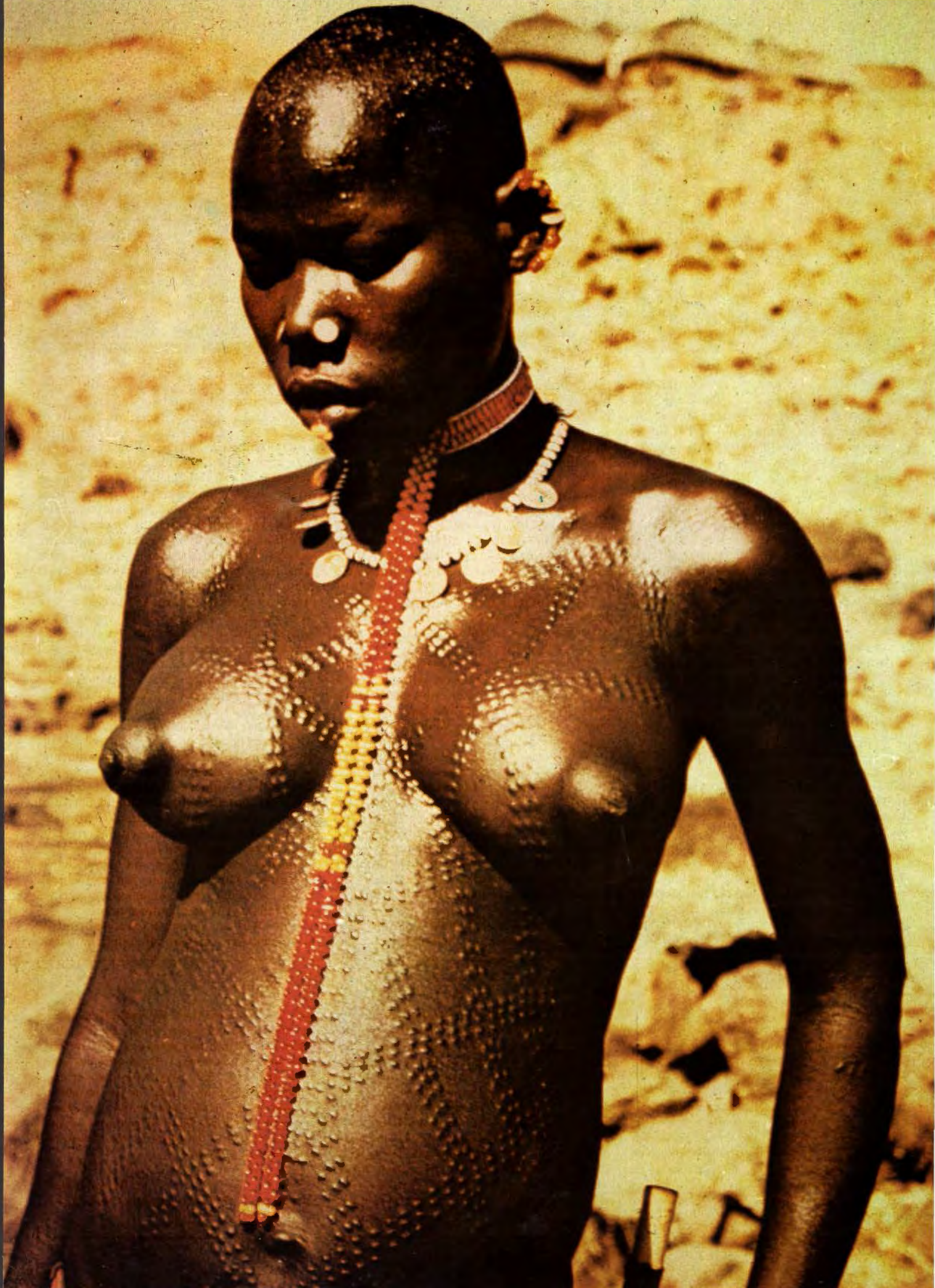
To most Africans, God in one of his many manifestations, or called by one of his many names (there are over 200 principal epithets ranging from 'the Everlasting One of the Forest' to 'He who roars so loud that the nations are struck with terror') is an ever-present being; and his priests (medicine-men and witch-doctors) are recognized leaders of the tribal community.

Estimates give the number of non-Christians and non-Moslems in Africa as

Left **Christian cross-bearer in procession, during the Queen's visit to the Sudan in 1965. There are over 68 million Christians in Africa**

Right **Cicatrization, cutting the skin with a sharp implement to produce raised scars, is practised by various African peoples, partly for beauty and partly for religious and magical purposes connected with initiation, pregnancy or love. This Nuba woman from the southern Sudan was first scarred when she was seven or eight**

Leni Riefenstahl



Stephanie Dinkins/Camera Press

157,031,000', or over half of the total population. In earlier times, before the true character of African traditional beliefs was understood, these people were called simply 'heathens'. They were poor benighted savages who 'bowed down to wood and stone'. The more accurate term used today is 'pagans', from the Latin *paganus*, a word which originally meant a peasant or countryman.

The African pagan (like the pagan everywhere for that matter) believes in a polytheistic system in which a chief god presides over lesser deities, rather as a king ruled over his domain in ancient times. Nearly all African cults had their Supreme Being, called by a hundred different names which vary from tribe to tribe. But no matter what the chief god is called, he is invariably conceived of as the Maker of the World, the Master of Human Destiny, an omnipotent and omnipresent 'king of kings' and 'lord of lords'. And under the rule of the Supreme Being are all the lesser godlings, each with his special function.

The question that has puzzled observers since white men first arrived in Africa is whether this Supreme Being, whatever his name, is an abstract idea – a sort of creative energy which animates and pervades the universe, but has no direct relationship with man; or whether this god is a personal being, like the Jehovah of the Hebrews, or the 'Our Father' of the Christians. It is, perhaps, typical of the difficulties inherent in a study of African religion that no native has come forward to clarify the question; and that white men can only make their observations from the outside, with no help at all from written scriptures, texts or recorded ecclesiastical history.

Yet all observers who have managed to make contact with pagan Africans agree that the idea of a Supreme Being, though vague, is universal, even among the most primitive of peoples, like the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert. It is also clear that the worship of this Supreme Being is, on the whole, a lackadaisical affair. The Creator of the Universe is, after all, bound to be somewhat indifferent to a mere human and his problems.

On the other hand, the lesser gods – the spirits of the earth and the ghosts of departed heroes – are thought to be much more sympathetic.

They can be flattered, wheedled and even threatened. A not unusual African prayer will go as follows: 'You are useless, you gods! You give us only trouble! You are a bunch of so-and-so's! What do we get from you? Nothing!'

It is evident that this 'personalized' relationship with the deity is not confined to African pagans. Christians, in particular Roman Catholics, often approach God through such intermediaries as the Virgin, the Apostles, local saints, martyrs, and others. And in the Moslem religion, Mohammed and his fellow prophets (including Jesus Christ) are the buffers, as it were, between humble man and Almighty God.

The African, surrounded from birth by all the wonders and terrors of nature, logically pays more heed to sun, rain, storms, rivers and animals than we do, as these objects are his immediate friends or enemies. From the dawn of time primitive man discovered objects of reverence and fear all around him. The former had to be thanked; the latter placated. This was the origin of all religious activity and remains the cardinal principle of African paganism. And if we remember that, in the beginning, men noticed that their enemies – crocodiles, snakes, lions and the like – were quiescent once they had caught and devoured their prey, we can begin to understand the origin of human sacrifice. Such sacrifices were common throughout the continent of Africa until quite recently, and nobody knows the extent to which they are still practised today.

Nature worship, then, is perhaps the most significant aspect of African paganism, and it is found in a hundred different forms throughout the continent. We are familiar with it in the animal gods of ancient Egypt; and among those gods, the crocodile and serpent were accorded special veneration. They still are in parts of Africa. It is difficult for Western man, with his inbuilt horror of snakes, to understand the African's attitude; yet our obsessions about reptiles are perhaps more illogical and less 'scientific' than primitive man's regard for these lowly creatures. After all, there are more beneficent serpents than maleficent, and we often kill our friends in our ignorance.

The African is more cautious in his approach; and instead of indiscriminately

The Magician Must Surely Die

Fundikira, the chief of Unyamwezi . . . fell ill in the autumn of 1858, and, as usual, his relations were suspected of compassing his end by Uchawi, or black magic. In these regions the death of one man causes many. The Mganga (witch doctor) was summoned to apply the usual ordeal. After administering a mystic drug, he broke the neck of a fowl, and splitting it into two lengths inspected the interior. If blackness or blemish appear about the wings, it denotes the treachery of children, relations and kinsmen; the backbone convicts the mother and grandmother; the tail shows that the criminal is the wife, the thighs the concubines, and the injured shanks or feet, the other slaves. Having fixed upon the class of the criminals, they are collected together by the Mganga, who, after similarly dosing a second hen, throws her up into the air above the heads of the crowd and singles out the person upon whom she alights. Confession is extorted by tying the thumb backwards till it touches the wrist or by some equally barbarous mode of question. The consequence of condemnation is certain and immediate death; the mode is chosen by the Mganga. Some are speared, others are beheaded or 'ammazati' – clubbed: – a common way is to bind the cranium between two stiff pieces of wood which are gradually tightened by cords until the brain bursts out from the sutures. For women they practise a peculiarly horrible kind of impalement. These atrocities continue until the chief recovers or dies: at the commencement of his attack, in one household eighteen souls, male and female, had been destroyed; should his illness be protracted, scores will precede him to the grave, for the Mchawi or magician must surely die.

Sir Richard Burton
The Lake Regions of Central Africa

Surrounded from birth by all the wonders and terrors of Nature, primitive man discovered objects of reverence and fear all around him

Leni Riefenstahl

Above left **These figures stand outside a shrine of the god of thunder in western Nigeria**
Above **Typically arid landscape in the Sudan. The African's reliance on Nature for water, food and all the necessities of life is the basis of Nature worship, the most significant aspect of African paganism, found in many different forms all over the continent**

killing all snakes, whether poisonous or not, he tries to placate the 'snake spirit' itself. Python worship, for instance, is characteristic of several West and East African tribes.

Less than a hundred years ago, travellers described the python 'temples' where these snakes were fed, watered, venerated and even danced to. The python god was given many wives who brought food and water to him and made him comfortable with grass mats and a decorated house. In return, his spirit watched over the tribe and, in the person of the priest, forewarned the community of dangers, accidents and the like. The penalty for killing a python was death by burning, and in 1864 the explorer Sir Richard Burton saw a python-killer burnt alive in his hut, from which he escaped only to be clubbed to death by priests.

Another fundamental fact of African paganism is the firm belief in life after death. No one dies from natural causes in any case. He ceases to live because he has been 'interfered' with – perhaps by human enemies, perhaps by evil spirits. Hence, when he 'passes over', this does not mean that he has gone for good but, to the contrary, he continues to take part in the communal life, now in his spirit form.

Africans, however, do not 'worship' these spirits so much as consult them or ask them for favours, or even argue with them. The ghosts themselves are present in some peculiarly personal belonging or frequented place – their hut, or the log they sat on at council meetings, or the tree they rested beneath. The well-known 'stool huts' of the Ghanaian kings are explained in these terms. The stools symbolize the 'soul' or personality of the departed kings and are preserved for many generations. Moreover, whereas our ideas of personal life after death are often comparatively vague, the African has a firm belief in reincarnation,

Black men were puzzled by assurances that they were children of God on the one hand -and slaves of white men on the other

a belief no doubt founded on the physical resemblance of a child to his parents and grandparents. Eventually one of the ancestors returns from the spirit world to enter the body of a newly-born child.

Summarizing the main tenets of African paganism, we can conclude that there is an underlying concept of a Supreme Being who made the world and presides over the destiny of mankind; that this world is full of spirits enshrined in natural phenomena and dead ancestors; and that there is no final 'death', but an active after-life together with an eventual return to earth in a reincarnated body.

Islam: Religion of the Desert

Moslems make up the second largest religious group in Africa, estimated at 97,934,000, the majority in North Africa which is almost wholly Mohammedan.

The Arabs began their conquest of Africa in the 7th century and had wiped out almost all traces of Christianity within a hundred years. Only the Coptic Church of Egypt and Ethiopia survived – small communities of Christians who were to be cut off from their brethren in the outside world for almost ten centuries.

There is no denying the immense appeal of Islam to the nomadic people who inhabit the lonely wastelands of the Sahara – 3,000,000 square miles of mountain ranges and sand seas. Islam originated in the desert among desert people, and its prophet Mohammed conceived its spiritual and moral code in terms of desert needs. It is an eminently practical religion, well-suited to the actual conditions obtaining in Africa, where polygamy, for instance, is recognized by all unprejudiced observers as a necessary institution. By way of contrast, Christianity, with its emphasis on original sin and sexual inhibitions, is comparatively unsuited to the African temperament and life.

Once North Africa had been conquered by their armies, Arab traders and merchants began their penetration of regions which even the Carthaginians and Romans had not explored. These traders were primarily after loot in the form of ivory, gold and, above all, slaves. And wherever they went, the Arab traders took with them the new religion, an absolutely uncompromising faith and fervour which left subject peoples no alternative: one was either a believer or an infidel. And this often meant, in practical terms, a choice of life or death.

Millions of pagan Africans all over the continent chose to 'co-operate' with the fierce and well-armed invaders, as they were to 'co-operate' with the Portuguese Christians during the 17th and 18th centuries. At the same time, the Moslem concept of the One God was, as we have seen, not alien to African thinking.

Moreover, Koranic law (as opposed to Christian morality) did not basically conflict with tribal custom. It recognized the institution of slavery, for instance – an institution which was actually an economic necessity in non-industrial, non-mechanized societies. But Islam controlled and to some extent softened the cruel system by introducing laws regulating the treatment of slaves, concubinage, the status of the resulting children, and the rights of slaves as human beings, particularly if they chose to be converts to the true religion.

The bulk of the Negro population who suffered from the cruelty of kings and chieftains must have welcomed the new laws. Before the arrival of the Arabs, the best that a Negro captured by a rival tribe could expect was a lifetime of intolerable serfdom or, if he was a young man, castration. The more likely fate was to have a leg chopped off and to be left to die. A number of European travellers in central Africa scarcely a hundred years ago give eyewitness accounts of this treatment of prisoners taken in tribal wars. The Arab traders, with an eye to the Mediterranean markets, considered this practice a waste of manpower; and wherever they converted people to their faith, they introduced a more humane relationship between master and slave.

In addition, the Arabs being themselves a non-industrialized people did not upset the simple economy of Negro life by introducing the machines and paraphernalia of western civilization. But they did bring many needed arts and crafts which enabled the primitive tribes slowly to improve their standard of living.

The results are obvious throughout Moslem Africa. Islam is a living force with strong political overtones. Once converted to the Mohammedan faith, the African can seldom be converted to Christianity, and most missionaries now openly admit that it is a waste of time to try to proselytize in Islamic countries like Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Mauretania. Wherever Islam has had a few centuries to take root, it gives the impression of being wholly integrated into the spiritual, social and political life of its African converts.

White Faith in a Dark World

From about AD 100 to AD 600 the Christian Church in Africa was one of the great bulwarks of the faith, a church with millions of adherents, hundreds of bishops, and an imposing list of martyrs and leaders. This powerful organization covered the whole of northern Africa from the mountains of Ethiopia to the shores of the Atlantic. Yet it was wiped out almost overnight (except for the Copts) by the conquest of the Arabs from the 7th century onwards. Christianity was unable to obtain a new foothold on the African continent for the next thousand years.

Today, the Christian Church claims a total of 68,208,509 members, of whom 29,100,000 are Roman Catholics, 17,500,000 belong to the Coptic and Eastern Churches, and 21,608,509 are Protestants. The handbooks that provide these statistics warn that they should be accepted with caution, since it is almost impossible to take an exact census in many parts of Africa.

None the less, the figure of over 68,000,000 adherents is an imposing one, as Christian missionaries have only been at work in Africa since about the end of the 15th century, when the Portuguese began their explorations and conquests of the Dark Continent.

One of the objectives of these conquistadores was, in their own words, 'the exaltation of the Catholic faith', and priests invariably accompanied the armies and navies of the invaders. They had considerable success in terms of numbers, for we hear that one Jesuit priest on a short tour through the Congo in 1531 baptized 1,500

Nuba wrestlers cover themselves with ashes, partly to reduce slipperiness but also because they believe that the ashes give them extra vigour. The belief that ashes, like fire which created them, carry new life and strength is widespread all over the world

Leni Riefenstahl

Gianni Roghi/Camera Press

Prediction and magic both depend on the belief that things do not happen by accident. The pattern of the crab's movements in the bowl provides an omen of the future

Negroes, using a hose for the purpose. A number of native kings were also persuaded to divorce all their hundreds of wives save one, no doubt with disastrous results to the tribal organization.

But unfortunately for the success of the missionaries, the European slave-traders were simultaneously busy exporting millions of Africans overseas to the New World – an estimated 100,000,000 having been shipped out as slaves between 1441, when the trade began with the arrival of the Portuguese, until 1888 when it officially ended. The black men were not unnaturally puzzled by the assurances on the part of the missionaries that they were children of God on the one hand and slaves of white men on the other. The problem was summed up by a Jesuit priest who worked in the Congo from 1881 to 1887. 'The Negro saw, and compared with his rude intelligence, the teaching and the works', he writes. 'They did not coincide. While the Christian missionary proclaimed the lofty dignity of the child of God by grace, the Christian trader merely counted one more "piece" for his gang.'

However, brave and truly Christian men like Livingstone continued with their work, and they have been followed by thousands of evangelists who have penetrated into every corner of Africa within the last hundred years. Today, through churches, chapels, mission schools and hospitals, the African is in daily contact with Christianity in its more practical form.

Spiritually, Africans tend to adapt Christian doctrine and ritual to their own temperament and way of life. The same process is noticeable in other parts of the world where Negroes meet in Christian worship. Services are more lively, and to some critics smack of far more ancient rites than the Christian ones. Song, dance and religious ecstasy remind us of pagan Africa, showing how deep-seated is the old traditional religion of the forest.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a considerable number of African Christians have broken away from the orthodox European sects to establish churches of their own. At the latest count there are an estimated 4,594 separate sects with a membership of 7,000,000 scattered over 33 states. Perhaps nothing could show more forcefully how deep-rooted the ancient tribal beliefs are than these breakaway churches, for we see in their organization and ritual definite pagan elements – like 'prophets' and 'prophetesses' (medicine-men and witch-doctors), 'healings' (white magic), dreams and visions (divination) and so on.

Further, these African churches are strongly asserting their 'Africanism' as against the European missionaries' 'white' view of the world. The names of some of these new sects clearly indicate their independence from the Western churches.

Thus we have 'the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth and its leader the Prophet Simon Kimbangu' in the Congo; the 'Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim' and the 'Church of the Lord Aladura' in Nigeria; and the 'Christian Marching Church of Central Africa' which is centred in Rhodesia.

Judging from the ritual of these breakaway sects, Christianity in central and southern Africa will soon have little resemblance to established religion as we know it in the West.

Medicine-Men and Witch-Doctors

These religious officials, who are found throughout pagan Africa, have always been popularly presented in the West as bogymen dressed up in absurd masks, feathers and animal skins, who leap about to the accompaniment of drums. They are alleged to deal in pure mumbo-jumbo in order to hoodwink the superstitious savages who are under their spell.

The facts are that these priests fulfil a useful function in all primitive communities. It is true that their skills, methods, medicines and cures do not conform with modern science. But this is not the fault of the medicine-men. Until European doctors arrived on the scene, the Africans had no alternative but to put their trust in those members of their tribe who had some understanding and some control of the physical and mental ills that afflicted the community. In other words, where malign spirits seemed to play so great a part in men's lives, specialists were needed to study cause and effect; and over the centuries there emerged a class of men who appeared to have some skill and some success in the prevention and cure of sickness. This was the origin and the role of the medicine-man.

In some cases, the medicine-man has developed effective cures based on his knowledge of drugs derived from plants. From centuries of experiment and observation, he has developed a pharmacopoeia for such day-to-day needs as inducing vomiting in the case of poison; purgatives for ridding children of worms; sedatives for quietening hysterics; and potions for chest colds, headaches, whooping-cough, dysentery, snake bite, swellings and stings. If his remedies were all totally ineffective, the medicine-man would quickly lose his standing in the community, as a doctor would in ours.

It must be admitted, however, that the medicine-man also relies for his cures on his special brand of hocus-pocus, as an examination of his 'little black bag' would reveal – a fantastic collection of trivia – bits of bone, wooden figures, lumps of old iron, shells, beads, feathers. A great deal of the medicine-man's treatment is psychological and belongs to the sphere of faith healing. Some Western observers of his methods, particularly in the case of neurotics, go so far as to say that he has as much success as our psychiatrists, if not more.

All European observers agree that the African's obsession with witches is the most evil aspect of paganism. Yet the witch-doctor, like the medicine-man, is not at all the ogre of popular imagination. He flourishes in primitive societies because of the belief that both the spirit and the human world are peopled by two opposing forces – the good and the evil. The witch-doctor is on the side of the good, and his chief job is to protect the community from evil spirits and wicked men.

He must always be ready to cope with mysterious events and diseases, like the death of a chieftain, sudden fevers, barrenness in women, sterility in men, mental disturbances and all other calamities believed to be caused by witches. In such cases his standard practice is to 'smell out' the evil-doer by the ancient and barbarous method of 'trial by ordeal'. This usually consists of administering poison either to the suspects or to their animals, the degree of the resultant sickness being considered infallible evidence of guilt. To make sure there is no mistake, a confession is extorted from the accused by torture. The punishment for witches is death.

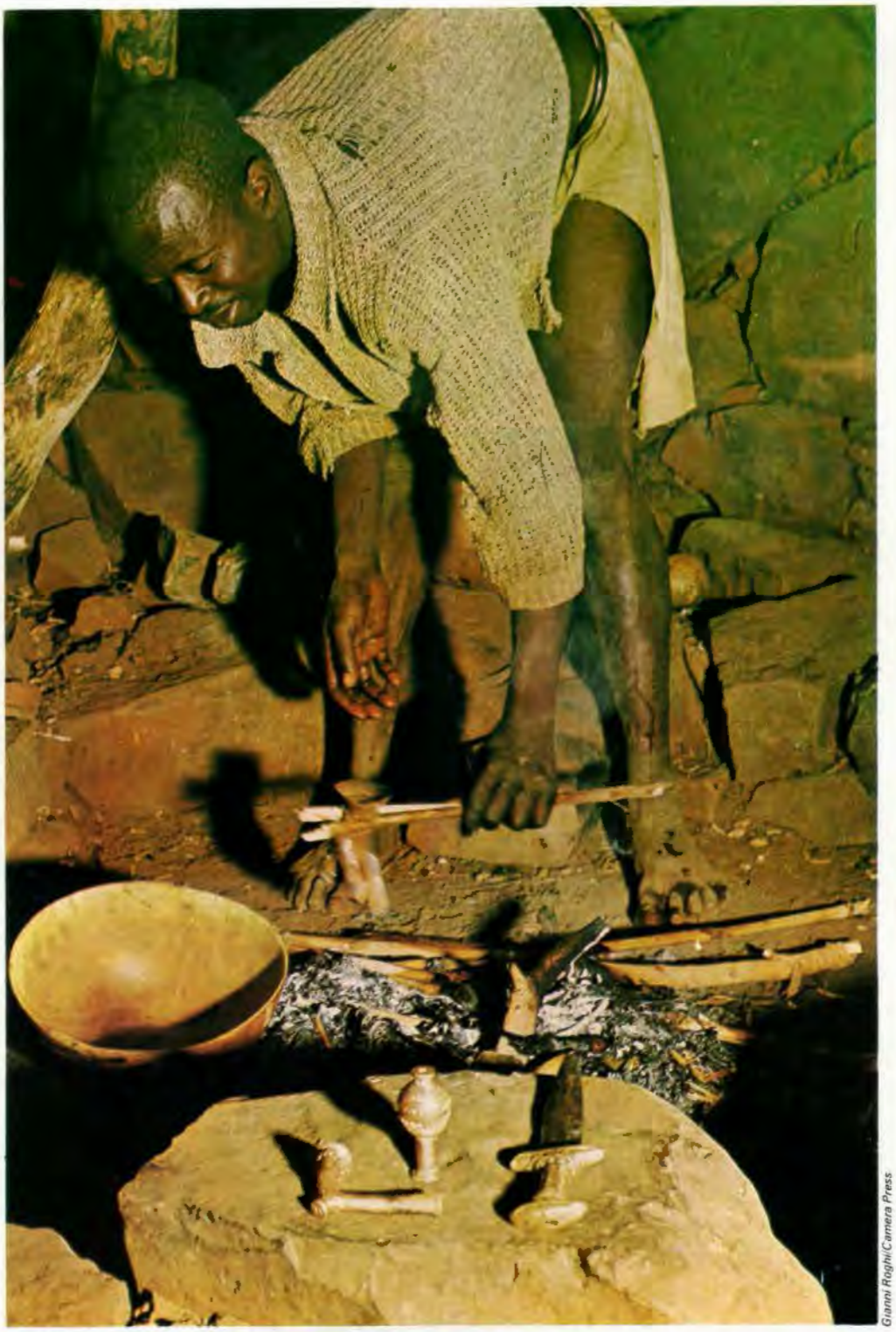
Medicine-men and witch-doctors are not the bogymen and ogres of popular imagination

Less barbarous is the witch-doctor's method of predicting the future. For this purpose he has a basket crammed with odds and ends which he shakes about, selecting the topmost object and interpreting the omens from it. A white bone means happiness and laughter in the village. A piece of iron means death. A wooden figure with a black tuft on its head means the appearance of a European who will cause misfortune. For this ju-ju, the witch-doctor speaks in a falsetto voice in mimicry of a European.

The Rain-Maker

Another important function of the witch-doctor is rain-making, which is a wholly religious activity with the Africans as it is a wholly scientific process with us. Agriculture, the harvest, and hence life itself depend upon rainfall. If the rain does not come, the god must be placated by every means in the witch-doctor's power, and elaborate ceremonies are common throughout central Africa for this purpose. They usually follow a general pattern of singing, dancing and praying with the rain-maker working himself into a state of ecstasy in order to invoke the god. If his efforts are successful, he will become a great hero. If they are not, he may be accused of being a witch masquerading as a witch-doctor, for here again, to the primitive African, calamities like drought are always ascribed to black magic. It can easily be seen that the career of rain-maker is a dangerous one; but it is undertaken by the witch-doctor as a *religious* duty, even when he knows that all he can really do to end a drought is to beg the god to send the rain. African rain-making ceremonies, insofar as they depend upon mystical rites, are not radically different from those found in drought-stricken Christian countries. The liquefaction of the blood of St Januarius at Naples, supposed to be an omen of good rains and a bountiful harvest, is an example.

We see, then, that the witch-doctor, cruel or ridiculous though his methods may



Gianni Roghi/Camera Press

In Africa, as in many other parts of the world, the craft of the smith, the controller of fire, is associated with religion and magic. Other members of the tribe are not allowed to see the tools of this smith in Cameroon, West Africa, who is also a priest

Death, Guilt and Sex
The Zulu in the 19th century:

One superstition had a decided effect on military activity. A warrior who killed an opponent stood to develop a serious ailment, culminating in madness, unless he took immediate preventive action. The first step in the cleansing process was to rip open the fallen foe's abdomen with a single slash of the assegai, in order to allow his spirit to escape. The victorious warrior then had to eat and sleep apart from the other men until his cleansing was completed. This involved travel to his home kraal, but before resuming relations with his wives he had to have intercourse with a woman not of his own kraal; this transferred the disease to her in latent form, and she in turn would pass it on to the next man to have intercourse with her. If no woman was available, the warrior could resort to sodomy. The superstition led to short campaigns, since after every battle most of the victorious army at once decamped for home.

Donald R. Morris *The Washing of the Spears*

Rhythmic drumming and dancing is used to induce states of trance in which spirits take possession of the performers, making a channel of communication between the normal and supernatural worlds
Left **African drummer in trance**
Right **Two Bushman women at a dance to cast out evil spirits**
Far right **Samburu women in Kenya, dancing to induce trance**

Jurgen Schadeberg

Jurgen Schadeberg

seem to us, is attempting in his way to serve the community by upholding the good and by waging war on evil.

Rites: Temples, Altars, Sacrifices

Primitive Africans, not knowing how to build in stone, seldom erect formal temples to their gods. As worshippers of nature, they prefer natural shrines, and the 'sacred grove' is universally venerated as the abode of spirits. A typical sacred grove may contain a pool, serpents, a phallic-shaped stone, or a hut which houses clay figures representing tribal gods and ancestors. To these shrines the worshippers bring their offerings of eggs, cowrie shells, little scraps of cloth and even empty bottles. The idea of the sacred grove is, of course, one of the most ancient and fundamental elements of all primitive religion.

There are many curious customs connected with pregnancy and childbirth among the African tribes, since primitive peoples have never understood the physiological processes involved. The phenomenon of birth is, therefore, a mystical event, surrounded by special rites and taboos.

For instance, we find in central Africa the taboo about seeing a pregnant woman up a tree. In such a case, a man is expected to shoot the unfortunate woman. Elsewhere it is taboo for a pregnant woman to sit on a rock, since this will prolong her labour.

Many women bear their children while working in the fields. Difficult deliveries are abnormal, though European doctors report that Negro women bleed worse the nearer their diet comes to that of the white man. On the occasion of their delivery, African women have no desire for the presence of their husband, since 'the child will be ashamed to be born' if a man is present.

When a girl baby is born, the umbilical cord is cut by a hoe to ensure that the female will be a good field worker. The cord of a boy is cut with an arrow to make him a good hunter.

Marriage is a social contract, without any particular religious associations. Prospective husbands are usually more interested in a woman's fertility than in her virginity, since the African's attitudes towards sex are relatively simple and he has few of the

At the death of an Ashanti queen in 1816 more than 3,500 slaves were murdered in her honour...

William Sargant

obsessions or inhibitions of civilized men in this respect.

The African does not make the sharp distinction between life and death that we do. Death is merely another change in status. The deceased is not 'dead' in our sense. He remains a very real presence in the community, continuing to benefit the living by his wisdom and advice.

His soul returns to that reservoir of power which we have called the Supreme Being. His body passes as a ghost to that 'other world' which is common to all African pagan religions. He must, therefore, be provided for in death as in life. Hence he is buried with solemn rites and interred with the necessities of existence – food, clothes, cooking pots and, in the case of the kings and chiefs in olden days, with wives and slaves who were sacrificed for the occasion.

It is reliably recorded that at the death of an Ashanti queen in 1816 more than 3,500 slaves were murdered in her honour. Cases of human sacrifice on the occasion of a king's death are no longer known in Africa today.

Initiation Ceremonies

The purpose of initiation customs, most of which are extremely severe, is to promote unity, co-operation and conformity to the life and law of the tribe. The most typical of them, and one that is almost universal throughout Africa, is circumcision. Nearly all African boys and large numbers of the girls undergo this mutilation, which is regarded as more of a religious ordeal than a surgical operation. The incidence of death as a result of clumsy methods, dirty knives and post-operative severity is considered as evidence of the religious nature of the rite.

The initiation is directed by the village elders and administered by the medicine-man. The boys, aged between 10 and 17, are sent away from the village into a special camp, which they are not allowed to leave for as long as six months. During that time they are considered to be on probation. In fact, they are treated much as young criminals were treated in the had old days in European prisons, half-starved, whipped for the most trifling offences, crowded into pens, and not allowed to wash until the long

Sudden death from sheer terror is not unknown...where a man discovers an evil fetish in his house

John Bulmer/Camera Press

Eli Weinberg/Camera Press

Left **Animals have been important in the African approach to the supernatural since the animal gods of ancient Egypt. An ant-eater and an elephant appear on these ceremonial staffs held by the orators or spokesmen of native chiefs in Ghana**

Right **Young masked girls in Basutoland taking part in pagan initiation ceremonies. These ordeals are sometimes so severe that they cause serious injury or death**

ordeal is terminated. These boys, once circumcised, swear blood brotherhood with each other. Those who survive the initiation emerge as full adult members of the tribe, with all the rights and privileges of the elders, including the right to marry.

A number of tribes also practise a similar rite on girls, who are taken to a 'camp' where they undergo clitoridectomy as proof, if they survive, that they are adults and entitled to begin new lives as wives and mothers.

Secret Societies

For the African, membership in a secret society begins at the very outset of his initiation into the tribe with the long circumcision ordeal shared with his companions. From the moment he returns from the camp to his village, the young Negro is involved in secret activities of one kind or another for the remainder of his life.

The principal secret societies seem to be directly related to pagan beliefs in spirits, witchcraft and cannibalism. Typical are the West African Leopard Societies whose members are supposed to transform themselves into the most feared animal of the forest. And like the leopard, they claw their victims to death and devour parts of them. European administrators made many attempts to root out 'leopard men', usually unsuccessfully.

Probably the most widespread and socially accepted secret organizations are those of self-appointed vigilantes engaged in the perpetual war against witches. Nigeria is the home of a secret witch-hunting society which has a curious resemblance to the Ku-Klux-Klan of the United States. The witch-hunters wear tall conical head-cloths to mask their human features and descend on villages at night to root out suspected witches.

Governments in Africa do not approve of secret societies but are powerless to suppress them. They are, on the one hand, an integral part of social life; and on the other, a powerful political force. The importance of such secret societies throughout Africa is typified in the Mau Mau organization of the Kikuyu in Kenya.

White and Black Magic

The distinction between white (good) and black (evil) magic is clear throughout Africa. The former is helpful and protective and falls within the sphere of the medicine-man, who prepares healing potions and of the witch-doctor who wages war on witches; the latter is the monopoly of wizards and sorcerers.

White magic tackles the problems of disease, both physical and mental, of accidents and misfortunes, and of natural disasters like drought. It works in the open, in the light of day, and nearly always entails a public ceremony. Black magic is black because the practitioner, man or woman, works in the dark.

Africans have not the slightest doubt that the evil charms, spells and methods of these wicked people are effective and even lethal.

Sudden death from sheer terror is not unknown in cases where a man discovers an evil fetish like a cracked bone secreted by a wizard in his house; or sees a trail of powder laid around his hut; or finds a clay image of himself pinned down with pegs and pierced with thorns in the head and heart. The psychological effect of such methods is not hard to assess. For where such evil objects are being used against a man, obviously the intention is evil and he is therefore in grave danger.

Whatever else has changed on the continent of Africa, the deep-rooted belief in magic, both white and black, has not. And no one can say how many innocent men and women have been terrified, tortured and even murdered as a result of the African's obsession with witchcraft.

Witches: The Continuing Fear

Africans base their fear of witches on the argument that somebody – some person or spirit – has to be responsible for the inexplicable. Why, for instance, should one man be struck down by lightning and another spared – especially if the dead man is a good hunter, a loving husband, a kind father? We call such a happening 'coincidence'. The African calls it witchcraft. For witches, although they are mortal, have supernatural powers which they invariably use to harm, never to benefit, their neighbours. A few of them are men – wizards or warlocks; but the majority are women, though not necessarily the poor old crones of Western tradition. An African witch can be young, because her evil powers and activities have nothing to do with her age or appearance.

In fact, there is not much she can do about her inherent wickedness, though if she is lucky her supernatural powers will be quiescent, and she will be able to live a normal life as a member of her community. But if she is an active witch, she will be bound to use her evil powers until she is caught by the witch-doctor.

A witch invariably practises her activities at night, at which time she leaves her body and flies off, sometimes as a ball of fire, sometimes as a night bird, to the tops of trees or a secret grove, where witches convene for their nocturnal orgies. These orgies take the form of cannibalism, for witches feed on human flesh and are especially partial to the meat of babies and young

Magic, Lightning and Failure

In most cases magic does not attempt the impossible; rain-magicians do not make rain in the dry season, and magic against thieves is made against unknown persons, not named persons. Hence there will be many successes, which are remembered. The failures can be interpreted within the system by invoking other beliefs. Every year before the Trade Winds bring their rains, Zulus call in special magicians to treat their villages against lightning. Most villages are not struck, but if a man's village *is* struck, he will say the magician was bad, his medicines were poor, a taboo was broken, a witch wielded the lightning, or Heaven itself was powerfully determined to strike the village. We reason similarly. If your house, which you have protected with lightning conductors, is nevertheless struck, you may say that the workman was bad, the wires poor, a rule of craft in installation was broken, the charge was too strong. You do not rush to the Royal Society to deny the validity of scientific theory. The total system of beliefs thus allows for a good deal of failure.

Max Gluckman
Custom and Conflict in Africa

Barnaby's Picture Library

Mansell Collection

children. The flesh-eating, however, seems to be regarded by many Africans as a mystical rite, a devouring of the 'soul' of the victim, whence the slow withering away of his actual body. The witch-doctor must, therefore, hasten to identify the witch responsible, before she figuratively consumes a vital organ like the heart, lungs or liver. Consequently, if he catches the witch and proves her guilt by the various magical tests employed (trial by ordeal), a quick confession is extorted from her by torture. She is then summarily disposed of.

These ideas of witches and witchcraft are so deeply implanted in the African mind that not even the impact of urbanization, education and technological changes has affected the basic convictions. All Christian missionaries admit that these beliefs constitute the greatest obstacle to genuine conversion. But before witchcraft can be eradicated from Africa, somebody has to explain to the unsophisticated native why some innocent person should be singled out for misfortune. Neither God nor the good spirits would do such a cruel and unjust thing. Therefore, the act must have been the work of an evil power in the person of a witch or a sorcerer.

Medicines, Charms, Fetishes

African medicines are of two kinds: straightforward potions distilled from plants and roots, prescribed in much the same spirit as Western medicines and drugs are prescribed for simple ailments; and magical potions or powders concocted from weird ingredients and prescribed for more difficult cases.

Examples of the latter potions are the various concoctions used for warding off evil spirits or giving a man protection from his enemies. From northern Nigeria comes this secret formula:

> Cut off the head of a snake and in it plant the seed of the swamp dock. Bury the head in a grave which must be seven days old. Pour water on it for three consecutive nights. When the plant has grown to a height of three or four feet, go again to the graveyard and strip naked. Pull up the swamp dock and use it as a girdle. If anyone attempts to attack you, the girdle will become a snake that will bite your enemy.

We can see from this formula that medicine in Africa is more magic than science. Knowing nothing of bacteriology, the medicine-man relies to a great extent on psychology and faith, hence the hundreds of spells and charms, one for almost every contingency. Barrenness is supposedly cured by all manner of ju-jus; pregnancy safeguarded by others.

Men wear antelope horns, animal teeth, gourds, knives, iron bracelets and leather pouches. Both sexes in primitive Africa are often mutilated on the face or body as part of this all-pervasive charm cult. Mutilations, bizarre to Western eyes, take the form of scars, filing down of teeth, extending the lips or ears with discs or rings, and plugging the nostrils.

The more bizarre of these mutilations are seen less and less as Africans adopt the outward trappings of Western culture, including our clothes. But the individual still puts his trust in his favourite ju-ju which he will continue to wear in secret even when he has left his village in the forest for one of the large modern African cities.

Underlying Myths

Together with all religions, paganism has a collection of myths to explain the Creation of the World and the Fall of Man. While each tribe has its own account, the basic theme is nearly always the same – not unlike the Hebrew version as told in the first chapter of Genesis.

God is said to have made man and woman from clay. These two mortals lived for a time in Paradise, from which they were expelled due to some 'original sin'. A Nigerian legend blames the woman for annoying God by striking the sky with her pounding stick. A Congolese story says that her continual nagging became so intolerable that God lowered her down from heaven in a basket.

Whatever the reason for the expulsion from Paradise, man was alienated from God who, in most African myths, retires into his own domain where he grows older and, it appears, more maudlin. For according to some, his old eyes dribble with tears, which become the rain that falls upon the earth below. According to others, he spends a great deal of his time quarrelling with his wife. Claps of thunder are the Great God shouting.

The underlying notion of nearly all African creation myths seems to be that God and man once lived on earth and conversed together. Then man – or more frequently woman – erred, and the Fall resulted. Ever since then, men have tried to climb back into heaven and have even built towers and ladders for that purpose, but without success. Consequently, when Christian missionaries arrived in Africa with the news that man could be saved through Jesus Christ, the appeal of the new religion was enormous, since no African myth explained how man was to ascend into Paradise.

(See also numerous articles on individual African tribes and ceremonies.)

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: The following are available in most large public libraries. They provide a good introduction to African religion and have extensive bibliographies: Daryll Ford ed., *African Worlds* (International African Institute, 1954); E. B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion* (Orbis, 1973); M. P. Motley, *Africa, Its Empires, Nations and People* (Wayne Saint University Press, 1969); Edwin W. Smith ed., *African Ideas of God* (Friendship Press, 1950); James Wellard, *Lost Worlds of Africa* (Dutton, 1967).

Possessed by Gods and Devils

Above left **Ewe man of Ghana in trance cuts himself without loss of blood, to demonstrate the power of the war god who has possessed him** ***Above right*** **Ubangi medicine-man beating a sick girl to drive out devils. Her back is daubed with herbs and warm water. The belief that all diseases are caused by evil spirits which have taken possession of the patient's body is found all over the world: in Africa 'a great deal of the medicine-man's treatment is psychological and belongs to the sphere of faith healing. Some Western observers of his methods, particularly in the case of neurotics, go so far as to say that he has as much success as our psychiatrists . . .**
Facing page: above **A Nigerian child, and a couple, in trance believing themselves to be possessed by the Holy Ghost**
Below **Zar priestess in Egypt. The priestess goes into trance to expel certain evil spirits, called zars, from her flock**

Afro-American Lore

Black America has created a highly influential folk tradition, in music, song, folk tales and legends: some of this tradition was affected in its early stages by white folkways but there are clear strands of African belief, brought by the slaves.

See NEGROES; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Agriculture

Ploughing, sowing, reaping and other agricultural operations, depending for success on the regularity of Nature and the bounty of the gods, are associated with important rituals and myths.

See numerous articles, including CORN; EARTH; FERTILITY; HARVEST; MOTHER GODDESS; SPRING; VEGETATION GODS.

Agrippa gained a reputation in his own day as a great sorcerer who had dealings with demons but his real importance comes from his book Occult Philosophy, *in which he defended magic as the supreme path to the understanding of the world and God*

AGRIPPA

Brompton Studio

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA von Nettesheim was born at Cologne in 1486 and died in 1535, almost certainly at Grenoble. His books on magic and occultism were widely known and he was both famous and infamous at the courts and universities of western Europe. His real name was Heinrich Cornelis. After the fashion of the time, he latinized Cornelis into Cornelius and awarded himself the bogus noble title of Agrippa von Nettesheim, from the Roman founder of Cologne and the name of a place near Cologne.

Undisciplined, unstable and erratically brilliant, Agrippa was often forced to live by his wits and played at different times the roles of occult scholar and alchemist, faith healer and demonologist, court astrologer, theologian, lawyer and doctor, historian, town orator, financial adviser and secret political agent. He worked now for the Pope and now for his rival the Emperor, switching sides as opportunity offered. He founded secret societies whose members he was not above exploiting. He mixed with royalty at one moment, only to find himself in prison for debt the next.

Agrippa moved restlessly about Europe until his enemies caught him at Grenoble, imprisoned and tortured him, and left him so broken that he only survived his release a matter of weeks. Much of his career is shrouded in mystery and even before his death he had become the centre of stories in which he figured as a master black magician. Goethe drew on some of these stories for the title character of his play *Faust*.

Agrippa's best-known work, *De Occulta Philosophia* (Occult Philosophy) was published in three volumes in 1531 but had been written much earlier, in 1510, possibly during a visit to England. It is based on ideas current at the time: that man is a miniature copy of God, made 'in the image of God' as the Bible says; that the whole universe, taken together, is God: and that man is therefore a miniature copy of the universe. The universe (the macrocosm or 'great world') is built on the model of man (the microcosm or 'small world') and so, like man, it has a soul. (See also MACROCOSM.)

Agrippa says that everything which exists has a 'soul' or spiritual component, part of the total world soul, which shows itself in the magical properties of herbs, metals, stones, animals and other phenomena of Nature.

For instance, the magnet attracts iron, whoever wears the stone called heliotrope becomes invisible, and a sure contraceptive for a woman is to drink mule's urine every month because mules are sterile.

Agrippa considers the relationship between matter and spirit in the light of various arts and sciences, including music, geometry and, especially important, astrology. Then he turns to the human soul and its relationship to the body, as revealed by necromancy – the summoning up of the spirits of the dead – and in the religions of all ages.

Agrippa builds up a system of the universe in which everything is part of a great spiritual whole, which is God. Magic is the way of investigating this system but magic is only for the initiated few, for men like Agrippa himself, members – as most of them were, in fact – of secret societies. He does not press the point fully home but his conclusion that man 'containeth in himself all things which are in God' is well in line with

Below left **Portrait of Agrippa from the frontispiece of his *Occult Philosophy*, in which he defended magic**

Right **Agrippa's reputation as a magician lasted long after his death in 1535. In the mid-19th century he is 'the great Agrippa', who punishes three naughty boys by plunging them into his inkwell, in Heinrich Hoffmann's gruesome *Struwwelpeter*, which remained standard children's reading until quite recently**

Man and God

Agrippa argues that man contains the whole world and God in himself:

Therefore man . . . hath in himself All that is contained in the greater world, so that there remaineth nothing which is not found even truly and really in man himself, and all these things do perform the same duties in him as in the great world: There are in him the four Elements with the most true properties of their nature, and in him an ethereal body, the Chariot of the soul, in proportion corresponding to the Heaven: There are in him the vegetative life of Plants, the senses of animals, of celestial spirits, the Angelical reason and the Divine understanding . . . man, being made another world, doth comprehend all the parts thereof in himself but also doth receive and contain even God himself . . . Therefore man is the most express Image of God, seeing man containeth in himself all things which are in God . . . Whosoever therefore shall know himself, shall know all things in himself; especially, he shall know God, according to whose Image he was made.

Occult Philosophy
(17th century translation)

the magical theory that the magician can make himself God and wield the supreme power of God in the universe.

Agrippa's other main work forms a complete contrast to his first one. Written in 1526, at a time when his fortunes were at a low ebb, and published three years later. *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium*, (The Uncertainty and Vanity of the Sciences and Arts) maintains that on balance the arts and sciences are harmful to man. Through an encyclopedic review of all the sciences and arts known to him, which provides a mine of information and holds up a fascinating mirror to the culture of the times, Agrippa contrasts the disillusion which all this knowledge brings with the spiritual strength gained through the only sure and beneficial thing on which man can rely – the divinely revealed word of God.

Agrippa is rarely an original thinker and his philosophy is a compilation of ideas from many sources. He ransacked the works of writers ancient and modern for ideas which he adapted in a tremendous display of erudition to his own magical system. But second-hand though much of his occult lore is, it is shot through with moments of genuine poetic utterance.

Of his contemporaries, Paracelsus was far the greater genius but Agrippa, with his virtues and vices, provides the best mirror to the social and intellectual ferment of his time.

D. G. DYER

Agrippa as Black Magician

One of the many stories told about Agrippa was that he went out one day, leaving the key of a secret room in the house with his wife. She foolishly lent it to the lodger, a student, who went into the room and found a huge book of spells, which he began to read. After a while he looked up and found a demon standing in front of him, asking why it had been summoned. He gaped at it in horror and the demon strangled him.

Agrippa returned and, fearing a charge of murder, made the demon restore the student to life for a few hours. The young man was seen walking in the street but when the demon's magic wore off, he collapsed.

Blackie & Sons/Michael Holford

'I have rent the sky. I have befouled it . . . I have befouled the waters, pierced open the earth' is the triumphol cry of Ahriman, the power of evil in the old Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism. But his triumph brings its own defeat when evil has eaten up everything it can and has nothing left to destroy but itself.

AHRIMAN

FOR 13 CENTURIES Iran has been a Moslem country but before the Moslem conquest the state religion was Zoroastrianism. Ahriman is the Zoroastrian Devil (not the Moslem one, whose name is Shaitan, more familiar to us as Satan). We first hear of Ahriman in the 7th century BC when he plays a significant part in the *Gathas*, or 'Songs', of Zoroaster, the prophet of ancient Iran and the founder of Zoroastrianism.

Zoroastrianism is generally held to be a classical form of religious dualism; that is to say, it holds that the universe is not the creation of one god or principle but of two – a holy power and an evil one. Some religions identify evil with matter, with what Christians call 'the flesh'; but in Zoroastrianism matter, far from being evil, is the creation of the holy god and is therefore in itself entirely good. Evil is a *spiritual* power, negative and destructive: it is called the 'Lie' and is the principle of disruption and death, the adversary of Truth.

In the *Gathas* there is the basic dualism between Truth and the Lie: these are principles which exist in opposition to each other for all time. Of the origin of the Lie nothing is said. Truth, however, is seen as an aspect of the One True God, or Ahura Mazdah, 'the Wise Lord': twice it is called his 'Son'. If the 'Lie' is the principle of evil, Ahriman is its personification. He is not yet the eternal Adversary of the One God but he *is* the eternal Adversary of an entity called the 'Holy Spirit'. From the beginning the two Spirits face each other in implacable hostility. But evidently there was a beginning, for the Holy Spirit, like God the Son in Christian theology, was born of the Father and it appears that he was also the twin brother of the Evil Spirit:

> In the beginning those two spirits who are the well-endowed (?) twins were known as the one good and the other evil, in thought, word and deed. Between them the wise chose rightly, nut so the fools. And when these Spirits met they established in the beginning life and death that in the end the followers of the Lie should meet with the worst existence, but the followers of Truth with the Best Mind. Of these two Spirits he who was of the Lie chose to do the worst things; but the Most Holy Spirit, clothed in rugged heaven, (chose) Truth as did (all) who sought with zeal to do the pleasure of the Wise Lord by (doing) good works. Between the two the demons did not choose rightly; for as they deliberated delusion overcame them so that they chose the most Evil Mind. Then did they, with one accord, rush headlong unto Fury that they might thereby extinguish the existence of mortal men.

Ahriman

Above **Lion-headed god of Mithraism (a religion which rivalled Christianity). He is believed to be identical with Ahriman, 'the most evil mind', ruler of death and destruction: now in the Vatican Museum**

Right **Ohrmazd, the principle of truth and light, riding on horseback, tramples on Ahriman's snake-covered head. Zoroastrians believed that the perpetual struggle between the two would end in the triumph of Ohrmazd. On the left a Persian king tramples an enemy. From a rock relief at Naqsh-i-Rustem, Iran**

From this passage two facts emerge. First, the two Spirits are twins and since Ahura Mazdah, the Wise Lord, is the father of the Holier, it follows that he must also be the father of the Evil One. Secondly the Evil Spirit, though he is 'of the Lie' must *choose* evil: he is not evil absolutely but becomes evil by choice. Once the choice is made, however, he is no more capable of change than is Satan in the Christian tradition: he is forever committed to the Lie.

Declaration of War

Zoroastrianism is above all the religion of free will. Not only is Ahriman, the Evil Spirit, evil by choice and the Holy Spirit holy by choice, but the One Supreme God, Ahura Mazdah, has also to commit himself – has to choose between Truth and the Lie.

Ahura Mazdah chooses Truth. 'Holy and good Right-mindedness do we choose: let it be ours.' This is a declaration of war on the Lie and those who have chosen the Lie. On both sides this is an irrevocable decision and the battle must he fought to the finish.

In the *Gathas*, then, which are now generally admitted to be the work of the prophet Zoroaster himself, the supreme God aligns himself with the Holy Spirit against the power of the Lie. The Evil Spirit, on the other hand, chooses to lead the powers of the Lie against the Holy Spirit and therefore against the Supreme God. But though he is the sworn enemy of the Holy Spirit, he is also his twin and must therefore also be the son of his father, the 'Wise Lord'. Would it not, then, be more true to say that the Zoroastrianism of Zoroaster is not a dualism at all but a form of monotheism (belief in one god), at least in the sense that the Wise Lord is the First Cause of all things? In later times the Zoroastrians became divided on this issue.

A purely dualist solution was favoured by the fact that in the course of time the Holy Spirit was simply identified with the Wise Lord. The name Ahura Mazdah took on its later form Ohrmazd, and Ohrmazd and Ahriman then appear as independent principles eternally separate and distinct, eternally opposed. This is the form of Zoroastrianism that we meet with in the Sassanian period, from the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD, when the Persian Empire was revived under the house of Sasan and Zoroastrianism became the official religion of the Empire.

By this time Ahriman had grown in stature: he had become an independent monarch who held undisputed sway in his own kingdom of darkness and death. But the myth of the two eternal twins lingered on because the problem of evil is at the very centre of Zoroastrianism.

Our experience of life seems to show that if God is all-powerful, he cannot be absolutely good – because he lets evil exist; and conversely, if he is absolutely good, he cannot be all-powerful – because he evidently cannot prevent evil. A cut-and-dried dualism absolves God from any responsibility for evil, however indirect, but he necessarily pays for his goodness at the price of his omnipotence. But if the old legend of the primordial twins was retained, and since the Wise Lord and the Holy Spirit were now identified in the single person of Ohrmazd, could it not be that these twin poles of good and evil themselves derived their being from a neutral principle which was the original Unity?

Such a principle some of the Zoroastrian theologians thought they had found in Infinite Time, which was also Infinite Space, and which they called by its ancient name Zurvan. The myth was therefore modified to suit this new theology. It has totally disappeared from the Zoroastrian texts of the period but it is preserved in Christian and other sources and is certainly authentic. The myth which has come down to us is a popular presentation of a far more subtle theological position, which seeks at all costs to preserve both the original Unity and the absolute goodness of God.

Zurvan and the Birth of Evil

The myth says that the great god Zurvan existed before there was anything else. He offered sacrifice so that he might have a son but after a long time he began to wonder whether his hopes were vain. As soon as this thought occurred to him, Ohrmazd and

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The Evil Spirit must choose evil: he is not evil absolutely but becomes evil by choice

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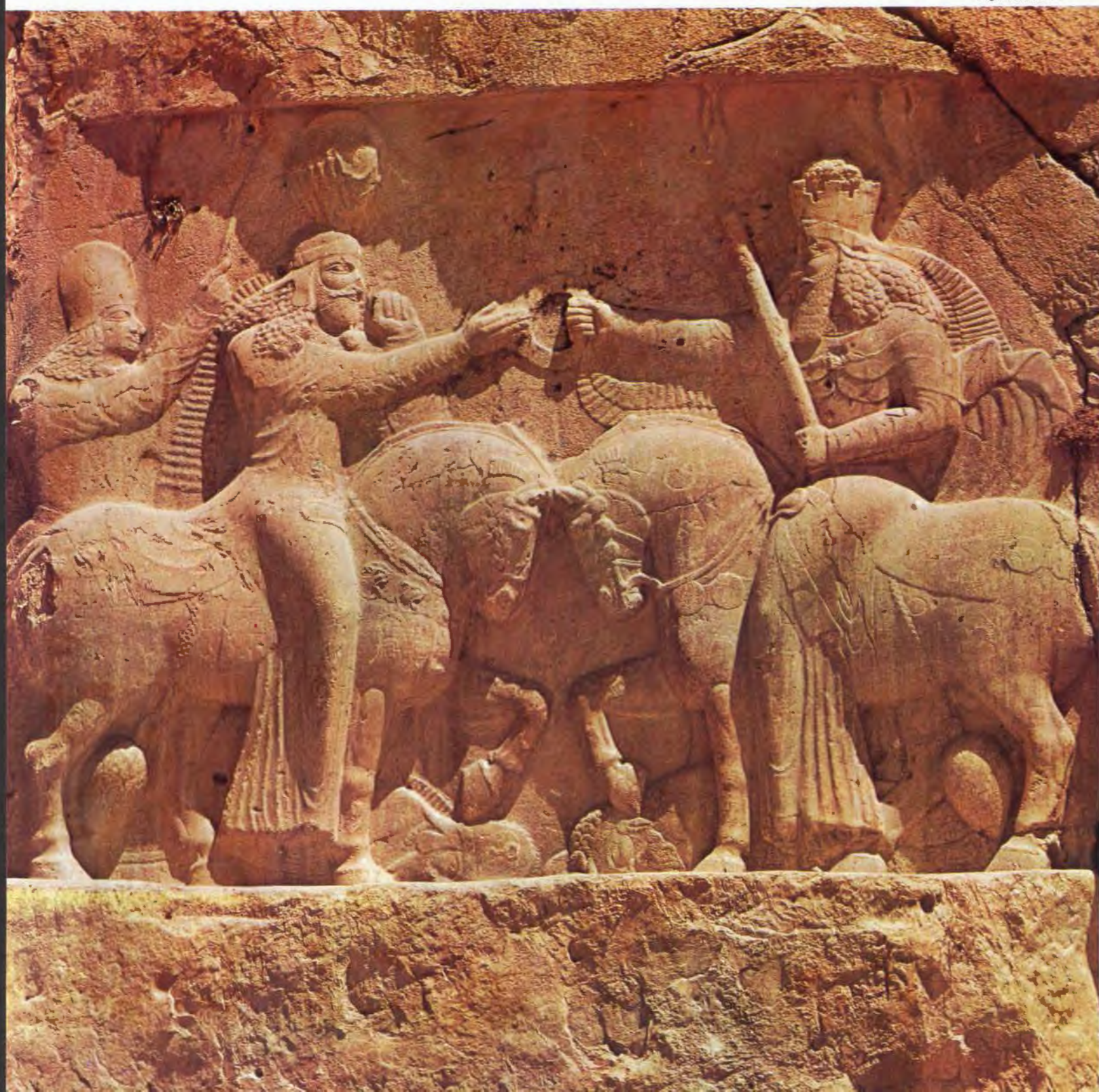


Ahriman were conceived – Ohrmazd because of Zurvan's sacrifice and Ahriman because of his doubt. Zurvan decided that whichever of them came to him first, he would make king.

> When Ahriman heard this he ripped the womb open, emerged and advanced towards his father. Zurvan, seeing him, asked 'who are you?' And he replied: 'I am your son, Ohrmazd.' And Zurvan said: 'My son is light and fragrant, but you are dark and stinking.' And he wept most bitterly. And as they were talking together, Ohrmazd was born in his turn, light and fragrant; and Zurvan, seeing him, knew that it was his son Ohrmazd for whom he had offered sacrifice . . . And he said (to him): 'Up till now it is I who have offered sacrifice for you; from now you shall offer sacrifice for me.' But . . . Ahriman drew near and said to him; 'Did you not vow that whichever of your sons should come to you first, to him you would give the Kingdom?' And Zurvan said to him: 'O false and wicked one, the Kingdom shall be granted you for nine thousand years, but Ohrmazd I have made a King above you, and after nine thousand years he will reign and do everything according to his good pleasure.' And Ohrmazd created the heavens and the earth and all things that are beautiful and good; but Ahriman created the demons and all that is evil and perverse. Ohrmazd created riches, Ahriman poverty.

Ahriman is born of Zurvan's doubt and rules the world, but only for nine thousand years. This partial solution of the problem of evil which made the Evil One 'prince of this world', if only for a relatively short time, did not in the end satisfy the majority of Zoroastrians. The myth of the primordial twins was set aside and the universe was neatly divided into two separate halves, light and darkness, good and evil.

In the beginning, then, 'the Light was above and the darkness beneath; and between them was the void – Ohrmazd in the light and Ahriman in the darkness. Ohrmazd knew of the existence of Ahriman and of his

Ahriman in an Islamic miniature, as an old man who offers the fatal fruit to the first human beings. The Zoroastrians borrowed the story of Adam and Eve from the Bible

University Library, Edinburgh

coming to do battle: Ahriman did not know of the existence and light of Ohrmazd.' He soon found out. Roaming around in his dismal kingdom, he reached the upper confines of his realm and saw a ray of light. He longed to get hold of it and to destroy it. Ohrmazd in his goodness offered him peace, which the Evil One summarily rejected, and leapt forward to attack the light. Ohrmazd repelled him, 'laid him low by the pure power of the Law and hurled him back into the darkness.' There he lay unconscious for over three thousand years.

Having foiled this first onslaught, Ohrmazd realized that he must create a bastion between himself and Ahriman, the eternal aggressor. For this purpose he first created a spiritual universe which is an 'ideal' model of the material universe, then the material world itself.

The ideal world was to remain forever free from the pestilential attacks of Ahriman, and at its summit were the souls of the human race. When Ahriman's attack on the material world took place, it was Ohrmazd's plan that these souls should acquire bodies and go to live in the world 'to do battle with Ahriman and the Lie'. But Ohrmazd demands the free co-operation of man, he does not and will not violate the freedom of man's will.

> He took counsel with the consciousness and pre-existent souls of men and infused omniscient wisdom into them saying: 'Which seems more profitable to you, whether that I should fashion you forth in material form and that you should strive incarnate with the Lie and destroy it, aud that we shonld resurrect you at the end, whole and immortal, and re-create you in material form, and that you should eternally be immortal, unageing, and without enemies; or that you should eternally be preserved from the Aggressor?' And the pre-existent souls of men saw by that omniscient wisdom that they would suffer evil from the Lie and Ahriman in the material world, but because at the end they would be resurrected free from the enmity of the Aggressor, whole and immortal for ever and ever, they agreed to go into the material world.

For the defeat and destruction of Ahriman, then, man's co-operation is essential. Man must become mortal and accept bodily existence in order in the end to annihilate the force of destruction, death and all evil.

Gayomart & the Lone-Created Bull

Once the souls have consented to this, Ohrmazd creates the material world: he creates the sky, water, plants, the animals in the shape of the 'lone-created Bull', and finally the first man, Gayomart 'shining like the sun'. All is now in readiness and Ahriman prepares his attack. It is devastatingly successful. Each of Ohrmazd's creations he defiles and corrupts; he slays the Bull and mortally wounds Gayomart. His triumph seems to be complete and he cries out in savage exultation:

> Perfect is my victory: for I have rent the sky, I have befouled it with murk and darkness, I have made it my stronghold. I have befouled the waters, pierced open the earth and befouled it with darkness. I have dried up the plants and brought death to the Bull, sickness to Gayomart . . . I have seized the Kingdom. On the side of Ohrmazd none remains to do battle except only man; and man isolated and alone, what can he do?

But Gayomart's seed had fallen into the earth as he died and from his seed sprang up a rhubarb plant which split in two to form the first human couple: the human race was therefore saved to continue the long arduous battle against evil which it had already freely accepted.

Moreover, the material universe was bounded by the sky which Ahriman had rent open, forgetting that it was made of 'shining metal that is the substance of steel'. He has entered into his Kingdom but the Kingdom is his prison.

This does not matter so long as he and the vices he has brought in his train can prey upon the creatures of Ohrmazd; but in the end evil which is of its nature destructive, finding that Ohrmazd's creation is slowly slipping from its grasp, will be forced to disrupt and destroy itself.

Ahriman and the demons in the world are like wild beasts that have broken into a garden, but once they have wreaked all the destruction they can, they find that they have been trapped. They make frantic efforts to get out and in doing so they use their own strength against themselves and ensure their own destruction.

The End of the Lie

Ahriman's end comes about when Ohrmazd's creation has become so spiritualized as to escape his power. Pandemonium then breaks out; demon attacks demon, each destroying the other until only Ahriman and Az, the demon of death, greed and lust, are left.

Az turns on Ahriman and threatens to swallow him, and Ahriman is forced to appeal to his eternal enemy to deliver him from his former ally. Ohrmazd will not relent. The Spirit of Obedience destroys the threatening demon Az and Ohrmazd himself lays Ahriman low.

Does this mean that Ahriman is finally annihilated? According to popular mythology, yes: 'he is dragged outside the sky and has his head cut off.' But according to more sophisticated accounts, he cannot be annihilated because he is the *substance* of evil and, according to the particular brand of philosophy the Zoroastrians had adopted, a substance by definition cannot be destroyed.

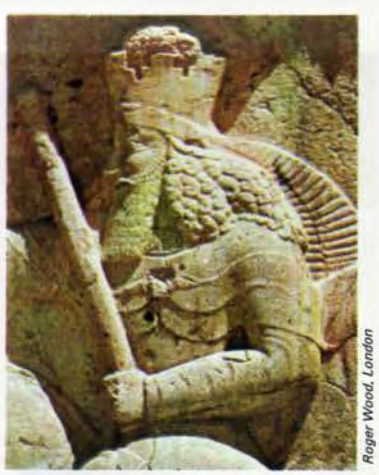
The technical term used means literally to 'put out of action': 'he is thrown out of the sky through the hole by which he rushed in; and at that hole he is laid low and knocked unconscious so that he will never arise again . . . He will be forever powerless and, as it were, slain and henceforth neither he nor his creation will exist.' With his destruction a new heaven and a new earth are created, all men are resurrected, and those who were confined to hell are released from their torments, and all enjoy perpetual bliss for evermore in the company of Ohrmazd, the Wise Lord.

While he still exists as a conscious being, Ahriman is intensely active in this world. He is the Adversary of both God and man, the Destroyer, the author of death, a 'liar and a deceiver'. His aim is to deceive men as to the true nature of God, and so to bring them to hate Ohrmazd and to love himself. By these means he entices them into hell of which he is the overlord. In fact he is not the equal of Ohrmazd and never really stands a chance because he 'comes to know things too late'. So he is defeated as much by his own stupidity as by Ohrmazd's wisdom and power.

(See also DEVIL; OHRMAZD; MANICHEANS; ZOROASTRIANISM; ZURVAN.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

FURTHER READING: R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961).



Roger Wood, London

Ahura Mazdah

A name of Ohrmazd, the good god of Zoroastrian religion, twin brother and opponent of the evil god Ahriman, who will eventually be overthrown by Ohrmazd after ruling the world for nine thousand years.

See AHRIMAN; OHRMAZD.

Roger Wood, London

Air

Connected with 'life' and 'soul' in mythology, mysticism and magic, because living creatures cannot survive without it: connected with Maat, the Egyptian goddess of truth, and with the card called the Fool in the Tarot pack: control of breathing is an important technique in yoga.

See BREATH.

Rampant sexuality, torrents of filthy language and extraordinary bodily contortions are nowadays associated with hysteria and other mental disorders. In the 17th century they were put down to possession by devils

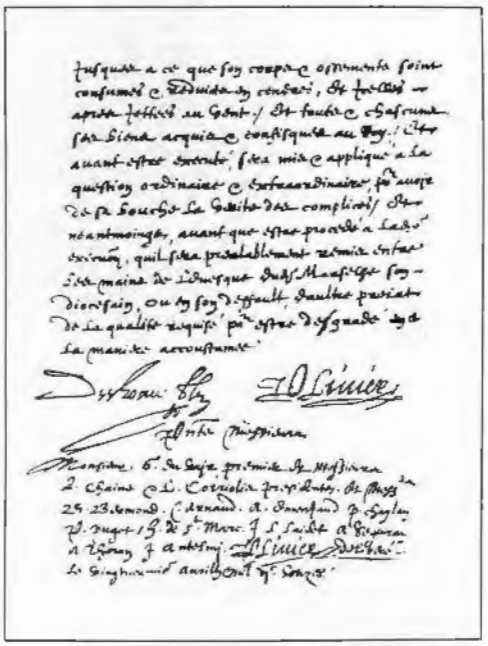
AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS

IN THE FIRST 25 YEARS of the 17th century the witchcraft delusion in France reached its high peak of intensity. A characteristic feature of the period was the prevalence of cases of demonic possession, involving priests and nuns. Demons were believed to be attacking the human race, obsessing the minds and controlling the bodies of victims into whom they had entered through the bodily orifices. In a reign of terror against every form of demonism, the Inquisitors attempted to withstand what they believed to be a mass assault levelled at Church and society by the Devil, working through his agents – sorcerers and witches.

In the year 1609 signs of diabolical invasion appeared at Aix-en-Provence in southern France, the victim being Madeleine de Demandolx de la Palud, a girl who had a history of emotional instability. In 1605 she had been admitted to the Ursuline convent at Aix but had been returned to the care of her parents, a well-established Provencal family, to recover from the attacks of depression which afflicted her when away from home. Unfortunately she fell under the influence of Father Louis Gaufridi, parish priest of Accoules in Marseilles and a friend of the family.

Like so many clerics of that age Gaufridi was far from ascetic in his way of life. Several women were known to be infatuated with him, and his services as a confessor were in particular demand among the wives of the citizens. The disparity between the ages of Gaufridi and Madeleine (he was 34, she was 13) was apparently no barrier to the priest. His visits became ever more frequent and he was often closeted alone with her for long periods. Inevitably, perhaps, she fell violently in love with him, and possibly he with her.

The story soon reached the ears of Catherine de Gaumer, head of the Ursuline convent at Marseilles, who warned the child's mother of the dangers to which her daughter was exposed. A hint was conveyed to the priest Gaufridi that he should cease his attentions at once.



Above **Last page of the judgement against Louis Gaufridi, with the signatures of those who condemned him for bewitching the nuns of Aix. He was brutally tortured before being dragged on a hurdle through the streets and strangled. His body was then burned**

Below **Convents were often the scene of psychological disturbances which were put down to the action of devils. From *La Religieuse*, a film about a young girl who is forced into a convent against her will, and becomes the prey of demonic forces**

In the following year Madeleine was admitted to the Ursuline convent at Marseilles under the direct control of Mother de Gaumer, to whom she revealed the full story of her relations with Gaufridi, which she said involved sexual intercourse since her childhood.

Hordes of Demons

It was considered wise to move Madeleine out of danger of any further association with the priest by transferring her to the distant convent at Aix. The affair might have been forgotten had not Madeleine, two years later at the age of 16, suddenly fallen victim to what in contemporary eyes was unmistakably demonic possession. Her body became contorted, hordes of demons surrounded her and in a fit of rage she destroyed a crucifix.

Such states of mind were not uncommon in convents and were usually cleared up very quickly by exorcism – a 17th century equivalent of modern psychiatric treatment. This case proved more obstinate, however, as the Jesuit Father Romillon discovered when his attempts to drive out the possessing demons failed.

Exorcism was an extremely complex ritual, requiring infinite patience and skill. It involved a violent verbal assault on the devil in possession, as well as prayers and the liberal use of holy water. The patient was often made to breathe in noxious fumes, to accelerate the departure of the devil from so inhospitable a habitation.

Father Gaufridi was questioned about his sexual relations with Madeleine and insisted that his association with her had been proper in every respect. Further exorcisms, however, brought from the mouth of the possessed girl damning accusations that Gaufridi was a devil worshipper and had copulated with her since she was 13. The situation at the convent was now getting out of hand, for three more nuns were possessed by devils; and by the end of the year the number had risen to eight. The most severely afflicted of these was Sister Louise Capeau whose ravings and contortions were, if anything, even more hideous than Madeleine's.

Reduced to desperation, Father Romillon sought the aid of one of the most famous witch-hunters of the age, the Grand Inquisitor Sebastian Michaelis. The Flemish exorcist, Father Domptius, was also called in and managed to produce from the mouth of Louise the harsh, blaspheming howls of three terrifying devils, by name Grésil, Sonnillon and Vérin, each of whom was high in the hierarchy of hell.

It was Vérin who accused Gaufridi of causing Madeleine's condition, revealing to the amazed exorcist that no less than 6666 ferocious evil spirits were now in possession of her body, the most eminent of these being the devils Leviathan, Baalberith, Asmodeus, Astaroth and, the mighty Beelzebub, second only in authority and infamy to Lucifer himself.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Engraving from an edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, showing the types of torture used by the Inquisition. The man hanging from the pulley is suffering the 'strappado', intended to dislocate his shoulders; a more extreme form of this was 'squassation'

Cannibalism and Perversion

Father Gaufridi was summoned from his parish and ordered to exorcize Louise Capeau. No expert in this highly specialized treatment, he failed miserably and heard himself denounced as a sorcerer and cannibal by the very demons he was struggling to expel. Typical of their denunciations was: 'Louis Gaufridi outside makes believe that he is a saint; however, inside he is full of iniquity. He feigns to abstain from flesh; nevertheless he makes himself drunk with the flesh of little children . . . whom he has eaten, the others whom he has suffocated and afterwards dug up all cry before God for vengeance upon crimes so execrable.' Gaufridi's reply to the dangerous charge of sorcery was not only curious but also damning, for he said: 'If I were a witch I would certainly give my soul to a thousand devils.' This statement was regarded as a confession of guilt by the Inquisitors, who flung Gaufridi into prison.

Meanwhile, the possessed nun Louise attempted to outdo Madeleine by loudly insisting that Gaufridi had committed every imaginable sexual perversion. The alarmed authorities immediately ordered the priest's rooms to be searched for magical objects or books but were surprised and disappointed to discover nothing of an incriminating nature. They learnt from those who knew him that he was well regarded in his parish. They released him and let him return to his parish. Here he clamoured for the vindication of his good name, and demanded that his accusers be punished.

Throughout this period the nun Madeleine never ceased to be wracked in body and spirit by the tormenting devils and the convent was in complete disarray as the result of her ravings, obscenities and accusations against Gaufridi. Overwhelmed by the 6666 furious demons within her, she sometimes neighed like a horse, while her bones creaked and groaned like a tree bending before a mighty storm.

The case of the possessed nuns of Aix was now rocking France. On the one side stood Gaufridi, insisting upon vindication, and on the other the Grand Inquisitor Michaelis: victor of a thousand battles with Satan, determined to bring Gaufridi to trial. The result was predictable. In 1611 the case came before a court in Aix and although he could not at first have realized it, the priest's doom was sealed.

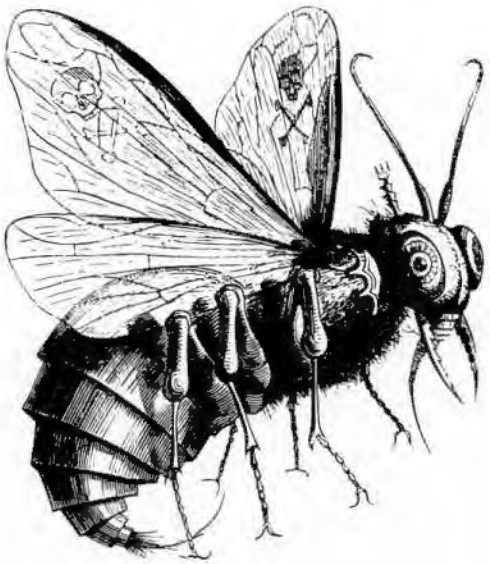
The behaviour in court of the two nuns, Madeleine and Louise, was by 17th century standards typical of an advanced state of diabolical possession. Madeleine in particular was often demented, shrieking, crying and alternating between violent denunciations of Gaufridi as a devil worshipper and wizard, and the complete retraction of the same accusations. Then she would return to the charge of cannibalism. 'Much he cares for your salt fish or your eggs. He eats good smoking flesh of little children which is brought to him invisibly from the synagogue' (the meeting of the witches). Then she would expose her passion for him by pleading for a single word of kindness from his lips. Sometimes she would be overcome by the wildest lust and it became painfully obvious to those in court that the girl was experiencing an orgasm before their eyes, her convulsions 'representing the sexual act with violent movements of the lower part of her body'.

In a frenzied reaction against life itself she twice attempted suicide. During the course of the trial it was discovered that she possessed 'Devil's marks' on her body, the secret brands by which Satan recognized his own. These marks later vanished in a mysterious fashion.

The Pact with Satan

Gaufridi was brought into court shattered by the mental anguish and physical tortures he had suffered in prison. His body had been shaved and searched for Devil's marks, three of which had been found as further evidence against him. To complete his misery, a pact with Satan signed in his own blood was produced in court, under the terms of which all women were to be made subject to his will.

It was common knowledge that the pact with the Devil required the surrender of the body and soul of a witch or sorcerer at the end of 20 years. But with true legalistic formality it was conceded that should the pact be written on virgin parchment or pre-



Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies, one of the demons which possessed Madeleine de Demandolx; from the *Dictionnaire Infernal*

pared outside the magic circle, the agreement was null and void. Such contracts between a sorcerer and Satan were sometimes written, and invariably signed, in blood. In return for his soul the sorcerer would receive some specific gift or power. There is no evidence that the agreement afforded any protection against the Inquisition, however, for Satan only rarely intervened on behalf of his dupes. The production of such a document in court was usually sufficient to secure a verdict of guilty from the witch-fearing judges of the 17th century.

Gaufridi's Confession

Gaufridi's confession, which he had signed in prison, reflected the morbid state of mind of his accusers rather than that of the accused. He said he had eaten babies and celebrated a black mass at the sabbath, where he held the rank of Prince of the Synagogue, sprinkling the witches with consecrated wine, and he had exercised his magical power over women. 'More than a thousand persons have been poisoned by the irresistible attraction of my breath which filled them with passion. The Lady of la Palud, the mother of Madeleine, was fascinated like so many others. But Madeleine was taken with an unreasoned love and abandoned herself to me both in the Sabbath and outside the Sabbath . . . I was marked at the Sabbath of my contentment and I had Madeleine marked on her head, on her belly, on her legs, on her thighs, on her feet . . .'

In court Gaufridi strenuously repudiated the confession, declaring it to consist of fantasies in the minds of the Inquisitors, extorted from him by torture. But protest was useless; the signed confession and the pact were sufficient to damn any man in the eyes of 17th century Christians, and Gaufridi was found guilty and condemned to suffer death by fire. He was to be burned slowly over a pyre of bushes instead of logs, so that his anguish would be prolonged. His tormentors gave him no peace, and even after his sentence he was pestered with demands for the names of his accomplices.

Exquisite Torments

On 20 April his spirit weakened and his mind gave way to despair. He cried out to his tormentors that since nobody would listen to the truth he might as well admit everything. On 30 April 1611, with head and feet bare and with a rope around his neck, he went through the official mummery of asking pardon of God. He was handed over to the torturers again to undergo certain exquisite torments that had been reserved for him – the strappado and squassation.

The strappado was an instrument used to interrogate criminals, to obtain confessions and the names of accomplices. With arms tied behind his back, the prisoner was hoisted to the ceiling by means of a pulley, while at the same time heavy weights were tied to his feet in order to dislocate his shoulders. During this ordeal it was customary to apply the thumbscrews. This was regarded as a preparatory torture for the major torment that was to succeed it – squassation. This was an extreme form of strappado. The prisoner was hoisted to the ceiling with huge weights attached to his limbs, which were pulled from their sockets. The prisoner was allowed to hang for a time, when the rope was released, the fall being arrested with a fearful jerk a few inches from the floor, the shock of which was calculated to disjoint every bone in the body. Four applications of squassation were regarded as equivalent to a sentence of death.

After the torture, the shattered body of the still living Gaufridi was dragged on a hurdle through the streets for five hours, escorted by archers. Arriving at the place of execution, the priest was granted the unexpected mercy of strangulation before the fire was lit, thus escaping the ultimate horror of the original sentence. His lifeless body was then burned to ashes.

As if by the influence of a magic charm, the nun Madeleine suddenly became free of her tormenting devils, thus disposing of any doubts that may have remained about Gaufridi's guilt. Madeleine's fellow demoniac, Louise Capeau, was less fortunate, for she was harassed by demons to the end of her days, while the devil mania itself spread to the nuns of other convents before it finally subsided. Madeleine, however, never escaped from the watchful eyes of the Inquisition. Once the taint of diabolic possession had become associated with an individual, no one really knew what infamies the devils might venture on next.

A generation after Gaufridi's execution, the year 1642 saw her defending herself with difficulty against a charge of witchcraft. Ten years later she was prosecuted again and this time, incriminated by the Devil's marks which had reappeared on her body, was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; she was released, at an advanced age, into the custody of a relative. Still under the eye of the Inquisition, Madeleine de Demandolx found freedom at last in death, in 1670 at the age of 77.

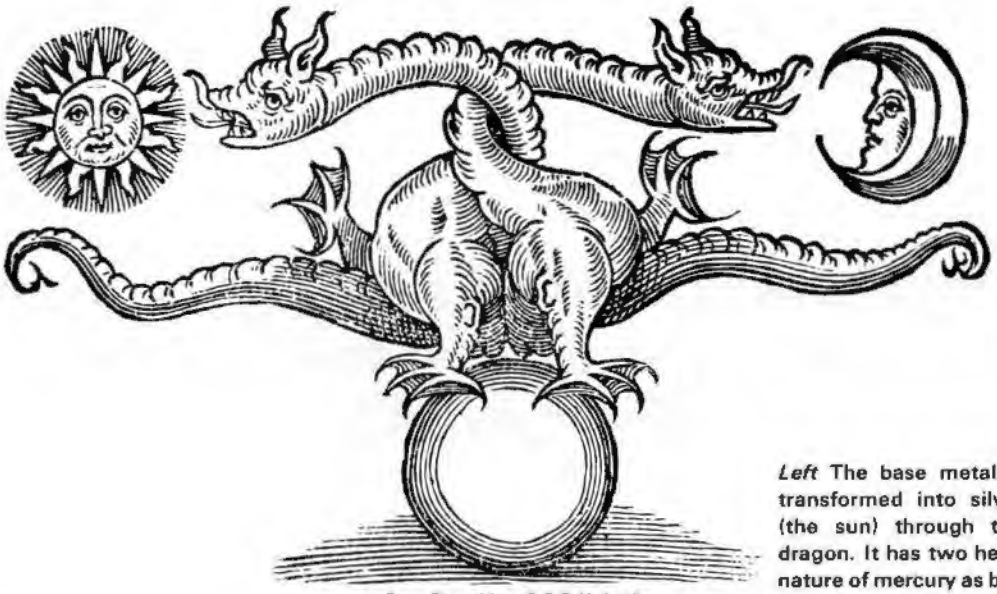
ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Louis Coulange, *The Life of the Devil* (Knopf, 1929); Eric Maple, *The Domain of Devils* (Barnes, 1966); F. R. Johnson, *Witches and Demons in History and Folklore* (Johnson NC, 1978).

Split Personality

The phenomena of *involuntary* possession are usually associated with pathological states of body and mind, such as are today diagnosed as epilepsy and hysteria. The main contributing factor, however, is a belief in the ubiquity of spirits, and in their power to enter into and take possession of human beings. The predisposing cause in all these cases is therefore psychical. Students of psychology are now familiar with the way in which within the one personality psychic states may arise which have all the appearance of separate personalities. The character assumed by these apparent alien personalities is largely determined by the nature of the current popular belief. Sometimes they are supposed to be animals. In Japan, for instance, possession by supposed foxes is prevalent. In other cases the possessing entities are held to be the spirits of departed ancestors or other relatives. In yet other instances the possessing entity is regarded as demonic.

Edward Langton
Essentials of Demonology



Ronan Picture Library E. P. Goldschmidt

Left **The base metal (the globe of the earth) transformed into silver (the moon) and gold (the sun) through the use of mercury, the dragon. It has two heads because of the double nature of mercury as both a metal and a liquid**

ALCHEMY

The alchemists moved along two tracks, which to most of us will never meet – one mystical and the other chemical. But to the adepts these were one track, for they believed that through the processes of the art they could both perfect themselves as human beings and perfect metals by turning them into gold

IN MOST BOOKS OF REFERENCE, even today, alchemy is described as a false science, based on the pretence that gold could be made from other metals, and it is still often referred to as nothing more than a fraudulent or inefficient forerunner of modern chemistry. These are misguided descriptions, which fail to take account of modern advances in the study of the philosophical and psychological side of the subject.

Alchemy was more an art than a science and its most important and most interesting aim was the spiritual transformation of the alchemist himself. For the mystical alchemists, the art involved both a chemical process and a spiritual process, both the turning of lead into gold and the transmutation of the alchemist from a state of 'leaden' earthly impurity to one of 'golden' spiritual perfection.

The Alchemical Labyrinth

Whether we are ever likely to gain a full understanding of the details of alchemical operations is doubtful, because of the obscure language of so many of the old texts. This obscurity of language and symbolism was deliberate. The medieval alchemist was uncomfortably close to heresy because, for the redemption of his soul from earthly bondage, he relied on his own efforts combined with devout and direct appeals to God, rather than on an approach to the divine through the conventional medium of the Church.

This spiritual position near the brink of heresy was one reason for the cryptic mystery-mongering of alchemical writers. They also recognized that the forces of nature involved in the 'great work' could be dangerous: violent explosions were a frequent accompaniment of alchemical operations. But above all they were determined to keep powerful mysteries of material and spiritual progress out of the hands of the greedy and the unworthy. As Thomas Norton of Bristol puts it in the 15th century, in his poem called *Ordinal of Alchemy*:

> This art must ever secret be,
> The cause whereof is this, as ye may see;
> If one evil man had thereof all his will,
> All Christian peace he might easily spill,
> And with his pride he might pull down
> Rightful kings and princes of renown.

To put off the incompetent and unworthy, alchemical writers veiled their directions behind a tangled code of symbols – the dragon, the king, the king's son, the grey wolf, the black crow, the lepers, the lion and the unicorn, the slaughter of the innocents, the royal marriage, the Ethiopian, the tree, the peacock, the bath and many more. An unusually simple example is that the spherical glass vessel used in many alchemical processes was called 'the philosophers' egg', not only because of its shape but because the Philosophers' Stone – which turns all things to gold – would emerge from the vessel just as, in an old legend, the universe was hatched from an egg.

The 'great work' laid a heavy burden on those who attempted it. It involved hours of prayer for God's grace and help, and the reading of almost impossibly difficult books – a task which had to be repeated many times until, slowly and painfully, their hidden meaning loomed up through the mists of symbolism. It meant months and years of toil over stills and furnaces, difficult processes being repeated over and over again with inadequate equipment. The experimenter wound his way through a labyrinth of false starts, misleading side tracks, dead ends, false hopes, disappointments, disasters and delays. Whether we believe that any of the alchemists ever reached the heart of the maze or not, those who devoted themselves body and soul to the art cannot all be dismissed as fools or swindlers.

Gold and the Stone

The aim of alchemy – on the physical plane at least – was to take a raw material (usually but not always a metal) and through long and complicated chemical processes to manufacture the Philosophers' Stone. The Stone had in itself the power of perfecting matter and when a small quantity of it was mixed with other materials, it would turn them into gold.

Many of the descriptions of the Stone do not suggest a real object at all. It is made of

The Mysterious Stone

Comments by alchemists on the Stone which turns all things to gold:

From a man and a woman make a circle, then a square, then a triangle, finally a circle, and you will obtain the Philosopher's Stone.

Michael Maier

But when we marry the crowned king with the red daughter, she will conceive a son in the gentle fire, and shall nourish him through our fire . . . Then is he transformed, and his tincture (tinge of colour) remains red as flesh. Our son of royal birth takes his tincture from the fire, and death, darkness and the waters flee away. The dragon shuns the light of the sun, and our dead son shall live. The king comes forth from the fire and rejoices in the marriage.

Tractatus aureus

Take the serpent and place it in the chariot with four wheels and let it be turned about on the earth until it is immersed in the depths of the sea, and nothing more is visible but the blackest Dead Sea. . . . and when the vapour is precipitated like rain . . . you should bring the chariot from water to dry land, and then you have placed the four wheels on the chariot, and will obtain the result if you will advance further to the Red Sea, running without running, moving without motion.

Tractatus Aristotelis ad Alexandrum Magnum

Out of other things thou will never make the One, until thou hast first become One thyself.

Gerhard Dorn

'I answered that it looked yellow, like gold. Yes, he said, it is supposed to be gold. I took it out and gold it was.'

fire and water; it is a stone but not a stone; it comes from God but does not come from God; it grows from flesh and blood, and yet is made of animal, vegetable and mineral; unknown and yet known to everyone, it is generally considered worthless and yet supremely valuable.

These descriptions sometimes refer to the Stone, the final step in the 'great work', and sometimes to the raw material with which the alchemist was supposed to begin, the first step in his operations. This curious meeting of the opposite ends of the work was symbolized by a snake swallowing its own tail, called the Ouroboros. From the spiritual point of view, the snake probably meant that alchemy begins and ends with man: the alchemist himself is the raw material of the work and he is also its final product – himself perfected. *Ars totum requirit hominem*, the alchemists said, 'the art requires the whole man'.

Despite the rhapsodical and paradoxical descriptions of the Stone, which relate to the alchemist himself – the true 'egg' in which the spiritual Stone was hatched – many alchemists evidently believed that the Philosophers' Stone did exist as a real physical object, that it did in reality turn things to gold, and that some great masters of the art had succeeded in manufacturing it.

One adept who was believed to possess the Stone was Paracelsus, the famous 16th century doctor and theorist. An account in a book by Michael Neander published at Leipzig in 1586 *(Orbis Terrae Partium Succinta Explicatio)* describes how Paracelsus heated a pound of mercury in a crucible. When it began to smoke, a piece of wax containing grains of the 'red lion' – the Stone in the form of red powder – was dropped into the crucible. The crucible was covered. Half an hour later, Paracelsus asked what the mixture in the crucible looked like. 'I answered that it looked yellow, like gold. Yes, he said, it is supposed to be gold. I took it out and gold it was. He said: Take it to the goldsmith who lives above the pharmacy and tell him to pay me for it. I did as he said and the goldsmith weighed it. Its weight was a pound minus half an ounce. And he went for money. . . .'

As late as 1782 there was a tremendous sensation in England when James Price, chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society, mixed a white powder with fifty times its own weight of mercury, added borax and nitre, and heated the mixture in a crucible, stirring it with an iron rod. The result was an ingot of genuine silver. When the same operation was repeated with a red powder, the result was genuine gold. However, when the Royal Society insisted that the experiments be repeated before observers chosen by the Society, Price reluctantly agreed and then committed suicide by drinking prussic acid, collapsing and dying before the observers' eyes. It was assumed that he had introduced silver or gold into the crucible through a hollow stirring rod.

Various medals and coins were struck to commemorate supposedly successful transmutations. There is the great medal of 'alchemical gold' dated 1677, for instance, struck for the Emperor Leopold I by the alchemist Wenceslaus von Reinburg; a medal of 1609, showing alchemical symbols for mercury and gold; another struck by the Baron Pfenninger with the inscription *Aurea progenies – plumbo prognata parente*, 'golden progeny begotten by lead as the father', which shows Saturn, the symbol for lead, with the head of the rayed sun (gold); and there are many others.

The King of Metals

The sources of the alchemical path were many. It became a necessary way of thought once man had mastered the strange process of applying heat to certain kinds of rock and thereby changing its nature into dross and shining metal. Then came the other wonder of mixing two metals in a fluid state and so producing a new metallic alloy which had different characteristics from either of its parents. Some metals tarnished and could be restored to health by washing with various vegetable juices. All could be purified by a renewed passage through the fire, by melting and burning away the dross, or by heating and beating until the impurities flaked away as swarf. The king of metals was the first known because it had no alloys in nature but was found in glistening golden grains in stream-beds. Even when it was melted like other metals, it remained itself, brilliant, sun-like gold. It did not corrode with time, it could not be dissolved by any ordinary acid, it was irresistibly beautiful and adorned all who wore it . . . It became symbolic of royal power as simply and as naturally as it was linked with the sun. . .

C. A. Burland *The Arts of the Alchemists*

Did Alchemy Work?

Few modern scientists would accept the truth of the alchemists' claim: that metals could be turned into gold through the use of a secret substance, the Philosophers' Stone, and with little more equipment than a furnace and a crucible. Most investigators have concluded that the alchemists were either fraudulent or mistaken. That many swindles were perpetrated is beyond any doubt but no serious historian of alchemy has ever tried to explain away *all* the evidence as the product of deliberate deception.

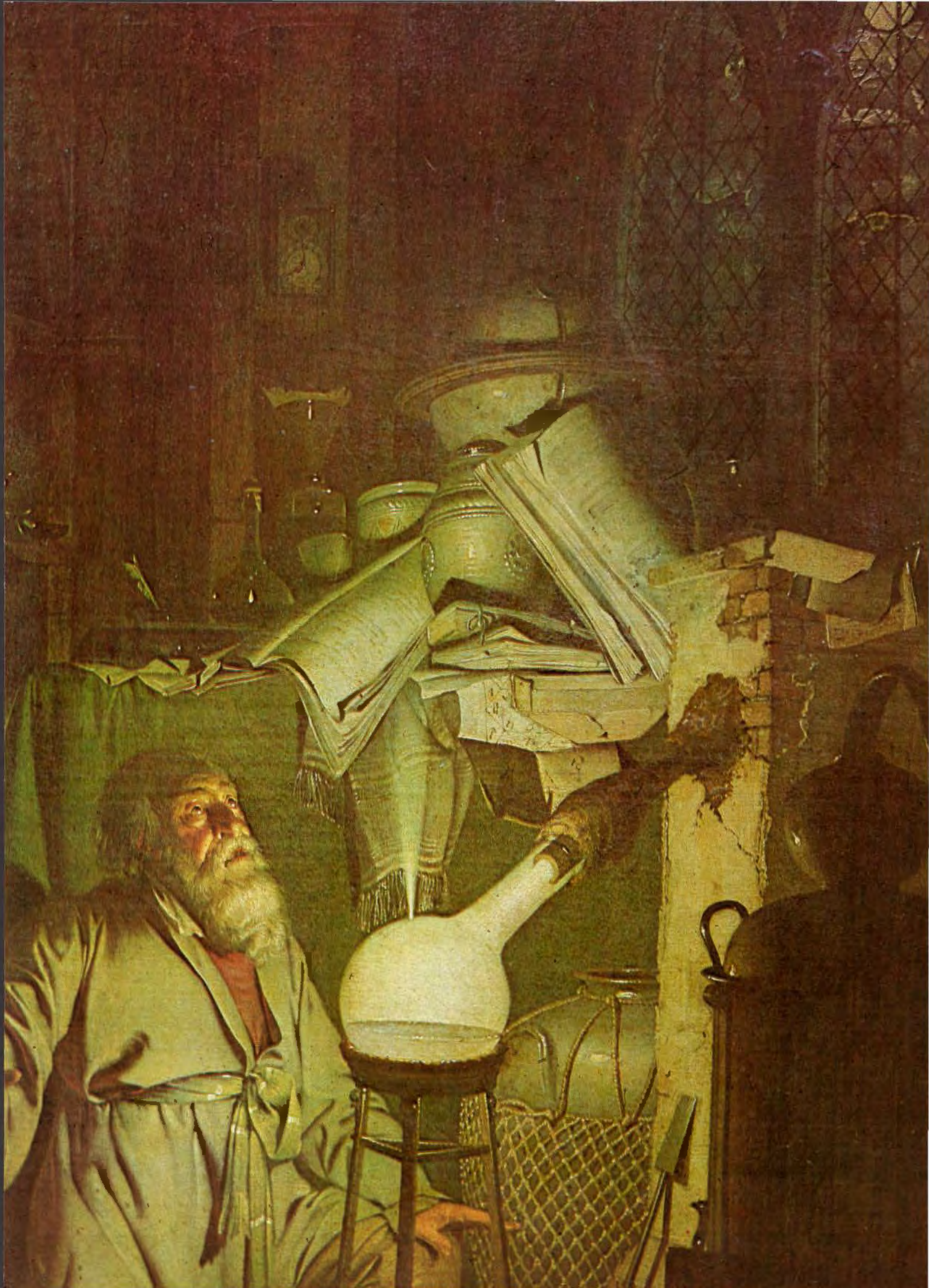
Mercury was a material used constantly in alchemy and it has been suggested that vapours from heated mercury may have caused hallucinations. Alternatively, A. Siggel and other historians of chemistry have pointed out that the alchemists lacked the knowledge of the modern chemist and that for them any yellowish material was virtually the same as gold. In many cases they may have succeeded in giving some other metal a golden colour and then concluded that they had made gold. Alchemical manufacture of silver has been explained by reference to arsenic compounds like orpiment and realgar which together with copper form 'silvery' alloys. Siggel has suggested that the yellow brass which, before zinc was known as a metal, was sometimes made in the Middle Ages by treating calamine and copper, could be taken for the alchemists' 'gold'.

The main objection to these theories is that alchemical gold was apparently quite frequently tested and accepted by professional goldsmiths. Brass might perhaps have been mistaken for gold in antiquity but probably not in Europe of the 15th and 16th centuries.

One powerful argument against the validity of alchemy is the fact that its supposedly successful practitioners do not seem to have become wealthy men. When Paracelsus made his will – signed on 24 September 1541, three days before his death – he made no mention of gold and silver. All he had to leave was books and ordinary personal property, and his most valuable single possession was a silver

Alchemists made important contributions to the study of chemistry. In this 18th century painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, an alchemist named Hennig Brand is shown discovering phosphorus

Derby Museum and Art Gallery



Top left The theme of rebirth was important in alchemical theory: the spiritual rebirth of the alchemist after the killing of his old self, and the rebirth of the base metal after the alchemist had 'killed' it by stripping it of its qualities. The Bath of Rebirth, from the 16th century *Splendor Solis* of Salomon Trismosin *Top right* Another illustration from *Splendor Solis*: the black figure, which has been killed, is rising from the waters of rebirth and beginning to glow with the blood-red hue of new life *Bottom left* Symbols of the materials used in the work, from *Cabala Mineralis*, in the British Museum *Bottom right* More symbols of death and resurrection, from an alchemical MS in the British Museum

To a basis in practical metallurgy, mystical and magical doctrines were added...

chalice decorated with lions' heads and weighing little more than 4 ounces. If Paracelsus could make gold in large quantities, he seems to have been strangely uninterested in doing so.

The 'Parachemical' Explanation

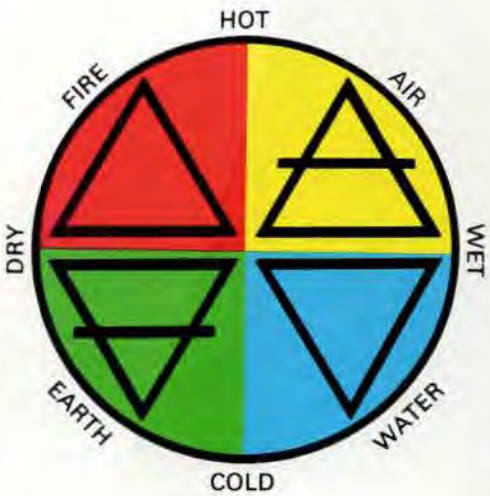
The following suggestion is put forward tentatively for what it may be worth as a possible interpretation of evidence which is confused and inadequate.

Investigators in the field of parapsychology have suggested that there are cases of 'psychokinesis' or 'telekinesis' in which a person causes changes in his physical surroundings – by causing objects to move about, for instance – without physical action on his part and apparently by means of some 'psychic' force. It is possible – though certainly not proven – that the long and intense concentration of an alchemist on his materials and operations, and the physically exhausting toil of the work, might induce an unusual condition of mind in which the alchemist was able to cause abnormal chemical reactions in his materials. These might be termed 'parachemical' reactions, possibly accounting for the alchemist's success.

If this were so, we would expect it to occur only very rarely and for very short periods of time – which would explain the inability of successful adepts to grow rich by making large quantities of gold.

On this hypothesis, the 'grace of God' for which alchemists devoutly prayed and without which, they said, the work could not succeed, would be interpreted as the rare and fleeting psychic ability to cause parachemical change in the alchemist's materials – an ability which in a pious age seemed to be something coming from outside the alchemist himself, as a gift from God. The reading and re-reading of mysterious books, rich in symbolism, might create a suitable mental atmosphere for this ability to show itself, a condition of mental exhaustion and 'headiness', a kind of drunkenness of the imagination. And the same mental condition might also be contributed to by the exhaustion produced by long concentration on the chemical operations themselves, performed over and over again.

In this light, it is not surprising that so many alchemical writers insist that guidance from a 'master', a successful adept, was essential for success. The adept's experience would enable him to guide and train the experimenter in the development and control of parachemical ability.



First Matter and the Elements

Western alchemy originated, so far as we know, in Egypt in the last centuries before Christ. In the East there is another old nucleus of alchemical doctrine in China, connected with Taoist philosophy and magic. The highest stage of enlightenment there was designated by the symbol of the Golden Flower, and there seem to be parallels and even connections with occidental alchemy. But our knowledge of Chinese alchemy is still very limited.

In Egypt, part of the basis of early alchemy came from the metalworking techniques of the ancient world. Craftsmen had reached a high level of competence in producing silver and copper alloys which looked like gold, so much so that a large number of technical terms had to be invented for the numerous different varieties of 'gold' which were available. A papyrus found at Thebes in Egypt, written in Greek c 300 AD, contains recipes for changing the colour of a metal so as to make it resemble gold or silver, and claims that the results will successfully pass all the tests for natural gold or silver. (This emphasis on changing the colour of a metal supports the theory of Siggel and others, mentioned earlier, at least so far as the early history of alchemy is concerned.)

To this basis in practical metallurgy, mystical and magical doctrines were added, often put out under the name of Hermes Trismegistus, 'thrice-greatest Hermes' – hence the later references to alchemy as the 'hermetic' art or philosophy. Some of the essential alchemical doctrines had been formulated before 400 AD.

It was accepted that all things are made of a primeval substance called 'first matter', the substance from which the world was originally made; with the implication that an experimenter could strip a material of its ephemeral qualities – such as colour, size, shape, weight – and get back to the irreducible element of first matter. He could then add to first matter the qualities needed to make it into gold. And there was the parallel implication that the alchemist could do the same thing in the inner reaches of his own being.

The prevailing theory of the elements, which was worked out by Greek philosophers and reigned almost unchallenged until the 17th century, also gave the alchemists support for their belief that the 'base' metals – lead, copper, tin, iron – could be changed into the precious metals, silver and gold. The theory was that all things are made of differing mixtures of four basic elements – fire, air, earth and water. These elements were the first stage in the 'growth' or development of first matter, and each combined two of the four primary qualities – hot, cold, dry, wet. Fire was hot and dry, earth was dry and cold, and so on (see diagram).

Now, if one of the qualities in an element alters, it changes into a different element. If water (cold and wet) is heated, it changes into air (hot and wet) in giving off vapour. If a burning fire (hot and dry) dies down and loses its heat, it changes into earth (cold and dry) in turning into ashes.

The theory suggested that if alchemists altered the elemental structure of, say, lead, they could turn it into gold. The theory also determined the pattern of their chemical processes, which consisted mainly of heating and cooling, drying and liquefying.

Metals and Planets

Another theory, which was the basis of much alchemical symbolism, connected the seven principal metals with the seven planets known to the ancient world. The two precious metals were assigned to the two most

GOLD	☉ SUN
SILVER	☽ MOON
MERCURY	☿ MERCURY
COPPER	♀ VENUS
IRON	♂ MARS
TIN	♃ JUPITER
LEAD	♄ SATURN

'valuable' heavenly bodies, those which gave light – the sun (gold) and the moon (silver) – and the remaining metals to the other planets (see diagram).

It was assumed that metals developed in the earth, each under the influence of its own planet; that metals had a natural tendency to 'grow' or develop into the noblest and most perfect of their kind – gold; but that owing to the accidents of Nature the metals reached this desirable end all too seldom. The alchemist, theoretically, could take the 'lowest' of metals, lead, and develop or 'ripen' it through the stages of the planetary chain until it became gold. A medieval work called *The Investigation of Perfection* says of alchemy (in a 17th century translation) that 'This *Science* treats of the *Imperfect Bodies* of *Minerals*, and teacheth how to perfect them'. And again there was the parallel with the successive stages in the 'perfecting' of the imperfect alchemist himself.

The Sex of Metals

To the alchemists, metals and minerals were 'alive'. They grew in the belly of the earth and were endowed with sex. A German handbook on metals, printed in 1505, says, 'It is to be noted that for the growth or generation of a metal ore there must be a begetter and some subject capable of receiving the generative action' and that 'in the union of mercury and sulphur in the ore, the sulphur behaves like the male seed and the mercury like the female seed in the conception and birth of a child.'

Underlying these various theories, from very early times, was the belief in the unity of the universe: that all the varied phenomena of the world are parts of one harmonious whole, and that just as a man's body contains his soul or spirit, so the 'body' or matter of the world is permeated by a universal 'spirit'. Alchemists came to believe that the universal spirit could be compressed or concentrated into the marvellous Philosophers' Stone, and that in this form it would 'ripen' or 'perfect' the other metals and turn them to gold.

In the alembic are the three stages of the work, shown by the black, white and red birds; the body, soul and spirit in man; mercury, sulphur and salt in chemistry; the elements which have to be united to produce the Philosophers' Stone

British Museum

Magical Initiation in Alchemy

They (the alchemists) all begin with a substance in nature which is described as existing almost everywhere, and as universally esteemed of no value. The alchemist is in all cases to take this substance and subject it to a series of operations. By so doing, he obtains his product. This product, however named or described, is always a substance which represents the truth or perfection of the original 'First Matter'; and its qualities are invariably such as pertain to a living being, not to an inanimate mass. In a word, the alchemist is to take a dead thing, impure, valueless, and powerless, and transform it into a live thing, active, invaluable and thaumaturgic.

. . . The First Matter is a man, that is to say, a perishable parasite, bred of the earth's crust, crawling irritably upon it for a span, and at last returning to the dirt whence he sprang. The process of initiation consists in removing his impurities, and finding in his true self an immortal intelligence to whom matter is no more than the means of manifestation. The initiate is eternally individual; he is ineffable, incorruptible, immune from everything. He possesses infinite wisdom and infinite power in himself.

Aleister Crowley
Magick in Theory and Practice

The Alchemy of the Mind

In this century psychologists, notably C. G. Jung, have begun to pay serious attention to the symbolism of alchemy. Jung's interpretations are often not much easier to understand than the obscure texts of the old alchemists themselves but his investigations focused attention on 'esoteric' alchemy, on the symbolism as opposed to the chemistry, on the alchemist's attempt to perfect himself as contrasted with his attempt to make gold. Though it must be remembered that the two sides of alchemy are like two faces of one coin and cannot properly be separated. The search for the Stone was *both* a search for gold and a search for spiritual perfection.

Jung's approach to alchemy was based on his discovery of alchemical symbolism in the dreams of some of his patients – patients who themselves knew nothing of alchemy at all.

This suggested that the symbols – the snakes, dragons, lions and wolves, the springs and fountains, the trees, castles and the rest – were not chosen deliberately by mystery-mongering authors out to impress the gullible or cheat the greedy, but that they correspond to ageless realities of the human mind.

Jung believed that the 'great work' of alchemy was very close to what he called 'individuation', the shaping of an integrated personality. The symbols are a secret language of the mind, which stand for psychological processes and stages in the 'work'. The alchemist, he explains in *Psychology and Alchemy*, was really exploring not the nature of matter but his own unconscious mind.

> The real nature of matter was unknown to the alchemist: he knew it only in hints. Inasmuch as he tried to explore it he projected the unconscious into the darkness of matter in order to illuminate it. In order to explain the mystery of matter he projected yet another mystery – namely his own psychic background – into what was to be explained: *Obscurum per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius!* This procedure was not, of course, intentional; it was an involuntary occurrence.

The Latin words in this quotation are an alchemical maxim, meaning that the obscure is to be explained by the more obscure, the unknown by the more unknown.

Another favourite maxim of the alchemists was *Solve et coagula*, 'dissolve and combine'. *Alchimia vera* ('The True Alchemy'), a German work of 1604, says that the whole secret of the art is hidden in these three words. To 'dissolve' refers to the old belief that the characteristics of a substance could be stripped away from it, to reduce it to first matter. To 'combine' meant to build up a new substance by adding desirable characteristics to the first matter.

Psychologically, to dissolve means to break down and destroy surface mental characteristics and attitudes which surround and obscure a man's basic self. To combine is to build up a new integrated personality.

Death and Resurrection

The details of alchemical processes are extremely complicated and vary from one alchemical textbook to another. But, broadly speaking, the first steps in the 'great work' were concerned with the 'dissolution', the reduction of the material in the alchemist's vessel to first matter. The parallel in the mind is the destruction of attitudes, ideas, complexes, of the whole outer shell of the personality.

In alchemy this process ended with what was called *nigredo*, the 'black' stage, when the material in the vessel had been broken down to first matter and was said to be 'dead' and 'putrefying'; when the alchemist himself had subjected his own personality to the fiery furnace of self-questioning and self-doubt, had gone down into his own inner abyss, had apparently destroyed himself and lay 'dead', 'rotting' in the slime which was all that was left of his ideals, his hopes and ambitions, his defences against the outer world.

The nigredo corresponds to the mock death found in many rituals of initiation. Among some primitive tribes, a magician's initiation involves a sleep of 'death' from which he is 'reborn'. In the *Golden Ass* of Aupuleius, written in the 2nd century AD, the hero describes his initiation into the mysteries of the goddess Isis and says that he approached the very gates of death but was allowed to return. The alchemists often drew a parallel between the nigredo and the Crucifixion, the death from which Christ rose to new life. (See also INITIATION.)

The remaining processes of the work constituted the 'combination' or 'putting together again' after the 'dissolution' had been completed. After the nigredo came the rebirth, which is described in an alchemical version of the mass written by Nicholas Melchior, astrologer to the king of Hungary in the 16th century. The 'Ethiopian' or black man is the alchemist's material, black in the 'death' of the nigredo.

> Then will appear in the bottom of the vessel the mighty Ethiopian, burned, calcined, bleached, altogether dead and lifeless. He asks to be buried, to be sprinkled with his own moisture and slowly calcined till he shall arise in glowing form from the fierce fire. . . . Behold a wondrous restoration or renewal of the Ethiopian!

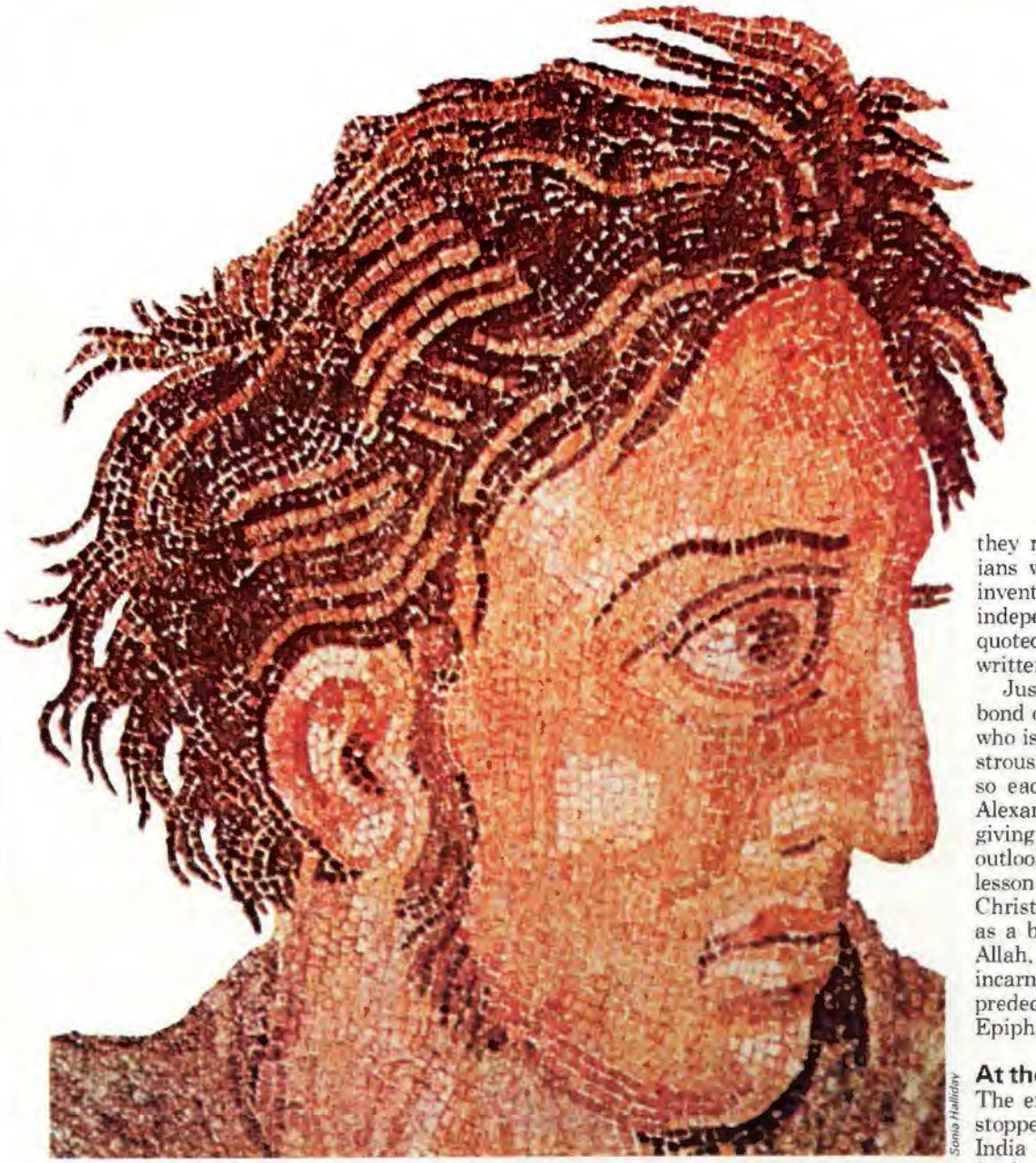
This is the 'bath of rebirth', in which a new inspiration, a new life, revives the alchemist after the 'death' of the nigredo. From this point on, often through a long succession of complicated processes, the alchemist built up the Stone, or the perfected personality, which, to quote Nicholas Melchior again, is 'the treasure of treasures, the supreme philosophical potion, the divine secret of the ancients. Blessed is he that finds such a thing'.

We know now that the alchemist's dream of turning base metals to gold is theoretically possible, though the cost of doing so would make the operation distinctly uneconomic. Modern nuclear physics has, in a sense, reached the alchemical goal but has totally neglected its non-material aim of perfecting the soul. When we consider its fell possibilities we may feel that perhaps Thomas Norton of Bristol was not so naive after all. 'This art must ever secret be. . . . If one evil man had thereof all his will, all Christian peace he might easily spill.'

(See also ELIXIR OF LIFE; MERCURY: PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

HANS BIEDERMANN

FURTHER READING: Excellent introductory books are C. A. Burland, *The Arts of the Alchemists* (Macmillan, 1968); Charles Graves, *Alchemist* (Ace Books, 1981) and J. Read, *Prelude to Chemistry: An Outline of Alchemy* (MIT Press). For C. G. Jung's theories, see his *Psychology and Alchemy* (Princeton University Press, 1968) and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (Princeton University Press, 1970). For the experiences of a modern alchemist, see A. Coudert, *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (Wildwood House, 1980). See also Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (Allenson, 1956).



Sonia Halliday

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

One of his eyes was black and the other yellow; he went to the end of the earth and the bottom of the sea, and flew through the air; he encountered all kinds of monsters and wonders

ALEXANDER THE GREAT led his triumphant armies from Greece to the Nile and on into India, created a vast empire which no one afterwards could hold together, and died before he was 33. Deified in his own lifetime – he was recognized as a god by the Greek cities of the League of Corinth – his astonishing career caught the imagination of succeeding generations. Four hundred years after his death at Babylon in 323 BC, the Emperor Trajan, one of the ablest of Roman generals and rulers, went to ruined Babylon and offered sacrifice to Alexander's spirit in the room where he had died.

Legendary stories clustered round Alexander's memory like limpets on a rock and were retold for hundreds of years with alterations, additions and shifts of emphasis. They spread across Europe and Asia, as far west as Ireland and as far east as Java.

The core of the later romance of Alexander was a book written in Greek at Alexandria after 200 BC by an unknown writer now called pseudo-Callisthenes (because the book was originally wrongly attributed to a real Callisthenes). The original is lost but four revisions of it have survived. It combined accurate historical material with legend. Later authors expanded it and translated it into other languages, with liberal additions in which they mingled material from reliable historians with imaginative fictions of their own invention and fables which were originally independent of Alexander. They often quoted letters supposedly, but not really, written by Alexander or to him.

Just as many of us now cannot feel any bond of sympathy with a character in fiction who is too far from our own likeness – a monstrous Martian or Venusian, for instance – so each different audience for the tales of Alexander made him one of themselves by giving him their own setting, nationality and outlook. As a result, he appears as an object lesson in the workings of fate, or as a saintly Christian, though he lived long before Christ; as a benefactor of the Jews, an emissary of Allah, a noble medieval knight, or even as an incarnation of the Devil because he was a predecessor of the 'Antichrist' Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see ANTICHRIST).

At the World's End

The extent of Alexander's travels – he only stopped, reluctantly, when he had invaded India because his soldiers refused to go any further east – inspired stories about him reaching the end of the earth, where paradise, the fountain of life and other marvels were to be found.

Some of these stories were told to draw a moral. A Jewish tale in the Babylonian Talmud (before 500 AD) says that Alexander reached the earthly paradise but was turned back at the gate because 'only the just can enter here'. But he was given a mysterious ball as a present, which turned out to be an eyeball. The eye, like Alexander himself, is restlessly insatiable and tries to encompass the whole earth and yet only a handful of dust dropped on it, blinds it and blots it out; the dust, of course, being death to which all men come, even the most successful.

This story was expanded later and appears in the 12th century in the German *Lay of Alexander* and the Latin *King Alexander's Journey to Paradise*. Alexander and his companions voyaged up the Ganges (or the Euphrates) till they came to the wall

Alexander's career of conquest seemed so superhuman that he became the hero of many legends *Left* Detail from a portrait in mosaic, found at Pompeii and now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples *Right* Alexander examines the talking tree

Bodleian Library

British Museum

British Museum

Over the castle's gateway was written, 'No man may go in to the greatest and least treasure of the world until he has passed the night of fear'

of a great city. There was no opening in the wall and they sailed on beside it for three days before they found a small window. When an old man came to the window, Alexander's lieutenants imperiously demanded tribute from the city. The old man sent them away, telling them that the city was the earthly paradise, the home of the blessed, but gave them a stone of mystic meaning as a present for Alexander.

Alexander took the stone back to Babylon, where various wise men puzzled their wits to find its meaning. At last an aged Jew demonstrated with scales that the stone was heavier than any quantity of gold but if a little dust was sprinkled on it, it was lighter than a feather. The stone stood for Alexander himself. The greatest of monarchs in life, a feather would outweigh his value once dusty death had claimed him.

There is the same motif in the story of how, on the way to the Wells of Life, Alexander came to a lake in which was an island, and on the island a castle and over the castle's gateway was written, 'No man may go in to the greatest and least treasure of the world until he has passed the night of fear.' Alexander and his men spent the night beating off the terrifying and dangerous attacks of tigers and dragons, monstrous crabs, lions the size of bulls, mice the size of foxes, foul bats and an army of wild men with six hands each.

In the morning the castle's drawbridge was lowered. They went in and saw a niche in the wall, above which was written, 'The greatest treasure and the least.' In the niche was a rich cushion and on it a stone shaped like an egg. When they looked into the stone they saw everything that a man could desire in this world, and when they weighed it against gold and silver it was heavier than all their treasure. But when a pinch of dust was put in the other pan of the scales, it outweighed the stone.

Within a hundred years of his death Alexander was already said to have gone to the world's end looking for the water of life which conferred immortality – like other heroes. What was originally a separate story about 'the green one', who drank the water of life and became immortal, was tacked onto Alexander in the tale of his cook. Nearing the world's end, Alexander's expedition came to an area of many wells. The cook washed a dried fish in one of them and the fish came to life and swam away. The cook drank some of the water, became immortal and promptly turned green, the colour of vegetation which is reborn every spring. But the cook could not find the right well again. Furious, Alexander tried various methods of killing him – which all failed because he was immortal – and finally threw him into the sea, where he lives to this day as a sea-spirit.

The extent of Alexander's victorious travels inspired stories about him reaching the ends of the earth, where he found all kinds of marvels. He also explored the limits of height and depth, flying in the air and descending to the bottom of the sea

Above **The first submarine voyage, from a manuscript in the British Museum**

Below **Alexander flies through the air in a basket drawn by six griffons. He was supposed to have steered them by dangling a piece of liver on a spear in front of their beaks**

Marvels and Monsters of the East

. . . we came to a wood inhabited by wild men with faces like ravens. We arrived at the country of the people whose feet are twisted, and next we came to the land of the lion-headed men. We came to a river where we saw a tree which grew from dawn to the sixth hour of the day, and which diminished from the sixth hour until night. We marched through a wilderness and arrived at the ocean. We saw what appeared to be an island and twenty of my men tried to swim there, but beasts came up out of the water and devoured them. We came to the land of the people having their eyes and mouths in their breasts. We saw the 'palm-bird' (phoenix). After a march of 65 days we arrived at Obarkia and saw two birds, one of which spoke Greek.

. . . we marched towards the east and after ten days arrived at a high mountain where a dragon lived. I caused the dragon to be slain. We marched on and arrived at a river called Barsatis and a high mountain. I left my troops and with two hundred of my friends marched to China in 25 days. . . .

From a fabricated letter of Alexander the Great to his former tutor, the philosopher Aristotle, in the Syrian version of pseudo-Callisthenes (translated by E. A. W. Budge).

Fiction from Fact

Many of the stories were built up around a grain of historical truth, like a pearl in an oyster. The daughter of a Scythian king, offered in marriage to the real Alexander but declined with thanks, turned into a Queen of the Amazons who visited the legendary Alexander with amorous intent. Another example is the famous story of Alexander's birth which represented him as the son of a god.

The real Alexander was the son of King Philip of Macedon, in northern Greece, and his queen, Olympias. When he drove the Persians out of Egypt, he was accepted as Pharaoh and when he visited the oracle of the god Ammon in the desert, as Pharaoh he was formally hailed by the priest as 'son of Ammon'. On this basis, apparently, pseudo-Callisthenes and other Egyptian authors said that Alexander was not really the son of Philip of Macedon. They said that the wise Nectanebus, King of Egypt, skilled in magic and astrology, fled before the invading Persians to Macedon and told Olympias that Ammon would father a child on her. Which Nectanebus, pretending to be the god and disguised as a dragon or a snake, duly did.

The legend may not be as cynical as it looks at first sight. Nectanebus may have been meant to be both himself and the vehicle of the god, for in Egyptian belief a pharaoh was a god. Plutarch, who lived at the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, suggested that the snake came into the story because Olympias was a devotee of Dionysus and danced with snakes twined round her in the frenzy of his worship.

The Sky and the Sea-Bed

Alexander's rule of the West (Greece) as well as the East greatly impressed posterity and may account for the notion that one of his eyes was black (the West, sunset) and the other yellow (the East, sunrise). It may lie behind his Arabic title Dhul-Karnain, 'the two-horned', meaning that he had subdued both horns of the sun, or the horns may be those of Ammon, whose animal was the ram. It was not unfitting to suppose that he had also gone to the limits of height and depth; and so in legend he goes down to the bottom of the sea in a green glass box banded with iron, and flies through the air in a chariot drawn by birds or griffons, which he steered by dangling a bit of liver enticingly on a spear

Sonia Halliday

Detail from the 'Alexander Sarcophagus' of the 4th century BC, showing him in battle wearing a lion's skin, the attribute of the great hero Hercules

in front of their beaks.

His other legendary feats included shutting up the savage tribes of Gog and Magog behind a wall of iron and brass, from which they will pour out to wreak havoc in the last day, a story which appears in the Koran. He made love to the beautiful Candace, Queen of Ethiopia (or of India). He tamed a vicious man-eating horse which became his favourite war-charger and which was called Bucephalus, 'the bull-headed', because it had horns. He met and defeated innumerable monsters and peculiar humans, gigantic ants, female cannibals, giants with six heads, dwarves with one leg, horses with the faces of men, men with the faces of dogs, and in the English *King Alysaunder* the people who stand on one foot all day gazing steadfastly at the sun.

In the 14th century Chaucer said that the tales of Alexander were so common 'that every wight that hath discretion hath heard somewhat or all of his fortune', and Philip the Bold of Burgundy took Alexander for his hero and model in much the same way that Alexander himself had conceived a great admiration for the Homeric hero Achilles.

It was not until the revival of classical scholarship in the Renaissance that the legend of Alexander began to go out of fashion and to be replaced by sober history. He has not lasted as well as King Arthur, about whose real life far less is known, and few of the stories about him are still common currency. He wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. When at the height of his power he asked the philosopher Diogenes what he could do for him, Diogenes replied, 'You're standing in my light'. He cut the Gordian knot which no one had been able to untie; when he was told that whoever undid the knot would rule the East, he slashed it with his sword. But you may be reminded of him when you hear 'The British Grenadiers' – 'Some talk of Alexander . . .'

FURTHER READING: N. G. Hammond, *Alexander the Great: King Commander & Statesman* (Noyes, 1981).

Algol

Bright white star in the constellation Perseus, widely regarded as evil because a dark star, which revolves round it, dims its light at intervals and gives it the look of a malevolent winking eye; named Demon's Head by the Arabs, by the Jews Satan's Head and later Lilith, a demoness of the night; classical authors said it was the head of Medusa the gorgon, hanging from Perseus' belt.

British Museum

Algonquin myths inspired both Longfellow's Hiawatha *and the Brer Rabbit stories. Their religion centred on Nature – the sacred plants, the Great Rabbit, the young girls walking through the fields naked*

ALGONQUIN INDIANS

THE ORIGINAL ALGONQUINS, or 'fish spearers', lived in a single village in Canada, in the area now covered by the city of Ottawa. Later on the name was used for a group of small tribes who allied themselves with the French settlers in Canada against the Iroquois Indians. But these tribes were in fact only the northern division of a larger group of Indian tribes speaking similar languages called the Algonquin (or Algonkian or Algonquian) linguistic group. They ranged along the eastern seaboard of North America and inland to the prairies. They did not realize that they were probably all related and were in a constant state of inter-tribal warfare, which was later complicated by the arrival of the white man.

It was the Algonquin-speaking Indians with whom the first European colonists made contact in the 16th century. The Elizabethan painter John White met them in Virginia and left an invaluable collection of paintings of them. The delightful and intelligent princess Pocahontas, who married an English settler, was one of them. They taught the Pilgrim Fathers to grow maize and hunt turkeys. It was one of their women praying to the manitous (spirit beings) in the cornfields who unwittingly set off the Salem witchcraft tragedy (see SALEM). It is an Algonquin mythology which Longfellow used in his *Song of Hiawatha*; the name Hiawatha is that of a great Iroquois Lone Pine chief, but everything else in the narrative poem is Algonquin.

The Holy Fireplace

The Algonquin-speaking tribes practised agriculture and lived more on the produce of their fields of maize and pumpkins than by hunting. Their villages were usually near rivers and good fishing grounds. Houses were made from saplings bent into arches, which supported walls and roofs made from sheets of bark. In some villages each house held a single family, in others there were long-houses, large constructions used by several related families, each of which had an individual screened compartment and, very important, a family fireplace. There was something holy about the fireplace, for all the tribespeople understood that fire was the gift of God and in itself was holy. Thus the family fireplace was something of a shrine. In addition, all food was given by God and all food-plants and animals had a living soul.

All villages included sacred dancing grounds where the shamans (medicine-men) met and conducted ceremonies during which they made contact with the spirit world, putting the living people of the tribe in touch with the world of their ancestors, and with the great spiritual powers. The Algonquins do not seem to have evolved a special type of building as a temple, but many of the medicine-men, and women too, were inspired by the spirits in their own houses. Such places were regarded with awe but the power was associated with the shaman and not with the building. The real holy places were usually out in the open air, and they were marked by rings of wooden posts carved with heads of ancestors and spirits, as John White drew them in 1587.

Brompton Studio

'The Flyer', an Algonquin medicine-man, by John White. He is acting out the myth of the bird which carries messages between the earth and the world of spirits. He has a dried bird on his head, and the otter skin at his belt contains magic charms

The Singer of Paradise

Chipiapoos, protector of the Land of the Dead in Algonquin myth, is the gentle singer of *Hiawatha*.

Most beloved by Hiawatha
Was the gentle Chibiabos,
He the best of all musicians,
He the sweetest of all singers.
Beautiful and childlike was he,
Brave as man is, soft as woman,
Pliant as a wand of willow,
Stately as a deer with antlers . . .
All the many sounds of nature
Borrowed sweetness from his singing;
All the hearts of men were softened
By the pathos of his music;
For he sang of peace and freedom,
Sang of beauty, love and longing;
Sang of death, and life undying
In the Islands of the Blessed,
In the kingdom of Ponemah,
In the land of the hereafter.

Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha*

The Shaman and the Great Rabbit

The Algonquin tribes as a whole, in common with most American Indians, believed that human contact with the unseen powers came through specially selected individuals. These shamans, or medicine-men, were usually marked out in childhood by some unusual psychological features. They might experience visions, suffer epileptic fits, show homosexual tendencies, dress in women's clothes, or go away alone for long periods. No doubt a modern psychiatrist could have made them normal citizens; but in their own culture they were regarded as facing difficulties sent from the spirit world to which they were thought to be closer than ordinary men. They were usually sent to study further as assistants to well-known shamans. Sometimes they lost their strange magical personalities when they reached puberty; but many passed on to become shamans of importance.

The medicine-men were intermediaries between the people and the spirits, which at times took possession of them. Each had his own branch of magic in which he specialized, and could call on brother shamans to help on special occasions. They were expected to help the tribespeople in all seasons of difficulty. They healed the sick, found lost property, smelled out evil magic, forecast the weather, and consoled the family in time of death. Yet they never became great chiefs. They were too unstable to be trusted with power, but their ability to see into the future was used to assist a chief to assess the value of his line of policy (see also SHAMAN).

John White painted a picture of a shaman in 'The Flyer'. The shaman is dancing and lifting himself as if he were a bird. His balletic action is magically aided by a dried bird attached to his hair, and no doubt by the magic charms in the otter skin tucked in his belt. But for all the apparent freedom of his dance, he is expressing part of a well-defined group of religious myths. He is the bird which arises from earth, as it did once from the waters before the earth was born. He rises to the world of the manitous (spirit beings) from which he will return bringing messages to the people.

The shaman's dance was most likely a round dance, just as the ceremonial posts around the sacred ground were set in a circle. This was natural enough, because he was concerned with the circuit of the heavens. The circular movement of the zodiac constellations around the sky was seen as a procession of the heavenly powers. Among them moved the sun, who was not only a manitou of power but a form of the strange creator spirit, who was also conceived as a great rabbit or a white hare.

In the more recent days of Negro slavery in America, some of the slaves from Ashanti in West Africa mixed with Indians of Algonquin stock, amalgamated their own spirit Anansi, famous as a trickster, with the Algonquin Great Rabbit, and so produced the world of the Brer Rabbit stories.

The Battle of the Brothers

Important among the Algonquin-speaking tribes were the Cree of the Great Lakes and southern Canada, and their neighbours to the south, the Chippewa (Ojibway). Among these tribes, who to a large extent escaped the colonial wars between the Europeans, the old mythology survived long enough to be recorded by scientific scholars. The survival of the old ideas was greatly helped by the secret society of the shamans known as the Midewiwin. This society had a method of writing in pictorial code. Their pictures scratched on birch-bark or painted on skin recorded the legends of the gods, and also notes on tribal history.

It is from the Cree in particular that we have the most complete form of the myths of the Algonquin-speaking peoples. Before the earth existed, there was water, on which a few floating sticks were placed by two ducks. The animals came along and could find no solid ground to stand on; those who could joined the ducks and dived to find more sticks. They made a raft on which they all lived. Then the Great Manitou placed some sand on the raft. It grew and spread out. In his form of a white hare he is still making the raft which is the earth bigger, and you hear him shaking the raft whenever there is an earthquake.

It came about that Death was sent to earth. As different groups of animals died, the Creator took their bodies and changed them so that the first races of men came into being. There was a daughter of the children of men and she gave birth to four divine sons. They were Nanabozo, the protector of humanity; Chipiapoos who died to become the protector of the Land of the Dead; Wabosso the maker of white, the magician and guardian of the North; and Chakekenapok, the flint-stone and maker of fire but also the winter. At his birth, the mother died. Thus Nanabozo and Chakekenapok were destined to be enemies.

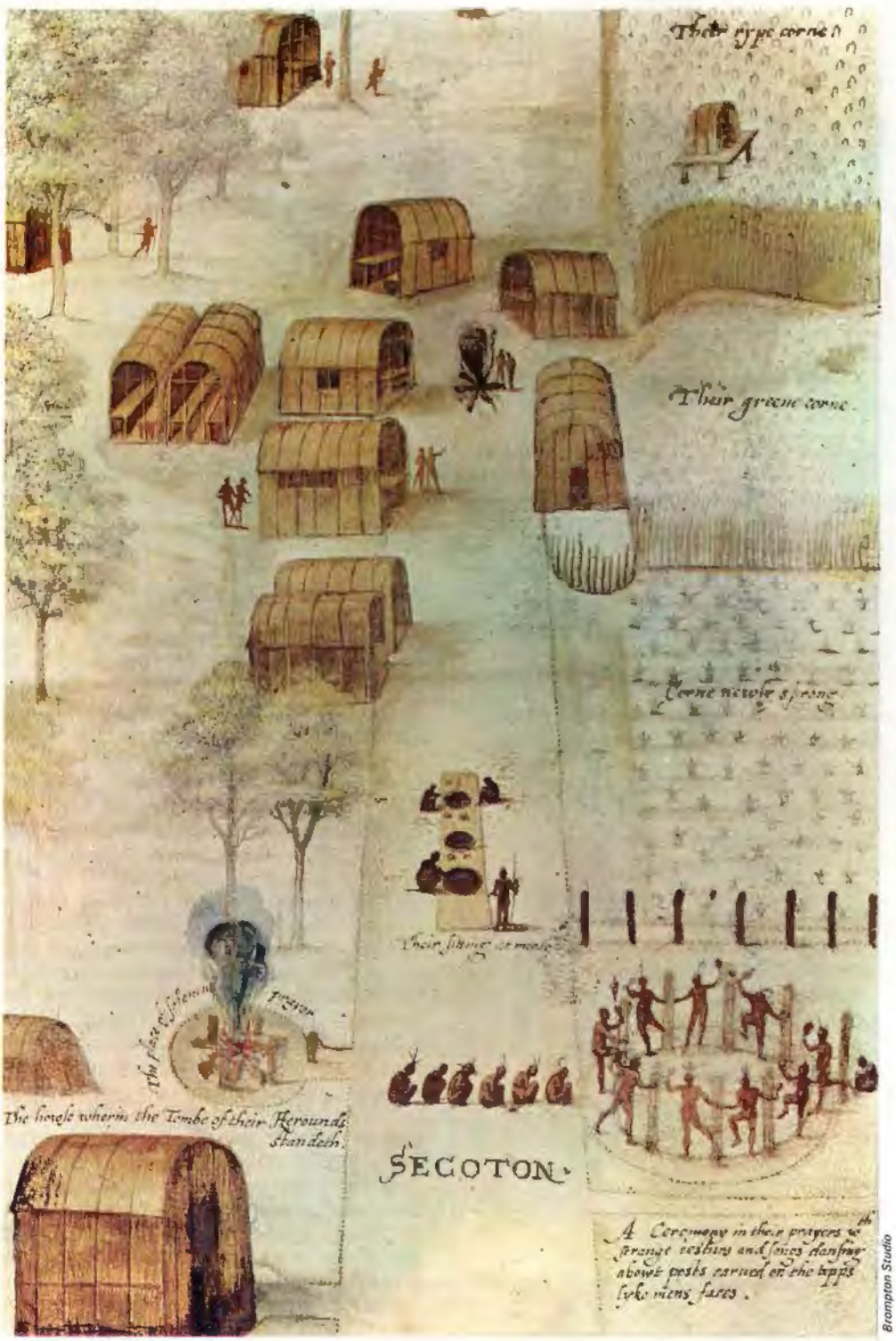
It was not until Nanabozo had grown up that the two opposed brothers met. Then they stormed around the earth, wrestling and tearing at each other. The magic deer-horn which Nanabozo carried broke pieces off the body of Chakekenapok. These fell to the ground as pieces of flint, and at last Nanabozo won the battle. Chakekenapok was torn to pieces and thrown over the earth. His bones became the ranges of mountains and his intestines turned into the pleasant grapevines.

There was a power granted by the Creator, which the Indians knew as a kind of magic breath called orenda (see also AIR; BREATH). This was available to all the manitous, who were the secret life of every created thing. Seeing that Nanabozo and his most beloved brother Chipiapoos had become so powerful and beautiful, the various manitous planned to kill them. Nanabozo knew all things and was able to elude the spells, but Chipiapoos walked on the thick ice of the Great Lakes and the manitous used their orenda to melt the ice. So Chipiapoos drowned and the manitous hid his body at the very bottom of the lakes, from which it could never be recovered.

For six years Nanabozo wept for his brother in seclusion, and sent out his magical powers to destroy the manitous. At last they managed to pacify him by sending their orenda in bags to blow on him like soothing winds. They brought peace to his heart. Four of the greater manitous brought mourning gifts, tobacco and magical medicine pouches made from animal skins. Nanabozo welcomed them as messengers of peace and accepted their invitation to visit their sacred house. There they gave him a drink which brought him peace and happiness. Then they combined to form the society of the Midewiwin and Nanabozo was the first initiate. Then they all summoned up the spirit of Chipiapoos and before sending him back to the underworld, they invested him with the powers of Lord of the Land of the Dead and Guardian of Souls.

The Sacred Plants

It was Nanabozo who discovered the magical virtues of the plants which were to be the food of the future human race of our own kind. He stored them in his magical hut, and put the Grandmother of Humanity, Mesakkummikokwi, in charge of them. And so, when the Algonquins picked the food plants, they put a portion of their reaping on the ground as a thank-offering to the ancient lady, 'Our Grandmother'.



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Left **The Algonquin village of Secoton, from a water-colour by John White. In the foreground are the holy ring of posts and the sacred fire – the place of solemn prayer**

Among the Algonquin tribes these and other myths were re-enacted at ceremonies on the anniversary of each event; in other words, at the appropriate seasons for planting maize, hunting deer or reaping the harvest. The timing of the ceremonies was calculated by counting moons and days, so that a practical calendar was linked with the religion. The passage of the stars across the sky marked the great seasons of the year, which were six in number.

The dancing and chanting of the myths at these ceremonies were linked with Nature's progress through the seasons of the year. It was a kind of magical drama. The power summoned up and released in the ceremonies helped the people to enjoy the fruits of earth and protected them from the dangerous powers of manitous.

Agriculture was always a holy thing. The little garden plots which went to make up the village farmland were given magical life by young women silently walking around them on a given night in spring, quite naked and so expressing the fertility of Nature which they were summoning to help them.

The Indians understood well enough that they depended on the powers of Nature for their existence; if there was a poor harvest, a drought, an earthquake – they died. They taught this to the early white settlers but found that the newcomers rewarded good with evil. Though the tribes detested any central authority, the pressure of the white man who seized their lands drove the chiefs to organize large confederations for resistance. On the eastern seaboard the struggle ended with the war of 1675–6 when the Algonquins were decisively defeated, massacred and driven from their heartland.

C. A. BURLAND

FURTHER READING: C. A. Burland, *North American Indian Mythology*, (Hamlyn, 1967); F. R. Johnson, *Algonquians, the Indians of the Part of the New World First Visited by the English*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Johnson NC, 1972).

Below **Religious dance of the Algonquin Indians, by John White. Their holy places were usually in the open and were marked by a ring of wooden posts, carved with heads of ancestors and spirits. The rattles and corn are symbols of fertility**

Brompton Studio

Paul Watkins

Allah

Supreme Being of Islam, 'the god', worshipped by the Arabs from before the time of Mohammed, who proclaimed him as the only god; pictorial representation of Allah is forbidden but Arab artists have made graceful play with designs using letters of his name. See ISLAM.

Mansell Collection

Hallowe'en now is mainly celebrated by children, especially in the United States. But their weird and grinning masks echo the terrors inspired by the old festival of All Hallows, when the dead came out from their graves to walk the earth.

ALL HALLOWS' EVE

ALL HALLOWS' EVE, or Hallowe'en, was originally a festival of fire and the dead and the powers of darkness. It is the evening of 31 October, the night before the Christian festival of All Hallows' or All Saints' Day. All Hallows' Day commemorates the saints and martyrs, and was first introduced in the 7th century. Its date was changed from 13 May to 1 November in the following century, probably to make it coincide with and Christianize a pagan festival of the dead. All Souls' Day in the Roman Catholic calendar is 2 November. It is marked by prayers for the souls of the dead.

It is only in recent times that Hallowe'en has been reduced to a minor jollification for children. Before the coming of Christianity, the pagan Celts in northern Europe held two great fire festivals each year – Beltane on the eve of 1 May and Samhain on the eve of 1 November – to mark the beginning of summer and winter. These dates have no connection with the equinoxes or solstices, or with sowing and reaping, but seem to date from very early times when Celtic society depended heavily on cattle for subsistence. Samhain marked the beginning of winter and was the time when the cattle were brought in from pasture to spend the winter under cover. It was also the beginning of a new year. Because the Celtic day started at sunset, and ran to the following sunset, the festival began on the eve of 1 November.

Sir James Frazer said in *The Golden Bough* that 'throughout Europe, Hallowe'en, the night which marks the transition from autumn to winter, seems to have been of old the time of year when the souls of the departed were supposed to revisit their old homes in order to warm themselves by the fire and to comfort themselves with the good cheer provided for them in the kitchen or the parlour by their affectionate kinsfolk. It was, perhaps, a natural thought that the approach of winter should drive the poor shivering hungry ghosts from the bare fields and the leafless woodlands to the shelter of the cottage with its familiar fireside.'

Bonfires on high hills were a conspicuous feature of the old Hallowe'en rites, though in England they have been gradually transferred to 5 November to mark the arrest of Guy Fawkes. In the 1860s a traveller in Scotland counted 30 fires on the hilltops between Dunkeld and Aberfeldy, each with a circle of people dancing round it. Down to the end of the 19th century fires blazed on the hills in Lancashire on the eve of All Hallows. In north Wales every family built a bonfire and each person threw into the ashes a white stone which he had previously marked. Prayers were said round the fire and next morning if a stone was missing, it was thought that its owner would die before he saw another Hallowe'en. The same belief existed in the Scottish Highlands and many forms of fortune telling were a traditional feature of Hallowe'en – probably because it was the Celtic New Year's Day and so a suitable time for predicting the events of the coming year.

In Aberdeenshire and Buchan in the 19th century, boys collecting fuel for the bonfire would ask for 'a peat to burn the witches'. When the fire was lit, the boys danced round it shouting 'Fire! Fire! Burn the witches.' When the fire died down, the ashes were scattered and when the last spark had gone out, the cry went up in the ominous darkness 'The devil take the hindmost' and they all ran for their lives. In Wales 'the cropped black sow' would take the hindmost.

Hallowe'en

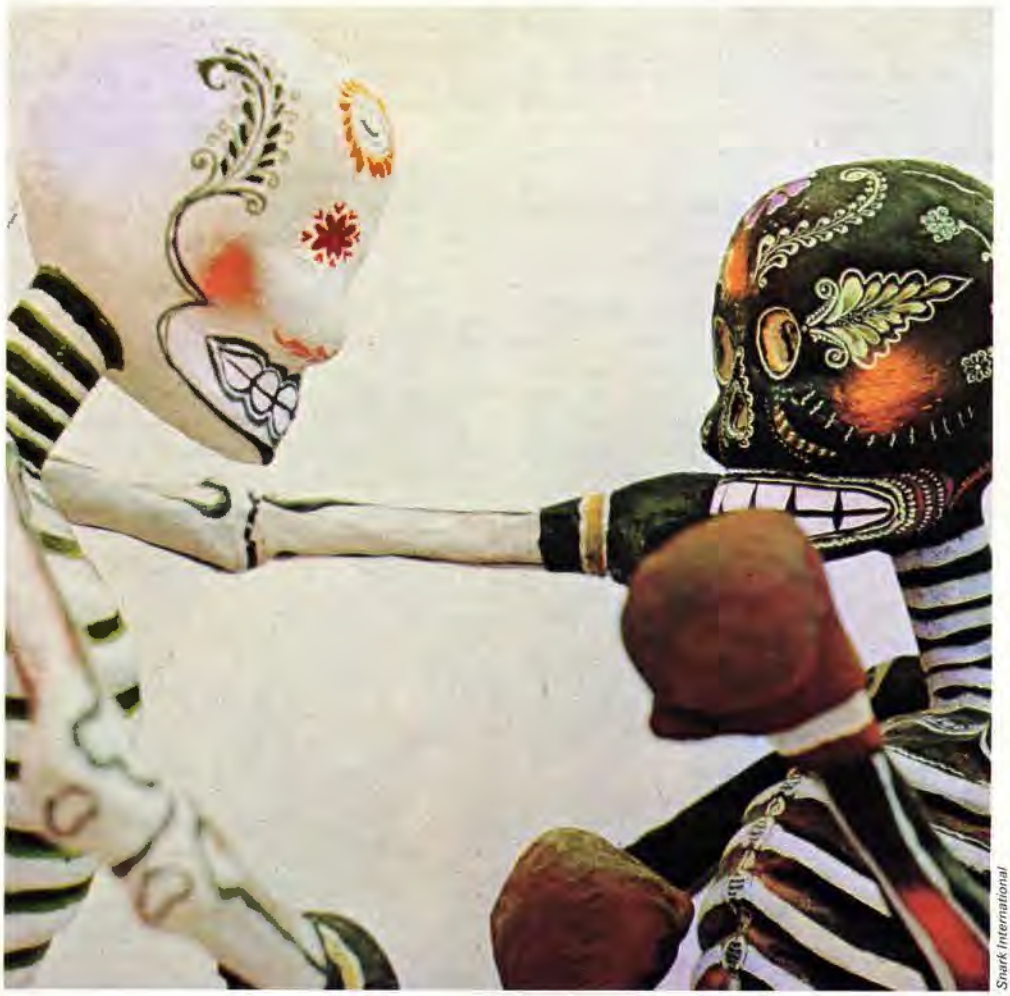
The mouth of the night is the choice hour of the *Sluath*, the Host of the Dead, whose feet never touch the earth, as they go drifting in the wind till the Day of Burning; of the *Fuath*, the Spirit of Terror that frightens folk out of the husk of their hearts; of the Washer, who sits with herself in the twilight; of the slim green-coated ones, the Water-Horse, and what not. The light that is shadowless, colourless, softer than moonlight, is ever the light of their liking. At the mouth of the night, along the water-courses by ways that at the hour of dusk and of lateness you had best be shunning, you are like to meet them; to west of houses they pass – what to do, who shall say? their ways being nowise human.

Amy Murray *Father Allan's Island*

From the Wintry Grave

Originally the bonfires were probably meant to provide light and heat which would help the sun through the winter, when it seemed to grow feeble under the attack of darkness and cold. Winter called to mind the chill blackness of the grave and in many parts of Europe – not only in Celtic countries – All Hallows' Eve, as the beginning of winter and the dying time of the old year, was a night when the dead stalked the countryside. Offerings of food and drink were put out for the ghosts. They passed by to the west always, the direction of the dying sun at sunset.

The fairies could also be seen on All Hallows' Eve, moving from one fairy hill to another with the music of bells and elf-horns. They were sometimes identified with the dead. There is an old Irish story about a young man who incautiously stayed out on Hallowe'en and met a band of fairies. They welcomed him cheerfully and gave him wine and fairy gold. But when he looked closely at them, he saw that they were neighbours who had died – some of them many years before. They shrieked with laughter when he recognized them and tried to tug him into their dance. Terrified, he struggled against them until he dropped unconscious. He woke in the morning lying inside a stone circle, his



Shark International

Hallowe'en, originally a festival of fire and the dead is still celebrated by children and witches ***Left*** **Witches and demons on their way to the sabbath** ***Right*** **Sugared skulls at the feast of All Souls, Mexico**

Jacqueline Mackay

Michael Busselle

Above left **'Double double toil and trouble, Fire burn, and cauldron bubble': modern witch ceremony with cauldron** ***Above right*** **Children with Hallowe'en pumpkin masks or 'Jack o' Lanterns (a name for Will o' Wisp)**

arms black and blue with the marks of fingers.

Darker and colder creatures still roamed through the night on Hallowe'en – demons and hobgoblins, witches who straddled broomsticks or shankbones, flew in sieves or egg-shells, or rode on coal-black horses. The fires helped to keep them off and at Balmoral in Queen Victoria's time the effigy of a hideous old witch was ceremoniously burned on a bonfire at Hallowe'en.

The guisers went from house to house, singing and dancing. Their blood-curdling masks and grotesque costumes may have been meant to keep evil at bay or, more likely, were a visible representation of the ghosts and goblins that lurked in the night. The masks have now been transferred to the children who, in the United States, visit the neighbours for the food-offerings which once belonged to the dead – or play tricks akin to the legendary destructiveness of witches and imps abroad on this night.

Witches' Revels

Real witches held high revel on All Hallows' Eve and this was one of the ways in which they preserved pagan customs. The witches of Aberdeen in 1596 said that they had danced round the market cross at midnight on Hallowe'en and also round an old grey stone at the foot of the hill at Craigleuch, the Devil himself playing music before them.

Modern witches have kept up the tradition. In 1963, for instance, a journalist watched the Hallowe'en festivities of a coven of witches at St Albans. The high priestess, naked except for a string of beads and watched by the other 12 members of the coven, drew a circle on the ground with the point of her magic knife. A candle burned in each quarter of the circle, with a fifth candle on an altar in the middle. The reporter did not reveal the details of the ceremony but he did record a remark of the high priestess. 'We are not anti-Christian', she said, 'we just have other means of spiritual satisfaction. It's hard to describe that satisfaction.'

Alligator

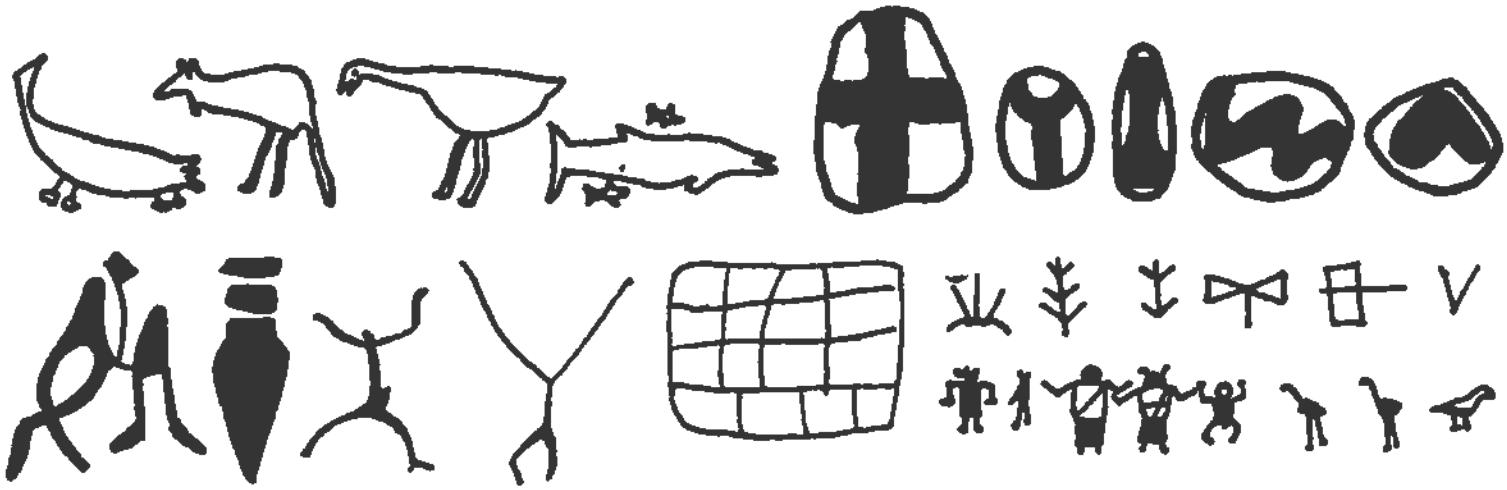
Indian tribes of the tropical Americas have many gods in the form of alligators, native to those regions. In North America the Choctaws venerated the alligator and would not kill it; the Chickasaws devoted a major ceremonial dance to it: in the southern United States, alligator teeth were used to help a baby's teething, to cure snakebite and to keep witches away; an old North Carolina superstition says that alligator gall helps sore eyes, and that the fat can cure cancer.

See LIZARDS.

Aloes

Fragrant wood, valued in antiquity for its pleasing smell and recommended in magical textbooks for operations connected with Jupiter and the sun: bitter aloes, made from a different plant, is a purgative drug and therefore a symbol of spiritual cleansing, purgatory.

N.H.P.A.



Prehistoric forms of writing from Australia, Italy, Crete and California. They were probably connected with magical and rituel practices

Christian priests forbade the use of runes, the letters of the old northern European alphabet, because the runes were so closely connected with paganism and magic. This is one example of the age-old belief in the magic power of letters, which survives to this day in numerology, a way of telling your fortune from the letters of your name

ALPHABET

WRITING IS a mysterious and magical art. In many primitive and ancient societies it was assumed that the gods must have invented this marvellous method of capturing speech and turning it into visible form. In the ancient world the fact that most people could not write, or read what was written, and that those who could were usually priests, brought writing a reputation as a great hidden wisdom. And its use in inscriptions on the tombs of the dead gave it a close connection with the other world.

The Egyptians called the picture-writing which they carved on the walls of tombs and temples, 'the speech of the gods'. The Greeks called the Egyptian letters hieroglyphics, 'sacred carvings'. Because they came from the gods and because they were pictures, the hieroglyphs had magical powers. One of the basic laws of magic is that a picture or a symbol does not merely refer to the thing it represents; it actually *is* the thing.

In Egypt, for instance, a hieroglyph which was a picture of an animal sometimes had to be used in an inscription inside a tomb. It was feared that it might come alive and the animal might eat the food provided for the dead man, or even eat the dead man himself. To prevent this, the hieroglyph would be left incomplete or drawn in two halves, so that the whole animal could not appear.

The Whispering Runes

The letters used in northern Europe in the early centuries after Christ were also powerful in magic. They were called runes, which comes from a root meaning 'mystery, secret', surviving in the modern German word *raunen*, 'to whisper'. The art of writing with a pen did not reach northern Europe until Christian missionaries brought it with them from the south, and the runes were carved – on wood, tombstones, jewels, swords and armour and other equipment.

Inside a tomb, it was thought runes would keep evil forces away from the dead. Or sometimes they were meant to stop the corpse from creeping out of its grave. They were cut on tombstones to prevent people from destroying them or stealing them for their own dead. Part of an inscription on a Swedish gravestone says, 'This is the meaning of the runes; I hid here magic runes undisturbed by evil witchcraft. He who destroys this monument shall die in misery by magic art.'

This inscription would serve by itself to bring the gravestone's destroyer to a miserable end. Because in magic a symbol *is* what it stands for, to write down a wish or a curse in symbols automatically gives effect to what is written. In the same way, runes were engraved on swords to make them irresistible in battle, as in the case of a sword named Marr – 'may Marr spare nobody'.

The poem called *Havamal* (Utterance of the High One) says that runes have the power to bring the dead to life.

> A twelfth (spell) I know; when I see aloft upon a tree
> A corpse swinging from a rope,
> Then I cut and paint runes
> So that the man walks
> And speaks with me.

To win mastery of the runes, the god Odin had to hang for nine days and nights in agony, transfixed by a spear to the World Tree – the ash Yggdrasill. At the end of this torture, he saw the runes and seized them.

> I peered downwards,
> I took up the runes,
> Screaming, I took them –
> Then I fell back.

Christian priests condemned the use of runes because they were so closely linked with pagan religion and magic. As late as the 17th century in Iceland, people were burnt to death because they had been found in possession of runes.

Development of the Alphabet

The earliest known forms of writing go back to about 20,000 BC and were drawn on the walls of caves. They were pictures of animals and men, and also geometric shapes and patterns. Nobody can be sure of their meaning but they probably had some religious and magical significance.

Broadly speaking, the development of systems of writing runs through three main stages. First comes *pictographic* writing, which means simply drawing pictures. For instance, ⊙ means 'the sun' and ★ means 'star'. Next, in *ideographic* writing the picture's meaning broadens out to include ideas associated with the thing shown. Now ⊙ means not only 'the sun' but also 'light' and 'heat' which come from the sun, and 'day' over which the sun presides. And ★ means not only 'star' but 'heaven' and 'god'.

The trouble with ideographic writing is not merely that the same picture may have several different meanings, which causes confusion, but also that there are a great many words in any language which cannot easily be represented in pictures. The next step is the introduction of *phonetic* symbols, which stand for sounds.

Phonetic writing can be extraordinarily complicated. There are some 50,000 Chinese symbols which stand for different sounds or combinations of sounds. The triumph of the development of an *alphabet* – a triumph of simplicity – is the use of a small number of symbols which can be used in combination with each other to represent all the words of a language. 'For this achievement,' David Diringer says, 'simple as it *now* seems to us, the inventor, or the inventors, are to be ranked among the greatest benefactors of

Your Name and You

Why were your parents so anxious to select a suitable name for you at the time of your birth? Because your name signifies your destiny and is the medium through which your character is expressed. It is the sign-board or blueprint along your road to success. Your parents sensed this and unconsciously named you for the particular character you were destined by birth to express.

J. Walton-Jordan
Your Number and Destiny

mankind.' It is not surprising that this brilliant invention was regarded long ago as sacred and magical.

Diringer's theory is that all the world's alphabets are descended from one original alphabet, invented somewhere in the area of Syria and Palestine, the land-bridge between the great civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, in the period 1750–1500 BC.

Hebrew and the Making of the World

In the European magical tradition, far and away the most important of all alphabets is the Hebrew, which was written from right to left and had 22 letters, all of which were consonants. No vowels (our a, e, i, o and u) were represented. The same is true of the Phoenician alphabet, from which our own alphabet is descended – by way of the Greek, Etruscan and Latin alphabets.

The importance of the Hebrew alphabet comes from the fact that God is described in the Bible as creating the world by expressing commands in words – 'God said, Let there be light; and there was light.' It was believed that when God pronounced the word *light*, light itself instantly sprang into existence. And all the other things which God made came into existence as he pronounced their names.

But what language did God speak? Obviously, Hebrew. And so the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet came to be regarded as supremely powerful magical instruments, through which the whole universe had been created and which contained the secret of the structure of all things.

This belief was one of the basic ideas of the Cabala – a complicated web of mystical and magical theories, originally Jewish but adopted with enthusiasm by non-Jewish occultists from Reuchlin and Agrippa in the 16th century to Aleister Crowley in the 20th (see CABALA).

The cabalistic *Sefer Yetsirah* (Book of Creation) written by an unknown author probably between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD, describes – if its obscure and at times impenetrable language can properly be said to 'describe' anything – how God created the world by means of numbers and letters; the numbers from 1 to 10, and the 22 Hebrew letters, 'the foundation of all things'. God 'drew' the letters, 'hewed them, combined them, weighed them, interchanged them and through them produced the whole creation and everything that is destined to be created.'

In cabalistic theory, God created the world by extending his own being. The *Sefer Yetsirah* says that 'the production of all things from the 22 letters is the proof that they are all parts of one body.' In other words, the letters are parts of 'one body' – the alphabet – and all created things, made by means of the letters, are also parts of 'one body' which is God.

It is not a long step from this to reach the equation, God = the universe = the Hebrew alphabet. Some theorists saw the Hebrew letters as parts or aspects of God, and so they were suitable objects of meditation; for a full understanding of the letters in all their innumerable combinations, if such a thing were possible, would be a full understanding of God. Arranged in different combinations

ATA

The Björkertorpstone, Sweden: the inscription in runes, the letters once used in northern Europe, is intended to kill whoever disturbs the monument

with each other, the letters threw light on the complexities of God's nature, and equally on the complexities of the universe.

To magicians, Jewish and non-Jewish, the Hebrew letters were sources of power – the divine power, which created the world. Magicians employed them in suitable combinations to bring the power of God to bear on summoning up a spirit or reviving a corpse or finding buried treasure.

An example is the powerful word Agla, which is made of the initial letters of the Hebrew phrase *Aieth Gadol Leolam Adonai*, 'Thou art mighty for ever, O Lord.' Agla was written inside magic circles to give the magician mighty power to control spirits, and it had a special use as a fire-extinguisher. If written on a wooden plate and thrown into a fire, it would put the fire out. Medieval German Jews explained this use of the word by expanding it into the initial letters of *Allmächtiger Gott, Lösch' Aus*, 'Almighty God, extinguish it.'

Though the Hebrew alphabet was particularly important, the older principle of the magic of letters applied to other alphabets as well. The word Azoth for mercury, a metal frequently used in alchemy, comes from the Arabic name of mercury, *al zauq*, but some alchemists thought that Azoth was a peculiarly effective name for the metal because it combines the first and last letters of the Hebrew, Greek, Roman and Arabic alphabets, and so contains the total magic power of all four. (See also GEMATRIA; NAMES.)

Letters and Correspondences

Observing that God had used the 22 Hebrew letters to create the world, some Jewish and Christian commentators succeeded in calculating that in the first chapter of Genesis God is said to create 22 things, obviously corresponding to the 22 letters. Because the letters were used to make everything that exists, they contain all truth and all wisdom, and Josephus, a Jewish historian of the 1st century AD, and other commentators calculated that the Old Testament, through which God reveals himself to men, has 22 books – though it required some ingenious juggling to reach this figure. It is probably not by chance that there are 22 principal cards or 'major trumps' in the Tarot pack, which are also believed to contain all the secrets of the universe. (See TAROT.)

Following up the theory that the universe was created by means of the letters, the *Sefer Yetsirah* classifies various phenomena of the world in terms of the letters they belong to. Twelve of the Hebrew letters are connected with the 12 signs of the zodiac, the 12 months of the year, 12 organs of the body and 12 'properties' (including sight, hearing, smell, sexual love, work, anger, laughter and sleep). Seven other letters are assigned to the 7 directions (east, west, north, south, above, below and the centre), the 7 planets known in antiquity, the 7 days of the week, the 7 'gates of perception' (the mouth, plus two eyes, ears and nostrils), and 7 pairs of opposites (including life and death, peace and war, riches and poverty, wisdom and folly).

The three remaining letters – mem, shin and aleph – are called 'mother letters'. They are connected with 3 elements or basic materials of which everything is made – water, fire and air; with 3 divisions of the universe – earth, heaven and the atmosphere between them; with 3 seasons of the year – winter, summer and spring; and with 3 parts of the body – belly, head and lungs.

A system of 'correspondences' of this kind, a classification of different phenomena into a set number of categories – as if, to use Aleister Crowley's analogy, you had to sort all the papers on your desk into a given number of pigeonholes – may seem peculiar but it is part of the old attempt to make sense of the world by classifying things in groups; just as we classify animals by species for a better understanding of how the animal world works. And there was a logic to the connections. The letter aleph (our A) was not a vowel in Hebrew but a 'breathing', a rough exhalation of breath, and it was natural to connect it with the lungs, which breathe; and with air – especially as it was thought that the shape of the letter came from an Egyptian hieroglyph representing an eagle, the lord of the air. Similarly, mem (our M) was connected with water because the letter was adapted from the Egyptian hieroglyph for 'water'.

In magic, correspondences are used not merely to understand the world but to con-

The young Napoleon Buonaparte and the old. Modern numerologists turn your name into a number, which supposedly reveals your character and future. A change of name means a change of destiny, and Napoleon is the stock example. When he dropped the u from Buonaparte, he altered his number from 1, standing for power and victory, to 4 – the number of defeat

Mansell Collection

trol it. A commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah* assigns the letter kaph (our K) to Venus, the planet of the love-goddess. A magician who accepted this might wear the letter embroidered on his robes or hold it drawn on parchment in his hand during a magical operation to make a woman submit to him – particularly if he noticed that in Greek k is the first letter of the word for the female genitals, *kteis*, which he would say was no accident. (See also CORRESPONDENCES.)

Fortunes by Letters and Numbers

The idea that the Hebrew alphabet enshrines the secrets of the universe is one basis of modern numerology, a method of analysing your character which depends on the belief that the letters of your name contain the essential truth about you.

You start by turning each letter of your name into a number (using the name by which you normally think of yourself), as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	B	C	D	E	U	O	F
I	K	G	M	H	V	Z	P
Q	R	L	T	N	W		
J		S			X		
Y							

These letter-number equivalents come from the Hebrew alphabet, in which the letters also stood for numbers – aleph (A) for 1, beth (B) for 2, gimel (G) for 3, and so on. Noughts are disregarded so that S (shin – 300) is 3, K (kaph – 20) is 2. There is no 9 in the table because the Hebrew letters which stood for 9, 90 and 900 have no equivalents in our alphabet. Numbers for letters like E and X which do not exist in Hebrew are taken from the Greek alphabet, where the letters also stood for numbers.

You write down your name with the number equivalents and add up the numbers. If the total has two or more figures, add these together and go on in this way until you reach a single figure. For example:

W	I	L	L	I	A	M		B	A	T	E	S	O	N
6	1	3	3	1	1	4		2	1	4	5	3	7	5

Total 46 = 10 = 1

The number 1 is the number of the name William Bateson and is supposed to reveal the truth about him.

More details will be given in later articles on the individual numbers which will also consider how each number got its particular meaning but, briefly, if your number is *one* you are thought to be an exceptionally powerful, positive and dominating person, forceful, aggressive and ambitious. You lead, pioneer, originate and invent. Self-reliant, obstinate, authoritative, you tolerate no rivals and you have few close friends. You can be kind and generous to people who do what you want but you have a violent temper and no scruples if opposed. All this follows from the fact that 1 is the number of the god of the Old Testament.

The number *two* – an evil and female number – has all the opposite characteristics. People whose names add to 2 make good subordinates and are obedient, quiet, helpful, gentle, modest, tidy and self-effacing. Sweet-natured, sympathetic and persuasive, they are also over-sensitive, easily depressed, unsure of themselves. And since 2 is the number of the Devil, they may be subtly malicious, deceitful and cruel.

Three is traditionally the luckiest of numbers and belongs to fortunate, lively, sparkling, charming people who easily make money and conquests in love, who are talkative and like to show off, highly talented, witty and gay. They tend to be unduly anxious for other people's approval and lavish their efforts wastefully in too many directions. An American numerologist says that they prefer opera to jazz 'when living true to their higher nature'.

Four, number of the earth, is distinctly gloomy and is the number of people who are solid but uninspired, hard-working but plodding, steady, cautious, conservative and conventional. Calm and composed on the surface, there may be violent eruptions of feeling underneath and also severe indigestion (earthquakes). They are excellent organizers and administrators but as 4 is essentially the number of poverty, disappointment and defeat, it does not hold out much prospect of success.

Those whose number is *five* are clever, jumpy, energetic, optimistic, versatile, impulsive, erratic and irresponsible. Nervous and highly-strung, lovers of risks and excitement, they are boastful, quick-tempered, resilient and bouncy. Because 5 is the number of sex (the word 'sex' adds to 5, incidentally), they have lurid love-lives.

Six is the number of well-balanced, peaceful, worthy but rather unexciting people, who are warm-hearted, reliable and kindly but also fussy, gossipy and narrow of outlook. Loyal and affectionate, their interests are centred on home, family and friends; wholesome and conventional, they dislike upsets or rows of any sort. They work hard but rarely have any flair for business.

Seven, one of the great magical numbers, belongs to people who tend to retreat from the world around them into the privacy of their own reflections. Philosophical and scholarly, they value the things of the mind. They are reserved, serious and dignified, self-controlled, uninterested in money and material pleasures, sometimes sarcastic and aloof. Their ideas are profound but they find it hard to explain them and are impatient of contradiction or opposition.

By contrast, *eight* stands for involvement in the rush and bustle of the everyday world, in money-making, business, politics. People with this number have the capacity for great worldly success but also, unfortunately, for disastrous failure. They do not forge ahead easily but by long effort, strain and concentration. They can be hard and selfish, grim and determined on the surface, sometimes wildly rebellious and eccentric underneath.

The Sacredness of Vowels

Nothing therefore is more excellent than the mysteries which ye seek after, saving only the mystery of the Seven Vowels and their forty and nine Powers, and the Numbers thereof. And no name is more excellent than all these (vowels), a Name wherein be contained all Names and all Lights and all Powers.

Pistis Sophia
(3rd century AD)

Referring to the seven Greek vowels: a, short e, long e, i, short o, u and long o.

Finally, *nine* is the number of high achievement, not in the worldly sense but in spiritual matters. It belongs to people who are high-minded, visionary, energetic, emotional and passionate, who have a sense of duty to others and an intense hatred of poverty, old age and ugliness, for themselves and everyone else. Often condemned as wild and impractical, they are easily imposed on and are always falling in and out of love. Cheiro, the celebrated palmist, says in his *Book of Numbers* that 'as a general rule they undergo many operations by the surgeon's knife', which may have something to do with the fact that 9 is the number of initiation, which in primitive societies frequently involves mutilation of the body.

Magical alphabets, frequently made by combining symbols from the Hebrew, runic and other alphabets thought to contain power

Other Numbers in Your Name

As well as the number given by your whole name, you can add up the *consonants* in it, this number referring to your outer personality and the impression you make on other people. The total of the *vowels* in your name is supposed to indicate the person you are at heart. (Y is treated as a vowel only if there is no other vowel in the word: in Lynn it is a vowel, in Henry a consonant.)

This distinction follows from the fact that written Hebrew and other early alphabets had no vowels. So the consonants which were written down show your outer shell, and the vowels which were concealed your hidden, inner personality.

The same fact probably also accounts for the old idea that vowels are particularly sacred and magical, more mysterious and important than the consonants which everyone could see written down; the 'soul' hidden in the 'body' of the consonants. Gnostic mystical theorists of the eastern Mediterranean area in the early centuries after Christ – Gnosticism originated in the same area and at the same period as the Cabala – were sometimes peculiarly addicted to vowels. One of their versions of the name of God was, in English letters, Iaoouee.

There are many obvious objections to numerology, of which numerologists take little notice. One of them is that all who share the same name also share the same character (including, of course, the same vowel and consonant totals). However, this is modified by the fact that numerologists bring in another number, the Birth Number, which is found by adding up your date of birth thus, 18.5.1935 adds to 32 = 5.

The Birth Number is meant to show your basic, underlying characteristics, 'the foundation on which you stand' or 'the reason for which you came on earth, how you can develop yourself and what you should do'. This number has to be considered as well as the other numbers in analysing your character. And if you find yourself really fascinated, you can take the number of each letter in your name one by one and consider its influence on your life and fortunes.

(See also NUMEROLOGY; and articles on the numbers from ONE to NINE plus ELEVEN; TWELVE; THIRTEEN and FORTY.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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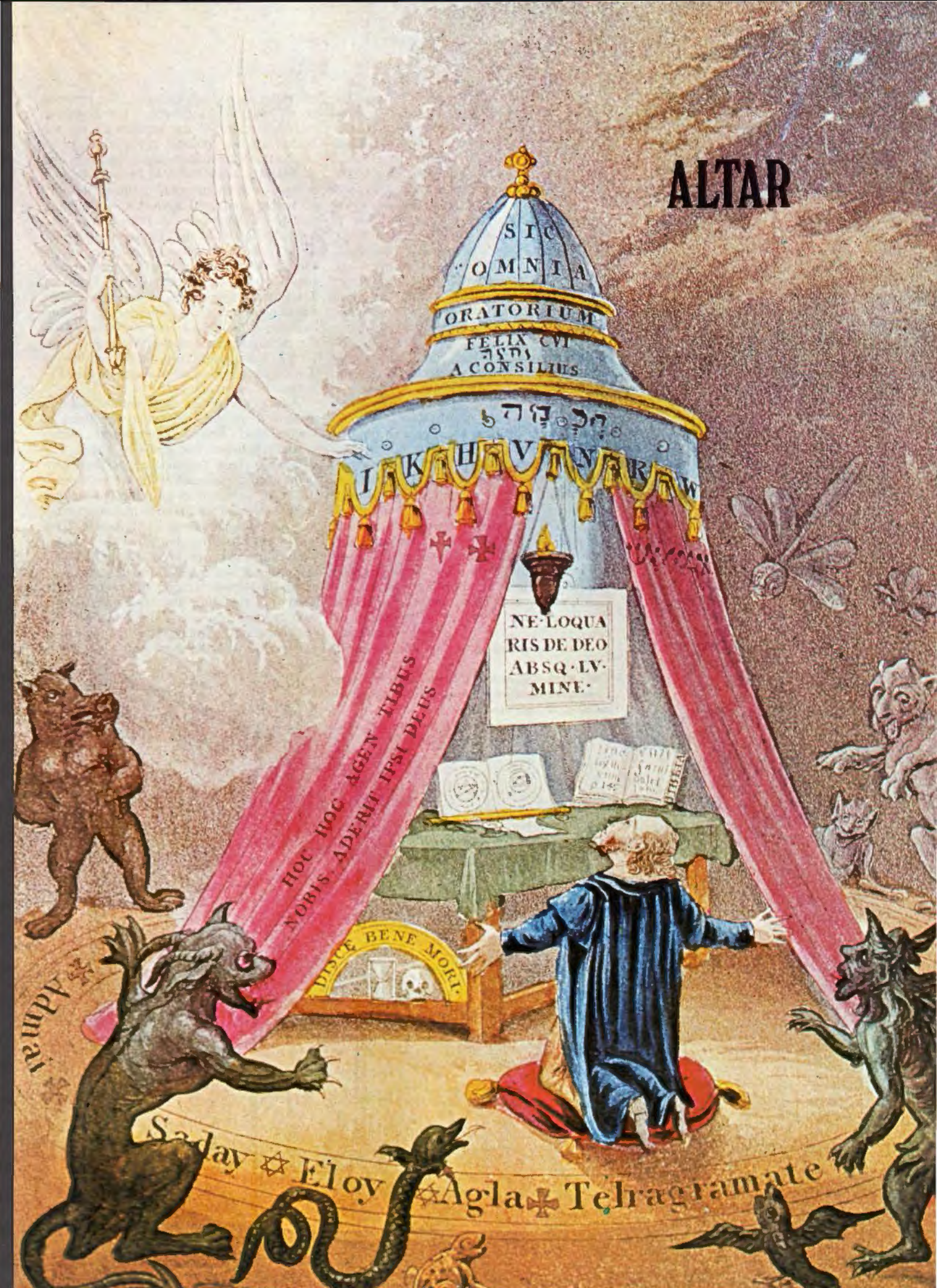

ALTAR
SIC
OMNIA
ORATORIUM
FELIX CVI
A CONSILIIS
NE·LOQUA
RIS DE DEO
ABSQ·LV·
MINE·
HOC HOC AGEN TIBUS
NOBIS ADERIT IPSI DEUS
DISCE BENE MORI
Adonai
Sadai
Eloy
Agla
Tetragramate

Previous page: **The Magician kneels before his altar, which is covered by an ornate canopy, and summons up a spirit which is appearing in the sky. Names of God are written to protect him from demons**

ALTAR

FROM THE DAWN OF human culture there is evidence that man was moved to make offerings, probably of a sacrificial kind, to supernatural powers. Even the sub-human precursor of mankind, Neanderthal man about 100,000 BC seems to have practised a cult which involved the sacrifice of bears. In caves, for example, at Drachenloch, Switzerland, the Petershöhle near Nuremberg, bear skulls have been found carefully arranged in niches and on stone slabs which the prehistorian J. Maringer has described as 'the oldest altars of sacrifice so far known'. But this interpretation of problematic material of such remote antiquity must necessarily be treated with reserve. More certain is the later evidence from about 6000 BC at Catal Hüyük in Turkey, where a shrine was used for fertility rites, associated with a Mother Goddess and a bull cult. A low mud-brick platform formed a kind of table before a wall adorned with representations of bulls' heads, women's breasts, and human hands. Human skulls were on the 'altar'.

These prehistoric examples indicate that from very early times places have been specially used or constructed for the purpose of offering sacrifice. The need to show that the offerings were specifically presented to supernatural beings doubtless caused the 'altar' to be raised above ground-level, thus suggesting the idea of a 'table of the gods', though this analogy must not be pressed too far. The words for 'altar' in Semitic languages merely indicate a place where a victim was slaughtered, while in some Indo-European languages the terms used denote a place where a sacrifice was burned. Their association with deity gave altars an aura of holiness and the altar could even be regarded as the throne of a deity.

Altars and Sacrifice

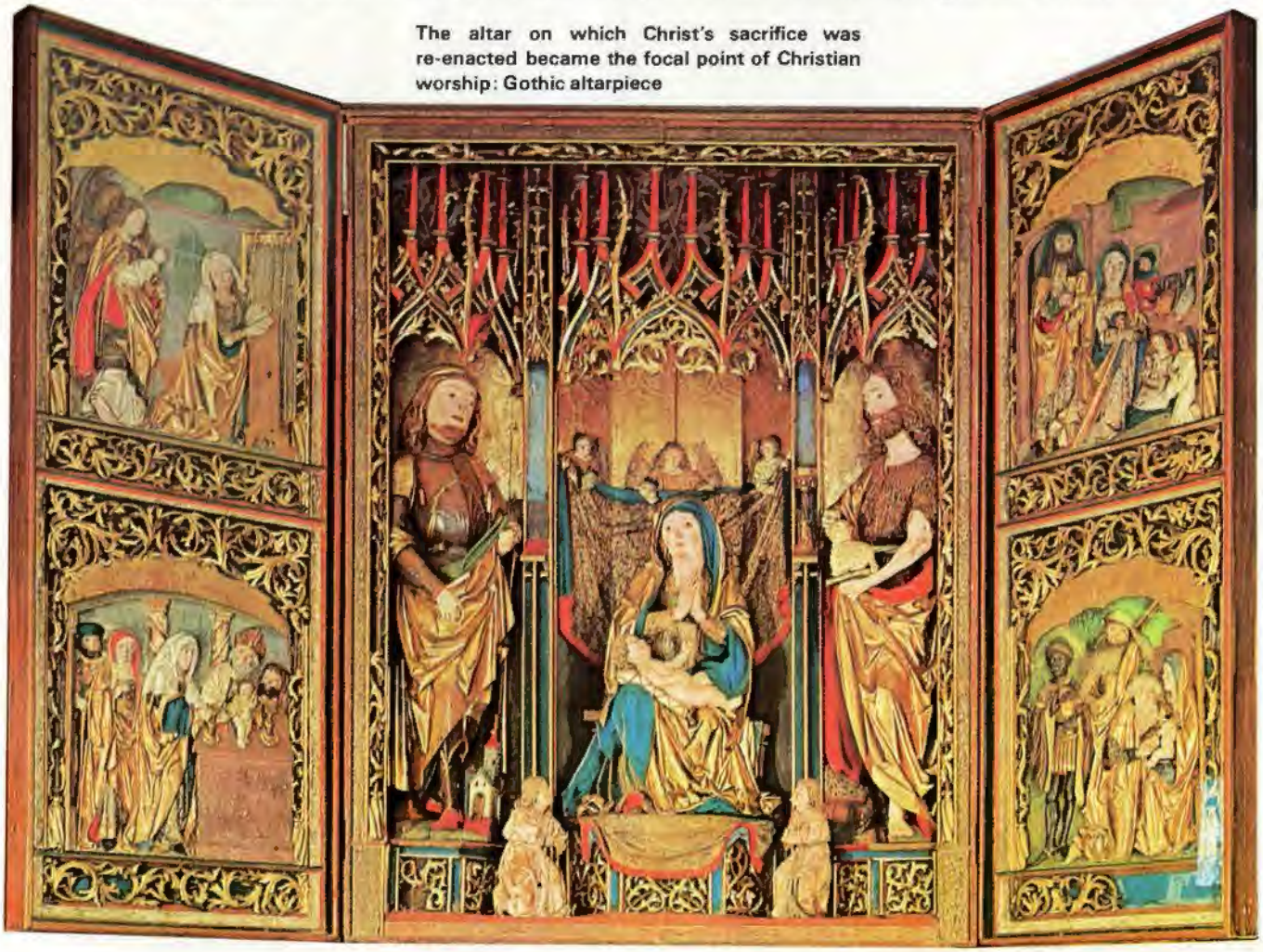
Altars are frequently represented in ancient Egyptian art, and the remains of some still survive in temples. It would seem that the Egyptians regarded altars only as necessary adjuncts to ritual worship. Their altars generally appear to have been light tables, holding food and jars. Temple altars could be large stone erections, with steps, such as the sun-altar in the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahiri. Tall stands, containing fire, served for burnt offerings. In ancient Mesopotamia two types of altar generally seem to have been used: large structures of brick for burnt offerings and small altars of various shapes, for burning incense.

Altars figured prominently in ancient Jewish worship. Significant examples of early practice occur in Genesis. In chapter 8 Noah builds an altar and offers burnt offerings, and God 'smelled the pleasing odour'; chapter 22 describes how Abraham built an altar for the sacrifice of his son Isaac. Exodus (chapter 20) records divine instructions for making altars of earth, and of unhewn stone (unhewn because the use of tools on the stone would profane it). Altars of bronze and gold and their equipment, made by Solomon for the Temple in Jerusalem, are described in 2 Chronicles (chapter 4). A notable feature of these altars were the 'horns', which projected at the corners; they appear on a stone altar found at Megiddo, but their origin and significance are uncertain. Exodus (chapter 21) implies that the altar of God was a place of refuge for criminals; the gospel of Matthew (chapter 23) indicates that in the 1st century AD Jews were accustomed to swear by the altar of the Jerusalem temple.

Altars for public and family worship abounded in the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. The Greeks distinguished between two kinds of altars. The *bomos* was used for sacrifices to the Olympian gods, the essence of the victim ascending in the smoke of its burning. The *eschara* (hearth) served for the cults of divine heroes and chthonic (underground) deities. This was a low structure, but often the sacrifice was performed over a pit, so that the victim's blood descended into the earth.

In the Greek temple, the image of the deity, not the altar, was the focus of attention. Altars varied in kind and form. On the Athenian Acropolis the great altar of the goddess Athene was an outcrop of

The altar on which Christ's sacrifice was re-enacted became the focal point of Christian worship: Gothic altarpiece



Michael Holford

natural rock, and at Delphi Apollo's altar was reported to be made on the bones of sacrificed victims. Public altars were sometimes of immense size: that of Zeus at Pergamon in Asia Minor was 40 feet high. In both Greece and Italy small altars were set up in homes and market-places, at graves, groves and springs. Offerings included fruit, flowers and libations of wine. Shapes varied and the Romans often favoured cylindrical altars. The altars of Hestia in Athens and Vesta in Rome, where a perpetual fire burned, were essentially the 'hearths' of these cities. Roman tombs frequently took the form of altars, dedicated to the cult of the dead.

In ancient Persia the cult of fire, later associated with Zoroastrianism, stemmed from that reverence for fire which characterized Aryan religion and had its Indian counterpart in the worship of Agni, the Vedic god of fire. Persian fire-altars comprised a massive base, surmounted by a stone slab on which stood the fire-container. This fire-cult has been preserved by the Parsees, whose altars follow the ancient pattern.

The Sanskrit word for altar, *vedi*, originally denoted a trench in which the sacrificial fire burned, and was closely associated with the domestic hearth in ancient India. Early Hindu literature describes other vedis of different shapes for various kinds of offerings. Great importance was attached to the shape, and special Sanskrit manuals deal in great detail with the matter. Brick altars were constructed in the form of a falcon, heron or tortoise. A Hindu text, the *Satapatha Brahmana*, compares the shape of an altar with that of a woman. In modern Hinduism altars are simpler affairs: a square-shaped structure of earth or clay, on which a fire is kindled for offerings of butter.

The Altar of Heaven

Altars were essential to the religions of China. There were two kinds: those used in the public worship of the cosmic powers and those required for the ancestor cult. The most impressive of Chinese altars is the Altar of Heaven in Peking, at which the Emperor of China, the Son of Heaven, offered sacrifice, the most crucial occasion being at the winter solstice.

Japan provides a unique example of an altar, or rather of an ideal altar. The Shinto sect of Tenri-kyo reverence a spot in Tamba-Ichi as the centre of the world and the place where creation culminated. There an unfinished altar is located, which will achieve completion when the teaching of the sect has been preached in all lands and universal brotherhood established in the service of God. Apart from this, Japanese altars have only a practical significance as tables of offerings or incense in Shinto and Buddhist shrines.

In Aztec religion the altar was adapted to the slaughter of human victims. The altar in the great temple of Huitzilopochtli, god of war, in Mexico City, was a block of green stone five feet in length and three feet in height and width. Its convex top was so fashioned as to present the breast of the victim to the stone knife of the sacrificing priest, who cut out the heart and presented it to the deity.

Roger Wood London

Michael Holford

Above **Zoroastrian fire altar at Naqshe-Rustam, near the site of Persepolis, Iran**
Below **Nigerian chieftain's bronze 'altar of the hand' symbolizing the power of the hand; it would be placed on a mud altar during religious ceremonies: British Museum**

The Christian altar, from earliest times, has been essentially associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper or Mass. In the early Church the rite was doubtless celebrated on wooden tables but the custom of celebrating it on the tombs of martyrs led to the tradition that stone was the proper material for altars. According to Roman Catholic practice today, even where the structure is mainly of wood, a stone *mensa* ('table') must be inserted. In Catholic Christianity, both in the Eastern and Western Churches, the status of the Mass or Eucharist as the supreme act of public worship has made the altar the focal point of church and cathedral.

The development of the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass invested the altar with a sacrificial significance: at each Mass the original sacrifice of Christ is re-presented. The doctrine of transubstantiation (that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ) and the custom of keeping the consecrated sacrament in a receptacle on the altar, encouraged the idea of the altar as a throne or local abode of Christ. Reaction against medieval abuses of the Mass was one of the causes of the Reformation, and it led to the abolition of altars in most Protestant churches. The placing of a cross and candles on altars dates from the 10th century; the location of the high altar is usually at the eastern end, but in some modern churches it is placed in the centre of the church.

S. G. F. BRANDON

On the fringes of the Classical world lived a mythical race of warrior women who had declared war on men and relegated them to slavery. The memory of their fierceness and bravery cast a potent spell on the Greek imagination

AMAZONS

THE AMAZONS were a mythical race of warrior women, whose battles with a number of Greek heroes were recorded in various local legends. Their original home was in the gorges and forests of the Thermodon valley in Pontus in Asia Minor, and their capital city was Themiscyra on the coast of the Euxine (modern Terme, on the Black Sea coast of Turkey). According to one tradition, men were excluded altogether from their country, but for purposes of propagating the race the Amazons made an annual visit to the Gargareans in the Caucasus. Girls born of these unions were then brought up by the Amazons, each one having her right breast either burnt or cut off to make it easier to hurl a javelin or stretch a bow. Boys were either put to death or sent back to their fathers. Another version has it that a number of men were kept for mating purposes, but had the status of slaves, and were allowed to perform only those tasks executed in other countries by women.

Legend also has it that the legs and arms of these men were mutilated to prevent their challenging the Amazons' power.

Whether men were or were not included in the Amazon state, only women bore arms, not only defending their own country, but making expeditions of conquest into neighbouring territories. They fought both on foot and on horseback, carrying crescent shields and wielding spears, bows and battle-axes. Their life consisted mainly in hunting and war-like exercises and the training of the girl Amazons. They were ruled by a queen, and they worshipped Ares, the god of war, from whom they were believed to be descended, and Artemis, goddess of the hunt.

Stories about the Amazons belong to the

Below **The Amazons were legendary women warriors descended from Ares, the god of war. From a silver panel in the British Museum**

earliest Greek sagas. Homer mentions them in a way which shows that they were familiar to his audience. When in historical times the Greeks got to know the Thermodon region and found no Amazons there, they supposed either that Hercules had destroyed them all, or that they had been driven away. Thus in later legends, the Amazons were moved further and further away from their original homeland, but they were always located on the fringe of the world as it was then known to the Greeks. They were said to be of Scythian origin from Colchis (south of the Caucasus), and there was also supposed to be a race of Amazons in Africa. They were in any case, always foreign to the Greek homeland, and in Greek eyes – like all foreigners – they counted as barbarians.

Hercules, Theseus and the Amazons

Two of their queens, Hippolyta and Penthesilea, figure in widely told Greek myths. The ninth labour imposed on Hercules by his master Eurystheus was to take from Hippolyta her girdle, symbol of her royal power, which had been given to her by the god Ares. According to one version of the myth, Hercules withstood a cavalry charge of Amazons single-handed and routed their whole army, killing Hippolyta at the same time.

Later legends linked the name of Theseus, mythical King of Athens, with Hercules' expedition against the Amazons. Theseus carried off Antiope whose sister Oreithyia, sworn to vengeance, led an invading army into Attica. The Amazons were defeated by the Athenians after four months fighting. Some say that Antiope was killed in the fighting, but others that she survived to make a scene at Theseus' wedding (she being the mother of Theseus' son Hippolytus, though not his lawful wife), where she threatened to murder all the guests. Theseus killed her, to prevent her carrying out her threat.

In another legend, Hippolyta brought yet another Amazon force against Theseus after this wedding, and in the ensuing battle was killed accidentally by her sister Penthesilea. Pursued by the Furies of her dead sister, Penthesilea sought refuge in Troy, where she obtained purification from her blood-guilt at the hands of the aged King Priam. In gratitude she enrolled in the Trojan army, where, as the war-god Ares' daughter, she fought bravely until Achilles killed her. Achilles then wept for the lost beauty, youth and courage of the dead queen and made love to her corpse. Thersites, reputed to be the ugliest Greek at Troy, jeered at Achilles' grief and accused him of unnatural lust, whereupon Achilles killed him. This enraged some of the Greeks and Diomedes, a cousin of Thersites, threw Penthesilea's corpse into the River Scamander.

The Greeks continued to circulate stories about the Amazons down to a late period. One very popular story was that the Amazon queen Thalestris visited Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) during one of his Asian campaigns, wishing to have a daughter by such a famous general. She stayed with him for 13 days before returning to her own country. Writing more than 400 years later, Plutarch lists no less than 14 authorities who mention this tale, though nine of them, he says, dismissed it as 'complete fiction', and it was laughed at after Alexander's death by his successor in Thrace, Lysimachus.

Slave-Girls or Matriarchs

The Amazons were a favourite subject for Greek sculptors and painters. In art of the earliest periods, they are dressed exactly like Greek warriors, but usually with one breast bare. After the Persian Wars (499–448 BC), for example on Greek vases of the great classical, period, they are represented in oriental garb, wearing caps and trousers, and pictures of them relate more and more to known legends about them. They are never depicted as having lost one breast, in spite of the Greek belief that their name meant 'breastless'.

Various explanations of the origins of the legends about the Amazons have been put forward. Some writers trace them to the armed slave-girls who were dedicated to the service of certain Asian deities, and the association of the Amazons with Artemis supports this theory. But the story is more likely to be an imaginative Greek embroidery of reports about matriarchal tribes in south-west Asia, or of tribes in which the women led a freer and tougher life than they did in Greece. Certainly the persistence of the legend right up to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, and its perennial popularity as a theme in the arts show that it had a deep appeal to some area in ancient Greek fantasy.

(See also HERCULES; THESEUS.)

Amazons in the Old World

We are told, namely, that there was once in the western parts of Libya, on the bounds of the inhabited world, a race which was ruled by women and followed a manner of life unlike that which prevails among us. For it was the custom among them that the women should practise the arts of war and be required to serve in the army for a fixed period, during which time they maintained their virginity; then, when the years of their service in the field had expired, they went in to the men for the procreation of children, but they kept in their hands the administration of the magistracies and of all the affairs of state. The men, however, like our married women, spent their days about the house, carrying out the orders which were given them by their wives; and they took no part in military campaigns or in the exercise of free citizenship in the affairs of the community by virtue of which they might become presumptuous and rise up against the women. When their children were born the babies were turned over to the men, who brought them up on milk and such cooked foods as were appropriate to the age of the infants.

Diodorus Siculus,
Bibliotheca Historica

Amazons in the New World

Sir Walter Raleigh, the famous Elizabethan adventurer, explored South America in the 16th century and was told of Amazons:

But they which are not far from Guiana do meet with men but once in a year. At that time all the Kings of the borders assemble, and the Queens of the Amazons, and after the Queens have chosen, the rest cast lots for their Valentines. This one month they feast, dance and drink of their wines in abundance, and the Moon being done, they all depart to their own Provinces. If they give birth to a son, they return him to the father, if a daughter they nourish it and retain it. It was further told me, that if in the wars they took any prisoners that they used to accompany with those also at what time soever, but in the end for certain they put them to death; for they are said to be very cruel and bloodthirsty, especially to such as offer to invade their territories.

Sir Walter Raleigh,
The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana

The Japanese Buddhist deity Amida offers entry into heaven to all his followers, in return for the faithful repetition of a short prayer – 'I adore thee, O Lord of Boundless Light'

AMIDA

THE WORD AMIDA originally denoted merely an abstraction – the ideal of unlimited light. But this abstraction, like others in Buddhism, came slowly to be personalized, first as a mere Bodhissatva (one assiduously undergoing the disciplines necessary to become a Buddha) and then as an actual Buddha.

Amida had 48 wishes, one of which was to let the dead pass into Jodo, or the Pure Land of the afterlife in which he would reign, and another that if any single mortal who had offered prayers to him failed to obtain salvation, then he, Amida, would never be a Buddha. These wishes were fulfilled, with the result that anyone with sufficient faith in Amida was assured of a place in Jodo.

The formulation of this doctrine of Amida as a personage rather than an abstract concept dates back to India in the 2nd century BC, but it was in Japan that it found its most enthusiastic devotees, who eventually formed the Jodo (Pure Land) and other similar sects. Perhaps the first Japanese individual to be granted a vision of Jodo was the student priest Genshin (942–1017), who retreated to Mt Hiei, near the old Japanese capital of Kyoto, in order to live in solitary meditation aloof from the luxury and depravity of his day. His most famous work, *Ojo-yoshu*, is usually quoted as the source of Japanese Amida worship. Certainly it contributed greatly to the foundation of the Jodo sect and had a profound effect on later literature and art.

Genshin maintained that for most people the Nemhutsu or repetition of the phrase 'Namu Amida Butsu' ('I adore thee, O Lord of Boundless Light') could, without any other aids, ensure entry into the heaven that awaited the soul after death.

The actual founder of the Jodo sect was not Genshin but Honen (1130–1212). After studying at a monastery on Mt Hiei and finding no satisfaction there, he formulated a doctrine based on a remark of Zendo Daishi, a Buddhist priest of an earlier Epoch, to the effect that man's salvation does not depend so much on his own strength as upon the grace of Amida. Honen thought that men should not trouble themselves about whether their hearts were good or bad, or their sins light or heavy, but should only believe that they would be born into the Pure Land and repeat the invocation 'Namu Amida Butsu' with total conviction.

To people of small intellectual capacity and little education, it was natural that a form of Buddhism that required merely a simple act of faith accompanied by a single phrase should have a strong and instantaneous appeal. To people who lived precariously, decimated by wars, famines and plagues, to be able to look forward not to the annihilation of self in the Buddhist Nirvana but to existence in a paradise far from this world of trouble, was a most potent source of consolation. Here, beyond the grave, was Amida offering something unobtainable in mortal life; an existence devoid of pain, sadness, hunger or anxiety.

Amida of the Phoenix Hall

In Buddhist art Amida may generally be recognized by the hands lying in his lap, with the thumbs placed end to end. Very often the halo (in Japanese *goko*) forms a background not only to the head but to the entire body. There is a gleaming spot on the forehead, emblematic of wisdom. The two images waiting on either side of Amida are Kannon (goddess of mercy) and Seishi (Lord of Might).

Probably the most beautiful sculptured representation of Amida is in the 'Phoenix Hall', part of the Byodoin Temple in the suburbs of Kyoto. Carved in the 11th century, this Amida rests in a building that indeed resembles the phoenix from which it takes its name, so lightly does it appear to

Amida in the paradise to which those who believe in him are sure of entry. The gleaming spot on his forehead symbolizes wisdom and his forehead is encircled by a halo

Giraudon

hover over the water that surrounds it. This, the weary, harassed and despairing believers of that time must have thought, was indeed the Lord Amida himself, sitting there in repose, his eyes lowered, as he compassionately promised salvation to all who believed in him. This offer of a future life of bliss is not dissimilar to that offered by depictions of Christ on the Cross; and the self-sacrifice of Amida, renouncing the possibility of becoming a Boddha unless all believers can join him in paradise, is not dissimilar to that of the Christian Saviour.

In most religions there is a conflict between the belief in salvation through works (the idea that it is a man's good actions which bring him to heaven) and the belief in salvation through faith. Those who accept the doctrine of rebirth in a paradise over which Amida presides and who believe that rebirth can be achieved merely by the repetition, in faithful submission, of a single invocation, maintain that all men are possessors of a 'Buddha nature' and that to make an intellectual or spiritual effort at self-improvement is illogical since by doing so one denies that one is already Buddha – and it is only by accepting one's Buddha nature that Buddhahood can be won.

Others, perhaps more self-exacting, deplore the way in which the Jodo and similar sects have turned what was at first no more than an abstraction into an actual personage. But if Buddhism was to be made accessible to the ordinary people of Japan, it was perhaps inevitable that the abstract should be made concrete, the unreal real; so that by seeing the walls of their temples covered with hosts of greater and lesser deities, they should be able to embrace a faith made personal enough to grasp. The promise of a future life may in part explain Japanese willingness to seek out death, even by suicide.

(See also JAPAN.)

FRANCIS KING

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Michael Holford

Amulet

An object worn or carried to ward off evil or to attract good luck: usually a jewel, a stone, or a piece of metal or parchment, inscribed with magic signs.

See TALISMAN.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Anabaptists

Protestant revolutionaries of the 16th century, persecuted for their insistence on re-baptizing converts from other Christian denominations; best known, unfairly, for their 'kingdom of the saints' at Münster in Germany, where they practised polygamy.

See COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.

Anandamayi Ma is venerated in India for her ability to take on the appearance and personality of gods and goddesses and also for her extraordinary bodily contortions when in trance, sometimes bouncing up and down like a rubber ball

ANANDAMAYI MA

EARLY ONE MORNING in spring 1896, a girl was born in a rural village named Kheora, situated in what is now called East Pakistan. Her parents named her Nirmala Devi. She received no formal education and as a child began to experience peculiar states of intense and brooding abstraction. As she grew older these moods often developed into positive ecstasies of mystical exaltation.

She was married at 13 and sometimes, while preparing meals for her husband, her consciousness would be slowly indrawn to such an extent that she became totally oblivious of her surroundings.

By the time she was 18 it was felt by many who met her that her freshness and simplicity concealed a strange and unpredictable personality which seemed to come and go unaccountably.

It was not long before the power that appeared to use her body as a vehicle through which to show itself was recognized as being not only charming and benignant, but also peculiarly solicitous and motherly in its attitude to those it attracted. Nirmala drew people to her by the sheer magnetism of this radiant and indwelling presence and some people felt they discerned in her an embodiment of divinity.

Among these was a saintly man named Bhaiji, who became one of Nirmala's first devotees. He was the first to call her Anandamayi Ma, or Blissful Mother, the name by which she is now generally known throughout India and in many other countries.

Most of the great mystics of whom we have reliable record are known to have had spiritual guides, some of whom appeared in ordinary human form, and some not. Unlike them, however, Anandamayi Ma – or Mother as she is often called – claimed no direct initiation from a particular gurn or spiritual guide.

When asked about this she said, 'In earlier years my parents were my guides; in household life, my husband; and in all the situations of life, now, all persons and things of the world are my guru. But know it for certain: the one Supreme Being is the only Guide for all.'

And, something which is probably unprecedented among Indian holy sages, Anandamayi Ma says she has not undergone any previous births. Which means that she does not claim to be the outcome and final flowering of a series of human incarnations in which she has striven to arrive at spiritual perfection. On the contrary, she has stated on various occasions that she has appeared on earth as the direct result of the profound yearning for God on the part of certain individuals, who – in their ardour to know God and realize their spiritual identity with the Supreme Being – have caused that Supreme One to respond and assume human form.

It is a tenet of oriental belief, particularly in India, that such yearning creates a similar yearning in the Supreme Being; and because of the limitations of his devotees he (the Supreme) shows himself to their external senses in a seemingly human embodiment.

This manifestation of divinity is not confined in Anandamayi Ma to the appearance of a single human embodiment. Whichever god or goddess has been worshipped intensely by any of her devotees, that particular image or aspect of divinity appears to them to play through Mother's form. The spectral semblance of one deity after another has been seen by them to flow out of her being, each image the perfect original of some traditionally recognized god-form. Kali, Krishna, Shiva, Brahma, it matters not which aspect of divinity; its form duly appears when Mother enters one of her moods of mystical ecstasy.

She once said, 'The personality and figures of gods and goddesses are as real as your body or mine.'

A Vision of Kali

Some time in 1925, while in Dacca (about 200 miles north-east of Calcutta) Mother was asked to perform Kali Puja, the worship of the image of Kali.

During preparations for the ceremony, which required an image of the goddess, flowers, incense and sandal paste, Mother saw – about 130 yards distant – the ethereal

form of the actual goddess, floating in the air towards her, with hands out-stretched as if eager to come to Mother's lap. Later another apparition appeared to Mother as a little girl of infinite sweetness. This also was Kali, she said.

During the rite itself the celebrants not only noticed the unusual effect which these occult experiences had upon Mother, but they were also swept by a wave of bliss which so engulfed them that they lost consciousness of externals. Each felt divine emotion greater than had been experienced when the ceremony was performed by priests.

In earlier years, during the celebration of kirtan (religious chanting and dancing) Mother would often go into a state of trance during which her body underwent the most amazing contortions. Her devotees claimed that her body, rolling on the ground, would appear to grow unusually large and then, as suddenly, contract almost to nothing. At other times her body behaved as if it were boneless, bouncing up and down like a rubber ball.

These and similar powers are mentioned in certain statements in manuals of yoga, particularly the Shiva Sanhita, where they are listed under the Eight Siddhis, or Magic Powers, that may be developed by yoga practice. But since Mother did not practise yoga, it was claimed that these supra-normal powers manifested themselves in response to the thoughts and emotions of her devotees, being, so to speak, the visible outer tokens of intense inner devotion.

On one occasion a devotee of Anandamayi Ma said to her in all good humour: 'You are credited with great power. If you have such power, just burn me to ashes.' He then set out to return to his own home.

It was an extremely hot day and he had put up his umbrella. Anandamayi Ma suddenly decided to join him and they walked a few paces together.

Richard Lannoy

Above **Anandamayi Ma: her devotees believe that the Supreme Being has shown himself to them on earth in her apparently human form**
Right **Indian print of Kali, goddess of time, holding symbols of war, raising one hand in peace and grasping for power with the fourth. Anandamayi Ma believed she saw Kali, once floating in the air and once as a little girl of infinite sweetness**

The devotee then became conscious of a fierce and unbearable heat beating down on him, despite the umbrella. He panicked and said: 'From where is the fire raining down on my head? Please stop the fire. I have ample proof of your power.' He lowered the umbrella just as the overpowering heat abated. But he noticed that some of the fabric had been consumed, as if by flame.

Anandamayi Ma is famous throughout India for her untiring devotion to the poor and the helpless. She has helped many homeless and starving people.

She teaches that knowledge of God alone constitutes true knowledge; that God alone is real, all else unreal; and that by knowing God one comes to a knowledge of all else besides.

In 1931, the first Ashram or place of worship centering around Mother was founded. In the following decades, the numbers of her followers increased all over the world, particularly in Western Europe and the U.S.A. In 1982 Mother was in Bengal and looking forward to her 87th birthday on May 23rd. One of her most faithful devotees described her recently as 'The most realized living saint of India'. He considers her to be the reincarnation of the goddess Durga, and says that her devotees are numberless, regardless of their religious order.

Since the establishment of that first Anandamayi Ma Ashram in Dacca, where her devotees could meet together for divine services, more than 20 others have been built by Mother's followers in her name.

KENNETH GRANT

Ananse

Spider-trickster of West Africa, hero of many fables in which he cleverly deceives animals, men and even God himself; the stories were taken to America by Negro slaves.

See SPIDER.

Stephen Dalton N.H.P.A.

Ancestor Worship

Veneration of dead forbears who are believed to see and influence events on earth, and to whom prayers and offerings are made by their descendants: still an important element of religious belief in many parts of the world.

See CULT OF THE DEAD.

Camera Press London

Anchor

In early Christian symbolism, an emblem of salvation and hope, partly because it stands for security and partly because it is shaped like a cross; it was often depicted upside down to emphasize its resemblance to the cross.

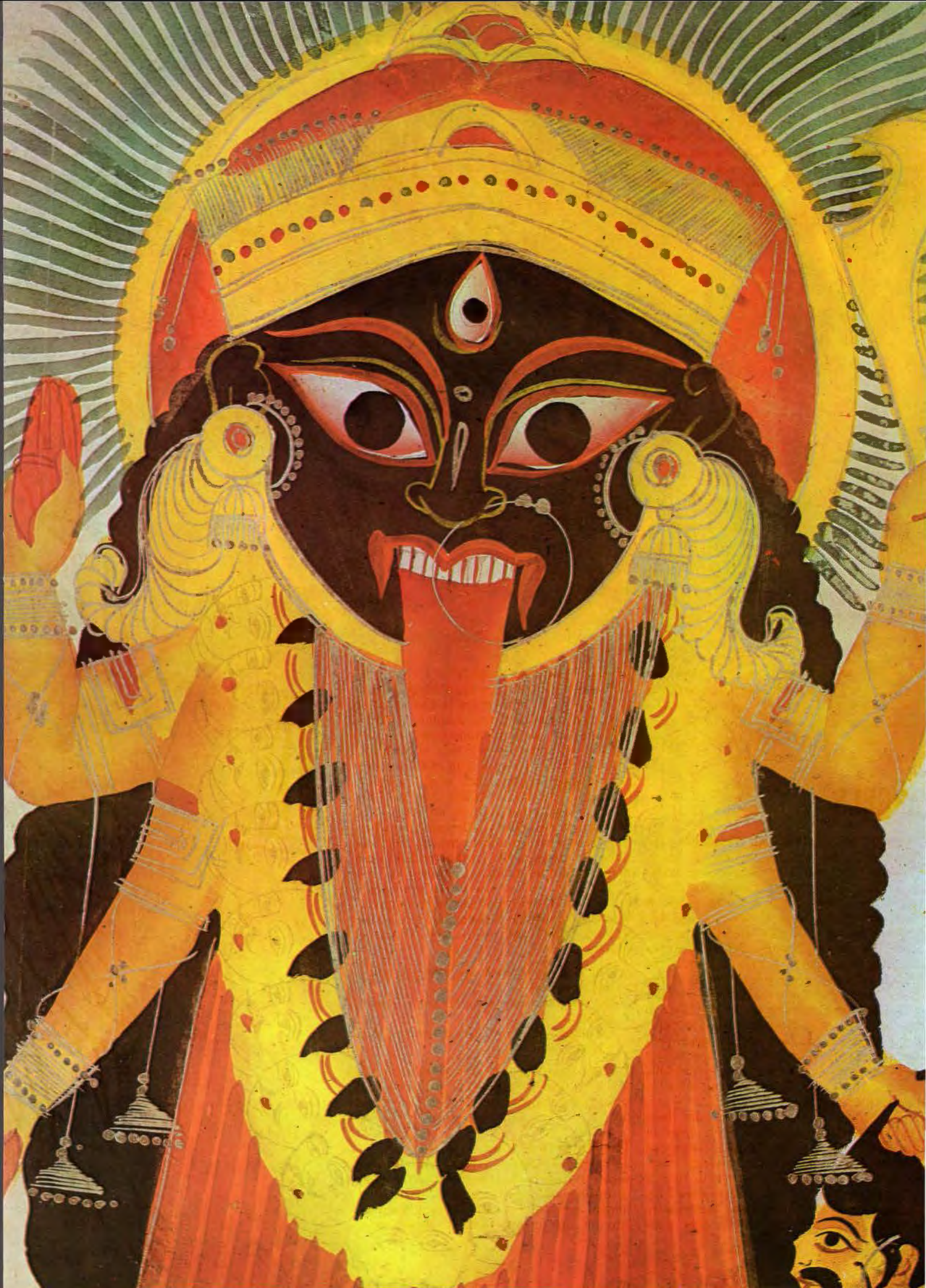
Anchorite

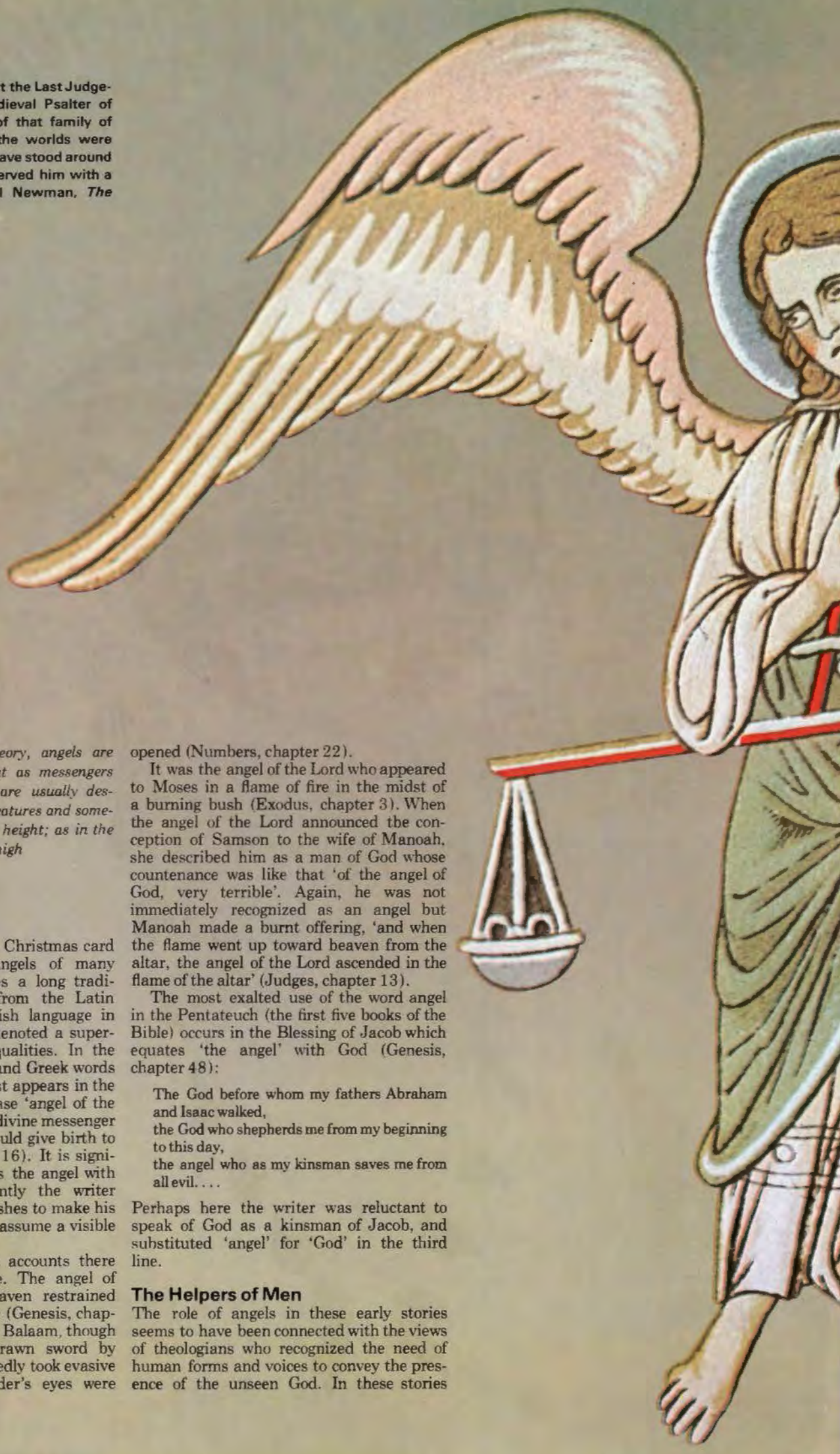
Originally, a Christian who abandoned human company and the clamour of the world to live alone and silent in a cell attached to a church; later used more generally as another word for a hermit.

See SELF DENIAL.

Michael Holford

Giraudon





The angel who weighs souls at the Last Judgement, a detail from the medieval Psalter of St Louis. 'It is a member of that family of wondrous beings who, ere the worlds were made, millions of ages back, have stood around the throne of God . . . and served him with a keen ecstatic love' (Cardinal Newman, *The Dream of Gerontius*)

In Jewish and Christian theory, angels are God's courtiers and are sent as messengers and helpers to men. They are usually described as beautiful, winged creatures and sometimes said to be of enormous height; as in the case of a female angel 96 miles high

ANGELS

BEHIND THE PASTEBOARD Christmas card angel and the stylized angels of many Christian hymns, there lies a long tradition. The term 'angel', from the Latin *angelus*, entered the English language in very early times when it denoted a supernatural being of kindly qualities. In the Bible it translates Hebrew and Greek words meaning 'messenger'. It first appears in the Old Testament in the phrase 'angel of the Lord', the title given to the divine messenger who told Hagar that she would give birth to Ishmael (Genesis, chapter 16). It is significant that Hagar identifies the angel with the Lord himself. Evidently the writer believed that when God wishes to make his will known to man, he can assume a visible human form and can speak.

Sometimes in the early accounts there was no visible appearance. The angel of the Lord calling from heaven restrained Abraham from killing Isaac (Genesis, chapter 22) and was invisible to Balaam, though he was seen with his drawn sword by Balaam's ass, which repeatedly took evasive action till at last his rider's eyes were opened (Numbers, chapter 22).

It was the angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the midst of a burning bush (Exodus, chapter 3). When the angel of the Lord announced the conception of Samson to the wife of Manoah, she described him as a man of God whose countenance was like that 'of the angel of God, very terrible'. Again, he was not immediately recognized as an angel but Manoah made a burnt offering, 'and when the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar' (Judges, chapter 13).

The most exalted use of the word angel in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) occurs in the Blessing of Jacob which equates 'the angel' with God (Genesis, chapter 48):

> The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
> the God who shepherds me from my beginning to this day,
> the angel who as my kinsman saves me from all evil. . . .

Perhaps here the writer was reluctant to speak of God as a kinsman of Jacob, and substituted 'angel' for 'God' in the third line.

The Helpers of Men

The role of angels in these early stories seems to have been connected with the views of theologians who recognized the need of human forms and voices to convey the presence of the unseen God. In these stories

it is through angels that divine help comes to men. Abraham could promise his servant, about to set out on his search for a wife for Isaac, that 'the Lord, the God of heaven . . . will send his angel with you . . . and prosper your way' (Genesis, chapter 24). Jacob in his dream at Bethel saw 'a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it', almost as though their primary function was to take earthly news to heaven (Genesis, chapter 28).

In the historical books of the Old Testament, to the angels are ascribed power to discern good and evil, the wisdom that knows everything, and the certainty of choosing aright. Belief in the goodness of angels is attested by the writer of Job, when he gives as an extreme instance that God charges 'even his angels' with error (chapter 4), and persists into New Testament times, as when it is said that the Jews in council saw Stephen's face 'like the face of an angel' (Acts, chapter 6).

Michael and Gabriel

In Daniel, the latest Old Testament book, a heavenly figure important in later doctrine about angels is introduced as 'Michael, one of the chief princes'. Michael is described as 'your prince' and 'the great prince who has charge of your people' (chapters 10, 12). This is the earliest biblical evidence of the belief that certain angels had charge of certain nations.

Another divine being named in the visions of Daniel but also not called an angel is Gabriel, who was sent to Daniel to interpret a vision. Afterwards 'the man Gabriel' came 'in swift flight' to give Daniel wisdom and understanding (chapters 8, 9). Seraphim and cherubim are presented in the Old Testament as winged but this flying man is the biblical basis for later presentations of angels wearing wings. Michael and Gabriel became important in later thought as angelic leaders. In Revelation, Michael leads the angels against the Devil in the war in heaven.

Origins of Angels

The beginnings of the biblical belief in angels must be sought in very early folklore. Our stories come from what are regarded as the early pentateuchal sources, the later writers in the Pentateuch making no mention of angels. The courts of the great kings of the Near East also were a model for the idea of a heavenly court. The gods of the Hittites and Canaanites had their supernatural messengers, and parallels to Old Testament stories of angels are found in Near Eastern literature.

In the Old Testament the functions of angels are to worship God and attend on him, standing ready to do his will; they announce coming prosperity or destruction, guard holy places, and guide and protect individuals and peoples. They manifest no personality separate from the God whose message they bear. They appear unsummoned, perform their appointed task and vanish.

After the Old Testament period, many

Jewish writings, such as Ecclesiasticus, ignore angels but others give them prominence. In Tobit Raphael guides Tobias throughout his adventure. More details are given about angelic intercession for men and their control of nations. Many more angels have personal names, they are organized in ranks, and are assigned the new function of controlling Nature and the stars.

Angels and Jesus

In the New Testament as clearly as in the Old, God may choose to communicate with man through an angel. It is interesting that at the beginning of the first gospel there appears in Joseph's dream 'an angel of the Lord' telling him of the conception of Jesus (Matthew, chapter 1) reminding us of the ancient story of Manoah in Judges. An angel of the Lord announced Jesus' birth to shepherds on the Bethlehem hills (Luke, chapter 2). Gabriel, whom we have already met as the man coming in swift flight to Daniel, is now an angel standing in the presence of God, sent to announce to Zechariah in the temple the conception of John the Baptist, and six months later to Mary at Nazareth to announce the conception of Jesus (Luke, chapter 1). Again as in the Old Testament, individual angels bring help to men.

The warm interest of angels in man's welfare is vividly expressed in the saying of Jesus that 'there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents' (Luke, chapter 15), and that children have their guardian angels standing as favoured envoys near to God himself (Matthew, chapter 18).

Such beliefs are part nf angelology, which shows a steady development since its presentation in the later books of the Old Testament. Some trace Babylonian and Persian influence on this development but it must be remembered that the angels of Zoroastrianism were abstract principles, in this quite unlike the messenger angels of the Old Testament. Others see in the number seven, which often recurs in Jewish and Christian angelology, the influence of Assyrian beliefs in seven planetary gods. But in any case there is firm evidence in the New Testament of Jewish traditions existing after the period of the Old Testament writings.

It was through Jewish Christians that angelology, based on the Old Testament and other Jewish writings, entered the teaching of the Church. Angels were set over the life of Nature, and over human communities. God was Israel's portion but Michael was her protector, taught her Hebrew and gave the law on Sinai. Every individual had his guardian angel and babies exposed or aborted were cared for by guardian angels. There continued to be angelic intercessors and messengers of revelation or warning, but further functions were more specialized. There was an Angel of Repentance who brought to man consciousness of sin and the promise of forgiveness, and an Angel of Peace received the soul as it left the body and bore it to paradise. The Angel of Death in Sheol was a good angel and guardian of souls. Good and bad angels, of light and darkness, all were under God's control.

Michael Holford

Moslems pray only to God but also ask angels to intercede for them with God. Mohammedan dwellers in the presence of God, from a Turkish manuscript in the British Museum

Wing Measurements

Crawford H. Greenewalt in his book Hummingbirds *considers how large an angel's wings would need to be, assuming a weight of about 11 stone:*

The wing from wrist to tip would be about four feet long, its total length between six and seven feet. When folded neatly into the body, the end of the wing would come just below the knee – comfortable enough for perching and walking. The wings would beat about once every second – a nice easy rhythm – not too far from a normal walking pace. The wings would, however, be heavy, perhaps a quarter the weight of the body and, alas, here lies the rub: the human frame hasn't the pectoral muscles to drive such formidable gear. Human pectorals are barely five per cent of the total body weight and a reasonable aerial job would call for at least fifteen per cent.

The Seven Heavens

Angelic rank was associated with speculation about the universe which increased to seven or eight the three heavens known to St Paul. All these were thought to be above the firmament where fallen angels were imprisoned, and all were inhabited exclusively by angels, the lower heavens by those in charge of human affairs, the upper by Angels of the Presence. According to some speculation these heavens were successive stages through which souls must pass, encountering their guardian angels to whom account must be given.

Corresponding to the seven heavens were seven archangels, this number sometimes including Christ and sometimes being additional to him. Angels continued to be given superhuman status, but were clearly distinguished from God. They were God's first creation, formed from fire. They were sometimes described as of enormous height, symbolic of their greatness. In the Gospel of Peter the heads of the two angels who bore Christ's body to heaven actually touched the skies, and the Elkesaites (an unorthodox Christian sect) knew of two angels, one of them female, 96 miles high.

The early Christian church was helped by concepts of angelology to formulate its doctrine of the Trinity, and especially of the nature and work of Jesus the Christ. By some writers Michael was equated with 'Word' and 'Son', and Gabriel with 'Spirit' and the Angel of the Spirit who entered Mary and became flesh. But from the 5th century, care was taken to avoid any heretical doctrine that Jesus was only an angel and subordinate to the Father.

Through the Middle Ages, speculation continued in angelology, and there was even learned argument as to how many angels could dance on the point of a pin. In modern theological thought angels still present concepts of 'pure spirits without physical bodies' or 'mirrors of God's mind and will'. Belief in them remains in varying degrees an article of faith, but speculations as to their origin and nature, and interpretation of human experiences of their help, are still matters of considerable debate. Throughout the centuries there have been accounts of angelic visitations – to the Celtic saints, the young Joan of Arc, and the soldiers at Mons.

Angels were sung of in carols and represented in illuminated manuscripts, sculpture and stained glass. It is consistent with the biblical record that Hamlet confronted by his father's ghost cries 'Angels and ministers of grace defend us!' and when he is killed Horatio exclaims 'Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!'

Angels are figures of light. It was because of the fairness of the English boys in the Roman slave market that Pope Gregory said that the Angles had faces of angels, and Bunyan liked to call them Shining Ones. The kindly angels of the Old Testament are behind Crashaw's description of the heavenly welcome to St Teresa:

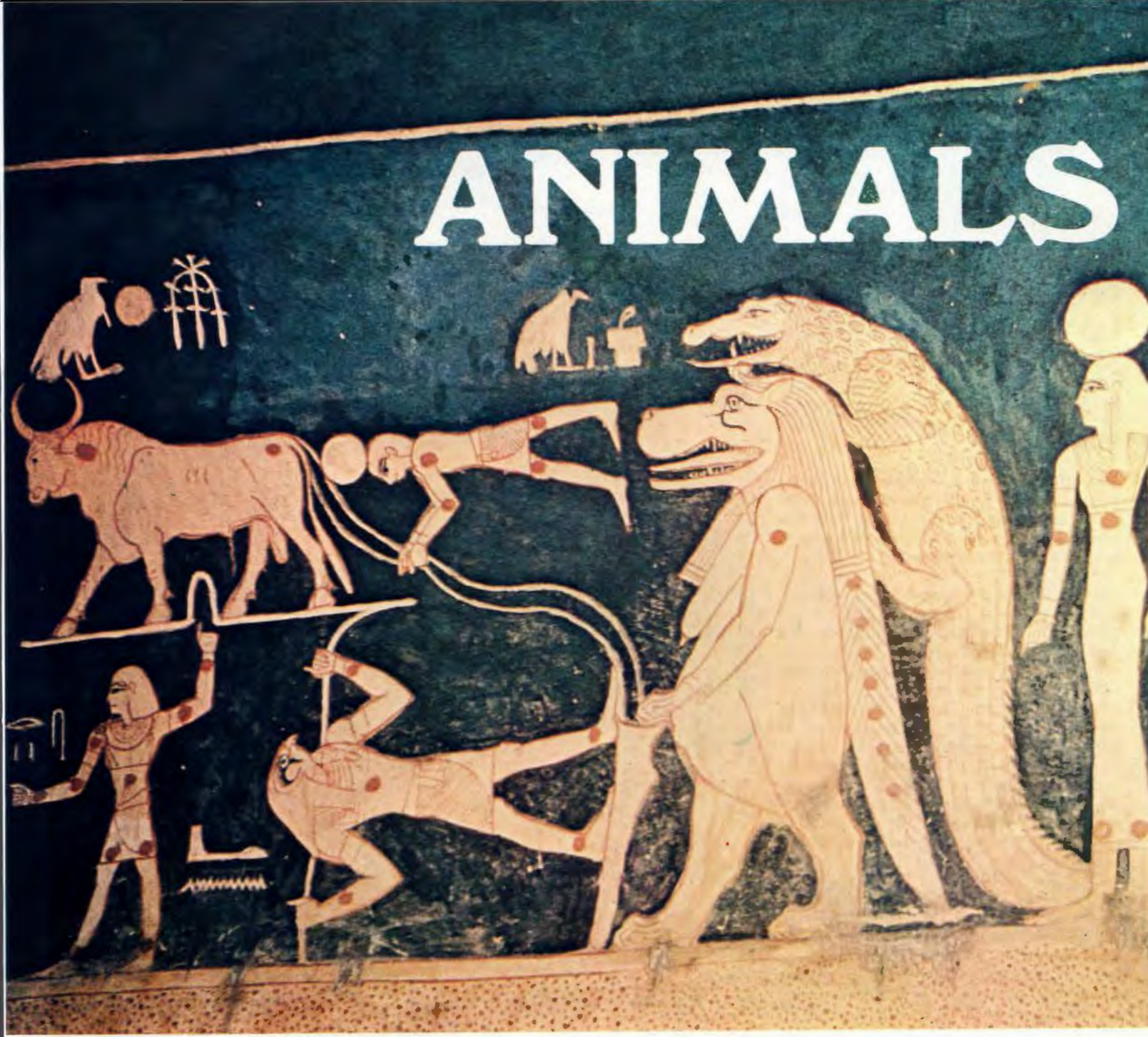
> Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet thee,
> Glad at their own home now to meet thee!

As long as the biblical record continues to be known and loved, the term 'angel' will still be used for a figure coming unsummoned, bringing from God revelation directly affecting the life of the one who receives him. (For the fallen angels, see DEMONS; DEVIL.)

J. N. SCHOFIELD

FURTHER READING: Gustav Davidson, *Dictionary of Angels* (Collier Macmillan, 1968).

ANIMALS



Teeth and claws of the Gods

Early men recognized a close link between themselves and the beasts which they feared, used or admired. They designed magical rituals to obtain the animals' powers and many animals were elevated to the realms of the gods

The hippo-crocodile goddess Taurt in a sacred procession, shown on the walls of the burying place of the Apis bulls at Sakkara in Egypt. Animals were extremely important in Egyptian religion and most of the Egyptian gods were shown in animal forms

AFRICA IS STILL sometimes troubled by outbreaks of the leopard men, who disguise themselves as leopards with masks and metal claws, pounce on a victim who they kill by piercing the jugular with their claws, and part of whose body they eat. In India sacred cows wander the streets unmolested. Long ago an Egyptian mob murdered a Roman for killing a cat. The early Christians were accused of worshipping a donkey. Norse berserkers in the skins of bears or wolves were feared for their crazed ferocity in battle. Finn mac Cumaill, a great Irish hero of legend, could turn himself into a deer or a dog at will. His two faithful hounds were the sons of his sister, who had been magically transformed into a bitch. The Minotaur of ancient fable was a man with a bull's head who lurked in the Cretan labyrinth, offspring of Queen Pasiphae and a bull that came from the sea.

In folklore there are talking animals and animals which marry human husbands or wives. Some animals are said to sense the presence of ghosts. It is lucky to see a white horse. A black cat can be either a good luck charm or an omen of evil. The Devil frequently appeared in animal form to witches, who were also accused of suckling familiar spirits in animal shape. In South America sorcerers have jaguar familiars and African witches are believed to ride on hyenas at night.

Behind all this is an outlook which does not clearly differentiate between men, animals, spirits and gods. Primitive man does not draw our accustomed distinction between human beings and animals at all. They share the world with him, on his own level, and he admires them, fears them, respects them, in a way which is foreign to us in

Gerald Cubitt

Daily Telegraph Magazine

Above **Stone horse guarding imperial tombs at Nanking, China** ***Right*** **The prehistoric White Horse of Uffington, cut into the Berkshire downs, possibly a representation of the Celtic goddess Epona, 'divine horse'**

cities or in our long-domesticated countryside. They are creatures of the same kind as himself, though differently shaped and in some ways better equipped. So they can turn into men, and vice versa. If a man wants to acquire the speed of the deer, the strength of the bear, the cunning of the fox, the night sight of the cat, he imitates the animal. He dresses up in its skin, mimics its cries, dances out its movements. He ruts as a stag, as a leopard he sinks his fangs into flesh. By concentratedly imagining himself as an animal, he can induce a state of mind in which he feels he has become it.

The line between man and animal is easily crossed, man being an animal himself. So is the line between animals and the spirit world, because in primitive thought everything that exists has a spirit as well as a body (see ANIMISM). Men have souls which survive death: so do animals, and like the ghosts of men their spirits may be good or evil. The gods, like the animals, have powers which surpass those of men. A god may be seen in an animal which shares some quality with him. And the magical mimicry by which a man turns himself into a beast may also be the magic by which he transforms himself into a god.

Man-Wallaby

Totemism is a type of social organization in which groups of people associate themselves closely with an animal (or a plant or an object – see TOTEM) as wolf-men, bear-men or whatever it may be. They use the totem as a badge of identification, much as a feudal knight was identifiable by the emblems on his armour, and the system may have originated from resemblances between a man and a particular animal. But it was evidently not merely a matter of saying of someone, 'he looks or behaves like a bear' but of implying, 'he *is* a bear'. In Australia, 'even today, when an aborigine says he is, for example, wallaby, he means what he says. He and the wallaby species are "one flesh". . .' (see AUSTRALIA). Except in special circumstances he does not kill or eat a wallaby, and he and his group are responsible for carrying out 'the rituals which ensure a plentiful supply of wallabies for everyone else. This is because he and the wallabies are descended from the same ancestor, a hero of long ago who was both a man and a wallaby.

Sacred Cat and Crocodile

Whether totemism lies behind the animal cults of Egypt is disputed, as there is no certain evidence of any totemic stage in Egyptian history, but the importance of animals in Egyptian religion astonished Greek, Roman and early Christian authors and embarrasses Egyptologists. Most, though not all, of the Egyptian gods were portrayed as animals, or as human beings with animals' heads, or in other mixed human and animal shapes. The sky goddess Hathor could be shown as a cow or as a woman's face with the horns and ears of a cow. The goddess Taurt, 'the great one', had the head of a hippo, the back and tail of a crocodile, a woman's breasts and the claws of a lioness.

Some animals were sacred in particular localities: the people of Bubastis in the Nile delta, home of the cat goddess Bast, would never kill a cat; in the Faiyum, where Sebek the crocodile god was worshipped, there was a pool of sacred crocodiles. Huge cemeteries have been discovered containing the mummified bodies of dogs, cats, crocodiles, falcons and bulls. Recent excavations at Sakkara have found

The mimicry by which a man turns himself into a beast may also be the magic by which he transforms himself into a god

traces of a cemetery of mummified baboons, who were given names and apparently venerated as gods.

All cats were divine in Bubastis but in other instances only one animal of a species embodied a god. At Memphis the Apis bull lived in splendour as 'the herald of Ptah', a god who was not himself represented as a bull but always in human form. When the bull died, a calf with the special markings which identified it as the successor had to be found. For 40 days the calf was attended by women, who at intervals displayed their sexual organs to him. Then he was brought by boat to Memphis, his cabin lined with gold.

The prominence of animals in Egyptian religion was not merely a tolerated survival from more primitive times. Their cults aroused genuine devotion and were costly of time, trouble and money. In the late 4th century BC the funeral of one Apis bull was so expensive that the funds set aside for it were used up and it was necessary to borrow an extra amount equivalent to £25,000 in modern money. Henri Frankfort has commented that 'there is something altogether peculiar about the meaning which animals possessed for the Egyptians. Elsewhere, in Africa or North America, for example, it seems that either the terror of animal strength or the strong bond, the mutual dependence of man and beast (in the case of cattle cults, for instance), explains animal worship. But in Egypt *the animal as such*, irrespective of its specific nature, seems to possess religious significance; and the significance was so great that even the mature speculation of later times rarely dispensed with animal forms in plastic or literary images referring to the gods.'

Animal and God

One theory of animal gods is that the god is first worshipped as an animal and later acquires human characteristics. His human nature grows gradually more important until he becomes fully human, though the animal often retains a connection with him and is sacred to him. But in many cases no such evolutionary pattern can be demonstrated; for Egyptian deities, for instance, or for Celtic gods. For example, the Celtic god Cernunnos, 'the horned one', who was closely connected with the stag and also with a peculiar ram-horned serpent, appears as part stag or serpent and part human in both the earliest and the latest representations of him.

Again, although the symbolism of an animal and its connection with a particular god naturally tend to be based on its own most striking characteristics, the symbolism and the origin of the connection are not always clear. Wolves, as fierce predators, are associated with war gods, like the Roman Mars or the Teutonic Tyr, but also with the Greek god Apollo, who was not a war god. The inquisitive and chattering baboon seems well suited to Thoth, the Egyptian god of intelligent inquiry who invented speech. But whether this is the correct explanation and whether, if it is, the ape was connected with the god because it embodied part of his nature or, the other way round, its connection with him for some other reason influenced later ideas of his nature, is uncertain.

The Front Rank of Nature

To primitive man nature is his living larder, to which – especially at the lowest stages of culture – he has to repair directly in order to gather, cook, and eat when hungry. The road from the wilderness to the savage's belly and consequently to his mind is very short, and for him the world is an indiscriminate background against which there stand out the useful, primarily the edible, species of animals or plants . . . A sentiment of social nature is built round each species, a sentiment which naturally finds its expression in folklore, belief and ritual.

. . . the same type of impulse which makes small children delight in birds, take a keen interest in animals, and shrink from reptiles, places animals in the front rank of nature for primitive man. By their general affinity with man – they move, utter sounds, manifest emotions, have bodies and faces like him – and by their superior powers – the birds fly in the open, the fishes swim under water, reptiles renew their skins and their life and can disappear in the earth – by all this the animal, the intermediate link between man and nature, often his superior in strength, agility and cunning, usually his indispensable quarry, assumes an exceptional place in the savage's view of the world.

Bronislaw Malinowski
Magic, Science and Religion

Immortal Snake

One beast which has taken a firm grip on the human imagination is the serpent. It was thought to have found the secret of avoiding death, because it sloughs its old skin and appears rejuvenated in a new one, and so in myths like the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh it steals the immortality which the gods had meant for man. This may have been its original role in the story of Adam and Eve (see FIRST MAN). The Eden story later gave the serpent its connection with the Devil, a connection assisted by the snake's phallic shape which linked it with lust, and also with fertility.

Some snakes were seen to live in holes in the ground or to appear from crannies in rocks, which connected them with the earth, with fertility again, and with the underworld and the dead. In Mesopotamia the Sumerian and Babylonian goddesses of the underworld were identified as serpents. In Greece sacred snakes were one of the marks of an underground god or spirit; honey-cakes were offered to them. The Fijian god Ndengei is a giant snake who lives in a cave and when he moves the earth quakes.

The cult of the house snake, offered milk and breadcrumbs, and addressed as 'master of the house', is not entirely dead in Greece even yet. There are many shrines of snake gods in India and python gods were common in Africa until this century. The plumed serpent appears in ancient Mexican religions and snakes, especially rattlesnakes, in the myths and rituals of North American Indians.

Bull and Boar

The bull is another important beast in the history of religions, impressive for its strength, its pawing hoof and fierce charge, and its formidable sexual powers. Enlil, the great Babylonian god of fertility and storm, was addressed as 'overpowering ox, exalted overpowering ox'. Gods of thunder, storm and rain, which fertilizes the earth, were often pictured as bulls. In India the Aryan sky god Dyaus, the red bull who smiles through the clouds, 'bellows downwards', which evidently means 'thunders', and later several Hindu gods have bull forms. Mithras, the Persian god of light whose cult

Michael Holford

British Museum

rivalled Christianity in the early centuries AD, was connected with the bull. In Crete the spectacular and lethal sport of bull-leaping was a religious ritual. The first Minos, or bull king of Crete, had been begotten by Zeus in the form of a bull, and the bull was also connected with the noise and destruction of earthquakes. The horns of the bull, as of other horned animals like the stag, were widely regarded as peculiarly sacred and powerful (see HORNS).

Celtic mythology abounds with sacred boars, magic pigs which reappear whole after being killed and eaten, and fearsome supernatural boars which are hunted by heroes. In Welsh legend, King Arthur and his men hunted Twrch Trwyth, a king who had been turned into a boar, for the treasures, a comb and shears, which he carried between his ears. Pork was the meat on which chieftains feasted in northern Europe, as did warriors after death in Valhalla, and the Celts buried pigs' bones and joints of pork with the dead. But elsewhere, as among Jews and Mohammedans, pig's flesh has been considered 'unclean' and forbidden.

Sun Chariot

The horse-taming nomads of southern Russia, who spread into northern Europe, Greece, the Middle East and India in successive waves over a period of hundreds of years after c 2000 BC, connected their swift and powerful stallions with the sun, and imagined the sun crossing the sky in a horse-drawn chariot. The Celtic war god was closely associated with horses, perhaps because of the use of horse chariots in battle, and in France and Britain the Celtic goddess Epona, 'divine horse', was popular with the cavalrymen of Roman armies. Freyr, the fertility god of the Vikings, was linked with both the boar and the horse.

The Animal in Man

The sacred horses of Freyr illustrate one of the reasons for sacrificing an animal to a god, which is simply to give him a good meal. In the 10th century AD a Christian king of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, went to Thrandheim and seized a stallion which was about to be sacrificed 'for Freyr to eat'. But there is another and deeper motive, for the slaughtered animal may be believed to embody the god and the worshipper who eats its flesh eats the god; if only temporarily and partially, he becomes the god (see FOOD AND DRINK).

In the savagely orgiastic worship of Dionysus the lines between animal, man and god were spectacularly crossed. Dionysus was described as 'mad' and 'raving' (see DIONYSUS). His worshippers, who were predominantly women, went out to the mountainside dressed in the skins of fawns, some of them suckling young animals at the breast, baby deer perhaps or wolf cubs. As they sang and danced they felt a strange excitement. They began to run, finding in themselves superhuman energy and strength, until in frenzy they hunted down animals, wild or tame, and tore them to pieces alive, gnawing at the raw flesh. They behaved, in fact, as if they were animals in animals' skins, suckling their young or tearing their prey. In the release of fierce animal passion their god possessed them: and it seems that the animals they hunted embodied Dionysus himself so that torn and devoured, he became one with his worshippers.

The same principle, that by imitating an animal and giving free rein to the animal elements in his nature, a man can reach a state of frenzied intoxication which breaks the chains that bind him to his human condition and makes him a sharer in the divine, appears in many other parts of the world. It lies behind the pagan European customs of dancing in animal costumes and masks which the Church tried to suppress and which have been preserved or revived in existing folk ceremonies. The *Liber Poenitentialis* of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 7th century, forbids people to dress up as stags or bulls or to put on the heads of beasts on the first day of January.

All Creatures Great and Small

Medieval Christianity had its animal symbolism too. The lamb and the fish stood for Christ, the dove for the Holy Ghost, the sheep for the righteous, the goats for the wicked. Animals were carved in profusion in churches, not only as pleasing decorations but because God made them all and in each of them could be seen something of the mind of the Creator. The man, the lion, the ox and the eagle, which stood for the authors of the four gospels, also showed that the complete Christian must be a man for reason, a lion for courage, an ox for sacrifice

Constantino Reyes-Valerio

Far left Many Indian gods have animal incarnations: Vishnu as a boar, from a 17th century processional chariot
Left The Minotaur of ancient fable was a man with a bull's head who lurked in the Cretan labyrinth. 'There is a labyrinth in the heart of every man; and to each comes the day when he must reach the centre, and meet the Minotaur' (Mary Renault, *The Last of the Wine*)
Right Part of a mural showing the old Mexican myth of a battle between the gods Tezcatlipoca (the jaguar, standing for night and death) and Huitzilopochtli (the eagle, standing for day and life)

and an eagle for contemplation.

In the bestiaries fables of animals taken from pagan authors were given Christian interpretations, like the fable of the male elephant, an animal in its sagacity so totally uninterested in sex that he would mate only when the female gave him the aphrodisiac mandrake plant to eat. The elephants were interpreted as Adam and Eve in Eden, the mandrake as the forbidden fruit. Not until Eve gave Adam the fruit did he know sexual desire and the result was the expulsion from paradise. In the habits of the elephant God had painted the lesson of the Fall for men to see and understand.

Astrology and Magic

The European magical tradition, also seeing the universe as a logical design and interested in the underlying links connecting it together, makes much play with animal symbolism. Most of the signs of the zodiac are named for animals and traditional popular astrological lore is interestingly totemistic, in the sense that people are supposed to have the characteristics of their zodiac animal. Those born under Capricorn, the Goat, are told that they butt away obstacles and leap over difficulties like goats bounding from crag to crag. Those born under Leo, the Lion, are commanding and powerful like the king of beasts, and have fine heads of hair (manes) and large handwriting (paw marks).

In magic an animal is used for its own inherent occult qualities or because of its links with supernatural forces (see CORRESPONDENCES; RITUAL MAGIC). 'If we would call any evil Spirit to the Circle', says the *Fourth Book*, added to Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* but probably not written by him, 'it first behoveth us to consider and to know his nature, to which of the planets it agreeth . . .' It describes the forms in which the spirits may show themselves, including a she-goat, camel and dove for spirits connected with Venus, a horse or a stag for those of Mars, a cow or a goose for spirits of the moon. Other magical textbooks give similar descriptions, following the tradition which goes back to ancient Mesopotamia that demons appear in animal forms.

The purpose is to help the magician to understand the nature of the spirit or demon which he attempts to summon up and master. Its animal symbols and characteristics contribute to a vivid mental picture of it, on which the magician concentrates during the ceremony in which it is conjured up. Behind this is the old magical belief that to imagine supernatural power, in its appropriate animal or other form, is to be possessed by it, to become it, to control it.

(See also BIRDS, FISH, INSECTS and articles on individual animals.)

FURTHER READING: There is much interesting material in J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980) though not all Frazer's conclusions are now accepted; also in Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New American Library). For the Celts see Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Columbia University Press, 1967); for Egypt, Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Harper Row, 1961); for the bull, J. R. Conrad, *The Horn and the Sword* (Greenwood, 1973).

Animism is the belief that spirits inhabit everything in Nature; every hill, tree and stream, every breeze and cloud, every stone and pool, has its own spirit – a belief once seen as the origin of all religions

ANIMISM

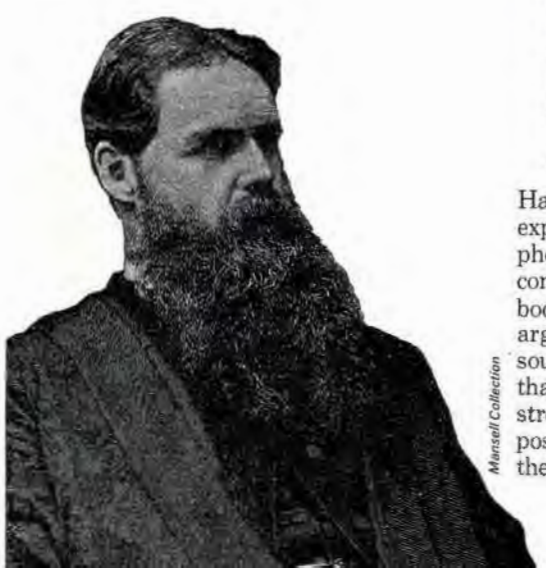
DURING THE 19TH CENTURY various theories based on the scientific knowledge of the time were developed to explain the origin of religion. One of these theories was put forward by the Professor of Anthropology at Oxford, Sir Edward Tylor, who suggested in his book *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871, that Animism was the 'minimum' definition of religion and the explanation of its origin.

Tylor described animism as 'the doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general.' The name is derived from the Latin words *animus* and *anima*, which could mean 'life, soul, spirit', and were essentially connected with the 'life-breath'. Tylor argued that animism was the earliest stage in the evolution of religion.

> It seems as though thinking men, as yet at a low level of culture, were deeply impressed by two groups of biological problems. In the first place, what is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one; what causes waking, sleep, trance, disease, death? In the second place, what are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions? Looking at these two groups of phenomena, the ancient savage philosophers probably made their first step by the obvious inference that every man has two things belonging to him, namely, a life and a phantom. These two are evidently in close connexion with the body, the life as enabling it to feel and think and act, the phantom as being its image or second self; both, also, are perceived to be things separable from the body, the life as being able to go away and leave it insensible or dead, the phantom as appearing to people at a distance from it.

Above **Animism is the belief that everything in Nature has a soul as well as a body: Indian tree spirit**

Below **Sir Edward Tylor, who put forward the theory of animism to explain the origin of religion**



Mansell Collection

Michael Holford

A Multitude of Spirits

Tylor went on to argue that primitive man assumed that the 'life' and the 'phantom' were 'manifestations of the same soul'. From this combination emerged the idea of the soul as an apparition or a ghost. In turn, this idea produced the conception of the personal soul or spirit. Tylor graphically described this *anima* or soul.

> It is a thin unsubstantial human image, in its nature a sort of vapour, film, or shadow; the cause of life and thought in the individual it animates; independently possessing the personal consciousness and volition of its corporeal owner, past or present; capable of leaving the body far behind, to flash swiftly from place to place; mostly impalpable and invisible, yet also manifesting physical power, and especially appearing to men waking or asleep as a phantasm separate from the body of which it bears the likeness; continuing to exist and appear to men after the death of that body; able to enter into, possess, and act in the bodies of other men, of animals, and even of things.'

Having argued that primitive man, from his experience of dreams and other related phenomena, conceived of a soul as the conscious animating entity within its own body, Tylor made a further deduction. He argued that from his conception of a personal soul, primitive man would have concluded that all natural phenomena, such as trees, streams, clouds, sun, moon and stars, also possessed souls that animated them, giving them life and movement.

This idea was vividly presented by Sir James Frazer, the famous disciple of Tylor and the author of one of the most influential studies of religion, *The Golden Bough*.

> After men had peopled with a multitude of individual spirits every rock and hill, every tree and flower, every brook and river, every breeze that blew, and every cloud that flecked with silvery white the blue expanse of heaven, they began, in virtue of what we may call the economy of thought, to limit the number of the spiritual beings of whom their imagination at first had been so prodigal. Instead of a separate spirit for every individual tree, they came to conceive of a god of the woods in general, a Silvanus or what not; instead of personifying all the winds as gods, each with his distinct character and features, they imagined a single god of the winds, an Aeolus, for example . . . To put it otherwise, the innumerable multitude of spirits and demons were generalized and reduced to a comparatively small number of deities; animism was replaced by polytheism.

It was believed that from this stage of the worship of many gods (polytheism), certain more enlightened peoples advanced to the idea of one solitary deity (monotheism), as among the Jews and Christians.

The Modern Attitude

The theory of animism as an explanation of the original nature of religion did not go unchallenged. A later Professor of Anthropology at Oxford, R. R. Marett, criticized Tylor's theory on the ground that it presupposed a consciousness of personality that was unlikely to have existed in the earliest stages of culture. Marett pointed out that supernaturalism, the attitude of the mind dictated by awe of the mysterious, which provided religion with its raw material, could exist apart from animism and might be the basis on which animism was founded.

Although animism long exercised a strong formative influence on speculation about the nature and origin of religion, more recent study approaches the problem along different lines. The earliest written records of religion, the Egyptian *Pyramid Texts* (c 2400 BC) reveal that in ancient Egypt there existed no idea of a clear-cut division between soul and body in human nature. On the contrary, a human being was regarded as a compound of physical body and various psychic elements of which the soul was only one. Similar, though less elaborate, conceptions were held by many other ancient peoples, including the Mesopotamians, Hebrews and Homeric Greeks. Tylor's dualistic idea of the soul as the inner essential self, independent of the body, first emerged comparatively late in India (c 700 BC) and Greece (c 600 BC).

The origin of the idea of deity is also far more complicated than Tylor thought. The evidence of archeology indicates that the earliest form of deity was that of the Mother Goddess, the deification of the female principle, which expressed man's desire for fertility and new life.

(See also ASTRAL BODY; BREATH; GHOSTS; ORIGINS OF RELIGION; SOUL.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

St Anthony of Egypt is best known for the attacks made on him by demons. It has been suggested that these experiences were caused by the acid from which L.S.D. is derived

ST ANTHONY

A CHRISTIAN ASCETIC, noted for his victorious struggles against demons, St Anthony was born in Egypt, c 250 AD. St Athanasius, in the following century, wrote a biography of him, which says that he was brought up as a Christian by his wealthy parents. He was extremely devout as a boy and was too sensitive to be sent to school, so that he never learned to read or write. His parents died before he was 20 and he lived alone; 'he took no care for anything whatsoever except his soul, and he began to train himself in the habits of the strictest abstinence and self-denial.'

He lived on bread, salt and water, fasting for three or four days at a time and going without sleep for long periods. The Devil tempted him with anxieties over worldly matters, by sending him 'filthy and maddening thoughts' and by appearing to him as a woman, but the saint was able to resist these assaults and concentrate on God.

When he went to live in a tomb near his village, he was attacked by multitudes of demons, which raged at him and pummelled him into unconsciousness, but he defied them. They also appeared to him in frightening animal forms, a famous episode because it was portrayed by painters of later generations. These demonic visitations may have been a natural result of the privations which the saint imposed on himself, and St Athanasius called them 'phantasms' or hallucinations but did not doubt that they were sent by the Enemy. 'The whole race of devils,' he said, 'is beyond measure an envious one and it is altogether jealous of all mankind and particularly of the monks, for they cannot bear to see . . . heavenly lives led upon the earth.'

More recently, it has been suggested that the saint may have eaten bread infected with the fungus *Claviceps purpurea*, which contains lysergic acid, from which the drug L.S.D. is derived.

When he was 31, St Anthony withdrew from human company altogether, shutting himself away in an old fort where he spent the next 20 years. Food was thrown in to him over the wall. He continued his ascetic self-denials 'and to the day of his death,' according to St Athanasius, 'he never touched his body with water . . . and he never dipped his feet in water without the sternest necessity.' A colony of disciples gathered round him, living in caves and huts, and vainly begging him for spiritual guidance. In the end he agreed to help them and spent several years teaching them and organizing them into a community. He is regarded as the founder of Christian monasticism.

The saint retreated from mankind again and spent the rest of his life as a solitary in the desert, though he received occasional visitors and went to Alexandria twice.

St Anthony and the Demons

From a biography of the Saint, written in the 4th century AD:

Now it is very easy for the Enemy to create apparitions and appearances of such a character that they shall be deemed real and actual objects, and phantasms of this kind caused a phantom earthquake, and they rent asunder the four corners of the house and entered therein in a body from all sides. One had the form of a lion and another had the appearance of a wolf and another was like unto a panther and all the others were in the forms and similitudes of serpents and vipers and scorpions. The lion was roaring as a lion roars when he is about to slay; the bull was ready to gore with his horns; the panther was prepared to spring; and the snakes and the vipers were hissing, and they appeared to be in the act of hurling themselves upon him; and the sounds which they made and the forms in which they showed themselves were terrible.

Now the blessed man ANTHONY was not disturbed by their commotion, and his mind remained wholly undisturbed. And as he was lying down he laughed at these phantoms . . .

St Athanasius
The Life of Saint Anthony

The bizarre and nightmare visions of St Anthony have fired the imagination of many artists. *The Temptation of St Anthony* by the Dutch painter Hieronymous Bosch

Michael Holford

ANTICHRIST

THE FEAR OF A MESSIAH of evil, who would come with war, plague, famine and destruction to enslave the world, haunted men for hundreds of years in Europe, rather as the fear of nuclear war makes an ominous background to our lives now; though with a consolation we lack, the belief that Antichrist would eventually be overthrown by God. As Christ's opposite, Antichrist would claim to be God and would work miracles, raising the dead, walking on water, healing the sick, turning stones into bread, but his miracles would be shams. The Jews also expected the coming of the evil power and it was said that he would be bald, with one eye bigger than the other, his left arm longer than his right, and deaf in his right ear; right being traditionally the side of good.

The early Christians adopted the Jewish belief in a coming titanic battle between God and an evil adversary. The first human model for the adversary was the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who captured Jerusalem in the 2nd century BC and used the temple for the worship of pagan gods.

In the New Testament 2 Thessalonians (chapter 2) predicts the coming of 'the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition', who will claim to be God. Revelation (chapter 13) predicts the appearance of the Great Beast 666, supported by a second beast, who was later identified as Antichrist. The first and second letters of John describe rebels inside the Christian flock itself as 'antichrists', which set a precedent for the later employment of the word as a term of abuse, used by Christians for other Christians who failed to agree with them.

Opponents of Popes Boniface VIII and John XXII labelled each of them as Antichrist and many Protestants later regarded all Popes as Antichrist, an idea which lingers on among a few extreme Protestants. In this century the Kaiser and Hitler were both described as Antichrist.

(See also GREAT BEAST.)

In this 15th century fresco by Signorelli the Antichrist is shown working false miracles and deluding the people, but is overthrown by an angel in the sky

Scala

Antisemitism

Hostility to Jews, based partly on Jewish religious exclusiveness and partly on beliefs about supposed Jewish racial characteristics: common in Europe since the establishment of Christianity, and one of the ugliest principles of the Nazi programme in Germany.

See RACE MYTHS.

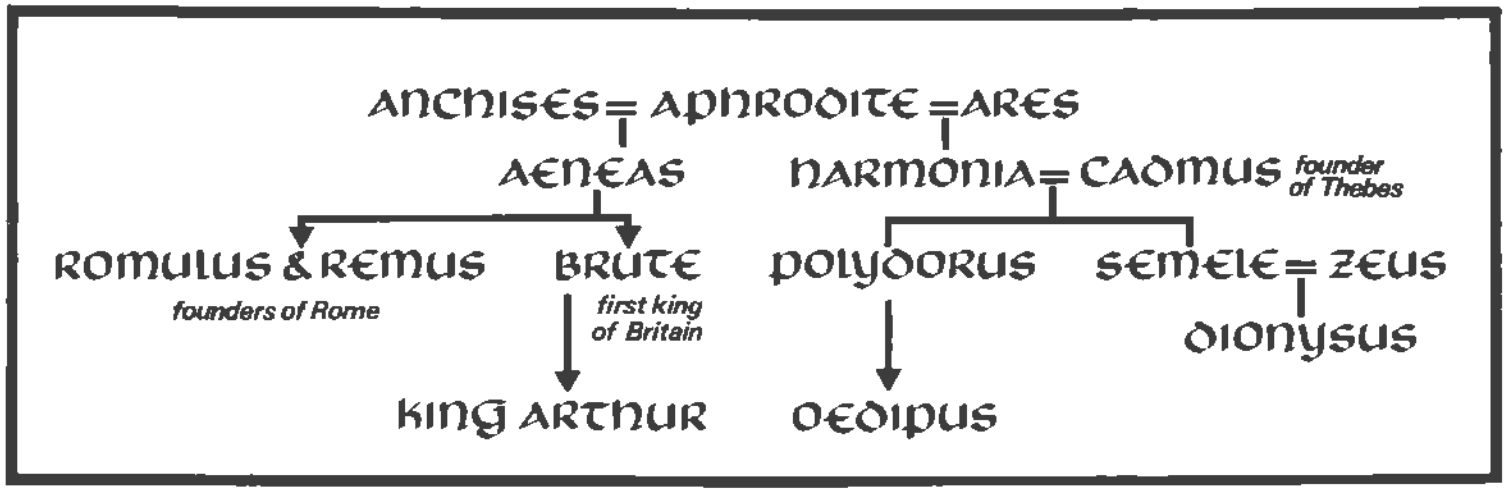
Popperfoto

Anubis

Egyptian god of the dead, 'lord of the mummy wrappings' and inventor of embalming, who led the dead to the place of judgement after death and supervised the weighing of the heart; shown as a black jackal or a dog, both of which roamed the cemeteries in the Egyptian desert.

See JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.

William MacQuitty



Golden Aphrodite, lover of laughter, born of the sea-foam, was the Greek goddess of love and beauty. Homer refers to 'the beauty of her neck and her lovely breasts and sparkling eyes'

APHRODITE

APHRODITE WAS THE ancient Greek goddess of love, beauty, generation and fertility. She was, naturally, a popular goddess and her cult was widespread throughout almost all of the Greek world. The Romans identified her with their goddess Venus. She had famous sanctuaries at Corinth and on the island of Cythera, at Paphos and Amathus in Cyprus, and at Eryx in the west of Sicily. She figures prominently in Greek mythology, beginning with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer (8th century BC) and the poetry of Hesiod (c 700 BC).

Despite her great popularity and important place in Greek religion and culture, Aphrodite was not in origin a native Greek goddess. Her cult came to Greece from Cyprus, where she was known as Kypris (Lady of Cyprus). Aphrodite was probably a local Cypriot version of the great mother goddess, whose worship under various names was almost universal throughout the Near and Middle East in ancient times, and was of great antiquity. The many primitive idols found in Cyprus, depicting a naked female figure with the sexual attributes grossly emphasized, are probably archaic representations of this mother goddess, to whom the ancient inhabitants of Cyprus gave the name of Aphrodite.

The Foam-Born

There has been much learned but inconclusive discussion about the original meaning of the goddess's name. The Greeks, from the time of Hesiod, tried to explain it as deriving from the word *aphros*, 'foam', in the sense that Aphrodite was 'foam-born'. Hesiod in his *Theogony* accounts for this 'foam-birth' in a strange way. Describing the origin of the universe, he tells how Earth gave birth to various beings through cohabiting with Uranus, the personification of Heaven. Uranus proved a tyrannous sire and imprisoned his offspring within the body of Earth, so that she groaned with the burden. Release came finally when Cronus, one of the sons of Earth, with the connivance of his mother, castrated his father. Cronus threw the severed genitals into the sea, and a white foam gathered around them, from which a maiden emerged. According to Hesiod, 'first she drew near to holy Cythera, and from there, afterwards, she came to sea-girt Cyprus, and came forth an awful and lovely goddess, and grass grew up about her beneath her shapely feet.'

This idyllic scene has been immortalized by the Renaissance artist Botticelli in his painting, *The Birth of Venus*.

This strange tale, so shocking in conception and yet so poetic in its presentation of Aphrodite, may provide a clue to the origin of some of the Greek myths about the origin of the universe. On Hittite clay tablets there has been found an even stranger and more primitive myth of a primordial act of castration: the sky-god Alalus is emasculated by a divine hero Kumarbis, who swallows the genitals and becoming impregnated by them, gives birth to the storm god. Since it is known that the Achaeans (one of the earliest of the peoples we call Greeks), had dealings with the Hittites of Asia Minor, it is possible that Hesiod drew on some tradition that derived ultimately from this region.

The Hittite myth does not deal with the origin of a goddess like Aphrodite. But the similarity of the theme of generation resulting from the severed genitals of a god is remarkable, especially since Aphrodite personified the principle of generation. According to Hesiod's *Theogony*, Aphrodite was also called Philommedes (member-loving) because she 'sprang from the genitals'. The Christian scholar Clement of Alexandria, writing in the early 3rd century against pagan religion, asserts with reference to the name Philommedes that in the rites of Aphrodite, her birth from the sea-foam was symbolized by the presentation of a cake of salt and a phallus.

Bronze head, 2nd century BC, of Aphrodite, goddess of love and the supreme embodiment of feminine beauty, originally a Cypriot mother goddess

Michael Holford

Desire as a Universal Force

In his account of the origin of things, Hesiod still further emphasizes the fundamental sexual significance of Aphrodite by associating her with Eros: 'And with her went Eros, and comely Himeros (Desire) followed her at her birth.' The Eros of Hesiod is not the young god of love or the mischievous Cupid of later mythology. He is a powerful creative force, described by Hesiod as one who 'unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise counsels of all gods and all men'.

It is evident that Hesiod regarded the traditional gods as deifications of basic universal forces. Seeing the creation of the universe in sexual terms, as the product of the intercourse of various pairs of cosmic beings, he felt the need for some factor that would unite and make fruitful the unions of the various pairs. In Eros he saw such a factor but he probably also drew on a primitive folk-tradition, where this view already existed. For the Athenian dramatist Aeschylus, in the 5th century BC, gives eloquent expression to the idea in some lines that have survived from his lost play of the *Danaids*. 'Love moves the pure Heaven to wed the Earth; and Love (*eros*) takes hold on Earth to join in marriage. And the rain, dropping from the husband Heaven, impregnates Earth, and she brings forth for men pasture for flocks and corn, the life of man.'

It would seem that the ancient Greeks had already made a god of sexual potency an agent in the creation of the universe, under the name of Eros, long before Aphrodite

Giraudon

Detail from Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*: the goddess riding on a shell, an emblem of woman, over the sea from whose foam she was born

entered their religion. Mindful of this, Hesiod evidently seeks to account for the later appearance of Aphrodite as the goddess of sexual love by using the strange and probably foreign myth of the castration of a primordial deity. By so doing he also manages to explain her non-Greek name of Aphrodite and to associate her with Eros, the older deification of the mysterious force that prompted the union of the sexes for the purpose of procreation. (See also EROS.)

Love and War

Hesiod's account of Aphrodite is especially important because, though somewhat later in date than Homer, he is aware of Aphrodite as a newcomer among the Greek deities; in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* she has already been included in the company of the Olympian gods. Homer makes her the daughter of the supreme god Zeus and Dione, an obscure goddess. However, two small facts may preserve some tradition of Aphrodite's eastern origin. In Homer she is the wife of Hephaestus, the lame fire-god and divine craftsman, who was certainly of oriental origin. And her love affair with the war god Ares recalls the fact that some eastern goddesses, including Ishtar of Mesopotamia and Anat-Astarte of Canaan and Phoenicia, combined the roles of goddess of fertility and goddess of war.

In the Homeric poems, Aphrodite is often portrayed in a rather undignified manner, although she is 'golden Aphrodite', the daughter of Zeus. In the *Iliad* the goddess Hera is depicted as consulting her when she wanted to beguile her husband Zeus. The goddess asks Aphrodite to give her 'love and desire, wherewith thou art wont to subdue all immortals and mortal men.' Aphrodite helps by lending Hera the embroidered girdle that adorned her breast, 'wherein are fashioned all manner of allurements'. Such a service was probably deemed proper to the goddess of love, even though it assisted in the deception of the supreme god Zeus.

But more surprising, and contrary to our ideas of the status of a goddess, are two other episodes in which Aphrodite is involved. The first occurs in the *Iliad* in a lively account of the fighting before the walls of Troy. The Greek hero Diomedes severely wounds Aeneas, a Trojan leader who was the son of Aphrodite by Anchises, a mortal man. Aphrodite, seeing her human son in danger of death, intervenes to save him. When Diomedes recognizes the goddess he is not deterred but lunges at her with his spear. Aphrodite is wounded in the wrist, and the immortal *ichor*, which the Greek deities have instead of mortal blood, pours out. Aphrodite gives a piercing scream, drops the wounded Aeneas and flees, while Diomedes derides her.

The idea that a goddess could be wounded by the weapon of a mortal man is certainly strange, and we can only wonder why the Homeric poet depicted the goddess of love as suffering so humiliating and painful an experience. He seems, while recognizing

her divinity, to mock the idea that she should participate in war. It may be that in this manner he rebuts some older tradition of a warlike aspect which the Greek Aphrodite had inherited from her eastern origins.

Under the Net

Even more degrading is the episode recorded in the *Odyssey*, where a minstrel sings of the illicit love of Ares and Aphrodite. He tells how Helius, the sun god, reported their liaison to Hephaestus, the lame and deformed husband of Aphrodite. Furious at the news, the craftsman god plans the punishment of the guilty pair. He forges a net too fine to be seen but too strong to be broken, and spreads it about the bed in his house. Giving out that he is leaving to visit his favourite sanctuary, he sets the trap for the lovers. Ares seizes the opportunity of the husband's departure to visit Aphrodite. Warned by Helius, Hephaestus turns back and discovers the lovers together in his bed, where they are enmeshed by the invisible but imprisoning bonds. Hephaestus calls the other gods to witness the shameful spectacle. The gods gather in ribald mirth but the goddesses keep demurely away. Hephaestus demands that Zeus pay back the bridal gifts before he releases his shameless daughter and her paramour. The sea god Poseidon finally persuades the angry Hephaestus to let the guilty couple go, by guaranteeing the payment of damages by Ares. The extraordinary episode ends by describing the 'laughter-loving' Aphrodite's retreat to Paphos in Cyprus, 'where is her demesne and fragrant altar. There the Graces anointed her with immortal oil . . . and clothed her in a lovely raiment, a wonder to behold.'

Aphrodite Beautiful

Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights as she moved.

Tennyson *Oenone*

Little, unfortunately, is known of the nature and form of the rites which were performed in the various temples of Aphrodite. At Corinth and in Cyprus she was served by sacred prostitutes; and at Abydos there was a temple of Aphrodite Porne (Aphrodite the Harlot). This connection with ritual prostitution attests Aphrodite's eastern origin; for the custom prevailed at the cult-centres of many eastern goddesses.

Aphrodite, however, was also the divine patron of marriage. At Athens, under the title of Pandemos (of all the people), her cult was dignified and unobjectionable. She had, in fact, many sides to her nature: she was a sea goddess, a goddess of animals, of gardens, and even of death – there was a small statue at Delphi called 'Aphrodite by the Tomb'. This last association is not surprising, for the great mother goddess was also a subterranean deity concerned with the dead.

In mythology Aphrodite was also associated with the three Graces or *Charites* (personifications of charm, grace and beauty) and with the Hours *(Horae)*, goddesses of the seasons. Various animals were connected with her (including doves, sparrows, swans, dolphins and mussels) and forms of vegetation (roses, myrtle, cypress and pomegranates).

Anemones for Adonis

Aphrodite's connection with Adonis (well known through Shakespeare's poem *Venus and Adonis*) reveals most clearly her original association with the Great Goddess of the ancient Near East. The story of Adonis appears in its most complete form in the *Metamorphoses* of the Latin poet Ovid (17 AD). Adonis is the incestuous offspring of Cinyras, King of Cyprus, and his daughter Myrrha who, in consequence of her sin, is transformed into a myrrh tree (the myrrh, exuded from the bark, is explained as the tears of Myrrha). This metamorphosis of his mother occurs before Adonis is born and his subsequent birth from the myrrh tree is

Paul Delvaux's *Venus Asleep*, 1944, a study in erotic frenzy. The skeleton is a reminder that the love goddess was also the bringer of death, 'the manslayer' and 'she of the tombs': Tate Gallery

Brompton Studios

Aphrodite is here seen in frivolous mood gambling with the god Pan, the amorous goat god whose task it was to make the flocks fertile: 4th century BC

significant of his origin as a vegetation god.

Grown to a beautiful youth, Adonis attracts the attention of Aphrodite, who falls passionately in love with him. Despite her warnings of the risks of hunting, Adonis is killed by a wild boar. Aphrodite is distraught with grief at his death and to commemorate the tragedy, she causes the anemone to spring from his blood.

An alternative Greek version of the Adonis myth is that when Adonis is born of the myrrh tree, Aphrodite, admiring his beauty, hides him in a chest and entrusts him to Persephone, the queen of the underworld. Persephone also falls in love with him and refuses to give him back, and Zeus has to decide between the two goddesses. He ordains that Adonis should stay for one third of the year with him, one third with Aphrodite, and the remaining third with Persephone.

The origin of Adonis is revealed by his name, which comes from a Semitic title 'Adoni', meaning 'my Lord'. The title signified a vegetation deity, whose annual death and resurrection commemorated the life-cycle of the corn. His death was lamented by a fertility goddess, he being her son or young lover. The relationship occurs in the cults of Anat and Astarte, goddesses of Canaan and Phoenicia, and finds its earliest expression in the relations of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar with Tammuz, the god of vegetation.

The death and resurrection of Adonis was celebrated annually in a ritual lamentation by women over an effigy of the dead god in many places, including Athens. In the Greek city of Alexandria in Egypt the sacred marriage of Aphrodite and Adonis was celebrated, followed next day by lamentation as an effigy of the dead god was taken out and cast into the sea. 'Gardens of Adonis' were also made, in which the forced growth of seedlings symbolized the resurrection of Adonis. The cult and myth of Adonis doubtless came to Greece from Cyprus with the cult of Aphrodite.

The Goddess in Art

The portrayal of Aphrodite in art deserves special notice. Greek classical art of the 5th century presents the goddess as a dignified figure, robed in contemporary costume, as in the Parthenon frieze, now in the British Museum. A notable but delicate exception is the representation of Aphrodite rising from the sea on the Ludovisi throne, where the body of the goddess is depicted as only lightly veiled.

The first notable figure of a nude Aphrodite was made in the 4th century BC by Praxiteles. The work was commissioned by the people of Cos, who rejected it for the traditional draped figure. It was accepted by the citizens of Cnidos, and became one of the most famous statues of the ancient world. The goddess was shown laying aside her robe, preparing for the bath; the original statue is known only through later Roman copies. The Cnidian Aphrodite inspired many later Hellenistic and Roman statues of which the Venus de Milo, now in the Louvre at Paris, is the most celebrated.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Apis

Sacred bull of Memphis in Egypt, connected with the gods Ptah and Osiris, who later became the Graeco-Egyptian deity Serapis, a god of the underworld: Serapis appears on Roman Imperial coins and the famous library of Alexandria was attached to his temple there.

See ANIMALS; BULL.

Roger Wood London

Apocalypse

Alternative name for the last book of the Bible, the Revelation of St John: in a broader sense, 'apocalyptic' writings describe an approaching and usually catastrophic end of the world, involving a conflict between good and evil in which God intervenes to secure the victory of the good; besides Revelation, the books of Daniel and Enoch are examples.

See DANIEL; END OF THE WORLD; REVELATION.

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The perfect embodiment of the Greek spirit, Apollo was perhaps the best-loved of all the Greek gods. Through his famous oracle at Delphi, he exercised a conciliatory influence on Greek politics, and he was believed to have founded many of the Greek colonies.

APOLLO

APOLLO, brightest and best of the ancient Greek gods, was the god of music, archery, prophecy, healing, the care of animals and young growing creatures; and from the 5th century BC, at least, he was identified with the sun.

He was the only Greek god to have specific functions in each of the domains allotted separately to the three gods of the sky (Zeus), the sea (Poseidon), and the earth (Hades). His titles bear witness to these functions. He was, for example, Apollo Asgelatas – 'god of radiance'; Embasios – 'favouring embarkation'; and Arotrios – 'god of ploughing'. His titles, of which well over 300 have survived in ancient authors and inscriptions on stone, show that Apollo was a god much loved by people in all walks of life.

He was the inspiration of a great deal of ancient Greek painting, poetry and music. More than any other figure in Greek mythology or history, he embodied the spirit of Greek civilization. In art he was depicted as the ideal type of young, virile beauty.

In historical times Apollo was worshipped by all the Greeks. He plays a prominent part in the Homeric epics, and in the *Iliad* is the ally of the Trojans. In Homer, he is usually called Phoebus Apollo – 'bright Apollo'. Other epithets associated with him refer to his deadly aim as an archer, or to his silver bow.

But this most typically Greek of gods, if he did not come originally from Asia Minor, certainly incorporated many of the features of a prehistoric non-Greek deity. It is possible that the name Apollo is of Greek origin, although modern scholars are divided as to whether the root-meaning of the word is 'strength', 'sheep-fold' or 'assembly of voters'. But at an early date the original Greek god seems to have been identified with a Hittite god named Apulunas or Appaliunaas, and the Greeks themselves associated Apollo not only with a legendary northern people, the Hyperboreans, but also with Lycia, a country in what is now south-west Turkey. Apollo's mother's name, Leto, has often been connected by scholars with a Lycian word meaning 'woman'. The Greeks, however, were aware of an ambiguity in the title Lykeios (Lycian) often given to Apollo. Greek poets punned (and in ancient Greek puns had a serious, not a humorous significance) on the associations this title could have with Apollo's fame as a slayer of wolves – *lykos* being the Greek for 'wolf'.

Apollo's eastern connections partly account for an atmosphere of mystery which was another of his aspects. In time, he accumulated many exotic titles, some of them of undoubtedly non-Greek origin, and as the god of oracles he was known throughout the Greek world as Loxias – 'the ambiguous one'.

Apollo and his twin sister Artemis were the children of Zeus, king of the gods, and Leto, the Titaness. According to one version of the birth myth, Delos was the only land which would receive Leto as she felt her time to give birth drawing near. Other places feared the power of the god she would give birth to. In historic times, Apollo's birth at Delos was celebrated by an important festival held in that tiny island each spring. According to the historian Herodotus, the Hyperboreans came every year with offerings which they brought all the way from their northern homeland. There was also an oracle of Apollo at Delos.

Apollo at Delphi

Apollo's most important oracular shrine, however, was at Delphi on the Greek mainland, a place which preserves to this day much of the extraordinary, religious atmosphere which it had in ancient times. The Homeric Hymn to Apollo describes how the god came to this place 'beneath snowy Parnassus' and performed – while still a child, according to some accounts – one of his greatest exploits:

> Nearby there was a fair stream, where the Prince, son of Zeus, killed with an arrow from his bow a dragoness, a fat great wild monster, who had done much harm to men on earth and to their long-shanked flocks, for she was a blood-reeking bane.

Later tradition embroidered this story, and the female dragon became a male snake, a python, from which derived Apollo's title of Pythian, often accorded him in his connection with the oracle at Delphi. It is often said – and the belief was already prevalent in antiquity – that the dragon or snake represented an earlier earth cult which was ousted by Apollo. But there is nothing in this original account, in the Homeric Hymn, to suggest that the dragoness was in any way oracular, or the guardian of an oracle, and the theory seems to spring from a later interpretation of what, in the first place, was a simple dragon story of a type common in Greece and elsewhere.

The ruins of Apollo's temple and the small *omphalos* or navel-stone which the Greeks regarded as marking the true centre of the earth can still be seen. Apollo was sometimes shown in Greek art as sitting on the stone.

The oracle was run in historical times by priests who interpreted the more or less incoherent mutterings of the Pythia, a middle-aged woman dressed by convention as a maiden, who sat on a tripod, inhaling the fumes of harley, hemp and chopped bay-leaves burned over an oil-flame; she was believed to be in direct communication with the god. For over a thousand years the oracle was regularly consulted by both Greeks and Romans (and by orientals as well), who were anxious to know the divine purpose in relation to future events. The oracle's replies were almost always obscure or ambiguous, and often wrong, but Socrates was a firm believer, perhaps because Apollo had declared him to be the wisest of all men.

The oracle was closed for three months in winter, and during this time Apollo was supposed to be absent, visiting his special people, the Hyperboreans, who danced, sang and feasted in his honour.

It was through the oracle at Delphi that Apollo exercised his chief political influence in the Greek world, which can be summed up as moderate, conciliatory and conservative. His advice was considered especially valuable by anyone intending to found a colony overseas. It was here, too, that Apollo chiefly operated as a moral force in Greek life. The three famous maxims, or 'programmes' as the ancients called them, were carved on a column in the fore-temple at Delphi: 'Know thyself', 'Nothing in excess' and 'Go surety, and ruin is at hand'. They – or the first two, at least – epitomized that awareness and moderation which are usually taken to have been the Greek ideal.

Apollo lasted at Delphi well into the Christian era. He delivered his last oracle in the year 362 AD, to the physician of the Emperor Julian, the Byzantine ruler who tried to restore paganism after Christianity had become the official religion of the Byzantine Empire. 'Tell the king,' said the oracle, 'that the curiously built temple has fallen to the ground, that bright Apollo no longer has a roof over his head, or prophetic laurel, or babbling spring. Yes, even the murmuring water has dried up.' (See also ORACLES.)

Wolf and Mouse God

The primitive deity who developed, partly by assimilating some of the characteristics of an eastern god, into the glorious figure of classical Greece was very probably a wolf god, worshipped by herdsmen for his power over wolves, which meant that he could keep wolves away from their flocks. In later times, Apollo's connection with flocks and herds was not emphasized as much as his more Apollo, in common with many other Greek deities, had a special tree which was sacred to him. This was the laurel (called *Daphne* in Greek). A very ancient legend tells how the nymph, Daphne, was overwhelmed by the god's amorous attentions and fled away from him. Luckily, she was turned into a laurel tree.

Apollo was known as the god of leafage, the ripener, the nourisher, the grower of things, the protector of corn, the warder-off of blight and the averter of locusts. One of his oldest titles was Smintheus, which connected him either with the Asian town of Sminthe, or with mice, or with both. Here, as so often, a number of concepts merged into one cult name. Mice were associated with snakes, such as the one which, according to some versions of the story, Apollo destroyed at Delphi; they were also destroyers of the crops Apollo was believed to protect.

Many of Apollo's higher functions arose out of these primitive agricultural ones. It is easy to see the connection between his care

The laurel, *daphne* in Greek, was sacred to Apollo. He fell in love with the nymph Daphne who escaped from his amorous attentions by turning into a laurel tree, as in this painting by the brothers Pollaiuolo, 15th century: National Gallery, London

The inspiration of ancient Greek painting, poetry and music, Apollo was depicted as the ideal type of young, virile beauty. Head of Apollo in the Rhodes Museum

of flocks and his skill with the bow which drove away predators. Shepherds to this day are known for their singing, playing and dancing in Greece and in other Balkan countries, and Apollo's patronage of music probably has its origin in this. The shepherd, too, must be able to care for his flocks, and Apollo was not only a healer himself, both of body and soul, and a god who kept away plagues and pests, but he was the father of the god of medicine, Asclepios.

The oriental cults which were absorbed into the worship of Apollo were as likely as not introduced into the Greek world during the period of overseas colonization which began in the 8th century BC, and from an early period Apollo took up the role of divine founder of colonies. Intending colonizers usually consulted the oracle at Delphi, and Apollo was often accorded the honorary title of 'Founder' in acknowledgement of the usually enigmatic advice his oracle had given. It was believed by some that he guided emigrants to their new settlements in the form of a sea-bird. Perhaps this is the origin of one of his more mysterious cult names – Opsophagos, 'fish-eater'.

In most of his remarkably numerous love affairs, Apollo was curiously unlucky. Deceit and disdain are the constant themes of these myths, aud most of Apollo's affairs had a fatal ending.

One very unlucky love of Apollo's was Cassandra, daughter of King Priam of Troy. She resisted the god's advances strenuously, and he wooed her with gifts, including the power of prophecy. When Apollo saw that she would not yield to him, he could not, as a god, recall his gifts, but he turned his blessing into a curse by making sure that while Cassandra always foretold truly what would happen, none of her prophecies would ever be believed by those they most concerned, her own people, the Trojans.

The Ears of Midas

Although Apollo was a god of protection and patronage, he was also, like all the Greek gods, a deadly enemy on occasion. The story of Niobe, told by Homer, illustrates this side of Apollo's character. She had seven sons and seven daughters, and in an ill-fated moment, boasted that she was superior to Leto, who had only two children. At this, Apollo and Artemis drew their bows, and Apollo slew the boys, while Artemis slew the girls. Niobe in her grief wept until she was turned into a pillar of stone, from which the tears still flowed, as visitors to Mount Sipylon could see for themselves.

In another cruel legend, Marsyas the satyr challenged Apollo to a contest on the flute. Apollo agreed, on condition that whoever won might have his will with the loser. Having won by his divine skill, he flayed Marsyas alive. In another contest, this time with the god Pan, King Midas of Phrygia, who judged it, decided against Apollo. Apollo then turned Midas's ears into those of an ass, and Midas had to wear a special headcovering, so that only his barber knew about the ears. The barber had to tell someone, and he dug a hole in the ground and whispered the story into it. Rushes grew up on the spot, and still whisper about Midas's asses ears to this day.

Apollo was adopted by the Romans as a god of healing, and later as a patron of oracles and prophecy, but although his cult was developed by the Emperor Augustus, who put up a great temple to him on the Palatine Hill, the Roman Apollo was not such a vivid figure as the great Greek god.

In the early centuries of our era, a number of new religions and cults, imported from the east, were rivals for the allegiance of the people in the Greek and Roman world. From this religious struggle Christianity, of course, eventually emerged victorious. But Apollo, the god so widely respected and adored, was throughout these centuries a force still to be reckoned with. The early Christian fathers had to make a special effort to dislodge him from his place in the imagination and regard of the pagan masses they were trying to convert. It is possible that some of the later and more scurrilous stories put about concerning the god owed their inspiration to this Christian religious campaign.

DAVID PHILLIPS

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Rescuing a young man from a beautiful ghoul and saving a city from a plague demon were two of the miracles of Apollonius, a wondering sage who some pagan diehards tried to set up as a rival to Christ

APOLLONIUS

THIS APOLLONIUS (the name is not an uncommon one) was born at Tyana, a town in Cappadocia (now part of Turkey). The date of his birth is uncertain. His age at his death was probably exaggerated by his biographer. He may have been born in the time of the Emperor Tiberius (reigned 14–37 AD) or of Caligula (37–41 AD). He survived till the reign of Nerva (96–98 AD).

Almost all our information about Apollonius comes from a long, rhetorical, romantic and probably highly unreliable biography of him, written more than a hundred years after his death (it was probably begun about 215 AD) by Philostratus, a literary man whose patroness was the Empress Julia Domna, mother of the then reigning Emperor Caracalla. This pious and cultivated Syrian lady had acquired a document purporting to be the memoirs of Damis of Nineveh, a disciple and companion of Apollonius, which seems to have impressed her, and she gave this to her favourite author-in-waiting to write up.

This work of Philostratus was a brilliant literary success: he was the most elegant and accomplished Greek writer of his age. But we cannot be sure how much genuine information it gives us about the real Apollonius – possibly not very much. It does, however, give a very good idea of the literary and religious tastes and enthusiasms of the devout, educated upper-class world of the Greek-speaking East in the 3rd century AD, a period of enormous importance in the development of European religious thought.

Apollonius as portrayed by Philostratus was a wandering religious teacher and wonder-worker who travelled widely in the Roman Empire and beyond. A visit to India is recorded at length, and he is said to have met the Brahmins, whom the Greeks of the time thought of as perfect Pythagorean philosophers. Apollonius himself was a Pythagorean. The Pythagorean revival, which began in the 1st century BC, produced some quite serious philosophers, but for Apollonius Pythagoreanism meant principally vegetarianism, refusal to wear clothes made of animal fibre, condemnation of animal sacrifices, and in general a celibate and ascetic way of life.

Philostratus puts into his mouth a large number of well-composed but rather tedious discourses on this and other subjects, full of the religious and moral commonplaces of the period. He represents Apollonius as having had several encounters with kings to whom he always showed himself superior, as a sage should. The climax of these is a trial before the tyrannical Emperor Domitian (reigned 81–96 AD) which came to an abrupt end when the sage miraculously disappeared from the court.

Philostratus describes a variety of

wonderful doings of Apollonius. There is the story of how he rescued a young man from an Empusa or Lamia, a ghoul in the form of a beautiful girl who was planning to marry her victim in order to eat him, which Keats re-tells in his poem *Lamia*. Another sensational, and very primitive, story tells how Apollonius delivered the people of Ephesus from the plague by making them stone the plague demon to death; it had conveniently appeared in the theatre in the form of an old beggar, but when the heap of stones was taken away the body of a monstrous dog was found. The whole book, and especially the account of the journey to India, is full of the most fantastic marvels. It is this combination of ascetic and high-minded, if not particularly original, religious and moral teacher and spectacular wonder-worker which appealed so strongly to the Empress Julia Domna and her circle.

A Rival of Christ

There is no evidence that Philostratus or his patroness had any anti-Christian intention in producing the biography of Apollonius. But in the time of Diocletian, at the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century, an attempt was made to set up Apollonius as a rival to Christ. Hierocles, a high imperial official who had a good deal to do with instigating the great persecution of the Christians under Diocletian, published in 303 AD an anti-Christian controversial work called *The Lover of Truth* which contained a comparison of Apollonius and Christ, designed to show that Apollonius was superior to Christ as a teacher and miracle-worker. The Church historian Eusebius wrote an answer to this comparison. As so often happened with anti-Christian controversial works, for obvious reasons, the answer has been preserved and the original work has disappeared. The comparison of Apollonius with Christ does not seem to have been very successful, and Apollonius never received any widespread cult among pagans. He is occasionally referred to with veneration by later pagan writers, but the Emperor Julian, the greatest and most intelligent of the 4th century defenders of the old religion against Christianity, never even mentions him.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

Mansell Collection

Apotheosis
Recognition of a human being as a god: examples are the kings of Egypt, Peru, China and Japan, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and the Roman emperors, whose deification influenced the later European theory of the divine right of kings.
See KING.

Michael Holford

Apparition
Appearance of the phantom of a person, living or dead, seen in the waking state or in a dream.
See ASTRAL BODY; GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

APPLE

ORIGINALLY GROWING WILD in Europe and western Asia, and cultivated in Europe since Roman times, the apple is a particularly sacred tree in European mythology. A 7th century poem says that a man who puts an apple to the axe must pay a fine of one cow, and the feeling that to cut one down is unlucky has persisted to the present day. So strong was this in Ireland, that an early Irish poem, the *Triads of Ireland*, calls for the sacrifice of a living creature in payment for felling one.

> Three unbreathing things paid for only with breathing things:
> An apple tree, a hazel bush, a sacred grove.

Felling an apple tree is unlucky because the apple stands for immortality, for eternal youth and happiness in the life after death. The Scandinavian gods kept themselves forever young by eating the golden apples of Idun, goddess of youth and spring. In Welsh legends kings and heroes go after earthly death to live happily in a paradise of apple trees called Avalon (the name possibly coming from the Welsh word for an apple, *afal*).

The apple probably owes its connection with immortality to its colours. Wild apples (crab apples) and many varieties of cultivated apple turn yellow and red as they ripen, and these are the colours of the sun—yellow in its course across the sky, red as it sinks to its 'death' at sunset, from which it rises again, resurrected and immortal, with each new morning.

Michael Holford

Michael Holford

The Daughters of Night

This link with the sun comes out strongly in the Greek story of the golden apples which were kept by the Hesperides or 'nymphs of the evening', the daughters of Night, in their garden in the farthest west, where the sun goes down to its death in the evening. A dragon with 100 heads guarded the apples but Hercules managed to kill the dragon and steal them. He took the apples to his master King Eurystheus, who gave them to the goddess Athene. She returned them to the Hesperides again, which makes this labour of Hercules seem singularly pointless. But it is likely that in the original story Hercules won immortality by stealing the apples.

The Apple of Desire

As an emblem of renewed life and youth, and because of its appearance when cut in half, the apple also stood for desire and belonged to love goddesses in Celtic and Greek mythology. This is its role in the story of the Judgement of Paris. A golden apple marked 'for the fairest' was thrown down at a wedding feast on Olympus, the home of the Greek gods. Three goddesses – Hera, Athene and Aphrodite – each claimed to be the most beautiful, and Zeus decided that the contest should be judged by Paris, one of the sons of the King of Troy and the handsomest man alive.

The goddesses stripped naked so that Paris could judge them properly and each of them tried to bribe him to give her the apple. Aphrodite, the goddess of desire, promised him the love of Helen, the most beautiful of mortal women. Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite, which the other goddesses bitterly resented. She kept her promise and Helen ran away with Paris; which was the immediate cause of the Trojan War.

This story, intended to account for the origin of the war, appears only in the later legends about it and has an odd ring, as it explains no religious ritual or custom and does not seem to be connected with any particular religious belief, except that the apple belongs to Aphrodite as a love goddess. It may be an elaboration of a brief reference in Homer's *Iliad* to Paris humiliating Hera and Athene at a meeting in his shepherd's hut by his preference for Aphrodite, 'who offered him the pleasures and the penalties of love'.

It has also been suggested, by Robert Graves, that the story was a mistaken attempt to explain a sacred picture showing Hermes, three naked goddesses and a young man with an apple; which really represented the Mother Goddess in her triple aspect of maiden, mother and hag (see MOTHER GODDESS), giving the apple to the sacred king to assure him of immortality; while Hermes, who led dead souls down to the underworld stood by.

Eve and the Apple

Traditionally the fruit which the serpent of Eden maliciously persuaded Adam and Eve to eat was an apple, though the Bible does not say what type of fruit was involved but only that it was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A more likely fruit than the apple would be the fig, which would connect neatly with the clothes that Adam and Eve made for themselves from figleaves after they had eaten the fruit. But what eating the fruit brought them was the guilty consciousness of desire, which the apple symbolizes.

Aquila of Pontus in Asia Minor, who was converted first to Christianity and then to Judaism, and translated the Old Testament into Greek in the 2nd century AD, is the first writer known to have identified the fruit as an apple. He translated Song of Solomon 8.5 – 'I raised thee up under the apple tree; there thy mother brought thee forth' – as 'I raised thee up under the apple tree; *there wast thou corrupted*', evidently taking the verse as a reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. St Jerome, translating the Old Testament into Latin, followed suit and the belief that the forbidden fruit was an apple has been generally accepted ever since.

Above **In the story of the Judgement of Paris the apple stands for desire. Paris, one of the sons of the King of Troy, had the difficult task of judging which of three goddesses was the most beautiful. He awarded the prize, a golden apple, to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The painting by Rubens is in the National Gallery, London**

Previous page **The apple's connection with the sun is shown in the story of the apples of the Hesperides, the nymphs who lived in the west where the sun sets. From a 19th century triptych by Hans von Marées**

The first of 12 articles on the signs of the zodiac describes the typical Aquarian, pre-eminently the scientist with a touch of the absent-minded professor

AQUARIUS

THE SIGN OF the zodiac occupied by the sun at the moment of your birth is one, though only one, of the most important factors in your horoscope, and is the factor on which astrology columns in newspapers and magazines are based. The zodiac signs are the 12 divisions of the circle in the sky through which the sun appears to pass.

Traditionally, your sign is Aquarius if you were born between 20 January and 18 February but, as explained later, in terms of the actual constellations in the sky your sign is Aquarius if you were born between 19 February and 20 March. The symbol of the sign is a man pouring out water from an urn, which has given Aquarius the traditional character of helpfulness and service to others. It is now often regarded as the ideal sign to be born under. This was not always the case, though the Roman author Manilius, who wrote an astrological poem in the 1st century AD, did say that:

> The Good, the Pious and the Just are born
> When first Aquarius pours out his urn.

In modern opinion Aquarius is pre-eminently the sign of the scientist, with a touch of the absent-minded professor. The Aquarian is quiet, gentle, not forceful, not inclined to insist or demand his own way. He speaks moderately and reasonably. He sees no point in taking a tough line, for truth will out in the end, and until it does there is nothing to be gained by saying anything at all.

The Amiable Aquarian

The Aquarian is frequently a little shy, perhaps because he is often physically large and rather slow. But although at times he may appear ponderous, he is not sluggish and he has more humour than people think. He just does not think it worthwhile to snatch at opportunities which will probably recur. Since Aquarius is traditionally 'ruled', or strongly influenced, by the planet Saturn, patience comes naturally to the Aquarian and less patient people may be irritated by his tolerance. He is said to be sensitive and easily moved to tears, and he hates being criticized.

His characteristic faults are few. The most tiresome is his inability to explain himself. Other people, left in uncertainty, will often put the worst construction on the Aquarian's actions and he will rely on the passage of time to vindicate him. This is not due to laziness, but often appears so. A similar fault of the Aquarian is that he cannot always convince people that he likes or admires them. He considers this is obvious and does not realize that others like to have unmistakable signs of his approval. The consequence may be that he will be considered not only lazy but cold and unfeeling, a reaction he will think is most unjust.

Two pleasing characteristics of the Aquarian are that he is not impressed by pomp and pretentiousness, nor does he attempt to pass himself off as being better than he is. He knows how necessary it is to be patient, and does not expect anything else from others. It is said that he is likely to exaggerate grievances, to think that things will take a long time to improve and are worse than they really are. He has little sympathy for prejudices of race or class but he will try to understand any point of view. A great reader, ideas interest him and he is not at all inclined to brush them aside because they are different from his own.

With this generally pleasing and amiable modern picture of the Aquarian can be contrasted the opinion of Vettius Valens, writing in the 2nd century AD, who described Aquarians as 'effeminate, inflexible, wicked, unfertile'. Though 'industrious and employed in public service', they were self-willed, misanthropic, atheistic and grudging.

The Age of Aquarius

It is important to bear in mind that the traditional 'tropical' zodiac, used for hundreds of years in Europe, is out of step with the 'sidereal' zodiac, the real constellations. When traditional astrology says that the sun is in Aquarius, it is really in the preceding constellation, Capricorn, and so on right round the zodiac circle. Since astrologers have begun to pay attention to this fact, in the last 20 years, people traditionally labelled as Pisceans have found themselves placed under Aquarius, traditional Aquarians under Capricorn, and so on. This confusing situation is caused by precession of equinoxes.

The equinoxes are the two periods of the year, in spring and autumn, when the days and nights are of equal length. At the spring equinox the Sun appears to cross over from the southern hemisphere to the northern, bringing the warmth of spring and summer. At the autumn equinox, it appears to cross back again, leaving the north to darkness.

The equinoxes are said to precess, or go backwards, because they move through the constellations in the direction that men have decided to call backwards, that is, against the direction of the planets. About four thousand years ago the Sun at the spring equinox was in the constellation Aries, but from the 3rd century AD until now the Sun at the spring equinox has actually been in the preceding constellation, Pisces, and from the 24th century it will be in the constellation Aquarius.

Precession of the equinoxes was discovered in the 2nd century BC but few people concerned themselves about the awkward consequences of the discovery, and astrologers have long gone on blandly saying that the zodiac must be very ancient although it was now clear that the equinox, from which they said that the zodiac had always been measured, was an invisible moving point. That early astronomers, who had no scientific instruments, should have chosen to measure their zodiac from an invisible moving point is not a probable suggestion.

The spring equinox precessed into the constellation Pisces, the Fishes, in the 3rd century AD. The fish was a well-known symbol of the early Christians, and so it was thought that this precession foreshadowed the coming Age of Christianity. Similarly the precession of the equinox, some four hundred years from now, into the constellation Aquarius is believed to herald the coming of an Aquarian Age of peace and harmony in a spirit of gentle moderation.

The only kind of Aquarius into which the equinox can precess is the constellation. This is worth emphasizing because astrologers used to insist that the constellations (as distinct from the signs) had no influence worth studying. And yet they attributed importance to the coming Aquarian Age which cannot exist except in terms of the constellation.

(See also ASTROLOGY; and articles on the other zodiac signs, and the planets.)

RUPERT GLEADOW

Traditional emblem of Aquarius, the water-carrier. The two-headed figure on the left symbolizes Janus, the god of beginnings, who gave his name to January. From a French 15th century manuscript, Bodleian Library

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Camera Press London

Architecture
The shape and arrangement of churches, temples and other religious buildings frequently have symbolic significance.
See RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE.

Mansell Collection

Ares
Greek god of war, equivalent to the Roman Mars: not a major deity, and an unpopular one, frequently described as a savage and bloodthirsty butcher.
See MARS.

ARIES

IN THE TRADITIONAL zodiac you are an Ariean if you were born between 21 March and 19 April, but in the sidereal zodiac which is increasingly used by modern astrologers (see AQUARIUS) Aries is the sign of those born between 20 April and 20 May.

The symbol of Aries is the ram, suggesting energy, initiative, aggression, and push. It should also be remembered that Aries means not only the ram as an animal but also the battering-ram, an instrument of aggression.

Aries owes its reputation for touchiness and dominance partly to the fact that it is the first of the signs and partly to the many political leaders born under it – including Hitler, Lenin and Jefferson. The sign also has a great military reputation, though in fact it has not produced as many successful military commanders as the sign of Scorpio.

Most of the famous people born under Aries – with a few exceptions, like Brahms, Chaplin and Freud – are men who have made their mark in politics. But though the ordinary Ariean is rarely the single-minded political and military genius that the lists of famous Arieans might suggest, he does tend to think of himself as the natural head of affairs. This at times leads to a certain self-centredness, with an apparent assumption that other people are not quite so real or so important as he is.

It was an Ariean, the Florentine Niccolo Machiavelli, who wrote the famous political textbook, *The Prince*, in which he advocated strong-minded and ruthless leadership of the state in the interests of the people.

The Ariean is said to be bad at early rising, but is very punctual and hates to be kept waiting. As one who inevitably considers himself the leader of any group, he naturally does not like people who try to take credit which he thinks should belong to him. In extreme cases he can degenerate into someone who is always grabbing for credit and honours.

A typical Ariean virtue is the combative one of not taking things lying down. He will assert his own point of view and is a useful leader for he is never afraid to make his weight felt. Compromise does not readily occur to him as the easiest way out of a difficulty; he is more likely to think that if his position is stated clearly and emphatically, other people will probably give way.

He usually believes that he attained unaided the position he now holds: no one has ever perceptibly helped him. This often leads to egotism. As the Ariean considers himself number one and the only person who matters, he does not attach much importance to the feelings of others. As a result, he is not often an ideal partner in marriage.

In the old days Britain, Germany and ancient Rome – all political great powers – were said to be 'under' Aries. In the days when Britain had an empire, it seemed quite natural to British astrologers that their country should be under Aries, which was thought a noble and imperialistic sign. Now that it is less easy to justify or excuse the habit of telling other people how to run their lives or their countries, it has become more difficult to speak tactfully in praise of Aries, for if one is oneself number one, this only implies that the rest are nowhere.

Aries is said to be the first of the signs but this was not always the case. In the first of his *Georgics*, the Roman poet Virgil mentions 'the white bull that with his golden horns opens the year', which suggests that Taurus, the Bull, was once considered the first sign. And the Babylonians did not recognize Aries at all, its place being taken by the constellation called the Hireling, the man who works for wages.

RUPERT GLEADOW

The sign of Aries, the ram, from a 15th century work on astrology by Leopold of Austria. Traditionally, those born under Aries have the aggressiveness of the ram

Victoria and Albert Museum

ARMIES

WAR IS SO MUCH a part of human life that it has invaded our dreams with nightmare visions which have turned into legends. On many battlefields the shades of forgotten fighting men, denied proper burial, have been believed to be condemned to re-enact their tragic fate until the end of time.

Near Glastonbury the phantom footsteps of marching knights in armour can still be heard at night, and at Woodmanton in Wiltshire, where Britons and Romans once fought, headless war-horses have been seen galloping wildly along the valley.

Other phantom armies have filled the skies. Of them all, none were more feared than the ferocious army of the restless dead, called the Wild Hunt. Led by the demon Wode of the broad-brimmed hat and the wide mantle, they ranged the night sky over Europe hunting human souls. An old legend of Normandy describes how a peasant, hearing them go by, dared to cry out to Wode, 'Share your spoils,' and afterwards found his own child dead in the hearth (see WILD HUNT).

In ancient Assyria armies of demons had been known to join forces with ghostly warriors in assaults on desert cities but in Christian Europe their organization took the form of cudgel-wielding guerilla bands who carried out sporadic attacks on defenceless hermits. In an early illustration a particularly well-equipped demon is shown mounted on a dragon, brandishing a lance, and glaring malevolently at the world through a pair of iron-rimmed spectacles.

The Roar of Phantom Cannon
For centuries an old house called 'Battlefield' which once stood on the site of the Battle of St Albans, resounded to the clash of sword on steel, harking back to the 15th century Wars of the Roses. When the English Civil War of the 17th century began to loom on the horizon, the air became filled with alarms and portents. As a psychic overture to the conflict, the roar of phantom cannon and the beating of unseen drums

were heard at Echt near Aberdeen. Soon after the battle of Edgehill in 1642, when 4000 men lost their lives, there was a widespread rumour that the conflict had been re-enacted by an army of ghosts before the amazed eyes of many witnesses. The spirits of the newly-dead had risen from the earth to battle anew, to fill the air with the thunder of cannon, the throbbing of drums and the groans of the dying.

Perhaps the beginnings of psychical research can be traced to this event for, as related in Lord Nugent's *Memorials of John Hampden*, the hauntings caused such disquiet that King Charles I sent three officers and three private gentlemen to conduct an investigation on the spot. The Commission reported that not only was the story true but that they had personally witnessed the ghostly fight, recognizing among the contestants men whom they knew had been killed at Edgehill, including the King's standard bearer, Sir Edmund Verney. The general state of alarm created by the apparitions is reflected in the concluding words of the pamphlet:

> What this does portend, God only knoweth and time will perhaps discover, but doubtless it is a sign of His wrath against this land for these civil wars which He in His time finish and send a sudden peace between His Majesty and Parliament.

For centuries there were persistent reports of restlessness among the spectres of Edgehill, but after the fencing of the area by the War Department the ghosts have been silent. Two years after Edgehill there were reports of a similar haunting on the night before the battle of Marston Moor, when a troop of horsemen was observed galloping through the sky over Helvellyn. Marston Moor produced its own ghosts as recently as 1932 when two motorists were startled to see cloaked men of Civil War vintage near the battlefield.

The Angels of Mons

Coming events cast their mournful shadows before the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 when, in 1735, a phantom army was observed in the sky over Souter Fell. Two years later, on Midsummer Eve 1737, a vast column of soldiers marched five abreast through the same sky, and in April 1744 a Scotsman named Forbes had a vision in which ghostly warriors began fighting on what was destined to be the field of Culloden. Then in June 1745 more than 26 witnesses reported seeing an armed host in the clouds, once again above Souter Fell. This appears to have been the last grand march of any phantom army in the British Isles.

The phantom armies made a brief but highly dramatic reappearance when the journalist Arthur Machen published an imaginary account of spectral bowmen in the British ranks during the retreat from Mons in 1914. Almost overnight this myth was accepted as factual by the British public and, when embellished with sword-brandishing saviours on horseback, became the famous story of the 'Angels of Mons', fighting on the British side.

The phantom army belongs to a heroic age long since banished by mechanized warfare. Machines, having no souls, leave no ghosts.

Michael Holford

The mythical warrior angels supposed to have fought in the retreat from Mons inspired popular songs. By kind permission of the Lawrence Wright Music Co., London

FURTHER READING: Christina Hole, *Haunted England* (Batsford, 1940); Eric Maple, *The Realm of Ghosts* (Hale, 1964) and *The Domain of Devils* (Hale, 1966).

ARROW

THE BOW was one of the earliest weapons invented by men and the arrow's ability to kill at a distance has given it a place in magic and folklore all over the world. In Britain prehistoric flint arrowheads, sometimes called elf-bolts and believed to have been dropped by 'the little people', were regarded with awe. The famous Scottish witch Isabel Gowdie said that the Devil shaped them with his own hands and described how she had shot one at a man but God had unexpectedly preserved him.

Almost every nation has a great bowman-hero of legend, a Robin Hood or William Tell. The feats of a master archer were readily ascribable to magic and the 15th century *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches), considering 'the deadly and horrible crimes which are committed by wizards who are archers' and whose skill is given them by the Devil, accuses them of directing lethal arrows at an enemy by bending their whole will upon him.

The phallic-shaped arrow can also be a symbol of virility and desire, as in central India, and anyone pierced by one of Cupid's arrows falls helplessly in love at once.
(For Zen archery, see ZEN.)

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Right **Cupid firing an arrow of desire, from a 15th century MS of the Romance of the Rose**

ART

MAGIC OF THE MODERNS

A hundred years ago the artistic ideal was 'truth to Nature'; since then many artists have substituted 'truth to the supernatural', the attempt to express the mysterious, mystical and macabre

THE URGE to express a sense of the mysterious, the marvellous, the irrational – of all that is other than natural or normally to be seen – has produced many remarkable works of visual art since the later years of the last century. Reaction had grown by then against the prevailing realism in art and the materialist view of the world. The course of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England shows this very clearly. The realistic aim of being 'true to Nature', which marked the movement's triumph in the 1850s, had lost its inspiring value 30 years after. The mystic and fanciful element later came uppermost in the work of Edward Burne-Jones and his followers.

On the continent of Europe the dominance of 'truth to Nature' was opposed in various ways. One contrast was the ideal conceived by Puvis de Chavannes in his serene and timeless mural paintings. But there were other artists who valued the diabolic and the macabre. Gustave Moreau was praised for the Satanic beauty of his *The Apparition*, a painting in which the head of John the Baptist appears in a blaze of ghostly light to Salome as she dances lasciviously before Herod.

Literature and painting found kinship in this pursuit of strange sensation. Moreau's painting inspired Oscar Wilde to write his dramatic prose-poem *Salome*. The Satanic and erotic character that Félicien Rops gave to his etchings had admirers in Baudelaire and Huysmans. The strange visions, inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, in the lithographs of Odilon Redon are described with gusto by Huysmans in that 'decadent' masterpiece, his novel *A Rebours*, as being 'beyond anything imaginable' and showing 'a fantasy that was unique'. The influential graphic art of Aubrey Beardsley added a wittily Satanic twist to a style originally based on Burne-Jones's chaste designs.

All these artists contributed to what may be called the spirit of the 1890s. The search for new sensations, the fascination found in the 'lilies and languors of vice', a leaning towards the mystic and occult as well as purely technical departures were ingredients to be found in varied proportion. The Salons of the Rose + Croix, which ran from 1892 to 1897, under the directorship of the critic and novelist, Joséphin Peladan (whose aim was 'to ruin realism') were full of mystically religious works in imitation of Burne-Jones, Moreau and Puvis.

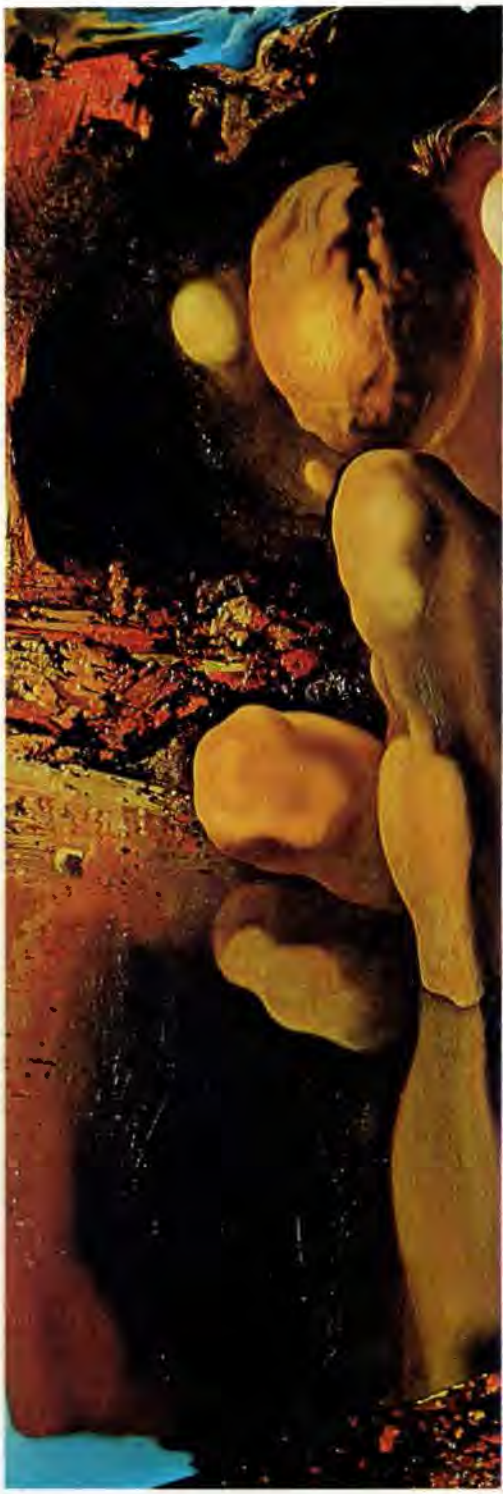
The Painter as Magus

Symbolism was a key word of the period in France. It was an idea evolved in the circle of Paul Gauguin at Pont-Aven in Brittany. The purpose was to give visual form to ideas instead of an objective view of natural appearances. A more active theorist than Gauguin was Emile Bernard who besides working with him in Brittany exhibited religious works in the Rosicrucian Salon. A separate group, the Nabis, included artists who worked in the mood created in Brittany, of special note being Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis.

In each of these related groups there was the thought that the artist had an inspired role. It was the function of the painter in the view of Peladan to be a 'magus', one not merely wise but entrusted with a special mission. The Nabis, who took their name from the Hebrew word *Naabiim*, meaning 'divinely inspired', invented titles and orders for themselves like an occult sect.

Gauguin can be viewed, like the other great post-Impressionists Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh, as one who enriched the language of form and colour. But he was distinct from them as one who dreamed of a golden age, a fabulous primeval world to which he longed to return. All things primitive, as in some way giving evidence of this mythic past, stirred him. The peasant life and costume of Brittany, the rough religious carvings and crucifixes of the region, gave hints of what he sought. The colonial section of the Paris Exhibition of 1889 opened his eyes to the existence of more exotic and mysterious lands; in the glowing text of a handbook on Tahiti he found the promise of an earthly paradise.

It is possible to regard the pictures painted by Gauguin in Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands simply as superb renderings of native types in tropical landscapes and to relate them aesthetically to the classic and decorative manner of Puvis de Chavannes. Yet many of them also show his interest in native religion and mythology, and how he introduced symbols of his own to represent them. He found fragmentary accounts of Tahitian lore in writings by earlier French travellers. In the absence of Tahitian representations of their gods he made up images to personify them.



His description of how he came to paint the famous *Manao Tupapau* is enlightening. A young girl lies on a couch in fear. He imagines she is frightened of the Tupapau (Spirit of the Dead), 'the constant dread of the Tahitians'. 'What', asks Gauguin, 'can be a Tahitian's idea of a ghost?' 'Naturally', he answers, 'she thinks of someone she has already seen. Therefore my ghost, my spirit, must be some sort of an old woman.' The flowers in the background, he adds, are

Brompton Studio

Salvador Dali's *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, the beautiful youth of Greek mythology who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool. He turned into the narcissus flower, which is hatching from the egg in the painting: in the Tate Gallery. By permission of the Edward James Foundation

Tupapau's flowers, 'phosphorescences and a sign that the spirit has you in mind.'

It is true that the Cubists and other artists in the first decade of the 20th century were attracted by the ceremonial masks, carved idols and fetish figures of Africa but they separated their qualities as sculpture from the notions of the supernatural which they stood for. What the European artist studied was the directness of technique, the sharply-cut planes and concentration of the essentials of plastic form.

The Delirium of Dada

There was a reasoned sequence in the development of means in modern art until during the 1914–18 war there came the extraordinary revolt against all reason of the movement called Dada. It started with a group of poets and painters who took refuge in the quiet centre of the hurricane of European conflict, at Zurich in neutral Switzerland. In these individuals the 1914–18 war was the cause of extraordinary behaviour bordering on frenzy. Bitterly opposed to the deadly struggle, they dissociated themselves from organized society and all its works and beliefs and conventions.

They were complete anarchists. They were anti-everything including art itself, which they linked with other expressions of society as a repository of false beliefs and conventions. The name Dada is said to have been the result of opening a German-French dictionary at random and lighting upon the word meaning 'hobby horse'. It has been suggested alternatively that it was taken from 'Da', the Russian for 'yes' of the Slav refugees in Zurich. Either way it was meaningless and as such delighted the wild poets and artists who took a prominent part in the movement; the Rumanian Tristan Tzara, the Germans Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck, the Alsatian Hans (Jean) Arp. 'What we call Dada is foolery, foolery extracted from the emptiness in which all the

higher problems are wrapped, a gladiator's gesture . . . a public execution of false morality,' said Hugo Ball.

Dada in action stemmed from performances at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich which included the chanting of nonsense poems, accompanied by 'noise-music' made by drums, cowbells and whistles, interspersed with screams. It was found that the negro types of mask devised by a Rumanian artist, Marcel Janco, created in the wearer an irresistible desire for outlandish movement. They represented not human beings but 'characters and emotions that are larger than life.' 'The paralysing horror which is the backcloth of our age is here made visible,' said Hugo Ball.

Dada's defiant manifesto, mechanical noise, freakish typography, the simultaneous presentation of unlike images involved with one another, derived from Futurism. *Collage*, works fashioned out of all sorts of different materials stuck together, came from Cubism. But what element of the supernatural was there in all this? It might be said that the Dadaists in their public demonstrations whipped up something that approximated to the delirium of primitive tribal ceremonies. Did they envisage anything beyond?

The answer may be found, and was found by exponents of Dada, in Chance. Chance was their magic. When Jean Arp tore up a drawing and let the pieces flutter to the ground, he discovered that they fell into an arrangement that seemed to have a strange 'rightness' of its own. It could be imagined that some unknown law operated, 'as unfathomable to us', he said, 'as the depths from which all life arises'.

Exploration of the Unconscious

The unconscious mind, the mysterious inner presence that Freud had discovered, was an operative factor on which Dada relied. Release from consciously directed and rational processes produced a kind of ecstatic activity, a self-hypnotism in which anything was possible.

The 'found object' and the 'ready-made' were discoveries initiated by the French intellectual Marcel Duchamp. The implication was that any object, whether natural (a twisted tree-root or oddly shaped stone, for instance) or some commonplace man-made article, became magically invested with significance if the observer chose to look at it in that way. He might be said to have 'invented' it.

Duchamp was uncompromisingly and contemptuously 'anti-art'. This was expressed in the notorious 'ready-made' called the 'Fountain' (a urinal) which he signed R. Mutt (the name of a firm of sanitary engineers) and sent to a New York exhibition to shock an art-worshipping public. It is a comment on the public's capacity for reverence that when the shock had worn off the 'Fountain' was many times a feature of exhibitions and that replicas of such 'ready-mades' as a bicycle-wheel mounted on a stool have been sold in art galleries in limited editions as modern masterpieces!

On Duchamp's part it was an ironic jest. He took trouble to disclaim any aesthetic pleasure in his choice. Yet it was a gesture that made a deep impression. For others it was a way of seeing that once again filled the world with wonders. Perhaps some memory even stirred of the spirit in which primitive men attributed superstitious meaning and powers to things seen. The 'found object' was not a passing fancy or joke quickly forgotten but an active ingredient in the movement that superseded but also came out of Dada – Surrealism.

The Surrealist Shock

The word 'surrealist' was first used by the poet and propagandist of Cubism, Guillaume Apollinaire, in 1917. He described his burlesque play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, as a 'surrealist drama'. Earlier the word 'surnaturalism' had been used by Baudelaire to suggest that the aim of art should be 'to create a suggestive magic', an 'enchantment'. 'Supernaturalism' was another term used by poets; Heinrich Heine had declared himself a 'supernaturalist' in art, believing that 'the artist cannot find all his types in Nature but that the most remarkable ones are revealed to him in his soul.' For Victor Hugo the 'surnatural' and 'supernatural' were ideas comprised in Nature referring to 'that part of Nature we do not perceive!'

These trains of thought do not necessarily conflict with one another or with the surrealism that began to emerge in the 1920s. The unconscious mind was 'the part of Nature we do not perceive', which poets and painters set themselves to explore. Surrealism in the definition of André Breton in 1924 was 'pure psychic automatism . . . Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.' The supernatural had a new and fascinating psychological location.

The relation with Dada is close. The Surrealists used similar shock tactics, were equally against 'art', that is, against works which they considered failed to express truth of feeling. Some of the same artists, Arp and Max Ernst for instance, figure in the history of both movements. But Surrealism was a more organized revolt and a more constructive effort to exploit the workings of instinct, intuition and states of being, as in dreams, when the conscious reason is temporarily suspended.

Brompton Studio

'Artists have been more conscious of the malign than the beneficent', as in the demonic forms painted by Francis Bacon: *Studies for figures at the base of a crucifixion*, in the Tate Gallery

Release from consciously directed and rational processes produced a kind of ecstatic activity, a self-hypnotism in which anything was possible

Artists in Wonderland

The importance attached to the operations of pure instinct and the unconscious mind, the outbursts of an untrammelled imagination and the creation of something equivalent to a dream, placed the history of both literature and painting in an altered perspective. For the French there was a literary foreshadowing of this in the poets Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, and Gérard de Nerval. But in the wider view such products of the Romantic period of the 18th and 19th centuries as the English 'Gothic novel' with all its terrors, spectres and fantasies could be seen in a new light. Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense*, Lewis Carroll's transmuted Wonderland could be regarded as classic anticipations of Surrealism, and there came a time when a French Surrealist set himself the task of translating *The Hunting of the Snark* into French!

Similarly a new value was attached in visual art to such works of the past as the stupendous fantasy of hell conceived by Hieronymus Bosch, the sinister *Colossus* of Goya, the *Nightmare* of Fuseli, the visions of Blake and the works of Moreau and Redon. The dream world of the 'modern primitive' was a spontaneous expression unaffected by ideas of technical correctness and an instance of the strange power of instinct that reinforced the opposition to professionalism in painting. In the same way the art of children up to early adolescence seemed to be automatically produced by the impulsion of a racial memory, recreating for a time a type of primitive artist. From the study of child art and 'art in the raw', the French painter Jean Dubuffet has evolved apparitions of the unconscious.

The Surrealist painters of the 1920s and onwards were never a group closely knit together by ideas of style and technique, but only in imaginative freedom that took individual form. As they found affinities in the past, so also they found them in contemporaries who had little or no concern with the promotion of the movement. Thus the German-Swiss painter, Paul Klee was in the surrealist current of thought with his aim 'not to render the visible but to make visible'. The Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico was able to create an atmosphere of dreamlike reverie and suspense. The

The Estorick Collection

Left **A painting in the Tate Gallery, *Of this men shall know nothing*, by Max Ernst, a member of both the Dada and Surrealist movements, which sought to explore the workings of instinct, intuition and dream-like states of mind, in which the conscious reason is temporarily suspended**

Right **The Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico evoked a sinister atmosphere of suspense: *Melancholia***

Russian-born painter Marc Chagall brought into art the fantasies and the defiance of all laws of nature found in Russian fairy tale and folklore. The Belgian painter, James Ensor, created sinister assemblies of masked and skeleton figures. Pablo Picasso was hailed by André Breton as the initiator of Surrealism and his destruction of surface appearances was suggestive to others, though much of his huge and protean output eludes the classification. His *Minotaur*, a powerfully modernized figure of myth, is an example of the way in which his work takes on a surrealist character.

New Nightmares for Old

Marcel Duchamp, independent of and yet inseparable from the histories of Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, produced the most enigmatic of works *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors*, a combination of glass, engraving and petrified accumulation of dust that Breton called 'the trophy of a fabulous hunt over virgin lands.'

The elements of surrealist 'magic' in the work of those closely associated with the movement consist in the wonders of surprise, in the sensation produced by objects in incongruous relation, in sex symbolism – a reflection of Freudian influence – and the fantastic in many different forms. Max Ernst has imagined the landscape of another world; Yves Tanguy sets amoeba-like objects floating over endless plains; André Masson seems to have looked for a message from some mysterious eternal force in his automatic writing; Salvador Dali has conveyed the disquieting thrill of strange juxtapositions; Joan Miró filled abstract shapes with dynamic life; Alberto Giacometti gave a superhuman intensity to his elongated sculptured figures.

The disturbance set up or represented by Dada and Surrealism has not ceased to agitate the visual arts down to the present time. Mixed with the humorously 'frightening' and the juggling with media has been a sense of deep disquiet. The disquieting nature of Surrealism in the 1930s was sometimes like a premonition of war: consider *The Three Fates* of 1939 by Edward Burra.

Imaginative art in this century has gained little content from religious faith. The peace and joy of *The Resurrection* by Stanley Spencer is exceptional. Artists have been more conscious of the malign than the beneficent, as in the demonic forms that Francis Bacon painted in a *Crucifixion*. They have shared the uncertainties of science and a mechanical civilization, sometimes fascinated and yet repelled by the machine as a dictatorial monster, sometimes pointing to the mysteries that still lie beyond the frontiers of science's material gains and explanations. Modern painting and sculpture grapple with enigmas. Artists have gone beyond old limits in new confrontations of the material by the spiritual. They may be said, as a modern dramatist has said of his work, to reveal what they do not know.

WILLIAM GAUNT

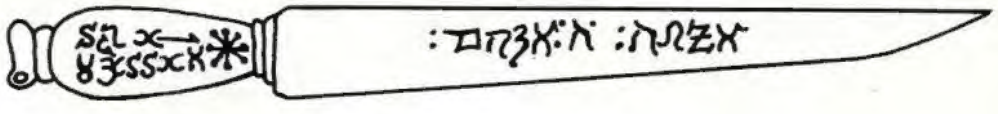
Brompton Studio

Sonia Halliday

Artemis

Greek goddess of the hunt and wild animals, 'lady of wild things', sister of Apollo: probably of Cretan origin; later identified with the Roman Diana.

See DIANA.



Arthame

Or athame, the magic knife described in the *Key of Solomon* and other magical textbooks, used for drawing the magic circle; as used by modern witches, it has a black handle and magic symbols on its blade.

ARTHUR

The Once and Future King

'Arthur, the good King of Britain, whose prowess teaches us that we too should be brave and courteous . . .' In the medieval stories, Arthur and his knights became patterns of chivalry, and their typical sport the tournament, in which the knights fought to show their strength and skill, in honour of the watching ladies of the Court

British Museum

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Little is known of the real Arthur – probably a British war-chief of the 6th century AD – but the stories which clustered round his memory grew into one of the most romantic, exciting and beautiful of all legends

THE HERO of a famous cycle of legends and romances, Arthur was said to have been born at Tintagel in Cornwall. He became King of Britain and held court at Camelot as the leader of a band of noble warriors, the Knights of the Round Table. The knights rode out to seek adventure and great deeds, notably in the quest of the Grail – in Christian legend the holy cup used by Christ at the Last Supper. Arthur was betrayed by his wife Guinevere and his nephew, or son, Mordred. Wounded in battle against Mordred, he was carried away by three fairy queens to Avalon, the land of immortal heroes, from which he will return to lead his countrymen in the time of their greatest peril.

The Real Arthur

Most scholars think it likely that there was a real Arthur. The name is Roman (Artorius) and the original Arthur was probably a leader of the Romanized Britons against the Saxon war-bands which invaded and plundered Britain from c 450 AD onwards, after the Roman armies had been withdrawn. If so, ironically enough, the great British hero fought against the ancestors of the majority of modern Englishmen. It has been suggested that he may have trained and commanded a force of heavy cavalry, and that this was the origin of the mounted knights of the later stories.

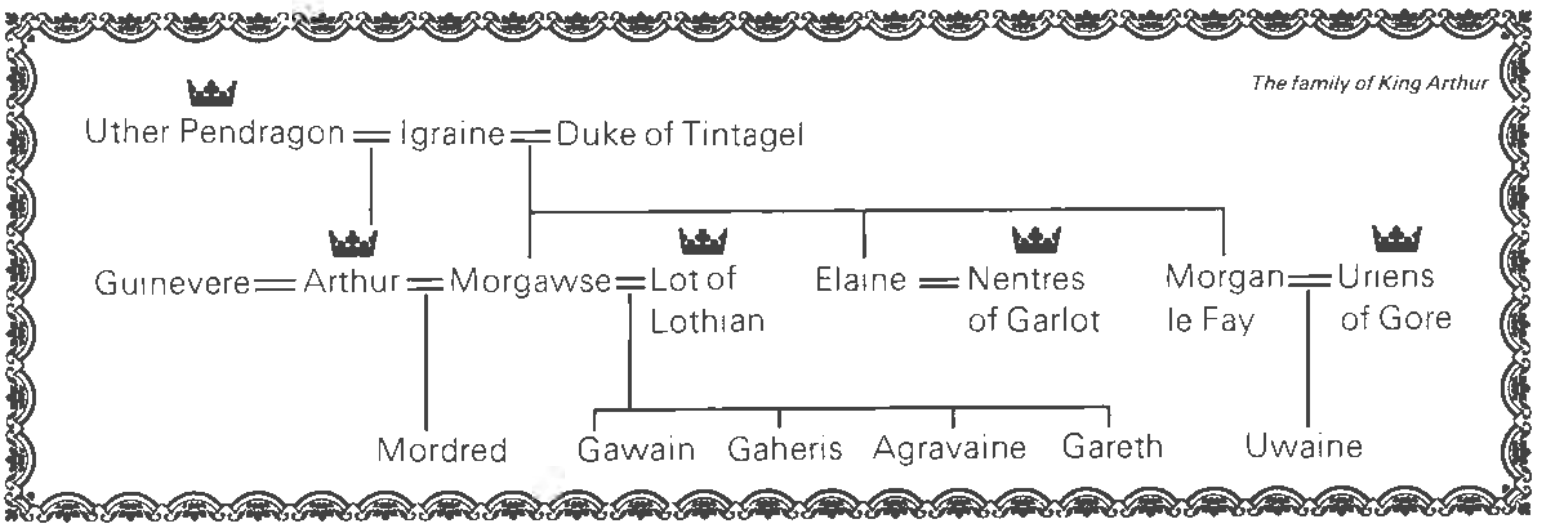
The real Arthur probably lived about 500 AD. A gloomy author named Gildas, who wrote a *Book of Complaints* c 540, says that the Saxons were defeated in a great battle at Mount Badon in about the year 500. Gildas does not mention Arthur but there is some slight evidence that he disliked Arthur and left him out of his history on purpose. However, Nennius in his *History of the Britons*, written in the early 9th century, says that Arthur was *dux bellorum* of the Britons – 'war-chief' or general, not king – at the battle of Mount Badon.

The 10th century *Cambrian Annals* say that Arthur defeated the Saxons at Mount Badon in 516, and also mention in 537 'the battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut (Mordred) fell.'

The Celtic Hero

The rest of our information about Arthur comes from romantic stories which may or may not be founded partly on fact. In Celtic legend he became a great hero, violent and boisterous, who rid the land of giants, monsters and witches. He seems to have resembled the Greek hero Hercules in performing superhuman feats or 'labours'. He slaughtered the Demon Cat of Losanne, he hunted the fabulous boar Twrch Trwyth and drove him into the sea. A Welsh poem

Left **King Arthur, from a late 14th century French tapestry. The real Arthur was probably a war-chief who fought against the Saxons invading Britain c 500 AD**



called *The Spoils of Annwn*, probably written in the 10th century, refers to Arthur's raid on the land of the dead, the isle of Annwn. He sailed there in his ship Prydwen and although he took three times Prydwen's normal complement with him, only seven men returned from the expedition alive. In Robert Graves's translation:

> I will not allow praise to the lords of literature.
> Beyond Caer Wydr they beheld not the prowess of Arthur.
> Three times twenty hundred men stood on the wall.
> It was difficult to converse with their sentinel.
> Three times the fullness of Prydwen, we went with Arthur.
> Except seven, none returned from Caer Colur.

The object of the raid was to seize the magic cauldron of Annwn, from which only the brave and the true could eat – 'It will not boil the food of a coward or one forsworn.' This cauldron may be the original Grail and if it supplied the food of immortal heroes, Arthur may have gained immortality by seizing it.

Arthur was generous and open-handed as befits a hero. In *Culhuch and Olwen*, a Welsh story which was written down about 1100, a visitor to his court is offered 'Meat for thy dogs and corn for thy horse, and hot peppered chops for thyself, and wine brimming over, and delectable songs before thee. Food for fifty men shall come to thee in the hospice . . . It will be no worse for thee there than for Arthur in the court: a woman to sleep with thee and delectable songs before thee.'

In the early Celtic stories Arthur has a large band of heroic comrades, including Cei Wynn (who became Sir Kay in the later romances), Bedwyr (Sir Bedivere), Gereint (Sir Gareth), Gwalchmai (Sir Gawain), Llenlleawc (Sir Lancelot) and Drwst Iron-Fist (probably Tristan). His wife is Gwenhwyfar (Guinevere). Some of the old Celtic gods are with him, now turned into men – Manawydan, Teyrnon and Gwynn son of Nudd, the master of hell. Also in his retinue are personifications of superhuman qualities, like Drem son of Dremidydd (Sight son of Seer) who could see a fly in Scotland from as far away as Cornwall, and Clust son of Clustfeinad (Ear son of Hearer) who could hear an ant getting up in the morning 50 miles off.

The Breton Tales

Before 1100 there were evidently various stories about Arthur and his exploits, which were popular in Wales and Cornwall. They were also well known in Brittany. Wandering Breton poets and story-tellers translated the stories about Arthur into French, embroidering them and adding to them in the process, and spread them all over France. One of the popular pastimes of the day was listening to the tales of a travelling bard, who moved on from court to castle to manor house and lived on what he could collect from his audiences.

Each bard's stories might differ in detail. One of them, for instance, said that Arthur had not really killed the Demon Cat; the truth was that the Demon Cat had defeated him and carried him off, but it was not safe to tell that version of the story to a British audience. The bards also tended to make the stories more real for their hearers by bringing the historical setting up to date, so that the Arthur who fought the Saxons turned into a medieval baron and his British troops became feudal knights.

By 1100 tales of Arthur had spread as far as Italy. There is a sculpture over one of the doors of Modena Cathedral which shows Arthur, Gawain and Kay rescuing Guinevere from a moated castle defended by enemy knights.

Geoffrey of Monmouth

An English chronicler named William of Malmesbury, writing in 1125, said that the Britons (or possibly Bretons) told many fables about Arthur, though he was 'a man worthy to be celebrated, not by idle fictions but by authentic history'; and that in 1087 the tomb of Walwin (Gawain) had been discovered in Wales on the sea coast, but no one knew where Arthur was buried and so 'ancient ballads fable that he will return'.

William's implied call for an authentic history of Arthur was never answered but a few years later, c 1135, the first full and connected account of the hero appeared in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*. This brilliant and compelling work, which masqueraded as history, has been described as 'the most successful work of fiction ever composed.' It has also been condemned by some slightly humourless modern scholars as an impertinent forgery and an outrage upon historical truth, but it still makes good reading today, eight centuries after it was written.

Geoffrey was born in Wales and was apparently of Breton descent. His father's name was Arthur, which may be significant. He drew on earlier histories and on traditions and legends for his *History* but seems to have drawn far more heavily on his own imagination. To account for the mass of previously unknown material in his book, he said he had used 'a certain most ancient book in the British language', though whether this book really existed is uncertain.

Geoffrey's book begins with the supposed first King of Britain – Brute (Brutus), great-grandson of Aeneas, who was one of the survivors of the Trojan War and the hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Brute and his Trojan retinue came to Albion (Britain), which was inhabited only by a few giants, and founded the city of New Troy (London). The island came to be called Britain, from Brute, and subsequent British kings were descended from him, down to Uther Pendragon, who succeeded to the throne when the Britons were hard pressed by the Saxons. Uther Pendragon does not seem to have ever existed in reality, and his name may come from a mistranslation of the Welsh phrase *Arthur mab Uthr*, 'Arthur the terrible', as Arthur son of Uther.

According to Geoffrey, Uther Pendragon fell violently in love with Igerna, the beautiful wife of the Duke of Cornwall. Her husband snatched her away from court and shut her up in Tintagel castle while he went to gather troops. Uther was furious and led an army into Cornwall to punish the duke. He also appealed to Merlin, the great magician, who by magic art made Uther look exactly like the duke. Disguised as Igerna's husband, Uther had no difficulty in entering both Tintagel castle and Igerna's bed, and Arthur was conceived at Tintagel.

Arthur was 15 when Uther Pendragon died and was buried at Stonehenge. He was crowned king at Silchester. He defeated and harried the Saxons, plundering them of much treasure with which he rewarded his fighting men. He won a great victory in Somerset, in a battle probably intended to be Mount Badon though Geoffrey does not say so. Arthur wore 'a helm of gold graven with the semblance of a dragon.' His shield was called Pridwen (formerly his ship in *The Spoils of Annwn*). His sword was called

Mansell Collection

Cav. uff. U. Orlandini

Above left **Part of a mosaic pavement in Otranto Cathedral, dated 1166, showing Arthur with crown and sceptre. Tales of Arthur had spread to Italy by 1100. This part of the pavement has been heavily restored and it is not certain that Arthur was originally meant to be riding a goat. If he was, the artist's intentions were presumably satirical**

Above right **Sculpture at Modena Cathedral, c 1100, showing Arthur, Gawain and Kay rescuing Guinevere from a moated castle**

Caliburn (later Excalibur) and had been forged in Avalon.

Arthur went on to subdue the Scots and to marry the beautiful Guinevere. His sister married Loth, Duke of Lothian, and by him had two sons, Gawain and Mordred. Kay and Bedivere were also prominent among Arthur's knights.

After Arthur had conquered both Ireland and Iceland, 'he invited unto him all soever of most prowess from far-off kingdoms and began to multiply his household retinue, and to hold such courtly fashion in his household as begat rivalry amongst peoples at a distance, insomuch as the noblest in the land, fain to vie with him, would hold himself as naught, save in the cut of his clothes and the manner of his arms he followed the pattern of Arthur's knights.' This is a foretaste of the Arthurian court of the later legends, attended by those 'of most prowess' and a centre of 'courtly fashion'.

Arthur's Conquests

Foreign rulers were alarmed by Arthur's successes and when he discovered this, 'his heart was uplifted for that he was a terror unto them all, and he set his desire upon subduing the whole of Europe unto himself.' He conquered Norway and Denmark, and then descended on France.

It took Arthur nine years to subdue all France. He then recrossed the Channel and held a great court at Caerleon in Wales. All his vassals came to pay him homage and there were tournaments and contests of strength and skill, including archery, chess and putting the weight. Geoffrey again provides an early trace of the later Arthurian court of chivalry, for the ladies 'would deign have the love of none save he had thrice approved him in the wars' (and as a result, he adds sardonically, 'did dames wax chaste') and the knights would fight mock battles, cheered on by 'the dames and damsels looking on from the top of the walls, for whose sake the courtly knights make believe to be fighting.'

Annoyed by a demand for tribute from the Roman Emperor, Arthur and his barons led an army to the continent, leaving Guinevere and Mordred, Arthur's nephew, to govern Britain. The Roman Emperor, Lucius Hiberius, brought levies from Byzantium, Africa, Spain, Persia, Egypt, Syria and Babylon in an army of over 40,000 men against Arthur. The armies met in France and Arthur was victorious in a tremendous battle of 'thrust of spear and stroke of swords and fling of javelin.' Bedivere was killed and Kay died of the wounds he received. After 'a most unconscionable slaughter', the Romans were driven from the field and Lucius himself was killed.

The Treachery of Mordred

Arthur intended to march on Rome but meanwhile in Britain Mordred 'had tyrannously and traitorously set the crown of the kingdom upon his own head, and had linked him in unhallowed union with Guinevere the Queen.'

Arthur returned at once to Britain with his army. The gallant Gawain was killed in battle against his evil brother Mordred, who was driven back to the river Camel in Cornwall, while Guinevere fled to a nunnery. In a final battle at the Camel (Geoffrey's interpretation of the *Cambrian Annals*' battle of Camlann), the traitor Mordred fell 'and many thousands along with him'. But 'the renowned King Arthur himself was wounded deadly and was borne thence unto the Isle of Avalon for the healing of his wounds, where he gave up the crown of Britain unto his kinsman Constantine . . . in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord five hundred and forty-two.'

Like other histories written in the same period, Geoffrey's book includes marvels, superhuman feats and supernatural monsters. Arthur is conceived as a result of Merlin's magic spell, he kills 470 of the enemy single-handed in one battle, and Geoffrey records that he slaughtered the giant of Mount St Michael who had been terrorizing the neighbourhood. But in the main Geoffrey's account of Arthur is realistic and is far less concerned with the supernatural than the earlier Celtic stories. Arthur is an ideal but not impossibly romanticized feudal leader. He is generous to his followers, a faithful but not tiresomely pious son of the Church, a fierce fighter and an excellent general, and he keeps a splendid and glittering court. When tragedy comes upon him, it is the result of ambition and treachery in his own family – an accustomed reality in the lives of real medieval kings. Even when he is carried away wounded to Avalon, there is no suggestion that fairies took him there, and though Geoffrey does not say that Arthur died, he also does not tell us that the hero will return again.

Geoffrey's *History* was accepted, quoted and followed by most later historians. Even towards the end of the 15th century, Henry VII based his claim to the throne of England on a genealogy taken from Geoffrey and going right back through Arthur to Brute.

The book was also a great popular success. It appealed to Welshmen, Cornishmen and Bretons as the story of a successful native British warrior. It appealed to the Norman aristocracy of England, to whom fighting was the one occupation supremely worthy of a gentleman; an attitude which Geoffrey puts into the mouth of one of Arthur's barons. 'For where use of arms is none, and naught is there to do but to toy with women and play at the dice and suchlike follies, none need doubt but that cowardice will tarnish all they once had of valour and honour and hardihood and renown.' To men who thought like this, Geoffrey's Arthur was an attractive figure and the belief that he had conquered half Europe appealed to Norman barons, whose own fathers and grandfathers had conquered England, Sicily and southern Italy, ruled large areas of France, and fought against Byzantines and Arabs.

In the year of Geoffrey's death, 1155, Robert Wace translated Geoffrey's *History* from Latin into French under the title of *Roman de Brut* (The Story of Brute). He remarked that the Bretons of his day told many stories of the Round Table, and this is the first reference to the Round Table which has survived. By 1200 an English cleric named Layamon had turned Wace's *Brut* into English, adding to it the story that after the final battle with Mordred, the fairy queen Morgan took Arthur in a boat to Avalon. He also said that Arthur had the Round Table specially built so as to avoid

Chèze-Brown

Tintagel Castle in Cornwall where, according to the legends, Arthur was magically conceived, with the aid of Merlin the wizard

disputes about precedence among his knights; it seated 1600 men.

Meanwhile in France, another able writer, Chrétien de Troyes, had turned his attention to the Arthurian legends.

Arthur and Chivalry

The poems of the Frenchman Chrétien de Troyes had an even greater influence on the later legends of Arthur than the prose of the British Geoffrey of Monmouth. It was Chrétien who firmly established Arthur's court as the centre of a company of gallant knights and beautiful women, engaged in dangerous adventures and amorous intrigues. Very little is known about his life but in the 1160s – about 30 years after Geoffrey had written his *History* – Chrétien lived at the court of the Countess of Champagne in Troyes. He based his poems, or said he did, on earlier written texts which have not survived and on the tales of travelling bards.

In Geoffrey of Monmouth Arthur is the central figure and hero; in Chrétien and the later French legends Arthur recedes into the background. Chrétien's poems are about the adventures of individual knights of Arthur's court: Gawain, Yvain, Erec, Lancelot and Perceval. Geoffrey as an Englishman was pleased to imagine Arthur conquering most of western Europe, including France; Chrétien and other Frenchmen imagined no such thing and their Arthur is not a great conqueror. Geoffrey placed Arthur and his court in real surroundings; in the French legends, though a few names of real places are used, Arthur and his knights live in a country that never was, a timeless fairyland beyond reality. Geoffrey never mentions the Grail; Chrétien began a poem about the Grail but did not live to finish it. Geoffrey has comparatively little to offer in the way of marvels and magic; Chrétien and his successors have far more. This element of the marvellous and the supernatural probably came to French writers from the travelling story-tellers, and originally from Celtic sources.

Chrétien portrayed Arthur's court in a

The Welsh Arthur

Said Arthur, 'Is there any of the marvels still unobtained?' Said one of the men, 'There is: the blood of the Black Witch, daughter of the White Witch, from the head of the Valley of Grief in the uplands of Hell.' Arthur set out for the North and came to where the hag's cave was. And it was the counsel of Gwyn son of Greidawl that Cacamwri and Hygwydd his brother be sent to fight with the hag. And as they came inside the cave the hag grabbed at them, and caught Hygwydd by the hair of his head and flung him to the floor beneath her. And Cacamwri seized her by the hair of her head, and dragged her to the ground off Hygwydd, but she then turned on Cacamwri and dressed them down both and disarmed them, and drove them out squealing and squalling. And Arthur was angered to see his two servants well nigh slain, and he sought to seize the cave. And then Gwyn and Gwythyr told him, 'It is neither seemly nor pleasant for us to see thee scuffling with a hag. Send Long Amren and Long Eiddil into the cave.' And they went. But if ill was the plight of the first two, the plight of those two was worse, so that God knows not one of the whole four could have stirred from the place, but for the way they were all four loaded on Llamrei, Arthur's mare. And then Arthur seized the entrance to the cave, and from the entrance he took aim at the hag with Carwennan his knife, and struck her across the middle until she was as two tubs. And Cadw of Prydein took the witch's blood and kept it with him.

Culhwch and Olwen
(trans. G. & T. Jones)

way which suited his own surroundings and his own ideals. He was heavily influenced by the code of chivalry which affected the polite society of courts and castles in France in his time. His descriptions of the way in which Arthur's knights behaved are object-lessons in the proper conduct befitting chivalrous gentlemen. As he says at the beginning of his *Yvain*, 'Arthur, the good King of Britain, whose prowess teaches us that we too should be brave and courteous...'

The Contest of the Hawk

The opening scenes of Chrétien's first Arthurian poem, *Erec et Enide*, set the tone of bravery and courtesy. The hero Erec rides off from Arthur's court at Cardigan to chastise a stranger knight who has insulted one of Queen Guinevere's ladies-in-waiting. He follows the knight, whose name eventually turns out to be Yder (for some reason Chrétien hated to reveal the names of his characters until the last possible moment) to a town where he meets a surpassingly beautiful girl named Enide. 'Nature herself had marvelled more than five hundred times how upon this one occasion she had succeeded in creating such a perfect thing.' Erec discovers that next day there will be a contest, which Yder the stranger knight is expected to win, 'for in the presence of all the people there will be set upon a silver perch a sparrow-hawk of five or six moultings – the best you can imagine. Whoever wishes to gain the hawk must have a mistress who is fair, prudent and courteous. And if there be a knight so bold as to wish to defend the worth and the name of the fairest in his eyes, he will cause his mistress to step forward and lift the hawk from the perch, if no one dares to interfere.'

Next day, the prize is claimed for his lady by Yder, of whom everyone else is terrified, but Erec challenges him and demands the hawk for the lovely Enide. The crowd quickly clear a space and the two knights fight a long-drawn duel – 'they reach for each other with the tips of their lances' as they charge together on horseback, 'and strike each other so hard that the shields are pierced and broken; the lances split and crack . . .' The two knights fight on until they are both exhausted and bleeding. Both are ashamed to be striking such faint blows and they agree to rest. Yder says, 'Let us withdraw and rest a little; for too weak are these blows we deal. We must deal better blows than these; for now it draws near evening. It is shameful and highly discreditable that this battle should last so long . . . Surely we should do our best with blades of steel for the sake of our lady-loves.'

Presently the combat is renewed. Erec hacks through Yder's armour into his shoulder and then 'deals him such a tremendous blow upon the helmet that it quite stuns him.' Erec drags off the fallen Yder's helmet to kill him but to do so would be a breach of the code of chivalry, as Yder is quick to point out. 'Mercy now, and do not kill me after having overcome me and taken me prisoner; that would never bring thee praise or glory.' Erec relents and orders Yder to go to Arthur's court and surrender himself to Guinevere.

The story emphasizes the chivalrous virtues of courage, strength and skill in fighting, showing mercy to a defeated foe, keeping one's word, refusing to tolerate an insult to a woman. The contest of the hawk is a typical institution of chivalry which occurs again and again in different forms in the later Arthurian stories – a romantic beauty contest which automatically leads to violent knightly combat, but a combat which is supposed to be fought in a fair and sporting spirit. Not that Chrétien and his successors were unduly starry-eyed about their heroes. The knights have the defects of their qualities. They can be reckless, haughty, stubborn, and in the heat of battle or rage, savage and bloodthirsty. They feel fear and do not always manage to overcome it. Their sexual morals are often decidedly loose (and did not appeal to Victorian critics). A knight worsted in combat may willingly admire the prowess of his opponent, or he may simply sulk.

Right **Arthur's knights, renowned for their chivalry and courage, constantly set out in search of adventure and to perform deeds of valour. The supreme quest was that of the Holy Grail – in Christian legend the holy cup used by Christ at the Last Supper.** ***The Knights Swear the Quest for the Grail,*** **from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris**

Below **When Arthur lay dying, Sir Bedivere took the sword Excalibur and threw it into the water, from which a hand rose and caught it. Early 14th century manuscript**

British Museum

The Knightly Quest

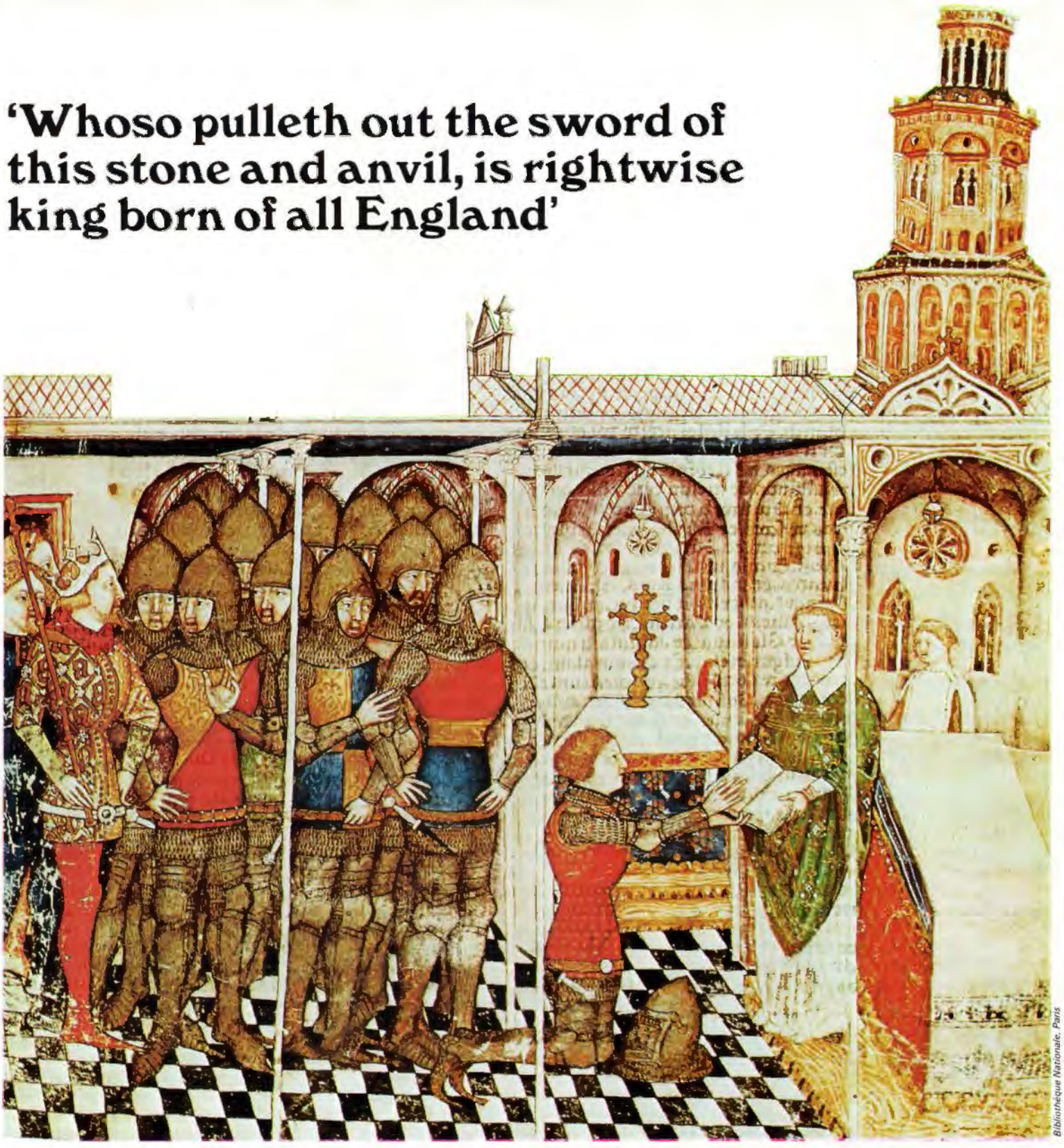
Quests are the principal feature of Chrétien's stories and of the later romances. A knight rides out to seek adventure and to preserve, or re-establish, his honour and reputation as a ferocious but courteous fighting man. During the quest he does battle against enemy knights, who may be chivalrous warriors like himself or evil, crafty and treacherous oppressors of the poor and weak. He rescues beautiful women from wicked knights and wizards. He is often captured and escapes death or dishonour by a hair's breadth at the last moment. He encounters savage beasts and monsters, glamorous seducers and witches, enchanted castles and spell-bound forests.

The extent to which Arthur himself has shrunk in stature in Chrétien is shown in his *Lancelot*. The court is at Camelot. A stranger knight appears before the king and announces that he holds prisoner many knights and ladies of Arthur's household. But he has no intention of returning them to Arthur's court. 'Rather do I wish to proclaim and serve thee notice that thou hast not the strength or the resources to enable thee to secure them again.' Geoffrey's Arthur would have replied to this insult by leading an army to rescue the captives. Chrétien's Arthur merely replies meekly that 'he must needs endure what he has not the power to change.'

In the same poem Chrétien tells the story of the love affair of Lancelot and Guinevere, Arthur's wife, in which Arthur is cuckolded and which became a stock feature of the later legends.

Chrétien's successors also added details which became accepted episodes of the

'Whoso pulleth out the sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England'



Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

legends. Robert de Borron's *Merlin*, written soon after 1200, follows Geoffrey of Monmouth's story of Arthur's conception and birth, and adds that he was brought up by Kay's father and won the crown of Britain by drawing a sword from a stone. The *Mort Artu* (Death of Arthur) brings in the disappearance of Arthur's sword Excalibur into a magic lake when Arthur is carried away to Avalon.

From the 13th century onwards the stories of the Round Table continued to be told, with additions and alterations, to generations of audiences. The stories had the same appeal as the popular romantic escape-literature of our own day, for which they largely created the pattern, with many of the same ingredients: heroes and villains considerably larger than life, sex and violence, feats of strength and last-minute escapes, misunderstandings and mistaken identities, the thwarting of evil designs and the triumph of courage and honour.

The Legend in Full Flower

In the 15th century the Arthurian legend reached its finest expression in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* (written in English despite its French title). The book is a reworking of much of the earlier Arthurian and Grail material and although there are inconsistencies and confusions because so many different tales are combined together, the result glows with the charm and splendour of Malory's style.

According to Malory, Arthur was the son of Uther Pendragon and Igraine of Cornwall, conceived at Tintagel after Merlin had magically transformed Uther into the likeness of Igraine's husband. Ignorant of his true parentage, Arthur was brought up by Sir Ector, the father of Kay.

When Uther Pendragon died, there was no one to succeed him and various great barons struggled for the throne. Eventually, at Merlin's instigation, the Archbishop of Canterbury summoned all the barons to London where Merlin had provided 'a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone; and in midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high, and therein stuck a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus: Whoso pulleth out the sword of

The Passing of Arthur

Then Sir Bedivere departed and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies on it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over-much cold. And so then they rowed from land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayst, for in me is no trust for to trust in; for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul.

Sir Thomas Malory
Le Morte D'Arthur

this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.'

No one succeeded in pulling out the sword, though many tried, until the young Arthur came by and casually took it to give to his foster-brother Kay. When this was discovered, Arthur was crowned king and defeated all rivals in a series of battles.

Not realizing that she was his own half-sister, Arthur made love to King Lot's wife when she came to the court, and she gave birth to the traitor Mordred, who was thus both the son and nephew of Arthur. It was this unwitting incest which brought Arthur and the Round Table to destruction, as Merlin prophesied. 'But ye have done a thing late that God is displeased with you, for ye have lain by your sister, and on her ye have gotten a child that shall destroy you and all the knights of your realm.'

The Round Table

Merlin and Arthur went to a lake, from the middle of which an arm protruded holding a sword. The sword, Excalibur, belonged to the Lady of the Lake, who gave it to Arthur. When Arthur married Guinevere, his father-in-law gave him the Round Table as a wedding present. It seated 150 knights.

In the later books, Arthur recedes into the background, as in the French legends. The bulk of the *Morte D'Arthur* is concerned with the chivalrous quests of the knights: Lancelot, Gawain, Gareth, Galahad, Uwaine (Chrétien's Yvain), Perceval, Tristram of Lyonesse (Tristan) and many more. The story of Lancelot's love for Guinevere is told, and the adventures of the knights who go in search of the Grail.

Malory's tales are full of supernatural marvels and beings – giants, goblins, fairies, invisible warriors, wizards and enchanters. Arthur was enticed into the Forest Perilous in North Wales by a great sorceress but was rescued by his knights and cut off the witch's head. Sir Bors came to a castle of beautiful women but when he crossed himself, the castle and the ladies vanished and 'he heard a great noise and a great cry, as though all the fiends of hell had been about him.'

The Road to Avalon

In the last book of the *Morte D'Arthur* Arthur himself emerges again as the central figure. Realizing that Lancelot and Guinevere were in love, he refused to admit it to himself or anyone else, because of his affection for Lancelot. But Mordred and Agravaine, who hated Lancelot, insisted on accusing him to the king's face, in spite of the opposition of Gawain and Gareth, who saw that it would mean the end of the fellowship of the Round Table. Their misgivings were justified, for when the accusation of adultery and treason was made in public, Arthur gave Mordred and Agravaine leave to seize Lancelot. Lancelot escaped them, killing Agravaine, and fled to France. Some of the knights went with him, others remained loyal to Arthur and when Arthur and Gawain took an army to France against Lancelot, good knights were killed on both sides, Gawain himself dying of wounds received in combat with Lancelot.

Mordred, left behind to rule England, seized the crown and tried also to seize Guinevere but she resisted him. Arthur returned to England and in a great battle sought out Mordred and killed him with a spearthrust, but the dying Mordred struck Arthur a terrible blow with his sword. Sir Bedivere helped Arthur away to the waterside and, on Arthur's instructions, threw the sword Excalibur far out into the water; an arm came up from the water and caught it and vanished away again. Then the wounded king was taken into a fairy barge and carried away to Avalon, the land of immortal heroes.

This last, magnificently written scene is set in Glastonbury. There was a tradition that Glastonbury was the Isle of Avalon, and much of the area round Glastonbury was water-logged and marshy. Long before, in 1191, the monks of Glastonbury had unearthed an oak coffin from 16 feet underground, which they claimed to be Arthur's. They showed an inscription, 'Here lies buried the renowned King Arthur with Guinevere his second wife in the Isle of Avalon', on a lead cross which they said had been found inside the coffin. Malory says that it was still a popular belief that Arthur would return again one day, and it was said that on his tomb was written *Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus*, 'Here lies Arthur, the once and future king.'

The story of Arthur has attracted many writers and artists since Malory, including Spenser, Tennyson, the Pre-Raphaelites and Masefield. Whether Arthur was originally a sacred king has been hotly disputed. An old Welsh poem says that he had three wives, all named Guinevere, which might suggest that he was regarded as a sacred king married to the Triple Goddess. Mordred's attempt to seize both the throne and Guinevere suggests the combat between the sacred king and his rival and attempted successor, who tries to oust him as consort of the Goddess. The evidence is inadequate to prove the theory but it may be that this ancient theme, lying beneath the surface of the legend, has helped to give it a deep and timeless appeal.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

(For the Grail legends, see GRAIL: and see also CAMELOT AND ARTHURIAN BRITAIN; GALAHAD; GAWAIN; LANCELOT; MERLIN; MORGAN LE FAY; PARSIFAL; TRISTAN.)

An oak table in Winchester Castle, once believed to be the original Round Table. Henry VIII showed it proudly to royal visitors. It has the Tudor rose in the middle because the Tudors based their claim to the English throne partly on their supposed descent from Arthur

Michael Holford

FURTHER READING: Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* is available in numerous editions; there are Penguin and Everyman editions of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and an Everyman edition of Chrétien de Troyes; R. Cavendish's, *King Arthur & the Grail* (Taplinger, 1979) makes interesting reading; for the real Arthur, see Geoffrey Ashe, *From Caesar to Arthur* (Collins, London, 1960).

Asafoetida

Evil-smelling gum, made by drying the juice of the plant *Ferula asafoetida* and used as a condiment: it is recommended in a magical textbook called the *Lemegeton* for calling up a demon, as its stench is suitable to the nature of demons, which stink of hell.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Asceticism

The practice of abstinence and austerity, based on the belief that the desires of the flesh are a spiritual hindrance, and intended to subdue the body or to make it holy. See SELF-DENIAL.

ASH

VARIOUS GREEK MYTHS link the birth of mankind with a universal ash tree. The poet Hesiod's fable of Zeus creating a race of brazen men from ashes accounts for the reference in Homer, when Penelope says to Ulysses, 'Tell me thy family from whence thou art; for thou art not sprung from the olden tree . . .'

Nordic myths also suggest that man was created from the wood of the ash by the god Odin; and the word itself derives from the Norse *aska*, meaning 'man'. In the *Edda*, the sacred book of the Northmen, the ash becomes the World Tree, Yggdrasill. Its branches overspread the world and reached the heavens, while its roots penetrated the abyss known as Hel, from which our modern word 'hell' is derived. Halfway up the trunk was Midgard, the disc-shaped earth, surrounded by ocean, with the serpent of eternity and a final mountain boundary on its outer rim. Asgard, the mountain of the gods at the base of Valhalla, reared up immediately around the trunk.

The association of the ash and snakes is widespread. In the 1st century AD Pliny wrote on ash's magical efficacy against snakes, how a snake would rather perish in a fire than crawl over an ash twig, and that they even avoid the shade cast by an ash tree; regarding which the 16th century writer Gerard remarks: 'It is a wonderful courtesie in nature, that the Ash should floure before the serpents appeare, and not cast his leaves before they be gon againe.' To carry an ash twig or wear ash leaves in your hat would protect you against being bitten by snakes; if you were, drinking ash sap would cure the bite. An ash stick was guaranteed to kill a snake outright.

Yggdrasill, the world tree in Nordic myth, was an ash-tree: its roots reached to hell and its uppermost branches touched heaven. It was also believed that the disc-shaped earth was situated half-way up the trunk.

Witches were also repelled by the ash, a bunch of ash keys being considered particularly useful against them. Ash sap was fed to new-born babies to protect them from evil spirits, and a baby's first bath should be before a fire of ash wood. A bunch of ash leaves would guard a bed and its occupant; a house within an ash grove was secure from supernatural influences.

The Irish burnt ash to keep the Devil away, and it was the original Yule log, the burning faggot from which the old year's sacred flame was transmitted to the new. Ash is in fact a splendid wood for fires, burning even if green.

There are many minor bits of magic connected with this tree. It could be employed to cure warts by pressing a pin into the wart and then into the tree saying:

> Ash tree, ash tree
> Pray buy these warts off me.

Children could be cured of rupture by passing them naked through a cleft, made in an ash tree and held open by oaken wedges, which was then closed and bandaged. If the tree's wound healed satisfactorily, the rupture would do likewise. Gilbert White describes the rite in *The Natural History of Selborne*, where he also notes the even odder custom of the 'shrew-ash'. Shrews were believed to cause cramp and lameness if they ran over cattle. If a live shrew was sealed into a hole bored in an ash, the cattle could be cured by stroking them with a branch from this tree. Ash could in any case not injure animals, and was one of the trees recommended for making shepherds' crooks.

'Good morning to you, God, good morning.' The Supreme Being of the Ashanti is everywhere and sees everything; if you have something to say to him, you say it to the wind

ASHANTI

THE ASHANTI PEOPLE live in Ghana, in West Africa. Religious rites and ceremonies are important in traditional Ashanti society because it is believed that men interact not only with each other but also with their ancestors and with supernatural beings and spirits which inhabit the universe. This interaction is possible because man himself is made of material and non-material elements. He has a body formed out of the blood of his mother, a spirit derived partly from his father and a soul given to him by the Supreme Being.

To the Ashanti, therefore, man's well-being depends on both physical and spiritual factors. When a person is sick, the cause of his illness may be spiritual as well as physical. When his affairs do not go right, he may have been thwarted not only by his fellow men but by supernatural forces and spirits invoked by evil men to their aid, or by spirits and beings which he has offended.

In a society which holds this view, religion cannot but dominate its way of life. Man must worship and pray to the supernatural beings and spirits on whom he depends for his well-being. Religion is one of the means by which he lives his life on this earth, and recourse to methods of controlling supernatural forces and spirits for his own benefit becomes a matter of practical necessity.

Although the Ashanti believe in a hereafter, they are more concerned with the here-and-now. They do not hold the view that the fruits of man's toils and labours are reaped only after death. You do not do good in order to reap the benefits after death but in order to live a full life on earth. If a person does not fare well, he must do something about it. If he still does not succeed, he can only hope to have his destiny changed

Camera Press London

At the birth of their nation the Ashanti believed that a golden stool descended from the heavens. The stool has always been a powerful symbol, 'the soul of the nation', and an insurrection resulted when the British tried to take possession of it in 1900

in the other world before he returns to be born anew, if he so wishes. The hereafter only provides the consolation of continuity, of knowing that you can join your kinsmen after death or that you can hope for a better life to be relived on earth.

The Dependable God

To the Ashanti the universe is the work of a Creator, Odomankoma. It is he who created the heaven and the earth, men and all creatures of the earth, trees and rivers. As they say on their drums, things that owe their origin to the Creator must be clearly distinguished from the works of man who draws on Nature for his own benefit. The things of Nature are from long ago.

> The path has crossed the river,
> The river has crossed the path,
> Which is the elder?
> We made the path and found the river.
> The river is from long ago,
> From the Creator of the universe.

When Odomankoma the Creator created the world, he also created life and death. According to an Ashanti myth, Death became so powerful that he was able to kill the Creator himself. But when the Creator died, the universe continued to be controlled by a Supreme Being, called Nyame. At first this Supreme Being lived very close to earth and was within easy reach of man but he was obliged to move far out into the heavens because women hit the earth continually as they pounded grain in mortars.

From his abode on high Nyame is able to see everything, for he sees even with his eyes turned away. He seems to be everywhere, for the Ashanti say, 'If you have something to say to the Supreme Being, say it to the wind'. He is the giver of rain and sunshine who controls the seasons. He offers protection and help to those who need it. As summarized in Ashanti proverbs: 'It is the Supreme Being that brushes off flies from the tailless animal.' 'It is the Supreme Being that pounds food for the one who has lost his arm.'

The Supreme Being is the source of morality. He does not like men to cheat one another. Man's destiny is in his hands: 'If the Supreme Being does not want you to die and a human being tries to kill you, you will not die.' Men can depend on him, for he is someone on whom one leans and does not fall. And so the drummer exhorts his listeners:

> The Dependable God bids us all
> Abide by his injunctions.
> Then shall we get whatever we want,
> Be it white or red.
> It is God, Creator of the firmament.
> Good morning to you, God, good morning.
> I am learning, let me succeed.

It is not only human beings who owe their lives to the Creator. The Ashanti believe that the supernatural beings which inhabit the universe also owe their existence and power to him.

Of these beings, those who wield the greatest power are the gods (*abosom*), who may be identified with particular features of Nature. They include river gods, tree gods and mountain gods, as well as gods without any clearly defined habitat. All of them rank below the Supreme Being and are sometimes described as his children. However, within the limits of the powers given to them, they act independently.

Gods Born of Woman

Gods may be given a temporary home in a special shrine, consisting of a brass pan and effigies or other objects to which sacrifices can be made. This makes it possible for gods identified with particular places to be worshipped wherever a shrine can be made for them; provided, of course, that they are served by priests appointed by them, or by priests familiar with their mode of worship.

Various human characteristics are attributed to the gods. They have sex, some being male, some being female and a few being both. They tend to specialize, to be more effective in some spheres than in others. There are gods of war and gods of victory. There are gods of peace and gods who are consulted about the causes of epidemics or other calamities.

The Ashanti believe that a god can enter into a woman's womb and be born into the

world. Usually he does not come forth in the form of a human being but as a piece of stone, which is subsequently discovered to be a god. The gods can change their shapes, turning themselves into animals or birds when it suits them, or appearing in human form – in the guise of beautiful women or people who are insane.

The gods also have unlimited mobility. They can stay in and out of their shrines as they like. The fact that shrines are made for some of them in different localities suggests that their worshippers believe that the gods can be present in many places at the same time.

Ashanti religious practice allows freedom of movement and freedom of worship. Every god is available for consultation by anyone who needs help and people travel to the particular gods who can give them the kind of help they need. Sometimes the gods themselves direct those who come to them to other gods. Naturally, some gods become more renowned than others and attract people to their shrines from all over Ashanti, and indeed from other places.

Earth Spirit

As well as the gods, the Ashanti recognize the existence of Nature spirits, which find a permanent or temporary home in natural objects and may be beneficial to those who recognize them and harmful to those who ignore them. They are generally not the objects of organized cults. They have no priests, no set form of worship, even though they may occasionally be the focus of rituals.

The most important Nature spirit recognized by the Ashanti is the spirit of the Earth. This is a feminine spirit, for the Earth is like a mother to humanity. Her sacred day is Thursday and in the old days work on the farm was prohibited on this day.

The attitude of the Ashanti to the spirit of the Earth is expressed in drink-offerings and in the poetry of drums. The priest of a god acknowledges the Supreme Being and the spirit of the Earth before he starts the trance dance. In the poetry of drums, the drummer addresses the spirit of Earth, saying:

> Earth when I am in life, I depend on you.
> When I am about to die, I depend on you.
> Earth that receives the body of the dead,
> Good morning to you, Earth; good morning,
> great one. . . .

Apart from the Earth, no planets are recognized by the Ashanti as belonging to the world of spirits. Neither the sun nor the moon appears in prayers or rituals.

Dangers of the Forest

Other Nature spirits are associated with particular trees, especially those used for carving or building. These trees are not the objects of organized cults because they are not personified gods (and so are distinguished from tree gods proper). When an Ashanti wishes to cut down any of them for use, he performs a little ritual so that the spirit enshrined in it may not harm him.

There is a widespread belief that many spirits inhabit the forest and that it is dangerous for anyone to venture alone into the thick forest unless he knows the lore of the forest. And it is not only Nature spirits that loiter there. Gods may also be met and some of those who become priests discover their gods through being possessed while in the forest. When they are possessed elsewhere, there is a tendency for them to run into the bush, to live there in seclusion so that they will be in constant touch with the god who has possessed them.

The rites performed during festivals set aside for some gods include bringing the god from the bush in a procession to the town.

André Held

Ancestor worship is an important element in Ashanti religion. Funerary urn of an ancestor: because the dead have supernatural powers, they can help or harm the living. They are prayed to, and offered food and drink

The Living and the Dead

The position of man's soul and spirit in the universe of spirits is also of concern to the Ashanti. While on earth, man must keep his own soul pure and strong. He must also respond to the spiritual influences and powers around him, because he has no power of his own to determine the course of his own life. Although he has a spirit, it does not make him a member of the world of spirits. It is when he dies that he can join the world of spirits, and in this state he shares such attributes of the gods as unlimited mobility, shape-changing, the power to show himself visibly through some human being and the gift of invisible presence.

Because the dead have supernatural powers beyond the reach of living men, it is believed that they can be of help to the living when they are reached through prayers and ritual. The Ashanti pray to the dead in much the same way as they spoke to them while they were alive. They offer them food and drink, conscious of their human past. They slaughter a sheep for them and afterwards cut it up and share it, as it were, with them.

Though the Ashanti revere the dead and behave in their presence in a religious manner, they think of them not as gods but as persons in another world, as kinsmen who are no longer visible but who can help the living.

Magical Force

The Ashanti believe in the magico-religious power of witches and sorcerers and in the protective powers of charms and amulets, prepared by experts, and worn on the body or hung in a room. There are amulets believed to provide protection against being shot, or assaulted, charms against witchcraft and bad medicine. These provide additional security to that offered by the gods and may be prepared or prescribed by a priest for the use of a client.

Closely related to the belief in magico-religious power is the belief that there is vital force inherent in some material things. This belief shows itself in the choice of ritual materials – in the selection of herbs, liquids, and substances assumed to have spiritual power. Such materials are used to harness spirits, to act as a vehicle of communication

with the unseen, and to act as agents of a person's desires.

Charms, amulets or other preparations of vital force can be used to influence not only gods and spirits but also man – to influence his mind or his heart, to weaken his body or destroy him completely. They are important bridges to the supernatural and may operate in the worship of supernatural beings as well as in magic designed to achieve its ends without the direct intervention of a supernatural being.

When they form part of the rituals of worship, they may be combined with actions and speech (in ritual formulae and prayers) or music and movement. When they are exploited for magical purposes, they may be combined with spells or incantations and prescribed actions.

The Axe of Nyame

Although there is evidence in the past of temples and priests of Nyame the Supreme Being, a distinctive organized cult of the Supreme Being has not survived. There are no set rituals for Nyame, no set occasions for worship exclusive to him. The central place which he occupied in Ashanti religious thought has continued to be expressed through the symbol of *nyamedua*. This is a forked branch of a tree (Alstonia congensis) named after Nyame the Supreme Being, which is fixed outside houses to serve as an altar for him.

A pot containing a neolithic axe is placed on this altar. The axe is called *Nyame akuma*, the axe of Nyame, for it is believed to come down from the heavens during thunderstorms. Offerings to the Supreme Being are placed in the pot.

On all ritual occasions focused primarily on the lesser gods, formal prayers and libations begin with a call to the Supreme Being. Apart from this, nothing else seems to be required for bringing people in touch with him, for he can always be reached through prayers.

The Worship of the Gods

Nature spirits similarly have no shrines or formal organized cults. Earth is mentioned in prayers and libations but there does not appear to be a distinctive organized form of worship for the spirit of the Earth. Similarly other Nature spirits become the focus of attention only when man is in need of objects with which they are associated. The rites that are performed for them are done privately: they do not call for general participation or the intensity of public worship.

It is the lesser gods and the ancestors who receive the greatest attention in Ashanti religious practice, for they are worshipped at fairly regular intervals. But there is a vast difference in the forms of worship devoted to the ancestors and those set aside for the gods.

The ancestors have no priests trained specially for the purpose of worship or the performance of rituals, for the ancestors are guardian spirits that may be approached by any of their kinsmen. Communication with them is established through prayers, pouring libations, offerings of food and blood sacrifice, usually of a sheep. In the case of ancestor chiefs, those who officiate on ritual occasions are the chief and his elders, the members of the tribe who are the keepers of the royal mausoleum and a selected number of officials and servants of the court.

The worship of the gods, on the other hand, requires trained priests. All those who assume this role undergo long periods of training, generally lasting not less than three years, during which they learn the music and dance of the gods, the particular songs of the gods they serve, the elements of drama embodied in public worship, the rites of the cult, methods of divination and healing, the use of herbs, the preparation of charms and amulets or how to counteract their powers, and methods of dealing with the personal problems of their clients.

In traditional Ashanti society then, religion provides an important means of dealing with the day-to-day problems of living that can be attributed to spiritual causes, as well as a focal point for rallying the members of a community and strengthening their solidarity.

Worship is regarded not just as an expression of faith in the unseen but as a service which gods and spirits demand. In this connection, the traditional religion of the Ashanti shows greater concern with the lesser beings and spirits than with the Supreme Being himself because it is believed that they are both more capricious and more directly involved in every day life.

(See also CULT OF THE DEAD.)

J. H. KWABENA NKETIA

Ashes have been used to promote fertility, to give strength or to bring rain: ashes of burned Bibles have been recommended for treating potato disease

ASHES

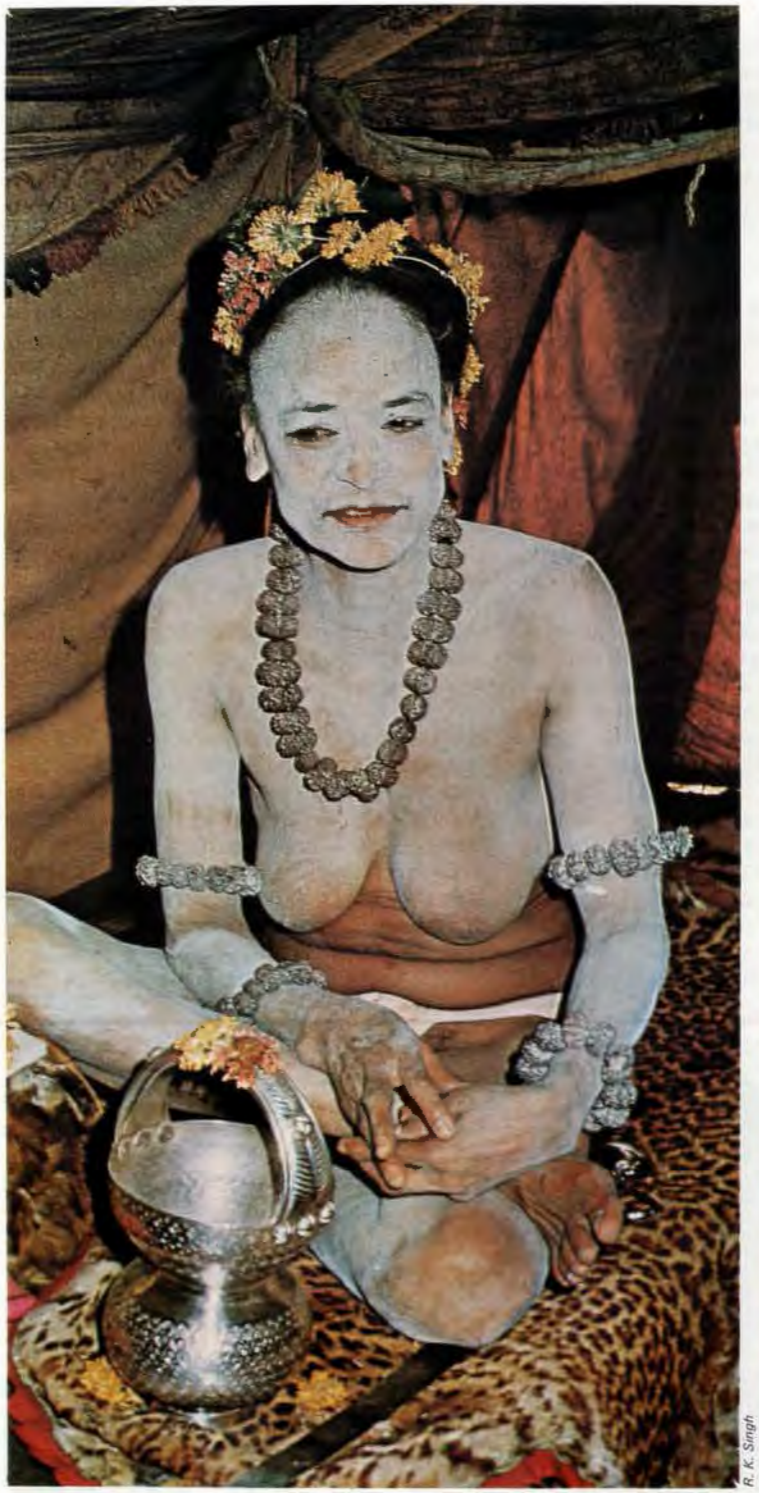
ASHES ARE the residue of fire, and just as fire is regarded in mythology and folklore as something which purifies and also regenerates, or brings new life, so the same properties are associated with ashes. Some primitive peoples regard ashes as the 'seeds' of fire, falling from it as it dies in the same way that the seeds of plants do, and so containing the life of the fire itself.

The ancient Jews sacrificed a red heifer by fire, the ashes being used to purify the unclean. The ancient Egyptians burned red-haired men, not as a purificatory rite but so that their ashes could be scattered on the fields to quicken the seed in the earth.

At the root of the custom of burning living creatures in sacred fires to fertilize the soil lies the conviction that ash is the soul of fire and so brings renewal. It was long a folk custom in Europe for the ashes of the Midsummer fires to be spread on the crops or

Leni Riefenstahl

Ashes, like fire which creates them, are widely believed to carry new life and strength, as among the Nuba people of the southern Sudan whose wrestlers cover themselves with ashes for extra vigour



R. K. Singh

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fed to farm animals. In modern Germany a flaming Easter wheel is rolled down the hillside and its ashes are then spread on the fields.

Ashes have also played their part in the rites of rainmakers and in control of the weather. South American tribes, particularly the Muyscas of Colombia, throw ashes into the sky to condense the clouds and induce rain, or scatter ashes on water as a charm to produce fair weather. In Central Europe ashes were spread on the fields to prevent hailstones, and in France as a defence against lightning.

Sometimes linked with the idea of ashes as renewers of life is the belief that when a creature has been burned, its ashes contain its qualities in concentrated form. In Luther's *Martyr's Hymn*, the ashes of Christian martyrs are the seeds of faith.

> Flung to the heedless winds
> Or on the waters cast,
> The martyr's ashes watched
> Shall gathered be at last.
> And from that scattered dust
> Shall spring a plenteous seed
> Of witnesses for God.

To ensure that the power of a witch was utterly extinguished, it was necessary that her body be burned and that her ashes be scattered to the winds. After the burning of Urbain Grandier at Loudun in 1634, his ashes were shovelled by the executioner towards each of the four points of the compass, while the mob searched among the dead embers of the pyre for charred bones, which would serve as aphrodisiacs or as cures for constipation. (See GRANDIER.)

In New Guinea it was believed that the qualities associated with one living creature

Above left **Indian disciple of the god Shiva, whitened with ashes; the god was represented as a white or silver-coloured man**
Above **Nuba wrestler covered with ashes before fighting**
Above right **Indian child, during a festival of Shiva, covered in ashes believed to contain holy and curative properties**
Below right **Victorious Nuba wrestlers are awarded branches which are burnt; the wrestler covers himself with the ashes before the next fight**

R. K. Singh

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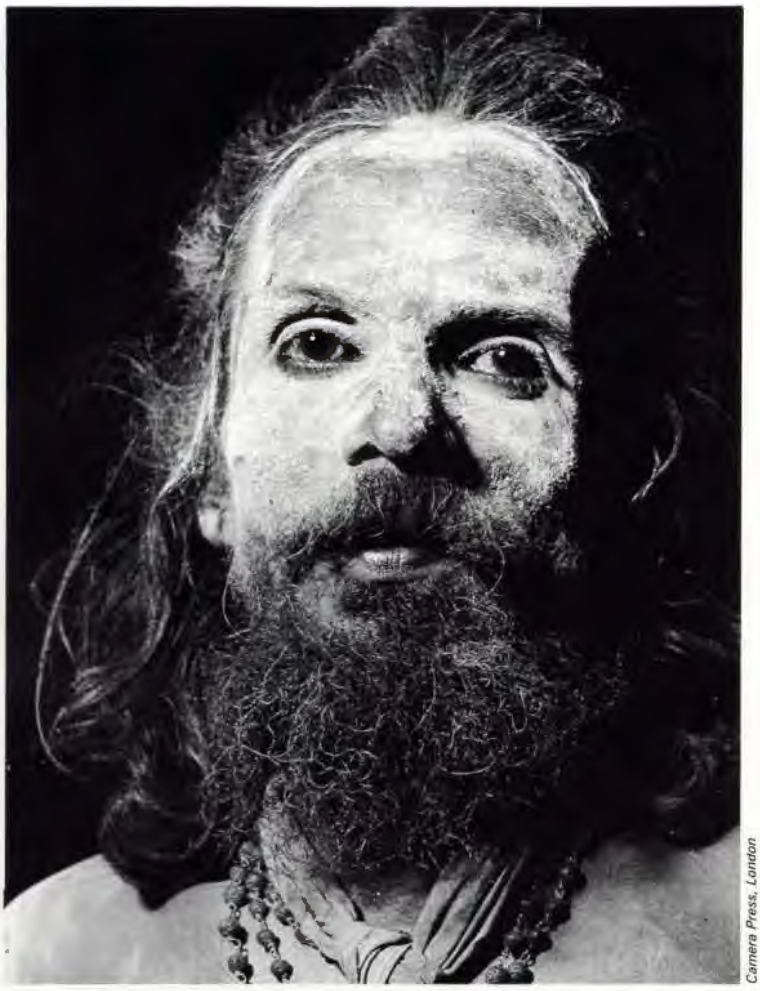
Balu Mondhe



Camera Press, London

***Left* Ash-daubed Indian holy man**
***Right* The Perchera, or tribal chief of the sanctuary at Kataragama, Sri Lanka, has put ashes on his face, symbolizing purification**

could be magically transferred to another by a ritual involving ashes. A snake was killed and its ashes smeared on the legs as a defence against snake-bite. Even today certain South American tribes mix the ashes of their loved ones with their food and drink in order to absorb the qualities of the dead.

An interesting combination of the agricultural use of ashes with the belief that the ashes of something holy contain magical power came to light in 1857 at the trial of the Cornish well-sinker Thomas Pooley. Charged with blasphemously recommending the virtues of the ashes of burned Bibles as a fertilizer and for the treatment of potato disease, he was condemned by an unsympathetic bench of magistrates to 21 months' imprisonment in Bodmin Gaol, where he shortly afterwards went mad.

Ashes were often used in divination, one of the strangest examples being in Yorkshire where, on the eve of St Mark's day (24 April) the ashes were riddled in the hearth and left overnight, and in the morning carefully examined for any mark resembling a footprint. Should this be found, the member of the family whose foot fitted the print was doomed to die within 12 months.

In Ireland, the Isle of Man and Lancashire divination by ashes was carried out at Hallowe'en, when a curious love ritual was sometimes performed by single men. The bachelor would sprinkle ashes or seeds along some quiet lane and then wait and watch. The first girl to pass along that way after him was destined to become his wife.

An entirely different way of looking at ashes is found among medieval alchemists, who saw them as the dead body of a substance. If you burned a piece of wood, the smoke rising up was the 'soul' of the wood and the ashes left behind were its corpse.

A similar connection between ashes and death lies behind their widespread use as a badge of sorrow, bereavement and repentance. In Roman Catholic churches on Ash Wednesday, the ashes of the palms used on Palm Sunday the previous year are sprinkled on the heads of penitents.

Ashur

Chief god and war god of the Assyrians, often shown firing an arrow from his bow and enclosed in a winged disc; he replaced the god Marduk when the Assyrians dominated Mesopotamia.

See MARDUK; MESOPOTAMIA.

ASMODEUS

THIS DEMON OF LUST was probably originally the Persian 'fiend of the wounding spear', Aeshma Daeva, from a root *aesh*, meaning 'to rush forward' or 'violent movement'. He was a storm spirit and a personification of rage, who filled men's hearts with anger and desire for revenge. Anger was regarded in the ancient world as something pre-eminently evil, stirred up like the violence of thunder and lightning by powerful supernatural forces.

Imported from Persia into Palestine, Asmodeus or Ashmedai appears frequently in Jewish literature, where his original function was to cause frustration in marriage, probably in order to provoke rage and violence. In the book of Tobit, written c 250 BC, Tobias marries Sarah, who has had seven husbands before but all of them have been strangled by Asmodeus to prevent them from lying with her. On the advice of the angel Raphael, Tobias burns the heart and liver of a fish, and the smoke drives the demon away. No explanation of the effectiveness of the fish-smoke is given, though it was evidently an unusually fierce and voracious fish as it had earlier jumped at Tobias and attempted to devour him while he was washing himself in the river Tigris.

The Latin version of Tobit adds that Tobias and Sarah also defeated the demon by remaining chaste for the first three nights of their marriage, which was the foundation of the later custom of the 'Tobias nights'. Down to the 19th century in parts of France, Germany and the Balkans, it was the custom to follow the example of Tobias and Sarah. In medieval France husbands sometimes paid a fee to the Church for a licence to disregard the rule.

According to Jewish stories, Asmodeus was the son of a mortal woman, Naamah, either by one of the fallen angels or by Adam before the creation of Eve. In the *Testament of Solomon*, written between 100 and 400 AD, he says, 'I was born of angel's seed by a daughter of man.' Described as 'furious and shouting', he not only prevents intercourse between husband and wife but also encourages adultery. 'My business', he says, 'is to plot against the newly married, so that they may not know one another . . . I transport men into fits of madness and desire when they have wives of their own, so that they leave them and go off by night and day to others that belong to other men with the result that they commit sin . . .'

In this way the demon's functions extended from frustrating desire to arousing it. He developed into a supernatural power of lechery and was said to have the feet of a cock, a bird noted for indiscriminate sexual vigour.

According to other Jewish tales, Asmodeus was the king of demons and lived on a mountain top. He liked to go up to heaven every day to take part in learned discussions there. The master magician King Solomon forced Asmodeus and the other devils to build the Temple at Jerusalem but Asmodeus took his revenge when Solomon foolishly allowed him to seize the magic ring in which his power resided. Asmodeus promptly hurled the ring down to the bottom of the sea, sent Solomon into exile and reigned in his place. But Solomon miraculously recovered the ring from the belly of a fish and imprisoned Asmodeus and the other demons in a large jar.

A magical textbook called the *Lemegeton*, which gives a long list of demons, says that when Asmodeus shows himself to human eyes he rides a dragon, carries a spear and has three heads – of a ram, a bull and a man, all traditionally lecherous creatures. The magician must summon him bare-headed as a mark of respect. He can make the magician invisible and lead him to hidden treasure.

Michael Holford

Asmodeus, originally a demon of rage, turned into a spirit of lust, whom the magician must summon bare-headed as a mark of respect. From Francis Barrett's *Magus*, 1801

Jean Ribière

Ass

Often a symbol of stupidity, and sometimes of lust; in Christian symbolism it stands for humble patience and courage: some classical writers accused the Jews and the early Christians of worshipping an ass. ›

Mansell Collection

Assyria

Empire in northern Mesopotamia, which reached its peak of dominance in the Middle East in the 8th and 7th centuries BC; named from its chief town and god, Ashur. See MESOPOTAMIA.

This Queen of Heaven, with crescent horns, was a rival of the God of the Jews, noted for the sensuality of her worship

ASTARTE

A GREAT MOTHER GODDESS was worshipped under various names throughout the Middle East, as Ishtar in Mesopotamia, as Ashtart or Asherah by the Phoenicians and Canaanites. The Greeks called her Astarte and equated her with their own love goddess Aphrodite, who was originally one of her many forms (see APHRODITE). Numerous clay plaques representing her have been found in Syria and Palestine, dating from 1700 to 1100 BC and probably worn as charms to promote fertility. She is mentioned frequently and with violent disapproval in the Old Testament and eventually, like many other deities who were rivals of the God of Jews and Christians, she turned into a demon and is one of the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

> . . . Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called
> Astarte,
> Queen of Heaven, with crescent horns;
> To whose bright image nightly by the moon,
> Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs.

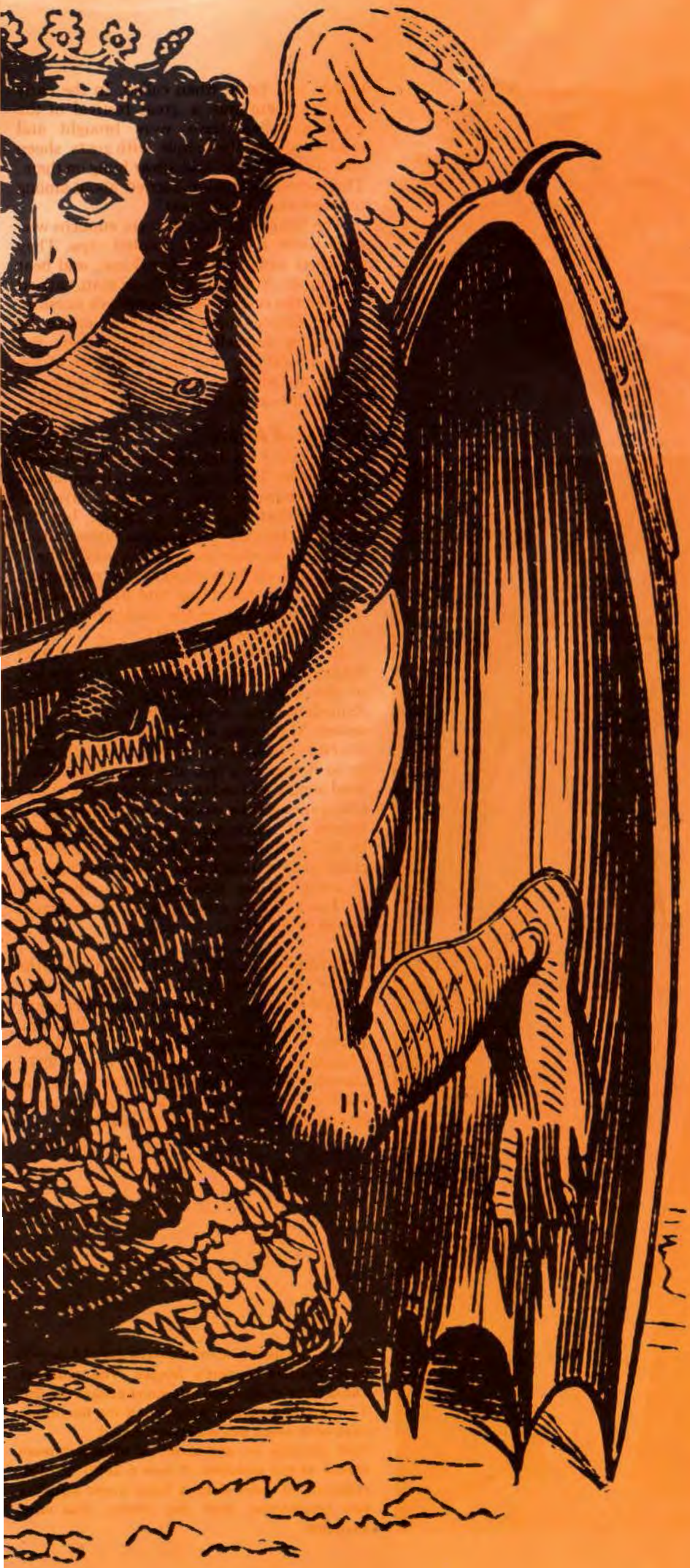
W. F. Albright has remarked that, 'Goddesses of fertility play a much greater role among the Canaanites than they do among any other ancient people': evidently because of their dread of drought and famine. Though these goddesses had different names and were independent personalities, they had similar functions and were essentially the same goddess. They ruled war as well as fertility, motherhood and sex, and they were frequently represented naked and with the sexual organs emphasized.

The Bride of Heaven

Ashtart was the chief goddess of the Phoenicians at Tyre and Sidon, and wherever they established colonies they took her with them. She had a temple in their colony at Memphis in Egypt, for instance, and temples at Carthage. A Phoenician statuette of her in alabaster has been found at Galera, near Granada in Spain: she sits on a throne, flanked by sphinxes and with a bowl under her breasts. At some point in her ritual milk was poured into the head of the statuette and flowed into the bowl through holes pierced in the goddess's breasts.

Asherah or Asherat, often called Asherat of the Sea, was the wife of the Canaanite supreme god El, whose name means simply 'the god', and by him was the mother of 70 deities. The same goddess was also worshipped in the south of Arabia and by the Amorites, the Semitic nomads who by 2000 BC had spread northwards from Arabia into Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia. There is an Amorite inscription to her of the 18th century BC, in which she is called 'the bride of heaven'.

In the Ugaritic texts, dating from c 1400 BC, found at Ras Shamra in northern Syria since 1929, the goddess Anat plays a leading role. The chief god El stays in the back-



ground and the most active god is Baal, the storm god who sends the rains which bring fertility to the earth. Anat is his sister and wife, and she plays the vital part in killing the god of drought and sterility or, in other words, in reviving the life of Nature (see BAAL).

Asherah, the wife of the old supreme god El and the mother of Baal, seems to have been hostile to Baal at first but later joined forces with Anat to help him. Apparently, the followers of both goddesses tried to attach them to the fertility god as the cult of Baal developed.

All these goddesses were imported into Egypt and in the 13th century BC Pharaoh Rameses II called himself 'the companion of Anat'. Ashtart or Asherah appears in an Egyptian sculpture where she is called Qodshu or Qedeshat, 'the sacred prostitute'. She is naked, stands on a lion, and holds a lotus flower, a symbol of life, in her right hand. In her left hand the goddess holds a pair of serpents, which are symbols of life renewed because snakes slough their old skins each year.

In Canaan the symbol of Asherah was a wooden pole, called an *asherah*. It might be a living tree but was more often a tree-trunk with the branches lopped off, standing in a socket on a stone base. The upright pole is again a symbol of life, generation and fertilizing power, and may be the 'tree of life' which appears frequently in Canaanite art.

The Abomination of the Sidonians

When the Israelites invaded Palestine they found numerous local fertility gods and goddesses established, Baals and Ashtarts or Asherahs. The Old Testament writers called the goddess Ashtoreth, combining her name with the Hebrew word for 'shame', *bosheth*, as a comment on the licentiousness of her rites. But many Jews worshipped her. '. . . They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; they went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were round about them, and bowed down to them.' When Gideon pulled down his father's altar of Baal and cut down the asherah which stood beside it, 'he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, and he did it by night,' (Judges, chapters 2 and 6).

It was natural to feel that the gods already established in the country were powerful there, and the worship of a fertility goddess appealed to Jewish farmers who were just as concerned for the increase of their herds, crops and families as the Canaanites were. In spite of the efforts of the prophets, many Jews continued to worship the mother. In the 10th century BC King Solomon built a 'high place' or sanctuary 'on the right hand of the mountain of corruption . . . for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians' (2 Kings, chapter 23).

In the 9th century at Mizpeh, north of Jerusalem, temples of Yahweh and Asherah

The great Semitic goddess Astarte eventually turned into the male demon Astaroth, who was said to have very bad breath. From Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 1863

stood side by side. King Ahab and his wife, the notorious Jezebel, were devoted to the Canaanite gods and maintained 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. It was against these priests that Elijah fought his great ritual battle on Mount Carmel (1 Kings, chapter 18). He succeeded in calling down fire from heaven when they could not, but the reaction against him was so strong that he fled for his life.

In the late 7th century BC the prophet Jeremiah still bewailed that 'the children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven' but those he reproached answered that they would continue to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour libations to her, as they and their fathers had done, because attempts to suppress her worship had brought nothing but disaster (Jeremiah, chapters 7 and 44).

Priests and Prostitutes

As goddess of fertility, Astarte typified the reproductive powers of Nature and woman. She was associated with the moon, and often shown with the horns of the crescent moon, because the moon was believed to govern the growth, decay and rebirth of all things as it waxed and waned in the sky (see MOON). The dove, an amorous bird, belonged to her and at Ascalon in the 1st century AD a visitor saw 'an impossible number of doves' in the streets and houses, because they were sacred and no one ever killed them. Fishes were sacred to her also, perhaps for their numerous offspring.

The Jewish prophets condemned the worship of Astarte, not only because they believed that Yahweh was the one true god but also because of the sexual rituals of the goddess, who was served by sacred prostitutes. Their activities had a practical use, for their earnings financed the goddess's cult, but the sexuality of Astarte's worship was basically imitative magic, intended to sustain the fertility of Nature.

Greek and Roman writers were also repelled by the worship of the Middle Eastern goddesses whose rituals spread westwards, with their phallic symbols, sacred prostitutes and painted priests in women's clothes. In *The Golden Ass* Apuleius (born c 123 AD) describes the priests, 'their faces daubed with rouge and their eye sockets painted to bring out the brightness of their eyes', who carried the image of 'the Syrian goddess' about on an ass, dancing to the sound of castanets and cymbals, cutting themselves with knives and flagellating themselves for the edification of the spectators before going round with the collecting box. Earlier, in the biblical account of the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, the Canaanite god's priests were said to 'cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them.'

The travelling lecturer and humorist Lucian, a contemporary of Apuleius, wrote an essay about the Astarte of Hierapolis, north-west of Aleppo in Syria. Tame bulls, bears, lions and eagles were kept in the grounds of the temple and there was a lake full of holy fishes, some of which knew their names and came when called. In the early summer there was a great festival of the goddess, when trees were brought and erected outside the temple, with goats, sheep and objects of gold and silver hung on them. The sacred idols were carried about among the trees and then burned.

The temple attendants were eunuchs who wore white robes with pointed caps. They cut their arms till the blood ran, and beat each other. Sometimes a young man, carried away in the ecstasy of the goddess's worship, would devote himself to her service by castrating himself. He would then run through the city and the occupants of the house into which he threw his severed members would supply him with women's clothes.

Michael Halford

Giraudon

Princes of Amity

As a result of the denunciations of Ashtoreth in the Old Testament as an 'abomination' and an enemy of God, Jews and Christians decided that she was a demon but for unknown reasons the goddess turned into a male demon, with very bad breath. If he is summoned up by a magician, he appears in human form, half black and half white. He reveals all events of the past, present and future, and knows all secrets.

In the magical textbooks the demon Astaroth has lost all connection with sex but in the early 17th century Astaroth and Asmodeus were among the devils who possessed Madeleine de Demandolx (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS). Under their influence, or so it was believed, she danced and sang lewd songs, writhed in indecent postures and told spine-chilling stories of orgies and cannibalism at witch-revels she had attended. In 1673 Madame de Montespan sacrificed children to Astaroth and Asmodeus, 'princes of amity', in her attempt to secure her hold on Louis XIV's affections by black magic (see BLACK MASS).

FURTHER READING: J. C. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths & Legends* (Attic Press, 1978); Donald Harden, *The Phoenicians* (Praeger); E. O. James, *The Ancient Gods* (Putnam, 1964); W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (John Hopkins Press, 1957); Lucian's 'The Goddess of Syria' is in volume 4 of the Loeb edition of his works, though in an eccentric and tiresome translation.

Above **The head and magical symbol of Astaroth from Francis Barrett's *Magus*. The goddess came to be considered a demon because the Old Testament prophets denounced the licentious rites with which she was worshipped**

Left **Astarte in alabaster, a Mesopotamian statue of the goddess of love c 2000 BC. The crescent or horn-shaped head-dress signifies her connection with the moon, and with sexuality**

The experience of seeming to leave one's own body and look at it from outside is not uncommon. It usually happens briefly and involuntarily but some people have deliberately experimented with 'astral travel'

ASTRAL BODY

FOR CENTURIES it has been a common idea that man is made of two components – a soul or spirit which comes from God, and a material body of flesh and blood. But some philosophers and occult theorists have suggested that each man has a third component, an astral body, meaning literally 'starry body' and sometimes called 'the body of light'.

This astral body is an exact copy of the flesh and blood body but is made of a finer material and has a shining and luminous appearance. It is supposed to be capable of separating itself from the physical body and travelling about, passing through walls, ceilings and other solid obstructions. It is also said to survive death, when it leaves the physical body. It exists in what is called the astral plane, which includes the normal, everyday world but extends beyond it.

An amusing account of astral travel was given by the French Roman Catholic journalist and occultist Anne Osmont, who died in 1953. She described how on her first attempt at astral travel she succeeded in leaving behind physical evidence of what she had done. She was friendly with a husband and wife, both sculptors. The wife, who was called Annie, had one evening expressed her strong disbelief in the possibility of astral travel. Mlle Osmont resolved to prove her wrong the same night.

It took a full quarter of an hour of effort to project herself out of her physical body, and then passing through the wall, she went to her friends' flat. They were asleep in bed. She took note of the colour and style of their nightclothes, but thought that was poor evidence, and looked around for some object to topple. On the mantelpiece was a gilt liqueur glass, and she tried to move it. It seemed as difficult to move as a piano, but presently she noticed it had moved a little, and continuing her efforts she got it to the edge and over. It smashed on the floor.

The couple sat up in bed with a start, and she heard Annie say grumpily, 'I bet it's that imbecile Osmont!' On her next ordinary visit she first saw the husband and repeated Annie's words to him. He recognized the reference and told her that his wife was very angry as the goblet had been a family heirloom. Mlle Osmoot records that she was desperately exhausted for several days as a result of this effort. Movement of physical objects while in the astral body is rare.

The astral body departing after death, as seen in a clairvoyant vision. It is also said to be capable of leaving the physical body during life, and travelling independently through walls and ceilings. This and all subsequent illustrations are from *The Projection of the Astral Body* by S. Muldoon and H. C. Carrington (Rider, 1929)

The Skinless Hag

Among the magicians of the West Indies the projection of the astral body is achieved by singing special charm songs. They speak of this accomplishment as 'hagging', and those of either sex who are feared as possessors of this power are 'hags'. The operation, colloquially called 'changing the skin' is generally supposed to be performed after nightfall in a cool and unfrequented place. The hag strips naked, settles in a comfortable position, and begins to sing a song. At the end of the song, the body is left unconscious.

The hag is said to be visible or invisible at will, or to take any appearance he or she chooses. According to the West Indians, the normal night-time appearance of a 'skinless hag' is an egg-shaped mass of faint light or fire. This light is said to be similar to the glow of decaying fish or rotten wood, seen in the dark. If the hag is near enough, the light is seen as a transparent mist through which the features and shape of the hag are visible.

'It's not me, it's my double'

Dr Francis Lefébure, who at the time had been practising yoga breathing exercises for about seven years, describes an occasion when his astral body became visible. During World War Two he was the doctor at a prisoner-of-war camp near Guelma in Algeria. His ideas were well known in the officers' mess and he was the butt of many jokes. One morning, Lefébure was told to go and see the lieutenant.

Getting into the Astral Body

The proper method is as follows: Develop the body of Light until it is just as real to you as your other body . . . Ultimately, the relation of that body with your own must be exceedingly intimate; but before this harmonizing takes place, you should begin by a careful differentiation. The first thing to do, therefore, is to get the body outside your own. To avoid muddling the two, you begin by imagining a shape resembling yourself standing in front of you. Do not say: 'Oh, it's only imagination!' The time to test that is later on, when you have secured a fairly clear mental image of such a body. Try to imagine how your own body would look if you were standing in its place; try to transfer your consciousness to the Body of Light. Your own body has its eyes shut. Use the eyes of the Body of Light to describe the objects in the room behind you . . .

As soon as you feel more or less at home in the fine body, let it rise in the air. Keep on feeling the sense of rising; keep on looking about you as you rise until you see landscapes or beings of the astral plane. Such have a quality all their own. They are not like material things – they are not like mental pictures – they seem to lie between the two . . .

Now, however unsuccessful your getting out of the body may apparently have been, it is most necessary to use every effort to bring it properly back. Make the Body of Light coincide in space with the physical body . . . then recover the unity of consciousness. If you fail to do this properly you may find yourself in serious trouble. Your Body of Light may wander away uncontrolled, and be attacked and obsessed. You will become aware of this through the occurrence of headache, bad dreams, or even more serious signs such as hysteria, fainting fits, possibly madness or paralysis. Even the worst of these attacks will probably wear off, but it may leave you permanently damaged to a greater or less extent.

Aleister Crowley,
Magick in Theory and Practice

'I went to find him. He was in the barber's shop. Always the first to chaff me, and fearless under fire, he didn't seem quite happy in my presence. This is more or less the story he gave me: "Last night about midnight, having gone to the little station (about three kilometres from the camp), I suddenly saw you so clearly there could be no possible mistake. I said to you, Hallo, Lefébure, what are you doing here at this time of night? And you replied, It's not me, it's my double! and then you disappeared as if by magic. Then I ran all the way to the camp and verified that you were in your room. I questioned the orderlies and the sentries, and they all guaranteed that you hadn't gone out during the night."

'The lieutenant, who seemed very impressed, did not make fun of me any more. As investigation proved that he was not in the least drunk that day, and that in fact he never was, the rumour spread in Guelma that I did strange tricks. Some months later I discovered that the phrase "It's not me, it's my double" was still famous in the town.'

The Sensation of Astral Travel

From accounts given by people who have travelled astrally, the general sensation is at first indistinguishable from the ordinary physical waking state, except sometimes for a feeling of well-being and buoyancy.

Dr Lefébure cites instances where he found himself walking round his bedroom and could not tell whether he was sleep-walking in his normal body or travelling in his astral body – until he felt himself floating upwards. He compares the limbs of the double to the phantom limbs felt by an amputee. He describes using his phantom arms to lever up the top half of his phantom body; but he adds that the most satisfactory results followed when he withdrew upwards from feet to head, like drawing a sword from its sheath.

To project himself astrally, Dr Lefébure relied on an effort of will, but also used yoga exercises involving more and more extended intervals of suspension of breathing.

The most experienced of modern astral travellers, the American author Sylvan Muldoon, attaches importance first to the building into the subconscious of a strong desire to be conscious in the astral body, then to the practice of concentrating on one's own image in a mirror. Next, attention is to be centred on the rhythm of the heart-beats, and the attempt made to be conscious of the heart beating at any point in the body. Then by repeated mental suggestion the heart should be slowed down. Needless to say, no one with heart weakness or irregularity should use this method.

Muldoon's unique series of experiences probably hinged on his abnormally slow heart-beat and his general frail health. He emphasizes that it is the feeling of suspense in the mind, not the actual projection of the astral body, that is unpleasant. He says that a really intense study of, and desire for, astral projection will always bring results because the force built up in the subconscious will inevitably express itself.

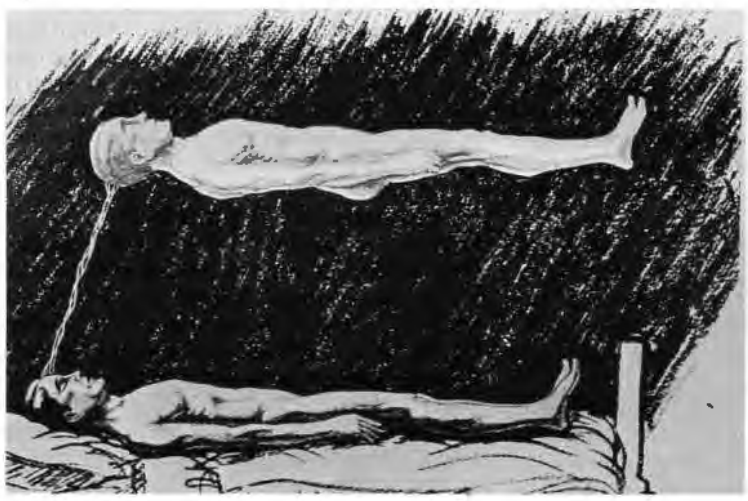
Apparitions

The evidence points to the possibility that some apparitions, or immaterial appearances of persons living or dead, are due to the presence of an astral body. There is the phenomenon of an observed apparition where more than one person, differently situated, sees the figure from an angle appropriate to his position. An example is the case of Lady B. and her daughter, who in about 1892 claimed they had seen the ghostly figure of a woman looking at herself in a mirror in their bedroom. Hornell Hart writes of the occurrence in *The Enigma of Survival*. 'Lady B. saw the face in quarter profile, the head intercepting its own reflection in the mirror. Miss B. saw the back of the figure with its long dark hair; the face was not directly visible to her, but she saw it clearly reflected in the mirror.' The record shows that the aspects seen by the two ladies were just as if a physical person had stood there.

Envelope of the Soul

The idea of an astral body is very old. Ancient Indian writings describe the eight *siddhis* or supernormal powers which can be acquired through a type of yoga called *Pranayama*. The sixth of these is 'flying in the sky', apparently referring to what is now called astral projection.

E. R. Dodds has shown that the western idea of the astral body originated in classical Greek philosophy, apparently without any important influences from oriental ideas. In his *Laws* (book ten) Plato discusses the souls



The most famous of modern astral travellers was the American author Sylvan Muldoon. He believed that an intense desire for astral projection would always bring results

Below **The astral body lying in the air above the physical body, to which it is connected by an elastic 'cord'. Arrows show the route the phantom takes in projecting. The phantom then stands upright, though the push and pull of the 'cord' causes instability in the phantom. Finally the phantom interiorizes, or returns to the physical body**

of the stars, which guide them in their courses. Some believe, he says, that these souls have bodies 'of fire, or it may be of air' in addition to the material bodies of the stars: though he also says that the human soul is not visible and 'enfolds us in a fashion utterly imperceptible to all bodily senses'. In the *Timaeus* the Creator is said to have made souls which he 'mounted' on the stars 'as it were on chariots'. These souls were later to be born as men and if they lived good lives, would return happily to the stars in the life after death.

Plato's pupil Aristotle developed a theory of *pneuma* (air or breath) as a constituent of the bodies of men and animals in which the sensitive soul resides and which is 'analogous to that element of which the stars are made'.

The linking together of the starry soul-chariots, the fiery or airy bodies of the souls of stars, and the Aristotelian starry soul-container, produced the idea of the astral body as a starry envelope of the soul.

The theory was taken up by the Neoplatonist philosophers. Porphyry, for instance, in the 3rd century AD, said that as the soul descends from heaven to earth, where it will acquire a physical body, its pneuma gradually thickens and darkens as it absorbs moisture from the air until it can be seen visibly. After death, the soul's efforts to climb back up to heaven again are hampered by this moist envelope, to such an extent that it may even be carried downwards, to a place of punishment. If it succeeds in rising, it gradually sheds the envelope. Some disembodied spirits have a misty pneuma which takes any shape they care to imagine, so that they appear to us in different guises, as gods perhaps or as souls of the dead.

The notion of the astral body has a continuous history in the West from classical times on. Dante's *Purgatorio* (canto 25), written in the 14th century, says that after death the soul 'around it beams its own creative power, like to its living form in shape and size . . . the circumambient air adopts the shape the soul imposes on it'. In the 16th century, Agrippa von Nettesheim seems to be referring to astral travel when he talks of 'vacation of the body, when the spirit is enabled to transcend its bounds, and as a light escaped from a lantern to spread over space'.

The Etheric Double

The terms 'astral body' and 'double' are used to cover several different types of phenomena. One of them is what is called the 'etheric double', identical with the Egyptian *Ka*, the vital force which gave the body life and which was represented in art as an exact replica of the physical body. The Hindus called it the *linga sharira* or 'vital form' which was, so to speak, the body's 'wiring system'.

The fact that Sylvan Muldoon placed so much emphasis on the 'cord', which he found linked his projected double to his physical body, suggests that his experiences involved the extrusion from the physical body of the etheric double as well as the astral body.

Another false trail occurs in the concept of the likeness of a person projected at some point in space by his intense thought or reverie. In Scotland they spoke of 'the forerunner', meaning some manifestation of a person's presence occurring at his destination before he arrived there. This is different from the conception of an astral body, which contains the full functioning consciousness.

The true astral body also applies to the condition of some dream states, and to the experience of seeming to be dissociated from one's body during sleep or loss of physical consciousness. The dream-cures at the shrines of the Greek god of healing, Asclepios (see HEALING GODS), which apparently affected a ghostly counterpart of the physical body seem to have been concerned with the etheric double rather than the astral.

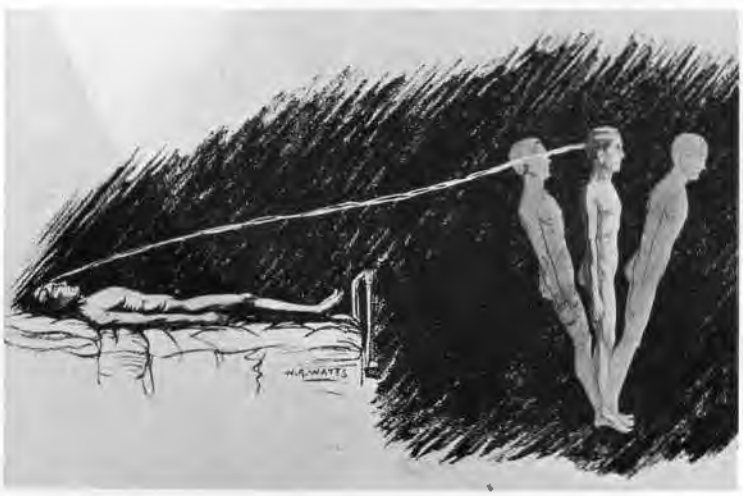
Fantasy or Reality?

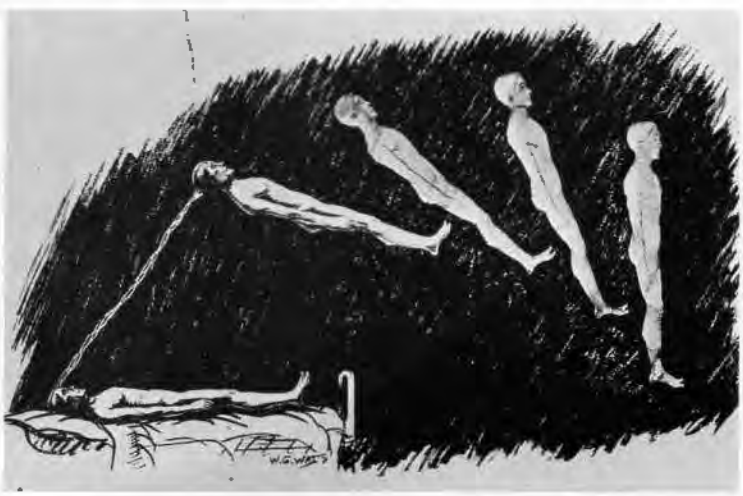
Of modern authorities some, like D. J. West and Antony Flew, maintain an attitude of good-humoured scepticism towards astral bodies and projections. On the other side Professor Hart's conclusions are noteworthy. He has summarized with great fairness the evidence and contentions of the holders of all points of view, sceptical or convinced, in his *The Enigma of Survival*. He thinks that 'these diversities among the different descriptions of the astral world, and of the afterlife in general, cannot be explained by claiming that all such accounts are mere fantasies. The verified evidence of the reality of astral projection seems quite conclusive, and the evidence that apparitions of the dead may often be and usually are vehicles of surviving conscious personalities, seems also to be convincing'.

(See also DOUBLE; LIGHT; OUT OF THE BODY EXPERIENCES.)

C. NELSON STEWART

FURTHER READING: A. Flew, *A New Approach to Psychical Research* (Watts, 1953); H. Hart, *The Enigma of Survival* (Rider, 1959); E. Sanford, *Psychical Research & Spiritualism* (American Classical College, 1980). For accounts of astral travel, see also two books by R. Crookall, *The Study and Practice of Astral Projection* (Wehman, 1961) and *The Techniques of Astral Projection* (Wehman, 1964); C. Green, *Out-of-the-Body Experiences* (Institute of Psychophysical Research, Oxford, 1968); F. Lefébure, *Expériences Initiatiques* (Omnium Litteraire, Paris, 1956); Oliver Fox, *Astral Projection* (Citadel Press, 1974). For the Greek origins and the Neoplatonists, see E. R. Dodds ed., *Proclus: the Elements of Theology* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1923), appendix 2.

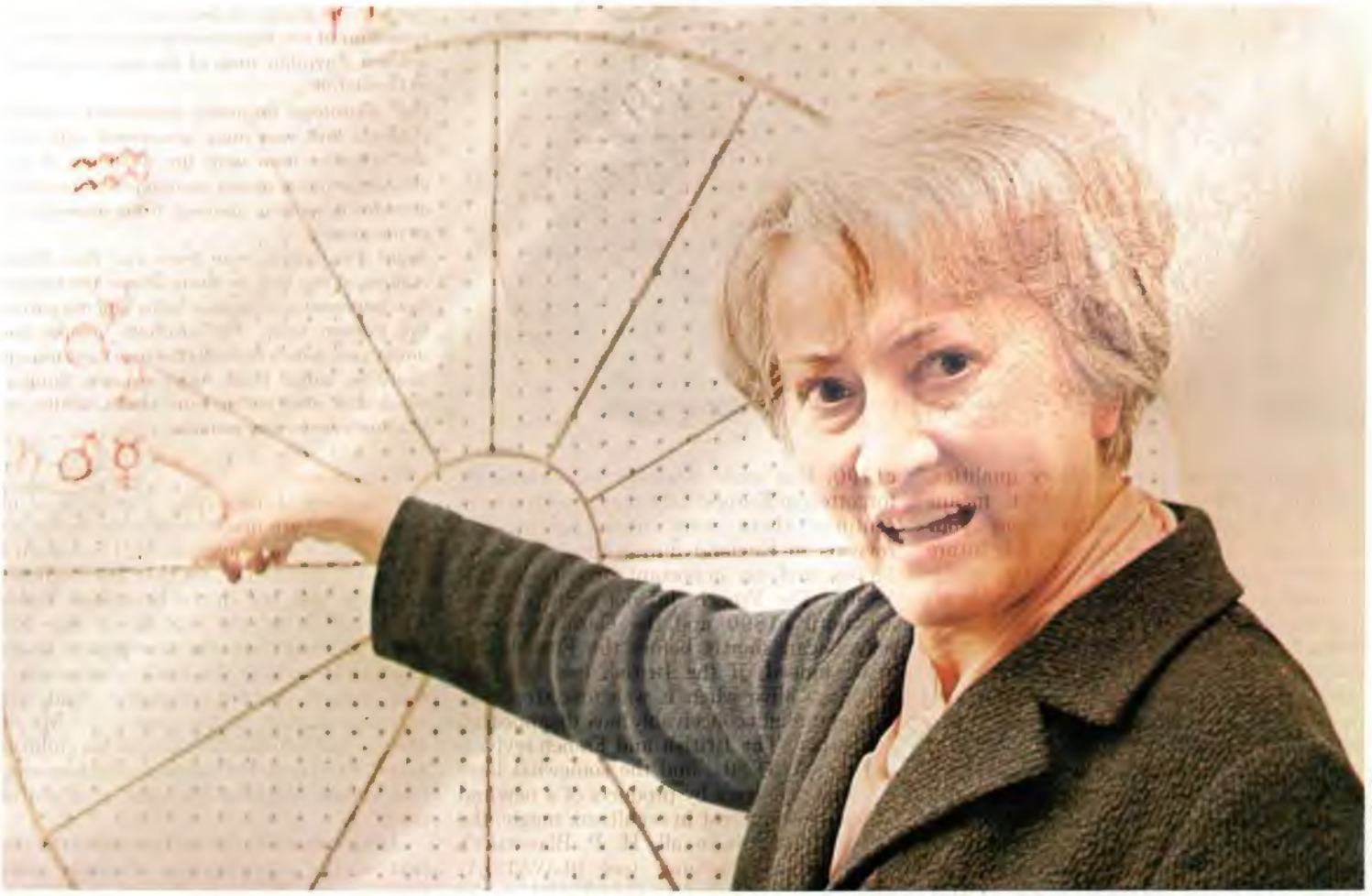




ASTROLOGY

Buried in the earth lies evidence of our past; on its surface we live in the present; and it has long been believed that in the sky the stars predict our future

British Museum



Camera Press London

ASTROLOGY IS THE alleged art or science of judging the influence of the planets in the solar system upon human affairs. A horoscope is a diagram showing the geocentric positions of the Sun, Moon and planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Geocentric means seen as if the planet Earth were at the centre of the solar system. For the sake of convenience in astrology the Sun and Moon rank as planets. All the planetary positions must be calculated in relation to a given moment of time and a specific geographical co-ordinate, expressed in degrees and minutes of latitude (north or south of the equator) and longitude (east or west of the meridian of Greenwich).

The horoscope itself represents a simple statement of certain astronomical facts, and as such is an objective scientific document. In this context one must exclude the twelve so-called Houses, whose areas can be calculated according to any one of half a dozen or more highly speculative mathematical procedures. The supposed significance of the Houses will be discussed later in this article.

While the horoscope itself can purport to be a scientific diagram, an essentially unscientific activity begins when the astrologer attempts to make deductions based on: the zodiacal positions of the planets; the presence of a planet or planets in one or other of the twelve Houses; and certain angular relationships between one or more planets.

Today almost everyone in Western Europe and the U.S.A. knows his zodiacal sign, meaning the sector of the zodiac through which the Sun was passing when he was born. The zodiac is a notional band of sky representing the Sun's annual path through the fixed stars. The concept of the zodiac was evolved during the Babylonian era. This ancient measuring device consists of twelve sectors each measuring thirty degrees. The 30° sectors are each named after fixed star constellations: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

If a person says that he was born 'under Taurus' it means that his birth occurred between 21 April and 22 May, when the Sun would have been anywhere between 0°–29° Taurus. If, however, he states that he was born on 10 May 1950, the Sun's position was at about 19° Taurus, which is more specific. Finally, in the case of a birth at exactly noon (Greenwich Mean Time) on that day, the Sun was at 19° 15′ 17″ Taurus, which is even more precise. The theories of scientific astrology require the horoscope to be calculated upon the basis of an *accurate* time and, as has been mentioned, an identifiable geographical location. These are the requirements for a strictly *individual* horoscope. The astrological 'information' published in newspapers and magazines does not refer to individual horoscopes.

Truth or Nonsense?

The fact that so many people know their birth sign is a product of the mass-circulation newspaper and periodical astrological journalism that began during the early 1930s. Those who have a detailed knowledge of the principles of astrology almost unanimously condemn this 'popular' astrology as childish nonsense. Nevertheless, the daily forecasts and the feature articles in magazines have persuaded countless thousands that 'the stars' may conceivably influence human destinies and that an individual personality in some way reflects the psychological qualities traditionally ascribed to his or her zodiacal sign.

As for the daily prognostications, it is obvious that by the law of averages a proportion of the readership will suppose that this or that prediction has been fulfilled. All the same, we are confronted with a system which divides humanity into types based on astrological symbolism, and this is perhaps astrology's most interesting feature.

Left **The zodiac is a circular band in the sky, through which the planets are seen to move. It is divided into 12 equal sections, known as the signs of the zodiac. In astrology, a planet's influence varies according to which part of the zodiac it is occupying. The Planesphaerium Copernicus, a chart of the heavens, c 17th century, showing the zodiac signs in the outer ring**
Above **Today, astrologers are again heavily in demand. Ingrid Lind is vice-principal of the Faculty of Astrological Studies, London. A psychological astrologer, she advises parents on children's aptitudes and education**

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Mansell Collection

Far left **The zodiac as we know it is a combined invention of the Egyptians and Babylonians. An ancient Egyptian map of the sky, the 'Zodiac of Denderah'**

Left **Astrology originally developed in Mesopotamia and was more concerned with kings and peoples than with the destinies of individuals; a tablet giving astrological forecasts in cuneiform writing, derived from observations of the moon**

Right **The zodiac man from *Les Très Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry shows the association between astrological signs and the parts of the human body. For example, people born under Leo, which controls the heart, are thought likely to suffer from heart trouble. Similarly Aquarians may suffer from weak ankles and Librans from kidney troubles**

Despite all its unsatisfactory qualities, 'scientific' natal astrology, which means analyzing your personality from your horoscope – as opposed to predicting future events – raises a great many fascinating, although probably insoluble, problems. Logically the 'art' should be dismissed as the obstinate survival of very ancient superstitious beliefs. However, it is possible that fairly accurate, although limited deductions can, in fact, be made from a natal or birth horoscope.

What is surprising is the survival of a system of divination that was first developed in Babylon before the Christian era, and which eventually reached the West in the 12th century via Latin translations of Arabic texts (10th century), which were themselves based upon far earlier Hellenistic Greek texts (c150 BC to 350 AD).

The Modern Revival

The astrological tradition in the form that is encountered today consists of a huge collection of rules and procedures which have been transmitted through the centuries, although not without substantial alterations and reformulations. In the West the contemporary astrological idiom represents an up-to-date version of the one current at the time of the Renaissance, when there was a widespread interest in astrology in educated circles. The invention of printing (c1440) facilitated the circulation of material that had hitherto only existed in manuscript form and the publication of ephemerides – tables containing the daily noon positions of the Sun, Moon and planets. Astrology still ranked as astronomy's twin sister and enjoyed equal respectability.

Educated men began to lose interest in astrology towards the beginning of the 17th century, when the discoveries of the first of the modern astrologers, including Galileo, Copernicus and Kepler, were beginning to be understood. This increasing scepticism was evident in Europe, but not in England where there was a noticeably lively interest in astrology during the second half of the 17th century. This was reflected by the large domestic output of textbooks and predictive almanacs.

Astrology was already well underground in Europe during the 18th century and in England the appearance of new textbooks dwindled to a trickle between 1700 and c1790. But while astrology was practically forgotten in Europe until the end of the 19th century, there were minor astrological revivals in England during the 1790s and 1820s and an important one during the 1890s. The French did not rediscover the art until c1890 and the German revival only began shortly before the First World War. Indeed, if the British had not kept astrology alive when it was forgotten elsewhere, it might conceivably have disappeared altogether. The British and French revivals during the 1890s, and the somewhat later German one, were by-products of a new and widespread interest in occultism, magic, the Cabala and, above all, H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophical teachings (see BLAVATSKY; THEOSOPHY). Alan Leo (1860–1917), the first important modern astrological publicist and the author of a long series of popular textbooks, was above all a Theosophical astrologer. This meant, in effect, that for Leo and his followers astrology had a considerable esoteric or occult component. Even today the ranks of the astrologers contain many who claim to be occultists.

It was the Germans, in particular, who investigated and experimented with astrology with enormous energy and interest during the years between the two World Wars. Furthermore, many of these people were highly-educated men and women. During the early 1930s, for instance, at least 30 German medical men practised astrology and there were undoubtedly many more whose names are unrecorded. While the German astrological movement contained the expected quota of charlatans and mild lunatics, a cultured and intelligent minority worked on the development of a new kind of astrology based, as far as possible, upon current academic psychological and typological concepts.

Jung and Astrology

C. G. Jung, a Swiss-German, whose renown as a pioneer in the field of analytical psychology almost equals that of Sigmund Freud, had a deep personal interest in astrology. In 1931 he observed that 'the cultural philistines believed until recently that astrology had been disposed of long since and was something that could safely be laughed at. But today, rising out of the social deeps, it knocks at the doors of the universities, from which it was banished some 300 years ago'.

Elsewhere Jung wrote: 'For those of my readers who are unaware of these things and think that I am exaggerating, I can point to the easily verifiable fact that the heyday of astrology was not in the benighted Middle Ages but is in the middle of the 20th century, when even the newspapers do not hesitate to publish the week's horoscope. A thin layer of rootless rationalists reads with satisfaction that in the year 1723 Mr So-and-so had a horoscope cast for his children, and do not know that nowadays the horoscope has almost attained the rank of a visiting card.'

Jung's remarks should be read in the context of the contemporary German astrological scene. While the knocks at the doors of the universities were too faint to be heard, a surprising number of Germans had a superficial knowledge of astrology.

It is evident that Jung himself studied the horoscopes of some of his patients, not in order to predict their future, but because he believed that a natal horoscope could provide information of a purely psychological nature; for example, why an individual might be latently susceptible to a particular kind of neurosis.

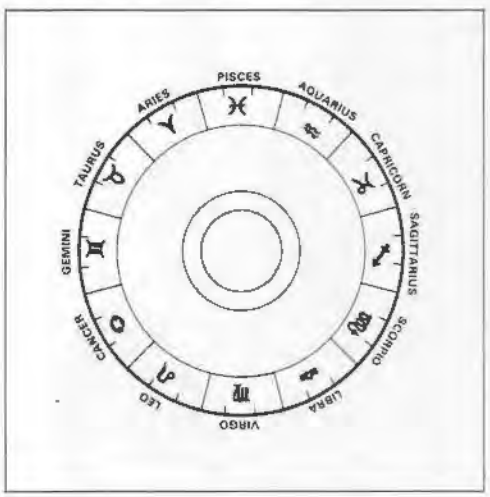
Theoretically, then, if a medically trained psychologist can use astrology successfully for psycho-diagnostic purposes, it could also be employed for personnel selection, or to assess whether or not two people who intend to marry are temperamentally suited to one another. In Germany the present writer has met professional experts on handwriting who are engaged by large firms to sift written applications for jobs and to identify the most promising applicants. Some of them also take a look at the candidates' horoscopes as an additional check. In Europe copies of birth certificates are frequently required to be submitted in such cases, and on these the birth time is stated, at least within about 15 minutes. British and American birth certificates do not record the birth time. In the absence of the latter it is impossible to calculate a more or less accurate Ascendant and without the Ascendant the horoscope is incomplete. In the absence of a birth time one can only erect the horoscope on the basis of noon Greenwich Mean Time for the day of birth, and so it could equally well apply to everyone else born on that day.

Aries
Taurus
Gemini
Cancer
Leo
Virgo
Libra
Scorpius
Sagittarius
Capricornus
Aquarius
Pisces

ARIES ♈	21 Mar.	LIBRA ♎	23 Sept.
TAURUS ♉	20 Apr.	SCORPIO ♏	24 Oct.
GEMINI ♊	21 May	SAGITTARIUS ♐	23 Nov.
CANCER ♋	22 June	CAPRICORN ♑	22 Dec.
LEO ♌	23 July	AQUARIUS ♒	20 Jan.
VIRGO ♍	23 Aug.	PISCES ♓	19 Feb.

Drawing a Horoscope

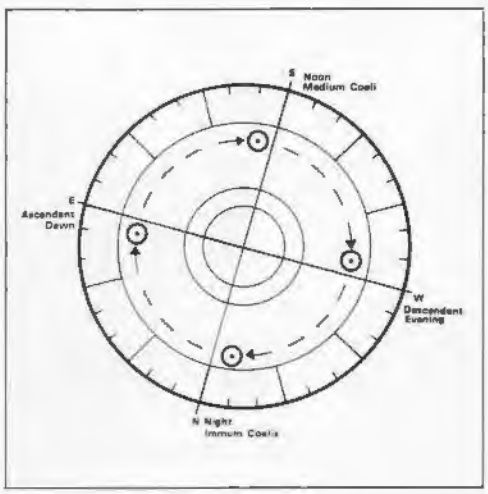
The apprentice astrologer begins by learning the names of the twelve signs of the zodiac and the traditional 'qualities' ascribed to each of them. The signs are shown above (and Fig. 1) in their conventional order with the approximate date when the Sun 'enters' each sign.



Diagramatically a horoscope expresses, among other things, the idea of the Sun rising in the East, that is, *ascending* above the eastern horizon at dawn; culminating or reaching its highest point in the sky at noon; setting in the west in the evening, and invisible below the horizon during the night.

Fig. 2 represents the Sun ascending at dawn, reaching the *Medium Coeli* (Midheaven) at noon, setting in the evening (Descendant), and below the horizon at midnight (*Immum Coeli*). It is particularly important to notice the Ascendant/Descendant – MC/IC axes, because these form the so-called 'angles' of a horoscope.

During the course of a 24-hour period every one of the 360 degrees of the zodiac successively 'rises' on the eastern celestial horizon. Roughly speaking, therefore, every two hours a new zodiacal sign is on the Ascendant. In order to discover the Ascendant (expressed for instance as '18° 27′ Leo rising') the astrologer must first calculate the MC (Midheaven). This is done with the help of an ephemeris and a few simple arithmetical computations. Once the MC has been identified the degree of the Ascendant can be found in the appropriate tables. The astrologer then fills in the 'angles', mentioned above, on the horoscope chart.

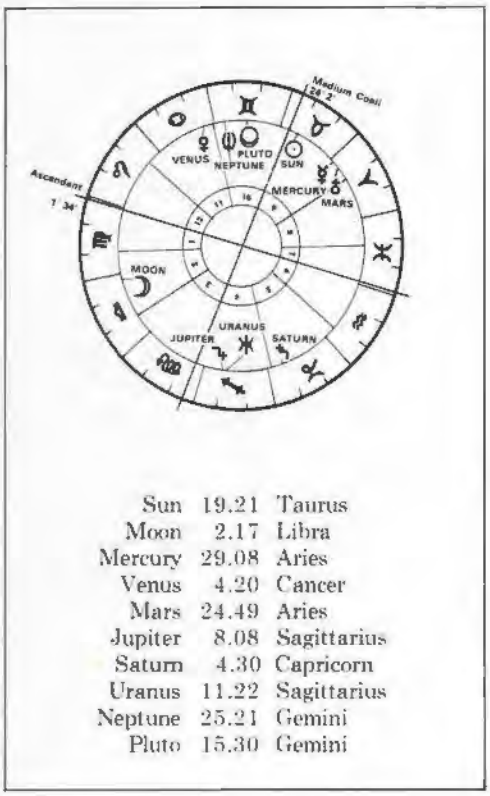


The horoscope of K. E. Krafft, the Swiss who was wrongly supposed to have been Hitler's personal astrologer, will serve as a typical example for an abbreviated account of the procedure for calculating a horoscope. He was born at Basle on 10 May 1900 at 12.45 p.m. Central European Time. His Sun was therefore in Taurus.

Since all the information in an ephemeris is based on noon Greenwich Mean Time, it is necessary to convert CET to GMT by subtracting one hour, giving a birth time of 11.45 a.m.

Basle is 47° 34′ north of the equator and 7° 40′ east of Greenwich. Having established the *sidereal* ('star-time', not clock time) for 11.45 a.m. GMT, and converted 7° 40′ E to minutes and seconds of time because Basle is east of the meridian of Greenwich, and we require to know the local sidereal time, a reference to a Table of Houses for latitude 47° North will show that Krafft's MC was 24° Taurus and the related Ascendant was 1° 43′ Virgo.

The next step is to establish the actual zodiacal positions of the planets at 11.45 a.m. on 10 May 1900. The birth time was so close to noon that with the exception of the Moon, for which a small adjustment (7′ 27″) is required, one could take the actual noon positions direct from the ephemeris. If the birth had occurred at, say, 7.45 p.m. some further simple arithmetical calculations would be needed. At 11.45 a.m. on 10 May 1900 the planetary positions were as shown in Fig. 3.



Sun	19.21	Taurus
Moon	2.17	Libra
Mercury	29.08	Aries
Venus	4.20	Cancer
Mars	24.49	Aries
Jupiter	8.08	Sagittarius
Saturn	4.30	Capricorn
Uranus	11.22	Sagittarius
Neptune	25.21	Gemini
Pluto	15.30	Gemini

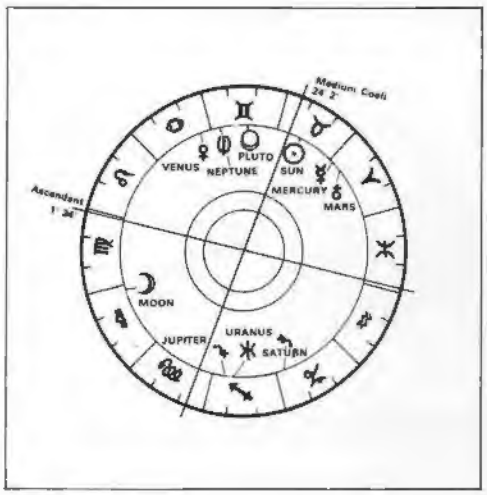
It has already been mentioned that the division of the horoscope into 12 Houses has no strictly astronomical foundation. The Houses are numbered anti-clockwise from the Ascendant. The cusps (boundaries) of the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th Houses are identical with the four angles (Asc, IC, Desc and MC). The boundaries of the remaining Houses will vary according to the mathematical system of House division employed.

As a result, one astrologer will show the Sun in, say, the 3rd House, while another working on an identical chart will have it in the 2nd. Most astrologers happily ignore this inconsistency. Furthermore, the mathematics of House division require a knowledge of spherical trigonometry. Hence the majority of astrologers are content to use Tables of Houses and are uninterested in the mathematical background.

Fig. 4 shows Krafft's horoscope with the

Those who excel at horoscope interpretation . . . can often deduce a few extremely salient facts of a purely psychological nature

twelve Houses calculated according to the Placidus system.



Finally there are the so-called 'aspects', which are certain angular distances, expressed in degrees, between any two or more planets. The aspects mainly considered are:

Conjunction	0°
Square	90°
Trine	120°
Sesqui-quadrate	145°
Opposition	180°
Semi-square	45°
Sextile	60°

Fig. 5 shows Krafft's horoscope with the addition of the more prominent aspects. For example, the Moon is square (90°) both Venus and Saturn and sextile (60°) Ascendant. Venus is in opposition to Saturn.

The Key to the Code

To sum up: a horoscope erected upon the basis of a known birth time and geographical co-ordinate contains the following factors: 12 30° zodiacal sectors (12 x 30 = 360°); 10 planets in their respective zodiacal positions; 12 Houses, the boundary of the first being the Ascendant; Four 'angles', Asc/Desc – MC/IC; the planetary aspects.

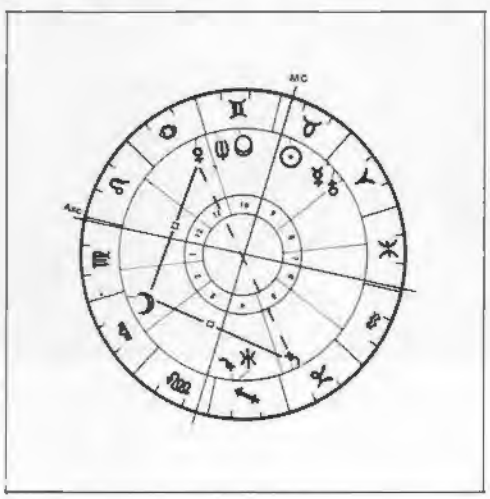
We have, then, a diagram that purports to record an 'astral' moment of time, but expressed in a symbolical code which must now be deciphered. This is the most difficult task of all. The astrologer works on the basis of a number of assumptions.

1. That each planet works or operates in a different and characteristic manner, hence the adjectives *martial* (Mars), *mercurial* (Mercury), *saturnine* (Saturn) and *jovial* (Jupiter). It is supposed that a planet's 'influence' will be particularly strong if it is close to an angle and, in particular, to the Ascendant and MC. In Krafft's case Neptune, Pluto and Sun are all 'dominant' because they are near to the MC. His Moon is possibly sufficiently near to the Ascendant also to be assessed as dominant.

2. That a planet reflects the qualities of the zodiacal sign in which it is placed. Hence Mars in Gemini will not have the same 'meaning' as Mars in Scorpio.

3. That a planet will operate according to its House position. Thus Venus in the 10th can suggest one thing and Venus in the 5th another.

4. That their angular relationships, or aspects will modify the influences of the planets concerned.



The art of interpretation involves the *combination* of all the available evidence and, as we have mentioned, this is where the difficulties begin. There are countless astrological manuals or 'cook books' which provide guidance of a kind for every conceivable factor. For instance, the novice scribbles: 'Sun in Taurus in the 9th House; Mars in Aquarius in the 6th House; Sun is square Mars.' According to the manual he uses he will now have to consider anything from a bald and very brief statement to an essay of up to 500 words. So he jots down his interpretative material and is then uncertain how to combine it together. If he happens to be acquainted with the person whose chart he is studying, he will believe that this or that 'appears to fit' but will be left with a good deal of apparent nonsense. Most astrologers never get much beyond this 'cook book' method of interpretation.

Impressive Deductions

The few who seem to excel at horoscope interpretation, including the people who can often make quite impressive deductions on the basis of a 'blind diagnosis', meaning that they have no personal knowledge of the native (subject), do not have to depend on 'cook book' techniques. Nor do they necessarily try to find an interpretation for every factor in the chart. They appear to have an almost instinctive knowledge of astrological symbolism and at the same time a highly-developed intuition. The writer's own experience is that they can often deduce a few extremely salient facts of a purely psychological nature. The quality of their work is apt to become diluted when they attempt to wring the last shred of 'evidence' from a horoscope. It is a fallacy to expect that the chart itself will 'reveal all'; this does not appear to be the case. Nevertheless, when correctly interpreted, a horoscope will sometimes yield information of a surprisingly accurate nature.

There are, of course, a great many logical objections to astrology. For example, suppose you are confronted with two identical horoscopes: the first for a manual worker and the second for a surgeon. Their respective social and educational backgrounds will necessarily be different. Then how can one talk in terms of identical 'fates'? We are not so much concerned with fate, however, as with the possibility that each will react to life's psychological situations according to a common pattern, but always in relation to his social milieu and understanding. There will, for example, be a very large element of free will. To identify the common denominator is in any case extremely difficult. Thus in astrological interpretation very little is absolutely cut and dried.

It would be tempting to write astrology off as a waste of time were it not for case histories such as the one at the Institute for Border Areas of Psychology, at the University of Freiburg in Western Germany. A

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

team of qualified psychologists spent a fair number of hours interviewing a young juvenile delinquent who had been sent to them by the local police. Their extensive written reports were locked away in the Institute's safe. In the meantime Herr Walter Böer, a local schoolmaster who was not only an expert astrologer but had some psychological training, was invited to study the boy's horoscope.

Herr Böer did not know of the identities of either the young man or of the psychologists who had examined him. Nor had he any access to their reports. Herr Böer's findings were very much in line with those of the psychologists, meaning that he was able to identify a disturbed and erratic personality.

It is not that Herr Böer possessed some unknown astrological secret. One can only point to an unusually sound grasp of the principles of astrological interpretation allied to what were evidently highly-developed intuitive powers.

Here it is only possible to provide the briefest possible summary of some basic interpretative material: it is by no means definitive and gives only a fragmentary idea of astrological concepts.

The Planets

Sun: the living being, the physical body, psychic energy, the male principle.

Moon: the soul or psyche; fantasy and feeling, change and fluctuation (tides and months).

Mercury: intelligence, reason, movement, associative or connective function, communication (Mercury as the messenger of the Gods).

Venus: love, art, physical attraction, sentiment, sentimentality, sex.

Mars: action, energy, impulsion, aggressive function, libido (Mars, the god of war).

Jupiter: expansion, richness (material or metaphysical), health, humour, developing function.

Saturn: limitation, contraction, concentration, inhibition, separation, maturity, loss, parting (and death), saturnine temperament, restrictive function.

Uranus: suddenness, revolution, violence, transmutation (magic, alchemy, the occult arts), creative function.

Astrology is not only a western phenomenon: it has a long history in the East
Left **A 13th century Persian astrological treatise showing Mars in the sign of the Ram in conjunction with Jupiter. The figures below represent the five planets: Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury and Saturn**
Right **One of eight astrological pictures from an Indian temple, showing Saturn**

Neptune: susceptibility, fantasy, romanticism, mysticism, deception and self-deception, psychic powers.
Pluto: power, demagoguery, dictators, the masses.

The Signs of the Zodiac

Aries: courage, impetuosity, energy.
Taurus: patience, persistence, obstinacy.
Gemini: progressiveness, cleverness, instability.
Cancer: inspiration, sensitivity, evasiveness.
Leo: dignity, breadth of mind, power, pretentiousness.
Virgo: reason, logic, exactitude, pedantry.
Libra: harmony, evaluation, trivialities.
Scorpio: profundity, insistence, roughness.
Sagittarius: justice, propriety, sophistry.
Capricorn: independence, abstraction, stubborness.
Aquarius: spirituality, conviction, illusion.
Pisces: compassion, tolerance, indolence.

The Twelve Houses

1. (Ascendant) development of personality, environment, childhood, physical body and constitution.
2. Material possessions and money.
3. Family relationships, communication.
4. Parental home, hereditary characteristics.
5. Procreation, sexuality, pleasure, risks, speculation.
6. Servants, health.
7. The community, partnership, marriage, open enemies.
8. Accidents, death, inheritances, the wife's or husband's money.
9. Spiritual life, philosophy, religion, travel.
10. Vocation, profession, public life.
11. Wishes and hopes, friendships.
12. Secret enemies, seclusion (hospitals, prisons), obscure difficulties.

The Aspects

Traditionally there are 'good' and 'bad' aspects (angular relationships between two or more planets). The conjunction (0°) and opposition (180°) can be either good or bad, according to the planets concerned. A conjunction would increase the mutual influence of the planets in question. Examples are, Sun conj. Saturn: difficulties in connection with the development of the personality, Moon conj. Venus: intense emotional life, artistic leanings, self-love, Mercury conj. Mars: quick mental reactions, aggressive instincts, Venus conj. Uranus: strong emotional tensions, unusual preoccupations.

The square (90°) and semi-square (45°) are supposed to be 'malefic', unfortunate or difficult aspects. The trine (120°) and sextile (60°) are said to be beneficent or fortunate aspects.

An Analysis

With hindsight, what can one make of Krafft's horoscope (see Fig. 5)? Here there is only room for an abbreviated analysis of a few of the factors.

One might begin by examining the Sun, which is in Taurus and in the 9th House, in relation to his Virgo Ascendant. At the same time, one would look for the 'dominant' planets, those close to the Midheaven and Ascendant. It is true that Krafft was a Taurean and his Sun, high in the Midheaven, is dominant. The same also applies to Neptune and Pluto. Furthermore, one must ask how his Virgo Ascendant affected his personality.

Sun (Krafft's living being, essence) in Taurus reflects patience, persistence and obstinacy. He had the patience to embark upon vast though fruitless astro-statistical projects, and as a young man persisted in this work in spite of his father's sometimes violent objections. He was a pig-headed person. In spite of all the negative evidence, he obstinately believed that he was destined to create a new kind of scientific astrology (Cosmobiology), and after 1937 that he could successfully exercise his strange gifts in Hitler's Germany.

Ascendant in Virgo: exactitude and pedantry. His temperament enabled him to attempt tasks that required these qualities. The dominant Neptune in Gemini in the 10th House (vocation, profession, public life) could reflect his markedly unstable character, as a result of Neptune's fantasy, romanticism, mysticism and self-deception. Pluto (power) is in a strong position. Krafft hoped for both power and influence. In a strictly limited sense he achieved both, but died in a German concentration camp after a lengthy imprisonment. Krafft, who for years studied his own horoscope so closely, obviously had no idea of his 'fate'!

Moon in Libra square Venus in Cancer, also square Saturn in Capricorn, and Venus opposition Saturn: all may reflect Krafft's sexual complexes and unfulfilment, also his inhibitions regarding sexuality and pleasure.

Sun in the 9th House: his preoccupation with a spiritual life. Neptune in the 10th House suggests Neptunian interests, including astrology and the prophecies of Nostradamus as a vocation or profession. During 1940–1 he worked on the Nostradamus texts for Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. Moon in the 2nd House: his fluctuating attitude to money and material possessions.

From these snippets you can begin to understand that a full-scale interpretation must consist of an adequate synthesis of a great many fragmentary and hypothetical propositions. In the case of Krafft one can now see how this or that would probably apply to him. An accurate blind diagnosis is far more difficult to achieve. Experience

Views on Astrology

We are born at a given moment, in a given place and, like vintage years of wine, we have the qualities of the year and of the season in which we are born. Astrology does not lay claim to anything more.

C. G. Jung

. . . a learned superstition, which up to modern times has exercised over Europe and Asia a wider dominion than any religion has ever achieved.

Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion*

It is now possible for astrologically guided unions to produce congenial children, with desired characteristics and a reasonable certainty of sex.

Myra Kingsley *Outrageous Fortune*

Astrology does not offer an explanation of the laws of the universe, nor why the universe exists. What it does, to put it in simplest terms, is to show us that there is a correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. In short that there is a rhythm to the universe, and that man's own life partakes of this rhythm . . .

It is not to discover what is going to 'happen' to us, it is not to forestall the blows of fate, that we should look to our horoscopes. A chart when properly read should enable one to understand the overall pattern of one's life.

Henry Miller

We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts. The sun is a great heart whose tremors run through our smallest veins. The moon is a great gleaming nerve-centre from which we quiver forever. Who knows the power that Saturn has over us, or Venus? But it is a vital power, rippling exquisitely through us *all the time*. And if we deny Aldebaran, Aldebaran will pierce us with infinite dagger-thrusts. He who is not with me is against me! – that is a cosmic law.

Now all this is *literally* true, as men knew in the great past and as they will know again.

D. H. Lawrence *Apocalypse*

suggests that about 60% of any interpretation will appear to be correct, but the validity of the remainder can seldom be easily evaluated.

New Systems in Germany

During the past half-century two completely non-traditional astrological systems have been developed in Germany. The first was Alfred Witte's 'Hamburg School' of astrology with its eight hypothetical Transneptunian planets, for which equally hypothetical ephemerides have been published. This system still has a number of devoted supporters. Latterly some of its textbooks have been available in English in the U.S.A.

An interesting by-product of the Hamburg School is the Ebertin system, developed by Reinhold Ebertin, who does not use the hypothetical planets. Herr Ebertin has jettisoned most of the medieval astrological tradition and you can operate his system without bothering about the Houses or, for that matter, the so-called zodiacal influences. A dial apparatus is used in conjunction with the horoscope chart to identify planets and their 'mid-points' on a common 90° axis. The only aspects considered are the conjunction, opposition, square, semi-square and sesqui-quadrate. The trines and sextiles are ignored. A fair amount of simple arithmetical work is required to establish a sequence of 'planetary equations' from which a synthesis can be made with the help of Herr Ebertin's excellent manual *Combinations of Stellar Influences*, which is available in English. It would appear that this heretical system works just as well as any traditional one, and at least a lot of old-fashioned and suspect ballast has been ruthlessly thrown overboard.

Modern Scientific Research

The French statistician, Michel Gauquelin, started investigating the claims of astrology in 1950. Until then, there had been no really thorough attempt to apply scientific methodology to astrological data. Gauquelin analyzed the horoscopes of around 25000 French people (it is a legal requirement in France to register the time of birth, and so he was able to construct accurate natal charts). From a sample of 576 eminent medical professionals he found that a surprising proportion were born just after Mars or Saturn had risen, or passed the mid-heaven. He then

Mansell Collection

European interest in astrology is reflected in this 17th century French engraving showing an allegorical figure, combining the signs of the zodiac with the works of such astronomers as Tycho Brahe and Copernicus

examined another group of 508, and achieved the same correlation. He estimated that the odds against this occurring were around one million to one.

Further research into the influence of the planets on 'professional types' revealed yet another intriguing factor. He found that the position of the planets was only very significant in the charts of those people who were *positively* distinguished and successful in their field. In a group of 1458 scientists that he analyzed, whose careers were simply ordinary, the position of Mars and Saturn at the time of birth was not of overall significance statistically. Gauquelin and his wife Françoise continued to develop their work in this area.

In the U.S.A. and Great Britain, similar work was initiated. Since times of birth are not registered in these countries, researchers could only look for general trends. Even so the results proved interesting. Edmund van Deuson in the U.S.A. processed 163,953 dates, while in Britain, Joe Cooper and Alan Smithers from Bradford University processed another 35000.

In accord with the tenets of astrological lore which says that an individual's birth date can influence career choice, their statistics gave similar indications. For example, the figures showed that a significant proportion of bankers are Virgos. As the sign is traditionally seen as meticulous, orderly and precise, this is in keeping with an appropriate career choice. Virgos are also said to be drawn to writing, and again, a significant number are writers.

Other scientific studies of astrological 'leanings' have investigated different areas.

A group of British doctors analyzed the birth signs of those patients in psychiatric care over a long period of years. They were able to find correlations of certain kinds of mental illness with birth signs. Significant percentages of schizophrenics and manic depressives seem to be born early in the year.

The emotional 'profiles' attributed to people's sun signs would be an obvious spin-off for this kind of research. In 1977, Hans Eysenck, a very eminent British psychologist teamed up with Jeff Mayo, a professional astrologer. Working with Eysenck's own standard personality test for extroversion and introversion, they found high correlations in the sun-sign 'types'. Extroverts tended to belong to the odd-numbered sun signs – Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius and Aquarius, while introverts predominated in even-numbered signs – Taurus, Cancer, Virgo, Scorpio, Capricorn and Pisces.

(See also articles on individual planets and zodiac signs.)

ELLIC HOWE

FURTHER READING: Many books by astrologers are available in public libraries and bookshops. A detailed guide is M. E. Hone, *The Modern Textbook of Astrology* (Weiser). For the zodiac signs and character analysis, see James Dickey, *Zodiac* (Doubleday, 1976) and R. Gleadow, *The Origin of the Zodiac* (Atheneum, 1969). For help in reading an ephemeris, see J. Mayo, *How to Read the Ephemeris* (Llewellyn Pubns.). See also E. Howe, *Astrology: The Story of Its Role in World War II* (Walker & Co., 1968) and L. M. Wilcox, *Astrology, Mysticism and the Occult* (editorial research 1980).

'A greenish substance like tenuous seaweed began to invade the room . . .' Experiences of atavism, the reappearance of animal characteristics from long ago, are rare and intensely horrifying

ATAVISM

ATAVISM MEANS reversion to an earlier type. Applied to human beings, atavism is the re-emergence of the characteristics of a certain ancestor or ancestors after a lapse of what may be many generations. The implication is nearly always of something unwholesome and frightening, and the idea has been used in many horror stories.

In a broader sense, the term atavism is used by occultists to mean the reappearance of characteristics which come from so long ago that they constitute reincarnations, or fresh embodiments, of pre-human consciousness; things which come from the time of creatures half man and half beast. Atavisms of this kind are very rare and intensely horrific. Nor do they always emerge spontaneously.

Dance of the Jackal

Frederick Kaigh in his book *Witchcraft and Magic of Africa* describes a ritual performed by an African witch-doctor. The witch-doctor danced in frenzy to the rhythm of drums and emitted high-pitched screams, like a jackal in rut. His dance reached a climax of ecstasy and he fell to the ground, where he remained inert as a log. Then a young couple leapt into the clearing over the heads of the drummers and swaying watchers. After repeated gyrations and whirlings, during which they also emitted piercing cries, a subtle change came over them. Kaigh says that he witnessed the actual transformation of their bodies into the likeness of jackals. The rite terminated in repeated copulations, well beyond human capacity even under the stimulus of aphrodisiacs.

Kaigh explained this demonstration of atavism as the result of a spiritual ecstasy combined with powerful magic on the part of the witch-doctor, whose projected 'double' or astral body had obsessed the two dancers.

The double usually assumes the true form of its original. In other words, the theory is that the witch-doctor was the apparently human embodiment of an animal soul. Its temporary incarnation in the bodies of the dancers was the signal for the entire gathering to engage in a communal orgy.

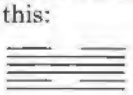
Woman into Wolf

It is possible that long ago in ancient Egypt, certain similar processes of transformation were known to the priest-magicians. Their identification of themselves with powers represented by animals suggests a knowledge of, and traffic with, atavistic energies that lie buried in man's subconscious as a legacy of his pre-human ancestry.

William Seabrook, an American journalist and collector of occult experiences, stumbled on a curious case of atavism. He and a friend had been experimenting with an ancient system of Chinese magic called the I Ching, or *The Book of Changes*. The I Ching contains, among other things, 64 hexagrams. (See I CHING)

If one of these hexagrams is visualized and mentally impressed upon the surface of an imaginary door it admits the practitioner, if he is sufficiently competent to open the door imaginatively, to a part of the astral world which is represented by the hexagram.

Nothing much occurred when Seabrook and his friend tried the experiment, although they sometimes persevered for several hours in an effort to open the 'door' and pass through it. One evening, however, a woman of their acquaintance said she wanted to try. She knelt down, resting the weight of her body on her heels. She then selected a figure, which happened to be a hexagram called *Ko*, which looks like this:



The woman closed her eyes and mentally superimposed the hexagram on the 'door'. Nothing happened for a very long time. Then, quite abruptly, she saw the 'door' swing open and she began to describe what was happening to her as she projected her consciousness across the threshold.

She entered a region of snow; flurries of it swept all about her. It was some time before she realized with a shock that she was loping swiftly over a desolate and infinite tract of ice. What had begun innocently, almost as a game, turned into a dangerous attempt to rescue her. Her features underwent a subtle and revolting change, her lips drooled foam, her speech faded and ceased altogether. From her throat issued a hideous baying sound that rose and fell.

In trying to recall the woman's spirit her friends shook her, called her name, and slapped her face. She snarled and would have savaged them if the cramped posture she had maintained for so long had not paralysed her limbs. It was with great effort that her resistance was overcome. As she calmed down, her face lost its wolfish expression and assumed once more its usual appearance.

It is interesting that the hexagram *Ko* denotes transformation, or changing 'as the leopard does when he changes his spots, or the tiger his stripes'.

It transpired some time after the event that, as a small child, the woman had seen wolves speeding over the snow in Russia, and had felt an intense desire to run with them. Years later, during the experiment, her desire had been realized.

Terror in the Mist

A formula for sounding these remote depths of the mind was worked out by Austin Osman Spare. Spare was an artist who had been a member of an occult group called the Golden Dawn, which flourished in the early years of this century and which taught the 'assumption of God-forms' on the model of ancient Egyptian magic, in which the magician tries to merge his consciousness

Kenneth Grant

Above **A powerful painting by Austin Spare whose work depicts the atavistic urges buried deep in the mind**

Brampton Studio

Brompton Studio

Austin Spare used symbolic pictures to give visible form to terrifying atavistic impulses deep in the mind. He claimed that he had only to visualize one of these pictures for the atavistic desire to surge up

with that of a god, usually imagined in animal form. (See GOLDEN DAWN)

Spare's 'formula of atavistic resurgence' was based on the use of symbolic pictures, which gave a visible form to various atavistic urges and desires deep in the mind. He claimed that he had only to visualize one of these pictures for the atavistic impulse to surge up. An example which he gave was an occasion when he needed to move a heavy load of timber, with no one to help him.

Spare closed his eyes for a while and visualized a picture which symbolized a wish for the strength of tigers. Almost immediately he sensed an inner response. He then felt a tremendous upsurge of energy sweep through his body. For a moment he felt like a sapling bent by the onslaught of a mighty wind. With a great effort of will, he steadied himself and directed the force to its proper object. A great calm descended and he found himself able to carry the load easily.

On another occasion, two people pressed Spare to conjure up an atavistic spirit in visible form. He warned them of the dangers involved, explaining that these creatures exist within the mind at levels not normally in communication with the conscious mind; that it was foolish to evoke them because they embodied the atavistic urges and desires of those who would behold them. But the couple insisted. Spare again used his symbolic picture method. He closed his eyes and waited. It was not long before a greenish substance like tenuous seaweed began to invade the room, partially obscuring the objects it contained. It resembled a coiling mass of vapour, which slowly congealed into a definite shape. It gained more and more substance with each successive moment, until the terrified dabblers panicked and begged Spare to banish it. Before it faded, however, they saw a vast face peering out of the mist; the eyes of it were like pools of black and burning oil.

Spare died in 1956, in a basement flat in Brixton, in poverty and obscurity.

KENNETH GRANT

Ate

Greek word for 'ruin, disaster': personified as a power which so disorders a man's mind that he cannot tell right from wrong; in the *Iliad* she is the daughter of Zeus, an early example of the problem of how far God is responsible for evil; some later European writers thought of her as a demoness.

Aten

Or Aton, in Egyptian religion, the disc of the sun; in the 14th century BC Pharaoh Amenophis IV changed his name to Ikhnaton (or Akhenaten), 'pleasing to the Aten', denied the old gods and established a short-lived religion of the Aten as the only god.

See EGYPT; IKHNATON.

Michael Holford

Personified wisdom, goddess of war and bringer of victory, mother of crafts, Athene was pre-eminently the city goddess of Athens, the intellectual centre of Greek civilization

ATHENE

Athene, who sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus, was the protectress of cities. Detail from a 6th century BC vase, at the Roman Civic Museum, Brescia *Above* The owl of Athene, on a 4-drachma piece, Athens, 5th century BC

Hirmer Verlag

THE GREEK GODDESS Athene (or Athena) was closely associated with the city of Athens, whose name in Greek is the plural form of the goddess's name; she was also called 'the Athenian', *Athenaie*. These names are not of Greek origin and the goddess was probably taken over from the earlier non-Greek population by the Hellene invaders who entered the country about 2000 BC.

In the Mycenaean period (before 1200 BC) Athene seems to have been a palace goddess, who protected kings in different districts. She was especially their protectress in war and there are artistic representations of an armed goddess who may be Athene. Direct evidence is hard to come by but this much can be inferred from her status in Homer and in classical Greek religion.

The Homeric poems (8th century BC), which look back to the heroic age of the Mycenaean civilization, preserve many memories from the centuries before Homer, and Athene is one of the most important deities in them. Her antiquity is indicated by a number of her titles which were of unknown or uncertain meaning to the Greeks themselves: Pallas, Tritogeneia, Atrytone. She is the daughter of Zeus, and he pays her markedly more love and respect than he shows to his wife Hera. She is the city goddess of Troy, but at the same time the helper of Greek heroes in battle. Other gods and goddesses have favourites whom they are prepared to whisk away from danger, but only Athene will stand beside a warrior in his chariot. Besides her spear and helmet, she carries a magic goatskin *(aegis)*, with which she flaps terror into opposing forces or courage into her own.

The more intelligible of her epithets in Homer almost all refer to her warlike qualities; *agestratos* or *ageleie* 'leader of the war-host', *egrekydoimos* 'rouser of battle', *laossoos* 'driving armies before her', *leitis* 'goddess of booty'. But she had other aspects. She was patron goddess of arts and crafts, including carpentry and weaving, and was noted for wisdom and resource.

The connections between these various functions are obscure. Wisdom and help in war probably reflect what the princelings of the Mycenaean age hoped for from her; perhaps she became the goddess of joiners and weaving-women because they looked to the palace for employment. But she remained their goddess long after the palaces fell and the princes were overthrown.

Born in Armour

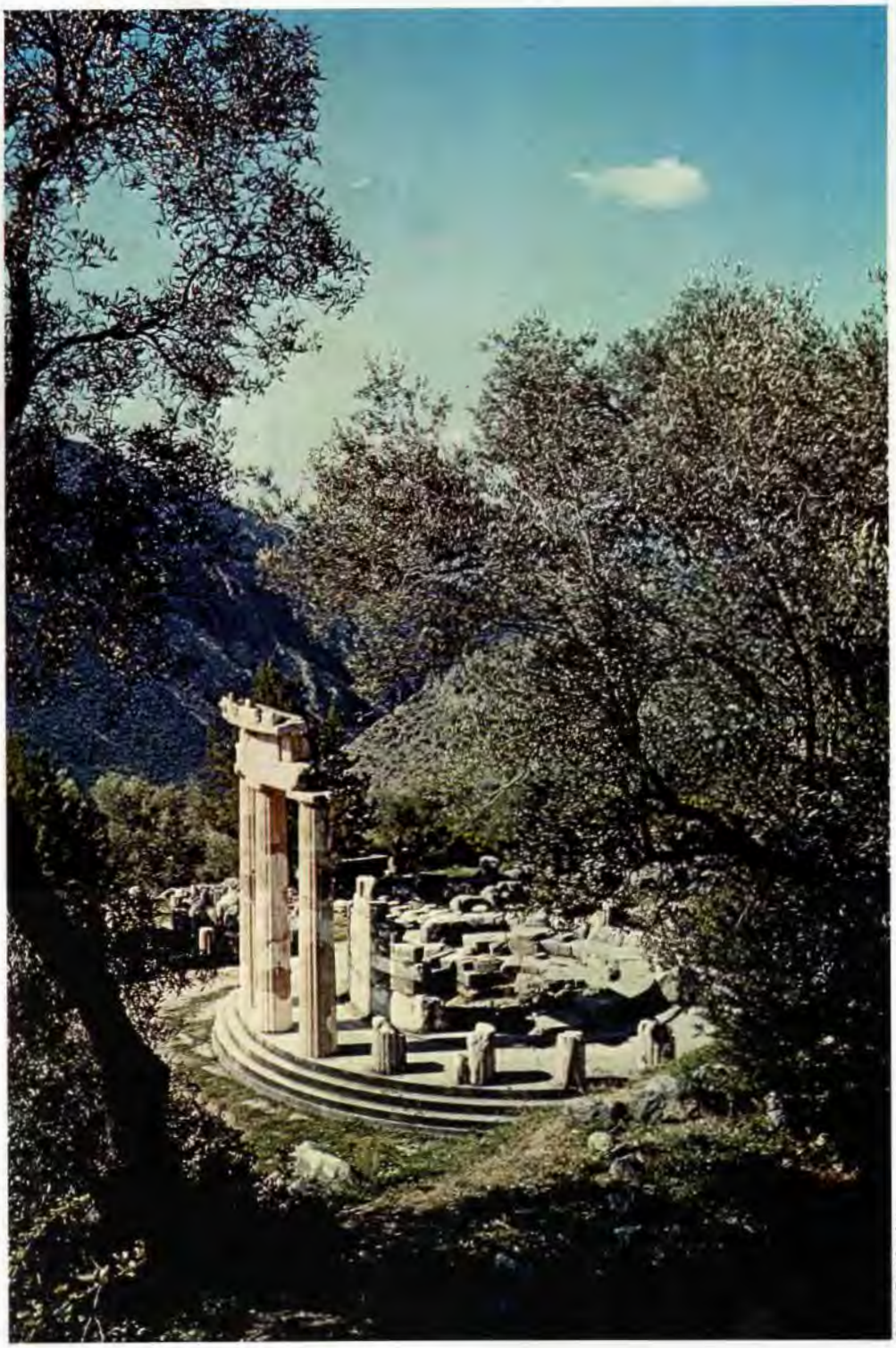
According to mythology the goddess was born in full armour from the head of Zeus, which Hephaestus helpfully split with an axe. She thus had no real mother, though one was supplied by the story that Zeus married Metis, 'Resource', and swallowed

A Manly Goddess

On Olympus the gods were altogether superior to the goddesses, considered collectively – superior not only in their power but also in their appeal, in the feelings they inspired among men. The chief exception to the rule was Athena, and the significant quality of Athena as a goddess was manliness. She was the virgin goddess in a world that knew no original sin, no sinfulness of sex, no Vestal Virgins. She was not even born of woman, having sprung from the head of Zeus – an insult to the whole race of women for which Hera never forgave her husband, Hera who was the complete female and whom the Greeks feared a little and did not like at all, from the days of Odysseus to the twilight of the gods.

M. I. Finley
The World of Odysseus

Mansell Collection



Camera Press London

Left **Building the Acropolis at Athens, on which stood the Parthenon, the greatest of Athene's temples** ***Below*** **Ruins of Athene's temple at Delphi**

her before she gave birth (a motif borrowed from Zeus' own birth; see CRONUS). She had no husband either. Hephaestus, the other god of craftsmen, who was worshipped with her at Athens, might have been the obvious mate for her, but that would have implied divine children.

Athene's warlike qualities made it natural that she should be given a leading part in the overthrow of the Giants, the earthborn rebels who piled up mountains in their attempt to storm Olympus. But as she was responsible for warriors' successes, their disasters were attributed to her anger. Because Ajax the Locrian assaulted her priestess at Troy, she roused a tempest as the Greek fleet sailed home, and Ajax was drowned.

Goddess of Cities

Holy places are very tenacious of the respect in which they are held by the people. The old palaces fell but Athene remained on the citadels where they had stood. From being the goddess of the ruler she became the goddess of the city, and was given this express title in a number of places besides Athens. She was often associated in this function with a 'Zeus of the city'. Already in Homer she is the city goddess of Troy with her temple on the acropolis. So long as her wooden image, given by Zeus to the first king, remained there, the city's safety was assured; the Greeks had to steal it before their victory.

The goddess developed some secondary characteristics in different localities; at Elis, for example, she had the title Mother, and apparently a connection with childbirth. But what appears in many places, and is therefore likely to be an ancient feature, is her association with the crafts, expressed in the title Ergane, 'craftswoman'. At Athens, where ceramics was a major industry, the potters particularly enjoyed her supervision, though she was also the goddess of the whole community. Another important item in the Athenian economy was the production and sale of olive oil, and so the olive too came under the goddess's special care.

This public aspect became more and more dominant as time went on. In the 6th century BC the dictator Pisistratus made a stylish return from exile by getting a strapping girl to dress up as Athene and lead the way. Nobody can have believed it was the goddess in person, but the spectacle must have had its effect. As ruler of Athens, Pisistratus put Athene's head on the city's coins, built her a new temple on the acropolis, and made her four-yearly festival, the Great Panathenea, more splendid. This was all politics rather than piety, but it was politically worthwhile because piety was still common. For the ordinary people it represented a visible expression of the increased glory of Athens. Pisistratus was succeeded in 528 by his sons, who continued his policies. Athene's face on the coins developed a merry smile, which remained there into the following century.

The Owls of Athene

Animals that appear in holy places are liable to be taken for manifestations of divinity, and the owls of the Athenian acropolis were associated with the goddess from early times. Her epithet *glaukopis* may mean 'owl-faced'. In 480 BC the Persian invaders destroyed the sacred buildings, but the appearance of an owl put heart into the defenders, and the tables were turned in the naval battle at Salamis.

In the following decades, Athens became the most powerful city in Greece and its intellectual centre. In Aeschylus and other authors of the 5th century, Athene appears as a noble figure, embodying the city's highest ideals of justice, wisdom and moderation. At the same time rebuilding was proceeding on the acropolis in magnificent style. A huge bronze statue of the warrior goddess was set up where it could be seen miles away at sea. The old temple was replaced by a larger and finer one higher up on the crest of the hill, the incomparable Parthenon. It contained another great statue of the goddess, clad in a golden robe and holding a figure of Victory in her palm. The outside was decorated with sculptures representing Athene's birth, her dispute with the god Poseidon for control of the city, battles among gods and men, and the ceremonial procession of the Panathenea.

These proud and liberal works still proceeded after Athens became engaged in her long war with Sparta (431–404). But the aspirations that they expressed were disappointed, for this war ended in defeat and disillusion. The goddess maintained her public position to the end of paganism, honoured with priestesses, shrines and sacrifices, entitled 'Bringer of Victory'. But these municipal pieties had less and less to do with religious feeling. Already in 5th century art Athene's face had taken on an impersonal expression. The subsequent decline of the city's industries struck at the roots of her popular support; the number of private dedications to her fell off sharply after the 4th century BC.

An Intellectual Rebirth

At the same time, the traditional gods were suffering from a general loss of respect, due to the rise of scientific rationalism. But far from killing the gods, the intellectuals gave them a new lease of life, by identifying them with physical or mental realities for which divinity could be claimed. For example, Zeus the hurler of thunderbolts was for them not a sturdy male figure, but the sky.

This line of thought began in the 6th century BC, and was being applied systematically by the 4th at the latest. In Plato's time, Athene was being identified with 'mind'. The same method was embraced by Stoicism, the philosophy which exercised more influence on educated men than any other from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD. For the Stoics, Athene was wisdom, or virtue, or the moon.

The aim in making these identifications was to find something which could be related to the name of a god as well as to his traditional titles and myths. So Chrysippus in the 3rd century BC explained that Athene was called Athene because the mind considers *(athrein)*, and Tritogeneia because wisdom is tripartite; she was born from the head with the help of Hephaestus, the craftsman god, because wisdom comes to light by way of the voice, and arises from technical skills.

Through such devices the Greek gods remained alive, and preserved their ancient attributes. In the Orphic Hymns (probably of the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD: see ORPHEUS AND ORPHISM) Athene is laden with the accumulated attributes of 1500 years; goddess of war, destroyer of Giants, mother of arts, bringer of victory and health, personified wisdom. In a later hymn, addressed to her by the philosopher Proclus in the 5th century AD, she retains all these facets, and is accommodated to the highly abstract theological system of the Neoplatonists as well; and this artificial creature, formed as it were by sedimentation, served Proclus as a focus for his genuine piety and devotion.

C. M. Dixon

Statue of Minerva, the Roman equivalent of Athene, patron of arts and crafts, and goddess of wit and resource

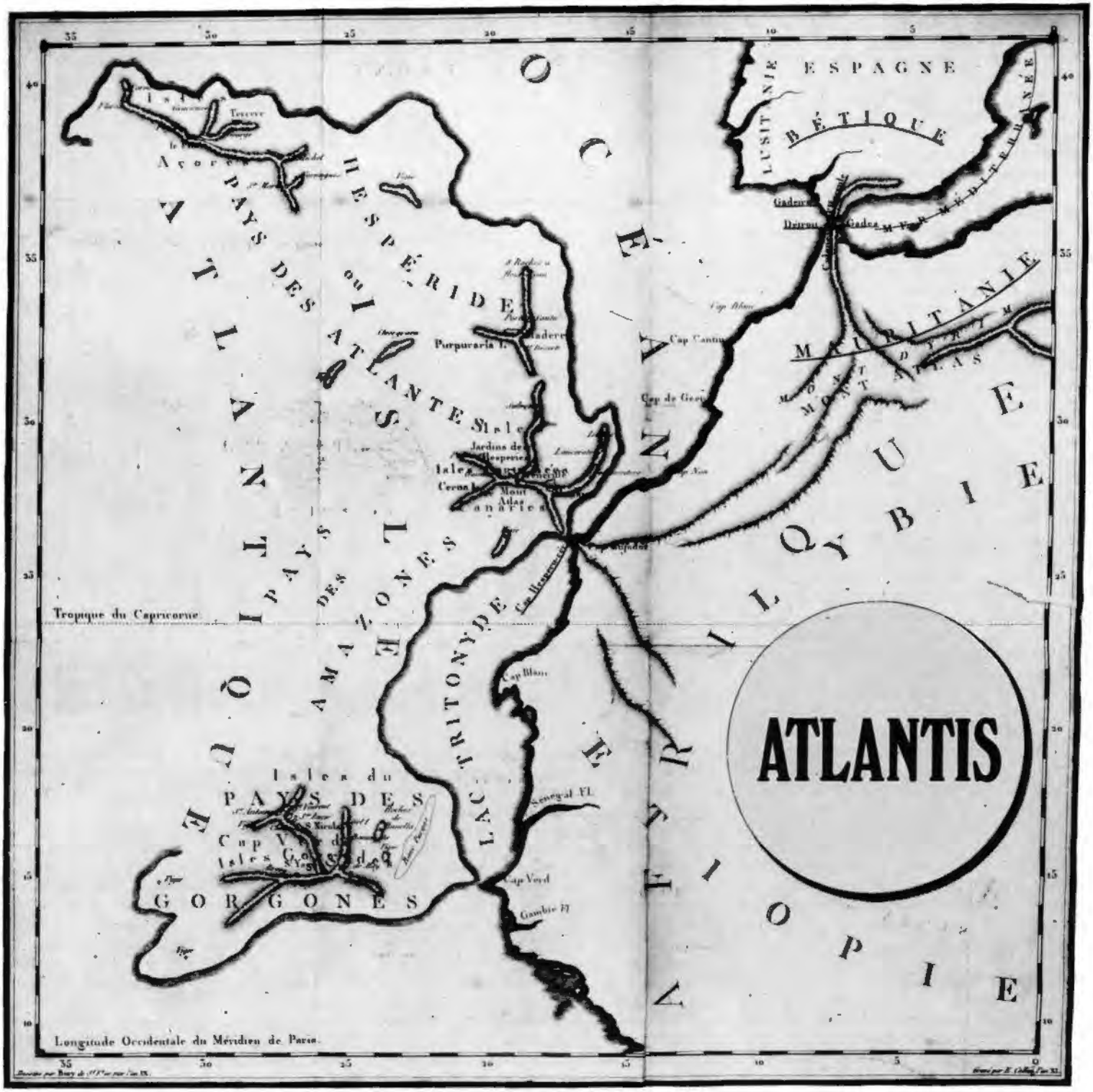
The Roman Minerva

As early as the 6th century BC, a native Italian goddess Menerva was identified with Athene. In Etruscan artistic copies of Greek mythological scenes her name is written for Athene's; in Latin literature Minerva is the ordinary name for the Greek goddess.

Because this identification was so early, it is hardly possible to determine Menerva's original character, though it must have resembled Athene's in some important respect. Many scholars regard her patronage of arts and crafts, which is conspicuous in historical times, as a basic attribute and the Latin proverbial phrase 'unwilling Minerva', indicating lack of inspiration, shows that she was established in the popular mind as goddess of wit and resource. Other functions of Athene were transferred to her by literary men and in official cult. The Etruscans set her up as a protecting goddess of cities, in company with Jupiter and Juno, and the Romans, when they took the south Etruscan town of Falerii in 241 BC, removed her image to Rome as the Greeks had removed Athene's from Troy. Little religious sentiment can have been involved. Roman religion was, after all, largely a mass of formalities, preserved from a pre-urban past by priestly conservatism and later by cultured antiquarianism, modified at intervals from political motives by the state.

M. L. WEST

FURTHER READING: H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (Dutton, 1959) gives an excellent brief survey of gods and myths. For the early period, M. P. Nilsson, *The Minoan–Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, Sweden, 1950) is the standard work. For the classical period there is much material in volume 1 of L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Caratzas Bros., 1977, first published in Britain 1896–1909), though the discussion of the gods' natures is outdated. See also F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (Dutton, 1938).



The lost paradise of Atlantis has attracted romantic speculation for hundreds of years: but its true location and date seem now to have been finally settled

ATLANTIS was originally a great seapower which, according to the Greek philosopher Plato, launched an attack on Athens and Egypt. During the war, Atlantis was swallowed up in a natural cataclysm in the space of a day and a night, this same cataclysm also annihilating the Athenian army. The only written account of Atlantis is that which appears in Plato. All later writings about Atlantis – and they are innumerable – are commentaries, expansions or fantasies derived from Plato's account.

Plato was an Athenian, born about 427 BC and dying in 348 BC. His description of Atlantis appears in two of his dialogues, fairly briefly in one called *Timaeus*, in greater detail in *Critias*. These are supposed to be the first parts of a trilogy, the third of which was to be called *Hermocrates*. This third dialogue was never written and even the *Critias* is incomplete, breaking off in the middle of an explanation of why it was necessary for the Atlanteans to attack Athens. In both dialogues all the description of Atlantis comes from the mouth of Critias.

This Critias was a real person, the grandson of Critias the Elder, who died in 403 BC. His description of Atlantis is based, he states, on what his grandfather told him and on documents in the possession of his family; and these documents and family tradition concern what certain Egyptian priests told Solon. Solon (d 558 BC), an Athenian statesman and lawgiver, was considered one of the wisest men of antiquity.

In the account of Critias, Atlantis is given a legendary beginning, as was usual in ancient histories. Poseidon, god of the sea, begets ten sons on a mortal woman. The eldest of the ten sons is called Atlas and the empire which Poseidon bestows on these sons is called Atlantis and is ruled thereafter by the descendants of the ten kings. The original small island becomes the Ancient Metropolis of the empire and the site of the temple of Poseidon. The rest of the very large empire is said to lie beyond the Pillars of Hercules (a phrase generally taken to mean the Straits of Gibraltar).

Eugen Kusch

Left **A conjectural map of the lost continent of Atlantis, which was said to have sunk under the sea in the space of a day and a night. Drawn in 1803, the map shows Atlantis situated west of the Moroccan coast. From Bory St Vincent's *Sur les Canaries Right* Bust, probably Phoenician, from the Archeological Museum, Madrid, claimed by some writers to represent an Atlantean priestess *Below* The so-called Cross of Atlantis, an ancient symbol allegedly showing the three concentric walls of the capital city and the great waterway entering from the south**

Lost Paradise

Atlantis is exceptionally rich and fertile, with level plains and well-wooded mountains, producing two crops a year with the aid of hot and cold springs, protected against cold winds and intensively cultivated. Politically, it is a federation of ten kings, led by the descendant of Atlas, meeting in the Ancient Metropolis for conference, consultation and a ritual bull-game. Technologically, it is extremely advanced, with written laws, a knowledge of metal-working, including the use of gold, silver and bronze, an exceptional grasp of engineering and architecture involved in the construction of temples, walls, long canals, tunnels and harbour works. The inhabitants worship a number of gods, of whom Poseidon is the chief, and they also practise a bull-cult. Socially, there is considerable stress on amenity, with public gardens and baths not only for men and women but also for horses.

All of this is consistent up to a point; and that point is that this empire collapsed in a single day and night, according to the account of the Egyptian priests, 9000 years before the date of their conversations with Solon, which means in about 9600 BC.

This is so glaring an impossibility that it provides at once the great attraction of Atlantis for the credulous, who are delighted to believe in a Lost Paradise of immense antiquity which can be thought of as the source of human civilization; and a great stumbling block for the logical and the scientific, who point out a number of problems.

For example, in 9600 BC there were no Athenians to oppose Atlantis; the Mycenaean city of Athens emerged not much before the 16th century BC. In 9600 BC writing and metal-working had not been discovered anywhere in the world. The first and simplest farming communities date from, at the earliest, 7000 BC. Horses were unknown in Europe until the Bronze Age and were previously confined to Central Asia. The earliest monumental architecture can be dated to not before 4000 BC. In brief, Atlantis as described by Plato is so impossible that his younger contemporary Aristotle assumed that Atlantis was a myth, an imaginary kingdom thought up by Plato to illustrate certain political theories.

But this explanation of Aristotle's is not really satisfactory. Plato's Atlantis is not a consistent myth; it illustrates no particular theory and is full of curious detail, very like a historical report, very unlike a political allegory. The characters in Plato's dialogues find the story from time to time baffling and apparently incredible, but continue on the basis that, strange though it seems, it is indeed true historical fact.

Fantastic Explanations

As a result, particularly since the discovery of America, innumerable writers have accepted Plato's account as fact and have endeavoured to explain it; and some of their explanations have been fantastic in the extreme. The usual explanation is to assume that Atlantis was an island continent in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, which subsided into the depths. This is claimed to explain all sorts of things from the creation of the Gulf Stream, the origin of the Sargasso Sea and the migration of eels, to the diffusion of cultures, plants and animals on either side of the Atlantic.

This is not the only location suggested for Atlantis, by any means; other candidates include the region of Heligoland, Tunisia, south-western Spain and north-western France. The trouble with all these explanations is that they are geophysically impossible, for the formation of the Atlantic Ocean has remained virtually unchanged since before the arrival of man on the earth.

What Was Atlantis?

Is there any way of reconciling all the anomalies in Plato's story, which will meet all the requirements of science? Such an explanation must be consistent with all the scientific disciplines; it must satisfy alike the historian, the geophysicist, the anthropologist and the archeologist.

For some years now it has been apparent to scholars that the Atlantis described by Plato was very like what archeology has uncovered of the High Bronze Age civilizations of the Aegean and the Near East – such as the Minoans, the Mycenaeans, the Hittites, the Egyptians and the Babylonians – between about 2500 and 1200 BC. Was there, then, something wrong with Plato's date? Had the Egyptian priests or Solon confused 900 with 9000 years? If so the date of the disaster would be 1500 BC instead of 9600 BC.

This hypothesis immediately makes the

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Atlantean civilization credible. Again, if there is a mistake with the power of ten here, it could apply equally to the large dimensions given for the empire of Atlantis. If so, the dimensions for the Royal City of Atlantis shrink to something very closely approximating to the central plain of Crete (the heartland of the Minoan civilization) and the date of the disaster to around 1500 BC, the time nearly enough when the Minoan Empire collapsed in a series of disasters which led to the Mycenaean take-over. Furthermore, Minoan Crete was a prosperous power in close contact with both Athens and Egypt, both of which were then in existence.

Was there a natural cataclysm which took place in the Aegean around this date? There was indeed: the world's greatest known volcanic explosion, that of the island volcano of Santorin, some 70 miles north of Crete.

The Cataclysm

Santorin today consists of three islands. These lie round a great expanse of water, in the centre of which rise two relatively modern volcanic islets, the more recent of which is still intermittently active. This great expanse of water is about seven miles from north to south and close to five miles from east to west, with an area of 32 square miles; and its depth is between 300 and 400 metres. It is in fact a gigantic volcanic crater of the type known as a caldera A caldera is formed as a result of a long and violent period of activity in an island volcano, when so much material has been poured out that the volcano collapses into the hollow chamber beneath and the sea rushes in with a colossal explosion. The major part of the island disappears beneath the sea and stupendous tidal waves spread out in every direction, bringing destruction near and far with floods, overwhelming masses of pumice and volcanic ash and, usually, accompanying earthquakes.

The most striking recent example of such a disaster is the explosion of Krakatoa in Indonesia in 1883. This explosion was heard nearly 3000 miles away, some 295 towns in Java and Sumatra were wholly or partially destroyed, 36,000 people perished, the sound waves travelled three times round the world, volcanic dust rose to a height of 50 miles and some of it fell in Japan, Africa and Europe. Tidal waves crossed the entire Pacific and were still of sufficient strength to break anchor chains in Valparaiso, Chile.

Now the effects of such an eruption can be calculated on the basis of the size of the caldera. The caldera of Santorin has a volume of about five times that of Krakatoa; and the violence of its explosion must be assumed to have been something like five times as great. Its effects in the landlocked and island-studded Aegean and its wider effects in the whole eastern Mediterranean must have been catastrophic beyond imagination. It caused the instant disappearance of the greater part of a previously circular island which it had already rendered uninhabitable with deposits of pumice and ash, which are still nearly 200 ft deep in places: and it produced tidal waves which must have swept many miles inland in nearby Crete with wholesale destruction and loss of life.

We are therefore left with two curiously similar accounts, one of which is Plato's. The other, the sum of the discoveries of geophysicists and archeologists, tells us that the great empire of Minoan Crete suffered a series of natural disasters in the later 16th century BC and that these disasters were caused by fires, earthquakes and floods which brought about the end of the civilization; and that around 1500 BC a fertile island, some 70 miles north of Crete, blew up in almost total destruction and caused widespread devastation throughout the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

These two accounts of unparalleled disaster are so similar in nature, location and date that they must be different accounts of the same disaster. And when an archeological expedition, led by Professor Marinatos of Athens, uncovered in 1967 Minoan remains deep under the pumice of Santorin, the final link was added and the identification of Santorin with the Ancient Metropolis of Atlantis, and of Minoan Crete with the Royal City and empire of the Atlanteans, became virtually inevitable.

EDWARD BACON

FURTHER READING: Phyllis Y. Forsyth, *Atlantis: The Making of Myth* (McGill-Queens University Press, 1980).

Picturepoint London

The vanished Atlantis has often been claimed as the source of similar cultural developments on both sides of the Atlantic, including colossal statues and pyramids
Left **Giant Toltec figures at Tula, Mexico**
Above **The island of Santorin, probably the original Atlantis, showing the edge of the volcanic crater now filled by the sea**

The Occult Atlantis

A curious method of research into the history of Atlantis is 'astral clairvoyance', which depends on the belief that a record of all events of the past continues to exist on the astral plane – the shadowy world to which the soul of man goes immediately after death. Through deep meditation occultists believe that it is possible to penetrate this plane and observe the 'memory of Nature'.

A pioneer of this method in the 1890s was W. Scott-Elliot, whose book *The Story of Atlantis* was reissued by the Theosophical Society in 1962. His astral researches revealed to Scott-Elliot that Atlantis occupied most of what is now the Atlantic more than a million years ago. It was inhabited by warrior tribes, including the black aboriginals called Rmoahals who stood ten to twelve feet high.

The ruling race were the Toltecs (who occupied Mexico in historical times), holding sway from their magnificent capital, the City of the Golden Gates. They averaged eight feet in height and made slaves of the black Rmoahals. Scott-Elliot's insistence on the great stature of the Atlanteans may be intended to account for the stories of giants which have come down to us: and belief in the innate inferiority of black races was common among occultists of his generation.

The rulers of Atlantis unfortunately took to black magic, which eventually brought retribution in the shape of the cataclysm which sank Atlantis beneath the sea. But some 200,000 years ago, Scott-Elliot says, a group of Toltecs emigrated to Egypt. Their descendants designed the pyramids, which explains why pyramids are found not only in Egypt but also in Central America. Another group visited England and supervised the building of Stonehenge. It was from the great lost continent that the subsequent civilizations of the Middle East and Europe sprang.

Atlas

In Greek mythology, the giant who held up the sky to prevent it from falling on the earth; he was identified with the Atlas Mountains in Africa and legend said that he was turned to stone when Perseus showed him the Gorgon's head; his name was first used for a collection of maps by Mercator in 1595, with a picture of him holding up the globe of the earth on his shoulders.

Mansell Collection

Atman

In Indian religion and philosophy, the 'self', the part of each man which is eternal; it is identified with Brahman, the one unchanging reality behind surface appearances. See BRAHMAN.

ATONEMENT

THE WORD MEANS literally 'at one-ment' and refers to reconciliation between man and God, who become at one with each other. Theories of atonement assume that the proper relationship between a man and his god has been broken by a 'sin' or offence, but that the relationship can be restored.

In the history of religions there are two main ways in which a man can atone for sin. One is by sacrifice, by giving up an animal or something which he owns and offering it to the offended god (see SACRIFICE). The other is by giving up the sinful action itself, by repentance and determination not to sin again.

Both these ways of atoning appear side by side in the Old Testament, together with another belief, also found in early Greek religion, that the sins of the people can be literally banished by transferring them to a scapegoat, which is then driven out of the community. As part of the ritual of the Day of Atonement (described in Leviticus, chapter 16), the sins of the people were recited over the head of a goat, which was then led away into the desert, carrying the sins of the people with it (see SCAPEGOAT). The scapegoat ceremonies were given up in the 1st century AD but the Jewish Day of Atonement remains an important festival, at which the faithful fast and repent.

Christian theories of atonement are connected with the scapegoat through Isaiah 53, verses 4–6: '... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... and with his stripes we are healed.' Christians identified the 'man of sorrows' of this passage with Jesus, and it became a central doctrine of Christianity that Jesus had reconciled man with God through his life and death, as he himself had suggested.

Different Christian thinkers have put forward different views about the mechanism of the Atonement, but that the coming of God to earth as a man made it possible for sinful man to be reconciled to God is accepted by all denominations.

The Scapegoat **by Holman Hunt: the goat to which the sins of the people were transferred and which was then banished into the desert**

Manchester City Art Gallery/Michael Halford

Scala

ATTILA

The legend of St Peter and St Paul repelling Attila from the gates of Rome, by Raphael

KNOWN TO WESTERN CHRISTENDOM as 'the Scourge of God', Attila was leader of the Huns, the savage horsemen who came originally from Mongolia and who by the 5th century AD had established an empire in central and eastern Europe. Short and squat, large-headed and flat-nosed, famed for brutality and destruction, Attila led the Huns in many campaigns, including one into Italy in 452. When the Huns approached Rome, Pope Leo I led an embassy which persuaded Attila to spare the city, a feat so astonishing that it was later said that St Peter and St Paul had appeared in person to overawe the barbarian king.

Attila died in 453 of a haemorrhage but within 100 years it was said that he had been murdered by his wife. This rumour and the fact that the Burgundians on the Rhine had earlier been disastrously defeated by the Huns, account for Attila's role in legends. In the Norse 9th century *Atlakvida*, the cruel Attila, lustful for gold, invites the Burgundian king, whose sister he has married, to his court to extort the Burgundian treasure-hoard from him. Although the Huns cut out the living heart of the king's brother, he refuses to yield up the treasure and is thrown into a snake-pit where he bravely dies. But his sister revenges him by killing Attila and the sons she has borne to him.

By contrast, in the great German epic, the *Nibelungenlied*, completed in Austria in the early 13th century, Attila appears under the name of Etzel as a noble and generous ruler, because the Austrians and Bavarians had inherited a favourable picture of him from the Ostrogoths, whose own hero-king Dietrich (known to history as Theodoric the Great) was said to have found refuge at Attila's court. This version of the story reverses the Norse tale. Attila's wife, sister of the Burgundian king, invites the Burgundian leaders to her husband's court and takes her own vengeance on them there.

FURTHER READING: *The Nibelungenlied* ed. A. T. Hatto (Penguin, 1964).

Giraudon

Attis

Youthful god of Asia Minor, lover of the goddess Cybele; fundamentally a vegetation god who died and was reborn like the crops each year; connected with violets which sprang from his blood and the pine tree into which he was transformed on his death.

See CYBELE.

Mansell Collection

Attribute

In mythology, a creature or object associated with a particular deity and revealing an aspect of the deity's nature: examples are the herald's wand of Hermes or Mercury, the owl of Athene, the ape of Thoth, and the arrows of some American Indian sky gods.

The Bettmann Archive

An augur prepares to predict the future by the flight of the ravens, birds whose cries were regarded as favourable if they were heard on the augur's right: from the tomb of the Augurs, Corneto Tarquinia

The flight or cries of birds, and other natural occurrences, were not accidents for the Romans but evidence of the wishes of the gods

AUGURY

THE ANCIENT ROMANS attached considerable importance to the taking of omens, called *auguria* or *auspicia*. The object was not so much to see into the future as to find out whether the gods approved or disapproved of some proposed course of action.

Domestic augury, in which the omens were taken by the master of the house, gradually dropped out of use, except on the occasion of a marriage. But public augury remained important in official and military matters until at least c 30 BC. The public practice of augury was restricted to the members of the college of augurs, whose function was to advise those state officials who had the legal right to take omens. The official could reject the augur's advice but Roman history told of many disasters which had followed defiance of the omens.

The augurs distinguished two kinds of omens: those which were deliberately waited and watched for, and those which occurred casually. Omens of the first kind were taken more seriously and alone had legal validity. They included thunder, lightning and comets; the flight and cries of birds; and the behaviour of certain sacred chickens. Casual omens consisted of the unexpected appearances of animals, and certain minor happenings (which were known as *dirae*), such as the spilling of salt or wine, stumbling, sneezing, or unintentional noises like the creaking of chairs. With the passage of time, the number of dirae grew so unreasonably large that the augurs were obliged to close the list. It is recorded that one Roman general, Marcus Marcellus, used to travel in a closed litter, in order to shut such untoward omens out of sight and hearing.

Omens from Birds

The official who took the omens sat in a special tent, which shielded him against troublesome omens and had only one opening, facing south. The pitching of this tent in the right place at the right time, and with the correct alignment, was a closely guarded professional secret of the augurs. The tent was set up on the eve of taking the omens and the official had to sleep in it, rise early, and sit on a stone or a solid seat, so as to avoid the risk of a creaking chair. A rumbling stomach or an object inadvertently dropped at this moment were interpreted as unfavourable signs. If everything was in order, however, the augur declared a silence, and pronounced an invocation. The official then fixed his gaze on the space in front of him.

If the omens were to be taken from wild birds, the augur stood on high ground, or on a tower. Facing east, he marked out an area for observation (the *templum*) in the sky with his staff. He then covered his head and sacrificed to the gods.

Not all birds counted for the purposes of augury. Those which did were divided into those whose flight was significant (including the eagle, buzzard and vulture), and those whose cries were regarded as ominous (the crow, raven and owl). The woodpecker and the osprey belonged to both these categories. The augur had to mark the direction of flight in relation to the four sections into which the templum was divided, the height of the birds above ground, the rapidity and sound of wingbeats, the frequency, pitch and strength of cries, and the general behaviour of the birds.

The rules were very complicated and in time a whole technical literature grew up on the subject, which had a jargon of its own. The college of augurs kept archives recording actual cases, and these were used as the basis of handbooks, which explained, for example, that the cry of the crow was a favourable omen if it was heard on the augur's left; that of the raven, if it was heard on the right. They set out the precise meaning of a bird seen shedding its feathers or letting droppings fall. If there were many contradictory signs, an attempt was made to see where the predominant tendency lay. Some birds carried more weight as omens than others – the eagle more than the rook, for instance.

The Sacred Chickens

Divination from the behaviour of the sacred chickens had its origin in the significance attributed to a bird flying with something in its beak. The most favourable sign was when the birds ate gluttonously, letting food drop from their beaks as they did so. But Cicero, whose work *On Divination* is the chief ancient source for our knowledge of augury, complains that the chickens were kept in cages and deliberately starved, so that their greediness was no true sign from Jupiter. Taking the auspices from chickens was a favourite method with Roman generals.

Although augury seems to have been held in high esteem by the Roman public at large as 'foreknowledge of the truth that is to be', some maintained that it was merely a tool in the hands of public officials.

Originally there were only three augurs and until the year 300 BC, only members of Rome's aristocracy were eligible for this office, which carried with it a salary and certain privileges not granted to other priests. The number of augurs was gradually increased, until in the 1st century BC Julius Caesar finally raised it to 16, including himself in the capacity of chief priest.

The augurs wore a mantle with a purple border, and their distinctive emblem was the *lituus*, a curved rod with which they marked out the limits of the templum. In imperial times the art of augury fell gradually into neglect, partly because the rules of divination had become so complicated, and the conditions required for favourable omens so numerous, that it became almost impossible to conduct an augury which led to a favourable result.

(See also BIRDS; DIVINATION.)

Auldearne Witches

Group of Scottish witches, the most famous of whom was Isabel Gowdie: she confessed, without torture, in 1662 that they worshipped the Devil, rode through the air on pieces of straw, visited fairyland and killed people with elf-arrows; she was hanged, her body burned and the ashes scattered. See GOWDIE.

Aura

In occultism, a luminous appearance seen surrounding the human body; the radiation has been called Od, Odyle or Odic Force; it is related to the aureole or halo surrounding the bodies or heads of figures in religious art.
See DOUBLE.

Solarfilms

AURORA

A GREAT AURORA is among the most impressive of the phenomena of the sky. The weirdly pulsating display of variegated colour is so fantastic in appearance that it has excited apprehension and even panic among observers unfamiliar with it. In 1583 hundreds of peasants hurried to Paris 'to say their prayers and make their offerings in the great church, moved to this penitential journey because of signs seen in the heavens and fire in the air.' In his *Natural History* the Roman writer Pliny (1st century AD) quotes the popular superstition, which persisted for centuries, that an aurora is the clash of battling armies in the sky.

Caused by bombardment of the upper atmosphere by electrically charged particles emitted by the sun, an aurora holds no terrors in the polar regions, where it occurs almost nightly. To the Maori the aurora australis or 'southern lights' is a great fire which was lighted by their ancestors, whose canoes had drifted far to the south into the cold Antarctic seas.

The 'northern lights', aurora borealis, are believed by the Eskimo to be the torches of spirits who are leading the souls of those who have just died to paradise. In the swishing noise said to accompany the phenomenon, they hear the voices of the spirits, trying to communicate with people on earth; and by answering them in a whisper, you can send messages to the dead through the spirits.

The Northern Lights, believed to be the spirits who guide the dead to paradise

At times of great solar activity, an aurora may be seen in middle latitudes or even, rarely, in the tropics. People living in Mediterranean regions are likely to see a spectacular aurora not more than once in a lifetime, and the effect is naturally awe-inspiring. In the Old Testament 'a boiling pot, facing away from the north', which may have been an aurora was interpreted as a portent of evil (Jeremiah, chapter 1) and the 'visions of God' in Ezekiel (chapter 1) may also have been inspired by an aurora: '. . . a great cloud with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze.'

AUSTRALIA

Myth and Magic of the Aborigines

Axel Poignant

Among many beautiful aborigine myths, one of the most striking is the concept of the Dreamtime, the 'eternal now' in which they are at one with their ancestors and heroes

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES are a dark chocolate-brown people, with narrow heads, sloping foreheads, deep-set eyes, broad noses, and black, wavy to curly hair. Archeological and anthropological research suggests that they came originally from the south-eastern Asian archipelago region. Following population increase, some groups moved southwards, crossing the narrow water spaces in the simplest boats. In the course of centuries they reached the Sahul Shelf, which was then a land bridge between Timor, New Guinea and the southern continent. Eventually, some 20–30,000 years ago, one or more groups were on what, after the subsidence of the Sahul Shelf, became the northern shores of Australia.

The basic requirement of each migrating group was permanent drinking water, within range of which its members could obtain food by hunting and gathering what nature provided, for the aborigines were neither gardeners nor herdsmen. When the numbers of a group so increased that they could not obtain sufficient food within their accustomed range in bad as well as good seasons, some of them hived off to live around another water-place. This hiving-off process was repeated until all Australia was occupied. In the course of time, separation resulted in variations in language and customs. Neighbouring groups, however, who kept in close touch with one another, retaining a common language, became tribes. They often had a tribal name, but never a central authority such as a council or a chief.

Each local group with its own food-gathering country is self-governing. It is an enlarged family, consisting of a man and his brothers and their children and son's children, whose wives come from, and whose sisters marry into, other local groups. In aboriginal thought the living members of such a group belong to their own country, not because they are descended, as we would say, from the migrating band which settled there, but because they were brought there by that band – in spirit

Australian aborigines, their bodies painted, as part of a highly secret ritual of purification: from Arnhem Land in northern Australia

Australia News and Information

Ceremony during the Bangtail Muster at Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. The songs and dances at aboriginal ceremonies frequently enact and re-create the adventures of the tribal ancestors, to strengthen the bond between the ancestors and their descendants

form. And there, in a water-place or in some other natural feature associated with the migrating group, they sojourned ever since until they entered their mothers' wombs to be born, or indeed, to be reincarnated. And after death, they return to those same spirit 'homes'.

Pioneers in the Dreamtime

The pioneers in that period long ago lived, hunted, made implements and performed ceremonies just as their representatives do today. Time, however, has fashioned the pioneers in heroic mould, endowing them with extraordinary powers, so that their actions, especially the exploits of their leaders, provide an explanation of the world as it now is. By striking mountains with ritual staffs or by hurling their boomerangs, the heroes cut gaps through them. In some regions, their whirling boomerangs with hurricane-like effect laid flat a road through thick timber. Striking the ground with a staff, as Moses did at the rock in Horeb, they caused water to rise as in a well. They appeared now as humans, and now as animals or birds. They travelled through the air or under the ground. But above all, by their actions, now copied in ritual, they caused plants and animals, birds and fish to appear, and human beings too. In their journeyings, spirit children were born from the women or emanated from the bodies of the heroes, just as in ritual today, the bird-down and paint flies off the actors' bodies as they vibrate themselves rapidly. Finally, when they died, their spirits went into a water-place, or remained in their dead bodies or their limbs changed into rock or earth, trees or anthills; and there they remained as a 'reservoir' or home of emanating or pre-existing spirits of the generations yet to be born.

What the aborigines believe about their own origin and their birth from generation to generation, they also believe about animals and birds, reptiles and fish, insects and plants, and indeed also about inanimate

Initiation

The lad had made no sound that I could hear, all through his ordeal, no movement that I could see. He looked almost a sickly green from giddiness and suppressed fear. The old warrior bending over him thrust his dirty fingers into the boy's open mouth, feeling, tugging, jerking at a front tooth.

With his bony fingernails soon stained with blood he forced back the gum from the tooth, jerking and tugging to loosen it a bit. I saw the boy's eyes close tightly as his face screwed up, but he did not murmur. The old fellow then withdrew from his matted hair a stone punch, a naturally cylindrical stone about five inches long and as thick as a finger. Our workmen use a similar tool, but it is of steel and they do not use it for punching out a tooth. The old man placed the punch end hard against the tooth, then struck it sharply with a stone. At the sharp click there was an instant shouted *'Wah! Ai!'* from all hands. Silence, while the old fellow placed his punch on the tooth for the next blow.

I had almost heard the tooth crunch agonizingly in its socket. The lad kept his eyes tight shut, and now he could not quite control the shivering of his body. But he had made no sound. The old man raised his arm again. 'Click!' echoed by the roar and stamp of feet. The boy shivered violently now, but still he made no sound. Again that click but this time, to a triumphant roar of *'Wah! Ai! Wah! Ai!'*, the operator held up a bloody tooth.

Ion L. Idriess
Our Living Stone Age

Mansell Collection

Left **Cicatrization, often part of an initiation ceremony. Pepper is rubbed into wounds cut into the skin, so as to leave raised scars. It is essential that the initiate must show his manhood by making no sound, in spite of the pain; he bites on a wooden ball in his mouth**
Right **Another element of some initiation ceremonies is knocking out a tooth. A bar of wood is inserted between the teeth of the initiate and another piece is used as a hammer, the blows being directed on to a small piece of wood placed directly against the tooth**

things such as rain, wind and fire. Many of the heroic figures who gave the land its features, and from whom men and women arose, were in essence both human and animal or plant. This explains why they could appear and behave now as humans, and now in another form. Indeed, it is often difficult to know whether the mythical exploit is being performed by man or animal.

Even today, when an aborigine says he is, for example, wallaby, he means what he says. He and the wallaby species are 'one flesh' and one in the unseen world, for they and their forbears had a common origin. The man-wallaby hero of the 'creative' time, called the Dreamtime or the Dreaming, was by his very nature and actions the source of both a line of human beings and also a line or species of wallabies. Both emanated from him and ever since the human line or clan has been named wallaby, and has been linked with wallabies in ritual and belief. When the hero 'died' his body changed into a stone, a tree or some other object; it became and has remained an inexhaustible centre of life-cells or pre-existing spirits, which go forth to be born in human or wallaby form.

The land is dotted about with spirit centres for human beings and natural species of phenomena, each along the paths followed by the heroes. A woman passing unwittingly near such a centre, and realizing soon after that she has conceived, will be told by her husband that a spirit child from that centre, wallaby, bandicoot, pigeon, plum tree or whatever it is, has entered her body on 'the incarnation road'; or a man 'finds', that is, sees in a vision of the day or night, a spirit child which then follows him to his camp and to his wife.

Ritual for Nature

With regard to natural species and phenomena, the men of each local group, who are related in the father-son line, constitute a secret lodge. Their task is to cherish the myths, chants and ritual, the sacred sites and symbols connected with particular Dreamtime heroes, who were, or gave rise to, a particular animal, plant or natural object. After initiation, they are shown the sites and symbols amidst much solemnity, and taught the ritual. Thereafter, at the prescribed time of the year they must anoint the sacred relics with blood or red ochre and fat, and perform the prescribed ritual which re-enacts the heroes' travels and exploits. Then the life-cells or 'spirits' of the animal or plant or whatever it is, will go forth and increase the species in its due season. Similar sites and rituals are associated with rain, fire and the heavenly bodies, ensuring water, warmth and light for man.

Totemism

This system of mythology and ritual is known as totemism. A person's totem denotes the particular animal, plant or object to which he stands in a special relationship. Usually, he neither injures, kills nor eats it unless he is in dire distress. Usually too, he must not marry a person of the same totem, for those of the one totem are like brothers and sisters. The totem – the animal or bird or indeed a plant – by behaving in some unexpected way before his waking eyes or in a dream, warns him if danger is near, strengthens him when he is sick, and turns his mind towards absent relations if they are in trouble.

Axel Poignant

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Above all, if a man's totem involves him in ritual duties, his responsibility is great. He is a custodian of the totemic sanctuary and of the ceremonial objects and the ritual connected with it. For him and the members of the totem-lodge, the chanting and acting are the break-through of the creative Dreamtime, and the symbols (outwardly artefacts of wood, stone or other material) are sacramental signs and means of its presence. Thus, in a performance, the chanting goes on and on; the decorated actors appear; but they are no longer the men of a few hours previously. They are now the heroes of the Dreaming. Excitement rises. The chanting becomes louder and louder and the rhythm more vigorously marked, until singers rise up, draw blood from themselves, and dance a prescribed and very energetic backward slide, until at a sign all is over.

Top left **The head of a totem group after a ceremony, with blood and eagle's down on his body. Important totem rites are performed only by men; women are excluded**

Top right **The singing and dancing out of myths are partly intended to hand on the stories to the younger men. Every few moments there may be a pause while the old men explain the meaning of each part of the ritual**

Above **The singers and dancers work up to a high pitch of excitement, sometimes cutting themselves until the blood runs**

In another ritual, while the singers 'chant the journeyings' of the kangaroo ancestors through the desert country, the young men are anointed with human blood; and then when the song has brought the kangaroo clan almost to the end of the journey, the young men silently and quickly form a human pyramid. The climax is near: the dust rises up from the heavy beating of the rhythm sticks on the ground; the chanting is intensified and an actor, the headman Dreaming Kangaroo, springs on to the top of, and over, the pyramid, which represents a great sandhill that the kangaroo totemic band had to cross.

The Dreaming

In these and hundreds of similar rituals the dramatic effect is striking. Actors, singers and onlookers alike feel that the life-giving, the creative, the timeless past

The few remaining initiates would only reveal with much diffidence what they regarded as the sky being's real, secret name

is present, embracing all. It is the Dreaming, for just as in our dream life, action is not limited by space, time and apparent power, so it was and is in the time-state of the Dreaming: the Eternal-Now.

Only the most obtuse observer would not be affected by the awe with which the men of a secret cult, a totemic lodge, approach the sanctuary of the transformed relics, or of the symbols of the Dreaming, and silently, carefully and reverentially handling them, break into chant. Then and there we recognize that the aborigines' inner religious experience is deep and vital. We recognize too, that they sense an abiding and life-giving reality through their myths, rituals and symbols. To them these are a heritage treasured through generations of the initiated, and interpreted to each generation by the elders of each cult-lodge.

Sacred Chants

Many of the sacred chants may seem uninspiring to the outsider, as he reads literal translations. Verse after verse, scores of them recount monotonously and repetitively everyday, ordinary happenings. The heroic ancestor or the totemic party move here, move there, cross a sand-hill or over a plain; they gather food; they see a bird or an animal and perhaps hunt it. They see another 'Dreaming' group and avoid them; they quarrel and they fight; but they also reveal their supernormal powers, especially of moving through the air or under the ground, and of changing into other forms, of men acting as animals, and animals as men. But the very 'everydayness' and repetitiveness of the actions are not boring. It is the singers' and actors' own life writ large, for it was the powerful Dreaming heroes who so lived, and whose power is still present through myth, ritual and symbols.

Very many myths are recorded in this way, or by the aboriginal narrator telling in broken English the story of the heroic past. But how different when the recorder is thoroughly versed in the tribal language and culture! Then the brief verses come to life; their poetic expression is revealed and their grip on the people understood. Such a recorder is the linguist T. G. H. Strehlow, who lived as a child on a Mission among the Aranda of Central Australia, and for the past 30 years and more has been studying the tribe's chants, myths and rituals. Here is one example of his work. A group of honey-ant people left its old home at Ljaba to go on a long journey west to another honey-ant centre. Coming to a curve in the mountain range, and realizing that Ljaba would thereafter be hidden from their view, they looked back and saw the 'pale purple peaks which surround it' but, like a pall of smoke, a haze was enfolding the hills. They were sad because they did not expect to see their home again. As tears ran down their cheeks, they chanted:

> Enfolded by plains lies Ljaba,
> Beyond the far horizon lies Ljaba.
> Enfolded by plains lies Ljaba,
> Dimmed by the enveloping mists.

They moved on but to this day, when Northern Aranda men perform the honey-ant ritual of Ljaba, 'tears come into their eyes as their low chant trembles on into the hushed pulse of the night':

> Enfolded by plains lies Ljaba,
> Beyond the far horizon lies Ljaba.

Once again they are with the heroes of old; indeed, they *are* the heroes of old, journeying west from their totemic spirit home which is dimmed in their eyes by the enveloping mists.

The Hero in the Sky

Throughout most of the interior of Australia, the mythological heroes, singly, in pairs or in groups, in human or totemic form, journeyed back and forth over vast distances, often criss-crossing each other's tracks. When their courses were finished they sank into the ground or became stones, trees or other objects which have remained to this day as memorials and sources of life.

In Eastern Australia, however, especially along the coast and the great Darling and Murray river system, the leader and culture giver of old, often with his wife and brother or son, or with a group, arose from the earth, or just appeared, origin unknown. In some versions, he landed from the sea. He travelled southward, establishing groups and tribes; furnishing them with implements and weapons; naming natural species; arranging the totemic system and rules of marriage; and teaching the tribes rituals, especially those of initiating young men. And when his work was finished, he went up to the sky.

He was known by different names, of which Biral in the north, Baiame and Goin in New South Wales, Nurundere in the lower Murray River region and Bundjil in Victoria were the most widespread. But these names were possibly not his real names. In the early 1930s I noticed that the few remaining initiates would only reveal with much diffidence what they regarded as the sky being's real, secret name. He was, however, generally referred to as the All-Father, or 'our father', whose voice was heard in the thunder and whose symbol was the bullroarer, a flat strip of wood tied to a string which makes a roaring noise when whirled around.

Baiame could be visited by medicine-men, the 'clever men' as their fellows called them. They were men of 'high degree', who having been initiated like every other male, then passed through a vivid experience of death and rising again, which was preceded by training, fasting and discipline. This experience, according to some accounts, also included being taken to the sky where they saw the All-Father and received magical substances. These included quartz crystals, which enshrined the colours and essence of the rainbow. In some regions they were obtained by medicine-men in pools at the foot of the rainbow, a great snake who linked earth and sky, and who was a source or channel of life-giving power.

Every male, however, had to be 'made' Baiame (or Biral, Bundjil and so on) to become fully a man, for only then did he know, though dimly, his whence and whither and why. The ground where he was initiated and where the teachings and symbols of Baiame were revealed, represented Baiame's sky world. Frequently, this inner sanctuary at the end of a secret path, was on an elevated position, such as a hill-top. In some districts, too, the trees around it, and also around burial places, were engraved with patterns of waved lines or diamonds, indicating the upward road to Baiame's world, which the spirits of the dead would eventually follow.

Unfortunately, this 'sky-hero' cult predominated in Eastern Australia, which was quickly subjected to European settlement. No one observed its rituals in their original completeness; no one studied its myths and doctrines. Its religious significance was not suspected. There were no material signs of

Picturepoint London

Above **Cave-painting of spirits** ***Below*** **Wandjina spirit who created the landscape of an area and disappeared underground, after painting a picture of himself which the aborigines must keep in good repair**

Axel Poignant

The Guardians

It may seem surprising to be told that a settler, missionary, policeman or settlement manager can spend years and years amongst such an apparently primitive type of people as the Aborigines, and yet know very little of importance about them, but it is a fact, and no one knows it better than the Aborigines themselves. But such is their loyalty to their secrets, that they never drop a hint to the white 'authority' of the great world of thought, ritual and sanction of which he is unaware. They feel either that he would not understand it or that he would despise it, and so the 'past-masters', the old custodians of secret knowledge, sit in the camp, sphinx-like, watching with eagle eye the effect of white contact on the young men, and deciding how much, if any, of the knowledge of their fathers can be safely entrusted to them, and just when the imparting of the secrets can be effectively made. If the young men are too much attracted to the white man's ways, if they are inclined to despise the old ways, and above all if they show a looseness of living which denotes lack of stability in character, the old men either teach them nothing, or else traditional fake versions of some myths as a means of testing their sincerity and loyalty. But only too often, after contact with the white man, the time is never propitious for the imparting of 'truth', and so the secrets pass away with the old men.

A. P. Elkin
The Australian Aborigines

religious observances, such as altars or temples, and questions failed to elicit a belief in a deity. And by the time anthropological field research was begun in Australia, the All-Father cults of Eastern Australia had almost ceased to exist.

Dwellers in the Sky World

Although the cult of the sky-hero is limited to Eastern Australia, all over Australia the sky world is the scene of activity of transformed and translated human and animal heroes of the Dreaming. This is understandable. The aborigines' existence depends on sufficient rain to ensure growth and increase of plant and animal, and on the light and warmth of the sun. Their routine of economic and social activities is correlated with the sun's recurring seasonal variations, and with the phases of the moon. But being ignorant of science, they see heavenly bodies and phenomena as the outward appearances and actions of persons like themselves, though endowed with greater powers, who having finished their earthly courses, went 'on top'. There the rainmen noisily roll their stones which are the thunder clouds, hurl down stone axes which are thunderbolts, and pour down water. The sun, a female, lighting her fire each morning, and the moon, a male, rekindling and waving a torch, each in its cycle sinks down into a 'hole' in the horizon and then rises up again.

The cycles of the heavenly bodies and the seasons must have contributed to the aboriginal idea of time as a continuing cycle. For them the present is not just the effect of what happened in a past Dreamtime but is that Dreamtime here and now. Time does not go on and on in serial order, but returns on itself. So too, human souls do not arise one from the other in a biological line but appear and reappear from the spirit-homes. In some tribes this is the effect of the moon's success in rising again after regularly waning away into 'death'.

The Dingo Men

In aboriginal experience and thought the sky on top and the earth below are one interconnected system, one world. This indeed is how it seems during the clear nights of inland Australia. Except during rain, the aborigines rest and sleep in the open, with nothing between themselves and the sky; only space. But space is not void; the shooting stars are spirits of the recently dead moving through it. And as one lies looking upward, the Milky Way and the constellations come nearer and nearer until they and the horizon are one.

Other stars and groups of stars are subjects of myths and have their own Dreaming explanations. In the region south and east of Broome in Western Australia, two dingos 'arose' out of the ground; they became gigantic men as tall as the sky. They are the *Baga-djimbiri*. As they travelled along the coast, they named animals and plants, and made springs of water by driving sacred pointed boards into the ground; they saw, but avoided, some women in the west who were digging for locusts; they cooked wattle seed, after realizing that trying to eat it uncooked was a mistake; they lost a hitting stick which local men later saw and copied, and which is represented in the sky as the pointers to the Southern Cross; they instituted the initiation rite of circumcision with the stone knife. A large bullroarer which they whirled flew into the sky to become a black patch in the Milky Way. In their travels they also speared a large kangaroo which hopped up to be the Coal Sack beside the Southern Cross. And so the two Baga-djimbiri went on until one day they laughed at a native cat-man. He and his group speared them. Their bodies became water-snakes, and their spirits went up above; they are the Magellan clouds.

This is a typical myth. Gazing upwards and restfully as sleep steals over them, the aborigines retrace the Dreaming in the sky. They see again the deeds and experiences on earth of those early ones who, translated to the sky, hunt and work, dance and sing, or simply shine there forever.

Keeping the Wandjina Whole

Mythological systems vary in Australia. New sets of beliefs and rituals have been developed here or there, or else introduced from outside. The two most interesting new cults are in the Northern Kimberley area and in Arnhem Land.

In the former region, in the Dreaming, the ancestors of the clans arrived on the coast led by individuals called Wandjina, each with his own name. They moved in groups about this very rugged country, meeting with varied experiences, some of heroic magnitude, until each band or clan settled down in

Axel Poignant

Picturepoint London

Cave and bark paintings are important in aboriginal religion. *Above* Snakes of an aboriginal fertility cult, painted on board, from Arnhem Land *Right* Cave-painting of Barramundi fish found at Nourlangie Rock, south-east of Darwin. One of the conventions of aboriginal art is that the skeletons of animals and fish are revealed, as if they had been X-rayed

a particular part of the region. In time the Wandjina died, and he, she or they became a painting on a cave or rock shelter in the clan country. The Wandjina was usually represented lying down, bust or head only, but the mouth was (and is) always missing.

The spirit of the Wandjina went into a nearby water-place, from which it would issue to vitalize its painting. For the Wandjina were and are Dreaming. Associated with rain, the rainbow and the sky, and therefore with the cycle of the seasons, their potency is ever present. Man's duty, clan by clan, is to retouch the paintings with ochres and pipeclay each year as the wet season approaches, thus ensuring that they are whole; then the power of the Dreaming becomes operative, as in the days when the Wandjina walked on the earth. The rains will fall, vegetation will grow, animal and bird life will abound.

In addition, in order to express their specific desires and duty, the ritual headmen of each clan paint or retouch designs representing the clan's totems, particularly natural species which contribute to the tribe's food supply. This painting and retouching is part of an increase ritual which includes chanting and recounting of the myth.

The Fertility Mother

The most striking complex of myth and ritual is in the northern third of the Northern Territory. Elsewhere in Australia male figures are dominant in mythology. Women, when present, usually play subordinate roles: but not so in Arnhem Land. There the myths centre on the Great Mother who arrived from the sea and, moving from place to place, gave birth to groups of human beings in what became the countries of particular clans and tribes, each with its own language. In some myths she also gave rise either as emanations from her own person or through ritual acts performed by herself, to the life-cells or entities of natural species.

A male consort or companion or brother is sometimes mentioned, but he is well in the background. In spite of this, in the rituals and in some of the myths, a great snake plays an important part. He is the Python, the Rainbow or Lightning Snake. 'When he raises his lengthening body from the springs, billabongs and rivers to the sky, flashing and roaring, the rains and floods come, and with them the wet season and the promise of life and increase for nature and man.' For as the wet season proceeds, the Mother, the Earth, brings forth food for man.

There are local variations of this basic theme. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the Mother's role is taken by two sisters, the Djanggawul, who with their brother came to the Gulf of Carpentaria coast by canoe from Beralgu, the island of the dead. In one version of the story, they are called the Daughters of the Sun, which left its home to rise up for them and warmed their backs as they rowed and rowed on to the Place of the Sun at Port Bradshaw. And yet they were also the Daughters of the Morning Star, which guided them as they paddled their way across the sea through the night:

> On the sea's surface the light from the Morning Star shines as we move, shining on the calmness of the sea. Morning Star, sent by the dancing Spirit People; those people of the rain, calling out as they dance with outstretched arms.

And as each night drew to its end, the rays of the Star reddened and then paled away before the rising sun. The epic of the Djanggawul is a great revelation of the poetic genius of the aborigines.

Another variation is the widespread cult of the Mother Kunapipi, the ritual of which has striking parallels to elements in the classical mystery religions of Europe. Coming from across the sea, Kunapipi landed either in the lower Roper River or the Victoria River area. She was accompanied by a band of left-handed boomerang throwers who cleared a road through the timber, and also by a group of desirable young women. These were her first-born children but she gave birth to many more at various places in her travels. She also performed the now popular Kunapipi secret ritual, in which those who are to be initiated at one stage enter a crescent-shaped trench, which symbolizes Kunapipi's womb, from which they emerge ritually reborn. While still in the womb each is given a wooden bullroarer to swing. As he does so, his spirit double enters it, and remains with the bullroarer in the trench when the initiate is 'reborn'. After the bullroarer disintegrates, this spirit double goes to the place of 'shades', the

The Magician

(An aborigine named Kurkutji described how two spirits, Mundadji and Munkaninji, gave him magical powers. He came on them in a cave, where Mundadji caught him by the neck and killed him.)

Mundadji cut him (Kurkutji) open, right down the middle line, took out all of his insides and exchanged them for those of himself, which he placed in the body of Kurkutji. At the same time he put a number of sacred stones in his body. After it was all over the youngest spirit, Munkaninji, came up and restored him to life, told him that he was now a medicine-man, and showed him how to extract bones and other forms of evil magic out of men. Then he took him away up into the sky and brought him down to earth close to his own camp, where he heard the natives mourning for him, thinking that he was dead. For a long time he remained in a more or less dazed condition, but gradually he recovered and the natives knew that he had been made into a medicine-man. When he operates the spirit Munkaninji is supposed to be near at hand watching him, unseen of course by ordinary people. When taking a bone out, an operation usually conducted under the cover of darkness, Kurkutji first of all sucks very hard at the stomach of the patient and removes a certain amount of blood. Then he makes passes over the body, punches, pounds and sucks, until at last the bone comes out and is then immediately, before it can be seen by the onlookers, thrown in the direction of the spot at which Munkaninji is sitting down quietly watching. Kurkutji then tells the natives that he must go and ask Munkaninji if he will be so kind as to allow him, Kurkutji, to show the bone to them, and permission having been granted, he goes to the spot at which he has, presumably, previously deposited one, and returns with it.

B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen
The Northern Tribes of Central Australia

spirit centre, there to wait until the individual's death and burial ritual. The latter frees the flesh-soul which then joins the double and becomes one with it again, and so awaits reincarnation.

Medicine-Men and Society

In their mythology and thinking, the aborigines have not come to grips with the ultimate problem of the origin of the world and of life. The earth and sky exist. The Dreaming heroes merely change the outward shape of what is. Rivers and valleys, hills and rocks, anthills and trees, are formed by their movements and in some cases by the transformation of their own bodies. Similarly, the heroes themselves are not created. They too exist; they appear from the ground, the sea, the sky, and bring with them the pre-existent life-entities or spirits of all that will be, man or animal, bird or fish, insect or plant. Beyond that, all is mystery.

Stone Age man, living without agriculture, industry or clothes, and with only the most primitive weapons

Australia News and Information

But the aborigines have tried to come to terms with the contingencies which face all human beings: death and disease. The aged must die and wait resignedly to 'finish'. The person wounded in a fight might die: there is nothing mysterious about it; and he can be revenged. The failure of many infants and young children to survive is accepted: they will be born again. And there is nothing suspicious about ordinary aches and pains; if bad enough they are treated with folk medicine. But for serious disturbances of a person's health and for death in the prime of life, a cause is sought.

The aborigines know nothing about germs and viruses or other natural explanations of sickness and death. They seek causes which they understand, namely, men (sometimes women) or spirits. In other words, the individual is sick, or has met with a serious accident, or has died because he is the victim of black magic. Some person of evil intent may have performed a magical rite on his footprint, or burnt and stabbed a small 'image' of him, singing the prescribed chant, thus causing him to born inwardly and die. The important feature is the 'singing' and the intention or projection of the performer's desire. This is most clear in 'bone-pointing'. A pointed bone or stick, usually with a piece of wax at the throwing end, is directed and jerked towards the victim to the accompaniment of action and chant. The projection of magic power must not be undertaken lightly. In one region, the performer must take care that the moon or sun is behind him and that there is no waterhole in front of him, or else he will be struck himself.

The pointing-bone releases from itself a kind of invisible spear which implants a bone or splinter in the victim without leaving a mark on the skin. In the same way stones and other forms of 'badness' can be projected. A very frightening type of black magic is the extraction of a person's kidney or caul fat, or blood from the heart, again without leaving a mark but with fatal result.

Black magic of whatever form provides an explanation of illness and death. If a person thinks that his ailment or injury is the result of black magic, he resigns himself to death.

In this and other cases of illness caused by projection magic, a 'clever man', the medicine-man, may effect a cure by extracting from the victim the bone or other object or 'badness' which had been hurled invisibly into him. Much 'bedside manner' is employed, and sleight-of-hand is used to extract the offending object by rubbing and sucking the affected part and to show it to the sufferer. In other cases the medicine-man extracts the 'badness' and with obvious care hurls it away, or he sets out after an apparently dying person's soul and if successful in catching it, restores it. In such ways confidence in life is given to the sufferer.

In case of death, a medicine-man acts as coroner. Being clever, he can see the spirit doubles or 'shades' of people, including that of a murderer. The double may be seen near the corpse or the deceased's camp. A coroner may use other methods of inquest, which imply that the soul of the dead person remains with the body for a time; and it may answer his questions in a code which he can interpret. And as he is 'clever' and has a good idea of the jealousies, quarrels and enmities within and between groups, he puts the responsibility for a death on someone whom his fellows will accept as the culprit.

The significance of the decisions and practices of medicine-men, and of their verdicts when acting as coroners, is clear. Through them and the underlying accepted beliefs, both the individuals and the community cope psychologically and socially with the undesirable but inevitable contingencies of life.

A. P. ELKIN

FURTHER READING: See A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines* (Doubleday, 1964); and for medicine-men the same author's *Aboriginal Men of High Degree* (St. Martin, 1978). R. M. Berndt, *Kunapipi* (Cheshire, Melbourne, 1951) is a study of this fertility cult. The same author's *Djanggawul* (Routledge, London, 1952) contains a fine translation of the Djanggawul chants. For Aranda myths and symbols see T. G. H. Strehlow, *Aranda Traditions* (Johnson Reprint, 1968), Ursula McConnel, *Myths of the Mungkan* (Melbourne University Press, 1957) has good translations of North Queensland myths. See also *Australian Aboriginal Mythology* edited by L. R. Hiatt (Humanities, 1975).

Auto da Fe

'Act of faith', commonly used for the burning to death of heretics but, strictly speaking, the public ceremony in Spain and Portugal at which the Inquisition pronounced judgement on heretics, who wore the *sanbenito*, a yellow garment embroidered with the cross and symbols of the crimes committed; those condemned to death were handed over to the civil authorities for execution; the ceremony was finally abolished in Spain c 1820. See HERESY.

Autolycus

The son of Hermes and grandfather of Odysseus; one of the Argonauts. He had the gift of making anything he touched invisible and became, like his father, an accomplished thief. Trying to steal the cattle of Sisyphus he met his match, for the beasts had been marked secretly under their feet, so Sisyphus was able to identify them. Shakespeare's Autolycus, true to his namesake, was also a 'snapper up of unconsidered trifles'.

Cases in which the subconscious, telepathy or a dead soul seems to be guiding the hand of a writer or painter are among the most fascinating and most baffling problems of psychical research

AUTOMATIC ART

THE TERM 'AUTOMATIC' applied to writing, painting and drawing means the production of work not consciously directed by the person whose hand executed it. It belongs to, and cannot be sharply separated from, a whole range of phenomena commonly regarded by psychologists as manifestations of layers of the personality which are subconscious or dissociated, cut off from the conscious mind. This includes hysterical tics, loss of memory, sleep-walking, multiple personality, 'speaking in tongues', prophecy, and mediumship in trance.

It is quite impossible to generalize about the automatist's state of mind during the production of automatic writing and drawings. Some go into a deep trance and are quite oblivious of their surroundings; some are drowsy but partially aware of what is going on; some are awake but abstracted; and some are fully conscious and may read or talk normally. Some automatists are aware of the movements of the hand and of what it is writing or drawing; some are conscious but quite insensible of what is written or drawn; and some are unaware even that their hands are moving.

Leyton-Sun

'Automatic' painting by Mrs Alaric Watts, a late 19th century amateur artist who found that when sketching her pencil would begin to move by itself. When painting, she prepared colours on her palette and let her hand be 'guided' to choose them

Inspiration from the Dead

In their early stages automatic writing and drawing are generally very crude and monotonous; they may begin with incessant repetition of the same figure or letter, and they often proceed no further than the production of a few empty phrases or irregular shapes. But in a few cases the automatist comes in time to exhibit skill or knowledge beyond his ordinary capacities. Automatic writing has been known to report events forgotten or unnoticed by the waking self, to produce fragments of languages not consciously known to the writer, and to exhibit what look like flashes of telepathy. The writing not infrequently develops a 'character' of its own, professing beliefs and opinions which differ from those of the automatist and sometimes it may display a fluency in composition greatly exceeding his.

Automatic writing may not merely possess a character of its own; it is liable to claim an origin from some source other than the automatist – perhaps a supernatural being, a dead person, or even a person still living. This fact, in combination with the heightened faculties sometimes exhibited, has made automatic writing (together with some of the related phenomena mentioned earlier) an important influence in the development of certain religious movements particularly modern Spiritualism (see SPIRITUALISM).

The majority of published automatic scripts fall into one or two classes. The first class consists of moral and religious precepts, and accounts of the nature of the next world and of life in it, purportedly coming from deceased persons. The religious teachings and the accounts of the next world vary very much in detail from one automatist to another, but on the whole the general resemblances outweigh the individual differences, and the similarities of tone are often striking. As the American philosopher William James remarked, automatic scripts and utterances abound 'in a curiously vague optimistic philosophy-and-water, in which phrases about spirit, harmony, beauty, law,

development, etc., keep recurring. It seems exactly as if one author composed more than half of the trance-messages.'

Some notable productions of this type are *Spirit Teachings* (1873) by W. Stainton Moses, the 'Bible' of British Spiritualism; W. T. Stead's *After Death* (1897); Miss K. Wingfield's *Guidance from Beyond* (1923); and two books by Geraldine Cummins, *The Road to Immortality* (1932) and *Beyond Human Personality* (1935).

The second category consists of historical romances narrated from the standpoint of some deceased person possessing first hand information or enhanced knowledge of the events and periods concerned. Some of the more interesting of these writings are those of Hélène Smith (in T. Flournoy, *From India to the Planet Mars*, 1900); of Mrs J. H. Curran (in W. F. Prince, *The Case of Patience Worth*, 1927); and of Geraldine Cummins (*The Scripts of Cleophas*, 1928 and *When Nero was Dictator*, 1939). There is no doubt that these and similar writings sometimes display knowledge, dramatic flair or literary gifts in excess of those which the automatist ordinarily possesses.

Painting in the Dark

Similarly, automatic drawings and paintings may be superior to anything which the automatist can accomplish in a normal state. The development of automatic drawing is often preceded and accompanied by the development of automatic writing. For instance, the complicated symbolic drawings described in two famous early British works, W. M. Wilkinson's *Spirit Drawings* (1858) and Mrs de Morgan's *From Matter to Spirit* (1863) were preceded and subsequently interpreted by automatic writing. Automatic drawing sometimes develops into automatic painting, but automatic painting has also, and perhaps more often, been known to develop independently. A curious feature of certain instances of automatic painting has been not merely that the paintings were executed with unusual speed, but that they were sometimes allegedly produced in the dark, as in the cases of David Duguid of Glasgow in the 1870s and '80s and of Marjan Gruzewski, a Pole, during the 1920s and '30s.

A distinction can be made between cases of automatic drawing and painting, and cases of 'psychic art' in which a clairvoyant or sensitive, gifted in the use of crayon or brush, has sketched some spirit or otherworldly scene allegedly revealed to him by his supernormal faculties. Many of William Blake's pictures belong in this class. The British psychic, Matthew Manning (see MANNING) has produced a large collection of paintings and drawings, inspired by his concentration on the creative force of dead artists such as Picasso. Picasso first inspired him during 1973, and he has done other paintings and drawings in the style of such different artists as Arthur Rackham, Paul Klee, Albrecht Dürer, Aubrey Beardsley and Leonardo da Vinci. Another well-known psychic artist, the Brazilian Luiz Gasparetto, appeared on British television in 1978, and produced 21 pictures, at times working with both hands at the same time. These were in the style of Renoir, Cezanne and Picasso. Madge Gill, a London housewife, produced work during the 1960s inspired by a spirit guide.

Suicide in Baker Street

In the early days of modern Spiritualism the supernatural origin of certain automatic writings, drawings and paintings seemed to many enthusiasts to be almost self-evident.

But as the 19th century wore on, the advance of science suggested other and less startling explanations. Observations of hysterical and brain-damaged patients, and experiments on various hypnotic phenomena, made it seem conceivable that intelligent activities of which a person is unaware may go on in connection with his organism; and that such activities may exhibit knowledge and dramatic gifts which the person does not ordinarily possess. These findings made the Spiritualist interpretation of automatic writing, drawing and painting seem less compelling. They led to an increasing demand that automatic writings should be 'evidential', which means that the deceased persons who purportedly inspired them should establish their identities conclusively by giving correct information about themselves which could not possibly have been known to the automatist, consciously or unconsciously.

One of the first automatists to produce what at first appeared to be evidence of this kind was W. Stainton Moses (see his book *Spirit Identity*, published in 1878). The spirits who purported to 'control' Moses' hand during his automatic writing, or to 'communicate' through him as a medium by means of table-tilting and raps, were sometimes persons apparently unknown to him; and yet occasionally they gave information about themselves which it was subsequently possible to verify.

For example, on the evening of 21 February 1874 Stainton Moses, who was with a party of friends in Grosvenor Square, London, suddenly felt impelled to sit down and write. His hand drew a rough sketch of an object which resembled a horse fastened to a kind of truck, and then wrote some disjointed sentences which purported to come from a man who had committed suicide that morning. The man said that he had killed himself under a steam roller in Baker Street (down which Moses himself had passed in the afternoon). Subsequent inquiry revealed that a man had indeed committed suicide there that morning by throwing himself under a steam roller. On the front of the steam roller was the brass figure of a horse.

The Thompson-Gifford Case

There have been similar cases in connection with other automatists, but the difficulty with these 'drop-in communicators' is that one can hardly ever be completely certain that the information they give about themselves could not have come within the automatist's ken and have been subconsciously stored away. The great American clairvoyant and trance medium, Eileen Garrett, has said that outbursts of automatic drawing or writing have occurred to her, but she has not seen them as spirit messages. She believes that they, and her controls as well, are properties or personalities from her own unconscious mind – or, in her own words, they are 'working symbols of the subconscious'.

Drawing as well as writing has figured in a number of 'evidential' cases, and painting was central to the famous 'Thompson-Gifford' case. In 1905 a goldsmith named Frederic L. Thompson, suddenly became overwhelmed with the urge to paint pictures. He also began to suffer from hallucinations of trees and landscapes, hallucinations which served as a basis for some of his pictures. The following year he visited an exhibition of paintings by an artist named Robert Swain Gifford, who had died some while previously. He there heard a hallucinatory voice which said to him 'You see what I have done. Can you not take up and finish my work?' Thereafter Thompson's impulse to paint became even stronger, and certain scenes impressed themselves on him especially. After some months it was discovered that his paintings of these scenes closely resembled scenes which had been very well known to the deceased Robert Swain Gifford in life. The resemblances between photographs of these scenes and Thompson's paintings is so striking that a casual observer could suppose that the pictures were based on the actual scenes, or else on the photographs. Thus Thompson had perceived in the form of hallucinations, and had felt impelled to paint, scenes closely resembling places well known to Gifford, but which Thompson had apparently never visited or seen in photographs.

The Telepathy Theory

The argument that automatists in fact derive their seemingly enhanced knowledge from their own subconscious memories cannot be convincingly applied to cases such as that of the celebrated American medium, Mrs Piper (see PIPER). Mrs Piper was studied and supervised by prominent psychical researchers from about 1885 to 1915. They were in the habit of regularly bringing to sit with her persons quite unknown to her who were introduced to her under pseudonyms. Despite these precautions, Mrs Piper was time and again able, by automatic painting or speaking, to give correct information about the deceased friends and relatives of these sitters.

It can hardly be supposed that even if Mrs Piper had somehow managed to penetrate the anonymity of all these sitters, she could previously have gleaned by ordinary means, and consciously or subconsciously retained, the information necessary to ensure success in such a large number of cases. Of course if we admit the possibility of telepathy, then another explanation of Mrs Piper's successes becomes feasible; namely that she obtained the necessary information telepathically from the sitters themselves. But in some instances Mrs Piper seems definitely to have given, as if from a deceased person, information not conceivably known to any of the sitters present.

Since Mrs Piper's time there have been a number of apparently successful cases of 'proxy sittings', sittings in which one person

sits with a medium on behalf of another person, and receives 'evidential' messages the contents of which he could not himself have supplied.

Perhaps the most curious of all automatic writings are the series of interlinked scripts produced in the early years of this century by a number of automatists connected with the Society for Psychical Research. With one exception – Mrs Piper – they were not professional mediums. The principal automatists, Mrs Verrall, Mrs Coombe-Tennant ('Mrs Willett'), Miss Helen Verrall (Mrs W. H. Salter), Mrs Fleming ('Mrs Holland') and Mrs Stuart Wilson, were women of education and position, and not in any way known to be abnormal. The scripts which they produced, or at least the portions of them we are here concerned with, purported to be inspired by a group of deceased friends, two of whom, F. W. H. Myers and Edmund Gurney, had taken a prominent part in the early history of the Society for Psychical Research.

In order to provide evidence of human survival of bodily death, this group of deceased persons allegedly hit upon an ingenious scheme. They sent to their friends still on earth, using different mediums, various parts of one communication (or else a series of related communications) so that the significance of the whole could only be perceived when the separate communications were compared. And in a number of cases – the so-called 'cross-correspondences' – the ostensible communicators might be thought to have succeeded.

These cases are often extremely complex and many involve recondite allusions to classical literature. A very simple, though far from unusually impressive, example of these 'concordant automatisms', as they are called, is the following. On 16 April 1907 Mrs Fleming (in India) wrote an automatic script which contained the words 'Maurice. Morris. Mors. And with that the shadow of death fell upon him.' *Mors* is the Latin for 'death'. The following day Mrs Piper, emerging from trance, spoke the words 'Sanatos' and then 'Tanatos'. On 23 April, again when emerging from trance, she spoke the word 'Thanatos', which is the Greek for 'death'. On 29 April Mrs Verrall's hand wrote a slightly garbled quotation from Walter Savage Landor: 'Warmed both hands before the Fire of Life. It fails and I am ready to depart.' She then drew the Greek letter delta, which had always been a symbol of death to her. Next she wrote *Manibus date lilia plenis* (give lilies with full hands), a quotation from a passage in Virgil's *Aeneid*

Above* and *Right **These colourful designs were drawn automatically by Miss Emily A. Tallmadge of New York City. She believed that her drawings were inspired by spirit guides, who also conveyed the symbolism which is shown in some of her work and which, she said, had been 'handed down through aeons of time'. Miss Tallmadge, who never studied drawing or painting, produced thousands of intricate pictures, no two of which were the same, before her death in 1956 at the age of 82. By permission of Mrs Harold Hunt**

Layton-Sun

foretelling the early death of Marcellus, nephew of the Emperor Augustus. Shortly after this she wrote 'Come away, Come away' (the first four words of Shakespeare's 'Come away, come away death'), followed immediately by '*Pallida mors aequo pede pauperum, Tabernas regumque turres*, Put in *pulsat*' ('Pale death stamps impartially upon the hovels of the poor and the towers of the rich'), a quotation from Horace. Finally she wrote, 'You have got the word plainly written all along in your writing. Look back.' None of the three ladies knew anything of what the others had written or said. Mrs Piper knew no Greek. The word 'death' occurred in Mrs Holland's scripts on only three occasions; in Mrs Verrall's scripts it occurred only once.

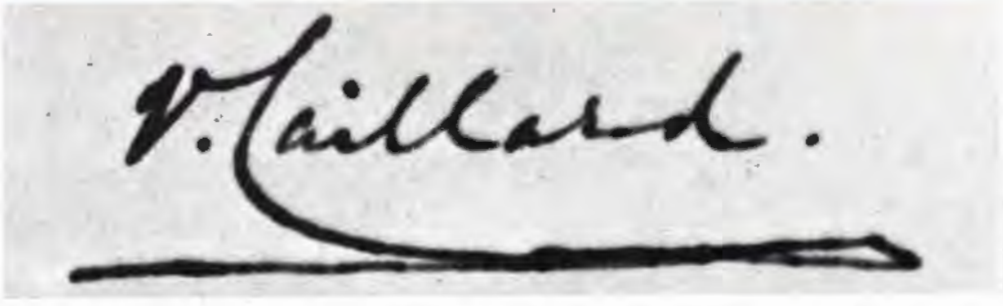
Many of the cross-correspondences are far more ingenious and remarkable. For example, the prolific Brazilian spiritist writer, Chico Xavier, found himself writing chapters of a book which made no consecutive sense at all – until his spirit guide told him to contact Dr Waldo Weira, who had been 'receiving' the missing chapters, and lived far away. Xavier had produced 130 books by the mid-70s. The title *Our Home* had sold over 150,000 copies by the end of 1980.

So it seems that the alternatives to a Spiritualist interpretation of certain automatic writings are themselves not easy to swallow; for the possibility of deliberate fraud can be canvassed in only a very small number of cases. But what makes the Spiritualist interpretation unacceptable to many researchers is the fact that the best cases are commonly found inextricably entangled with the worst. The most convincing of an automatist's 'communicators' will guaranotee the credentials of the most implausible ones; and this fact opens up problems so complex that it is difficult to see any way of approaching them.

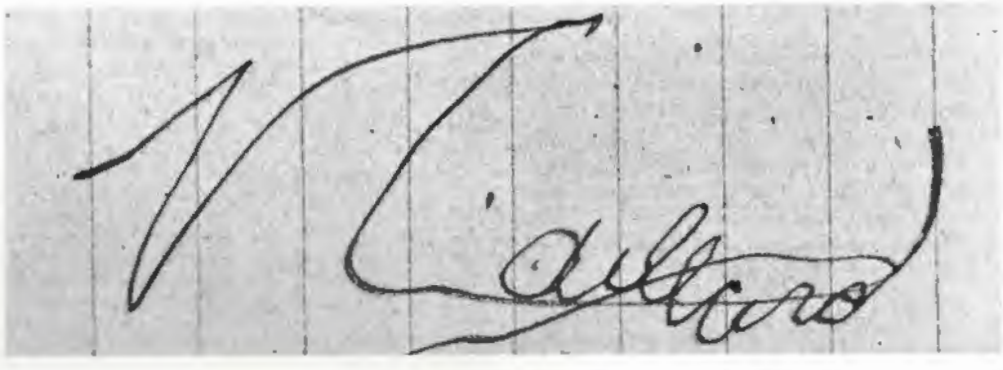
ALAN GAULD

FURTHER READING: General introductory material will be found in G. N. M. Tyrell, *The Personality of Man* (Pelican, 1947); Rosalind Heywood, *Beyond the Reach of Sense* (Dutton, 1961); W. H. Salter, *Zoar* (Ambassador, 1961). For useful summaries of important early cases, see F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (Arno Press, 1975, 2 vols). The classic work on the early history of Spiritualism, F. Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism*, has been republished as *The Mediums of the 19th Century*, edited by E. J. Dingwall (University Books, 1963). For useful background material, see Morton Prince, *The Unconscious* (Macmillan, 1914) and Bernard Hart, W. Sharp/F. Macleod, *The Wilfion Scripts* (Wilfion Books, 1980).

Grosvenor Gallery



Psychic News



Psychic News

Above **Self-portrait by Madge Gill, the London housewife who died in 1961 after producing hundreds of automatic drawings, many of which she attributed to a spirit called Myrninerest** ***Right*** **Some spirits of the dead are said to guide the hands of the living to write automatically but others are alleged to be able to write themselves. The normal signature (above) of the British industrialist Sir Vincent Caillard, and (below) his signature supposedly written by his spirit at a seance**

AUTOMATIC MUSIC

AUTOMATIC ART is not confined to painting and writing – it can also extend to musical composition. There are individuals who claim that the great composers are at work still – beyond the grave – and are using them as outlets for their continuing creativity. Best known of these individuals is a U.K. woman, Rosemary Brown. Her own rudimentary knowledge of music cannot be related to the quality of the huge volume of music which she writes down as 'dictated'. The notation comes from musicians as diverse as Beethoven, Brahms, Debussey, Liszt, Chopin, Schubert and also Stravinsky. In 1980, during the filming of an American television documentary on her work, Mrs Brown produced a piece called *Marzurka in D Flat* which she claimed was written under the direction of Chopin. Some of her pieces are fully orchestrated, and she is respected by many musicians.

Other people claim musical spirit guidance too, including the eminent British Concert pianist, John Lill. A winner of the important Tchaikovsky Piano Competition, Lill claims that he saw Beethoven nearby while he was practising at the Moscow Conservatoire. Since that time, he says that he has had several conversations with the dead composer. A piece dictated to Rosemary Brown in 1972 called the *Sonata in E Minor* was dedicated to Lill at the express wish of the great composer.

AUTOMOBILE

THE MOTOR CAR has taken upon itself many supernatural associations that were once ascribed to horse-drawn vehicles. In popular superstition, for example, American girls count 100 red convertibles (or some similarly outstanding type of car), then look for a red-headed woman and a man with a green tie. After that, the first boy spoken to will be the girl's husband.

French girls say that they count 100 cars with '21' in their license plates, for the same reason; in the United States again, girls may look for license plates on which the numbers are in sets of three, from '111', '222' and so on up to '999'.

In one of several outbreaks of supposed demonic possession in 17th century France, accusations of witchcraft and lesbianism were levelled at the Mother Superior of a convent

AUXONNE NUNS

THE DOCTRINE OF DEVILS which dominated clerical thinking in the Middle Ages was based on the belief that an immense army of demons, according to one estimate 7,405,926 strong, were engaged in a permanent attempt to corrupt the souls of men. Individual devils directed their assaults at the most vulnerable part of the human line of defence, the sexual front, and often aimed specifically at the inmates of nunneries who, denied the pleasures of love and the satisfaction of motherhood, were peculiarly susceptible to this type of attack.

During the Middle Ages, these sexual demons were kept at bay by a regime of fasting, scourging and blood-letting but the later relaxation of the old harsh disciplines allowed waves of violent hysteria to rage through many convents, often taking the form of wild blasphemies, demented ravings and abandoned dancing in the nude: symptoms which were regarded as evidence of diabolic possession.

There was a series of notorious incidents in France in the 17th century; at Aix in 1611, at Loudun in 1634, at Louviers in 1647, which required the discipline of torture and the stake before they could be brought under control.

In 1660 a similar situation came to light at Auxonne, where the presence of a young priest, Father Nouvelet, as father confessor had for some years provided a focus for the explosive forces building up in the local Ursuline convent. Eight of the girls had fallen violently in love with him and he had become the object of erotic dreams which were assumed to be of diabolic origin. This situation was not only highly dangerous from a moral standpoint but contained a sinister threat to the priest himself. There were several previous examples of the likely fate of a man caught up in the nightmare world of cloistered female celibacy. It had become almost an occupational hazard for a male confessor of nuns to be denounced as a sorcerer by his charges.

Hysteria and Possession

For those who were enclosed in monastic orders, the opportunities of satisfying sexual appetites were even more limited, and especially, perhaps for women, who could less easily take the initiative in such matters. Hence, while the records show plenty of cases of nuns, and even abbesses becoming pregnant or being involved in scandal, we also find the sexual impulse emerging in the form of hysterical manifestations . . . It has long been recognized that people can (without conscious intention) induce in themselves various forms of illness and defects of function at the behest of an unconscious or repressed need. Thus a man who has seen a particularly terrifying sight may develop blindness, and this blindness will disappear as suddenly as it came, when the underlying anxiety has been dissipated. In a similar way, people sometimes become ill in order to escape from situations which they find intolerable – and the illness is quite genuine. Such hysterical seizures usually bear a close relationship to the unconscious fantasy: in particular, women sometimes exhibit convulsive bodily movements, or become rigid, with the body arched so that the pudenda are thrust forward as in coitus . . .

G. Rattray Taylor, *Sex in History*

Expelling Devils

Understandably, Father Nouvelet tried to stave off trouble by declaring that the nuns and he himself were all victims of witchcraft. Two peasant women were therefore charged with the crime and when no evidence was offered against them, were sentenced to banishment. However, they were torn to pieces by a mob as they left the court.

The problem of the possessed nuns had still to be solved. Father Nouvelet instituted his own highly specialized system for the expulsion of devils, which involved lying in bed with the girls and conducting services during which they assumed erotic postures before the altar. This did not please the Mother Superior of the convent, Barbara Buvée, known as Sister St Colombe. She opposed the exorcisms, to the disgust of the girls who rounded on her with accusations of witchcraft and lesbianism.

Lesbianism occurs only rarely in the scandals of the Church, though there had been a suggestion of lesbian infamies at Louviers, where the nuns had paraded naked at the instigation of their confessor, Father Boullé, who was afterwards burned alive. The Mother Superior was indicted for witchcraft on 28 October 1660, and was thrown into a cell and heavily chained. Her situation was particularly hazardous since she was already out of favour with the authorities, having been severely punished with floggings and fastings for insubordination.

The Evidence

On 5 January 1661, Barbara Buvée was brought to trial before the Parlement at Dijon. Evidence was submitted to the court that she and Sister Gabrielle de Malo had indulged in 'mutual touchings'. Sister Henriette Cousin described how the Mother Superior had not only kissed her passionately but had placed her hand on her bosom. Sister Humberte Borthon had seen visions of hell in which the Mother Superior 'lay down on her like a man on a woman'. Most shocking of all had been the vision of another sister, in which the Mother Superior had been seen carrying a stolen host in one hand and an artificial phallus in the other.

As the trial went on, evidence of an even more disturbing character came to light. It seemed that Asmodeus, the devil of lust, had penetrated the convent's defences and had indulged in bouts of sexual intercourse with Sister Françoise Borthon.

At any earlier period of French history this evidence would probably have proved conclusive but, fortunately for the Mother Superior, there was now a spirit of scepticism abroad and the court was by no means satisfied. In March the Parlement instituted a further inquiry. It appeared that the physicians who had examined the nuns were equally unconvinced by the evidence and there was even a suggestion that those of the nuns who were not mentally ill were probably outright frauds. One physician, it is true, considered the state of possession to be genuine. Finally on 15 June 1662, Dr Bachet reported that 'in all their acts, whether bodily or mental, the nuns have never displayed any legitimate or convincing sign of true demoniacal possession'.

Barbara Buvée was declared innocent and released from custody but was sent to another convent, after which the disturbances at Auxonne gradually subsided.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Avalon

Paradise of Celtic legends, an island of apple trees situated in the far west, to which King Arthur was taken after being wounded to death; first mentioned in the 12th century by Geoffrey of Monmouth, who said that the fairy queen Morgan ruled there; later thought to be the area round Glastonbury.

See APPLE; ARTHUR; GLASTONBURY.

AXE

THE AXE WAS ONE of the first tools ever invented and even the earliest primitive hand axes, made of stone, were probably thought to contain dynamic power; for on impact they emitted explosive noises and sparks reminiscent of the thunder and lightning of the storm gods, and they also destroyed enemies.

The coming of the Iron Age, which brought a major agricultural revolution stemming from the development of iron implements, probably enhanced the magic power of the axe: partly because of the invincibility of the iron axe in battle and partly because of the reverence accorded to iron itself. The iron first used by man was meteoric in origin. It had come from heaven and so it was regarded as a metal of the gods (see IRON).

The Double Axe of Crete

The double-headed axe was an important symbol in the religion of ancient Crete. Double axes with thin and curving blades were an emblem of the great mother goddess, and a double axe was fixed to the top of a high pole, beneath which animals were sacrificed. Jacquetta Hawkes has suggested (in *Dawn of the Gods*) that the axe 'may have begun its evolution from a practical tool into a religious symbol as an instrument of sacrifice comparable to the cross. Its shape, the double triangle, was widely used as a sign for woman, and the shaft thrust through the central perforation afforded an effective piece of sexual imagery.'

The double axe was called the *Labrys* and the great palace of the Cretan kings at Cnossus was known as the Labyrinth, meaning 'House of the Double Axe'. Labyrinth did not come to mean maze until later, perhaps because of the intricate and maze-like construction of the palace, with its numerous rooms and corridors.

The symbol of the double axe has been found branded into skulls in cemeteries of the New Stone Age in France, and carved on the pillars of Stonehenge.

The use of the axe as an instrument of sacrifice is illustrated by the curious ceremony of the *bouphonia* at Athens, in which an ox approached the altar 'of its own accord' and ate the corn on the altar. The ox was slaughtered by a priest, who then went away into voluntary exile. The axe with which he had killed the beast was condemned as 'guilty' and thrown into the sea.

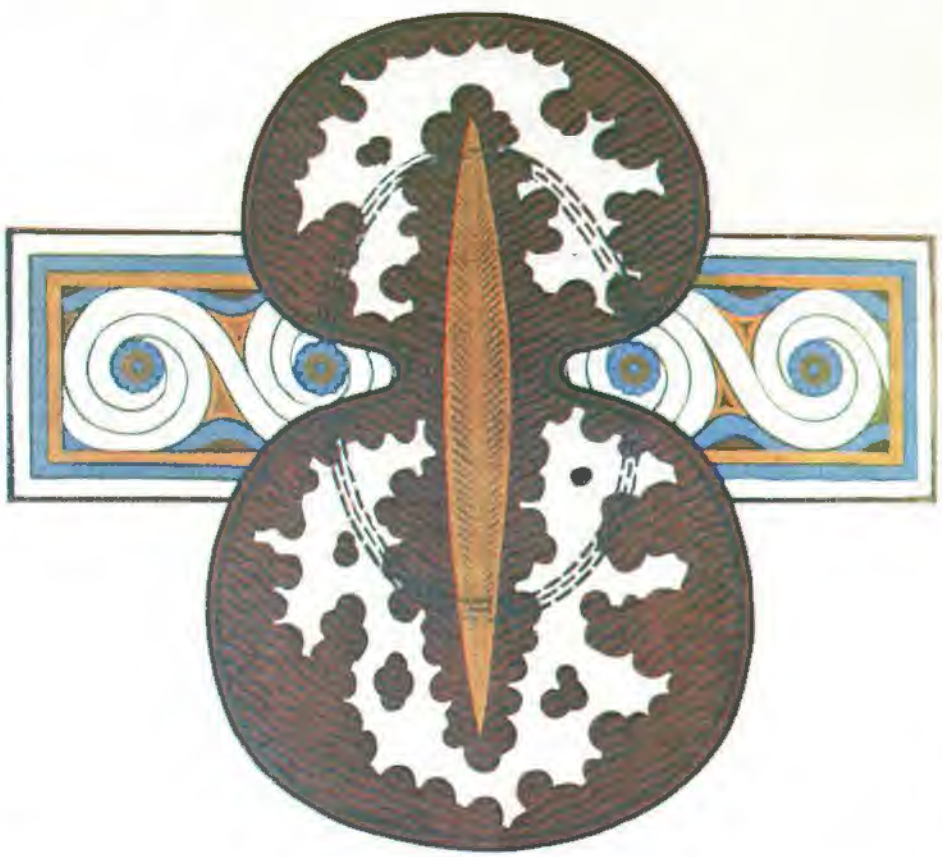
Axinomancy

Various forms of divination make use of an axe. A way to find buried treasure is to put a round agate on the red-hot edge of an axe standing upright on the ground. If the agate adheres to the axe, it is an indication that you must look elsewhere for the treasure. But if the agate falls and rolls three times in the same direction, this points to the place where the treasure is buried.

For the detection of thieves, which was a constant preoccupation of magicians before the rise of scientific criminology, an axe was left standing head downwards on the ground. The interested parties then danced in a circle around it until it tottered and fell. The direction in which the handle then pointed indicated the whereabouts of the thief.

The axe was also important in witchcraft. Witches would strike an axe into an upright post and 'milk' the handle. The result was magically to milk every cow in the neighbourhood dry.

The axe appears frequently in folk tales and folk customs. Negroes in the southern United States are reported to believe that by walking through a house carrying an axe, disaster can be brought to those within: an ingenious theory, which combines fear of iron, terror of a cutting edge and the traditional awe of the axe. They also say that to dream of an axe is a warning of danger or death, and in a current British dictionary of dreams the axe is said to mean 'danger to a friend'.



Picturepoint London

An important symbol in Cretan religion was the double-headed axe. It may have evolved from a tool into a religious symbol as a result of its use as an instrument of sacrifice

Azande beliefs demonstrate the type of thinking which lies behind belief in witchcraft, not merely in Africa but all over the world

AZANDE

THE AZANDE live in the very heart of Africa, where the borders of the Congo, Sudan and Central African Republics join. They number about 750,000, unevenly distributed over a territory of 75,000 square miles. The area has been disrupted for a century by the rapacity of the slave-traders, commercial exploitation, rough conquest, a major sleeping sickness epidemic, resettlement schemes and civil wars: contact with economically more developed nations has done little to advance the welfare of the people.

Before the days of colonial rule the Azande had expanded by conquering surrounding peoples whom they 'zandeized'. In the process a cluster of about 15 independent kingdoms was established. All the kings belonged to a dynasty which traced descent, in the male line, from an 18th century ruler named Ngura, whose numerous other noble descendants formed a ruling clan and aristocracy, the Avungara.

All Avungara possessed authority and a king delegated large parts of his power to princes, courtiers and deputies, himself remaining in the centre of his realm like a queen bee in a hive. But a ruler ruled and was not simply a figurehead; he was the wealthiest man in his state, married the most wives and was the supreme judge and military commander. The legal and military decisions of the royal poison oracle in pre-colonial days were absolute. Cases of murder and adultery, which were those most likely to cause social disruption, could only be tried by a ruler's oracle. Nowadays the powers of rulers and nobles, and therefore of their oracles, have been greatly reduced.

The Logic of Witchcraft

Evans-Pritchard's great study of Azande witchcraft, oracles and magic is more than a translation of Azande beliefs into terms which we can understand, and has much wider relevance. Probably, most people in the world today believe that one person can harm another by wishing him ill and using mystical and psychical means to do so. Evans-Pritchard showed that such beliefs, which account for phenomena which most readers will regard as imaginary, are not the product of specifically African or primitive ways of thinking. The beliefs and customs he describes are those of the Azande but his demonstration that there is a logic in witchcraft beliefs, and that they form part of a coherent system of thought and are insulated against contradictory evidence by supporting secondary beliefs, has a general application. So does his demonstration that variations in belief are related to differing structures of social relations. Subsequent studies have built on his work.

The Azande are no more illogical or prone to delusions than any other people. Given their degree of control over their environment and their degree of scientific knowledge of it, their beliefs are rational and their actions are based on commonsense. They do not appeal to their beliefs about witchcraft to explain events which are clearly the consequences of idleness, incapacity or lack of self-control. A bad workman cannot blame bad craftsmanship on the work of witches; nor can an adulterer claim that he was bewitched into committing his fault. But the Azande do believe that most misfortunes, accidents, sicknesses and deaths are caused by the malicious activity of witches or sorcerers.

André Held

The Azande believe that witchcraft is a substance in the stomach, a part of the body which is emphasized in this statuette. Exaggerated ear ornaments are also a distinctive feature

Ethics of Witchcraft

Men suffer misfortunes and then believe that they have been attacked by a witch. In theory, of course, the witch has set his evil power to work and this has caused the misfortune. The Azande believe that witchcraft is a substance in the stomach whose soul goes out at night and harms others. Anyone may have this substance in his stomach, but not everyone sets it to work. If a man is upright – of sound principle, charitable, even-tempered, tolerant, generous – he will not set witchcraft to work even if he has it in his stomach. The Azande say it remains 'cool'. But if a man is quarrelsome, spiteful, bad-tempered, greedy, over-ambitious, his witchcraft will get 'hot' and go out at night to harm those against whom he bears grudges. Thus witchcraft as a theory of causation embraces a theory of morals, for it says that witches are wicked people. Azande say: 'Jealousy comes first and witchcraft follows after.' The ethics of witchcraft thus disapprove of the common anti-social vices and approve of the virtues of many societies.

Max Gluckman
Custom and Conflict in Africa

Inside the Witch

Witches possess an inherited characteristic, identifiable as a substance in the intestines, the 'soul' of which, if heated by the malevolence of its owner can mystically 'strike' a victim and 'eat' his strength. The 'substance', like baldness, may or may not be transmitted to children. If it is, it remains latent unless activated by ill-will, and its manifestation, it is believed, may be conscious or unconscious. It increases in strength as its possessor matures, so the anger of elders is more feared than that of the young.

Anyone, except an Avungara, may be accused but no one admits to being a conscious witch, though it is believed that they abound. The evidence for the prevalence of witches is the numerous misfortunes which are attributed to them. The only certain way of checking the presence of the 'substance' is by autopsy. Such a course which, putting it mildly, is of little value to an accused, was forbidden by rulers (and modern administrators) because the absence of 'substance' in a witch found guilty by a royal oracle would have contradicted the oracle's legal certainty.

Sorcerers use bad medicines, act consciously and may work for profit. Both witches and sorcerers are evil, though superficially ordinary, persons who conceal their perverted and unnatural characteristics.

Occurrences which in other cultures are attributed to luck, chance, coincidence, fate, or the will of God, the Azande blame on witchcraft. Witchcraft explains the 'why' of events; why a particular misfortune afflicted one person rather than another at one selected moment in time. It provides a philosophical explanation of the existence of evil and of causation in terms of the ordinary rather than the extraordinary. It is normal for a hurrying man not to notice a snake slumbering in his path, for a startled snake to strike and for a bitten man to die. What is unique is the coincidence of the events happening at a certain time in a certain place, and it is this which is put down to witchcraft.

Protection against Witches

A wise man by taking heed can avoid some of the machinations of witches, though not all, as some witches are wildly malevolent and cunning beyond foreseeing. Cultivating gentle and generous behaviour, and fulfilling social and moral obligations avoids rousing the rivalry and malice of neighbours. Also, a man can forewarn himself by the use

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Left **An Azande witch-doctor in ceremonial dress is a 'living orchestra': bells made from the fruits of a palm tree hang from his waist, bundles of seeds are tied round his legs and ankles, and in each hand he holds an iron rattle. He dances himself into a state of exhaustion to put himself in touch with the spirit world *Above* Circumcision was adopted by the Azande only towards the end of the 19th century: an initiate dances under the guidance of a tribal elder *Far right* Youths singing and dancing during the circumcision ceremony**

of divination and forearm himself by the use of protective magic and medicines. Before any activity which involves unpredictable risk, such as hunting, marrying or travelling, a Zande likes to consult the oracles. If their decision is inauspicious, then he cancels or postpones his plans and congratulates himself on the foresight which enabled him to avoid the hidden mischance. If, despite a favourable forecast, misfortune nevertheless ensues, the explanation of the oracles' failure is found in secondary parts of the belief system; and the victim argues that he committed an error in divination, or that the evil was activated after the consultation, or even that his oracle itself had been a victim of powerful sorcery. The apparent failures of oracles are interpreted in terms of the belief system of which they form a part.

Minor misfortunes are shrugged off but serious ones call for counter-action. Mystical attack logically demands mystical defence.

The Oracles

Important oracles, in ascending order of reliability, are the termites, the rubbing board and the *benge* or poison oracle. Oracles cannot volunteer information but can only indicate agreement, disagreement or uncertainty in response to direct questions put to them in customary forms. For example, a man who wished to inquire if his wife was an adulteress and then to discover the name of her lover, might first consult the termites oracle. He would stick two leafy branches (of particular species) into a termites' mound and leave them overnight, after instructing the blind termites to indicate his wife's guilt or innocence by either eating or rejecting the branches. If the oracle found her guilty, then he might next place the names of her suspected lovers before his rubbing board oracle.

Juice is squeezed on the 'female' table part and the 'male' lid is jerked across it. Smooth sliding or firm sticking are the two opposite responses. Sticking at a name indicates the adulterer.

If the husband then wishes to take legal action, he must consult the poison oracle, for the rubbing board oracle being under the manual control of the operator could be falsified, whereas the poison oracle is not and therefore can stand as evidence. Wealthy and elderly men with many wives, who were most likely to be the victims of adultery, were those who had most access to oracle poison and the fowls which were its vehicles.

Witch Cats

The most feared of all these evil creatures that are classed by analogy with witchcraft is a species of wild cat called Adandara. They live in the bush and are said to have bright bodies and gleaming eyes and to utter shrill cries at night. Azande say of these cats 'It is witchcraft, they are the same as witchcraft'. The male cats have sexual relations with women who give birth to kittens and suckle them like human infants. Every one agrees that the cats exist and that it is fatal to see them. It is unlucky even to hear their cries. I heard a cat cry one night and shortly afterwards one of my servants came to my hut to borrow a magic whistle which I had bought and which was made especially for warding off the influence of these cats. He uttered a spell and blew on the whistle and went back to his hut seemingly satisfied that he had warded off danger from our home.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard
Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande

Finding the Witch

The action of witchcraft and oracles is most clearly seen in the contexts of sickness and death; for the Azande do not observe witchcraft but sickness, from which they presume witchcraft. Take the case of a victim who is struck at through the illness of a dependant, who is being 'eaten' by a witch. Physical symptoms are treated medically and, as witchcraft has a short range (it acts only among those who interact socially with each other), the patient might be removed to a distance. But these are only palliative measures and, for a complete cure, the attacking source must be sought out and restrained.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Men bewitch those they hate. A victim, therefore, seeks the witch among those who might have reason to hate him; that is among those of his acquaintance with whom he has disturbed social relations. This review causes him to assess his own social conduct. Certain categories of persons are excluded. As witchcraft substance is inherited close relations are not considered because, by implication, the accuser would be stigmatizing himself; the key social unit of property-holding kinsmen is not imperilled by internal accusations. Avungara, being descended from a stainless common ancestor are similarly excluded. And no ruler would have permitted accusations against another Avungara, and by implication the royal oracles, for that would have threatened the legal and political order. The social distance between rulers and commoners placed the former beyond the envy of their subjects and so they were immune from attack. As they also cannot bewitch each other, their deaths are explained by one of the secondary elaborations of beliefs, such as the sorcery of a rival ruler or having seen a type of sexually abnormal wild cat.

Women and minors are seldom accused by men because their strength is weaker and because there can be few occasions on which they are in social competition. Accuser and accused are usually of similar status. Witchcraft is diagnosed as individual hatred, but the direction from which it is seen as striking is determined by the accuser's interpretation of his own position in a specific social situation in real life.

The consultor places the names of suspects before the poison oracle. Benge is a type of strychnine, arduous to acquire and irksome to use; restrictions which limit casual accusations and concentrate it in the hands of senior men. A little benge is forced down the neck of a fowl in a prescribed manner. The fowl is then addressed and questioned. For example: 'If X is the witch, oracle kill the fowl'. If a clear affirmative is given, the consultor cuts off a wing of the chicken and sends it, via a chief's deputy, to the accused. The accused should then 'cool' his witchcraft by blowing a mouthful of water over the wing.

The process of selection makes it likely that the accused is someone who has had ill thoughts about the victim, and no one can be certain that he is free of witchcraft substance. But whatever his personal reaction to the charge, the accused should blow water in the customary way to signify his goodwill. If the patient recovers, that is an end to the incident; if not further consultation is required. Should the patient die, then a murder has been committed and the victim's kin must seek either justice or vengeance. Traditionally, after further consultation, the accuser took the evidence of his own oracle to court. There the ruler's oracle, which 'was in itself the greatest part of what we know as rules of evidence, judge, jury and witnesses', corroborated or rejected the plea. Compensation for adultery and murder, or legal vengeance, could only be executed by authority of the court.

Colonial governments recognized neither witchcraft nor oracular verdicts, thereby encouraging, in Zande eyes, both murder by witchcraft and adultery. Both are devious acts and hard to prove by direct evidence. The limitation of appeal to public legal procedures has led to an increase in private vengeance magic.

The Azande are not witch-ridden. They do not go about in perpetual fear of witches. Just as we normally observe the rules of hygiene and road safety but only fear sickness or road accidents when they seem imminent or occur, the Azande normally take reasonable precautions against witches and only fear them when they suffer, or have reason to anticipate, a misfortune.

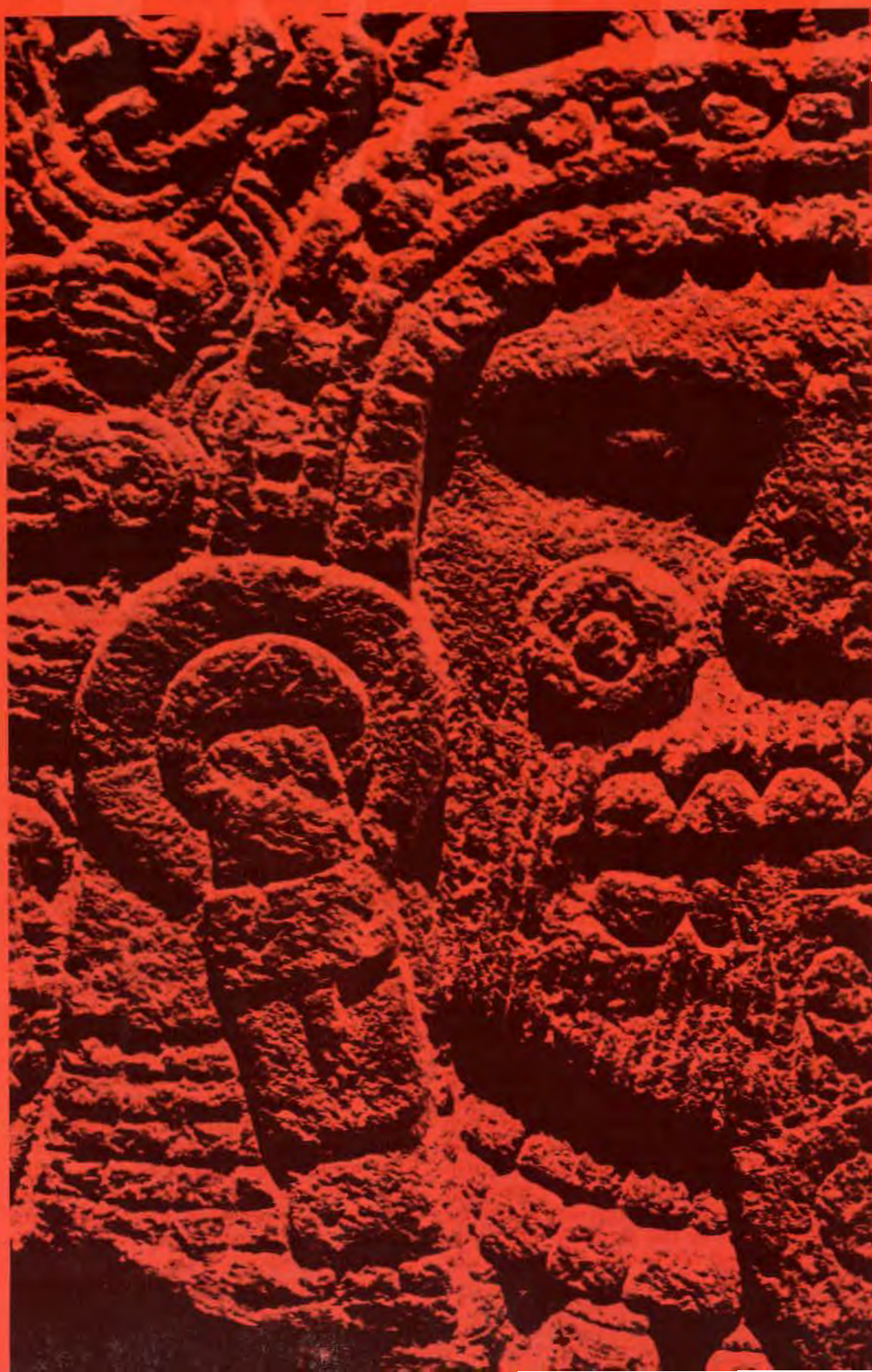
P. T. W. BAXTER

FURTHER READING: The great work on the subject is E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford University Press, 1937). See also the same author's *The Zande Trickster* (Oxford University Press, 1967), *Essays in Social Anthropology* (Free Press, 1963) and *The Position of Women in Primitive Societies* (Free Press, 1965) and also worth reading is, *Azande: History and Political Institutions* (Oxford University Press, 1971). Conrad C. Reining, *The Zande Scheme* (Northwestern University Press, 1966) describes recent developments in Zandeland. For similar beliefs in other African cultures, see J. Middleton and E. H. Winter ed., *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa* (Praeger, 1963).

AZTECS

The Blood Feast of the Sun

The gods of the Aztecs 'are expressions of images which lie deep in the structure of the human personality'; they are images of beauty and of blood



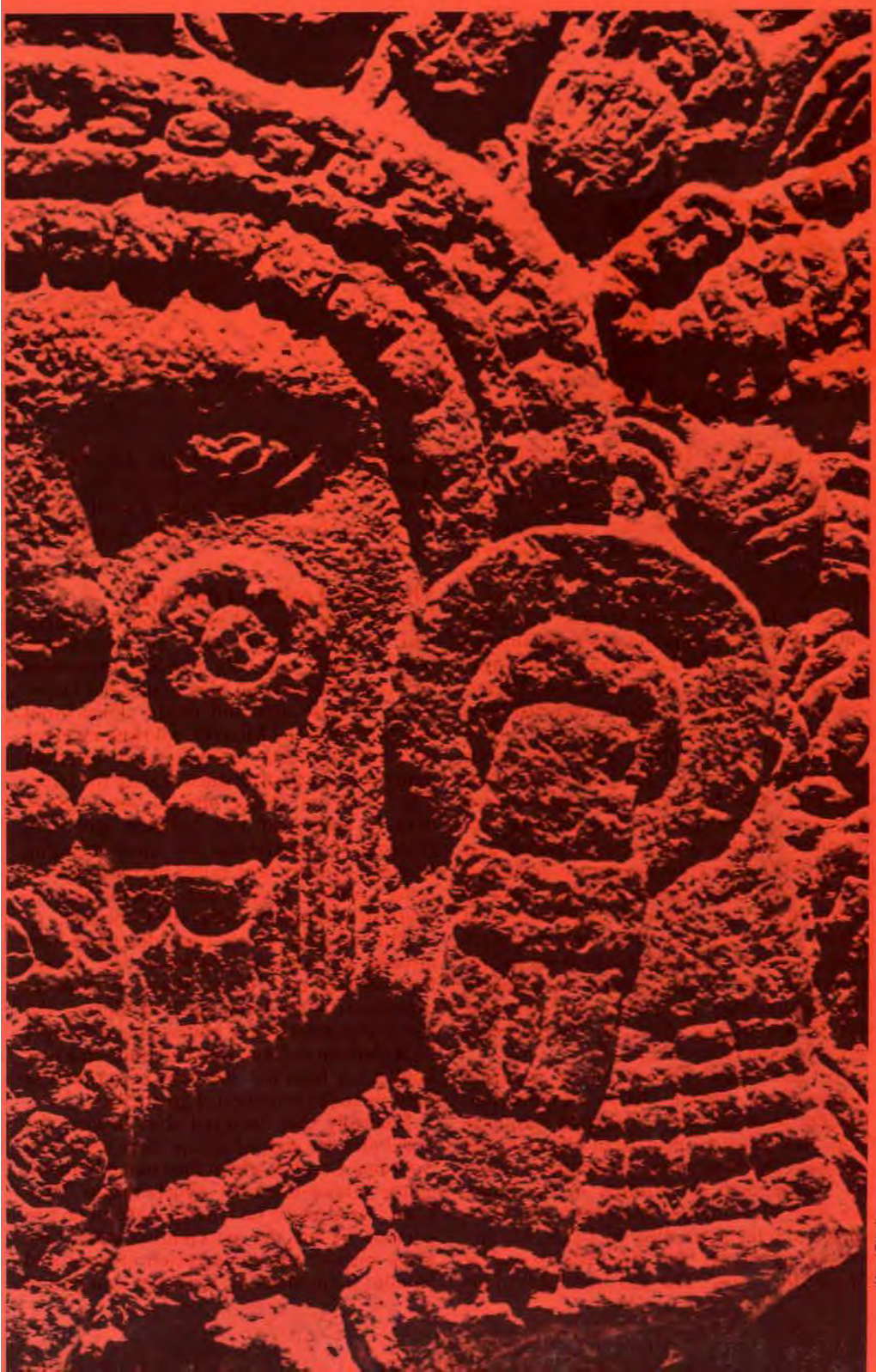
THE AZTECS were a group of American Indians speaking Nahuatl, a language of the Siouan family. They came originally from North America but may have been in Mexico for several centuries before they became a powerful tribe. The language was also spoken by the Toltecs, who controlled most of Mexico between 750 and 1000 AD.

Southern Mexico had been a civilized country long before the Aztecs built their great city state. As early as 900 BC there had been a civilization of importance on the southern curve of the Gulf of Mexico. This was a development which appeared quite suddenly among tribes of primitive farmers whose villages depended on maize cultivation. When this early Olmec civilization declined, it was succeeded in south-western Mexico by another culture, developed by the Zapotecs, who continued from the 2nd century BC until 1480 AD, when they were brought into the Aztec Empire.

On the highland plateau of Central Mexico a new civilization arose around the city of Teotihuacan (Teo-tee-wa-kan) the Place where the Gods were Made. Here great pyramid temples were built for the Sun and Moon and the Wind-and-Rain. The city was probably the home of nearly a million people. The paintings and sculpture from Teotihuacan show that much of later Aztec religion was already in existence by the first century AD. Teotihuacan had a great many contacts with surrounding Mexican tribes, and its art style is found throughout the whole area of the later Aztec Empire.

After the fall of Teotihuacan in the 6th century AD, there was a period of confusion, which ended with the development of a war-like empire based at Tula (or Tollan) the Place of Reeds, 20 miles north of what is now Mexico City. The Toltecs, who ruled from Tula, gradually controlled all civilized parts of Mexico. But soon after 970 a civil war broke out. The fighting was excessively fierce and a terrible pestilence broke out. By the end of the war the Toltec Empire was finished. Some leading Toltecs had escaped to Yucatan, far to the south, and tradition says that only 20 noble Toltec families survived on the Mexican plateau.

These Toltecs were important because



Hans Staden

they were descended from the god Quetzalcoatl (Kwet-zal-co-atl) the Precious Twin, who was the planet Venus as Morning Star. But the name can also be read as Feathered Serpent, which refers to Quetzalcoatl as the wind god whose breath rippled the leaves and grasses as if they were the green plumes of the earth serpent. Quetzalcoatl was blessed by the Creator, and his descendants alone among the Mexican nobility had the right to rule the country.

Quest for Cactus Rock

After 1000 AD the Mexican city states were constantly at war with one another. Some tribes reached a high level of civilization but others were poverty-stricken and still wore skins and hunted with bows and arrows.

Among the latter were the ancestors of the Aztecs. It was in 1168 that the leaders of this small tribe came to a ruined temple where they heard a message from a talking image of their tribal god Huitzilopochtli (Wit-zil-o-poch-tli), Blue Humming Bird on the Left, the bright sun god at the height of his path in the sky. They were sent on a pilgrimage which lasted nearly a century. They were promised that one day they would find an island in a lake with a rock on which there would be a cactus. On the cactus they would see their god in the form of a shining eagle holding a serpent in his talons. This would be the place where they were to settle and build a city from which they would rule all Mexico.

After many tribulations the Mexica, as they called themselves, were defeated and ensnared by the king of Colhuacan. The tough Aztec tribesmen were soon sent to help in a war against the surrounding tribes. They killed all the enemies they saw because they would not bring back prisoners to be sacrificed to the gods of their oppressive ruler in Colhuacan. Instead they cut off one ear from each victim, and put them in packs on their backs. When the king upbraided them as cowards who could not capture nny prisoners for his gods, they silently poured a torrent of human ears over his feet.

Tonatiuh, the sun god: originally his heaven was reserved for those who had achieved fulfilment on earth, but the Aztecs made it the abode of warriors: Aztec relief, c1500 AD

Human Sacrifice

It is difficult for us to come to a true understanding of what human sacrifice meant to the 16th century Aztec: but it may be observed that every culture possesses its own idea of what is and what is not cruel. At the height of their career the Romans shed more blood in their circuses and for amusement than even the Aztecs did before their idols. The Spaniards, so sincerely moved by the cruelty of the native priests, nevertheless massacred, burnt, mutilated and tortured with a perfectly clear conscience. We, who shudder at the tale of the bloody rites of Ancient Mexico, have seen with our own eyes and in our days civilized nations proceed systematically to the extermination of millions of human beings and to the perfection of weapons capable of annihilating in one second a hundred times more victims than the Aztecs ever sacrificed.

Human sacrifice among the Mexicans was inspired neither by cruelty nor by hatred. It was their response, and the only response that they could conceive, to the instability of a continually threatened world. Blood was necessary to save this world and the men in it: the victim was no longer an enemy who was to be killed but a messenger, arraigned in a dignity that was almost divine. All the relevant descriptions . . . convey the impression not of a dislike between the sacrificer and the victim nor of anything resembling a lust for blood but of a strange fellow feeling . . .

Jacques Soustelle
Daily Life of the Aztecs

British Museum

The king was shocked and afraid. He dismissed the Aztecs and told them they could settle freely on an islet in the Lake of Mexico. So they went to the rocky islet among the swamps. There their leader found a stream beside a rock, and on the rock was the cactus and the shining eagle of Huitzilopochtli. Their long pilgrimage was over. The year was 1325.

Horror and Cruelty

It was not until 1375 that an Aztec war chief assumed the title of Tlatoani and so asserted his independence as the 'Speaker' of the will of the Aztec people. In 1440 the fifth chief of the Aztecs came to rule Tenochtitlan (Cactus Rock) as they called Mexico City. The Mexica now dominated the whole of the Valley of Mexico, and had allied themselves with the neighbouring cities of Tezcuco and Tlacopan. Their chiefs had sought out princesses of pure Toltec descent as their brides, so that they could inherit the divine right to rule which belonged to the descendants of Quetzalcoatl. The new ruler of the Aztecs was given the title of Uetlatoani or Great Speaker for the several tribes over whom he had dominion. His name was Moctecuzoma Ilhuicamina (Moc-te-cu-zoma Il-wi-ca-mina), meaning Noble Strong Arm, He Who Aims at the Sky. During his reign the Aztec armies continued their conquests and first reached the shores of the Mexican Gulf.

In 1484 the Great Speaker Tizoc (He who offers his own Blood to the Gods) laid the foundations for the rebuilding of the ancient temple to Huitzilopochtli. He took prisoners and sacrificed some to the god. The annals say that this was the first sacrifice of human captives on a large scale. In fact it had long been felt to be necessary to kill a few captives, rarely more than 20 at even the greatest ceremonies.

Tizoc died before the temple was completed. The great building was to be finished and dedicated under his successor, the Great Speaker Ahuitzotl (Ah-wit-zotl) or Water-Opossum, a magical creature believed to be the cause of death by drowning.

Ahuitzotl was a patron of the arts, and a great lover of music. He had more wives than any other Mexican ruler, and rejoiced in flowers, beautiful birds and animals. Yet his name became a synonym of horror and cruelty. When the great temple was dedicated he took 20,000 captives and had them all sacrificed in four days by eight teams of priests. The year was 1487, only five years before Columbus sailed into the West Indies. Ahuitzotl died in 1502 when the Spanish had just settled in Cuba. His successor was Prince Strong Arm, the Noble Lord; Moctecuzoma Xocoyotzin.

By this time almost all of civilized Mexico was under Aztec domination. Traders went far afield, bringing turquoise from New Mexico, gold from Panama and precious feathers from Guatemala. Even the independent priest-kings of the Zapotecs had surrendered. But when Moctecuzoma (Montezuma) died in 1519, his city was occupied by the Spanish troops of Hernando Cortes. The god had fulfilled his promise of glory and had now deserted the Aztecs; and it was left only for the brave young Prince Falling Eagle (Cuauhtemoc) to lead a hopeless resistance against the white men.

The Two-Lord and the Fire

During their years of expansion the Aztecs had been, in their way, an enlightened people. They not only married princesses of Toltec descent but also sought out knowledge of past arts and crafts. They hired teachers from the Mixtecs, who knew a great deal about Toltec customs and included many fine artist-craftsmen among the tribe. The work of Aztec artists was almost entirely concerned with religion and it is possible to understand the inner meaning of many of their best works because captive Aztec nobles gave much information to Spanish missionaries after the Conquest.

The religion which they described was already an ancient one when the Aztecs first settled on Cactus Rock. It was an expression of the inner spirit of Mexico, the result of generations of philosophical thought by American Indians who had built up a new kind of life from the discovery of agriculture right up to the evolution of great cities.

Basically they believed that beyond the world and the gods of nature there must be a Supreme Creator, whom they named Ometecuhtli (Omey-te-cu-tli) which means Two-Lord. As Creator he was thought to be two persons in one, for no creation could take place without the co-operation of male and female. Sometimes he is shown as a pair of

C. Butland

British Museum

Far left **Mixtec sacrificial knife made from chalcedony, 14th century AD** ***Left*** **The sun had to be nourished with offerings of the 'red cactus fruit', human hearts and blood, according to Aztec belief. If this sacrifice was neglected the sun would stop moving and the human race would die from the resulting fire: to be sacrificed to the sun was considered a glorious death. Illustration from a manuscript in the Museo de America, Madrid** ***Below*** **Aztec skull, encrusted with turquoise mosaic: possibly a representation of the black Tezcatlipoca, god of 'all forms of black magic and devilry'**

very old people, and sometimes as a single being dressed half as a woman and half as a man.

It seems that Ometecuhtli was the product of thought by learned philosophers. Most of the Mexicans looked to the central fireplace in their homes as the shrine of the oldest of the gods. They called him Ueueteotl (Old Old God) and saw in him a symbol of the continuous creation of fire (equivalent to life) and the destruction of used-up things. He was a fountain of change at the heart of everything. His place in the heavens was the Pole Star, the pivot of the universe. The oldest image of this god, shown as an aged man seated with a fire-bowl balanced on his head, comes from the ruined pyramid of Cuicuilco, near Mexico City. It dates from more than 2000 years before the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

The Mexicans believed that 13 domed heavens circulated around the pivot of the universe. There was one for each of the visible planets, the sun, the moon, the clouds, the lightnings, the heat, and the rain; all contained within the dome of the fixed stars. Under the flat surface of the earth there were thought to be nine underworlds, the lowest of which were the lands of the dead.

As the central hearth-fire in the house was the pivot of earthly life, so the souls of the dead who eventually entered the fire in the lowest region of the universe ascended to a point where the Creator might send them back to earth. But this again was a philosophic idea. Most people appear to have expected a long stay in the underworld, which was after all a very happy place where people in the form of skeletons enjoyed a normal social life, presided over by the Lord and Lady of the Dead.

To the philosopher this multi-layered universe was like a single drop of water in the hand of the ineffable Creator, Ometecuhtli. But in general the Aztecs believed, much as did their Red Indian forbears, that the world was the back of a gigantic living creature.

The Black Mirror

The Aztec legends described Mother Earth as a strange monstrous being like a gigantic alligator. Long ago, the black Tezcatlipoca (Tez-caat-li-po-ca) or Smoking Mirror, so named from his symbol, a black obsidian mirror which appeared to smoke when the magicians looked into it to descry the future, had drawn the earth up from the great waters of creation. As he put his foot into the waters, the monstrous alligator snapped at it but the foot was not torn off until the terrible god of magic and youthful energy had drawn the earth monster from the waters and made her back into the dry land. Since then the god has had but a single foot and his lonely footprint in the heavens is the constellation of the great Bear. According to another story, his foot was cut off when the doors of the underworld closed on his leg.

Tezcatlipoca was lord of the four directions on earth, East, South, West and North. He was also lord of the Nature gods when these other gods were developed.

A popular legend told of a cave in the universe where the Mother of the Gods gave birth to starry offspring. They were the 400 northerners, the 400 southerners, and the planets. Then she became pregnant again. The children were upset and planned to destroy the new child. Only the golden moon girl wanted to protect her mother.

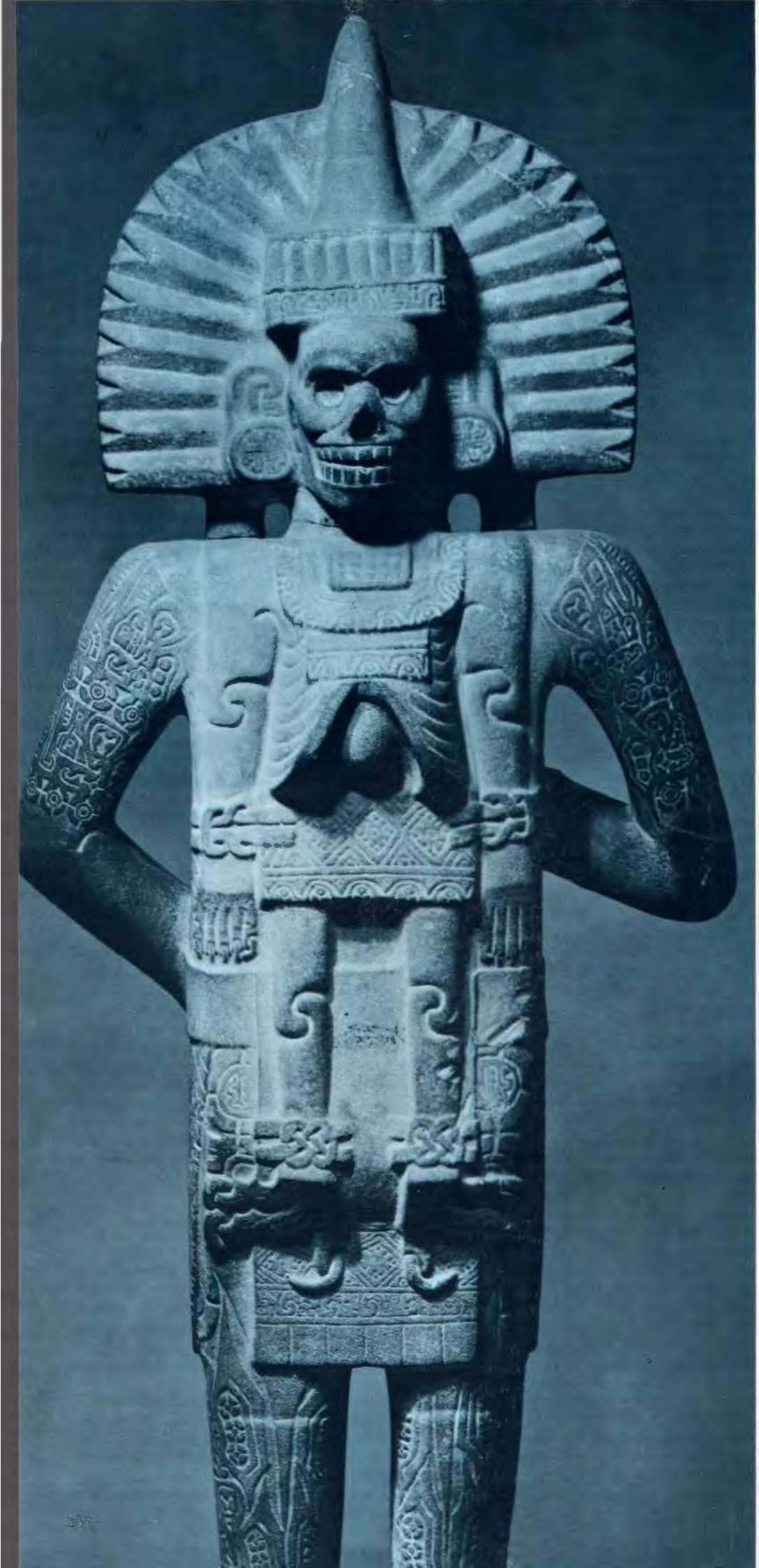
When the new child was born, it proved to be a monstrous sun-before-the-earthly-sun. It was Tezcatlipoca armed as a warrior. He destroyed all the stars. Then, seeing his sister among the slain, he realized that her head might yet live, so he cut it off and cast her into the sky, where the head with golden bells on her cheeks can still be seen as the Moon. Each day when the sun emerges in our real world, we see that the stars of night are slain, but they are reborn as the moon comes among them, grows pregnant and then meets her ever-recurring end.

The Fourth Sun

Once the earth was established, the gods created men. Three times the human race became too self-opinionated and had to be destroyed, at about 2000-year intervals. They were destroyed by the fire, the waters, the winds. Now the present human race, who were made by the gods from the beloved maize plant which is still the sustenance of mankind, are being tested.

The end of this universe will come from a terrible earthquake. Whether after this fourth sun, the earth will be re-populated by another better race remains to be experienced in the future.

On each re-creation a new sun was made



Left The god Quetzalcoatl was the Lord of Life and Death, and god of the wind: only his descendants, the Toltecs, had the right to rule over the Aztecs *Facing page* Three times the human race destroyed itself through pride, according to Aztec tradition, and a new sun was made by the gods for each re-creation. A representation of the sun is at the centre of this calendar stone, c1500 AD. Almost 12 feet wide, it was found in Mexico City

The Brooklyn Museum

by the gods. At the beginning of the present creation they made a great offering place at Teotihuacan. There they met for four days, waiting for one of them to cast himself into the fire. At last from a distance there came a miserably ill and poverty-stricken god. He had no reason to continue as he was, so he voluntarily cast himself into the fire. Blazing, and blue with magic power, he flew into the heavens as Tonatiuh (Ton-a-tiyu) the Lord of Fate, the sun. The sun appeared every day, and each day had its separate fate for people, so the count of time which the fortune tellers used was based simply on the sun.

The sun was very brave, the source of all brightness and glory. He had his special heaven for brave warriors who had been sacrificed and for women who had died in childbirth. These warriors, dressed as eagles, lifted the sun to the top of the sky every morning; the women lowered him down each evening into the underworld.

The Nourishment of Blood

All the time the sun was thirsting from the great heat. So he had to be nourished and cooled by offerings of the red cactus-fruit (which meant human hearts and blood). Only a few need be sacrificed to keep the sun moving in the sky, but the sacrifice must never be neglected or the human race would die from the fire caused by a motionless sun.

Of all deaths the most glorious was to be sacrificed to the sun. The sun himself sacrificed his victims in the sky as he rose and the stars died. On earth the stars were represented by the spotted quails, which were killed every morning at sunrise. Sometimes people saw at this lucky time the little brother of the sun, Piltzintecuhtli (the Divine Princeling), the planet Mercury.

Sometimes the Great Star was visible, in the form of the morning star lifting up the sun. This was a symbol of Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air and of human civilization. Sometimes in the evening they saw the Great Star as the evening star, pushing the sun down into the red sunset. This was the symbol of the evil twin, Xolotl, who was an animal creature, leading people into sin and working black witchcraft against humanity and against the other gods.

The other planets were also gods; and so were the major stars. The groups of stars through which the sun passed were the houses of 13 gods. These were very like our

Beheading the Maize-Woman

The maize rites of the Aztecs:
As soon as the plant began to germinate, they went to the fields 'to find the god of the maize' – a shoot which they brought back to the house and offered food, exactly as they would to a god. In the evening, it was brought to the temple of Chicomecoatl, goddess of sustenance, where a group of young girls were gathered . . . The girls were of three different ages, very young, adolescent, and grown up – symbolizing, no doubt, the stages in the life of the maize . . . three months later, when the crop was ripe, a girl representing the goddess of the new maize, Xilonen, was beheaded; this sacrifice opened the door to using the new maize profanely, for food, which seems to suggest that it was in the nature of an offering of the first-fruits. Sixty days later, at the conclusion of the harvest, there was another sacrifice. A woman representing the goddess Toci, 'our Mother' (the goddess of the maize gathered for using) was beheaded and immediately afterwards skinned. One priest arrayed himself in the skin, while a piece taken from the thigh was carried to the Temple of Cinteotl, god of the maize, where another participant made himself a mask out of it. For several weeks, this person was looked upon as a woman in childbirth – for what this rite probably meant was that Toci, once dead, was reborn in her son, the dried maize, the grain that would provide the winter's food.

Mircea Eliade
Patterns in Comparative Religion

12 signs of the zodiac, though the Mexicans knew that there were 13 moons in any one year, but that one of them was always incomplete. Thus there was always a relationship between earthly events and the shapes in the sky where the gods had their palaces.

Earth was the domain of the powerful and demonic Tezcatlipoca, who had four forms. He was the yellow Tezcatlipoca as god of the sunrise in the East, of bravery and growing crops. The blue Tezcatlipoca was the fertility spirit and the patron spirit of the Aztec nation. In the West he became the red Tezcatlipoca, who died by being skinned alive so that maize could be given to mankind. In this form he was Xipe Totec, Our Lord the Flayed One. In the North he was the black Tezcatlipoca in the land where the sun never shone, where he became the ruler of all forms of black magic and devilry.

C. Reyes Valerio

The Maize God

This religion suited warriors and the astronomer-priests but it had little meaning for the farmers who produced the food on which the people lived. Most Mexicans were small farmers, feeding their own families and growing cotton for their own clothing. They needed to propitiate the rain and wind, the spirits of vegetation and the kindly Earth Mother. Probably their religion was more ancient than that of the warriors to which it became wedded in the complex Aztec theological system. Their traditions were fully integrated into the other system, however, and certainly by Aztec times the whole complex of beliefs presented a kind of unity. It was no more logical than an exciting dream; and that may well be because the gods of Mexico were really those factors within the depths of the human personality from which our dreams normally spring. Always, without any very conscious thinking about it the Aztecs linked the world of nature with the sequence of human life, and projected their thoughts onto a very human pantheon of deities, regarded with all the affection and fear with which humans regard their neighbours, particularly of the non-human kind.

The almost passive centre of the farmers' religion was the maize plant. It had many spirits, but was basically the maize god Cinteotl (Sin-tay-otl). This divine power within the basic foodstuff of ancient America was nurtured by Mother Earth. He loved pretty Chalchihuitlicue, the flirtatious mistress of the rain god Tlaloc, and was cleansed by the winds sent by Quetzalcoatl.

When the first green ears appeared on the maize, the girls took some and danced with their hair thrown loose and with naked breasts, for the maize was now the pretty young goddess Xilonen. Later, when the maize was to be harvested, bundles of ears were made up to represent the maize spirit, and were carried ceremonially to be enshrined in the granaries for next year's sowing. Then some of the grain was chewed by the girls so that it would ferment in water and so become a delightful kind of light beer. Great magic was worked by the priests so that each year the maize could be protected from its natural foes. Maize was life, and the rhythm of planting and reaping conditioned the whole concept of the meaning of the passage of time in Mexico. At the harvest festival the girls wore necklaces and headbands of brightly dyed popcorn, as if it were the most delightful of flowers, and indeed so it was.

The Magical Year

The Aztec year was not divided into weeks and months but into periods of 20 days each. Eighteen of these periods made up the calendar year, which included five 'nothing' days to bring the count correctly up to 365 days. There was an extraordinary system of working out a magical year, which consisted of periods of 260 (20 x 13) days, within which all the normal variations of fate took place. When the magical and civil

The priestly way was a strangely savage life of deep learning; a kind of ferocious holiness

The Essence of Fear

Coatlicue (Co-at-lee-kway), the 'Lady of the Serpent Skirt', and mother of Huitzilopochtli, was thought of as powerful and awesome, so the task of the sculptors was to transmute those qualities into stone. The great statue in Mexico, whose head is twin serpents, whose necklace human hands and hearts, whose feet and hands are viciously armed with claws and whose skirt is a mat of writhing snakes, brings into a dynamic concentrate the manifold horrors of the universe. A smaller carving, simpler and less detailed, produces this same effect, implying that the very essence of fear was honoured and worshipped.

G. C. Vaillant
The Aztecs of Mexico

calendars came into line, which occurred every 52 years, there was a great festival at which new fire was ceremonially made and distributed, and every temple was renovated as if creation had begun again.

The Aztec day began at sunset. There was no calculation of hours, because in all normal life it was quite sufficient to observe sunset and sunrise. There was a period when the sun was at its highest point in the day, and at night there was a mid-point of night. This was probably determined by noting the stars which appeared in the zenith when the sun set, and waiting till they were setting on the western horizon. This procedure would be sufficiently accurate for the emperor and the priests to make the midnight observation of the starry sky.

There were nine gods who were known as the Lords of the Night. Each in turn held sway over the hours of darkness for a night. There were 13 Lords of the Day, and each of them held sway in turn over a day. Thus, in the magical calendar of 260 days, which consisted of the combinations of 13 numerals with the 20 days of each period, there was this other rhythm of ruling deities of each period. Each 13-day period had a protecting pair of deities, and similarly the 20-day periods had each a guardian spirit. Within this fantastic almanac there were 13 magical birds flying with their individual influences on fate, but fortunately for the sanity of the fortune tellers the birds ran exactly parallel to the numeral series.

A Ferocious Holiness

The priests in Aztec Mexico were the most important example of social mobility. Warriors sometimes, by feats of great bravery, might move across barriers and become members of the tribal nobility; but priests might come from any social class. Young candidates were sent by their parents to a training school. They were questioned very carefully by the priests, because such a life meant much hardship and demanded a great love of learning. The tests were the same for children of the meanest serf and for those of the greatest noble.

Once boys entered the temple service they went through much hardship, sleeping on the ground and being woken up for night ceremonies. They became inured to spending long hours in chanting poetic history and theology, and learning the knowledge of the stars and of medicine. They must frequently perform acts of personal offering by cutting their ears and tongues to give blood to the gods.

The black-painted junior priest ate little and simply and never cut or cleaned his hair or nails, but acquired knowledge and wisdom as he progressed. He might become an interpreter of magical symbols or an artist or, if he were good enough, he might become a sacrificing priest who graduated from taking out the hearts of quails to performing a similar operation on the hearts of living men.

The priestly way was a strangely savage life of deep learning; a kind of ferocious holiness. At the head of the priestly organization were the High Priest of the Rains and the High Priest of the Winds. Their titles show that whatever deities they were actually serving, their office was to preserve the life and fertility of the land.

Omens and the Four Rains

There were also religious women, who were usually employed in making vestments of beautiful weaving and featherwork for the servants of the gods. They were expected to carry out the cleaning of the temples and also to cleanse humans from disease, just as the goddess Tlazolteotl could do with her magic. They had a considerable knowledge of herbal medicine, which was aided by the national passion for taking a sauna bath as a form of spiritual purification. It is clear from the painted books that some of the priestesses were elevated to the rank of Sacrificers, who took human hearts for the gods.

Another group of religious servants were those whom the gods seized upon and caused to utter prophecy. These were people who saw visions, or heard the voices of the spirits of the dead or the voices of the gods. Many of them would have been trance mediums of great power in our day. But any person who showed an abnormal mental condition was thought to have received a divine inspiration. A passage in a manuscript called the Codex Laud, at Oxford, compares the highly trained astronomer-priest to the inspired prophet. One has command of the moving stars but the other has command of the breath of life.

There were a vast number of omens to be observed, which were recorded soon after the Spanish Conquest of Mexico by Father Sahagun. But almost any event might be treated as an omen by people who thought that life was determined for them by outside powers. There were a great number of things to be learned from the flight and behaviour of birds. The cries of an owl at night were considered to be ominous and the movements of lizards and serpents were also of interest. The rattlesnake conveyed messages from the earth goddess.

There was also a good deal of interest in the weather and the directions of the winds, which was natural in an agricultural community. The peasant was always aware of the reliance of the community on the powers of nature. But it was realized that these powers might well be capricious. The water goddess, for instance, was described as a brilliant and capricious young woman. She controlled whirlpools as well as the quiet fertilizing rivers. At one of her ceremonies her priests had the right to beat and take clothing and jewellery from any unfortunate passer-by.

In the home of this goddess, where she lived with her husband Tlaloc, the god of all sources of water, there was continuous warm drizzle and brilliant rainbows shone over the masses of flowers and sweet smelling shrubs. They had four servants, the Tlaloques or Little Rains. These were cloud spirits who reclined in the rolling vapours, carrying different kinds of rain. One came from the East and brought the golden spring rains to fertilize the soil; another from the South brought warm blue rains to make all things fruitful; a third from the West brought the red rains which made the plants sleep as winter came; lastly the northern rain was dangerous, for he came from the realm where the sun never shone and so his rains brought destruction and were mostly hailstones.

The Tempting of Quetzalcoatl

But what would the rain do without the winds? The Aztecs said of Quetzalcoatl that as god of the wind he came to sweep the way for the rains and in this form he was a breath of life which made the vegetation of the earth sway like a serpent covered with green feathers. When his time of power was well advanced, the naughty water goddess decided to tempt him. She stripped naked and sat before him with her beautiful vulva opened, like the earth waiting for fertility from the breath of

C. Reyes-Valerio

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Left **Coatlicue, the Aztec goddess of the earth, mother of life, death and the gods** ***Right*** **The Aztec water goddess tempting Quetzalcoatl, like the earth waiting for fertility from the 'breath of life', the wind which brought the refreshing rains**

life which was the wind. The somewhat grotesque painting of this in the Codex Laud also combines the idea that the goddess of whirlpools tempted the wind and so caused the great breakers on the sea in hurricanes.

But Quetzalcoatl was also the morning star and his path, first rising in the heavens and then sinking, was also linked with the fertility myth. And it was the key of the story of the divine King Quetzalcoatl.

The divine king brought blessings to the earth, improved agriculture, made the arts flourish and covered palaces with jewels and precious feather decorations. He taught a philosophy of gentleness and austere asceticism, offering blood from his ears and limbs daily to the gods in the outer heaven. But when the revolutions of time brought the stars into a pattern which meant that his planet was setting, he was tempted. The goddess approached him and visited his court, bringing with her many magicians and enchanters, among whom was the black Tezcatlipoca. At a festival she offered the god-king a bowl of alcoholic pulque prepared from the agave heart. Then as he became intoxicated she offered him magic mushrooms and induced a trance-like ecstasy in which he abandoned his austerity and raped her.

On awakening, appalled at his break with the ascetic code of priestly behaviour, Quetzalcoatl left Mexico. He gave over his power to Tezcatlipoca and sailed into the sun, where his heart burnt up and ascended again as the morning star. Already there was a confusion between the god and the first king of the Toltecs, who was dedicated to the worship of Quetzalcoatl. The truth is that the concept of the god Quetzalcoatl was very ancient indeed but because it concerned an earthly king it was a myth which could be applied to any period in the past.

In the Quetzalcoatl myth, an account of wind and rain and the passing seasons, which promoted fertility and then passed on, had expanded into a universal parable of the human condition. We all follow this path of development, which ends in loss of energy and eventual death. We also share something of all primitive religion within our own personalities, for the gods of old Mexico, and of many other places, are expressions of images which lie deep in the structure of the human personality.

These natural gods, in spite of their raw and often horrific appearance in Mexican art, inspired great devotion and trust in the populace. The religion was not just a formality but a reality which people lived. It was a re-presentation of the natural universe of which they were part. The sense that mankind was an active part of the life of the whole universe was the driving force behind their artistic output. Whether it was a great image for a temple, or a little pot for use in the home, the work was an expression of the link between the universe and the ordinary human being.

End of the Aztec World

In the Aztec version of the final collapse of Mexico we find that not all the population fought the Spaniards. They moved only when led by the great nobles to whom they owed allegiance. Mostly they suffered passively, and acted bravely when called upon by the brilliantly feathered war leaders. Though decimated by the smallpox which killed the noble Cuitlahuac, who succeeded Moctecuzoma, the Aztecs continued to give battle with their Stone Age weapons against Spaniards clad in steel and armed with cannon. The young Cuauhtemoc was their last elected war leader. But finally he surrendered as the last buildings in the city of Cactus Rock were torn down. Later, when he made a brave effort to achieve freedom he was captured and strangled. But Cuauhtemoc became the national hero of modern Mexico; and his mother tongue, the ancient Nahuatl language, has become the language of poetry in Mexico.

(See also QUETZALCOATL.)

C. A. BURLAND

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The Old Testament attacks Baal worship but the religion of Israel was influenced by the great fertility god, the upholder of order against chaos

BAAL

THE WEST SEMITIC word *baal* was applied to men and gods to mean ownership. It usually referred to the ownership of a place, so that there were many local gods who were Baals of their own areas, but it could also refer to ownership of a sphere of interest, as in the case of Baal Berith, 'the god of the covenant', who presided over agreements, or even to a god's ownership of those who worshipped him.

From c 3000 BC probably, and certainly by about 2500 BC, the title was applied specifically to a god of the Amorites, a powerful group of Semitic nomads. He was the god of storm and the rain of winter, first found in Palestine and southern Syria, named Adad in Mesopotamian texts and Hadad in texts from Ras Shamra in northern Syria.

The texts found at Ras Shamra since 1929 contain versions, dating from about 1400 BC, of a large number of myths involving Baal, who was the most active deity in the fertility cult of the Canaanites, the early inhabitants of Syria and Palestine. This cult was particularly concerned with the winter rainfall, which was vital to the fruitfulness of flocks and fields. The texts make it possible to reconstruct the Canaanite cult of Baal. They sometimes confirm and sometimes correct the sporadic references in the Old Testament, which are generally criticisms of the abuses and grosser aspects of this Nature cult.

The Defeat of the Waters

The Baal myth of Ras Shamra describes in dramatic scenes how Baal (or Hadad) champions the gods and the order they sustain against the insults and threatened tyranny of the unruly waters, 'Prince Sea, even River the Ruler'. After a critical struggle Baal overcomes, slays and disperses the waters, distributing them so that they are a good servant rather than a bad master. This conflict is described as a fight for kingship, and the victor Baal is acclaimed as 'king', his kingdom being 'an everlasting kingdom'.

This was the Canaanite declaration of faith in the beneficence of Nature. It was an assurance to the worshippers and a relief to their fears and anxieties, which were expressed and purged by the drama vividly related in the texts. It was also an opportunity to influence the course of Nature by the speaking of words and possibly by an accompanying ritual in which Baal's victory was acted out and so magically recreated each year.

The main motifs of this Baal myth are reproduced in the Old Testament, notably in the psalms which assert or imply the kingship of God and in passages in the Prophets on the theme of the kingship of God and the maintenance of his order against the menace of Chaos in Nature and history. This was the theme of the Hebrew Feast of Tabernacles on the eve of the New Year, adapted from the chief seasonal festival in Canaan when the Israelites settled in Palestine, between c1225 and 1050 BC.

This same theme is the substance of hope for the future in apocalyptic literature (see APOCALYPSE). The imagery of the old Canaanite theme of the kingship of the god and his order in Nature, won in conflict with the unruly waters and certain sea-monsters, such as *ltn* (the Biblical Leviathan), 'the Primeval Serpent, the Tortuous One with Seven Heads' is re-echoed from the Canaanite New Year ceremony.

The Warrior Storm

This is perhaps most familiar to general readers in the vision of the emergence of the reign of God and his saints after the succession of bestial powers, which significantly came up 'from the sea' (in Daniel, chapter 7) and the culmination of the conflict against the bestial powers of evil in the establishment of the kingdom of God and his new creation, when 'sea shall be no more', in Revelation (chapter 21).

Baal's character as the storm god is expressed in a sculptured stele (an upright slab or pillar) found near his temple on the acropolis of Ras Shamra and dating probably from c 2100 BC. He is depicted as a helmeted warrior in a short kilt, striding into action, brandishing a mace (the weapon with which he overcomes Sea-and-River) and a spear, which is grounded, point downwards. The butt of the shaft of the spear is depicted as branching, and this has been taken to simulate forked lightning, which is regularly noted as the weapon of Baal-Hadad (or Mesopotamian Adad) in texts and in sculpture. However, a seal design from Ras Shamra suggests that the branching spear may depict a cedar tree, expressing Baal's significance as a god of vegetation, particularly associated with the cedars which are the most splendid trees of the mountains of his Canaanite home.

Michael Halford

Baal, the cloud-mounter, god of the winter rains. Statuette of the 15th–14th centuries BC, now in the Louvre

The god's power of fertility is expressed by his association with the bull as his cult animal; he wears the bull's horns on his helmet. His stock epithet in the Baal myth is 'He who mounts the Clouds' (compare Yahweh, God of Israel, 'who makes the clouds his chariot'). The wavy lines shown beneath the feet of the god possibly represent the mountain tops and clouds (and again Yahweh 'treads the high places of the earth'). But they may also represent the waters below, over which he has triumphed.

The essential features of the warrior Baal are reproduced in the figurines of a young active god in bronze, sometimes inlaid in gold and silver, from various sites in Syria and Palestine. They indicate the widespread cult of the god, *the* Baal, the Master or Lord in the Nature worship of Canaan.

Baal, Zeus and Hercules

Baal was one of the Semitic gods whose cult penetrated to Egypt, possibly carried there by the many Semites deported from

Syria and Palestine in the various campaigns of the Pharaohs between the 15th and 13th centuries BC. The Pharaoh Rameses II (d 1224 BC) himself affected Syrian cults.

The most notable cult centre of Baal in Egypt was Baal Saphon near Pelusium, east of the Nile Delta. The name reflects the proper home of the god, Mount Saphon, the modern Jebel al-Aqra, the Mount Kasios of the Greek geographers, a kind of Canaanite Olympus on the northern horizon of Ras Shamra.

Greek authors knew of a temple of Zeus Kasios near Pelusium and an inscription mentioning Zeus Kasios has been found there. The assimilation of Baal, the storm god who 'mounts the clouds', with the supreme sky god Zeus was natural, and equally natural was the worship, on this featureless but dangerous coast, of the god who established his kingship after winning victory over the unruly waters.

As the god of Tyre, whose worship Jezebel is depicted in the Old Testament as striving so hard to promote in Israel, Baal was assimilated in the Greek period (after the 4th century BC) to Hercules, the active young god who also sustained order against Chaos, which was depicted, like one of Baal's adversaries in the struggle, as a many-headed monster of the watery wastes, the Hydra. (See HERCULES.)

A similar theme was known between 2000 and 1000 BC in Asia Minor, as shown by mythological texts from the ancient Hittite capital of Hattusas (modern Boghazkoi) where the god who successfully overcomes the sea-monster is Teshub, the weather god, who is represented in Hittite sculpture with the familiar features of the bronze figurines of Baal from Syria and Palestine.

The preoccupation with the fertility cult in Syria tended to give Baal-Hadad a predominance even beyond his proper sphere in Nature. It is significant that several of the kings of Damascus were called Ben-Hadad ('the son of Hadad'), which may have been a throne-name of them all. It is a fair inference that the name reflects the conception of the king as the earthly guarantee of the kingship of Baal and the stability of order against the menace of Chaos. It was probably a trend to monotheism (the worship of one god) in the conception of Baal of the Heavens (Baal-Shamayim) in Syria between about 1000 and 500 BC which made Baal such a dangerous rival to Yahweh in Israel and prompted Elijah to his famous challenge to the prophets of Baal on Carmel (I Kings, chapter 18).

The Dying and Rising God

The bulk of the remainder of the Baal mythology in the Ras Shamra texts concerns Baal's conflict with Mot, the power of drought, sterility and death, where Baal is a dying and rising god, the spirit of vegetation which wilts and dies in summer but revives again with the winter rain. These texts relate to the seasonal ritual of the Syrian peasants.

After Baal has succumbed to Mot, the latter suffers the vengeance of Baal's sister, 'the Virgin Anat', who cuts him with a blade, winnows him with a shovel, parches him with fire, grinds him with a millstone and scatters him in a field. Here the rites of desacralization (freeing from holiness) of the first or last sheaves of the grain-harvest underlie the myth; such a rite, in fact, as is described in the Bible in Leviticus (chapter 2) which refers to the offering of the first sheaf, 'green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears'.

Baal eventually revives, and there is the glad prospect of the skies raining oil and the wadis running with honey (again an aspect of the establishment of the order of God in the Old Testament). Finally, "after seven years' Baal engages Mot in a great struggle and overcomes him. This may be related to the Hebrew custom of allowing the land to lie fallow in the seventh year, thus simulating a famine, when the sinister power of sterility was allowed to exhaust itself, in the hope that the next six years would be normal.

Certain features of the myth suggest other rites mentioned in the Old Testament. On the death of Baal, 'the Virgin Anat' ranges the mountains searching for him with loud lamentation, suggesting the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon ('Hadad the Thunderer') in Zechariah (chapter 12) and the weeping for Tammuz by the women of Jerusalem (Ezekiel, chapter 8).

From the references in the Old Testament to repeated lapses to the cult of Baal and his female associates, we can infer that in settling in Palestine the Hebrews tended to assimilate the Baal cult without adapting it. Official authority was alarmed and the early calendar in Exodus (chapter 23) and the Ritual Code, also in Exodus (chapter 34), insisted that the festivals at the three great seasonal crises of the year be observed 'before Yahweh God of Israel', that is at the central sanctuary of the confederacy of Israel. Owing to this basic experience, Israel was able to transform the theme of the Canaanite New Year festival, the kingship of God won and sustained against the menace of Chaos, and develop it as a fundamental element of her own faith. The popular tendency, however, was to assimilate the grosser elements of Baal worship in the Canaanite fertility cult. To this the prophets are eloquent witnesses, especially Hosea, who inveighed against this materialistic Nature cult and the licentious rites of imitative magic with which it was associated. (See ASTARTE; SYRIA AND PALESTINE.)

JOHN GRAY

According to the 16th century demonologist John Wier, Baal had three heads: of a cat, a man and a toad. He spoke with a raucous voice and taught his followers guile, cunning and the ability to become invisible. From Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

FURTHER READING: J. C. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Attic Press, 1978); C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature* (Argonaut); J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (Humanities, 1967) and *The Canaanites* (Praeger, 1964).

Michael Holford

Babylonia

The area north of the head of the Persian Gulf, watered by the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, the centre of early civilization and religious development in the Middle East; in early times divided into two parts, the southern called Sumer and the northern Accad or Akkad.

See MESOPOTAMIA.

Hamlyn Verlag

Bacchus

A name of Dionysus, the Greek god of fertility, wine and ecstatic frenzy, whose worshippers were called Bacchae or Bacchantes; Bacchanalia was the Latin name for the mysteries celebrated in the god's honour, originally confined to women, banned at Rome in 186 BC but reintroduced during the 1st century AD.

See DIONYSUS.

Bahais look forward to the religious and political unity of all mankind. Since the following story is historical, Persia, the old name for Iran, is used throughout.

BAHAIS

ON 23 MAY 1844 Mirza Ali Mohammed, son of a Persian merchant and a resident of Shiraz in the south-west of Persia, declared himself to be a manifestation of God on earth. He assumed the title *Bab* (Arabic for 'Gate') and predicted that an even greater manifestation was soon to appear, one who would usher in the dawn of a new age. Assisted by 18 'Letters of the Living' or disciples, the Bab hoped to pave the way for the coming of this divine messenger, who was to be known as Baha-Ullah, or Splendour of God.

Baha-Ullah duly appeared, after the death of the Bab, and the Bahai faith, as it is known today, takes its name from him. Bahais are those who accept Baha-Ullah as the manifestation of God for our age.

Today, over 100 years later, the Bahai faith has emerged from the obscurity of its beginnings in Persia and is now represented in countries and communities all over the world. The principal writings of the faith have been translated into over 400 languages and dialects, evidence of the appeal that it has exerted. The United States is one of the main strongholds of Bahaism.

Execution of the Bab

Belief in a 'Second Coming', when God will return to earth to establish peace and justice, is a theme common to many of the world's religions. In Islam the members of the Shi-ite sect expect the coming of the Mahdi ('guided one'), or Qaim ('he who shall arise'). The Shia believe that Mohammed, at his death, handed on his authority to Ali, his son-in-law, who in turn passed it on to 12 successive Imams or leaders, who were to act as spiritual messengers and guides. The last of the Imams disappeared mysteriously in 874 AD but his followers believed that they kept in contact with him through a succession of intermediaries or Babs.

When the Bab made his declaration in 1844, many flocked to his cause, calling themselves *Babis*. His descent from the Prophet Mohammed on both his father's and his mother's side, gave impetus to the Bab's cause.

But the Babis were not without enemies, for both the Persian government and the orthodox Moslem divines viewed the ever-increasing popularity of the new movement as a threat to their existence. The 'revolutionaries' were hounded from city to city, suffering many indignities. In Persia people were incited to whip the Babis and to humiliate their women. In one case a Babi was pierced through the nose and dragged by a cord through the streets.

The movement continued to flourish in spite of adverse conditions. The Bab spent the greater part of this period of his life being moved from one prison to another, and many of his followers were brutally massacred. But even from his prison cell at Mah-Ku the Bab continued to exert considerable influence. Mah-Ku lies in a remote part of north-west Persia, inhabited by the Kurds, a Moslem community of the Sunni sect, extremely hostile to the Shia. After a few months internment in this region the authorities were forced to remove the Bab, for he had so gained the confidence of the people and his warden that the term 'imprisonment' no longer applied. It was here that the Bab compiled the work known as the *Bayan*, in which he constantly refers to the 'greater one to come', to 'him whom God would make manifest'.

The Persian authorities hoped to stem the spread of the Babi religion by taking the Bab, then aged 30, to Tabriz for execution by shooting. The extraordinary events which took place on the day of the Bab's execution, 9 July 1850, are described by a contemporary follower of the Bab named Nabil in his book *The Dawnbreakers*. The city was in a state of turmoil. The Governor had washed his hands of the affair and it was left to the brother of the chief minister of the Shah to carry out the orders.

As the hour approached, a dishevelled youth threw himself at the master's feet and asked to be allowed to accompany him in death. His wish was granted and both the Bab and the youth were suspended by ropes from a nail in the prison yard, in such a way that the head of the youth rested on the breast of the master. When the clouds of smoke from the 750 rifles had cleared, only the youth was to be seen, alive and unharmed.

It was then discovered that the shots had only severed the ropes holding the prisoners, and the Bab was later found in his room, in conversation with his secretary. The officer in charge of the firing squad refused to repeat the order, when the Bab declared himself ready. A subordinate finally gave the order. Nabil says that as soon as the fatal shots had been fired, an exceptionally severe gale of dust shrouded the city in darkness for the rest of the day.

Fifty years later the Bab's remains were enshrined on Mount Carmel, near Haifa in Israel, and the site has become a revered centre of the Bahai faith.

Abdul-Baha, the chief missionary of Bahaism: released from prison in 1908, he travelled the world at the age of 70 to convert people to the new religion

Bahai Centre

The Bahai movement is based on the belief in Baha-Ullah as the messenger of God for our time. The Bahais believe that God himself is unknowable but that he communicates with men through manifestations, who reveal themselves from time to time on earth. These manifestations, who all derive from the same God, are the founders of the great religions of the world. When Baha-Ullah, in 1863, declared himself to be 'him whom God should make manifest', he not only fulfilled the prediction of the Bab, that a greater one was to come, but also claimed to be the most recent in a line of manifestations which has included Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster and Buddha. Each fulfilled God's purposes for *his* age but Jesus said, 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth' (John, chapter 16). Bahais believe that with the revelation of Baha-Ullah, that time has come.

The Coming of Baha-Ullah

Mirza Hussain Ali, who declared himself to be the expected Baha-Ullah, was born in 1817 at Tehran. He was of noble descent and spent much of his early life in ministerial circles. He became an ardent follower of the Babi doctrine. After the Bab's execution, the movement split into two groups, those who followed Mirza Yahya, officially nominated by the Bab as his successor, and those who gathered themselves around Mirza Hussain Ali. The first group rapidly dwindled in numbers and eventually disappeared.

The Babi faith suffered a serious setback in 1853 when two Babis attempted unsuccessfully to assassinate the Shah of Persia. There resulted a purge of the Babis, in which all the leaders were killed except the future Baha-Ullah who was thrown into prison. It was here that he became aware of his mission on earth.

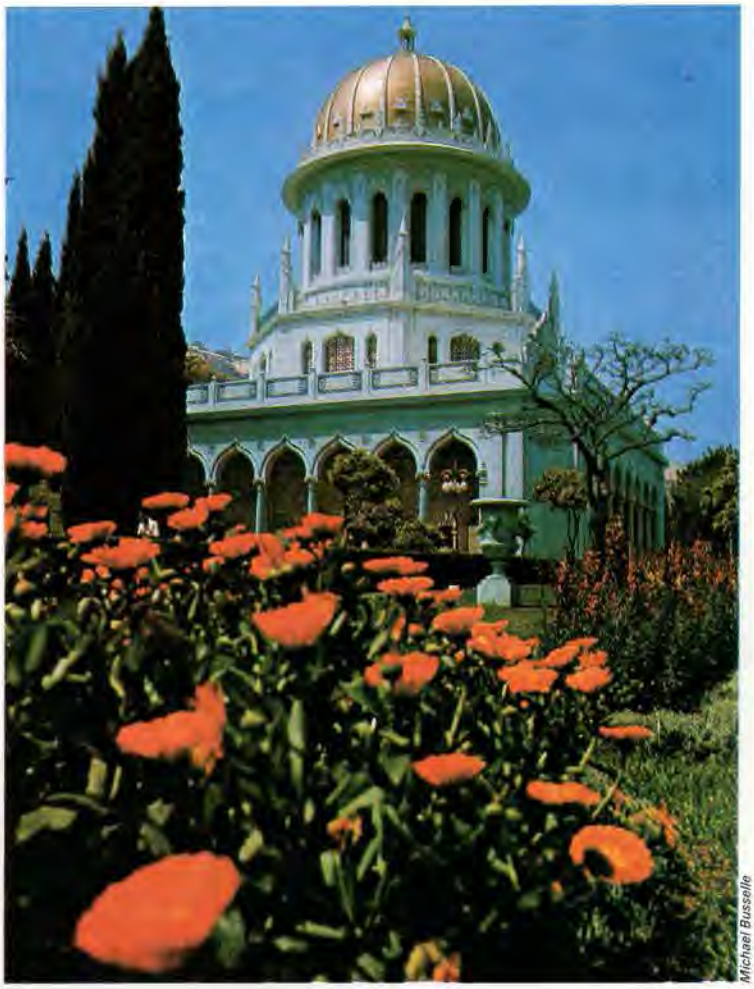
On release he was exiled with his family to Baghdad, outside Persian jurisdiction, and from there he continued to attract followers to the Babi faith. The Turkish authorities viewed the dissemination of his ideas with distaste and when in 1863 he retired for twelve days to a garden outside Baghdad and proclaimed himself to be the 'Promised One', as foretold by the Bab, they intervened and sent him first to Constantinople and then to Adrianople.

The scene of the declaration, which was the birth-moment of the Bahai faith proper, has been named the 'Garden of Ridvan'. The twelve days are celebrated annually by Bahais and known as the Ridvan Festival, from 21 April to 2 May.

The hostile pressures on Baha-Ullah, increased by the bitter dissension between himself and his half-brother, Mirza Yahya, culminated in several attempts by Mirza Yahya to murder Baha-Ullah. As a result Mirza Yahya and his associates were banished to Famagusta in Cyprus and Baha-Ullah was sent to the prison city of Acre where he died on 29 May 1892.

In spite of these confinements and harassments the Bahai faith began to make

Bahai Centre


Michael Busselle

Left **Abdul-Baha, shown with his retinue at the base of the Eiffel Tower, Paris, about 1911**
Right **In this building on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel, the remains of the Bab are enshrined. The site is the centre of the Bahai faith**

widespread gains, even during the lifetime of Baha-Ullah. Baha-Ullah committed many of his teachings to so-called 'Tablets' which were passed on to his followers. While in Adrianople, he wrote to many of the political and religious leaders of the world, appealing to them to pay heed to his doctrines and in Acre he completed the *Kitabi Aqdas* (The Most Holy Book) which contains the essence of his beliefs.

The Oneness of Mankind

Bahais believe that there is one God for all mankind and therefore only one true religion. Although in the past God has manifested himself in different forms to suit the requirements of different ages, he nevertheless expounded through all his manifestations the same basic truths. Differences between religious movements have arisen, the Bahais claim, because the original teachings were misinterpreted. The coming of Baha-Ullah is a sign that man has reached a stage of maturity in which social and religious unity may at last be realized. Bahais devote themselves to this end.

Baha-Ullah himself, in his writings, gave much attention to the reorganization of social administration but the task of putting his ideas into practice was left to Abdul-Baha (1844–1921), eldest son of Baha-Ullah and 'Exemplar' and 'Interpreter' of his teachings.

To achieve world unity, Baha-Ullah advocated certain goals at which Bahais were to aim. They must seek to abolish all forms of prejudice with regard to colour, race, class and creed, thus breaking down national boundaries in preparation for an administrative body which will unite the whole world. A commonwealth of the world will be established. Men will be thought of no longer in terms of black or white, Christian or Buddhist, Russian or American, but as members of a united world community.

In this new order men and women will have equal status and all children will be given equal opportunities of education. An international system of currency will be introduced and an auxiliary world language (either newly invented or an already existing language) will be taught in schools.

In the meantime, by exemplary personal conduct Bahais can show the world the virtues of belief in their cause. They are forbidden to gamble and are discouraged from taking intoxicants and drugs

An Absence of Ritual

One outstanding feature of the Bahai faith is its lack of clergy and religious ritual. Bahais meet in a spirit of prayer more akin to a social gathering than a religious ceremony. Small Bahai communities all over the world, by grouping themselves into local and national 'spiritual assemblies', prepare themselves for the 'World Order of Baha-Ullah', the day when mankind shall become one. A spiritual assembly is formed wherever nine or more Bahais over the age of 21 congregate. These are subordinate to the supreme administrative body, the 'Universal House of Justice' which came into existence in 1963, 100 years after Baha-Ullah's declaration of his mission. Its seat is at Mount Carmel, at the shrine of the Bab while the shrine of Baha-Ullah lies to the North, a few miles outside Acre.

When Abdul-Baha was released from prison in 1908, Bahai communities had already been established in Chicago and nearby Kenosha. He travelled extensively in western Europe and the United States, although nearly 70 years old.

By 1980, the organization had about 17,000 local councils, known as Local Spiritual Assemblies. The Universal House of Justice (the international governing body of the Bahais) meets in Israel, in Haifa. In the United States, the administrative headquarters, the National Spiritual Assembly, is located in Wilmatte, Illinois. Bahàis feel that better technology in communications makes international unity easier to achieve.

M. SAUNDERS

FURTHER READING: John Ferraby's *All Things Made New* (Bahai, 1960) is a comprehensive guide to Bahaism. See also J. E. Esslemont, *Baha-Ullah and the New Era* (Bahai, 4th rev. edition, 1980) and R. Meyer, *Bahai: Follower of the Light* (Bahai, 1979).

To bring the beautiful Balder back from the dead, all created things wept, as they can still be seen to do after frost when the air grows warm; but the attempt failed

BALDER

BALDER IS ONE of the most puzzling figures in the company of the Scandinavian gods. He is said to be a son of the great god Odin and is one of the inhabitants of Asgard, the home of Odin and his attendant gods, but we know little about him except for his death. There is no reliable evidence for a cult of Balder, no ancient cult centres associated with his name, no recognizable figures or carvings of him, no symbols associated with his worship. His name occurs in an early German spell (the Second Merseburg Charm) and the name *Baldaeg* is found in genealogies of the early Anglo-Saxon kings as the son of Woden (Odin), but these do not prove that Balder was ever known as a god to the heathen Germans.

Balder has received so much attention because of the moving story of his death, told by Snorri Sturluson, a great master of Icelandic prose, in his *Prose Edda* of the 13th century. A little earlier, in the 12th century, another learned but less gifted writer, Saxo Grammaticus of Denmark, wrote a long Latin history of the kings of his country, and included in the early books many stories of the old gods, among them the death of Balder.

According to Saxo, Balder was a human hero, although it is implied that he was the son of a god, and he was assisted by supernatural women who gave him a special food, prepared from snakes, which made him impervious to wounds. Balder wished to marry the maiden Nanna but he had a rival in another warrior called Hoder (Hotherus) who also went to the supernatural women for help. Following their advice, Hoder travelled to a land of cold and darkness and won a magic sword from its guardian, Mimingus. This was the only weapon by which Balder could be slain. There were battles between Balder and Hoder, in some of which the gods themselves took part, but in the end Hoder won the maiden Nanna, and wounded Balder with the magic sword. Balder was carried into battle on a litter, and died three days later from his wound. Odin went to great lengths to avenge Balder, disguising himself as a smith in order to woo a princess called Rind, by whom he had a son who grew up to slay Hoder.

The Fatal Mistletoe

In the better-known version of the story as told by Snorri, Balder was the son of Odin and Frigg, and was of radiant beauty, a youth beloved by all. He had ominous dreams threatening some calamity, and in order to protect her son Frigg asked all living creatures and inanimate things to give her a solemn oath never to do Balder harm. After this the gods found it amusing to fling darts and weapons at Balder, knowing that he could not be hurt. But the god Loki desired Balder's death. He discovered that Frigg had neglected to take an oath from a tiny plant which grows on the oak, the mistletoe, since it seemed too young to matter. From it Loki made a dart which he gave to the blind god Hoder, suggesting that he fling it at Balder in sport. The dart pierced Balder, and he fell dead.

There was bitter grief among the gods, and they held a great funeral for Balder and burned him on his ship, together with Nanna his wife who had died of grief.

Odin sent a messenger on his own horse Sleipnir down the dark and perilous road to the kingdom of death and over the bridge of the dead, to bring Balder back. Hel, goddess of the realm bearing her name, agreed to release Balder on one condition: all things, on earth, living or dead, must weep him out of Hel. At Frigg's summons all created things, men and beasts, plants, stones and metals, did indeed weep, as they may be seen to do after frost when the air grows warm. But there was one old giantess in a cave, called Thokk, who churlishly refused to join in the mourning for Balder. She was really Loki in disguise, thwarting the desire of the gods, so that Balder remained in Hel.

The Lament for Balder

Other references to Balder in the Norse poems are brief but there are allusions to Odin's attempts to save Balder from death, to Loki's part in his slaying and to the funeral of Balder attended by all the gods, a representation of which is said to have been carved in an Icelandic hall of the 10th century. Certain elements of the tale, then, go back into the pre-Christian period but it is very difficult to decide whether Snorri or Saxo is the more reliable.

Statue by H. E. Freund in Copenhagen of the god Loki, who caused the death of Balder. Balder was mortally wounded by a dart made of mistletoe, which had been overlooked when all created things swore never to harm Balder

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

There are two separate ideas which appear to be deeply rooted in pre-Christian thought. First, Balder was either a son or a follower of the god Odin who, although god of the dead, was unable to save him from death. Odin's failure to do so brought about his own doom and that of all the gods at Ragnarok (the destruction of the gods). There are implications that a hostile power in the underworld struck at the gods through Balder, represented in Snorri's tale by the malice of Loki.

Secondly, the radiant god struck down by death and mourned by all creation strongly suggests a memory of a fertility cult, in which men lamented the death of their god. Their lament brought him back from the dead, so that spring returned to the world. The dying Balder carried round in a litter recalls similar traditions concerning Freyr and Balder's name, like that of Freyr, is thought by some to mean 'Lord' (see FREYR). Some have seen in this a likeness to the custom of weeping for the dead god in the Near East (see APHRODITE; DYING GOD) although it should be noted that there is no resurrection or rebirth in the story of Balder.

The connection with mistletoe, of which Frazer made so much in *The Golden Bough*, is itself problematical. There are traditions of a sword called Mistletoe elsewhere in Norse tradition, and there is also a very famous sword called Mimming, the same name as that of the sword's guardian in Saxo's story. Mistletoe does not grow in Iceland or western Norway, and this may be a foreign element imported into the North, replacing an earlier motif of a sword and a tree in the otherworld. The motif of a plant, not included in a general pact, which is used to slay a hero is one found in folktales of the Near East, and in a medieval Jewish legend about the cross of Christ.

Balder and Christ

The Balder story has reached us in relatively late literary sources, and the possibility of outside literary influences has to be borne in mind. There are certain striking resemblances in Snorri's version to legends about the crucifixion of Christ, and some scholars have suspected strong Christian influences. The Anglo-Saxon poem on Christ's cross, known as *The Dream of the Rood*, has a reference to all creation weeping for its king when Christ was on the cross. There are also folklore elements in the story, in the idea that the moisture of a thaw is Nature weeping for Balder, and in references by Snorri to a flower called Balder's brow and by Saxo to a burial mound in Denmark where Balder was said to be buried, out of which a stream flowed when men tried to break into it.

Indeed the whole subject of Balder is an extremely complex one but while scholars argue as to the earliest form of the tale of his death, there is no doubt that elements of the story at least formed an important part of the pagan lore of early Scandinavia.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

Mansell collection

A 16th century German woodcut showing a victim accused of witchcraft being tortured to extort a confession. One judge is questioning the prisoner, while another directs a scribe to write down the confession

In ten years at Bamberg some 600 people were executed as witches in a persecution instigated by the 'Witch Bishop', Gottfried von Dornheim

BAMBERG WITCHES

DOMINATING THE MINDS of witch-hunters in the time of the great persecutions in Europe was the belief that it was the duty of Christians to rescue heretics and pagans from the hideous fate which awaited them after death. Long before, St Augustine had stated his conviction that 'not only every pagan but that every Jew, heretic and schismatic will go to the eternal fire . . . unless before the end of his life he be reconciled and restored to the Catholic Church'. The outcome of this attitude was the imposition of a veritable hell on earth upon thousands of human beings with the object of saving them from the terrors of hell in the next world.

The horrors of the persecution were probably worse in Germany than in any other part of Europe. Witch trials began there in the mid-15th century but the bulk of the trials date from after 1570, at the time of the Counter Reformation, when the Roman Catholic Church began to roll back the tide of Protestantism and every form of heresy, including witchcraft, came under fierce attack.

Between 1609 and 1622 over 300 people were executed for witchcraft in the state of Bamberg alone. The accused were tortured without regard for age or sex. In 1614 a woman of 74 died undergoing torments 'up to the third grade'.

The Witch Bishop

From 1623 to 1632 the state of Bamberg, later described as 'the shrine of horror' was ruled by a fanatical witch-hater, the Prince-Bishop Gottfried von Dornheim. Known as 'the Witch Bishop', he established an extremely efficient witch-hunting organization, under a subordinate, Suffragan Bishop

Friedrich Förner, assisted by a council of lawyers. Special prisons were set up, the most notorious being the *Hexenhaus* or Witches House, where the captives were interrogated and tortured. A minimum of 600 people were burnt as witches during this decade.

It was considered essential that the accused should confess to witchcraft, and no efforts were spared to obtain confessions. The means employed included roasting on an iron chair, rending the flesh with red-hot pincers, crushing the legs, dislocating the shoulders and applying thumbscrews.

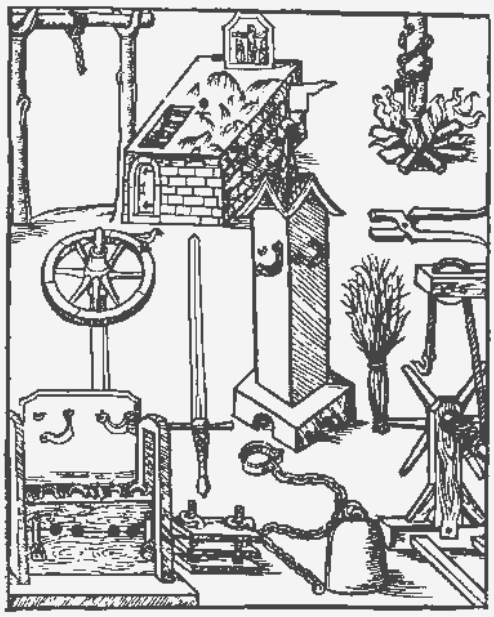
It was exceedingly dangerous to express the slightest doubt as to the guilt of anyone who was accused or to question the methods of the courts for, as soon became obvious, the authurities were determined that, once arrested, no prisoner should escape the stake. This the liberal-minded Dr Haan, Vice-Chancellor of Bamberg, who had shown signs of leniency in his dealings with accused witches, discovered to his cost when he in turn was denounced as a witch. Under torture he admitted his guilt in full and denounced five leading burgomasters as fellow-sorcerers. This did not save him, for in 1628 the kindly Vice-Chancellor and his wife and daughter were burned as witches.

The dreadful situation in which the five burgomasters now found themselves is revealed in a letter written by one of their number, Johannes Junius, who had occupied this position of honour since 1608. Now, at the age of 55, he was suddenly denounced as a witch on the testimony of Dr Haan and others. He was accused of worshipping Satan, desecrating the sacred host, having sexual intercourse with a succubus (a demon in female form) and riding to the witches' sabbath on the back of a black dog.

His letter, addressed to his daughter and smuggled out of prison by a bribed jailer, conveys the agony of mind and body of an innocent man caught up in the mesh of the witch-hunters, and the sense of hopelessness that soon destroyed all power to resist. 'For whoever comes into the witch prison,' he wrote, 'must become a witch or be tortured until he invents something out of his head and, God pity him, bethinks him of something.' Junius described the torture of the thumbscrews, the mildest of all the engines of torment. 'And then came also – God in his highest heaven have mercy – the executioner, and put the thumbscrews on me, both hands bound together, so that the blood spurted from the nails and everywhere, so that for four weeks I could not use my hands, as you can see from my writing.'

During his examination a blemish was discovered on his right side, which being impervious to pain was assumed to be a Devil's mark, the sign of the Christian's submission to Satan. This further evidence seems to have been hardly necessary in view of the fact that under torture he confessed in full to the charges against him, and on 6 August 1628 he died at the stake.

Father Friedrich von Spee, a Jesuit whose hair had turned prematurely grey as the result of his experiences as a confessor of witches in neighbouring Würzburg, revealed the effects of torture on the human mind in a book which he wrote in 1631: 'the most robust who have thus suffered have affirmed that no crime can be imagined which they would not at once confess to if it could bring down ever so little relief and they would welcome ten deaths to escape repetition.'



Mansell collection

Some of the instruments of torture used in the Bamberg witch trials

Man in Black

Hans Petz from Steinbach, a court official in the district of Untermain, finally confessed after he had been subjected to such tortures as the application of thumbscrews and leg vises and the stocks. For three and a half hours he was suspended by a rope, eight feet from the ground, while a stone weighing 20 pounds hung from his toes. He admitted the following:

'That he had committed adultery more than one hundred times with Priestiklin of Steinbach and had copulated with her standing and in other ways. One day, while standing near her at a fountain and touching her on the body, she was suddenly transformed into the terrifying black figure of a man. His hands were rattling and on his right leg he had a cloven hoof, by which Petz recognized with whom he had been trafficking. This character called on Petz to deny God and to fetch the sacred host when he went to supper . . . Some time later she met him, when she had regained her natural form and they continued their sexual relationship, but by now it had become cold and lacking in love. In all he went to five witches' dances and at one of them it was discussed how the crops could best be spoiled.'

Graf von Lamberg,
Hexenprozessen in Bamberg

The Witch Industry

The speed and efficiency of the court procedure would be unbelievable if one were not aware that the machinery was generously lubricated with money exacted from the estates of the accused. Within a matter of three weeks from the date of her arrest in June 1629, Frau Anna Hansen had been interrogated and tortured, had confessed, had ratified her confession and had been beheaded and burned. A prisoner who displayed any tendency to delay his inevitable death by obduracy could always be persuaded otherwise by the application of those Bamberg specialities, flaming feathers dipped in sulphur applied to the armpits and groin, or a scalding bath to which lime had been added.

Witch-hunting in Bamberg, as elsewhere in Europe, involved a whole industry of interested parties whose income depended on a steady flow of victims. They ranged from the judges who tried the cases down to the merchants who supplied the timber for the execution fires. The whole cost of trial, imprisonment and execution was borne by the estate of the prisoner or, if he had no property, by his relatives or by the local authority.

Anyone unfortunate enough to be accused had to contend not only with the genuine belief in the existence of witches of a majority of the population, and with the clergy's determination to save his soul from hellfire, but also with the vested interests of those whose pockets were lined by his execution. The result was a vicious circle of torture, death and the betrayal of friends. Whenever the confiscation of the property of the accused was suspended, the number of executions always declined.

End of the Terror

Refugees from the terror fled to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, where they attempted to arouse concern about the travesties of justice at Bamberg. Father Lamormaini, the Emperor's confessor, told him of the disquiet created by the atrocities, and another Jesuit said that the victims, far from being execrated as witches, were rapidly becoming the objects of popular sympathy. Councillor Dümler of Bamberg described to the Emperor how his wife had been cruelly tortured and burned at the stake although pregnant.

In time, the Emperor responded to the general clamour by ordering certain legal reforms, including legal representation of the accused and the ending of the confiscations of property. Torture, however, was not abolished.

After 1630 the witch-hunt declined in intensity. In that year Bishop Förner died. He was followed two years later by his master, the Witch Bishop. The invasion of Germany by Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant King of Sweden, distracted attention from witchcraft to the problems created by the presence of a victorious arch-heretic on Catholic soil. In 1630 there were 24 executions and in the following year none.

The horrors of German witch-hunting, however, were perpetrated by Protestants as well as Roman Catholics. It is on record that a Lutheran named Benedict Carpzov admitted ordering the executions of at least 20,000 victims in Saxony.

With the gradual decline of belief in the Devil, the fear of witchcraft subsided. Concurrently, the burning need to rescue the heretic or witch from the terrors of hellfire by the infliction of agonies in this life gradually lost its relevance.

ERIC MAPLE

BAPHOMET

IN OCTOBER 1307 Philip IV of France accused the Order of Knights Templar of heresy and homosexual vice. Whether the accusations were true is uncertain, though the French king's greed for the Order's enormous wealth and the fact that the knights' confessions were extorted by torture and threats have made many historians suspicious (see KNIGHTS TEMPLAR).

One of the accusations was that the Templars worshipped an idol named Baphomet. This was a head, sometimes said to be a human skull, sometimes a stuffed human head, sometimes a head with three faces. The knights were accused of believing that the head was the source of their riches and also the source of fertility: it made the trees blossom and the earth produce crops. There were supposed to be several of these heads, kept at different Templar centres. One was described as being made of metal and having a face like a human face, with curly black hair.

Cults of the head as the seat of life and fertility, evidenced by its ability to grow a crop of hair, are known from many parts of the world (see HEAD) but very few of the Templars confessed to worshipping the head. Of 231 knights examined by the pope's Commissioners, only 12 admitted knowing anything about the head, as against 183 who confessed that they had renounced Christ and 180 who confessed to defiling the cross in various ways.

The Baphomet of Mendes, or Satanic goat of the witches' sabbath, drawn by the 19th century French magician Eliphas Levi

The name Baphomet itself is a puzzle. It is usually explained as a corruption of Mahomet, which was spelled Bafomet in Provence, the centre of the Cathar heresy (see CATHARS) with which some authorities believe the knights were infected. Alternatively, Montague Summers, the learned though unduly credulous historian of witchcraft and Satanism, suggested that the name was a combination of two Greek words (*baphe* and *metis*) and meant 'absorption into wisdom'; the wisdom being the knowledge of the god who had really created the world and man, and of whom Christ was an evil enemy.

In France in the 19th century Eliphas Levi drew the picture reproduced here, as an illustration to his book *The Doctrine and Ritual of High Magic* (see LEVI). He called it the Sabbatic Goat or Baphomet of Mendes, combining in one image the idol of the Templars, the Tarot card called the Devil, the Satan of the witches' sabbath who appeared as a goat, and the divine he-goat worshipped in classical times at Mendes in Egypt and said to copulate with its female devotees, as the Devil did with witches.

Levi called the drawing 'a pantheistic and magical figure of the Absolute', a diagram of the god who is the sum total of everything in the universe. The figure contains symbols of the four elements, the head standing for fire, the wings for air, the scales for water, the legs for earth. The torch is a symbol of divine revelation, the pentagram of human intelligence, the white and black crescent moons of good and evil, the caduceus of the union of the sexes, the breasts and hands of maternity and toil, two of the penalties for the sin of Adam and Eve but also, according to Levi, 'the signs of redemption'. (See Goat)

Living things cannot survive without water, and water washes away dirt. The interplay of these two facts lies behind the baptismal ceremonies of Christianity and other religions

BAPTISM

BAPTISM IS KNOWN generally as the rite of initiation into membership of the Christian Church. Most people probably regard it as originating from the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, an incident which is graphically recorded in the New Testament and frequently depicted in Christian art. But ritual washing or immersion in water was already an ancient and widespread practice before that time, and various meanings were attached to it. To understand the full significance of Christian baptism, it is necessary first to appreciate the varied symbolic roles of water in religion. (See also WATER.)

In the creation myths of many peoples water is the substance out of which the world, or the creator of the world, originally emerged. The ancient Egyptians imagined that in the beginning there was only a featureless expanse of water, called Nun. Out of this the primeval hill first emerged, followed by the creator god Atum, who stood on it to begin the work of creating the universe. In Babylonian myth the first gods are produced by the intercourse of the salt waters (Tiamat) and the fresh waters (Apsu). Later, the Babylonian god Marduk slays Tiamat, which is conceived of as a great monster, and fashions the universe out of its body.

In these ancient traditions water was regarded as the source of life, a belief which was strengthened by the fact that man and all other living creatures need water to maintain life. The idea of water as a life-giving substance has found expression in many religions in the idea of a mystic 'water of life' or 'fountain of life'.

The cleansing property of water also acquired religious significance as a means or symbol of ritual and spiritual purification: thus in Psalm 51 the petition is made to God: 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity . . . purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'

The Salvation of Pharaoh

It is not surprising, therefore, to find in the earliest religious writings so far known, the *Pyramid Texts* of Egypt, which date from about 2500 BC, that water has both a revivifying and a purifying role. These texts are concerned with the mortuary ritual practised to ensure the resurrection of the dead pharaoh to a blessed and eternal life, and they illustrate the ideas and beliefs of the Egyptians at this time. Several of them refer to a lake in the next world in which the sun-god Re revivifies himself each morning, and in which the dead king will also bathe and be revivified. The texts also show that ritual lustrations (washings) were frequent during the ritual of embalming, their purpose being both to purify the corpse from the contamination of death and to revivify it. The ritual was patterned on the rites believed to have been performed by various deities to raise the dead god Osiris to life again. The dead pharaoh was ritually identified with Osiris, in the belief that the re-enactment of the rites would similarly resurrect him to a new life. (See BOOK OF THE DEAD.)

The ancient Egyptian evidence is especially important because it presents so graphically the two aspects of water combined in a single ritual process of salvation. The water cleanses the body of the deceased from the corruption of death and also revivifies or regenerates it for a life of eternal blessedness. This twofold process for the achievement of a blessed immortality is not found again until the emergence of Christianity. But ritual ablution as an initiatory rite or for spiritual rebirth was practised in the mystery religions of the Graeco-Roman world, and there are interesting comparisons with Christian baptism.

Washing the Pig

As a purificatory rite only, bathing in the sea was an important part of the initiatory ritual of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the oldest mystery cult of ancient Greece. On the second day of its Greater Mysteries initiates hastened down to the sea, each carrying a small pig. They washed both themselves and

Michael Halford

the pigs in the sea as an act of ritual cleansing. The pigs were subsequently sacrificed, their blood being considered a potent purificatory agent against demonic evil. (See ELEUSIS.)

It is in the mysteries of Cybele and Attis that we meet the most savage form of a regenerative bath. The rite was known as the *taurobolium*. The initiate descended into a pit and was bathed in the blood of a bull, sacrificed above him. (There is mention also of a *criobolium*, which involved the slaughter of a ram.) The first documentary evidence of the rite dates from the 2nd century AD.

The rite seems sometimes to have been primarily a sacrifice for well-being of some kind; but its regenerative function is shown by certain inscriptions which use the word *renatus* (reborn) of the initiate or refer to the day of the taurobolium as his birthday. Some of the ideas that underlie this rite would seem to be obvious: the bull has ever symbolized strength and virility; and its blood is its life-substance. But in what manner the bull was associated with Attis, a 'dying-rising god', and in what sense the devotee was reborn or rejuvenated by the taurobolium is not clear. (See CYBELE.)

Ritual washing for various purposes was an ancient custom among the Hebrews; after being healed of leprosy, for instance, or after touching a corpse. Jesus is reported to have healed a blind man by sending him to wash in a pool, after anointing his eyes with clay (John, chapter 9). These examples show the belief in the power of ritual washing to remove ritual 'uncleanness' and in the curative property of water. But more significant as a forerunner of early Christian baptism was the ritual bath which had to be taken by converts to Judaism. This rite was essentially a purification from heathenism, in preparation for membership of the holy people of Yahweh, the God of Israel. An essential requirement was the total immersion of the candidate.

The Baptism of Jesus

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the excavations at Qumran of the settlement of the community which owned them, have shed much light on the nature of the baptism of Jesus. The Qumran Covenanters, who regarded themselves as a holy community within Israel, would admit a new member after public repentance and baptism. A passage from the scroll known as the *Manual of Discipline* says 'that his flesh will be cleansed by the sprinkling of water for impurity and by the sanctification of himself with purifying water'. The large cisterns, with steps descending into them, found at Qumran indicate that baptism was by total immersion.

Before considering the Christian accounts of the type of baptism practised by John the

The purifying properties of water lie behind its use in both pagan and Christian rituals *Left* The baptism of Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, a painting by El Greco *Right* Painting from an Egyptian tomb, c1380 BC: two streams of water are poured over the dead man's head to purify the corpse from the contamination of death and to revivify it

Michael Halford

Baptist, it is useful to look at the account in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the 1st century AD. This is significant in the light of the evidence from Qumran since the area of John the Baptist's activity was nearby.

> For John was a pious man, and he exhorted the Jews who practised virtue and exercised righteousness towards each other and piety toward God, to come together for baptism. For thus it seemed to him would baptismal ablution be acceptable, if it were not used to beg off sins committed, but for the purification of the body when the soul had previously been cleansed by righteous conduct.

It is in this setting of contemporary Jewish ritual ablutions, emphasizing the purifying action of water, that the earliest form of Christian baptism, particularly that of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, is to be understood. This is clear from the earliest account in the gospels (Mark, chapter 1). 'John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins . . . In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.'

The disciples of Jesus, under his direction, apparently baptized their converts and, although there is some obscurity as to whether Jesus himself actually baptized, early tradition represents him commanding his disciples to do so. 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost' (Matthew, chapter 28). This commandment that baptism should be 'in the name' of the three Divine Persons, who were in later Christian doctrine to constitute the Trinity, seems to indicate a later elaboration of the original formula. But the use of the Trinitarian formula soon became established as orthodox doctrine, and it has continued to be regarded as an essential condition for a valid baptism.

This evidence of the original form of Christian baptism, and its close connection with contemporary forms of Jewish baptism, shows that baptism at first was essentially a *purificatory* rite, which was intimately linked with repentance of sins. It was the essential requirement for admission to membership of the Christian community and it was closely related to the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, who would shortly return with supernatural power to establish the kingdom of God. But there is no suggestion that the rite effected some kind of spiritual transformation of the baptized person, such as might be described as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration'.

Ritual Death and Rebirth

It was St Paul who was responsible for transforming this original form of baptism into the sacramental rite of rebirth which baptism became in the Christian Church. This decisive change is first expressed in the 6th chapter of Paul's letter to the

A Baptismal Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel thy people through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy Baptism; and by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify Water to the mystical washing away of sin; We beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon this Child; wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost . . .

The Book of Common Prayer

An Aztec Prayer

From the Aztec ceremony of bathing the newborn:

Merciful Lady Chalchiuhtlicue, thy servant here present is come into the world . . . Wash him and deliver him from impurities . . . Cleanse him of the contamination he hath received from his parents: let the water take away the soil and the stain, and let him be freed from all taint. May it please thee, O Goddess, that his heart and his life be purified, that he may dwell in this world in peace and wisdom. May this water take away all ills . . . wash from him the evils which he beareth from before the beginning of the world.

Bernardino de Sahagun
Historia de las Cosas de la Nueva Espana
(trans. H. B. Alexander)

Romans, which was written about AD 56 or 57. The passage concerned needs quotation and commentary to bring out its full significance.

> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This passage, full as it is of esoteric imagery, clearly sees baptism in a very different way from that of the earlier ritual cleansing, which initiated the convert into the Christian community. Instead, Paul presents the rite as a ritual death and rebirth, which simulates the death and resurrection of Christ.

There is a parallelism of imagery between the burial of Christ in the tomb and the burial of the new convert under the baptismal water. In other words, in baptism the Christian is ritually assimilated to Christ in his death, dying to his former self, so that as Christ was resurrected from the dead, the Christian, thus ritually incorporated in Christ, will rise to a new immortal life.

This Pauline doctrine of baptism recalls, in a striking manner, the assimilation of the dead with Osiris in the ancient Egyptian mortuary cult. Like the Egyptian rite, baptism for Paul effects rebirth or transformation to a new exalted state of being. Paul's view had a decisive influence and found dramatic expression in the baptismal ritual of the Early Church. Special baptisteries were constructed to allow total immersion. The candidates took off their clothes and descended into the water, thus ritually symbolizing a dying to their old selves. On emerging from the baptismal water, they were clothed in white robes, received a new name and given mystic food of milk and honey, so proclaiming their rebirth by baptism to a new life in Christ.

Picturepoint London

Keystone Press Agency

Right **Christian baptism: it used to be widely believed that if the child did not cry, the rite had failed to drive the Devil out of him** ***Below*** **Communal baptism of Jehovah's Witnesses at Twickenham rugby ground**

Baptism of Babies

In the early period of the Church, most candidates for baptism were adults. Often converts put off baptism until near death, in the belief that thereby they would die purified from sin and spiritually reborn. But as time went by, the custom of baptizing infants gradually prevailed. It was natural that Christian parents should want their children to enjoy the spiritual benefits of baptism but the practice was decisively affected by the doctrine of Original Sin.

According to this doctrine, a newborn child, though incapable of actual sin, was held to be subject to God's wrath because it shared in the inherited sin of mankind (see FIRST MAN). A baby which died unbaptized was condemned to hell (or to Limbo, a special compartment of hell). The practice of infant baptism led to the introduction of the smaller elevated font, which replaced the baptistery of earlier churches: and also to the separation of baptism from confirmation, which was originally part of the baptismal ceremony in the Early Church and was regarded as imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit to the baptized through the laying-on of the bishop's hands. Another important development was that the grace of baptism was believed to be conveyed *ex opere operando*, which means by virtue of the enactment of the rite itself. Emphasis was laid upon the correct 'form' and 'matter': the Trinitarian formula had to be used, and the water must flow over the candidate and not merely be sprinkled upon him.

The Reformation did not disturb the status of baptism as the essential rite of Christian initiation for Protestants as well as for Catholics. Indeed certain sects such as the Anabaptists and Baptists laid primary stress on its importance; but they insisted on a return to adult baptism by immersion, maintaining that baptism should signify the deliberate acceptance of Christ, which was impossible for an infant.

Today baptism is usually taken to symbolize acceptance of membership in the Christian community, rather than to effect a mystic rebirth, such as Paul taught. The Roman Catholic Church retains the most elaborate baptismal ritual in the West: it includes preliminary exorcisms, placing of salt in the candidate's mouth, anointing with spittle and oil, and the holding of a candle.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: M. Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Scribner, 1969); A. Carson, *Baptism* (Kregel, 1981); D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West* (Allenson, 1965).

C. Nelson Stewart

Bards

Poets and story-tellers, regarded in northern Europe as possessing magical powers and closely associated with the Druids: in Wales the 'chief of song' was chosen at a bardic contest, a tradition which lives on in the Welsh Eisteddfod.
See POETS

British Museum

Barnacle Goose

For centuries the Irish ate the barnacle goose during Lent, convinced that it was a species of fish: its then unknown breeding habits and association with the sea prompted mythical explanations of its origins; it was variously thought to hatch from shell-fish, from barnacle-covered driftwood, or from a fruit like a melon.
See GOOSE

FRANCIS BARRETT

PUBLISHED IN LONDON in 1801, *The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer; Being a Complete System of Occult Philosophy*, is famous for its vivid portraits of demons. They were drawn by its author, Francis Barrett.

Little or nothing is known of Barrett's life. It is possible that he taught magic to pupils, who may have influenced the occult group later led by the celebrated Victorian novelist Bulwer Lytton, with which the French magician Eliphas Levi was connected (see LEVI: LYTTON).

The Magus, unfortunately, suffers by comparison with the works of other later magicians like Eliphas Levi and Aleister Crowley, who were livelier writers and had a more profound grasp of the subject. The book is divided into sections on 'natural magic', in which tales about the supposed magic powers of animals, herbs and stones are trotted out once more; alchemy; talismans and numbers; magnetism; the Cabala; and ceremonial magic, largely drawn from earlier 'grimoires' or magical textbooks.

The Magus takes a high and Christian tone but some of Barrett's claims suggest that his magic was not as white as he painted it. 'I have, in the country, by only speaking a few words, and used some other things, caused terrible rains and claps of thunder.'

The Magus was republished in 1967 by University Books, New York, with an introduction by Timothy d'Arch Smith.

In the 16th century Basque witchcraft was believed to be a Satanic cult, but lying behind it was an older type of witchcraft, belief in which has persisted to the present day

BASQUE WITCHCRAFT

DURING THE LATER 15th century, the whole of the 16th and the early years of the 17th, the witches and wizards of the Basque region were intensely active and acquired a reputation which spread all through Europe. The Basques are a people of mysterious origin, living along the coasts of northern Spain and southern France, under the shadows of the Pyrenees. As early as the 3rd century BC they were famous for their skill in predicting the future from the flight of birds. Later, their conversion to Christianity was a slow process and forms of worship which are non-Catholic and not centred on the Church have continued to appear right up to the present time.

A Spanish royal edict of 1466 indicates that in the province of Guipuzcoa, on the southern shore of the Bay of Biscay, there were a number of men and women who practised witchcraft and black magic. They were known as *bruxos* and *xorguinos*. The activities attributed to them were damaging property, causing harm to other men and women, inducing sterility and difficult childbirths, and causing bad vintages and bad harvests of other crops. The witches and wizards were also believed to deny God and the Virgin Mary.

This was the period in which the Basque country was torn by warring nobles and factions. Armed men killed each other mercilessly, and blood relations disposed of each other by poisoning. In a social environment such as this, where friendship could turn to violent enmity, where blood relationships produced both strong alliances and great family dramas, it is understandable that the public authorities shrank from intervening in incidents attributed to supernatural forces.

On the other hand, even the Church authorities had very little jurisdiction in the region, since the natives' interpretation of Christianity was highly individual and somewhat shocking to anyone accustomed to normal Christian ideas and practices. For instance, an erudite Spanish bishop of the time reports that the inhabitants of Vizcaya would not accept a priest amongst them unless he had a concubine, since they considered that no male is free of carnal desires and feared that if the priests lived alone they would direct their attentions to the womenfolk of the parish. The Vizcayans also would not allow bishops from elsewhere within their boundaries, and practised an apparently pagan worship of the dead. It is also known that even in the 15th century there were in Vizcaya heretical movements which tended towards sexual freedom, communism and activities which were afterwards attributed to witches and wizards.

The Lady of the Caves

The next pieces of evidence about the sect of the witches known to the great historians of the Inquisition and heresy in Spain also come from Vizcaya. They date from 1500, by which time the Spanish Inquisition had already been functioning for many years, and there are two of them: that of Archdeacon Pedro Fernandez de Villegas, in his commentary on Dante's *Inferno*, and that of Fray Francisco de Vargas. The archdeacon's text indicates that the centre for the witches' meetings or 'conciliabules' was in the mountain range of Amboto, a place which is famous in Basque folklore, as it is said to contain some caves in which lives a deity known as 'la Dama' (the lady), who was considered to be the patron of the witches.

Although this tradition is linked with very ancient pre-Christian ideas, as will be seen later, the witches and wizards brought to trial at the beginning of the 16th century were formally accused in a Christian context, of casting evil spells and of having conversations and relationships with demons. Many people confessed to having spoken to the Devil, who sometimes appeared as a male goat and at other times as a handsome mule. But those who confessed to having seen this also admitted that he sometimes appeared as a man, though always bearing some sign which indicated his evil nature, for instance a horn in his forehead or long teeth protruding from his mouth.

This form of 'witches' sabbath' must be

related to those which took place somewhat earlier in the south of France and the Catalan Pyrenees (to the east of the Basque region). The first appearance of the 'sabbath' in Inquisitorial trials was in Carcassonne and Toulouse between 1330 and 1340. In the Catalan valleys it is first recorded about 1424.

The reason for the existence of these ancient centres of activity is perhaps related to the heresy of the Cathars, which has remained shrouded in mystery to this day (see CATHARS). The whole of the south of France was for centuries engaged in a religious struggle. The heretics were painted by their enemies as worshippers of the Devil. It is by no means certain that they were, apart from one type of heresy, that of the Luciferans, who seem to have worshipped Satan as the brother of Jesus. Did echoes of these heresies reach the Basque country? It is possible, but there is no way of proving it.

Judged by the Left Eye

The trial of 1500 was considerably influenced by what had been written about witchcraft in different parts of Europe throughout the 15th century. The most famous text was the *Malleus Maleficarum*, which had such a pernicious influence in Europe from its first appearance until well into the 17th century, although it is true that there were some inquisitors and theologians in Spain who followed certain earlier, far less credulous doctrines about the reality of the activities attributed to witches and wizards. Among these must be counted Martin of Arles, who disagreed with those who believed witches to be capable of flying through the air and performing other similar acts, although he did believe that it was possible, by means of spells, to cause sterility in married couples, injure people, destroy fields and crops, all through the help of the Devil. But in spite of these exceptions it seems that in 1507 the Inquisitor of Calahorra burned some 30 witches and a few years later the kingdom of Navarre experienced a wave of terror and repression.

In 1527 the Inquisition, established on the frontier of Navarre, carried out an intensive investigation into the activities of witches. Two girls, aged nine and 11, appeared before the court at Pamplona to denounce the abominable acts they had taken part in. They offered their help in the administration of justice if they were pardoned. Accepting this condition, the judge went from village to village accompanied by 50 soldiers. The two girls were put in separate houses and suspects were summoned before them in turn. The children looked the suspects in the left eye and decided whether or not they were witches. They were looking for a 'sign' in the eye, resembling a frog's foot. It appears that over 100 men and women were discovered to be sorcerers, having been judged so independently by both the children.

According to documents discovered by the city clerk of Pamplona a similar investigation was carried out in 1525 with Graciana de Izaroz as the witness, in the region of Ituren and Zubieta. 400 people presented themselves voluntarily and only 12 were picked out as sorcerers: 2 men and 10 women. These were subjected to a second inspection by the same Graciana (whose grandmother had been burnt as a witch) and she remained doubtful about 2 of them. Some of those convicted formed a family group (a married couple and an uncle); others, more sinister, were the classic solitary witch with a strong background of erotic activities, such as Maria of Ituren. The group of witches and wizards of Elgorriaga and Urroz were accused of making ointments with toads' blood and babies' hearts.

Maria of Ituren was tortured and confessed to having celebrated a 'conventiculo' (clandestine gathering) with her companions. There they ate and drank until cock-crow. Having anointed themselves, they changed into horses and galloped through the air. The ointment they used was made from toads which had been skinned alive and pulverized, and a herb called in Basque 'usainbelar' (water plantain). While Maria of Ituren confessed to all these activities, others flatly denied everything, and when subjected to ducking said that they believed in God and were telling the truth when they pleaded innocence.

The Inquisitor Avellaneda evolved a theory of witchcraft which coincides almost exactly with the theories of other judges and theologians engaged in similar activities in different parts of Spain. The letter in which he expounds this theory is a monument of credulity. The classic argument 'seeing is believing' is of little use to us in judging what he saw and believed, for in the letter already mentioned he claims to have seen a witch flying, before reliable witnesses: and a witch smeared with ointment being transported by the Devil, who was then frightened off by the name of Jesus.

The Devil's Communion

According to Avellaneda, the witches first deny the Christian faith. Then new witches are presented to the Devil by an initiate, in a particular place on the day appointed for such gatherings. On this day (it is usually Friday night) there is a horrible banquet and a kind of communion. Then there are great sexual orgies, and on top of that, evil acts against the rest of society. The Devil appears in the form of a black male goat and is worshipped in an indecent manner. The bait offered is the promise of riches and pleasures. The gatherings were sometimes very large: at one, between Pamplona and Viana, there were nearly a thousand people.

The activities of Avellaneda must have caused a considerable disturbance amongst the high functionaries of the Inquisition, for in 1529 several of them met to discuss the question of whether witches flew or not and whether they went to their gatherings in reality or only in their imaginations. In fact six voted for their doing so in reality, three for their imagining it, and one remained doubtful. It can be said that opinions remained divided in similar proportions throughout the 16th century.

The country suffered waves of terror and panic at the activities of witches and wizards. A succession of children and adolescents appeared, providing the most terrifying pieces of information and confessing themselves to be repentant sorcerers.

The Horned Horse

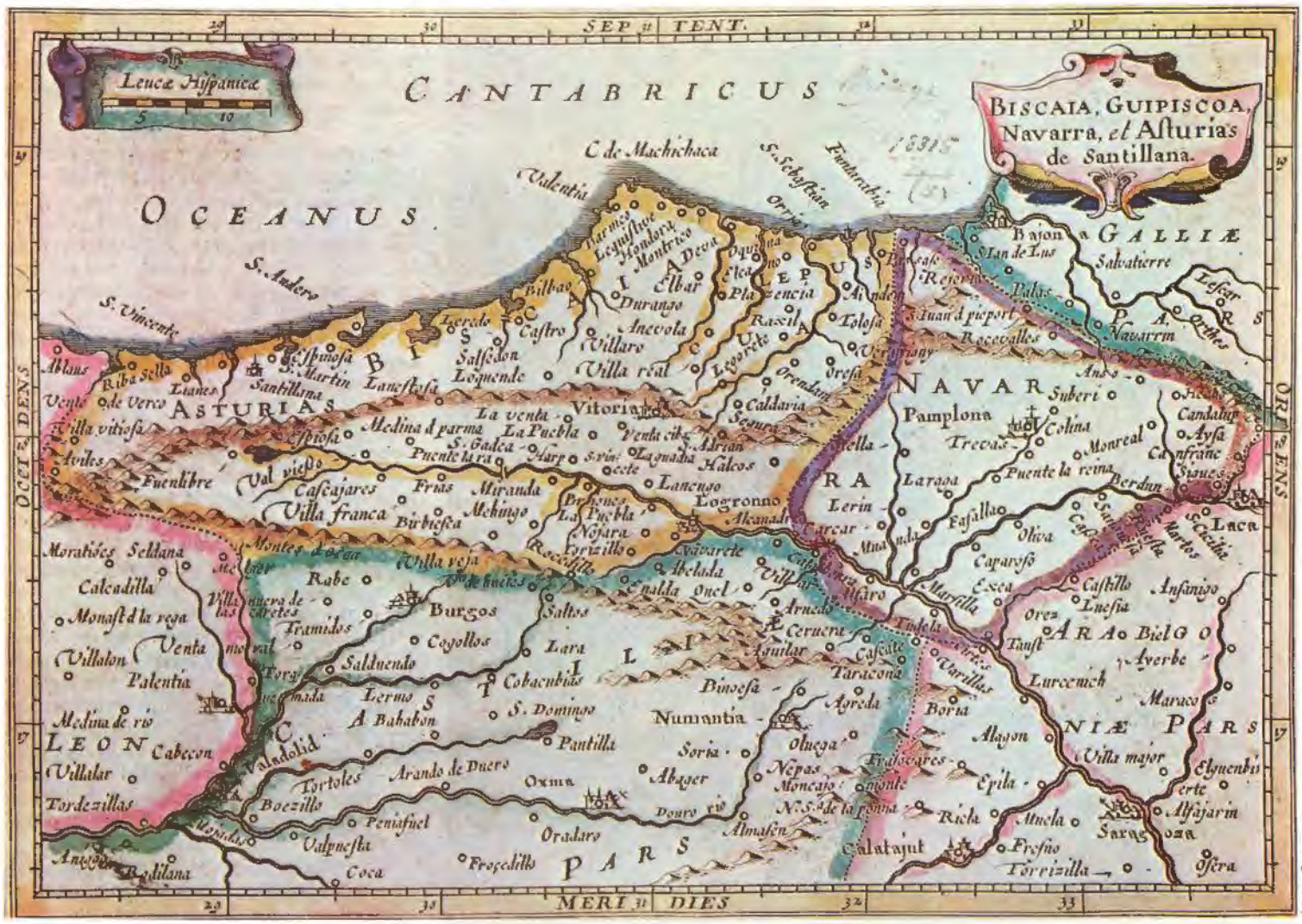
From 1530 to 1555 there was a veritable battle between those who called for heavy penalties against witches and wizards, and the Inquisition, which was disinclined to accept mass accusations. At times the civil authorities acted individually and on their own initiative, as happened in Vizcaya in the years 1555 and 1556, where proceedings were started against a family group of witches and wizards. The trial is significant because it indicates the existence of local rivalries, of disputes between families, which may lie behind the accusations of witchcraft, and also in the importance given

The Devil's Priests

The priests and curés of Labourd and of the neighbouring districts of Navarre are for the most part sorcerers. They are so respected that no one is scandalized by their habits, frequenting the taverns, the dances, the ball games with swords by their side . . . or going on pilgrimages in company with three or four pretty girls. Their privileges are such that at first no one dared to accuse them, but Satan could not at last prevent an old priest of good family from being denounced. He confessed that some fifteen or sixteen years before he had wanted to quit this abomination, but the devil so tormented him that he was almost out of his senses . . . He was condemned to death . . . and he requested the Bishop of Dax to perform the degradation, after which he was duly executed . . .

This made a great sensation and there was no longer hesitation in accusing priests. Some of them feigned vows to Monserrat and other places and fled; others took to the sea. At first we looked on the accusations with suspicion as the result of enmities, but little innocent children and persons from other parishes bore testimony to seeing them in the Sabbat. We arrested seven of the most notable in the land, most of them having cure of souls in the best parishes of Labourd. One of them, Pierre Bocal of Siboro, aged twenty-seven, had celebrated the devil's mass in the Sabbat the night before he sang the first one in his church . . . For the service in the Sabbat the devil gave him 200 crowns, while that in his church brought him only about 100.

Pierre de Lancre
Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges (1612)


Leucæ Hispanicæ
CANTABRICUS
OCEANUS
BISCAIA, GUIPISCOA, Navarra, et Asturias de Santillana.
GALLIÆ
NAVARRA
ASTURIAS
LEON
PARS
Pamplona
Vitoria
Burgos
Logrono
Bilbao
Durango
Tolosa
Bayon
Valladolid
Palencia
Numantia
Soria
Tudela
Calatajut
Tarazona
Aragon
Huesca
Jaca
Lucenich
Averbe
Navarrm
Salvaterre
Monreal
Puente la reina
Estella
Laraoa
Lerin
Olite
Tafalla
Olza
Caparroso
Castillo
Infanzon
Tafalla
Tudela
Agreda
Borja
Villa mayor
Ricla
Almazan
Frefno
Torrizilla
Sarag
Ossera
Alfajarin
Tordesillas
Medina de rio
Villalar
Cabecon
Oxma
Arando de Duero
Tortoles
Boezillo
Peniafiel
Olmedo
Valpuesta
Coca
Froçedillo
Pantilla
Cobacubilos
Lara
Salduendo
Cogollos
Frandos
Monaft d la vega
Calcadilla
Moratinos
Seldana
Rabe
Villa veja
Villa franca
Fuentibre
Aviles
Villa vitiosa
Ablana
Ribadella
Llanes
Vente de Vero
Santillana
Lanesteosa
Espinosa
Medina d parma
Puente la tra
Cafcajares
Frias
Miranda
Mehingo
Birbiesca
Montes d Oca
Villa veja
Rabe
Villa franca
Nojara
Torrizillo
Logronno
Lanengo
Caldaria
Segura
Vitoria
Venta
La Puebla
Venta
Trevas
Colina
Suberi
Pamplona
Candalup
Ayfa
Sanes
Lerin
Caparroso
Olza
Tafalla
Olite
Caparroso
Castillo
Infanzon
Lucfia
Orez
Tafalla
Tudela
Agreda
Borja
Villa mayor
Ricla
Almazan
Frefno
Torrizilla
Sarag
Ossera
Alfajarin
Elyuenbi
Maraco
Averbe
Lucenich

Basque Museum

Modern mural of a nude witch with her familiars, a kitten and toads; from the Basque Museum, Bayonne. Witches in the Basque country were accused of worshipping the Devil, inducing sterility and blighting crops

principle of inversion to such an extent that what should have appeared agreeable from a sensual point of view, was in fact repugnant. A normal mind, of today or yesterday, would find it difficult to see the advantages of inverting not only the order of beliefs but also that of the sensations.

The practice of evil was an important feature of the lives of these witches and wizards: to carry out their evil deeds they had recourse to shape-changing and flying. They blasted crops, livestock and people: they practised necrophagy (the eating of dead bodies) and vampirism. Not even their own families were safe from them, for the members of the sect murdered their relations. In addition they celebrated black masses and committed all kinds of sacrilegious acts.

The Logrono trial paints a picture of lives dominated by horror. The sorcerers seem to live like condemned men. However great the fear inspired by the Devil in Spain in the 17th century, the accumulation of so much evil proved something of a strain on the most serious and balanced minds. The report of the trial was read by the humanist Pedro de Valencia, who wrote two critical essays about it asking questions such as: Was all this true? Could these be orgiastic cults like those of classical times? Human excesses and strong passions could explain what was described to a certain extent, but was it not due rather to the effects of the imagination? Pedro de Valencia emphasizes the mental states which can be attained by the use of drugs, and also touches on the theme of a predilection for what is repellent, described by some doctors. Where does the truth lie?

As a man well versed in the ways of the world, Pedro de Valencia considered that the meetings of witches must be real, 'that their chief object is that which has been pursued by all such people in all ages, namely carnal self-indulgence'. In other words, witches and wizards were dominated by sensual passions rather than by any religious or anti-religious beliefs and motives.

Deserted Sabbaths

According to the findings of Alonso de Salazar y Frias, one of the judges of the Logrono trial who became sceptical about the report some years later, 1384 children aged from six to 14, had made confessions which were full of defects. There was no consistency of opinion as to where the sabbaths took place, nor on the question of the ointments used. Some of the sorcerers' 'pottages' as the Inquisitor disdainfully refers to them, were tried out on animals and found to have no effect. He also proved to the witnesses and the sorcerers themselves that the things which they described had not in fact happened. He even sent two secretaries to one notorious sabbath on the appointed day and they found no proof that anything happened there.

Everything which the Logrono report had held to be true was exposed as a series of hoaxes and fairy tales. The Inquisitor saw the results of the previous trials as being due to the ignorance and malicious intent of witnesses, the mentally confused state of the accused and the incomprehension or laziness of the judges. He himself confesses to having put pressure on some of the accused, and of not having punished two witnesses who were responsible for the majority of the denunciations and who afterwards boasted of having told lies.

The Church of Satan

The French Basque coast was, like the adjoining territories, a prey to fear of the activities of witches and wizards; and in Navarre, Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya the French Basques were believed to be even more notorious sorcerers than the Spanish. There was a succession of trials there between 1576 and 1605.

In 1609 came an explosion of panic on the French Basque coast which is not easily explained. The people of Labourd, as those of Guipuzcoa before them, demanded the punishment of the sorcerers, who were becoming a veritable plague. King Henry IV of France commissioned the president of the parlement of Bordeaux and two councillors to take action. One of them, a lawyer named Pierre de Lancre worked with terrifying zeal. He was prejudiced from the start against the Basques. Besides being a hostile observer, he had at his fingertips the books of former well-known judges of witches and the harsh laws which had been applied elsewhere

in Europe in the past. Thus equipped, and with a total ignorance of the language, he succeeded in reducing the region to a state of terror worse than any previously recorded.

Here again there were hysterical declarations by crowds of children. The image of witchcraft which de Lancre held is similar to, but more complex and lurid than, that given by the report of Logrono. The number of sabbaths grew, the abundance of demons was matched by the number of different forms which they took.

Besides showing us a secret society, organized on monarchical lines, with a court of the French type with its grades and hierarchies, de Lancre imposes a whole ecclesiastical system on the sorcerers' society, so that the sabbath appears as an imitation of the Catholic faith, with temples, altars, diabolical saints, music and decorations. There were also, according to him, ecclesiastical grades among the sorcerers, from subdeacons to bishops. The Black Mass, so familiar to modern Satanists, is described by this judge who was pious, erudite, gallant and barbaric all at the same time. Women and sorcerer-priests were his chief enemies. His fundamental thesis was the similarity of witchcraft cults in Italy, Spain, Germany and France. De Lancre sent quite a number of people to their deaths before his mission was finished, and while the conclusions of his contemporary Salazar y Frias slept for centuries in the Spanish archives, de Lancre's books were widely read and studied.

De Lancre arrived at the conclusion that in the Basque regions the domination of the Devil always took the form of an imitation of Christ, his Church and its ceremonies. (This same conclusion had been reached almost 100 years before by a Spanish friar who wrote a treatise on witchcraft based on the trials in Navarre between 1525 and 1527). As the opposite of the sacraments, there were 'execrations'. The religion – if it can be called such – of the sorcerers consisted in turning the Christian religion upside down.

Basque Witch Beliefs Today

From the Middle Ages to the 17th century the Basques lived in a state of anxiety caused by the belief in evil and supernatural acts. They attributed individual and general misfortunes – as many other races have done – to human actions sponsored and guided by mysterious and maleficent powers or beings. No doubt there were among them real sorcerers and witches, who manufactored poisons and evil spells, love potions and herbal concoctions. But the one thing which escapes us – because of the quantity of biased testimonies, exaggerated by fear or hatred – is the actual extent of these people's activities, and likewise the exact nature of their real beliefs.

Nevertheless, even today in one or two rural communities, one can find a wealth of traditions about the activities of witches and wizards. Some refer to a genuine Satanic cult: to sabbaths and the worship of the male goat. But these are far less abundant than the traditions relating to a different type of witchcraft, having less relation to Christianity, a type of witchcraft which is free from theological interpretations like those of the report of the Logrono trial, and de Lancre.

Basque Museum

Many Basque witches confessed to having made ointments with toads' blood and babies' hearts and to having trafficked with the Devil, in the form of a man who had a horn in his forehead and long teeth protruding from his mouth: another mural from the Basque Museum

Many villages have preserved such traditions. Some until quite recently had a reputation for being credulous and fearful, others for being full of witches. The French Basques were generally held in greater suspicion than the Spanish, as in the 17th century. According to these traditions, the art of witchcraft was acquired in a mechanical way, having little to do with pacts with the Devil or an organized church of Satan. The old witch transmits her condition to the young one, giving her a pincushion or some other object. The witches' activities take place at night, as do those of other beings called 'the nocturnal ones'. They ride on mysterious horses, change themselves into cats to perform various misdeeds (particularly stealing food) and meet at crossroads. They take the form of rats, cats, donkeys, and also of herbs and dry leaves. The sterile or wild varieties of some plants, and also certain insects and animals are associated with them. They are frightened of cocks, although cocks and black hens are also sometimes consecrated to them. The witches are basically creatures who inspire terror, but on occasion they appear in a comical light.

Little is said in these traditions of sabbaths or diabolical gatherings, though in Vizcaya the witches are said to meet in a so-called partridge field and in caves. Here and there caves, springs, dolmens and other specific places are considered to be the haunts of witches.

But as significant as this, or even more so, is the fact that in Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa a belief has existed right up to the present time in a goddess who is supposed to live in the mountains. She has a woman's face of extraordinary beauty. She sometimes flies through the air surrounded by fire and she is the president and directress of the witches. This deity is called 'la Dama' or 'la Senora' (the lady). This name, as in la Dama de Emboto, is sometimes followed by the name of the place where she resides, in a cave filled with gold and illusory precious objects which are transformed into coal when exposed to daylight.

Far back in the Middle Ages, before witchcraft was interpreted as a purely Satanic cult, in large areas of Western Europe people believed that witches made their nocturnal excursions on horseback under the leadership of a female power called Diana, Herodiade, Noctiluca, Bensozia, and other names. Thus, the beliefs which were current before the 14th century are closer to part of what was believed in the Basque country at the beginning of the 20th century than to the ideas described in accounts of witchcraft from the 16th and 17th centuries.

J. C. BAROJA

FURTHER READING: J. C. Baroja, *The World of Witches* (Weidenfeld, 1964).

BAT

THE BAT IS an animal with leather-like wings and hideous appearance, a creature of the shadows. One species, the vampire bat, is a notorious drinker of blood. The bat's physical characteristics and its apparently supernatural ability to hunt its prey in total darkness have been largely responsible for the frightening reputation it has acquired over the ages as a creature of occult power.

The bat has taken on some of the significance of both the bird (symbol of the soul) and the demon (dweller in darkness), and has been represented in folklore as witch and familiar, ghost and devil, and occasionally as a tribal god.

Shakespeare refers to the bat as an ingredient in the hell-brew of the weird sisters in *Macbeth*.

> Eye of newt and toe of frog,
> Wool of bat and tongue of dog.

The Chinese, taking a kindlier view of the creature, maintain that the bat flies head downwards because of the weight of its brains. Aesop ascribed its night-flying habits to attempts at evading its creditors. But in most parts of the world the bat is a mysterious and terrifying creature of the night, a death symbol to the Irish, a ghost to the Indians of British Columbia, and an embodiment of the dead among Ivory Coast Negroes. In Europe, Asia and America the sudden entry of a bat into a house foreshadows the death of the occupant. In China, however, the bat symbolizes a long and successful life.

It was an established principle in medieval times that the Devil often assumed the shape of a bat, and because of this Sicilian peasants, even today, burn bats alive or nail them with wings outstretched to their doors.

Macabre Burdens

Evil spirits in the shape of bats were believed to enter the bodies of human beings, from which they could only be evicted by skilled exorcists. Nigerian witch-doctors, who are particularly adept at this art, skilfully extract bats and frogs from the mouths of patients who happen to be afflicted in this particular way. Among the Negroes of the southern

S. C. Bisserot

The bat, a creature of the dark which has long been associated with the Devil, stands for a form of fluttering horror which even today is hard to rationalize away

states of the U.S.A. evil spirits are conjured out of human beings into the bodies of bats, which then obligingly flit away into the darkness with their macabre burdens.

In the *Remaines of Denis Granville*, published by the Surtees Society, there is an anecdote describing how a Frenchman, suffering from melancholia, was attended by a physician, a surgeon and a priest who brought with them a bat in a bag. While the priest prayed, the surgeon made a small incision in the sick man's side, and at the same time the physician suddenly released the bat, which began to flutter about the room. Convinced that the evil spirit had now left his body, the patient made an instant recovery.

La Voisin, the abortioner and sorceress of 17th century France, made use of bats' blood in the Black Mass. Something often found in gruesome rites of this nature was the body of a bat that had been drowned in blood, since this served as an agent for the release of psychic energy. And bats' blood was often an ingredient of witches' flying ointment, because it was supposed to give them the bat's ability to fly successfully at night.

Because it was magically powerful itself, the bat often served as a protective charm or amulet against the powers of evil, and as a luck-bringer. Among the Hessians in Germany it was an accepted belief that the heart of a bat attached to a gambler's arm by a red thread guaranteed him success at cards. In the Austrian Tyrol the fortunate possessor of a bat's left eye could make himself completely invisible to others at will.

A Few Drops of Blood

The bat became not only the totem animal of the men of an aboriginal tribe in New South Wales but also their sex symbol. A similar association of ideas led amorous Central European girls to entice their reluctant lovers into their arms by the discreet addition of a few drops of bats' blood to the loved one's beer.

Bats have occasionally been honoured

with the status of gods, the supreme deity of some of the Indians of the American Pacific coast being Chamalkan the bat. The mighty bat gods of Samoa invariably took the lead whenever the tribes marched off to war. In Europe, according to an old legend, a bat decided to join the war between the animals and birds but being uncertain as to where its real interest lay, fought on both sides.

In the legends of a number of North American Indian tribes the bat is given the unexpected role of hero and chivalrous champion of mankind in distress. This happier and positively virtuous aspect of the bat's character is seen in the modern American cult-figure, Batman.

Voodoo Drugs

In the folklore of the countryside, bats flitting about the fields at dusk indicate fine weather. Bats were long held responsible for stealing bacon from farm-house chimneys, and this curious bacon theme recurs in the custom, not yet quite extinct in the English countryside, in which boys, upon sighting a bat, chant:

Bat, bat, get under my hat
And I'll give you a slice of bacon.

Women, on the other hand, have always been extremely reluctant to let bats approach their heads, due to the superstition that bats are irresistibly attracted to the hair. Once entangled they can only be released by a pair of scissors wielded by a man.

The study of electronics has shown that the mysterious ability of the bat to find its way in complete darkness without hitting any obstacles is due to a supersonic detection device not unlike radar. Nevertheless, despite every scientific effort to rationalize the bat, its image as a symbol of the Devil remains unshaken.

The traditional function of the bat in contemporary magic has been further emphasized by the edict of the New York City Council of 1962 outlawing the sale of Voodoo drugs. Bats' blood was included in the list of prohibited items, with prayer candles inscribed 'death unto my enemy', lovers' oil and grave dust.

Spells and counter-spells filled the air between Paris and Lyons in this extraordinary occult contest between rival groups of magicians

BATTLE OF BEWITCHMENT

ONE OF THE ODDEST EPISODES in the history of modern magic, a prolonged battle of spells conducted in space over a distance of 300 miles, occurred in France towards the end of the 19th century.

On one side, in the city of Lyons, was a defrocked priest named Joseph-Antoine Boullan, who in 1875, at the age of 51, had become a disciple of the miracle-worker Pierre Vintras. At the end of that year, on Vintras's death, Boullan announced that he had been chosen to succeed him as high priest of the Church of the Carmel, which Vintras had founded. Most of the pontiffs consecrated by Vintras refused to accept the newcomer as their leader, and Boullan was left to settle with the few remaining members of the Carmel in Lyons. Here he ostensibly continued the work of Vintras, supported by his middle-aged housekeeper, Julie Thibault, otherwise known as Priestess of the Carmel and the Apostolic Woman.

Visitors to the Carmel were allowed to see Boullan and his priestess celebrating such curious rites as the Sacrifice of Glory of Melchizedek or the Provictimal Sacrifice of Mary, but only a favoured few were privileged to participate in the central acts of Boullan's mystico-erotic liturgy, his 'Unions of Life'.

Idol of the Mystical Sodom

Boullan taught that 'since the Fall of our first parents (Adam and Eve) was the result of an act of culpable love, it was through acts of love accomplished in a religious spirit that the Redemption of Humanity could and should be achieved.' Life, he maintained, was a ladder which one could climb by having sexual intercourse with celestial beings, and which one could help inferior creatures to climb by coupling with them. This doctrine can only be understood as advocating incubism and succubism (sexual intercourse with spirits in male or female form) on the

Photo Lanc

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Photo Universelle, Lyons

Left **Abbé Boullan, the defrocked priest who believed that ritual magicians were attacking him** ***Above*** **The novelist J.-K. Huysmans, who became involved in the battle** ***Right*** **Julie Thibault, Boullan's 'Apostolic Woman'**

one hand, and bestiality on the other. While there is no evidence that Boullan and his disciples ever committed bestiality, documents exist which prove that they believed they had copulated with archangels, saints, and historical figures such as Cleopatra and Alexander the Great.

Ranged against Boullan, 300 miles away in Paris, were four men: Edouard Dubus, a young poet addicted to magic and morphine; the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, another morphinomaniac who had recently revived the ancient Rosicrucian Order; a young occultist called Oswald Wirth; and one of Guaita's fellow Rosicrucians, the self-styled Sâr Joséphin Péladan, a talented novelist and picturesque charlatan who used to walk the boulevards of Paris in a silver waistcoat and black Arab burnous.

The most dangerous of these four were Guaita and Wirth, who had both learnt the secrets of the Lyons Church of the Carmel by posing as would-be disciples. Early in 1887 Guaita and Wirth joined together to set up what they called an 'initiatory tribunal' to try Boullan, who was not surprisingly found guilty. On 24 May 1887, in a letter dictated by Guaita and signed by Wirth, the ex-Abbé was informed that he was a condemned man. Wirth later maintained that all they had intended to do was expose him, which they did in 1891 in the book *Le Temple de Satan*, where he was described as 'a pontiff of infamy, a base idol of the mystical Sodom, a magician of the worst type, a wretched criminal, an evil sorcerer, and the founder of an infamous sect.'

But Boullan was convinced that he had been condemned to death, and remembering the lethal spells and incantations he had taught Guaita and Wirth when they had been his guests in Lyons, he not unnaturally assumed that they would try to carry out the sentence by magic. The house in Lyons was accordingly put on a war footing, and soon, if we are to believe Boullan and Julie Thibault, an occult battle was raging, with spells and counterspells hurtling through space between Paris and Lyons.

Study in Satanism

This astonishing battle was still in progress at the beginning of 1890 when one of our principal witnesses to the whole episode, the novelist J.-K. Huysmans, came on the scene. Joris-Karl Huysmans had made his name as a naturalistic writer but now, impelled by a growing interest in the supernatural, he was planning to write a novel about Satanism.

The sinister rumours circulating in Paris about Boullan suggested that the ex-Abbé, if not a Satanist himself, would be able to provide Huysmans with information about contemporary Devil-worship. The novelist accordingly wrote to him asking for 'reliable documents' and offering to depict him as 'the Superman, the Satanist, the only one in existence, far removed from the infantile spiritualism of the occultists.' Boullan replied politely but guardedly, refusing Huysmans' offer of publicity, denying that he was a Satanist, and posing as 'an Adept who has declared war on all demoniacal cults'; his letter was signed 'Dr Johannès' – the 'Adept's name' under which Huysmans was to portray him in his novel *Là-Bas*.

In a further letter Boullan offered to place at Huysmans' disposal 'documents which will enable you to prove that Satanism is active in our time, and in what form and what circumstances.' However, he was not prepared to give the novelist any information of value until he had satisfied himself that Huysmans was more trustworthy than Guaita and Wirth, and during the spring of 1890 he sent Julie Thibault to Paris to interview him. Huysmans was fascinated by this astonishing woman. She for her part took an immediate liking to the author. After she had reported favourably on her visit to Paris, Huysmans' flat was engulfed in a flood of documents from Lyons, with the result that his novel was finished by October 1890 and published the following spring.

Boullan had every reason to be pleased with the portrait Huysmans painted of him in *Là-Bas*, where he was presented as 'a highly intelligent and very learned priest . . . a much sought-after theologian and a recognized master of canon law.' The Rosicrucians on the other hand, were understandably angry at the attacks made upon them in the book, and Péladan, referred to in *Là-Bas* as 'that cheapjack magician, that mountebank from the Midi', retaliated by asserting that Huysmans' novel revealed 'an absolute and definitive ignorance of the laws of Satanism'. In fact, Huysmans' information was not so much inaccurate as misapplied, for the source from which he had drawn most of it was polluted. Boullan deceived Huysmans in much the same way as he himself had been deceived by Wirth.

Fluidic Fisticuffs

In spite of this deception, Boullan genuinely believed that Huysmans had become involved in his own occult battle with the Rosicrucians, and twice during the summer of 1890 he performed what he called 'magical operations' to protect the novelist from spells cast by Guaita and Péladan, the second of these 'operations' lasting two whole days. During a visit Huysmans paid to Lyons in October, he was instructed in the art of combating evil spells, and Boullan later sent him the weapons he would need in his battle with the occultists, notably an exorcistic paste made of myrrh, incense, camphor and cloves.

About this time the novelist began to be troubled by what he called 'fluidic fisticuffs', blasts of cold air which struck at his face at night, and which affected his cat at the same time. At the first sign of one of these attacks which, he told a doctor friend, he 'undoubtedly owed to the hatred of Stanislas de Guaita', he would promptly shut himself up with Boullan's occult weapons. A tablet of exorcistic paste would be burnt in the fireplace, a defensive circle drawn on the floor. And then, so an authority tells us, 'brandishing the miraculous host in his right hand, and with his left hand pressing the blessed scapular (cloak) of the Elijan Carmel to his body, he would recite conjurations which dissolved the astral fluids, and paralysed the power of the sorcerers.'

During the summer of 1891 Huysmans spent several weeks in Lyons, where Boullan performed even more elaborate ceremonies to defend the novelist and himself. Warned of impending danger by his astrological computations or by 'Maman' Thibault's interpretation of the flight of the local sparrow-hawks, the ex-Abbé several times celebrated the Sacrifice of Glory of Melchizedek, clad in the vestments of the Vintrasian Carmel: a red robe with a white mantle cut in the shape of an inverted cross, to signify that the reign of the dolorous Christ was over. Standing barefoot at the altar, he would recite the prayers of the Sacrifice, and placing his left hand on Huysmans' head and lifting up a host in his right, call upon the heavenly powers to strike down the spell-workers.

Writing to a friend with a levity which concealed childlike credulity, Huysmans reported: 'The battles have begun again since I last wrote to you – Wagrams in space . . . Boullan jumps about like a tiger-cat, clutching one of his hosts. He invokes the aid of St Michael and the eternal justiciaries of eternal justice; then, standing at his altar, he cries out: "Strike down Péladan, strike down Péladan, strike down Péladan!" And Maman Thibault, her hands folded on her belly, announces: "It is done."'

Death and a Duel

On 3 January 1893, the day after writing Huysmans a letter full of foreboding, reporting dreams of death which had haunted Julie Thibault, Boullan died suddenly. Huysmans' friend Jules Bois, a former disciple of 'Dr Johannès', promptly published an article in a Parisian newspaper accusing Guaita of having killed Boullan by magic. Huysmans himself declared in an interview: 'It is indisputable that Guaita and Péladan practise black magic every day. Poor Boullan was engaged in perpetual conflict with the evil spirits they continually sent him from Paris . . . It is quite possible that my poor friend Boullan has succumbed to a supremely powerful spell.' Guaita's response was to challenge both Huysmans and Bois to a duel, and although both quarrels were settled peacefully, a pistol duel was later fought between Bois and Guaita.

An account of the affair published by Bois tells of a horse mysteriously halted on the way to the duelling-ground and a bullet magically prevented from leaving a pistol-barrel, and there can be no doubt that both Huysmans and Bois continued to believe that Guaita and his fellow Rosicrucians had done Boullan to death by magic. Writing to tell Julie Thibault in August 1893 that Édouard Dubus had been committed to an asylum, Huysmans reported that 'before he was shut up at Charenton he was boasting it was he who had struck down the Father in Lyons. If he wasn't lying he's paid the penalty soon enough. As for Guaita . . . his punishment seems slow to come, but doubtless we shall see it in time.' It came five years later, when Guaita died of an overdose of drugs, at the age of 27.

ROBERT BALDICK

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BEAN

OF THE BEAN family, it is the broad bean, *Vicia faba*, which has the most important part in folklore. It has been widely regarded as impure and unlucky, despite the fact that it has been cultivated for food since later Stone Age times. There are numerous references to beans in the Bible, from which it is clear that it was originally one ingredient of bread, as in Ezekiel (chapter 4). 'And you, take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt, and put them into a single vessel, and make bread of them.' Later, however, beans were considered fit only for slaves and farm animals; this outlook continued right up to the 17th century.

The ancient superstitions about the bean are perhaps due to its resemblance to the kidneys, or possibly the testicles: after all, in astrology the bean is under the dominion of the planet Venus. The Egyptians actually considered the bean sacred and therefore would not eat it. Tradition has it that the Greek philosopher Pythagoras believed beans to contain blood and, being a vegetarian, would not consume them. In a more far-fetched legend he is supposed to have met his death because, pursued by enemies, he ran into a field of beans, which he refused to crush because he believed that the plants housed the souls of the dead. Across the centuries the same belief crops up in Britain.

The Romans believed that the ghosts of the dead, the Lemures, used to throw beans at houses by night, with resulting ill fortune to the occupants, and in a festival to placate these ghosts they threw black beans on their graves or burnt them as a counter-offensive, for even their smell was sufficient to banish spirits. Within living memory beans were eaten in Italy on anniversaries of death, although in Sicily the eating of beans was part of a harvest thanksgiving ceremony. North America's Iroquois Indians held an August Bean Festival, rich in dances and ritual, thanking the gods for the crops and underlining the belief that beans were a special gift from the gods. And beans were important in the magic paraphernalia of many Pueblo Indian ceremonies, especially in the great Hopi spring rite that was both a puberty rite and a way to ensure the beans' sprouting.

To establish the innocence or guilt of a person beans were taken 'blind' from a bag: to pick a black bean condemned you, while a white one absolved. The first use of this principle seems to have been in earliest Greek days, when the 'scapegoat', whose ritual death purified the tribe and ensured a successful year ahead, was chosen in this way. The country belief that if one bean in a row comes up white, a death in the family will follow, may derive from this ritual. In 'conjure magic' charms from America's Deep South, one-half of a white bean is a frequently used ingredient.

A hardy annual, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, a pantomime bill: Victoria & Albert Museum

Leyton-Sun

King of the Bean-Feast

On the whole, Christian superstitions were less distrustful of the bean than ancient ones. It played its part in love divination. In an Italian rite, three beans were placed in a bag, one whole, one without its 'eye', the third with no skin. Girls anxious to visualize their future husbands would expect a rich one if they drew the whole bean, a penniless one from the skinless bean, or an invalid from the 'blind' one.

A bean-feast or beano is a jolly occasion, and probably derives from a Twelfth Night custom of baking a cake with a bean in it. The person whose slice held the bean was the bean king, master of the revels. In prehistoric times these revels doubtless began as invocations for good weather and crops in the year ahead, made at the time of the longest, bleakest nights of the year. They reappear as the Roman Saturnalia, when the celebration of the equality of all human beings, supposed to have existed in the legendary reign of Saturn, took the form of unrestrained merrymaking in which slave and master were equal.

There was a King of the Saturnalia, who in medieval England became translated into a 'Lord of Misrule' or, in Scotland, an 'Abbot of Unreason'. These temporary monarchs were originally crowned on All Hallows' Eve (October 30) and 'misruled' until Candlemas (February 2), being later restricted to the 12 days of Christmas. Their reigns became so riotous and so expensive that in 1555 an Act greatly restricted their activities in England and suppressed them altogether in Scotland.

BEAR

British Museum

Bears were probably worshipped by Neanderthal man and, to this day, bear festivals are celebrated in Europe

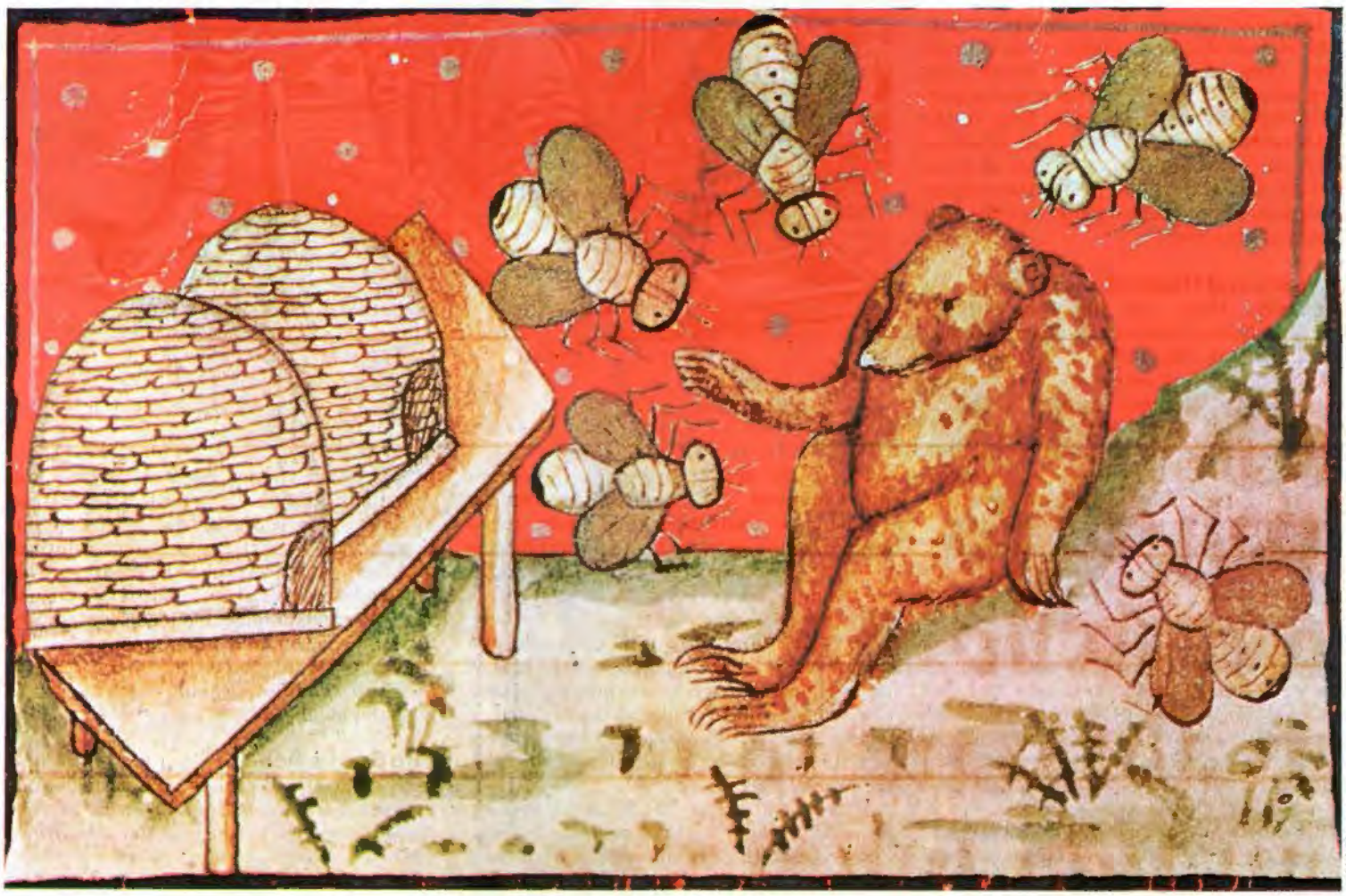
HUMAN VIEWS of the bear have always been awash with misconceptions, even in areas where bears were common. Paramount among the fallacies is the idea that bear cubs are born as shapeless lumps of flesh, and that the mother bear actually moulds them into shape by licking them. This belief was held by most ancient writers and was widespread in medieval Europe. The painter Titian used as his personal signature a picture of a she-bear shaping her young. Shakespeare compares a man's lack of character to 'an unlick'd bear-whelp that carries no impression like the dam.'

The belief still exists in many rural areas of Europe and America. It is understandable because bear cubs are ridiculously tiny at birth, and mother bears (like most animal mothers) do lick their young. So an observer, standing at a safe distance from the she-bear, would see a tiny lump of flesh, half-buried in maternal fur, being licked. The fallacy has given the language the useful metaphor 'licked into shape'.

There are plenty of other homely superstitions about bears. In the 16th century bear grease was a cure for baldness, and a preventative against blight in your garden, if you rubbed it on the garden *tools*. Englishmen then also believed that one ride on a bear's back would immunize a child against whooping cough. And an old cure for fits involved taking fur from a live bear's belly, boiling it in *aqua vitae* (alcohol) and applying it to the soles of the feet.

In more recent belief, current still in parts of rural America, a bear's tooth was used as a teething implement for babies, to give their teeth the strength of the bear, and sometimes as an adult's charm against toothache. Bear grease may still be used to cure aches and pains (and in fact the massage would do some good), while sleeping on a bearskin has been said to cure backache.

Above **Battle of the bear and the unicorn; from a 14th century MS in the British Museum**
Below **Enemy of the bees, because he steals their honey, the bear has often been called 'Bee-wolf'**



British Museum

Mary Evans Picture Library

It may seem odd that such a large and potentially fierce animal as the bear should be generally loved as the cuddly Teddy Bear. Desmond Morris, the British zoologist, suggests that this affection is due to the bear's round, plump, furry appearance and its ability to stand on two legs like a human being. *Right* Among the bear-worshipping Ainu of Japan bear cubs were reared at a woman's breast until the time came to send them away to the spirit home in a ritual strangling ceremony *Opposite left* Wood carving of bear-man from Nootka Sound in Canada. Stories of humans marrying bears are common in North American Indian myths *Right* 'Somebody has been at my porridge and eaten it all up', from the story of Goldilocks *Far right* Winnie the Pooh, A. A. Milne's endearing creation

Like other animals, bears figure in supernatural legends. Bear ghosts walk through some tales of the American South, and Worcester Cathedral in Britain was apparently regularly haunted by a bear in the 17th century. But accounts of apparitional bears are not nearly so numerous as those of dogs, cats and horses. It is in the realm of mythology and ancient religion that the bear comes into his own.

Helpers and Healers

Naturally, bears are important in the myths of North American Indians. In a way, the bear was the Indian's greatest competitor, for it is as omnivorous as man. So bears ate the salmon caught by Pacific Northwest tribes, the buffalo meat stored by Plains tribes, the maize grown by tribes in the southwest – and, sometimes, members of the tribes. Indian myths and customs show a great respect for the creature.

Northern Indians killed bears for food but always apologized to the dead animal for the indignity, for it was thought to possess great supernatural powers, even to be a god disguised. So the bear's head and hide would be ceremonially laid out, and care would be taken with the bones (so that the bear would not be crippled in the spirit world). To some tribes, including branches of the Apache, bears were so powerful that they were not only never killed but were literally untouchable, alive or dead.

In Indian myths bears often function as 'tutelary figures' or spirit helpers of the heroes. Bear acts as a healer in the myths of such widely diverse tribes as the Sioux, the Chippewa and the Pueblos, and the shamans or medicine-men of these tribes often dress as bears to take on their healing powers. The Kootenay Indians in the Canadian Rockies believed in a group of bear gods who could be prayed to for help. The Plains Cree, Iroquois, Cherokee and others hold 'bear dances' in which they imitate bear movements and pray to the bear spirits. And in Labrador Eskimo belief, a shaman is visited during his ecstatic initiation ceremony by the Great Spirit in the form of a polar bear.

The legend of the Bear Woman is fairly common among North American Indians, and among other primitives too. Usually it involves a tribesman who marries a strange woman with special magical powers, and who finds that she is a bear able to take human form. Most of the tales end unhappily: the husband is perhaps unfaithful and the woman reverts to bearishness, kills him and wreaks havoc on the tribe. Or else (as in similar tales of men who marry mermaids, elves and other immortals) she tires of humanity and returns to the forest or the spirit world, leaving her mourning husband behind.

The Bear's Son

A related class of legends tells of an alliance between a woman and a male bear. In most cases the woman produces a son, who grows up to be a semi-divine hero with perhaps some vestige of bearishness (like the bear's

Axel Poignant

Leyton-Sun

North American Indians killed bears for food but always apologized to the dead animal for the indignity

Methuen/E. H. Shepherd

ears in the Chinese version of the tale). Such tales can be found all through Europe, as in German and Croatian legend, as well as in Asian and North American Indian lore. And at least two of the world's great legendary heroes are connected with bears and closely resemble the Bear-Son heroic prototype.

The first of them is the English hero Beowulf. His name seems to mean bear – 'bee-wolf', translatable as 'honey-eater'. His name probably connects him with the older Bear-Son tales, and his exploits, including a descent to the underworld and his final battle with the dragon, run parallel to the basic pattern of the Bear-Son stories. (See BEOWULF)

The other legendary character with possible bear connections is the Greek hero Odysseus. Recent scholarly detective work has connected the Odysseus legend with the Bear-Son stories and also with ancient bear-worshipping cults. The *Odyssey* refers to the family of Odysseus as the 'house of Arceisios', which name is a variant of a Greek adjective meaning 'bearish' or 'ursine'. A very old Greek sub-myth, credited by some authorities as belonging to the Odyssean background, says that Arceisios was the child of a union between a man and a she-bear. And Arceisios was Odysseus' grandfather. With the parallels with the Bear-Son, again in a descent into the underworld, but also the very bearish clash with the giant Polyphemus in a cave, there is a good case for Odysseus' kinship with the bear.

The Great Bear

Apparently the Bear-Son legends and other myths involving the bear have their roots in the widespread ancient worship of the bear. The earliest religious expression that we know of in human history took the form of bear worship. Neanderthal men, some 100,000 years ago, carefully placed the skulls of bears on what seem to have been holy altars (see ALTAR). The skulls were of the giant cave bears which, though vegetarian, were fierce competitors for the Alpine caves where the skulls were found. They were fierce and imposing enough, it seems, to be elevated into gods by the men who killed them. And it is possible that the killing and the reverential disposing of the skull, had in it elements of ritual sacrifice,

Methuen E. N. Shepherd

the sacrifice not *to* the god but *of* the god, returning him to his spirit home.

The pattern recurs in later cults of the bear. The Greeks told of a bear-goddess named Callisto, who was transformed by Zeus into the constellation called the Great Bear. But behind this pretty story lay a darker fact: the cult of Zeus Lycaeus, which some authorities connect with werewolfism and others with bear worship, but which definitely involved human sacrifice. Lycaon himself, in legend, was the father of Callisto; and the cult grew out of his sacrifice of a boy (in most versions, his bearish grandson Arcas) to Zeus.

Callisto herself came to be closely associated with the virginal goddess and huntress Artemis. There are accounts of a bear cult from Brauron in Attica that centred on the worship of Artemis in bear form. But here only traces of ritual sacrifice remain in the mock-sacrificial presentation of young girls, dressed bear-like in brown robes, as initiates.

The Great Bear is a powerful god in the mythologies of peoples linked by a basic language form, 'Finno-Ugric', including the Finns, Lapps, Esthonians and Lithuanians, and also a variety of primitive nomadic tribes across the north of Russia. In these religions, as in those of some North American Indians, the shaman or priest identified himself with the bear god. He wore bear garb and he was believed to turn into a bear.

The Hairy Ainu

Many of these shamanistic religions are still alive in odd corners of the world, still with their elements of bear worship as among the Ainu of Japan. The Ainu are themselves something of a curiosity: they are not Japanese by race but have fair skins and blue eyes and are exceptionally hairy. It has been suggested that their culture is at least 10,000 years old. Their religion is dominated by a fire goddess and by the ritual worship of the bear.

In Ainu tradition, when a black bear cub was caught in the mountains, he was brought to the village with all the ceremony due to a visiting god. He was nursed at a woman's breast and when he grew larger he would be caged, but still tended with care until the time came to 'send him away' to his spirit home. The sending-away ceremony could be cruel, but ended quickly with a killing arrow and a ritual strangling. The dead bear's head and hide would then be arranged so that he could 'take part' in the feast held in his honour, a feast in which the main course was the bear's flesh.

Again, if the Ainu kill a wild bear, its body is brought into the village to be eaten but also to be worshipped during the eating, with offerings, songs and prayers. The sacrifice of the young bear has largely died out among modern Ainu, though the worship of the bear god as a principal divinity still flourishes.

Above **Pooh Bear on a honey hunt**
Below **Bear cameo from South Shields; possibly associated with a shrine of the Celtic bear god Matunus at Risingham in Northumberland**

Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle

The Bear's Rebirth

We do not have to look entirely to obscure primitive religions for modern remnants of ancient bear worship. There are many survivals in western countries, such as the bear festival that has long formed a part of springtime celebrations in parts of southern France. In these rites a man dressed as a bear emerges from a symbolic cave, terrorizes the town and performs a mock abduction of a woman. Other communities in western Europe and in Slav countries have parallel ceremonies which include a bear figure emerging from his winter's sleep.

Bear worship and the tales of bear heroes tend to have this common link that the bear's 'dormancy', or hibernation, has a powerful and timeless symbolic meaning, closely connected to one of the most fundamental patterns of all mythology. The bear's emergence from his winter sleep is a symbolic *rebirth*, which parallels the death and resurrection of the hero-god in so many of the world's fertility religions. The bear's continuing presence in festivals of spring, when crops are 'reborn', and in folklore and religious belief generally, testifies to the importance the animal has had through all the ages of mythology.

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* (Viking Press, 1968); Rhys Carpenter, *Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics* (University of California Press, 1974).

The famous murder in Canterbury Cathedral has been interpreted as a pagan ritual sacrifice

THOMAS BECKET

BORN IN 1118, Thomas Becket rose from humble origins to become the bosom friend of one of the most formidable of all English kings, Henry II. In 1162 Henry made the mistake of installing Becket as Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket threw himself wholeheartedly into this role, defending the privileges of the Church with more enthusiasm than most of his subordinate bishops, and substituting a hairshirt and other asceticisms for his former life of luxury.

Becket quarrelled so violently with Henry that he had to escape to France in 1164. He stayed there till 1170, when the Pope forced a reconciliation and Becket returned to England. But King and Archbishop again fell out and on 29 December 1170 Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral by four knights of Henry's court, acting on the king's irritable outburst, which he had not meant to be taken seriously, 'Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?'

In 1172 Becket was declared a saint. Miracles occurred at his tomb in Canterbury, which became a popular place of pilgrimage: the most famous, though fictitious, pilgrims being those described in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Killing the God

Henry VIII plundered Becket's shrine but otherwise the turbulent priest was left in peace until this century, when it was suggested that the murder in the cathedral had been a ritual killing of the divine king, with Becket acting as a substitute for Henry II.

This interesting but improbable idea stems from the theory advanced in the 1920s by the Egyptologist Margaret Murray that medieval witchcraft was the survival of the old pagan religion of western Europe. (See MODERN WITCHCRAFT.)

In her book *The God of the Witches*, published in 1933, Margaret Murray argued that an important ritual in the old pagan cult was the sacrifice of the god, in the person of the king or tribal chieftain. He was killed because he contained in himself the fertility of his land: if he was allowed to grow old, the life of his people would fail with his. At first the kings themselves were sacrificed, often at a regular interval of seven or nine years. Later, the king's place was frequently taken by a substitute. (See KING.)

The startling part of the theory was the suggestion that the practice of slaying the god survived long after western Europe had been, apparently, thoroughly Christianized. Margaret Murray said that the interval in England was evidently measured in multiples of seven years. King Edmund of the English was stabbed to death in 946; Edmund Ironside died, possibly murdered, 70 years

Michael Holford

Head of Thomas Becket on a pilgrim's badge. Canterbury became a popular place of pilgrimage after he was murdered there by Henry II's knights in 1170

British Museum

British Museum

A modern but improbable theory suggests that Becket was ritually murdered as a substitute for the divine king *Left* The murder of Becket showing the cap which resembles the Phrygian cap of the god Mithras *Right* Miracles occurred at Becket's tomb and he was declared a saint

later in 1016; William Rufus was killed in the New Forest, shot by an arrow, 84 years afterwards in 1100; and Thomas Becket was murdered after another 70 years' interval in 1170.

The first three of these supposed victims were all kings. Becket was brought in on the suggestion, for which there is no evidence, that the archbishops of Canterbury had inherited from a pagan high priest the duty of acting as substitute for the king when a royal victim was needed.

The most interesting statement of the theory is Hugh Ross Williamson's book *The Arrow and the Sword*, published in 1947. He examined the deaths of William Rufus and Becket in detail, and suggested that Henry made Becket Archbishop to crown the heir to the throne, the younger Henry. This was meant to be followed by Becket's murder in 1163. The purpose was to make sure that the young Henry would be accepted by the people as the new divine king, consecrated by the old one before his sacrificial death. In fact, however, Becket did not crown the young Henry and was not murdered in 1163.

Ross Williamson maintained that both Henry II and Becket were Cathar initiates (see CATHARS) and that the Cathar heresy had itself been influenced by Mithraism, a religion which had been a strong rival to Christianity in the early centuries AD. Immediately before Becket was killed, one of the knights struck off the Archbishop's cap. The earliest illustration of the scene, dating from about 20 years after the event, shows the cap, which resembles the Phrygian Cap of the god Mithras.

In the end the theory of Becket as a slain god is unconvincing. It requires too much ingenious juggling with small scraps of evidence, and it requires us to believe that in a society outwardly Christian the highest in the land were the leaders of a pagan cult and practised human sacrifice, without any convincing evidence of the fact having survived.

Bee

Symbol of industry and orderly government: frequently a messenger of the gods; according to a Breton story, bees sprang from the tears shed by Christ on the Cross, and in Europe it was always considered wise to tell the bees of a death in the family, or they would desert the hive.

See HONEY

N.H.P.A.

Beech

The 16th century herbalist Gerard says, 'the wood is hard and firm, which being brought into the house there follows hard travail of child and miserable deaths': in ancient Greece the sacred grove of Zeus at Dodona consisted of beeches and oaks.

See TREES

N.H.P.A.

BEELZEBUB

A MONK OF THE abbey of Stablo in the Netherlands confessed in 1595, without undergoing torture, to being a witch. He said that the demonic being worshipped by witches at their sabbaths was Beelzebub. They kissed his footprints and before they began their feast said grace 'in the name of Beelzebub, our Grand Master, Sovereign Commander and Lord'. Two French witch hunters of the early 17th century, Pierre de Lancre and Henri Boguet, also said that witches blessed their food in Beelzebub's name, and Boguet added that they called him 'the creator and preserver of all things'; in other words, that they regarded him as their god.

In the 16th century the demonologist John Wier, a pupil of Agrippa, gave Beelzebub pride of place in a catalogue of demons as supreme chieftain of hell, with Satan ranking below him. A book published in Germany in 1505, attributed to the celebrated magician Faust, lists Beelzebub as one of the five most powerful demons (the others being Lucifer, Satan, Astaroth and Beherit). One story was that it was Beelzebub with whom Faust made his pact.

Two 18th century magical textbooks, the *Grimorium Verum* and the *Grand Grimoire*, state that the supreme trinity of evil consists of Lucifer, Beelzebub and Astaroth. When summoned by a magician, Beelzebub appears in the form of a huge fly.

Conjuring up so fearsome a power is considered peculiarly dangerous. S. L. Mathers, a magician who died in 1918 (see GOLDEN DAWN), said that unless the magic circle is properly drawn, to summon up Beelzebub would probably result in the death of the magician on the spot. This did not deter his pupil Aleister Crowley from invoking Beelzebub with 49 attendant demons and sending them to attack Mathers. The reactions of Mathers are not recorded.

Beelzebub's reputation as a spirit of evil so powerful that he could be ranked with, or even take precedence of, Satan goes back at least to Jewish popular belief at the time of Christ, when he was regarded as the prince of devils. When Jesus expelled demons from the bodies of the sick, he was accused of doing it with Beelzebub's assistance.

The demon was originally Baal-zebub, god of the Philistine city of Ekron, west of Jerusalem. Ahaziah, King of Israel in the 9th century BC, fell ill and sent messengers to the god asking whether he would recover (2 Kings, chapter 1). The name of the god seems to mean 'lord of flies', though it is not clear whether he ruled flies or drove them away; or possibly his priests took omens from the flight of flies. But as flies were long believed to be generated in mouldering corpses, the title Lord of the Flies was a suitable one for a great prince of demons, which are creatures of decay and corruption.

BELIAL

THE DEMON OF LIES, Belial or Beliar, plays a less prominent part in medieval and modern demonology than Beelzebub, though both were once great powers of evil in Jewish belief. This is probably because the main early references to Belial are in writings which were not included in the Bible.

The name may be a shortening of Hebrew *beli yaal*, 'without worth'. Depraved debauchees are sometimes called 'sons of Belial' in the Old Testament but in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, of the late centuries BC, Belial achieves much higher rank as chief of devils, prince of deceit, the malicious one, the tempter, the ruler of evil inclinations and master of hypocrites. In one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*, he is the leader of the forces of evil. 'But for corruption thou hast made Belial, an angel of hostility. All his dominion is in darkness, and his purpose is to bring about wickedness and guilt.' St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (chapter 6) contrasts light with darkness, Christ with Belial. 'For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial?'

The *Sibylline Oracles*, a mixture of Jewish and early Christian propaganda, predicts that Belial will appear on earth. He will come from Samaritan stock, the Samaritans and the Jews being bitter enemies.

> . . . Beliar shall come in later time and shall raise the mountain heights and raise the sea, the great fiery sun and the bright moon, and he shall raise up the dead and shall perform many signs for men: but they shall not be effective in him. Nay, but he deceives and many shall he deceive.

This picture of a worker of deceptive wonders is probably connected with the belief in the Antichrist or Antimessiah, the incarnation of evil who will appear to counterfeit the miracles of the true Messiah and delude people into worshipping him.

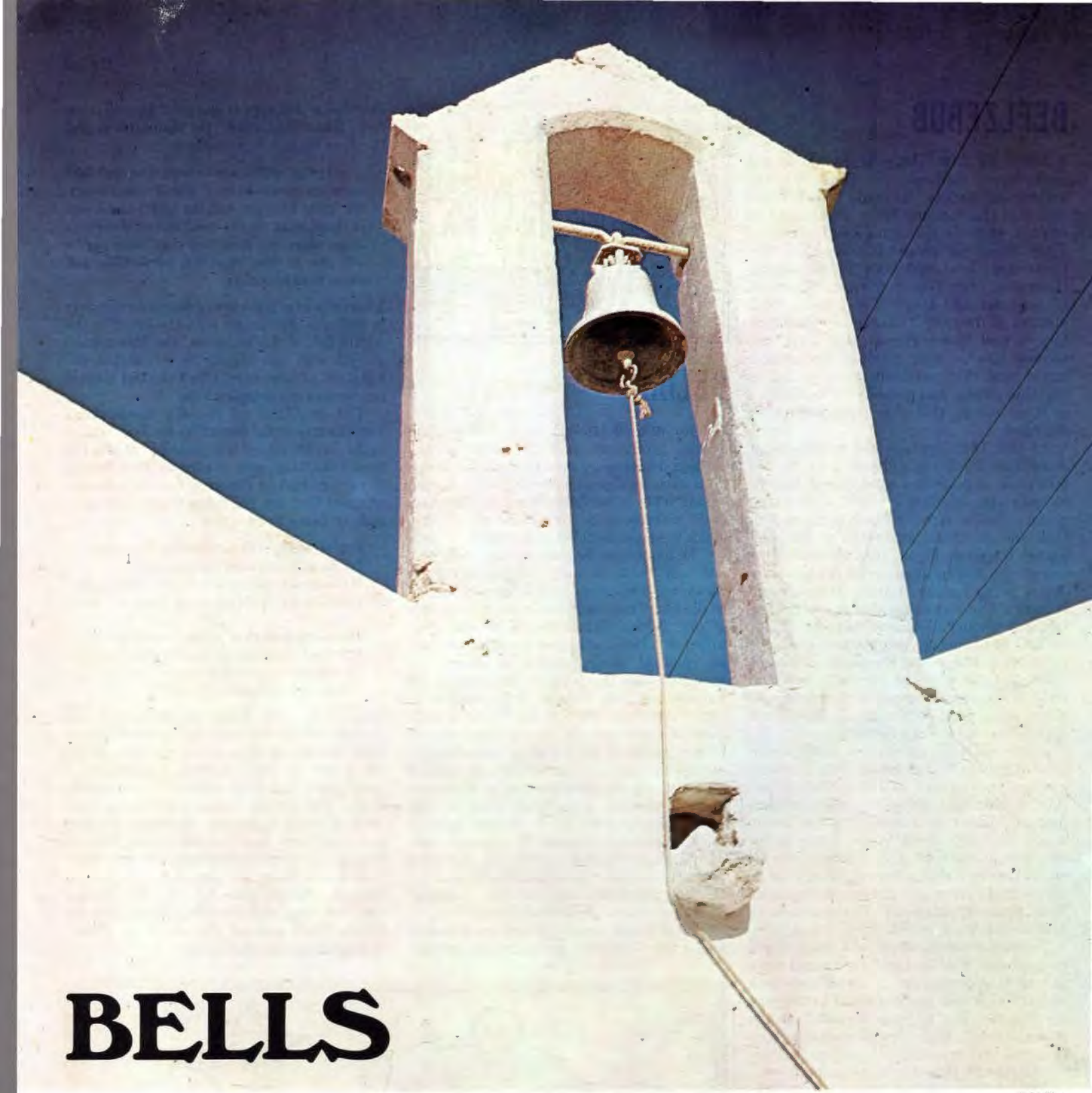
The emphasis on Belial's deceitfulness may have been influenced by the Zoroastrian belief in Ahriman, the principle of the Lie (see AHRIMAN), and in turn enabled Milton to picture him in *Paradise Lost* as a honey-tongued liar, the politician whose only principle is 'peace at any price':

> A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed
> For dignity composed and high exploit:
> But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
> Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low;
> To vice industrious, but to noble deeds
> Timorous and slothful.

Beelzebub and Belial were among the demons which the mass-murderer Gilles de Rais attempted to summon up (see GILLES DE RAIS). A cock, a dove, a pigeon or a turtle-dove had to be offered them to pacify them. The simple verbal formula for summoning them illustrates the belief of medieval magicians that God would help them to conjure up demons, however nefarious their motives for doing so. 'I conjure you Baron, Sathan, Belial, Belsebut, by the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, by the Virgin Mary and all the saints, to appear before us and to speak to us . . .'

British Museum

Above **Belial presents himself and four demon companions to Solomon and Moses** ***Right*** **The demon of lies standing at the mouth of Hell, here represented by the dragon's gaping jaws, from the German** ***Book of Belial*****, 1463**



BELLS

C. M. Dixon

'And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' The tolling bell is both a mark of death and a defence against evil

BELLS have been used for social, ritual and magical purposes from time immemorial. In the pagan temples of antiquity the bell's outer shell was regarded as female, and the clapper, a later substitution for the hammer with which the bell was originally struck, as male. The use of bells in the rites of religion probably stems from their early role in magic. They were rung by the Chinese to summon rain, by the Tyrolese to protect the harvest. Even bells attached to domestic animals had the additional function of affording protection against evil spirits, as in modern Italy where they are worn by horses and cattle as a defence against the Evil Eye.

The development of sophisticated religions failed to relegate these ancient symbols to the past. In the Old Testament the robes of the High Priest were adorned with golden bells, and bells also played a significant role in the religions of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hindus and Egyptians. The Christian Copts of Africa rang bells as a defence against the Evil One, and the old pagans of the North often inscribed bells with the hammer symbol of Thor, the thunder god.

The establishment of Christianity in northern Europe witnessed a further development of the same theme, only now it was the dwarf elemental spirit and the pagan ghost which fled pursued by the terrifying ringing of sanctified Christian bells. As Knappe observed, in his *Science of Folklore*, 'the churchbells, betokening the coming of a new religion, must have been thought to be unpleasant to a heathen ancestor's ghost.'

The Baptism of Bells

The casting and particularly the consecration (making sacred) of church bells has always been accompanied by elaborate ceremonies. In Catholic Europe they were dedicated to the saints, without which rites, some believed, they could not sound or have the power to combat evil spirits. The baptism of a bell required the presence of a bishop or his deputy and the use of holy water, oil, salt and cream. The bell was washed, crossed, anointed and prayed for in the name of the

Trinity, and presents were given to the priest on its behalf. In addition it was essential that it should have god-fathers 'of high rank'.

The bell was taken to the church decked with flowers, a journey accompanied by much merry-making. The wild drinking for which the celebrations were notorious continued well into modern times, to the displeasure of the clergy.

Church bells are often inscribed with a few words illustrative of their functions, of which the following are examples:

> When female virtue weds with manly grace
> We ring with rapture and we spread it forth.

or more sombrely:

> I call the quick to church
> and dead to grave.

The pre-Reformation pardon bell, sounded before and after the services, and the other special chimes, were intended primarily to scare away evil spirits and for this reason bell-ringing was inseparable from early religious processions. In times of plague, bells were rung to disperse the 'corrupt airs' that contemporary physicians considered to be a primary cause of pestilence, a doctrine that influenced medical thinking as late as the 17th century. Even in modern times southern American Negro mothers are often convinced that a child can be cured of stuttering if it drinks from a bell, so acquiring the bell's ability to enunciate clearly. In England it was generally believed that a bell rope attached to the girdle of a woman in labour assisted childbirth.

It Tolls for Thee

The frequent tolling of funeral bells must have induced a contemplative state of mind in the old days when the normal expectation of life was limited to about 40 years. It was generally accepted that until the passing bell had been rung the soul remained earth-bound, since it only 'rose to heaven on the sound of the bell'. In Scotland the head of the corpse was occasionally pillowed upon a bell as an additional insurance against the Devil. In the north of England the tolling of bells was often codified into easily recognizable terms: 'nine knells for a man, six for a woman and three for a child.' The mournful notes of the passing bell constituted a general summons to the parish to pray for the soul of the dying, while at the same time serving as a charm to protect the departed from the marauding devils which were present in force upon these occasions. Following death, it was long the custom for a bellman to patrol the parish calling for prayers for the departed. In pre-revolutionary France the 'Bellman of the Dead' arrayed in deacon's robes adorned with death's heads and bones, marched through the streets ringing his bell and intoning for the benefit of his fellow citizens, 'Awake you that sleep and pray to God for the dead.'

At the centre of the demonic theory was the conviction that evil spirits expressed their hatred of Christianity by causing outbursts of thunder and lightning and mighty gales, which could be countered and overcome by the furious ringing of church bells, some of which bore the inscription *fulgura frango, dissipo ventos*, 'lightning and thunder, I break asunder.' John Aubrey in his 17th century *Miscellanies* refers to the ringing of the great bell at St Germain in Paris during storms, and at London's Old St Paul's there was a special fund to pay for 'ringing the hallowed belle in great tempestes and lightenynges'.

An 8th century formula for the blessing of church bells alludes to this doleful theme.

> Whenever this bell sounds, let the power of enemies retire. So also the shadow of phantoms, the assault of whirlwinds, the stroke of lightnings, the injuries of tempests and every spirit of the storm winds.

The tolling of the church bells could be surprisingly effective against the witches and sorcerers who for centuries infested the night skies, since their fragile broomsticks could never withstand the dynamic impact of a truly clamorous peal. In the words of the old Italian peasant song:

> Much the witches fear the spell.
> When by night they hear a bell
> Off they fly over the sky
> When they hear dondo dondo.

For fiends in human shape as well as the unorthodox, condemned to spiritual death, the bell had a particularly ominous role to play in the awe-inspiring Christian rites of excommunication, popularly known as 'bell, book and candle', when it was tolled as if the sinner had already died.

Swiss National Tourist Office

Spectrum Colour Library

Left **Church bell at Kritsa in Crete; tolling a bell for a dead man summoned the people to pray for his soul. In northern England they tolled nine knells for a man, six for a woman and three for a child**

Right **The Alpine cow bell not only indicates the whereabouts of the herd, but is also thought to drive away evil spirits which might harm the animal**

Below **The bells worn by hippies in the 1960s symbolized peace and non-violence, perhaps a survival of the tradition that the ringing of bells keeps evil influences at bay**

C. M. Dixon

U.S. Travel Service

Left **Bell in a Byzantine church: there is a superstition that drinking from a bell cures stuttering, giving the sufferer the freely wagging tongue of the bell**

Below **The Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, first received its name during the antislavery movement of 1839; it cracked after ringing on Washington's birthday in 1846**

Bells of Danger

The many ancient superstitious usages attached to bells and bell-ringing came under severe criticism at the Reformation. A questionnaire issued by the Archdeanery of York asks: 'Whether there be any within your parish or chapelry that use to ring bells superstitiously upon any abrogated holiday or the eves thereof?' The ritual use of church bells became more strictly controlled; nevertheless, as far as laymen were concerned, much of the old mystique of the bell survived Puritan interference. Even today one comes upon the belief among older people that those born at the chime hours, 3, 6, 9 and 12 o'clock, are not only blessed with second sight but can see ghosts. An even more persistent superstition holds that it is highly ominous for a church bell to ring without human aid. This portends a death in the parish within seven days, especially if it occurs during a church service, while should it boom at a wedding it means that either the bride or groom is doomed to an early death. This belief has been modified into the modern superstition that the tinkling of a telephone without apparent cause is destined to be followed by bad news.

Bells could be extremely disturbing when they were rung both as a summons and as a warning to the people of fire or danger. They were then rung backwards, that is, starting with the tenor and concluding with the treble. This was the signal for popular risings during the French Revolution and for the massacre of the Huguenots on St Bartholomew's Eve.

The curfew bell, originally devised as a way of ensuring a general extinction of fires and lights in the household, became in the hands of William the Conqueror an instrument of despotism used to forestall a popular rising by keeping the people from the streets. Oddly enough it was not only human beings but elemental spirits who regulated their lives according to curfew hours, as is evidenced by a speech in King Lear: 'This is the foul fiend flibbertygibbet. He begins at Curfew and walks 'til cock-crow.'

Bells of Joy

There is no more joyful a sound than the ringing of church bells at weddings and coronations when the clamour is at its most tumultuous: nor so much solemnity as when they toll for a royal funeral. At the death of any member of the British royal family the bell of St Paul's chimes for an hour and at the death of the monarch for two.

The joy expressed by the jingling of bells was integral with the motley world of dancing humanity, whether it was the Jester and folk dancer of old Europe, or the Deer Dancer of Mexico. The bell also had a considerable influence on spiritual life at sea for it not only regulated the watches but was regarded as the ship's soul. However securely lashed, it invariably tolled when the vessel sank.

The deeply-felt need to invest bells generally, and church bells in particular, with quasi-human qualities often took the most bizarre forms. It was believed, for instance, that bells refused to ring if they were insulted, or sweated blood with terror and took revenge for injuries inflicted upon them. Bells became involved in the stream of folk drama which our ancestors so loved to create. A mermaid swam from the River Mersey and was heard ringing a bell at dawn, and bells could be heard tolling from sunken villages deep beneath the sea. Off the coast of Lancashire the bells of the drowned church of Kilgromod gently chime the hours. Seven miles out beyond Cardigan Bay they murmur from a hidden city, marked by the Caer Wyddno rocks. Midnight or Christmas Eve is the time when ghostly bells are most often heard. Rarely, and then only after a great storm, the mournful notes of a bell can be heard from beneath the muddy waters of the River Crouch in Essex, where it was jettisoned centuries ago by the seven witches of Canewdon. This is a tale reported from other lands, the culprit more often than not being the Devil.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: C. Hole, *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* (Hutchinson, 1961); T. Ingram, *Bells in England* (Muller, 1954); A. H. Knappe, *The Science of Folklore* (Methuen, 1961).

This great hero, the slayer of the monster Grendel, was finally killed by a fire-breathing dragon which had attacked his people

BEOWULF

BEOWULF IS the hero of the only long complete poem left to us in the Anglo-Saxon language which is not primarily Christian in content. The poem, of 3182 lines, is contained in a manuscript of about 1000 AD, which survived the wholesale destruction of monastic libraries during the Reformation and ultimately reached the British Museum. From the long arguments of scholars there has emerged a keen appreciation of the poem's greatness as a work of art. It is one of the outstanding achievements of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Beowulf was a prince of the Geats, a people whom scholars have tried to identify with the Gautar or Götar of central Sweden or with the Jutes of Denmark. Many Danish and Swedish characters in the poem are known from other sources but Beowulf himself is not found anywhere else.

The Lair of Grendel

The poem opens in Denmark, where the aged king Hrothgar built a splendid royal hall called Heorot. This provoked a series of attacks from an evil man-eating monster named Grendel, who lived in a cave beneath a lake and haunted the lonely moorland. He hated the lights, music and laughter at banquets in the hall, and he killed and devoured the Danish champions who encountered him, for no sword could wound him.

When he heard this, the young prince Beowulf set off by sea and offered his services to Hrothgar. In reply to a hostile challenge from one of the Danish thanes, he claimed to have slain water-monsters in a great swimming exploit in boyhood, and to be capable of overcoming Grendel by his bodily strength alone. He lay down with his men in the hall that evening, and at dead of night Grendel pushed open the barred doors and entered in search of victims. He seized and devoured one of the Geatish warriors, but when he reached Beowulf the hero seized him in a powerful wrestling grip from which he could not free himself. After a long and desperate struggle, the noise of which brought terror to the Danes in the buildings beyond, Grendel realized that he was outmatched. He tore himself free, leaving his arm in Beowulf's grasp, and struggled back to his lair, mortally wounded.

There was much rejoicing in Heorot, and Grendel's arm was fastened to the wall as a trophy, while Hrothgar and his queen presented splendid gifts to Beowulf in recognition of his victory. But that night a second monster, Grendel's mother, came to the hall to take vengeance for her son, and carried off one of the Danish noblemen. In his grief the king appealed to Beowulf, and a small company set off to follow her tracks to the lake. It was a sinister place, shunned by men and beasts alike, where serpents and strange creatures could be seen on the water, and the head of the slaughtered Dane was set on the cliff above. Beowulf dived into the lake, taking with him the famous sword Hrunting, which Unferth the Dane lent him for the enterprise.

It was some hours before he reached the cave of the monsters, and immediately Grendel's mother leapt upon him, and he found the sword Hrunting useless against her. Only his armour of chainmail saved his life when she brought him to the ground and tried to stab him, but at that moment he caught sight of a huge sword hanging within his reach, and with this he was able to overcome the monster and cut off her head. By the light of a fire in the cave, he found Grendel himself lying dead and cut off his head also to take back to Heorot, together with the hilt of the wonderful sword, whose blade had now melted like ice in the blood of the monsters.

The Last Adventure

The second part of the poem is concerned with Beowulf's last adventure, after he had reigned long and gloriously as king of the Geats. The old king was called on to defend his people from the hostility of a winged, fire-breathing dragon, which dwelt in a stone tomb beneath a burial mound, and there guarded a hoard of treasure, heirlooms of a noble family, buried with the last of their line. A runaway slave stole a cup from the mound while the dragon slept, and in fury the monster began to raid the land of the Geats, setting their halls aflame and spreading terror and destruction.

Beowulf had a huge iron shield made for him and set out to challenge the dragon. The dragon attacked him with flames and poison and bit him with its sharp teeth, at which Beowulf's men fled in fear. Only one youth called Wiglaf went to the help of his king, and between them they slew the dragon, though not before Beowulf was on the point of death. Wiglaf brought out the treasure from the mound and laid it before the dying king, and Beowulf gave the young man his golden collar, armour and weapons, since he had no son to succeed him.

Beowulf died before the cowardly thanes returned. The poem ends with Wiglaf's bitter rebuke to them, and with the building of a great funeral pyre for the dead hero, and a mighty mound of earth over the ashes as his lasting memorial.

This gilded figure of a dragon with wings and teeth, from the front of the great shield found in the royal ship-grave at Sutton Hoo, resembles the description of the fire-breathing monster that killed Beowulf

Michael Holford

A wealth of scholarship has been expended on the interpretation of this poem, and there have been many theories about its origin and meaning. In the 19th century it was thought to be based on pagan Nature myths, in which a light hero battled against darkness and winter. All this is now discounted, and the poem is generally regarded as the work of one poet of Christian times, although he may have used earlier lays in its making.

The Sutton Hoo Burial

On the other hand, there is much in the poem based on oral and native traditions. The presentation of the story is in keeping with that of heroic oral poetry in other countries and periods, while the rich tapestry of stories alluded to in the poem, such as the battle in Finn's hall, the vengeance of Ingeld, Sigemund's dragon-slaying and the departure of Scyld in his funeral ship are themes familiar in early Germanic and Scandinavian tradition.

Archeological evidence shows that the poem's descriptions of weapons, ornaments, halls and ships are in close and sometimes detailed agreement with Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship of the 6th and 7th centuries. The boars described as protective symbols on helmets accord with 6th century practice in Sweden and such a boar crest survives from a 7th century Anglo-Saxon grave.

In particular, objects from the royal ship-grave at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, dated to the first half of the 7th century, have thrown light on some passages in the poem. The helmet found there closely resembles that of Beowulf, while on the great shield is set the gilded figure of a dragon with wings and teeth, like the creature of the poem. The Sutton Hoo treasure shows how close were the links between East Anglia and Uppland in Sweden in the 7th century which helps to account for the interest in Swedish affairs shown in *Beowulf*. The ship buried in the grave gives new interest to the description of the Danish king sent out to sea after death, surrounded by weapons and national treasures. There is a well-established tradition in Scandinavian mythology of a divine king-ancestor departing by ship to the land of the dead, and both here and in the detailed descriptions of cremation funerals the poem shows a remarkable familiarity with pre-Christian traditions and practices as they survived in England in the last period of heathenism.

Bear Hero

Use of folktale motifs has also been noted, in particular that of the Bear's Son, the hero with certain bear-like characteristics. The name Beowulf is thought to mean 'Bee-Wolf', which denotes the bear, the enemy of the bees because he steals their honey. There are also a number of Scandinavian tales where the hero fights two monsters, a giant and a dragon, and goes down either below the water or under the earth, while his friends above ground desert him, thinking him dead. Traditions of crentures of the Grendel type and of dragons in mounds have also left their mark on local folklore i various parts of England.

Certainly the poet was drawing on heroi and native material as well as on th Christian learning of the monasteries fusing his material with great skill. It ha been noted that direct Christian reference are limited almost wholly to the book o Genesis, but on the other hand the language and assumptions of the poem imply familiarity with Christian teaching.

Scholars generally date *Beowulf* well into the 8th century, though a small minority group argue for a date after the Viking invasions of the 8th to 10th centuries. There is argument about whether it was composed as an oral work and later written down, at what date it was first committed to writing, and where. Origins in Northumbria, in East Anglia, to which the Sutton Hoo treasure belongs, and in Mercia, one of the dominant kingdoms in the 8th century, under the great king Offa (d 796) have all been suggested.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

FURTHER READING: *Beowulf,* trans. M. Alexander (Penguin, 1973); G. N. Garmonsway, J. Simpson and H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Beowulf and Its Analogues* (Dutton), which includes translations of other sources connected with the poem. See also R. W. Chambers ed., *Beowulf: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 1959); D. Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford University Press, 1951).

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Moroccan Tourist Board

Moroccan Tourist Board

The Berbers of North Africa are devout Moslems but have preserved some curious beliefs of their own

BERBERS

BERBER IS THE name given to the inhabitants of North Africa, principally the nationals of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauretania and, to some extent, Libya. The term distinguishes them from the Arabs, from whom they differ in language, customs and appearance.

During the Roman period, lasting from about 50 BC to 600 AD, the Berbers in the cities became first Latin-speaking Romanized pagans, then Latin-speaking Romanized Christians, among whom was St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

The Arab invasions of Roman Africa at the end of the 7th century and through the first half of the 8th century swept away both the Latin culture and the Christian religion, suggesting that neither was very deep-rooted and that both were superimposed on the ancient Berber tradition.

The Berbers should not be confused with the Arabs, despite the fact that the Berbers are Moslems and usually speak Arabic in addition to their own language. But they stubbornly retain certain characteristics which go back to their ancient traditions.

The most striking of these characteristics is their treatment of, and attitude towards, women. Women go unveiled, take an active part in affairs, and, in the case of the Touareg, a Berber people who live mainly in the Sahara, have almost as much social and sexual liberty as women have in Europe. Among strictly orthodox Moslems, particularly in Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, such latitude is unheard of.

Facing page **The firing of rifles, guns and pistols on ceremonial occasions is believed to drive off evil *jinn*, spirits who inhabited the earth before man was created *Above* The social and sexual liberty enjoyed by women is one of the main differences between Berbers and other African races. Unveiled, the faces of Berber women are emphasized with ornate jewellery and brightly woven head-dresses**

The Magic Cannon

The cannons of the Sultans of Morocco:
A whole rigmarole of ritual and belief grew around the cannons. They became, in effect, ambulant representatives of his Chereefian Majesty's person, possessing his power of *baraka* or blessing, his power to cure diseases, to receive petitions and offerings, and to grant asylum. Any malefactor who sat himself upon the shaft between the cannon's wheels acquired automatically the right of direct appeal to the Sultan, an appeal which no Sultan would refuse. 'I swear by the cannon of the Sultan' was a frequent and binding oath, and the cannons also received direct prayer, addressed customarily to their muzzles. They also received offerings, in the form of the heads of the enemy, and after a victory the cannons were completely hidden by the bloody heads piled on and around them. More bizarre still, during a temporary truce or parley in rebel territory, women of the Berber tribes could be seen kissing the big bronze gun barrels and praying to them for the defeat of the Sultan. The paradox was not apparent to them, for they venerated the Sultan as the *khalifa*, or representative, of God, and abhorred him as an oppressive tyrant of their people.

Gavin Maxwell *Lords of the Atlas*

Giraudon

St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo from 395 to 430 AD, and one of the most influential of all Christian theologians, was a Berber: painting by Botticelli

The Holy Essence

The Berbers are extremely devout and rigorously observe the basic tenets of Koranic law: the daily prayers, the prescribed fasts, pilgrimage to Mecca, and attendance at the mosque. The more bigoted of them are still strongly anti-Christian and are even more hostile to the Jews, particularly since the establishment of the state of Israel.

Berbers reverence a great many holy men, both dead and living. These saints, they say, can effect miraculous cures by reason of their *baraka* or 'holy essence'. This concept of baraka is the key to the Berbers' religious convictions and, at the same time, the reason why Europeans have so often been puzzled and even shocked by some of the customs prevalent in Barbary, as North Africa used to be called. Early travellers report the custom of collecting and conserving the spittle, the washing water and even the urine of the Moroccan sultans. Women would hasten up with a cloth to catch the expectoration of their monarch, as if they were receiving a valuable gift. In their view, of course, they were, since baraka was involved, and this holy essence pervades everything that a shereef (a descendant of the Prophet) and the holy men possess or even touch.

Sultans, shereefs and saints all possess baraka as a sort of birthright. Others can acquire it. For instance, a wife who is excessively kind to her husband's second wife may become a holy woman with her special baraka. Little children, being without sin, also have this virtue: they are said 'to know the language of angels'. When they grow up, they lose their baraka until they become bridegrooms or brides. Once married and settled down, they lose the quality again, until the man grows old and grey. Then he recaptures something of his childhood's baraka. The mentally deranged are also believed to possess this holy essence and are never mistreated.

Spirits of Night

To the Berber, the world is full of good and evil forces, notably the *jinn*, the spiritual beings who inhabited the earth before the creation of man (see JINN). The jinn live underground and only emerge at night, which is why the dark is more frightening than the light. However, they can he kept at bay with noise, and the louder the noise, the farther they remove themselves. This is the explanation of the firing of guns, rifles and pistols on important occasions like weddings.

Speculation as to the future of the Berbers must take into account the desire of the North African countries to modernize and industrialize as fast as possible. These processes are bound to mean the weakening and eventual abolition of old tribal conventions and customs.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: R. Montagne, *Berbers* (Biblio Dist., 1973).

BERTRAND

IN THE YEARS 1847 and 1848 various cemeteries in Paris were desecrated by what was feared to be a werewolf. Bodies were found torn from their graves and mutilated. In many cases the belly had been ripped open and the intestines pulled out. It was rumoured that some of the bodies had been chewed and gnawed.

At the Montparnasse cemetery, during a night in November 1848, the body of a woman in her 50s was dragged from her grave. A deep cut had been made in the body's neck and there was a huge incision in the abdomen. One arm had been cut off and placed between the corpse's legs. In December the coffin of a young woman was split open. The body was carried a short distance away from the grave but was not mutilated.

Those in charge of the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, where four female corpses had been disinterred and mutilated during two weeks in 1847, said that a creature part human and part animal had been seen, gliding among the graves. No one had been able to catch it, for it vanished like a ghost. Dogs howled and refused to go near it.

The fear grew that some supernatural horror, a man who at night turned into a wolf, was responsible. In the end, in March 1849, a trap was set and the culprit was caught. He was Francois Bertrand, a sergeant in the French army, 25 years old.

Sergeant Bertrand was not a werewolf in the folklore and horror story sense, a man physically transformed into an animal with fangs, fur and claws. He was a man who suffered from fits of necrophilia in which he felt as if he was a ravening animal. His case is of interest as an example of a psychological condition which has supported and probably helped to give rise to the belief in werewolves.

Fantasies of the Dead

Bertrand made a detailed confession to a doctor at the military hospital to which he was taken. The son of a peasant farmer, he had been a solitary child who loved animals. In his late teens he had enjoyed fantasies of torturing and ravishing women, both before and after they were dead. During these fantasies he masturbated. He searched for the dead bodies of animals, which he treated like the women of his day-dreams. 'I experienced in these circumstances extreme pleasure, an indefinable joy.' At this time, ironically enough, he was training to be a priest.

After he joined the army his craving for the dead bodies of women grew more and more powerful. He was driven to dig up and violate corpses against his will, he said in his confession, by a force which seemed to be outside him and which gave him no peace. He tore at the earth of the graves with his bare hands till the blood ran from them but he felt no pain. He did not seem to be himself but a ferocious animal.

Bertrand was tried before a military court, and sentenced to one year in prison.

BERMUDA TRIANGLE

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE, or the Devil's Triangle, is a large area of ocean within the triangle formed by the southern tip of Florida, Puerto Rico and Bermuda. Since 1854, about fifty ships have been lost without trace in the area. However, it should be clearly understood that many thousands of vessels regularly pass through the triangle in complete safety. What is special about the Bermuda Triangle is that for some reason the disappearance of ships and aircraft there has caught the imagination of authors who fervently insist that there must be some sinister 'force field' at work. The gradual build-up of this theory, with successive authors quoting preceding speculation as fact has all the makings of a modern legend. Typically, a place or location is attributed with magical powers – in this case the ability to devour unfortunate ships and airplanes. After the publication of several books which had elaborated upon this modern mystery, an American research librarian, Lawrence Kusche, decided to investigate their claims. He meticulously checked contemporary newspaper articles, insurance reports and government agency information. From this he was able to provide reasonable explanations for the disappearance of fifty 'mystery' ships.

FURTHER READING: Lawrence Kusche, *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery – solved* (Warner Books, 1975); *The Disappearance of Flight Nineteen* (Harper and Row, 1981).

This remarkable woman gave unstintingly of her restless gifts in her successive devotions to Anglo-Catholicism, atheism, women's emancipation, Theosophy and Indian nationalism. Her interest in the occult was a devouring passion.

ANNIE BESANT

ANNIE BESANT ENDED her *Autobiography* with these words: 'In life, through death, to life, I am but the servant of the great Brotherhood, and those on whose heads but for a moment the touch of the Master has rested in blessing can never again look upon the world save through eyes made luminous with the radiance of the Eternal Peace.' At this time (1893) she had been a Theosophist, a servant of the 'White Brotherhood', for only two years; but she had found a spiritual resting-place, a Master and a cause, after years of feverish and anguished seeking. To the end of her life she remained, and is remembered as, a Theosophist and a great humanitarian.

Annie Wood was born in London in 1847. Her father, William Wood, was versatile to the verge of instability; her mother, Emily Roche Morris, was calm, stable and conventionally pious. Annie, the second of three children, showed an early aptitude for religion and after being confirmed at the age of 14 became an intense and romantic Anglo-Catholic, immersing herself in the sacramental life of the Church and in the writings of the Church Fathers. She later confessed that she took her religion 'in strenuous fashion', speaking of her 'headlong vigour of conviction and practice', and allowing that she was 'of the stuff from which fanatics are made'.

In this phase she might well have become a nun, had the opportunity presented itself; but it did not, and in 1867 she married the Rev Frank Besant, an Anglican clergyman. It was anything but a love match. When her marriage had become no more than an unpleasant memory, she summed it up in these words: '. . . out of sheer weakness and fear of inflicting pain I drifted into an engagement with a man I did not pretend to love.' A friend, the journalist W. T. Stead, put it more crudely: 'She could not be the bride of Heaven, and therefore became the bride of Mr Frank Besant. He was hardly an adequate substitute.'

Free Thought and Birth Control

Gradually she moved from orthodox Christianity towards atheism. In desperation she consulted E. B. Pusey, the leader of the type of high Anglicanism she then professed. She was met with no understanding and was warned that she was suffering from intellectual pride. In 1873 she separated from her husband, and wrote the first of her anti-orthodox, free thought pamphlets, 'On the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth'.

In the following year, she read for the first time a copy of the *National Reformer*, journal of the National Secular Society, which she joined almost at once. The leader of the NSS was Charles Bradlaugh, then approaching the peak of his career as a radical politician and atheist; he and Annie Besant were kindred spirits. Within a few days she was offered work on the staff of the *National Reformer*, and soon became a lecturer on free thought topics, often travelling in the company of Bradlaugh. There is little doubt that she and Bradlaugh would have married, had they been free to do so; but both were legally bound, and by the time they were free, it was too late.

Mrs Besant's rise to fame and influence within the company of the secularists was meteoric (not the last time this was to happen, the pattern being repeated in other movements she was to join). In 1875 she became a vice-president of the National Secular Society. In 1877 she was prosecuted, with others, for selling 'obscene literature' – a book called *The Fruits of Philosophy*, advocating birth control. She was acquitted but a court case the following year was less successful from her point of view, for she lost the custody of her daughter, Mabel, to Frank Besant, who accused his wife of propagating 'the principles of Atheism' (she had published a book called *The Gospel of Atheism* in 1877), of associating with 'an Infidel Lecturer and Author named Charles Bradlaugh', and of publishing 'an indecent and obscene pamphlet'. Obviously, therefore, he thought that she was not a fit and proper person to have charge of a child.

Conversion to Theosophy

During the next ten years, Mrs Besant was tireless in her advocacy of feminist causes. She led the match-girls' strike of 1888, became one of the first women to enrol in London University (though she never obtained a degree) and continued her fight against orthodox Christianity, if anything more violently than before. In 1884 she met George Bernard Shaw, and joined the Fabian Society in 1885, soon becoming a member of its Executive Committee. Shaw later described her as 'a woman of swift decisions', who 'always came into a movement with a bound, and was preaching the new faith before the astonished spectators had the least suspicion that the old one was shaken'. This was the beginning of her ideological split with Bradlaugh, a split which became irrevocable in 1889, when to everyone's utter amazement Mrs Besant suddenly announced that she had become a Theosophist.

The reasons for this appear to have been twofold. First and perhaps most important, Annie Besant was religious by nature. Her violent rejection of orthodox Christianity was an emotional consequence of her unhappy marital experience with a priest of the Church of England, and there remained within her a spiritual void which sooner or later had to be filled. It was not without significance that she later confessed that for ten years or more, while preaching materialism and atheism, she had remained unconvinced by her own arguments and, for that reason perhaps, had shouted all the louder.

The second reason was the influence exerted on her by the extraordinary figure of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the co-foundress of the Theosophical Society, whose book *The Secret Doctrine* she had reviewed, and whom she met for the first time in March 1889 (see BLAVATSKY; THEOSOPHY). H.P.B., as she was known among Theosophists, was only the latest in a number of decisive masculine influences on Mrs Besant (for the masculine elements in H.P.B.'s personality were plain). Her public reputation was not of the best; but Mrs Besant chose to ignore this, arguing that even if Blavatsky were a fraud, this did nothing to invalidate the aims and teachings of the Theosophical Society.

These aims were summed up under three points: to found a Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race or creed; to forward the study of 'Aryan' literature and philosophy (later modified to the study of comparative religion); and to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

H.P.B., with a shrewd eye to a potentially valuable disciple, admitted Annie Besant to the inner counsels of the Society almost at once. By June 1889 she had become a member of the Esoteric Section of the Blavatsky Lodge, an inner circle specializing in the occult (another member of which at this time was the poet W. B. Yeats). Two years later, H.P.B. wrote to the American Theosophist leader, W. Q. Judge: 'It is only a few months that she studies occultism with me in the innermost group of the ES, and yet she has passed far beyond the others. She is not psychic or spiritual in the least – all intellect; yet she hears Master's voice when alone, sees his light and recognizes his voice.' 'Master' was Master Morya, one of the two greatest Tibet-based 'Mahatmas', or great souls (the other being Koot Hoomi), whose disciple Mrs Besant had become.

On H.P.B.'s death in 1891, a struggle for succession began between British, American and Indian factions. Mrs Besant eventually emerged as the leader of all but a section of the American Theosophists, who went their own way. In 1893 she accompanied a Theosophical delegation to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago and late in the same year set off on her first visit to India, thus beginning yet another phase in her kaleidoscopic life.

The Forged Letters

Soon after her arrival in India, she was approached by a group of Brahmins with a view to leading a national movement on Hindu lines. This would have been as distasteful to most Theosophists (who were officially neutral in religious matters) as it was to the Anglo-Indian community, and she was wise to refuse – for the time being. Instead she devoted herself wholeheartedly to the consolidation of the Theosophical movement, and to her own progress in the occult arts. In this latter quest she was profoundly influenced by an ex-Anglican clergyman named C. W. Leadbeater, a man whose moral character was frequently called in question, and who was suspended for a time from membership of the Theosophical Society, but whose hold on Mrs Besant was so strong that hypnotism has been suspected.

The struggle for leadership of the TS had resulted, among other things, in the revelation that some of the letters supposedly written by the Mahatmas had been forged.

Many Theosophists now refused to take the Mahatmas seriously but Mrs Besant continued to insist, as she had written in her *Autobiography*, '. . . that the great Sages spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky exist, that they wield powers and possess knowledge before which our control of Nature and knowledge of her ways is but child's play'. Indeed, it was the Mahatmas who first 'appointed' Mrs Besant President of the Theosophical Society in 1907, a decision which some Theosophists found difficulty in accepting. However, at a subsequent election, Mrs Besant was chosen President by a large majority.

The Krishnamurti Episode

By 1908 Mrs Besant's attention had begun to turn to the Hindu doctrine of *avatars* (incarnations), which held that God (in this case Vishnu) became man whenever circumstances warranted it; this could be read in the *Bhagavad Gita*, a work which Mrs Besant had published in an English version in 1895. Was the time now ripe for a new incarnation, for the appearance of a new world teacher? Mrs Besant felt that it was. And one was forthcoming.

Leadbeater believed that he had found the chosen one in a Brahmin youth, Jeddu Krishnamurti, and Mrs Besant followed his lead. The whole of the Krishnamurti episode was a fateful, tragi-comic mistake. The boy was 'discovered' in 1908. Adopted by Leadbeater and Mrs Besant, he was groomed for spiritual stardom for years on end, despite the protests of his bewildered father. The tragedy was reserved for Mrs Besant, who lived to see her protege renounce all pretensions of spiritual leadership. The TS also suffered; its sponsorship of Krishnamurti was one of the main causes of the defection of Rudolf Steiner, and the foundation in 1912, of the Anthroposophical Society (see STEINER).

During these years advanced occult experiments were carried out by Leadbeater and Mrs Besant, experiments which resulted in a number of publications, including *Man: Whence, How and Whither* (1913).

This book is devoted to tracing out the past incarnations of Theosophical and other personalities, and makes fascinating, if enigmatic reading. The characters are given classical names: Mrs Besant is Herakles, Leadbeater Sirius, and Blavatsky Vajra (Indra's thunderbolt in Hindu mythology). Others who appear include Bradlaugh as Lutetia and Julius Caesar as Corona.

A chapter written by Mrs Besant and entitled 'Black Magic in Atlantis' contains the following passage, which one would like to offer to a depth-psychologist. 'Herakles, the wife of Mars (Master Morya), was captured by Oduarpa (unidentified, perhaps Frank Besant) in the assault on the City of the Golden Gates that followed and completed his victory; she indignantly repulsed his advances, and catching up a dagger repulsed him with all her strength. The dagger slipped aside on his metallic casing, and laughing, he struck her down, outraging her as she lay half senseless: when she recovered consciousness, he summoned his horrible animals, and they tore her into pieces and devoured her.'

Fall from Favour

Although long sympathetic to the cause of Indian nationalism, Mrs Besant was not actively involved in Indian national politics until 1913, when she delivered a series of lectures in Madras on the subject 'Wake Up, India!' The following year saw her once more entering the field of political journalism with the *Commonweal*, 'A Journal of National Reform', and the *Madras Standard*, a newspaper which she took over and transformed into the *New India*.

She quickly achieved recognition as a nationalist leader. In 1916 she founded the Home Rule for India League, and in 1917 she was for a time interned by the authorities. On her emergence from internment, she was swept to the Presidency of the Indian National Congress on a wave of popular sentiment.

Her triumph was short-lived. Nationalism found another leader, M. K. Ghandi, who was less tied to constitutional methods, and her moderate attitudes fell out of favour with what was, to her, bewildering suddenness. As long as political power rested with the middle-class intelligentsia, she was a

force to be reckoned with, but when the balance shifted to the masses of the people she found herself for the first time in her life, an anachronism. She was a woman; she spoke no Indian language; and she was, despite everything, still English in her respect for constituted authority.

The last years of the Great War and the 1920s saw a further profound crisis within the Theosophical Society, as Leadbeater was consecrated bishop in the Old Catholic Church. Soon disowned by the Old Catholics, he founded the Liberal Catholic Church, taking many Theosophists with him. The final blow fell in 1929, when Krishnamurti, tired of being manipulated by others, renounced his 'Messiahship'. Annie Besant died in 1933. She was 85 years old.

Of all Annie Besant's manifold activities, it is her work in helping to arouse Indian national sentiment that is most likely to be remembered by posterity, although her labours in the cause of women's emancipation in late 19th century England were scarcely less important. Her sincerity few would question; her judgement was another matter altogether. She was proud, and although she had a sense of fun, most who knew her suspected that she had no sense of humour, and little genuine capacity for self-criticism. This may go some way toward explaining her errors of judgement, but it can never explain away a fascinating and incredibly many-sided personality, a lover of mankind and a woman whose need for commerce with the unseen world can be described as a devouring passion.

ERIC J. SHARPE

FURTHER READING: A. H. Nethercot's two books, published by Hart-Davis, *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant* (1961) and *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, are excellent but make no attempt to grapple with her Theosophical thought. She described her occult investigations in *Man: Whence, How and Whither* (Theosophical Publishing House, 1913).

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Annie Besant, self-styled 'servant of the great Brotherhood' and the most famous of British Theosophists. She believed 'that the great Sages exist . . . that they wield powers and possess knowledge before which our control of Nature and knowledge of her ways is but child's play'

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Bestiary

Collection of moral tales about real or fabulous animals, very popular in medieval Europe and providing artists with a guide to animal symbolism in Christian art and architecture; the whale, for example, is a form of the Devil because he lures seamen to their deaths, while the panther's sweetness of breath makes him an emblem of Christ.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Bewitchment

The act of putting someone under a spell, or the condition of being enchanted or entranced; from Old English *wicca*, a witch.

See PSYCHIC ATTACK.

Michael Holford

Michael Holford

The Sure Highway to Salvation

BHAGAVAD GITA

'Perhaps the most important mystical treatise in all the mystical traditions', the Gita added a new dimension to Hinduism – the element of love and devotion to a personal God

OF ALL THE HINDU scriptures the *Bhagavad Gita* is the best known, the best loved and the most read. In itself this is a little surprising, for it does not form part of the Hindu sacred canon, the *Veda*. In fact it is a tiny episode in India's vast epic, the *Mahabharata*, the story of the fratricidal war between two branches of the Kuru family; the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra on the one hand, and their cousins, the five sons of Pandu, on the other.

The principal ally of the sons of Pandu is Krishna, the chief of a related tribe, and he is strongly in favour of war. With this in mind he had offered himself as charioteer to Arjuna, the third of the Pandava brothers and his closest friend, and Arjuna had accepted. All seems ready for the battle to begin, but there is a last-minute hitch. Arjuna's warlike enthusiasm had never been in doubt, but at the last moment his nerve fails. Not that he is a coward, far from it, but he is overcome by a sense of the futility of it all and a vast compassion for the useless suffering that the war is bound to bring.

Krishna, however, is not only a tribal chieftain, but also God. He is the incarnation of the great god Vishnu and it is his will that the war should take place. This last-minute hitch does not please him and he finds Arjuna's compassion singularly out of place. Humanly speaking, Arjuna's arguments are in accordance with all that is best in the Indian tradition: it can never be right to kill one's own kinsmen, and Arjuna protests with all the ardour of an essentially chivalrous nature.

The incarnate God is not impressed. 'Do not play the eunuch,' he says, 'for this ill beseems you: give up this vile faintheartedness. Stand up, chastiser of the foe.' But Arjuna is no longer prepared to go against his conscience out of blind obedience to the incarnate God: he demands solid reasons for embarking on a course of action which seems to him wholly wrong.

On the purely moral plane Krishna has a very weak case and he knows it: so the

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the best-loved of all Hindu scriptures, the god Krishna explains the nature of the universe, as it appears to both Hindus and Buddhists, to his friend Arjuna. This lengthy philosophical poem is in fact only a small part of a vast epic, the *Mahabharata*, which tells of the fratricidal war between two branches of the Kuru family *Left* Two facing pages show the opposing parties ranged against each other, chariots against chariots, infantry against infantry, elephants against elephants, so as to ensure a fair trial of strength. These and all the illustrations that follow are from a Persian translation of the *Mahabharata*, dated 1761–63: British Museum

argument is very soon switched from the moral to the metaphysical level, and this gives the Gita a timeless quality that its setting in the epic would scarcely lead one to expect. Krishna's moral arguments are two: first it is Arjuna's caste-duty to fight; he is a warrior by caste, and the first duty of a warrior is to go to war. And even if he is so heretical as to set aside his caste-duty, then at least he might pay some attention to the dictates of honour. What *will* people say?

> All creatures will recount your dishonour which will never pass away; and dishonour in a man well trained to honour is an evil surpassing death. 'From fear he fled the battlefield' - so will they think of you, the mighty charioteers. Greatly esteemed by them before, you will bring contempt upon yourself. And many a word that is better left unsaid will such men say who wish you ill, disputing your capacity. What could cause you greater pain than this?

Krishna, however, lays little store by these ethical arguments, for ultimately they mean very little. The really weighty argument is that Arjuna, like any human being, is not really a free agent. What he does he is compelled to do by the very nature and structure of the universe. The ways of God are as mysterious in Hinduism as they are in Christianity, and it is not for man to question them since he cannot change them. How much more sensible to submit with a good grace than to kick against the pricks! Arjuna must see things as they are, and then he will have no cause to grieve, and in the Gita Krishna explains to his friend the nature of the universe as it was understood by Hindus and Buddhists alike. Once you have understood its nature, then you will have put aside all sorrow.

The Pearl of Great Price

The Hindu view of the universe conditions the Hindu view of salvation; and it is a very different view from our own. Its cornerstone is the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. With us man lives only once, and his conduct on earth conditions his future state of blessedness or woe. With the Hindus and the Buddhists things are very different. The soul has been in existence since before time began and it will continue to exist, imprisoned in a mortal body, for ever unless and until it can find a way of escape which will free it from matter once and for all. This, and not the purely ethical considerations about peace and war, is what is really important: this is the pearl of great price compared with which all the doings of men on earth are as chaff.

This is also Buddhist teaching; and it is significant that the main Buddhist teachings are tacitly assumed in the first chapters of the Gita. There is no such thing as final death: re-birth follows on death just as surely as death follows on birth. Physical death is simply a staging-post on our pilgrimage through time: there is nothing final about it, and hence there is no need to grieve: for 'who thinks this self can be a slayer, who thinks that it can be slain, both these have no right knowledge: it does not slay nor is it slain.'

But this is only half the reason. The association of the 'self' with the organism we usually consider to be ourselves is really fortuitous: the two do not belong to the same order of existence. The second we all know: it is everything we are accustomed to think of as ourselves: our body, our mind, our emotions and that part of us which discriminates between right and wrong, the combination of intelligence and will which we in the West call our soul. All this is the sphere of material Nature, ultimately reducible, then, to matter.

None of these constitutes the 'self', not even the soul, for one and all are concerned with action in this world, and action *(karma)* is not the sphere of 'wisdom' *(jnana)*, which is another word for pure contemplation. This is the province of the 'self', and it is beyond time and space and therefore beyond action, whether good or evil, since action can only take place in time and space. Death cannot touch the self, for what is timeless is necessarily free from death. Hence, to realize the self within you is to achieve immortality in this life. But how can this be done?

The Goal of Detachment

The answer is very simple: detach yourself from all things of this world, both the objective world outside you and, even more important, the subjective world within you. Your greatest enemy is desire; and if you but conquer desire, then you will reach that state of holy indifference where you will be invulnerable to all the vicissitudes of life and death. 'Hold pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat, to be the same: then brace yourself for the fight. So will you bring no evil on yourself.'

There is an apparent contradiction here; for once one has reached a state of sublime indifference, then what possible point can there be in fighting or, for that matter, in not fighting? Arjuna is very quick to see this. He asks why Krishna commands him 'to do a cruel deed' in going to war, and asks to be told 'the one simple way whereby I can attain the better part.'

From the Buddhist point of view which Krishna has hitherto been advocating, there is really no answer, for in Buddhism (and in some Hindu systems) there is a gulf fixed between the self and the world of space and time. Nirvana is that state of timeless bliss which lies altogether outside the phenomenal world, and which has nothing to do with God.

In the Gita, however, Krishna is God: and that makes a difference. As God he is both the still, unchanging state which the Buddhists call Nirvana, and also the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe: ultimately he is the sole agent since the universe is his body. Human beings are minute parts of him and the part cannot separate itself from the whole. As the whole acts so must it act too: its free will is apparent only, ultimately it must act in accordance with the will of God. At the end of the dialogue this is made very clear: 'In the region of the heart of all contingent beings dwells the Lord, twirling them hither and thither by his uncanny power like puppets mounted on a machine.'

How to Practise Yoga

Day after day, let the Yogi practise the harmony of soul: in a secret place, in deep solitude, master of his mind, hoping for nothing, desiring nothing.

Let him find a place that is pure and a seat that is restful, neither too high nor too low, with sacred grass and a skin and a cloth thereon.

On that seat let him rest and practise Yoga for the purification of the soul: with the life of his body and mind in peace; his soul in silence before the One.

With upright body, head, and neck, which rest still and move not; with inner gaze which is not restless, but rests still between the eyebrows;

With soul in peace, and all fear gone, and strong in a vow of holiness, let him rest with mind in harmony, his soul on me, his God supreme...

Yoga is a harmony. Not for him who eats too much, or for him who eats too little; not for him who sleeps too little, or for him who sleeps too much.

A harmony in eating and resting, in sleeping and keeping awake; a perfection in whatever one does. This is the Yoga that gives peace from all pain.

When the mind of the Yogi is in harmony and finds rest in the Spirit within, all restless desires gone, then he is a Yukta, one in God.

Then his soul is a lamp whose light is steady, for it burns in a shelter where no winds come.

The Bhagavad Gita (trans. Juan Mascaro)

Michael Holford

Salvation can be attained only by obeying God's law on earth, and the first duty of a member of the warrior-caste is to go to war. A night attack on the camp of the Pandu princes, who epitomize goodness and heroism

Michael Holford

The opposing warriors, the Kauravas, symbolize wickedness. Their wives and mothers mourn over the fallen, while the god Krishna, who has willed the war, looks on. In Hinduism, it is not for men to question the ways of God

Michael Holford

As Bhishma, commander of the Kaurava forces, lies dying from arrow wounds inflicted by Arjuna, he lectures the Pandu princes on government and persuades them not to renounce the world. The god Krishna looks on

Michael Holford

The battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas: Arjuna's reluctance to fight in the war is the starting point of the *Bhagavad Gita's* teaching

It is not for man to question the ways of God: he should humbly continue in that state of life into which he has been born until, by detachment, his works are 'reduced to ashes in the fire of wisdom'. This is man's spiritual goal but it is not incompatible with his doing his caste-duty on earth, even if that means bloodshed and war. To do one's caste-duty is the normal means of salvation since it is the way laid down by God, but it must be done in a spirit of complete disinterestedness. 'Therefore detached, perform unceasingly the works that must be done, for the man detached who labours on to the highest must win through.'

> The man who puts away all desires and roams around from longing freed, who does not think, 'This I am', or 'This is mine', draws near to peace. This is the fixed still state of Brahman; he who wins through to this is nevermore perplexed.

This is the goal of the contemplative, though it does not yet mean union with God, for God is for the moment seen as the God who is active in the universe, and Nirvana or Brahman is a state altogether beyond the universe of space and time.

If, however, the man who has 'become Brahman' feels himself to be coterminous with the entire universe, if he has realized that 'sameness' which remains unchanged when all else changes, does this not imply that he has realized his own profound identity with the Absolute? And does this not mean that the personal God incarnate as Krishna will simply disappear from his sight? To this Krishna has an unequivocal answer:

> Who sees Me everywhere, who sees the All in Me, for him I am not lost, nor is he lost to Me. Who standing firm on unity communes in love with Me as abiding in all beings, in whatever state he be, that athlete of the spirit abides in Me.

Nirvana or 'liberation', then, or 'becoming Brahman', does not mean that one loses God; for liberation is not complete unless it

is accompanied by love. This is what is wholly new in the Hindu tradition, and this is what makes the Gita perhaps the most important mystical treatise in all the mystical traditions. To achieve the integration of total personality by absorbing it entirely into its immortal centre is to 'become Brahman' and to reach Nirvana. But this is not the end but only the beginning of the mystical life, for the 'knowledge' one has obtained of eternal, timeless life must be supplemented by love of a Person who is beyond both Brahman and Nirvana. And so Krishna says: 'Of all athletes of the spirit the man of faith who loves and worships Me, *his inmost self absorbed in Me* – he is the most fully integrated.'

To know the source of Nirvana, however, means both to love God and also to fear him, for he can shatter this apparently changeless state whenever he chooses. Hence it is necessary for Krishna to manifest himself also as power, and the climax of the Gita is a tremendous vision of Deity in all its blazing fury. Arjuna is terrified and cries out:

> Ablaze with many-coloured flames you touch the sky, your mouths wide open, gaping, your eyes distended, blazing: so do I see you and *my inmost self is shaken:* I cannot bear it, *I find no peace*, O Vishnu.

This is a totally new aspect of God, the aspect we are familiar with from the Old Testament but which is totally foreign to the 'Nirvana that is Brahman too', for God is irresistible power as well as perfect peace.

The Sure Highway

The Gita adds a new dimension to Hinduism – the dimension of love and devotion. It is intended for both the average sinner and the perfected saint who has detached himself from all transient things. For the sinner divine grace is always available and it can break the law of karma, according to which all actions must bear their inevitable fruit: all that Krishna asks is a loving faith.

In the old religion salvation had been reserved to the three higher castes and the male sex: the Gita for the first time makes no such distinctions. Devoted love is both the means by which salvation or 'liberation' can be won, and after liberation has been won, the sure highway that leads on to God. The whole process is summed up at the end of the last chapter:

> Let a man be integrated by his soul now cleansed, let him restrain himself with constancy, abandon objects of sense – sound and all the rest – passion and hate let him cast out; . . . let him give up all thought of 'I', force, pride, desire and anger and possessiveness, let him not think of anything as 'mine', at peace; – if he does this, to becoming Brahman he is conformed. Brahman become with self serene, he grieves not nor desires; the same to all contingent beings he gains the highest love and loyalty to Me. By love and loyalty he comes to know Me as I really am, how great I am and who; and once he knows Me as I am, he enters Me forthwith.

But all this is conditional on obeying God's law on earth, and in Arjuna's case this means fighting a bloody war. 'If, relying on your ego, you should think, "I will not fight", vain is your resolve, for Nature will constrain you. You are bound by your own works which spring from your own nature.' But Krishna's last words are not a threat but a consolation:

> Bear Me in mind, love Me and worship Me, sacrifice, prostrate yourself to Me: so will you come to Me, I promise you truly, for you are dear to Me. Give up all things of law, turn to Me, your only refuge, for I will deliver you from all evils; have no care.

This in a nutshell is the message of the Gita. The 'knowledge' acquired in contemplation through which the 'self' realizes its own changeless and indestructible nature is supplemented by a devoted love of the personal God, who is the source of Brahman and Nirvana as much as he is of the everyday, visible world.

(See also BRAHMAN; NIRVANA)

R. C. ZAEHNER

FURTHER READING: Two important translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* that should be read are: the W. D. P. Hill edition, with notes (Oxford University Press, 1967), and the translation by Christopher Isherwood and Swami Prabhayananda, with an introduction by Aldous Huxley (Vedanta Press, 1972). A translation by Juan Mascaro was published in a Penguin edition in 1962.

British Museum

Bible

The sacred book of Christianity, combining the Old Testament, the holy books of Judaism, and the New Testament, the books added by the Christians; the bulk of the present New Testament was accepted as authoritative by Christians by c200 AD; other Jewish books, regarded as less authoritative but sometimes added to the Bible, are called the Apocrypha.

Bibliomancy

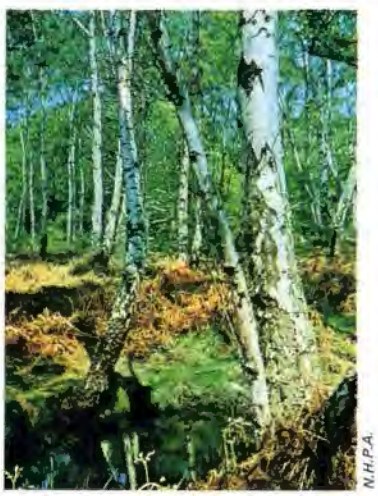
Divination from a book, frequently but not always the Bible; Virgil's *Aeneid* was commonly used in the Middle Ages, and the Koran by Mohammedans; the usual method is to open the book at random and, with your eyes shut or head turned away, touch a sentence or passage which is then believed to indicate what the future holds or what action should be taken.

See DIVINATION.

Bigfoot

The *yeti* of western America, found in old Indian legend, but also in stories of modern sightings, from mountainous north-west California; described as a hairy giant whose footprints (in plaster casts taken in 1958) measure 16 inches long; captured nn film in the late 1960s, he was revealed as some kind of large hairy biped, though too distant and indistinct for more accurate or detailed description.

See ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN; SASQUATCH.



N.H.P.A.

Birch

Sacred to the Scandinavian god Thor and a symbol of spring; a branch of birch on a house was thought to protect the family from the Evil Eye, lightning, gout and barrenness. Dakota Sioux burned birch bark to keep thunder spirits at bay. Broomsticks on which witches rode to the sabbath were traditionally made of birch; a north-eastern United States superstition warns against making birch brooms in May, which will 'sweep the family away'.

See TREES.

Mansell Collection

BIRDS

From Heaven or Near it

Men have always envied the birds their ability to fly, which brought them into contact with the sky powers and the gods. The curious colouring or behaviour of some birds – the blackcock's dance, the curlew's yellow eye, the hoopoe's feathered crest – has also given them supernatural associations

MAN'S INTEREST IN BIRDS throughout the ages has been partly due to the similarities which he noted between their behaviour and his own, and partly to what he considered their superiority to himself in some respects. Because, like himself, they go on two legs, construct homes, sing, dance and show off, man has felt an affinity with the birds but he has also felt amazement and envy at their ability to fly. And so he has viewed them ambivalently, as in some respects like men, in others like gods. This ambivalence is characteristic of much bird mythology and folklore, and has often found expression in efforts by men to identify themselves with birds by copying their appearance and behaviour.

One of the earliest human works of art apparently shows a man masquerading as a bird. It is a scene painted during the Old Stone Age in the cave of Lascaux in France. A human figure, wearing a bird mask, is depicted falling backwards. Beside the man is a post or stake on which a bird perches or, more probably, a model wooden bird is set. This lively scene has been thought to represent either the soul as a bird or a shaman in trance but, whatever its significance, the painting shows that at this period birds played an important role in ritual and belief. It is on a rock cornice in a narrow vertical fissure in the floor of the cave. Other pictures of birds in the caves of southern France and northern Spain are also usually engraved in comparatively inaccessible situations, which suggests that for Stone Age man these representations possessed a special and secret significance.

A good deal of oral folklore, particularly concerning animals and birds in the industrialized West, is the residue of more serious beliefs which have disintegrated or decayed. For example, the belief still current in America that the drumming noise of a woodpecker betokens rain is an isolated scrap of information practically devoid of significance until viewed in the context of the ancient beliefs and rituals of which it is the last evidence surviving in the countryside. Early man probably thought that the woodpecker was a bringer of thunder, and so it came to be associated with rain and storms.

The belief that an egg was involved in the process by which the universe came into existence is very ancient. Theories of this kind deal with the problem of which came first, the hen or the egg, and may be regarded as man's attempt, consciously or subconsciously, to avoid an infinite regress.

The Original Egg

According to one Egyptian myth the god Khnum made the cosmic egg from the mud of the Nile. According to another, the sun was the egg of 'the great cackler', a goose. About 600 BC the Cretan writer Epimenides mentioned the world-egg and this concept spread to Greece.

There are other myths in which supernatural persons or beings emerged from eggs: for example, the Peruvian tradition that the orders of society came from eggs of

Left **Max Ernst's *The Robing of the Bride*, a modern painting which seems to combine man's age-old envy of the birds' ability to fly, and his attempts to capture this ability by masquerading as a bird, with the horror of the unnatural mingling of human and non-human** ***Right*** **'A pelican in her piety': in Christian art the pelican feeding her young with her own blood was a symbol of charity, and of Jesus Christ who gave his life for mankind**

Imagination fashioned gigantic winged creatures controlling or causing clouds, wind, thunder and lightning

different metals, golden for the chiefs, silver for the nobles, copper for the common people. Hawaii is said to have emerged from the sea when a deity descended and laid an egg. The number of such myths and the huge area over which they have been recorded indicates that before written history began, man was so impressed by the remarkable powers of birds that he associated them with supernatural events, including the creation of the universe.

Right up to our own time eggs have aroused amazement and awe, for the process by which what looks like a large rounded pebble produces a living creature is worthy of wonder (see EGG).

The creation myths in which the nest-building of birds is involved show that this procedure early intrigued mankind (and inspection of nests may have influenced man's first attempts at basketwork and pottery). An amphibious creature, often a bird, is said to have brought the earth into being by fetching up mud from the water. This myth is found in India, is widespread in northern Asia and occurs in sufficiently similar form in North America to suggest that it spread across the Bering Strait. Among the Chippewa Indians the story was that various mammals tried to bring up mud but only the diver bird succeeded. Iroquois myth speaks of the tribal ancestress descending from the sky and amphibious creatures bringing up mud to make an island on which she could live. The Mandan Indians believed that two pigeons flew back and forth across the water until a blade of grass appeared and dry land followed, a tale vaguely reminiscent of the story of Noah's Ark.

The Beat of Heavenly Wings

Of all flying creatures birds are the most conspicuous and impressive. As some soar into the heavens until they disappear from sight, they were regarded as having a close relationship to the sky powers, the sun and the heavenly bodies, the weather powers and the gods dwelling on high. These powers might be thought of as appearing in bird form, or it might be believed that a man could get in touch with them by transforming himself, using magical means, into bird form.

In those regions where there are pronounced seasonal changes, there is an obvious correlation between increasing temperature, day-length and the path of the sun, on the one hand, and the growth of vegetation and the breeding of animals on the other. As a result, the sun and those creatures believed to be closely associated with it were viewed with particular awe. The eagle's soaring flight, mounting in a huge spiral, gave it solar affinities. Zeus, the Greek supreme god, was said to have appeared as an eagle and also as a swan, another large, powerful and high-flying bird which has retained importance in mankind's beliefs to the present day.

Other large birds, such as vultures, became linked with this complex of ideas and imagination fashioned gigantic winged creatures controlling or causing clouds, wind, thunder and lightning. The Simurgh of the Persians had wings like an immense rain-bearing cloud, while the Indian Garuda, with the head and wings of an eagle and the body and legs of a man, typified the wind. In the account of the Roc in the *Arabian Nights* which swoops into the Valley of Snakes to retrieve lumps of meat to which diamonds adhere (and are thus secured by crafty men) the magico-religious bird has become a story-book character, but originally the great bird gripping a snake represented the victory of the beneficent fertility-bringing powers over the evil forces of drought and sterility.

As a bird so naturally became the symbol of higher power, winged creatures became associated with gods and other sacred figures in various ways, sometimes as vehicles of humanized representations. Zeus in later Greek art rides an eagle, Aphrodite is borne by a goose and Apollo is conveyed in a swan-drawn chariot. Asian divinities are commonly portrayed mounted on large birds. Skanda, the Indo-Chinese warrior god rides a peacock; the Hindu god of love, Kama, rides a parrot, a bird with erotic associations.

Messengers of the gods are often winged. Mercury has diminutive symbolical wings attached to his heels and in Christian art angels have birds' wings. Evil powers and emissaries may also be winged but in the West they are sometimes associated with darkness by being equipped with bats' wings. In Christian art the Holy Spirit is commonly depicted as a dove because of the reference in the story of Christ's baptism: 'And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove' (Matthew, chapter 3).

If the heavenly powers may visit men in the likeness of birds, men can also visit the gods by pretending to be birds. This belief finds its fullest expression among those Siberian tribes in which the shaman in trance utters bird calls and flaps his arms like wings.

It is widely believed that the soul may depart from the body, either temporarily during life or permanently after death, in the form of a bird. This notion is not a thing of the past, nor is it confined to peoples in a low state of culture. It still persists, or did until recently, around the coasts of the British Isles where it is said that seagulls are the souls of drowned seamen. There are various related beliefs. In ancient Mesopotamia the dead were described as existing in the form of birds in the underworld; among the Bantu in Africa there is a belief that the spirit of a murdered man haunts his killer as a bird, and in Germany ravens were thought to be damned souls or the steeds on which witches rode.

The Language of Birds

Apart from man, birds are the most vocal of all animals and as a group far surpass him in variety of utterance. Their calls and songs constitute a language of signals, limited but efficient. A very widespread belief, common in folktales, is that in certain circumstances men can understand the speech of birds or other animals, or that birds can understand human language. Folklore tells of occasional persons born with this gift but more often it is acquired by some device such as eating snake's flesh or magical herbs. In Iceland a hawk's tongue was carried under the tongue of the person seeking this power.

The concepts of the bird which brings news, for example in the Flood myths, and the bird which brings intelligible vocal messages are sometimes linked. Odin had two ravens which roved around the world to pry into events and gather news. They returned to perch on his shoulders and

Garuda, king of the birds, symbol of the wind, and devourer of evil men, carries the Hindu god Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi through the sky in their Krishna and Radha incarnations. Venerated as Vishnu's charger, Garuda has the beak, talons and wings of an eagle, and the body and limbs of a man: 18th century painting in the Islamic Museum, Berlin

Dresden Gallery

A white bird is a portent of death, for pure white birds are so unusual as to be considered uncanny

whisper what they had learned into his ear. In folktales, overhearing the conversation of birds sometimes provides the hero with valuable clues. In the Scottish ballad *The Twa Corbies* a person 'walking all alone' overhears the corbies (crows) discussing their grisly feast on the body of a dead knight. The 'Bird of Truth' motif is also widely known. The theme is that a bird reveals important information, for example, the identity of a traitor.

Connected with these ideas is the belief that birds may serve as oracles or guides, as in augury (see AUGURY). The belief lives on in the Shropshire superstition that to see a magpie going widdershins (to the left) is unlucky, and in the tradition in the Faroes that a girl can foretell where her future husband will come from by throwing stones at a crow and observing in which direction it flies. The Masai believe that if a grey woodpecker is heard on the right it is a good omen, but if heard on the left it betokens evil, while if heard behind a traveller it indicates that he will have a favourable reception.

In some places in the United States a bird entering a house is auspicious, unless it is a white bird, in which case it is a portent of death, for pure white birds are so unusual as to be considered uncanny. The calls of birds with sinister associations, such as owls, tend to be feared. On the other hand, in most of Europe the first calls of the cuckoo are welcomed as heralding spring.

Birds, being regarded as messengers of higher powers or as possessors of secret knowledge, were said to have led people to the site on which to found a new city. Similarly a bird might indicate to a saint the location for a hermitage or monastery. The diver was supposed to be a guide to the otherworld. According to legends, obliging birds have helped individuals in various ways, from feeding children to rescuing them from the sea, bringing food to prophets and saints, or carrying away poisoned food.

The Bringers of Spring

The annual appearances and disappearances of birds have long aroused mystification. Their return in spring inspired rejoicing, and linked some birds, especially larger species such as the goose and crane, with the sun. Apparently such birds were thought

Michael Holford

Large, powerful birds like the vulture and the swan are often associated with powerful deities. *Left* In Greek mythology Leda bore children to Zeus who ravished her in the form of a swan. Helen of Troy, one of the children, was born from an egg laid and hatched by Leda: *Leda and the Swan* by Rubens *Above* The falcon was worshipped in Egypt from prehistoric times and, soaring high in the sky, was identified with the great sky god Horus: bronze falcon's head, dating from after 850 BC *Below* The vulture was associated with Nekhebet, a protective goddess of Upper Egypt who is often shown in this form hovering over the pharaoh's head: from a wall relief at Karnak

of not merely as heralding spring but, in a practical sense as emissaries of the gods, as bringing it. They were sometimes greeted with ceremonies. Siberian tribes honoured the arriving geese ritually by preparing an artificial nest, and on the island of Rhodes the swallow was welcomed with a song. The disappearance of birds in the autumn aroused speculation and disquiet. It was said of some birds that they visited the land of the dead.

Red Beak and Yellow Eye

The courtship and other social displays of birds are often conspicuous and sometimes spectacular, especially when the birds concerned are adorned with brilliantly coloured plumes or perform in groups. Primitive peoples assumed, on seeing a number of birds engaged in a social performance, such as cranes, the blackcock and the cock of the rock, that they were enacting a magical ceremony. Regarding birds as wiser than themselves in some respects, they copied them, believing that such dances ushered in the fertility of spring or brought rain. The Hopi of the south-western United States perform an eagle rain dance and the Taruhumare Indians of Mexico imitate turkeys in their rain-making ceremony. In the Alpine *Schuhplattler* dance the male dancers wear blackcock feathers in their hats and gambol in opposing pairs as blackcock do at the *lek*, or courting arena. It is probable that the dance arose in imitation of the birds. In ancient Crete there was a crane dance, as there is in modern Japan, and in Yugoslavia on Shrove Tuesday boys perform a fertility dance, imitating a cock.

The folklore of many birds has been determined or influenced by their colouring. Red being the colour of fire, lightning and blood, birds with conspicuous red markings are sometimes connected with one or more of these. The cock crossbill's red crown and its twisted bill inspired the legend that the bird acquired these characteristics through its efforts to remove the nails from Christ's Cross. And the American robin's red breast comes, says a tale, from Christ's blood when the bird pulled thorns from his Crown.

In antiquity the colour yellow was associated with jaundice and consequently also with its cure, and it was supposed that if a patient fixed his gaze on the large, staring yellow eye of the stone curlew the disease would be transferred to the bird. Black birds, such as crows, have often been connected with the Devil or witchcraft as black has commonly been associated with evil magic and wickedness.

Comparatively few birds are pure white, although albinos occur in some species. Being exceptional, they are regarded as uncanny and can awaken fear. Pied birds were viewed with disquiet, because people could not decide whether they were good or evil. The folklore of these birds, such as the magpie and the pied wagtail, reflects this ambivalent reaction. The exception to this attitude was the oyster-catcher which was regarded as benevolent. Although pied, this bird appears to be white when it is in the air, and in the Hebrides it was thought to look, in flight, like a white cross. This distinction was said to have been bestowed upon the oyster-catcher because it concealed Christ from his enemies by piling seaweed over him.

Michael Holford

The Hoopoe's Crown

Folktales provide explanations for the unaccountable physical or behavioral peculiarities of animals. Tales of the type, 'How the . . . got its . . .', are found all over the world. Probably they are told to entertain rather than explain. For example, an Arabic tale explains that the swallow acquired its forked tail when the serpent of evil took a bite out of it.

The hoopoe's crest, a striking physical characteristic, was linked with the rays of the sun and in folktales the hoopoe appears as a solar bird. Birds' crests were used as symbols of royalty and the hoopoe, because of its distinguishing mark, also became linked with legends about kings. Both associations are found in an Arab legend about Solomon, which explains how the crest was given to the hoopoe. When Solomon was travelling on a magic carpet, hoopoes sheltered him from the sun. Solomon offered to reward them but they foolishly asked to be given golden crowns. When they were persecuted for the gold, the hoopoes implored Solomon to have pity on them so he changed their crowns for feathered crests. The goldcrest, peacock and crested lark are other species with ornamental crowns or crests associated with royalty.

When birds are not known to breed in an area where they are usually to be found, stories are told to explain the absence of nests. The fable that the barnacle goose is hatched from shellfish could not have persisted for centuries had not the breeding grounds of the birds in the Arctic long remained unknown. Similarly when a bird's shape seems inadequate to account for its behaviour odd explanations are concocted. Because the quail, which is a skulking bird when seen in its nesting habitat, seemed incapable of sustained flight over the sea, the belief arose that it rode on the back of the crane. The osprey's ability to catch fish by plunging into the water, seemed extraordinary, and it was supposed that this bird of prey had the power to fascinate fish.

(See also articles on individual birds.)

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: E. A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Dover, 1969). See also E. Ingersoll, *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore* (Gale, 1968) and W. Harter, *Birds: In Fact and Legend* (Sterling, 1979).

E. E. Evans Pritchard

Old beliefs and customs connected with childbirth linger on, a legacy from the time when birth was a dangerous crisis and a mystery

BIRTH

TO THE PRESENT-DAY western city-dweller, childbirth is associated primarily with the antiseptic atmosphere of the maternity ward. The sense of being at the mercy of powers beyond ourselves has been almost abolished. But this very recent emancipation has separated us not only from our ancestors but from the great majority of mankind, for whom childbirth is still one of the great crises of life and, above all, a mystery.

Among the first works of art to emerge from the mists of prehistory are the so-called 'Venuses'. They are squat, ugly female figurines, only a few inches high, carved between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago. As figurative art, they are rudimentary. But they are unmistakably pregnant. Their precise purpose cannot now be decided but at the very least they reveal a concern with the processes of human reproduction, and with the increase of the species. Similar carvings in relief and representations of male and female sexual organs, found in the caves of south-western Europe, permit us to infer that fertility has always been a basic human concern.

The world of early man was a dangerous world. The pregnant woman and, later, the mother and her child were objects of prey for all manner of evil spirits; so it was that the crisis of childbirth came to be surrounded with precautions and prohibitions, spells and incantations, things to be done and things to be avoided at all costs. In so far as these are related to the supernatural world, they may perhaps be called religion; but the boundaries between religion and magic, never very clear, are often indistinguishable at this early period. At all events, the attitudes which first appear in the religions of antiquity sit squarely on the boundary. Virtually all of these attitudes have persisted with very little change in primitive and undeveloped societies (and even, occasionally, within developed societies) down to our own day.

Left **In primitive societies the time of childbirth is thought to be an especially dangerous period, for the children as well as the mother, and various rituals are performed to purify them and banish evil spirits. An Azande woman holds a child over the fire during a birth ceremony** ***Right*** **Tlazolteotl, the Aztec goddess of sexual love, depicted in the act of giving birth**

The Crisis of Birth

The crisis of childbirth begins with conception. In many primitive societies, however, the immediate cause of conception remains a mystery. A woman could, it seems, become pregnant by eating almost anything, animal, vegetable or mineral; by drinking one liquid or another; or merely by visiting a certain powerful place. The role of the husband might be recognized, but the ultimate source of power lay outside him.

Failure to conceive might be cured by a variety of means. In the Indian state of Gujarat, for example, a barren woman might swallow the umbilical cord of a new-born child, or eat a mixture of seeds and spices, while seated on the cot of a woman in childbed. The power to conceive might be transferred in some way: in the Indian Deccan it was held that a barren woman who touched another woman suckling her child would become pregnant; but the child would die.

Once pregnant, a woman was usually separated from her family and tribe, at least as the time of her delivery approached. Certain foods would be prohibited. She would be secluded in a special hut or in a special part of her house, in order not to endanger either herself or anyone else. For a woman in childbirth was ritually unclean. In fact, the pollution incurred by contact with such a woman was even worse than that connected with death and the dead.

The real source of this pollution was, of course, the copious flow of blood – always and in all situations a source of the deepest impurity. In the Old Testament (in Leviticus, chapter 12) we read that a woman giving birth to a boy is unclean for seven days, as at the time of menstruation: blood being the common factor. For the birth of a girl the period of impurity was two weeks longer. Anything the mother touched, or anyone who touched her, would become similarly impure by contagion: hence her isolation, otherwise the religious and social life of the group could not proceed. Almost identical prohibitions are to be found in many primitive societies.

At the confinement, elaborate precautions were taken, aimed at making the delivery easier and at protecting the mother and her infant. In the former category would come the careful untying of all knots in the house, to help the woman to relax; in the latter, the bolting and barring of all doors and windows, to keep evil spirits out. An additional precaution taken in parts of India was to secrete a knife or other weapon under the bed, again for protection against spirits. In Greece, it was believed that women in childbirth were especially susceptible to the Evil Eye; therefore all mirrors were removed from the room, since it was possible to put the Evil Eye on oneself. Nor, after the birth, might the woman go out at night, because she would be in danger from the malignant stars. So she shut herself up after dark with doors and windows closed, at least until after the child had been baptized and she herself had been churched.

Sunday's Child

In all parts of the world where astrology is, or has been, a living belief, from ancient Babylonia to modern Ceylon, one of the primary duties of the attendants at a birth is to note the exact time of delivery, so that a precise horoscope may be cast. This is little regarded in modern Europe; but a manual of midwifery (Jacobus Ruessus, *De Conceptu*), published in Frankfurt in 1587, has a woodcut showing delivery taking place on a chair, while in an adjoining room two astrologers wait to cast the infant's horoscope.

The notion of auspicious days survives, however, in the popular rhyme that begins, 'Monday's child is fair of face, Tuesday's child is full of grace. . .' But although the rhyme says that the child born on a Sunday will be 'blithe and bonny, good and gay', old Celtic belief endowed Sunday's child with second sight. Other accounts held that a child born during the hour after midnight would have the power to see the spirits of the dead. In India, birth at an inauspicious time must still be counteracted by appropriate rites, and birth nine hours before or during an eclipse requires that the father must perform similar rites before even being allowed to see his child.

Couvade

Psychologically, it is a well-known fact that the father often suffers almost as much as the mother at the birth of a child. Anthropologists have discovered many examples of the custom of *couvade* (literally, 'brooding' or 'hatching'), in which the father takes to his bed and behaves as though he, and not his wife, were having the child. An Irish legend tells of the wife of Crunniuc, who was forced to run a race against horses, though she was pregnant. She won, and immediately gave birth to twins, condemning all men who heard her cries to suffer the pains of childbirth for four days and five nights, the curse to be passed on for nine generations. This was one mythical origin of the couvade.

More prosaically, it was believed in the Middle Ages that pain might be transferred from the woman to the man, either by an exchange of clothing (the man's garments being put on the woman at the moment of delivery), or by means of spells. In such cases, the midwife might be thought to be dabbling in witchcraft – not an altogether unusual combination. One Thomas Pennant wrote of Langholm, Dumfries, in 1772, that 'the midwives had the power of transferring part of the primeval curse bestowed upon our first great mother from the good wife to her husband. I saw the reputed offspring of such a labour, who kindly came into the world without giving the mother the least uneasiness, while the poor husband was roaring with agony and in uncouth and unnatural pains.'

The real significance of couvade is still a matter for discussion. It is likely that the original reason was to protect the infant from evil influences which might reach him through the person of his father who, whatever his role in conceiving a child, was believed to provide his offspring with a soul. The father, then, withdrew from circulation in order to avoid antagonizing evil spirits.

Changelings

Owing to the ritual impurity of the mother, she and her infant were exposed to unusual danger for the first few days after birth. For Indo-European peoples, from Scandinavia to Greece, the greatest danger was from the 'little people' of wood, forest and stream, the fairies who desired nothing better than to exchange a fair human child for one of their own dark race.

Stories of 'changelings' are legion, particularly among Celtic peoples, but the main characteristics are constant: a weak, dark, undernourished infant is thought to be a fairy child. In practice, superstition and ignorance condemned the child to an early and unlamented grave, as likely as not. In legend, the deception might be discovered and repaired if the changeling could be betrayed into revealing its age (for changelings were always old). In the Scottish Highlands, a new-born infant would be placed as close as possible to a fire piled high with peat; if it was a changeling, off it would go 'up the lum' (chimney). In Greece, the danger came from the sea nymphs, or Nereids, who were beautiful, young, capricious and cruel, and who delighted in stealing human children – not out of malevolence, but simply from a desire to have children of their own.

While precautions of all kinds accompanied normal births, an additional hazard accompanied abnormal deliveries. A difficult delivery was believed by the Teutons to be evidence of the woman's unfaithfulness to her husband. Twins and other multiple births have often been regarded with the gravest misgivings. Among the Basoko in the Congo they were kept strictly apart from other children, and everything they used was strictly taboo – their very unusualness being a sign of the supernatural. (See TWINS.)

Mustard Seeds and Iron

There were, however, auspicious irregularities. One such was the child who emerged with a caul (part of the torn membrane adhering to the face or head), also known in Scotland as a hallihoo, or holy hood. This was very much a sign of good luck, since the caul had both magical and medicinal virtues, not necessarily confined to the child itself. Charles Dickens's David Copperfield recorded that 'I was born with a caul, which was advertised for sale in the newspapers, at the low price of 15 guineas.' Cauls were especially valued by sailors as protection against drowning, and could also confer powers of second sight on their owners.

The death of a woman in childbed was the gravest of all calamities, since in popular belief the ghost of such a woman was peculiarly malevolent. In the north-west of India, for example, it was held that a woman dying within 10 days of childbirth or during menstruation became an evil spirit, called *Hadal* or *Hedali*. If her corpse was cremated, mustard seeds were strewn on the road behind the bier, since it was believed that the ghost could return home only if she could collect all the seeds along the way. If the corpse was buried, four iron nails were fixed at the four corners of the grave.

Similarly, precautions had to be taken on the death of a child, whether still-born or (in Christian countries) unbaptized. In the north of England it was believed until quite recently that it was unlucky to tread on the grave of such a child. In Northumberland an unbaptized child would often be buried in the same grave as some other adult, for protection and care in the life beyond.

But assuming that the delivery had gone well, there were other rites to be performed. Even in Christian countries, the child and its mother had, as it were, to be 'introduced' to the household deities. The practice of 'saining' (blessing) was observed in Scotland during the last century. A fir-candle was lighted and carried three times round the bed. Then a Bible and a morsel of food were placed under the pillow, with the words, 'May the Almichty debar a' ill frae this 'uman, an' be aboot her, an' bless her an' her bairn.' Or the child might be put on a cloth spread over a basket of provisions and carried three times round the crook of the chimney, for the hearth was the abode of the 'little people'.

Other necessary rites in primitive societies concerned the disposal of the afterbirth, the placenta and the umbilical cord which, having been part of the living child, were sometimes believed to be the seat of the 'free-soul' (the soul which wanders in dreams, and which finally departs at death.) At all costs these relics must be prevented from falling into the hands of ill-disposed persons, who might use them for magical purposes. We have already seen that they could be used as cures for barrenness. But the usual practice was either to give them to a relative to care for, or to make positive magical use of them. So, for instance, the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia threw a boy's placenta to the ravens, believing that this would give him power to see into the future; a girl's placenta would be buried at high-water mark, to make her a good clam-digger.

Churching of Women

Once the danger period for mother and child had come to an end, when the flow of blood ceased and the umbilicus healed, both had to be received into society – the child by circumcision (after eight days in Judaism), naming or baptism; the mother by offering the appropriate sacrifices and receiving a renewed blessing. The period of purification could be as long as 80 days on the birth of a daughter. In Hinduism the period of impurity varies with the caste of the woman concerned, from 10 days for a high-born Brahmin to 30 days for a low caste Sudra.

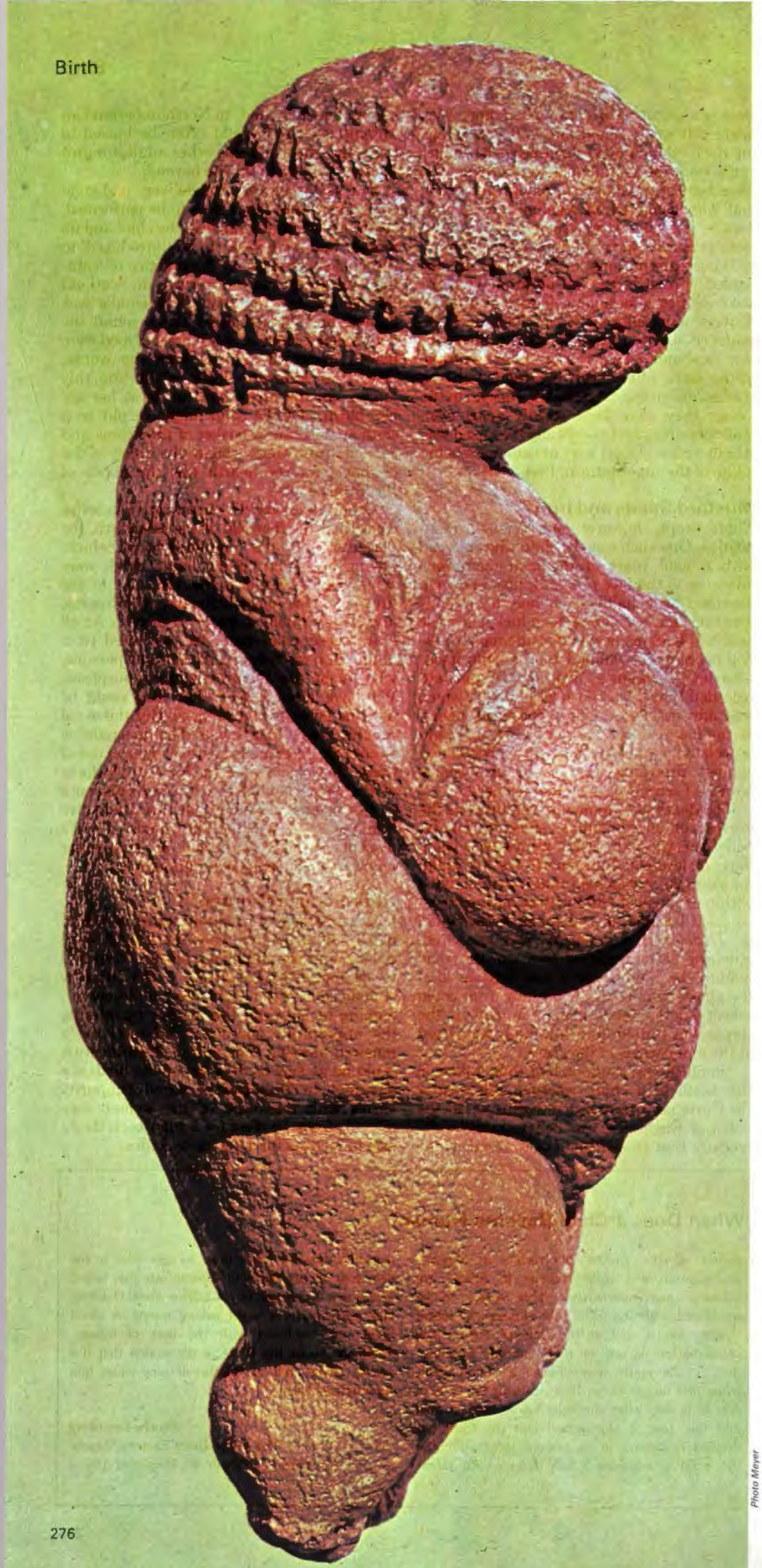
When Does a Child Become Human?

Beliefs of the Afikpo Ibo people in Nigeria: Socialization and child training in Afikpo are informal and noncoercive. This seems to be associated with the belief that although an infant already has a soul at the time of birth – the reincarnation of one or more persons who have died – the spirit may change its mind about living and decide to 'go back', causing the body to die. It is only when the baby has started to walk and talk that it is assumed that the spirit has decided to remain in its present incarnation and the child is considered fully human. An infant mortality rate of more than 50 per cent in the first year of life tends to substantiate this belief. There is a convention of not talking about children, and particularly of never asking questions about them, for combined with the idea of infants' diffidence about life there is the notion that if a person thinks evil of another it may cause him supernatural harm.

Phoebe Ottenberg
'The Afikpo Ibo of Eastern Nigeria'
(in James L. Gibbs Jr. ed. *Peoples of Africa*)

In folk belief monstrous and abnormal births, multiple births and difficult deliveries may be signs of the anger of supernatural powers and grim omens of future disaster. This two-headed dog is one of the exhibits in Potter's Museum at Bramber, Sussex

Brian Netscher



Prehistoric 'Venuses', small, squat female figurines dating from between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago, are among the earliest works of art to have survived. Unmistakably pregnant, they reveal man's intense concern with birth and fertility: the *Venus of Willendorf*, Natural History Museum, Vienna

Photo Meyer

The Christian practice of 'churching' women originally had this same function, of purification and reintegration into the worshipping community. Until this rite had been carried out, the woman was a danger to her neighbours. In Scotland she was not permitted to enter any other house, because she would bring evil with her. In parts of Scotland and Ireland, too, there was a belief that should she appear out of doors and receive insult or injury, she would have no remedy at law. To avoid this contingency, some Irish women were said to fasten a straw of thatch, or a splinter of slate, to their hats when they went out. By doing this a woman would be able to say that she had never left the shelter of her roof.

There is a whole folklore connected with naming and baptism, in the latter case Christian and pre-Christian elements being inextricably mixed. Even before these ceremonies, signs of future prosperity were eagerly looked for. In Lincolnshire it was believed that if a child was born with its hands open, it would be generous, but if they were closed it would be churlish. The first time a child was taken to a neighbour's house, whether before or after baptism, it was customary in most parts of England to present it with an egg, for abundance, and salt, for friendship.

But the great event was baptism. The *Gentlemen's Magazine* recorded in 1832 that, 'It is the belief of some very simple people that unless the child cry during the ceremony, it will not live. This silly superstition occasions some poor infants to suffer considerable torture; for their barbarous nurses do not hesitate to pinch their tender flesh, or prick them with pins, to excite the wished-for evidence of their longevity.' The theological explanation of this belief was that the infant's howls were either the pangs of the new birth, or the voice of the Devil being driven out. (See BAPTISM.)

The extent to which such beliefs and practices as those described still survive in the West is a moot point; but it is certain that there are many parts of the world in which childbirth is a matter in which common sense and hygiene are of less importance than the active assistance of beneficent supernatural powers. Only when these have been recruited, and the omnipresent powers of darkness and evil neutralized, can the new-born child and its mother face an uncertain future with some degree of confidence.

ERIC J. SHARPE

FURTHER READING: A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (University of Chicago Press, 1961); Katharine M. Briggs, *The Fairies in English Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1967); W. R. Dawson, *The Customs of Couvade* (Manchester University Press, England, 1929); E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (Arno Press, 1972).

Black
The colour of darkness and night and therefore of death, evil and the Devil; linked with Saturn, the planet of death, time and sorrow, and with lead, the dark and heavy metal of Saturn; the colour of mourning and gloom; black candles, robes and other equipment are used in magical ceremonies intended to kill an enemy, and a method of summoning the Devil is to tear a black hen in half at a crossroads on the stroke of midnight.
See COLOURS: CORRESPONDENCES.

Black Fast
A magical method of killing a victim by abstaining from food, while concentrating malice against him; Mabel Brigge was executed at York in 1538, after confessing that she had murdered a man by this method.

The Black Mass ceremony from the film *Witchcraft through the Ages*: the blood of a sacrificed child was used instead of wine

In Paris in 1673 the mistress of Louis XIV was the naked altar for a magical Mass. The roots of the ceremony go back to medieval magic, witchcraft and heresy

BLACK MASS

THE CEREMONY CALLED the Black Mass is essentially a magical operation, and has little to do with the worship of the Satan of popular imagination, which pictures it as an obscene and blasphemous ritual offered to some improbable demon seated upon an impossible altar. The matter is not as simple as that. There is no one rite or ceremony which can be described under this general title. It refers to a group of rites which, all the same, are related.

No one really knows anything of the early history of the Black Mass. The rites and ceremonies of the Christian Church have been recorded from its early childhood until now, but there does not exist a single document describing the rites of a Black Mass at first hand.

There are clues, however, which suggest that these rites are magical and, what is more significant, quite divorced from Christian or any other theology. The 7th century Church Council of Toledo, for instance, denounced an office known as the Mass of the dead. This was the first recorded Black Mass, and it was no requiem. The priest performed the rite not to deliver the soul of a dead man from purgatory, but to consign a living man to death.

The sinister Mass of St Secaire is supposed to have originated in Gascony. The priest performs the rite in a ruined and disused church. His server is a woman with whom he has copulated. Verbally, the Mass substantially follows the order of the Christian rite but the priest first consecrates a black triangular host, and then, in place of wine, offers water from a well in which an unbaptized child has been drowned. The result of this malignant ceremony is the death of its victim, who wastes away by inches.

A related example is an odd ceremony said to originate in Normandy, called the Mass of the Holy Ghost. This Mass is peculiar in being strictly orthodox, but it must be celebrated by a Franciscan friar whose intention must be the granting of the dearest wish of the client on whose behalf the Mass is said. Nothing could be more innocent or more in accord with orthodox belief.

But if the motive and intention were innocent, the results were not. There is a story traditional in Normandy that a young girl induced a Franciscan to say this Mass to ensure the immediate return of her lover, who was abroad in pursuit of fortune. The result was an impulse so urgent that, abandoning all plans for the future, he immediately sailed back to France. He was overjoyed to find the girl waiting to welcome him on the quay but just as they were about to be reunited, the cliff beneath which the girl stood subsided and killed her instantly.

These examples are fairly representative of the essential elements of the so-called Black Mass, and bear little resemblance to the popular conception of the Black Mass, the related witches' sabbath and the pact with Satan. The relation between these is intimate, and such that its real significance can be seen only against the whole background of European magic and witchcraft.

The Lord of this World

In the south of France in 1335 the Inquisitor Pierre Gui and two Vicars-General of the Archbishop of Toulouse tried 63 people on charges of witchcraft and sorcery. Among them was a girl named Anne-Marie de Georgel. She told the judges that a man clothed in skins had visited her when she was washing. She consented to sexual intercourse. Afterwards he breathed on her and she was transported to the sabbath, where she was received by a goat who taught her 'all manner of evil practices'. These practices included a Mass offered by one 'dressed as a priest'. Questioned about her beliefs, Anne-Marie said that there were two gods, The Lord of Heaven and the Lord of this World. There was war between them. It was her opinion that the Lord of this World would be victorious.

It is possible to eliminate the supernatural elements from accounts like these and still be left with a residue of fact which is highly significant. The Devil was evidently a ceremonially dressed human being. The goat was a man wearing a horned head-dress, the leader of the assembly. The pact with Satan was the acceptance of the candidate as a member of the assembly. A sexual ceremony sealed it (see SABBATH).

The Devil of the witches' sabbath was the equivalent of the priest. Accounts of the Mass he offered vary in detail, but not essentially. Water replaced wine in the chalice, and a turnip (black with rot) was used instead of the host. The 17th century witch-hunter Pierre de Lancre reported the use of an old black boot at the elevation in place of the turnip.

This apparently crazy pandemonium was not without method and purpose. At the time of the elevation, the congregation called loudly upon the Devil, 'master of the serfs', to save them. The extraordinary ceremony becomes intelligible in a social context. The boot and the turnip were protests against a low and declining standard of living. The appeal to the Devil was to a god who was not the god of the peasants' oppressors.

Michael Holford

Witches were accused of parodying the Mass at their meetings, perverting the Christian ceremony to honour the Devil. *The Witches' Sabbath* by Frans Franckens

The Heretic Mass

The confused operations of witchcraft and magic are unintelligible except in the light of a dualist theology, a belief in two great powers or forces of good and evil. Black and white magic are two aspects of the same thing. The black and white stand for complementary opposites which, by interaction, serve as the source of creative energy.

The concept of the opposites is the theme of every kind of magical operation (see OPPOSITES). There is a dreadful story told by Jean Bodin in his *Démonomanie des Sorciers* (1580) about a Black Mass said at the order of Catherine de Medici, Queen of France. A priest consecrated a black and a white host, the white being given to a young boy whose throat was cut to provide human blood for the chalice. A similar concept inspires the saying of prayers backwards.

At about the same time that Anne-Marie de Georgel was tried, another woman was questioned concerning her association with a demon and her attendance at the witches'

sabbath. She admitted that a demon had taken her place in her husband's bed, so that she could slip away to be present at the assembly and, as she said, 'to serve the Cathari at supper'. The 'supper' was apparently the Cathar equivalent of the Mass.

The powerful sect of the Cathars was a dangerous opponent of the Christian Church. They believed that all material things were the creation of an evil spirit. They therefore rejected the sacramental system of the Church and, in particular, the Mass because they believed that matter, being evil, could not be the vehicle of divine grace. For the rejected sacraments, they substituted rites of their own.

Very little is known about the ceremonies of the Cathar 'supper' but the evidence points to its close relationship to the ceremonies performed by the man 'dressed as a priest'. It is not surprising that the Inquisition took an unsympathetic view of the witches as allies of a sect which secretly preached that the Christian Mass was an offering to Satan (see CATHARS).

There were other reasons for the Inquisition's severity. The Cathars and those allied with them were not primarily theologians or reformers. The Mass of the black turnip and the boot suggest not only a religious but a social protest, aimed at the foundations of medieval society. The Cathars hoped to set up a new order of society on a reformed Cathar model. They were the pioneers of revolutionary change. Essentially, their strange rites and ceremonies reflect this spirit of rebellion.

The concept of the Black Mass as an offering made to the traditional Satan by devil worshippers with their credo 'evil be thou my good' cannot be reconciled with the facts and evidence. Sparse as it is, all points in the same direction, and away from the horrific figure of the old wood-cut and illumination. Satan recedes into the background; his substitute is the supernatural opposites, the source of all creative energy.

An Altar of Flesh

The dualist nature of the substitute is reflected in the black rites of all succeeding periods. With the Reformation medieval civilization collapsed, but witchcraft and black magic did not. In the 17th century in France, a woman called 'La Voisin' (burned alive in 1680) and her abominable crew of witches and Black Mass priests were accustomed first to use the orthodox Mass as a magic charm to win back a wayward lover. But if this failed, the second resort was to a Black Mass in which the client offered her naked body as an altar and as a vehicle for obscene ceremonial manipulations of the elements of the Christian Mass. If, in short, the 'good god' failed them, the 'evil one' was approached for help.

The most famous person involved in these horrors was the beautiful Marquise de Montespan. She employed a priest to say Masses which included a prayer 'that the Queen may be barren, that the King leave her bed and board for me.' She duly became the mistress of the King, Louis XIV, but in 1673, when she feared she might be supplanted by a rival, she and La Voisin called in another priest, the sinister and hideously ugly Abbé Guibourg. Guibourg said three masses over the Marquise's naked body. The blood of a sacrificed child was used for the wine and mixed with flour to make the host. An incantation was recited, calling on 'Astaroth and Asmodeus, princes of amity' to ensure that the King would refuse nothing that de Montespan asked of him.

Black magic and the rites associated with it still survive and are said to be increasing. Statements of this kind are difficult to confirm or even to investigate, but it is true that revolutionary periods (such as our own) tend to encourage the development of certain kinds of occultism. Since World War I great revolutionary movements, whether of 'right' or 'left', show evidence of their occult and mystical background. A sinister example is the practice of black magic associated with certain inner circles of the German National Socialist Party (see NATIONAL SOCIALISM) and it is interesting that the ceremonial at the Hitler Youth meetings closely resembled the form of the Catholic Mass.

H. T. F. RHODES

FURTHER READING: H. T. F. Rhodes, *The Satanic Mass* (Citadel, 1975). See also R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968) and for a fictional description, probably based on fact, J. K. Huysmans, *Down There (Là-Bas)* (French-European Pubns.).

'God is you, the black people.' The Black Muslims have brought many American Negroes a new pride and a new hope

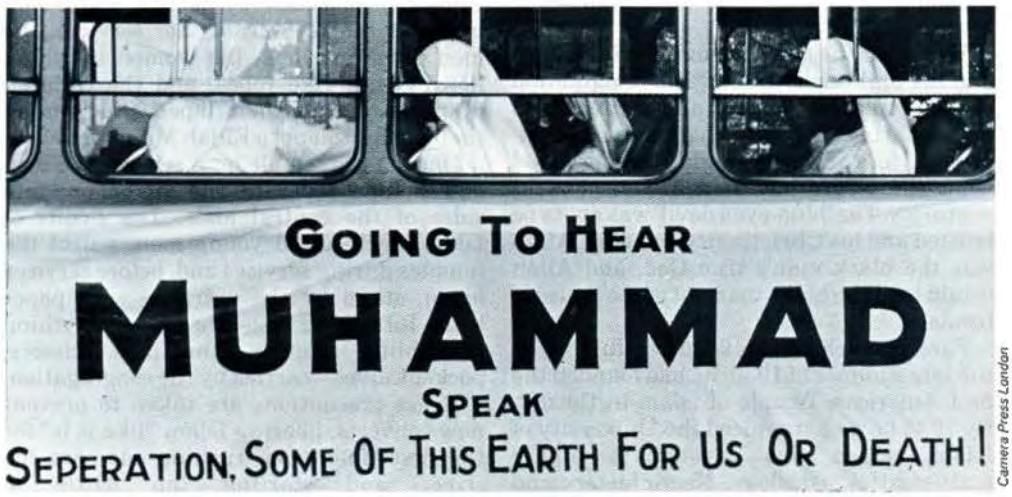
BLACK MUSLIMS

MALCOLM X, or 'Big X' as he was known to Black Muslims, first made news across America in April 1958 when one of his followers, Johnson Hinton, was clubbed by New York police and badly wounded. Five hundred Black Muslims besieged the police precinct house, showing all the signs of being about to take the building by storm. Police Captain McGowan, through a black newspaperman, contacted Malcolm X, who persuaded the crowd to disperse, though not before ordering that Hinton be given hospital treatment and pointing out that he had been the victim of police brutality.

The unfortunate Hinton was taken to hospital, had his skull repaired with a silver plate, and was later awarded $75,000 in damages against the City of New York by an all-white jury. Police Captain McGowan, speaking of Malcolm X's part in the incident said: 'No man should have that much power over that many people. We cannot control this city if one man can wield that much power.' The Black Muslims had made their first real impact on the shocked white population of the United States.

Most black Americans are descended from West African peoples. When Christianity began to invade Africa in the 15th century, these peoples had their own religious, political, artistic and agricultural systems. Christianity was not the first 'foreign' religion to come among them, for earlier, Islam had swept down by way of Egypt and North Africa. But Mohammedanism left most of the African way of life intact (see AFRICA).

Christianity was a different matter. Within a few generations of their landing on African soil, the Christians had not only introduced a completely new religious and social structure, but had simultaneously begun the export of black slaves to the New World. By 1860, 4 million Africans had been shipped from their homes to the United States, aboard what they were later cynically to call the 'Good Ship Jesus'.



Camera Press London

Black Muslim women on their way by bus to hear their supreme leader, Elijah Muhammad

Let My People Go

Once in America, the pious wife of his master might teach the slave religion, using the Bible as a text. At the same time, he was bred like an animal for intelligence and strength. Slaves were bought and sold at the owner's convenience; this meant that even the poor quality of family life possible under the system was further eroded by the constant breaking up of family groups. Christianity flourished on the plantations, but it was not unnatural that the black slaves should turn chiefly to the Old Testament, and the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt, for real comfort.

The Negro Spirituals sprang from this inspiration. 'Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel?' the black man asked in song, and 'Go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land, tell old Pharaoh let my people go.'

The Civil War offered hope for a while, but not for long. The Negro, freed from slavery, but by no means emancipated, was still at the best downtrodden; at the worst, tortured, lynched, burned. Negro Baptist and Methodist Churches sprang up, in which the black man could momentarily feel free and equal. But outside his Church, he found himself in the same plight as before.

In 1930 came the great Wall Street crash, and as the depression deepened, jobs hitherto considered fit only for blacks were taken by newly-poor whites. The Negro had to take his place at the very end of the dole queue. He was totally without hope, rejected and despised on all sides.

The Prophet of Allah

It was into this atmosphere that a strange, bronzed pedlar made his appearance in the black ghettoes of Detroit. Selling silk and cloths which, he said, came from Africa, he also peddled a new line of thinking for the black people. He was from the Holy City of Mecca, he said, and had come to teach them the ways of their homeland.

The pedlar's name was Wallace D. Fard, sometimes called Farrad Muhammad, and it was variously said that he was a Jamaican Negro whose father was a Syrian Moslem, that he was a Palestinian Arab, or that he was of the tribe of Koreish, the tribe of Mohammed, the prophet and founder of Islam.

Whatever the truth about his origin, Fard and his philosophy caught the imagination of the people. He shocked and excited them by his daring in openly challenging the supremacy of the whites and in saying aloud what the Negro had said in whispers for centuries. The 'blue-eyed devil' was not to be trusted and his Christianity was a lie. Allah was the black man's true God, and Allah would lead the black man out of the house of bondage.

Fard's preaching was so successful that by the late summer of 1930, he had founded the first American Temple of Islam in Detroit. By 1934 he had organized the University of Islam, which was devoted to higher mathematics, astrology, Negro history and the study of Islam, as well as to more orthodox studies. He also gave the people 'The Sacred Ritual of the Nation of Islam', the Black Muslim's Bible.

Fard also set up a Muslim Girls' Training Class to train Muslim women in the arts of good housewifery and motherhood, and as a protection against police raids and attacks by unbelievers he established the Fruit of Islam, a private army trained in unarmed combat and the use of firearms.

The Last Messenger

The next head of the Black Muslim movement was the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Messenger of the Prophet of Allah – Fard was known as the Prophet of Allah – and the Last and Greatest Messenger of Allah in the United States. Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah Poole, the son of former slave parents, in the town of Sandersville, Georgia, in 1897. At the age of 16 he left school and home, and in 1923 he and his wife Clara Evans and their two children moved to Detroit. For seven dreary years Poole held poorly paid jobs in the factories of the city until, in 1930, he met Fard. 'Farrad Muhammad,' said Poole later, 'took me out of the gutters in the streets of Detroit and taught me knowledge of Islam.'

Poole made great progress in his newly-found religion. Three years after joining, and under his new name of Elijah Muhammad, he went to Chicago and established Temple Number 2, as the headquarters of the Black Muslim movement. In 1933, Fard's appearances became less and less frequent, and in the following year he vanished completely, never to be seen or heard of again. His disappearance remains a mystery. One theory says that Elijah persuaded him to offer himself for human sacrifice, although human sacrifice is not a part of Black Muslim ritual. Whatever the truth, Elijah succeeded to the leadership and became the force behind the movement.

Surviving Armageddon

The following account of the organization was written in the late 1960s, when there were over 25,000 'hard core' Black Muslims in the United States. 'Muslim life centres round the temple and its restaurant, a teetotal establishment where members are able to eat kosher food. Temple services are held two or three times a week and are generally preceded by family and group meals at the restaurant. For services, the men dress in black, the women in white, flowing, nun-like robes, and the children wear buttons in their lapels proclaiming their commitment to Elijah Muhammad.

Once in the temple for a service, the men and women separate and sit on opposite sides of the central aisle. The Fruits of Islam, dark-suited young men, patrol the temples during services and, before services begin, stand by the entrance with paper bags. Into these bags are placed anything resembling weapons – hat pins, scissors, pocket knives – carried by the congregation.

These precautions are taken to prevent new converts, hearing Islam "like it is" for the first time, from rushing out onto the street and starting the battle of Armageddon against the white man at once.

The average Muslim meeting hall is a drab place, containing rows of seats and a small platform at one end, on which sit the jazz musicians, who often start the meeting with improvised music. Also on the platform is a blackboard, which is the focus of the service. On one side of it is a drawing of the American flag, with a cross superimposed on it. Under the flag is written "Slavery, Suffering and Death". On the other side of the board is the star and crescent of Islam, over the words "Freedom, Justice and Equality". Running the length of the blackboard is the sombre question: "Which one will survive the battle of Armageddon?"

The Muslims have one major message: the white man is by nature evil, a snake who is incapable of doing right, a devil who is soon to be destroyed. Therefore the black man, who is by nature divine and good, must separate himself from the white man as soon as possible, lest he share the white man's hour of destruction.'

God is Black

Several Southern Churches once shared the dogma preached by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa today: that the blacks are descended from Ham, the son of Noah, who mocked his father's nakedness, and so was doomed to be a drawer of water and hewer of wood – a servant to the children of Noah's other sons. An equally ludicrous dogma was originally preached by the Black Muslims. They held that God is black, as black is the prime colour – colours cannot be mixed to produce black. Therefore the white man is evil, because white is as non-black as one can get. To explain how the black race – held by the Muslims to have been the original race – produced a white race, the Muslims claimed that an evil black scientist named Yakub rebelled against Allah and produced the Caucasian strain.

Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X often referred to the 'day when the word will be given' and Black Muslims usually took this to mean judgement day for the white man. But Elijah never specified the nature of 'the day' exactly. One theory is that on 'the day' the black Nation of Islam would separate from the White Nation of America to form its own government and occupy its own land.

Generally speaking, the Muslims have not advocated violence, except in self-defence. Elijah Muhammad prohibited participation in the white man's wars and the white man's allegedly violent methods. The practice of taking a new name after conversion reflects the Muslims' repugnance for a system which produced slavery. The 'slave name' – as in the case of the boxer Cassius Clay – is dropped, and a new name, in Clay's case Muhammad Ali, is adopted.

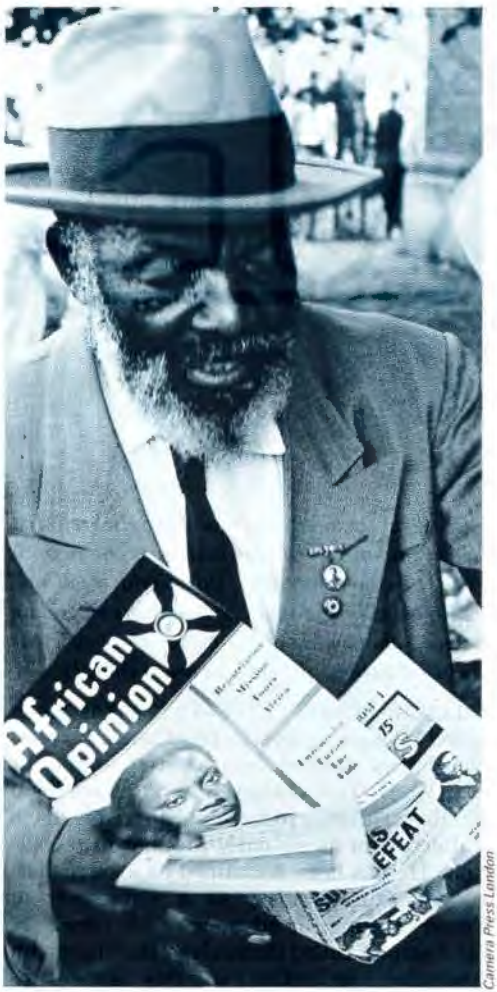
The support of strong personalities such as Clay and Malcolm X gave a great boost to the movement. Malcolm X was particularly active in the early 1960s and attracted a large membership through his writings and speeches. He left the movement in 1964 to convert to traditional Islam. He was assassinated in 1965.

After the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, his son Wallace D. Muhammad became the new leader. He moved the organization closer to traditional Islam, and began accepting people of all races. This was reflected in the new name he gave to the movement. Previously it was called the Nation of Islam. Wallace changed it to the World Community of Islam in the West. Other traditions were also changed – for example, he said that members could serve in the armed forces and the police.

Nowadays, the movement has mellowed and is more ecumenical in its outlook.

FRANK SMYTH

FURTHER READING: *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Ballantine Books, 1977); James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (Dial, 1963); Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word is Given* (Greenwood Press, 1979).



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The Black Muslim movement was originally founded in the U.S.A. in the 1930s, during the years of the Depression. Its original leader, Wallace D. Fard, was a door-to-door fabric salesman in Detroit. After his mysterious disappearance in 1934, the organization was taken over by Elijah Muhammad, who developed its separatist philosophy, and recruited thousands of members.

Above left In their search for a non-slave identity, by which they rejected white values, the Black Muslims discovered a new inspiration in Africa. This Harlem citizen sports a miniature of the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and carries copies of African affairs magazines

Above right Black Muslim women dressed in flowing white robes are shown here seated under a banner in which defence of their womenfolk is seen as a strong Muslim preoccupation

Below left A lone white priest attends a Muslim meeting

Below right Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims until his death in 1975, addresses a Muslim convention in Chicago. His son, Wallace D. Muhammad, took over the leadership after him

UPI

BLAKE

MAKER OF MYTHS

Brompton Studio

This great painter, poet and mystic rejected reason and preferred imagination as the path to truth. 'To me,' he said, 'this world is all one continued vision of fancy or imagination' and he believed that much of his visionary poetry was 'dictated' to him: 'the authors are in eternity'

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827) has been called by some a mystic, by others a gnostic. Swinburne praised him as a champion of evil; W. B. Yeats believed him to have been a Rosicrucian initiate; Marxists have claimed him as an early prophet of revolution. He has been acclaimed as a surrealist; as an expressionist; as a forerunner of Freud or Jung, in advance of his time. Yet his disciples called themselves 'the Shoreham Ancients', indicating in this appeal to antiquity their intention of returning to a tradition stemming mainly from Plato.

What is in no doubt is Blake's stature. He has been called 'the Greatest Englishman'. Yet to call him the greatest English poet would be absurd. Many find his turbulent Michelangelesque forms repellent; his long 'Prophetic Books' contain magnificent fragments but are incoherent, lacking the formal structure which epic poetry demands. His lyrics are often beautiful, but less so for their artistry than for the resonances they set in motion in the reader's mind.

Blake's genius was perhaps principally that of a creator of myths. When we think of Blake, we think of a living world of gods and demons in the continuous activity of their uninhibited energy. His pantheon of spiritual beings, or energies, whose names he himself invented, seems to exist in its own right no less than the pantheons of Greece or of Egypt, independently of those works in which the gods are depicted. Blake is an outstanding, and perhaps a unique, example of a polytheist, a believer in many gods, who was also a Christian.

The Spirit of Prophecy

Blake's gods, the 'Zoas', their 'sons', 'daughters' and 'emanations' are what C. G. Jung called archetypes, those 'self-portraits of the instinct' or basic mental patterns or

'The world of Imagination is the world of Eternity.' Blake exalted imagination and detested reason. He sought to portray 'eternal forms', the total being of things which we normally see only partially: *Portrait of a Flea*

Tyger, Tyger

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry? . . .

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears
Dare he laugh his mark to see?
Dare he who made the lamb make thee?

The Tyger

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

Auguries of Innocence

The sword sung on the barren heath,
The sickle in the fruitful field:
The sword he sung a song of death,
But could not make the sickle yield.

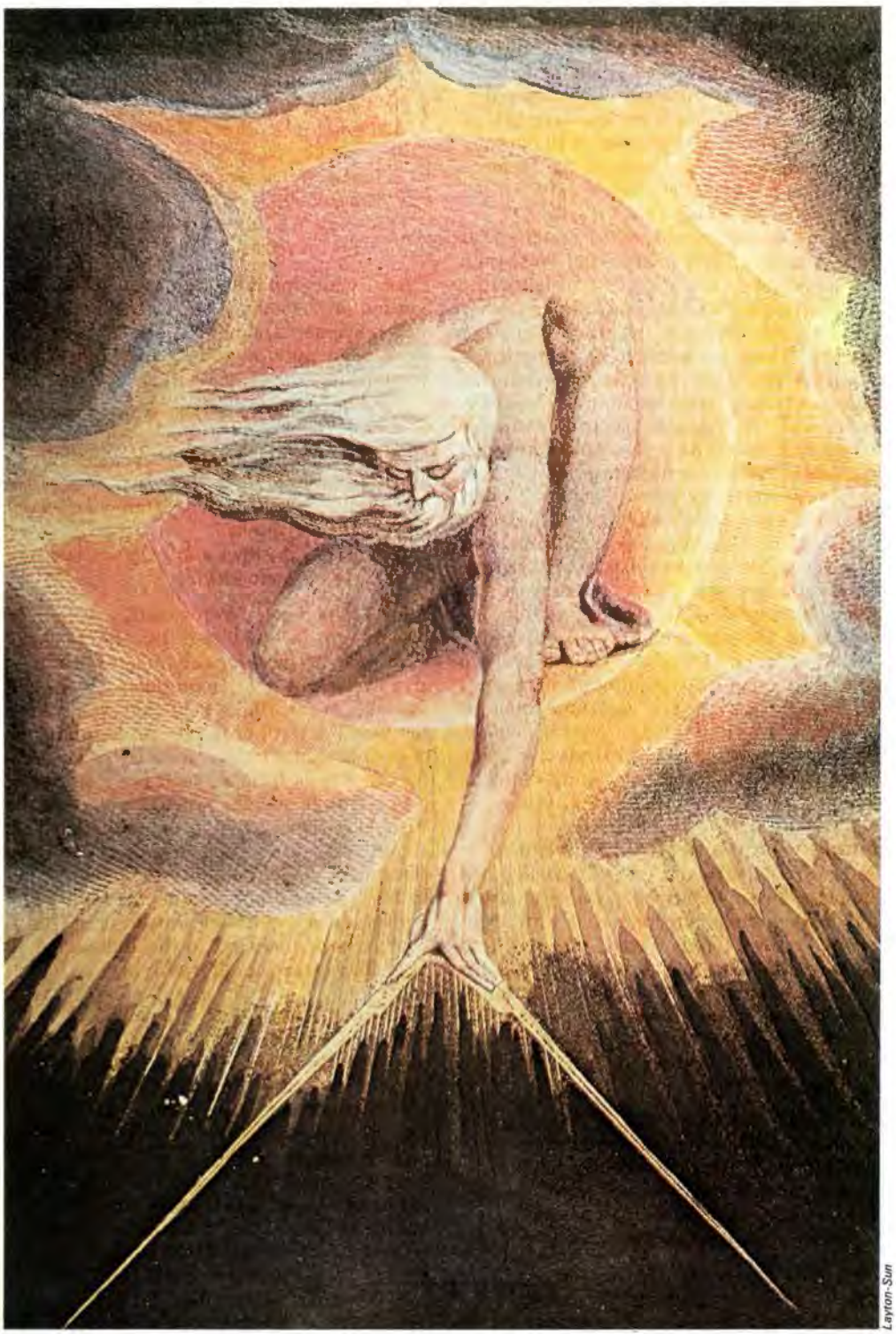
From Blake's poems

images which he discerned within that order of the mind he called the collective unconscious, since it is common to all men. Blake believed that 'all Deities reside in the human breast', that 'all religions are one', and that 'the Religions of all Nations are derived from each Nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius, which is everywhere call'd the Spirit of Prophecy.'

There is no orderly formulation of Blake's mythological system though commentators from Yeats in the 1880's to the present time have attempted to discover or impose such an order. Blake seems to have been at all times possessed of a kind and degree of consciousness which comes to less gifted mortals only in flashes. His 'visions' seem to have been of two kinds: an acute perception of the content of the collective unconscious; and an illuminated vision of Nature. He saw himself as a prophet in the Hebrew tradition; and his 'visions' as relating to the national mind of England, 'the Giant Albion'. 'Prophets, in the modern sense of the word, have never existed. A Prophet is a Seer, not an Arbitrary Dictator.' Inspired poets are no less prophets than Moses or Ezekiel: 'Milton's *Paradise Lost* is as true as Genesis or Exodus', for the truth of inspired art is not that of historians, but the abiding realities of the mind itself.

There are two extreme views about the nature and source of Blake's knowledge. We must take him at his word when he says that his visions came to him spontaneously, and evidently with a speed and energy which outran his powers of recording his impressions. He said that much of his poetry was 'dictated' and on completing his *Milton*, he wrote in a letter, 'I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the Secretary; the Authors are in Eternity.'

On the other hand, throughout his work there is evidence not only of a powerful intellect, but of an extensive knowledge of English poetry and history, of contemporary



In a famous painting, *The Ancient Of Days*, the power of reason, named Urizen in Blake's mythological system, is shown creating the visible, material world. For Blake this event was the same as the 'fall into Division', the usurpation by reason of 'Jesus, the Imagination', the divinity which is in every human being. The dividers symbolize both rational creation and the divisive spiritual influence of reason

Layton-Sun

'To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination'

political events and writings, and of that body of esoteric or occult knowledge which led Yeats to conclude that Blake had access to the secret oral tradition of the legendary Rosicrucians. Perhaps on the strength of this supposition, paraphrases of Blake were incorporated into the rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn, to which Yeats himself belonged (see GOLDEN DAWN).

But it is not necessary to assume that Blake was an initiate in any other sense than the only real initiation – insight into spiritual reality and an imaginative understanding of whatever works he read or studied. There is nothing in his writings which he could not have learned from his wide and deep reading in the Hermetic, alchemical and Neoplatonic texts available to him in English. As a young man, he was a member of the Swedenborgian New Church; he almost certainly knew Thomas Taylor, the Platonist philosopher; he deeply venerated the mystic Jacob Boehme and Paracelsus. He seems to have read Agrippa, Fludd and perhaps Thomas Vaughan and other alchemists. As an apprentice, he worked on the engravings of Jacob Bryant's *New System of Mythology*, which gave him an introduction to comparative mythology to which he continued to add, throughout his life, whatever knowledge was available. Blake also knew something of Indian religion, and of Welsh and British antiquities, and he was well-read in Latin and Greek authors.

Single Vision and Newton's Sleep

Blake consistently and cogently condemned the materialist philosophy of Bacon, Newton and Locke, whom he countered with arguments derived from Plato, Plotinus and Berkeley, delivered with an energy all his own. He followed the Cabalistic tradition of four worlds, each representing a state of consciousness (see CABALA). His terms for these worlds or states are Eden, Beulah, Generation and Ulro.

> Now I a fourfold vision see,
> And a fourfold vision is given to me;
> 'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
> And threefold in soft Beulah's night
> And twofold Always. Nay God us keep
> From Single vision and Newton's sleep.

'Newton's sleep' is the materialist view which takes the quantitative aspect of the world for its total reality. Blake regarded the Creation as a system of appearances rather than of material objects external to the mind.

> The Sky is an immortal Tent built by the Sons of Los
> And every Space that a Man views around his dwelling place
> Standing on his own roof or in his garden on a mount
> Of twenty-five cubits in height, such space is his Universe.

Every man inhabits his own Eden, his 'garden on a mount', and in this sense, his own universe; a somewhat similar view has since been put forward by the philosopher Whitehead.

> As to that false appearance which appears to be reason
> As of a Globe rolling through Voidness, it is a delusion of Ulro.
> The microscope knows not of this nor the Telescope: they alter
> The ratio of the Spectator's Organs, but leave Objects untouched.

Blake considered Wordsworth's vision of Nature to be distorted by the Lockean philosophy, which regards man as the passive recipient of impressions from an external world. Blake held that we perceive the world according to our kind and degree of consciousness: 'As a man is, so he Sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers. You certainly mistake, when you say that the Visions of Fancy are not to be found in This World. To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination.' In his conception of mind as the reality and Nature as a system of appearances, Blake was perhaps indebted to the Indian as well as to the western occult tradition.

The Four Zoas

Blake was a lifelong Christian, whose theology was based upon the Swedenborgian belief that a 'new Church' (which began in 'the heavens', or inner world, in 1757, the year of Blake's birth) was to be the religion of 'God as man'; a Christian humanism (see SWEDENBORG). Blake took the term 'Divine Humanity' from Swedenborg and his affirmation of 'Jesus the Imagination', present in and to every individual being, certainly derives its peculiar emphasis from Swedenborg. Swedenborgian also is Blake's conception of spiritual communities, the collective identity of those in the same spiritual 'state'. Swedenborg's 'Grand Man', who contains in his one life all human souls, gave Blake one of his finest conceptions.

> We live as One Man; for contracting our infinite senses
> We behold multitude, or expanding we behold as one,
> As One Man all the Universal Family, and that One Man
> We call Jesus the Christ, and he in us, and we in him
> Live in perfect harmony in Eden, the land of life.

The principal enactors of the interior drama of man's 'fall into Division and his Resurrection to Unity' are the Four Zoas, the 'living creatures' of Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot (Ezekiel, chapter 1) and the Beasts of the Apocalypse. These 'four mighty ones', whom Blake has so powerfully characterized both in his poetry and in his designs, are named Urizen, Luvah, Urthona and Tharmas. They are identical with Jung's four functions of reason, feeling, intuition and sense. The 'fall' of man results from the separation of these functions from 'Jesus the Imagination', the God within, and from one another. Each in turn attempts to dominate man; but especially (since Blake's myth relates specifically to 'the giant Albion', the collective being of the English nation) Urizen, the rational power.

From this usurpation by reason of 'the throne of God' which is in every man, all our national ills have followed. But each of the Zoas has an eternal and a temporal aspect; thus Luvah (love) becomes when thwarted, Orc, the destructive spirit of war and revolution, and also the cunning serpent of sexual lust. The senses (Tharmas) become mere formless energy proliferating in a blind 'polypus' of vegetation. Los, the temporal vehicle of Urthona, is relatively unfallen, in Blake's picture of the national psyche, and is said to have 'kept the Divine Vision in time

In *The Fall of Man* God looks on indignantly from heaven as Adam and Eve are gently led from the Garden of Eden by the Saviour. This is the signal for Satan to arouse Sin, Death and Hell, to celebrate with him the coming of violence, death and pain. The lion devours the bull, the tiger attacks the horse and the vulture and eagle fight for the meek lamb

Michael Holford

INRI

1808

Blake's Great Task

Trembling I sit day and night, my
friends are astonish'd at me,
Yet they forgive my wanderings. I rest
not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the
immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought,
into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the
Human Imagination.
O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of
meekness and love!
Annihilate the Selfhood in me: be thou
all my life!
Guide thou my hand, which trembles
exceedingly upon the rock of ages,
While I write of the building of Golgonooza,
& of the terrors of Entuthon,
Of Hand and Hyle & Coban, of Kwantok, Peachey,
Brereton, Slayd & Hutton,
Of the terrible sons & daughters of Albion,
and their Generations.

Jerusalem, chapter 1

National Portrait Gallery London

of trouble' – a comment, perhaps, upon the prophetic role of the arts in England.

Each of the Zoas has, besides 'sons' and 'daughters', a feminine counterpart or vehicle or 'emanation'. The emanation of Los is Enitharmon, or space, who brings to birth the conception of time. Luvah's emanation is Vala, the 'veil' of Nature. When Vala, who is in reality a 'shadow' of the soul (Jerusalem, in Blake's mythology), lays claim to substantial and independent reality, she becomes a cruel and destructive principle. The 'sickness of Albion' Blake diagnosed as a tyranny of Vala made possible by the usurpation of abstract reason, Urizen. The Redemption of man is perpetually enacted as 'the Saviour' – the God within – re-integrates the separated faculties into the Imagination.

Satan of the Self

As Blake's 'saviour' is 'Jesus the Imagination', so his Satan is 'the Selfhood', or separated ego; whose freedom is delusive, and whose kingdom is the world cut off from God, the Hades of the spiritually dead, whom Blake calls the Spectres. The separated 'spectres' functioning independently and without orientation are, in modern psychological terms, complexes; and Jung has called the ego a special instance of the complex. Like Blake, Jung saw the cure as a return of the parts to the whole to which they belong. Blake called Satan's Kingdom 'a kingdom of nothing'; for there is no being called Satan, only a 'state'.

For Blake there is no irredeemably evil being; evil he assigns to 'states' of mind and not to individuals. 'These States Exist now. Man Passes on, but States remain for Ever; he passes thro' them like a traveller who may as well suppose that the places he has passed thro' exist no more, as a Man may suppose that the States he has pass'd thro' Exist no more.'

Blake's account of the Fall shows affinities with various formulations of the western occult tradition, and especially with Boehme (see BOEHME). The Fall comes about through the usurpation of a 'second creator' who in Blake's mythology is Urizen. The Creation (which for Blake is the same as the Fall) comes about through the 'binding' of Urizen within the 'cave' of the five senses, an event described in a passage several times repeated in the Prophetic Books: 'For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow climbs of his cavern.'

The Visions of Eternity

The remaining Zoas and the four Emanations are drawn down with this Demiurge into his fallen world of 'error, or Creation'. Boehme describes the same event as the corruption of the Seven Fountain Spirits, whom he names from the gods of the seven planets known in antiquity. Blake in this context often calls the fallen beings the 'starry ones', in this same astrological sense. They return to their beauty and perfection when the repentant Urizen acknowledges the supremacy of 'Jesus the Imagination' over reason. Blake's most famous designs – the 22 illustrations of the Book of Job – are a pictorial narrative of the 'fall' of Satan from the unity of the 'God within'. Job is tormented by the reasonings of his own selfhood until he acknowledges the divine mystery, which reason cannot fathom.

The same rejection of reason appears in a fine passage in *Milton*.

To cleanse the Face of My Spirit by Self-annihilation,
To bathe in the Waters of Life, to wash off the Not Human
I come in Self-annihilation and the grandeur of Inspiration
To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour.

A central theme in Blake's mythology is the Last Judgement, the subject of one of his most ambitious compositions, and of his magnificent prose account of this work. The Judgement is not, for Blake, the arbitrary punitive intervention of a tyrant god, but the manifestation of 'that which eternally exists, really and unchangeably.' It is the supreme human revelation of things as they are, in their full being; an awakening from sleep, a resurrection from spiritual death. 'The world of Imagination is the world of Eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the Vegetated body. This world of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal, whereas the world of Generation or Vegetation, is Finite and Temporal. There Exist in that Eternal world the Permanent Realities of Every thing which we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature. All things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the divine body of the Saviour, the True Vine of Eternity, the Human Imagination. . .'

Blake's 'eternal forms' are not abstract ideals but, on the contrary, the total being of those things which we normally perceive only dimly and partially. Natural forms, trees and mountains, the heavenly constellations and the smallest maze of dancing flies are, seen with the supreme vision, not less themselves but more:

. . . These are the Sons of Los: these
the Visions of Eternity,
But we see only as it were the hem
of their garments
When with our vegetable eyes we view
these wondrous Visions.

In the light of the supreme vision all illusions, self-deceptions and misconceptions cease to exist. 'Error is Created. Truth is Eternal. Error, or Creation, will be Burned up, and then, and not till then, Truth of Eternity will appear. It is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it.'

KATHLEEN RAINE

FURTHER READING: The standard edition of Blake is *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, edited by Geoffrey Keynes (OUP, 1966). An excellent general introductory book is Bernard Blackstone's *English Blake* (Shoe String Press, 1966). See also A. Blunt, *The Art of William Blake* (Columbia, 1959); M. Davis, *William Blake* (University of California Press, 1977); N. Fryre, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton, 1947); G. W. Digby, *Symbol and Image in William Blake* (Oxford, 1957); D. Hirst, *Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake* (Barnes and Noble, 1964); G. Mills, *The Neaplatonism of William Blake* (Harper & Row, 1961); K. Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (Princeton, 1968).

Previous page **This water-colour, *The Lazar House* showing the grim figure of Death presiding over contorted human misery, while Despair stands by, was probably inspired by Milton's *Paradise Lost*. 'Immediately a place before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark, a Lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid numbers of all diseased . . .' *Left* To Blake, Satan is 'the Selfhood' or separated ego, whose Kingdom is a kingdom of nothing. Evil is a state of mind through which man passes: *Satan arousing the Rebel Angels*. Plaster cast taken from a life-mask of William Blake *(above right)***

Michael Holford

Towards the end of the 19th century the eccentric and extraordinary 'H.P.B.', founder of the Theosophical Society, dominated the occult scene in a career which moved from Spiritualism to an attempt to unite the eastern and western magical traditions, and from the performance of apparent miracles to violent accusations of fraud

John Symonds

MME BLAVATSKY

HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY (1831–1891) was the foundress of modern occultism and one of the most remarkable women who ever lived. In the summer of 1873, after travelling steerage across the Atlantic from France, she arrived penniless in New York. She was then 42 years of age, weighed 16 stone, rolled her own cigarettes and chain-smoked. She found lodgings in a tenement house for working women.

Little is known about her before this time. She was the daughter of Colonel Peter Hahn and cousin of Count Sergei Yulievich Witte, a Tsarist prime minister. She received no formal education and went to no university. A few weeks before her 17th birthday she married Nikifor Blavatsky, Vice-Governor of the Province of Erivan in Transcaucasia. After a few months of marriage, she ran away from her husband to lead the life of a Victorian hippy. According to Count Witte, she rode on horseback in a circus in Constantinople, gave piano lessons in London and Paris, was in charge of an artificial flower factory in Tiflis, and for a while was assistant to Daniel Dunglass Home, the celebrated Spiritualist and levitationist (see HOME).

An American artist, Albert Leight Rawson, met her in Cairo during 1850–1, when she was dressed as an Arab and smoking pot. According to him, she took lessons from Sheik Yusuf ben Makerzi, 'the Chief of the Serpent Charmers', in the art of handling live snakes. With a certain Countess Kazenov, whom she met at Shepheard's Hotel, she called on Paulos Metamon, a Copt magician.

H.P.B.: We are students who have heard of your great learning and skill in magic and wish to learn at your feet.

P.M.: I perceive that you are two Franks in disguise and I have no doubt you are in search of knowledge – of occult and magical lore. I look for the coin.

It was Spiritualism which had drawn her to America at the age of 42: no less than 18 million Americans, it has been calculated, among a population of over 38 million, attended Spiritualist seances and read Spiritualist papers. It was even believed that through the intense concentration of unusually gifted mediums, the dead could materialize in their former bodies. This was supposed to be happening at Chittenden in Vermont. Two enterprising brothers, William and Horatio Eddy, were said to be materializing scores of people who had once walked the earth – Indian squaws, soldiers of the Civil War, drowned sailors, prominent manufacturers, children. The seances took place either in the dim light of a murky lamp or in pitch dark, and the audience were kept at a safe distance by a wooden barrier. Sometimes only half an arm would appear through a slit in the curtain which draped the platform – to compress a spring balance to the 40 lb mark. This was to show how real the materializations were.

Some of the spirit forms were gifted musically and there were regular sing-songs during the evening, and before the seances began the audience usually danced· it was all part of the entertainment.

Fame as a Medium

Journalists who reported these events were unable to say if they were genuine or not. The New York *Daily Graphic* sent an astute observer, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, to report on them. He already had a reputation as an investigator of psychic phenomena. When his articles appeared in the *Graphic*, they created a sensation.

Madame Blavatsky in New York read them eagerly, dropped the cravats she was sewing or the advertising cards she was designing, and hurried off to the Eddys' farm, which had been turned into a hotel to accommodate the visitors.

'Good gracious, look at that specimen, will you?' said the Colonel to his companion, an artist whom he had brought with him to make drawings of the spirit forms.

In the dining-room of the Eddys' farmstead, he had caught sight of a broad-shouldered woman with frizzy blonde hair; she was wearing a red shirt. (In those days a red shirt expressed sympathy for Garibaldi's libertarian views, not for socialism.) The artist turned his head and saw a moon-shaped face, with large mystical blue eyes. The Colonel took a seat opposite her 'to indulge in my favourite habit of character studying.' She was talking volubly in French to another woman. After the evening meal, the two ladies retired outside for a smoke. The Colonel followed, struck a match for Mme Blavatsky's cigarette and said politely '*Permettez moi, Madame.*'

'I hesitated before coming here,' said Mme Blavatsky, 'because I was afraid of meeting that Colonel Olcott.'

'Why should you be afraid of him, Madame?' asked the Colonel gravely.

'Oh, because I fear he might write about me in his paper.'

Naturally the Colonel wrote about her in his paper and Mme Blavatsky was delighted. He described her as a Russian aristocrat – her mother was Helena Fadeyev, daughter of Princess Helena Dolgoruky – and as a medium of most extraordinary ability who alone could solve the riddle of these manifestations at Chittenden. Instead of solving the riddle, Mme Blavatsky made it more mysterious. Now the oddest characters were called back to life, Russians and Georgians who appeared in their native costumes, twanged the lezguinka, and answered Mme Blavatsky back (in Russian, of conrse) when she asked them how they were getting along.

On her return to New York City, she was interviewed by the *Graphic*, who told their readers in a feature article that 'Madame Helen de Blavatsky' had spent three nights in the Pyramid of Cheops, had witnessed the famous D. D. Home being carried out of one of the upper windows of a house in London and wafted gently to a waiting carriage below, that she had made a fortune by buying ostrich feathers cheaply in the Sudan, and that she had narrowly escaped death by the blowing up of the *Eumonia* in which she was travelling. 'As I lay on my back in the water, I saw limbs, heads and trunks all falling around me.' Only this last statement was true.

The interview was larded with patches of conversation.

'Do you fellows smoke here?' she asked.

'I don't,' replied the journalist who was conducting the interview.

'Oh, you mean fellow!'

'But the others do and you can smoke if you wish.'

'All we Russian ladies like our cigarette. Do you know poor Queen Victoria nearly has a fit when her Russian daughter-in-law smokes?'

The Colonel insisted that there was no sexual love between himself and Mme Blavatsky and he emphasized this by pointing out that she was unattractive physically, a view which conflicted with the description of her in the *Graphic*: 'She is handsome, with full voluptuous figure, large eyes, well-formed nose and rich sensuous mouth and chin.'

Articles about her appeared in other New York papers. Then Spiritualism in America received a set-back through the exposure of a mean fraud perpetrated on Robert Dale Owen, the Senator and distinguished reformer, son of Robert Owen, the utopian socialist. He had fallen in love with a spirit form, a young woman called Katie King who had lived in the 17th century; he gave her jewellery, which vanished away with her when she re-entered the spirit world. Then the news was broken to Owen that she was real. He was shocked to hear it and described it as a vile slander.

The Colonel and Mme Blavatsky set to work to investigate. They concluded that

Katie King was a genuine spirit but they were too late to save the sanity of Robert Dale Owen.

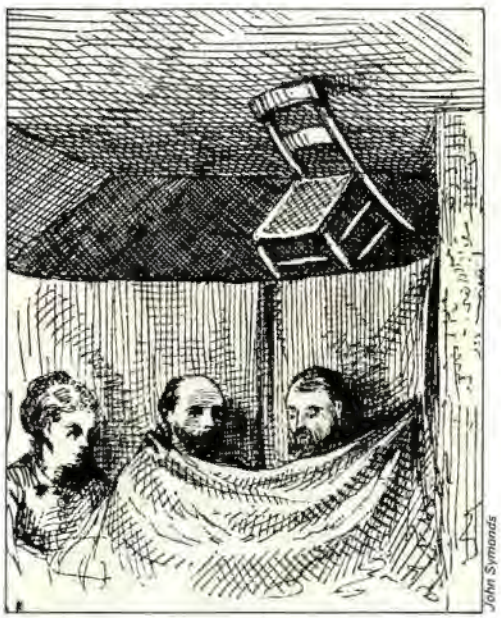
Isis Unveiled

Like any other medium, Mme Blavatsky had her spirit 'guide' or 'control', an intermediary between her and the world of spirits in general. He was called John King and she referred to him in terms of great affection, called him her Holy Guardian Angel, and said she would not put a foot out of doors without consulting with him first. But when the interest in Spiritualism declined, she talked less and less of John King and began to mention other beings, more god-like than human, who had chosen her to be their messenger. There were several of them, known collectively as the Brothers or Masters; their powers were practically unlimited.

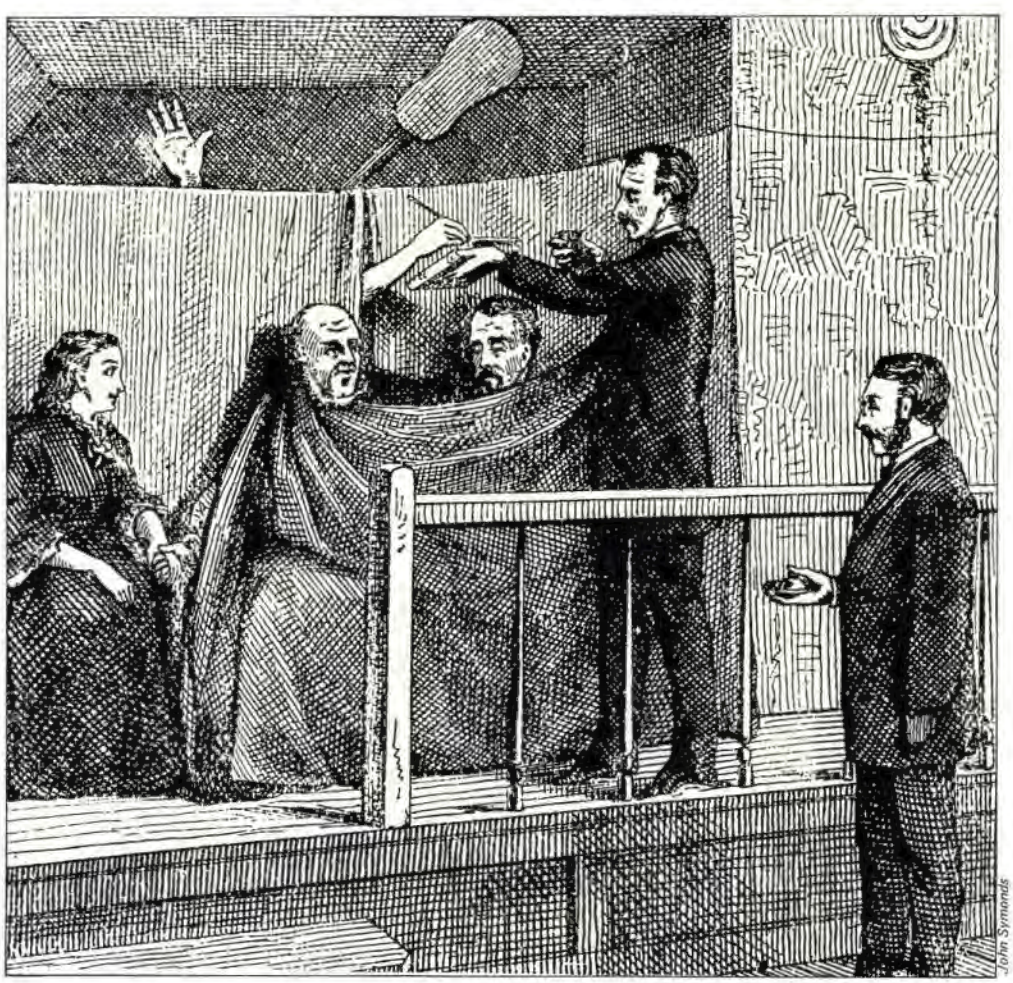
Such supermen are part of eastern tradition. In India, they are called Mahatmas, great souls (see MAHATMA). They would occasionally drop the Colonel a note, telling him to do this or that for Mme Blavatsky. The note was usually left lying on his desk, having been precipitated there by occult means from the Brothers' Sanctuary in Tibet. It was a hint from one of the Brothers which made the Colonel leave his wife and three children and set up house with Mme Blavatsky at 46 Irving Place, New York City. Here, during their 'at homes' would come their friends who were interested in magic, the Cabala, Egyptian religion, rope tricks and other tricks, and talk into the night over cups of tea.

One evening during 1875, after one of the guests had given a lecture on Egyptian art, the Colonel had a brilliant idea. It was that they should put their meetings on a formal basis by organizing themselves into a society. Mme Blavatsky seconded the proposal and after hunting for a suitable name, the word *Theosophy*, meaning knowledge of God or divine wisdom, was found in the dictionary and adopted. Thus was inaugurated the Theosophical Society. The next step was for Mme Blavatsky to write a book on this divine wisdom or body of truth concerning God, man and the universe; it occupied her for the next two years and was published in New York in 1877, under the title of *Isis Unveiled*. While writing and smoking hashish, she said she had glimpsed the goddess Isis herself.

Isis Unveiled is not an outline of magic or of Theosophy but a survey of the literature of magic, witchcraft, alchemy, eastern thought and western science – a gallimaufry of fact and fable on many subjects. Her aim was to redeem magic from the disfavour into which it had fallen since the rise of science in the 17th century. She postulated the doctrine of the Astral Light or vital ether, which she called by the Sanskrit term of Akasha, a tenuous substance, and propounded the notion of a secret science known to the ancients, and a secret brotherhood of adepts who, down the ages, have transmitted this secret knowledge to those ready to receive it. She herself was in touch with the Tibetan section of this brotherhood, one of whom had actoally written whole pages of *Isis Unveiled* for her in the middle of the night while



Mme Blavatsky was a frequent and enthusiastic visitor to the home of the Eddy brothers at Chittenden in Vermont. The two brothers, William and Horatio, were renowned for their extraordinary powers as mediums and their ability to summon a succession of spirit forms, including Indian squaws, soldiers who had been killed during the Civil War, and drowned sailors. The seances were held in a small upstairs room called the Circle Room. At one end of the room there was a raised platform with a railing to prevent members of the audience from rushing forward in their excitement. The medium sat in a narrow cabinet against the right-hand wall of the platform and the spirit manifestations appeared from behind a curtain. On Mme Blavatsky's first visit to the Circle she was welcomed by the spirit of a childhood friend from her native Russia, who had long before been killed in a street accident. He replied to her questions by plucking the strings of a guitar and concluded by playing the Georgian national anthem. At subsequent meetings chairs were elevated *(above left)*, spirits danced with selected guests and on one occesion a spirit even uttered a few words. Colonel Olcott devised a method of weighing a spirit by means of a spring balance *(above right)*. When compressed the balance indicated 40 pounds



John Symonds

Early leaders of the Theosophical movement: Annie Besant (*left*), a devoted disciple of Mme Blavatsky, took over leadership of the Society on her death. Colonel H. S. Olcott (*centre*), was co-founder of the Theosophical Society with Mme Blavatsky in 1875. Mr W. Q. Judge (*right*) was a leader of the American branch

she was fast asleep. This notion was not new: the idea of a brotherhood of adepts is found earlier, in the teachings of the Rosicrucians for instance; but the time was ripe for presenting these ideas again, especially when linked with eastern thought.

The Frenchman, Eliphas Levi (see LEVI), in his attempts to resuscitate western ceremonial magic with its roots in the Cabala, had entered the field before her, but it was Mme Blavatsky's peculiar merit to have made the bridge between the western and eastern magical systems and to have found the source of occult wisdom in the eastern Wisdom tradition.

What is remarkable about so large and learned a work as *Isis Unveiled* is not that it was written by Mme Blavatsky, a performer at Spiritualist seances, who knew neither Sanskrit nor Pali, but that it contains statements of an intuitive kind which show that she was in tune with the spirit of her time, with the beginning of that great movement towards an understanding of the 'objective psyche' or the unconscious.

The Hidden Masters

Meanwhile the Theosophical Society, like the interest in Spiritualism in general, had declined; its members had grown tired of Theosophy and resigned from the Society. This was one of the reasons why Mme Blavatsky decided to take the bold step of selling up and going to India, land of the Mahatmas, taking the Colonel with her, of course. Westerners, she said, were too deeply rooted in materialism to understand Theosophy and the magic of the Secret Brothers – but India, the citadel of occultism, India of the golden face! . . .

The Colonel had been in contact with an Indian organization which had, he and Mme Blavatsky thought, a similar point of view to their own. They were mistaken in this but the Arya Samaj, or Society of Men of Good Will, a Hindu reformist organization to which they affiliated their Theosophical Society, made the bridge for them to India.

They arrived in India in February 1879. The Colonel was so moved to be at last on the sacred soil of India and among his spiritual kinsmen, as he called Indians, that he sank on his knees and kissed the stone of the quayside. They were met by the Bombay representative of the Arya Samaj, who entertained them lavishly, and then gave them a large bill 'for expenses'. Mme Blavatsky was furious and used language which the Colonel called 'ironclad'.

Dayananda Sarasvati, the Arya Samaj leader, adopted a reserved attitude towards these peculiar Americans who seemed to him to be interested only in the *siddhis* (powers) of yoga. Through an interpreter he said to the Colonel, for he did not speak to women, that the claims of yoga were true and based on the laws of nature; the *rishis* (seers) of old could do anything, of course, for they were more or less divine.

In October, Mme Blavatsky and the Colonel sank their small capital into *The Theosophist*, a monthly magazine devoted to oriental philosophy, art, literature and occultism, the first number of which contained the first instalment of the autobiography of Dayananda Sarasvati, the Great Teacher. It sold out immediately.

They made friends everywhere. Perhaps because of their anti-British and even anti-European sentiments, combined with their love of everything Indian, the Society steadily grew and Mme Blavatsky and the Colonel soon found themselves the centre of an organization with international possibilities: in spite of a quarrel with the Great Teacher, who called them a couple of charlatans.

The Hidden Masters or Secret Brothers who lived in the Himalayas and in inaccessible Tibet where, during 1864, Mme Blavatsky had been initiated, or so she said, provided the driving force. They were the power behind the miracles – there is no other word for them – which Mme Blavatsky was now regularly performing, such as materializing out of the unseen particles in the air anything which she needed at the moment – a teacup, for instance. One of the Brothers, named Koot Hoomi, was helping the Society as well as he could by sending from Tibet persuasive letters to distinguished Englishmen in India who were sympathetically inclined towards Theosophy. That these letters

A Permanent Enchantment

Madame Blavatsky describes how she wrote *Isis Unveiled:*

I am solely occupied, not with writing *Isis*, but with Isis herself. I live in a kind of permanent enchantment, a life of visions and sights, with open eyes, and no chance whatever to deceive my senses! I sit and watch the fair good goddess constantly. And as she displays before me the secret meaning of her long-lost *secrets*, and the veil, becoming with every hour thinner and more transparent, gradually falls off before my eyes, I hold my breath and can hardly trust to my senses! . . . Night and day the images of the past are ever marshalled before my inner eyes. Slowly, and gliding silently like images in an enchanted panorama, centuries after centuries appear before me . . . I certainly refuse point-blank to attribute it to my own knowledge or memory. I tell you seriously I am helped. And he who helps me is my Guru.

Quoted in John Symonds, *Madame Blavatsky, Medium and Magician*

came mainly through Mme Blavatsky or just dropped from the ceiling, was not considered suspicious, except by the Protestant missionaries in India who were the target of Mme Blavatsky's frontal attacks.

The Oxford Sanskrit scholar, Max Müller, editor of *The Sacred Books of the East* series, said that after her quarrel with Dayananda Sarasvati, she decided to found a religion of her own. There is some truth in this for she was drinking at the source of all religions and her synthesis of ancient creeds, though not, strictly speaking, a religion, rather resembled one.

Astral Bells

In March 1880, Mme Coulomb and her husband arrived at the Theosophists' door; they had come from Ceylon where their business had failed and they were in sore straits. Mme Coulomb had known Mme Blavatsky in Cairo in 1872, when Mme Blavatsky had been in sore straits. As soon as Mme Blavatsky caught sight of her old friend Mme Coulomb, with the black-bearded one-eyed husband whom she had since acquired, she gave a cry of joy, and offered them work in the Society. It proved to be an unfortunate thing to have done.

Sometimes in Mme Blavatsky's presence the startling and eerie sound of 'astral bells' would be heard, high up near the ceiling or travelling about the room. It was said to be a sign that her Master was present; it was like the tinkling of a little silver bell.

Raps on the furniture or on the walls, supposedly made by the spirits of the departed, were also heard in her presence; she could easily evoke the spirits. While she was in Simla, the seat of the Government in India during the hot season, during a dinner party she even produced raps on the bald heads of high government officials. She was the talk of India.

The restless Colonel travelled about to spread the word; he established new branches of the Society throughout India and Ceylon, and gained thousands of converts. Occasionally, he bumped into a Mahatma, one of the Hidden Brothers, before whom he bowed down in reverence. Koot Hoomi was tall, handsome, benign, gave him words of advice and vanished into thin air.

On the banks of the Adyar River, just outside Madras, they found for sale a large house in extensive grounds. They had been looking for more commodious premises. They bought it and moved in during 1882. It is still the headquarters of the Theosophical Society.

Scandalous Revelations

In 1884, the founders returned in triumph to Europe. Lady Caithness, Duchess of Pomar, entertained them at her palace at Nice, and while the Colonel was in England lent Mme Blavatsky a flat in Paris. The most exalted French mystics made their pilgrimage to her.

She came over to England where the Society for Psychical Research proposed that they should investigate her 'marvellous phenomena' (the phrase was not ironic), and publish their findings. She agreed without hesitation. They examined the Colonel who talked about astral travelling; then an Indian member of the Society who related convincingly the marvels he had experienced; finally they had several chats with Mme Blavatsky herself. But before they had time to publish their conclusions, a bombshell exploded in the very centre of Theosophy in Madras. The Protestant missionaries had published some highly indiscreet and revealing letters, allegedly written by Mme Blavatsky to Mme Coulomb, which clearly exposed the great Mme Blavatsky as a fraud and her 'marvellous phenomena' as the work of confederates, of whom Mme Coulomb was the most important. The letters had been brought to the editor of the Madras *Christian College Magazine* by Mme Coulomb in a rage: she had been expelled from the headquarters at Adyar after a quarrel with other members of the committee in charge.

News of the scandal was published in the world's press; it made the Society for Psychical Research reconsider their not unfavourable views on Theosophy. The crudeness of the revelations startled them. Mme Blavatsky, it was alleged, had got Mme Coulomb to make a dummy figure of a man which on moonlit nights M Coulomb wore on his shoulders to give the faithful the impression that it was Koot Hoomi hurrying by. And Mme Coulomb had described how she had dropped the Mahatma letters through a slit in the rafters. In other words, these letters had not been precipitated from Tibet. (By 'precipitation' was meant the projection of the Mahatma's thoughts through the ether or astral; on the way they formed themselves into a material letter, ink-written, enclosed in a real Chinese envelope.) The Society for Psychical Research sent an investigator, Richard Hodgson, to India to find out what he could and report back.

And after him, hurriedly, followed Mme Blavatsky to sue the missionaries for libel. These Coulomb letters were entirely forgeries, she declared.

But in India she was advised by her devoted followers, three of whom were lawyers, not to do anything of the sort; it would only lead to putting Koot Hoomi in the witness box, and the Masters would not like that. Mme Blavatsky desisted, to the disappointment of the missionaries who had been patiently waiting for her to attack. They decided to renew their offensive by suing General Morgan of the Indian Army, retired, for calling Mme Coulomb a liar and a thief, unless he apologized. The good general stuck to his guns and the solicitors of the missionary party issued their writ, a device solely to get the fabulous Mme Blavatsky with her unguarded tongue and explosive temper into the witness box. But the same day Mme Blavatsky fled back to Europe, never to return to India.

The Society for Psychical Research at last issued their report. In it they described Mme Blavatsky in terms which have helped to keep her memory green but which at the time she did not find flattering. 'For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors of history.'

The Secret Doctrine

But Mme Blavatsky was too ill with Bright's disease to care very much what they said about her. She wandered through Italy to Switzerland and Germany, and back to England where she settled down to write her masterpiece, *The Secret Doctrine*, an account of the root knowledge out of which all religion, philosophy and science have grown. It was all there for her to see in the Akashic Records for everything, going back to Noah, has been preserved. It was her answer to Richard Hodgson.

'I *live two lives again*,' she wrote to Alfred P. Sinnett, author of *The Occult World*, who had helped to build up the Theosophical Society. 'Master finds that it is too difficult for me to be looking consciously into the Astral Light for my *Secret Doctrine* and so, it is now about a fortnight, I am made to see all I have to as though in a dream.' She was looking into the collective unconscious and her Master was the archetype of the wise man.

She was visited by W. B. Yeats, who described her as 'a sort of old Irish peasant woman with an air of humour and audacious power.' Aleister Crowley, who followed in her footsteps, called her a high initiate, holding the grade equivalent to that of Master of the Temple.

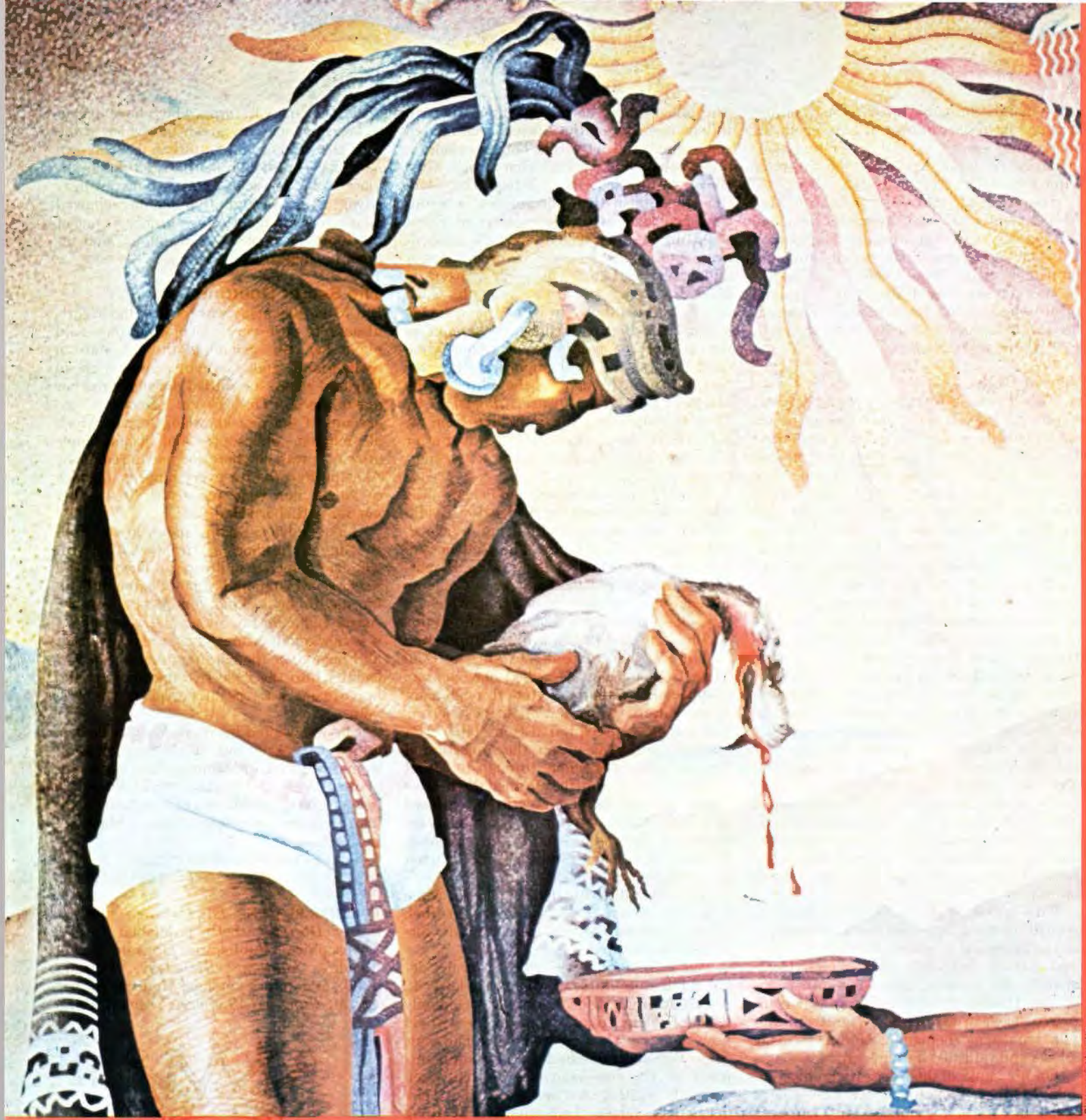
(See also BESANT; THEOSOPHY.)

JOHN SYMONDS

FURTHER READING: *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* (both published by the Theosophical Publishing House). Marion Meade's *Madame Blavatsky* (Putnam, 1980), and John Symonds, *Madame Blavatsky, Medium and Magician* (Yoseloff, 1960).

Mme Blavatsky's mystic brooch, with her initials in a hexagram (spirit and matter interlocked) topped by a swastika (the ceaseless coming into being of life) enclosed in a snake swallowing its own tail (immortality), surmounted by the crown of perfection

John Symonds



Picturepoint London

When a man loses blood, he weakens and dies. As a result, blood is 'life' and a blood sacrifice may be meant to strengthen a god by giving him life, as the Aztecs offered blood to the sun: a modern mural from Guatemala

'In every land, primitive man has nourished the soil with the strength of human blood' and the identification of blood with life, soul, strength and virility is the basis of many ideas deeply rested in our minds

BLOOD

CHEMICALLY, BLOOD IS almost identical with sea water, providing a clear indication of the marine origins of all living creatures, and it has been described, with good reason, as 'the river of life', for it courses through the body in an unending stream which terminates only with death.

Men observed long ago that bodily death involves the cessation of the flow of blood, and that when a man is wounded and loses blood, he weakens and dies. The natural result was the belief that a creature's blood is its life.

It is only a short step from the concept of blood as life to the identification of blood with the soul, which lies behind the fear of spilled blood. By impregnating the earth with the soul-power of its owner, the blood is thought to threaten anyone who treads on it. To neutralize the danger, it is necessary to destroy the blood, often by fire. The shedding of innocent blood on the ground could make the spot accursed for ever, for the outraged soul cried out for vengeance. There are many barren patches of earth in the British Isles where, for this reason according to tradition, no grass will grow. One of the best known is the grave in Montgomery churchyard of William Davies, who was executed in 1821 for a crime of which he was almost certainly innocent.

Food taboos often arise directly from the concept of blood as the soul. The prohibitions against consuming the blood and flesh of certain animals, among the Jews and other communities, testifies to the undying strength of this old belief. All such taboos are rooted in the belief that if you drink the

blood of an animal, its soul becomes absorbed into your own body. On the other hand, many communities ritually drink the blood of animals and men whose peculiar qualities they admire. The Norwegian hunters of old drank bear's blood to acquire the formidable strength of the bear, and in East Africa Masai warriors are known to invigorate themselves with draughts of the blood of lions.

As with animals, so with men. The headhunters of the Central Celebes in the East Indies drank and ate human blood and brains so as to become brave, and in the initiation ceremonies of the aborigines of Central and Western Australia the young were anointed with the blood of the old and experienced men of the tribe.

Similarly, by drinking the blood of a god one might acquire his divine qualities. In the Christian Communion service the worshippers drink the wine which is symbolically the blood of Christ. In the Church of the Holy Blood at Bruges is exhibited a vial of ruby-coloured liquid which tradition says is the water with which Joseph of Arimathea washed the body of the crucified Christ, stained with the divine blood.

Integral with the worship of a deity is the concept of blood sacrifice, the victim being the first-born or the best, whose blood is shed to propitiate the god. The Vikings paid tribute to the gods of the sea by running their long ships over the bodies of prisoners, reddening the keels with their blood, a custom which survives symbolically in the ship-christening ceremony of today.

Blood was the essential factor in the human sacrifices of ancient Mexico and Peru in which thousands were killed to ensure a bountiful harvest. In every land, primitive man has nourished the soil with the strength of human blood. (See also SACRIFICE.)

Blood of the Hunted

Our ancestors were convinced that animals had ghosts and could haunt their murderers. The blood of the hunted, crying out for vengeance against the hunters, created terror in a world peopled by weak men and savage beasts. The Kayans of Borneo were haunted by the souls of the panthers they had killed, and for protection smeared themselves and their weapons with the blood of fowls, which was considered an effective defence against the ghosts. Possibly this rite has associations with the 'blooding' ceremony practised by fox-hunters.

One of the nightmares which have dominated the mind of man has been his fear of menstrual blood which, due possibly to its apparent abnormality and also to the fact that it emanates from the bodies of women, who are generally regarded as evil (see WOMAN), has been considered unnatural and sinister. It was sometimes assumed to be the result of the bite of an evil spirit or a snake, and many communities have regarded it as a blood sacrifice to the moon. Contact with menstrual blood could be extremely dangerous and as a precaution women have at various times been isolated, and even caged. The mere glance of a woman in her menses could be almost lethal and in many places menstruating women have been prevented from touching the earth with their feet, in case they should pollute the ground.

Michael Holford

Since blood is life, it may also be the soul, the part of man which survives the death of the body. In the Indian *Mahabharata*, Drona prepares for death by collecting his soul together from all his limbs. As his head is cut off, the soul rises up like a column of blood-red flame

Scoring Above the Breath

According to popular belief, the magic power of a witch was contained in her blood and was transmitted to her children, its potency for evil remaining unimpaired by time unless destroyed by fire. The result was the custom of burning the body of a condemned witch.

The witch signed her pact with Satan in her blood and with this same blood she suckled her familiar imp. Matthew Hopkins, the self-appointed English 'Witch-Finder General', reported the case of the witch Elizabeth Clark, who fed her familiar, Jamara the legless spaniel, with her own blood, and the same accusation was made against many other witches.

Blood played as important a role in white magic as in black. A witch's power could be destroyed if she was 'scored above the breath', which meant tearing her forehead, mouth or nose until her face became bloody. The same method was employed by European peasants to combat werewolves. Blood

Scala

At the end of the world a hail of mingled fire and blood rain down on the earth: from Signorelli's *The Last Judgement*, in Orvieto cathedral

combined with the hair, nail parings and urine of a bewitched person was used in the Witch Bottle, a device for breaking the spell of a witch. The bottle would be brought to the boil on the kitchen fire at midnight to the accompaniment of the Lord's Prayer said backwards, causing the witch dreadful agony and sometimes death.

The Powder of Sympathy

The belief that shed blood retains a connection with the person or animal from which it came lies behind the Sympathetic Powder made famous by Sir Kenelm Digby in 1661. According to Digby, a sick person could remain in his bed at home while his doctor applied the Sympathetic Powder to a portion of blood-stained bandage which had been delivered to him at his chambers, and a wound so treated would rapidly heal.

Sealing agreements by the ceremonial use of blood is known as the Blood Covenant. Blood-brotherhood involved the mutual drinking of blood by the contracting parties or the commingling of blood by cutting each party and touching the wounds together. It became a common feature of tribal life in ancient Europe and among many American Indians, to create artificial kinship between individuals who were not related.

Royal blood and the blood of chiefs is assumed to possess inherent qualities not shared by lesser mortals, and because of its sacred character must not be spilled. Kubla Khan, the 13th century Mongol chieftain, in ordering the execution of a kinsman of noble blood, subscribed to this tradition by decreeing that the illustrious prisoner should be tossed to death in a blanket.

Out, Damned Spot!

The old belief that blood cried out for vengeance persisted long in folklore and literature. Stories abound of murderers striving in vain to wash the guilty blood from their hands and clothing, or from the blood-stained ground. Such blood is believed to be indelible and forces the cry from the tortured lips of Lady Macbeth: 'Out, damned spot! Out, I say.' People believed that a corpse's blood knew its killer. Suspects were made to touch it.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: C. Hole ed., *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* (Hutchinson, 1961); B. Inglis, *A History of Medicine* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965); E. Maple, *Magic, Medicine and Quackery* (Hale, 1968); B. Seeman, *The River of Life* (Museum Press, 1962).

BLOXHAM, ARTHUR

BORN IN ENGLAND near the turn of the century, Arthur Bloxham originally wanted to become a doctor. For various reasons this was not possible, and he eventually became interested in hypnotism. In 1972 he became President of the British Society of Hypnotherapists, and is regarded as an eminent practitioner in that discipline.

Bloxham's casework took him into the area of regression into past lives, and his tape-recorded sessions of people recalling other lives and personalities run into hundreds of examples. One of his most famous cases, a Welsh housewife called Jane Evans gave vivid accounts of lives as varied as a tutor's wife in Roman Britain to a nun in Maryland U.S.A. who is alleged to have died in 1920. For many people, Bloxham's tapes are convincing evidence of the reality of reincarnation (see REINCARNATION), while psychologists have also offered various explanations for the phenomenom.

Blue

The colour of the sky and therefore of the planet Jupiter, named for the Roman god of the sky; in Christian symbolism the colour of eternity, faith, purity and modesty, and associated with the Virgin Mary; the phrase 'blue blood' was coined by Spanish aristocrats in the belief that their veins were bluer than those of people contaminated by Moorish blood; politically the colour of conservatism, as against the red of revolution.

See COLOURS; CORRESPONDENCES.

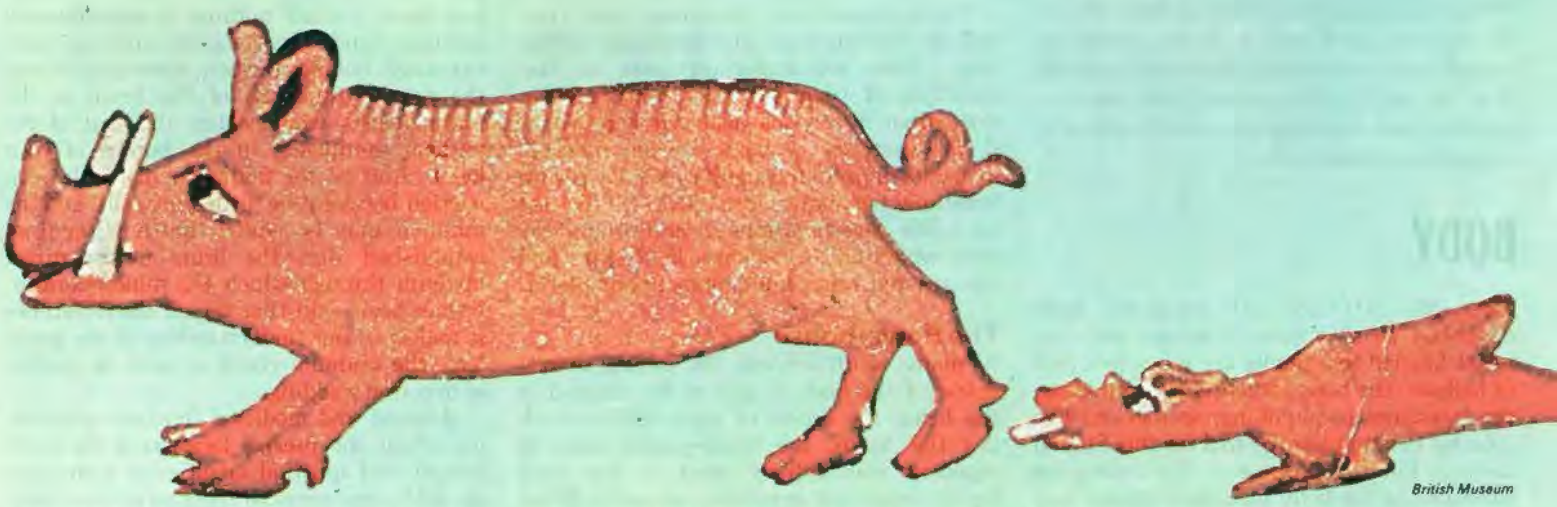
Michael Holford

Bluebeard

Villain of European folk tales, so named from the colour of his beard, who murdered his numerous wives and kept their bodies in a locked room; the story appears in Charles Perrault's *Contes du Temps* (1697) and may be based on the crimes of the mass-murderer Gilles de Rais, executed at Nantes in 1440.

See GILLES DE RAIS.

Mansell Collection



British Museum

The ferocity of the wild boar made it a symbol of death and destruction, and an enemy of the gods. But it was also a symbol of fertility and the boar's head on a warrior's helmet or shield was thought to protect him by giving him the beast's courage and strength

'A boar is a sovereign beast', an emblem of courage and ferocity, the most dangerous of animals for the hunter, and the slayer of men and even of gods. It is sometimes an incarnation of evil, sometimes an embodiment of the dead, sometimes a symbol of the fertility of the earth. A fiercely tusked boar, from a manuscript in the British Museum, with a wyvern, a two-legged dragon with barbed tail and wings

BOAR

THE POWER AND FURY of the 'sovereign beast' have given the wild boar a wealth of symbolism, from Iceland to India, and a vast and tenacious body of folklore and legend. The ancient words of the Boar's Head Carol recall the traditional festivities of Christmas and its pagan predecessor, the winter feast of Yule.

A boar is a sovereign beast
And acceptable in every feast;
So might this Lord be to most and least;
Nowell, nowelle.
This boar's head we bring with song
In worship of him that thus sprang
Out of a virgin to redress all wrong;
Nowell, nowelle.

From antiquity to the Middle Ages and later, the boar was first of all a symbol of the fertility of the earth. In Germany when the corn waved, it was once said, 'The Boar is rushing through the corn' and children were warned, 'Don't go through the corn, there's a boar in there.' The last sheaf at harvest (sometimes called 'the Sow') was saved, and from it was made a loaf in the form of a boar; this was placed on the Yule table until the end of the festive season. It was then kept until the spring sowing, when part would be eaten, and part mixed with the seed-corn to ensure a healthy crop. A comparison may be drawn with the Scandinavian Yule custom of drinking and eating to a good agricultural year and to peace.

The idea of sacrifice in the dead of winter to the fertility deities was not far off, though there is little direct evidence on this point. But the boar was the sacred animal of the fertility god Freyr in Scandinavian mythology. Snorri's *Edda* tells how Freyr rode to Balder's funeral (see BALDER) behind the boar Gollinborsti (golden bristles), also known as 'the one with terrible tusks'. Another boar mentioned in the Eddic literature (the source books of Scandinavian mythology) is Saehrimnir, the boar which was killed and eaten afresh every day by the dead heroes in Valhalla.

Fertility and Death

The boar was thus also connected in the mythology of many peoples with the symbolism of death and the dead. In Northern Europe and Scandinavia the boar, representing the souls of the departed, was believed to run on the storm-clouds as part of Odin's wild hunt. Here we can recognize the curious tension between fertility and destruction that was characteristic of many early mythologies. The Roman historian Tacitus said that the Aestii (a tribe in north-eastern Germany) 'worship the Mother of the gods. They wear, as emblem of this cult, the masks of boars, which stand them in stead of armour or human protection and ensure the safety of the worshipper . . .', which suggests this ambivalence. The dual, life and death, aspect of the mother goddess and related fertility deities is well known.

The wearing of armour, especially helmets, shaped in the form of a boar's head or ornamented with boar's tusks, is attested at least as far back as Mycenean Greece. The position of the boar in Greek mythology, and its connection with the gods, is illustrated by such episodes as that of the Calydonian boar-hunt in the *Iliad* (book 10). Among European archeological finds of recent years was the boar's head helmet found at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk in 1939. The object of this ornamentation was probably magical. The boar symbol was also emblazoned on shields and standards even in pre-Christian Europe, and the use of the boar emblem *(sanglier)* in European heraldry is to be traced back to this source. The most famous wearer of this device was the English king Richard III.

The Boar of Evil

In the ancient Near East, the boar's various aspects as a fertility symbol, symbol of death, and animal of the hunt were also well marked, though among Semitic and Egyptian peoples its character as an embodiment of evil tended to be stressed. Semitic peoples, it seems, have always regarded the pig as unclean, and have refused to have anything to do with it. This was probably because it was originally a sacred animal: the Greek writer Plutarch could not decide whether the Jews worshipped or abominated it. Among peoples who refused (and in some cases still refuse) to eat pork were the Cretans, Syrians, Phoenicians, Egyptians and Ethiopians, as well as the Jews and Moslems (see PIG).

Legends of gods slain by boars, or while boar-hunting, are numerous. Adonis, consort of Aphrodite and Attis, consort of Cybele, both met their end in this way. The same may be true of the Egyptian god Osiris, though the evidence here is scanty. The Cretans held that Zeus himself was a prince ripped up by a wild boar and buried in their midst. This assertion is supposed to have earned them their traditional reputation as liars.

Thus the boar came to be the incarnation of the enemy of the gods; in Egypt, for example, the evil god Set was porcine in form. Traces of a similar conception in the West can be found in traditions of Odin's wild hunt, and in the story of King Arthur's boar-hunt, in which the fabulous boar is the emissary of Satan, to be overcome not by force, but by prayer. Comparable accounts of boar-hunts are found in many medieval texts, among them the French *Song of Roland*, the Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone*, the *Romance of Sir Eglamour* and the German *Nibelungenlied*.

In India, though the volume of material is far less than in Europe, one of the incarnations of the god Vishnu was as a boar, while an Indian creation legend tells how the god Brahma, in the form of a boar, lifted up the earth on his back from the waters of the primeval flood.

The power and potency of this sacred animal was believed in many parts of the world to be a source of magical aid. Boars' tusks and hooves were used as amulets, while an infusion of boar's tusk could help cure all manner of ailments, from epilepsy and toothache to 'the twinges'.

ERIC J. SHARPE

'We carry within us the wonders we seek without.' In occultism, the human body has powers far beyond those with which it is normally credited. It is the axis of the universe, the centre of existence, and has attracted to itself a wealth of magical beliefs and practices

BODY

THE HUMAN BODY HAS frequently been described as if it was a machine, with the heart likened to a pump, the lungs to a pair of bellows, the bony structure to scaffolding, the intestines to plumbing, and so on. The food we eat supplies the fuel for this human factory. For the purpose of illustrating the functions of the body such descriptions may be valid and useful, but is the human body really no more than a machine?

To the occultist, the human body represents, in the language of physics, a field of force. Its limbs and organs are connected as if by invisible cables to the infinite complex of a vast hidden world, and bodily actions can send out powerful streams of energy.

This idea is one which is ancient and widespread. The human voice, say the Arabs, is the most potent sound on earth. Human blood, said the Aztecs, provides nourishment for the sun. Human breath, says yoga, is part of the divine current. 'We carry within us,' declared Sir Thomas Browne in the 17th century, 'the wonders we seek without. There is all Africa and her prodigies in us.'

Physical exercises, concerned with controlling the functions and processes of the body, form an important part of the discipline of yoga but they constitute far more than a physiological regimen. Some of the exercises of yoga become timeless moments of profound significance. Used with breathing techniques (see BREATH), they set up subtle reverberations in and around the body which find a response in the spiritual spheres and bring enlightenment and power.

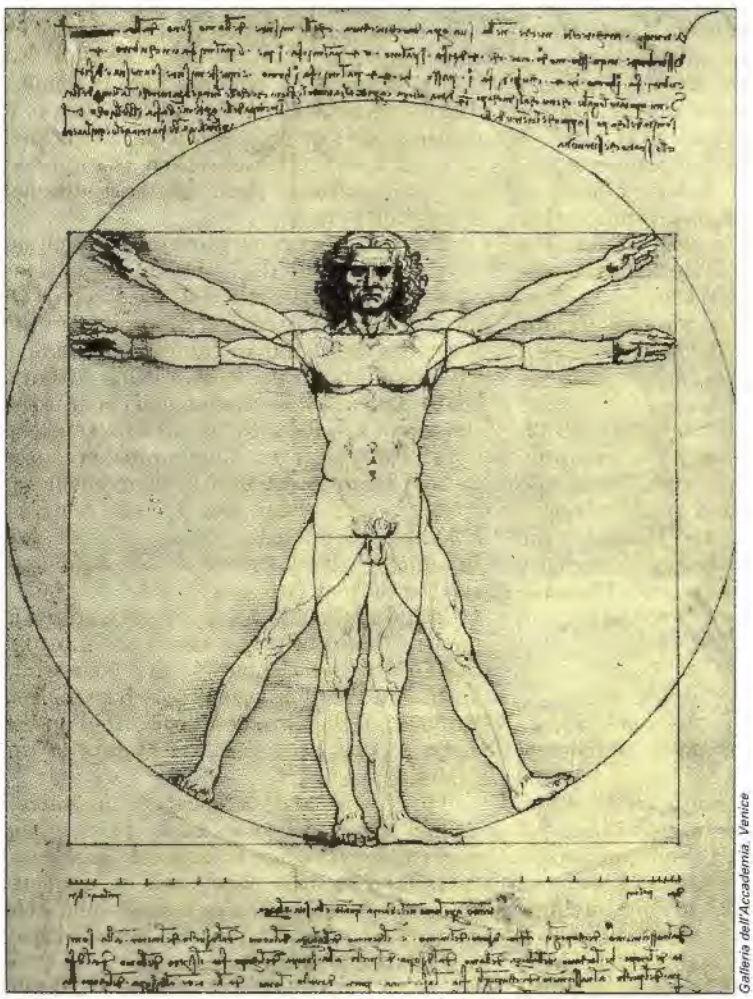
The Powerhouse

In many occult schools, the central powerhouse of the body is said to be situated in the head, the crown of man, within which lies the brain, the 'three-pound mass of repellent convolutions' that is the most highly organized apparatus on earth. What the significance of this wonderful complexity is, is still largely unknown to science, and the greater part of the brain remains unknown territory. Many areas are 'silent' and have yielded nothing to experimental probing, and physiologists are as precariously balanced when theorizing about the precise functions of the brain as the phrenologists who localize the seat of the various sentiments in the bumps of your head. And as for finding a plausible connection between the 'little grey cells' and the mind, it may be added that it is far from established that the brain is the direct medium through which the mind operates. It has been said that for all the difference it makes to our understanding of the problem, the cranium could as well be stuffed with cotton wadding.

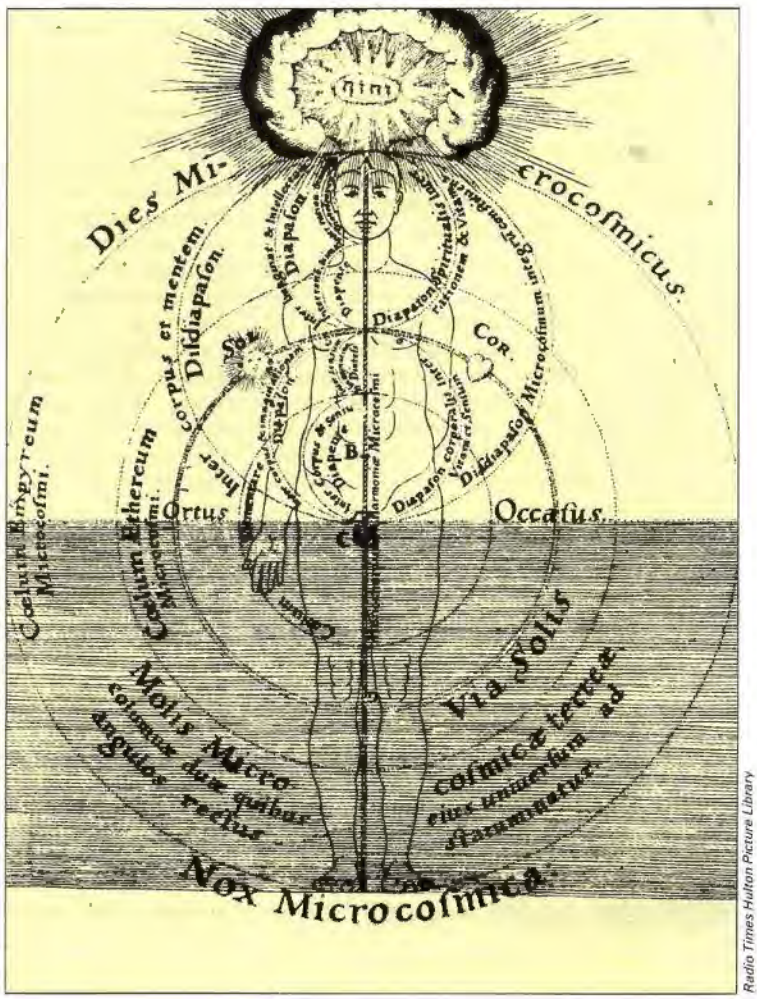
Ancient and medieval thinkers speculating about the precise location of the intellectual and spiritual faculties of man came up with some unusual theories of their own. The midriff became the seat of reason, the gall bladder the seat of determination, the 'guts' the seat of courage, the liver the seat of the emotions. According to the Hindu manuals on yoga, the *sahasrara* or 'mental plexus' the centre controlling the human psyche, was situated just above the head, in a position roughly corresponding to the halo of the Christian saint. The Arab physician Avicenna (d 1037) held that the brain was no more than a cooling system for psychic operations that took place elsewhere. On the other hand, the Alexandrian physician Galen, in the 2nd century AD, thought that the highest mystical experiences were centred in the ventricles of the brain, which he believed to be entirely empty spaces within the cranium.

Below left **The outstretched arms and legs of a man form a square and a circle: the square symbolizes the solid physical world and the circle, the spiritual and eternal. Man bridges the gap between these two worlds. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Magical Proportions of Man***

Below right **In Robert Fludd's diagram, *The Harmonic Intervals of Man*, all aspects of the universe have their counterparts in the human body. The day in man is the upper half of the body and night the lower half; the sun is represented by the heart. The harmony above is reflected in the harmony of the body**



Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The Ladder of the Spine

The brain is the efflorescence, the bursting into flower, of the spine. In ancient Egypt the symbol known as the Tet pillar was said to represent, among other things, the spine of the God Osiris, and in abbreviated form was worn as a magical amulet. The vertebrae marked the stations of a mystical ladder for the ascent of vital forces in certain occult exercises. Occultists therefore regard the backbone as the main channel for the flow downward of forces from the mental plexus, and for the flow upward through the feet of energy from the earth.

So we find the feet too playing a role in occultism. They form the natural point of contact with Mother Earth. Those who are psychically depleted are advised to walk with bare feet on freshly-ploughed land to replenish their energies. The soles of the feet send down, as it were, invisible roots to the nourishing soil, from which vitalizing pulsations are sent surging up through the body. This age-old notion still prevails in many parts of the world.

The Hands Reach Out

As the feet reach down, so the hands reach out. When man first stood erect and freed his hands for work, he set out on his march to progress. If civilization was conceived in the brain, it has been achieved by the hands and in the final analysis, it is the hand that has changed human destiny. Inevitably therefore, the hand plays a major role in occultism. In ancient Greece the man with a defective voice could not participate in the inner mysteries of Eleusis, but the man with a deformed hand could never hold high office in any ancient priesthood.

Great psychic powers are believed to flow through the hand. The currents are concentrated in the palm and from there are directed to their destination by way of the fingers, poised in symbolic gestures, to bless, to curse, to heal, to hurt. Here, as in all occult rites, intent is the mainspring of the ceremony. In Hindu occult practice, the fingers of the hand are made to assume standard classic positions or flexes known as *mudras* and each mudra is believed to represent a concentration of specific forces (see GESTURE).

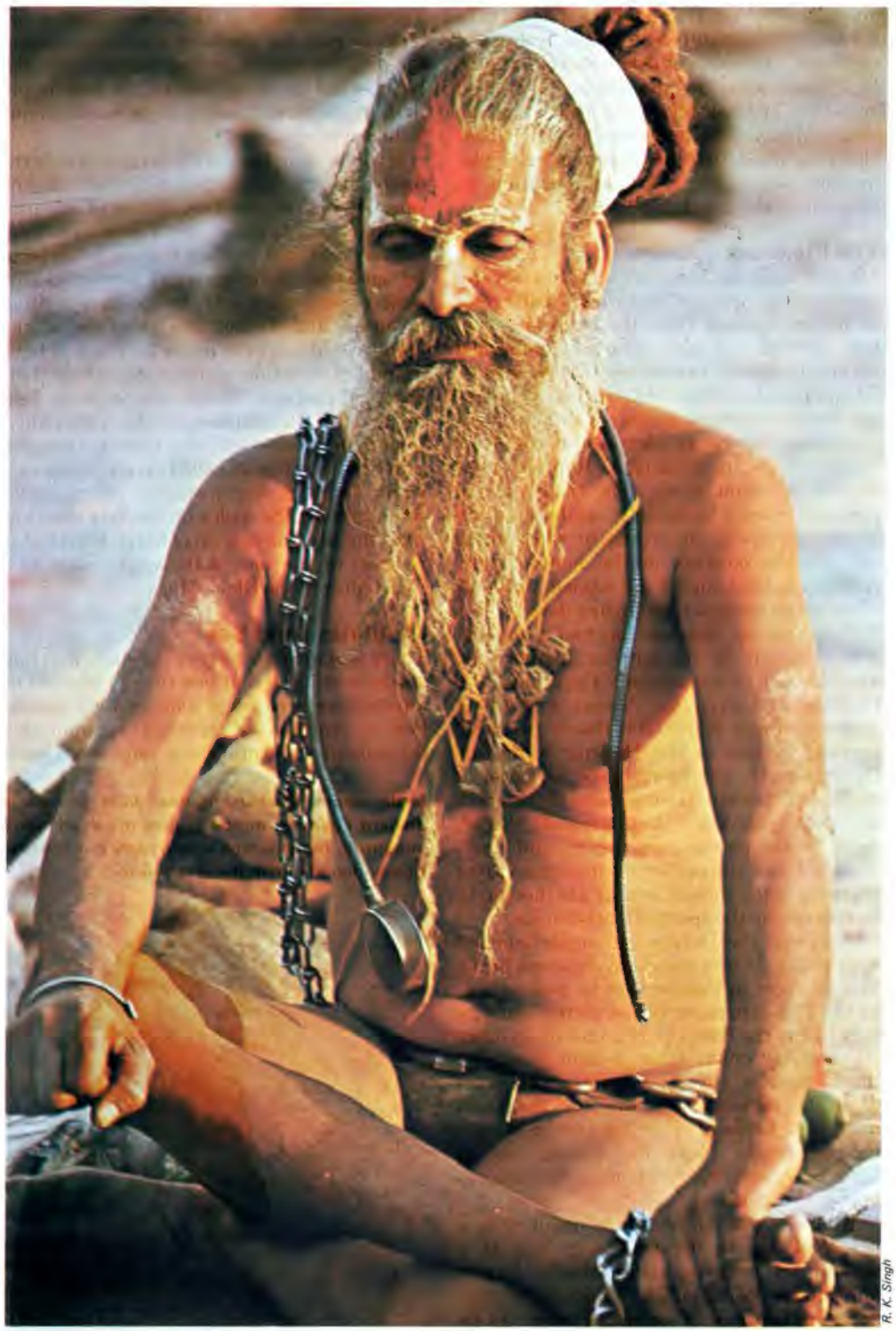
The Ear-Torn Yogis

Among the organs of sense, the eyes and the ears hold the supreme place in occultism. The eye does more than enable one to see; it modifies the external world. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tse would call it an obscuring element, for the eye blinds rather than enlightens. It limits the range of our vision, filtering and keeping out much that would give us a truer picture of the universe. Another school would call it an active agent, a torch in a world that would be dark without it. Leonardo da Vinci held that an intellectual force emanated from the eye. To those who believe in the Evil Eye, it can be suffused with hatred or envy, and send forth a malignant flash that can sear and blight.

In Buddhist writings, the ear rather than the eye is considered the more 'sensual' organ, for men are very susceptible to the lure of speech and music, by means of which they are easily influenced. The ear opens up a world of understanding unique in man's experience, and all esoteric schools speak of the potency of Sound, the Word and the Name. Many peoples regard large ears as a sign of spiritual development. The mysterious statues on Easter Island are said to represent an extinct caste of Long Ears. The Inca nobles were known to the Spaniards as *Orejones*, or Big Ears, because they cultivated long ears by pulling and stretching them from infancy. Of the few authentic personal descriptions of Buddha, one says that he had long ear-lobes.

According to yoga, the ear is connected by a network of invisible ganglia to the subtle organs of perception, and the power of the *mantra* or magic formula, whispered into the ear of the new convert, can bring instant spiritual enlightenment. A greatly dreaded class of Hindu wonder-workers, known as the *Kanphata* or 'ear-torn' yogis, base their cult doctrine on this power of the ear. They perforate the cartilage of the ear and wear huge earrings in a ceremony of initiation that goes back to very ancient times. The blood spilt during the rite is believed to flow direct from a hidden channel: it is used to anoint the head and is then rubbed into the scalp.

There is a supreme magic and mystique



R. K. Singh

Ill-treating the body is a common way of strengthening the soul. Indian members of the Vaishnavite sect sometimes castrate themselves in the exercise of self-discipline

about spilt blood (see BLOOD). The sight of it can arouse in different people feelings of revulsion, nausea, murder or voluptuousness. According to the Bible, the blood gives life and the life of the flesh is in the blood. Many of the major religions hold that blood is an actual life-carrying principle, the soul substance, the materialization, so to speak of the spirit.

The Plexuses

Man is said to have not one but several bodies. Exponents of esoteric doctrine refer to bodies distinct from the material structure of bone and flesh, which lie enmeshed within the human frame (see ASTRAL BODY). The physical and the subtle or 'astral' bodies are believed to have points of contact. These junctions, known as plexuses in the West and *chakras* in Hinduism, form a major branch of occult study. The theory of the plexuses was intricately elaborated in Hindu occultism, according to which there are 88,000 chakras in the human body. Actually only about 30 are named, and only six or seven are described in any detail.

Belief in the plexuses has had a remarkable diffusion. In one form or another they were known to the ancient Egyptians, the Chinese and even the Mayas in Central America. From Egypt the theory probably spread, by way of the Hellenic world and Byzantium, to the Hesychasts, an order of monks in modern Greece, who distinguish six such plexuses; the forehead, throat, heart, solar plexus, sex organs and 'tail'. The last two do not enter into the prayer rhythms of the monks as they are thought to be contrary to the spirit of Christianity.

Although the Devil is commonly depicted with a tail, it was popularly believed in the Middle Ages in Europe that he had no buttocks. The expansion of the gluteal muscles that forms the buttocks is found in no other creature but man. When a man stands up these muscles encase, protect and conceal what is regarded as one of the most important single areas in the human body – the perineum. Near the human tail is situated one of the most powerful plexuses known to occultism.

Much of the information about this is not available to the general public. It is seldom set forth in writing and is largely unprintable, pertaining as it does to the most debased features of occult practice. In its anthropological or 'exterior' aspect it is closely linked with nudism, flagellation and homosexuality, and in its 'left-hand' or evil deviations with rites almost exclusively performed with a 'locked' anus, combined with scatologic and sexual magic. The love philtres and elixirs of immortality that used to be made by the magicians of old were compounded with secretions from this region.

The deviant branches among the Taoists of China and Tantrics of India, and certain sects in North Africa and ancient Asia Minor were adepts in such forms of sorcery. There is no clear evidence that the Greeks or Romans cultivated this kind of magic, although accounts of the practices of the witches Erichtho and Canidia (in the works of Lucan and Horace) would suggest that it might have been known to the witches of Thessaly, through Asia Minor. And if the term *sacrum* for the bony structure forming the 'tail' in man, is indeed derived from the Latin word meaning 'sacred', it may imply that in classical times too, its occult significance was recognized.

It will be seen that to the occultist the body has a widely ranging significance. In one sense it lies at the very centre of the profound enigma of existence. Taken as a functioning unit, the human body is believed to be endowed with mystical power. Bodily actions performed with intent have a ritual meaning and breach the frontiers of the occult world; and the limbs and organs have a hidden function quite apart from their practical purpose. These considerations help us to catch a glimmer of the 'rationality' underlying superstitious beliefs, magical practices and the so-called crypto-sciences – water-divining, for instance, palmistry or divination by the moles on the face – no less than the ritual laying-on of hands in orthodox religion or the use of the virgin nude as a living altar in the Black Mass.

Mutilation and Sex

There is scarcely a part of the body that has not been subjected at one time or another to interference because of some esoteric notion. For a variety of reasons communities throughout the world have sanctioned such practices as branding, tattooing, circumcision, flaying and maiming. The hair was shorn because of one belief, or allowed to grow because of another. The skull was trepanned to let the soul out, a scalp-lock grown to keep the soul in. The teeth were knocked out, the face and limbs scarified, the fingers chopped off, the head deformed. In various countries the female pudenda were snipped, burned, stitched or even secured with a padlock. After all such mutilations have been accounted for in terms of hygiene, aesthetics, proprietary rites or pleasure, there still remains a large unexplained area that can only be understood against a religious or occult background.

In the same way, at some time or other, every action performed by man was believed to be linked to a great pattern in the universe. Occultism has found hidden meanings in sneezing, blinking, pointing, spitting, shouting, weeping, whistling, dancing, playing, eating and drinking, and in defecation and sexual intercourse.

Sex figures prominently in contemporary psychology but to the occultist, who claims to know in his own way as much about the subject as the psychologist, the 'sensations' of sex and the consequences of repressing the sex instinct are of hardly any concern. Phallus and vulva are the instruments of a union in which frustration or pleasure, or even procreation, are only side issues. Gender is used as a means of fusing two polarities or opposites into a highly-charged unity, whose potential can be directed to a purpose that has no sexual element in it (see OPPOSITES). But again, man is a double-sexed creature, self-sufficient if he but knew it, and continence is a high explosive. Little more need be said here, except that sexual activity in any form, autosexual, homosexual or heterosexual, as well as the deliberate control of sexual activity as in asceticism, are regarded by 'left-hand' occultists as capable of being used for magical operations of a particularly unpleasant nature.

The great occultist Cornelius Agrippa (see AGRIPPA) believed that talismans confected under the influence of the heavenly bodies, using ingredients in right proportion and with proper circumstance, carried within themselves the powers of their celestial origin. This belief in the interpenetration of the spiritual and the physical is basic to occultism. There is a hidden relationship in all things, and the human body is at the centre of a web of intangible affinities whose threads are interlinked.

The mortal frame of man, say students of the subject, embodies the mysteries of creation. Man is the prime *axis mundi*, the great cross-point of the universe, and a true understanding of himself will open the door to all arcane knowledge. The functioning human body, man in action, reflects all the manifold features of the universe. Every part of man is imbued with the radiations of the spiritual world, every gesture informed with occult potency. Man is a living talisman. (See also INITIATION; MACROCOSM; MAN; MUTILATION; SEX; TATTOOING; and articles on parts of the body.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

Little stone *ushabti* figures were placed in ancient Egyptian tombs to give the dead man a substitute body, which would carry out any task demanded of him in the afterworld

William Macquitty

Michael Holford

Bodhisattva
One who is on the way to becoming a Buddha, as a result of the merit he has gained in past lives; when he has mastered 'the six perfections', he has escaped from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and now chooses where to be reborn so as to do the most good; he eventually becomes a Buddha unless, like the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama in Tibet, he has vowed to remain on earth until all living beings have reached enlightenment.
See BUDDHISM.

The writings of a mystic who began life as a cowherd in a German village have influenced modern philosophy and religious thought. In the early 17th century Jacob Boehme tried to grapple with a world full of evil and a God who seemed far away

JACOB BOEHME

AT THE AGE OF 25 a German shoemaker named Jacob Boehme had a mystical experience which influenced him for the rest of his life. 'What kind of spiritual triumph it was,' he said in his first book, *Aurora*, written in 1612, 'I can neither write nor speak; it can only be compared with that where life is born in the midst of death, and is like the resurrection of the dead.' Boehme experienced several of these 'illuminations', one of which was stimulated by the simple sight of light playing on the surface of a pewter dish. The effect on him was often to make him write 'like a downpour'.

The son of a prosperous farmer, Boehme was born in 1575 at Alt-Seidenberg, near Görlitz in Silesia. He became a master cobbler, married and had four children. His *Aurora* so disturbed the Chief Pastor and the town council of Görlitz that he was forbidden to write any more. In 1613 he sold his business and travelled around Germany, visiting his friends and supporters, and trading in yarn and woollen gloves. In 1619 he wrote his second book, *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence*, and from then until his death in 1624 he wrote some 30 books and pamphlets.

Sidney Spencer, in his book *Mysticism and World Religion*, calls Boehme 'by far the greatest and most original of Protestant mystics'. Boehme's thought was rooted in his own deep piety, his devotion to the Lutheran Church to which he remained faithful all his life, and his intensive study of Luther's translation of the Bible.

He was well versed in astronomy, in the writings of the alchemist and philosopher Paracelsus (see PARACELSUS), and in the ideas and symbolism of alchemy and the Cabala. He was also influenced by the mystical tradition stemming from his famous predecessor Meister Eckhart (see ECKHART), which stressed the need for faith in God and surrender to God.

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Boehme accepted the old belief that man is a miniature copy of God and the universe, hence the symbols of planets as the vital centres of the human body in this illustration to an 18th century edition of his works

Wrestling with God

In *Aurora* (chapter 19) Boehme explains the spiritual and intellectual predicament which started him on his quest for truth. It is at once very personal and very typical of the period. He believed that God dwelt in a remote place beyond the stars (as all astronomers taught, certainly until the time of Kepler). Feeling that God was far away, he saw around him a world in which evil flourished, which contained both '*good and evil*, love and anger . . . and that it went *well* in this world with the wicked as with the virtuous.'

Perplexed and melancholy, Boehme resolved 'to wrestle with the love and the mercy of God', as Jacob in the Bible had wrestled with the angel of God. The result of this spiritual wrestling was the experience of breaking through 'the gates of hell, even into the innermost birth and geniture of the Deity, and there I was *embraced* with love, as a bridegroom embraceth his dearly beloved bride.'

The problems which most oppressed Boehme were the power of evil in the world and the harsh doctrine of predestination, which appeared to leave no room for human free will. He coped with these problems by recognizing a harmonious tension between

opposites – good and evil, human freedom and the will of God – underlying all existence. 'In yes and no,' he said, 'all things subsist'. (See OPPOSITES, PREDESTINATION.)

In man, Boehme thought, the harmonious balance of opposites is upset only when human free will commits itself to self-centredness and cuts itself off from God's will. Then the forces within a man turn against each other in poisonous and frenzied conflict, and the 'divine essence' in man is sick unto death, unless the will renounces self-centredness and turns back to God.

Boehme felt himself called to impart his ideas to whoever would listen, to warn them against impending disaster unless they repented. He hoped to inaugurate a general reformation of Christendom and the reunion of Protestants and Roman Catholics. In fact he was bitterly attacked but his writings influenced later philosophers and mystics, including Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietszche in Germany, and the Quakers, William Law and William Blake in England.

By Boehme's time the Renaissance had produced a view of the world which had developed from, but in some ways challenged, previously accepted ideas. He attempted to combine new knowledge about the universe with older cosmological and mystical traditions to understand more fully the world he lived in. His framework was the belief that man is a miniature copy of the universe and of God (see MACROCOSM).

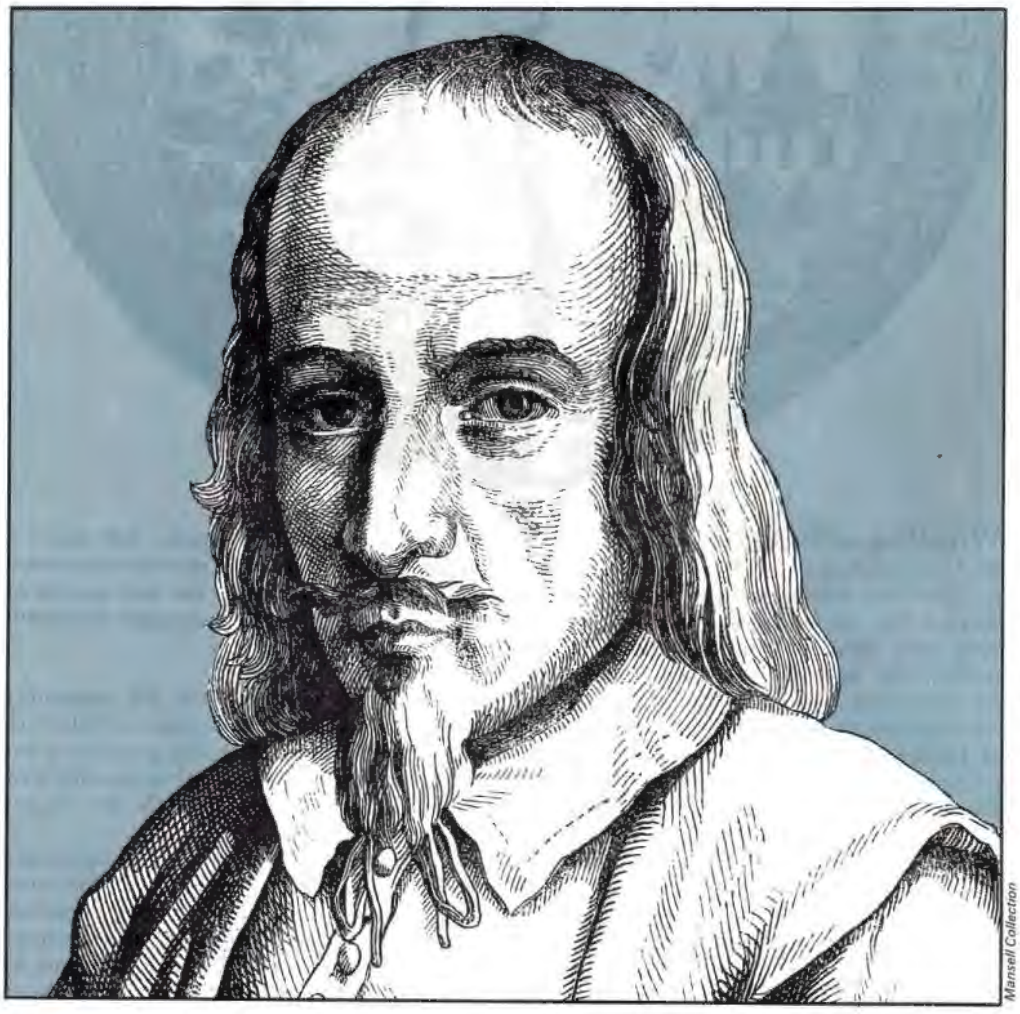
For example, God in Christian theory is threefold – the Trinity. The heavens, Boehme thought, are also threefold. The sky represents God the Father. The sun which is the sky's 'heart' represents Christ, who is the 'heart' of the Father, his centre of love, light and the creative energy which sustains all life in the world. The light from the heavenly bodies represents the Holy Spirit.

Just as God is threefold so man, being created in the image of God, is threefold. This is the basis of Boehme's theory of the three births. The 'elemental birth' gives man his body. The 'astral birth' gives him his instincts and intelligence, which he shares with the other animals. But unlike them, man is called to control the forces within him: if he does not, he is no better than a beast. The 'spiritual birth' gives man the 'divine essence', the ingredient in him which is potentially God.

Lucifer, Adam, Christ

God created Adam to replace Lucifer, the archangel who had fallen because he tried to exalt himself against God. But because Adam sinned in Eden, he also fell and man was expelled from Paradise. To rescue mankind, God sent into the world Christ, the second Adam, the God-man, the 'heart' of the Father. The 'divine essence' in each man must be saved through the entry of Christ into all human thought and action. Man must die to self-centredness and enter a state of total surrender, a state of harmony within himself and with the divine will. In this state he is 'reborn'. For Boehme, as for Paracelsus and the alchemists, rebirth is at the heart of all processes, both in man and in the universe.

Jacob Boehme: he had an intense spiritual experience during which he believed that he was in the presence of God and was *'embraced* with love, as a bridegroom embraceth his dearly beloved bride'



Mansell Collection

Eternal Unity

In trying to explain how God, who is invisible, infinite and eternal, created and pervades a world which is visible, material and limited in space and time, Boehme made use of alchemical and cabalistic symbolism in his theory of the seven 'properties' of Nature. He linked these properties with the planets and metals of astrology and alchemy.

At the basis of everything that exists is the 'abyss' or 'ground' (*Ungrund* in German), the 'eternal stillness' which is not existence but the potentiality of existence. It contracts or coagulates, giving rise to the first property of Nature (corresponding to Saturn and lead), the second (Mercury, quicksilver) and the third (Mars, iron). These three properties are the salt, mercury and sulphur of Paracelsan alchemy, the substances of which everything is made. Dark, bitter, hungering for power and yet expending it, these three properties promote the coming into being and the shaping of all things. In the fourth property (Sun, gold) there is a lightning flash, a purifying fire of wrath and judgement which is transformed into the fire of love in the fifth property (Venus, copper). The sixth property (Jupiter, tin) communicates joy in speech and song. The seventh (Moon, silver) is the 'house' or 'container' for all the rest and in it we rejoin the first property for the seven properties really constitute an eternal unity.

Through these properties God unfolds and reveals himself in the material world. In them he contemplates himself as in a mirror. But in looking into the mirror, he is not merely looking at himself and his wisdom and glory. His very looking is an exercise of his loving, creative power, calling up further spheres of existence. Each of these embodies the same process of self-realization, from the inarticulate but potent 'ground', through the purifying fire of the fourth property to the song of praise in the sixth and the unity of the seventh.

It is this same process through which the mystic passes on his way to God.

H. POPPER

FURTHER READING: Boehme's *Aurora* and *Mysterium Magnum* have been reprinted in English (Hillary, 1960 and John M. Watkins, London, 1965, respectively); *Signatura Rerum, Supersensual Life* and *Of Heaven and Hell* were reprinted in the Everyman series (1912, 1926, 1934). For Boehme's life and thought, see F. Hartmann, *Jacob Boehme* (Steinerbooks, 1981), and J. J. Stoudt, *Sunrise to Eternity* (AMS Press) with full bibliography. For his influence in England, see S. Hobhouse ed., *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law* (Rockcliff, London, 4th edn, 1949) and D. Hirst, *Hidden Riches* (Barnes & Noble, 1964). See also S. Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religion* (Peter Smith).

A heretical sect, the Bogomils held that the visible world had been created by the Devil and that all matter was therefore inherently evil. Because of their rejection of orthodox Christian principles, they were accused of sexual immorality, witchcraft and magic

BOGOMILS

THE BOGOMILS WERE a religious sect founded in Bulgaria in the 10th century, which during the Middle Ages won many followers in the southern Balkans and Asia Minor, and influenced later religious movements in western Europe.

The Bogomil doctrine was founded on the belief, taken over from much older heresies, that there are two creative agents at work in the universe, one good and the other evil. This was made the basis of a moral code enjoining complete denial of the flesh and a religious system that combined an allegorical interpretation of the New Testament and orthodox Christian dogma with a novel and extravagant mythology.

Because they believed that matter was irredeemably evil, the Bogomils rejected marriage and the procreation of children, forbade the eating of meat and drinking of wine, and condemned manual labour. They also opposed the established Church and poured scorn and ridicule on the rich and powerful of the day. They were persecuted by the authorities, and in Constantinople, particularly, some of them were tortured, imprisoned or put to death.

It is probable that they had two different sets of teaching, one for ordinary converts who were not strictly bound by the code of sexual and dietary abstinence, and the other, which included secret interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, divulged only to 'perfect' initiates. In later times, they lost their early reputation for extreme asceticism, and were accused of vice and sexual excesses, as well as the practice of magic, soothsaying and witchcraft.

According to the most likely account, Bogomilism was founded by a Bulgarian village priest named Bogomil, who preached about the year 940. Apart from the doctrines attributed to him by another Bulgarian priest, Kozma, whose *Sermon against the Heretics* (c970) containing 16 formal curses to be pronounced against the Bogomils is the earliest first-hand account of the sect, nothing is known about Bogomil. His very existence has even been doubted by some historians.

Bulgaria had become officially Christian in the year 865, with the sudden conversion of the Khan Boris. But for the majority of Bulgarians, who up to that time were pagans, the new religion was imposed too swiftly and

Although Bogomilism was a Christian heresy, there is little sign of Christian influence in this 13th century tombstone in a Bogomil cemetery in Yugoslavia: even the sign of the cross was rejected by members of the sect, who believed that the Holy Cross on which Christ had been crucified had been made by Satan and was detested by God

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

forcibly to take firm root. From the beginning, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church had to combat both the older pagan cults and various Christian heresies brought to the Balkans by settlers from Asia.

Bogomilism can be regarded as one of a series of attempts throughout history to blend Christian and dualistic beliefs. Dualism – the recognition of two independent principles of good and evil in the universe – is older than Christianity, but its immediate source for the Bogomils was Paulicianism, a Christian heresy which reached the Balkans from Armenia, where it had grown up under the influence of doctrines that had originally nothing to do with Christianity and were, in fact, radically opposed to it.

According to the Bogomil version of this dualism, there was on the one hand a good deity, called God, invisible, immaterial, perfect and merciful, who created light. On the other hand, an evil power called Satan, the Devil, *Lukavii* 'the deceiver', or *Nechestivii* 'the filthy one', was the creator of darkness, matter and the entire visible world, including the sun, the stars, the earth, human beings, the Church and the cross. The Bogomils believed that the Devil, whose original name was Satanael, was the elder son of God and that Christ was the younger. Bogomil dualism differed from earlier forms in making the evil power ultimately subordinate to God.

In the course of time the Bogomils developed a mythology of their own, and by the 12th century a number of Bogomil books were in circulation. The texts of some of them have survived to this day. Typical of their beliefs about Satanael is the legend that after he had fallen from grace he climbed back as far as the fifth heaven asking the angels as he went how much they owed God, and promising to reduce their debts. Through these promises, Satanael won over a third of God's angels, whom he carried on his seven tails.

Another legend, dating from at least as early as the 11th century, made the Devil the creator of Adam's body and God the creator of his soul. The Devil stole the soul from God, but could not make it stay in Adam's body. He then wandered off for 300 years, and during this time lived off the meat of unclean animals. He returned at the end of this period and forced the soul to stay in Adam's body by stopping up the anus, through which it had escaped before, with his hand. This myth explained, according to the Bogomils, why when a man is angry 'he rages like a snake, a dog or a cat: his soul partakes of all these animals.'

The Cross of Satan

The Bogomils rejected the Old Testament in general, and in particular the Law of Moses and the books of the Prophets, as the revelation of the evil power. They had their own canon of New Testament books, which they interpreted freely, often in an allegorical fashion. They rejected the sacrament of baptism and maintained that the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ were illusory, not actual events, involving a phantom and not a real man. It followed that they denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They refused to venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Bogomils put forward a special reason for not revering the Holy Cross, which they said was made by Satan and, since Jesus was crucified on it, was an object detestable to God. Kozma accuses them of cutting down crosses and making tools out of the wood.

The Bogomils had no churches – they regarded them as material objects, and therefore as objects of loathing – and no set forms of worship, apart from the Lord's Prayer, which they recited at regular intervals throughout the day and night. They condemned the Church hierarchy and had no priesthood, although there is some evidence that at a later period at least, the title of *dedets*, 'grandfather', was used to indicate a rank corresponding to that of bishop in the Orthodox Church.

In the 11th century Bogomilism spread to Asia Minor, and the sect had adherents in Constantinople itself, even among the ranks of the aristocracy. The Byzantine Bogomils developed an extremely peculiar doctrine of the Trinity, and taught that Christ entered the Virgin Mary's body through her right ear, and issued forth again as a phantom. This belief was connected with the view that the Divine Logos (the Word which became incarnate as Jesus, according to Orthodox dogma) was not eternal, but the spoken word of God uttered in historical time by Christ in his teaching – hence the entry through the ear. The Byzantine Bogomils also elaborated the sect's demonology, believing that each man was inhabited by a demon, and that the demons particularly loved water, the realm of Satanael.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

The Bogomils' moral and social teaching was the logical outcome of their belief that matter is evil. Sexual union, even lawful marriage, they particularly abhorred, as it led to the reproduction of matter; and they were accused by their enemies of shrinking from children as if from a bad smell. Husbands and wives who were converted to Bogomilism were required to live apart for a long time before the final renunciation of their marriage vows and initiation into the sect. In spite of this, the Bogomils became very numerous after the 10th century, and for this reason it has been supposed that some of them, the 'ordinary' believers were allowed to have children.

The Bogomils refused to eat meat, which was especially abominable in their view, as the product of the procreative act, and they would not drink wine, as they believed that the tree planted in the Garden of Eden by the Devil was the vine.

Throughout the source literature for the history of the Bogomils – all of which was written by their enemies – they are accused of deceit and hypocrisy, and in particular of adopting an outwardly 'lamb-like', gentle, modest and quiet demeanour which concealed a ravening wolf within.

Bogomilism disappeared from history when Bulgaria was conquered by the Turks at the end of the 14th century, but the movement had begun to decline from the beginning of the century. It was at this time that they were first accused of sexual immorality and of practising magic and reviving certain pagan rites and superstitions. The name Bogomil seems to have been adopted by and applied to almost anyone with outlandish and unorthodox beliefs, and the Bogomilism which was obliterated by the Ottoman Turks was only loosely related to the original doctrine.

DAVID PHILLIPS

FURTHER READING: The fullest account in English is *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* by D. Obolensky (Oxford Univ. Press, 1948); see also *The Bogomils* by Oto Bihalji-Merin and Alojz Benac (Thames & Hudson, London 1962).

Bones

Longest-lasting part of the body, and so in some societies seen as the root of life; shamans sometimes experience mystical 'death' in which the flesh is stripped from their bones, which are washed and dried before the body is reconstituted in a 'rebirth': Pacific islanders use a pointing bone as a magic wand: in American folk medicine carrying a bone cures backache, toothache, cramp and fits: bones have many magical uses, and people still break a fowl's 'wishbone' for luck.

C. M. Dixon

BOOK OF THE DEAD

Passport to Eternal Bliss

The Egyptians were much concerned with life after death, as shown in many inscriptions and texts found in pyramids and coffins. The Book of the Dead outlined the difficulties awaiting them and provided them with practical information

IT BECAME THE CUSTOM in ancient Egypt from about the 18th Dynasty (1580–1320 BC) to place in the tombs of the dead papyrus scrolls inscribed with texts. These texts were designed to help the dead to rise to life again and obtain a happy lot in the next world. The name Book of the Dead is a modern one, given by Egyptologists. The ancient Egyptian title was 'Chapters for Coming Forth by Day'. This title described what the texts would do for the dead, according to Egyptian belief. Briefly, it meant 'ability to leave the tomb' and it involved many strange and complex ideas about human nature and destiny. The Book of the Dead was the product of a long development of faith and ritual practice concerning death and the dead in Egypt. Many of the texts can be traced back through two earlier collections of funerary texts, the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts.

The Pyramid Texts have a unique place in human records; for they are not only the earliest records we have of Egyptian thought, but they are also the earliest body of religious writings we have of mankind as a whole. They are called 'Pyramid Texts' because they are inscribed, in hieroglyphic characters, on the interior walls of certain pyramids at Sakkara, the necropolis or burial place of the ancient city of Memphis. The Pyramid Texts date from about 2350 to 2175 BC but it is clear that they contain traditional material which goes back to a much earlier period.

The inscriptions were collected and arranged by the priests of Heliopolis, near Cairo, which was the ancient cult-centre of Atum-Re, the sun god. In composing these texts, the Heliopolitan priests seem to have had a double purpose. The first was to provide the dead kings, buried in the pyramids concerned, with the magical means of securing resurrection from death and ascent to the sky, where they might join the sun god on his unending journey through the sky by day and the underworld by night. The sun god was imagined to make this journey by boat, and in the Egyptian mind eternal bliss was thus conceived as being for ever in the company of Atum-Re as he made his unceasing circuit of the universe.

This linking of the kings' posthumous destiny with Atum-Re was evidently part of the policy of the Heliopolitan priests, intended to exalt the status of the god they served. The policy finds further expression in the texts by the presentation of Atum-Re as the creator of the universe, and Heliopolis as the place where he began his work of creation.

Guide to the Afterlife

The Heliopolitan priests were not skilful at literary composition, and the Pyramid Texts include rituals for use in embalming and funeral rites, hymns, incantations, magical spells, prayers and myths in no apparent order. It appears that any material deemed to have a religious or magical efficacy was included. Some of it was evidently of a very primitive character: for example, the so-called Cannibal Hymn, which represents the dead king as eating the gods, doubtless reflects a practice of ritual cannibalism that had once, long before, existed in Egypt.

The priests of Heliopolis sought to associate the pharaoh's eternal future with their own god Atum-Re; but they could not ignore a more ancient mortuary god named Osiris. The Egyptians believed that Osiris, a good king of long ago, had risen from the dead after being foully murdered. They further believed that a dead person, who was ritually identified with Osiris, could also be raised to life again. (See OSIRIS.)

Originally, it would seem, this Osirian mortuary ritual was confined to royal use, and it was evidently so well established that the Heliopolitan priests felt obliged to incorporate it into their Pyramid Texts. Doubtless they could not safely ignore such ancient rites, which had long been practised to secure resurrection for the kings of

Probably the finest existing copy of the Book of the Dead is the papyrus made for Ani, a royal scribe who lived in Thebes in about 1320 BC. In this illustration, of his funeral procession, mourners are shown following the boat-shaped hearse on which his mummified body is lying: British Museum

Michael Holford

Egypt. But the Osirian idea of salvation from death logically contradicted the Heliopolitan view of a blessed afterlife with the sun god.

These two different views of the afterlife add to the confusion of ideas and imagery in the Pyramid Texts. Thus, while some texts are designed to enable the dead king to fly up to heaven as a falcon or climb up on a ladder, others deal with his embalming and resurrection according to the legend of Osiris. This discrepancy remained a permanent feature of Egyptian belief about the state of the dead as can be seen from the texts of the Book of the Dead.

The following translated extracts give some idea of the diction and imagery of the Pyramid Texts. First, an incantation designed to enable the dead king to join the sun god Re:

> He flieth as a bird, and he settleth as a beetle on an empty seat that is in the ship of Re. . . He roweth in the sky in thy ship, O Re, and he cometh to land in thy ship, O Re.

The next illustrates the way in which the dead Pharaoh Unas is ritually identified with Osiris, so that, invoking the principle of imitative magic, he is one with Osiris in his resurrected life:

> Thy (Osiris's) body is the body of Unas. Thy bones are the bones of this Unas. (If) thou walkest, this Unas walks; (if) this Unas walks, thou walkest.

During the period from c 2160 to 1580 BC, the nobility of Egypt adopted the custom of burying their dead in large wooden coffins, on the sides of which were painted texts designed to help the dead to pass safely to a blessed afterlife. The Coffin Texts are particularly characterized by the concern expressed by the deceased that he should have an adequate supply of food and drink, lest he should be forced to feed on his own excrement. He also asks that he should be assured of a supply of fresh air to breathe and that the integrity of his body should be preserved. Belief in the potency of magic is also abundantly attested.

The scales or balances, which were to be used in the dread judgement that faced the dead, are mentioned. The following passage, which takes the form of an invocation of the

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sun god, gives some idea of the terror this grim ordeal inspired. The balance is personified as an awful demonic being.

> Thou canst protect me from this god of mysterious form, whose two eyebrows are the two arms of the balance, who casts his lasso over the wicked (to hale them to) his block, who annihilates the souls, in the day when evil is assessed, in the presence of the Master of all! Who is this god, whose two eyebrows are the two arms of the balance? It is Horus who presides at Letopolis. Others say: it is Thoth, it is Nefertem, the son of Sekhmet, this one who raises his arm.

This invocation is reproduced in Chapter 17 of the later Book of the Dead.

On some coffins, found in the necropolis of El-Bersheh and dating from the end of the 11th Dynasty (c 2000 BC), a funerary text occurs which differs strikingly from the Coffin Texts. The text is also notable for the illustration that accompanies it, and which makes it a veritable guidebook to the next world. It shows a map of the journey which the dead had to make by either of two tortuous roads that were separated by a lake of fire. One was a land route, leading to the country of Ro-Setau, a mysterious place connected with the realm of Osiris; its entrance was guarded by a gate of fire. The other route was by water to the lake of Ro-Setau, the entrance to which was watched over by a ram-headed crocodile, armed with a knife. Other dangers also beset the dead on the way – serpents, monsters, gates that could not be opened except by the right magical spells. This funerary text has, appropriately, been named the Book of the Two Ways.

The Book of the Dead contained spells, incantations and descriptions of rituals that would help those who had died to pass unscathed through the dangers of the underworld, and achieve a happy afterlife. Some of the rituals were meant to assist the dead man to join the sun god in the sky. In this illustration from a text of the 21st Dynasty (c1000 BC), the sun disc, containing the eye of Re the sun god, is worshipped by an ape and a priestess: Papyrus of Hert-Tavi, British Museum

The Pyramid Texts were compiled by the priests of Heliopolis for the exclusive use of

The Weighing of the Heart

One of the most famous scenes in the Papyrus of Ani shows the weighing of the heart after death in the Hall of the Two Truths. The heart of the royal scribe Ani is weighed in a balance against a feather, the symbol of truth. A dog-headed ape, associated with the god Thoth, sits on the beam of the balance, and Thoth himself stands at one side to record the result of the trial. The jackal-headed god Anubis tests the tongue of the balance. Behind Thoth stands the monster Amemet, 'the devourer of the dead'.

The text reads:

Osiris, the scribe Ani, says: 'My heart my mother, my heart my mother, my heart my coming into being! May there be nothing to resist me at my judgement; may there be no opposition to me from the Tchatcha (the gods of the four cardinal points); may there be no parting of you from me in the presence of him who keeps the scales. You are my ghost *(ka)* within my body which knits and strengthens my limbs. May you come forth to the place of happiness to which I am advancing. May the Shenit (divine beings) not cause my name to stink, and may no lies be spoken against me in the presence of the god. Good is it for you to hear.'

Thoth, the righteous judge of the great company of the gods who are in the presence of Osiris, says: 'Hear this judgement. The heart of Osiris has in truth been weighed and his soul has stood as a witness for him; it has been found true by trial in the Great Balance. No wickedness has been found in him; he has not wasted the offerings in the temples; he has not done harm by his deeds; and he uttered no evil reports . . . on earth.'

The great company of the gods reply to Thoth dwelling in Khemennu: 'That which comes forth from your mouth has been ordained. Osiris, the scribe Ani, triumphant, is holy and righteous. He has not sinned, nor has he done evil against us. Let it not be given to the devourer Amemet to prevail over him. Meat-offerings and entrance into the presence of the god Osiris shall be granted to him, together with a dwelling for ever in Sekhet-hetepu, as to the followers of Horus.'

Adapted from E. A. W. Budge,
The Egyptian Book of the Dead

Egyptian religious beliefs and practices are vividly reflected in illustrations to the Papyrus of Ani. *Right* Seker or Socharis, the hawk-headed god of the underworld, early identified with Osiris *Facing page, from left to right* A table piled with offerings of food; Hathor, the sky goddess and the protective goddess of the Theban city of the dead, as a hippopotamus and as a cow, her sacred animal

the dead pharaohs; no reference is made in them to the fate of other folk. The Coffin Texts reveal that later on nobles and other important persons had begun to take over this ancient royal ritual. In so doing, they did not change the royal references and terminology of the ancient texts, doubtless because they feared that any alteration in the traditional form might impair the magical efficacy of the spells and incantations. The resulting confusion, which also occurs in the later Book of the Dead, is very puzzling to the modern reader but it seems to have been no obstacle to Egyptian faith.

The process of democratization continued into the period from 1580 to 1090 BC, and it finds its complete expression in the Book of the Dead. By this time, any person who could afford the essential minimum of what was once the royal mortuary ritual could hope to enjoy the resurrection to a new life which had once been the privilege of the pharaoh. To enable the dead to achieve this resurrection, and to pass safely through all the grisly perils of the underworld to everlasting happiness, assistance had to be provided as it had been for the pharaohs in the Pyramid Texts and later for the nobles in the Coffin Texts.

Selections of appropriate texts were provided by scribes, written on sheets of papyrus, which were rolled up and deposited in the tomb. The selection and presentation of the texts, which thus formed the Book of the Dead, varied according to the means of the deceased or the generosity of his heirs. Cheap copies were available for the poorer members of society, which contained only what were regarded as the really indispensable texts. Spaces would be left in them for the insertion of the names of those by whom, or for whom, they were eventually purchased. The more elaborate versions, which were produced for the wealthy, contained varying numbers of chapters.

The larger and obviously more expensive versions of the Book of the Dead were generally illustrated by scenes of the funerary ritual and of the experiences of the deceased in the next world. What is probably the finest copy of the Book of the Dead is the Papyrus of Ani, now one of the great treasures of the British Museum. It

Michael Holford

was made for the royal scribe Ani, who held various important offices in Thebes about 1320 BC. The scroll measures 78 feet by 1 foot 3 inches, and is the longest known papyrus of its period. The text is written in hieroglyphic characters, and the illustrations are done in various colours and are well and clearly drawn.

The most impressive illustration in the Papyrus of Ani shows the judgement of the dead Ani in the Hall of the Two Truths. The scene depicts the heart of Ani being weighed against the feather-symbol of Maat (Truth). The next scene shows Ani, after the dread ordeal from which he has emerged justified or 'true of voice', being presented by the god Horus to Osiris.

This judgement scene usually illustrates chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead which took the form of a prayer addressed by the dead person to his heart not to testify against him at the awful moment when it was balanced against the symbol of Truth (see also JUDGEMENT).

Other scenes in the Papyrus of Ani show the funeral procession and the ceremony of 'Opening the Mouth', a magical rite designed to restore to the embalmed body certain of its faculties (see EGYPT). The resurrection of Ani is also represented, and Ani and his wife are depicted in many scenes enjoying their new life in the paradise of Osiris. In one delightful scene Ani appears to be playing a game like chess, advised by his wife who sits behind him.

The production of copies of the Book of the Dead continued down the long centuries of Egyptian history into the 1st century BC. This lengthy tradition bears witness to the enduring strength of the Egyptian belief that the ancient Osirian mortuary ritual effectively provided the means of defeating the dread consequences of death and attaining a state of eternal bliss.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950); S. A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts* (Longmans, Toronto, 1952, 4 vols); see also T. C. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1960) and S. G. F. Brandon, *The Judgement of the Dead* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967).

C. Nelson Stewart

Book of the Dead (Tibetan)
Or *Bardo Thödol*, a Tibetan Buddhist treatise on what happens at death and in the interval between death and rebirth, giving instructions in the art of dying rightly and in the art of reincarnating; there is an English translation edited by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, with a psychological commentary by C. G. Jung, published by the Oxford University Press.
See TIBET.

The ghosts of Borley Rectory have made it the most famous haunted house of modern times

BORLEY RECTORY

HARRY PRICE WAS unquestionably Britain's most widely known ghost-hunter and his investigations of Borley Rectory, termed by him 'the most haunted house in England', have caused violent controversy among modern psychical researchers.

The Rectory was an unattractive Victorian brick building of many rambling rooms, damp, dark and uninviting, in the parish of Borley on the Essex-Suffolk border. It had been built in 1863 by the Rev Henry Bull, whose son Harry succeeded him as rector and remained there until his death in 1927. By that time the ghost stories had begun to rise like ivy around the Rectory – partly, it is thought, because of the Spiritualist leanings of Harry Bull.

Local tales concerned a mysterious coach and horses which galloped along the roads; visions of headless men; a girl in white; sounds of dragging footsteps and other weird noises in the house. Above all, there was the apparition of a nun who occasionally walked the house and grounds. In 1929, when the Rev G. E. Smith and his wife had taken the house, these tales came to the ears of Harry Price.

Harry Price Investigates

Harry Price had by then made a name for himself by exposing fraudulent mediums, investigating haunted houses and founding the National Laboratory for Psychical Research. At Borley, Price interviewed people, pursued local legends tirelessly, and began to piece together a romantic tale of illicit love and murder in the 14th century, in which the victim was a nun.

Meanwhile there were reports of further outbreaks of ghostly activity, involving a poltergeist. Bells rang inexplicably; stones and other objects flew through the air; things

Psychic News

Harry Price, the famous ghost-hunter, who called Borley Rectory 'the most haunted house in England', though whether there were really any ghosts there has been heatedly disputed. Price died in 1948, after writing two books about Borley

went bump in the night. Price assiduously took notes on all this, continued his interviews, and held a seance – in which communication was obtained with the spirit of the Rev Harry Bull.

Shortly afterwards the Smiths moved out, mainly because of the impossible living conditions of the decaying old house and were succeeded by an elderly rector named Foyster, with his pretty young wife Marianne. The activity of the following months made all previous happenings seem very trivial.

By all accounts the poltergeist caused objects to fly through the air, overturned furniture, scattered clothing and even produced objects from nowhere. Doors locked themselves, bells rang and knockings came from the walls. Much of this fury centred on Marianne: she was struck, dumped out of bed, locked in her room. Curious writings began to appear on the walls – pencil scrawls that often seemed to ask for prayers and Masses (as if to pacify a 'lost soul'), always addressed to Marianne.

Price makes clear in his first book on Borley, *The Most Haunted House in England* (1940) that he suspected Marianne of being responsible for many of these happenings. Most people since have agreed. And Price shows that almost all of the phenomena during the Foysters' occupation happened while Marianne was out of sight, or happened to her while she was alone, or could have been contrived by her in the presence of others.

But Marianne denied the accusation and Price went on noting phenomena and building up 'the most haunted house' story. And this in spite of the fact that the ghosts were no longer in action. They remained absent except for a few wild tales by sightseers, after the Foysters left Borley in 1935.

Ghosts at Empty Windows

In 1937 Price himself rented the house and he brought with him a team of observers, all inexperienced but supposedly level-headed, to keep a regular watch on subsequent events. But very little happened. The ghosts had gone away long since. Now the poltergeist, with the Foysters gone, also became quiet. Price paid great attention to new pencil marks appearing on the walls – but no words were formed and the markings were so small as to be easily missed.

By 1938, when Price moved out, the house had become a tourist attraction and was frequently visited by Spiritualists and ghostmongers. Some of these claimed they had seen the ghosts but none of the reports are reliable. Then, shortly after a Captain Gregson had bought the Rectory, it was gutted by an accidental fire.

The blaze gave new life to the legends. A police constable was among those who claimed to have seen weird figures moving through the flames. Other stories told of apparitions at the empty windows of the burnt-out shell. Price's second book *The End of Borley Rectory* written in 1945, years after the fire, retails most of these stories.

In this book Price amplified the legend about the nun and alluded to the fact that digging had revealed human remains in the Rectory cellar.

Harry Price died in 1948, and his obituaries brought the Borley story to the boil again. In 1956 the Society for Psychical Research published (disclaiming editorial responsibility) an assessment by three of its members, E. J. Dingwall, K. M. Goldney and Trevor Hall entitled *The Haunting of Borley Rectory*.

The three authors build up a damning case against Harry Price, scything away at the details and incidents that fill his two books. They point scornfully at the amateurishness of Price's team of observers, and at the way in which Price prepared their minds to see things. They indicate the often incompetent nature of these observations and suggest, for example, that the best way to ensure the newness of the later pencil marks would have been to put fresh whitewash on the walls. They pick holes in the reports of eyewitnesses. They bring out facts and hints that point most strongly to Marianne Foyster's complicity. They claim that to strengthen the story, Price distorted or coloured some facts and suppressed others, such as the odd acoustics of the Rectory and its infestation with mice, both likely causes of strange noises. Worst of all, they cast doubt on Price's own integrity, making it clear that Price could have caused some of the poltergeist phenomena that sprang up when he arrived at Borley – and adding that some people definitely thought that he did.

Price did not lack defenders and the case of Borley Rectory has caused bitter dissension among experts.

The Argument Goes On

In *New Light on Old Ghosts* (1965) Trevor Hall discusses Borley with reference to some new evidence – including an alleged confession from Marianne Foyster. A reviewer of this book, writing in the Society for Psychical Research's *Journal*, was not impressed. 'Neither the "confession" nor Mr Hall's own researches into this lady's affairs seem to be available for study; if this is so, it must diminish the evidential value of Mr Hall's abbreviated paraphrase of Mrs Foyster's alleged remarks to an unnamed interviewer.'

A few facts can still be discerned among all the arguments. First, Borley Rectory had a long history of hauntings but not a single ghost appeared to Price or to any other potentially reliable witness – only to laymen and suggestible sightseers, and mostly under dubious circumstances. Secondly, no accounts of poltergeist activity came from Borley until Price and later Marianne Foyster went there. Yet from then on the bulk of ghostly happenings involved a poltergeist.

Thirdly, no one piece of evidence presented by Price is in any way conclusive or convincing *in itself* – certainly not by the exacting standards of the Society for

Peter Underwood

Exterior of the house, the scene of violent poltergeist phenomena in the 1930s: legends of a murdered nun and visions of headless men and a ghostly coach and horses were also associated with it. After the house burned down, there were stories of apparitions at the empty windows of the gutted shell

Harry Price Library, University of London

Psychical Research. Borley becomes impressive only for the *quantity* of its phenomena. Fourthly, Price's three antagonists make a great many unarguable points against him, especially in terms of his suppression or distortion of facts.

A new, open-minded and scholarly assessment of the Borley case has been prepared for the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research by Mr R. J. Hastings. His thorough and cogent judgement seems rather more like a magistrate's summing-up than like the 'prosecutor's case' of Dingwall, Hall and Goldney. Out of his detailed weighing of the evidence comes an important conclusion: that while Price's hunger for publicity may have created some confusion, and his journalistic style and outright carelessness may have produced some lapses and contradictions, there is no proof of fraud.

Mr Hastings's monograph only underlines the mournful wish that the Society had been able to launch one of its own full-scale, expert and reliable investigations while the Rectory was still standing and Price still alive. Certainly no new look, however thorough and objective, can at this late date clear away all the mud-slinging, the uncertainties and the accumulations in this case. Without doubt, Borley Rectory continues to be one of the world's most complex and controversial haunted houses.

DOUGLAS HILL

This photograph, taken during the Rectory's demolition, shows a brick allegedly suspended in mid-air after leaping from the ground

The Borneans read sermons in stones, wisdom in the winds and auguries from wild animals. Tracing their origins back to mythological marriages between gods and birds, they believe that every part of the natural world has meaning for them

BORNEO

BORNEO, FAMOUS FOR its headhunters, is the third largest island in the world and has a population of around five million. Although headhunting has now died out, the practice is still deeply relevant to the religion and mythology of these people.

Over half the population live inland, up the great rivers and among the rugged mountains. These lively, able and artistic people live in long-houses, each a self-contained community of up to 500 under a single, palm-thatched roof. All are, or have been until recently, pagan animists (see ANIMISM) but divided into some 20 linguistic and cultural groups with many variations on a common theme of belief.

Nowhere in the world is animism so developed, elaborated and intellectualized as among the Iban people of Sarawak and the related tribes of Borneo. This faith places man in a universe which he feels he shares intimately with everything else: with the moon and the moths, the birds and the bees, trees, stones, snakes, scorpions, winds and thunderstorms, other men's wives, his own dreams, desires, experiences, a hen's egg. A system of thought which can hear a rock sing and make a songbird speak as a god, decide your day by a nightmare or your destiny by an eagle's flight, can only be understood against the background of everyday life in equatorial Borneo. For myth, ritual and beliefs about death and the afterlife are closely related to everyday problems: the problems of contesting yet accepting, conquering yet conserving the rich, tropical rain forest which still covers three-quarters of the great island and would quickly overgrow the rest again, if not kept under firm control.

Cricket on the Hearth

In this setting, man has to work hard under difficult conditions. Easy living in tropical plenty does not occur in inland Borneo, with its erratic climate, everlasting humid heat, generally poor sandstone soils and tough terrain. Mt Kinabalu, at 13,500 ft the highest peak in South-East Asia, is regarded as a sacred place of the spirits by all who live within sight of those fierce black cliffs. Man here learns from birth to recognize that he is only a small part of a hard but rewarding jungle world, where to flourish he must know the ways of serpent, snail and deer; wild fruit and the fish below the rapids; how to tell tasty from lethal mushrooms, and how to deal with locusts and grubs.

So, in unusually humane modesty, it is believed that a fly or a flycatcher can be the equal of a great Iban chief. And everyone must always be ready to listen to what other creatures or objects show, say, sing, signal, warn or otherwise suggest. For instance, the dog-like 'whoof' of the barking deer is considered informative in Borneo. Great importance is attached to the sounds made by several species of cricket and grasshopper – so much so that Selampandai, the 'creator of man', in one manifestation is a nocturnal house-cricket.

Today if you hear such a *selampandai* cricket in the long-house at night, the sound it makes – a faint but metallic ting-ting like the jingling of coins – is regarded as a direct message from the god Selampandai to living folk in the long-house. There are usually two alternative messages based on the position or other context of the sound or sight. In this case, however, the cricket's message is specifically for pregnant women. If the selampandai is heard on or from the verandah the child will be a boy, for that is where the men sit. On the other hand the woman will give birth to a girl if the cricket is heard in the room.

Another sort of cricket, called *mengalai* in life (and Mangalai as a particular personality) is spokesman of the dead. This cricket rarely enters the long-house – and if he does it is a serious portent. He often lives in the support poles under the house, at ground level, wherever it is damp and slushy. He speaks especially to the relatives of somebody who has died recently. Commonly, he asks for food offerings and other attention on behalf of the departed. Failure to obey is likely to cause severe illness.

A subtle distinction is drawn between animals, birds and insects, and between trees and plant life. Although trees and plants lack the power of movement, they can be charged with all sorts of special and often spiritual qualities. The essence of the matter, which is animism in the fullest sense, is that man seeks communication with the total tropical environment. But he not only seeks communication with the visible, tangible world but with everything that can be heard of, dreamed of, imagined or felt.

This attitude of ear and mind does not distinguish human noises from other sorts of sound, nor does it distinguish sickness from death or ancient warrior chiefs from modern political leaders. It is essential to emphasize and visualize this. Everybody and everything has some sort of say in the Bornean way of life. The everyday medium for routine communication between self and the unseen is through the language of animals who are all around the long-house and inhabit the jungle. But everything has something to communicate, not only to humans but to the gods and spirits as well.

Two Heads Are Better

Animist thinking of this kind is related to the difficulties and uncertainties of Bornean life which were accentuated until recently by the constant fear of headhunting. The taking of human heads developed as a way in which one long-house group could acquire fresh power from another, through the heads, thus strengthening its health and morale, and improving its harvest (see HEAD).

More individually, the family of a dead chief might seek a head to fortify the departed in his journey to the other life – though sometimes a slave would be sacrificed to accompany him on the long spiritual journey instead. Or young men would go headhunting to demonstrate their manly virtues to the opposite sex. Again, dramatically, a male in some way shamed or humiliated could respond, to reinstate himself socially, by setting out on a one-man hunt. This was an alternative form of 'running amok' and could amount to suicide. Success, a triumphant dancing return with a dripping skull, would silence his critics forever. But to succeed single-handed was extremely hard, since the whole island was organized to make head-getting as difficult as possible.

The normal method was for a large war party to stalk through the mountains, preparing a secret escape route against pursuit, and then ambush a careless woman going down sleepily to the river for water at dawn, or perhaps a little boy who had strayed off to play at blowpipes. One head was as good as another for all these purposes, as long as it was from a fairly remote community. Obviously neighbouring long-houses could not carry on if they treated each other in this rough way.

The captured heads were kept in racks or clusters hung along the long-house verandah. Offerings were made through them, on most important religious occasions; *through* them because there is no idea, in this animism, of directly worshipping the heads or indeed worshipping *anything*. The Bornean concept is one of participation, communication, a kind of universal intercourse. There are no supreme deities to whom men and beasts need be subservient. Similarly, there are no idols, no sacred cows. The invisible can help or hinder. Man decides. Everything is and is not. In this respect one can see some affinity between Bornean animism and the less monkish side of Buddhism, particularly the form of Zen practised in pre-Communist China.

Dining with the Gods

This is not to say that there are no gods, no heroes, in this island pantheon. On the contrary, the universe is alive with spirits who in the past were enmeshed with (and often in bed with) man or woman; and who can return to communicate with mortal men and women, through the shaman priests or the language of the animals.

One main purpose of the great festivals, which are an exciting feature of long-house life, is to bring down these nebulous but powerful figures to earth so that they may participate with the living in eating, drinking, music, singing and dancing. These occasions, often bordering on the orgiastic, commonly go on continuously for several days and nights. They begin with the

Sarawak Museum

A cluster of human heads hanging from the roof of a long-house in Sarawak, Borneo: in pagan times offerings were made through these heads to the gods, spirits and guardian ghosts who, the Borneans believed inhabited the universe around them

shaman or witch-doctor invoking *all* gods, culture heroes, great warriors of yore, ancestral spirits, monsters, guardian ghosts and a multitude more to join in the communal fun.

The shamans may be of either sex; some of the very best are bisexual or hermaphrodites – who are supposedly better able to reach out and touch the mood of both sexes and all things. They chant all through the night, swaying on finely carved swings, and slowly bring down the 'unseen host'.

The Brahminy Kite

Bornean poetry is laden with animal metaphor as well as with specific references to the gods. The Iban pattern of godliness is one of several ways Borneans assess this side of infinity. All the persons named in thousands of verses have their place in this pattern, which begins with the vaguely benign god called Bunsu Petara, existing long ago in the nowhere. Later on there emerged a more tangible character entitled Raja Durong. His son, Raja Jembu, had seven sons and one daughter, who are of great importance in human affairs.

Even today ordinary Ibans trace their descent from the offspring of these gods, such as Selampandai, 'the maker of man', and Menjaya Manang Raja, the chief male shaman and guardian of health. The most interesting and relevant of these is the elder brother Sengalong Burong, the Brahminy Kite, an eagle regarded all over Borneo as being an unusually powerful indicator of good times and bad, according to whether he circles in the sky from left to right or right to left. He is the god of courage and is especially associated with human heads.

From his marriage to a spirit Sengalong Burong produces eight children, seven daughters and one son. The son goes off to produce a human line and the daughters all marry birds, except one who falls in love with an insect, and they live in a long-house with their father as chief.

The oldest daughter, the beautiful Endu Dara Tinchin Temaga (Princess Shining Brass Ring), alone has offspring but to achieve this result she enjoys a curious succession of affairs. Her husband, Ketupong, is a tiny woodpecker who is – in real

The Slide Centre

Sarawak Museum

Above **Even today the Ibans of Borneo trace their ancestry back to the offspring of the gods, and there are many modern men who believe that they are descended from the son who was born to a bird princess, daughter of the great eagle god Sengalong Burong, as the result of an adulterous affair with a human being: wooden images of Iban gods *Right* Bornean agricultural festivals are based on various natural phenomena, such as bird migration or the movements of the stars: girls taking part in the ceremonial planting of the first rice grains *Facing page* Members of one long-house could increase their spiritual and physical powers, and improve their harvest, by capturing heads from another group: cluster of human skulls**

life – an astonishingly bold little bird and therefore symbolizes to this day the qualities of bravery. He is the leader in headhunting raids. Nevertheless, like his five bird brothers-in-law, he is seemingly impotent.

While the bird husband is away leading an expedition to foreign lands, his wife associates with Menggin, a human being who has by a long series of adventures succeeded in reaching the spirit world. In due course, she has a son by him, before her woodpecker lord returns and throws the man back down to earth. This son, Sera Gunting, later goes back to his bird motherland, commits incest and is once more expelled. But this time his grandfather, the great eagle god Sengalong Burong, teaches him new laws of marriage and of religious observance. He returns to earth not in disgrace but as a spiritual teacher.

His teaching requires that the birds of the spiritual long-house henceforth be treated by men as spokesmen for Sengalong Burong and his brother gods. Whatever the six bird husbands say by call or show in flight thus became the arbiters of Iban behaviour. Around them has grown up an intricately woven set of observances, according to whether they fly from right to left or left to right, how and where they call, in which succession they appear, and so on.

Such augury by animals is an essential part of Bornean animism. It is a living part, too. Many modern men trace descent direct from Menggin's adultery with the Brahminy Kite's eldest daughter.

Sermons from Snakes

The Kayans who live to the north of the Ibans trace their origins back to plants rather than birds. They believe that the allegedly aphrodisiac durian fruit fell and split upon the root of a great forest tree. Out came a girl, the mother of her race. But at one time, long ago, the Kayans say they did not realize that a pregnant woman would deliver a baby unaided. Like the durian fruit, the female body had to split open. So they always carried out Caesarean operations – until another teacher from on high came upriver and taught a more natural method of birth.

The Kelabits, who live north again of the Kayans, beyond the headwater rapids up in the wild mountains, erect all sorts of stone structures as part of their death rites and for the journey of the spirits of the dead. These hill-folk pay particular attention to omens given by snakes. One fairly common and very poisonous snake has bare red skin at either end, head and tail, a very odd-looking creature. If this is seen going the 'wrong' way when the people are clearing the jungle for planting, the entire operation may be abandoned. Such extreme observances can be disastrous to the year's food cycle. That is partly why the hill-people have been easily influenced by Christian missionaries since the interior was opened up to them. Strict rules of augury do not go well with increasing population and other pressures.

Unfortunately, early missions in the area were of an extremist sort. They tended to be fundamentalist, teetotal, and preaching hell-fire and brimstone. But there is now a reaction against this new austerity which has led to a neo-Christian cult called Bungan Malan. This combines old and new ideas and lays emphasis on the interpretation of dreams. It is already the largest single sect inside Borneo.

The idea of the interchangeable roles of man and other forms of matter is one to which we constantly return. The theory of universal interrelationships is not to be dismissed as mere superstition: much is based on acute observation and understanding.

The Kelabits, for instance, fix their rice-planting calendar by a sequence of dates for migrating birds which each year arrive with great regularity from China and Japan, starting in August. The Ibans observe the Pleiades as these move with other stars, and regulate outdoor life accordingly. The Kayans have a way of measuring the solar solstice by a carved pole which daily registers the changing shadow-length of the sun.

There is little room for activities like 'magic' and 'witchcraft' as separate concepts. The shaman is, to some small extent, a witch-doctor. But anyone with the rare feel and the patience for it can learn to be a shaman and so commune with gods and spirits. Nothing he or she (or she-he) does is considered more than a special skill, a job of craftsmanship within the common knowledge of the group.

Through all this there is the sense of change by experiment and evolution. Thus the Iban eagle god, Sengalong Burong, is seen as the only innovator of a new system, brought down to men by his illegitimate grandson. Borneo folklore, tradition, myth and faith is a lucid record of such innovations. By the same token, Islam has affected and mingled with the basic island approach, as Buddhist and Hindu beliefs before that; or Christian trends in this century. New fusions and confusions are occurring now but it will be surprising if they really alter the underlying animism.

TOM HARRISSON

Invoking the Gods

An Iban chant

The sound of the beating of dead bamboo,
Warning us to call together the older chiefs.
Ambau has already come here,
From Pangkalan Tabau,
The mooring post lashed by the trader's ropes.
Meringai also has arrived,
Husband of Randai, cleverest weaver of Batang Skrang . . .

Where are you holy Manang Sada,
Arrived from the height of Lingga mountain?
The other side is Laja's place,
He who smokes the enemy skulls.
The other side is Manang Begura's place,
He who owns a charm prolonging life,
So that no one may ever die . . .

Leave that place,
And come to a long ridge,
Lit by bright sunshine.
Bending downriver and leaning upriver,
The place where crystal water is poured . . .

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A man who had been humiliated in the eyes of his tribe could reinstate himself by single-handedly capturing a head, but this was extremely difficult and it was more usual for headhunting to be carried out by large war parties. After capture, the trophies were dried out over a wood fire, as shown in this picture

FURTHER READING: W. R. Geddes, *Nine Dayak Nights* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1968); Tom Harrisson, *Borneo Folklore*; Benedict Sandin, *The Sea Dyaks of Sarawak Before White Rajah Rule* (Michigan State University Press, 1968).

HIERONYMUS BOSCH

Lille Palais des Beaux Arts

'Bosch reveals the inner side of man, his fears, fantasies, dreams, desires and preoccupations': *The Concert in the Egg*

Hieronymus Bosch was the supreme master of the fantastic in art, the creator of a supernatural dimension that has never ceased to excite sensation and speculation. His view of man in relation to the world, the flesh and the Devil is underlined and embellished with the coperings of the monstrous, the hybrid and the deformed

VICE, SIN, FOLLY, the degeneration of the mind and body were the theme of Hieronymus Bosch's paintings. They were in direct contrast to the placid mainstream of the Flemish School of painting in the 15th century. Not for him the typical 'Madonna and Child' of a van Eyck or a Memlinc, in which the donor of the picture – merchant, prelate or Burgundian official – is faithfully portrayed and every detail tells of the love of material things and the realities of the contemporary world. Instead, Bosch reveals the inner side of man, his fears, fantasies, dreams, desires and preoccupations.

Born Hieronymus – or Jerome – van Aeken c 1450, he became known as Bosch after his birthplace 's Hertogenbosch in Holland. In *The Temptation of St Anthony* (National Museum, Lisbon), his genius rises to a tremendous crescendo; again it reaches a peak in the great triptych known from its central panel as *The Garden of Terrestrial Delights* (Prado, Madrid). These works are packed with inventions as grotesque as they are beautifully painted. They are full of symbols and allusions which, even when obscure to us now, were evidently conceived with a theological precision.

Bosch himself is something of an enigma. Such particulars that remain about his life are of a humdrum sort, offering few clues to his character and opinions. He belonged to a family of painters who came originally from Aachen in west Germany and settled at the town of 's Hertogenbosch in North Brabant, now in Dutch territory. In 1478, the town was a manufacturing centre of cloth and cutlery, rich enough to build a great cathedral. Bosch seems to have been employed in the adornment of this church of

. . . the mysticism and diabolism of his work, its symbolic references to alchemy and sorcery

St John with paintings and designs for its stained glass windows. He worked contentedly at 's Hertogenbosch all his life, a well-to-do and respected citizen with a house on the market square and a country property nearby. His success, however, was not merely local. His paintings were admired and commissioned by court patrons.

Playing the Devil

Bosch lived in a backward region which was out of touch with modern thought. In North Brabant, lingering traces of superstitious fears and primitive terrors had survived from the Dark Ages. Bosch was probably influenced by the monstrous gargoyles of Gothic architecture, and by the fabulous creatures drawn in the margins of illuminated manuscripts and pictured in the medieval bestiaries. It is probable too that written legend and arcane or secret lore formed part of his artistic heritage. It is known that he was a member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady in his native town, a fraternity with both religious and social functions. The Brotherhood trained musicians and provided altarpieces and ornaments for the church. It also kept up the tradition, already hundreds of years old, of the miracle and morality plays and organized the public stage performances and pageants dear to the Netherlander's heart. As well as representations of the Passion there would be scenes in which hermits and Christian solitaries were tempted by the Devil. Actors made up as demons and wearing grotesque masks would mime weirdly. Bosch may well have designed costumes for these spectacles. He would certainly be a spectator and no doubt he stored up impressions he might later use in painting. There is in fact an *Ecce Homo* (Staedel Institute, Frankfurt) in which Christ appears on what looks very like the open-air stage set up in the middle of the Netherlandish town.

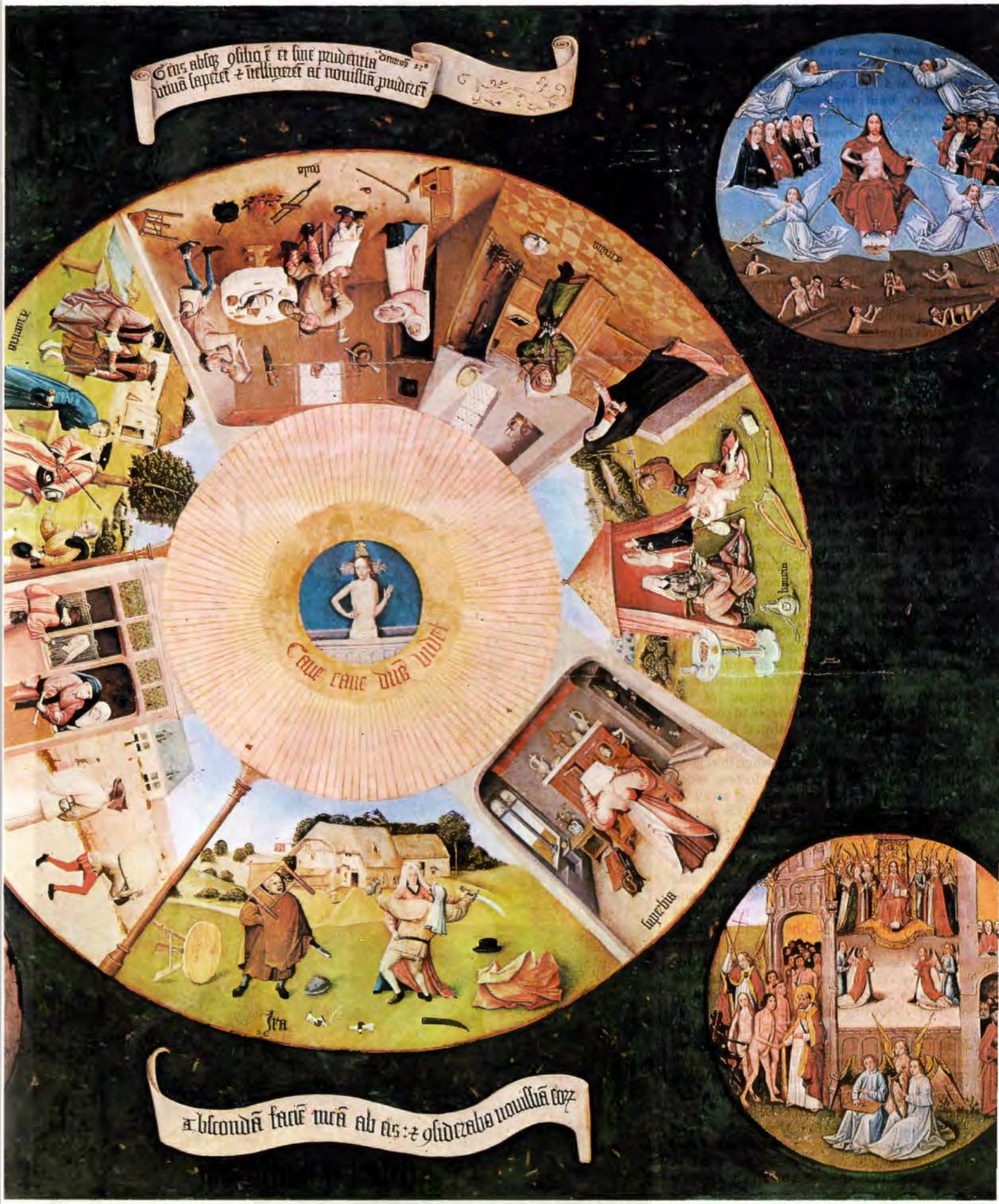
Was Bosch himself a man still in thrall to the ideas of an earlier age? The survivals of medieval thought and belief can be discerned in the mysticism and diabolism of his work, its symbolic references to alchemy and sorcery. Yet there are other elements in its disquiet which are reflections of a changing period. The range of knowledge was extending. Travellers were bringing back reports of lands yet to be explored, strange in flora and fauna, and their tales may have led him to conceive a 'new world' of exotic animals and vegetation. Humanism was beginning to apply its sceptical and critical judgement to existing institutions and accepted conventions. An awareness of these widening perspectives may be found in his paintings.

Bosch's work is psychological in essence in some ways. In an acute comment, Fray José Siguenza, the 16th century Spanish priest, makes this point neatly: 'The difference between the pictures of Hieronymus Bosch and those of other masters consists, in my opinion, in the fact that others mostly paint Man as he appears from without, whereas Bosch shows Man's inner nature.'

The development of this approach, suggested by the approximate chronology of his paintings, was from a simple morality to subtleties of psychological depth. Human failings are plainly satirized in the early *Seven Deadly Sins* (Prado, Madrid). Vanity is represented by a housewife in a typical Netherlandish interior, admiring herself in the mirror held up by a friend. *The Cure of Folly* in the same museum satirizes both the tricks of the charlatan and the gullibility of his victim in the literal rendering of a proverb about cutting out the stone (of folly) from a simpleton's head. Clerical complaisance in the exploiting of credulity is implied in the figures of monk and nun who look on.

The Ship of Fools (Louvre) gives an equivalent in painting of a satirical poem of that title which was popular at the time. Bosch's work was now more elaborate in the use of symbols and more pointed in comment on the faults of the religious orders. A monk and nun again appear, the central characters of the shipload, drunkenly singing and playing. The picture is full of hidden meanings. The makeshift boat, perilously afloat on the dark green waters of evil, sails under a pennant bearing the Devil's emblem, the crescent. Its mast is a hazel-nut tree, symbol of the fool. The drinkers bob open-mouthed at a cake dangling between them unattainably – the illusion of pleasure,

Human vice surrounds the figure of Christ, with the words 'Beware, beware, God sees', in *Seven Deadly Sins*. The bottom panel shows anger and, going clockwise round the circle, the following sins are envy, avarice, gluttony, sloth, lust and pride


Deus absq; ulla re sine prudentia
divina faceret & intelligeret ac nouissima prouideret
Deuteronomii 32°
Caue caue deus videt
Superbia
Ira
Et abscondā faciē meā ab eis: & videbo nouissima eorum

Adam and Eve in Paradise, a detail from the *Garden of Terrestrial Delights*. 'It is a strange uneasy Eden with its bulbous, tropical-looking Tree of Life.' The pinks and reds are the colours of love

Facing page A universe of hallucination in the *Temptation of St Anthony*, a nightmare of devilish and monstrous forms, mingling influences from medieval manuscripts and gargoyles with alchemical symbolism, sorcery and the creations of imagination run riot

perhaps. The spectator seems invited to contrast the mimicry of the professional jester, perched aloft, with the behaviour of the fools of nature.

Sinister Shepherds

The first of Bosch's comprehensive panoramas of evil let loose in the world and its dire consequences is the triptych *The Hay Wain* (Prado). The left panel tells of man's first disobedience and the expulsion from Eden, while a cloud of fallen angels in loathsome insect form parachute down to beset the human race. The hay wain stands for all worldly ends, the pursuit of wealth, power, material satisfaction. All classes, princes, churchmen, the common people, join in. There is a wild scramble round the golden load, murder is done and bodies are crushed beneath the wheels. Lovers sit above, heedless of an angelic voice, more receptive to the suggestions of the winged demon beside them. Satanic goblins pull the cart along and in the final scene convoy the lost souls into the ruinous architecture of Hell. The imaginative treatment of the theme forecasts the masterpieces to come.

Bosch meanwhile had painted a number of subjects from the New Testament. Although these convey the message that good will prevail, there is a discomforting sense of evil present or hovering not far away. In the early *Marriage at Cana* (Boymans Museum, Rotterdam) a contrast between miracle and black magic is pointed. As the grave figure of Christ is seen turning the water into wine, a priest of the black arts lurking behind him causes the swan and boar's head borne by servitors to the feast to spit fire and poison. The splendid *Adoration of the magi* (Prado), at first sight serenely devotional, contains many details suggestive of ill-omen, from the sinister shepherds on the stable roof to the troops of cavalry prowling in the distance.

In pictures of Christ's martyrdom Bosch's view of the spectators becomes increasingly macabre. In *The Crowning with Thorns* (National Gallery, London) the tormentors are unpleasant but plausibly life-like; but in the later *Bearing of the Cross* (Ghent Museum) they have turned into ferociously inhuman caricatures. But his supreme feat was to create the universe of hallucination that so amazingly appears in the Lisbon *Temptation of St Anthony*

Giraudon

and the Prado *Garden of Terrestrial Delights*.

The *Temptation* follows the traditional account of the saint, steadfast in faith in the ruined temple in the desert to which he had retired to contemplate, though assailed by a horde of demons in every form, either alluring or terrifying (see ANTHONY). Bosch must have plunged deep into the contemporary treatises on alchemy, witchcraft and demonology. Alchemical symbols abound – such as the egg, symbol of the world's birth, and the gourd representing the alchemist's still, from which devils emerge. The ritual of the Black Mass is detailed. But no literary source could account for the visual imagination and power that brings to fantastic life those flying saucers of bird-shaped boats and fish that skim through the sky, the hybrid monsters that lurk in hollow tree-trunks, the strange cross-billed bird on skates with the inverted funnel on its head that impales on its beak the artist's signature. *The Last Judgement* (Vienna), either by Bosch or an uncannily clever imitator, is an explosion of infernal fire that erupts into a sombre chaos.

Beyond question his most remarkable painting, and one of the most extraordinary paintings ever conceived, is the *Garden of Terrestrial Delights*. Volumes have been devoted to this triptych which depicts the primal paradise, the world and hell. But ambiguity and subtlety are omnipresent. It is a strange, uneasy Eden in the left panel with its bulbous, tropical-looking Tree of Life, the elephant and giraffe and other animals of far-off lands of which he had somehow gained knowledge. The central panel is dazzling in its gaiety of colour and diversity of incident; it is the garden of worldly delight itself. The pale slender nudes thronging this dream landscape represent sexual desire and aberration in every guise. Yet these are not animal bodies, such nakedly real men and women as Roger van der Weyden painted in his great *Last Judgement*, but graceful phantoms, the projection of dreams. The scene is intensely erotic yet without sensuality. It is also a complex system of signs and symbols. The strawberries, cherries and other fruits would be understood by his contemporaries as symbols of sexual enjoyment. The prevailing pinks and reds would be recognized as the colours of love. The steely blue of the spikily fantastic, coral-surmounted structures on what has been called the lake of adultery would be taken as signifying deceit. The spheres and jars in which lovers are enclosed seem to represent the imprisoning hallucination of their desires.

Sensation Gone Astray

While no doubt every detail had for the artist its precise symbolic meaning it is a mark of the greatness of this painter-magician that he allows for complexities of interpretation, just as Shakespeare allows us to conceive different Hamlets. The huge birds that gaze so stolidly at the lovers' frolics may be taken to symbolize desire; but their size relatively to that of the human figures also indicates a complete reversal of all proportions in this cosmos. It is a universe of thought and sensation which has gone ecstatically astray.

Whether such an unconventional painting could ever have been hung in a church seems doubtful. It has been suggested that it may have been painted for the heretical Adamites and that it was the Grand Master of this sect who dictated the scheme of erotic symbolism. This theory, put forward by the art historian Wilhelm Franger, has been contested. An argument against it is that the Adamites can scarcely have relished its final scene of dissolution.

In the final phase of Bosch's work there is a perceptible easing of tension. His last painting, c 1515, was a *Temptation of St Anthony* (Prado) notably different from the tumultuous version at Lisbon. In a more genial and fertile landscape than he had painted before the saint sits wrapped in calm meditation, indifferent apparently to the fiendish alarms that have also diminished in number. The threats of a helmeted dwarf and a creature compounded of bird, robot and man-like ape, with raised hammer, do not move him. Miles away in thought, as he sits on the bank of a little stream he ignores Satan swimming towards him with raised, clawed hand and a visage on which there seems written the desperation of one who fights a losing battle.

WILLIAM GAUNT

FURTHER READING: Charles de Tolnay, *Hieronymus Bosch* (Reynal, 1966).

Giraudon

Bo-Tree

A peepul tree, *ficus religiosa* or 'sacred fig', under which Gautama Buddha sat in meditation for 49 days and received spiritual illumination; the village where this occurred was called Buddh-gaya and became the most famous of the holy places of Buddhism; a slip of the Buddh-gaya tree was planted at Anuradhapura in Ceylon and is one of the oldest trees in the world; Buddha was said to have been reborn as a bo-tree in one of his existences; bo-trees are venerated by both Buddhists and Hindus.
See GAUTAMA BUDDHA.

Michael Holford

ANTOINETTE BOURIGNON

A SINGLE HYMN is the sole surviving monument of Antoinette Bourignon, 17th century mystic and opponent of every form of organized religion. Yet for over a century after her death her writings, running to 19 volumes, were the subject of controversy. Constantly at odds with the clergy during her lifetime, she was twice accused of witchcraft. She was later classed as a heretic and her teaching was outlawed by the Church of Scotland.

Born in 1616 in the Belgian town of Lille, Antoinette early showed signs of a strongly individual strain of mysticism. As an adolescent she began her search for an authentic religious experience of her own and at the age of 18 began to have religious ecstasies. She was convinced that God spoke to her directly, telling her to separate herself from the world. Her parents wished to see her married and refused her request to enter a convent. They brought her to a Jesuit confessor in the hope of persuading her to be more amenable – with the sole result that it inspired her with a life long antipathy to the teaching of all Churches, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike. This feeling was to strengthen steadily throughout her life and is summed up in a sentence from her book *The Light of the World*, published years later: 'The true Church is constituted, not by office or habit or dignity, but by the doctrine of Christ working in the soul. There alone, in the Christian heart, does the Church of Christ exist.'

Disregarding her parents' wishes, Antoinette left home and applied for permission to read the gospels – a rare privilege at that time for one in her position. 'I no sooner began to read the Gospels attentively', she wrote later, 'than I perceived such a conformity with my inward sentiments that, if I were to set them down in writing, I should write such a book in substance as the Gospels.' In 1641 she again left home and for four years lived the life of a hermit. They were productive years which she spent writing religious verse with clearly erotic overtones. Her father's death in 1648 left her a moderately rich woman and with her new independence she was invited to take over the management of an orphanage. She was temperamentally unsuited to the care of children, however, whom she disliked and distrusted; she used the rod freely and spoke more of the Devil than of God.

Scandal broke out in 1661 and she was accused of making pacts and consorting with the Devil. Although the subsequent public inquiry cleared her name, the common people were convinced that she was a witch and the orphanage was closed in 1662. The following year Antoinette conceived the idea of setting up a genuinely Christian community. She settled in Holstein, North Germany, first at Husum and later at Flensburg. Continuing to write and publish her works, she also engaged in incessant and acrimonious controversy with the local clergy. In 1680, the year of her death, she was again accused of witchcraft. Sick at heart, she left the community and went to Franeker in Holland, where she died alone at the age of 64.

Many of her writings display, as John Wesley recognized, a deep Christian piety; she was one of the outstanding mystics of her time. Typically mystical is the sharp distinction drawn between good and evil, God and the world. Only God is to be loved, for to love the created world is to love the evil as well as the good it contains.

Satirical portrait of Antoinette Bourignon, from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

In Hinduism, Brahma is the creator of the universe, one of a trinity with Shiva and Vishnu. But these three gods are personified manifestations of something greater: Brahman, the changeless, eternal principle which makes the universe what it is

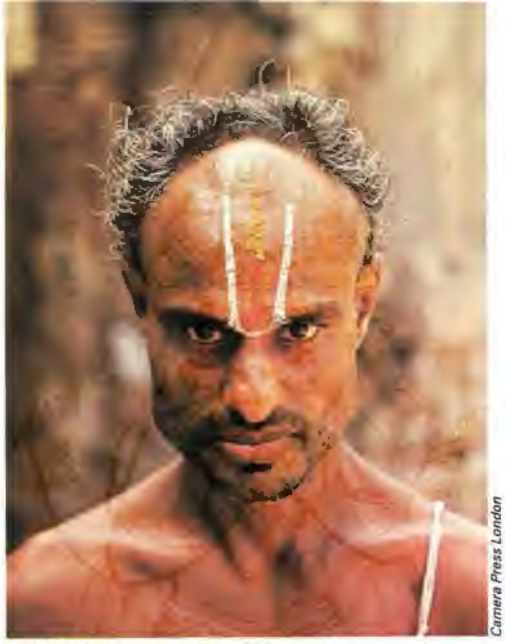
BRAHMAN

FOR CENTURIES BRAHMAN has been the term used by the Hindus to designate the Absolute or God. The word has a very ancient history. In the earliest parts of the *Veda*, the sacred book of the Hindus, it means 'sacred utterance', thence 'sacred action' and 'the sacred' in general. What this 'sacred' was, was only dimly perceived at first: it was, however, felt to be supremely present in ritual – the 'power' behind the sacrifice. Only gradually did the word come to mean the supreme Principle of the universe: the 'sacred' became also the source of all that is sacred – it became God.

This development, however, was long and arduous, and is wholly unlike anything we are familiar with from the Bible. In the Bible God is the given fact of religious experience from the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis right up to the last verse of the Book of Revelation: his intense personality is continuously present from beginning to end. Brahman, on the other hand, works its way up from a relatively humble beginning as 'sacred utterance' to that of the supreme Principle of the universe. Even when this is achieved, it never becomes an acting and speaking God in any way comparable to the Old Testament Yahweh. It remains essentially the permanently pervading power within things, not an external power that issues commands and prohibitions. The existence of a supreme 'sacred power' comes to be taken for granted, but no serious attempt is made to identify it. The first attempts are crude: it is the sun, or the wind, or the breath of life, it is food or it is the Word, it is Being or Not-Being: it is everything and it is nothing.

It is only in the *Upanishads* (composed in c800 BC), the philosophical treatises that close the *Veda*, that the great 'identification' for which Hinduism is famous takes place: Brahman is Atman: Brahman is the self.

The word Atman also has a long history



Camera Press London

A Brahmin, regarded as a god on earth, and the human repository of the sacred power of Brahman

Below **A Brahmin worshipping the god Shiva, the Destroyer, himself a manifestation of Brahman 'the One, the abiding reality'**

but by the time of the *Upanishads* it has come to mean simply 'self'; it can mean either the self of an individual or the 'self' of the entire cosmos. If it is the latter, then it is already identical with Brahman, and the equation 'Brahman is Atman' would therefore be saying the same thing twice over. This is best illustrated by a quotation from one of the earliest *Upanishads:*

> The whole universe is Brahman . . . He who consists of mind, whose body is the breath of life, whose form is light, whose idea is the real, whose self is space, through whom are all works, all desires, all tastes, who encompasses this whole universe, who does not speak aud who has no care – he is my Self within the heart, smaller than a grain of rice or a barley corn, or a mustard seed, or a grain of millet, or the kernel of a grain of millet; this is my Self within my heart, greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than all these worlds. All works, all desires, all scents, all tastes belong to it: it encompasses all this universe, does not speak and has no care. This my Self within the heart is that Brahman. When I depart from hence I shall merge into it. He who believes this will never doubt.

This means that the eternal, unchanging principle through which the whole universe coheres and which makes it what it is, is identical with what is more inward than the heart of man itself: both are changeless and essentially One: both are immortal and cannot die because both are exempt from the passage of time – in the context of which alone, death (and birth) can have any meaning. To 'merge into Brahman' then means to become eternal, to become one with the Eternal.

Brahman is essentially the God of the philosophers, the only certain characteristic of whom is that he does not change. Hence when it is said that a man 'becomes Brahman' it means that he has passed beyond all change: nothing can destroy him, and he is therefore 'free from fear' as Brahman is. In Buddhism it means no more than this; it means 'liberation' from space and time, not identification with any Absolute since the Buddhists were not interested in an Absolute in so far as it was divorced from experience. The Hindus, however, are incurable metaphysicians, concerned not only with the experience of eternity but also with explaining this transcendent experience in more or less rational terms.

This is the Self

'Whoever understands God, becomes God.' This definition of the Hindu theory of the relationship of the human soul to God is illuminating but needs some qualification. It is true that there has always been a trend in Indian philosophy to take the Brahman-Atman identification quite literally: there is the One eternal Principle, Brahman-Atman, which alone really *is*. If this is so, this school of thought goes on to argue, then all variety and multiplicity must be illusory. This means that because every human self is identical with Brahman, they must consequently be identical with each other. In such a system 'you' and 'I' are meaningless terms since there is only one abiding reality of which 'you' and 'I' are, when all is said and done, ultimately illusory manifestations.

If reality is absolutely single and unchanging, it follows that change is unreal. Since not only our lives but the quality of them are rooted in change, it follows that from the point of view of the Absolute, Brahman, they must be unreal and therefore meaningless. By definition Brahman 'has no care': he or it does not care because if he did he would cease to be indivisibly

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One. Neither Brahman nor the 'liberated' self which realizes itself as Brahman can then be touched or affected by what we commonly call good and evil:

> This Self . . . is impalpable, for it cannot be grasped; indestructible for it cannot be destroyed; free from attachment, for it is not attached to anything, not bound. It does not quaver, nor can it be hurt.
>
> Whoever knows this – these thoughts do not occur to him: 'So, I have done evil' or 'So I have done good' . . . Evil does not touch him: all evil he shrugs off. Evil does not torment him; all evil he burns out.

But if one adheres to the view that Reality is unbreakably One and changeless, then it follows that the God who acts must himself be illusory; this makes nonsense not only of morality but also of religion. This *philosophical* view had therefore to be abandoned by the *religious* consciousness which demands worship, since worship implies a distinction between the worshipper and the Worshipped.

Hence Brahman came to be viewed in two ways – as it is in itself, unqualifiably One, and as it presents itself to the world, the omnipotent and omniscient Lord God who originates, sustains and destroys the universe. In both respects – the unqualified and the qualified – Brahman is now defined as Being, Consciousness, and Joy: it has taken on a positive content. Even so the Deity, when it is referred to as Brahman, remains the ultimate Absolute; it is not the object of worship.

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The four-headed god Brahma, the creator of the world and man, a personification of one aspect of Brahman

Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer

Brahman is neuter in gender. There is, however, also a masculine Brahma but this is merely the creative aspect of the ultimate One. In later Hinduism the two personal gods who between them claimed the devotion of the great majority of Hindus – Shiva and Vishnu – came to be associated with this Brahma in a kind of trinity in which Brahma was seen as the Creator, Vishnu as the Sustainer, and Shiva as the Destroyer of the universe. All three of them, however, were only manifestations of the One, the abiding reality, Brahman.

But Brahman was also 'sacred power' and the Brahmanas, or Brahmins as they are usually called, were therefore regarded as human repositories of this power: they were quite literally gods on earth, each and all of them being so many incarnations of the Absolute.

This is the metaphysical basis on which the Brahmin caste is based and is the justification for what seem to us to be the grotesque pretensions of the system. Essentially, however, Brahman has remained 'that than which one can conceive of nothing higher'; Brahman is 'unseen, one with whom there is no commerce, impalpable, devoid of distinguishing mark, unthinkable, indescribable, its essence the firm conviction of the oneness of itself, bringing all development to an end, tranquil and mild, devoid of duality . . . That is the Self: that is what should be known.' That is Brahman.

(See also HINDUISM; SHIVA; VISHNU.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

BRAN

BRAN THE BLESSED plays a major role in one of the 'Four Branches' of the collection of medieval Welsh tales known as the *Mabinogion*, probably to be dated to the second part of the 11th century, but containing material that is much older. In the story of *Branwen daughter of Llyr* Bran figures as King of Britain, but his divine origins are clearly discernible. He is described as being so huge that no house could ever be built big enough to contain him. He is just and generous, the possessor of a magic cauldron which could restore the dead to life, a patron of the arts and a true king to his people. Bran's sister is Branwen, and her unfortunate marriage to the King of Ireland touches off a story of tragedy and magic.

The name Bran means 'raven' and because of this attempts have been made to identify Bran as a raven god. There is in fact insufficient evidence in the surviving mythology to support this theory.

When Bran and his followers set out to invade Ireland the people go in ships, but Bran wades, carrying the musicians on his back. It is he who acts as a bridge, hurdles being placed on his body to allow people to cross over. Bran is fatally wounded in the ensuing battle; he commands that his head be struck off and carried to the White Mount in London and buried with its face looking towards France.

The Celts worshipped the human head, believing it to be capable of life, independently of the body. They thought it had powers of averting evil, and could be used as a talisman. They credited it with powers of prophecy and wisdom, fertility and hospitality, and believed it could move of its own accord. They frequently used the head in their religious art to symbolize the total divine being (see HEAD). Bran's severed head fulfils all the functions attributed to sacred godheads. It remains uncorrupted, a cheerful companion at feasts in the strange and magic land in which Bran's companions eventually find themselves.

After fourscore years have passed in the otherworld, one of the seven men at the feasting opens a forbidden door to test the truth of Bran's prophecies and at once the seven are back in the everyday world and remember their sorrows. They then take Bran's head to London as he had requested and bury it there. The head becomes capable of speech, of averting invasion and warding off plague until it is ultimately disclosed, when its powers cease. The epithet 'Blessed', *Bendigeit*, with its Christian connotation is probably a rendering of a pagan title.

The Magic Branch

The story of the adventures of another Bran, the son of Febail, has associations with the otherworld. (Whether Bran the Blessed and Bran, son of Febail, are one and the same is uncertain.) It is a tale of magic in which the human hero journeys to the otherworld and remains there indefinitely. The tale, known as 'The Voyage of Bran', was written down probably as early as the 8th century. The theme of the story is well known in Irish literature: the hero is enticed by a goddess to the otherworld and his adventures there are glowingly described. One day he is out walking near his home when he hears sweet music which sends him to sleep. He wakes up to find a silver branch with white flowers on it beside him and he takes it into his house. A strange woman appears there, and sings of the wonders of the otherworld and persuades him to visit it. When she leaves, the magic branch springs from his hand into hers. He sets out with 27 companions to look for the marvellous land.

Bran meets the sea god, Mannanan mac Lir, driving his chariot on the sea, which to the god is a flowery plain. The deity also chants verses to him in which he prophesies the coming of Christ, and tells how he, Mannanan, will beget a son, Mongan, who will undergo many changes in form. This Mongan is stated to be a reincarnation of the divine hero, Finn mac Cumaill (see FINN).

Many years pass but to the wanderers in the otherworld they seem but a brief space of time. At length one of them longs to visit Ireland again, and they return. When they reach the shore, the homesick man leaps out of the boat and turns into a pile of ashes when he touches the soil of Ireland. Bran then relates the wonders of the otherworld to the crowd which has gathered to look at the voyagers. Bran and his men then go back to the enchanted land, never to return.

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 2

Braz - Dant

Times Newspapers

BRAZIL

Early European explorers were astonished by such customs as comperage, in which the Indians gave women to their European guests, cannibalism and the ritual execution of prisoners, and by the men's habit of piercing holes in their lips or cheeks through which protruded plugs of wood or stone

Ritual execution and religious cannibalism were encountered by early explorers among the tribes of Brazil. Today this vast country still presents complex patterns of mythological belief and strange proctices

WHEN IT WAS first discovered by Europeans, the coast of Brazil was populated by a number of tribes which nearly all had the same customs and shared the Tupi language. They lived in stockaded villages, several hundred inhabitants to each house, and four houses to each village. They hunted for game in the forest, fished, farmed, and waged war on each other in a systematic way to capture prisoners who were later ritually executed and then eaten.

As the interior was explored more deeply, quite different tribes were found. A large group of these, speaking the Ge language, roam the country during the dry season to hunt and gather food, returning to their villages and plantations during the wet season. They have a complicated social organization, being divided into clans and groups of inter-tribal marriages. Some tribes are nomadic all the year round, but in the Amazon basin there is a large group of settled tribes belonging to the Arawak and Carib cultures, whose main focus is in the Guyanas and the Caribbean. It is a vast country, and there is no single pattern of custom and belief.

The early chroniclers who encountered the Tupi-speaking tribes wrote detailed reports of the savage paradise in which they found themselves. They tried to understand such customs as comperage, in which the Indians gave women to their European guests; the men's habit of piercing holes in their lips and cheeks, through which protruded sharp plugs of wood, stone or resin, like the fangs of jaguars; and of course cannibalism, which they put down.

The common justification of cannibalism is that by eating the flesh of an enemy warrior you absorb his manly virtues. For the Tupi, the principal virtue was that of courage, but the fact that the wives of chiefs were given the genitals of a dead prisoner shows that his sexuality was also esteemed. The virtue of courage, however, was intimately linked to the idea of revenge. The ghosts of those who had died, either naturally

Tupi women were even more voracious cannibals than the men and made no bones about eating a prisoner

Harald Schultz

or in wars to get prisoners, had to be placated by capturing an enemy and clubbing him ritually to death. These prisoners were first adopted into the captor's family, given a young girl as wife, and sometimes lived in captivity for 20 years before being put to death. Strangely enough to our eyes, prisoners seldom tried to escape, for to die in the land of their enemies was a sure passport to immortality in the Indian heaven.

The Great Walker

There are few overt references to cannibalism in their mythology. The main figure is called Maira and is half-way between a god and a hero. He is sometimes called the Walker, in honour of the great journeys the Tupi excelled in, and sometimes the Maker. He did not, however, create the world in its entirety, but transformed what was already in existence into an order in which human beings could live: he was thus a culture hero, giving the main rudiments of their social life to the Indians.

One myth deals with Maira in the shape of a young child who, when wandering in the woods, was met by a poor widow and her children gathering food. Thinking he was about to stop them, the children began to beat him, an act in which he encouraged them – for as the blows fell, it began to rain edible roots, fruit and vegetables, in fact all the food plants the Tupi now grow. Later, when Maira had reassumed adult form, he visited the Indians. Though wanting to give him proper homage for his generosity, the Indians also wished to be quite sure of his identity. They made him jump over three fires, in the second of which he died, his head exploding like thunder.

It is the usual fate of a culture hero to be a stranger, and to die at the hands of those he has befriended. Myths from other tribes show that the theme of the young boy producing food plants when he is beaten is allied to initiation rites, when a youth becomes a man. These rites usually deal with a number of novices at the same time. The Tupi initiation rite, however, was individualistic: a youth proved himself by executing a prisoner, after which he went into seclusion for some months, endured ordeals such as the scarification of his body, took a new name, and was then able to marry.

A jaguar was sometimes dealt with in the same way as a prisoner. An explanatory story from the Tupi-speaking Urubu tribe tells how a man avenged his brother's death by following the cannibalistic murderer to an underground village of jaguars, and killing the chief who was dressed up in his ritual feather regalia. It is this feather regalia which all men now wear, especially for ceremonial occasions, that was originally the property of the jaguar; and other beliefs show us that this jaguar is an aspect of the culture hero himself.

The feather head-dress is an image of the sun, and the hero lives in the house of the sun in the east. At night he has to pass from the west underground, when he puts on a jaguar shape, to go back to his birthplace. Often the souls of the dead are thought to accompany the daytime sun, and anyone dressing up in the feather regalia is imitating this heroic state. Significantly, the Tupi prisoner was dressed up in just this way, and various rites transformed him into something approaching a chief as well, that is, a representative of the village where he was to be executed. More particularly, he was transformed into a kind of ritual brother-in-law.

Cannibal Wives

A study of mythology shows that the jaguar is regarded as a brother-in-law throughout South America. Sex always has curious associations with eating and the killing of game, a symbolic equation that has much to do with the operation of the incest taboo. The consequence of this taboo, of course, is to stop a man marrying in his own immediate family, however that is defined. Everyone being in the same position, the simplest solution is to give your sister to another man as his wife in exchange for his sister. When such an exchange is not possible, the husband has to pay for his wife by working for his in-laws. This happened regularly among the Tupi, and such were the antagonisms created by the system that the same word did duty both for brother-in-law and for enemy. The word was 'tobajara', meaning in effect, the rival with whom you have a competition for honour. The jaguar, who rivals man in killing game, is used in myth as the figure to denote the rival in sexuality and marriage.

The enemy captive was a rival of this kind. He was given a wife by his captor and so, like any husband, had to do menial work for him. But he was unlike the usual run of husbands in that he was treated with much affection instead of with the customary disdain and avoidance, and indeed he was called 'the loved one'.

Here we may see an interesting parallel with the vegetation gods of the Middle East, dying yearly amid the laments of the women. However, the Tupi women, even the prisoner's wife herself, made no bones about eating the prisoner. They were even more voracious cannibals than the men, who saw the rite partly as an opportunity to gain prestige for themselves. Throughout the country, the ideal of men is to be hard in body and mind, to be wakeful, abstinent, capable of great physical endurance and of undergoing painful ordeals such as scarification, liquid pepper in the eyes, fasting, or being stung by the largest and most venomous wasps and ants.

The Reign of Women

This masculine ideal is set against the feminine vice of softness and sleepiness. Several mythologies tell how death came to men because they were too sleepy to answer the call of a tree whose bark regularly comes off in sheets, and which had the gift of immortality.

Masculine virtue is thus aimed at immortality and power. The lethargy, which all are afflicted with, stems from mythological times when it was the women rather than the men who had charge of things. The story is of wide occurrence in South America. Sometimes it describes how the women

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Ritual costumes of the Umutina Indians of the Matto Grosso in the interior of Brazil *Left* Man wearing the skins of a jaguar and a wild cat. The jaguar plays an important part in Brazilian Indian beliefs. In some cases the hero who long ago gave a tribe its culture and social organization was a jaguar, some believe that the sun takes the form of a jaguar at night, and many of the shamans, or priests, are possessed by the jaguar spirit and turn into jaguars after death *Right* A father and his small son dance in a ceremony honouring the dead. Many Indians of Brazil believed that the ghosts of the dead needed to be placated, which was done by clubbing an enemy captive to death. Prisoners died happily because they believed that death in the country of their enemies was a sure passport to immortality in heaven

found what were to be the sacred flutes of the tribe, the representatives of the ancestors, by which means they kept the men in subjection. Nowadays the men, having successfully revolted, have the care of these instruments together with that of the entire religious apparatus and it is death for a woman or an uninitiated youth to see them.

Tupi myth also tells of this reign of women, who did all the work while the men, who had no genitals, lolled in their hammocks like children. The women satisfied their sexuality by calling a giant snake from under the ground, on whose raised head they took their pleasure. This custom continued till a young boy discovered what was happening and cut off the snake's head. The women took offence and left. It was then that Maira took charge by fashioning male members for the men out of the snake's body and sewing them in place, reserving the head for himself. Appeased in this way, the women returned, and the men took command.

This story deals with an adolescent fantasy which often goes with initiation. Tupi youths tied a piece of string around their foreskins to hide their shame, while men wore the penis sheath. The significance of this can be seen among the Bororo, where youths live in their mothers' houses until they are initiated, when they must go to the Men's House at the centre of the village. There they are given a penis sheath and are then ready for marriage. During this lengthy rite, the penis sheath is called the boy's wife, and is a substitute for the sister he cannot marry: instead he marries the daughter of the man who gives him the sheath. The myth of the reign of women plainly relates to this situation.

Battle of the Sexes

Initiation always deals with the separation of a boy from his mother, and his adoption into the society of men. Often one finds the institution of a Men's House or type of club in tribes like the Mundurucu, where men have to live with their wives' families, instead of the wife living with the husband's family: it becomes a 'home from home' where the strains of being a perpetual in-law are not felt. At the same time it is the place where the men celebrate their independence from women in religious form, with the help of masks, dances, songs, musical instruments and mysteries.

Besides the competition for honour between men there is thus a battle between the sexes. The serpent, who is the private lover of women, has to be killed by men whereupon a sound relation between the sexes can be established through marriage. The north-western tribes tell a story which is a complication of this theme. It deals with a young man suspected of being a cannibal, who is killed by his own people and turns into a palm tree. The sacred flutes, often kept under water when not needed, are carved from the trunk of this tree, and a beer made from its fruit. Whenever an important man dies, his body is burnt and the ashes mixed with the beer, which everyone then drinks in commemoration of him. It is all part of the initiation theme, for the hut where the novices are secluded is often thought of as a cannibalistic monster, serpent or water-demon, which has to be killed for the youths to emerge as newborn men.

The name of the cannibal palm-tree spirit is Jurupari, who has become one of the bogey-men throughout Brazil, for those of European and Negro descent as much as for the Indians. He is the master of the jungle, and is much feared. Among the Cashinawa tribe elements of the Jurupari myth appear in the figure of a Rolling Head, who creates the rainbow – the form taken by the great serpent when it is killed – and the moon.

The Tupi say that the moon was once a

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man who committed incest with his sister, and the Jurupari stories may have a similar background. In any case, it is this moon man who must be ritually killed, like the Tupi prisoner, in imitation of the moon's monthly birth and death. Among the Bororo people, this moon man is the brother of the sun. Among the Arawak tribes, the sun and moon are also brothers, the sun creating useful animals and the moon harmful ones. Sometimes they are figured as the jaguar and the anteater – a dangerous animal when roused – who quarrel over who is the stronger. The jaguar says that he is, since he eats flesh while the other eats only ants, but the anteater replies that this can only be proved by an examination of their faeces. By a trick he exchanges the jaguar's excrement for his own, leaving the jaguar humiliated.

The Tupi also have a story concerning twins. Their mother is the wife of Maira who leaves her when she disbelieves in his magical powers. Already pregnant with his child, she follows him but is seduced by Mikur the opossum, who fathers the other child on her; she then comes to a village of jaguars where she is killed, and the twins are brought up by a jaguar grandmother. When they are adult they avenge their mother by killing all the jaguars but one, who is allowed to escape by Mikur's son, and then go in search of their father. When they find him he puts them through a number of tests and ordeals, such as having to pass through the Clashing Rocks, in which Mikur's son is always killed and has to be brought back to life by his brother.

Above left A chief of the Kamaiura Indians in the Xingu park, wearing a ceremonial head-dress of eagle and parrot feathers. Christian missionaries have laboured for centuries to convert the Brazilian Indians and at the missionary posts outside the park tribal rituals are forbidden *Below left* Waura Indians of the Upper Xingu area in northern Brazil. Two men almost entirely concealed in huge straw masks are begging food from a woman *Above* Masked and robed figures representing dangerous spirits, which have emerged from the forest to attend the initiation of young girls, among the Tikuna Indians of the Upper Solimoes River

Playing Possum

There are many possible interpretations of such a myth. One certainly deals with the distinction between the mortal body and the immortal soul. The fact that the opossum's son dies and is brought back to life points to the particular manifestation of this belief in shamanism. A shaman is a man (occasionally, in South America, a woman) able to fall into trance and converse with spirits which help him or her to divine the future, diagnose disease and perform cures. The trance is likened to a death, especially that mock death known as 'playing possum', from which comes part of the significance of this animal.

Shamanism is sometimes hereditary, father training son in the techniques of the craft. More often the vocation descends on a man, after a period of psychological disorder or shock, in which he rushes into the woods and returns unable to think or speak clearly and smelling like a corpse – opossums, it should be noted, also have an unpleasant odour. He is then trained to recognize the spirit which confronted him, usually that of a bird or animal. He acquires the ability to be possessed by it and eventually by others, the chief of which is the jaguar spirit. The shaman's equipment usually includes the gourd rattle or maraca, which to some Indians speaks with the voice of the spirits. He may use a variety of plant drugs to help him into trance, usually tobacco, together with techniques such as exaggerated over-breathing. His seances take place at night, for spirits are fearful of light, and he may put on a remarkable theatrical performance in which he talks to the spirits; they reply with shrieks, bellows, groans and roars.

The shaman, then, is a man who can separate soul from body without actually dying, and who is able to travel to the sky or below the earth in search of the souls of his patients which have been stolen away. The loss of one's soul is a common complaint amongst Indians, and often occurs when someone sees a ghost in the jungle, or the Tupi Anyang, a hostile spirit who is covered with long hair, is of a greenish colour, has no bones in his body, and performs obscene antics. But Indians may also suffer from an invasion by spirits or by disease, which must then be extracted. This the shaman does by first blowing on the afflicted part with tobacco smoke, the vehicle of spiritual power, and then sucking

Times Newspapers

Kamaiura Indian praying for the rains to stop so that the fishing season can begin. The wooden flute is the instrument through which he speaks to the gods. Among many Indians the sacred flutes represent the ancestors of the tribe, and it is death for a woman or a boy who has not yet been initiated to see them. At one time, so the story says, the women had charge of the flutes and so were able to rule the men, but the men rebelled and seized the flutes

out the disorder, which he expels with an explosive sound from his mouth. Sometimes he also produces a piece of meat, a worm, a thorn or stone as the material embodiment of the spirit or disease.

Such practices are readily connected with ideas of sorcery, which is the product of bad feeling either within a village or between two perhaps unrelated villages. The shaman of one village will be seen as a sorcerer by the inhabitants of the other, if things go ill with them, and raids are often mounted to kill him.

After death, shamans turn into were-jaguars among some tribes, into powerful but malevolent spirits among others. Often they are buried in a distant part of the jungle and the paths leading to the grave blocked with thorn bushes, to stop the ghost from returning. But this is a common feature of funerals in Brazil. The Tupi were an exception, and buried their dead within their houses.

Celestial Jaguar

The shaman is always a powerful figure, and the Tupi shaman rivalled the chief. Several large villages might band together to form a primitive federation during war, and one of the largest of these groups was headed by a shaman. This was not merely on account of the fear he inspired, but because of his visionary powers. One of the strangest phenomena witnessed by the early colonists was the series of migrations which occurred at intervals under the leadership of a shaman, who inspired whole populations with visions of the Land without Evil, and who took on the main attributes of the culture hero Maira in doing so.

The Land without Evil was Maira's own land, and several localities were favoured for this paradise – in the sky, in the middle of the continent, and on an island in the Atlantic. One group of Tupi searching for it inland wandered all the way up the Amazon, where they were met by Spaniards going in the opposite direction looking for El Dorado – one of history's odder coincidences. Other groups went to the shore where they built houses in which they danced day and night, singing and beating the ground with stamping tubes. These dances lasted for many days, during which everyone fasted. Their purpose was either to make the house rise magically into the sky, or to allow the dancers to become weightless – an experience induced by extreme exhaustion – and thus able to walk over the sea.

It is said that thousands of Indians died during these treks, both from starvation and from the attacks of their enemies, and that one group, having reached the Atlantic shore, performed their dance and failed to achieve the necessary exaltation, turned around and made for the Pacific. Such beliefs in a Promised Land are common today, and they are often the result of a technically advanced culture meeting a more primitive one.

Tupi myth says that Maira set fire to the world and then flooded it, as a punishment for men's ingratitude. Ge-speaking Indians still believe this may happen; one of their ceremonies, which takes place round a sun-pole, is partly intended to ward off this danger. These Indians originally lived in a part of Brazil plagued by drought and flood, so their belief is understandable. South of Brazil, however, there is the idea that a Celestial Jaguar will one day make an end to the world, and in Brazil proper many tribes think of eclipses as the swallowing of sun or moon by a jaguar, as a punishment for the sins of mankind. Tupi messianism – belief in the coming of a saviour god – is all part of this pattern: it is still concerned with the Jaguar who gave them culture, who made them compete among themselves for honour, and who must be placated if they are not to eat each other up entirely.

FRANCIS HUXLEY

Bread, one of the oldest foods of man, has at various times and places been used as a witch detector, a love charm and even as the means of locating the body of a drowned person. It was once also, curiously, considered a cure for indigestion and it is traditionally unlucky to take the last slice of bread from a plate

BREAD

BREAD, THE STAFF OF LIFE, is a synonym for food itself. We speak of 'earning our daily bread' when we mean working for our living; 'taking the bread out of someone's mouth' means to deprive him of his livelihood. Because of its vital importance from the cradle to the grave, bread has many sacred associations; it is surrounded by ceremonies and superstitions which derive from its original association with the corn spirit. At one time at the sowing of the corn, the soil was fertilized by sacrificial human blood. The spirit of the corn, sometimes represented by a human victim bound in wheatsheaves, was ritually killed at harvest time (see CORN).

This theme of the first and last fruits of the field dominates the rites of bread. In north-west India the first of the grain is formally presented to one of the family; in the Russian Volga region it was the custom for the village elder to present a portion of the first bread of the new harvest to each member of the community. A Swedish traditional rite, revealing traces of sacrifice, involves the baking of the last sheaf into a loaf shaped like a young girl.

The modern harvest loaf is highly decorative, the designs often taking the form of horns of plenty and wheatsheaves, reminiscent of the earlier plaited 'corn dollies' which were kept as good luck charms until the next harvest. In Devonshire a little grain was always cut before reaping began and was made into sheaves which were laid on the church altar. In Yorkshire the parson cut the first corn which was made into Communion bread. This had great potency as a love charm, and found a ready market among practitioners of witchcraft. Consecrated bread was frequently stolen at night from churches, allegedly for use at the Satanic Mass, a crime for which witches went to the stake in considerable numbers.

Camera Press London

Bread is the 'staff of life', the food which sustains man's body, and in Christian symbolism the Body of Christ, the spiritual food which sustains man's soul. The breaking of the sacred bread at the Mass, in imitation of Christ's breaking of bread at the Last Supper

Proof of the Loaf

Bread played a prominent role in the primitive European system of trial by ordeal in which accused persons attempted to prove their innocence by eating a piece of bread and butter; if they choked they were considered guilty. In 1619 the witch Joan Flower swallowed a mouthful of bread and butter, declaring that 'she wished it might never go through her if she were guilty', and dropped dead.

The baking of bread had its special taboos. A menstruating woman was prohibited from participating in the kneading, as it was believed that her touch prevented the dough from rising. Another was the marking of a cross on the dough to prevent it from falling into the hands of Satan. Bread baked on Good Friday was held to retain its freshness and the woman who baked it was considered highly blessed. The Russians, however, regarded all Fridays as ominous for baking, and Good Friday even more so. In Western Europe, bread baked on that day was highly valued for its therapeutic qualities; a loaf was often suspended from a cottage ceiling for a year and then replaced with a fresh loaf from the new harvest.

Household bread was equally valued both as a medicine and as a magic charm by corn-growing peoples. In Belgium stale bread placed in the cradle was thought to protect the baby; in Egypt it was considered a cure for indigestion; in Morocco it was an accepted specific against stammering.

The sealing of friendship, like the taking of oaths, involved the ritual eating of bread and salt. In love-making too the sharing of bread had its part to play ; French brides used to arouse the passion of the bridegrooms by sharing with them a cake called the 'Bride's Pasty'.

Bread has always symbolized domesticity and contentment. To waste bread therefore was regarded as an offence and punished in an appropriately unpleasant manner. In

every morsel of the bread she had wasted. In Britain and the United States bread thrown into the fire is said to feed the Devil.

The Sin Eater

There are a number of popular superstitions concerning the magical aspects of bread. A long hole in the loaf portends a death in the household. In the United States it is believed that an over-addiction to bread gives one a hairy chest. A curious tradition that it is unlucky to take the last slice of bread on a plate is widespread in Britain and America. For a single woman to do so means that she will remain an old maid. Also in the United States, it is bad luck to turn a loaf upside down; if one falls that way, it portends a quarrel.

Bread has also figured in the lore of sea and weather. Sailors believe that to cut a loaf and turn it upside down causes a ship to sink. In the belief that storms can be averted, bread is placed on the window-sill in Spain, facing the direction of the anticipated outbreak.

A remarkable quality formerly ascribed to bread was its power to react to the presence of a drowned body. It was believed that a loaf weighted with quicksilver and placed in the water would be irresistibly drawn towards the place where the body lay. As recently as 1921 a corpse was discovered after this method had been tried at Wheelock in Cheshire.

Bread had an important function in connection with the Last Rites. Until a century ago it was not uncommon for an old man, called a Sin Eater, to be hired to take upon himself all the sins of the newly dead, in return for sixpence, a bowl of beer, and a loaf which had been in contact with a corpse. The idea behind this practice was that it would enable the soul of the dead person to proceed directly to Paradise (see SIN EATER).

FURTHER READING: Christina Hole, *English Folklore* (Scribner, 1940); Ronald Sheppard and Edward Norton, *The Story of Bread* (Fernhill, 1957).

Sacred bread in another form; the manna with which God miraculously fed the Israelites in the desert. Detail from *The Israelites Gathering Manna*, by Roberti, 15th century

Michael Holford/National Gallery London

BREATH

Element of Life and Soul

Breathing air into the lungs is the first action after birth – and death comes with the final breath. Since air is life, it has been identified with man's soul or spiritual essence in many religions. Learning to control breathing is therefore the basis of many Eastern paths to spiritual enlightenment

THE FIRST MAN, according to the book of Genesis, was fashioned from earth by the hand of God, who then breathed life into him through his nose – a process imagined by some commentators as being like the blowing up of a bladder. God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.' This connection between breath and the source of life is found in many religions and myths.

In a legend of the Australian aborigines, for instance, the god Pundjel fashioned two male figures from a mixture of clay and bark. After smoothing the bodies by a series of magical passes encompassing them from head to foot, he then lay upon them – each in turn – and blew into their mouths, their nostrils and their navels. After some time they came to life and moved about.

Similarly a commentator on the Koran says that the body of Adam was originally a clay figure which took 40 years to dry, after which God endowed it with the breath of life. The name Adam is a Hebrew word possibly coming from a root which means 'red' and so connected with the red clay of the first man's body. The red colour further connected it with blood, the 'water of life', in the sense that without blood a man dies.

According to Saturnius and Basilides (who taught at Antioch and Alexandria respectively in the 2nd century AD), the first man was made by seven evil angels, led by the god of the Jews, who said, 'Come, let us make man after our image.' They fashioned a being of enormous proportions but it could only crawl along the ground until the good supreme Creator himself endowed it with air, the divine spirit or soul. In other words, it needed to be impregnated with *pneuma* (in Greek) or *prana* (in Sanskrit) – terms which refer not to mere breath but to life-giving vital air or 'spirit'. Only after this could the crawling creature stand upright and become truly a man.

The identity of breath and soul is established in early mythologies of widely separated peoples. In Fiji, for instance, people suffering from bronchitis or asthma were considered to run the risk of losing their souls. A magician was employed to capture the sick man's 'butterfly' (as his wavering breath was called) and secure it firmly to the body again. This he did with spells and conjurations. Also in Fiji, when the canoe of a chief was launched, a number of men were sacrificed so that their souls (or breath) might supply a wind of good luck for the sails of the craft.

In ancient times the breath of the dying was believed to re-enter the living. The Algonquins buried their dead children in frequented places so that the souls might re-enter future mothers there. A similar idea is at the root of a Roman custom which entitled the nearest relative of a dying person to inhale the final breath.

Pregnant by the Wind

Since air was life – men and animals cannot live without it, any more than without blood – it was thought possible that a woman might be impregnated by it. In Egypt the vulture, Maut, was supposed to reproduce her species by the intervention of the wind; the Virgin Mary was also said to have conceived at the impulse of a breath.

Some Arabic legends relate that Mary conceived by the breath of the angel Gabriel; in another Arabic account of the Immaculate

Roger Wood

The Egyptian goddess Maat, who was begotten by air and first appeared as an egg, but later adopted a more conventional shape

Brompton Studio

Conception, a dove descends upon her, inspiring her with the word or breath and the word is made flesh. The angel, like the dove associated with Mary, is a winged creature whose natural element is air. The dove was the bird of breath, air or soul. It belonged to the Egyptian goddess of love, Hathor, and to other love goddesses and mother goddesses. A dove-like bird is shown enveloping a statue of Juno, the Roman queen of the sky or air, at Hierapolis in Syria; it appears in the shape of a pigeon carved in gold.

The dove, as the bird of air and the spirit of God, also stood for the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. In the New Testament – in the gospels of St Matthew and St Luke – it is the Holy Ghost who impregnates the Virgin Mary. St Mark and St John describe how the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descended into Jesus when he was baptized in the river Jordan (see also DOVE).

Air was not only the substance of the divine Spirit but also the home of spirits in the plural. Angels, demons, ghosts and the fairies called 'sylphs' inhabited the air. The word 'sylph' was used for the winged air-sprites which belonged to air as one of the four elements, the basic materials of which everything in the world was thought to be made (see ELEMENTS).

These conceptions grew out of the earliest embodiments of storm, hurricane, wind, rain, night and day, which man's early reasoning likened to the various animals that surrounded him, and which he thought of in animal form. As time went by, he conceived of weird imaginary combinations of animal and bird forms which he thought peopled the storm, the darkness and the kingdoms of the four elements.

In ancient Egypt, breath or air was typified by a human-headed bird which accompanied the deceased in the underworld called Amenta. Its winged form relates it to the air, and shows its kinship with angels and other aerial beings which assumed important roles in later beliefs and customs.

Left **The Fool, a card from a 19th century Tarot pack, connected with air in the sense of emptiness – the Nothing that was before anything existed, but which contained the potential existence of all things** ***Above right*** **The ancient Egyptians visualized air as a human-headed bird, which accompanied the dead to the underworld**

Eliphas Levi said that if a man breathes in a certain way upon the back of a woman's neck she will automatically surrender to his will

Michael Halford

Spirits Proud and Wrathful

Incense, representing the breath of life, is another aspect of this symbolism. It was presented to the dead together with an offering of blood, the mystical 'water of life'. The incense or breath was thought to pervade the blood, which stood for the red clay, the earth from which plants grow or the body of the first man brought to life by the breath of God. And so the double offering stood for the instilling of life into matter. The dead man could use the offered blood to make a material clothing for his spirit, so that he would be able to appear visibly on earth as a ghost.

According to some Jewish magicians, the phantoms of the dead or dying clothe themselves in a subtle aerial vapour in order to become visible to the eyes of the living. This applies to every sort of apparition, whether angels, spirits or demons. It is not, therefore, the phantom itself which is seen, but merely the subtle vapour or ghostly air which it has concentrated about itself. It may be that the fragrance of flowers and oils was used in earlier civilizations to make communication with ancestral spirits easier, by enabling them to show themselves in visible form. Smoke and perfumes served as vehicles for the temporary embodiment of demons which had been summoned up to visible appearance in the ceremonial magic of the Middle Ages.

An early Jewish treatise on magic (the *Pneumatica Kabbalistica*) alludes to 'Dwellers of the Lowest Air', as 'Spirits Proud and Wrathful, Authors of Arrogance and Fury, and the Seducers of Men'. These demons are said to require thicker and coarser odours and damp obnoxious vapours to make bodies in which the magician can see them.

An Egyptian myth is the basis of a more profound doctrine about air. The Egyptians believed that from the marriage of Chaos (matter before it was brought to life) and the Wind (the life-breath) came forth Mut or Mat in the form of an egg. Mat or Maat was the Egyptian word for both 'mother' and 'matter', and was also the name of the goddess of truth and justice.

The original egg – mother and matter, the womb in which the chick is hatched – later became the 0 or nought, which is the number of the first card in the Tarot pack. In early French packs this card is actually called *Le Mat*, the Fool.

The Fool is the first of the cards, the Origin from which all the others proceed. It stands for the Nothing before anything existed, which contained in itself the potential existence of everything; the ultimate Truth (the goddess Maat) behind all the surface phenomena of the universe. It is associated with air in the sense of a vacuum, an emptiness, and is identified with God as Pure Nothingness – having no identifiable characteristics but containing all things (see also TAROT).

The Sleeping Serpent

Breath or air as the creative spirit is also linked with the mind, the creator of ideas. In Hinduism, mind and breath (prana) are considered to be identical. Many forms of yoga involve *pranayama* (control of breathing) although far more is involved than the inhalation, retention and expiration of breath. The theory behind it is that when the process of breathing ceases to agitate the body and subsides, the mind attains absolute tranquility, freedom from thought, and the ultimate identity of itself with the object of meditation. The flow of breath having been controlled to the point where it ceases altogether, conception of mental images also ceases, and the mind becomes empty, merging into a formless radiance which is of the nature of pure bliss.

This doctrine was developed in its final and most perfect form in certain Hindu and Buddhist manuals, in which the whole of creation is regarded as illusory. Prana, the breath or life-current, is primarily used to compel the upward surge of *kundalini*, the great magical *shakti* or power residing in every individual (see KUNDALINI). She is visualized as a sleeping serpent coiled at the base of the spine. She is activated by a concentration of *citta* (mind-substance) set in motion by controlled breathing. The breath is thus a compulsive energy used to awaken the dormant cosmic power. This power is also likened to fire, fanned into activity by pranayama.

Magic powers accrue to the adept who stays the kundalini at any one of the six lotuses (*chakras*) situated at intervals along the spinal column. In the real adept, the true yogi, the fire is not arrested at any of these centres but is exalted to the highest lotus: the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara*) in the region of the brain, where the goddess Kundalini unites with her lord, Shiva (pure consciousness). *Samadhi* (literally 'together with the lord') is the result.

When samadhi is stabilized and rendered permanent, it is known as liberation (*mukti*); it causes the yogi to become aware of his natural state. Liberation is not a state to be attained, for it is man's real nature. Attainment consists in removal of the ignorance which veils the true state.

There are several ways of raising kundalini. The use of breath forms the basis of *hatha yoga*, one of the major traditional forms of spiritual culture for realizing the union (*yoga*) of individual and absolute consciousness. *Ha* stands for the moon, *tha* for the sun. The solar and lunar currents circulating in the physical organism constitute the life-current (prana) which can be directed by breathing techniques. Breath and mind being one, the control of the one automatically effects the control of the other.

Mechanism of Desire

The prana is interrelated with sexual energy. Kundalini, the mystic fire, can also be expressed sexually. Mind and breath, united and rhythmically directed towards a given goal, is the basis of sexual magic. The magically-charged breath is supposed to have affinities with the mechanism of desire. According to Eliphas Levi, the 19th century occultist, if a man breathes in a certain way upon the back of a woman's neck she will automatically surrender to his will.

The ancient Hindu work *Yoga Vasishtha* contains a classic description of the awakening of the great magic power (shakti):

> When the *Kundalini* is filled with *prana* she darts upwards. She then becomes erect and stiff like a stick or an excited serpent. If the various physical orifices are then closed, the body is filled with *prana* and its physical and material components are fundamentally changed.

A western counterpart of the sun, moon, fire trinity is the caduceus of Hermes. This is the prototype of the magic wand used in ceremonial magic. It comprises the twin currents of moon and sun symbolized as serpents twined about a pole or wand which terminates in a winged and luminous bulb. The breath (or prana) represented by the serpents attains perfect equilibrium and transmits its influence to the wand, which

Michael Holford

Breath is life, in the sense that man cannot live without it. The Virgin Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, often linked with the air that God blew into Adam's body to bring him to life. In El Greco's *Annunciation* the angel Gabriel, a winged being of the air, announces the event to Mary. The dove, another winged being of the air, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit

thus becomes potent to perform the will of the magician. The bulb of the wand, radiant with illumined will, is symbolical of that radiance with which the head-lotus (*sahasrara chakra*) is flooded when the risen goddess (Kundalini) unites with her lord: Shiva, the lord of Fire or Light.

Jumping like a Frog

The vagaries of kundalini when improperly or incompletely aroused have occasionally been recorded. One of the physical results of such a deviation is known as *buchari siddhi*, or 'the power of jumping like a frog'. This siddhi has been described by Aleister Crowley who observed it of his guru, Allan Bennett, one of the first to introduce Buddhism to England. One day, Bennett had been practising pranayama and his body had assumed the rigidity characteristic of certain trance conditions, causing it to jump about erratically. When it came to rest it resembled an overturned idol. He was completely oblivious that his body, galvanized by the interior power, had been rocked from its *asana* (meditation posture) and thrown about the room to land finally in a topsy-turvy attitude several yards distant from its original position.

In the Tibetan Mystery Schools the breath plays a vital part in the process of death. The lama appointed to aid the dying makes sure that the prana is maintained in the sushumna (central canal) and not dissipated by re-entering the left or right nerve-currents. If consciousness is retained to the last, the breath or soul passes over consciously to the *bardo* (after-death plane or realm of the disembodied 'dead'). There it awaits rebirth in a form appropriate to its spiritual development. In this way, the breath, as the soul, survives the death of the physical organism (see also YOGA).

KENNETH GRANT

The search for a lost Earthly Paradise, where men of God could live in peace together, led St Brendon on an extraordinary voyage westwards. The story of his travels was one of the influences which inspired Columbus to discover America, centuries later

ST BRENDAN

THE IRISH ABBOT Brendan (c484–577) like other Celtic saints of the Dark Ages, is obscured as a human being by a cloud of legends. His chief legendary exploit was an Atlantic voyage in search of the Earthly Paradise or 'land promised to the saints'. A belief that Brendan reached an unknown country far west of Ireland was among the ideas that influenced Columbus. Modern students have maintained that the story reflects a vague Irish knowledge of America before the arrival of the Norsemen.

Whatever its factual value, the story has a place of honour in medieval romance. Versions in many European languages are proof of its popularity. The legend was sometimes counted as part of the Arthurian cycle, having grown similarly out of dark age Celtic tradition: certainly there are mythological links between St Brendan's Voyage, the Quest of the Grail, and the passing of Arthur over water to Avalon.

St Brendan, called 'the Navigator', is the patron of Kerry in south-west Ireland. His name is variously spelt. The mistaken form 'Brandan' is common, probably because of confusion with the mythical hero Bran, also a voyager (see BRAN). Brendan was born towards the close of the 5th century in or near Tralee. During a long life he founded monasteries at Ardfert in Kerry and at Clonfert in Galway. He undoubtedly went outside Ireland; his alleged visits to Wales and Brittany are quite credible and it is known that he met St Columba at Iona. St Brendan is commemorated in church dedications and place-names from Brittany to the Faroe Islands. The true extent of his travels is open to question but it appears that the legend of his voyage grew up around some venture which caused his absence from Ireland during the 530s or 40s.

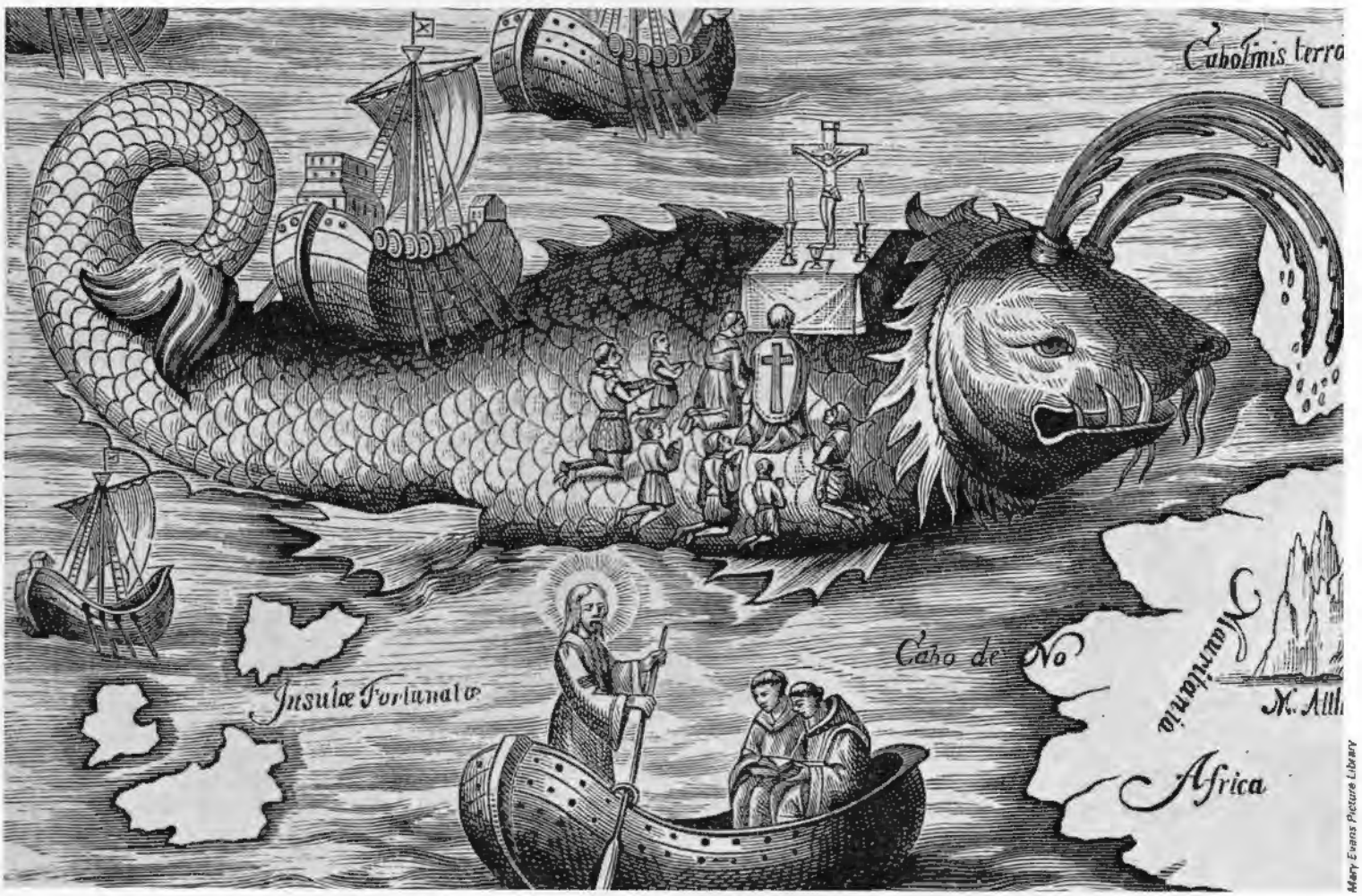
Faery Lands Forlorn

The legend is not an isolated fantasy. Its gradual growth, over three or four centuries, took place against a rich background of Irish seafaring, both real and imaginary. Early in the Christian era the Irish adopted the coracle or skin-boat from the Britons, and improved it into the efficient and seaworthy curragh, made by stretching greased waterproof hides over a wooden frame. The largest curraghs could hold a crew of a dozen or more, and make long journeys propelled by oar and sail, weathering storms by lying low in the waves.

Migratory Irish monks, of whom St Brendan was only one, were using curraghs from the 5th century onward to venture farther and farther. Their main purpose was sea-pilgrimage, the search for a 'desert in the ocean', where they could live in peace and penitential remoteness from society. They were exploring the Hebrides within Brendan's lifetime; they reached Orkney in 579 AD, the Shetlands before 620, the Faroes about 670 and Iceland about 795. The Norse who colonized Iceland after 874 found the abandoned remains of an Irish monastery. There is doubtful evidence that a few reached Greenland, perhaps in flight from the Norse; and an accidental voyage to Arctic seas by a pilgrim named Cormac is recorded much earlier, almost as far back as Brendan himself.

Besides traditions about these explorations by monks, the Irish had popular sea yarns on the lines of Sinbad the Sailor. These stories (*The Voyage of Mael Duin* is the most important) describe wanderings by curragh among faery islands supposed to lie west of Erin. They have a strong flavour of pagan myth. Similar themes and episodes occur in the Brendan legend. However, the claim that it is merely a Christian version of the old type of story cannot be sustained. St Brendan's voyage has absorbed other literary elements too – classical, for instance – and in a sense it could be called a Christian Odyssey.

Allusions to the voyage begin to appear in Irish writings in the early 9th century. We are told that Brendan 'sailed the sea', 'sought the Land of Promise', 'visited wonderful islands'. A sketch of the voyage is



Map of St Brendan's voyage, showing the amiable whale on which the saint and his companions landed, mistaking it for a small island

Mary Evans Picture Library

included in the *Life of St Machutus* (the Breton St Malo), written between 866 and 872. The two major versions, however, are in a *Life of St Brendan* dating from somewhere about 900, which is preserved in the medieval *Book of Lismore*; and the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, an account of the voyage alone, probably composed about 910–20.

The Friendly Whale

The main plot is fairly well defined. Brendan sails with a company of monks to look for a wonderful land in the western ocean, which is regarded as a retreat, as an isle of the blest, and sometimes as the lost Earthly Paradise. He discovers a whole series of islands, witnesses many marvels, and celebrates Easter on the back of a whale. After years of peril on the high seas he attains his goal and returns safely.

While the *Lismore* version is far from negligible, all serious study of the legend must be based on the *Navigatio*. This is a prose Latin work, entertaining and skilful, written in Ireland by an unknown but gifted Irishman. It is not, of course, evidence as to anything Brendan actually did, for this is in the realm of legend. The problem is whether the *Navigatio* reflects a real Irish knowledge of Atlantic geography and particularly of America before the Norse 'Vinland' voyages. Such knowledge, if present, might or might not have been derived in some way from the historical Brendan; that question remains a purely speculative one.

Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Irish monks, like St Brendan, were using coracles from the 5th century onward to venture farther and farther. Their main purpose was sea-pilgrimage, the search for a 'desert in the ocean', where they could live in peace and penitential remoteness from society. St Brendan's voyage may have unknowingly taken him to America centuries before Columbus

In its *Navigatio* form the story is as follows. St Brendan is visited at Ardfert by another monk named Barinthus, who has been to the 'land promised to the saints' over the western ocean, though he is uncertain of the route. Brendan decides to go in quest of it. Choosing 14 companions, he builds a great curragh, and sails from a creek near the foot of Brandon Mountain. Veering winds bear the boat hundreds of miles off course to a steep rocky island with a single landing place.

After a spell ashore, the monks go on to another island inhabited by large sheep and by a mysterious person called 'the procurator', who helps and advises them. Landing on what appears to be a nearby islet, they find they are on the back of a whale. Brendan afterwards tames the beast and induces it to help them. They cross a narrow sound to an island on the west of the Island of Sheep; this is the Paradise of Birds.

In due course they go on to another island where the disciples of the Irish saint Ailbe live; to an island with a poisonous spring; to a region of calm where the sea is like a 'thick curdled mass'; to a very different stretch of sea, cold and stormy, where monsters threaten them; to a flat flowery island almost level with the waves; to an island with fragrant air, vividly green grass, and fruits described as huge grapes.

They pass a translucent sea where they can watch the fishes far below, and, on another day, a vast crystal column among the waves. From here they sail north to a rugged island covered with slag, where giants are working at a colossal smithy, surrounded by fire and fumes. After this comes a remote northern mountain with black cliffs and smoke pouring from the summit, and then, far to the south of it, a precipitous islet with an Irish hermit living in a cave near the top.

Most of these adventures have fairy-tale elements, yet there are many strangely exact statements of compass bearing and distance, the latter expressed in the Norse manner as 'so many days' sail'. Brendan does not touch on all the islands in one impossible tour, but in a series of forays, returning periodically to the Island of Sheep as a base. His final, successful expedition from there takes 40 days. He passes through a thick fog into light, and at last beholds the promised land. It is sunny and fruitful. The explorers traverse it for weeks without coming to a farther shore. A man whom they meet on a river bank – doubtless a disguised angel – tells them to turn back. Some day God will restore this lost Paradise to all Christian men, but in the meantime it must stay hidden, or known only to a few as a haven from persecution. So the monks leave, and reach Erin again without mishap.

Chronologically, Brendan's exploits

seem to extend from 539 to 551 or thereabouts. However, he is only actually engaged on them for a total of seven years. The *Navigatio* (or at any rate the surviving imperfect text) fails to explain the discrepancy. But the *Lismore* version, which preserves some independent scraps of tradition, says that Brendan returned to Ireland at one stage, and after an interval set out again in a wooden ship instead of a curragh. Besides splitting the voyage into two instalments, the same source adds further details to the more northerly-sounding episodes, such as encounters with small dark imps and with a 'sea-cat' which seems to have been a walrus.

Based on a Map

How should the *Navigatio* be construed? In some sections at least, the author is undoubtedly giving glimpses of actual places, seen through a haze of folklore or poetic imagery. Thus the northern island of giant smiths is generally acknowledged to be Iceland. The smithy is a volcano, perhaps Hekla, to which the author has transferred a standard classical myth about Etna and its Cyclopean forge, found in Virgil and Aeschylus. Again, the Island of Sheep is almost certainly Strömö in the Faroes. The name 'Faroes' is derived from a Danish word for sheep, and the animals, said to have been imported by the first Irish settlers, are a staple of the economy. The Paradise of Birds is Vagar, across the sound west of Strömö. Vagar still swarms with wild-fowl of many species. Both sheep and birds are mentioned in a description of the Faroes by the Irish geographer Dicuil, written in 825.

Other clues are less clear, but they are plentiful, and, when taken together, forceful. Granted that the *Navigatio* is fiction woven round a popular hero, to that extent resembling a romance like *Mael Duin*; nevertheless it appears, as *Mael Duin* emphatically does not, to be based on a map or something like one. As to the extent of this map, opinions differ. But a survey of writers who have studied the legend shows that there are arguments for including not only the Faroes and Iceland, but also St Kilda, Rockall, Jan Mayen, southern Greenland, the Newfoundland Banks and iceberg zone, Madeira, the Azores, the Sargasso Sea, and parts of the West Indies, the Bahamas and mainland America.

Such a map would not be as utterly incredible as it sounds. A well-read Irishman in the early 10th century could have put most of it together from classical and later geographers, from the Irish monastic tradition, and from reports of Viking voyages. But if the author of the *Navigatio* was painstaking and learned enough to put together such a map, what were his sources for references to America?

At present there is no answer. Some evidence does exist for pre-Norse Atlantic crossings, which might have been described in oral traditions or lost documents. But the data are hard to interpret, and point to a period much earlier than the Irish seafaring. It is safe to conclude that the *Navigatio* does reflect a knowledge of Atlantic geography;

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

A monk at Brandon Hill on the coast of Kerry, Ireland. From its foot the saint set out on his voyage in search of the Earthly Paradise or 'land promised to the saints'. The story has a historical background in Irish seafaring

that it also reflects pre-Norse ideas about land on the far side; that these ideas may have a fragmentary factual basis; but that if they do, we can still only guess at the source of information. While the proved Irish achievement is astonishing, there is no good reason to think that America itself was discovered by St Brendan or by any Irishman of the Dark Ages. The problem merges into the broader problem of early trans-Atlantic contacts.

The Shifting Island

Whatever geography the *Navigatio* contains is lost to sight in the later romantic adaptations, where the whole story is jumbled and made more fantastic. Brendan's fame spread through medieval Europe, but no idea of a map went with it. The sole persistent belief was that the saint discovered one otherwise unknown island in the western ocean – a warm, supremely fertile place. 'St Brendan's Isle' was not thought of as the Earthly Paradise (which medieval Christians pictured in Asia, and could not take seriously anywhere else), but as something more like the island of giant grapes supposed to have been visited during the quest.

This at least was believed in literally. St Brendan's Isle appears on a number of medieval maps, usually to the south-west of Europe. It moves farther and farther out with the progress of exploration. In the Hereford map of 1275 it lies among the Canaries. The Dulcert chart (1339) shifts it towards Madeira. Pizigani (1367), Beccarui (1426, 1435), and others transplant it to the region of Azores. A few years later, after the Portuguese discovery of the Azores themselves, Bianco marks 'St Brandan's or the Fortunate Isles' as two groups farther westward still. Behaim's map, published in 1492 just before Columbus sailed, shows a huge St Brandan's Isle near the actual location of the South American coast.

Columbus himself is said to have made inquiries in Galway where Brendan finally settled, and to have taken a Galway seaman on his first voyage. His son testifies to the effect the legend had on him. Certainly he knew more about it than some of the mapmakers. He spoke of St Brendan's islands – in the plural – and of the trans-Atlantic Paradise, which he was prepared to accept because it buttressed his concept of circumnavigation. Later, in fact, Columbus argued that Paradise was to be found up the Orinoco river, and that he had reached its approaches, like Brendan before him, by sailing westward.

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: Geoffrey Ashe, *Land to the West: St. Brendan's Voyage to America* (Viking Press, 1962); Tim Severin, *Brendan Voyage* (McGraw-Hill, 1978); George A. Little, *Brendan the Navigator* (Gill & Son, Dublin, 1945).

Beauty and horror, compassion and cruelty are the keynotes of the work of the painter Pieter Breughel the Elder. Together with the intimately observed detail of the everyday life of his time is a preoccupation with the theme of the oppressor and the oppressed. The innocent are ever at the mercy of the powerful; the peasants dance, but there is a scaffold in the background

BREUGHEL

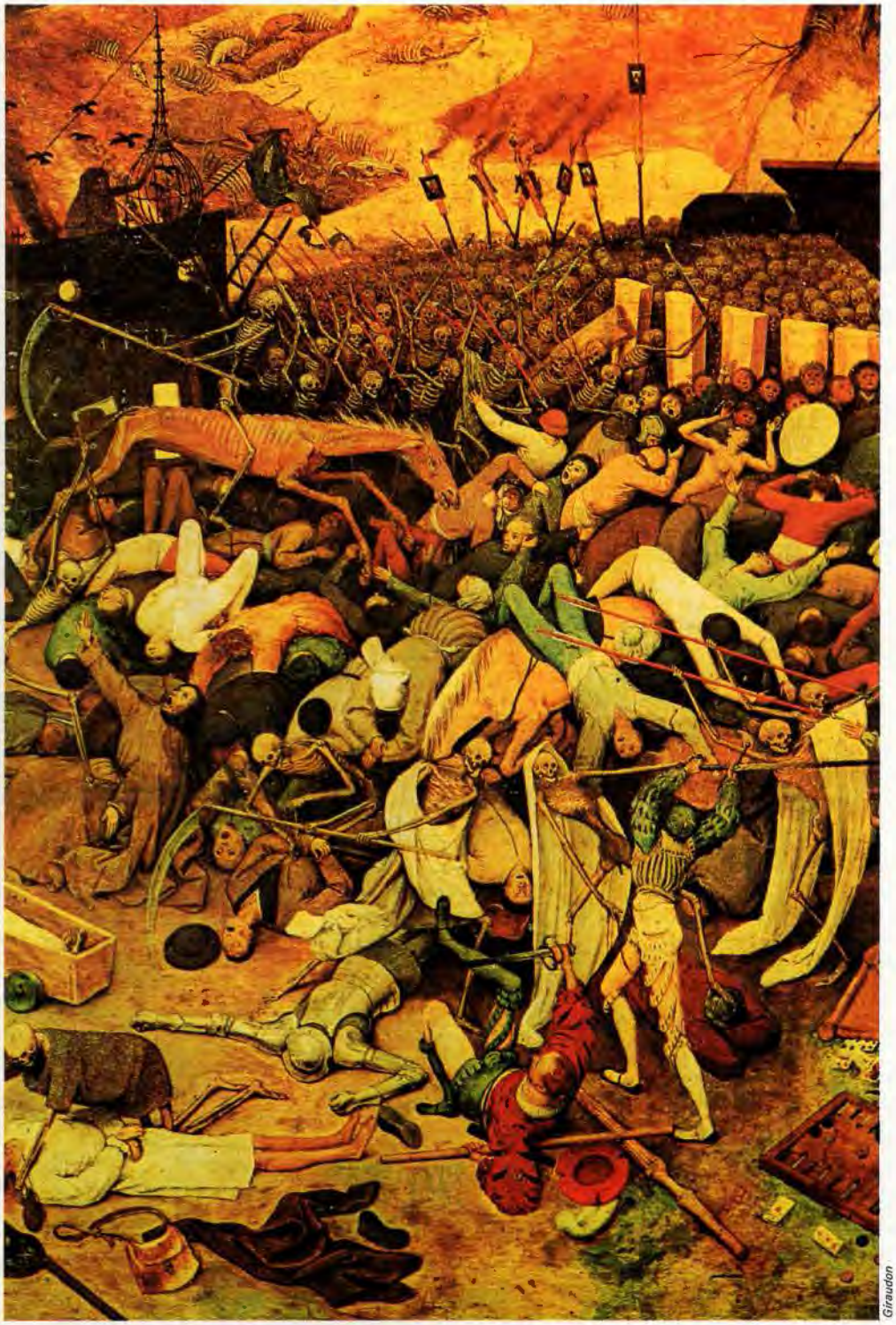
PIETER BREUGHEL the Elder, the greatest of a family dynasty of painters and one of the greatest of all European artists, possessed an extraordinary range of vision. His work shows profound comment on human affairs and presents a marvellous panorama of the visible world. At the same time, like Hieronymus Bosch, he gives spectral shape to sin, death and the conception of hell with all its attendant demons and monstrosities.

In the paintings illustrating the parables of the Gospel and common proverbs of his time, he comments philosophically on human failings. In other works there is an urgent sense of the tragedy of his own time, a dark period in the history of the Netherlands which was at that time unhappily dominated by Spain. He conveys in his paintings of biblical themes, even if in cryptic and covert fashion, his reaction to the miseries of a land harried by the persecution of a foreign ruler and the warring fanaticisms of religion and politics.

In Breughel's magnificent landscapes and the figures that people them, there is a new feeling for the relationship of man to his environment. And from the illustrations of parables and proverbs given contemporary guise it was but a short step to his superb portrayal of the everyday life of his time. Patriotic sympathy animates the masterpieces in which he observes his rustic fellow-countrymen and women – in the farthest remove from an alien court – at the marriage feast and in the lumbering peasant dance that symbolizes their temporary respite from toil and care.

Little is known about his life, except that he died in 1569 aged about 45. Neither his birthplace nor his exact date of birth are known for certain. It is assumed that he came from a village called Brueghel or Brögel, either in Dutch Brabant or in the present Limburg province of Belgium – perhaps the existing Brögl near the little town of Brée. It is a reasonable guess that he was born about 1525 since it is known that he was admitted to the Antwerp Guild of St Luke as fully fledged painter in 1557. The nickname he acquired 'Peasant Breughel' seems to apply rather to his subjects than to his origin. It is recorded, however, that he was the pupil of Pieter Coeck van Aelst, painter, designer and architect, whose daughter Breughel eventually married. Pieter Coeck died in 1550 and soon after Breughel went to work for the Antwerp engraver and print publisher, Jerome Cock. He made a journey to Italy, possibly to gather material on Cock's behalf.

The journey and the period afterwards spent with Cock were both of great influence on Breughel's development. Unlike so many Dutch and Flemish artists of the period he showed no sign of wishing to emulate the works of the Italian Renaissance masters he saw at Rome. But there can be no doubt of the vivid impression left on his mind by the varieties of landscape he encountered on his extensive tour: the awesomeness of Alpine heights, the spreading vistas of lake, river and plain, the southern coasts.

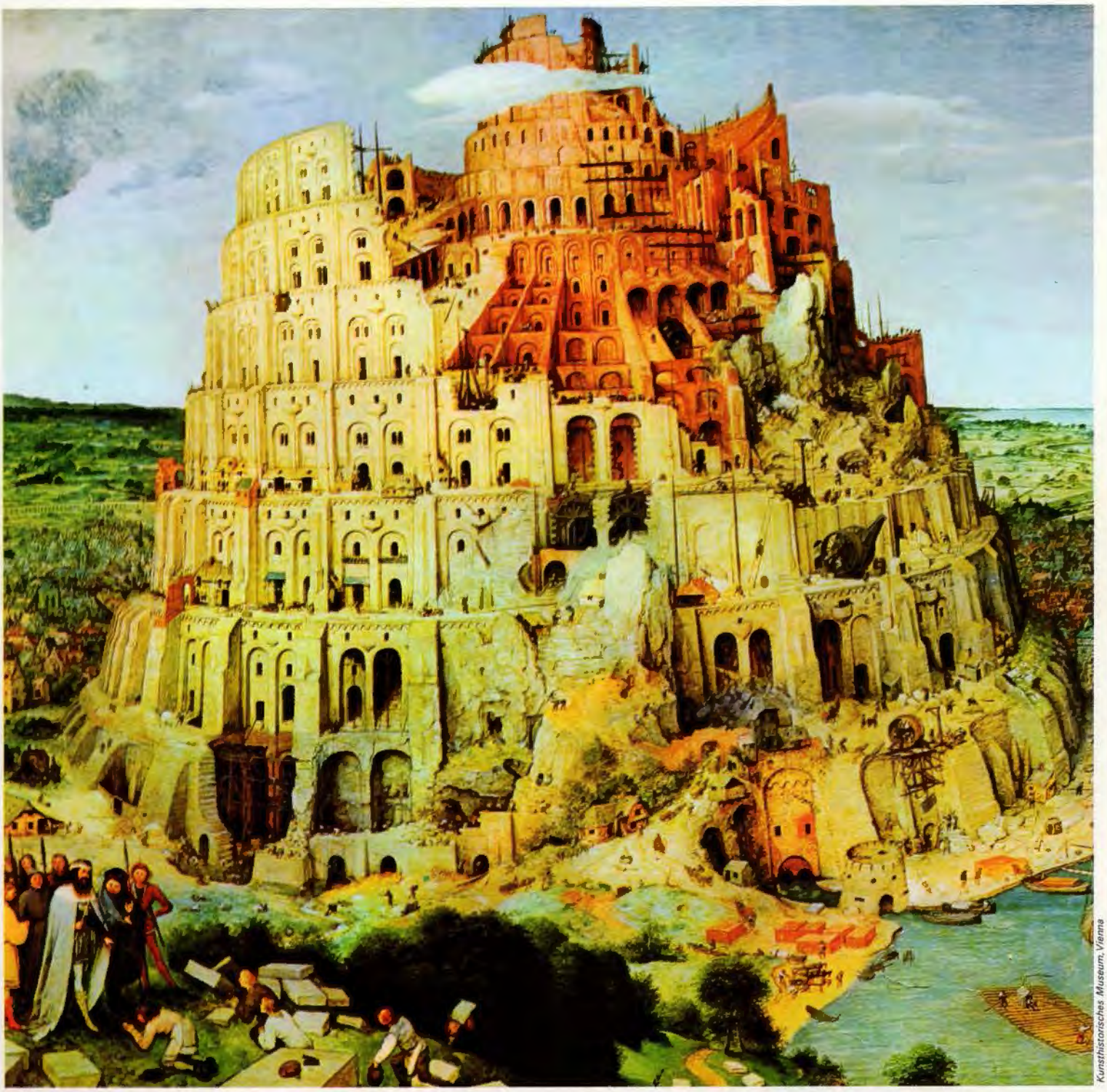


Giraudon

Death mows all down before him in a setting of battle, torture and execution: detail from *The Triumph of Death*, painted in 1568, the year in which the Spanish army, sent to put down the revolt in the Netherlands, entered Brussels in triumph

King Carnival

Such were the subjects he drew, and Cock engraved, on Breughel's return to Antwerp. Cock, who had a shop near the Antwerp Bourse, was a pioneer of graphic reproduction. He catered for taste at various levels with engravings of landscapes, moral themes and fantastic subjects in the style of Hieronymus Bosch (see BOSCH). In all of these Breughel had a hand and he became so intimate with the work of Bosch that he might be called the heir of his imagination. One of Breughel's signed drawings, the satirically symbolic *Big Fishes eat Little Ones* (Albertina, Vienna) was near enough to the style of the earlier master to be engraved and published under Bosch's name. The subjects Breughel penned for



Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

One of man's most destructive failings, his futile attempts to grasp power which is beyond him, is reflected in *The Tower of Babel*

the engraver reappear, marvellously elaborated, in the paintings he produced independently from about 1557 until shortly before his death in Brussels in 1569. Marvellous indeed is the product of these years, both in the number of masterpieces, and in the immense amount of workmanship and thought they represent. They are the distillation of the beauty and also the horror that an inspired artist could perceive in the conditions of the time.

A cosmic, worldwide vision appears in the early landscapes of c 1557: they are not views of one place but a universe seen in vast perspective of shimmering water, towering mountains, distant cities and dense woods. The *Landscape with the Temptation of St Anthony* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) combines such a prospect with details reminiscent of Bosch, an aerial armada of evil spirits, misshapen semi-human forms and gnomes. Another of these world-landscapes is the setting for *The Fall of Icarus* (Royal Museum, Brussels) c 1558, with its great ocean and beautifully painted ship in full sail. Icarus has sunk into the sea, only one leg showing above the surface and Breughel seems to comment not only on the vanity of his attempt to fly but on the insignificance of individual calamity and the indifference of the world towards it, as represented by the ploughman and the shepherd who are taking no notice.

In *The Tower of Babel* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) the stupendous building seems another reflection on the vanity of human ambition. The popular print market demanded proverbial philosophy and this was provided for by the large-scale pictures, teeming with life and incident, of 1559–60. In *The World Turned Upside Down* (Gemälde-Galerie, Berlin-Dahlem) he illustrates nearly a hundred maxims and popular sayings, forming a huge anthology of reference to human folly. An inn sign with a globe and an inverted cross sums up the picture's meaning. One figure 'runs his head against the wall' another 'cries over spilt milk'. In the centre is a young woman with an aged husband; she 'hangs a blue

cape round him' in allusion to a popular expression meaning to be unfaithful.

The Battle between Carnival and Lent (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) is another amazing compendium of figures, gay with the colour of pageantry beloved by his countrymen but pointing the contrast between festivity and the quiet of the religious and contemplative life with a wealth of ingenious detail. The protagonists are King Carnival, a gross fellow perched on a wine barrel with a spit impaling a pig's head for weapon, confronted by Lent in the form of a lean old woman with a wooden shovel to which – symbol of meagre fare – are affixed two herrings.

A World in Flames

But the mood of Breughel's art now changed; it became more intense, reflecting the disquiet of the times. Calvinism was spreading like wildfire through the Netherlands. The efforts of Philip II of Spain to put down the heresy grew more and more ferocious. Numerous executions, the arbitrary powers given to the Inquisition, and the presence of Spanish troops outraged popular feeling. Antwerp, like other cities in the 1560s, was ripe for revolt. Breughel moved to Brussels in 1563 after his marriage, supposedly to be rid of a prior and embarrassing liaison. Although Brussels was the court centre, he found the same spirit of unrest and menace in the city.

Patronized by the court, his sympathies were nevertheless with the common people and his paintings offer many clues to this feeling of kinship. In *Monkeys* (Berlin) 1562, the sad creatures chained at a prison-like embrasure with a distant view of Antwerp behind them seem to symbolize the captivity of a people. It is not merely fanciful to see the hated foreign mercenaries in the disguise of biblical warriors in *The Battle of the Israelites and Philistines* (Vienna) 1562. To express his depth of feeling he again had recourse to the manner of Bosch. *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* represents the defeat of evil ideas and intentions in the shape of gibbering monsters. *Dulle Griet* (Mayor van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp) 1564 shows 'Mad Meg', a hell-raising fury, sweeping through a demonic chaos full of nameless hybrids and grotesques such as Bosch had conceived, against the background of a world in flames.

Breughel was a witness of these years of wild popular outbursts and savage reprisal, and left his testimony for posterity. *The Numbering of Bethlehem* (Brussels) 1566, shows a door-to-door inquisition such as many a snowbound Flemish village must have witnessed. *The Conversion of St Paul* (Vienna) 1567, might also be taken to denote, rather than its ostensible subject, the approach of the dread Duke of Alva, riding with his troops from Lombardy through an Alpine pass, with a commission to put down revolt in the Netherlands by every means. *The Massacre of the Innocents* (Vienna) c 1567, is just such a cruel scene as Breughel might have witnessed.

These pictures are the more pointed for the contemporary dress and surroundings they depict. It remained for Breughel to distil the essence of the contemporary situation in the great *Triumph of Death* (Prado, Madrid) c 1568. Transcending the grotesque the painting is grimly direct in its symbolism. Death in skeleton shape mows all down before him in a lurid setting of flaming towns and sinking ships. 1568 was the year in which the Duke of Alva entered Brussels in triumph. The great artist finally produced a work of sombre reflection in *The Magpie on the Gallows* (Landesmuseum, Darmstadt) with its peasants dancing in the shadow of the scaffold.

In famous works of his later years, Breughel exercised the magic purely of an art perfected in design, colour and human understanding, manifest in those incomparable masterpieces at Vienna, the *Hunters in the Snow*, *The Wedding Banquet* and *The Peasant Dance*. Yet the sense of parable remained with him. There is no more touching a picture than his *Blind leading the Blind*, painted in the year before he died. In its rendering of the pathos of physical disability, it also suggests the plight of imperfect humanity, constantly liable to be led astray.

WILLIAM GAUNT

Previous page **The archangel Michael and the heavenly host routing the gibbering monsters of evil in *The Fall of the Rebel Angels***

Below **'In its rendering of the pathos of physical disability, it also suggests the plight of imperfect humanity, constantly liable to be led astray': *The Blind Leading the Blind***

Museo di Capodimonte, Naples

Brer Rabbit
Hero of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, puhlished between 1880 and 1906 by the American journalist Joel Chandler Harris: the stories are based on folk tales brought from Africa by Negro slaves and probably influenced hy the Great Rabbit of Algonquin Indian mythology; Brer Rabbit is a mischievous 'trickster' who cleverly outwits his enemies, especially the malicious Brer Fox.

Editions du Chalet

Breviary
Book which contains the services or 'divine office' of the Roman Catholic Church for each day of the year, and each section of the day, as distinct from the service of the Mass (contained in the missal) and those of baptism, marriage and other sacraments (in the Rituale Romanum); revised in 1960, the breviary contains psalms, lessons from the Bible, hymns and prayers, including those used on each saint's day.

BRIDGES

THE FUNCTION OF A BRIDGE, an artificial structure which overcomes a natural barrier, and links two places that are naturally apart, is the key to the important role of bridges in religious customs and beliefs. Since the natural barrier was usually a river, which to the primitive mind was a living thing and regarded as a god or a spirit, the building of the bridge might affront a deity, who had to be appeased by sacrifices.

The most notable rites of this type took place in ancient Rome. There the oldest bridge over the river Tiber was the Pons Sublicius, which was made entirely of wood, the use of metal being taboo. On this bridge, annually on the Ides (the 15th) of May, a curious ritual was performed. Puppets made of bullrushes to represent old men, bound hand and foot, and called *Argei*, were flung into the river by the Vestal Virgins.

The exact meaning of this ritual has been much debated but the most probable conclusion is that the rites were propitiatory, the Argei being substitutes for human sacrifices made to the river god in compensation for the bridge.

The purpose of a bridge in providing a link between two naturally separated places seems also to have inspired the idea of a bridge between the lands of the living and the dead. This idea is common to many religions; the earliest instance is in the *Gathas* of Zoroaster (c 570 BC). The bridge is called the *Cinvato paratu*, the 'Bridge of the Separator'. The references to it are very obscure but there is reason for thinking that already in ancient Iranian doctrine it was believed that the dead had to face the ordeal of crossing a bridge controlled by a grim deity. In later Iranian religion this ordeal took the form of a judgement, which determined the fate of the dead.

A fateful bridge, called *al-Sirat* also occurs in Islamic teaching. The ordeal is described as follows: 'The believer will pass over it, swift as sight, or as lightning, or as wind, or as a race-horse. Such will escape, safe and sound; others will be torn (by hooks), others will fall fainting in the fires of Hell, and it will continue until the last passes or is carried away.'

BRIGIT

BRIGIT WAS the daughter of the powerful tribal god, the Dagda, according to early Irish literary tales. Her name, meaning 'the Powerful One' or 'Queen', links her with the North British Brigantia, 'the High One', with whom she may originally have been identical. Brigantia was goddess of the Celtic tribe of the Brigantes, who occupied what are now roughly the six northern counties of England. Dedications to this deity are also known from the Continent, and it seems probable that her spheres of influence must have been closely similar to those of her Irish counterpart.

The evidence suggests that the two goddesses are in fact fundamentally the same deity, but venerated according to local preferences and requirements in different Celtic regions. In Brigit and Brigantia we are dealing with powerful pagan Celtic religious ideas: the influence of these deities was widespread in Celtic areas, and their cult enduring. In British art Brigantia is associated with Minerva (see ATHENE). Caesar, in his observations about certain Celtic divinities, remarks: 'About these gods they hold nearly the same views as other people do . . . that Minerva first instituted the arts and crafts.'

Brigit of Ireland is essentially a patroness of craftsmen and their crafts. Brigantia is not only likened to Minerva but figures also in Roman times as a nymph goddess, who presided over springs to which healing powers were probably attributed. Brigit was similarly concerned with medicine and healing of all kinds, and many wells of different virtues were named after her successor in Christian times, St Brigit of Kildare. It thus seems very probable that Brigantia of North Britain and Brigit of pagan Ireland shared the same origins.

National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, Edinburgh

Roman statue of Brigantia, the northern English equivalent of the Irish goddess Brigit. She holds the spear of the Roman Minerva and the globe of rulership, with wings of victory sprouting from her shoulders: 3rd century AD, from Birrens, Dumfriesshire

Brigit also shows a close affinity with certain Celtic goddesses portrayed in groups of three in the art of Roman Gaul and Britain. She figures in Irish traditions as one of three sisters all named Brigit. It is almost certain that this is a purely literary attempt to explain the pagan Celtic idea of a single god or goddess depicted in triple form in order to emphasize his or her divine powers. This threefold character would then link Brigit with the portrayals of the triple goddesses of Gaul and Britain; these mother goddesses were worshipped in the Roman Empire by men of all nations. The Celts regarded the number three as being especially magical and powerful, and for this reason they often gave their deities attributes or characteristics with this number, such as three heads.

Brigit of Ireland is also deeply concerned

St Brigid of Ireland, the pagan goddess in her Christian form, associated with fertility, childbirth and healing

with fertility and childbirth and this further links her with the groups of three mother goddesses with their symbols of plenty and maternity. In the literature of early Ireland, Brigit was the goddess of poetry and wisdom. One of her sisters (or other manifestations of herself) was the patron goddess of medicine; the third Brigit was responsible for the well-being of the smiths.

It is probable that the old calendar festival of *Imbolc* (1 February), which seemingly celebrated the start of the milk season of the ewes, was connected with rites in honour of Brigit. This would emphasize her concern with fertility, both human and animal. *Imbolc* corresponds to the feast of St Brigit in the Christian calendar.

There seems to be little real doubt that the widespread and popular cult of the pagan goddess Brigit was replaced in Christian times by the cult of the saint, doubtless identical with the goddess in more than name. The worship of this Christian Brigit, with her curative and fertility associations, was as widespread and persistent as would be expected in the light of the earlier cult.

Brigit of Kildare was the first Christian of this name to be recorded. At Kildare a sacred fire was kept permanently burning. It was tended by 19 nuns in turn, and by St Brigit herself on the 20th day. No male was ever allowed to come near it or to breathe upon it. This suggests that we are dealing with a survival in a Christian context of a pagan cult exclusive to women, such as we know to have existed in Celtic Europe.

Midwife to the Virgin

Like her pagan predecessor, St Brigit was widely invoked and loved. She too was especially associated with fertility and childbirth; dedications to her are numerous in the Celtic-speaking regions of the British Isles. Her cult has persisted down to modern times. In the Catholic islands of western Scotland she was traditionally known as the Virgin Mary's midwife; in this role she achieved a popularity superior even to that of the Virgin Mary herself. She was credited with many miracles and indeed was referred to as 'the Mary of the Gaels'. Brigit was invoked by women in labour, and by the midwife, before delivery began – practices which carry back down the centuries to the pagan goddess conferring ease of birth and prosperous fertility.

Her feast day, *La Feill Bhride* (1 February) was attended by tremendous local celebrations and elaborate ritual which had to be carried out correctly if St Brigit was to be pleased and generous. She was the symbol of the stirring of life again after the dead months of winter. Her pagan origins are emphasized by the fact that if she were thought to be displeased, a sacrifice of a clearly non-Christian nature was made to her. A cockerel was buried alive near the point where three streams met, reflecting perhaps her ancient threefold character. Incense was then burned on the hearth of the family concerned.

FURTHER READING: A. Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1968).

'Brittany is poetry' wrote a French poet in the 12th century and this ruggedly beautiful region is rich in poetic legend. Lancelot of the Lake spent his childhood here; Merlin the Wizard fell in love here; and it was here that Tristan and Isolde were reunited before death. But besides its romantic associations, Brittany also has its darker side. Ankou, the terrifying spirit of death, is still believed to stalk the countryside and even today the practice of sorcery survives

BRITTANY

BRITTANY FORMS PART of the area of western France also known as Armorica. Her people are Celts and have close affinities with other Celtic people such as the Welsh, the Cornish and the Irish. Nearly a million Frenchmen still speak the Celtic language Breton or *brezhoneg*, from which Welsh and Gaelic are descended. This indicates the extent to which the Bretons, like the Welsh, have preserved their national individuality. Like all Celts, the Breton people have a love of freedom and a fierce attachment to the traditions of their birthplace.

Brittany was peopled in distant times by a race who have left huge stone monuments, tombs and circles of stone. The Gauls who occupied the area during the Roman Empire were driven out by a mass migration from Britain in the 5th and 6th centuries, at the decline of the Empire. The

Breton Centre London

Ankou, Reaper of Death

He is tall and of a fearsome thinness – sometimes a skeleton wrapped in a shroud. He is whitehaired, his locks falling over his shoulders, and wears a flat broad-brimmed hat of the type still popular in the remoter parts of the country...

Still he makes his nightly journeys, reaping his rich harvest of human lives. Often he is represented as carrying upon his shoulder a scythe which is sharpened with a human bone, sometimes a sword, sometimes as at La Roche-Maurice a lance, and sometimes as at Noyal-Pontivy a club. And because of the long journeys he must take, he is provided with a cart, covered in a shroud, the axles of which may be heard creaking on dark nights. Well may they creak, for never a spot of grease do they see, so incessantly is the cart in use. This cart is drawn by a team which varies according to the district in which it finds itself; in the Morbihan by two oxen and a lean horse, in Finistère and the Côtes-du-Nord by two and occasionally by three horses one behind the other, the shaft-horse sleek and well-fed, the others little more than skeletons.

If the Ankou journeys alone he walks beside his horses; but if he takes with him his servants he stands in the cart using his scythe to right and left with terrible effect while they, skeleton forms like their master, wearing the same flat Breton hat, and dressed in black, lead the team and pile the bodies of the dead into the cart. And of those who die upon the night of St Sylvester it is said that they must draw of their own strength the cart of the Ankou instead of resting in it on the journey to their Maker.

W. Branch Johnson
Folktales of Brittany

invaders from the British Isles gave their newly gained territory the name of their homeland – whence the name Brittany. From the time of the arrival of the Bretons up to the 10th century, it was ruled by kings and later by sovereign dukes. In 1532, Brittany lost its independence, but remained virtually a separate state until 1789, the date when it was annexed to France. It was after the French Revolution that the region was divided up into its present five departments: Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes du Nord, Ille et Vilaine and Loire Atlantique.

The Bridge of the Secret

The Bretons played an important part in the formation and spread of the Arthurian legends (see ARTHUR). Their travelling entertainers had a high reputation in the Middle Ages; the poetess Marie de France, who borrowed from them the themes of her lays, wrote in the 12th century: 'Brittany is poetry'. Many heroes of the stories of the Round Table were Bretons. Lancelot of the Lake, who was brought up by the fairy Vivien, spent his childhood in the forest of Broceliande near Paimpont which still exists today. He took his name from the nearby lake where the fairy had her palace. The Bridge of the Secret, where Lancelot and Queen Guinevere pledged their love, can also still be seen. (See also LANCELOT.)

In the same forest is the Fountain of Youth, whose waters are believed to have powers of rejuvenation, and the Fountain of Barenton, sacred to the Druids and still the symbol of Celtic poetry. It was there that Merlin the Wizard met Vivien and fell in love with her. The Garden of Joy, not far away, was their trysting-place. The water of Barenton also possesses allegedly miraculous powers: when it is poured on the Stone of Merlin nearby it lets loose storms and causes other natural phenomena. At one time the population of the neighbouring town of Concoret (Morbihan) used to go there in procession and the priest would dip the foot of the cross in the spring, to bring rain in dry years.

It was also in Brittany that part of the story of Tristan took place (see TRISTAN). The hero's uncle, King Mark of Cornwall, took his name from that of an ancient Celtic horse god (horse in Breton is *marc'h*). Strange legends are still current about Mark in the region of Douarnenez and in Penmarc'h. The latter place name means 'the horse's head'.

Tristan of Leon after his love affair with Mark's wife, the Irish Isolde, retired to Brittany. There he married another Isolde, the daughter of the king of Carhaix in western Finistère. When mortally wounded, he asked to be taken to await the boat which was bringing his first love back to him, it was to the headland of Penmarc'h that he was taken; it was there that the two lovers died, facing the sea which unites all Celts.

The Scythe of Ankou

For the past 150 years, scholars of folklore have been collecting a rich store of folktales, stories and narrative songs of a remarkable diversity. Some of them include characters from far earlier times and have connections with pre-Christian beliefs. Others tell of miracles and fabulous feats ascribed to national saints. Others help to explain some local feature such as a strange hollow in the ground or a huge stone monument.

The major theme which constantly recurs is that of death and the afterlife. It is a theme which permeates the peninsula completely. A seemingly divine person known as Ankou is at one and the same time the provider and the master. Awe-inspiring, omnipotent, Ankou is the true ruler of the world. In popular imagination he appears to be supreme, since everyone eventually obeys him: the Virgin Mary and even Jesus Christ himself have submitted to him.

Ankou has various guises. Each parish has its own version, which changes moreover, because the last person to die in the year has to play the role of Ankou during the whole of the following year. He is represented as a skeleton, or as a man without a nose and with empty eye-sockets. He often has a hat with a wide brim which hides his face and prevents people from recognizing him at first. In pictures he usually carries a scythe handled the wrong way up. Ankou uses it to kill those people he has marked out, but instead of using it in the normal way of reapers, he throws it in front of him, cutting edge first. To travel along the pot-holed roads, he rides on a cart with creaking axles. Two acolytes escort him; one holding the horse's bridle, and the other opening the gates and doors.

This funeral carriage, called *Karrig an Ankou*, Ankou's Chariot, often appears in the narratives. To hear it is a bad omen: it means that there will be a death in the parish. For the homecoming reveller who encounters it around midnight, it is a terrifying experience. Ankou inspires dread and it is rare ever to escape him. The unfortunate man will only have a short space of time to put his affairs in order. He will be seized by a fierce fever and then it will be just a matter of days before death.

At Death's Door

Another aspect of death is represented by the world of *Anaon*. This word describes both the sinners who have not yet been freed of their ties with life here on earth, similar to the Catholic souls in purgatory, and the spirit who presides over their domain. The land of Anaon corresponds to the pagan hell, where cold reigns instead of fire, as in medieval Christian tradition. Dwellers in Anaon communicate with the living who can not only help Anaon, but also fight against him. Certain rites can permit a soul to be rescued from this frozen torment: a Mass or a series of Masses, special pilgrimages, appropriate exorcisms.

Signs of Anaon are found everywhere as his land overlaps that of the living in some ways; it includes, for example, some place in the countryside where a dead person lived sinfully. There are also territories on earth which belong to Anaon. These are very old sacred places, dedicated since prehistory to the gods of death and the afterlife. The sinners, often drowned sailors, gather at the approaches to Pointe du Raz and the Ile de Sein. The kingdom of Anaon, known as the Marsh of Hells (*Yeun Ellez*) is situated in the Armorican peninsula, between Brasparts and La Feuillée. Bounded on three sides by wild hills, where sandstone juts from the heath in sharp spines, it was thought to be the door to the underworld.

It is here that the living come to rid themselves of troublesome ghosts. For an exorcism of this sort, it was necessary to

'The guardian saints of Brittany are a curious collection, numbering over 500 in all. Some are minor local gods or early Breton chiefs. Some, who have lasted for centuries and are still acknowledged, are barely tolerated by the Roman Catholic Church.' Included among them is St Gwenole who founded the abbey at Landévennec, now in ruins

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According to legend, the standing stones of Carnac were an army of pagans who pursued St Cornely; to escape them he turned them to stone. In fact they are part of a huge burial ground, probably dating from c 2000 BC, and including stone tombs, stone circles and grave mounds

have the help of a priest well-versed in this kind of service. Dressed in his surplice and holding his stole in his hand, he went to the haunted place. There he took off his shoes to become, according to the ritual, *beleg betek an douar*, 'priest to the earth'.

A bitter struggle followed which could last for hours, even days, during which the exorcist would attempt to put his stole on the ghost's neck. When he had succeeded in doing this and had pronounced the magic words, the dead person was transformed into a black dog. A man was then chosen by the priest to take the animal, following a prescribed route, from presbytery to presbytery, to the boundary of Yeun Ellez. Then the priest of one of the nearby parishes led the sinister animal to the marsh. Barefoot, he led it to *Youdig*, where hell opens its gates, and made it disappear for ever.

Long-range Murder

It was also believed that it was possible to induce the death of another. This could be done by forming the figure of a baby in wax *(bugel koar)* for a woman to keep hidden next to her belly for nine months. After this, a priest would baptize it in the presence of godparents; it was then sufficient to prick the effigy several times in the heart, the stomach and the brain to kill the person it was supposed to represent, who would go into a 'decline'.

Another way of causing an enemy's death consisted of going to see certain old women who, in return for a suitable reward, would dedicate a person to St Yves, patron of Brittany. St Yves was renowned as a judge of the highest integrity, able to give fair judgement between two enemies. By calling the man you dislike your sworn enemy, you could ask St Yves to give judgement between the two of you. As the penalty of this rite is death for one or the other of you, it is advisable to be sure that your own deeds will stand scrutiny before practising it.

Quite often, death is linked with the idea of transformation: the exorcism of Anaon ends in changing a dead person into an animal. This also happens in other circumstances. The spirits which populate the countryside, such as the *Spontailh* from Carnac or the malicious *Martine* from Coglès, assume a great variety of aspects to baffle humans.

Magicians and fairies, of course, have similar powers, either over themselves or over other people. According to a legend associated with the Ile du Lok a bad fairy used to seduce men and then turn her lovers into fish to stock her fish-pond. At Loudéac the story used to be told of a green serpent, who had once been a handsome young prince, but who was turned into a snake by a white female cat.

The Well of the Sea

There are innumerable legends and customs attached to the stone formations of Brittany. Traditionally, the upright standing stones are believed to be human beings who have been petrified as punishment or as an act of vengeance. The region is particularly rich in megaliths and other stone monuments,

The Legend of Carnac

St Cornely, we are told, pursued by an army of pagans, fled towards the sea. Finding no boat at hand, and on the point of being taken, he transformed his pursuers into stones, the present monoliths. The Saint had made his flight to the coast in a bullock-cart, and perhaps for this reason he is now regarded as the patron of cattle. Should a bullock fall sick, his owner purchases an image of St Cornely and hangs it up in the stable until the animal recovers. The church at Carnac contains a series of fresco paintings which outline events in the life of the Saint, and in the churchyard there is a representation of the holy man between two bullocks. The head of St Cornely is said to be preserved with the edifice as a relic. On the 13th of September is held at Carnac the festival of the 'Benediction of the Beasts', which is celebrated in honour of St Cornely. The cattle of the district are brought to the vicinity of the church and blessed by the priests – should sufficient monetary encouragement be forthcoming.

Lewis Spence
Legends and Romances of Brittany

which still exist beside the Christian crosses which were erected many centuries later. The megaliths of Saint-Just and those on the peninsula of Crozon form a chequer pattern.

The most impressive monuments stand in rows. Those at Carnac consist of some 3000 upright stones side by side, with a considerable number of dolmens (stone tombs), stone circles and burial mounds enclosing masonry. The stones of Carnac, according to tradition, were once an army before being transformed into rock by St Cornely to stop them pursuing him. The legend surrounding the stones of Plouhinec is that they hide treasures which can be seen once a year, when the stones go to drink at the River Etel. The curious onlooker, however, runs the risk of being crushed to death by the stones rushing back. The monument of Kerloas in Plouarzel has two projections: one is believed to confer male children on the man who rubs himself on it; while the other gives power over her husband to the woman who does similarly. The rock called *Ar Gazeg Ven* (the stone mare) at Locronan has the reputation of making the woman who sits on it fertile.

Other stones are legendarily connected with water. The standing stone of the Ile d'Un, on the Grand-Lieu Lake, together with the stone of Saint-Samson on the bank of the River Rance, are the bungs which hold back underground waters and prevent a flood. The worship of springs is also a marked characteristic of Breton belief; it seems probable that the ancient Bretons believed in the existence of a vast ocean under the earth which gushed out at springs and ran over in rivers. It was thought necessary to provide against its overflowing at certain places which were known to be the most dangerous.

Sometimes, indeed, it was believed that the waters broke loose and destroyed whole cities; Brittany has many of these submerged cities. The Grand-Lieu lake covers one; there are also Etier de Langon, the bay of Mont-Saint-Michel, that of St Brieuc close to Erquy and above all that of Douarnenez under whose waters reposes the famous Ville d'Ys. The destruction of this town is sometimes attributed by legend to the sudden opening of the Well of the Sea, releasing underground waters, rather than to the natural encroachment of the sea over the coast. It is believed that the person responsible for this catastrophe was the Princess Ahes or Dahud, who took the keys to the well from her sleeping father at the request of her lover, the Devil. She was an ancient Armorican goddess of water.

There are still people who are considered to have special powers in connection with springs. The clergy have Christianized them by putting them under the protection of a local saint, with whom they share their healing power. Sometimes, this has resulted in a curious synthesis of Christian and pagan practice. At St-Jean-du-Doigt, for instance, the parish priests go in procession every year, in order to renew the healing qualities of the spring, and dip a relic in the water. This relic, the finger joint of St John the Baptist, has given its name to the place.

The sacred springs are reputed to cure a wide variety of afflictions, including eye troubles, infectious illnesses, chest complaints, fevers, rheumatism and toothache. They also have powers of divination. The garment of a sick child, placed on the surface of the water, is said to tell the outcome of his illness. If it floats, he will recover, but if it sinks, he will die. Offerings are made to encourage a favourable prognostication; they usually take the form of coins, nails or pins which are thrown into the spring.

Christian and Pagan

The guardian saints of Brittany are a curious collection, numbering over 500 in all. Some are minor local gods or early Breton chiefs. Some, who have lasted for centuries and are still acknowledged, are barely tolerated by the Roman Catholic Church. The most illustrious are the Seven Saints, who created the seven bishoprics of Brittany. They are Kaourintin, Pol, Brieg, Samsun, Malo, Patern and Tugdual. Also worth mentioning are Gwenole, who founded the abbey at Landévennec, and Ronan the hermit of Locronan.

St Anne, the patroness of Brittany, is traditionally called *mamm goz ar Vretoned*, the grandmother or ancient mother of the Bretons. She has the same name as a Celtic goddess, Ana, thought by the ancient Irish to be the mother of gods; a fact which probably accounts for the high honour in which she is held. A legend established around the very ancient sanctuary of Ste-Anna-la-Palud has it that St Anne may have been a Breton, coming from the same part of the country as the submerged Ville d'Ys. She was married in Judaea and after the death of her husband returned to Armorica, where Jesus came to visit her. This is obviously a memory of the earlier, native Anne, later taken over by the Christian Church.

The religious history of Brittany, in fact, shows a constant struggle between the old religion and the new. In the 17th century, the power of the Church was at such a low ebb that it was necessary to organize missions to revive it. Paganism ruled, especially in the interior of the peninsula, and many priests themselves shared their services between the two forms of worship.

Modern Sorcerers

The sorcerer of ancient times still flourishes today under the modern name of healer, despite the annoyance of priests and doctors. Many people still believe that the cause of an illness is the 'Evil Eye'; it is therefore more a question of lifting a spell than of nursing a patient. There are whole families who share these special gifts but in other cases the gift is held by just one member of the family. The daughter who is born after six sons, with no other daughters in between, for instance, is said to be endowed with special powers; a child who is taken onto holy ground before being baptized is able to foresee the future; the person who can suffocate a living mole can give milk to cows and women. Some acts of sorcery are still performed, Black Masses are celebrated and there are occasional attempts at bewitching. The works of Agrippa, the 16th century occult writer, are still talked about, particularly when someone has been persuaded to tell of supernatural experiences of which they have been victims or witnesses.

Since the end of the First World War, however, ideas have progressed and many old customs have disappeared. The modern face of Brittany differs from that at the beginning of the century. But it is a bit like those creatures in legends which transform themselves: behind the facade, the people are still the same, one of whose characteristics is a lively, sparkling and extravagant imagination: this is Brittany's most attractive side, and the means by which she remains the magician of the western world.

G. LE SCOUÉZEC

FURTHER READING: G. Massignon ed, *Folktales of France* (University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Brocken

Highest peak of the Harz Mountains in Saxony (now in East Germany), long famous as the place where witches held their revels on Walpurgis Night, the eve of 1 May; scene of the witches' sabbath in Goethe's *Faust*: the Brocken Bow or Brocken Spectre is the giant shadow cast on clouds or fog below him by someone standing on a hilltop, so named because the phenomenon is supposed to occur frequently on the Brocken.

See GERMAN WITCHCRAFT.

Witches were believed to travel on eggshells, bunches of straw and even wisps of grass. The broomstick, however, is the vehicle popularly associated with the witch – oddly, since it is also the emblem of the virtuous housewife

BROOMSTICK

THE HUMBLE BROOMSTICK has played an intriguing part in the social, sexual and psychic life of mankind. In popular belief witches invariably fly through the air on broomsticks, though in fact the number of witches who confessed to doing so is remarkably small.

Brooms were originally made of a stalk of the broom plant with a bunch of leaves at the head. As an indoor, domestic implement, the broom became a symbol of woman. The equivalent symbol for man is the pitchfork, and in many medieval pictures of witches' gatherings the women hold brooms and the men or the devils hold pitchforks. In some parts of England until quite recently a woman would prop up a broom outside her door when she went out, or she might push the broom up the chimney with its end sticking out at the top, as a sign that she was out. But perhaps originally her purpose was to guard her home by being symbolically present there in the form of the broom, for the 17th century Scottish witch Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE) said that before leaving to go to the witches' sabbath, a woman would put her broom on the bed to represent her to her husband. The witch would say, 'I lay down this besom in the Devil's name; let it not stir till I come again.'

In the Middle Ages it was believed that witches travelled on an infinite variety of flying objects, including animals, hobby horses, shovels, eggshells, bunches of straw and wisps of grass, or without any visible means of support at all. A forked stick was a particularly popular witch-vehicle.

She Ambled and Galloped

A famous Irish witch of the early 14th century, Alice Kyteler (see KYTELER), was said to own a staff 'on which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin, when and in what manner she listed, after having greased it with the ointment which was found in her possession.' There is no clear indication here of flying through the air, though the mention of the ointment suggests it. According to an anonymous tract from Savoy, *Errores Gazariorum*, written c1450, a stick anointed with flying ointment was presented to every witch on her initiation. The earliest known case of a witch confessing to flying on a broom was in 1453, when Guillaume Edelin of St Germain-en-Laye, near Paris, stated that he had done so. A witch of Savoy, tried in 1477, said that the Devil gave her a stick 18 inches long and a jar of ointment. She would grease the stick and, putting it between her legs, say 'Go, in the Devil's name, go!': and at once she was carried through the air to the sabbath.

A hundred years later, in 1563, Martin Tulouff of Guernsey said that he saw his aged mother straddle a broomstick and whisk up the chimney and out of the house on it, saying as she went, 'Go in the name of the Devil and Lucifer over rocks and thorns.' In 1598 Claudine Boban and her mother, witches of the province of Franche-Comté in eastern France, also spoke of flying up the chimney on a stick. The belief that witches usually left their houses by way of the chimney became firmly embedded in popular tradition, in spite of the rarity with which it appears in witches' own confessions: there may be some connection with the custom, mentioned earlier, of pushing a broom up the chimney to indicate the housewife's absence.

The lawyer and witch-hunter Jean Bodin, in his *Démonomanie* of 1580, maintained that witches flew on either a broom or a black ram but that it was only the woman's spirit that flew through the air, while her body remained at home to perplex investigators. There is evidence that the 'flying' of witches was a dream or hallucinatory experience, and most witches said that they went to their meetings in the ordinary way, on foot or on horseback.

It is also possible that the belief that witches flew on broomsticks was partly based on the fact that they danced with a stick between their legs, jumping high in the air. This may explain the curious statement of a Somerset woman named Julian Cox at her trial in 1664, that 'one evening she walked out about a mile from her own house, and there came riding towards her three persons upon three broomsticks, born up about a yard and a half from the ground.' Two of the three persons she knew, the third 'came in the shape of a black man'.

Broomsticks are popularly associated with witches. A modern witch with broomstick and black cat, and *(below)* her traditional predecessor, flying to the witches' meeting on her broom. The belief that witches flew on broomsticks was probably partly based on the fact that they used them in ritual dances

Popperfoto

Freedom of the Air

An effective form of defence against aerial witches was considered to be a peal of church bells. Stronger methods were sometimes used: in Slav countries people used to fire muskets at the clouds, screaming as they did so, 'Curse, curse Herodius, thy mother is a heathen damned of God', while others bestrewed the ground with scythes and billhooks, edge upwards to ensure that there should be no soft landing for the witches.

Towards the end of the 18th century the whole question of the flying of witches was thrashed out in an English court of law. The judge, Lord Mansfield, delivered his famous judgement: that he knew of no law of England that prohibited flying and that, as far as he was concerned, anyone so inclined was perfectly free to do so. It remains a mystery, therefore, why from the moment of its sanction by British law, flying by British witches appears to have stopped almost immediately, except for isolated reports of East Anglian witches skimming church spires on flying hurdles throughout the next 50 years.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Broomstick Wedding

Once grounded, the broomstick survived only as one of the props in the Mummers' play, in the now extinct broomstick dance of the Fen country, and in the long discarded comic dance of the weird sisters in *Macbeth*. Its eclipse appears so complete that only 150 years ago Collin de Plancy wrote in his *Dictionary of Demonology*: 'The idiots who imagined that sorcerers and demons celebrated the Sabbath also argued that witches travelled to the Sabbath on broomsticks. Nowadays everyone knows there are no sorcerers and no one rides on broomsticks.'

A rite which survived, however, in Wales and among gypsies, was the old custom of the broomstick wedding. The happy couple solemnized their union by leaping from the

street into their new home over a broom placed in the doorway. This had to be done before witnesses and without dislodging the broom. At any time within a year the marriage could be dissolved by reversing the process, the couple jumping backwards out of the house over the broom, again before witnesses and without touching the broom.

For a single girl to step over a broomstick, however, was a most unfortunate omen for it meant that she would be a mother before she became a wife. Lighthearted wags used to delight in putting broomsticks in the paths of unsuspecting virgins. It was also very unlucky to make a broom in May, by long tradition an antifertility month and unsuitable for weddings, or during the 12 days of Christmas. It was disastrous to sweep dust out of the front door, which meant dispersing all the luck of the house. On the other hand, in India, a sweeper's broom is still often tied to the mast of a ship, as a charm to 'sweep' storms away; in the symbolic manner of the great Dutch Admiral Van Tromp, who hoisted a broom at his masthead as a sign of his intention to sweep English ships off the seas.

In England since the Second World War the witch's broomstick has regained significance with the revival of witchcraft itself. The ritual importance of 'wand, riding-pole or broomstick' is stressed in the manuals of the modern witch covens.

Man, it seems, finds it impossible to escape from the dreams of his childhood. perhaps influenced by the nursery rhyme of the old woman who ascended in a basket to brush the cobwebs from the clouds with her broom. But it is still surprising that an object specifically designed for sweeping the floor should also be in fantasy a vehicle on which to swoop through the skies.

FURTHER READING: M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford University Press, rep. 1967); Charles A. Hoyt, *Witchcraft* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1981); M. Summers, *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, rep. 1973).

A few witches confessed to leaving their houses by way of the chimney, mounted on a broomstick, and it quickly became part of the traditional popular beliefs about witches: detail from David Tenier's *Scène de Sorcière*

Giraudon

Burned at the stake as a heretic, Giordano Bruno was one of the most original thinkers of his time

GIORDANO BRUNO

GIORDANO BRUNO, philosopher and mathematician, was born in 1548 in the little Italian town of Nola near Naples. A lifetime of enforced wandering through Europe, during which he formulated revolutionary ideas concerning the workings of the universe, resulted in hostile accusations by the Church at Rome. In 1592 he was prosecuted and imprisoned by the Inquisition and in 1600 was burned as a heretic at the stake.

At the age of 17, Bruno entered the principal Dominican monastery in Naples. Here he soon became acquainted with the writings of classical authors such as Aristotle, Virgil and Plato. He undoubtedly read and questioned the works of Ptolemy, the Alexandrian astronomer, whose geocentric theory of planetary movement, explaining the earth to be the immovable centre of the universe, had been accepted for over 1300 years. Here too he was soon noted for his remarkable powers of memory, so much so that he was summoned to Rome by Pope Pius V to discuss his system of mnemonics or memory training.

Bruno's preoccupation with the writings of Erasmus, and his love of disputing accepted beliefs soon led him into trouble. Hearing that an indictment had been drawn up against him, he fled from the monastery, at the same time abandoning his monastic habit. This hasty decision had far-reaching consequences; it cut him off from any hope of reconciliation with the Church.

On the Run

In 1579, in the course of the wandering life to which he was henceforth condemned, Bruno reached Calvinist Geneva. Here he was persuaded by the Marchese de Vico to abandon the monastic habit for good. His hopes of liberty and security were shattered when he indiscreetly exposed 20 mistakes,

which he declared had been made in a single lecture by one of the most prominent local professors.

Threatened with reprisals, Bruno made his way to Paris, supporting himself by teaching. His lectures were so successful that King Henri III sent for him to discover whether his marvellous memory was natural or was achieved with the aid of magic. Bruno based his memory devices on those expounded by Raymond Lull, the 13th century Spanish mystic philosopher; they involved the use of geometric symbols, figures, circles and tables (see LULL).

In spite of royal patronage Bruno felt obliged to move on at the approach of the religious wars in France, and decided to go to England. The atmosphere in Elizabethan London was sympathetic to refugees from all over Europe, and especially to Italians. These years (1583–85), which were spent in comparative safety at the house of the French Ambassador, Michel de Castelnau, were to be his most rewarding. He was introduced to the fashionable circles of intellectuals; he met and discussed his ideas with such eminent scholars of the day as Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Fulke Greville. Indeed, his stay in England was marred by only one unpleasant incident, during a short visit to Oxford, where the dons evidently took exception to his theories and to his bombastic manner. Bruno, angered by his reception referred to his critics as 'the herald of the idol of Obscurity and the bailiff of the goddess of Presumption'.

The Infinite Universe

Ever since leaving Naples Bruno had supported himself by writing, lecturing and publishing. Now in London, encouraged by de Castelnau and others, he began to put his unorthodox views on cosmology and philosophy down on paper. In his work *Ash Wednesday Supper* of 1584, Bruno introduces his readers to the Copernican theory of the universe; he states, contrary to accepted Church tradition, that the sun is the centre of the cosmos. For centuries it had been believed that the universe consisted of a *finite* series of concentric spheres with the earth, motionless, at its centre. Bruno was one of the earliest to realize that the universe must be of infinite extent, incorporating innumerable worlds, and he expounds this fully in his book entitled *On the Infinite Universe and Worlds* published later in 1584.

Bruno maintains that just as men regard the earth as the central point of the universe, about which everything revolves, so too beings on other worlds such as the sun and the moon believe that they are the focal point of their universe.

He divides the worlds into two categories, the suns and the earths or planets; each dependent on the other for its existence. The earths rotate round the suns, but the suns too are continually moving. Behind all movement he envisaged a world soul or spirit, manifesting itself even in inanimate objects such as plants and stones. The individual soul, Bruno believed, could through wisdom, reason and love, rise higher and higher to eventual unity with God.

Bruno was also interested in the magical arts. He compared them to a sword which can be used ill in the hands of a wicked person, but which, correctly manipulated by a God-fearing man, can produce much good. He lists ten different kinds of magic which can be employed to this end. They include natural and sympathetic magic, as well as invocation of the dead (necromancy) and of demonic powers. He advocates mathematical magic, involving the use of figures, characters, words and numbers.

A very impractical man, Bruno was quite incapable of foreseeing the conclusions which would be drawn from his bold statements, especially by his enemies. He worked quickly and his pupil Eglin has left us a description of him 'standing on one leg and dictating as fast as the pen could follow'. He published no less than 61 books on philosophy, the art of memory, geometry and other subjects.

Leaving England in 1585, he spent the next six years visiting European centres of learning, and in particular those in Germany. Finally in 1591 he accepted an invitation from a Venetian nobleman named Giovanni Mocenigo to go to Venice and instruct him in 'the art of memory and invention'. Whether Mocenigo intended to lure Bruno into a trap or whether he was merely dissatisfied with his teaching, is uncertain; but in 1592 he denounced him to the Inquisition and Bruno was put in the jail of the Holy Office on a charge of heresy.

Giordano Bruno was burned alive at Rome in 1600 as 'an impertinent and pertinacious heretic': his scepticism about religion and his belief in magic both contributed to his condemnation

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Burnt at the Stake

Although he had never given any overt sign of intending to break with the Church, it had been said of him even in tolerant England, that he was a man of no religion. Indeed one of the minor charges against him was that he had published extravagant praises of the heretic ruler, Queen Elizabeth I. From very early on, however, he had sought to be reconciled to the Church, on condition that he did not have to return to the monastic life.

In 1593 Bruno was transferred to the dungeons of the Inquisition at Rome. Refusing to retract any of his philosophical opinions, he was finally condemned as 'an impenitent and pertinacious heretic' and was publicly burned at the stake in the Campo dei Fiori (Square of Flowers) at Rome on 17 February 1600.

FURTHER READING: F. A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1964).

Brut

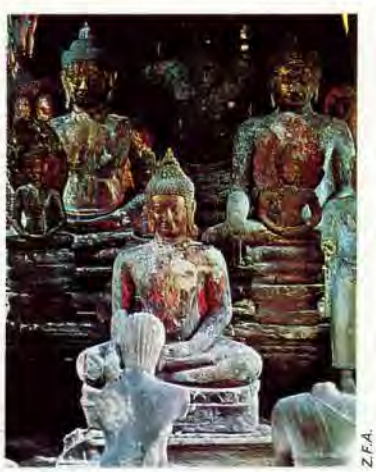
Or Brute, or Brutus, legendary descendant of Aeneas: expelled from Rome with his followers, he conquered the island of Albion, which took its name of Britain from him, and subsequent British kings were descended from him; the story was told in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, c1135, and was generally accepted as true until the 17th century.

See ARTHUR.

Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, born c 563 BC in what is now Nepal, the son of a chieftain of the Sakya clan; as a young man he left his home and family to become a wandering holy man, and received spiritual illumination while meditating under a bo-tree; he continued to travel about, teaching and gathering disciples, and was called Buddha (the enlightened one), Bhagava (the lord), Tathagata (truth-finder) and Sakyamuni (wise man of the Sakyas); he died at the age of 80 in c 483 BC.

See BUDDHISM: GAUTAMA BUDDHA



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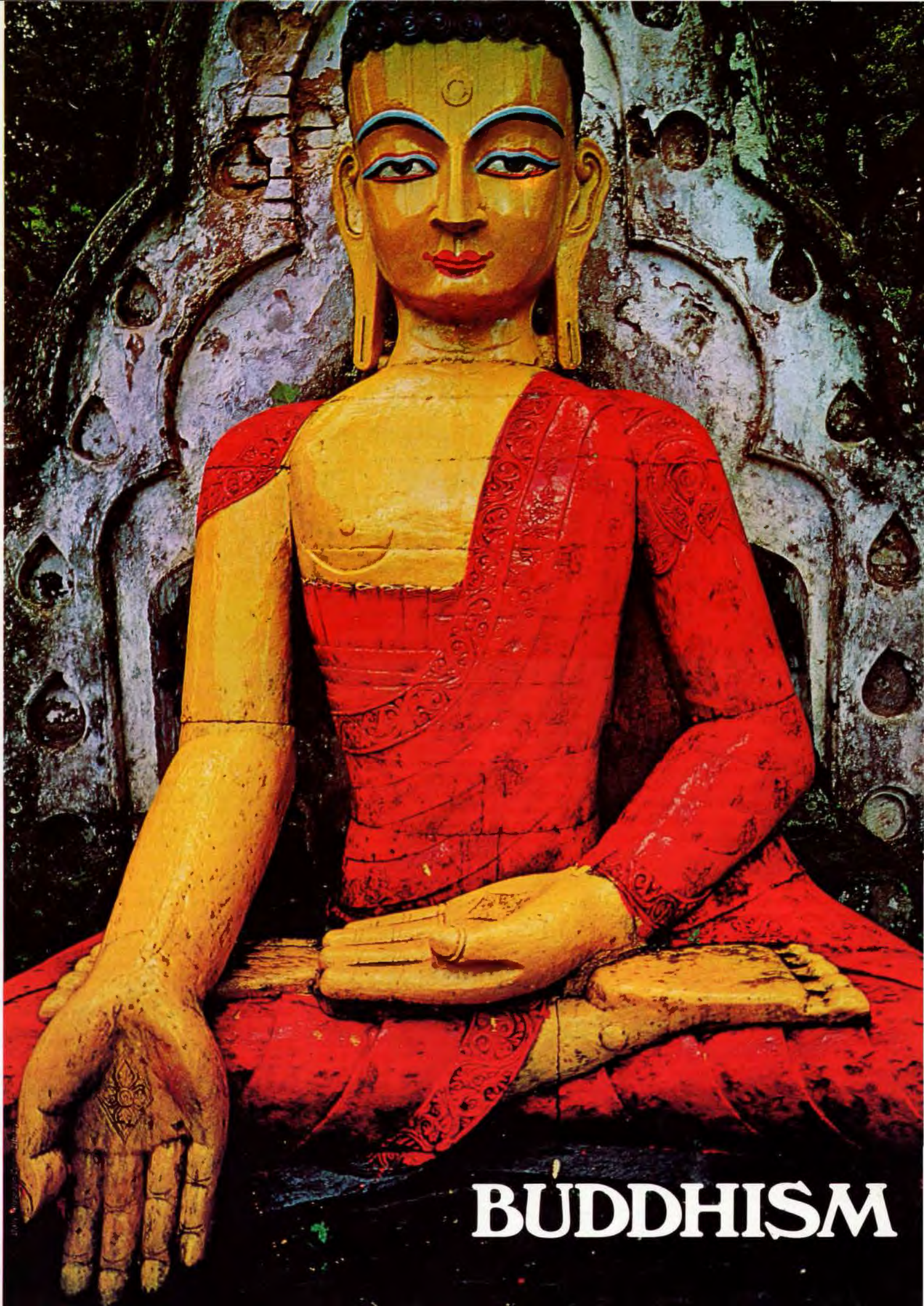
BUDDHISM

Gerald Cubitt

Gerald Cubitt

Arising in India five centuries before the birth of Christianity, Buddhism dominoted its native land for 15 centuries, and in due course prevailed in Central Asia, the Far East and Southeast Asia. It has exhibited astonishing power to propagate itself, and less ability tn hold its gains. No ather religion has prevailed, as Buddhism did in China, in a major civilization other than its native one, and in recent decades Buddhism has even achieved a modest foothold in the West

BUDDHISM DENIES THAT there is a personal world-creator, yet it affirms men's capacity to meet and become superhuman saints, saviours endowed with vast wisdom and compassion. It denies that there is an immortal soul, but affirms that there is personal continuity from life to life through many rebirths until liberation is attained. Permitting wide liberties of thought and practice to individuals and groups, Buddhism exhibits sharp sectarian differences. Yet all kinds of Buddhists are agreed that the supreme goal is Enlightenment, and that in this world-age the way and the goal were discovered and proclaimed by Siddhartha Gautama, the Sage of the Sakya tribe.

Gautama, the Buddha or 'enlightened one', preached his first sermon near Benares in c 530 BC. When he died 45 years later, he left a flourishing community of hundreds of monks and thousands of lay followers. As his successor he nominated, not a disciple but the *Dharma*, his 'truth' or 'doctrine'. These teachings were transmitted orally and were not written down until the 2nd century BC. By this time the teachings had been edited and amplified but the marvellous memories of the professional reciters, and the zeal of the various Buddhist sects to prevent each other from adulterating the scriptures, kept changes within bounds.

Buddhism's essential aim is to achieve enlightenment or liberation, Nirvana, which is liberation from the remorseless round of birth, death and rebirth. Unless a man achieves liberation, he is reborn over and over again, 'transmigrating' from one existence to another. Faced with this prospect of never-ending reincarnation, a man might react by pursuing worldly pleasures or, at the other extreme, by asceticism and the attempt to set himself apart from all worldly things.

Gautama in his first sermon proclaimed a Middle Way hetween vulgar pleasure-seeking and futile self-denial. This Way, leading to enlightenment and Nirvana, is the Holy Eightfold Path: right views, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration. He declared the Four Holy Truths: that life is fraught with suffering; that the source of suffering is craving for sensual pleasure, for afterlife and for annihilation; that there is an end of suffering when craving ceases; and that there is a path which leads to this ending, the Holy Eightfold Path.

The five mendicants who heard this sermon experienced a spiritual awakening. That the words themselves were not the sole cause of this is plain, for readers usually do not attain the first degree of sainthood upon perusing them. The early account mentions the Buddha's tremendous personal charisma, the thorough readiness of his listeners, and the solemn way in which he imparted this gnosis.

Meditation on suffering is not recommended out of any penchant for melancholy, but because it kills lust and arouses compassion, quells wishful illusions and liberates energy. Transmigration, the round of birth and death, is fraught with suffering because living beings constantly re-condemn themselves to this predicament by their worldly desires. In early India it was axiomatic that you become what you desire. Cessation, the ending of suffering, is Nirvana. It is a happy state in this life, consequent upon the extinction of ignorance and craving, and an indescribable state after the death of the liberated saint, the *arhant*.

Previous page **Buddha, 'the enlightened one', is the title of Siddhartha Gautama, founder of this family of religions and philosophies whose essential aim is to liberate all things from the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, the prison in which Indian thought sees man enchained: from Katmandu in Nepal**

Buddhism grew up originally in India, though few traces of it remained there after c 1200 AD, but it still has a powerful influence in the Far East. The temple of the Emerald Buddha at Bangkok, Thailand *(left)* is one of the great shrines in Southeast Asia. Buddhists believe in many demons and spirits, like this guardian spirit *(right)* in the same temple

Reverence for Life

Buddhists, as is well known, regard the difference between human beings and animals as unimportant, and equal compassion should, in any case, be extended to all. Scrupulous respect for the life and dignity, for the rights and wishes of all living beings is a Bodhisattva's first and most elementary duty. During a debate with the Saskya Pandita which the Venerable Tsong-kha-pa had in about AD 1400 his opponent, probably absent-mindedly, crushed a louse between his nails. Tsong-kha-pa interrupted him, exclaiming, 'While we are here debating these abstruse metaphysical subtleties, I hear the laments of a fellow-creature rising to the sky!' The Saskya Pandita was so much taken aback by this reproof that his hat fell off, he left the tent in confusion, and victory remained with Tsong-kha-pa and his 'Yellow Church'. Likewise, it is quite usual for Bodhisattvas to sacrifice their own lives for animals. When he was a prince of Benares, the Bodhisattva who subsequently became the Buddha Gautama, threw himself down in front of a tigress who had given birth to five cubs and was exhausted from hunger and thirst. 'But she did nothing to him. The Bodhisattva noticed that she was too weak to move. As a merciful man he had taken no sword with him. He therefore cut his throat with a sharp piece of bamboo and fell down near the tigress. She noticed his body all covered with blood, and in no time ate up all the flesh and blood, leaving only the bones.' On another celebrated occasion, as King Sibi, the Bodhisattva ransomed a pigeon by giving a pound of his own flesh to the hawk who had caught it. This fellow-feeling for all living beings, whoever they may be, is much akin to Dr Schweitzer's 'reverence for life' . . . Even the bacteria had already been thought of by the Buddhist monks, who took special precautions against harming the invisible creatures who were said to abound in water and in the air.

E. Conze 'Buddhism: the Mahayana'
in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*

The Three Trainings

Another formula for the Path is the 'three trainings' of morality, concentration and wisdom. Morality here means abstention from specific wrong acts. The five basic precepts observed by Buddhist laymen and monks alike are: not taking life, not taking what is not given, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not telling untruths, and not drinking liquor. The monk also undertakes to observe a code of over 200 rules of restraint. Particular importance attaches to not harming human or animal life, and most of the other precepts serve that objective.

The chief roads to concentration are the four 'abodes of mindfulness': contemplating the body, the feelings, mental states and dharmas (doctrines). You watch your breath go in and out; you are mindful of your actions, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down; you reflect on the body as consisting of 32 parts and of the four elements of earth, water, fire and wind; and you imagine the successive stages of the body's decomposition after death. As for feelings, you note pleasure, pain and neutral feeling, whether of body or of mind. States of mind are to be watched, noting lust, hate, folly, concentration or distraction. The meditator on dharmas notes what hindrances are present in him. He is aware of the presence or absence of the factors of enlightenment, namely mindfulness, dharma-investigation, vigour, rapture, tranquility, concentration and equanimity. He contemplates the Four Holy Truths until he really understands them.

Concentration is characterized by single-mindedness. After passing through the preliminary stages, the meditator attains the first trance, which is filled with rapture and happiness. In the second trance rapture gives place to serenity and clear awareness. By the time the fourth trance is reached, the meditator is beyond pleasure and pain, beyond joy and grief; he dwells in equanimity and pure awareness.

Three grades of wisdom are distinguished, the lowest based on hearing the doctrine, the next on thinking about what has been heard, and the highest on meditative trances. Morality provides a base for concentration, which in turn supports wisdom, and through wisdom the mind is freed from the 'outflows' – sensual desire, becoming (living again and again) and wrong views. Extinguishing the outflows, one becomes a saint (arhant), attains Nirvana, and is freed from further births.

Psychic Powers

Prominent among the fruits of meditation are the six super-knowledges: magic powers (such as flying, walking on water, changing one's form and projecting a mind-made body), clairaudience (the ability to hear sounds not actually present), mind-reading, memory of former lives, clairvoyance, and extinction of the outflows. The first five are mundane. They are reached through concentration, and may be attained by non-Buddhists. The sixth is supramundane, reached through insight, and attained only by arhants.

The early tradition regarded the mundane super-knowledges with ambivalence. The great saints, including the Buddha himself, went on shaman-style journeys to the paradises and hells, received communications from spirits through clairaudience and clairvoyance, read the minds of their students in order to select the the appropriate teaching or meditative practice for them, and remembered their own and others' former lives. They also foretold the future, 'saw' human events that were going on at a great distance, and subdued demons.

On the other hand, monks were forbidden to exhibit their psychic powers to ordinary people, because this cheapened the spiritual attainments. They were to refrain from reciting spells and from interpreting dreams, omens and the stars. Similarly, the super-knowledges were not to be used for worldly purposes, because this would conduce to worldly greed. Yet the literature of Indian Buddhism is full of tales in which a saint used his paranormal powers to rescue someone from worldly distress. This tension between worldly engagement and Nirvana-oriented disengagement characterizes the entire history of Buddhism.

The Earning of Merit

So far it might seem that the early Buddhist ethic was merely one of abstention, and that the goals of the religious life were entirely ascetic and unworldly. This is not the case. Donation was a cardinal virtue for both laity and monks. The laymen earned merit by giving material requisites to monks and nuns, and by helping the sick and the needy.

Merit is a sort of spiritual currency, that can be spent on a happy next life in a paradise, or turned over to the benefit of a deceased relative, or invested in further spiritual progress. The monk was not rich in material goods but he was supposed to be rich in Dharma (Doctrine), which he donated by teaching it. He also earned merit just by living the monastic life, and like the layman he often devoted his merit to the well-being of deceased relations.

Another merit-earning activity is worship *(puja)*. In the household life, puja means honouring your parents, guests, teachers and other worthy persons. In a sacred context, it means making the same ritual gestures of reverence and hospitality: bowing with palms pressed together, kowtowing, touching the honoured one's feet, circumambulation, chanting salutations and verses of praise, and offering food, water, lights, incense, flowers, cloth and precious substances. Today in the Theravada countries of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, foot-washing is performed for holy guests, images are bathed, and worthy persons are splashed with water on New Year's Day.

The Three Jewels

The most worshipful entities are the Buddha, the Dharma (Doctrine) and the Sangha (Community). These are the three Jewels or Treasures. The Sangha has four divisions: monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. But in common use the word means chiefly the community of monks. You become a Buddhist by declaring, 'I go to the Buddha-refuge, I go to the Dharma-refuge, I go to the Sangha-refuge.' Here the third refuge is the community of holy persons, not all of whom are monks, just as not all monks are saints.

The early teaching sets forth a simple series of stages on the path. The primary division is between worldlings and saints. The worldling who has taken the refuges is a faith-follower, one who pursues the truth and accepts the doctrine on the authority of another. There are four grades of holy person or saint. The *stream-winner* is certain not to fall into a bad rebirth and not to relapse until he attains enlightenment. This stage is attainable through morality and perfect faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In no more than seven births the

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You become a Buddhist by saying, 'I go to the Buddha-refuge, I go to the Dharma-refuge, I go to the Sangha-refuge': the Dharma being the true doctrine and the Sangha the community of holy persons, including monks and laymen. The monks vow to observe a code of more than 200 moral rules but the five basic rules, applying to laymen as well as monks, are not to take human or animal life, not to take what is not given, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to tell lies, and not to drink intoxicants
Right **A young boy, regally dressed, sits with the women of his family before taking the vows which will make him a Buddhist monk**
Facing page **The boy's head is shaved *(above)*. This is a mark of the renunciation of the worldly life in many different societies: Christian monks, for instance, have 'tonsures' or shaved patches on their heads. Later *(below)* the boy takes the saffron-yellow robe of a monk and vows to keep it holy as long as he breathes**

stream-winner will attain sainthood. The *once-returner*, free from the fetters of lust and ill-will, will attain sainthood in his next human rebirth. The *non-returner* gets rid of all his fetters in this life, and then is reborn in a high heaven where he reaches Nirvana. The arhant extinguishes all the outflows and in this very life realizes liberation of mind through wisdom.

In the earlier layers of the early scriptures, Buddha is little more than the first arhant among equals. His uniqueness consists of having reached full enlightenment without having a master in this life. In later parts of the early canon, the Buddha is exalted far above his holy disciples. Whereas the earlier texts ascribe to him only the three great cognitions (memory of his former lives, cosmic vision and knowledge that his outflows were extinguished), later Pali texts claim he was omniscient.

Gautama was probably never considered to be the only Buddha. The Pali texts speak of a series of six former Buddhas, whom Gautama remembers through his own super-knowledge, and of the future Buddha, Maitreya, who is now a Bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be).

What is Nirvana?

Is Nirvana annihilation or eternal existence, the cessation of all thought and feeling or perfect beatitude? The early texts give enigmatic answers. They say that there is an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconditioned; and then they define the unconditioned as destruction of lust, hatred and folly. Whether the Buddha exists after death ranks as an undeclared point, along with whether the world is eternal, whether the world is infinite, and whether the soul and the body are the same. The Buddha refused to admit that the Buddha exists after death, or does not exist, or both exists and does not exist, or neither exists nor does not exist. To each of these statements he answered, 'This does not fit the case.' Then he likened the Buddha after death to a fire which has gone out; it has not gone north, south, east or west. The Buddha, he says, is deep and immeasurable like the great ocean. Since the Nirvana-realm is unique, analogies are inadequate, and the prudent teacher guards against treating them as descriptions. The only adequate indication of Nirvana is instruction on how to experience it.

Early Buddhism rejected the Upanishadic concept of a world-soul *(brahman, atman)*, the material and efficient cause of all things (see BRAHMAN). Nirvana is not a stuff out of which the world is made, and its attainment is not a reversion of the soul to its unmanifested state. The Buddha denied that there is an atman or self, in the sense of an unchanging substance which serves as host to changing and transient properties. He treated all phenomena as processes and declared a Middle Path between the eternalist extreme of being ('what is, always is') and the annihilationist extreme of non-being ('then it was real, now it's extinct'). The action of cause and effect is not a modification of substances, but dependent co-arising: 'When A exists, then B comes into being; when A does not exist, B does not come into being.' Relations are real, substances are not.

Transmigration is not the re-embodiment of a soul, but the passing over of a consciousness, consisting of the seeds of good and evil deeds *(karma)* committed during this life and previous lives. It is likened to the flame passing from one candle to another, or a poem passing from the teacher's mind to the pupil's. The transmigrant consciousness finds a species and a family in conformity with its moral legacy.

The world of transmigration *(samsara)* consists of three realms: the *desire-realm* (comprising the subterranean hells, the animal world, the ghost world. the human world, the demon world and the lower god worlds); the *form-realm* (the higher god worlds); and the *formless realm*, inhabited by beings who as contemplatives in this life achieved the trance-planes of endless space, endless consciousness, nothing-at-all, and neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

Buddhist cult practice implements the conviction that all living beings are members of one cosmic family. Merit is transferred to the account of beings in hell, to alleviate their sufferings and hasten their release. Animals are given sanctuary in temple precincts, hunting and butchering are considered immoral, and veterinary treatment is provided as a pious act. Offerings of merit, rice-cakes and water are made to the ghosts of departed relatives on the anniversaries of their deaths, and to all the ghosts on the

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15th day of the seventh month. Offerings are made to numerous gods, godlings and demons. In return, the gods grant worldly blessings such as children, riches and freedom from danger and disease. The two great Indo-Aryan gods of the 6th century BC entered early Buddhism, Indra as protector and Brahma as inspirer of the Dharma. Rebirth in Brahma's heaven is obtained through the four contemplations known as 'Brahma-dwellings': friendly love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. In general, the early Buddhist approach to spirits was to subdue them through Dharma, then treat them with friendly respect rather than with terror or aversion.

The Converted Emperor

During the second century AN (after the Nirvana of Gautama in or about 483 BC), the Buddhist monastic order split into two sects, the Sthaviras (Elders) and the Mahasanghikas (members of the Great Assembly). The former restricted their assembly to arhants, and denied that a layman could become an arhant, thus excluding laymen from their councils. The latter admitted laymen and non-arhants to their meetings, which consequently were called 'great'. The Elders were an ecclesiastical establishment, enhancing the status of the cleric and the arhant. The Mahasanghikas made less of arhantship, and exalted Buddha even more than the Elders did. They maintained that he is supermundane, does not reside among men, has an infinite body, has boundless power, and is endowed with endless life. He

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Buddhist worshippers put flowers in the hats of these statues, burn incense to them and periodically give them new clothes. Worship earns merit, which can be spent in a happy next life in a paradise before another rebirth on earth, or which can be used to alleviate the sufferings of a dead relative in one of the numerous hells

sends out apparition-bodies throughout the whole cosmos, and through them works ceaselessly for the salvation of all living beings.

In or about 274 BC Asoka came to the throne of the Maura Empire. After consolidating his power and expanding his territory, he was stricken with remorse at the bloodshed and destruction he had wrought in the course of conquest, and became a Buddhist convert. He went on pilgrimages, gave up hunting, frequented the company of monks, and spent some time in retreat. Then he proclaimed a policy of Dharma-conquest rather than military conquest, and appointed special Dharma-commissioners to oversee the execution of his policy. He commended tolerance between sects and urged all to concentrate on the common essence of Dharma. But he promoted the growth of Buddhism and other ascetic sects, and by sending missionary monks to foreign countries he gave Buddhism tremendous impetus.

During Asoka's reign, the sect of Vibhajyavadins (Distinctionists) split off from the school of the Elders. The Vibhajyavadins themselves soon split into several sects. Their strongholds were in western India (present-day Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra). An archaic Vibhajyavadin sect which called itself simply Theravada (the Doctrine of the Elders) passed through the south of India to Ceylon in the late 3rd century BC. After many vicissitudes and recurrent encroachment by Hinduism, other Buddhist sects and Christianity, it is still there (see SINHALESE BUDDHISM). In the 5th and 6th centuries AD, there were Theravada centres on the Madras coast, from which the sect spread to Burma. Today it prevails in Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia as well as Ceylon.

About four centuries AN there arose a

The coming Buddha saves people from danger, receives confessions of sins, and comes to the dying to lead them to his paradise

movement calling itself the Bodhisattvayana or Mahayana (great course or vehicle), in contrast to the Hinayana – inferior course or vehicle. Initially it was probably not a separate sect but just a new way of stating some typical Mahasanghika doctrines: that the phenomena of the world are illusory and empty, that the true Buddha is transworldly, that the Buddhas who appear in the world are his phantom-bodies, that they exist simultaneously in many world-realms, and that the saving activity of the Buddhas never ceases.

The idea of the Bodhisattva – the one who is on the path of becoming Buddha – was acknowledged by all the Hinayana sects, but most used the term only to designate Gautama before he attained enlightenment. Mahayana proclaimed that the Bodhisattvayana is the course which all devotees should follow. It taught a path along which even the humblest could set out, and it assured him of help from an array of celestial Bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

The Bodhisattva Career

We know from stone reliefs that stories of the Buddha's former lives were popular by the 2nd century BC. These tales celebrate a series of virtues called 'perfections'. The idea of the perfections was developed by the Elder sects, and Mahayana adopted the idea and made it the heart of the Bodhisattva path, which it recommended not just for admiration but for practice by all devotees, whether male or female, monastic or lay.

The Bodhisattva path begins with the awakening of the aspiration for supreme, perfect enlightenment. This momentous act requires the accomulation of much merit and wisdom, and the aid of good spiritual friends. It also has great results. It cancels bad karma, prevents bad rebirths and leads to good ones.

Having awakened his aspiration, the Bodhisattva cultivates good qualities, does good to others, and meditates on the aims of his career. In due course he makes a set of vows, resolving to save living beings and often specifying that when he becomes a Buddha his Buddha-land will have such-and-such amenities and advantages.

Then the Bodhisattva proceeds to practise six virtues until they become perfections. *Donation* means giving one's goods, the Dharma, and even one's life and body, to those who have need of them. It is a perfection when the giver has no thought of reward, and is spontaneous and unselfconscious about the act. *Morality* consists of observing the precepts, transferring the resultant merit to the account of others, and encouraging others to do the same. *Patience* means enduring hardship and injury from others, and accepting difficult and unpalatable doctrines. *Vigour* is unflagging energy and zeal in overcoming vice and cultivating virtue. *Meditation* consists of practising the trances, concentrations and attainments without accepting the worldly advantages these can procure. *Wisdom* is the queen of the perfections, since it consists in the direct realization of the truth of emptiness (see SUNYAVADA), which quells all fictions and 'thought-constructions' and thus renders the other five virtues perfect.

When the Bodhisattva masters the six perfections, he achieves the non-relapsing state and is not bound to rebirths by his karma, but chooses at will where he is going to be reborn in order to benefit living beings. Eventually he becomes a Buddha, unless he has vowed to remain a Bodhisattva until all living beings attain enlightenment.

The celestial Bodhisattvas in the Mahayana pantheon are Great Beings who have achieved the non-relapsing stage and sovereignty over the realms of transmigration. Most of them are probably descended from the deities of North Indian popular religion in the last five centuries BC, and they have taken over the attributes and functions of the great gods Indra and Brahma. They occupy subordinate positions in the early Mahayana Sutras, but become more and more prominent after 200 AD, until they surpass the Buddhas themselves.

The Buddha to Come

Devotion to Maitreya, the coming Buddha, is common to both Hinayana and Mahayana. He will be born at Benares in the distant future when human virtue and prosperity have increased immensely. Meanwhile he is staying in the Tusita Heaven, where the devout may be reborn if they earnestly pray for it, particularly at the moment of death. There they will pass the interlude in celestial bliss, listening to Maitreya's discourses. And when he comes to earth again, they will accompany him. As a high god Maitreya is powerful, and as a Bodhisattva he is compassionate, so worshippers can expect a response to their prayers. He is the inspirer of Buddhist teachers, appearing to them in dreams or trances, consoling them when they are in doubt or frustration. He also saves people from danger, receives confessions of sins, and comes to the dying to lead them to his paradise.

Manjusri is said to have become a non-relapsing Bodhisattva 64 myriads of aeons ago. Because he vowed not to hurry to enlightenment but to remain in samsara as long as a single living being is unsaved, his Buddhahood is not imminent. He was born in Gautama's time as a Brahmin and lived 450 years. Merely hearing his name deducts many ages from one's time in transmigration and worshipping him guarantees good rebirth. If you recite a certain Sutra and chant his name, he will appear to you in seven days, in a dream if you have bad karma, otherwise in a waking vision. He is the embodiment of Wisdom, and in art is shown riding a lion, holding a sword in his hand.

Another Great Being is Avalokitesvara who appears in multifarious forms in order to help and save living beings – as a Buddha, as a Bodhisattva, as an arhant, or as a Hindu god. The merit from devotion to him is equal to that from worshipping a vast number of Buddhas. He grants boons to those who call him to mind and recite his name. He saves them from evil passions, grants a son or daughter (as she chooses) to a supplicant woman, and saves those who think of him from fire, shipwreck, robbers, execution, prison, witchcraft, demons, wild beasts, snakes and thunderbolts. His cult burgeoned during the 4th century AD, and by the 7th he was the most popular divinity in the Indian Buddhist pantheon.

We have seen how the Mahasanghikas idealized the Buddha, and treated the historical Gautama as one of numerous apparitions projected by the eternal, supermundane Buddha. They also believed, as against the Elders, that many Buddhas exist in the universe at the same time, each reigning over a Buddha-field or Buddha-land.

From the beginning, there was an apparent contradiction between Gautama's various roles. The Lotus Sutra, completed c 200 AD, declares that he did not really enter Nirvana at the end of his 80 years on earth, but only

Gerald Cubitt

Serenity in stone: faces of Bodhisattvas, saints who are on the path to becoming Buddhas, at the Bayon Temple in Angkor Thom, Cambodia, built in the 12th century by the Emperor Jayavarman VII, a supporter of Buddhism in an area where Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed and influenced each other, as they had earlier done in India

gave the appearance of doing so, to shock and invigorate people who would otherwise have taken his presence for granted. In reality, he is always active, teaching and helping all living beings in this and all other worlds. The Buddha of the Lotus Sutra is a marvellous and ever-present teacher, but he does not relieve the pupils of the necessity to make an effort, gain merit and accumulate wisdom. In India, Gautama always remained the most popular of the celestial Buddhas.

Vairocana, 'Descendant of the Sun', began as an epithet of Gautama but became one of the chief Buddhas in the Avatamsaka Sutra (c 300 AD). Aksobhya, 'the Unshakable', was popular in the first two centuries AD. He presides over a Buddha-field in the Eastern Direction where people who do good deeds or hear his name can attain birth. Amitabha, 'Unlimited Light', (also called Amitayus, 'Unlimited Lifespan' and the Amida of Japan – see AMIDA) presides over a paradise in the Western Direction called 'the Happy Land'. All beings who go to Amitabha's land unfailingly attain enlightenment. To obtain rehirth in the Happy Land one must have a minimum of good conduct, must hear the name of Amitabha, and must fix one's intent on going there. There are no hells, animals, ghosts or women in that land. All material requisites come just by wishing for them. Fragrant jewel-flowers shower down from jewel-trees, and the clouds play continual sweet music. And the beings there hear whatever Dharma-discourse they wish to hear. The cult of Amitabha was never as popular in India as that of Sakyamuni, but it enjoyed tremendous fortune in China.

Tantric Buddhism, or Vajrayana, 'the Thunderbolt Vehicle', arose c 600 AD, after a long period of incubation. The Tantric centuries equalled in glory any other period in Indian Buddhist history. They produced great art and architecture, profound scholarship, and a remarkable line of holy men. Just as Mahayana revitalized a tradition that was falling prey to academic hair-splitting and complacency, so Vajrayana revived spiritual zeal and accomplishment at a time when the Bodhisattva ideal was more celebrated in academic analyses than realized in practice.

Revival in India

From the 7th to the 12th centuries, Vajrayana flourished in Bihar and Bengal. The great monastic universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila taught the whole range of Buddhist, Hindu and secular learning to thousands of students, including Chinese, Tibetans and Southeast Asians. But Moslem invaders destroyed organized Buddhism in the Ganges valley, sacking Nalanda in 1198 and again several times over the next decades. It survived as a folk cult for two or three centuries, then vanished from the Ganges area.

Vajrayana also prospered in the sub-Himalayan valleys, in Swat, Gilgit, Kashmir, Katmandu. It was exterminated by Moslem rulers only in the 15th century. It survives to this day in the Katmandu Valley.

It is doubtful whether Buddhism ever had much strength in the Tamil country in southern India, except in a few towns such as Conjeeveram, a great centre of learning where there was still a Theravada community even in the 15th century. West India and the Deccan were Buddhist strongholds to the end of the 7th century but the last Buddhist monuments in Maharashtra date from the 5th century, and thereafter Hinduism dominated the whole region. Probably Brahmin advisers at the courts were more skilful at winning the princes' favour than were the Buddhist monks. Buddhism flourishes best in strong nation-states (as in Sri Lanka, Burma and China in the T'ang period). The loosely structured feudal society of the Rajput period favoured the equally loosely organized Hinduism.

While it is not true that Hinduism absorbed all the best from Buddhism, it still assimilated and perpetuated a great deal. The strong emphasis on compassion in devotional Hinduism owes much to Buddhist inspiration. The later Vedanta schools (see VEDANTA) are indebted to Buddhism in many important respects. Samkara's Vedanta supplanted Buddhism by borrowing not only philosophy but monasticism from it, and Samkara is with good reason called a Buddhist in disguise.

Modern India has rediscovered its Buddhist heritage with pride. A few caste Hindus and millions of former untouchables have been converted to Buddhism and for every convert, there are many more Indians who study Buddhist doctrine with approval, go on pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy places, and see the religious universalism of the Buddha as a forerunner of the egalitarian democracy India is now striving to develop. Asoka's ideal of Dharma-victory still lives, and its symbol, the Wheel of the Dharma, stands in the centre of India's flag. (See also CHINA; GAUTAMA BUDDHA; JAPAN; NIRVANA; TANTRISM; TIBET; ZEN.)

RICHARD H. ROBINSON

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Michael Holford/British Museum

Buffalo
The American bison, on whom Plains Indians depended for survival; a major supernatural power in their myths, such as Buffalo Old Man and Old Woman in Kiowa or Apache tales; great buffalo dances as of Mandans, with full head-dresses from buffalo heads and mime of herd movement, used to lure herds for hunters; associated with rain, buffalo was prayed to by Sioux and others when rain was needed.
See GREAT PLAINS INDIANS.

Our ancestors believed that there was more to building a house than bricks and mortar. Rituals designed to ensure the prosperity of the building and its occupants included the burial of human beings – sometimes small children – beneath the foundations

BUILDERS' RITES

BEFORE A BUILDING of any type could be erected, it was necessary to propitiate the powers of Nature, because the order of Nature was being interfered with, and particularly the spirit of the earth on which the building would rest. Through every stage of the construction, from the initial selection of the site until the final completion of the roof-top, there followed a succession of magical rites.

In the choice of a site the spirit world was consulted and the entrails of animals examined for signs and portents. A sign of the intentions of the gods might be manifested through Nature itself. In the legend of the foundation of Mexico City, for instance, we are told how a group of Indians, observing an eagle holding a serpent in its talons, recognized this as an intimation from the gods that the city should be established on that spot (see AZTECS).

It was the custom in Ireland in the last century to stick a new spade into the earth and only if it had not been removed overnight by the fairies did building operations begin. Another Irish custom, equally bizarre, was that of throwing a hat into the air during a gale and building the house where it happened to fall, since such a site was considered likely to be sheltered from adverse winds. After the land was surveyed, it would be blessed by the priest or magician and thus made safe for occupation.

The orientation of a building with the sun was of immense symbolic importance. The Temple of Solomon, for instance, had entrance towers facing towards the east, and the Holy of Holies was at the west. The altar of a Christian church is usually at the east end. This ancient association with the sun was deliberately flouted by Sir Walter Mildmay, in Puritan abhorrence of superstition, when he built the original Emmanuel College Chapel at Cambridge facing north and south rather than east-west.

To endow a new building with good fortune and to secure it against the assaults of evil spirits, bread and salt were laid in the foundations. It remained the custom as late as the 17th century to build a bottle of water and a piece of bread into the walls of English cottages, as charms to secure the occupant from want.

It was once common practice to sacrifice a human being to the Earth deity and it was believed that no building would stand unless its foundations were laid in blood. In the old royal city of Mandalay, men were buried alive under the gates. In Siam victims were crushed to death in a pit. The custom survived into comparatively modern times among some primitive peoples; for instance, in 1881, the King of Ashanti (now a region of Ghana) mixed the blood of 200 maidens with the mortar when building a new palace. The survival of the custom in the West until Christian times is suggested by the discovery of skeletons in the foundations of old churches, as at Darrington, in Yorkshire, in 1895 when the church walls were found to be resting on a human skull. It is probable that the recurring stories of nuns and monks immured alive are based upon distorted traditions of this character. The legend that St Columba buried St Ronan beneath the foundations of his monastery to propitiate the guardian spirits of the soil may well have a similar basis. In the English fen-lands, traditionally, those who caused flooding by neglecting to keep up the sea walls would be used as living foundations when the walls were rebuilt.

Michael Holford

Mansell Collection

Symbols to propitiate spirits and ensure a building's stability: an inscribed brick and 'tet' pillar, a symbol of stability, discovered in the foundations of an Egyptian building *(above)*; European builder's mark of a circle and two mallets on a foundation stone *(right)*

Such practices were followed not merely as a form of psychic insurance for the durability of a building but with the additional aim of providing a ghostly guardian who would prevent the intrusion of hostile spirits, since it was assumed that a human being so sacrificed would haunt the site for ever. An example of this superstition came to light in 1966 with the discovery of the skeletons of babies who had been ritually entombed in the Roman fortress at Reculver, Kent. The tradition persists that the site is haunted by the sobbing ghost of 'a child that had been buried alive by the Romans'.

Shadows for Sale

These rites were replaced over the years by forms of sacrifice less offensive to sophisticated religious taste. A human shadow was used instead of the living person, in places as far apart as the British Isles and Rumania; there were even 'shadow traders' who secretly measured a man's shadow and buried the measurements beneath the foundations.

Puppets or domestic animals later replaced the human being as objects of sacrifice, the blood being poured into the foundations. In the early 1960s during restoration work at Lauderdale House in Highgate, London, workmen found part of a

goblet, two shoes and four mummified chickens which had been built into the chimney breast in the late 16th century. More recently a mummified cat was found immured in a cottage wall at Cricksea, Essex, where it had been buried alive to protect the house against fire. Coins are frequently discovered cemented into the brickwork of old chimneys; it has been suggested that the motive was to provide 'ransom money for the person who ought to have been there'.

The custom of placing documents beneath foundation stones is extremely ancient. It is recorded that Chaldean kings, interested in antiquity, used to tunnel into the ruins of old palaces for the foundation records deposited by their predecessors. Closer to our modern rites were those performed at Crowland Abbey, Lincolnshire, in 1112 when the Abbot laid the first cornerstone while the citizens submitted written offerings of either money or unpaid labour.

The actual materials used in the work of construction were ritualistically important, particularly in relation to ancient tree worship. This tradition survived among the Ozarks hillmen of the United States in the custom of transferring some of the timbers from an older building to a new one. An English superstition asserts that it is courting trouble if a builder uses tomb-stones instead of bricks.

In Africa and the East, building operations were often festive occasions, as were those brought to the United States by the early European settlers. No ceremony could have been more light-hearted than the erection of a cottage in Donegal, which used to be a communal undertaking with the neighbours carrying wood and stones to the site to the music of a hired fiddler. Among some primitives, building operations could be far from joyful, however; the Bapedi tribe of South Africa, for example, had to maintain a state of absolute continence during the work of construction, and any departure from such restraint, it was thought, would impair the soundness of the completed building.

Topping Out

Within the house the hearth was regarded as a domestic shrine and the door as a barrier against spirits, the latter bearing magical inscriptions. At Alatri in Italy phallic symbols were carved on the lintel of a postern or passage in the walls of the citadel. In the Channel Islands, however, house builders considerately provided roof ledges upon which witches could rest while on the way to their destinations.

From classical times to the present the completion of a building has been celebrated as a feast. In ancient Rome the contractor, having erected a state or religious building, offered thanks to the Bona Dea, a fertility goddess, who then became its protectress.

The once universal 'topping out' ceremony, in which a barrel of beer was drunk while a tree or wreath was attached to the roof of a completed building, survives today only in attenuated form. It is still observed occasionally, however, as in 1963 when a green bough was nailed to the newly completed dome of Smithfield Poultry Market, 'as a means of warding off evil spirits'. The topping out ceremony in its original splendour can still be seen in Germany where a bush like a Christmas tree is placed in position after the last timber of the house has been put on. In one such ceremony one of the carpenters gives thanks to God, 'the highest builder in Heaven'. Healths are drunk, after which the glasses are thrown to the ground to prevent bad luck.

Little else of the potent magic of the building trade has survived in the modern world. And yet public buildings and bridges are still ritually opened, and the first sod of a new site turned with a new spade, or the first mortar laid with a shiny trowel. And there is still the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone, with its inscribed tribute to local dignitaries.

(See also HOUSE.)

ERIC MAPLE

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Foetuses of dogs and llamas on sale in Bolivia: they bring good luck if buried under the foundations of a new building. This belief is probably a survival of the earlier custom of killing an animal or a human being to provide a spirit-guardian for a building

Popperfoto

Symbol of virility, fertility and power, the bull was the focus of many cults in ancient times from India to the Mediterranean. In Crete, young men and women literally 'took the bull by the horns' in order to extract these sacred qualities. The modern bullfight originated in beliefs which date back thousands of years

BULL

CONTEMPORARY MAN in Western society has but one basic interest in bulls – their role in the production of beef. For most of us, even this knowledge is quite indirect since in urban society we rarely encounter bulls except piecemeal in the butcher's. It is natural then if we do not know of the lengthy, intensive and dramatic involvement of our ancestors with these creatures, or realize that millions of people in the world today still closely relate their lives to them.

The story of men and bulls begins in the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. Man was a hunter, and some of the most widespread and frequently hunted animals were various types of wild cattle. Those best known to ancient man in Europe and the Near East were a species now called *bos primigenius, urus*, or aurochs – a huge, savage creature with shaggy hair and long, curving horns, from which Spanish fighting cattle are descended. Of all the animals hunted by our forefathers, the aurochs were probably the most valuable. Not only were they a plentiful source of meat but their bones were used for spear points, harpoons and fishhooks, and their skins were fashioned into clothing, boats and tents.

Wild cattle are herding animals, the aurochs herd consisting of a number of cows and calves dominated by a single fierce bull. Consequently, he who would successfully hunt the aurochs had first to kill this dangerous paramount bull. And ancient bulls, like their modern descendants, were powerful, swift, sharp-horned creatures. Standing six feet high or more at the shoulders, they were assuredly a most difficult animal to kill. These ancient bull hunts, these Stone Age *corridas*, must certainly have been savage, bloody affairs in which members of both species perished. Thus, while the aurochs was one of early man's primary benefactors, he was a dangerous and unwilling one; a benefactor who produced profound awe and fear in the hearts of those who hunted.

Art for Meat's Sake

A measure of these emotions is discernible in much of the cave art of south-west Europe (see CAVE ART). Produced from about 40,000 years ago and extending through the Magdalenian culture period, altogether some 25,000 years, it is with few exceptions an art of animals. In much cave art, such as at Altamira in Spain and at Lascaux in France, wild bulls and cows predominate. Scholars agree that for the most part it is magical art; this theory that it was 'art for meat's sake' has been adduced from two kinds of evidence, the art itself and its location. As to the art, not only does it concern animals, but the animals are repeatedly

The kings of Crete were apparently revered as incarnations of the bull god of the island, and bulls played an important part in Cretan religion: ritual vase from Cnossus in the form of a bull's head, used for making offerings of oil or wine

drawn pierced with spears and darts, with traps set before them, headless, disembowelled, dying. Clearly these drawings were part of sympathetic magical rituals based on the belief that the image of an animal is in some way connected with the real animal.

The location of the drawings also demonstrates their magical nature. In virtually every case they are found not in cave mouths or on rocks in the open, but deep within subterranean caverns, far removed from the areas of day-to-day living. We must assume that this artistic secretiveness was not born of modesty but of fear of discovery and retaliation by the very animals which man sought to kill.

The Supreme Bull

During early Neolithic times, when cattle were domesticated, a new dimension was added to the relationship of man and bull. Precisely how this happened is not known, but it was a tremendous forward stride for humankind. It released man from the bondage of the hunting culture. No longer was he a virtual slave to the arbitrary movements of wild animal herds. Now he could keep a ready supply of meat and later milk on hand at all times.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of animal domestication, however, was that it appears to have been directly responsible for our ancestors' first learning that sexual activity is connected with pregnancy. While he had undoubtedly witnessed copulation among animals through the years, there is no evidence that man saw the relationship between the exuberant sexuality of the bull and the subsequent calving of the cow, or in his own sexual activity and the child-bearing of his women.

Once animals began to be domesticated, however, proximity and daily observation allowed him to perceive the cause and effect relationship in procreation. Further, when Neolithic man made this discovery, bulls came to assume a new value in his eyes. Still a symbol of boundless strength and power, bulls were then esteemed for their sexuality as well, for it was obvious that a single animal could impregnate an entire herd.

During this time man also learned the rudiments of agriculture – that seeds when sown would produce plants. But it was many years before the value of breaking the earth became known and before the plough was invented. For most of this period, cattle-raising and agriculture were separate spheres of activity. Cattle were for meat and milk; grain was for bread and beer. Late in the Neolithic Age, however, man saw a relationship between his cattle and his crops. He believed that the great fertility of the bull could influence the successful growth of grain. As a cattle-raiser he knew the tremendous fertilizing power of the bull. From this it was but a step to believe that the fertility of the bull could be as efficacious for grain as it was for cattle.

One of the first recorded hymns shows clearly that praise is given to 'the great bull, the supreme bull which treads the holy pasturage – planting corn and making fields luxuriant'. This is not homage to the earth or to seeds, but to the bull for his aid in walking among the plants and causing them to grow by emanating fertility. The plough plays only an incidental part; it opens the earth to receive the fertile force.

Roger Wood Studio

Egyptian bronze statue of the sacred Apis bull, fathered by a ray of moonlight and after death embalmed and buried like a king

Exalted Overpowering Ox

Historians agree that all the first great civilizations of the Tigris-Euphrates region and those of the Nile and the Indus rivers were built upon the broad, firm base of stockbreeding and agriculture. In the hunting cultures, all able-bodied men hunted; there was little division of labour or specialized tasks not involving the hunt. With animal domestication and planting, however, one man's effort could feed several other men, whose time and labour were then released for other pursuits. In time the inevitable enrichment of culture thus effected resulted in the first civilizations.

During this period, the bull continued to play a central role in man's life, as the obvious inseminator of herds and the imagined fertilizer of the fields; both archeological relics and records of early civilizations relate repeatedly to the bull. In the analysis of these materials, however, a most surprising fact emerges: one or more of the central gods in the religions of each of these peoples was a bull god. Hymns and prayers to these deities indicate that as

The Bull in Heliopolis

An Egyptian hymn to the great bull god:

Hymn to Amen-Ra, the Bull in Heliopolis,
president of all the gods,
beneficent god, beloved one,
the giver of the warmth of life to all beautiful cattle,
Hail to thee, Amen-Ra,
Lord of the thrones of . . . Thebes,
  Bull of his mother,
  Chief of his fields . . .
  Lord of the sky,
eldest son of the earth,
lord of the things which exist,
establisher of things,
establisher of all things,
One in his times among the gods,
Beautiful Bull of the company of the gods,
  father of the gods,
  maker of men,
  creator of beasts and cattle,
lord of the things which exist,
creator of the staff of life,
master of the herbage whereon cattle live,
  Form made by Ptah,
  beautiful child,
  beloved one.

From E. A. W. Budge *The Gods of the Egyptians*

well as being a symbol of great strength and fertility, the bull was believed to be directly responsible for thunder, storms, rain, floods, in fact for water in any form. Other evidence, especially from Egypt, links the bull god with the sun and the moon.

Throughout ancient Sumeria, a bull god called Enlil was worshipped as god of the storm and supreme god of fertility. It was through his power that there was water, the fields were green, and all things grew. Mankind itself drew life and sustenance from him. Praising Enlil as their father, the 'exalted overpowering ox', 'Lord of the world of life', 'powerful chief of the gods', the Sumerians of about 3000 BC addressed him with stirring invocations.

Similarly, in ancient India, a wealth of evidence indicates a bull-oriented religion among the earliest inhabitants of the Indus valley. The Aryans who conquered them, moreover, c 1500 BC, left an eloquent literary testimony concerning bull worship. Hundreds of hymns by these people, originally passed on orally from generation to generation, were ultimately written down and compose a sacred Hindu literary work known as the *Rig-Veda*. The Aryans worshipped a number of bull gods – Dyaus, Parjanya, Rudra, Indra and Agni – and many of the *Rig-Veda* hymns are devoted to them.

The archeological testimony from Egypt is even more compelling. Not only do we know that the people worshipped a variety of bull gods, but that two cults, those of Apis and Mnevis, were probably the oldest, most widespread and enduring of all Egyptian religious sects. The worship of both bull gods was quite similar. Each was considered to be a god of fertility and strength, each had celestial aspects, and each had elaborate connections with other gods. Each god was believed to have an earthly manifestation, Apis being immaculately conceived by the impregnation of a special cow by a ray of moonlight, while Mnevis was the incarnation of the sun-god Amon-Re. Upon the death of each divine bull, it was embalmed like a king and interred in large tombs which were known as Serapea.

An additional association between men and bulls appeared in both early Mesopotamia and Egypt; kings related themselves to bulls and bull gods. Thus in Sumeria the great Sargon called himself the *patesi* or 'tenant farmer' of Enlil. King Rimush acknowledged that he was appointed by Enlil. And Naram-Sin, who wore the horns of bulls into battle, presented captive kings to Enlil in recognition of the bull god's sovereignty. This close association between king and god in Sumeria had many interesting facets. Both bull god and king came to share the title 'Wild Bull'. Sargon was so called, and the seal of his servant shows a man watering a bull. Kings wore bull-horned head-dresses as a symbol of their divine appointment and power. And to make the interrelation complete, there arose the custom of placing long, curled beards upon images of the bull god. This practice, probably ritualistic in origin, was rooted in the conception common in Mesopotamia that the beard was a sign of strength and masculinity. Consequently, only Sumerian kings were allowed to grow long beards.

The relationship in Egypt between kings and bull gods was even closer. Narmer-Menes, the king who forcibly united Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom not long before 3000 BC, worshipped Apis and spread the gospel of the bull god throughout the land. Moreover, either his adroitness or his simplicity led him actually to conceive of himself as a bull. In either case, at a very early date bull worship in Egypt became identified with king worship.

Since bull worship was such a characteristic feature of all the earliest civilizations, it was inevitable that many of the other culture centres throughout the Mediterranean, facing similar problems and holding similar values, would sooner or later focus attention on the bull. Thus in Crete, in Greece and in Rome, man's relations with bulls reflected both his Near Eastern heritage and his own particular cultural needs.

In Crete, for example, while the bull god was primarily connected with the sun and fertility, he was likewise linked with the force, the deep-throated roar, and the destructiveness of earthquakes, which were common to the island. Crete also developed the first public, ritualized bullfights. In Greece, the bull became the focus for socially approved rites of sexual abandon which evolved directly into Greek theatre. And in Rome, as the foremost rival of Christianity for centuries, Mithraism introduced the ritualistic washing away of sins and purification of the body with a bath in the blood dripping from a dying bull.

The Minotaur's Prey

Cretan kings, called Minos, were supreme in both the spiritual and material lives of their subjects, like the kings of Egypt. Apparently revered as the incarnation of the island bull god, Minos stands at the centre of all Cretan legends and myths. As natural leader of the bull cult, the king was the focus of activity during celebrations.

Stories of Minos and of the ceremonies and practices of Cretan bull worship spread widely about the Mediterranean. Eventually many of them became part of the mythology of neighbouring groups in the Aegean area, such as the Greeks. There is, for example, the Greek legend of Europa and the Bull in which the maiden Europa was seduced and taken across the sea to Crete by the god Zeus in the form of a bull. Here she gave birth to Minos, who later became the bull-god-king of the island.

Another early Greek myth refers to Minos as the tyrant who ruled over Crete and who demanded tribute from Athens every nine years in the form of seven young men and seven maidens. On arrival in Crete, these youths were taken into a giant maze and released. Here they became the prey of a ferocious man-bull or Minotaur who roamed the confines of the maze in search of such human tribute. This Minotaur was the result of the union between Pasiphae, wife of Minos, and a bull with which she had become enamoured. By concealing herself within a wooden cow, constructed for her by the master craftsman Daedalus, she had seduced the bull. The man-bull creature that she bore was imprisoned by Minos in a

Anne Bolt

C. M. Dixon

Left **Spanish bullfighting is a descendant of the Cretan bull games and, more remotely, of the hunting of savage wild bulls by prehistoric man. The bullfight is not a sport but a ritual combat of human courage and skill against brute force: in the writings of Ernest Hemingway and other modern authors it has acquired its own heroic aura of the terror of death and the pride of victory**

Right **Cretan bull-leaping, from a fresco at Cnossus; each dancer grasped the charging bull's horns, which were regarded as the focus of its life-giving power, was hurled up into the air, turned a somersault on the bull's back and landed on his feet on the ground**

labyrinth at Cnossus, and it was here that the young Athenians met their end. Long did Athens live in fear of Crete and its Minotaur until one of her heroes, Theseus, entered the labyrinth, and slew the beast.

Scholars have interpreted the myth with the aid of other myths and have concluded that it is an account, albeit garbled and distorted, of early bull cult practices. These included three major groups of ritualistic observances: fertility dances, bullfights or bull fertility rites, and sacrifices.

Bull Dancers of Crete

Each spring, just at the time when all nature revived, Minos held the spectacular island corrida, or running of the bulls. Every phase of these great rituals, from the chase and capture of the wild bulls to their final death in the arena, appears in hundreds of Cretan art forms. From this evidence we know that these were great fertility rites which were performed in an effort to impregnate the land with new life. This impregnation was accomplished at the arena in two ways: by horn grappling and by bull sacrifice.

The Cretans, like the ancient Sumerians, considered the horns of a bull to be the focus, the concentrated essence of the bull's strength and fertility. At the corrida it was the magic, fertile horns of the wild bull which became the centre of religious interest. The initial part of the Cretan bullfight was consequently composed of a series of ritual actions designed to procure a portion of this tremendous power for the benefit of mankind. To do this, specially trained male and female athletes went into the arena unarmed. Standing before the onslaught of a bull, the sacred performers had neither cape nor sword, and in fact did nothing until the beast was almost upon them. Then by grasping the horns of the charging bull a split second before the lowered head snapped upward in a mighty toss, the athlete was catapulted into the air. Performing a forward somersault in mid-air, he landed with his feet on the back of the bull or on the ground.

That the feat was extremely dangerous is obvious. There are, in fact, numerous Cretan depictions of athletes trapped under the hoofs and caught between the horns of

Michael Holford

Wandering in the desert after their escape from Egypt, the Israelites demanded visible gods to lead them. They melted down their golden ear-rings to make a statue of a bull-calf (Exodus, chapter 32): *The Worship of the Golden Calf*, by Filippo Lippi

raging bulls. The aim of this and other horn-grasping methods was non-lethal contact with the horns of the sacred bull. With every grasping, every swing, every toss, the bull cult devotees believed that their champions were absorbing strength and fertility for the ultimate benefit of all men.

The Cretan obsession with male virility is further evidenced by the numerous images of bulls showing erect phalli found at Cnossus. An even more striking indication of Cretan pride in male sexuality is the fact that all female performers in the bullring wore a breechcloth bunched together toward the front to give the appearance of the male organ. In the spring then, as the warming sun quickened the land, Cnossus held its sacred bullring ceremonies designed to fructify the earth and its creatures with the exuberant sexuality of the bull.

The spread of the bull cult from Crete was inevitable. Assimilating elements from bull religions all over the Near East and Africa, Cretans used them in creating many spectacular bull rituals of their own, and in turn spread these throughout the Mediterranean world. These practices were usually modified by those who adopted them, but many of them took root around the shores of the Mediterranean and became the hybrid systems of bull ritual that were to develop into the modern Spanish bullfight.

JACK CONRAD

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BURIAL

In the Shadow of Death

The disposal of the dead nowadays is approached with brisk, professional efficiency; burial rites are becoming increasingly impersonal. Yet underlying our aseptic attitude, the age-old emotions of mourning for our loved ones and fear of their returning to haunt us still persist

VERY FEW PEOPLE want to die. Very few admit that they will, and almost everyone everywhere has hoped that survival can somehow be contrived if enough trouble is taken. The trouble can be taken by the hoper himself, behaving well enough in life to earn immortality; or even, if he is lucky in his religion, by repentance on his deathbed. Or his survivors may propitiate someone or something on his behalf.

Life after death can also be thought of in two ways. The spirit may survive, bodiless, or reborn in a new human, a tree, an animal, or an ancestor figure. Or the body itself may be resurrected in the flesh for the spirit to inhabit. Most funeral customs are the result of one of these two ways of thinking, and the most elaborate rites have come from the conviction that the reborn spirit will need in its future life all that it had on earth, so that if it is to settle comfortably it must be as rich as possible, often at great cost to the living.

At the funeral of a king in Scythia, for instance, slaves and horses were killed and buried with him, while the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom were content to bury the great with wooden and clay models of their slaves, houses, animals and boats. In China all the possessions, including whole armies, navies, and air forces, were traditionally fashioned out of paper and burnt at the funeral. Through the centuries the importance accorded to death has declined, a sensible shift from human sacrifice through wood to paper.

Not all customs have been elaborate, but all successful religions have included in their rituals the means for ensuring some form of life beyond death. On the other hand, no religion has managed to demonstrate what *does* happen after death, and so there are also rituals to protect the living if anything goes wrong, preventing the furious ghost, unable to find a new body or paradise or whatever, from haunting his careless kin. Terror of the unsettled spirits of the dead dies very hard; food may be put out for them, or their names made taboo so that they are not inadvertently summoned. Graveyards are still shunned at night, fingers are crossed, and very few people are prepared to deny the existence of ghosts with complete confidence.

The Trappings of Fear

Over thousands of years, the world's customs have become such a tangle of facts, faiths, superstitions and rationalizations that it is hard to be sure of the real meaning of any particular custom. However, the customs themselves, all rooted in the ancient and continuing hopes and fears, follow a consistent pattern. We have a common daydream of sudden wealth: 'What would you do if you won the Pools?' We would be reborn, of course, a trip round the world, everything new, a new life. Usually, as losers, we make do with an occasional new suitcase, but our clothes are clean and we have a new face-flannel for a holiday. Similarly with the dead, the body is washed, straightened and wrapped in new cloth for

Salisbury & S. Wilts. Museum

Two opposite motives lie behind burial customs all through history: one is affection for the dead and the other is fear of them. Fear causes burial in a sealed container, a coffin six feet underground, a mound or a jar. Affection provides something red, to give blood and so 'new life' to the corpse, as in this South American burial *(left)*: or food and useful articles for the dead man to use in the afterlife, like the beaker in this reconstruction of a prehistoric burial at Shrewton in Wiltshire *(right)*

Axel Poignant

Other people's methods of disposing of their dead usually seem bizarre *Above* In Sicily corpses were placed on shelves in the catacombs; a similar method is used in some of the modern American mausoleums *Right* In Nigeria the bodies of criminals are denied proper tribal burial and are thrown onto a platform and left to disintegrate *Far right* In the East Indies a widow might be buried alive with her dead husband, to accompany him in the otherworld: an 18th century engraving

its new state, and it probably goes in a new box, in a new hole, six feet deep.

With all this there will be prayers to help the spirit leave the body and to comfort it in the afterlife; some religions, including Christianity, pass the responsibility on to God, and neither tell the dead what to do nor give him ghostly possessions. But the love-hate ambivalence of all family relationships persists in death; gold, blood, hair, memorial plaques, flowers, ashes in a debased baroque urn on the mantelshelf – whichever we use, our motives are obscure and dark, coloured by superstition in the most rational of us, twitched back from the edge of common sense by a little nudge of fear. Hygiene and honour may seem to compel us, but the washing, anointing, parcelling-up, shutting in a box, burying deep and pinning down with a heavy stone may also be seen to come from fright.

The Business of Burial

A state funeral in England or America still has much pageantry; troops slow-marching with reversed rifles to bands playing the Dead March in *Saul*, black crepe muffling the drums, the coffin on a horse-drawn gun carriage, and the mournful notes of the 'Last Post'; but state funerals are rare.

When the average Englishman dies at home, the funeral is organized by an undertaker, who is called in as soon as possible. Some people still keep the body in the house, and then one of the family, or a nurse, may lay it out before he comes. The corpse is stripped, straightened, washed, and dressed in clean or new nightdress or pyjamas, the eyes and mouth are closed, the hands folded on the breast, the hair brushed and combed, and a clean sheet is put over the body, turned down to show the face. If the undertaker's assistant comes to do the laying-out, he will also pin on a square like a nappy after the washing, shave a noticeable beard, and arrange the corpse, using bandages for arms and legs, to look as if it is asleep with the head a little on one side. He has been taught to step back at intervals to see that the effect is 'natural'. (If there is a delay before the funeral in hot weather, the corpse may be embalmed. It is not eviscerated; the blood is simply drawn off through a vein in the armpit and replaced with a formalin-based embalming fluid.) The corpse is then put into the coffin and covered with a shroud to match the pillow and lining, if the family prefers this to ordinary clothes.

In some parts of Britain, relatives and close friends traditionally came to see the corpse and at night one of the family would sit up with it, with candles at head and feet, but this is now rare, and viewing is becoming rare too. More and more people prefer not to keep the body in the house at all, but have the undertaker's men lay it out and take it straight back to his shop, where there are special rooms for visiting if required.

The coffin is made of wood. Most undertakers now sell caskets as well as coffins, an American fashion for a rectangular box instead of the traditional tapered shape.

Notices of the funeral are sent out privately and to the newspapers, and as soon as the arrangements can be made and the family gathered, the corpse is buried. The hearse is a powerful, black car like an estate-wagon, much more expensive than most people have in life, and either it is driven to the house with the coffin already in it, or it arrives empty and the undertaker's bearers carry the coffin out, on their shoulders in the south, down at arm's length by the handles in the north. All over the coffin and on the roof of the hearse (and sometimes in a special car as well) are the flowers, often made up into wreaths and crosses as in the 19th century, but mostly now in sheaves, large flat arrangements tied with bows and bagged in cellophane. The hearse drives very slowly to the church or the cemetery chapel, followed by the matching cars of the undertaker's fleet, containing the mourners.

When they arrive at the church, the coffin is carried in and set on draped trestles before the altar for the burial service. Then it is taken to the grave, already dug, and lowered in. The words of committal are read by the priest, and the mourners may throw a

Mansell Collection

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

little earth onto the coffin before they leave. Later the grave is filled by the cemetery staff, and the flowers are put on top of it.

Some months later, there may be a memorial service which strangers can attend if the family feels the dead to have been very loved or distinguished, and in any case when the grave has settled a memorial stone, slab ('mousetrap' in the trade), or curb may be put up with name, dates of birth and death, and a remembering or loving message. In the last century, these stones were often large and fanciful; now the authorities in charge have clamped down on size and style, and also encourage lawn cemeteries, plain fields with little bronze plaques let flat into the ground so that the grass can easily be cut with a motor-mower. Graves may be visited, and flowers placed or planted, but not many people visit their family graves regularly.

Cosmetics for the Corpse

During the 19th century, funerals were much more complicated than this, and hung over the family for at least a year, during which it was almost compulsory to wear black. The periods of mourning for different degrees of blood relationship were exactly laid down and exactly followed; a widow might wear black for the rest of her life. Now, some old-fashioned people wear dark clothes for the funeral, and men may wear a black tie or an armband for a little while, but that is all. The English see less and less necessity for 'a good funeral' and for the outward rites of grief and mourning.

In the United States of America, however, where funerals were once deliberately simple, the undertakers, who call themselves 'funeral directors' with more conviction than they do in England, have steadily increased the possibilities of big spending on funerals, both as status symbols and as 'grief-therapy', and though mourning clothes are as unfashionable as they are in England, everything else is more elaborate. The undertaker plays a more prominent part throughout. The corpse is almost always embalmed, the face and hands are carefully painted, hair tinted and waved, and spectacles set in place. A complete new outfit (dress or suit, underclothing, hose, shoes) is put on, though nothing shows below the waist, and an artistic arrangement made in a rich wooden or metal casket, lined with ruched and tucked velvet. It is set up in a bower of flowers in an interior-decorated reposing room at the funeral home, where friends often visit the glamorous corpse for several days before the funeral.

The emphasis, exactly as in Ancient Egypt, is on eternal preservation. No 'grave goods' are supplied, but the undertaker does everything he can to foster the belief that the incomplete embalming, the forever metal casket, and the concrete vault that may be bought to enclose it, will prevent decomposition.

Black Crepe and Plumes

The Roman Catholic countries of Europe and South America have neither simplified their burial customs, as in England, nor changed their slant as in the United States, but rather cling to the old black-and-baroque fashions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Mourning is still extensively worn, and there are sometimes horse-drawn hearses with black plumes and velvet caparisons. The motor-hearses have richly carved and gilded decorations, and there are longer processions and more flowers. Graves are still regularly visited.

Roman Catholics also preserve the custom of having a portrait of the dead person at the tomb, an ancient and widespread practice that produced superb portraits and ancestor figures. Some of the most interesting were carried on royal coffins in medieval England and France. The corpse was formerly carried exposed on top of the coffin so that all might see that the king was dead, but later it was put inside and was replaced by a portrait statue, robed and crowned. The few which survive may be seen in Westminster Abbey. The modern pictures for the average man are a very dim reminder, small sepia photographs set in the tombstone.

Primitive man lived in tiny communities in an enormous world with long hours of darkness. There is less room for fear in our shrunken, bright, and crowded world. Millions of us are hardly conscious of night at all, the unknown is receding into space, and our funeral customs, already diluted from primitive rituals, are going the way of all religious ceremony, becoming more and more alike, less and less urgent.

BARBARA JONES

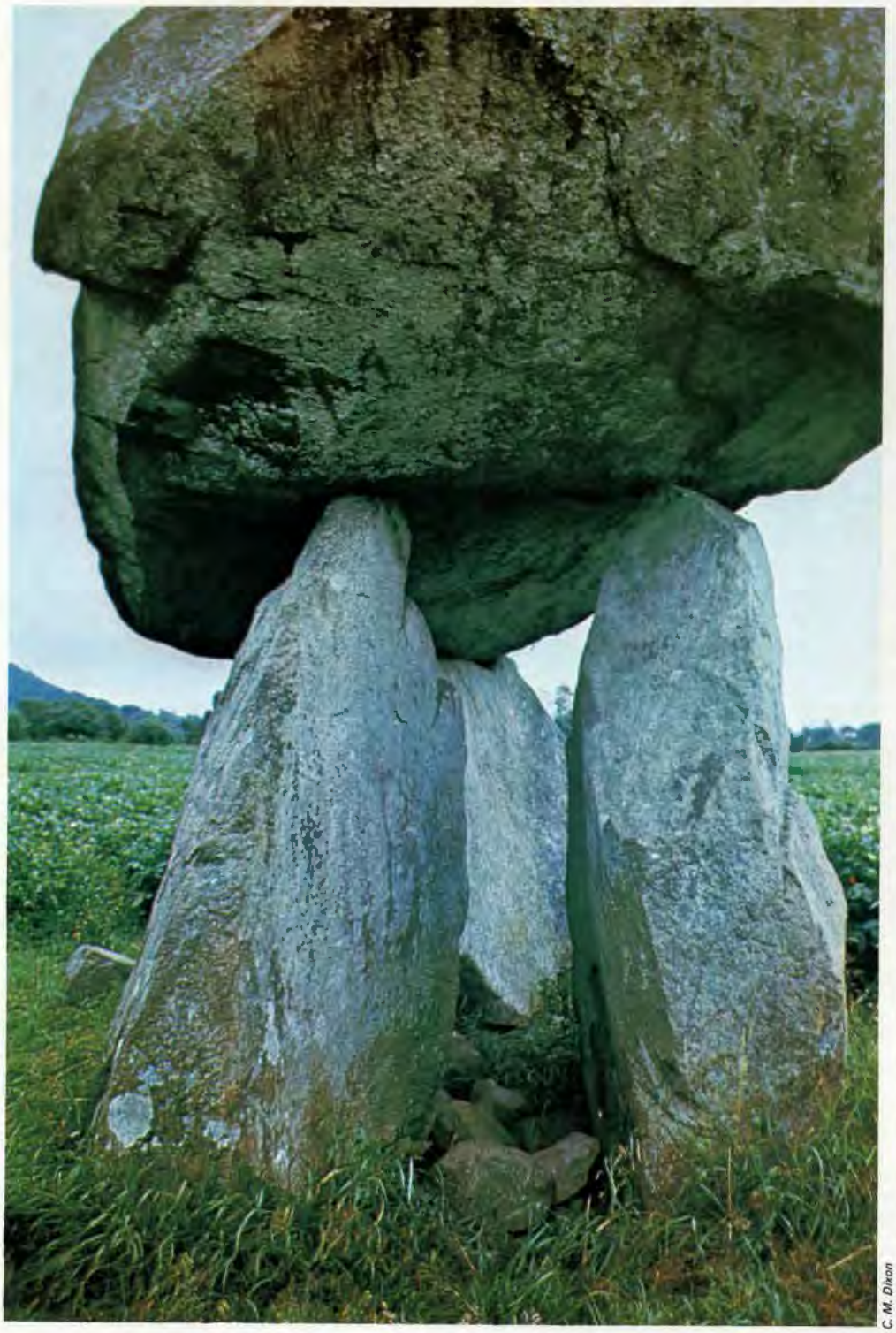
The Symbolism of Funeral Rites

Men have lost their reason in nothing so much as their religion, wherein stones and clouts make martyrs; and, since the religion of one seems madness unto another, to afford an account or rationale of old Rites requires no rigid Reader. That they kindled the pyre aversely, or turning their face from it, was an handsome Symbol of unwilling ministration; that they washed their bones with wine and milk, that the mother wrapped them in linen and dried them in her bosom, the first fostering part, and place of their nourishment; that they opened their eyes towards heaven, before they kindled the fire, as the place of their hopes or original, were no improper Ceremonies . . . that in strewing their tombs the *Romans* affected the Rose, the Greeks *Amaranthus* and myrtle; that the Funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuel Cypress, Fir, Larix, Yew, and Trees perpetually verdant, lay silent expressions of their surviving hopes. Wherein Christians who deck their Coffins with Bays, have found a more elegant Emblem. For that he seeming dead will restore itself from the root, and its dry and exuccous leaves resume their verdure again; which, if we mistake not, we have also observed in furze. Whether the planting of yew in Churchyards hold not its original from ancient Funeral rites, or as an Emblem of Resurrection, from its perpetual verdure, may also admit conjecture . . .

That they buried their dead on their backs, or in a supine position, seems agreeable unto profound sleep, and common posture of dying; contrary to the most natural way of birth; Nor unlike our pendulous posture, in the doubtful state of the womb . . .

That they carried them out of the world with their feet forward, not inconsonant unto reason: as contrary unto the native posture of man, and his production first into it. And also agreeable unto their opinions, while they bid adieu unto the world, not to look again upon it; whereas *Mahometans* who think to return to a delightful life again, are carried forth with their heads forward . . .

Sir Thomas Browne *Urn Burial* (1658)



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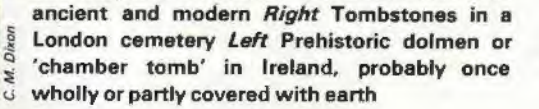


Jim Bamber

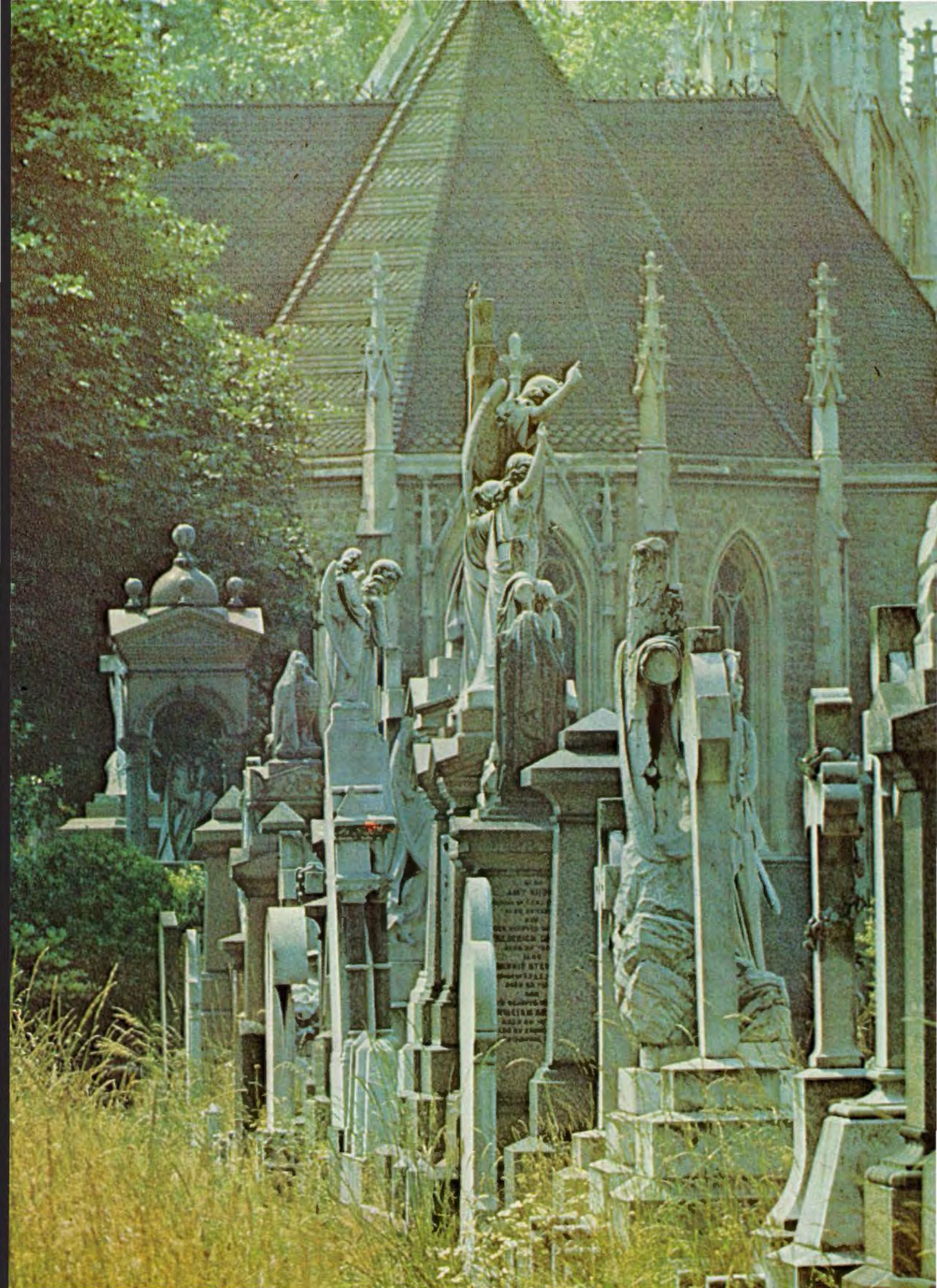
Marking the resting place of the dead with imperishable stone, as a perpetual memorial and a symbol of eternal life, occurs in burials ancient and modern *Right* Tombstones in a London cemetery *Left* Prehistoric dolmen or 'chamber tomb' in Ireland, probably once wholly or partly covered with earth

The Origins of Burial

The deliberate burial of the dead is one of man's earliest cultural achievements. It was first associated with the culture of Neanderthal man, towards the close of the Middle Stone Age. In the later Stone Age when present-day man made his appearance, some 40,000 years ago, there was a great outburst of magical, artistic activity, evidence of which can be found in the cave art of southern France (see CAVE ART). At the same time, there was a greater elaboration both of graves and grave goods; objects were placed beside the corpse and the bones of the dead were sometimes coloured with red ochre. In living cultures, where it is possible to establish the meanings of such customs, the red of the ochre is often associated with blood, a basic element in life itself. In these same societies the burial of the grave goods implies their continued use by the dead though in a different form from life on earth. It therefore seems probable that by the time of the Upper Paleolithic Age, the period of cave art, man had some idea of continuity after death, of another world, a land of the dead, of which the Christian heaven and hell is but a dualistic expression.

The basic logical requirement of such a conception is the development of a dualistic view of man's nature, which is seen as split into flesh and spirit, mind and matter, body and soul. Of these two elements, one dies with the body, one lives on after death. So that life and death are not two completely opposed states: the spirit interpenetrates death and peoples the otherworld with the living dead.

The significance of the appearance of elaborate burial customs and artistic achievements in the Upper Paleolithic Age is greater than at first appears. For their existence suggests that by this time man had developed a means of elaborating concepts and ideas, a language such as we know today. The development of language from a more elementary sign system, such



The urge to defy the transitoriness of human life by erecting a permanent monument to the dead we love runs very deep *Above* Etruscan sarcophagus at Rome, commemorating a married couple *Right* Perhaps the most magnificent tomb ever built, the Taj Mahal at Agra, India, where the bodies of Shah Jahan and his favourite wife lie side by side in the vault beneath the dome

as animals possess, was undoubtedly the greatest technological advance in the history of man. It is the feature that most clearly separates contemporary man from the apes.

Thinking is not confined to the users of language, but there can be no doubt that the development of thought and its use as a major instrument of human growth is dependent upon the invention of a communication system of this kind. One of the first signs of this advance in the technology of communications is the appearance of burial customs which suggest that man had developed a set of ideas which divided his nature into body and soul, and his universe into earth and heaven, or this world and the next. The belief in immortality, as the famous anthropologist Malinowski pointed out, is one of the principal sources of religious inspiration.

A Cemetery in the Belly

The burial customs we know from direct observation and written record, rather than from digging into the past, display a number of striking similarities, as well as a wide range of variation in other respects. The variations are in specific customs such as methods of disposal. Burial in the earth (inhumation) is only one such method. Other forms include burial in caves and in mounds or tumuli, obvious forerunners of the Egyptian pyramids and the mausoleums of Europe, by which the important dead are singled out for exceptional treatment. Water burial is practised by seafaring peoples not only out of necessity but also as a way of honouring the great. In Scandinavian legend the corpse of the slain Balder, with his wife and horse, and the gift of Odin's ring Draupnir, was laid in his ship upon a funeral pyre and launched blazing out to sea (see BALDER). Elsewhere, as among the LoDagaa of northern Ghana, burial in a river or its bank is a method of cleansing the community of someone who has died a 'bad death'.

The placing of the dead in trees or on scaffolds is found in many parts of the world and is especially associated with the Zoroastrian religion, practised by the Parsee community of Bombay. Their holy book, the *Zend-Avesta*, proclaims a punishment of a thousand stripes for a person who shall bury in the earth the corpse of dog or man, and not disinter it before the end of the second year. For only such a treatment can secure the proper ascent of the dead to the other world. (See PARSEES.)

The Sioux and other American Plains Indians also buried their dead on platforms, and sat for days beneath them to keep the dead company. This may have been partly to protect the body against wild animals; for the same purpose other nomadic tribes used cremation. Eastern Indians often practised a secondary burial – disinterring a corpse, scraping the bones clean, tying them into a skin and burying the bundle – sometimes in a pot, to be kept near the family. Plains Indians would often employ a symbolic second burial, cutting a lock of hair from the deceased, wrapping it in skins and keeping it as a sacred possession.

Cannibalism, in those relatively rare parts of the world where it was practised, was sometimes a recognized means of disposing of the dead and was an obligation on the surviving relatives. The meat of the funeral feast is 'nothing less than the corpse of the departed kinsman'. Of inhabitants of the eastern highlands of New Guinea it has been remarked that 'their cemeteries are their bellies'. Certainly this mode of disposal of the dead, the consumption of one generation by the next, is a striking way of conquering death.

Methods of disposing of the dead vary from people to people. But they may also vary within a particular group. We have already seen how important leaders may be accorded special treatment; 'sinners' or despised categories of persons may be differentiated in the same way, especially those who have died a 'bad death'; for example, suicides, witches and those killed by drowning or by lightning, young children who have not yet been fully incorporated into the society and, in Africa, women who have died in childbirth. In each of these cases, whether intentionally or unintentionally, something is wrong.

In Europe, until recent times, certain Christian sects refused to bury unbaptized children and suicides in 'holy ground', while the blood-guilty were interred at a crossroads with a stake in the heart. The last crossroads burial in England took place outside Lord's cricket ground in 1823. And in 1811, in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch, a corpse was arrested for debt, a survival of the procedure whereby the body of a debtor could be legally deprived of a proper burial until his creditors had been repaid.

Love and Fear

The dead are treated in different ways not only for reasons of status, but also as a sanction upon those who remain behind. The earthly system of rewards and punishments is often projected onto the dead, and their destination after death may depend on the way in which they are buried. Only a full burial will ensure proper despatch to the other world; a partial performance may mean that the dead man becomes not a sanctified ancestor but an unsanctified ghost hanging around his earthly dwelling, haunting those who survive in an attempt to get his grievances put right.

The attempt to put oneself at a distance from the ghost is a constant theme of funeral customs everywhere. It is the task of the living to set the dead on the path to the other world, the last journey from which there is no return. For this purpose, the dead may be provided (as in rural Greece) with a coin for the ferryman who rows them across the river of death, with food to sustain them on the way, and with property to use when they get there. This property may include slaves, slaughtered on the tomb, or wives, burnt on the funeral pyre, or the more humble possessions of the deceased, his clothes, his weapons or his drinking vessels.

The general trend towards actions of this kind, which are implicit in the body-soul division, is illustrated by a report from Lincolnshire at the turn of the century. A widow had placed her husband's mug and jug on his grave, having first broken them both. Explaining her actions to the rector, she said, 'I was that moidered with crying that I clean forgot to put 'em in t'coffin . . . So I goes and does t'next best. I deads 'em both over his grave, and says I to mysen,

Burial in the earth is only one method of disposing of the dead . . . others include burial in caves and mounds, forerunners of the Egyptian pyramids, the mausoleums of Europe, and monumental tombs

Gerald Cubitt

The Bishop Orders His Tomb

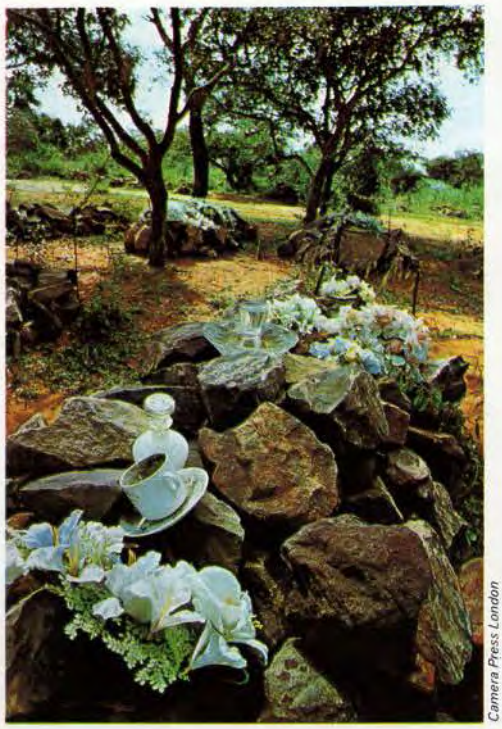
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
– Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was the snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet . . .
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse
– Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! . . .
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke! . . .

Robert Browning
The Bishop Orders His Tomb in St Praxed's Church

my old man, he set a vast of store, he did, by yon mug and jug, and when their ghoastes gets over on yon side he'll holler out, "Yon's mine, hand 'em over to me," and I'd like to see them as would stop him a-having of them an' all.'

In simpler hunting societies such as those of North America, where the social investment in property was small, a man's possessions were usually destroyed after his death. As the accumulation of capital goods becomes a more prominent feature of society, so grave goods become more nominal, tokens and toys being substituted for the real thing. Eventually expenditure on the dead is seen as neglect of the living, and strong efforts are made to cut down on such 'unnecessary' expenses.

The destruction of a man's property provides a clear instance of the double attitude that lies behind many aspects of funeral ceremonies. Sidney Hartland commented (in his article on 'Death and Disposal of the Dead' in *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics):* 'Throughout the rites and observances attendant on death, two motives – two principles – are found struggling for the mastery. On the one hand, there is the fear of death and of the dead, which produces the horror of the corpse, the fear of defilement, and the overlapping desire to ban the ghost. On the other hand, there is the affection, real or simulated, for the deceased, which bewails his departure and is unwilling to let him go.' The corpse is thus both loved and feared.

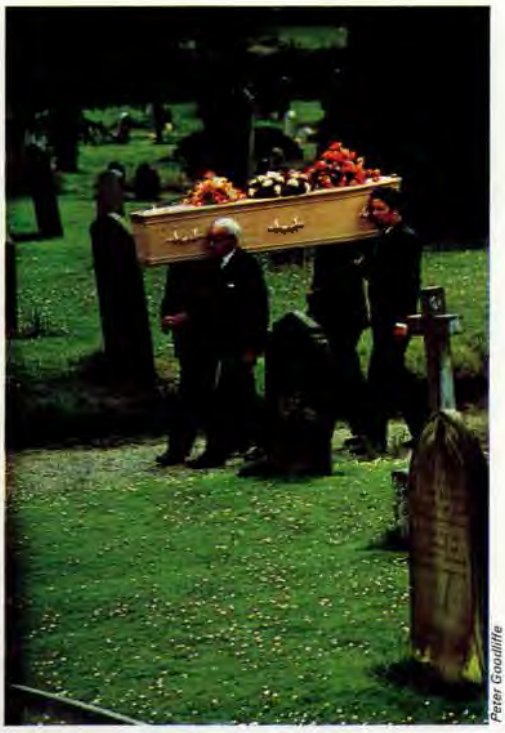


Camera Press London

Above **Grave in Botswana, southern Africa, with flowers, cup and saucer and other objects, which are modern descendants of the offerings made all over the world to show love and respect for the dead, and at the same time to placate an angry ghost** ***Below*** **Funeral procession with wreaths and mourners in Sicily, a survival of the twin attempts to honour the dead and formally cut him off from the world**

Axel Poignant

Transworld Features



Peter Goodliffe

No moment in most people's lives attracts the ceremonial with which they are honoured after death. Roman Catholic countries have retained elaborate funeral customs, including the solemn and sinister horse-drawn hearse *(left)*. Protestant burials *(right)* have generally become simpler, though in the United States there has been a return to embalming and the monumental style of ancient Egypt

To take a cue from Freud, the double-edged attitude towards the dead, seen in so many funeral customs, is a projection of the love and hate that mark the relations we have with our nearest and dearest. Significantly it is often the closest kin, the dead man's heirs and widow, who are seen as being in the greatest danger from the ghost; it is they who have to be provided with the strongest protection from his revenging spirit. So it is they too who often have to undergo the severest ordeals during the course of these ceremonies, since they are the ones who have most to gain (and most to lose) from his death.

The funeral ceremony is not only a matter of disposing of the dead and despatching him to the other world, but also of filling his place in the land of the living and redistributing his rights and duties over people and property.

The transition from life to death is the major 'rite of passage' through which all must go, and the great change in status from living to dead cannot be performed just with a nod of the head. The process has to be a gradual one and the burial service is customarily followed, at a suitably discreet interval, by a second funeral, an obituary service, in which the close kin are released from mourning, the dead are despatched to their final abode, and their life on earth is summed up in what is the equivalent of a funeral oration.

Reaction to death mellows in the course of the funeral and one of the functions of such ceremonies is to relieve the bereaved of anxiety and grief, as well as to reconcile the community to the loss of one of their number, for death constitutes a distinct threat to those who remain behind. But such a threat can never be totally set aside. The idea of continuity after death is itself an aspect of the refusal to accept the reality of death. So too perhaps is the idea that death, except for the old, is 'unnatural'. In most pre-industrial societies a specific supernatural cause was assigned for every event. Hence the frequent ordeals, centring upon the corpse, that occurred during the funerals, in an attempt to find out who killed the dead man. In one form or another, accusations of witchcraft or of sins against the supernatural powers were a constant accompaniment to funerals.

The Loss of Eternal Life

One striking illustration of this attempt to reject its inevitability is to be found in the tales of the origin of death. The biblical story of Adam, Eve and the apple has its parallels in other stories that attribute the coming of death to man's disobedience. But often what is remarkable is the triviality of the offence man has committed. Another set of stories, found in all parts of the world, contrasts the mortality of man and the waxing and waning of the moon. In one version God sends messengers to convey the news of immortality to man, and of death to the moon; the message to man gets delayed or reversed, with the result that he loses the gift of eternal life. But the manner in which this was lost is almost accidental, rather than a matter of deliberate planning. It is as if the chance introduction of death left open the possibility that the present state of affairs could be reversed.

It is doubtful if, in any society, men have placed much hope in such an outcome or much weight on tales of this kind. If an explanation of death was required, to meet the enquiries of children or the fears of the old, then these stories were ready to hand. In their actions, as distinct from their formal 'beliefs', most people display a more practical attitude towards death. It is the elaborate funeral ceremonies that enable small face-to-face communities to meet the shock that the loss of a member inevitably brings. In our more impersonal society, the impact of death (unless of a national figure) is very localized; even close kin are shielded from immediate contact by specialist undertakers. But in simpler societies, funerals are often the most elaborate ceremonies in the whole ritual calendar, the occasions on which a community gets together to dispose of the dead, redistribute his roles and property, and at the same time set its fears at rest by demonstrating the solidarity of the living in the face of loss and bereavement.

(See also CREMATION; CULT OF THE DEAD.)

JACK GOODY

FURTHER READING: E. Bendann, *Death Customs* (Humanities, 1970); Jack Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (Stanford University Press, 1962); Barbara Jones, *Design for Death* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1967).

Burning

Cremation ranks second, in antiquity and popularity, only to earth burial as a way of disposing of the dead: burning an animal was a way of offering it to a god, the rising smell and smoke being thought to carry the essence of the beast up to the god: the belief that burning a substance releases its 'soul' or 'essence' is found in alchemy: in Europe heretics and witches were burned to death. See CREMATION: FIRE: SACRIFICE: SUTTEE.

British Museum

They have been called 'the harmless people' but this has not protected them against the injuries inflicted by civilisation, or against the harm they fear from natural forces and ghosts

BUSHMEN

ONLY A FEW THOUSAND Bushmen today continue to live as their ancestors lived in South Africa. Less than two centuries ago their people were ruthlessly killed off by the Dutch, and within living memory European settlers used to hunt down the 'wild' Bushmen, his women and children, as though they were game. Their numbers have been further reduced by many tribesmen leaving their old hunting grounds to become 'tamed' by working for white settlers. The remaining representatives of the Bushman race are mostly found in the Kalahari Desert in the south-west.

To understand Bushman beliefs, with their emphasis on Nature worship, magic and taboo, we must take into account that the Bushmen are a Stone Age people, in terms of their intellectual and cultural development. They have no written language, no codified laws or system of government, no agriculture and no settled communities.

Until they came into contact with Europeans, the Bushmen lived almost exactly the same sort of life that primitive men lived thousands of years ago. They wore no clothes except a pouch to cover their genitals and, occasionally, a cloak of animal skins. Wholly nomadic, they existed by hunting and root-gathering. Their needs were so simple that their language was, and is, extremely rudimentary, not far removed in sound from the utterances of animals – the so-called 'Click' language which early travellers likened to the clucking of turkeys. Understandably, their intellectnal potential was limited to an awareness of basic natural phenomena, leading to a reverence for the life-giving rain, for rivers and harmless animals, and a dread of storms, drought and the fiercer wild beasts.

This aboriginal African race has ouly vague ideas of religion and no organized form of worship. They see the world around them as divided into forces of good and evil, and they do what they can to show their gratitude to the former and to placate the latter. Incapable of building temples or even of making idols, they pay homage to the spirit world by means of dances, music and incantations. They rely on myths for an interpretation of such phenomena as birth, death, the origin of the world, the nature of an afterlife, and the role of the supernatural in the affairs of men.

The Great Captain

Some tribes speak of a god called Tsui-Goab who is a combination of legendary super-chief, folk hero and lord of the skies. But Bushmen do not worship or pray to him or any other deity in a formal manner, for they have nothing resembling a temple or shrine. The nearest they come to a concept of God in the Christian sense is their vague belief in a 'Lord', or 'Great Captain' who is bigger and stronger than any mortal man and who lives in a two-storey house in the sky. The Captain, his wife and his numerous children live on the ground floor of this mansion while the upper storey is occupied by the souls of the dead. The Captain's house appears to be a glorified version of the Bushman's hut, and his diet is a banquet of the Bushman's favourite food – honey, locusts, bluebottles, butterflies and ant eggs. The souls of the dead do nothing and eat nothing, which implies that this divine chieftain has no particular interest in mere mortals.

More powerful in some Bushmen's eyes is Gaunab, the equivalent of the Devil, the embodiment of evil responsible for all the calamities that afflict mankind, including storms, thunderbolts, lightning and drought. To people whose day-to-day existence is constantly threatened by sudden danger, the forces of evil are bound to seem stronger than those of good, and this is why so many Bushman religious beliefs strike Western observers as vague and inconsistent. Much more important to men who live so close to Nature are the realities of their daily life. Rain is undoubtedly their principal concern and most of their rites and ceremonies are conducted to placate the rain spirit.

Walling up a Ghost

Living in a state of constant watchfulness, particularly at night, Bushmen are more aware of ghosts than they are of gods, and the ghosts of dead people are closer to them than some deity who lives far away in the sky. The reason for this is that primitive people do not accept the Western concept of death as an ending of life due to known causes. In their view, a person does not die, but is spirited away in mysterious and sometimes sinister circumstances. The one who has thus gone remains somewhere in the offing as a ghost. He might have died because malignant spirits entered his body and made him sick; or sorcerers might have carried him off by magical spells. Even a very old man refuses to believe that death is inevitable in the course of Nature: he will argue that he has enemies who will bewitch him with their powerful medicine. In a curious way he may be right, since his actual fate, when he is too old and decrepit to hunt, could well be to be abandoned, to die ultimately of starvation or as the prey of wild beasts.

The graves of dead Bushmen show this fear of ghosts, for they try to make sure that the deceased's spirit does not come forth to harm them by placing heavy stones on the corpse and then piling up a mound over the grave. And in order to protect themselves from supernatural spirits, whether of dead people or of hostile gods like Gaunab, the Bushmen have their magicians and witch-doctors, like every other pagan group in Africa. Some magicians are men, some women. Some are benefactors, others malefactors. All have special powers, perhaps to make rain, perhaps to control the movement of animals, perhaps to cure the sick.

Messages from Bones

Bushmen witch-doctors are individuals recognized as having heightened powers of perception, who become the principal social and medical advisers of the group. They are, among other things, soothsayers and can predict such things as the weather or the probable success or failure of a hunting expedition. In addition, every Bushman acts as his own soothsayer by means of his 'bones', or fragments of animal bone marked with special signs. He consults them on every important occasion and 'reads' them according to fixed laws that are based on their positions and conjunctions.

The Bushmen of southern Africa have preserved the religious beliefs of the Stone Age. A Bushman in trance, communicating with spirits *(above)* and a ritual dance round a fire *(below)*

Jurgen Schadeberg

Jurgen Schadeberg

Important functions of the magician are to make rain, to ensure a plentiful supply of game for the hunters, to protect the group from evil spirits. Some magicians specialize in various traditional cures, based largely on herbs and a primitive form of bloodletting. Naturally their medicine is of a very simple kind but they cope with a great many diseases by massage, herbal compresses and a process of extracting the 'evil medicine' by sucking the part affected and spitting out the poison or foreign body which is causing the sickness.

The Bushman's knowledge of the properties of herbs, natural salves and lotions is sometimes surprising, as is shown by their use of urine as a sterilising agent. Urine is, in fact, virtually bacteria-free and has been used in the West as a disinfectant in battlefield conditions. This treatment, as used by the Bushmen, was first described by a Dutchman, Johannes Gulielmus de Grevenbrok, in 1695:

> A very frequent remedy is to turn the patient on his back and on his front and make water on him. They do not allow even his face to escape a bath of urine. Some even take a seashell or tortoise-shell, fill it with water discharged by one man, mix it with a powder from a certain plant, and administer it to the sick man. They do not attach any healing property to the water of women; the women themselves think it injurious to them.

To what extent a magical element is present in this type of doctoring is difficult to say. Certainly neither the Bushmen nor their relations, the Hottentots, indulge in as much mumbo-jumbo and fetishism as the Bantu and the Negroes of Equatorial Africa.

Puberty Rites

One of the principal duties of the magician is to preside over the puberty ceremonies. For the boys, the initiation consists of living in isolation in a special camp for about a month. During the first few days they are roughly handled by the magician and half-starved: their only food is a little water and raw roots or berries. After the first few days of hardship, the boys are allowed to dance the tribal dances, wearing ostrich feathers and the beaks of white storks. On one of the nights of the dance, a female demon called Hishe appears in their midst and is driven away by the magician. Hishe is variously described as an old hag; a small creature with red eyes, wings and claws; a lion walking upright; or a hermaphrodite. She is obviously a hobgoblin invented by the magicians to frighten the boys during initiation, for if they overcome their fear, they are considered to be men. Similarly the initiates are given a hunting test when each lad is required to show his skill in stalking and shooting an animal. Those who pass these tests are branded by the magician, who cuts the boys between the eyebrows and shoulder-blades with incisions about half an inch long. This cicatrization ends the rites and announces that the boy has become a man, with a man's rights and responsibilities.

Among one group in the eastern Kalahari, coming of age involves circumcision. The boys are operated on at the age of 12, being brought forward one by one to the medicine-man who pulls the boy's foreskin as far over the glans as possible before cutting it off with one slash of a ceremonial stone knife. The boys are given two or three weeks' convalescence, for the operation is a very severe one. Many of the boys faint, some have been known to die from loss of blood, but none cry out, as this is considered unmanly.

The same aura of magic surrounds the puberty rites prescribed for the girls. The ceremony begins with the first menstruation, when the girl is in a state of taboo. She is shut up in a tiny hut and is seen only by her mother until her menstrual flow ceases. The severest penalties attach to a man who sees a girl at this time and there are many legends recounting how a man who looked on a girl during her first period was transformed into a stone. For her part, a girl who was foolish enough to defy the taboo might find herself turned into a frog. Once her puberty rites are ended, however, a feast is held in her honour. The feast is followed by a dance of all the women and girls of the clan, with only two of the older men present.

As soon as a wife is pregnant, she is again in a state of taboo. She may not eat certain foods; no one may pass behind her back; and no man may be present at the birth. In the case of the first child, delivery is in a hut, under the floor of which the afterbirth is carefully buried in case some magician should use it to bewitch the mother or her child. For subsequent births, the woman simply goes to a secluded place, has her baby, and returns to the camp.

Twin births are considered unlucky, and one of the infants, usually the girl, is buried alive, though it is doubtful whether this practice still continues. The justification for it was based on the difficulty of a woman carrying two babies on the march, let alone suckling them both.

The Painted Rocks

The Bushmen have a large body of folklore and myths, mainly about the heavenly bodies and animals. Some of the stars and planets are regarded as semi-divine, and there is considerable evidence of moon worship.

Supernatural properties are attributed to certain animals and insects, notably the mantis which no Bushman would kill. The mantis is the central character of a great many Bushman legends and is endowed with human attributes, including the power of speech. He has his favourite animals, especially the eland, the cow antelope and the gemsbok, or South African antelope, which he protects on behalf of the hunters. The mantis is regarded as the Bushman's best friend in the animal world.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Bushman culture is their skill as artists. The rocks all over South Africa are covered with their paintings, many of which belong in the front rank of prehistoric art. Some anthropologists interpret these pictures as mystical in origin and purpose—a manifestation of a fertility cult or of sympathetic magic. According to this theory, the artist drew the portrait of those animals the hunters wished to kill. Other students of Bushman art prefer the simpler explanation that these paintings, some of them obviously of raids by Negro tribes from the north, were simply records of historical events.

The whole subject of Bushman art remains something of a mystery, for some paintings are undoubtedly many thousands of years old while others are quite recent, only ending with the arrival of the white men. Today, Bushmen have lost all skill and desire to paint the rocks and they cannot even interpret the work of their ancestors.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: A. Jackson, *The Bushmen of South Africa* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1957); E. Thomas, *The Harmless People* (Knopf, 1959).

Butterfly

Symbol of the soul and of attraction to the light: in Europe, North America and the Pacific it was widely believed that the soul has the form of a butterfly, which gave the creature uncanny and sometimes ominous connotations; in northern Europe to see one flying at night was a warning of death, and some said that the soul-butterfly's ability to leave the body in sleep accounts for dreams; medieval angels were sometimes depicted with butterfly's wings and fairies are often shown with them.

See INSECTS.

Tom Scott

Buzzard

Scavenger bird, associated in much mythology with cleanliness and so with curative powers; Pueblo Indians used its feathers in curing rituals, and to 'sweep away' evil; American superstition says a buzzard feather worn behind the ear will prevent rheumatism, buzzard grease will cure smallpox; also associated with death in the Old South, where beliefs say that witches sometimes take buzzard form, and that a buzzard shadow will do harm if it passes over you.

See BIRDS.

CABALA

Modern occultists have been powerfully influenced by the Cabala: George Stansfeld Jones, who took the magical name of 'Frater Achad', rearranged the cabalistic Tree of Life into a 'cosmic snowflake', a symbolic anatomy of God and the universe, which he hoped would be used as the ground plan of a perfect temple: drawn by Steffi Grant

Kenneth Grant

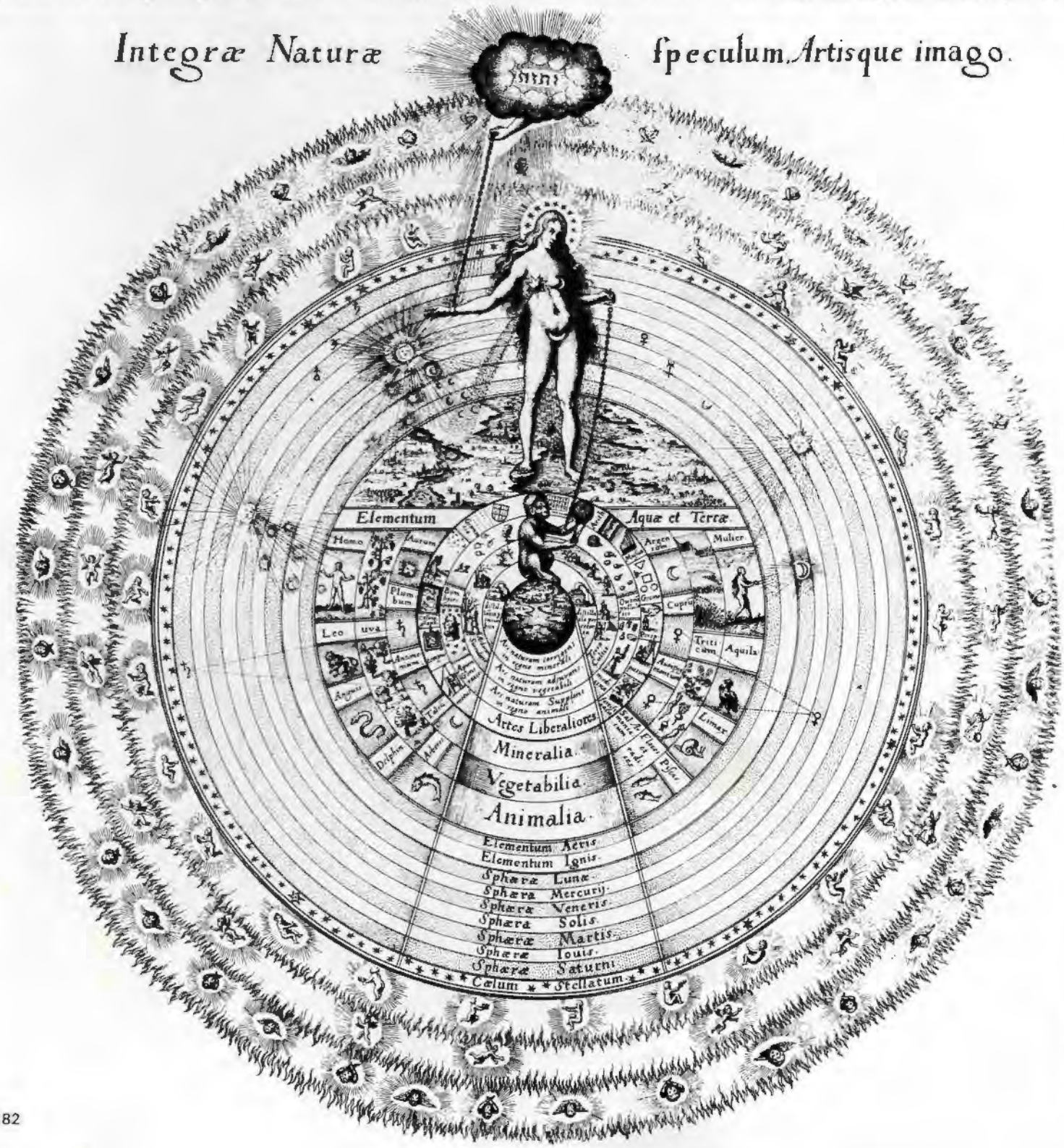
Eventually used as a term for almost 'any mixture of occultism, Hermetism, Rosicrucianism, exotic theosophy and general infotuation with secret lore', the Cabala was originally a body of Jewish doctrines about the nature of God and the vital role of man in God's universe

THE CABALA, strictly speaking, is a system of Jewish mystical thought which originated in southern France and Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries. Yet even for the founders and early masters of this school, Cabala was but one among many terms (true knowledge, inner knowledge, knowledge of the mysteries, hidden wisdom) used to designate their secret lore, and it was only later that Cabala became the term generally used. Later the word was used for Jewish mysticism and occultism in general, and later still Christian Cabalists gave it an even wider meaning.

Cabala or Cabbala or Qabbalah are among the English spellings of a Hebrew word whose more correct transliteration is Kabbalah and whose meaning is 'receiving' or 'that which is received'. By the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, the word had the technical sense of 'tradition', and especially of tradition handed down by word of mouth, as distinct from the written Scriptures. At this date it still had no 'secret' or mystical connotations but referred to acknowledged legal, ceremonial and religious traditions.

The Cabala's central doctrine deals with the unfolding of the hidden and unknowable God into the 'fullness' of the manifest God, known by his works. A diagram of the universe by the 17th century author Robert Fludd, with the links between the hidden God and the world

The origins of Jewish mysticism are obscure. Many of the prophetic, visionary or apocalyptic passages in the Old Testament played a considerable role in subsequent mystical lore (see DANIEL; EZEKIEL), but there is no justification for viewing these as part of a continuous mystical or esoteric (hidden or secret) tradition. The earliest fully articulated mystical system that is accessible to the historian of Judaism is the Merkabah or 'throne' mysticism (see THRONE) that flourished from the 4th to the 10th centuries in Palestine and Babylonia. No doubt this mystical tradition, or parts



of it, goes back to the early Rabbinic period (2nd to 3rd centuries), and beyond that to still earlier currents and trends. The Mediterranean world of late antiquity with its mingling of Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, magic and speculations about angels, demons and divine powers, created a climate in which mystical lore could develop.

Some Jewish writings which were not included in the Old Testament (the *Book of Enoch*, for example, and the *Testaments of the Patriarchs*) suggest the existence of groups which cultivated esoteric doctrines and mystical disciplines. In the 1st century AD the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria describes in his *De Vita Contemplativa* a Jewish sect leading a contemplative and semi-monastic life. There is evidence that the Essenes, held by most scholars to be identical with the Dead Sea or Qumran sect whose writings were found in and since 1948 near Jericho (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS), possessed a secret lore. It seems to have consisted mainly of angelology and magic, and there is no reason to assume any continuity of Essene doctrines and the forms of mysticism cultivated in rabbinic and other circles.

At any rate, the Mishna (a 2nd century rabbinic collection of religious law) attests the existence of two subjects that should not be taught in public and which, therefore, were considered as esoteric disciplines intended for initiates only. These subjects were 'the work of creation' (based on Genesis, chapter 1) and 'the work of the chariot' (the mysteries of the Divine Throne, based on Ezekiel, chapter 1). The precise nature and contents of these mystical disciplines is a matter for conjecture but it seems certain that some of the early rabbis practised an ecstatic contemplation which culminated in the vision of the Throne of Glory, the Merkabah.

In the later *Hekhaloth* texts, the ascent of the soul to heaven and the 'perils of the soul' encountered during these ascents are described realistically and convincingly enough. Like all forms of mysticism involving the rising of the soul to heaven, Merkabah mysticism ramifies into theories about the structure of the universe, because the ascent takes place in a spatially conceived cosmos, divided into higher and lower worlds, spheres and heavenly palaces; into angelology and demonology, because the various cosmic spheres had their angelic guardians and powers; and into magic, because the adept had to use special words and mystic signs to force his passage and subdue the angelic or demonic powers barring his progress. Esoteric speculations and ecstatic experiences of this kind were probably tinged with Gnostic elements (see GNOSTICISM). They were viewed with misgivings and suspected of being apt to lead weaker spirits into heresy.

The characteristic feature of Merkabah mysticism was its emphasis on the transcendent, mysteriously awesome and truly numinous aspect of the deity. The experience of loving communion with God, so common in later mysticism, is absent here. The initiate rises through spheres, worlds, heavens and celestial mansions or 'palaces' *(hekhaloth)* guarded by all sorts of terrifying angelic beings until at last, if he be worthy, he stands in awe and trembling before the supreme vision of the Divine Splendour.

Creation and Splendour

The *Sefer Yetsirah* or 'Book of Creation' which was written at some time between the 3rd and 6th centuries in Palestine or Babylonia, and which came to enjoy great prestige in the subsequent history of Jewish mysticism, stands completely outside the Merkabah tradition. Its theory of the universe derives the world from 32 elements, which are the first ten numbers and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The book is obscure, perhaps deliberately, but its doctrine of ten *sefiroth* (which here means numbers) and its emphasis on letter mysticism clearly influenced the later Cabala. All reality is a reality of the letters, which are the ultimate elements of which the cosmos is constructed. This conception easily links on the one hand with the cabalistic doctrine of the cosmic process as an unfolding of the mystical name of God (that is, of the Hebrew letters constituting his name), and on the other hand with the theory and practice of magic which seeks to manipulate reality by means of these letters (see ALPHABET).

From Palestine and Babylonia some of these esoteric and magical texts and traditions spread to the Jews of Spain, Italy and France, and led to the formation of the German 'Hasidism' which flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries. The mysticism of the German Hasidism was a mixture of parts of the Merkabah tradition (but without its ecstatic practice), magical elements, ideas derived from the *Sefer Yetsirah*, and philosophical doctrines. The practical emphasis was on piety, humility and self-effacement, on penitential and ascetic discipline, and on the practice of devotional contemplation – particularly at prayer – in the form of meditation on the Hebrew letters and their numerical values. In due course German Hasidism merged with the new Cabala that developed in the 12th and 13th centuries, at first in Provence, in southern France, and subsequently also in northern Spain.

It is precisely this new system of mystical theosophy (or 'knowledge of God'), and its continuation into the 16th century and beyond, which constitutes the Cabala in the strict sense of the term. Its origins still need further clarification, for it is evident that many different influences coalesced in its emergence: Gnostic and Merkabah traditions, elements deriving from other oriental sources, and philosophical theories of various kinds.

It is a curious fact that the Cabala should have developed in the same area and at the same time that saw the flowering of Provençal culture and the sudden and violent efflorescence of the Cathar heresy (see CATHARS). There is no reason to doubt the existence of cultural contacts but there are few, if any, definite and specific similarities. Cabalists and Cathars can both be said to have held Gnostic doctrines, but there is nothing to suggest either a common source or direct influence of one movement on the other.

The principal work of Spanish Cabala, the *Zohar* or 'Book of Splendour' was written in the years after 1280 AD. The *Zohar* draws on many of the cabalistic doctrines and traditions which had evolved by them, but there is no reason to consider it the work of an 'editor' who merely combined ancient sources or texts. The author, Moses de Leon of Guadalajara, wrote the work in a peculiar imitation-Aramaic. The *Zohar* in due course became the classical main text for the Cabalists. Subsequent cabalistic works, whether expounding similar or different doctrines, could not affect the prestige and central position of the *Zohar*. Even the completely new cabalistic system evolved by Isaac Luria in the 16th century pretended to be a profounder interpretation of the mysteries of the *Zohar*.

The Abyss of Nothingness

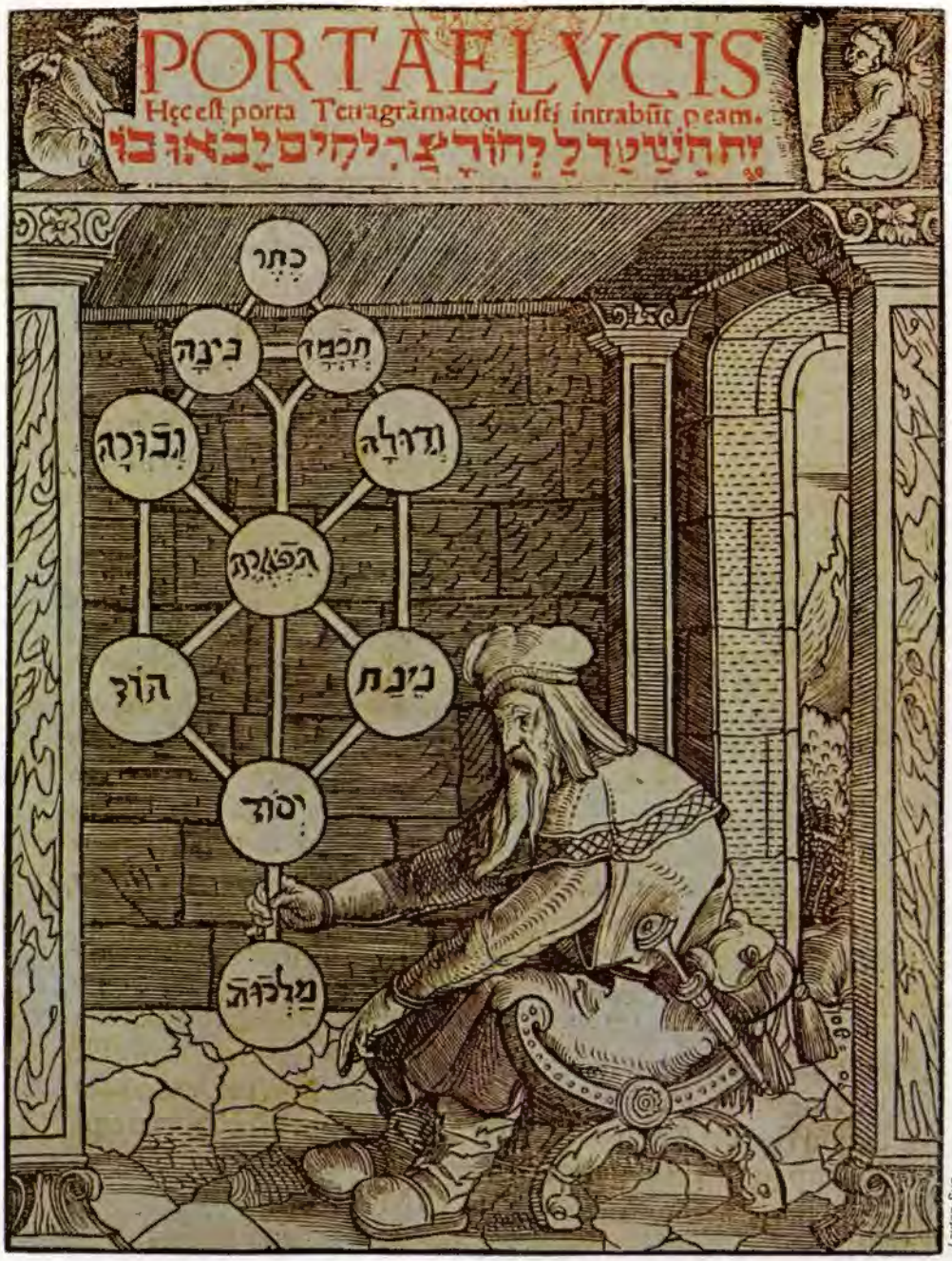
The backbone of the cabalistic system is its doctrine of the deity, which distinguishes between the inaccessible and unknowable *deus absconditus* (the hidden god) on the one hand, and the self-revealing dynamic God of religious experience on the other. Of the former not even existence can be predicted. He, or rather 'It', is the paradoxical fullness of the great divine Nothing. The Cabalists called it *En Sof*, literally the 'infinite'.

En Sof is so hidden in the abyss of its Nothingness that it is not even mentioned in the Bible, let alone addressed in prayer or accessible in contemplation. Scripture, God's word, is by definition nothing but the revelation, that is, the self-manifestation, of God. An existing God means a manifest, revealed and related God. The process of manifestation is the process by which God 'comes into being' (at least in the perspective of the being to which he relates).

The text of the Bible, when read superficially, seems to describe the creation of the world and God's first dealings with it, but the Cabalist pierces through this outward layer of meaning to an inner, hidden level which is, to him, the ultimately significant one. What Scripture tells is the process of Divine becoming and of the inner Divine life. For in the depths of the Divine hiddenness, turned in upon itself, there occurs a primordial, initial wrench by which it begins to turn outwards, to unfold, to exist. Here existence is a process of extraversion in the introverted En Sof.

This initial movement is described in a highly mystical passage in the *Zohar* as the concentration or crystallization of energy in one luminous point (or rather a point 'dark with luminosity') which bursts the closed confines of En Sof. The process of 'emanation' has started. Cabalistic writings use the term emanation rather than creation, and where the Bible says 'create' they interpret it in the sense of 'emanate'.

An emanation is something which has 'flowed out' from its source, as distinct from something which has been created, made by a Maker. A theory of emanation from God is a way of providing links between the many different phenomena of the world and the spiritual One, in which all things have their source. But the Cabalists use the theory of emanation not so much for this



The Tree of Life, from *Portae Lucis* (1516) by Paul Ricci, a Jew turned Christian who taught at Pavia University. The ten spheres of the Tree are the sefiroth, which are aspects of God, the stages of the process of the hidden God's unfoldment and, to magicians, centres of power which man can grasp and use, as Ricci himself explained in saying that the lore of the Cabala teaches us how 'to attain more easily and beyond the use of Nature to the glories of the Eternal Father and our prerogatives in this world, which resemble them'

purpose but rather to account for the procession of the fullness of the Divine Being from the Hiddenness of the Divine Non-Being or Nothingness.

The Ten Sefiroth

The *pleroma* or dynamic 'fullness' of the Life Divine is described as a complex organism consisting of ten emanations, potencies or focal points, called sefiroth. These potencies are not ten gods, but ten aspects, stages or manifestations of the Living Deity. The 'World of Emanation' or 'World of the Sefiroth' is not the universe but the godhead in its 'existent' aspect. The dynamic interrelation of the ten sefiroth pictured in the three lines of the sefirotic Tree (the right side is male, the left female, and the middle line mediates between them and harmonizes them) make up the dramatic inner-life of the godhead which, in spite of its complexities, is essentially one.

Orthodox critics held the dualism between the hidden and the manifest God, as well as the doctrine of sefiroth, to be departures from strict Jewish monotheism. The Cabalists, who had some of the greatest luminaries of orthodox Jewish learning in their camp, replied that they were speaking of a profound mystery, and that the mystical understanding of the Divine Unity was precisely their main concern. In fact, the emphasis on this essential Unity grew more insistent as by the sheer inherent power of the cabalistic symbolism the various sefiroth became more and more personified.

The Cabala's picture of the divine totality as an emanated 'fullness' of ten sefiroth is reminiscent of the great Gnostic systems of earlier centuries. But whereas the Gnostic pleroma or 'fullness', the realm of the divine, consisted of hundreds of divine *aeons* or powers, the cabalistic 'World of the Sefiroth' is reduced to a manageable ten. Moreover the Gnostic aeons are a rather chaotic and disorderly lot: they ascend and descend in almost anarchic freedom, whereas the cabalistic sefiroth are ordered in a strict hierarchy.

The notion of the cosmos as a series of descending emanations from a divine source is a familiar Neoplatonic motif (see NEOPLATONISM). Medieval Arab philosophy was markedly Neoplatonic and there is definite evidence of specific Neoplatonic influences on the early Spanish Cabalists. The classical doctrine of the sefiroth is therefore an intriguing combination of Gnostic and Neoplatonic motifs. The cosmos as a hierarchical structure of successive emanations – this is Neoplatonic. But the idea that this emanated cosmos is divine or, to be more exact, constitutes the fullness of the divine realm and that the entities making it up are divine forces, is thoroughly Gnostic.

The Four Worlds

What happens after the tenth sefirah, what are the relations between the Divine Being shown in the sefirotic Tree and the actual universe in which we live? Some Cabalists seem to have thought of further emanations which finally produce our material universe. In that case there would be no break at all but a gradual, imperceptible descent from the godhead into the material world. As against this radical Neoplatonism, other Cabalists tended to hold to the traditional doctrine of creation as a discontinuous act. This could be done by letting the process of emanation stop with the tenth sefirah. God, the complex of sefiroth, then proceeds to create the universe out of nothing.

Later cabalistic cosmology spoke of four worlds. These are, in descending order; *Asiluth*, the divine world of the sefiroth; *Beriah*, the sub-divine sphere, the world of the Divine Throne and the angels; *Yesirah*, the world of the heavenly spheres down to that of the moon; and finally *Asiyyah*, the sub-lunar universe. This fourfold division is prefigured in the realm of the sefiroth, since the sefirotic Tree can be divided into four tiers corresponding to the four 'worlds'. The image of the sefirotic realm as a tree already occurs in the first cabalistic text to have survived, the 12th century *Bahir*. The tree is, of course, growing downwards and its roots are above.

While each of the sefiroth has a considerable range of symbolism and imagery, some are more important than others. The fifth sefirah, 'Power' or 'Stern Judgement', also appears as the source from which destructive evil and the demonic powers emanate. In fact, the problem of evil and the possibility of its being originally a part, albeit a fallen part, of the divine totality are recurring themes in cabalistic speculation.

Of special importance, however, in cabalistic thinking and practice is the relation

between the sixth sefirah, Tifereth (the 'Beauty', also the 'Compassion' of God) and the tenth sefirah, which is called Malkhuth or Shekhinah. Tifereth is the central sefirah; it functions as the hub and pivot of the whole system. In the dynamic give-and-take of the sefiroth, Tifereth receives the power and influx of the higher potencies and, harmonizing them, passes them on to the lower ones. It embodies the creative dynamism of the sefirotic Tree and is conceived exclusively in male symbols: king, sun, bridegroom, heaven. Standing at the lower end of the sefirotic cluster is Malkhuth. As the last of the divine manifestations, it is the point at which the Divine (the world of Asiluth followed, according to the teaching of later Cabalism, by the three lower worlds of Beriah, Yesirah and Asiyyah) contacts the Non-Divine.

Standing at the lowest, receiving end of the system, Malkhuth is the receptive womb, the moon, the bride and the queen. It is only in relation to the lower worlds that Malkhuth, as that aspect of the deity which is nearest to them, acquires active, creative or even ruling characteristics. Then the royal aspect of her Queenship is emphasized and the bride is also the mother.

The Sacred Marriage

It is the frankly erotic imagery in the description of the relations between Tifereth and Malkhuth which is one of the most striking features of the cabalistic symbolism of the *Zohar*. The supreme and central mystery of the Cabala is the Holy Union or 'sacred marriage' between the two aspects of the Divine, or in other words the unification of God. The greatest catastrophe that the Cabalist can imagine is the destruction of the unity within the godhead, the separation of the Shekhinah from her husband. This was precisely the tragic consequence of Adam's sin in Eden (see FIRST MAN).

It is thus really the fate of God that is at the core of religion, and man's efforts, both in good works and in mystical contemplation, should be directed to the one end of promoting the wholeness of God, the union of male and female within the divine 'fullness'. The gravity of sin is due to man's capacity to disrupt the Divine union; man's greatness consists of his capacity to restore the lost union.

The biblical notion of man as the image of God was thus absorbed into the cabalistic doctrine, according to which the human frame reveals the same structure as the mystical Divine frame of the ten sefiroth. Since the tenth sefirah, Shekhinah, is also the mystical archetype of Israel, the sefirotic symbolism could easily absorb the Rabbinic tradition (originally developed by way of commentary on the Song of Solomon) which regarded Israel as God's bride.

An interesting consequence of this symbolism is the relative absence of erotic elements in the mystical life of the individual Cabalists. Erotic symbolism is limited to the sphere of the inner-divine and has little or no place in man's relation with God. The Cabalist knows no lover who ravishes him, and the kind of experiences recorded in Christian and Sufi mystical literature are foreign to him. The meditative ascent to the Shekhinah and beyond aims at a communion (and not at mystical union) with God, that would promote the mystical union *within* God. It is Israel's task to promote this end by contemplative efforts and a holy life.

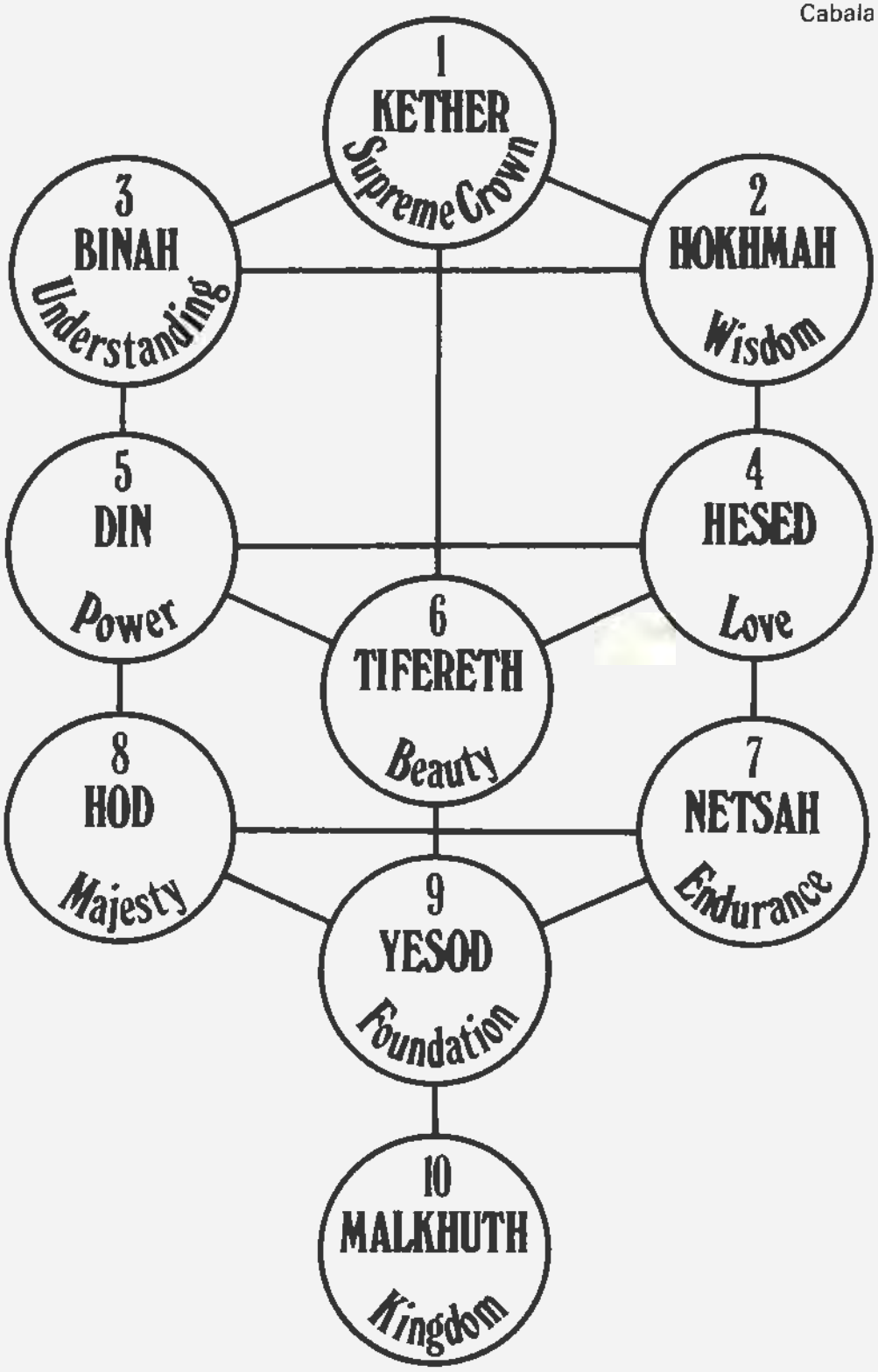
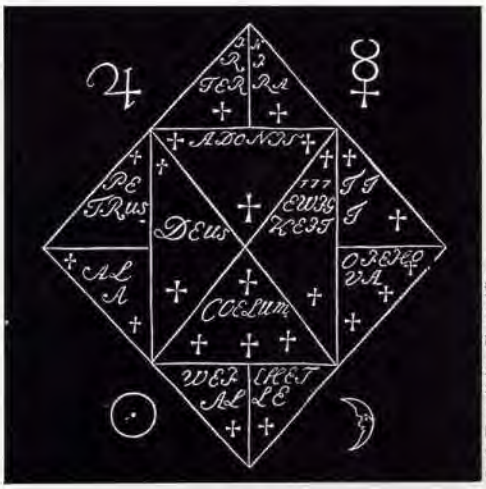


Diagram of the Tree of Life, showing the ten spheres, the emanations through which God revealed himself: 1 Kether, the supreme crown of God, also called Ayin, 'nothing' 2 Hokhmah, the wisdom of God, also 'the father' or Reshith, 'the beginning' 3 Binah, the understanding or intelligence of God, also 'the mother' 4 Hesed, the love or mercy of God 5 Din or Geburah, the power and stern judgement of God 6 Tifereth, the beauty, glory or compassion of God 7 Netsah, the lasting endurance of God 8 Hod, the majesty of God 9 Yesod, the foundation or basis of all active forces in God 10 Malkhuth, the kingdom of God, also called Shekhinah, Israel, the bride of God. The right-hand column headed by Hokhmah is male, the left-hand column is female, and the central pillar balances and unifies them

The Breaking of the Vessels

Classical Spanish Cabala was an esoteric doctrine, reserved for an elite of initiates. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 the religious ferment among the refugees who settled in North Africa, Italy and the eastern Mediterranean, caused the Cabala to spread to wider circles and to become the dominant form of popular piety, as regards theological doctrines and devotional (especially ascetic and penitential)



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In magic the cabalistic preoccupation with letters and names of God, as containers of secret knowledge and objects of mystical speculation, turned into the attempt to use them as sources of power. *Top left* Diagram believed to give the magician control of all evil spirits *Top right* The harmony of God, the universe and man, by Robert Fludd. At the centre, Iod He Vau He are the Hebrew letters of the supreme name of God; also called the Tetragrammaton or name of four letters *Below* Hung round the neck before sunrise on a Sunday, these symbols would make the wearer invisible

practice. A major cabalistic renaissance took place in the 16th century in Safed (Upper Galilee) where a group of scholars and mystics, mainly of Spanish origin, had settled. By far the most influential of them was Isaac Luria, whose teachings form a weird and curious mythology of a strangely Gnostic character.

In the beginning God was All in All. In order that creation (which means, that which is not God) might be, God had to empty space by withdrawing or 'retracting' his all-pervading presence. This is the mystery of the *Tsimtsum* ('retraction'). Into this newly created vacuum God wanted to infuse his carefully veiled light, thus bringing into being a created cosmos. But the channels or pipes through which the creative light-essence of God poured into creation-in-the-making could not contain the Divine light. They collapsed and broke in the *Shevirath ha-kelim*, 'the breaking of the vessels', and the divine sparks fell into chaos, a prey to demonic powers.

Here a Gnostic type of primeval catastrophe or fall is assumed in the very heart of God's creation, even before Adam's fall. Since then the history of the world, including the creation of man, is the drama of the struggle for restoration *(tikkun)* with its ups and downs, its progress and setbacks. The two major setbacks were the fall of Adam and the destruction of the Temple.

The decisive idea at the bottom of the system was that it was not only Israel which was in exile and in need of salvation, but the whole cosmos. In fact, God himself is involved in the fall. Every stone and every plant shelters a fallen divine spark which yearns to return to its origin and, as it were, cries out for salvation.

Lurianic Cabala soon became the dominant form of Jewish piety and provided the theological background of the 17th century Messianic movement connected with the person of Sabbatai Zevi. The doctrines of this movement soon developed into a mystical heresy which rendered the Cabala suspect. The 18th century mystical revival initiated by Israel Baal Shem Tov and known as Hasidism encountered violent opposition, partly because it was associated, in the eyes of its critics, with the aftermath of the Sabbatian movement and its Cabala.

The Christian Cabala

Under the influence of the Cabala many doctrines and practices established themselves in Judaism which would otherwise have been less influential. Thus the belief in transmigration of souls did not really become an established and widespread doctrine until it was taken up by the Cabala. Medieval Cabala also absorbed much of the earlier magical tradition, part of which was international in character and part of which bore specifically Jewish traits.

Christian interest in the Cabala developed in the 15th century and its beginnings were closely connected with the Neoplatonic tendencies of the Medicean Academy at Florence. This interest was at first specifically Christian, attempting to prove that doctrines about the nature of Christ were the true and secret meaning of the Jewish Cabala. Moreover, it was argued that the Cabala contained the original revelation of mankind, and hence the term came to mean Platonic, Orphic and Pythagorean occultism in general, rather than specific Jewish doctrines as expounded in Hebrew texts.

The first generations of Christian Cabalists, often instructed by Jewish teachers, possessed some sound though fragmentary knowledge of the subject (Pico della Mirandola and Reuchlin are examples), but most authors used Latin translations only and not the original texts. From the 17th century onwards, ignorance steadily increased until the term Cabala became a euphemism for any mixture of occultism, Hermetism, Rosicrucianism, exotic theosophy and general infatuation with secret lore: as illustrated, for example, by W. Wynn Westcott's claim (in his *Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah*, 1926) to have taught cabalistic doctrines which had never been published before and were not to be found in any Hebrew book.

Another cabalistic trend was in evidence in 17th century England, a combination in different proportions of natural philosophy, alchemy and Neoplatonism in the writings of Thomas Vaughan, Robert Fludd and the Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More. This Cabala, unlike Jewish esotericism, was essentially a form of natural philosophy which combined what Fludd called 'theosophical and philosophical truths' and for which 'Mosaicall Philosophy' and Hermetism meant the same things. Hence Henry

More's bland assertion that the Platonists had 'more of that Cabala than the Jews themselves have at this day'. From this type of literature some cabalistic elements subsequently percolated into the symbolism of 18th century Freemasonry.

Some non-Jewish mystics, including Jacob Boehme, possessed an innate affinity with the cabalistic mode of thought, and their writings exhibit remarkable similarities which do not necessarily prove acquaintance with the doctrines of Jewish theosophy. Among writers whose intuitive insight into cabalistic motives and doctrines more than offset their ignorance in linguistic and historical matters, are Franz von Baader in Germany and A. E. Waite *(The Holy Kabbalah*, 1930) in England.

The term Cabala did not only mean theosophy and mystical philosophy. Soon after the word had penetrated the European languages it was used as synonymous with magic and from the 17th century it could also mean a plot, intrigue or clique. (The interpretation of the noun 'Cabal' as composed of the initial letters of the names of several of Charles II's advisers was never meant as anything but a pun). Cabalistic magic was mainly a matter of permuting and combining Hebrew letters and their numerical values, magic squares, anagrams and the like. These mathematico-mystical operations, known as *gematria* and expounded by Cornelius Agrippa in his *Occult Philosophy*, and by many others, could serve practical as well as theoretical ends: magical purposes on the one hand and mystical interpretation of Scripture on the other. In a wider and more popular sense cabalistic magic could mean the most diverse kinds of occult practice and divination.

Scientific study of the Cabala did not begin until the 19th century. It has made considerable progress in the 20th especially since Professor Scholem's researches have placed it on a sound linguistic and historical footing.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

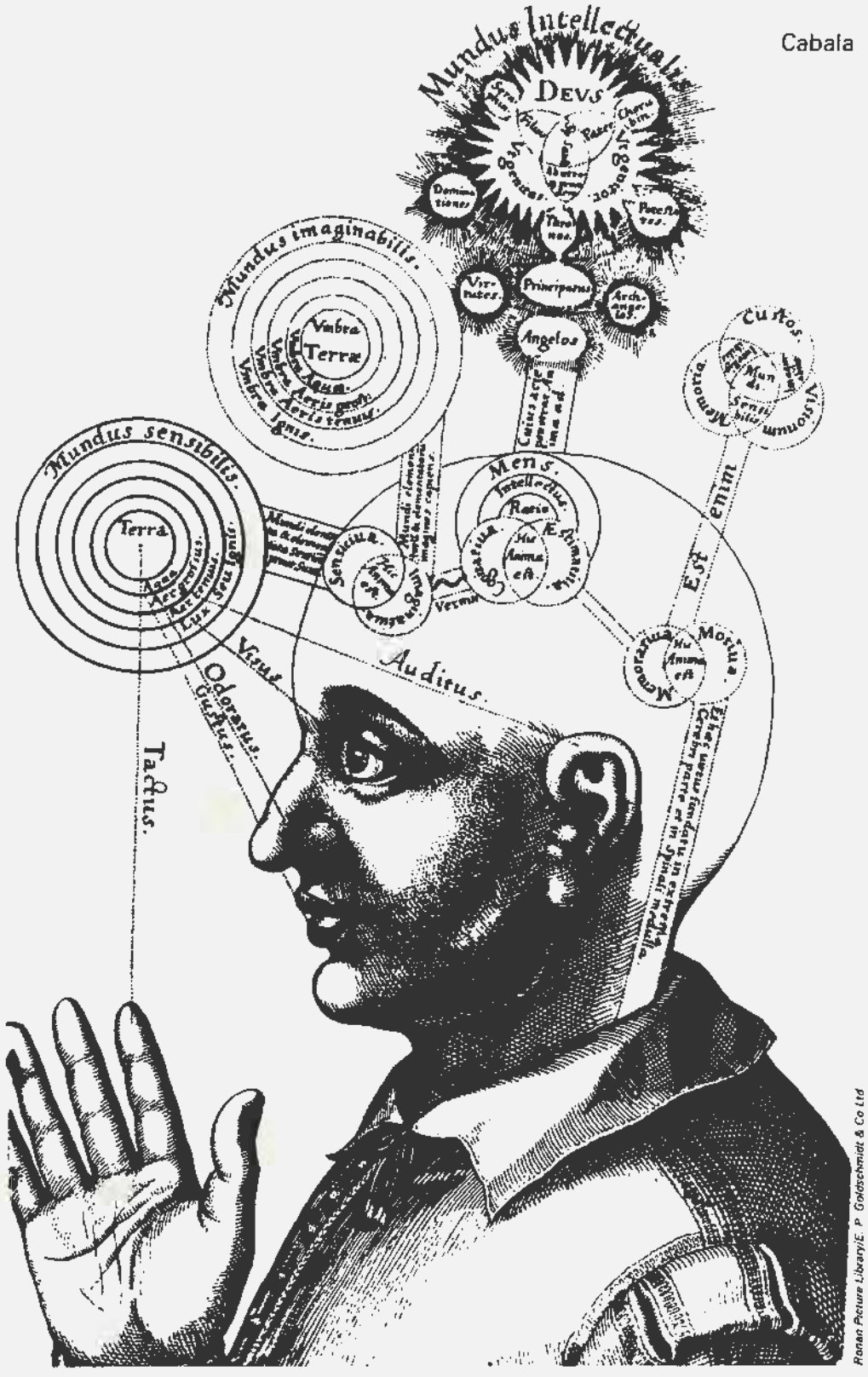
Cabala and Modern Magic

Stemming from its influence on Christian occultists of the Renaissance, the Cabala has powerfully affected modern magicians, including Eliphas Levi in the 19th century and Aleister Crowley in the 20th. The Tree of Life is seen as a diagram of the way in which the universe 'emanated' or came into existence from the One, the unity believed to exist behind all things. Conversely, it is also seen as a diagram of the way in which man can unite himself with or become the One, by 'rising through the spheres', spiritually climbing the ladder of the ten sefiroth to reach God.

The 22 major trumps of the Tarot pack are connected with the 22 Paths, which link the sefiroth together and provide mystical pathways along which the magician travels. This travelling is performed not in the ordinary physical body but in the astral body, and there is a complicated system of correspondences which help to guide the magician on his way (see CORRESPONDENCES: PATHS). As he rises through the spheres, the magician masters and controls the powerful force of each individual sefirah.

This is, in effect, a statement of the magical belief that the adept of the occult arts must experience and master all things in order to achieve supreme perfection and power, for the Tree of the ten sefiroth is believed to be a cosmic diagram, the basic pattern which shows how the universe is arranged and how its phenomena are connected. It is also a statement of the belief that man is a miniature replica of the universe and God, and that he is capable of spiritually expanding himself to become God.

The Cabala, and Jewish magic in general, has also influenced magicians in their use of 'names of power', many of which were originally names or titles of the god of the Old Testament and the gods of the ancient world.



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Human mental abilities classified in terms of God and the universe: from Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi*

These names are believed to be reservoirs of power, which the magician taps by using them.

(See also ALPHABET; GEMATRIA; GRIMOIRES; NAMES.)

FURTHER READING: G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schocken, 1969) and *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (Schocken, 1969). For the magical side, see W. E. Butler, *Magic and the Qabalah* (Llewellyn Pubns.); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968).

Cactus
The spiny desert plant, important in south-western American Indian rituals; among the Pueblos, Zuni chiefs are installed with rites that include whipping with cacti, which ensures good fortune; Zuni Cactus Societies use cactus flagellation to test endurance; Hopis place pieces of cactus at the corners of a new house to 'root' it to the earth; many south-western tribes use hallucinogenic drugs from cacti in mystic ceremonies.
See DRUGS; PUEBLO INDIANS.

Caduceus
Latin word for a herald's staff of office, associated with the Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods: in its oldest form possibly an olive branch with two prongs at the top, entwined with ribbons; later it was a wand with two snakes twined round it and sometimes with wings at the top of the staff: in alchemy a symbol of the uniting of opposites: more generally, it has been interpreted as an emblem of power (the wand) combined with wisdom (the snakes): also used as a symbol of healing.

The meteoric career of the magician Cagliostro, who achieved a European reputation only to meet with disaster, has remained one of history's enigmas. Attempting to combine Cathalicism, Freemasonry and magic he aroused exasperated opposition and met his death at the hands of the Inquisition

CAGLIOSTRO

SHOWMAN, PHILANTHROPIST and genuine seeker after supernatural knowledge, Count Alessandro Cagliostro was one of the most extraordinary figures of 18th century Europe. Born Giuseppe Balsamo in 1743, as a young man he took the name of his godmother, Countess Cagliostro, to whom he was related on his mother's side. The family belonged to the lesser and impoverished Sicilian nobility. At the age of 23 he went to Malta, where he was received with open arms by the Grand Master of the Order of The Knights of Malta. The Grand Master, who was skilled in alchemy and a Rosicrucian, introduced him to occultism and encouraged him to take an interest in alchemy.

Arriving in London in 1776 with his young wife Serafina, Cagliostro was welcomed by the Freemasons, whose members at that time included some celebrated personalities, and was officially admitted to their Society. At this time, Cagliostro was obsessed by the idea of the Philosopher's Stone. He experimented with manufacturing powders and with transmuting metals and making precious stones. He spent hours bent over tables of Pythagoras and in studying cabalistic numbers. He also gained a reputation for predicting the winning numbers in a lottery; after three successful predictions, the news spread like wildfire. So many people came clamouring for his help that he had to close his doors and resolved never to play the lottery again.

Deeply interested in the theosophical theories of Emmanuel Swedenborg (see SWEDENBORG), Cagliostro introduced them to the Freemasons' lodges. He also taught the art of conjuring up spirits. After becoming involved in several disreputable incidents which were apparently engineered by his detractors, with a view to getting him out of the way so that they could steal his cabalistic and alchemical secrets, Cagliostro decided to leave London. Travelling under the sponsorship of the Grand Lodge of England, Cagliostro made a series of visits to one European lodge after another, including the Hague, Brussels, Liège, Nuremberg and Leipzig. His fame grew and he was received by Frederick II of Prussia and also by Prince Stanislas of Poland. He is also said to have met the Comte de Saint-Germain, the fashionable magician of the court of Louis XV in France.

Cagliostro's chief aim at this time was to establish the identity of Freemasonry, magic and religion, by going back to the Cabala sources and the Templar tradition (see KNIGHTS TEMPLAR). He had been brought up a Roman Catholic, had become interested in magic and had been initiated into Freemasonry. Feeling that there was an affinity between all three, he attempted to bring about a mystic fusion. The Bible, he said, was full of magic, from the miraculous powers of Moses to the secrets of King Solomon, from the prophets' visions to the witch of Endor, who made the ghost of the dead Samuel appear before King Saul. He believed that this heavenly magic, as revealed in the Scriptures, could be rediscovered with divine help, and that God could be perceived in the secrets of Nature, so marvellously revealed in the alchemist's laboratory. Putting his discoveries to the test, Cagliostro carried out feats of clairvoyance and necromancy, the summoning up of ghosts, and had success in curing certain illnesses.

The Egyptian Rite
The motives of this extraordinary man have often been maligned through misunderstanding – a confusion increased perhaps by his showmanship, his love of mystery and his curious habit of travelling under assumed names. He was not, as many suspected, out to make money; he was rich in any case. Nor had he any desire for titles. He was, in fact, a genuine philanthropist and believed that a man's first duty was to work for the good of others, to alleviate their sufferings, to free them and give them happiness. The services he gave were always free and he made many gifts to charity. He was a man naturally endowed with a gift of intuition and the teachings he gained from his initiators further developed his apparently supernatural powers.

In 1779 he visited Courland, a sovereign principality under the protection of Prussia, settling in Mittau which was then a centre of occultism and magic. Cagliostro began to carry out supernatural experiments and to use a method of clairvoyance which he discovered in an Egyptian papyrus. The 'Egyptian rite' involved hypnotizing a child, after due ceremonies of purification and preparation, and causing him to see visions and utter prophecies. In his ritual ceremonies he made circles in the air with a symbolic sword and invoked archangels to intercede for him with God. On one occasion he succeeded in invoking the Archangel Michael, whom the child saw clearly, dressed in a long white robe.

The Queen's Necklace
As a healer, too, he became renowned, practising healing by the laying on of hands and by other methods. He used an approach which was far in advance of his time in that he started from the viewpoint of the patient's personality and problems, which he seems to have perceived through clairvoyance. He combined this psychological approach with the use of very simple remedies, and had some remarkable cures to his credit. While in France, he became the friend of Cardinal de Rohan, who had long wished to meet the man whose reputation had aroused his respect. The Cardinal persuaded him to treat his uncle, the Marshal de Soubise, who was desperately ill. Three days after Cagliostro began to treat his patient, the Marshal rallied, though previously at death's door.

Up to 1785, Cagliostro seemed to have a glorious future ahead of him. The Ministers of France and the Freemasons showered him with flattering awards and he mingled with important and influential people. Yet some quality in his personality seemed to invite disaster, hostility and slander. The medical profession in particular were jealous of his success and created trouble at every opportunity. A valet-secretary dismissed for stealing revenged himself by spreading lies which soon gained currency. A certain Polish baroness who had at one time admired him became vindictive and started spreading evil stories about him. He had also aroused the antagonism of some of the Catholic clergy who did not approve of his 'miracles', seeing in them a threat to the authority of the Church.

Cagliostro's downfall was precipitated

when he was accused of being involved in the resounding scandal of the affair of Marie Antoinette's necklace. The French Queen badly wanted a sumptuous necklace of diamonds and pearls, which Cardinal de Rohan was eager to give her as he hoped to get back into favour with Louis XVI. In August 1785 a dangerous adventuress, Comtesse de Valois la Motte, was entrusted with taking the jewel-case containing the necklace to the queen, but kept it for herself. When the swindle was discovered, the thief accused Cagliostro, who was arrested and imprisoned in the Bastille. He was eventually cleared but was ordered to leave France.

Incensed by the unjust treatment at the hands of the French authorities, Cagliostro made his way to London where he endangered his position still further with the publication of his *Letter to the French People* in 1786. In it he condemned the absolute power of the French monarchy and prophesied accurately that the Bastille would be stormed and the governor put to death.

He wandered unhappily about Europe, and decided to go to Rome. Armed with credentials from several bishops he asked the Vatican for permission to visit Rome and this was granted. As soon as he arrived, in 1789, Pope Pius VI decided that his presence was a provocation and informed the Office of the Inquisition, who made a merciless report.

Cagliostro was arrested and underwent a lengthy trial. He was charged with imposture, heresy and sacrilege, to which were added accusations of fraud, lying and false pretences. He was said to be an adept in the most demonic sorcery and to be involved in political conspiracies to overthrow royalty. His personal life was also impugned and he was accused of having been a heavy drinker and a womanizer.

Cagliostro was sentenced to death but the Pope commuted this to a sentence of life imprisonment, which was to be the equivalent of prolonged torture. Taken to the fortress of San Leo, near Urbino, he died there on 6 August 1795, strangled, it is said, by his jailer. His burial place is unknown.

F. RIBADEAU DUMAS

FURTHER READING: F. Ribadeau Dumas, *Cagliostro – Scoundrel or Saint?* (Orion Press, 1967); Vincente Huidobro, *Cagliostro* (Gordon Press, 1974).

Portrait of Count Cagliostro, a famous 18th century magician and wonder-worker: said to have succeeded in conjuring up angels, he was imprisoned by the Pope and died in the dungeons of the Inquisition

Calumet

From the Latin for 'reed', the name given to the long-stemmed pipes of American Indians, and to the ceremonies themselves, in which the pipes passed among participants and onlookers, the smoke rising as an offering to the gods for peace and prosperity; Plains Indians used the ceremony to underline peace pacts, to celebrate victories, to welcome guests.

See TOBACCO.

Chris Barker/British Museum

CAMELOT & ARTHURIAN BRITAIN

Chèze-Brown

One theory places Camelot near Tintagel in Cornwall, where according to legend King Arthur was born. The medieval castle stands near the remains of a Celtic monastery dating from about the time of the real Arthur

Where was Camelot, the king's capital in the Arthurian legends? Recent archeological discoveries suggest that Cadbury Castle in Somerset has the strongest claim to be the 'real' Camelot

CAMELOT WAS THE CAPITAL of King Arthur where, according to legend, he reigned over the Britons before the Saxon conquest. It is not located on any authentic early map. However, *cam* and *camel* do occur as elements in British place-names of pre-Saxon origin.

The oldest known stories of Arthur never refer to Camelot, as such. The King first holds court there explicitly in the romance *Lancelot*, written by Chrétien de Troyes between 1160 and 1180. Three centuries later Malory makes it the chief city of the realm, where the Round Table is housed. He sometimes equates it with Winchester, yet in one passage of his work it seems to be north of Carlisle. Tennyson never attempts to localize Camelot: in the *Idylls of the King*, it is symbolic, in the poet's own words 'of the gradual growth of human beliefs and institutions, and of the spiritual development of man.' The name in fact has tended to become evocative rather than geographical. Thus the conversion of T. H. White's Arthur cycle into a musical involved an almost inevitable change of title from *The Once and Future King* to *Camelot*.

Local legends and antiquarian guesswork have proposed several sites for this elusive city. One is Colchester, the Roman Camulodunum. Another theory places it near Tintagel, Arthur's reputed Cornish birthplace, in a district which contains the River Camel and Camelford. However, the candidate with the strongest claim to a genuine underlying tradition is Cadbury Castle in Somerset.

The 'Castle' is an earthwork fort of the pre-Roman Iron Age on an isolated hill 500 feet high, which looks over the Vale of Avalon to Glastonbury Tor in the distance. The ramparts surround an enclosure of 18 acres on top of the hill. The village of Queen

From Land's End to the Grampians

The salient point about the mass of Arthurian oddments is the grandiose geography. Nobody else except the Devil is renowned through so much of Britain. From Land's End to the Grampian foothills, Arthur's name 'cleaves to cairn and cromlech.' We hear of the Cornish fortress at Kelliwic; of a Cornish hill called Bann Arthur and a stream called the River of Arthur's Kitchen; of Cadbury and its noble shades; of the lake Llyn Berfog in Merioneth, where Arthur slew a monster, and his horse left a hoof-print on the rock; of a cave by Marchlyn Mawr in Carnarvon, where his treasure lies hidden (woe to any intruder who touches it); of a cave at Caerleon, and another near Snowdon, where his warriors lie asleep till he needs them; of still another cave in the Eildon hills, close to Melrose Abbey, where some say he is sleeping himself; of the mount outside Edinburgh called Arthur's Seat; of Arthur's Stone, and Arthur's Fold, as far north as Perth; and many more such places. Arthur seems to be everywhere.

The first natural deduction is that Arthur really was everywhere: that he flashed from end to end of his crumbling country on that terrible armoured charger, rallying the faint-hearts, reconciling the factions, and pouncing on the bewildered heathen, with Kay and Bedivere riding beside him. And the second deduction . . . is that the man who bequeathed such a towering legend was no ordinary human being. Even if most of the Arthur stories were borrowed or fabricated, it is still necessary to explain why they should ever have been attached to Arthur. Even if the bards vested him with the attributes of a god, the question still remains: Why him in particular? To which there is no adequate answer but the readiest one – because he deserved it.

Geoffrey Ashe, *King Arthur's Avalon.*

Camel – once simply Camel – is fairly close, as is the River Cam. The antiquary John Leland, in the reign of Henry VIII, speaks of local people referring to the hill-fort as 'Camalat' and as the home of Arthur. Folklore of immemorial age has clustered round it. A well inside the ramparts is called King Arthur's Well, and the summit plateau King Arthur's Palace. The King is said to lie asleep in a cave and at midsummer the ghostly hoof-beats of his knights can be heard.

To say that this place or any other *is* Camelot invites the question, what meaning can be attached to such an identification? At Cadbury Castle there can never have been a medieval city of the kind imagined by Malory. Here, the issue has been raised more insistently by the work of the Camelot Research Committee, which in 1966 began to excavate the hill. Since then traces have been found of several human occupations extending over a long time. Crucial to the Camelot problem are the proofs that about the first quarter of the 6th century AD, Arthur's presumed period, the hill was in fact the stronghold of a wealthy and powerful British ruler, who imported luxuries from the eastern Mediterranean, put up at least one substantial building on the piece of ground called King Arthur's Palace, and refurbished the defences by superimposing a huge drystone rampart of Celtic type, for which there are no known contemporary parallels anywhere else in Britain.

Interpreted in the light of other archeological findings, these results at least suggest an acceptable meaning for the phrase 'Arthurian Britain', and for Camelot as a reality around which legends have grown, as they did around the considerably smaller citadel of Troy.

The Real Camelot

Whatever the precise truth about the real Arthur, he symbolizes an historical fact which is no longer disputed. The British Celts, having lived under the rule of Rome and received a degree of Roman civilization, rallied against the first Anglo-Saxon invaders and threw them back. During the first half of the 6th century, the Britons were generally in the ascendant throughout most of what is now England, and in the Scottish Lowlands. During a large part of this time they enjoyed relative peace and prosperity. Arthur appears to have been the British commander to whom the main credit was due. He may or may not have had some royal title, but his legendary reign is based far more on his exploits as a war-leader and on the period of peace which his victories secured.

Cadbury Castle, easily the largest and most formidable of the known British strongholds of that period, fits logically into the picture as the headquarters of the greatest British leader. In that sense it could be the 'real Camelot' of the 'real Arthur'.

Furthermore, its archeological context includes other places that figure in the Arthurian legend. Thus at Tintagel in Cornwall, while there is no sign of the pre-Norman castle where Arthur was allegedly born, the famous headland is now known to have been inhabited in his time. Its occupants were British monks, and the imported pottery used by their community has supplied key clues to the dating and interpretation of other sites, including Cadbury itself.

At a second Iron Age hill-fort, Castle Dore in Cornwall, traces have been found of 6th century resettlement by a west country chieftain. He built a timber hall, and may have been the original of King Mark in the Tristan romance. Further hill-top dwellings have been discovered in Wales, and also on Glastonbury Tor. The Tor seems to have been the home of a certain Melwas, who appears in an early tale of Arthur and later becomes 'Meleagant' or 'Mellyagraunce'.

Arthur feasting in Camelot, his capital city in the later legends and the place where the Round Table was housed: from a manuscript in the British Museum

British Museum

Knights of the Round Table

The historical questions most usually prompted by the romances may be summed up under two headings: the Round Table and the Holy Grail. In other words, can we make anything historically of Arthur's court on its secular side (meaning chiefly the order of knighthood) and on its religious side (meaning chiefly the motif of a Christian mystery which was peculiar to Britain)?

Under the first heading, one popular theory accounts for the armoured riders of Camelot by maintaining that the real Arthur turned the tide against the Saxons with a cavalry force, a personal corps of mounted men which was the basis of the legend. It is a fact that heavy mailed cavalry was developed by Rome in the last phases of the Western Empire, and may possibly have been seen in Britain early in the 5th century, a remembered model for imitation. It is also a fact that the Saxons were not horsemen, and might well have been routed by mounted Britons.

For the cavalry theory there is still no direct evidence. But research has done much to trace the outline of an actual British nobility in the Dark Ages. From the results of excavation, coupled with clues in early Welsh poetry, it is possible to form a convincing picture of warriors fighting under Arthur's command and, perhaps, assembling in his Cadbury headquarters.

These 'knights', who undoubtedly did fight against the heathen, had little of the panoply of the Middle Ages. They went to war in thick leather tunics and breeches with coats of mail, and carried long-bladed

Philip Rahtz

The place with the strongest claim to be the original Camelot is Cadbury Castle, a pre-Roman earthwork on an isolated hill in Somerset, not far from Glastonbury which itself has an important role in the legends of Arthur and the Grail. Investigations by the Camelot Research Committee have found evidence that in the early 6th century AD, the period of the real Arthur, Cadbury was in fact the stronghold of a powerful chieftain, who may have been Arthur himself

Left Traces of several different human occupations over a long period of time have been found at Cadbury: Saxon masonry

Below Uncovering stone defences at Cadbury, in 1966

Right Aerial view of Cadbury, perhaps the headquarters from which Arthur's cavalry rode against the invading Saxons

Philip Rahtz

N. Barrington

In this early society, a key place was occupied by bards. Poet-sages of legend like Merlin and Taliesin have real if shadowy originals

swords, spears and round whitewashed shields. They had horses and rode across country, whether or not they actually fought in the saddle. They were Christians, at least in name, and attended divine service before a battle. Their civilian garb was colourful if probably simple, and they wore gold ornaments and jewellery.

In this early society, with its curious mingling of barbarism and sophistication, a key place was occupied by bards. A great chieftain's title depended partly on the appropriate bard's knowledge of his ancestry. The loyalty of his vassals depended on the bard's success in keeping them convinced of his prowess, wisdom, and generosity. Poet-sages of legend like Merlin and Taliesin have real if shadowy originals. It is because of these highly respected figures – mainly in the north – that the tradition of Arthur himself, and of a British heroic age associated with him, was handed down to supply the material of medieval romance.

The Celts and the Grail

As to the religious question, little can be said with certainty about the beliefs underlying the Grail theme itself. But Arthurian Britain and the neighbouring Celtic lands were undoubtedly a scene of Christian activity. Some of it had the restless, journeying quality which the Grail stories reflect, and some was peculiar enough to accord with the strange atmosphere of these stories, if not with the imagery in detail.

The higher social classes in Britain were largely Christianized before the end of Roman rule, and produced such eminent figures as St Patrick. The halting of the Saxon advance in Arthur's time enabled a series of apostles, chiefly Welsh, to preside over a much wider flowering of Christian culture both in Britain and in Ireland. Ireland in particular became the most cultured western land of the Dark Ages and owed a vast debt to the British saints after Patrick.

This Celtic Church of the British Isles was almost out of touch with the Christianity of the Continent, and had a character of its own. It was based on monasteries rather than dioceses; its ruling ecclesiastics were abbots rather than bishops; and the monks, not the secular clergy, set the tone. A Welsh tradition suggests that the three

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

Previous page **Arthur's entry into Camelot, from a 14th century romance; British Museum**
Left **The battle of Camlann in which Arthur was mortally wounded by the treacherous Mordred: from the 15th century St Alban's Chronicle. The real Arthur's warriors were not feudal knights but fought in leather tunics and breeches with coats of mail, and carried spears, swords and round whitewashed shields**

chief religious centres of Arthurian Britain were Amesbury, Glastonbury, and Llantwit Major in South Wales. All three had monasteries, none was the seat of a bishop.

The Celtic monks of Britain and Ireland were freer than their brethren abroad. They wandered widely and they were more democratic in outlook. Women were held in higher esteem than among Continental Christians, because the importance of the monks made nuns important as well. The ascetic contempt for worldly goods was adverse to some of the arts. Sculpture, for instance, was reduced to decoration, and there was no significant church architecture. However, in literature and scholarship the Irish at least excelled, and the one British monk of the 6th century whose writings survive, Gildas, was fairly well-read and wrote in Latin.

In the less Romanized western parts of Britain, and in Ireland, the Church did not have to contend – as formerly on the Continent – with a powerful and entrenched pagan priesthood. Even the Irish Druids were not very dangerous. Hence, the old religion was not viewed as Satanic in the same way, and the Celts preserved much mythology and speculation of a kind which went into eclipse elsewhere. The trend was encouraged by the fact that they could safely possess apocryphal Christian books which the Continental hierarchy forbade to the faithful.

The writings of Celtic monks include bizarre doctrines about angels and formulae for intercourse with the spirit world. St Brigit is spoken of as a reincarnation of the Virgin Mary and, in some obscure sense, as a priestess. Pagan beings reappear in Christian contexts, not as devils but as heroes. Among them is the god Bran, a deity of the Celts both British and Irish (see BRAN). He occurs in some of the early legends of Arthur; as a ruler of Britain in the Welsh *Mabinogion;* as an Atlantic seafarer in an early Irish tale; and eventually in the Grail stories themselves, as Brons, a companion of Joseph of Arimathea. Pagan myth, Christian legend and classical scholarship combine in the saga of St Brendan's Voyage (see BRENDAN), which has links of its own with the Grail Quest.

Celtic Christianity was never heretical in any clearly defined way. But it communicated an odd flavour, a 'sense of something else'. The Celts were brought into conformity with Rome by the Synod of Whitby in 663, at a time when their missionaries, reversing the earlier movement westward, had deeply influenced the Anglo-Saxons.

The violence of the Whitby debate testifies to the feeling of the Roman clerics that they were confronting something baffling. There is no good reason to think that the Grail stories reflect anything specific that happened among Arthur's people, but the medieval authors who regarded that milieu as a proper setting for strange Christian mysteries were following a sound instinct. If Cadbury Castle was indeed Camelot, its closeness to Glastonbury, that Celtic sanctuary where the Grail legend has hovered for so long, may be more than coincidence.

Arthur and the Welsh

As an imaginative conception, Arthurian Britain has gone through two phases. The early Welsh tradition looked backward to a glorified 'Island of Britain' where Arthur and other heroes had flourished. Geographically, England was then 'Logria', and the 'Cymry' or Welsh had dominion over it. Then the Cymry lost Logria, and Wales alone preserved the remnants of Arthurian splendour. But some day, it was prophesied, Arthur would come back as a Celtic Messiah and subdue the English.

This view was more or less adopted by Geoffrey of Monmouth when, in the 1130s, he wrote his *History of the Kings of Britain* which did so much to plant an exaggerated and glamorized Arthurian realm in the minds of readers outside Wales. However, with the popularization of the theme by non-Celtic romancers, Arthur ceased to be a purely regional hero. England's Plantagenet sovereigns claimed to possess his birthplace, his chief cities and his grave, and to be his rightful successors in the lordship of all Britain. Edward I displayed Arthur's alleged remains at Glastonbury to prove that Arthur would never return to aid the Welsh.

Both aspects of Arthur were adroitly united by Henry Tudor. He stressed his own Welsh ancestry, and marched to overthrow Richard III under the standard of the Red Dragon. When he became king as Henry VII, he allowed his propagandists to construe the event as fulfilling the prophecy of Arthur's return – meaning, now, not that the Welsh had conquered the English, but that a true 'British' prince had saved the whole land from civil war and restored its ancient Arthurian glory.

The great poetic exponent of this Tudor myth is Edmund Spenser who, in *The Faerie Queene*, portrays the England of Elizabeth I as the magnificent kingdom of the Britons restored. The same motif recurs elsewhere in Elizabethan and Stuart literature, and as late as 1757 in Gray's poem *The Bard.* (See also ARTHUR; GRAIL.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: Most aspects of this subject are surveyed in *The Quest for Arthur's Britain* (Granada Publishing Ltd., 1980), edited by Geoffrey Ashe, which includes chapters by the principal archeologists concerned, and a full bibliography.

CAMISARDS

THE NAME CAMISARDS was given to the Calvinist peasantry of the Cévennes and Bas-Languedoc regions of southern France, who at the beginning of the 18th century waged partisan warfare against the armies of Louis XIV. The word Camisard derives from *camisa*, meaning 'shirt' in the local dialect. It has been suggested that the Camisards may have changed their shirts frequently, to symbolize purity. According to another explanation, however, it was their custom of wearing white shirts over their ordinary clothing at night, as a distinguishing mark which could be thrown away during pursuit, which gained them their name.

The wars of religion which ravaged France during the 16th century had been terminated in 1598 by the Edict of Nantes, which gave the Calvinists, or Huguenots, freedom of conscience; the right to hold public worship in certain specified localities; and full civil rights, including the right to hold official positions. But these concessions were much resented by the Roman Catholic clergy, and were often called in question during the 17th century. In 1685 Louis XIV formally revoked the edict and thereby deprived his Protestant subjects of all religious and civil liberty.

The revocation came as a terrible shock to the Protestants, for the Edict of Nantes had been declared perpetual and irrevocable by three monarchs, including Louis XIV himself. Since it seemed impossible that they could be delivered from oppression by political means, Protestants turned for reassurance to the apocalyptic passages in the Bible. In this they were encouraged by Pierre Jurieu, a Protestant pastor who published a series of violently controversial tracts in which he interpreted the present situation in terms of prophecies taken from the Book of Revelation, and foretold the overthrow of Roman Catholicism in 1689. Circulating secretly in France, these works exerted a powerful fascination on Protestant minds. Their effect was intensified by the increasingly severe persecution to which the Protestants were now subjected. Driven from their churches and deprived of their pastors, they began to hold clandestine meetings in wild country places.

The Little Prophets

Excitement was particularly intense in the south of France, which already in the later Middle Ages had produced various religious movements of a markedly 'enthusiastic' nature (see ENTHUSIASM) and a more or less anti-Catholic tendency. Now a pupil of Jurieu, Du Serre, disseminated the apocalyptic message in the Dauphiné region, and trained young children as propagandists. These 'little prophets', headed by a girl known as 'the fair Isabel', went from village to village announcing that the reign of Antichrist had begun, and would shortly be terminated by the Second Coming of Christ. Adults listened and were soon gripped by an infectious enthusiasm. Those who had gone over to Roman Catholicism stopped attending Mass. In the presence of the ecstatic children whole crowds would fall into convulsions, accompanied by uncontrollable sobbing.

It was in the mountains of the Cévennes, however, amongst the small farmers, cloth and silk weavers, and vine dressers, that the new faith flourished most vigorously and was most vigorously repressed. From 1686 onwards troops were quartered on these people for the winter, without compensation or any attempt at a fair distribution of the burden.

In reality these so-called *dragonnades* were imposed from Paris and were fully approved by the king; but the victims looked elsewhere for the cause of their woes. Profoundly royalist, they never blamed the king, but on the contrary prayed daily for his well-being. Their hatred was reserved for the local authorities: the administrator of Languedoc, Nicolas Lamoignon de Basville; the local military commander, the Comte de Broglie; the priests and missionaries. And the local authorities, for their part, became ardent persecutors when, following the successful English revolution of 1688, the existence of a Protestant minority in France seemed to threaten the security of the realm.

'Fanaticism Reborn', an attack on the outrages perpetrated by the Camisards, French Protestant revolutionaries who believed that the Last Judgement was imminent, that bullets fired against them would turn to water, and that they were guided by mysterious lights in the sky

Bibliotheque Nationale/Photo Larousse

Bullets Turned to Water

The revolt of the Camisards broke out on the night of 24 July 1702. A band of some 40 Cévenols stormed the house of Abbé Du Chayla at Pont-de-Montvert and released seven Protestants who were held captive there. These men had been tortured. The abbé himself flogged them daily and he also forced them to sleep bolt upright, their feet squeezed in the middle of a great beam. The Cévenols killed the abbé, after which they went through the land killing many more priests and burning churches.

In the campaign that followed, the Camisards, as they were now called, operated in armed bands which took it in turn to fight. The men would take up arms to attack a Catholic village or castle; after which they would return to civilian life for a time. It is likely that the number involved never exceeded 4000, or the number under arms at any one time 1500. But these small, temporary units were supported by a population of some 200,000, and they operated in a wooded, mountainous, almost savage country, which they knew perfectly.

In addition, they fought in the absolute certainty of divine support. The ecstatic and visionary experiences which had marked the movement from the beginning continued in time of war. The Camisards were guided to places of safety by mysterious lights in the sky; supernatural voices consoled them; bullets fired at them turned to water. Children and women, shaking all over, encouraged them with prophecies of the Second Coming and the Last Judgement. All this enabled them to carry on a campaign which immobilized a large number of regular troops, at one time as many as 60,000.

The Camisards fought under a number of leaders. There was Esprit Séguier, who immediately after the killing of Abbé Du Chayla tried to organize a general massacre of the Catholic clergy; he was soon captured and burned alive. There was an old soldier named Laporte, who called himself 'Colonel of the Children of God' and named his camp 'the Camp of the Eternal'. There were other old soldiers, and some wool-carders, forest-rangers, blacksmiths, bakers – all of them people of lowly origin, but inspired by fanatical faith and often by visionary experiences.

Fire and Sword

The most remarkable leader was undoubtedly Jean Cavalier (1681–1740). His father, an illiterate peasant, had been forced by persecution to become a Roman Catholic; but the boy Jean was secretly brought up by his mother as a Protestant. He became a shepherd and then a baker's boy, until at the age of 20 he went to Calvinist Geneva for a year. Returning at the beginning of the revolt, he joined the Camisards and soon showed extraordinary military talents. He imposed rigorous discipline on his forces, but also inspired them with immense faith and courage; with the result that he was able to hold in check not only the Comte de Broglie but also three French marshals.

The struggle nevertheless ended in the defeat of the Camisards. Marshal Montrevel adopted a harsh policy of extermination, burning hundreds of villages and putting most of the inhabitants to the sword. The chances of long-term resistance faded as the Governor, Basville, drove roads through the hitherto impassable country. Marshal Villars offered, instead, a chance of reconciliation; and in 1704 peace was negotiated between the Marshal, representing Louis XIV, and Jean Cavalier. During the negotiations Cavalier, who was still only 23 years old, conducted himself not as a defeated rebel but as an equal and honourable adversary.

The terms obtained by Cavalier for the Protestants included liberty of conscience and the right of assembly outside walled towns. But they were denied the right to have churches of their own, and for this reason the treaty was rejected by most of the Camisards, while Cavalier himself was repudiated as a traitor to the cause. The fortunes of the Camisards now rapidly deteriorated. By 1705 all serious military activity had ceased and the remaining leaders had either submitted or had been killed.

Thereafter the most vocal witnesses for the movement were a handful of refugees in London, who attracted lively curiosity by their ecstasies and prophecies, and also by an attempt to resurrect a dead body in St Paul's churchyard. The end of the war between France and England, in 1711, deprived the Cévenols of the last hope of support from abroad. In 1715 Louis XIV announced, by medals and a proclamation, the extinction of the Camisard heresy.

NORMAN COHN

Camphor

Substance obtained from the wood of a laurel *(Laurus camphora)* and believed in Europe to preserve chastity if carried on the person, perhaps because of the Greek story of Daphne, who kept her virginity by turning into a laurel tree (see APOLLO): in Malaya those who hunt for camphor speak a special language and make offerings to the camphor spirit.

Micheal Halford

Canaanites

Early inhabitants of Palestine and Syria, before the Israelite invasions; they were absorbed by the Hebrews and their beliefs and rituals influenced Jewish religion. See ASTARTE; BAAL; PHOENICIANS; SYRIA AND PALESTINE.

CANCER

ACCORDING TO THE traditional system, people who come under Cancer, the fourth sign of the zodiac, are those whose birth dates fall between 22 June and 23 July. Cancer is held to be ruled by the Moon, an aspect of the Great Mother, and in recent times astrologers have tended to overstress the sentimental, maternal aspect of this sign. Although the Moon shines with reflected light, this does not mean that Cancerians live for and through others.

In earlier times, it was the hard shell of the crab, emblem of this sign, which was emphasized and the typical Cancerian is often thick-skinned rather than sensitive. The Moon's influence inclines those born under this sign to be ambitious, unstable, easily corrupted and changeable in their opinions and loyalties. They are likely to be employed in public affairs but not to remain in any one line of business, having a tendency to roam.

A Cancerian often succeeds as an author or journalist, for he is interested to know what people think, and can gauge how much they are prepared to be told, unlike Capricorn, who may think they ought to be told the truth whether they like it or not. It is typical of Cancer to have produced one of the best-known news agencies in the world (Reuter), and also one of the most famous newspaper magnates (Lord Northcliffe).

Belying his reputation as a sensitive and sentimental sign, Cancer is often thick-skinned, and will think no worse of you for telling him a few home truths. Tact is not usually one of his virtues, but this is because he thinks he knows the facts and presumes that everyone else is equally interested in having them publicized. Unlike Leo, who imposes himself on any situation and insists on seeing it his way, Cancer is content to float with the popular tide.

Being fond of drama, he plays up any situation, and is easily led to say a little more than a strict interpretation of the facts would warrant. He is probably the source of various stories which are too good not to be true, or at any rate too good not to be told. Cancer's stories, though not always strictly accurate, are rarely unconvincing.

CANDLE

A CHILD'S birthday cake, with a candle on it for each year of his life, points straight to one facet of the symbolism of candles. A lighted candle, as a single source of light, a single fragment of the universe's store of light, stands for an individual person's life as a single fragment of life in the world.

Among Jewish communities in medieval Europe a way of seeing into the future was to put a lighted candle in a place shielded from draughts during the ten days before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the period which was by tradition the time when each man's fate for the coming year was settled in heaven. If the candle went out, the person it represented would not see the year out. If it burned down to the end, he could expect one more year of life at least.

It was an old Jewish custom to light a candle for a dead man, a practice also adopted by Christians, and which may have its roots in the idea of giving the ghost the light of life in the darkness of the tomb. Jews lit candles by the bedside of a dying man to keep demons away, for demons are creatures of darkness and fear light, and a candle burned for a week in the room where someone had died.

At the Jewish Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights (Hanukkah) one candle is lighted on the first evening, two on the second, and so on for the eight days of the festival. This feast, celebrated in late December at the same time as the Christian Christmas festivities, may once have been a midwinter ritual at which fire and light were kindled to assist the reviving life of the sun. But it now commemorates the rededication of the Temple at Jerusalem to the worship of the Jewish God in 165 BC, after it had been profaned by the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see ANTICHRIST).

The Eyes of the Lord

On the last day of Hanukkah a passage from the Bible is read (Numbers, chapter 8) which refers to one of the great symbols of Judaism, the Menorah, the seven-branched golden candlestick or lampstand said to stand six feet high, which Antiochus removed from the Temple and destroyed. A new one was made to replace it. The Menorah is first mentioned in the book of Exodus (chapters 25 and 37) where God instructs Moses to have it made. It appears again in the vision of the prophet Zechariah (chapter 4) who saw 'a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on top of it, and seven lamps on it'. An angel told him that 'these seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.'

The 'eyes' have been interpreted as the seven planets, watching the earth from the sky, with the implication that the Jewish God claimed the powers of the planetary gods of Mesopotamia. Alternatively, or additionally, the seven lamps may have symbolized the creation of the world in seven days. The last Menorah, which stood in the Temple at the time of Christ, was carried off to Rome by the Emperor Titus, who destroyed the Temple in 70 AD. It is shown on his triumphal arch at Rome.

The 4th century African Christian writer Lactantius commented sardonically that the heathen kindled lights to God as if he was in darkness, and suggested that if they contemplated the sun in the heaven they would see that God had no need of their candles. But in fact Christians themselves used candles, not only to give light at their services, but to carry in funeral processions, to burn at the tombs of the dead and to kindle before the relics of the saints.

The tendency to connect candles with the dead, and with their ghosts, also occurs in the West. A guttering candle warns that the life of someone in the house is flickering to its close, and if a candle burns blue, a ghost is near. American belief says that a candle left to burn in an empty room will cause a relative's death. Another omen of death is a corpse candle or fetch candle, the mysterious light which hovers in the air and moves away from you if you follow it (see WILL-O'-THE-WISP). The magical burglar's implement called the Hand of Glory is the hand of a dead man and it holds a candle made of his fat. The light of this candle carries so strong an aura of the petrifying stillness

Though some early Christian writers scorned the pagan use of candles in ritual, Christians themselves quickly began to carry candles in funeral processions and light them for saints: interior of a Roman Catholic church at Chichicastenango in Guatemala

Picturepoint London

of death that it prevents anyone who sees it from moving (see HAND).

Candles for Lucifer

Candles have a role in the superstitions of love as well as of death. In rural America, a girl may test her boyfriend's fidelity by lighting a candle outdoors near his house. If the flame bends towards her, or towards her lover's house, all is well. If not, the young man is faithless. But in American belief a candle can help to reclaim his affections. The girl needs merely to thrust two pins through the wick of a burning candle. This simple ritual may symbolize a 'pinning down' of his love.

Witches presented candles to the Devil at their meetings, suitably enough, since one of his names is Lucifer, 'lightbearer'. In some cases they lit them from a candle which he bore in his hand or on his head. In 1594 in Puy-de-Dôme, in the hill country of southern France, Jane Bosdeau's lover took her to a witch meeting where 'there appeared a great black goat with a candle between his horns.' All the witches lighted candles from it and then danced around him in a circle. In 1590 the North Berwick witches met in a church and he who took the part of the Devil, in a black gown and a black hat, preached to them from the pulpit, round which were lights 'like great black candles'.

In 1679, when the Police Commissioner of Paris investigated the activities of a widow known as La Voisin, fortune teller, abortionist and supplier of poisons and black magical ceremonies, a chapel was discovered in her house. Its walls were draped in black and on the altar stood black candles. There were also candles made of human fat, provided by one of La Voisin's lovers, a public executioner. It was La Voisin who arranged the Masses said for Madame de Montespan (see BLACK MASS), in which a woman lay naked on the altar, her arms stretched out in the form of a cross and with black candles in her hands.

A Light in Darkness

For modern witches the eve of 2 February is one of their four main festivals, harking back to old pagan ceremonies in Europe at this time of year, involving the kindling of fires and torches, apparently to drive away the winter darkness and prepare the way for the coming of spring. The Christian festival of Candlemas on 2 February commemorates the Purification of the Virgin Mary, when she took the baby Jesus to the Temple and was told that he would grow up to be 'a light to lighten the gentiles'. Candles were associated with it by the 5th century in Jerusalem and a procession with lighted candles became and remains part of the Roman Catholic ritual.

In the Highlands of Scotland on the eve of 1 February, the day of St Bride or St Bridget, who was originally a pagan goddess (see BRIGIT), a bed was placed near the door and one of the household went out, came back in again and said, 'Bridget, Bridget, come in, thy bed is ready.' One or more candles were lit to burn by the bed all night. The purpose was apparently to welcome the goddess who would soon bring the spring, with the candles standing for the light which would dispel the winter dark. Similarly, the candles on a Christmas tree suggest the birth of the 'Light of the World' in the middle of winter.

The symbolism of creating light in darkness also lies behind the use of candles in magical rituals. In a recent book, *Magical Ritual Methods*, W. G. Gray says that most formal rituals begin with the kindling of a fire or light and that 'lighting candles should never be done indifferently or with lack of attention.' At first the room should be in total darkness.

The darkness is banished by lighting the candle which is a sign of the power entrusted to man, the power with which 'we can make Suns on earth, and it endows us with minor Godship . . . so we light the taper, which becomes a Rod, and slowly stand upright . . . When we were entirely in the dark, we were afraid to move from the safety of our stone shelter, but now as Light-Bearers we can move anywhere we will, bearing the precious gift wheresoever it may be needed.'

In which connection it may be worth recalling that the sin for which the original Light-Bearer was hurled from heaven, we are told, was pride.

(See also FIRE; LIGHT.)

Axel Poignant

Candles are often connected with the dead, and the candle flame with the ghosts of the dead, shimmering in darkness. Sicilian fishermen burn ornate candles to their patron saint to obtain his blessing and protection

In the remote Essex village of Canewdon, there are still old people who remember how witches could be seen riding to their meeting place on moonlit nights

CANEWDON

'THE WITCH COUNTRY' is the name given locally to the parish of Canewdon in Essex; the village is renowned for many miles around and is a legend in its own right. Although today it is rapidly becoming urbanized, it was within living memory isolated both geographically and socially, due to its remote situation on the fringe of the Essex marshlands and to its reputation as a centre of witchcraft.

According to an old tradition, as long as the church tower stands there must always be six witches in Canewdon under a master of witches: 'three in silk and three in cotton, one being the parson's wife, one the butcher's wife and one the baker's wife.' When the last witch dies, the legend says, the tower is doomed to fall; conversely when the tower falls, the last witch will die. That this tradition survived until well into the 20th century is verified by innumerable written and oral accounts, as is the custom performed until recently in which the village children danced seven times around the church as a precaution against witchcraft.

There are still old villagers even today who prefer not to pass near the crossroads at night. It is said that a witch was once buried there with a stake driven through her heart, and her headless ghost has been known to emerge as a shadowy cloud from the churchyard and make its way along the road leading to the distant river.

Another well-known Canewdon legend is that of the witch who rowed across the local river in a stolen church bell, using feathers as oars. Her unwieldly craft capsized and the tolling of the bell has on rare occasions been heard from deep beneath the water. On the river's edge there was once a barren patch long known as the witches' field, where the witches were believed to meet to renew their powers. The very old still tell how on moonlit nights the witches could be seen riding to their rendezvous on the river bank.

The Witch Master

The last 'Master of Witches' was George Pickingale, a farm labourer who died in 1909, passing on his powers to his son, in whose hands they apparently atrophied, for little more is heard of them. Pickingale was reputed to possess the power to summon the local witches by means of a wooden whistle, and to halt farm machinery with one glance from his fierce and somewhat glassy eyes. He was adept at charming warts and was occasionally called in to arbitrate in a wages dispute. The more superstitious villagers up to a decade ago remembered how he would sit idly smoking his pipe while a bevy of imps worked for him.

Pickingale blended the qualities of both the black and the white magician. In his capacity of village wise man, his aid was sought for social purposes, but he exploited his reputation as a wizard to the full, coercing neighbours into drawing water for him from the village well, and using the threat of black magic to secure forced tributes of beer. Following his death at the age of 93, his cottage long remained untenanted, possibly from fear of his familiars, 'the little old white mice', which were said to haunt the premises, peering out of the darkness with red staring eyes.

Transworld Feature Syndicate

A Canewdon villager with the church tower in the background. According to an old tradition, as long as the tower stands, there will always be seven witches in Canewdon, and the village is the centre of many stories of witches

Almost as remarkable, and far more dangerous, were the powers accredited to the last six witches of Canewdon who must have lived in the 1880s, and who were doubtless perfectly innocent victims of parochial vindictiveness. According to statements recorded during a survey carried out between 1958 and 1961, these were described as follows. Mrs W was a cripple who cast spells and was loathed for her venomous temper. Mrs K used to fix passers-by with her glaring eyes, and prevented them from entering church. Mrs L was an eccentric who inflicted plagues of lice upon those who offended her. Another Mrs L betrayed herself as a witch by refusing to step over a doormat under which a steel knife had been laid. Mrs C was a woman renowned for bewitching waggonwheels and known to possess imps. Mrs M was a not unkind woman but one who occasionally terrified her neighbours by materializing spectrally at their bedsides in the dead of night, peering fiercely from beneath a poke bonnet.

The activities of these sinister women were embodied in a wealth of macabre legends, no doubt passed down the generations for centuries and attached to one bevy of suspects after another.

The White Mice

The Canewdon witches had the power of the Evil Eye and a single glance could immobilize a victim for hours on end, or even bring traffic to a halt. I am indebted to Mr Witcutt, late Rector of Foulness Island for the following anecdote. A waggoner had refused to buy beer for a Canewdon woman and afterwards his horses were unable to move. He used the whip on them but they would not budge. His mate said, 'No use hitting the horses, mate, hit the wheels. It's the old girl in there.' And he hit the wheels and she emerged from them screaming, with the marks of the whip on her face. The belief that a witch could transform herself into a wheel was once very general.

Canewdon must have been one of the last places in the British Isles where the witches' familiar survived in folk belief, although cases did occur in mid-19th century Norfolk and Suffolk. The familiar peculiar to the Canewdon witches – the white mouse – is only rarely referred to in the witch trials of the 17th century, but the legends in which these animals were mentioned indicate that not only were they the repositories of the witches' power but that they were passed down the generations from one witch to her successor. At the close of the last century several of the legends of Canewdon began to reflect the rapid decline in the belief in witchcraft. An old woman suffering on her deathbed found it impossible to die until she had passed on her powers. She finally gave a low whistle and a number of white mice emerged from a box. She was then able to die in peace.

According to another legend, white mice refused to leave the body of a dead witch, and could only be disposed of by nailing them in the coffin with their mistress. A significant legend from the same area describes the burning of the imps as the sole means of breaking the grim entail.

Canewdon was obviously the ideal place for an intensive witch-hunt and there are traditions of suspected witches having been ducked in the village pond. Fortunately for potential victims of spells the local people were adepts in white magic, their domestic charms against witchcraft consisting in the main of knives and scissors placed under doormats. The village layer-out of the dead, a notable seer, was also available in cases requiring the help of the specialist, largely because of her skill in the preparation of 'witch bottles'. These were bottles containing the hair, blood and urine of a victim of witchcraft which were boiled on the cottage hearth at midnight in order to betray the witch by 'drawing her' to the scene of her crimes. By the turn of the present century jam-jars containing urine had replaced the elaborate brew of earlier years.

The Head at the Window

A once common legend relates to the perpetual pursuit of the parish priest of Canewdon by Satan, whom the former always managed to elude since the Devil invariably entangled his tail in the hedgerows of the narrow winding lanes. An old farm known as the Tile Barn, which once stood on neighbouring Wallasea Island on the fringes of the parish, was long believed to be haunted by an invisible entity which made known its presence by emanating an ice-cold atmosphere; on one occasion a black head complete with horns was observed peering from an upper window.

The overall effect of this body of traditions tended to reduce the number of visitors to Canewdon to a minimum, as well as to endow local humour with the somewhat macabre flavour for which it has become renowned. A popular story which is no doubt still told today concerns an observation made by a villager who, upon learning that a child had been born with a full set of teeth, muttered, 'My God! we'll have werewolves here next.'

Many strange superstitions have persisted in the Essex marshlands which, until comparatively recent times, were the homes of fever-ridden, narrow-minded and somewhat belligerent country labourers and fishermen. It was not difficult to believe, at Canewdon, that a headless ghost walked nightly along the river wall or that the local sweep, who was extremely tall and thin and never removed the soot from his face, had some affinity with the Devil. This type of tradition was not, of course, peculiar to Canewdon but the importance of the Canewdon story comes from the light it sheds on the superstitious beliefs of another age, treasured in the folk memories of unlettered labourers in a remote corner of the English countryside.

There is perhaps nothing quite like Canewdon in the annals of witch belief, for it provides the modern investigator with a window into a dark, forgotten world.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: T. R. Revesz, *Witches* (Raintree Pubs., 1977); Eric Maple, *The Dark World of Witches* (A. S. Barnes, 1964).

Cannibalism

The eating of human flesh by men: frequently a way of acquiring the strength, skill or other qualities of the victim; sometimes a form of burial, sometimes a way of protecting yourself against the ghost of a man you have killed, sometimes part of the initiation of a shaman or medicine-man; a human victim might be identified with a god and eaten to bring the god into the bodies of his worshippers.

See FOOD; SABBATH; SACRIFICE; VAMPIRES; WEREWOLVES.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Canonization

Formal recognition that a man or woman is a saint: in the Roman Catholic Church the process, in which the pope is the final judge, may take many years; if the candidate's reputation for sanctity survives the first steps in the procedure he is known as 'the Venerable'; at a later stage he is beatified and called 'the Blessed'; recognition of sainthood then depends on establishing that miracles have been obtained through appeals to the Blessed since the beatification.

See SAINTS.

CAPRICORN

THE TRADITIONAL ZODIAC places those born between 22 December and 20 January under the sign of Capricorn, the sea-goat. The tenth sign of the zodiac is derived from the Babylonian god Ea, who was the god of the region described in the Bible as 'the waters under the earth'. Ea was a very different character from Saturn, who has been the astrological ruler of Capricorn for the last 2000 years and was the most dreaded of the planets. Saturn represents restriction, limitation and control. Because of Saturn's influence, the Capricornian is often represented as a hard-working, humble, rather dreary person who never ventures to take a risk and constantly expects things to go wrong.

Fortunately for those born under this sign, however, this gloomy view of the Capricorn character is an unbalanced one. It is true that he has a tendency to be overserious, pessimistic and emotionally inhibited; but he has other qualities derived from his planet which are often turned to good account. Chief of these is an economical streak. This urge towards economy does not often take the form of meanness, though Capricornians commonly feel that the gods keep them a little short so that there is not much that they can afford to give away.

Capricorn people typically are clear-headed, self-critical in youth, and set high standards for themselves. Among artists, typical Capricornian composers include Mozart and Schubert. When Mozart showed one of his scores to the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor remarked: 'What a terrible lot of notes, Mr Mozart', to which the composer replied, 'No more than are necessary, your Majesty'. To this day we admire the clean, economical style of Mozart, who never wrote a superfluous note.

As writers, Capricorn subjects display the same economy and their brevity often leads to wit. They say what they have to say in the fewest possible words, and are far more likely to provide too little explanation of their meaning than too much. Some Capricornians would even say that it is from pure laziness that they write no unnecessary words, but the elegant concise precision of Francis Bacon's *Essays* was not due to laziness. The same qualities make Capricornians effective as public speakers; their speeches are usually shrewd and to the point. When involved in argument or controversy, they do not bother to leap to their own defence but draw their opponents on to commit themselves and to build up a complicated structure of argument. Capricorn then demolishes the basis of his opponent's case and brings it crashing to the ground.

Capricorn, in short, tries as far as possible to produce the maximum effect with the minimum expense of effort and energy. There is never anything superfluous about Capricorn; in whatever sphere he chooses, he always knows when and where to draw the line and his theories are invariably safely founded on rock.

British Museum

CARDS

Camera Press London

Does the history of our past and future lives lie ready and waiting in a pack of cards? Card readers believe that cards contain a wealth of occult meaning, which enables them to tell us our fortunes

READING THE PAST, the present and the future by means of a pack of ordinary playing cards or by the more elaborate and larger pack known as the Tarot, is one of the most popular methods of divination. The use of symbolically decorated cards for fortune telling probably preceded their use in games of chance, and later replaced the more primitive forms of divination, such as the throwing down of a bundle of arrows or sticks, or the inspection of entrails. Often the clairvoyant or the gypsy resorts to additional methods, gazing into a crystal ball or into a bowl of water, to confirm the reading already taken from the cards.

Cards have been made of bark, bamboo, ivory, skin or linen as well as of pasteboard and nowadays of plastic. The designs have been variously painted by hand, hand-printed from blocks, engraved or lithographed. Among the fine examples of cards to be seen in the national museums and private collections there are many variations in design. German packs, for instance, use different emblems for the 'pips' from those common in France and England.

The origin of our modern packs is still a matter of dispute and there are almost as many theories propounded by occultists and historians to choose from as there are addicts of the cards. Cards were known as early as 969 AD in China and according to a Hindu legend they were invented in India by a Maharajah's wife to cure her husband of the nervous habit of pulling his beard, by keeping his hands occupied. Others claim that the ancestors of our modern cards were imported into Europe by the gypsies, who had originally brought them from Egypt. References to the Tarot cards are found as early as 1299 in Italy. A 14th century manuscript shows a king and two courtiers playing cards, and the pips are arranged in the same way as they are today.

The Devil's Pack Book

The decorative and colourful Tarot cards, from which our more simplified standard packs are thought to be descended, are still used in Mediterranean countries in a game called *tarocchi*. A complete Tarot pack consists of 78 cards, divided into four suits: Cups, Wands, Coins and Swords. Each suit has 14 cards, comprising the numerals one to ten, and four trumps or court cards – King, Queen, Knight or Chevalier, and Valet or Jack, named after the picture of a blazoned or coated figure of a court personage. Sometimes the court cards represent ancient and contemporary heroes, and they have even been known to commemorate political events.

In addition to the four suits of the Tarot there are 22 major trumps, which are called the Major Arcana, because they are believed to contain hidden occult mysteries. These picture cards with their unusual design and such bizarre titles as the 'Hanged Man' and 'Death', are of great significance when used for fortune telling.

The standard pack of today, though bearing some resemblance to the ancient Tarot, consists of only 52 cards, divided into four suits, two red and two black: Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds and Spades. The Knight of the Tarot is omitted from the standard pack, leaving only three court cards in each suit. Some packs, those of Spain for example, did not include the Queen as it was thought unseemly to represent a woman in the Devil's Pack Book, as cards were often called. In France, on the other hand, the Queens sometimes exposed their voluptuous breasts, and there were sets of naked ladies to satisfy the tastes of licentious gamblers.

How to Tell Your Fortune

Every card reader has his or her favourite method for laying out the cards. Often two methods are used one after another, if greater clarification is needed or if there are additional questions which require more precise answers. When using the standard pack, it is necessary to start with a simple interpretation of each of the 52 cards and later to gain an understanding of all they mean, by themselves and in different combinations with other cards.

Of course, there are variations in the interpretation of each card but a general consistency is apparent if different authorities are consulted. In addition, every card is given a qualified or extended meaning and a 'dark' or 'light' significance when modified

People of fair complexion and stainless character; a symbol of love from the erotic to the spiritual; aristocrats and clergymen

Dark complexioned and of a frank and open disposition; hard workers and astute businessmen

Medium colouring and of equable temperament; thrifty and dependable, they often succeed as farmers or craftsmen

People of sombre appearance who are born leaders; often soldiers and politicians

by other cards in close proximity. The following, an easy method for beginners to practise, is known as the Wheel of Fortune.

The fortune teller chooses from the standard pack the court card that most resembles the client. In the case of a married woman of fair complexion, the Queen of Hearts would be taken and placed face upwards in the centre of the table, between the reader and the client. Having shuffled the rest of the pack thoroughly so that no 'influences' remain attached to the cards from any previous contact, the fortune teller hands them to the client, instructing her to shuffle them herself and to put her thoughts concerning her hopes and fears, her wishes and questions, into them. She is then asked to cut the cards into three random packs with her left hand – said to be that of the Devil – and to place these face downwards on the table. A good reader may say, 'this is a naughty superstition and you must not believe a word of it', a phrase which in no way deters the client from drinking in every word uttered, but it is to be hoped that it salves the reader's conscience.

The fortune teller then turns each pack face upwards and gains a general indication from the three top cards that are now exposed. Suppose the cards revealed are the King of Clubs, the Seven of Hearts and the Ten of Spades. A brief interpretation might read thus: 'A man, well-placed, powerful and possibly in the Consular Service, is bringing you good luck; I think he has a gift for you. He tells you that you must make your home anew in some far-away place. I think it must be your husband, Madame.'

If the fortune teller receives a positive response from the client, she gathers the three packs together again, reshuffles them and deals 9 packs of 3 cards each, face downwards (see diagram opposite), while saying: 'three above you (1), three below you (2), three behind you (3), three before you (4), three for your house and home (5), three for your hopes and fears (6), three for what you don't expect (7), three for what you do expect (8), and three for what is sure to come to pass (9).'

Under each heading the following indications might be expected as pack by pack is turned face upwards by the reader and each card has its significance revealed:

1 *Above you* This pack represents both the blessings and the evils that are being

Standard

Germanic

Tarot

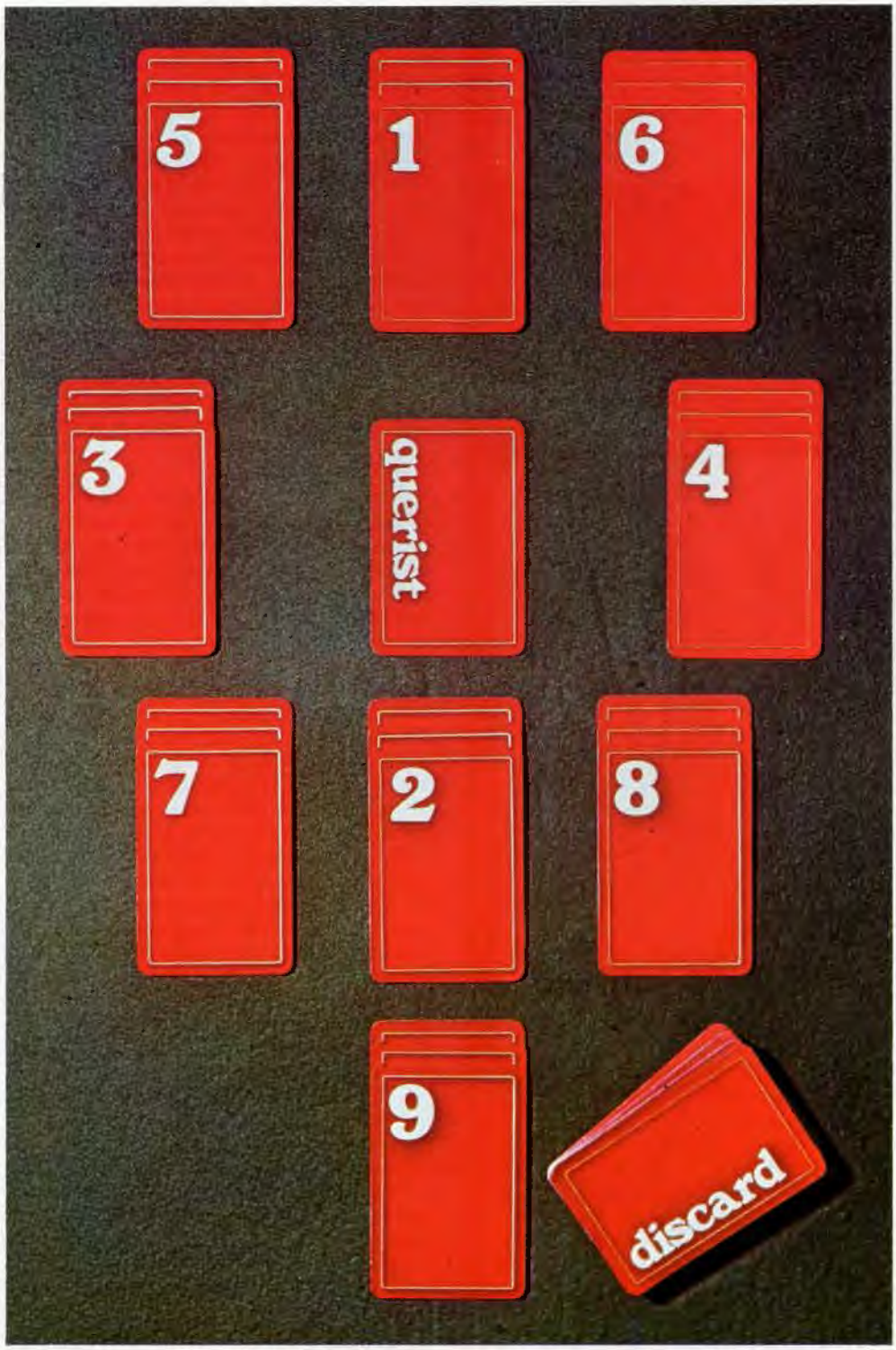
Other names or possible origins

Grails, chalices, crystals or mirrors	Batons, sticks or rods of power	Patons, seals, pentacles, 'lots' or precious stones	Arrows, daggers or magical weapons

THE NUMERALS

	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs	Spades
1	Love; marriage	An engagement	Conquest	A death
2	Friendship	Trouble	Enterprise	Treachery
3	Pleasure	Social activities	A kind gesture	Separation
4	Change	A legacy	Gaiety	Peace
5	An inheritance	A rendezvous	A lawsuit	A funeral
6	Originality	Forgiveness	Good news	A stroke of luck
7	Good fortune	Money	Success	Prudence
8	Company	Prosperity	Deception	Quarrels
9	A wish	A loss	Anticipation	Suffering
10	Home	Financial gain	Travel	Deprivation

Many people are alarmed when the Ace of Spades, known popularly as the Death Card, appears . . .



experienced at the present time, 'hanging over one's head'. They will be material, psychological and spiritual.

2 *Below you* Both the good and the bad things that one is responsible for oneself. All that is under control.

3 *Behind you* Joyful and sad times in the past.

4 *Before you* A description of coming events in the near future.

5 *Your house and home* A description of how these are now and how they will be in the future.

6 *Your hopes and fears* These will be described, confirmed or refuted.

7 *What you don't expect* Good or bad news and the turn of events to come.

8 *What you do expect* A clarification of the client's own often vague thoughts and wishes or fears about the future.

9 *What is sure to come to pass* A final and, it is to be hoped, rousing prediction for both the near and the distant future of the client.

To conclude, the fortune teller makes a summary of the whole Wheel of Fortune so that events and the people appearing as these come about are clearly impressed on the client's mind. To clarify further if necessary, or to answer any special questions arising out of the reading, the client may draw three cards at random out of the discard pack which, when placed face upwards, will give the divinatory answer.

Many people are alarmed when the Ace of Spades, known popularly as the Death Card, appears and the fortune teller should take great care to interpret this in a way that will dispel the fears of the client and bring reassurance and hope.

The Greater Trumps

The curiously decorated collection of 78 cards which form the Tarot pack are *the* cards for fortune telling and are said to reveal the hidden mysteries of the universe. Every true adept of the cards should acquire a pack of Tarots, of which there are many different versions, although basically their symbolism is the same. There are several variations in establishing the sequence of the 22 major trumps or Major Arcana and many different symbols have been used. The French Tarot of Marseilles is perhaps the most faithful to the originals, while those depicted by the occultists Oswald Wirth and

KING A mature, generous man of good position; an aristocrat

QUEEN A fine woman of noble lineage

KNAVE A charming but unfaithful young man who brings news

KING A distinguished and powerful man; possibly a diplomat

QUEEN A woman of gentle birth and strong character

KNAVE A dashing young man who is given to extravagance

KING A man of forceful character; possibly a soldier

QUEEN A seductive and treacherous woman; a temptress

KNAVE A serious-minded youth who may prove a formidable opponent

KING A man of affairs, rich and worldly; often a business tycoon

QUEEN A rich and beautiful woman, elegant and sophisticated

KNAVE A gifted young man who will succeed in life

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A. E. Waite stress the Rosicrucian, cabalistic, Grail and Cathar aspects.

Adaptations of the Tarot in the last century presented the symbolism in naturalistically engraved pictures, often with a text added to facilitate their reading by the uninitiated fortune teller. Eliphas Levi and other occultists link the Major Arcana with the Hebrew alphabet and Arnold Usshar links them with runic letters.

For the collector, nothing can be more fascinating than to go in search of ancient and modern packs with local variations in shape and design. Those of Naples, Trieste and from as far away as Russia and Mexico are enchanting, while those from Germany and neighbouring countries are hard in design and mechanically crude in printing.

The Tree of Cards

A simple reading, using the Tarot cards, can be made by applying the same interpretation of the numerals and court cards as outlined for the standard pack. The addition of the Chevalier or Knight gives an extra court card for clarifying a prediction.

For a more detailed analysis the fortune teller lays out the cards according to a pattern based on the Tree of Life of the Cabala (see diagram on following page). This reading is performed only once for a general indication, but more comprehensive results are obtained if the process is repeated three times, first for the past, second for the present, and third for the future.

The fortune teller shuffles the full pack well, and after the client has also shuffled, the reader makes ten packs of seven cards each and lays them face downwards in the order shown in the diagram. Proceeding from pack to pack, the cards are turned face upwards and each card read separately, then in conjunction with the other packs, and finally the whole revealed Tree of cards is read as an unfolding 'story' woven into an integrated whole. Each individual pack can be interpreted in the following way: pack 1 relates to that which is divine; pack 2 to fatherhood; pack 3 to motherhood; pack 4 to compassion; pack 5 to strength or conquest; pack 6 to sacrifice; pack 7 to love; pack 8 to the arts and crafts; pack 9 to health; pack 10 to worldly matters.

It will be seen that the packs have the pattern of a tree with a central trunk and two supporting branches. Seen from the reader's

The Fool
Folly
Everyman on the Life-Path

The Juggler or the Magus
A gamble
Choice on the Life-Path

Pope Joan or Juno
Wisdom
Woman, the mysterious

The Empress
Action
Woman, the intuitive

The Emperor
Will
Man, the intelligent

The Pope or Jupiter
Inspiration
Man, the creative

The Lovers
Love
The Great Choice

The Chariot
Travel
Providence guides

Justice
A decision
'As a man sows . . .'

The Hermit
Sagacity
Hidden knowledge

Wheel of Fortune
Destiny
The Wheel of the Law

Strength
Courage
'Know thyself'

The Hanged Man
Catastrophe
Saint or sinner?

Death
Inevitability
The Great Initiation

Temperance
Moderation
The Middle Path

The Devil
Temptation
The Great Secret

Tower struck by lightning
Change
Renunciation

The Star
Hope
Glory of the Adept

The Moon
Danger
The Great Portal

The Sun
Happiness
Transcendent Glory

The Day of Judgement
Progress
The final assessment

The World
Gain
Spiritual attainment

THE TAROT
THE 22 CARDS OF THE MAJOR ARCANA

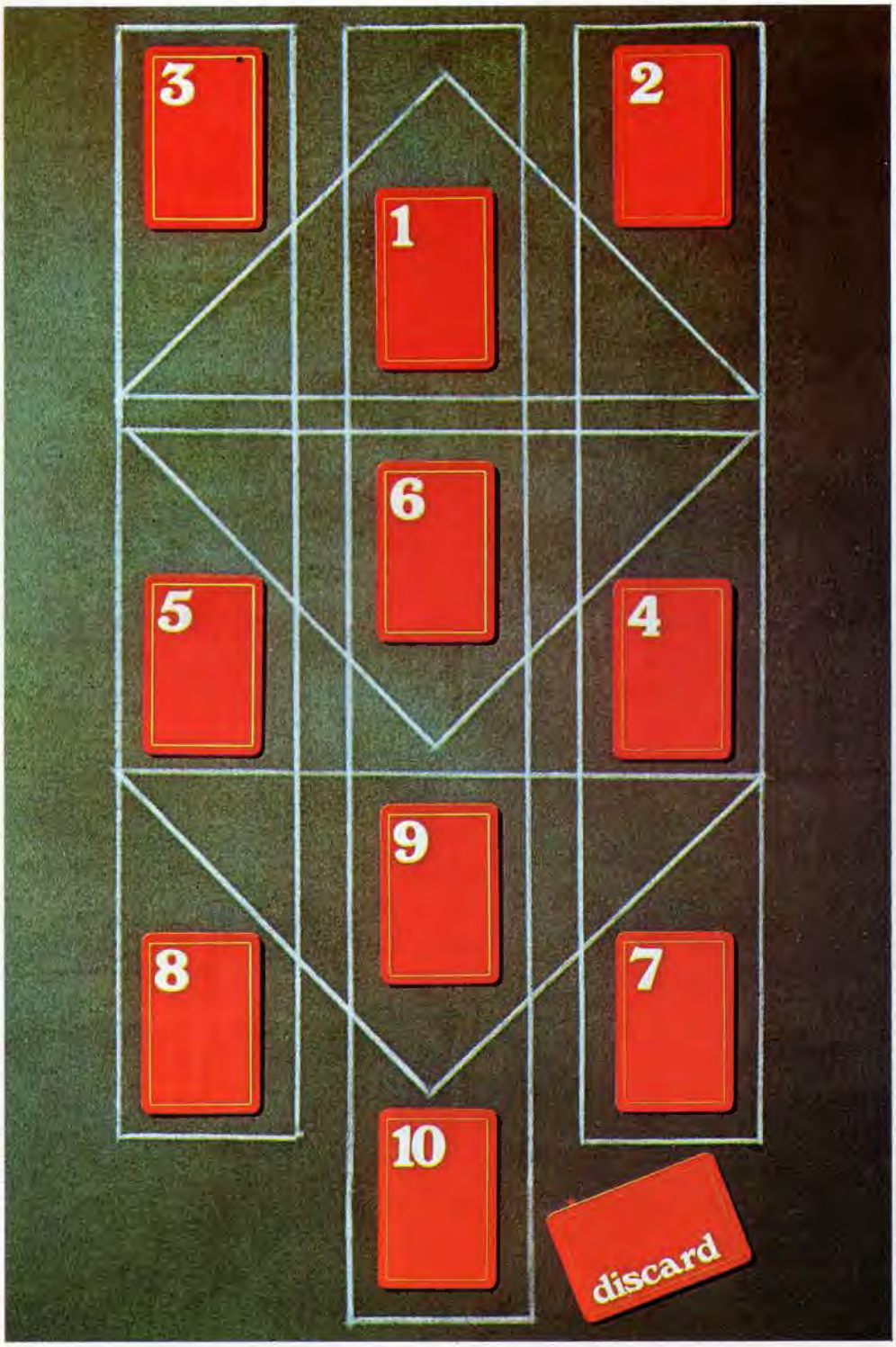
viewpoint, the central pillar represents Harmony, the left hand branch Discipline and the right hand Love. Furthermore, the packs form three triangles on the Tree: at the top, an upright one, below this two downward pointing ones. The first triangle is that of the Spirit, the second that of Reason and the third that of Intuition. The lowest pack (10) at the foot of the Tree symbolizes the Earth. The discard pack may be used for clarification or for qualifying if necessary. Some study of the Cabala is essential for this method of divination (see CABALA).

Besides the indication obtained from the numerals and court cards of the Minor Arcana, the 22 trumps of the Major Arcana enable the fortune teller to elaborate on the reading. With the Hanged Man, for example, number 12 of the major trumps, the image is of a youth hanging upside down by one leg from a gibbet. The positive prediction is of self-sacrifice; the negative of treachery.

Among the gypsies, the Master subjects his disciple to a trance-initiation in which the disciple experiences for himself the symbolism of each trump card. In the case of the Hanged Man the experience is of being offered as a human sacrifice, of being tortured and dismembered, of a separation between the astral and the physical body. The 'shade' of the disciple seems to wander, hopelessly lost, in the underworld where he faces the negation 'God is not'. Only if his love for, and faith in, the Master is so strong that he can still, in the darkness, feel identity with him, will he be reborn to live more fully on the earth above him. In identifying himself with the Master he comes to understand and experience the yearly and continuous death and rebirth of the sacrificed God. In this resurrection, 'God is'.

A Tale of the Tarot

A delightful though improbable story is told about the origin of the Tarot cards. When the civilization of Egypt with its temple libraries of occult lore was about to be destroyed by invading barbarians, the priest-initiates gathered together to discuss how best to preserve their ancient wisdom for posterity. In spite of much head-scratching, no bright idea was forthcoming until one initiate proposed that it should be memorized by the most virtuous and most



learned among them, and that he should be smuggled out of the land in the hope that he could found a new College of the Mysteries in some more propitious place.

An excellent suggestion, no doubt, but not one initiate present was found worthy of the task. Not one possessed the required memory capacity, nor dared to submit himself to the test of utter virtue. All had been contaminated by the flesh one way or another. The conference was at a standstill, the enemy all but thundering at the gates. 'I have it', an aged priest cried out at last. 'Virtue is all but non-existent in this evil world of ours and certainly is not appreciated by barbarian hordes. Let us appeal to vice, which is forever triumphant among mortal men. Let us hastily inscribe under glyph and symbol upon a pack of easily concealed papyrus cards, our stored wisdom of the ages. We will then confide these cards to any passing rogue or vagabond, explaining that they are to be used for games of chance or hazard, in fact for gambling. Then we will speed him on his way, knowing that he will cheat all he meets by this cunning method and thus, unknowingly, save the wisdom for a more enlightened day.'

A passing gypsy, hoping for a little loot, gleefully pocketed the cards. Down the ages the wisdom travelled, passed from hand to hand, copied from one pack to another, an instrument for gain or loss, to be seen in every tavern of the world to this day. So the wisdom has remained for us to unveil, sheltered by the chicanery of tricksters.

The Seed of the Future

Telling fortunes with the cards can be an amusing pastime. It can also be a deeply serious method of divination and spiritual awakening when practised by one with the gift of far-seeing as well as a profound knowledge of occult symbolism. The daily practice of taking a single card and meditating on it, thus bringing its meaning to life, is one which is highly recommended.

All this inevitably leads us to question the validity of card-reading, to wonder whether there is really 'anything in' the cards, whether messages conveyed by the random fall of shuffled cards can be rationally explained. The devotee of the art naturally has no doubts about this. But it necessitates a belief that there is no random element in anything we do; that the seemingly chance arrangement of cards is, in reality, 'designed' by the unconscious mind of the subject (see FATE).

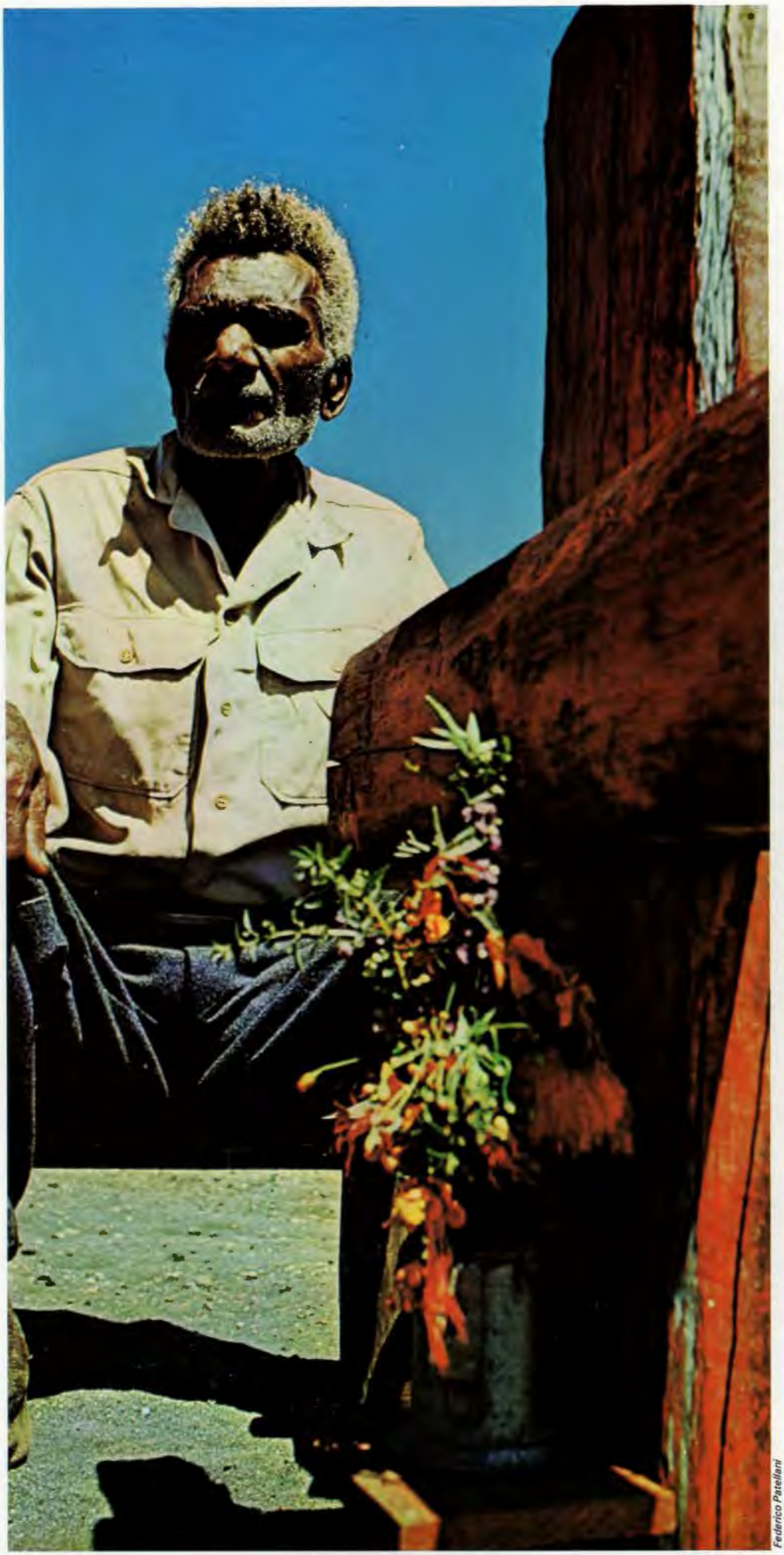
Belief in clairvoyant powers is also a requirement. Some would attempt to explain these powers as a form of telepathic communication that spans or is outside time and space. The subject's mental processes are transferred to the symbols on the cards, which the reader is able to re-translate or interpret. The stored memories in the subject's unconscious uncover the past, immediate preoccupations give the present. If both the past and the present are made known to the conscious or waking mind, the future will almost inevitably unfold itself.

In other words, the future lies hidden like a seed in the earth, ready to sprout, grow and flower. To the seer, the flower may be known from its seed, the future is the child of the past. The symbols on the cards correspond to the archetypal images, the basic factors which lie deep in the collective unconscious of every man. When these living archetypes 'click' with their counterparts on the cards, they make themselves known by means of the intuition and speak through the lips of the seer. Destiny is in the hands of the archetypes.

(See also DIVINATION; TAROT.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

FURTHER READING: Papus, *The Tarot of the Bohemians* (Wilshire Book Co.); Brian Innes, *Tarot* (Arco, 1978); Basil Ivan Rakoczi, *The Painted Caravan* (Brucher, London, 1954).



Federico Patellani

Member of a cargo cult sitting by a red cross in the hope of bringing back the Red Cross planes which flew medical supplies to the Pacific islands during the war

These cults of the Pacific, which attempt to bring ships or aeroplanes loaded with cargo to the natives by magical means, are a reaction to white domination and an attempt to escape it. They are also an attempt to realize a dream

CARGO CULTS

AMONG THE STRANGEST religious manifestations of this century are the so-called cargo cults, which have occurred in great numbers among the native peoples of Melanesia, a group of islands scattered in the Pacific. Even contrasted with other bizarre religions, cargo cults have been regarded as having strange doctrines, odd practices and, most puzzling of all, a remarkable resilience in the face of defeat.

Apocalyptic religions which predict the end of the world and the salvation of only a few do exist in our society, especially in the United States, but they are relatively rare. Their membership is always small compared to the size of the community in which they exist, or the membership of established religions. But historically, such cults are by no means rare and have not always been confined to small minorities.

At the time of the great plagues in the Middle Ages, cults proclaiming that this was the end of the world sprang up, calling for everything to be put aside in an attempt to gain salvation – the method by which this was to be achieved depending upon the cult. Religions preaching that the end of the world is near have also been quite common in Jewish culture, and some scholars claim to have identified as many as 50 such cults about the time of Christ. It has even been argued that Christianity itself was one.

The main features of these cults, which set them apart from more orthodox religions, are: the key role of a leader, prophet or messiah; their simultaneous vision of imminent doom and redemption (apocalypse and millennium); the energy and speed with which the religion grows up and then disintegrates; and the radical nature of the measures imposed by the prophet on those who wish to be saved.

Buying President Johnson

The cargo cults are generally thought to have started, sometime around the 1880s, in Fiji, and since then the pattern has remained roughly the same. Out of nowhere, as it were, a prophet appears and predicts imminent salvation, which may take the form of the islanders' ancestors returning on a ship; a ship that is also loaded with consumer goods like refrigerators, radio sets, desks, furniture, and other items like canned food and even jeeps. The prophet orders various kinds of ritual observances, including such activities as building a warehouse or a jetty (to receive the ship and its goods) or houses for the returning ancestors; the destruction of property or livestock; sexual

abstinence; or throwing money into the sea.

When the day of doom arrives and nothing happens, the prophet may try to slip away, leaving the disillusioned people to return to as normal a life as is possible after what they have done, or he stays and tries to explain what happened, or did not happen. Cultists do not seem to notice that a new cult is very similar indeed to the ones which previously failed.

Although not all these elements are present in any particular cult, there are a number of common factors. There is always at least one prophet, sometimes several. They are usually men, though women do occasionally appear in this role. The description 'cargo cults' also indicates that the idea of ship's cargo – in the sense of western trading goods as they are known to the Melanesian islanders – is almost universally present. Occasionally the cargo is expected to arrive in an aeroplane, and the natives try to build a primitive airstrip.

In some cults, the participants have tried to use their money to buy President Roosevelt or, more recently President Johnson, presumably because these men symbolize powerful magic, and owning them would transfer this power to the Melanesians. Other cults have rejected white men.

Whatever the details, there is a general pattern to these cults which justifies their classification as a special type of millenarian religion (the 'millennium' being the time of happiness expected to follow the end of the present world). Scholars seem to have taken some time to realize that belief in imminent redemption is a common feature of human religion, and that cults of this kind are therefore not unique. Originally, it seems, they were interpreted as some kind of collective madness or irrationality. There have been district administrators who have taken the attitude: 'Why don't the natives stop it and pull themselves together?' And indeed, it must have been very puzzling for a colonial official to walk up to a village and find it organized as a crude parody of a European police compound, with the local inhabitants wearing scraps of western costume and checking 'passes', at the village 'gate'. Inside they would be sitting at tables, surrounded by toy imitations of paper and writing equipment.

David Attenborough

Communist Plots?

A more sinister interpretation given to the cults, based purely on the misunderstanding of a phrase ('Masinga Rule', the name of a cult), is that they were some sort of Marxist plot. There are articles in the journal of the civil servants of the Melanesian region which argue that the cargo cults are a cloak for Communist or Marxist penetration, taking the form they do simply in order to bamboozle officials into not recognizing them for what they are. A variant of this theory – this time coming not from conservative colonial officials but from left-wing social scientists – is that the cults are a form of colonial rebellion in religious disguise.

There is certainly more in this than in any of the previous theories and it is true that in some of the cults there is explicit rejection of, and discontent with, the white power structure. It is clear that some of the prophet leaders were using the only weapon they had to hand, in order to organize the people and canalize their energies against the colonial regime. But one of the bewildering features of these cults is the enormous number of theories which have been advanced in addition to those already mentioned.

Fundamentally, these cults can be explained as attempts to organize social change, made in religious guise. The Melanesians live in fairly simple small-scale societies in relatively fertile areas of the world. There is no population problem and no pressure on the land and game resources. However, for the last 150 years these islands have been slowly penetrated by traders, colonizers and missionaries. The natives have been used as labourers by the planters and traders, and have been introduced to such consumer goods as clothes, axes, lamps and the like. They have been administered by white officials under laws which bore very little relation to their tribal customs, and in languages which they did not understand. They have been coaxed or pressured into accepting white men's religions.

The most important lesson that the Melanesians have learned from this is that the white men are powerful people who have warehouses full of the most marvellous goods and clothing, which they will give in exchange only for money, not for the goods, and obligations of kinship which govern transactions in native society. White men know how to organize people into police forces and church congregations and sanitary villages. White men claim to know about another world where the ancestors are waiting and where all will be bliss and peace if only their rituals are observed.

What can the native reaction possibly be to all this? Their basic way of life has been disrupted. Some of the functions of their political organization have been usurped by white men, and their system of religion has been challenged by a very powerful one which promises much more than they ever envisaged. There are a number of reactions. They would like to *be* white men. Or they would like white men to be more like them, to join them rather than to rule them. Or they would like to *replace* white men and even reverse roles. Or they would like to take from white men what they have, and drive them out. Now these sound like the slogans of a colonial rebellion, or of Negro rioters in the United States. And indeed, this is where fruitful comparison can be found.

Federico Patellani

David Attenborough

The Only Outlet

But why should the reaction to these feelings be of a religious character? The main reason is that the society in which the Melanesian lives is a traditional one, based mainly on locality and kinship ties. In such a society the roles played by individuals are clearly defined, and there are traditional institutions which are not able to adapt and respond to the new features of the situation. The kinship system is sustained by all kinds of other factors in the society but it begins to give way in the face of wage labour, when people are no longer dependent on relatives for their livelihood or for their next meal. They no longer have to live where they can

Inhabitants of an island in the New Hebrides believe that a white leader, Jon Frum, will arrive bringing 'cargo' in an immense scarlet plane, and will drive the white man from the island with the help of an army which waits for him in the crater of a volcano. Cult rituals involve erecting scarlet crosses and gates *Far left* Shrine with a white-faced figure representing Jon Frum, and an image of the plane that will bring him to the island *Above left* Scarlet cross on a runway built by the cult *Left* Gates and lines of sticks making a magical airstrip on the fields of volcanic ash surrounding the volcano

continually renew their kinship ties. They no longer feel that the pleasure of their elders and of their ancestors is a necessary part of their own good fortune. In other words, the traditional social organization is not very adaptable to the new situation.

The white man has merely superimposed his way of life on native society. He has not taught the Melanesians how to reorganize themselves in order to meet their new problems. The only new organization which he *has* offered to black society is Christianity. The traders do not offer opportunities for the Melanesians to become traders and employers and planters in their own right. The colonial regimes have not, on the whole, done more than bring them into the lowest levels of administration, as village headmen or police auxiliaries.

Secrets of the White Men

The Churches, however, have encouraged participation by the Melanesians, at the highest levels they are capable of reaching, if necessary at the very top. What is more important, they have encouraged the formation of native churches in which no white men participate. The Melanesians have therefore, in a sense, penetrated the secrets of the religious organization of the white man, and have learned more about organization from religion than from any other aspect of white society, economic or political. Therefore it is logical that they should turn to a religious form of organization in order to handle the impact of white society, and fulfil those expectations which they have been given by its members, but which white society will satisfy only on its own terms.

But this penetration of religion can lead to further frustration, which perhaps explains why so many of the cults have Christian elements. Although the Melanesians have adopted Christianity, they find that the rest of the white man's treasure is not forthcoming. Clearly, he is keeping secret some of his most powerful religious magic, especially the formula for evoking those ships or aeroplanes full of cargo which appear out of the blue. Hence the persistence: if one prophet failed to find the formula, perhaps the next one will.

Cargo cults, therefore, have as their aim the realization of some Melanesian dreams. The people want to come to terms with that white society which is at once promising so much, and exciting them so much, yet wreaking such havoc on their society. This coming to terms can be by incorporation, or absorption, or rebellion, or rejection. The prophets are an example of how political and social leadership can take a religious form.

The cargo cult ideology is, of course, a confused mixture of traditional beliefs, half-understood Christian ideas, and a rather garbled version of what the outside world is really like. More is not to be expected from people whose picture of the world touches ours only at a tangent.

Part of the trouble is that each of these fragmented Melanesian societies has a different language, spoken by perhaps only a few thousand people. As most of these languages have no written form, communication takes place mainly through the rather inadequate resources of pidgin English, becoming considerably garbled in the process.

The cults have a pretty clear aim. The Melanesians are in a very curious and difficult situation. Their actions in, for example, slaughtering their pigs in order to prepare for the impending millennium may at first seem idiotic. On closer examination, they show just how desperately these people desire fulfilment of their wishes.

I. C. JARVIE

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Jacqueline MacKay

Springing from ritual practices that can be traced back to before 3400 BC, ring and chain dances have developed in ways as different as our Christmas carol and the dances of witches

CAROLE

A CAROLE is a circle of dancers holding hands or opening into a linked chain. The word comes from the Greek *choros*, originally used to describe singing and dancing on a circular threshing floor at the antique festival of Dionysus, which afterwards became the circle of the chorus in the Greek theatre. The Ezvones, the crack Greek guards, dance the Kalamatianos, a modern ring and chain, the skirts of their uniforms swirling as they move, while the Trata, the maidens' dance at Megara in Greece, on Easter Tuesday, is an open chain.

But ring and chain dances are known all over the world, and spring from ritual practices in use long before their appearance in Greece. The Greeks themselves sought the origin of the ring and chain in the dance led by Theseus, in imitation of the windings of the labyrinth in which he had slain the

Witches at their Sabbaths traditionally performed the ring and chain dance moving to the left, against the sun; angels were believed to dance the carole in heaven. *Left* Modern witches performing a ring dance *Right* Angels dancing in the gardens of Paradise: detail from *The Last Judgement* by Fra Angelico

man-beast, the Minotaur. But the dance existed long before Theseus was thought of.

A Bronze Age vase from the Lac de Bourget in Savoy, shows a chain of four people holding hands. The famous Liria vase of c300 BC shows a chain of four women and three men, all holding hands, led by two pipers. And a chain dance is painted on the famous François vase in the Etrurian Museum, Florence.

Earlier still, archeological finds dated c2600 BC, in Elam (a country in what is now Iran), show women holding hands in a chain, while yet earlier, on a rock drawing in a valley north of Luxor in Egypt, seven girls hold hands in a chain. These are the 'feather head-dress people' who were in Egypt before 3400 BC.

The Dreaded Carmagnole

In present-day Bulgaria the C of *chorus* has been dropped and the Hora circle can embrace a whole village community; in Rumania the Hora is danced as a sign of entry into manhood by the boys, and of readiness for marriage by the girls. It is also a test of character, the circle dissolving instantly if a badly behaved person tries to join it. In Yugoslavia, it may expand to take as many as 500 dancers. Here it has become Kolo, the Wheel. Some variations are danced without music, to the rhythmic thud of feet.

Provence has the Farandole, an open carole, which the Provencals believe was introduced by the Greek colonists when they founded Marseilles, but they do not know enough of their own history, for the dance can be traced much further back. The Farandole is a carole which is in fact danced all along the Mediterranean coasts of both France and Spain. In Spain the closed ring is called the Sardana and the open chain the Contrapás. The Farandole winds up the French Catalan valleys to the tune called Carmagnole, a tune dreaded in Revolutionary days when the people took their chain dance to Paris. It continued there and on its home ground into the time of Napoleon, when a Bonapartist general was caught and killed in the coils of a Carmagnole-Farandole danced in the streets of Toulon.

In Spain the dance appears in Andorra as the Bal Plá, starting as a closed ring, and finishing in a Farandole which fills the

Giraudon

village square. The carnival season in the French district of Aude ends with a Galop Infernal, an infernal Farandole indeed, rushing through the streets.

The Basque country has the Dantza Khorda, the String dance, the first and last men carrying bouquets as insignia of office. The Spanish Basques over the frontier have their Aurésku, a ceremonial chain dance for festival days, and we find it again in Asturias as Dantza Prima.

Working its way north the carole is found in Switzerland under its early name, Coraule, in the Gruyere country; north again in the Walloon region of Belgium as Coródes, Longue Dance and Cramignon, accompanied by singing, the leader carrying a bouquet as in the Basque country. The carole passes into the Netherlands, again as the Cramignon, where the captain of the Young Men's Society leads the chain in and out of houses and inns, a bouquet in one hand. Further north still the chain wound its way in Danish castles and courts to singing:

> There danced the maidens with hair unbound,
> It was the King's daughters sang the Round.

Today in the Faroe Islands the islanders begin a ring to enliveu long, winter nights, one man singing, more and more joining in, until the ring must break into a chain which develops twists and curves.

Sweden prizes the Long Dance around flaming tar barrels on Easter Eve or around the Midsummer pole. To keep warm, the dancers may continue for hours, the line running from farm to farm. Norway also cherishes the song-dance, often in circular form, and Iceland possesses similar ballad-chains, while Finland carols in long chains and big rings around the Midsummer pole.

The Holly and the Ivy

England has nearly lost the chain but has kept the ring in the various 'church clippings' (as at Painswick), in such country dances as Gathering Peascods and Sellenger's Round, danced on moonlit nights about Maypoles. Both forms have descended to children in various singing games, such as Round the Mulberry Bush or Looby Loo, while In and Out the Windows is a single-file children's version of the celebrated Helston Furry Dance. This form gave rise to the processional 'contra' dance, called 'contry' in the United States and often confused with forms of country dancing.

Country dancing, better known as 'square dancing', recently had a new vogue in America. It descends from the chain dance through intermediate stages such as the Kentuckian 'running sets', performed in squares or circles of four or more couples. Modern square dancing demands an expert caller, who guides the sets of dancers through often complex and intricate chain figures.

The medieval carole was the most popular dance for over three centuries. We hear of it again and again – of holiday makers borrowing finery 'in Carol to go', of noble ladies and gallauts, country folk and Church dignitaries, all carolling in castles, on village greens and in cathedrals. Paintings show chains in beautiful gardens, and in heaven, formed by angels who are sometimes welcoming a new soul into the paradise ring. Yet, as always happened when a dance became over-popular, it was censured by the Church and disallowed by the priests who punished the dancers. Carolling was forbidden until Mass was over, for the churchyard was used as a dancing ground. In the 14th century we hear of the accursed dancers of Kolbigk in Germany setting their chain in motion on Christmas morning while Mass was still being celebrated. By some unseen power they were condemned to encircle the church for a year without respite.

From the 16th century onwards dancing gave way to singing in churches, resulting in our present use of the word 'carol' for sung seasonal verse, like our widely popular Christmas carols.

Witches at their sabbaths always enjoyed dancing, and used both ring and chain. The ring was said to have been performed facing outwards and moved widdershins, that is, to the left and against the direction of the sun, therefore adversely influencing the fertility of crops, since witches were thought to do all the harm they could. The chain was led by the chief or priest of the witch coven, who moved off so quickly that there had to be a 'rear man' to beat up the laggards. Those who fell out had to limp home alone.

VIOLET ALFORD

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Carthage

City on the North African coast, near modern Tunis, a Phoenician colony which in time became a leading power in the western Mediterranean, until its destruction by the Romans in 146 BC: the Carthaginians sacrificed children to their gods, the most important of whom were Baal Hammon and the fertility goddess Tanit.

See PHOENICIANS.

Lavion Sun

Cartomancy

The art of telling fortunes by Tarot cards or by ordinary playing cards; from Italian *carta*, 'card', and Greek *manteia*, 'divination'.

See CARDS.

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CASANOVA

PERHAPS THE GREATEST confidence trickster who ever lived, whose innumerable love affairs have made his name a byword for lechery, Giacomo Casanova was born at Venice in 1725. By turns secretary to a cardinal, soldier, and violinist in an orchestra, in 1755 he was sent to prison, accused of being a Freemason and a magician. He escaped from prison and travelled about Europe, hobnobbing with the great.

Claiming to be an adept of the Cabala and an initiate of the mysteries of the Rosy Cross (see ROSICRUCIANS), Casanova swindled a large number of the credulous rich who believed in his occult powers. To some extent, it seems, he believed in them himself. The most remarkable of his victims was his 'divine madwoman', Mme la Marquise d'Urfé, an aging Parisian widow who wanted to be reborn as a man.

For this purpose it was necessary to find a maiden, who must be the daughter of a Rosicrucian adept and who would be magically impregnated with a male child by Casanova himself. When the child was born, he would be handed over to Mme d'Urfé, who would kiss him on the mouth passing her soul into him with her breath. Her corpse would then be disposed of and Casanova was to look after the little boy, who would contain the spirit of Mme d'Urfe.

The 'maiden' chosen was in fact a whore and despite Casanova's best efforts she failed to conceive. In this emergency, on Casanova's instructions, Mme d'Urfé wrote letters to the moon asking for guidance. The moon's replies, written in silver ink on green paper, appeared from nowhere floating on the water in Mme d'Urfé's bathtub. Eventually the first plan was dropped and Casanova tried to impregnate Mme d'Urfé herself with a male child, without success.

Mme d'Urfé died soon afterwards, from an overdose of an occult remedy called the Panacea. Casanova died in 1798 after writing his memoirs, in which he said that when he thought of his victims he stood astonished at his own moderation.

FURTHER READING: John Masters, *Casanova* (Michael Joseph, 1969).

Michael Holford

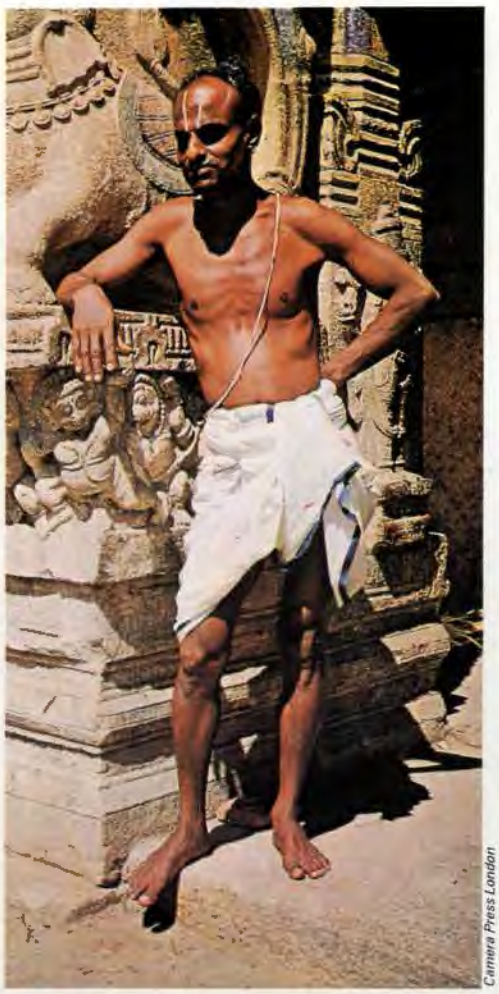
In Hindu India your behaviour in previous lives determines your social status in this one. The caste system remains an important factor in the life of a modern state

CASTE

CASTE IS A TERM applied to social units which rank in a hierarchic order and within which there is a minimum of social mobility. The word caste appeared first as *casta*, a term by which the Portuguese travellers of the 15th century referred to the divisions of Indian society. Although some modern sociologists speak of 'caste-like' categories, with reference to the rigid sections of societies divided along lines of colour, race or class, caste in the narrow sense of the term is a system that is confined to Indian culture.

Unlike the classes of Western societies and the racial elements of such societies as the United States and South Africa, the Indian castes have their roots in a system of ideas which claims religious sanction for the division of humanity into a number of inherently different groups. This is an essential part of the Hindu outlook and the system of castes is thus a religious as well as a social phenomenon.

It is based on the idea that men are born with different spiritual qualities which result largely from their actions in previous existences, and that the qualities of members of one caste are essentially different from those of members of others. Membership of a caste is seen as a spiritual condition which remains unchangeable during a lifetime, though merit or demerit acquired in one life can affect a man's or woman's status in a future rebirth. The idea of reincarnation is inseparable from the religious foundations of the caste system.



Camera Press London

In ancient India the caste system in its present complex form had not yet developed, but the social order reflected in the Vedic hymns, the oldest part of the sacred Sanskrit literature, involved a division of society into categories or estates: the so-called *varna* (literally 'colours'). Though this fourfold division of society was to become the framework for the rank-order of castes, it was very different from the castes of modern India. The order of varna consisted of four categories, the highest being that of Brahmins (priests). Below them ranked the Kshatriyas (warriors), next came the Vaisyas (merchants and husbandmen) and the lowest were the Sudras (menial artisans, labourers and servants).

A creation myth contained in a Vedic

The highest ranking groups in ancient India were the Brahmins (priests) and the Kshatriyas (warriors), who were called 'twice-born' because they went through a special initiation ceremony which was regarded as a second birth. Spiritual power was reserved to the priests, political power to the warriors. *Left* Brahmin outside a temple in southern India *Below* Kshatriyas in battle, from the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*

hymn ascribes this division of humanity to the very beginning of the present world-age. Purusha, an original divine being whose immense body filled the whole universe, was sacrificed by the gods in such a manner that the parts of his body transformed themselves into the various elements of the creation: his mouth turned into the first Brahmin, his arms into Kshatriya warriors, and the lower parts of his body into Vaisyas and Sudras.

The Twice-Born

In Vedic times there was still some mobility between these four categories and marriages between Brahmins and Kshatriyas were not unusual. The members of the three higher ranks were described as 'twice-born', because young males of these groups underwent an initiation rite, regarded as a 'second birth', which admitted them to the religious life. The Sudras, the lowest order, were excluded from most ritual activities and they were not allowed to study the sacred Vedic texts.

The system of varna was codified in one of the earliest Indian law books, the code of Manu, which specified the functions of the members of the four categories and regulated relations between them. This codification coincided with a hardening of the divisions of Hindu society and the mobility between the varna disappeared. The differentiation in the rights and duties of the members of the four estates became more pronounced. Manu laid down that all actions should be judged according to the status of the doer, and men of high status were not only accorded many privileges but also had obligations. A higher standard of behaviour was expected from them than from men of low birth, and those of high status who were guilty of certain offences were to be punished more severely than men of lower rank who had committed identical crimes.

The laws of Manu also determined the relations between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, priests and secular rulers. Whereas in ancient times Indian princes had the right to perform religious functions, Kshatriyas were now deprived of all their religious prerogatives, such as the right to conduct sacrifices, and were subordinated to the spiritual power of Brahmin priests (see also BRAHMAN). But the supremacy of the Brahmins' spiritual power was never expressed in the political sphere, and in this the Kshatriyas ruled supreme.

The fourfold division of society into the hierarchically ranked varna extended over the whole of India, and provided a model for the structure of Hindu society. From about 300 BC onwards numerous castes or *jati* developed within the varna framework. These were social groups whose members married only among themselves. This is one of the most characteristic features of the system. Each caste is a closed social group with distinctive customs and ritual practices, strict dietary rules and occupational preferences. From birth the individual is provided with a fixed social milieu, from which no vicissitude of fate can remove him, unless he violates the rules of his caste to such a degree that he is either temporarily or permanently excommunicated or 'outcasted'. His caste determines his choice of partner in marriage, and frequently his occupation, acts as his trade union and prescribes his religious practices. Most castes are subdivided, and it is within the local sub-caste that a man or woman generally finds most social contacts.

While each caste and sub-caste is a largely self-contained unit, there is a pronounced interdependence of castes, which render each other numerous services in both the religious and economic spheres. For instance, Brahmins act as family priests for all individuals belonging to the twice-born castes, while members of many lower castes have their prescribed roles in the ritual practices of a village community. Economically, because of the occupational specialization of castes in traditional Indian society, no one group can dispense with the services of the other social groups.

The Pure and the Impure

But despite this interdependence, there are strict rules limiting the relations between members of castes of different status. Basic to the system is the belief in the unequal degree of ritual purity attaching to the various groups. Hindus hold that certain types of contact, such as eating with a member of a lower caste or even accepting water from his hands, defiles a man of higher status and the avoidance of such polluting contacts and the maintenance of ritual purity is a constant preoccupation with Indians of high caste. Many occasions expose a man or woman to pollution.

There is, in addition, the underlying belief that impurity prevails over purity. While the purity of persons of high caste is diminished by contact with members of the lower groups, the latter do not enhance their purity if they are touched by a high-caste person.

Conformity to every detail of the rules which regulate the conduct of caste-members is considered the supreme virtue in a Hindu. A violation of the rules, even if committed accidentally, may result in dire consequences. Thus a Brahmin who unknowingly partakes of the food cooked by a person of low status loses his ritual purity and with it his own caste status.

Hindu society sees the individual not so much as an independent agent, guided in his conduct by the promptings of his own conscience, but as the member of a tightly organized community whose actions affect not only his own status but also that of those closest to him. For an individual's wrong conduct can cause a chain reaction. By incurring pollution, a man in turn pollutes the innocent members of his household, and may affect even kinsmen and friends who, ignorant of his lowered ritual status, accept food prepared in his house. Because the pollution that results from certain offences against caste rules is automatic and contagious, no group can afford to permit freedom to the individual in the regulation of his life.

Caste members are therefore critical of deviations from the narrow path of orthodox behaviour on the part of other individuals in the group, and even close kinsmen will disown a family member who has lost status by contact with a person of lower caste. The breach of a rule, such as the taboo on the eating of certain types of meat, or the ban on sexual congress with lower caste partners, is regarded as a social offence as well as a sin.

The Untouchables

Actions permissible for members of one caste are wrong for those of another, and instead of a universally applicable moral code there are as many different standards of behaviour as there are castes.

The lowest castes, including artisans doing polluting work such as tanning, leather working and scavenging, are everywhere regarded as 'untouchable', and bodily contact or even proximity to them pollutes members of clean castes. Though public discrimination against untouchables is now illegal, they still form an under-privileged class, which in many parts of India comprises a large percentage of the population.

Castes and sub-castes have elaborate organizations with caste councils and caste headmen, and these exert a considerable degree of discipline over the members. The importance of this system in the social structure of India can hardly be exaggerated: the overwhelming majority of the Hindu population takes the hierarchy of castes for granted, and considers it part of a world order closely integrated with orthodox Hindu religion.

Religious reformers through the ages have attempted to abolish these social distinctions, but they have had no lasting effect, and sects which preached the equality of man ended up as closed groups similar to castes – and are now regarded as such by the rest of Hindu society. However, although the caste system has made for a static and conservative society, it has at the same time facilitated the integration of many groups of different origin, each of which has retained many of its social and religious practices and traditions. In this way the cultural independence of small groups has been respected even though they are incorporated into the greater Indian society.

Throughout the centuries the system of castes has provided a basis, and an ideological justification, for the coexistence of different ethnic and cultural groups as well as for the mutual tolerance of a great number of communities with distinct religious and social customs.

Despite official attempts to create an egalitarian society in which caste privileges have no legally recognized place, the continued persistence of castes as distinct social units within Indian society can be predicted with a high degree of probability. In recent years the religious aspects of the system have somewhat receded into the background, but the castes have gained a new function as political pressure groups, whose cohesion and strength are rooted in the traditional solidarity of their members. Thus an ancient social order, derived originally from mythological and religious concepts, survives in a changed form in the public life of a modern state.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

CAT

Worshipped as a goddess or feared as an agent of the Devil, sacrificed to evil spirits or cherished for its powers of healing – the fortunes of the cat have fluctuated throughout history

DURING THE THOUSANDS of years in which the cat has lived among human beings it has been venerated at one period as a deity, and at other times cursed as a demon. In parts of ancient Egypt where the cat was regarded as sacred to the cat-headed goddess Bast, spiritual ruler of the city of Bubastis (now Tell Basta) to the east of the Nile Delta, to kill one might be punishable by death. Diodorus Siculus, the Greek historian, described how a Roman who committed this crime was murdered by a mob despite the pleadings of high Egyptian officials. If a cat died, from any cause whatever, its owner went into mourning, shaving his eyebrows and performing elaborate funeral rites. Cat cemeteries were established on the banks of the Nile, where the sacred animals were mummified and then laid to rest, together with vast quantities of cat mascots and bronze cat effigies.

The cat was invested with this aura of holiness elsewhere in the ancient world. The Roman goddess Diana sometimes assumed the shape of a cat, and the chariot of Freyja, the Scandinavian fertility goddess, was drawn by cats. This reverence was due not so much to the animal's importance as the guardian of the granaries against mice (as in ancient Egypt) or to its role as the traditional enemy of the serpent, but to the beauty of its eyes which were strangely reminiscent of the moon.

In her *Cult of the Cat*, Patricia Dale-Green says, 'Like the moon it (the cat) comes to life at night, escaping from humanity and wandering over the housetops with its eyes beaming out through the darkness.' Many people believed the cat was the child of the moon and it was said that 'the moon brought forth the cat'. This curious link has been regarded as due to 'the changeableness of the pupils of the eye, which in the daytime is a mere narrow line, dilatable at night to a luminous globe.' From the magic of their eyes arose the belief that cats were seers with strong mediumistic powers. In the East the cat is said to bear away the souls of the dead, and in some parts of West Africa Negroes accept that the human soul passes into the body of a cat at death.

An Italian legend tells of a cat that gave birth to her kittens beneath the very manger in which Christ was born. But the cat was not destined to be venerated in Christian Europe, for the Church with its violent repudiation of paganism succeeded in reducing the status of this once sacred animal to that of a devil.

The gods of one religion almost invariably become the devils of the next but there has

The cat is traditionally connected with the moon, which waxes and wanes and disappears from the sky like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, which slowly appears and vanishes again, leaving behind a smile that eventuelly disappears too

Isobel Grierson was sent to the stake after evidence had been given that she entered the house of Adam Clark at Prestonpans in the likeness of a cat

rarely been so dramatic a fall from grace as that of the once holy cat. During the persecution of the heretical sect of the Cathars the belief was fostered that these heretics had worshipped the Devil in feline form, and the stage was set for the cat's unwitting participation in the witchcraft tragedy.

In the Middle Ages the English scholar Gervase of Tilbury stated a popular belief when he wrote, '. . . women have been seen and wounded in the shape of cats by persons who were secretly on the watch and . . . the next day the women have shown wounds and loss of limbs.' In 1718, towards the end of the witchcraft mania in the British Isles, William Montgomery of Caithness, driven berserk by a vast crowd of cats which gossiped outside his house in human language, attacked them, hatchet in hand, killing two and wounding others. On the following day, two old women were found dead in bed while another had an unexplained gash in her leg, proof positive that they had changed shape during the night. Earlier, in 1607, also in Scotland, there was the classic case of Isobel Grierson, who was sent to the stake after evidence had been given that she entered the house of Adam Clark at Prestonpans in the likeness of a cat, accompanied by other cats.

The Fear of Cats

Jane Wenham, the last person to be tried for witchcraft in England, was accused of assuming the form of a cat to terrify her victims. At the height of the witchcraft delusion it was generally assumed that a witch could take the shape of a cat only nine times, presumably because of the belief that a cat had nine lives.

More often, cats were given the comparatively minor role of witches' familiars. The villain of one of the first important trials of English witches, in 1566, was a white spotted cat called Sathan, which fed on its mistress's blood. The cruelties inflicted upon a cat caught in the mesh of witchcraft could be dreadful, for the wretched animal was likely to be burned alive, both in England and on the Continent.

Some people have an intense fear of cats, and in the 17th century Increase Mather, the celebrated New England Puritan divine, observed, 'There are some who, if a cat accidentally comes into a room, though they neither see of it nor are told of it will presently be in a sweat and ready to die away.' It was generally assumed that if a cat was allowed near a corpse it would steal the soul, and the dead person would then become a vampire. Vampire cats were common in Japan, but were easily recognizable as they had two tails.

One superstition, hardly extinct today, held that cats crept into the cradle to suck the breath of young babies. Nursemaids stood permanent guard against these attacks.

In parts of Europe where many of the old pagan ceremonies were preserved relatively unchanged, a cat often personified the spirit of the corn. At Briançon in France a cat ceremonially garbed in ribbons, flowers and corn ears presided at the harvest, while near Amiens one of these animals was ritually killed when the last sheaves of corn were cut. It was customary to roast cats alive to drive away evil spirits at the European Easter and Shrove Tuesday fire ceremonies. In the English Guy Fawkes celebrations sacks of living cats were placed on the bonfires.

Cat sacrifice in modified form continued into comparatively modern times, usually to protect a building against fire. Less than ten years ago the mummified bodies of a cat and her kittens were found plastered into a cottage wall at Cricksea in Essex, and are now on exhibition at a local museum.

Until the close of the 18th century black cats were burned alive in the Highlands of Scotland, in a ceremony called Taigheirin, to secure from the gods the gift of second sight; and the Irish Hellfire Club is said to have celebrated one of its orgies by igniting a huge tomcat.

Almost as unfortunate was any kitten born in the month of May. Rarely a good hunter, it would bring home glow-worms and snakes instead of mice and, because of this, was usually drowned. Needless to say its 'melancholy disposition' made it easily recognizable.

Lore of the Black Cat

Legendary lore has had a particularly dramatic influence on feline fortunes. In Britain the 'blackberry' cat's reputation for devilment and mischief is due solely to the fact that it is born at the end of the blackberry season, this being the time of year when, according to an old tradition, Satan was thrown out of heaven into a blackberry bush (which he then defiled with his urine and spittle).

The sins of the blackberry cat pale into insignificance when compared with those of

Michael Busselle

William MacQuitty

Facing page **Satan incarnate: in medieval times a black cat was widely believed to be an embodiment of the Devil *Right*** **The cat was sacred to the Egyptian goddess Bast. Cemeteries containing the bodies of mummified sacred cats have been discovered with bronze statues of cats, like this one which is dated to c 600 BC**

Cats have always aroused strong human emotions, some people adoring them and others detesting them. Both reactions appear in folklore and nursery rhymes, where the cat may play an attractive role, as in 'Puss in Boots' or 'The Cat and the Fiddle' (*below*): or it may be a creature of evil and the companion of witches (*right*). One of the witches executed at Lincoln in 1618 said that she saw her mother's familiar spirit, 'the cat Rutterkin, leap on her shoulder and suck her neck.' Three other witches who were involved are shown (*bottom*) with their familiars, a kitten, an owl, a mouse and a dog

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Mansell Collection

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

the black cat which, in the United States and most of Europe is regarded as the embodiment of the Devil himself. In Britain, it is the white cat who plays this role. The brindled cat was notorious in England as the familiar of the witch, hence the witches' cry in *Macbeth*, 'Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed', while the black cat, generally speaking, symbolizes magic minus malice.

Even today cat lore, particularly the correct approach to the black variety, is extremely complicated. The black cat should be gently stroked along the spine and never chased away, or it will take the luck of the home with it. To come across such an animal out of doors is highly favourable in most parts of Britain, but in Yorkshire as in the United States it is unlucky; at the same time it is lucky to own a black cat. Many Americans believe it is unlucky if the cat crosses their path from left to right.

One supernatural skill attributed to these animals is their ability to forecast the weather. When cats scamper wildly it means wind; when they wash their ears, rain; and when they sit with their backs to the fire, frost or storms. The Indonesians believe that it is possible to produce rain by pouring water over a cat.

Observers in the past have tried to rationalize the weather-forecasting element in the feline make-up. An early attempt suggested that 'the moisture which is in the air before the rain, insinuating itself into the fur of this animal, moves her to smooth the same and cover the body with it so that she may feel less the inconvenience of Winter, as on the contrary she opens her fur in Summer that she may better receive the refreshing of the moist season.'

The cat has always been credited with that most important function of divinity, the art of healing. The instrument for this is its tail which will cure a 'queff' or stye, if drawn downwards over the eye, while the following charm is recited:

> I poke thee. I don't poke thee.
> I poke the queff that's under the eye.
> O qualyway, O qualyway.

'Tail cure' is equally effective in the treatment of warts, whitloes and the itch. Catskin properly dried and applied to the face is believed to relieve toothache, and in the

Cat and Mouse

Cats and mice are often associated in legends concerned with the beginning of the world. According to one legend, not only did rodents precede cats but their existence was the reason for the cat's creation. At the time of the Flood, we are told, there were no cats. Noah (showing, one would have thought, extraordinary lack of foresight) took pairs of rats and mice into the Ark, with the result that it was soon over-run with vermin. Noah asked the lion, as king of the beasts, to do something about the situation. The lion sneezed, and from his nostrils appeared a pair of cats, which soon reduced the rodent population.

It has also been said that God created the cat, but that the mouse was Satan's creation; and the Devil's mouse did its best to destroy life once and for all by nibbling a hole in Noah's Ark. Fortunately it was caught by God's cat, and the hole was closed by a frog who crept into it.

Patricia Dale-Green *Cult of the Cat*

17th century a whole cat boiled in olive oil was thought to make a first-class dressing for wounds. If a disease resisted ordinary methods of treatment it was at one time customary to transfer it to the family cat, by dousing the animal with the patient's washing water and driving it from the house. When any member of the family was ill, the cat's every movement might be scrutinized for signs and portents. Its leaving home was an omen of death, and if the sick person dreamed of cats or a cat fight it was a sign that death was near.

It was noticed that cats were extremely sensitive to the presence of an unburied body in the house, and that they left home immediately someone died, returning only after the funeral. A cat that stood its ground but was caught leaping over the coffin was always killed at once, as such behaviour was thought to bode ill for the prospects of the departed in the hereafter.

Prophetic Sneezes

When signs of sickness first showed themselves in the family cat, its every sneeze was awaited with the keenest interest. A single sneeze, near a bride on her wedding morning, forecast a happy marriage, but on other occasions it might portend rain. Three sneezes in succession were a warning that the whole household would go down with colds in the near future.

It was a rule in many households that a sick or dying cat be put out of the house, to prevent death from spreading through the family. When moving house in the north-east of England it was traditional to abandon the family cat in order to preserve the luck.

Seamen were invariably kind to a cat, believing that it brought luck to any ship it boarded. In addition cats were infallible weather guides and were thought to be invaluable when a ship was becalmed, as a wind could be raised by placing a cat under a pot on the deck. To throw a cat overboard, particularly if it were black and without a single white hair, was unthinkable since this could cause a storm.

Actors also welcome cats, regarding their presence as a good omen, and they believe that kicking a cat causes the worst possible luck. But if a cat runs across the stage during a performance, it is thought to be an extremely ominous sign.

A great many cat superstitions and fears have survived in the United States. The lore of the Old South tends to see the cat as a devil, a witch, a witch's imp – but at the same time its whiskers were often used in 'conjure' magic and charms. Southern belief also says that if you kick a cat you will get rheumatism, and if you drown a cat the Devil will get you. Yet a broth made from boiling a black cat was believed to cure consumption. The attitudes in lore from the North were equally complicated. The New Englander long believed that he could tell time from a cat's eyes, for the pupils supposedly contracted at low tide, dilated at high tide. Pennsylvanians boiled black cats to keep the Devil at bay; Ozarkians, afraid to kill a cat, might chop off its paw and throw it out of the house.

Cats have played altogether happier roles in fairy tales. We are indebted to Aesop and others for the fable in which the mice solemnly debated who was to bell the cat, and for centuries children in northern Europe have listened with delight to the remarkable tale of Dildrum the cat who flew up the chimney to become King of Catland; while Puss in Boots has long been a national institution.

In the story of Puss in Boots, which has several European versions, the hero is usually a young man whose only inheritance is a cat. This cat, however, is really a prince who has been bewitched. A creature of marvellous ingenuity, the cat convinces the king that his master is a wealthy nobleman, provides the young man with great estates and splendid clothes, and wins him a beautiful princess, the king's daughter, for a wife. When asked what it wants for a reward, the cat insists on having its head cut off and when this is reluctantly done, the bewitched prince is restored to his normal human form.

In modern times although the cat has not yet recovered its lost status as a goddess, there have been other compensations. Television stardom has come its way and it would sometimes appear that the entire economic life of the nation is geared to the production of its food. Yet, quite unspoiled, the cat remains serene, civilized, god-like and utterly mysterious.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Patricia Dale-Green, *Cult of the Cat* (Houghton, Mifflin, 1963).

Axel Poignant

Catacombs

Large underground burying places, used by the early Christians: the fact that many martyrs were buried in them made them popular with Christians who wanted to rest near the martyrs: the most famous are those in Rome, which consist of an extensive network of narrow passages with shelves cut in the walls on which the bodies were placed; there are also small rooms for family burials and larger ones in which services were held.

Caterpillar

Larva of a butterfly or moth, in Europe often believed to be created by the Devil or by witches with the Devil's assistance; in parts of the United States the appearance of a black one is a sign of a hard winter ahead; in England carrying a caterpillar about with you is supposed to ward off fevers.

The attempt to suppress these heretics, who believed in chastity, poverty and simple piety, led to the founding of the Inquisition and the first crusade ever to be fought inside Europe

CATHARS

THE CATHARS, also known as the Albigenses (from the town of Albi, north-east of Toulouse), were a powerful religious sect which flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries, chiefly in southern France and northern Italy. In their own eyes, they were the only true Christians, and nearer than the Roman Catholic Church to the tradition of the early Christians, both in the life of chastity, poverty and simple piety which they lived and preached, and in their organization and ritual. But their theology, based on a dualistic belief in an evil principle in the universe which limited God's power, was heretical; and the fact that they were well organized, and that their zealous missionaries gained many converts posed a serious threat to the Church of Rome, whose authority and sacraments they rejected and whose hierarchy they condemned.

For more than 50 years the Roman Church tolerated Catharism, which first appeared in western Europe about the year 1140. During these years, Catharism spread so rapidly that divisions and differences developed inside the movement itself. But by the turn of the century the Church felt compelled to act against the heresy, and in 1208 Pope Innocent III declared a Crusade against the Cathars, which led to a merciless war lasting 20 years.

After the Treaty of Meaux in 1229, which ended the war, the Cathars carried on an underground struggle against the Inquisition, which was instituted by Pope Gregory IX for the express purpose of rooting out the heresy (see HERESY). The massacre of some 200 Cathars at Montségur in the Pyrenees in 1244 was a disaster from which the movement never recovered.

From Eastern Roots

The origins of Catharism lie in the old beliefs of Gnosticism and Manicheism, which grew up outside Europe, and the heresy reached France and Italy from the Balkans and Asia Minor. Their name, derived from the Greek word for 'pure', shows that the contemporaries of the Cathars regarded them as in some way connected with the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity. Their fundamental dualism, as well as many points of detail in their practices and beliefs, prove that the Cathars were originally a western offshoot of the Bogomils (see BOGOMILS).

Between the 4th and the 10th centuries, the Western Church had been free from any serious heretical movements but in the 11th century, with the revival of trade, signs of religious agitation began to appear.

In the 12th century this religious ferment gathered force and, as one authority on medieval Europe puts it, 'Europe was swarming with hermits, wandering preachers and foot-loose monks.' The mood of the age was favourable to Catharism but the specific factors behind its rapid spread are uncertain. The eastern doctrines on which it was based probably filtered in from the East at first along the trade routes, so that it may have reached Lombardy in northern Italy first, and from there penetrated France and the Rhineland. This process was probably hastened by the persecution of the Bogomils in Constantinople in 1110 and 1140.

Already by this time we hear that in the south-west of France the Cathars were so well established that the Roman Catholic churches were empty. The Cathars were now apparently an organized Church with their own hierarchy, ritual and system of doctrine. By 1149 they had their first bishop in the north of France. In 1167 the Bogomil Bishop Nicetas came from Constantinople to visit Lombardy and southern France. He summoned a Council of Cathar bishops and ministers at St Felix de Caraman, near Toulouse, apparently to assert the true Bogomil faith and to establish new bishoprics. By the end of the 12th century no less

Below **Long and rigorous training prepared the 'perfect', the initiates who formed the elite of the Cathar sect, to suffer torture and death rather than betray their faith: two condemned Cathars awaiting execution, from a painting by P. Berruguete *Right* St Dominic, who preached with great fervour against the Cathars, watches the burning of heretical books: 'good' books rise, untouched, from the fire. Painting by P. Berruguete**

Prado, Madrid

Prado, Madrid

than 11 Cathar bishoprics had been established, five in France and six in Italy.

The Cathars were not confined to France and Italy. By c 1150 they were established in Germany, particularly around Cologne, and in 1162 a German-led Cathar mission arrived in England. They were branded on the forehead and expelled from the country.

The Monster of Chaos

The Cathar philosophy was based on dualism, the belief that two opposed powers or principles are active in the universe. Most of the Cathars seem to have regarded the evil principle as weaker, or somehow less real, than the good. Yet the good principle, or God, was not all-powerful. He suffered the hostility of an evil power which he had not himself created or willed, and his power was limited in other ways. 'Without doubt, God cannot lie,' said Jean de Lugio, a leading Cathar apologist, when challenged to give an example of something that God cannot do.

The evil being, which was sometimes known as the Monster of Chaos, in some way partook of the nature of man, fish, bird and beast. But at the same time, it was a spirit 'which had no beginning'. The being had various physical forms: matter, chaos, darkness, Lucifer and Satan. According to the usual Cathar view, Satan had created the material world and the flesh, and man's task was to liberate his spirit, the good part of him, from its material envelope. The material world would eventually pass away altogether. God's creation of celestial and eternal things was contrasted with Satan's creation of what was material and transitory. The evil principle, however, was eternal – only its effects would perish in time.

Christ as a Phantom

The Cathar teaching about Christ has survived mainly in its negative aspects. Christ appeared in our world merely as a phantom. His mission was to teach the doctrine of salvation set out in the gospels and to warn mankind that the god of the Old Testament was really a demon who had created the material world.

Christ's true mission, however, had been accomplished elsewhere, in 'superior worlds', and his crucifixion in this world was fictitious. Some Cathars said that the crucifixion was an image of torture inflicted in another world on the demon who had created the world. The Cathars condemned the cult of the cross and, like the Bogomils, maintained that the cross had been made of the wood of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. The Cathars were accused of denying that Christ was the son of the Virgin Mary, and in the eyes of their contemporaries the most scandalous part of their doctrine was the denial that the human body is resurrected after death.

There were two classes of Cathars, the 'perfect' (*Perfecti*) also known as 'bons-hommes' or 'ancients', and the 'believers'. The 'perfect' formed the hierarchy of the Cathar Church, and the 'believers' were the rank and file. The 'perfect' underwent a long and rigorous initiation which culminated in a religious ceremony, the *consolamentum*, which was the Cathar equivalent of the Christian baptism, confirmation and ordination of a priest, all rolled into one.

The consolamentum was conducted before a large audience in a room which had a table in the middle, spread with a spotless white cloth, on which lay a copy of the New Testament. A Cathar 'ancient' addressed the candidate in a series of special formulas. The candidate confessed his sins and renounced this world and its works, ending with a solemn promise to give himself to God and to the gospel, never to lie or swear an oath, never again to touch a woman, to eat only vegetables and fish, and never to travel or pass the night or take food without a companion of the same sex.

The training the 'perfect' received prepared them to endure torture rather than betray their faith, and history shows that many of them went willingly to atrocious deaths. Their enemies accused them of being favourably disposed towards suicide.

Not every Cathar felt able to take the vows of sexual abstinence and extreme asceticism that were required of the 'perfect', and many waited until they were on their death-beds before receiving the consolamentum, which then took the place of the Christian rite of extreme unction. There were, however, other religious ceremonies, such as the *apparelliamentum*, a monthly public confession of sins before one of the 'perfect', and simple services at which the Lord's Prayer was recited and hymns sung.

Although the austere renunciation of the material world, and particularly of meat, wine and sexual intercourse, was a way of life to which only a minority could commit themselves, the Cathar faith was evidently one which exercised a great fascination on the men and women of the time.

It took more than a century of war and persecution after Pope Innocent III declared a crusade against the Cathars to put the heresy down. Nor did the Cathars disappear without trace. Apart from the fact that the Albigensian Crusade altered the course of French history, and that the Inquisition left a permanent mark in the consciousness of southern Europe, later religious movements have been influenced by Catharism, and as late as the Second World War there was a neo-Catharist sect in Toulouse.

(See also BLACK MASS; SABBATH.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

The Albigensian Crusade

By the 12th century the troubadour culture of poetry and song, come from no one knows where, flourished among the aristocracy of southern France. By its side flourished the austere Cathar faith often practised by the aristocrats themselves.

In 1174 the Cistercian St Bernard preached against the Cathars in Toulouse, and their bons-hommes were forced to leave the city; but not for long. In 1204 Pope Innocent III told the King of France that Count Raymond VI of Toulouse must be deposed and a good Catholic installed in his stead, but Philip Augustus of France took no action. The next year a monk, Dominic Guzman of Caluérega, assailed the heretics in a new missionary style. Like the Cathar

Perfecti, he went barefoot and simply dressed to preach to the masses.

The Pope appointed officials called Legates to Languedoc, that part of southern France lying to the west of the Rhône and to the east of the Bordeaux country. In 1207 they asked Count Raymond to join a league of southern barons, pledged to hunt down the heretics. When he refused, he was excommunicated and it was announced that whoever killed the Count would earn a blessing. On 15 January 1208, one of Raymond's squires assassinated the Papal Legate Peter of Castelnau at St Gilles on the banks of the Rhône.

For two days the Pope could not speak for rage. On 10 March 1208 he called for a crusade against the heretics who were 'worse than the very Saracen'.

The King of France refused to engage himself. But many knights of northern France were attracted by this novel crusade, the first inside Europe. In the statutory 40 days of crusading they could gain salvation without crossing the seas; their sins would be remitted and the goods of the heretics would be at their disposal.

So in the spring of 1209, some 20,000 knights with a huge band of foot soldiers, including the dreaded *routiers* or mercenaries, came down the Rhône and assembled at Lyons, whence the crusade set forth on 24 June, St John's Day. Raymond VI, an adroit opportunist, did penance at St Gilles barefoot and in his shirt, then hastened to join the crusade at Valence. He hoped not only to save his own lands but also to rid himself of Roger Trencavel, a powerful rival. Trencavel met the crusade at Montpellier and offered to make submission. This refused, he left for Carcassonne through Béziers, taking with him to apparent safety Bézier's best-known heretics and Jews.

The crusaders, moving south, invested Béziers on 21 July and prepared for a long siege. But after an ill-advised sally by the defenders the city fell into their hands next day. Over 20,000 people were massacred, including all who had taken refuge in the Church of the Madeleine. It is said that when the Papal Legate, Arnald-Amalric of Cîteaux, was asked how heretics should be distinguished from true believers, he replied, 'Kill them all. God will look after his own.'

Terrorized, cities and towns surrendered to the advancing crusaders. Only Carcassonne where they arrived on 1 August, prepared to hold out. Under safe-conduct Trencavel went to the crusader camp to negotiate, and against all honourable usage was taken prisoner; he died in captivity soon after. Bereft of its lord, Carcassonne surrendered after only 15 days' siege to the most determined and brutal of the invaders, Simon de Montfort (father of the Simon de Montfort famous in English history).

Because the Cathars renounced the Roman Catholic Church and their Catholic baptism, the sect was believed to be in league with the Devil, and was accused of encouraging debauchery and unnatural vice: illustration of Cathar atrocities, from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

Prudently refused by greater northern lords, the Trencavel lands were assigned to Montfort. By September the 40 official days of crusading were over and most of the knights went home. But Montfort stayed in Languedoc and began a ruthless pursuit of the bons-hommes, who at first retreated to hill fortresses in the Minervois and Corbières regions. They held out for months during the burning summer of 1210, but were eventually forced to surrender for lack of food and water. When they did, those who refused to recant perished in huge bonfires.

Massacre at Montségur

Montfort's ambitions grew. He sought to be Count of Toulouse. The crusade had become a defensive war of south against north, with King Pedro II of Aragon and the Count of Foix rallying to Raymond of Toulouse. But in 1213 Pedro was killed at the battle of Muret, a decisive victory for Montfort. Raymond was excommunicated again. The Council of Montpellier awarded Toulouse to Montfort, and in May 1215 the city fell into his hands. Its walls were razed and its treasures plundered. Montfort's greed and brutality appalled even the Pope.

In April 1216 Raymond VI and his son returned to Languedoc from exile and were welcomed as liberators. Raymond retook Toulouse and massacred the French garrison. Montfort besieged the city for nine months, then was killed by a stone fired – it is said by women – from inside the walls.

But the triumph was short-lived. In 1222 Raymond VI died. In 1226 the Council of Bourges excommunicated his successor, Raymond VII, who had won back Simon de Montfort's conquests from Montfort's son Amaury. Amaury ceded his rights to the King of France and a new crusading army under Louis VIII came down the Rhône and retook all Languedoc except Toulouse. The country was systematically ravaged. Raymond VII yielded in 1229, and promised to rid the country of heretics and to marry his young daughter to the King of France's brother. When she died without children, in 1271, Languedoc, a ruined country with its fine civilization destroyed, was formally attached to the Crown of France.

Meanwhile, the extirpation of the Cathars had continued. The Order of Preaching Friars founded by Dominic Guzman had been entrusted with the work of the Inquisition in Languedoc, and terrorized the population. The last open resistance of the Cathars was at Montségur, their holy fortress on a hill where, between 1243 and 1244, they held out for ten months. When at last they surrendered, enormous pyres surrounded by palisades consumed the 200 Perfecti who refused to renounce their faith. Legend has it that their treasure of gold and holy books still lies hidden at Montségur.

MARGHANITA LASKI

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St Catherine of Siena was notorious for the trances into which she repeatedly fell, at one time appearing to be dead for four hours. She believed that she had mystically married Christ and mystically died with him

ST CATHERINE

BORN ON 25 MARCH 1347, Catherine of Siena was the 23rd child of a dyer named Jacomo Benincasa. A mystic who showed all the signs of religious fanaticism, she was driven by her convictions to attempt to change the pattern of European history.

In the 14th century, religion and politics were inextricably entangled, and the Pope was nominal ruler of the Western world. Although rising nationalism had not yet broken the unity of Christendom, there was almost always fighting somewhere between Christian states. In this situation, a religious fanatic was able to exert a powerful influence on events.

At the time of Catherine's birth, the Pope ruled from Aviguon in France, and French inflnence was supreme in the Church. Rome and the Papal States were in ruins. Led mainly by Florence, the cities of Tuscany, including Siena, maintained a precarious independence. Throughout Catherine's short life, the four scourges of mankind – war, famine, plague and heresy – constantly threatened life, and frequently took it.

Catherine's biographer, Raimondo of Capua, tells us that at the age of five she was already extremely devout, and that at about that time she had her first vision, in which she saw Christ enthroned above St Dominic's Church in Siena, attended by Sts Peter, Paul and John the Evangelist. When she was seven or so, she decided to become a hermit, but heavenly voices counselled against this. By the time she was 12, Catherine had considered and rejected marriage and the convent, the vocations then commonly open to women, but had pledged herself to perpetual virginity. Nevertheless, because she had for a short time been tempted to try and win a husband, she was later hag-ridden with guilt, accusing herself of vanity and frequently beating herself until the blood ran. She took Mary Magdalene, the Penitent, as her 'mother and mistress'.

At 16, following another vision, she became a tertiary among the Daughters of Penance of St Dominic's Order of Preachers. As a tertiary, she was not expected to enter a convent but she was bound to say certain prayers, to attend certain services regularly and to take a Dominican as her confessor and spiritual adviser. But the friar into whose hands she was put did not demand enough from her. She voluntarily shut herself up in her room at her father's house, and over the next three years accused herself of entertaining the foulest temptations.

On Shrove Tuesday 1366, when she was almost 19, the vigils and pains of her adolescence were rewarded by a vision in which she was betrothed to the only husband she could accept, Christ himself.

Married to Christ

She experienced the vision in the room she used as her cell. A ring, set with a diamond symbolizing faith, and surrounded by four pearls signifying purity of intention, thought, word and deed, was placed on her finger by Christ himself. The witnesses were his Mother, Sts John, Paul and Dominic, and King David the Psalmist. Christ said to her, 'Behold, I hereby espouse thee to myself in faith, which shall adorn thee from this time forward evermore . . . until . . . thou shalt celebrate with me in heaven the eternal wedding-feast.'

After this experience Catherine was driven by inner promptings, which she described in concrete terms of voices and visions, to leave her room. She became well known in Siena, partly for her charity towards the sick and poor, but more for the trances into which she repeatedly fell, especially after receiving Holy Communion. At such times she was totally insensitive and her limbs became stiff and cold. Asked what happened at such moments, she could say only that she was so full of Christ that her senses stopped working. Whether explained in her own terms or in those of the morbid psychology of hysteria, these trances remain a remarkable example of religious ecstasy.

Her catatonic fits reached their climax

Tomb of St Catherine of Siena in Rome: she died at 34; believing herself to be tormented by demons. Although she was buried at Rome, her head was cut off and taken to Siena, where it remains to this day

Scala

Left **When she was almost 19 St Catherine experienced a vision in which she was betrothed to Christ, depicted here as an infant** ***Above*** **St Catherine of Siena, showing on her hands the stigmata: they were invisible until after her death, and she explained this by saying she had begged Christ not to let them show on her body while she was alive**

one day in August 1370, when Catherine's followers, a very mixed school of disciples, heard that she had died. She lay as though dead for four hours, then wept, it is said, for two days. Afterwards she explained, 'I saw the hidden things of God, and now I am forced back into the prison of the body.'

Even in the 14th century, talk of mystical marriage and mystical death aroused criticism. By May 1374, Catherine had become so notorious that she was summoned to appear before the General Chapter of her Order at Florence to answer charges, record of which has unfortunately not survived. The hearing brought her wider notoriety – and a new confessor, Father Raimondo of Capua, later the Dominican Prior-General and her first biographer.

In the summer of 1374 there was an outbreak of plague in Tuscany and the members of the school of mystics who called Catherine 'Mother' nursed the sick and comforted the dying. Catherine had been calling for a crusade to free the Holy Places in Palestine from the Mohammedans, but forgot the need for a holy war while the plague lasted. The winter of 1375, however, found her in Pisa, moving crowds to religious fervour by her very presence, and preaching the crusade at every opportunity. Her enthusiasm was matched by that of the new pope, Gregory XI. Catherine wrote not only to him, but also to many of the rulers of Europe, stressing the need for war. But when it came, it was to Tuscany, not to the East.

Before the outbreak of the war, Catherine, still at Pisa, underwent yet another major mystical experience when on 1 April 1375 she received the stigmata, the wounds inflicted on Christ on the cross. No one saw the five wounds until after her death, and she explained their invisibility by saying that she had especially requested it: 'I saw the Lord on the Cross . . . I saw five rays the colour of blood directed at my hands, my feet and my heart. Understanding this mystery, I suddenly cried out, "O Lord my God, I beg thee do not let these wounds show on the outside of my body."'

Believing that she was mystically married to her Saviour, had mystically died with him, and was continually sharing his sufferings, Catherine plunged into the troubled events of her last five years of life.

In Tuscany, the plague of 1374 had left near-hysteria and famine in its wake. The Council of Eight at Florence, angry at the Papal States' refusal to supply corn at realistic prices, made an alliance with Milan; permitted the sacking of the churches and monasteries of Florence; added the word *Libertas* in letters of silver to the blood-red banner of the city; and declared war on the papacy.

Catherine who habitually called the Pope 'Christ-on-earth' immediately embraced the cause of Gregory XI. For several months she was able to keep Pisa and Lucca out of the war, but Florentine successes soon nullified her influence. She then began to preach peace to Gregory XI. 'It is better to let the gold of temporal things go than the gold of spiritual things . . . smite them rather with

the staff of benignity, love and peace than with the staff of war . . . Peace, then, peace! for the love of Christ crucified!' She told the Council of Eight in Florence, 'Realise then, my sweet sons, that whosoever rebels is like a rotting limb on the body of Christ and our Father Christ-on-earth, and will fall into the company of the dead . . .'

Soon she was in Florence using her eloquence and her influential friends to persuade the Eight to send her to Avignon as a member of the city's peace delegation to the Pope. At Avignon in 1376, she was repudiated by the Florentine delegation, but stayed on at the papal court, trying to persuade Gregory that true peace could come only if he would return to Italy and reform the Church. It was, in fact, his intention to restore the Roman papacy, but an earlier attempt by his predecessor, Urban V, had ended ignominiously, and Gregory had to choose his moment carefully. He judged it had come late in 1376, after Catherine's return to Italy. It is difficult to judge how much influence she actually had on his decision to return to Rome. Her admirers gave her most of the credit, but it is possible to argue that she was pleading only for what was diplomatically the obvious next move. Within two years, she was in an agony of confusion over the wisdom of her part in it.

She had told the Pope, 'Do not come (to Italy) with armed force. The magic wand of justice must be wielded by the hand of love', but it took a massacre of mercenaries at Cesena, as well as the triumphal return of the Pope to Rome, to smash the Tuscan League and bring the Florentines to a genuine peace conference. Before terms were made, Gregory had died, in March 1378.

The Terror of the Demons

The new Pope, Urban VI, was bombarded with advice from Siena. After hearing that in his zeal for reform the Pope had threatened and struck cardinals and made enemies of such powerful neighbours as Queen Joanna of Naples, Catherine began to warn him, 'Justice without mercy may appear more like injustice . . . Do your business with moderation and a tranquil heart. For the love of Christ crucified, soften a little the sudden movements of your temper'. But Urban was temperamentally incapable of taking such advice, and in September 1370 his cardinals repudiated him by electing Cardinal Robert of Geneva as anti-pope. Robert ruled from Avignon as Clement VII, supported by France and her European allies. This division, known as the Great Schism, lasted for 40 years. Catherine wrote to Urban, 'these devils incarnate have not elected a Christ on earth, but an antichrist to you who are Christ-on-earth.' The Pope commanded her to come to Rome. Before obeying, she spent a week in Siena dictating her most famous spiritual work, now known as *The Dialogues of St Catherine*, then went to Rome, to spend the rest of her life fighting for Urban's recognition as Christ-on-earth.

On 30 January 1380, Catherine suffered a stroke, remaining unconscious for some hours. In a letter written a fortnight later she attributed her attack to 'the terror of the demons . . . roused to rage' against her by her reforming work. Her description of her life at this time is worth quoting. 'At the hour of tierce I rise from Mass, and you would see a dead woman going to St Peter's . . . I remain there praying until nearly the vesper-hour . . . My body remains without food or even a drop of water, with physical torments of a sweetness I have never before endured.'

Nor could she long endure them now. Her 'demons' blamed her for the schism, arguing that if she had not persuaded Gregory to leave Avignon, the Church would not have split. She complained that the whole weight of the Barque of Peter lay on her shoulders. The burden broke her. She was struck by paralysis and before the end of March she already looked like a mummified corpse. But she did not die until Sunday, 29 April.

Catherine was buried in the Minerva Church at Rome, but her head was removed and carried to Siena, where it may still be seen, perhaps one of the most repulsive, although one of the most venerated, of Christian relics. She was canonized in 1461.

J. HOLLAND SMITH

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Jim Bamber

Cat's Cradle

European and American children's game with string, a simple version of the elaborate string figures of some primitive peoples; in the Congo a cradle of string is made to encourage the sun to rest, and shine less fiercely; the Eskimo, on the other hand, uses the cradle to catch the sun and to delay the coming of winter.

See STRING.

By courtesy of the Wellcome Trustees

Caul

Portion of the amnion, or thin membrane enveloping the foetus, which covers the head of some newly born children: an omen of good fortune with powerful magical properties; it protects sailors from drowning, presumably because it was thought to keep the foetus from drowning in the womb; if sold, the caul carries its magic with it and a case of a sailor trying to buy one is known from as late as 1944.

See BIRTH.

The early Celts sacrificed human beings by drowning or suffocating them in cauldrons. In contrast, legend tells of magic vessels that revived the dead or gave the gift of poetry to those who drank from them

CAULDRON

THAT THE CAULDRON was an object of sacred and ritual significance in early Celtic societies has been established by finds of ritual cauldrons dating back to the Celtic Iron Age and earlier; and by medieval Irish and Welsh tales of sacred cauldrons, which do much to prove the truth of, and elaborate on, theories founded upon archeological discoveries. The pagan Celts, believing that hospitality had an almost religious significance, seem to have looked on the cauldron as being symbolic of this quality, for in this vessel food for the welcoming feast was cooked. It was therefore an important utensil in the king's household, and cauldrons were no doubt prized possessions wherever they could be afforded, from simple pottery vessels to the great elaborate decorated metal cauldrons described in legends.

As a symbol of plenty, the cauldron was connected with fertility. Food, and as a result life, came from the cauldron. Certain mythological cauldrons were allegedly capable of reviving the dead. Others were believed to contain a liquid that could confer poetic inspiration on those who drank it, a fitting belief for people as dedicated to poetry as the Celts. Certain sacred cauldrons were considered to be inexhaustible – no matter how much was taken from them they were never empty. So it is not surprising to find that the cauldron was an important attribute of the typical Celtic all-purpose tribal god, father of his people, such as the Dagda of Ireland.

Two of the most important cauldrons still in existence were found in Jutland, Denmark. The better-known one was discovered in a bog at Gundestrup. It is a large silver bowl onto which eight outer plates and five inner ones were originally fixed. These, and another on the inner bottom of the bowl, are all beautifully decorated, the inner ones with representations of what must be cult scenes, the outer ones with

busts of Celtic gods and goddesses. This vessel, which seems to have been deliberately dismantled before being put in the bog, is a very important discovery, for it illustrates both the part played by the cauldron in Celtic ritual, and certain aspects of Celtic religious practice before the impact of Roman influence.

The other cauldron was found at Bra, where it had been broken into pieces before being placed in a small pit. Like the Gundestrup cauldron, the Bra vessel had presumably been deposited as an offering to some specific deity or supernatural force. It was originally a large bronze cauldron, decorated about the rim with ox heads and owl masks, two creatures sacred to the Celts.

Filled with Blood

Another most impressive piece of evidence for the use of the cauldron in a religious context comes from Vix in France, where a Greek *krater* (cauldron) of bronze dating to about 500 BC, was found in the richly appointed grave of a Celtic princess. A griffon-cauldron with a tripod has also been found, associated with a burial at Ste Colombe nearby. These vessels were imported from the Mediterranean region, and were no doubt buried in the belief that they would be useful in the great otherworld feast beyond the grave. One of the most enduring and persistent Celtic concepts of the otherworld is that hospitality and feasting were of prime importance, and gave never-ending pleasure and satisfaction (see CELTS).

We know from classical writings that the early Celts sacrificed human beings by drowning them in cauldrons or vats. The Cimbri, for example, who can be regarded as a Celto-Germanic tribe, slaughtered human victims over a cauldron which became filled with their blood. Sacrifices were made to the great god Teutates, a war god of the Gauls, by suffocating human victims in a cauldron, and one of the most important features of the Gundestrup cauldron is a scene which is generally thought to depict some such ritual actually in progress. A male figure, presumably the deity himself, holds a man by the feet over the mouth of a large vessel. This scene could perhaps be interpreted equally well as the act of throwing a dead warrior into the sacred cauldron of regeneration, with the god giving life back, not taking it away. But as the victim is being held over the vessel, and is not totally immersed in it, as was necessary in the cauldron of regeneration, the first interpretation is probably the correct one.

Beer for Immortality

Celtic literature contains convincing parallels to this earlier material, and also some new information. Several of the Irish and Welsh deities were believed to possess huge magic cauldrons, and the stealing of the otherworld cauldron by the semi-divine hero is a dominant theme in the early tales. The five *bruidne* (feasting halls) of ancient Irish tradition each had a magical cauldron which cooked the correct amount of food for all comers, no matter how great the company. Other Celtic deities also had wonderful cauldrons, such as the one used by Goibniu, the smith god, to brew his beer for his otherworld feast. All who partook of Goibniu's feast became immortal.

National Museum, Denmark

The Gundestrup cauldron: the scene on the inner panel shows a male figure holding a man over a large vessel, and is generally thought to depict the ritual sacrifice of a human victim to the war god. The figures on the outer panels represent Celtic deities

The Irish god Mider, King of the Gaelic underworld and the owner of three malevolent cranes and wonderful otherworld cows, likewise owned a cauldron of this kind. Cu Chulainn one of the greatest heroes of Celtic myths, and the god Cu Roi stole it from Mider's dwelling and the vessel became Cu Roi's after a struggle. Welsh tradition has it that Pwyll, Lord of Annwfn, the otherworld, had a magic cauldron in his possession, which King Arthur and his men made an expedition to steal (see ARTHUR).

The Welsh Bran the Blessed (see BRAN) also owned a wonderful cauldron of regeneration which had been given to him by a giant and his wife after their escape from the King of Ireland, who had attempted to destroy them. The Irish king had seen them come from the Lake of the Cauldron, the monstrous man carrying the magic vessel on his back, and accompanied by his huge wife. Their violent and anti-social behaviour had displeased the Irish who had threatened to dethrone the king if he did not get rid of them. This grotesque couple are clearly deities, who are often described as appearing as huge and ugly people, doing mischief to mankind. The cauldron is evidently a sacred otherworld vessel.

A cauldron known as the *Coire Sainta* is described in a 9th century Irish glossary.

> A name for a cauldron of covetousness which was made by the artists. Thus it is. It has nine chains out of it, though it is not larger than the head of a large *cingit* (obscure). There is a hole at the end of every chain, with nine artists standing round it, while the company sang, each with the point of his spear fixed in the hole of the chain that was next him. And whosoever gave one of them a gift, it was into the cauldron he put it; whence it was called the Cauldron of Covetousness.

This appositely describes a venerated cauldron, associated with the arts, into which actual offerings were made.

The literary tradition, then, confirms the archeological evidence concerning the role of the cauldron in early Celtic mythology and ritual. Confused though much of the literary evidence has now become, it is clear that the theme of the magic otherworld cauldron, the sacred vessel of the god or goddess, runs all through the early literature of the Celts. The giving of the cauldron to a mortal, or its theft by the hero, is the focal point of several of the early legends.

The great decorated cauldrons of Iron Age Europe, and the ritual attending their final deposition on bogs or in pools, were no doubt associated with similar legends and beliefs, and with grim sacrifices that are merely hinted at in legends.

(See also GRAIL.)

Foto Hinz

CAVE ART

The Magic World of Prehistoric Man

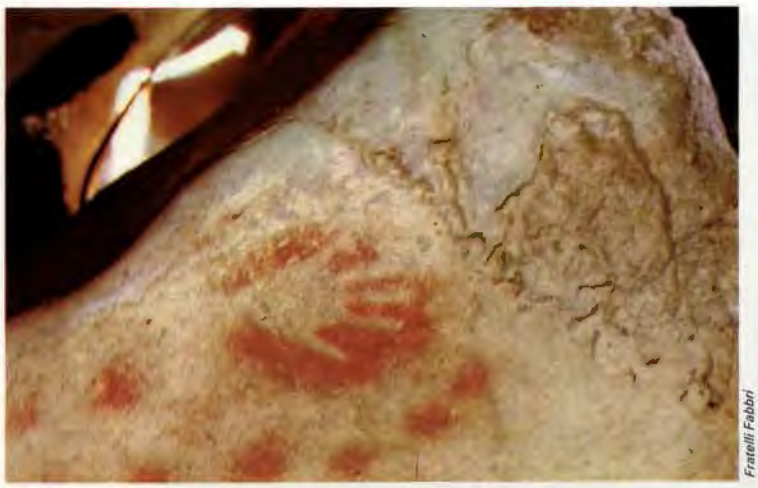
That many prehistoric cave paintings were connected with ritual magic to ensure fertility and success in hunting has long been accepted, but new theories suggest that a richer and more complex system of sexual symbolism may be involved

CAVE AND ROCK ART is found all over the world and has been practised from the earliest times until the present day. The most immediate problem which it raises is the question of dating. There are no scientific methods of analysis which yield absolute dates that can be applied either to the paints used or to the incised and engraved lines on a rock. In the vast majority of cases it is impossible to tie rock art down to a particular period and therefore quite impossible even to begin to enquire into its significance.

Fortunately, for some groups of rock art at least, the situation is not so desperate, for representations can be associated with particular groups of people, either on the basis of their associated archeological remains or on the basis of stylistic analogies between the rock art and pottery or metal decorations, or because certain extinct animals are represented, or because items of equipment shown in the rock art can be equated with actual (and datable) equipment found in excavations.

All archeological investigation suffers from the same disadvantage, that it can be assumed that the material recovered in excavations is only partial and that the sample known is biased. For financial reasons, it is rare for any site to be fully excavated, and the sites actually investigated represent only a minute fraction of those known to exist. For the majority of prehistoric periods, therefore, it is impossible to know very much about the total artistic output of a particular culture. However, it is lucky that at many different periods in the past, and in many different areas of the world, artists chose large, static and imperishable rock surfaces as their canvasses.

Among the most remarkable Stone Age paintings are those in the caves at Lascaux in France, like this one of a cow and a horse. Animals were probably represented to give men magical control over them



Fratelli Fabbri

Fratelli Fabbri

Fratelli Fabbri

Above left **The outline of a human hand in a cave at Pech-Merle in France: red ochre was probably applied to a hand placed on the wall through a blowpipe, either as a powder or in the form of a thick liquid. It has been suggested that these hands, which can also be seen *(above right)* in this painting of horses in the Pech-Merle complex of caves, may have been protection against the Evil Eye *Above*** **These late Paleolithic paintings found in the Levanzo cave on the island of Egadi near Sicily, include representations of fish and human figures**

One of the regions where rock art has received the most extensive study is Europe. Some of the rock art of Europe can be definitely dated to the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age period. Other examples can be dated, on the basis of detailed parallels with weapons and tools found in excavations, to specific periods between 2,000 and 450 BC; others again can be assigned to particular cultures because of the inscriptions found on them. Many works, however, such as the grouped lines and abstract designs in Fontainebleau forest near Paris are still undatable.

Those examples of European cave and rock art that can be assigned some kind of date are principally found in areas which suggest that they were executed by people who were unable to practise agriculture in the plains and were forced to live by hunting, fishing and stock breeding in forested zones, in mountainous regions and in narrow valleys. Alternatively, it can be argued that the artists were those people who were put in charge of the flocks and herds, and who had to search for fodder and water in the higher areas for part of the year; or again that the artists were those who were posted to the higher areas for purposes of defence.

These rock carvings and paintings, except those of Paleolithic date, share certain features in common. Most of them were executed on rock surfaces which were (and still are) open to the air and which are visible in daylight. There are very few examples indeed of European art *inside* caves which can be dated to the post-Paleolithic periods, though notable exceptions include some of the Sicilian caves which contain paintings and engravings of probable Mesolithic and Neolithic date, certain caves in the Balkans which were possibly cult centres in later prehistoric times, and certain Cretan caves which may have been sanctuaries in historic times. The majority of these exposed rock surfaces contain 'scenes' showing domestic activities or hunting or war. Most of them include recognizable artefacts such as tools, weapons or houses. Most of them include depictions of humans which are basically 'stick figures'. These figures, engaged in various recognizable domestic and aggressive activities, differ markedly in content and character from another group of

In some caves, paintings and engravings can only be reached after several hours of scrambling, climbing and crawling

prehistoric works of art which, although also executed on rocks, include virtually no obvious cases of identifiable scenes and which, in the vast majority of cases, are situated within the dark galleries of caves. These are representations which can be dated to the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000–10,000 BC).

The Old Stone Age Caves

The Paleolithic cave art so far discovered is centred on south-western France and northern Spain with important, more or less isolated and restricted, examples in southern Spain, Portugal, Sicily and eastern France. In other parts of Europe where caves also exist, deliberate search for Paleolithic cave art has failed to find any examples. Only in eastern Europe, in the Urals and in Turkey, has a possibly related cave and rock art been discovered.

The Upper Paleolithic period coincided with the last major advance of ice sheets over Europe, and with the long period of their slow and irregular retreat which was punctuated by several fresh advances. As a result, although the climate was generally cold, it was not uniformly so during the whole of the period. The changes in climate affected the relative abundance of wild animals and hence the livelihood of the Upper Paleolithic peoples. They lived by hunting, fishing, fowling and gathering; they practised no agriculture and no animal husbandry. They camped beneath rock shelters and in the entrances of caves, but they sometimes erected tents or built huts of wood and stone. They did not, as far as is known, actually live in the depths of caves, much beyond the reach of daylight.

Upper Paleolithic tools and weapons were made of flint or similar rock, and of bone, antler and ivory; perishable materials such as wood and vegetable fibres were almost certainly also used. Spears tipped with various types of stone, bone or antler points were used for hunting, and harpoons with detachable heads for fishing. The quarry consisted mostly of the mammals of the Arctic steppe; horse, bison, reindeer, mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, hare and ibex. In the milder phases, and south of the Pyrenees, woodland animals were hunted: notably wild oxen, deer and wild boar. Various wild fowl and also fish are found amongst food debris.

By and large these are the animals which are found depicted on the walls of caves (and some rock shelters) as well as some carnivores, such as cave lion, wolf and bear. Besides animals, Paleolithic cave art features a varied series of signs, symbols or designs of no obvious significance, as well as some human figures and a few imaginary creatures. Vegetation and landscape are absent. Unlike the rock art of later ages, Paleolithic cave art does not include obvious representational scenes. There are (with one exception) no identifiable activities such as war, hunting or dancing, and there are no 'stick figures'. The images most commonly occur in an apparently haphazard way on the rock surfaces, with little obvious relation to each other, either in their positioning, relative size or orientation. The animal species which are shown together would not normally have been seen together in reality. In many cases a figure may be entirely or partially covered by another.

The Artists' Technique

Paleolithic cave art includes paintings, engravings, low-relief sculptures and clay modellings, as well as various combinations of these techniques. The paints used were all made of natural earth pigments which occur in the areas of the caves: red and yellow ochres and black manganese oxide. Greens, blues and white are not found in Paleolithic art. 'Crayons' of ochre have been found in the habitation debris of several sites, and caches of ochre are not uncommon in the decorated caves. Grinding stones were used for powdering the ochre. For paintings such as the 'negative' hand stencils of Gargas in the Pyrenees, it seems that the paint may have been applied in dry powder or thick liquid form through a blow-pipe directed at a hand placed on the rock; this produced a clear outline of the hand with a gradual fading of the colour around. There is clear evidence of the use of liquid paint, for in a few instances there are obvious drip lines running from the paintings. It is also likely that paint was sometimes applied as a paste mixed with fat or clay.

Engravings were produced by several different techniques. Many fine engravings were made with a specialized tool with a narrow chisel-shaped edge, known as a burin. By making a very shallow incision in the rock, the thin weathered outer zone was removed, and the unweathered rock, generally of a paler colour, was revealed underneath. Some engravings, pecked out with flint picks, are deeply outlined; these are generally of early date. These simple engravings were probably the technical predecessors of the finely modelled low-relief sculptures, for these were executed in the same way with flint picks; they are sometimes outlined by a deeply hollowed-out groove. The sculptured surfaces were subsequently smoothed over, for tool marks are not usually discernible. Traces of red ochre paint can still be seen on some examples but these low-relief sculptures are nearly all in daylight, in rock shelters or very close to the entrances of caves, and their surfaces are generally greatly weathered. Deeper inside caves there are many examples of combined engraving and painting.

Another engraving technique made use of especially weathered cave wall surfaces and the thin clay films on some cave walls because it was possible to make tracings with the fingers or soft sticks on such soft surfaces. Clay floors of caves were also decorated but these have only survived in exceptional conditions, either under overhangs or in parts of the caves which were difficult of access. Most of these floor representations are engravings but some superb clay modellings are also known.

Some of the decorated caves are large and deep, with the decorations extending for a considerable distance underground. In some caves, paintings and engravings can only be reached after several hours of scrambling, climbing and crawling. In most caves, however, decorations usually start either within the entrance region of the cave or very near to it, and were therefore associated with the living areas in the cave mouths. Inhabited rock shelters were also sometimes embellished with the images placed on surrounding walls and overhanging rock, or on blocks of stone arranged against the wall around the living area.

Dating and Meaning

Two major points of interest for Paleolithic art, as for all rock art, are dating and significance. The meaning of superimposed representations is of the utmost importance for both these points. There is no longer any doubt about the general Paleolithic time

Michael Holford

scale during which this cave art was executed, and it has occasionally been possible to pinpoint a particular work of art within a particular Upper Paleolithic culture. Numerous schemes have been proposed which attempt to assess the relative chronology of the styles adopted during the 20,000 years of Paleolithic artistic activity. Most of these schemes depend on an assumed single or double cycle of development, from the simple to the complicated, or from the crude to the sophisticated, and also on the obvious point that an image superimposed on another must necessarily have been executed at a later period.

Most research workers dealing with prehistoric rock art have always assumed that superimposed art reflects a significant lapse of time between the first representation and the second, and that this practice indicates a lack of interest in aesthetic effect on the part of the second artist. Only recently has it been recognized that the time-span between the representation of two superimposed images may only have been a matter of a few minutes, and that the practice may have been a prehistoric artistic convention, or technique, indicating a deliberate association between representations. If this view turns out to be correct, major revisions of proposed schemes of relative dating will be necessary.

Hunting, Fertility and Magic

Long before anyone had suggested that superpositioning, the placing of one image over another, might have been a convention for showing association, it had been generally accepted that cave art had a magical or ritual significance. Much Paleolithic art is found deep in the caves, beyond the reach of daylight, and this suggested that this period of art reflected more than mere enjoyment of art for its own sake. It seemed obvious that man's overwhelming preoccupation in Paleolithic times must have been the search for food. Ritual and magic would be used to ensure success in the hunt, and Paleolithic art was interpreted as an example of imitative magic. The hunters believed that they could gain magical power over their quarry, either by representing it on a cave wall or floor, or by enacting a ritual hunt in front of a representation of the quarry.

Many of the animals represented in cave art were those whose remains were found among the food debris of Paleolithic man. The majority of the other animals depicted, the carnivores and other dangerous beasts, would have constituted a threat to Paleolithic man's existence and would also have been hunted by him. Many of the signs and symbols of cave art, some of which are distributed around and on the animals, but many of which occur singly or grouped together on panels, were taken to be representations of darts, the throwing of stones, clubs or traps; they were thus brought into the general hunting interpretation. Marks on some of the animals were taken to signify wounds.

As more and more discoveries of decorated caves became known, this interpretation was modified to some extent. A fertility element was recognized, as well as the hunting element. It was suggested that depictions of humans, and of certain food animals which were shown without wounds, were intended to increase the numbers of the available food quarry and to increase the human population itself.

This interpretation is still generally accepted, though it has been severely criticized in the last decade. For example, there is a striking absence of correlation between the relative frequency of animals represented in the art – a frequency which varies considerably from cave to cave, and from region to region within any one cave – and the relative frequencies of the same animals in actual Paleolithic food debris. In addition, many of the so-called weapons cannot really be equated with actual artefact types, and it is difficult to see why, on numerous occasions, such weapons should have been shown in isolation or even, in some cases, as missing the quarry. It is an important fact of Paleolithic art statistics that the majority of representations are

Left **On the ceiling of a cave at Altamira in Spain a herd of bison were painted in red, yellow and black pigment** ***Above right*** **A painting in the lowest of the Lascaux caves, showing a wounded bison, a dead or wounded man, and a bird perched on a stake. It may be a memorial to a dead hunter, or it may show a priest in trance before a bison which is to be sacrificed, the bird being the priest's soul or spirit watching over him** ***Below right*** **Black bull, from Lascaux**

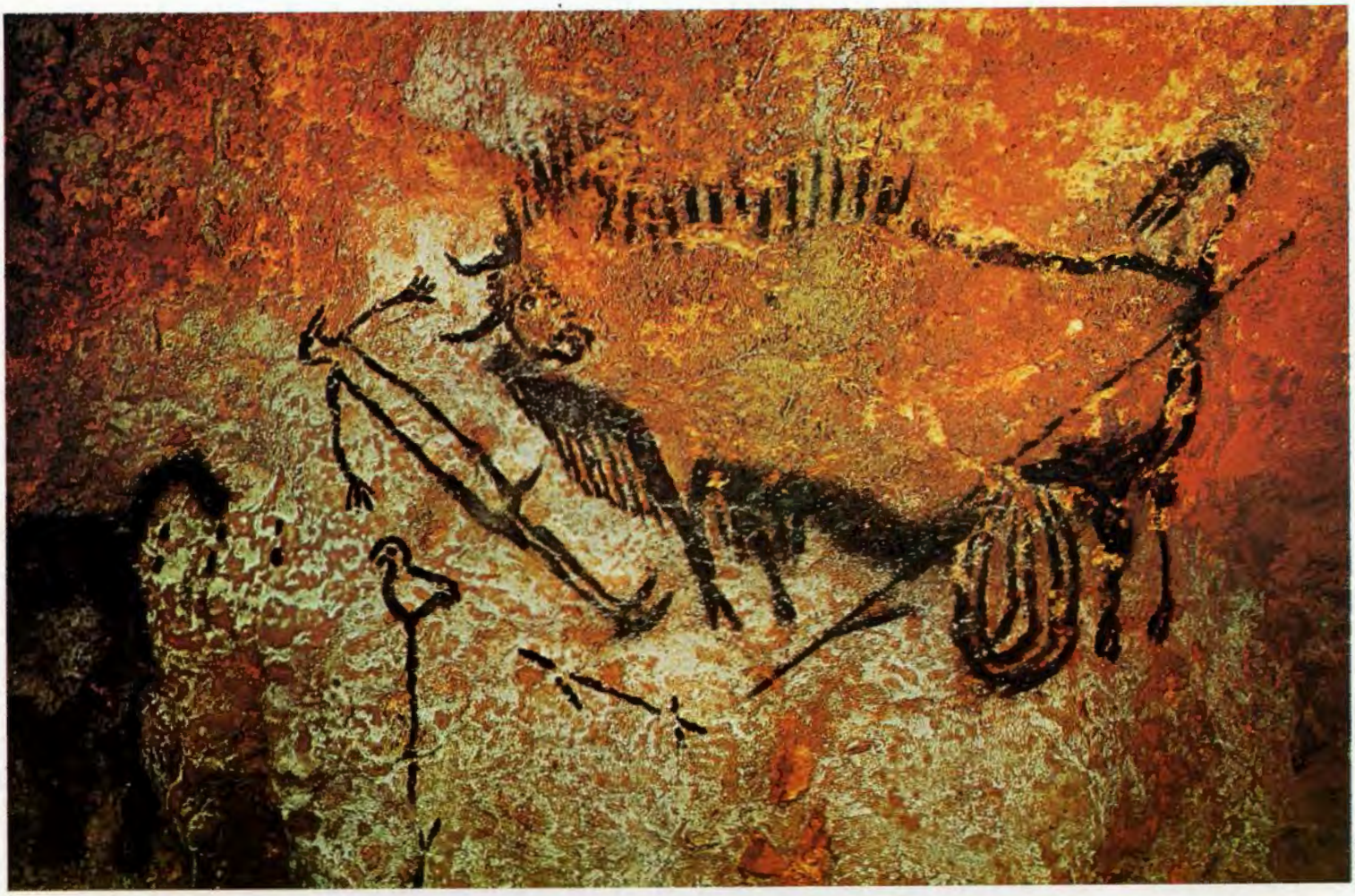


Foto Hinz

Foto Hinz

The Value of Magic

The representations may have played a part in the rites by which young men were initiated as fully adult members of society. To judge by analogy with what is known, for example, of Australian aboriginal art, it seems highly unlikely that rock-paintings or engravings were sufficient in themselves. A much more likely probability is that they formed part of a complex of activities which certainly included dancing and may also have included miming.

. . . in primitive society no clear distinction is drawn between economic, religious or magical activities, or, to put it in more abstract terms, between ritual and what we would regard as practical activities. This same consideration applies with more or less force to cave art as a whole, and, if the psychological effect of the ritual (including the production of cave art) is taken into account, who is to say that the ice age hunters were wrong? When as much depended on luck as it did in hunting, an activity in which man was matched with only primitive weapons directly against the beasts, magical rites that had the effect of increasing confidence and heightening solidarity were evidently of the utmost practical value. The value of a rite, or rather its efficacy, depends after all on the response it evokes.

Grahame Clark and Stuart Piggott
Prehistoric Societies

shown with no wounds and with no 'weapons' about to strike them.

It is also worth noting that modern hunting and gathering communities are in no way preoccupied with the quest for food, as is assumed for the prehistoric hunters. Many such communities have the time, skill and sophistication for considerable artistic work which is in no way associated with the simple search for food. There is nothing to suggest that Upper Paleolithic hunting was more difficult than that of many hunting peoples today, and it is reasonable to examine the possibility that Paleolithic art was the result of a more sophisticated activity than simple imitative magic.

Sexual Symbolism

Recent French work, notably that of Professor Leroi-Gourhan, has started from the theory that superpositioning indicates the artist's deliberate association of representations. The content of Paleolithic art appears, at first sight, to differ fundamentally from other rock art in its absence of scenes and recognizable economic or domestic activities. Previously this has been taken, in combination with the existence of superpositions and the apparently random placing of images on cave walls, to indicate haphazard activity by individual artists. But if the new theory is right, Paleolithic art is concerned with the planned association of grouped representations.

To Leroi-Gourhan, the distribution of different animal species within a cave suggests an organized sanctuary or holy place,

Left **Acrobats apparently performing a ritual dance are the central figures in this group of engravings in Addaura, Sicily, which also shows men hunting: these are the two dominant themes in cave art in this region. The human figures are depicted with an attention to detail that is unusual in Paleolithic art** ***Right*** **Outlines of animals, two among scores found deep in the Niaux caves in France**

where sexual symbols – previously thought to represent weapons, traps and wounds – are placed in association with, or close to, certain animal species which themselves symbolize either the male or female element. In short, 'Paleolithic representations are concerned with an extremely rich and complex system, much richer and much more complex than . . . previously suspected.'

Studies of cave and rock art are in many ways still in their infancy. Most investigations have centred on establishing principles of dating, on the rather naive assumption that artistic work will inevitably proceed from the simple to the more complex, and in the belief that superpositioning signifies no more than a difference in time between two representations. More and more rock art is discovered each year and interpretation of all this material has been held up by the acceptance of general, all-embracing explanations of its purpose and meaning.

However detailed and extensive the research on style and dating of a particular art complex, in virtually no case do we yet know why the artists chose rock surfaces for their canvasses. It is time that investigation into the significance and function of different groups of art entered a new phase. The clues to unravelling their meaning must lie in detailed investigation of localities, with special attention to features such as visibility and orientation and in detailed consideration of content. Any reasonable interpretation of Paleolithic cave art must, for example, attempt to account for the extreme rarity of human images and the absence of vegetation and scenery.

It is still much too early to be able to say whether there is one single common denominator, beyond the use of the same material, behind all cave and rock art. It is even too early to say whether the choice of exposed surfaces, on the one hand, and the use of dark areas, on the other, represents a major difference in intent and significance between rock and cave art or simply reflects a difference in date and in the conditions of life of the peoples involved.

(For African rock art, see ROCK PAINTINGS.)

PETER J. UCKO

FURTHER READING: For a comprehensive review of the different interpretations, see P. J. Ucko and R. Rosenfeld, *Palaeolithic Cave Art* (McGraw-Hill, 1967) and for A. Leroi-Gourhan's theories, see his *Treasures of Prehistoric Art* (Abrams, 1967) which is finely illustrated, as is P. Graziosi, *Palaeolithic Art* (McGraw-Hill, 1960). See also A. Laming, *Lascaux* (Penguin); Ann Sieveking, *Cave Artists* (Thames and Hudson, 1979).

CAVES

FROM THE DAWN of human culture caves have been used as dwellings, sanctuaries and tombs, and in fact the use of caves can be traced back long before the appearance of *homo sapiens* in the archeological record. About 300,000 BC the so-called Peking Man, a remote predecessor of modern man, lived in the Choukoutien caves near Peking. Skeletal remains found in these caves seem to indicate the practice of ritual cannibalism. Another notable instance of the pre-human use of caves was discovered in the Guattari cave on Monte Circeo, Italy, dating from the Mousterian period (c 100,000 BC). There a 'human' skull had been deposited, surrounded by a ring of stones, apparently evidence of some magical rite.

Some of the most impressive evidence of the ritual use of caves comes from the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000–10,000 BC), when true man had displaced his sub-human ancestors. In south-western France and the Pyrenean area of Spain figures of animals, including bison, reindeer, horses, mammoths and the woolly rhinoceros, were depicted on the walls and roofs of caves. Many of these animals are represented as pregnant or wounded with darts. This cave art is generally regarded by modern scholars as magical in intent, being designed to promote the fertility of the beasts which men hunted for food, or to ensure success in hunting them (see CAVE ART). There is also evidence that ritual practices were performed in the caves and some of them appear to have been holy places. The most notable example is the cave of the Trois Frères at Ariège in France, where a strange half-human, half-animal figure dominates an inner cavern.

There are many examples of the ritual use of caves in later times. It is difficult to determine why they were originally chosen for sanctuaries but it seems that the mysterious nature of most caves may have been the decisive factor. Often, they were probably regarded as entrances to the underworld.

The following examples give some idea of the various types of cave sanctuaries and their wide geographical distribution. The famous temple at Abu-Simbel in Egypt, built by order of Rameses II in the 13th century BC, and dedicated to the gods Re-Harmakhis (the Rising Sun), Amun, and the Pharaoh himself, is an artificial cave. It is designed so that the rising sun shines through the entrance, to illumine the divine figures in the inner sanctuary.

Ancient Crete had many cave sanctuaries, connected with the cult of the Mother Goddess. Possibly, the cave suggested the womb of the Earth Mother. Several of these caves were associated with the birth of Zeus. The cave of the Sibyl at Cumae, described by Virgil, was famous for its oracle. In India there are magnificent cave temples at Karli, Ajanta and Ellora, held sacred by both Buddhists and Hindus. At Tun-Huang in China are the caves of the Thousand Buddhas, so-called from the multitudes of images of Buddha which they contain.

Caves were often associated with the birth of a god or a divine hero, as in the case of Zeus in Crete. In Rome the Lupercal cave sheltered the infant Romulus and Remus. Mithra was born from a rock and worshipped in caves. The birthplace of Christ at Bethlehem is a cave. Caves, natural or artificial, have also provided tombs for the dead, often acquiring special sanctity from those buried in them. The most notable example is the cave tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, over which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built.

Company in Death

The men of the last ice age buried their dead evidently believing in a physical afterlife . . . the dead were often buried in the dwelling caves where they had lived, so that they might remain in familiar surroundings. Grave pits were carefully dug in cave floors, and the corpse deposited either in a 'sleeping position' – on its side, on its back – or crouching. A protective layer of stones was then placed around and over the grave . . . In Predmost, Moravia, Czechoslovakia, a mass grave was found to contain at least 14 skeletons, protected by a layer of stones. Apparently the dead were to keep one another company.

Johannes Maringer *The Gods of Prehistoric Man*

Sonia Halliday

Early Christian monks sought solitude for contemplation in the desert and in caves: the Goreme cave monastery in Cappadocia, Asia Minor, used by early Christian hermits and still in use today

Although he had scarcely any formal education, Edgar Cayce became a doctor when in a trance state, and treated some 30,000 patients before his death in 1945. He also developed his own occult philosophy

EDGAR CAYCE

THE MIRACLE WORKER has always occupied a prominent position in unorthodox medicine, dealing with diseases considered incurable by more conventional doctors. Possibly the greatest occult diagnostician of modern times was Edgar Cayce (pronounced Casey) of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, known as 'the Man of Miracles' who died in 1945, at the age of 67 and whose early experiences had much in common with those of earlier mystics. As a child Cayce is said to have spoken with an angel, and to have seen visions of his dead grandfather. He was a shy, reserved boy with deep religious feelings, and although he never completed his schooling, he had a great love for reading, and went to work in a bookshop.

Cayce was only 16 when he first became aware of his power to heal. Lying in bed, after being hit in the back by a baseball, he suddenly ordered his mother to apply a poultice to the spot. She did so and by morning he had recovered completely, but could remember absolutely nothing of what had taken place. Not long after this experience he contracted a throat disease which threatened to reduce his voice to a permanent whisper. In despair he turned to a hypnotist for help but was incapable of entering the deep sleep that was necessary for this kind of treatment. But another hypnotist, Al Layne, helped him on this occasion and also played an important part in Cayce's development as a healer. Cayce put himself to sleep in Layne's presence and suddenly, speaking in a clear voice, said, 'Yes, we can see the body.' He prescribed the treatment necessary to restore circulation to the affected nerves of his throat, and Layne ordered the circulation to respond accordingly. A few minutes later Cayce woke up, completely healed.

Edgar Cayce's reputation as a healer soon began to attract the sick and suffering to him from every direction. They were all desperate for treatment, and the young man was often exhausted by his efforts to relieve ailments which had generally been given up as incurable by doctors. Much of Cayce's treatment was based on diagnosing spinal lesions as the cause of the disorder, and called for osteopathy and homoeopathy. Indeed, during most of the healing sessions he had the assistance of an osteopath. Cayce invariably went into a trance state which was followed by the diagnosis, starting with the words, 'Yes, we see the body.' The hypnotist Layne assisted in these operations, especially in the early days, but later a medical man was also present.

Typical of the cases passing through Cayce's hands was that of a woman crippled by arthritis and abandoned as incurable by her doctors. The treatment, prescribed during the trance state, involved dieting, exercises and massage, and was fully successful in restoring the use of her limbs.

On another occasion he diagnosed a disorder affecting the wife of a doctor as pregnancy accompanied by a bowel disorder, after her own physician had declared her to be suffering from an abdominal tumour. Cayce proved accurate and the 'tumour' was soon resolved by a successful delivery.

Bed Bug Juice

Whenever possible Cayce tried to arrange for his patients to be treated by a qualified physician, but he often met with deeply entrenched opposition from the ranks of orthodox medicine. It was, however, a member of the medical profession, Dr Wesley Ketchum, a homoeopath, who vindicated Cayce's methods of treatment. Dr Ketchum was suffering from an illness that he had diagnosed as appendicitis, but being determined to put Cayce's skill to the test he asked for a reading, and was told that a spinal disorder was the cause of the trouble, and that he ought to consult an osteopath. Ketchum did this and was freed from discomfort. Convinced of the truth of Cayce's claims, he examined his records and submitted a highly favourable report to the American Society of Clinical Research at Boston. This was followed by an article in the *New York Times* of 9 October 1910 which brought Edgar Cayce's achievements as a healer to the attention of the nation.

Neville Spearman Publishers

Edgar Cayce, the 'Man of Miracles': a psychic healer of great power, he was said to have spoken with an angel as a child. He was also clairvoyant, and once identified a murderer while in a trance state

The hordes of sick who now flocked to Cayce for treatment made it necessary to form an organization to carry out his work and the Association of National Investigators was created. A fully-staffed hospital was established at Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Cayce worked there. In 1931 this organization was succeeded by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, which accumulated records of the many thousands of medical cases he had treated.

Quite apart from the homoeopathic and osteopathic techniques he employed, Cayce appears, on occasion, to have used forms of 'backwoods' therapy which were hardly likely to endear him to orthodox doctors. Remedies like bed bug juice for dropsy or oil of smoke for a leg sore had long been out of favour with a profession that tended to write off most folk medicine as quackery. Nor did his other ventures, into what was popularly known among doctors as 'Gas Pipe Therapy', enhance his reputation in medical circles. An example of this is described in Martin Gardner's *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*. 'One of his readings advised attaching the copper anode of a battery to the third dorsal plexus centre, and the nickel anode first to the left ankle, then to the right ankle.' Cayce also marketed a number of patent medicines, including Ipsab for pyorrhoea and Tim for haemorrhoids, and various devices for treating the sick with electricity and radio-activity.

The New Tomorrow

Apart from his powers as a psychic healer, Cayce was clairvoyant, and on one occasion discovered the identity of a murderer while in a trance. But he was accused of complicity in the crime by an unimaginative police officer in charge of the case, and after this he refused to carry out any further experiments in psychic detection. His aid was also frequently sought by relatives of those listed as missing in the First World War, an ordeal that he found particularly harrowing.

Like many others in the field of fringe medicine, Cayce created his own occult philosophy, much of which had developed from questions submitted to him while in a trance state. This credo seems to combine many of the elements of Theosophy, Christianity and Pyramidology, no doubt the result of Cayce's extensive reading in his youth. A journal called *The New Tomorrow*, published by his followers, increased Cayce's influence in occultist circles, as did his pamphlet *Auras* published in 1945. In this Cayce disclosed his ability to see the human aura (see DOUBLE) and predicted that colour therapy would eventually become an approved form of medicine.

When he died in 1945, worn out by a lifetime of dedication to the sick, and by the strains of both poverty and persistent medical opposition, Cayce left records of no less than 30,000 cases that he had treated over a period of 43 years. The Cayce Foundation of America continues to honour the name of a man who has been described as possibly the most remarkable healer that has lived.

CELTS

In this world the Celts practised human sacrifice, by drowning stabbing and burning; their otherworld was a place of magic, of deities in many shapes, of enchantments, sacred animals and divine heroes, a world of secrets and hints and elusive symbols

THE EARLY CELTS were composed of a number of different racial elements, and at the height of their power they occupied huge tracts of Europe, from the Atlantic in the west to the Black Sea in the east, from Denmark in the north to the Mediterranean in the south. But in spite of the decentralized nature of Celtic society and the many geographical and tribal differences that must be taken into consideration, there is an impressive uniformity of religious idiom throughout the known Celtic world which allows us to think in terms of Celtic *religion* even though there is little evidence of a formal religious system.

Archeologists have identified people whose material culture is what we recognize to be Celtic, as early as 600 BC. It is almost certain that these people were Celtic-speaking but we have no written records at this stage to verify this supposition. It is extremely likely that their predecessors – people whose culture is known to archeologists as *Urnfield*, a late bronze-using people – also spoke Celtic. The evidence of names helps us here, the distribution of Urnfield remains coinciding in certain instances with very early Celtic place-names.

Pagan Celtic motifs entered Celtic Christian art: a Celtic cross at Glencolumbkille in Ireland, a site associated with St Columba

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

The great wine flagons found in graves, together with drinking vessels and joints of pork, testify to a continuing belief in the otherworld as a place of revelry

This first phase of Celtic culture is known as *Hallstatt*, a name derived from the extensive cemetery which was found at Hallstatt, near Salzburg in Austria, in the 19th century. Some 2500 graves were investigated, and their contents, together with discoveries made in the salt mines from which the people derived their wealth, tell us much about Celtic society at this period. The people grew rich through mining and trading the salt, a most valuable commodity in the ancient world. The chieftains used iron instead of bronze for their weapons, thereby improving their chances in warfare, and the technological superiority of the metal ensured a career of rapid expansion and conquest. These Hallstatt Celts were composed of the old indigenous Urnfield people combined with intrusive racial elements from the Asian steppes and more easterly regions. New skills in horse-rearing and management introduced from these areas, combined with better weapons and perhaps innovations in methods of warfare, helped the Hallstatt warriors to establish supremacy over a wide area.

The graves and their furnishings tell us not only about certain material aspects of society, but also hint at spiritual attitudes. The burials were elaborate, being under a mound, in a wooden chamber usually made of oak. They were furnished with richly decorated weapons and personal ornaments, many of them bearing symbols which we know from later evidence to have had a religious significance. Horse trappings, drinking vessels and joints of meat were provided for the otherworld feast, that great Celtic celebration beyond the grave. All these features point to powerful beliefs about the nature of personal survival after death, and are motifs which are repeated again and again in later Celtic history. The bodies of the wealthy dead were laid out, burnt or unburnt, on four-wheeled wagons.

Many pagan Celtic monuments were later Christianized ***Above*** **Stone figures of the 8th or 9th century, possibly hidden in the structure of a 12th century church because of their pagan affiliations: in Co Fermanagh, Ireland** ***Below left*** **Christian cross obscuring the earlier Celtic inscriptions on an Irish memorial stone: the old inscriptions give the name and descent of the dead man, probably to help keep him alive in the afterworld** ***Below right*** **The 'Bishop's Stone' at Killadeas: the south side of the stone shows a Christian abbot with bell and crozier; the west is probably a representation of a pegan Celtic head**

Chariots of the Dead

The second stage in the history of the early Celts is known to archeologists as *La Tène*, from the site on Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland, where a great deposit of metalwork and other material was discovered in the 19th century. A wooden pier had been constructed over the water and the many articles had been thrown in, presumably as offerings to a specific god or to a plurality of deities and forces.

These articles were recognized to be Celtic but they differed from those of the Hallstatt phase. New art styles had come into existence, showing amongst other things strong classical influences, and there was clear evidence of wider trade and cultural contacts and technological developments. One of the most impressive changes in the still elaborately equipped graves is the presence of the light two-wheeled war chariot, which had replaced the four-wheeled wagon of the Hallstatt burials. This chariot is one of the most characteristic pieces of war equipment of the Celts. Archeology knows of it, the classical writers describe it, it is represented in art and it plays a prominent role in certain of the early Irish tales.

The new art style of La Tène shows a much wider contact with Etruria and the Mediterranean world than before. The great wine flagons found in the graves, together with fire dogs, drinking vessels and joints of pork – the favourite feasting food of the Celts – all testify to a continuing belief in the otherworld as a place of revelry, not gloom, in which equipment and provisions of this kind would be needed.

Each of the numerous Celtic tribes had its own ruler, its 'men of art', its laws and its customs; and in spite of the inevitable regional and temporal differences which give local variations, there is a fundamental similarity which is remarkable. In Gaul, kings had been replaced by chieftains by the time Julius Caesar invaded the country in the 1st century BC. In Ireland, the custom of kingship remained, the king being of supreme importance to society. He was regarded as semi-sacred, the earthly manifestation and voice of the god. A good king ensured prosperity and fertility, good weather, rich harvests, freedom from plague and invasion, the general well-being of his people – as did the god himself. If the king was unsuitable in character or physically blemished, the supernatural forces were believed to show their dislike and displeasure by bringing disease and famine on mankind and blight on the earth.

Caesar describes the structure of Celtic society in his *De Bello Gallico* (book 6). 'Throughout Gaul there are two classes of men of some dignity and importance. The common people are nearly regarded as slaves: they possess no initiative and their views are never invited on any question. Most of them, being weighed down by debt or by heavy taxes or by the injustice of the more powerful, hand themselves over into slavery to the upper classes, who have all the same legal rights against these men that a master has towards his slave. Of the two distinguished classes, one is that of the Druids, the other that of the Knights. The Druids are concerned with the worship of the gods, they look after puhlic and private sacrifice and they expound religious matters. . . The Knights take part in war whenever there is need and war is declared. . . The greater their rank and resources, the more dependents and clients do they possess.'

This same threefold division of society is found in pagan Ireland, with the king of a district, great or small, and the various grades of freemen constituting the aristocracy, the Druids (priests) and the poets and lawyers likewise occupying a privileged position in society.

The Celts, speaking two different forms of the language, which are known as P-Celtic (spoken in Gaul and Britain) and Q-Celtic (spoken in Ireland, but traces also exist on the Continent) were thus loosely linked by common origins and language, common religious traditions and a close similarity of laws and systems of learning.

Unwritten Secrets

The Celts themselves did not commit their religious traditions to writing and it is necessary to use a variety of sources of information to discover the nature of the religion and mythology of the pagan Celtic peoples. They were not illiterate, for we know that some of them used Greek for their

business transactions. However, they regarded their laws, their genealogies and their history in the same sacred light as their religion. All these disciplines were required to be handed down orally from master to pupil, from priest to acolyte. It took some 20 years of intensive application to assimilate and master the secrets of Druidic lore. The oral tradition is fundamental to the Celtic temperament; a deep respect for it has continued down to the present day in the Celtic-speaking areas of Europe (Brittany, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man).

For information about Celtic religion on the continent of Europe, and to a lesser extent in Britain, there are the written comments of Greek and Roman authors, interested in noting the habits and customs of the barbarian peoples of Europe. From Roman times there are the sculptured monuments on which native gods, goddesses and cult symbols are figured, often in Roman guise, accompanied by a dedication to a native deity. There are inscriptions and native coins which often bear Celtic names and magical symbols, and there is the evidence of place-names.

Over and above this, the native literatures of Wales and Ireland, the oldest in Europe outside the classical world, form a great repository of mythology and pre-Christian practices. Although written down only in Christian times, the persistence and longevity of the oral tradition was such that we can be quite confident that there is a genuine core of true mythology to be found underneath the embellishments of the story-tellers, the censorship of the Church, and the motifs borrowed from classical and Scandinavian sources.

All the evidence for pagan Celtic religion, fragmentary and varied as it is, emphasizes the fact that the Celts were deeply conscious of religion. The inhabitants of the physical world and those of the otherworld – that gay land beyond the grave – were in constant communication with each other. There is nothing to show that the virtuous attained the otherworld after death for ethical reasons; nor is there any hint of a gloomy otherworld. The land of the gods could be entered in life by the clever, aggressive hero, by means of treachery or force. Or it could be attained by mortals through the invitation of an immortal being, who usually had amorous intentions. But for the Celt there was, and could be, no rigid division between the two territories.

At times, as on *Samain*, (1 November) the great religious feast of the Celts, which was a season of gloom and portent and sacrifice, the inhabitants of the otherworld became hostile and dangerous. They played tricks on mankind and caused panic and destruction. They had then to be appeased, and their powers turned once more in a direction favourable to mortals.

Wells Filled with Bones

The Celts did not as a rule build formal temples, in the manner of the Mediterranean world, but they did have clearly defined sanctuaries, which included structures of some sort, as well as making use of such natural features as hill-tops, open plains in the vicinity of sacred trees, groves, springs and wells, where we know that they gathered for the performance of ritual. These were places which had been made sacred by the cult legend of some deity, whose name is often enshrined in local place-names. The burial mound where the divine ancestor was interred, according to tradition, and which was often considered to be an entrance to the otherworld, was sometimes a focal point for ritual. The simple earthen enclosure formed by a bank and a ditch, and containing perhaps some wooden or wickerwork structure in which cult images were housed: the burial place of some eminent person: a sacred pit filled with ritually smashed pottery and the bones of sacrificed humans and animals: a stone platform for sacrifice: all these are to be found in archeological contexts.

Again, the ritual shafts and wells found on the continent of Europe and in Britain, filled with layers of objects which include dogs' heads, human bones and skulls, bracelets, ritually bent weapons, smashed pottery and intact vessels, and often with traces of buildings which stood near them or enclosed them – these also seem to have served as temples for the pagan Celts. Apart from one or two examples which are outside the main stream of Celtic tradition, there is little evidence for the construction of elaborate stone temples until the time came when they were built in Celtic areas under the sway of Rome. Roman and native deities alike were then worshipped, and classical and Celtic religious symbols were displayed in such temples.

The Celts have always tended to express things in an oblique fashion, abhorring direct statement, and this can be seen to operate very strongly in their religious idiom. They preferred the subtle allusion, the hint, the symbol: so that the sophisticated, obvious temple and the life-like portraits of the classical gods were alien to their way of thought and not easy for them to accept. Under the influence of Rome, however, such things were built and fashioned in accordance with Roman custom. But the

Jean Roubier

Left **Head of a Celtic god surrounded by various animals which were sacred to the Celts, including the fabulous beaked, winged horse. The torc round his neck and the wheels on either side of him were often deposited with the dead: a detail from the Gundestrup cauldron in the Danish National Museum** ***Right*** **In addition to the more powerful deities the Celts worshipped a host of minor spirits, demons and fabulous creatures, many of whom could change shape at will. Stone carving of a monster holding severed human heads: the Celts were head hunters and worshipped the head**

more subtle rites and symbols continued to exist in the background, appearing from time to time in native pottery or sculpture, in crude idols, in obscure hints and references in the Irish and Welsh written sources.

These people, then, carried out their rites and enacted their myths at prominent natural features or in sacred enclosures, beside wells, or near deeply-dug shafts and pits. Apart from gatherings within individual tribal communities, to commemorate some event concerned with a local god or goddess, there were the great Celtic calendar festivals, which were often celebrated on a plain beside a grave mound, or on a hill-top.

There were four main festivals in the Celtic year. *Imbolc* (1 February), a feast about which we have little detailed information, marked the coming of the ewes into milk. In Ireland this feast was sacred to Saint Brigit of Kildare, who no doubt took it over from her pagan predecessor, the goddess Brigit (see BRIGIT). *Beltane* (1 May) was a fire festival, traces of which have persisted to the present day in Celtic areas. Cattle about to be taken to the summer grazings were first driven through purificatory fires by the Druids.

Lugnasad (1 August) was sacred to the god Lugus, whose cult was widespread. It was a festival to mark the harvesting of the crops. Finally, the great feast of the year was *Samain*, celebrated on 1 November and the night before it: the barriers were down between mortal and immortal, visible and invisible, and sacrifice and correct performance of ritual were practised to keep the sinister gods at bay. Markets were held, games were played, law courts sat and public poetic recitations were given, while racing and feasting added zest to the gatherings which sometimes lasted for several days. During the festival any breach of the public peace was punishable by death. (See also ALL HALLOWS' EVE.)

The Druids

These feasts, and other more local celebrations, were held at the main sacred site of each tribe or region. The priests who officiated at these gatherings, the intercessors between the mortal and the divine, were extremely powerful. Some of them at least were known as Druids. There is evidence that there were priests other than Druids but we know little about them. The name Druid seems to mean 'knowledge of the oak', and this would be appropriate in a society which held the oak in special awe. Maximus of Tyre, a philosopher of the 2nd century AD, reports that the Celts worshipped Zeus in the form of a tall oak tree.

Our knowledge of the Druids is scrappy and of unequal value. Modern lore about these priests stems only from antiquarianism, not from ancient testimony. In spite of the fragmentary nature of the real evidence it is clear that the Druids constituted a powerful and influential priesthood in some Celtic regions at least. They performed the sacrifices, read the omens, and appeased the gods by performing the rites correctly.

The Irish Druids figure as magicians, teachers, shape-shifters (those with the ability to change form) and even buffoons, but whether this reflects their true role in early Irish society, or merely the fancies of later Christian writers, must remain in question. Their origins are shrouded in antiquity and there is no reason at all to suppose that they were newcomers, originating with the Celts themselves. Their order may have had a longer ancestry in Europe. (See DRUIDS.)

Death in a Sea of Flame

The Celts practised human sacrifice. The Romans considered this ritual to be barbarous and caused it to be discontinued. They also struck a lethal blow at the Druids, whose power and political influence was a

To the Celts horns were a powerful symbol of virility and divine power. They not only gave their gods horns but enhanced their chances of success in battle by wearing horned helmets: bronze horned mask from Norfolk

British Museum

threat to the success of Roman campaigns in the Celtic areas. Caesar, referring to the practice of human sacrifice, describes the great images of interwoven branches which were filled with men and set alight, 'and the men die in a sea of flame'.

Three fierce Celtic gods, Teutates, Esus and Taranis, are mentioned by the Roman poet Lucan. A commentator on Lucan says that people sacrificed to Teutates were drowned or suffocated in a vat; those sacrificed to Esus were stabbed and then hung up in a tree; Taranis favoured burning. There is little definite in the Irish texts to demonstrate the nature of human sacrifices in that country, but it is certain that they were practised there also.

There are many dark hints and allusions which suggest that the motif of the triple death (by drowning, stabbing and burning) was more than a literary convention, and echoed the tradition of sacrifices to the three great Gaulish gods. Several stories contain the motif of the tricking of the hero and his company into a house, the door of which is secured while they are feasted and made drunk. The building is then set on fire, and all perish in the conflagration or escape through the heroism and supernatural strength of the hero. There are hints of ritual drowning in tubs or wells, numerous examples of foundation sacrifices, even in Christian contexts, and episodes in the early stories which point to the sacrifice of infants.

Animals were certainly ritually killed and the bull-sacrifice *(tarb-feis)* was an integral feature of the inauguration of a new king, a ceremony of deep religious significance in early Irish society. Bull-hides were used by the Druids to sleep on while they had their omen-giving dreams, having first chewed some of the flesh of a cat, a dog and a red pig, and consulted their 'idol gods'.

The All-Purpose God

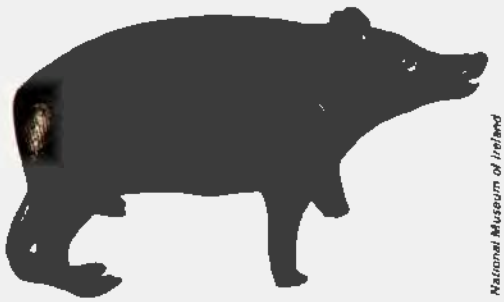
It is extremely difficult to find any orderly pantheon in the Celtic gods and goddesses known to us, or any clear-cut division into deities of specific functions or departments. However, the knowledge that the structure of Celtic society was of a semi-sacred nature, that the king was regarded as the visible agent of the god – sometimes his son,

A Magic Kiss

One day Niall, son of Eochu Muigmedon King of Ireland, went hunting with his four brothers. They came across a hideous old woman guarding a well. 'She was as black as coal. Her hair was like a wild horse's tail. Her foul teeth were visible from ear to ear and were such as would sever a branch of green oak. Her eyes were black, her nose crooked and spread. Her body was scrawny, spotted and diseased. Her shins were bent. Her knees and ankles were thick, her shoulders broad, her nails were green.' As a price for the water in her well, the loathsome hag demanded a kiss from each of the brothers in turn; but only Niall overcame his revulsion and embraced her. Thereupon she was transformed into a beautiful woman: 'She was as white as the last snow in a hollow. Her arms were fully and queenly, her fingers long and slender, her legs straight and gleaming . . .'

Reading these old tales, one has the impression that the Irish of past centuries lived on easy terms with the supernatural. If we can judge by the reactions of the characters themselves, no surprise was occasioned by the intervention of folk from the Otherworld, or by spells cast and shapes shifted. The natural order of things was something vaster and more flexible than we envisage today.

D. D. R. Owen
The Evolution of the Grail Legend



National Museum of Ireland

Hunting the ferocious wild boar was a popular and dangerous pastime, for it demanded great skill, and there are many legends of supernatural boars and their adventures in early Irish and Welsh literature

sometimes allegedly the mortal mate of the tribal goddess, the Earth Mother – suggests that the Celts thought of the world of the gods as being organized in a similar way; and there are hints of this in the Irish tradition.

Over and above the numerous tribal and local divinities, we hear of such powerful shadowy beings as Anu, or Danu, mother of the gods. Anu is referred to as 'she who nurtures well the gods'. Danu, from whom the Irish gods called the Tuatha De Danann ('Tribes of the Goddess Danu') are named, has Don as her equivalent in British mythology. Danu's three sons are the gods Brian, Iuchar and Iucharba, known to tradition as *fir tri ndea*, 'men of the three gods'. Brigit the goddess is elsewhere allegedly the mother of this powerful trio, and it may be that she is in fact Danu, known by another name.

One of the most difficult factors in any attempt to get a realistic idea of the nature of Celtic deities and their individual qualities is this custom of giving a single divinity a multiplicity of names, many of them merely descriptive epithets. As a result, much that is confusing in Celtic mythology may become clear if it can be convincingly demonstrated that certain major deities, though seemingly different, are in fact a single deity with a number of names, functions and manifestations. The undoubted power of Brigantia, goddess of the Brigantes, for example, suggests a high position in some supernatural hierarchy.

At present the evidence all points to a huge number of named gods and goddesses, with a comparably large assortment of attributes and symbols, but with a markedly limited range of functions. The tribal god was an all-purpose figure and, despite the differences in his name, he was basically the same throughout the Celtic lands. He was a 'good' god, like the Dagda of Ireland, protector of the tribe, giver of all that was good and desired, their leader in war, their ultimate judge in legal matters, lord of the otherworld feast, mate of the tribal goddess.

It seems that the god himself tended to move with the tribe when it set out for new conquests and territories. But the goddess, who was much concerned with the actual geographical region over which she presided, remained behind to be overcome by the nextcomers, and to be killed or used for their own purposes, or mated with their own tribal god. Celtic gods and goddesses were not believed to be inviolable.

Over and above the basic pair, so well attested by representation in art, by inscriptions on stone and by the legends of the Celtic world, there were other gods and goddesses of lesser importance and limited but more specific functions. These deities were concerned primarily with the arts, with crafts such as that of the smith, with medicine and healing; or they presided over important local features such as sacred wells and rivers. But there must have been a good deal of overlapping, and the all-purpose god could, according to tradition, turn his hand to any skill or craft when the occasion demanded it.

The Savage Mother

Certain gods, such as Lugus (Irish Lugh, Welsh Lleu), Sucellos, Camulos, Esus, Teutates, have a fairly wide distribution in stone inscriptions and place-names, and some are known from the literary traditions. It is not clear whether these represent deities of a greater and more universal power than the local tribal gods, fathers of the gods themselves in fact, or whether their wider distribution is due to population movement and conquest. Or again, it may be that they were official gods of the Druids themselves, more concerned with 'national' than with tribal concerns.

The mother goddess of the Celts was often conceived of as a warrior, fighting with weapons and instructing the hero in superior secrets of warfare. She was also believed to be capable of influencing the outcome of battle, not by her weapons but by magic and incantation, sometimes taking the form of a sinister bird (crow or raven) and flying over the hosts, causing frenzy and confusion, foretelling the future, and rejoicing over the carnage.

The Celts believed it was undesirable and positively dangerous to name a sacred thing by its correct name. As a result the gods are often referred to in a roundabout way, as were other sacred matters. The Ulstermen, for example, do not swear by a named god but by 'the god by whom my people swear'. This is understood and sufficient to make the oath binding.

The number three was sacred to the Celts. Sometimes they portrayed their deities in groups of three, or as having three heads or three faces. In the tales the deities or semi-divine heroes are described as being one of three people of the same name and birth, or as having been born three times in succession.

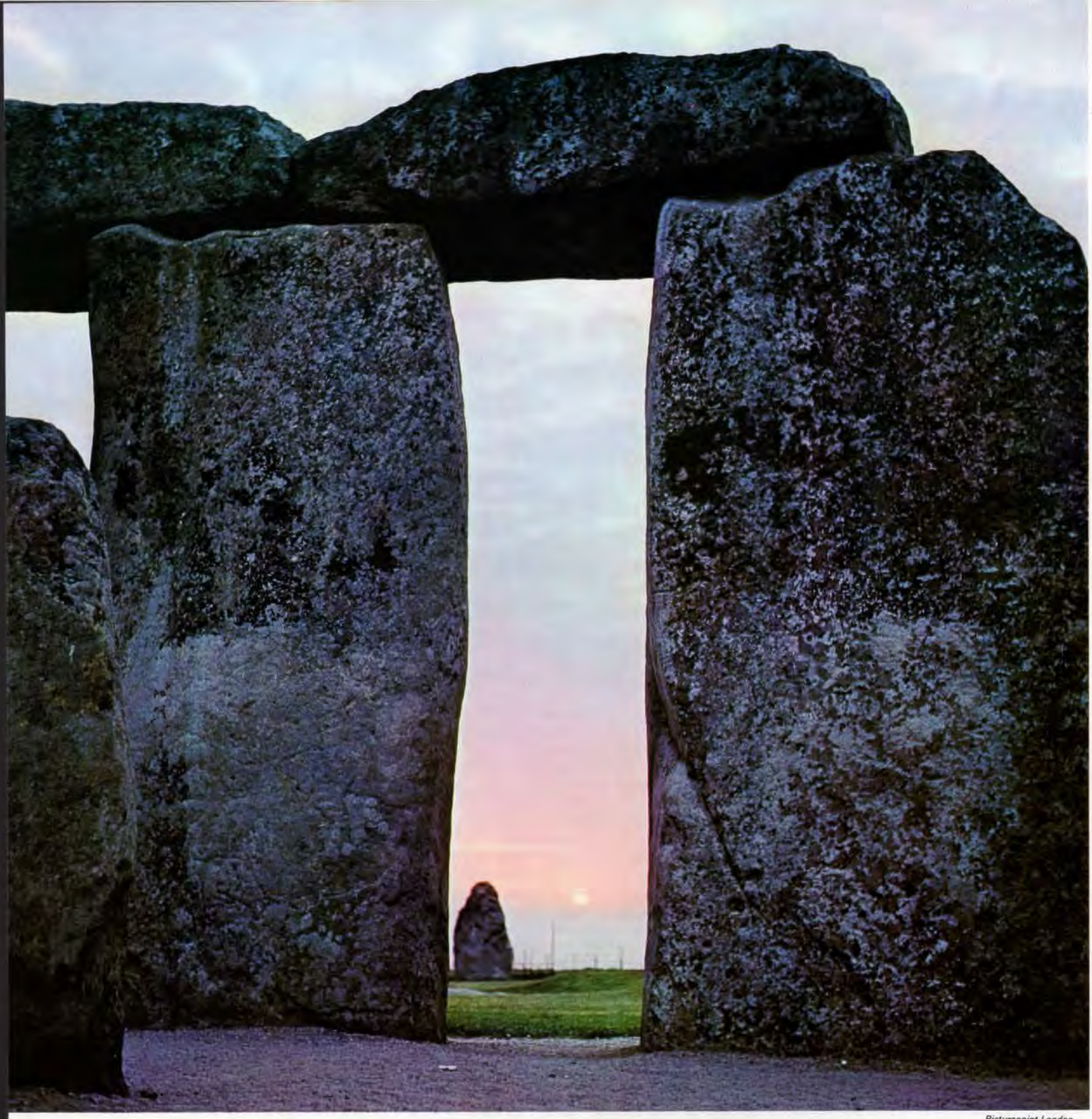
The Shape-Shifters

In addition to the powerful gods and goddesses with their many names and symbols, there are other and lesser supernatural beings – spirits and guardians of certain places, godlings and nymphs, sprites and demons. There were animals and birds which were sacred to the Celts, and many of the deities are represented as having bird or animal parts, or bird or animal servants and messengers. There were sacrificial beasts, and birds of good or evil omen, the companions of the gods, and their visible form on occasion.

The boar was held in high esteem by the Celts, its flesh being their choicest food; while the boar hunt was a favourite pastime. Several of the deities have names which link them with boar cults. There are many legends of supernatural boars and their adventures in the Irish and Welsh literary traditions. The otherworld feast is alleged to be sustained by magical pigs which, no matter how often they are cooked and eaten, are whole and alive again next day, ready for the next feast.

The bull also played an important role in mythology, while the horse, the stag (attribute of the Celtic stag god Cernunnos, 'the Horned One') the dog and the ram all figure in the world of Celtic mythology. The ram-headed serpent seems to have occupied a foremost place among the sacred animals, and various other fantastic beasts are figured or referred to in different contexts.

Shape-shifting or changing of form was allegedly much indulged in by the Druids and also by the deities, and several of the semi-mythological characters in the early legends take the form of an animal, some meeting their deaths while in this shape.



Picturepoint London

Stonehenge was built in pre-Celtic times but was almost certainly used as a temple by the Celtic Druids: the modern Druids still hold ceremonies there on Midsummer Day

Birds, too, were regarded as playing a very distinctive and individual role, the crane being sinister and ominous, an idea which has continued on into modern folk belief. The swan was invariably the form taken by benevolent deities, often when engaged in amorous exploits, and sometimes wearing chains of gold or silver, their magical badge which set them apart from other birds.

The World of Magic

The otherworld of the Celts, was a world of magic rather than a world of formal doctrine and inflexible deities; a world which mattered in everyday life rather than at religious feasts and periodical rituals alone; a world not of gloom but of gaiety. Its inhabitants were conceived to be gods and goddesses whose attitude to human beings was not always beneficent, but who could be propitiated by those who knew the correct form. It was a world which could on occasion be entered by mortals; and the deities were likewise believed to be capable of appearing at will in the world of men – not always to the benefit of mankind. It was a world whose inhabitants must always be reckoned with and appeased; a world to keep at bay, to exploit, rather than to love.

This is the basic background of Celtic religion, with all its regional variations, its local deities and its local patterns of worship, its different cult legends based on local sacred places and their own distinctive divine associations. This homogeneous background for local expression and tribal preference enables us to speak of pagan Celtic religion as a real, if elusive, thing.

(See also CAULDRON; DRUIDS; HEAD; HORNS; MABINOGION; POETS; and articles on individual gods and heroes.)

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Columbia University Press, 1967); T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (Thames and Hudson, 1980); Stuart Piggott, *Ancient Europe* (Aldine Publishing, 1966) and B. Cunliffe, *Celtic World* (McGraw-Hill, 1979).

CENTAUR

CENTAURS WERE MONSTERS in the classical sense, in that these legendary creatures combined two species in one skin. They had human heads and arms and torsos, merging into the bodies of horses. Centaurs were often savage and unbridled, according to report. Yet they had much mysterious wisdom and virtues far surpassing those of ordinary men.

The ancient Greeks regarded the centaurs as fanciful celebrants who danced in the train of Dionysus, the wine god, but also believed that their own forefathers had both befriended and fought against centaurs in the days of old. The latter conviction probably had some basis in fact, for the name centaurs signifies 'those who round up bulls' and the idea of the centaur may well have sprung from the cattle-breeders of Thessaly in northern Greece, who spent much of their time on horseback and whose manners were rough and barbarous. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the original centaurs were Cimmerian and Scythian raiders, rough-riding nomads from the north, who often invaded Thrace in the north-east.

In mythology the origin of the centaur was more poetic. It was said that a most reprehensible mortal man named Ixion had founded the race. This Ixion committed the outrageous offence of daring to attempt to seduce Hera, wife to Zeus and queen of heaven itself. To see how far Ixion's impudence would go, Zeus formed a cloud image of Hera and substituted it for the goddess. A monster, Centaurus, was born of this strange union, and when grown to maturity, himself united with the mares of Mount Pelion and so produced the centaurs.

Another, more austere legend has it that Chiron was the first centaur. Chiron had begun life as a Titan, a primeval son of Cronus (see CRONUS) and the ocean nymph Philyra. He dared make war against the young gods of Olympus but they defeated him. Apollo, the god of light and reason, punished Chiron by making him half-horse.

He had been educated by the gods and in turn undertook the instruction of hero after hero: Actaeon, Jason, Castor and Polydeuces, and Achilles, each served an apprenticeship with Chiron in the wilderness.

But Chiron's own fate was an unhappy one. He fell wounded by a poisoned arrow in a tragic accident. The arrow came from the quiver of a good friend, the best of men, impetuous Hercules. There was no antidote to its poison. To escape the wound's unending agony, Chiron renounced immortality in favour of his fellow-Titan, Prometheus. Zeus then generously set the kindly centaur's image in the heavens as the constellation Sagittarius, the Archer.

Feast of the Lapiths

Artists have always delighted in the challenge centaurs offer them. Arnold Bocklin, the 19th century German painter, once painted a huge centaur who stoops into a blacksmith's shop to have his shoes repaired. Rubens sketched a boyish Achilles astride Chiron's broad back; the ageless tutor turns half-way round in mid-gallop to explain some abstruse point. One of Michelangelo's first sculptures was a bas-relief *Battle of the Centaurs*. His source was the Roman poet Ovid, who vividly describes a feast held by the Lapith tribe, a legendary people of Thessaly, to celebrate the nuptials of their chieftain Peirithous.

The centaurs were invited to attend that feast as friends but they got drunk and tried to drag the Lapith women forcibly off into the bushes. A brawl ensued, with slaughter on both sides, and the centaurs were driven away as darkness fell. According to another version, the centaur Eurytion was invited to the feast but became excited with the wine, attempted to abduct the bride, and was restrained by Theseus. Eurytion then returned to the attack with a band of centaurs, who were armed with slabs of stone and trunks of pine trees. A long battle followed from which the Lapiths eventually emerged victorious. The centaurs were driven to the frontiers of Epirus and sought shelter on Mount Pindus. It was this quarrel which sadly put an end to the ancient friendship between mankind and the centaurs.

Today in Greece, the peasants will tell you of *kallikantzaroi*, 'good centaurs', who appear to be descended from the old legendary creatures. But the 'good' which has been prefixed to their names in modern times is a precaution taken out of fear, as when a superstitious northerner refers to elves or fairies as 'the good people'. The *kallikantzaroi* come up out of the ground on winter nights. They are hoofed, shaggy, swift, stupid and mischievous. In short they are 'monsters' in the modern, and not the ancient, sense.

ALEXANDER ELIOT

Mansell Collection

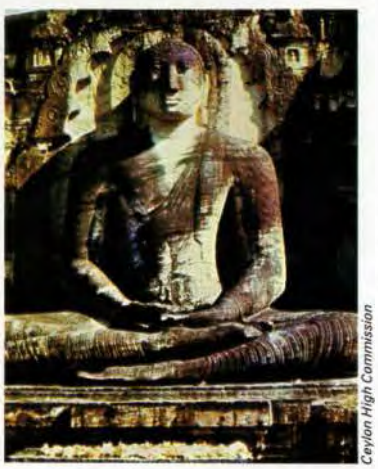
Caeneus, in trying to prevent the half-human, half-horse centaurs from raping the women of the Lapith tribe, was mercilessly hammered into the ground by these monsters: stone relief from Olympia

Andy Weir

Ceres

Roman goddess of corn and of the creative powers of the earth, the equivalent of the Greek Demeter; guardian of marriage, and associated with the dead under the earth and with the wine god; her name survives in our word 'cereal'.

See CORN; DEMETER.

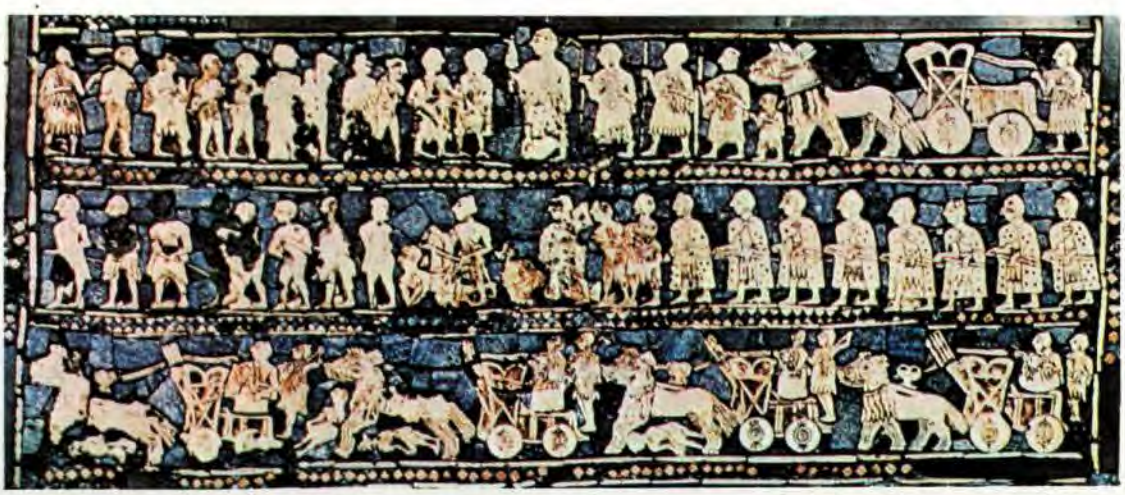


Ceylon High Commission

Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Since 1948, an independent state: some 60% of its people are Buddhists, with a substantial minority of Hindus and smaller numbers of Christians and Moslems; a tooth and a footprint of Buddha are famous relics and objects of pilgrimage.

See SINHALESE BUDDHISM.



Chaldeans

A people of Mesopotamia, famed as astrologers, magicians and sages; Chaldean kings, the best known of whom are Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, ruled Babylonia for close to 100 years, until overthrown by the Persians in 589 BC, and rebuilt the temples of the city of 'Ur of the Chaldees'.

CHANGELING

THE BIRTH of a deformed, moronic or exceptionally ugly child is an old tragedy. One way to make the parents feel better is to decide that the child is not their own at all but a substitute, left by the fairies in place of the child they have stolen. How much pain has been suffered by children believed to be changelings no one can measure, but early in this century in Ireland a changeling child was burned to death on a hot shovel. In 1894, near Clonmel in Ireland, a young woman was burned to death as a changeling by her husband and family. There are many stories of a child being thrown out on a dungheap to die of exposure, and a favourite way of dealing with a changeling was to whip it until the fairies came to take it back.

A changeling can also be made to reveal its true form by making it laugh or making it cross water. It is sometimes a fairy child but more often an old, even senile fairy, disguised as an infant. A typical English changeling story tells how a woman's baby never grew, was always hungry, failed to learn to walk, and lay in its cradle year after year. The woman's older son, a soldier, coming home after a long absence, saw the child's strange and hairy face, and took an empty eggshell, which he filled with malt and hops, and heated on the fire. There was a laugh from the cradle. 'I am old, old, ever so old,' said the changeling, 'but I never saw a soldier brewing beer in an eggshell before.' Now he knew for sure that it was a changeling the soldier went for it with a whip, and it vanished through the door.

A baby was likely to be snatched away by the fairies before he had been christened, that is before he had been made a Christian and before he had been officially named, and so became a person in his own right. Ways to protect him were to draw a circle of fire round him, hang a pair of open scissors over him, or put his father's trousers across the cradle.

(See also BIRTH.)

Wm Heinemann Ltd/Leyton-Sun

'She never had so sweet a changeling', from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, an illustration by Arthur Rackham. Fairies were thought to steal human children and leave old, senile fairies in their places, disguised as children

Beliefs in witchcraft and magic in the Channel Islands successfully survived the fierce persecutions of the 16th and 17th centuries, and even affected the architecture of houses

CHANNEL ISLANDS

ISLAND DEITIES are said to have something deathly about them; certainly the face of God loomed dark and menacing over the Channel Islands, during the great hunts for witches in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The most cruel tortures were applied without mercy and those sentenced to death were either hanged before being burned at the stake or, as in Guernsey, were burned without the mercy of preliminary strangulation. Mutilation and exile were among the lesser punishments imposed. In Guernsey 58 women and 20 men, mostly natives of that island, were charged with witchcraft. Four of them were burned alive and 28 were hanged before being consigned to the flames. Others were publicly mutilated or banished, and one unfortunate woman was hanged on her return from exile. The charges levelled against the accused were based in the main on rumours or on denunciations made under torture by supposed confederates.

Among the most common forms of spell for which these unfortunates were punished were the infliction of plagues of lice or maggots on their neighbours, and the drying up of the milk of some peasant's cow, a disorder which would probably be identified today with milk fever.

A Birth at the Stake

In Guernsey the witches were believed to be organized on Continental lines, with the familiar features of midnight sabbaths and Satanic orgies. As early as 1563 we find a man named Martin Tulouff confessing to having heard an old witch, his mother, cry out in the name of Lucifer, as she took flight on her broomstick.

Over half a century later an accused Guernsey witch admitted to having been approached by Satan while at the sabbath. At that very moment, she claimed, she experienced the sensation of being transformed into a bitch. Another witch, Colette du Mont, after flying to the sabbath, had copulated with Satan who had assumed for the occasion the shape of a black dog. Animal guise appears to have been common at the sabbaths, where it was not unknown for Satan to preside disguised as a cat.

A witch was often betrayed by the appearance of the 'Devil's Mark' on her body, a sign that she had associated with Satan. Respectable citizens were called on to search for the mark, by inserting pins into the most sensitive parts of the body.

The Bailiwick of Jersey, although somewhat less repressive than that of Guernsey, could also be extremely cruel, over 33 victims being hanged or burned in Jersey during the period of witch trials. In his book *The Black Art*, Rollo Ahmed has described a peculiarly gruesome recorded case in which a pregnant woman gave birth to a child while being burned alive in the Royal Square. The child was ruthlessly cast into the flames by the frenzied mob, who were determined that no 'imp of Satan' should be allowed to live.

During the fury of the Channel Islands witch-hunt, both the malevolent witch and the good or healing witch were hunted down ferociously, whereas in England the laws against witchcraft sometimes could not be enforced because of the popularity of white witchcraft among the common people. In Jersey even the so-called victims of witchcraft, who sought relief from healing witches, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment on a diet of bread-and-water.

Witch-hunting in the islands exposed not only the witch, whether evil or good, to the rigours of the law, but also the witch's clients.

The official attitude towards witchcraft must have been modified considerably during the second half of the 17th century, if the scepticism of Philippe le Geyte, Lieutenant Bailiff of Jersey, can be taken as an example. 'How many innocent people', he wrote, 'have perished in the flames on the asserted testimony of supernatural circumstances? I cannot say there are no witches: but since the difficulty of convicting them has been recognized in the Island they all seem to have disappeared as though the evidence of time gone by had been but an illusion.' The decline of the persecutions reflected the critical mood of the thinking classes rather than any change of heart among the masses, for long after the repeal of the law against witches, in 1736, much of the popular belief in magic and witchcraft survived relatively unchanged.

Even today old people recount with conviction stories of bewitched cows either aborting or losing their milk. According to one such legend, which I was told on the island of Jersey in 1968, two families quarrelled over the qualities of their respective herds. One placed a curse on the other with the result that their best cow lost its milk. Aid was sought from the parish priest, who uttered prayers against the evil spirit but took the additional and somewhat surprising precaution of inserting quicksilver into the farmhouse walls. The cow, it is said, recovered. All this was said to have occurred in the early 1920s.

From the island of Herm, off Guernsey, comes the story of a Satanic imp which was the cause of strange noises, continually heard at midnight near an old quarry. The owner of a nearby cottage decided to face the worst and called out loudly, 'If you come from God, speak, but if from the Devil, clear out.' The demon cravenly returned to the infernal regions and was heard no more.

The Island Conjurors

White witchcraft has long remained an institution in the Channel Islands, although its practitioners always disclaim any such title, preferring instead to be regarded as healers, diviners or conjurors. To Mr Philip Ahier of Jersey I am indebted for the following anecdote describing the subtleties employed by a 'conjuror' of the last century in discovering the identity of a thief. A young woman who had lost a ring persuaded a conjuror to assemble all the suspects in one room, where he placed a dusty old boiler over a pure white cockerel. All were then instructed to go outside the door and to return singly. The lights were put out and one by one the suspects returned, to find the room in complete darkness. Each was then told to lay his hand on the boiler and informed that at the touch of the thief the cockerel would crow three times. At the end of the ceremony the hands of all were examined for soot-marks. The only one who had clean hands, a woman, was declared guilty. She immediately made a full confession and returned the ring. The subtle conjuror had known that the guilty one would be afraid to touch the boiler, a trick that could only be successful in a community where there existed a general belief in magical powers.

These conjurors, who were supposed to be seventh sons of seventh sons, were not only diviners but also healed the sick, and have preserved their traditional reputation as psychic healers to the present day.

Visiting Jersey in 1968, I was introduced to an elderly man who had acquired a great reputation for healing by the power of touch. Born, so he said, on the seventh hour of the seventh day, he insisted that his powers were hereditary and gave as his source of inspiration the power of God. A curious feature was his insistence that during the course of his treatment of the sick there always materialized before his eyes a magic book, which was invisible to all but himself and which gave the directions for the cure. He charged no fees, relying entirely on voluntary offerings from his many grateful patients.

A story from Guernsey describes how a woman suddenly saw her sailor son walking on the road ahead of her. Thinking he had unexpectedly returned from his voyage, she hurried to catch up with him, and called his name. Suddenly she stopped abruptly, with a sense of apprehension and terror; although the figure was perfectly visible, there was no sound of footsteps. Several weeks later, she learned from the owners that the ship and all hands had been lost at sea.

A Cold Sort of Vapour

An old resident of Guernsey told me that during the German occupation she received special permission from the Commandant to take up residence in Sark, where she lived for a time alone in an isolated cottage. Almost immediately, she detected what she describes in her own words as 'a cold vapour, heavy and menacing, with the feeling also of eyes looking down on me – very evil.'

During the evenings, at about nine o'clock, she often heard the sound of a bell, ringing quite clearly from the nearby valley. Later she discovered that a previous occupier had heard the sound of chanting mingled with the tolling of the bell, and had written down the musical notation. Years afterwards while travelling abroad, the woman heard the same chant during a visit to a monastery in Italy. She showed

her notes to the Abbot who was incredulous, telling her that these were associated with a small community of monks which had existed in only one other place in the past – on the island of Sark in the 6th century. It is true, in fact, that a monk named Magloire, who became patron saint of the Channel Islands, was head of a community of Celtic monks on Sark at that time and that the community later spread to Italy.

Magic and Love

Magic directed towards amorous ends was closely connected with witchcraft, though of a somewhat light-hearted character. The 'Witches' Rock' in Jersey is still pointed out as the place which used to be visited by young girls at night, to seek out their spectral lovers; and also, it is said, by tradesmen who wanted to discover by divination how to outwit their business rivals.

In a curious household rite which continued to be practised in the present century, with the object of commanding the presence of a defecting lover, a cake was baked, containing flour and soot. Half was eaten and the other half wrapped in the deserted maiden's left garter and placed beneath her pillow. This spell was supposed to bring the spectral double of the young man to her bedside at midnight.

The visitor to the Islands who is sufficiently interested in the old way of life to make the necessary inquiries will be shown curious 'witch ledges' on the chimneys. The purpose of this peculiar feature of Channel Island houses is to provide a resting place for the witch. It was thought that if she could not find anywhere to rest on her journey, she would be angry with the householders. This custom must be seen in conjunction with another which has been observed within living memory, the custom of attaching garlic to the rooftops to keep witches from entering the house.

Occasionally the inquirer may hear the rumour that witchcraft survives in one particular parish or another, but in general the attitude to such matters today is one of half-belief. It has been truly said that the Channel Islands 'constitute a little museum of ancient habits' in the modern world.

ERIC MAPLE

Chaos

In mythology, the confusion which existed before the universe was set in order, and also the forces of confusion and disorder which still exist: frequently personified as a monster which does battle with the gods, the forces of order; they subdue it, a victory which men may have to act out periodically in rituals to keep disorder in check.

See CREATION.

British Museum

Charlemagne

Great European ruler (742–814), the central character of medieval legends in which he is a superhuman warrior and the champion of Christianity against Islam; said to have risen from the dead to fight in the Crusades, or to be still alive but sleeping till his people need him; connected with the constellation of the Great Bear of 'Charles's Wain'; later overshadowed in legend by his companions in arms, the 'twelve peers', who included Roland, Oliver and Ogier the Dane.

Brompton Studio

Mary Evans Picture Library

CHARON

THIS AGED and irascible boatman was believed by the Greeks to ferry the souls of the dead across the infernal river (the Acheron or Styx) which separated the land of the living from that of the dead. Charon is thus associated with Hermes Psychopompos (see HERMES), who summoned those appointed to die and led them to Hades. It has been thought that he was originally a death god, as was his Etruscan counterpart Charun. He is mentioned in Greek literature as early as the 5th century BC and is frequently depicted in art, particularly on the white-ground vases called *lecythi*.

Charon had to be paid for performing his sombre office of ferryman of the dead. It was customary to place an obolus, a silver coin, under the tongue or between the teeth of the corpse, to pay the fare. The shades of the dead who had not been properly buried, and thus equipped to cross into Hades, were refused passage by Charon and so left to haunt the living, seeking their release. The Roman poet Virgil draws a grim picture of the grisly ferryman in his *Aeneid* (book 6). 'Charon, on whose chin lies a mass of unkempt, hoary hair; his eyes are staring orbs of flame; his squalid garb hangs by a

In Greek mythology Charon, the terrifying boatman of hell, ferried the souls of the dead across the river which separated the land of the living from the land of the dead

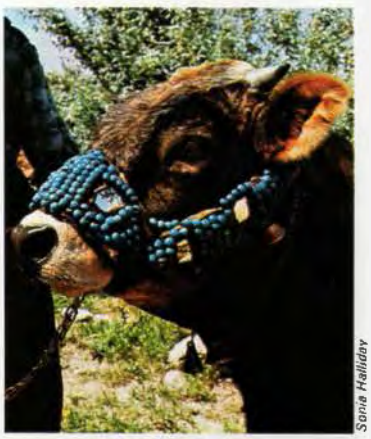
knot from his shoulders. Unaided, he poles the boat, tends the sails, and in his murky craft convoys the dead.'

Though a pagan concept, the image of the grim boatman and his load of souls deeply affected the minds of many medieval and Renaissance Christians. Dante tells, in his *Divine Comedy*, of his encounter with Charon when he descends, with Virgil as his guide, into the Inferno. 'Charon, demonic form, with eyes of burning coal, collects them all, beckoning, and each that lingers, with his oar strikes.' And Michelangelo, in the stupendous vision of the *Last Judgement* which he painted above the altar of the Sistine Chapel, depicts Charon and his fatal boat with a realism both terrifying and unforgettable. The memory of Charon passed into modern Greek folklore where, under the name of Charos, he carries off the young and old.

The Etruscans, that mysterious people who lived in central Italy and whose culture is known mainly from the evidence of their tombs, venerated a grisly deity called Charun. His demonic image appears on the walls of tombs, holding the hammer or mallet with which he dealt the death-blow to those whose destined time had come. This Etruscan Charun is clearly a death god; whether there was an original connection between him and the Greek Charon, as their names suggest, has not been proved.

The idea that the newly dead have to cross a river to reach the land of the dead is very ancient. It occurs in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts (c 2400 BC) and many means of transport are devised. The most notable, in the present connection, is that of securing passage in a boat manned by one named 'He who looks behind'. The name is significant, for this Egyptian ferryman, like the Greek Charon, is a difficult character and has to be persuaded or threatened into taking the deceased to the next world. The vignette which illustrates Chapter XCIII of the Book of the Dead shows the deceased addressing a man or deity seated in a boat, whose head is turned backwards. In the ancient Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh a similar idea occurs: the hero is ferried over the 'water of death' by Urshanabi, the boatman.

(See also HELL.)



Sonia Halliday

Charm

A spell: a form of words or an object believed to contain magic power, hence its broader meaning of attractiveness, fascination, allure or, as a verb, to enchant or bewitch: derived from the Latin *carmen*, 'a song'.

See IMITATIVE MAGIC; INCANTATION; TALISMAN.

ZEA

Cherub

In Jewish and Christian tradition, a type of angel, a winged being with a human head: descended from creatures with animal bodies, wings and human faces believed in ancient Mesopotamia to intercede for man with the gods; two cherubim 15 feet high stood in the Holy of Holies, the dwelling of God, in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem: later, a cherub is represented in art as a beautiful child.

See GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

Underlying the naive simplicity of many children's games are themes which are neither simple nor quaint

CHILDREN'S GAMES

TRADITIONAL CHILDREN'S games tend to consist of more or less standard movements and actions, often complicated by the accompaniment of a rhyme or chant. Older games, which today's parents and grandparents may remember from their non-televisual childhoods, generally have long roots stretching back to Britain and Europe. But, old or new, a considerable number of games have roots or antecedents that go further back – to a time when such activities were adult concerns. So most children's games can be viewed as survivals, in varying degrees, of once-important rituals or ritual dramas that involved the whole community.

In past ages, children were more closely integrated into adult life, as they still are among primitive peoples and in the more backwoods parts of civilized regions. It is not surprising, then, that the flourishing oral lore of children has perpetuated and transmitted, over the years, ritual relics that were once very serious necessities.

Take perhaps the most famous game inherited from England, *London Bridge*, traditionally played in the United States with some curious variations. Basically, two children stand facing each other, hands clasped and arms raised to form an arch. The others run under the arch, until at a signal the arch descends and traps a child. When all players have been captured, the American game ends with a tug-of-war – which lasts until one child lets go and breaks the line. That child is then victimized in some prearranged way.

Other variations include the corruption of the original song:

> London Bridge is broken down,
> Dance o'er my lady lee,
> London Bridge is broken down,
> With a gay lady.

These lines have now been drastically simplified to:

> London Bridge is falling down,
> Falling down, falling down,
> London Bridge is falling down,
> My fair lady.

But the change is just a normal mutation, no more significant than the use in colonial Massachusetts of Charleston Bridge as the game's locale.

No, it is the act of 'trapping' players, and the final isolation of a victim, that most interests the folklorists. They see in it a reflection of the world-wide belief that some sort of sacrifice is required for successful bridge building. Often, the victim was interred alive in the foundations of the bridge. (See BRIDGES.)

Also, perhaps more imaginatively, some experts see in the tug-of-war a hint of old European games involving a symbolic contest between forces of good and evil, usually taking place on a pretended bridge. So the two children forming the arch were demonic or angelic 'keepers of the bridge', deciding the fate hereafter of the others. It was so, certainly, in a game called *Bridge of Holland* once played by children of Pennsylvania's German immigrants.

The supernatural, on a fairy tale level, appears also in a game called *Old Witch*, at one time widely popular with American children. The child playing the witch uses standardized tricks to steal away other players from their 'mother'; the latter must find them and use similar formula tricks to rescue them. There are no winners and losers – there is merely a strong current of ritual drama, performed for its own sake, as with many other quasi-dramatic games.

The Farmer in the Dell, for instance, takes its drama from the assigning of roles – one child as farmer to begin, then 'the farmer takes a wife', 'the wife takes a child', and so on. The last player to be chosen is a cheese taken by a rat. We might see an element of victimization again here, though whether the victim is sacrifice, scapegoat, initiate or otherwise is not immediately obvious.

Elements of primitive tribal 'testing' rituals – initiations, ordeals or whatever – may be reflected not only in the rites performed by new members of present-day clubs and fraternities, but also in children's games

Following page **Many games still played can be seen in Breughel's *Children's Games*, painted in 1560. Fragments of old rituals and beliefs have survived in games which have their roots in the past**

Rev Damian Webb

Rev Damian Webb

Left **The 'love games' of children may be associated with both fertility rites and with imitation of adult concern with marriage. In this popular ring game, sometimes called *Rosy Apple, Lemon or a Pear*, players in couples must dance through a symbolic wedding arch *Above* Two more ring games, *In and Out the Dusty Bluebells* (left) and the more modern *I'm Going to Kentucky* (right) both involve finding a 'fair lady' and are also enactments of grown-up courtship and marriage *Below* The tug-of-war which concludes games like *London Bridge* or *Dranges and Lemons* seems to hint at the tradition of human sacrifice, but may also be descended from ancient forms of ritual combat, mock battles between winter and summer, light and dark, good and evil**

of the *Forfeits* or *Truth or Consequences* kind. In these, a player's failure to answer a question, or perform a required action correctly, makes him liable to undergo some unpleasant trial or punishment.

The initiate-victim concept also appears in games like *Tag*, or *Blind Man's Buff*, where one player stands alone against the rest, seeking to catch someone to take his place. *Blind Man's Buff* is known by many names all over the world: its initiation elements may be more apparent in an American variant where the players revolve in a ring around the blindfolded player, until the blind one raps with a staff on the floor. He then points the staff at the ring; the player singled out in this way emits some noise, in a disguised voice, and the blind one tries to guess who it is. If he guesses correctly, the child identified must assume the blindfold.

Anyone who remembers the games of his own childhood will be able to call to mind those others which retain some hints of this testing, or initiation, 'one-against-all' ritual. We can find patterns akin to it in *Hide and Seek* or even *Thimble, Thimble* (also called *Hunt the Thimble*), both still popular among children. We can find it very clearly in that well-known test of courage and daring called *Follow the Leader*. And we can find it in a simulated war game like *King of the Castle*, where one child tries to hold the top of a rise against all besiegers.

A once popular ball game, variously called *Alley Alley Over* or *Haley Over* is equally a war game, but for two opposing groups –

Rev Damian Webb

Rev Damian Webb

and so is less akin to an initiation rite than to straightforward mimetic ritual. Two groups of boys stand on opposite sides of a house, and one throws a ball over the house, calling out the game's title. Whoever catches the ball then runs (or sneaks) around to the 'enemy' side and tries to hit an opponent with the ball. Anyone hit is a prisoner of war, whereupon the ball is thrown back in the opposite direction and the other side has a chance to gain a prisoner. The game ends when all one side has been captured.

Lurking prominently in the background behind many children's games is that all-inclusive category of primitive ritual, the fertility rite. The theme of celebrating fertility may lie behind the game (imitating adult work) called *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*, inherited from England along with a more specifically fertile, though now less popular, game based on the song *Gathering Nuts in May*. But then practically any game like these involving a dance-like circular movement or ring can be labelled with the fertility implications, as long as all the players are included in the ring.

One old game of this sort, probably almost unknown today, was called *Oats, Pease, Beans and Barley Grows* in the United States. It held other names in Europe, where it flourished for centuries, mentioned by Froissart in the 14th century and Rabelais in the 15th. Players circle solemnly, singing or chanting lines that still hold much of the religious awe of the old 'mysteries' and true fertility rites:

> Oats, pease, beans and barley grows,
> How, you nor I nor nobody knows.

The game can become imitative of a marriage rite, with a boy and a girl within the circle and the children chorusing good advice.

It may be more difficult to see fertility magic in that long-lived round game for small children, *Ring Around the Rosy*, the verses of which (in some modern versions) end with a sneezing noise and then 'we all fall down'. But it seems even more fanciful to follow some modern writers in tracing the game's origin back to the Great Plague. Perhaps victims of the 'Red Death' were rosy with blood and afflicted with sneezing; certainly, in the end, they all fell down. But the game originally did not contain these precise words, on which the theory is based. Instead, older and better forms turn out to have been sacrificial-victim games, isolating one player with a forfeit to pay – as in a famous 19th century version:

> Round the ring of roses,
> Pots full of posies,
> The one who stoops last
> Shall tell whom she loves best.

So the child who was slowest to 'fall down' had to make a blushing admission. A common variant played in more recent times also demanded a victim, but much less poetically:

> Ring around the roses,
> Pocket full of posies,
> One, two, three – squat!

Crude as it is, this version still demanded the singling out of a victim of love – which may not be all that close to the object of fertility rituals, but is certainly a long way further from a gory death by plague.

Other games seek to draw from children an admission of love, or function as forms of love divination, and so stand perhaps at the threshold of the fertility theme. The counting game *Rich Man, Poor Man* supposedly foretells what sort of person the player will marry. A Hallowe'en game like ducking or bobbing for apples floating in a basin of water grew out of similar games for young adults; each apple bore a player's name, and you would marry the one whose apple you managed to bite. Sometimes the apple was hung from a string, and a boy or girl tried to bite into it from opposite sides – with every chance for mouth-to-mouth contact. (See ALL HALLOWS' EVE.)

And love games come into the *Forfeits* kind of play. A fairly modern game called *Spin the Bottle* requires the children to sit in a ring while a bottle on its side is spun in the centre. The player at whom the neck of the bottle points must confess whom he or she loves, and must sometimes kiss the object of affection, or else face a forfeit.

Most of the games mentioned so far have been akin, one way or another, to religious activity of older times. The links may sometimes seem rather strained, remote or unlikely – but some connections can usually be made. As a final and vivid illustration, take that universal game generally called *Hopscotch* except by the Scots, who call it *Peever*. The players mark out a specified pattern of squares on the ground, or with chalk on a city sidewalk, and kick a marker through the squares in a fixed order, while hopping on one foot from square to square in its wake. No more than a test of agility, it seems – until it is noted that in many versions the squares are arranged in special ways, two of which are the traditional shapes of the maze and the basilica (the latter containing seven squares, roughly the plan of a church). So, it seems, the progress through the diagram – without stepping on any line or losing balance – reflects the progress of the human soul through the trials of life towards salvation, indicated by the upper square, which indeed is often rounded or domed.

This analysis may seem to be too much symbolic weight to be carried by a children's game. But remember that children and their lore are notoriously conservative, that many of these games are as old as Western civilization – and that symbol and myth and ritualization are not so alien to children's lives, even today.

The act of mythologizing can be seen to permeate even those most up-to-date games involving cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, Batman or spacemen. Here the children are imitating the myth heroes of their imaginative world, just as primitives performed mimetic ceremonies in which their gods and heroes were portrayed (and realized). Even in those games that approach the nature of organized sport, the element of ritual has a place. In spring, when the ground is barely clear of snow in less tropical areas, it is the season for those complex and intent games of marbles, the rules and skills of which are as complex and demanding as those of a Navaho healing ceremony. Some weeks later, the time for playing marbles is over: all the children know it, by some unspoken but inflexibly binding, almost instinctual law. Perhaps this is the same instinctual process, diminished but still active, that led men in the ancient days to regulate their seasonal celebrations, evocations and ceremonial magics.

(See also NURSERY RHYMES.)

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: Iona and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1969); W. W. Newell *Games and Songs of American Children* (Harper, 1883).

Offspring of Typhon, a dreaded being associated with storm and tempest, and Echidna, who was part woman and part serpent, the Chimaera was a misbegotten monster of Greek mythology which belched fire as it breathed

CHIMAERA

THE CHIMAERA was a monster compounded of parts from three creatures: lion, goat and serpent. It appears in Homer's *Iliad* (books 6 and 16) as located in Lycia, in Asia Minor, where it is killed by the hero Bellerophon. Bellerophon's legend contains more than his battle with the Chimaera but these other features belong only to the background of this article and do not concern us here.

Bellerophon was already disliked by his ruler, Proetus, the king of Ephyre in Argolis, a place usually identified with Corinth. He was also disliked by Proetus' wife, Antea, who tried to seduce him and failed. In revenge, she accused him of making advances to her. Proetus did not try to kill him directly, but sent him to Iobates of Lycia, his father-in-law. Bellerophon was at first well received by Iobates, the king of Lycia, but when the king read the calumnious letter that he brought, containing secret instructions that Bellerophon should be killed, he plotted his death by ordering him to slay the Chimaera.

The Chimaera was of divine, not human origin, being 'a lion at the front, a serpent at the rear and in the middle a *chimaera*.' This word, which seems to leave part of its body unexplained, meant 'goat'. 'The Chimaera breathed flashing fire. But Bellerophon killed it, relying on marvels from the gods.' He then fought his way through other perils until he married the king's daughter. The Chimaera is called *amaimaketos*, an epithet which is otherwise used of fire and probably means 'raging', though some ancient writers used it to mean 'invincible'.

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, probably written in the 8th century BC, the Chimaera is mentioned as born by Echidna to Typhon with other monsters: Orthus, Geryon's hound, Cerberus and the Hydra. Typhon's origin was certainly in Lycia, so that scholars who

say that the Chimaera's location there is only secondary are probably wrong.

Hesiod says that the Chimaera had three heads, one belonging to each component animal, that it was killed by Pegasus and Bellerophon, and that by Orthus it was the mother of the Sphinx and the Nemean lion. A fragment of Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women* which mentions the legend of Bellerophon seems to be our earliest explicit reference to Pegasus as the name of his horse. Pindar alludes very briefly to Bellerophon's killing of the Chimaera.

Apollodorus, at the end of his history of Greek mythology, written in the 2nd century BC, once more gives the story of Bellerophon. Of the Chimaera he says that it was more than a match for many men, and that through its middle head, that of a goat, it belched fire. It was a single creature with the power of three beasts. Bellerophon, soaring high on his winged horse, Pegasus, shot down the Chimaera from the height. Pegasus was thus a necessary means for its killing.

A celebrated representation of the Chimaera in art is the Etruscan bronze figure found at Arezzo in Tuscany, which shows a powerful lion's body, limbs and head, a goat's head rising from its back, and a tail consisting of a serpent's body and head.

This has an affinity with a Hittite winged lion from Carchemish on the Euphrates which has a snake for its tail and a second and human head rising from its back. The fiery breath of the Chimaera may be a mythical rendering of the flaming gas that rises from the ground here and there in the south-west of Anatolia.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that the Chimaera was a personification of the storm-cloud. Nowadays the word is used to describe any fantastic or horrible imaginary creature, and is also the term applied by biologists to plants and animals having hybrid characteristics.

Famous Etruscan bronze of the Chimaera in the Archeological Museum, Florence. The name of this mythical monster, which once described a beast compounded of a lion, a goat and a serpent, has come to be used for any hybrid plant or animal or in a metaphorical sense for any imaginary fear.

CHINA

侯立周倉手持偃月刀軍民人供之

Twin ethers encompassing the universe are known as Yin and Yang: the Yin ether is of the earth, dark, female, heavy; while that of Yang is of heaven, bright, male, light

Traditional Chinese religion, surprisingly, has something in common with Maoist ideology in that both have a strong social purpose. Long before the Communists took over, the Chinese government 'adopted' the ancient pantheon of gods and turned them into a celestial bureaucracy, with a supernatural emperor at the apex, supported by divine 'officials' of all ranks, down to the gods of the household

RELIGION IN CHINA has always been deeply embedded in the social system, and it is not possible to consider the one without the other. It is among the world's richest religions. Intermingled with the strands of Buddhism, Taoism, ancestor worship, folk religion and Confucianism is a deep concern with the fate of society. From this complex background three major interests emerge.

One interest was in man, in his individual relationship to the universe: Taoism has been its important representative. The second was in man as a being important in the future of the world, and has been represented by Buddhism. The third concern was with society rather than with man as an individual or the world at large. This 'social religion', was represented by a set of ideas which had no name of its own (although some of its parts had names) and is of central importance for understanding China.

Buddhism and Taoism are considered here largely in their role of providing social religion with some of its materials, or providing important alternative beliefs for individuals with problems in adjusting to society in different circumstances or stages of life (see also BUDDHISM; TAOISM). The period of recorded religious development in China is extremely long, going back to the Shang dynasty of the 18th to 12th centuries BC, but we are mainly concerned here with modern China.

In China today, millions of people, some speaking mutually unintelligible dialects and spread over vast areas, live under one central control. The problem of maintaining social and cultural unity is very great. This is no new problem, for it existed as early as the Chou dynasty (12th-3rd centuries BC), when the people we call Chinese first began to expand rapidly into areas inhabited by people of different cultures.

A 19th century Chinese screen painting of the learned god of war, Kuan Ti (seated). Being a god of heaven, as opposed to a demon, he was expected to prevent rather than encourage warfare

Religion was always a major means for dealing with the problem. Even the foreign (Manchu) Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911 AD) used Chinese religion to govern the Chinese and the peoples they had absorbed.

Religion became a means of social control by absorbing, over the centuries, most of the local cults and bringing them together under the Chinese system. This was originally the worship of heaven, of the ancestors and of a host of gods and spirits. The Former Han period (from 206 BC to 220 AD) was a time of great expansion, during which the system was given a new basis in a total theory of the universe, meaningful to all under Chinese control. Gradually, two levels for appreciating this theory developed.

One level of the system was very sophisticated and the concepts used impersonal or semi-personal. The other was 'religious' in the more conventional sense: it involved gods and other spirits. (The two levels are also present in other systems, including both Taoism and Buddhism.) The first level was meant for the scholarly and the second for the less educated, who could not read formal texts. They received their ideas from proverbs, 'good books' written in simple characters, folk stories which were told rather than read, and from pictorial materials.

This division was not completely clear-cut. Certainly there was a major social gap between the mass of illiterate or semi-literate peasants and artisans, and the scholarly official classes. There were also, however, people of varied education working in occupations which were not highly regarded, in trade and commerce, in professional religious roles and in entertainment and teaching. Women, mostly illiterate or semi-literate, cut across all divisions.

In addition, the two interpretations of ideas overlapped, complementing and reinforcing each other. At the first level, a general blueprint of social relationships was authenticated by reference to ultimate 'truths' about the universe and its relation to society. Values associated with society were further underlined and acted out in rites and ceremonies. These activities were themselves seen as having a deeper cosmic significance too: they helped to balance the universe.

The second level further sanctified social relationships by reflecting them on a 'supernatural' plane. It also provided more details about specific connections between gods and the supernatural, and different social institutions. Together these sets of ideas covered the society. Some were concerned with the roles of the emperor and his officials, the form of government and territorial administration. Some were concerned with families and other kin-groups which had a high degree of political and economic control over their members, and to all other forms of association such as guilds, societies and even groups of friends. It is difficult to think of a corner into which these sets of ideas did not reach.

Because they explained everything to do with society, these ideas were even drawn upon by non-approved groups including bandits and rebellious organizations.

Yin and Yang

At the higher level, the blueprint for social relations in the traditional Chinese system was provided by a group of ideas which has been loosely and popularly termed 'Confucianism', from its connection with the teachings of Kung Fu-tze (550–480 BC). There have been many different interpretations of its precise nature. Some writers have stressed its concern with the things of this world and with ethics. Others, seeking to align it with the 'higher religions', have stressed the semi-personal nature of its concept of heaven. There has been much controversy among scholars over definitions and functions but in outline the theory is as follows.

Originally, there was a single cosmic cell containing 'ether' (*Ch'i*) which was made to pulsate by a creative force known as *Tao*. Tension set up by this activity eventually rent the cell into opposite and complementary halves; twin ethers which encompassed the universe and which are known as *Yin* and *Yang*. The Yin ether is of the earth, dark, female, heavy; while that of Yang is of heaven, bright, male, light. The continuous operation of Tao, which is a sort of natural law, causes these entities to alternate, and by this process five 'elements' are produced: water, fire, wood, metal, and earth. By various combinations of these elements, the multitude of things in this world comes into existence (see also ACUPUNCTURE).

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Above left A new dragon boat is blessed by a Taoist priest, who brings it offerings of roast pork and vegetables. Later the boat will take part in races designed to bring rain for the spring rice planting *Above* Portrait of the powerful Empress Tzu-Hsi at her funeral in 1908. According to Chinese religious belief the earthly ruler had a counterpart in heaven, known as the Jade or Pearly Emperor *Left* Malevolent spirits were thought to be haunting the small island of Cheung Chau near Hong Kong, after the discovery there some years ago of human remains. To placate the spirits the islanders hold an annual Bun festival, at which they say prayers and light joss sticks. They also parade through the streets *(below left)*, balancing their children in the air *(below)*. The spirits are presented with 60ft high mountains of buns

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The Wisdom of Confucius

From the Analects, *a collection of sayings attributed to Confucius (translated by Lin Yutang).*

Confucius said, 'I am going to remain quiet!' Tsekung remarked, 'If you remain quiet, how can we ever learn anything to teach to the others?' And Confucius said, 'Does Heaven talk? The four seasons go their way in succession and the different things are produced. Does Heaven talk?'

Confucius said, 'It is man that makes truth great, and not truth that makes man great.'

Confucius said, 'The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.'

Baron Wen Chi said that he always thought three times before he acted. When Confucius heard this, he remarked, 'To think twice is quite enough.'

Confucius said, 'You can kill the general of an army, but you cannot kill the ambition in a common man.'

Confucius said, 'Truth may not depart from human nature. If what is regarded as truth departs from human nature, it may not be regarded as truth.'

Confucius said, 'The superior man is liberal towards others' opinions, but does not completely agree with them; the inferior man completely agrees with others' opinions, but is not liberal toward them.'

Tsekung asked, 'Is there one single word that can serve as a principle of conduct for life?' Confucius replied, 'Perhaps the word "reciprocity" will do. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.'

The Yin and Yang and the elements were the basis of traditional classifications in China. Colours, parts of the empire, parts of the body, numbers and many other things, were grouped and defined in terms of them. They were thought to determine the natural forces, even the process of history and the fate of dynasties. By their continuous motion all things are formed. Death and decay is the process by which they separate into their original cosmic components. Some liken it all to the action of a gigantic pair of bellows, continually sucking in cosmic materials out of heaven and earth, forming them briefly into things as they are now, and then letting them out again to return to nothingness.

If some of this sounds obscure, the Taoist would say it is inevitable. The very adjectives used for Yin, Yang and the elements are attempts to describe the indescribable. The Taoist's task was to achieve an inward appreciation of his own nature, which is the nature of all things, for all things are governed by a single Tao. Only then could he work in true harmony with the universe.

The Harmony of Ritual

For the Confucian, however, the nature of Tao was known. It consisted of rules of conduct, etiquette and ceremonial. It was a guide for social action. Working through society, man had the important task of adjusting heaven and earth, and preserving universal balance. Heaven was seen by the Confucian as the source of morality, Earth was amoral, and man combined something of both heaven and earth. Heaven wielded the power of reward and punishment. It was approachable for knowledge of the future only by the emperor, and it was from heaven that he obtained his mandate to rule on earth. Imperial sacrifices to heaven continued until 1911, and coronations were accompanied by sacrifices, intended as 'adjustments' of heaven and earth.

All approved forms of ritual were seen as having a harmonizing function, including the cult of Confucius which took place in temples found at all administrative centres and resembling some of the temples of the gods worshipped by ordinary people. Other important cults were dedicated to the patron of literature and to the creator of writing. All these rites helped to adjust society, and to adjust further the universal order. Most important, however, was ancestor worship, in which the emperor venerated the ancestors of the whole society, and his subjects their own forbears.

The Worship of Ancestors

Confucianism did not uphold belief in the survival of the soul. In earlier times, however, the nobility practised ancestor worship at ancestral tablets and graves. These rites were related to the ancient belief that man has two souls, a superior or spiritual soul which will ascend into heaven and meet its ancestors if due ceremonies are performed, and a second soul which informs the body during life and the corpse after death, provided the correct sacrifices are made.

In later times, scholars saw such rites as caring for the living rather than the dead. Their function was to engender feelings of filial piety and therefore harmony in the family or clan. For this reason, only those involved in the continuation of the kin-group were venerated: married persons with sons. In clans, communal halls for housing ancestral tablets became also centres for trying disputes and entertaining officials and others with whom good relations were sought.

Buddhism provided an alternative conception of man after death: the idea of a soul surviving to expiate its sins against the world in purgatory before rebirth. Naturally the idea implicit here, that parents could do wrong, was abhorrent to the true Confucian. Generally speaking, Buddhist rites for the dead, performed for parents, were frowned upon except in special circumstances.

The models for correct social behaviour and attitudes were found also in the family, the basic unit of society. The young Chinese learnt that young must venerate old and that loyalty was a most important virtue. In large family households he also learnt, sometimes from bitter experience, that acquisitiveness, self-indulgence, dishonesty and lack of a ceremonial approach to relations (which were considered to be the sources of cosmic disharmony) could certainly cause tension in the group.

The values acquired in the family were extended to all other areas of life, including relations with the government, business and other forms of organization. Many institutions copied the kinship pattern for organizing themselves. Masters were like fathers to their apprentices, teachers similarly so to their pupils, and the emperor likewise to his subjects. Even religious groups, particularly the monastic orders, were organized according to pseudo-kinship principles into 'families' and 'clans'.

Balance, it was considered, could be preserved only if one acted with correct feelings. To adjust society, one had first to adjust oneself. The scholar was expected to practice self-cultivation to get an inward appreciation of the truth of the system. A non-virtuous teacher or government official could accomplish nothing good. Even epidemics, floods and other natural disasters were explained in terms of lack of virtue of the people, particularly the leaders of society.

During active social life the scholar, certainly, was expected to work entirely with Confucian assumptions. In old age, however, he was allowed to be less conventional. Some took up Buddhism as they became more concerned with physical decline and approaching death, practising meditation to assist them in their future lives. Many women were attracted to Buddhism.

Others took up Taoism, which related the individual more directly to the universe. They practised Taoist methods for prolonging life, with the object of preventing the Yin and Yang from separating. This involved exercises, such as 'Chinese boxing' and breath control, and the use of special herbs. Sometimes, although this was less approved, they employed sexual practices in order to 'nourish' Yang with Yin.

Today in Hong Kong elderly men to whom Taoism seems especially to appeal, and some women climb mountains early in the morning, or perform the careful slow movements of Chinese boxing in quiet spots of the city. Some, in order to be in tune with Nature, keep little birds in cages.

Tolerance of the eccentricities of the old had a useful function. It kept those approaching senility out of social mischief, directing them within themselves rather than outside. Such self-centred activities were less tolerated for the young, although other more social forms of Buddhism and Taoism were condoned. Business men who joined societies for performing charity (part of the Mahayana tradition of which Chinese Buddhism is part) mitigated their acquisitiveness to some extent. Those forming Taoist groups to cure disease among ordinary people were performing a social service.

Man was seen as standing between gods and demons and attempted to adjust them to his social life in orderly fashion

The Celestial Bureaucracy

The metaphysical significance of Confucianism must have been difficult for ordinary people to appreciate fully. Confucian 'results' were obtained by the use of proverbs and stories of filial piety and by a system of sermons in the rural areas; this had declined in effectiveness by the late 19th century. But a 'basis' had also to be provided. This was done by recourse to the multitude of gods and spirits of Chinese religion and the local cults it absorbed. The system was turned into an animated version of the theory of Yin and Yang.

In the ancient system, gods and spirits or demons were divided between heaven and earth respectively. Under later influence from Yin-Yang theory, gods became identified with Yang and demons with Yin. As a result of Confucian ideas the gods generally, being of heaven, were seen as the source of morality. There were a few delightfully unconventional beings, mainly of Taoist origin, however, who never quite fitted in with this scheme. Demons, being of earth, were amoral. They were greedy and impolite – like the Yin side of human nature – although like amoral people they occasionally had their uses, and sometimes destroyed each other.

In general, man was seen as standing between gods and demons and attempted to adjust them, as the scholar adjusted the Yin and Yang elements to run his social life in orderly fashion. If he showed greed and other Yin qualities, he might attract the attention of demons, and the disfavour of the gods. If he was virtuous and moral, the gods brought him the benefits of the good life.

Gods were of different kinds. Some were personified forces of Nature, while others were deified sages, buddhas and bodhisattvas, or saviours of mankind, taken from the more supernatural levels of Taoism and Buddhism. But many were former members of society: a human being contained during life both Yin and Yang or god aud demon, hoth elements surviving as souls. It was believed that a powerful Yang soul, that of a virtuous or powerful person, might become a god; while the Yin soul of a person dying tragically and unexpectedly might be unprepared, and hence resentful, thus becoming a powerful demon.

An ingenious and rather sinister 'takeover' of the pantheon was gradually effected by the State. It took all the good, public-minded gods it could find, added to them by deifying people of noted virtue, and then placed them all in a gigantic celestial hureaucracy. This was an organization paralleling that of the worldly order hut going much farther. It stretched into every institution of mankind, into areas beyond the reach of mortal officials.

Significantly, this hierarchy was not only set up but also controlled by the human bureaucracy. The head of the celestial government was the Jade or Pearly Emperor, the counterpart, of course, of the real emperor of China. Under him were boards of administration for controlling the forces of time and of Nature. There was a Ministry of Justice, comprising numerous city gods and presided over by a city god-in-chief. These gods were the counterparts of mortal officials in charge of provinces and districts of China, and individually they were based on temples in the major cities of their territories.

The origin of the city gods is said to date to the time of the Emperor Yao (2357–2255 BC) when a spirit was thought to live in the city moat and wall. They guarded their territories from spiritual enemies and influences. Ordinary people were encouraged to help in their selection and, theoretically at least, they were appointed for a limited term and could be transferred from place to place. Beneath them were the earth gods who were also of great antiquity and looked after the smaller community, such as a village or section of a village. Under them again were a multitude of anonymous officials known as 'honourable men' who acted as runners to the gods. In Hong Kong today they are pictured together with their horses, as means of transport, on charm papers used in ritual.

Gods of specific institutions sometimes shared temples with the community gods. The kitchen god was worshipped in all households. There was a goddess of the bedhead in charge of married couples and their children, who usually shared a bed, and there was often a goddess of child-rearing, who was a former midwife and powerful spirit-medium. There were various patrons of agriculture, and the crafts and trades had their gods too. Jewellers had a Minister of Works who achieved fame by making an ornament to conceal a disfigurement of an emperor's consort. Carpenters and other skilled workers had a craftsman god, said to have once made a wooden kite on which he rode. Even rogues and bandits had their patrons. This may have created 'honour among thieves' but it was largely a case of the system turned against itself.

Some gods had dual, even triple roles, which added to the complexity and size of the pantheon. The kitchen god, for instance, was also the patron of professional cooks. The Chinese goddess of mercy is thought to have been an ancient local goddess before the advent of Buddhism, in which her role was to help in the salvation of Buddhist souls. But she is also represented with a baby on her arm and in this form she helped people who desired to have children.

A 3rd century hero, seen as the embodiment of bravery, loyalty and righteousness, was known under seven names and was the patron of pawn shops, all kinds of friendly societies and sworn brotherhoods; in Hong Kong today he is even patron of the police. He was also a soldier god of wealth and, under another name, god of war. Some civic gods had a role in controlling man after death as well. The earth gods cared for graves. The city gods controlled souls in their districts and had some influence on the fate of Buddhist souls in purgatory.

Man's Right to Punish the Gods

It is difficult to assess precisely the attitude of the officials to all these gods. Certainly they were expected to venerate their celestial counterparts and consult them on community matters. As the *Book of Rites*, one of the classics of the Confucian canon, points out: 'when the scholar shows respect, the people will believe'. Folk stories show that ordinary people, at least, believed that officials could meet with supernatural punishment for lack of respect. On the other hand officials had the right to punish gods of

Although the state religion of China was remarkably successful in meeting the needs of most Chinese, some rebels and eccentrics formed secret religious societies which expected or worked for the overthrow of the established order. A priest of the Triad Society kneels before an altar in the Society's lodge. The writing above the altar calls upon members to be loyal and upright, and to burn joss sticks regularly. This society was formerly outlawed because it sought the overthrow of a foreign dynasty

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Left The King of the Seventh Hell, surrounded by obsequious attendants, looks on while hideous dogs and demons drive condemned souls into the river. The Seventh Hell was reserved for those guilty of cannibalism and desecrating graves *Right* Painting of four Kings of Hell. In popular Chinese belief there are many different hells, each ruled by a *Yama* or King, and each equipped to punish those who have committed specific crimes during life

a rank below their own for failing in civic duties: to bring rain or cure an epidemic, for example. Images might be thrashed, gods demoted and ceremonies denied them. This perhaps provided a warning to mortal officials to perform their tasks efficiently. And there were also folk stories aiming to put gods in their place, which was always below that of the Chinese emperor.

One charming story explains why the earth god is always placed on or near the ground. It appears that the emperor T'ai Tsu, who lived in the 14th century, once visited an inn on his travels and found all the tables taken except an altar table for the earth god. 'Give me your place,' he said, placing the image on the ground, and proceeded to order his dinner. After the emperor had gone the inn-keeper replaced the image but that night the god appeared to him in a dream. He told him to put him back on the ground, as he did not dare to contravene the emperor's order. And so it was from that day.

For ordinary men it would appear there was no escaping the god-officials in this life or the next and many gods were themselves former officials of the mortal world. Indeed, once a year all gods reported to the Jade Emperor on the conduct of the people in the community or institution under their control.

It was wisely recognized that some freedom, and some control of the system also, must be allowed to the common folk. It was assumed, for example, that the ordinary man, closer to the margin of subsistence than the average scholar, might find it difficult to follow the tenets of Confucianism in all circumstances. Certain gods were tolerated who sanctioned less approved aims. Gods of wealth were worshipped by ordinary people and also had an important role in business – shop owners gave annual feasts to wealth gods to which employees were invited. Some wealth gods also concerned themselves with questions of financial morality. They were deified men who had been generous with charitable donations. The jolly gods of Taoism provided entertaining if not always edifying stories, which were condoned.

It was also realized that those in desperate straits might do things which made them more vulnerable to celestial disfavour, and more easy prey for demons. Various rites for appeasing gods, obtaining their aid and defeating demons were thus tolerated,

瀧瀧瀧
秉正除奸
有忠心方可入此
英雄名
無義氣勿
萬雲龍陳近南謝邦恒吳建貴
韓昌鄭
三寧司命
松
木楊城
水立
斗世
天生天養天賜福
萬
祖
遠淙沁洳淌潞
碑
潮汕洛江汶
萬子萬孫萬年長
紅牡丹合慈
共
秉正除
白牡丹

Michael Holford

although they sometimes involved activities and words lacking in the decorum so prized by Confucians. As in life, one gave money and other gifts for favours. Paper mock 'money' in various denominations, 'gold' and 'silver' 'ingots', and paper 'clothes' were important items of paraphernalia for many rites. They were also cheaper than the real thing used in relation to mortal officials. Theoretically etiquette forbade that common folk approach high gods direct, in the same way that it forbade direct approach to mortal officials. It was correct to go through the mediation of honourable men, or lesser gods, or to use the services of a type of non-celibate Taoist priest whose major role, in the later period at least, was to serve this religion.

Since this kind of priest took the status of god on initiation into his order, and worked to gain similar powers, he could approach gods direct, and was believed to be able to defeat demons himself. Besides performing rites on behalf of those in need, he drew up 'petitions' or constructed 'edicts', 'tablets', and 'injunctions' on behalf of the gods, using yellow-faced paper and vermilion ink in imitation of bureaucratic documents. These were used by people acting on their own. Women were the main private performers, on behalf of both themselves and the members of their households. They also tended the household images daily, together with the ancestral tablets which were usually kept on the same altar-shelf.

The underworld, like the world of the gods, was thought capable of being manipulated in similar fashion to the world of men. Bribes of mock money were paid to judges at funeral performances often conducted by Taoist as well as Buddhist priests. These are still carried out with great histrionics in Singapore today. Exit permits were burnt for quick passage through the underworld by filial sons on behalf of their parents, and also for other members of the household. Even the uncomfortable notion of parental sin might be mitigated by a popular notion that souls might be wrongly imprisoned, like the living.

The State managed the supernatural system with remarkable success, allowing as it did for a certain amount of unorthodox conception and practice among the ordinary people. Those who did not fit fully into society and could not come firmly under the influence of the ideological system, the unattached and the unemployable, were often encouraged to take up some form of monasticism, which was controlled. Professional Buddhism was an approved occupation for elderly widows.

Secret Societies

But there were also those who were discontented with the arrangements, or dissatisfied with their own place, or that of certain men occupying official positions in society. They sometimes joined religious groups which confirmed their attitudes and offered solutions. A number were messianic sects inspired by faith in the coming of a saviour. They combined Chinese notions of the Yin and Yang and a predetermined universe, with elements from other sources, which included Buddhism, Taoism, and in some cases even Christianity and Islam (which has existed in China for 13 centuries). They preached a millennium, a time when perfect government would be established and ruled over by an incarnate divine. Meitreya, the 'Buddha to Come', was usually cast in this role.

Such groups recruited frustrated scholars as well as ordinary folk, and many had both sophisticated and unsophisticated levels for understanding their ideas. There were also secret societies, such as the Triad Society, which did not have their own independent ideologies but used elements from various sources and directed them not so much towards a millennium as towards the overthrow of the foreign Ch'ing dynasty and restoration of the Chinese Ming. Groups of this sort were not tolerated of course, and were often severely suppressed.

With religion so intertwined with the social system, it is clear that major social change could not be fully effected without considerable change in beliefs and practices. A new and comprehensive ideology was found in Chinese Communism – although curiously, Chinese medicine which is based on Yin-Yang theory is still positively encouraged in China today. In some ways the new system, especially in its present Maoist form resembles the old. There are striking parallels between modern and traditional methods for instilling the social ethic, for example by self-cultivation

The Ancestors Know Better

China under the Shang dynasty, c1300 BC.

In the family temples, of the imperial family as well as of the nobles, offerings of food and wine must regularly be made to each of the many ancestors, even when no especial favours are required. (When they *are*, the offerings will be supplemented by sacrifices of animals or of slaves.) The presentation to one of the ancestors of a vessel for food or wine or water is a fitting way of commemorating any auspicious event, a successful hunt or battle, or a mark of imperial favour, a grant of land or of title. After all, the ancestors' influence determines the course of events for their descendants, and they deserve a reward for their efforts. The name of the ancestor thus honoured will often be inscribed on the vessel in the pictographic script that . . . has come into use during the reign of this enlightened dynasty.

The priests are the interpreters between the dead and the living. Although they accompany the emperor on his travels in order to give him day-to-day advice from the ancestors, it is best to pose important questions within the ancestor temple in the city, where one is most likely to find the ancestors at home. Questions are submitted in writing, carved on shoulder blades of cattle or on tortoise shells, and the ancestors answer them, with a plain 'Yes' or 'No', by guiding the direction of the crack produced when the priest applies a red-hot bronze point to the back of the bone. It is a simple method, and the same bone or shell can be used over and over again. So the ancestors are asked about everything: tomorrow's weather and the best place to camp for the night, as well as the prospects for the harvest . . . The answers are not infallible, for after all even ancestors are not all-powerful. But on the whole they know better than their living descendants, and sometimes the priest will triumphantly inscribe on the bone after the event the tally of the day's hunt or the laconic remark that 'it really didn't rain'.

Geoffrey Bibby *Four Thousand Years Ago*

Michael Holford

Shou-Lao, the god of long-life, holding a peach, a symbol of longevity and immortality, because it was thought that the peaches in the celestial orchard ripened once every 3000 years

by the reading of orthodox books and seeking strength from an inward appreciation of the contents. But the comparison between the two systems must not be pressed too far. There is much in modern China that is very different from the past.

We do not know the precise state of beliefs and customs connected with the former gods in China today. A first attempt to strip the supernatural sanctions from traditional institutions was made long before the Communists came to power. In the 20s a campaign to demolish many temples and images was launched. Among gods to be discarded, listed in a Chekiang provincial government gazette of 1928, were city gods, earth gods and the kitchen god. Many images and temple carvings have appeared in Hong Kong antique shops over the years but the last decade has seen a great increase in their numbers.

However, it should be noted that Chinese newspapers carried accounts of suppression of sectarian religious leaders right into the late 50s. They tell of 'anti-flood' campaigns in which these leaders preached that flooding was due to lack of virtue among the local establishment of officials. There are also occasional news reports filtering through which indicate the persistence of funeral and other customs.

The stronghold of Chinese religion today is undoubtedly overseas Chinese society. Confucianism is still strong in Taiwan. Singapore and Hong Kong have a multitude of temples and cults. But their practices and ideas occur against a background of social and political institutions which is very different from traditional China and have also been subject to change. The religion of overseas Chinese is traditional certainly, but it does not have quite the same relevance to society as it once did in the homeland.

MARJORIE TOPLEY

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INRI
CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY

'Other religions teach that men have become gods: Christianity that God entered into flesh and became man.' In this article the history of one of the great religions of the world is outlined

CHRISTIANITY TAKES ITS NAME from its founder, Jesus Christ. Christ is not a name but an adjective meaning 'the anointed one' and derived from the Greek *Christos* which is itself a translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, the one chosen and anointed by God. Jesus is a Hebrew name, Jesus was a Jew, and the designation Jesus Christ points to two cardinal facts about the rise of Christianity. It sprang from Judaism, and in the early centuries it had its widest dissemination in the Hellenistic world, the Mediterranean area where Greek cultural influence was strong.

Many of the central concepts of Judaism were incorporated into Christianity: as Jesus said, he had come not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil. The Old Testament, the name given by Christians to the Jewish scriptures, asserts the oneness of God: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one god.' An intransigent monotheism has been both the glory and the tragedy of Israel. In the ancient world this insistence set the Jews apart from their neighbours even in a political sense, as the gods of the various peoples were expected to recognize each other. In particular, Israel came into conflict with rulers who claimed to be gods themselves. This claim was made by Alexander and his successors, by the Egyptian pharaohs and by the emperors of Rome, and this claim the Jews resolutely rejected. They were the only people in antiquity who refused to place a pinch of incense on the altars of the emperors, and the only people who were tacitly granted exemption from this universal demand.

The Jewish Background

There are religions of Nature, religions of contemplation and religions of history, and Judaism was centred in history. Religions of Nature see the divine in the recurrence of the seasons, and particularly in the processes of fertility. Their rites call for the sacrifice of infants to win the favour of the god and to stimulate the fertility of the earth; sometimes also for the emasculation of men and the perpetual virginity of women or, in reverse, for sacred prostitution. Ancient Israel met such practices in Canaan and sought ruthlessly to stamp them out.

Religions of contemplation seek the divine by turning within, until meditation is consummated in ecstatic union with the Ultimate. Judaism knew of dreams and visions but not the rapture of the mystic who loses his identity in the abyss of the godhead.

Religions of history see the divine rather in events, in the mighty acts of God as he raises up and casts down. Frequently they look forward to a great coming event, a cataclysm which will terminate the present world order and introduce a new and blessed era. For the Jews the new era was to be the restoration of Paradise, to be inaugurated by an inspired leader, the Messiah.

If the coming day of the Lord was to be light and not darkness, Israel must do God's will. Some believed that this consisted in the performance of the rites of the Temple. But when the Temple was no longer accessible, as a result of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, in the 6th century BC, the law (called the Torah) with all its requirements of circumcision, kosher food, sabbath observance and the like, became the focus of Jewish piety. The prophets, however, deprecated formalism of this sort and thundered that God is not pleased with the blood of rams but rather when justice rolls down like waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.

By the time of Jesus the Jews, who had been an oppressed people for seven centuries, were under the yoke of Rome. Many of the peoples of the Empire rejoiced that Rome had given them security through the establishment of a universal peace but the Jews were resentful. The flower of their youth had been squandered in Rome's earlier civil wars and the Roman belief in the divinity of the emperor was contrary to Jewish belief in the sole rule of God.

There were three parties among the Jews. The Sadducees were willing to collaborate with the occupying power, the Zealots fomented rebellion, and the Pharisees would neither fraternize nor rebel but kept the law and waited for vindication at the hands of God. Those who committed themselves to political passivity in this way were all the more ready to dream of an intervention from heaven. A deliverer would come, whether he was 'the righteous one' of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a Messiah on earth, or the Son of Man appearing on the clouds of heaven.

Previous page **Some historians have maintained that the only thing we know for certain about Jesus is that he was crucified, though such a degree of scepticism is now out of fashion, and the essential picture given of his life in the New Testament is generally accepted as reliable. God looks down from heaven, while St John supports the Virgin Mary who mourns over the dead Jesus: from the Rowan Book of Hours, in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris**

Right **St Paul's missionary journeys made Asia Minor the most heavily Christianized area in the early centuries after the death of Jesus: cave dwellings in the Cappadocian province of Turkey, used by several generations of early Christians**

Did Jesus Exist?

Into this society was born Jesus the Galilean, a loyal Jew who observed the feasts by going up to Jerusalem. How much do we know about him?

There are no writings from his pen. The gospels which tell of his life and teachings were not composed until some 30 or more years after his death (commonly dated to the year 33 AD) and some portions of the Christian scriptures, called the New Testament, may date from as late as the end of the 1st century or even the beginning of the 2nd. Can we rely on the picture which they draw?

Some historians have questioned even the very existence of Jesus, despite the difficulty in that case of explaining the rise of the Christian religion. Marxists have maintained that Jesus was a myth of the proletariat, though there was no proletariat in the modern sense in that day. Some have suggested that Jesus was a Nature myth, a personification of the dying and rising of the seasons, for he rose from the dead in the spring. But the early Christians clearly did not see him in this light, and in fact they took care not to commemorate the Resurrection on the day of the spring equinox, because that was the day on which the Nature god Attis arose after the death of winter.

Other historians have said that Jesus did indeed exist but of one fact only can we be

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quite sure, that he was crucified. There are variants in the accounts of all the other events of his life and, it is argued, the early Christians selected for the record only what met their own needs and hopes.

Such scepticism has diminished of late, for we are unable to account for the ways in which the early Christians differed from their Jewish forbears unless it is accepted that Jesus instituted changes. The essential picture in the New Testament is reliable, the more evidently because the authors recorded unpalatable sayings of Jesus. For example, the Church was confronted by a group stemming from John the Baptist, giving them good reason to disparage John. Yet they recorded Jesus's words, 'There is none greater born of woman than John.'

The cross itself was also a source of offence. Why revere a criminal executed by the most shameful of all deaths? Some in the early Church tried to eliminate the dilemma by denying that Jesus had a real body at all. He merely looked as if he did and on the cross he cried out 'as if in pain'. But the main body of the early Church would have none of this. Their creed asserted that 'he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.'

If Jesus was a Jew, loyal to the tradition of his people, and if he was not a rebel against Rome, why was he crucified? The answer is that he alienated all parties: the Sadducees because he scorned them for collaborating with the Romans; the Zealots because he would not rebel; the Pharisees because he differed from them as to what was meant by fulfilling the law. He held that the Great Commandment was to love God and your neighbour, rather than to refrain from certain foods, or to observe the Sabbath to the neglect of human obligations. In particular, Jesus consorted with outcasts, prostitutes and tax-gatherers. Assuring them of God's forgiveness, he even undertook to forgive their sins himself. He seemed, then, to be guilty of blasphemy, by usurping the role of God. Jesus certainly spoke of God as his Father, and he appears to have thought of himself as the Messiah who would redeem Israel, not by arms but by suffering.

Jesus was conscious of standing at the pinnacle of history, about to usher in the

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Christians of all denominations believe that, in Jesus, God became man, died in agony on the cross and rose from the dead, to bring all men the possibility of eternal life and happiness with God. Easter is a period of sorrow at Christ's death, repentance for human sinfulness and joy at Christ's resurrection. *Far left* Procession of the Penitents of Perpignan, in France, carrying the image of Christ crucified. The custom of doing public penance on Good Friday is a common one in many parts of the world *Left* Easter procession in Malta with the figure of Christ carrying the cross which he bore for every man *Above* The American evangelist Billy Graham, whose massive campaigns to bring the message of Christ to the people are, in their different way, as dramatically moving as the older processions and images

new Paradise of God. His challenge to the priests at Jerusalem, when he defied their authority by casting out of the Temple those who changed foreign coins into Temple currency, brought the wrath of the hierarchy upon him; but because he already enjoyed a popular following, the rulers of the people feared to lay hands on him. They were not empowered to put him to death without Roman consent, and the only charge which Rome would entertain was that of political insurrection.

Jesus could hardly be accused of committing an overt act of rebellion, and the charge finally made against him, and fixed to his cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, was that he had claimed to be the 'King of the Jews'. From the point of view of the Jews, therefore, his real offence was blasphemy, but to Pontius Pilate, the Roman official, he was guilty of inciting rebellion.

The Conquest of Death

After his crucifixion, Jesus was alleged by his disciples to have risen from the dead. Some historians feel that there were three stages in the growth of this tradition. First came visions of the risen Jesus, then the stories that his tomb had been found empty, and finally the belief that he had ascended bodily into heaven. But however the Resurrection may have been conceived or experienced, the followers of Jesus were convinced that their master was still alive.

This faith created the Church. Such a statement may seem too strong, for other religions have originated without a founder who rose from the dead. But it is certain that the faith of the early Christians rested on the belief that Christ had conquered death and had broken the power of the demonic forces in the cosmos. He had given men a new power to surmount their own perverse propensities. Another vivid element in the early Christian faith was that Christ would soon return as the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven, to set up a new order, whether on earth or in heaven.

Inspired with this faith, all the disciples became missionaries. Christianity had its first following among the Jews, to whom Peter was missionary, but Hellenist converts, who spoke Greek, soon became more numerous. As a result, the New Testament has come down to us not in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, but only in Greek. St Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, was largely responsible for Christianity's development away from its origins in agrarian Palestine and into the urban Hellenistic world. His missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor made this region the most heavily Christianized until the time of the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century AD. He also travelled to Rome where, according to a strong tradition, he was martyred during Nero's persecution of the Christians in 64 AD.

Paul came nearer than any other New Testament writer to formulating a Christian theology. A Jew himself, he naturally accepted the Jewish picture of God as the Father. Jesus is not called God by Paul, but he is said to have been on an equality with God and to have humbled himself, taking the form of a slave and becoming obedient even to the death on the cross. For this reason God 'has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord . . .' (Philippians, chapter 2).

Paul's statement that Christ humbled himself was taken to mean that he emptied himself of his full power and glory, a view which facilitated the later claim that he was both God and man. As man he had divested himself of some of the prerogatives of deity.

In the gospel of St John there is a more precise statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine that God became man. In the prologue to that gospel we read that, 'In the beginning was the Word.' The English 'Word' translates the Greek *logos*, which means the rational principle, both dormant and active, in the entire universe. This was the principle in accordance with which God created the world, and this logos became flesh in Jesus. The Latin word for 'flesh' is *carnis*, hence becoming flesh is called 'incarnation'. Other religions teach that men have become gods: Christianity that God entered into flesh and became man.

Paul was the greatest theologian among the early Christians: the greatest leader of the churches is believed to have been Peter. The Roman church looked upon Peter and Paul as the co-founders of their church and Peter, as well as Paul, is assumed to have

Jean Ribière

Christianity stressed the gentler virtues: mercy, compassion, consideration, tenderness, self-sacrifice and love, sheer love, with no consideration of recompense

suffered martyrdom under Nero. There is a tradition that Peter became the first bishop of Rome but this has not been established for certain. The bishop was at first merely the pastor of a local group of Christians. The Roman congregation soon acquired a leading position among the churches, partly because it was in the capital of the Roman Empire but even more because it was the most reliable source of the Christian tradition, since it was founded by the two martyred apostles, after whom there had been an unbroken line of succession in the bishopric.

Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love

Christian morality at that time was heroic rather than ascetic. In many respects, Christianity carried over the ethic of Judaism. But in contrast to both Judaism and paganism, Christianity stressed the gentler virtues: mercy, compassion, consideration, tenderness, self-sacrifice and love, sheer love, with no consideration of recompense.

At certain points, this early ethic was affected by the expectation that Christ would soon return. Because Paul believed that the current world order of society would only last a short time, he taught that no one should try to change his status, whether he was a slave or a free man. The early Church, therefore, sought to ameliorate the lot of the slave and Christianize the relationship of master and man, but did not call for universal emancipation.

By the same token, the married and the unmarried should remain as they were, except that marriage might be allowed to those who could not abstain from sex. This grudging concession was later given an ascetic turn and led for centuries to virginity being considered superior to marriage. The only point at which the early ethic called for a drastic change in social attitudes was with regard to war. No Christian author condoned killing in war until the time of Constantine. Various reasons were given for this pacifism, the main one being Christian love. However, some leaders of the Church allowed Christians to do military service, provided they did not kill. This was possible during the two centuries of the great Roman peace, when the army was generally engaged in what today would be police work.

Christianity seems to have emerged as a religion in its own right, recognizably distinct from Judaism, by the time of Nero's persecution in 64 AD. Once this had happened, Christians forfeited the exemption from taking part in the worship of the emperor, which was tacitly granted to the Jews. The Christians, quite as emphatically as the Jews, would give divine honour to no man. This refusal was one of the main reasons for their persecution until the time of Constantine. In addition, their rejection of all pagan gods was interpreted as atheism and the pacifism of the great majority of Christians was thought to be a danger to the state.

The First Three Centuries

During the first three centuries the Church continued to spread, especially around the shores of the Mediterranean and inland along the courses of rivers such as the Tiber, the Po and the Rhone. As Christianity expanded and the number of its adherents increased, divisions arose within the Christian body.

Reference has already been made to those who argued that Jesus did not have a real body but only the appearance of a body. The same claim was made by the Gnostics (see GNOSTICISM). They argued that, because the body is material and evil, Jesus could not have had a body and could not have been incarnated in flesh. Equally the material and therefore evil world could not have been created by God, but by a malevolent god or spirit, a 'demiurge'.

The Church strove valiantly to conserve belief in the humanity of Jesus and the creation of the world as good by God. The early Creed affirmed 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.'

A question of discipline caused a schism in the Church after the great persecution by the Emperor Decius in 250 AD. Many members of the congregations and even some bishops had been frightened into sacrificing to the Roman gods. When the persecution ceased they wanted to be restored to communion within the Church, for already great importance was attached to receiving the body and blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine; the rite that was later called the Mass. Most members of the Church agreed to readmit the lapsed after suitable penance but splinter groups, who believed in the strict enforcement of rules, seceded.

The Conversion of Constantine

The conversion of Constantine in 312 AD marked the turning point in the status of the Church in the Roman world. One of the contestants in the struggle for the position of emperor – a struggle that had divided the Roman world – he overcame his rival in Rome at the battle of the Milvian Bridge outside the city.

Constantine was convinced that victory had been given him by the risen Christ. Although it seems strange that he should have looked for triumph in war from the Prince of Peace, there can be no question of his sincerity. He had nothing to gain politically by proclaiming his conversion; at that time only about 15% of the population in the West was Christian. In 323 AD he became ruler of the entire empire. When he became a Christian he had to give up being a god and the cult of the deified emperor came to an end.

Constantine declared the day on which Christ rose from the dead a public holiday and called it the Sun's Day – previously he had been a worshipper of the sun. Northern Europeans followed Constantine's lead with such names as Sunday and Sonntag.

Under Constantine there was not precisely a union of Church and State but there was a close affiliation. This became closer under the later emperors in the Byzantine East. Legislation was passed favouring orthodox Christianity and penalizing dissenters. The Jews suffered some restrictions, the pagans more, and the heretics most. The heretics were driven out, the pagans died out and the Jews alone survived, although they were treated as aliens in a Christian society.

The Arian Heresy

A doctrinal dispute which arose in Egypt is known as the Arian-Athanasian controversy from the names of the opposing leaders, Arius and Athanasius. The Arians said that Christ was a creature; he was the first of all creatures and he was associated with God in the creation of the world. But he did not have 'an eternal timeless generation' and 'there was when he was not'. The Athanasian party affirmed that Christ as

Michael Holford

When he was about 30, Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan by his cousin John the Baptist, according to the gospels; after the ceremony the Spirit of God descended on him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven declared 'This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased'. This illustration is from an 18th century Ethiopian manuscript in the British Museum

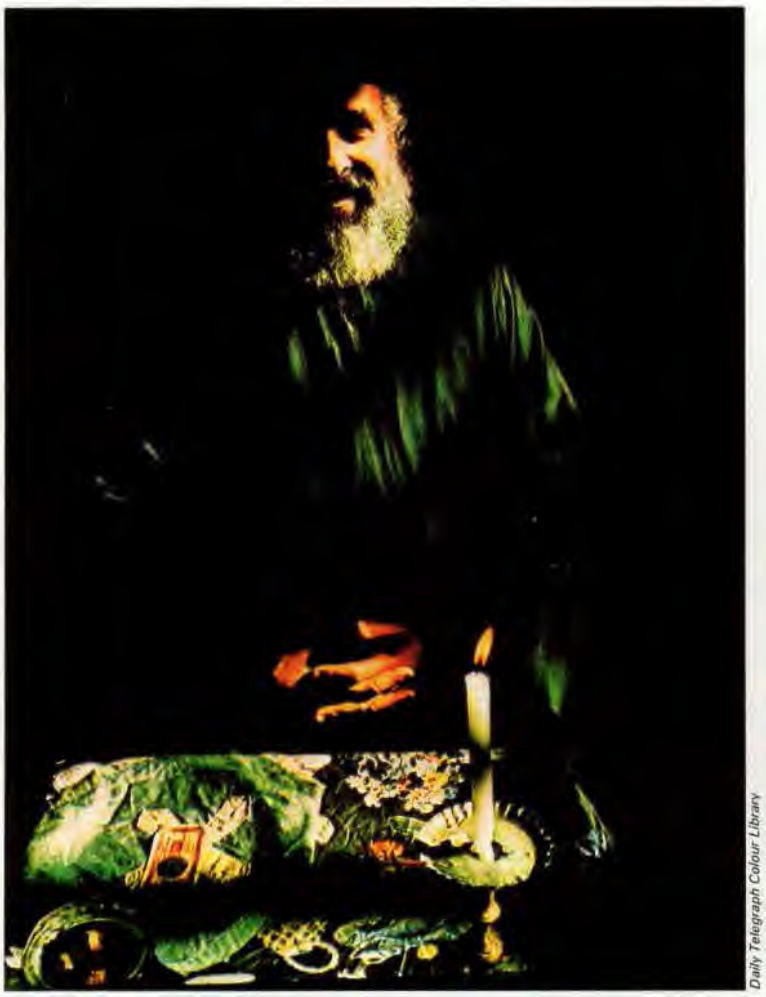
the Son had been eternally present with God the Father. There had been no beginning, there would be no end. He was of one being or essence or substance with God the Father. When the Holy Spirit was included in this relationship, the doctrine of the Trinity was complete.

Supporters of this doctrine insisted that it was not tritheism (belief in three gods) as their opponents claimed. Neither was it modalism (the view that God has three modes of activity). The doctrine of the Athanasian party was adopted by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

It has always been difficult to find a middle ground between Christ's separation from God, as a subordinate creature, and his full identity with God. The reconciliation is found in the view that humanity and divinity are not incompatible. Even man can be a participant in the divine nature, and Christ participated to the full.

But if Christ was of one essence or being or substance with the Father, and if he was also human, what was the relationship of the human nature to the divine nature in him? This subject became controversial in the 5th century. The Nestorians were accused of splitting Christ into a dual personality, but denied the charge. The Monophysites (from *monos*, one and *physis*, nature) said that Christ had only one nature, the divine. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD affirmed that he had two natures, inseparably combined. A number of groups refused to accept this definition and the doctrinal difference merged with racial and linguistic divisions.

The Syrian churches divided and the Nestorian branch, driven out of the Greek empire, won a following in Persia, India and China. Another branch, the Jacobite, took the Monophysite position, as did the Armenians and the Copts in Egypt. In the



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The earliest disciples became missionaries, in particular Peter who was the chief missionary to the Jews, and Paul who preached mainly to the Gentiles. This tradition has been vigorously continued, giving Christianity a foothold in every corner of the globe

Left **The first expansion was into the Greek-speaking world of the eastern Mediterranean, where the Greek Orthodox Church continues to flourish: an Orthodox priest in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, built on what was believed to be the site of Christ's birth**

Right **Christians have been working in Africa since the 15th century: a missionary with an African Christian woman who has whitened her face, apparently to make her more acceptable to a white god**

7th century Honorius, the bishop of Rome, tried to reconcile the opposing parties by giving his support to the view that Christ has only one will, a position called Monothelite (from *monos*, one and *thelema*, will). This doctrine was later rejected by the eastern and the western churches, but is still held by the Maronites, a sect found mainly in the Lebanon.

Yet another dispute which racked the Byzantine empire concerned the form of worship. The question was whether the images of Christ and the saints, and in particular the crucifix, should be allowed in churches. Iconoclasm, the breaking of images, started with the Emperor Leo the Isaurian. In Isauria, a district of Asia Minor, the bishops harked back to the days of the early church when there were no images – for even the crucifix did not appear until towards the end of the 4th century. Christians with Monophysite leanings who believed that Christ had only one divine nature, said that to portray the human was impossible, while to portray the divine was idolatry. The defenders of the images called them the books of the unlearned; they argued that if God became flesh in Christ, and Christ became present in bread and wine, there was no reason why the saints and Christ should not be depicted in art. Images were eventually restored, but only as paintings or bas relief. Rounded sculpture was excluded in the East but permitted in the West.

Ethically, the greatest change in Christian thought during and after the time of Constantine was in the Church's attitude to war. This was partly because of the martial victories of Constantine, the defender of the faith, and partly because of continuing pressure from the barbarians. Most Christians adopted a modified version of the classical theory of the just war. In the West St Augustine, at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries, taught that the motive of the just war was love and that its objects must be the vindication of justice and the restoration of peace. Its conduct should be as humane as possible. Monks and the clergy should not fight.

After the fall of Rome in 410 AD the political unity of the Roman empire was shattered, despite a partial and temporary recovery under Justinian (c 482–565 AD). Various Teutonic tribes established themselves within the empire, some of whom were already Christians but Arians, members of a heretical sect. Others were pagans. The conversion of both to orthodox Christianity was the work partly of the papacy, partly of the monastic orders.

Hermits in the Desert

Monasticism had developed in Egypt, especially in the time of Constantine. As the masses began to flock into the Church, the more ardent spirits withdrew to the desert. At first they were hermits who renounced the society of men, but later communities of monks were formed. From the outset celibacy was demanded of monks as it was, later, of nuns. Monasticism gradually became part of the structure of the Church. St Jerome combined monasticism and scholarship, devoting himself to the translation of the scriptures. Monks often became bishops.

Eventually, a vocational division arose. The bishops or secular clergy (from *saeculum*, the world) served the parishes, while the monks or regular clergy (from *regula*, the rule of the monasteries) engaged in contemplation and prayer, did missionary work and, later on, dispensed hospitality.

In the West the papacy, centred in Rome, became immensely powerful politically, because government had broken down and although the Byzantine emperor in the East still claimed jurisdiction over the West, he lacked the resources for dealing with the barbarians.

The Children of God

God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the oppressed and the desperate, and of those that are brought even to nothing; and his nature is to give sight to the blind, to comfort the broken-hearted, to justify sinners, to save the very desperate and damned. Now that pernicious and pestilent opinion of man's own righteousness, which will not be a sinner, unclean, miserable and damnable, but righteous and holy, suffereth not God to come to his own natural and proper work . . . But here lieth the difficulty, that when a man is terrified and cast down, he is so little able to raise himself up again and say, 'Now I am bruised and afflicted enough; now is the time of grace; now is the time to hear Christ.' The foolishness of man's heart is so great that then he rather seeketh to himself more laws to satisfy his conscience. 'If I live,' saith he, 'I will amend my life: I will do this, I will do that.' But here, except thou do the quite contrary, except thou send Moses away with his law, and in these terrors and this anguish lay hold upon Christ who died for thy sins, look for no salvation. Thy cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy obedience, thy poverty, thy works, thy merits, what shall all these do, what shall the law of Moses avail? If I, wretched and damnable sinner, through works or merits could have loved the Son of God, and so come to him, what needed he to deliver himself for me? If I, being a wretch and damned sinner, could be redeemed by any other price, what needed the Son of God to be given? But because there was no other price, therefore he delivered neither sheep, ox, gold nor silver, but even God himself, entirely and wholly 'for me'. . . Now, therefore, I take comfort and apply this to *myself*. And this manner of applying is the very true force and power of faith. For he died *not* to justify the righteous, but the unrighteous, and to make *them* the children of God.

Martin Luther *Commentary on Galatians*

In the mid-8th century the kingdom of the Franks, to the north, recognized the bishop of Rome as the civil ruler of a strip of Italy running from Rome over the Apennines to Ravenna. Meanwhile the Benedictine monks, followed later by other orders, crossed the Alps and took over unused land. There they created self-sustaining communities and became centres from which the task of converting and educating the pagans was carried out.

The expansion of Christianity and the Church's involvement in society brought changes and corruptions. A religion cannot expand without adapting itself to the language and customs of its converts, and while this process may win converts it may at the same time pervert the religion. The pacifism of early Christianity disappeared completely in the Middle Ages, with many kingdoms, all professing Christianity, fighting between themselves. The saints were militarized. St Peter was honoured not because he had acknowledged Christ, but because he had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. St George, St Andrew, St David and St Michael assumed the roles of the war gods of antiquity.

The Truce of God

Wealth proved corrupting. A monk described the history of western monasticism in this sequence: piety produces industry, industry creates wealth, wealth destroys piety, piety in its fall dissipates wealth. Each of the great monastic orders enjoyed at least two centuries of vitality. Enfeeblement followed, and new orders arose in an effort to recover the original spirit. The papacy, too, experienced periods of efflorescence and of decay.

The 11th century was marked by a great movement of reform, led by men from the north who had little feeling for the Mediterranean world, and who desired to cleanse the monasteries, purify the Church and give direction to society. The Western (Roman) and the Eastern (Byzantine) Churches finally separated in 1054 AD. The Cistercians supported monastic reform and restored the original Benedictine emphasis on manual labour. Priests, like monks, were required to be celibate, and the clergy were told to put away their wives. Princes were called upon to swear to observe the Truce of God, resulting in fighting being reduced to a summer sport.

This great reform, called the Gregorian after Pope Gregory VII, resulted in the papacy of the 13th century functioning as a world government more effective than any before or since. The pope was the Lord above the nations. Intellectual life flourished, universities were founded, St Thomas Aquinas brought about a new synthesis of Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy, while Gothic architecture gave expression to piety reaching for the stars, and beyond to the very throne of God.

But reforms, if they misfire, can bring new corruptions. The Christian princes broke the vows they had made to observe the Truce of God, and the only way to reduce warfare between Christians of the West proved to be by diverting their belligerence toward the infidels in the East. The peace movement ended in the Crusades. The imposition of clerical celibacy resulted in clerical concubinage, which was rife by the time of the Reformation in the 16th century. The papacy's success in controlling Europe politically involved the popes in political machinations to such an extent that by the 15th century, the papacy was in danger of becoming a secular city-state.

So far as property was concerned, the Church in the Middle Ages had approved of rent but not of usury. However, as the Church itself became increasingly wealthy, the doctrine that a money-lender should receive compensation for the gain that would have accrued had he used the money himself, was accepted. In domestic relations the emphasis in marriage was on children and faithfulness, rather than on falling in love.

A Swarm of Sects

The Church had been without serious divisions in the West from the early 5th to the 12th centuries. Education during this period was scant and intellectual interest even scantier. But with the relative failure of universal reform, small groups arose in the 11th and 12th centuries, resolved to carry out, among themselves, the changes that had proved impracticable in the Church as a whole. Southern France and northern Italy swarmed with sects. The Cathars had views similar to those of the ancient Gnostics while the Waldenses denied the authority of the orthodox Church, appointed lay preachers, and translated large parts of the Gospels into the common speech.

To meet the threat of heresy, the Church launched the Inquisition, justified as being a work of love for saving souls from eternal damnation. The Cathars were wiped out, but the Waldenses found refuge near the timberline of the Italian Alps and survive to this day (see CATHARS; WALDENSES). The sectarian movements led by John Wyclif in England and John Huss in Bohemia were associated with the spirit of rising nationalism. Wyclif's followers, the Lollards, were largely suppressed, but those of Huss, who was burned at the stake in 1418, became so strong in Bohemia that eventually they were tolerated alongside of the Catholics. This was the first example in the Christian West of religious pluralism, the recognition of more than one religion within a given territory.

In the late Middle Ages the papacy was weakened by divisions, as a result of which there were sometimes two, or even three, popes at the same time. Church councils were called which threatened to supplant the papacy as the governing organ of the Church, but the popes regained control.

The Reformation

The opening years of the 16th century, eventually a period of vast upheaval, were characterized by an interlude of tolerance. The heretical sects of the Middle Ages had been suppressed and the Church felt sufficiently secure to suffer criticism. In fact there was much to criticize. Clerical concubinage was rife, and was tolerated to such an extent that a tax was laid on concubines. The bureaucratic machinery needed for the papacy to play its universal role had to be paid for, and the financial extortion by the Church that resulted was deeply resented, especially when the Renaissance popes spent money on wars and were so secularized as to make treaties with Turks against Christian princes. Excommunication lost its spiritual force when it was used against rulers because they had failed to make financial contributions to the papacy. Many people tried to influence God through external practices such as pilgrimages, the cult of relics, the intercession of the saints, and of the Virgin.

Then came the great reformation movement, of which one aspect was Martin Luther's attack in 1517 upon the whole

The Christian's Comfort

Heaven is glory and heaven is joy; we cannot tell which most; we cannot separate them; and this comfort is joy in the Holy Ghost. This makes all Job's states alike: as rich in the first chapter of his Book, where all is suddenly lost, as in the last, where all is abundantly restored. This consolation from the Holy Ghost makes my midnight noon, mine executioner a physician, a stake and pile of faggots a bonfire of triumph: this consolation makes a satire, and slander and libel against me, a panegyric and an eulogy in my praise . . . it makes my death-bed a marriage bed, and my passing bell an epithalamion.

John Donne *Sermons*

If Christianity were once abolished, how would the Free Thinkers, the strong reasoners and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject so calculated in all points whereon to display their abilities? What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of, from those whose genius by continual practice hath been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distinguish themselves upon any other subject. We are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only topic we have left?

Swift *Argument, the Abolishing of Christianity*

system of indulgences. These granted remission of penalties for sin, not only on earth but also in purgatory, and sometimes offered the forgiveness of sins. These indulgences were supposed to transfer the unused extra credits of the saints, who were better than they needed to be for their own salvation, to those whose accounts were in arrears. The recipient of the indulgence made a financial contribution to the Church.

Luther's attack was directed against the religious aspect of the system rather than the financial. He did not believe that anyone had any extra credits, as no one could ever be good enough to earn salvation. God's forgiveness of, and favour to, those who have sinned is a sheer act of grace mediated to men through the sacrificial death of Christ.

Luther took the Bible as his authority, declaring that any man guided by the spirit of God is able to interpret the Bible correctly. Papal infallibility was denied. The superiority of the clergy to the laity was denied. The sacraments, especially the Mass, were so reinterpreted that no priestly class was required for their administration. Luther believed that all laymen are spiritually priests, though not ministers by vocation.

The revolt of Luther was followed by the revolts of other reformers — Zwingli in Switzerland, Calvin in France, Knox in Scotland, Cranmer in England. Christendom, in the sense of a unified Christian society, was shattered. The new divisions were to some extent national, becoming more so when the population became religiously unified as a result of the expulsion of minorities. Eventually, Protestantism was strongest in the north, and Catholicism in the south, a pattern that has led to the generalization that Protestantism was the religion of the Teutonic peoples and Catholicism of the Latin. But France for a time had an enormous Protestant element and France was a Latin country. Ireland was Roman Catholic but not Latin. Bavaria and the Rhineland were Teutonic but remained Catholic.

The result of this growing nationalism was a weakening of the papacy even in Catholic countries. There was a strong movement in France, the Gallican movement, that maintained the independence of the French Church against Rome, while the Catholic Church in Spain has often gone its own way regardless of papal pronouncements.

The main effect on the Roman Catholic Church was to tighten the dogma, the discipline and the bureaucratic structure of the Church. The secularized papacy of the Renaissance came to an end. The popes became as austere as the Puritans. Clerical celibacy was enforced and dogma was more rigidly formulated. This was the work of the Council of Trent, in the years between 1545 and 1563.

The Problem of Freedom

The violent conflicts of Roman Catholics and Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries brought to the fore the problems of Church and State and the problem of religious liberty. In effect, the solution was a system of religious liberty on a territorial basis, which carried with it the right of emigration. One region was to have only one religion and those who could not in conscience subscribe to it were not sent to the stake or the dungeons of the Inquisition but were free to emigrate.

This was not an ideal solution, and only lasted for a short time. As France learnt through the expulsion of the Huguenots, it is disastrous for a country to lose many of its finest citizens.

There are various reasons why religious pluralism within the single state was eventually tolerated. One was sheer weariness of war. The Thirty Years' War in Germany in the 17th century left cities with inhabitants dead of starvation in the streets with grass in their mouths. Another factor was trade. Holland was particularly sensitive to this consideration as she was the market-place of the world, and if she restricted her commerce because of religious beliefs, her prosperity would suffer.

The deepest considerations were religious. The champions of religious liberty pointed out that faith cannot be constrained, that sincerity cannot be forced. Compulsion may make men into martyrs or hypocrites. It cannot make them into genuine converts. To burn a man because he refuses to save his life by renouncing his convictions is to burn him for telling the truth, that is, what he believes to be the truth. Sincerity does not necessarily make a man right, but insincerity makes him necessarily wrong.

England in the 17th century made the greatest progress towards religious liberty. This was partly because the Puritan struggle was between various Protestant groups, who were less bitter towards each other than they were towards the Church of Rome. Oliver Cromwell believed that the differences between Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists were unimportant, though Catholics, Anglicans and Quakers presented more of a problem. He did not want to suppress any religious group, although he was severe with Roman Catholics in Ireland on political grounds. He did not believe in the separation of Church and State but in an establishment based on the beliefs of three religious groups, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist. Although his regime did not last long, it proved that religious pluralism and religious stability are compatible. The American system is basically the same. Although Church and State are separated, the State relies heavily on the three pillars of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism for moral sanction.

Genesis and Geology

Since the 18th century, Christianity has gradually been moving towards overcoming its own divisions. At the same time it has been wrestling with new scientific and social developments. Until recently this was more true of Protestants than of Roman Catholics. After the Council of Trent, the Catholics continued to enhance rather than diminish their claims on behalf of the papacy, and at the same time felt a greater alienation from the contemporary world of thought. Protestants were more open to new ideas, even at the risk of making so many concessions as to depart radically from the Christian tradition.

One area of controversy has been natural science. The Catholic Church suppressed Galileo; and Luther and Calvin rejected the views of Copernicus on biblical grounds. However, many Protestants accepted his views and his writings were allowed to circulate. The theories of Newton and Galileo did not trouble the Protestants, and they accepted the new astronomy as an impressive commentary on the text 'the heavens declare the glory of God'. Serious conflict began only in the 19th century when geological discoveries cast doubt on the biblical account of the creation of the world in six days. Some scientists attempted to

Sonia Halliday

The early Christians expected that their master would soon return in glory on the clouds of heaven to set up the kingdom of God on earth, and his coming was awaited with joyous expectancy: 19th century painting on a ceiling of the Rila monastery in Bulgaria

reconcile the two points of view by assuming that a day meant 1,000 years or even longer, and that God created the world in six of these periods. But biblical scholars retorted that the word 'day' in the book of Genesis meant 24 hours. Genesis conflicted with geology, and geology won. Liberal Protestants came to regard the book of Genesis as inspired mythology, not as a scientific treatise.

The doctrine of organic evolution was more disconcerting because it affected the understanding of man. If man is biologically descended from lower forms of life, among whom Nature is red in tooth and claw, is man ineradicably predatory and warlike by nature? If animals are mortal and man immortal, when in the scale of ascent did man become immortal? Some theologians have suggested conditional immortality, asserting that not all men are immortal but only those who are capable of living in the atmosphere of the spirit.

The application of historical techniques to the Bible raised the problems of uncertainties as to the texts and discrepancies between various accounts. These problems were passionately pursued from the 18th century onwards, especially in Germany and mainly by Protestants. Catholics were not granted freedom in the field of biblical study until the time of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, which opened in 1962.

Politically, Protestantism has been hospitable to, and has contributed toward, political democracy, largely as a result of the Puritan revolution in England and America. The Catholic Church, which is organized as a hierarchy, has preferred on the whole to deal with highly centralized governments. This situation has been modified in the United States where Catholics have recognized that both democracy and the separation of the Church and State might be advantageous to the Church. Had

there been an autocratic government and an established Church in the United States, neither would have been Catholic.

Modern Christian Theology

Modern theology is centred on the doctrine of the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Spirit. In the case of God the Father, some schools of thought emphasize his immanence, as a being who pervades the universe. This was true of Protestant Liberalism. Others stress transcendence, the belief that God exists beyond and apart from the universe.

Mystics, on the one hand, who are stupefied by the overwhelmingness of God, and scientists on the other, who are aghast at the immeasurable universe, shy away from all concrete language about God, especially from all personal adjectives. Many theologians turn to Christ as the focus of their piety because they 'can walk with Him and talk with Him'. In Pietist movements there has been a saccharine Jesus cult. Yet others emphasize the Spirit which lies at the heart of all rules and structures and doctrines. Believing this, they may sever themselves from any organized church and be led beyond Christianity to a combination of all religions.

Christianity expanded phenomenally during the 19th century, its greatest numerical gains having been among primitive peoples. Although it has made no serious inroads into the ranks of the world's other great religions, Christianity has influenced other faiths, which have adopted Christian attitudes without acknowledging formal adherence to the faith.

(See also JESUS; MARY; MASS; PAUL; and many other articles on Christian beliefs and practices.)

ROLAND H. BAINTON

FURTHER READING: The literature of the subject is vast, of course, but good modern books include R. H. Bainton, *The Horizon History of Christianity* (American Heritage Publ., 1964) and the volumes in the 'Pelican History of the Church' series; F. C. Copleston, *Medieval Philosophy* (Harper and Row, 1961); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Harper and Row, 1978); Basil Willey, *Christianity Past and Present* (Hyperion, 1980).

Two views, by an outsider and a Christian Scientist, of a movement which has aroused intense controversy ever since its foundation. The founder was one of the most remarkable women of the last 100 years

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

IN 1875 the 'discoverer and founder' of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), published her book *Science and Health*. Frequently and extensively revised, a definitive edition appeared towards the end of Mrs Eddy's life, as *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the authoritative textbook of the movement. Mrs Eddy's other writings are regarded as valuable supplements to it. Formal doctrine has remained unchanged since the founder's death and none of the many commentaries on Christian Science by loyal members of the movement are regarded as authoritative. Mrs Eddy decreed that her textbook and the Bible were the movement's only 'preachers', and she swept away at one stroke the numerous pastors who initially occupied the pulpits of Christian Science churches.

Christian Science is both an interpretation of Scripture and the basis of a system of healing. It rejects the conventional doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus is said to have been a man, a Way-shower, who 'demonstrated' the truth by healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Christian Science claims to teach all men how to make the same type of 'demonstrations', which are not miracles, but rather the consequences of a true understanding of God. Healings are wrought by assertions of the truth – the allness of God, good, and the nothingness of error, evil. Man is held to be entirely spiritual, a reflection of God: physical man, the man known to the senses, is a 'counterfeit', and it is only this false, material man who can suffer.

Christian Science teaches that when men grasp this truth, they overcome the flesh and all the ills to which it is heir, and that ultimately man will overcome death itself, by knowing that there is no matter to die, but only spirit to enjoy eternal life. Man is enslaved to the body, when he should realize that he has all the attributes of God, whose character is expressed in seven synonyms: Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, Love. All testimony of the senses is to be rejected, and only pure metaphysical ideas are to be entertained.

This endeavour to entertain only pure thoughts and to assert metaphysical truths, is seen as both divine worship and scientific achievement. But the truth of Christian Science is to be tested pragmatically, in the healing of sickness and the elimination of all disharmony which, it is claimed, are achieved by its application. There is a certain paradox in this, since it is maintained that by denying the existence of matter, and by affirming the absoluteness of spirit, so man's experience of the material world is improved and evil eliminated. The material world is an illusion, but it is an illusion the improved experience of which is necessary to prove its illusory character. Man is healed by learning that there is nothing to heal, but in practice it is to improved physical effects that Christian Science must point for proof of its claim.

This metaphysical theory is supported by reference to the Bible, and scriptural texts are used to establish that this teaching is the substance of what Jesus taught. His revelation is demonstrated as what Mrs Eddy referred to as a 'science' in her own writings. Sin, like sickness, is an illusion, stemming from man's failure to realize his divine son-ship. Christian Science has no doctrine of soul: since man is said to have no body, he is therefore all soul, the reflection of God, who is called Soul. Conventional ideas of heaven and hell have never been accepted. They are mere conditions of mind. The afterlife is little emphasized, but it is believed that man must progress into Christian Science, either in this stage of his existence or in the next.

Malicious Animal Magnetism

What man must do is to overcome the false claims of his mortal mind, from which all evil stems. This mortal mind has power over men only because they credit it with power. Its most specific form is 'malicious animal magnetism', on which Mrs Eddy laid the utmost stress, and which means conscious or unconscious evil thought, the source of all sin, sickness and death.

This concept is the most original and distinctive feature of Christian Science theology. In the early years of Christian Science, Mrs Eddy tended to identify malicious animal magnetism with individuals, particularly with her apostate students. Later she dealt with it as a more impersonal agency, sometimes attributable to other systems of thought (particularly to Theosophy, Spiritualism and Roman Catholicism) but always to be discounted by Christian Scientists, who were taught appropriate defensive work to protect their own thinking.

To the general public, Christian Science is best known for its rejection of medicine. Instead, it declares that real healing occurs only through its own agency. It has often been the boast of Christian Scientists that their ranks have been recruited from hospitals and almost from the cemeteries. Accredited Christian Science practitioners undertake no other gainful employment but charge fees for their services. Any Christian Scientist who has undergone a week's course of instruction may, without charge, undertake mental work for others. A treatment consists in the practitioner 'knowing the truth' for his patient, praying for him by affirming scientific thoughts relevant to the case, and by passing on to the patient particular thoughts to 'hold on to'. These are usually texts from the Bible, extracts from Mrs Eddy's writings, or sometimes the words of Christian Science hymns.

Christian Science declares that real healings are not achieved by orthodox medicine but only through Christian Science. Where medicine appears to heal, this occurs only because the patient's thought is changed by receiving treatment. It is the mental operation, not the physical effect of drugs or medicine, which produces health. Christian Science treatment can be sought and administered by telephone.

The organization of the Christian Science movement underwent a number of radical changes in its early days, particularly in the period of its rapid growth in the 1880s and 1890s. At first, Christian Science was taught as a therapeutic system in institutes, and it was only gradually that the church organization, which Mrs Eddy also established, became predominant.

Mrs Eddy had originally, so it is said,

expected Christianity to embrace her new teaching. When this did not occur, she provided her movement with its own ecclesiastical organization, with a permanent, highly centralized structure. She founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist, at Boston, Massachusetts, as the Mother Church of the movement, of which all other Christian Science churches were to be branches. The Directors of the Mother Church were established as the ultimate authorities in the movement, subject always to Mrs Eddy's will as long as she lived.

Her intention with regard to local churches was clear; they were to have no independent preachers, and indeed no professionals involved in their operation. They were allowed some autonomy in their local business affairs but in religious matters were completely controlled from Boston. Sunday lesson-sermons were to be read, without comment, by readers elected from the congregation. These sermons were to consist, as they still consist, of set readings from the Bible and from *Science and Health*. The 'First Reader' reads from the textbook and it is he (or she) who conducts the service; the 'Second Reader' reads from the Bible. A good Christian Scientist reads the quotations which constitute Sunday's sermon every day in the week preceding the Sunday on which the sermon is publicly read. The evening service is always a repetition of the morning service in any given church, not one word or one note being changed, and the sermon is identical in all Christian Science churches.

In most churches a 'testimony' meeting is held once a week, and on this occasion adherents describe their appreciation of Christian Science and recount its healing powers. The testimonies at these meetings tend to be highly stereotyped. Christian Science services lack the expressive qualities of most religious gatherings. Liturgical embellishments are eschewed: there are no special vestments; there is no choir, but often there is a soloist who performs once in each Sunday service. Musical expression and church decor are in restrained, impersonal taste. There are no intrinsically significant rituals. The communion service, held twice a year, is marked by a slight variation of ritual in which the congregation is, exceptionally, invited to kneel. Christian Science churches do not normally have a warm community life.

Growth and Division

The movement grew rapidly in America in its early years. Its optimism, emphasis on the benevolence of the Deity, and its novelty gave it a certain congruity with a rapidly expanding society. Its apparent reconciliation of Christianity and science, at a time when the two appeared to be in profound conflict, was undoubtedly an important factor in its early growth. Though the movement has not placed much emphasis on missionary work, Christian Science spread to Britain and other English-speaking countries before the end of the 19th century. In continental Europe, success was generally confined to Protestant countries, particularly Germany and Switzerland.

Robert Estall

In the early 1950s there were some 10,000 Christian Science practitioners in the world, about 80% of them in the United States. Almost 90% of all practitioners were women at that time. The movement has always had far more women members than men, but the very high ratio of women to men among practitioners probably reflects the fact that women, many of whom have other means of support, are much more likely than men to be able to forgo other gainful employment.

Especially in its early years, the movement was criticized and ridiculed by churchmen, doctors and sometimes by legislators. Christian Science healing has not been generally accepted outside the movement, and the medical profession has remained unconvinced by its claims.

The early days of the movement were also marked by internal disputes. Many of Mrs Eddy's early students quarrelled with her, and some established rival systems of metaphysical healing. After her reorganization of the government of the church, many local schisms were resolved by the system of duplicate membership of the church, by which the individual was more firmly attached to the Mother Church in Boston than to his branch church. Schismatics could join another branch, or found one, without having to lose their standing in the movement.

Even so, expulsions from the movement have been relatively frequent over the years, many of those expelled being teachers and practitioners who have challenged the authority of the Directors of the Mother Church. Others have been excommunicated for teaching Christian Science by unapproved methods. Most of the dissentients from the practice of government in the movement, and even those considered heretical in their statement of Christian Science, continued to affirm their loyalty to Mrs Eddy after their excommunication.

Divisions and struggles to gain control at the top were particularly marked during the decade after Mrs Eddy's death.

In 1936, at the last census of religious bodies in the United States, some 238,000 people were recorded as Christian Scientists in that country, and this certainly constituted the great majority of adherents in the world at the time. No more recent membership figures are available but the number of practitioners declined in most American states and in Great Britain between 1953 and 1968. Obviously, numbers of practitioners are at best an indirect guide to the fortunes of the movement but except in California, Florida and Texas few new churches have been established in the last two decades and this suggests that Christian Science has now passed its period of growth and that it is likely to decline in the future.

(See also EDDY; NEW THOUGHT.)

Above **Notice board in front of a Christian Science church in Canada** ***Below*** **Mrs Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Movement: she emphasized that 'healing physical sickness is the smallest part of Christian Science. It is only the bugle-call to thought and action, in the 'higher range of infinite goodness'. Formal doctrine has remained unchanged since her death**

Christian Science Publishing Society

A Way of Life

For its adherents, Christian Science is above all a way of life. Its radical reinterpretation of traditional Christianity has kept it, until recently, under fire from the religious establishments of the countries in which it has flourished. Its audacious pioneering in the field of religious therapeutics has, for the most part, won only

reluctant acknowledgement from the medical profession. Little serious scholarship has been devoted to it during the century of its existence, but this is now changing.

The period in which it appeared seethed with occultism, spiritism, 'animal magnetism' and all kinds of forays into the supernatural. From the outset, Mary Baker Eddy took sharp issue with these popular manifestations, as she also did with traditional Christian beliefs in special miracles. There was no such thing as a miraculous infraction of law, she held; the seeming miracle must be the natural result of a not yet apprehended law. As early as the 1870s she described the current spiritistic phenomena as the result of either trickery or autosuggestion, and in the still pre-Freudian 1880s she wrote in *Christian Healing*: 'When I learned how mind produces disease on the body, I learned how it produces the manifestations ignorantly imputed to spirits . . . The belief that produces this result may be wholly unknown to the individual, because it is lying back in the unconscious thought, a latent cause producing the effect we see.'

The phenomenon of Christian healing she put in an entirely different category. Genuine spiritual cures, in her view, came from a rational understanding of the nature and laws of the realm of being which is revealed through Christian experience. This wholly spiritual order, described in the New Testament as 'the kingdom of God . . . within you', constituted the inner structure of reality, the essential nature of man as the child of God. The New Testament healings, instead of being blindly accepted as miracles or summarily rejected as myths, were to be understood as evidence of the transforming power of ontological insight energized by Christian love. 'The miracle,' she wrote in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 'introduces no disorder, but unfolds the primal order, establishing the Science of God's unchangeable law.'

To the deeply Christian Mrs Eddy the virgin birth, healing ministry, resurrection and ascension of Jesus represented the quintessential example of the power of Spirit over matter and of Life over death. His words, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father', were the guarantee not of a God made in the image of human personality but of a divine, inexhaustible, creative Love at the heart of existence, a Love that was made manifest in the compassionate power of the Christ.

Mrs Eddy's definition of God as the Principle of being was entirely compatible, in her view, with the concept of conscious purpose, care and creativity usually associated with belief in God as a personality: it simply united these with the idea of universal order and law. 'As the words *person* and *personal* are commonly and ignorantly employed,' she wrote in *Science and Health*, 'they often lead, when applied to Deity, to confused and erroneous conceptions of divinity and its distinction from humanity.' God is Person, she explained, only in the sense of being infinite Mind, Spirit and Soul.

In reducing matter to a limited and fallacious kind of thinking – a mistaken 'mode of consciousness', in her own words – Mrs Eddy indicated that it must yield its tyranny over appearances in proportion as human experience was brought under the laws of spiritual being. This differed basically from the philosophical idealism that would make matter an idea in the mind of God. It also conflicted with 19th century physics, which believed in an irreducible matter-stuff. In effect, she was proposing a mind-matter continuum, with matter described as the lowest stratum of 'mortal mind' and that mind described in turn as 'matter's highest stratum'.

In her system a new dualism between mortal mind (the matter-mind continuum) and divine Mind (God expressing Himself through spiritual ideas) replaced the old one between mind and matter. This represented the absolute metaphysical distinction between error and truth, belief and understanding, appearance and reality.

Mrs Eddy's quarrel with hypnotism (animal magnetism) as a therapeutic agent was directed at its reliance on the energies of the human mind, on the power of suggestion (belief). Christian Science, like traditional Christianity, called for a surrender of the human mind to the divine, but not in terms of blind faith or a special esoteric knowledge, any more than in terms of directed suggestion or willed belief. It was rather a matter of exchanging belief for understanding.

The Importance of Healing

The central importance of healing to the Christian Scientist is that this is the area in which he feels that he can most concretely test his understanding of God and of man's relationship to God. What looks to many observers like a fixation on physical health may perhaps be better understood as a commitment to make religion practical. If quick relief from bodily pain were the Christian Scientist's major aim, a pill might be more attractive than study and prayer aimed at drawing him closer to God as the source of his true being. The emphasis on physical healing in the public 'testimonies' relate to the New Testament emphasis on healing as one of the major signs testifying to the coming of 'the kingdom'.

The concept of healing has been broadening among rank and file Christian Scientists over the years. In the foreword to a 1966 compilation entitled *A Century of Christian Science Healing*, published to commemorate the centenary of Mrs Eddy's 'discovery', the Christian Science Board of Directors brings this out and quotes her words from *Rudimental Divine Science*: 'Healing physical sickness is the smallest part of Christian Science. It is only the bugle-call to thought and action, in the higher range of infinite goodness.' Christian Scientists, the foreword continues, apply the word 'healing' to 'the demonstration of spiritual wholeness in all the aspects of human living', and to the 'rectification of all the ills and evils of the human condition.'

This states the sweeping ideal. A final chapter of assessment in the same book relates the ideal to the actuality. 'Whether a Christian Scientist participates in the social battles of our day as a liberal or a conservative, a fighter or a reconciler, a partisan or an independent, a private or a general, his ultimate purpose is to *heal*. Yet most Christian Scientists would probably agree that up to now only a small fraction of the healing dynamic of their religion has been utilized in relation to the urgent collective problems facing the world.'

Involvement in the World

Mrs Eddy's own concern in this direction is illustrated by her founding in 1908, when she was 87 years old, of the soon famous international daily newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor*. Generally accounted an outstanding achievement in secular journalism, the *Monitor* was also an integral part of the healing programme she envisaged for the Church of Christ, Scientist, and in her own estimate was her most important undertaking since the writing of *Science and Health*. As a unique form of social outreach by a church, it has aimed through the years to report the problems of the world in a balanced and realistic way.

While many signs point to a developing social awareness within the Christian Science Church, discussions with representatives of traditional Protestantism have led to a lessening of old tensions and suggest a closer integration of interest, if not of organization and doctrine, with the Christian community as a whole. The growth of a vigorous spiritual healing movement in the traditional churches, coupled with the social impact of psychotherapy in general and psychosomatic medicine in particular, have also left Christian Science less isolated in the contemporary scene.

The chief problem for Christian Scientists now may be to maintain the spiritual radicalism which has constituted both their uniqueness and their reason for being. As with other 'errors' of the human condition, however, they see this as no real danger so long as they hold fast to the essential guide-lines laid down for them in the Bible and in Mrs Eddy's works. The Christian Science way of life is inevitably oriented toward healing, whether of the body physical or of the body politic, and Mrs Eddy put the issue briskly to her followers when she wrote in her *Miscellaneous Writings*: 'If Christian Science lacked the proof of its goodness and utility, it would destroy itself; for it rests alone on demonstration.'

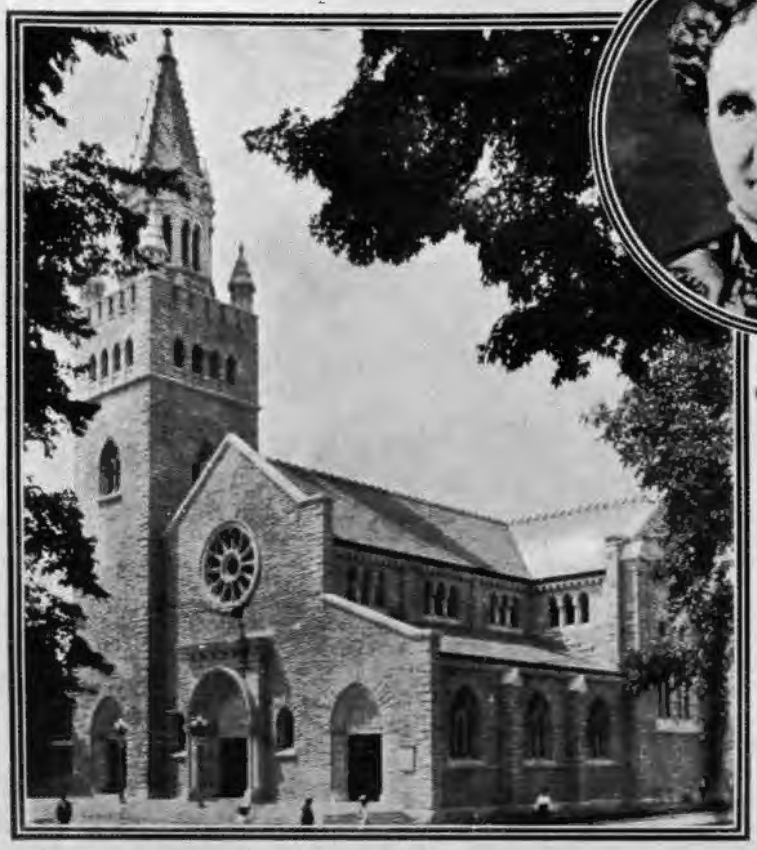
FURTHER READING: Mrs Eddy's own works can be consulted at Christian Science reading rooms; see also Norman Beasley, *The Cross and the Crown* (Duell, 1952); John Dewitt, *Christian Science Way of Life* (Christian Science, 1971); H. A. S. Kennedy, *Mrs Eddy* (Mitre Press, London, 1947); B. R. Wilson, *Sects and Society* (University of California Press, 1961).

Illustration attacking the growth of the Movement, published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1906 when Mrs Eddy was reported to be dying; in fact she died in 1910

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

THE GROWTH OF THE SUPERSTITION OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY [illegible] ILLUSTRATIONS BUREAU AND NORTHROP



THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH AT CONCORD.

MRS. MARY BAKER EDDY FOUNDER OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS IN NEW YORK CITY.

A SHRINE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: LYNN HOUSE, WHERE MRS. EDDY WROTE "SCIENCE AND HEALTH."

THE MOTHER CHURCH OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, BOSTON.

THE HIGH PRIESTESS'S ABODE: MRS. EDDY'S HOME AT CONCORD.

WAITING THE ARRIVAL OF MRS. EDDY AT THE CONCORD CHURCH.

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE FRONT HOUSE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE, BOSTON.

VISIT OF CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS TO MRS. EDDY'S HOME AT CONCORD.

[illegible] Science has been much talked of lately, owing to the reported incurable illness of its founder, Mrs. Eddy, and also a recent case in the English Courts, where a Christian Scientist

Despite many attempts in the past to suppress Christmas, this uncient midwinter feast has survived, but has undergone many changes. Starting as a pagan festival and later adopted by the Church, today Christmas has come full circle. The religious aspects no longer predominate and it has become, as it was originally, a time of feasting and revelry

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS HAS ITS ORIGIN in two ancient pagan festivals, the great Yule-feast of the Norsemen and the Roman Saturnalia. Extending from Advent, which begins on 30 November or the Sunday nearest to it, to Candlemas Day on 2 February, it was close enough to the winter solstice to acquire many of the associations of the Norse ceremony: the Yule-log, the evergreen decorations in houses and churches, even the Christmas feast itself. These elements were combined with the Saturnalia of the Romans to provide the basis for the early Christian festival.

During the Saturnalia, gifts were made by the wealthy to the poor in honour of the golden age of liberty when Saturn ruled the known world, and slaves were allowed to change places and clothing with their masters. They even elected their own mock king who, for the period of the festival, ruled as a despot. The Saturnalia involved the wildest debauchery, and was a festival worthy of Pan himself.

Naturally it came under heavy censure from the early Church and despite the fact that Jesus Christ and the saints gradually replaced the pagan deities it was long considered completely out of character with the Christian ideal. However, the festival was far too strongly entrenched in popular favour to be abolished, and the Church finally granted the necessary recognition, believing that if Christmas could not be suppressed it should be preserved in honour of the Christian God.

Once given a Christian basis the festival became fully established in Europe with many of its pagan elements undisturbed.

It was only in the 4th century that 25 December was officially decreed to be the birthday of Christ, and it was another 500 years before the term Midwinter Feast was abandoned in favour of the word Christmas. Even then on the Continent the festival continued to show many features inherited from the Saturnalia. In particular, the Feast of Fools was a wild debauch reminiscent of the pagan past. The Normans when they invaded England in 1066, introduced a Master of Ceremonies into the English Christmas. Known as the Lord of Misrule, his counterpart in Scotland was called the Abbot of Unreason. A mock king, he ensured that Christmas was conducted along traditionally pagan lines. The custom of electing boy bishops, youths chosen from the cathedral choirs and accorded the honours due to bishops, also started at this time.

The main contributions of the medieval period to the Christmas ceremony were the carol and the nativity drama. During the 15th century Father Christmas was already known by that name, although he was then merely a background figure to the Christmas season.

The coming of the Reformation at first had little effect upon the pagan content of Christmas. The number of saints was reduced drastically and the boy bishops were abolished but on the whole Christmas continued to be celebrated as it had always been. The newly discovered turkey appeared on the Christmas table before 1573, in addition to the boar's head, once symbol of the Scandinavian Sun Boar. The favourite drink at this time was a concoction of hot ale, eggs, apples and spices known as lamb's wool. A century later, this was replaced by punch.

The undisguised pagan element in Christmas had often provoked criticism from extreme Protestants but the festival was not really affected by their beliefs until the Puritans came to power in the 17th century. Christmas was attacked as 'the old heathens' feasting day to Saturn their God' and carols were forbidden.

Father Christmas's importance in the festivities of Christmas is a comparatively modern phenomenon. Long ago he was a minor character in mumming plays, with no connection with either children or presents. He still has a role in the procession and dance of the mummers of Marshfield in Gloucestershire on Boxing Day

Brian Shuel

Finally, 25 December was proclaimed a fast day in 1644. The new rule was enforced by the army, which spent much of its time pulling down the greenery that festive 'pagans' had attached to their doors. In Scotland the prohibition was enforced with great rigour. This anti-Christmas attitude spread to Puritan territories in America. The Church established special services for Christmas in Boston during the 1690s, but many civil authorities strongly opposed this move. And it was not until some 150 years later that Christmas first became a legal holiday in the United States, in Alabama in 1836.

The First Christmas Trees

In Britain during the 18th century the popularity of the Christmas festival and revelling began to decline, and during the first quarter of the 19th century the decline continued – to such an extent that William Sandys, the antiquary, began to record old Christmas customs before they were forgotten. Unknown to Sandys, however, social conditions were laying the foundations for a glorious revival of the Christmas spirit, as a reaction to the wretchedness and drab poverty that was a by-product of the Victorian age. The festival we know today, colourful, sentimental, extravagant, and very much centred on the family, is a typical product of that period, not least in its vague compassion for the infant Jesus and his parents, pictured (incorrectly) as homeless outcasts. As early as 1841 *Punch* suggested that the Christmas season should be a time for helping the poor and hungry, a sentiment that was given tremendous impetus by Charles Dickens in his *Christmas Carol* two years later. So the custom arose of a special benevolent Christmas dinner for the poor, gushingly described in the song 'Christmas Day in the Workhouse' by George Sims, where

> . . . with clean washed hands and faces
> In a long and hungry line
> The poor sit at the table
> For this is the hour they dine.

Many authorities have claimed that Martin Luther first introduced the idea of the Christmas tree to 16th century Germany; but it is more likely that the use of the tree has roots in the old worship of trees by the tribesmen of northern Europe. Certainly the Germans first brought the tree into Christmas before other peoples. And they took it to America: German mercenaries, fighting on the British side in the War of Independence, raised Christmas trees in their camps, and German settlers in Pennsylvania also set up their trees. It was a longer time coming to Britain, but its popularity there was ensured when Queen Caroline erected a tree at a royal Christmas celebration in 1821, and when in 1841 Prince Albert provided one for a children's party at Windsor.

Christmas soon became popular once again, although in Scotland it was a long time before religious prejudice could be overcome. Some customs, such as Twelfth Night mumming and wassailing, vanished but others rapidly took their place. The Christmas greeting card first appeared in 1844, and by the 1870s had become firmly entrenched in Britain and the United States. In the 1850s the paper hat had become a feature of Christmas parties, where games very similar to the frolics of the medieval Feast of Fools were played. Kissing under the mistletoe also became a popular custom in England and America, and is a reflection of the festival's ancient Scandinavian origins (see MISTLETOE).

Americans soon added much more greenery to their Christmas decorations, including holly wreaths on front doors, and illuminated the trees growing in front gardens. The United States also instituted the 'communal' tree: the first was put up by the people of Pasadena, on Mount Wilson in 1909, and the next went up in 1912 in Madison Square Garden, for the people of New York. In Colorado in the 1930s, the people of Palmer Lake began a communal Yule-log ceremony, where the log was ritually fonnd, and burned in a special fireplace made in the town hall.

Feast of Light

Christmas has always been a Feast of Light, and so candles and special fires have had major roles in the festive traditions. Today the candles have been replaced, on inflammable evergreen trees, with special electric lights, but the symbol is the same. In Spanish-American parts of the southwestern United States, small fires are lit

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

FOT

Left **The strong pagan elements in Christmas reflect the influence on it of the ancient Yule-feast of the Norsemen and the Roman Saturnalia. They include the tree, feasting, drinking and gaiety, the mummers in animal masks who have now turned into pantomime companies, and the use of evergreens for decoration**
Above **Santa Claus on ice: one of the most popular symbols of Christmas, he is also one of the most commercialized**

Newsweek
5:58

Robert Estall

Robert Estall

The immense Christmas tree outside New York's Rockefeller Center *(facing page)* and the Regent Street decorations *(right)* contrast sharply with carol singers *(above)* and the traditional 19th century pastime of 'snapdragon', snatching at raisins alight with brandy

Mansell Collection

outside houses, and lighted candles set into bags of sand illuminate roofs and walls.

Santa Claus, probably the most widely accepted of all the symbols of Christmas, arrived in Britain sometime during the 1880s from America, where he had long reigned as the gift-bringing St Nicholas of the German and Dutch settlers. As St Nicholas he had become famous as a result of Clarke Moore's poem 'The Night Before Christmas', published in 1823. By the 1890s the English Father Christmas, originally a minor character in a mummer's play, had been absorbed into the personality of his American counterpart, and become the jovial figure that he is today.

Holiday for Ghosts

St Nicholas was only one of a number of legendary personalities who traditionally bring gifts during the Christmas season, and who invariably come from some unknown land to which they return after the ceremony. Others are the Knight Rupprecht of north Germany, who is possibly identified with Odin, and the Three Kings who, at Epiphany (January 6) bring gifts to the children of Spain. Occasionally the bearer of gifts is a woman, as in Alsace where she appears wearing a crown of candles, or as in Italy where the good fairy Befana fills children's stockings with toys when they go to bed on the eve of Epiphany.

In Holland St Nicholas is accompanied by a forbidding black companion, and in other lands the Christmas scene is not without its ghosts and demons, supporting the old tradition that it is the time of year when spirits and trolls make high holiday. Only in Britain has Father Christmas shed his forbidding aspects, although here, as elsewhere, children are solemnly warned that only if they are very good will they receive their presents.

Scarlet Flowers

There is a combination of both old and new in the many pleasing customs that grace the Christmas season. Old holly and ivy together with ancient mistletoe have now been joined by the scarlet flower of the poinsettia, which has become a common motif on greeting cards and wrapping paper. The elevation of this wild flower to a place of honour began in the United States. It is said that a little Mexican boy made his offering of humble wild flowers to the infant Jesus and that when they were placed under the altar the flowers turned scarlet.

Boxing Day, which falls on St Stephen's Day, 26 December, was originally the time when donations were made in the Church, or to the apprentices of local tradesmen. It survives in modern times as little more than a sporting holiday.

Many minor customs reflect the pagan traditions of the season. The sergeant-major serving tea to privates on Christmas morning is an echo of the Saturnalian custom in which master and slave exchanged roles; similarly the pantomime tradition that the principal boy is played by a girl and the 'dame' by a male comic. Telling ghost stories by the fireside is a relic of the belief that at this particular time of year the family ghosts return to their old homes. Some quite ordinary actions can be of symbolic importance, as is illustrated by the superstition that for every mince pie eaten there will be a happy month in the year to come.

Other traditions have a solemn content as, for example, 'a green Christmas means a full churchyard', which is countered by 'a white Christmas means a happy New Year'. At midnight on Christmas Eve cattle in the barns are said to turn to the east and bow, while horses reverently kneel.

The Christmas season popularly ends with Twelfth Night on 5 January, and this is generally accepted as being the date on which all evergreen decorations must be taken down if the luck of the year is to last. Twelfth Night was once a time for eating Twelfth Cakes, but this custom is now almost extinct.

In the Church, however, the Christmas season lasts until Candlemas Day, 2 February, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, held in honour of the occasion when she presented Christ in the Temple. During the Candlemas ceremony lighted candles are blessed, and carried in procession, celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ was called 'the light of the world'.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: G. Buday, *The History of the Christmas Card* (Gale, 1972); T. G. Crippen, *Christmas and Christmas Lore* (Gale, 1976).

Chthonian
Underground deity or spirit, from the Greek word for 'earth', *chthon;* the term includes the gods and powers of the underworld, the earth goddess herself in some of her aspects, and frequently the spirits of the dead, believed to live on under the earth in which they lie buried.
See EARTH.

Cicatrization
Practice of cutting the skin and causing permanent scars to form; widespread among primitive peoples, partly as an aid to beauty and partly for magical and religious reasons.
See AFRICA; AUSTRALIA; TATTOOING.

Leni Riefenstahl

Between 400 and 500 versions of the Cinderella story have been recorded in Europe alone. The one most widely accepted in Britain derives from a 17th century French rendering, but the earliest known version appeared in 9th century China

CINDERELLA

IN ESSENCE, CINDERELLA is the story of a poor and ill-treated girl, victim of a cruel stepmother, who appears before a prince in a gorgeous disguise provided by a supernatural helper. She wins his admiration, and later marries him after she has passed a test of recognition. Some authorities on folk tales reduce even this outline to a more fundamental type of story which they call 'the unpromising hero'. The leading character may even be a boy who, though dirty and apparently even lazy, astounds everyone with his beauty and prowess after receiving supernatural aid, and wins a desirable girl. The story occurs even among polygamous peoples, where the child of a first wife is victimized by his father's later wife or wives. In a Bantu version, for example, the hero is a boy and the supernatural helper is an ox.

In Europe alone between 400 and 500 versions – with the stepmother, disguise and recognition themes included – have been recorded. It is not known where the story originated, and even Andrew Lang's half-humorous assertion that 'a naked and shoeless race could not have invented Cinderella' is not necessarily true, because in some variations of the story the heroine is recognized by means of a ring or a lock of hair. The earliest known version appears to be Chinese, of the 9th century.

The Glass Slipper

The version now best known in the British Isles derives not from folk tradition, but from a comparatively sophisticated rendering by the French author Charles Perrault in his collection of fairy tales, published in 1697. Perrault added some details of his own to the story and these are now some of its most familiar features. Indeed, they have even entered folk tradition in some parts of the world. The pumpkin that turned magically into a golden coach, and the mice who became dapple-grey horses to pull it, were invented by Perrault. He also introduced the notion of Cinderella having to leave the dance by midnight, when her magic finery would revert to rags. Perrault is also responsible for the glass slipper. But it is not clear whether this confusion had already arisen in the sources Perrault used for the story, or whether he (presumably deliberately) introduced it himself.

Perrault not only embellished the story with inventions of his own, he also omitted some of the important points found in the folk tale versions. In these the heroine is usually helped by her dead mother, or by agents sent by her mother, and the prince carries off a false bride, who is denounced by a bird. Perrault also transformed some of the more archaic elements in the story. In most of the folk tale versions, the heroine receives supernatural help from a domesticated animal – a cow, or a sheep, for example – who is often her dead mother reincarnated. Perrault changed this animal agent into a fairy godmother, a curious half-pagan, half-Christian conception. At the end of Perrault's story, Cinderella shows a Christian forgiveness towards her stepsisters, and even marries them off to 'two grand noblemen of the Court'. This is in striking contrast to the end of the story as it is told by the brothers Grimm. In their version, which was based on German oral tradition, the stepsisters' eyes are pecked out by pigeons, and 'for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.' Christian, too, are the morals Perrault drew from the tale: the only true gift is grace, and whatever gifts you may have, they are useless without a godfather or a godmother.

The Red Calf

No specifically English folk tale of the Cinderella type appears to have survived. About a century ago, however, two versions were recorded in the Scottish counties of Morayshire and Aberdeenshire, under the title of 'The Red Calf' or 'Rashin Coatie', the heroine taking this name from a coat of rushes that she wore. In these Scottish versions the heroine, who is ill-treated and fed on porridge and whey, while her ugly and ill-natured elder sister is the favourite, is helped by a red calf among the cattle she is sent to herd. The red calf is guided by her dead mother, and in one variant of the story is slain by the cruel stepmother. However, a magic power resides in its bones and the dead calf speaks to her:

> Tak me up, bane by bane
> And pit me aneth yon grey stane

Whatever she wants, if she comes and asks him for it, he will give it to her. In the other version, the heroine herself is ordered to slay the calf, but the calf instructs her to kill the wicked stepsister instead, and to jump on its back and escape.

On their travels, they make a coat of rushes for the heroine, and Rashin Coatie, as she is now called, goes to the palace, where she is set to work as a kitchen maid. At Yuletide, Rashin Coatie is supposed to stay at home and get the dinner ready, while everyone else goes to church. The red calf, however, procures fine clothes and slippers for Rashin Coatie, and undertakes to cook the dinner, so that she can go too. Rashin Coatie goes to church, where the Prince sees her and falls in love with her, and tries to stop her when she leaves. He succeeds in keeping the slipper which she leaves behind.

The Prince tries to find the owner of the slipper, but no woman has a foot dainty enough to fit it. The henwife's daughter clips her toes and pares her foot until the slipper fits, but a bird warns the Prince as he is carrying off this false bride. The Prince returns to his palace, where Rashin Coatie is working. He recognizes her, finds the slipper fits, and marries her.

The first meeting between the heroine and the Prince, and the incident of the dropped slipper, also occur in church in a modern Greek version of the story. In this the role of the red calf (or Perrault's fairy godmother) is played by the carefully tended bones of the dead mother. In a Russian version, the heroine's dead mother again appears as the supernatural helper, first in the form of a sheep, and later as a birch tree. Here the mother actually assumes the form of a beast herself, instead of merely sending one to help. This is midway between the Scottish versions and the most primitive version of all, in which the mother actually *is* an animal in the first place. The motif of a helpful tree – usually one that has grown up on the mother's grave – is widespread in the Cinderella stories. In the version recorded by the brothers Grimm

Cinderella plants a branch at her mother's grave, and waters it with her tears until it becomes a beautiful tree. Cinderella sits under it three times a day, and a little white bird – representing, no doubt, the dead mother's soul in early belief – always perches on the tree. If the heroine expresses a wish, the bird throws down at her feet whatever she has wished for.

The Mutilated Foot

From these various versions it can be seen that there are a number of elements and motifs associated with the story, and any folk tale that includes a minimum number of these features can be recognized as belonging to the Cinderella type. The name Cinderella itself, which derives from Perrault's *Cendrillon*, is not an essential feature of the story. In one Italian folk tale on this theme, the heroine is called *Vaccarella*, or the cowherd; in a Russian version, she appears as Pigskin Hood.

Marian Roalfe Cox, who published a study of 345 versions of the Cinderella story in 1893, considered the ill-treatment of the heroine, and her final recognition by means of the shoe or other personal token, as the two essential elements. She lists, however, some 27 motifs which are associated with it in one place or another. An enormous variety of treatment can obviously be obtained by mixing these motifs in various ways and story-tellers all over the world have allowed themselves a great deal of freedom in this mixing. In a Moravian version, when the Prince has set off to church with the false bride the heroine transforms *herself* into the bird, whose usual function is to direct attention to the mutilated foot. It is interesting that not one of these motifs, the false bride, the bird or the mutilated foot, occurs in Perrault's version, by now the classic rendering of the tale for most of the world.

DAVID PHILLIPS

The magical pumpkin *(left)* and the glass slipper *(right)*, two of the most familiar features of the story of Cinderella, were introduced by Charles Perrault the French author, who in 1697 published the definitive version of the fairy tale: illustrations by the 19th century painter and illustrator, Gustave Doré

Mary Evans Picture Library

Mary Evans Picture Library

CIRCE

THE FAIR-HAIRED SORCERESS Circe is described in the *Odyssey* as a goddess, although her reputation throughout mythology is rather that of a witch. She was the daughter of Helios, the sun god, and sister of Aeetes, the divine wizard and King of Colchis. Another celebrated witch, Medea, was her niece.

Circe was banished to the isle of Aeaea, after she had poisoned her husband, the King of the Sarmatians, a nomadic people of Persia. Circe's island has been sited as lying at the head of the Adriatic, not far from the mouth of the river Po; according to Hesiod, however, Aeaea lay off the coast of Latium, now a part of Italy, in the promontory called Circaeum, which was once an island.

Circe lived in a marble palace surrounded by woods, practising her magic arts and singing as she sat by her loom. She was attended by nymphs and a troop of wild beasts, whom she had transformed from men she had ensnared. When Odysseus's men landed on her island, they cast lots to decide who should stay to guard the ship and who should go to reconnoitre the land. Odysseus's friend Eurylochus set out with a band of men and, attracted by Circe's singing, they were drawn to the palace. Wild beasts came out to meet them, but instead of attacking the men, they fawned on them and made them welcome. Circe invited them to dine at her table and all entered unsuspecting, except Eurylochus who stayed behind, fearing a trap.

As soon as the sailors had drunk the goddess's drugged wine, she struck them with her wand and turned them into hogs. Eurylochus escaped and told Odysseus what had happened. He set off to rescue his friends and on the way he met the god Hermes who gave him a magic herb named moly, to protect him against Circe's magic. When Circe attempted to transform Odysseus, she found that her magic was useless. Odysseus forced her to restore his men to human shape.

Circe, who had become enamoured of Odysseus, by her wiles persuaded him to remain for a year on her island. At length

Odysseus became restive and was determined to be on his way again. Circe advised him how to navigate the River of Ocean and descend into Hades, and how to deal with the ghosts. When Odysseus returned to Aeaea, having been advised about his own future by the ghost of Tiresias, Circe sent him off on his homeward voyage to Ithaca. She warned him against the Sirens and against Scylla and Charybdis; also of the fatal consequences that would follow if any of his men were to kill and eat the cattle of the Sun on the island of Thrinacia. Circe is an important figure in the *Odyssey* and it is due to her warnings and advice that Odysseus finally reaches home.

She appears from time to time in later literature, always in connection with Odysseus. She bears him a son, Telegonus, according to the *Telegonia*, the lost poem by the epic poet Eugammon of Cyrene, which has survived only in a prose summary. Telegonus comes to Ithaca, seeking his father. Arriving at night, he is mistakenly attacked as a raider and mortally wounds Odysseus, with his poisoned spear. He then carries off Odysseus's body and also Penelope, Odysseus's wife and their son Telemachus to Circe, who makes them immortal with her magic powers. Telemachus marries Circe and Penelope marries Circe's son, Telegonus.

In folk tales told from western Europe to Mongolia, Circe's story has many counterparts. It has been suggested that such folk tales spread from the Near East and originated in the Babylonian myth of Ishtar, who killed her lovers when she became tired of them. During the progress from myth to folklore, the slaughter of the goddess's lover became changed into transformation into beasts.

Circe, it has also been suggested, may be related to the powerful ancient Mediterranean goddess known as the 'Lady of the Beasts'. Her image has been found engraved upon Minoan gems a millennium before Homer's day. Flanked by lions, she crowned the main gate of Mycenae at the time of the Trojan War. Around the year 1200BC, invading Dorians drove the goddess's ancient worship from the shores of Greece, but it lingered for centuries in Italy and places further west.

C. M. Dixon

In ancient times a circle often marked the boundary of a sacred area, and protected it against evil influences: passage grave in County Meath, Ireland

From ancient rites to astrology, alchemy and magic, the circle is one of the most powerful and most widely used of all symbols

CIRCLE

IF YOU WANT TO DEPICT a group of things, linked together, complete in itself and separated from everything outside the group, the shape which most effectively expresses completeness and separateness at the same time is the circle. A group of people linked by a common aim or interest which for the moment sets them apart from others may call themselves a 'circle', the old-fashioned 'ladies' sewing circle', for instance, or the Rotarians, and your friends and acquaintances constitute your social 'circle'.

These ideas of completeness and apartness lie behind the confusingly paradoxical uses of one of the most powerful and most widely employed of all symbols. Sometimes it stands for the sun, or for the sun's course through the year, or for time in general. The zodiac is the circle of the sun's apparent progress through the stars in a year, and astrological horoscopes are now almost always circular. Clock faces are usually circular too, showing the remorseless, ever-repeated round of the hours.

As a symbol of time and of the ups and downs of fortune which time brings to every man, the circle often takes the form of a wheel (see WHEEL). But if the circle is a symbol of time and its divisions, it is also a symbol of eternity, because it consists of an endless line. Standing for sun, the stars in their courses, time and eternity, it can also mean heaven and perfection. Some of the Greek philosophers said that the circle is the perfect figure and circular motion the perfect motion, and in the 13th century the great theologian Thomas Aquinas agreed, on the ground that in a circle a return is made to the beginning. Here is the circle as a complete whole.

Whole and Hole

The circle is a symbol of 'all things' because it can be imagined as a line drawn round everything but at the same time it is a symbol of 'one thing', because it is a single figure. It is therefore an emblem of the proposition that 'All is One', that all the various phenomena of the universe are linked together in a unity. The alchemical symbol called the *ourobouros* is a demonstration of this. It is a circle formed by a snake or a dragon swallowing its own tail, and sometimes bearing the Greek phrase *En To Pan*, 'all is one'. This phrase is made of three words having seven letters, and 3 + 7 = 10. Again, ten means 'all things' because it completes the series of the primary numbers, of whose combinations all other numbers are constructed, but ten also means 'the One', because it is made of 1 and 0, and 1 + 0 = 1.

The circle is a whole but also a hole. It is the symbol of nought, 0, and so it stands for emptiness, non-existence, nothing. But it is the Nothing which contains the potential existence of everything, the primeval chaos from which God made the world, the 'abyss' or 'ground' or 'womb' of all being (see BREATH: CABALA).

The Magic Circle

The use of a circle to mark the boundary of an area which is sacred, set apart from everyday life and to be protected against worldly or evil influences, is very ancient. The stone circles of Stonehenge, Avebury and many other prehistoric sites are examples. The Babylonians drew a circle of flour round the bed of a sick man to keep demons away from him. A Roman ambassador to a foreign potentate would draw a circle round himself with his staff, to show that he should be safe from attack. Medieval German Jews drew a circle round the bed of a woman in childbirth to ward off demonic attack, and the words 'Sanvi, Sansanvi, Semangelaf, Adam and Eve, barring Lilith' were chalked on the door or the walls for additional protection.

In medieval and modern European textbooks of ritual magic the circle is of great importance. The magician and his assistants stand inside a circle to protect themselves from the spirits, demons or forces they intend to conjure up. But the circle is not only intended to keep something out

Mansell Collection

Magic circle from *Le Veritable Dragon Rouge*, a 16th century magical textbook: the magician and his assistants stand in the triangle, with wax candles on either side and a brazier of charcoal in front; the inscription JHS stands for Jesus

but also to keep something in – the magical energy which the magicians will summon up from within themselves in the course of the ceremony. It is this energy which will force the spirit to appear and if it were not for the circle the energy would flow off in all directions and be dissipated. The circle keeps it inside a small area and so concentrates it. The same motive lies behind the circle of people who link their hands at a seance.

The magic circle should be nine feet in diameter, drawn on the floor or the ground with a sword or a knife, or with charcoal or chalk. Inside this circle is drawn a slightly smaller one, eight feet in diameter. In the narrow rim between the two circles are bowls of water, crosses, names of power (see NAMES) and plants like vervain, which demons are said to dislike, to reinforce the barrier against hostile forces. There must be no gap or break in the circle, through which an evil influence could get into it and take possession of the magician, and when the magician has entered the circle he must close it carefully behind him.

The 18th century French *Grand Grimoire*, introducing a grislier note, says that the circle should be made of the skin of a young goat, cut into strips and fastened down with four nails from a dead baby's coffin. The magician stands in a triangle, drawn inside the circle, with a wax candle placed in a circlet of vervain on either side.

A modern formula for drawing the magic circle is given in Dion Fortune's book *Psychic Self-Defence*. The magician begins by facing east and making the sign of the cross, touching his forehead, shoulders and solar plexus. This is not the Christian cross but the equal-armed cross, standing for the four elements and the four cardinal points, and so for mastery of all things (see CROSS). Next, he imagines that he is holding a great cross-handled sword in his right hand, point upwards. He says, 'In the Name of God I take in hand the Sword of Power for defence against evil and aggression.' He imagines himself as a 'tremendous armed and mailed figure, vibrating with the force of the Power of God.' He draws the circle on the floor with the point of the imaginary sword, in a line of imagined golden flame. Facing east and clasping his hands above his head, he says, 'May the mighty archangel Raphael protect me from all evil approaching from the east.' He repeats the same formula facing south, west and north in turn, naming Michael, Gabriel and Uriel respectively.

This circle has been drawn 'deosil' or clockwise, moving to the right, which is the side of good. In black magic the circle would be drawn the opposite way, moving to the left or 'widdershins', a word derived from an Anglo-Saxon phrase meaning 'to walk against', and which means moving against the direction of the sun and therefore in an unnatural and evil manner.

Circumambulation, moving round something in a circle, is a very old magical and religious rite, and circular dances are known from all over the world (see CAROLE: DANCE). In eastern Europe, at least until recently, at a Jewish wedding it was the custom for the bride to walk round her husband three or seven times under the wedding canopy. The original purpose was probably to keep the pair and their marriage safe from evil by drawing a protective circle round them.

(See also RING.)

FURTHER READING: Richard Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Circumcision

Removal of all or part of the foreskin: the underlying motives for its use in a religious context are uncertain but it is usually a form of initiation; occurring at puberty, as among many African peoples, it is part of the initiation into adulthood; sometimes, as in Jewish practice, it is connected with the naming of a child, which makes him a real person and so initiates him into human life.

See AFRICA: INITIATION.

Clairvoyance

Mysterious ability to see what is not present to ordinary sight, including objects or happenings at a great distance, and things in the future; clairaudience refers to hearing instead of seeing; distinguished from telepathy, which is the ability to sense other people's thoughts and mental states, or to convey your own to other people, without the use of speech, gesture or the other normal methods of communication.

See DIVINATION; EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION.

The churchyard of a ruined church was the sinister setting for a series of events at Clophill in Bedfordshire. Tombs were discovered broken open and the skeleton of a young woman who died two centuries ago was disinterred

CLOPHILL

A DERELICT CHURCH on the slopes of Dead Man's Hill at Clophill in Bedfordshire, has twice been the scene of incidents apparently connected with the practice of ritual magic.

On the first occasion, in March 1963, seven tombs in the churchyard were seriously damaged and the coffin of a girl who had been dead for 200 years was removed from one of them. Her bones were found inside the church. In 1969, on Midsummer Night, a tomb was smashed to pieces and attempts were made to dig the body from beneath it.

The first desecration is thought to have taken place at full moon. It was discovered, according to a newspaper report, when a visitor to the churchyard saw a child carrying a human skull. Arranged in a circle inside the church were the thigh, shin and arm bones, and part of the pelvis; an earlier visitor claimed to have seen the skull impaled upon a spike in the centre. The feathers of a cockerel were scattered nearby. The bones were those of Jenny Humberstone, the young wife of an apothecary, who had died in 1770 at the age of 22.

At first the affair was regarded as a hoax, possibly carried out by students. This was not unlikely considering the large number of graveyard desecrations that had taken place in the previous year. At Knutsford, Cheshire, the grave of a man buried in 1682 had been opened, while many of the stone crosses in Eltham churchyard, near London, had been damaged by vandals. Nevertheless there was a strong suggestion that other, more sinister, agencies had been at work. Westham church in Sussex had been invaded by black magicians who spat upon the crucifix in broad daylight. In Haydale Wood, Derbyshire, a girl had been found tied to a tree after being scourged with whips by Satanists. Only a few miles from Clophill itself the mutilated heads of a number of cattle were found in a bluebell wood, outside Luton.

Commonplace as these incidents were becoming, the Clophill affair seemed to suggest that some kind of organization might be involved. For one thing it was evident from the damage inflicted upon the tombs that a great deal of effort had been put into the attempt to break them open, which seemed to discount a mere students' frolic. They were table-top tombs and each was surmounted by an extremely heavy slab of stone. Prising this masonry from its base must have involved intensive effort with crowbars, and the attendant risks of detection and imprisonment were considerable. The entrances to six of the tombs had been securely sealed with layers of bricks, and only Jenny Humberstone's grave permitted entry. The raiders had smashed open the coffin and removed the skeleton. It seemed unlikely that this was merely a sick practical joke. Certainly the police believed that the evidence suggested that a Black Mass had been celebrated.

The incident was widely publicized and the suspicion that one of the modern English witch covens might be involved soon arose. This was strenuously denied by the then spokesman for British witchcraft, the late Dr Gerald Gardner, who insisted, 'It is nothing to do with us. We are as puzzled as everybody else. English witches don't do things like this.' He was undoubtedly right. The Clophill affair had nothing in common with modern witchcraft which is concerned with white or good magic. A more pertinent theory was that Satanism or necromancy was involved.

One national newspaper claimed to have interviewed a prominent Satanist who was reported as saying that a Black Mass had indeed taken place in the church. 'The ideal arrangement,' he had said, 'is to use a naked woman as an altar for the ceremony but it was too cold that night. So it was decided to use a woman's bones. This was part of the cult's worship of the mother figure as represented by the goddess Diana.'

Shreds of a Shroud

It is far more likely, however, that the ceremony performed that night involved necromancy, the art of making the spirits of the dead return and speak. It was a common practice among black magicians during the Middle Ages and even today is well known

Tombs in the graveyard of the church on the slopes of Dead Man's Hill at Clophill have twice been desecrated in what seem to have been preliminaries to necromantic rites: on one occasion the bones of a 200-year-old corpse were arranged in a circle inside the church ***Facing page*** **Clophill church: a notice on its walls reads 'Keep awey. This church is dangerous'** ***Right*** **The remains of one of the tombs**

in Africa and in Haiti, the land of Voodoo. A corpse is essential for necromancy, but is not necessary for Satanic rites.

Another incident, not generally reported, added to the mystery of the Clophill affair. The Rector had told the press that he intended to re-inter the skeleton and fill in the grave as soon as possible. Meanwhile, he locked the bones away for safety in another building. The tomb robbers returned to search for the skull and other objects that had played such a prominent role in their sinsiter rites. On discovering the grave to be empty, they vented their rage upon what was left of the coffin, smashing it into fragments which were left scattered about the church and churchyard.

Jenny Humberstone was finally laid to rest in her old grave by the church porch, with eight tons of earth over her coffin.

Six years later, yet another tomb was smashed and attempts made to disinter the corpse. The Rector was horrified, and spent the following two nights in a lonely vigil by the gutted church. On the third night he went home to bed, thinking that the danger was over. The following morning, two more graves were found destroyed and opened.

Understandably, the villagers of Clophill are reluctant to discuss the strange happenings; they refer to them as 'the troubles up in the church'. Meanwhile no one knows when more 'troubles' may occur. On the red tiled floor of the ruined church lie shattered pieces of Jenny Humberstone's coffin, with ragged pieces of her shroud still attached. Everyone in Clophill hopes the remaining coffins on Dead Man's Hill will continue to stay underground.

FURTHER READING: *Ghosts*, edited by W. Mayne (Elsevier-Nelson, 1971).

Little is known of one of the greatest mystical writers, the author of the Cloud of Unknowing, *yet thousands of Christians have gained help and solace from this 14th century work, which argues that the dark cloud which shuts us off from God, can be penetrated with God's aid, not by the intellect but only by a sharp dart of love*

CLOUD OF UNKNOWING

THE AUTHOR of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, one of the most famous of all mystical works, is himself unknown. Even the date when it was written is still uncertain, although its style and other evidence place it in the late 14th century. The author belonged to a group of mystical writers which included Richard Rolle of Hampole, Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich, and which arose at the same time as the Rhineland and Flemish mystical school, among whose members were Eckhart, Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroek.

The two groups, however, appear to have developed independently, although along parallel lines. They were both products of a similar intellectual climate which seems to have fostered the search for an experimental form of religion. Both groups drew their inspiration from a writer known to us as Pseudo-Dionysius, whose works were first heard of in Constantinople in the 6th century AD (see DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE).

The teaching of the *Cloud*, insists throughout on the impossibility of knowing God by human reason. Right at the beginning occurs the passage:

> For of all other creatures and their works – yea, and of the works of God himself – may a man through grace have fullness of knowing, and well can he think of them; but of God himself can no man think.

And towards the end, appealing to Dionysius, the author says, 'The most godly knowing of God is that which is known by unknowing.' The 'cloud of unknowing', in fact, which lies between God and man, is pierced not by the intellect but only by a sharp dart of love.

A Beam of Ghostly Light

The people for whom he is writing, the author says, are those who aim at being perfect followers of Christ, not merely by the practice of good works but through contemplation. Like Hilton and the other English mystics mentioned above, he uses what was then a new approach to religion, the cult of contemplation. The word contemplation, in this its technical, mystical sense, means a mental prayer based on intuition rather than on reason, and is distinct from meditation. In the *Cloud* contemplation is seen, according to the principles laid down by Dionysius, as being beyond the intellect. The working of the intellect can only hinder it, and so it must consist in concentrating the mind on the

British Museum

Illustration from the ***Cloud of Unknowing*** **showing the twelve sons and one daughter born to Jacob, later called Israel, by his two wives and their handmaidens: the sons' descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel, the chosen people of God, and each of them is here linked with one of the qualities of the faithful worshipper of God**

simplest idea of God, with all created things rigidly excluded.

> This darkness and this cloud . . . is betwixt thee and thy God, and hindereth thee, so that thou mayest neither see him clearly by light of understanding in thy reason, nor feel him in sweetness of love in thine affection. And therefore shape thee to bide in this darkness as long as thou mayest, evermore crying after him whom thou lovest. For if ever thou shalt see him or feel him, as it may be here, it must always be in this cloud and in this darkness. And if thou wilt busily travail as I bid thee, I trust in his mercy that thou shalt thereto come

But this initial effort is not contemplation, though the writer believes that to one in the proper frame of mind God will bestow this formless knowledge. He makes it very clear that it is God who must be sought, not an experience, but he does say that it is possible that of his goodness God will sometimes grant a mystical experience:

> Then will he (God) sometimes peradventure send out a beam of ghostly light, piercing this *cloud of unknowing* that is betwixt thee and him, and show thee some of his secrets, the which man may not and cannot speak . . .

Much research and speculation has gone into the attempt to identify the author of the *Cloud*. At one time it was suggested that Walter Hilton (see HILTON) may have been responsible, but this theory has now been abandoned. It seems likely, however, that Walter Hilton knew the author, who was himself acquainted with the work of Richard Rolle. The language of the *Cloud* suggests that the author lived in the north-east Midlands. Some scholars have suggested that he was a Carthusian monk, others that he was a secular priest, but his identity remains an unsolved mystery.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

FURTHER READING: *Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works* translated by Clifton Wolters (Penguin, 1978); J. McCann ed., *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Burns, Oates, London, 1952); for general historical background, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (St. Martin, 1924).

N.H.P.A.

Clover

A three-leafed clover is a symbol of the Trinity and a protection against evil and witchcraft; the four-leafed variety is also lucky, provided it is not given away, and is supposed to give its owner clairvoyant powers; five-leafed clovers are unlucky unless given away.

Coal

A rock which burns, a paradoxical quality which suggests that it contains powerful magic: it is lucky to find a piece in the street; coal brings good luck if carried in the pocket and there are cases of burglars using it in this way, of schoolchildren carrying it with them to examinations, and of prisoners taking it with them to their trials; in Scotland and the north of England coal should be the first thing to be brought into the house on New Year's Day.

Timekeeper, scarer of demons and giver of health, the cock is connected with dawn and the sun. Its pugnacious nature has caused it to be one of the oldest symbols of the fighting spirit

COCK

THE PROUD STRUTTING, aggressiveness and sexual ardour of the cock, together with its striking appearance and loud crowing, are the reasons for this bird's particularly widespread involvement in folk customs and traditions. It has retained its association with ancient lore, and has also tended to accumulate new beliefs and practices wherever it has been introduced.

The cock appeared in southern Europe in post-Homeric times, probably about the 5th or 6th century BC. Early in the 5th century a cock was depicted on a Sicilian coin. The Persian wars were fought during this period and there can be little doubt that the bird's introduction was due to this Asian incursion. The cock was sacred in Persia and to kill one of these birds was regarded as a serious sin. Its Persian name indicates that it was considered oracular. Aristophanes, in *The Birds*, called it 'the Persian bird' and compared its crest to the head-dress of the Persian king.

The Persians, in their turn, called the Carians, who came from a region in Asia Minor, 'cocks' because they wore crested helmets. A Greek writer compared the cock's adornments to the magnificent robes of Croesus, the proverbially wealthy king of Lydia. Pliny, too, commented on the remarkable comb. Because of the bird's pugnacity and courage, a cock was placed on the head of the statue of Athene on the Acropolis, as symbol of battle.

The crowing of the cock attracted special attention among the Greeks because it occurred about dawn, although the bird does, of course, crow at other times. There was a Greek story that when Mars chose to spend a night with Venus in the absence of her husband, Vulcan, he commissioned Alektraon (the Greek for 'cock') to watch at the door. He fell asleep and Mars, surprised by the returning husband, punished Alektraon by transforming him into a cock. He has been vigilant at dawn ever since.

The cock is part of folklore and tradition in many parts of the world; in both Asia and Europe the crowing of a cock was believed to drive away ghosts and demons: mosaic at Misis, Turkey

Sonia Halliday

Because evil spirits, 'the powers of darkness' have always been believed to be particularly active at night, the dawn crowing of the cock was usually a welcome sign, and the belief arose that the bird itself was effective in exorcizing evil. In the Persian sacred books it was stated that the cock's crow awakens the dawn, arouses mankind to praise the perfect Holiness and drives away spectres and demons. This tradition persisted in Europe.

The belief arose that a bird that could frighten devils must be able to scare wild animals, and travellers in Libya carried a cock with them to frighten lions and basilisks. The basilisk was a fabulous monster, hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg, and alleged to be able to kill with a glance. The Greek writer Aelian, who died in about 222AD, remarked that the basilisk dies in convulsions on hearing the crowing of a cock. It is widely believed that a crowing hen is a sinister omen.

The Healing Bird

Another Greek author, Heliodorus, writing in the 3rd to 4th centuries AD, stated that the cock crows because of its affinity with the sun. The bird's solar connection dates from ancient times in Europe as well as in

Asia, and we may assume that this association was introduced at the same time as the bird itself. The Greeks believed that the cock was sacred to Apollo, god of the sun, and it became associated with Asclepius, the god of healing, Apollo's son by the nymph Coronis. This association with Asclepius and healing is an outcome of the bird's connection with the sun and the life-giving powers, and its opposition to the powers of darkness. In the *Phaedo* Plato records Socrates's request before drinking the hemlock that a cock should be offered to Asclepius on his behalf, although this request was not connected with any desire to escape the effects of the poison.

The practice of sacrificing cocks has been widespread. Cocks were sacrificed to the sun in Mexico, and elsewhere served as ritual sacrifices after the erection of a building or bridge (probably instead of human victims). In the East a cock may be killed over an invalid's bed and the blood sprinkled on the sufferer. It is, or was, a custom in Ceylon for a red cock to be dedicated to a sick person and sacrificed if he recovered. In Scotland, the blood of a red cock was administered in a flour cake to the invalid. There were places in Germany where it was believed that illness and bad luck could be warded off by hiding the head, heart and right foot of a cock in the house. In both Germany and Ireland a cock was sacrificed on 11 November, St Martin's Day (or Eve, in Ireland). In Athlone in Ireland the blood was sprinkled on the threshold and the four corners of the house. D'Arcy Thompson in *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (1936) states that he himself remembers a cock being sacrificed to St Nicholas to cure a sick cow. Cocks are sacrificed among the Arabs and in North Africa, although in some African regions it is considered wrong to kill these birds.

Below left **The cock is renowned for its courage and pugnacity, and cock-fighting is an ancient entertainment that still survives in some parts of the world: cock-fight in Haiti** ***Below right*** **'Saviour of the World': the cock was a sacred bird in Persia and India, and this figure with a man's body and the head of the bird which daily saves the world from darkness, by crowing to bring the dawn, was often found on amulets used by members of the Gnostic sects which flourished in western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean area. Late 18th century gilt statuette, in the Gerald Yorke collection**

Denial before Cock-Crow

The cock's symbolism is important in Christian traditions. Its crowing gained additional significance because of its role in St Peter's repudiation of Christ (Matthew, chapter 26) and it naturally became symbolic of the Christian's duty to remain alert against temptation and 'the wiles of the devil'. As such it became customary to place a weathercock on church towers and steeples.

A tradition dating from the 4th century tells how the cock announced Christ's birth by calling out *Christus natus est*, 'Christ is born'. Shakespeare embroidered tradition when he made Marcellus comment on the disappearance of the ghost in *Hamlet:*

> It faded on the crowing of the cock.
> Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
> And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm;
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time.

Many ideas concerning good and bad luck involve the cock. American lore says if a cock crows on a porch, visitors will come; if in the rain, the rain will stop. A cock crowing facing a house, at the front door, on a banister, or inside the house, is an omen of death. In Germany it was an ill omen if a wedding procession met cocks fighting while on its way to church.

Cock-fighting is an ancient amusement, popular in some eastern countries and all over Central and South America, also still carried on illegally in certain regions of Europe and the United States. As early as the 3rd century AD the Christian writer Lactantius had declared cock-fighting an unsuitable spectacle for Christian people, but the compassion for animals shown by many saints had little effect in encouraging humane treatment.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

Picturepoint London

Michael Holford

Cockle-Shell

Or scallop-shell, the heart-shaped shell worn in the hats of pilgrims to the shrine of St James of Compostela in Spain; the polished side of the shell was engraved with a drawing of the Virgin Mary or the Crucifixion, and the shell was blessed by a priest to protect the pilgrim from spiritual harm; hence Sir Walter Raleigh's famous lines, 'Give me my scallop-shell of quiet, my staff of peace to walk upon. . .'

Kress Collection, Seattle Art Museum

Cockroach

Large beetle-like insect infesting many old houses, dark-coloured and nocturnal, so acquiring supernatural attributions: in the Old American South, it was believed that a witch could be caught by leaving a jar in the hearth ashes overnight; a cockroach found in the jar was the trapped witch: folk medicine used cockroaches to treat urinary ailments, epilepsy and worms in children: United States lore suggests ridding your house of roaches forever by sweeping them out on Good Friday.

Giving up all entertainment was demanded of anyone who joined the Cokelers, a small 19th century Nonconformist sect which survives today

COKELERS

THE STRICT PURITANICAL sect of the Society of Dependants, or Cokelers as they were known popularly, was founded in 1850 and still has a small following today. It is exclusive to the West Sussex area and parts of south-west Surrey. The origin of the strange name Cokelers is not certain, although it has been suggested that it refers to the members' custom of drinking cocoa at their meetings, as part of the simple refreshments which were provided on these occasions. Another possible explanation is that it derived from a place called Cokkeg, in the village of Loxwood in Sussex, where the sect was formed.

The Cokelers were founded by a London shoemaker named John Sirgood, who was born at Avening, Gloucestershire, in 1820. As a young man, living in the Clapham area of South London, Sirgood became a member of a small sect named the Plumstead Peculiars, which had been founded by the evangelist William Bridges in 1838 (see PECULIAR PEOPLE).

At first Sirgood preached in Clapham, but he soon discovered that the further he journeyed from London the more genuine the response became. Closing his shop, he and his wife set out, with their belongings packed into a hand-cart, and walked into Surrey and West Sussex. They decided to settle in Loxwood, a small village about eight miles from Horsham. Here John Sirgood started to preach in the fields and behind the cottages. Informal prayer-meetings were held, and his fame as a preacher soon spread around the countryside. He was reputed to possess remarkable powers as a faith healer and even to have raised someone from the dead.

Forbidden Flowers

In 1850 Sirgood decided that the time had come to form his own sect. The principles which he prescribed for his followers were that they should lead a life of simple Puritan austerity. 'We believe that man must have a second birth,' he preached, 'he must realise Christ in his own life.' Those who joined him were expected to renounce the world. They must accept that they had become possessed of part of the body of Christ and therefore free from sin; the sect was first known, in fact, as the 'Body'.

The demands which he made on his followers were rigid in the extreme. Villagers and labourers who had once enjoyed their ale in the local inn found that, once they had joined the Society of Dependants they were expected to scorn all intoxicants and other pleasures. The Bible was their only literature, and whole passages had to be learned by heart and quoted in conversation. No flowers were allowed in the cottages, which had to be austerely furnished, with the minimum of decoration. Entertainment and music were forbidden, and pictures and photographs were destroyed. Sport, literature, drama and most of the relaxations of the average man and woman were denied to the Dependants. Furthermore, the Society did not advocate marriage. Anyone wishing to marry was at liberty to do so, but no marriage service could be solemnized by the followers of John Sirgood. They believed that marriage interfered with one's relationship with God, and that it was impossible for God to permit a marriage service in one of their chapels. This severe mortification of the flesh attracted many sincere, but often simple, followers and half the farm labourers in the district were soon Dependants.

As Sirgood's doctrine spread further afield, many new Dependant communities sprang up in neighbouring towns and villages, and the Cokelers still use their chapels today. Large provision shops were opened by the Society wherever a colony was formed, and were owned by the members on co-operative lines. At Loxwood there still is a large store with a meeting-house, steam bakery and laundry, and with every kind of article for sale, from provisions to bicycles, haberdashery, kitchen utensils, gardening equipment and furniture. These shops have paid big dividends over the years, and only the ale houses have been the poorer for the coming of John Sirgood. For generations the Cokeler farmers have sold their produce to the Dependant dairies, and families in the various districts have invested their savings in the shops, with whom they have dealt exclusively. John Sirgood's system meant that labourers in this part of the country have always been comparatively well-off and better dressed than those in other parts of Surrey and Sussex.

Joyful Funerals

But although the Cokelers prospered, they have not multiplied. Their doctrines were sterile and their membership dwindled, out of touch with the world beyond their little kingdom. In 1885, the year of Sirgood's death, membership in the district totalled 1,500. At the beginning of this century the members formed almost a third of the population of Wisborough and Northchapel, and there were many other villages under their influence. By 1904 there were only about 900 members regularly attending their chapels, dressed in black. Today a few of the meeting-houses remain open, but only a few Cokelers attend the services. Many of the stores and communal farms have been sold. It is not a religion likely to attract young people, in a world where the internal combustion engine, television, pop music, the cinema and alcohol are worshipped.

Visitors nevertheless are welcomed tu the Loxwood meeting-house and are warmly received by this friendly sect. They will observe that members of the congregation spend the interval between the morning and afternoon services in a small back room where refreshments are served free of charge. At their gatherings, when prayers have been said and hymns sung without music, the meeting is thrown open. Any member can stand up and give testimony to God's goodness.

When John Sirgood was buried in the field behind the Loxwood chapel which he had built, the interment was attended by many hundreds of followers, farm hands and labourers. A Cokeler funeral is impressive and lasts for several hours. Death is not considered fearful, but is regarded as a happy release from a world where there is much sin and misery.

The whole of a Cokeler's life is devoted to attempting to reduce sin and unhappiness to a minimum. The funeral, with its feasting and singing, is therefore more a celebration than an occasion for mourning. Instead of the usual gravestone, the Cokeler's grave is marked simply with a number on a metal plate.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

COLERIDGE

THE MIND OF COLERIDGE (1772–1834) has been described as an ocean. This image is apt for many reasons – for its all-embracing scope, its profundity, unity, movement, and mystery. As the supreme literary critic not only of the Romantic movement and of his friend Wordsworth, but of English poetry in its entirety, Coleridge stands alone; his lectures on Shakespeare are unsurpassed in their kind. His *Aids to Reflection* remains a living contribution to Anglican and Protestant theology. Coleridge has been seen as an early Existentialist philosopher. He was a declared Platonist, and the names of two of his sons, Hartley and Berkeley, declare his affinities in English philosophic thought. 'Every man', he wrote, 'is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist. I do not think it possible that anyone born an Aristotelian can become a Platonist; and I am sure no born Platonist can ever change into an Aristotelian. They are the two classes of man, beside which it is next to impossible to conceive a third. The one considers reason a quality, or attribute; the other considers it a power. I believe that Aristotle could never get to understand what Plato meant by an idea.'

As a young man Coleridge visited Germany in order to study the language and philosophy of Kant and Schelling, with whom he has many affinities. He was among the last minds to attempt that universality of knowledge which characterizes Renaissance thinkers, but which has scarcely been possible since. 'I am, and ever have been, a great reader, and have read almost everything – a library cormorant. I am *deep* in all out-of-the-way books, whether of the monkish times, or of the puritanical era. I have read and digested most of the historical writers; but I do not *like* history. Metaphysics and poetry and "facts of mind", that is, accounts of all the strange phantoms that ever possessed "your

Illustration by J. Noel Paton to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*: the belief that it is unlucky to shoot an albatross was largely invented by Coleridge

philosophy"; dreamers, from Thoth the Egyptian to Taylor the English pagan, are my darling studies.' From childhood, when his father first showed him the starry sky, his mind had been 'habituated *to the vast*'. His favourite reading as a child was *The Arabian Nights*, for its marvels. A fine classical scholar, he read the Greek philosophers in the original.

In its immense scope, Coleridge's mind embraced all that European civilization had to offer. He corresponded with Humphry Davy on scientific subjects. At the same time he was one of the first to attempt that kind of introspective observation which has since laid the foundation of modern psychology. He held a very low opinion of Locke and the materialists; his own thought was given its unity and coherence by his unwavering view of man as a spiritual being. For Coleridge, both as Christian and Platonist and as transcendentalist, mind is primary. As against Locke's view that nothing is in the mind that was not first in the senses, he considered Imagination to be 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.' This view of imagination differs in its dynamic character from Plato's more static presentation of the world of ideas.

Pleasure-Dome in Xanadu

It is well known that Coleridge wrote the poem *Kubla Khan* from the vivid recollection of an opium-dream. He was perhaps the first poet to draw upon the unconscious images of dream, uncensored by rational understanding and without reference to any theological or mythological system. 'Dreams with me are no Shadows, but the very Existences and foot-thick Calamities of my Life.' His immense learning, his knowledge of traditional mythology and its symbolism, is interwoven with archetypal dream-figures luminous with the aura of mystery which belongs to our dreams.

Coleridge insisted upon the distinction between Reason and Understanding; the former being an immediate perception, the latter the discursive faculty of the mind. 'Understanding is the Faculty of *Reflection*. Reason of Contemplation. Reason indeed is much nearer to SENSE than to Understanding; for Reason . . . is a direct aspect of Truth, an inward Beholding, having a similar relation to the Intelligible or Spiritual as SENSE has to the Material or Phenomenal.' He writes elsewhere, 'For to us, self-consciousness is not a kind of *being*, but a kind of *knowing*, and that too the highest that exists in us.' In the *sum*, or I AM, 'object and subject, being and knowing are identical, each involving and supposing the other.'

Coleridge never completed the great work for which he felt, to the end of his life, that all his writings and studies had been only a preparation. His thought is to be discovered throughout his letters, note-books, lecture-notes and table-talk recorded by his friends and the hearers of his inimitable extempore lectures on literature; and in the political and literary journalism to which he devoted so much time and energy; to the detriment, it may be, of his incomparable poetic genius. It is impossible to dip into Coleridge anywhere without discovering some rich treasure; and yet the whole is greater than the parts, for perhaps no other man has ever left such a record of all that passed through his mind and senses.

His profound intellect notwithstanding, Coleridge was a man of deep feeling, capable of great love and great suffering. If knowledge be a fourfold experience, as Jung has explained, embracing intellection, feeling, sensation and intuition, Coleridge was, in this respect also, a complete man to a degree seldom achieved. 'My opinion is this,' he wrote, 'that deep thinking is attainable only by a man of deep feeling, and that all truth is a species of revelation. The more I understand Sir Isaac Newton's works, the more boldly I dare utter to my own mind . . . that I believe the souls of five hundred Sir Isaac Newtons would go to the making up of a Shakespeare or a Milton.'

KATHLEEN RAINE

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

Druids at the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969, wearing robes of colours which indicate their rank: white for the chief Druids, green for the bards, and blue for recent initiates

COLOURS

THE RUSSIAN PAINTER Vasily Kandinsky, one of the founders of the modern movement in art, believed that colours have 'a corresponding spiritual vibration' and that 'colour harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration in the human soul'. The experiments conducted by B. J. Kouwer and reported in his book *Colours and Their Character* (1949) suggest that people react to colours in ways which match their traditional significance, whether because each colour has some innate quality of its own or because of the association of similar ideas with them for centuries.

The traditions are embedded deep in myth. The Aztecs spoke of four main colours – red, yellow, white and black – which were the four main types of corn, the four cardinal directions, and the gods associated with them. The Pueblo Indians, Cherokee and other American tribes also assign special colours and myth qualities to the four directions.

A colour's meaning may vary considerably in different parts of the world. Black is generally the colour of mourning in Europe but in China mourners wear white. Even in Europe, the ideas associated with

a colour vary. Black is the hue of death but the typical flower of death is the white lily, and white birds are usually considered ominous, because of their rarity. But broadly speaking, there is a rough general agreement in the European tradition on the significance of the principal colours.

Black is naturally linked with night and darkness, and by extension with death, the night that ends a man's days, with mourning and sorrow, and with evil, the Devil and the 'powers of darkness'. Black magic is evil magic, a black day is one of disaster, a black sheep is the one that goes astray, the black flag marks the pirate, the lawless rebel, and the arch-rebel himself, the Devil, frequently appeared to witches as a black animal, or as a 'black' (dark-complexioned) man, often in black clothes.

Black is also the colour of the earth, in which the dead lie buried. In Greece and Rome black animals were connected with the earth goddess, the powers below and the ghosts of the dead in the underworld.

Standing for both death and earth, in alchemy black means death and putrefaction but also germination, new life burgeoning in the depths. Renewed life comes to the surface in the 'white' stage of the alchemical work (see ALCHEMY).

The contrast of black and white is fundamental to European colour symbolism. In churches the black trappings of Good Friday are replaced on Easter Sunday by white for Christ's resurrection. Black and white knights do battle in legends and also on chessboards. Where the Devil and his legions are black, the angels and the righteous wear white in heaven.

White means cleanliness, and therefore purity and innocence. A bride wears white for purity. White magic is good magic. The sacred horses of the Greek, Roman, Celtic and Germanic peoples were white. White is the moonlight that shines in the blackness of night, and so it may stand for inspiration and insight, light in the darkness of the mind. Black is ruthless, as in the black shirts of Fascists, white is meek, or sometimes even cowardly, the white feather and the white flag.

Red For Danger

Red is pre-eminently the colour of blood, and the words for 'red' in English, French, German and Latin all stem from a root which probably meant 'blood'. As a result red means physical life and energy, and in prehistoric burials the body was often sprinkled with red ochre, apparently to give the corpse life in the underworld. In American superstition, red occurs in many folk cures: a red silk handkerchief for neuralgia, red yarn around the thumb to stop a nosebleed. But red also means bloodshed, and is the colour of the planet and war god Mars. When a victorious general rode in triumph through the streets of Rome, his

Popperfoto Ltd

Luis Arenas

Above **Buddhist monks at a theological college in Bangkok. In the East saffron robes, varying in shade from yellow to orange or red, are a symbol of spiritual greatness** ***Below*** **Spanish Cardinals wearing red vestments, in the Christian Church a symbol of divine love**

face was painted red. In Irish legend, the fiercest of all warriors were the Red Branch, the guards of Conchobar mac Nessa, King of Ulster in the 1st century AD. In a wider sense, red means violence in general, danger (as in traffic lights) and all fierce and passionate emotions, including revolutionary enthusiasm and lust, the red flag of Communism and the red light that marks the brothel. Kouwer found that the ideas people principally associate with red are passion, emotion, temperament, action, mutinousness, force, sexuality.

Green is the colour of vegetation, and our words 'green', 'grass' and 'grow' all come from the same root. Green is the peaceful bounty of Nature and most people find it a soothing and restful colour. Its connection with fertility appears in The Green George of Slav countries, a young man covered from head to foot in branches and flowers, the centre of a joyful procession in April, or the Jack o' the Green in England, wearing green boughs and ivy on May Day.

The symbolism of blue is less clear. It is the colour of the unclouded sky, and so the blue in the United States flag means vigilance (the white is for purity and the red for courage). It is linked with supreme gods, ruling from the sky, and perhaps as a result with aristocracy and conservatism, blue blood and true-blue: though in France and Russia white has been the symbol of the old order. The Virgin Mary's robe is usually blue, perhaps because of her role as the queen of heaven. On the other hand, blue is sometimes connected with the sea and water, with tears and sadness, 'the blues', and with the murky depths of pornography, as in blue films.

Yellow is also ambivalent. As the colour of the sun and gold, it means perfection, wealth, glory, power. But in early times saffron-yellow vestments were worn in churches on Good Friday, as a reminder of the Jews' vindictiveness in crucifying Christ, and Judas was given reddish-yellow hair in medieval paintings, because yellow meant jealousy and hate.

(See also CORRESPONDENCES; GREEN; RED; WHITE.)

Keystone Press Agency

Theo Dennel

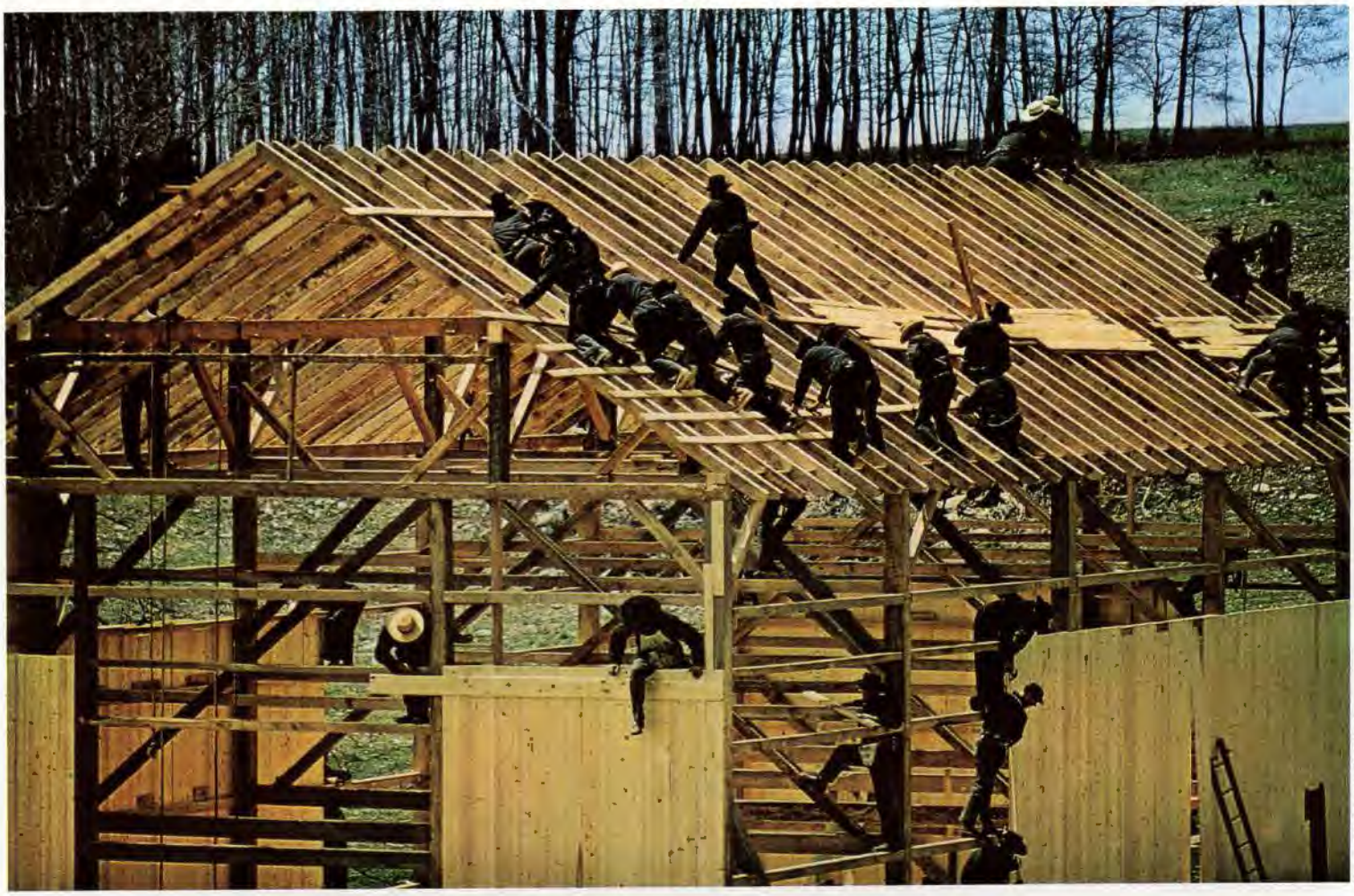
A colour's meaning varies considerably in different parts of the world. In the West the colour of death and mourning is black *(above)* but in China mourners wear white *(below)*

Comets

The appearance of a comet was long believed to mean that some cataclysmic disaster was likely to occur – war, famine, plague, the downfall of kings or even the end of the world: presumably because the comet's swift and unexpected passage through the sky was seen as a disruption of the orderly regularity of the heavens, heralding a parallel disruption on earth: a comet was seen before the Norman invasion of England in 1066, and comets accompanied both the birth and the death of Julius Caesar.

See OMENS.

Michael Holford



Transworld Feature Syndicate

Common beliefs and interests have led members of the Amish sect, an offshoot of the Mennonites, to set up segregated communities in the United States, where they pool their resources for the welfare of the group

'They did not seek profits but they did what they had to do with pleasure and creativity.' Same religious Utopias in which all property is held in common have been extremely successful, not only finoncially but in giving their members a happy and constructive life: in some cases, even with what to most people would be an impossible ban on all sexual relations

COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

HOLDING ALL PROPERTY IN COMMON has never been a widespread practice among religious movements. It is an interesting variant of the much more frequently found monastic arrangement, in which the monk abandons all his goods on entering the order. Orders of monks, nuns and friars, as they are found in Christianity and Buddhism, differ from communistic religious movements principally in being constituted of members of only one sex; in accepting a hierarchic system of authority; and in emphasizing personal poverty rather than communism of possessions. Most important of all, these orders are part of a wider religious organization and tradition. By contrast, communistic movements are total social systems, which usually do not admit those outside the commune to any place in their religious scheme of things.

Communistic movements are necessarily communitarian, that is, they establish communities, in which the principles of communism are applied. Without the total control of the activities of everyday life possible in a separate community, communistic principles would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement. The initial aim of many of these sects has been to create a community, rather than to establish communism, and the principle of common ownership has often been adopted only after the life of a separated community has been established.

Although many Christian communities have existed which have not been communistic, when sects set up separated communities, their basic principles of brotherhood, equality in the love of God, and the shared prospect of salvation, predispose them to communistic arrangements. When a group has drawn together as a fellowship, any disparities of wealth among them are irrelevant to their new hopes, a hindrance to their common purpose, and a symbol of the vain and corrupt values of the world.

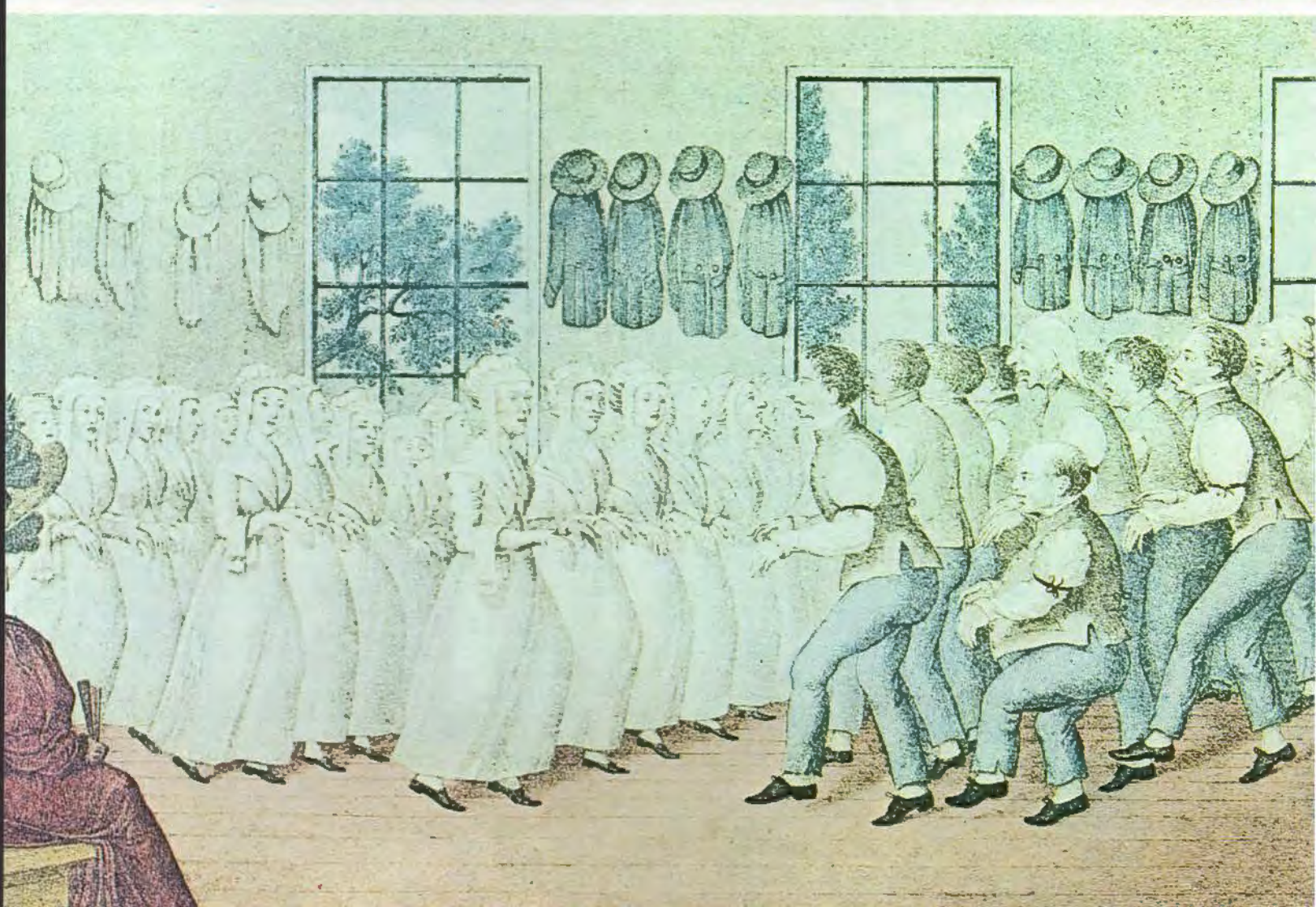
So communism may be adopted as a matter of expediency, as an outgrowth of the movement's new circumstances once it has established a separated colony. In this case, the new system may he justified by inspiration or revelation, as among the Community of the Truly Inspired (the Amana Society), who adopted communism of goods after they had emigrated to America and whose new practice was made legitimate, after some members had challenged it, by revelation of the Holy Spirit to their leader.

In other cases, as among the Oneida Community, or the Tolstoyans, communism is prescribed as part of the way of life of the saints and is a basic principle, to be realized by the establishment of a colony. Sometimes there is explicit reference to the early Church at Jerusalem, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, which provides scriptural justification for communism.

Politics and Persecution

Religious communism differs from the communism of political Utopians, such as the followers of Robert Owen at New Harmony or the disciples of Fourier, who set up many colonies in the United States during the 19th century. Religious groups are not necessarily, and not usually, attempting to provide a model of social organization for other men to imitate – at least not until other men learn the spiritual truths which they know. In the event, political communities have always failed, usually very soon after being founded. Religious communistic colonies have had more varied fortunes and some have flourished for decades.

One of the necessary conditions for the establishment of sectarian communism is the possibility of finding a place in which the sect can be sufficiently isolated from the



Mary Evans Picture Library

Communistic sects have sought isolation from the rest of society to enable them to safeguard their beliefs *Left* In Paraguay Mennonite communities often recruit new members from the local Indians; communal baptism of Lengua Indians *Below* The Shakers, who got their name from the ecstatic trembling which took place at their religious meetings, fled to America in the 18th century to escape persecution; there they organized themselves into strictly disciplined celibate communities *Right* In the 16th century, Protestant revolutionaries known as Anabaptists established a 'kingdom of the saints' at Münster in Germany; they were accused of all manner of atrocities

rest of the world. This is essential, to prevent the contamination of the group by outside influences and to provide a stable context in which children can be brought up in the values of the sect. Since such groups come out of the wider society, the colony is both a place of refuge and a heavenly community.

It is not every society that allows men to congregate in this way. The Levellers and Diggers of 17th century England were seen as a threat to the social order, and when this is the response of the political authorities such groups are not permitted to establish themselves. Only where royal or aristocratic patronage was gained, as the Hutterian Brethren gained it successfully in Moravia, Hungary and Russia (see HUTTERIAN BRETHREN), were European sects able to practise communism, at least until late in the 18th century. More often, the sects fled from persecution, usually to North America where land was abundant and diligent settlers were welcomed.

The principal religious communistic sects have come from central Europe and have usually been German-speaking. Some semi-communistic sects have arisen in England but the groups like the Girlingites in the New Forest met with opposition.

An important factor aiding the success of communistic sects has been their isolation from the wider society, and one of the most important insulating mechanisms has been the use of a language differing from that of the surrounding people. The Mennonites in Brazil, who were not always communists though they always lived in segregated communities, were well aware of the importance of retaining their native German as a defence against assimilation to the society outside. In those communistic groups which have permitted sexual relations and have raised children, difference of language has been of great importance in preventing young people from learning too quickly about the attractions of the world outside.

Shaking with Joy

The Shakers are perhaps the most celebrated of all the communistic sects. This sect owes its origin to the preaching of refugee French Camisards (see CAMISARDS) in 18th century England. They converted some Quakers in Lancashire to belief in the imminent return of Christ, with the unusual feature that the returning Christ was expected to appear as a woman. The Shakers got their name from the ecstatic shaking that occurred in their noisy religious meetings.

In 1770 a woman named Ann Lee became their leader, after she had experienced a vision in which she clearly saw that sexual intercourse was the source of all the evil in the world. Her preoccupation with this subject may no doubt be explained by the fact that she had had several stillborn children. She now saw that redemption was to be gained by renouncing sex and reproduction. Although scarcely literate and given to shaking and speaking in tongues, Ann Lee was undoubtedly an impressive leader of considerable intelligence. She declared that to escape persecution the sect should go to the New World, where they expected to make converts in what they thought of as the last days of the existing order of things. Eight Shakers made the journey to America in 1774.

In the following years Shakers came into being in various places, scattered over several states. Perhaps as a defensive measure, and as a way of establishing the appropriate control of the godly life, the leading Shakers, after Ann Lee's death in 1782, decided to organize themselves in segregated communities. From 1787 Shaker communities were set up. Within them were organized large groups known as 'families', each with its male and female head. Celibacy was the absolute rule and each man was provided with a 'sister' who undertook a variety of household tasks for him. Care was taken never to leave individuals of opposite sex alone with each other, and there is no record of scandal in any of the 18 Shaker communities that were eventually established.

To become a Shaker was no light undertaking. New members, on entering a community, gave up all their possessions for the good of the fellowship. Thereafter they received a share of what was termed 'just and equal rights and privileges, according to their needs.' Should anyone leave the community – and inevitably some did – he received an agreed sum on discharge.

Practicality was a much prized Shaker virtue, their organization was a model of efficiency, and although agricultural work was the basis of their economy they were from the outset interested in a wide range of craft and industrial activities. Since no wages were paid, and each received simply what he needed according to the modest assessments that their religious dispositions dictated, the Shakers could devote all their energy and ingenuity to the work that they saw as the testimony to their faith. Among the many useful devices that they produced were a new type of circular saw, a much improved washing machine (this in the early 19th century), a tilting chair, and new designs in sewing machines and brooms.

Industry and inventiveness were principal outlets for Shaker enterprise, facilitated by the fact that they were a celibate community, in which no one had family problems or sexual distractions. Visitors were generally impressed by the spirit of harmony that prevailed among the Shakers. This harmony, and their successful economy, have been attributed to the simple principles of faith on which they based their way of life, and the intensity with which these were inculcated. Order, neatness, cleanliness, frugality and sobriety were the pervasive demands.

The discipline of the daily lives of the Shakers was informed by the joy that they expressed most fully in their worship, particularly in their ecstatic dancing, which in time was organized along a wide variety of set patterns. They believed in communications from spirits (though they found nothing in common with Spiritualism when that movement arose), in direct revelation from God, in faith healing and in speaking in tongues. They gave a good deal of time to religious exercises and, like other communistic sects, they did not have to give too much time to labour, because their needs were very limited.

Despite celibacy, the Shakers recruited sufficiently from the outside world to continue through the 19th century and into the 20th. They can rarely have numbered more than 3000 at any one time and there probably cannot have been more than about 16,500 of them altogether during the movement's entire life. By the mid-1960s only a few old ladies remained, still living together in the last surviving Shaker community. Shaking as such had ceased to be practised and so had the dancing, which had been so fully developed in the 19th century. (See also SHAKERS.)

Living in Harmony

A strong injunction to celibacy and community of goods were the distinguishing features of another sect that flourished in 19th century America, the Harmonists, or Rappites. This sect built successively, at ten-year intervals, three substantial villages in the states of Pennsylvania and Indiana. Initially the sect was composed of the personal following of its remarkable, autocratic and impressive leader George Rapp, a weaver, who in the 1780s began to conduct his own religious meetings in his native village in Württemberg, Germany, expressing severe disapproval of the outward show and ritual of the Lutheran Church. Württemberg was a strong centre of sectarianism at this time, and Rapp soon acquired a significant following from his own and neighbouring villages. His separatism and the emptying of the Lutheran churches caused the Lutheran authorities to seek the intervention of the state to discourage Rapp, and periodically he was called to account for his teachings and activities.

Of One Heart and Soul

Many religious communists have cited the book of Acts in the New Testament as their scriptural justification:

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need . . .

But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.' And she said, 'Yes, for so much.' But Peter said to her, 'How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Hark, the feet of those that have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.' Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

Acts, chapters 4 and 5

In the earliest known formulations of Rapp's beliefs there was no explicit demand for celibacy among his followers, although he himself – in spite of being married – was known to be leading a celibate life. Nor, in the first two decades of his movement, was there any direct assertion that there should be community of goods among the faithful. Perhaps, however, in those circumstances, such a demand would have been scarcely practicable for the farmers and artisans who were among his following. They believed that withdrawal from the world was necessary, in preparation for Christ's reappearance, which they believed to be imminent – as indeed did many quite orthodox Protestants in Europe and America at the time of the Napoleonic wars.

It was after the keenest members of the sect had emigrated to America, in 1804, that communism proper was adopted by them. Migration itself tested the faith of the Rappites, since they all gave what they had to support the costs of the journey for themselves and others, and for their initial expenses in America. The Harmony Society, as the sect called itself, bought land and, after considerable hardship in the early days built a model village on the Connoquenessing Creek, near Pittsburg in Pennsylvania. The community regarded itself as a Church, in which all members surrendered their property to the society and pledged themselves to its laws. In return, they were ensured all the necessities of life, education and religious instruction, and insurance for their dependants.

The Harmonists soon achieved a reputation for industry and good husbandry, despite financial difficulties, dissensions, disappointments about the land they had purchased, and, above all, despite their intense expectation of the early second coming of Christ. Celibacy was instituted in the very early days, but some marriages took place. Rapp held that the imitation of Christ, which was the aim of the community, was incomplete without celibacy. He permitted marriages only for those who were insufficiently spiritually advanced to accept the full rigours of the wholly dedicated life, although he did so less readily and with more impatience over the years. Since the Harmonists, like the Shakers, were sure that they lived in the last days their failure to reproduce did not trouble them.

Visitors from outside were eager to see the way of life of the Harmonists and were impressed by their simple dedication, their complete security, their indifference to profits and to entertainments, and their certainty about their heavenly reward. Yet within ten years of first settling in Pennsylvania, the Harmonists, disturbed by the close encroachments of the world around their land, seeking water power and a milder climate better suited to the vine, and despite all the labour involved in beginning again the work of creating a settlement, put up the town of Harmony for sale, and moved to the banks of the River Wabash in Indiana Territory.

Wonder of the West

In the new location, the Harmonists were less surrounded by German-speaking immigrants, but they were more immediately involved in political affairs, being a sizeable community with opportunity to influence political decisions in their county. As a frontier society, their achievement in Indiana was all the more remarkable, and New Harmony was regarded as 'a wonder of the West'. Robert Owen, the English socialist manufacturer heard of it: he visited the community, and eventually bought the settlement, when the Harmonists again moved on. But Robert Owen's secular communists, who permitted freedom of religious belief, preached emancipation of women, and who lacked the community discipline that characterized the religious society of George Rapp, failed within a year or two to make the ready-made colony function. The Harmonists, meanwhile, set up a third prosperous colony, named Economy, on the Ohio River in Pennsylvania. Again, they established a town that was a model of neatness and order.

Celibacy was, however, a severe test. The community ceased to recruit by new immigration from Württemberg, and indeed came increasingly to regard itself as the completely gathered remnant of the faithful, enjoying wisdom quite different from that available to men in the world whom it now had no interest in recruiting. As a result the average age of its members rose and its numbers began to decline. A schism occurred in 1831, when an impressive imposter arrived at Economy, presenting himself as His Royal Highness Maximilian of Este, Ambassador of Christ. The Harmonists were undergoing an internal crisis at the time and were anxious for the coming of Christ. Expectant and gullible as they were, a number seceded with Count Leon, as he was also known, and continued to practise communism in other parts of America; this reduced the community even further.

Throughout the 1830s and 40s the Society continued to prosper but, having completely closed its ranks, ensured its own decline. Its reserves of wealth were considerable, and became the subject of prolonged litigation in the 20th century. That they had accumulated so impressively, was largely due to the competence of Frederick Rapp, adopted son of George, who died in 1834, and to the spiritual control of George Rapp himself, who died at the age of 90 in 1847. In its day, the Harmony Society had been a pioneer of the oil industry and had built the first oil pipelines.

The Truly Inspired Ones

The productivity, inventiveness and social usefulness of the communistic religious societies is again illustrated in the history of the Amana Society, the Society of the Truly Inspired, which eventually settled in Iowa. The Amana Society which numbered some 1500 people at the height of its success also came from south Germany. It had originally arisen early in the 18th century, at the instigation of two inspired preachers, Rock and Gruber, who had travelled to various places at the bidding of the Spirit, preaching the word. The sect which they founded was pacifist and committed to the view that God still inspired men through the Holy Spirit, whose instruments some men were called to be.

After Rock's death, no new 'instrument' appeared for some time, but a number of prophets arose in the sect at the beginning of the 19th century in various parts of Germany. In 1842, under the leadership of Christian Metz, it was revealed that they should emigrate to America. Initially, the sect settled near the city of Buffalo and called their community Ebenezer. They were not, at this stage, communists: their intention had been to find a place where they could live the life of faith in peace.

Trouble with the Seneca Indians and fear of encroachments on their withdrawn way of life from the growing city of Buffalo.

induced them in the late 1850s to sell their land and move to Iowa, where they settled in seven villages. They took the name Amana from the Song of Solomon (chapter 4, verse 8). Force of circumstances caused them to become communists, and this was an understandable development for a group that had already committed itself to a common destiny in this world and the next. Their adoption of the communistic principle was conveniently reinforced and made legitimate by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaking through Metz, the leader of the community. The regulations concerning the entitlements of individuals and the responsibility of the community were similar to those of the Harmonists. They ate as a community, in common dining halls, the two sexes being separated.

Low Status of Marriage

The Amana Society did not impose celibacy. It was approved, but was not so strongly enjoined as among the Harmonists and the Shakers. Even as children, the sexes were kept apart, and marriage was permitted only when a man reached the age of 24: ideally, however, the faithful should not marry. This had been an early injunction, long before the sect became communistic but, of course, the virtual elimination of the family unit predisposes a sect to communism of goods and mutual help.

The sect had three orders of piety, and those who married revealed by so doing that they were of the lowest order. Only by leading a conscientious life could a couple who married rise again in spiritual status. Families did, however, dwell in individual homes in Amana, which suggests that marriage continued to be a common, if disapproved arrangement. In contrast with the Shakers, whose way of life allowed for considerable elements of recreation, the Amana Society frowned on entertainments and all levity.

The Amana Society was governed by trustees under the inspired instruments of the Holy Spirit. After Metz died, Barbara Landmann was the leader of the community, but she was the last of the 'instruments' and long before the end of the 19th century the Society ceased to have a spiritual head with inspired power. The villages were organized by elders, who were not necessarily old, but who were recognized as spiritually advanced. They were in charge of industrial and agricultural activities. In their dealings with the outside world, the Amana Society gained a reputation for honesty and shrewdness, neither cheating others nor letting themselves be cheated.

The religious beliefs of the sect were simple. They accepted the Bible in a literal

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Eve Arnold – Magnum

Above **The pacifist Russian Doukhobors, who emigrated to Canada at the beginning of the century, practised communism for a time; they caused embarrassment by parading in the nude as a protest against government interference** ***Below*** **Drop-Out City in America is a haven of refuge for hippies, and others who feel themselves at odds with the highly organized world around them; they share their goods in common and practise free love**

way, believed in the Trinity and in the resurrection of the dead, but not in eternal punishment, since hell would purify even the most wicked in time. They sought to avoid the world in every way, and to lead retired, withdrawn lives in humility and simplicity, eschewing anger, impatience, criticism, levity and idleness. They were exhorted neither to desire nor to grieve. The men were to 'fly from the society of womenkind'.

Without an inspired leader, the Amana Society continued, although in decline, until in 1932 they decided to abandon their communistic organization. They reconstituted themselves, abandoning the old restrictions on dress and in other matters. In time their settlements became tourist attractions.

Promiscuous but Perfect

Perhaps the most thorough-going of all communistic religious societies was that founded by John Humphrey Noyes, which was eventually established at Oneida, in the state of New York. Its thoroughness consisted in its adoption not of celibacy, or preferred celibacy, but of communism of sexual relations.

The Oneida Community were known as Perfectionists, because they taught the possibility of perfection in this world. This was an extreme version of the Holiness teachings that had developed among some Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the eastern United States in the second quarter of the 19th century. The principal idea of Holiness teachings was that men might, after their conversion, experience a second blessing of sanctification; the more extreme advocates held that sanctification might be instantaneous. Although the majority of Holiness believers took the doctrine to mean that the converted person who was 'born again' should lead an exemplary life, others believed that, being sanctified, they could no longer sin, no matter what they did. In consequence, promiscuity occurred among some as a 'proof' of perfection, and theories of 'spiritual wivery' opened the way to considerable sexual licence (see SPIRITUAL WIVES). The Oneida Community were frequently condemned on this score and their intentions misunderstood.

After a false start in 1846 at Putney, Vermont, where local hostility drove them out, the Perfectionists who had gathered around Noyes set up a community at Oneida. The farmers who joined Noyes sold their property and settled for life in common. They engaged in agriculture, trapping, silk-manufacture, satchel-making and the production of a variety of other consumer-goods. They justified their experiment by a distinctive theology. Noyes believed that the second coming of Christ, which so many Americans were then awaiting, had in fact occurred in 70 AD. Catholics had perverted the consequence of the advent, but now his own community were to restore the perfection of the 1st century Christians.

The early Church at Jerusalem, with its communistic organization, was the obvious model. To avoid the sexual excesses current among Holiness extremists, many of whom he knew, Noyes taught that it was evident that when God's will was done on earth there would be no more marriage, just as there was none in heaven. But abolition was possible only when men were perfected. Thereafter, two individuals would not be bound, either in marriage or outside it. Possessiveness and its accompanying selfishness would be put aside. At Oneida, a man was not permitted to claim a woman as his wife, and neither could a woman claim a child as 'hers'. Sexual relations were a matter for the community, not just for the individuals involved. Cohabitation had to be planned. Noyes enjoined a high degree of continence, in favour of intelligent, well-ordered procreation. Children were detached from their mothers as soon as possible, and put under the care of others.

Defeat by Public Opinion

Noyes was both the theological architect and the administrator of Oneida. In some ways he was undoubtedly a genius, as the remarkable success of his experiment in religious communism indicates. The community was seen as the social state of heaven governed by God – a community in which personal sanctification preceded social reconstruction. While the Bible was the foundation of their faith, they were, as a sanctified community, people who had passed beyond the literal interpretation of the scriptures. What they sought was absolute love among men: they were still growing in spiritual grace, even though they regarded themselves as already sinless. One of the ways in which this grace was developed was through the practice of mutual criticism within the community. The community assembled to hear the self-criticism of one of its members, and then to engage in comments on his shortcomings; finally Noyes himself would offer an exhortation to the member concerned, usually with some words of commendation included. Such a process may have done much to sustain allegiance to the community. Members, as William James put it, 'externalized their rotteuness', and publicly re-dedicated themselves to the life of the community.

Oneida flourished, and was still flourishing, when in the 1870s the propagation of its views led to considerable misrepresentation and brought public pressure to bear against it. Eventually, in 1879, the community was constrained to abandon its way of life in deference to public opinion, and its substantial property was converted into a joint stock company for the 280 members. The industrial activities were continued.

A number of other communistic religious sects have flourished, some of them, such as the Russian Doukhobors, who settled in Canada at the turn of this century, espoused communism in part and for a period, but without particular success. An outstanding case from Africa is the Aiyetoro Community in Nigeria. This sect was constituted by seceders from the revivalist movement known as Cherubim and Seraphim. They established themselves on the coast, and organized a communist system of production. Within a few years, their fishing enterprise had produced considerable profit, and the plain uniforms of the early days were abandoned for dress of individual choice. The community is essentially religious, and although it has a living standard far higher than the Nigerian average, it has maintained its collective services and its community structure.

BRYAN WILSON

FURTHER READING: E. D. Andrews, *The People Called Shakers* (Peter Smith); K. J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785–1847* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965); Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth* (Smithers, 1951); C. Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (Peter Smith).

Comparative Religion

The systematic study of religions, concerned to analyse, compare and classify them, and to trace their history and their relationships to the societies in which they exist, rather than to evaluate the truth of their beliefs.

See RELIGION.

Confucius

Kung Fu-tze (550 – 480 BC), Chinese sage: much of the traditional Chinese view of the universe, the gods and human morality and conduct was based on his teaching: Confucius himself had a cult in temples found in all administrative centres: the *Analects* of Confucius is a collection of his sayings.

See CHINA.

Mary Evans Picture Library

CONGO

Macabre stories of idol-worship, witchcraft, human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism which have at one time or another been told about the tribes of the Congo, reflect their deep abiding fear of the supernatural

ITS RELIGION, MYTH AND MAGIC make the Congo the most striking region of Africa, for here black men lived for thousands of years completely out of touch with outside civilizations. The Congo has always been the heart of Africa both geographically and, to some extent, culturally. Most of the aboriginal population of 15 million people are pure Negroes, racially different from the Semites of North Africa and the Bushmen and Hottentots of South Africa.

It was not until the 15th century that Portuguese explorers, looking for a new route to India, landed on the west coast and penetrated into the interior of Equatorial Africa. They found a country of immense rivers and impenetrable forests, peopled by black men who lived in a state of semi-barbarism. Portuguese missionaries made strenuous efforts to Christianize these pagans, and we read of 1500 of them being baptized with a hose by a Jesuit priest on his rounds of the villages. The conversion of the Congolese, however, was short-lived; it is estimated that there was not a single Christian in Central Africa by the end of the 18th century.

When the European merchants and missionaries returned to the Congo a century later, they found the natives living very much as they had done when the Portuguese first saw them 400 years before. They lived by hunting and primitive agriculture and, as far as their religious life was concerned, were accounted 'heathen who bowed down to wood and stone'.

In fact, some observers maintained that these Negroes had no concept of God whatsoever and only worshipped idols called ju-jus and fetishes. They were said to be under the domination of witch-doctors, depicted as masked wizards who performed unmentionable rites, including the sacrifice

Witch-doctor in the Congo with wooden arrows thrust through his cheeks: feats of this kind contribute to the awe in which he is held

Federico and Aldo Patellani

Musee de l'Homme

Musee de l'Homme

God is depicted as something of a tyrant who drove both men and animals from a pleasant land to a harsh life here below

of living infants. In addition, the Congolese were described as having such a low view of the value of human life that they strangled several of a dead chief's wives and buried them with their feet pointing towards their deceased husband. Cannibalism, too, was rife among certain tribes. Idols, witchcraft, human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism – these were thought to be the sum of Congolese religious beliefs and practices.

It is now known that this picture is only half-true, and is partly due to the difficulties encountered by white men in trying to discover the truth about African myths and magic. It is inevitable that a subject people should be wary of revealing their secrets to their alien masters. This is especially the case where ritual murder,

With so many ghosts and spirits to contend with it is natural that the pagan Negro should turn for help to experts in the supernatural. Two witch-doctors from Stanleyville: Congolese witch-doctors, called *Mganga* or *Mfumu* are a combination of soothsayer, herbalist philosopher and psychiatrist

trial by ordeal and similar savage practices are involved, since the European authorities immediately made such customs illegal. Whether the colonial governments were ever able to eradicate such ancient tribal rites in remote areas of the Congo is doubtful.

It is, however, generally agreed that the Congolese have some idea of what civilized people call God, though the principal difference is that whereas Christians, Jews and Moslems believe in a *personal* deity, the African regards God as a vague figure with no particular interest in him as an individual. Yet most natives would readily admit that there must have been a Creator, or Lord of the Universe, a sort of super-king who rules the whole world. They have various proper names for this mysterious and remote deity – Maweja, Mulopo, Nzambi, Kalunga, Akongo and so forth; and various honorific titles such as 'Elephant in Strength', 'Tortoise in Patience' and even 'Tomato in Sweetness'.

More specific is a god-chief called Lyangombe, a combination of a folk-hero and a supernatural being of great power. In general, Lyangombe is a beneficent god who is prepared to help his devotees,

Federico and Aldo Patellani

Armed with weapons and dressed to kill, the Watusi of the former Ruanda province dance themselves to a frenzied pitch of excitement before going to war

provided he is well treated. As he can protect his worshippers against sickness and calamities, he has a special cult and priests. Lyangombe enters into his chosen people and controls their actions, even deigning to allow his women followers to bear his children. In consequence, missionaries have found him an obstacle to Christian teaching, for his cult is said to lead to considerable licence and promiscuity.

But whatever the Congolese call God, their attitude towards him is inclined to be unceremonious for they neither love nor fear him as Christians are supposed to love and fear their God. This indifference is reflected in the lack of any kind of temple or even of a representation of the Almighty. Congolese folktales which embody a great deal of their religious and social history emphasize the distant, almost hostile attitude towards the Supreme Creator.

At the same time, there is a close, almost personal relationship between men and animals. The legend of why the dog has no hands, for instance, is typical of the animal myths. God denied the dog hands, but told him he could always live close to man, who would be his hands. Thus the dog is the servant of man, and vice-versa. God, however, is depicted as something of a tyrant who drove both men and animals from a pleasant land to a harsh life here below. No particular reason is given for man's expulsion from paradise, except that God was angry over some small misdemeanour. Alternatively, woman is blamed as the prime cause of men's troubles, as in Hebrew and Greek myths (see WOMAN).

The Drumming of the Dead

Despite the impersonal attitude towards the deity, the Congolese are conscious of the supernatural at every turn: 'every breath that the native draws is tempered and controlled by his awareness of the supernatural.' This means that the black man in the forests of Central Africa believes the world around him to be peopled with a multitude of spirits and ghosts, some

Federico and Aldo Patellani

Federico and Aldo Patellani

The Burning of Shakespeare

The famous explorer H. M. Stanley set out to cross the largely unknown territory of Central Africa in 1874. During this expedition, while encamped on the banks of the River Congo, his party was surrounded by hostile native warriors

'What is the matter, my friends?' I asked. 'Why do you come with guns in your hands in such numbers, as though you were coming to fight? Fight! Fight us, your friends! Tut! this is some great mistake, surely.'

'Mundele,' replied one of them . . . 'our people saw you yesterday make marks on some tara-tara' (paper). 'This is very bad. Our country will waste, our goats will die, our bananas will rot, and our women will dry up. What have we done to you that you should wish to kill us? We have sold you food, and we have brought you wine, each day. Your people are allowed to wander where they please, without trouble. Why is the Mundele so wicked? We have gathered together to fight you if you do not burn that tara-tara now before our eyes. If you burn it we go away, and shall be friends as heretofore . . .'

My note-book contained a vast number of valuable notes, plans of falls, creeks, villages, sketches of localities, ethnological and philological details, sufficient to fill two octavo volumes – everything was of general interest to the public. I could not sacrifice it to the childish caprice of savages. As I was rummaging my book box, I came across a volume of Shakespeare (Chandos edition), much worn and well thumbed, and which was of the same size as my field-book; its cover was similar also, and it might be passed for the note-book provided that no one remembered its appearance too well. I took it to them.

'Is this the tara-tara, friends, that you wish burnt?'

'Yes, yes, that is it!' . . .

We walked to the nearest fire. I breathed a regretful farewell to my genial companion, which during many weary hours of night had assisted to relieve my mind when oppressed by almost intolerable woes, and then gravely assigned the innocent Shakespeare to the flames, heaping the brush-fuel over it with ceremonious care.

H. M. Stanley *Through the Dark Continent*

benevolent, but many more malevolent. Further, he is concerned more with the spirits than he is with gods, because the former affect his life more obviously and are much closer to his own material world. Thus, even the members of his family, once they are dead, are still not far away; they retain the power to harm as well as to help him.

The African spends a great deal of time and energy in placating these *mizumu*, or spirits of the departed. In a sense, he believes in an afterlife much more fervently than many Christians, since no one 'dies' in the course of Nature. He is spirited away. And when the departed leaves his village, he continues to exist very much as he did on earth, needing to be fed, talked to, and even housed. Of course, life is more pleasant in this afterworld, because there is more time to drink beer and to dance.

Proof of the existence of the mizumu is easy enough to obtain, say the Congolese. Put your ear to the ground and you will hear their drums. And since they obviously exist, they must be treated with respect. It may even be necessary to offer them a human sacrifice in order to placate them; otherwise they will harm the living. One can see their handiwork all around – in the suicide of this person, or the death in childbirth of another.

This obsession with the ghosts of the dead should not be compared with ancestor worship. The Congolese do not properly worship anybody or anything. Their religion is based on a fear of the unknown. Their chants, dances, drum-beating, sacrifices, food offerings, and the wearing of all manner of ju-jus are nearly always intended to ward off evil. When the Congolese address their ancestors, they assume a tone half-wheedling, half-hectoring. A typical 'prayer' would go, 'O Father! O Mother! Can you hear me, old ones? Why don't you come and drink this good beer? And isn't it time you brought us good hunting?'

Previous page **During the painful initiation ceremony performed by the Mongongi secret society, members emerge from the forest in line, forming a giant snake, and encircle the new initiates, who are tested by being beaten and trampled underfoot**

Above **The ceremonial dress of the natives of the Kasai region, once worn by their ancestors for rites of human sacrifice and cannibalism, is now used during circumcision rituals**

Below **Among the Bapende the annual dance, known as *Nioka*, in which the men are painted to look like snakes, harks back to an old myth which tells how woman tempted man in the form of a serpent, and man turned into a serpent to possess her**

Casting the Bones

With so many ghosts and spirits to contend with it is natural that the pagan Negro should turn for help to experts in the supernatural. For the black man believes just as firmly in magic as we believe in science, his whole attitude to life is based on the mystery of Nature, as ours is based on a rational explanation. Two men are swimming a river. One man is devoured by a crocodile, another escapes. Why, the Congolese ask, is one spared, the other taken? The answer is that malevolent spirits are responsible, where we attribute it to chance.

The experts in magic and the supernatural are the witch-doctors whose religious and social functions have been greatly misunderstood by Western observers. The genuine witch-doctor called *Mganga* or *Mufumu* in the Congo – is a combination of soothsayer, herbalist, philosopher, and psychologist. He undertakes to predict the future, cure the sick, administer the tribal laws, and cast out evil spirits. He must not be confused with the sorcerers, or *Mlozi*, who work in the dark against their fellowmen and are hated by all.

One of his primary functions, as tribal medicine-man, is to treat the sick. Like all African pagans, he starts with the premise that sickness is caused by magic – in some cases by a sorcerer who has to be rooted out; in others by a malign spirit in the form of some animal hostile to man, such as a snake or a lion. The witch-doctor's job is to compound an even stronger 'medicine' than the magic spell under which his patient is suffering. Perhaps he will try to transfer the disease to the sick man's enemy. Or he will impregnate his potions and salves with secret incantations. To this extent, the witch-doctor relies more on psychology than physiology, and most of his cures would fall in the category of faith healing.

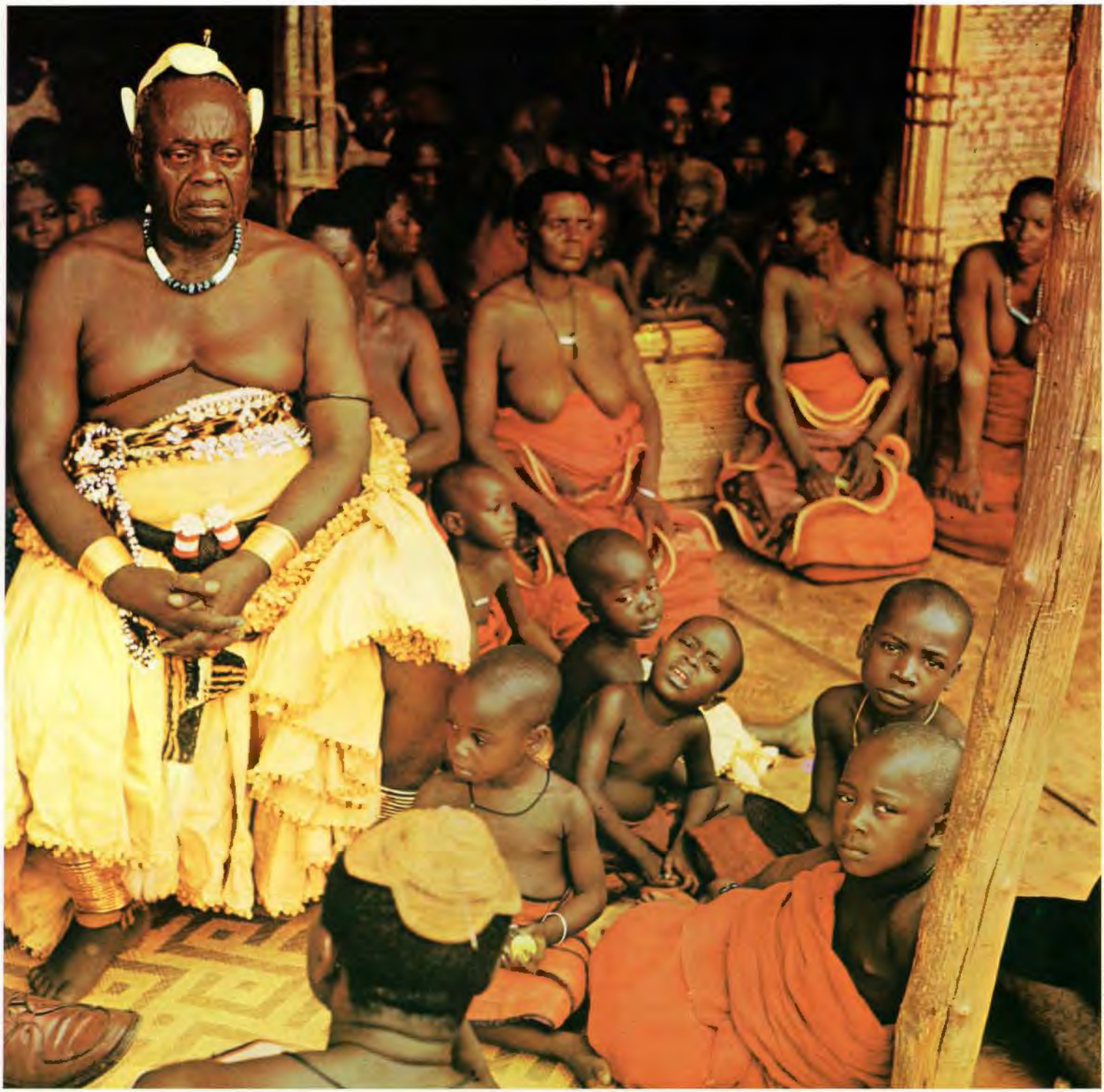
Another important function of the witch-doctor is to predict the future, and no Congulese would undertake an enterprise of any significance without first consulting him in his role of soothsayer. Divination is usually effected with the aid of 'the bones' – traditionally the leg bones of goats, highly polished and shaped to resemble the heads of various animals. The witch-doctor, after falling into a self-induced trance, casts his bones. There are reports from reliable witnesses that certain of these objects actually stand up and remain standing on end, while others lie flat on the ground. The soothsayer interprets them accordingly. If the bones signifying a crocodile or lion stand erect, he predicts danger, while if those representing a friendly animal remain standing, he forecasts a successful journey.

The witch-doctor is also responsible for the general welfare of the community and is called upon in times of drought to make rain. For this ceremony he organizes an impressive spectacle, decking himself out in a mask, feathers and animal skins, and leading a ritual dance to the accompaniment of drums. If he is a good weather forecaster, he will time the ceremony to coincide with the gathering of the storm-clouds; and if he fails to make rain, he can always fall back on the excuse that some evil spirit or some undiscovered wizard is opposing him. It follows, then, that his most important function is to 'smell out' sorcerers.

He has numerous ways of achieving this object, the most common being 'trial by ordeal'. The method most used is the poison test, based on the belief that the innocent will not be affected by the medicine while the guilty will succumb to it. Accordingly, all those members of the community who are under suspicion will be required to drink a poisoned brew. The witch-doctor will then interpret their degree of guilt from their reaction. Some Western observers maintain that the potion the witch-doctor administers is not poisoned at all, but the guilty assume that it is and thus reveal their guilt. In any case, the idea is not to kill the witch outright, since first a confession must be extorted, by torture if necessary.

The Secret Societies

And so it is that despite the complete irrationality of these Central African methods of 'smelling out' witches and despite the cruelty of the punishments – poisoning, drowning, feeding the victims to crocodiles, and even burning alive – the natives of the vast forests of the Congo accept without



Federico and Aldo Patellani

The wise and serene chief of a tribe may, after his death, attain the status of a god-chief, with the power to help and protect his people

question the necessity of eliminating sorcerers by any means. They are absolutely convinced that at night, crouched in their hovels, wizards make wax images of their enemies and slowly destroy them by tearing off their limbs one by one. In order to identify himself with the powers of evil, the sorcerer sacrifices infants and drinks their blood. Among his paraphernalia will be found human teeth, bones, cocks' feathers, and magic pebbles. And, to distinguish him even further, the sorcerer is said to have a special sullen appearance and to be noticeably antisocial in his behaviour. Hence, anthropologists trace the origin of the pagan Negro's obsession with sorcery to the primitive fear of the 'outsider', of the member of the tribe who in some way or other does not conform to the conventions of the group.

This obsession with witches and sorcerers often leads to the formation of secret societies whose professed aim is the smelling out of the Mlozi, but who, in the natural course of events, turn into gangs who terrorize the weak and innocent. Members of these societies, like the Bamucapi and the Atinga, who have been known to operate in the Congo, disguise themselves in animal masks and skins and travel from village to village intimidating and robbing the inhabitants. Such organizations were never wholly controlled by the white colonists. With the departure of the Europeans, it is probable that they have strengthened their hold on a helpless and superstitious population.

The general impression the European is bound to get from a study of the Congo is that the natives are self-condemned to a life of considerable wretchedness, caused on the one hand by their obsessive fear of the unknown and on the other by the severity of their tribal law. These factors account for their outbursts of violence as well as their indifference to cruelty, their love of dancing, feasting, and drinking, as well as their acceptance of drudgery and boredom.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: E. G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion* (S. P. C. K., 1962).

CONJURE MAGIC

ONE NAME for the magical beliefs and practice among Negroes in America's Old South; also called 'hoodoo' or 'voodoo' though only vaguely resembling the complex Voodoo religion. Elements of religious worship were perhaps more evident in some areas, as in New Orleans in the last century, but now the idea of 'conjure' means simply magic-working. In this it seems to have retained much of the African way of magic.

Practitioners – called many names, including 'hoodoo doctors' – were employed to cast spells on clients' enemies, or to take off spells cast on clients. Thousands of charms designed to kill or afflict illness have been recorded, using ingredients like graveyard dirt, bat's blood, chicken bones and feathers, salt and ashes, usually tied up in red flannel. Every conjure man had his own recipes.

The charms were not always harmful, but were used to cure ailments like barrenness, impotence, ill temper, anything (as the saying goes) from a bald head to a broken heart. The powerful New Orleans 'gris-gris' went into action for gamblers' luck and lovers' success. And these magics can still be found in parts of the South, even in northern ghettoes, wherever the credulity remains.

Barnaby's Picture Library

In the Old South a black cat's whiskers were often used in 'conjure' magic

This holy man, who predicted that the world would end in 1900, aroused the hostility of both the government and the Church in Brazil but his followers regarded him with reverence and fought to the last man for his beliefs

ANTONIO CONSELHEIRO

THE MOST SPECTACULAR of the various leaders of millennial movements that have arisen in Brazil, Antonio Vicente Mendes Maciel, called Conselheiro, 'the Counsellor', was born in 1835. He was the child of a family of impoverished landowners in northeast Brazil.

Millennial movements expect a cataclysmic end of the world and the coming of a better one. The migrations of some Brazilian Indians, sometimes extending across the whole continent, are explained in terms of a search for a 'land without evil' before the present earth is destroyed. A similar influence came to Brazil from Portugal, centring around the young King Sebastian who disappeared mysteriously at the battle of Kassr-el-Kebir, fought by the Portuguese in North Africa in 1578. Stories of the imminent return of Sebastian periodically agitated Portuguese and, later, Brazilian society, just as myths of the return of Arthur or of Frederick Barbarossa circulated in England and Germany.

The many wandering monks, friars, holy men and vagabonds who roamed about Brazil in the 19th century often speculated about the returning hero who would save the people from their distress. These penitents were often herbalists and prophets, and in regions without very many priests they catered for the religious needs of the illiterate peasantry. Some were held in much greater respect than the priesthood.

As a young man, Maciel worked as a clerk in various places. His marriage was unsuccessful and after his wife had left him he drifted into the life of a wandering preacher. He quickly gained the respect of the superstitious peasants, and acquired his name of 'Counsellor' because of a reputation he gained for wisdom and as an arbitrator in local disputes.

Maciel's appearance was striking, and his strange way of speaking in short, unconnected phrases won him the reputation of being a prophet and a holy man. He lived on alms, but very sparingly, and his fasts, ascetic habits and mysterious manner, made him an object of superstitious awe. Unsolicited by him, mendicants and others began to follow him from place to place, reciting beads and litanies.

In time, his fame had spread through all the great cities of the country, although he kept himself to the backwoods areas. In 1876 he was arrested on a false charge, and to his asceticism was now added a note of martyrdom. His followers, and the ignorant peasantry, were even more devoted to him on his release, and he moved about the country as before.

The End of the World

Conselheiro's influence was generally beneficial, and he was able to command local people to a variety of good works – repairing buildings, mending walls, building chapels – which otherwise would have been neglected. As a result, local priests were prepared to tolerate the descent into their parishes of the prophet and his rabble of followers. Such was his influence that just as he could persuade the poor to work, he could also persuade the rich to supply the materials for various undertakings. Civic authorities could not interfere, and the ordinary life of the villages and small towns of the backlands ceased when Antonio arrived to preach and prophesy. Healings and miracles were claimed.

After the establishment of the Republic of Brazil in 1889, Conselheiro's prophetic utterances came to have a clear anti-republican character. As long as he had been only the object of clerical censure, on the grounds that he over-excited the consciences of men and preached an 'over-rigorous morality', the civil authorities had done nothing to stop the prophet and his entourage of several hundreds. The accusation that he sought to convince men that he was the Holy Ghost, whether true or not, had not induced the government to confine him to an asylum. His preaching against the new and highly insecure Republic, however, led to a skirmish with the police but his followers, who were often vagabonds of dubious character, were too numerous and too ferocious to be routed, and inflicted severe casualties on the police.

Conselheiro's preaching began to take up the millennial strain that had reappeared at various times in Brazilian history. He prophesied the return of Sebastian, who would arise with an army from the sea to free men from the yoke of the Republic. He promised the end of the world in 1900, and saw his own movement as the gathering of the flock under the one shepherd. Many of his sayings appear meaningless, but they had that dark mystery well calculated to impress the simple people who listened to him.

Now in open conflict with the authorities, Conselheiro led his following north into the arid backlands and settled in the village of Canudos, remote from civilization. There he was joined by people from villages around, and then from farther afield, until a sizeable community grew up around the old village and in the hills round about. Bandits joined the new settlement and from there foraged the surrounding countryside.

Conselheiro preached austerity and privation, and set aside normal marriage, as the community prepared for a siege. He was hostile to the Republic, and his own society was run as an independent state at war with the outside world. But in 1895 he permitted a Capuchin friar to undertake a mission, to marry a number of couples, and to baptize over 100 children, even though many members of the settlement were opposed to the friar's being allowed to stay. The community remained a religious society, however, and in its own way was very devout, engaging in a great deal of prayer and the kissing of images.

The Siege of Canudos

Endemic banditry and the general inefficiency of the civic authorities in dealing with these numerous local manifestations of disorder perhaps accounted for the long lapse of time before any attempt was made to disperse the rebellious settlement at Canudos. Trouble arose after Conselheiro's followers came into conflict with the authorities of Joazeiro, a town some 125 miles from Canudos. Troops were called to deal with the millennialists, who lost many killed and wounded in the ensuing action, but managed to stop the offensive.

In 1896 a new force of over 500 men was sent against the settlement. This body was also repelled, and as a result of this victory many new recruits set out for Canudos, which now became an effective

The exhumed body of Antonio Conselheiro. This holy man prophesied that a saviour would arise with an army from the sea to free the Republic of Brazil

military camp. A third military campaign, with 1300 troops involved, was no more successful and the military were again put to flight. Eventually, a force of over 5000 was dispatched by an alarmed government which feared a major insurrection. A long campaign ensued, in which the troops suffered more than 2000 casualties in dead and wounded, and which required more recruits for the final assault on the stronghold. The difficulties of the terrain, the inexperience of the army officers and the guerilla tactics of the rebels were all factors which lengthened the struggle.

The millennialists were prepared for just such a siege; they viewed it as part of the events leading to the end of the world, when salvation would be vouchsafed only to those at Canudos, whereas the Republic would everywhere be damned. Only at Canudos would there be a promised land, in which men would enjoy the earth's abundance. A church with walls as thick as a fort had been built at Conselheiro's direction, where the long services of the community were conducted, and the ceremonies performed in which images were kissed.

Fortified with elaborate rituals such as these, which often ended in hysteria, the followers of the Counsellor fought with extraordinary tenacity. Time and again, they cut off the troops' supplies, and only when a regular supply line was established, and larger cannon brought into the difficult positions around Canudos, was there a prospect of victory for the government. The cannon destroyed the towers of the new church and soon afterwards, in 1897, Conselheiro fell ill, apparently of dysentery, and died.

The situation in the encampment was now desperate, with the military closing in around the centre. Conselheiro's followers continued to hold out, believing that their leader had gone to heaven to summon the assistance of angels. Two weeks later, the troops succeeded in forcing the millennialists to raise a white flag, but only the elderly and the children came out. The grown men remained, and fought for a few more days to the very last man.

Antonio Maciel himself was undoubtedly a deluded fanatic, of whom the principal commentator has written: 'The multitude created him, refashioning him in its own image . . . The people needed someone to translate for them their own vague idealizations, someone to guide them in the mysterious paths of heaven . . . He drew the people of the backlands after him not because he dominated them, but because their aberrations dominated him.' This is to see Conselheiro as the personification of the aspirations of a disoriented and disorganized people, whose way of life had never been provided with stability and settled customs, and whose grasp of religious ideas was tenuous and permeated with superstition.

Personification of a Dream

Maciel was a curious and magnetic figure, whose contribution to events, in providing the dreams in which his followers sought their salvation, became significant only after the end of monarchy in Brazil. He did not envisage himself as outside the Christian tradition, but rather as a special emissary of God, holier and more inspired than priests, but deprived of the priest's right to officiate at Mass. He had been infuriated when, on occasion, he had sought the right to preach in churches and had been refused by priests. These experiences may have hardened his teaching, and led him to make some dire predictions about the fate of the Church. Despite these prophecies, he had remained essentially in the Roman tradition of liturgy, and had encouraged its more superstitious and fetishistic aspects.

The overthrow of the Empire may have fitted into his hazy conceptions of the time of the end. Equally his change of attitude may simply have reflected a more serious turn in the mental derangement from which he was evidently suffering. There is nothing to suggest that his militancy stemmed directly from the aspirations of his followers, although, since many were vagabonds, his willingness to lead them as a hostile religious movement admirably fitted their aspirations and their pent-up and otherwise frustrated hostility to the authorities.

BRYAN WILSON

FURTHER READING: E. Da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1944).

Conversion, whether of an individual or a crowd, involves a fundamentol change of belief. The methods by which people can be induced to change their beliefs are strikingly similar, whether employed by the preacher, the psycho-analyst or the political indoctrinator

CONVERSION

THE CHANGING OF BELIEF to an extent that substantially affects an individual's outlook and personality is the sense in which the word 'conversion' is used in this article. This change brings with it, at least temporarily, a change from 'a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy,' to a self 'unified and consciously right, superior and happy', in the words of William James (in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*).

The restriction of the term to those changes in belief that *substantially* affect the individual's outlook and personality means that changes on this scale are likely to relate to religious outlook; indeed, in the past, when conversion in this sense was spoken of, it was always religious conversion that was intended. But conversion may be not only *to* religion but equally *from* religion, and in so far as the change in belief relates to those needs which religion exists to satisfy, such a change may fairly be called a religious conversion. Moreover, nowadays the conversion process may as readily be seen in changes of political belief, and in those major changes in an individual's outlook that may be brought about by psycho-analysis or other psychiatric treatment; and Walter de la Mare has spoken of falling in love as 'a conversion of the heart'. The processes of conversion are similar, whatever the change in belief effected.

Such changes can be divided into two basic categories: the conversion of people in groups; and the conversion of individuals. The classic example of the conversion of

The conversion of a person to a new religious belief is often confirmed by a ceremony after which the convert feels cleansed, purified and regenerated. Communal baptism, by Canadian Baptist missionaries, in a stream near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia

Picturepoint London

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Imperial War Museum

Kress Collection/Seattle Art Museum

Most scholars agree that conversion is a gradual process, often culminating in a sudden and dramatic climax. The climax may come at the traditional revival meeting with a spell-binding preacher like the Rev Billy Graham *(left)* and an outburst of group emotion, or at a mass political rally like those held by Adolf Hitler *(above)*, or in solitude like the conversion of St Paul *(below)*, who saw a blinding flash of light and a vision of Jesus saying, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

people in groups is the revival meeting in its traditional form. With a spell-binding preacher, making full use of such aids to arousing feeling as lights or fire, and music – often of a strongly percussive kind – and expounding graphically the terrible alternatives to acceptance of belief, members of the congregation will lose their individualities in group emotion. They may sing and shout, groan and wail. Some may 'speak in tongues', usually in an uncontrollable and incoherent babble. Others may be stricken by convulsions and roll on the ground in apparent agony. The revival reaches its climax with complete breakdown of rationality in all or most of the congregation. On recovering their calm, they will announce that they have undergone conversion. Accepting the new belief, they feel cleansed and purified, remade and newly regenerated.

Famous examples of religious conversions by this process are those effected by John Wesley in the 18th century, by Billy Sunday in the early years of the 20th century and by Dr Billy Graham today. There are also the early Salvationist meetings, and the many camp meetings, so called, of revivalists of one creed, or another in the rural districts of the United States. In the political field, such mass rallies as those held by Adolf Hitler in the 1930s clearly fall into the same pattern.

In the religious field it is not only the Holy Spirit who is believed to move the congregation. The notorious convulsionists of Loudun in France in the 17th century (see GRANDIER) were believed to be possessed by the Devil; and John Wesley, who had originally believed that the peculiar manifestations at his own meetings were the work of God, came to believe that they were sent by the Devil to bring discredit to his work.

The mental processes that result in the dramatic if short-lived conversions of this kind are believed to be understood and have

been extensively discussed, notably by Dr William Sargant (in *Battle for the Mind*). What apparently happens, briefly and figuratively, is that the individual is brought to a point of emotional stress whose only relief is breakdown, at which point acceptance of the new belief proffered is felt to be remedial and therapeutic. In the revival meeting, the stress is applied to people who may have been in a state of comparative equilibrium shortly before; their need for breakdown, release, new belief, is artificially induced. As the need is not long or deeply felt, the remedy is not long-lasting.

The Discovery of Unease

It is rather in the conversion of individuals that the process can be studied in greater detail. To start with, the often dramatic instances of instantaneous or lightning conversions sometimes adduced as proof of the miraculous workings of Grace can be dismissed. As the Catholic writer, R. C. De Sanctis has shown (in *Religious Conversion*), no conversions are in fact sudden and unprepared, although many converts like to believe them so. Conversion is the end of a long process of 'mutation', although much of this process may take place at an unconscious level of the mind; as it obviously did in the most famous convert of all, St Paul.

Its beginning may perhaps be defined as 'the discovery of unease'. The individual finds himself, as William James put it, divided and wrong, inferior and unhappy, in what concerns a major part of his outlook. Consciously or unconsciously he begins to seek an outlook that offers greater prospects of harmony and happiness. He may even decide what outlook it is that will suit him, and then seek to believe it. This was the case, for instance, with St Augustine of Hippo; originally a Manichean, he had made an intellectual decision for Christianity some time before he was able emotionally to accept it. But it is equally usual for potential converts not to know what it is they are seeking. If, however, they are eventually to emerge from the disturbed self through conversion, they will gradually become more inclined to one possible answer than another. Evidence that suggests that *this* is the right answer will be consciously or unconsciously accepted, and other evidence rejected.

During this period of seeking an answer whether it is consciously known early on or not, the subject is likely to become increasingly disturbed and unhappy. He will probably show, to a greater or lesser degree, many symptoms of the depressive stage of manic depression. He may feel himself to be lonely, isolated, unwanted; guilty and soiled; incapable of creative thinking; devoid of any capacity for happiness. He may reach that extreme state known to Catholics as 'aridity' or the dark night of the soul.

Sometimes the conversion – we might almost call it a cure, and such it is felt to be by the subject – is gradual. Gradually the loneliness, unhappiness, guilt, pass away and are replaced by more positive attitudes. Gradually the subject realizes that he is possessed of new and (for the time being, at least) satisfying beliefs. But sometimes the actual moment of conversion is sudden and dramatic, and these, not surprisingly, are the conversions we hear most about.

It seems clear that such a moment occurs when the subject is ready for it, but what constitutes readiness we do not know. Certainly the pattern of the new belief has been more or less established and is awaiting emergence. Almost certainly, in some sense stress has been increased to the point of breakdown. What seems usually to happen is that breakdown is triggered by encounter with some potent object, event or idea, a breakdown often accompanied by ecstatic happiness and followed by almost immediate acceptance of the new belief.

The 'triggers' themselves are various. For St Augustine it was the reading of a verse in the Bible that suddenly took on powerful significance. Often it is encounter with Nature. St Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, was by a river at the moment of his conversion; the American missionary, David Brainerd, in a wood at night. It may be a meeting with another person of inspiring ideas, though this is more often an early point in the mutation process than the actual moment of conversion. The trigger may be a religious service or edifice or image: Paul Claudel, the French writer, had his moment of conversion in Nôtre Dame. But the trigger may be comparatively trivial and only the sudden change perceived.

Calculated Stress

In psycho-analysis the moment of breakdown known as 'abreaction' is clearly similar to that of conventional conversion. It follows a long period of usually painful self-examination and probing. It is followed by the characteristically joyful release, the feeling of being 'made new'; in this state such hypotheses as the Freudian ones are accepted as true because they *feel* true. Political conversions, forceful or willed, can be brought about by similar means, as Dr Sargant has shown. For most individuals to be, as it is now called, *brainwashed*, all that is needed is a sufficiently long period of enforced stress, during which the subject is reduced to a state of confusion, guilt, isolation and misery; while he is presented, as an alternative, with the political ideas to which it is desired to convert him. The point of breakdown is reached, often expedited by a sudden show of kindness, a promise that guilt, isolation and misery will be replaced by happy purged 'belonging' once the change of heart is achieved. The breakdown occurs: the promised change is effected, though how long it will last again depends, in most cases, on continuous follow-up and indoctrination. Nearly all the American soldiers brainwashed in Korea reverted to their former beliefs soon after they had returned to their former environment.

Many of these were, however, processed in small groups. This is an increasing tendency, whether used openly for religious or political conversion or indoctrination, or for psychiatric therapy. The method is both more economical than individual treatment and more likely to be effective with people of higher intelligence than would respond to the revival or mass meeting.

It is believed that some kinds of people are more susceptible to conversion techniques than others, though there is disagreement as to what types are most likely to resist or succumb; and there may well be differences according to whether individual or group techniques are in question. Hysterics, for instance, may respond to the more dramatic manifestations of group conversion, but are unlikely to hold any beliefs stoutly or lengthily. Psychopaths do not in general respond. It is variously said that people already holding strong beliefs are likely to resist conversion techniques or to accept them. It is generally agreed that the apparently normal healthy extrovert is the most vulnerable.

Renewal Through Exhaustion

The general physical process of conversion has obvious similarities to various others where change of belief may be less in question than mere release from tension. Native dancing is often adduced as an example, where a strong state of tension can be built up to the point of exhaustion and collapse, with subsequent feelings of release and renewal. The dancing manias of the European Middle Ages have clear likenesses to this pattern (see DANCING MANIA).

Since the important outward manifestation of conversion is the adoption of new belief, felt, at least for the time being, to be satisfactory, the possible worth of the new belief must come into question. For the person concerned, this is not in doubt: the new belief is validated by the satisfaction it gives and its ultimate truth is certain. A dispassionate judgement, however, must accept that *feeling* a belief to be true is no proof that it *is* true. As we have seen, all kinds of beliefs may be acquired through conversion processes, but some at least outsiders will judge to be of doubtful truth and dubious moral value, whatever immediate benefit they may confer on the person concerned.

As to the scope and durability of conversions, it would appear that the conversion of an individual by his own efforts and as the result of a personally-directed search is likely to be the longest lasting and most deeply held. This holds good whether it is brought about by gradual processes or by a final 'lightning flash' experience – except in the cases of those few people who apparently need more or less frequent changes of beliefs. The kind of conversions effected by group pressures are likely to be only temporary unless reinforced by constant indoctrination. Conversion may, as we have seen, be to any kind of belief substantially affecting the individual's outlook, and, whether belief it may be, to be properly called *conversion*, its adoption will change the individual, temporarily or permanently, from 'a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy,' to a self 'unified and consciously right, superior and happy.'

MARGHANITA LASKI

FURTHER READING: William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Collier-Macmillan, 1961) and by the same author *The Will to Believe* (Harvard University Press, 1979).

The extravagant manifestations of the Convulsionaries included violent agitation of the body and cataleptic trances, during which they were insensitive even to the pain of crucifixion

CONVULSIONARIES

THE TOMB of an obscure deacon, François de Pâris, in the little Parisian cemetery of St Médard, was the scene of a series of extraordinary events in the early 18th century. Not only were miraculous cures of the afflicted reported to have taken place after touching the tomb, but some of the visitors began to be seized with convulsions similar to those of epilepsy. These events attracted considerable notoriety; they were events which had their roots far back in the past and which were to have far-reaching religious and political consequences.

François de Pâris was born in 1690, the son of a wealthy member of the Parlement. A man of heroic humility, he declined to be ordained priest, although conscious of the call to serve God. His ascetic and charitable practices were legendary; so much so that in self-mortification he went without communion for almost two years. Worn out by his asceticism and his labours for the poor, he died in 1727, at the early age of 37.

On the day of the funeral, an old woman whose arm had been paralysed for 25 years was cured on touching the bier. Other miraculous cures were reported from time to time during the next four years. But it was in the early months of 1731 that a new and disturbing element began to manifest itself. Visitors to the tomb at St Médard began to be seized with convulsions and in extreme cases to pass into cataleptic trances, evidently as a result of contagious hysteria.

The Church of St Médard had Jansenist connections, situated as it was near Port-Royal which was a renowned centre of Jansenist scholars. When the cult of François de Pâris grew, the adherents who became known as Convulsionaries were a group of Jansenists, a sect named after a heretical Flemish bishop Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638). The Vatican had issued a series of Bulls condemning Jansenius's teachings, the latest of which was the Bull *Unigenitus* of 1713. A Jansenist heretic was therefore anyone who refused to accept this Bull.

Strange Things at St Médard

Jansenism had already been associated with spiritual healing before the events at St Médard. The first link was forged in March 1656, at Port-Royal, when a young girl named Marguerite Périer was cured of a terrible ulcer. She was the niece of the theologian Pascal, who had written in defence of the Jansenists. The second link came much later, in 1725, when a certain Anne Charlier was cured of a haemorrhage. This took place in the course of a religious procession, but the priest who had celebrated Mass and was carrying the host, was against *Unigenitus*, and therefore a heretic. The third and fourth links followed in 1727, with the deaths of Gerard Rousse, a priest of Avenay, and François de Pâris. Cures were effected on both tombs, but the greatest wonders took place on the tomb of Deacon de Pâris.

In violently ecstatic trance states, the Convulsionaries were completely insensitive to pain: from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

The fame of St Médard spread and the number of visitors multiplied. However, not all those who came did so for worthy reasons; on 7 August 1731 a certain widow Delorme came to the cemetery to scoff, and was paralysed for her impudence. Insult was added to injury when she was thrown into jail. Public opinion was still further roused, for political issues were involved; near-riots ensued, and in January 1732 the cemetery was closed by royal decree. This action provoked some unknown wit to write:

De par le roi, défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu

which we might paraphrase as: 'God is forbidden to work miracles here by order of the King.'

But although the focus of the convulsionary movement was thus removed, neither the healings nor the convulsions were thereby brought to an end. Evidently the connection with the tomb of François de Pâris was incidental, rather than essential. The movement spread into the provinces. Significantly, it found support among the aristocracy, and even Voltaire's brother, Armand Arouet, counted himself among its adherents.

The most celebrated of the Convulsionaries was a member of the Parlement, Louis-Baptiste Carré de Montgeron (1686–1754). Montgeron, whose early life had been far from exemplary, went out of sheer curiosity to St Médard in September 1731, and addressed to Deacon de Pâris a typical sceptic's prayer, beginning, 'If it is true that you exist and that you can hear me . . .' After four hours at the tomb, he emerged from the cemetery a believer, and the rest of his life was devoted to working out the implications of what must be reckoned as a classical conversion experience. He at once began the work of attempting to persuade the world that the events at St Médard were both true and significant. Although for political reasons he was in exile from Paris, he returned in 1737 to present to Louis XV in person the first volume of his massive book *La Vérité des Miracles*, in which he defended the authenticity of the cures of St Médard. Predictably, he was arrested and thrown into the Bastille.

Montgeron's book (the first volume of which had been ordered to be burned on his arrest) was not only a defence of the Convulsionaries; it was equally an attack on the French Church, the Pope and the Bull *Unigenitus*. He paid the price; the last 17 years of his life were spent in captivity, and when he died in 1754 Montgeron was buried in a pauper's grave. But he gave the world a disciple's picture of a movement which even the doctors of the Sorbonne who were against *Unigenitus* felt to imply 'reprehensible things', and urged should be 'rejected in its entirety as an object of horror and mistrust.'

Crucified in a Trance

If we ask what the Convulsionaries actually did to provoke these extreme judgements, the account of an interview which took place in 1758 between Lieutenant Bertin of the French Police and a certain Dr Dubourg of Paris is illuminating. Dubourg's testimony was restrained and factual. He was privately convinced that although the practices of the Convulsionaries were odd and indeed repugnant, there was no question of imposture or trickery; nor was there anything in them to offend against public decency. He reported that the convulsions led to five classes of apparent maltreatment, varying from kicks and blows to the dropping of weights on the abdomen, the driving of nails into the flesh and, in extreme cases, actual crucifixion – all in a state of trance. Women were particularly desirous of undergoing such tortures, which in their own private jargon they called *secours* (aids); those responsible for providing them, usually young men, were known as *secouristes*. The sexual implications are obvious. Other contemporary accounts tell of similar manifestations: for instance, the case of one Marie Sonnet, who was said to have remained suspended over a fire for 36 minutes, supported only by the head and feet.

Clearly what was involved was spontaneous or induced catalepsy, more common in primitive and Oriental religions than in Christianity but not unknown, either before or since, in the West. The body's rigidity and insensitivity to pain when in such a state are well-known symptoms, attested from many religions and many parts of the world. The ultimate object is usually to demonstrate the relative worthlessness of the body, and the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. In this respect the Convulsionaries have their place in the history of religious asceticism. But in this case the Jansenist origins of the movement introduced a political element into the picture, and as a result the authorities adopted repressive measures. Thousands of Convulsionaries were imprisoned. This had the effect of driving the movement underground, where it later gave rise to competing sects before disappearing completely.

Since the prosperity of a community and indeed its very life hung on the success or failure of the corn crop, our ancestors wove many superstitions around the harvest

CORN

WHEAT WAS GROWN in the Middle East some 7000 years ago and was known in Northern Europe as early as 1000 BC. With its cultivation grew up the concept of a spirit or goddess living within the corn plant who must be kept alive from harvest time until next year's sowing to guarantee the renewal of the crop.

In ancient Greece the goddess was called Demeter, the 'Giver of Wheat', and her Roman equivalent was Ceres, the goddess of grain crops and the harvest (see DEMETER). Not even the advent of Christianity substantially affected the essentials of this pagan belief, except to effect a transformation in the nature of the object venerated. Thus in France, the Virgin became known as 'Our Lady the Bread Giver', while in Ireland St Vulgan was appointed the patron saint of sowing and the harvest.

Any intrusion into the domain of the Earth Mother by the plough was surrounded by taboos and superstitions. In the ancient world a new plough could not be manufactured from the wood of an old one that had been struck by lightning, while hair was plucked from the hides of the oxen that pulled the plough as a protection against the assaults of the sky gods.

The Plough of Death

The plough alone became the focal point of many superstitions. If a man omitted a furrow while ploughing it was taken as an omen that one of his household would die, while even to dream of a plough, with its undertones of newly-turned earth for a grave, could be a portent of death. As a means of protecting the community from the assaults of malignant spirits a ploughshare was ritually drawn in a circle around the village by naked women at dead of night.

To ensure an auspicious sowing a hen's egg or a loaf from the previous year's harvest was sometimes placed under the plough before the first furrow was cut, and in Prussia the ploughman and sowers were doused with water in the hope that there would be a plentiful supply of rain. Some American farmers invariably sowed their corn in the dark of the moon, believing that this prevented the growth of over-tall, spindly stalks. (But South Carolinians preferred the light of the moon.) American superstition also tells farmers to plant corn when the leaves on hardwood trees are as large as squirrels' ears; and never finish cutting your corn before sunset. A corn stalk hung over a mirror brings good luck.

The Irish farmer tries to encourage the growth of his corn by placing a sickle in its midst, to remind the crop of its destiny. In Europe it was a favourable omen if poppies grew in cornfields, since this flower was originally associated with the Roman corn goddess Ceres.

For American Indians who grew corn, the ceremonies and festivals associated with the crop took a paramount place in their worship. Most Indian mythology personifies the corn as a corn mother, or perhaps two corn maidens (though the corn deity of the Hopi was the male god of the underworld – rather as if Hades supplanted Persephone). Many origin myths among Indians depict the disappearance and return, or resurrection, of the corn deity; and the corn plant is important in charms and prayer sticks used in ceremonies.

But the corn's dominant role is a central feature of the year's biggest ritual, the spring Corn Dance. The Pueblos have a secret and gorgeous Green Corn Dance in spring, really a series of complex rites, addressed to the corn maidens, the rain and the clouds. The Shawnee, Cherokee and some eastern tribes like the Iroquois have similar corn ceremonies: the Iroquois Corn Festival is a harvest rite, in September, with many circle dances and other fertility motifs, and women taking the major parts.

Corn was supposed to be particularly vulnerable to adverse psychic influences, and had to be carefully protected from contamination by the presence of the sick or by death. Those who were seriously ill were kept well away from the cornfield, and under no circumstances was a funeral procession

Michael Holford/Horniman Museum

Plaited corn dolly from Montenegro, Yugoslavia, made from the last ears of the harvest; throughout Europe corn dollies were kept in the farm to ensure the success of future harvests

permitted to pass through it. A vindictive extension of this theme was the custom among jealous Irish peasants of magically transferring their own misfortunes to a neighbour by secretly burying a dead animal or a piece of meat in his field.

Rain, one of the primary essentials for growth, could be secured by the farmer in a number of ways. Primitive communities usually employed for this purpose a rain-maker whose rites varied from scattering water from a hut roof as an intimation to the rain spirits to follow suit, to those of the Omaha Indians who spurted water into the air to make a fine mist. Among the Macedonian Greeks, it was customary for a procession of children to visit every spring and well in times of drought, led by a girl adorned with flowers, singing:

> Send Thou us a still small rain
> That the fields may fruitful be
> And vines in blossom we may see
> That the grain be full and sound
> And wealthy grow the folks around.

In the United States farmers of the old school in the Ozark hills tried to ensure plentiful rain by soaking cobs from the seed corn in water. Only when the new crop was thought secure would the cobs be buried or cast into a running stream.

The Last Sheaf

When the corn was ripe for harvesting the first sheaves were sometimes gathered and taken into the church. The people of Lillers in France celebrated a Mass for the crop and blessed the wheat and fruit. At Valenciennes, following the feast of St Veronica, dancers were led by a girl dressed in white who presented grain to the onlookers in return for money which was spent on wine. In a similar custom taking place annually at Richmond, Yorkshire, the first farmer to offer the Mayor a substantial specimen of the new crop is ceremonially given a bottle of wine at the Market Cross.

In the British Isles the gathering of the harvest was generally supervised in the old days by a workman called 'The Lord of the Harvest', assisted by another known as 'The Lady'. During the reaping the farmer generally remained well in the background. In Ireland it was the custom to attach a small box containing insects to the scythe handle in the belief that it would intensify its cutting

Andy Weir

Italian bread baked to represent the local goddess of crops and fertility

power. The most significant of the former rituals enacted by the reapers were associated with the last sheaf, once believed to contain the spirit of the corn. Sometimes a few ears of corn were left standing in the field but more often these were plaited as they stood into a 'corn dolly' and then severed by the sharp blades of sickles hurled by the reapers. The 'dolly' was kept in the farm until the beginning of the new season's ploughing, thus ensuring continuity.

The last sheaf of the harvest might symbolize either a human being or an animal. In parts of Germany the sheaf was referred to as a pig, he-goat, wolf, straw cock or rye sow, and in the Kiel district as the corn cat. In Scotland it was called the maiden, the old wife, or the clyack chief, while in England it was variously known as the mare, the maiden, kern baby, or kern doll.

Trespassers Will Be Sacrificed

In Cornwall the last handful of corn, called 'the neck', was always ceremoniously cut by the oldest reaper who cried out at the same time: 'I havet! I havet! I havet!' When asked what he had, he replied, 'A neck! A neck! A neck!' The sheaf was cut and carried to the farm with much merriment, decked with ribbons and then left until the following year. Sometimes it might be set up near the gate of the cornfield as a magical charm against unfavourable weather.

In Central Europe the 'corn mother' wandered the fields in spirit at night, dressed in a linen robe with cornstalks for hair. During summer when the wind blew through the corn, sending great waves from one end of the field to the other, German peasants would mutter 'the corn mother is going through the corn' and children were warned to keep well away lest the corn mother should catch them. Behind this mysterious belief lie certain dark traditions of human and animal sacrifice, as suggested by the saying in parts of Bavaria that he who gives the last stroke at threshing has 'killed the corn man'. In ancient times any stranger passing through the cornfield might be sacrificed as the ritual representative of the corn spirit, and it was long accepted that a forfeit might be demanded from any stranger venturing among the harvesters.

Among the other rites which have gone the way of sickle and scythe has been a ritual associated with gleaning, in which there was a garlanded Queen of Gleaners: this was once as important a rite of the corn harvest as the dolly. Yet although mechanization has gradually displaced the age-old rites, man stubbornly refuses to abandon ideas that are as old as the cultivation of corn itself. But the ceremonial side is today mainly confined to the revived agricultural festivals of the Church and in particular the Harvest Festival.

Most interesting, however, is the survival of a tradition that originated with ancient rites of the cornfield and which forms part of the wedding ceremony. It is not generally realized that the wedding cake is a relic of the symbolic corn ears worn by the bride in the pagan past to ensure fertility. These, in the course of time, were replaced by cakes and were scattered over the newly-married couple as they left the church. The pleasing custom of sending pieces of cake to guests and friends is a modern expression of an ancient desire to share with one's friends the magic of the corn spirit.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: G. E. Evans, *Ask the Fellows who Cut the Hay* (Faber, London, 1966); J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980); R. Sheppard and E. Newton, *The Story of Bread* (Fernhill, 1957).

Cornucopia

Literally in Latin, 'horn of plenty': generally a twisted horn overflowing with fruit and flowers, a symbol of abundance and prosperity; often shown in the hands of Plutus, god of wealth, Fortuna, goddess of fortune, and other deities: in Greek mythology it was originally the horn of Amaltheia, the goat which suckled the infant Zeus; he rewarded her by putting her in the sky as the constellation Capricorn.

Slide Centre

Fairies of one sort or another were once commonly seen in Cornwall — and not only by imaginative children. Grown men and women had a healthy respect for the 'little people' and preferred to keep on the right side of these touchy and capricious spirits

CORNWALL

A CENTURY AGO the Cornish 'piskey', now surviving merely as a banal motif on innumerable brass toasting forks and other souvenirs for tourists, was alive in the imagination of thousands of Cornishmen. He was only one of a number of supernatural beings which were believed to people the countryside, both above and below ground.

Because of its isolation, geographical and linguistic, Cornwall has a strongly individual tradition of legend. Folk tales, or 'drolls' as they are called, are of giants, of saints not known in England, and of holy wells. Superstitions sometimes centre around the great standing stones, the cromlechs, the *men scryfa* left in Cornwall by the contemporaries of the men who put up Stonehenge. There are also the stories and beliefs of those who follow the traditional occupations of the Cornishman: mining tin and catching fish.

The Little People

In the 19th century, belief in the 'little people' was widespread, as illustrated in two stories quoted in A. K. Hamilton Jenkin's book *Cornwall and its People*. Mrs Rebecca Noall of St Ives, who died in 1927, told the author how she had seen the little people in her youth. One evening after working late at her trade as a dressmaker, she was walking home escorted by her father when an extraordinary sight appeared: on each side of them they saw a procession of the little people, walking in orderly fashion, arm-in-arm, with the greatest decorum and dignity. The old lady used to describe them as being the neatest little creatures imaginable, and beautifully dressed in scarlet cloaks and black steeple-crowned hats. Her father had evidently seen them as clearly as herself for, in a whisper, he bade her keep strict silence and avoid attracting attention by any exclamation of surprise. Thus they reached home in safety, none the worse for their strange encounter.

The fairies were mischief-makers and took a naughty delight in 'mazing' walkers in the country, so that they lost their way on familiar paths. The only way to break the spell was to turn some garment inside out. Jenkin had such an incident described to him by a man whose wife had recently suffered from the fairies' attentions. The small people could be aggressive: William Bottrell, in a 19th century collection of Cornish folklore, tells how a smuggler who planned to land some goods on Penzance's Eastern Green, went to spy out the land. Climbing a hillock, he came across hundreds of the piskeys dancing. 'Tom noted that the little men were all rigged in green,' says Bottrell, 'except for their scarlet caps (small people are so fond of that coloured headgear,

John Webb

The mischievous and sometimes malevolent piskeys, reputed to have caused so much havoc in 19th century Cornwall, have now become familiar figures in the Cornish tourist trade

that they used to be nick-named "redcaps"). But what struck his fancy and tickled him most was to see the little, old, grave-looking pipers with their long beards wagging. For the life of him, Tom could not forbear shouting "Will 'e be shaved . . . will 'e be shaved old redcaps?"' At once hundreds of the dancers lined up, armed in an instant with bows, spears and slings. 'Tom made off to the boat, and his comrades followed close on his heels; but on the way, a shower of pebbles fell on them, and burned like coals of fire wherever they hit them.'

Miniature Miners

The 'knackers' or 'knockers' are mine fairies. They haunt only the richest lodes, so to hear them at work was a good sign; many a lode of good ore has been discovered by hearing them singing and knocking. The miners would leave a small piece of their dinner on the floor for the knackers; if they did not, then the little creatures would find some way of punishing this meanness. This was called leaving a 'didjan' (a small piece) for 'bucca'. Originally a bucca was a spirit that must be propitiated and fishermen would leave a fish on the sands for him; at harvest time they left bread and beer. There were two buccas, 'Bucca Gwidden', the good or white one, and 'Bucca Dhu', the bad or black one. Many miners have recounted suddenly breaking through into a lode and finding the knackers all at work in a cavity, with miniature picks and other equipment.

Other small inhabitants of the West Cornwall peninsula were the spriggans, spiteful creatures forever carrying off babies from their cradles, and popping their own ugly brats inside instead. One way of getting rid of the changeling was for the robbed mother to take the creature and dip it in a holy well on the first three Wednesdays in May. Another was to make a smoky fire with green ferns in the hearth; when the house was full of smoke, the unfortunate changeling would be thrown down on the hearthstone, and the injured mother would rush out of doors and run three times around the house. When she returned, her own child should have been put in the changeling's place.

Spriggans, like the buccas, were watchful of old pieties. They guarded the vast treasures that were buried by the old kings. Anyone digging for treasure was likely to find himself surrounded by hundreds of spriggans, who would so scare him that he would be forced to rush off; after this experience he would be so ill that he must spend several days in bed. If he dared to return to the place he had tried to desecrate, he would find the hole filled in, so that no trace of it could be found.

Cornwall is famous for its logans or rocking stones, the best known example being at Treryn Dinas on the western peninsula. Logan Rock was most delicately balanced, though enormous. Like all others of its

kind, it had magical associations, and for thousands of years the Cornish had regarded the stone respectfully. Early in the 19th century a lieutenant in the Royal Navy for a wager sent the great stone crashing to the bottom of the cliff with a single push. Local opinion was outraged and the Admiralty ordered the officer to replace the stone at his own expense. The operation was duly carried out with block and tackle, but the logan never rocked as well again.

All the great rocks have some association. In connection with Merlin's Chair, a square formation of rock, situated opposite Mousehole, there was a saying:

> There are those who shall land on the
> rock of Merlyn
> Who shall burn Penzance, Paul and Newlyn

This prophecy was fulfilled in 1595, when a force of Spaniards landed and did just that.

Logans and 'chairs' are natural formations, but the prehistoric standing stones were put there by the hand of man. The most potent magically was the *Men-an-Tol*, the holed or 'crick stone'. The most famous of them is at Madron, near Penzance. Here there are three standing stones, the middle larger one pierced with a hole in its centre. Until this century, the country people used to crawl through this hole for the cure of lumbago, sciatica and cricks in the back. It also possessed curative powers for rickets. Children afflicted with this defect were passed nine times through the hole. A man stood on one side of the stone, a woman on the other; the child was passed with the sun from east to west, and from right to left, a boy from the woman to the man, and a girl from the man to the woman. The order had to be very strictly observed.

There are many other holed stones too in this neighbourhood, called 'Quoits'. According to local legend the giants who inhabited the district used these stones to play quoits. One of these was the giant who lived on Carn Galva, who used them to play with a human friend and also with neighbouring giants. The rocks scattered all over West Cornwall are the result of the giants bombarding each other when vexed.

Cursing and Ill-Wishing

There are many Cornish ghost stories associated with the sea. A seaman's apparition will appear to his wife or sweetheart at the moment of his drowning; sometimes a great ghost ship in full sail appears off the coast. The most gripping story concerns the wreck of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's flagship, the *Association*, on the Gilstone in the Scillies. This has recently been discovered by underwater divers, who have recovered considerable amounts of treasure from the bottom. It is said that a local man in the crew warned Sir Cloudesley that he was steering too close for safety. Incensed, the Admiral ordered him to be hanged. Before he was launched off the yardarm, the condemned man requested that a psalm be read, and chose the 109th, known as the 'cursing psalm'. The execution was duly carried out but not before he had sworn that the ship would sink. No sooner had the sailor's body been heaved overboard than the sky grew dark, and a tempest blew. The ghost of the hanged man appeared in the water, and followed the ship till she struck.

The cursing psalm was often used by witches. Powers of sorcery ran in certain of the oldest families, in the seventh son of a seventh son, or daughter of daughter. Touching a logan stone nine times at midnight also turned a person into a witch; another method involved the feeding of a toad with consecrated bread. Witches often transformed themselves into hares and would ride about in the night on ragwort stems, usually to a meeting at a logan stone.

Witches could cure complaints, and they could also 'ill-wish'. It is still believed by quite a few people throughout the county that power to bring ill-luck by cursing does in fact reside with certain persons, and that they use it. The idea is very much alive: anyone looking pale and wan is likely to hear the comment 'Es, me'andsome, yor lookin' brer ill-wished. Was the matter?' ('Yes, my handsome, you are looking very ill-wished. What's the matter?') This common expression does not in fact mean that the speaker believes that ill-wishing has taken place, but it does show the survival of the idiom.

As well as verbal charms, there were actual objects. The most interesting was the 'milpreve' (from the Cornish *myl pref*, 'a thousand snakes'). This was a type of prehistoric bead, blue with sometimes a yellow wriggly line (a 'snake'). Boiling water with this bead, which is also known as an 'adder stone', makes an effective draught for those stung by adders. This is a living link between Cornwall and the Druids, for Pliny describes how among the Druids a bead known as the *ovum anguinum*, the 'snake's egg' was worn as a badge of office, and how it was formed from the breath of a mass of snakes.

These milpreves were often worn in rings by white witches or 'pellars', who used to provide written charms for placing under pillows to work against ill-wishing. They often charged a handsome fee for this service. Numerous omens predicted death: the sudden appearance of rats or mice in a house, the perching of a bird on the window-sill of a sick person's room, a blackbird seen through glass or the appearance of a robin. The hand of a dead man used to be passed over sore eyes or facial disfigurements. A wedding ring taken from the hand of a dead woman was supposed to be effective in curing a stye on the eye, if the eye is stroked with it.

Although many of the superstitions recorded by folklorists at the end of the 19th century have disappeared, there are still many curious survivals in the county, among fishermen and in children's talk. There are still families which get up at dawn on May Day and go for a long country walk – a tame survival of the elaborate 'Maying' ceremony of former times, but a real one nevertheless.

GRAHAM NORTON

FOT

The *Men-an-Tol* or holed stone at Madron near Penzance. Until this century people would crawl through it for the cure of lumbago, sciatica and cricks in the back

CORRESPONDENCES

CORRESPONDENCES

THE LION, THE SPARROWHAWK and the phoenix, the colour yellow and the number six, the heliotrope and the sunflower, gold, the god Apollo, a child, the zodiac sign of Leo, cloves, cinnamon and myrrh, a cock, a sceptre: the link which connects the items on this list together is the fact that they are all associated with the sun in ritual magic. These chains of association are part of what is called a 'system of correspondences'.

The most familiar correspondences are those between the days of the week and the planetary gods: Sunday is the day of the sun, Monday of the moon, and so on. European magicians use this set of links as a guide to the best time for performing different types of magical operation. For example, the *Key of Solomon*, the most famous of European magical textbooks, says that Sunday, the day of the sun (or one of the traditional hours of the sun – see DAYS) is the right time for a ritual intended to gain money or attract the support of influential people. A magician performing a ceremony for this purpose will use as many of the things which correspond to the sun as he can. He will light six candles on his altar, he will wear a gold ring on his finger, he may drape the room in which he is working with yellow hangings, he may wear a yellow robe adorned with hexagrams, six-pointed stars. He will burn cloves, cinnamon or myrrh in a brazier, and he may perhaps sacrifice a cockerel. He uses these things because he believes that they are secretly linked with a powerful force or current of energy operating in the universe, and that by using them he attracts this force and brings it to bear on the object of his ceremony.

This idea is part of one of the basic beliefs underlying European magic, the conviction that the universe is not a disorderly collection of stray bits and pieces but an ordered whole, a design or a pattern. The main strands in the pattern are the correspondences. They are the magical equivalent of a scientist's classification of the phenomena he studies into orderly groups, and they go back to men's attempts to make sense of the world by classifying things in terms of the gods who controlled them. The modern magician has substituted for the gods the mysterious currents or forces, at work both in himself and in the universe outside him (see FORCES), but many of the correspondences are drawn from the ancient world and are based, not on any principles known to science but on a symbolic or poetic logic which links together things that outwardly and rationally do not appear to be connected.

The dove and the sparrow, for instance, are still said to correspond to Venus, the force of love, just as they were sacred to Aphrudite in Greece, because they are noticeably amorous birds.

Planets, Metals, Colours

Similarly, the traditional connections between planets, metals and colours have a certain logic behind them.

Planets	Metals	Colours
Sun	Gold	Yellow
Moon	Silver	White
Mercury	Quicksilver	Grey
Venus	Copper	Green
Mars	Iron	Red
Jupiter	Tin	Blue
Saturn	Lead	Black

Gold and silver belong to sun and moon respectively, partly because of their colour and partly because it was natural to connect the two most valuable metals with the most valuable planets, the ones which gave light. The sun's link with gold explains the *Key of Solomon's* recommendation of Sunday as the right day for a magical operation to make money.

Quicksilver belongs to Mercury because it is the most mobile of the metals and Mercury is the fastest-moving planet. Green is the colour of Venus or Aphrodite as ruler of Nature, the force behind the green growth of vegetation, and copper is probably her metal because Cyprus was both the place of Aphrodite's birth and also the classical world's principal source of copper.

Iron is the metal of Mars because of its use in weapons of war and red is the colour of blood and bloodshed: also the planet Mars sometimes has a reddish look. Blue belongs to Jupiter as lord of the sky but his connection with tin is obscure though very old, for the Sumerian term for tin was 'metal of heaven'. Lead, the darkest and heaviest of the metals, and black as the colour of death were naturally associated with Saturn as the dimmest and slowest-moving of the planets known in antiquity (see also COLOURS).

The same type of thinking lies behind the other sun correspondences listed earlier. The cock, for example, is here because it greets the sun at dawn, and the sparrowhawk because it soars towards the sun. Cloves and cinnamon correspond to the sun, as the preserver and sustainer of all life on earth, because they were used as preservatives, and do in fact have powerful bacteria-killing properties. Myrrh is also a preservative, used by the Egyptians in embalming corpses and offered at midday to the Egyptian sun god.

Magicians influenced by the Cabala relate their correspondences not only to the planets but to the ten *sefiroth*, the aspects of God or parts of the divine being in the cabalistic Tree of Life, and also to the 22 Paths which link the sefiroth together on the Tree, and to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 22 major trumps of the Tarot pack (see CABALA: TAROT). A detailed system of cabalistic correspondences was published by Aleister Crowley in his book *Magick in Theory and Practice*. It was based on the work of Crowley's one-time master and later bitter enemy Macgregor Mathers, head of the Order of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN).

One of the uses of this system is to provide the aspiring occultist with a set of signposts on the 22 Paths, along which he tries to 'rise through the spheres' or climb towards God, a hazardous undertaking in which he may easily stray from the true way (see CABALA). For example, the path from Malkhuth up to Yesod, the first path which he must follow, belongs to Saturn and emblems of death are assigned to it, including the colour black and the yew and the cypress, which are graveyard trees. If he sees a figure in red on the path, or a horse, which is a beast of Mars, or an almond tree, which belongs to the moon, he knows he has strayed from the true path. Similarly, if he believes he is in the region of Netsah, the sphere of Venus, he would expect to see doves or sparrows, or a swan, or a spotted beast like a leopard or a lynx, which are creatures of Venus.

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CORYBANTES

THE WHIRLPOOL of Greek mythology not only mingled together a myriad of conflicting tales but sucked into itself many elements of foreign belief, especially from Asia Minor. The result, more often than not, is confused. The Corybantes provide a good example of this confusion. Their very name probably means 'whirlers', although even this is uncertain. In their various guises they usually appear as supernatural beings devoted to noisy, orgiastic dancing. But who they danced for and why is disputed – not only by modern scholars but also in the Greek stories themselves, where the Corybantes are frequently confused with another band of loud leapers, the Curetes (youths) of Crete.

The reason for this confusion is the interaction between Greek and Asiatic myths. Apart from their similar behaviour, both Corybantes and Curetes are presented as attendants on the Great Mother of the gods: Rhea in the Greek stories, Cybele in the Asiatic. As the cultures intermingled between the two sides of the Aegean Sea, Rhea and Cybele became identified with each other and so did their attendants.

Some authorities, attempting to make the matter clearer, tell us that the Corybantes are not Greek at all but purely Asiatic. They are ecstatic dancers in the train of the 'mountain mother' Cybele, playing the piercing instruments of the uplands. These were cymbals, rattles and 'bull-roarers' or stones with a hole in them which, when whirled round on a thong, made a noise like a rushing wind; they were believed to invoke rain. As well as being dancers, the Corybantes are associated with magical cures, especially of mental disorders. They seem, in fact, to be an example of the ancient and still surviving concept of the medicine-man, whipping his followers into a trance-like dance, purging them of evil and controlling the elements.

Such a precise attribution cannot get rid of the fact that the Greeks themselves muddled up the Corybantes and the Curetes

and when they were describing the Cretan Curetes quite often called them Corybantes.

Yet another element arises in that the Corybantes, or Curetes, appear to be connected with the Dactyls, who also served Rhea, the Great Mother. Rhea's husband, Cronus, had the habit of devouring their children. After she had given birth to three daughters (Hera, Demeter and Hestia), Rhea found that she was again with child. In order to cheat her husband, she decided to bear the infant secretly and went into hiding in a mountain cave in Crete. In which mountain the cave lay is, again, disputed: some say Aegeon, others Dicte, yet others Ida. It is interesting incidentally that Cybele was connected with another Mount Ida, in Phrygian Asia Minor. When her labour began, Rhea pressed on the ground with her hands. From each of her fingerprints, spirits or divinities sprang up to assist at the birth and protect the infant Zeus. These beings are generally called the 'Idaean Dactyls', *dactyl* being the Greek for 'finger'. There are various accounts of their nature and characteristics but they are all, in a sense, children of the Great Mother.

The Corybantes (or Curetes) are sometimes identified with the Dactyls and sometimes said to be the latter's offspring.

The Corybantes were frenzied armed dancers who guarded the infant Zeus. These strange nurses, who frightened away enemies by the clanging of metal, were believed to have magical powers of healing

Alinari

Whatever their name and parentage, they were armed with sword and shield which they clashed together as they danced round Zeus's cradle to prevent his father hearing his cries. (No scholar has yet suggested that the great god's later predilection for thunder dates from his earliest aural experiences.) The number of Corybantes or Curetes varies from account to account but they are often said to be three and it is thus that they are usually represented in art.

In other versions of the birth of Zeus, Hera persuaded her mother Rhea to allow her to take the new-born infant to the Cretan fastnesses, where she cared for her baby brother until he was old enough to marry her. In these accounts the Curetes are local youths assembled by Hera to dance and clash their weapons when the child cried. From a hymn discovered in Crete, it is evident that the Curetes were the object of a cult and were revered as attendants of 'Zeus Curos', the adolescent Zeus. The hymn is of the Hellenistic period but it has been plausibly suggested that the rite itself has far more ancient origins and that historical Curetes existed. These were Cretan youths who, in Minoan times, worshipped Zeus as a god of their own age.

In all these stories, whether they be of Greek or Asiatic origin, the same elements occur. In each there is a connection with the Mother of the gods, wild dancing, the warding-off of harm and the clashing of metal on metal. The last point leads to further ramifications. Many of the ancient tales present the Dactyls as the earliest workers in metal and also as magicians, weavers of spells both good and bad. The same qualities are also attributed to the other beings associated with the Dactyls, including the Corybantes, the Telchines, semi-divine beings of Rhodes, and the Cabiri, Phrygian deities associated with Samothrace and also with Asia Minor. In many versions there are dark stories of male fertility and mutilation, of three brothers, one of whom is murdered or revoltingly maimed by the other two.

This strand of fratricidal strife runs through all the accounts of the sons of the Great Mother. These artisan beings seem often to be thought of as dwarfs, echoing quite foreign myths such as that of the Niebelungen, the Teutonic smith-dwarfs who dwelt in caves beneath the earth.

Harald Schultz

Cosmetics

Preparations designed to beautify the skin: body painting, cicatrizing or tattooing are common in many parts of the world, for ornamental and also for magical and religious reasons: the Old Testament writers generally disapproved of cosmetics and the elaborate beauty aids of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome were condemned as pagan and immoral by the early Christians.

See COSTUME; TATTOOING.

Axel Poignant

Cosmogony

Theory of how the universe was created: 'cosmos' means the universe as an ordered whole: the great variety of creation myths can be divided into two groups; aetiological myths were speculative accounts of how things came to be; ritual creation myths were an essential element of ceremonies meant to ensure that human society, prosperity, order and the universe itself would continue.

See CREATION MYTHS.

COSTUME

Clothes can be the distinguishing mark of the specialist, whether he is a medicine-man, a monarch or a monk. Their purpose is less to protect the wearer from the bitter winds and burning sun than from hostile magical attack

WHY HUMAN BEINGS took to wearing clothes is still not agreed upon by anthropologists. A hundred years ago such a question would have produced the inevitable response that the answer was to be found in the Bible, in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. When Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit of the Forbidden Tree they 'knew that they were naked' and hastily sewed fig leaves together to cover their bodies. In more secular language, human beings were alleged to have an innate sense of modesty.

This theory has fared badly as anthropological knowledge has increased. It has been pointed out that notions of modesty vary widely at different times and in different places. An Arab woman caught with her veil off will raise her skirts over her head, thereby causing what Europeans would regard as a much more indecent exposure. Chinese women used to think it improper to expose the foot, and Japanese women the nape of the neck. Even among Europeans the parts of the body – especially the female body – which could be exposed without impropriety have varied from age to age.

Another reason which is often given for the wearing of clothes, that human beings clothed themselves as a protection against the cold, does not bear examination either. The early civilizations arose in comparatively hot climates, in the valleys of great rivers such as the Nile and the Euphrates. But while the Egyptians wore little or even, in the case of the lower classes, no clothing, the Assyrians and Babylonians were enveloped in layers of fringed shawls. Even today the Arabs in some of the hottest

Above **The costume of medicine-men and shamans reflects the belief that wearing ornaments or clothes made from feathers or skins will transfer the qualities attributed to the bird or animal to the wearer: a North American Indian, wearing wings made from eagle feathers, performs the Eagle Dance to bring prosperity to his tribe**

Even in Europe, the parts of the body, especially the female body, which could be exposed without impropriety have varied from age to age

regions on earth wear voluminous clothing, while the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, in South America, where the climate is bitterly cold, wear no clothes in the proper sense of the word. They merely hang from their necks a kind of leather shield which they turn around in accordance with the direction of the wind.

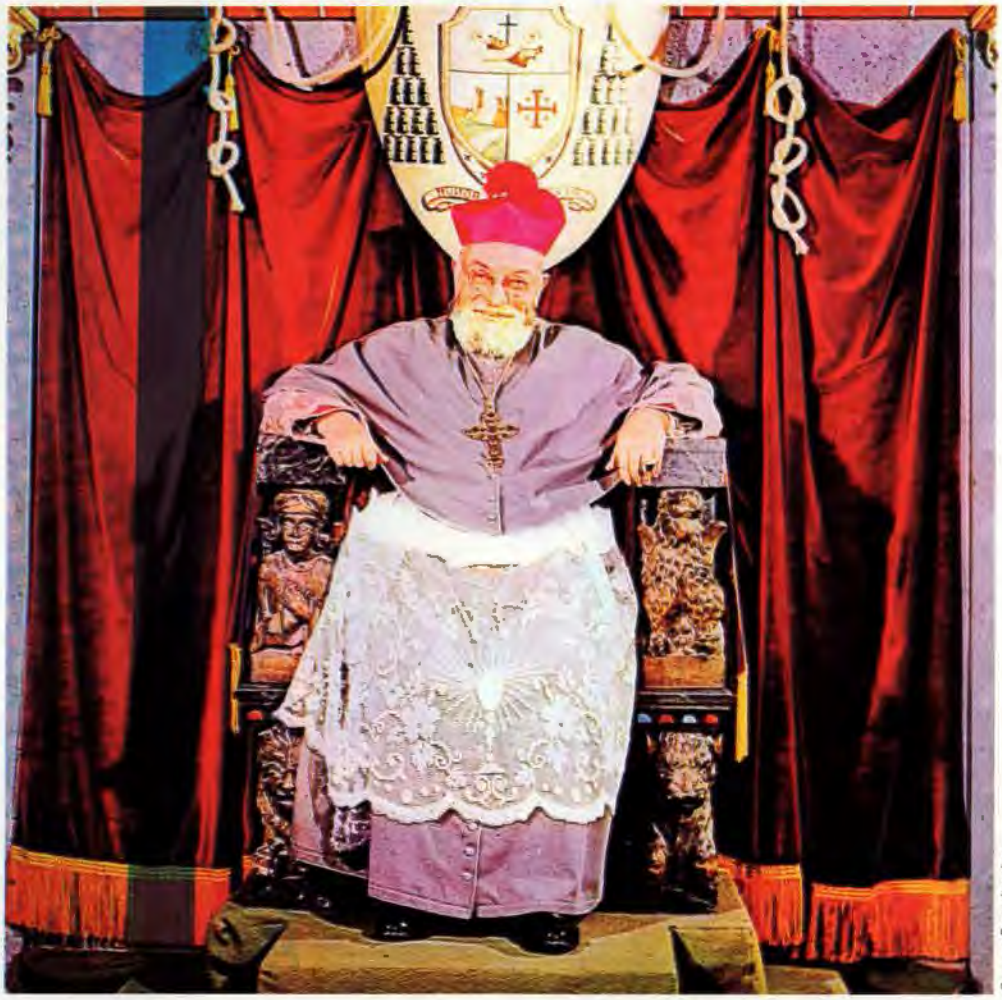
According to yet another theory, clothes were invented as a protection against the bites of insects: this would explain the concentration of clothing around the middle of the body to protect the vulnerable sexual organs. The modern view, however, is that primitive man was not trying to protect his sexual parts from insect bites – although such a subsidiary motive may have existed – but from hostile magic.

Primitive man had a horror of sterility, for a tribe which did not breed doomed itself to extinction. This horror was reinforced by his belief in magic. The 'evil eye' of an enemy could, he believed, rob him of the power of begetting offspring. He therefore sought to to protect his sexual organs either by concealing them or by the more primitive method of hanging near them some kind of fertility amulet. From the earliest times the most potent of such amulets was thought to be the cowrie shell; specimens have been found all over the world in burial mounds, even many hundred of miles from the sea. This shell was chosen on the magical principle of 'like to like'. To those who believe in it, everything that *resembles* something else *is* that something else, by a kind of mystical affinity. Therefore since the cowrie shell bears a certain resemblance to the female sexual organs, it is believed to have the power of promoting fertility.

In the same way, if a powerful animal such as a bear can be killed and its teeth made into a necklace, then the wearer's own vigour will be reinforced. There were other motives, of course, in wearing such a necklace for, in addition to being an amulet, it was a trophy and a decoration. The history

Priestly clothes in both primitive and advanced societies often show strong feminine elements
Left **North American Indian priest, painted in 16th century by John White: British Museum**
Right **Archbishop Albert Gori, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem**

Brompton Studio



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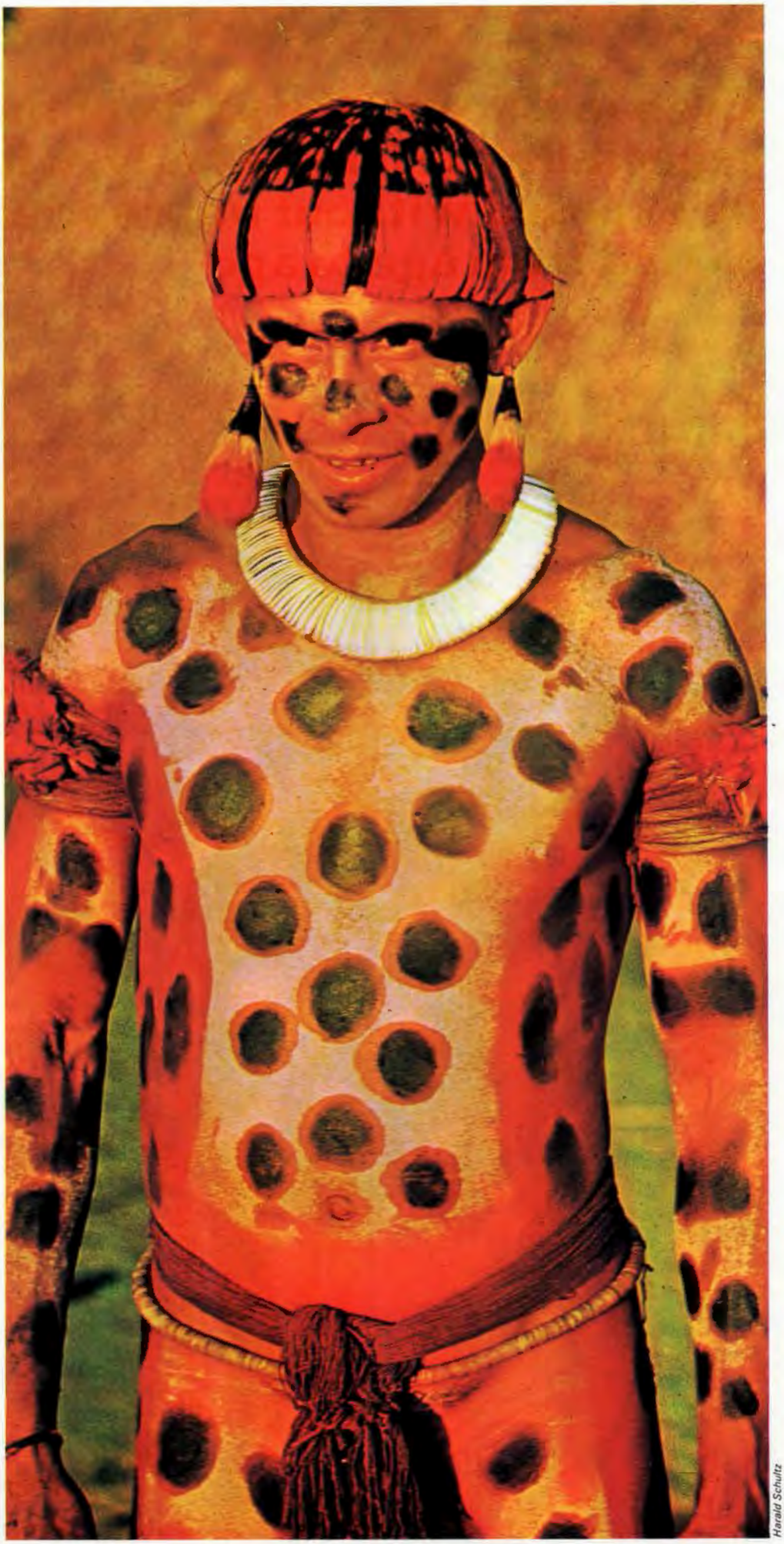


Harald Schultz

Modern body-painting *(above)* is a striking throwback to the tattooing or painting of patterns with special magical or social meanings, common in many primitive societies *Right* Brazilian Indian: the pattern painted on his body represents a jaguar, an animal that figures largely in South American mythology

of clothes, apart from their utilitarian and protective qualities, is largely a matter of interaction of these three motives. They are still exemplified in a modern woman wearing a valuable necklace. It is at once a decoration and a proof of her husband's wealth and social status; men having transferred such proofs to their womenfolk.

In any developing civilization the secular and the sacred gradually become separated. Protective magic is more and more left to a specialist: the shaman or medicine-man. Cave paintings of the Ice Age show that such persons were already distinguished from what we would call the laity by their costume. As Lawrence Langner puts it (in *The Importance of Wearing Clothes*), 'The ornaments and clothes of the medicine-man, sorcerer or magician of present-day primitive religions are intended to indicate his special relationship to the spirits or gods and his control or power over them. Thus feathers, horns or antlers, amulets in the form of shells, claws and teeth of animals, and complex systems of painting or tattooing having special magical meanings, and symbols of the totems, form part of the medicine-man's or shaman's stock-in-trade.'

We do not nowadays regard tattooing as 'costume' but to the primitive mind there was not much distinction between them, especially if both shared the same magical purpose. The earliest tattoos of which we have any record are those on the skins of Egyptian mummies, some of which date back to 2000 BC (see TATTOOING).

Why Priests Wear Skirts

Anthropologists have long noted the curious fact that the costume of the shaman or his equivalent in primitive societies has strong feminine elements. Some scholars have suggested that the wizard wears women's clothes because 'he stole them from a witch'. In other words, the first channels of communication with gods or spirits were ecstatic women whose functions were gradually taken over by men. It is remarkable that priestly

Harald Schultz

British Museum

Harald Schultz

Above left **Ornaments and masks symbolizing the animals and birds associated with gods and spirits are often worn by primitive peoples during ritual ceremonies: woman of the Umutina tribe in South America wearing a feather head-dress, and necklaces made from the teeth of animals, addresses the souls of the dead which are believed to be incarnated in the animals of the forest** ***Below left*** **A member of the Umutina tribe is threatened by assailants made anonymous by enormous straw masks, during the Hatori mask rituel** ***Above*** **Because a tribe that does not breed will eventually become extinct, sexual potency is recognized as vital by primitive tribes: tribesman of the Sepik River area of New Guinea**

clothes are still 'women's clothes' even in the most advanced of world religions.

A curious paradox in early representations of gods and goddesses is that sometimes they are shown elaborately clothed and sometimes completely naked. The reason would seem to be that sometimes it is desired to protect the *mana* or mysterious spiritual power of the deity in question from too rapid an evaporation. Sometimes, on the other hand, it is desired that the *mana* should flow out freely, as in the case of fertility goddesses. Hence the exposed breasts of the snake goddesses of Crete, or even complete nudity and the exposure of the sexual parts.

In classical Greece participants in sacred rites wore, in general, a longer version of ordinary dress. The Romans did the same

For Glory and Beauty

Part of God's instructions to Moses for making the garment of the high priest:

'And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the Lord." And you shall fasten it on the turban by a lace of blue; it shall be on the front of the turban. It shall be upon Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take upon himself any guilt incurred in the holy offering which the people of Israel hallow as their holy gifts; it shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.

'And you shall weave the coat in chequer work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and shall make a girdle embroidered with needlework.

'And for Aaron's sons you shall make coats and girdles and caps; you shall make them for glory and beauty. And you shall put them upon Aaron your brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. And you shall make for them linen breeches to cover their naked flesh; from the loins to the thighs they shall reach; and they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons, when they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place . . .'

Exodus, chapter 28

with the difference that while the Greeks sacrificed bare-headed, the Romans always covered the head with a fold of the toga. The vestal virgins wore a white robe with a border which could be drawn over the head and fastened under the chin. The priests of some cults wore the high conical bonnet called a *tutulus*.

We have no pictorial representations of the religious garb of the Jews, owing to their horror of 'graven images', but there is an elaborate description of the high priest's vestments which Moses was instructed to make for Aaron (Exodus, chapter 28).

There is some difficulty in distinguishing between priestly vestments and royal robes. In the early days of monarchy, the king was a priest-king. Even when the two functions separated, the priestly character of the king's office persisted, even if only vestigially, in his ceremonial robes. Certain ecclesiastical garments are assumed to this day by the English monarch at a coronation, and in earlier times the resemblances were much more obvious.

When Constantine, the first Christian emperor, moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople he abandoned the austerity of his predecessors and clothed himself in oriental splendour, wearing a robe of gold tissue embroidered with flowers. Byzantine costume reached the height of its splendour in the 6th century, as can be seen in the splendid mosaics in the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. In these it is impossible not to be struck by the ecclesiastical look of the imperial costume. The emperor was indeed a priest-king, the Viceroy of Christ on Earth, and if he did not actually say Mass he scattered incense on the altar and presided over Councils.

The vestments of the Roman Catholic Church followed a somewhat different line of evolution, their starting-point being sometimes purely utilitarian. The maniple, for instance, was a simple strip of linen worn over the arm and used, in the hot climate of Italy, to wipe the brow of the officiant. It later became more elaborate and was invested with all kinds of symbolic meanings. The same might be said of the cope, the chasuble, the stole, the cincture, and the dalmatic, a wide-sleeved, long loose robe slit at the sides. All these garments were originally worn by all persons above a certain social level but, from the 5th century onward, clerical garments became more and more different from the costume of the laity.

Frock-Coat and Top Hat

Liturgical costume – as opposed to the everyday dress of priests and monks – had become almost entirely stereotyped by the end of the 12th century. The only important modification was in the form of the mitre which began to be worn with the two peaks back and front instead of sideways and gradually increased in size. During the last two centuries of the medieval period, the Church grew richer and richer, and even the ordinary dress of the higher clergy reflected this affluence. For religious ceremonies, elaborate vestments, glittering with gold, jewels and embroidery were worn. Then, in the 16th century came the Reformation, one aspect of which was a deliberate attempt to return to the simplicity of the primitive Church.

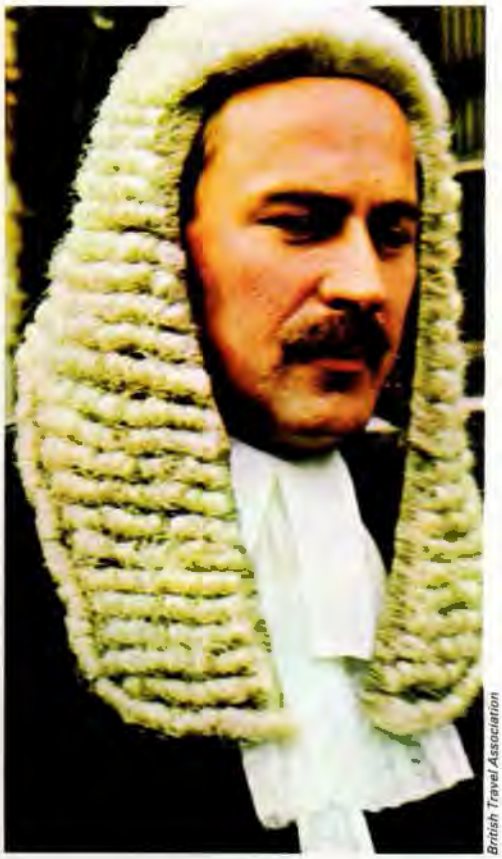
With most of the Reformers this meant an abandonment of vestments altogether. The Mass was abolished or reduced to a communion service requiring no special garments. Preaching became the most important part of worship, and the Calvinist preachers wore for the purpose what was known as the 'Geneva gown'. This was simply the professional dress of the day, such as worn by doctors, lawyers and academic persons, and, like their costume, was black. In the pulpit ministers continued to wear a gown, usually of academic origin. For ordinary wear the cassock persisted until the 18th century, one of the last Anglican clergymen to wear it being John Wesley. By the end of this century the costume of a clergyman was no different from that of any gentleman, except, of course, that it was invariably black.

The Anglo-Catholic movement of the mid-19th century brought back the use of vestments for the service of the altar, but in ordinary life most clergymen wore the frock-coat and top hat of their lay contemporaries. Their neckwear, however, was white, but varied in form from the 'Pusey collar' of the High Churchman to the white tie of the Evangelical. Up to the early years of the 20th century it was often possible to tell a clergyman's religious convictions at a glance by this exterior sign.

It is only within recent years that psychologists and anthropologists have begun to give serious attention to the basic meaning and derivation of religious dress. Some of its elements undoubtedly go back to very primitive times, and have a significance which would horrify their pious wearers today. It has been suggested, for example, that the mitre is ultimately derived from the open-mouthed fish's head worn by the priests of Dagon. The form of the chasuble with the hole in the middle has been thought to have had, originally, a phallic significance, since all primitive religions were heavily concerned with fertility.

This may be speculation, but what seems certain is that religions which have retained a magical element have also retained their gorgeous and symbolic vestments. Those that have become, or are in process of becoming, ethical societies and social service organizations, have shed their splendour and conduct their services in ordinary dress. Some clergymen even decline to wear the clerical collar or any kind of distinctive dress on the grounds that it imposes a barrier between themselves and the laity. The magical apparatus of the medicine-man has thus been completely laid aside. (See also HEAD-DRESS.)

JAMES LAVER



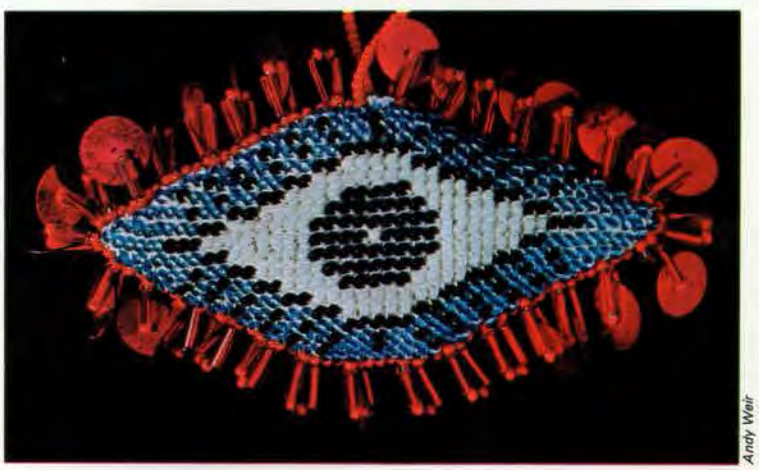
British Travel Association

Above **The wigs and impressive robes worn by judges and other members of the legal profession in Britain do much to emphasize the majesty of the law**

Right **Stylized flowers, symbols of fertility, and elephants, one of the most powerful of animals, form a pattern on the brightly coloured fabrics worn by masked Nigerian dancers**

FURTHER READING: R. H. Kemper, *Costume* (Newsweek, 1978); L. A. Liddell, *Clothes and Your Appearance* (Goodheart, 1981).

Camera Press London



Andy Weir

Counter-Charm
A spell intended to counteract hostile magic: examples are the gesture of defence against the Evil Eye, making the sign of the cross for protection against evil, or the hex signs, still seen on farmers' barns in the United States, which traditionally keep witches at bay.

The gentle cow plays an important part in mythology and nowhere more than in India, where in recent times she has become the symbol of the Indian nation

COW

THE COW FOR CENTURIES has been looked upon as a tangible symbol of life and fertility by nomadic and pastoral peoples, who depend on this uncomplaining beast for nourishment and prosperity. In mythology the cow has come to be associated in particular with the divine givers of life, the mother goddesses, either of the sky or of the earth.

In ancient Egypt the goddess Hathor, mother of the sun god, was frequently represented either as a cow, or as having a human face, with cow's horns and ears. It was believed that every night she engulfed the sun god, only to give birth to him afresh every morning. Similarly Nut, another Egyptian sky goddess, was depicted as a cow, supported by the other gods, and with the stars on her underbelly.

In many ancient religions, however, the cow as a source of fecundity took second place as an object of worship to the bull as a source of generative power. The male symbol thus took precedence over the female. This is true of ancient Near Eastern religion generally. In Greece and Crete, too, the bull-cult of Minoan-Mycenean religion was far more important than any corresponding veneration of the cow, though in some traditions the sky god Zeus was said to have been nursed by a cow. His consort, Hera, is described by Homer as *boopis*, 'cow-eyed'.

This idea of divine nourishment is also to be found in ancient Scandinavian mythology. Snorri's *Edda* tells of the primeval giant, Ymir, who was nourished by four rivers of milk from a cow. The beast, Audumulla, was herself created out of condensing frost. Being thirsty, she licked the blocks of salty ice around her and as the ice melted under her warm tongue, the head and then the body of a man appeared. This was Buri, grandfather of Odin, greatest of the gods.

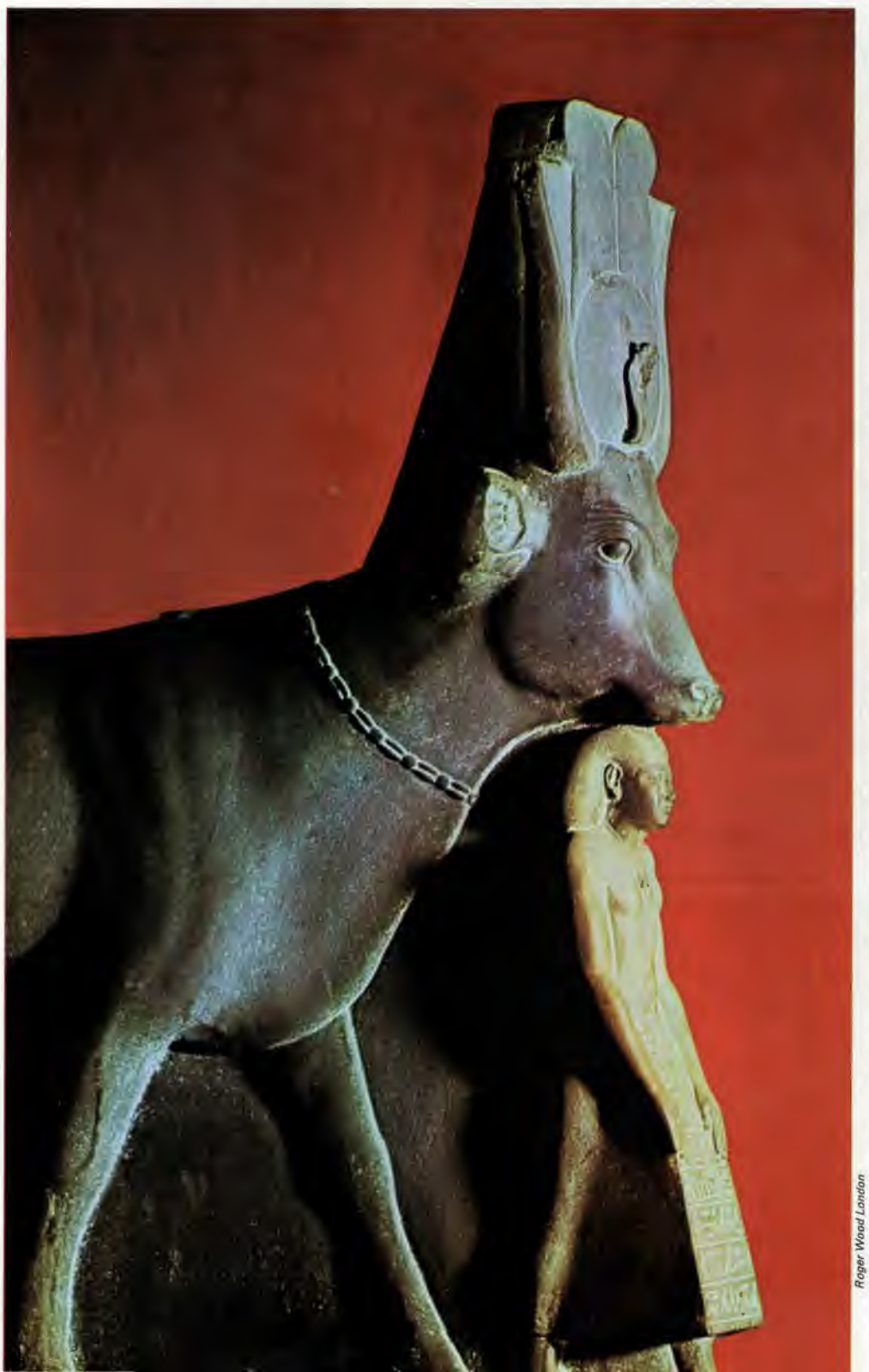
Accept the Cow

It is in India and in Hinduism that the cow plays the most striking role, both in mythology and in the day-to-day practice of religion. In practice, Indian cow-worship is restricted to one species of the animal, the East Indian humped zebu. The roots of this worship are certainly Indo-European, and have much in common with features already mentioned. The cow is thought of as a symbol of the divine bounty of the earth, and as the 'mother' of gods and men. The high god Varuna is called 'son of Aditi' in the oldest of the four chief Hindu collections of prayers and hymns, the *Rig Veda*, while the goddess Aditi is called 'the Cow, the sinless'.

The myth of the earth taking the form of a cow receives its first detailed expression in the *Vishnu Purana*, an ancient Sanskrit collection of legendary lore. In this, Prithu, the monarch of all, approached the earth in order to make her yield plants. The earth assumed the form of a cow and ran away, but was finally caught and persuaded to nourish the earth with her milk. Then Prithu milked the earth into his own hand, and there grew up all manner of corn and vegetables for man's food.

Although there was no express prohibition of cow-killing or the eating of beef in early Indian history, by the time of the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, of the 3rd century BC, it was stated categorically that the killing of a cow was the greatest of all crimes: 'All that kill, eat, and permit the slaughter of cows, rot in hell for as many years as there are hairs on the body of a cow so slain.' The *Laws of Manu*, the greatest of the Hindu codes of law, are less extreme. They lay down that slaying cows is a 'minor offence'. Provided the killer lives in a cow-house, bathes in urine, and follows the cows all day, standing when they stand and sitting when they lie down, he may expiate his crime in three months. It may also be noted that Zoroastrianism knew of similar prohibitions: Ahura Mazdah is the lord of all cattle, and therefore 'all robbery and violence against the (sacred) Kine' is forbidden.

The cow, by reason of her sacredness, is also a practical means towards the expiation of other sins. Again according to *Manu*: 'He who unhesitatingly abandons life for the



Roger Wood London

The Egyptian goddess Hathor, mother of the sun god and guardian of the dead, was often represented as a cow: statue of Hathor protecting the Pharaoh Psammetichus II

Brahmanas (the priestly caste) or cows, is freed from the guilt of the murder of a Brahmana, and so is he who saves the life of a cow, or of a Brahmana.' Similarly, he who has committed a mortal sin can be purified by attending cows for over a year. On a somewhat different level, a birth at an inauspicious time can be remedied by passing the infant beneath the body of a cow – thus bringing about a symbolic rebirth from the source of holiness.

Death Clutching a Cow's Tail

Not only the cow itself, but also its products, are powerful sacred instruments in Hinduism. They are especially effective in purifying a person from the stain of sin. There are five of these products: milk, curds, clarified butter, dung and urine; none must be wasted. All were important in the sacrificial rituals of early Hinduism, and have increased in significance down the ages.

Of the many reasons for the tenacity of the cow-cult within Hinduism, special mention must be made of the association of Krishna, the most popular of Hindu gods, with the cow. A legend told of Krishna's youth depicts him as a cowherd, devoted to their care, and yet dallying with the maidens who shared his responsibilities. Their devotion to him is a pattern of human devotion to God; but the setting, amid the cows, is also significant. Cow-worship was further strengthened in opposition to the Moslem invaders who had no compunction about the slaughtering of cattle. Again, it received fresh impetus with the development of the doctrine of *ahimsa* (harmlessness), with its implicit reverence for all forms of life, animal as well as human. A more modern development has been the symbolical identification of the cow with India as a nation – a localization of the original identification of the cow with the earth.

At present, the cow plays a variety of roles in the religious life of Hindu India. In some Hindu temples, a cow is brought in every morning, placed with her back to the image of deity and solemnly milked. In Hindu rituals generally, every part of the cow – as well as the five products mentioned earlier – has significance.

At an annual festival, the Gopastami (cow holiday), women attend an adorned cow, placed in the temple courtyard. They move round it four times, each time pouring water on the tail from a jug, and then lifting the tail to their eyes and head. Finally each woman kisses the cow, whispering, 'Truth belongs to you, and it is our duty to keep our promises.'

It is widely believed among Hindus that the cow is able to act as a pathfinder in the world beyond the grave, and that it is highly auspicious to be able to die clutching a cow's tail. For the lower castes, often forbidden direct access to temples, a cow-shed has come to fill the function of a temple in their daily lives.

The protection of cows in India because of their sacredness has led, ironically, to the neglect of their welfare, partly because controlled breeding and the exercise of ownership and restraint is virtually impossible. The traditional Hindu attitude, however, is summed up in Gandhi's well-known words: '"Cow Protection" to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in all human evolution; for it takes the human being beyond his species . . . Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives . . . "Cow Protection" is the gift of Hinduism to the world; and Hinduism will live as long as there are Hindus to protect the cow.'

Richard & Sally Greenhill

'All that kill, eat, and permit the slaughter of, cows, rot in hell for as many years as there are hairs on the body of a cow so slain', according to the *Mahabharata*, written in the 3rd century BC: even today in India the cow is a sacred animal, and its protection was described by Gandhi as being Hinduism's gift to the world

Coyote

Major Trickster figure in myths of Plains Indians and other tribes, including Californian; sometimes described as taking human form in a mythic past when animals lived like men; a creator and a central culture hero, he appears in many origin myths, teaching basic skills, bringing fire and so on, but his dual nature also places him in tales of entertainment where he appears mischievous, violent, erotic or merely foolish.

See TRICKSTER.

Michael Holford

Crab

Sometimes a symbol of the union of opposites, because it is at home both on land and in the water: in the Tarot card called the Moon a crab crawls up onto land from a pool, a symbol of the depths of the mind revealing themselves: in some of the Pacific islands crabs are gods, or the shadows or messengers of gods: the fourth sign of the zodiac is Cancer, the Crab.

See CANCER.

CRANE

CRANES FLYING IN LARGE, clamorous flocks attracted much attention in ancient times. The Greeks noted that the cranes travel in a wedge formation, which reminded them of the triangular shape of their letter D (Δ); and so a connection arose between cranes and the alphabet.

There was also a mythological or symbolic association between cranes and trees. On a Celtic altar of the 1st century AD, found in Paris, the god Tarvos Trigaranus is shown felling a willow tree in company with three cranes and a bull. In Eastern symbolism the crane and the pine tree, signifying long life, are often depicted together. In Irish legends there are indications that the crane was once regarded as having supernatural qualities. St Columba, who was called 'crane cleric' was said to have turned some women into cranes. In the West the lofty 'alphabetical' flight of the birds connected them with Apollo, the god of sun and poetry, and with Hermes, the patron of communications. But the association between long-necked birds and the sun is very ancient. Such birds appear frequently as a design on early pottery in the Middle East and it seems that not only cranes but other long-necked birds such as geese, egrets and even flamingoes were associated with the sun.

The migrations of cranes and geese have been connected with the coming of spring, and with increasing warmth and fertility, since time out of mind. Even today, when the numbers of cranes breeding in Europe are much reduced, the migrating flocks arouse excitement as they pass noisily overhead.

As happened not infrequently in the bird lore of antiquity, accurate observation merged into myth. Aristotle noted that cranes when sleeping stand first on one leg, then on the other. Aelian, the Roman writer of the 3rd century AD, improved on this; he stated that they posted sentinels and that these birds held a stone in the raised foot to help themselves to stay awake. Horapollo, a Greek grammarian living in the 4th century AD, referred to the crane as a symbol of vigilance. Thus the stone-grasping belief is probably an addition to much earlier tradition, based on the fact that the crane is indeed a wary bird.

Dancers Entombed Alive

During the mating season, cranes perform an elaborate and impressive type of dance, and this was interpreted by some ancient peoples as a form of magical ceremonial. The crane's curious movements during its 'dance' were imitated in human dances in Crete, China and elsewhere. Describing the courtship display of the American whooping crane, now a rare species, Margaret Rawlings wrote (in *The Yearling*): 'The cranes were dancing a cotillion . . . two stood apart, erect and white, making a strange music that was part cry and part singing. The rhythm was irregular like the dance. The other birds were in a circle. In the heart of the circle, several moved counter-clockwise . . . The outer circle shuffled around and around. The group in the centre attained a slow frenzy . . .' A crane dance was performed by human dancers in ancient Crete in connection with the labyrinth, the home of the Minotaur. The lay-out was circular and apparently the performance was enacted on an arena of swastika pattern. The circle and the swastika are both symbols of the sun so we may assume that the dance was a solar ritual, which is in agreement with evidence that the crane was a bird of the sun.

In ancient times crane dances were also performed in China. According to historical records Ho-lu, king of the ancient kingdom of Wu in the Yangtze Valley, offered his daughter a fish of which he had already eaten a portion, thereby breaking a taboo. She committed suicide, whereupon the king in order to propitiate her spirit and avert evil, sacrificed dancers by burying them alive. He constructed a magnificent tomb, furnished with objects of priceless value, for her remains. An underground passage led to the sepulchral chamber. The dance of the white cranes was enacted in the market-place of the capital. The crowd was ordered to follow the funeral cortege and boys and girls were instructed to enter the passage following the crane dancers. Then a machine was set in motion to close the passage and bury the dancers alive.

In the Far East crane dancers were associated with a group of ideas – thunder, rain, fertility and reincarnation. In Chinese records it is stated that black cranes and demons danced during times of drought. A picture of a crane is placed on the catafalque when coffins are carried to the grave in parts of China; a crane fashioned from paper is sometimes harnessed to the sedan chair containing an image of the deceased. Such a paper crane may be suspended from the window of the dead man's house during Taoist funeral ceremonies. The patriarch of Taoism, Lao-tze, is shown wearing a red robe embroidered with white cranes and riding a one-horned monster, not unlike a water buffalo. Thus in China, as in Crete and Gaul, there is an association between a supernatural being, a horned beast and the crane.

The crane figures in a number of fables. The story of a war between cranes and pygmies goes back to Homer's reference in the *Iliad* and is mentioned, among others, by Aristotle and, in English literature, by Milton. It was constantly repeated by Greek and Latin writers. It even travelled to India, where a tradition became current that dwarfs fought the monstrous mythical eagle of Hindu mythology, Garuda.

FURTHER READING: W. Harter, *Birds: In Fact and Legend* (Sterling, 1979).

The complicated and impressive dance performed by cranes during their mating season was at one time believed to be a magic ritual, and its movements were imitated in human dances: the sinister climax to an ancient Chinese crane dance was the burying alive of the dancers. Chinese watercolour in the Victoria and Albert Museum

Michael Holford

CREATION MYTHS

The phenomenon of birth, and artistic creativity, lie behind many of the world's myths of how the world began; this article deals with the creation myths of the ancient world, including the stories in the early chapters of Genesis

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD and the origin of mankind are the themes of many myths. They are found among the primitive peoples of most lands and they can be traced back into remote antiquity. Creation myths are of two kinds: aetiological myths which concern the beginnings of things, and stem from primitive speculation about their origins; and ritual myths, which were essentially connected with various periodic ceremonies, particularly at the New Year, designed to ensure the continuation and well-being of the state or even of the world.

It is interesting to consider how the idea that the world had a beginning or had been created arose in the first place. Although the idea is a familiar one to us, it is not self-evident. The earliest members of our race obviously could not have witnessed the creation of the world – indeed, to them in their brief lives, their physical environment must have seemed eternal, supposing that their minds were sufficiently developed to have reflected on the fact. However, two factors in the experience of the Paleolithic peoples doubtless gave them some idea both of the beginning of life and of creativity. The remains of Paleolithic culture reveal a great concern with the phenomenon of birth, both of humans and animals. The emergence of the child from the womb of its mother must surely have been a most impressive demonstration of the beginning of a new creature, whether human or animal. The earliest creation myths, indeed, instinctively used the imagery of biological birth.

The idea of creativity can also be traced back to the Paleolithic era. As the evidence of their art shows, the Paleolithic peoples must have been aware of the mysterious power of creation when they drew the image of an animal on the blank wall of a cave, or fashioned a piece of stone into the figure of a woman. When pottery was invented in Neolithic times, further stimulus was given to the conception of creativity. In several myths the creator-god is imagined as a divine potter who fashions men out of clay.

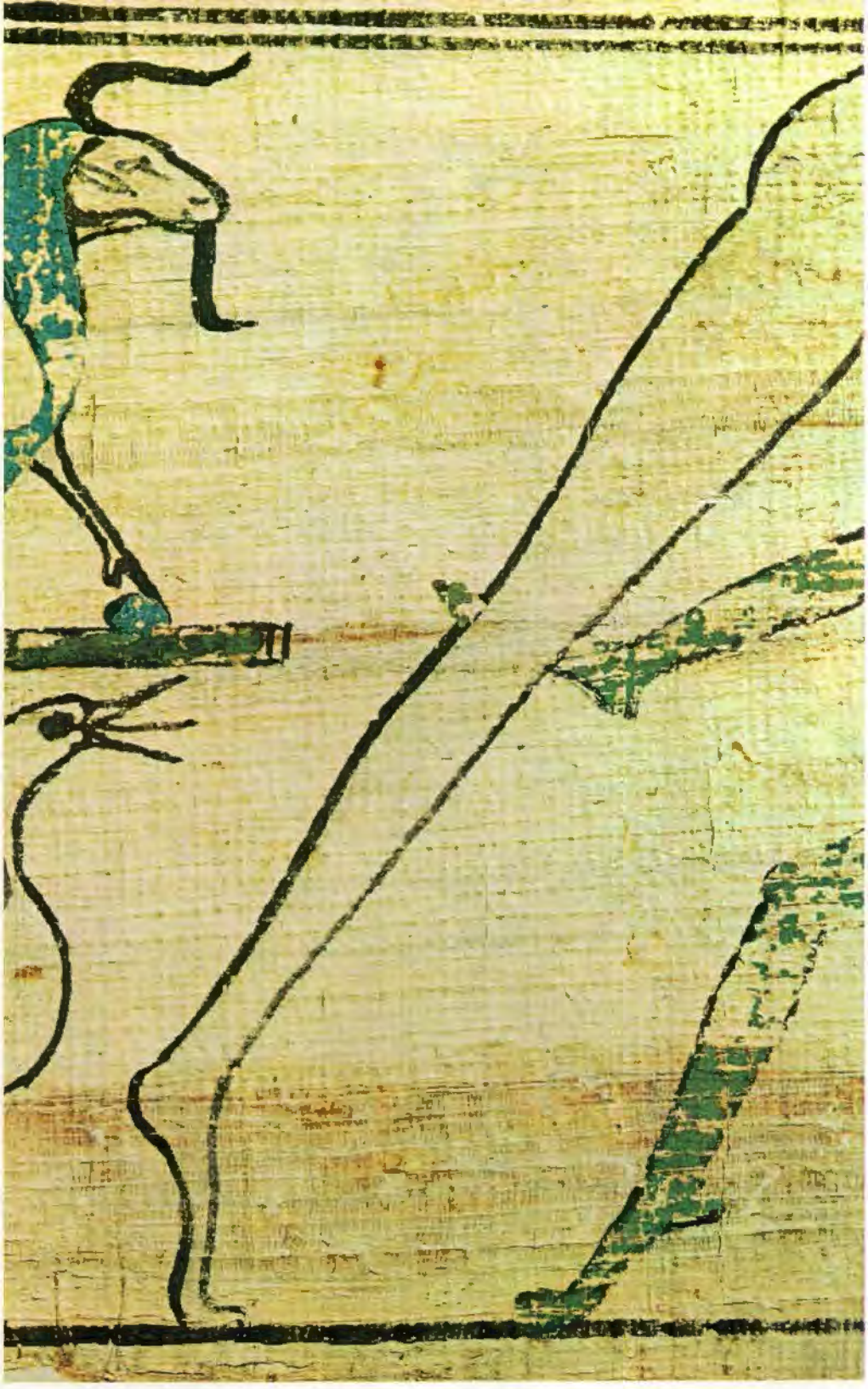
It is accordingly not surprising that in the earliest written cosmogonies, or creation myths, we find a mixture of thought and imagery about the beginnings of things which derives both from the new needs of civilized society, and from the cruder concepts of the pre-literary past. Egypt and Sumer provide our earliest examples of creation myths, the texts concerned dating in each instance from about the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.

Birth of the Earth and Sky

The earliest evidence of ancient Egyptian thought about the beginnings of things occurs incidentally in the Pyramid Texts. The fact is significant, because these texts are not concerned with the creation of the world but with the destiny after death of the kings of Egypt (see BOOK OF THE DEAD). The priests of Heliopolis, who composed the texts about 2480–2137 BC, drew upon traditions about their god Atum, whose temple at Heliopolis was one of the oldest cult-centres in the land. Atum was a mysterious deity, whose name could mean 'the not-yet-Completed One, who will attain (completion)'. He was identified with the sun god Re, under the composite title of Atum-Re. Various passages in the Pyramid Texts reveal that the priests of Heliopolis believed that originally there had been only a primordial waste of water, without shape or order, called Nun. The 'first time' started when Atum emerged from this primeval deep and began the work of creation. In order to begin this work, Atum needed a firm place on which to stand, and reference is made in the texts to a primeval hill which also emerged with Atum out of Nun. This primeval hill was identified with the site of Atum's temple at Heliopolis, thus making it the most ancient and sacred place in Egypt, since it was there that the creation of the world began.

God created the world in six days, according to the book of Genesis, and rested on the seventh day. Section of an initial letter in a 13th century illuminated manuscript in the British Museum, showing, from top to bottom, the acts of God on the seven days of Creation: the separation of light from darkness; the creation of Heaven; and of the Earth, the seas and vegetation; the stars, moon and sun; birds and creatures of the sea; animals and 'everything that creeps upon the ground', man and woman. On the seventh day God rested

British Museum



The sky goddess Nut and her brother Geb, the earth god, were originally locked in a close embrace according to Egyptian belief; their separation, by Shu the personification of air, gave the universe its shape: scene from the papyrus of Tamenill (c 1000 BC) in the British Museum, showing Nut, her body forming the vault of heaven, arched over her brother the earth

The idea of a waste of waters existing from the beginning, called Nun, from which the first land emerged, doubtless reflects the conditions of the Nile Valley. Each year the Egyptians witnessed the inundation of their land by the mysterious rising of the river Nile; then, as the flood subsided, the higher points of land began to emerge from the water. Beyond the delta of the Nile lay the Mediterranean Sea, the 'Great Green', which seemed a limitless expanse of water. Hence came the imagery of Nun and of the primeval hill.

Having conceived of the emergence of their god Atum, the priests of Heliopolis had next to imagine how he could have created the universe. Since they instinctively thought in terms of biological generation, they were, consequently, faced with the problem of accounting for the process of creation from a sole male deity. Their solution was crudely primitive. According to one passage in the Pyramid Texts, Atum produced two deities, Shu and Tefnut, by masturbation; in another passage, by spitting. These deities were, respectively, personifications of air and moisture.

Since Shu and Tefnut were male and female, the next stage in cosmic creation could be described as an action of procreation. From the union of Shu and Tefnut were born Geb, 'earth', and Nut, 'sky'. In later Egyptian art, Shu, as the personification of air, is represented as lifting up the sky goddess Nut from the recumbent body of the earth god Geb. Evidently the earth and sky were imagined as being at first in close embrace, and thus had to be separated in order to give the universe its shape. In art Nut is generally depicted as a gigantic woman, whose body over-arches the earth. The sun, moon and stars are shown as passing over her body, which forms the vault of heaven. It is interesting to note that Egyptian cosmogony differs from most other cosmogonies in making the earth male and the sky female.

The Heliopolitan priests, having thus accounted for the four chief constituents of the cosmic universe, namely air and moisture, earth and sky, did not go on to describe the origin of vegetation, animals or mankind. Instead, they told how from the union of Geb and Nut were born two pairs of deities: Osiris and Isis, Set and Nephthys. This fact significantly reveals the real motive behind their myth of creation. The four deities mentioned were ancient and important deities who originated from other parts of Egypt. By making these deities the great-grandchildren of Atum, the Heliopolitan priests asserted the precedence of their own god. In other words, this earliest example of a creation myth was designed to exalt Atum as the supreme creator, to whom other gods owed their existence, and his temple at Heliopolis as the most ancient and holy place in the Egyptian world.

The Cosmic Egg

This Heliopolitan cosmogony seems to have provided a stimulus to the priesthoods of other great temples in Egypt. At Memphis, as we learn from the famous Shabaka Stone, now in the British Museum, the priests of the local god Ptah neatly rebutted the claims of Heliopolis by claiming that Ptah was the original creator and that he used Atum as his agent. This Memphite cosmogony is more sophisticated in its imagery, and Ptah is represented as creating by the power of his magical word.

Hermopolis in Upper Egypt was distinguished by the peculiar form of its creation story. There, it was related, eight original beings, represented as frogs or serpents, deposited on an island an egg, out of which the sun god emerged to begin the work of creation. According to the tomb-inscription of a priest of Hermopolis in the 3rd century BC, pilgrims were still being shown the shell of this cosmic egg.

Michael Holford

When Thebes became the political capital, about 1580 BC, and its god Amun the chief state god of Egypt, the priests composed a cosmogony which represented Amun as a life-giving wind moving over the inert waters of Nun; this initiated the process of cosmic creation. Thebes, too, claimed to be the first of cities – 'the water and the land were in her at the First Time'. Other temples each had its creation myth, notable examples being those of Esna and Edfu.

One remarkable feature of the ancient Egyptian creation myths is that they show no concern to explain the origin of mankind. They are literally 'cosmogonies', in that they deal with the beginning of the 'cosmos' or world and the relations of the gods. There are passing references to the creation of men in various other texts; but the Egyptians were not so much concerned with the origin and purpose of the human race as were the Mesopotamians and Hebrews. There is evidence, however, of the manner in which the Egyptians believed that human beings were created, as for example in a bas-relief commemorating the birth of the pharaoh Amenhotep III (1405–1370 BC) at Luxor. In this the ram-headed fertility god Khnum is depicted as fashioning the infant king and his *ka* or double on a potter's wheel, while the goddess Hathor endows them with life. According to a text of the 7th century BC, 'man is clay and straw'.

In the creation myths of ancient Sumer attention was focused more upon the beginnings of civilization and mankind than on the origin of the world. The goddess Nammu, the personification of the sea, is called 'the mother, the ancestress, who gave birth to all the gods'. But it is Enki, the god associated with the fresh waters, who figures most as the creator in the early Sumerian texts. He is depicted as arriving by sea in Sumer, in a kind of golden age at the dawn of time, and impregnating Ninhursag, 'the mother of the land'. Enki's fertilizing activity produces the plants necessary for food. He also invents the pickaxe and brick mould, the two essential implements of Mesopotamian economy.

In one notable Sumerian myth the creation of mankind is described. To relieve the

C. M. Dixon

'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him' *Left* 16th century tapestry in the Accademia del' Arte, Florence, depicting the sixth day of creation *Below left* Adam and Eve, tempted by the serpent in the garden of Eden: 15th century painting by Hugo van der Goes

Facing page **The first living being of Scandinavian mythology was the giant Ymir, born from melting ice and nourished by the cow Audumulla who came from the same source. While licking the blocks of ice in order to obtain salt for herself, Audumulla released the bodies of Buri and his son Bor, the first men. After Ymir's death his body became land, his blood the seas and his skull the heavens: painting of Ymir and Audumulla from the Statens Museum fur Kunst, Copenhagen**

Kunsthistorischesmuseum, Vienne

gods from the toil of providing their own food, Enki causes human beings to be fashioned out of clay to act as servants of the gods. At a feast given by the gods to celebrate the creation of their new servants, the goddess Ninmah challenges Enki to deal with two freaks which she has made. These freaks are a eunuch and a barren woman. Enki adroitly finds a place for them in the Mesopotamian social system. He then challenges Ninmah to find a purpose for the two freaks which he himself has made, a diseased and an aged man. Ninmah can do nothing with them, and she curses Enki because what he has made cannot be unmade. This addition to the myth of the creation of mankind is significant; for it reveals that the Sumerians were concerned with the problems of disease and old age, and that they attributed these ills to the sport of the gods.

The most famous of the Mesopotamian creation myths is the Babylonian *Enuma elish*. This cosmogony is similar in motive to the Egyptian cosmogonies, in that it was designed to exalt the god of Babylon, Marduk. This deity was not reckoned among the most ancient of the gods of Mesopotamia; in fact, he was regarded as the son of Enki. But when Babylon rose to political supremacy, it was evidently felt by the Babylonian priests that the status of their god had to be raised.

This was done in the *Enuma elish* by telling how Marduk became the leader of the gods and the creator of the world. A primordial chaos is described, when there existed only Tiamat, the personification of the sea, and Apsu, who personified the fresh waters. From the mingling of these two entities the first generation of the gods was born, among whom was Enki, who slew Apsu. Tiamat, imagined as a great monster, sought to avenge Apsu by destroying the gods. Her horrific appearance, and the monsters she creates to aid her, so terrify the older gods that they readily accept the offer of the younger god Marduk to save them on condition that his supremacy is recognized. Marduk meets Tiamat in battle and kills her. He then slices up her body and fashions the universe from it. From the blood of Kingu, leader of Tiamat's monstrous host, Marduk makes mankind to serve the gods. The poem ends with an account of how the gods, in gratitude, build

The Babylonian god Marduk killed Tiamat, personification of the sea . . . he fashioned the universe from her body; and from the blood of the leader of her monstrous host he made mankind to serve the gods

Ole Woldbye

for Marduk his great temple at Babylon.

The Hebrew creation myths, though later in date than the Egyptian and Mesopotamian, are better known and have exercised a profound influence upon Western thought and culture. They are contained in the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. Although these chapters in their present form have the appearance of a continuous narrative, careful analysis of the text reveals two distinctive cosmogonies.

Be Fruitful and Multiply

The first (Genesis, 1. 1 to 2. 4a) contains an account of the creation of the world in six days, the creation of mankind being the last episode. Scholars generally agree that this cosmogony dates from the 5th century BC, and represents what is known as the Priestly tradition. This account of creation reveals traces of Mesopotamian influence, particularly in the picture of the original watery chaos: 'And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.' The Hebrew word *tehom* 'deep' is akin to the Babylonian Tiamat. What is especially notable about this Priestly cosmogony is that God does not create the world out of nothing, as later theologians maintained; a watery chaos existed before God's acts of creation. Mankind is represented as being created 'in the image of God' and commanded to 'be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it'. God finishes his work of creation in six days and rests on the seventh, thus providing, according to the Priestly writer, the divine example and authority for the Sabbath.

The other Hebrew creation myth (which starts at Genesis 2. 4b) is recognized by scholars as an older tradition. They designate it the 'Yahwist' tradition, dating it about 900–750 BC. This version does not deal with the creation of the world but concentrates on the creation of mankind, which precedes the creation of the animals, contrary to the Priestly account. God (who is here given his characteristic Hebrew name of Yahweh) fashions Adam out of the earth (*adamah*) as the Egyptian god Khnum and the Mesopotamian deities made men out of clay. Having animated Adam with the 'breath of life', Yahweh places him in the

British Museum

garden of Eden, imagined as a kind of oasis. In the narrative that follows, the Yahwist writer was primarily concerned to show how mankind became subject to death through Adam's original act of disobedience to his divine creator. This episode involves the mysterious 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil' and the 'Tree of Life'. The writer's second motive, to account for the beginning of things, also finds expression in these chapters. He explains the origin of the names of animals, the creation of woman, the wearing of clothes, why the serpent 'goes upon his belly', the origin of the pain of childbirth and the toil of agriculture.

Egypt, Mesopotamia and Israel provide the earliest and most striking creation myths of the ancient world. Fragments of such myths have been found among Hittite records, and they seem to have exercised some influence on Greek mythology. In ancient Greece, however, there was no established tradition of creation myths. Certain vague references in Homer suggest some belief that Oceanus was the source of life. The Greek writer Hesiod devoted a whole work, the *Theogony*, to explaining the beginnings of things; but the composition is a strange mixture of mythical imagery and primitive rationalization. Traces of creation myths are found in other Greek writings. But the naturalistic explanations of the origin of the world advanced by the early Greek philosophers are, doubtless, more characteristic of the Greek mind here; and it is significant that Zeus was not regarded as the creator of the world.

Above **Tloque Nahuaque, the god-above-all of the Mixtecs in Central America, and the original giver of all life including his own: illustration from the Codex Zouche-Nuttal** ***Below*** **Daylight is created as the morning star is wafted into the heavens by the east wind: Australian bark painting**

Axel Poignant

The earliest forms of Iranian cosmogony are difficult to determine. Under the influence of Zoroastrianism a cosmogony recognizing two independent principles was later formulated, in which Ahura Mazdah was responsible for the good aspects of creation, and Ahriman for the evil (see AHRIMAN). Ancient Indian literature contains brief references to speculation about creation but no mythological tradition concerning the origin of the world. China also produced no established creation myth; the alternating cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang* characterize Chinese cosmogony (see CHINA).

In the myths of more primitive peoples, tales of the origin of life on earth often seem to take precedence over cosmogonies. Among American Indians, only tribes of the south-west, and some in California, have true creation myths – on the lines of the Zuni myth of the god-being Awonawilona, who existed before 'the Beginning', and who created Sky and Earth from whom all life came. Otherwise, Indian accounts of the origin of things concern, for instance, some culture hero like the Earth Diver bringing up sand from some primal sea, and making the earth out of that sand – not as a creation from chaos or nothingness. (See also FIRST MAN.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (Verry, Lawrence, 1963) with full bibliographies.

¶ *Then ſhall be ſaid or ſung the Apoſtles Creed by the Miniſter, and the People, ſtanding.*

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth :

Creed
A system of belief: in Christianity, a statement of the principal Christian doctrines; the creed recited during Mattins and Evensong in Anglican and Roman Catholic churches is the Apostles' Creed, dating from the 3rd century or earlier; the creed recited during the Communion service is the Nicene Creed, dating from the 4th century and containing formulae directed against the Arian heresy.

A notable 19th century advocate of cremation was an eccentric doctor who cremated his own son, at the risk of being arrested. The rapid increase in cremation over the last century is largely due to the efforts of a few individuals

CREMATION

IN MODERN BRITAIN, more people are cremated than are buried. In America, high pressure funeral salesmanship combines with organized religion to keep the figures down; still, cremation is growing more popular every year, so that now in California and other Pacific states one out of five dead bodies is cremated. Yet it is less than a century ago that cremation became legal. A long and heated battle for the right to dispose of the dead by burning was waged from early in the 19th century until the practice gained official sanction when England's Cremation Act was passed in 1902.

The earliest way of disposing of the dead was by burial. Cremation was very rare until the appearance of agricultural peasant-village communities from about 8,000 years ago. These communities spread through Europe from the 4th millennium BC, and while they mainly disposed of their dead by burial, cremation occurred as a variant rite. Thus in the long barrows of England and the chambered megalithic passage graves of Ireland and Brittany cremation took place, though not as the principal burial custom.

In the 2nd millennium BC in Europe cremation became more and more common, and from the 15th century BC was the main method of disposing of the dead. In Britain, cremation had completely displaced burial by the Middle Bronze Age and the dead throughout much of Europe were interred cremated in Urnfields, or cremation cemeteries, by the Late Bronze Age. Previously, cremated remains in bags or urns had been put in barrows. The prehistoric Iron Age saw mixed rites of burial and cremation. It seems clear that the change from burial to cremation in the 2nd millennium was one which took place within society and did not involve the incursion of new people.

Burning on the funeral pyre was the custom in Rome from the end of the Republic in the 1st century BC to the end of the 4th century AD. In Hindu India, cremation has always been widely practised and the burning ghats are a feature of many Indian cities today. Here the dead, not in coffins, are burned in public on funeral pyres. In the past, it was the custom for a widow to jump on to her husband's funeral pyre and be consumed by the same flames that burnt his body. This custom was made illegal in India in the 19th century under British administration but one still hears of isolated cases of such suicides by widows on the funeral pyre (see SUTTEE).

In some societies there have been objections to cremation because burning the dead was thought to be polluting the sacred principle of fire. This was not the objection of Christianity. The Christian religion objected to burning the dead because it seemed to violate and invalidate the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. In Christian countries cremation was forbidden for centuries although in the 19th century even clergymen advocated it.

Support from Science

The main defence of cremation in Europe came from people horrified by the insanitary conditions caused in towns by the custom of burial. The problems caused by drainage from churchyards and cemeteries and the waste of land in and around towns and villages were set out in a book by Edwin Chadwick, *A Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns*, published in 1843. In the second half of the 19th century many physicians and chemists, especially in Italy and Switzerland, recommended the adoption of cremation. A congress at Milan in 1874 petitioned the Chamber of Deputies for a clause permitting cremation. In the same year the Cremation Society of England was founded to promote the practice of cremation. 'We disapprove

In many cultures burning the body of a dead hero or warrior was thought to be a fitting and spectacular way of speeding him on his journey to the otherworld, a romantic belief that retained its appeal even when cremation was rejected by the Christian church: illustration from a 16th century manuscript

British Museum

Golders Green Crematorium

of the present custom of burying the dead,' it declared, 'and desire to substitute some mode which shall rapidly resolve the body into its component elements by a process which cannot offend the living, and shall render the remains absolutely innocuous. Until some better method is devised, we desire to adopt that usually known as cremation.'

Four Pounds of Lime Dust

The founder of the society was Sir Henry Thompson who had for years brought the question of cremation to the attention of the English public. He used to say that the problem was a simple one: 'Given a dead body, to resolve it into carbonic acid, water and ammonia, rapidly, safely and not unpleasantly.' He himself experimented with a furnace in which a body weighing 144 pounds was reduced in 50 minutes to about four pounds of lime dust.

Great difficulties were placed in the way of all who wanted to bring back the ancient rite of burning the dead. The Council of the Cremation Society of England was unable to purchase a freehold until 1878, when an acre of land was obtained at Woking not far from the cemetery there. In 1882 the Council received an application to undertake the cremation of two deceased persons who had left express instructions that their bodies were to be burnt. The Home Secretary was approached but refused permission. The bodies were therefore preserved. A member of the Society thereupon erected a crematorium on his estate in Dorset, and the cremation of these two persons took place. A year later he himself died and was also cremated: the cremations were supervised by an official of the Cremation Society.

Police Protection

No comment, for or against, was made by the Home Office, who seemed nonplussed by the situation. In 1884, however, they took action when a Dr William Price of Llantrisant in Glamorgan, announced publicly that he intended to cremate the body of his infant son and proceeded to do so. William Price is justly described in *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography* as 'eccentric'. A practising doctor, he claimed to be an arch-druid, practised free love and opposed vivisection and vaccination. He carried out rites dressed in a white tunic with a huge fox skin on his head, and constantly advocated cremation. The dead boy had been born to him at the age of 83 and christened Jesus Christ.

At first the police did not know what to do but eventually Price was arrested. His trial took place at Cardiff Assizes, where Mr Justice Stephen ruled that no offence had taken place and that cremation was legal, provided that it was carried out without nuisance to others. A year later, in 1885, the first publicly organized and controlled cremation in Britain took place, at Woking. Price himself was cremated when he died in 1893.

There was still much opposition and prejudice in the early days and police protection was required at some cremations. Now all this has changed. Today 51% of those who die in Britain are cremated, and there are already more than 200 crematoria in the country. The ban on Roman Catholic cremations was lifted in 1964. Orthodox Jews, however, still continue to object to cremation.

The ashes from cremated bodies are disposed of in various ways. The remains of a Hindu funeral pyre are put in the river – usually the sacred river Ganges. The Digger Indians smear the ashes with gum onto the heads of the mourners. In Europe and America the ashes are stored in urns, buried in the earth or in graves inside a church, thrown to the winds, or scattered in a garden of remembrance. Cremation has dealt with the sanitary problem that worried the 19th century reformers; the scattering of ashes deals with the problem of storage and grave-space, but its widespread adoption brings to an end the tombs and monuments for the dead which were a feature of western European Christian civilization for so many hundreds of years.

GLYN DANIEL

Transworld Feature Syndicate

Left **Dr William Price, an eccentric who cremated his own son, whom he had christened Jesus Christ: he was tried at Cardiff Assizes and his acquittal in 1884 cleared the way for Britain's first 'official' cremation in 1885** ***Right*** **In Bali, the body of a king is placed on a tower together with effigies of bulls and a dragon, and burnt: cremation of Chokorda Sukawati, the last king of Bali**

Crescent
The shape of the waxing moon, and, so a symbol of increasing power, hence its adoption as the badge of the Ottoman Turks: it became an emblem of Islam: often an attribute of deities connected with the moon: a horned moon stands for growth and fertility, both because it is waxing and because horns are symbols of fertility (see HORNS): a crescent and star together stand for paradise.

Giraudon

'For the Cretans the supreme embodiment of the divine power in the world was feminine.' In her many roles the Great Goddess dominated the Minoan civilization, so named from the title of the Cretan king, Minos

CRETE

AN EXTRAORDINARY CIVILIZATION flowered in Crete after 2000 BC. Its geographical position made Crete a natural meeting-point for many of the cultural currents of the Mediterranean. It belonged to the Aegean world, making a link between Asia Minor and Greece, yet at the same time commanded sea routes southward to Egypt and eastward to the rich trading ports of the Levant. The influence of such widespread contacts is particularly evident in the religious ideas by which Minoan civilization was so largely inspired.

Crete seems to have remained uninhabited until early Neolithic times when the beautiful and fertile island attracted settlers, presumably from the adjacent region of Asia Minor. The Anatolian peninsula is now recognized as one of the earliest centres of the development of the new farming economy and then of urban life. Already by 6000 BC a large settlement such as Catal Hüyük had many shrines devoted to fertility cults. A supreme goddess, a lesser male divinity, birds, lions and bulls were represented in art. Actual bulls' horns were mounted as cult objects, while much later, in the Bronze Age of Beycesultan, in south-west Anatolia, these were architecturally formalized into horned altars – in one instance associated with a sacred wooden pillar.

These forms are strikingly similar to what was to emerge in Crete. Whether an important element of Cretan religion was directly derived from Anatolia, or whether it was only that both shared in a common inheritance is open to question. In spite of chronological and cultural difficulties, it is likely that there was a direct relationship. The initial settlement of Crete was followed by further immigration from the peninsula, and during Minoan times the two territories remained linked by ties of trade, and probably of language and of social custom as well.

Fashionably Dressed Goddess

For the Cretans the supreme embodiment of the divine power in the world was feminine. The Great Goddess or Mother Goddess, whose worship was common to the early agricultural peoples of the Mediterranean and south-west Asia, was probably immediately introduced into Crete by the Anatolian settlers. She kept her supremacy, although in appropriately changing forms, with the rise of high civilization. She was at once the one and the many. In the words that Apuleius put into the mouth of Isis herself in *The Golden Ass*, she was one 'whose godhead, single in essence but of many forms, with varied rites and under many names, the whole earth reveres'. In Minoan times the emphasis on pregnancy, maternal amplitude and nakedness found in the prehistoric idols was left behind and the goddess was usually portrayed in the same elegant fashion as the ladies of the court.

Among the 'many forms' of the Great Goddess some, indeed, were domestic. One was as guardian of the house, and particularly of the royal palace, where the prince may have ruled as her servitor and consort. At the same time her wilder aspects, more directly related to the old fertility cults, were no less important. She was the divinity of vegetation, mistress of animals, at home in forest, cave and mountain peak. In rites concerned with the death and rebirth of vegetation and seed, the goddess was associated with a young male divinity, probably both son and consort. She represented the continuity of the vegetation cycle, he its discontinuity. He died and was born again.

The various aspects of the goddess can be seen emerging in the divinities of historic times. As guardian she is best represented by Athene – already worshipped at Cnossus in late Minoan times. Demeter, with her other-self Persephone, was recognized as Cretan, as also was Hera. An association with doves seems to evoke Aphrodite, while Artemis best expresses her role as mistress of animals and virgin goddess of the wild places. Artemis was identified with Britomartis (the name means 'sweet virgin') who was worshipped in eastern and central Crete, and with Diktynna (Lady of Dikte), who was her western counterpart.

As for the young god, he too has local Cretan manifestations in Hyacinthus and probably also in the leader, or single embodiment, of the Curetes. Under the influence of the Achaean Greeks, the Indo-European Zeus was identified with the Cretan god, and the story of his concealment (or birth) in a Cretan cave, of the Curetes dancing and beating their shields to save the infant from his devouring father, was an accepted part of Greek mythology (see CORYBANTES). While the Greeks thus allowed their supreme god to have been born in Crete, they denied the inevitable Cretan heresy that he also died there.

Frenzied Dancing

The rites centred on the household goddess of the palaces and involving the princely families must have been formally ceremonious. Those enacted out of doors in the fertility and vegetation cults were ecstatic and mystic. The Greeks came to associate the island with mystical religion, and the Cretans themselves claimed, probably with justification, that they had enacted in public those Mysteries which at Eleusis were veiled in utter secrecy (see ELEUSIS).

Scenes engraved on gold signet rings and seal stones may represent rites celebrating the cycle of the seasons. The goddess is shown sitting below a tree, dancing in flowery meadows or occasionally perhaps lamenting at a shrine or over ritual jars. In these scenes the goddess is attended by female votaries, including young girls. In others, especially where boughs and trees are being plucked, she is accompanied by the young god. In these vegetation rites the dancing, especially of the god, is often ecstatic or frenzied.

Ritual meaning was expressed in positions of the arms. The goddess is often shown with arms bent and raised above the head, or extended before her. A common position of worship was with the right hand clenched and pressed against the forehead. Conch shells were blown, perhaps in order to summon the goddess.

The supreme deity of Crete was feminine, 'single in essence, but of many forms', one of which was guardian of the royal palace: the prince may have ruled as her consort. 'Prince of the Lilies', wall painting from the Palace of Minos at Cnossus; the lily was the most sacred flower in Crete

Hirmer Verlag

'Snake Goddess', her hands raised in a ritual gesture: the snake was generally attributed to the Great Goddess of Crete in her role as guardian of the household, although this symbol may also have been associated with fertility. Faience statuette in the Heraklion Museum, Crete

Funerary rites were related to the general conception of rebirth through the goddess. The elite were buried in unpretentious chamber tombs, dressed, ornamented and accompanied by pots, bronze vessels or other grave goods. It can be supposed that a happy Cretan view of the afterworld survived in the Elysian Fields of Greek mythology, associated as they were with the Cretan Prince Rhadamanthus, who was renowned as a just ruler. Frescoes on a sarcophagus from Hagia Triada in southern Crete illustrate funerary rites of the late Minoan period, c 14th century BC. They include the pouring of a libation, to the accompaniment of a lyre; the dedication of what look like fruits and wine at an altar; the blood sacrifice of a bull, to the accompaniment of a double flute, and apparently the carrying of offerings to the dead noble's tomb. The principal officiants are women wearing skirts of fur or fleece that may be priestly garments. Others, however, wear ordinary courtly dress and may have been royal ladies who were also priestesses. It seems to have been a princess of this kind who had been buried at Arkhanes near Cnossus. Among her rich grave furniture were gold amulets and a gold ring engraved with a ritual scene. She had been buried in a dress similar to that worn by the goddess on her ring.

The number and richness of ritual vessels are proof of the important place of libations and perhaps of ceremonial purificatory sprinkling in Minoan ritual. These vessels were often in the shape of the heads of sacred animals, particularly of the bull and lion. In one of the Hagia Triada funerary scenes libations are being poured from a large two-handled vase into another vessel that may have carried them into the earth. On a seal stone strange composite figures referred to as 'demons' are represented bearing elegant beakers, the contents of which are to be poured into a conical vessel held by the enthroned goddess. Little narrow-necked jars of exquisite workmanship may have served to sprinkle holy water.

Serious Play

Minoan society had reached a stage of sophistication at which activities which were originally religious had become partly secularized. For the peaceful, conservative island society this led to a kind of serious playing characteristic of Minoan culture. Crete was later said to be the home of the dance, and dancing – sometimes graceful, sometimes frenzied – was among the rites of the goddess. Less purely religious dancing formed an important part of both court and country life, probably often associated with seasonal festivals. The sacred nature of some ring dances appears in a model where naked dancers, arms clasped, are circling within an area enclosed by horns of consecration (formalized horns, indicating sacredness). Dancing in line in an altogether more stately fashion was practised by court ladies (see DANCE).

The most remarkable manifestation of serious play was in the famous Cretan bull games. Young men and girls, both wearing men's dress of tight-fitting belt and loincloth, performed athletic feats with the beasts, including vaults and somersaults between the horns (see BULL). The bull, symbol of male potency in relation to the goddess, was here encountered in actuality, possibly to celebrate life's renewal, or as an initiatory test of skill and courage. These games were, however, watched by lighthearted audiences. The palaces were provided with sacred ways and theatres that must have made a setting for processions and other performances.

Snakes in the Palace

The goddess of many names was also identified by a variety of symbols and manifestations. The most used were the horns, the pillar, the double axe, the tree, the dove and other birds, the snake and the shield. Horns of consecration were placed on palace buildings, on shrines, on the head of the goddess and in many other settings. Freestanding or sculptured pillars were part of the sacred furnishings of palaces, villas, shrines and tombs. They were anointed and offerings were made on, or to, them. Their primary meaning was probably phallic, but some authorities believe that they stood

for the Great Goddess herself. In 'pillar crypts' such as the one in the palace of Cnossus, functional pillars seem also to have been anointed and held sacred.

The double axe, perhaps originally a sacrificial symbol like the cross, came to represent the goddess. It may often, as in the scenes on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus, have been set on the apex of the sacred pillar; it was represented between the horns of a sculptured motif representing an ox's skull or within horns of consecration. For votive use, double axes were made in gold or bronze and in a variety of sizes (see also AXE). Trees appear in many ritual scenes, often growing in shrines or small enclosures. They were not formalized in the usual manner of symbols, but shown naturalistically, usually in leaf but occasionally bare.

The snake was principally an attribute of the goddess in her role as guardian of the household, although it may also have had chthonic and sexual meanings. The two 'snake goddesses' of Cnossus are well known. In the town shrine at Gournia nearby, a crude goddess figure was twined with a snake, and there were snake tubes among the utensils; these were terra cotta cylinders with snakes represented twining round them, the purpose of which is not known. Real snakes were probably kept in the palaces, and rooms were set aside for them in private houses.

The goddess was sometimes portrayed between a pair of lions (as long before in Anatolia) or between birds and fabulous griffins, of oriental origin. The god was similarly shown as a master of beasts. Among the least understood figures of Minoan art are those known as demons – strange hybrid creatures, which often have the head of a lion or an ass. They attended upon the goddess, sometimes in procession and bearing libation ewers; demons appear to have been particularly concerned with the growth of crops.

A figure-of-eight oxhide shield, a recurring motif, gave rise to a religious symbol. It was occasionally personified in male or female form, presumably god and goddess. Its siguificance may partly have derived from the shields of the Curetes, but it must also have stood for the protective power of the goddess. Not only the shield but also the snake, the bird and the tree all survived as attributes of the Athene of the classical world.

Spirals, including linked and running forms, were among the most popular motifs in Minoan art. They were often used decoratively, but possessed symbolic meaning, perhaps of eternal continuance. They appear on altars, shrines and ritual vessels. Among minor symbols were a sacred knot and a human ear and eye. The lily was the most sacred flower of Crete, and three poppy seeds might be worn or carried by the goddess.

Ecstasy in the Open Air

Unlike most of their contemporaries in the Bronze Age world, the Cretans had no large temples or temple figures. There were shrines of modest size in the palaces. At Cnossus there was a pillar shrine in the main court, and nearby the low, dimly lit throne room with stone basins and a sunken tank, suggesting use for purification ceremonies. The throne, with its flanking griffins, may have seated a divine prince, a high priestess or even a queen. Houses had their small shrines for private worship, and probably most towns and villages, like Gournia, had public shrines where little images and symbols of the goddess were ranged on a shelf in an inner sanctum.

More characteristic of Minoan Nature worship were sanctuaries in the countryside. Caves, probably often associated with the birthplace of the god, were among the most ancient and most popular. Some were walled and provided with chapels, altars and offering-tables. Very many generations of islanders visited them to worship and leave their offerings. The counterpart of the caves were the peak sanctuaries, of which there were about a dozen in the island.

The more ecstatic rites of the goddess were celebrated out of doors, in localities where there might be shrines for a sacred tree, or an enclosure with a sacred grove.

Minoan influence on the Mycenean culture of the Achaeans in the late Bronze Age is nowhere more dominant than in its religious forms. The goddess appeared on the mainland with all her familiar attributes. The pillar between lions stood above the great gate of Mycene itself. Yet even by this time nearly all of the gods of the Olympian pantheon were already being worshipped. Dionysus also had his place, and at Cnossus there was a shrine to the legendary craftsman Daedalus. The goddess still held a high place but the male divinities, and particularly Poseidon, were now perhaps held in at least equal honour.

Directly, and through Mycenean civilization, Minoan religion gave much to that of Hellenic Greece. In addition to the relationship between the Cretan goddess and her classical descendants, there was the powerful Cretan element in the Eleusinian Mysteries, and a traditional Cretan founder at Delphi, later to be presided over by Apollo. All the main centres of Greek mythology were of Mycenean origin. The connection between the cult of Dionysus and the ecstatic rituals of the goddess is evident. In their stories of Theseus and the Minotaur, the Greeks embodied their sense of the strangeness of ancient Crete and memories of its former power.

(See also GREECE.)

JACQUETTA HAWKES

The embodiment of strength and sexuality, the bull was the symbol of masculinity in relation to the Great Goddess: pot in the form of a bull, from Mesara, Crete

C. M. Dixon

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The Bull-King

Theseus and the Athenians at Cnossus:

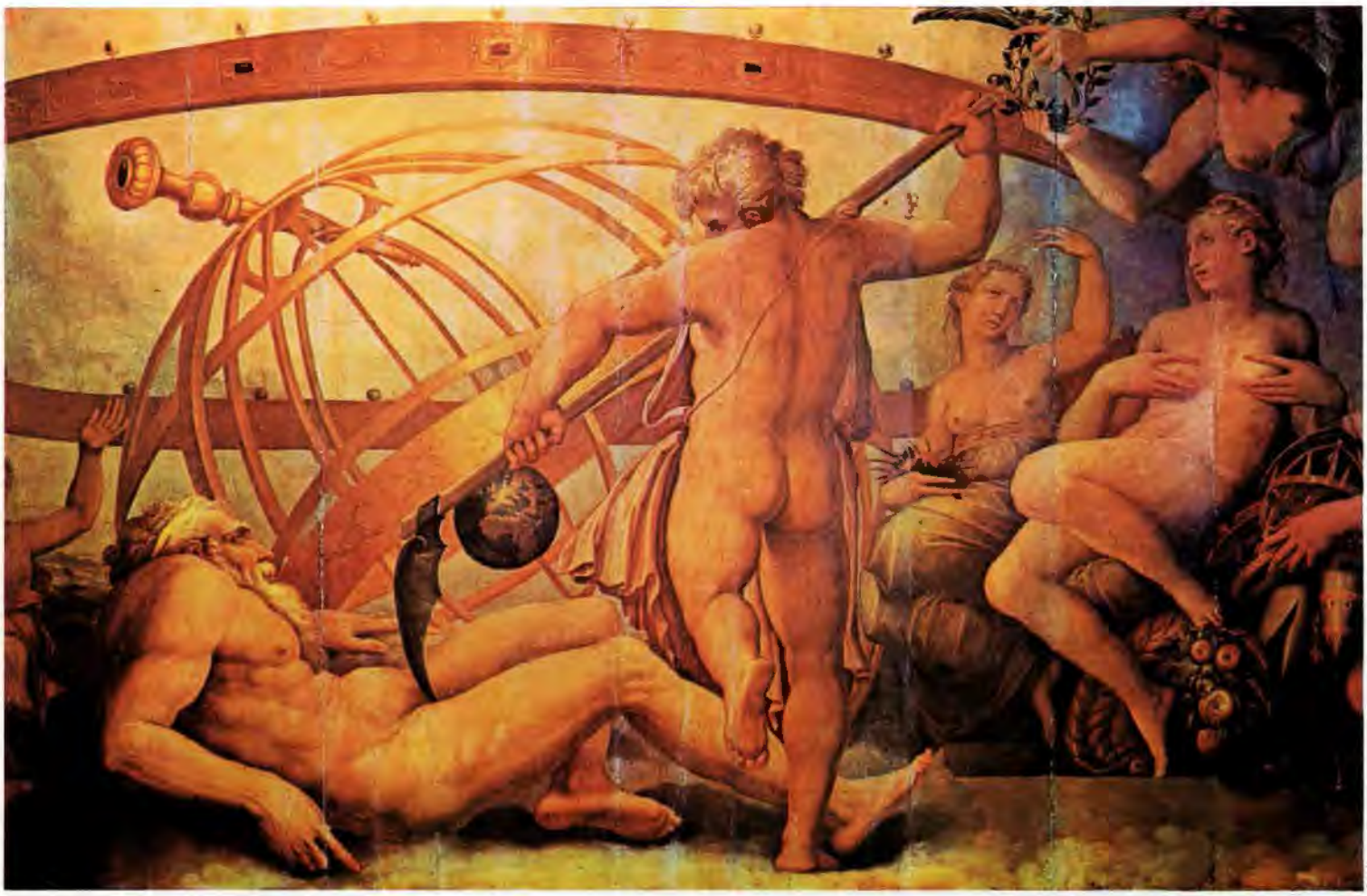
Picture to yourself all the kings' palaces you ever saw, set side by side and piled on one another. That will be a little house beside the House of the Axe. It was a palace within whose bounds you could have set a town. It crowned the ridge and clung to its downward slopes, terrace after terrace, tier after tier of painted columns, deep glowing red, tapering in toward the base, and ringed at head and foot with that dark brilliant blue the Cretans love. Behind them in the noonday shadow were porticoes and balconies gay with pictured walls, which glowed in the shade like beds of flowers. The tops of tall cypresses hardly showed above the roofs of the courts they grew in. Over the highest roof-edge, sharp-cut against the deep-blue Cretan sky, a mighty pair of horns reared toward heaven . . .

We entered the Palace precinct by the great West Gate. On either side there were staring people. Before us was the great red lintel-column, the painted shadows beyond . . . Once more we waited, but this time in deep decorum. The people peeped discreetly, and murmured together. To pass the time, I raised my eyes to the walls; and then I forgot my resolve to stare at nothing new. For pictured there was the bull-dance, from the taking of the bull to the very end: beauty and pain, skill and glory, fleetness and fear and grace and blood, all that fierce music . . .

The guards' spears rattled. King Minos entered, and went up the side of the dais, and sat upon his carved white throne, resting hands on knees like the gods of Egypt. He wore a long red belted robe, and he looked tall; but that might have been his horns. The light from the portico gleamed dimly back from his gold face and crystal eyes.

In the quiet, I heard from the Cranes' soft indrawn breaths. But that was all. Old Cretans say we were the first band of victims, seeing Minos in his bull-mask, of whom not one cried aloud for fear.

Mary Renault *The King Must Die*



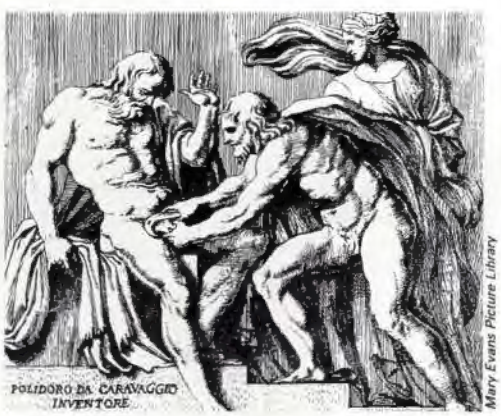
Scala

CRONUS

MORE IMPORTANT in myth than in cult, Cronus was chief among the Titans, the 12 'former gods', according to the Greek writer Hesiod (c 700 BC). The Titans were the children of Heaven and Earth, together with the Cyclopes and the hundred-handed monsters, but they were not able to reach the light until Cronus, the youngest Titan, castrated his father with a sickle and so separated heaven from earth. As king of the gods, Cronus married his sister Rhea, who bore him six children: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon and Zeus. Earth and Heaven had prophesied that one of Cronus's children would overthrow him, and he tried to prevent this by swallowing them as they were born. But Rhea smuggled the last child away to Crete, delivering to Cronus a swaddled stone, which he duly swallowed. Zeus grew up safely, and somehow made Cronus regurgitate his other children; after a ten-year was between the older and younger gods, Zeus defeated Cronus and the other Titans and fettered them in Tartarus, where they remain.

It was formerly assumed that the myth reflected a historical displacement by the worship of Zeus of an earlier, no doubt pre-Greek cult of Cronus. Hittite tablets, however, have revealed that a curiously similar story was current in Asia Minor before 1200 BC. The counterpart of Cronus is Kumarbi, who becomes ruler of the gods by biting off and swallowing the genitals of Heaven (a combination of the castration and swallowing motifs). As a result, Kumarbi conceives a son, who becomes the weather god (the chief deity, corresponding to the Greek Zeus). Like Cronus, Kumarbi wishes to destroy his offspring, and probably swallows a stone in an attempt at abortion – the same action as in the Greek myth, but differently motivated. The attempt fails; the weather god is born, he fights a battle, and emerges triumphant.

Cronus castrated his father Uranus, 'Heaven', in order to free himself and his brothers and sisters from their prison in the depths of the earth *Above* 16th century painting on the ceiling of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, showing the infant Cronus mutilating his father *Below* Another version of Uranus's castration: Gaea, wife and mother of Uranus, and mother of Cronus, looks on with approval



Mary Evans Picture Library

It was probably in the period before 1200 BC, when eastern contacts were strong, that the Greeks took over the Asiatic myth, though some scholars put it shortly before Hesiod. We should like to know what Cronus was before he had oriental castrations and swallowings foisted on him, and why he was chosen for that role. Possibly he was already the father of Zeus, though his name indicates non-Greek (possibly pre-Greek) origin and the relationship cannot go back to Indo-European times. If he had special functions, they are obscure. For the Greeks of the historical period, he is fettered in the underworld, in other words, he plays no part in the world of men and has no influence there. (In 5th century Athens his name was used to mock the old, the stupid and the passé.)

There is, however, an alternative version which says that Cronus's reign was the Golden Age and that he now rules over the fortunate heroes in the Isles of the Blessed (see GOLDEN AGE). It was Zeus's accession that brought hardship and the necessity of tilling the soil. This may be connected with the annual Cronia, or Feast of Cronus, celebrated at Athens and certain other towns. Its date differed in different places, but so far as we can tell, it always fell in the idle period between harvest (May) and ploughing (October), and slaves joined their masters in merriment. If Cronus was a seasonal figure who played a part only at this celebration, the myth can be understood as a construction to go with it.

'We enjoy this feast and this leisure as a legacy from the time when Cronus ruled all the year round; but now Zeus is king, and we shall need our ploughs again.' This relationship between Cronus and Zeus would make a suitable basis for the adoption of the more complex oriental myth.

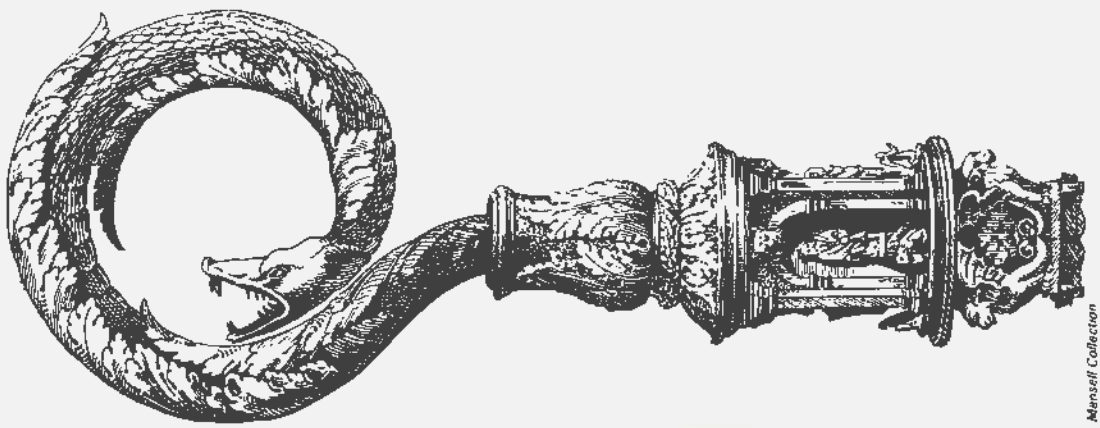
Child Sacrifice

Other traces of Cronus in cult or myth are scanty and of uncertain significance. Adopting the form of a horse, he mated with the nymph Philyra and became the father of the centaur Chiron. At Olympia there was a Cronus Hill, at the top of which priests known as the Kings made an annual sacrifice to Cronus at about the spring equinox; this may be a pre-Greek survival. Here, before the foundation of the Olympic Games, Cronus and Zeus were said to have wrestled.

Cronus Hills existed also in Laconia in Greece, and in Sicily. Carthaginian influence had been strong in Sicily and it has been suspected that there 'Cronus' may represent the Phoenician El or Moloch. Cronus was identified with this god at least as early as the 5th century BC, probably because of the Phoenician reputation for sacrificing children to him. The identification affected interpretation of the myth of Zeus's birth, child sacrifice becoming attributed to the early Cretans. The Romans identified Cronus with their Saturn for a different but equally superficial reason: the Saturnalia, though held at a different season (December) from the Cronia, had the same character of egalitarian merrymaking.

Like all the main Greek gods, Cronus was affected by attempts at etymology. From at least the 5th century BC the obvious (but false) equation was made with *chronos*, meaning 'time'. This fused with the idea of Time as a divine progenitor, which reached Greece independently from Iran, to give an allegorical sense to the story that he swallowed his children: Time consumes us all, his progeny.

FURTHER READING: *Hesiod & Theognis* tr. by D. Wender (Penguin, 1976) where the Hesiodic myth and its oriental counterparts are fully discussed.



Mansell Collection

Crook

The hooked staff of a shepherd, and so a symbol of the loving care of a pastor for his flock: a crozier, the hooked staff of a bishop or abbot, may be derived from the shepherd's crook or from the staff of a Roman augur: crozier is also used for an archbishop's cross.

WILLIAM CROOKES

EMINENT AMONG A GROUP of distinguished Victorian scientists who interested themselves in Spiritualist phenomena, Sir William Crookes (1832–1919) was a meticulous and penetrating experimentalist. He was elected to the Royal Society at the early age of 31, following his discovery of a new element, thallium. He was President of a number of learned societies, ranging from the Chemical Society to the Society for Psychical Research, and was President of the Royal Society itself from 1913 to 1915. His extraordinary versatility was reflected in the stream of papers reporting his work published between 1851 and 1918.

The group of scientists who concerned themselves with the fantastic phenomena claimed to take place at the Spiritualist seances which were so common at this time included the physicist Lord Rayleigh, the astronomer Sir William Huggins and the anthropologist Sir Francis Galton. Crookes's investigations, however, went far beyond anything attempted by his contemporaries. His energy was prodigious, and between 1869 and 1875 he undoubtedly attended more seances for physical manifestations than any scientifically qualified investigator before or since.

As a result of his investigations he reported the occurrence of a variety of phenomena in a series of papers published during 1870–1874 in his own magazine, the *Quarterly Journal of Science*. They included levitations of objects and of human beings, paranormal sounds, and the materialisation of hands and complete human forms.

Almost all of Crookes's records of his psychical experiments seem to have fallen into irresponsible hands and been destroyed after his death, so his work must be judged almost entirely from his published reports and the accounts of a few eyewitnesses. His contemporary papers were collected and published in book form: *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (1874).

Best documented of all are his seances with D. D. Home, the renowned physical medium (see HOME). Home first arrived in England in 1855 from America, where he had already made his mark. He was at this time a tubercular young man of 22. It has been said that there was hardly a person of note in London who had not attended his seances or who could not consult a friend who had, although most scientific men, including the great Michael Faraday, preferred to keep away. Home's mediumship was unique in that he always sat as one of the 'circle' and not hidden within a cabinet, and his phenomena were normally produced in light rather than in the more usual total darkness so conducive to fraud.

Controversy continued, however, between those acclaiming Home and those denouncing him as a charlatan – albeit without any convincing evidence of fraud being produced. Into the arena of argument sprang Crookes, already an established Fellow of the Royal Society. In a paper published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* in 1871, he announced that his experiments with Home's mediumship, which he described in detail, and which had been conducted in his own laboratory, appeared 'conclusively to establish the existence of a new force, in some unknown manner connected with the human organisation, which for convenience may be called the Psychic Force.' Before publishing this account he had submitted essentially the same paper to the Royal Society, only to have it rejected. In correspondence with one of the secretaries, Professor G. G. Stokes, he stated: 'I consider it my duty to send first to the Royal Society, for by so doing I deliberately stake my reputation on the truth of what I send.'

He invited the two secretaries of the Royal Society, Professors Stokes and Sharpey, to visit his home to witness the phenomena for themselves – an invitation which neither of them accepted.

Darwin Much Perplexed

There was much consternation in the scientific world over the appearance of Crookes's papers reporting his research with Home, Kate Fox and other mediums. Charles Darwin, writing to the anthropologist Sir Francis Galton on 23 January 1872, said: 'Have you seen Mr Crookes? I hope to heaven you have, as I for one should feel entire confidence in your conclusion.' In 1874 after reading Crookes's *Notes of an Enquiry into the Phenomena called Spiritual*, Darwin remarked in a

letter to Lady Derby, 'If you had called here after I had read the article you would have found me a much perplexed man. I cannot disbelieve Mr Crookes' statements, nor can I believe his results.'

Galton did indeed call on Crookes, and he was soon able to report to Darwin, in a letter dated 28 March 1872: 'Crookes is working deliberately and well.' Three weeks later Galton wrote: 'Crookes, I am sure, so far as it is just for me to give an opinion, is thoroughly scientific in his procedure. I am convinced, the affair is no matter of vulgar legerdemain . . .'

There were, however, critics of a virulent kind, notable among whom was Dr W. B. Carpenter, F.R.S., who made an anonymous and viciously personal attack on Crookes in the *Quarterly Review*. Crookes's reply (included in his *Researches*) was both crushing and devastatingly witty.

The most controversial of all the spiritualistic phenomena vouched for by Crookes were the fully-materialized spirit-forms which walked and talked in the Victorian seance rooms. Crookes described his experiences with 'Katie King', the form materialized by the medium Florence Cook, in three letters to the journal *The Spiritualist*. The fantastic nature of his reports on 'Katie' has led one recent critic, Trevor H. Hall, to conjecture that Crookes and Miss Cook were lovers, and that his published championship of her phenomena resulted from this relationship and a desire to protect her reputation. However, it is known that he also vouched for the authenticity of an equally solid 'phantom' known as 'John King', materialized by another medium, Charles Edward Williams, and it would be going rather far to attribute a similar motivation in this case!

Nothing to Retract

Much of the difficulty in assessing the work of Crookes and his contemporaries stems from the fraud that undoubtedly flourished in the darkness of the Victorian seance rooms. Crookes's comment on this was: 'I have myself frequently detected fraud of various kinds, and I have always made it a rule in weighing Spiritualistic evidence to assume that fraud may have been attempted, and ingeniously attempted, either by seen or unseen agents.' In addition he emphasized that the occurrences he described took place in nearly every instance *'in the light'*.

Crookes finally withdrew from participation in the Spiritualist scene, due to the pressure of his work in the physical sciences, and what he described as the 'calumny, slander, backbiting and abuse from Spiritualists', as well as from fellow scientists, that he suffered during his investigations. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, however, he continued to sit with both physical and mental mediums.

'I have nothing to retract,' he declared in his Presidential Address to the British Association in 1898, 'I adhere to my already published statements . . . I regret only a certain crudity in those early expositions which, no doubt justly, militated against their acceptance by the scientific world.'

Crookes's records of his experiments fall far short (as he himself admitted) of the standards the subject demands. His great scientific achievements may have engendered a certain assumption of omnipotence, for in 1871 he was able to say without embarrassment: 'Others . . . have gone so far as to question my veracity: "Mr Crookes must get better witnesses before he can be believed!" Accustomed as I am to have my word believed without witnesses, this is an argument which I cannot condescend to answer.'

Most present-day parapsychologists are sceptical of at least the more extreme phenomena accepted by Crookes and would consider him deluded. We cannot do better, perhaps, than sum up in the words of his friend Sir Oliver Lodge: 'It is almost as difficult to resist the testimony as it is to accept the things testified.'

K. M. GOLDNEY, R. G. MEDHURST

FURTHER READING: R. G. Medhurst and K. M. Goldney, *William Crookes and the Physical Phenomena of Mediumship* (Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Vol 54, 1964); E. J. Dingwall, *The Critics' Dilemma* (privately published, London, 1966); T. H. Hall, *The Spiritualists* (Duckworth, 1962).

Lenbo-Sun

Sir William Crookes: physicist and chemist, and a President of the Royal Society, he claimed to have seen materialized spirit forms walking and talking during seances

CROSS

'Life is but the shadow thrown by the cross of Christ': to Christians everywhere the cross is the supreme emblem of their faith. Ethiopian Christian carrying an ornate cross

Camera Press

Older than Christianity, the cross has been used as a symbol of the world, the sun, fire and life. The Christian cross is an emblem of the triumph of life over death, of good over evil

CROSS

ALTHOUGH THE CROSS is best known as the supreme emblem of the Christian faith, cross symbolism is much older than Christianity. The simplest form of cross, the equal-armed or Greek cross *(crux quadrata)*, has been used since prehistoric times. The oldest examples are those found engraved or painted on flat pebbles, dating from c 10,000 BC, at Le Mas d'Azil, a cave in the French Pyrenees. Other pebbles found there have lines, circles and rudimentary human figures on them, and it is possible that they were 'ancestor stones', believed to contain the spirits of the dead.

In pre-Christian uses of the cross its meaning is usually uncertain. Sometimes it seems to stand for the four directions, or the four directions plus the centre, in which case it can mean 'the world' or 'everything'. Sometimes it is a symbol of the sun, apparently as the four spokes of the wheel which is a common symbol of the sun (see WHEEL). Both meanings reappear in early Christian symbolism, in which Christ is frequently associated with the sun and in which the cross is a symbol of his rule of all things, the arms of the cross stretching out to bring under his sway the uttermost length and breadth, the uttermost height and depth.

The Nazi Cross

The swastika, an equal-armed cross with a line projecting from each arm, has been found drawn on prehistoric clay figures of animals. It was revered as a symbol of the rain god in Central and South America, and the Aztec goddess of rain is depicted carrying a cross. The Aztecs and Mayans linked the cross symbol with the Tree of Life, erecting sizeable crosses in temples which greatly excited the conquistadors. In North America also certain Athapascan Indians used the cross symbol in their rites praising the new moon; New Mexican Indian grave mounds have yielded shells marked with crosses and swastikas; the Dakotas, Creeks, Blackfoot and other tribes brought crosses into rain-making magic; the Pueblos and others used crosses of many shapes as religious decoration, and some Californian tribes at times depict their great mother goddess with her arms and legs splayed on a cross or swastika.

The swastika has also been found in the Greek fortress of Mycenae and among the Etruscans in Italy, on early Christian tombs and on pagan tombs in northern Europe. There are swastikas on sword hilts of the 3rd century AD which were recovered from peat bogs in Denmark, and a fine 7th century scabbard fished out of the Seine has a cross and a swastika side by side.

The swastika usually seems to stand for the sun or fire, and so for life and vigour, perhaps because it originally represented the whirling round of a fire-drill, an apparatus for making fire by revolving a wheel at the base of an upright stick. (It has also been suggested, less plausibly, that the equal-armed cross originally represented the two sticks which primitive man rubbed together to make fire.) The Nazi party in Germany adopted the *Hakenkreuz* or 'hooked cross' as its official emblem, under the mistaken impression that it was a purely Germanic symbol (see SWASTIKA).

The *crux ansata*, shaped like a T with a loop on top of it, is also very old and was originally the Egyptian *ankh*, a symbol of 'life' which appears frequently in Egyptian art, held in the hand of a god or applied to the nose of a dead man to give him life in the afterworld. The Egyptians wore it, usually as the pendant of a necklace, as a charm to prolong life and they buried it with the dead to ensure their resurrection. The ankh looks like a key and may be connected with the symbolism of the key as the instrument which unlocks the gates of death and opens the road to immortality. It is found in some early Christian tombs and was adopted by the Coptic Christians of Egypt.

By This, Conquer

Besides the Greek cross, the principal types of Christian cross are the T-shaped cross *(crux commissa)*, the X-shaped or St Andrew's cross *(crux decussata)* and, most important of all, the Latin cross *(crux immissa)* in which the base arm is longer than the others, and which is generally shown in representations of Christ crucified.

When a man was crucified, his hands were tied or nailed to the cross-piece, and there was often a projection from the upright beam which helped to support the body. It might take days to die on the cross and it was not ouly a cruel death but an ignominious one, reserved for slaves and criminals of inferior social status.

It was probably as much the fear of ridicule, of the sneer that they worshipped a common criminal, as the fear of persecution or the dislike of seeming to ape the pagan veneration of idols, which made the early Christians reluctant to use the symbol of the cross openly. But they evidently regarded it as an important emblem, for they marked their burying-places and tombs with disguised crosses – an X, an anchor or an axe, for example. They also made the sign of the cross frequently, as a mark of their faith and for protection against evil. The 2nd century theologian Tertullian, who had a flair for exaggeration, said that a Christian traced the sign of the cross on his forehead in all the actions of daily life, at every forward step or movement, whenever he went in or out, when he put on his clothes, when he sat down or lit the lamps or went to bed.

The symbol of the cross naturally began to be used much more openly after Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century and crucifixion had been abolished. It was said that the Emperor Constantine the Great was converted to Christianity in the year 312, when he was marching on Rome to deal with a rival claimant to the throne. He saw a towering cross of light in the sky, with the words *In hoc vinces* (By this, conquer). He defeated his rival in battle and attributed his victory to the Christian god. The initial letters of the Latin words, IHV, or later IHSV or IHS, when the phrase was expanded to *In hoc signo vinces* (By this sign, conquer) frequently appear in Christian art, partly because in Greek the capitals IHS are the first three letters of the name 'Jesus'.

Constantine used the cross as a symbol on his coins and statues, on armour and on the walls of his palaces. He was also fond of the chi-rho monogram, an X impaled by a P, being the Greek letters for the 'Chr' of *Christos*. Both symbols were very popular with his Christian subjects.

Finding the True Cross

'Life is but the shadow thrown by the cross of Christ,' wrote an anonymous medieval author, 'outside that shadow is death.' Once the instrument of an ignominious death, the cross became the symbol of eternal life, the emblem of a triumphant death which had brought to all men the promise of immortality in heaven. Suitably enough in view of its shape, the cross became one of the great symbols of the reconciliation of opposites, the opposites of death and life, of punishment and self-sacrifice, of shame and glory, of earth and heaven, of agony and joy.

By c 350 it was believed that the true cross, the cross on which Christ died, had been found. St Cyril, a bishop and lecturer at Jerusalem, said that pieces of its wood had been distributed all over the world. By the end of the century Christian writers in Italy knew the story that Constantine's mother, the Empress Helena, had discovered the true cross at Jerusalem in 326. Directing excavations on the site of Christ's execution, she uncovered three crosses, the nails which had pierced Christ, and the mocking inscription 'This is the King of the Jews'

To Each His Cross

Foreign crosses, other men's merits are not mine; spontaneous and voluntary crosses, contracted by mine own sins, are not mine; neither are devious and remote and unnecessary crosses, my crosses. Since I am bound to take up my cross, there must be a cross that is mine to take up; that is, a cross prepared for me by God, and laid in my way, which is temptations or tribulations in my calling; and I must not go out of my way to seek a cross; for, so it is not mine, nor laid for my taking up. I am not bound to hunt after a persecution, nor to stand it and not fly, nor to affront a plague and not remove, nor to open myself to an injury and not defend. I am not bound to starve myself by inordinate fasting, nor to tear my flesh by inhuman whippings and flagellations. I am bound to take up my cross; and that is only mine which the hand of God hath laid for me, that is, in the way of my calling, temptations and tribulations incident to that.

John Donne *Sermons*

C. M. Dixon

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Besides its Christian associations forms of the cross have been used as potent symbols of many other beliefs. In ancient times it could mean universality, representing 'the world' or 'everything' *Left* This carved Pictish swastika from Perthshire, symbolizing life and vigour is formed by human bodies *Above* 'Jews are not welcome here'; the Nazis adopted the *Hakenkreuz* or swastika in the mistaken belief that it was a purely Germanic symbol *Below left* Egyptian animal-headed gods holding looped crosses or *ankhs*. As a life-giving symbol the ankh customarily accompanied the dead to ensure everlasting life in the afterworld *Below right* Human bodies reappear in this curious cross, once owned by Montague Summers, an authority on witchcraft and demonology: now in the Witches' Mill, Isle of Man

which had been fastened to his cross. There was no way of telling which was Christ's cross and which were those of the two thieves crucified with him, until the crosses were taken to the bedside of a dying woman and the true cross revealed itself by miraculously healing her.

The inscription and a piece of the cross are preserved at the church of the Holy Cross in Rome, which was built on the site of one of Helena's palaces. One of the nails is said to form the inner circlet of the famous Iron Crown of Lombardy, at Monza. Pieces of the true cross were indeed distributed all over the world, in such quantities as to arouse cynicism.

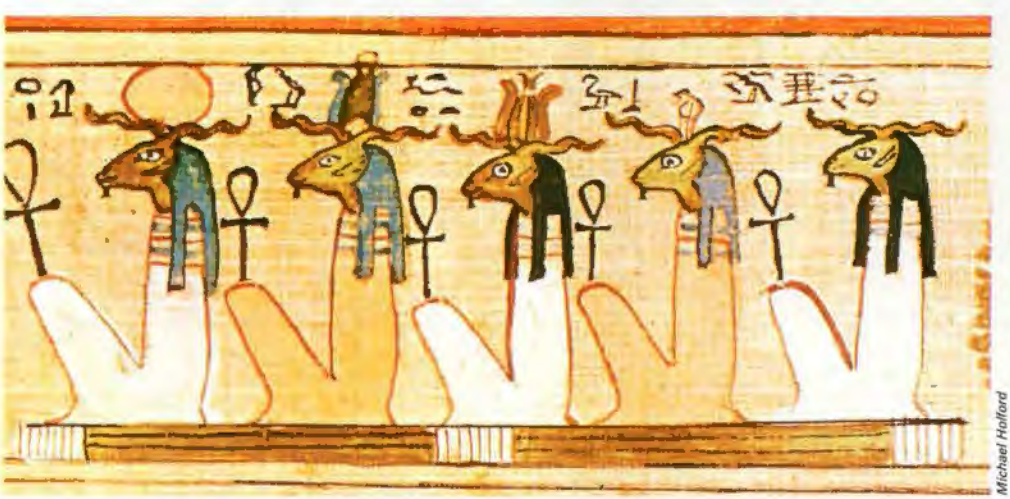
In 884 the Pope sent a piece of the wood of the true cross to King Alfred in England, an event which inspired poets to write expanded versions of an earlier Anglo-Saxon poem called 'The Dream of the Rood' (rood is an old English word for cross). The earliest surviving version of the poem is carved in runes on the 8th century cross at Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire.

The Glory-Tree

In the poem the true cross, 'the glory-tree', describes how it was hewn down and made into a scaffold, how it was set up on a high hill and how 'mankind's brave King' mounted it. And the cross goes on to tell how, when Christ's body had been taken down, it and its two companions were buried in a deep pit where 'friends found me', a reference to the legend of Helena.

Christian missionaries in northern Europe carved crosses on standing stones already venerated by pagans, to Christianize them. The eventual result was the Celtic standing cross, a stone pillar which sometimes has no cross-piece at all. When it does, there is often a circle round the point where the four arms join, the circle possibly standing for eternity and immortality (see CIRCLE).

Some early crosses in northern Europe dramatically combine Christian and pagan motifs. One side of the Gosforth Cross in Cumberland shows the Crucifixion but on the other side are scenes from pagan mythology of the destruction of the gods at the end of the world. This was evidently to show that in his death and resurrection Christ had overthrown the powers of hell,



Michael Holford

FDT

the false gods of the heathen who were regarded by Christians as devils.

Similarly, the Scandinavian world-tree which stood at the centre of the universe (see ASH) was replaced by the 'glory-tree', the cross on which the Saviour hung in death and in triumph at the exact centre of the world. In medieval art the cross is often shown as a tree. An example is a 16th century engraving showing Christ crucified on a tree whose branches are heavy with fruit, which men and women are picking, a symbol of the fecundity of Christ's sacrifice, the hope of immortality which his death brought to all men.

Christian artists and story-tellers frequently identified the cross with either the tree of life or the tree of knowledge in the story of Adam and Eve (see FIRST MAN). One widely accepted story was that when Adam lay dying, he sent his son Seth to Eden. The angel who guarded the gate of paradise gave Seth three seeds of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Seth placed them on Adam's tongue and Adam died happy, knowing that mankind would be saved from the consequence of his crime in Eden. The three seeds grew into a great tree, from which the cross was fashioned. Christ was crucified on it at the centre of the earth, the place where Adam had been created and where he had been buried. And Christ's blood falling onto Adam's skull redeemed him too at last.

Once the instrument of an ignominious death, usually reserved for common criminals, the cross became the symbol of eternal life, the emblem of a triumphant death which had brought to all men the promise of immortality in heaven. Raphael's *Crucifixion*

Michael Holford

The T For Protection

The figures shown beside the cross in medieval representations of the Crucifixion were used to point the moral that in founding the Church, Christ had abolished the authority of the Jewish Synagogue. Sometimes the Church is shown as a figure on Christ's right, catching in a bowl the flow of blood and water from his wounded side, the blood and water standing for the Mass and Christian baptism. On the other side is the Synagogue, a blindfolded figure holding a broken staff. Or the Church may be represented by the Roman centurion, who pierced Christ's side with a lance but then recognized him as the son of God, while the Synagogue is the man who held a sponge filled with vinegar to Christ's lips, the sour vinegar being the outmoded doctrines of the Jews. Or the penitent thief may be the Church and the impenitent one the Synagogue.

Even when the Virgin Mary and St John are shown beneath the cross, the Virgin may stand for the Church, the second Eve, born of the second Adam, and St John for the Synagogue. The oddity of this was explained by pointing to the story in St John's own gospel (chapter 20) of how he arrived at Christ's tomb before St Peter, but then hung back and let the impetuous Peter go in first. This showed, it was said, that the Synagogue must give place to Peter, to the Church.

Making the sign of the cross is naturally a common Christian defence against evil and the Devil, and magicians conjuring up evil spirits drew crosses inside the magic circle for protection. They also used the T-shaped cross for the same purpose. The origin of this is a passage in Ezekiel (chapter 9). The prophet saw a vision in which God ordered a mark to be made on the foreheads of the righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. Those who had this mark would be spared when the city was destroyed and its people slaughtered.

The Jews believed that this mark was a T, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and so a fitting symbol of 'the end', 'the last days' when the world would be destroyed and made anew. Many Jewish burial urns of the 1st century AD in Palestine have T-crosses carved or scrawled on them in charcoal (though some authorities believe that these were Christian burials). The tradition that the letter T is a mark of protection became firmly entrenched in European magic.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: For medieval cross symbolism, see E. Male, *The Gothic Image* (Harper and Row, 1973); for 'The Dream of the Rood', see *The Earliest English Poems*, tr. M. Alexander (Penguin). See also J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (Philosophical Library, 1972).

Fragments of messages purporting to come from beyond the grave from several distinguished psychic research investigators were received by a group of eminent people who were interested in automatism at the turn of the century

CROSS CORRESPONDENCES

THE AUTOMATIST, Mrs Verrall, invented this term early in the present century to describe any concordance between the automatic scripts or trance utterances of two or more automatists operating independently (see AUTOMATIC ART).

The idea that such concordances might occur or might be experimentally induced was not entirely new but favourable conditions for testing it arose only after the death in 1901 of F. W. H. Myers of the Society for Psychical Research and the posthumous publication of his famous book, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. At that time a number of people who had been impressed by Myers began to produce automatic scripts purporting to come from Myers himself or from his friends and collaborators Edmund Gurney and Professor Henry Sidgwick, and comparison of their scripts soon began to reveal apparent concordances. The most important of these automatists were Mrs Verrall, a Lecturer in Classics at Newnham; her daughter Helen Verrall, afterwards Mrs W. H. Salter; Mrs Holland, pseudonym of Mrs Fleming, a sister of Rudyard Kipling; and from 1908 onwards Mrs Willett, pseudonym of Mrs Coombe-Tennant, who was a prominent public figure and a British delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations.

All these were amateurs of the highest standing. The only professional 'medium' concerned was the famous American, Mrs Piper, who played a leading part in some of the earlier cross-correspondences. Later on, other amateur automatists were drawn into the group, which continued to function down to about 1930. By that date it is said to have produced over 2000 scripts – by far the largest body of 'automatic' material now in existence anywhere. These scripts were carefully transcribed, compared and annotated by a number of experienced investigators, of whom the most active were Alice Johnson, an official of the Society for Psychical Research, J. G. Piddington, President of the Society 1924–5 and Gerald Balfour, afterwards the 2nd Earl of Balfour. Many scripts showing cross-correspondences have been published and discussed in the *Proceedings* of the Society.

Spheres of Influence

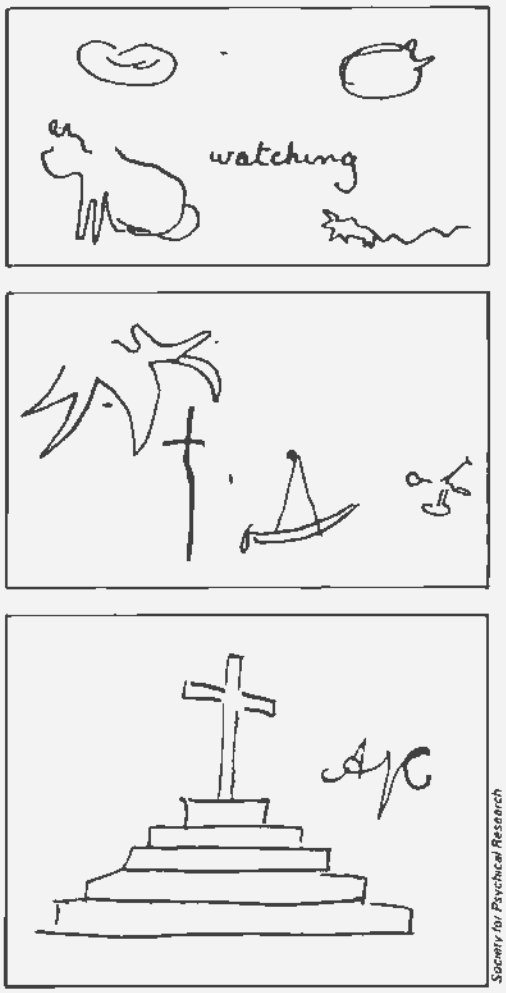
Cross-correspondences can be classified in various ways. Most of them occurred spontaneously, without any prompting by the investigators; but there are one or two experimental cases in which the 'script-intelligence' of one automatist was asked to introduce a specified topic into the script of another and more-or-less successfully complied. The following is a curious instance.

On 28 January 1902, Mrs Piper's script-intelligence, which called itself 'Rector', was asked to show itself to Helen Verrall with a spear in its hand. 'Why a sphere?' asked 'Rector'. The mishearing was corrected, but the confusion apparently persisted, for on 4 February 'Rector' claimed to have shown himself to Helen Verrall with a 'sphear' (so spelt). The claim was unsubstantiated so far as Miss Verrall was concerned; but on 31 January Mrs Verrall was seized by an impulse to write automatically and produced a brief script in a mixture of Greek and Latin which was only in part intelligible but contained *both* the word 'sphere' (in its original Greek form *sphaira*) *and* a Latin phrase descriptive of a spear (*volatile ferrum pro telo impinget*). This looks pretty much like a successful experiment in telepathy between the living, save that the telepathic 'message' was picked up by the mother instead of the daughter. That it emerged in a mixture of Greek and Latin is not particularly surprising: Mrs Verrall was conversant with both languages, and her earlier scripts were mostly written in dog-Latin and Greek.

Another distinction is that between 'simple' and 'complementary' cross-correspondences. The most obvious kind of simple correspondence is one in which the same thought is independently expressed, preferably in the same words and at about the same date, in the scripts of two or more automatists. Examples of this have occurred occasionally. A good instance is the 'Thanatos' correspondence, where within a fortnight the key idea 'death' was independently expressed in three different languages by three different automatists – Mrs 'Holland', Mrs Piper and Mrs Verrall (see AUTOMATIC WRITING). The weakness of this case is that in a series of communications purporting to come from the dead the theme of death is, to say the least, a pretty obvious one. It does raise an interesting question: how did Mrs Piper, who knew no Greek, get hold of *thanatos*, the Greek word for death, which seems to have conveyed nothing to her conscious mind?

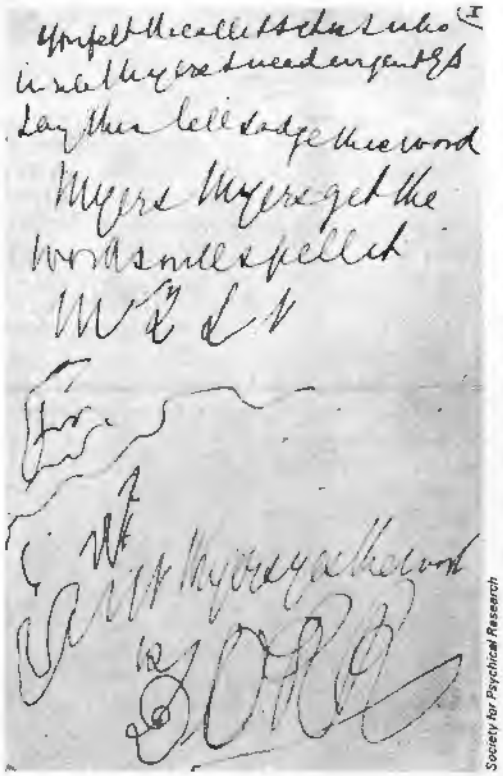
Psychic Jigsaw

More frequent and more important, is the complementary type; indeed, some writers recognize only this type as constituting a true cross-correspondence. The ideal complementary case would be one in which a coherent and significant message was split into several fragments, each meaningless by itself, with each being successively communicated through as many different automatists; the sense of the whole appearing only when their contributions were put together, forming a kind of jigsaw puzzle. It must be admitted that no actual cross-correspondence fully conforms to this ideal model. The 'complementary' fragments are usually found interspersed with irrelevant matter; the interval of time between one such fragment and the next is often rather



Society for Psychical Research

Three individual examples of automatic scripts, believed to be communications from the dead, which were received early this century by Mrs Verrall, a lecturer in Classics at Newnham College, Cambridge. On their own they were virtually meaningless, but when compared with messages and incidents encountered by other psychical researchers, they seemed to form a pattern. *Above* Message received on 11 March 1902, advising Mrs Verrall that there is no information today, but that she should watch for further communication *Centre* On 28 August 1901, Mrs Verrall produced an automatic script in Latin which made specific reference to fir trees in a garden; the script, signed with a scrawl, also included sketches of a sword, a bugle suspended by a nail and a pair of scissors. Unknown to Mrs Verrall, another researcher, Mrs Forbes, was at the same time receiving messages from her dead son, Talbot, a soldier killed in the Boer War. When the two subsequently met and compared notes, it was found that Mrs Forbes had several fir trees planted from seeds sent by Talbot. A further link was Talbot Forbes's regimental badge, a suspended bugle surmounted by a crown *Below* Between April 1903 and March 1906, Mrs Verrall received several messages alluding to a cross mounted on five stone steps, with a fresh green wreath, bearing the inscription AJC. Later at the home of another experimenter, Miss Curtois, Mrs Verrall's attention was drawn to a photograph which resembled in detail the cross of the scripts. She was told that it was a memorial to Miss Curtois's mother, whose initials were AHC



Society for Psychical Research

'You felt the call it I it is I who write Myers.' Automatic script produced by Mrs Willett, containing a message from F. W. H. Myers to the eminent psychical researcher Sir Oliver Lodge

long; and the 'message' when finally deciphered is not always so meaningful as could be wished. There are, however, a large number of cases which approximate in varying degrees to the ideal type. Most of them are highly complicated, turning as a rule on obscure literary allusions. For that reason they can be appreciated only by intensive study and are virtually impossible to summarize. All that can be done here is to quote briefly a single, relatively straightforward, example.

On 16 January 1907, Piddington asked Mrs Piper's 'Myers' intelligence to mark attempts at cross-correspondences in some way, say by drawing a circle with a triangle inside it.

On 28 January Mrs Verrall's script opened with the word *aster* (Greek for 'star'), followed by a number of what seem to be free associations with the word. Then came the following passage (the words italicized are partly quotations from, partly garbled reminiscences of, Browning's poem *Abt Vogler*): 'the hope *that leaves the earth for the sky* – Abt Vogler *for earth too hard* that found itself or *lost itself – in the sky*. That is what I want. *On earth the broken sounds – threads – In the sky, the perfect arc. The C major of this life.* But your recollection is at fault.' After this came two drawings of a triangle inside a circle, with a further reference to 'the part that unseen completes the arc'.

On 3 February Miss Verrall's script included drawings of a star and a crescent moon, with the words 'the crescent moon, remember that, and the star'.

On 11 February 'Myers', writing through Mrs Piper, claimed to have referred through Mrs Verrall to 'Hope and Browning' and also 'Star'.

On 17 February Miss Verrall's script contained another drawing of a star and the words 'the mystic three(?) and a star above it all'. (This has been taken as an allusion to the line in *Abt Vogler*, 'That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star', which is an apt analogy to a complementary cross-correspondence.) Finally, on 8 April 'Myers', writing through Mrs Piper, stated that through one of the other automatists he had drawn a star and a crescent.

Voices from the Grave

The question of how such complementary correspondences are to be explained, is one of the most difficult and disputed questions in the whole field of psychical research. Four different explanations are theoretically possible: fraud, chance, telepathy from (or possession by) the dead, and telepathy between the living. The first of these, however, can be discarded with confidence. That a large number of persons of high intelligence and high moral standing should without apparent motive have conspired together to deceive the world and should have kept up the deception for some 30 years is psychologically incredible. The very ambiguity and vagueness of even the best cross-correspondences is the surest proof of the automatist's honesty.

The hypothesis of sheer chance has a different status. No exact limit can ever be set to the possibility of chance coincidence, and the sceptic can argue a number of considerations which suggest that chance may have played a greater part in the production of correspondences than the investigators have been willing to admit. But the fact remains that very few who have made a careful study of the complete evidence have found it possible to regard the correspondences as *purely* accidental.

There remains the alternative choice either of postulating a rather unusual kind of telepathy between the living or of accepting in some form the actual agency of the dead. Most of the original investigators came to prefer the second view for three main reasons. There was, first, the testimony of the scripts themselves: if the true agents were the subconscious minds of the automatists, why did they persist in calling themselves 'Myers', 'Gurney', and so on? Would not this have been a joint 'conspiracy to deceive' such as we have already rejected? Second, and more important, there was the argument from design. 'Simple' correspondences might indeed be explained by telepathy between the automatists, but how could this apply to 'complementary' cases, where the overall design was not understood by any of the automatists until their scripts were put together and compared? If none of them knew the design, none of them could have invented it. And thirdly, if one of the automatists was nevertheless the designer, how did she collect the materials for her design, some of which were outside her normal knowledge? Are we to picture her subconscious mind rummaging in the minds of her colleagues, until she came on precisely the items required for building up the correspondence? Such *selective* telepathy, it was urged, was unexampled and hard to conceive.

Unsolved Problem

To these arguments tentative answers have been offered by a number of critics. (1) To the argument from the consensus of the scripts their reply is that such dramatization is characteristic of all subconscious products, including ordinary dreams, and that at this level no real distinction can be drawn between believing and make-believing. Since it was Myers's death which set the whole movement going, 'Myers' naturally becomes the hero of the drama; and a dissociated fragment of Mrs Verrall's mind groping after an identity, may declare 'I am Myers' with a confidence as innocent (and perhaps as temporary) as that of the small child who states 'I am a steam engine'. (2) The argument from design has been countered by pointing out that 'complementariness' does not in itself prove intention. Ordinary telepathic impressions often emerge undesignedly in just the same fragmentary and enigmatic way: the famous Gilbert Murray experiments furnish good examples. (3) If, however, we concede that some correspondences do involve deliberate planning, the critic may urge that it is still unnecessary to attribute the planning to the dead. We do not know how telepathy works, in this case or in any other, but we need not imagine it in terms of picking out bits of the jigsaw from someone else's mind; we are equally free to think of an automatist subconsciously constructing the puzzle out of material already available to her, some of it familiar to her conscious self, some of it once familiar but now dropped out of conscious memory, and some which has drifted in on the accidental winds of telepathy. And if we ask 'What automatist?', a case can be made for replying 'Mrs Verrall'. She had known Myers well; she was the first of the group in the field and the first to hint at correspondences in her script; she possessed most of the classical learning needed for the construction of certain recondite puzzles; she had reported cases of spontaneous telepathy from her husband and her daughter long before she took to automatic writing; and, finally, after her death in 1916 there was a marked falling off both in the quantity and the quality of alleged correspondences.

There for the present the discussion rests, and there it is perhaps likely to remain until the complete body of script material is made available for study and analysis.

E. R. DODDS

FURTHER READING: The cross-correspondences have been published in Britain in a long series of articles in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* from vol. XX (1906) onwards. A detailed list will be found in H. F. Saltmarsh's *Evidence of Personal Survival from Cross Correspondences* (Arno, 1975); E. D. Mitchell's, *Psychic Exploration* (Paragon, 1979) is also well worth reading.

CROSSROADS

THE PHRASE 'dirty work at the crossroads' sums up the ominous significance of places where roads meet. In Russia vampires lurked at crossroads and attacked travellers at night. In Japan phallic symbols used to be set up at road junctions to protect passers by, and in India offerings were made at crossroads to Rudra, the god who ruled ghosts and evil powers. A crossroads is an uneasy and uncanny place, perhaps because it imposes a choice of routes or symbolically of paths through life, with dangerous possibilities of choosing the wrong way and with the threat of the nightmare childhood experience of being lost.

In classical Europe offerings of food called 'Hecate's suppers' were placed at crossroads for this sinister goddess (see HECATE), whose image was often to be seen there, frequently in triple form – a statue with three faces looking three ways, or three wooden masks on a pole.

The 'suppers', which sometimes included cakes set with candles like our modern birthday cakes, also placated the malevolent ghosts which were believed to follow the goddess, ghosts which could not stay quiet in their graves but which roamed the earth hunting human prey.

It was an old custom to bury at a crossroads the body of a suicide, whose ghost could be expected to be restless and vengeful, with a stake driven through the corpse's heart to prevent it from walking. Criminals, whose ghosts would also be vengeful, were often executed at crossroads. On the other hand, some American Indians buried dead babies at crossroads, intending that the ghosts would 'enter' passing women and so be reincarnated.

The connection of crossroads with evil powers and ghosts made them suitable places for witches' meetings, for making a pact with the Devil and for operations of black magic – and sometimes white magic, as in many United States folk cures and marriage divinations that are required to be performed at crossroads.

Caxton Gibbet which is still to be seen at a crossroads in Huntingdonshire

Michael Busselle

According to one legend, the downfall of Britain will follow swiftly if the ravens in the Tower of London are harmed in any way

The sinister crow in its rusty black plumage is associated with death and disaster. In ancient times it had the reputation of being wily and knowing, the confidant of the gods and the messenger of man

CROW

THE CROW FAMILY form a group of conspicuous, large birds with a wide distribution throughout the world from the arctic to the tropics. In particular the raven and crows proper, of Europe and Asia, have attracted man's attention, and much folklore is connected with them. These associations arose primarily from their carrion-feeding behaviour; hunters in ancient times, aware that the presence of the birds provided clues to the whereabouts of game, and often of carcasses, would regard them as endowed with knowledge and insight surpassing their own. As death has long been a mystery to mankind the observed close association between carrion-feeding birds and corpses meant that they aroused disquieting responses.

The raven's habit of picking out the eyes from a corpse before eating the flesh was commented on by Aristophanes in *The Birds*. In the Bible, in Proverbs (chapter 30) it is said: 'The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother, will be picked out by ravens of the valley.' In Bohemia it used to be said that crows picked out the eyes of St Lawrence. One of the crows in the Scottish ballad '*The Twa Corbies*' says of the fallen knight, 'I'll pike out his bonny blue e'en.' By the odd kind of inversion which sometimes occurs in folklore it was said in Wales that blind people who showed kindness to ravens would regain their sight. In Czechoslovakia there was a tradition that a man who ate three ravens' hearts reduced to ashes would become a crack shot. The notion that by partaking of the heart or flesh of a creature one could acquire some of its qualities was extremely widespread and in this instance it was evidently supposed that the raven's farsightedness could be acquired. According to the Greek writer Porphyry (3rd century AD), by eating the hearts of crows one might acquire the birds' prophetic powers.

Why the Raven Croaks

Black, the colour of the crow, has long been associated with death and disaster; and because large birds of this colouring are relatively uncommon, a need was felt to explain their dark hue. A number of legends purport to explain how they acquired it. Thus, according to the Greek geographer Pausanias (2nd century AD) and other writers, when Apollo became the lover of Coronis, the mother of Asclepius, he commissioned a snow-white crow to mount guard while he went to Delphi; despite this, Coronis although already pregnant by him, became unfaithful with Ischys. Before the crow set out with the news Apollo divined what had happened and, infuriated that the crow had not picked out Ischys's eyes, turned the bird black.

Another story relates that the gods were sacrificing and the raven was sent to bring water from a fountain for a libation but he dallied, waiting until some figs were ripe. So the bird was condemned to suffer from thirst in summer – and that is why the raven croaks so hoarsely.

The frequent allusions in folklore to the association between the raven or crow and water might seem unaccountable, for these birds are not especially partial to damp habitats and, indeed, sometimes frequent rocky outcrops and ruins in desert country. The association has apparently arisen through ravens being frequently seen circling among black storm clouds. Thus the species was credited with some of the qualities of a storm bird such as were attributed to large high-flying, and sometimes mythical, birds in Asia and elsewhere. Among the Greeks and Romans the crow was likewise considered to be a weather prophet. Many Greek writers refer to the raven as presaging tempests, though some characteristics of its behaviour were interpreted as prognosticating good weather. The raven's association with clouds and rain meant that it was often regarded as a thunderbird.

Perhaps the most familiar episode in which the raven is associated with water is the account in Genesis of the sending forth of a raven by Noah from the Ark to search for land. This is derived from an older myth of the Deluge originating in the ancient city of Acre in Israel, in which the dove, swallow and raven are sent forth in turn to discover whether the waters had subsided. It is recorded that at Krannon in Thessaly there were two ravens and never more – a detail perhaps based on observations that the birds pair for life – but at Krannon the ravens were connected with a magical rain-making ceremony. Coins of the 4th century BC depict two ravens on a small wagon containing a jar of water with pieces of metal suspended from it. By jolting this contrivance the jangling sounds and splashing water simulated a miniature thunderstorm. It was believed that in this manner rain could be induced.

Messenger and Guide

In common with the eagle and some other conspicuous, large birds the raven was regarded as being in contact with higher powers; and in this capacity it was regarded as entrusted with carrying information, water or fire, or performing other missions. In what seems to be a variation of the Deluge story the culture hero of a Siberian tribe, the Koryak, comes to the rescue during a period of incessant rain by flying up to heaven and stopping the leak. The mythical association with water was apparently carried to the New World where we find an American Indian culture hero Yetl transforming himself into the form of a raven in order to obtain and escape with fresh water. He was surprised in the act and was turned from white to black. However, he succeeded in flying to earth and disgorging the water to become streams, rivers and lakes.

The mythological figure Raven is of course the major culture hero and trickster of all tribes of the North Pacific coast. (Crow is a lesser figure in Indian myth, being a minor trickster of the Canadian Chipewyan and some Plains tribes.) For the Kwakiutl, Haida and other North Pacific tribes, he is the transformer who brought mankind into being (out of a clamshell), gave them fire, water, game and the wealth of Nature. As a trickster, he is a great stealer of food, usually thwarted laughably (see TRICKSTER). Raven appears too in Jicarilla Apache myths, where he is responsible for making man mortal; while in Iroquois and other woodland Indian ceremonials Raven is often evoked for curing rituals.

Death is a Hooded Crow

As a wise bird flying hither and thither and at times reputedly in touch with the gods the raven was said to act as messenger, informant and guide. Ravens led the Boeotians to where they founded a new city and they guided Alexander to the shrine of Jupiter Ammon in the oasis of Siwah in Egypt and later foretold his death. It was said that when the people from the island of Thera in the Aegean emigrated to Libya ravens flew alongside their ships to guide them. The Emperor Jimmu of Japan marched to war in the 7th century with a golden raven as guide. Pausanius recorded that a crow indicated the grave of the Greek writer Hesiod; according to Aelian a crow

carried messages for King Marres of Egypt. Odin's two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, went forth each day prying into what was happening in the world and returning to perch on his shoulder and whisper their news into his ear.

In Celtic areas the importance of the raven and crow was once great though it is uncertain to what extent we are justified in speaking of a raven divinity or crow god. Various supernatural female figures appeared in the form of ravens or crows. Odin was called Hrafna-gud, god of the raven. The goddess of slaughter who came to the Celtic hero Cu Chulainn when he was mortally wounded appeared with her sisters as hooded crows and perched on his shoulders as he was dying.

Scottish folklore still holds reminiscences of these ferocious beings in the person of the dread Cailleach, a female who can appear as a raven, hooded crow or other birds. In Anglo-Saxon poetry the raven is constantly associated with battles. The similarities between Germanic and Celtic raven and crow traditions are such that we may assume with some confidence that their origin dates from the period when the peoples concerned lived in close proximity to one another. According to the *Prose Edda*, while his body lay sleeping, Odin could take the shape of various creatures, including that of a wild beast or bird. Odin's ravens were not fierce flesh-eating birds; Huginn and Muninn represented Thought and Memory – the mind's ability to go roving as in a shaman's trance. On a 7th century helmet from Sweden he is shown on horseback with two birds presumably ravens flying round his head.

In Christian Europe the raven had sinister significance, derived from Roman ideas concerning augury, dim recollections of the raven's connection with pagan gods, and from its dark plumage and deep croaking. Shakespeare refers several times to the ominous raven, and its association with death and fortune. In 1650 Dr Nathaniel Hone wrote: 'By the flying and crying of Ravens over their houses, especially in the dusk of evening and where one is sick, they conclude death.'

Apparently there has been a transference of oracular beliefs from the crow to the magpie, another member of the family, and the sayings and rhymes, and even minor ritual, such as taking off one's hat to it in Wales, seem to be derived from Roman crow augury.

The raven and grey (hooded) crow still retain in parts of the British Isles something of their reputation as oracles. There is an Irish phrase 'raven's knowledge' meaning to see and know all. It is also said in Ireland that the raven and grey crow 'tell the truth'.

The references in the Bible to Elijah being fed by ravens and to ravens being fed by God predisposed Christians to regard the bird as benevolent but, on the principle that the gods of a defeated faith may become the evil spirits of its successor the raven was sometimes viewed with suspicion – not surprisingly in view of its many heathen associations. St Ambrose wrote at length on the bird's impiety in not returning to the Ark. Jewish, Moslem and Christian legends regarded it as blameworthy for remaining to eat carrion and it was said that henceforth it was condemned to eat carrion. In the Koran the raven is sent by God to show Cain where to bury Abel but this is a version of an older Jewish legend. We hear of desert saints being assailed by devils in the form of 'black stinking ravens'. In Germany witches were said to ride on them. When St Vincent was thrown to the beasts at Saragossa his body was defended by ravens and when at length it was buried at Cape St Vincent ravens kept guard. Shakespeare makes use of both traditions malevolent and benevolent. In a single scene of *Titus Andronicus* (Act II Sc. 3) he mentions the 'fatal raven' and quotes 'ravens foster forlorn children' – an extension of the story of Elijah's ravens.

The ravens at the Tower of London remind those who are interested in ancient traditions of the significance which these birds have possessed in the British Isles and elsewhere for many centuries. It is said that disaster to these ravens would presage Britain's downfall. At one point in the Second World War, people were disquieted by the rumour that the Tower ravens had not croaked for five whole days.

Sun-Crow of China

The most interesting of the many fables concerning ravens and crows is the War of the Owls and Crows which appears in Indian as well as classical sources. It seems to embody reminiscences of very ancient beliefs with regard to the heavenly bodies, the owl representing the moon and the crow the sun. In China the three-legged sun-crow is an important symbol. The tradition that a crow never enters the Acropolis at Athens appears to be based on the tradition of the enmity between Athene, whose symbol was an owl, and the crow.

The raven and crow have been the subjects of a number of heterogeneous beliefs. Parts of the raven were used in medicine, according to Pliny, and raven's eggs were used by the Greeks in homoeopathic magic. Ovid, in *Metamorphoses*, refers to the witch Medea infusing into the veins of the elderly Jason a decoction of an aged deer and the head of a crow that had outlived nine generations of men. Folklore attributes a very long life to birds of the crow family. Aelian states that raven's eggs dye the hair black but unless you filled your mouth with oil while you applied this remedy for grey hair you would find that your teeth also had become indelibly black.

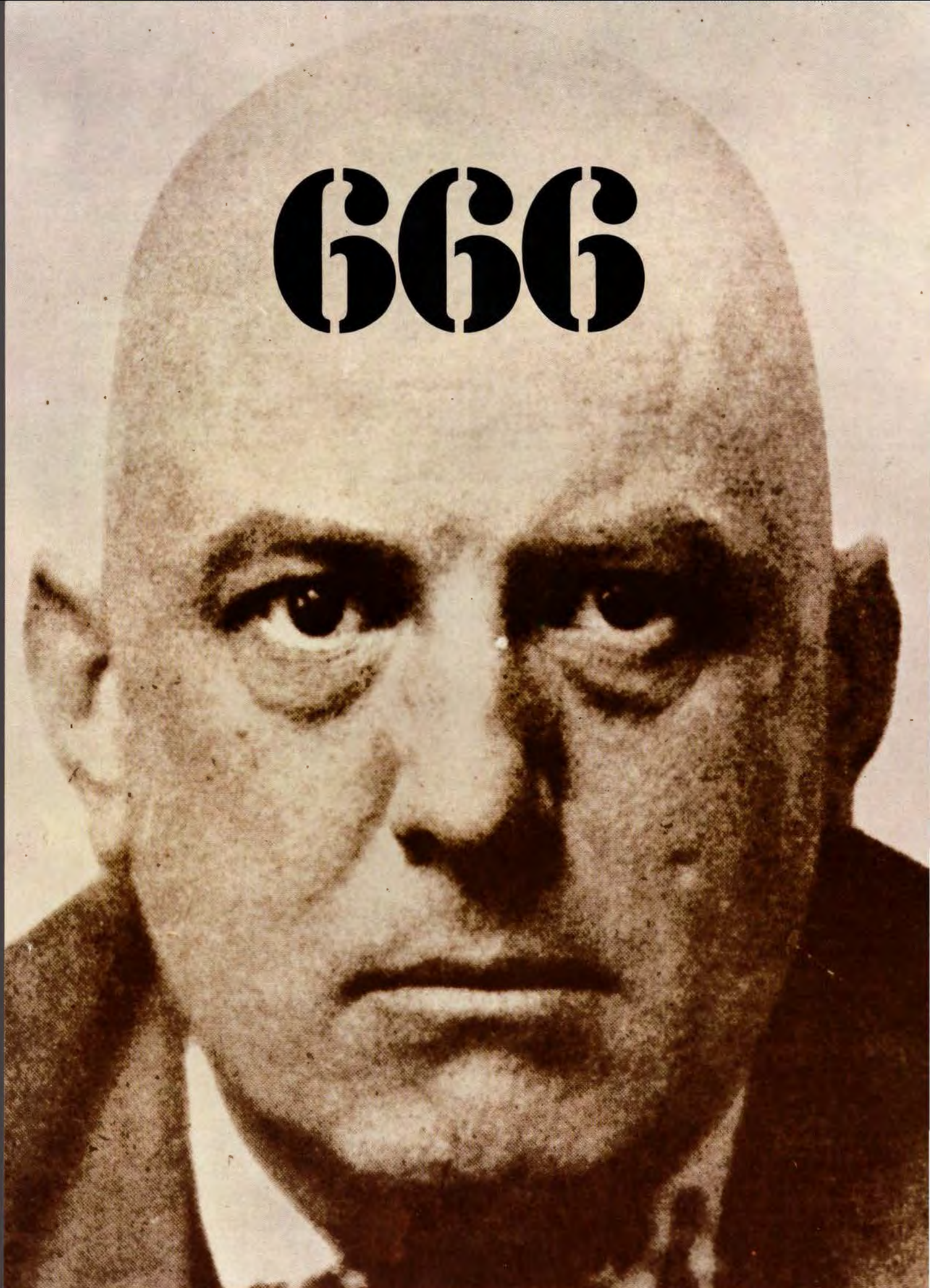
EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: E. A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Dover, 1969).

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Despite its widespread reputation as a bird of ill omen, Christians were generally more kindly disposed towards the raven: for according to the Bible the prophet Elijah, while in hiding, was kept alive with bread and meat brought to him by ravens. A painting by the Italian artist Giovanni Givolano Savoldo

666



An air of unsavoury mystery still surrounds the life and teachings of Aleister Crowley nearly a quarter of a century after his death. Violently hostile to Christianity and its God, he saw himself as the Messiah of a new religion

ALEISTER CROWLEY

POET, NOVELIST, WRITER of books on magic, eccentric – Crowley (1875–1947) was all this and more. He strove hard to assume the mantle of magician, and long before he died he knew that he had succeeded. He is thus in direct line of descent from Sir Edward Kelley, Cagliostro, the Comte de Saint-Germain, Eliphas Levi and Madame Blavatsky, all of whom were credited with remarkable, if not miraculous powers. Crowley's father was a successful brewer, the manufacturer of Crowley's Ales, but whose main interest by the time Aleister was born was that of travelling about the English countryside preaching the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren and trying to gain converts to his sectarian views. The first important fact, therefore, about Aleister Crowley is that he was brought up amid the mysteries of the Christian religion; at the age of 11, however, when his father died, he grew to detest the faith in which he had been brought up and, without knowing why, went over to the side of Satan. While still a Christian and subjected to daily Bible readings in the Crowley household, he had taken a fancy to the 'False Prophet', 'the Beast whose number is 666', and the 'Scarlet Woman', characters or archetypes which were to play a prominent and decisive part in his later life.

Educated at Malvern and Tonbridge schools, and later at Trinity College, Cambridge, as a young man Crowley began to write verses after the manner of Swinburne. His real seat of learning, however, which suited his peculiar talents, was the magical society known as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the leading light of which was a man of considerable magical potential, Samuel Liddell Mathers, known as MacGregor Mathers.

The Secret Chiefs

The Golden Dawn, which had about 100 members spread among several lodges, taught the use of magical weapons, how to consecrate talismans, set up magic circles, travel astrally and so on. It also gave instruction in the use of that ground plan of Western magic, the Cabala. In a word, it taught and practised ceremonial magic as opposed to magic which used other aids such as drugs or sex (see also GOLDEN DAWN).

Although one member at that time, 1900, described the Golden Dawn to the present writer as 'a kind of club, like any other club', it was quite unlike any other club in one respect: its constitution was not derived from its governing body but from superior beings or intelligences called (following Madame Blavatsky) Secret Chiefs. Mathers, it was said, had met the Secret Chiefs one night in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris. Crowley joined the Golden Dawn in 1898. Accepting all the vows and obligations, he took the magical title of Perdurabo (I will endure to the end).

At this time, Crowley was living in a flat in London's Chancery Lane and describing himself as Count Svareff, a Russian nobleman. Under this and other names, he published at his own expense several books of verse and, anonymously, a work of pornography entitled *White Stains* (1898).

Mathers was also a scholar, and translated and edited three important works: *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, *The Key of Solomon* and *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, 'as delivered by Abraham the Jew unto his son Lamech, AD 1458'. *Abra-Melin* inflamed Crowley's spirit; he described the book as one which is in marked contrast with all the puerile nonsense written on the subject. The technique of this magic has something in common with yoga: a secluded spot and a long period of purification are necessary before one's Holy Guardian Angel or Higher Intelligence can be invoked. Crowley searched the Lake District and Scotland and found what he wanted in Boleskine House, near the village of Foyers, in Inverness. He dropped the title of Count Svareff, assumed that of Lord Boleskine, constructed his oratory and began the operation. But instead of his Holy Guardian Angel appearing, he merely attracted a host of evil spirits.

He quarrelled with Mathers and was expelled from the Golden Dawn. Crowley retaliated by denying that Mathers had met the Secret Chiefs in the Bois de Boulogne and been confirmed by them as Head of the Order. Mathers, he said, had only bumped into some evil demons. He continued to pour out a torrent of verse and to climb mountains, in Mexico and in the Himalayas. He acquired a wife, Rose, and wrote for her the pornographic *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*. His greatest need was to make his own link with the Secret Chiefs or Mahatmas; without such a link he was a negligible force.

This uncertain state of affairs did not last long. Towards the end of 1903, when Crowley was 28, he went with his wife on a trip to Ceylon. In the new year, he decided to return home, and on the way back stopped for a while in Cairo. Wearing a turban with a diamond aigrette, a silken robe and a coat of cloth of gold, he gave out that he was Prince Chioa Khan. He was driven with Princess Khan (formerly Rose Kelly, the daughter of the Vicar of Camberwell) about the Cairo streets, with 'two gorgeous runners to clear the way for my carriage'. Despite his style of living, Crowley was undecided about his future and growing short of money. Then an event occurred which put at last some magical ground under his feet. This was 'the Great Revelation in Cairo'. The old world of Christianity came to an end for Crowley and a new world, of which he was prophet, was born.

Aiwass, also spelt *Aiwaz*, the name of his Holy Guardian Angel whom he had tried with only partial success to invoke at Boleskine House, appeared to him in his Cairo flat and commanded him to take down a message for mankind. After an hour's dictation, Aiwass disappeared, but he was back again the following day at the same time, noon. Aiwass described himself as the minister of Hoor-Paar-Kraat (the Graeco-Egyptian god Harpakrad or Harpokrates), that is 'a messenger from the forces ruling this earth at present'. Aiwass came on three occasions and each time dictated a chapter of *The Book of the Law*, as the work is called. In other words, a new era, or rather aeon, in the world's history had begun, one which will last for 2000 years. The heart of Crowley's magic is derived from this work; it is the text behind his magic and his philosophy which he summed up in the phrase *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*.

The Number of the Beast

Just before Aiwass appeared in Crowley's Cairo flat, a curious incident occurred in the Boulak Museum (now the National Museum). Rose had been in a strange, dazed state of mind and in this condition she had been mumbling something about Horus. 'Who is Horus?' asked Crowley, who was not aware that his wife knew anything about Egyptian religion. 'There', said Rose, pointing, 'there he is'. She was indicating an ancient Egyptian stele on which was painted Horus in the form of the hawk-headed Ra-Hoor-Khuit (Ra-Hara-khte). Crowley went forward, then fell back in amazement. The exhibit bore the number 666, the number of the Beast, his number!

Many years later, in 1946, I asked Crowley, 'Why do you call yourself the Beast?'

'My mother called me the Beast,' he replied briefly, presumably not wishing to go into the deeper aspects of the subject. Crowley's mother was a pious woman and the behaviour of her son reminded her of the Beast of the book of Revelation that came out of the depths of the sea, with horns on his head, blaspheming God.

The cosmology of *The Book of the Law* is explained by Crowley thus: there have been as far as we know, two aeons in the history of the world. The first, the aeon of Isis, was the age of the domination of the woman, of matriarchy. The choice of Egyptian names for these aeons is purely arbitrary and does not imply that they are confined to Egypt. The second aeon, that of Osiris, was the aeon of the man, the father; it coincides with the Christian period, also with that of Judaism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism. It was superseded in 1904 by the aeon of Horus, the child. He explained that the emphasis for this present period, that of Horus, is on the will *(thelema)* or true self in man as opposed to external authority, priests and gods. 'Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.'

Portrait of Aleister Crowley, the 'Great Beast', the most famous – and infamous – magician of modern times; he reviled the Christian God and sought by magical means to set himself up in his place

The Silver Star

On his return to Europe in the spring of 1904, Crowley wrote to Mathers informing him that the Secret Chiefs had appointed him the head of the Order and declared a new magical formula – thelema. 'I did not expect or receive an answer,' said Crowley, 'and I declared war on Mathers accordingly.'

The following year Crowley led a disastrous climbing expedition to Kanchenjunga and added to his evil reputation by deserting his comrades on the mountain. In 1910, he published the curious and obscene *Bagh-I-Muattar* or 'The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz'. This was a volume of homosexual love poems, supposedly translated from the medieval Persian.

But all this was marginal activity; his work was to spread the good tidings. A new world had been born and a new aeon had arisen. To this end, he founded his own magical association, the A.·. A.·. (*Argenteum Astrum*, the Silver Star) which constituted the Inner Order of the Great White Brotherhood; the Outer Order was the Golden Dawn. And he brought out his own publicity organ, *The Equinox*. This was issued for several years at the rate of two bulky volumes a year. Its articles and reviews were mainly written by Crowley under a variety of names. The series entitled 'The Temple of Solomon the King' contains details of Perdurabo's ascent in the Great White Brotherhood. No 7 contains *The Book of the Law* with his first brief comment; he thought it time to give it out to the world, but it caused no stir whatsoever. Between whiles he went off on any magical adventure which offered itself, during which he probed the gods for further guidance.

One night during 1912 Crowley received an unexpected visit at his flat in Victoria Street, London, from Theodor Reuss, a high ranking German Freemason. They were strangers to each other and Reuss had apparently come over from Germany for the express purpose of meeting Crowley. Without beating about the bush, he accused Crowley of giving away magical secrets. Reuss wore a handle-bar moustache and pince-nez; he was alleged to be a member of the German Secret Service. Crowley denied the accusation. Reuss replied by going to the book-shelf and taking out Crowley's *Liber CCCXXXIII: the Book of Lies*. He opened it at the page which begins, 'Let the Adept be armed with his Magical Rood and provided with his Mystic Rose,' and showed it to Crowley.

The secret that Crowley had been giving out to all the world was that sex can be used ritually or magically; but as he had been expressing it in veiled language, as in this extract, Reuss's point is difficult to see. The previous head of the order to which Reuss belonged, a wealthy German ironmaster called Karl Kellner, had learned this so-called secret from Tantric yogins in India during the last decade of the 19th century. He had been introduced to the ritual of *maithuna* (sexual union), in which the mind, the breath and the semen are held still. And on his return to Germany, he had expounded the delicate subject to his fellow Freemasons, among whom was Franz Hartmann, one of the companions of Madame

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Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

John Symonds

'Be strong, O man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.' In 1904 Crowley proclaimed the advent of a new era in which the emphasis would be on man's true inner self, as opposed to the external authority of gods and priests *Above* Crowley in Arab dress: he loved aliases, disguises and exotic costumes. In Cairo, calling himself Prince Chioa Khan, he received the communications from his Holy Guardian Angel which marked the opening of the new era *Above left* Drawing by Crowley, who was a painter, mountaineer and chess-player as well as a magician *Far left* Top of his Janus-headed magical wand *Left* The Australian violinist Leila Waddell, 'Laylah' or 'Sister Cybele', one of Crowley's many mistresses and magical assistants, with the mark of the Beast between her breasts *Right* A 1930s poster, attacking Crowley as 'The Beast 666', a title bestowed on him by his mother

THE HUMAN BEAST
NEW DISCOVERIES
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Blavatsky, and proposed that they should start a new magical society to embody these sex and yoga teachings. Thus in 1902 the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, or Order of the Templars of the East, was founded. It claimed that it could communicate in nine degrees the secrets not only of Freemasonry but of the Rosicrucians, the Illuminati, the Order of the Hidden Church of the Holy Graal, the Knights of the Holy Ghost, and those of St John, of Malta, and of the Holy Sepulchre – in fact, of every mystic order that they could think of. 'Our Order possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teaching of *sexual magic*, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Nature, all the *symbolism* of FREE-MASONRY and all systems of religion.'

Sexual Magic

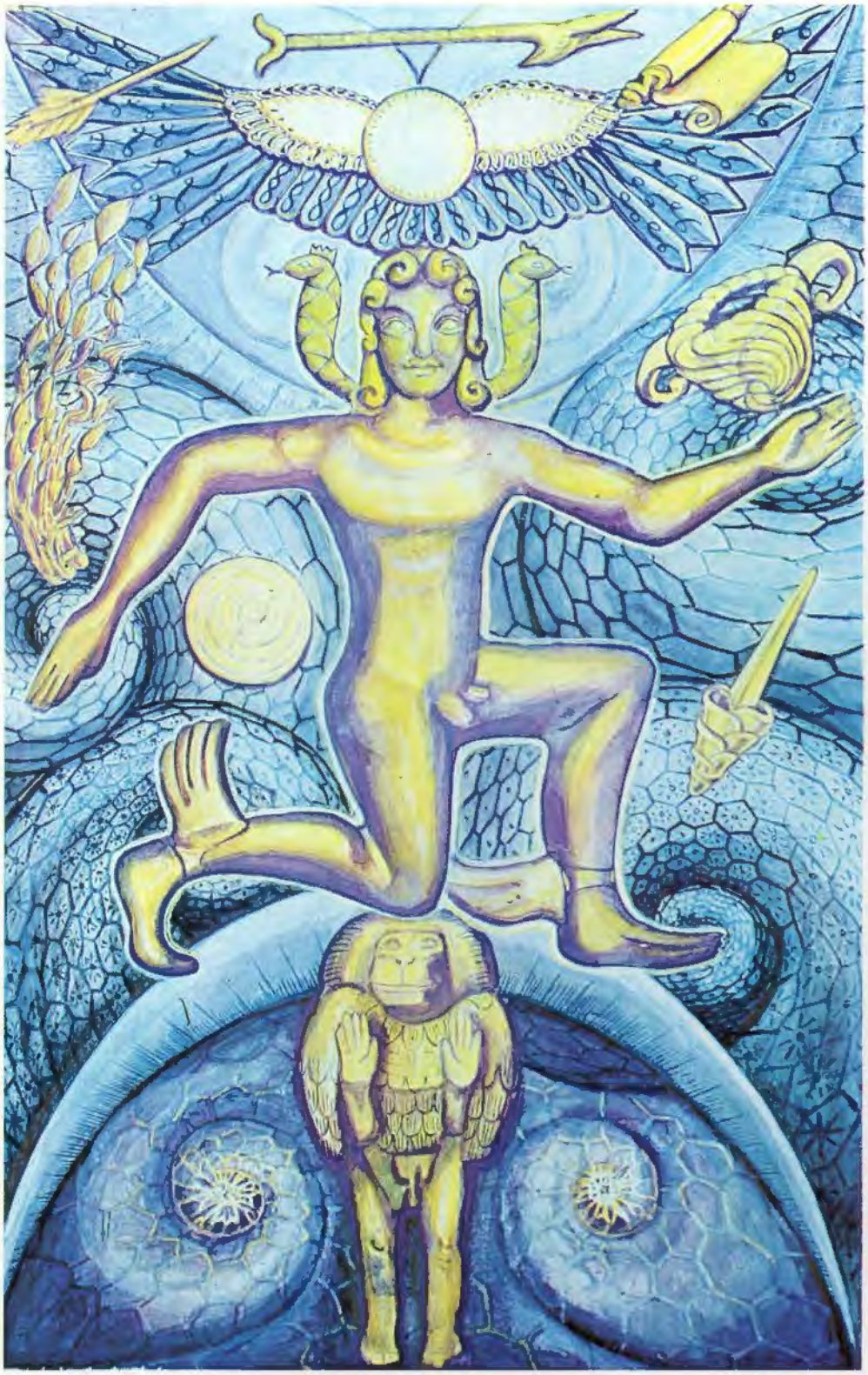
Crowley and Reuss talked long into the night. 'Since you know our hidden sex teachings,' said Brother Merlin (Herr Reuss's magical name), 'you'd better come into our Order and be its Head for Great Britain.' Crowley, who never declined a dinner, an adventure or a title, readily agreed. After a journey to Berlin, he was transformed with due ceremony into 'the Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis.' And with that keenness and audacity of mind which sees and seizes the main point, he gave himself the magical name in this secret society of Baphomet; this was the name of the idol which the original poor Knights of the Temple were accused of worshipping (see BAPHOMET).

One could not join the Order and start attempting to perform maithuna. The aspirant had to work his way diligently up to the IX°. One more degree was added by Crowley, the XI°, that of homosexual workings (or IX° inverted). In Paris during 1914 he worked this XI° O.T.O. with his pupil Victor Neuburg on 24 different occasions, the whole being known as The Paris Working. The X° was of an honorary character to distinguish the 'Supreme and Holy King' of the Order in each country where the Order was established.

The Ordo Templi Orientis claimed that the teachings of the Knights Templars (whose Order was disbanded amid a great scandal at the beginning of the 14th century) were known and continued by them, but this is wishful thinking. And the prostitutes whom Crowley frequently took as partners in his practice of sexual magic, apart from their not being trained in this form of worship, were completely ignorant of what he had in mind. His descriptions in *The Magical Record of the Beast* of these activities are quite out of keeping with the tone and elaborations of maithuna.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Crowley transferred his activities to America. The one important magical event which happened to him at this time, apart from his meeting with Leah Hirsig, the Scarlet Woman who outdid all other Scarlet Women in the Beast's Life, was his assumption during 1916 of the Grade of Magus.

Since 1909, he had been a Master of the



Temple, an exalted grade which enabled him to join the Secret Sanctuary of the Saints or the abode of the Secret Chiefs; now he went one higher. These upper stages in his career were implied in the Great Revelation in Cairo, that is to say in his being the vehicle of *The Book of the Law*. At last, he was ready to assume the throne and proclaim his word, thelema or 'do what thou wilt,' which ushers in the new aeon of liberty, as opposed to the old aeon of suffering (Christianity and other slave religions). The words of the ceremony which he performed, and during which he crucified a frog, make this clear.

'Night being fallen, thon shalt arrest the frog, and accuse him of blasphemy, sedition and so forth, in these words: *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*. Lo, Jesus of Nazareth, how thou art taken in my snare. All my life long thou hast plagued me and affronted me. In thy name – with all other free souls in Christendom – I have been tortured in my boyhood; all delights have been forbidden unto me; all that I had has been taken from me, and that which is owed to me they pay not – in thy name. Now at last I have thee; the Slave-God is in the power of the Lord of Freedom. Thine hour is come; as I blot thee out from this earth, so surely shall the eclipse pass; and Light, Life, Love and Liberty be once more the law of Earth. Give thou place to me, O Jesus; thine aeon is passed; the Age of Horus is arisen by the Magick of the Master the Great Beast.' And so on and so forth.

Do What Thou Wilt

With the end of the war, Crowley returned to England; he did not stay in England for long but departed with small means and two mistresses, one of whom was his Scarlet Woman, Leah Hirsig, for Sicily. At Cefalu, he rented a villa, consecrated a temple to the New Aeon in one of the rooms, and painted on the front door the words DO WHAT THOU WILT. This was his famous 'abbey', his Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum; here, during three years, he had time to add copious details to his diary, to paint pictures which reveal his remorseless vision, and to try to fuse together the bits and pieces of his life. His aim at Cefalu was to create a world centre for the study of occultism, but few availed themselves

Michael Holford/Gerald Yorke Collection/Warburg Institute

Cards from a Tarot pack designed by Crowley and painted by Frieda Hariss ***Left*** **The Magician or Juggler: Mercury with the ape of Thoth, his Egyptian counterpart, the whole symbolizing the creative will of God and man** ***Centre*** **Death, the skeleton and scythe, performing the whirlwind dance of change** ***Right*** **The Hierophant or Pope who holds the key of heaven and hell: the pentagram which contains the dancing child symbolizes Crowley's belief in the new age of Horus**

of the opportunity of going there. Furthermore, the Beast's increasing dependence on heroin undermined his driving-force and the discipline of the abbey. However, during this period, he was revived by a commission from Collins, the publisher, to produce a novel about the drug traffic and to write his confessions; he set to work with unexpected vigour. The good produces the bad: *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, 1922, was the initial cause of his expulsion from his abbey following the review of the novel, and a general attack on Crowley and his creed in a Sunday paper.

But Crowley had uttered his word, thelema, and done his work; it remained only for him, the Logos (word) of the New Aeon, to publish some more magical writings and attend to the affairs of the Order. The turn of the wheel of fortune produced new followers in Germany, and the Mandrake Press which brought out during 1929 two of the projected six volumes of his *Confessions* which Collins had dropped. He also published about this time his magnum opus, *Magick in Theory and Practice*.

Crowley, who behaved as if the world was only an exhalation of his own being, wound the vast subject of magic round himself and the petty incidents of his life, with the result that *Magick* is a city within a city. Whoever penetrates into the inner city will find there Perdurabo, the false god, choking with guilt from having set himself up in God's place.

JOHN SYMONDS

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CROWN

A CROWN is an object placed on the head, and so it is a symbol of pre-eminence, of having reached the top. We call the top of the head itself the crown, and we use the same word for the top of a hill.

The custom of placing an object on a person's head as a visible sign of success, of having reached the summit, as it were, is very old. The Greeks gave wreaths of wild olive to victorious athletes at the Olympic games. A Roman general celebrating a formal triumph wore a wreath of laurel or bay leaves, and wreaths were presented to soldiers for bravery, and to poets or artists for excellence. We still call the greatest success of a man's life his 'crowning achievement' and if his work bears fruit we say it is 'crowned with success'.

Something placed on the head could also be meant to protect the part of the body which contains the intelligence and also the breath, and hence the life and soul of a person. In Rome suicides or people who knew they were about to die veiled their heads: when Julius Caesar was confrooted with the daggers of his assassins, he drew the top of his gown up over his face. The same idea may be behind the old custom of putting a wreath on the head of a dead man before his burial, to keep his soul from harm. We continue this custom, though we now put the wreath on top of the coffin. It is circular and made of evergreen leaves, both as symbols of hoped-for immortality.

Another old custom, still continued, is for a bride to wear a veil and a circlet of flowers, which again may have been meant to protect her against evil. Guests at Greek and Roman banquets wore wreaths of flowers, apparently to keep their heads clear and prevent them from getting drunk.

The Investiture of the Prince of Wales at Carnarvon Castle in 1969. The widespread custom of placing a crown on a person's head signifies triumph and pre-eminent authority

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

Crown Royal

Gods and kings wear crowns to show their pre-eminent authority. Kings are 'crowned heads' and the ceremony in which a man is acknowledged as a king is called a coronation, or literally 'a crowning'. In Mesopotamia deities and kings were shown wearing a high conical head-dress rising from between pairs of horns, apparently as a symbol of fertile vigour and of rising upwards, the top, the summit. The royal head-dress of Egypt, which was itself regarded as divine, was a curiously shaped high cap. Persian kings also wore high caps, studded with jewels. The Byzantine emperors followed suit and the high cap with one, two and eventually three bands round it became the tiara of the popes.

In the early Christian centuries small crowns, circlets of gold or some other metal, were hung up in churches as offerings to God. It is likely that the celebrated Iron Crown of Lombardy, probably dating from the 9th century, was originally one of these. Only six inches wide, it is a circle of six rectangular gold plates with a narrow band of iron on the inside, believed to be made of a nail from Christ's cross (see CROSS). Napoleon set it on his own head when he was crowned King of Italy in 1805.

As a symbol, almost an incarnation, of kingship, the old royal crown of England, St Edward's crown, was destroyed in the time of the Commonwealth. A new one, as nearly as possible a copy of the old, had to be made for Charles II. A special crown was made when George V was crowned Emperor of India at Delhi in 1911, because by British law the royal crowns could not be taken abroad, a striking example of the intimate connection between the crown, the king and his country.

Crusade

Christian term for a holy war, first applied to the armed expeditions to recover the Holy Land from the Mohammedans, later to other wars officially approved by the Church, including the Albigensian Crusade against heretics in southern France: more geuerally, any aggressive campaign against an evil; derived from the same root as 'cross'.

See CATHARS; KNIGHTS TEMPLAR; WAR.

British Museum

Crystal-Gazing

Or scrying: divination by looking into a ball of rock-crystal, a mirror, a pool of ink or other liquid: events at a distance or in the future may show themselves in the crystal as pictures or symbolic images: also used to communicate with spirits, as by John Dee and Edward Kelley in the 16th century.

See DEE; SCRYING.

Barnaby's

CU CHULAINN

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER in a group of early Irish stories known as the *Ulster Cycle*, Cu Chulainn is the supreme example of the ideal Celtic hero. The pagan Celts venerated god and hero alike; the hero possessed many of the qualities of the tribal god – bravery and near-invincibility in conflict, for example – but both were capable of surrendering to superior forces, natural or supernatural. Both hero and god had strong intellectual capacities, and a quickness of wit which resulted in martial success as frequently as did mere brute force and the clever handling of weapons. Both were often in possession of some especially potent weapon, in Cu Chulainn's case the mysterious *gae bolga*, the spear he had obtained from a warrior goddess, once it penetrated the body it could not be withdrawn without inflicting fatal wounds from its barbed sides. This concept of the hero, like the Celtic concept of deity, allowed of no unintelligent, handsome brute, blundering along and succeeding only by means of his phenomenal strength. Beauty the hero must have, and great physical stamina, but he must also be intelligent, and educated according to the standards of his time. He must be able to outwit the hostile forces, not only of this world but of the supernatural, by his superior knowledge and by his quick wit.

A Law unto Himself

The stories of the *Ulster Cycle* were written down in the form in which we now have them c 1100 AD, but their manuscript origins were much earlier. They are concerned with the *Ulaid*, the people of Ulster, in northern Ireland, about the turn of the Christian era. The main story in the cycle is that of the cattle raid of Cualnge (*Tain Bo Cualnge*), the splendid epic which deals with the rivalry between the provinces of Connaught and Ulster, and with Cu Chulainn's heroic defence of the Ulstermen.

Cu Chulainn knew the secret language of the poets, for the great *fili* or poet, Amairgin, had been his foster-father, and had instructed him in the poetic and juridical arts. He first outraged, then pacified, the society into which he entered, in true heroic fashion. He had physical beauty of a kind that was extraordinary because it differed from the physical ideal of his tribal background and yet it was striking enough to impress favourably all who saw him. He was small, in a society in which height was revered; dark, where fairness was in vogue; a beardless boy, not a mature bearded warrior. He was called a *sirite*, 'sprite', a law unto himself, nevertheless upholding the honour of his people against impossible odds. He was known as *siabartha*, 'distorted one', because of the terrible change in his appearance when his battle ardour was

Statue of the Irish hero Cu Chulainn in Dublin's General Post Office. His legendary exploits, aggressiveness and great physical beauty commanded the highest respect in pagan Celtic society

Irish Tourist Board

aroused. He was the fear of every warrior, the beloved of all women who looked upon him in his full beauty. He was the son of the great god Lugh, the lover and subjugator of the goddesses, arousing the desire even of the terrible Morrigan, the war goddess, with her dark bird-form and her terrifying magical and prognostic powers.

The *Ulster Cycle* contains some historical material, but the main characters and episodes are of a manifestly mythological nature. It reflects a society which is strikingly similar to that described by the classical commentators on the continental Celts, and suggested by archeological evidence and Roman writings for parts of Britain. It was an intensely aristocratic society, and Cu Chulainn was a youth of noble birth and connection. His mother was Dechtire, sister of the high king Conchobar mac Nessa, the wife of the warrior Sualtaim, who is then Cu Chulainn's earthly father. According to one version of the conception of the hero, his birth is the result of an incestuous union between Dechtire and her brother the king. By the time Cu Chulainn is seven years of age he has left childhood far behind him, being the equal of a 14 year-old youth and clamouring for action.

The Heat of Battle

While still a small boy, Cu Chulainn sets out for Emain Macha, the court of Conchobar; he is equipped only with his toy weapons. He bursts into the precincts of the royal residence and attacks and overcomes the 150 youths who are practising games on the playing field there. The *Tain Bo Cualnge* contains the fascinating account of the young hero's progress, describing the various ordeals he undergoes in his journey from childhood to the status of a hero. His great boyhood feat is that of killing the monstrous hound of the smith Culann. The smith bewails his loss, and the boy promises to act as watch dog for him until another beast shall have been reared. He is then known as Cu Chulainn, Culann's Hound, and so acquires his name.

Next, he gains weapons by treachery. He has heard the Druid Cathbad saying to his pupils that 'a boy who would take up arms (on that day) would be splendid and famous, but would be short-lived and transient'. Cu Chulainn goes to the high king and demands weapons, leading his uncle to believe that Cathbad has sent him. He breaks all the weapons which are given to him, only those of the high king himself enduring. Against all advice, he goes off to try his luck as a warrior and has phenomenal success against great odds.

He returns to Emain Macha in a great state of triumph and exhilaration. The watchers at the fort are disturbed when they see him approaching, because they recognize that his dreaded battle ardour which distorts his appearance has come upon him; he is berserk. They try various ruses to calm him. Naked women are brought before him, and when he hides his face he is seized and placed in a vat of cold water, which boils and bursts open. A second vat is brought, and this also he heats in the same way. A third calms him, and he is then restored to his normal appearance. He is dressed and brought before the king.

A dramatic description from the same story demonstrates the non-normal appearance of this supreme Celtic hero. 'His comely appearance was restored, and he blushed crimson from head to foot. He had seven toes on each of his feet, and seven fingers on each of his hands. He had seven pupils in each of his royal eyes, and seven gems sparkling in each pupil. Four dimples in each cheek, a blue dimple, a purple, a green and a yellow. Fifty tresses of hair he had between one ear and the other, bright yellow like the top of a birch-tree or like brooches of pale gold shining in the sun. He had a high crest of hair, bright fair as if a cow had licked it. He wore a green mantle in which was a silver pin, and a tunic of thread of gold. The boy was placed between Conchobar's knees, and the king began to stroke his hair.'

Cu Chulainn epitomizes the concept of the Hero for Ireland. We must suppose it to have been a concept common to the early Celtic world, where magical powers and superhuman battle feats were believed to be accompanied by fierce physical distortions and strange emanations such as the 'hero's light'. In the *Tain* it is said of Cu Chulainn: 'The hero's light rose from his forehead, so that it was as long and as thick as a hero's whetstone. As high, as thick, as strong, as powerful and as long as the mast of a great ship was the straight beam of dark blood which rose up from the very top of his head and became a dark magical mist, like the smoke of a palace when a king comes to be attended in the evening of a wintry day.'

Kiss for a Severed Head

The epic of the *Tain* is concerned with the hero's single-handed defence of the province of Ulster, when the rest of the male population were suffering from a debility that rendered them utterly incapable of physical effort. Cu Chulainn is immune from this affliction, perhaps another indication of his foreign origin. He engages in a series of triumphant single combats, which are described in detail.

He has various taboos, and the violation of these must inevitably lead to destruction. He is named after a dog, and so must never taste the flesh of this animal. But the hostile forces of the otherworld combine to destroy him. He is tricked into tasting canine flesh, thus violating his taboo, and from then on his end approaches swiftly. He dies, fighting against his enemies to the last. His head is struck off and, when placed on a rock, splits it with its enduring battle-heat. His wife Emer, whom he had won in true heroic fashion from her father by violence, kisses the lips of the severed head and dies with her husband.

The character of Cu Chulainn, then, epitomizes all that pagan Celtic society venerated and desired. His skills, his intellectual powers, his chariot feats; his harnessing the powers of the otherworld, his acceptance of fate and the choice of a brief, violent, glorious career rather than a long, safe, mundane existence; his colourfulness and his aggressiveness; his aristocratic nature and his great physical beauty. All these qualities are those we know the early Celts to have desired in their gods and in their heroes alike. Such stories must have been told in the crude houses of the rich Celtic chieftains throughout the pagan Celtic world and, although the names of the hero and the deities concerned must have differed, the basic concept must have been recognizably similar. And so enduring that it has persisted, and come down the ages to survive today in vestigial form in the hero tales told in the humble homes of the Celtic-speaking survivors of this pagan Celtic past, on the fringes of the western world.

ANNE ROSS

CUCKOO

THE LOUD CALL of the cuckoo, heralding the arrival of spring, is of greater importance in folklore than its other well-known habit of laying its eggs in the nests of other birds. None of the familiar birds visiting Europe announces the advent of spring with so loud, reiterative, and distinctive a call – a call whose pitch and other characteristics make it easily imitated by the human voice. Other birds with call-notes having some resemblance to the human voice, such as the great northern diver and some owls, are commonly regarded as mysterious and have also achieved prominence in folklore.

The 13th century song 'Sumer is icumen in, Lhude sing cuccu' reminds us that to our forefathers, as to us, the cuckoo was a welcome harbinger of increasing sunshine, warmth and growth. Its arrival was a notable date in the calendar, as is indicated by local traditions in the English counties that the cuckoo arrives for the local fair – for example, in Hertfordshire, where it is said to come to Sawbridgeworth fair. In Siberia some of the tribes timed their spring ceremonies by its call.

It was a small step from noting correlations between birds' calls, weather and farming operations to assuming that correspondences between the cuckoo's calling and human affairs were such that personal fortunes could be predicted by noting the bird's behaviour. Thus, in England, Scotland and on the Continent it was said that a person could tell how long he had to live by noting how often the cuckoo called. All was well if, as often in spring, the cuckoo called incessantly – but probably such sayings were never taken very seriously. It was also said that a girl could ascertain how long she would remain unmarried by counting the calls; but in Germany, if the cuckoo called more than ten times in such circumstances, it was generally regarded as bewitched and unreliable. In the United States it is said that a cuckoo's call, especially if from low-lying lands, is a forewarning of rain. And another American

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

superstition states that, whatever you are doing when you hear the first cuckoo of spring, that activity will predominate in your life for the rest of the year.

A belief dating from the time of Aristotle or earlier, and still lingering in the countryside today, is that the cuckoo turns into a hawk in winter; this arose, no douht, to explain the bird's disappearance. Plausibility was given to the notion by the similarity between the cuckoo and the merlin, a kind of falcon, together with the disappearance of the merlin from much of its winter range to its breeding haunts about the time the cuckoo arrives.

There was a widespread belief in Europe and North America that on hearing the first cuckoo of the year one should wish, and there are still people who make a ritual event of the occasion by turning the coins in a pocket, for luck. It is said that if you have money in your pocket on hearing the bird, you will not want for it throughout the year. In parts of Germany it was the custom for rustics to roll on the grass when the bird was first heard, claiming that by so doing they could avoid suffering from lumbago. In Norfolk and Sussex it was unlucky to hear the first cuckoo while in bed, as this was a warning that someone in the family would become ill. In the Scottish islands and in France it was undesirable to hear the cuckoo before having broken one's fast. The Scots expected bad luck to follow, but the French said that the person who heard the cuckoo while fasting would suffer from numbed limbs or become a good-for-nothing idler.

The similarity of the cuckoo's two syllable call to words in various languages has led some people to regard it as a bird endowed with the gift of prophecy: from the title page of Andrew Borde's *Merry Tales of the Madmen of Gotam*

There appeared in print as far back as 1685 a procedure for obtaining a clue to one's future spouse. It was said that if a man looked under his left shoe on first hearing the cuckoo he would find a hair of a similar colour to that of his future wife; a woman could discover her future husband in the same way. There were various other somewhat similar procedures.

Prophetic Bird

Augury and ornithomancy are based on notions that bird behaviour has ulterior and sometimes supernatural significance. Thus in Cornwall to hear the cuckoo on the right presaged good fortune, while to hear it on the left boded ill. In Norway more elaborate prognostications were made according to the point of the compass from which the bird was heard calling. As bird augury was practised on a considerable scale by the Romans, some of the associated notions may have been carried north and have influenced regard for the cuckoo. They must also have been carried to the New World, for an old rural American belief reads similar meanings into the location of the bird – especially the first of the year. If it calls from the south, a good harvest is presaged; if from the north, death or other tragedy; from the east, luck in love; from the west, general good luck.

The similarity of the cuckoo's two syllable call to words in various languages has formed a basis for some traditions. A Bohemian legend relates that the cuckoo is a metamorphosed girl calling for her lost brother or, alternatively, if the words are interpreted differently, announcing that he has been found. The theme of a Serbian song is that the spirit of a dead man could not find release because his sister wept so incessantly at his grave. So she transformed herself into a cuckoo and cries continually, 'Ku ku, Ku ku,' meaning 'Where are you?' There may be some connection between these two stories and a belief that the cuckoo goes to a mysterious realm, the land of the dead, in winter. This is supported by an odd Estonian legend according to which Christ came to a cottage after a wicked stepmother had murdered two children and told the father that they would appear in spring as two living creatures. They emerged as a cuckoo and a swallow.

The cuckoo has often been associated in the past with cuckoldry: Shakespeare speaks of the cuckoo who 'mocks married men'. In the *Asinaria* of the Latin dramatist Plautus (c 250–189 BC), a man's wife, finding him in adultery, shouts at him: 'What? is the cuckoo lying there? Get up, gallant, and go home.' The connection between the cuckoo and cuckoldry appears to have arisen from its nesting behaviour and its consequent reputation as a usurper.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

CULT OF THE DEAD

Baschieri Salvadori

Man, in contrast to other animals, treats his dead with love, hatred, awe or sorrow: he rarely ignores them completely. Behind this is the hope that they live on after death, and very often the belief that they will help those who survive

Left **Papuan natives blow through tubes into figures which represent their ancestors, perhaps to keep them alive with breath**

Right **Among the Kraho Indians of Brazil women weep for their dead relatives by the special logs made to receive the souls of the dead**

Harald Schultz

The appeasing of ancestors by human sacrifice is a far cry from Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey or the Lenin mausoleum in Moscow. But the basis for these is the same – the impulse to forge a link between the living and the dead

IN THE GUATTARI CAVE on Monte Circeo, on the Italian coast north of Naples, there was found in 1939 a solitary skull, lying on a platform of earth and stones. Round the skull was a circle of stones, and strewn about the floor were the bones of deer, buffalo and horses, and also the lower jaw of another human being. The skull belonged to a man aged 40 or 50, who had been killed by a blow on the right temple with a sharp weapon. There were indications that the brain had been extracted, perhaps to be eaten. The skull may originally have been set up on a stake, the ring of stones suggests a magic circle and the animal bones may be the remains of offerings to the skull or of meals eaten in its presence.

Since prehistoric men left no written explanation of themselves, much of what can be said of them is highly speculative but it looks as if this skull was worshipped in some fashion, though it is not certain that its owner was murdered: he may have been killed in battle or by accident. What is certain is that one of the most striking differences between men and other animals is that animals ignore their dead and men do not. Men treat their dead with love, hatred, awe, sorrow, or even with appetite, but rarely with casual disregard.

Lying behind this is an even more important distinction. Unlike the other animals, a man is aware that he himself will eventually die. The effects of this realization on human behaviour have been incalculably great. It is the root of the hope for a life beyond death and it is probably one of the roots of belief in supernatural beings which do not die, which create and maintain the order of Nature, on which each man depends for his brief earthly existence.

The Dear Departed

The men or man-like creatures who lived in the Choukoutien caves near Peking about 500,000 years ago already used fire and made rough tools. They may also have been cannibals who ate the brains and the marrow of the bones of their dead. Perhaps they did this (if they did it at all) merely because they liked the taste, but if they believed that in eating the dead they acquired their strength and skill, or that the dead lived on in the bodies of their eaters, this is the earliest trace of a cult of the dead, in the sense of a belief that something survives death and that what survives has power and requires special treatment.

Later, though still very early, burials suggest concern for the dead and possibly fear of their power. In the Teshik-Tash cave in Uzbekistan, in central Asia, a child had been buried in the middle of a circle of ibex skulls. In a cave on Mount Carmel in Palestine the bodies of five men, two women and three children had been trussed up with their knees drawn up to their bodies. This may have been done to save space and so make grave-digging less taxing. Or it may have been a magical attempt to help the dead to be reborn, by arranging them in the position of a foetus in the womb. Or it may have been meant to stop the dead from getting out of their graves and attacking the living. Or death may have been seen as a kind of sleep and the bodies arranged in a sleeping position, in which case our euphemism 'laid to rest' is an extraordinarily old one.

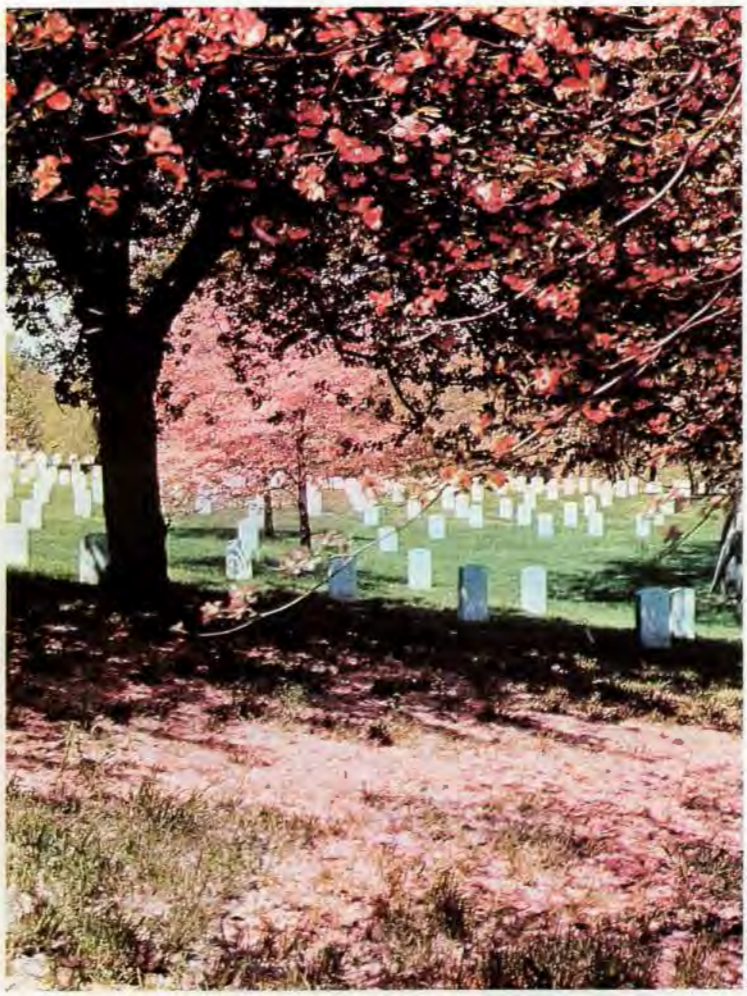
Later still, though before true man had emerged, Neanderthal burials in Europe show care and respect for the dead, possibly tinged with fear. Of six skeletons discovered near La Ferrassie in central France, all except one had been buried facing west. The west is the direction of the dying sun in the evening, and it was later widely believed that the far west was the home of the dead. The single exception was a body which faced east and had been trussed before burial with the legs drawn up. Perhaps this elderly woman had been feared in life and was still feared in death.

But Neanderthal burials generally suggest an affection for the dead. They were buried under the floors of the caves in which the people lived, sometimes near the hearth, presumably to give the cold corpse warmth and perhaps with the feeling that the departed was still one of the family and should keep his accustomed place by the fire. The fact that tools and joints of meat were buried with the dead suggests that they were thought to be still alive somehow, somewhere, and that it was the duty of the survivors to help them.

The Place of Skulls

In the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000 to 10,000 BC) *homo sapiens* himself, with a brain markedly larger than that of the average modern man, spread from Asia into central and western Europe, and across northern Africa into Spain. He again buried his dead with care, close to the living, and often sprinkled red ochre on them, apparently to give them the blood-red colour of renewed vitality. The dead were dressed in their best, hung with valuable ornaments, and generously equipped with food and weapons, which means that the

C. M. Dixon



Picturepoint London

The commemoration of our dead predecessors is an explicit recognition of our indebtedness to them *Above left* The Celts paid particular attention to their dead, especially to those who had been powerful in this life. Celtic chieftains were often buried with chariots and their regalia. Central Court Grave in Co Sligo, Ireland *Above right* Arlington Cemetery, Washington, reserved for those who have given distinguished service to their country *Opposite* Skulls of monks sharing a single anonymous grave, as they shared all things during life. Down the centuries the remains of monks have been preserved in the monastery garden on Mt Sinai *Left* Mourners pay their last respects by the deceased's open coffin *Right* The Karaja Indians of Brazil leave food on the top of ceramic urns, containing the remains of the dead, to sustain them in the afterworld

living made real sacrifices, in the literal sense of the term, for their dead.

Dating from the Mesolithic period in Europe (c 10,000 to 3500 BC) are the 33 human skulls found in the Great Ofnet cave near Nördlingen in Bavaria. All of them faced west and were covered with red ochre. At least five, and possibly 21 of these people had been killed by hatchet blows. This collection of relics may have belonged to headhunters, who thought that by taking their victims' heads they acquired an extra supply of human energy. Or the heads may have been buried with ceremony to pacify the angry ghosts of the murdered.

These heads, like the Monte Circeo skull and the human skulls found at Catal Hüyük in Turkey, resting on what was apparently an altar of the great mother goddess (see ALTAR), suggest that the head was already regarded with particular awe, as it certainly was later. The head is the part of the body with which a man breathes, sees, hears, eats, talks and thinks. It is the part which you think of as pre-eminently *you*, the home of your personality, and it was perhaps already believed to contain the essence of a person's life-energy and character (see also HEAD; SKULL).

The earliest surviving realistic portraits of human beings were found at Jericho in Palestine, dating from not later than 6250 BC. They are human skulls covered with plaster, in which the features were modelled, with eyes made of shells. They probably come from a family portrait gallery and represent ancestors who were venerated by their descendants. The practice was apparently fairly common at Jericho, because quite a number of decapitated skeletons were found buried under the floors of houses.

The Panoply of Death

The Neolithic period (from c 3500 BC) saw the spread of the techniques of breeding cattle, as distinct from hunting them, and growing crops instead of merely gathering them. Presumably these changes would have strengthened the feeling that a man's land and herds were his because his forbears had owned them, that they were the gifts of his ancestors and belonged to his family – past, present and future – a feeling which lies at the root of ancestor worship (see below). This period has left plentiful evidence of human attention to the dead, especially to those who had been powerful in this life.

At Alaca Hüyük in Turkey the stone-lined graves of chieftains who ruled from c 2400 to 2200 BC contained astonishing quantities of gold, silver and copper objects – daggers, maces, battle-axes, cups and jugs, ornate pins and mirrors. At the same period in Mesopotamia the royal graves at Ur were magnificently equipped, and there courtiers, soldiers and servants had been killed with their masters, no doubt to continue serving them in the afterworld. At Maikop in southern Russia a man was buried under a canopy which was partly supported by golden figures of bulls, and he wore a robe on which were 87 gold plaques representing bulls and lions.

For the living to spend so much on the dead suggests a mixture of affection for them, an obligation to equip them fittingly for the life to come, and a healthy respect for the help and protection which they could give to those who survived them. The earliest written records in human history are concerned with securing a happy immortality for the kings of Egypt (see BOOK OF THE DEAD). In the 14th century BC in China, the rulers of the Shang dynasty were interred with what has been described as 'extravagant pomp'. The king was buried in a wooden room at the bottom of a pit 45 feet deep and 65 feet square.

Even secular societies such as the Soviet Union inter their illustrious sons with pomp and circumstance, and provide for the cult of the dead

Other human beings might be killed and buried with him and in some cases he was given chariots and horses as well.

In the 5th century BC the great traveller Herodotus wrote a famous account of the burial of a Scythian king (in his *Histories*, book 4). The Scythians lived to the north of the Black Sea. When a king died, they slit open the corpse's belly and filled it with pleasant-smelling substances, sewed it up again and buried the body, lying comfortably on a mattress, in a great square pit. They strangled one of the king's concubines and several other members of his household and buried them with him. They also buried horses, golden cups and a selection of his other treasures with him. Then they piled up a mound of earth over the grave and waited for a year.

After a year, they strangled 50 of the king's remaining servants, whose bodies were gutted and filled with straw, and similarly 50 of his finest horses. Then the men and the horses were impaled on spikes and placed round the tomb, each horse with its rider, and left there.

Herodotus also remarked that when an ordinary Scythian died, the body was taken by his family on a round of visits to friends. The friends provided meals, serving the corpse with food just like the rest.

The Megaliths

Meanwhile in the eastern Mediterranean area, burying the dead underground had begun to be accompanied by the building of structures above ground. These structures were sometimes far more imposing than the homes the dead had inhabited in life, like the colossal pyramids built to tower over the mummified corpses of Egyptian pharaohs. Before 2000 BC in Crete, for example, the dead were being buried in caves, or in underground chambers resembling the rooms of houses, or in chambers above ground.

This fashion in burials spread westwards to Malta, Spain, Portugal and southern France. Large stones (megaliths) began to be used for the walls and roofs of the tombs, an architectural style which spread to the rest of France and into northern Europe. Some of the tombs and the stones used were of huge size. Near Seville in Spain there is a tomb close to 70 feet long with a block of granite at the front of it which is 11 feet high, weighs 21 tons and had been fetched from a quarry more than 20 miles away. At New Grange in Ireland, a burial chamber, with a passage 62 feet long leading to its entrance, was covered with a circular mound of earth 265 feet across and about 45 feet high.

Not all megalithic tombs were anything like as big as this but even the smaller ones required human sweat and toil far in excess of what would have been needed merely to tuck the dead neatly away out of sight. The monuments imply a powerful sense of awe and respect for the dead, and possibly an urge to keep them tethered to their graves, close to their kinsmen and descendants for the help they could give.

Many of these tombs seem to have been the burying places of a family, or a larger group of people, used over a long period of time. When a man died, apparently, his corpse was left in the tomb with food, weapons and other equipment, and the door of the burial chamber was walled up, to keep him inside. When the next corpse was to be buried, the door was broken down again and offerings were burned to honour the spirit of the first occupant. This would go on until too many bodies had accumulated, and to make room for newcomers the skeletons already inside were pushed out of the way and piled up in disorderly heaps at the sides of the burial chamber. The apparent disregard of these elderly bones suggests that, not unnaturally, when a person had been long forgotten his remains were no longer treated with great respect.

In Brittany, there is often a menhir (a single upright stone) at the head of a grave and the entrance of the burial chamber inside points towards the menhir. It has been suggested that the people who built these graves believed that the souls of the dead liked to come out to take the air, and that the menhir was both a perch on which the soul could rest and also a marker which would help it find its way back.

The Dead and the Goddess

It is possible that the use of large stones and mounds of earth to wall in and roof over the dead was a development from the older tradition of cave burial, and was connected with the belief that burial under a weight of earth was the right way to put the dead where they belonged, in the domain of the earth goddess. Some megalithic tombs in Europe contain paintings and idols of a goddess, pottery decorated with a face or a pair of eyes, and geometrical patterns which may be symbols or stylized pictures of the goddess. These representations are almost certainly derived from figures of goddesses in Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean.

Both in Europe and elsewhere, many of the representations of a prehistoric mother and earth goddess have been found in burying places. Her connection with the dead was a natural one, for the dead were buried in the earth and it was the earth from which the crops sprouted. Perhaps to be committed to the womb of the earth carried with it the hope of a new life, just as the plants which die drop their seeds into the earth and are reborn again in due season.

(See also PREHISTORIC RELIGION.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

Ancestor Worship

The basis of ancestor worship lies in a feature found in all human societies, the commemoration of the dead. There are obvious reasons why the dead live on in the memory of the living. The greater part of man's behaviour, as well as the material surroundings within which he works, is transmitted to him from his forbears. This body of customs and artefacts that we call culture includes his language, his buildings, his art and his social organization. None of these stand still; each generation makes its own contribution; but each does so in a cumulative way on the basis of the achievements of earlier generations.

This is especially true of simpler societies. There a man is often exploiting the same productive resources as his immediate predecessors. In Australia the territory of a band of hunters is usually one that has been passed down from earlier generations. In agricultural societies, men are yet more dependent upon their forbears. Among the Ashanti of West Africa, for example, land was regarded as belonging to the Earth, a female principle, but it also belonged to the ancestors. When a farmer began to cultivate his land, he sacrificed a fowl upon some mashed yam and said, 'Grandfather, you once came and hoed here and then you left it to me.' It was because his ancestor had hoed the

In the Belly of the Earth

Then Fa and the old woman laid Mal gently on his side. They pushed the great gaunt bones of his knees against his chest, tucked in his feet, lifted his head off the earth and put his two hands under it . . . Mal's fingers were moving aimlessly and his mouth was opening and closing. Fa and the old woman lifted the upper part of his body and held his head. The old woman spoke softly in his ear.

'Oa is warm. Sleep.'

The movements of his body became spasmodic. His head rolled sideways on the old woman's breast and stayed there.

Nil began to keen. The sound filled the overhang, pushed out across the water towards the island. The old woman lowered Mal on his side and folded his knees to his chest. She and Fa lifted him and lowered him into the hole. The old woman put his hands under his face and saw that his limbs lay low. She stood up and they saw no expression in her face. She went to a shelf of rock and chose one of the haunches of meat. She knelt and put it in the hole by his face.

'Eat, Mal, when you are hungry.'

. . . The old woman took handfuls of water and the others dipped their hands too. She came back and poured the water over Mal's face.

'Drink when you are thirsty.'

. . . At a sign from the old woman, Lok began to sweep the pyramid of earth into the hole. It fell with a soft swishing sound and soon Mal was blurred out of shape. Lok pressed the earth down with his hands and feet . . .

The old woman squatted down by the freshly stamped earth and waited till they were all looking at her.

She spoke:

'Oa has taken Mal into her belly.'

William Golding *The Inheritors*

land before him that he himself had the right to farm there.

The commemoration of our dead predecessors in an explicit recognition of our indebtedness to them, whether they are Christian saints, the benefactors of an Oxbridge college or our more immediate forbears. It is as appropriate to secular as to religious practice, and the visits of Soviet leaders to London are regularly marked with excursions to the grave of Karl Marx at the Highgate cemetery. Even secular societies such as the Soviet Union inter their illustrious sons with pomp and circumstance, and provide for the cult of the dead (while rejecting their continued existence in the afterlife). Both the Lenin mausoleum and Westminster Abbey celebrate not only the major political figures of the country, but also 'cultural' heroes like the astronaut Yuri Gagarin and the poet William Wordsworth.

An Influence after Death

It is useful to distinguish ancestor worship proper from the cult of the dead and from forms of memorialization. The interment of Yuri Gagarin does not imply any idea of personal continuity after death, and yet it is difficult to disentangle personal continuity from social continuity, that is, from the influence a man continues to have after his death. The cult of the dead implies a belief in an afterlife of some sort: the worship of ancestors recognizes their participation in everyday affairs; by appeasing the dead, or more often by failing to do so, we bring about their intervention in the world of the living.

But ancestors are not just any dead; they are a man's specific forbears, his lineal kin, those who have socially and physically brought him into being. Hence there is a close association between the kind of kinship groups which a society possesses and the custodianship of the ancestral shrines. In Chinese society, where men belonged to their father's clan, custodianship followed the paternal line; it was the sons that looked after their father's shrine. Indeed, here, as among the Hindus and the ancient Romans and Greeks, a childless man might adopt a son to ensure that he had worshippers at his shrine (and an heir to his property). Even a widow might adopt a son in her husband's name and so preserve, as the Chinese say, the continuity of the incense smoke, which is burnt at the ancestral tablets.

Incense is burnt daily; other offerings, such as fruit, preserves, sweets, rice sprouts, fragrant wood, lotus flowers and cooked food are made on festive occasions. At the same time the richer families employ a priest to read from the scriptures and perform certain rituals before the shrines. His function is to report the names of the dead (he has a complete family genealogy) to superior deities and to uplift them by reading the scriptures so that they are able to proceed to the Western Heaven of Happiness as soon as possible. (See also CHINA.)

The Hell Named Kalasutra

In India the ancient Hindu Law of Manu recognized the obligation of a man's sons, by birth or adoption, to provide food for the dead. 'The ancestors of men are satisfied a whole month with sesame, rice, barley, black lentils or vetches, water, roots and fruit, given with prescribed ceremony: two months with fish, three months with venison, four with mutton, five with the flesh of such birds as the twice-born may eat . . .' Such offerings are made mainly at the *Sraddha* or mind-rite of the orthodox Hindu, when offerings to the ancestors can be made indirectly through the priests. 'Whatever mouthfuls . . . are eaten by the Brahmins are eaten by the ancestors,' writes another lawgiver. The food may be given to a cow, a kid or burned but 'that fool . . . that gives the residue . . . to a man of servile class, falls headlong down to the hell named Kalasutra.'

In societies such as Ashanti in West Africa, where a man belonged to the kin group of his mother and her brother, then the matrilineal descendants, the sister's sons, looked after the shrines. This did not mean that a man could not sacrifice to his father, but he had to do so through a member of his father's clan.

The Watchful Dead

Worship of the dead (of which ancestor worship is one form) varies between simply warding off the dead with gifts lest they should intervene, and asking for their positive blessing in the way the Ashanti did. In the Eurasian continent, ancestor worship often seems to be of the placatory kind. 'Death and life' wrote Sir Edward Tylor, 'dwell but ill together, and from savagery onwards there is recorded many a device by which the survivors have sought to rid themselves of household ghosts.' Funeral ceremonies are full of examples of customs whereby the ghosts are set apart from the living, particularly from their nearest and dearest, the widows and the orphans, who are seen to be in the greatest danger from their loved ones. In more generalized form, such sentiments seem to be associated with many offerings to the tombs of the dead. In China, India and in the classical world, the dead appear actively to intervene if they do not receive their due. When they are treated properly, they are benevolent. But if the Hindu dead do not receive their due, then they wander around as ghosts; if neglected, the Chinese ancestors apparently turn into demons and bring trouble upon the world.

There seems to be a division in Europe and Asia between good, appeased ancestors and bad, rejected ghosts or demons. In Africa such ghosts exist, persons who have not yet reached the Land of the Dead. But the ancestors, as ancestors, seem to play a more positive role, both good and bad, in the affairs of men; translation of their immaterial forms into masks, figures, shrines, is more developed. These differences are partly related to the wider distribution of literate, universal religions in the Eurasian continent. Islam, for example, forbids the representation of the human image; and the worship of the One God allows little room for the propitiation of ancestors. Nevertheless, just as Christianity took over some local shrines and turned ancestors into saints, capable of acting as intermediaries between man and God, so too the Moslems of North Africa turned the graves of ancestors into the tombs of saints.

In addition to these religious influences, there were also some differences in the organization of kin groups and in systems of inheritance which may have affected the worship of ancestors. It is clear that attitudes towards parental figures must affect the attitude towards the ancestors, the dead parents. In China it has been suggested that because a man often took over his share of the patrimonial property during his father's lifetime, his relationship with his parents was less hostile as a result; his advancement no longer depended upon their death. In Africa it is generally those ancestors

Picturepoint London

from whom one inherits that one has most to fear; 'guilt' feelings apart, it is to them that one has a particular debt which needs to be repaid in offerings.

The Shrines of Ancestors

At death the dead make their journey to the other world. But communication with them has to continue from this world. Even the memorialization of the dead inevitably tends to take on material forms; the appropriate behaviour is directed towards and focused upon a grave, or an object associated with the dead man or an effigy, such as a statue or painting. In this context, great stress is placed upon the actual burial, the actual dwelling-place, the actual representation of the dead. It has been argued that drama began with the acts and scenes of burial ceremonies, which incorporated drama and mime. However this may be, many forms of representative art are rooted in ancestor worship and memorialization of the dead. For the living individual, the portrait on the walls of the ancestral home ensures one's survival after death: and the greater the artist, the greater the hope of immortality. For the survivors, the creation of an image provides a point of contact, a living and enduring memorial.

Such memorials and shrines range from the abstract to the representational, these different forms often being found side by side in the same region, though in general it is true that the simpler the society the more abstract the style. In West Africa, the poorer agriculturalists have shrines of mud mounds or earthenware pots, or even of selected stones. Among the Ashanti, with their elaborate state system and richer resources, the ancestor shrine is a carved stool, which is blackened on a man's death.

The Ashanti stool is an example of the complexity of such ancestral shrines. In the first place, it is an outward and visible sign of an individual's status. A child will be presented with a small stool when, after seven days, he goes through the 'outdooring' ceremony and acquires a real human personality. Different chiefships and different clans have their own stools, carved in a traditional way and often illustrating some appropriate proverb.

On such a stool only the office-holder himself may sit; when he rises it is placed on its side. For someone else to sit there would be a direct challenge, not only to a man's office but to his very existence. For so closely is the stool identified with the individual, impregnated as it is with the 'dirt' of his body, that his life itself is threatened by such an act.

The stool is at once chair and throne, the symbol of authority. The Ashanti believe that at the birth of their nation a golden stool descended from the heavens and became the most valued part of their regalia, the symbol of their new-found unity, the 'soul of the nation'. In 1900 when the British Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Frederick Hodgson, tried to take possession of it in the name of Queen Victoria, the result was insurrection.

The stool represents not only the spirit of the nation, but also the spirit of the individual. At death a man's stool is seized and the white wood blackened with soot. It is then placed in the 'stool-house' of the lineage to which the dead man belonged, normally just a room in the elder's compound. Here it rests among the shrines of earlier dead, receiving offerings of food and flesh from the living members of the lineage. (See also ASHANTI.)

Shrines and memorials may be collective or individual, the former tending to be abstract, the latter representational. Among the Ashanti only the stools of important members of the lineage are placed in the shrine-room. To the north, in the savannah lands of Ghana, each individual Tallensi has a shrine, but only when he has been survived by two generations of descendants and therefore established his own 'house'. Among the nearby LoDagaa every man who leaves behind him a son (or whose widow produces a son to his name by marrying his brother) has an ancestor shrine carved for him during the long course of the various funeral ceremonies.

Few systems of ancestor worship are as elaborate or as specific as these, nor yet so closely linked with organizing the relationships between living men; for to sacrifice together to common ancestors is clearly a unifying bond of the greatest importance. In most societies, it is the more immediate dead that are man's primary concern. But here too the tombs, relics and shrines, both abstract and representational, provide a thread of continuity between the

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Shrines, portraits, images and graves are important because they provide a point of contact between the living and the dead
Left **Entrance to Forest Lawn Cemetery in Los Angeles, California. In America the corpse is often embalmed and made to look as lifelike as possible, the emphasis being on 'eternal preservation'**
Above **Ancestor worship is still a powerful force in China: in Hong Kong joss sticks and candles are burnt, with prayers for the spirits of the dead**

Lop-Sided into Paradise

A Chinese girl goes to the grave of her mother:

. . . I would return to this place, this being the eighth year of her tenancy, and draw her forth. With a Taoist priest of Macau I would come, which would pay tribute to my mother, and a labourer. I would expose the coffin and lift the lid. One by one I would take out her bones, first hiding the skull under my coat away from eyes. Then I would polish the bones with sand, the little bones of her feet I would polish first and place them at the bottom of the Canton urn. Next the leg bones I would take, and these I would perfume, and lay them next in the urn, then the rib cage, the arms, the tiny bones of the fingers – all these I would place most carefully in the urn lest I bring her lop-sided into Paradise. On these, amid the incantations of the priest, I would lay the skull and cover the mouth of the urn away from flies.

Alexander Cordell
The Bright Cantonese

living and the dead; not only do they represent a continuation of the same personality but they provide a focus for communication between a man and his descendants.

Food for the Dead

Ancestor worship is simply a form of communication between the living and the dead. The forms of the communication vary, though all fall within the range of normal human intercourse. There are verbal forms – prayer, oaths, written formulae. There are visual forms – gesture (usually gestures of obeisance), painting, sculpture, the temple itself, then dance and more extensive types of movement such as the procession and the pilgrimage. Finally there are the offerings of flesh and food which form so important a part of ancestor worship. The worshippers pay homage to a 'divinity' that was once a man, a 'god' who was once a producer and consumer, and in many cases owner of the very means by which the living continue to produce – the land, the oxen or the ploughshare. So the dead continue to be offered the basic food and drink of the country, the bread and the wine, the yam and palm sap, the porridge and the beer.

But service to the dead cannot be the simple duplication of service to the living; the things of this world have a different meaning for those who can no longer enjoy them in the same way. With food the ancestors receive only a part of the whole; with livestock, the whole is offered in sacrifice, but the biggest portion is in fact consumed by those who remain behind. As far as the ancestors are concerned, a major element in the transaction would seem to be not so much giving as repaying; one is in perpetual debt to the forefathers, just as one is to parents who have raised one from infancy; one can repay this debt only by continual piety in the shape of sacrifice.

Human Sacrifice

Sacrifice is of two general kinds. The regular offerings to the dead are made on festivals like the three day period (the period of moon's rebirth, the period of Christ's resurrection) of Hallowe'en, All Saints and All Souls. Then there are the occasional sacrifices made at times of affliction, when one's child is ill and a diviner has pointed to an ancestor as the cause. For the dead, while beneficent to their descendants, can also punish. Indeed recent ghosts and others who have not been properly settled in the land of the true dead, are often plain vindictive, sometimes so that the living will be forced to undertake the correct rituals on their behalf, or to right a wrong that has been done them. Whereas the regular transactions approximate to the payment of debt, to the fulfilment of an obligation, the latter smack more of a gift that tries to repair some damage done. But often the damage has itself been caused by failing to give the ancestors their due, thereby incurring their wrath.

Sacrifice is not, of course, confined to the ancestors: it is a way of communicating

with supernatural agencies of all kinds. But there is one kind of offering of living beings that is often directed towards the dead – human sacrifice. The ritual immolation of human beings was widely practised; it was found among practically all the Indo-European peoples; in early Israel, Samuel 'hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord'; it occurred in India and Japan, among the Aztecs of Central America and in the forest states of West Africa.

But human beings (often criminals, slaves or war captives) were also sacrificed to accompany the dead on their journey to the other world. They were used, as in the West African kingdom of Dahomey, to convey messages from the living to the dead, especially to dead kings. As the 19th century explorer Richard Burton wrote, 'They periodically supply the departed monarch with fresh attendants in the shadowy world. For unhappily these murderous scenes are an expression, lamentably mistaken but perfectly sincere, of the liveliest filial piety . . . Whatever action, however trivial, is performed by the king, it must dutifully be reported to his sire in the shadowy realm. A victim, almost always a war-captive, is chosen; the message is delivered to him, an intoxicating draught of rum follows it and he is despatched to Hades in the best of humours.'

In the United States, Plains Indians went to war after a death so they would not 'grieve alone'. The Natchez of the lower Mississippi, alone among American tribes, practised wholesale sacrifice at important funerals, killing wives, relatives, friends, all to accompany the dead – and others not connected with the dead man often volunteered for the same honour, while parents killed their children as extra sacrifices and thereby gained great status.

Human sacrifice, or 'ceremonial murder', is akin to ceremonial suicide. Again the act is often associated with the cult of the dead. In earlier times Hindu widows were expected to sacrifice themselves upon their husband's funeral pyre (see SUTTEE). So too the Japanese *hara-kiri*, when committed at the funeral of a dead person, is in the nature of an offering to the soul of the dead.

Human sacrifice also lies close to cannibalism. For just as animal sacrifices are consumed by both god and man, so too man may be expected to consume part at least of the fellow humans he has offered. This practice was not very common, except as a ritual gesture. Indeed many societies, especially those following the major world religions, disapproved of the sacrifice of animals, let alone humans.

Barnaby's

Memorial to Karl Marx in Highgate Cemetery, London, frequently visited by foreign Communist officials paying their respects to the dead philosopher

Royal Ancestor Worship

While the ancestors of ordinary men continue to communicate with their descendants, guarding over them and receiving their due, so the royal ancestors continue to be involved in the affairs of the state.

Indeed one of the strengths of dynasties like that of Egypt or of Ashanti, one of the sources of their legitimacy and a discouragement to their overthrow, was their role as intermediaries between their subjects and their ancestors, the earlier kings.

In Ashanti one can see royal ancestor worship as a simple extension of what occurred among the commoners. But in the Middle East and the Eurasian continent, ancestor worship in the full sense seems largely confined to the royal dynasty. At death in Egypt every dead man became the god Osiris, who was the king of the dead, associated with the idea of resurrection and the annual life and death of the cereal crops. There was no specific worship directed towards the individual, though the relatives of the dead often commemorated them. The worship of individual ancestors was largely confined to the burning of incense for the royal dead who were installed in their monumental stone pyramids in the valley of the Nile.

Crime and Punishment

A belief in the continued influence of the ancestors on human life is often an important factor in maintaining the laws and customs on which social life rests. In Rome, the man who sold his wife was given over to the ancestors for punishment; so too was a child who struck his father and the violator of graves. It is over the most serious offences against one's fellow men, such as fratricide and incest, that the ancestors are often the main instruments of social control, more important than the judges who administer the earthly punishments.

The ancestors are never completely cut off from this world. Often they are seen as returning to the world in the shape of their own descendants, either by the process of reincarnation or by other kinds of spiritual identification. Among the Murngin, a hunting tribe of Northern Australia, the soul of a dying man goes back to the 'totemic well' on the territory of his clan; it is from here too that the spirits of the unborn emerge to find a home in the womb of a wife of a clan member. When a man dies, it is his father's father or other grandparent that escorts him back again. Thus there is a continuous chain of being.

JACK GOODY

FURTHER READING: For the general background to the prehistoric cult of the dead, see G. Clark and S. Piggott, *Prehistoric Societies* (Knopf, 1965) and for more detail see J. Maringer, *The Gods of Prehistoric Man* (Knopf, 1960); Glyn Daniel, *The Megalith Builders of Western Europe* (Penguin, 1963); E. O. James, *The Ancient Gods* (Putnam, 1964). For ancestor worship, see also Jack Goody, *Death, Property and the Ancestors* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1962); John Middleton, *Lugbara Religion* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1960); M. Fortes and G. Dieterlen, *African Systems of Thought* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1960); Francis Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow* (Routledge, London, 1948).

Cup

Symbol of woman, of abundance, of spiritual sustenance: the cup of the Mass or Holy Communion which holds the consecrated wine is called a chalice: in Christian legend the Holy Grail was the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper, preserved by Joseph of Arimathea.

See GRAIL; MASS.

Cupid

The Roman god of love, identified with the Greek Eros: son of Venus or Aphrodite, the love goddess; frequently depicted as a beautiful winged boy with his bow and arrows, which arouse love in those they strike: like love itself, he is erratic and mischievous: the delightful story of how Cupid woos the mortal Psyche is told in *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius.

See EROS.

Sonia Halliday

Un père de famille est rendue à la santé par ses prières.

Il rend la parole à un enfant muet

Il rend l'usage des jambes à un boiteux.

Il distribue du pain aux pauvres.

Il convertit beaucoup de personnes en prêchant.

Il prie Dieu d'éclairer ses ouailles.

Faites, Seigneur, que nous soyons toujours animés de la crainte et de l'amour de votre saint nom, puisque vous ne cessez jamais de protéger ceux que vous avez établis dans la solidité de votre amour

CURÉ OF ARS

THE LIFE OF St Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney, patron saint of parish priests, is of great interest from the viewpoints botb of mystical theology and psychical research.

Born in 1786, the second son of a small farmer in the village of Dardilly, near Lyons, he proved exceptionally responsive to his mother's religious teaching. A sensitive and nervous child, he was also robust, lively and vivacious but occupied his mind with religious topics while assisting in the fields. The French Revolution entailed persecution of those Catholics who repudiated the state organized church. Vianney therefore had little schooling and attended secret Masses.

Jean-Marie's sense of religious vocation, the desire to 'win many souls to God', crystallized about 1798 when he was sent to work on his uncle's farm at Ecully, about four miles south of Dardilly. Ecully sheltered several priests including Abbé Charles Bellay who prepared Jean-Marie for his first Communion, administered secretly. In 1805, when religion was restored, his father let him return to Ecully to study at Abbé Bellay's presbytery school. He found Latin agonizingly difficult and only a 60-mile pilgrimage on foot to the tomb of St John Francis Régis at Lalouvesc in the mountains

Dieu de bonté accordez à notre faiblesse les secours de votre grâce; et comme nous honorons la mémoire de la S.te Mere de Dieu, faites que par le secours de son intercession nous puissions nous relever de nos iniquités. Amen

Editions du Chalet

Michael Holford

A visionary and mystic, the Curé of Ars was also a penetrating and intuitive psychologist; in addition various testimonies suggest that he was capable of reading thoughts *Previous page* **Portrait of the Curé: the scenes surrounding his picture illustrate events in his life, including miracles that he is believed to have performed** *Left* **Statue, in wood, of the Curé of Ars: canonized in 1925, he is the patron saint of parish priests**

of Ardèche saved him from despair. As an intending priest registered under the Archbishop of Lyons (Napoleon's uncle), he was exempt from military service, but in 1809 was called up in error.

Falling ill of a 'slow fever', he was sent on to rejoin his regiment. Exhausted he was picked up on the road by a military defaulter who conveyed him to Les Noës in the shelter of the Bois Noirs hills. The Mayor, a confirmed anti-Bonapartist, advised him to stay in hiding.

In consequence of an amnesty he returned to Ecully in 1811 and from 1812 to 1814 he studied at seminaries in Verrières and Lyons. He failed the examinations (conducted in Latin) but was allowed to take them in French. He was ordained priest (deacon) at the age of 29.

In 1818 Vianney was appointed to the tiny parish of Ars, across the Saône about 16 miles from Lyons. One small church of primitive design and four large taverns ministered to the needs of the 230 inhabitants who tended to be indifferent to religion. But the Abbé could not reconcile himself to a single soul eluding Heaven.

The Conversion of Ars

By calling at mealtimes, though himself refusing refreshment, he came to know every family. He spoke to them as peasant to peasant, but never failed gently to insist on the claims of religion. Soon the villagers learned of his fasting and prayers for sinners late into the night and before dawn. In the pulpit he declared innkeepers to be the source of sin and poverty, incapable of salvation. As the church filled the taverns emptied. The innkeepers went out of business, the last one being bought out by the Curé.

An able strategist, Vianney first converted the women, who prevailed on their menfolk to attend church and not work on Sundays. In the confessional the little Abbé ruthlessly withheld absolution until convinced that contrition was genuine and sin renounced. The most prolonged of his struggles was against communal dancing, rustic drunken revelries tending to promiscuity. But by 1824 he had effectively won his battles.

His parishioners soon discovered his remarkable talent as a confessor. He had a wonderful ability to penetrate their secret thoughts, it seemed. His words were few but always perfectly aimed. In time the faithful flocked to confession from Ars, Dardilly, Ecully and Les Noës, and eventually from all France.

His was an incredibly exhausting regime. He became so thin that he seemed but a flame glowing through skin and bone. His large bright eyes, radiant in a shrunken and wraithlike face, gave him the semblance of a saint on earth, and it was not surprising that broadsheets extolled him as if he were already enthroned in glory.

His sermons were as famous as his confessional. He depicted the horror of damnation; but it was not mere 'hell-fire' preaching or 'bible-punching'. Spontaneously he shed tears, as did his congregation, at the plight of souls separated from God and spoke with moving simplicity of the joy of those who perpetually saw God face to face. Bishops and dignitaries came from all France to hear him, as well as writing to him for advice on dealing with moral and pastoral problems.

In later years the Curé was constantly exposed to the temptation to retreat from Ars to a monastic and contemplative existence. He tried to leave the village three times but always returned. At his last attempt, in 1852, he was apprehended by his parishioners. He died in Ars after a brief illness, in 1859 at the age of 73.

The Making of a Saint

In his last years he reluctantly accepted the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. By this time 100,000 pilgrims, it is estimated, visited Ars annually. Consequently the first papal Process for inquiry into Vianney's merits began as soon as 1862. He was declared Venerable in 1872, Blessed in 1905 and canonized as a Saint in 1925, on the basis of two cures effected at his tomb.

The Curé's remains were exhumed in 1904 preparatory to his beatification. The flesh was dried and darkened but intact except for the face which, though recognizable, had suffered damage.

For many of the pilgrims Ars and its Curé had a mystic lustre, and many came in the hope of physical cure as well as spiritual healing. As in all pilgrimages a proportion of the suppliants were cured of bodily ailments. Few of the accounts extant are sufficiently detailed medically for us to decide whether they were natural or supernatural. Since such cures can and do occur outside of a religious setting, we cannot affirm them to be patently supernatural. But, whatever the cause, Ars was as productive of faith-cures as any of the world's famous shrines.

Vianney was a fine intuitive psychologist. His remarks, often humorous and always gentle though firm, revealed a penetrating simplicity. Some of the qualities of G. K. Chesterton's character Father Brown were inspired by the Curé. Numerous testimonies suggest that he had an insight superior to the normal, as if he was literally capable of reading thoughts. In modern terms, we should describe him as a 'sensitive' with a marked capacity for telepathy. From a crowd of pilgrims Vianney would pick out a total stranger and tell him the problem that had brought him to Ars and intimate facts of his life. These stories are based on written testimonies with circumstantial detail. It is possible that the Abbé was also clairvoyant and precognitive.

We are in no position to decide whether he had these powers by nature or by God's

grace as a token of sanctity. Such abilities are not manifested by all saints. Modern sensitives tell us that response to human need is a factor very conducive to the operation of paranormal powers, a suggestion supported by other evidence from psychical research. Also the Curé's austerities rivalled those of any oriental yogi, though whether paranormal powers can in fact be reinforced by asceticism is not yet certainly known.

Ecstasies and Visions

Those who lead lives of spiritual intensity are often visionaries. The Curé would sometimes pass into the state of calm and joyful contemplation, known technically as 'ecstasy'. In ecstasy numerous mystics have believed themselves to be in direct spiritual union with God. The Curé was most guarded about his experiences, but phrases he let slip suggest that at times he felt the close presence of John the Baptist, the Blessed Virgin and St Philomena, as well as Christ himself.

Some witnesses testify that they themselves had visions in the Abbé's presence. In 1840 a Mlle Durié heard a gentle voice talking to the Curé. Entering the room she saw a lady of ordinary stature, in a robe of dazzling white bearing golden roses and with a wreath of stars about her head. Addressing the lady as Mother, Mlle Durié, who believed herself to have cancer, asked to be taken to Heaven. 'Later', said the lady who then vanished. Mlle Durié aroused the Curé from what appeared to be an ecstasy, 'his countenance radiant and his gaze fixed'. When Mlle Durié referred to the presence of 'our Lady', the Curé told her she was not mistaken but must never speak of it again. It appears that Mlle Durié was cured of her presumed cancer after a lapse of three and a half months.

Attacks of the Devil

The Curé's life corresponded to saintly prototypes in a further respect. From 1824 to 1858 he suffered sporadically what he believed to be persecutions by the Devil. At night he heard noises as of rats gnawing or scratching, or of blows on the doors of the presbytery, or of hammering or drumming. Sometimes the Curé would hear the sound of footsteps and a coarse rough voice mocking him as 'a potato eater' and growling abuse and obscenities. A picture of the Annunciation was found smeared with filth. The Curé's bed was shaken and pulled across the room while he lay on it. The testimony of contemporaries suggests that on some occasions only the Curé heard the diabolical speech and noises, and it is natural to suppose that sometimes they were only hallucinatory. The act of vandalism could, in theory at least, be attributed to the Abbé himself in a condition akin to sleep-walking, as with Father John of Castille, of whom it was said that the Devil compelled him to use his own hands to deface pictures of the Blessed Virgin. But there was also testimony from Ars which suggests that some of the happenings, including the voice, were actual objective physical events. And there is no evidence positively to support the sleep-walking theory.

The haunting of the Curé bears a strong resemblance to poltergeist outbreaks, many of which are objective phenomena. Many features common to poltergeist disturbances suggest that a goodly proportion of them are due to obscure natural causes and related to emotional tension in the person on whom they centre. We know that the Curé's heroic virtue in his pastoral office was maintained in the face of a longing for solitude and contemplation, and it is arguable that the internal struggle was externalized in the drama of the Satanic persecution.

The mysterious happenings attendant on the Abbé cannot be surely interpreted as either natural or supernatural by considering his life in isolation from the data of psychical research on the one hand, or the phenomena of the mystics on the other. As a person at first he repels as a reactionary puritan, but in the end the most agnostic of readers is liable to be vanquished by Vianney's strange and improbable charm.

A. R. G. OWEN

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Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Because Adam and Eve surrendered to the serpent's tempting, and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were cursed by God, and expelled from the Garden of Eden: 14th century Bible Historiale

CURSE

SWEARING IS NOT TAKEN very seriously in our society but its old religious and magical connotations linger on. The word 'oath' usually means a careless imprecation but it can also mean a solemn statement, backed by a man's honour or by an appeal to God. To swear is generally to use 'bad language', a socially incorrect and ill-mannered activity, but to swear on the Bible in a court of law is a socially correct action, still likely in practice to make a witness more reluctant to tell lies than he might be otherwise.

Old-fashioned people object to swearing not only because they consider it vulgar but because it is blasphemy (a word whose meaning is now commonly restricted to swearing, in fact). The old phrase for it is 'taking the Lord's name in vain' or, in other words, trying to use God's powers for your own trivial or wicked purposes.

A curse is still the product of inner tension, which it still relieves. It still frequently achieves its basic object of bullying others into compliance, even though few of us any longer expect the curse to do physical damage to its victims. In societies which do expect a curse to

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harm its victim, it is part of the accustomed armoury of the magician and its effects can be damaging and sometimes even lethal. In 1956 an Australian aborigine was taken to hospital in Darwin, apparently dying because he knew that a death-spell had been cast against him. Placed in an oxygen tent and fed intravenously, he gradually recovered because he believed that the white man's magic was stronger than the aborigine sorcerer's.

Claude Lévi-Strauss has described the deadly effects on a man who knows he is the victim of hostile magic, in a society which believes and has conditioned him to believe that sorcery will kill him. The man himself is certain that he will die. His family and friends are equally certain, and treat him as if he was already dead. The victim's fear and his rejection by everyone around him may in practice prove fatal.

In this light, the effectiveness of excommunication, the solemn Christian ritual of cursing, in the Middle Ages is less surprising than it might seem at first sight. In his *History of the Inquisition* H. C. Lea described the plight of a man who had been excommunicated, in terms very like those of Lévi-Strauss. 'To the public law of the period he was an outlaw, without even the right of self-defence against the first-comer, for his very self-defence was rated among his crimes; in the popular faith of the age he was an accursed thing, without hope, here or hereafter. The only way of readmission into human fellowship, the only hope of salvation, lay in reconcilation with the Church through the removal of the awful ban.' And the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* echoes the same theme in saying of the excommunicated outcast that he can be 'considered as an exile from Christian society and as non-existent, for a time at least, in the sight of ecclesiastical authority.'

In most cases a curse is not meant to be either fatal or permanent. It punishes an enemy until he makes amends, when the curse is formally removed. Nor need a curse always be spoken aloud. For instance, there is an Eskimo belief that you can injure a person by spitting on the ground in front of him, meanwhile formulating a malevolent wish against him in your mind. In Europe and the United States witches have long been thought capable of harming people by 'ill wishing' them, usually by means of some magical action that may be as simple as spitting, pointing a finger, or a mere glance of the eye. And this is no dead and forgotten folk belief: it still prevails in civilized times. In 1906, a farmer in Pennsylvania paid a woman a large sum of money to remove her curse or spell on his

livestock, which had been inexplicably dying one by one for a year. More recently, in 1953, an Arizona rancher shot and killed a woman whom he (and everyone in the area) thought was putting a curse on his wife. In Limoges, France, in 1963 an old woman was investigated by police for alleged 'witchcraft' activity, though she claimed to be a lifter of spells, not a caster. And in southern Germany, where the witch belief is especially strong, a farmer in 1964 accused his wife of having cursed his cattle, so that cows went dry and calves died.

But cursing need not always be malevolent. In writing about the Lugbara people on the northern borders of Uganda, John Middleton has explained how the head of a family invokes the ghosts of his ancestors to punish with sickness any of his relatives who need to be disciplined. He does this by sitting near the shrines of the ancestors and thinking the words of the curse in his mind. If he says the words aloud, if he 'whispers into the shrine', the effect will be so drastic that the victim is likely to die. 'Silence in the face of offence, or merely the words "you will see me later" from an elder or kinsman of the same family cluster, are ominous and tantamount to a threat to invoke the ghosts.'

This is an example of the curse as a support of authority and established order, a threat which ensures good behaviour. In an essay on 'Zande Blood-Brotherhood' E. E. Evans-Pritchard has described the Azande ritual in which two men (or two groups) form an alliance by drinking each other's blood. The blood each man has swallowed will take vengeance on him if he betrays the alliance. 'If you see someone struggling with your blood-brother and you run and attack him also and strike him violently, may you not recover from the vengeance of the blood. If a child of mine is in danger of the law and hides in your hut and you give him away so that he gets into trouble, may you die from the blood . . .'

Often the speaker takes a piece of cord, holds it in his blood-brother's hair and twists it round and round on top of his head while the spell is pronounced. The twisted cord stands for the grip which the blood will take on the other's vitals if he breaks the alliance.

If one of the men is false to his blood-brother, the blood in his stomach is expected to take vengeance by itself but sometimes the injured partner will take the cord which he used during the ritual and wind it into a ball, meanwhile calling on the blood to exterminate the offender and his family, to bring upon them leopards, lions, snakes, thunder, dysentery, leprosy and other evils. He wraps the ball in leaves and hides it in the roof of his hut. If the offender comes to make amends, the ball is taken down and unwound, and the blood is ordered to release the man from its grip.

The Well of St Elian

This type of curse, which is to strike someone only under certain stated conditions, is known from many parts of the world as a way of ensuring that obligations which have been undertaken will be met, and so of preserving social harmony. According to the Roman historian Livy, when the Romans made a treaty with their neighbours the Albans, the Roman spokesman prayed to Jupiter: 'If the Roman people shall knowingly and of set purpose depart from the terms of this treaty, then smite thou them, O Jupiter, as I smite this boar-pig today.' And he killed the pig with a flint knife.

The use of the cord in the Azande blood-brotherhood ritual recalls the prominence of the idea of 'binding' in curses from the ancient world. In the *Republic* Plato condemns magicians who, 'if anyone wishes to injure an enemy, for a small fee they say they will bring harm on good or bad alike, binding the gods to serve their purposes by spells and curses (*katadesmoi*).' The Greek word means literally 'bindings' and refers to curses scratched on lead tablets or bits of pottery and placed in tombs or buried in the ground. Sometimes the lead tablet was tied round with wire, to 'bind' the victim more effectively. A curse scrawled on a piece of pottery and dating from c 400 BC says, 'I put quartan fever on Aristion to the death'.

These curses were frequently intended to disable opponents in a legal action. A late 4th century example from Athens says, 'I bind Theagenes in tongue and soul, and the speech that he is preparing. I bind also the hands and feet of Pyrrhias the cook, his tongue and his soul and the speech that he is preparing.' Two other hostile witnesses are similarly 'bound' and the curse ends, 'All this I bind, obliterate, bury, impale'. In some cases the curse was believed to be effective by itself but sometimes the spirits of the dead or the underworld deities were also called upon.

This method of cursing is not as far from us in the modern West as we might like to think. The cursing well of St Elian at Llanelian-yn-Rhos, near Colwyn Bay in Wales, was doing a flourishing trade in the mid-19th century. The procedure was to write the name of your enemy on a piece of paper, put it in a lead box and tie it to a slate on which you wrote your initials. You took it to the keeper of the well and paid him a fee. Your curse against your victim was then recited and the lead box was thrown into the well.

The keeper would probably also receive a fee from the victim, who would hurry to pay for the curse to be removed. The keeper would read two psalms to him and make him walk round the well three times. Then he would draw up the curse in its lead box from the well and give it to the victim.

Another long-lived use of a curse was to deter robbers from violating graves. Many curses of this sort have been found in funeral inscriptions from the ancient world, especially in Asia Minor, and in northern Europe curses were written in runes on gravestones (see ALPHABET). The fear of being disturbed in the grave and the use of a curse to prevent it survived into Shakespeare's time. The epitaph which he chose for his tomb at Stratford says:

> Good friend, for Jesu's sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here.
> Blest be the man that spares these stones
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

The idea is still by no means dead, as the

Death by Magic

An individual who is aware that he is the object of sorcery is thoroughly convinced that he is doomed according to the most solemn traditions of his group. His friends and relatives share this certainty. From then on the community withdraws. Standing aloof from the accursed, it treats him not only as though he were already dead, but as though he were a source of danger to the entire group. On every occasion and by every action, the social body suggests death to the unfortunate victim, who no longer hopes to escape what he considers to be his ineluctable fate. Shortly thereafter, sacred rites are held to dispatch him to the realm of shadows. First brutally torn from all of his family and social ties and excluded from all functions and activities through which he experienced self-awareness, then banished by the same forces from the world of the living, the victim yields to the combined effect of intense terror, the sudden total withdrawal of the multiple reference systems provided by the support of the group, and, finally, to the group's decisive reversal in proclaiming him – once a living man, with rights and obligations – dead and an object of fear, ritual and taboo. Physical integrity cannot withstand the dissolution of the social personality.

Claude Lévi-Strauss
Structural Anthropology

Facing page **After the birth of Jesus, Herod ordered the massacre of all male infants in Bethlehem, in an attempt to kill the child who was destined to become 'King of the Jews': according to St Matthew's Gospel, this fulfilled one of the prophecies of Jeremiah through whom God had declared a curse against the Hebrews 'for all their wickedness in forsaking me'. 17th century Ethiopian manuscript in the British Museum, depicting the Massacre of the Innocents** ***Below*** **The ancient belief that a curse would prevent a grave from being disturbed survived into Elizabethan times: epitaph on Shakespeare's tomb at Stratford-on-Avon**

British Travel Association/Vicar & Churchwarden of Holy Trinity, Stratford

Michael Busselle

Michael Holford

stories of curses alleged to have overtaken those who have disturbed the rest of Egyptian mummies show.

A curse may also overtake a man as the result of some crime which not he but his ancestors committed. The hereditary curse which haunted the house of Atreus, kings of the Greek city of Argos, played a part in the murder of Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks in the siege of Troy, by his wife Clytemnestra, as told in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus.

Bell, Book and Candle

In Greece an official curse could be pronounced by magistrates or priests against an enemy of the state or an offender against the laws, and evidently had a terrifying effect on the victim. In the Old Testament, chapter 28 of Deuteronomy contains a catalogue of maledictions against those who do not obey the voice of the Lord God, so comprehensive and so drastic that Jewish congregations were frightened of hearing it read at all, in case it brought the curses down upon them.

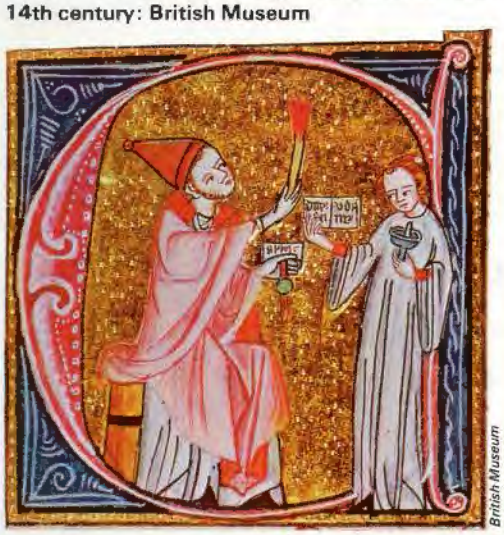
These official curses are the predecessors of the Christian ritual of excommunication, in which the notion of 'binding' appears again, for the Church based its right to curse, with effects reaching even beyond the grave, on Matthew 18.18, where Jesus tells his disciples that 'whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

The most ceremonious form of the rite of excommunication is popularly known as bell, book and candle because the officiating cleric closes the book from which he has read the curse, a bell is tolled as for a dead man, and candles are extinguished as a sign that the soul of the offender has been removed from the sight of God. Of course, the excommunication can be lifted if the offender repents.

In the 8th century Pope Zachary devised a formula for popes to use in pronouncing anathema (another word for ceremonious excommunication). The pope was to wear violet vestments and his mitre, and to be assisted by 12 priests carrying lighted candles. He formally deprived the offender of the Mass and separated him from the society of all Christians: 'we exclude him from the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church in heaven and on earth . . . and we judge him condemned to eternal fire with Satan and his angels and all the reprobate, so long as he will not burst the fetters of the demon, do penance and satisfy the Church.' Finally the pope and the 12 priests threw their lighted candles to the ground.

(See also INCANTATION; OATH.)

Left **A magical method of causing death or injury is to curse a doll made in the image of the intended victim: witch doll, with photograph of the subject of the curse attached** ***Right*** **A protection against curses is a 'witch bottle': the nails, and heart made of felt and pierced with pins, were originally inside the bottle, which would disable a witch before she could cause harm** ***Below*** **The ceremony of excommunication is popularly known as bell, book and candle: the book from which the curse was read was closed, a bell was tolled as for a dead man, and candles were extinguished, symbolising the removal of the offender's soul from the sight of God: detail from an encyclopedia of canon law and theology compiled in the 14th century: British Museum**


British Museum

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CYBELE

THE GREAT GODDESS of Nature and her young lover or son, well-known deities in the Near East, appear in Anatolia (now Turkey) as Cybele and Attis. As figures of classical mythology they are best known from literature of Roman times, both Greek and Latin, but they have a previous history, which this literature reveals in part. They were always known to be foreign to Greece and Rome.

The cult and myth of Cybele as known in the classical world originated with the Phrygians who entered Anatolia from Thrace in the 13th century BC. It contained elements taken over from the native population, among which was perhaps the figure of Attis. Even in ancient times Attis was sometimes identified with the Syrian Adonis, so closely did they resemble each other. But Cybele, though she is akin to such other forms of the Great Goddess as Astarte in Syria and Ishtar in Babylonia, Ma in Anatolia and Rhea in Greece, is a distinctive figure because of her special connection with mountains and with wild beasts.

According to some scholars Cybele is the same as Cybebe of the Lydians (who lived in what is now southern Turkey) and certainly little distinction between them is found in classical literature. Cybebe originates from the South Anatolian and North Mesopotamian nature-goddess Kubaba, 'mistress of doves'. But the name Cybele is likely to be Phrygian, since Cybela or Cybelus was a name of her sacred mountain and apparently meant a place of caves or chambers where she dwelt and had her image. In some Phrygian inscriptions from 700 BC onward she is called *matar Kubile* and Attis *Atte papa*, which suggests that Attis was a male consort.

The original centre of her cult was Pessinus near Ankara in Phrygia (now central Turkey) at the foot of Mount Dindyma or Dindymum. The mountain is now called Gunusu Dagh.

During the 7th century her cult appears to have spread through Anatolia to Lydia and the coast of the Black Sea. From Lydia it reached Greece, where it was little favoured and usually left to Phrygian slaves. In 205 BC at the crisis of the Hannibalic war it was brought direct from Pessinus to Rome. Cybele was accepted there as a goddess who protected cities and maintained life, was established in a temple on the Capitol, and was later honoured with a festival, the *Megalensia*, the Great Mother's Games. Fortune began to favour the Roman armies, and there was even an unprecedented harvest in Italy which repaired the ravages of war. But in spite of its magical efficacy the cult with its rites was found scandalous at Rome, so that it was insulated by special rules. No Roman was permitted to join directly in its rites, still less to serve as a priest. From Rome in the imperial age, when in its train other oriental cults were introduced, it spread to the provinces and lasted until the triumph of Christianity.

The original character of Cybele may be gathered best from the scornful description

Giraudon

Attis, the consort of Cybele: bronze statue in the Louvre, Paris

of the Christian apologist Arnobius who touches on it in a tract written about 300 AD; some of the same details appear in the writings of Pausanias, the Greek geographer of the 2nd century AD, and elsewhere. Cybele was born of the rock Agdus from the seed of Zeus; hence her name Agdistis used in this story. She was at first a bisexual monster of great strength and ferocity. The monster devastated the country and terrified gods and men until Bacchus tricked it by pouring into its favourite drinking fountain a great quantity of the strongest neat wine as a soporific. As it slept, Bacchus tied its male organs firmly to a tree with a rope of twisted bristles, so that when it woke and sprang up, these organs were torn off with a great flow of blood, and it lost its male sex. From the blood the first almond tree grew. One of the almonds was picked for its beauty and put in her lap by Nana, daughter of the river Sangarius. It disappeared, but Nana became pregnant. She was shut up without food by her father, but fed by the Great Mother until she bore her child Attis. By order of Sangarius, Attis was exposed in the open and left to die, but he was fed by a wild goat.

The Black Stone

As he grew up, his beauty attracted the love of Agdistis who hunted with him in the woods and presented him with the game. Midas, King of Pessinus, wishing to deliver Attis from this disgraceful attachment, arranged for him to marry his own daughter, closing the town's gates for the ceremony. But Agdistis burst in, raising the town walls on her head, because she knew that danger threatened Attis if he should marry. Thereupon Attis went mad and castrated himself under a pine tree, scornfully making a gift of his severed organs to Agdistis, who gathered them up and preserved them. Violets grew from them, with which the pine was decorated. But Attis himself died from his wounds. In spite of Agdistis's prayers, Zeus would not restore him to life, but merely preserved his body from corruption and kept its little finger in perpetual motion. Agdistis installed the body in a tomb at Pessinus with castrated priests to maintain a cult.

The childish and dream-like grossness of this form of the myth is surely a sign that it is the original one. Its savagery persists in all later forms. Primitive too is the black stone of Pessinus, the uncarved fetish which was specially identified with Cybele and was later taken to Rome. The high, flat-sided crown that her images wore, explained in this myth as the walls of Pessinus raised on her gigantic head, is a feature which suggests that she was originally conceived as a living mountain or rock, as well as an anthropomorphic goddess. This is borne out by the account of her origin. The myth was toned down and even allegorized by later writers, such as the Emperor Julian (331–363 AD), the last powerful defender of paganism.

The poet Lucretius (c94–55 BC) recognized Cybele as the Great Mother, wearing her 'mural' crown and riding in her chariot drawn by lions, and described her cult. Catullus (c84–54 BC) again describes the cult. The hero of his story is a young Greek, not the mythological Attis. He visits the mountainous area in the north-west of Phrygia to hunt on Mount Ida, is seized by madness, castrates himself and joins Cybele's followers, and when he wishes to escape is driven back into the forest by one of her lions. The versions in which Attis dies by the wound of a boar's tusk are affected by the myth of Adonis. But in some versions of the myth, and evidently in the cult, Attis is said or assumed to rise again from the dead. As a spirit of vegetation, which renews itself every year, he would naturally do so, and it was the purpose of Cybele's cult to maintain life. The castration, which persists in the myth and cult, had the nature of a sacrifice to Cybele. Sacrifices of bulls and rams were also customary.

The cult was unique in the Greek and Roman world for its noise and frenzy. It was psychologically akin to the cult of Dionysus, which was likewise by origin Thracian and Anatolian but much better known to the Greeks, having been long ago adopted by them and controlled. Cybele's procession of eunuch priests marched, danced and whirled through the streets to the scream of flutes, the throbbing of drums, the clatter of castanets and the clash of cymbals. Where this was allowed, devotees who joined it wounded and sometimes castrated themselves. The priests wore long robes like women. The cult had regular beggars, the *metragyrtae*, and municipal officials, carriers of the sacred pine, to administer it. In spite of the decorous statues of Cybele known in classical art, her cult always showed her underlying nature. Traces of the same originally hermaphrodite character are found in other goddesses.

E. D. PHILLIPS

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Cyclops

Or 'circle-eye' (plural Cyclopes), name given to the one-eyed giants of Greek myth; divine craftsmen, they were the forgers of Zeus's thunderbolt: best known is Polyphemus who, in Homer's *Odyssey* imprisons Odysseus and his men, but is outwitted by the hero: generally depicted in classical literature as a figure of burlesque and fun

Michael Holford

Cypress

A graveyard tree, symbolic of death and, because it is evergreen, of resurrection: associated with powers of the underworld by the Greeks and Romans: according to various stories, the cross on which Christ was crucified, the pillars of Solomon's Temple, the club of Hercules and the arrows of Cupid were made of cypress wood.

Jim Bamber

Spirit possession is a characteristic feature of the traditional religion of southern Dahomey. A devotee who wishes to be 'captured' by a particular spirit has to undergo a long period of seclusion, during which his body is marked with ritual scars

DAHOMEY

FROM THE BEGINNING of the 18th century down to the 19th, Dahomey formed one of the most important kingdoms on the old Slave Coast of West Africa. In the complex Dahomean religion, the term *vodun* (from which is derived, through the slave trade, the West Indian 'Voodoo') was a key word in the religious vocabulary of several West African tribes, notably the Fon. Although in European accounts the vodun have often been described as gods or deities organized in a pantheon and constituting a system of polytheism, it would be more accurate to describe them as spirits. A characteristic feature of the religion of Dahomey is spirit possession.

A spirit or group of spirits usually has at least one 'temple', which may be a simple mud hut or a much more elaborate structure. If it is believed to be especially powerful, it may have many temples in different parts of the country. Each temple has its priests, who may be male or female, and whose position tends to be hereditary, although new cults and temples are constantly being founded by persons who become possessed by spirits. The priests minister to the devotees, *vodunsi*, who are attached to their temple and who have been initiated by them into the cult of that spirit. Often the devotees, the majority of whom tend to be women, have sought initiation in gratitude for, or in anticipation of, benefits conferred by the spirit, such as good health, fertility and prosperity. Membership in a cult may also be inherited.

The normal initiation ceremony can be very elaborate and expensive for the initiate and his kin who must pay the priest and sacrifice frequently to the spirit. It often includes a long period of seclusion at the temple, during which the initiate is said to have been 'killed' by the spirit and then to have been 'revived' or 'reborn'. While he is in seclusion, an initiate is marked with the body scars peculiar to the cult, is taught the language (often that of another tribe) associated with it, and rehearses its special songs and dances. Towards the end of his seclusion, he is 'captured' by the particular spirit which has 'declared war' on him and which 'enters his head' to take temporary possession of him. This condition is indicated by a trance-like state which normally occurs during dances in which the devotee is dressed in a costume special to that spirit and in which he imitates behaviour said to be characteristic of the spirit. Since the devotee acts in this way as a vehicle for the spirit, he hopes to derive benefits from it. After his initiation is completed, the devotee is expected to continue supporting the temple and its priest; to observe days dedicated to the spirit by abstaining from work and sexual intercourse; and to join in the dances which bring on possession and which are held periodically for the spirit. When he eventually dies, his fellows, led by the priest, conduct special ceremonies for him.

Shades of the Ancestors

This brief summary of the complex cult organization may give the impression that all spirits are much the same but in fact there is an extraordinary variety. One important class comprises the ancestral spirits who are called *tovodun*. The Fon and the other tribes in the area are divided into clans and lineages, membership of which is normally transmitted in the male line, and the ancestors of these groups can influence the fortunes of their living members. Each lineage confirms its identity as a separate branch of the clan to which it belongs partly by building and consecrating a shrine to its own ancestors. The shrines of the senior lineage include some which are used on behalf of the clan as a whole. Each lineage makes annual sacrifices to its dead and at less frequent intervals they are honoured with more lavish ceremonies. Periodically, too, the more recent dead have to be properly 'established' as ancestors. In other words, they do not become tovodun merely by dying, but are given this status in rituals performed by their descendants who hope for some return from them. Many of these ceremonies can only be performed by a 'priest of the ancestors' whose training and appointment is (or was) partly controlled by

the monarchy. A prominent feature of the ceremonies is the possession of lineage members by the spirits of their ancestors.

Within the general category of tovodun, some receive special attention. Each clan, with one or two exceptions, is said to stem from the mating of a woman with an animal or vegetable, which is regarded as the embodiment of a spirit. The first son born of this miraculous union is known as the clan-founder, *tohwiyo*. It is he who transmits to his descendants the special observances laid down for them by his non-human parent. These include prohibitions on eating certain foods and the use of particular tattoos. The tohwiyo is believed to concern himself with the affairs of the living, such as births, marriages, divorces and deaths, and should be informed or consulted about them at the shrine which each lineage of the clan has dedicated to him. At the annual ceremonies for the ancestors, one dancer impersonates and is possessed by him.

The beliefs about the clan-founder and his parents represent the notion that the origin and persistence of the clan depend on the conjunction of the human and non-human – the vodun, in fact. The tohwiyo is appropriately the intermediary between the two spheres, because he is the product of their conjunction and is therefore both human and spirit. He and his father also signify which practices are peculiar to that clan and distinguish it from the others.

Some tohwiyo acquire such a reputation that they attract devotees from outside their own clans. A conspicuous example is the founder of the royal clan, supposed to be the son of a princess and a leopard. The kings of Dahomey encouraged commoners to participate in this cult, and at the same time prohibited members of their own clan from joining the cults of other vodun – a striking case of the political uses of religion.

These vodun are commonly associated with a few clans which trace their origins, not to partial but to complete human beings who came down from the sky or out of holes in the ground. These clans are therefore

Dahomey fetish: dominated by a multitude of spirits, Dahomeans worship inanimate objects which they believe to have magical powers

Almasy

William Sargant

Priests, either men or women, are attached to the temples dedicated to each of the many spirits or groups of spirits in Dahomey: their position is usually hereditary, although new cults and temples are founded by people possessed by spirits

sometimes said to have no tohwiyo, their place being taken by the so-called 'gods', the most famous of whom are called Mawu-Lisa, Sogbo and Sagbata. There is evidence that these vodun and the clans associated with them originated amongst the Yoruba peoples who live mainly in western Nigeria, but are also found in Dahomey.

There is certainly a close correspondence between the spirits known to the Fon as Mawu-Lisa and to the Yoruba as Odudua-Orishala (Obatala). These spirits form a composite being, described sometimes as a hermaphrodite, sometimes as a pair of twins. They clearly symbolize an idea of duality in the world, since Mawu is female and is also the earth, the moon, the west and the night, whereas Lisa is male, the sky, the sun, the east and the day. At the same time, they express the unity achieved through the interaction of these dual elements and are commonly represented by the two halves of a gourd which are carefully joined together, suggesting the junction of the earth and the sky. In some myths, they are credited with having created the world, and they are then supposed to have divided the various features of it amongst their 'children', who are other vodun, born of their union. This multiplication of spirits within one cult is common in Dahomey.

Somewhat similar ideas are held about the group of spirits led by Sogbo, who is very like the Yoruba Shango. Sogbo is another hermaphrodite, supposedly living in the sky, who, like Mawu-Lisa, produced a number of 'children' to whom control over different natural phenomena was given. Considered together, these 'children' represent a dual division of the world, in which the sky again stands for everything above, but it is the sea, and not the earth, which represents everything below. This feature is perhaps explained by the fact that the cult, in this form, originated at a village near the coast. Certainly, the beliefs about these vodun reflect a preoccupation with water, whether as the sea, the rivers, the lagoons or the rain. The 'sky spirits' in this group are also associated with thunder and lightning, which is one means by which they may attack human beings, who therefore have to placate them.

The third group of vodun is dominated by Sagbata (Yoruba – Soponna), who is called 'king of the earth'. He too is sometimes a single being, sometimes a pair of twins, and propagates 'children' who are the spirits of different aspects of the earth. The notion of duality is not very evident in the cult itself but there are myths in which Sagbata and Sogbo agree, after a quarrel, to divide the universe between them, the one taking the earth and the other the sky. These are clearly attempts to explain the overlapping and often contradictory claims of the cults.

The Smallpox God

One unpleasant way in which Sagbata manifests himself to human beings is by afflicting them with smallpox or other eruptive diseases, and Europeans have therefore often called him the 'smallpox god', just as they have called Sogbo the 'thunder god'. They and Mawu-Lisa are in fact vodun which have been especially successful in competing with others to attract devotees. Some legends say that, like the tohwiyo, they were originally ancestral spirits and that their cults have only become more general in relatively recent times. Why they spread is not very clear, but they could hardly have done so if they had not appealed to human desires for security and well-being. Even so, they did not satisfy these desires completely for there are other successful vodun, several of which are especially concerned with the personal fate or destiny of individuals. The most well known of these are Legba, Dan and Fa.

Legba is a spirit for whom a common material representation is a figure with an exaggerated, erect penis, which symbolizes his inordinate demands for attention and his freedom from normal constraints. He has this character because he is a 'messenger' between all the other vodun who cannot communicate directly, since they 'speak different languages', and between them and mankind. Therefore, if he is not given the sacrifices he constantly requires, he may disrupt communications and thereby bring about natural calamities and individual misfortunes. The idea of Legba thus provides an explanation for those disasters which occur even when men have apparently discharged their obligations to other spirits.

Dan, who is commonly figured as a snake holding its tail in its mouth, is associated with the rainbow, with water and with smoke, and in general is said to represent the idea of motion. Primarily though, he is envisaged as a source of individual success or failure in gaining wealth. Therefore, he has to be treated carefully because, like Legba, he is notoriously fickle and can withdraw his favours if insufficient attention is paid to him. Both Legba and Dan are connected by Dahomeans with their most elaborate system of divination, which they probably acquired from the Yoruba. Its vernacular name is Fa and, besides revealing what good or ill the future may hold for an individual, it offers him the means of securing or evading it. Therefore, as well as being a technique of divination, Fa is a cult with its own metaphysical doctrine of man and nature, which some of its practitioners can expound in great detail. Indeed, Fa is often spoken of as a vodun. That this should be so may serve as a fitting final comment on the complex religion of Dahomey, which provides individuals with so many alternative ways of trying to interpret experience and to control it.

W. J. ARGYLE

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Camera Press London

DANCE

Camera Press London

Initiates have learned the secrets, they have symbolically died and have awakened to a new status

Man has always expressed his feelings in movement, and dancing is one of the oldest arts. But it is also a means of marking the crises of life, or encouraging the crops or healing the sick soul and body. Behind many ritual dances is the belief that it is through the dance that man speaks directly to his gods

WHILE WESTERN MAN generally regards the dance as a pastime, many other people, especially in non-literate societies, still dance as a form of prayer or magic, directed to a variety of practical ends. Ritual dances of today serve many functions, particularly as celebrations of life's crises, for healing or as efforts to promote the fertility of crops.

Puberty rites survive among aborigines in various parts of the world. The *waiang-arree*, for example, is the circumcision rite of the tribes of Broome on the west coast of Australia. After initiations and a climactic group dance by men and boys in a double circle, the novices become fully fledged members of tribal society. They have learned the secrets, they have symbolically died and have awakened to a new status.

Women may hold their own rites for pubescent girls. Choroti and Lengua women of South America danced for a month, circling the girl with slow steps, and striking the ground with bamboo staffs topped by deerhoof rattles. In this rite for demon exorcism they had the aid of four singing medicine-men. In the Maipure tribe of Venezuela the older women chase away demons, who are really masked men miming wild beasts. An Apache girl of New Mexico joins in a circle dance with attendants. For four days four men, the masked *gahe*, impersonate horned mountain spirits with pointed swords and angular gestures. During the ceremony the girl practises her future tasks as a woman. Such instruction is an important function of these rites.

Therapeutic dances may also take the form

Although dancing, in the West, is generally regarded as a social pastime, or entertainment, dances in Africa still retain their ritual character *Previous page* Nigerian stilt dance, a test of skill *Above* Basuto girls, their faces symbolically concealed behind masks made from beads, perform an initiation dance

The Dance of Life

In the ecstasy of the dance man bridges the chasm between this and the other world, to the realm of demons, spirits and God. Captivated and entranced he bursts his earthly chains and trembling feels himself in tune with all the world . . . The dance, inherited from savage ancestors as an ordered expression in motion of the exhilaration of the soul, develops and broadens into the search for God, into a conscious effort to become part of those powers beyond the might of man which control our destinies. The dance becomes a sacrificial rite, a charm, a prayer, and a prophetic vision. It summons and dispels the forces of nature, heals the sick, links the dead to the chain of their descendants; it assures sustenance, luck in the chase, victory in battle; it blesses the fields and the tribe. It is creator, preserver, steward and guardian.

From its deep and far-reaching influence it will be apparent that in the life of primitive peoples and of ancient civilizations scarcely anything approaches the dance in importance. It is no art that disregards bread; on the contrary it provides bread and everything else that is needed to sustain life. It is not a sin, proscribed by the priest or at best merely accepted by him, but rather a sacred act and priestly office; not a pastime to be tolerated only, but a very serious activity of the entire tribe. On no occasion in the life of primitive peoples could the dance be dispensed with. Birth, circumcision, and the consecration of maidens, marriage and death, planting and harvest, the celebrations of chieftains, hunting, war and feasts, the changes of the moon and sickness – for all of these the dance is needed . . . the dance in its essence is simply life on a higher level.

C. Sachs *World History of the Dance*

of circling or demon impersonations. They may show startling, individualistic whirls or spasms, depending on the purpose and location. They achieve therapy by inducing ecstasy, by curing a disease, or both. Ecstatic dances bring worshippers into communion with supernatural beings, by means of regulated movements, hypnotic musical accompaniment and sometimes with the aid of narcotics. The most spectacular mystic cult is that of the Turkish dervishes. Rufai or howling dervishes stamp and spring in a double circle, swaying and jerking their bodies. Mevlevi dervishes whirl individually, faster and faster, while the upraised right hand receives supernatural power and carries it to earth through the lowered left hand. (See DERVISH.)

Balinese men dance themselves into a near-suicidal trance, as they direct their kris daggers against their own breasts. The frenzy of the Asiatics brings to mind medieval dance manias – the St Vitus tremors which are now extinct, and the self-flagellant ecstasy of Penitentes, who still celebrate their Easter rites in New Mexico and the Philippines, to atone for their sins.

Asiatic shamans whirl themselves into a trance not only for mystic experience, but also for the cure of illness. Siberian shamans of the Tungus and Yakut tribes commune with the spirits of ancestors or animals and they effect cures by means of a revelation. Noisy exorcisms are the aims of the masked Devil Dancers of Ceylon and the Nalke and Paraiyan castes of India. These inspired men (rarely women) have their counterparts in the New World, especially among the Eskimo and the tribes in the jungles of the Amazon. They restore sick patients by bringing their souls back from the spirit land.

The New World received other ecstatic cults from Africa, under various names. Negro slaves brought the *vodun* cult (from which the word Voodoo is derived) to Haiti from Dahomey. The Bantu perpetuated their Macumba in Brazil, making many adaptations to the new environment. For instance, they know their ancestral gods by the names of Catholic saints as well as by the tribal names but they have preserved the essence, the traditional movements, songs and drums, and retain the strict ritual organization, with male and female priests. The worshippers impersonate deities in traditional movements, such as undulations for the snake god. As the deity 'rides' a worshipper, he or she may lose consciousness or become violent. Priests, who remain conscious, must often restrain ecstatic individuals, and help them regain consciousness. Though these rituals appeared malevolent to missionaries, they actually benefited the participants by relieving psychic tensions and by effecting better rapport with fellow human beings.

Masks with Staring Eyes

Missionaries saw such ecstasy arising within the groups of Christian converts. The Shouters and the Holy Rollers are among the sects which seek communion with Jesus in a semi-trance. Any member of a congregation can start a gospel song. A pianist and steel guitarist pick out counter rhythms; then the entire assembly syncopates the melody with hand-clapping, tambourine or triangle. As the worshippers rise from their chairs, some flex their knees rhythmically; some shuffle their feet; some skip in the aisles with spasmodic foot twists. They jerk their torsos or sway with upraised arms, shouting 'Halleluia', 'Thank you, Jesus!'.

In the New World, medicine dances of native origin cure mental and physical ailments. The Iroquois of New York State and Canada hold many medicine dances with traditional songs. At midwinter the Society of Maskers represents disease spirits and exorcises spirits which have afflicted members of the traditional native religion. In wry, wooden masks with staring eyes and long hair, they enter the sanctuary, the specially sacred area of their meeting place, crawling, whinnying and knocking turtle-shell rattles on floor and door. They hop about grotesquely, causing mingled awe and mirth. From a fireplace they collect ashes and rub them on the hair and arms of patients who are suffering from toothache or some other ailment. Finally everyone joins in a circle dance and a subsequent feast of corn mush. The Iroquois hold equally jolly medicine dances to propitiate the spirit of an animal that has taken offence at some ritual misdemeanour and has afflicted a man or woman. If a shaman decides that a bear spirit has caused cramps, for instance, he recommends a ritual for the bear. After a prayer and a tobacco offering, ritual conductors lead a circle dance, imitating bears with waddling and growling. Then the spectators join in a mimetic counter-clockwise circuit. They stamp, kick, eat nuts and berries, the bear's favourite food, and end by greatly cheering the patient.

Other tribes, like the Navaho of Arizona, hold long curative ceremonies, with singing and sometimes with masked spirit impersonations. They have special success with emotional ailments, by virtue of the musical and dance rhythms. They do not try to cure ailments brought by the white man from Europe.

To encourage a plentiful supply of food dances are performed to honour animal spirits in hunting rites, and plant spirits in agricultural rites. They vary greatly in accordance with the environment, fauna and flora. Animal dances, which are usually imitative, please animal spirits before a hunting expedition and appease them after a successful kill. Early man and some groups of modern men have held beasts in awe, not only because of their food value but also because of their agility and power. These animists endow all creatures with souls. Their animal mimicry is often very realistic. Boys of the Australian Kemmirai tribe imitate kangaroos by jumping, holding up their hands before their chests, or scratching themselves. African mimes can be great comics, such as the monkey men near Odienne of the Ivory Coast of West Africa. Tewa Indian men of New Mexico act like deer in some animal ceremonies; they gallop lightly or stand and tremble, nervously turning their antlered heads from side to side. In another version, however, they have stylized the mime; they stand erect as they sing and tread the ground.

Many animal dances survive as entertainments. Japanese folk festivals include realistic masked deer, bears, dragons, herons, cocks, and a comic lion imported from China. Turkish festivals enliven begging processions with camels and foxes in skins. England's prehistoric dramas survive in the Mummers, with real skins or shaggy imitations made of newspaper. The stylized reindeer of Abbots Bromley are six men who hold antlers in front of their heads as they face each other in two files, cross over and interweave sedately (see HORNS).

Agricultural dancers of today rarely impersonate plant deities. The Aztecs appointed elaborately garbed priests or

Gerald Cubitt

Popperfoto

Spanish National Tourist Office

Israeli Government Press Office

Caroles, or ring and chain dances, spring from ritual practices thousands of years old. Two variations are the Sardana of Spain *(left)* and the Israeli Hora *(below)*

Facing page **Dances honouring animal or plant spirits to ensure success in hunting and a plentiful harvest are found all over the world**

Top left **Coconut dancers of Bacup in Lancashire in a version of the Morris Dance hold floral hoops above their heads**

Top right **The stylized reindeer heads carried by the dancers at Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire are probably a survival from prehistoric hunting rituals**

Right **The Morris Dance was originally a vital part of the ritual that ushered in the summer: detail from painting of the Old Palace at Richmond**

priestesses for the impersonation of deities like Cinteotl, god of maize, in their seasonal ceremonial dances. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks also visualized their agricultural deities, like Dionysus, god of wine and seasonal rejuvenation. Iroquois women, however, merely symbolize the spirits of corn, beans and squash, without imitative attributes. Tewa women represent corn in great communal dances for the harvest, huge circuits and intricate lines danced by hundreds of men, women and children.

As in the case of animal mimicry, some agricultural dances are losing their religious significance but retain their ancient patterns. Balkan peasants still celebrate the harvest with circle dances by men and women – *kolos* of Serbia, *horas* of Rumania, Greece and Palestine, descendants of the ancient Greek *choros*, yet even more complex in steps and rhythms. The Tarascan Indians of Mexico still perform a sowing dance for women.

Folk dances and singing games preserve the forms of other occupational dances besides the hunt and agriculture. The Spanish *Filada* mimes spinning; the German *Webertanz* represents weaving; the Danish Shoemaker's and Tinker's Dance, the English Sailor's Hornpipe and Cobbler's Jig indicate these occupations.

Dancing Class Distinctions

The various classifications of people within a society, by birthright, occupation, age and sex, affect dance participation. In Western society such classifications are not rigid, but in many parts of the world social status determines a person's rights as a dancer.

Social organization, which may involve ritual organization, has evolved an infinity of patterns and restrictions. India's caste system is probably the world's most rigid division of people into gradations of prestige and occupations (see CASTE). The low-caste, the Paraiyans, clatter in masked, shamanistic trance movement, the purpose of which is curative. Peasants of Maharashtra in south-west India perform calendric festive dances, such as the *kolattam* stick dances. The Devadassis (female temple dancers) excel in the fine art of Hindu *Bharata Natyam*. Hilltribes like the Todas cling to ancient round dances.

Past civilizations have similarly, though less rigidly, divided people into social and

Brian Shuel

Brian Shuel

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

choreographic classes. Europe's medieval feudal system separated people by location and simultaneously by occupation. Aristocrats in their castles held lavish festivals with comic dances by professional clowns and paired dances by the elegant men and women, including *caroles* and later on *pavanes* and *gaillardes*. Burghers in the cities tried to emulate the aristocrats, but they also took over dances from the peasants like the rough *weller*, which they eventually developed into the waltz. The peasants or serfs were the custodians of ancient, pagan ritual dances. Partly as tradition, partly as release from an arduous life, they continued to impersonate the awesome animal maskers at Twelfth Night and Carnival. In many parts of Europe, the descendants of these peasants perform folk dances for harvests, for weddings and for tourist shows.

In Mexico the Aztecs developed a similar class system between the 12th century and the 15th. They expressed their social-ritual divisions during huge seasonal ceremonies. Priests and war captives, who were also sacrificial victims, impersonated deities. Warriors held ritual combats, not unlike the sword dances of northern Europe. Nobles held special dignified dances, in double file. Women had special roles, as priestesses. In some serpentine dances harlots were the partners of warriors; in other serpentines respectable virgins of the merchant class joined youths of their class. Serfs never participated; they watched the ceremonies, or were drafted as sacrificial victims.

Telling the Men from the Boys

The Aztec caste system was exceptional in the New World. Most native tribes had a comparatively democratic organization, based on clans, and some still do. Iroquois society is divided into hereditary clans, which are traced through the women. All social and ritual activities hinge on the interaction of two groups of clans, termed moieties by anthropologists. Members of each moiety have their assigned places in the sanctuary and in the dance line. They must sit at opposite sides of the sanctuary. Generally they participate in the same ceremonies. In New Mexico, however, the members of the two moieties often have separate ceremonies. The summer moiety manages the summer dances for crops,

The devil dances of Liberia, West Africa, are performed on occasions such as the death of a king or at harvest time. The dancers *(right* and *facing page, below)*, made anonymous by their costumes and usually wearing terror-inspiring masks, represent malignant supernatural powers or devils: by imitating these evil spirits they hope to propitiate them *Facing page above* War dances, in preparation for battle or to celebrate a victory, also attract attention to the masculinity of the participants: Chuka dancers in Kenya

Popperfoto

while the winter moiety is in charge of winter ceremonies for animals.

Age grades nowadays have little effect on dance arrangements, except that in Europe and America children keep up singing games. In some aboriginal esoteric rites children are not admitted. In puberty rites they are the leading performers. In the now obsolete war societies of the Indians of the American Great Plains the boys were members of certain societies according to their particular age grade. Today in most American Indian and other folk dances, children participate, usually at the end of a dance line, copying their elders. While aboriginal dances involve elders as vigorous as their grandchildren, Western man tends to assume that energy is a prerogative of youth. The idea that modern dancing is for the youngsters has a long history. In the Middle Ages it was customary for the older couples to march slowly through the *branle double*, for younger couples to engage in the *branle gai*, and for youngsters to leap through the lively steps of the *branle de Bourgogne*.

Another form of segregation, according to sex, has deep-seated biological and sociological motivation. Men dance for war and the hunt, but women for peace and horticulture. The sexes may dance alone in their special rites, or they may occupy separate parts of a dance line, perhaps with different steps. Rarely are women the partners of men. That is a recent development in the social and stage dances of Europe and America.

The Geometry of Dance

The dance functions, organization and inter-personal relationships find expression in visible and audible patterns. The ingredients of the visible pattern are posture, arm gestures, footwork and geometric formations. They are usually synchronized with sound effects. Some rituals call for imitative body postures or special gestures. Other rites, as for harvests and most sociable dances, emphasize steps that carry the dancers over the ground in simple or elaborate formations. Local factors also determine the kind of ingredient. That is, different peoples emphasize certain ingredients in special ways called style. Many African tribes and their New World descendants move the whole body expressively, even acrobatically. India's art dancers emphasize arm gestures. European peoples like footwork – small, intricate steps in the Balkans, high leaps and kicks in the Basque Provinces. In southern Spain the men and women of Andalusia excel in sinuous torso and arm movements as well as in intricate footwork. Peasants of northern Spain prefer circle dances or interweaving 'longways'; this term is used for dances performed by two rows of dancers standing opposite each other in parallel lines. Ireland's folk dancers are masters of every kind of geometric floor pattern.

Postures have certain universal connotations. Dirges and other sad dances produce flexed bodies, while in gay moods the torso is thrown out and the head raised. Heavy animals like bears or buffalo suggest a bowed position in mime; while birds suggest light, upward imitation of flight. At the same time, every tribe and national group shows local posture tendencies. West African Negroes and Spanish flamenco dancers exaggeratedly extend their backs; English Morris dancers tilt backwards; Basques hold themselves erect; Serbians and Indians of North America tilt forwards or even flex their bodies. Within these regional postures, age grades cause variations. American Indian war dancers remain fairly erect, if the men are old; they flex and extend to extremes if they are young.

Speaking with Their Hands

Sex also has an effect on traditional postures. In many parts of the world, from America to Russia, women are supposed to dance with a meek posture, head bowed, feet close together, while men may expand and stretch. In Chinese theatre, male characters often assume a straddling posture, but female characters hold legs and arms closed in. Within these conventions there are also individual variations. Even in stylized group dances some individuals move joyously and others meekly. In mime some experts have more extreme interpretations of flexion and extension than others. Also – a more elusive constituent – some dancers use more force than others, in their more emphatic exhibition.

Gestures of the arms and hands similarly express universal moods and thoughts, and also regional and individual variations.

Syndication International

Spear dance by the Wogogo tribesmen of East Africa: one of the many versions of the war dance, performed throughout the world with sword or shield, spear, sticks or bow and arrow

Dance gestures, which ultimately derive from daily gestures, are always stylized; they may be simple and intelligible or elaborate and obscure. The gestures of European folk dancers are simple compared to the code of India. Everywhere gestures can be imitative or symbolic, involving the whole arm or just the fingers, executed with or without props. They can be realistic, expressive of emotions, or decorative. In ancient and modern India *nritya* signifies narrative, stylized gestures, while *nritta* is decorative. Both types contrast with the forthright, realistic gestures of European dances such as the Swedish flax-reaping. For an understanding of nritya and of Katha-Kali folk dramas, the spectator must know the sacred myths, the tales of Krishna, Shiva and legendary heroes. He must also know the meaning of the hundreds of finger positions and arm positions. The gesture code has been simplified in the ritual dances of Manipur in north-east India, the Indonesian enactments of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, in the narrative gesture dances of Samoa and the Hawaiian *hula*.

The only American Indians with a gesture code are the tribes of British Columbia, though the Aztecs and Maya apparently had ritual codes. Their manuscripts show gestures similar to those of Balinese priests lowering their hands to the earth or raising them to the sky. These codes of Asia and native America have had little or no effect on art dances of Europe and America. Ballet dancers persevere in a set of conventionalized positions for love and sorrow; followers of the American pioneer, Isadora Duncan, invent their own gestures; followers of the German pioneer, Mary Wigman, show the influence of Indonesia's decorative hand positions with overstretched fingers. In general, dancers of the Western world neglect gesture in favour of footwork. (See also GESTURE.)

Focus on the Feet

Footwork or steps may be the basis of a dance, a rhythmic background to gestures, or a means of progression. The leaps of Basque men, the intricate crossing of the feet of the Scottish dancer, the brushes and flaps of an American tap dancer take the full attention of performer and audience, perhaps formerly as ritual, certainly now as exhibition. The high leaps of the Basques and the similar leaps of the men of the Ukraine and Georgia may hark back to ancient vegetation rites to promote the leaping of plants into life. The jumps and turns of Balkan folk dancers and of England's Morris men may also have ancient roots in supplications to the earth and the seeds.

On the other hand, the footbeats of India and southern Spain appear as rhythmic backgrounds to the filigrees of arms and hands. In contrast with such virtuoso uses of feet and legs, the simpler steps of most folk dances serve as a means of progression. In their forward, backward or sideways movements European groups and couples may use the polka or waltz steps. More frequently they run through their formations as do people in other parts of the world.

Closed or open circuits are the most commonly found ground patterns of dance. In closed circuits the participants may move in the direction of progression or they may face the centre and then step sideways. They can move clockwise, as commonly in hunting cultures and in north-west Europe, or counter-clockwise, as in agricultural rites of south-east Europe and Africa. Some peoples regard the latter direction as sinister and evil, as the Algonquins of America's Great Lakes and the medieval English, who considered 'widdershins', meaning against the sun, as the witches' direction. The closed circle, single or double (in couples) has its limitations. The open circle is really a follow-my-leader line and offers many possibilities of serpentining, winding into a spiral, and so on. It is known among the Bambuti Pygmies of Africa, the French Provencale *farandole* dancers, and agricultural American Indians.

Straight lines are less common than circling patterns. They take many forms. Simplest are the multiple stationary lines of the Maori in New Zealand, and of Africans such as the Watusi, who lay more stress on gestures and leaps than on formations. Two parallel lines offer more artistic possibilities,

Maze, Snake and Goddess

Among later Greek writers there is a persistent tradition of a maze or labyrinth dance in Crete, in which the dancers pursued a winding course suggestive of the devious passages of a maze. The fact that the palace at Knossos . . . is complex in plan and suggests the Labyrinth of legend, perhaps lends some support to this tradition. Dances of the maze type are common to many early peoples in various parts of the world, whether they have Labyrinthine buildings or not. Some historians trace them all to a very primitive dance form which is really an imitation of the crawling of a serpent. The importance of the snake in Minoan religion is well attested, and it is possible that in primitive times a python or other large snake . . . was kept as an embodiment of the goddess. Some students think that a snake-line dance was performed in the gloom of the many caves in the mountains near Knossos, and that it was climaxed by the exhibition of a living python. Such a performance would have been weird and spectacular in the highest degree.

Certain figurines indicate also that there were in Crete snake-handling rituals, in which woman votaries carried small living snakes in their hands. Earlier, such figurines were interpreted as 'snake goddesses', but recent studies have shown that they portray worshippers, dancers, or priestesses. Snake-handling rituals in the United States and in other parts of the world are usually accompanied with shouts and hymns, and with a shuffling sort of dance.

Lillian B. Lawler *The Dance in Ancient Greece*

Camera Press London

Couple dances, with women partnering men, are rare in many parts of the world: men traditionally dance for victory in war, women for peace. 18th century Turkish miniature from the Topkapi Library, Istanbul

and have greater scope for dramatic expression. The facing lines may be two groups of warriors, or two lines of men and women in a mime of courtship repulsion and magnetism. The former type has shown most elaborate developments in the sword dances of Europe. The latter type persists in various parts of Africa, in simple patterns; it has evolved into the intricacies of the 'longways sets' of Scottish and New England country dancing and also into the patterns of Pueblo Indian harvest dancers. In many of these longways the approach-and-recede pattern is combined with the serpentine motif of the open circle, as in the Virginia Reel. In this and many other longways the arch pattern introduces an ancient tree symbolism into geometric formations: successively, partners hold up their joined hands and other couples run through the arch. American Indians have adopted this ornamental pattern, Yucatan Indians with the aid of actual flower arches, and Great Lakes Indians by holding hands.

Group formations may combine with couple patterns in European folk dances, from Palestine to Finland. In Moravian dances the couples circle counter-clockwise. At the same time they change from parallel progression with joined hands to separation, reunion, pivoting, and so forth. In the French quadrilles and American square dances all circle and then the four couples successively cross over, break up into small circles, finally spinning by twos in the swing. In these folk dances couples and individuals conform to regulations, unlike the undisciplined dancing that takes place in the modern ballroom.

Patterns in Time and Space

The various ingredients of the dance are combined into structures by patterns in tempo or variations of steps. Quadrille types open with the circling, continue with a 'body' of distinctive formations, and close with a promenade and swing. The original French quadrilles were suites, with precise, named sections, like the Morris dances with their five successive dances. Many dances have simpler forms. Some, like the Palestinian *hora*, continue with the same step and formation of an open circle, but they build up excitement by a crescendo in speed and intensity. Others use the simple device of contraction, like the German *Siebenschritt*, with its ever shorter and shorter series of steps. A common device is the two-part set of slow and fast dance, like the Renaissance *Pavana* and *Gaillarda*, the later Minuet and Rondeau, the present Hungarian *Lassu* and *Gyors*, the Norwegian *Gangar* and *Springar*, and the Tewa Harvest slow and fast dance. Each part has distinctive steps, first processional, then lively and leaping; and special music.

Dances often combine with other activities into traditional dramas, with preparations, intensifying action, and aftermath. African possession cults and the corresponding Holiness Church services start with prayer and solemn music; work up to a climax of frenzied solo and circle dancing, with interludes for speeches; and they calm down into a benediction and song, with in Africa a concluding feast. This is the structure of the Greek Dionysian rites and the resultant Greek dramas and medieval Passion Plays. While these dramas last only a few hours, some rituals occupy many days, like the 27-day Midwinter rites of British Columbia tribes. (See also DRAMA.)

Dance Music

Over thousands of years dances have developed an infinite variety of musical accompaniments, costumes and settings. Musical accompaniment may involve separate musicians, single or grouped. Drums of many sizes and shapes are almost ubiquitous; they are most advanced in Africa. Stringed instruments have spread from the Near East to most of Asia and Europe, and thence to the Americas. Gongs characterize Southeast Asia. Flutes and other wind instruments are sporadic, varying from the tiny flute of the one-man flute-and-tabor music in England, Spain and Mexico, to the enormous horns of Tibet and native Chile. Europe has evolved the most complex instruments and ensembles of strings, accordions, pianos and other instruments. The most elaborate ensembles, the orchestras of the modern world, have the least significance, while the drum-and-voice combinations are closest to the original magical intentions.

These separate accompaniments generally conform to the mood, tempo and metre of the dances, and they have the same structure. They may thus be in triple or double time; or in irregular metres. They may synchronize with the footwork of the dancers and with each other, or they may be in syncopation or antiphony. The relationship is closest when the dancers produce their own accompaniment, as the sole musicians, or as enrichments of the background music. Dancers may manipulate their instruments, as they sing or chant, or move them automatically as part of their clothing, or create rhythmic sounds with parts of the body.

Sometimes drummers dance, kneel, leap, as they beat the rhythms. Small drums are used by tribesmen of New Guinea; the Santals and Oraons of Bihar in India have more cumbersome ones slung around their shoulders; gypsy men of Turkey and Macedonia perform remarkable feats with huge, double-headed instruments. The tambourine players in the Italian *tarantella* have a relatively lightweight instrument with a simple playing technique. Almost as impressive as the gypsy drumming is the self-accompaniment of Mexico's Concheros, who strum rhythmic chords on a lute-like instrument, made of an armadillo shell, as they stamp out their dance steps. In the New World such music may be a substitute for ancient native rattles. Iroquois men shake horn or turtle-shell rattles. Many tribes shake tortoise rattles for rain. The Siouans of North America and the Yaqui of Mexico use deer-hoofs, on sticks or on their belts. Yaqui clowns, who play an important role in the dance, strike a rattle with brass discs on the palm of the left hand. At the same

The shift from faith to fun has not destroyed all native ritual, and even in urban society serious artists are seeking a return to faith or to a deep, almost ritualistic dedication

time they wear bells dangling from their belts, and rustle anklets of butterfly cocoons filled with gravel. Many dancers wear such jinglers on their belts, hems or ankles.

More skill is involved in the manipulation of castanets, held in the hands, with different timbre for the right and left hands. The castanets of Spain are descendants of ancient finger-cymbals; Andalusian women often have the same poses as the cymbal players of Egypt and Greece. At the same time they and their partners stamp out intricate sounds with their hard-heeled shoes. Flamenco dancers also stamp *zapateados* but they clap their hands or snap their fingers. They belong to a widespread cult of stamping either with or without shoes and of handclapping in counter-rhythms.

Dressing for the Dance

Costumes sometimes add such sound effects to the visual designs. Morris men jingle the bell pads on their shins as they leap and simultaneously wave kerchiefs or strike sticks. Nautch dancers of India jingle ankle bells and stamp while they pirouette and whirl voluminous skirts. But many props are soundless, like the fans of Japanese geishas or the long sleeve extensions of Chinese theatre dancers. The manipulations of the fans are symbolic and represent falling leaves, waterfalls, and many other things. Some props are realistic or descriptive, or simply decorative. Tewa men manipulate feathered wings to simulate eagles. An American stage dancer, Loie Fuller, whirled hundreds of yards of cloth as flames under red lights. Isadora Duncan's disciples wafted silk scarfs merely for an effect of lightness.

Masks similarly serve many purposes, most importantly symbolic or imitative purposes. The Iroquois False-Face masks and the Tewa eagle half-masks with beaks represent supernatural beings without impeding dance movements. But many ritual masks are so huge as to preclude any dance movement except for a walk, such as the huge disc worn by impersonators of the Inca sun god and the towering demon masks of Melanesian and West African dancers. Some masks require special manipulation. Thunderbirds in British Columbian dances move their beaks on hinges. Other masks heighten character acting, like the demons, heroes and court ladies of Japanese theatre, and the comic Old Men of the Tarascan people of Mexico.

Special garments are prescribed for the effectiveness of the masks. The dancers may be completely covered in bulky grasses or in stiff and decorative kimonos. At the other extreme, they may be nude but for painted stripes. Without masks, costumes rely on other devices for their effect. Tewa Indians decorate their tunics or kilts with magical designs, zigzags for lightning, terraces for clouds and rain. Folk dancers of many lands emphasize their femininity and masculinity by costume patterns and rich ornaments. Women wear layers of full skirts which they whirl as they turn and sometimes flip with their hands. Men exaggerate their strong chests with bouffant sleeves. (See also COSTUME; MASKS.)

Settings enhance the meaning and effectiveness of dance movements and props. Maypole dancers belong on a village green. Tewa dancers belong in their sunny semi-desert, against a horizon of snow-capped mountains, their turquoise, red, black and white costumes brilliant against the beige adobe of the homes around the dance plaza. British Columbian maskers appear more weird than ever in the dimly lit dance house, by a flickering fire. But Melanesian and Polynesian dances are set against the background of jungle or sea, the sun, and the fragrance of exotic flowers.

Environments have often changed for dances, as people have migrated to new lands, have conquered or visited other peoples. Such migrations have resulted in the diffusion of dance forms, with adaptations to their new homes, and in mixtures. Other changes such as secularization and professionalization have taken place locally and also through migrations.

Recent dance importations to North America followed the immigrations of the 19th century. Some of the immigrants have tried to re-create their seasonal festivals in the new environment. In settlements like Heightstown, New Jersey, Slovaks and Moravians attempted processionals through the streets of the village, imitating their native harvest festivals. In big cities, like New York and Detroit, they have tried to stage fragments of their dance rituals or have invented plays representing their custom.

Mixtures generally result in the course of transfers. Some of the mixtures are among the world's most picturesque dances, such as a dance representing the battles of Moors and Christians, with a Spanish libretto and Aztec movement styles. America's most accessible mixtures are the square dances, which started as diversions of British immigrants, then added Scottish motifs, later on, Danish and Norwegian motifs in the Middlewest, and, in the Southwest, figures from Spanish *cuadrillas*. Such mixture has affected art dance, too, but in a more self-conscious manner. Americans such as Fred Astaire and Paul Draper have combined European ballet with American tap dancing.

The Joy of Dancing

How can I describe the joy of dancing . . . Voluminous, vast, swelling like sails in the wind, the movements of my dance carry me onward – onward and upward, and I feel the presence of a mighty power within me which listens to the music and then reaches out through all my body, trying to find an outlet for this listening. Sometimes this power grew furious, sometimes it raged and shook me until my heart nearly burst from its passion, and I thought my last moments on earth had surely arrived. At other times it brooded heavily, and I would suddenly feel such anguish that, through my arms stretched to the Heavens; I implored help from where no help came.

Isadora Duncan *My Life*

Dance in the Modern World

Professionalization has had an increasing effect on the forms and settings of dances. Certain gifted individuals in every culture become so expert that they elaborate the traditional forms, or create new routines. In ancient times, as in Pharaonic funerals, and still today, as in India's Katha-Kali dramas, experts who became professional by virtue of their excellence were as dedicated to the gods as to their art. African virtuosi, like the Watusi men, do not expect remuneration. Today in the Western world, however, the supreme performers serve both art and mammon.

Secularization has resulted from professionalization, but the process is not identical. Some professionals, like Japanese Shinto priests, still serve religion. Most secular dancers, as in the ballroom, are

Right In the modern world the dance has become increasingly secularized, as in ballroom dancing, but folk dancing even as a stage or tourist attraction retains many of the characteristics and much of the appeal of its ritual past, when it was a vital part of the community's life: Russian dancers in traditional costume *Centre* The symbolism of a dance is heightened, and it comes closest to its original magical function, when music or rhythm is provided by only one type of instrument: children at Kabul, Afghanistan, dance to the sound of tambourines *Below* According to Hindu belief the god Shiva set the world in motion with a dance, and dancing is an intrinsic and highly formalized part of life in India: Orissa dancers in Delhi

Peter Larsen

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amateurs. The process of secularization has certainly been going on for untold centuries. In many parts of the world rituals survive side by side with pleasure dances, as among the Iroquois and the Basques. For centuries special 'social' dances have been created, like the minuet, polka and waltz; these dances emphasize communications between the sexes instead of communication with deities.

The shift from faith to fun has followed in the wake of Euro-American industrialization and urbanization. Yet it has not destroyed all native ritual, and even in urban society, serious artists are seeking a return to faith, or to a deep, almost ritualistic dedication. The devotees, be they performers, producers, or scholars, believe that the dance plays a role in modern society, even though it is no longer integrated with beliefs and activities.

Ritual dances are taking on new forms, suited to modern Christianity. While ancient dance rituals persist in Africa's Coptic churches and in Spain's cathedrals; while stage performers enact Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* as a spectacle, a few devotees have tried to reinstate dancing in Christian churches, particularly in the United States where a number of Sacred Dance Guilds have interpreted biblical themes in dignified movements.

Therapeutic dances survive here and there within urban culture. Inside the industrial pattern they may help the mentally ill, the problem child, and the worker on an assembly line. Many experts believe that this ancient healing function of dance has considerable potentialities for exploitation in the future.

(See also CAROLE; CORYBANTES; HOBBY HORSE; MORRIS DANCES; SWORD DANCES.)

GERTRUDE KURATH

FURTHER READING: Good introductions to this enormous subject include V. Alford and R. Gallop, *The Traditional Dance* (Methuen, London, 1935); M. Huet, *Dance, Art and Ritual of Africa* (Pantheon, 1978); D. Kennedy, *England's Dances* (Clarke, Irwin, 1949); L. B. Lawler, *The Dance in Ancient Greece* (Columbia University Press, 1978); C. Sachs, *World History of the Dance* (Norton, 1937); for an interesting sociological survey, see F. Ruse, *Dance in Society* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969).

DANCE OF DEATH

The *Dance of Death*, an allegorical representation of Death leeding all men and women inevitably to the grave was a popular theme in late medieval art: these illustrations from Holbein's series of woodcuts on the subject show Death as a grotesque skeleton who appears to various people and is finally himself engulfed by men and women who have already died

IN DANCES OF DEATH, people reflect their attitude towards this final, catastrophic crisis in human life. Some people have regarded death with horror and they have feared the ghosts of the dead. Some express their grief in mournful ceremonies. Others try to cheer each other and the departed spirit by dance and song. Others again consider death a transfiguration, a door to another, better life. Similarly, the celebrations take many forms: impersonations of the image of death, imageless homage to the deceased, or joyous folk dancing.

Death was often personified as a grotesque skeleton, as in the medieval European Dance of Death. This is best known through frescoes and woodcuts, but it had a foundation in actual miming dances. Death in the form of a skeleton capered in turn with sinners of all classes and ages, cardinal, labourer, child. This dance was an expression of the medieval horror of death, despite the Church's promises of a better afterlife. Clown-skeletons still cavort in ecclesiastical celebrations descended from the Middle Ages. In Catalonia, Spain, skeleton figures dance during religious holidays, notably Carnival and Holy Week, sometimes at Corpus Christi. In the *danza macabra* or *bal de la mort* of the Ampurdàn area of Spain, a quadrille of skeletons carries a scythe, clock and banner. In Mexican *carnavales* Death is a horrid clown, armed with a pitchfork, descended from the Spanish impersonations.

The burial wake is another common manifestation. A motif of cheer and consolation pervades Spanish wakes. The mourners dance a lively *jota* or *canario*. Catholicism has introduced the word 'angelitos' (little angels) for the spirits of recently deceased children. Mourners celebrate wakes with a *baraban* or *lucia* in Sicily and Tuscany, and with a jig in Ireland. Negro wakes in South Carolina work up to a frenzied pitch of dance and song. Food and liquor contribute to the festivity of these wakes.

Banishing the Dead

Another form which the celebration may take is the release or exorcism of the spirits, motivated by fear of their evil potentialities as well as by affection. American Indians of many tribes perform a series of funerary and anniversary rites. The California Luiseno banished the spirit from his familiar haunts with the *tuvish* and *chuchamish* (wake), and in memorials for all the dead of the past year or several years. They imitated the character of the dead persons in the *yunish matackish*. They burned images in the *tauchanish*. Similarly, until recently, the Yuma tribe in the Mohave desert burned rush images in a circular dance and a cremation ritual termed *keruk*. The Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua, Mexico, perform a *rutuburi* circle dance and a special death dance around their belongings, during a three-week fiesta. After a year they perform other dances – the *yumari* and *pascol*. The Yaqui tribe of Sonora, Mexico holds a fiesta and dance at the wake of a child, similar to a Catalan wake. They hold a special *matachina* dance or a *chapayekas* dance for members of these ceremonial societies. Another ritual finally releases the spirit.

Though ghosts are not feared quite as much among the Iroquois of New York State and Canada, these people do believe in them and make efforts to allay them. In case of a violent death, they dispatch a priest for prayers at the site of the murder. After four nights they sing for the release of the spirit and to aid its trip to the other world. After ten days they reinforce this supplication through song and dance. In the winter women chant and circle in the *ohgiwe* for their ancestors, with drum accompaniment. The assembly concludes with a feast and gay round dances.

Chinese and Japanese Buddhists celebrate the Feast of Lanterns as memorials to their ancestors. Japanese villagers, especially in Asage, circle counter-clockwise in the *Bon Odori*, during mid-July or in August, in connection with harvest celebrations. Men

and women sing as they gesture or clap their hands; sometimes they also have a musical accompaniment.

In some instances there may be a fusion of the concept of death and resurrection. Boys' puberty rites may enact the symbolic death of the initiates and their rebirth to a new status (see DANCE). Funeral rites of antiquity often included the hope of resurrection. The high kicks of Egyptian female mourners symbolized new life. The Egyptian Osiris rituals and the Greek spring festival for Dionysus mimed the death and final resurrection of the deity. Babylonians and Romans had similar customs. In the Middle Ages funeral dances symbolized resurrection by a kiss between male and female performers, with the anticipation of new life. The Hungarian *Gyas Tanc* perpetuates this concept.

Relics in modern children's games of many countries form yet another manifestation. English and American children preserve the actions and song words of ancient funeral rites, as in *Old Roger is Dead*, *Jenny Jones* and *Green Gravel* (see CHILDREN'S GAMES). In their Hallowe'en masks and pranks small children perpetuate All Soul's ceremonies for the return of the spirits and propitiatory food offerings.

Impersonations of death are also found in modern art dances. Two German choreographers visualized death as an ugly thing. In *Totenmahl* or *Feast for the Dead* (1929), Mary Wigman masked her group in white, cadaverous faces, as homage to the dead of the First World War. In his *Green Table* (1933), Kurt Jooss envisaged the figure of death in wartime as a skeleton resembling the great reaper of the Middle Ages. A few years later, in 1937, the American, José Limon, created his *Danza de la Muerte* and Andrée Howard produced *Death and the Maiden* to Schubert's music for the English Ballet Rambert. These modern spectacles echo the anxieties of folk laments.

FURTHER READING: A. Strindberg (translated by A. Paulson), *Dance of Death* (Norton, 1976).

DANCING MANIA

THERE APPEARED ON THE STREETS of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in Germany, in July 1374, a body of men and women, belonging almost entirely to the poorer classes, who began to exhibit the signs of an alarming disorder. Its symptoms were convulsive running, leaping and dancing, frequently accompanied by elaborate hallucinations, and those so affected seemed powerless to stop themselves; indeed, attacks could be terminated only by forcible binding, or by the onset of utter physical exhaustion. No one seemed to know how the outbreak started, though we hear of the 'dancers' as having come 'out of Germany' and that they were popularly known as 'St John's Dancers'.

It is this name which provides a clue to the possible origins of the phenomenon. Already in the early Church, the Feast of St John the Baptist had been placed at Midsummer – incidentally, the only example in the Church Calendar of a saint celebrated on the day of his birth, rather than of his death; according to St Luke he was born six months before Jesus. It is common knowledge that in pre-Christian Europe, and elsewhere, Midsummer was a time of celebration, in which dancing, processions and the lighting of fires played their part. These elements were, it seems, transferred bodily to the Festival of St John the Baptist – a measure of which the Saint is unlikely to have approved. It is not known for certain but it appears at least likely that the dancing mania began with the celebration of a semi-Christian Midsummer in 1374. Memories of the Black Death were still strong; there was a widespread sense of fear and insecurity; and the result was a form of mass hysteria which spread with startling rapidity. Within a very short time dancing mania was reported from the streets and churches of Liege in Belgium, from Utrecht in Holland and many other towns and cities.

Predictably the phenomenon was officially attributed to evil spirits, and recourse was made to chapels of St John for the purposes of exorcism; this strengthened the connection with the saint under whose auspices the dancing had begun, though

occasionally the issue became confused by the introduction of St John the Apostle in his place. The common people, too, were convinced that demons were at work but accounted for this by the theory that the persons affected had been invalidly baptized by priests living in concubinage, which added an unpleasant moral and theological dimension to the problem.

Although each separate outbreak came to an end in a few weeks, sporadic instances of the dancing mania continued for the remainder of the 14th century. The next serious wave occurred at Strasbourg in 1418. By this time the original link with St John the Baptist had been forgotten, and those afflicted were taken instead to the chapels of St Vitus (an obscure 4th century Christian saint who had long been thought, for no apparent reason, to protect sufferers from convulsive diseases) to be cured. Again, the saint's day was closely connected with the celebration of Midsummer. The name 'St Vitus's Dance', *Veitstanz*, was applied to this new outbreak, the symptoms of which were identical with previous epidemics; this name has survived to this day as a popular name for convulsive chorea.

Below **This ecstatic dancer in a Los Angeles nightclub is a throwback to the medieval men and women who danced compulsively in the streets of Europe in the 14th century, a phenomenon that was attributed to possession by evil spirits**

Camera Press London

Dance of the Spider

These outbreaks of dancing mania in 1374 and 1418 are the best-known, but there is ample evidence to show that the disease itself had appeared earlier; there are records of similar visitations in 1237 at Erfurt in Germany and in 1278 at Utrecht, for example. It continued, though on a smaller scale, well on into the 17th century. In Italy, for instance, an almost identical disease, known as Tarantism, was popularly believed to be caused by the bite of the tarantula spider. The main symptom in this case was extreme lassitude, out of which the patient could be brought by means of music (giving rise to the dance-form the *tarantella*); this induced a convulsive crisis and finally exhaustion, after which the sufferer was regarded as cured. Tarantism was known intermittently from the 14th to the 18th centuries.

In Scotland, three men and four women were burned at the stake at Paisley on 10 June 1697 for the crime of witchcraft, and it seems from the evidence that they were sufferers from some form of chorea. Many of the symptoms exhibited by the Convulsionaries of 18th century France, and in connection with Methodist and other Christian revival movements in Britain and America in the 18th and 19th centuries, were substantially those of the dancing mania, though not known by that name. Other parallel manifestations, ranging from the medieval Flagellants to the more recent Holy Rollers, might also be cited.

Dancing mania was basically a contagious form of hysteria, brought on in a situation of peculiar stress. It was largely psychological in origin, though it was not without its physical causes, such as undernourishment. As an expression of European life in the Middle Ages, its imagery was that of popular Christianity, though pathologically distorted. It is therefore without theological significance, though it has considerable interest for the student of the psychology of religion, not least as evidence of what can happen within the framework of organized religion when individuals and communities are subjected to severe mental strain. In this sense, both the disease and its cure are significant religious facts.

(See also CONVULSIONARIES; HOLY ROLLERS.)

DANIEL

THE BOOK OF DANIEL in the Old Testament is named after its central personality, a noble young Jew taken, with three of his friends, from Judea to the court of the Babylonian king. The book recounts the life, piety and wisdom of Daniel, as well as his visions of the future. The name Daniel seems to be that of an ancient Semitic legendary figure.

The book is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, and presents many problems. The first, more biographical part of it tells how Daniel and his friends lived as exiles at court, remaining faithful to their ancestral faith in spite of trials, tribulations and temptations. The best known incident in this connection is that of Daniel's being cast into the lion's den for refusing to give divine worship to King Darius the Mede. An example of Daniel's god-given wisdom was his ability to interpret dreams and to read the writing on the wall in Belshazzar's banqueting hall.

The second – and in later periods more influential – part of the book reports a series of dreams and visions. The symbolism of these – the four beasts, the beast with the horns, the visions of the 70 weeks, the 'son of man' seated on a throne, the final revelations of the angel – refers to the course of history, that is, to the destruction of the four successive world empires and their wicked and idolatrous rule by the kingdom of God and his saints (the 'fifth monarchy').

Although the book purports to date from the period of the Babylonian exile, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BC) to that of Darius the Mede (521–486 BC), this dating is accepted by few scholars and the general consensus of critical scholarship ascribes the composition of its main part to the time of the persecution of the Jewish religion under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and the period of the Maccabean revolt (c 165 BC). This would account for many of the

A visionary whose writings form the basis for the millenarian beliefs of some present-day Christian sects, Daniel is probably best known for surviving a night spent in a den of lions: painting from the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

peculiarities of the book as well as for many of its dominant motifs: persecution and martyrdom, the rule of the wicked, the hope for a divinely operated *dénouement* and for the imminent establishment of the rule of the saints. If this dating is correct, then the 'four kingdoms' are the Babylonian, (unhistorical) Median, Persian and Greek (Seleucid dynasty) empires. When Rome became the dominant power symbolizing the rule of the wicked (the 'great whore of Babylon' in the symbolism of the Revelation of St John), the four kingdoms were interpreted to refer to Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome. In later periods other identifications were offered: the later medieval *Book of a Hundred Chapters* took them to refer to France, England, Spain and Italy. During the Civil War in England, a radical Puritan sect which was strongly represented in Cromwell's army were known as the 'Fifth Monarchy Men', because of their expectation to establish the rule of the saints.

The original purpose of the book was no doubt to strengthen the faith and the hearts of the persecuted Jews, making them persevere in their uncompromising opposition to the policy of hellenization ('idolatry') enforced by the Greek government and embraced by certain Jewish circles, and holding out hope of imminent salvation by revealing the divinely predestined course of history. The cryptic and symbolic character of the book's visions lent itself to reinterpretation in other analogous historical situations, whenever severe crises and tribulations generated fervent hopes and expectations of a coming end of the world.

The significance and historical influence of the book derive from its powerful apocalyptic character: history is conceived on a wide canvas as the succession of preordained world empires, their turning against God, the triumph of wickedness and idolatry, the ultimate punishment and destruction of the evildoers, and the establishment, in power and glory, of the kingdom of God and his saints. The book consequently became a favourite with many mystics and millenarian enthusiasts, who looked forward to a blessed time to come. Some of the visionary motifs of the book, such as the 'son of man' and the 'Ancient of Days' (both in chapter 7) played a considerable role in subsequent eschatology (doctrines of death, judgement, heaven and hell) including that of the early Church; Jesus refers to himself, in the New Testament, as the 'Son of Man' rather than as the Messiah; and in the mysticism of the Jewish Merkabah visionaries (see CABALA).

The notion of four successive world empires and the cryptic references to the deliverance of the saints after 'a time, two times, and half a time' (chapter 12) and other symbolic details and numbers have frequently stimulated the imagination of millenarian enthusiasts and provided proof-texts for apocalyptic speculations. Throughout the Middle Ages Jewish mystical interpreters of the Bible computed the date of the coming of the Messiah on the basis of the Book of Daniel. Among Christians in the Middle Ages, the Book of Daniel combined with the Book of Revelation and its prophecies of a rule of the saints for one thousand years (the 'millennium') to nourish millenarian speculations.

The Book of Daniel contains certain innovations in angelology, such as the idea that each nation has its guardian angel, Michael being the guardian of Israel (12.1 – see also ANGELS). It also provides the first biblical reference to a belief in a resurrection and afterlife (12.2).

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

The Great Vision

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me; my radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words; and . . . I fell on my face in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

Daniel, chapter 10

Dante's vision encompassed the whole range of human life and destiny; a vision which is as relevant today when man is steadily conquering space as it was in the day of the medieval astronomer

DANTE

DANTE ALIGHIERI'S *Divine Comedy*, as his *Commedia* is generally known, is one of the rare and great works of literature that give a comprehensive vision of the place of man in the universe. It sets in a tremendous panorama the past, present and future; combines poetry and prophecy; and is profoundly concerned with the problems and prospects of human life and destiny. Since it was written, in the early years of the 14th century, this poem in three parts, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, has made a constant impression, not only in the Florentine poet's own land but on readers in any country – or language. There are beauties of phrase and expression that essentially belong to the Italian original but nothing is lost in translation of the universal meaning inherent in the subject.

The full significance appears when the poem is considered as a whole. To confine attention to the first part, the *Inferno*, which has been a popular tendency, is to miss the point. It is a misconception to think of Dante as a grim sadist who rejoiced in describing the tortures he wished his personal enemies to suffer in hell. The word 'Comedy' of the title has of course no implication of humour but suggests rather a series of events that may lead to a happy conclusion. With Dante one ascends by many stages from the depths to the region of supreme bliss.

The inferno was not merely the place of punishment for those who had done wrong in life. Here it is first necessary to consider the parallel that is maintained throughout between the material inventions of the story and the spiritual condition for which they stand. Hell in the material sense is imagined as an inverted cone extending into the bowels of the earth, in which persons known and named, as well as an anonymous multitude, undergo a variety of torments according to the nature of their wrong doing. But all this has an allegorical meaning as an analysis of the individual or also, if one so chooses to interpret it, the kind of society, that in the exercise of free will has elected to be governed by evil motives and desires and suffers in consequence an inevitable corruption.

The implacable inscription over the gate of hell – 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here' – refers to the impenitent, thus self-condemned. But purgatory for those who had not obstinately and irrevocably persisted in self-ruinous courses represented the dawn of hope and the possibility of redemption. This was to be achieved by active effort to throw off the burden of sin and guilt. Purgatory was not simply an annex of hell, a place of penalty for minor offenders or a kind of waiting-room before admittance into heaven. It is imagined as a vast mountain in the southern hemisphere, to climb which was an expiatory labour.

Virgil, whom Dante so greatly admired and whom he represents as his guide, made the often-quoted remark in the *Aeneid* on the easiness of the descent to Avernus; possibly less often remembered is the observation that followed on the toil of regaining the upper air. Dante likewise, emphasizes the labour involved in getting rid of every taint of error by the ascent of the seven encircling cornices of the mountain, each marking a stage of purification. There was still a progression to be made after the Earthly Paradise was reached at the summit. Above the region and condition of primal purity which it represented, like the Garden of Eden before the fall, there were the heavens to be ascended. The soul was launched radiantly into space and beyond it to its final union with the Divine Will.

The Dual Image of Beatrice

Dante himself was the pilgrim of this visionary journey. It occupied a week at Easter in the year 1300, he being then 35, 'midway on life's road'. It contains much that related to his own experience. Lost in a dark wood (having strayed, this implies, from the strait and narrow path), distracted by wild beasts (symbolic of temptations), he is relieved and delighted to find he has the shade of the great Latin poet, Virgil, to

act as his guide. The appearance of a pagan writer in a context of essentially Christian character may seem surprising. But apart from the respect in which Virgil was held in medieval Italy as supposedly foretelling the coming of Christ and as being a kind of benevolent magician, he had the admiration of Dante as the genius of Rome's imperial order. The city founded by Aeneas, the 'pious' instrument of divine powers, which grew into an all-powerful and all-embracing empire, was the more admirable to Dante in contrast with the disorders and strife of cities and parties in his own time. He favoured the so-called Holy Roman Empire as a continuance of the ancient Roman Empire and his support for the 'new Caesar', Henry of Luxembourg, in his designs on the city of Florence, perpetuated the decree of exile against Dante for his part in the Florentine contentions of Guelf and Ghibelline.

Virgil in the *Aeneid* had also described a visit to the underworld. His Hades provided various suggestions of setting and nomenclature for the *Inferno*. Dante (the author) allows Virgil to be for a while a companion to Dante (the character in the poem) on his journey. He is a guide through the depths of the inferno and an escort up the Mountain of Purgatory but takes his leave as they approach the Earthly Paradise. That Virgil should have accompanied him is explained in the poem as at the request of Beatrice, a haunting presence in Dante's mind and art.

She was Beatrice Portinari, the daughter of a wealthy Florentine. Dante first met her when both were children and Beatrice a year younger than he. Her beauty of feature and character inspired in him an adoration that the years had strengthened. Though they went their separate ways, Beatrice becoming the wife of Simone dei Bardi and Dante taken up with poetry, soldiering and diplomacy, her image remained with him. She died at the age of 24 but for Dante lived on, as he describes in the sonnet-sequence of 'The New Life' (*La Vita Nuova*), the mystically passionate work that long preceded the *Commedia*. He was then already married to Gemma Donati by whom he had several children. In time the image of the Florentine girl he had first loved gained a strange duality or multiplicity; she was at once human and a personification of qualities in the abstract – of love, conscience, maternal tenderness, goodness, religious feeling; even, in an ultimate abstraction, of Christian beatitude. It is thus that she appears in the *Divine Comedy*. Dante creates a complexity of allegorical subtleties, though one may read into them the trace of her actual impact on his life and character. The thought of Beatrice seems in fact to have weaned him from moral lapses, he admits, and given him the hope of salvation.

Thus at the beginning of the *Inferno*, Virgil explains that it is at Beatrice's plea that he has come to rescue Dante from the 'dark wood' of his own moral confusion. Allegorically, she might be thought of as Christian piety enlisting in the person of Virgil the aid of philosophy and reason. But in the *Purgatorio* there is a direct confrontation in which in a very human fashion Beatrice sharply reproaches Dante for his sins. It may be noted that the Pre-Raphaelite image of Beatrice, conveyed by the paintings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti as that of mournful and languorous suffering, departs considerably from the plain-speaking and vital creature whom Dante portrays. It is she and not Virgil the excellent pagan, who must lead him upwards in the *Paradiso* through the heavens, though there comes a point when, having delivered her Christian admonitions and heard his contrition, she at last takes her departure. The soul of Dante goes on to the supreme revelation of the light eternal and divine.

The Ten Circles of Hell

In working out his design, Dante makes use of the classifications by number in which the Middle Ages found a mystical virtue. But in his sense of structure and mathematical proportion he showed also a bent of the Florentine genius that had other expression in painting and sculpture. There were ten main divisions of hell, as also ten heavens. Even the terrifying landscape of hell had its order. Dante clearly thought of the earth as a globe, oriented by Jerusalem. At surface level was the brink of the vast pit and there the ditherers, unable to make up their minds between good and evil, aimlessly ran after banners whirling to and fro.

Across the river Acheron and below was the dizzy descent of circle after circle. Five of them formed the outworks of the infernal city of Dis. The first was the Limbo where dwelt the Unbaptized and Virtuous pagans whose unconscious fault it was to be ignorant of Christianity and to be confined by the material or erroneous nature of their own beliefs. The second was that where the Lustful were driven before a gale that signalized their own tempestuous passions; in the third, the Gluttonous wallowed in the mire; in the fourth and fifth the Hoarders, the Spendthrifts and the Wrathful carried on their futile battles. A nether hell was contained within city walls, with a growing terror of descent into the sixth circle of the Heretics and the seventh of Violence where tyrants boiled in a river of blood, profligates were pursued and torn by hounds, suicides turned into withered trees pecked by harpies and sodomites scorched in a sterile desert under a constant rain of fire. Lower still in the eighth and ninth circles the many variations of Fraud and Malice were contained in the pits of Malbolge; the word means 'evil pouches' and Dante describes the area as an inverted hollow cone intersected with ten concentric valleys. The tenth circle was the frozen lake of Cocytus where icy figures

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Dante Alighieri: in the *Divine Comedy* the reader ascends with him 'from the depths (of hell) to the region of supreme bliss'. In this allegorical portrait, of the Florentine School, the poet is shown gazing across a river, probably Acheron, to the Mountain of Purgatory

symbolized the final extinction of all feeling in wrongdoers and Lucifer was a frosty monster, different in every way from the active Satan, defiantly heroic in nonconformity, of Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

A hidden path took Dante and Virgil from this underground lair at earth's centre to the Antipodes and the healthier atmosphere of the Mountain of Purgatory. The inferno was an unchanging spectacle, purgatory an active process of improvement. The inferno recalled the specific offences of sinners, purgatory was the place of strengthening and purifying, for getting rid of sin. After the quarantine of ante-purgatory (for the excommunicated and the belatedly repentant) and the passage all must take through Peter's Gate, there followed the arduous but salutary regime nicely adapted to the nature of each of the 'Seven Deadly Sins'; in appropriate and modern fashion the taint of gluttony is removed by starvation. Passing through a final wall of flame the pilgrim reached at last the flowery meads and peaceful pine-woods of the Earthly Paradise. There is a beauty that recalls the paintings of Botticelli in the verses describing the setting of a religious pageantry in which Dante again met and was reconciled with Beatrice. His imagination rises grandly to the supreme test of describing the passage through the heavens; his encounters with the souls of many famous persons; his ascent to the highest of the revolving spheres, the *Primum Mobile* that gives motion to the rest; and thence to the Empyrean where in a flash of intuitive vision Dante perceives the human will in the encirclement of the Divine Will.

Dante's thought and purpose in the *Divine Comedy* have several aspects. He gave a version of the Christian story, in the general outline of which orthodox Catholicism could find nothing to object to. In another aspect it was his personal confession as one who had erred but at last found redemption. Then again, it was in part a criticism of his times, his countrymen and native city: a rebuke and exhortation. In the struggle between Pope and Emperor that gave their partisans the names respectively of Guelf and Ghibelline he was on the imperial or Ghibelline side; in the split of the rival party into two, the Black Guelfs and White Guelfs, however, he sympathized with the latter and was exiled when they were. The papal supporter of the Black Guelfs, Boniface VIII, is pilloried in the *Divine Comedy* for many misdeeds including simony (the buying or selling of ecclesiastical preferments), avarice, and greed for temporal power.

The Italy of Dante's time is vivid in the poem and so also are the many incidental stories like the sad tale of Paolo and Francesa and the horrifying confession of Count Ugolino. A question that remains is how far the poem has a significance for the present time, apart from its manifest splendour as a work of art and the interest of its historical associations. The progress of science in modern times has strengthened a materialistic view of the universe far removed from Dante's scheme of things. The present mapping out and proposed 'conquest' of space might seem to make the heavens he wrote of no more than a naive reflection of medieval astronomy. Yet is there any reason why his conception of a spiritual dimension is less valid now than at any other time? In the last canto of the *Paradiso* he leaves no artificial picture of heaven but the feeling of a wonder remaining, the transcendent source of the good which is the soul's objective. The intense feeling, he says (of the glory intuitively perceived for a moment) stayed with him on his return to his earthly life. Without detailed memory of his greatest experience Dante retained the comfort of the love 'that moves the sun and all the stars'. His great 'allegory of the soul' can be fortifying amid the confused welter of today's thought.

WILLIAM GAUNT

FURTHER READING: Among translations which can be recommended are those by L. Binyon, *Inferno* (1933), *Purgatory* (1938) and *Paradise* (1943), published by St. Martin's Press; C. H. Sisson, *The Divine Comedy* (Regnery Gateway, 1981); D. L. Sayers, *Hell, Purgatory* (Penguin, London, 1962, 2 vols).

In the *Inferno*, the first part of the *Divine Comedy*, Dante describes his journey through the ten circles of hell with the Latin poet Virgil as his guide: detail from Signorelli's *Last Judgement* in Orvieto Cathedral, showing the damned tormented by the winged, horned demons of hell

Scala

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 3

Dave – Extr

ST. JAMES HALL,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23d, 1879.

FAREWELL TOUR!

AFTER SIX YEARS ABSENCE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES,

IRA E. DAVENPORT

Survivor of the World Renowned

DAVENPORT BROTHERS

—AND—

PROF. J. F. DAY

Previous to their departure to Mexico and South America.

In Unique and Startling Wonders!

Mysterious displays, and unaccountable Mysteries, which have been given in the presence of the Crowned Heads and Nobility of Europe, and before large and intelligent assemblages throughout the civilized World. Their profoundly

MYSTERIOUS POWERS

Have astonished the wisest of all countries, and the most learned have been forced by overwhelming evidence to acknowledge them as inexplicable. *No complicated or glittering apparatus for deception used.*

John Webb

DAVENPORTS

IRA ERASTUS DAVENPORT (1839–1911) and his younger brother, William Henry Harrison Davenport (1841–1877), were two of the most spectacular mediums of the 19th century. Their stage act, with its demonstration of apparently supernatural powers, caused intense excitement and controversy. They first came to public notice while they were still small boys, in the wake of the curious events at the farm of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York. Previous occupants of the farmhouse had been troubled by mysterious knocks in the night. In 1848 one of the Fox children, Kate, allegedly challenged the 'spirit' responsible for the knocks to rap as many times as she snapped her fingers. This the spirit did, and eventually a code of raps was established.

The Fox rappings aroused great interest, some of which spread to the Davenport brothers, in nearby Buffalo, who were able to produce sounds from musical instruments which were hung near them in a darkened room, while they were tied up with heavy ropes. In their later, more elaborate display the brothers were tied hand and foot at opposite ends of a giant box, with doors. When the doors were shut, bells were heard to ring, musical instruments inside the box were played and 'spirit hands' appeared at an opening in one of the doors.

Whether the Davenports had any genuine mediumistic powers, or whether they were nothing more than brilliant showmen and illusionists, was hotly debated. Many people believed in them, and some still do, but stage conjurors of the time, including J. N. Maskelyne and Houdini, the great escape artist who became a violent opponent of Spiritualism, were convinced that they could duplicate the Davenports' effects. In a letter which he wrote to Houdini in 1909, Ira Davenport sat on the fence: 'We never in public affirmed our belief in spiritualism, that we regarded as no business of the public, nor did we offer our entertainments as the results of sleight of hand, nor on the other hand as spiritualism, we let our friends and foes settle that as best they could between themselves.' The friends and foes never did settle it, and have not yet.

Davy Jones
Sailor's name for the evil spirit of the sea, first recorded in the 18th century; his locker is the bottom of the sea, and to go there is to be drowned or buried at sea; a not very probable theory derives Davy from 'duppy', a West Indian spirit, and Jones from Jonah, because of his adventure with the whale.

Barnaby's Picture Library

A grave left open over Sunday 'yawns for another corpse' and it is very unlucky to begin any new enterprise on a Friday. European superstitions about days mingle Christian and pagan traditions, and magicians time their operations for certain hours of the day to capture the influence of the appropriate planet

DAYS AND HOURS

THAT FRIDAYS ARE UNLUCKY is a belief still widely held, and if a Friday falls on the 13th of a month it is doubly ill-omened because of the unluckiness of 13 (see THIRTEEN). The worst day of the year for a wedding is Friday 13 May, as May has been generally considered an ominous month for marriage since Roman times.

The term 'black Friday' is now commonly used for any Friday on which things go wrong but originally referred to 10 May 1886, when there was a severe financial panic in London, and earlier to the Friday of 6 December 1745, when London heard the news that the Young Pretender and his army had reached Derby in their invasion of England. According to legend, an earlier black Friday still was the one on which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.

You should not start a new job, call in a doctor, move house, turn the mattress on a bed, begin a sea voyage or, if you are a criminal, come up for sentencing on a Friday. In Ireland, however, it is a good day to die on, provided you are buried on the Saturday and prayed for on the Sunday.

Friday is unlucky because it is the day on which Christ was crucified, and a day of fasting, fish-eating and general gloom. In the earlier pagan tradition, however, Friday was the day of the love goddess, a happier association which still survives in the most common version of a well-known rhyme:

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for a living,
But the child that is born on the Sabbath Day
Is blithe and bonny, good and gay.

There are many different versions of this rhyme (none of them very old) and in some it is Friday's child who is full of woe, which suits the Christian tradition of Friday rather than the pagan one. Two of the other lines fit well enough with the symbolism of the planets for which the days are named. Monday's child is good to look at because of the beauty of the moon, and the lot of Saturday's child suits the toilsome and careworn character of Saturn.

The Ashanti and some other peoples of West Africa gave a child a special name according to the day of the week on which he was born. The habit was exported, with slavery, to the Caribbean and the American South, where Negroes had such names as Quashee (Sunday), Cudjo (Monday) and Cuffee (Friday).

SUN	☉	SUNDAY	Gaining money or support; causing friendship and harmony; finding buried treasure.
MOON	☽	MONDAY	Operations of love; seeing visions; necromancy; invisibility; operations connected with water, travel.
MARS	♂	TUESDAY	Operations of death, destruction, hatred and discord; summoning the spirits of the dead.
MERCURY	☿	WEDNESDAY	Obtaining knowledge or discovering the future; theft and deceit, commerce, merchandise.
JUPITER	♃	THURSDAY	Gaining money, status or friendship; becoming invisible; achieving good health.
VENUS	♀	FRIDAY	Ceremonies of love, lust, pleasure and friendship.
SATURN	♄	SATURDAY	Ceremonies of death, destruction or injury; summoning souls from hell; obtaining knowledge.

Magicians have tried to bring the influence of a planet to bear on an operation by performing it on that planet's day and hour. Symbols of the spirits Bethor, Och and Hagith which according to the *Arbatel of Magic* govern Jupiter, the Sun and Venus respectively

Sunday's Child

The week of seven days was adopted in Rome somewhere about 400 AD, and spread into Europe, but it had been a recognized period of time long before that in the east. It still successfully resists the irritation of tidy-minded calendar reformers, who dislike it because the year does not consist of an exact number of weeks. It was probably chosen to give one day to each of the seven planets known in antiquity.

Our names for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday come from the Germanic deities Tiw, Woden, Thor, and the love goddess Freyja or Frigg.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the days round which the greatest number of superstitions have clustered. Friday is generally the unluckiest day of the week and Sunday the luckiest. The child born on Sunday will be not only 'blithe and bonny, good and gay' but also strong, handsome and safe from the machinations of evil spirits. In Scandinavia he will have the power of seeing spirits.

But although Sunday is the best day to be born on, it is not a good day for doing anything else, except going to church and thinking about the things of God. Nails should never be pared on Sundays or Fridays, nor should you have your hair cut on those days (or on any days except Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays). It is very unlucky, and hence very rare, to bury anyone on a Sunday. It is also extremely dangerous to leave a grave open over Sunday. 'It yawns for another corpse', as Christina Hole says in her *Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, 'and a second death in the parish will follow shortly.' If a grave has been dug and must be left unfilled over Sunday, it should be covered over with planks or turf.

The Sabbath For Man

Sunday has this character in Christian societies, of course, because it is the sabbath, the day which is peculiarly sacred to God. In ancient Babylonia the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first and twenty-eighth days of the month were uncanny days, on which the king was not allowed to perform certain actions, including offering sacrifice, pronouncing judgement, changing his clothes, and eating roast meat. Whether this is the origin of the Jewish sabbath is a matter which is still disputed.

The Jewish sabbath (from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday) was and is a positively blessed day, both holiday and holy day. It commemorates the last day of creation, on which God rested from his labours: 'and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it . . .' (Genesis, chapter 2). The Fourth Commandment instructs the faithful to keep the sabbath day holy and to do no work on it (Exodus, chapter 20).

The prohibition of work on the sabbath was faithfully observed by many generations of Jews and Christians. It was considered so important that when the army of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see ANTICHRIST) attacked the Jews on the sabbath, the Jews refused to fight and were slaughtered unresisting, after which it was decided that in war strict observance of the sabbath must be suspended. Jesus and his disciples evidently took observance of the sabbath for granted. Irritated by what he regarded as tiresome legalistic restrictions on what was allowable on the sabbath, Jesus did make his famous remark that 'the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath' (Mark, chapter 2) but the same comment was also made by Jewish rabbis.

The Christians transferred their sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, the day on which Christ rose from the dead, and the day on which they met for worship. In the 4th century Gregory of Nyssa said that Saturday was the memorial of God's creation of the world and Sunday the memorial of the Resurrection, but by this time Christian observance of Saturday was in decline. In the year 321 Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor, who had earlier been a worshipper of 'the unconquered sun', ruled that the first day of the week, 'the venerable day of the sun', should be a day of rest. The sun's old association with the first day is responsible for the fact that the Lord's Day of Christianity bears the pagan name of Sunday.

Vampires on Saturday

Saturday is sometimes lucky and sometimes not, perhaps reflecting a mixture of respect for the Old Testament sabbath with hostility to Jews and with the astrological tradition of Saturn's malevolence. Friday night's dreams will come true if told on a Saturday. Traditionally, a couple who marry on Saturday will have no luck at all, but Saturday is now the most popular day for weddings because it is the most convenient. People born on a Saturday are supposed to be able to see ghosts. Down to the 19th century in Greece a vampire was believed to rest in its grave only on Saturdays, so this was the day for digging up the body and burning it.

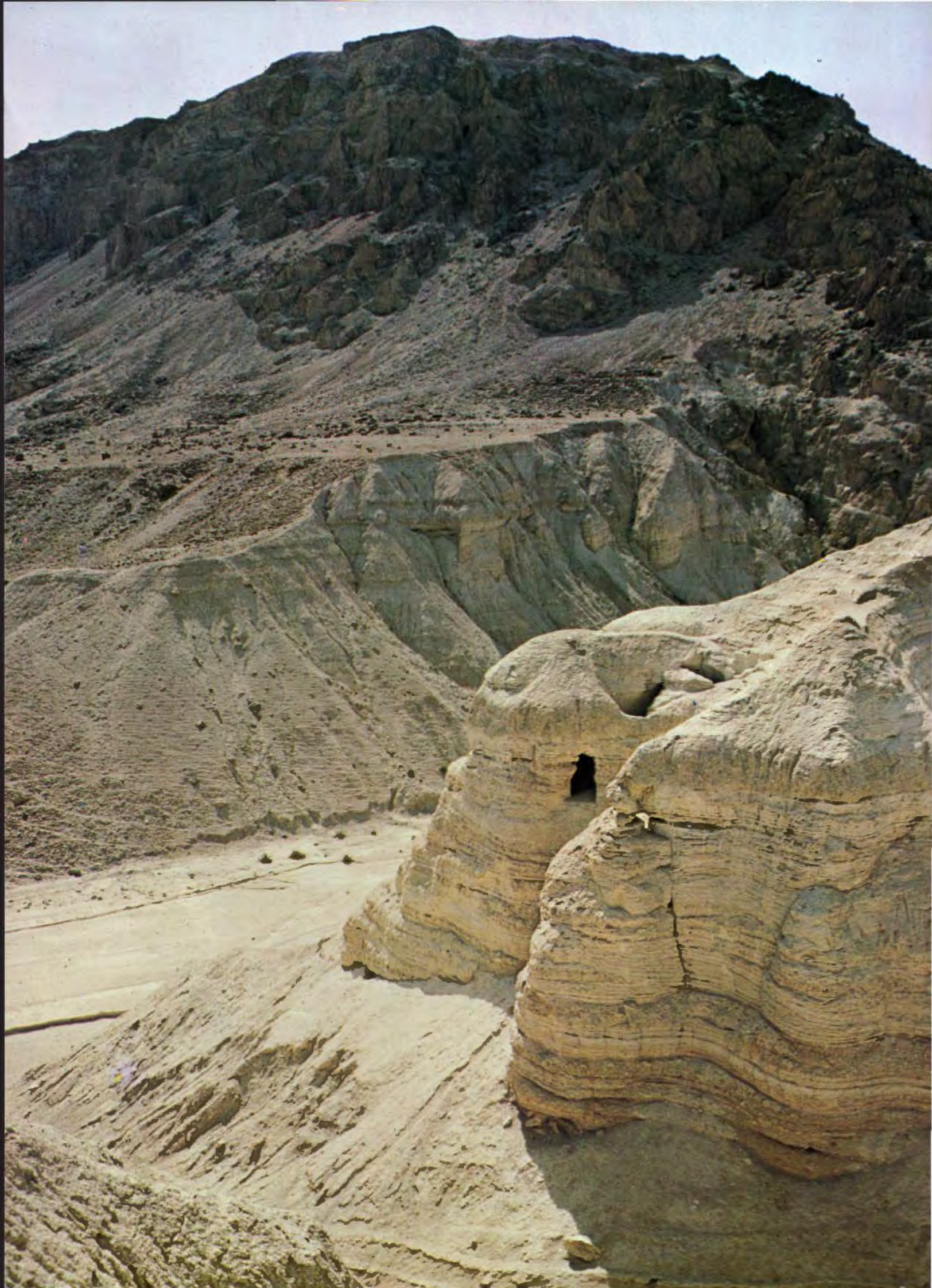
The other days are less important, though in northern England it used to be thought highly unfortunate to meet someone with flat feet on a Monday, perhaps because the flat foot denies the crescent arch that recalls the moon.

Some days, like Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, are especially lucky to be born on but a singularly unlucky day is Childermas, or the feast of the Holy Innocents (28 December), which commemorates Herod's indiscriminate slaughter of children in the hope of eliminating the infant Jesus. In the 15th century Edward IV's coronation was postponed when it was realized that the Sunday which had been chosen for it happened to be Childermas.

Days and Hours in Magic

Astrological considerations have always been important in European magic, and magicians have tried to bring the influence of a planet to bear on an operation by performing it in that planet's day and hour. A list of the operations suitable to each planet is provided by two of the magical textbooks, the *Key of Solomon* and *True Black Magic*. (See diagram opposite.)

Each planet rules the first hour after sunrise on its own day. The succeeding hours are ruled by the other planets in the order Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. At sunset this progression is interrupted and the first hour after sunset is ruled by the planet fifth in order from the planet which rules the day. The effect is that each planet rules the first and eighth hours after sunrise and the third and tenth hours after sunset on its own day.



The scrolls found in Palestine since 1947 include manuscripts of books of the Old Testament 1000 years older than any previously known, and have illuminated the background of the New Testament. Some have recognized Jesus in the 'Teacher of Righteousness' of the Qumran community

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

COLLECTIONS OF MANUSCRIPT material found at various sites west of the Dead Sea in Palestine in 1947 and the following years are popularly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The most important of these sites are the regions near Qumran, Murabba 'at and Engedi. From caves in the last two areas documents were recovered relating to the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans (132–135 AD). But the most interesting of the documents are those of a rather earlier date, found in 11 caves in the Qumran district, a few miles south of Jericho.

In one of these 11 caves an Arab goatherd, Muhammad adh-Dhib, lighted by chance in 1947 on the first lot of 'Dead Sea Scrolls' to be publicized, amounting to seven in all. Most of these were in fairly good condition, having been wrapped in linen and placed in earthenware jars for safe keeping. The vast majority of the manuscripts found in the other Qumran caves, however, whether by Bedouin or by trained archeologists, were in a sadly fragmentary condition. Many of the pieces were no larger than postage stamps. Only by an effort of the imagination, envisaging them in their original state, could these be called 'Scrolls'. The task of piecing them together so as to reconstruct as far as possible the original text lasted for several painstaking years.

Most of the documents are written in Hebrew, some in Aramaic (another Semitic language), a few in Greek. The fragments represent over 500 books which apparently belonged to the library of a Jewish religious community. About 100 of these are copies of books of the Hebrew Bible; several Old Testament books are represented several times over, and all of them have been identified except that no trace has been found of the book of Esther. Others are commentaries on Old Testament books, showing how these were understood in the community which owned them. Others again give valuable information about the organization of the community, including one in particular which was found in Cave 1 in 1947, variously called the 'Rule of the Community' or the 'Manual of Discipline'.

Yet others are liturgical documents which throw light on the community's order of worship. One thing that emerges clearly from these liturgical texts is that the community regulated its religious life by a different calendar from that which was officially followed in the Jerusalem Temple and which is still the calendar used by orthodox Jews for religious purposes. The Qumran calendar, of which we had previous knowledge from a work entitled the *Book of Jubilees* (c100 BC), ignored the phases of the moon completely and aimed at being entirely solar. It consisted of 364 days, so that any given day of a particular month must have fallen on the same day of the week year by year. This calendar must have become progressively out of step with the real solar year of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days, but we have no idea what provision, if any, was made to correct the error. The use of a different calendar was one factor preventing the community from participating in the Temple festivals in Jerusalem, but not the only one.

The first scrolls were discovered purely by chance in 1947 by an Arab goatherd in hill caves near the Dead Sea. Many of them evidently belonged to the library of a Jewish religious community

Paleography, the study of ancient handwriting, points to a date in the last two centuries BC and the 1st century AD for the Qumran manuscripts; the same period was indicated when some of the linen in which the Scrolls from Cave 1 were wrapped was submitted to the radio-carbon test.

Dated by Coins

Not far from the caves where the manuscripts were found were some ancient ruins, locally known as Khirbet Qumran, which had never been excavated. Some slight attention had been paid in 1873 to an ancient cemetery lying between the ruins and the Dead Sea, but no firm conclusions were reached regarding its date or use. The discovery of the manuscripts, however, aroused interest in the ruins and the cemetery, and as a result of excavations carried out from 1951 to 1956 a close correlation between these and the manuscripts was established. At the beginning of the excavations, towards the end of 1951, there was found in the floor of an excavated room a jar of a type identical with those in which the Cave 1 manuscripts had been placed, and along with it was a coin bearing a date which, transposed into our system of dating, corresponds to 10 AD. In the course of excavation hundreds of other coins were found and these, together with other material evidence, make it plain that the buildings were occupied in the period during which most of the manuscripts were copied – that is to say, in the two centuries from about 130 BC to 70 AD, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The buildings were designed to be the headquarters of a community numbering a few hundred men. They included rooms for public meetings, a refectory, a writing-room, areas for the grinding and baking of flour and for the manufacture of pottery, but no sleeping quarters: the members evidently slept in tents or in caves. The cemetery contained over 1000 burials. The whole building complex had a plentiful water supply, carried in channels from cisterns cut in the hills above to catch the rain and discharged into reservoirs dug at convenient points in and around the buildings.

There were two main phases of occupation of the buildings, separated by an interval of about 30 years during which they lay derelict. Occupation was resumed about 4 BC; it may be significant that this was the year of the death of Herod the Great. Considerable damage was done to the buildings by an earthquake which can be dated, on independent evidence, as having occurred in 31 BC. The second period of occupation was brought to an end violently; the buildings were burned after some fighting, and this destruction cannot well be divorced from the war which was raging at the time between the Jews and the Romans.

In short, the evidence of the manuscripts and the evidence of the buildings fit together so well that we can safely combine the evidence of both to reconstruct the history of the community.

The Teacher of Righteousness

The Qumran community was organized in the second half of the 2nd century BC out of a group of pious Jews – *hasidim*, as they were called – who could not endure life under the existing religious establishment in Judaea.

When, in 168 BC and the following years, the Gentile king Antiochus Epiphanes (175–163 BC) tried to impose Hellenistic paganism on Judaea, steadfast resistance was offered to him by two groups – on the one hand, Judas Maccabaeus with his family and followers; on the other, many of the hasidim who normally took little active part in public affairs, being content if they had freedom to worship God and lead their lives according to the ancient prescriptions of the Jewish law. Because this freedom was threatened, they made common cause with Judas and his militant associates, but when the guerilla genius of the latter led to the restoration of religious freedom, the temporary alliance began to break up. Judas and his brothers (the family of the Hasmoneans) continued to fight, hoping to gain political freedom as well as religious freedom, and this struggle too was crowned with success in 142 BC. The hasidim were not concerned to promote the political ambitions of the Hasmoneans, but they disapproved most strongly of the Hasmoneans' assumption of the high priesthood in Jerusalem. The group of hasidim from which the Qumran community developed maintained that the only legitimate high priests were the sons of Zadok, who had held the sacred office from Solomon's time until the rise of Antiochus, eight centuries all told. Each member of the Hasmonean dynasty of priest-kings was, in the eyes of the community, a 'Wicked Priest'; one member of the dynasty receives this designation in a special degree because he persecuted the community and its organizer, the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.

This 'Teacher of Righteousness', who is never mentioned by his personal name, led his followers down to the wilderness of Judaea in accordance with the command of Isaiah, chapter 40: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.' He interpreted the ancient prophecies in such a way as to show his followers clearly what their function was in the closing days of the 'present evil age', on the eve of the arrival of the eternal age of perfect righteousness. They were the faithful remnant of Israel, a miniature people of God encamped in the wilderness, awaiting the divine signal to take

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The Dead Sea Scrolls have led to a greater understanding of both Judaism and the origins of Christianity. Some of them are copies of Old Testament books, others throw light on the beliefs and organization of the community that produced them *Above left* The Second Isaiah scroll before it was unrolled and examined *Centre* The task of identifying and translating the scrolls has taken several painstaking years. Much of this work has been done by scholars *(below left)* at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem *Right* First sheet of one of the scrolls, showing the damaged and fragile state of many of them, and also the fine penmanship of the scribe

action to bring in his kingdom. It was impossible for them to share in the Temple services while they were polluted by an illegitimate high priesthood, but they believed that their ascetic life, their devotion to the study and practice of the law of God, and their endurance of persecution at the hands of the 'Wicked Priest' and other oppressors, would be sacrifices acceptable in the sight of heaven, and would indeed provide a store of additional merit procuring atonement for the defiled land of Israel.

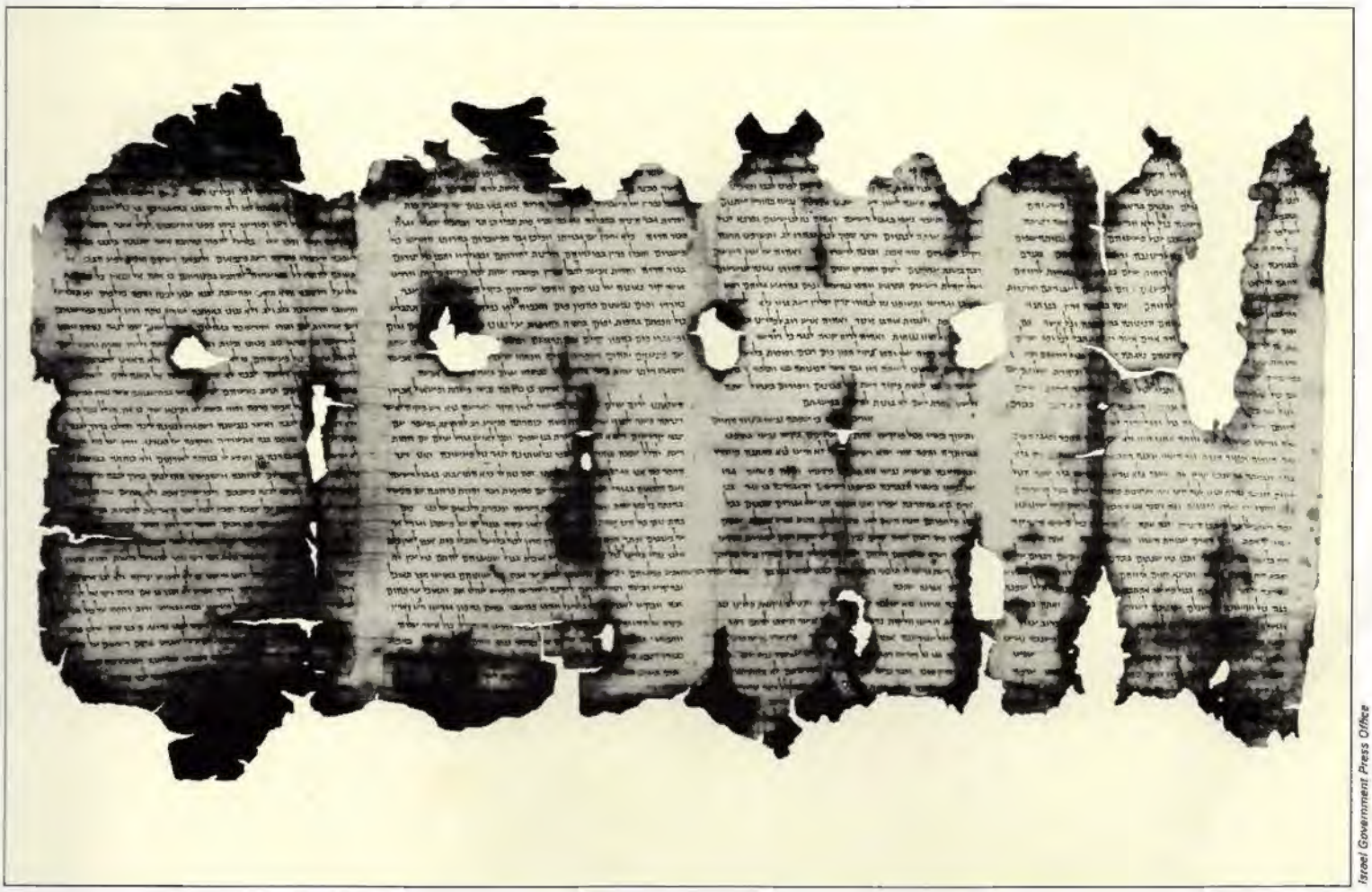
At first, perhaps, they expected the new age to dawn during the lifetime of the Teacher of Righteousness, but his death (about 100 BC, perhaps) brought no diminution of their hope. When, in the middle of the 1st century BC, the Hasmonean power was brought down by the Roman occupation of Judaea, the community saw in this the just retribution of God on an impious dynasty. And if the Romans proved even more oppressive in their turn, they too would suffer retribution, and the members of the community would be the agents of divine judgement against them when the time came to take arms against the ungodly and extirpate them from the earth. The 'War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness' (to quote the title of one Scroll) would establish everlasting righteousness. It was perhaps with this hope that the community supported the revolt against Rome in 66 AD, only to be cut to pieces and dispersed.

Volunteers for Holiness

What can we say about the significance of this community of 'volunteers for holiness' (as they called themselves), thus unexpectedly brought to light by the discovery of the Scrolls?

First, the information which we have received about them provides us with a new chapter in the history of religion, and that is something of great value in itself. More particularly, it provides us with a new chapter in the history of Jewish religion. Judaism before 70 AD was much more diversified than it became after that year, and we now know more about one of the strains making up this diversity. In this community we can see more certain traces of Zoroastrian influence in Judaism than are found elsewhere in it, although these elements are strictly subordinated to Hebrew monotheism.

A further question in this regard concerns the possible identification of the Qumran community with some Jewish party known to us from other sources. The



Israel Government Press Office

weightiest arguments for such an identification are those which link the community with the Essenes, a mystical sect who believed in non-resistance and whose quietist movement was a feature of the Jewish religious scene during the 200 years preceding 70 AD.

The organization of the Essenes, as described in particular by the Jewish writer Josephus, bears a close resemblance to what we gather of the organization of the Qumran community, as also does the graded process of initiation. There are differences in detail, but some change was bound to take place in the course of two centuries. It might be wisest to think of the Qumran community as one of several Essene groups located in various parts of Palestine and the neighbouring territory. We are assured by archeologists, however, that the headquarters of the Essenes, mentioned by the Roman writer Pliny the Elder (died 79 AD) as being west of the Dead Sea, cannot be identified with any installation known to them other than Khirbet Qumran. The Essenes are described as pacifists, whereas the men of Qumran looked forward to war against the Gentiles. But probably the Essenes were not absolute pacifists; they may have been holding their fire for the final Armageddon.

Illuminating Texts

As for the bearing of the Scrolls on the Bible, the interest which attended their first discovery arose from the fact that here were manuscripts of the Old Testament books in Hebrew reliably dated 1000 years earlier than the oldest datable manuscripts of Hebrew Scripture previously known to be extant. The earlier textual history of the Hebrew Bible has thus been enriched by a wealth of new evidence, although the ordinary reader of the English Old Testament can be assured that no significant changes in the essential message of the books are involved.

It has become clear, however, that the bearing of the Scrolls on the New Testament and the origins of Christianity is even more important. Estimates of their relevance in this respect have varied greatly, from those who find no connection at all to the minority that would go so far as to recognize Jesus himself in the Teacher of Righteousness. We may forget such extreme positions and welcome in the Scrolls an abundance of new background material against which the New Testament can be read with greater understanding. It is difficult to think of any part of the New Testament which is not illuminated in some way by this discovery.

Whereas the New Testament is dominated by the proclamation that in Jesus the Kingdom of God or age of the Messiah has arrived, the Scrolls (even the latest of them) still look forward to its coming, although it is regarded as imminent. Its advent, in the community's expectation, would be marked by the appearance of three figures foretold in Old Testament prophecy – a prophet (a second Moses), an anointed priest (a second Aaron) and an anointed king (a second David, a great military leader). While the early Christians regarded Jesus as the promised Messiah (or 'Anointed One'), the Teacher of Righteousness does not appear to have been a messianic personage either in his own eyes or in those of his followers, but rather a preparer of the way for the messianic age. His role is thus more comparable to that of John the Baptist in the New Testament narrative; and while identity is out of the question, the life and activity of John the Baptist offer one of the most promising areas of common ground between the Scrolls and the New Testament. Another such area may be found in Paul's sojourn in Damascus, a place which figures in one of the most important texts (the 'Zadokite Work') as an outpost of the community.

While the Qumran community's ideal of holiness involved insulation from sinners, the ideal of Jesus and his disciples involved association with them. The rapid spread of Christianity through the Mediterranean world between 30–70 AD meant that it could not be suppressed by the extermination of any one centre of its life, as the Qumran community came to an end with the destruction of its headquarters.

F. F. BRUCE

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The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

DEATH

Behind innumerable myths of the origin of death lies the urge to find an explanation for man's mortality. Similarly, the need to visualize the appearance of this last, unwelcome visitor has led to death being depicted as a fearful beast, a terrible angel or an animated skeleton

IF MAN HAS ALWAYS felt that the mystery of life must be explained, he seems to have had an equally urgent need to account for the humiliating outrage of death. It is almost as if life, despite its trials, was too good to be true and death, despite its apparent peace, too ghastly to be true. In stories from all over the world, death is an intruder: he was not there at the beginning but made an early entrance. Very frequently he arrives as the result of a mistake, of a message wrongly delivered. Sometimes he is a punishment, visited upon mankind for disobedience, ingratitude or sheer stupidity. In many myths, death comes by agreement, as the outcome of a debate between divinities (one of whom may be malevolent) or among the first men and women themselves.

These three types of myth about the origin of death – the error, the penalty and the decision – are found among many different and widely scattered peoples and it is also quite common for the various features to be combined in a single story. There is a constant recurrence of the idea that death was, in the first days, meant to be temporary and that human beings, but for a tragic and original mischance, would have repeatedly renewed their lives like the moon or like lesser beings such as snakes and crabs which (it was thought) took on a new lease of life when they sloughed their skins or shed their shells. This concept of lost renewal occurs in all the three main types of myth.

The Message that Went Astray

The myth of the mistake, of the message that went wrong, is especially common in Africa. In many versions the chameleon is sent by God to tell the first men that they are to have the gift of immortality; but he dawdles on his way and is overtaken by the lizard, the swifter messenger of death. The Gallas of East Africa tell how God sent a bird with the message that men were to renew their lives by changing their skins.

Far left William Blake's painting of the Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse, *Death on a Pale Horse*. 'Behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him . . .' In Greek art Thanatos, or Death, was frequently portrayed armed with a sword *Left* In medieval art Death is represented as a skeleton, sometimes armed with a dart with which he strikes the death-blow: 15th century brass rubbing from the tomb of Richard Notfelde in the Church of St John, Margate *Right* Sometimes the skeletal figure of Death is shown with an hour-glass, symbolizing his association with Time, whose sands run out for each of us in the end; *The Three Ages of Woman and Death* by Hans Baldung Grien

The bird came across a snake feeding on some meat; he was hungry and promised the snake he would tell him 'God's news' if he gave him a share. The serpent finally agreed and the bird told him that men would grow old and die but that all he had to do was cast off his skin to be young again. In his anger, God punished the bird for his treachery and greed by giving it a painful disease which makes it sit on treetops and bleat sorrowfully, whence it is called *holowaka* or 'the sheep of God'.

In a myth of the Hottentots, the moon sent an insect to tell men that they, like herself, 'would die and dying live'. The insect, going slowly on his way, was met by a hare who asked him his business. The hare said he was quicker and was quite willing to take the message. The insect agreed but the hare (whether through malice or stupidity is not clear) garbled the message and told men that, unlike the moon, when they died it was the end of them. The moon was angry with the hare and struck him with a stick, splitting his lip. Some say the hare, in the struggle, scratched the moon's face with his claws, which is why her surface is pitted. Others declare it was not the hare's fault. He delivered the message correctly at first but the people refused to believe him, shouted at him and so confused him that he finally told them the opposite of what he should.

The myth of the wrongly transmitted message is also found in South-East Asia and Oceania but in these regions most of the death-origin stories seem to centre on the motif of skin-changing. In parts of Polynesia it is said that at the beginning all changed their skins when they grew old and renewed their youth. One day, however, a child cried when he could not recognize his 'new' mother; she was so sorry for him that she put her old skin back on again and later died, as did all other people thereafter. There is a curiously similar African story of a couple who sent their children to fetch water in a basket while they were changing their skins. The children tired of their hopeless task and came back to the hut. The father chased them away but they crept stealthily back and saw their mother half in and half out of her new skin. Whereupon she died and brought death into the world.

The Arawaks of Guyana have a story according to which the benevolent creator

Prado Madrid

Left Emma O, in Japanese Buddhist belief, the ferocious ruler of the underground hell and the supreme judge of men. Beside him are two decapitated heads, from which the sinner can conceal nothing; detail from a Japanese scroll painting in the Horniman Museum *Above* The Hindu goddess Kali who, in her more horrific aspect, personifies destruction. She is black, often depicted with three eyes and four arms and bloated with the blood of her victims

Michael Holford

visited the earth to see how the first men were faring but they were ungrateful and attacked him. So he took away their 'immortality' and gave it to the lizards, snakes and beetles.

In the Orinoco basin it is believed that God intended that men should be immortal by changing their skins but that an old woman laughed at such a seemingly ludicrous idea. God was offended and sentenced mankind to mortality.

The Great Punisher

The concept of death as penalty or punishment, often for the foolish action of a woman, is found in many parts of the world, besides the story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis (see FIRST MAN). The aborigines of New South Wales tell how in the beginning God forbade the people to go near a certain hollow tree in which bees had made their nest. The men obeyed but the women wanted the honey. Finally, one of the women hit the tree with an axe and out flew death in the form of a bat which now claims all living things by touching it with its wings.

In Baganda legend, Kintu, the first man, is permitted, after many trials and tests, to marry one of the daughters of heaven. God sends the pair to live on earth and gives them gifts, including a hen. He tells them to hurry lest they meet Death (the bride's brother) and not to come back if they have forgotten anything. The woman forgets the hen's feed and goes back for it, at which God, in his displeasure, grants Death's request to accompany them. Death keeps claiming the children as they are born but is prevented from taking them. Kintu appeals to God who relents and sends another of his sons (called 'Digger') to take Death back to heaven. God ordains silence during the pursuit as Digger chases Death who has hidden in the ground; but the children's cries break the spell and Death is allowed to remain on earth and strike down living things.

The Algonquin tribes of North America say that immortality was granted to men by the Great Hare, himself the source of vital energy. The gift was in a little package which our first ancestor was forbidden to open. But his wife, the Pandora of the New World, could not restrain her curiosity and peeped inside. As she did so immortality flew away, never to return.

There is a very odd African story, told by people living on the shores of Lake Kivu, which shows God trying to save men from death but giving up in exasperation rather than inflicting a punishment. God made man to be immortal and kept a close watch on Death who was always trying to pick quarrels with men and provoke them to a fight which he knew he would win. One day God was away and Death killed an old woman. She was buried but after a few days her grave began to heave as if she were coming back to life. Her daughter-in-law poured boiling water on the grave and beat it with a pestle, saying 'Die: what is dead should stay dead'. The grave was then quiet and the old woman was really dead. God returned and seeing that the old woman was not there asked what had happened. When he was told, he said he would hunt Death down. Death fled in terror and met another old woman to whom he said, 'Hide me and I shall reward you'. She let him hide under her skirt and he entered her body. God caught them up and decided that, since she was so old, it would

The concept of death as penalty or punishment, often for the foolish action of a woman, is found in many parts of the world

be best to kill her and tear out Death and kill him. But Death slipped through his fingers and this time persuaded a young girl to hide him in her belly. God despaired: if human beings kept on thwarting his efforts to save them he might as well give it up as a bad job. So he let Death do as he pleased.

The Upotos of the Congo say that the immortality meant for men was granted to the moon. This happened because in the first days God commanded the inhabitants of the earth and the moon to attend on him. The moon-men came straightaway but the earth-men delayed. In his wrath, God rewarded the moon with ever-renewed life and visited the earth with death. In the Admiralty Islands it is said that the first man, pursued by an evil spirit, was hidden by a tree within itself. The tree asked for two white pigs as a reward but the man brought one white pig and a black one smeared with chalk. The tree, in its anger, said it would help no more, so the spirits catch men and kill them. In the Celebes there is a belief that the sky, at first, was very close to the earth and God used to lower gifts to the first people on a rope's end. He let down a stone which they refused, and then a banana which they accepted. God therefore decreed that mankind would not be like the stone, immortal, but perishable like the banana.

Fatal Debate

One of the most imaginative myths of the origin of death is that of the Wintun Indians of the Pacific coast of North America. It is said that Olelbis, being about to create men, sent two buzzards, brothers, to build a stone stairway between earth and heaven, at the top of which there were to be two springs, one for purification and the other for drinking – the 'fountain of youth'. As they laboured, Sedit the coyote, the mischievous and clownish creator, came and tempted them. Is all their hard work, he asks, really worth it? Will men and women want to go on ascending and descending the stairway, endlessly repeating their lives? 'Joy at birth', he says, 'and grief for the dead are better, for these mean love.' The brothers are persuaded and destroy what they have built. But the younger says that Sedit too must take his own advice and die. In frenzied terror, Sedit makes himself wings of sunflower petals and tries to fly to heaven; but his wings wither and he falls. Olelbis says his own words have condemned him and hereafter all men will die.

The poignancy of this story is reflected in one told by the Eskimos of Greenland. At the beginning, they say, there was no death and no sun. One old woman declared she would be happy without light if there were no death. But another said that if it were not possible to have the one without the other, it were better to have both, for life without light was unbearable.

This brings us to the third type of death-origin myth – mortality as the result of a debate, a theme that has appeared in some of the stories already mentioned. The tenderness of the last two tales seems to be peculiarly North American: it recurs in a Blackfoot Indian myth of the discussion between the first old man and the first old woman. The man wanted immortality but the woman said there would then be too many people, and, besides, if people died they would be able to feel sorry for one another. They agreed to leave the matter to a sign: they would throw a piece of buffalo bone into the water – if it floated they would opt for immortality, if it sank, for death. The woman, who had magical powers, changed the fragment into a stone and hence we all die.

In Oceania the debate is, it appears, always between two supernatural beings, one of whom proposes life (often by skin-change) and the other death; the second always prevails, since he who has the last word wins. Sometimes one deity is openly malevolent. In the Banks Islands the story is told that Qat, the good god, made wooden images and vivified them by drumming and dancing before them. But he was succeeded by Marawa, the evil and jealous god, who buried his images and killed them.

The Larder of Death

Certain tales are remarkable in that they do not fall into any of these groups. The Aranda aborigines of Australia say that at the beginning first women and then men emerged from the rocks. The leading man was envied and hated by the others because he was nearest to the women, so they pointed a magic bone at him. He fell into a coma, 'died' and was buried. But he was not really dead and his head and neck rose out of the ground; then came Urbura, the evil and enchanted magpie, who stabbed the man in the throat and commanded him to stay dead. The other men and women were turned into lamenting birds. But for Urbura all would have been well.

Perhaps the strangest story of all comes from the Ewe-speakers of West Africa. Yiyi the spider (another example of the cunning and greedy demiurge found in many mythologies) cadged meat from Death during a famine. Death had plenty of meat because he had made a great clearing in the forest and set traps in it. In return for continual supplies, Yiyi gave Death his daughter in marriage. Death told his wife not to go through the clearing when she went to fetch water but one rainy day she did and was caught in a trap. Her husband chopped her up for the larder. When Yiyi discovered what had happened he attacked Death with a knife and ran away in terror to the village with Death in pursuit. Death had never been to the village before and as he lay in wait for Yiyi he amused himself by shooting at the women as they went down to the river for water. He then realized that here was game enough and he had no need to trouble setting traps for animals.

C. DE HOGHTON

Personification of Death

One of the earliest known attempts to depict the horror of death has been found at Catal Hüyük, a Neolithic settlement in Anatolia dating from the 7th millennium BC. It takes the form of representations of gigantic black birds of vulture-like appearance menacing headless human corpses. The mythologies of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia provide our earliest written evidence of the personification of death. In the legend of Osiris, this divine hero, who became a type of 'Everyman' in the mortuary ritual (see OSIRIS), was killed by the evil god Seth, who came to be regarded as the personification of evil; in art Seth is depicted as an animal with sharp pointed ears or horns, a long muzzle or snout, and a tail splayed at the end. He is never actually portrayed as the death god, however, nor is such a baleful being ever shown as such in Egyptian art. Yet, as the following Coffin Text of the Middle Kingdom (c2160–1580 BC) vividly shows, the Egyptians personified death very realistically: 'Save me from the claws of him who takes for himself what he sees: may the glowing breath of his mouth not take me

Scala

away.' It is possible that, during the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt, the jackal-headed god Anubis, long associated with the Osirian mortuary ritual, became the *psychopompos* (guide of the dead) or even the death god.

The Angel of Death

In ancient Mesopotamia the Babylonians named the death god Uggae; but he does not figure notably in their mythology under this name. However, death was personified in a horrific manner. Thus in the famous *Epic of Gilgamesh*, Enkidu, the unfortunate friend of Gilgamesh, dreams of his coming death as seizure by an awful being:

> . . . he transformed me,
> That mine arms were covered with feathers like a bird.
> He looks at me (and) leads me to the house of darkness, to the dwelling of Irkalla;
> To the house from which he who enters never goes forth.

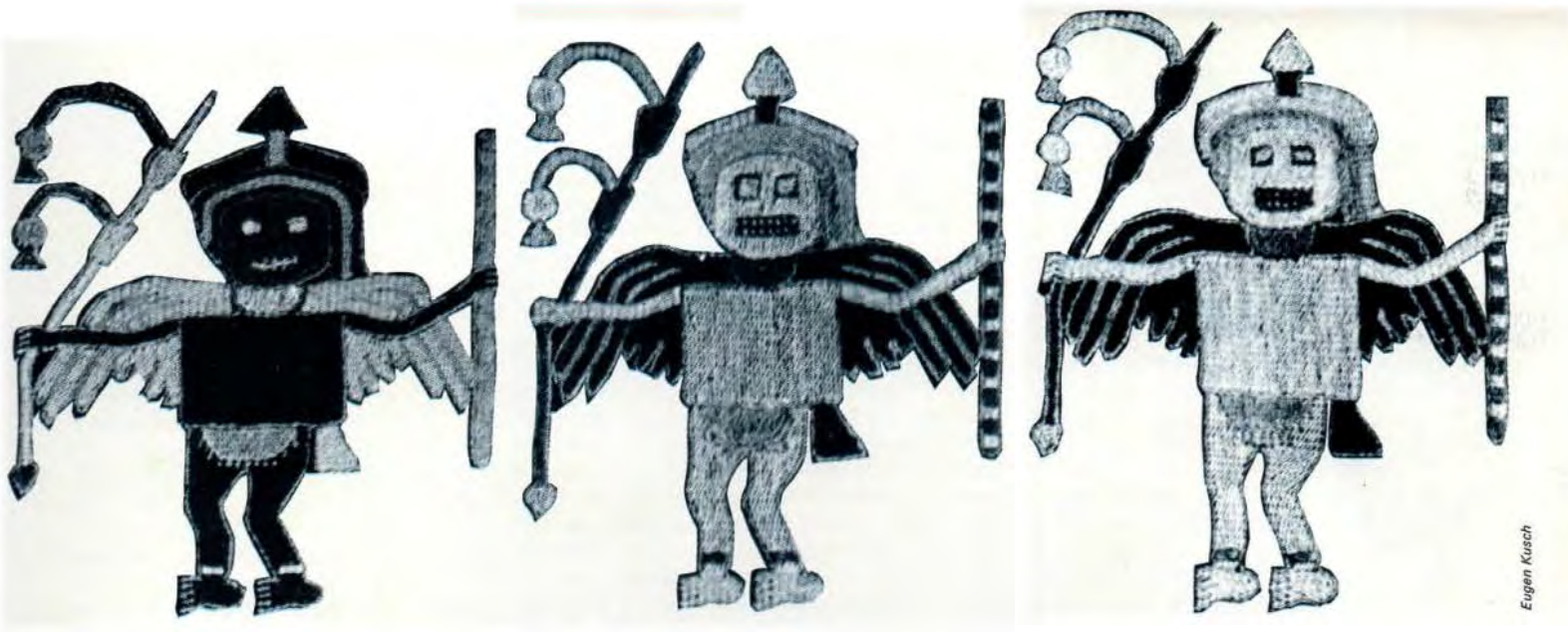
An Assyrian text of about 650 BC actually describes the dread enemy in an account of the underworld, and pictures a grim figure with the hands of a man and the feet of serpents. There was, however, much fluidity of conception in personifying death; for another Assyrian text gives directions 'For making exchange for a man wanted by the Goddess of Death'. Indeed, Mesopotamian demonology provided a variety of grisly monsters associated with the underworld.

In ancient Hebrew literature, although the origin of death is attributed to the sin of Adam in Genesis (3, 19), God is regarded as ultimately responsible for the individual's death. However, Hebrew thought, which tended to separate its god Yahweh (see YAHWEH) from direct contact with human affairs, produced the idea of the 'angel of Yahweh' as the agent of death. In later Jewish folklore the angel of death is named 'Sammael', meaning 'the drug of God', since it was believed that his sword was tipped with gall: the howling of dogs announced his presence in a town.

In Iranian mythology death was closely associated with Time (see TIME), so that Zurvan, the deification of Time, was regarded as the god of death. Thus an ancient Persian text states: 'For Zurvan there is no remedy. From death there is no escape.' The Persians conceived of two forms of Zurvan: one of them 'Time of the Long Dominion' was the form of Time associated with death, since it brings old age, decay and death to all men. There is some evidence that the idea of this form of Zurvan, with whom Ahriman, the personification of evil, was identified, was incorporated into Mithraism, and found expression in its temples in statues of a lion-headed monster, adorned with various symbols of Time.

In the Vedic literature of ancient India a god of the dead is known under the name of Yama. According to the *Rig-Veda*, he was the son of Vivasvant and 'the first of mortals to die and enter that other world'. In later writings Yama becomes the judge of the dead, and in that role he appears in Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. In Chinese belief, under the name of Yen-lo wang, he presides over the fifth hell. As Emma-O, in popular Japanese art, he is depicted seated at his tribunal, a fearsome figure in the robes of a Chinese judge. Hinduism, however, has other personifications of death. Mara, or Mrtyu is death personified. The concept has an important role also in Buddhist mythology, but rather as the personification of evil, being *papman*, 'the evil one'. The Hindu god Shiva, who is conceived as having an ambivalent nature, has on one side of his being Bhairava, 'the terrible destroyer', who haunts cemeteries, and appears wearing serpents about his head and a necklace of skulls. An even stranger conception is the personification of Shiva's destructive energy in the form of the goddess Kali or Durga. This goddess (Kali means Time) is of horrific appearance: her colour is black, she wears a chaplet of severed heads, and her many hands hold symbols of her nature – the exterminating sword, scissors to cut short the thread of life, and the lotus of eternal generation, for existence as an unceasing cycle of birth and death.

Above **In the story of the Harrowing of Hell, in which Christ descends into Hades to succour the souls of the just, Death is identified with Satan, who is depicted as a skeletal figure in chains, prostrate beneath the triumphant Christ: from a mosaic in St Mark's, Venice** ***Above right*** **Detail from an early Peruvian death shroud, embroidered with representations of the grotesque gods of the underworld: Lima Archeological Museum**



The Last Enemy

Greek mythology personified death in two forms. The more ancient conception is the more grim. Homer refers to the *ker thanatoio* (the fate of death), which was probably imagined as a winged harpy that snatched away its victims. The more sophisticated image of Thanatos (Death) was that of a winged youth, of heroic form, armed with a sword, such as he is shown on a column, now in the British Museum, that once adorned the temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Thanatos was actually portrayed in performances of Euripides' *Alcestis*, described as black-robed, winged and armed with a sword.

In Christianity death has also been personified, although theologically it is regarded as the penalty of sin. St Paul proclaims that 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (I Corinthians, chapter 15). In the Revelation of St John (chapter 6), Death is depicted as riding on one of the baleful horses. In the myth of Christ's descent into Hades, Death is sometimes identified with Satan, and in depictions of the event Death often appears as a skeletal figure prostrate beneath the triumphant Christ.

In medieval art Death is invariably represented as an animated skeleton, armed with a dart with which he strikes the death-blow. An interesting development of the idea appears in Holbein's version of the *Dance of Death*, for the skeletal figure of Death is shown with an hour-glass, thus symbolizing his association with Time. Another striking example of this association is seen in Dürer's engraving *The Knight, Death and the Devil*. From this association emerged the Renaissance figure of Father Time, whose scythe, derived from the sickle of the god Saturn, symbolizes the mortal stroke that severs human lives.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Queen Elizabeth I's astrologer and a noted scientist, John Dee claimed to talk with angels. He was also employed in the Queen's secret service. How far his magical activities were a cover for espionage is a problem which remains unsolved to this day

JOHN DEE

IN THE EYES of many of his contemporaries John Dee (1527–1608) was a charlatan, impostor and dabbler in black magic. This portrait of the man was embellished by many writers, especially by Samuel Butler, whose *Hudibras* contains a vicious caricature of Dee, and even the *Biographica Britannica* describes him as 'extremely credulous, extravagantly vain and a most deluded enthusiast'. Although Dee's life story is well documented, little has been done to explain or interpret him. His abundant output of erudite works, his projects and treatises, reveal him as one of the most remarkable of Elizabethan scholars. He was an authority on mathematics, navigation, astronomy and optics, as well as being Astrologer Royal to Elizabeth I.

Dee was born at Mortlake, at that time a village on the Thames outside London. Young Dee had a retentive memory and early proved an apt pupil. At the age of 15 he went to St John's College, Cambridge, where he recorded in his diary that he used to spend 18 hours a day studying.

His reward came in 1546 when he was appointed Under-Reader of Greek at the newly founded Trinity College, shortly after which he was made a Fellow of Trinity and graduated as a BA at his own college. It was while he was still at Cambridge that the first charge of sorcery was levelled against him as a result of an over-realistic stage effect – a mechanical flying beetle – which he created for a production of Aristophanes's *Pax*. All his life he had a passion for mechanical toys.

These early years were spent in travel and study. He went to the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1547, where he made friends with the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator and brought back to Cambridge two of Mercator's globes, together with newly devised astronomical instruments. In one sense Dee can be said to have been the first Englishman to indulge in industrial espionage, for he realized quite early that the English must increase their knowledge of navigational techniques if they were to expand their empire. Consequently he passed back to England all the information he learned from Mercator and others.

Horoscope for the Queen

About this time Dee first took an interest in natural magic, a subject which was then occupying the minds of many Renaissance scholars. A distinction was made both by the scholastic laity and the Church between natural or 'white' magic, and black magic. The view was that the former was a natural and therefore a good force, that it seemed magical because its workings were spiritual and invisible and therefore not normally given to mortals to understand. Black magic, on the other hand, was a force for evil conjured up by men either for evil purposes or through ignorance and superstition. It was the dividing line between science and the occult which Dee found so fascinating. He learned much from the orientalist Antonius Gogava, and from Cornelius Agrippa, who had framed the doctrine that the practice of magic was one of the lawful ways by which man could attain to a knowledge of God and Nature (see AGRIPPA). Thus, while teaching logic and mathematics on the continent, Dee was also pioneering in the perilous fields of natural magic, especially in telepathy.

Dee was a prolific caster of horoscopes and this talent attracted some attention at court in Queen Mary's reign. He was asked to cast horoscopes for both the Queen and her prospective bridegroom, Philip of Spain. Rashly, he developed close ties with the Princess Elizabeth in her semi-captivity at Woodstock, near Oxford. Dee was a cousin of Blanche Parry, who was confidential maid-of-honour to the Princess, and through Blanche he corresponded with Elizabeth and drew for her a horoscope which is in the British Museum today. He was accused of attempting to take Queen Mary's life by poison or black magic and was charged with treason, although the only substantial evidence his accusers could produce was that he had shown Princess Elizabeth the horoscope he had drawn for her sister, the Queen. He was acquitted of the charge, but kept in prison until late in 1555.

When Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth became Queen, the new sovereign, remembering the horoscopes Dee had already drawn for her, requested him to cast a date that would be propitious for her crowning. From then on the relationship between Dee and his monarch was friendly but not even the Queen herself could afford to make a suspected magician too obviously a key figure in her entourage. It is still not known for certain to what extent Dee was a secret agent, nor how far his dabbling in magic was a cover for espionage. Often he was away for months at a time on mysterious missions on the continent, sometimes for the Queen, more often for Sir William Cecil (Lord Burghley) and Sir Francis Walsingham, who was in charge of Elizabeth's intelligence system.

Secret Ciphers

In 1563, while browsing in the bookshops of Antwerp, Dee came across a copy of a rare and little known book, *Stenographia* by Trithemius, Benedictine Abbot of Spanheim on the Rhine (1462–1516). He was so excited about his discovery that he wrote to the statesman Sir William Cecil about it, saying of the book that its 'use is greater than the fame thereof is spread'. This work was to have a great influence on Dee. For seven years he had been busy preparing one of his most abstruse and controversial books, *Monas Hieroglyphica*. After reading *Stenographia* he completed his work in 12 days. It dealt with the relation of numbers to natural magic and used a code and symbols which could only be understood by Dee himself and by those he had initiated into the secrets of translation. Few pretended to understand it, yet Cecil declared it to be 'of the utmost value for the security of the Realm'.

How could so abstruse a philosophical work be of value to the security of the realm unless in some way it assisted espionage? Trithemius had been an exponent of natural magic but centuries later students of the Abbot of Spanheim were emphatic that *Stenographia* dealt primarily with ciphers. D. P. Walker, one of the leading modern authorities on natural magic, has stated in his *Spiritual & Demonic Magic* that 'Trithemius' *Stenographia* is partly a treatise on cryptography in which the methods of encipherment are disguised as demonic magic, and partly a treatise on demonic magic . . . It should be noted that Trithemius's astrological magic is not only a kind of telepathy; it is also the means of acquiring universal knowledge.'

Dee took over where Trithemius left off and in his *Monas* developed a cryptography of his own. In between producing the first English edition of the Greek mathematician Euclid with Henry Billingsley, and urging the use of telescopes in the Army, he was sent by the Queen on another secret mission, this time to the Duchy of Lorraine. It was probably concerned with the proposals for marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou, for whom Dee drew a horoscope. That the mission was important is clear from the fact that the Queen sent two of her own physicians to attend Dee when he was ill.

Crystal-Gazing

Dee's first marriage in 1574 is somewhat of a mystery. Not even the name of his bride is known; there is no record of the marriage and no note about his wife in Dee's diaries until a reference to her death the following year. Curiously, on the very day she died Dee was visited at his home by the Queen who asked her astrologer to show her the 'magic glass of which she had heard so moch'.

Some writers have suggested that the 'magic glass' was the same as that used by Dee in the crystal-gazing experiments which he is known to have made. It is more likely to have been a concave mirror, however, for Dee's account of the incident states that the Queen and her courtiers laughed heartily, which could have been explained if they saw distorted images of themselves in the glass. Most contemporary authorities agree that Dee did not become actively interested in crystal-gazing until 1581. It was on 25 May of that year that he first mentioned in his diary: 'I had sight offered me in crystallo and I saw.'

The experiments with crystal-gazing were preceded by Dee's preoccupation with his dreams. He made frequent mention of strange dreams in his diaries; similarly he noted the dreams of his wife, for he had married for the second time. His new wife was Jane Fromond, a lady-in-waiting at court. His interest in crystallomancy was undoubtedly stimulated by his meetings with Renaissance Cabalists and by his genuine and scientific desire to explore the possibilities of spiritualism and telepathy. Dee did not delude himself that he possessed mediumistic talents; he said many times, no doubt with regret, 'You know I cannot see, nor scry' and he depended entirely on scryers (crystal-gazers). He used a variety of 'glasses', crystals and special stones for his experiments; two which are alleged to have belonged to him may be seen in the British Museum. But in his choice of scryers Dee was unfortunate. The first, Barnabas Saul, was a rogue who may well have been 'planted' on Dee by his enemies to trap him into indiscretions. The second, Edward Talbott, who on entering Dee's employment changed his name to Kelley, was if anything a bigger rogue, though possibly a more competent, if erratic, scryer. Kelley started life as an apothecary who cherished the idea of finding a formula to manufacture gold, turned to crime and black magic, but on joining Dee was sternly admonished to concentrate on 'conversations' with the angels and not the devils.

Dee held fairly positive views on the nature of the angels who appeared in visions. They were intelligent beings, telepathically attuned to a knowledge of the past and future. He was vaguer about devils but accepted that their purpose was to confuse and obscure the truth by introducing chaotic visions. He made careful notes of what he called his 'angelic conversations' and many of these are preserved in manuscript form in the British Museum. A sample of them was published in 1659 by Meric Casaubon under the title of *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed between Dr John Dee and Some Spirits*. But Casaubon sought only to

Angelic Conversation

Part of a conversation between Dee, Kelley and the spirit Madimi at Mortlake in July 1583. Dee and Kelley were desperately in need of money and were also trying to find out about the future of a Polish nobleman, Count Albert Laski.

DEE Mistress *Madimi*, you are welcome in God for good, as I hope; what is the cause of your coming now?

MADIMI *To see how you do.*

DEE I know you can see me often, and I see you only by faith and imagination.

MADIMI (pointing to Kelley) *That sight is perfecter than his . . .*

DEE In respect of the Lord Treasurer, Mr Secretary and *Mr Raleigh*. I pray you, what worldly comfort is there to be looked for? Besides that I do principally put my trust in God.

MADIMI . . . *Madder will stain, wicked men will offend, and are easy to be offended.*

DEE And being offended will do wickedly, to the persecution of them that mean simply.

MADIMI . . . *Or else they were not to be called wicked.*

DEE As concerning *Alb. Laski* his pedigree, you said your sister would tell all.

MADIMI . . . *I told you more than all your dog painters and cat painters can do.*

DEE You spoke of *William Laski* and *Sir Richard Laski* his brother, of which *William* going into *France*, and then into *Denmark*: and his marriage into *Poland*, came this *Albert Laski*, now Palatine of *Soradia*, etc.

MADIMI . . . *Those were two pretty men for me to meddle withal. When you set yourselves together, and agree together, I will make all agree together.*

KELLEY WILL YOU *MADIMI* LEND ME A HUNDRED POUNDS FOR A FORTNIGHT?

MADIMI . . . I have swept all my money out of doors.

DEE As for money we shall have that which is necessary when God seeth time.

MADIMI . . . *Hear me what I say. God is the unity of all things. Love is the unity of every Congregation (I mean true and perfect love). The world was made in the love of the Father. You were redeemed in the love of the Father and the Son. The Spirit of God is (yet) the love of his Church*

E. M. Butler
The Myth of the Magus

John Dee employed the services of a man named Edward Kelley as his 'scryer', or crystal-gazer, because he did not possess the necessary talents himself. Kelley would sit before the crystal and describe whatever spirits he saw and what they said to him. With a friend named Waring, Kelley was alleged to have dug up a corpse in a churchyard at Walton Le Dale in Lancashire, and by magic incantations forced it to speak: imaginative picture of the scene, from *The Astrologer of the 19th Century*

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depict Dee as a deluded person. He completely ignored the scientific and philosophical approach of Dee and failed to analyse the true meaning of the 'angelic messages'.

More recent commentators have been kinder. The modern scholar Theodore Besterman described Dee as 'a pioneer in spiritualism' and had little doubt that the visions recorded in the diaries and manoscripts were genuine. 'For there is much in them', he wrote in *Crystal-Gazing* (1929), 'that is in accord with modern experience. In no case, however, can the absolute honesty of Dee be doubted and the absurd reflections . . . which have been made on his integrity, and even on his sanity, are quite undeserved.'

Calling on the Angels

Dee's approach to 'spiritualism' was almost entirely through scrying, though some of his manuscripts suggest that he sought revelations through mystic trances and 'photism' (hallucinatory sensation or vision of light). This was in accordance with the theory of natural magicians that a mystic trance gave a sense of union with God and enabled revelations of importance to be disclosed.

Kelley would sit before the crystal and describe whatever spirits he saw and what they said to him. Dee would record all Kelley told him and occasionally ask Kelley to put questions to the spirits. One figure appears over and over again in the scrying, a spirit-child, half-angel and half-elfin, first described by Dee as 'a Spiritual Creature, like a pretty girl of seven or nine years of age'. She said her name was Madimi (Dee named one of his daughters after her) and she appeared for seven years to Dee and Kelley.

Dee and Kelley preceded their scrying by a system of 'calls', or invocations. These suggest the influence of the Renaissance magicians Agrippa, Campanella, Bruno and Trithemius. Kelley, always a braggart, claimed that the calls were dictated to him in the angels' own language, called Enochian. But the basis of the idea is to be found in Dee's *Monas*. Casaubon dismissed Enochian as 'foolish, fabulous writing' but an analysis of the angelic language and calls shows they can be variously interpreted. They are part natural magic, part mathematical and astrological, part pure cryptography. Enochian is a complete language of its own, with its own alphabet and grammar.

In 1583 John Dee introduced a visitor to England to his scrying experiments. This was Count Adalbert Laski, who represented the King of Poland. Laski had been warmly received by the Queen, who provided funds for Dee to entertain Laski. Shortly afterwards Dee, Kelley and their families went to Poland with Laski. During his absence a mob broke into Dee's house at Mortlake and destroyed his books and instruments.

Dee did not return to England until 1589. He and Kelley visited the King of Poland and the Emperor Rudolph II, attempting to interest each in the 'angelic conversations' and also in Kelley's plans for manufacturing gold. 'Warnings' from the spirit world were passed on to these rulers. Then on 6 May 1586, Dee was told that the Papal Nuncio had submitted to the Emperor Rudolph a document which accused Dee of necromancy. A few days later he and Kelley were expelled from Prague.

They found a new patron in Count Wilhelm Rosenberg, who invited them to his palace in Trebon. About the same time Dee received an invitation from the Czar of Russia to go to Moscow to receive a salary of £2000 a year, a house and 'to be honourably accounted as one of the chief men in the land'. Yet for some reason Dee turned down this offer, remaining with Rosenberg.

Spying with the Glass

About this time Dee was finding Kelley's moods and fits of temper a sore trial. For a while Kelley absolutely refused to scry. Then, unexpectedly, he volunteered to look in the crystal once again. What he related thereafter struck horror into the Dee family and Jane Dee 'fell aweeping and trembling for full quarter of an hour, then burst forth into a fury of anger.' For according to Kelley, the spirit-child Madimi had counselled the Dees and the Kelleys to 'share all things in common, including our wives'. Dee rebuked Madimi for such 'unmeet' words and for a long time refused to have anything to do with the proposal. Nevertheless the counsel of Madimi was eventually obeyed and on 3 May 1587, Dee, Kelley and their respective wives signed a document swearing blind obedience to the angelic commands. There are no records of how the experiment in wife-sharing fared, but there was no more scrying after this and soon afterwards Kelley left the Dees.

Upon his return to England Dee almost immediately had an audience of the Queen, yet his career never really prospered after this. Despite many appeals for posts, all he was given was the wardenship of Christ's College, Manchester, in 1595, a position he does not appear to have enjoyed. In 1605 he returned to Mortlake and died there three years later.

Perhaps the full significance of the 'angelic conversations' will never be grasped. That they comprised a genuine attempt to experiment in spiritualism and telepathy is fairly certain. It is equally certain that what Dee mainly sought was knowledge of the hidden mysteries of the universe. But what complicates any attempt to interpret his motives is that there were also other purposes behind the scrying. Some writers have depicted Dee as the foolish dupe of Kelley; others have suggested that both Dee and Kelley were fraudulently using crystal-gazing to obtain money from Count Laski, the Emperor Rudolph and others. But if it was through greed that Dee exploited the crystal why did he reject the Czar's magnificent offer? What seems more probable is that in various ways the 'angelic conversations' were used as a cover for espionage. What better method of finding out what Laski and Rudolph wanted to know (and many of the questions put to the angels fully revealed the aims of these men)?

Certainly some of the visions can be thus interpreted and to support this theory there are many references to Dee having passed intelligence to Walsingham. It was widely believed on the Continent that Dee acted as an official spy for Elizabeth. But how much of this intelligence was factual and obtained by normal processes, or how much may have been gleaned by occult or astrological methods one can only hazard a guess. But although Dee may have wasted much valuable time on his spiritualistic experiments, he was a sincere seeker after knowledge, a mystic at heart but a scientist in his mind, and in many respects a pioneer in a variety of scientific fields.

RICHARD DEACON

FURTHER READING: R. Deacon, *John Dee* (Muller, London, 1968); P. French, *John Dee* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).

Deism

Or 'natural religion', religion without revelation, an important theological movement in the 17th and 18th centuries which numbered Rousseau, Voltaire, Franklin and Jeffersnn among its supporters: the belief that the study of Nature and the exercise of reason are better guides to the existence and character of God than the study of sacred scriptures; deists tended to dislike formal religious observance, ritual and priests, and to believe that all the major religions contain essentially the same message.

Delphi

Site of the most influential oracle of the ancient world, at the temple of Apollo on Mount Parnassus, north of the Gulf of Cnrinth; the oracles were delivered by Apollo's priestess, the Pythia, seated on a tripod and speaking in trance, and were transmitted to inquirers by the priests.

See APOLLO: ORACLES.

Camera Press London

The favour of Demeter, the ancient Greek earth goddess, was especially important to countrymen. In gratitude for their help in regaining her daughter Persephone, Demeter revealed her Mysteries to the rulers of Eleusis

DEMETER

DEMETER was the ancient Greek goddess of corn, and of agriculture and fertility. The second part of her name, *meter*, means 'mother' in Greek and De (or Da) was in ancient times thought to be a word for the earth. The Greeks in historical times had a separate goddess of the Earth (Ge) and Demeter came later in the genealogy of deities, being a grand-daughter of Ge and sister of Zeus. But in origin she is certainly an earth goddess and as such the author of all crops and vegetation, and so the sustainer of the life of animals and men. Her daughter by Zeus, Persephone, was also called simply Kore, 'the Maiden'. She represented more directly the fruits of the field, but the two were so closely linked that they were often known as 'the Twin Goddesses', and even sometimes as 'the Demeters', a title which demonstrates their original identity.

Because the life of plants between autumn and spring is one of hidden growth under the ground, the story was told how Persephone was carried off by Zeus's brother Hades, lord of the underworld, and compelled to spend each winter with him as his wife. In spring, when the earth was covered in flowers, she would reappear, bringing men joy and happiness. So, as Kore, she was a deity of youth and gaiety, the leader of the nymphs, with whom she was gathering flowers when she was carried off and with whom she looked after the growth of children and young men and women. But as the wife of Hades, she was also queen of the underworld, governing men's fate after death, and in this aspect an awesome and dread goddess.

The Mysteries

As deities of the crops, and also as patrons of the life and growth of children, Demeter and her daughter were regarded as important civilizing influences, drawing men towards a settled life of agriculture and domestic happiness. Since agriculture was the most important source of prosperity in early Greece, the favour of Demeter was essential to all men, and especially to the peasant and the common man. To her, and to the god of the underworld, the farmer would sacrifice at the beginning of his seasonal tasks, and to her he offered his thanks and first-fruits after the harvest. Hence, many of Demeter's festivals coincide with these seasonal activities, ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, and the storing of the harvest. One of the most important, the Thesmophoria, took place in late October, the time of sowing, and included ceremonies designed to ensure the fruitfulness of the seed, and also the fertility of mankind. It was celebrated only by women, who as the bearers of children were more suited for such ritual, and much of it was secret. Many of Demeter's festivals included secret ceremonies, and these were often restricted to women. The main reason for this secrecy was perhaps the sense of awe and fear which was aroused by the contemplation of the hidden powers of the earth, the powers governing birth, growth and death, and also the life after death, below the earth.

The most important festivals of Demeter and Persephone were those ceremonies of initiation known as 'Mysteries', and of these the most influential in historical times were the Mysteries of Eleusis in Attica. These were open to both sexes. They guaranteed to initiates, above all, the promise of a happier fate after death. But the favour of the goddesses was also promised in this life, in terms of prosperity, especially agricultural. This was personified as a god Plutus (Wealth), who was the child of Demeter, born from her marriage to the Cretan Iasion, with whom she lay 'in a thrice-ploughed field'. The generation of the earth's fruits is thus represented by the union of the goddess with a mortal in a field that has been prepared for sowing. Plutus is sometimes shown as a little child seated on a cornucopia, which is being handed by Ge to Demeter. The setting of the myth, in Crete, perhaps supports the view of some scholars that Demeter's Mysteries have a Cretan origin.

The Rape of Persephone

The most famous of the myths relating to Demeter is that of the Rape of Persephone. This is closely associated with the story of the origins of crops and the art of agriculture, and of the Mysteries. Many legends told how, when Demeter was searching for her daughter, after Hades had carried her off, she received information about the Rape from the local inhabitants of different parts of Greece and was offered their hospitality. In gratitude she gave them her gifts of agriculture and the Mysteries.

The chief claimants for this honour were Eleusis and Sicily, the most important centres of her cult. The earliest and best-known version of the myth, the so-called Homeric Hymn to Demeter, tells how Demeter came to Eleusis, disguised as an old woman, and was there welcomed by the family of King Celeus. She became the nurse of his baby son, Demophon, and attempted to make him immortal by anointing him with ambrosia, and hiding him in the fire to burn away his mortality. His mother detected her, and Demeter was thus thwarted, but she promised to teach the Eleusinians her mystic rites. She then caused a universal famine, which threatened mankind with starvation and the gods with the loss of their sacrifices. Zeus was forced to order Hades to release Persephone. But Hades gave her a pomegranate seed to eat, and because she had tasted food in the underworld she was compelled to spend part of every year there, returning to the upper world in spring. Demeter, however, restored the fertility of the fields and revealed her Mysteries to the rulers of Eleusis. The poem closes with the promise of happiness after death for the initiated, and of prosperity on earth for those whom the goddesses love.

Sonia Halliday

As goddess of the crops and fertility, Demeter was regarded as an important civilizing influence by the Greeks, drawing men towards a settled life of agriculture and domestic happiness: Bodrum Museum

The famine, in this version of the myth, reflects another form of the belief that the death of vegetation has a divine cause. When Persephone is absent, the earth is naturally barren, but here it is Demeter's anger and grief at the loss of her daughter which causes the death of the crops, and thus endangers the life of men and gods alike.

The Homeric Hymn does not refer to Demeter's gift of agriculture to man after her daughter's restoration, but another version told how she made Triptolemus, another of the Eleusinian rulers, the recipient of this gift, and gave him a winged chariot with which he travelled over the whole world, teaching men the art of agriculture and giving them the corn. Triptolemus was a very popular figure in Athens in the classical period, and his mission was often depicted in art.

Corn and Earth

Ceres, the Roman goddess of corn and of the creative powers of the earth, was in her indigenous worship closely associated with Tellus, the Earth. As a deity of fertility, she was also a guardian of marriage, and as an earth-goddess, she was connected with the cult of the dead. Her chief festival, the Cerialia, took place in April and was essentially agricultural in character. At an early date she became identified with Demeter, and her most important cult, on the Aventine at Rome, was introduced at the beginning of the 5th century BC under Greek influence. She shared this with Liber, god of wine, and Libera, who was sometimes identified with

Persephone. Here, still more than in Greece, her associations were popular. The temple was supervised by the plebeian aediles, magistrates who represented the common people of Rome. As the provider of bread for the populace, and as guardian of the 'sacred laws' *(Ceres legifera)*, she became a protectress of the common people in their early struggles for liberty.

Later, with the growing urban development of Rome, her original importance as a goddess of country life faded, and in the literature and art of the later Republic and Empire she is for the most part a pale copy of Demeter, inheriting with her daughter Proserpina (Persephone) the Greek myths already related. An annual festival centred on the myth of the Rape and Return of Proserpina was introduced, probably in the 3rd century BC, from the Greek cities of southern Italy. This was celebrated by women only, and included secret, initiatory rites. It thus resembled to some extent the Greek Thesmophoria but differed from this festival in that it was celebrated in midsummer, probably at harvest time. The Cerialia, in spring, were also extended in the course of time to include dramatic performances on the Greek pattern. Because these coincided with the time of Persephone's return, they too came to be connected with the Greek myth.

The story of the Rape is a popular one in Latin literature. Ovid relates it on two occasions, in his *Fasti* and *Metomorphoses*, and the late Latin poet Claudian wrote a long epic on the subject entitled *The Rape of Proserpina*. It thus passed into the literature of the Middle Ages. Because of its funerary significance it also became a favourite subject for the artists of sarcophagi. This popularity is perhaps connected with the great proliferation of mystery cults and religions concerned with life after death, which arose in the first centuries AD.

(See also ELEUSIS; PERSEPHONE.)

N. J. RICHARDSON

FURTHER READING: The Homeric hymn is included in the Loeb edition of Hesiod (Harvard Univ. Press); see also M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (Harper and Row, 1940) and *History of Greek Religion* (Norton, 1964).

Demons

Evil spirits: derived from the Greek *daimon* (hence 'daemon'), a spirit which might be good or bad: the Christians condemned all pagan spirits as evil beings under the sway of the Devil, which gave the word 'demon' its invariably evil modern connotation.

See EVIL SPIRITS.

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Demiurge

The creator of the universe in Plato's *Timaeus*: in Gnosticism believed to be a subordinate supernatural power, not the same as the good supreme God; gnostics often identified him as the god of the Jews; derived from a Greek word meaning 'craftsman'.

See GNOSTICISM.

DERVISH

IN BROAD TERMS, the word dervish describes a Mohammedan holy man, usually belonging to a religious fraternity (which may be either cloistered or lay) and following a form of Sufism, a series of philosophical systems designed to improve the workings of the human mind. There are a number of orders and sub-orders, each with its own rule dating back to its founder and with its own ritual. Individual practices vary from the whirling movements or 'dancing' of the Mevlevi sect to the ecstatic rites of the Rufai or 'howling' dervishes. Each order is independent and free to go its own way within Islam. Apart from full members of an order, there is a huge number of lay followers, particularly in the Turkish Moslem world, who are under the obligation of saying certain prayers every day.

Because dervish teaching methods differ so startlingly from those used by both Eastern and Western scholastics, the general impression has been that dervishes are wild fanatics or madmen. Indeed this was the Western image of the dervish in the 19th century: a strange fanatic, wild-eyed, insane, a practitioner of weird rites. Many travellers of the time brought back lurid stories of 'whirling' and 'howling' dervishes – entertaining, perhaps, but offering few clues as to what, if anything, might have been the basis of their strange behaviour.

In Central Asia, on the other hand, at any time in the past several centuries (and even, to a great extent, today), a dervish would largely be regarded as a person of science, culture, literature and philosophy – and perhaps more: a person with perceptions and capacities beyond those of ordinary men, something like saint and magician, with powers of healing and telepathy; capable of miracles.

Dervishes have been known in most parts of the Moslem world, as well as in medieval Spain and other parts of Europe. Dervish textbooks were used by Roger Bacon, the Franciscan, in his lectures at Oxford. The Spanish philosopher Raymond Lull of Majorca (c 1233–1316) has been shown to have derived his theories of love from dervish literature, and Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), known as 'Algazel' to the medieval schoolmen, was a noted dervish thinker.

The Door of Enlightenment

Even today many dictionaries define the word 'dervish' as deriving from the Persian *darvish*, literally a poor man. Yet a symposium published in 1966, containing eyewitness accounts of the activities of contemporary dervish communities, says the word is generally considered to be derived from the Persian verb *der-vekhton* – to wait at a door – the reference being to waiting at the door of enlightenment.

Much new material has been published in the last four or five years. One authority, Idries Shah, Grand Sheikh of the Sufis, lineal descendant of the prophet Mohammed, makes it clear that the understanding of what a dervish might be can never be explained satisfactorily only in words. He says: 'A dervish is a Sufi . . . In Sufi literature the words "Sufi", "dervish" and "fakir" are used more rarely than "knower", "lover", "follower" or "traveller". The others are externalist labels.'

Dervish teaching is based on the concept of 'essence' rather than the concept of God, and dervish teaching, because it is designed to improve the quality of the human mind, may or may not have a religious context. But whatever the context, it will be a vehicle for the self-realization that is aimed at: 'He who knows his essential self knows his God'. A modern traveller, Omar Michael Burke, who has visited dervish groups in Asia and Africa, describes Sufism as 'a way of life said to have been handed down from remotest antiquity. Its training was designed to produce the perfected man – and woman. In order to achieve this, the Sufi had to go through a long training. The difference between this teaching and all other systems was that the Sufi training took place within the world, and not out of it.'

Dervishes claim that there is a form of superior mental activity open to man, which can be manifested on the ordinary plane as well as in some inner sense; but that man in general cannot approach this due to certain

Regarded in the West as fanatic madmen because of their dancing, howling and whirling, dervishes are holy men, whose training is 'designed to produce the perfected man and woman'; from a Persian manuscript in the British Museum

Michael Holford

obstacles which are interposed by conventional thinking.

In consequence, dervishes have specialized in making startling and cryptic utterances which have naturally caused them to be considered mad, unrealistic or otherwise socially unacceptable. Nobody would believe or could verify dervish claims that man was trained ('conditioned') until the events of the Korean war brought Pavlov's work again into prominence. Evolutionary theory stated by dervishes several hundred years before Charles Darwin read like arrant nonsense to people conditioned by the Bible's chronology and accepting it without question. Dervishes today state that their claims about the 'higher faculties of man' – including precognition, bilocation (power to exist in two places simultaneously) and telepathy – await similar confirmation and cannot be challenged by people who have not arrived at a state where they can test the operation of such phenomena.

Blueprint for the Mind

Dervish teaching, perfected in the past by Sufi sages, is through formulations appropriate for the time, the place and the people involved, and by very precise techniques. Unlike conventional universities and colleges, there can never be a prescribed course of study in a dervish school, remaining the same at all times, for all students. Dervish texts will on the whole be revisions of earlier material, redesigned to project the teaching they contain into the current environment. Studies will take into account both the nature of individual pupils, and of the teacher.

Among the many techniques used by dervish masters to engender higher states of mind among their pupils are such revisions, including legends and parables, intended to establish in the mind not a 'belief' but a 'blueprint' or model, to help it operate in another manner. Auditory, visual and other sense-impacts are also used. There are also techniques to free the mind from preconceptions and conditioned ideas, thus making 'space' in it to receive the teaching.

How could the Victorian image of the wild fanatic ever have been generated from a way of life with such a controlled methodology and such a high aim – the perfectability of man and 'conscious evolution'? It could happen surprisingly simply, if the people observing dervish activity had no basis for understanding what they saw. Idries Shah offers an analogy, in a description of a strange rite: 'It is the night of Saturday, especially consecrated to a ritual which is awesome to us, faithfully followed by devotees of a certain cult. Two groups of 12, dressed in colourful costumes, carry out complicated movements in an enclosed space . . . The atmosphere is eerie, partly because of abrupt changes of emotion. . .' The esoteric rite, meticulously observed, turns out to be a floodlit football game. Shah sets against it a Victorian traveller's description of a meeting of 'whirling' dervishes, couched in precisely similar terms. One realizes that the travellers carefully wrote down what they thought they saw. But then, so did the hypothetical observer of the football game.

As well as the lack of a basis for understanding by observers, the permissive attitude of the dervishes, which makes no real distinction between believers in one cult or another, has been largely responsible for the 'bad press' which they have had.

Linked by a Mystic Force

The Sufis appeared in historical times mainly within the pale of Islam, though 'Christian dervishes' were not unknown; the teaching is held to be in the inner reality of all religions. All dervishes are believed to be linked by a force they call *baraka* (grace, lightness, impalpable beauty), and the total baraka of the founders of the Dervish Orders is held to interpenetrate all the Orders. Schools, or Orders, may equally be located in a monastery, a cafe in Western Europe, or even be a linking of people and activities spread over an immense area and invisible to the outsider, since the Sufis believe in the possibility of communication without physical presence. Four of the surviving major Dervish Orders are those of the Chisti, the Suhrawardi, the Qadiri, and the Naqshbandi. Dervish schools are always temporary, a body of people associated for a purpose, the rules ceasing to operate when the objective has been obtained.

There are many traces of earlier dervish activity to be found in Western Europe. Elements can be seen in the troubadours, the Knights Templar, and the witch cults of Western Europe, among others. Another example is in the Chisti community, which specialized in the use of music in their exercises. Wandering dervishes of the Order would play a rousing air on fife and drum when entering a town, and then recite a 'teaching' story. The relic of this may be found in the figure of the jester. Similarly, a dervish in the Middle Ages might move from place to place, dressed in a patchwork garment (the traditional dervish robe) and teach by signs, sometimes in cryptic words, sometimes not speaking at all. The European pronunciation of the Arabic name for such a teacher would be *arlakeen* and there is little doubt that his appearance is perpetuated in the harlequin.

An element of dervish behaviour, it is said, is its 'edge' and unexpectedness. In the words of Arif Yahya: 'Do not expect the way in which they bring their teaching to be wholly within your ordinary way of understanding. A pearl may be carried in a leather purse. The ignorant cry out: "This square object with a flap does not look like the necklace which has been described to me." '

(See also GHAZALI; RUMI; SUFIS.)

FURTHER READING: See Idries Shah's *The Sufis* (Doubleday, 1971) and his *Tales of the Dervishes* and *The Way of the Sufi*, both published by Dutton in 1970.

Sonia Halliday

A 19th century drawing by an English visitor to Turkey of whirling dervishes who are much respected in the East. They claim that the higher faculties of man include the power to exist in two places at once, telepathy, and an ability to see the future, for which evidence is now mounting in the West

DEVIL

Lucifer in hell, chewing on the body of the arch-traitor Judas, as in Dante's *Inferno*: mosaic in the Baptistery, Florence

FOR GENERATIONS of Europeans and Americans the Devil was a formidable reality – the supreme embodiment of evil, vengeful, intensely malicious, ruthless and subtle. Although belief in him has decayed in proportion with the decline of belief in God, it is not by any means extinct yet. For some Christians, of all denominations, Satan remains the arch-enemy of God and man. In a book called *The Devil*, published in 1953, Giovanni Papini accepted the evil archangel's reality and power, and maintained that he had inspired the writing of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Byron's *Manfred* and Kafka's *The Trial*. In 1947 the *Reader's Digest* published a story about an American girl who had been sent to a reformatory. Anxious for release, she prayed to God, but with no result. So she turned to the Devil, offering him nine blasphemous communions if he could help her. She took the sacrament cursing God, and after she had done this eight times she was let out on parole.

Belief in the Devil has always been assisted by the human tendency to look for a scapegoat, preferably non-human, on whose shoulders can be loaded the blame for evil, violence, pain and misfortune. The *Manual of Discipline*, for instance, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, says that God created two great spirits, one of truth and one of perversity, the latter being the angel of darkness. 'Through the Angel of Darkness, however, even those who practise righteousness are liable to error. All their sin and their iniquities, all their guilt and their deeds of transgression are the result of his domination; and this, by God's inscrutable design, will continue until the time appointed by Him.'

Similarly, the Christian writer Origen (died 253) said that the simpler Christians of his day believed that evil spirits caused people to sin and if there was no Devil, nobody would sin. Origen maintained that this view was wrong-headed, that men commit sins because they are imperfect, though the Devil is quick to seize his opportunity to lead the sinner on.

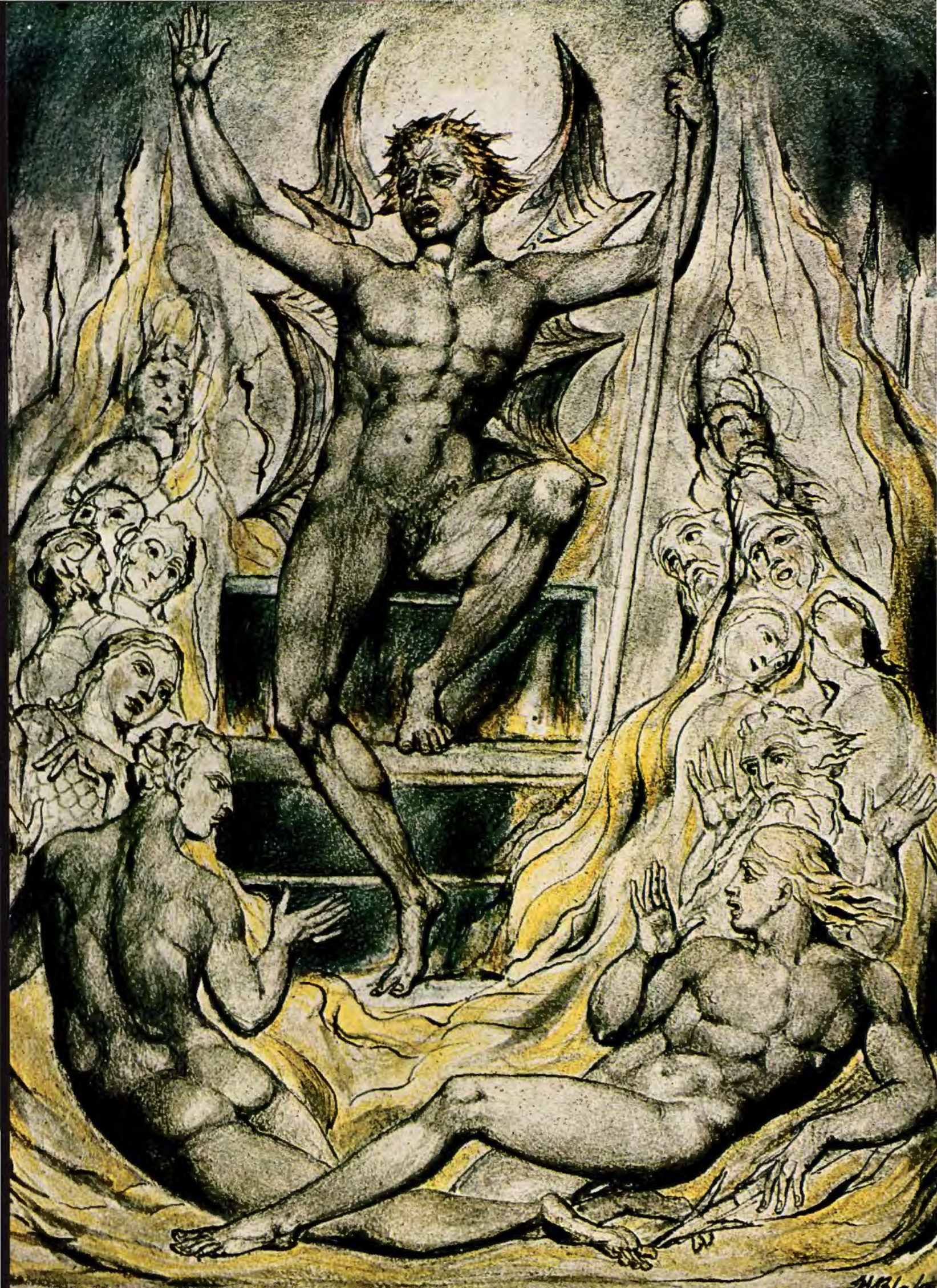
One of the most difficult tasks of Christian teachers all through the centuries has been to combat the persistent tendency of their flock to shift the whole blame for evil and sin onto the Devil, which necessarily leads to shifting it onto God himself. If God is all-powerful and the Devil causes evil, so the obvious argument runs, then God must allow the Devil to cause evil and so must ultimately bear the responsibility for it. As the *Manual of Discipline* was forced to conclude, it is by God's inscrutable design that the angel of darkness provokes guilt and transgression.

In pagan and primitive societies the gods are, in fact, usually held responsible for the existence of evil. The great powers which rule the universe are the ultimate authors of all things, good and evil, life and death, pleasure and pain alike. The Greek gods and goddesses could not be classified as either good or evil, but were either by turns, as the mood took them. The Devil of Europe is the product of belief in a God who is entirely good. He has his roots in Jewish tradition and his flowering in Christianity.

God and Evil

The god of the Jews was at first only one of numerous gods. After the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sang his praises: 'Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?' (Exodus, chapter 15). David complained that Saul's henchmen had tried to drive him out of the Lord's following telling him to go away and serve other gods (1 Samuel, chapter 26). These other gods belonged to the neighbours of the Jews, like the Baals and Ashtaroths of the Canaanites, and the prophets condemned them as evil powers. The early Christians also attacked the pagan gods as evil demons but did not question their reality.

The picture of Yahweh as one god among many gradually gave way to the belief that he was the only God, who had created the universe and everything in it. If he had created everything, then on the face of it he must have created evil, a conclusion from



The satan who had begun his career as a useful official of the heavenly court later became the master of evil and the enemy of God

John Webb

which some of the Old Testament writers did not shrink. The prophet Amos said, 'Does evil befall a city unless the Lord has done it?' (chapter 3).

In the Old Testament God inflicts death, pain and disaster on men with alarming frequency. He punishes the sin of Adam and Eve with death, toil and the pain of childbirth (Genesis, chapter 3). It was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart to prevent him from listening to Moses, so that he could 'multiply his wonders' by inflicting appalling plagues on the Egyptians (Exodus, chapter 11). Sometimes he sent spirits to afflict people, like the 'evil spirit from the Lord' which tormented Saul and drove him into mad fits of rage (1 Samuel, chapters 16, 18). But in these early traditions there is no hint of the presence of the Devil, for if it is God who sends evil to men no Devil is needed. Belief in the Devil came later and biblical texts which originally had nothing to do with him were taken as scriptural evidence of his existence.

The Coming of Satan

The Devil has several different personal names, the most common of which are Satan and Lucifer. The name Satan means 'adversary' in Hebrew and originally meant merely an opponent, and not necessarily a supernatural one. The Philistines, for instance, were afraid that David might become their satan, or adversary (1 Samuel, chapter 29).

But in later passages an angel who is called 'the satan' appears. He is a member of God's heavenly court and his duty is to act as prosecutor, to state the case against men before God. In the book of Zechariah (chapter 3), when the high priest is being judged by God, the satan is there to accuse him, and is already regarded as unduly merciless.

Left **William Blake's *Satan in Council*: the story of the Devil's rebellion against God and his expulsion from heaven with the angels who followed his banner was adopted by Christian theologians, who believed that his titanic pride had made Satan unwilling to accept second place, even to God *Above* 'The Devil', one of the trumps from an early 19th century Italian Tarot pack, showing him with the serpent: by at least the 1st century AD the serpent which tempted Eve had been identified as either the Devil or the Devil's emissary**

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

By the time the book of Job was written (after 700 BC) the satan is still the accuser of men but he is now shown in a strongly unfavourable light. In the early chapters of the book, he objects to God's praise of Job's righteousness, on the ground that it is easy for Job to behave well: he is prosperous and enjoys God's favour, why shouldn't he be righteous? But give him a strong dose of misfortune, the satan says to God in effect, and he will denounce you to your face. Intrigued, and still behaving in a way whose morality seems distinctly pagan, God has Job's children, servants and cattle killed. When Job refuses to curse God for these calamities, the satan is allowed to afflict him with a painful and hideous skin disease, but Job still remains faithful to God.

In Job the satan is performing what is felt to be a necessary function. He tests how far a man's actions match his professions, he looks for wickedness under the surface, and it is for this purpose, apparently, that he 'goes to and fro on the earth and walks up and down on it' (with a possible pun intended on the words *satan* and *sut* 'to roam about'). But he is not an attractive figure and later, with the growth of a nobler conception of God, it was felt that the satan's zeal for a conviction must make him as unwelcome to God as he is to man. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek 'the satan' became *diabolos*, 'the accuser', with the implication of false accusation, slander, and this is the word from which our 'devil' is derived.

The development of the satan, the malicious accuser, into the supreme enemy of God and man may have been influenced by Persian Zoroastrianism, for Palestine was part of the Persian Empire for some 200 years after 538 BC. Zoroastrians believed in two rival gods of good and evil. The world was created by the good god but was promptly invaded by the evil god Ahriman and his legions of fiends (see AHRIMAN).

Although in Jewish and Christian theory the Devil never attained the status of an independent god but was always subject to God's control, Jewish writers increasingly revised the older picture of Yahweh, separating out the good and evil elements in his earlier character and attributing actions which they felt to be evil, not to God but to other supernatural powers. A striking example is the story of David's census. When first told (in 2 Samuel, chapter 24) Yahweh puts the idea of numbering the people into David's mind and then punishes the crime with a plague that kills 70,000 men. But when the story is retold (in 1 Chronicles, chapter 21) it is Satan who suggests the census. This is the first and only use of Satan as a proper name in the Old Testament.

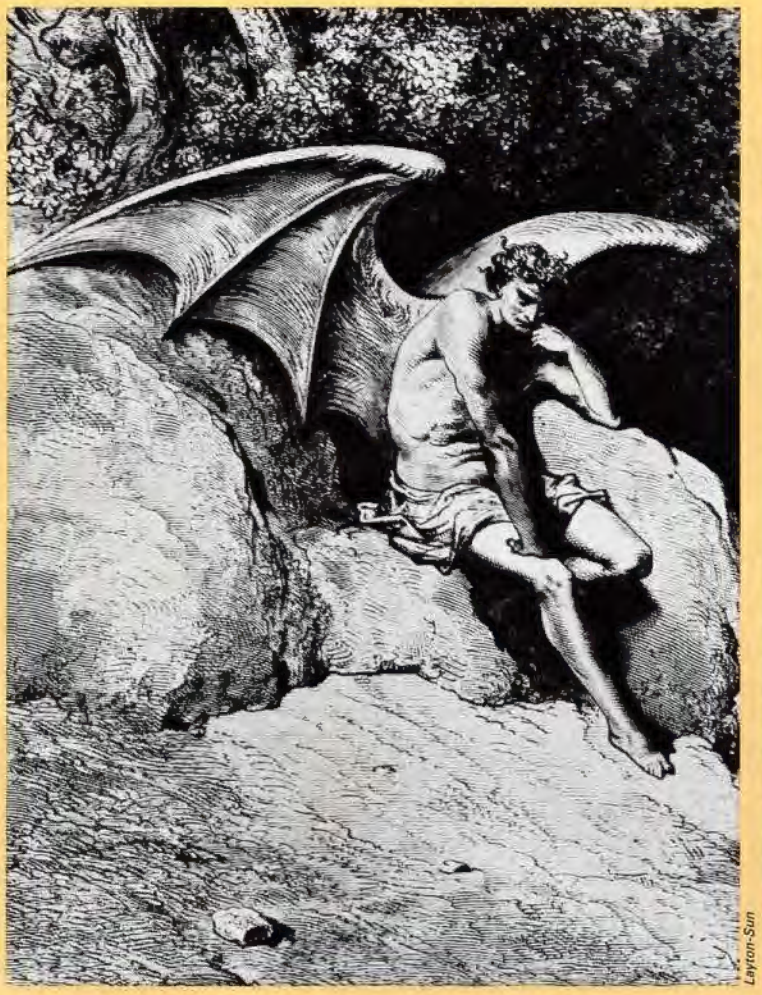
The Jewish *Book of Jubilees* ascribes several of Yahweh's sinister actions in the Old Testament to an angel called Mastema, who is the chief of evil spirits and whose name ('hatred') reveals his character. It was Mastema who tried to kill Moses on his return from Midian to Egypt (whereas in Exodus, chapter 4, it was Yahweh). It was Mastema who hardened Pharaoh's heart, in place of Yahweh, and Mastema who slaughtered the Egyptians' children, again in place of Yahweh (Exodus, chapter 12).

In other apocryphal books called the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* the evil angel is named Beliar or Satan or the Prince of Deceit. He is now clearly the opponent of God as well as the adversary of man. He is entirely evil, without any redeeming feature, the incarnation of utter 'worthlessness', as the name Beliar (or Belial) implies. God is good, Beliar is evil, and man must choose 'either the light or the darkness, either the law of the Lord or the works of Beliar.' Satan rules his own kingdom, 'the kingdom of the enemy', and those who sin fall into his clutches. (See BELIAL.)

The satan who had begun his career as a useful official of the heavenly court had now become the master of evil and the enemy of God. Two stories were told to explain how this had happened, those of the fall of Lucifer and the fall of the Watchers.

Lucifer and the Watchers

'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations!' These are the opening words (in the Authorised Version) of the famous passage in Isaiah (chapter 14) which predicted the coming doom of the king of Babylon, and which St Augustine and other Christian theologians took to refer to the fall of a great archangel who had rebelled against God and had been hurled down from heaven in punishment. The archangel's name in heaven had been Lucifer (light-bearer), on earth it was Satan. The angels



Layton-Sun

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Satan as brooding romantic hero, an illustration by Gustave Doré to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: though he has the bat's wings of the evil archangel, his humanity contrasts with earlier ideas of the Devil in half-human and half-animal form, as in this illustration *(right)* of Satan teaching Martin Luther. The Devil's animal forms reflect his lordship of sensuality, physical passion and brutishness

who joined his rebellion were also expelled from heaven and became the demons of whom he is the lord on earth and in hell (see also LUCIFER).

The sin which caused the Devil's fall was pride. A Roman Catholic author, writing in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, explains that:

> Lucifer saw the splendour of his own augelic nature, together with its supernatural gifts, and rightly prized it. However, he wished to be sufficient unto himself and refused to admit that he depended on God and could find happiness only in God. His sin of rebellious pride was an act of complete egoism and pure malice: he loved himself to the exclusion of all else and without the excuse of ignorance, error, passion, or weakness of will. The sin of the other rebel angels was likewise one of pride in themselves and perhaps in their leader.
>
> Because of the perfection of the angelic will, Satan's choice, once made, was irrevocable. His rejection of God was eternal, as is his subsequent punishment. His essential and greatest torment is the pain of loss, namely the loss of God by whom and for whom he was created. He is in utter despair and is filled with hatred for God, the good angels, mankind, and his fellow demons.

The first trace of the other story appears in Genesis (chapter 6), which describes how 'the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose.' Their wives bore them children which were 'the mighty men of old, the men of renown.'

The first full version of this story is given in *1 Enoch*, a Jewish book which was not included in the Old Testament. Two hundred angels of the order of Watchers, the sleepless ones, lusted after the beautiful daughters of men. They came down to earth and took themselves wives, to whom they taught forbidden arts, including magic, botany, the manufacture of weapons, astronomy and astrology, and the use of cosmetics. The offspring of this monstrous union of the angelic and the mortal, the heavenly and the earthly, were monsters – giants who devoured mankind and even killed and ate each other. God slaughtered the giants and the archangel Michael imprisoned the fallen angels in the valleys of the earth until the time when they would be hurled into everlasting fire.

Both these stories are about angels driven to sin by pride or lust, and sentenced to hell in punishment. They were naturally combined, with the Watchers becoming the rebel angels who followed Lucifer's banner. By at least the 1st century AD the serpent which tempted Eve had been identified as either the Devil or the Devil's emissary, so that Satan was partly responsible for human death, the punishment for the sin of Eden.

Christian writers accepted that the Devil's successful temptation of Adam and Eve had brought death into the world. The crime in Eden put all subsequent generations of men into the Devil's power, from which God sent Christ to rescue them (see ATONEMENT; FIRST MAN). Various passages in the New Testament itself describe the Devil as the ruler of this world. He says that he has power over all the kingdoms of the world, when he tempts Jesus in the wilderness (Luke, chapter 4). Elsewhere, he is called 'the prince of this world' or even 'the god of this world', references which some of the gnostic sects used to support their contention that the Devil rules this world because he created it.

War in Heaven

The ferocious vision of the twelfth chapter of Revelation knits together the principal threads in the later Christian concept of the Devil. 'Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, ". . . the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God . . . But

British Museum

The Devil tips the scales against the souls of the just; detail from a manuscript in the British Museum

woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!" '

Here are combined the themes of the accuser, the war in heaven, the fall of Lucifer and his angels, the Devil's power on earth, and the dragon, who is Leviathan, a primeval monster with which Yahweh does battle in the Old Testament. And 'that ancient serpent' is presumably the deceiver of Paradise.

The story of Satan is told in very much the form familiar to us today in a poem which had considerable influence in the Middle Ages, written by Avitus, a bishop in Gaul in the early 6th century. The Devil rebelled through pride. When he and his angels had been expelled from heaven and he saw Adam and Eve happy in Eden, the Devil was passionately jealous. He feared that mankind, a thing of clay, would succeed to his own lost state and he decided to bring men death. Taking the form of the serpent, he deliberately encouraged in Adam and Eve the same arrogance which had caused his own downfall. He told Eve that the forbidden fruit would reveal to her all the things which God had kept secret, and so would enable her to mingle her mind with the godhead. The poison of ambition entered Eve and she ate the fatal apple.

The Devil's time on earth was not as short as the author of Revelation had suggested. On the contrary, his 'great wrath' lasted for centuries. Lusting for human souls, Satan and his host of demons lurked everywhere in ambush to trap the unwary, to tempt men to sin, to drag their prey to the torments of hell. With the aid of God, men could resist the lures of the Enemy but the Christian emphasis on the entire goodness of God threw into sharper, blacker contrast the figure of the Prince of Darkness.

Attitudes to the Devil ranged from terror to contempt to worship. In folk plays and dances he usually appeared in a humorous role, there were many stories of how easy it was to outwit him, and in German folklore he is often condescendingly labelled *gute dumme Teufel*, 'the good stupid Devil'. But just as in the case of the Kaiser or Hitler in this century, there was a real fear of the enemy beneath the jokes and surface condescension of his opponents.

The opening sentences of Richard Bovet's *Pandaemonium* (1684) provide a typical description of Satan's power and purpose. 'Since the defection of the Fallen Angels from the first rectitude, or state of sublime Happiness and Glory . . . the indefatigable Enemy of Souls hath been restless in his Attempts 'to advance his own Infernal Dominion, and for the withdrawing Human Souls from that glorious Felicity, from whence himself and his Confederate Angels are for ever excluded. And to carry on this Diabolical design, no Fraud nor Artifice hath been omitted, no Delusions nor Suggestions neglected, no Temptations nor Allurements spared, that might entrap and enslave the ever-existing Souls of men . . . For though he changed the highest Heaven for the lowest Hell, a Palace of Eternal Happiness for a Dungeon of Eternal Horror, yet he changed not his Dire and Diabolical Resolutions; but still fights against the Thunder of the Almighty, and though vanquished, still retains his Traitorous Principle and inclination to Rebel.'

The Cloven Hoof

Pictures of the Devil and the horrors of hell on the walls of churches, sermons which preached his malign watchfulness, his shadowy sinister presence everywhere, seem to have created what we would now call a 'backlash' effect. Some, though probably very few at any given time, were positively attracted to the ruler of evil, the lord of sensual pleasure, perversity and outrage.

To what extent the god the witches worshipped was a pagan deity has been hotly disputed (see MODERN WITCHCRAFT). The evidence is hard to interpret, because so much of it was obtained by torture, but it suggests that the witches' god was essentially the Christian Devil, though certainly many pagan elements and ideas were connected with him. For one thing, he frequently appeared (he was presumably a man dressed up) in animal forms, sometimes of a grotesque nature recalling the mixed animal shapes of Babylonian and Assyrian demons. For example, the Devil of the Bamberg witches was sometimes green, with an owl's head, horns, a black face, and talons on his hands and feet.

The creature half-man and half-goat who quite often appeared to witches recalls the classical god Pan and the satyrs who revelled in the rout of Dionysus. The Devil frequently had the bat's wings appropriate to his status as a fallen archangel, he very often had horns, and his favourite animal incarnation on the continent of Europe was as a goat, though he did not take this form in England or Scotland. As a goat, he was usually black, sometimes with a reddish beard, he had a tail and cloven hooves, and he might walk with a limp (see GOAT).

Behind these animal forms there was probably not the survival of any particular pagan god but the survival of an idea. Christianity's tendency to regard the body and its passions as evil, corrupt and dirty, contrasts with both paganism and magic which generally value the whole man, not the man who tries to excise part of his nature. As the arch-opponent of the Christian God, the Devil was naturally the apostle of the belief that man's physical nature is as vital an ingredient of his being as any other, and the Devil's animal shapes were probably an expression of the witches' desire to release the animal in man.

In many cases the Devil appeared as a man, often a dark man, befitting his role as leader of the powers of darkness. But whether in human or animal form, the climax of his worship was sexual union with him.

Some modern magicians deny Satan's existence altogether, some believe in him as a reality to be detested, a few are his worshippers. Another view, stated by Dion Fortune for example (in *Psychic Self-Defence*), sees him as a personification of 'negative evil', as a 'cosmic thrust-block'. Negative evil is the firm surface that we must have to push against in order to walk, and the Devil is 'the principle of resistance, of inertia, that enables Good to "get a purchase" '. For the majority of us probably, the most familiar concept of a being no longer believed in is the great rebel of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the romantic titan whose pride would not allow him to accept second place, even to God: 'better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.'

(See also HELL; PACT; SATANISM; SERPENT; and articles on European witchcraft.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Routledge, 1967) with full bibliography.

The lithe and leggy goddess Diana, mistress of herself and protector of women, slaves and animals, is a curiously modern figure. The study of her cult at Nemi in Italy was the starting point for Frazer's Golden Bough

DIANA

OF ALL THE GREAT goddesses of the classical pantheon, the Latin Diana (and even more her Greek counterpart Artemis) is the most trnly female. Compared, for instance, with Aphrodite (the vamp), Athene (the bluestocking) or Hestia (the trapped housewife), Diana or Artemis is woman as woman, not woman the mate of man nor woman the personification of an intellectual or social ideal. She has the basic feminine characteristics of directness, aloofness and cruelty, in contrast to the masculine characteristics of romanticism, gregariousness and brutality.

Indeed, to modern eyes, in an age when woman is gradually winning (or maybe regaining) her independence, many of the traits of this ancient goddess, however trapped out they may be in the apparatus of antiquity, appear oddly contemporary. Lithe and leggy, in tall boots and short skirt, a huntress, scornful of men, she holds her own in the wilds of the earth. A comforter of mortal women, she brings them the techniques of painless childbirth. Filling the night with brilliance, she rides the clouds, mistress of the moon, mutable, cool, untouched. Hid in reeking fumes of incense, baring her huge and multiple breasts, hung about with symbols of fertility, she exists in a darkness shot through with oriental richness and wizardry. One feels that James Bond, intrigued and very wary, would have known what he was up against.

It is already clear that there is perhaps even more confusion attaching to Diana (Artemis) than to the other divinities of European antiquity. One reason for this is that while she was a comparative latecomer to the pantheon and had less 'mythology' than many of her peers, she became a favourite character, in her various aspects, in poetry and folklore. But the fact that she is the prime representative of the female (a subject on which everyone has personal opinions) made her capable of many varying interpretations and particularly susceptible to identification with foreign aspects of the feminine principle, as these were encountered by the ancients on their geographical borders, or on the frontiers of their own 'rational' minds.

The Grove of Diana

The Latin Diana might almost be thought of as the patron saint of this encyclopedia, since it was an urge to explain the strange nature of her cult and priesthood at Nemi that led Frazer, some 80 years ago, to begin *The Golden Bough*, the book that lies behind all later comparative studies of 'man, myth and magic'. The cult of Diana was popular in ancient Italy but her oldest and most famous place of worship was at Aricia, near the modern Nemi. Here is a volcanic lake known as the 'Mirror of Diana', surrounded on all sides but one by precipitous, densely wooded slopes, vividly described in the first chapter of *The Golden Bough*. In a grove (*nemus*) on the only accessible shore was the sanctuary of Diana, said to have been founded around 500 BC, although the cult itself had undoubtedly far older origins.

Diana was worshipped in this mysterious place (as elsewhere) as goddess of fertility and childbirth, of hunting and of wild and domestic animals. Associated with her was a shadowy male divinity called Virbius, later identified with Hippolytus, the favourite of Artemis, who was said to have been restored to life by Aesculapius (the healing god) and brought by the goddess to Aricia, where he would be hidden from the wrath of Aphrodite.

In historical times, the priesthood of Diana at Nemi was without parallel. The priest was known as the 'King of the Grove' (*Rex Nemorensis*); he was always a runaway slave who, coming to Nemi, had to pluck a bough from a certain tree and engage the incumbent priest in single, and mortal, combat; having fought (and killed) his way to office, he then lived in perpetual expectancy of challengers, one of whom in due time would overcome him and succeed him in his priestly duties and terrors. (Frazer's conclusion – in a nutshell – was that this barbaric ordination, this ghastly laying on of hands, was an echo of ancient human sacrifices to Diana).

Aricia had a political importance, too, as a religious centre of the Latin League. The foundation in Rome of the temple of Diana on the Aventine Hill was probably an attempt to transfer the most important cult centre of the League, and hence its political leadership, to Rome. It is noteworthy that the Aventine was the headquarters of the Roman plebeians and that Diana was regarded as the protectress of the lower social orders in general and of slaves in particular – a clear connection with the 'King of the Grove'. Slaves had a holiday on Diana's principal festival in mid-August, a date transformed by the Christian Church into the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, who also, in certain places, was venerated as patroness of outlaws and thieves. Moreover, Diana (Artemis) was, at least in historical times, thought of as a virgin, and no man could enter the temple on the Aventine.

Mistress of Wild Beasts

The classical mythology of Artemis tells that she was the daughter of Zeus and Leto and the sister of Apollo. In some of the stories Artemis was born first, with no pain, and immediately acted as midwife to her mother for the birth of Apollo, thus prefiguring her later care for mortal women. The evolution of her character is a good example of the transition from the pre-Hellenic to the Hellenic world in Greek mythology and of the resulting confusion. Artemis's name is apparently not Greek. In Homer she is a rather ineffective partisan of the Trojans and is called *agrotera* (she of the wild) and *potnia theron* (mistress of wild beasts). She is the huntress, leading the life (as remarked by Charles Seltman in *The Twelve Olympians*) of an unmarried daughter of Homer's 'gay and brilliant feudal families', the goddess of 'energetic women' such as Atalanta, the better of men in hunting and wrestling yet 'unwilling to wed any of them'. The analogy with the huntin', shootin' and fishin' young ladies of the English shires is not too far-fetched, given the change in space, temperament and time.

Although the later Greeks and the Romans certainly regarded Artemis as a virgin, this was not the view of the earlier Greeks. To them, she was celibate but above all independent – if she wanted a man, she would have one but she would not be bound to him. However, as the comparatively uncomplicated, guilt-free Homeric past slid away, Artemis changed from the attractively open-air girl, perhaps sometimes accompanied by an attendant lover, to the more forbidding character of the austerely chaste huntress. It is in this role that she is most familiar. This is the Artemis of Hippolytus, her virgin and, to most contemporary minds, priggish acolyte who repulsed the advances of his stepmother Phaedra and was destroyed (as was she) by Aphrodite; of Actaeon who, having by no fault of his own seen the goddess bathing naked in a spring, was by her changed into a stag and done to death by his own hounds; and of the later European imagination.

In the oldest, pre-Hellenic, stage and particularly in Asia, Artemis, though concerned with the wild, was one of the many manifestations of the mother-goddess, the source of life and fertility. In the mainstream of the purely Greek tradition, this maternal aspect was transmuted into a role almost that of the maiden aunt, the busy attendant at births, a companion of the young. On the periphery, and especially in the cult at Ephesus, the more overtly female, life-generating aspect remains to the fore.

Tomboy Goddess

But this concern and love for young things may also be connected with the boisterous side of Artemis's character. In the famous hymn by the Greek poet Callimachus (c 305–240 BC) the goddess asks Zeus her father to give her only nine-year-old girls as her companions: she appears as a kind of tomboy goddess. At Athens, for instance, girls of this age were dressed in bearskins to take part in a festival of Artemis.

The image of the bear (like that of the stag) runs through several of the Artemis legends. One of the best known concerns Kallisto (the name means 'loveliest'), originally a Minoan forerunner of Artemis but in classical mythology a nymph in her train. There are many versions of the story. In one, Zeus seduced her in the form of a bear; in another, Hera, enraged (yet again), turned Kallisto into a bear and tricked Artemis into killing her; in a third, Artemis discovered Kallisto to be pregnant and herself turned her into a bear and shot her. The victim was transported to the skies as the constellation of the Great Bear (the Plough) and her son was Arkas, the ancestor of the Arcadians. Some say Arkas had a twin brother, none other than Pan.

Sonia Halliday

Scala

Above Artemis baring her multiple breasts, hung about with symbols of fertility; Selçuk Museum *Right* The more forbidding side of Artemis's character is illustrated in the unhappy legend of the young huntsman Actaeon, who, by no fault of his own, saw the goddess bathing naked in a spring. Incensed by this she transformed him into a stag and he was torn to pieces by his own hounds: Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* in the National Gallery of Scotland *Below* Cool and virginal, Lady of the Beasts, the huntress Diana holds her own in the wilds of the earth; by the 16th century German painter Cranach the Elder

Giraudon

In one of the stranger versions of the Kallisto story, Zeus had his way with her after assuming the form of Artemis herself. This is an example of the strand of what we would call lesbianism in the legends of Artemis. It would be a mistake to put too much emphasis on this; but her liking for exclusively female society, her savagery towards certain men and towards her female attendants if they involved themselves with men, all point in this direction. Some of her folk cults, indeed, were decidedly ambivalent, with male dancers impersonating women and girls sporting phalluses.

The link between Artemis and the moon, so evocative to later generations, did not emerge until the 5th century BC. It probably sprang from her concern with woman and from her brother Apollo's identification with the sun; but the connection is nowhere recognized in any cult, as far as we know. Much the same goes for her frequent confusion with the witch-goddess Hecate who, like her cousin Artemis, was also connected with the guardianship of women and the young (see HECATE). Nonetheless, these identifications gave rise to the eerily romantic image of the triple goddess, potent in the night sky, in the wilds of the earth and at accursed crossroads, where Hecate was worshipped and grim happenings occurred. On this darker side, Artemis was also credited with the power (and inclination) to send plagues and sudden death.

Diana of the Ephesians

Although essentially a goddess of hill and heath, Artemis was revered as the chief divinity in three famous Greek maritime cities – Syracuse, Marseilles and Ephesus. It was in the last of these that her cult became particularly renowned. Tradition has it that the city of Ephesus was founded about 900 BC by Ionian Greeks who brought with them the worship of Artemis. These Ionians mingled freely with the local inhabitants and assimilated many Asiatic customs. Tradition also relates that the Amazons built a temple at Ephesus to house a primitive image of a goddess (later identified with Artemis), probably made of a palm trunk. This temple was destroyed by barbarians around the middle of the 7th century. About 100 years later the great king Croesus erected a magnificent temple which in time became one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The chief object of veneration, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, was a wooden statue of Artemis.

The temple was the recipient, over a very long period, of rich gifts, which often took the strange form of gold and silver panoplies and garments for the statue. These would be changed at intervals, rather as a child dresses a doll. The most curious of these accoutrements were vestments to which were attached large golden representations of dates, giving the appearance of clusters of ample breasts. But oddest of all, on the head of the goddess was set a small shrine which probably contained the *diopet*, the most ancient and sacred thing in the temple. This was a small stone (possibly, in fact, a neolithic implement) which had been venerated in Ephesus since long before the Ionians came and which was believed to have fallen from Zeus in heaven. (This belief enabled the Ephesians to retort to their tiresome Christian critics that they did not worship an idol but something fashioned by the hand of God himself.)

The temple continued in fame and splendour for many centuries and did not go into a decline until the second half of the 3rd century AD. Finally, about the year 400, the statue was smashed by a Christian who boasted on an inscription that he had torn down 'the demon Artemis'. But it is said that the diopet was saved and hidden; and it is quite possible that an object now in the Liverpool City Museum is the very 'Zeus-fallen thing'.

It is curious that the Diana of the Ephesians, the exuberantly rich symbol of fertility and splendour, surrounded by oriental pomp, yet bearing on her head a relic of neolithic man, should be the longest surviving historical manifestation of the goddess Artemis. For she has lived on in the European imagination as something very different; the pure huntress goddess of the moon invoked by Ben Jonson in the words 'Queen and huntress, chaste and fair . . . Goddess, excellently bright.'

Sonia Halliday/Selçuk Museum

Statue of Diana: as a pagan deity, goddess of the moon and patroness of witches, she was regarded as a demon by the early Christians

Lady of Light

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

Swinburne
Atalanta in Calydon

Witch Goddess

Greek and Roman authors connected witches with darkness and night, and so with Diana as goddess of the moon. In a poem by the Roman writer Horace (1st century BC), the witch Canidia appeals to 'Night and Diana, you faithful witnesses of all my enterprises.' As a pagan goddess and patroness of witches, to the early Christians Diana was a demon, and traces of her in this capacity survived into the Middle Ages. In 1318 Pope John XXII accused some of his court at Avignon of copulating with demonesses called 'Dianas'.

The most famous survival, however, was the belief that witches flew through the night with Diana. An ecclesiastical regulation called the Canon Episcopi, which has been traced back to the 9th century, says that some deluded women falsely believe that during the night they 'ride upon certain beasts with Diana, the goddess of pagans, and an innumerable multitude of women.' In other versions of this belief different pagan goddesses are named but it was natural to connect Diana, the moon and the huntress, with night-flying. Margaret Murray (in *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*) called the witch religion of Europe 'The Dianic cult', a hint that has been taken up by those modern witches who worship a Queen of Heaven. But although there are occasional references to a goddess in the history of witchcraft – among the Basques and some of the Scottish witches, for example – traces of her are rare, and witches were mainly concerned with a male god, the Devil.

C. DE HOGHTON

FURTHER READING: M. Grant, *Myths of the Greeks and Romans* (Weidenfeld, 1962); W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (Methuen, 1950); C. S. Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians* (Max Parrish, 1956).

DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

ALL WE KNOW of the original Dionysius (or Denis) the Areopagite is what is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (chapter 17). 'But some men joined him (Paul) and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite . . .' Areopagite means a member of the judicial court which sat on the hill called Areopagus in Athens. The man converted by Paul at Athens was said to have become the first bishop of that city, on the sole evidence of the word of another Dionysius, writing a century later. The once popular identification of the Areopagite with St Denis of France is obviously wrong, for in fact the latter was martyred in c 250 AD.

The Areopagite's importance in the history of mysticism is not due to anything he did himself but to the works which were wrongly attributed to him from the 6th century to the 16th. The real name of the author of these works is unknown, and he is now usually referred to as 'Pseudo-Dionysius'.

The works are first heard of in Constantinople in 533 AD. At a council held

Dionysius the Areopagite was at one time identified, incorrectly, with St Denis the apostle of France, who was tortured and beheaded by the Romans in the 3rd century: detail from a late 14th century French painting depicting the martyrdom of St Denis

Giraudon

there in that year one party appealed to the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite to support its views, but their opponents denied the authenticity of these writings. At the Council of the Lateran in Rome, a century or so later, no one called the attribution in doubt and it continued to be accepted down to the 16th century and even beyond.

These writings on the nature of mysticism formed the groundwork of mystical theology as it developed in the Middle Ages; the fact that they could not have been written by Dionysius the Areopagite does not detract from their value. The literary device which caused the erroneous attribution was a common one in those days, and indeed appears to have been used at an earlier date for some of the books of the Old Testament (the Wisdom 'of Solomon' in the Apocrypha for example). The writer wanted to be taken for the convert Dionysius mentioned in Acts and took some pains to authenticate this; he says that he was much disturbed by an unexpected eclipse of the sun which, he subsequently discovered, took place at the death of Christ (Luke 23. 44). He claimed that he was converted by St Paul and became bishop of Athens. He made out that he addressed his works to Timothy, Paul's companion, and sent his letters to various people, among others to John the Evangelist exiled on Patmos.

Yet everything in these writings combines to make us reject so early a date for them. Thus it is quite obvious that the writer made use of the Greek Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus (411–485 AD). It is more probable, therefore, that 'Pseudo-Dionysius' wrote in or about the year 500. In addition, the liturgical rites which he mentions were obviously in a far more developed stage than they could have been had he been describing what took place in the church of Athens during the time of persecution in the last years of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd.

The extant works of Pseudo-Dionysius, all in Greek, are the *Celestial Hierarchy*, the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, *The Divine Names* and the *Mystical Theology*. There are also the letters which still survive.

Charter of Christian Mystics

Of special interest is the influence of these works on the 14th century mystical movements – those of the Rhineland (Eckhart, Tauler and Suso), of Flanders (Ruysbroek especially) and England (the *Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton, Richard Rolle and Julian of Norwich) all of which seem to have absorbed and reproduced in varying degrees the Pseudo-Areopagite's synthesis between Christianity and Neoplatonist positions. In a sense, his writings have come to form the charter of Christian mysticism. They deal specifically with the intimate union between God and the soul and the progressive deification of man. This is said to be achieved by a process of 'unknowing' by which the soul abandons all perceptions of the senses together with the reasoning of the intellect. This leads it to a state of obscurity and darkness which is increasingly illuminated by the 'ray of divine light' culminating in the knowledge of the ineffable Being, going right beyond both affirmation and negation.

The celestial hierarchy is formed by the nine choirs of angels in their three orders. Firstly, the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones; secondly the Dominations, Virtues and Powers; and thirdly the Principalities, Archangels and Angels. These correspond on earth to the threefold hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons. These, with the sacraments, lead man to deification.

The spiritual life is divided into the three stages of the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways. This division is to be found, though sometimes with slightly different terminology, from the early Middle Ages onwards. The importance of Pseudo-Dionysius lies in his introduction of the idea of 'unknowing' into Christian mysticism, that God is best known by negation: we can know more about what God is not than about what he is. This is not, of course, an approach confined to Christian mysticism; the points of similarity with Zen Buddhism, as well as the differences, are obvious. (See also CLOUD OF UNKNOWING; ECKHART; JULIAN OF NORWICH; HILTON; and RUYSBROEK.)

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

FURTHER READING: *The Divine Names* and *Mystical Theology*, translated by C. E. Rolt, published by the S.P.C.K. in 1920.

Beneath the wild, savage rites of Dionysus lies the recognition of man's need for occasional release from the bonds of law and order. To resist Dionysus is to reject joy – and to incur terrible consequences

DIONYSUS

THE THIRTEENTH GOD of the Greeks, Dionysus was a son of Zeus, according to Hesiod, although his paternity has been disputed. He was a stranger in Hellas, coming from wild uplands, mystic, the object of both frenzied devotion and hostility. After many wanderings and much trouble, he sat at the High Table of Olympus, as one of the great gods, taking the place surrendered to him by Hestia, the goddess of hearth and housework. This bare account contains nearly all the clues we need for as much understanding as we are ever likely to achieve, rationally, of the mythology and cult of Dionysus, the god of far more than wine.

The difficulty in writing about Dionysus is not that he is distant but that he is so close: indeed, he is always with us. But he is often denied and, when this happens, he wreaks a terrible vengeance. He is the god

Left **Dionysus was credited with discovering grapes and inventing the art of wine-making: scene on the inside of a shallow Greek bowl, dated about 535 BC, showing the god bringing the vine across the seas to Greece**

Hirmer Verlag

of the wilds – not the wilds of visible nature where Artemis reigns, but the wilds that extend so far and smile so deep in the secret regions of the human personality. He is the god of the irresistible but often resisted urge to 'let oneself go', to throw off the trammels of custom and respectability, to abandon, indeed, the Greek ideal of moderation in all things. He represents a permanent human force and yet a force that every age and culture seeks, if not to suppress, to channel and contain. Every age will reinterpret him according to its own attitudes and beliefs, its own restraints and permitted releases. This is no bad thing, so long as we are aware of it: it makes us (because he is so strange and fascinating, so known and yet so unknown) think about him more deeply than about Ares or Hera, or perhaps even Zeus or Athene. We can learn more about ourselves from Dionysus and how his cult revealed him than we can from any other Greek deity – except Apollo, the god of order and reason, with whom Dionysus is curiously and significantly linked.

Born from the Thigh

The mythological stories told of Dionysus's birth and his adventurous progresses through the lands of men will of themselves lead us on to the nature of his cult and the historical background of its introduction and acceptance in classical Greece. In origin, Dionysus is no Greek. He plays, for instance, no partisan role in Homer's account of the Trojan War – not even on the side of the Asiatic Trojans. He figures only occasionally, in passing. Homer had heard of his wild rites but clearly knew little about him. Dionysus hails, in fact, from Phrygia and later moves to Thrace, the wild tracts on either side of the Hellespont. His mother, Semele, is associated with the Phrygian earth goddess Zemelo. The Greek mythologists, however, make Semele a mortal, the daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes – that doom-laden site of so many products of Greek imagination. Semele, needless to say, was beautiful and attracted the attention of the ever-amorous Zeus, the father of the gods. Hera's jealousy, ever fertile of new ways to thwart Zeus, caused her to visit Semele in the guise of an old woman and suggest to the naïve girl that she ask her divine lover to appear to her in his full immortal splendour – not least to impress her sisters Agave, Ino and Antonoe. Zeus, who had promised Semele any favour she might ask, reluctantly consented – whereupon Semele was annihilated by his lightning and thunderbolts. Her unborn son was rescued by Zeus and shut away by him in his own thigh, whence in due time he was born.

But Hera was not to be deceived and on her orders Dionysus was seized by the Titans, who tore him limb from limb and began to cook him up for a meal. Having been restored to life by Rhea (his earth goddess grandmother), he was finally hidden, disguised as a girl, in the household of Athamas, King of Orchomenus in Greece. But Hera made the king demented and he killed his son Learchus, thinking he was hunting a stag. Dionysus was next fostered by nymphs on Mt Nysa where, some say, he

Sonia Halliday

Although drinking wine was in fact only one of the means through which the worshippers of Dionysus attempted to achieve union with him, he is traditionally depicted in art as the god of wine and revelry: Drunken Dionysus, a mosaic from Antioch, Turkey

invented wine. Grown to manhood, he was himself driven mad by Hera and went wandering about the world, accompanied by Silenus, his tutor, and a rout of satyrs and wild women – the maenads or bacchantes – his former nymph nurses and others. Strange tales are told of these followers and of their extraordinary powers. They caused fountains of milk and wine to spring from the ground; fire could do them no harm – they often carried it in their hands or on their heads; weapons left them unscathed; they had the strength to tear apart live bulls and other fierce beasts, the women no less than the men – yet the women showed great tenderness to young animals and suckled them at their own breasts. Armed with the *thyrsos*, an ivy-twined staff tipped with a pine cone, brandishing swords and enwreathed with serpents, they followed the god as far as India and then retraced their steps to Greece.

As he went, the god founded cities, so it is said, taught laws and the culture of the vine and engaged in battles. But if he was victorious in the latter, he frequently met with opposition from stubborn folk who denied his divinity. These paid dearly for their blindness. Lycurgus, for instance, King of Thrace, was driven mad, killed his son Dryas with an axe thinking he was cutting down a vine, and mutilated his corpse. Thrace was smitten with a great drought. Dionysus, who had taken refuge from Lycurgus's persecution at the bottom of the sea, reappeared and said relief would come only with the death of the king. Whereupon his subjects tied Lycurgus to wild horses and tore him apart. In Argos and Boeotia, both provinces of Greece, there was similar hostility to the god with similar results: the women went berserk and rent their children in pieces.

The most famous story of the denial of the godhead of Dionysus and the frightful consequences was set in Thebes. The story is told in one of the most memorable of Greek tragedies, *The Bacchae* of Euripides (c 487–407 BC). Dionysus, accompanied by his followers, came to the city, the place of his birth, and was angered to find that Agave and his mother's other sisters denied his divinity and that he was the son of Zeus; but old Cadmus and the blind seer Tiresias recognized him. Dionysus therefore sent a madness upon his aunts and the rest of the Theban women, who abandoned their household chores and went raving upon Mt Cithaeron. Pentheus, son of Agave and now King of Thebes, a pillar of unimaginative authority and male supremacy, was outraged and tried to arrest Dionysus and his maenads, but they walked out of prison completely unharmed.

Meanwhile the women are out on a high mountain, at this stage in a comely trance, like flower-children of antiquity. But set

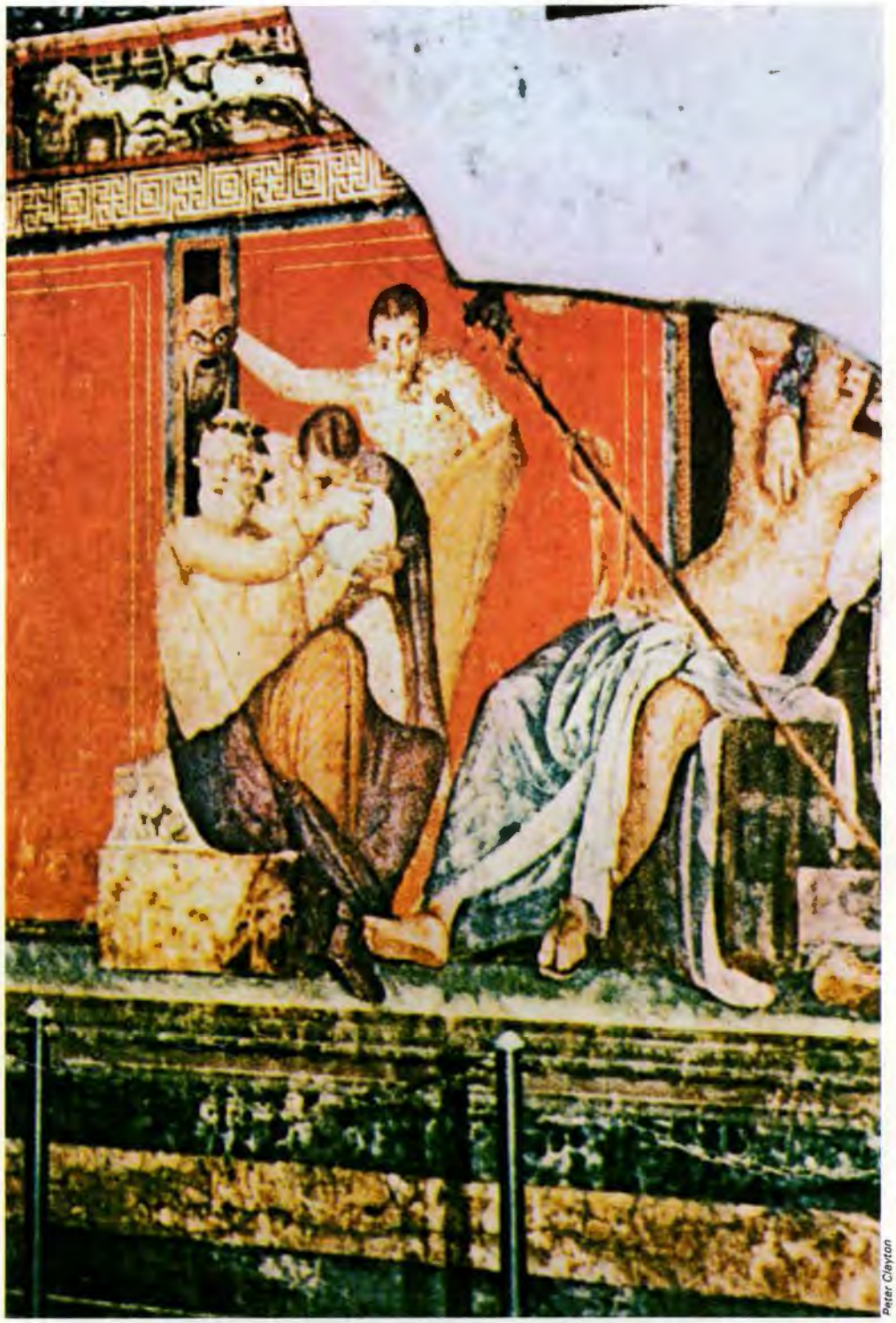
Scala

upon by herdsmen, they go into a frenzy, tear the Theban cattle limb from limb, eat the flesh raw, plunder the neighbouring villages and steal the children. Nothing can avail against them. Then Pentheus begins himself to fall under the spell of Dionysus, who so far in the play has appeared as a mortal. He is persuaded to go and watch the women, hidden in a pine tree and disguised as a woman. But the possessed women discover him, uproot the tree and dismember him alive. Agave, his mother, wrenches off his head, believing she has slaughtered a lion cub with her bare hands. The women return in ecstasy to the city but Cadmus manages to bring them back to their senses. As Agave and the others realise the full horror of what they have done and stumble off into hopeless exile, Dionysus reveals himself as the god.

By the account so far, Dionysus might well seem a bestial character and his deeds even more horrific than most of the cruel doings of the ancient Greek divinities. But the point is this: horrors occur when Dionysus is denied. If you surrender to him you will have joy – a wild and frenzied joy but not a joy destructive in itself; but if you resist, the joy becomes a foul and frenzied horror, a punishment for the refusal of joy. The stories illustrate this point, particularly the *Bacchae*, in which one of the most striking elements is the contrast between the accounts of the women on Cithaeron. In the first, when they are left alone in communion with the god, all is peaceful and idyllic; in the second, after they have been startled by the herdsmen and think they are being hunted, they erupt into bloody madness; and in the third, when they discover Pentheus in their midst, there is a climax of unspeakable fearfulness.

The stories also reflect something unique in Greek religion and mythology: the historical fact of the introduction, by groups of foreign missionaries, of what was to all intents and purposes a new religion and a new ethos – and of the inevitable resistance they met. The Dionysiac cult is totally different from the mainstream of Greek, Olympian religion. The latter was founded upon the immortality of the gods and the mortality of men and upon the gulf between the two. It was man's duty to reverence the

Dionysus was the god of the whole of 'moist nature' – sap and blood and sperm: murals in the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii, apparently a centre for the worship of Dionysus *Left* The whipping of a young girl, an initiate into the Dionysian mysteries *Right* An initiate is given wine to drink while a horrific mask is held up behind him: possibly the mask was reflected in the surface of the wine



Peter Clayton

gods, from a distance, and to avoid their anger by decent and orderly behaviour – self-knowledge and no extremes. Dionysus offered the complete opposite. Within a ritual frame, his cult allowed, indeed encouraged, the release of irrational impulses which gave freedom, identification with the god and thereby happiness. He is known as 'Lusios' – the liberator. Moreover, his cult is open to all: to young and old, men and women, slaves and freedmen.

It is this which makes Dionysus the god of far more than wine. He is the god, says Plutarch, of the whole of 'moist nature' – sap and blood and sperm; or, in the words of Professor E. R. Dodds, of 'all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature.' It was the later Greeks and the stolid Romans who looked to a degenerate Dionysus, the tipsy, merry Bacchus and his Saturday-night-out boys and girls: and modern Europe followed them until anthropology and psychology suggested different ideas. For the real devotees of Dionysus, wine was merely one means of union with the god. There were others more potent – above all, the dance.

Dancing Madness

In many societies throughout the world dancing has had a profound religious significance. Everyone knows of savage dances and the states of 'ecstasy' – standing outside oneself – that they induce. Jalaluddin Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi sect of dervishes, noted for their dancing, taught that 'he who knows the power of the dance dwells in God'. There have, throughout the Christian era, been outbreaks of 'dancing madness' in Europe; and their characteristics as described in the records are strikingly similar to those that we read of in Euripides. Even in our own time, the dance has become more of a cult. On the wilder shores of pop, events may be observed that are strongly reminiscent of a Dionysiac 'orgy'. And be it noted that the word 'orgy' is *not* used here in its debased common sense. For a Dionysiac, and for many alive today, the 'orgy' is not a drunken revel but a means of seeking, by dance and music, a communion with something beyond the ordinary, in company with a band of like-minded people.

Apart from dance and music, there is evidence that the behaviour of the *bacchae*, the women inspired to ecstatic frenzy by Dionysus, are not figments of the possibly warped imagination of an old and disappointed Athenian playwright. In many countries and in any number of modern clinical descriptions, the same elements recur. The tossing back and around of the head and hair, the handling of snakes, insensitivity to pain, the tearing apart and

God of Many Joys

He, the nurturer and the god of rapture; he the god who is forever praised as the giver of wine which removes all sorrow and care; he, the deliverer and healer, "the delight of mortals", "the god of many joys", the dancer and ecstatic lover, "the bestower of riches", the "benefactor" – this god who is the most delightful of all the gods is at the same time the most frightful. No single Greek god even approaches Dionysus in the horror of his epithets, which bear witness to a savagery that is absolutely without mercy. In fact, one must evoke the memory of the monstrous horror of eternal darkness to find anything at all comparable. He is called the "render of men", "the eater of raw flesh", "who delights in the sword and bloodshed". Correspondingly we hear not only of human sacrifice in his cult but also of the ghastly ritual in which a man is torn to pieces.

W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*
(trans. Robert B. Palmer)

eating raw of animals – all these are characteristic of hysteria and, very often, of hysteria channelled into the practice of religion.

In the Dionysiac cult, the rending and devouring of raw flesh is probably based on straightforward magic: you may become god by devouring god in one of his manifestations. This concept is not so far removed from that of the Christian who receives the consecrated bread during Holy Communion, not to mention that of Scandinavian tribes in the Dark Ages who, it is said, devoured their kings when times were bad in order to spread their royal strength throughout all the members of the band. Maybe the fate of Pentheus reflects this kind of human sacrament, behind the ostensible motive of revenge – an echo of ritual symbolism.

It seems probable that the actual cult of Dionysus was introduced into northern Greece about the beginning of the 7th century BC. Its coming, and its gradual penetration southwards, are likely to have had the twin results of disturbing the settled routine of domestic and religious life, and of provoking violent opposition from the Pentheus figures of the time. About the start of the 6th century the problem may have reached crisis point and it appears to have been resolved in a thoroughly Greek, pragmatic way by incorporating the Dionysiac cult into the existing state cults – rather, to take a tame parallel, as British would-be revolutionaries are sometimes elevated to the House of Lords.

Bacchanalian revel in honour of the god of the wilds of the human personality: painting by Nicholas Poussin in the National Gallery

Night on a Bare Mountain

This unlikely marriage took place notably at Delphi, the seat of Apollo, the god of law and order. Commenting on this remarkable outcome, Charles Seltman writes (in *The Twelve Olympians*): 'Law could be redeemed from mechanistic rote by the natural human contact of the anarchic god, while licence could be put under control by complying with the god of self-knowledge and moderation. Order could learn about disorder, and disorder about order.' When one compares this solution with the earlier troubles and the sorry Christian history of persecution and sectarianism, one may yet think the Greeks worthy of study and admiration.

Of particular interest is the establishment of Dionysiac religion at Athens. Peisistratus, ruler of Athens in the mid-6th century, founded both the Panathenaic Games and the Great Dionysia. He invited the priest of Dionysus at Eleutherae – a village on the borders of Attica which claimed to be the god's birthplace – to set up his statue at the foot of the Acropolis. The priest was accompanied by a troupe of country players called *tragodoi* (literally, 'goat-singers') who gave performances before the statue in honour of the god. Many people believe that this is the origin of Greek tragedy and thus of Western theatre (see DRAMA). It is interesting that this may at least partly explain why Greek actors wore masks: Dionysus had long been the god of masquerade – the Master of Illusions, as Professor Dodds calls him – capable of transforming himself into many shapes to avoid his enemies. In the Attic countryside, the Dionysia were less subtle and included, we may be sure, a good deal of rural jollification and drunkenness.

But the most extraordinary manifestation of the Dionysiac cult, which lasted until the age of Plutarch in the 2nd century AD, was the joint mountain dancing festival of the women of Athens and Delphi. This was held in midwinter every two years. A group of well-born Athenian women and girls were chosen to walk the 100 miles, barefoot, across the mountains to the shrine of Apollo, where they joined their Delphic sisters. After prayers and sacrifices to the god of licence in the precincts of the god of reason, they set off at night to scale Mt Parnassus, more than 8,000 feet high. There, on the bitter heights, they held the *oreibasia*, the mountain dancing of Dionysus.

Nobody knows exactly what they did. The remarkable fact is that they did it at all – these cloistered women from upper-class homes upon the serene Attic coast, abandoning themselves in midwinter to the harsh night on the bare mountain. Other parts of Greece held similar rites but nowhere in such dramatic surroundings. Wild they may have been but their timing in midwinter and the exclusion of men point to something very different from the popular idea of an 'orgy'. For these women, the *orgia* were acts of devotion and communion,

Michael Holford

Right **'Mr Punch' is depicted as a jovial Dionysian figure surrounded by nymphs and satyrs in this detail from the cover of *Punch* magazine, designed by Richard Doyle and used from 1844 to 1951 *Below*** **The bacchae and maenads, the women who followed Dionysus on his travels, tore wild beasts apart in frenzy, yet showed great tenderness towards young animals: Dionysus and maenads, scene on a Greek urn of about 540 BC**

John Webb

Hirmer Verlag/Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

of release into the unknown, terrifying yet fulfilling.

Other Dionysiac festivals may well have been more 'orgiastic'. In some, men were allowed to take part and these may have been characterized by sexual freedom. But it is well to remember a passage from the *Bacchae*: 'Dionysus compels no woman to be chaste. Chastity is a matter of character and she who is naturally chaste will partake of Bacchic rites without being touched.' As Seltman says, 'Their state of *ecstasis* left the Bacchae free to follow either the instincts or the restraints of nature. No inhibitions stopped the satisfaction of desire; no exhibitionist urge drove them towards promiscuous folly.'

The Dionysiac cult recognizes the universal human need to fling off the fetters of habit, if only – willingly – to take them up again and soldier on to cope with the demands of an ordered social life. Dionysus allows us this release, this necessary respite from regime. And in spite of the frenzy, this does not free us from ultimate responsibility. As Professor Dodds observes, 'Dionysus is beyond good and evil . . . he is what we make of him.' The god, in fact, is already within us: we have to seek him and allow him to escape, if we do not wish him to break out – as he did from Pentheus's prison – and drive us mad. In this sense, we are indeed one with Dionysus; and that is why he fascinates us.

CHARLES DE HOGHTON

FURTHER READING: E. R. Dodd's introduction to *The Bacchae* (Oxford University Press, 1944); see also his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (University of California Press, 1951); W. F. Otto, *Dianysus: Myth and Cult*, translated by Robert B. Palmer (Spring Pubns., 1981); Philip Vellacott's translation of *The Bacchae* is in the Penguin Classics series.

Scala

Dioscuri

'Sons of Zeus', the twin heroes Castor and Polydeuces of Greek myths (Castor and Pollux of Roman): they protected sailors, and were believed to have come to the aid of the Roman army at the battle of Lake Regillus, c 496 BC: they sailed with the Argonauts to fetch the Golden Fleece: they were worshipped in Sparta, where their symbol was two upright pieces of wood joined by two cross-pieces, hence the astrological symbol for Gemini, with which they were associated.

See TWINS.

DIRECTIONS

'I ADJURE THEE, furthermore, by the crown of thorns which was set upon His head, by the blood which flowed from His feet and hands, by the nails with which He was nailed to the Tree of the Cross, by the holy tears which He shed, by all which He suffered willingly through great love for us: by the lungs, the heart, the hair, the inward parts, and all the members of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I conjure thee by the judgement of the living and the dead, by the Gospel words of our Saviour Jesus Christ, by His Saying, by His miracles . . .'

This apparently pious prayer is in fact part of a long incantation in the 16th century *Grimoire of Honorius*, intended to summon up to visible appearance one of the most powerful of all demons, Amaymon, King of the North. The grimoire also provides incantations for summoning the demonic rulers of the other three directions: Egym (south), Baymon (west) and Magoa (east).

The belief that each direction has its ruling demon has a long history in Europe. An early list of them is Oriens (east), Amemon (south), Eltzen (north) and Boul (west). Cecco D'Ascoli, the 14th century astrologer and magician, said that four spirits 'of great virtue' rule the cardinal points. Each of them has 25 legions of spirits under his command. If they are summoned up and given human blood to drink and the flesh of a dead man or a cat to gnaw, they will give trustworthy answers to the magician's questions. Their names are Oriens (east), Amaymon (west), Paymon (north) and Egim (south).

Another magical textbook, the *Lemegeton*, says that the kings of the four quarters 'are not to be called forth except it be upon great occasion, but invoked and commanded to send such, or such a spirit as is under their power and rule'. Several centuries later, the modern magician Macgregor Mathers, commenting on the importance of a properly constructed magic circle, said that without one, to summon up 'such fearful potencies as Amaymon, Egym or Beelzebub' would probably result in the death of the magician on the spot.

In white magic the four directions also have their rulers, the archangels Raphael (east), Michael (south), Gabriel (west) and Uriel (north). The magician appeals to each angel to protect him against evil coming from each direction (see CIRCLE).

Many North American Indian tribes – especially those of the south-west – also link spirits and deities with the directions and with colours. The Pueblos see six main directions: north, yellow; west, blue; east, white; south, red; upwards, usually multicoloured; downwards, black. Animal gods and Nature spirits come into the system, so that Mountain Lion and Oriole (both more or less yellow) are associated with the north. Similarly, the major Aztec god Tezcatlipoca was yellow as ruler of sunrise in the east, blue as lord of the south, red as master of sunset in the west, and black as ruler of evil magic in the north (see AZTECS).

The east, being the direction of sunrise, is symbolically the direction of life and light, and to turn to the east is to turn towards the light, towards spiritual illumination, towards God. This is why the altar in a Christian church is almost always at the east end. Some early churches were built the other way round, following the precedent of Greek and Roman temples which usually faced east so that when the doors were opened the rays of the sun shone on the statue of the god.

By contrast, the west is the direction of death because the sun 'dies' there each evening. In many prehistoric burials the dead face towards the west and in modern Europe people are usually buried with their heads to the west. In Homer the principal entrance to the underworld, where the dead live, is in the far west.

The north, on the whole, has an evil reputation. In the northern hemisphere the sun moves through the sky from east to south to west, and the north is the one sector of the sky through which the life-giving sun does not pass. And if you face eastwards, the sacred direction, the side on which shadows fall is both the north and the left. But alternatively, instead of taking the east as the point of reference, some peoples have looked to the North Star or Pole Star as the fixed point of the heavens, 'the unmoved mover', the First Cause. The Etruscans placed the home of the gods in the north, and when one of their seers was about to speak he would face south, identifying himself with the gods. The Old Old God of the Aztecs lived at the Pole Star, the point on which the whole universe turned.

Robert Estall

Each of the four directions indicated on a church weathervane traditionally has its guardian angel: Raphael (east), Michael (south), Gabriel (west) and Uriel (north)

Evil on the Left

In Europe the left is traditionally the side of evil and the right of good. Black magic is 'the left-hand path' and to move to the left in magic is to attract evil influences. This is probably because the left hand is normally the weaker and the right the stronger, so that right is the side of God and good: hence the word 'right' means not only a direction but also justice, virtue, truth straightness. The left or 'sinister' side belongs to abnormality, evil and the Devil.

Medieval writers found great difficulty in explaining why the gospel is read in church from the left side of the altar and the epistle from the right (from the point of view of the congregation). This seemed extremely peculiar, since the gospel would be expected to take precedence. The real reason was that the gospel had originally been given the place of honour, the right, as seen from the bishop's chair, but this had been forgotten and ingenious explanations were produced. The epistles, it was said, were the apostles' preaching to the Jews, the chosen people of God (the right side of the altar) but they rejected it. So the words of Christ (the gospels) were offered instead to the pagans (the left side).

(See also RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE.)

Novosti Press Agency

DISEASE

Magic and medicine have been inextricably mixed since men first tried to cure disease. Magical methods range from the 'shark repellent' of the Second World War to the Renaissance use of 'mumia', the use of holy relics or the moss from a human skull

MANY ANTHROPOLOGISTS make a sharp distinction between religion and magic. They point out that if a sick man seeks a religious cure he implores or badgers some god, demon or other spiritual creature to restore his health. The outcome then depends on the goodwill of the supernatural being. To achieve a magical cure he only needs to know the ritual formula or possess the appropriate charm. If he applies it correctly the desired result will follow.

Other scholars see religion and magic merely as variants, often interwoven, by which people try to gain their desires in an indifferent or hostile world, and seek to allay their fears or soothe their insecurities. It is certain that insecurity promotes recourse to magic. In our own society actors, sailors and bomber pilots (all members of insecure or dangerous professions) are notoriously addicted to the carrying of 'lucky charms'. This is a practice little fancied by bank clerks, civil servants and others in safe, humdrum jobs although that insecure and neurotic civil servant Samuel Pepys mentions in his *Diary* that he carried a hare's foot against the colic. Natives of some Polynesian atolls have elaborate fishing magic to avert the dangers of the open Pacific but none when they fish the quiet waters of the lagoon.

In primitive societies it is often believed that objects that are similar in shape, colour or smell to the cause or symptoms of an illness will have a curative effect; prehistoric burials have been found in which the body has been sprinkled with red ochre, probably because it was thought to have the life-giving powers of blood. Skeleton, between 30,000 and 40,000 years old, found in Samarkand, Russia

Illness, especially among primitive peoples, produces great insecurity. Hence, there are many magical cures available for treating even quite trivial diseases.

As well as being magically cured, illness may be magically caused and it is illogical to

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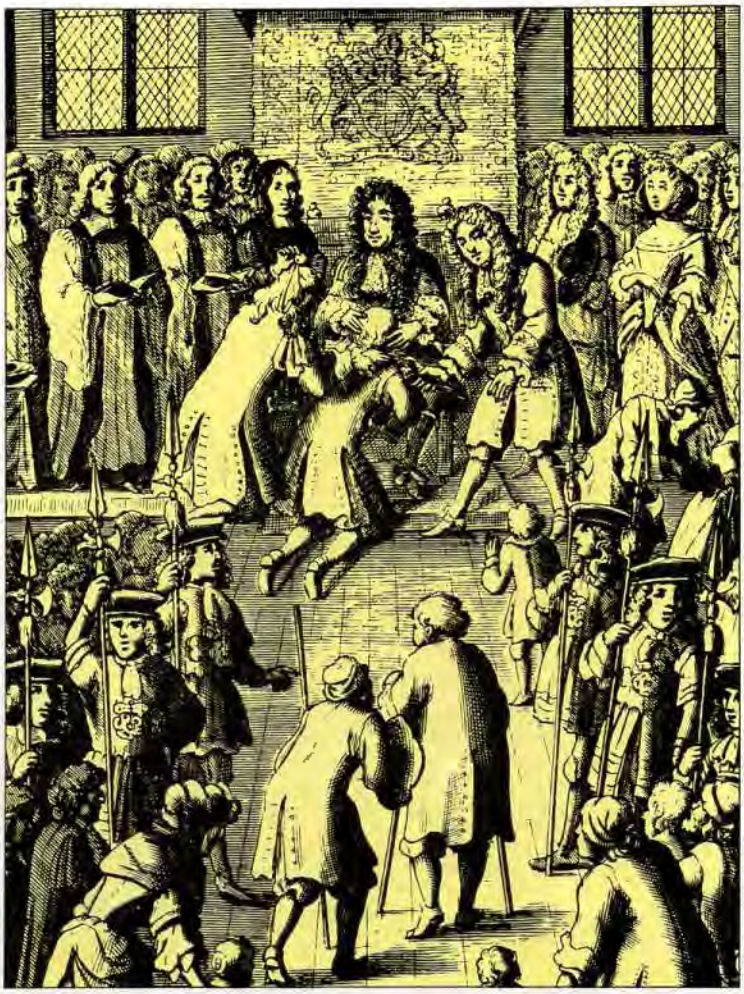


The Wellcome Trustees

The belief that monarchs inherited the magical power to cure scrofula, the King's Evil, by touching was widespread from the 11th to the 18th centuries *Left* Edward the Confessor, the first monarch to show healing powers, curing a leper *Right* Charles II: he is believed to have 'touched' more than 92,000 people *Below* Touch-piece presented by Charles II to prevent a recurrence of the King's Evil

Many of the remedies prescribed in the past can only have been effective psychologically, as magical 'morale boosters' *Facing page* An advertisement for tiger balm (*left*) still on sale in Chinese shops in London *Right* Victorian advertisement for an eye battery: it was claimed that this gadget would do away with 'all the horrible experiences of Leeching, Bleeding and Surgical Operations'

The Wellcome Trustees

consider the one while ignoring the other. Indeed, magic cures are often inseparable from magic causes. On the Melanesian island of Dobu almost all diseases are believed to be due to spells which are the private property of individuals. Anyone who develops yaws, a horrible tropical infection, believes that he knows who owns the magic to inflict it and that only the possessor of this spell will also own the magic to remove it.

There is a distinction between treatments which can properly be described as magical and those which are rational or empirical but are based on wrong beliefs and misunderstood physiology. Is it magical rite or inefficient pharmacology when the Anglo-Saxon leeches prescribed marsh mallow pounded with lard for gout? Many of our modern cures may seem superstitious magic a hundred years from now. During the 1918 influenza epidemic millions of people were convinced of the near-magical efficacy of a proprietary medicine named *Yadil* in preventing and curing the disease. Its manufacturers were eventually convicted of swindling the public. *Yadil* contained no active drugs and was little more than water dosed with garlic, yet vast numbers of people who took it were as sure of its potency as any Dobuan islander is convinced of the magical power of his neighbour's paralysis spell. In the Second World War servicemen likely to be torpedoed or shot down in the sea were given a product referred to as 'shark repellent'. It now seems certain that it was useless except as a magic morale booster under conditions of desperate insecurity.

Throughout the world, man's ingenuity has concocted an astonishing number and diversity of cures and preventives when faced with disease. Yet many are basically similar. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer used the term 'Sympathetic Magic' to include what he called 'Homoeopathic Magic' and 'Contagious Magic'. He based this classification on two general principles.

The first is often called the Law of Similarity. Formerly, and even today among people with no scientific training, it was believed that objects or circumstances which bear some similarity in colour, shape, smell or sequence of events must be related to each other. If this is assumed, it becomes reasonable to treat jaundice by bringing the patient into contact with yellow things. The Anglo-Saxons prescribed yellow flowers, in Germany gold rings were used, and the ancient *Atharvaveda* of India (composed in the second millennium BC) contains a charm to take the disease from the patient and transfer it into a yellow wagtail. The Cherokees of America used burr, a plant which sticks to anything, to strengthen the memory. The Hindus filled a silver basin with water, looked at the reflection of the moon in it and then drank the water to cure neuroses – on the theory that such forms of 'lunacy' were influenced by the moon.

This Law of Similarity came to be known in medieval times as the Doctrine of Signatures. Its essential feature, the proposition that objects are related even by their least significant attributes, led to the belief that 'like cures like', which is the foundation

Jim Bamber

of homoeopathic medicine (see HOMOEOPATHY). Its roots are very ancient. Neanderthal burials, perhaps 100,000 years old, have been found in which the body was sprinkled with red ochre. This, in homoeopathic magic, was probably thought to embody the life-giving potency of blood. Innumerable variants of this principle could be quoted. In Asia Minor and the Aegean, for example, it was customary to cut off some hair and skin from a dog which had bitten you. The dog licked its own wound, thereby curing yours.

Healing by Proxy

The second of Frazer's principles is the Law of Contagion: cures based on it are called Contagious Magic. It states that things which have once been in contact continue to act on each other even when far apart. Thus, hair or nail parings removed from the body can still be used to influence it for good or ill. When a child of the Thompson Indians of British Columbia lost his teeth, his father would feed them, in raw venison, to a dog. This ensured that the child's new teeth would be as strong as those of the dog. In 1902 a Norwich woman named Matilda Henry trod on a wire nail which pierced her foot. She at once greased and polished the nail, remarking that the wound would then stay clean, like it. Although this practice – clean the weapon that wounds you – can be found in every continent, Matilda Henry was unlucky: she died of tetanus.

An extension of the doctrine that 'like cures like' is the 'cure by proxy'. A typical example occurs in an Indian legend where the leg of a valuable camel is cured by setting fire to that of a stray ass. The treatment of a doll or effigy instead of the patient is another version of the same idea. The converse is practised by some African tribes who magically transfer mumps from a patient to a rat, and in Kashmir bulls are driven through villages to absorb the pestilence of cholera.

Extensions of this kind are common and what began as sound empiricism may end as magical flummery. *Mumia*, from which we get the word 'mummy', is derived from Persian and originally meant 'wax'. Later it was applied to natural bitumen and resin, which were used as salves or wound dressings, and were no doubt often beneficial. Because some of these resins were used in embalming, the word 'mummy' was transferred to the preserved corpse, which then acquired the therapeutic reputation of the wax. *Mumia* had become almost a panacea by Renaissance times. In 1564 Guy de la Fontaine, physician to the King of Navarre, found that the leading Alexandrian purveyor of mumia was faking it from the bodies of slaves, even those who had died of the plague. In the same century, a German physician not only made it out of executed felons but even recommended carefully spiced and prepared flesh cut from the buttocks of a living man . . . a long haul from the original wax ointment!

Magical cures often involve vital essences such as blood or flesh. In 1880 the *Daily Telegraph* reported cases of tomb robbing in Germany to obtain the heart or liver of recently dead maidens or children. They were brewed with herbs and eaten to cure various diseases and to make the cannibal bullet-proof.

The eating of mice to cure whooping cough has survived in England until recent years. This remedy goes back to ancient Egypt where mice were believed to arise by spontaneous generation from the mud of the Nile. Hence they were imbued with the life-giving properties of its flood. The earliest written record of mouse as a child's medicine, dating back to 1500 BC, occurs in the *Berlin Papyrus:* 'Make this child or his mother eat a cooked mouse. Tie the bones round his neck with a seven-knotted string'. In the predynastic cemetery of Naga ed Der in Upper Egypt (c 4000 BC) the remains of mice have been found in children's bodies.

Perhaps the earliest form of this custom is recognizable in Stone Age burials. Many Neolithic skulls have been found in which the operation of trephination has removed a piece of bone from the living skull, perhaps to allow the escape of some demon or evil spirit, perhaps to treat epilepsy. Sometimes *rondelles*, circular discs of bone, were cut out and these have been found pierced with a hole as if to be worn as a magical, life-giving or healing amulet.

In the Egyptian mouse cure we met the use of a seven-knotted string. This illustrates a common element in traditional cures: the use of number magic. Certain numbers, such as 3, 7, 9 and 13, have long been credited with a magical or mystical potency

A Spanish mathematician used certain types of numbers to cure impotence. He wrote them down, ate one himself and plied his girl friend with the other

which can be drawn upon for good or ill by persons cunning in this lore. In the New World 4 was the principal magic number.

Many examples of number magic could be given. Spells often have to be repeated thrice, incantations nine times. In Scotland, as in Sicily, a seventh son (or better still the seventh son of a seventh son) had power to heal ulcers. This, as well as involving number magic, is an example of the hereditary transmission of magical potency. It resembles the power claimed by the French and English monarchs to cure scrofula, a form of tuberculosis which was very common in the past. At this ceremony 'touch pieces', originally of gold, later of silver or copper, were given to prevent the return of the disease.

From the time of Pythagoras, the 6th century Greek mathematician, the mystique of numbers has teased the imagination of philosophers (see also NUMEROLOGY). Medieval Arab mathematicians fell greatly under their spell and numbers were used in many aspects of healing. The Spanish mathematician Al Madshritti used certain types of numbers to cure impotence. He wrote down the numbers, ate one himself and plied his girl friend with the other – a strange aphrodisiac but typical of the mystic and cabalistic attitude towards mathematics. Perhaps the most famous mystic group of numbers is that found in Dürer's engraving *Melancolia* (1514).

16	3	2	13
5	10	11	8
9	6	7	12
4	15	14	1

In this square each horizontal and vertical line adds up to 34, as do the long diagonals, the four figures in each quarter, and other combinations. Moreover, the sums of the squared or cubed figures in many combinations equal each other. This curious discovery was believed to have curative properties and was used to treat many diseases.

British Museum

Prescribing by the Stars

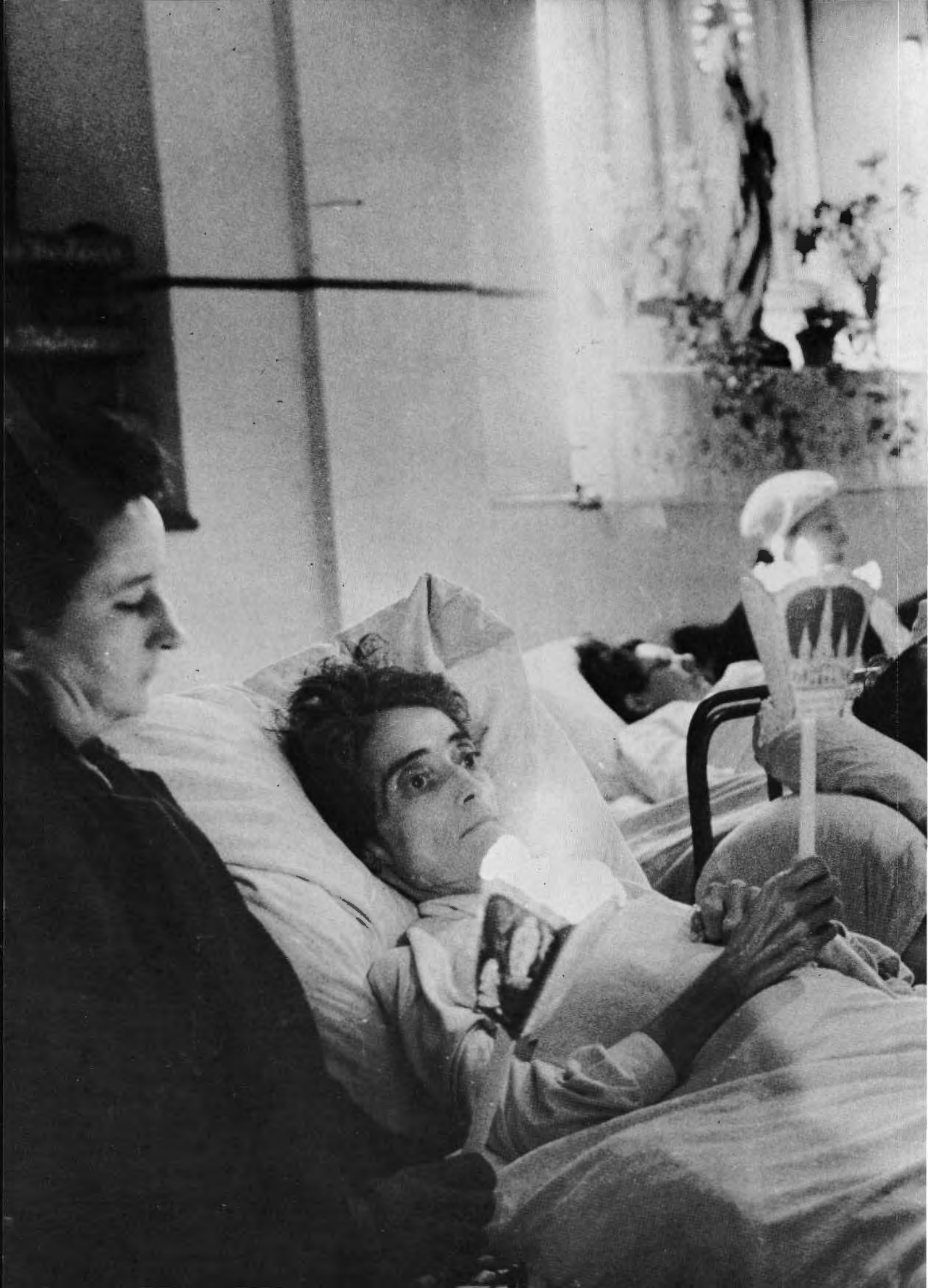
Inevitably, ideas about the cure of disease reflect the philosophical or scientific opinions of their time. This is well seen with astrological theories. When, in the ancient world, it came to be accepted that human affairs were closely influenced or controlled by celestial bodies, it was inevitable that this was reflected in the treatment of disease.

An example occurs in the *Anglo-Saxon Herbal*; a prescription for the *fylle-seocniss* (falling-sickness, or epilepsy) is to eat berries of 'asterion' (an unknown plant) at the time of the waning moon, when the sun is in Virgo. Crinas of Massilia (1st century AD) used astrology with enthusiasm: he made his patients pay punctilious regard to times, seasons and celestial bodies. For tuberculous ulcers Pliny, the Roman writer of the 1st century AD, recommends 'damasonium, which is also called alisma, gathered at the solstice and applied in rainwater to the sore, the leaf being crushed or the root pounded with axle-grease . . .' But caution is needed in assessing calendrical instructions. Some, at least, are rational rather than astrological and indicate the season when the root, flower or berry was botanically most ripe for therapeutic use.

Greek physicians were often negative in their approach to patients: they advise against treating such and such a disease. This becomes intelligible if the physician presupposes that his untreated patients will go to the temple for magic cures by incantation, amulets, prayer and purification. The healing temples of Asclepius were open to all (see HEALING GODS). It was up to the physician and the patient to decide between them whether to seek a medical or a magical

Right **Magical charms to cure or prevent disease or injury are common in societies that exist in an insecure and hostile environment: the inhabitants of Trecastagni on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily consecrate models of legs, arms and other parts of the body injured during volcanic eruptions to the saints of the local shrine, in order to ensure protection against future lava flows** ***Left*** **In the Middle Ages a sick person would anxiously watch for supernatural signs or omens indicating his recovery or death: if the mythical caladrius looked at a patient he would recover, but if the bird turned away he was sure to die: illustration from a medieval bestiary**

Axel Poignant



Invalids at Lourdes, a centre of pilgrimage for the sick and dying for more than 100 years: a spring with miraculous healing powers appeared there in 1858, the year in which St Bernadette claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary on 18 occasions. Since then, millions of pilgrims have journeyed to Lourdes in the faith that they would be cured of their ailments

Camera Press London

cure. The philosopher and physician Galen (131–201 AD) says that incantations are useless and outside the activity of physicians. Even Pliny, who from his encyclopedic gatherings is often ridiculed as unduly credulous, has a strong vein of sceptism. He derides the use of an owl's toe to treat fever, and asks, 'Why, of all things in the world was the toe of a horned owl thought of?' For ear complaints he prescribes 'a cricket dug out with its earth and applied. Great efficacy is attributed to this creature . . . because it walks backwards, bores into the earth, and chirrups at night. They hunt it with an ant tied to a hair and put it into the cricket's holde . . . and when the ant has embraced it the cricket is pulled out.' But of some insect remedies he writes: 'Even to hear of these cures makes me feel sick: heaven help us!'

Astrological influences were, of course, potent in causing, as well as curing illness. The Anglo-Saxon chronicles record the arrival of comets which were thought to bring pestilence.

The dominant doctrine of health and disease throughout the Middle Ages was the Humoral Theory, or Doctrine of the Four Elements. Its first complete enunciation, apparently, was by Pythagoras and through Aristotle (384–322 BC) it exerted an immense influence on later thought. It stated that everything was composed of four simple elements: earth, air, fire and water. These were the basis of the four 'qualities' moist, dry, hot and cold, and the four 'temperaments', melancholic, sanguine, bilious and phlegmatic. It was a sterile doctrine, overdue for replacement when the Renaissance dawned. It held, broadly speaking, that diseases were due to a *dyscrasia* or imbalance of these elements, and cure lay in redressing the balance. Thus 'hot' diseases need 'cold' remedies. Theoretically this can be described as no more than mistaken physiology. In practice it led to some outlandishly fanciful treatments, which at least verge on the magical.

The Worm in the Bud

Over vast areas of the world we meet the concept that disease is caused by a magical creature invading the body or implanting noxious missiles in it. It may be the 'worm' of Anglo-Saxon leechcraft, the gnawing snake of Bantu belief, or a wide range of indwelling spirits or devils.

Healing by Invocation

Magical healing in Ancient Egypt:
The sorcerer whose task it was to drive out or to keep away a spirit from the body of a man through the magic power of the word had various means of doing it. The simplest was the command. Addressing himself to the spirit he ordered it to get out: 'Get thee hence, thou female breaker of bones, thou crusher of stones, who enters into the vessels.' Or the disease was adressed: 'Spit, vomit, perish as thou arosest.' . . .

It was important for the magician to know who his opponent was. Knowing his name gave him particular power with which he could threaten the spirit. 'I know thy name . . . do I not know thy name? . . .' was said repeatedly in an incantation for the eye. Or if he was not sure he considered various alternatives:

> Art thou a servant? Come in the vomit.
> Art thou a noble? Come in his urine
> Come in the sneeze of his nose
> Come in the sweat of his limbs.

Threatening and scaring the ghost was a good method employed very frequently. The worst that could happen to a spirit was to be forced to eat excrements . . .

Or the conjurer simply said as a protection against the pest of the year: 'I am the abomination that came forth out of Buto, O Meskhenet, that came forth out of Heliopolis; O men, O gods, O dead, be ye far from me. I am the abomination.' How could a spirit care to take possession of an abomination? . . .

Cajoling the demon by pretending to be healthy, to be 'immunized', was another method and it was said at the time of pest: 'I am the healthy one in the way of the passer by. Shall I be smitten while I am healthy? I have seen the great disaster. O this fever, do not assail me, for I am the one who has come forth out of the disaster. Be thou far from me.'

H. E. Sigerist
A History of Medicine

In these cases cure may be sought by charms and incantations to lure forth the intruder or its missile, or by imbibing nauseating concoctions, often of human and animal excreta, to offend and drive out the demon of disease. The Nootka Indians of British Columbia withheld food from sick people so that the invading spirit should be driven off by starvation.

Doctrines of this kind are often elaborated into complex systems. The neighbourhood of Guinhangdan, a small fishing village in the Philippine Islands, may serve as an example. There witches, sorcerers and spirit gods are the chief agents of disease. The last, called *encantos*, comprise three types: *tuanon* or earth spirits; *tubignon*, river and ocean spirits; and *cohoynon*, who inhabit trees. These beings are very common and although people try to avoid their haunts, this is not always practicable. When a disease has been diagnosed as due to an encanto, incantations (often to Christian deities) and the application of ritual anointment, massage, herbs and poultices are used. A curer called a *parahaplas* wraps the patient in large leaves to sweat for about an hour. He is then uncovered and the leaves examined for the missiles which the encantos have shot into him. Any bits of grit, sand, hair or parts of insects are proof that the disease was in fact caused by one of these spirits.

In Europe mental disease was traditionally attributed to possession by evil spirits. According to Christian legend, a nun failed to make the sign of the cross over a lettuce she was eating and swallowed a devil who was sitting on it. When a priest exorcized him the devil protested that it was not his fault if a negligent nun had swallowed him.

Often the treatment of disease is partly rational or empirical, partly magical. The Romans treated abscesses by poultices, a practice which is still medically approved. But they also recommended that the poultice should preferably be laid on the fasting patient by a maiden, herself fasting and naked. This is no longer standard practice though it is not impossible that some psychological benefit might ensue.

In Bantu Africa, disease is seldom thought of as basically physical in origin. An African often understands the cause and treatment of a disease from the Western standpoint but he will ask why *he* has been afflicted and not another. He demands antibiotics but feels they will not work unless he supplements them by magically appeasing an offended ancestral spirit, atoning for a broken taboo, or placating an irate chief or sorcerer. In Ghana, during the 1918 influenza epidemic, accusations of witchcraft flourished and magical cures correspondingly proliferated.

The Wandering Soul

Many primitive tribes believe that disease is due, not to the intrusion of some evil spirit but to the absence of the patient's soul. This is often thought to wander in dreams and may be unable to re-enter the body if a sleeper is suddenly awakened. When this happens, the errant soul must be enticed back by charms or other allurements. Among the Kenyah of Sarawak a native healer will recall the stray soul and fasten it to the patient's body by string and the sticky blood of a fowl. The Koryaks of Siberia have a similar cure. An Ottawa medicine man has been known to trap an escaped soul in a small box and put it back into the mouth of its owner.

Belief in wandering souls is not confined to primitive and exotic tribes. It is common in Europe. In Germany, Czechoslovakia, Scotland and elsewhere the soul may escape in the form of a white bird, from the open mouth of a sleeper. It may leave the body in a sneeze. If this happens it must be magically returned on the instant by calling out 'Bless you' or, in Spain, 'Jesus', or by making the sign of the cross.

Because in much of the world disease is thought to be a supernatural visitation, supernatural means are naturally used to avert and cure it. One of the most important of these is the power of the gods and saints. In Hindu religious tradition Krishna cures the hunchback woman Kubja by touching her. The Bible claims that Christ similarly cured a blind man. Innumerable examples could be quoted. Healing was a major function of Christian saints, some of whom were specialists. St Lucy was associated with eye disorders, St Apollonia with toothache and St Agatha with diseases of the breast. In medieval times the chief purpose of pilgrimage was to seek a cure at shrines, such as that of St James of Compostela. Recently the body of a medieval man, with a grossly diseased hip joint, was excavated at Thetford in Norfolk. Beside him lay a pilgrim's badge showing that he had journeyed to the healing shrine of Our Lady of Rocamadour in central France. Thousands of believers still seek such cures at Lourdes and elsewhere.

In Christian countries supernatural treatments often contain religious elements. Tudor England was several times ravaged by an epidemic called the Sweating Sickness – perhaps a form of influenzal encephalitis. A cure for it was to recite seven Paternosters and seven Hail Marys – thus combining Christian prayer with pre-Christian number magic.

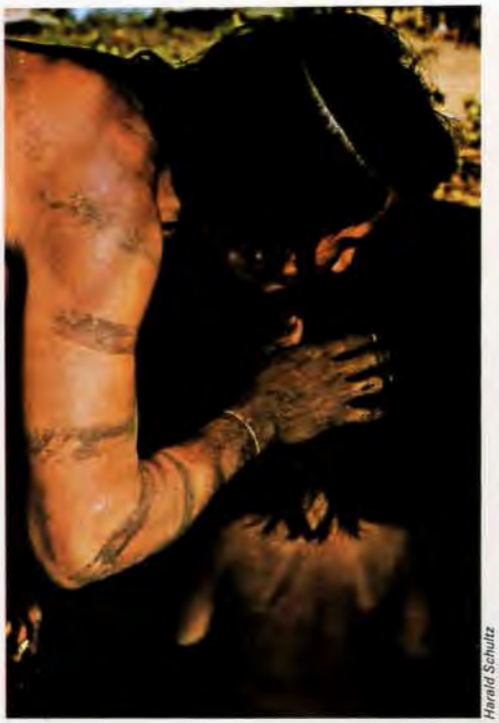
Christian curative magic takes many forms. In Sussex, shoes put crosswise every night were a cure for rheumatism. Good Friday buns were eaten later in the year as panaceas for illness.

Bede (672–735 AD) in his *Ecclesiastical History* records the earliest healing miracle in England as having been performed by St Germanus. The saint applied a 'bugget' or reliquary, which hung round his neck, to the eyes of a blind girl, 'which done she straight received her sight.'

Curing by Noah's Beard

The fusion of originally separate items of magic into one composite charm has already been noted. Occasionally the result was extremely complex and might combine Christian and pagan elements. The *cimaruta* is a good example. This was a charm, usually of silver or some other metal and commonly worn on a necklace, which was very popular in and around Naples. It often contained little figures of the moon, a hand, a sprig of rue, a key, a horn of fish, a cock or an eagle, a heart, a serpent and a cherub. All these might blend in a single *cimaruta*. They averted evil and cured many ills. The origin and significance of the separate items are complicated and ambiguous. The fish in Christian lore symbolizes Christ. The hand and the horn can both be traced back to a phallic origin. The moon and plants associated with it were consecrated to the goddess Lucina: both Hippocrates (5th century BC) and the Dutch physician Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738) used moondaisy for disorders of menstruation – and rue was used against plague in Italy.

With healing as the primary object of medieval pilgrimages, it was to be expected



Harald Schultz

Wellcome Trustees

Among primitive peoples disease is often attributed to supernatural causes, the invasion of the body by a magical creature or evil spirit, or, in other cases, the absence of the soul from the body: the tribal medicine-man attempts either to drive the invader out with charms and incantations, or to lure the soul back into the body *Above* Medicine-man in Brazil treating a patient *Right* Wooden effigy of a shaman of the Haida tribe in British Columbia

that spurious holy relics would abound. Hundreds of shrines throughout Christendom claimed to effect magic cures by these relics. Enough pieces of the alleged True Cross existed to build a house. According to various legends, hairs from Noah's beard were preserved at Corbie in north-east France, parts of Christ's manger at Wimborne in Dorset, drops of the Virgin's milk at Walsingham in Norfolk and her wedding ring at Perugia in Italy.

Corpses and their trappings have always been dreaded and avoided as progenitors of magic ills. They also have healing powers. In Lincolnshire moss found growing on a skull was powdered and used as snuff to cure headaches. A ring made from a coffin hinge relieved cramps, and a piece of gallows rope cured ague. Elsewhere, barren women walked beneath corpses on gibbets, and the Greek traveller Pausanias (2nd century AD) refers to the model of a corpse being used as a votive offering.

CALVIN WELLS

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Disk

Or disc, a symbol of the sun, or sometimes of the heavens as a whole: the 'sacred disc' of China stood for heavenly perfection: the winged disc, which belonged to the Assyrian god Ashur and other deities of the ancient world, stands for flight and is now used by organizations connected with air-travel and space-flight.

See SUN.

Dismemberment

A symbol of the destruction of old life to create new life: the initiation of shamans, in Siberia and Australia for example, may include a dream of being torn apart by spirits and put together again: in Egyptian mythology Seth tore the body of Osiris to pieces, which Isis gathered and restored: in Greek mythology Zagreus was dismembered and from his heart Zeus created Dionysus: in alchemy the material of the work, and spiritually the alchemist himself, was torn apart to be purified and re-created.

National Portrait Gallery London

DISPENSATION

THE LATIN WORD *dispensare*, 'to weigh out' or 'distribute', was used particularly to refer to the orderly arrangement of a household. It was taken over into Christian theology to mean the orderly arrangement of a religious system or of God's dealings with his human family: the Jewish or Christian dispensations.

In a narrower sense, the word means the relaxation of a law, in the interests of good 'household management' as it were, in cases where the law bears too hardly on an individual. In the Roman Catholic Church, with the growing power of the papacy, the right of dispensing with a law in an individual case was ultimately vested in the Pope.

The Popes came to use the dispensing power with such frequency that many of the faithful were scandalized. People who had made vows were allowed to break them, clergymen were allowed to hold more than one benefice, dispensations were given to marry within the prohibited degrees, or to dissolve marriages, for fees which were an important source of income to the papacy.

Protestant reformers disapproved of this traffic. In England the Pope's refusal to give Henry VIII a dispensation from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was partly responsible for the breach with Rome.

Henry VIII conferring the succession on his son by Jane Seymour, despite the Pope's refusal to annul his first marriage

Displacement

Technical term in psychical research: when a subject is trying to forecast what card, drawing or other 'target' comes next in a series, he may score a hit on the target before or behind it: in S. G. Soal's experiments, for instance, two subjects scored significantly high on targets coming before or after the one they were aiming at.

J. B. Rhine

Distillation

One of the principal processes in alchemy, in which a substance was heated and gave off vapour, which then condensed; the vapour was regarded as the 'spirit' of the substance, driven out of it to be purified and later recombined with it; the process was often symbolized by birds flying up to heaven and down again.

British Museum

Michael Holford

The wailing cry of the diver bird is uncannily human. This is one of several links between man and diver which make the folklore surrounding this bird especially significant

DIVER

THE DIVER BIRD is best known in the United States as the loon – but in the realms of folklore and mythology, where its diving abilities play an important part in many Indian tales about the beginnings of the earth, its other name comes more frequently into use. The great northern diver, whose distribution is mainly North American, is sometimes seen around the coast of the British Isles, and breeds also in Norway; while two other species, the red-throated and the black-throated, nest in Scotland and the neighbouring islands such as the Shetlands. So the folklore of the diver is far from exclusively American.

Where the red-throated diver breeds in Shetland, it is known as the rain-goose because its call is said to forecast wet weather. In fact the diver calls during courtship, aggression and other such situations and its cries have little or nothing to do with rain. Shetland weather lore is sometimes self-contradictory; divers flying inland – said to be a sign of good weather – may also be noisy, a portent of bad weather. Nevertheless, when contradictions in folklore occur, they may be, as in this case, indications that the lore has interesting antecedents which have been obscured or forgotten. We would be at a loss to understand the Shetland traditions were it not that there are more detailed diver traditions elsewhere which throw light on them. In the Faroes, in addition to belief in the diver as weather prophet, there is a saying that when one calls as it flies over it is accompanying a soul to heaven. Norwegians, too, not only associate the bird with the weather but also with death for they say that its weird calls predict that someone will be drowned.

Skull with Artificial Eyes

There are indications that the Faroese belief in the diver as the companion of the soul is a shred from a fabric of belief which once extended throughout much of northern Europe, Asia and America. The diver has a highly important place in the traditions of Siberian tribespeople. At the four corners of the coffin of a Tungus shaman, where it is deposited on the tundra, are set posts surmounted by wooden models of diver-like birds. Small replicas of divers are sewn on the costumes of Yakut, Vogul and other shamans. Amongst these tribes it is considered reprehensible to disturb or kill a diver. Moreover in Siberia and North America alike, traditions relate that during the Creation or after the Flood the diver helped to bring the world into being by bringing up mud from below the surface of the water. There are clear indications that diver traditions were carried from Asia across the Bering Strait to be disseminated in North America a long time ago.

At Ipiutak in Alaska archeologists have found that graves belonging to an extinct Eskimo culture have yielded skulls not only of human beings but also of divers, suggesting that the birds were regarded as companions or guides for the soul and that the destinies of divers and men were regarded as linked. The eye-sockets of both the human skulls and of a diver skull were found to be fitted with artificial eyes, suggesting the belief in a mysterious affinity between men and these birds. A folktale which seems to shed light on this discovery relates how a diver restored sight to a blind boy by taking him to a mysterious underwater realm. They both plunged in and the boy emerged able to see. The various fragments of tradition from different parts of the world together suggest that the diver was regarded as a magical bird, able to enlighten and lead the human spirit in life and death. Thus the vestiges of diver lore which survive in Shetland and elsewhere in Europe are seen to be the lingering remnants of a magical or magico-religious cult which at one time extended over a great deal of the inhabited region around the North Pole.

Cry Like a Woman's Scream

One of the great northern diver's outstanding characteristics has had an important influence. The bird's loud wailing cry, sounding eerily over the still northern lakes, is remarkably like the screams of an anguished woman. Undoubtedly it reinforced the belief that the bird has mysterious human affinities. Probably it played a part in suggesting that the diver could act as man's guide not merely on earth but to the 'undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns'.

The diver's wailing cry sounds like a woman's screams, and reinforced the belief that the bird has a mysterious affinity with human beings: during seances a shaman would aim to change himself magically into a bird in order to fly to the spirit world. Shaman's rattle in the form of a diver, in the British Museum

Support for the inference that the bird's calls were responsible for its being regarded as in some respects human or quasi-human is furnished by folktales. Thus according to one story the loon is really a fisherman who was knocked on the head and had his tongue cut out so that he could not reveal the name of the criminal, and was then turned into a bird. According to another, loons which had once been men circled around Kuloskap, the culture-hero of the Algonquin Indians, and were taught their strange cry so that, recognizing it, he could come to their rescue if they needed help. Long afterwards, when they had become men again, he visited them and appointed them his huntsmen and messengers. In such stories the distinction between birds and men is vague. This is understandable because during the seances of a shaman he aims to transform himself magically into a bird, imitating its calls and movements, and so flying away to visit the spirit world.

Other diver folklore attempts to account for the bird's peculiarities in appearance and behaviour. As the great northern diver does not breed in Norway but appears off the coasts accompanied by its well-grown young, a story was concocted to explain why nobody had ever found a nest in that area. It was said that under each wing was a recess in which the eggs were incubated. Another story purported to explain why its legs are set so far back on its streamlined body that when the bird comes on land to nest it can only shuffle with difficulty. It was said that during the Creation, by an oversight, its legs were omitted and were thrown after it only just in time to become attached.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

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DIVINATION

'It is all a question of moving the self into a deeper consciousness, a totality of awareness . . .' The stars in their courses, numbers and letters, the flight of birds, the chance words of children, these and many other events have been seen as portents of the future, and may in fact stimulate some mysterious faculty in the diviner which enables him to know things that are hidden to the normal senses

MAN IS CONSIDERED REMARKABLE for his reasoning faculty which is said to distinguish him from other animals, yet this faculty has never sufficed him. Simple human wishes or apprehensions about the future, as well as momentous decisions in the present, are felt to call for supernatural guidance. Hence the 'science' or art of divination. To divine by seemingly irrational means what action to take in the face of the unknown, what is to be hoped for, what is certain to come to pass, was once the prerogative of the soothsayer or medicine-man. Later it became that of the priest, the prophet or the augur and, since the Renaissance, of the astrologer, the gypsy and the village wise-woman. Today, clairvoyants have brought this once highly honoured practice from its more or less underground existence into bourgeois living-rooms in all the big cities of the world.

Divination is the prediction of future events or the discovery of secret matters by a great variety of means, signs and occult techniques. It is primarily concerned with the future but it sometimes necessitates a turning backward of the vision in order to learn from the forgotten past. Divination is a gift from the divine: from God or from the gods. This is an intuitive gift, the psychologists say; a magical gift, according to the witch; an occult one with its own rationale, according to those who have been initiated into the mysteries.

The huntsman, the herdsman and the husbandman in the distant past wanted to know about seasonal changes, about fertility, about droughts and the water supply, upon which human survival depended. Such men would scan the heavens at night, watch the flight of birds by day, look deep into the embers of the camp fire or into the depths of a still pool – and so, somehow or other, come to 'see' and to 'know'.

Omens were sometimes gleaned by throwing down arrows or bundles of sticks, or by inspecting the entrails of an animal that had just been killed; both haruspicy (the latter method) and augury by observation of the behaviour of birds is known to have been practised as long ago as the 1st millennium BC by the Etruscans (see ETRUSCANS). Other methods employed by men in ancient times probably included the pouring of sand through the fingers or the study of the lines and mounds on the palms of the hands. Playing with knucklebones, men came to cast lots. Centuries later, such methods gave way to the 'hexagrams' of the Chinese I Ching or Book of Changes, to the Tarot cards, to palmistry and to the forked rod of the water-diviner. Divination by gazing into a crystal globe or a bowl of water, by inspecting tea leaves, coffee grounds or ink blots, gradually came to seem more appropriate to a civilized society than dissecting the quivering liver of a newly slain beast or causing a tortoise-shell to crackle meaningfully over the embers on the hearth. From watching stars and recording eclipses, there evolved the highly complicated mathematical readings of the astrologers, while the belief that the earth and her precious stones were endowed with magical power led man to develop the art of alchemy.

An Overwhelming Success

The most remarkable thing about divination is its success. Some methods may have proved more efficient than others and, more to the point, some diviners have a greater power of visionary sight than others, or a greater gift for understanding human character and the way in which an individual is likely to act. But even from the most materialist point of view, judged by its age-old popularity and bearing in mind that divination has had to survive ecclesiastical condemnation and the gibes of rationalists and sceptics, the art was and is an overwhelming success. The financial gains of those who ply it for cash at the present time, and the number of 'professionals' whose consulting rooms are filled and whose waiting lists are replete, are impressive.

The motives for consulting a diviner are fear, desire and hope: fear of hunger, of enemies, of illness and accident, of natural disasters, of what may happen after death; desire for gain, love, children, conquest, happiness, immortality. In the East the question of past and future incarnations has its place. And hope embraces both fear and desire, for there is hope that the worst will not happen and that the best will.

Long ago the person who had the 'gift' of divination might be an experienced grandmother or matriarch, as is the case with many gypsy tribes today, or a revered old man who might also be the chief or 'king', as with other gypsy tribes. Then there was the child who, from birth, was unusual – the strange one, the dreamer, the introvert, the one set apart. Or the tribe might set someone apart, someone who was 'possessed', who had the touch of a god upon him, because he was an epileptic, or insane, or in some cases a homosexual, having the virtues and powers of both sexes in one.

As Above, So Below

The role of the seer was to read and interpret the signs and portents, to awaken in himself an intuition as to what course should be followed, and reveal it to the people concerned, whether individuals or a group. In his hands lies the fate of his people. Will there be famine or war should the present dynastic house fall? What must be done to arrest the plague that is taking its toll of so many worthy citizens? Or again, will the love and possible union of two young people of rival families bring peace, stability and well-being to the kingdom? Such a task was a highly serious matter, and the seer one of the most respected and revered members of the community. And not only did he have to be certain in his intuitions, but he had to find and train neophytes for initiation who would succeed him when he died. Training would include not only divination but the arts of music, of reciting epics, of memorizing genealogies as well as knowledge relating to planning cities, building temples, the laying out of fields and the rotation of crops, the

In ancient times the person with the gift of looking into the future was often an old and respected man, possibly the chief or king of his tribe, or, in the case of a woman, an experienced grandmother or matriarch; this tradition is still alive even today among gypsy tribes, and in some parts of Europe: in an Italian village an old woman studies the strange patterns that are formed when lead is dropped into water, and foretells what the future holds for a young bride-to-be

Federico & Aldo Patellani

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Above **Phrenology, the art of reading character from the shape of a person's head, developed during the late 18th century: the size and location of bumps on the skull, and the shape of the head itself, are thought to reflect the development of the brain centres associated with various mental processes. Phrenologist examining a young client *Right* Divination by moles on the face or body is based on the belief that marks on the skin are the stars of the body, and that, like the stars in the firmament, they can reveal profound mysteries: in this engraving from a 17th century treatise on the subject a woman's face is made up entirely of circles, possibly implying that the circular movement of the stars in the heavens is reflected in man**

breeding of cattle and, of course, the practice of herbal and surgical medicine. In such a master the vocations of priest, scientist and philosopher were combined.

Augury is a matter of identity, of identifying the things of the earth with those of the heavens, of the palpitating life of creatures with the vibrations of the cosmos, all of which wisdom is embodied in the alchemist's concept 'as above, so below'. Man is a hot-blooded animal with the life-blood flowing through his body as the warm bodies of birds fly through the air, approaching the sun, the divine source of life. Concentrating on the flight of the birds causes flights of thought to wing their way through the mind. Catch these thoughts that are stimulated by the birds and there you have a premonition, a 'hunch', a hint of things to come. Give tongue to such knowledge and there you have a prediction: the oracle, the imprint of outward signs and awakening inward intimations, has spoken through you. It is all a question of moving the self into a deeper consciousness, a totality of awareness, that is wider by far in its range than that of the limited consciousness of the ego or the reasoning faculty.

This consciousness, for example, can be the state of trance or ecstatic enthusiasm as experienced by the Pythian priestess of the Delphic Oracle, or the delirium of a dying man who utters prophetic words. Interpretations put upon the oracular utterance afterwards may be false, and a misunderstanding of that which has been declared might lead to disaster. Again, bribery or wishful thinking may distort an interpretation, but never – say the true prophets – can the oracle in itself prove false.

Training in occult theories was given to chosen pupils in special schools or by individual teachers; even today, such schools exist for the educated and spiritually advanced. Pupils are taught to see relationships between outer happenings – such as the behaviour of birds or the formation of tea leaves, which appear somehow meaningful – and that part of consciousness which is felt to be outside time and space in some way. Cultivating this gift, and transmitting the garnered wisdom of the ages under glyph, sign or symbol, requires instruction from a master and a long period of study and self-discipline for the pupil on probation. The master aids the disciple to pass into the right receptive state of consciousness or trance, and also communicates to him the techniques or keys of interpretation that will objectify his intimations and link these with those events about which those who consult him wish to be informed.

To the seer and occultist, a formation of birds, circling in a certain quarter of the sky, appears as a kind of telegraphic message passing between the mind of the Great Architect of The Universe and the mind of man. The ordered journey of the planets at night, the sudden appearance of a comet, a shower of falling stars, a fearsome eclipse of the sun – if the significance of these phenomena could be grasped, it must have a bearing on the day-to-day events on the

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Above Metoposcopy is judging a man's character and destiny from the lines on his forehead: diagram of the planets corresponding to wrinkles on the brow *Right* The belief that coffee grounds or other inanimate objects can reveal the future is centuries old: photograph taken in 1855

Augury is a matter of identity, of identifying the things of the earth with those of the heavens, of the palpitating life of creatures with the vibrations of the cosmos

earth below. This belief led to the charting of the 12 divisions of the zodiac with their powers, influences and attributes.

So much for the heavens; but if one turned from the celestial to the study of things on earth, such as the intestines of warm-blooded beasts, for instance, could one not find there a correspondence with the pulsating life of mankind? If an eclipse seemed ominous, so did the malformed liver of a young bull that to outward appearance seemed unblemished before slaughter.

Numbers, letters, words and sounds were also believed to have a supernatural meaning and to have a magical and prophetic value besides their utilitarian one. At first it was the priests and priestly scribes who alone knew the meaning of these signs and how to work with them. The Jewish Cabalists used them to construct a magical and mystical religious philosophy and spiritual exercise (see ALPHABET; CABALA). Idols and images of the gods were also looked on in the same way – not just as carved and painted representations but as being highly charged with power and with a numinous quality; as transmitting instruments for the archetypal powers that radiate throughout the cosmos and whose forces can be 'tapped' by the seer.

The Path of the Seer

In dealing with individual or collective problems, there often seems to be no other way than by resorting to some kind of magic – whether this is called psychology, business acumen, political astuteness, or just a 'hunch'. Or again, meditation, clairvoyance, prayer or faith. Human reason is frequently baffled by the apparent lack of meaning or order in life, from birth to death. This is not to say that reason does not have its place in the composition of a human being; every faculty has its rightful place, for man is a composite entity and within this grouping of parts and forces are both the imaginal and the rational faculties, as well as that which is generally referred to as the soul or spirit. This is the starting point from which the diviner and the occultist work when developing their so-called supernatural powers, powers which are better called supernormal, as being latent but not always manifest in everyone. The diviner tries to understand how each faculty or principle in

Mansell Collection

Popperfoto

himself corresponds with a like structure in others, and indeed in the whole universe: and he comes to see in what direction the future must unfold, and in what manner the individual or the group should face it.

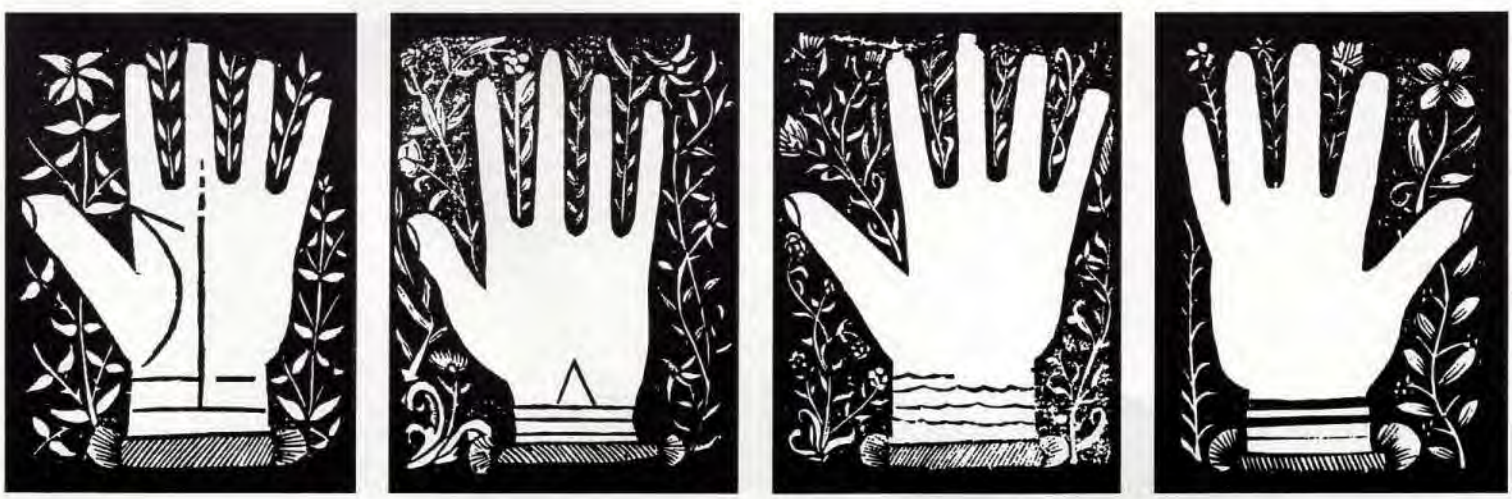
Many diviners have practised the path of austerity, of asceticism or of self-torture as an aid to liberating their gift. Among these are certain Indian and Tibetan yogis and Moslem fakirs. Others have considered that a healthy and beautiful body is the best vehicle through which to allow the other 'bodies' to operate – we might call this the Apollonian Way, and the orgiastic frenzy or licentious method the Dionysian Way. Extremes of ritual licence or of asceticism seem to act equally well as liberation techniques, whatever the morality of the methods.

Palmistry was practised in ancient Greece and China, and still flourishes today: 16th century Italian painting by Peruzzi of a fortune teller reading a woman's hand *Right* An American palmist at work *Below* Illustrations from a late 15th century treatise on palmistry showing *(from left to right)* the hands of 'an Avaricious and Thoughtless Man; a Stubborn and Iniquitous Man; an Irascible and Evil Man'; and the wrist of 'a Woman Unsuited for Motherhood'

But in almost every case periods of retreat from the world, hours or days of meditation and trance, certain restrictions in food and drink, and a number of prohibitions, indulgences or deviations concerning sexuality, are typical. Nor have the uses of drugs or intoxicants been neglected. The Pythoness or priestess-seer of Delphi was said to chew hallucinatory herbs and it has been argued (though without much evidence) that she sat on her tripod above stupefying fumes that rose from a crevice in the rock below her; in a trance-like state she uttered oracular words which were recorded by her male priests in perfect hexameters.

To open the inward eye, to liberate trance states, the drinking of wine or mead, beating of tom-toms, dancing and twirling and, of course, taking drugs such as marijuana, mescaline and now LSD, have been or are being used; though it is clear that addiction to some of these drugs involves extremely grave dangers.

Studying the theories and practices of the



Sieve and Shears

A form of divination much used from the earliest years of the Middle Ages down to our own day, in some French provinces, is coscinomancy, or divination by a balanced sieve. The early phrase was 'spinning the *sas*' – an old word which means sieve or strainer. It is notable that all peoples have ascribed divinatory potentialities to objects in rotation. A mere knife spinning on its collar upon a table is supposed by many people to be capable of bringing bad luck to a house. The gyratory movement is of a character essentially mysterious or even diabolic, as some hold, and divination by the sieve is certainly one of the most perplexing methods in existence. The *Opera omnia* of Cornelius Agrippa . . . contains an invaluable figure indicating the manner of suspending the sieve in order to make it vaticinate. The author says that 'the sieve is suspended by tongs or pincers (*forcipes*), which are supported by the middle fingers of two assistants. So may be discovered by the help of the demon (*daemone urgente*), those who have committed a crime or theft or inflicted some wound. The conjuration consists of six words – understood neither by those who speak them nor by others – which are DIES, MIES, JESCHET, BENEDOEFET, DOWIMA and ENITEMAUS; once these are uttered they compel the demon to cause the sieve, suspended by its pincers, to turn the moment the name of the guilty person is pronounced (for all the suspected persons must be named) and thus the culprit is instantly known . . . More than thirty years since I made use of this manner of divination three times: the first time was on the occasion of a theft which had been committed; the second on account of certain nets or snares of mine used for catching birds being destroyed by some envious one; and the third in order to find a lost dog which belonged to me and by which I set great store. In every said attempt my fortune was to succeed; yet I stopped notwithstanding after the last time for fear lest the demon should entangle me in his snares.'

E. Grillot de Givry
Picture Museum of Sorcery, Magic and Alchemy

diviner raises a question that has never been satisfactorily answered. This concerns the problem of the inevitability of destiny and that of choice. If 'that which is sure to come to pass', as the fortune teller says, is a certainty, then where does choice or free will come in? And if there be no choice, what is the function of the oracle? It would seem that one can encourage the goddess Fortune, and that is why the Romans made offerings at her shrine before any important undertaking. The existentialist maxim, 'We choose that to which we are destined', is a clever play with words but in no way throws light on the subject.

Perhaps the explanation lies in seeking to reconcile oneself with the immutable sweep of the cosmic tides of destiny, while knowing that it is how one reacts to them that is one's own choice. That is, one can react in a positive or creative way, or in a negative or destructive way. The evolution and devolution of life is predetermined and can be named Fate, while there is yet freedom of individual choice, which we name Free Will, within the overall pattern.

Two Kinds of Prophecy

Lest the Christian should join the materialist in deriding divination, it should be remembered that it has its place in the Bible. One needs only to recall the story of the Witch of Endor who, for Saul, practised necromancy – and evoked the shade of the dead Samuel to advise him about the future (I Samuel, chapter 28). Joseph practised divination by water (hydromancy). There are the prophetic dreams of Jacob, and the dreams that Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh. The prophets of Israel not only admonished their people, but warned them of disasters to follow if they did not mend their ways, and the advent of the Messiah was foretold. The New Testament contains many references to such prophecies and shows how these were fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus himself foresaw his own death and resurrection; and finally there is the book of Revelation with its poetic and dramatic previsioning of that which is to come about at the end of this world cycle.

It may seem strange to us that the ancient Greeks placed such a high value upon the pronouncements of their oracles, that a people whom we tend to think of as eminently noble, scientific and reasonable should so wholeheartedly have given credence to them. We tend to forget that the consultation of the oracles was a key-point in the works of the great Greek dramatists like Sophocles who, in *Oedipus Rex*, tells how King Oedipus sent his faithful Creon to the world-famous Delphic oracle to enquire how his city of Thebes was to be rid of the plague which was exterminating so many of its citizens. The oracle declared that he who had killed King Laius must be found and punished. Learning this, Oedipus asked the blind seer Tiresias to use all the resources of his art to search the past and discover the murderer who, of course, was the unknowing Oedipus himself. Not only had Oedipus murdered Laius, his own father, but he learnt that he had married his own mother. To exorcize the impurity within him Oedipus struck out his own eyes and by this terrible act appeased the gods and removed the curse from his people. Such ritual ideas came to be the foundation of Greek medicine and hence the words 'purgatives' for medicaments and 'catharsis' for psychological treatment.

Inspired by such human predicaments expressed in dramatic form, Freud was able to lay the foundations of his psychoanalytic theories concerning guilt, his famous Oedipus complex. His therapy, like that of the ancient oracular pronouncements, lies in gaining awareness by recovering the unknown or repressed guilty experiences of the individual so that, by reliving these and discharging the emotions that went with them, he may be healed of his neurosis and attain maturity.

The Latin orator and philosopher Cicero (1st century BC) explains that divination is a truly religious matter because it necessitates the belief in a divine Providence that has designed a destiny for every man, and would come to his aid if properly approached; and that it would be very unwise to forget about or to neglect this Providence. There are two kinds of prophecy, according to Cicero and Plato; one of art and the other of Nature. And following Plato, Cicero speaks of inductive divination, *entechnos*, that which can be taught, a technique; the other is a natural intuitive kind, *atechnos* or *adidactos*, that which is not taught.

The former is based upon the observation of phenomena as perceived by the diviner, and is explained by Plato as the search for the future by means of the flight of birds and other signs, which he considered healthy and rational as it was founded upon a proper methodology. The latter he saw as a form of madness or mania because it pre-supposes that a god or familiar, a daemon, has entered into the diviner and has thrown him into an ecstasy or trance – *mania* (Greek) or *furor* (Latin). In this state the diviner can foretell what is to come to pass, what Fate or Providence has in store for us. Of this type of seer are the Sibyls and the Pythia. Cicero points out that the Greek word for divination, *mantike*, is derived from mania or frenzy, whereas the Latin word, *divinatio*, is from *divus* meaning divine or of the gods.

The 'grammar' of the diviners in everyday use, when no great portent such as an eclipse was likely to take place, consisted of relatively simple signs through which the will of Providence could be interpreted. Coming upon any of those animals sacred to a god, such as the owl of Athene, the wolf of Apollo, the eagle of Zeus, the bear of Artemis, the serpent of Asclepius, would be significant. Observing the messages of earth tremors or reading those of a scattered handful of dirt was the practice of land dwellers, while understanding the portents given by the seas, lakes and rivers and observing the behaviour of fishes was practised by lake-dwellers or seafaring folk; these signs, well understood, formed part of the diviner's grammar. Plutarch (c 46–120 AD) believed that fishes, because they were said to be mute, are aware of a prophetic illumination because, being so far from the heavens, they have had to develop reason and intelligence so that they could know in advance what was going to happen. But he thought more highly of birds, for he quotes the dramatist Euripides as saying that they are the messengers of the gods.

Messages from the Birds

The Romans especially practised divination from the flight and song of birds. Birds flying to the east, towards the sunrise, were considered propitious, while those flying towards the west and the sunset, in the direction of the underworld, were a bad omen. If they flew low and hither and thither, it was unpropitious for it indicated that they were agitated or troubled. It was necessary to distinguish between much activity, or *energeia*, and a steady horizontal formation, or *hedra*, the former telling of

Methods of Divination

The following are the technical terms for some of the many methods of divination:

Aeromancy	by atmospheric phenomena; weather predicting
Alectromancy	by a cock picking up grain
Amniomancy	by a caul
Anthroposcopy	by facial features
Arithmancy	by numbers
Astrology	by planets and stars
Augury	from the behaviour of birds
Austromancy	by the winds
Axinomancy	by a balanced axe, or by a stone on a red-hot axe
Belomancy	by arrows
Bibliomancy	by random passages in books
Bletonism	by currents of water
Botanomancy	by herbs
Capnomancy	by smoke
Cartomancy	by cards
Catoptromancy	by mirrors
Ceromancy	by molten wax dropped in water
Cheiromancy	by the hands
Clairaudience	by hearing things inaudible to normal hearing
Clairvoyance	by seeing things invisible to normal sight; second sight
Cledonomancy	from chance remarks or events
Cleromancy	by dice or lots
Coscinomancy	by sieve and shears
Crystallomancy	by a crystal
Dactyliomancy	by a finger-ring
Dowsing	by means of a divining-rod
Geloscopy	by a person's way of laughing
Genethlialogy	from the stars at birth
Geomancy	by dots on paper, marks on the earth, or particles of earth
Gyromancy	by whirling round until dizziness causes a fall
Halomancy	by salt
Haruspicy	from the entrails of animals
Hepatoscopy	from the liver of an animal
Hieromancy	by observation of sacrificed things
Horoscopy	by planets and stars
Hydromancy	by water
Ichthyomancy	by fishes
Lampadomancy	from the flame of a candle or torch
Leconomancy	from the shape taken by oil poured on water
Lithomancy	by stones
Margaritomancy	by pearls
Moleosnphy	by moles on the body
Myomancy	from the movements of mice
Necromancy	through communication with the spirits of the dead
Numerology	by numbers and names
Oenomancy	from the appearance of wine poured in libation
Oneiromancy	by dreams
Onomancy	by the letters of a name
Onychomancy	by the finger-nails
Ophiomancy	from the behaviour of snakes
Ornithomancy	by the flight of birds
Palmistry	by the hands
Pegomancy	by fountains
Pessomancy	by pebbles
Phrenology	by the head
Physiognomy	by the face
Psychometry	by handling an object
Pyromancy	by looking into a fire
Rhabdomancy	by a wand or divining-rod
Scapulomancy	by the shoulder-blades of animals
Scatoscopy	by inspection of excrement
Sciomancy	by shadows, or ghosts
Scrying	by a crystal
Sideromancy	by the movements of straws placed on red-hot iron
Sortilege	by drawing lots
Spodomancy	from ashes
Stichomancy	from random passages in books
Tephromancy	from sacrificial ashes
Theomancy	by oracles, and by persons inspired by a god
Uromancy	by urine
Xylomancy	by dry sticks
Zoomancy	from the behaviour of animals

strong action while the latter suggested a steady purposefulness. These instructions were applied to the behaviour of separate birds, or to just two or three together, as well as to larger formations.

The songs, cries or calls of birds were also considered to have prophetic meaning. Such beliefs survive among country people, fishermen and sailors even today. If swallows do not return yearly to the eaves of your house, it foretells that ruin will come to it. If they dart so low as nearly to touch the ground, storms will spoil the crops, but if they are soaring high it predicts drought. Seagulls inland mean a tempest at sea; a lone seabird is bad news. It is generally unlucky to see one magpie alone, but birds in pairs herald love and friendship. The cooing of doves in a forest in the evening is a warning against thieves, but in the dove-cote it foretells happiness and prosperity. The crowing of the cock reminds man of the Resurrection, but if it occurs during the night it means that there will be treason among friends. Flights of wild swans or wild ducks mean travel and news, but if the birds are flying towards the moon the meaning is loneliness or news of a death.

Cats and Rats

Much of this homely wisdom is founded upon fact, of course, but much also seems arbitrary or fanciful. The hooting of an owl and the caw of a raven tell of death or illness, but the songs of blackbirds bring joyful news. Many peasants think that it is dangerous to the health to listen to the nightingale. The hum of bees brings good tidings unless it is a disturbed buzzing which means trouble, but that of wasps spells visits from unwelcome strangers or evil tongues.

Good news should always be told to the bees, whispered into their hives, if you wish for future blessings. A black cat brings good luck if she comes to you but she must not walk away or disdainfully cross your path. Generally, white cats bring bad luck but if they purr at your feet it is a good omen. (It should be remembered that many of these country beliefs vary from place to place.)

Clay model of an animal's liver, with instructions in cuneiform, used by Babylonian priests in haruspicy, the art of divination through inspecting the entrails of freshly killed beasts

British Museum

The howl of a dog at night means that phantoms are abroad, and a death is indicated. Tiny spiders bring money, while large ones must never be killed, for they are sacred to Athene and encourage industry. A lizard foretells a miscarriage but frogs are harbingers of a life-long passion. Cattle lying down when they should be grazing means bad weather, but when they rush about madly a thunderstorm is near. Rats seen leaving a ship in dock mean that it will founder on its next voyage.

At first glance piebald ponies bring good luck and must be wished upon, but you must not look at them twice in succession or the wish will not come true. Hares in a graveyard are the shades of the dead, while snakes are for fertility unless seen disappearing into the ground, when they are taking messages to the dead. Indeed there is no end to such signs given by Nature that may be read by one who has grown up on the land or lived by the sea.

Homely divination was also practised by taking note of accidental happenings: the chance words of a child, of a stranger passing in the street, of an idiot or an old person. This art, known as cledonomancy, also included studying the significance of names. Thus Herodotus (5th century BC) records that the King of Sparta, Leotychides, when about to go to war against the Persians asked a herald his name. It was Hegesistrate which means 'guide of the army', and the king accepted this as an augury of his

Michael Holford

Camera Press London

Soothsayers, oracles and medicine-men are revered in many parts of the world, where divination is still considered to be a serious and important art

Above **Divining tablets made from wood and ivory, from Mashonaland in Rhodesia: now in British Museum**

Right **Fortune teller in the market place at Marrakesh, Morocco**

coming victory. To use words blasphemously brings down curses for the future so that it is better, the ancients said, to refer to holy personages or objects euphemistically – the real name of a god, for example, always being kept secret and never being pronounced aloud.

Pausanias (2nd century AD) gives an example of cledonomancy. A man was not sure whether to marry a young woman of his own clan or a rich woman of more exalted rank. While thinking over the problem, he heard a child at play with his fellows shout, 'Take care of yourself' which he at once understood to mean that he should marry the rich one! Was he right? We are not told. But to go about learning by this seemingly hazardous method, one should first go before the statue of the god Hermes when the sacred lamps are burning in the evening. After offering incense and placing money – needless to say – by the altar, your question should be whispered into the god's right ear. Then leave the temple holding your hands over your own ears until, on coming to the market-place, you suddenly take them away. The first words heard will indicate the answer to your question. Such magic do words possess that even now we often make a wish when two of us utter the same word at the same moment.

Dangerous Art

Another method, favoured by the Pythagoreans, who disliked bloodshed and therefore would not practise the inspection of entrails common in antiquity, was called empyromancy. In this the seer concentrated on the smoke which rose from the burning of incense or of laurel leaves or other sacred plants. Divination by inspecting pools, rivers and springs was also practised and led to the present use of a bowl of water and perhaps to the crystal – which in turn led on to mirror-gazing, as used in Japan and elsewhere, to induce trance. Peasant maidens, when they want to behold the features of their future husbands, consult their mirrors when the moon is full. Mirror-magic has also been used for evoking demons and has been considered very efficacious by Cabalists, Rosicrucians and other schools of magicians. But for this a profound knowledge of the names, words of power, occult signs and attributes of a host of devils is necessary, and the art is fraught with great danger.

Divination was also performed by means of sounding, or causing the wind to sound, bronze objects such as shields, bells or musical instruments hung in trees. This may have been a tradition inherited by St Joan of Arc when she heard the voices of saints and angels in the church bells. She was also said to have danced round a fairy oak, which may have induced a trance state if it was true that she could tell certain things about the future, even predicting the day of her own death.

Cleromancy is divination by 'lots', by means of drawing sticks, or throwing knucklebones, dice or coins. The result was by no means thought of as a matter of chance by the Greeks and other peoples of ancient times, but as a sure indication of the answers vouchsafed by the gods; learning the will of the gods by casting lots is mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*. Today we still sometimes decide what action to take by tossing a coin.

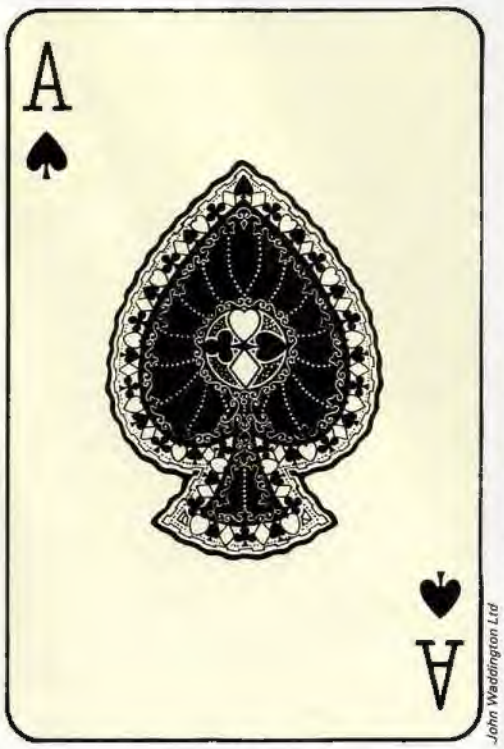
Prediction by studying atmospheric effects is called *meteora* and today is transformed into weather prediction. Thunder and lightning either meant that the person struck had offended the gods or that, like Ganymede, he was wanted in heaven. The will of the god was *diosemeia*, a sign from Zeus, for example, when he sent rain or a good harvest. Every star or planet had its divinatory significance; Venus and Lucifer, the evening and morning stars, were beneficent; while Sirius, the Dog Star, was generally malign. As for the moon, both her good and bad influences are well known and the word 'lunatic' was used in the past for those who were once thought to have had their minds turned by her.

Concerning the relationship between reason and prophecy, Plato in *Phaedra* held that this gift is outside the reason, being a kind of intuitive knowing given by divine grace to certain chosen men and women. It is a form of delirium, he taught, in which the unconscious speaks while the conscious mind is in abeyance, and is akin to the state of being in love, and to poetic inspiration (as Robert Graves has also made clear in *The White Goddess*). It is an emotion of being beside oneself or of being taken out of oneself for a while.

Plato gave a physiological explanation of

John Webb

Symbols of death: the sinister skeleton of the Tarot pack (*above*), part of an early 19th century Italian set in the British Museum and (*below*) the ace of spades, popularly thought of as the death card. It is probable that symbolically decorated cards were used for fortune telling before their use in games of chance



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Napoleon had his guiding star and 'book of destiny' and was not above looking into the future

the predictions given by the configurations of the entrails of sacrificed beasts, by saying that the emotions operate through the blood, lights and liver, and therefore the gods direct the flow of blood and mark the organs of the body with their designs for the future.

A Surfeit of Black Bile

Aristotle also tried his hand at an explanation; the ecstasy is caused or determined, he taught, by the temperament or chemical make-up of a man. The melancholic, for example, has a surfeit of black bile which can cause blood diseases, fevers and a feeling of drunkenness or 'possession'. Hence the origin of individual clairvoyance is purely natural. But like Plato he makes a distinction between insanity and an ecstasy with prevision. In the latter case the black bile is of a very subtle essence, superior to the other elements composing the body, and similar to the fluids emanating from the stars. This fluid is the ether or the fifth, the divine, element in man.

The Stoic philosophers had a high respect for all aspects of the art of divination. Their two dogmas – sympathy and fatality – served as a basis for their beliefs. They taught that there is a universal or cosmic sympathy between the wholeness of life and each fragment or individual entity. Thus according to them the past, the present and the future remain somehow always inscribed as a cosmic record, which may be read by those with the gift or who have been trained for the task. But, as they pointed out, an astute and subtle intelligence lacking in moral principles might easily distort pure vision with a few profitable untruths, if corrupted with the desire for gain. The growing corruption of the once noble oracles of antiquity allowed the gift of divination to pass out of the hands of the intelligent initiate and fall into those of the wicked witch, the conjurer and the triekster at the village fair.

Centuries of Divination

Divination is still practised seriously in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, among the American Indians, the Eskimo and the peoples of the Far East. In the West, it reached its highest peak of popularity in Greece and Rome but was already in decline before the advent of Christianity; the overthrow of paganism set the seal on its overt expression. From then on it went underground, since the persecution of witches included diviners as well. However, there were exceptions, such as the French prophet Nostradamus (1503–66). And there was a period during the Renaissance when astrology and divining by the stars was patronized even by the popes themselves.

The 18th century saw a recrudescence of the occult arts. Innumerable cults of a philosophic liberal Christianism or a humanistic Spiritualism became popular in avant-garde salons of Paris and throughout Europe. Illuminati, augurs, mesmerists, mediums, clairvoyants of many different kinds abounded. The famous Tarot cards, by means of which the French Revolution had been predicted at Versailles, passed into the hands of these sophisticated inheritors of the traditions of the Magi. The new leaders of the people, anxious about their personal destinies, resorted more or less secretly to the most renowned seers of the day. Napoleon had his guiding star and his 'book of destiny', and was not above having a peep into the future whenever he got the chance. When the Age of Reason gave way to the Age of Romanticism, the magic arts flourished more strongly than they had done for centuries. In the 19th century, neither atheistic and materialist forces, nor Protestant and Roman Catholic authority, were able to quell the gathering interest in, and need for, an interpretation of life that was neither dominated by theologians nor negated by sceptics.

That there is still a demand for the art of the diviner today is obvious at all levels of society. Gypsies still earn a few coins for a hasty reading of the palm or the cards, and there are large numbers of diviners, clairvoyants, astrologers and others practising in many cities. The clients of these inheritors of the diviner's arts are drawn from all walks of life and include royalty, business executives, film stars and pop singers. And, making due allowance for human fallibility and fraud, who is to say whether the amount of hope given and truth revealed does not far outweigh the falsehoods and failures?

(See also numerous other articles, including ASTROLOGY; AUGURY; CARDS; DOWSING; DREAMS; OMENS; ORACLES; PALMISTRY; PROPHECY; SCRYING.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

Believers in this modern millenarian movement see the hand of Satan in anything which hinders their missionary work, from poor health to a car breaking down or a missed appointment: but movements of this sort play an important role in developing countries

DIVINE PRINCIPLES

A YOUNG KOREAN electrical engineer named Sun M. Moon, during the late 1940s and early '50s received a series of what he took to be messages from God which acknowledged him as none other than the returned Christ. Through his divine encounters, he came to believe that a new body of knowledge, The Divine Principles, was being revealed to him. This doctrine unveiled the laws by which God governs man, explained the causes of mankind's problems and God's purposes in human history, and also disclosed the manner in which the perfected and eternal kingdom of God would soon be established on earth.

By the late '50s he had assembled several hundred followers in and around Seoul, Korea. To these believers he announced that the next few years would be the 'Last Days' of the 'world as we know it', a period of 'cosmic tribulation and judgement'. The world was soon to undergo a dramatic, supernaturally caused transformation, through which his faithful followers would become rulers of a restored, eternal and perfect Garden of Eden. Although this imminent transformation was to be effected by 'descending spirit forces', God's Chosen People were obliged to play a role. They were to assemble a large number of converts in order to constitute a 'foundation of the new world'. This foundation was to be the elite which would govern the theocracy of the 'New Age'. And since the restoration of man to God's grace was to involve

Holy Spirit Association

Sun M. Moon *(above)* became convinced that God had chosen him as the second Christ after he had been saved from execution in a Communist prisoner-of-war camp

not just Korea, but the entire world, the foundation had to include persons from a variety of nations. Throughout the 1960s Moon sent missionaries abroad – especially to Japan and the United States – to perform this work. Over the years, the movement gained thousands of converts, claiming membership in some 16 countries. The impact of the cult, popularly called the Moonies (see MOONIES) was considerable.

Spartan Simplicity

Two of the most striking features of the Divine Principles movement are the intensity of the members' efforts to win converts and the degree to which they sacrifice themselves to 'God's newly revealed plan'. If the movement remains a rather minor one, in terms of sheer size, it is not because of any lack of effort on the part of its members. The way of life defined as exemplary by Divine Principles believers is one of spartan simplicity and a virtually total commitment to winning converts. Ideally, the believer is expected to surrender all his material wealth to the movement, retaining only enough to enable him to survive while he carries on his missionary activities. While the members often work at conventional jobs, they keep for themselves only enough funds for the bare necessities of life and for the expenses of individual proselytizing. All the rest of their wages goes into a collective fund, to be spent on the more expensive missionary endeavours, such as printing books and leaflets, and renting communal houses and lecture halls. If a convert's spouse, parent or other relative refuses to convert, it is felt best to sever the relationship altogether rather than risk possible interference with the primary task of witnessing. Occupational career commitments must be dropped unless they increase one's access to potential new and influential converts, for the imminent advent of a perfect world renders all conventional careers meaningless.

Periodically, missionary campaigns are held lasting 40 days, during which thousands of people are sent through the countryside to win new converts. In preparation for, and during, these campaigns, the believers fast and deny themselves even their few normal comforts. A diet of bread and water is defined as proper during such periods. During the campaigns some missionaries live by collecting and selling waste articles. The most devoted missionaries may even become permanent itinerants, especially in South Korea. One such missionary has related:

> My husband and I have been pioneering in different provinces, and to do this we had to send our four children into orphanages. I climb to a mount every day and gather brush and wood to make bundles of fuel to carry down to a village and sell. With the money I buy a few pounds of oats for my living. Supporting myself in this way, I proclaim the truth day after day and month after month.

Suffering, and enduring that suffering, for the Glory of God and the Restored World on Earth is a central theme of everyday life among the believers. Indeed, one *must* experience the suffering of living humbly and of missionizing intensely in the face of rejection, if one is fully to win favour with God or, more immediately, with Moon and fellow believers. On ceremonial occasions, Moon provides special prizes and accords special recognition to those whom he judges to have 'suffered most and for a long time and made a notable achievement' in winning converts.

Associated Press Photo

The Divine Principles movement developed in Korea at a time when that country was ravaged by war, and the example set by Sun M. Moon helped to give many of his confused fellow countrymen a sense of direction

Battle Between God and Satan

A significant part of the movement's appeal lies in the character of what is promised them in return for their sacrifice and endurance. Beginning with their rule over the restored and reformed earth within a few (unspecified number of) years, believers are assured of being virtual demigods for all eternity. Those who convert early, before the truth of the Divine Principles becomes self-evident, and who thus help to bring about the inevitable, will occupy the most favoured positions in the divine theocracy. When the millennium comes, the mass of those who are still unconverted will come before them for judgement. Those who did most to obstruct the movement will be assigned the lowest places in the new world. In the context of such massive and eternal rewards, any present suffering and hardship is viewed by believers as quite minor.

A particularly valued place is promised to Koreans. Not only is Moon the successor to Jesus and the 'Lord of the Second Advent', but Korea is the New Israel and will 'serve as the priest nation for the rest of the world', and as 'God's Chosen People' the Koreans will be favoured in the new order. Seoul will be the world capital and Korean will be the language spoken by all mankind.

The Divine Principles conception of reality also has an appeal of a more immediate and everyday character. The movement believes in extremely active supernatural forces, whose continual presence and acts are constantly manifest in everyday events. This world of supernatural forces is populated by spirit persons – humans who have died, and eternal figures such as God, Satan and the angels, who are themselves divided into two warring camps. God's forces are in constant battle with Satan's forces, contending for control of man in the material world. Since the Fall of Man in Eden, Satan has more or less dominated or controlled man, although the forces of God have continually attempted to throw off this domination.

Now that God has chosen Moon as the second Christ and has revealed his divine plan, this age-old struggle is entering its final and decisive phase. In this last stage, God's forces will win a permanent victory over those of Satan. The fact that these forces are locked in a fight to the finish is constantly manifest in everyday events. All events in the material world are caused by the actions of spirit persons in one or

the other of the two camps. Persons in the spirit world cause events in the material world for a purpose related to this cosmic battle. Satan's spirits hinder and God's spirits help those in the material world who help God (in the form of the Divine Principles movement). Satan's spirits help and God's spirits hinder those who help Satan (which means all who oppose the Divine Principles movement).

This conception provides believers with a simple and powerful scheme for interpreting the 'meaning' of everyday events: anything that hinders or hurts a believer, the movement or those aligned with it, is an attack by Satan's spirits: anything that helps a believer, the movement or those aligned with it, is an act of helping or leading by God's spirits. Through constant application of this scheme in everyday life, members come to have an immediate and close sense of unseen forces operating on the physical order (for example, the weather) and intervening in world affairs, in relations among nations, in the latest national disaster, and in their own daily lives. Missed or caught buses, cars breaking down or running smoothly, poor and good health, missed and kept appointments, chance and arranged meetings, lost and found property – everything and anything – belongs to a world of spirit causality.

Opposition from Parents

As might be expected, the beliefs, dedication and missionizing intensity of Divine Principles followers have indeed generated opposition. In South Korea during the 1950s, the movement experienced an especially difficult time. It was a favourite for 'exposé' magazines, an object of condemnation by more conventional religions and an object of some concern to the government. Apart from the disapproval generated by the heterodox character of their beliefs, various kinds of irregularities (sometimes sexual) were alleged to occur within the movement and it was viewed as having a strong tendency to break up families. It should be noted, however, that matters of this sort have frequently been of concern to conventional citizens when faced with intensely committed 'end of the world' religions.

Perhaps partly as a result of its continual growth, the Divine Principles movement has more recently experienced less condemnation in South Korea. Syncretic religions, combining different religious beliefs, have a sizeable following in that country, making them a political fact of life. Recent regimes have apparently thought it the better part of wisdom to attempt to gain the co-operation of such groups in fostering social reform rather than to suppress them.

Movements like the Divine Principles have an important function in developing countries. They can transform a passive belief in the natural and inevitable character of whatever exists into a faith that things can be changed – by God, man, or both. Though political leaders are apt to put little stock in supernatural forces as catalysts of change, they agree with the fundamental belief that things can be changed, and are disposed to support this belief almost irrespective of the larger creed in which it is embedded. In pre-industrial, developing countries such religions as the Divine Principles can be viewed as cauldrons in which are forged people amenable to the modern mentality.

Outside South Korea the movement only began to 'take hold' in the early '60s. While still only tenuously established in most countries in which it claims membership, it has experienced relatively strong growth in Japan. And, partially paralleling the early difficulties in South Korea, the missionizing intensity and devotion of its members have generated opposition among the Japanese. In the main, this opposition has crystallized around the fears of parents whose offspring have joined the movement. In 1967 a group of deserted parents formed a national organization dedicated to getting their youth to return home and to resume their high school or college studies. Pointing to the Divine Principles' missionary intensity and glorification of suffering, the parents have charged that their children have been 'brainwashed', 'misled', and 'made virtual prisoners' of the movement. And, the parents have charged, as a consequence of the movement's fasting practices, many of their children suffer from malnutrition. The group has held demonstrations outside the Divine Principles' Tokyo headquarters demanding the return of their children and they are said to have undertaken legal action against the movement.

It is in the United States that the Moonies aroused the most bitter controversy outside Asia. As parents became aware of what was happening to their children, they made efforts to rescue them from the organization, and had them 'deprogrammed'.

Middle Class Leadership

While appealing to the poorest and least educated groups, the movement's membership in various countries is also drawn from the middle classes and from the young, relatively educated sectors of the population. In South Korea, in addition to students, the movement draws significantly on young army officers and has some attraction for college teachers. Although the membership with these characteristics is small compared to the total numbers of such persons in South Korean society – and small compared to total Divine Principles' membership – it is very important, for the leadership it provides and for the sophistication it has injected into the movement's policies and strategies. Further, the occupational standing and skills of these members gives them access to the power centres of South Korean society.

In the United States, the believers tend to be of a relatively high educational level, and to be under the age of 30, with the bulk of the membership at least below 40. Many are drawn from what is identified in the United States as the 'lower middle class' or from rural and small town migrants to urban areas.

People who convert to the Divine Principles seem uniformly to be persons who, prior to and at the time of their conversion, are experiencing a sense of meaninglessness both in their own lives and in the larger world. The Divine Principles' view of reality has a strong capacity to overcome this and to give a sense of direction.

Like other millenarian religions, the Divine Principles has, over the years, become increasingly equivocal on the topic of exactly *when* the new world order will be established. In the same way that the early Christians had progressively to attenuate their millenarian expectations as they gained power and respectability, the Divine Principles movement may be entering the early stages of transformation into merely another established religion.

JOHN LOFLAND

National Portrait Gallery

Divine Right

Theory that a king's authority is given him directly by God and that he is therefore independent of the will of his subjects, who owe him unlimited obedience: probably descended from old beliefs about the divinity of kings, by way of the worship of the Roman emperors, the theory was not fully elaborated until the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was asserted by, among others, Louis XIV in France and the Stuarts in England.

See KING.

A. Guillano

Dodona

Site of a famous oracle of Zeus, in the mountains of north-western Greece: the priests 'of unwashed feet who couch upon the ground' and priestesses interpreted the rustling of the leaves of a sacred oak as the words of the god: they may also have drawn oracles from the sound of a sacred spring in the grove, the echoes of a gong, and the flight and calls of sacred pigeons; later, the god's answers were given through lots.

See ORACLES.

Carlisle Art Gallery and Museum

DOG

The dog's habit of attaching himself to mon and identifying with his moster's interests is no doubt one of the reasons why this animal has been worshipped in many places and held in high esteem. Some would go so far as to say that dog worship is still practised in Britain

FROM THE BONES of dogs discovered in caves, burial grounds and lake dwellings in Europe it is known that a breed existed here in the New Stone Age, and in the Bronze and Iron Ages. The domestic dog is probably descended from the grey common wolf, *Canis Lupus*.

From the earliest recorded times the dog has been intimately associated with man, his home and his family. The first mention of the dog in the Bible may be found in the account of the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus, chapter 11) and an early reference to his being man's companion occurs in the Book of Tobit (in the Apocrypha), when Tobias sets out on his journey, accompanied by an angel, 'and the young man's dog with them'. Both cats and dogs were held in high esteem in ancient Egypt; the city of Cynopolis took its name from *cynos*, a dog. Its citizens were forced by law to provide for all their stray dogs, and they even went to war with a neighbouring city when someone ate one of their dogs. It became customary to name dogs on monuments to the dead: Pharaoh Rameses II (13th century BC) gave his pet dog the name of Anaitis-in-Power, and other dogs which were commemorated by name in this way included Ken, Abu, Akna, Tarn and Temas. Several paintings of King Tutankhamen's dogs have been discovered, elegantly depicted on the furniture of his tomb. One shows the boy king riding in his golden chariot, chasing deer, with two great mastiffs accompanying him, wearing gold collars.

It is believed that the Egyptians worshipped the dog because of their regard for the dog star, Sirius, the brightest star in the skies. Sirius was venerated by all the people of the Nile, who depended on the rise and fall of the great river for their livelihood. The rising of the river marked for them the most important feast day of the year, and when the time for the flood drew near they watched with anxiety for the rise of Sirius, the dog star, over the horizon. This told them that the floods were soon to be expected, and that their New Year was beginning. Falling down on their knees in the light of the star, they worshipped Sirius, faithful as the dog, which never failed them.

Another reason for this dog-worship may have been because the dog-headed god Anubis, or Apu, was said to guide the souls of the dead to the underworld, the abode of Osiris. Thus the god – and the creature whose head he wore – had to be placated and worshipped.

Above **As faithful companions and expert hunting animals, dogs were held in high esteem by the Celts. Bronze Celtic dog from Kirkby Thore, Westmorland, probably a votive offering to a god** ***Right*** **St Hubert, the patron saint of dogs in northern Europe, receives the magic stole which has the power to cure the bite of mad dogs:** ***The Mass of St Hubert*****, a painting in the National Gallery**

The Smell of an Infidel

The dog was also revered by the early Babylonians, Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were the people living between the two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. History relates that the Governor of Babylon owned so many dogs that four towns were made exempt from taxes provided the inhabitants fed their dogs properly. Terracotta statuettes of these ancient creatures may be seen in the British Museum, and their names have a familiar ring even today. The last of the great kings of Assyria in the 7th century BC gave such names to his hunting mastiffs as 'He-Ran-and-Barked', 'The Producer-of-Mischief' and 'The Seizer of His Enemies'.

Because the Egyptians worshipped dogs, the Hebrews hated them, and scorned the belief that animals could detect the presence of spirits and ghosts, or were familiar with the world beyond the grave. But the Hebrews, although disliking the dog, were aware of his value. 'Dwell not in a town where no harking dog is heard', they said. According to legend, when the Jews made their silent, secret exodus from Egypt to find the promised land, not a single Egyptian dog stirred: 'they did not move their tongues against man or beast'.

Islam abhors the dog for one of the same reasons as the strict Jew. The animal is

The Hound of Heaven

Behind the image of the watchdog that guards man's possessions, lies that of the personal dog-ghost that protects him on lonely roads; and, deeper still, lies the image of the divine dog that protects man's soul on its way to paradise. Behind the image of the guide dog that leads the blind is that of the personal dog-ghost that guides its master to treasure, and ultimately the divine dog that guides souls through the darkness of the Underworld. (Harnesses moulded on the clay images of dogs found buried with their masters in Chinese tombs are similar to those used by the blind.) Behind the image of the dog that hauls medicine and food to outposts is that of the personal dog-ghost that brings these commodities to the bereaved, and – on the deepest level – that of the divine dog-physician and the suckling bitch-goddess. Dogs on all three levels guard treasure, hound criminals and provide faithful companionship: all three take the initiative in approaching man.

Dog-deities provided the light of the sun, moon and stars, and the waters that fertilized the earth. They were responsible for the potency of man and fertility of women, and they gave protection against all evil influences.

The dog received the souls of dying men. It also judged souls after death, and maintained equilibrium between the light and dark elements. As an incarnation of the Buddha, the dog brought man enlightenment.

Finally, we come to the Hound of Heaven – Christ – the Guide, the Protector, the Healer, the Light of the world, the Judge – who everlastingly pursues man's soul, and operates in the individual psyche as the will towards 'Life more abundant'; as the drive towards greater consciousness.

Patricia Dale-Green *Dog*

Michael Halford

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

held to be an unclean eater, a devourer of refuse, and must therefore be classed with the pig. Yet Mohammed allowed dogs to be used for the chase, and the animals captured were eaten, provided the name of Allah was uttered when the hunting dogs were slipped from their leads. The Moslem creed admits two dogs into heaven, Tobit's dog, already mentioned, and the great watchdog Katmir, said to be the Dog of the Seven Sleepers, who appears in the Koran and whose descendants are prized by the Bedouin tribes to this day.

The giant mastiffs of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, who ruled Rhodes from the 14th to the 16th centuries, were taught to distinguish between the smell of a Turk and a Christian; Spanish bloodhounds helped in the conquest of Mexico and Peru; and in the 16th century there was a spaniel which saved the Dutch republic by awakening the camp of William the Silent just as it was about to be attacked by the enemy.

The Country of the Dogs

A number of strange beliefs concerning dogs are held in the East. In various parts of the Orient it is believed that there are tribes of men whose heads are fashioned in the shape of a dog; Bilad el Kelb, the Country of the Dogs, said by the Sudanese to exist near Uganda, is a land where all the men become dogs at sun-down and run about barking fiercely and hunting in the woods. Arabic superstition maintains that there is a tribe called Beni-Kelb (the Sons of the Dog), in which housewives and daughters look like fair women, but the males have no speech, because they are all white hounds. Some say these hounds 'dwell not in the land of Arabia, but inhabit a country beyond the flood, where they devour their old folk as soon as their beards are hoary'. When they have sight of a guest approaching, says the fable, 'the hospitable men-dogs spring forth to meet him, and holding him by his mantle with their teeth, they draw him gently to their nomad tents, where they give him drink and refreshments.'

The Emperors of ancient China hunted tigers, deer and boar with greyhounds, mastiffs and chows. The chow, the common dog of China, is the village guardian, sleeping in the sun by day, on watch at night. In Tibet, the Lama priests place images of 'dog-lions' in their sacred temples.

It is clear that the ancient Persians venerated dogs because of the many references in their sacred writings. Three kinds of dog are mentioned in the *Zend-Avesta*: the house dog, the shepherd's dog and the vagrant. The stray, prowling around the camps in search of carcases and unwanted food, was a scavenger well provided for, being compared to the begging holy man, and was protected by religious laws. In the *Zend-Avesta* the stray dog is described as being 'self-clothed and self-shud, watchful, wakeful and sharp-toothed, born to watch over man's goods.'

There are only five sins, according to this work, which carry with them the penalty of being cast into outer darkness. Two of

A man's dog has been called his 'best friend' and as such has been shown a devotion which sometimes borders on worship *Above* A cemetery for departed dogs in England; it is an old belief that dogs will accompany their masters to heaven *Far left* The British are particularly renowned for their sometimes eccentric attachment to dogs: this lady is collecting funds to feed her large pack *Far right* Artemis or Diana, the classical goddess of the chase, with her hunting dog: one tragic story tells how a young huntsman, who saw her bathing naked, was transformed into a stag and torn to pieces by his own hounds

The Dog Husband

One of the five daughters of an old woman owned a dog. That girl became pregnant, for the dog changed itself into a young man to become her lover. Her family, ashamed, cast her out. But the girl made fire and survived. Eventually she gave birth to four male pups and one female. They grew quickly. One night months later the girl heard sounds like children playing. She spied on the pups, and saw that they had removed their dog coats and were playing in human form, an ability they had kept secret from her. She quickly took the coats and flung them into the fire. From then on the children walked upright as humans. When the girl's family learned that the children were real people, they were all reconciled.

Abridged from *Folk-Tales of the Coast Salish*, ed. Thelma Adamson

Keystone Press Agency

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The giant mastiffs of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem were taught to distinguish between the smell of a Turk and a Christian

these concern the dog – giving him food too hot to eat, or refusing him food while humans are eating, The faithful, said the holy law, must 'set aside three mouthfuls of bread and give them to the dog'.

When a man dies, as soon as the soul has left the body, the corpse-demon falls upon the body from hell, and this demon can be expelled ouly by the glance of a dog with four eyes. As the Parsees could never find such a creature, they interpreted the doctrine as meaning a dog with two spots over the eyes.

A yellow-eared, four-eyed dog is believed by many Persians to watch at the head of the Kinvad bridge, the gateway to the next world, and with his fierce barking he is said to drive out the Devil from the souls of the holy ones who walk over the bridge into eternity. This yellow-eared dog, according to the Parsees, was the first creature allowed to guard man's body before God had animated it. 'Arise, O thou yellow-eared dog, arise!' cried God, and the dog immediately barked and shook his ears, so that the Devil, seeing the fierce creature, fled down into hell.

The Watchdogs of Hell

It was considered a serious crime, according to the *Zend-Avesta*, to kill a sacred water dog, the holiest of dogs. This impious act was believed to bring on a terrible drought which would dry up all the pastures, the drought lasting until the dog's killer was discovered and put to death. Then the holy soul of the dog was offered as a sacrifice for three days and three nights, in front of a blazing fire. The slayer had to endure 20,000 lashings on his back, and then to carry 20,000 loads of wood. He must also kill 10,000 snakes, 10,000 tortoises, 20,000 frogs, 10,000 cats, 10,000 earthworms and flies, and after further punishment he was allowed to atone for his fearful crime.

The Hindus believe that the dog is equal to man. 'The wise will look upon a Brahmana possessed of learning and humility, and on a dog'. The dog is therefore a responsible creature, and must pay for his mistakes. Thus, a mad dog that bites without first barking or warning, and wounds a man or sheep, must pay for his crime as if it were wilful murder. In the

Hirmer Verlag

sacred books of the Hindus there are two four-eyed dogs of Yama, the God of Death of early Vedic mythology. These dogs guard the gates of hell, a myth which has a parallel in Egyptian mythology, in which Anubis, the dog-headed (or jackal-headed) god, was given the same task, and also in Greek myth in which Cerberus is the monstrous watchdog of the underworld.

Left **Ceramic dog-lions from China which were often placed in sacred temples: by courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum** ***Above*** **In Greek mythology the entrance to the underworld was guarded by a monstrous three-headed dog called Cerberus: Greek vase of the 6th century BC showing the watchdog and Hercules who tamed him**

Superstition in connection with the dog dies hard. In many parts of central Europe today, and in most Slavonic countries, the dog-spirit is believed to live in the fields of ripening corn, so that when the wind rustles the corn like waves, the older folk say, 'Look – the mad dog is in the corn.' This dog is supposed to stay in the cornfield until the last sheaf is left standing. He runs in front of the reapers, seeks sanctuary in the last sheaf, but is finally caught. If a reaper falls ill during the harvest, he is said to have stumbled upon the corn spirit, who has punished him with sickness.

Many legends and superstitions surround the close bond between man and the dog. The Spaniards relate how three dogs, Cubilon, Melampo and Lubina, went with their masters to worship the infant Christ at Bethlehem, so that even today in Spain it is considered lucky to call dogs by these names. In the United States, a yellow dog following you awhile, or a strange dog going home with you, means good luck. A dog rolling over continually means visitors coming; a dog eating grass foretells rain. And as elsewhere, a dog howling at night is a death omen – because of the old belief in the dog's supernatural perceptions, enabling it to see the approach of Death himself.

JOHN MONTGOMERY

FURTHER READING: Patricia Dale-Green, *Dog* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967) with a complete bibliography.

Dogon

A Sudanese tribe inhabiting the mountainous regions near Timbuktu, now in the Republic of Mali, many of whose distinctive pagan beliefs have survived the growth of Islam and Christianity in the neighbouring territories: ancestor worship is a notable feature of their religion, and rituals, conducted by sacred priest-chiefs called *hogon*, include rain-making ceremonies, masked dances, and circumcision of both men and women.

Michael Holford

Michael Holford/Victoria & Albert Museum

Dogwood

In the United States a flowering tree used extensively as medication by the Indians and later in backwoods folk medicine; the bark contains quinine, and so decoctions made from it were legitimately effective against fevers, and were used to treat malaria by the Confederate army; children were passed through the branches of the dogwood to give them immunity to childhood diseases; folk belief says that fish bite best when dogwood blooms, and storms follow the blooming.

Michael Holford/Bethnal Green Museum

DOLLS

THE MODERN PLASTIC DOLL which walks, talks and winks its eyes has a lengthy ancestry. Dolls were used as playthings by Egyptian children as long ago as 1900 BC. Many cultures, notably the Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani and American Indian, have given dolls as playthings to boys as well as girls. Dolls provide far more than mere entertainment to children, whose imagination endows them with personality and even the power of speech. They form a focus for the child's fantasies, are made to act out his desires and fears and are often ritually 'punished' in place of the real object of their owner's anger. Cosseted and buffeted by turns, the doll arouses the maternal instinct and provides a grounding in motherhood.

To an even greater extent in the lives of adults, dolls and figurines of many kinds have a variety of symbolic meaning. In witches' spells, dolls were riddled with thorns or pins and used for malicious purposes (see IMITATIVE MAGIC). They were also used extensively as fertility and love charms in Asia and Northern Europe. In medieval France and England wax dolls were made to lure a lover; held to the breast they melted, and as they dissolved so, figuratively, did the loved one's heart. In Europe the doll was also widely used as a powerful aid to fecundity, and the modern practice of placing miniature figures of the bride and groom on a wedding cake probably originated from this practice.

This same fertility-promoting principle is carried on in the west of England and in other parts of Europe today at harvest time; 'corn dollies', figures or shapes woven from the stems of wheat and barley, are hung in homes, barns and public houses in the hope that the 'harvest daemon' will come and rest in them, thus promoting the growth of the next year's crop (see CORN).

In Catholic countries where miniature statues of the Virgin and the saints are revered, the doll is an honoured artifact. In Japan, during the Girl's Festival, or Hinamatsuri, heirloom dolls are displayed in the *tokonama*, or alcove, of every home which has daughters. The dolls represent a Japanese emperor and empress with their court and, after choice scraps of food have been laid before the tiny figures, the daughters of the household are told exemplary stories of Japanese womanhood.

DOLPHIN

THAT DOLPHINS were especially friendly to man was a widespread popular belief in the ancient world, and there are many stories of boys riding dolphins and of dolphins saving men from drowning. Perhaps the most famous is the story of Arion, the legendary poet and musician of the 7th century BC, who was threatened with death by sailors who coveted his wealth. He persuaded them to let him sing one last song, then leapt into the sea and was carried safely ashore by a dolphin that had been attracted by his singing.

Many similar tales are told of heroes and demigods, and it has been argued that they represent local versions of the myth of the god who dies and is reborn. Sometimes the dolphin conveys the god safely to the underworld, or brings him back in the spring; sometimes the body of the god is carried to his future cult-centre. According to one myth about Dionysus, the god hired some sailors for a voyage and the crew, unaware of their master's identity, plotted to abduct him and sell him as a slave. Discovering this, he manifested himself by filling the ship with wild music and flowing wine, turning the oars into serpents and causing a vine to grow up the mast. Terrified, the sailors leapt into the sea, whereupon Poseidon turned them into dolphins.

The dolphin was associated not only with life and death but with divine wisdom and love. Apollo sometimes appears as a dolphin god, and the foundation of his celebrated oracle at Delphi was attributed to Cretan sailors who had been led there by a dolphin that Apollo had sent to guide them. Aphrodite and Eros are frequently portrayed riding dolphins, and Poseidon found an amorous task for the dolphin when he sent it in pursuit of the nereid Amphitrite, who had spurned his advances. As a reward for bringing her back to him, according to one account, Poseidon placed the dolphin in the sky as a constellation.

The idea of the dolphin as a guide or guardian on a journey, particularly by water

Greek vase showing the legendary poet Arion being carried to safety on the back of a friendly dolphin

Royal Ontario Museum

or to the underworld, was widespread among the Greeks and probably throughout the Mediterranean area. At the Greek settlement of Olbia, on the north-west coast of the Black Sea, tokens in the shape of dolphins have been found in the hands of the dead. Dolphins and deities with dolphin attendants, often in forms that resemble the Greek myths, have also been found at Roman sites from Libya to Britain.

Classical dolphin beliefs survived into the Christian era and were assimilated to at least one Christian legend. The body of Lucian of Antioch, who was martyred in 312 AD, was thrown into the sea but brought ashore by a dolphin, and Symeon Metaphrastes, the biographer of the saints of the Orthodox Church, tells how the saint's corpse was carried upon the dolphin's back 'laid out as if resting upon a bed, and it was a marvel to see how the corpse remained immovable upon such a slippery and round body'.

Dolphins are found not only in the Mediterranean but in temperate waters elsewhere, and they appear in the folklore of various maritime peoples. In Annam, for example, it was believed that dolphins would save shipwrecked sailors from drowning, and to find a dead dolphin at sea was a sign of luck.

That ancient beliefs may not be entirely mythical is suggested by several 20th century reports of drowning people pushed ashore by dolphins, and of dolphins making friends with swimmers and even allowing children to ride them. In recent years, scientists have investigated the reputed intelligence of these creatures and have reported that their dolphins seem to have imitated human speech and to have responded intelligently to certain experiments. However, the possibility that the dolphin is an intelligent species with which man will one day communicate remains a dream. It is a dream in which the dolphin is as benign, and as mysterious, as in the ancient myths.

FURTHER READING: R. Stenvit, *The Dolphin* (Dent, 1969); N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (Cassell, 1966).

Houston Rogers

Don Juan

Legendary Spanish profligate, hero of innumerable love affairs, who invited the statue of a man he had killed to dine with him; the statue accepted and dragged him off to hell: Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* is the most famous treatment of the theme, also used by Shaw in *Man and Superman*.

DOUBLE

It is an old and tenacious belief that the human soul can take visible form, a belief which lies behind the lore of the astral body, the double and the aura, the guardian angel, the doppelgänger and the fetch. That the soul could be projected from the body at will, that the witch could be in two places at once, that a man might see his own phantom shortly before his death, or that others might see it at the moment of his death, are deep-rooted ideas which are still widely accepted today

THE NATURE AND SUBSTANCE of the soul or spirit has long engaged the attention of theologians and philosophers. Certain gifted individuals have claimed to see visible emanations from the human body in the form of astral bodies, etheric doubles, luminous auras, haloes and aureoles; and many of these manifestations have been represented in art, from the ancient Egyptians to the Surrealist painters (such as Magritte) of the 20th century. In primitive art the soul has sometimes been portrayed as 'a sort of gremlin emerging from the mouth', according to one imaginative description of it.

The concept of the human double (or doubles) has remained a constant factor in folklore and tradition, particularly the belief that every human being is accompanied through life by two extensions of his personality, the one good and the other evil; the former luminous and the latter dark and menacing. This curious idea was probably based originally on a primitive rationalization into companion spirits of the reflected image in water and the ever-accompanying shadow.

Constant Companions

A vast wealth of lore, legend and superstition surrounds both the reflection and the shadow the world over. The Zulu, for example, believed it dangerous to look into a dark pool lest he be captured by the in-dwelling spirit, while the shadow – that darker 'other self' which followed man everywhere – might be lost or injured by carelessness. At a Chinese funeral great care is taken to ensure that no mourner's shadow is trapped inside the coffin; while it is the practice of children everywhere to stamp gleefully upon each other's shadow, play-acting the ritual killing of the soul.

It was perhaps inevitable that the dualistic ancient Persians should have considered each human being to be permanently attended by a good and evil spirit, which influenced his thoughts from birth to death. The ancient Greeks numbered these doubles among the daemons. Although the human double could exist apart from its original it would be highly ominous for it to be seen, as this was an omen of death. Significantly, it was extremely unlucky for an ancient Greek to see his reflection in water for this too was a fatal omen, inspiring the tragic legend of Narcissus.

While the Greek daemon later evolved into our more familiar demon, the luminous reflection, transformed into the good genius, became the more familiar guardian angel of Christianity (see also GUARDIAN SPIRITS). In this celestial form the concept of the double survived the extinction of the pagan world, but whether conceived as guardian angel, etheric double or astral body, it persisted in the folk beliefs of the people. With its more primitive aspects unchanged, it survived under a variety of names such as the Jüdel or Doppelgänger of Germany, the *fylgja* of Norway, or the fetch, waft, task or fye of the British Isles.

The most primitive concepts of the soul's function continued to hold sway in popular belief until well into the 17th and 18th centuries. It was believed that the soul could escape from the body, or be stolen, or alternatively be sent out of the body at will. In the days before the development of modern medical science it was generally assumed that the absence of the soul could be the cause of illness, and that death might ensue as the result of the soul leaving the body and wandering abroad. Projection of the soul at will was an extremely ancient feature of folk mythology and is suggested in the book of Daniel (8.2): 'I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision, and I was at the river Ulai.'

That the soul could wander into the unknown realm of the dream lies behind the primitive belief that it is dangerous to awaken a sleeper, since his soul might be prevented from returning. Even more sinister was the conviction that a soul could be extracted from the body by sorcerers and ghosts. Upon this assumption is based the belief found in Haiti that a soul can be captured and used as an instrument to enslave its owner, leading to the tradition of the zombie (see ZOMBIE).

The myth of soul projection became potentially dangerous during the witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was accepted that the witch's double might wander abroad destroying human life and livestock, while its owner was to all appearances elsewhere. Known as 'spectral evidence', the testimony of a witness that the witch had been seen performing evil deeds or attending the sabbath was sufficient in law to bring large numbers of innocent persons to the stake or gallows, despite the evidence of other witnesses that the witch was at another place at the time stated. John Cotta in *The Trial of Witchcraft*, published in 1616, justified this procedure by the following analogy: 'Experience doth show us that the same eye which saw the shape, proportion and figure together with the true substance, doth as perfectly both see and know it, when it is separated from the substance by the art of the painter.'

The Double of Death

The concept of the human double played a prominent part in beliefs about omens of love and death. At Hallowe'en a young girl would light two candles on her dressing table and peer into a mirror while she ate an apple, and it was then that the spectral double of her future husband would materialize in the mirror, looking over her shoulder. A girl with particularly steady nerves might even walk round a churchyard 12 times, after which the double would appear to her.

According to Norse ghost lore every human being had a fylgja, or 'follower', a spirit that was as mortal as the body it reflected and which came into the world in the caul of a newborn babe and was doomed to die when the original passed away. Connected with this macabre theme was the belief that whenever a double materialized.

To see your reflection in a pool or mirror was often taken as a sign of bad luck to follow, for it was thought that you were seeing a visible manifestation of your own spirit. *La réproduction interdite* ('the forbidden double') by the Surrealist painter Magritte: by permission of the Edward James Foundation

Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Brighton Art Gallery

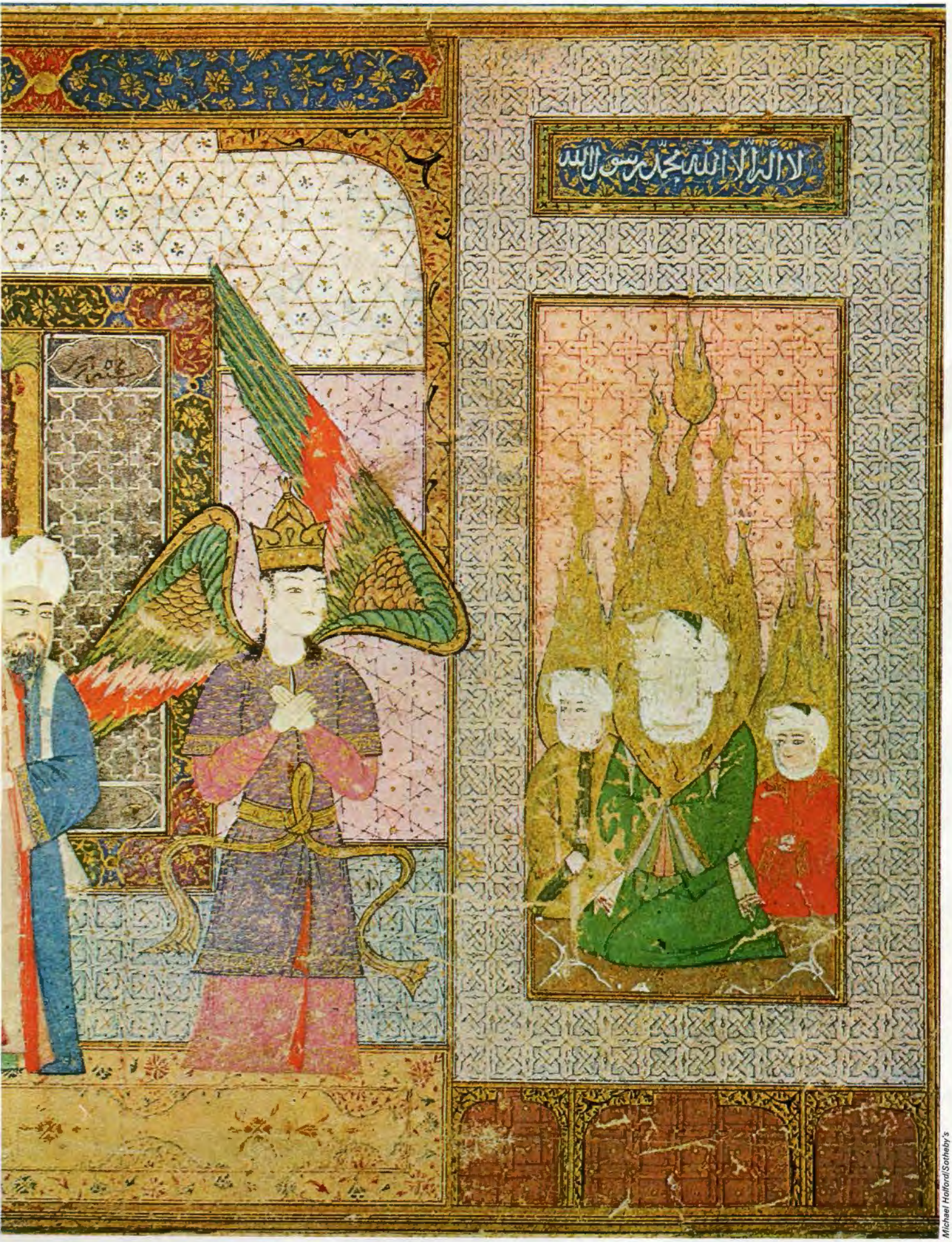
The halo which surrounds the head of the Christian saint has a counterpart in other beliefs: Moslem prophets are often depicted enveloped by flames, a symbol of their spiritual power: 16th century Turkish manuscript showing a prophet visited by an angel and holy men

death was near at hand. An old custom enabled the morbidly inclined, by keeping watch in the church porch on the eve of St Mark, and sometimes on All Soul's Day and Christmas and Midsummer Eves, to witness the shadowy forms of all who were doomed to die in the parish in the succeeding 12 months pass into the church at midnight. It was not unknown for a watcher to see his own double, a far from comforting experience for it was a sign that he too must follow the others.

Far more common, however, are reports of phantoms of the living presenting themselves at the moment of death to an intimate relative or a dear friend. Known as the 'fetch', this type of manifestation is an extremely common feature of the psychic lore of Europe. According to tradition, if the fetch was seen early in the day it was a sign that death would not take place at once: however, should it appear at night, death was likely to occur immediately. In Scotland such wraiths appeared before the shuddering beholder wrapped in their winding sheets. The Irish fetch provides the theme for a number of ghostly anecdotes in which the human being is haunted by his own double. Many modern psychical researchers consider the fetch to be a projection of thought, rather than an actual double, but to our ancestors its genuineness was beyond dispute.

Seeing Your Own Double

Robert Dale Owen, the 19th century Spiritualist, has described how a woman's dying brother appeared to her at the moment of his passing. In the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research there is an account of the Birkbeck ghost, the apparition of a mother seen by her three children shortly before her death. One of the oldest traditions of this character relates to the 'death fetch' of William Rufus, which was seen at Bodmin in Cornwall flung over the back of a diabolical black goat at the very moment when the king was pierced by an arrow in the New Forest. There is a curious tale in Moreton's *History of Apparitions* in which the double of a young man living in the East Indies, who was about to be disinherited by his father, suddenly materialized in the lawyer's office, terrifying those present with the dramatic command, 'Hold!'.



Michael Halford/Sotheby's

The Empress Catherine the Great responded in a typically autocratic manner when her doom-laden double advanced towards her, for she ordered her guards to open fire on it

Sometimes a fetch would materialize before the eyes of its human original, a horrifying experience because it was an omen of his death. John Aubrey, the 17th century antiquary, relates how Lady Diana Rich saw a vision of herself as clearly as a reflection in a mirror, as she walked in the grounds of Holland House in London: a month later she was dead. Her sister, Lady Isabel Thynne, had a similar experience before her death. In the same century, a Dr William Napier, while staying at an inn, saw his own corpse lying on a bed and did not live long afterwards. Queen Elizabeth I, immediately before her death, was shocked to behold a vision of herself on her death-bed, looking 'pallid, shrivelled and wan.' Goethe and the poet Shelley were also privileged to see their own death fetches. The Empress Catherine the Great responded in a typically autocratic manner when her doom-laden double advanced towards her, for she ordered her guards to open fire on it.

Old ideas about the double became involved in the superstition of the falling picture. The portrait was thought to contain the soul or double of the person portrayed, and should it fall it was regarded as a sign of his impending death. There are households even today where after a death occurs, all mirrors are covered – a custom that originated in the belief that the doubles of the living projected into the looking-glass would be carried away by the ghost of the departed to the land of the dead.

The subject of the human double is still very much an open one, and is an area of considerable study and research. It is interesting in this respect, to note reports of the results of recent investigations carried out with the drug L.S.D. Not only were the subjects apparently able consciously to transform their reflections in a mirror into extraordinary shapes, but to see their own body images projected on the walls of a room or in a crystal; thus reconstructing experimentally some of the most tenaciously held beliefs about the double in European folklore.

ERIC MAPLE

***How They Met Themselves*, by the English painter Rossetti; witches and sorcerers were thought to be able to project their souls at will, but to see your own double materialize was usually a sign that death was imminent**

The Human Aura

The word 'aura' is used by occultists to mean a faint cloud or luminous appearance which has been seen surrounding the human body by certain gifted individuals or clairvoyants. The aura comes from the same layer of occult speculation as the astral body and the etheric double, speculation about the nature of man.

It is clear that besides an objective visible body, each human being has subjective invisible experiences, of which he himself is aware but which he can only make others aware of by means of speech, gestures, writing and other signs. These subjective experiences include sensations, memories, thoughts, urges and decisions; all of which have been classified by psychologists ancient, medieval and modern. In all religions these invisible parts of a man are regarded as more important than his body.

The question is whether those inner, subjective parts of a human being, which undoubtedly exist, ever become observable as outer, objective phenomena – specifically, in the form of an aura. At the lowest level, a materialistic explanation will dismiss the aura as being no more than gaseous substances emitted from the human body; and one sceptic writing on the subject has referred the aura to body odour. But besides odours, many living things also give off radiant heat. Warm-blooded animals can be detected by their heat in the dark, by snakes which prey on them. Some animals are luminous – for example, the glow-worm. Electricity is generated in living processes and can be helpful in the study of them.

In 1858 a well-known industrial chemist, Baron Karl von Reichenbach claimed to have discovered certain radiations coming from magnets, crystals, plants and animals, which could be seen and felt in the dark by sensitive subjects after acclimatization for two or three hours. The north pole of a magnet sent out a blue glow and a cool current of air, the south an orange appearance and a warm feeling. The same was found with the ends of crystals and with parts of animals. The human body showed blue and felt cool on the right side, orange and warm on the left. The radiation was called Od, Odyle or Odic Force. The hypnotist de Rochas in France and William Gregory, Professor of Chemistry at Edinburgh, also believed they had observed it.

In recent years the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich has claimed to discover a common functioning principle in living and non-living things, manifesting fully only in the former; in observing it, he finds the same polarity of the blue cool radiation as against the warm orange.

Many other alleged radiations have been suspected of playing a part in the phenomenon of the aura, including the mitogenetic rays discovered by A. Gurwitsch in 1923, which emanate from plant tissue and affect the cell division of yeast. They are ultra-violet radiation of low intensity.

Kilner's Auras

Although it had often been claimed that the human aura had been seen by clairvoyants, it was not until 1911 that W. R. Kilner devised ways of showing it experimentally. He did this by two methods: firstly by looking at the human body through a dilute solution of a dye called *dicyanin*; and secondly by looking at a very bright light through a strong alcoholic solution. The second method must be used for a brief period only, as it is otherwise dangerous. Later, H. Boddington discovered a type of glass manufactured in Czechoslovakia which dispenses with the use of solutions. Kilner also used carmine and since his time a number of other dyes have been found to be more or less satisfactory.

The aura can only be seen against a dead black background. It is not a vapour but appears as a radiation, usually blue-grey in colour. It is also seen in magnets and other objects, and is affected by magnets. It changes with age, but only to any marked degree in females. Kilner distinguished between an outer aura, which was without regular shape, striated (marked with small parallel lines) not visible with the carmine screen, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth at different places; an inner aura visible through the carmine screen, and inside the inner aura an apparently empty space in which careful investigations showed faint coloured striations, uniformly a quarter of an inch deep when visible. Later the author distinguished an ultra-outer aura, seldom visible.

Kilner's main object in these researches was to aid diagnosis of disease, because he believed that illness caused changes in the appearance of the aura. He identified the

Robert Doisneau/Rapho

innermost of his three subdivisions of the aura with what is called the etheric double. Clairvoyants who have specially trained consider this the most dense vehicle, the 'health aura' or a visible part of it. The etheric double is probably physical matter of a refined character. Highly trained clairvoyants are said to see the astral body, which is so called from its starry appearance. A few privileged seers claim to see the 'mental body' or even the spiritual centre of the being, but this must be rare.

Halo and Aureole

The ancients represented the aura in art. The Egyptians believed in various invisible parts of man, which they sometimes represented in visible form in their inscriptions. Sometimes they showed a sort of halo around the head of an important figure. The gods of the Hindus were often shown with the halo and it was not unknown among the Greeks and Romans. The founders of the Sikh religion were later portrayed with it. Moslem rulers were shown with a flame about the head and as Moslems were forbidden to use human religious images, the prophet himself was sometimes represented in pictures wholly by a flame.

In Christian art from the 5th century to the 16th the aura was almost invariably shown around important figures by a *gloria*, a luminosity around the head or whole body. Later the practice was often revived. A halo which surrounds the head only is termed a *nimbus*, but if it extends around the whole body it is called an *aureole*. The significance of both was spiritual power.

Eugen Kusch

Top **Henri Heraut, a Parisian artist, claims that he is inspired by dreams to create dolls that look like himself. Some might credit him with a macabre sense of humour, for in more superstitious societies effigies of this kind were thought to house the spirit of a person *Above* Black clay urn from an early Peruvian culture, showing a priest with his *alter ego*, or 'other self'**

The nimbus was given to both good and evil beings. The three persons of the Godhead were invariably shown with the nimbus. Christ usually bore a cross inside the nimbus and the cross sometimes appeared in the nimbus of the Father and the Holy Ghost. The Apostles and all later saints were also entitled to a simple nimbus.

The nimbus was also shown on personified figures of the planets and constellations. On powerful rulers the nimbus was often shown, even when they were evil. It is remarkable that the Pharaoh who opposed Moses, Herod who slaughtered the innocents, Judas Iscariot, the Beast of the Apocalypse and Satan himself were shown with the nimbus. The aureole was generally but not exclusively confined to God and the Virgin Mary.

The nimbus was of different colours. God and the saints generally had gold, the patriarchs silver, more ordinary people mostly red, blue, green and violet. Evil beings had a black nimbus. Living persons had a square nimbus, spiritual beings a round one, while the triangular nimbus, when used at all, seems to have been reserved for the Godhead.

(See also ASTRAL BODY; OUT OF THE BODY EXPERIENCES.)

W. B. CROW

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DOUKHOBORS

THE NAME DOUKHOBORS was given to a nonconformist Christian sect of Russian peasants who first appeared in the latter half of the 18th century: it was a derogatory term coined by clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and means 'spirit-wrestler', in the sense that the sect was battling with the Holy Spirit. The Doukhobors themselves claimed that they were fighting alongside rather than against the Holy Spirit, but the nickname, like other religious nicknames such as Quaker and Shaker, persisted in common usage.

Theologically the Doukhobors appear to have had their roots in the beliefs of the Judaizers, a heretical Russian sect which denied the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, the Paulicians – another Russian sect – who protested against religious formalism and rejected the Old Testament, and the Bogomils (see BOGOMILS).

The Doukhobors began by rejecting the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church, claiming that the worship of icons and saints, the doctrine of the Trinity and all forms of ritual – including the Sacraments – were ill-founded. They regarded man as the 'living book' and accepted the gospel only in a figurative sense. Later, they extended their dissent from the Church by including the government in their condemnation, and in particular refused to accept the idea of military service, which was then compulsory in Russia. As the price of their nonconformism the Doukhobors suffered cruel persecution throughout the 19th century, being deported several times to different parts of Russia.

Appalled by reports of their suffering, the writer Leo Tolstoy and a group of sympathizers, which included the Society of Friends (Quakers) in England, petitioned Nicholas II to allow the Doukhobors to emigrate. Representations were made to the Canadian government and in 1899 the first immigrant party arrived on Canadian soil. Land was allocated to them in the Far West and they were cordially received.

The first colony to arrive in Canada numbered about 7500. According to the most recent estimate some 20,000 Doukhobors inhabit Vancouver, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia today. The main concession made by the Canadian government was that of exemption from national service on religious grounds; to obtain this exemption the Doukhobors are required to belong to the Union of Doukhobors of Canada, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, the Named Doukhobors of Canada, the Society of Independent Doukhobors or the Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors.

In recent times, the sect has made its living mainly by farming, although the

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When the Russian Doukhobors find themselves in conflict with the Canadian government, they register their protest by stripping off their clothes *Above* and *right* Members are removed by mounties from a political meeting

original Christian-Communist outlook has largely collapsed. Many Doukhobors refuse to accept government tax levies, as they reject individual land ownership and the registration of birth or marriage. Despite their professed pacifism, the sect has resorted to acts of sabotage, together with mass protest rallies in the nude when their beliefs bring them into open conflict with the government; on occasions, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have successfully dealt with the latter form of protest by the use of itching powder.

The Doukhobors have little indigenous art or culture; they claim that artistic development leads to competition, and a similar objection to formal education causes a good deal of trouble with the educational authorities. Although they accept a slightly modified version of the Scriptures as a basis of their faith, they generally abhor the written word, and include the Bible in this general aversion, passing on the teachings of Christ by word of mouth.

The 'Sons of Freedom', an extreme wing of the Doukhobors, have used subversive action for years in an attempt to force the Canadian government to deport them back to Russia – blandly disregarding the fact that the assent of two countries is needed for deportation, and that Communist Russia is unlikely to welcome them back to the land of their troublesome fathers.

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The Doukhobors, who reject religious formalism, emigrated to Canada at the turn of the century to escape persecution

One of the most important birds in mythology and folklore, the dove has a curiously mixed symbolism. It is the bird of love but also the bird of death and mourning

DOVE

A NUMBER of different strands have contributed to the folklore and symbolism of the dove, and so various themes are involved. This is understandable when we consider that the folklore concerns more than one species and that different aspects of the bird's behaviour have caught the attention of people in various communities. In most ancient writings the bird referred to is commonly the domestic *Columba livia* but species are not always clearly differentiated; when the allusion is to migratory species the turtle dove *Turtur communis* is concerned, or in Asia Minor *Turtur risorius*.

The domestication of the dove (or pigeon) dates from remote times, as early Egyptian tomb paintings testify. There was a 'pigeon post' in Babylon and according to Pausanias, the Greek traveller and geographer of the 2nd century AD, a winner at the Olympic Games sent news of his success to his father by homing pigeon. The Saracens also used pigeons during the Crusades to maintain communications. But in the Middle East as well as in Europe dove cotes were built and the breeding birds were often exploited for food. Such dove cotes dating from the Middle Ages may still be seen in the English countryside.

Although the flesh of doves has been found appetizing by many peoples and pigeon pie was a popular dish in England, there were inhibitions among the Semites against eating it; this was probably because of the birds' associations with divine beings. At Hierapolis in Syria, one of the chief centres of the worship of Atargatis, a deity similar to Astarte and Ishtar, the statue of the goddess was surmounted by a golden dove. The birds were regarded as so holy that a man who was impious enough to touch one was regarded as defiled for a whole day.

British Museum

The Greeks explained in a myth how the dove became associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The goddess and her son Eros were playfully competing in picking flowers and as Aphrodite was winning because she had the help of a nymph named Peristera (Dove), so Eros turned the nymph into a dove and henceforth she remained under the protection of Aphrodite. A Greek writer mentions that as Adonis had been honoured by Aphrodite, the Cyprians cast doves into a pyre to him. The mythology of the goddess, whose names Aphrodite Anadyomene signify Sea Foam, Rising from the Sea, and especially the story that she was born from an egg brooded by a dove and pushed ashore by a fish, suggest that her cult came from across the sea to Greece (see APHRODITE).

Like a number of other birds with religious associations the dove came to be regarded as oracular. According to Virgil, two doves guided Aeneas to the gloomy valley where the Golden Bough grew on a holm oak. There was a tradition at Dodona in Greece that the oracle was founded by a

Left **The modern use of the dove as a symbol of peace derives from the story of Noah and the Ark. When the bird returned with an olive leaf in its beak, Noah knew that the flood waters had subsided *Right* To the Greeks and Romans the amorous dove was a bird of love; the Romans sacrificed doves to Venus, goddess of love, and depicted her riding in a dove-drawn chariot; from the *Roman de la Rose***

British Museum

dove, and the oracle in the oasis of Siwa (Ammon) which Alexander the Great sought out was similarly reputed to have owed its origin to a dove. The Romans sacrificed doves to Venus, goddess of love, whom Ovid and other writers represented as riding in a dove-drawn chariot.

The Roman worship of Venus was to a large extent derived from a Phoenician sanctuary (Eryx), where the dove was revered as the companion of Astarte. Thus European beliefs concerning doves were mainly derived from Asia. It may be that the association in the Middle East between doves and goddesses of fertility arose from the conspicuous courtship and prolific breeding of the birds.

The use of the dove as a symbol of peace, in which role it commonly appears today in cartoons, is derived from the reference in Genesis (chapter 8), describing the return of the dove to the Ark. On being sent out the second time, the bird reappeared with an olive leaf in its beak 'so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from off the earth'. Thus the dove became associated with future prosperity and tranquillity, and hence with peace.

To Christians the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and an emblem of purity. In this 13th century English manuscript the doves eat the fruit of a tree while the dragons below wait to catch them; the tree stands for God, and the dragon, which cannot live in the shadow of the tree, is the Devil

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Symbol of the Holy Spirit

The importance of the dove in Christian symbolism is derived from the account of the appearance of the bird at Christ's baptism (Matthew, chapter 3; Mark, chapter 1). From the time of the early Church to the present day it has been the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and from the 5th century the dove was shown in pictures of the Annunciation. It also appears in representations of the Creation as the spirit of God 'moving over the face of the waters'. The white dove has long been an emblem of purity and doves were offered in the Jewish rite of purification (Luke, chapter 2). In Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, as the Holy Spirit appears to Lancelot, a dove carrying a tiny golden censer in its beak enters by the window, impressing the Knights of the Round Table with the purity of the castle of Pellas in which they are assembled. The incident is represented in Wagner's opera *Parsifal*.

Doves feature in the biographies of Saints and Christian personalities down the centuries. In the 3rd century the election of Fabian as Pope was regarded as divinely indicated by a dove alighting on his head, and when Clovis was consecrated on Christmas Day, 496, a pure white dove was said to have brought a vial filled with chrism (anointing oil). Probably because of its association with the Virgin Mary, the dove became an emblem of innocence.

The Mourning Dove

For some North American Indians, though, it was an emblem of improvidence or incompetence. California and Great Basin tribes tell many proverbial fables about Dove's inability to build a sound nest, or to profit by the teaching of the thrush.

The voices of doves have contributed to their folklore – which, in America, seems often to have been transferred from the English cuckoo. In Georgia, a girl hearing the calls of the returning doves in spring performs a ritual derived from an English cuckoo ritual. After taking some steps she looks in her right shoe for a hair which will match the colour of the hair of the man she will marry. Rural lore also says that the dove's call (like the cuckoo's) predicts rain. Unlike the cuckoo, a constant call of a dove is an omen of death.

Doves have been widely associated with death and mourning, probably due to the soul-bird belief – which is shared by many North American Indian tribes. An English folk belief suggests keeping a live pigeon or dove in the bedroom of a dying man, to prolong his life till the family gathers, apparently because the soul, with an affinity for the bird, might thus be made to linger. But in the United States the bird is also a health bringer: turtle doves nesting near a house keep off rheumatism, and a dead dove placed on the chest cures pneumonia.

(See also BREATH.)

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Even some sceptical scientists have acknowledged that dowsing works. But just how the dowser finds what he is searching for by means of a rod or pendulum is still uncertain

DOWSING

THINK OF A DOWSER and your mind probably calls up the picture of a man with a forked stick in his hands, striding across a field and waiting for some mysterious force to drag the stick's end downwards – like a hunting dog on point – indicating the presence of water underground. And if you believe in reasonable and sensible explanations for things, you probably dismiss this picture and its real-life counterparts as charlatanry or superstition or both.

The picture may be inaccurate but like many popular views it persists in spite of the facts. And certainly the popular idea of dowsing has enough accretions of the overtly supernatural to make it highly dubious in the eyes of 'sensible' folk. Tradition says, for instance, that the forked stick should be hazel – but of course an even older tradition places hazel near the top of the list of 'magical' woods, a vital ingredient in many charms, amulets and folk cures. Folklore offers rowan and ash substitutes for hazel in the dowsing rod, and these are also magical woods. The forked stick, too, has its witch associations, since it was on such an implement that witches were supposed to ride to their sabbaths, as many of the old demonological woodcuts show.

It is the central premise of dowsing, however, that arouses most scepticism: that some unseen power or force exerts itself on the stick, in the presence of unseen water (or other materials); and that this effect takes place only when the stick is held by someone with the dowsing talent, who acts as a kind of transformer or perhaps amplifier of the unseen force.

When people begin talking about special mysterious forces and special mysterious abilities, there is a danger of the whole subject sliding rapidly into what Freud called the 'black mud' of occultism. Many dowsers and a few other interested parties have been anxious in recent years to reject imputations of the supernatural, and have borrowed (from J. B. Rhine and other experimenters in telepathy) the less loaded and more modern term 'paranormal' to describe the dowsing ability. They also reject the familiar term 'water divining' – claiming first that more things than water are sought, and secondly that the seeking has little to do with divination. So 'dowsing', an elderly term with obscure origins, has become their favourite name for themselves. There are many organized Societies of Dowsers in Britain and Europe, none of water diviners. (No such groups exist in the United States.) Dowsers try to make clear what their activity is, at its widest and most factual. They have also set up different kinds of experiments to test dowsing, empirically, to show whether or not it works. They have faltered only when they came to offering some plausible explanation for *why* it works, when it does.

Finding Buried Treasure

What happens in dowsing is fairly straightforward, if also fairly wide in scope. A person uses some implement to find, by a non-physical means, the whereabouts of some material that would otherwise be hidden to his senses. Subterranean water in all its forms (streams, artesian wells, pools and so on) is the most common object of the search. But almost as often the goal is some mineral, like coal, iron or other useful metal. Dowsing was also used for centuries in searches for buried treasure, because of its metal-finding efficacy, until modern technology adapted wartime mine-detectors into metal-detectors for such purposes, so supplanting the dowsing rod.

In archeology, too, dowsers have played a part in determining the position and extent of ancient remains. Yet another use for dowsing is to search for lost objects, usually Granny's precious ring and the like, but it is sometimes employed in more important matters. Dowsers were in demand during the California gold rush and in other mining areas. A British dowser named W. H. Burgoyne claims that he has frequently been requested, often by the police, to help in searches for corpses of the drowned. And medical dowsing uses the implements to locate the whereabouts and nature of an illness within a patient's body.

Just as the object need not always be water, the implement need not be a forked stick, or indeed any kind of stick. It can as easily be a bent metal rod or wire – a long piece with a right-angle bend at one end, where the hands grip it – or a pair of these. One well-known Oregon dowser used a copper rod and radio tube as his personalized

The high degree of success achieved by dowsers in their search for hidden objects continues to baffle scientists. The implements used to indicate the whereabouts of water, for example, may include a pendulum or similar weight attached to a silk nylon thread (*top left*), a long metal rod or wire with a right-angle bend at one end (*top right*), or the more traditional forked hazel stick (*right*). The presence of water underground is somehow transmitted through the dowser to the implement, which begins to tremble

Simon Field

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Dowsers believe that they are endowed with a finely tuned faculty which reacts to the presence of certain objects, causing muscular contractions that affect the rod or pendulum *Left* Using an accurate map this dowser practises his art in the comfort of his own home, later visiting the sites to confirm his finds *Right* Sometimes the vibrations are so strong that the dowser has to struggle to hold on

equipment; another Oregonian, the even more famous Clyde C. Hammerley, used a forked bronze bar. But then the implement could also be a pendulum or similar weight on a silk or nylon thread. Often the pendulum is used together with a rule or a protractor-like disc, especially in medical dowsing, when the pendulum's movement along the gradations of rule or disc provides information towards the diagnosis. Many dowsers have their own highly individualized implements, which work for them. In the case of the rods or sticks, they may be held in a variety of ways, lightly with the fingertips, or gripped tightly in front of the chest with the heels of the hands outwards and the palms down.

Dowsing at a Distance

So the dowser chooses his favourite implement and goes in search of whatever is wanted, and at that point we leave the area of hard facts and confront pure mystery. For when the rods tremble and dip above a perfectly unremarkable spot of ground, or when the pendulum alters the direction of its swing, something has caused the phenomenon. It is wholly unsatisfactory to say that dowsers are all frauds, pushing the rods down or adjusting the pendulum when they choose to do so. Yet it is also a trifle unsatisfactory to say that the rods move of their own volition – though anyone who has watched dowsing will agree that it sometimes looks that way, with the rods flailing and waving madly and the dowser apparently struggling to hold on. Dowsers know, of course, that the implement cannot do the work itself: the manipulator must have the dowsing ability. Somehow, in the presence of water or whatever, that ability responds and, dowsers believe, causes *unconscious* muscular contractions that affect the rod or pendulum.

It must be emphasized that the dowser believes himself largely unable (on a conscious level) to detect the object of his search without the implement. Certainly he would agree that he could not pinpoint its location. Nor does he believe that his talent will work unless he has first concentrated his mind on the material for which he is searching. As he sets out across a field with his dowsing rods, he is clearing his mind and thinking only (for instance) about water; this concentration gives his talent space to operate, while the rods reinforce and focus it, as a means of bringing into conscious awareness the dowser's unconscious perception of water.

Apparently the effect can be achieved without the dowser's physical presence on the scene. Many searchers after water or minerals do their dowsing in the comfort of their own homes by moving their rods or pendulums above *maps* of the area in question. Henry Gross of Maine, perhaps the best known dowser in the United States, claimed many successes by map work. The dowser may visit the sites later, to confirm his findings and to pinpoint them more accurately. But such dowsers believe that distance has no effect on their perceptions.

So far at least, it seems there is nothing difficult about dowsing. Anyone can try it to see if they have the talent with a bit of bent wire in the garden, or over a good big map with a homemade pendulum. It is all the more odd, then, that such a simple process with such great potential value should be comparatively young. Ancient myth and legend offer stories of magical rods (those of Hermes and Aaron leap to mind), but these are more akin to the magician's wand than the dowser's rod.

It may be true that the charmed sticks of primitives that trembled and vibrated when a ghost had been conjured up (as in old Melanesian lore) or when in the presence of a thief or his hidden loot (as in old African lore), are in fact early forerunners of the dowsing rod. But dowsing as we know it, with its more practical uses, was born later. Even classical times seem to have been without it: ancient Greek and Roman water finders had an armoury of spells and incantations but were not dowsers. Not until the Middle Ages do references unmistakably concerned with dowsing begin to occur in learned works. It is known that

dowsing was used by prospectors for minerals in the Harz mountains in the 15th century. German miners brought the practice to England in the reign of Elizabeth I. By the following century it had become well established, enough to cause Martin Luther to abjure it, and Georgius Agricola to include in a treatise on mining the first (but hardly extensive) investigation of it.

By the 17th and 18th centuries the dowsing rod stood prominently in lists of essential 'scientific' instruments, and had gathered a considerable documentary background. That background included a sturdy array of scoffers, including Sir Thomas Browne and Jonathan Swift. But in spite of rationalist attacks on dowsing as a superstition, and religious attacks on it as a devil's contrivance, it went on gaining in popularity. Hordes of men in Europe and Britain, by the 19th century, were engaged in the practice; similar hordes were writing accounts of successes. Gradually the dowser's defence was taking shape: it said, don't confuse dowsing with sorcery or superstition, because however it happens it can be *seen* to happen.

In the 19th century there were some people who were prepared to take a more practical view, such as two hard-headed American engineers, who tried dowsing for themselves. They discovered that it not only worked for them but that it found water in places where their hydraulic engineering training and experience would never have led them to look.

Modern scientists on the whole remain sceptical. They are not impressed with the stacks of documented successes from past dowsers: the quantity of the evidence does not necessarily prove (they say) each individual case. Geologists, as would be expected, hold particularly strong views on the subject. They tend to feel, first, that dowsers are too often wrong, and therefore too unreliable, to be taken seriously; and secondly, that when the dowsers are right it is probable that their experience has made them subconsciously aware of land configurations and other physical signs pointing to the presence of water. But certainly not all geologists dismiss the dowsers' claims: some eminent geologists have themselves been dowsers, using it in their work. And a great many others maintain commendably open minds on the subject.

Sensitive Plant

A few scientists have set up experiments to test dowsing. A number of accounts of experiments can be found in Sir William Barrett's book *The Divining Rod* (1926), including a well-documented account of a test in the 1890s, involving the great British dowser John Mullins, who found abundant water on an estate in Sussex where hydraulic engineers had failed. But such old instances seldom convince a hidebound sceptic, mainly because the conditions do not meet the rigour of controlled laboratory experiments. D. J. West, an authority on psychical research and allied matters, acknowledges the number of cases in which dowsers apparently achieved spectacular successes 'in the field'. But he adds that in systematic laboratory tests 'the level of success has always been inferior to the reports of outstandingly accurate performances in natural surroundings'.

From such a statement a sympathetic reader might take the point that dowsing (like telepathy and other 'paranormal' phenomena) is a delicate plant that does not transfer readily from natural surroundings to the clinical world of laboratories. But scientists reject this possibility, and demand that any such phenomenon subject itself to controlled experimentation. In 1968 the British author and broadcaster Brian Inglis investigated dowsing in a television programme, in which his representative sceptic, a university professor and psychologist named John Cohen, asserted that dowsing's reality 'has not been demonstrated yet – not scientifically'. Accordingly, a controlled demonstration was arranged at which a part-time dowser named Robert Leftwich scored considerable success.

Professor Cohen claimed, however, that the experiment was not really scientific and at Mr Inglis's request set up a second experiment entirely under his own control. A patch of ground was chosen and five cans of water, a knife and some dummy containers were buried by the Professor and his assistants at spots unknown to anyone else. The dowser picked up three out of five cans of water but failed to find the knife. Although Robert Leftwich considered the result disappointing, Professor Cohen was impressed – particularly because there was

Engraving showing the different ways of holding a divining rod. Unlike other ESP phenomena, positive proof of success in dowsing can be easily found, by digging

Bettmann Archive

no possibility of visual clues having been picked up from the topography – and handsomely admitted his amazement and his agreement that there seemed something more to dowsing than he had thought. He still refused to accept any supernormal explanation without a good deal more investigation, and he announced his determination to go on experimenting.

All this is taken to reinforce the dowsers' standard reply to accusations that they usually do badly under test conditions. They reply that being surrounded by scientists and other observers, few of whom are sympathetic and many of whom are openly critical, tends to throw off their finely tuned faculty. In the above experiment there was the added pressure from the presence of television cameras and crew, causing natural nervousness which would interfere with Mr Leftwich's concentration. No one should dismiss the dowsers' excuse too swiftly. The ability, if it exists at all, is not a controlled function of the body or the intellect, like running or reading, both of which can be easily tested in laboratories. It is a non-rational, unconscious or subliminal phenomenon; and science has never been favourably enough disposed towards such matters to develop special laboratory techniques for them. There are indications that considerably more individuals may have the ability, in latent form, than we might think – about one in 20, according to a British dowser's estimate.

A Paranormal Awareness

Obviously dowsing involves extra-sensory perception – 'sensing' of the presence of water and the rest, but one that does not operate through the normal five senses, setting aside the possibility that some normal, physical explanation can yet be found. But tacking the name of ESP onto dowsing is merely exchanging one mystery for another: the experts are just as vague about how ESP works. It has been suggested that dowsing is a paranormal awareness of the presence of these material objects, as if the dowsers can 'tune in' to the objects' physical presence in the way that people claim telepathically to 'tune in' to other minds. Some dowsers, but far from all, actually claim to *see* the object of their search, underground, when contact is made. Also, it has been soggested that the ability is more like that of a radar screen: a mental 'probe' is sent out that bounces back to register on the rods.

Most often, however, the dowsers turn to another technological area for their explanations. They claim that the water or the metal itself gives off 'radiations', and the dowsing talent picks them up. From this widely held idea has come dowsing's quasi-technical name, *radiesthesia* – often restricted to mean only the medical form of dowsing, but equally often used to cover the whole field. It is a fairly tangled idea, but at its simplest it implies that everything, every material or object, gives off its own rays or radiations not perceptible to the normal senses, and that the dowser (endowed with his special psychic 'pick-up') need merely tune his mind to the radiations of the substance he is seeking.

Not all radiesthesists are dowsers, however. Some spend their time combating the harmful radiations that apparently can make particular areas uncomfortable, or worse. These can be neutralized, and one's house or person, insulated against such rays, by a variety of contraptions including simple coils of copper wire. Other radiesthesists work with curious machines that are intended to detect and measure the radiational quotients of different objects, persons, diseases or what have you; but none of these instruments have begun to convince neutral observers of their scientific validity. Nor is the nature of these radiations ever made clear in all the thousands of words written about them. It seems, on the whole, that the idea of radiations might make a metaphor of limited usefulness for the relationship between the dowser and the object, but that this attempt to attach a scientific reality and terminology to dowsing has succeeded only in creating an atmosphere of cranky pseudo-science, which can do dowsing no good.

As this early 16th century treatise on mining shows, the divining rod was also used by prospectors to locate coal

It seems much healthier to leave dowsing in the realm of extra-sensory perception, where some small advances in understanding have been made, and from which a good deal of the weird and occult debris has been cleared away. In these terms, a dowser on the television programme referred to earlier offered an interesting possibility for a clearer definition of dowsing as ESP. He thought it might be a variant of the *directional* instinct that pulls homing pigeons back to their starting points, that sends domestic pets hundreds of miles across unfamiliar country unerringly to their original homes. Experiments have shown that this ability in animals must be largely extra-sensory, not relying on landmarks, familiar terrain or the like. Perhaps, then, dowsing is a comparable ability – vestigial in most of us but unconsciously accessible to the talented few. One recalls those marvellous tales of desert animals saving their masters by sensing the presence of water beneath the sand.

Certainly dowsing ought to provide a valuable road to an understanding of ESP in general – perhaps more valuable than the telepathy experiments with cards or the telekinesis experiments with dice, if only because it has in the rod an outward manifestation, and because it is focused on material objects. In telepathy tests the results must always be assessed through statistical probability, which critics seem ready to question. In dowsing the results are ascertained merely by digging. So perhaps we can hope that scientists will look more closely at dowsing, and that eventually they will evolve some specialized new techniques for their experiments.

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: E. Z. Vogt and R. Hyman, *Water Witching USA* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

The greatest mystery of all faced the creator of Sherlock Holmes when he tried to find positive proof of life after death

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

A KEEN STUDENT of all psychic and paranormal phenomena for nearly half a century, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spent the last 12 years of his life as an active and leading exponent of the doctrines of Spiritualism. Born in Edinburgh in 1859, he was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith but while training to be a doctor he was influenced by the works of Darwin, Spencer and Huxley, which caused him to become an agnostic. From 1882 to 1890 he practised as a doctor in Southsea, in conditions of considerable poverty, until growing recognition of his literary ability and particularly of the Sherlock Holmes stories, enabled him to give up medicine (apart from an interlude as an army surgeon in the Boer War) and devote himself entirely to writing and the study of the subjects that interested him.

While living in Southsea in 1887 he conducted a series of experiments in telepathy with an architect friend named Ball, transmitting diagrams from one to the other. 'I showed beyond any doubt that I could convey my thought without words,' he wrote in his memoirs. Having established to his own satisfaction the existence of thought transference between living beings, he became interested in investigating the possibility of messages being transmitted in a similar way from the dead, and attended a number of table-turning seances at the home of General Drayson, an astronomer and pioneer of psychical research.

He became interested in Theosophy, and then in Spiritualist beliefs. Daniel Dunglas Home, the celebrated medium (see HOME), had not long before been practising in London at the height of his fame, and Spiritualism was a topic very much under public discussion. Conan Doyle became a member of the Society for Psychical Research, and his reading at that time included the Swedish philosopher

Psychic News

Emanuel Swedenborg – whom with Mesmer, he later classed as one of the founders of the Spiritualist movement – Sir William Crookes's *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* and F. H. W. Myers's *Human Personality*. Conan Doyle amassed an extensive library of Spiritualist writings, and his own writings on the subject included – besides numerous articles and letters in the press – *The New Revelation*, *The Vital Message*, *Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, *The Case for Psychic Photography* and *The History of Modern Spiritualism*, a definitive work in two large volumes. *Phineas Speaks* was a collection of reports of seances held in his own home with Lady Doyle acting as medium. Phineas, a disembodied Arab philosopher, was the guide, who transmitted messages from the next world. Conan Doyle's last book on the subject, *The Edge of the Unknown*, came out in 1930, very shortly before his death.

Psychic News

Conan Doyle's ideas of conditions in the afterworld did much to comfort the bereaved ***Top*** **Spirit photograph, taken by John Myers, of Conan Doyle (right) and Sir Vincent and Lady Caillard** ***Above*** **Photograph of Conan Doyle taken early this century**

Voice of a Dead Son

In 1902 Conan Doyle met Sir Oliver Lodge at Buckingham Palace, when both men were receiving their knighthoods, and from that time on they were associated in their researches. It was not until after the First World War, however, that Conan Doyle abandoned almost all his other activities and devoted himself entirely to the cause of Spiritualism.

By now he was wealthy, internationally famous, and happily married for the second time; his first wife had died of tuberculosis after a long illness. But the tragedy of the war overshadowed his life; many of his friends had been killed and his younger son Kingsley died shortly after the armistice, of pneumonia aggravated by war wounds. The propagation of a belief in survival after death became, in this sad epoch, Conan Doyle's primary concern. A year after Kingsley's death he attended the seance of a Welsh medium and heard his son speak to him. 'It was in his voice,' Conan Doyle records in *Memories and Adventures*, 'and concerned with what was unknown to the medium.' In the presence of another medium he saw his mother and nephew 'as plainly as ever I saw them in life', and so did two other witnesses.

In order to proclaim his message of hope to the bereaved he began an extensive series of journeys about the world, giving lectures on Spiritualism and life after death, and meeting well-known mediums and leading personalities interested in psychic matters. Wherever he went he drew large audiences, who were probably attracted in the first place by his fame as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, but who remained to be won over by his sincerity and undoubted gift for public speaking. His lectures were illustrated by slides of 'spirit photographs' taken or developed by himself. One, for instance, showed the corridor of a 600-year-old inn at Norwich in which the ghost of a woman was clearly to be seen.

He became president of various related bodies, the London Spiritualist Alliance, the British College of Psychic Science, and the Spiritualist Community. Until shortly before his death he was writing, and involved in correspondence and meetings with the Home Secretary, Clynes, pressing for an amendment to the law as it affected mediums and their clients. Conan Doyle finally died at the age of 71 in July 1930. Not long before his death he became convinced that some fearful cataclysm was to take place in nine or ten years' time.

Conan Doyle's beliefs had called down on him the disapproval of churchmen, not

only because they involved communications with the dead, expressly forbidden by the Bible, but also because they ran counter to the conventional Christian idea that the souls of the dead sleep for many years before resurrection. The Spiritualist belief was that souls do not always realize that they are dead, although there is nearly always an immediate awakening to a new life of the spirit. Doyle felt strongly that the living should do all that was possible to assist the recently dead to surmount this difficult phase and become adjusted to existence on a new plane.

His beliefs were fairly simple and clear-cut. In a lecture given in Edinburgh in 1922, for instance, he described conditions on the 'other side', as reported in messages given through mediums: those who died in old age became younger again, while those who died as children grew up, so that all were at an age of about 25. The new existence had an exceedingly complex social structure, with a hierarchy of different grades, or spheres; depending on its behaviour in previous earthly life, the departed spirit found its appropriate sphere in the next life, but aspiration could carry it upward in a never-ending ascent. Formulating a Darwinian theory of the evolution of the spiritual life of mankind, Conan Doyle concluded that simple logic showed that the scheme of evolution evident in all physical life must also be reflected on the paraphysical level (a theory later to be taken further in the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin).

As well as the disapproval of the clergy, Conan Doyle had to bear scepticism and mockery from scientific writers of the time. He remarked in his memoirs: 'I have abandoned my congenial and lucrative work, left my home for long periods at a time, and subjected myself to all sorts of inconveniences, losses, and even insults, in order to get the facts home to the people.' The criticisms of scientists particularly irritated him. 'The fact that a man is a great zoologist like Lankester, or a great physicist like Tyndall or Faraday,' he said, 'does not give his opinion any weight on a subject which is outside his own speciality.' This argument was not entirely consistent with his statement elsewhere: 'I felt more and more that the case for the phenomena vouched for by such men as Sir William Crookes, Barrett, Russel Wallace, Victor Hugo, and Zöllner was so strong that I could see no answer to their exact record of observations.'

Ghost of a Boisterous Child

Conan Doyle's own standpoint was that of a 'respectful materialist who entirely admitted a great central intelligent cause.' He was also, in the view of many of his readers, an expert sifter of evidence and had in fact successfully solved several real-life mysteries which were laid before him in his capacity as the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He himself recorded many psychic experiences, including the case of a haunted house at Charmouth in Dorset, which as a member of the Society for Psychical Research he was called on to investigate on behalf of the upset tenants. He says that, 'In the middle of the night a fearsome uproar broke out,' in spite of the fact that the threads which the investigators had stretched across doors and windows remained unbroken. There were no other manifestations after this, but subsequently the house burned down and the skeleton of a child of 10 was unearthed in the garden. Conan Doyle suggested that a young life cut short in a sudden and unnatural fashion might have left a store of unused vitality liable to break out in unexpected ways.

In his disputations on the Spiritualist controversy Conan Doyle did not at any time attempt to deny the existence of some fraud among mediums and psychic practitioners, but he asserted that it was far less common than was supposed, and that he himself had only encountered it three or four times. What could complicate the issue, he said, was unconscious fraud. This sometimes occurred when a medium in a semi-conscious condition, possibly suffering from a temporary failure of real psychic power, submitted to the promptings of his earthly nature, or to telepathy messages from those around him.

He adduced numerous examples of true phenomena, as personally experienced by himself. When his own wife was acting as a medium he had received through her whole notebooks of information which was quite outside her range of knowledge; he had developed photographic plates with messages from, and pictures of, the dead; he had witnessed examples of telekinesis, the movement of physical objects through the air, and through closed doors and windows, without human agency; with his own hand he had felt the materialized hands of spirits, and he had had several dreams in which he foresaw events to come. All these phenomena had been scrutinized in a properly Holmesian critical spirit; as he observed himself, he would be unimpressed by a medium who said 'remember the happy days of childhood', but would pay attention if he said 'remember the day we put frogs in the cook's bed.'

An avowed agnostic, Conan Doyle did not immediately reach the conclusion that there was indeed a life after death, even after he had acknowledged the validity of various supernormal phenomena. For 20 years he was moving towards such a belief, and by 1916 he declared that he was in possession of positive knowledge to this effect. Although opposed to all church dogma he retained a deep respect for the principles of Christianity, as for those of Islam and Buddhism; at one point he proposed an eighth principle, to be added to the seven official principles of Spiritualism, which should recognize the person of Jesus Christ and affirm his leadership in the sphere of ethics. The Committee of the National Spiritualists' Union, however, voted against this.

In a recorded talk shortly before his death, Conan Doyle said: 'People ask, "What do you get from Spiritualism?" The first thing you get is that it absolutely removes all fear of death. Secondly, it bridges death for those dear ones whom we may love. We need have no fear that we are calling them back, for all we do is to make such conditions as experience has taught us will enable them to come if they wish, and the initiative lies always with them. They have many times told us that they would not come back if it were not God's will, and that it makes them intensely happy to be able to help and comfort us, to tell us about their happy life in that world to which we are in our turn destined to come.'

JOAN AIKEN

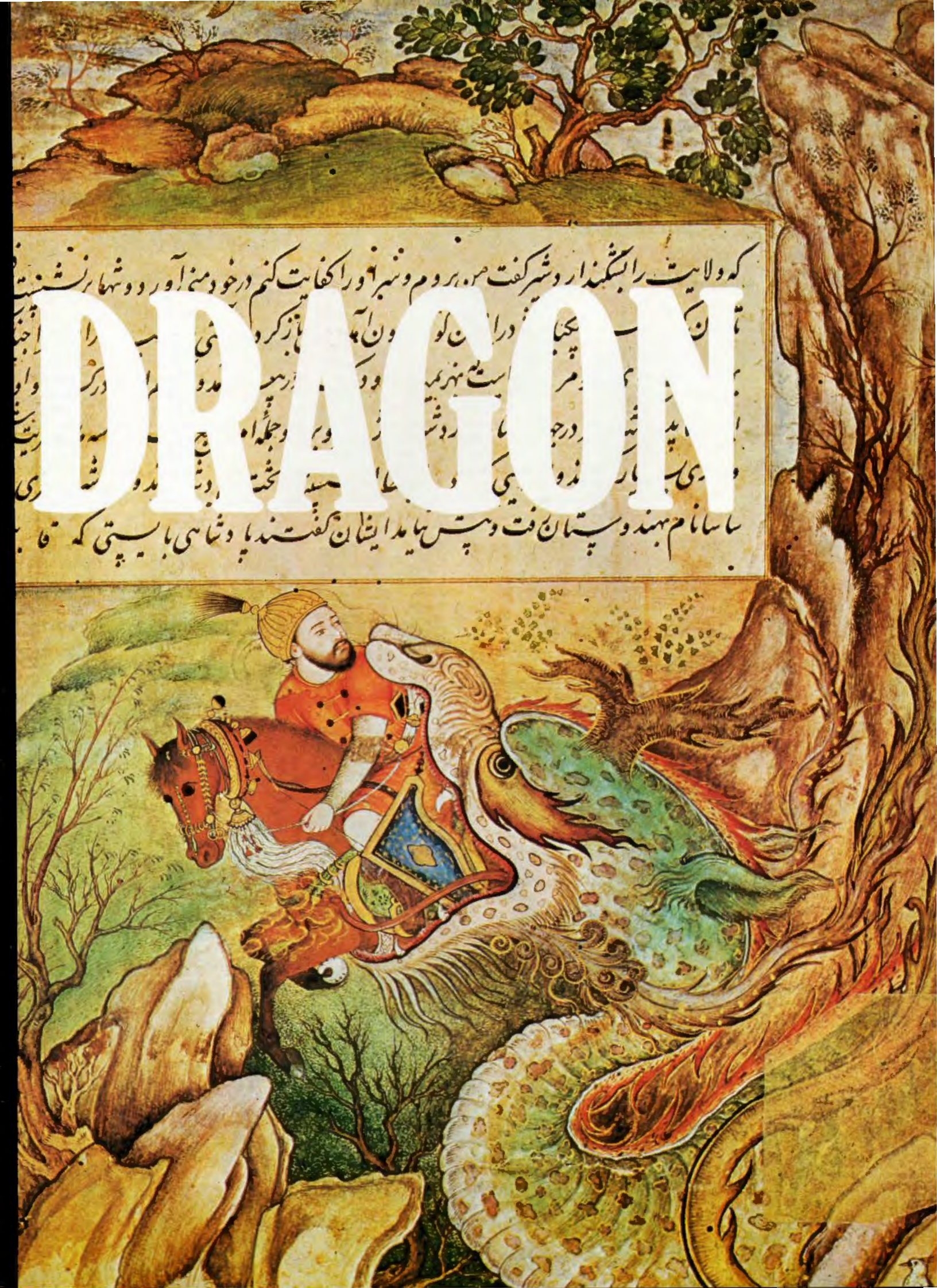
FURTHER READING: Sir A. Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* (Hodder, 1924); John Dickson Carr, *Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (Murray, 1949).

British Film Institute

Dracula

The most famous vampire of fiction, central character of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, published in 1897, and of a celebrated film version, made in 1931 and starring Bela Lugosi: a walking corpse which sucks the blood of the living, Dracula has appeared in many other horror films.

See FILMS; VAMPIRES.


DRAGON

The forked tongue and tail of the dragon, his glaring eyes and ominously flared nostrils, his scorching breath and sharp teeth and talons, add up to a formidable array of weapons

'Here be dragons' claimed the early map-makers and indeed there are few parts of the world where this mythological monster has not raised its scaly head. The ambiguous character of the dragon can be seen as a reflection of its hybrid ancestry; to the early Christians it was the malevolent Adversary, while the Chinese believed it was a beneficent being

WHERE THERE ARE MYTHS, there are usually dragons. But although it would be easy to recognize a dragon, and descriptions and artistic representations of dragons abound, it is not so easy to define the beast. Like other fabulous monsters, such as the chimaera and griffin, the dragon is a mixture of several creatures. One of the earliest dragons to leave a permanent mark in the world (he is depicted in white glaze against a blue background on a gate in ancient Babylon) appears to have the head and horns of a ram, the forelegs of a lion, a scaly, reptilian body and tail, and the hind legs of an eagle. Each race has naturally drawn on the part of the animal world with which it is familiar in putting this composite beast together. The dragon of the ancient Egyptians is a close relation of the crocodile, while elephant dragons appear in Indian myths, and stag dragons in Chinese.

The dragon is even more dangerously equipped than any of his mythical rivals. The forked tongue and tail, the glaring eyes and ominously flared nostrils, the scorching breath, the sharp teeth and talons, and the armour-plating of the body add up to a formidable array of weapons. But strangely enough, the dragon is by no means always hostile to man. In the East, particularly, he is often a symbol or a portent of prosperity, and there are many tales of individual acts of kindness performed by dragons for the benefit of men.

Though most people nowadays would associate the dragon with fire, his primeval element is water, whether the sea, rivers, lakes, water-spouts or rain-clouds, and this watery connection is what chiefly distinguishes the dragon from other mythical hybrids. Even desert-dwelling people insist on it, and their dragons spend a lot of time lurking at the bottom of wells. Indeed, the bottom of the well is often identified with the dragon's eye, and this is a link with another distinguishing characteristic of the dragon: its baleful and searching gaze. There is little doubt that the very word 'dragon' is derived ultimately from an ancient Greek word meaning 'to see'. In the Old Testament the dragon is mentioned several times in the same breath as the owl, another creature with large, bleak eyes.

Descended from Serpents

Like other creatures, both mythical and real, the dragon has evolved. The giant saurians – the whale-sized fish-lizards, the fifty-foot tyrannosaurs and the tank-like dinosaurs – disappeared from the face of the earth millions of years before man appeared, but it is possible that their fossils and remains inspired the earliest stories about dragons. Amongst extant creatures, however, the dragon's earliest identifiable progenitor is the serpent, and some authorities believe that they can trace the lineage of dragons all over the world back to one common ancestor, Zu, the monster of watery chaos in Sumerian mythology.

The Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia in the fifth millennium BC, and their struggle to tame the rivers in that country inspired several myths. Their most important god was Enlil, who himself started life as a river god, but was promoted to the dry land and the upper world. The serpent or dragon Zu stole the tablets, worn by Enlil on his breast, on which were set out the laws governing the universe. On Enlil's orders, Zu was slain by the sun god Ninurta, who thus set the precedent for sun gods who battle with dragons in the myths of other ancient peoples.

The Sumerians were superseded, c 1800 BC, by the Babylonians, a Semitic people, who took over many of their myths and religious beliefs. The legend of Zu left traces in the great Babylonian epic of creation *Enuma elish*, in which the sea goddess Tiamat leads the forces of primeval watery chaos against the gods (see CREATION MYTHS). In her army she has sharp-fanged serpents and ferocious dragons, with crowns of flames, made so like gods that all who look at them die of fright. She is defeated nevertheless by Marduk, champion of the gods, and son of Ea-Enki, the god of wisdom. After the battle Marduk cuts Tiamat's body in two, leaving one half to form the sea and lifting up the other to form the sky. Marduk was originally the local god of the unimportant town of Babilu, but his power grew with that of his people, the Babylonians, and he became eventually the god of creation. Every New Year, which the Babylonians celebrated in the spring, his victory over the dragons of chaos was re-enacted through the recital by priests of the creation epic.

It seems likely that Babylonian or Sumerian influence were at work from an early period in Egypt. The dragon myth in particular is thought to have reached there towards the end of the third millennium BC, and to have inspired the legend of the gigantic serpent Apophis (or Apep, or Apop), the enemy of the sun god. Later in Egyptian mythology, the captive Apophis was identified with the ocean which girt the earth and held it together, but at the same time threatened continually to break its fetters and destroy the world. The Egyptians gradually adapted the dragon myth from one of creation to one of the daily combat between light and darkness. The sunset was interpreted as the swallowing of the sun by Apophis, or alternatively the sun was imagined to do battle with the dragon every night as it travelled through the underworld. The dragon rose from a dark river to attack the sun's boat, but by morning had been cut to pieces, or, in other versions of the myth, had been forced to disgorge the sun.

There was a similar story of battle between the sun and storm clouds, which was also represented as a conflict between the god and a dragon or water monster. In a related Asiatic myth, which also derives from the Sumerian and Babylonian stories of battles between the dragons and a god, the dragons survived but were held down on the sea-bed by fetters or by the hands of the gods; their vain struggles to free themselves caused earthquakes and violent storms at sea.

Servant of the Devil

At a later period in Egypt, the dragon was identified with the god Seth, the violent 'Lord of the South', god of earthquakes, hurricanes, thunder and destruction, who shook the very sea itself (see SETH). The belief arose, too, that after death the souls of the wicked would be cast before a fire-breathing dragon or devoured by the 'Swallower of the West', a dragon-like hybrid which was made up from the crocodile, the lion and the hippopotamus.

Previous page **The dragon's serpentine origins are apparent in the monster that devours Bahman and his horse in this illustration to a Mogul epic: British Museum**

Right **The earliest stories about dragons were possibly inspired by the fossilized bones and remains of giant animals that inhabited the earth millions of years ago; some experts believe that the monster that allegedly lurks in the depths of Loch Ness is the only surviving example of these prehistoric beasts: photograph of the Loch Ness 'monster'**

Below **The dragon's traditional guardianship of treasure is reflected in the Siegfried saga in which the hero kills the dragon Fafnir who lurks in a cave guarding the source of life and power: still from the film *Siegfried*, directed by Fritz Lang in 1923**

Keystone Press Agency

National Film Archives

In the oldest writings in the Old Testament, Yahweh is represented as a storm god, at whose coming 'the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, yea, the clouds dropped water, the mountains quaked before the Lord' (Judges 5.4-5). His power over sea, sky, cloud and serpent is celebrated in passages reminiscent of the Babylonian and Egyptian dragon-myths. 'Thou didst break the heads of the dragons on the waters' says the Psalmist (Psalm 74.13), and, according to Isaiah (27.1), 'the Lord . . . shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.' In fact, the battle between Yahweh and the dragons is a familiar theme in the visions of the later Hebrew prophets, for whom, however, the dragon has a purely symbolic meaning as the enemy – Assyrian, Babylonian or Egyptian – of Israel. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of the Lord God's hostility towards Pharaoh, 'the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams', into whose jaws he will put hooks and whom he will have thrown into the wilderness (Ezekiel, chapter 29). During the Babylonian exile another prophet calls upon the Lord with the cry, 'Was it not thou that didst cut Rahab in pieces, that didst pierce the dragon?' (Isaiah 51.9).

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, and in Jewish writings of the 1st century AD, the dragon is a symbol of mourning and desolation. In early Christian texts the dragon represents the Devil or the Devil's servant, an identification suggested by the leathery webbed feet and forked tail common to both beings, and one which is in line with the general conception of the dragon as the enemy or adversary, especially of God or the gods. In the Book of Revelation (chapter 12), the dragon is described in some detail. He is big and red, and has seven heads and ten horns, and in the war in heaven Michael and his angels fight against the dragon and his angels 'and the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.' (See also DEVIL.)

The process in which different peoples develop and adapt a vague concept in a way which suits their own needs and experience, can be traced in the treatment of the dragon myth by the ancient Iranians and Indians. In Iran, where a dualistic view of the universe prevailed, there were many forms of the myth of conflict between the god of light and the dragon. In one of these myths the great god of creation Ahura Mazdah struggles with the three-jawed, three-headed, six-eyed dragon Azhi Dahaka, 'an imp of the spirit of deceit'. In a later version of the same story, prevalent in the 4th century AD, it is the fire god Atar, originally a lesser deity in a polytheistic system, but now the son of Ahura Mazdah, who fights the dragon Azhi. The dragon also evolves with the passage of time, and becomes a human monster with two serpents springing from his shoulders, a guise in which he has passed into the folklore of the Armenians and other people of the Middle East.

In the ancient Hindu hymns known collectively as the *Rig Veda* (c1200 BC), the dragon is represented as the demon of drought, and is slain by the god Indra, who thereby releases the waters from the storm clouds. In a parallel development to the Iranian, another version of the myth describes how Trita, god of healing and life, and bringer of fire from heaven, slays the three-headed, six-eyed serpent Visvarupa. In both these myths there are details which recall the Sumerian Ninurta's battle with the dragons. In Vedic mythology, however, the dragon is occasionally depicted as a friend of man, and in later Hindu sacred texts Indra's defeat of the dragon meets with only qualified approval.

The dragon is described as a three-headed creature in the earliest mention of

Facing page In China the dragon was a splendid and generally benevolent beast, associated until 1911 with everything used by the Emperor; but Chinese dragons could cause droughts or an eclipse of the sun when offended, and the Chinese hold special dragon festivals to propitiate them: pillar carved in the shape of a dragon's head, on a floating restaurant at Aberdeen, Hong Kong, where one of the biggest festivals is held each year *Above* An alchemical version of the dragon's legendary guardianship of treasure is illustrated in this 15th century woodcut by Johannes de Cuba of Strasbourg: a dragon is killed to extract a precious gem that the animal has transformed from an ordinary stone

him in ancient Greek literature (in the *Iliad*), where Agamemnon's sword-belt is decorated with a blue enamel dragon and there are three dragons on his cuirass, which was made in Cyprus. The reference to Cyprus may be connected with the fact that the Greeks probably imported the dragon from Palestine, as is reflected in the myth of Perseus and Andromeda. The daughter of the Ethiopian King of Joppa (Jaffa), Andromeda was chained to a cliff on the coast of Philistia (Palestine) when Perseus saw her, fell instantly in love with her, and rescued her from the female sea-dragon. Robert Graves has suggested that Andromeda's story was inspired by a Palestinian or Syrian icon of the Babylonian god Marduk. The Greek myth did introduce a new element into the tradition about dragons, however, and that is the idea that the dragon must be propitiated by human sacrifice, preferably of a royal virgin.

Another peculiarly Greek notion is that of the sowing of dragon's teeth, from which spring the founders of the city. The dragon has survived in modern Greek folklore as the *drakos*, a word usually translated as 'ogre'. These creatures maintain the time-honoured dragon role of the adversary, and in some stories they have more specific dragon traits: they sleep with their eyes open, and see with them shut, a characteristic suggested by fish, which is also attributed to the Dragon King in some Chinese legends. They are also, in some stories, assigned the role of guarding precious treasure.

Guardian of Treasure

The earliest mention of dragons in connection with treasure appears to be by a Greek author, Artemidorus (2nd century AD) an expert on the interpretation of dreams. Dreams about dragons, he says, indicate wealth and riches, 'because dragons make their fixed abode over treasures'. There may well be some remoter, more obscure link between dragons and treasure that has so far not been explained, because in a culture quite unrelated to any of those we have discussed so far, that of the Maori in New Zealand, the dragon's first cousin, the lizard, is also revered as the guardian of funerary caves, and this is said to be because the lizard represents Whiro, the god of sickness and death. The sacred crocodiles of ancient Egypt may also have had a similar function.

The association between dragons, caves and treasure became very popular in the early Christian period and in the Middle Ages. In a Roman legend of the 5th century, St Sylvester conquers a dragon which lies at the bottom of a cave on the Tarpeian rock outside Rome, to which maidens had been sacrificed. The legend incorporates much of the typical symbolism of dragon lore. There are 365 steps leading down to the cave, an allusion to the sun (linked, as we have seen, with dragons in Sumerian and Egyptian mythology) and its annual journey round the earth, according to the cosmology of the time. In this Roman legend the cave is also a symbol of death, as in the Maori lizard cult.

In Teutonic mythology the dragon Fafnir slain by Siegfried lurks in a cave, watching over a treasure hoard which is the source of life and power. Siegfried is made invulnerable by bathing in the dragon's blood, and through drinking it acquires the language of the birds – symbolic of domination over nature. In the myths of many races, heroes obtain boundless courage by eating a dragon's heart or drinking its blood, or acquire its penetrating gaze as a result of killing it.

In early Christian thought the dragon has the allegorical role, already seen in the book of Revelation, of representing the Devil or the Antichrist, or more generally, evil passions, paganism, or the oppressive powers of this world. Whatever the connection between the historical and the legendary St George, the origin of the story of St George and the dragon seems to lie in this general idea, but as worked up in the Middle Ages, particularly under the influence of the Crusades, the story obviously owes much to the Greek myth of Perseus and Andromeda. The hold of the dragon on the medieval mind is also exemplified in heraldry, where the dragon is featured often, both for charges and supporters. The use of the dragon as an emblem in modern times is, of course, suggested by this heraldic tradition.

The Dragon of the East

Whereas in the ancient Middle East and in medieval Europe the dragon remains an essentially sombre and forbidding monster, lurking in the mythical depths, as it were, in the Orient and particularly in China and Japan he has a certain splendour and panache. Indeed, there can be few mythological figures which have so stimulated the oriental imagination. The mere description of the dragon given by the ancient Chinese writer Wang Fu shows an exuberance not to be found in the West: it has a triple-jointed body, the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the belly of a clam, the scales of a carp, the claws of an eagle and the soles of a tiger. The Chinese dragon is, however, just as intimately concerned with water, caves and treasure as his cousins in the West. And cousins all these dragons are, sharing common ancestors, though the Chinese dragon has picked up some of the traits of the Burmese lotus-serpent on his journey from Mesopotamia and India, has assimilated a Buddhist adaptation of ancient Asiatic snake cults, and has of course acquired some distinctively Chinese features on his native soil.

The most striking of these is that the dragon in China is not, as in the West, a representative or symbol of the powers of evil. On the contrary, according to the old Chinese *Book of Rites*, the dragon as the chief of all scaly animals is one of the four benevolent spiritual animals, the unicorn, phoenix and tortoise being the others. How this transformation came about can only be guessed. It reflects the general principle stated by Jung that 'every psychological extreme secretly contains its own opposite', which is expressed in Chinese thought through the classical doctrine of Yang and

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Scala

When offended or disturbed, Chinese dragons could cause a drought by gathering up all the water of a district in baskets, or they could eclipse the sun

Yin, the good and bad influences. That this principle underlies the dragon's transformation into a beneficent being is confirmed by Wang Fu's statement that the dragon's scales number 117, of which 81 are imbued with Yang and 36 with Yin, because the dragon is partly a preserver and partly a destroyer. Yang is also the male element and, as its representative, the dragon also became at an early period a symbol of the Emperor, and appeared on the Chinese flag (which may have suggested its use in heraldry later in the West). During the Manchu dynasty (1644-1912) the dragon was held in especial esteem, and everything used by the Emperor was described in terms of it: there was the dragon throne, dragon bed, dragon boat and so on.

This kindly view of the dragon entailed significant changes in the dragon lore which the Chinese adopted from other Asiatic peoples. Whereas the Sumerian Zu stole the tablets of destiny from the god Enlil, Chinese dragons frequently appear as the givers of laws. They are also instructors in magic and givers of swords, while the art of painting was introduced to China by a dragon.

Although Chinese dragons appeared at favourable moments to presage periods of prosperity, and had been known to emit foam which had supernatural powers of fertilization, they could also, when offended or disturbed, cause a drought by gathering up all the water of a district in baskets, or they could eclipse the sun. To

Above **The Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda introduced a new element into popular dragon mythology: the belief that the beast must be propitiated by the sacrifice of a royal virgin. Painting of Perseus slaying the dragon to free Andromeda, daughter of the Ethiopian King of Joppa, by Piero di Cosimo, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence**

Right **In Christian thought the biblical dragon Leviathan was identified with the Devil and witches were represented submitting to their Master in the form of a dragon, as in this early 16th century drawing by Hans Baldung Grien**

Far right **According to a Yorkshire legend, More of More Hall vanquished the Dragon of Wantley by wearing armour studded with spikes, and kicking the monster: illustration from a collection of old ballads**

The Terror of Smaug

Bilbo the hobbit ventures into the underground lair of Smaug, the dragon:

As he went forward it grew and grew, till there was no doubt about it. It was a red light steadily getting redder and redder. Also it was now undoubtedly hot in the tunnel. Wisps of vapour floated up and past him and he began to sweat. A sound, too, began to throb in his ears, a sort of bubbling like the noise of a large pot galloping on the fire, mixed with a rumble as of a gigantic tom-cat purring. This grew to the unmistakable gurgling noise of some vast animal snoring in its sleep down there in the red glow in front of him.

It was at this point that Bilbo stopped. Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait. At any rate after a short halt go on he did; and you can picture him coming to the end of the tunnel, an opening of much the same size and shape as the door above. Through it peeps the hobbit's little head. Before him lies the great bottom-most cellar or dungeon-hole of the ancient dwarves right at the Mountain's root. It is almost dark so that its vastness can only be dimly guessed, but rising from the near side of the rocky floor there is a great glow. The glow of Smaug!

There he lay, a vast red-golden dragon, fast asleep; a thrumming came from his jaws and nostrils, and wisps of smoke, but his fires were low in slumber. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light.

Smaug lay, with wings folded like an immeasurable bat, turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his underparts and his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls were nearest could dimly be seen coats of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears hanging; and there in rows stood great jars and vessels filled with a wealth that could not be guessed.

J. R. R. Tolkien *The Hobbit*

propitiate them, the Chinese flew dragon kites, especially at the mumming parade in the New Year.

In Japanese legends the dragon is a more ambivalent creature than in Chinese. There are dragons who demand the sacrifice of a young virgin every year, and in one myth the storm god Susa-no-wo rescues the princess Inada by making the dragon drink saki and then chopping it to pieces. In Japan, too, the dragon is associated with water. The Dragon King lives in a mysterious marine realm, with a retinue of serpents, fishes and other sea monsters, and tribes of dragons have power over rain and storms. There are many stories of wise Buddhist priests who can tame these creatures and make them give rain in time of drought, or of holy men on pilgrimages who command the dragons to calm the stormy sea.

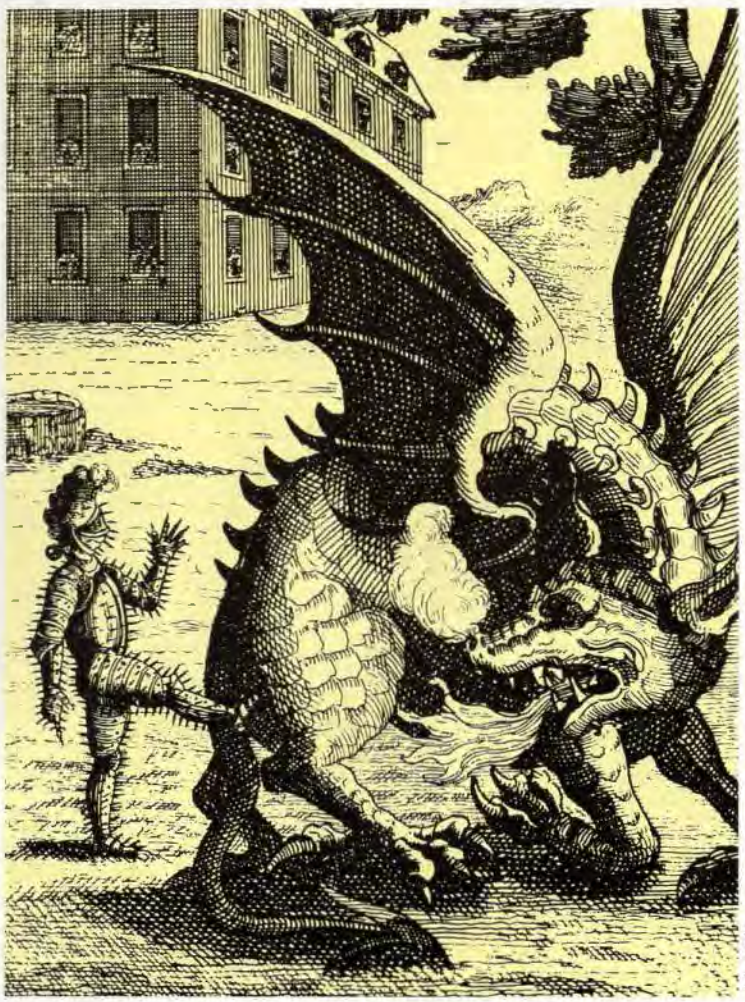
The Beast Within Us

The dragon is known in many other parts of the world: in Hanoi, which was once known as the Dragon City; in Iceland, where the god Loki has associations with a female dragon; in the British Isles, where there are dragon caves and dragon-haunted lochs; and in Hawaii, where all the dragons are descended from the mother goddess Mo-o-inanea, the 'self-reliant dragon'.

According to some modern psychologists, the dragon is still with us, representing, says Jung, the 'negative mother-imago, and thus expressing resistance to incest, or the fear of it'. The dragon's guardianship of treasure represents, according to the same author, the mother's apparent possession of the son's libido: in psychological terms, the treasure which is hard to attain lies hidden in the unconscious. While this theory can be neither proved nor disproved, the consistency with which a number of well-defined traits have adhered to such an indeterminate monster in many countries and climates throughout 50 or 60 centuries, at the very least, poses an interesting problem. One thing is clear: broadly speaking, people get the dragons they deserve, and the same might be true of psychologists and anthropologists, each of whom will give his own solution of the problem.

DAVID PHILLIPS

Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe



John Webb

'It is natural for all to delight in works of imitation', said Aristotle, speaking of the origin of the dramatic impulse. Yet in the beginning, drama had a more practical purpose, the attempt to encourage the growth of crops by imitative action

DRAMA

MAN IS A NATURAL MIMIC and among the earliest evidences of magical imitation are the representations of animals in the cave art of the Old Stone Age. Our ancestors may have made these drawings to amuse themselves but many anthropologists have concluded that their work had a purpose and was a form of magic for good hunting and bountiful animal life (see CAVE ART). The idea of imitating in order to acquire was continued in the New Stone Age when man had discovered how to grow crops and vary his food supply. The first farmers believed that they could give a hint to the powers of Nature; accordingly when rain was needed they poured water out of a pail, mimicking a downpour in the hope of getting one. One of the origins of drama, therefore, can be said to lie in imitative magic.

Another procedure intended to encourage Nature by imitation was to leap in the air beside the growing grain, with the expectation that it would spring up in fullness and plenty. Here was a game of 'let's pretend', the game which children have never stopped playing. Adults also have continued to delight in pretending to be someone else and have never ceased to enjoy impersonation. In a modern society, we watch 'let's pretend' performances increasingly, because the means of presenting them are so many and so convenient, in cinema and television studios as well as in theatres. There has been continuity of mimicry down the centuries since the relish of pretending is inexhaustible.

R. K. Singh

The Katha Kali danced dramas of India are enactments of sacred myths, tales of Krishna, Shiva and legendary heroes and demons. Before a performance actors meditate on the gods whose parts they will play: the central figure in this scene is the monkey god Hanuman

Born of Fertility Rites

What has changed has been the purpose of imitation. The mimicry which began as magic has expanded into a huge and money-making entertainment industry. The earliest plays were the progeny of fertility rituals. Life and more life were its objectives. It is worth remembering that recreation did not originally mean 'fun and games'; it meant being re-made and born again.

It is a commonplace that conflict is the essence of drama. The first drama, which developed from routines of song and dance, presented a battle of life and death. If a tribal hero or god was shown to be slain he had also to be resurrected. He was not only a human hero. He might symbolize the death of winter and the resurgence of spring and summer; he might be the corn spirit which was hoped to be indestructible. But there were doubts and fears of pestilence attacking man and soil. So Nature had to be helped and encouraged and man, fearful of extinction, had to be comforted. (Comfort, like recreation, is a word which has been softened; it first meant strengthening, as in the Christian description of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter.) Thus performances were arranged in order to exhibit the defeat of winter and death, and the triumph of life renewed.

The first play of which anything is known was enacted at Abydos in ancient Egypt nearly 4000 years ago during the reign of Sesostris III (1887-1849 BC). In it the deity of life, Osiris, was defeated and killed by Seth, the demon of death. Osiris came back to life. He was impersonated in his resurrection with ears of corn springing from his body. When he rose from the dead here were the tokens, for all to see, of unbeaten vitality and fruitfulness.

The Greek historian Herodotus identified the life-giving Osiris with the god-hero of his own people, Dionysus (see DIONYSUS). Dionysus was long associated with the acted drama, which the later Greek poets, especially in Athens, transformed from crude ritual songs and dances in honour of this god into written plays of high artistry and sophistication. They composed tragedies of literary splendour and comedies which mingled buffoonery with wit and topical satire, but the singing and dancing of the chorus remained. In the comedies

there were still the relics of the old lusty revelling and the wearing of the phallic symbol of fertility. The texts have survived as classics to be studied and sometimes revived. When the plays were first written they were part of an annual religious festival, a competitive occasion with prizes awarded, and a ritualistic and traditional one, in so far as the priests of Dionysus were the judges and performances were limited to a holy week. Significantly, the principal time of continual play-going, with a day-long succession of performances, was in the spring.

The drama was still concerned with the gods of traditional mythology although it is probable that these had dwindled to little more than a literary convention by this time. The real faith of the citizens who went to the plays and were not sceptics was in the mysteries of Eleusis about which there had to be silence. The word mystery came from a Greek word for sealing the lips; it described rituals which must remain secret.

'Goat-Song' and 'Revel-Song'

In primitive religions animals, especially the bull and the goat, play a prominent part as the embodiments of physical and sexual energy. Those who now talk of tragedy are rarely conscious that this term meant 'goat-song' to the Greeks, who believed that the origin of tragedy was a tumultuous chant and dance routine in which, as the word implies, the celebrants were seen as half-bestial. When the great dramatic festival was being held in Athens the tragedies in groups of three were followed by the light relief of a satyric play. The satyrs were the semi-human, semi-divine spirits of untamed country, sometimes partly goatish, sometimes partly horse-like. A typical figure was the hairy Silenus, who was shown in pictures seated on a wine-skin (see SATYRS).

The Greek word comedy meant a revel-song. Tragedy developed when one individual, who came to be known as Thespis (hence the name Thespians for actors) stood out from the choric goat-song. He spoke what we call a part, and then was followed by others who thus created the rudiments of a play. Comedy began as a riotous celebration of human fertility and was turned into an art when texts were written. But when the genius of Aristophanes (c 450– c 388 BC), the Athenian master of comic wit, was at its height, the original antics were not forgotten. The players wore the phallus. Perhaps that was a piece of routine which was taken for granted, like the hump-back of Mr Punch. But there remained on public view this reminder of the old caperings. *Caper* is Latin for a goat and so that animal survives today in one of our words for a frolic.

The coming of Christianity to Europe diminished dramatic performances but could not kill the impulse for a ritual release from normal canons of behaviour or the fascination of 'let's pretend'. The coming of the New Year was a natural occasion for rejoicing because the shortest day had passed. The Romans had their midwinter Saturnalia, with its topsyturvy festivities, and so strong was the impulse to celebrate the death of the Old Year and the coming of another season of ploughing, sowing, and eventually reaping, that the Christian Church had to accept a season of wild and even anarchic rejoicing. While the new religion celebrated its Christmas, the feast had to include some of the old pagan rites and liberties (see CHRISTMAS). At the Feast of Fools, first heard of in France in the 12th century AD, an Abbot or Lord of Misrule was appointed to preside over the astonishing proceedings, which were not confined to France and had some English replicas. The Saturnalian spirit could not be suppressed.

The Bessy and the Fool

The junior clergy behaved as though they were seniors. There was drinking and turbulence; there was even sacrilege with a mock Mass and priests playing dice on the altar. There was interchange of garments; men were disguised as women and women

Mansell Collection

The Athenian poets transformed acted dramas from fertility rituals into highly sophisticated written plays which were originally performed as part of an annual festival that was held in honour of the god Dionysus; the masks traditionally worn by the actors in classical dramas gave them a superhuman appearance that was in keeping with their roles as participants in a sacred ritual

Below left **A Greek actor in his dressing room with the masks of a young man, a maiden and an angry father: Roman terracotta panel, copy of a Greek relief, now in the Lateran Museum, Rome**

Below **A Roman statuette possibly of an elderly female character, made from ivory and dated about 2nd century AD: from the Musee du Petit Palais**

Photographie Bulloz

as men. There was a curious survival of the goat-song and its mummery since some revellers put on animal skins and paraded with frisking and antics through the streets. The force of tradition in this game of 'let's pretend' is shown even today in the English midwinter pantomime. In it the part of the principal boy was, and often still is, played by a girl, and a horse or cow is represented by two men concealed under an animal's hide. Ritual is continually found to have an extraordinary power of survival in the theatre as elsewhere.

The farmers all over Europe celebrated Plough Monday, the Monday after Twelfth Day early in January, with mummery. It was the day on which, if the weather was favourable, the turning of the soil began. The young men who drove a ceremonial plough painted their faces and had grotesque attendants: the Bessy, a man dressed as a woman, and the Fool, who wore an animal skin, a hairy cap and an animal's tail. An important feature of the Plough Monday rites was the driving out with brooms of supposed ghosts. There is an afterthought of that old magical practice in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which the elfin Puck, endowed with magical powers, ends the play as a sweeper with a broom in his hand. The dramatist was likely to have seen the mummeries of January and June in his native Warwickshire.

Civic Charades

He could also have seen similar performances on May Day when, in the fullness of blossomy spring, there was good reason to implement the fertility ceremonial of the New Year. There was clowning, singing and dancing round the hoisted and decorated Maypole which began either as a tree-symbol of shooting upwards, or a permitted survival of the ancient comedian's phallus. The animal-cult came into the May Day caperings with the riding of the hobby horse.

Out of such seasonal masquerades and miming eventually came the planned and scripted performances of the earliest theatre, such as the pageants and mystery plays of the Middle Ages, in which paganism was replaced by Christian legends and devotion. These were amateur performances and free-for-all spectacles. The members of the craft guilds enacted biblical stories on wagons drawn through the towns, or in or outside churches. They were devised with simple texts and with no inhibitions about introducing comedy into sacred subjects. The title of the mystery plays was taken from the Latin *ministerium* meaning 'a service', and has no connection with the 'sealed lips' mysteries of the classical world. In these civic charades of the English cathedral cities the connection with magic was severed. They were works of faith, not of superstition. The Reformation struck a fatal blow at them, as at all forms of community drama. To the Puritans any kind of 'let's pretend' was an abomination. In their opinion, to impersonate another was to act a lie, and therefore sinful. The theatre was described as Satan's workshop, in which vice and vanity were mingled.

As the professional theatre developed during the 16th century the Puritans did their utmost to kill it but failed because the Queen and the noblemen, as well as many of the common people, enjoyed it. To this the great dramatists of the period owed their careers and English literature some of its finest poetry. The plays and players contributed a magic of their own, that of word-music and the spell of language used at its highest power. There was the magic, too, of the actor's personality and skill in presenting a wide range of characters in tragedy and comedy. The Clowns and Fools in the plays carried on the practice of the old Dionysian revels; they were bawdy celebrants of sex. The Puritans raged and the public were delighted.

Slide Centre

Below **The classical tradition of performing plays in honour of the gods was continued in the regions colonized by the Greeks and, later, the Romans: stone mask from the ruins of a theatre at Side, Turkey**

Right **Passion Plays, the enactment of Christ's sufferings and his death on the cross, developed in Europe in the Middle Ages: scene from the famous Passion Play at Oberammergau, a village in Bavaria. In 1633 the inhabitants vowed that they would perform this drama every ten years, in gratitude for deliverance from the plague**

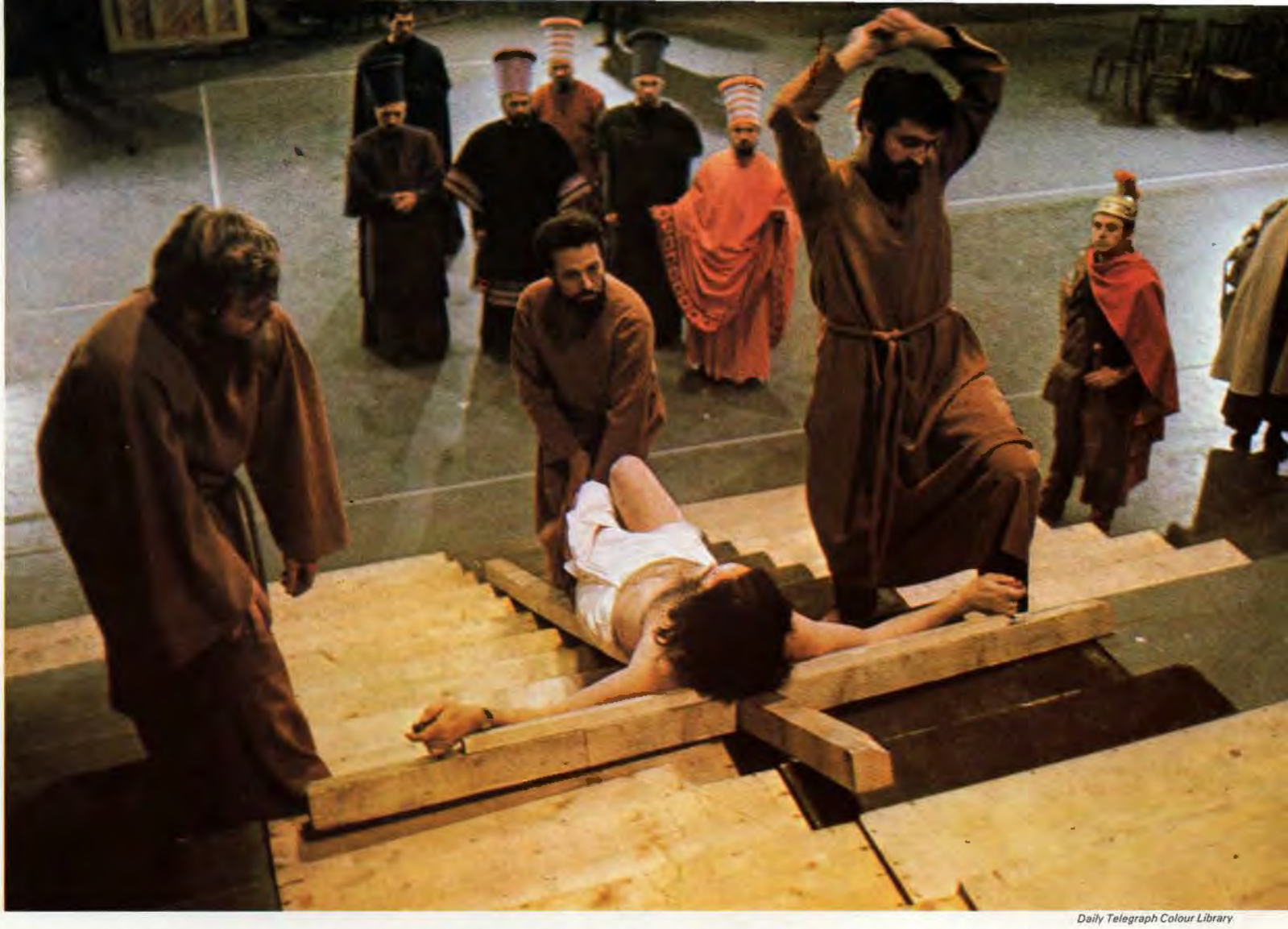
The Folk Plays of Europe

None the less the old spirit of pagan mummery was not crushed. It lived on in the rustic folk plays which were performed, chiefly in midwinter, by the country people and were still to be seen in the 19th century. These maintained the primitive belief that a performance must contain a death and a resurrection. They were thus in direct descent from the drama of the Greeks and even of ancient Egypt. The battle of Seth and Osiris was long continued in the farmhouses of many European countries and there are a number of the simple texts preserved. The characters were given various names in various places but the essential part of the story was much the same. There had to be a contest, a killing, and a life-giving cure.

Sir Edmund Chambers made a careful and most interesting survey of scripts collected from near and far. There were many variations of detail, but the normal performance had permanent characters and episodes. The mummers, sometimes called guisers, arrived and demanded entry at a house where there was a Christmas party with dancing and singing; this sometimes took place at Easter as well. Their leader, known as the Presenter, asked for the room to be cleared and then explained in rhyme that the hero was St George who 'fought the fiery dragon, drove him to the slaughter, and by these means had won the King of Egypt's daughter.' To him entered Slasher, the Turkish knight, challenging St George to combat. They bandied words: 'One shall die and the other shall live.' From words they proceeded to sword-play. Usually the Turk was killed, sometimes St George. In either case the Presenter cried for a doctor and the doctor arrived with his magic bottle containing a herbal medicine. 'The stuff therein is elecampane. It will bring the dead to life again.' The dose had its miraculous effect. Then the clowns came in with songs and capers. Typical drolls were called Big Head, Beelzebub, Little Johnny Jack and Devil Doubt, who carried a broom.

> If you don't give me money, I'll sweep you out.
> Money I want and money I crave.
> If you don't give me money, I'll sweep you to the grave.

The players were labourers with very low wages and were grateful for the smallest tip



Daily Telegraph Colour Library

and a drink of any size. A typical guising was described by Thomas Hardy, doubtless from youthful memories of Dorset, in his novel *The Return of the Native*. The Presenter in that case was disguised as Father Christmas.

Research has shown that all the elements of primitive mummery and fertility rites were brought in. The performers in some places blacked or coloured their faces. Being poor, they had to improvise their costumes and weapons and there was much use of coloured ribbons. There was the ritual broom. There was occasional use of animal skins for the players of comic parts. There was even mention of Egypt since St George had strangely gone to the land of Osiris for his bride. The main event was always the fight between the hero and the villain with its killing and reviving by the wonder-working doctor.

The folk play has been traced from the north of Scotland through Yorkshire to the south of England and across Europe to Bulgaria. There were differences in names and local allusions but all emerged from the universal feeling that midwinter demanded a recognition of light, warmth and growth to come.

Inevitably when the drama went to town and the playwright became a poet instead of a rustic rhymer the celebration of agricultural needs was forgotten. Play-making had begun as a mimetic form of prayer and became an art and a secular entertainment. But the pantomime survives with some of the old ingredients. Its plot is a myth, and its staging asks for magical effects. It draws on the archaic tradition while it reappears with songs and jokes of the present.

(See also FOLK PLAYS; HOBBY HORSE; MAY DAY; MYSTERY PLAYS.)

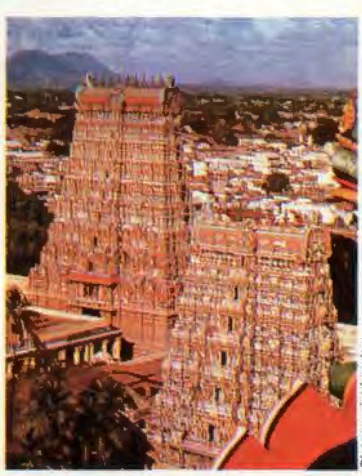
IVOR BROWN

FURTHER READING: Sir Edmund Chambers, *The English Folk-Play* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1933); Gilbert Murray, *A History of Ancient Greek Literature* (Frederick Unger, New York, 1965 reprint); Allardyce Nicoll, *World Drama, from Aeschylus to Anouilh* (Harrap, 1949); E. Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge University Press, 1927).

Draupnir

The magic ring of the Germanic god Odin: also the name of a dwarf who may originally have been the maker of the ring: Odin placed it on the funeral pyre of Balder.

See RING.



Picturepoint London

Dravidians

Early inhabitants of India, ancestors of the modern Tamils: they settled the Indus valley and penetrated into southern India and Ceylon, before being conquered by the invading Aryans from c 1500 BC: they seem to have believed in reincarnation, and there is evidence of cattle and tree cults, snake spirits and a goddess of vegetation, all of which appear in later Hinduism, and of the worship of a god similar to the later Shiva.

See INDIA.

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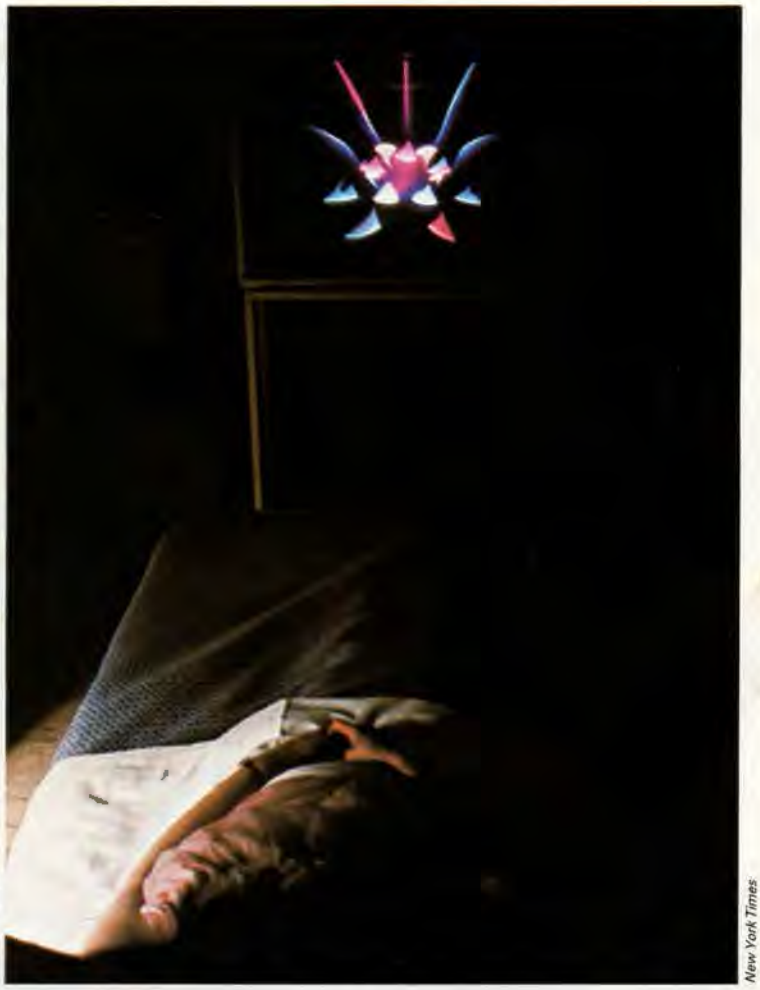

New York Times

Facing page **The unexpected juxtaposition of familiar objects in a hallucinatory setting gave many surrealist paintings a dream-like and sometimes nightmarish quality: in Magritte's *Hardy Sleeper* a man lies sleeping in his coffin, with objects that have the curious otherworldly clarity of a dream vision below him**

Above **Research into dreaming has established that a man who is not allowed to dream may become insane. Laboratory equipment for research into the subject includes machinery *(left)* that records physiological changes that occur during dreaming, and *(right)* flashing lights directed at the eyes of the sleeper**

DREAMS

'For Jung, dreams were a kind of impartial photography of unconscious life': from the ancient world to the present day, dreams have been regarded as ventures into a mysterious otherworld

THE EXPERIENCE OF DREAMING is one that can still profoundly disturb and puzzle the modern educated person, even though he is disposed to seek a scientific rather than a supernatural explanation of it. Moreover, the theories of Freud and Jung, as well as the practice of psychiatry, attest to the importance of dreams as evidence of the deeper levels of personal existence. It is understandable, therefore, that in earlier ages dreams assumed a far greater significance and played a very important role in human affairs. Dreams gave every person, each night, apparent contact with another world or form of existence, mysteriously different from that experienced when awake. Sir Edward Tylor rightly emphasized the importance of dreams in causing primitive man to conceive of himself as possessing a soul, a non-material self that moved and acted in the dream world.

The variety of dream experience, which can be both pleasant and horrifying, naturally stimulated speculation. Beings of all kinds were encountered in dreams: some were recognized as the dead; some seemed superhuman in appearance and power; some had monstrous forms. Then there was experience of events that had never happened in the waking world, and sometimes the sense of supernormal insight or knowledge. Inevitably the dream acquired an aura of supernatural. It was regarded as a source of information about future events in this world, by way of divine warning or encouragement. Through dreams, the gods might reveal their will, and demons tempt to ill. Dream experience made men aware that they were constantly in contact with a mysterious supernatural world, from which much might be learned about their own destiny in this world and the next.

Egyptian texts record a number of the dreams of kings, in which gods were concerned; their preservation doubtless owed something to the political and religious issues involved. The most notable example has also the most dramatic setting: it is

The Arts Council

Scala

Giraudon

recorded on a stele of pink granite placed between the paws of the great Sphinx of Giza. The inscription tells how the future Pharaoh Thothmes IV (1425–1408 BC) once rested, during a hunting expedition, in the shade of the colossal image which represented the sun god Re in his form of Harmakhis, 'Horus of the Horizon'. He fell asleep and dreamed that the god appeared and spoke to him. Harmakhis told the sleeping prince that he would confer the kingdom of Egypt upon him and give him a long and prosperous reign. Then he told Thothmes to observe the sorry situation of his image, the Sphinx, which lay half buried in the drifting desert sand, and charged him to preserve it. When he became king, Thothmes remembered the dream and cleared the Sphinx of the encroaching sand, recording his pious deed on the stele.

The meanings of this and of other royal dreams, in their recorded forms, are clear; they generally attest to the divine providence enjoyed by the kings. But this was not so with most of the dreams which other Egyptians had, and they were evidently much concerned about their interpretation. A science of dream-divination (oneiromancy) was established to meet their need, and something of its technique may be learned from the fragmentary remains of 'keys' to dream-interpretation that have been found.

The following extracts come from the *Papyrus Chester-Beatty* III, which possibly preserves a tradition dating from the Middle Kingdom period (2000-1785 BC). They occur in a long list of dream experiences, presented in a set formula: 'If a man sees himself in a dream looking at a snake – Good, it signifies (abundance of) provisions.' 'If a man sees himself in a dream looking at a dead ox – Good, it signifies (the death) of his enemies.' 'If a man sees in a dream his bed on fire – Bad, it signifies the rape of his wife.' These written 'keys' were for specialist use.

The practice known as incubation, meaning sleeping in a temple to obtain divine advice through a dream, or a cure by dream-contact with a healing god, is attested in Egypt during the Graeco-Roman period; it is not certain whether it had existed there in the earlier period.

The records of ancient Mesopotamia provide ample evidence of a widespread concern about dreams among the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. The types of dreams and the manner of their interpretation are generally akin to the Egyptian tradition, thereby indicating that human reaction to dreams, like the experience of them, follows a common pattern. On the whole, however, the Mesopotamian evaluation reflects the morose spirit that characterizes Mesopotamian culture. Thus, the Sumerians called dreams Ma-Mou, which meant 'creation of the night'. A dream god, An-Za-Qar, was also recognized, who ranked among the nocturnal demons, suggesting that dreams issued forth from the underworld, the grisly place which the Babylonians called the 'Great Land'.

Mesopotamian literature reveals that warnings of impending doom often came in dreams. For example, in a Sumerian version of the flood legend, the hero Ziusudra learns of the coming catastrophe in a dream 'such as had not been (before)'. The famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* describes the ominous dream which Enkidu reported to his friend Gilgamesh: 'My friend this night I saw a dream. The heavens (groaned) and the earth answered. I found myself alone.' Then he tells how the death god appeared and dragged him off to the underworld. Oneiromancy was an established practice in Mesopotamia.

The cuneiform texts of Ugarit (Ras Shamra), which document the culture of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan before the settlement of the Israelite tribes, show the importance attached to dreams by these people also. Of particular interest is the curious fact that they imagined that gods also dreamed: the great god El learns of an important event through a dream.

Biblical Dreamers

Ancient Hebrew literature abounds with accounts of dreams through which Yahweh communicated his will and purpose to his devotees. To cite a graphic example, the patriarch Jacob, when fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau, learns of his destiny in a marvellous dream at Bethel, which was probably an ancient Canaanite sanctuary. 'And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

In ancient Greek and Roman society dreams were regarded as one of the chief means whereby the gods communicated with men, and men might learn the future

Previous page **Divination through dreams was an established science in the ancient world. The Old Testament tells how Joseph was able to forecast seven years of plenty for Egypt followed by seven years of famine, by interpreting Pharaoh's dream in which seven gaunt cows and seven thin ears of corn devoured the same number of plump animals and grain: Florentine mosaic depicting the dream of Pharaoh** ***Left*** **Marc Chagall's** ***The Dream*****: in his paintings Chagall transformed the material world into a dream-country in which men and women behave with the rational illogicality found in dreams**

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth . . ."' (Genesis, chapter 28). The sequel is also significant: 'Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."'

What is probably the best known account in the Old Testament of dreams and their interpretation is the episode of which Joseph is the hero, and which is significantly located in Egypt (Genesis, chapters 40 and 41). The Hebrew writer presents his Israelite hero as a highly skilled interpreter of dreams; yet he is careful to represent Joseph as attributing the power to interpret dreams to God: 'Do not interpretations belong to God?' he asks, and he says of Pharaoh's dream: 'The dream of Pharaoh is one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.' However, although the dreams are represented as divine warnings to those who receive them, the recipients cannot themselves understand the meaning of them. Joseph shows his superiority, and his god's favour to him, in being able to interpret Pharaoh's dream which the Egyptian sages have failed to do. The three dreams concerned in the story, those of the butler, the baker and the Pharaoh, all involve a number-factor (three vine-branches, three baskets, seven cows and seven ears of corn). The first two contain warnings of personal fate to be accomplished in three days, the third concerned the fate of Egypt in seven years of plenty and seven of famine.

Oneiromancy appears as an established practice in ancient Israel. It is related of Saul that when 'he enquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by lots (Urim) or by prophets' (I Samuel, 28.6). There seems to be a reference to the custom of necromantic incubation in Isaiah 65.4: 'who sit in tombs and spend nights in secret places'. In Hebrew apocalyptic literature, dreams have a major role. The book of Daniel is the classic example of this, with Daniel presented as one who had been divinely endowed with 'understanding of all visions and dreams'.

The Shadowy Gates

In ancient Greek and Roman society dreams were again regarded as one of the chief means whereby the gods communicated with men, and men might learn the future. The dramatist Aeschylus, writing early in the 5th century BC, reckoned the science of oneiromancy among the chief benefits which the 'culture hero' Prometheus had conferred on mankind. Both Greek and Latin literature abound with stories of notable dreams. The poems of Homer provide the earliest and some of the most vividly recounted examples. Zeus is the sender of dreams, and sometimes he deceives men thereby as in the case of Agamemnon (*Iliad*, book 2). Dreams usually take the form of a visit to a sleeping person made by a dream figure (*oneiros*), which could be a god, a ghost or specially created *eidolon* (image) that had the shape of some person known to the sleeper; the oneiros that visited Agamemnon, for example, took the form of the venerable Nestor. The oneiros stood at the head of the sleeper's bed. He saw it and heard its message: the Greeks always spoke of dreaming as 'seeing a dream'. A dramatic example of such a visitation occurs in the *Iliad* (book 23) where the appearance of the ghost of Patroclus to the sleeping Achilles is graphically described.

Dreams were very highly regarded by some philosophers. For instance, Plato in the *Republic*, represents Socrates as maintaining that the dreams of a good man are pure and prophetic, since when he is sleeping his soul is free and is not fettered by bodily concerns.

The problem of interpreting dreams was recognized in a curious distinction that is drawn in the *Odyssey* (book 29). Penelope says to the disguised Odysseus: 'Stranger, verily dreams are hard, and hard to be discerned; nor are all things therein fulfilled for men. Twain are the gates of shadowy dreams, the one is fashioned of horn and one of ivory. Such dreams as pass through the portals of sawn ivory are deceitful, and bear tidings that are unfulfilled. But the dreams that come forth through the gates of polished horn bring a true issue, whosoever of mortals behold them.' The problem naturally produced a class of professional interpreters (*oneirokritai*), who evolved their own esoteric methods of solution. Dream books were written in the Graeco-Roman world, as elsewhere; one of the most notable, the *Oneirokritika* of Artemidorus (2nd century AD) has survived.

Dreams of divine origin were frequently sought by the Greeks and Romans. A favourite means of obtaining them was incubation, a practice already noticed in describing Egyptian oneiromancy. Delphi, the famous shrine of Apollo, was probably once the location of a dream oracle. More notable was the practice of medical incubation, particularly in connection with Asclepius, the god of healing. Patients would sleep in his celebrated temple at Epidauros, in the hope that the god would visit them in a dream and ordain their cure. The many votive-inscriptions found in shrines of Asclepius witness to the faith of those who believed that they had thus been cured (see HEALING GODS).

Dreams figure prominently in the records of early Christianity. Indeed, in the New Testament they are the usual means by which God communicates his will. Joseph is instructed in a dream to marry the pregnant Mary, who was to bear the Saviour (Matthew, 1.20). The Wise Men and Joseph are advised about the evil Herod in dreams, and in a dream Joseph is told to flee with the infant Christ and his mother (Matthew, chapter 2). Pilate's wife is prompted by a dream to warn her husband at the trial of Jesus (Matthew, 27.19). Peter is prepared by a dream to accept the gentile Cornelius as a convert (Acts, 10.9) and Paul is directed in a dream to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts, 26.9).

S. G. F. BRANDON

Dreams in the Modern West

The art of interpreting dreams and, more especially, of using them for divination, was likened to witchcraft by the Christian Church, but dreams played an important role in medieval life. They were, on the one hand, the inspiration of great vocations – as in the case of St Francis of Assisi or St Dominic – and on the other they probably formed the basis of many accounts of witches' sabbaths. During the Renaissance the publication of the first interpretative keys to dreams, inspired by Arab writings, did at least free the subject from the illicit aura which surrounded it during the Middle Ages, although the interest did not go much beyond the level of parlour games.

It was not until the 19th century and the Romantic Revival that dreams became acceptable in the West although they had never lost their significance in ancient societies, in which they were regarded as a cultural phenomenon deserving the attention of the greatest intellects. The subject attracted the attention of scholars, mystics and poets whose approach to dreams was more poetic and metaphysical than experimental and scientific. Several of the Romantics kept dream diaries: the German writer Jean-Paul, for example, did not limit himself to the observation of dreams but also experimented, trying to retain consciousness and to impose his will, in short to control them.

The publication of *Dreams and the Means of Controlling Them* (1867) by Hervey de Saint Denis, a professor of Chinese at the College de France, marked an epoch in the scientific study of dreams. It echoed the work of Alfred Maury, whose book *Sleep and Dreams* (1861) was the culmination of a series of researches into the analogies between dreams and mental illness, and between the images which occur during the intermediate states between waking and sleep (known as hypnagogic images) and the hallucinations of the mentally sick. From all sides valuable observations were being made concerning the association of ideas by which the dream thread was woven, the discovery that even people who deny dreaming do in fact have dreams, and the connection between dream images and external sensory stimuli. But

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Hypnos, the Greek god of sleep: without his soothing touch there could be no dreams, believed to be the chief means through which the gods communicated with men

When part of Alfred Maury's bed fell on the nape of his neck, he dreamt that he was being tried by a French Revolutionary tribunal; he was condemned to death and put to the guillotine

without doubt the chief importance of the work of these two scholars was that through them the dream emerged from the medieval secrecy and popular superstition in which it had been held since the Renaissance.

The first approaches to the dream in the 19th century were based on an essentially physiological theory, and Alfred Maury was among those who tried to establish that the fundamental cause of dreams lay in external stimuli. He made many experiments attempting to prove this. On one occasion, he got somebody to tickle his lips and the tip of his nose while he slept; this made him dream that his face was being tortured. When a bottle of eau de cologne was placed under his nostrils, it made him dream that he was in a bazaar in Cairo. Maury's most celebrated dream occurred when part of his bed fell on the nape of his neck, which made him dream that he was being tried by a French Revolutionary tribunal; he was condemned to death and put to the guillotine. One wonders whether the same incident would produce a similar dream sequence in dreamers who had different backgrounds and different memories. Maury seemed to doubt this and his doubts were confirmed by Hildebrandt, another scientist working on the theory that dreams were caused by external stimuli, and author of an important study, *The Dream and Its Value to Life* (1875).

Hildebrandt's experiments showed that the same external stimulus produces different dreams even in the same dreamer, and even more so in different dreamers. Although he was woken up from sleep in the same way three days running, three different dream scenes resulted. The experiments showed without doubt that the external stimulus is never the cause of the dream sequence but, at the very most, its pretext. It remained to be demonstrated that the same was true of internal stimuli. The way was opened to Freud who was to describe dreaming as an autonomous psychic process. Jean-Paul and Hervey de Saint Denis, as a result of their attempts to control dreaming, came to recognize the autonomous character of this process; concentration and will could introduce images and themes of their choice into dreams but they were unable to create the dream sequence in which those images and themes would appear: this sequence remained unexpected and unpredictable. The field of physiological experiments with dreaming is still being explored today.

It was in 1900 that Freud published his celebrated work *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Of all his works this was the one he valued most and which he considered would earn him the gratitude of posterity. Freud reinstated the 'science' of dreams and presented in clear analytical terms observations often scattered among numerous ancient treatises on dreams, as well as those of more recent authors.

The use of dreams for therapeutic purposes, and the sexual interpretation of them, were two characteristics of psychoanalysis in 1900. They had been used for healing in the ancient world but Freud made use of dreams for therapy not for the purpose of tracking down organic illnesses undetected by ordinary examination, nor to cure by healing images, but to reveal through the association of ideas and analysis the conflicting complexes and repressions which hinder the development of the personality. In Freud's time, and especially amongst the rich women who formed the majority of his patients, repression was of a sexual type. This is why at the conclusion of his dream analyses, Freud so often discovered sexual meanings, though he protested very strongly against the accusations of being obsessed with sex which were maliciously levelled against him. He was always aware that dreams can have non-sexual causes, such as hunger or thirst.

Freud's Interpretative Technique

The Freudian technique of interpreting dreams is not very different from that of the ancients: the difference is that instead of appealing to the interpreter's association of ideas, it appeals to those of the dreamer himself. It has above all the merit of being expressed in a new language, which made sense to modern man. In deciphering dreams Freud talked of a 'manifest content' and a 'latent content'. The manifest content is the memory the consciousness retains of a dream on waking. The latent content is something which is disguised but which can be uncovered through analysis. This becomes possible when you put yourself into a receptive state. You have to isolate each dream scene, every detail of the dream, to unleash everything that each of them suggests, even if it is utterly repugnant, grotesque or immoral. The rule of the game, as for the whole process of analysis, is 'the truth and nothing but the truth'. According to Freud, it is only the latent content that can reveal the meaning of dreams.

Why, one may well ask, should there be a latent content and a manifest content? How does the latent content become the manifest content? It is possible, of course, to adopt the attitude that 'it's only a dream': dreams would therefore be absurd and insignificant. Freud took the opposite attitude to this sterile viewpoint. He took the view that all dreams have meaning, even though he was unable to find any meaning in some of them. To explain the existence of a hidden content and a manifest one, he elaborated a theory of resistance and censorship. These ideas were born not so much from the study of dreams, as from that of neurotic phenomena, particularly hysteria. In the course of treating neuroses, Freud was able to establish that hysterics know the 'whole truth' at an unconscious level but refuse, or are unable to admit it. He likened the dream to a neurotic phenomenon. The manifest content he attributed to a resistance which prevents the latent content from revealing itself. This is where the 'censor' exerts itself. The latter imposes from that time onwards a 'dream work' by which the latent disguises itself in the manifest. The dream work operates by means of processes more or less known to the ancients. Firstly, there is a process termed *identification*, often linked to a play on words, a pun, or verbal assonance. Freud himself recounted a patient's dream which he called 'a pretty instance of the verbal bridges crossed by the paths leading to the subconscious' (*The Interpretation of Dreams*). A young woman, apprehensive about her approaching marriage, dreamt of arranging a bunch of flowers, amongst which were violets, as a centre-piece for the table. Freud detected a significant play on words between 'flowers' and 'defloration', between 'violets' and 'violate'.

Displacement is the name for another process in which the emphasis is shifted from

Freud likened the dream to a neurotic phenomenon, a concept that is reflected in this 'dream photograph': in the foreground are the distorted figures of two women, while a sinister masked figure lurks in the background. Photograph by Ira Cohen

Mansell Collection

'To sleep: perchance to dream:' In his famous soliloquy Hamlet links sleep and death, echoing an age-old association and also the belief that dreams are part of an existence mysteriously different from everyday life. In Greek mythology, Hypnos, god of sleep, and Thanatos, god of death, were brothers: scene from a Greek urn showing the two gods carrying the body of Sarpedon, a son of Zeus

one symbol or figure to another more 'neutral' one in the dream. Say you have an illness which you prefer not to think about; your dream may present this in the form of a woman with cancer of the throat. Yet another process has been termed *projection*; you have done something dishonest and in your dream this action is attributed not to yourself but to one of your rivals or someone whom you dislike.

If the Freudian description of the working of dreams seems satisfactory, indeed obvious in many cases, the interpretative technique lends itself to as much discussion as the theory itself. On the one hand, Freud maintained that all dreaming is the expression of a desire, even if a masochistic one, and on the other, that its primary function is to be the guardian of sleep. The dream was a hallucinatory realization of a desire that reality or prejudiced morality prevented from being satisfied, and this hallucinatory realization allowed it to unfold in sleep without any barriers or difficulties.

Jung's 'Voice of the Other'

C. G. Jung (1875–1961), taking a different viewpoint, showed that dreams upset sleep as often as they protect it. Other authorities have held that a dream is less the realization of a desire than its expression. Drinking in a dream does not quench your thirst; you have to drink when you wake up.

But if dreaming has other functions than those attributed to it by Freud, what are they? What purpose do they serve? Jung, instead of enquiring into the causes of dreaming preferred to look into its purpose. He detected a surprising gap in the Freudian approach: the latter escaped from the need to examine the manifest structure of the dream under the pretext that it was only a 'facade'. But what would a house be without a facade?

For Jung, dreams were a kind of impartial photography of unconscious life, the compensation of our rational vision of things, the voice of the 'other' in us. But this voice uses a language which is strange or lost to us. It is a language which it is important to decipher, not because it deliberately hides something but rather because it is archaic, symbolic, visual. And since the unconscious life is not static, dreams also express a search motive, a delving into the future.

Jung believed that dreams opened up to the individual the paths of the future, hidden to his conscious mind. This is why he attached less importance to the study of a single dream than to a series. These series of dreams revealed the lines of force of the unconscious and, through what he called the 'individuation process' urged the individual to integrate the unknown parts of his personality and thereby achieve the Self, or wholeness. This is why he contrasts the 'reductive' analysis and causal analysis of dreams which he attributes to Freud with an 'amplifying' one, appealing to the creative imagination.

Jung attaches more importance than Freud to what the latter had called fixed or universal symbols and what Jung termed 'archetypes', belonging less to the stratum of the individual's unconscious than to those of the collective unconscious. Freud had already noted that dreams contained fixed elements, not to be detached from the technique of analysis by association of ideas, just as there also exist certain types of dream, such as those of earthquakes, the end of the world, journeys by night across the sea, or more simply, nakedness, loss of teeth, missed trains, or death. Jung sought the meaning of these general symbols, not only in the fields in which Freud had already researched but in the study of comparative mythology and religion. Henceforth these archetypes would help to bring to light the universal dimension of individual problems.

Freud denied that dreams can reveal the future, all their roots being found, according to him, in the past. However, he recognized that 'the dream can lead us into the future since it shows the realization of our desires. But this future which is present for the dreamer, is moulded by indestructible desire to the image of the past.' Jung has been interpreted in slightly different ways, although his theory of the value of dreams in this respect does not differ greatly from Freud's. With regard to telepathic dreams, Freud was less reserved. But it is significant that he did not choose to publish the conclusions he had reached during his lifetime. Jung strongly affirmed the reality of telepathic feats which he called 'synchrones', while at the same time emphasizing the difficulty of finding a satisfactory theory to explain them. Some psychoanalysts have taken note of phenomena of a telepathic or clairvoyant nature which often arise during psychoanalytical treatments.

Chickens Dream Inside Egg

In the '50s the American physiologists Kleitman and Dement attempted to establish an 'objective' method for the study of dreams. Specializing in the physiology of sleep, they rediscovered what the Hindu treatises described 3000 years ago: the existence of two distinct sleeping states. The one, endowed with dreams, the other deprived of them. This distinction between dreaming sleep and deep sleep became evident thanks to the discovery of rapid movements of the eye which occur at the same time as remembered dreams and which are referred to as 'REMs'. American physiologists were also able to show that everybody dreams, including those who claim they never do. They showed that dreams only became evident during certain periodical phases of sleep and that these phases became less with age; with newly-born babies 80% of the total sleeping time is taken up with dreams, falling to 35–40% with children and 20–30% with adults. This seemed to show that dreams, far from being only the relics of the previous day's memories, as Freud had claimed, are found to be predominant at a time when these memories are non-existent. In the case of chickens, physiological signs of dreaming were apparent even before the hatching of the egg and in the case of kittens before their eyes opened. All this suggests that dreams occur before individual memory is able to nourish them.

The experiments conducted by Dement and Kleitman in 1959 seem even more significant. They prevented subjects from dreaming by waking them up when their eyes began to move. These people exhibited such alarming psychotic characteristics that the experiments had to be interrupted. Meanwhile the physiologists thought they had discovered the 'seat' of dreams, or what we prefer to call their 'relay station', at the

level of the pontine reticular formation in the most primitive part of the brain. In France, Dr Jouvet and his colleagues at Lyons also established that the prevention of dreaming in human beings resulted in alarming psychotic symptoms, and produced death 'while in perfect health' in cats and rats. They came to the conclusion that dreams are an essential function of life and that it was less dangerous to undergo hunger and thirst than to be deprived of dreams.

They thus came back through their laboratory experiments to the belief of Jung and others that the dream expresses a self-regulating and compensatory function of the organism. Dreams are indispensable to life. Indeed, physiologists of sleep are incapable of providing us with a guide to the meaning of dreams in general or of particular dream images. In this respect the analytical and symbolic method remains privileged. But apart from the possibility that physiologists may one day achieve this, it is essential to understand that their discoveries strike at the root of all the Freudian views and throw light on the general function of the dream in a remarkable way. This function can in no way be the realization of a particular desire, since it is at its height in infancy, that is to say at a time when the desire has not yet been born and when dreams can be nothing other than the expression of an ancestral desire which diminishes with age. That the 'seat' of dreams may be situated in the most primitive part of the brain and not in the cerebral cortex also confirms the ancestral, hereditary and collective bases of the dream, which Freud found so difficult to admit.

RAYMOND DE BECKER

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British Museum

Dress

Clothes seem to have been adopted as much for protection against magic as against sun and weather: priests were very early distinguished from others by their dress, which had, and has retained, strong feminine elements: in religion and magic the absence of dress is often intended to let power flow out freely from the human body or from the image of a god.

See COSTUME; NUDITY.

John Webb

Drink

Like food, the subject of many beliefs and ceremonies: intoxication by drink or drugs has been widely believed to be an entry to the otherworld or the realm of the divine: the Greek gods drank nectar, the Teutonic gods drank mead, in India the juice of the soma plant was offered to the gods: in Greek religion Dionysus was the lord of wine, drunkenness and ecstasy: in the Christian Eucharist the consecrated wine is the blood of Christ.

See DIONYSUS; DRUGS; ELIXIR OF LIFE; FOOD AND DRINK; MASS.

A gateway to heaven, a release from the prison of self, an opening-up of new vistas of experience: man has found many uses for the drugs which affect the mind and which are being increasingly exploited in modern society. The problem is, as it has always been, to ensure that drugs remain our servants rather than our masters; in primitive societies it has long been recognized that there is a need for a ritual setting to channel these dangerous forces

DRUGS

THE POET BAUDELAIRE described drugs which affect the mind as 'artificial paradises'. The phrase is apt and Lewis Lewin, the German biochemist, repeated it in his pioneering study of these drugs (*Phantastica*, 1924), where he divided paradise into categories: five of them in all, the paradises of narcosis, stimulation, euphoria, intoxication and hallucination. More simply we might say: of dreaming sleep, energetic wakefulness, well-being, drunkenness and the inspired imagination.

In palmistry, a certain small line near the bottom edge of the palm is called the paradise line. Some people, however, call it the poison line, because it indicates the capacity to enjoy a private and rarefied pleasure which in large doses cuts a man off from reality and infects him with an unattainable hope. A substance known as a drug in the pejorative sense of that word also has the characteristic of being paradisiacal and poisonous, as though it were one product of the serpent coiled about the Tree of Life.

One cannot read widely about drugs these days without coming across persistent references to the 'drug problem'. Drugs are indeed a problem in that they are addictive and encourage strange forms of narcissism which, though they may end fatally, are still attempts to regain paradise. The desire to do so is one of the fundamental ambitions of human nature which nearly every religion encourages, and this illuminates the drug problem from another aspect. If drugs can be used to enter paradise, what are the uses of paradise itself?

Drugs are used the world over, sometimes for entertainment, often for therapy or as a religious observation. Thus the soma plant celebrated in the early Vedic hymns of the East gave such bliss to those who took its juices that it was regarded as a divinity, and the visionary worlds of splendour praised by its devotees are certainly descriptions of the images which it induced. Opinions are divided as to what plant soma was originally; at one time it was thought to be a species of either *Asclepias* or of *Sarcostemma*, though it has recently been identified as *Amanita muscaria*, the fly agaric.

The use of this toadstool and of other hallucinogenic (hallucination-producing) mushrooms may have been much more widespread in the past than we realize, and its effects quite possibly helped to give form to a number of traditional descriptions of heaven. Indeed, the most famous mysteries of antiquity, those of Eleusis, may have used the fly agaric in order to initiate the worshippers into a realization of the divine, which could well account for the veneration in which the mysteries were held. In Mexico before and after the Spanish Conquest several plants were held sacred because of their illuminating properties, ranging from the peyote cactus from which mescalin is derived to a species of *ipomea* containing a relative of lysergic acid (LSD); the *psilocybe* mushroom which was called *teonanactl* or 'god's flesh', whose active principle is psilocybine, and *Datura stramonium* or thornapple with its scopolamine and atropine.

Such plants were used to cure illnesses of the soul and of the body, to divine the future and to gain a sense of supernatural knowledge. In South America other plants are used for similar purposes: one Brazilian curer has tracked down some 80 such plants in his own country, including a hallucinatory tree-toadstool. These plants include lianas like *Banisteria caapi*, peppers like *Piptadenia*, cocaine in the Andes, and at least one hallucinogenic animal, a caterpillar found inside bamboo stems.

In Africa, Asia, Siberia and Australia the list of plants which produce psychotropic (mind-changing) effects is long, and where no such plant is available alcohol may be used instead. Modern pharmacology has added to the number of psychotropic substances with highly potent and dangerous

derivatives of opium, with anaesthetics, synthetic narcotics, tranquillizers – the original one being a synthetic based on the active principle of *Rauwolfia*, a plant used for centuries in India to calm the mind – pep pills, hallucinogens and others. However, no modern doctor considers such substances to be sacred, as they would be amongst traditional cultures and as they are, up to a point, among those who use these products for their own enjoyment. This fact in itself has much to do with the existence of a drug problem.

The Religious Use of Drugs

The widespread use of drugs around the world, and especially in our society, makes it plain that man is a discontented animal beset by psychological and physical troubles, by boredom and spiritual ambitions. He uses drugs to relieve pain and illness, and also to change his entire way of looking at things. In religious language, human nature is always wishing to transcend its usual limitations. For waking consciousness is by no means the only kind which it is possible or desirable to experience, and other states can be reached by the use of psychophysical techniques and also by drugs.

Because they change the degree of alertness of the mind in one way or another, it seems probable that drugs interfere with the sleep cycle, either by allowing one to dream while still awake or by using the force of dreams to power action. It seems hardly credible, however, that maté tea, made from the leaf of a South American shrub and containing caffeine, could ever be used to induce trance. Tea, which contains tannin as well as caffeine in quite large quantities, certainly does not have this effect normally, and it was originally celebrated in India and China for its refreshing qualities that allowed the mind to stay awake during meditation. By itself maté could not bring about an oracular state of trance – as it does amongst Indians still living in the Mato Grosso – unless its actions reinforce a process already set in motion by the seer and, by this working together of a psychological technique with a physiological agent, bring about a state of dissociation in which the mind finds a new faculty of expression.

The religious use of drugs, in fact, usually accompanies the practice of shamanism, though shamanism often does without drugs. Shamanism is a technique by which a man, and sometimes a woman, prepares himself by singing, dancing, training and long periods of seclusion during which he meditates, for an influx of untoward inspiration that can carry him into the world of spirits where events on earth are ordained and carried out (see SHAMAN). It is often a hereditary calling, but may equally well be embraced by those who have either a surplus of mental energy or who have suffered from what we would call a nervous complaint of some severity. Such unsatisfied or unbalanced states of mind are continually looking for a resolution of their frustrations and ambitions, and they do so by using traditional methods which articulate their powers coherently.

Drugs can help to do this because their effects are so similar to those produced by other methods of shamanistic training. An instructive case concerns tobacco, which like maté was used for getting into trance. Throughout the Americas this plant was used much as we use it today, for pleasure and to aid concentration, though it was sometimes accounted a fault in an ordinary man if he smoked it in private. But its most significant use was by shamans who smoked large amounts at one sitting to achieve their ecstatic experiences. The combination of tobacco smoke and overbreathing (causing oxygen intoxication) produces that kind of giddiness and nausea which most people experience with their first cigarette. Giddiness is one of the universal symptoms of ecstasy – the word giddy comes from the Old English *gidig*, meaning possessed by a god – and it is by entering into this giddiness and following down the physiological pathways which it opens up that a shaman is able to dissociate himself from his normal waking self and arrive at a place in his mind where all is certain and a quite different conscious process begins.

What such people have done is to use the forces within the paradisiacal experience for definite ends. The lack of such ends in modern society, as has already been implied, is one reason why we have a drug problem: without a ritual support the mind is often not strong enough to resist the effects of a drug, and so loses its sense of direction. When we consider the power of some drugs, this is not surprising. The incredibly small quantity of 100 microgrammes of lysergic

Transworld Feature Syndicate

Shamans in parts of Southeast Asia take opium to increase the ecstatic effects of dancing; but the drug is a soporific, and the devotee usually soon reaches a passive state where 'one no longer dreams, one is dreamed': Chinese men smoking opium. As with many drugs, the last stages of addiction to opium are marked by psychic and physical horrors

acid is enough to bring about a psychedelic experience in which the mind is profoundly altered in its normal functioning and of which it previously had but the barest suspicion. Indeed many investigators have been so taken aback by these changes that they prefer to call the drug a psychosomimetic, one which produces a condition resembling madness.

The purpose of a ritual setting for the taking of a drug is to prevent madness, by directing the energies which the drug releases into a number of specific channels, and to put paradise into relation with objects in the outside world by establishing a dogmatic plan within the imagination, through which social events can be seen as psychological ones, psychological as physical ones, and physical ones as spiritual.

By such a method even opium, the grandmother of all narcotics, has occasionally been used not merely to enjoy its sumptuous and pearly visions but to carry out a conscious intention. Such is the habit of shamans in parts of Southeast Asia, who take opium to increase the ecstatic effects of dancing and through them to send their spirits upon a supernatural adventure for the curing of illness or the foretelling of the future. The soporific effect of opium is such, however, that its devotees are much more liable to become physically passive, which must be why it is so seldom used in an active and practical manner. It is true that opium is used in the East for conviviality, but its solitary use is difficult to control. Coleridge, who first took laudanum, a derivative of opium, to dull a particularly ferocious toothache and eventually became addicted to it, did manage to write at least one great poem under its influence: or perhaps we should say that *Kubla Khan* composed itself when his mind, still active in its poetic function, directed the opium into a creative activity. But such feats are rare, for the mind's ability to hold its own against the sweetly insidious effects of opium in large quantities is limited, and the drug soon brings about that passive state in which, as Henri Michaux, the modern French poet, has said, 'One no longer dreams, one is dreamed'.

'O just, subtle and all-conquering opium!' cried de Quincey, author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822), who took laudanum as an elixir for his neurasthenia and declared it to be the centre of the true religion of which he was the high priest. But religions have hells as well as heavens, and the last stages of his addiction were marked, as they always are, by psychic and physical horrors from which he at last managed to free himself. What is this paradise, as Baudelaire said of hashish, which one buys at the price of one's eternal damnation? But this progression from paradise to the inferno allows one to draw a most interesting parallel between the possessive effects of a drug and those of a spirit, as in Voodoo (see VOODOO).

In Voodoo ceremonies we might say that a pact has been entered into with any one of the many gods or spirits of the Haitian pantheon, which are called *loa*. The worshipper is possessed by the loa in such a way that he no longer has conscious control of his actions, and has no memory of what passed when he was possessed. The loa who rides him, as the phrase goes, always has a definite way of behaving – a stereotype, we might say, or schema – and this ability to act out the character of a loa is only achieved after training and initiation. Those who feel the influx of divine energy before they are initiated into Voodoo suffer not only from unfortunate accidents but often from manic outbursts ending in madness. It is the business of Voodoo to avoid this outcome and to see that its initiates can become possessed by this energy and still remain sane.

A Pact with the Devil

We might thus call an addict one who has been possessed by a drug after a private initiation which has no aim other than the desire continually to be possessed, unlike a Voodoo ceremony with its definite beginning and end. The addict cannot but wish his experience will continue for ever, even if he realizes that his body will disintegrate under the impact of the drug and that he then can no longer call his soul his own. The narcotic drugs, which slow down physical activity, and the excitants like amphetamine

which speed it up, are particularly apt to bring about this state of living on borrowed time; this is presumably not only because they bring out long-term metabolic changes but also because the will cannot detach itself from the pleasures it seeks.

The question of whether it is ethical to take drugs is a difficult one to answer. They have been and still are being used as an aid to meditation, but the masters of this art are unanimous in condemning them, since they tend to inflame the imagination and give it a wrong idea of its powers. From his own experience, Jean Cocteau has said that no one becomes an opium addict unless he has made a pact with it: a pact in which he dedicates his will to the power of the drug. There is no doubt that the mythology surrounding drug-taking reflects certain basic notions about black magic for this reason. Black magic is rightly regarded as a dangerous pastime because it provides immediate gains without immediate payment: it is a pact with the Devil, who comes later when it suits him and presents a bill on which are written the ominous words, One Soul.

What does it mean, to enter into a pact with the Devil? Freud was much interested in the subject and wrote a study of it at the time when he was still taking cocaine, which he did for ten years. The traditional reasons for such a pact include the obtaining of wealth, of power over men and Nature, and over the hearts of women. But Freud concluded from the case he studied that the central reason was to overcome depression and to find a father-substitute. About cocaine he wrote: 'One senses an increase of self-control and feels more vigorous and more capable of work', and he suggested that its effects were due, not to direct stimulation but to the removal of anxiety symptoms, which produced a return to a state of normal euphoria. Anxiety has to do with the superego in his system (see FREUD), and we can enlarge this description by remarking that by removing the 'censor' cocaine also removes anxiety. Because of this cocaine may have been an indispensable tool for Freud during his self-analysis: it allowed him to follow the lines of his reasoning into the subconscious without his mental censor putting up a resistance. That Freud escaped from addiction while one of his friends, to whom he had recommended it, died from its effects, suggests that he only did so because he had found a method by which the effects of the drug became subservient to the force of his intellectual drive. He had created a special form of ritual.

Separating Mind from Body

Without this drive cocaine is undoubtedly a danger, as we may see from the religious taking of coca amongst the Kogi of Colombia. This tribe uses it ceremonially to learn the lengthy genealogies and liturgies of their worship, and to fill their minds with the proper religious awe and sense of significance. Coca however has the unfortunate effect of making its takers impotent after a while, and the Kogi are suspicious of their womenfolk (who are not allowed to chew it) and so inefficient as farmers that their children are undernourished. Ironically, the atheists of the tribe who have dropped out of the religion altogether are much healthier and happier, though their neighbours scorn them for losing their chance of immortality. This petrifying effect of coca, even with a religious system to direct it, is certainly partly caused by the fact that the Kogi way of life is beset on all sides by the creole population and has withdrawn into a state of apathy.

Coca is used elsewhere in the Andes to ward off hunger and fatigue, and it does so by numbing these sensations and dissociating the mind from anxieties arising in the body. But anxiety may persist even if its symptoms disappear with the use of a drug. These symptoms emerge again after a long time in an even more disagreeable form, as the nightmare effects of addiction show. When at such a time the use of the drug is stopped, this anxiety must be at least one of the constituents of the most unpleasant withdrawal symptoms.

Attacking the Self

The drugs used in other religious rites tend to be hallucinogenic rather than narcotic or stupefying, and these have a quite different effect upon anxiety. Common to plants with such different active principles as *Banisteria*, *Amanita* and *Datura* is the production of a sudden and violent surge of energy with visions in which terror and splendour may be equally present. The Viking berserkers seem to have used *Amanita* to endow themselves with a blind and warlike frenzy no opponent could withstand, a frenzy that might last more than a day and after which they sank into a long torpor of exhaustion.

In South America the Indians who take *Banisteria* and other plants fall victim to a similar frenzy (though they do not use it when on war parties), and European travellers who have tried the drug in their company report experiencing the traditional visions, amongst which are those of beasts of prey about to tear them into pieces. Such drugs seem to work by putting psychological anxieties into touch with the musculature, and what is dissociated is the ego from the imagination rather than, as in narcotics, the imagination from anxiety. There may be a connection between the fact that hallucinogens are not physically addictive and that they do not inhibit anxiety.

All these drugs, however, can be used for delicate purposes as well as frenzied ones. One must remember that all shamanistic traditions speak of an initiatory experience in which the body is felt to be torn apart, after which a crystalline body is given by the spirits. Both the dismemberment and the illumination of the body are commonly felt under hallucinogens, even if in a mild fashion, and one can understand dismemberment as the outcome of a drug-induced dissociation in which the normal persona or expression of the personality, is forced to give up its defensive reactions. What is known as a 'bad trip' is caused by the anxiety which the approach of such a psychological dismemberment evokes, and which generates an increasing feeling of loss and horror when it cannot be properly discharged. From all accounts a really bad trip has certain similarities to a schizophrenic attack, and hospitals report many instances of bad trips which last for days or even months. The taking of tranquillizers is certainly one way of bringing such an episode to an end, but the traditional method is to accept the attack which the drug makes on the self without fear, an acceptance which transforms anxiety into knowledge and makes it give up its energy to a higher faculty.

But no two drugs attack the self in quite the same way, and they activate different parts of the same underlying process and give rise to different types of anxiety. The drug found in *Amanita* seems to be particularly effective in putting the motor system into spasm, and the shamans who use it must go through a long education in this experience and have grappled with the startling visions it produces before they can master its immediate effects and use them according to their will. *Datura* also activates a sense of physical power together with a psychic ambition that may lead a man so far out of his normal range that a spasm of timidity at the wrong moment may leave him stranded upon an ungovernable activity. Different is the effect of the *psilocybe* mushroom which clinically is said to be that of depersonalization. But there are two sides of every coin, and what is depersonalization to one man may be dematerialization to another: tribal practitioners in fact call upon this effect when they wish to penetrate material obstacles, to free consciousness from its bodily entanglements and allow it to inhabit bodies other than its own.

Drug of the Aztecs

Peyote traditionally used has yet other consequences. It was one of the first hallucinogens to be experimented with in Europe, and is famous for its visions of fantastic and grotesque architecture, of prodigious landscapes and giant figures striding about or petrified into ancient statuary, and of jewels shining with abundant colour. All these visions occur without apparent reason, and the Indians phrase this by saying that peyote is a power in itself that works from the outside, a teacher who can show a man the right way to live and answer his questions by giving him an experience to live through.

This quality of the peyote experience allows one to qualify the remark of Michaux that under such drugs one does not dream, one is dreamed. If used correctly peyote has the power of personifying a dream in such a way that it allows the dreamer to keep some part of his self-awareness intact and still questioning. The consequence of searching for a meaning within the visions which inhabit one is that they become increasingly full of meaning themselves.

Peyote is of particular interest because it is the sacrament of the Native American Church, a religion based upon Indian practices and having Christianity for its justification. It was used by the Aztecs for

South American shamans smoked large quantities of tobacco at one sitting to achieve ecstatic experiences, but it was also smoked for pleasure: Brazilian Indian smoking cigar

Eric Cross

divinatory purposes, and by the Tarahumara and Huichot of northern Mexico as the body of divinity on which all their beliefs centred. This religion was picked up by the Plains Indians at the time of their defeat by the whites and used to rally the wisdom of the Indian past to cope with the degrading changes that overcame them. It was in fact a type of cult such as we often find springing into existence when old ways of life are being destroyed by a powerful and technically more advanced culture, and it is also the only surviving one of several such cults which arose in the Plains.

The Search for Power

The drug problem in the West should probably be seen in the same light: the popularity of drugs is at least partly due to the very rapid changes now occurring in our society. Drugs have always been used to search for power, a power which can be used to enlarge the capacity of the imagination and to bring about change in society. When society itself changes, drugs give a certain kind of life to the imagination which is being stripped of its ancient forms, and a confidence in its ability to live in a strange world. Cannabis has certainly been used in this way from time to time: in Jamaica, for instance, the Rastafari smoke it both for religious and political reasons in the hope that they may soon return to their promised land – Abyssinia, where the Lion of Judah still reigns. Half a century ago or more, cannabis was also the motive cause for a new religion being set up by the Baluba of the Congo: they destroyed their fetish houses, and proclaimed the drug to be a power under which they could live in perpetual friendship and protected from calamity. The drinking of alcohol was forbidden, and those who had committed misdeeds were condemned to smoke a number of pipes of cannabis in order to reform their misconceptions.

Wherever a drug is used by a religion to gain a view and foretaste of divinity, it is treated as though it were a god itself. 'We have drunk Soma, we have become immortals, we have arrived at the light, we have reached the gods: what power has malevolence over us now, what can the perfidy of mortals do to us, O Immortal?' So runs one of the hymns of the *Rig Veda*, one of the sacred texts of the East. Opium has been called the hand of God and anchor of salvation, though Cocteau has remarked that it resembles religion as an illusionist resembles Jesus. Tobacco has been called the blessed plant, honour of the earth and gift from Olympus, and both wine and beer have been similarly praised down the centuries. 'Our glass was the full moon, the wine is the sun. If a grave is moistened with such a wine, the dead man will rediscover his soul and the corpse will revive', said Ibn al Farid, the medieval Arabian poet. But the wine he talks of here is that of the Spirit, which also descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost so that they spoke with tongues and were accused of being drunk.

A drug is nothing unless it kindles the spirit in a man, though this spirit may be thought of as divine or demoniacal according to predilection. Whichever it may be, the spirit is not man's possession but a gift made to him, and as a gift it has a nature and a morality of its own which must be both wrestled with and obeyed if it is not to bring harm to its host. Every religion has its own way of experiencing and ordering this power, and their often stringent ritual requirements are the product of a long experience in bringing the spirit in touch with the world of men. The religious taking of drugs is one particular example of this: it says plainly enough that amateurism in these matters does little but create a problem, and that if the mind is to reach beyond itself by the use of a drug it must be placed in the service of an idea and a method that makes for wisdom and communion rather than folly and isolation.

(See also MUSHROOM; PEYOTE CULTS.)

FRANCIS HUXLEY

FURTHER READING: Lewis L. Lewin, *Phantastica: Narcotic and Stimulating Drugs* (Dutton, rev. edn, 1964); E. Josephson, *Drug Use* (Halsted Press, 1974).

'Human nature is always wishing to transcend its usual limitations ***Left*** **Certain Indian tribes in South America take drugs for the visions and hallucinations that they cause: chief of a Sucumbio River tribe in South America** ***Right*** **Similarly in the modern West taking drugs to penetrate into another order of reality is steadily on the increase, despite the appalling dangers of addiction**

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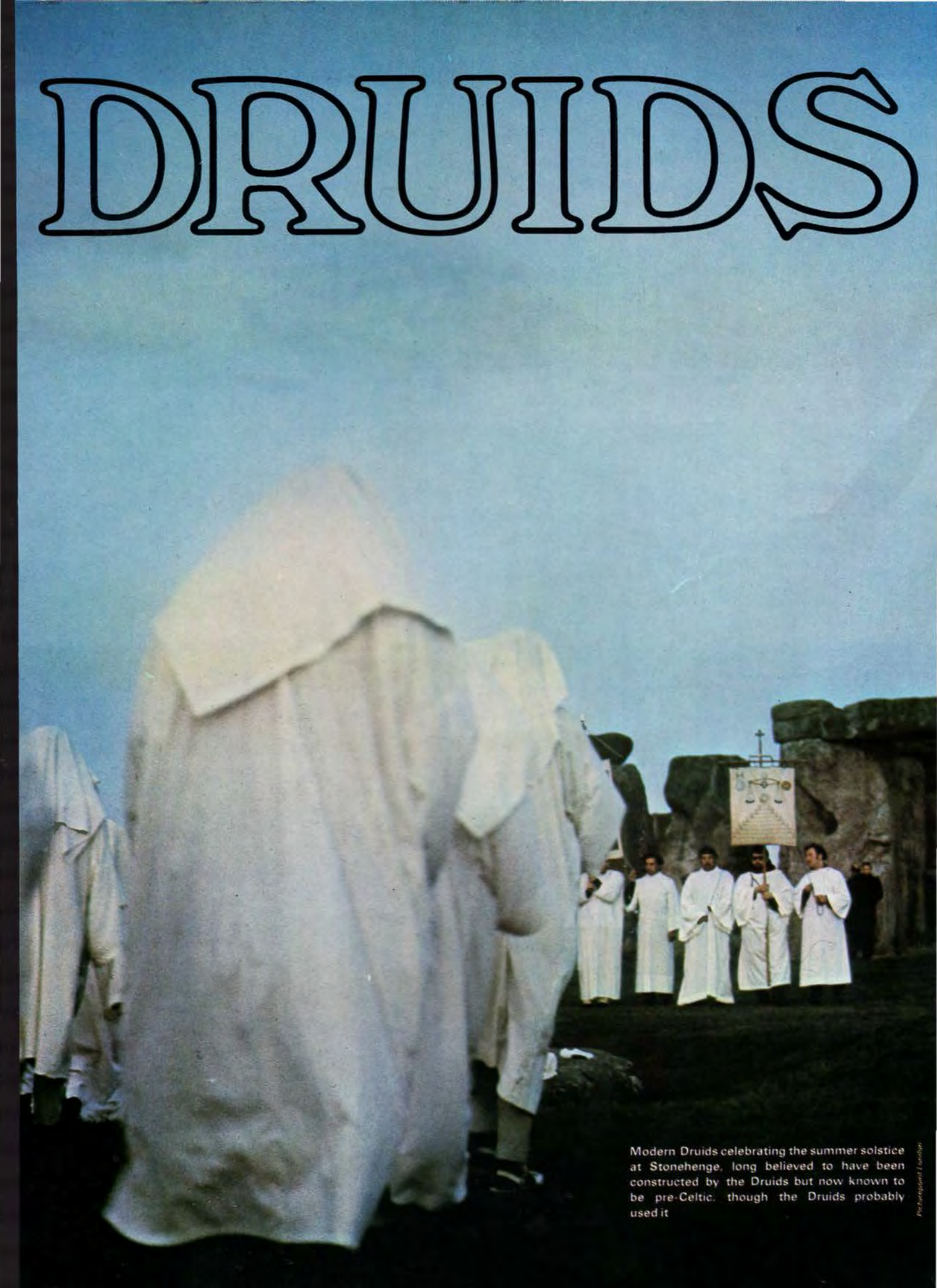
DRUIDS



Modern Druids celebrating the summer solstice at Stonehenge, long believed to have been constructed by the Druids but now known to be pre-Celtic, though the Druids probably used it

Photograph: London

C. M. Dixon

Nicholas Barrington

Spectrum Colour Library

Top **Stone circle popularly associated with the Druids at Castlerigg near Keswick in Cumberland** ***Above*** **Menhir or long stone at Cap Frehel in Brittany: these monuments, connected with prehistoric burials, have also become part of the Druid legend** ***Left*** **Aerial view of Stonehenge; some classical writers believed that Stonehenge was a temple to Apollo the sun god**

The classical writers were surprised and perplexed by remote woodland shrines rather than civic temples as the cult centres of Gaul, and invested them with romantic attributes of terror

The history of the Druids is closely interwoven with strands of folklore, legend and romantic literature. The first of these two articles traces the history of the mysterious Celtic sages whose religion is said to have involved human sacrifice; the second, by the Chosen Chief of one group of present-day Druids, is written from 'inside' modern Druidry

MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTHOOD of pre-Roman Celtic religion in Gaul and Britain, the Druids are mentioned by name in some 30 references in Greek and Roman writers between the 2nd century BC and the 4th century AD. In addition, functionaries known as Druids are mentioned in the earliest Celtic literature, that of the Irish hero-tales and law tracts, which can be shown to represent a pre-Christian state of affairs older than the 5th century AD. The religion in which Druids functioned was proscribed and exterminated in the Roman provinces of Gaul and Britain during the 1st century AD.

With the rediscovery of classical literature from the Renaissance onwards, the Druids in France and especially in Britain were built up into myth and folklore in accordance with contemporary changes in taste; the Romantic Revival in British art and literature was especially productive of the type of Druid folklore which survives today, but is not much earlier than the late 18th century.

The social and economic background of the Celtic culture to which the Druids belonged can to a fair extent be reconstructed from the evidence of archeology and that of the classical writers who commented on the Celts, with the vernacular sources, as in the case of Ireland, as supporting evidence. In archeological terms Druids belong to the final phases of the La Tene culture of the late Iron Age. References to Druids, however, relate exclusively to Gaul, except for two mentions of them in Britain, found in Caesar and Tacitus.

The classical sources relating to the Druids may usefully be divided into an earlier and a later group, the first being based on first-hand knowledge, the second on an idealizing and romantic conception in which barbarous qualities are minimized or ignored. The two viewpoints represent the contrasted attitudes of 'hard' and 'soft' primitivism in which civilized societies may view barbarians; in the idealizing process concepts of the noble savage, and of a Golden Age at the world's edge, play a large part.

The first group of sources are mainly derived from the comments and observations on the Gauls made by the Greek Posidonius, a Stoic philosopher writing at the end of the 2nd century BC, from first-hand knowledge through travel and contacts with the people of Massilia (Marseilles) in Gaul. His work survives only in quotation, particularly in Strabo, Diodorus Siculus and Julius Caesar. These comments are consistent with those of other writers of the 1st century AD such as Lucan, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela and Pliny, and also Ammianus Marcellinus (b 330 AD). This Posidonian group constitute our most reliable sources.

The second, idealizing, group of sources centres on scholars working in Alexandria from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD, and may conveniently be named Alexandrian. These are mostly works of compilation, and the philosophical attainments of the Druids are enlarged upon and in general put on an equal footing with those of the other non-Greek philosophers of antiquity, such as those of India or Persia. Stoic philosophy had led to a slight idealizing tendency at times in the Posidonian sources, but in the Alexandrian group we move into a romantic tradition anxious to establish profundity and sublimity in what little was known of the Druids and of Celtic religion.

The Mistletoe and the Oak

The native Irish sources, though of the greatest importance for the light they throw on pre-Christian Irish Celtic society as a whole, are not very informative about pagan religion and the Druids, and since the tales in the form in which they survive are the versions of medieval Christian clerics, this is perhaps not surprising. Furthermore it must be remembered that they relate exclusively to Ireland, and represent the uncritical view of a barbarian society from within. From the foregoing sources, it is possible to piece together the following incomplete information.

The name druid presupposes a Gaulish *druvis*, from *druvids*, and probably related to the Greek *drus*, an oak tree, with the ending cognate with the Indo-European root *-wid*, 'to know'. Pliny makes a direct association between Druids and oaks in his account of the mistletoe ceremony in which the Druid cut mistletoe from an oak with a knife or sickle of gold on the sixth day of the moon (see MISTLETOE). Woodland sanctuaries are characteristically Celtic. The name Druids occurs only in the texts, and is not represented in any pre-Christian inscription. Druids seem to have been a designated branch of the Celtic hierarchy together with bards, and the seers known as *vates*, and as we have seen, are recorded only in Gaul and Britain in antiquity.

The Celtic priesthood as a whole formed an honoured element in society, and Caesar places Druids equal with the warrior-aristocracy, the *equites*, in Gaul, and stresses their exemption from the tribal obligations of war and taxation. The remaining Posidonian sources class them with the poets, the seers and the prophets of the Celtic world, and in the Irish sources they rank among the 'men of art' or of special gifts, immediately below the nobility.

On Caesar's authority alone, there was a chief Druid for all Gaul, who convened annual meetings in a sacred precinct within the territory of the Carnutes tribe. Such sanctuary sites are attested by Gaulish names such as *nemeton*, and seem to have been cleared areas in the forest, in some instances enclosed by a palisade or bank and ditch: there is archeological evidence of such sites. In these sanctuaries wooden images of deities are mentioned by Lucan, and are again corroborated by archeology. The classical writers were surprised and perplexed by remote woodland shrines rather than civic temples as the cult centres of Gaul, and invested them with romantic attributes of terror.

Recruitment to the Druid order seems to have been from the noble classes, and instruction in the oral tradition of memorizing verses for periods of up to 20 years is mentioned by Caesar. Such traditional instruction for bards and poets was characteristically Celtic and, with periods of training of up to at least 12 years, continued in Ireland to the 17th and in Scotland up to the 18th century. Prehistoric Celtic society was non-literate except for an occasional ability to write in Latin (or very rarely Greek), as the only languages of literacy.

Times

The first summer solstice ceremony held by the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, which was formed in 1964, took place not at Stonehenge, but at Hunsbury Hill near Northampton

Sacrificed in Fiery Baskets

The functions of Druids in Gaul, at least, seem basically to be those of the acknowledged repositories of traditional lore and wisdom, and particularly of customary law. They are sometimes attributed the prophetic powers of the seers but this may have arisen partly from their practical knowledge of the calendar. They certainly appear as lawgivers, and as being directly concerned with animal and human sacrifices, including those holocausts in huge wicker constructions attested by Strabo and Caesar. It was the practice of human sacrifice under Druid auspices in the Celtic world that was largely the cause of the proscription of the religion by the Romans from the 1st century AD onwards.

What we know of the Druids' corpus of knowledge is scrappy and not very impressive. So far as their speculations on the supernatural are concerned, we have to be on our guard in the classical texts against taking literally the loaded terminology of ancient philosophy, which was all that could be used to describe the situation in an alien and barbarous society. All that really emerges is a belief that the Druids knew the divine will and the actions of the gods, with whom they had communication. Their beliefs about the immortality of the soul struck the classical world as very unfamiliar: an otherworld which was a magical renewal of life exactly as on earth, but in another body and in another place. To accommodate this simple barbarian concept within classical thought, the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls was invoked, though in Druid belief this is nowhere implied. The literal re-living of life beyond the grave as a Celtic belief is documented by other references in the texts, unconnected with Druids, and by the evidence of the elaborately furnished princely tombs of the period.

Knowledge of Stars and Time

That a belief in the Druids' prophetic powers may have had some basis in fact is suggested by evidence for their practical knowledge of astronomy and the construction of calendars. The Posidonian sources contain several references to such knowledge, of course not uncommon among the priests of many comparatively barbarian societies of their time, and the references to 'Pythagorean knowledge' believed to be known to the Druids may well refer to some Greek mathematical concepts transmitted to the Gauls via Massilia. The surviving fragments of a monumental calendar-inscription from Coligny in Gaul are an objective testimony to considerable calendrical expertise at this time, and a recognition of the problems of reconciling the solar and lunar years. The other scraps of information about Druidic knowledge imply among other things some knowledge of herbs and their medicinal properties.

Such first-hand references as there are to the later Druids show them as hardly more than magicians and medicine-men on the fringes of Romano-Celtic culture, and even Druidesses who are no more than fortune tellers appear in stories. We saw how human sacrifice was obnoxious to Roman sentiment and while we need not see the Gaulish or British Druids as leaders of a national resistance movement, we can appreciate how, as the tribal repositories of traditional Celtic learning and sentiment, they would embody the incompatible barbarian tradition which the Romans were stamping out from the provinces of their empire. The Elizabethans in Ireland and the anti-Jacobites in Scotland later encountered a similar situation in their forcible assimilation of the final Celtic world.

Romantic View of the Druids

The rediscovery of the Druids came with the rediscovery of the classical texts in which they were mentioned, after their submergence during the Middle Ages. They began to take their place among the respectable ancestors in the new nationalistic feeling in France and England, and in the former country their judicial power was especially commented upon from the 18th century onwards, and in 1585 a code of laws was invented for them. Apart from this strain of idealization, however, they were viewed on both sides of the Channel in terms of a hard primitivism and their human sacrifices in gloomy groves were not glossed over.

Building of Eternal Death

Howling the victims on the Druid Altars yield their souls
To the stern warriors; lovely sport the Daughters round their victims . . .
Terrified at the sight of the Victim, at his distorted sinews,
The tremblings of Vala vibrate thro' the limbs of Albion's Sons.
While they rejoice over Luvah in mockery & bitter scorn,
Sudden they become like what they behold, in howlings & deadly pain.
Spasms smite their features, sinews & limbs; pale they look on one another;
They turn, contorted; their iron necks bend unwillingly towards
Luvah; their lips tremble; their muscular fibres are cramp'd & smitten;
They become like what they behold. Yet immense in strength & power,
In awful pomp & gold, in all the precious unhewn stones of Eden,
They build a stupendous Building on the Plain of Salisbury: with chains
Of rocks, round London Stone, of Reasonings, of unhewn Demonstrations,
In Labyrinthine arches, (Mighty Urizen the Architect,) thro' which
The Heavens might revolve & Eternity be bound in their chain,
Labour unparallell'd, a wondrous rocky World of cruel destiny,
Rocks piled on rocks reaching the stars, stretching from pole to pole.
The Building is Natural Religion, & its Altars Natural Morality;
A building of eternal death, whose proportions are eternal despair. . .

William Blake, *Jerusalem*

But from the early 17th century in England the Druids also appear as Nature's sages and philosophers, and by 1695 the antiquary John Aubrey's suggestion that Stonehenge and other prehistoric stone circles might be Druid temples was modestly put forward, in competition with Phoenician, Roman, Saxon and Danish claimants for the building of the Wiltshire monument. Another antiquary, William Stukeley, in the early 1740s enthusiastically championed the Druids as builders of Stonehenge. Within the framework of contemporary religious controversy he made them priests not only of natural, but of revealed religion, anticipatory Christians in expectation of the Messiah. From then on, a romantic vision of Druids was encouraged by the prevailing temper of taste and sensibility, and by the discovery of the 'noble savage' in the South Sea Islands. The folklore associating Stonehenge and other stone circles with Druids became firmly established at this time, and continues in the present day summer solstice performances on the site.

A Welshman trained in the genuine bardic traditions of Glamorgan, Edward Williams, invented a ritual involving a little circle of stones, the Gorsedd, on Primrose Hill in London in 1792. In 1819 Williams contrived to have this attached to the also genuinely traditional Welsh poetic and musical meeting, the Eisteddfod. He unfortunately forged documents to support his case for a direct Druidic ancestry for his fabrication: the ceremony, with attendant Archdruid and Druids, now forms part of the aunual ceremony. The tradition was further confused from the late 18th century onwards by mistranslations of early Welsh poems, by which they were made to convey a mystical Druidic meaning, and in this climate of thought William Blake turned partly to the mystics and partly to Stukeley to show in his Prophetic Books that 'All things Begin and End in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore.' In final decline the ancient Indo-European priesthood, almost casually recorded by the classical writers, were a part of English folklore and fantasy; in ornamental landscape-gardening, dressed-up Druids could appear as alternatives to Hermits in decorative grottoes, and even today continue to make their corporate appearances at Stonehenge or Primrose Hill.

STUART PIGGOTT

Survival Down the Ages

Druidry itself has always claimed a high antiquity going back to the New Stone Age. Not only in Stonehenge but in the dozens of orientated stone circles scattered especially along the western shores of the British Isles, Druids recognize the ancient temples in which the sun, moon and stars were held in reverence by their forbears.

There is no need to assume that Druidry is essentially Celtic, although from the Celtic migrations it was doubtless modified substantially. The date given for the legendary Cymry, or brotherhood colony set up in Wales, 2000 BC, seems to correspond with the date of an Iron Age migration. Certain links with the Aryan culture of early India and with the witches led T. C. Lethbridge, in his book *Gogmagog*, to consider that all three traditions have a common origin in South Russia or Asia Minor in perhaps the 4th millennium BC.

The similarities lie in reverence for the sun and moon, circular dancing in a clock-wise direction; the existence of a sacred caste of sages, the burning of the dead, the cult of certain animals and wisdom-teaching by long, memorized poems. 'The young,' says Caesar in his *De Bello Gallico*, 'are taught to repeat a great number of verses by heart and often spend 20 years upon this institution . . . The Druids teach likewise many things related to the stars and their motions, the magnitude of the world and our earth, the nature of things and the power and prerogatives of the immortal Gods.' And it was Britain, not Gaul, that was the training place of this body which held the knowledge of the contemporary sciences and arts and imparted them, acted as political advisers to rulers, were exempt from war and often acted as heralds of peace, as well as being priests of a religion.

Evidence from a Computer

Was it of Stonehenge that the Greek poet Pindar wrote in his 10th Pythian Ode, where he describes a temple sacred to Apollo the sun god, in the land of the Hyperboreans or dwellers beyond the north-west wind? Another writer calls it a round temple of wings where there is dancing and music. Most early writers agreed that Stonehenge should be attributed to the cult of Apollo. 'In the Island of the Hyperboreans,' says Diodorus Siculus (of the 1st century BC), 'is a grove of Apollo, exceedingly beautiful and a temple worthy of notice, of a round form.' The other deity mentioned is Saturn, who slept in the west – 'sleep was the bond forged for him'. Now Stonehenge is precisely a temple of the sun, Apollo, and of time, Saturn. Until recently there was no conception of the antiquity of Stonehenge and it was not until the 18th century that

Imaginative representation of a Druid at Stonehenge, which appeared in *Vanity Fair* in 1911: he holds the cosmic egg and the scythe used in the ceremonial cutting of mistletoe. Scholars working in Alexandria in the early centuries AD were the first to produce an idealized picture of the Druids as profound philosophers

Andy Wier

Danish National Museum

The Druids were the priests and prophets of Celtic paganism; the head of a Celtic god, from the Gundestrup cauldron. The Celts worshipped the head as a symbol of divinity and supernatural powers

it was realized that it was thousands rather than hundreds of years old.

In modern times archeologists, Professor R. J. Atkinson in particular, date the successive Stonehenge structures to the period 1900–1450 BC. An American scholar, Professor Dawkins, fed into a Harvard computer the figures of the sightings across the stones and the positions of the heavenly bodies in 1450 BC and showed that Stonehenge pointed to the rising and setting points of sun and moon at both solstices and equinoxes, 16 orientations in all. Dr Fred Hoyle of Cambridge, followed this up by showing that the partial ring of 'Aubrey holes' or ritual pits inside the circular ditch formed a calculating machine for eclipses.

To this vindication of traditional meanings at Stonehenge, one adds the obvious deductions from its structure: circular dancings, processions, five-fold teachings, a death-and-resurrection cult of the sun, and male and female emblems. These signs give a sketch-outline of a cult, remarkably like the Druidic ideas.

The Chosen Chiefs

How far was Druidry driven out by the Romans? It continued in Wales and developed the deeply poetic traditions of the 5th and later centuries, whence came the Arthurian legends and teachings (see ARTHUR). It also survived in Ireland.

Druid traditions were unwritten until recently and links are widely dispersed in time. It is said that in 1245 a gathering was held with representatives from many parts and the objects of the Order were agreed. A grove or group was founded, the Mount Haemus Grove which still exists. Druids appear, together with Rosicrucians and Freemasons, in the mixture of mystical-occult societies of 18th century London; these were largely influenced by the mystic Jacob Boehme (see BOEHME).

In 1717 John Toland gathered delegates from Bardic and Druid circles in some ten areas, including York, Oxford, Wales, Cornwall, Anglesey, the Isle of Man, parts of Scotland, Ireland and Brittany as well as London, to form the Universal Druid Bond from which the present outward body descends, the Mother Grove An Tich Geata Gairdeachas. The grove no longer professes any specific religion, but forms a deistic philosophy.

The line of Chosen Chiefs includes, besides Toland, Dr Stukeley and Lewis Spence, the antiquarians, and William Blake, the visionary poet and artist. The main English Order was reformed in 1964 as the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, conforming to these grades in Brittany, France and Wales. At the same time the public observances were increased to eight – the four solstices and equinoxes, and the four Celtic festivals of Imbolc (1 February), Beltane (31 April), Lugnasad (1 August) and Samhain (1 November).

At solstices and equinoxes the Companions in their grades, Bards in blue, Ovates in green and Druids in white respectively, form into circles wherever they are celebrating; contrary to general belief the more organized ceremonies are now held, not at Stonehenge but at more accessible places, Parliament Hill in London, or Glastonbury Tor in Somerset, although the 'rump' movement left the main body in 1964 and still carries on rites once a year at Stonehenge.

The Lady of Summer

In the old form a trumpet summons to attendance, the Chief with half-drawn sword asks to the four quarters 'Is it peace?', and the Gorsedd or gathering is proclaimed. The reception of honoured visitors follows, often headed by the local mayor. Then, if it is the spring or autumnal equinox, the Lady Ceridwen Cariadwen is received and offers gifts appropriate to the season including the horn of plenty.

The summer solstice has its main ritual at dawn, when the rise of the light and the transformation of all things into good are proclaimed. The second rite, at noon, has, besides the reception of the Lady of Summer, a solemn feast, when the Order as host gives out some of the blessings that are conceived as having been received from the dawn light of this longest day; bread, salt and wine are bestowed upon all those who come.

At the winter solstice, held indoors, the death of the Old Year is mourned with the extinction of all lights. Then the birth of the Mabinog, or little sun, is celebrated by turning to the south-east with the erection of a star-lantern in the darkness. This is the time when mistletoe is distributed, and usually an Eisteddfod of some kind is held; a programme of Celtic music on the old type of harp called the *clarsach*, or a sword-dance symbolizing death and resurrection, have been prominent features of recent occasions.

Of the Celtic fire festivals, two are held in the open air, Beltane with its Earth Mother and May Queen being celebrated upon the summit of Glastonbury Tor, while Lugnasad with its fiery wheel of the descending year is held in a wood. Samhain is a more mystical occasion, being concerned with the links between living and dead; the ritual is Breton and uses the cauldron, ancient symbol of the Mother, and the Four Foods of the Dead. Imbolc is concerned with the washing of the face of the earth and the new furrow.

In the old form a trumpet summons to attendance, the Chief with half-drawn sword asks to the four quarters 'Is it peace?' and the Gorsedd or gathering is proclaimed

The Inner Sun and Moon

From this it will be evident that the observance of seasons and locality and their meanings form a great part of the Druidic public objects. The choice of Parliament Hill instead of Stonehenge for three ceremonies is not merely because the celebration of a national mystique should be near the capital city of the nation, as Stonehenge was the centre of the late Wessex culture. It is because of the extraordinary fact that a series of sites form a line from it, through Gospel Oak and the ancient Pen Ton, ending at the Bryn Gwyn (Tower of London), this line being orientated almost precisely to the midwinter sunrise. Ancient earthwork indications further suggest that Parliament Hill was a great gathering place, similar to the far smaller Tynwald in the Isle of Man. According to legend, here was the Caer Troia, the New Troy, founded by Brutus fleeing from the fall of Troy about 1200 BC.

Yet these observances are also intended to be meaningful at deeper levels. The sign of the Awen, or Three Rays of Light, is that of the divine attributes, Universal Majesty, Verity and Love Infinite. The sun and moon reverenced are not of course the physical ones, but are the inner sun of man and the moon of motherhood. Teaching comes most effectively from pithy wisdom sayings; and there is directed meditation amongst other things within the Order, which together form a safe training of the higher faculties designed for the West through our ancestors, the details of which are only available to those within the Order. This training links with the ancient mystery teachings. The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids in fact forms an esoteric philosophic body with methods both old and new, as well as being a public body giving its teaching to the public in symbolic forms. In this it is unique amongst esoteric organizations.

The Gorsedd of Bards

Many people would think of modern Druids as Welsh, and certainly the movement is strong in Wales, if nationalistic rather than mystical. On the cultural side, Welsh musical contests go back to an unknown date, before that of King Hwl the Good (c 950 AD) whose Pencerdd or Chief Poet already had a special chair in the court. Some sort of meeting like an Eisteddfod was held in 1176 in Cardigan Castle, patronized by Lord Rhys, but nothing is later recorded until 1450 at Carmarthen. The next held was in the north, at Caerwys in 1523, and another in 1568 where a committee appointed by Queen Elizabeth examined bards and granted licences to wander and earn money by performances. The earlier tradition against written records has prevented our knowing much more until the 18th century almanacs begin to advertise meetings.

With Thomas Jones of Corwen, however, we come to the beginning of the modern Eisteddfoddau when he organized a large meeting at Corwen in 1789. A proliferation of Welsh cultural societies followed, and in 1792 Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams) started the modern Gorsedd or ceremonial circle ritual. By 1821 the Carnarvon Eisteddfod was a huge affair, much patronized by the nobility and gentry. In 1860 it was decided to hold a national Eisteddfod annually, alternately in north and south Wales.

Nowadays the National Eisteddfod Court organizes the occasion, while the Gorsedd of Bards is responsible for carrying out the full ceremonial. Every Gorsedd must be proclaimed a year and a day beforehand. It is all very distinctly Welsh and concerned with poetry, prose and musical competition and performance. Brittany and Cornwall are regarded as merely 'branch-Gorseddau', not as existing in right of their own traditions and languages, while the French and English Druidic movements are not recognized at all. And yet, when the Gorsedd movement was started under the aegis of Iolo Morganwg, it was proclaimed on Primrose Hill in London, jointly with leading English Druids of the day, that English was to be considered a bardic language, to rank with the 'Ancient British' for all bardic purposes. A few years ago, however, an Archdruid was reported as saying that only Welshmen could be Druids, following which a fraternal delegate from Brittany was refused admittance to the National Eisteddfod.

The mystical-symbolic side is in fact seen only in the ritual. Admission to the three Orders of Ovates, Bards and Druids is by way of examinations or honorary invitations, the Welsh language being compulsory. The Archdruid is elected for three years and has a committee of officers.

The Bards of Cornwall, organized with the help of Wales, form a considerable body which revives the extinct Cornish language so far as is possible; thus the Bards are of two types, language and non-language members. Solely Bardic, their impressive robes are in deep blue. They carry out some of the usual ceremonies at the stone circles of Cornwall or in the great halls of Arthur built at Tintagel in the present century for the Arthurian Order. William Borlase wrote about Druidic remains in Cornwall in the 18th century much as did his contemporary the English Chief, Dr Stukeley; that is, most ancient monuments if not obviously Christian were apt to be ascribed to Druids.

Druids in Brittany

The Bretons have a strong Druid and Arthurian tradition from classical and medieval times; there were the famous prophesying 'Druidesses' on the Île de Seine, and the enchantments of the Forest of Broceliande, near Rennes, where Merlin was imprisoned in a tree by the enchantress Vivien. It was only at the beginning of the present century, however, that Druidry became an organized force in Brittany. For several years now the annual August Eisteddfod has been held beside the beautiful lake at Paimpont, in the midst of the old forest area of Broceliande. The ceremonial follows the Welsh-English pattern.

Druidry is still a hereditary matter as well as one of organized bodies, and James Duncan, the late Father of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and an independent Druid, used to tell me that to his knowledge there were at least 400 other such Druids. Moreover any senior group has a right to move from an existing Order to make a fresh working. Many of these live unknown to each other. There are also bodies of ancient descent which appear now to have social activities only and to have little inner teaching.

(See also CELTS; STONEHENGE.)

ROSS NICHOLS

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David Hurn-Magnum

The throbbing beat of the drum in many societies forms a bridge to the supernatural. As an aid to the trance state, as a means of frightening away evil spirits, it is part of the equipment of the priest, the magician and the shaman

DRUM

Buckland Abbey, Devon

MAN'S USE OF DRUMS for a wide variety of practical and magical purposes seems universal and of the greatest antiquity. They have been employed to mark the occurrence of special occasions and events; in religious ceremonies of all sorts; as conveyors of messages, often in sophisticated codes; and, of course, as straightforward musical instruments. In many different parts of the world, drums have been beaten to prevent storms or earthquakes and to drive away demons and evil spirits, especially those that cause sickness.

They are sometimes linked with initiation rites. In the Port Moresby region of New Guinea, for instance, the main task which boys are set at their formal entry into manhood is for each to make himself a drum. They go into the forest in groups and are obliged to observe certain strict rules. They must not see or be seen by a female; if they were, their drum would have a poor tone. They must not eat fish, lest the bones tear the skin of the drumhead. They must not drink running water but only water trapped in the great leaves of the jungle foliage; for running water would put out the fire and power of the music of their drums.

Particularly in Africa, where musical skill in drumming is highly varied and developed, drums have been often connected with royal authority. In many western areas, every chief had his own sacred drum, which was played only at important religious ceremonies and offered its own libations of blood. When it was made, a slave would be sacrificed upon it and the spirit of the slave was believed to inhabit the drum thereafter. This recalls the royal drums of certain Malay rulers which were the dwelling-places of mighty spirits.

Above **Drake's Drum in Buckland Abbey near Plymouth, believed to have been taken by Drake on his voyage round the world and to sound of its own accord when war is imminent; some claimed to have heard it just before the First World War** ***Left*** **During a Royal Tour, Nigerians salute the Queen by beating their drums. In some parts of West Africa every chief has a sacred drum as a symbol of his royal authority**

The ancient kings of Buganda, a region especially renowned for the virtuosity of its drummers to this day, had a royal drum which was the object of the greatest veneration and was, indeed, the symbol of their kingship. When it was first made and whenever it was given a new skin, the blood of the ox whose hide was used was poured over the drum, as was also the blood of a human sacrifice. When the drum was beaten, it was believed that the life and strength of this blood flowed into the king, renewing his power and authority. The royal drums of some Buganda tribes also marked places of sanctuary: escaping slaves and straying animals who touched them were regarded as sacred.

The drum is probably most famous, however, for its ability to induce strange states of mind, conditions of trance and ecstasy and weird powers. There are the throbbing drums of magical ceremonies, the drums of Voodoo, of the Maenads of ancient Greece and of our own contemporary music. But in most cases the drum itself is not particularly significant, it is no more than one ingredient in a rich magic brew. In one region, however, the drum itself is of special importance and interest – the far north of Europe and Asia. Here, the drum (in the form of a kind of tambourine) has been used as the chief instrument of divination and has been particularly connected with the shamans of Lapland and Siberia (see LAPLAND; SHAMAN). He would beat on his drum to send himself into a trance. Then, it was believed, he would journey, mounted on the drum, through the world of the spirits. When he returned from the underworld, entranced, he would describe his travels in frenzied song, to the accompaniment of his drumming.

The Siberian shamans' drums were often carved and painted with pictures of men and animals, heaven and hell and hunting scenes. Some had metal images inside them which would rattle when the drum was shaken. (Some believed that thunder was caused by a great shaman beating and shaking his drum in the heavens.) These images were intended to record the visions that the shaman had seen in his trances.

In Lapland, before the coming of Christianity, there was the same veneration for the shaman and his drum. But the Lapp shaman, as well as employing his drum for inducing a state of trance, also used it as a direct tool of divination when he was fully conscious. The head of his drum was painted with many images, done in alder juice or reindeer blood. These images represented the gods of sun and moon, or wind, fertility and thunder, men, women and animals and the underworld. If he wished to foretell the future, the shaman would take his drum from its special skin bag, place little brass rings on the head and tap it with a hammer. As the rings danced on the images, so could the future be seen. This could be done not only by shamans. It seems that in the 18th century nearly every Lapp household had its own magic drum. Whenever an important practical decision had to be made (about, for instance, in which direction to hunt), the father would put on his best clothes, spruce himself up and consult the family drum. But it was always left for the shaman, rapt in his delirious trance, to seek solutions to the questions of greatest moment. He, above all, trusting in his drum, was the only one who could heal the sick by rescuing their souls from the dread world of the spirits.

The Drum in Ashanti Religion

The religion of the Ashanti in Ghana lays great emphasis on drumming during public worship, for drums are versatile instruments capable of performing both musical and non-musical functions, and serving as an aid to worship by creating the appropriate mood for worship, or they can be used as a means of worship and a bridge to the supernatural.

The majority of Ashanti drums are made out of *tweneboa*, a species of cedar formerly also used for building houses, which is believed to be the abode of the spirit, Tweneboa Kodua. It is cut down only after the appropriate ritual has been performed. Before the finished drum leaves the drum carver's workshop, it is first consecrated to Tweneboa Kodua irrespective of what it is to be used for. On any occasion that a master drummer has to perform, he must also begin by pouring a little libation to Tweneboa Kodua.

In organizing the sounds of drums, three functions are considered; the need for alerting or rousing people, the need for verbal communication and the need for movement. Accordingly three modes of drumming are employed: the signal mode, the speech mode and the dance mode. The signal mode consists of single drum beats played intermittently, or a short rhythmic figure played over and over again as a call signal or warning signal.

In the speech mode of drumming the emphasis is not just on selected rhythm patterns but on coherent verbal messages: an attempt is made to reproduce the spoken word as closely as possible on drums. This is facilitated by the nature of the Ashanti language, for Ashanti is a tone language, a language in which the tones of particular words, phrases and sentences tend to be fixed. Because of this it is possible for any drum which gives clear pitch contrasts to reproduce the tones of words, phrases and sentences. The second element of speech which is reproduced is rhythm. The relative durational values of the syllables of the spoken word can be imitated on drums. When these are combined with the appropriate tones, the Ashanti ear is able to re-interpret the sequence of drum sounds in verbal terms.

On ritual occasions the speech mode of drumming is much more frequently exploited than the signal mode. For then the drums can be used for addressing the focus of worship, for invoking his presence,

for praising him, or for communicating the wishes of his worshippers to him. Similarly the drums can be used for addressing the priest who, in Ashanti, also functions as a medium. They may spur him on to dramatic action or give him encouragement in the dancing ring. They can also be used for addressing the community of worshippers or individuals such as elders of a cult group, or ritual officers. The mood for worship can thus be greatly heightened through verbal texts played on drums.

The speech mode of drumming is greatly exploited in rituals devoted to ancestor chiefs. These rituals take place every 43 days and consist of food offerings, blood sacrifice and libations. As a libation is poured for each chief his name and praises are sounded on drums. Ashanti tradition also requires the drummer of the talking drums to play alone at about 4 o'clock on the morning of the *adae* festival, recounting the names of ancestor chiefs in their order of reign, playing a poem for each one of them, and ending with appropriate greetings of the occasion. The drummer usually prefaces this roll-call with a drum prelude called the Awakening, in which he addresses nature spirits, the Supreme Being, the earth and malevolent spirits personified in the witch. At the end of each poem he greets each one and is heard by the entire community as they lie awake in bed or as they start to prepare for the festival. For those who understand the language of the drums, the mood for the events of this day set aside for remembering and revering the memory of ancestor chiefs would have been set by the drummer as he plays in the speech mode.

The dance mode of drumming is equally important in Ashanti religious practice, for the dance is a form of dramatic expression which can be combined with music to express a variety of thoughts and emotions. Hence for the Ashanti it is a vital element of worship and gives an added importance to drum music played in religious contexts. The drums are usually played in small ensembles or in larger groups, each ensemble being associated with social or cult groups who play them on ritual and ceremonial occasions. The ensembles played by cult groups are of several types. The *bommaa* type of ensemble, consisting of five or seven drums, is played on important public occasions of worship for state gods. Stylistic differences are maintained between the music played for the gods and that played for the chief. Another type consists of three small drums augmented by a master drum; in the music played by this type of ensemble the pieces follow each other in a prescribed order and are intended to build up to a climax. If the priest is not already possessed by the god before he comes publicly to the place of worship, he is expected to reach this state in the course of the music and to sustain it in various dramatic forms as the different pieces are played.

Drums used in ritual contexts in Ashanti society have distinctive repertoires which set them apart from those used for other purposes. Those that are dedicated to the gods are regarded as sacred and are kept in the temple or in its vicinity. However it is not only such drums that need care. The Ashanti believe that all drums used in ritual contexts must be protected from chance defilement lest they cease to be an effective bridge to the supernatural.

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Drumming is frequently used to induce strange states of mind, conditions of trance and ecstasy. In Africa a slave was sometimes killed on a drum so that his spirit would inhabit it. This Tibetan drum is made of human skulls

Horniman Museum/Michael Holford

Drummer of Tedworth

Poltergeist, probably the earliest well-attested one in England: at Tedworth, Wiltshire, in 1662 an itinerant drummer was arrested by a magistrate, who confiscated his drum; about a month later the magistrate's family heard drumming noises on the roof and pieces of furniture began to move about of their own accord.

A large group of Moslems belong to a sect founded by a ruler who believed himself to be God; after nearly ten centuries, they still await his return.

DRUZES

A MOSLEM SECT, the Druzes differ from other orthodox Moslems most strongly in their practice of an esoteric or secret religion, known fully only to those initiated into it. Their name is derived from that of Darazi, one of the two original apostles of the cult, which was founded in the 11th century.

In Islam there have been from early times a number of schisms (see ISLAM). The main orthodox Moslems are the *Sunnis*, but in the first century of Islam a split began to occur between the Sunnis and the *Shia*, who followed the leadership of the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali. Much later came the *Ismailis*, who split from the Shia in a power struggle for the succession to the Imamate, the headship of Islam. The Druzes were an off-shoot of this important schism. In common with the Ismailis, they believed in emanations of the deity, in supernatural hierarchies, and in the transmigration of souls.

The most extraordinary feature of the Druzes' history is the life-story of the real founder, Hakim, a Caliph of Egypt of the Fatimid dynasty. Hakim was born in Cairo in 996 AD and succeeded to the throne when barely 12 years old. He was closely cared for by a tutor – too closely for his liking, since the tutor rarely let him out of the palace and stopped him from giving his companions lavish presents. He therefore authorized his parasol-bearer to kill the tutor – an act of decisive brutality which his disciple, Hamza, was later to cite among the proofs of his divinity.

Curfew at Sunset

When he was 20 years old, Hakim began to display a marked eccentricity of behaviour, an intolerance not characteristic of the Druzes in more recent centuries, and an excessive prudishness. He persecuted both Christians and Jews. Christians had to wear blue clothes and hang from their necks crosses a foot long. Jews had to wear yellow clothes and hang from their necks blocks of wood, supposed to resemble the head of the calf which they had once worshipped.

He banned the brewing and sale of beer. Town-criers rang bells in the streets and warned men and women not to enter the baths without drawers. Fishmongers were not to sell fish that had no scales. Curfew was at sunset. Once, when a dog frightened Hakim's horse when he was out riding, he had every dog in Cairo shot. Another caprice led to the execution of a number of grooms and valets.

By the time he was 30 years old, Hakim had intensified his oppression of the Christians. Nearly 500 of their churches and

Israel Government Tourist Office

Druze villagers in Upper Galilee celebrate the attainment of religious autonomy for the Druze Community in Israel. Members of this Moslem sect await the return of their saviour, Hakim, who disappeared in 1020 AD

monasteries had been demolished and their lands seized. He himself professed a fervent devotion to the cause of Islam. He wore a coarse black woollen shawl when riding to the mosque on a donkey, and bestowed gifts on the poor sheltering in the mosques. Women had to stay indoors all the time: to enforce this rule, Hakim forbade the shoemakers to make shoes for women.

Women Walled up to Starve

A sacred book of the Druzes describes this period of Hakim's life thus: 'Our Lord before his disappearance wore black garments during seven years; he let his hair grow long for seven years; he kept all the women shut up in their houses for seven years; he rode on a donkey for seven years. This he did out of his great compassion for us, to conform himself . . . to the number Seven, which is so important in the system of the Ismailis. He wore black garments . . . to signify to his faithful friends and servants that for seven years after his disappearance they would be in a state of trial and darkness.'

One day, passing some public baths, he heard the sound of female voices and learned that there were women in one of the baths. He at once had all the doors and windows walled up and left the women inside to starve to death. When his spies reported that some women had managed to evade his ban and leave their homes, he invited them to the palace. A number of them, flattered by the honour, gathered there, whereupon he ordered his guards to sew them up in sacks and throw them into the Nile.

When Hakim was 32, his Islamic piety began to yield to a conviction of his own divinity. His apostle Darazi came to Cairo as Hakim's chief vizier and wrote a book proclaiming this doctrine. Hamza, Hakim's second apostle, attended by 12 disciples, converted many to the new cult. Hakim himself no longer went to the mosque or observed Moslem feasts or the fast of Ramadan; and he suppressed the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

No doubt his orthodox Moslem subjects were dismayed; but this development brought relief to many of the other religions. Since Hakim now believed himself to be God, he thought that he should not discriminate between various modes of worship. The Christians were allowed to rebuild their churches, their properties were restored to them, and in one week 6000 Christians, who had become Moslems under pressure, returned to their faith.

In order to promote belief in his divinity, Hakim pretended – with the help of a network of spies, many of them old women who could enter the harems – to know everything that was going on in Cairo, and often startled his courtiers by repeating to them things they had said at home the night before.

Again, he issued an order that all shop-doors should be left open at night: the owners would be compensated for any goods stolen. In one night there were 400 thefts. Hakim confronted the owners with a statue; in it was concealed a man who told them where the stolen goods were and who had taken them. The thieves were hanged – but it was Hakim who had employed them for this task, in order to provide further proof of his omniscience and his stern sense of justice.

Terrible as a Lion

Hakim himself used to patrol the streets, often in disguise. Once a paper was handed to him: on it was written an insult to his sister. He gave his army orders to burn and pillage Cairo and kill any who resisted, and went to watch the fire from a nearby height. After one-third of the city had been destroyed, he called his men off, apologized to the townspeople (explaining, however, that he was not responsible for all that had been done), and granted a general amnesty. Such was the terror he inspired that this was received with humble gratitude.

A 19th century student of the history of the Druzes sums up thus the personality of Hakim: 'His aspect was as terrible as a lion; his eyes were full, and of a light brown; no one could stand his look; his voice was strong and sonorous. Inconstancy and caprice, joined to cruelty; impiety united to superstition, formed his general character. It is said that he adored, in a special manner, the planet Saturn.'

His death – or, as the Druzes believe, his disappearance – occurred in 1020 AD. Early one morning before daybreak, he rode on his donkey out of Cairo, first embracing his mother and telling her that, according to his horoscope, he would that day run a great risk. On the mountain top from which he had watched the city burning, he gazed at the stars and said to his attendants: 'We all belong to God, and we shall all return to him'; then, striking his hands together: 'Thou hast appeared then, fatal sign!' No more is known; he never went back to Cairo. The Druzes believe that he was the last incarnation of God and that he is not dead and will one day return in glory.

Oneness of God

With such a founder, it is not surprising that the Druzes have often, down the centuries, been embroiled in violence and civil wars – the last of these having occurred in Lebanon as recently as 1958. A 12th century observer said of them: 'They are subject to no king or prince . . . and are so nimble in climbing hills and mountains that nobody can successfully carry on war against them.' Sometimes they have warred with those of other faiths; but at other times Christians under Druze sovereignty have enjoyed more toleration and security than in any other Moslem land.

It would, indeed, be misleading and unfair to suggest that the Druzes of modern times emulate the savagery of Hakim. In the 1958 war, for example, a leader of their side was a hereditary Druze chieftain, Kemal Jumblatt – a man of intelligence and culture who has held office in successive Lebanese governments. He may be assumed to interpret the traditional teachings of the Druzes in a highly spiritual sense. These teachings, in any case, have always emphasized the oneness of God: they may be compared with the doctrines of the Gnostics in early Christian times.

In 1979 it was estimated that there were around 400,000 Druzes, scattered throughout Lebanon, Syria and Israel. They worship in small, bare shrines, empty but for boxes adorned with shreds of coloured rag. A modern traveller, Robin Fedden, writes of their elegance, their courage, and their 'astonishing beauty'.

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Dryads

In Greek mythology, female spirits who guarded oak trees and are shown dancing around them: they were later connected with groves and woods in general; mortal daughters of Zeus, they were long-lived and generally benevolent to men: a hamadryad was the life-spirit which lived in each tree and which died when the tree decayed; tree spirits are also known in many other parts of the world.

See ANIMISM; NYMPHS.

Sotheby's/Michael Holford

The martyrdom of Mani, founder of the Manichean religion; his flayed body lies on the ground, and his skin, stuffed with straw, hangs from a palm tree. The Manicheans were dualists, believing in the eternal opposition of two great principles, the powers of Light and Darkness; from a 14th century Persian manuscript

Where does evil come from? Many answers have been given to this question: one of them is that evil stems from some great god, force or principle which is separate from and opposed to the good

DUALISM

IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS, dualism means the belief that there is a radical opposition between two great principles which underlie the existence of what, in one way or another, is found in the world. In Zoroastrianism, for example, the two opposing principles are Ohrmazd, the creator and champion of the good, and Ahriman, the champion of evil. Ahriman and his army of evil beings harass the good creation of Ohrmazd, into which they have penetrated from outside, until at the end, far in the future, they are expelled and deprived of all their destructive power.

In Zoroastrianism, the theory of opposite principles takes various different forms. In the *Gathas* or 'Songs' of Zoroaster there is the opposition between the beings belonging to the good god's creation and the demonic beings who try to annihilate it. The *daivas* or demons joined the side of evil by their own choice. But an earlier choice had been made by the two 'spirits', the Holy Spirit and the Evil Spirit. They are described as twin brothers, which can be interpreted as indicating the symmetry between them. They are equal and contrary, the inspiring agencies and at the same time the opposite terms of the 'choice' to which all reasonable beings are committed.

Zoroastrianism soon became a clearly dualistic system in which Ohrmazd was opposed directly and from all eternity to Ahriman. Some non-Iranian sources testify to the existence in Iran of a myth recounting how Zurvan (Time or Destiny) gave birth

to the twins Ohrmazd and Ahriman. This seems to have been an attempt to 'bridge' the dualism of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, with Zurvan as the impersonal principle of Time or Time-Fate, the sphere in which the actual agencies of the cosmic drama exist and operate. But the myth was finally rejected by the Zoroastrians themselves. (See AHRIMAN; ZURVAN.)

The Evil Rival

Another example is the 'anticosmic' dualism of Gnostic teachers and sects, like Valentinus, Basilides, the Manicheans and the Mandeans (or much later the Bogomils and Cathars). Here, this world itself is evil, made of a dark and essentially negative substance, and created not by the supreme God but by an inferior supernatural power, the Demiurge. Man's body and the lower level of his soul were created by the Demiurge but contain, imprisoned in them, the divine spark, the spirit which comes from God and which can only be freed from its prison by the *gnosis*, the liberating knowledge of God.

In the doctrine of some Gnostics, including Valentinus (2nd century AD), evil manifests itself only at a late stage in the creation of the universe. There is a succession of emanations from the divine world. The last of these is Sophia (Wisdom) and her 'fall' brings matter into existence. The dualism of the Manicheans and the Iranian Gnostics was more radical, for Light and Darkness were in opposition from all eternity. (See GNOSTICISM; MANICHEANS.)

According to the Bogomils in the Balkans, the evil principle, Satanael, who corresponds to the Demiurge of the Gnostics, derived from God but created an earth and a heaven for himself. He also created the body of man, which he treacherously caused to be animated by a spirit, sent by God (see BOGOMILS).

A dualism partially analogous to that of the Bogomils can be found in a number of legends from eastern Europe; among some sects of western Asia, including the Yezidi of Iraq, the 'worshippers of the Devil' who venerate the Angel Peacock, a demiurge who is a rival of God but is later reconciled with him (see YEZIDI); and among a number of peoples of central and north-western Asia, including the Tartars and eastern Finns. An example is the story of Erlik, a rival who co-operates with the Supreme Being in the work of creation: he digs up for him a particle of earth from the bottom of the primordial sea and tries, with little success, to create a heaven of his own.

These stories imply a feeling of some inadequacy on the part of the Creator. Generally, the adversary is conquered in the end but the nature of his malignant deeds brings them into the fold of dualism proper. He breathes his own bad spirit into man or he soils man's person, and this is not because of any fault on man's part, especially as the intrusion of evil is described as occurring during the creation of man.

Something very similar occurs in a number of primitive mythologies from north-eastern Asia and from North America, where we have the tales of Coyote, a typical trickster-demiurge who is an unhappy but not ineffective competitor of the Creator during the work of creation. Stories detected among

the Dogon in Mali imply that reality has resulted from the opposing actions of a Creator and a competitor, the Pale Fox. The wide diffusion of dualistic myths warns us against always attributing dualism to Iranian or Manichean or Bogomil influence.

The Serpent's Descent

Another strand of dualism appears among the Orphics, in Empedocles and other early Greek philosophers, and in Plato. The world is thought to consist of two principles, which are seen as complementary to each other but usually unequal in value. In Plato there is the dualism of Matter on the one hand and the Ideas (with the supreme one, the Idea of Good) on the other. In Empedocles there is the dualism of the two opposite principles of Love and Discord, which prevail in turn in the universe. In Pythagorean doctrine there is the dualism of the Monad (Unity, perfection, eternity, infinity) and the Dyad (Duality, imperfection, limitation in time and space).

Gnostic dualism has something in common with this type of speculation, especially in the variety of Gnosticism which is called 'ophitism', in which the serpent (*ophis* in Greek) symbolizes the descent of the superior spiritual element (*pneuma*, literally 'breath') into the inferior world of matter, and its subsequent ascent again, or reintegration into the divine, heavenly realm. This concept of descent and ascent is related not only to the theory of the salvation of the human spirit, escaping from its imprisonment in this world, but also to the nature and creation of the universe. The spiritual element is conceived of as animating matter and giving it life, form and movement, even if only precariously and provisionally.

The term dualistic can also be applied to certain Indian doctrines, found in the *Upanishads* and the Vedanta tradition, which are 'monistic' in that they reduce all that exists, in its manifestations in the realm of multiplicity and appearance, to a first principle, the ultimate ground and substance of the universe (*Atman*, *Brahman*, *Purusha*), which is immanent (pervading all things in this world) but also transcendent (surpassing, going beyond them). But these Indian systems are also dualistic, in the sense that they oppose the visible and illusory world with its limited and imperfect gods to the transcendent substance of Atman and Brahman (see also BRAHMAN).

Or there is the Chinese theory of Yin and Yang, the two ultimate principles of the universe, whose opposites – day and night, male and female, celestial and terrestrial, and the rest – underlie all manifestations of being. Again, in Taoist doctrine, these two principles are transcended by one first principle, the Tao itself, which is inexpressible, not reducible to a mere expedient to 'bridge' the Yin-Yang couple (see CHINA; TAOISM).

Fra Angelico's painting of the *Last Judgement*; the souls of the righteous, on God's right, go to heaven and the souls of the wicked, on his left, are subjected to the tortures of hell. Christian concepts of God and Satan, of good and evil, are not truly dualist for God remains the supreme Creator and Lord; Satan is a creature of God and creates nothing

Scala

Ethical Dualism

Sometimes the opposition between the two principles of a dualist system seem to reach into the very interior of Godhead, or whatever is substituted for it, as in some Iranian or heretical Islamic speculations. Peculiar developments of classical dualism, with its tendency to split soul or society or reality into opposing segments, can be detected in some forms of modern existentialism, of Freudian psychoanalysis and of Marxism.

But it is important to distinguish between dualism in the true sense of the term and so-called 'psychological' and 'ethical' dualism. A duality of ethical and psychological possibilities, the good ones and the bad, is to be found in every form of human thinking and behaviour. For example, it would be misleading to assimilate to true dualism the Jewish concept of the two 'spirits' which act in the soul of man, the good inclination and the evil inclination. For these do not detract from the biblical idea of a supreme Creator and Lord of the universe. The Dead Sea Scrolls expressly state that these two spirits were appointed by God to give man a choice (see DEVIL).

Similarly, the Jewish and Christian concepts of Satan are not truly dualist, for Satan is a creature of God and creates nothing himself. Nor are the Jewish and the somewhat different Christian ideas of original sin, which are very different from the dualist Orphic, Platonic and Gnostic notion of a primordial crime, committed in the heavenly world by a divine or semi-divine but invariably non-human and pre-human agency, a sin 'previous' to the world and to man, and producing the very existence of man in the world. This notion did influence some Jewish and Christian thinkers, including Philo of Alexandria in the 1st century AD and Origen in the 3rd, but is foreign to biblical thought. St Augustine formulated the orthodox Christian refutation of dualism, according to which evil is not a principle or a substance but a deficiency of good within created rational beings (either angelic or human).

(See also EVIL; OPPOSITES.)

UGO BIANCHI

Michael Holford

Right **Above the sacred tiger hang the interlocked symbols of Yin and Yang, encircled by eight trigrams. In Chinese belief, the Yin and Yang represent the two principles of cosmic energy which are opposite and complementary. Yin is of the earth, dark, female and heavy, and Yang is of the heaven, bright, male and light. The eight trigrams are mystic symbols, used in divination**

Left **According to Hindu belief Vena, the wicked king of the world, dies as punishment for his haughtiness. From his lifeless body spring two spirits, a dark evil one who goes off to lurk in the desert, and the resplendent Prithu, who is the saviour of men**

FURTHER READING: R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (Harper Torchbooks, N.Y., 1966); Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1963); R. C. Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi* (Allen & Unwin, 1956).

C. M. Dixon

Dung-Beetle

Or scarab, venerated in Egypt because it lays its eggs in a ball of dung which it rolls along the ground: a symbol of the sun, of the creation of life in matter, or resurrection; amulets in the shape of a scarab were worn as good luck charms or placed in the tombs of the dead to ensure eternal life.

See SCARAB.

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Dunkers

Christian sect whose members emigrated to Pennsylvania from Germany in the 18th century to escape persecution: the name comes from their practice of baptism by immersion, administered to adults only; they model their way of life on that of the early Christians and hold 'love-feasts' twice a year; the sect has gained many converts in recent years through missionary work.

Mansell Collection

Dunmow Flitch

The side of bacon awarded at Dunmow in Essex to a married couple prepared to swear that they had not quarrelled in the previous 12 months: the bacon may reflect the old fertility symbolism of the pig: the custom, said to have been founded in the 12th century, was revived in the late 19th.

DWARFS

The small, dark people of Norse mythology, renowned as workers in metal and magic, may have a historical origin

IN FOLK LEGENDS and fairytales, dwarfs were always described as creatures of small stature, ranging from the size of a man's thumb to the height of a two-year-old child. In appearance and feeling, they roughly resembled human beings, but magical powers endowed them with special skills and wisdom far beyond those of any mortal men. Inhabiting the dark and secret places of the earth, dwarfs could appear or disappear with bewildering rapidity.

Although dwarfs were a regular feature of northern folklore, references to such diminutive beings can be found in Greek literature. Crowds of tiny men climbed ladders to reach the top of Hercules's wine cup, when that hero visited their country; and in Greek paintings they were depicted as hewing ears of corn with miniature axes. Such writers as Pliny and Aristotle claimed that tribes of these minute people dwelt in caves on the banks of the River Nile.

Very occasionally, dwarfs were described as incredibly beautiful. Fair Idun, of Norse mythology, was utterly unlike her dark, ugly brothers and father, dwarfs who were skilled smiths. Old Ivaldir sometimes allowed his lovely daughter to walk abroad in the sunlight, which she much preferred to their gloomy underground kingdom of Svartalfheim. Because she was so beautiful the sun's rays did not turn her to stone, a fate which befell other members of the race of dwarfs. Bragi, the handsome god of poetry and eloquence, fell in love with Idun, and married her; and she was given the special task of keeping the golden apples, which gave the gods eternal youth and vigour.

The more usual Scandinavian and Teutonic dwarfs were hump-backed, dark little men with large, wise heads and long beards. Sometimes their feet resembled those of a goat, or a goose. All lived to a great age, and considered unwholesome food to be the cause of the brief span of human life. Their kingdoms and tribes were ruled over by kings and chieftains, and possessed large armies. Dwarf territories were situated deep inside mountains, mines, or under water. In the main, the creatures feared and detested

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sunlight, and one named Alviss, who was compelled to remain all day above ground, was turned to stone by exposure to the sun's bright rays. Garbed in black, brown or grey, they found no difficulty in merging into rock clefts and cave mouths, or gaining unseen access to their dark, subterranean abodes.

All That Glitters

Dwarfs were particularly the jealous custodians of gold, precious metals and jewels, and this guardianship also included the glitter of the sun's and moon's rays. Their vast underground halls were reputed to contain the most priceless of treasures. Anyone who stole from these hoards suffered great misfortune, and if a robber did manage to transport some of the gold to his home, he would abruptly discover that the fortune had turned into a pile of dead leaves.

To the mortal men they favoured, dwarfs were the givers of wise counsel, for they were considered to be the repositories of great knowledge. This secret wisdom evidently invested them with the power to foresee the future, make themselves invisible, and assume other forms. They were also adepts at magic songs and runes, and brewed the heady mead of poetry, which was guarded by the gods. Anyone aiding them was treated with the utmost kindness and courtesy, and generously rewarded from the storehouses of treasure. Legend tells of human midwives given gold in grateful return for their special services.

Michael Holford/Prado

Dwarfs and little people in general have always held a fascination for man: the tiny hump-backed men of northern European folklore were often credited with supernatural powers and throughout history people of very small stature were exhibited as curiosities *Left* The wise and kindly dwarfs from Walt Disney's highly popular film version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, whose antics were earlier recorded by the brothers Grimm *Above* Fred Roper's Company of Wonder Midgets, photographed in 1936 at Waterloo Station before leaving for South Africa where they were to appear at the Johannesburg Empire Exhibition *Right* Up to the 18th century dwarfs occupied a favoured position at the courts of Europe, often as playmates of the royal children: painting of the court dwarf, Don Sebastian Morra, by the 17th century Spanish artist Velazquez

These mischievous and sometimes malicious beings teased farm animals, abducted children and beautiful maidens, and stole bread and corn

John Webb

The dwarfs were chiefly renowned for their ability to produce magnificent metalwork. The foremost craftsmen among their numbers were generally the kings. It was these ugly and often ill-tempered little men who could create wondrous works of art and magic. They forged the armour for the gods, and the strong chain called Gleipnir with which the gods bound the terrible Fenris Wolf. Magic swords and golden rings, so highly prized in many legends, were fashioned by the deft fingers of dwarfs. Fair Idun's two brothers made Gungnir, Odin's magical spear. They also produced for the goddess Sif, the beautiful wife of Thor, exquisite, long golden tresses, to replace her own hair after the mischievous god Loki had shorn it all off.

Another dwarf, Sindri, forced to compete against Ivaldir's two sons by the boasting of his brother Brökk, wrought many wonderful things, including Thor's mighty battle hammer, Mjölnir, which no matter how far it was hurled always returned to its thrower's hands. For the god, Freyr, the dwarf made Gollinborsti. This great boar could either be ridden or draw a chariot, and it travelled as easily through water or air as upon land. The lights from Gollinborsti's special golden bristles ensured that Freyr never rode in darkness, not even in the deepest night. For Odin, Sindri fashioned Draupnir, a golden arm ring. Every ninth night, eight rings, all of similar weight, were formed and fell from this magical piece of jewellery, so that by the end of only one year the owner of the dwarf's handiwork would have amassed a great treasure.

Many scholars have produced evidence to justify the theory that the dwarfs of folklore and superstition are descended from a race of small, dark men, skilled in mining and smelting metals, who inhabited the primeval forests of Western Europe. Fearing invasion from the East, they sought refuge in caves, which may have given rise to the belief that dwarfs had been swallowed up by the earth *Above* The survival of the old culture was often thought to be perpetuated by the little people of later centuries: detail of a dwarf from a painting by Domenichino, in the National Gallery *Left* The Elfin Oak, one of the attractions in the children's playground, Kensington Gardens, has been fashioned from an old tree stump

David Hurn-Magnum Camera Press London

Lords of the Mine

Anyone who forced the dwarfs to give or make one of their exquisite articles was doomed, and their gain brought only misery. An enchanted sword, Trfing, which two dwarfs were compelled to forge, had a curse laid upon it. It could never be drawn from out of its sheath without bringing death.

Those dwarfs who lived in the mines were regarded very warily by men, and considered more vicious and unpredictable than those inhabiting mountains. Miners often heard them moving about far below in the darkness, and now and then glimpsed the little men. Within the mines, all kinds of catastrophes from broken tools to roof falls and sudden fires were attributed to the fury of these dwarfs. This was their method of punishing over-inquisitive humans, who appeared to treat the tiny 'lords' of the mine without proper respect. However, if mollified with presents of food, dwarfs were known to help with the work in hand, and give advance warning of danger by tapping in the mine shafts. The tales of the 'knockers' from Cornwall and Staffordshire belong among those of the rest of Europe relating to mine dwarfs (see CORNWALL).

Generally, it was human beings who had cause to grumble about the dwarfs' behaviour. These mischievous and sometimes malicious beings teased farm animals, abducted children and beautiful maidens, and stole bread and corn. Yet, apparently, they were considered annoying rather than dangerous, except for the Black Dwarfs, which were a type of malignant elf. In the majority of Scandinavian and German folk tales, the dwarf is quite friendly to men, although sometimes complaining bitterly of human dishonesty and untrustworthiness. The *erdleute* (earth people) of Swiss legend were said to help farmers, to find wandering cattle, and collect fire wood and fruit to leave out for the poor children.

Many North American Indian tales concern little folk explicitly comparable to the dwarfs of European tales. The Paiutes saw all dwarfs as mischievous, but the Cherokee believed they could be good or bad – though seeing either kind was a death omen. Many Eskimo tales depict helpful, luck-bestowing dwarfs similar to those of Scandinavia.

The origins of the dwarf are obscure. Norse mythology suggests that the tiny men either came to life as dark maggots crawling from the decaying flesh of the slain primeval giant Ymir, or from the scarlet billows of the seas, which were formed from the same giant's blood. The gods granted them the wits and shape of men, and gave four of the dwarfs, Austri, Vestri, Svori and Norori, the duty of upholding the four corners of the sky. There seems to be little evidence to suggest that any of the dwarfs themselves were ever venerated as gods.

Archeological and anthropological studies have produced evidence to justify the theory that the belief in dwarfs was based on reality rather than on imagination. Some of the first inhabitants of Western Europe were small, dark, shy people, dwelling among the dense forests which covered much of Britain, Brittany, western France and Germany. Like the little Lapps, who inhabited the Scandinavian Peninsula before the invasion of the Gothic-Scandinavian races, they were skilled in mining and smelting the metals which abounded in those regions.

Memory of an Extinct Race

From the East came strong invaders, economically and mechanically better equipped than the small natives. As these new people conquered and settled, the dominant features of their civilization became the much-hated incursions on the little people's original environment. Weaker in strength and numbers, they were forced to retreat into the swamps and islands, driven back by the clearing of their forests for the organized agricultural settlements of their invaders. Later came the passionately loathed church bells, as Christianity overcame the old religions. According to popular belief, the little men hated agriculture, the clearing of forests, and the ringing of church bells – anything, in fact, which disturbed the peace of their underground kingdoms.

Some of these original people intermarried with their conquerors, especially the Celts, who were in their turn forced further westwards by stronger Nordic groups. This mingling of races enshrined many of the very ancient crafts and beliefs of the little people, and determined that pockets of the old culture remained.

As in the case of many minority groups throughout recorded history, the invaders had no need to fear serious attacks from the vanquished, yet the seemingly magical

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In more modern times dwarfs have been associated with the circus *Left* Henry Behrens, 30 inches tall, was thought to be the smallest man in the world. He lived in Worthing with his wife, Emmie, who was 36 inches tall, in a house of scaled-down furniture *Below* General Tom Thumb who was exhibited by the 19th century showman, Phineas Barnum, was named after the dwarf hero of a folktale popular in the 16th century

practices of the defeated race gradually became the fearful superstitions of the more powerful majority. All the mysterious customs appeared to belong in the supernatural realms of some dark fairy world peopled with malevolent spirits who could use their incomprehensible knowledge of magic for the overthrow of the physically stronger overlords. Sir Walter Scott suggested that the little people's probable ability to foretell the weather from observing cloud formations and other meteorological phenomena, would have given them, in the eyes of the conquerors, another magical advantage. Thus, it was the invaders' fears, rather than the dwarf people's actual talents, which gave the relatively smaller and weaker race a curious power. Fairies, with whom dwarfs were popularly associated, were always believed to be capable of travelling quickly, and possessing the power of invisibility. Obviously, their slight stature allowed the little dark men to move swiftly, and no doubt they increased this speed in order to escape the attentions of their enemies, which would be accepted as further proof of great supernatural knowledge.

Caves in many parts of Western Europe show traces of having been inhabited from prehistoric times until as late as the 15th century, and it seems likely that the little people, and the descendants who shared their beliefs and magic, were forced to seek protection in caves. This may well have given rise to the widely held opinion that dwarfs were swallowed up by the earth. Right up until the 17th century, superstitious people claimed to have witnessed dwarfs' nocturnal revels in the vicinity of the so-called 'fairy' mounds. These were probably the barrows where once the little people had ceremonially buried their dead. Such tumuli would be considered to possess mystical and magical significance as meeting places for the secret gatherings of similar believers.

So it may be that dwarfs are really the group memory of a long extinct race. They lived on in the minds of later generations, embellished with incredible powers, and transformed into legendary figures, characterized by the beliefs of various cultural groups. Though dwarfs' fictional habits might differ from country to country, all were probably the distant relatives of the dark, little men who lived thousands of years ago.

SANDY SHULMAN

Museo Nazionale, Florence

The rites of lamentation for Adonis, who was killed by a wild boar while on a hunting expedition, concluded with a joyful looking forward to his return to life, which was also an expression of hope for future crops: Michelangelo's Dying Adonis

The myth of the god of Nature who dies and is reborn recurs in many religions. Modern scholarship has shown that this is not a single strand but a complex web of myths, the meaning of which differs profoundly according to the social and cultural setting

DYING GOD

SEVERAL RELIGIOUS MYTHS of the ancient Near East have in common certain features which link them together despite important individual variations. Historians of religion since James Frazer have labelled these common features as the myth of the 'dying god'. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer complicated the discussion for later researchers by mixing up the analysis of this ancient pattern of myth with his theory of the divine king, who was believed to be the source of vitality for his people and who was ritually killed for the prosperity of his successors (see KING). Frazer's theories on this last subject have suffered severe criticism and are not now thought capable of being sustained. But in the volumes entitled *Adonis, Attis, Osiris* Frazer collected a mass of valuable material that can be detached from the abandoned theories within which he there presented it. The essence of the matter may be briefly summarized as follows.

In ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Syria, legends relate how a god is killed, often by a wild boar or by an enemy whose symbol is a boar. The corpse is deposited in a river, or he is drowned. Through his death the vitality of Nature is lost. But his loss is mourned by a goddess who goes out in search of his body. The finding of the corpse is a liberating act for the vegetation, and with this liberation the god returns to life once more. The myth is attached to an annual ritual for the recovery of the vegetation after the heat of summer.

To understand the meaning of this ancient pattern of myth is not easy for a northern European living in a well-watered land, where the contrast between the seasons is marked by relatively small changes. In the Near East, on the other hand, the contrast is extremely perceptible and much more violent in effect. The lovely spring is sadly brief, and rapidly the rich vegetation disappears as it is scorched under the cruel sun. For long months of dry, dusty, burning heat, water comes not from the sky but only from Mother Earth's resources below in wells and rivers. Under the impact of the fierce sun the vitality of Nature, man and beast dwindles to a minimum.

Primitive men watched this annual process with some anxiety. Modern scholars have often supposed that the recurrence of the seasons must have given complete confidence that the cycle would come round again. The ancient evidence shows that this rationalist supposition is false. The seasonal cycle was not an infallible natural law, and the entire prosperity of society depended on a good harvest. A bad year was awkward, a succession of bad years calamitous. Each year the menacing desert threatened destruction. Miraculously, the seed buried in the soil at seed-time sprang up to new life in the harvest but primitive men could not take this for granted.

Weeping for Tammuz

This fundamental experience of man in relation to basic necessities of his physical existence was expressed in many of the ancient Near Eastern myths. One of the oldest attested myths is that of the Sumerian shepherd god Tammuz. In Roman times Tammuz became identified with the Phoenician Adon ('lord'), whom the Greeks appropriated as Adonis. But originally Tammuz and Adonis were independent. The ritual of Tammuz took place at a festival in July when the vegetation had already gone, and consisted of passionate lamentations. The prophet Ezekiel describes with pain and displeasure a vision in which he saw Israelite women at Jerusalem who had so far compromised their loyalty to Yahweh that they were weeping for Tammuz. Mourning for the god's death was certainly the principal feature of the rite. Sumerian hymns tell how Tammuz was drowned and how the mother goddess Inanna (or Ishtar) descended to the underworld to bring him back from his imprisonment there (see also ISHTAR; TAMMUZ).

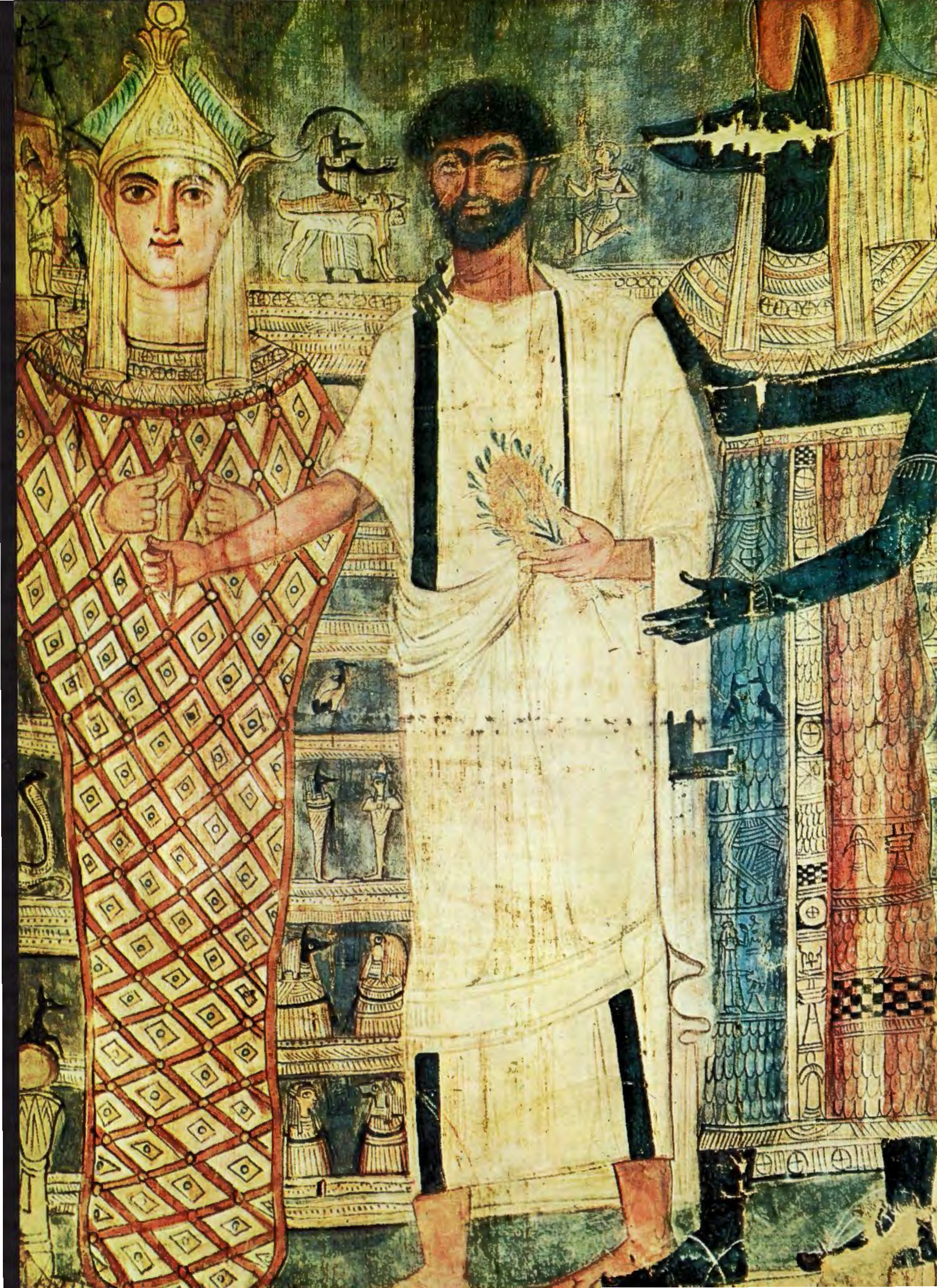
The purpose of the lamentations is not certain. It may have been an expression of sympathy for the tragedy that had befallen Tammuz. Or it may have been an attempt to avert wrath by disclaiming responsibility for the catastrophe.

The ceremonial mourning at a time when the seeds were sown was universally known, and can be seen to have influenced the proverbial saying of the Hebrew psalmist, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.' But the Hebrews did not believe that there was any annual loss and recovery of vitality in Yahweh, and did not lament his demise in the hot summer.

The Mesopotamian rites for Tammuz were for the crops and flocks. The worshippers did not suppose that if they identified themselves with the god through participating in the mourning incantations, they could gain any personal survival of death or privilege hereafter. Like the ancient Hebrews, they expected no immortality other than that of their posterity.

It is a paradox of the history of Adonis that the cult is Semitic and yet that virtually all the extant sources for the study of the cult are not Semitic but Greek. In Greek myth Adonis, young son of the Cypriot king Cinyras, died from a wild boar when he was on a hunting expedition (see also APHRODITE). The boar was proverbial for its ravages in growing crops. In the *Iliad* (book 11) Homer gives a vivid description of the disastrous damage done by a wild boar. So the animal was an appropriate killer for a vegetation god. Adonis, however, represents not the harvest so much as the spring grasses and flowers destroyed by the summer heat. It was natural that in later times (as for Shelley) Adonis stood for the tragedy of noble youth cut off in its prime.

As with Tammuz, the rite for Adonis was one of lamentation, in which the women played the leading part. At Byblos in the 2nd century AD there were impressive ceremonies at Aphrodite's shrine, with an open-air procession and hymns which concluded with a joyful looking forward to Adonis's return to life. Unfortunately no document records, either explicitly or implicitly, the interval between the day on which Adonis was ritually mourned and the day on which his future revival was celebrated. The cheerful ending to the festival was in any event an expression of hope for the future crops rather



than of presumptive confidence in Adonis's present achievement of renewed life. The lamentation for his death was always the principal characteristic of the July festival, and several texts which describe or mention the rites conclude with the funerary mourning without going on to describe the return to life which the lamentations were intended to encourage.

Osiris, God of the Dead

Some of the best known passages in the Old Testament express the moving reflection that man's short and transitory life is like the grass that withers and the flower that fades. But once there is a religious context in which there is expectation or hope of surviving death (as there was not in early Mesopotamia), it is no great step to suggest that man's personal destiny may well have some correspondence with the seasonal cycle of spring, the dying of summer heat, and the renewal of life in the golden harvest. If the vegetation revives, may not man do the same?

This step was explicit in the worship of Osiris in ancient Egypt. The well known Book of the Dead, with its immense collection of formulae and passwords that the soul needs to learn now in order to negotiate its passage hereafter, is a sufficient reminder of the obsessive interest of the Egyptians in their proper destiny after death. Osiris was first and foremost the god of the dead, with a special relationship to Pharaoh. But at the same time Osiris had functions and powers closely akin to those of the Mesopotamian god Tammuz. He was the corn growing up to harvest, and above all the Nile itself, on whose annual flood in the summer months the prosperity and welfare of the country wholly depended (until the Aswan dam was built in 1902). Crops were sown on the mud flats which the receding Nile left as it subsided each October, and this fall in the level of the river was Osiris's death. Yet each June the power of Osiris revived in the waters coming down from the Ethiopian highlands, but which in ancient belief welled up from a subterranean water system bubbling to the surface at the first cataract.

Old Egyptian religion had three focal interests above all others – life after death, the monarchy, and the Nile as the source of agricultural prosperity. All three aspects found expression in the sacred myth of Osiris and his wife Isis. From the marriage of Isis and Osiris, earth and water respectively, sprang the life-giving corn (see also ISIS; OSIRIS). But the myth related how Osiris was killed by his wicked brother Seth, who cut up Osiris's body and threw the pieces in the Nile. The death of Osiris was annually commemorated on the 17th day of the Egyptian month Athyr (13 November). But Isis, together with her son Horus, who was to be his father's avenger, went in a ship in search of the pieces to put them together again. On the night of 19 Athyr (15 November) the mourning worshippers of Cairo used to go down to the Nile to join Isis in her search. At the climax the cry went up, 'We have found him, let us rejoice together.' Ceremonies connected with the Nile flood are prominent in Egyptian religion throughout its history.

Side by side with his lifegiving role in relation to the Nile and the fertility of the crops, Osiris was also of the first importance as king of the underworld which was his permanent home. He did not return from it to revisit the upper world. From his kingdom in the nether regions he caused the annual flood of the Nile and daily sent up the sun on its course. But his 'resurrection' was not a resumption of divine life on earth, for he did not leave his infernal throne.

The influence of this Egyptian cult of Isis and Osiris became considerable in the hellenistic age of the Ptolemies and in the age of the Roman empire. In a drastically reinterpreted form the veneration of Isis as a kindly universal mother spread throughout the Roman empire. A festival of Isis on 19 July marked the official celebration of the rising of the Nile waters and of Horus's revenge upon the wicked Seth. This was still being observed in the city of Rome in the

Staatliche Museen Berlin

William MacQuitty

In Egypt the god Osiris was killed and restored to life but his 'resurrection' was not a resumption of earthly life for he did not leave his throne in the land of the dead. Like each Egyptian king, who became an Osiris after death, he was connected with the Nile flood and the fertility of the earth; with the ascent and descent of the sun, and with life after death *Left* The mummy of Osiris receives the deceased from the jackal-headed Anubis, the underworld guide *Right* Mummified corpse of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II

4th century AD. In Egypt the Church came to recognize the need for a liturgical commemoration at this time and put a feast of St Joseph on 20 July, making the Christian dragon-slayer, Michael the archangel, the new patron of the Nile flood.

At the winter solstice, on 25 December, the Egyptians celebrated the birth of the son of Isis, Harpocrates, and led the sacred cow of Isis seven times round the temple of the sun. Twelve days later on the night of 5–6 January, in the late Roman period, there was a festival at Isis's temple in Alexandria to celebrate the birth of her child Aion, the god of eternity. On this night the Egyptians used to fetch water from the Nile, believing that it would be invested with healing properties or even (so some claimed) be turned into wine.

After the 4th century this festival of Isis on 5–6 January became important to the Christian Church in Egypt for whom Christ, not Horus or Aion, was the true sun and light of the world. The earliest evidence for the Christian observance of the feast of the Epiphany on 6 January comes from Egypt, and by the second half of the 4th century Christians throughout the Greek East were celebrating this day as Christ's Nativity, his veneration by the Magi, his baptism, his wine-miracle at Cana, and his feeding of the multitude. The greatly overloaded character of the feast becomes explicable if the original motive behind the institution of the celebration was to provide a rival attraction to the rites of Isis. John Chrysostom (c 390 AD) relates how at the great baptismal ceremonies of the Epiphany, simple Christians used to collect some of the water from the consecrated springs and preserve it for its medicinal properties.

In view of this evident influence of the festival of Isis on popular Christian customs associated with the Epiphany, it is remarkable that Isis's feast on 25 December had no influence on Egyptian Christianity. Only Western Christians observed 25 December as the Nativity of the true sun during the first half of the 4th century, and this festival was first accepted into the Egyptian Church's calendar under Western influence in the 5th century.

Attis and Cybele

The religion of the great mother of the gods had its principal centre in Anatolia. In the hills of Phrygia and Lydia she was worshipped under the names of Cybele or Agdistis, with a great sanctuary at Pessinus, not far from Ankara (see CYBELE). At Comana in Cappadocia there was the temple of another great mother goddess of Anatolia, Ma or Bellona, whom Cybele attracted to herself as part of her attendant train. The religion of these fierce Anatolian deities generated fervent and frantic emotion. Monotonous dirges were sung to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. Repetitive rhythms induced wild excitement among the priests and worshippers who frenziedly scourged themselves and cut their bodies with knives (much like the priests of Baal encountered by the prophet Elijah), sometimes even castrating themselves in their ecstatic condition.

Cybele had a young male consort, Attis. The myth recounted that Attis met his death either by being killed when out hunting a wild boar, or after being put by Cybele into a state of Bacchic frenzy in which he bloodily castrated himself under a pine tree. Violets were born of Attis's blood as the first flowers of spring. Attis's death was commemorated at a spring festival of mourning and fasting during March, culminating in ecstatic dances on the wild Day of Blood on 22 March and on 25 March, the Day of Joy (*Hilaria*). In the 4th century AD this became the feast of his recall to life by his mother and consort Cybele. The ceremonies were preceded by an all-night vigil with lights. The day following, 26 March, was kept for much needed rest, and on 27 March there was a ceremony of washing Cybele's statue in warm water with a procession at which obscene songs were sung to the accompaniment of indecent gestures, the purpose of which was probably to ward off evil spirits.

Much of the surviving evidence for the cult of Attis and Cybele comes from the late Roman period, at which date the interpretations of the rites, and perhaps some of the rites themselves, had undergone development and modification under external influences. By the 4th century AD the climax of the rite was coming to lie not merely in the lamentations and frenzied acts of self-mutilation but also in the self-identification of the initiate with Attis in the dying and rising process. Here he was assured of salvation both now and hereafter, and in the most solemn act of initiation he went down into a dark pit while the blood of a bull poured over him from above. In virtue of this the initiate was 'reborn for ever', *renatus in aeternum*, as a later 4th century inscription records. Before the 4th century, so far as the evidence goes, the intention in the sacrifice of a bull in honour of Cybele was the benefit of some great cause such as the emperor. In the late Roman period it was rather a private purification for the salvation of the individual soul. The original meaning of the vegetation rite for the welfare of society became secondary to the individual's personal quest, and the rites of Attis and Cybele, like those of Isis, were practised with special tenacity by the wealthy pagan families which required a religion capable of being a viable alternative to Christianity.

In the 5th century AD Augustine of Hippo met a priest of Cybele who assured him that the religion of Attis and the religion of Christ were one and the same. Augustine did not believe him. But the story exemplifies the extent to which late Roman paganism sought to oppose Christianity by taking over some of its more characteristic themes and claiming that the meaning of their myths was identical. Nevertheless the rites of Attis and Cybele never wholly lost their significance as a rite of spring for the crops. The representations of Attis in figurines show him as a shepherd with a flute and pine tree, in one example with a scourge of knuckle-bones, or dying by his pine tree, or dancing in frantic ecstasy. The resurrection theme, however, is never clearly expressed; and the mother goddess Cybele is never portrayed as a Pieta, mourning for her dead son. One custom which survived centuries was that of planting violets on a grave. It may have derived from the cult but this is not certain.

The Dangerous God

Dionysus was a deity of Thracian origin whose cult penetrated Greece in Mycenean times (see DIONYSUS). The character of the Dionysian cult provoked opposition, not least from civic authorities in Greece, who were appalled when their womenfolk went off to dance by night upon the mountains, behaved as if they were drunk and in hysterical ecstasy tore up and ate the raw flesh of an animal. The cities tamed the Dionysiac orgies by giving them official status and by controlling their organization. At Athens the cult was domesticated and rationalized by being given the ritual form of tragedy and comedy (see DRAMA). In Rome also there was consternation when Greek missionaries from south Italy first brought the exciting nocturnal revels. Dionysus was identified with Bacchus, the god of wine, and turned into a jovial Falstaff-like figure rather than the dangerous god of ungoverned animal vitality.

Dionysus's myth had various forms. Poems written in the name of Orpheus, the legendary Thracian seer, magician and poet, relate that as an infant Dionysus was torn to pieces and eaten by the Titans. Zeus struck the Titans with his thunderbolt and out of their smouldering ashes fashioned man who thus remains a mixture of high divinity and low aggressions. Or, it was said, Demeter (Ceres) put the pieces together so that Dionysus was reborn. These and other variations of the myth reflect the different settings in which it was interpreted. Some, including Plato (who provides perhaps the earliest evidence for the existence of the myth), took the story as a theological allegory about human nature. Others saw it as a vegetation myth in association with Demeter and her mysteries at Eleusis near Athens (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS).

Dionysus made a late entry into the myths associated with Eleusis. Originally, as in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, the Eleusinian story simply told how Demeter's daughter Persephone was carried down to the underworld and then returned again to her mourning mother for half of each year. Additions were made as time went on. Rites, which perhaps were once for the propitiation of spirits of the underworld, incorporated agrarian features. Demeter was the corn mother, venerated by workers on the land in

Various ancient myths of a dying and rising god, of a goddess who visits the underworld and whose return to the earth's surface brings the reawakening of life in the spring, grew closer together and influenced one another until in the late Roman empire they were all understood as telling the same basic story of an eternal cycle of death and new life. In Greek mythology, the goddess Persephone was carried off to the underworld by Hades. She spent six months of each year there, returning to the upper world with the coming of spring: the *Rape of Persephone*, by Rubens

Hesiod's time. It was natural that she should welcome Dionysus to Eleusis, at least as an occasional visitor, on account of his association with the vintage. Dionysus and Demeter were identified with Osiris and Isis by Herodotus. The Eleusinian mysteries therefore absorbed influence from agrarian types of cult, and were also associated with individual hopes of a privileged life in Hades for those admitted to initiation. But the death and return pattern of Persephone's myth was not important in relation to these personal hopes.

The ancient myths of the 'dying god' of spring and harvest grew closer together as they influenced one another, until in the late Roman empire they were all understood as allegories telling the same basic story – the myth of an eternal cosmic return. The myths themselves incorporated elements from one another, and there was also some ritual borrowing. But the earlier in time the history of each cult is traced, the more individual and dissimilar they come to appear. The crux of the matter is that the meaning of the rites and myths may differ profoundly according to the social and cultural context.

The Dying God and Christianity

The final and perhaps most fascinating question in an inquiry into the ancient myths of the dying god is whether these ancient symbols had either direct or indirect influence upon Christianity. For Christianity has a story of death and resurrection at the centre of the New Testament, a ritual meal of bread and wine, and a spring festival. In its later history it also came to portray the suffering mother and her divine child. The external resemblances are striking. But what of the setting and inner meaning?

The first Christians were Jews. That is to say that Christianity originated within a community that utterly rejected the vegetation cults of the ancient world and would not compromise with them. Ezekiel's condemnation of the women weeping for Tammuz is typical of the Hebrew standpoint taken as a whole. The Judeo-Christian tradition could never accept the notion of a god who suffered periodic loss of power and needed to be revived by propitiatory rites. If the Passover was once the spring

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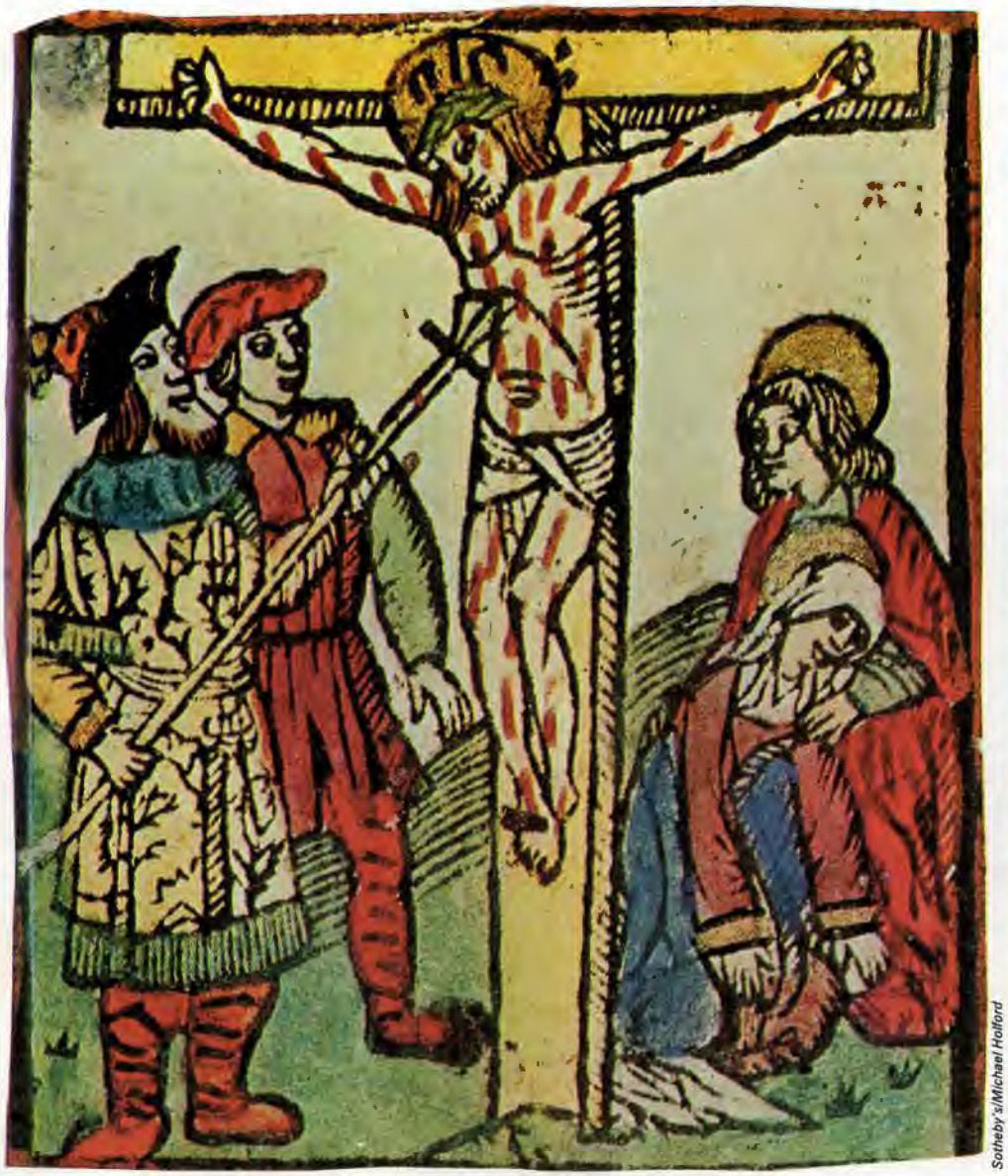


Sotheby's/Michael Holford

Although the story of Christ's death and resurrection might seem to reflect the ancient myths of the dying god, Christianity grew in a climate which completely rejected the notion of a god who suffered periodic loss of power and needed to be revived by propitiatory rites: early 16th century woodcut from an illuminated breviary

sacrifice of semi-nomad shepherds, as most Old Testament scholars think (though this view has been warmly contested) nevertheless the Israelites never shared the view of their Canaanite neighbours that the deity's powers required annual revival. Recent investigation of the background of the New Testament, powerfully reinforced by the Dead Sea Scrolls, has seen emergent Christianity as being set almost wholly within a Jewish matrix. The present writer believes that this tendency in recent study has succumbed to the exaggerations which often result from the impact of new material, but could not dispute the broad truth of the position. The first Christians took for granted the traditional Hebraic understanding of the deity as transcendent and as existing independently of themselves and of the world. Such belief stands in the strongest possible contrast to the theology of the vegetation cults for which the god was wholly immanent in the seasonal processes of the physical world.

The Christians simply took over from the Jews the feasts of Passover and Pentecost: why they did not also take the autumn festival of Tabernacles is a puzzle for the solution of which only very tenuous scraps of evidence survive. The origins of Easter as an annual festival lie simply in the continuing observance of the Passover meal among the Christian communities. Nothing could have been more natural. In this traditional form the rite was practised by the Christians before it acquired its full weight of interpretation as the unique annual festival of the resurrection of Christ. But in New Testament times, as can be seen from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the resurrection was being celebrated each week on the first day of 'Lord's Day', *dominica* as the Latin Christians soon called it. It was not difficult to hold a special commemoration once a year on the Lord's day which fell nearest to the Jewish Passover. Late in the 2nd century AD after some difficult controversy, the annual Easter festival was transferred from the original date, which always coincided with the synagogue Passover, to the following Sunday – that is, to the Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

The myths of Attis, Adonis and Osiris were intended to explain the rites of the cult by referring to 'events' of immemorial antiquity; and by the 1st century BC they were generally understood as allegorical myths with a cosmological or psychological meaning. The Christians startled the contemporary world by declaring as sober record that their master who lived recently, and died under Pilate the governor, had risen again and was now living. It is evident from Paul's dry catalogue in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, that they would not have existed as a community if they had not believed themselves to be reporting a fact.

If, however, the ancient legends of the vegetation gods cannot help us understand how Christianity began, it may nevertheless be possible to see signs of influence on later developments in the Church's history. It has already been suggested above that in relation to Christmas and Epiphany the historian is able to discern fairly clear evidence of either indirect or even direct influence. The Church found it necessary to provide counter-attractions on the traditional dates of great pagan festivals like December 25, January 1 and June 24, when the Midsummer festival became the nativity of John the Baptist. Early Christians had no qualms whatever about putting harvest and vintage scenes or the seasonal cycle on their sarcophagi or their mosaic floors. Yet here again the context of these symbols was significantly modified. The seasonal cycle, if taken as being no more than a poetic illustration and analogy, would naturally suggest the eternal round of transmigration or reincarnation. This the Christians utterly rejected as inconsistent with the unique value and meaning of this life.

The difference brings out a point which emerges with clarity from this comparative survey, namely that it is a mistake to assume that beneath the various forms within which religion finds expression there must be some essential similarity. There is not a universal myth of the 'dying god' which is adopted at a certain stage of human evolution and which appears in different societies and cultures dressed up in clothing of various colours. At least, if we begin from such assumptions, it is certain that we shall miss much of the truth about these ancient religions.

H. CHADWICK

FURTHER READING: The classic discussion is to be found in the sections on Adonis, Attis, Osiris in J. G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980). For discussions of Tammuz and Osiris, see H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (University of Chicago Press, 1978) and *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Harper & Row, 1961). For Attis and Cybele, see E. O. James, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess* (Praeger, 1959). For early Christianity see A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background* (Harper & Row, 1964).

Michael Holford

Ea

Or Enki, the god of the waters, one of the three supreme deities of the Babylonian pantheon, the other two being Enlil, god of storms, and Anu god of the sky: Ea overcame the sweet waters, Apsu, with which he was later identified, and is often depicted in human form with waves about his shoulders: also invoked as the 'Lord of Wisdom', he was the patron of arts and crafts, and was credited with the invention of magic, and the creation of man from clay in the image of the gods.

See MESOPOTAMIA.

Michael Holford/British Museum

Because of its size, strength and aristocratic bearing, and its ability to outsoar all other birds, the eagle became a recurring emblem of divinity and also of kingship

EAGLE

MANY PLACE NAMES such as 'Eagle Rock' and 'Eagle Mountain' remind us that this magnificent bird was once a familiar sight in the mountainous areas of the British Isles. Even today when the numbers of birds of prey have been greatly reduced in Europe there are localities, as for example in the eastern Mediterranean, where at times of migration considerable numbers may be seen. It is significant, not only for the natural historian but also for the folklorist, that species and individuals decrease northwards, and it is not surprising to find that eagle lore is most deeply rooted in the mountainous regions of Asia. In religion, magic and literature the eagle achieved prominence in that continent and the European folklore of this great bird is in large part derivative. Although eagles of many species are relatively common south of the Sahara the lore connected with them in Africa, with the exception of Egypt, has had so little influence in Europe that we need not take account of it here.

Bird with Two Heads

In antiquity the eagle had a more significant role in Mesopotamia than in Egypt, where Horus, the falcon god, was of considerable importance. This is understandable when we take into consideration the differences in climate and topography between the two regions: such geographical factors had much influence on religion. Ancient Egypt was a land of sunshine dependent on the annual rise of the Nile whereas the Mesopotamian city states came into being in a region fringed by mountains and menaced by storms and floods. As far back as the 3rd millennium BC a double-headed eagle was associated with Ningursu of Lagash, the Babylonian god of fertility, storm and war. These associations are explicable when we remember the eagle's habit of soaring powerfully among the clouds, which were regarded with the greatest concern in such an area as they brought fertility to the fields but might also be responsible for disastrous flooding. The double-headed eagle was adopted by the Hittites and later cultures down the centuries. Evidence of the prolonged continuity of tradition is apparent in its becoming the emblem of Austria.

Another example is provided by the eagle-and-serpent motif. It appeared among the Hittites in the myth of the strife between the weather god and the serpent Illuyankas and has continued throughout many centuries and cultures; it appears today in the lectern of Peterborough cathedral and also in the arms of Mexico. In nature, it is not uncommon to see an eagle carrying a snake in its talons in regions where the snake-eating, short-toed species of this bird are found. In antiquity the conflict between the bird which soars high and the reptile which creeps into holes in the earth impressed people who looked on it as expressing the tension between the forces at war in the universe. Interpretations varied but the motif remained a portrayal of life's warring opposites.

In Indo-Iranian mythology, the eagle had an important role. It was associated with two themes, both of which had wide ramifications; in the Hindu text, the *Rig-Veda* it figures as the bringer of the sacred *soma*, an intoxicating spirit distilled from a plant of this name. In the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Parsees, it is said to dwell on the 'All-healing Tree Light' which in religion and art is related to the Tree of Life. From the cults in which these large symbolic birds were involved emerged beliefs in monstrous mythical winged creatures, such as the Arabian Anka, the Persian Simurgh and the Roc which carried off Sinbad the Sailor, as well as composite part-bird beings like the Indian Garuda. There are reminiscences of these strange creatures in the Book of Daniel where we read of a lion with eagle's wings and in Revelation in which other composite creatures are mentioned. Underlying such concepts is the attempt to symbolize supernatural power.

Asian influence may be detected in the exalted status of the eagle in Greek mythology, as the attribute or associate of Zeus. His eagle-surmounted sceptre at Olympia was in the tradition of Babylonian processional sceptres and such signs of authority continued into the Middle Ages.

In the Old Testament the eagle typifies swift and high flight and is noted as frequenting battlefields, but in most contexts the vulture is not clearly distinguished from the eagle. Through inadequate observation and the misunderstanding or deliberate embroidery of texts, eagle lore became increasingly divorced from natural history.

Myth of Rejuvenation

Eagles which survive to maturity are long lived as Aristotle, Plato and Pliny noted. The references in the Old Testament, such as 'youth renewed like the eagle's' (Psalm 103.5) together with observations of sea eagles plunging into the water to secure prey contributed to the myth of the bird renewing its youth; this became elaborated and embellished as it was transmitted from scholar to scholar down the centuries. Albertus Magnus (1200–1280 AD), quoting earlier authorities, wrote: 'They say that an old eagle, at the period the young ones are fledged, as soon as she has discovered a clear and copious spring, flies directly upwards even to the third region of the air, which we term the region of meteors, and when she feels warm, so as to be almost burning, suddenly dashing down and keeping her wings drawn back, she plunges into the cold water, which by the astringing of the external cold increases the internal heat. She then rises from the water, flies to her nest, and nestling under the wings of her warm young ones melts into perspiration, and thence with her old feathers she puts off her old age, and is clothed afresh; but while she undergoes the renovation she makes prey of her young for food.' Like so many medieval scholars Albertus feels constrained by the weight of authority to quote this account but remarks that as he has known two captive eagles moult in the normal way he must regard this as a miraculous occurrence.

Probably the beliefs that the eagle's feathers are incorruptible and that if placed with other feathers they consume them are extensions of the tradition of longevity. There may be another such extension in the legend current in Inishbofin at the mouth of Killary Bay, Co. Galway, and also in the Shiant Isles in the Hebrides, that Adam and Eve continue to live on in these islands as eagles.

The myth of the eagle stone, a nodule said to be brought to the nest by eagles to assist in ovulation appears to be a variant of a motif in which birds, such as the cock, swallow, hoopoe, raven, crow, jay, crane, adjutant stork and the mythical Roc are associated with stones to which magical properties are frequently attributed.

Companion of the Sun

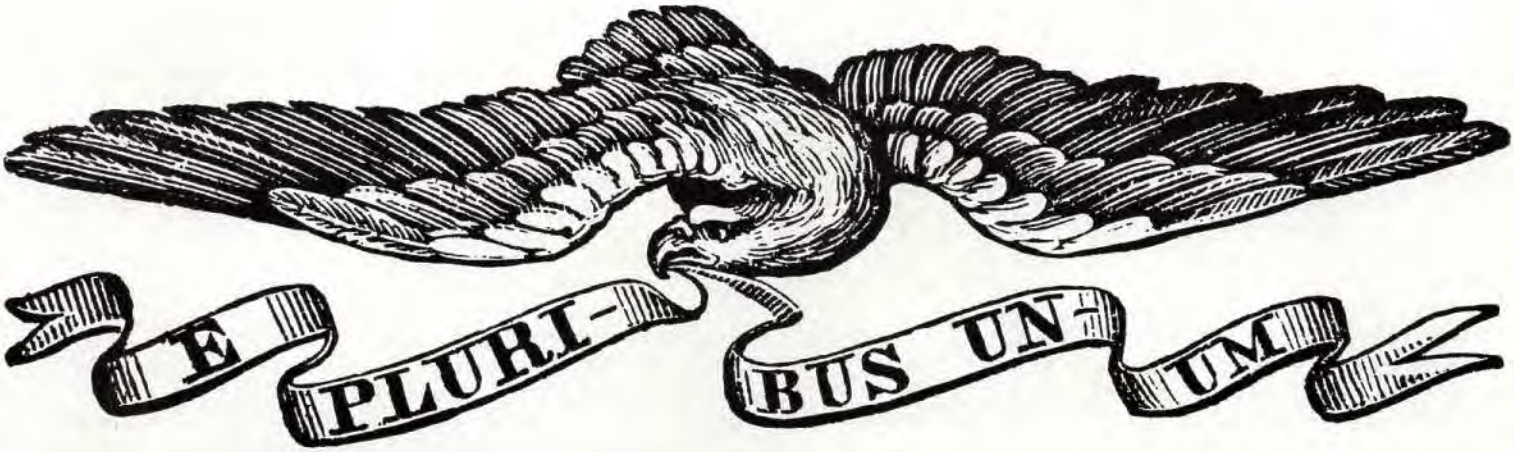
The eagle, because of its upward soaring flight is a bird of the sun and therefore associated with solar, sky and weather powers, but it also has obscure connections with the stars. The constellation Aquila (Eagle) is opposed to Cancer (Crab) and this was represented on ancient coins by showing a crab on the obverse to the eagle. It was also associated in some circumstances with lightning and the thunderbolt, both on coins and in mythology. The Romans believed that the eagle was never struck by lightning – hence the practice of burying an eagle's right wing in the fields or vineyards to ward off the hailstones which sometimes accompany thunderstorms.

These ancient associations continued in a somewhat disguised form in the legends attached to various Christian saints. St Medard, bishop of Noyon in the 6th century, was protected during a tempest by the outspread wings of an obliging eagle – and when St Servatius of Tongeren in Belgium was in discomfort from the hot sun, as he slept by the wayside, an eagle shaded him under its wings. In the Christian church the eagle has long been the symbol of St John because, as St Jerome wrote, 'he ascends to the very throne of God'. For this reason most lecterns in cathedrals and churches are in the form of an eagle with outspread wings.

Previous page **European eagle lore originated in the mountainous regions of Asia, and the bird features prominently in Indo-Iranian mythology: in this illustration from a 16th century Persian manuscript the legendary Kai Ka'ns is borne aloft in his flying machine by eagles who are attracted by the raw meat impaled on the four spears**

A powerful and impressive bird, the eagle has been a symbol of leadership and conquest through the ages ***Above right*** **The American eagle, the emblem of the United States** ***Right*** **Like the Roman emperors, Napoleon adopted the eagle as the symbol on his standards: painting by David, showing the army swearing allegiance to the Emperor after being presented with the imperial emblems**

Mansell Collection



In the British Isles eagles occur in the folklore of Wales where it is said that King Arthur lives on in a cavern guarded by these birds. In stormy weather Welsh people used to say: 'The eagles are breeding whirlwinds on Snowdon'; in the neighbourhood of that mountain the cries of eagles were regarded as ominous, foretelling disaster. The Greeks and Romans also drew auguries from the behaviour of eagles. Plutarch mentions an eagle's nest with seven eggs as a portent. At the battle of Arbela in Anatolia (331 BC) a soothsayer rode close to Alexander the Great assuring him that he had divined by an eagle that he would be victorious over Darius. An eagle is said to have lifted the headgear from Tarquinius Priscus and then replaced it, thereby indicating that he would be king of Rome as indeed he became in about 616 BC. Roman legions regarded a site as suitable for winter quarters if there was an eagle's eyrie in the vicinity. Shakespeare, who was well acquainted with the lore of the eagle, referred to a number of classical ideas throughout the plays.

The eagle is no exception to the rule that auspicious birds may occasionally predict evil. The appearance of one of them was a favourable portent at Alexander's birth, but eagles could also foretell death.

Since the eagle was a powerful aerial creature associated with the gods, portions of its body were considered to have medicinal or magical properties. Its feathers, cooked together with a special herb, were said to cure demoniacs, its liver pounded with honey and balsam cured cataract, presumably on the assumption that as the bird's sight is keen a concoction from some organ should be a remedy for poor vision. Its heart served as a love charm but its marrow could be used as a contraceptive – a somewhat ineffective prescription as birds' bones do not contain marrow.

The eagle is prominent in fables and folktales. A number of these stories, such as The Eagle and the Tortoise; and The Eagle Shot with its own Feathers go back to classical sources, and the story of the wren which outwitted the eagle and won the competition as to which bird could fly highest is found in Aesop's Fables.

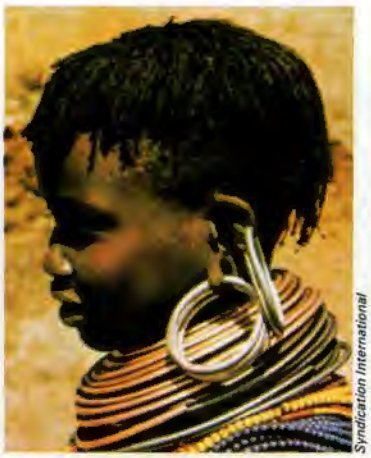
(See BIRDS.)

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Michael Holford

Ear

The organ of hearing, and together with the eyes the most important of the sense organs in occultism and religion: through our ears we receive sounds and words which lead to greater understanding and knowledge; large ears, therefore, were regarded by some people as a sign of wisdom and spiritual development, and in yoga the power of the magic formula whispered into the convert's ear can bring instant enlightenment: 'burning' ears mean that someone is talking about you.



Syndication International

Ear-ring

A ring, pendant or other ornament which is hung from the ear: ear-rings inscribed with magical symbols were at one time worn by both men and women as amulets to prevent evil spirits and malicious influences from entering the body through the ear; and sailors traditionally sported plain gold ear-rings as a protection against drowning: rings worn in pierced ears were considered most effective for the cure of bad sight.

See TALISMANS.

Michael Holford

Putting a newborn baby on the ground or taking an earth-bath are two of the magical ways of exploiting the fertility of the earth, which has been worshipped as the mother of all living things and the ruler of the dead

EARTH

THERE IS AN OLD IRISH STORY about the invasion of Ireland by a people called the Gaedil. The goddess Eriu opposes the Gaedil and makes an army out of sods of peat and the mountain to fight them. She eventually changes her mind and welcomes the invaders but she asks that the island shall bear her name. Which it does, Eriu being the oldest form of both Eire and Erin.

This connection between a goddess and the land, which are identical because both have the same name, is based on the fact that the earth is not merely the stage on which we strut our crowded hour but the foundation of our existence. On it we live, from it our food grows, in it we are buried. And so the earth has been thought of as a great deity, the mother whose tireless fertility nourishes a man in life and to whose dark belly he returns in death. It has been widely believed that man comes from earth to begin with: the first man was made of clay, we are of the earth earthy, we are dust and to dust we shall return. Or the souls of babies are thought to enter their mothers from caves or rocks, and when this is combined with belief in reincarnation the parallel between man and his crops is complete. Both are born of the earth, are buried in it and reborn again.

Among the remains of prehistoric hunting peoples are the 'Venus' figures, naked women carved in bone or stone, some with

Left **The Giants, monstrous sons of Gaia the earth, fought and lost a battle with the gods. There is a tradition that after their defeat they returned to the earth, buried under volcanoes: scene from a Greek vase, about 530 BC, in the British Museum** ***Right*** **To the Asaro tribe of New Guinea, earth is a symbol of success in battle: the tribesmen once won a great victory when they emerged from a river covered in mud, and frightened off their enemies who believed they were evil spirits**

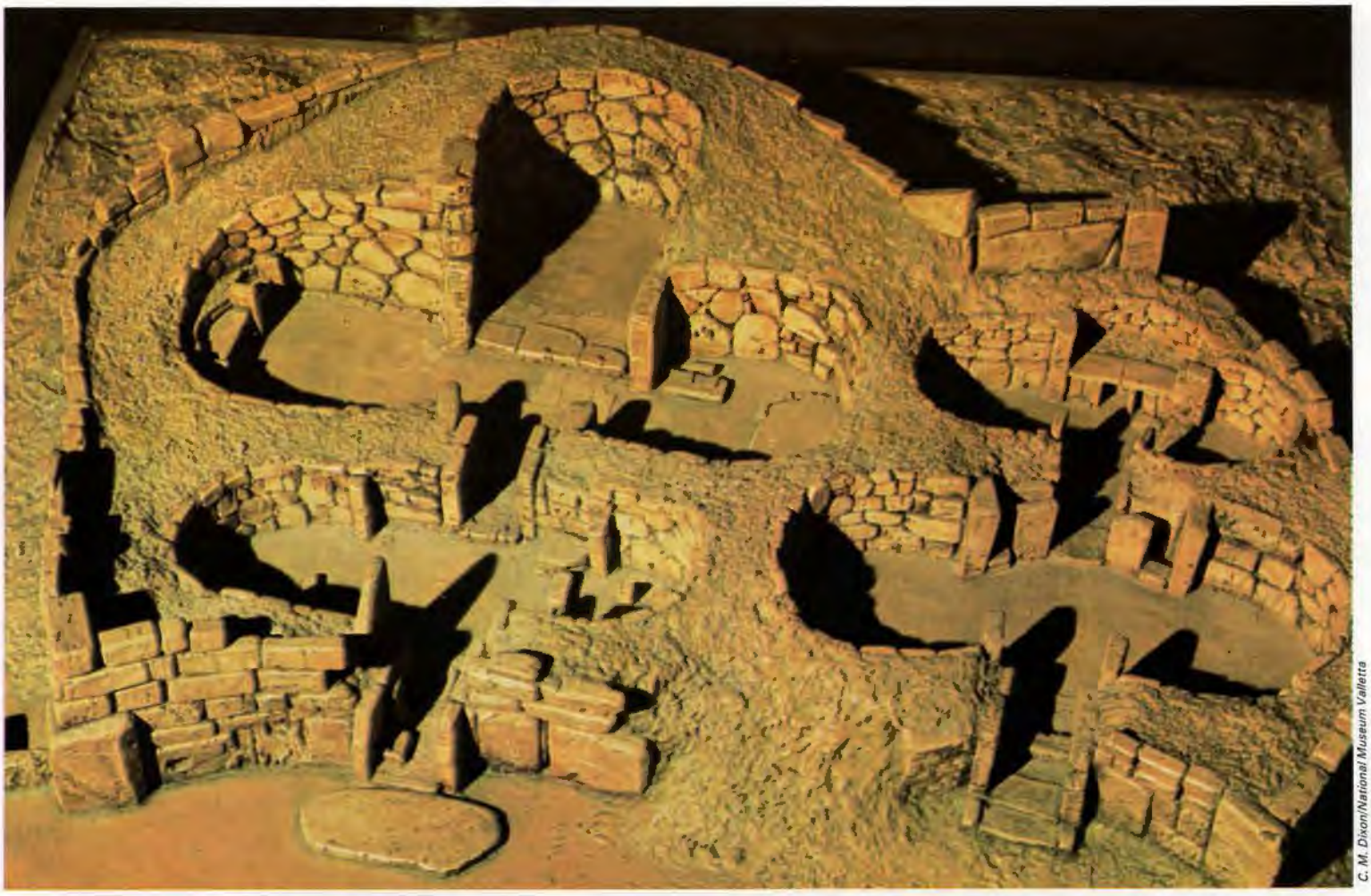
Times Newspapers

The Underground Gods

The Olympians taught of gods intensely personal, strong, wilful, possibly honest but by no means invariably so. Man entered into contracts with them because it was his only hope. If they broke the contracts he was angry, but could do nothing. Above all things he must remember his humbler station and keep his distance. It taught him too that all his hopes of happiness must lie in this life, since after it was over he would be nothing but a shadow. The chthonian cults brought us from this human, comprehensible and business-like atmosphere of daylight to gods who were surrounded with an air of mystery. They were approached at night, and often in the darkness of an underground cavern or pit. At these entrances to Hades they brought the worlds of the living and the dead together . . .

In the coexistence of these two types of religion lies the explanation of the paradox with which we started out, the presence in contemporaneous Greek literature and thought of the two opposite points of view: the advice to "think mortal thoughts" and "strive not to become a god" on the one hand, and on the other the exhortations to "assimilate yourself to God" and "make yourself immortal as far as you can".

W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*



C. M. Dixon/National Museum Valletta

huge breasts and buttocks, the sex organs emphasized, and frequently pregnant. Whether these early figures were meant to embody the fertility of the earth as well as the fertility of woman is uncertain. But as farming developed, and in societies which looked to agriculture for survival, similar figures seem to have been connected with the worship of a great mother goddess, who was in one of her aspects the earth, the mother of all living who also ruled the dead buried in her womb. H. J. Rose has said of the Greek earth goddess Ge or Gaia: 'It is unlikely that she was, to begin with, anything so huge as the planet Earth in general; rather was she the particular piece of earth . . . with which the particular worshipper or worshippers were acquainted; or, still more likely, the power residing in that patch of ground which made it produce all manner of plants.' The same thing is probably true of other early earth and mother goddesses.

Clay figurines of c 4000–3000 BC, found in the Zhob valley near Quetta in Pakistan, of a woman with prominent breasts, round eyes, a beaky nose and a grim slit of a mouth, are thought to represent a goddess who ruled the dead and the seed-corn, both buried in the earth, as well as the crops growing in the spring. Huge sanctuaries, constructed on Malta and the nearby island of Gozo c 2000 BC, were used for a cult of both a fertility goddess and the dead. Seen from the air, their ground-plans resemble an immense obese woman and it has been suggested that the resemblance was deliberate. The fact that representations of a goddess are so often found in prehistoric tombs points to a connection between the earth, the mother and the dead. So does the use of caves as both holy places and burying grounds (see CAVES).

An astounding example of prehistoric belief in the earth's fertility was discovered in a Neolithic flint mine at Grimes Graves in Norfolk. At the bottom of one shaft was the figure of a pregnant woman, sitting on a ledge, at her feet a chalk phallus and a pile of picks, made of deer-horn. Apparently the miners who dug this shaft had failed to find a bed of flint, and the shrine to the goddess was meant to neutralize the dearth of flint in this shaft and ensure the fertility of the next.

Heaven and Earth

In south-west Asia and the eastern Mediterranean area, the great goddess had many functions, many disguises, many names – Ishtar, Astarte, Cybele, Hera, Aphrodite, and the rest. As Earth Mother she may once have been regarded as the original source and fount of all things, and the dead were perhaps laid to rest in her womb in the belief that like the seed-corn they would be reborn in due time. But in the earliest cosmogonies of the ancient world that are known to us Earth is not the original creator.

In the beginning, according to Genesis, the earth was *tohu wa-bohu* ('waste and void'), meaning 'non-existent'. It was not until the third day that God created dry land and called it Earth. In Mesopotamia there was an old Sumerian myth that the primeval sea gave birth to a cosmic mountain in which heaven (the god An) and earth (the goddess Ki) were interlocked together. From their mingling the god of air, Enlil, was born. He parted them, and the air has separated sky from earth ever since. There was a similar Egyptian myth, with the variant that the earth is male and the sky female (see CREATION MYTHS).

Heaven and Earth are a divine pair in many other parts of the world, all through the Pacific, in China and Japan, Africa and North America. The Kumana of southern Africa, repeating a very widespread theme, say: 'the Earth is our Mother, the Sky is our Father. The Sky fertilizes the Earth with rain, the Earth produces grains and grass.' Similarly, a fragment of a lost play by Aeschylus, the *Danaids*, describes how rain falling from the male sky impregnates the female earth, and she gives birth to grain and pasture (see APHRODITE).

According to an unfortunately late report, by the philosopher Proclus in the 5th century AD, during the Eleusinian Mysteries the Athenians gazed up at the sky and shouted *Hue* ('Rain') and then at the earth and shouted *Kue* ('Conceive!').

The same idea lies behind poetic imagery which identifies the soil as the womb, and ploughing and sowing as impregnation. In the *Oedipus Rex* Aeschylus says that Oedipus 'dared to sow seed in the sacred furrow where he was himself formed, and plant there a bloody branch.' It is still quite a

Left **Model of temple, in Malta, for the worship of a fertility goddess: the ground plan resembles a huge fat woman** ***Above*** **Gaia who, in Greek mythology, created the sky, mountains and sea: terracotta statuette from Tanagra, Greece** ***Right*** **Coatlicue, the great earth mother of the Aztecs**

common figure of speech that a man 'sows his seed' in a woman.

In Homer the earth is the home of gods as well as men. The three brothers Zeus, Poseidon and Hades cast lots to divide the universe between them. The sky fell to Zeus, the sea to Poseidon, the underworld to Hades. The surface of the earth was their common property (the link connecting sky, sea and underworld together) and they lived there, on Mount Olympus.

But there was a time before the Olympians ruled the universe and they won their mastery by a victory over older gods. This story is told in Hesiod's *Theogony*. First of all Chaos came into existence, and next 'wide-bosomed Earth *(Gai)*' and gloomy Tartarus in the depth of the ground *(chthon)*, and Eros the power of love. Earth gave birth to Uranus, the starry heaven, 'equal to herself, to cover her on every side', to the mountains and to the sea. Then, lying closely locked with Uranus, she bore many offspring, including the wily Cronus, 'youngest and most terrible of her children'. Cronus castrated Uranus and ruled in his stead, a story presumably partly intended to account for the separation of sky and earth (see APHRODITE; CRONUS).

Cronus and his brothers and sisters were called Titans, possibly meaning 'honoured ones'. After a fierce struggle a younger generation of gods, Zeus and the Olympians, defeated the Titans and imprisoned them in Tartarus (which was much later to become a synonym for hell) and there they remained, seldom worshipped but not forgotten. They are referred to with considerable awe. In the *Iliad* (book 14) the goddess Hera is required to swear a solemn oath, 'so that all the gods that are below with Cronus may be our witnesses'.

The Titans are very old gods. They probably belonged to the people who lived in Greece before the Greeks themselves invaded and settled the country, and the myth of their defeat by the Olympians is likely to reflect a reality, the victory of the newcomers. But they were not the only chthonian (underground) powers of Greek belief. There were many others, local spirits which were probably closer to the lives and hearts of ordinary people than the great Olympians. Some of them were spirits of the fertility of the earth, others were semi-divine heroes, worshipped at the tombs where they lay in the earth, for the chthonians continued the old tradition of a connection between the dead and fertility.

Animals sacrificed to chthonian powers were usually slaughtered in a pit or trench dug in the earth, and killed throat downwards so that the blood would fall directly on the ground and soak into it. They were generally black animals (instead of white for the Olympians) and the meat was not eaten by the worshippers but burned. The chthonians were worshipped in dark caves or shrines underground, and at night. Snakes were often sacred to them. Erechtheus, for instance, the guardian spirit of the Acropolis at Athens was a snake and offerings of honey-cakes were given him.

Chthonian spirits not only made the ground fertile but gave oracles and took possession of human beings, inspiring them to divine the future or reveal hidden events. The most famous example is the Pythia, the priestess of the oracle at Delphi, which belonged to the earth goddess herself before the Olympian Apollo killed her sacred snake, Python, and seized the oracle from her. Delphi was believed to be the centre of the earth and there was no more suitable place from which the earth goddess could speak.

The Olympians lived in the light of day. They had human passions, for they were quarrelsome, lustful, reckless, moody, sometimes benign and sometimes cruel, but they were far above the level of men, from whom they demanded humility and obedience. Brimming with vitality themselves, they taught men to look to this life for happiness and for nothing but shadowy oblivion after death. The chthonians were dark, fertile, profound, uneasily mysterious and non-human. Their ability to possess the living, their lordship of the dead and the rebirth of crops, meant that they held out a hope of happiness after death.

Not that the Olympians and the chthonians can always be sharply distinguished, for many of the Olympians had chthonian connections themselves. Hesiod advises farmers to pray for a good harvest to Zeus Chthonios and pure Demeter. It was in the worship of Demeter, in fact, that the chthonian strand in Greek religion reached its fullest and finest expression. She was originally an earth and fertility goddess, and her daughter Persephone was the wife of Hades and the queen of the dead in the underworld. The belief that Demeter could give the initiate into her mysteries a happy immortality was probably based on the analogy between the seed-corn resurrected in the spring and the buried dead finding a new life beyond the grave: the Mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis were originally agricultural ceremonies (see DEMETER: ELEUSIS).

Spirits Underground

The ruling god of the underworld and master of the dead was himself an Olympian. But although in the *Iliad* Hades was said to share the earth's surface and live on Olympus, most Greek writers placed him almost permanently in the halls of the underworld (which was afterwards given his name). One of his titles was Pluton, 'the rich one', because living under the earth he was linked with the earth's fertility, and in Latin he was Pluto or Dis, 'wealthy' (see PLUTO). Another Olympian closely connected with the earth was the god of the sea, Poseidon, in his capacity as the maker of earthquakes, 'earth-shaker' (see POSEIDON).

Earthquakes are widely believed to occur when the god or hero or monster who holds the earth up changes his hold on it or shifts his position. Among some African peoples the movements of an underground god cause the earth to tremble. The Fijians offered the earth god sacrifices to persuade him to turn over gently. On the East Indian island of Timor earth tremors are caused by a giant who eases the strain by shifting the earth from one of his shoulders to the other.

In European popular belief, lesser spirits

of the earth lived on for centuries, uncanny and dangerous beings like the dwarfs hammering away in their underground galleries (see DWARFS) or the knockers and buccas of the Cornish tin mines. Miners, violating the earth with their shafts and tunnels, always seem to have feared supernatural dangers as well as physical ones.

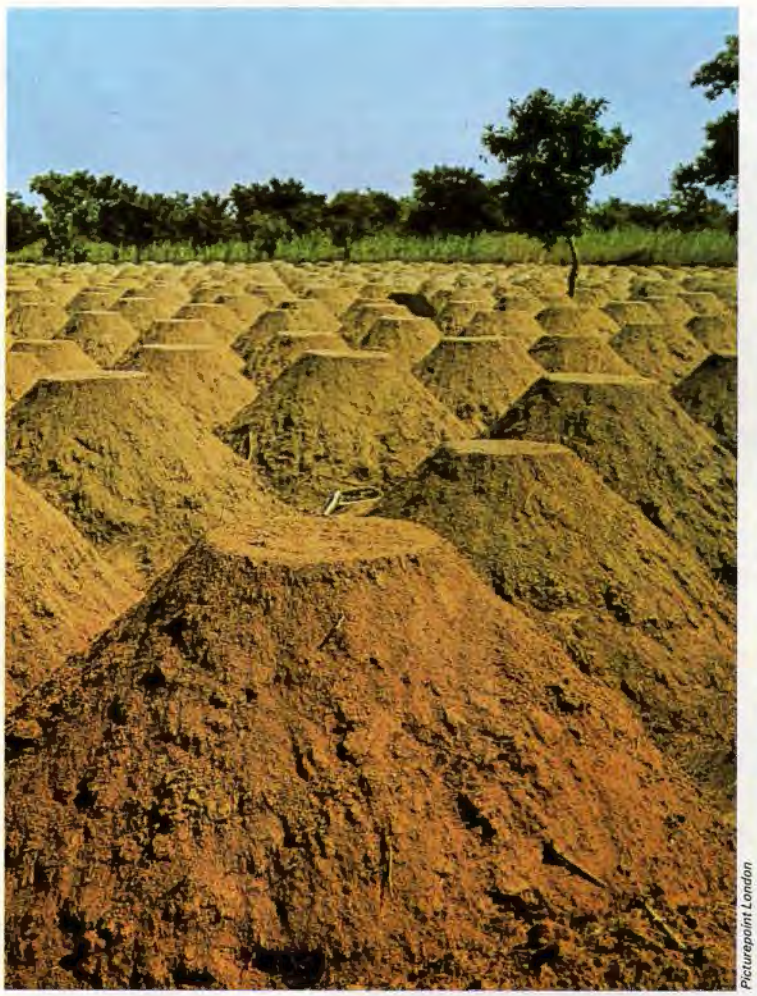
Belief in the magic powers of earth also survived. Many peoples, including the Romans, Germans, Scandinavians, Parsees and Japanese, had the custom of placing a newborn baby on the ground soon after birth, to let the fertile vigour of the soil pass into the child's body. In the 17th century in England Francis Bacon maintained that the smell of soil refreshed the spirits and improved the appetite, especially in the spring, before the earth had 'spent her sweet breath' in growing vegetables. Ladies, he thought, would do themselves much good by weeding. James Graham, a celebrated quack-doctor of the late 18th century, strongly recommended 'earth-baths', in which the pores of the skin would draw in the soil's nourishing juices. He used to lecture on this, with his tame 'goddess of health' at his side, both buried up to their chins in earth, their heads protruding from the soil like a couple of cabbages.

(For earth as an element, see ALCHEMY; ELEMENTS; for the earth in divination, see FOUR; GEOMANCY; and see also FERTILITY; FIRST MAN; HELL; LANDSCAPE; MOTHER GODDESS.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Methuen, 1950); J. F. Michell, *The Earth Spirit: Its Ways, Shrines, and Mysteries* (Thames & Hudson, 1976); H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology* (Methuen, 6th edn, 1958); D. Vitaliano, *Legends of the Earth* (Citadel, 1976).

The belief that the earth is a divine mother whose fertility nourishes mankind is widespread in Africa *Left* Yam cultivation in Dahomey: symbols to ensure a good crop are inscribed on the mounds of earth that surround individual yams *Right* Chief of the Dogon tribe in Mali, with magical inscriptions drawn on the earth



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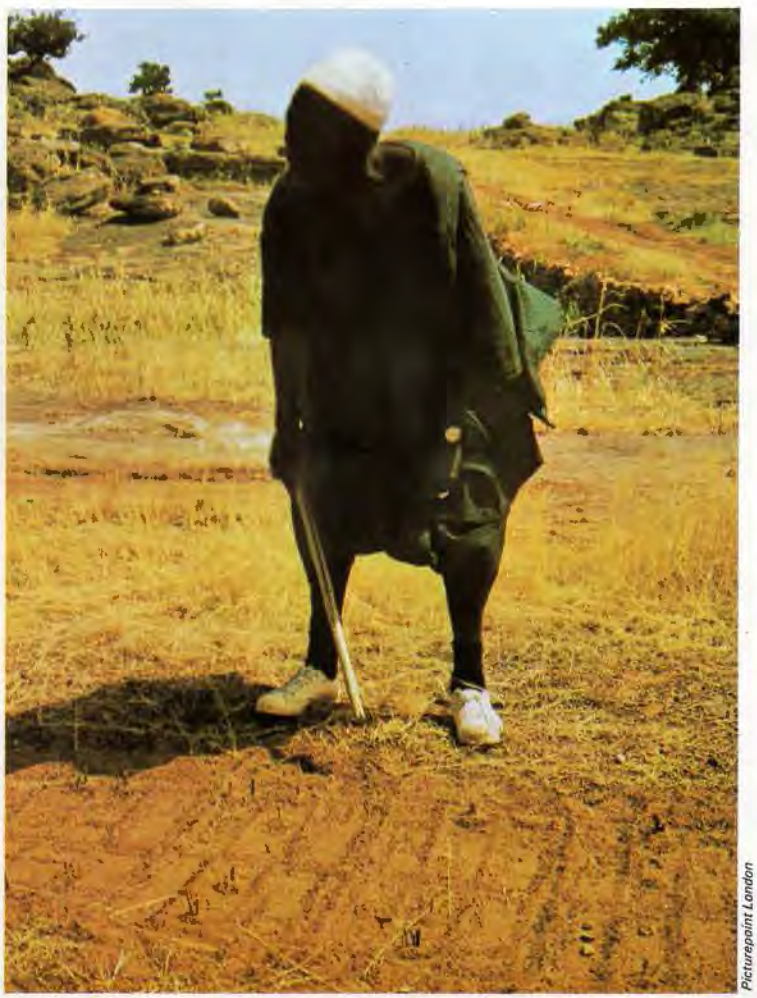

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East

The direction of the rising sun and therefore symbolically the direction of life and light: to turn to the east is to turn towards the light, towards spiritual illumination and towards God; hence in Christian churches the altar is usually at the east end: the dead are often buried with their feet facing eastwards in the hope of resurrection: magicians sometimes invoked Oriens the ruling demon of the east and in drawing the magic circle they would turn to the east and move clockwise imitating the passage of the sun. See DIRECTIONS.

Terry Mead

EAST ANGLIAN & ESSEX WITCHES

For more than 200 years East Anglia was renowned for its witches and for the severity of its witch trials. Even today the name of Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General, still evokes terrifying memories

Michael Busselle

THE TRAVELLER THROUGH the eastern counties of England and particularly East Anglia will observe on village greens and in market places certain monuments dedicated to the victims of religious persecutions during the reign of Mary I in the first half of the 16th century, in which no less than 277 Protestants were burnt by the Romanists. After Elizabeth I had succeeded to the throne an implacable hatred for all things popish exploded into a violent demand for radical reform. A primary objective of the Reformers was the elimination of the practitioners of magic and sorcery who had been permitted to function almost unchecked by the Church of Rome, and it was no accident therefore that Essex, heartland of dissent, should have become foremost in the demand for a house-cleaning involving every aspect of superstitious usage. At the same time the voices of the returned Marian exiles from the Continent, where witches were being persecuted in many countries, added still further to the clamour for action against the alleged sorcerers.

In a sermon delivered by Bishop Jewel before Elizabeth in 1560, he stressed the need for legal action against the magicians. 'Witches,' he declared, 'had marvellously increased within your Grace's realm,' and he went on to demand that 'the laws touching such malefactors be put in due execution'. At that time there were laws upon the statute book prohibiting witchcraft, for the first abortive Witchcraft Act of 1542 had been repealed in the reign of Edward VI, while a subsequent attempt to introduce legislation had failed in the reign of Mary. The year 1563 witnessed the Convocation of the Church of England urging stronger penalties upon the practitioners of witchcraft and in that same year the Elizabethan Witchcraft Act passed into law. This imposed the penalty of death for murder by sorcery, and the pillory and imprisonment for witchcraft of a less lethal character.

The first person known to have been executed in England after the new Act had come into force was 63-year-old Agnes Waterhouse of Hatfield Peverel in Essex; she was hanged at Chelmsford in 1566 for the alleged crime of bewitching William Fynee to death. Her principal aid and accomplice was her familiar, a cat named Sathan. It is significant that no less a personage than Sir Gilbert Gerard, the Attorney General, participated in the trial of the accused. The first of the victims, like so many who were to follow her to the gallows, was of peasant stock. The English rich, unlike their Continental counterparts, were secured by their wealth from the wild accusations of witch-hating fanatics, for they retained the power as well as the legal right to sue any detractor for defamation of character. In Sir George Croke's *Reports of Select Cases* at law during the Elizabethan period (published in 1661), there occurs the significant instance of Fortescue v. Hext in 1593, in which the court held it to be 'very heinous and actionable' for a woman to say of a man 'He is a witch and bewitched my husband to death for he made his picture in wax and roasted it every day by the fire until he roasted my husband to death'.

So much for the Witchcraft Act as it affected the well-to-do, and it was no doubt due to this and other circumstances such as the absence of both Inquisition and official torture, that English witchcraft preserved its traditionally peasant characteristics throughout the whole period of the persecutions. The victims were mainly confined to the social outcast or the village scapegoat. The offences with which they were charged

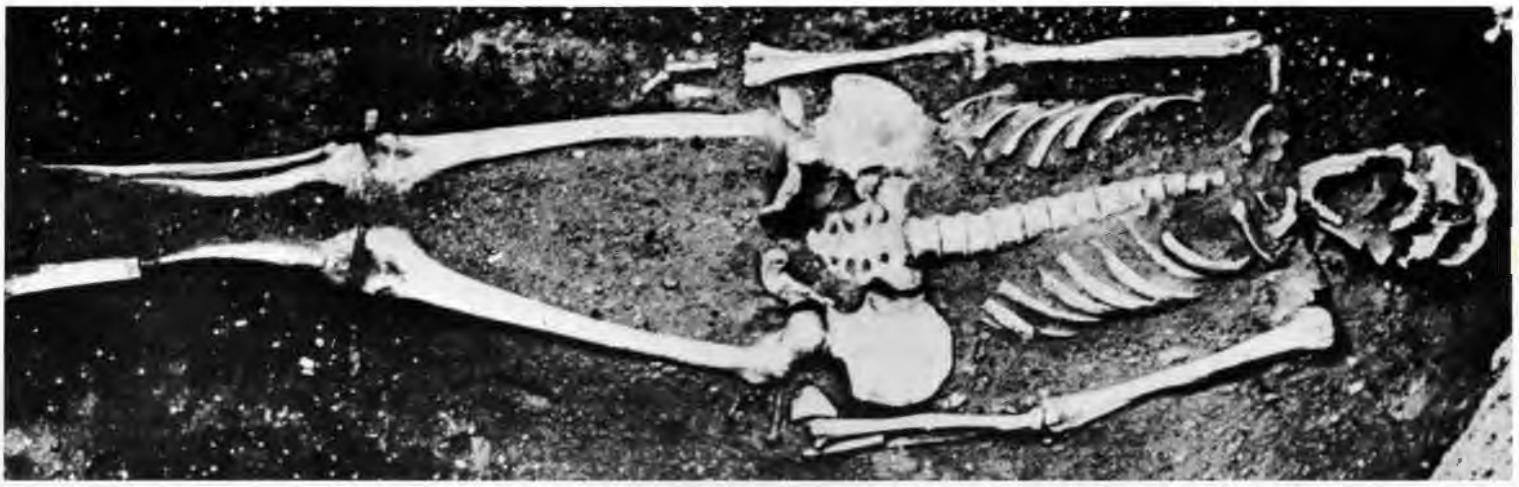
Trigon Films

were mostly acts of simple *maleficia* – baleful acts attributed to the vindictiveness of witches – without any signs of the elaborate sabbaths conjured up by the Inquisitors of France and Germany.

It was the misfortune of the county of Essex to remain the scene of continuing persecutions during the whole of this period, the major 16th century trials occurring in 1566, 1579, 1582 and 1589. The notorious trial of the witches of St Osyth, near Brightlingsea, was held in 1582; 14 women were charged with various acts of witchcraft, including murder, upon the evidence of children of six to nine years of age. The tragedy began as a village quarrel with the exchange of such insults as 'old trot' and 'old whore' and the bewitching of cows and geese. It was the St Osyth trial which in all probability impelled Reginald Scot to publish his famous *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) in which the manifest absurdities involved in the witch-hunts were exposed to the acid test of ridicule. Even the most casual survey of the evidence provided by the old court records reveals that the outbreak of the witch mania in East Anglia bore all the characteristics of mass hysteria, with the whole folklore of witchcraft being hurled at the heads of the accused along with the 'evidence' based upon hearsay, and with the testimony of young children being freely accepted by the courts.

At the very heart of this conspiracy, it appears, were the village soothsayers, known as Cunning Men and Cunning Women. They were in fact witch-doctors and had no hesitation whatsoever in denouncing unpopular individuals as witches. This had been their role from time immemorial when the punishment had been limited to ecclesiastical penances or the ritual drawing of the witch's blood to neutralize the spell. Now, however, with the state as official witch-hunter, their influence in village life spelt misery and death to every suspect.

Although practitioners of magic themselves, the Cunning People only rarely fell foul of the authorities. They were universally respected, for they represented to the peasant mind the anti-witch principle and were therefore regarded as an integral part of the grand alliance of Church and State against black witchcraft. George Gifford, an



The witch-hunting mania in East Anglia had all the characteristics of mass hysteria: one authority declared that any old woman with '. . . a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice or a scolding tongue' was liable to be pronounced a witch ***Left*** **Still from** ***The Witchfinder General,*** **a film about Matthew Hopkins: he claimed to have the Devil's list of all the witches in England** ***Above*** **Skeleton of a witch, its mouth apparently open in a macabre scream, which was found buried at St Osyth, scene of a notorious witch trial in 1582**

Elizabethan clergyman of Malden in Essex, left a contemporary account of their sinister role in Elizabethan times. Gifford, who regarded Cunning People as agents of the Devil and deluders of the people, observed: 'When the people fear a witch there is much running to the wizards to learn what to do. The Devil teaches these Cunning Men many horrible abominations and foul abuses of the name of God by which they are made believe that they are cured from their harms.' Gifford thus testified to the malevolent power of the practitioners of white witchcraft who were to his mind as guilty of witchcraft as those they so readily denounced, a fact that very few of those in authority were prepared to admit at the time.

It was Gifford's contention that many of the rituals then employed to combat witchcraft were in reality forms of pagan sacrifice, particularly the burning alive of farm animals. He went on to point out that these village witch-doctors were responsible for the arrest of perfectly respectable individuals: 'Within these last few years,' he said, 'the devil has by Cunning Men accused the very religious and godly of having secret marks upon them.'

How to Tell a Witch

The witch fever raged throughout Essex and East Anglia, overflowing into the adjacent counties. In Norfolk, ever-growing numbers found themselves dragged before the magistrates to be executed or confined in prison or the pillory until they were ready to confess their guilt. Suffolk also suffered its spate of denunciations, arrests and hangings.

The death of Elizabeth and the accession of King James I, a witch-fearing fanatic, had little influence upon the general trend of the witch mania in the eastern counties, for wherever the extreme Protestants maintained their militancy witch-hunting was likely to break out at any time and spread like a forest fire. In Catholic areas, needless to say, the magistrates were far less zealous in rooting out evidence of pagan practices and there the witch-hunters were far less certain of their prey.

Handbooks for magistrates, as for example Michael Dalton's *Country Justice* (1618) and Richard Bernard's *Guide to Grand Jurymen* (1627), insisted that the primary evidence of witchcraft was the possession of an animal familiar. Bona fide physicians, as fallible as their unofficial allies, the Cunning People, were generally prepared to diagnose many of the illnesses that they were unable to cure as caused by witchcraft. At the same time the Puritan clergy sought everywhere for the least sign of any religious deviation that could be classed as a 'superstitious practice'.

Tainted Blood

The most primitive types of magic beliefs prevailed among the peasant population all of whom claimed to be staunch Christians. In 1624 John Crushe was presented to the Essex Archdeacon's Court accused of burning a bewitched lamb alive on Hawkwell Common in order to break the spell of witchcraft from which his flock were suffering. It was during this century that the people of East Anglia began to protect themselves against the malice of witches by the use of witch bottles, receptacles containing urine and horseshoe nails which were heated on the fire as a form of counter-magic and which were probably introduced from the Low Countries. Good urine it appears was absolutely essential; bad urine (that of a witch) causing the bottle to blow the cork.

East Anglia underwent its second and infinitely more severe witch-hunt in 1645, led by the self-styled Witchfinder General Matthew Hopkins, a lawyer who had become interested in witchcraft. It was in Manningtree, near the Suffolk border of Essex, that the persecution was revived with considerable intensity. Conditions were ripe, for with the Civil War still raging and its outcome far from certain the Puritan eastern counties had been reduced to a state of tension which only the punishment of a scapegoat could relieve. The population was, if anything, even more fanatically Protestant and therefore witch-fearing than in the times of the Elizabethan witch-hunts and there existed in addition a further factor that has received scant attention from students of witchcraft in the past.

In many of the towns and villages of East Anglia there still lived the children and grandchildren of the victims of the trials of the 1560s and 70s; and since witchcraft was generally assumed to be in the blood and therefore a hereditary taint, these became the automatic first choice, whenever fresh victims were required. In 1645 John Rivet, a tailor of Manningtree, troubled by the illness of his wife, sought advice from a Cunning Woman named Hoyve of Hadleigh in Suffolk, and was told that her sickness was due to witchcraft. Rivet, searching his mind for a likely suspect, remembered that the mother of Elizabeth Clarke, a neighbour, had been hanged as a witch. This information came to the ears of Matthew Hopkins, who seized upon the discovery as an opportunity for publicity and brought Elizabeth Clarke before a magistrate. The prisoner was searched for witch's marks and tormented by being denied sleep, an apparently legitimate form of torture, while Hopkins waited for her imps to visit her. In due course these put in an appearance, taking the form of a kitten, two dogs, a rabbit, a toad, and a polecat.

The unhappy prisoner was finally forced into making a full confession and named as her accomplice Anne West, a poverty-stricken widow who had long been suspected of witchcraft. The latter had the additional disadvantage of being denounced by her own daughter Rebecca, who freely admitted having attended a witch's meeting in company with a number of Manningtree women. What was to become the stock ritual of denunciation followed by prosecution leading to further denunciations then followed. St Osyth village, scene of the terror in Elizabethan times, once again delivered up its quota of suspects into Hopkins's hands, as did many other villages in the vicinity.

Searched for Witch's Marks

Following their trial held at Chelmsford in the summer of 1645 before Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, 19 countrywomen died on the gallows. Arthur Wilson, the Earl's steward, who was present at the trials, set down as his opinion that the prisoners were

The mere presence of a witch-hunter was usually sufficient to agitate a whole community into a frenzy of denunciations

no more than victims of their own imaginations being 'poor, melancholy, envious, mischievous, ill-disposed and ill-dieted,' confirming once again that it was the miserable poor who had become the victims of the witch-hunts.

Hopkins claimed to possess the Devil's list of all the witches in England and, thus armed, set out to find further victims, accompanied by his own group of professional witchfinders. Amongst these were John Stearne who searched the male prisoners for witch's marks while Mary Phillips searched the women. They began systematically to comb the countryside of East Anglia, moving from town to town and village to village, often at the invitation of the authorities, who were by this time utterly overwhelmed by the witch panic. Among Hopkins's charges for his services were the sums of £23 0s 6d for a visit to Stowmarket and £15 for King's Lynn. Witch-hunting had become an extremely profitable profession.

By a deliberate policy of terrorism in which prisoners were tied up, deprived of sleep, made to sit cross-legged on stools for hours on end, or marched backwards and forwards until they dropped from exhaustion, Hopkins secured the confessions he needed without crossing the official boundary between mere duress and illegal torture. There appears to have been no shortage of suspects; for to Hopkins witchcraft meant the possession of animal familiars, hence any unfortunate outcast possessing a pet cat, dog or mouse became particularly liable to suspicion. In the same way any sudden or inexplicable outbreak of disease among human beings or cattle could indicate witchcraft as most contemporary physicians would have been prepared to testify.

Not only Norfolk and Suffolk but also the counties of Cambridge, Northampton, Huntingdon and Bedford became the stamping grounds of the Hopkins gang who took care never to venture beyond Puritan territory. The mechanism of witchfinding appears to have been in the main self-generating and the mere presence of a witch-hunter in the vicinity usually sufficient to agitate a whole community into a frenzy of denunciations. So great was the terror engendered by the witchfinders that a suspect had even been known to volunteer to be searched for witch's marks in order to vindicate his good name in the eyes of his neighbours, as for example Meggs, a Suffolk baker, who offered himself for examination and, having failed the test, was sent to the gallows.

The witch-hunting industry involved all manner of normally respectable citizens. Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, paid its local team of searchers for Devil's marks '12d per day to be divided among them'.

Ordeal by Swimming

With 200 of his victims packing the jails of East Anglia Hopkins staged a great trial of witches at Bury St Edmunds in 1645. Among the 18 who died by hanging was John Lowes, a 70-year-old clergyman who had been denounced as a witch by his own parishioners at Brandeston in Suffolk. Forced to undergo the walking torture until he fainted from exhaustion, Parson Lowes at last admitted to the ownership of familiars, one of which he had dispatched to sink a ship at sea. None of his accusers ascertained whether or not such a ship had existed, let alone had sunk on that day, and the old man was hanged after reading his own burial service, as no other clergyman could be persuaded to undertake it for him.

Among the best known methods used for the detection of witches at this period was the 'swimming test', an ordeal in which the suspect was trailed on ropes in a pool of water or a stream, the assumption being that if she floated she was guilty and that only if she sank could her innocence be presumed. Long pins were also plunged into the bodies of suspects in the search for Devil's marks. The swimming test was forbidden by a Parliamentary Commission in 1645 but no restraint was imposed by officialdom upon Hopkins's other enormities.

In 1645 Hopkins undertook a number of incursions into the county of Huntingdon. Here he came into conflict with a clergyman, the vicar of Great Staughton, Rev John Gaule, who resented his presence in the county and who openly attacked him from the pulpit. Although compelled to recant Gaule returned to the attack, finally publishing a damning indictment in pamphlet form entitled *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcraft* in which he exposed the cruel tortures used by the Hopkins gang, making the point that 'every old woman with a wrinkled face, a furrowed brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice or a scolding tongue . . .' was liable to be pronounced a witch. Hopkins attempted a reply to the charges raised against him in his own pamphlet *The Discovery of Witches* but by this time his star was beginning to wane and there was every sign that the day of the unofficial tribunal was over. In the first place the triumph of Parliament in the Civil War had created more settled conditions and, secondly, the voice of criticism was beginning to be raised against him from all quarters. In 1646 Hopkins retired to his house in Manningtree where he died in the following year.

The type of person selected by fate to fulfil the role of witch is a problem for the psychiatrist. Sir Charles Oman, the historian, divided English witches and wizards into four main groups: the conscious charlatans, the malignant persons who really believed they had the power to harm their enemies, the sheer lunatics, and finally the victims of torture and duress. There is not the least doubt that most of those who suffered in the great East Anglian witch-hunts of the 17th century believed personally in the reality of witchcraft, and some possibly that they were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged, for belief in magic was universal among the peasantry. One Newmarket woman who sincerely believed her pet toad to be a familiar spirit received the scientific attentions of Dr William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood and physician to King Charles I. The doctor, to the witch's disgust, cut open the unfortunate toad, demonstrating to his own satisfaction at least that there was nothing supernatural in its composition. Harvey was many years in advance of the majority of his profession, who were perfectly prepared to use witchcraft as an alibi for their own medical deficiencies.

Livestock Burned Alive

A Dr Jacob of Yarmouth, in the year 1664, basked in the glory of a reputation for 'helping children that were bewitched'. Jacob was involved in the notorious case of the Bury St Edmunds witches of 1665 when Rose Cullenden and Amy Duny of Lowestoft were found guilty of bewitching a number of children, one of whom died. Given in evidence was the astounding fact that at the instigation of Dr Jacobs a toad which had been discovered in the bedding of

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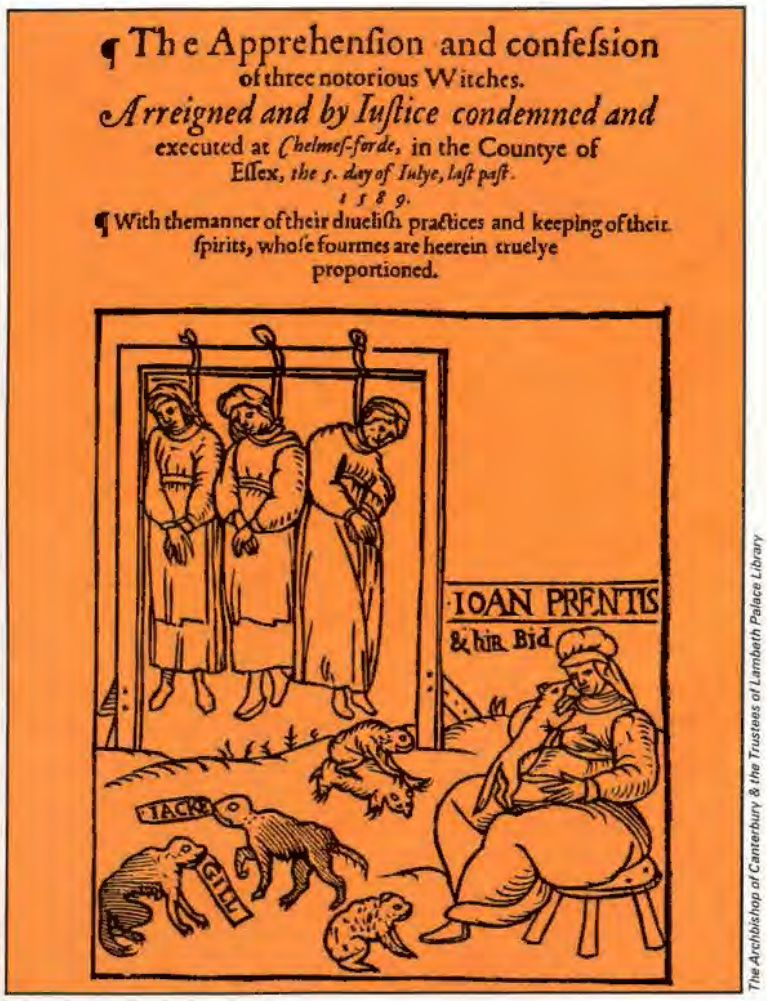

The Archbishop of Canterbury & the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

one of the children was thrown into the fire where it exploded, and that afterwards Amy Duny was seen to have burns upon her arms, a sure sign of her guilt. During the court proceedings a number of children testified that Amy Duny and Rose Cullenden were attacking them 'spectrally' when it was quite obvious to those present that the women were doing nothing of the kind. This type of 'spectral evidence' was perfectly acceptable to the witch-fearing judge Sir Matthew Hale who, in spite of doubts raised by other members of the court, sentenced the prisoners to death. Contained in the indictment were the usual stock charges against 17th century witches: the conveying of nails and pins into the bodies of victims, the bewitching of farm carts and the magical killing of cows and pigs.

There is a note of grim humour in the curious case of Abre Grinsett, a beggar woman who was charged in 1665 with bewitching Thomas Spatchett, bailiff of Dunwich, so that he suffered attacks of headaches, and fits. The fact that he had broken his skull as a child appeared to have little bearing on the evidence submitted to the court, which included a full confession, by Spatchett, of a compact with the Devil who had assumed the shape of a 'pretty handsome young man'. One of the magistrates observed that if Abre Grinsett chose to bewitch men like Spatchett she was free to do so, and she was discharged and sent home where she was later found dead, to all appearances murdered by her neighbours.

The possession of animal 'familiars' was at one time synonymous with witchcraft, and any outcast with a small animal as a pet was liable to be accused of the crime *Left* Illustration to Matthew Hopkins's *The Discovery of Witches* showing the witchfinder and two witches with their familiars, including a legless spaniel and an ox-headed greyhound *Right* Execution of three witches at Chelmsford in 1589: seated at the base of the gallows is Joan Prentice, who admitted to killing a child by witchcraft, with her familiar, a ferret, on her lap

Throughout the 17th century and well into the 18th, witch-hunting remained a popular sport in East Anglia and Essex. The repeal of the Witchcraft Act in 1736 had little effect upon the superstitious fears of the common people who continued to believe in witchcraft for a further century. Under the terms of the new Act witchcraft ceased to be a legal offence although punishment limited to imprisonment and pillory was reserved for those who claimed to have supernatural powers, as for example the Cunning People. To a considerable extent the situation had reverted to that existing before the Witchcraft Act of 1563 with witch-hunting now a private matter between the bewitched and his adviser, the Cunning Man.

Faith in white witchcraft as prescribed by the Cunning People remained extremely strong in East Anglia until the 1850s when, following the decline in the belief in magic, witchcraft ceased to be a factor in peasant philosophy. Even as late as 1826 a huckster was swum as a witch at Wickham Keith, Suffolk, and at about this time Ipswich was honoured by the presence of its own Cunning Man 'Old Winter', a notorious white wizard. In 1857 *The Times* cited a not untypical case, in which a magistrate at Hockham in Norfolk was requested by a citizen to submit a suspected witch to the swimming test. Behind the scenes as prime instigator had been the inevitable Cunning Man.

Many magical practices belonging properly to the Dark Ages continued to be practised in the remoter parts of the East Anglian marshlands until fairly recently. Livestock was burned alive throughout the first half of the 19th century as an antidote to witchcraft, while as late as 1866 crosses were nailed to barn doors in Norfolk during an epidemic of cattle disease, to protect the herds from devils and witches. Even in the 20th century iron objects like knives and scissors were placed under cottage doormats to keep witches from the premises.

The marshland coastal fringes bordering the North Sea long remained an area of peasants who were dissenters almost to a man, and almost medieval in their acceptance of witchcraft. Until 1860 Essex possessed the most famous Cunning Man of all times, James Murrell of Hadleigh, an expert exorcist whose prowess with the witch bottle was proverbial (see MURRELL). Even as late as the 1870s the witch bottle was not unknown among country labourers, although as often as not the refinements of the art had been forgotten, a jam jar of urine being used instead. Witch's imps in the shape of

The majority of people who suffered during the great East Anglian witch mania were convinced of the reality of witchcraft, and it is even possible that some believed themselves to be witches; in any case, Matthew Hopkins's deliberate policy of terrorism ensured that he obtained the confessions he needed without officially torturing his victims. Scene from *The Witchfinder General*

white mice were still feared in parts of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex until the close of the century and provided the theme of many macabre legends, some of which are remembered to this day.

The Devil's Harvest

Further north, in the Fenlands, country folk long believed in the satanic compact, considering it possible to secure the granting of material requests from the hands of the Devil by a rite called 'The Gathering of the Devil's Harvest', which was performed on St Mark's Eve. Perhaps the best known survival of witch fear in its most malignant form was the notorious incident of 1863 in which an old fortune-teller, after being accused of witchcraft, was forced to undergo the swimming test at Sible Hedingham in Essex as the result of which he died. For this crime the two principals, a man and a woman, both shopkeepers, were sentenced to terms of hard labour. It transpired from the evidence given in court that the unhappy victim had been submitted to the cruel 17th century ordeal known as the walking torture, in an effort to persuade him to remove a spell he was supposed to have placed upon the woman. It was not far from here, at Dunmow, that one of the last known attempts to impose the swimming test upon a witch was made by two country labourers in 1880. The offenders were brought before the courts and punished.

As a macabre postscript to the East Anglian witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries a St Osyth resident discovered, when digging his garden some 40 years ago, the skeletons of two women buried in a north-south orientation and riveted limb to limb. Whether these were survivals of witch persecution it is not possible to say with absolute certainty, but it is reasonable to assume that the bodies had been so restricted after death to prevent them rising from the grave to haunt the community.

(See EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS.)

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: R. Trevor Davies, *Four Centuries of Witchcraft Trials* (Methuen, 1947); T. Gardiner, *Broomstick over Essex and East Anglia* (Henry, 1981); Roberts, *Witches and Witch-Hunters* (Folcroft, 1973); Eric Maple, *The Dark World of Witches* (A. S. Barnes, 1964); G. Morgan, *Essex Witches* (Spurbooks, 1973).

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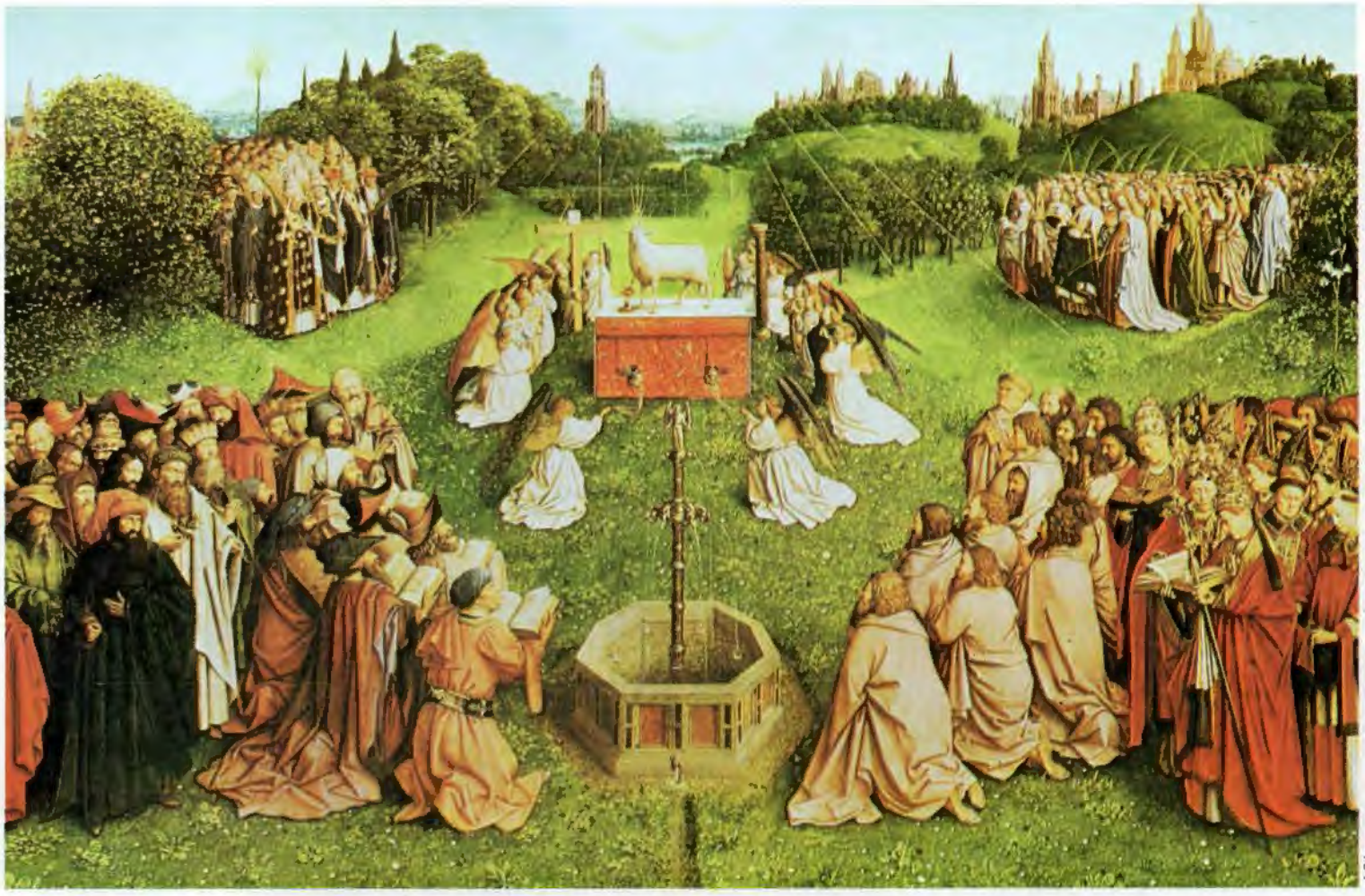

EASTER &

No celebration in the Christian calendar is richer in symbolic ritual than Easter. In dramatic contrast with Holy Week, a time of sadness and mourning, Easter Sunday dawns with universal rejoicing, the rays of the rising sun announcing to all mankind that Christ, too, is risen

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST is commemorated at Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar. The impact of this feast day on the common people in time past was so great that it was even supposed that the sun itself danced for joy each Easter Day. It was popularly believed that this sight could be seen by anyone getting up early and standing at some suitable vantage point, always provided that the Devil had not blocked the view. Of course it was not everyone who believed this. John Brand, a stern 18th century antiquary observed that: 'It is a common custom among the vulgar and uneducated.'

It may have been this belief that lay behind an ancient custom recorded at Chester, which R. Chambers describes (*The Book of Days*, 1864). The Dean of the cathedral produced a ball during the Easter service, held it and danced, before passing it to choristers and others present, including the Archbishop. Afterwards they all had a meal of bacon and tansy pudding.

At one time the herb tansy was customarily used for flavouring Easter cakes and puddings. It is seldom used nowadays, on account of its bitter flavour, but most probably it was originally intended to symbolize the bitter herbs served at the Jewish Passover table, a festival from which the Christian Easter partially derives. Lambs were sacrificed at the Hebrew feast to commemorate Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and Christian tradition represents Christ as the Paschal Lamb, clasping the banner of victory over death. (The word 'paschal' comes from the Greek form of the Hebrew 'Pesach', passover.) In Devonshire and Somerset, on Easter morning, people watched for this lamb and flag motif to appear in the centre of the sun's disc. Sometimes the rising sun, symbol of Christ risen from the dead, is welcomed with Easter music. Bands and choirs sing hymns, and in America the Moravians – an old German

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HOLY WEEK

religious community living in Pennsylvania – play trombones at three o'clock in the morning to wake sleeping people.

The great climax of Easter in the Eastern or Orthodox Church comes earlier still: at midnight, when the priest announces to the assembled people: 'Christ is Risen', to which the congregation reply: 'He is risen indeed.' Everyone has brought candles and these are now lit, so that the whole church becomes a blaze of light. Before the Revolution Russians would greet one another with a ceremonial kiss – three times repeated in honour of the Trinity. The Lenten fast, which is still strictly observed by Orthodox believers, ends at this moment. Hungry peasants have been known to slip a few coloured eggs in their pockets and to begin eating them the moment the ritual greeting has been given, even though the service is still in progress.

The harsh Lenten diet was most unpopular and in some countries people gave it a very elaborate send-off. In England a red herring, prepared to look like a man riding away on horseback and arranged on a bed of corn, was eaten on Easter Day. In Poland there was a similar custom. Country boys took a pot of *zur* – gruel made from water mixed with fermented rye meal – and a herring, and drummed them out of the village before burying them. People lived on little else during the fast period, and the boys enjoyed giving the food its funeral.

The severity of Lent and its restrictions explains why the Easter festival is a great

Facing page **In Easter celebrations Christ is often represented by a lamb, traditionally the symbol of the Redeemer in Christian thought and art: *Adoration of the Lamb*, altarpiece in the Cathedral of St Bavon at Ghent, by the 15th century Flemish painter Jan van Eyck. Christians all over the world commemorate Christ's Passion and his sufferings on the way to the Cross, with solemn ceremonies *Above left* An image of Christ bearing the Cross is carried through the streets of Panjim in the Indian province of Goa *Above right* In Jerusalem men dressed as Roman soldiers accompany a cross to which symbols of the Crucifixion such as a hammer, nails and rope are attached, in a procession along the Via Dolorosa, Christ's path to the hill of Golgotha**

Work was forbidden in Poland during Easter Week and it is said that a farmer who insisted on ploughing his fields was swallowed up with his oxen

occasion for feasting, and in many Christian countries families used to hold open house – sometimes with rather curious food by modern standards. In England radishes were a seasonal speciality, and a Radish Feast was held in Oxford.

The Paschal Lamb

Easter foods in central and eastern Europe are prepared in advance, and blessed by the priest before anyone will consider tasting them. As magnificent a spread as the family can afford is provided, with the best linen cloth in use. The tradition of the Paschal Lamb ensures pride of place for this meat at the Easter table, but in some countries a substitute of pastry or sugar may serve as a centrepiece instead. In Poland the lamb is made of butter and surrounded with numerous dishes containing ham, roast veal, sausage and other delicacies. As a rule the whole ensemble is prettily decorated with flowers and garlands.

Easter pastries are another important part of traditional Easter fare. Russians prepare *paska*, a tall, stiff bread, made with cottage cheese and raisins and iced on top. Italian mothers give their children *ciambella*, a cake made with olive oil; boys are given one in the shape of a horse, while for girls the cake is shaped like a dove, arrayed in real feathers. Austrian children receive a nest-shaped cake filled with eggs. Some scholars see in such ceremonial pastries the remnants of an old magic rite, where ritual offerings of bread assured prosperity to the community and to the tribe.

Sometimes pastries were part of a dole or charitable distribution. At Biddenden in Kent the famous Biddenden cakes are still distributed on Easter Monday, according to the terms of an ancient benefaction. Tradition says that this is in fulfilment of the wishes of Siamese twins, Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, who left 20 acres known as the Bread and Cheese Lands, to provide these cakes and a supply of bread and cheese. The cakes are embossed with the figures of the two women.

The custom of doing public penance for human sinfulness on Good Friday is common in many parts of the world: penitents dressed in sombre black robes follow an effigy of Christ on the Cross as it is borne through the streets of Seville

This food, and other similar forms of charity, of course fulfilled a genuine need in times when poverty meant starvation. Slightly different were Church Ales, held in some parts of Britain at Easter. Churchwardens had to provide malt for brewing ale, which was then sold with bread, meat and other foodstuffs donated to raise funds for the church and for charity. The feast which followed was originally held in the church itself, but resulted in unseemly rowdiness, and so church halls or houses came to be built. The custom aroused the displeasure of the Puritans after the Reformation and was gradually suppressed. In time some of them were closed and others turned into licensed inns.

Easter was also an occasion for paying rent, which could be rendered in kind as well as cash. There are records of various spices – pepper, cumin, cinnamon – and even pairs of gloves being offered. Indeed presenting new gloves to the landlord at Easter was an old method of ensuring land tenure, and young men would give a pair to their sweethearts.

A complete set of new gloves for Easter is nowadays customary in some countries, a relic from the early Christian times, when the festival was a popular occasion for baptizing newcomers to the Church. The candidates wore fresh white robes to signify the new life given to them by the Resurrection. Popular tradition says that anyone who can afford new clothes for Easter, and neglects to buy them, will be unlucky, and in America the annual Easter parade is when the new spring outfits are displayed.

Renewal and rejuvenation, closely linked with the central meaning of Easter, are symbolized in many ways. According to a common and widespread belief, running water becomes blessed on Easter Day because Christ sanctified it. In France women wash their faces in the flowing streams, and in other countries farmers sprinkle their animals. Bottles of Easter water are often carefully preserved as a source of healing. In Ireland they say it provides protection from evil spirits.

Water is important in assisting the crops to grow, and primitive peoples supposed that it possessed a more general fertilizing influence. In some European countries it is customary to sprinkle the girls, and the boys who do it are rewarded with a small gift. In Hungary this took place on Easter Monday – hence its name, *Vizbeveto* or Water Plunge Monday. Today a few drops of eau de cologne replace the old fashioned dousing. The same custom existed in Poland, where it was known as the *Dingus*. In the Middle Ages it was a two-day festival, and after the splashing girls and boys pelted each other with eggs.

Traditionally work was forbidden in Poland during Easter Week, especially on the Thursday, which is dedicated to the memory of the dead. They say that a farmer who insisted on ploughing his fields was swallowed up, together with his team of oxen. Anyone putting an ear to the ground will hear him calling for help. Some people avoided work with linen or yarn, the tradition being that dust from these materials would get into the eyes of dead souls. Probably there is some connection with funeral shrouds.

A popular fertility rite consists of touching a young man or girl with the branch of a tree. This bestowed health and fruitfulness. In Czechoslovakia the Easter Switch is plaited from pussy willow branches and decorated with ribbons. A boy would strike a girl on the legs with this until she paid him a fine of Easter eggs. In eastern Pomerania, more surprisingly, children chased their parents out of bed, a birch twig being used.

Some Easter customs seem to show direct links with crop growth rituals. In Greek Macedonia the girls would get up early on Easter morning, find a cherry tree and rig up a swing. Later, other swings were erected on the village green and the *hora*, an ancient circular dance, was performed while the swinging took place. A similar game was popular in Latvia, the original intention presumably being to encourage the crops to grow as high as the girls were swinging.

A Lift for the King

In England Lifting or Heaving must have served the same purpose, though Christian tradition converted it into a commemoration of the Resurrection. This popular custom was discontinued towards the end of the last century. As a rule Easter Monday was the day when women were 'lifted' by the men, the roles being reversed the following day, but this varied according to local custom. King Edward I was lifted on Easter Monday by the ladies of the court, for which he paid them £14 – a lot of money in those days. A special chair was prepared, with

The Resurrection of Christ

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rab-boni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" . . .

John, chapter 20

decorations such as coloured ribbons, and the person to be lifted was invited to take a seat. It was then hoisted in the air three times, those who did the work receiving a reward of money and perhaps a kiss.

The idea of taking flight has obvious echoes of the Resurrection. In parts of Germany models of a bird were usual Easter presents. With gracefully spread wings of paper, they were hung from the living-room rafters. A similar bird flew above a baby's cradle in parts of eastern Europe, generally being left there throughout the year.

In England and other European countries, Easter Day was once celebrated by lighting great bonfires. This marked the renewal of life with the return of spring. Sometimes a doll, symbolizing winter, was burnt or thrown in the water. This was also known as Burning the Judas. Among the Germans, Dutch and Swedes these fires can still be seen. German settlers in Texas also still make Easter bonfires and tell their children that the Easter rabbit is burning flowers: he is making dye for the Easter eggs.

The rabbit is a comparative newcomer to the Easter celebrations, having taken the place of the traditional hare. But at Hallaton in Leicestershire there is still an annual Hare Pie Scramble on Easter Monday. The parish rectors were given the right to a piece of land on condition that they provided plenty of ale, two dozen loaves and two hare pies for the occasion. As it happens, hares are out of season at this time of year, so the pies are made with some other meat instead.

VENETIA NEWALL

The Ceremonies of Holy Week

The week preceding Easter, Holy Week, has been observed by Catholic Christians since the 4th century AD, by the performance of special ceremonies. The dramatic Gospel accounts of Christ's last week in Jerusalem provided a series of events that could be ritually commemorated. These Holy Week ceremonies mostly originated in Jerusalem. They were soon adopted in varying forms throughout the Church, because the official establishment of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine (288–337 AD) encouraged pilgrims to visit Jerusalem in increasing numbers. In Jerusalem, and elsewhere in Palestine, the interest and patronage of the Emperor and his mother, St Helena, caused many churches to be built marking sacred sites of the Gospels. They included, most notably, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. St Helena is credited with the discovery of the True Cross on which Christ was crucified.

A contemporary account of the Holy Week ceremonies as they took place in the latter part of the 4th century is extant. Known as the *Peregrinatio Etheriae* or 'Pilgrimage of Etheria', it was so called because it was written by an abbess or nun of that name, who was probably of Spanish origin and who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land at that time. Her record will be used here as the basis of a description of the Holy Week ceremonies. It will be supplemented where necessary with accounts of rites that were later added to the original scheme.

Entry into Jerusalem

Holy Week began on the Sunday before Easter; it is known today as Palm Sunday. According to Etheria, the faithful gathered at the seventh hour that day on the Mount of Olives, on the eastern side of Jerusalem. After an appropriate service, the people, led by the Bishop, followed the traditional route taken by Christ from the Mount of Olives on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They were accompanied by children, all bearing branches of palm or olive and crying: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.' The procession slowly made its way through Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The ceremony ended with prayers before the reliquary of the True Cross. In the Middle Ages, elsewhere, the Palm Sunday procession was usually made from one church to another, where palms were blessed and distributed. Christ was represented in the procession by a Gospel book, or a crucifix, or the Blessed Sacrament. Sometimes a carved figure, seated on a wooden ass, was used. In Byzantine churches icons were carried. The blessing and distribution of palms, together with a procession singing 'All Glory, Laud and Honour', remain the chief features of the modern Palm Sunday rites.

Etheria describes special ceremonies, but of subsidiary importance, on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. They were associated with sacred sites in and about Jerusalem. They were not adopted into the later scheme of Holy Week.

The Washing of Feet

The Thursday of Holy Week was a day of great significance because it recalled the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples, and his Agony and Arrest in Gethsemane. At the time of Etheria's pilgrimage, the chief ceremony was a night vigil on the Mount of Olives. First, the people, led by the Bishop, assembled in a church containing a cave, which Christ had traditionally visited that day with his disciples. From there they proceeded to the place of his Ascension. At first cock-crow, they descended to the Garden of Gethsemane, where 200 candles were lighted. The account of Christ's arrest was read, and evoked great lamentation. The procession then returned to Jerusalem, just as darkness was lifting. The Bishop dismissed the people to rest, before returning for the rites of Good Friday.

Elsewhere the Thursday ceremonies inevitably took a different form from those enacted in Jerusalem. In the Western Church emphasis was laid upon the Last Supper. At the Mass that day there was a solemn ringing of all the bells at the 'Gloria in excelsis', after which they were silent until Easter Even. Because no Host was consecrated on Good Friday, an extra Host was consecrated on Thursday; this was used on Good Friday for the Mass of the Presanctified, a shortened form of Mass. It was carried in solemn procession to an Altar of Repose, before which the faithful kept vigil. In cathedrals the Holy Oils were blessed. It was customary also for the Holy Water stoups to be emptied; and the altars were ceremonially washed, although this was sometimes done on Good Friday. The Kiss or

Above **Gifts of cakes and pastries are part of the Easter tradition in many parts of the world; during a ceremony at St Bartholomew's Church in London, widows received Hot Cross Buns, and sixpence each: Victorian photograph** ***Right*** **In some countries the purely Christian tradition is combined with a symbolism peculiar to the part of the world in which the festival is celebrated: in Mexico, Indian children daub themselves with white paint, symbolic of Christ's blood** ***Far right*** **Easter customs often reflect the concept of springtime renewal and rejuvenation: village boys in Hungary sprinkle the girls with water, believed to have a fertilizing influence**

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In pre-Revolution Russia, Easter Day was a time of conviviality and celebration, starting at midnight when candles were lit in churches and three ceremonial kisses exchanged in honour of the Trinity: lithograph of 1862, illustrating Russian Easter customs. Coloured eggs and *paska*, the tall stiff bread that was traditionally baked for Easter, are shown below the central picture

Sign of Peace, the ritual embrace after the Agnus Dei, was omitted at Mass in commemoration of the kiss of Judas. The ceremonies concluded with the *Pedilavium* (washing of feet). It was performed by bishops or abbots on people of inferior rank, in memory of Christ's washing of his disciples' feet at the Last Supper. It was also performed by certain sovereigns. The English royal Maundy service recalls the practice of earlier English kings. The name 'Maundy Thursday' is derived from *mandatus novum* ('a new commandment', John 13.34), the first words of the response of the ceremony of the washing of feet.

Good Friday, the anniversary of the Crucifixion, started in 4th century Jerusalem with prayers before sunrise in the ancient church on Mount Sion, where the alleged Column of Flagellation was preserved: the scourging of Christ by Pilate's soldiers was thus mourned. According to Etheria, the chief ceremony that day took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The relic of the True Cross was exposed and adored by the faithful. In turn, they bowed and kissed the sacred wood, which was then held by the bishop. They were carefully watched by deacons, since, as Etheria reports, a pilgrim once bit off and stole a portion of the precious relic. This ceremony was followed by a three-hour service at the site of Golgotha, the place where Christ was crucified.

In the Western Church a ceremonial Veneration of the Cross (sometimes called 'Creeping to the Cross') is the characteristic Good Friday rite. Clergy and people kneel and kiss a crucifix placed on the sanctuary steps. After this ceremony, the Host, consecrated on Maundy Thursday, is brought from the Altar of Repose for the Mass of the Presanctified. The liturgical colour is black; and the organ is silent. A Three Hours Service, from noon to three o'clock, originally introduced by the Jesuits, is now customary in many churches.

Holy Saturday, known also as Easter Even, commemorates the resting of Christ's body in the tomb. The Easter vigil is notable for an elaborate ritual, of which the theme is the rekindling of fire as a symbol of Christ's Resurrection. In Jerusalem this Paschal fire is kindled by the Patriarch of Jerusalem within the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the modern form of the rite, the fire is kindled in the porch of the darkened church. The procession moves into the church, lighted by a single taper or candle; a second is lighted in the nave; a third at the sanctuary. The focus of attention then becomes the Paschal Candle, a large candle set on the north side of the sanctuary. This candle, referred to as a sacred pillar of light, is duly consecrated. Five grains of incense in pyramidal form are inserted into it, supposedly in memory of the Five Wounds of Christ. The lighting of the Paschal Candle is followed by the lighting of all the lamps and candles of the church and the joyful ringing of its bells. The completion of the Easter Vigil was followed in ancient times by the first Mass of Easter at dawn.

The Paschal Candle is, by implication, a symbol of Christ. It is, significantly, extinguished at the Feast of the Ascension of Christ, which marks his physical withdrawal from the world. The Holy Week ceremonies, as a whole, are basically commemorative of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ; but like the ritual of the ancient mystery-religions, they are calculated to promote in the faithful a sense of identity with Christ in his sufferings and triumph over death.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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This Jewish Christian sect, which broke away from the early Gentile Church of the Apostles, is characterized by its recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, who would one day return to reign on earth

EBIONITES

THE NAME 'EBIONITES' was first used in the 2nd century by the Christian writer Irenaeus to describe a Christian heretical sect. This strange name may go back to the very beginnings of Christianity.

Many scholars cite, in this connection, the Apostle Paul's statement in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter 15) about a financial contribution that had been organized in Greece 'for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem'. The reference here is clearly to members of the original Christian community at Jerusalem who were in need. It has, however, been suggested that the expression 'the poor' may not just denote a state of poverty, but rather be an honorific title assumed by the Jerusalem Christians, who are reported to have 'had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as any had need' (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2). Moreover, it is recalled that Jesus had said 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Luke, chapter 6). Consequently, if the Jerusalem Christians were thus known as the 'poor', which in Hebrew speech would be the 'Ebionim', the Greek word 'Ebionites' could be reasonably considered as a translation of Ebionim. This conclusion means that, by the 2nd century, a sect of Christian heretics bore the same name as the original Jewish Christian community at Jerusalem.

The theory that the Jerusalem Christians were called Ebionim has been further strengthened, but at the same time made more complicated, by the fact that the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls seems to indicate that the Qumran community may also have called themselves Ebionim (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS). This Qumranic use would, accordingly, suggest that 'Ebionim' was truly an honorific Jewish title current at the time of Christ, and that common usage of it may indicate some connection between the Qumran Covenanters and the original Christian community at Jerusalem. But, however that particular issue may be assessed, what is important here is the fact that, if the Jerusalem Christians were indeed known as Ebionim, the evidence of Irenaeus reveals a surprising situation: namely, that by the 2nd century these original Christians, or their immediate descendants, were regarded as heretics by an orthodox Church Father such as Irenaeus.

That the members of the original Christian community at Jerusalem were known as the Ebionim is indeed probable, but it cannot be regarded as certain from the extant evidence; for there exists no actual statement that they were ever referred to simply as the 'Poor' (Ebionim). However, whether or not the Ebionites did derive from the first Jewish Christians, the latter certainly merit our attention; for they have a basic importance in the study of Christian origins.

Christianity originated in Galilee and Judaea, and the first disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (see JESUS) were Jews. After the Crucifixion, the disciples' faith in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel was re-established by a series of visions, which convinced them that God had raised him from the dead and that he had ascended into heaven. They believed that he would shortly return to earth, with supernatural power, to complete his messianic career, which meant in terms of current Jewish thought, the restoration of political sovereignty to Israel and the consequent overthrow of the Roman government there. The Acts of the Apostles, written towards the end of the 1st century AD, gives a later idealized account of the fortunes of these original Jewish disciples, and the writings of St Paul provide information that is of the greatest importance.

According to these sources, we learn that the disciples of Jesus, including his mother and his brothers, established themselves as a community at Jerusalem, thus forming what was to be the Mother Church of Christianity (Acts, chapter 1). They began to proclaim to their fellow-Jews that God had confirmed the Messiahship of Jesus by raising him from the dead, and they urged them to repent of their sins and prepare themselves for the imminent return of Jesus as the Messiah. In this presentation of Jesus, they clearly conceived of him as exclusively the Messiah of Israel, concerned only with the salvation of the Jews as the Chosen People of Yahweh (see YAHWEH). Their own conduct confirms this view, because they continued to live as zealous orthodox Jews, worshipping regularly in the great temple at Jerusalem and observing the ritual Law. In other words, these original Jewish Christians did not conceive of their faith in Jesus as constituting a new religion; indeed, it made them more devout and zealous members of their ancestral religion of Judaism. Although they encountered the repressive opposition of the Jewish sacerdotal aristocracy who co-operated with the Roman government in Judaea, these Jerusalem Christians won many converts, including Pharisees and members of the lower orders of the temple priesthood, thus attesting that they were regarded by their compatriots as orthodox Jews.

St Stephen, the first Christian martyr: he was charged with blasphemy because, in contrast to the Ebionites who believed that Christianity was a perfected Judaism, he was hostile to the orthodox cult of the Jewish Temple. He was condemned to death and stoned

The Three Pillars

The leadership of this Jerusalem Church raises an interesting and important problem, which can only be indicated here. According to the contemporary evidence of Paul, at Jerusalem there was a triumvirate or party of three, consisting of James, the 'Lord's brother', Cephas (Peter), and John. Of these three 'pillars' as they are called, James was obviously the leader (Galatians, chapters 1 and 2). The testimony of Acts is more problematic. In the earlier chapters Peter appears as the recognized leader. Nothing is said of James until chapter 3, and the statement there seems to imply that Peter then handed over the leadership to James. James thereafter is clearly the leader, although the author of Acts curiously avoids identifying him as the brother of Jesus. That James did become the head of the Mother Church of Jerusalem is confirmed by later Christian writers and implied by the Jewish historian Josephus (1st century AD). James doubtless owed his position to his blood-relationship to Jesus; on his death in 62 AD, he was succeeded by another relative, Symeon, thus indicating that at this early stage leadership was dynastic.

This original Jewish Christianity, with its headquarters at Jerusalem and communities in other parts of the country, was essentially a Jewish Messianic sect within the body of Judaism; its distinction lay in its recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. It clearly did not contemplate its doctrine and purpose as being applicable to Gentiles, peoples other than Jews. It reluctantly accepted the conversion of a few individual Gentiles, who seem already to have had some connection with Judaism.

There seems, however, to have been a 'splinter' group, led by Stephen, who were hostile to the orthodox cult of the Jerusalem temple and possibly had some connection with the Qumran Covenanters who had a similar attitude. Some members of this group, which was dispersed on the death of Stephen, travelled to Antioch in Syria, where they preached the new faith to Gentiles and made many converts. The leaders of the Mother Church of Jerusalem were,

thereupon, faced with a problem: could these Gentiles be admitted to membership of the Church without becoming Jews, which meant, for male converts, being circumcised? The evidence of the Acts and Paul's Epistles is conflicting on what policy was actually adopted. On the whole, it would seem that the Jerusalem leaders probably accepted Gentile converts into something like proselyte status, without definitively requiring circumcision but strongly commending it. They doubtless viewed such converts as second-class Christians, and never expected their numbers to be large before Christ's second coming.

The conversion of Paul, a Hellenistic Jew, was destined to effect a fundamental transformation of this situation (see ST PAUL). He was inspired to see Jesus not only as the Messiah of Israel but, more importantly, as the divine Saviour of all mankind; consequently he presented Christianity as a universal salvation-religion. Paul and his doctrine were repudiated by the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, and his arrest by the Romans in 59 AD removed him from further part in the movement.

So far as the history of the Mother Church of Jerusalem can be reconstructed from the sparse and fragmentary evidence, it would seem that it strictly controlled the Christian movement outside Palestine, especially in combating the influence of Paul. A strong Jewish Christian church was probably established also in the great city of Alexandria in Egypt, with close ties with the Mother Church. In Palestine itself Jewish Christianity appears to have been sympathetically associated with the Zealot resistance movement against Rome, which was religiously inspired (see ZEALOTS). There is reason for thinking that the execution of James at the instigation of Ananus, the high priest, in 62 AD was due to this association.

St James, the brother of Jesus, was the first leader of the Ebionites: he was executed in 62 AD, probably because of the sect's association with the Zealot resistance movement against Rome: detail from a painting in the Church of St Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome

Scala

In the war against Rome, which started in 66 AD and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Mother Church of Christianity disappeared. A later legend, demonstrably unsound, told of the flight of its members to Pella, a city in Transjordan. What is certain and beyond dispute is that the Mother Church of Jerusalem, which had been the recognized source of faith and authority in the infant Christian movement, ceased to exist after 70 AD.

The obliteration of the Jerusalem Church led to a rehabilitation of Paul's interpretation of the faith, which came to form the basis of Catholic Christianity as a universal salvation-religion. Remnants of Jewish Christianity survived in various places in Palestine, Syria and Egypt until the 5th century. Its members clung to the original tenets of their faith, being characterized by their observance of the Mosaic Law, their belief that Jesus was of human origin, and their hostility to Paul. They are known only through the garbled and prejudiced accounts of orthodox Christian writers, who regarded them as heretics. They are named either as Ebionites or Nazarenes, and various strange beliefs and customs are ascribed to them; it is likely that some groups did adopt Gnostic ideas (see GNOSTICISM) or held beliefs that stemmed from the Qumran Covenanters.

Certain of their writings have survived, in forms of varying authenticity. The most important are the so-called *Pseudo-Clementines*, comprising the *Homilies*, the *Recognitions* and an *Epitome*. Others, including an Ebionite Gospel, and Ebionite *Acts of the Apostles*, a *Gospel of Peter*, and a *Book of Elkesai* are known by surviving fragments or from references by orthodox writers.

Scala

Ecce Homo
Latin meaning 'Behold the man'; the words used by Pontius Pilate when he presented Christ to the Jews, who demanded that he be crucified (John 19.5): also the name given to paintings representing Christ crowned with thorns and bound with ropes, of which there are famous examples by Tintoretto, Correggio and Titian.

Gemaldegalerie Dresden

Echo
Repetition of sound which can often be heard in high mountains: in Greek mythology the name of a mountain nymph, vainly loved by the god Pan, who in his wrath had her torn to pieces by mad shepherds, only her voice remaining: in another story Echo was doomed by Hera to repeat only what others say because she had distracted Hera's attention from Zeus's amorous affairs with her idle chatter; she was, therefore, unable to declare her love for Narcissus and sadly pined away until only her voice was left.

Giraudon

Giraudon

ECKHART

THE TRIAL OF Eckhart von Hochheim on charges of heresy opened at Cologne in September 1326. In the following year he travelled to Avignon, to be examined by a papal commission. In March 1329 a papal bull condemned as either heretical or dangerous 28 'articles', propositions drawn from his works. It also says that Eckhart had revoked them and 'at the end of his life professed the Catholic faith'. He must therefore have died late in 1328 or early in 1329.

This great German mystic, generally known as Meister (Master) Eckhart, was born c 1260. He entered the Dominican friary at Erfurt and before 1298 had been elected Prior. He was sent to the University of Paris where he received his master's degree in 1302. After holding various ecclesiastical offices in Germany, and a second stay in Paris, he taught at the friary of Strasbourg and then at the Dominican university in Cologne.

Despite the heresy trial, Eckhart's personal orthodoxy was never in question, and as the papal commission's task had been merely to examine the wording of the condemned articles, without reference to the context or to the author's intention, his immediate followers (notably Johann Tauler and Heinrich Suso in the 14th century, and Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th) could defend and continue his teaching. All the same, it was very often regarded as suspect, the manuscripts of Eckhart's works in German were scattered and the manuscript collections of his Latin works were largely forgotten after the 15th century. Though Eckhart's influence was far-reaching, from the 14th century mystics until the revival of mysticism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, our knowledge of his works is still incomplete. Many historical problems and difficulties in interpretation remain, and any general survey of Eckhart's thought must be treated cautiously.

Meister Eckhart studied for his master's degree in Paris, leading the kind of life depicted in these illustrations from a 14th century MS: student priests at their devotions (*left*) and (*right*) caring for the poor

Eckhart was steeped in the Vulgate version of the Bible (the Latin translation made in about 385–405 by St Jerome), in the Church Fathers and, as a Dominican, in Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, and in Aristotle and Aristotelian tradition. He frequently refers to Pseudo-Dionysius and other mystics but his supreme authority was St Augustine. He used his philosophical and theological training, not to build a system of thought but to understand the reality of the Logos (the divine Word) which he felt claimed his and every human life, and to teach the deeply felt need to be *deiformis*, 'God-patterned'.

This comes out in his commentary on Exodus 20.21 – 'Moses went up to the darkness inside which there was God' (Vulgate). The word 'darkness', he says, can be interpreted in four ways: the troubled condition which compels a man to seek God's aid; secondly, the troubled condition of a man when God is with him, citing the prayer of St Bernard of Clairvaux that 'if thou art with us, grant that I may always be in a troubled condition, so that I may always be worthy of having thee with me'; thirdly, the troubled condition that separates the 'imperfect', who only follow God as long as he calls them to honours and wealth, from the 'perfect' who will accept hardships and misfortunes and follow the Lord unconditionally; and finally 'the immensity and the supreme excellence of the divine light'.

It was not that there is any darkness in or around God: on the contrary, it is his very light that dazzles the mind, so that knowledge of God who is above all that can be known is, humanly speaking, perfect ignorance. The same theme appears in Pseudo-Dionysius and in the 14th century English *Cloud of Unknowing*. (See DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE: CLOUD OF UNKNOWING.)

Eckhart stresses the necessity of being completely 'removed and pulled away from . . . all that is subject to change'. To be with God involves overcoming *imperfection* (mundane values like wealth and honour, or mundane knowledge which confines itself to phenomena that change) and reaching *perfection* (poverty, suffering and ignorance regarding self-sufficient mundane knowledge). His mysticism is a way of living and a way of thinking, not speculation or contemplation as ends in themselves, and it stems from the personal need to be with God.

The Light in Man

In one of his sermons Eckhart describes a saint as one who 'has left all things behind him and (now) takes them up at the point where they are eternal'. To refuse to be submerged in mundane life, then to see it as God-given and hence to refuse to manipulate it, but to *let it be* as God shapes it, and then to *let oneself be* God-shaped: this *letting be*, this *surrender*, frequently occurs in Eckhart, and in Boehme and his followers (see BOEHME). Eckhart quotes St Augustine who speaks of the dire poverty of the soul that desires to embrace many different things; as in a circle, where many radii meet in one centre. If you leave this centre, then 'by being scattered in many different directions, everything is lost'. The same fate befalls the spirit who 'pours himself out into the vastness of everything . . . when his own nature forces him to look everywhere for the One and does not allow him to find the many'.

Eckhart saw harmony within God and each creature, and between God and the creatures. This harmony is due to an affinity between the nature of the spirit and that of the One, of God in the fullness of his excellence. But Eckhart goes much further: man actually has within his nature something of the divine light, the divine spark; and he goes on to say, with St Augustine, that this light is inextinguishable. He emphasizes that this applies to the light in so far as it is divine, and that the soul is a mere receptacle of the divine light or wisdom. To say less would have been to put man on an equal footing with God, which Eckhart denied.

But was Eckhart being consistent? Did his search for a rational theory for his experience of God's presence in the soul push him further along a line of argument than he really intended, so that he had to reassert, somewhat artificially, the God who transcends his creatures? For he also used the concept of the *ground* of a being, whether God or creature, by which he means the oneness of a being in its hidden depths as contrasted with the diversity of aspects at the surface. It is from this inmost core of his personality, unmoved by outside agencies, that the Father gives birth to the Son. Man, too, should derive his life from his core, not from outside agencies. And it is here that God imparts himself to man through the *inner* birth of his Son. 'Hence God's ground is my ground and my ground is God's ground. Here I live my life out of my very own nature, as God lives out of his very own nature.'

Eckhart goes even further, when he maintains in his commentary on Exodus 3.14 – 'I am that I am' – that the very inclusiveness and absoluteness of God's being makes all other beings entirely dependent on him, indeed *part* of him. Then how is it possible for any being to have autonomy? Are we all simply extensions of God?

This is excluded by Eckhart's analysis of the traditional terms 'being' and 'essence' (contrasting Latin *esse*, the fact that there is a certain being, with *essentia*, the quality of its existence, what properties or attributes it possesses). In man and in other creatures, being and essence are distinct: in God they coincide. The difference between Creator and creature is thus more than one of degree. Through the very kinship of the artist with his handiwork – a comparison Eckhart often uses – and that of God who *speaks* with man who *responds*, each creature has its own status. God's being does not simply engulf everything that is not himself.

In his *Commentary on St John's Gospel*, discussing John 1.1 – 'the Word was with God and God was the Word' (Vulgate) – Eckhart compares the relationship between the Father and the Son (the Word) with that between justice and one who is just. In so far as the just man *is* just, he is identical with, or subsists in, justice. Yet the two are distinct, in the sense that justice is the exemplar, the originator, and the just one receives his just existence from it. The Father, who is the origin and exemplar, gives birth to the Son: the two are interdependent. And in the *Commentary on Ecclesiasticus* the Holy Spirit is seen as the bond of love between Father and Son. The Trinity may thus be seen as three distinct persons who depend on each other for their existence. But there is no distinction between their being and their essence. The one divine being *is*, and it is the Father giving birth to the Son in their mutual love, the Holy Spirit.

Eckhart develops the use which Thomas Aquinas had made of Aristotle's concept of the 'active intellect', which perceives objects, not as separate items but as patterns or meaningful wholes. Eckhart says that the active intellect considers objects as totalities, with the roots from which they sprang. The uniting force is love, and the active intellect participates in the union achieved by love.

In the Son, God lives in full awareness of his being. But the Son is also the 'reason' (*ratio*) that brings about the Father's intention of coming out of himself and making creatures who share with him the fact of being. They flow from God and because he makes them they share being with him, but their essence is not his. The Son, as *ratio*, engineers the coming about of orderly structure, and as active intellect he conceives the structure itself and envisages the way in which creatures will actually come about and develop within that structure. He is the Word that creates, because God speaks through him.

God is being-and-essence: his creatures have being *with* and *in* him, but essence *from* him. The Son participates fully in the divine essence, and in the essence of all creatures. The creatures also have essence, though they participate less fully in the divine essence than the Son. Their essences constitute a hierarchy, from the lowest creatures, which have being but whose essence has a very low power of participation, up to man, who has reason and intellect and a capacity for love. Man can love the Word which is Truth, and Eckhart quotes Song of Solomon 5.16 – 'This is my beloved and this is my friend' – and follows it with a passage from the 12th century author Hugh of St Victor which describes an actual state of ecstatic illuminating love.

Eckhart is quoting here, not recounting his own experience. He does not look for heights of mystical experience: he is concerned with a God-oriented life, where love prepares the ground for seeing God's creative thought realized in the Logos, the Son. In such a life, unity of being, the loving aspiration of the will and the God-discerning intellect certainly experience ecstatic heights. But these are no more than intense moments in a life spent participating in God's life.

Commenting on John 1.14 – 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' – Eckhart says that we cannot perceive an object unless its image is already impressed on our minds. Seeing the Word incarnate in Jesus is only possible when one is 'God-patterned', and this only happens because out of pure grace the Word was made flesh and dwelt *in* us. By grace the inner birth makes us the Word's adopted sons, so that

we participate in the life that he is. We are the image of the Word, and hence also of the Holy Trinity. And we see God's glory, not only as he dwells in and among us, but as the Word becomes flesh 'universally and in the course of nature, in every work of nature and of art'. For the man who is God-patterned has within himself 'all grace and all truth', as St Paul said (Romans 8.32, Vulgate): 'with himself he has given us everything'.

Eckhart's principal Latin work was probably begun during his second period in Paris, c 1311–1314, but was never finished, and only parts of it have survived. It was intended to consist of three sections: *Opus Propositionum*, basic theological propositions, of which we have only the *Prologue*; *Opus Quaestionum*, of which nothing but the title is known; and the *Opus Expositionum*, commentaries on the Bible, and a collection of sermons (*Opus Sermonum*). The whole work was to have constituted Eckhart's *Opus Tripartitum*.

In Latin, there are also a sermon preached in Paris on St Augustine's day, 1302 or 1303; a *Collatio*, or inaugural lecture, dating from between 1297 and 1300; and a number of *Quaestiones*, or disputations, from Eckhart's two periods in Paris.

In German, there are the *Talks of Instruction* given to religious communities. The *Liber Benedictus* consists of a treatise called *The Book of Divine Consolation*, written for the Queen of Hungary, and of a sermon preached before her, *The Noble Man*. Some 60 other sermons are now regarded as authentic, as well as the treatise *On Detachment*.

H. POPPER

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British Museum

ECLIPSE

MAN HAS ALWAYS REGARDED the sun with awe and reverence, not only because it is seen to be the energy source of all life, but also because of its constancy and the inflexible reliability of the cycle of day and night. This diurnal cycle has been built into the evolutionary pattern of all living things so that they respond to sunset and sunrise as if remotely controlled by the sun itself. Sunset and dawn have become the natural regulators of our activities and rest periods. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sun should be treated with respect and even worshipped, because of the security that it inspires. It is because of the unfaltering cycle of the movement of the sun across the sky that we are peculiarly sensitive to any interruption that occurs.

In the days when solar eclipses were not understood, these phenomena were the cause of great alarm and were generally ascribed to supernatural agency. Among the Romans at one time it was even considered blasphemous and held to be a legal offence to speak openly of their being due to natural causes. A total solar eclipse is indeed awe-inspiring even to experienced astronomers. The scene is set by the gradual weakening of the sunlight as the moon moves across the disc of the sun, even though the sky remains clear and blue. Just before the eclipse is total

For thousands of years astrologers have been able to predict eclipses, and usually interpreted them as omens of disaster: illustrations from a 13th century manuscript showing (*left*) an astrologer plotting an eclipse and (*above*) diagrams of the shadows cast by bodies of various sizes

British Museum

Superstitious fear has almost always been man's reaction to an eclipse of the sun or moon; in this illustration from a 15th century French manuscript, the fears of the men in Alexander the Great's army are stilled by the soothsayers, who interpret the lunar eclipse as a good omen, foretelling victory for the Macedonians in their coming battle with the Persians

the shadow can be seen bearing down at a speed of about 2000 miles an hour and the air has become unusually still. As the darkness sweeps down there is an involuntary temptation to crouch and let the shadow pass; a glance at the sun reveals the crimson prominences, like huge angry flames embedded in the pearly light of the corona. One's attention is riveted on the magnificent spectacle until suddenly the sun reappears. Dawn is repeated in the space of a few seconds and the whole world seems to come to life again.

The earliest recorded eclipse seems to have been the one that took place on 22 October 2136 BC, which is referred to in the ancient Chinese classic the *Chou King* or Book of History. Eclipses must have been observed earlier than this for the story has it that the two official astronomers of the time were taken by surprise by this one, with the result that there was insufficient time to prepare the customary rites. The normal procedure was to beat drums and gongs, shoot arrows in the air, and make a general din with the intention of frightening away the monster that threatened to devour the sun. In spite of the fact that the sun recovered from this attack the two astronomers were executed for their negligence. There are many other cases of the use of various rites to ward off the threat to the sun.

One particularly interesting case in modern times is the one recorded in a letter to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* concerning the eclipse of 29 July 1878: 'It was the grandest sight I ever beheld but it frightened the Indians badly. Some of them threw themselves upon their knees and invoked the Divine blessing; others flung themselves flat on the ground, face downwards; others cried, and yelled in frantic excitement and terror. Finally one old fellow stepped from the door of his lodge, pistol in hand, and fixing his eyes on the darkened sun, mumbled a few unintelligible words and raising his arm took direct aim at the luminary, fired off his pistol, and after throwing his arms about his head in a series of extraordinary gesticulations, retreated to his own quarters. As it happened, that very instant was the conclusion of totality.'

Solar eclipses are usually very short and the total phase cannot last longer than eight minutes. It is this transient nature of the event that seems to promote the use of some sort of ritual. No sooner have the demonstrations begun than the monster moves away and the eclipse is over. Such highly 'effective' deterrents will obviously be remembered and used again if the occasion should arise. Nowadays we expect eclipse predictions to be accurate to a fraction of a second because we understand the underlying physical principles and have studied the motions of the earth, the moon and the sun in great detail. In the story of the Chinese eclipse there is an inference that the astronomers should have known about it in advance and there is good reason for believing that crude predictions were possible in those days because of the repetitive cycle of eclipses known as the Saros.

The Babylonians discovered that there was a Saros or cycle of 223 intervals between new moons, after which eclipses of the sun and moon recur. If an eclipse is seen on a particular day, then it is certain that another will happen 18 years, 10 days and $7\frac{3}{4}$ hours later which may be visible from the same place but which will not have the same appearance. On average there are 41 eclipses in the Saros cycle, and each one of these will be followed by another just over 18 years later. The Saros was almost certainly known to the Chinese and they would have used it in predetermining the dates of eclipses. The first well documented example of the use of the Saros was the prediction of the eclipse of 28 May 585 BC by Thales of Miletus, the Greek scientist and statesman, but there can be no doubt that the method was used earlier than this.

Columbus Exploited Eclipse

Obviously the ability to predict was a powerful tool in the hands of the astrologers and their readings of the sky were variously correlated with natural disasters, deaths, wars and the displeasure of the gods.

In more recent times, others have used their knowledge of eclipses to great effect. Sir Arthur Helps, in his *Life of Columbus* (1910) relates the story of how the explorer used the lunar eclipse of 2 April 1493 to obtain provisions from the inhabitants of Jamaica. At first they were reluctant to help him and he threatened them with divine vengeance, 'for that very night the light of the Moon would fail'. The natives were frightened and during the eclipse they approached Columbus and implored his intercession – with the inevitable result that the moon was restored to them and provisioning ceased to be a problem.

The only difference between lunar and solar eclipses as far as prediction and observation are concerned is that a total solar eclipse can be seen only from a narrow strip on the earth's surface across which the moon's shadow sweeps during the time of the eclipse, and which may be only about 150 miles wide. Lunar eclipses can be seen from the entire moonward hemisphere of the earth.

One would expect that some detailed knowledge of the processes causing eclipses would dispel some of the fears accompanying them, but the evidence of modern anthropologists seems to refute this. It seems that the basic reaction to a major natural disturbance like an eclipse still contains a certain amount of fear.

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ECSTASY

The Christian mystic in solitary communion with the divine and the Sufi in his frenzied dance both claim an experience of ecstasy

MYSTICS, THEOLOGIANS, psychologists and poets all have their very different interpretations of what is meant by ecstasy. The term implies a mystical experience, and is sometimes used as if it described all kinds of mystical experience in which the ordinary perception of the everyday world is surpassed. Although it need not be a religious experience, as a religious phenomenon ecstasy is often, although not invariably, induced by devotional acts such as prolonged meditation, the contemplation of particular objects, fasting or the repetition of sounds or movements. At least five senses in which the term is used may be distinguished.

The most restricted use of the concept is found within the Roman Catholic faith, most particularly in the exposition of mystical experience elaborated by St Teresa of Avila (1515–82), for whom it denoted a specific stage of the mystic's relation to God (see TERESA OF AVILA). Drawing on her own extensive mystical experience, she distinguished ecstasy as the stage following the mystic's sense of initial union with God. It was signalized by complete surrender to God; he occupied the interior of the soul and the believer became dead to the world. The ecstatic stage was followed by the betrothal of the mystic to the deity.

The state of ecstasy has often been compared to the experience of sexual union. Accompanied by the continuous sound of drumming and singing, this Voodoo worshipper dances herself into an erotic frenzy in which she may feel united with her god

Transworld Feature Syndicate

William Sargent

A man believing himself to be possessed by a god is forcibly restrained during a Voodoo ceremony in Haiti. In such a state the ecstatic feels himself raised above his physical being to a point where he loses contact with the normal world. He may well appear to assume another personality, in which case the onlookers are likely to regard his speech and behaviour as being divinely inspired

Not all Roman Catholic mystics and theologians have followed this restricted usage. More generally, others have described as ecstasy almost any experience of a transcendent reality in which the individual has the impression of being united with the deity, or in which the spirit is uplifted in contemplation of a religious subject. For these writers ecstasy lies in the union of two separate and different entities – man and God – in which God is transcendent but, in rare and special instances and in personified form, is briefly united with the worshipper.

There is a broader conception of ecstasy which is not specifically Christian. Here ecstasy is any mystical experience in which the individual attains a heightened awareness of deity and gains knowledge that he does not normally possess, and in which he has a sense of elevation above his physical being and surroundings to a point where he becomes unresponsive to normal sensory stimuli – insensitive to pain, for instance.

Associated with this last usage, but more extensive, is the use of the word ecstasy to describe the experience of those who are involved in collective behaviour of a frenzied and uncontrollable kind. Epidemics of pathological behaviour have been common in Christian history, beginning perhaps with the talking in unknown tongues in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts chapter 2) and in Caesarea (Acts chapter 10). Among many dramatic incidents in medieval times, the dancing epidemics of religiously inspired crowds in Italy in the 14th century (see DANCING MANIA), the convulsions widely experienced in parts of France in the 18th century (see CONVULSIONARIES), and the 'preaching sickness' which affected many people in Scandinavia in the 19th century have all been regarded as manifestations of religious ecstasy. So have the phenomena that attended early revivalist meetings. John Wesley, although himself unsure of the cause, recorded over a hundred cases of people being dramatically affected at his Methodist meetings in the 1740s; some died or went mad.

Poets and others have often described as 'ecstasy' intense moments of heightened vision and a mysterious sense of elevation. The poets William Wordsworth, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Jean Rimbaud are frequently cited in this respect, although none of them attributed his vividly recounted experiences to the agencies invoked by Christian mystics. Others, particularly Aldous Huxley, have suggested that the experience to be gained by the use of drugs (in his case, mescalin) is similar to that undergone by mystics.

It is clear that the word ecstasy may relate to a range of mystical experiences or dramatic social behaviour. This divergence arises in part from the difficulty of comparing essentially personal experiences. Similar subjective experience may be interpreted in highly different ways according to personal temperament, to the religious and mystical traditions of the society of the person involved, and to his acquaintance with those traditions. In this area where religious ideas, subjective experience and social behaviour converge there is little precise terminology and little possibility of accurate measurement.

Rapture and Ravishment

The difficulty of categorizing experience of this kind is illustrated by the extent to which Christian mysticism – and also that of the Cabala in Judaism – is heavily dependent on terms that are drawn from sexual experience and sexual union. 'Lover', 'ravishment', 'rapture', 'marriage' are all terms commonly used to describe what is involved in ecstatic experience. It may be noted that these terms give some grounds for those theories that relate the experience of ecstasy to the sexual frustrations of the fervently religious celibates who, as a class, have been most disposed to mystical experience. The idea of the lovers' union as the prototype of ecstasy itself goes back long before the Christian era.

There is no agreement as to what constitute the essentials of ecstatic experience; however, a cluster of elements recur, though by no means all of these are reported by all

Herbert List

Camera Press London

Left Member of the Jamaican obeah cult during a pocomania session: a state of trance is induced by dancing to the sound of chanting and drumming, which sometimes lasts for days at a time. Afterwards experiences in the spirit world are recounted _Right_ A young girl in a huge concert audience screams uncontrollably at a pop group, encouraged by the presence of hundreds of other girls in a similar state of frenzy and intense excitement

who claim to have experienced ecstasy. It is usually said to involve a sense of extraordinary elation, new or mystical knowledge, glory, joy, purification, a sense of union with a higher being and a loss of worldly awareness. Sometimes there is also a sense of peace, ineffability and release. There are, however, accounts of Christian mystical experience that are sometimes classed as ecstasy in which feelings of darkness prevail – for example in the accounts of the 4th century bishop Gregory of Nyssa and of St John of the Cross (1542–91). In general ecstasy is of short duration, and the traditions of Catholic mysticism suggest that it usually lasts for no more than half an hour. If, however, we take into account ecstasy as the public expression of frenzied religious experience and trance state and spirit possession, as distinct from private and silent reverie, then there are cases of ecstasy that have lasted several hours.

Indian Visionaries

There is no reason to suppose that particular psychic states are confined to any one culture, although the explanations given for such states will vary according to cultural concepts. A range of mystical experience, trance states and behaviour associated with these is found in many societies. Among American Plains Indians a young man seeks a vision as a personal experience which will provide him with direction in his life. The vision quest requires fasting, purification and the physical tortures of the Sun Dance (see GREAT PLAINS INDIANS).

Claims of personal access to religious truth are always potentially disruptive for any established orthodoxy. Although in an unorganized religion like Hinduism, in which widely divergent traditions co-exist, they cannot be regarded as heretical, even in that tradition mysticism has given rise to disputing schools. In more organized religious systems, such as Islam and more especially Christianity, mystics have usually been treated with suspicion and their experience of ecstasy regarded with caution. The mystic's experience of ecstasy had to be interpreted in terms acceptable to the Church in medieval Catholicism. The tendency of the ecstatic – found in Sufic teachings in Islam as well as in Christianity – was to claim not only temporary union with God, but essential identity with him. For his statements to this effect, Meister Eckhart stood condemned in the 14th century (see ECKHART).

Perhaps because mystical experience was described and rationalized by those already committed to the dogmas of the Church, in Christianity ecstasy has become a highly intellectualized concept, experienced most typically by the believer in isolated contemplation and not so readily seen in expressive behaviour. Perhaps because the Church was so closely identified with the civic agencies of social control, religious behaviour of a frenzied type that might claim to be ecstatic was always suspect and usually interdicted. The private mystic, whose writings might edify others, might be tolerated within the framework of Church order, but the demonstrative ecstatic who might claim authority higher than that of priests and officials was an obvious threat to public and religious authority.

In the last three centuries mystical ecstasy has been a less common phenomenon in Christian history. For long virtually confined to the enclosed life of convent or monastery, handled intellectually and recounted principally in literary form, ecstasy and mysticism generally have suffered the impress of rational patterns of thought and of social organization.

Release from the World

Roman Catholic writers, who have, understandably, had most to say about ecstasy in the Western world, have sometimes denied that such a phenomenon can properly occur in Hinduism, which is indisputably the most mystically disposed of all the great religions. Ecstasy, they argue, occurs only in the union of a believer with a transcendent personified deity. Hinduism tends to pantheism and to monism (crudely described as a belief in a single reality), rather than to

Barnaby's

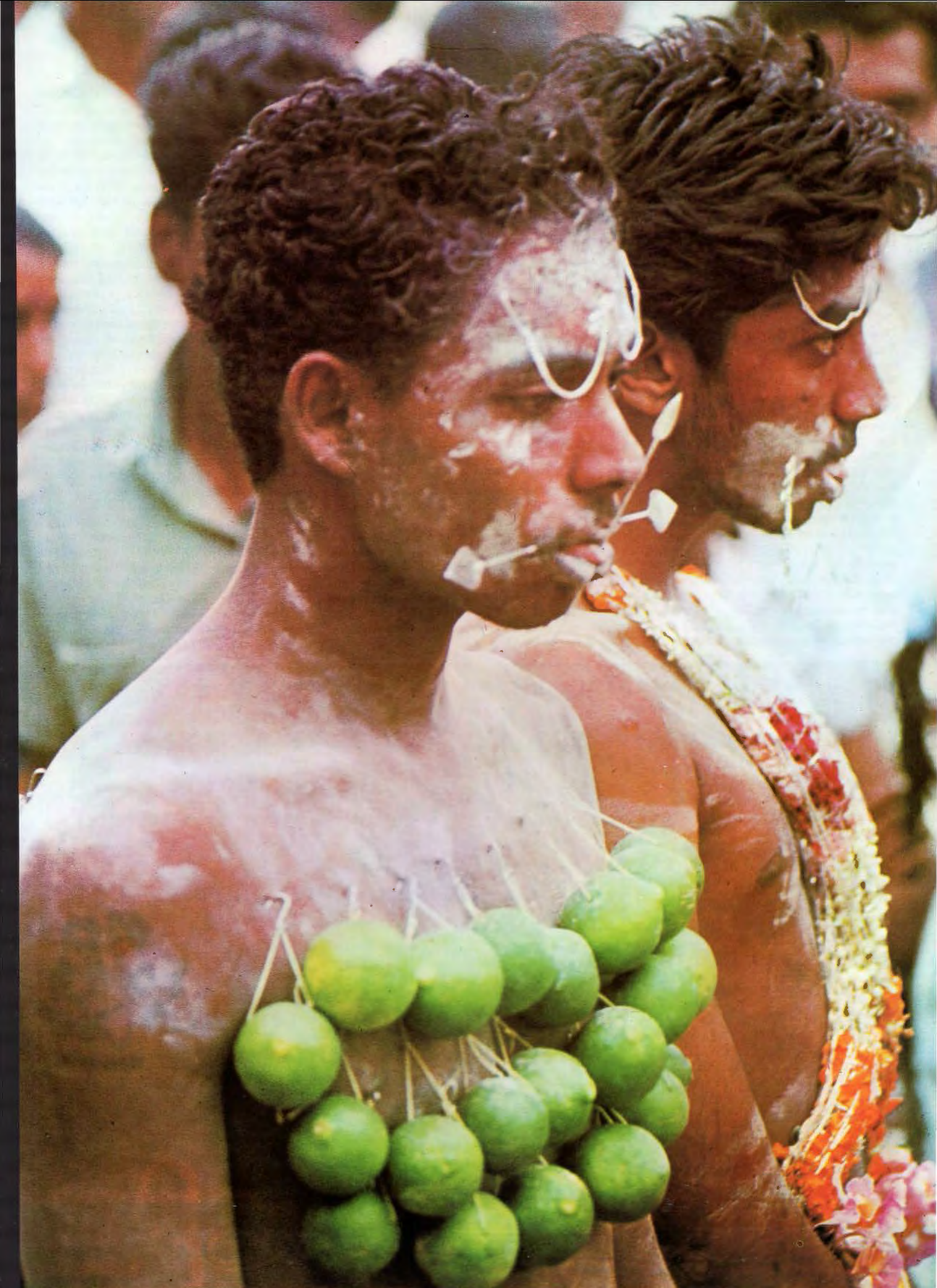
monotheism; unity, therefore, rather than temporary union, is the dominant concept in ecstatic experience.

The Catholic view ignores the extraordinary diversity in Hindu thought and is, of course, to insist on dogmatic prescriptions of psychic states. The dominant emphasis of Hindu mysticism has been on the attainment of a state of consciousness in which the believer merges with the one universal spirit, Brahman, and realizes that the sensory world is illusory. Despite divergent traditions, the dominant goal of Hindu mysticism is release from the human condition, the attainment of spiritual illumination in an ineffable experience. Intense joy, detachment from the world and self-surrender are common themes throughout Hindu mysticism, and these may likewise be called ecstasy.

Ecstasy in the narrow sense of the term was also less likely to be found in Judaism and Islam, with their more severely monotheistic and transcendental conceptions of God. Mystical experience is, however, recounted in the Old Testament, and the vision of the divine charioteer with the four mysterious living creatures recorded in Ezekiel (1. 4-28) became a prototype for ecstatic contact with the unseen world. The traditional lore of Judaism and the books of the Cabala contained a demonology, angelology and cosmology which were guides to the wise in their search for mystical and ecstatic access to God (see CABALA). The Cabalists rejected the rationalistic trend

Above **Crowds at a Hitler rally stretch out eager hands to their idol. These rallies were calculated to whip up mass frenzy by the use of music, ceremonial and the leader's remarkable powers of oratory** ***Below*** **Though the Church has tended to regard ecstatic experiences with suspicion, some Christian sects deliberately arouse states of ecstasy as part of their mode of worship. Believing themselves protected by their faith, members of the Dolly Pond Church in Tennessee handle poisonous snakes** ***Right*** **One of the penitents who parade each year through Singapore at the Festival of Thaipusan: his mouth is pierced and limes hang from hooks driven into his chest. Religious fervour can frequently make the believer insensitive to pain**

William Sargent Spectrum Colour Library



of Judaic thought in medieval Europe and used sexual symbolism to describe the soul's relation to God.

Compared with the Christian view, the Moslem conception of God is much more as a being 'wholly other'. However, in the tradition of Sufism (a mystical doctrine within Islam) both the ideals of temporary union with God, as found in Christian ecstasy, and the more pantheistic theory of continuing union of God and man, are to be found (see SUFIS). When Abu Yazid could affirm, 'I am He,' in the 9th century, he gave expression to an extreme sense of ecstasy, contrary as such ideas were to Islamic orthodoxy.

Dancing and Whirling

Visions were an integral part of this type of mysticism, and although Sufic teachings contained many discrepant ideas and some contradictions, there is a frequent return to the idea of union with God. Although not part of the original Sufic teachings, ecstasy was induced by singing and dancing in some Sufic orders, and at the popular level whirling and dancing became identified with the ecstatic state. The dance corresponds to the concentration on the cross or on relics by which ecstasy was sometimes induced in Christianity, or with the repetition of chosen *mantras*, or prayers, in Indian religious practice.

Allowing for cultural differences in behaviour some states of spirit-possession and trance might also appropriately be regarded as conditions of ecstasy. Outside the orthodox expression of Christianity there is to be found a wide incidence of such phenomena, but it is also found in movements that have been considerably affected by Christianity, of which some would be recognized as distinctly Christian. The experience of the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost' among Pentecostalists (see PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS) might be held to be an experience of ecstasy, in which the believer speaks in unknown tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit which momentarily overwhelms him. Pentecostalists speak of the 'infilling of the Spirit', which is a near-sexual symbol of the union achieved. In conformity to general Protestant tradition, however, those who have undergone this experience do not claim to have had visions. In the new independent Christian Churches in West Africa, of which the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Church of the Lord, Aladura, are among the largest, there are institutionalized occasions at many services when revelations are pronounced and, more spectacularly, dramatic and ecstatic outbursts occur in which the individual may speak with the voice of God and give commandments to the congregation.

Even more compelling are the ecstasies that are to be witnessed in the Afro-Brazilian cults of the coastal cities of Brazil. In their temples there are usually a group of priestesses who are regularly 'possessed' by one of the various African deities who have been worshipped by the Negro population since their arrival as slaves in Brazil (see BRAZIL). Frequently these deities are also identified with particular saints of the Roman Catholic Church, and most temples possess a Catholic altar as well as idols for the various deities. The priestesses, during their trances, act out the role of the deity and are thought to be entirely impervious to normal sense perceptions. Drumming, singing and dancing are the usual procedures by which the ecstatic state is induced. In ecstasy the priestesses may administer advice, attempt cures and sometimes behave wilfully and outrageously, particularly so when a group of peasant gods, known as *caboclos*, possess their votaries. This type of ecstatic performance is, of course, of much greater immediate social impact and significance than the solitary ecstasy that is the prototype of orthodox Christian mysticism.

(See also DERVISHES; ENTHUSIASM; FAKIR; HOLY ROLLERS; MYSTICISM.)

BRYAN WILSON

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Ecstatic behaviour sometimes carries an element of exhibitionism, as in the case of this Indian fakir, who is suspended by hooks while his assistant daubs the admiring crowd with ashes. Fakirs practise an extreme asceticism, often involving self-mutilation, in an attempt to acquire spiritual and magical powers

Camera Press London

Ectoplasm

A whitish substance exuding from the body of a medium in trance which gradually materializes, taking on the shape of a face or a body: it has been variously likened to muslin and liquid or paste jelly and has been observed to issue from the mouth and breast, and in the case of the famous medium Eva C., from the thumb: this kind of phenomenon has lent itself to fraudulent practice, one medium admitting that he had drawn his faces on gauze rolled in goose-fat.

See MEDIUMS.

Harry Price Library

Edda

The title given tn two separate books, the *Elder* or *Poetic Edda*, and the *Younger* or *Prose Edda* of Snorri, which together provide a major source of information about the beliefs and culture of the Scandinavians before the advent of Christianity: probably composed in Iceland in the early 13th century, they contain myths and legends associated with the principal northern gods and heroes.

Det Kongelige Bibliotek

Scandals and law suits marked the spectacular career of the woman known to her many thousands of followers as 'Mother'

MARY BAKER EDDY

THE DISCOVERER and founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, was born Mary Baker at Bow, New' Hampshire in 1821, the youngest of six children. The facts of her early life are, despite her own autobiographical recollections and many official biographies produced by the Christian Science movement, very much disputed. Her education appears to have been slight, despite her claim to have been taught Hebrew, Greek, Latin, natural philosophy and moral science by an elder brother who graduated at Dartmouth College. In later years Mrs Eddy, perhaps excusing her somewhat faulty use of language, declared that what she had learned from schoolbooks 'vanished like a dream' when she discovered Christian Science, and that 'learning was so illumined that grammar was eclipsed'.

Despite the limitations of her education, Mrs Eddy became one of the really remarkable women of the latter part of the 19th century, producing several books, of which one sold many more than a million copies, founding a Church and an international daily newspaper and influencing, through her teachings, the lives of many thousands of people.

During the course of her life she married three times, first at the age of 22 to George Washington Glover, variously described as a building contractor and as a bricklayer, by whom she had her only son; she was widowed within the year. In 1853 she married a dentist, Dr Daniel S. Patterson, whom she divorced in 1873 after he had deserted her. Her third husband, Asa G. Eddy, was a student of the then Mrs Patterson when she began to teach her mental healing system; she married him in 1877.

In the years of her first widowhood and as the wife of Dr Patterson, the founder of Christian Science lived the life of a semi-invalid; the precise nature of her complaint has remained obscure. Before her remarriage to Dr Patterson she became preoccupied with various methods of healing, and the authorized biographers suggest that her 'experiments' in these years, particularly with homoeopathy, were steps by which she became increasingly aware of the powerlessness of drugs and the power of the mind in the process of healing.

In 1862, four years before the date given by the authorities of the Christian Science movement for the discovery of Christian Science, Mrs Patterson (as she then was) went as a patient to Phineas P. Quimby in Portland, Maine. Until his death in 1866 she was a regular patient of his, once staying for some months under his care. Quimby's system of healing was without doubt the most important influence on Christian Science as Mrs Eddy later developed it. Quimby got his ideas from Charles Poyen, a French mesmerist who had travelled in New England. The doctor had originally practised with the aid of a medium, but subsequently came to believe that what cured his patients was the process of changing their thought. Quimby began a practice of mental healing, manipulating the heads of his patients but trusting to the mental rather than the manipulative elements in his system. The notes he wrote on his practice were published many years later by one of his students. Quimby wrote of a Christ Science of healing; he believed his methods to he those employed by Jesus; and he held that good thoughts would drive out bad. From this Mary Patterson acquired her first ideas about Christian Science, although she was subsequently equivocal about her relationship with P. P. Quimby and her indebtedness to him.

Despite the many similarities between the ideas expressed in *Science and Health*, the Christian Science textbook which she first published in 1875, and the ideas of P. P. Quimby, there are also distinct differences. In particular, Christian Science embraces a much more distinct and consistent philosophical ideal. The source of Mrs Eddy's idealism has been disputed, but it seems likely that she was introduced to popularized versions of the work of Berkeley, Kant and Hegel by one of her students. She was not above plagiarism, as is apparent from her borrowings from Carlyle, Ruskin and other authors. But whatever notions she acquired from the idealists, Mrs Eddy appears to have feared the identification of her healing system with that of Quimby more than anything else. She tried to disown the association, then reinterpreted it. She always made the strongest attacks on spiritualism and animal magnetism (associated with mesmerism: see CHRISTIAN SCIENCE), which had given rise to Quimby's original ideas. If the diaries of Calvin Frye, her secretary for the last years of her life, may be relied upon, Mrs Eddy was in those years 'haunted by the suggestion that she must confess that she "got it" from Quimby or she would be damned'. Certainly Mrs Eddy was almost obsessed with fears of plagiarism: she copyrighted her works; brought those who plagiarized her writings to court; and forbade her students to take notes during instruction.

Claimed Divine Revelation

The official Christian Science version of the discovery of her system, as given in the various biographies of Mrs Eddy authorized by the Directors of the Mother Church, is that in early 1866, after a fall on ice which she later claimed had been thought to be fatal, she prayed and after three days was able to walk again. Mrs Eddy subsequently claimed this as the occasion of her discovery of Christian Science, but at the time she was much less certain, and within two weeks of the accident she wrote to another of P. P. Quimby's students pleading for his mental help in her affliction. In retrospect this incident, so nearly coincident with the death of Quimby in the previous month, which marked the beginnings of her work as an independent healer, became interpreted as the occasion of her revelation. It was, however, some years before this version of the facts was published and her relationship with Quimby relegated in importance. Her subsequent success was undoubtedly related to her own growing claims to be the sole discoverer of her system and, indeed, the recipient of a divine revelation: she regarded God as the author of the textbook of Christian Science and her teachings as 'uncontaminated and unfettered by human hypotheses'.

The early students of Mrs Eddy were largely recruited from people with a strong predisposition towards the occult. She lodged with spiritualists and advertised her method of healing as a new and rewarding profession. Few of her early pupils remained loyal, however, and the stormy relationships

described in the various biographies suggest that Mrs Eddy either had a tendency to attract unstable people to herself and her system, or that she was herself a woman of difficult temperament. Students left her, charging her with love of money and bad temper, and sometimes these episodes prompted her to litigation or, more often, accusing the apostate of 'mental malpractice' – the deliberate misuse for evil ends of the mental suggestion to which Christian Science attributes so much power.

Only when she moved to Boston, and to some extent ceased to have day-to-day relations with her followers, did Christian Science begin to thrive and acquire respectability. Scandals still persisted, some of them of a kind which might have been thought to bring irredeemable discredit on the movement. Mrs Josephine Woodbury, for instance, taking to heart Mrs Eddy's spiritual teaching and emphasis on chastity, gave birth to a son whom she declared to be immaculately conceived, and whom she christened the Prince of Peace. This was too direct a challenge to Mrs Eddy's authority. She, despite her idealist teaching, remained throughout her life a practical woman with a strong sense of reality. She disbelieved Mrs Woodbury's claim, said so, and had to fight a libel action about the language which she used to describe the episode. Another follower, Mary Plunkett, induced her husband to join her in announcing the dissolution of their marriage in one of the Christian Science periodicals. Her subsequent, and highly dramatic, proclamation of spiritual marriage to another Christian Scientist brought her expulsion from the movement. Mrs Eddy's austere views on sex received less emphasis in later years, although some who claimed to be loyal followers continued, although married, to lead nun-like lives for years after Mrs Eddy's death.

The Movement Grows

Neither these unconventional ideas, nor a remarkable sequence of disorders in the ranks of Christian Scientists, prevented the movement from growing and thriving in the last two decades of the 19th century. In the late 1880s Mrs Eddy gradually inaugurated a complete change in its government, withdrawing from active participation in it but retaining the right to intervene on any point in its affairs when she felt guided to do so. She wrote, and frequently revised, a *Manual* for the government of the Church which, in addition to preserving certain prerogatives of hers (which 60 years after her death still technically remain in force), established a Board of Directors to control the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, and established all other churches as branches of it. She took steps to control the church pastors and independent teachers of Christian Science who had become active, and subjected all to the Board of Directors.

Her own removal from the scene of operations undoubtedly encouraged the growth of innumerable stories about Mrs Eddy which circulated among her adherents. To be called to attend her became a very rare and

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The personality of Mary Baker Eddy, a woman of limited education but strong character, still dominates the Christian Science movement. A legend in her lifetime, she claimed miraculous powers of healing and direct revelation from God

distinguished privilege in the movement, and to serve in her household, even in a menial capacity, the equivalent of an education in Christian Science by the more formal method of courses which she had instituted.

She took an active part in the complicated legal decisions which arose in connection with the building of her church in Boston, where the room in which she stayed for one night has been kept as a type of shrine for Christian Scientists, known as 'Mother's Room'. Only a few years after this church was built, and perhaps to eclipse the immense success of one of her students, Mrs Augusta Stetson, the moving genius in building a large new church on New York's fashionable Riverside Drive, Mrs Eddy authorized a two million dollar extension of the Mother Church. Most impressively of all, only two years before she died, she ordered the Christian Science Publishing Society to produce an international daily paper, *The Christian Science Monitor*, which has perhaps done more to establish and sustain the prestige of the movement than any other of Mrs Eddy's amazing accomplishments.

By the turn of the century, Mrs Eddy and her movement had become a modern wonder, even in the United States with its capacity for novelty in a vigorous, expansionist age. Wildly exaggerated claims in the daily press about the size of the movement sustained public interest. (Mrs Eddy was commonly said to have probably a million adherents in 1906, when, in fact, the Mother Church had only 40,000 members, and when the United States census counted only 65,000 Christian Scientists in the whole country.) Publicity was not, however, always favourable.

Mrs Eddy found criticism as difficult to bear as the rivalry to her own leadership that she discerned in the considerable achievements of her own students, such as Mrs Woodbury and Mrs Stetson. Hostile critics were not to be tolerated, and Mrs Eddy forbade her followers to patronize bookshops or publishers who sold 'obnoxious books', by which she meant books critical of herself and Christian Science. The rule has remained in the Church *Manual*.

Accounts of Mrs Eddy as an individual have varied widely. The evidence of her own uncorrected prose suggests untutored vigour, ambition and half-digested ideas. She did not espouse a particularly austere code in her private life, though she eschewed coffee, tea, alcohol and tobacco. She was very much a patriot, and saw no objection to dealing in stocks and shares, which she did extensively with the fortune she accumulated. She had no particular interest in the theatre or in culture, which is perhaps understandable given the circumstances in which she lived all her early life, but she did not forbid cultural interests to her followers.

Despite the emphasis of her teachings, and the absolute denial of the efficacy of drugs or medical practice, Mrs Eddy wore glasses in later life, visited the dentist and certainly used drugs. Her own reputation as a mental healer is largely based on a number of dramatic, and mainly self-recounted, occasions of healing. The healings are largely unauthenticated by medical testimony – a circumstance which Christian Scientists attribute to the hostility of medical practitioners to mental healing. Certainly there were widely reported healings on the dramatic occasion of Mrs Eddy's speech in Chicago in 1888.

Personality Still Dominant

Speculation about Mrs Eddy's successor inevitably arose towards the end of her life. She herself had said that she would be succeeded by a man, and had subsequently said that she referred to no man then living. Some of her followers looked for her resurrection after her death, but this prospect was not encouraged by the Board of Directors of the Mother Church who, in fact, inherited Mrs Eddy's authority. The movement withstood her death in 1910 without immediate disruption, despite the difficulty of adjusting to the fact of its leader's death by a Church officially believing that man should demonstrate that death had no claims on him. The bitter divisions and protracted litigation which followed in the next decade arose largely from the very inadequate instruments of government which Mrs Eddy bequeathed to her movement. Despite these troubles, which may have much affected the growth of Christian Science and which certainly made clear its authoritarian character, there is no doubt that the personality of Mrs Eddy is still dominant within the Christian Science movement.

(See CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.)

BRYAN WILSON

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Michael Holford/Horniman Museum

According to one tradition from Central Europe, the Virgin Mary dyed eggs in various pretty shades to amuse the infant Jesus; since then eggs have been decorated at Easter with elaborate and colourful designs

Few people who follow the ancient custom of giving eggs at Easter remember that the egg is a symbol of new life and fertility, appropriate to a spring festival celebrating the Resurrection of Christ

EGG

THE SIGHT of a young bird suddenly breaking out from what seemed a lifeless object encouraged ancient peoples to speculate about the nature of creation. The egg became a symbol of life. Early man was unable to grasp an abstract idea like the creation of the world but he could watch a parallel process in the hatching of an egg. The idea of a 'world egg' which produced the first creator followed from this, and it appears in many early creation myths (see BIRDS). Ancient Egyptian writings describe how the sun god Re was born from an egg. In Hindu mythology the golden world egg is called *hiranyagarbha*; it hatches Brahma, the sun, and he forms the universe from its component parts. The Chinese have a legend that the first being, P'an Ku, appeared from the cosmic egg, and in Oceania various legends ascribe the origin of man to birds' eggs.

The emblem of life became a popular fertility symbol. In some countries peasants carry eggs into the fields as a magic charm to increase the crop and double the yield of grain. The Scots used to put a nail and an egg in the bottom of the sowing basket and pile seed corn on top. The egg represented the corn 'as full of substance as an egg is full of meat'. Slavs and Germans smeared the plough with egg on Green (Maundy) Thursday, a festival of spring and renewal, hoping to ensure a good crop.

Eggs are seen as such powerful fertility charms that they are used to correct various types of impotence and sterility. In Péc, a town in Serbia, pain in the testicles is relieved by an application of fried eggs

sprinkled with sal ammoniac. The same treatment is said to restore lost virility. In Morocco, a man wishing to increase his sexual capacity eats an egg yolk every morning for 40 days. A childless Hungarian woman mixes a little of her husband's blood with the white of an egg and the white speck from the yolk. This mixture is stuffed inside a dead man's bone and buried in a spot where the husband will urinate; then the woman will conceive. According to a traditional Hungarian saying, a man with a big family has 'mixed his blood with eggs'.

Because they contain new life, the seeds of the future, eggs are often used in divination. A popular method of discovering one's future husband was to pierce the shell at Hallowe'en, New Year, or some other significant occasion, and catch the white in a glass of water. The shapes which formed were studied carefully and interpreted; in France the egg was broken on someone's head. Girls in Scotland and Ireland removed the yolk from a hardboiled egg and filled the cavity with salt. If the charm was to work effectively it all had to be eaten, including the shell. This was done at midnight and no water might be drunk before the morning. If the girl dreamed that her lover was bringing some, it meant she was going to be jilted.

To Sea in an Egg-Shell

Many people in the United States invert the shell of a boiled egg after they have eaten it, and smash the other end. This is a relic of the idea that witches used unbroken shells as a means of transport – to fly through the air or sail over the sea. Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) says: 'They (witches) can go in and out at auger-holes, and sail in an egg-shell . . . through and under the tempestuous seas.'

Ceremonial burial of an egg is quite common in the Middle East. Moroccans who wish to drive someone insane empty an egg and write the name of a jinn, or spirit, around the shell with a mixture of saffron, fig juice and egg white. The contents of the egg are then mixed with gunpowder and put back. If the egg is buried where the victim habitually walks, the charm will drive him out of his mind. Should the parents of a newborn Moroccan baby omit the customary gift of money to

Newcastle Museum of Antiquities

Ronan Picture Library

Left **According to a famous Greek myth, Leda, having been seduced by Zeus in the guise of a swan, produced two eggs: out of the first came the twins, Castor and Pollux, and the second contained Helen and Clytemnestra: detail from a painting by a follower of Leonardo da Vinci** ***Above right*** **The world egg which produced the creator is a common motif. This 3rd century representation of the birth of Mithras shows the god within an egg-shaped cavity, emerging from a broken shell** ***Below right*** **A symbolic drawing of the 'philosophers' egg', from a treatise by the 17th century alchemist Michael Maier. The 'philosophers' egg', represented by the circle and the stem, was a sealed egg-shaped vessel in which alchemical reactions took place, and from which the Philosophers' Stone was thought to emerge**

Scala

the local schoolmaster so that his pupils can have a holiday, the boys take their revenge. They secretly dig a hole outside the parents' door and steal an egg from their chickens. The egg is interred and a chapter of the Koran recited over it, as is the custom at a funeral. When the mother walks over this her child is doomed to die and she herself will be permanently afflicted with an issue of blood.

In parts of the United States, folk medicine gives a way to erase a birthmark: rub it with a fresh egg each morning for seven days, burying the eggs under the doorstep.

Eggs are also used in protective magic as a guard against the Evil Eye. In north Albania, when a child is born the neighbouring women call and bring eggs to the mother as a gift. If the new arrival is a boy they take an even number: two, four, six or eight. If it is a girl the number will be odd: one, three, five or seven. One of the eggs is smashed and thrown across the infant's face to guard it from the Evil Eye. In southern Macedonia (Greece), 40 days after a birth the mother takes her baby to be 'churched'. On her way back she calls at the homes of the sponsor and closest relations. If the child is a boy the woman of the house takes an egg and, passing it over the infant's face, blesses it, saying, 'Mayest thou live, my little one. Mayest thou grow old, with hoary hair and eyebrows, with a hoary beard and moustache.' The ancient Mayans used eggs to cure, or counteract, the Evil Eye in a simple ritual where the priest would break the egg and the victim would gaze at it as if it were an eye, burying the egg afterwards.

The Easter Egg

A great number of traditions have grown up around the custom of giving Easter eggs, but we do not know precisely when or where this custom originated. A grave excavated at Worms, Germany, and dated about 320 AD, contained two goose eggs painted with stripes and dots, but local archaeologists were unable to say whether the burial was Christian. As early as the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 AD) eggs were forbidden during Lent: hence they became a special treat when the long fasting period was over. Decoration of eggs for Easter existed in Poland before the 11th century and, in England, the household accounts of King Edward I contain an entry for 18 pence spent on the purchase of 450 eggs, to be coloured or covered with gold leaf and given to members of the royal household.

In England before the Reformation eggs were used in church ceremonies, the appearance of the new bird from its shell being compared to Christ arising from his tomb at the Resurrection. In Old Russia we find similar ideas. The tradition of giving Easter eggs was immensely important and one legend traces the custom to St Mary Magdalene who, it is said, was arrested by a centurion in Alexandria; she gave him an egg and he let her pass. Another version describes how she presented one to the Roman emperor as a token of Christ's Resurrection.

In France and certain other Catholic countries, during the silence of the church bells from Maundy Thursday until Easter, children are told that the bells have gone to the Pope in Rome to fetch the Easter eggs. Paschalia, the Easter spirit, is supposed to bring them in Greek Macedonian homes. In fact the parents slip red eggs under the younger children's pillows after attending midnight Easter Mass. In Westphalia, Germany, an Easter fox brings the eggs. Often, and more logically, it is a bird: Swiss children watch for the arrival of the Easter cuckoo. Elsewhere in Europe the Easter hare lays eggs in one's house or garden; in America it has become the Easter rabbit. Said to be sacred to Eastre, an obscure Germanic spring goddess, the hare – a prolific breeder – was a symbol of fertility.

Sometimes the Easter eggs would be kept throughout the year to bring good luck, and in the Balkans people supposed that Easter eggs had power to repel evil spirits. They were buried in the fields to protect the crops. The Poles hung the shells in their fruit trees to increase the yield or scattered them in corners of their rooms to keep out insects and toads. Even the water in which they were boiled was carefully saved and poured across the entrance to the cowshed. This would prevent a witch from coming in and stealing the milk.

Decorating the Eggs

In Central and Eastern Europe colouring Easter eggs is especially important and there are many legends seeking to explain how the custom arose. Ukrainians often use blue dots in their designs, which they call the tears of the Virgin Mary. They say that she took a basket of coloured eggs as a gift for Pontius Pilate, in the hope of persuading him to show mercy towards Jesus. But in her grief as she prepared them she wept, and her tears fell upon the shells, forming brilliant dots of colour. Poles tell their children that she dyed eggs in various pretty shades, red, green and yellow, to amuse the infant Jesus; since then Polish women have dyed them, but at Easter, not Christmas, for the Resurrection theme is the underlying reason for the custom.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall from which he never recovered. It was natural that a character unable to survive a fall should be given the form of a fragile egg

Mary Evans Picture Library

In countries of the Orthodox faith, the most popular colour for dying eggs is plain red. The Rumanians explain this with a story of the Virgin Mary leaving a basket of plain eggs at the foot of the cross on the original Good Friday. They were a gift for the soldiers there, so that they might be a little kinder to her son. But the basket was ignored and after a time the blood of Christ flowed down and stained the eggs red. Even today Balkan peasants say that the red colour represents the blood of Christ.

Apart from these plain eggs, peasants of Central and Eastern Europe produce very elaborate patterns with the wax-resist technique. The artist uses a crude wooden pen filled with melted wax to trace patterns on the shell. Areas covered by the wax remain undyed when the egg is dipped in colouring. Designs utilizing as many as seven colours can be created by this method. Other types of decoration involve appliqué work.

The Poles glue paper shapes to the surface of the shell, and in Serbia they use little circles of coiled metal or tufts of brightly coloured wool. These elaborate eggs were sometimes presented as tokens of love by a young girl to her sweetheart. As many as a hundred might be given and, if a girl felt that the work was beyond her, she employed a local woman to do it. Factory-made chocolate eggs are a comparatively recent innovation, first popular in the time of our grandparents.

A traditional English technique for colouring eggs was to tint them with dyes made from plants or to press flowers against the shell. The Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere contains a few eggs decorated for the poet's grandchildren in the 1860s by the family gardener. It is unusual to see such historic specimens, since they generally became casualties of the Easter games. Egg rolling is the best-known game, still practised in America and in scattered parts of northern England and Scotland.

Many superstitions concerning eggs prevail in the United States. Farmers advise against setting a hen in May, or placing an even number of eggs under a hen. Eggs set by a woman will be pullets, but those taken to the nest in a man's hat will be cocks. An egg marked with a black cross will keep weasels away. Eggs laid on Friday are said to cure stomach-ache. It is said to be unlucky to take hen's eggs in or out of a house after sunset, or to bring birds' eggs inside at any time. Dreaming of eggs foretells good luck, or a wedding; a dream of broken eggs portends a lovers' quarrel; a dream of a lapful of eggs, not surprisingly, is an omen of riches to come. An old belief from the South says that placing eggs under your parents' bed will make them quarrel.

VENETIA NEWALL

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EGYPT

The sun's disc was to be worshipped before all the animal-headed gods of Egypt. So declared the Pharaoh Akhenaten, in one of the most remarkable episodes in the 3000 year history of Egyptian religion

TWO FACTORS have conspired to give ancient Egypt its unique appeal: its religion and the fact that its climate has so wonderfully preserved the relics of this religion for us. Religion permeated the whole life both of the individual Egyptian and of Egyptian society. It found expression in such a rich variety of forms that Egyptian religion provides the best introduction to the historical and comparative study of religion. Almost every aspect of religious faith and practice is found in this ancient religion: polytheism, henotheism (the worship of a single god), monotheism (belief that there is only one God), mythology, magic, ritual, divine kingship, mighty temples and mysterious tombs, a professional priesthood, illustrated religious texts, a wisdom literature and religious scepticism. It also embraced the most elaborate funerary cult, magical resurrection and a complex afterlife, and the earliest conception of a judgement after death. Although now extinct, Egyptian religion was the longest-lived religion yet recorded; it was already in being in 3000 BC and it survived until the forcible suppression of pagan cults by the Christian emperor Theodosius in 384.

Egyptian religion is well documented. There is an abundance of texts inscribed on the walls of tombs, temples, obelisks, statues and stelae (stone memorial slabs), or painted on coffins or written on papyrus scrolls. They range in date from the Pyramid Texts of c 2400 BC (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) to texts of the 4th century AD.

Above **Three *ankhs* or looped crosses, worn by the living as charms to prolong life and buried with the dead to ensure their resurrection, are carried by the goddess of happiness in a procession of gift-bearing gods. Bas relief of about 2700 BC *Following page* The goddess Isis spreads out her winged arms in a protective gesture, at the foot of a gold coffin enclosing the mummy of Tutankhamen. Isis was often depicted as a guardian of the dead**

Werner Forman

Michael Holford

Left **An avenue of ram-headed sphinxes led to the great temple of Amun-Re at Karnak near Thebes. The ram was the symbol of Amun and his soul was believed to be enshrined in a ram-headed sphinx, the embodiment of wisdom, mystery and power** ***Right*** **Souls pay homage to the sun god Re, whom the Egyptians conceived under various imaginative forms. As Re-Harakhti he was associated with an ancient sky god and was depicted as a falcon or falcon-headed man crowned with the sun's disc. Detail from the Papyrus of Anhai in the British Museum** ***Far right*** **On the same papyrus the sun god is shown in another form, as the beetle Khepri with the solar disc; the scarab beetle was thought to be born spontaneously and therefore became an apt symbol for the rising sun**

Monuments such as pyramids, temples and tombs have often been so well preserved that their ritual use can be easily traced. Temples and tombs were adorned with ritual scenes, and tombs with depictions of the underworld, all of which provide a vivid picture of Egyptian deities, worship and belief about the next world.

The immense duration of Egyptian religion makes it necessary to know something of the course of Egyptian history, especially since Egyptologists use their own chronological scheme in making reference to various periods. This scheme is founded on a dynastic framework; the dynasties concerned are royal, but it is not certain why the various groups of monarchs are so related to each other. The dates given here are approximate, since only rarely can an Egyptian date be definitively established. The Thinite Period (3200–2780 BC), comprising Dynasties 1–2, marks the beginning of the united kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt under pharaonic rule. The Old Kingdom (2780–2280 BC), comprising Dynasties 3–6, was the pioneering period of Egyptian civilization, known as the Pyramid Age. The First Intermediate Period (2280–2052 BC), comprising Dynasties 7–10, was a time of social revolution when royal power was seriously weakened. At the time of the Middle Kingdom (2052–1778 BC), comprising Dynasties 11–12, the political centre had moved to Thebes in Upper Egypt; this was a period of great literary activity. The Second Intermediate Period (1778–1567 BC), Dynasties 13–17, was a time of national eclipse, when Egypt was subjugated by Asiatic invaders. The New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC), Dynasties 18–20, was the period of Egypt's greatest imperial expansion; Tutankhamen was a minor king of the 18th Dynasty. The Late Period (1085–330 BC), Dynasties 21–30, was a period of national decline, when Egypt suffered from Assyrian and Persian invasions; the last native Egyptian pharaoh was Nectanebo (359–341 BC). During the Ptolemaic or Hellenistic Period (330–30 BC), Egypt was ruled by Greek (Macedonian) monarchs, the last of whom was the famous Cleopatra. After her death, Egypt was incorporated into the Roman Empire; this was the Roman Period (30 BC–641 AD). The main pattern of its religion continued, with the Roman emperors taking the place of the pharaohs, until it was finally suppressed in favour of Christianity in 384 AD. Certain elements of the ancient faith passed into Coptic Christianity, which survived the Islamic conquest of Egypt in 641 AD and the subsequent conversion of the Egyptian people to Islam.

Two natural features have always dominated life in Egypt, namely, the River Nile and the sun; from them stemmed two of the basic themes of ancient Egyptian religion. Egypt has been aptly described as a land having length but no breadth. The description is not quite accurate, because the Delta area is certainly extensive; but south of Cairo, Egypt really consists of two strips of irrigable land on either bank of the Nile, with the desert stretching away on each side. The land consequently divides into two distinctive parts: Lower Egypt, comprising the Delta area, and Upper Egypt, formed of the long narrow Nile valley. The fertility of the land depends absolutely upon the annual flooding of the Nile and the careful control and conservation of its life-giving waters. This entails the construction and maintenance of elaborate irrigation works. Consequently a strong centralized government, uniting Upper and Lower Egypt under one rule and able to direct the country's labour resources, has always been essential to the economic and social well-being of the people. Such a government was first established about 3000 BC by princes of This, in Upper Egypt, and the achievement was so important that the Egyptians looked back to this union of Upper and Lower Egypt as the starting point of their national life.

Pharaoh, the God on Earth

Because the pharaoh (a title derived from *per* meaning 'house' and *aa* meaning 'great') was so essential to the well-being of the land, he came to be regarded as divine. According to a tradition that arose in the Old Kingdom, he was believed to be son of the sun god, and therefore the deity's representative upon earth. The pharaoh was accordingly regarded as the owner of Egypt (in Egyptian *Kemi*, the 'black land'), and the mediator between the people and the sun god. A royal insignia and ritual proclaimed his unique status. When he died,

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Two natural features have always dominated life in Egypt, the River Nile and the sun; from them stemmed two of the basic themes of ancient Egyptian religion

or rather ascended to the sky to join his divine father, his body had to be enshrined in a great tomb, served by a mortuary temple. The pyramids were the distinctive tombs of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom.

Because the sun so insistently dominates the daily scene in Egypt, it was venerated under the name of Re (Egyptian-Coptic for 'sun') as the supreme state deity, intimately associated with the monarchy. Known as the 'Great God', Re was conceived under various highly imaginative forms. As Re-Horakhti, an ancient falcon or falcon-headed sky god called 'Horus of the horizon' was associated with the sun god. Re-Horakhti was represented in art as a falcon-headed man, crowned with the solar disc; sometimes this form of the deity was depicted as the solar disc, encircled by two serpents, between the outstretched wings of a falcon. As the sun at dawn, Re was represented as a beetle (*Khepri*) or a beetle-headed man. This strange concept had a subtle significance. 'Khepri' derived from the word *kheper*, meaning 'to become or exist', so that Re-Khepri indicated both the rising sun and the sun as the self-existent creator of the universe. The declining sun was Re-Atum, shown as an aged man of wise counsel; the word 'Atum' conveyed some idea of 'completion'. Atum was the god of Heliopolis, the old centre of sun worship.

Since Re, as the state god, was essentially connected with the kingship of the pharaohs, it was inevitable that his cult should be affected by political changes in Egypt. During the Old Kingdom period, he was worshipped as Re-Atum in his ancient home at Heliopolis, where his temple was supposed to mark the primeval hill where he began the work of creation. When the political capital was moved to Thebes in Upper Egypt, during the Middle Kingdom, Re was associated with the local god of Thebes, Amun. Amun-Re was represented in art as a man wearing a cap, surmounted by two plumes and the solar disc. The great pharaohs of the New Kingdom were zealously devoted to Amun, building at Thebes for his worship huge temples, richly endowed, so that Amun became in effect the sole state god. This exaltation of Amun eventually produced one of the most interesting, though obscure, episodes in the whole of Egyptian history.

The Heretic King

It would seem that the priests of Heliopolis, the ancient cult centre of Re-Atum, attempted to combat the exaltation of Amun by promoting the worship of Re untrammelled by association with another god. Accordingly they proclaimed the Aten, the sun's disc, as the symbol of supreme deity. Meanwhile at Thebes the enormous power acquired by the priesthood of Amun had begun to challenge the royal power. When Amenhotep IV (1372–1354 BC) ascended the throne, he gradually set about supplanting Amun as the supreme deity by the Aten. This king, who soon changed his name to Akhenaten ('Pleasing to the Aten'), was a strange genius whose devotion to the Aten bordered on fanaticism. He moved his capital from Thebes, the stronghold of Amun, to a new city named Akhetaten ('Horizon of the Aten'), where he built a magnificent temple to his god, similar in plan to that at Heliopolis. He expressed his devotion in hymns to the Aten and he had himself frequently portrayed, together with his beautiful wife Nefertiti and their children, worshipping the Aten, whose descending rays, ending in hands, bless the pious family. He took measures to repress the cult of Amun, even to the point of causing the deity's name to be removed from monuments. However, the attempt to reform Egyptian religion did not survive the heretic king, and his successor Tutankhamen (1354–1345 BC) was obliged to submit to Amun's supremacy and bring the court back to Thebes. The memory of Akhenaten was execrated and his monuments destroyed. The ascendancy of the Amun priesthood reached its inevitable conclusion in about 1080 BC when Herihor, the 'First Prophet of Amun', took over the royal power at Thebes. (See also IKHNATON.)

The third main theme of Egyptian religion was constituted by the funerary cult which centred on the god Osiris. This was essentially concerned with the spiritual needs of individuals, which were not served by the state religion. Osiris, the divine hero who died and rose again, had an intimate personal appeal and, since it was believed that resurrection to eternal life could be achieved through ritual assimilation to him, he came increasingly to dominate Egyptian religion; his cult was the longest lived of all those of the Egyptian deities.

The earliest texts record a multiplicity of gods and goddesses. The majority were local deities but some achieved a nation-wide recognition. Amun is a case in point: the political supremacy of Thebes made him the supreme state god. Most local deities, like Bast, the cat goddess of Bubastis, and Sebek, the crocodile god of the Faiyum, had their chief sanctuary in their place of origin, with which they remained essentially associated; sometimes their cult might be accorded a limited observance in one or two other places. The origin of these local deities is unknown. The fact that many of them had animal forms or animal heads has suggested the theory of their derivation from ancient totems; but there is no certain evidence that totemism existed as an institution in early Egypt, and many other local deities cannot be explained in this way.

Of the major deities after Re, Osiris and Amun, whose worship was generally observed throughout the land, Horus and Isis enjoyed the widest recognition. Horus was a complicated deity who, under certain forms, achieved the status of a state god. His solar aspect as Re-Horakhti, under which he was associated with Re the sun god, was paralleled by another of equal importance but of confusing significance, especially since the two aspects became combined in one single deity. In the Osirian mythology Horus is the posthumous son of Osiris; who avenges his father's death and inherits his kingdom. Since the Egyptians identified a deceased king with Osiris, and his son and successor with Horus, the latter came to be regarded as the divine prototype of the reigning pharaoh.

In the Osirian mythology the god Seth figures as the murderer of Osiris and the opponent of Horus, who finally overthrows him. This god, who seems originally to have been associated with storms and the desert, and so regarded as a strong and fierce being, gradually became the Egyptian god of evil. Seth is generally depicted as an animal-headed man. The animal has never been certainly identified; it has a long curved muzzle, almond eyes and sharp pointed ears. The Greeks later identified Seth with the monster Typhon.

The other chief deity of the Osirian mythology who can claim to have become, with Osiris, one of the two most popular deities of Egyptian religion, and later of Graeco-Roman society, was the goddess Isis, the wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, the daughter of Geb and Nut.

Ptah, the god of Memphis, always enjoyed a position of dignity in the Egyptian pantheon, because Memphis had been the ancient capital of the land and continued an important city. He is represented in art invariably in human form, tightly wrapped in a robe like a mummy; he wears a skull cap and holds a curiously shaped staff or sceptre. The priests of Memphis attributed to him the creation of all things, including the other gods. Memphis was also the cult centre of the Apis bull, a primitive symbol of procreative vitality, which was associated with Ptah as the manifestation of 'his blessed soul'; later the Apis was also associated with Osiris.

Hathor was a widely popular goddess, who manifested herself in various forms. As a beautiful woman, she was the divine patron of music and dancing, symbolizing the joy of life. In a bas relief at Karnak, recording the divine birth of the pharaoh Amenhotep III, Hathor is represented as animating the infant king and his *ka*, or other self, with the *ankh*, the symbol of life. The goddess was also thought of as a cow and was sometimes depicted suckling the king. She personified the sky and is often represented as a cow receiving the setting sun, an office which caused her also to be regarded as a guardian of the dead, whom she transported to the next world. But Hathor had another side to her nature: she was identified with the destructive 'Eye of Re', and as the 'Lady of Punt' she was a divine lioness. She was closely associated with Horus: her name Hathor *(Het Hor)* means 'House of Horus'. Hathor's ambivalence of character is similar to that of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar.

The Divine Scribe

The Egyptians deified the earth as a male deity, Geb; but often he was represented as a goose. In the Heliopolitan story of the creation, Geb originally lay in close embrace with Nut, the sky goddess, until separated by Shu, the god of the atmosphere (see CREATION MYTHS). The Pyramid Texts indicate that Geb was once venerated as the oldest of the gods, and the pharaohs were regarded as his successors, sitting on the 'throne of Geb'. A very

Michael Holford/British Museum

The abundance of funerary texts inscribed and painted on papyri and on the walls of tombs and coffins show the Egyptian's concern with his well-being in the afterlife. It was believed that the dead could be resurrected to eternal life through ritual assimilation to Osiris, the god of the dead, who had himself died and risen again. The Papyrus of Hunefer shows Osiris on the far left, swathed in white mummy wrappings and holding the crook and flail, emblems of supreme power. In the centre the mummy lies on its catafalque and on either side Hunefer, the royal scribe, offers worship to various divinities

different deity was Thoth, who was associated with the city of Hermopolis but acquired attributes that made him significant to all Egyptians. His appearance is one of the strangest among the many strange Egyptian deities, for on a human body he has the head of an ibis bird. Thoth was regarded as the god of wisdom and the divine scribe; he is generally represented holding the reed pen and colour palette of the Egyptian scribe. He assumed an important role in the judgement of the dead, where he recorded the verdict when the heart of the deceased was weighed. The Greeks identified Thoth with Hermes and, as Hermes Trismegistus ('Thrice-great Hermes'), he was the source of the mystic revelation incorporated into the so-called Hermetic literature of the Graeco-Roman period (see HERMETICA).

A god who deserves special mention, though he was not numbered among the greater gods of Egypt, is Bes. He was represented as a squat, dwarf-like figure with a large grinning face. He may justly be called 'the poor man's god' because of his great popularity, despite his having no cult centre. Bes was the patron of fun and music, and helped women in childbirth. In many ways he could be regarded as the god of good luck; numerous amulets shaped in his image have been found.

The Egyptians were most obviously polytheists; but there is also evidence of a tendency to henotheism, if not monotheism, among them. Most notable is the use of the expression 'the Great God' in their wisdom literature and certain inscriptions. The use of this expression, without further qualification, is significant; it shows that the Egyptians recognized one supreme deity who needed no distinguishing name. It seems certain that in the earlier period the title 'Great God' referred to Re, the sun god; later Osiris may sometimes have been so designated. Akhenaten's concept of the Aten certainly merits the description 'monotheistic'. But it seems likely that the worship of any specific Egyptian deity in its local sanctuary was a kind of henotheism; during the service, the deity concerned was conceived of as the 'one' god, there and at that moment.

Egyptian religion does not appear to have been so rich in mythology as was the religion of the contemporary civilization of Mesopotamia. It had indeed its creation myths and the fundamentally important Osirian myth. Three other myths are known which concerned Re and certain goddesses. One told how Re grew old and mankind rebelled against him. To punish them, Re sent forth his eye in the form of his daughter Hathor. So destructive was the goddess that the sun god had to make her drunk in order to stop her work of slaughter, for otherwise mankind would have been wholly exterminated. A variant version of this myth concerned the fierce goddess Tefnut, who lived as a lioness in the Nubian desert. Re, whose daughter she was, wanted her to return to him and he sent Shu and Thoth, in disguise, to persuade her to come back. On the return journey she transformed herself into a beautiful goddess at Philae, and revealed herself as Hathor at Dendera, which was her chief cult centre. The third myth told how the goddess Isis acquired her magical power. She made a serpent and caused it to bite Re. No god could cure Re in his agony; then Isis appeared and offered to relieve him on condition that he revealed his secret name to her. The tormented sun god was forced to comply and the knowledge she gained gave Isis her great power. There are a number of tales, such as that of the Two Brothers, which are full of supernatural details, but they are not true myths.

Ka, the Second Self

Religions are concerned not only with the deities who personify and explain the various manifestations of power that men encounter in the world, but also with human nature and destiny. The ancient Egyptians' concern with their personal destiny found expression in their elaborate mortuary cult. This cult presupposed a very complicated view of human nature. The individual person was conceived as a mixture of the physical and spiritual, made up of several constituents. The *ka* was a kind of *alter ego* or double, created at conception together with the person whose ka it was. Egyptian texts give conflicting information about the nature of the ka and where it existed during the lifetime of the individual concerned. In art it was depicted as an exact replica of the individual, from whom it was distinguished by the ka symbol – shown as two arms extended upwards – which was set on its head. Provision had to be made for the ka at death; in fact the tomb was called the *het ka*, the 'house of the ka', and it contained the ka statue in which the ka dwelt. 'To go to one's ka' was a euphemism for death. It is uncertain whether the Egyptians thought of the ka as a non-material entity; it seems to denote some vital force essential to the existence of the individual person.

The ka cannot properly be described as the soul. The *ba*, another constituent of human nature, had more claim to this description, though not in the sense of the 'soul' as the inner essential self according to the Greek idea of the *psyche* or the Hindu *atman*. In their concept of the ba, the Egyptians expressed their belief that at death a free-moving entity separated itself from the body but remained in close proximity to it. They represented the ba as a human-headed bird, giving it a male or female face according to the sex of the deceased. In the funerary papyri the ba is often depicted as perched on the portal of the tomb or flying down the tomb shaft to revisit the embalmed body lying in the sepulchral chamber below. Another important constituent of the person was the *ib* or heart. This was sometimes referred to as the 'god in man', since it was regarded as a kind of witness or censor of the conduct of the individual within whom it resided. The heart had a vital role in the judgement after death. The individual's shadow and name were also important to his being, though of lesser significance compared with the other entities. At death, the Egyptian trusted that the proper performance of the mortuary ritual would transform him into an *akh* or glorified soul.

Important as all these constituents were

The Egyptians continued, century after century, to embalm their dead and to furnish their tombs as though the dead really did live in them

to the whole person, the body was always regarded as essential to life: this was why it was so carefully embalmed to preserve it from the disintegration caused by death. With their elaborate conception of human nature and the care given to ensuring eternal well-being after death, it is remarkable that the Egyptians never seem to have been curious about the purpose of human life in this world. In this lack of concern they contrast notably with the Mesopotamians, in whose mythology the origin and purpose of mankind was a primary topic.

Egyptian ideas of how and where the dead spent their afterlife are fundamentally confused. This confusion is already present in the Pyramid Texts (c 2400 BC). It doubtless went back to predynastic times and stemmed from different local traditions. Three conceptions of the afterlife can be distinguished. What is probably the most primitive envisaged the dead as living on in their tombs, equipped with various everyday necessities and nourished on daily food offerings made by their relatives. In the Pyramid Texts the existence of a celestial realm of the dead is described. The idea takes two forms: that of ascending to heaven to join the sun god Re in his solar boat on his daily journey across the sky; or of ascending to join the 'Imperishable Ones', the circumpolar stars. The idea of accompanying the sun god became the more generally accepted view. The third conception was associated with Osiris and his realm, which was called the *Duat* or *Ament* (the West).

This realm was subterranean and was situated beneath the western horizon, which in Egypt was constituted by the western desert. The dead had to journey there, encountering many hideous monsters and fearsome obstacles on the way. This land of the dead was imagined as an idealized Egypt, where the blessed dead lived happily the same kind of life as in the Nile valley. Special guidebooks to the next world were provided for the dead: the Book of the Two Ways described alternative land and water routes, both equally perilous; the Book of Gates divided the Duat by 12 gates; the Book am Duat told of the 12 time-divisions taken by the sun god on his nightly journey through this underworld. What is particularly significant, in all this complex imagery and practice concerning the dead, is that the Egyptians continued, century after century, to embalm their dead and to furnish their tombs as though the dead really did live in them.

Magicians of the Nile

Magic played an important part in ancient Egyptian life and thought. It was mainly based upon the principle of symbolic imitation – that like will beget like. For instance a model of a wax crocodile, directed by an appropriate spell, might be transformed into a real crocodile to kill a rival; there is actual evidence of such a practice. Most things could be endowed with magical potency, from the pharaoh's crown to amulets such as the *udjat* eye (giving power to see everything, and promoting prosperity and fertility) and the *ankh*, a symbol of life and vitality, which was used by both the living and the dead. A statue of a god had to be animated by a magical ceremony similar to that of the 'Opening of the

Michael Holford

Far left **Anubis, the jackal-headed god, conducted the souls of the dead to the other world and presided over funerals** ***Left*** **The ibis-headed god Thoth was the wise and benevolent scribe of the gods. He invented writing and all the other arts and sciences, and was closely associated with magic** ***Right*** **Akhenaten, who sought to promote the worship of the Aten, the sun's disc, above the worship of Amun, frequently had himself portrayed sitting in the sun's rays. These rays, ending in hands, bless the devout pharaoh**

Mouth' which was performed on an embalmed corpse. The whole mortuary ritual was based on the magical assimilation of the dead to Osiris, so that they would experience a similar resurrection from death. An indication of the Egyptians' belief in magic is provided by the custom of mutilating hieroglyphic signs representing dangerous animals or insects, or showing them as pierced with knives when they occurred in tomb inscriptions; it was a precaution against these potentially dangerous signs coming to life.

The service of the Egyptian gods was performed in temples by a professional priesthood, assisted by specially appointed laymen. This service had two main forms: a daily toilet and offering ceremony, and periodic festivals. The daily service was performed in the inner sanctuary of a temple by priests only, on the image of the god which was kept in a special shrine. The image was anointed and symbolically clothed and offerings of food and incense were made to it. The festivals commemorated various events in the annual calendar: New Year's Day, sowing and harvest, and the inundation of the Nile.

Some festivals were devoted to certain deities or their temples. A notable example was the annual visit of Hathor of Dendera (or rather her cult statue) to the sanctuary of her spouse Horus at Edfu. The journey was made by boat, with halts at various towns on the banks of the Nile. The occasion was one of prolonged rejoicing and merrymaking among the people. It was only at festivals that ordinary folk saw the image of the god, which was carried out of the temple, mounted on a special boat, on the shoulders of priests; for inner courts of temples were forbidden to the public.

Egyptian temples were of three main types; some of them, like those of Amun at Thebes, were on a colossal scale. Sun temples, such as that of Atum-Re at Heliopolis and of the Aten at Akhetaten, were square in shape, enclosed by a wall and open to the sky. At Heliopolis the chief object of veneration was the *ben-ben* stone, a truncated obelisk which marked the place where Atum-Re had originally emerged from the primeval waters of Nun and commenced the work of creation. Other temples were of rectangular plan, comprising a series of courts. The inner

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Lord of Every Land

The great Hymn to the Aten *nobly expresses Akhenaten's concept of the sun as supreme lord*

Beautiful is your shining forth on the horizon,
O living Aten, beginning of life!
When you arise on the eastern horizon,
you fill every land with your beauty.
You are bright and great and gleaming,
and are high above every land.
Your rays envelop the lands,
as far as all you have created.
You are Ra, and you reach unto their end,
and subdue them all for your beloved son . . .

You who bring children into being in women,
and make fluid into mankind,
Who nourishes the son in the womb of his mother,
who soothes him so that he weeps not,
O nurse in the womb!
Who gives breath in order to keep alive
all that he has made;
When he comes forth from the womb on the day of his birth,
you open his mouth in speech, and give all that he needs . . .

You make the Nile in the Other World,
and bring it whither you wish,
In order to sustain the people,
even as you have made them.
For you are lord of them all,
who weary yourself on their behalf,
The lord of every land, who arises for them,
O Aten of the day, great of majesty!

Extract from Joseph Kaster's translation in *The Literature and Mythology of Ancient Egypt*

sanctuary was reached through a pillared hall, and was in complete darkness. The third type of temple was the funerary temple, built for the proper performance of those rites, especially the food offerings, which were regarded as essential to the well-being of the dead man whose tomb they served. The great pharaohs of the New Kingdom erected vast funerary temples on the western bank of the Nile, opposite Thebes. These differed little in size and layout from the temples of the gods.

Since most of the extant evidence on Egyptian religion relates to the king and the upper classes of society, little is known of the religion of ordinary folk. Lesser deities, such as Bes, doubtless seemed to them more approachable than the great state deities, but Osiris had an intimate personal appeal to all classes. There is some evidence that Amun could be addressed as 'one who cometh at the voice of the poor'; however, it is significant that on the stele of Neb-re, where these words occur, the Amun 'who hears the prayers' is depicted seated outside the portals of his temple, as a kind of vizier to the greater Amun who dwelt within the sanctuary.

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The Aten, the sun's disc, was elevated to the status of a god by the Pharaoh Amenhotep, who changed his name to Akhenaten, meaning 'pleasing to the Aten', and built a magnificent temple to his god

The Dawn of Conscience

The 'dawn of conscience' has been located, with reason, in ancient Egypt. Already in the Old Kingdom the concept of *maat*, which denoted the qualities of truth and justice, was associated with the 'Great God' as the basic principle of an ordered universe. From this period, too, emerge the beginnings of the belief so important to the evolution of ethics and morality, that the dead would be judged on their conduct in this life.

The immense duration of Egyptian religion, and the impressive continuity of its traditional pattern of faith and practice, suggest that the Egyptians unthinkingly accepted an ancient priestly tradition, generation after generation. But there is evidence that this was not wholly so, and that there were those who could look critically at their ancestral faith, especially the funerary cult. There exist, inscribed on the walls of certain New Kingdom tombs, versions of what is known as the Song of the Harpist, which takes its name from the figure of a corpulent harpist who is depicted singing it. It was probably sung at memorial feasts held by relatives at the tombs of the deceased. In it the futility of the mortuary faith is frankly expressed: 'None cometh from thence that he may tell us how they (the dead) fare, that he may tell us what they need, that he may set our heart at rest, until we also go to the place whither they have gone.' The obvious conclusion is drawn from this scepticism: 'Be glad, that thou mayest cause thine heart to forget that men will (one day) beatify thee. Follow thy desire, so long as thou livest.'

A Mummy at the Feast

The expression of such sentiments is significant; for it shows that there did exist at least a minority who could doubt the truth of their traditional religion and the effectiveness of its ritual technique for the achievement of a blessed immortality. Yet this faith was able to continue its serene tradition without the suppression of such heretical scepticism. That it did so attests the strength of two things: the spiritual satisfaction which the average Egyptian got from his faith in Osiris, and the practical nature of his philosophy of life. The Greek historian Herodotus, who visited Egypt in the 5th century BC, records an Egyptian custom at banquets of showing the guests a model of a mummy with the admonition: 'Gaze here, and drink and be merry; for when you die, such will you be.' This curious custom was prompted by no spirit of cynicism or levity; it reflected the practical evaluation of life that characterized the Egyptians. They feared death, but they believed that they had the means of reversing its threat of personal extinction and they accordingly made provision to secure this immunity. But such preoccupation with death and the afterlife did not induce pessimism or prompt a this-world-denying attitude. The Egyptians sought to extract the most joy possible from life, while preparing for death and mindful of the judgement that faced them thereafter.

The legacy of Egypt's ancient religion cannot be accurately assessed. The famous American Egyptologist J. H. Breasted believed that Akhenaten's monotheism influenced Moses and found its fruition in the Hebrew concept of one single God, who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. The connection cannot be proved and the assumption that it did exist has not been generally accepted by scholars. More certain is the influence of Egyptian wisdom literature on the Jewish Book of Proverbs. The elements of Egyptian religion which passed into Coptic Christianity were chiefly related to the world after death; such elements included the idea of a judgement immediately after death and of the assessment as being made by weighing the soul on scales. And the Egyptian elements have yet to be fully evaluated in the Hermetic literature, where the god Thoth figures prominently under the name of Hermes.

(See also BOOK OF THE DEAD; CREATION MYTHS; HORUS; ISIS; JUDGEMENT; MUMMIFICATION; OSIRIS; SETH.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

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EIGHT

IN POPULAR NUMEROLOGY, if your name adds up to 8 (see ALPHABET) you will usually be told that you are a driving materialist, ambitious for power, influence, status and money. It is pre-eminently the number of business executives, efficient administrators, men of great organizing ability and dominating character, busy with worldly concerns, clever, realistic, cold and ruthless when necessary but not always unkind at heart, men who get on in the world. They are much interested in money but in their private lives are often curiously impractical about it. They are likely to be too preoccupied with the main chance and too self-sufficient to make ideal partners in love or marriage. So materialist is the number 8 that it has been interpreted to mean an interest in Spiritualism, due to a liking for the materialization of spirit-forms. An American numerologist sums up this view of the number by recommending that in any year which adds to 8, you should 'Go for the money. Make influential contacts.'

But the path of 8 is not at all an easy one. It is the number of great success but also of dramatic failure in worldly matters. It has ominous overtones, expressed by one authority in the statement that those whose number is 8 will like choral and organ music, especially of the gloomy and plaintive variety. Eight-people live lives of constant strain and effort and, no doubt as a result, are liable to suffer from nervous indigestion.

Lying behind all this is the fact that 4 is the number of earth and material things (see FOUR) and since 8 is 4 doubled, 8 must mean an intense involvement in material matters, money-making, industry and commerce, earthly power and 'the things of this world' in general. In addition, the eighth sphere of the cabalistic Tree of Life is taken to correspond to Mercury, who in one of his roles was the god of trade and commerce, and the figure 8 resembles the two interlaced serpents of Mercury's caduceus. The shape of the number, the two circles suggesting dualism – success and failure – and the fact that 8 is twice 4, which is the unluckiest of numbers, account for the ominous undertones.

A New Beginning

The popular interpretation is also partly based on an entirely different line of symbolism, in which 8 means 'a new beginning' and so 'new life'. In Jewish tradition a baby boy is named and begins his life as a real person on the eighth day after his birth. Baptism as a Christian is 'a new beginning' and fonts in churches are often eight-sided. Many Christian baptisteries, buildings constructed when baptisms were performed only three times a year and so a large building was needed, were octagonal.

As the number of a new beginning, 8 also means immortality, resurrection, life after death. The early Christians associated 8 with Sunday. They accepted that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh but they said that the Sunday on which Christ rose from the dead was God's eighth day, on which he renewed his work and gave men the possibility of eternal life. One of the numbers of Christ was 888 (reached by adding the number values of the name Jesus in Greek). It was also pointed out that eight people survived the flood – Noah, his wife, their three sons and the sons' wives – to start life afresh on the earth (Genesis, chapter 8). As the number of the Christian life after death, 8 also stands for eternity and infinity, and the mathematical symbol for infinity is an 8 lying on its side. The prospect of eternity in heaven or in hell has contributed to the modern numerologist's prediction of great success or dramatic failure with 8.

Occultists have generally followed the Christian track, noting that 8 is the first cube number and so introduces a new dimension, and that the cube is a symbol of earth and so can stand for 'the solidification of matter', and bringing in the shape of the figure 8 and the Eightfold Path of Buddhism, which is the way of liberation from earthly existence (see BUDDHISM). A. E. Abbot's *Encyclopaedia of Numbers* says: 'Esotericism sees the 8 as signifying a resurrection into a higher consciousness, and representing the eternal and spiral motion of cycles. The crossing-point of the figure 8 suggests the crossing-point from earthly life to the spiritual world . . .' Behind all this may lie the fact that a man's body has seven orifices but a woman's has eight, and it is through the eighth that new life comes into the world.

Eisteddfod

A Welsh word meaning a 'session'; the traditional assembly of Welsh bards and musicians, at which competitions were held and a 'chair' was awarded to the chief bard: the modern festival, now held annually, owes its popularity to a revival of interest in Celts and Druids in the 19th century; it consists of competitions in poetry, music, literature, and the arts and crafts, and is intended to preserve and promote the Welsh language and culture.

See DRUIDS.

El

The supreme deity of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, whose wife Asherah, called Astarte by the Greeks, was the great mother goddess: his name means literally 'the god' and his other titles, 'Father of Men', 'Creator of Created Things' and 'the Bull' indicate his benevolence to man and his strength and virility: he is depicted on a stele as a bearded man, wearing a crown adorned with a pair of bull's horns.

See ASTARTE.

ELDER

TWO KINDS OF ELDER have magical and mythological associations: the common elder – 'ever bush and never tree', as an old Scots rhyme has it – and the dwarf elder, a large, rather ill-smelling herbaceous plant dying down in winter. They belong, somewhat unexpectedly, to the honeysuckle family.

Of the two, common elder is more closely connected with magic; as with so many plants, it is associated with witches and the Devil but, if properly used, also provides protection against them. In many lands there are tales of an elder mother, elder spirits or witches who both inhabit the bush and *are* the bush. Consequently if a branch is cut from an elder, blood may spurt from it and, likely as not, some old crone in the village will have her arm in a sling the next day. If elder is taken indoors, death will be in the house within a year; if it is burnt, the Devil will come down the chimney; if you strike a man dead with an elder stick his hand will come up from his grave; beat a child with elder and it will stop growing properly; make a boat of elder and you are sunk; a cradle, and the child will ail and be easy prey to fairies. Yet an old American belief says that burning an elder stick on Christmas Eve will reveal, or unmask, all witches and black magicians in the area.

Scandinavian mythology makes much of Hydle-moer, the elder mother, related to Hulda, the goddess of marriage. It was she rather than witches who was responsible for disasters following injury to an elder, but this was a matter of revenge, and could be averted by asking permission before cutting an elder or making use of it. Forms of this belief have been recorded from Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire. A Danish legend suggests that if one stands under an elder at midnight on Midsummer Eve, the King of the Elves will be seen passing by. It was, however, widely considered unwise to sleep beneath an elder and to dream of it betokened illness.

Yet at the same time amulets and charms against witches and other evil spirits could be made from elder wood; elder sprigs picked on the last day of

April and fixed on to houses protected their inhabitants likewise; while if a baptized person dabbed the green juice from the elder's inner bark on to his eyes, he could know of the doings of witches anywhere. Elder would protect, too, from lightning, could be made to charm warts away and made the ideal handle for the whips of hearse drivers, who were at risk because of their work with the newly dead.

Gallows and Graves

In Austria, as in northern England, a cross of elder was placed on new graves; if it flowered, this was a sure sign that the soul of the departed had reached heaven. Elder boughs might also be placed in a grave to keep witches from the dead.

Epitomizing all the minor myths and the general distaste for this often crooked, ugly, ill-smelling tree, a major myth grew up about the elder. In Jacobus de Voragine's medieval *Golden Legend* we find the first account of the elder's use for gallows and as an appropriate graveyard plant, and, although the elder does not grow naturally in Palestine, the statement that it was both the tree on which Christ was crucified and that on which Judas killed himself.

Elder has been used in medicine since Egyptian times, not just as a charm but for making curative lotions. American Indians made tea from the bark, which was an emetic if the bark was scraped upwards, a laxative if scraped downwards. Pioneer United States folk medicine used the plant's bark, flowers, and berries to cure such ailments as headache, toothache, burns, swellings and tumours, rheumatism and insect infestation. Elderberry wine is still made today as a general tonic; and it is said if you carry an elderberry in your pocket you will be safe from ivy poisoning.

The dwarf elder was even more valuable than the tree in European folk medicine, being recommended against bites of mad dogs and snakes, to cure dropsy, gout and piles, and as a purge. It could also be used to dye hair black and cloth blue. While it was, in France, one of the herbs dedicated to St John, its main claim in mythology is its reputation of growing only where the blood of a Dane has been spilt.

The way this myth grew up has been demonstrated by Geoffrey Grigson. The plant was anciently called walwort, probably derived from Old English *wealwhyrt* meaning 'foreigner plant', referring to the dwarf elder's introduction to Great Britain. In 1538 the name danewort is given (by William Turner) as an equivalent, and as late as 1640 we find Parkinson repeating older herbalists in explaining that this referred to the plant's purgative qualities in producing 'the danes', namely diarrhoea. 'Danes' may derive from *dain*, an old word meaning 'a stink'. *Historia Regum Angliae*, written by John Rous in the 15th century, contains an account of 'ebulus' (the old Latin name) growing freely where the British people – the Mercians – died when the Danes overran the country. In his *Britannia*, William Camden puts this story together with the name danewort and concludes that the truth must be that the plant thrives where Danes have died.

What is interesting, however, is the widespread and ancient belief that dwarf elder arises where any human blood has fallen. The great botanist Linnaeus quoted the old Swedish name *mannablod* meaning 'man's blood', paralleled by the Welsh *llysan gwaed gwyr* meaning 'man's blood plant' and Norfolk 'blood hilder'. The modern dictionary slips in Old English *wael wyrt* or 'slaughter plant' as a further possibility. Certainly the sap and the juice of the berries, blackish like spilt blood, and the autumnal red of the stems, suggest reasons for this belief.

A. J. HUXLEY

Medieval legend identified the elder as the tree on which Judas Iscariot killed himself. The guilt-stricken Judas is shown first contemplating suicide, then hanging from the tree of ill omen

British Museum

El Dorado

A mythical king from South America who was said to cover himself with gold dust, thus giving rise to his Spanish title, 'the gilded man': the name was also applied to the fabulous city of Manoa and surrounding country which was believed to contain untold wealth, and its supposed location on the Amazon inspired many luckless expeditions from Spain and England in the 16th century: it has now come to mean any richly endowed area or accumulation of treasure.

Museo del Oro

The belief that God chooses an individual or a people for a particular task or destiny was held as long ago as the third millenium BC. The idea of divine election occurs not only in Hebrew thought but in many other religions

ELECTION

THE IDEA that God specially chooses certain individuals or nations for some peculiar role in the scheme of his providence is known as election; the word is derived from the Greek word *eloge* ('choice'). The idea is basic to the traditional structure of Christian theology, and it finds expression in the German term *Heilsgeschichte*, meaning 'Salvation-History'. This Heilsgeschichte is an elaborate interpretation of the history of the Hebrew people, designed to show that God used both the Hebrew people as a whole and certain individual Hebrews for the furtherance of his plan to save mankind. The idea that God had thus chosen the Hebrews was not, however, only a Christian idea; it was already deeply rooted in Hebrew thought and graphically presented in the Hebrew Bible. But in its original Hebrew form the idea was essentially nationalistic and almost exclusively concerned with the destiny of Israel.

This idea of divine election, in both its Hebrew and Christian versions, has had an enormous influence on human thought and institutions in many parts of the world. In later Christian thought the idea took on a new and distinctive form in connection with belief in the predestination of human beings to either heaven or hell. Similar ideas of divine election have also found expression in other religions, most notably in Islam.

Belief that one has been divinely chosen for some special office or task is very ancient. In Egypt it can be traced back to the third millennium BC in the claim made by the pharaoh that he was the son of the sun god Re, and so represented him on earth. The imperialist pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty claimed that their god Amun-Re had given them world-sovereignty. In a hymn dating about 1470 BC, in which Amun is represented as addressing Thothmes III, the god announces his election of the king as the world conqueror: 'I have come that I may cause thee to tread down the uttermost ends of the lands; what the ocean encircleth is held in thy grasp. I have caused them to behold thy majesty as a lord of the wing, which seizeth on what he seeth according as he desireth.' Similar expressions of divine election are found in ancient Mesopotamian and Babylonian texts. Marduk, the great god of Babylon, is even represented as having chosen the Persian prince Cyrus (died 530 BC) to overthrow the native Babylonian king Nabonidus.

And it was not only kings who claimed such divine election; whole peoples have believed that they have been elected to a status of superiority over others. The Indo-Iranian peoples, who conquered Iran and North-Western India in the second millennium BC, referred to themselves as the *aryas* ('Aryans'), which meant the 'noble', in contradistinction to the despised natives, whom they dispossessed of their lands under the leadership of their own Aryan gods. The ancient Greeks arrogantly divided mankind into two contrasted groups: the 'Hellenes', who were their own superior selves, and the *barbaroi*, the barbarians. The Romans, in their turn, believed that they had been elected to world empire either by Jupiter, their supreme deity, or by a mysterious *fatum* or destiny. The British-Israelite theory of the British having been chosen for a similar role is a 20th century example of the same kind of belief.

Such a predisposition on the part of a people to claim divine authority and aid to justify their conquest and dispossession of other peoples can reasonably be evaluated as a natural human trait, indicative of a deeply rooted unwillingness to accept direct responsibility for their own violent self-aggrandizement. The sense of confidence produced by the conviction that one is serving God and not oneself is also obvious, and it represents an ancient form of 'psychological warfare', even though it was not often consciously used in this manner. But such instances of belief in divine election rarely developed into a carefully articulated tradition, which in turn decisively moulded the national character, as happened in Israel, where it also found literary expression of a most remarkable kind.

Hebrew literature, as embodied in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (a collection of literature of an apocalyptic nature), contains a philosophy of history in varying forms, through which

Scala

In Christian theology the idea of election became associated with predestination: the elect could look forward to an eternity in heaven, the rest to eternal damnation: a 14th century Italian painting of the Last Judgement

runs a common theme. It is that Yahweh, the god of Israel (see YAHWEH), had in the remote past chosen the Israelite or Jewish people for a special destiny. This destiny was to take the form of their settlement in the land of Canaan, where they were to devote themselves to his service and enjoy his special favour. This settlement in Canaan meant their conquest of the country and the extermination of its inhabitants, towards whom Yahweh is represented as being hostile, as he is also generally represented to be towards all other nations. The identification of Canaan as the land of Yahweh's promise provides the motif for the continuation of the theme of the Heilsgeschichte. The vicissitudes of fortune that Israel experienced, including periods of foreign domination, after the settlement, are explained in terms of Israel's varying faithfulness and unfaithfulness to Yahweh, with the promise of the ultimate vindication of the nation as Yahweh's Elect People.

The Promise to Abraham

The theme of Israel's election is impressively presented first in the books of Genesis and Exodus. It is set forth in these writings in what appears to be a sequential narrative of dramatic events, in which Yahweh is depicted as choosing Abraham, who originally lived in the Sumerian city of Ur in Mesopotamia, to be the progenitor of the Hebrew people and the first recipient of his promise that Canaan would become their own land. Abraham is represented as a kind of Bedouin chief, living a nomadic life with his family and their flocks after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. The first promise of his election is recorded in Genesis (12, 1–3), when Yahweh commands him to leave Haran, where he had settled with his father, and migrate to Canaan: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves.' After Abraham arrives in Canaan, Yahweh appears again to him and declares: 'To your descendants I will give this land' (Genesis 12.7). This promise is repeated to Abraham's son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob.

But although Abraham's election is regarded as the crucial event that initiated Israel's unique destiny, no reason is given why Yahweh did thus originally choose him to be the progenitor of the elect people who were to inhabit the Promised Land. Equally remarkable is the fact that, according to the Genesis narrative, it is not the elder son of Isaac, namely Esau, but the younger son Jacob who is selected by Yahweh to inherit the promise. This unexpected preference is referred in later Jewish tradition to the arbitrary choice of Yahweh; for Yahweh is represented as addressing Israel through the prophet Malachi: '"I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How hast thou loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau"' (Malachi 1.2–3).

Despite Yahweh's promises Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do not, as it happens, settle in possession of Canaan but live as nomads, with Jacob himself dying in Egypt. According to Genesis (chapter 46), Jacob and his other sons settled in Egypt through the influence of Joseph, Jacob's son, who had become the chief minister of the pharaoh. This surprising conclusion of the book of Genesis, however, prepares the way for the marvellous events narrated in the succeeding book of Exodus. But this book starts with a very different situation. A long period has elapsed during which Joseph's generation have died out, and his descendants and those of his brothers have become a populous nation. The Egyptians, alarmed at the growth of these foreigners in their land, enslave them and take measures to reduce their numbers. Yahweh is then described as intervening to save the Israelites from their hondage. This he finally accomplishes, having selected Moses as his agent and leader of his people. According to the narrative, after the miraculous exodus from Egypt the Israelites journeyed to Mount Sinai, where Yahweh summoned Moses to bear to the people an invitation to enter into a covenant with him: 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel . . . if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel' (Exodus 19.3–6). Yahweh is then represented as delivering to Israel, through Moses, the sacred Law including the Ten Commandments, the observance of which was Israel's side of the covenant.

Double-Sided Election

This idea of a formal covenant made between a god and a nation is unique in the history of religions. Logically it implies a kind of double-sided election: that Yahweh selected Israel to be his people, and Israel selected Yahweh as its god. However, throughout Hebrew literature it is Yahweh's election of Israel which is exclusively stressed. Israel's side in the transaction is invariably cited by the prophets in condemnation of the nation's failure to keep its obligations to Yahweh. That Yahweh signally fulfilled his commitment in giving Israel possession of Canaan is a reiterated theme of Hebrew prophecy and poetry, and it is graphically described in the book of Joshua. This writing closes significantly with Moses' successor Joshua, under whom the conquest of Canaan is represented as having been accomplished, addressing the Israelite tribes in a farewell speech before his death. He speaks in the name of Yahweh: 'I gave you a land on which you had not laboured, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards which you did not plant.'

And so Yahweh's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is fulfilled: the descendants of these patriarchs have become a nation and are settled in possession of the Promised Land of Canaan. Thus is the theme of Israel's election and its accomplishment presented in the Hexateuch, or first six books of the Old Testament. But scholars are

Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

Above **Detail from a painting by Rembrandt showing Moses with the tablets of the Law; the Jews' acceptance of the Law of God at Sinai confirmed their special position as the chosen people** ***Right*** **Before the Battle of Uhud Mohammed is said to have provided his soldiers with water which flowed from his fingers. Claiming divine authority, the Moslems justified their conquest of other peoples and lands**

generally agreed that this presentation is a later literary creation from earlier and diverse traditions, and that the reality behind it was very different. Research has distinguished a literary tradition, designated the 'Yahwist', which forms the basic scheme of the Hexateuch. It is so called because it is consistently concerned to show that Yahweh is the supreme creator god who chose Israel to be his people. On analysis, this Yahwist tradition appears to date from about 900 BC, and is a cleverly designed composition which has fused into a consequential narrative three different cycles of tradition. Its purpose was to present the various Hebrew tribes which had established themselves in Canaan as a unified people, descended from a common ancestor, to whom the god Yahweh had originally promised the possession of Canaan. The three cycles of tradition are usually described as the Primeval History, which starts with the creation and fall of Adam and ends with the Tower of Babel; the Patriarchal History, which runs from Yahweh's calling of Abraham to the settlement of Jacob and his sons in Egypt; and the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan.

Philosophy of History

From the careful investigation of the relevant evidence, the modern view of the historical reality behind the Yahwist narrative is that a loose confederation of Semite tribes, who had adopted Yahweh as their war god, partially conquered Canaan: some of these tribes had probably escaped from bondage

Sonia Halliday

in Egypt. The devotees of Yahweh were concerned to maintain the exalted position of their god after the settlement in Canaan, but the tendency of the confederate tribes was to revert to the worship of their ancestral gods or adopt the agricultural deities of Canaan. The Yahwists were helped in their task by the fact that the break-up of the confederation made for military weakness and the consequent defeat of the Hebrew settlers by revived Canaanite power and the newly established Philistines. The Yahwist prophets were, accordingly, able to proclaim that when the tribes had been faithful to their covenant with Yahweh, he had done mighty deeds for them – delivered them from Egyptian bondage and given them possession of Canaan. They called upon them, therefore, to repent of their unfaithfulness, repudiate the other gods and return to their allegiance to Yahweh, who would remember his covenant and save them.

This Yahwist appeal to Yahweh's providence for the Israelite tribes in the past was, according to modern scholars, eventually elaborated by a Yahwist writer into the veritable philosophy of history which has been preserved in the Hexateuch. Its theme was Israel's election and Yahweh's providence for his chosen people; its aim was to show that Yahweh had been the ancestral god of the various tribes that had formed the Israelite confederation. To achieve this, the Yahwist writer fashioned the ancestral legends of the various tribes into a consecutive narrative which related various ancestors into generations of one family, whose founder was Abraham. In this Patriarchal History the election theme was carried back beyond the Exodus and Sinai covenant to an original promise made to Abraham. Hence, by fusing this Patriarchal History with the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan tradition, the various Semite tribes that had formed the Israelite confederation were presented as the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. To complete the cycle of this conspectus of Yahweh's providence in the past, the Yahwist writer added to the Patriarchal History and the Exodus and Conquest of Canaan narratives the Primeval History – an account of mankind from the creation of its original parents, Adam and Eve, to the shattering of the original unity of mankind and its scattering abroad as divine punishment for the building of the Tower of Babel.

The Godly Remnant

This Yahwist interpretation of history came to exercise a profound influence upon all subsequent Jewish life and thought. For there was thus enshrined in their sacred Scriptures a graphic record of how Yahweh chose Abraham to be the progenitor of Israel, promising to his descendants the possession of Canaan, and of how he had marvellously fulfilled his promise. And the Torah or Sacred Law, given at Sinai, was the symbol of Israel's covenant with Yahweh to serve him as his Elect People. Through all their long centuries of suffering and tribulation, this sense of divine election has always inspired and sustained the Jewish people, and forged an indissoluble bond between them and the Holy Land of Yahweh's ancient promise.

From about the 8th century BC an important variant version of the Election belief grew up. During the religious and political struggles of this period the majority of the Israelite people often forsook Yahweh for the worship of other gods. This caused the Yahwist prophets to formulate the idea of a 'remnant' of the nation who would always remain faithful to Yahweh, and so inherit the promise of the Election (Amos 3.12; Isaiah 10.20–22). This idea was destined to be utilized in a remarkable manner many centuries later, and to become a formative factor in Christianity of fundamental importance. The transformation of the idea was the work of St Paul (see PAUL). Himself a Jew who accepted Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, Paul was confronted with the problem that the majority of his compatriots rejected Jesus and were thus cut off, as he saw it, from salvation. Hence he was faced with the question: 'has God rejected his people?' (Romans 11.1). For an answer, Paul fell back on the old prophetic idea of a Godly Remnant as the true Israel; and as this Remnant he identified the minority of the Jews who had become Christians and the Gentile converts, justifying the incorporation of the latter by quoting a prophecy of Hosea: 'Those who were not my people I will call "my people"' (Romans 9.25). Thus Paul provided the Christian Church with the means whereby it could claim that it was the true Israel, and the rightful heir of

C. M. Dixon

'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church . . . I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven , and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.' Peter was singled out from the rest of the apostles by Christ and given special authority *Above* On this Byzantine marble chest Peter is shown receiving from Christ the scroll which became one of his distinguishing symbols *Below* Keys in hand, the saint is shown, in this English church wall-painting, exercising his function as keeper of the gates of heaven, as he welcomes in the souls of the blessed

Peter Goodliffe

God's promises to the Hebrew patriarchs. This claim is uncompromisingly made in I Peter (2.9). 'But you (Christians) are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.'

But Christianity, in its turn, became faced with the problem of those who remained obdurate to its message or failed to live according to their baptismal profession. Consequently, the idea grew up that the number of God's Elect must be small; for 'many are called, but few are chosen' (Matthew 22.14). In Christian theology the idea of Election became closely associated with that of predestination. St Augustine (354–430 AD), probably from his own personal experience of conversion and his conviction that man can do nothing to save himself and is in need of God's previous grace, referred to 'those whom in his justice God has predestined to punishment' and to the salvation of 'those whom in his mercy he has predestinated to grace'. It is in the words of John Calvin (1509–64), however, that the doctrine of Election found its most notable expression in Christianity. The quintessence of his teaching is contained in the following passage from his writings:

> The seed of the word of God takes root and grows fruitful only in those whom the Lord, by his eternal election, has predestined to be his children and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. To all others who, by the same counsel of God before the constitution of the world, are reprobate, the clear and evident preaching of the truth can be nothing else but an odour of death in death.

This strict deterministic attitude provoked within Calvinism a reaction known as Arminianism (from its founder, Jacobus Arminius, 1560–1609), which maintained that God's sovereignty was compatible with a real freedom of will in man and that Jesus Christ died for all men and not only for the elect.

The idea of election, closely associated with predestination, figures prominently in Islam, the other great monotheistic faith. Thus in the Koran Mohammed declares: 'If Allah will guide anyone, He enlargeth his breast for Islam; but if He will send him astray, He maketh his breast narrow and contracted as if he were climbing into Heaven; thus doth Allah lay the abomination upon those who do not believe' (Surah 6. 125); 'If We (Allah) willed, We should cause to come to every soul its guidance; but true is the saying of Mine, "Assuredly I shall fill Gehenna, with jinn and man together"' (Surah 32.13).

(See also JUDAISM; YAHWEH.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Man and his Destiny in the Great Religions* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1962); W. Hausmann, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election* (Philosophical Library, 1969); H. H. Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (Lutterworth, 1950).

ELEMENTS AND ELEMENTALS

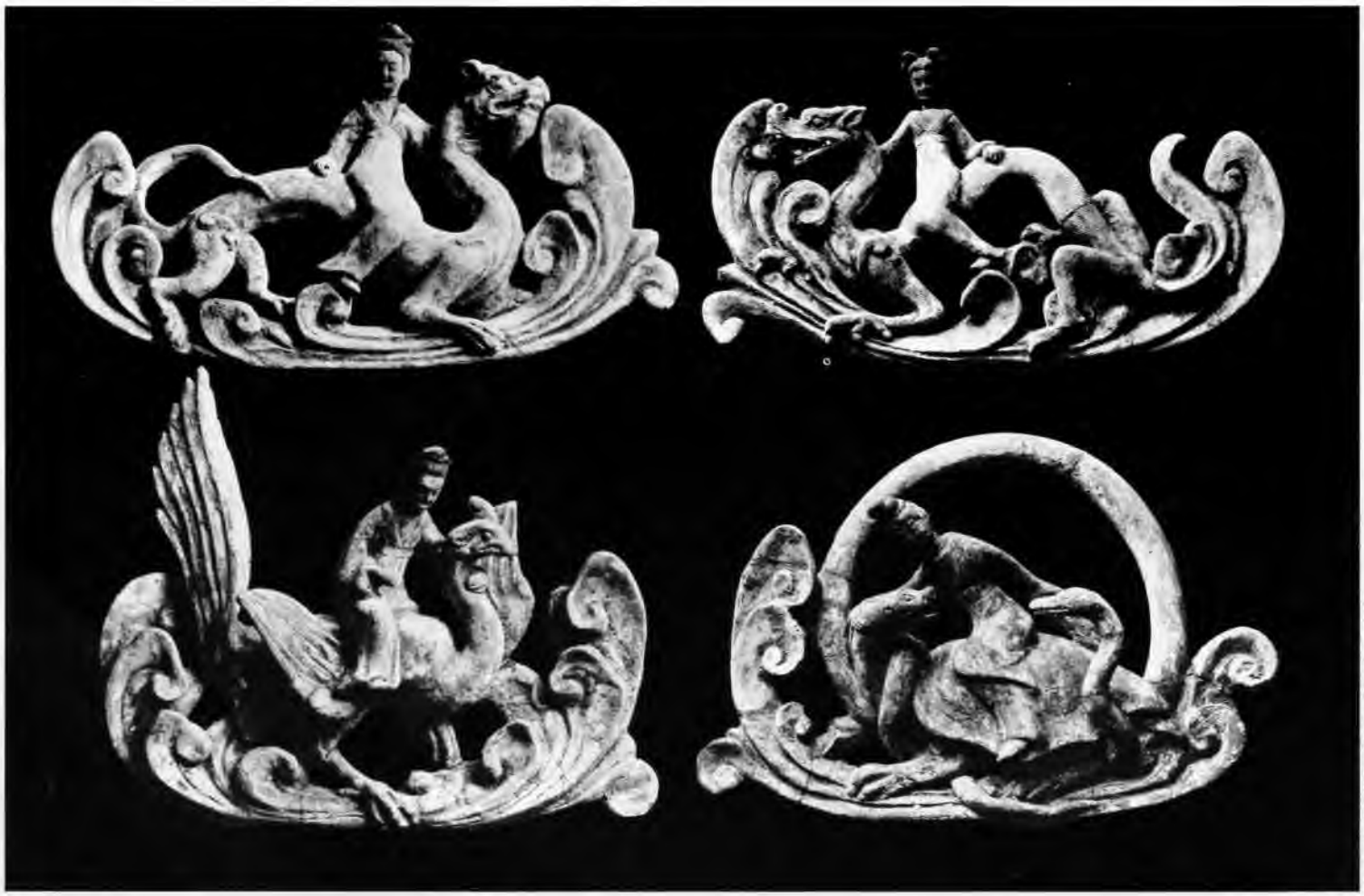
THE THEORY THAT ALL things are made of differing combinations of four basic materials – fire, air, earth and water – was advanced by the Greek philosopher and scientist Empedocles, who lived in Sicily in the 5th century BC. The theory was taken up by Plato and Aristotle, and was accepted by the great majority of Europeans down into the 17th century. It has been reinterpreted by modern occultists to whom the four traditional elements stand for four conditions in which energy can exist: gas (air), electricity (fire), solid (earth) and liquid (water).

The four elements provided a basis for the belief of the alchemists that gold could be manufactured artificially (see ALCHEMY). They were also important in medicine, because they were combined with the doctrine of the four 'humours', stemming from the famous Greek physician Hippocrates and transmitted into medieval Europe by Galen, the great Roman medical authority of the 2nd century AD. The humours (from Latin *humor*, 'moisture') were the four liquids present in the body whose differing combinations determined each man's temperament and physique. The liquids and temperaments were connected with the elements as follows: fire, yellow bile, choleric (or bilious); air, blood, sanguine; earth, black bile, melancholic; water, phlegm, phlegmatic.

The perfect man, if such a thing existed, would have the four liquids and temperaments in perfect balance in his constitution. Disease was caused by an imbalance of the humours. Too much phlegm caused colds, an excess of yellow bile caused jaundice, and a strongly sanguine person would need

Water represents 'the unconscious depths of the human mind, unfathomable mystery, woman'. Diana was goddess of the moon, which rules the tides, and in art she is often associated with water, bathing in lakes or rivers: statues of Diana and her nymphs in the grotto of an Italian palace

Scala



William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City

Female figures ride animals that are associated with four of the five elements of Chinese philosophy in these decorations from a tomb of the Six Dynasties period (221–581 AD) *Top left* The Green Dragon, whose element was wood *Top right* The White Tiger, metal *Above left* The Red Bird, fire *Above right* The Dark Warrior, a tortoise and a snake, whose element was water. The fifth element is earth

to be bled frequently. Cholera was named for its supposed origin in yellow bile and the choleric temperament. (See also DISEASE.)

The symbolic meanings of the elements naturally vary very considerably from one writer or artist to another. Fire and air were usually regarded as active, positive, creative and masculine elements, earth and water as passive, negative, receptive and feminine. This distinction comes out in the French writer Gaston Bachelard's summing up of the characteristic qualities of the elements: 'Earthly joy is riches and impediment; aquatic joy is softness and repose; fiery pleasure is desire and love; airy delight is liberty and movement.'

Briefly, the element of fire tends to be associated with energy, purification and transformation, passion and aspiration. Air is connected with breath, soul, speech, with flight as a liberation from the earth-bound state, and so with freedom, 'free as air'. Earth is associated with the solid and the practical, with the body, with gloom and melancholy because earthly life is so much inferior to the life of heaven, with the dead buried in the earth and with hell under the earth, and with riches and material success because it is in the earth that the harvest grows. Water is the fount and origin of everything, the primeval waters of the abyss before the world was formed, 'the deep' which existed 'in the beginning' in Genesis, the unconscious depths of the human mind, unfathomable mystery, woman. (See also BREATH; FIRE; FOUR; WATER.)

In the ancient world the whole of Nature was peopled with spirits, which lived in every tree and stream, every crag and cloud (see ANIMISM). Once the theory of the four elements had been accepted, four classes of spirits were particularly associated with them, the spirits which much later were called 'elementals'. Gnomes and undines are the elementals of earth and water respectively, sylphs and salamanders the elementals of air and fire: minor spirits of Nature, invisible to human beings but nevertheless substantial, and living in the four elements.

The association of the elements with spirits was probably first made by the Neoplatonists, followers of a school of philosophy which arose at Alexandria in the 3rd century AD. The Neoplatonists had a highly developed demonology and their demons (both good and bad) were thought to people the universe, and were the object of religious and magic rites. The Neoplatonists were deeply influenced by Plato, who developed the mystical and religious themes inherent in Empedocles's doctrine of the four elements, and it was an easy step for them to connect the demons with the elements.

The Greek authors do not go into much detail about the demons and spirits which perhaps in the 15th century first acquired the name elementals. For a really detailed account, one must turn to the works of the 16th century physician, alchemist, traveller and mystic Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, known to posterity by his adopted name of Paracelsus (see PARACELSUS). He invented the word 'gnome' and probably much of the lore about elementals as well, though he may also have drawn on legends and superstitions he encountered in his wanderings through many countries, including Sweden, Russia and possibly even India.

According to Paracelsus, man is made of three substances, spiritual or godly, soulful or astral, and visible or terrestrial. These three substances or elements which go to make up the constitution of man are universal, but whereas man exists in all three, there are other beings which live exclusively in only one of the elements. Various categories of beings are perfectly at home in different elements: gnomes can see and breathe as easily in the earth as undines and sylphs in water and air.

Man himself, it appears, would be an elemental spirit of Nature, but for the divine element in him. The elementals proper occupy a position between men and pure spirits. They have flesh, blood and bones, they propagate offspring, they eat and sleep, and in these respects, and in their physical organization, resemble human beings. But they can move as quickly as spirits.

The elementals are not immortal, being subject to disease. But they cannot be imprisoned, and fire and water do not injure them. They dress, talk and in many ways act like human beings but, says Paracelsus, 'are incapable of spiritual development.' They have reason and language like man – they have minds, but no souls in the spiritual or immortal sense. 'This may appear strange and incredible,' concedes Paracelsus, 'but the possibilities of Nature are not limited by man's knowledge of them, and the wisdom of God is unfathomable.'

He goes on to explain that the undines or nymphs live in water, the gnomes or pygmies in the earth, the sylphs or sylvestres in the air, and the salamanders or vulcans in fire. The four classes of elementals do not mix with each other. Each being keeps strictly to its own element, and to the undines, for example, water is what the air is to us. 'If we are surprised that they are in the water, they may also be surprised because we are in the air.' In their own element, the earth, gnomes can pass through rocks and stones as easily as we can pass through our own element, the air, and it is the same with salamanders in fire. The sylphs are most like human beings, because they would be drowned in water, suffocated in earth, and burned in fire. Each element is transparent for the spirits living in it: the sun shines through rocks for the gnomes.

The Love of an Undine

In size and appearance the undines resemble mankind. The gnomes are about a foot-and-a-half tall, but can expand at will to giant size. The sylphs and undines are kindly disposed towards man, the salamanders can neither be approached by nor approach man, while the gnomes are usually malevolent. On the whole, Paracelsus assures his readers, 'the elementals have an aversion against conceited and opinionated persons, such as dogmatists, inquisitive sceptics, drunkards, and gluttons, and against vulgar and quarrelsome people of all kinds'. What we know of Paracelsus's life suggests that this was a list of his own pet hates. 'But the elementals,' he goes on, 'love natural men, who are simple-minded and child-like, innocent and sincere, and the less vanity and hypocrisy there is in a man, the easier it will be for him to approach them.'

The elementals have their own manners, customs, languages and even governments. They have their own houses or palaces too – at least, the gnomes and undines do. These dwellings are made of special substances unknown to humanity, 'as different from the substances we know as the web of a spider is different from our linen'.

According to Paracelsus, undines have been known to adopt human shape, clothing and manner, and to enter into a union with man – a notion which inspired Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's charming romance *Undine*. Men have also been admitted to communities of elementals.

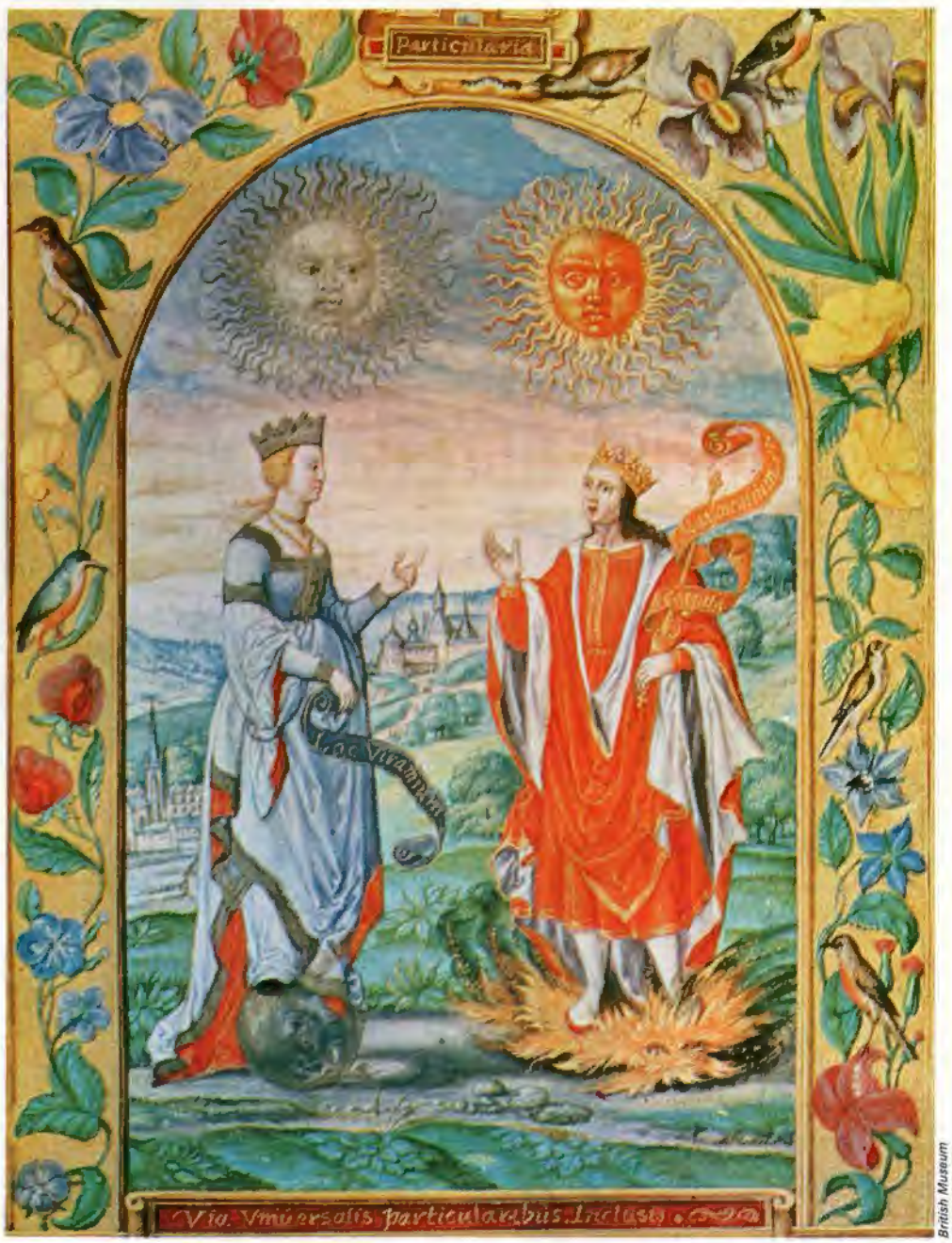
But the spirits of the earth, the air and fire seldom marry a human being, though they may become attached to him and enter his service. They are not, it must be remembered, 'airy nothings', or merely ghosts or appearances. They are of flesh and blood, only subtler than man.

In a special work on undines, Paracelsus supplies more details about them. If a man marries an undine, and she deserts him, he ought not to take another wife because the marriage has not been dissolved. If he does marry another woman, he will shortly die. The children of a marriage between a man and an undine will be human beings, because they will receive a human soul from the man. The undine, too, receives the germ of immortality through her union with a human being. But 'as an undine without her union with man dies like an animal, so man is like an animal if he severs his union with God.'

Finally, Paracelsus issues a warning. If any man has an undine for a wife, he must take care not to offend her while she is near water, as she might be prompted to return to her own element. In the same way, if anyone has a gnome for a servant, he must be faithful to him: 'if you do your duty to him, he will do his duty to you.'

It would seem that the elementals owe much to the imagination and invention of Paracelsus, and if he drew on any popular fancies, he certainly added many touches of his own. The elementals have not entirely lost their grip on the imagination: the undines have inspired at least one modern theatrical work, and the gnomes of this world are still a force to be reckoned with. Modern occultists also, through concentrated imagination and will-power, try to conjure up 'artificial elementals' – cruel, injurious beings which may resemble toads or snakes, not visible to ordinary sight, but real enough to the person attacked or to a clairvoyant.

DAVID PHILLIPS



British Museum

The four traditional elements fire, air, water and earth provided the basis for the alchemists' belief that gold could be manufactured artificially. Later alchemists said that everything was made of mercury, sulphur and salt: the male-female qualities of mercury are depicted in this illustration from the *Splendor Solis*, a 16th century treatise on alchemy

Elephant

Revered in the East for its strength and stability, it was also held to be a symbol of wisdom, moderation and pity, and was associated with kings and royal authority: in Hindu legend Indra, the king of the heavens, rides an elephant called Airavata, and the elephant-headed Ganesha, god of worldly wisdom, is often petitioned for success before any enterprise; the universe was also thought to be supported on the backs of elephants: in Siam, sacred white elephants were reared by human nurses.

Karin Haddle

What exactly happened at the celebration of the Mysteries at Eleusis, secret rituals associated with Demeter, is still a mystery. It has been suggested that at the climax initiates were shown the most holy object of all – one of totally unexpected simplicity

ELEUSIS

British Museum

HELD IN HONOUR of Demeter and Persephone, the Eleusinian Mysteries were ceremonies of initiation, celebrated annually during antiquity at Eleusis in Attica. Their nature was a closely guarded secret, any breach of which was liable to punishment by death. Originally they were a purely local cult, possibly restricted to a single family or clan; their secrecy has been sometimes explained as due to these original restrictions, but it is more probably due to the sense of awe and fear which was felt by those who took part in ceremonies which concerned the forces of life and death.

Like all other rituals of Demeter and Persephone, the Mysteries were in origin agricultural ceremonies, but comparison with similar rituals in other societies shows that the processes of agriculture tend to be associated in ceremonies of initiation with those which govern the life of men. It is therefore probable that already in their earliest stages a personal significance was attached to the Mysteries. Unlike other types of initiation, they were not restricted by age or sex, and their significance was thus potentially universal.

The incorporation of Eleusis into a unified Attica probably led to an expansion of membership. Legend dates this to the mythological period, but adds that Eleusis was allowed to keep control of the Mysteries, according to the Greek writer Pausanias (2nd century AD). Apparently Athens did not interfere much, if at all, with the cult in the early historical period. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter, which dates from the late 7th or early 6th century BC, does not refer to Athens or to Athenian elements of the cult. The management of the Mysteries appears to have been in the hands of the Eleusinian family of the Eumolpidae, from whom the Hierophant was drawn. His title indicates that he revealed the sacred objects, and he was the chief priest at Eleusis. At some stage, however, this management was shared with the family of the Kerykes, who had Athenian connections. They provided the *daduchus* (torch-bearer) and the *keryx* (herald) who were the other chief officials of the cult. Athenian influence first becomes apparent in the 6th century, with the building of an enlarged *telesterion* (hall of initiation), and towards the end of the century there is evidence of the construction of a sanctuary of the Eleusinian deities at Athens. A procession from Athens to Eleusis was instituted and initiation into the rites of Demeter and Persephone at Agrae, on the outskirts of Athens, was made a necessary preliminary to initiation at Eleusis. This first stage was called the Lesser, the second the Greater Mysteries.

A further development was the opening of the Mysteries to all who could speak Greek, provided that they were free of pollution. The first definite evidence comes from an anecdote in Herodotus, the Greek writer of the 5th century BC, which is set at the time of the battle of Salamis in 480. This tells how a great cloud of dust like that of the procession to Eleusis was seen moving towards Salamis and a sound like the cry made during the procession was heard. The story was taken as a sign that the Eleusinian deities had come to the aid of Greece in her struggle against Persia.

This legend must have contributed to the popularity of the Mysteries, and Athenian propaganda during the 5th and 4th centuries BC also greatly increased their

prestige. This remained undiminished down to the Roman period, and they survived in fact until the end of the pagan world, when the invader Alaric in 395 AD finally destroyed the sanctuary.

Dancing by Torch Light

Archeology shows evidence of a series of buildings on the site of the telesterion from prehistoric times onwards, but the first literary evidence for the cult is found in the Homeric Hymn. This throws light on some of the preliminary rituals. One of these was a purification ceremony, in which the initiate was seated on a stool with his head veiled and his foot resting on a ram's fleece, while a priest or priestess purified him. In the Hymn Demeter is portrayed performing a similar ritual on her arrival at the palace of the ruler of Eleusis. On later monuments Heracles is shown undergoing the same purification.

Fasting was also a preliminary to initiation, and the Hymn describes how Demeter fasted for nine days when looking for Persephone and how she would not accept food or wine in the palace at Eleusis. She also carried torches in her search, and these played an important part in the ritual. There were dances by torchlight around the well Callichoron ('of the fair dances') at Eleusis, and this well is mentioned in the Hymn. It is still visible at the entrance to the sanctuary. The dancing formed part of a *pannychis* (all-night festival).

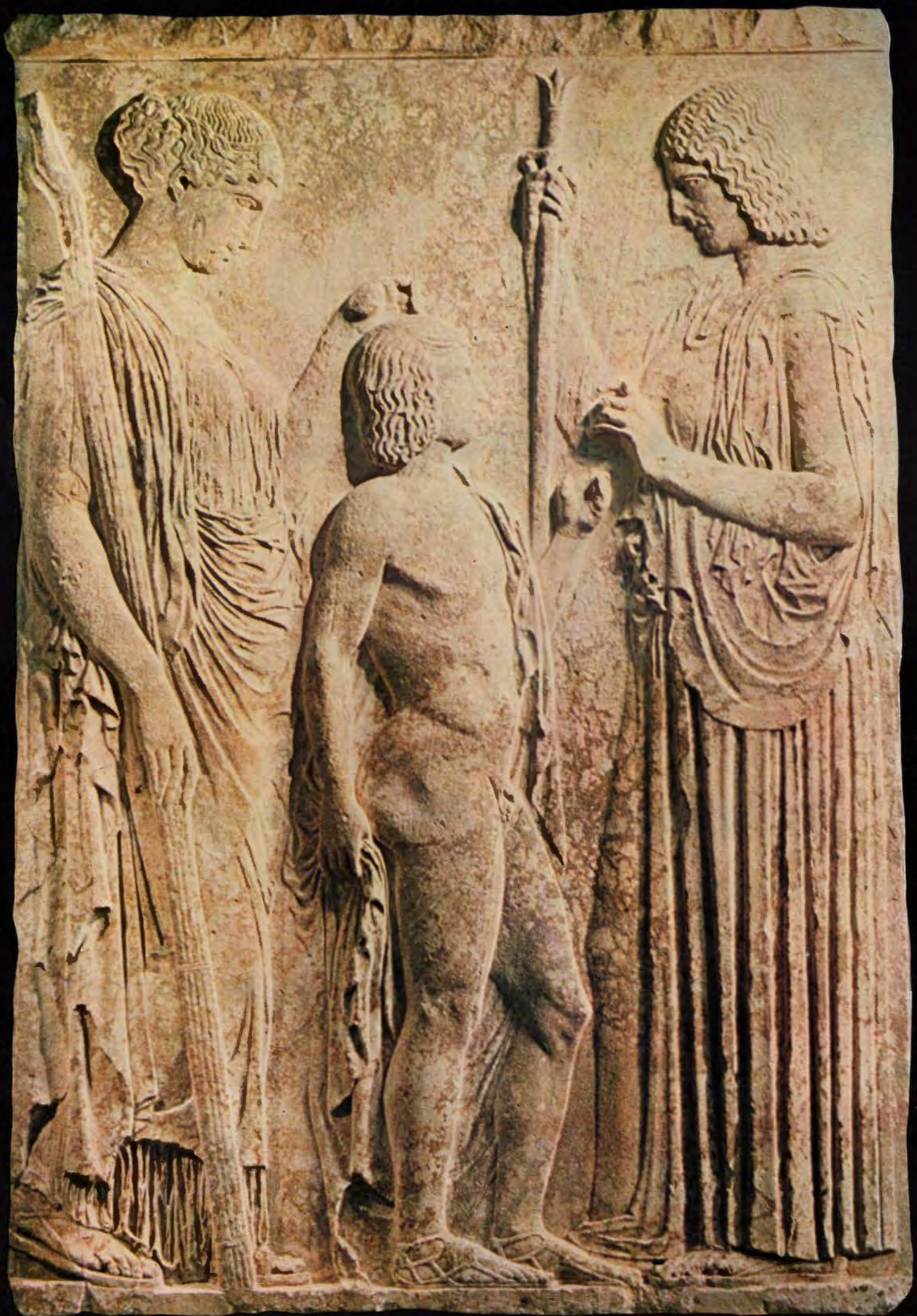
Demeter's fasting is broken when she is made to laugh by the jokes of a servant called Iambe. She then asks for a drink of barley and water, flavoured with the herb pennyroyal. In the cult fasting was also broken with this simple drink, and the making of coarse or obscene jokes (called *aischrologia*), which is common to many rituals of fertility, took place during the preliminaries to the Mysteries.

The Hymn goes on to describe Demeter's attempt to immortalize the king's son Demophon by placing him in the fire every night, her detection by the child's mother and the consequent failure of this project. There might be a reference here to the preliminary purification, in which fire was probably used. It has however been suggested that the story has a deeper significance, and that Demeter's nursing of the child reflects the 'adoption' of each initiate by the goddess in the Mysteries. As Demophon is reborn through his baptism of fire, so the initiate experiences a rebirth and the promise of a new life.

After the takeover of the Mysteries by Athens the preliminary ceremonies increased in complexity. The first stages

Facing page **After staying at the palace of the King of Eleusis during her search for Persephone, Demeter ordered that a temple should be erected where initiates would celebrate her Mysteries; she also taught Triptolemus, the King's son, the art of agriculture and commanded him to travel through the world in a winged chariot spreading this knowledge: scene on a Greek vase, showing Demeter with Triptolemus *Right* Head of a caryatid in Demeter's temple**

Mansell Collection



Facing page **Demeter presented Triptolemus, the hero of agriculture, with the first corn, and it is thought that the 'supreme revelation' of the Eleusinian Mysteries which were originally agricultural ceremonies, may have been the showing of a single ear of corn: relief at Eleusis showing Triptolemus receiving the corn from Demeter. Persephone stands behind him**

were purificatory. These were followed by the Lesser Mysteries, which took place in the month of *anthesterion* (February–March). Their purpose was also mainly that of purification, and they included washing in the river Ilissus. We are told that they had some kind of instructive content and prepared the initiates for the Greater Mysteries.

These took place in the month of *boedromion* (September–October), from the 15th to the 23rd day. There were two grades of initiation, and a year had to elapse before one was admitted to the final grade, which was known as the *epopteia*, meaning 'spectacle' or 'vision'. Before the festival the *hiera*, sacred objects, were brought to Athens from Eleusis. Their nature is unknown, but it was presumably these which the Hierophant or chief priest revealed during the ceremonies. They were kept in sacred boxes which are often represented in art.

The festival began with a solemn assembly at Athens during which the proclamation was made, which stated those classes of people who were forbidden to take part in the initiation. This was followed on the 16th day by a journey to the sea, where the initiates again took a sacred bath. Each took with him a pig, which was sacred to Demeter, and washed this also in the sea, after which the pigs were probably sacrificed. An official sacrifice to Demeter and Persephone took place the next day, and on the 18th day the initiates rested.

The great procession to Eleusis took place either on the 19th or 20th. This was called the Iacchus procession, after the deity who personified the cry which was made during it. The journey was a long one, some 14 miles, and it was interrupted by many ceremonies and included dancing, singing of hymns, and sacrifices. There was also a form of obscene humour in which prominent citizens were abused. On arrival there was a night festival with further dancing. This is portrayed on a votive tablet found at Eleusis.

About the main ceremonies of the Mysteries, which took place on the following days inside the telesterion, much less is known. The various stages of the building itself have been excavated, and the one which dates from the time of Pericles, in the second half of the 5th century BC, was a vast structure of approximately 51 metres in length and width. Along the sides were tiers of steps, wide enough to accommodate an audience of almost 4000 spectators. It is now thought that a small room stood in the centre of the hall, forming a Holy-of-Holies; from which the Hierophant would appear when he displayed the sacred objects.

The ritual took three forms, the 'things spoken' *legomena*, 'things performed', *dromena*, and 'things revealed' *deiknymena*. The first of these are thought to have been brief sentences, rather than a long exposition, and we are told by Aristotle that the initiates did not go to Eleusis to learn, but to have an experience and to be put in a receptive state of mind. Other authors emphasize the emotional experience of initiates to the Mysteries, whose reactions are said to be religious awe and fear, and at the close of the ceremonies joy, encouragement, and hope. The story of Demeter's 'passion', her search for Persephone and joy at her return, was central to the Mysteries, but it is not known how this was represented or referred to. Any form of dramatic representation appears to be ruled out by the nature of the telesterion. There were however important dramatic effects from the interchange of darkness and light, and the sudden blaze of torches at the climax of the Mysteries is often mentioned.

A Single Ear of Corn

Most of the evidence for what happened inside the telesterion comes from Christian writers, and is suspect on the grounds of prejudice and also of confusion with other pagan cults. Several authors refer to a 'sacred marriage' between Zeus and Demeter in relation to the Mysteries, and the Christian writer Asterius accuses Eleusis of celebrating 'a union between the Hierophant and the priestess' in an underground chamber. The Eleusinian myths do not refer to a marriage of Zeus and Demeter, but to that of Hades and Persephone. Originally the divine couple appear to have been anonymous, and they are sometimes referred to simply as 'the God and the Goddess'. If however a ritual union was enacted at Eleusis it cannot have taken place in the telesterion, where there was no underground chamber. Another Christian writer, Hippolytus, implies some form of sacred marriage, and he adds that during the Mysteries the Hierophant announced the birth of a sacred child to the goddess.

A second valuable testimony is given by Hippolytus about the epopteia, the name of which indicates that its essential nature was some form of revelation; references to the Mysteries throughout antiquity stress the fact that it was the *vision* of them that gave the initiates their hopes for the future. According to this writer, the 'supreme revelation' of the epopteia was simply the showing of a single ear of corn. This may seem hard to believe, and Hippolytus is eager to suggest the primitive nature of such a revelation. But if the agricultural basis of Demeter's worship is remembered, and the analogy that was felt between the life of the corn and that of men, one may be less inclined to question this testimony. The Mysteries were celebrated near the season of the autumn sowing, and their foundation is linked to the myth of the rape and return of Persephone, who personified the corn which was sown in the earth and 'came to life' again in the spring. In the symbol of the ear of corn the initiates may likewise have seen the promise of a new life beyond the grave, and the announcement of the birth of a divine child may also have symbolized this promise. At the same time, the child of the goddess of the earth is sometimes named as Plutus, the god of wealth, who in the Homeric Hymn is sent by Demeter and Persephone 'to the house of the man whom they love', and the divine birth and revelation of the corn must also have represented for the initiates the hope of prosperity in their present life.

We do not know much about the closing stages of the festival, but many authors speak of the encouragement and expectation of a better life which visitors to the Mysteries carried away with them. How far this involved moral resolutions it is hard to determine, although it seems that there was a kind of rudimentary ethical code at Eleusis which encouraged respect for family, fellow-citizens and foreigners alike. But the influence and prestige of the Mysteries throughout antiquity is rather to be explained as a result of the optimistic view of life and death which they offered, in contrast to the more pessimistic attitude of traditional Greek religion. Their influence on philosophy was strong, and through Pythagorean and Platonic circles they came to have an important effect on the philosophical and religious thought of the first centuries AD and also to some extent on the development of early Christian theology.

(See also DEMETER.)

N. J. RICHARDSON

Supreme Revelation

The Phrygians also say, however, that he is a 'green ear of corn reaped'; and following the Phrygians, the Athenians when initiating (anyone) into the Eleusinian (Mysteries) also show to those who have been made epopts the mighty and wonderful and most perfect mystery for an epopt there – a green ear of corn reaped in silence. And this ear of corn is also for the Athenians the great and perfect spark of light from the Unportrayable One: just as the hierophant himself, not indeed castrated like Attis, but rendered a eunuch by hemlock, and cut off from all fleshy generation, celebrating by night at Eleusis the great and ineffable mysteries beside a huge fire, cries aloud and makes proclamation, saying: 'August Brimo has brought forth a holy son, Bromios,' that is, the strong has given birth to the strong.

For august is, he says, the generation which is spiritual or heavenly or sublime, and strong is that which is thus generated.

Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*
(trans. F. Legge)

FURTHER READING: G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton University Press, 1961); M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (Harper and Row, 1940) and *History of Greek Religion* (Greenwood, 1980).

Eleven is the number of revelation, of going beyond the human to a higher plane, but it also has its dangers

ELEVEN

THE ELEVEN DISCIPLES who remained true to Jesus provide the clue to most modern numerological interpretations of the number 11. When you add up the number value of a name, you normally reduce the total to a single figure (see ALPHABET) and 11 reduces to 2. But some numerologists make an exception for 11 (and also for 22). For example, the name Winston S. Churchill adds to 65, and 6 + 5 = 11. If you like, you can halt the reduction process at this point, especially as 11 turns out to fit Churchill's achievements and character better than 2 does. One reason for the exception is that 2 is in many ways a disagreeable number (see TWO) and some numerologists like to avoid disagreeable numbers if possible, though they stress that you should consider whether you are pulling the wool over your eyes if you choose to think of yourself as 11 instead of 2.

If you decide that your number is 11, then you resemble the faithful apostles in having moral courage, visionary insight, and a powerful impulse to teach and inspire your fellow men. You have great spiritual force, you are an idealist, you are not satisfied with anything short of the best. All this is reinforced by the fact that the eleventh sign of the zodiac, Aquarius, stands for determination to help others, to pour out the life-giving water of your faith and vision on a parched world. In addition, you are probably an affable, genial person, because in astrology the eleventh house of a horoscope traditionally influences friendships and social life.

Revelation and Martyrdom

Partly because of Christ's disciples and partly because 11 follows 10, 11 is the number of revelation, received by you and transmitted to others. Since 10 is the number of the bodily plane of existence, the 10 fingers on your hands and toes on your feet, 11 stands for the beginning of a higher set of numbers, the revelation which opens the way to a higher, more spiritual plane.

Sonia Halliday

Because 11 disciples remained true to Jesus it is considered to be the number of moral courage, visionary insight, idealism and spiritual strength: wall painting, in Turkey, depicting the Last Supper

On the other hand, the fact that 11 comes immediately after 10 has given it some less desirable characteristics. In the 12th century Hugh of St Victor said that 11 means 'transgression out of measure'. It goes dangerously beyond normal limits. The number also falls dangerously short of 12, which is a number of completeness because so many things are arranged in groups of 12 (notably the 12 months of the year – see TWELVE). And so 11 combines the qualities of going far beyond the human without going quite far enough, and the numerologists warn of loving your ideals better than your fellow men, of providing universal remedies but not appreciating human needs. 'Needs to cultivate human understanding,' they say, rather in the manner of a headmaster ending a schoolchild's report. The fact that in a good many games a team consists of 11 players has been seen as symbolic of the imperfect attempting to reach the goals of perfection.

The number is also dangerous in a more physical sense because it means martyrdom, the death in this world that brings entry to the higher life of the next. Less lethally, it may mean opposition, enemies, attempts to frustrate you, the common obstacles met by inspired preachers and teachers.

Elf

In northern European mythology elves were originally small supernatural beings of two kinds, the light elves who lived in Alfheim, and the dark elves who lived in Swartheim: they later became the fairy people of Germanic folklore and were often thought of as mischievous and malignant, having the power to harm people with their 'elf-arrows': children born with deformities were said to be 'elf-marked', and knots in hair were called 'elf-locks'.

See FAIRIES.

John Webb

Alchemists were not only concerned with turning base metals into gold but with curing the ills of the flesh: disease and old age. They believed that the two aims were inter-connected and experimented diligently in their laboratories to produce a universal remedy or Elixir of Life

ELIXIR OF LIFE

THE WORD 'ELIXIR' comes from the Arabian *aliksir*, and in early Greek chemical treatises meant the transmuting agent by which base metals could be turned into gold and silver (see ALCHEMY). European alchemists referred to the Philosophers' Stone, which was believed to have universal curative powers, as the Elixir of Life, although many ancient writers claimed that the Elixir could also be made from other stone and is not necessarily identical with the Philosophers' Stone. An entry in an 18th century reference work, the *Universal Lexicon* of H. Zedler, defines 'elixir' as a kind of dark-coloured medicine, composed of many ingredients and dissolved in a strong solvent.

The belief in a panacea or remedy for all ills may be traced back until the days when the long life or immortality of the gods was explained by their partaking of mysterious food and drink, like the nectar and ambrosia of the Greek deities. It was widely believed that these precious and youth-giving remedies could be made of precious ingredients like gold, pearls and other jewels.

During the first centuries AD Alexandria was the home of the secret doctrine which promised to convert impure metals into gold, and at the same time to convert human beings into pure sages; and as the crowning achievement of their alchemical efforts, to prepare the 'universal remedy'. The theory was that if the philosopher or alchemist had attained a state of mind, allowing him to master the problems of metallic transformation, he should also be able to use his knowledge in overcoming all vicissitudes of human life, normally subject to an unknown number of diseases.

Here the aims of the Western and of the Chinese alchemists united. In the Far East the longing for a universal remedy was very strong; there are legends of a great master of the secret art of the 2nd century AD, named Wei Po-Yang who, according to tradition, became immortal together with one of his disciples and also with his little dog, who accidentally ate the rest of the magical panacea. In Europe the search for gold was pursued more single-mindedly and therefore its 'synthetizing' is mentioned more frequently than the other goal of the alchemist, the Elixir.

Normally medicines are designed to cure specific diseases; but what the alchemists strove for was the panacea, which could cure all kinds of sickness and also considerably prolong human life (hence *elixir vitae*, Elixir of Life). The basis for such an aim is the theory that all kinds of disease have a common cause – as for instance a disturbed balance of the 'elements' and 'humours' – so if it were possible to find an agent able to redress this balance, then the universal remedy would be found. Even the scholarly Paracelsus, who always revolted against the ancient humoral theories, claimed to have found a kind of panacea and told of the great number of different diseases he had been able to cure by its use. As late as the 16th century, the German alchemist Gerhard Dorn wrote: 'For since there is one single and most general beginning of all corruptions – and one universal fount of regenerating, restoring, and life-giving virtues – who, save a man bereft of his senses, will call such a medicine in doubt?' It is quite clear that the theoretical basis was the idea that sickness and disease have their common root in 'corruption', comparable to the Church's dogma that it was the original sin of Adam and Eve which was the true reason for all kinds of earthly degeneration.

The basic conception is that normal human life is afflicted by sickness and death as a consequence of impurity; and that by gradual purification, by the refining and purging that is an essential part of alchemical theory, it is almost inevitable that the adept will be enabled to overcome

A universal panacea, the Fountain of Youth, the Elixir of Life: the belief in a remedy that will cure all ills and prolong life is deeply-rooted in human nature. Details from Cranach's *The Fountain of Youth* showing (*left*) old women entering the magical waters which transform them (*right*) into young girls

Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

The immortality of the gods was attributed to the life-preserving qualities of their food and drink, the ambrosia and nectar of the Greek gods, for instance: *The Marriage of Cupid* by Raphael, in the Farnesina Palace, Rome, shows them feasting on Olympus

all these earthly imperfections. It follows, then, that this universal remedy must be a tool against all kinds of disease. The panacea must strengthen the vital energy to such a degree that the patient becomes stronger than all afflictions.

Many alchemists have claimed to possess such a secret remedy, including Paracelsus and Jan Baptist van Helmont (1577–1644). Especially in the writings of Paracelsus's disciples, the medical alchemists who cured with the help of inorganic compounds instead of drugs, there is much talk about the mysterious *'tinctura philosophorum'* or Philosophers' Tincture. One of these texts, c 1560, tells us that by the art of the true alchemist the tincture is made, and 'the true aim of the true medical men is the resurrection and regeneration of nature. In order to find this art the tincture of the physician had to be invented miraculously, which up till our days was always secretly used by the true masters of the spagirical art.' The term 'spagyric' is defined as 'made by means of the art to separate and to combine in the right way' – and refers to one basic maxim of alchemy: *'solve et coagula'*, dissolve and coagulate. Secret medicines are therefore often called 'spagirical remedies', and apparently the great number of prescriptions, describing the ways of making curious substances out of rare minerals, alcohol, metallic solutions, acids, and so on seem to represent nothing else than substitutes for what was so often talked about – the Elixir of Life.

A strange panacea mentioned in Zedler's *Lexicon* is the 'panacea aqua', which was apparently nothing else than water, distilled several times, without any taste, odour or colour. A certain M. de Villars of Paris was said to have used it to cure many diseases. Other elixirs and panaceas, composed from minerals and rare herbs in the most cases, were ascribed to many other chemists and alchemists. Zedler's encyclopedia refers to a case in which a panacea was used; he speaks of a letter from one of Paracelsus's disciples to a certain M. Michael Neander, relating how on one occasion a woman, in great distress, told the famous doctor that her husband would die in the course of the following night. Paracelsus inspected the patient's urine and then told her: 'Tomorrow your husband will have breakfast together with you and recover again.' Then he took a little portion of a white powder ('white elixir'), and told her to give it to the sick man dissolved in warm beer. The patient would then go into a sweat and become well again – and so it happened.

Many stories of this kind could be told but it is not clear whether they originated in the time of Paracelsus or were later attributed to him. At any rate the Swiss physician himself wrote in his books that he had been able to overcome many terrible diseases. The Dutch alchemist van Helmont tells us that by divine inspiration he had found the true remedy by using the ways of the alchemists, and he called himself *'philosophus per ignem'*, meaning 'philosopher through fire'. He stressed his belief that Paracelsus had known the Elixir of Life which he called a universal ferment, necessary for all mixture of the elements and humours. He is said to have cured various diseases by dipping a secret 'stone' into milk or oil which the patients had to drink. Sometimes he speaks of a universal solvent, the 'alkahest', by which he apparently means the same as Elixir and which, in the right concentration, should be able to dissolve everything 'as warm water dissolves ice'.

In a tract ascribed to Paracelsus and published for the first time in 1570, entitled *De Tinctura Physicorum* (On the Tincture of the Physicians) occur the following sentences: 'This is the tincture by which some of the first physicians in Egypt, and afterwards up till our times, have lived for 150 years. The lives of many of them lasted for some centuries, as history clearly teaches, although this does not seem to be true to anybody: because its force is so miraculous, that it is able to enlighten the body . . . and to strengthen him to such a degree that he will remain free of all diseases and, although afflicted by old age, will appear as it had been in his youth. Therefore the *tinctura physicorum* is a universal remedy which devours all sicknesses like a fire devouring wood. Its quantity is tiny, but its force is mighty.' The

Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei

author goes on to claim that he has cured many diseases including leprosy, dropsy and epilepsy.

Prolonging Life to Doomsday

The 17th century French alchemist Jean d'Espagnet, a native of Bordeaux, describes the preparation of this mysterious medicine in the following way: 'Take three parts of red earth (meaning the Philosophers' Stone), water and air, six parts altogether, mix them thoroughly and prepare a metallic paste like butter in which the earth can no longer be felt with the finger. Add one and a half parts of fire and place it into a thoroughly closed vessel and give it fire of the first degree for digestion. Then you prepare an extract of the elements according to the degrees of the fire until they are reduced to a solid earth. The matter becomes like a shining, translucent red stone and then it is ready. Put it into a pot on a modest fire and moisten it by its oil, drop by drop, until it becomes fluent without smoke. Do not be afraid that the mercury will vaporize; the earth drinks the humidity eagerly, because it is a part of its nature. Now you have the elixir ready. Thank God for his grace that he has granted you, use it for his praise and keep the secret.' The meaning of these sentences was probably clear to alchemists of his day but we can hardly guess what substances were referred to when d'Espagnet speaks of adding one and a half parts of fire.

Apparently the belief in the efficacy of the alchemical Elixir was not limited to the time before the beginnings of modern science. The author of *History of Alchemy* (published in 1832), K. C. Schmieder, evidently believed to some degree in the existence of the universal remedy when he wrote about the famous Salomon Trismosin, a mysterious personality said to have lived towards the end of the 15th century: 'He (Trismosin) not only told about the force of the panacea in general, but pointed to certain cases revealing the miracles of it. He regenerated himself by a half grain of it so that his yellow, wrinkled skin became smooth and white, his cheeks red, his grey hair black again, and his bent spine was lifted vertically . . . He was inclined to believe that, using this medicine, human life could be prolonged at one's convenience, probably until Doomsday.' Here Schmeider apparently became sceptical himself, and so he adds: 'Exaggerations, which show a disagreement with Nature, were always the reason that their author was met mistrustfully, and that modern spectators condemned the panaceist together with the alchemist.'

Those rare creatures, the 20th century alchemists, have also not turned away from hopes of the Elixir. In 1917 a Californian couple named Ingalese claimed that they had isolated a substance which they called both Philosophers' Stone and Elixir. Minute doses, they said, acted as a rejuvenator – and they kept themselves hale with it. They also claimed to have used it successfully to 'resurrect' a woman who had been medically dead for a short time.

It is not easy to distinguish between what the alchemist tried to teach in allegories and allusions and should be taken in a higher sense, and – on the other hand – what they were ready to take for granted in a literal sense. The one possibility by no means excluded the other, but it was thought of as a mystical participation of the spiritual with the material aspect. Therefore, if the old texts speak of purification, rectification, refinement and so on, giving the adept miraculous possibilities of influencing his world, then this in the first place is to be taken as a hint of his new spiritual freedom from normal human limitations. At the same time, however, when the opposites, spirit and matter come together, the alchemist was also free to believe in legends such as that of the life-giving and regenerating universal remedy, made from the same 'hidden stone' which can also be used for transforming impure metals into gold.

For us it would be more convenient to think that the ancient alchemists only spoke in allegories when describing the wonderful aspects of the universe one perceives when one is granted ultimate knowledge by God's grace. We would gladly accept these legends as symbols of a purely spiritual immortality, beyond any material affliction, in the face of which one is able to forget all earthly disease and imperfection and to behold only the immaterial light of the purified mind. But such a standpoint would take into account only half of the truth in which the alchemist believed.

If we take the alchemical process in the Jungian sense and explain it by projection

The Wine of Egypt

A great lady, who was also unfortunately for her, an old one, and was unable to resign herself to the fact, was reported to have consulted Cagliostro, who gave her a vial of the precious liquid with the strictest injunction to take two drops when the moon entered its last quarter. Whilst waiting for this period to arrive the lady who desired to be rejuvenated shut up the vial in her wardrobe, and the better to ensure its preservation informed her maid that it was a remedy for the colic. Fatal precaution! By some mischance on the following night, the maid was seized with the very malady of which her mistress had spoken. Remembering the remedy so fortuitously at hand she got up, opened the wardrobe, and emptied the vial at a draught.

The next morning she went as usual to wait on her mistress, who looked at her in surprise and asked her what she wanted. Thinking the old lady had had a stroke in the night, she said –

"Ah, madame, don't you know me? I am your maid."

"My maid is a woman of fifty," was the reply, "and you . . ."

But she did not finish the sentence. The woman had caught a glimpse of her face in a mirror. The Wine of Egypt had rejuvenated her thirty years.

W. R. H. Trowbridge, *Cagliostro: The Splendour and Misery of a Master of Magic*

of a subconscious process onto the surrounding world, then we are quite near to an understanding of the coincidence of the spiritual and the material aspect. A purely spiritual alchemy would never explain the existence of alchemical laboratories in which physicians honestly and fanatically sought for occult medicines. The wish to overcome sickness and pain by having reached a high spiritual stage and by taking part in the divine creative forces is, at any rate, a noble one and therefore we are able to view it more sympathetically than the attempt solely concerned with synthetizing gold.

From the early days of Hellenistic alchemy onwards, the final object of the 'philosopher' was to set the *pneuma* (soul) free of its bodily fetters; the pneuma cannot be open to any earthly affliction – therefore if the highest stage in evolution could be attained, sickness would inevitably be overcome. Whatever we are able to accept as true in the alchemical legends of the Elixir of Life, there is no doubt that this ideal ultimate object of the alchemical doctor's endeavours helped to improve his pharmaceutical possibilities.

It is possible that out of the endless striving for the Elixir man gained access to many secrets of Nature; otherwise for long centuries doctors would have been content with their traditional *materia medica* as described in antique herbals. Alchemy, dealing with inorganic matters (which nevertheless for the alchemist were not without a secret life) opened new doors; and if it could not bring into existence a true Elixir of Life it certainly helped man to seek, to labour, to endeavour – and this is the true beginning of all human progress.

(See also ALCHEMY; MERCURY; PARACELSUS; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

HANS BIEDERMANN

Michael Halford/Victoria & Albert Museum

Left Alcohol has long been popular as an elixir: 19th century lithograph advertising Coca wine ***Right*** Alchemists in Europe referred to the Philosophers' Stone as the Elixir of Life, and the appearance in his crucible of the perfect red gold, the Red Elixir, proved to the alchemist that he had created the true stone: ***The Red Sea, the Red Sol, the Red Elixir Vitae,*** allegorical illustration from a 15th century treatise

Karin Haddle

Elm

In Teutonic mythology the first woman, Embla, was created from an elm by the three gods Odin, Hoenir and Loki who gave the tree breath, soul and warmth: in England the elm was also known as 'elven' because of its association with the elves, and in Devon it was believed that lightning would not strike an elm: according to country lore, when the leaves of the elm were as big as a mouse's ear it was time to plant barley, while the shedding of its leaves before the autumn foretold disease among the cattle.
See TREES.

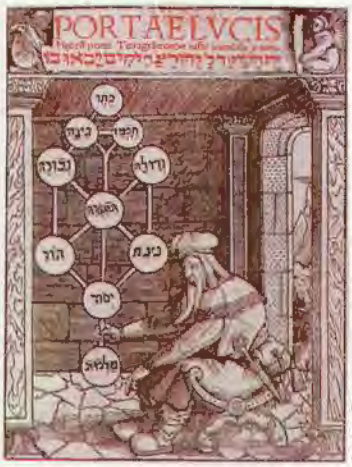
Elohim

One of the chief names for God in the Old Testament: it is the plural form of the Hebrew *El* or *Eloah*, meaning 'god', and is used to denote heathen gods and spirits of the dead as well as the God of Israel: magicians, believing that the 'real' name of the god contained his essence, inscribed Elohim on their magic circles to infuse divine power and ward off evil influences.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Elysium

In Greek mythology a land of perfect happiness and perpetual spring where those favoured by the gods lived exempt from death; according to Homer the Elysian Fields were located at the end of the earth, on the banks of the river Oceanus, and were ruled by Rhadamanthus: later classical writers identified it as the part of the underworld to which the righteous went after death.
See PARADISE.



Layton-Sun

Emanation

Literally an 'outflowing' of the supreme principle or divine essence into a series of secondary forms: central to the system evolved by the Cabalists was the belief that God revealed himself through ten descending emanations or spheres known as *sefiroth*, aspects of God: they provide a path by which man can reach God and are centres of power which magicians attempt to use.
See CABALA.

Bruce Davidson – Magnum

EMERALD

POPULARLY ASSOCIATED with romantic love and the sensual side of Nature, the emerald is attributed to Venus and to Friday, the day sacred to that goddess. It is also associated with the zodiacal house of Gemini, the sign of the Twins.

These attributions are the outcome of a long evolution of ideas which had their root in a close and intense observation of physical phenomena. The Venusian attribution is based upon the concept of renewal and rebirth. In ancient Egypt *uat* was the name for water and it also means green. Water and green were synonymous in early mystical lore because water typified the earliest form of soul or generative essence; the affinity of that colour with the element itself is of secondary importance.

The Egyptian word also signified the hard green stone, the emerald, and the green feldspar, a rock-forming mineral of such extreme hardness that a sharp knife is barely able to scratch it. It was used primarily for tablets, another meaning of the word 'uat' being to transmit, as is done by engraving upon tablets. The celebrated Emerald Tablet, containing the 13 precepts of Hermes and revered by generations of alchemists, was said to have been engraved by Hermes Trismegistus (see HERMETICA). *Uat-chat* was the name of a nome or division in Upper Egypt; its capital was Aphroditopolis, and its goddess, Hathor – the Egyptian Venus. The Egyptians depicted the Eye of Horus in the uat or emerald colour, the eye being a reflector of images, both in this world and the next.

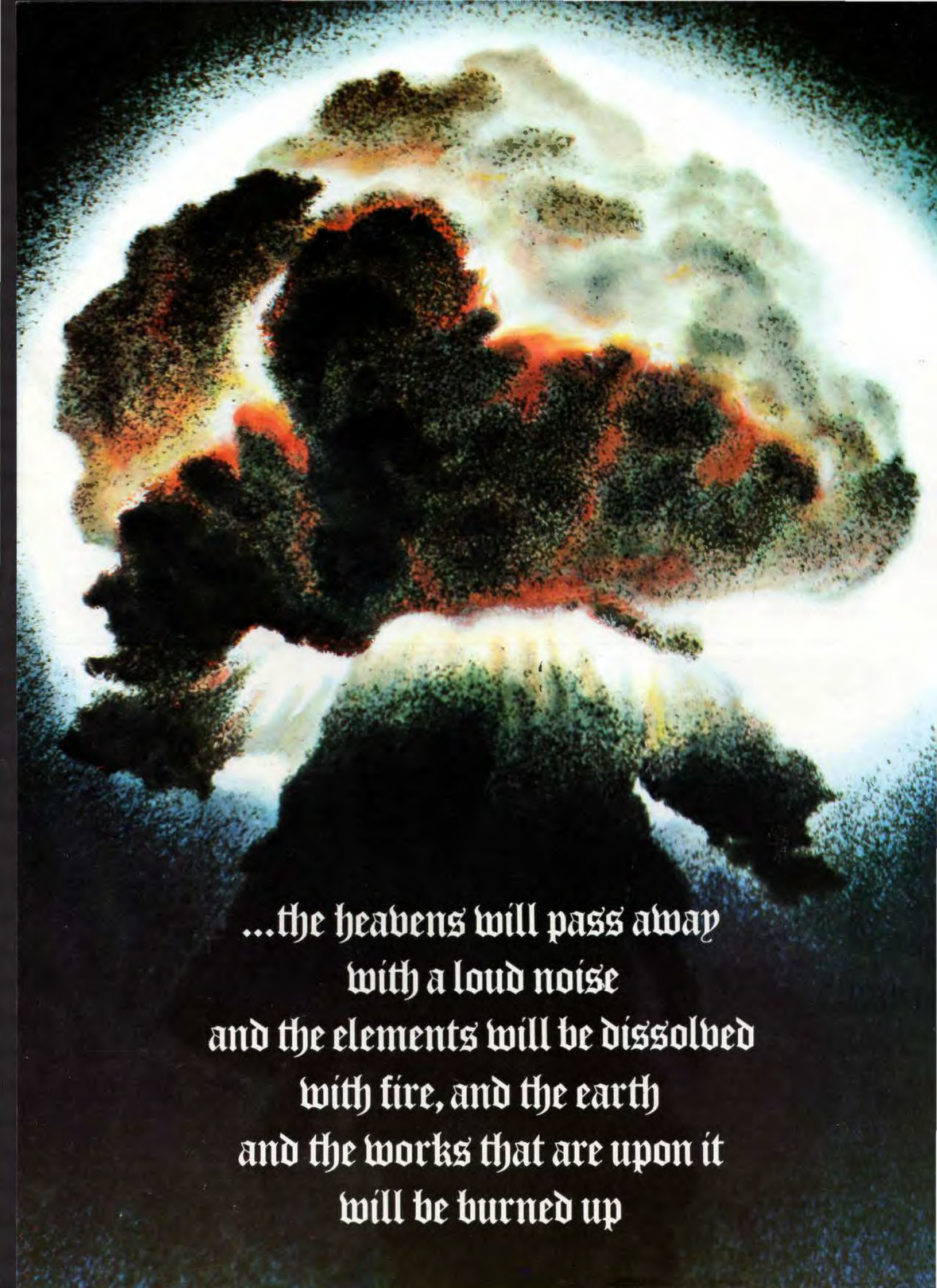
The blue-green sceptre of the genetrix, *Uati* (also Uatchit or Wadjet) was a symbol of the Twin Goddesses and blended the blue of heaven and green of earth in one image. This is undoubtedly the origin of the attribute of the emerald to the twin-sign, Gemini, at a later stage of symbolism. Uati brooded over the mummified body of Osiris (the deceased), bringing it to rebirth from the green earth into the blue heaven of eternal life. The uat as the emerald earth containing the dead was – in this instance – synonymous with the *Tuat*, or underworld, from which emerged the glorified spirits at the time of rebirth or resurrection.

The 19th century Egyptologist, Champollion, copied an emerald representation of Atum from the lid of a sarcophagus, showing that this colour typified the invisible world out of which new life burgeoned in verdant raiment of green leafage.

A Graeco-Egyptian magical rite involved the consecration of a scarab 'carved out of precious emerald'. It was bored through and strung with a gold thread so that it could be worn as a charm. Beneath the beetle was carved, also in emerald, a figure of the goddess Isis. On days proper to its use, this spell was recited over it: 'Come to me, thou that art under the earth, rise up to me, thou great spirit.'

The Papyrus Sceptre or Lotus Wand – another magical charm – was made of mother-of-emerald. The papyrus was the typical plant of nourishment and reproduction, also of the transmission of the word. This amulet therefore represented 'the magical power of Isis' which endowed the wearer with rebirth in the spirit world.

The colour and gem attributed to Libra is also emerald, Libra being the zodiacal house of Venus. As the colour green is a blend of yellow and blue, the emerald typified the enduring conjunction of the blue (air) of heaven and the yellow (gold) of the sun. Thus, Venus, who symbolized life, growth and the green earth, had as her most brilliant form the emerald.
(See JEWELS.)


...the heavens will pass away
with a loud noise
and the elements will be dissolved
with fire, and the earth
and the works that are upon it
will be burned up

END OF THE WORLD

Man has always been haunted by a sense of the impermanence of this world. The ideo that the final destruction of the cosmos is followed by re-creation is common to many religions

THE RAGGED FANATIC, solemnly carrying his placard announcing that 'The End of the World is at Hand', is an object of ridicule. The image of the mushroom cloud is an ever-present reality to every sensitive person. Between the two – a very real possibility of an end to the world as we know it and the attempt to pinpoint the end and express it in mythological terms – there is much more than an accidental connection. Men have seldom been able to believe wholeheartedly in the permanence of the established order, though they have often poured scorn on the prophet who has dared to remind them of their doubts. It was so in the early centuries of the Christian era: 'Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation"' (2 Peter 3.3) and it is so today. The difference now is that the end of the world, if there is to be an end, is seen as coming about through, in some sense, natural causes. In the past, it was held that it would come about through supernatural causes and it was accordingly expressed in mythological terms.

The writer of 2 Peter answered the 'scoffers' by pointing out as a 'fact' that the earth had been created by God out of a watery chaos (as related in Genesis 1.1), that through this same water 'the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished' (Genesis, chapters 6–8), and that by the word of God, 'the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men' (2 Peter 3.7). Here we have a mythological pattern, repeated in many parts of the world, of creation, destruction and re-creation, and it is in this perspective that practically all end of the world myths must be seen. We may speculate

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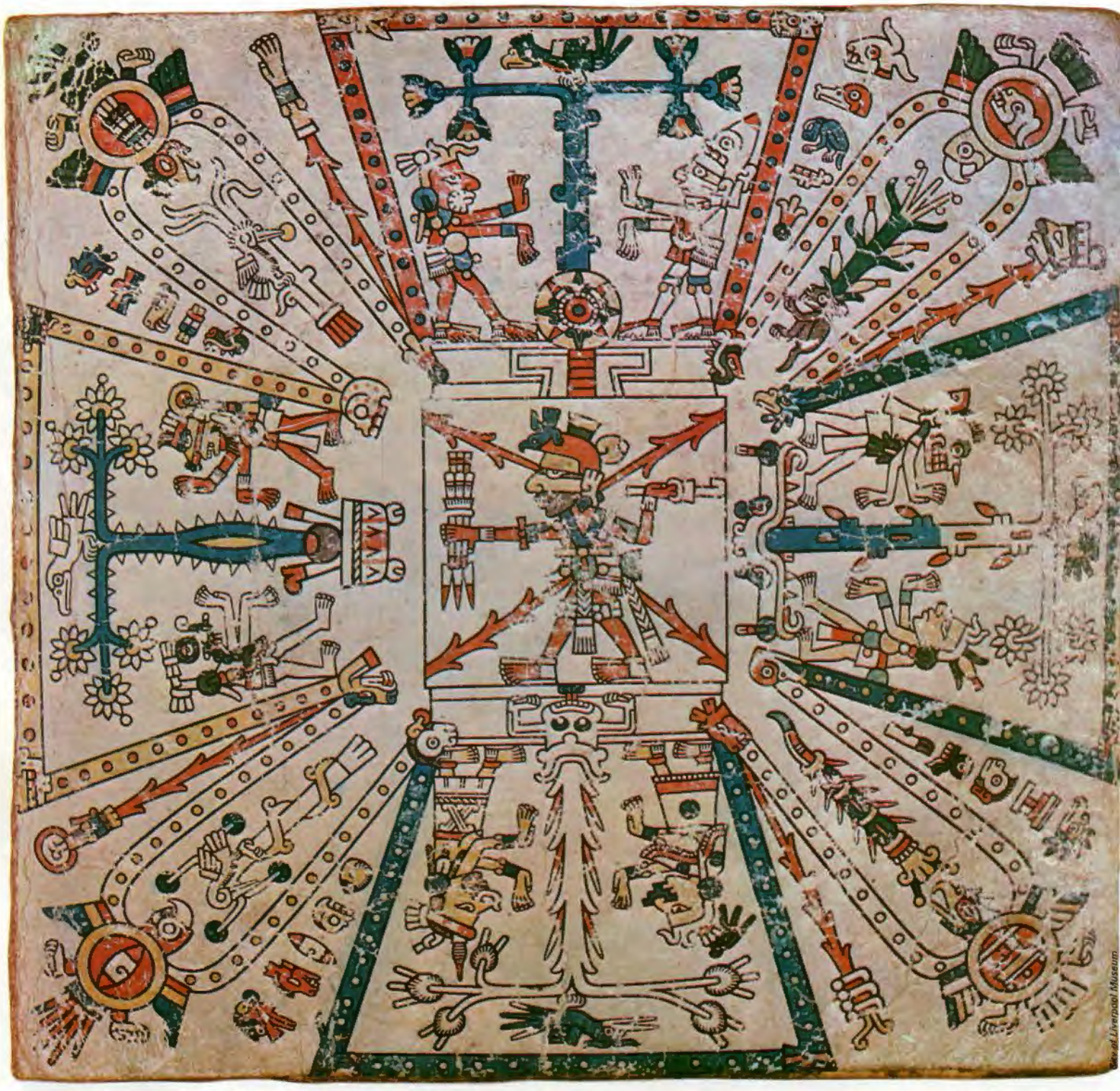
The mushroom cloud of an atomic explosion (*left*) warns of the very real possibility that the world may end in scientifically created chaos; but the prophet of disaster (*right*) is still ridiculed today, as he has been through the ages



Each of a series of world ages has ended in cosmic catastrophe, according to Aztec mythology: leaf from the Codex Fejervary-Mayer depicting five world regions, four of which have already been destroyed. In the centre is the region of the present world

interminably as to the origins of such patterns as these, without ever reaching more than a probable theory. However, it seems likely that in primitive man's experience the succession of day and night, summer and winter, rain and drought, heat and cold; the rising and setting of the sun; the phases of the moon; the wanderings of some, at least, of the stars – all contributed to a sense of insecurity with regard to man's tenure of the face of the earth.

There is no lack of evidence to show that primitive man conceived of the cosmic process not as something stable, but as a great and continuous battle between the forces of creation and destruction, order and chaos. The world had been brought into being by supernatural forces out of chaos; and unless these forces were supported – by prayer, sacrifice and other ritual acts – then the world would inevitably return once more to that same chaos. The cosmic order was, however, maintained by the gods (particularly the High Gods of the sky), and should they so choose, it could be brought to an end. The annual festivals of agricultural peoples, with which cycles of myth are intimately associated, were meant to ensure the continued existence of the earth, particularly the seasonal renewal of its fertility and its life. But in the background was always the fear that at some time, to be appointed by the gods, a return to chaos would take place. Natural phenomena – hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes – suggested the means: man's ritual and moral shortcomings suggested the motive.

Common to a surprisingly large number of races was the conviction that all this had, in fact, happened before. The gods had destroyed the world on certain occasions when conditions had become so bad as to be unbearable from the gods' own point of view. But why should they ever become so bad? No simple answer is possible, except that the ancients were evidently under no illusions regarding the perfectibility of mankind.

Destruction is merely the prelude to new life, a wiping clean of the world's slate, in order that a new start may be made

But even this pessimistic outlook, which placed man's Golden Age in a distant past, and saw his evolution as a development into greater and more sophisticated iniquity, was not the whole of the story.

In ancient Babylon, for instance, where man's position in the cosmos paralleled that of the slave in the city-state, it was up to the gods to decide when the end should come. They had decided before: Sumerian and Babylonian–Assyrian mythology had recorded the legend of the great Deluge, and of the great Ark in which Ziusudra (Utnapishtim) had been saved (compare the Old Testament story of Noah), but had given no cogent moral reasons why this should have been so. Nor were their end of the world myths any the less arbitrary. In Seneca's words: 'Berosus (author of a history of Babylon) says that everything takes place according to the course of the planets, and he maintains this so confidently that he determines the times for the conflagration of the world and for the flood. He asserts that the world will burn when all the planets which now move in different courses come together in the Crab, so that they all stand together in a straight line in the same sign, and that the future flood will take place when the same conjunction occurs in Capricorn.' The astrological aspect is probably to be explained in terms of identification between the stars and the gods themselves, who were ultimately responsible for past and future catastrophes.

The link between past and future is to be seen in a slightly different form in the mythology of the Aztecs of Central America who believed in a series of world ages, each of which had so far ended in a cosmic catastrophe – famine, fire, hurricane and flood respectively. This present age was expected to end on the completion of a 52-year cycle and every 52 years special preparations were made: all fires were extingnished and priests and people ascended a sacred mountain, waiting for the rise of the Pleiades. Only when this happened could the people be sure of safety for another 52 years.

Many South American Indians tell of a similar past catastrophe, thoogh theirs is a less sophisticated conception. Usually the disaster is said to have been the sun or moon falling onto the earth, or destruction by fire or by snow and ice. And in most cases the horrors are sent by an angry god or culture hero – and later a few survivors, with supernatural aid, repopulate the earth. Algonquin tribes in North America have a few end-of-the-world tales, envisaging it either as a great fire or a final and all-inclusive battle.

Hindu and Buddhist belief generally looked on the history of the world as consisting in a series of four ages, or *Yugas*, each of enormous length. These have the names *Krita Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dvapara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga*, marked by successive declines in morals, righteousness and piety. By the end of the final age, Kali Yuga, of a Day of Brahma (a thousandfold cycle), Brahmins will have come to neglect their devotions; popular piety will be dead; fire, drought and famine will ravage the earth. Then there will be a century of death, after which the god Vishnu assumes the form of Rudra, the destroyer, and dries up all the moisture on or beneath the earth. There follows a universal conflagration, in which the last vestiges of human occupation disappear from the face of the earth. At last the underworld, earth and heavens disappear also in the vast whirlpool of flame; nothing remains save the eternal and uncreated Brahman. But this is a beginning, as well as an end: the cycle is begun again, and a new series of ages ensues, marked by the same stages, the same decline into sin and lawlessness (*adharma*), and earmarked for the same ultimate fate.

Prelude to New Life

Turning to an entirely different tradition, one of the best known and yet in some ways least understood myths concerning the end of the world is that which is found in the medieval Icelandic sources, and which has to some extent passed into the European consciousness through Wagner's opera *Götterdämmerung* (*The Twilight of the Gods*). The earliest version of this myth ends the first poem in the Poetic (or Verse) Edda, the *Völuspá* (12th century). This is no saga, nor a logically constructed prediction of the 'last times', but rather a poetic apocalypse, perhaps reflecting some of the tension between old and new faiths during the years when Christianity was winning its way into the minds of the Northern peoples. Once more, the end of all things is set in the framework of cosmogony: the beginning and the end are equally important and there are hints of a previous catastrophe, similar to those we have already seen.

The end is heralded by a cock-crow, and has been preceded by the 'Fimhul-winter' – three winters of unprecedented severity. The catastrophe begins to unfold with the death of the blind brother of the slain Balder and the fettering of the evil Loki, and the refrain begins: Garm (the hound of death) howls by the hole of the underworld; the fetter breaks; the wolf runs free. There follows a description of the terrors of the Kingdom of the Dead, and of the moral dissolution of mankind, another consistent element in such myths. Then the cosmic tree Yggdrasill shudders, the hound Garm howls once more, the snake wound round the world begins to stir, and the gods, good and evil alike, begin to assemble for the final battle. Odin is killed by the Fenris wolf but is avenged, briefly, by his son; Thor is killed by the Midgard snake. The sun becomes dark, the earth sinks into the sea, the stars fall from heaven, and fire consumes both Yggdrasill and Valhalla, the home of the slain heroes. All is waste and void.

Then the miracle happens: the earth reappears, purified and fresh, ruled by the sons of the gods; Balder and his brother return, and a high and noble temple-hall shines brighter than the sun. The underworld remains, though eternally cut off from the world of light. Chaos has once more been transcended, as in the moment of the first creation; mankind is once more established on the face of the earth – though a new earth freed from the fetters of the past. It has often been thought that the motif of new creation is not part of the original mythological tradition; and yet, allowing that the myth as we have it is post-Christian, can we not see here the fusing of Indo-European and Judaeo-Christian traditions within the framework of high poetry?

A far different Indo-European view of the end of the world, and yet one which has marked affinities with Hindu beliefs, is found in ancient Greece. The Greek writer Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, speaks of the five ages of Gold, Silver, Bronze, Heroes and Iron, in which there is a gradual descent from joy and innocence to guile, misery and corruption. An elaborate theory of cyclical world history was put forward by Heraclitus (c 500 BC) and later developed by Plato; possibly this theory

According to the New Testament the end of the present world will be heralded by a multitude of signs such as wars, earthquakes and famines. One of the central symbols in the elaborate imagery of the book of Revelation is a scroll sealed with seven seals, the opening of which lets fearful terrors loose upon the world: Death, the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse, is given power over a quarter of the world when the fourth seal is opened. Detail from *The Triumph of Death*, a series of frescoes by Francesco Traini

owes much to Babylonian influence, particularly in respect of the idea of the *magnus annus*, or great year, the period during which eight independently revolving planetary spheres return to their point of departure. In Plato's version, a total revolution in one direction is followed by a revolution in the opposite direction; thus the world as it is known is succeeded by an age of 'history in reverse'.

Also from Heraclitus came the notion of a cosmic fire, the *ekpurosis*, into which the world is periodically dissolved, and from which it is born anew. To be sure, the elements from which the world is made are indestructible, and can never be more than temporarily disturbed, returning after the conflagration to the same relationship to one another. But each cycle is none the less distinct, though hardly distinctive: indeed, one corollary of a theory of this kind was that history repeats itself exactly, down to the smallest detail. Every age is subject to the same forces of disintegration and degeneration and each will dissolve in time, only to be recreated. This theory was developed in its most elaborate detail by the Stoic popular preachers of the 2nd century BC and earlier, and passed over into Christianity through the Church Fathers, some of whom even undertook to attempt to prove the doctrine of ekpurosis from the Book of Genesis.

However, the cyclical theories of the Greek philosophers accorded ill with the Judaic tradition out of which Christianity developed, and these were ultimately attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable, so vast were the differences between them.

The Ways of God with Man

Turning now to this Judaeo-Christian stream of tradition, the developed Christian view of the end of the world differs in certain important respects from these other mythologies particularly in that it incorporates no trace of a cyclical view of time. It rests on the Old Testament view that in God's good time a new and better world will emerge out of this present order, thus vindicating God's final sovereignty over creation.

In later Judaism the Old Testament view was to give rise to elaborate time schemes, in which the lengths of this present age and the age of the Messiah to

Scala

Mansell Collection

come – both preceding the ultimate vindication of the sole and absolute authority of God – were calculated with much precision and not a little imagination. The sequence was: first the present age, characterized by increasing moral turpitude (by now a familiar element); secondly, heralded by great tribulations, the messianic age here on earth, in which righteousness and peace are established throughout creation; and finally, the accomplishment by God of the ultimate act of new creation.

On the practical level, the problem in late Judaism was to reconcile the wisdom, power and justice of God with the actual misfortunes of Israel in the 1st century AD. An elaborate justification of the ways of God with man is contained in 2 Esdras (Apocrypha); beginning with man, with Adam, it then continues with the question 'When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in thy sight?' and its answer, 'Thou mayest indeed find individuals who have kept thy commandments, but nations thou wilt not find' (3.35), and ending with the vision: '. . . faithfulness shall flourish, and corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which has been so long without fruit, shall be revealed' (6.27). The point here is, however, not that the world is going to come to an end, but that past and future alike are in the hands of God, and that the consummation is the responsibility of the Lord of history, just as was creation. The process is planned, and not haphazard.

It is against this background that Christian ideas concerning the end of the world must be viewed. The framework of the absolute sovereignty of God is identical. So, too, is the pattern of the three ages: this present age; the age to come inaugurated by the emergence of Jesus as Messiah – 'in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son' (Hebrews 1.2) – and the age to come consummated by the second appearance of Jesus Christ in power and glory.

In this present age men are helpless, being under the sway of angels, principalities and powers in enmity to God. The coming of Christ heralds the gradual breaking of the power of these evil spirits. Characteristic of this new age are certain 'powers' such as the conquest of sin, suffering and disease.

The consummation of the new age so far as the vast majority of mankind is concerned – those who have either not heard or not heeded the Gospel – will come 'like a thief in the night' (Thessalonians 5.2); in this passage Paul echoes Jesus's words, 'the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect' (Luke 12.40). But although the actual end may be unexpected, there will have been ample signs heralding its advent: wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes and famines. The subsequent crisis will be cosmic: '. . . after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling down from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory'; 'Heaven and earth will pass away . . .' (Mark, chapter 13).

Alpha and Omega

There seems little doubt that the idea of the immediate end of the world passed into the consciousness of the Christian Church direct from the teaching of Jesus himself. It is prominent in Paul and certain of the later books of the New Testament: '. . . the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up' (2 Peter 3.10); and, of course, in the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation adds little of

Facing page **A woman, pursued by 'the great dragon . . . that ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan' is given the wings of an eagle in order to escape him; the monster makes war on her offspring: illustration of a passage from the Apocalypse in a French manuscript**

Through the ages there have been sects and individuals who have predicted the imminent end of the world *Above left* 'The Noeh of Washington Mud Flats': convinced that a second Flood would occur in 1936, he built a gigantic Ark and equipped himself with demon-proof armour *Above right* Believing that the conjunction of eight planets in 1962 foretold global disaster, members of the Aetherius Society climbed a mountain in England's Lake District to pray

substance, however, to the shorter and more cryptic accounts found in other New Testament books, although its imagery is considerably more elaborate. One central symbol is that of the scroll sealed with seven seals; on the opening of the sixth seal there is an earthquake, the sun becomes 'black as sackcloth', the stars fall and the people run in terror; the seventh seal produces silence in heaven for a half hour, then seven angels send seven torments, the 'seven bowls of the wrath of the Lord'. Nevertheless, these and similar convulsive symptoms are not really the point of the narrative, which is to proclaim the passing away of the old order and the coming of the new: 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away' (Revelation 21.1). Of no less importance is the agency – the direct action of God – by which this radical renewal is accomplished: 'And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new . . . I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end".' (Revelation 21.5–6).

Broadly speaking, the Christian Church, while continuing to believe in a vague way in the final summing up of all things in Christ, has long refused to concern itself with the details of the end of the world. There have been exceptions, of course: recurrent periods of biblical orthodoxy have given rise to more or less extravagant claims that the end is in sight. One example of the new mythology which such concerns have brought in their wake is found in the writings of Thomas Burnet (1635?–1715), who reflected in his *Sacred Theory of the Earth* that the destructive fires would be kindled at Rome, the seat of the Antichrist, and would be aided and abetted by all the sources of fire in the world. Since the soil of Britain contains so much coal, he concluded, it would be preferable to be elsewhere when that day dawns.

ERIC J. SHARPE

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'The Angel of the Odd' was the guiding spirit of a modern Belgian painter in the fantastic and satirical tradition of Breughel and Bosch

JAMES ENSOR

JAMES SIDNEY ENSOR, born at Ostend in 1860, the son of an English father and Flemish mother, was a man of many facets; he was a poet, musician, painter in varied styles and etcher but remarkable above all as a master of the grotesque. His parents sold souvenirs of Ostend to visitors at the Belgian seaside resort, toys, sea shells, postcards, curiosities and masks at carnival time. There was always a shop full of such things on the ground floor of the building in which he lived and had his studio. In his paintings he gave its oddities an eerie, phantom life.

Ensor loved everything about Ostend. 'fairy queen of skies and multi-coloured waters' in his description. The carnival, always so dear to the Flemish heart with its animal masks, storks with blue beaks and foolish clamour, peculiar insects and tottering puppets, enraptured him. 'I am happily confined' he wrote, 'in the solitary realm where the mask reigns'. Its weird intensity of expression, added to the unexpected gestures and jerky movements of the carnival figure, inspired pictures such as no one else had painted before.

When in 1917 he inherited from an uncle the curiosity shop at 27 rue de Flandres, where he remained until his death in 1949 (it later became an Ensor Museum), he kept its bizarre stock intact, no longer as objects for sale but as the cherished source of his most fantastic conceptions. In this later period of his long life, however, some inner spring of the imagination seems to have failed him. He painted still with iridescent colour but for the sharp impression of the artificial world he fashioned it is necessary to go back to his work belonging to the turn of the century.

After training at Brussels and an early 'dark period' in which he painted figures and landscapes with conspicuous ability in an entirely naturalistic style, fantasy claimed him. He had always had a sense of the strangeness of things. As a child he received a strong impression from a big sea bird which blundered into his room, attracted by the light, and fluttered round him beating its wings. 'I still see' he was to recall 'that horrible apparition and feel the shock of that black and fantastic bird'. As a young man in the 1880s he was encouraged in the spirit of the macabre by the 'decadent' leanings of the XX Group, an avant-garde group of painters in Brussels, to whose exhibitions he contributed.

Death as symbolized by the skeleton was an ironic aspect of life. With a grim bravado, Ensor converted a photograph of his own handsome person into a skull on a body, similarly dressed and posed, in an etching he entitled 'my portrait skeletonized'. The mask as the false outward semblance and the skeleton, the lurking inner reality, were to enact a weird carnival, separately or together, in the prolific output of Ensor in the 1890s.

With a mockery of human behaviour, skeletons in one painting of 1889, shivering under their cloaks, huddle round a studio stove for warmth. In another work a skeletal connoisseur surrounded by his treasures of oriental art might perhaps suggest the axiom that art is long and life is short; though Ensor was not a man to point obvious morals but invests his paintings with an ambiguity, half-humorous and half-sinister. This is the atmosphere of his *Masks Quarrelling Over a Hanged Man*; his *Masks and Death* in which Death opens his jaws in satiric laughter at the lugubrious faces around him. There is a self-portrait, playfully stressing his likeness to Rubens, as Rubens appears in his own self-portrait, but crowned by a carnival hat and looking out almost apologetically from the host of leering visages that haunt him.

Ensor could think himself into the mood of artists he admired. In landscape he sometimes recalls Turner and Monet but his grotesques show him in the tradition of Bosch and Breughel. A picture of fantastic animals, birds and fishes playing on musical instruments was Bosch-like in invention even to a fish sailing through the air while tootling on a pipe. Just as Bosch in his painting *The Bearing of the Cross* surrounded the figure of Christ with inhuman-looking tormentors and spectators Ensor brings together a huge array of false-faced humanity in his celebrated picture *The Entry of Christ into Brussels*. (See BOSCH; BREUGHEL.)

He painted Christ many times but always, as in this instance, as a noble spirit patiently enduring amid the imbecile mass of the human race. His idea of Christianity does not seem to have been defined further than this but his conception of the luminous presence was in no way irreverent, though the *Entry into Brussels* was hotly criticized for impiety. It was too unconventional even for the XX Group and was refused inclusion in their exhibition of 1889. There was even a call for Ensor's expulsion from this society. In its brilliance of colour and originality of design as well as in theme it is now recognized as one of the outstanding works of modern art.

For many years he ran the gauntlet of adverse criticism. He painted himself with ironic humour in an *Ecce Homo*, crowned with thorns and taunted by two of his most hostile critics against whom he could at least retaliate by caricaturing them. Appreciation was slow in coming but in 1920, when he was 60, the first of many retrospective exhibitions since held proclaimed his eminence. In 1933, when a festival at Brussels was held in his honour he was acclaimed 'prince of painters'. In that year he painted himself at the harmonium with all the masks of the vast canvas *The Entry of Christ into Brussels*, staring out from the wall behind him.

When he died in 1949 at the age of 89 he was numbered among the principal modern masters. The violence of his colour caused him to be hailed as a forerunner of the Expressionists, his imagination as a forerunner of the Surrealists. But like Edgar Allan Poe he is unique in works inspired by the 'Angel of the Odd'.

WILLIAM GAUNT

Ensor was enraptured by carnivals, with their strange figures, puppets and, above all, masks: 'I am happily confined,' he wrote, 'in the solitary realm where the mask reigns.' In his early paintings they symbolize false outward appearances and Ensor shows them sometimes separately, sometimes together with grim skeletons representing Death, the inner reality *Above* In *Masks and Death* the skeleton laughs at the sad faces that surround him *Below* The half-humorous, half-sinister atmosphere that pervades so much of Ensor's work is typified in *Masks Quarrelling Over a Hanged Man*

Giraudon

Royal Museum of Art, Antwerp

Michael Holford

Any religious sect which claimed to be inspired or possessed by God and which gave free rein to its exalted feelings ran the risk of being called 'enthusiastic' – a derogatory term in the 18th century, when the classical virtue of moderation was greatly admired

ENTHUSIASM

THE TERM 'ENTHUSIASM' was originally employed to describe the psychic state of a man who knew that a god dwelt within him, and was so used of religious phenomena in ancient Greece. In the development of Christianity, the term became much more generally employed for many kinds of religious excitation, and in the 18th century in particular it became a widely used term applied by the orthodox in a derogatory sense to those Christians (usually sectarian) who gave free expression to their exalted religious feelings and who sought to communicate them to others. Many different types of religious belief and practice were labelled 'enthusiastic', and it became common to regard as enthusiasts any who claimed prophetic gifts, or inspiration, or whose beliefs led them to dramatic acts of self-display.

Strictly, however, enthusiasm is not simply religious fervour, fanaticism or intense emotional commitment to heterodox beliefs: it is the conviction of the inward presence of the divine which then justifies the expression and action, and the emotional fervour, of the individual. Religious leaders who claim direct divine inspiration, or possession by the god, may also be properly regarded as enthusiasts. In deference to popular usage, however, it must be conceded that any religious commitment of a heterodox kind, in which strong emotional expression is encouraged, may, even if there is no assertion of possession, be regarded as a type of enthusiasm.

But even on this wider definition, it is clear that those whose faith rests on the Scriptures, even if they employ a very divergent interpretation of their own, or who believe that God's word is the only form of revelation now available to mankind, are not to be regarded as enthusiasts, however fervently they may canvass their beliefs. In these respects, the designation 'enthusiasm' cuts across other classifications of sects, whilst, on the other hand, it leaves some saints of the Roman Church, such as St Teresa, for example, who were convinced of their close relations with God, very near to an enthusiastic position. Sects such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians who, however devout and intense they might be about their beliefs, do not believe that their warrant for faith is dependent on direct revelation but is based essentially on the Bible, are not to be counted as enthusiasts. They claim no inner illumination, and no source apart from the Scriptures for their beliefs. But the term is more appropriately applied to Holiness and Pietistic groups that claim some inward sense of the Spirit, and, by extension, to those groups that emphasize

the prospect of the individual's attaining through the operation of the Holy Ghost a sense of assurance about his own salvation and sanctification in his earthly life (see also HOLINESS CHURCH).

Among the early heresies arising among Christians, some were in the strict sense manifestations of enthusiasm. The Montanists who, originating in Asia Minor in the 2nd century AD, appeared likely to become a sect large enough to threaten the continuity of orthodox Christianity itself, were enthusiastic both in the claims of their founder, Montanus, who declared himself to be the incarnation of the Holy Ghost who was to reveal all things to come, and in the visionary experiences that were a commonplace among some of those who became his followers. The special prophecy of the movement was the coming of the millennium, and thus, in this case as in many others, millennial beliefs were embraced by a distinctly enthusiastic religion – so described not because of millenarianism itself, but because of the claims of its founder and members to direct divine inspiration (see MONTANISTS).

From Messenger to Messiah

Movements spawned by the inspiration of prophets, were often enthusiastic in the type of theological justification they invoked. Not infrequently a movement that began on the basis of scriptural prophecies, became enthusiastic as the personal claims of the leader became inflated by success. Men who began as messengers or expositors of the Word, or critics condemning the laxness of the Church and the licentiousness of the clergy, sometimes steadily shifted the warrant for their preaching as their followers grew in number and as they came increasingly to adulate their leader. From being mere expounders of scripture, they sometimes became men inspired by God, who saw visions and experienced revelations: sometimes they even claimed to be the actual Messiah.

Thus, Tanchelm, a notary from the court of a Flemish nobleman in the early 12th century, began as a holy man condemning the wealth of the Church and the tithes that it exacted from the people. He acquired a following in the regions around Utrecht and Antwerp, and steadily advanced in his own claims until he held that he was possessed of the Holy Spirit in the same measure as Jesus had been. His bath water was drunk by his followers for its special holy potency and remedial quality, and he was surrounded by a body of retainers and partisans who persisted in their convictions about his divinity long after he had been killed by a priest in 1115.

The claim to be the special emissary of God was not an uncommon one among the sectarian leaders of medieval Europe and many religious movements arose because men believed in the divine endowment of one or more leaders. The limitations of literacy, communication and organization meant that many of these movements were movements in almost the literal sense of the word, as men followed a leader whom they identified with the Messiah to what they believed would be the promised land, or the place where the saints would gather when the earth was destroyed. As movements they were highly unstable, dependent on the blind trust of followers and on the competence of the leaders in maintaining faith and avoiding capture. Claims of personal spiritual power, and the faith that sustains them, are not readily amenable to discipline and steady commitment; and until modern times such movements often consisted of either loose congeries of meetings and itinerant preachers with secret doctrines, or of sudden dramatic outbursts of fervour that led to suppression and sometimes to warfare. One of the best known outbursts occurred at Münster, Westphalia in 1534.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Facing page **Pentecostalists in the early 20th century came to believe that after the baptism of the Holy Spirit converts might be given the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, as the Apostles were on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on them: painting by El Greco, showing tongues of fire above the Apostles' heads, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove** ***Above*** **Melchior Rinck, an Anabaptist: thorough-going enthusiasts, some members of this sect believed themselves to be the prophets of God**

Individual Fervour

The Anabaptist fervour at Münster included a strong element of enthusiasm which was not a feature of Anabaptism elsewhere. Such was the diversity of views that prevailed among Anabaptists and other radical elements in the early years after Luther's break with the Roman Church, that the dissenters then active in northern and central Europe cannot be regarded as constituting regular and established sects. There were many variants of doctrine and disputes on theological issues went on in many of the principal cities of central Europe. Each disputant spoke only for himself, often disagreeing on particulars even with those whose views closely approximated his own, and sometimes changing his own ideas even within the course of a few months. Initially such volatility was justified by reference to the Scriptures and the need to search out their meanings: eventually, it often led to claims of inspiration and prophetic insight of an enthusiastic kind.

Besieged for their Beliefs

No preacher of the time showed greater capacity for the development of his own teachings than Melchior Hofmann, a furrier who had become a self-appointed lay preacher in his wanderings over northern Europe and the Baltic cities. At one time a staunch Lutheran, within the course of a very few years Hofmann came to adopt increasingly radical positions: he accepted the need for adult baptism, and then asserted the impossibility of obtaining forgiveness for sin committed after adult baptism. He preached the early end of the existing dispensation, the coming of the millennium, and he eventually designated Strasbourg as the city of hope at the time of the end. Finally, he declared himself to be the new Elijah, and designated one of his followers Enoch: claims that approach enthusiasm in the narrower sense of the word. The Melchiorites, as his followers were known, were only a pale foreshadowing of the enthusiasm that was to break out at Münster, and which invoked Hofmann as its prophet, although he remained imprisoned in Strasbourg and eventually disavowed the Anabaptists at Münster.

The earliest advocates of the Reformation in Holland, before the views of Calvin were adopted, were Anabaptists. They stressed the importance of baptizing only those capable of responsible belief. Many of them espoused a position known as sacramentism: that God was in the true saints and they in him, and consequently they had no need for the performance of the Eucharist, nor of effigies, since they already professed to enjoy a higher inner sacrament and an inner apprehension of God. This was thorough-going enthusiasm, and its more extreme exponents maintained not only that God was in the saints, but that they were prophets. Thus, John Mathijs, a baker from Haarlem, who regarded Hofmann as his mentor, declared that he, the new Enoch, was commissioned by the Holy Spirit directly. At the bidding of the Spirit he put aside his wife and took up with a young girl who was reputedly very knowledgeable in the Scriptures. In the licence he permitted himself in conjugal matters he continued an older tradition of enthusiasm and foreshadowed the disposition to 'spiritual wivery' of some later enthusiasts.

Mathijs sent his 'apostles' to Münster to urge re-baptism on the radical Lutheran priest, Bernard Rothman, who already dominated a town divided between radical townsfolk, a conservative Lutheran city council, and the Roman Catholic Bishop and the monastic clergy who remained loyal to him. Rothman embraced the Anabaptist teaching, and his radical call for Christians to share their possessions with others drew in many impoverished countryfolk to Münster eager for immediate advantage

and also for a part in the millennium to come. Mathijs himself ruled the city for a few weeks in 1534, vindicating his decisions by calling them inspiration from God. He was killed fighting with the besieging troops, apparently under the illusion that God would enable him to destroy all those who opposed him.

Mathijs was succeeded by one of his 'apostles', John Beukels (or Bockelson) known also as John of Leyden, who declared himself to be the voice of the Lord, and who imposed stricter communism of goods on all the saints. He also introduced polygyny – the practice of men being allowed to have several wives at the same time – which was partly justified from the Old Testament but which may also have been a practical measure to ensure that the superfluity of women (which increased as men were killed in defence of the city) were gathered under some man's protection. Beukels was crowned king of the new Zion, the new David, and the Messiah of the Last Days. Despite the conditions of siege under which Münster suffered, he found time to establish an elaborate court, to mint gold and silver coins, some of which bore the legend 'The Word has become Flesh and dwells in us'; to serve splendid banquets, although most of the people were starving; and to hold processions and parades. Faith in Beukels may have waned in the fearful last days of the siege, before the insurrection was crushed, but some of the leaders remained Anabaptists to the end despite torture.

The Free Spirit

A more diversified form of enthusiasm is to be found in the tradition of perfectionism in Christianity, which has a long history from the Middle Ages to the end of the 19th century in many different movements. The adepts of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages claimed perfection because they possessed the Holy Spirit, and this freed them from normal restraints and conventions. The Holy Ghost is the form of deity which Christians have usually referred to when claiming to be possessed by their god. As the most ethereal representation of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost lifts the concept of possession to a distinctly metaphysical plane on which the idea can be represented in ways close to the claims of Christian orthodoxy. The votaries of the Free Spirit maintained that possession of the Spirit rendered them pure and incapable of sinning. They rejected the concept of sin as one which stemmed from uninspired men, and one which had no application to the Spirit-possessed. They could say with St Paul – although such movements found little need for justification from scripture – 'Unto the pure, all things are pure'. They held that God was in all their acts, even in those that men called sin, and some of them maintained that it was thus lawful for them, according to the higher law that applied to them, to do things forbidden to others.

The particnlar conduct that the Brethren of the Free Spirit condoned by reference to their spiritual state was free sexual relations. They maintained that they could not sin by having sexual relations with any person, even including members of their own families. How widely such conduct was engaged in is of course difficult to assess, but in the 14th century the teachings of the Free Spirit were espoused in many parts of Europe, sometimes accompanied by licentious conduct. Some undisciplined companies of roving mendicants known as Beghards espoused the teaching and recruited many religious lay-women, including some of those known as 'Beguines', to the doctrine and its mysteries.

The advocates of the doctrine maintained that a man who knew he possessed the Spirit was already in heaven: hell was to be ignorant of one's own divinity. Some certainly believed that all men might realize this condition, and some believed that the dissemination of the teaching would itself usher in the millennium. Nonetheless, there was also an elitist implication in the doctrine. Adepts distinguished between those who realized that they possessed God now, and those who would discover union with God only after death. Some suggested that Christ had not attained the full perfection that they had realized – for the perfect man *was* God, beyond the power of any to distinguish them. At times some of them declared that they were greater than God, since without their recognition of God he could not exist. For most of them, their direct awareness of the divine permitted them to regard the Scriptures as entirely superseded in legitimating their religious belief and practice.

The movement of the Free Spirit did not give rise to a distinct sect. Its votaries remained amorphously associated, gathering in small fraternities, and embracing many different beliefs and practices. Illuminism, the claim to possess an inner light, as a teaching permits precisely this diversity among the faithful, and makes difficult the establishment of coherent creeds and stable organization. But the ideas of the Free Spirit recrudesce in various periods and places in Christian history. Ideas of recapturing the innocence of a pristine state of nature have frequently been associated with Free Spirit teachings, since before the Fall there was neither good nor evil.

William Sargent

Religious enthusiasm at revivalist meetings can rise to a pitch where members of the congregation fall into trances (*above*) or the preacher, like this woman (*facing page*) at a Holy Roller meeting in Florida, begins to 'speak with tongues'

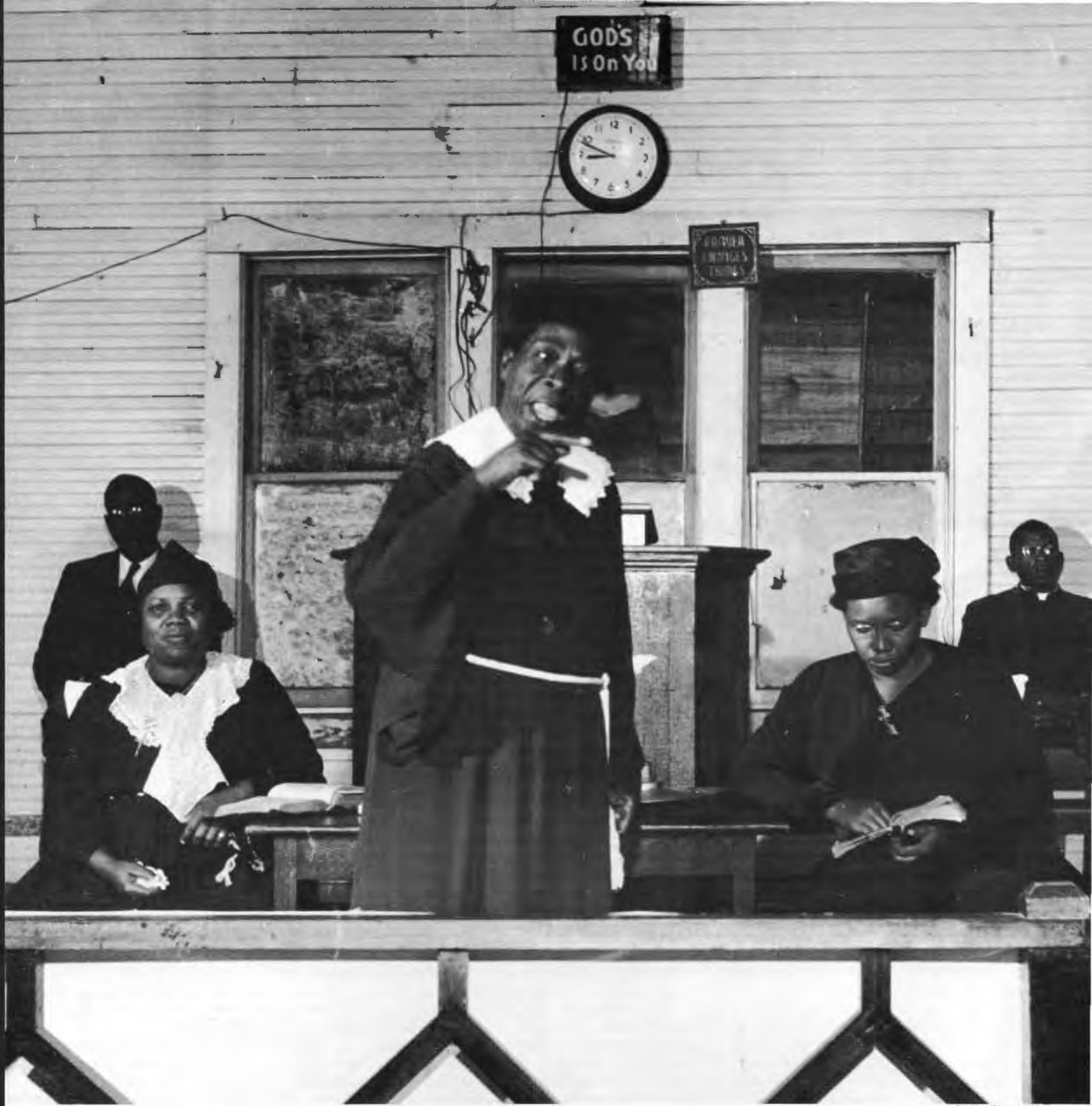
God's Woman

The Quaker James Nayler, who entertained self-conceptions of his own Messiahship and who entered Bristol riding on a donkey in 1656, might be said to have been an enthusiast who took the Quaker doctrine of the inward light further than has been the practice of Quakers since then. Even apart from such aberrant excess, there is an element of essential enthusiasm in Quaker teaching.

The extent to which the Quakers invoke a typically enthusiastic justification for their religious practices is limited, and this is true of other groups that have legitimized their positions by claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There is a distinction, although it is not one that popular usage has always acknowledged, between possession by a deity and inspiration from a deity. Holy Spirit inspiration has been claimed in many movements that lay greater stress on the Scriptures than do the Quakers (except during their evangelical period in the mid-19th century).

In the revivalist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, in Britain and the United States in particular, there was an element of enthusiasm in the theological sense, and remarkable manifestations of it in the popular sense. In the teaching of John Wesley, the emphasis that a man could not only be saved but could receive assurance of his salvation might be regarded as an attenuated form of enthusiasm. At revivals, prayers were often made for the Holy Spirit to descend into the hearts of men and convert them, whilst the idea of men becoming deities has echoes in a number of Christian sects in which the faithful are identified with the Church on earth and referred to as 'the bride of Christ'. Even a movement as far removed from the enthusiastic as Jehovah's Witnesses approaches this type of association with the deity in referring to its own elite as 'God's Woman' – the collective body of the faithful who will join Jehovah in his heavenly rule over the new earth.

Salvation is often represented in sexual imagery of this kind, and is consummated in union with the divine which has at least



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some implications of deification of the truly elect. In the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) salvation by deification is given even more explicit expression: Mormons hold that God himself was once as men now are and only gradually evolved as God. They believe that all faithful Mormons will themselves progress in the afterlife until they all become gods.

These teachings are, however, all rather more oblique ways of presenting the idea that men will experience deity directly than are the teachings espoused by Holiness groups and Pentecostalists, in which a direct experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit is awaited, which will be made manifest to others. This teaching stands in direct descent from a more muted form of enthusiasm alluded to earlier as part of the conversionist and revivalist tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Morbid Images and Symptoms

The doctrines of a number of central European Pietists (believers in the need for a revival of piety) in the Lutheran tradition contained elements of an almost enthusiastic kind. When, in the 1720s, Count Zinzendorf gave asylum on his estates at Herrnhut in Saxony to the Moravian Brethren, he infused them with something of his own style of Pietism. Zinzendorf's teachings of grace were an extremely diluted form of enthusiasm when compared with the excesses recorded in earlier centuries, but he believed that since Christ had suffered for men, so men were now free to adore God; the experience of conversion was therefore to be a joyous one as the believer was reunited with Christ.

This faith emphasized feeling above any kind of thinking or theorizing; it emphasized the emotional, particularly in dwelling on Christ's sufferings. Moravian hymns were preoccupied with Christ's wounds and had a particular preoccupation with his wounded side, which was referred to as the 'holy side-wound', 'unfathomable side-hole' in which believers would 'greet each other'. The imagery of Moravian hymns does not in itself reveal enthusiasm in the thoroughgoing sense. The idea of grace which Moravians strongly maintained, falls short of asserting that the believer is possessed by

his God, but the believer possesses certainty about God's intention which he acquires from the Spirit's action within him.

The revivalist activity which Wesley sponsored relied heavily on the idea of the Spirit prompting men and, in the early years of Wesley's preaching, Spirit possession in revival meetings was a commonplace. These phenomena antedate Wesley in fact. During the revival in Massachusetts in 1735–42, scenes of extreme emotional disturbance occurred which have often been called outbursts of enthusiasm. The leader, Jonathan Edwards, favoured restraint in worship, but particularly under the preaching of James Davenport fainting, falling, shrieking and violent trembling were frequent accompaniments of religious conversion, as the Spirit acted on the mind of participants. These signs, indeed, became for some the testimony of the Spirit.

Although Wesley was more restrained than other revivalist preachers, in his early days he too tended to regard dramatic responses to his preaching as the action of the Holy Spirit. He recorded many cases of sensational effects, particularly on the most illiterate members of his congregations among the miners near Bristol and Newcastle. People fell raving and anguished at his meetings. Sometimes whole congregations broke down into spontaneous weeping and groaning; sometimes a man was struck down as if dead; some went blind; and between 1739–42 there were 14 cases of temporary insanity and 9 incurable cases among members of Wesley's audiences. Later, when Wesley became convinced that these manifestations were not the operations of the Holy Spirit, and began to discourage them, they became much less common and subsequently disappeared from Methodism, although there were recurrences among the Primitive Methodists under the preaching of Hugh Bourne.

Extreme manifestations of emotional disorder that were credited to the Holy Spirit were common during the Great Revival in Kentucky in 1797–1805. At the camp meetings at which the brothers John and William McGee, and James McGready preached hellfire, outbreaks of jerks, falling and dancing occurred. Some even fell down and barked like dogs in the excitement of the charged atmosphere in which large numbers had brought home to them God's scheme of reward and punishment as seen by the Presbyterian and Methodist preachers who led the revival. The revivals in more settled societies have not always produced such dramatic manifestations.

Strange phenomena were reported, however, such as the preaching sickness that swept over Sweden in the middle of the 19th century, when many people including children spoke fervently and eloquently as if possessed. In Finland, the incidence of 'sleeping preachers' – people who suddenly preached from a semi-somnolent state – was noted at various periods from the 1770s to the 1930s; these are well recorded and may be regarded as states of possession. The Welsh Revival, in 1905, produced a large number of cases of 'speaking in tongues', visions and trance states. In general, in modern times these phenomena appear to occur among rural populations, and populations experiencing the disrupting impact of urbanization, rather than among settled city populations.

Spiritual Wives

Wesley's doctrine that a man who was saved might obtain the assurance of salvation and be sanctified gave rise, particularly in the United States, to the strong emphasis among some Methodists on a condition of holiness. They taught that entire sanctification was possible as a 'second blessing', subsequent to, and distinct from the experience of conversion, and by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Presbyterian revivalist Charles G. Finney espoused these doctrines in the hope that this emphasis on moral regeneration might consolidate the results of revival-induced conversions. But both revivalism and the doctrine of entire sanctification appeared as threats to the settled Church order of the denominations, and increasingly those who advocated these ideas and practices found themselves somewhat at odds with ordinary denominational fellowships. Emphasizing the possibility of attaining complete sanctity, sometimes as an instantaneous transformation, some of these people found themselves too holy to need ordinary church associations. Not all of those who believed that they had possessed the Holy Spirit in this way were drawn into this position, but at least some of them sought to demonstrate their spirituality by establishing that they could dispense with the normal conventions and restraints of society. As in the Middle Ages, it was in free sexual behaviour that they demonstrated their spiritual excellence.

Ecclesiastical regulation was rejected by these enthusiasts, and so were the Scriptures. The real guides to conduct were experienced inwardly. In asserting their transcendence over the merely carnal, some of these votaries came to practise 'spiritual' unions of a promiscuous kind. 'Spiritual wivery' was one variant on this theme that held considerable fascination for many Perfectionists although not all of them justified promiscuity. Sometimes they simply believed in 'sanctified bundling'. Although the Perfectionist following at the Oneida Community of John Humphrey Noyes practised sexual communism, involving promiscuity, they did so conscientiously and with restraint. Noyes was an advocate of a eugenic theory of planned parenthood, not of promiscuous sexuality (see COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

Modern Enthusiasts

In modern Pentecostalism the revivalist tradition, which gave currency to the idea of the Holy Spirit momentarily affecting the hearts of men at the time of conversion, acquired an added dimension of enthusiasm rather different from the emphasis on Holiness of Finney. In the first decade of the 20th century a number of evangelicals came to believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit (an occasion when the convert was dramatically filled with the Spirit) and the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues were still in operation. The Pentecostalists taught that not only might believers experience a sanctifying visit of the Holy Spirit, but that they might, after Holy Spirit baptism, continue to enjoy the opportunity to be a vessel for the Spirit's possession. At first there was considerable disorder in religious meetings and the Spirit was credited with providing specific guidance for individuals and exhorting men to all sorts of activity; but eventually Pentecostalists re-invoked St Paul to provide a basis of order for their services. Today they assert that the Spirit never utters prophecy contrary to Holy Writ. But both in theory and in the mood of their meetings, Pentecostalists are enthusiasts. (See PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT.)

A distinction is to be made between movements in which there is an expectation that all men might possess the deity, or become the deity, and those in which the deity becomes the possession of only a priest or a medium, or is represented only in one prophet or Messiah. Movements arising around individuals who claim to be Messiahs are discussed separately (see MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS), but in the phenomenon of Spiritualism there is a considerable element of enthusiasm.

In the general Western tradition, stemming from the practice of the Fox sisters of Rochester, New York, in the mid-19th century, the medium is possessed not by the deity but by the spirit of a dead person. There is a tendency to regard this spirit as at least acting in concert with the will of God, even though it is not itself regarded as part of the deity. In the older tradition of Western Spiritualism, however, particularly as it was manifested by the Shakers (see SHAKERS), the spirits that prompted speaking in tongues, instructed in dancing, inspired the composition of particular hymns and conveyed messages and revelations, were seen as more characteristically emanations of the divine. In this the Shakers sustained the enthusiasm of the Camisards or French Prophets, whose refugee remnant converted the first Shakers in the mid-18th century (see CAMISARDS).

Enthusiasm occurs in other contemporary movements, particularly those that are described as messianic, but the term covers a very wide range of intrinsically diverse religious persuasions. The imprecision of the term, and its application to any sort of expressive religious phenomena, have caused it to fall out of currency in contemporary sociological studies of religion, although it has been widely employed by orthodox religionists themselves – usually as a term of disparagement.

BRYAN R. WILSON

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Meyer Erwin

Originally the god of love was not the pretty boy archer of popular tradition but an all-powerful force which inspired fear in the hearts of gods and men

EROS

THE CHUBBY CHERUB with his bow and quiver, favourite device of Victorian valentines and rococo art, bears little resemblance to the earliest conceptions of Eros, the Greek god of love. His origins are obscure; some say that he was hatched from a silver egg laid in the womb of darkness, emerging as a monstrous being, four-headed, golden-winged and uttering animal cries. Others hold that he was the son of Iris or of Ilithyia, the goddess of childbirth; while later mythology makes him the son of Aphrodite by Zeus, her father, or by Ares, the god of war, or by Hermes. The Greek writer Hesiod (8th century BC) makes Eros, together with Earth and Tartarus, the oldest of the gods. He represents him as the powerful creative force that attracts together and unites the cosmic couples who created the universe, 'bringing harmony to chaos' and making it possible for life to develop (see APHRODITE).

Long before Aphrodite appeared among the gods, the ancient Greeks worshipped a god of sexual potency named Eros. That Eros was not only a creative agent but also on occasions a destructive one was already understood: an implicit acceptance of the power of passion to wreck society and threaten law and order. The Latin writer Apuleius (2nd century AD) in later times makes the same point when he speaks of the god 'running from building to building all night long with his torch and his arrows, breaking up respectable homes.' But it is as a cosmic principle that Eros first makes his appearance in Greek myth, a far cry from the petulant boy archer of later tradition.

Although there is no mention of the god in Homer, the passages in which the word *eros* occur illustrate clearly its early meaning. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* eros stands for irresistible physical desire; it is the force which attracts Zeus to Hera, Paris to Helen, an affliction which causes the limbs of Penelope's suitors to tremble uncontrollably. In the later lyric poets of the 6th and 7th centuries BC the conception of this force is broadened to include mind as well as body.

From his birth, Eros's variously imputed parentage signifies several different aspects of his role as the god of passionate love. As the son of Hermes, god of fertility, who was worshipped with phallic images, Eros represents sexual potency and is himself a god of fertility: at his cult centre at Thespiae in Boeotia he was represented by a simple phallic figure. From the devious god Hermes, too, he draws his cunning and his penchant for trickery. With Ares the warrior for his father, Eros reminds us of the fighting man's

Parmigianino's painting of Eros shaping his bow. The 'bitter-sweet' often mischievous god of love is winged to represent the fleeting nature of passion and with his arrows he can inspire both love and aversion

Sonia Halliday

Above **Eros presides over a tender scene in which Thetis is reunited with her husband Peleus: detail from the Portland Vase, now in the British Museum** ***Left*** **The story of Cupid and Psyche, suggesting the union between the human soul and divine love, was a popular subject with artists: 4th century mosaic from Antioch Museum**

immemorial attraction for women and the often ambivalent – or, as we would say, 'love-hate' – nature of sexual relationships. As the son of Aphrodite by Zeus, according to Hesiod and the most widely held view, the contrary and perverse element of Eros is symbolized; his parents' union is an incestuous one, signifying that erotic love knows no boundaries and trespasses on forbidden relationships.

God Who Never Grew Up

The changing conception of the god is reflected in art, in which Eros remains perpetually youthful, even growing steadily younger. He is represented as a youth in archaic times, as a young boy in the Classical period and as a baby boy in the Hellenistic age. He is shown winged to represent the fleeting nature of passion, blindfolded to suggest the inconsequence and unpredictability of his attacks, and carrying a torch to symbolize the flame which he kindles in others. He has power over gods and men – even Zeus himself is frightened of him – and no one is immune to his cruel darts.

Indulged by Aphrodite, he is half god, half spoilt, undisciplined boy. His bow and arrows, first mentioned by Euripides (484–407 BC), are his favourite playthings; the sharp arrows from his quiver producing sometimes love and sometimes disdain in their victims. He takes a malicious pleasure in choosing unlikely targets and delights in the misery he causes. Sometimes Aphrodite, who herself suffers from his archery and is led into all sorts of undignified liaisons in consequence, loses patience with him and confiscates his weapons. The poet Anacreon (6th century BC), while dwelling on Eros's playful side refers also to his cruelty. The god is shown (as also on vase paintings) striking the lovelorn with an axe or wielding a whip. At the same time Eros is the embodiment of the sweetness of youth. He is associated with all beautiful things, he walks on a carpet of flowers and wears a crown of roses. Yet it is not for nothing that the rose is his special emblem, for the rose, though sweetly perfumed, has a sharp thorn. The poet Sappho describes his contradictory qualities as 'bitter sweet'.

The playmates of the god in Aphrodite's train are Pothos and Himeros, representing longing and desire. Eros has a brother, the son of Ares and Aphrodite, named Anteros. Earlier writers show Anteros in opposition to Eros, as the god who avenges slighted love; it is only later that he becomes the brother of Eros, standing for mutual affection and tenderness, yet still constantly at odds with the selfish god of love. Anteros was the younger brother and was conceived on the advice of Themis, Zeus's first wife, when Aphrodite complained to her that Eros remained perpetually a child and never seemed to grow any older. Themis suggested that the remedy was for Eros to have a brother, who would spur him on to outstrip him. As soon as Anteros was born Eros grew stronger and the span of his wings increased. If ever he was separated from Anteros, however, he found himself reduced to his former size. The story seems to suggest that passion that is mutual rather than one-sided makes love grow stronger and more mature.

There was not one Eros but many, according to Euripides and a number of later writers, and he was worshipped in many places: notably in Parion in Mysia and in Thespiae with phallic images, as the god of both passion and fertility. A festival in his honour, the *Erotidia*, was celebrated at Thespiae in the spring, every fifth year, with sports and games in which musicians and others took part. If any strife or sedition had arisen among the people, prayers and sacrifices would be offered to the god to resolve the disagreement.

Cupid, That Very Wicked Boy

Known to the Romans as Cupido or Amor, the Latin counterpart of Eros has strongly marked human characteristics, due to the influence of the Alexandrian poets and artists. He is less of a god and more of a mischievous child: he is the 'knavish lad' referred to by Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), 'this wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy'. The word *cupido* means desire but it is an emotion on a different scale from Hesiod's power 'that loosens the limbs and damages the mind.' Apuleius describes him as 'that very wicked boy, with neither manners nor respect for the decencies.' In earlier times, however, he was a more powerful god, accorded the same honour as his mother. It was believed that his influence extended not only over the heavens and the sea but even to the underworld. His godhead was widely venerated

and prayers and sacrifices were offered to him daily.

According to some authorities, there were two Cupids, one of whom, the son of Jupiter and Venus, was a lively and pleasant youth, while the other, the offspring of Night and Erebus, was given to debauchery and riotous living. Cicero indeed mentions three Cupids, their parentage being ascribed to Mercury and Diana, Mercury and Venus, and Mars and Venus. In common with other immortals, Cupid had the power of changing his shape at will: in the *Aeneid* of Virgil, he assumed the form of Ascanius at the request of his mother Venus and went to the court of Dido, where he inspired the queen with love.

In art, Cupid is usually shown amusing himself with some childish pursuit. He chases a butterfly, plays with dice, drives a hoop or throws a quoit. Sometimes he plays upon a horn to entertain his mother; sometimes he marches like a warrior, a spear on his shoulder and a buckler on his arm, signifying that love conquers all. Occasionally he is shown riding on the back of a lion or a dolphin, or engaged in breaking up the thunderbolts of Jupiter.

The Taming of Love

Like Eros, Cupid is vain and cruel, and the Latin poet Ovid speaks of his 'savage spite'. A story in his *Metamorphoses* illustrates the vindictive side of the god of love. Cupid's arrows, he explains, were of two kinds: one golden, shining and sharp, the other leaden and blunt. The first inspired the victim with love and the second produced fear and repulsion. Once Phoebus Apollo teased Cupid for carrying weapons which were better suited to a warrior than a naughty boy. Determined to get his own back on Apollo, Cupid shot an arrow of desire at his tormentor, who promptly fell in love with the nymph Daphne – only to be repulsed, for Cupid had wounded her too, but with a leaden arrow. Refusing Apollo's advances, she fled terrified, but the god pursued her relentlessly. Finally she implored her father Peneus to efface her beauty by turning her into a tree to escape the god.

It is in the legend of Cupid and Psyche, as told by Apuleius that the god of love is shown at his most tender and human. For once he is made to experience the suffering which he has inflicted on others. Psyche is an earthly maiden of such extraordinary beauty that she arouses the jealousy of Venus, who orders Cupid to cause her to fall in love with the vilest and most degraded of men. Cupid, however, himself falls in love with her and has her carried off to a marvellous palace, where he visits her nightly in darkness but conceals his identity from her and tells her that she must never see his face. Lonely during the daytime, Psyche begs to be allowed to invite her sisters and Cupid agrees, though warning her that they will try to set her against him. Out of jealousy at her wealth and good fortune, the sisters persuade her that her husband must be a repulsive monster since he will never permit his face to be seen.

The following night, when the god is asleep, she lights a lamp to look at him. Instead of a horrible serpent, as her sisters had described, she sees a beautiful youth, winged and golden haired. In her ecstasy, she lets fall a drop of scalding oil on his shoulder. Cupid awakes and tells her that for her disobedience she will never see him again. Psyche searches the earth for Cupid, hounded relentlessly by Venus, who has discovered the lovers' secret and has locked up Cupid in his bedroom. Cupid, unable to bear separation from Psyche, flies out of the window to enlist the aid of Jupiter, who puts an end to their troubles by raising Psyche to the level of the gods and making her immortal. Venus is reconciled and accepts Psyche as her daughter-in-law and the lovers are reunited.

Psyche is held to be the personification of the human soul and is often shown in art winged, like her lover, following an ancient belief that the human soul took the form of a butterfly or other winged insect. In Platonic philosophy love, in the most elevated sense, is an agent of the soul's progress and from the 4th century BC Psyche and the god of love were often depicted together in allegorical representations.

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Mansell Collection

The aspect of Eros as the unifying power of love which brings order, peace and development, has encouraged municipal statues of the god in European art: marble of Eros in the Palais de Luxembourg, Paris

Eschatology

The doctrine of last things, involving speculation about the ultimate destiny of man and the world, and the nature of death, judgement, heaven and hell: Hindus believe that the individual soul is absorbed into the Divine Being after a series of reincarnations: according to Christian apocalyptic writings the end of the world will be marked by the return of Christ to overthrow the Antichrist and to preside at the Last Judgement.

See END OF THE WORLD: JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.

NFB-West Baffin Eskimo Co-op

ESKIMO

The merciless physical environment of the Eskimo has produced a religion which is tinged with terror; fear of the gods, of ghosts, of spirits and of sorcerers

PRIMARILY A COASTAL PEOPLE, the Eskimo occupy an area extending from Greenland and Labrador in the east to the Bering Sea in the west; some groups live on the Siberian shore of the Bering Straits. In 1979 there were an estimated number of 92,000, of whom approximately half are to be found in Greenland and the rest fairly evenly divided between Canada and Alaska. Thanks to improved diet, hygiene and medical care, the population is increasing, though only slowly. Speculation over their origins is inconclusive; they have affinities with the Mongoloid peoples of Asia, but culturally and linguistically they are a race apart. Their dialects are variants of one distinctive, highly inflected tongue, which has nothing in common with any of the other archaic languages of the American continent. Until recently the Eskimo have had little cultural contact with other peoples: only in Alaska (and to a lesser extent in Greenland) is there evidence of this. However, it has been pointed out that the Eskimo culture is part of the great polar culture circle, stretching around the rest of northern Eurasia. The Eskimo have been divided into about a dozen major groups but resemblances between the groups are so well marked that there is every justification for speaking of Eskimo culture and religion as a whole.

The word 'Eskimo' appears to be derived from a Wabanaki Indian word, *eskimantsik*, meaning 'eaters of raw flesh'. Needless to say, this is not the Eskimo's own description of themselves; their own word is *inuit*, the plural of *inuk*, 'man' or 'person'.

The first Europeans to make the acquaintance of the Eskimo were Eric the Red's Norsemen in the late 10th century, but it was not until the start of the Christian mission in Greenland in the 18th century that their religious beliefs and practices came to the attention of the West. Since then, information has been gathered piecemeal, few Europeans or Americans having anything like an overall knowledge of the Eskimo. And now time is running out. Traditional beliefs and customs are being

The Eskimo believes himself to be at the mercy of capricious gods and spirits which must be placated if he is to eke out an existence in the harsh, unyielding climate of the Arctic *Left* Lithograph of a sea goddess by the Eskimo artist Paulassie: sea spirits in particular are shown respect because they control the main supply of food *Right* Unusual two-sided carving from Cape Dorset of spirits

NFB-Chris Lund

gradually submerged and forgotten, except in the most isolated areas. Many Eskimo are now at least nominally Christians, and it is a moot point to what extent the old beliefs and practices still have the status of living reality to the majority, rather than in the vague realm of 'folklore'. However, we shall be concerned here with Eskimo religion as it was before the advent of Christianity and Western civilization.

Ungentle Spirits

The religion of the Eskimo, like their entire way of life has been shaped by their environment, and is at one with the harsh, unyielding character of the Arctic in which they live. The Eskimo has always had to fight hard for bare existence with only a narrow dividing line between life and death. He has felt at the mercy of capricious forces and this has made his religion hard, fatalistic, and as bare of gentleness and beauty as the ice fields themselves. Personality counts for little or nothing; environment is all-powerful. The dead may occasionally be counted fortunate; the living, never.

The first need, if life is to be sustained, is for food. The Eskimo are a hunting or fishing people, according to locality and season, and one of the few gifts which the denizens of the spirit world may give is plentiful game. They *may* give – but they may not. Why, a hunter was asked, were there no bears in a certain place at a certain time? 'No bears have come,' he answered, 'because there is no ice, and there is no ice because there is too much wind, and there is too much wind because we mortals have offended the powers.' His reply combines the weather-lore of the experienced hunter and the resignation of a man who knows himself to be at the mercy of great powers.

The supply of food is controlled by the spirits, and should they be offended in any way, they will withhold the bear, the seal, the whale and the caribou, until recompense is made. In practical terms, this means the observance of a variety of taboos.

It has been pointed out that the supernatural world of the Eskimo is strangely timeless and static. Unlike many primitive peoples, the Eskimo have little conception of a past – least of all an ideal past. Everything is adjusted to the present moment. Everything has always been as it is now. Significantly, Eskimo mythology is virtually without creation myths, and those that exist, in Alaska, have almost certainly been derived from the North-Western Indians. Nor is there any reasoned account of the creation of man, save as a very incidental byproduct of the Sedna myth, which speaks of Eskimo, other men and beasts as having sprung from the union of a goddess and a dog-man. Man, it seems, has always been as he is; so, too, have the gods.

It is tempting to speak of the Eskimo deities as a hierarchy; tempting, but unjustified, since the Eskimo themselves certainly do not think of them as such. The Eskimo are animists, conceiving the whole world as the abode of spirits, with every natural object inhabited by some spirit. Over and above these are the animal spirits, the air and sea spirits, and other classes of spirits which do not fit neatly into any of these categories. The hierarchical aspect, to the Western theorist, emerges from the fact that the Eskimo conceive of a Supreme Being, Sila (Silap Inua), who has all the characteristics of a High God.

The Eskimo word for 'spirit' is *inua*, which is the third person possessive of *inuk*, 'man', and thus means 'its man' or 'his man'. The inua is in effect a miniature double of the man, animal, or object in which it lives: this is of course a basic idea on which all animism rests. Silap Inua is the inua of the air, who may be male or female, who lives in, or may be identified with, the sky, and controls atmospheric phenomena. To the Polar Eskimo 'Sila' is a synonym for 'weather', 'the universe' or 'the whole' – again a common characteristic of High Gods – but is not normally the recipient of worship, nor the subject of a developed mythology. Sila is the only 'genuine' Supreme Being in Eskimo religion, though other deities can fill something of the same function.

Second in the rank of deities is the moon spirit (with various names of which one is Tarquiup Inua), who controls all land animals and all fertility, human as well as animal, and as such is of incomparably greater practical importance than Sila. A widespread myth tells how the moon and sun were once a brother and sister who lived on earth. The two committed incest, though the girl did not at first know this; when she found out, she fled from her brother into the heavens. He pursued her, and his pursuit is continued for all eternity. A Greenland variation tells how the moon and his sister the sun live in a double house with a single entrance. Not only must the moon spirit be constantly propitiated if he is to grant success in hunting, but since he is the bestower of fertility, he can be entreated on behalf of barren women. It is believed in some areas that the shaman or medicine man can fly to the moon to obtain children for childless women, and may have intercourse with the woman in question as a further (and in all likelihood more effective) measure. The sun, as the moon's sister, is of comparatively little cultic importance.

Mutilated Goddess

Among Eskimos who rely on sea hunting, the greatest of the spirits is Sedna (also called Nuliajuk, Nerrivik, Arnquagssaq) who 'owns' the seals, whales, walruses and all other sea creatures, and is worshipped (and feared) in Greenland and in the central areas of northern Canada. The most elaborate Eskimo myth tells how a girl named Avilayoq married a dog, and brought forth offspring – Eskimo, white men and other creatures. The children made so much noise that the couple moved to an island, from which the dog husband had to be sent to the girl's father for food. This was put in a pair of boots, hung round the dog's neck. One day, while he was away, a man came and took the girl away, revealing himself later as a petrel. Her father went to look for her, and took her away from the petrel's country in a boat. But the petrel followed them, called up a storm and threatened to upset the boat. In terror, the old man threw his daughter overboard, and when she clung to the gunwale, cut off her fingers one by one. The upper joints became the whales, the second joints the seals, and so on. Eventually she sank in the sea, but only after her father had struck out one of her eyes. On his return home, the old man filled the dog's boots with stones, and he, too, sank. The daughter became one-eyed Sedna, ruler of the sea, who dwells with her father and dog husband in the depths of the ocean. She is both sea goddess and a goddess of the dead.

As ruler of the sea creatures, she must be appealed to for success in hunting. This involves the observance of taboos and the intercession of the shaman when taboos have been broken. The shaman goes into a trance, during which his spirit is believed to

Since women are regarded as unclean in hunting contexts, absolute sexual continence must be observed before and during hunting expeditions

NFB-West Baffin Eskimo Co-op

fly to Sedna's realm; on arrival, he steps over the dog, and does his best to placate the sea goddess. This involves the combing of her hair, since it is believed that broken taboos cause filth to collect in her hair. He may be told that the hunt will not prosper because of some secret offence or breach of taboo, such as the eating of boiled meat. All being well, Sedna is eventually placated, and the shaman returns to his body; he tells the people what has happened, and in many cases spontaneous confessions follow. A similar procedure is followed in respect of the land animals guarded by the moon spirit. Again, the shaman is able to 'fly' to the moon and intercede for his people. Obviously there is ample room for trickery on the part of the shaman – but his supernatural capacity is seldom questioned.

Other rituals are observed in connection with hunting, since all the spirits controlling the supply of food must be kept well disposed. So, for example, a seal which has been killed may be left a drink of water in order that its spirit may carry a good report to the spirit world. Similar mourning rituals are observed when an animal is killed as those which obtain in human affairs – again in order not to harm or offend the spirit of the dead animal. Particularly elaborate precautions are taken on the death of a bear or a wolf, since their spirits are thought to be more dangerous than those of other animals.

In Alaska, there is an annual 'Bladder Festival', in which the accumulated bladders of animals killed during the year are offered in order to ensure future hunting success. There is a constant need to observe the taboos: for instance, since women are regarded as unclean in hunting contexts, absolute sexual continence must be observed before and during hunting expeditions. There are many ways of discovering breaches of taboo. The most obvious is the lack of game; another is to 'weigh' the head of a recumbent person by means of a thong passed round the back of the neck. Lightness or heaviness determines the degree of guilt involved.

Sky and sea deities may in some cases 'divide' themselves in such a way as to delegate their functions. On Baffin Island, the Kadlu are three sisters who produce thunder and lightning by rubbing skins together – probably an original function of the High God. Other minor deities are connected with the earth. One particularly repulsive specimen is the 'Disemboweller' of Greenland, a female demon, cousin of the moon spirit, who disembowels anyone she can make laugh. Most local deities in fact are malevolent, and inspire nothing but fear. An interesting group of spirits not quite deities, are the *tornait*, from which the shaman's familiars are recruited. They may be associated with the dead, and one can see in them distorted popular reminiscences of the people of the Thule culture (the earliest known Eskimo culture), in much the same way as the Celts of Britain are believed by some to have become the 'little people' of folklore. The chief *tornait* is known as Tornarsuk, and treated in some areas as a Supreme Being.

The Wandering Soul

Like other primitive peoples, the Eskimo believes that man has not one, but several 'souls', *inuas*, all of which are associated with the body only temporarily. There are many variations but it is broadly true to say that man can have three types of soul: the 'free-soul', an immortal spirit and source of power which lives on in another world after death, or may return as a ghost to plague the living; the 'life-soul' which animates the body and dies with it; and the 'name-soul',

Museum of the American Indian

Left Even the most unlikely objects are thought to have their guardian spirits: drawing of cooking pot spirits by Kenojuak *Below left* Spirit charm, part of the shaman's equipment, which enables him to communicate with the forces controlling sea-hunting *Right* Wooden salmon mask showing both the physical form of the fish and the hideous spirit which lurks within it

Michael Holford

which attaches to the name, and which can be passed on to another human being. It must not be thought, however, that these can be sharply distinguished from one another. An Eskimo of the Great Fish River, asked what he understood by the soul, answered: 'It is something beyond understanding, that which makes me a human being.'

The soul may be conceived of as a miniature of man, living in some part of his body; or there may be many such miniatures, scattered around the body, and especially the joints. What is basic to Eskimo belief however is the connection between the soul and power or life-force. Sickness, for instance, is often interpreted as loss of soul, and therefore to be cured by the catching and bringing back of the wayward soul by the shaman. Death and disease are quantitatively, rather than qualitatively different, and it is, perhaps, not altogether surprising to find in some quarters a belief in the powers of the shaman to raise the dead – to bring back the soul from the very borders of the realm of the dead. In no case does 'loss of soul' occur without a cause: either negative (the breaking of taboos) or positive (black magic); it is the task of the shaman to eliminate the latter cause, by neutralizing the spirit force concerned.

Closely connected with these ideas is the belief that the wandering soul of the dead man or woman is potentially dangerous to the living. Clearly the dead live on, because they are seen in dreams; clearly they are dangerous, because of the things that happen to the living, and for which an ultimate cause must be sought. Unaffected by the bounds of space or time, their only chance of making their wants known is through the person of the shaman, and man can only live a relatively troublefree existence by acceding to their requests and demands. Ghosts may, sometimes, be seen: but this is a misfortune of the first order, exceeded only by the touch of a spirit, which brings instant death.

Football in Heaven

This is not to say that in Eskimo belief, all the dead become malevolent ghosts. Most pass after death to a state in which they are at least happy; it is only the few who have had the misfortune to meet death in an unsuitable way who are forced to wander. There is little or no idea of post-mortem judgement on the basis of good and evil deeds involved. What really matters is whether or not the person in question has observed all the taboos, and the manner of his death. So the Eskimo of the Bering Straits believed that the souls of shamans and those who have died by accident (especially in hunting), suicide, violence, starvation or in childbirth go to a land of plenty in the sky. Some Eskimos regard the Aurora Borealis as the spirits of the fortunate departed playing football in the heavens. Those who die a natural death descend to the underworld or to the underwater realm of Sedna, a land of gloom and deep darkness, but accessible to the shaman so that he may succeed in releasing the unfortunate soul. The central Eskimo distinguish between a sky heaven (Qudliparmiut) and a subterranean hell (Adliparmiut) – again on the basis of the kind of death.

For four or five days – the length of the journey to the land of the dead – the soul remains in the house in which the person has died, and may then stay by the grave until summoned to enter the body of a new-born child. This is actually the 'name-soul', which is passed on as the child receives the name of the deceased, and which represents a kind of transmigration doctrine. The house in which the person has died is abandoned, and his possessions thrown away to avoid contaminating the living. Belief of this kind can lead to terrible consequences: a sick person may be removed from a house, and left to die in isolation; the burial shroud may

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be put on before the person is actually dead; and in extreme cases, the dying man or woman may be put in the coffin while still alive. Elaborate safeguards are also observed in order to prevent the ghost from returning to the death house. The corpse may be removed through a window, or through the smoke-hole, a temporary door, or anything but the proper door, in order to prevent the ghost from finding its way back again.

When the dead man is a shaman, the precautions are intensified. So, for instance, a snare may be placed at the door to frighten the ghost, who might anticipate being trapped on trying to re-enter his house. The living too, take precautions: they may plug their nostrils in order not to become prey to 'spirit infection'; they may keep a knife under the pillow at night; and a sledge may be set up either at the grave site or at the death house as a warning to unwary travellers. During the period of mourning, various taboos are enforced. Some Eskimos will avoid uttering the name of the deceased, perhaps for fear of attracting his ghost; almost all impose a ban on working with sharp instruments such as knives, needles and harpoons, lest they should injure the ghost (however unwittingly) and bring trouble on themselves. Hunting expeditions will be suspended for a few days, out of respect for the dead, or in order not to deprive the dead of their proper nourishment.

Burial beliefs and practices vary. As the ground is too hard for interment, the normal practice is surface burial, either covered by stones or uncovered, or in some cases cave burial or sea burial. In the Bering Sea area the covering is added to surface burial as a further protection against the ghost walking. Similar reasons may be suspected in instances of flexing and binding the corpse. Most Eskimo provide the dead with grave goods – food, water, tools, weapons, and so on – for his use in the beyond. In most cases, the objects provided are broken, not, as has sometimes been assumed, to prevent theft, but to liberate the spirit essence of the pot, pan, kayak or paddle in question. Human sacrifice has been known to have occurred in the past, though rarely.

The need to neutralize the dead extended to the practice of periodic feasts, in which the dead were invited back to the land of

Musées Nationaux du Canada

Left **Christmas barely recalls the pagan festival which it usurped, celebrating the returning sun. Drums were used by shamans to help them undertake spirit-flights** ***Above*** **The Eskimo make string figures when the sun begins to move away south, hoping thereby to trap it and delay the coming of the long winter**

the living in order to partake of the bounty of their descendants. In the Norton Sound area of Alaska there were three such 'ordinary' festivals annually; but these were eclipsed by the Great Feast of the Dead, held every 10 or 15 years. This feast lasted five days, with dancing, and the giving of presents to the representatives (normally the namesakes) of the dead. This should not be confused with the 'Inviting-in Feast' of the Yukon, in which a similar pattern was observed, only this time with regard to the inuas who grant good hunting. In both these cases, elements appear to have been taken over from the Indians of the North-West such as the wearing of masks.

A Religion of Fear

It is the medicine-man (*angakok*), mediator between the living and the spirit-world, who gives the everyday practice of religion much of its distinctive character and most of its point. He, or she – for women might also fulfil this role – was known all around the polar regions, from Lapland to Labrador. The qualifications were twofold: aptitude, which in practice might involve mental abnormality; and training. For the angakok had to possess supernormal powers and be seen to possess them. He had to be able to enter into a trance, and to communicate that trance to others; he had to speak the shaman language (a mixture of archaic Eskimo and gibberish); and above all to learn to control the spirits, heal disease by restoring 'lost' souls, and obtain food for the people by propitiating Sedna and her like.

His equipment was simple, and centred on the drum on which he summoned spirits to help him undertake his spirit-flights. Exact details of his training are not known, for these matters were kept hidden, but we do know that it began at an early age (seven or eight), with apprenticeship to an older shaman, when he set out on the quest of a vision of his own familiar or guardian spirit. Dark tales are told of shamans who brought about the death of infants in order to have these spirits at their call. But the angakok, although a past master at deception, was not evil; he worked for the people, not against them. There are Eskimo sorcerers, workers of black magic, but even less is known about these. So much is, however, certain, that the practice of Eskimo religion revolves around the shaman, and that any powers the ordinary individual may possess are very much subordinate to those of the angakok.

Not that the individual is altogether devoid of power. Power can be inherited or bought; an amulet may be traded for a kayak, and even a familiar spirit may be made the object of a good 'deal'. Obviously this would not be done if it were not thought that the most important thing in life is the possession of power. For the world is full of 'negative power', derived from the spirits, but capable of attaching, like a virus, to any person or any object; and the only defence is similar power harnessed to one's own ends. Amulets are carried and worn by most Eskimo for this very purpose: a man's umbilical cord or afterbirth, teeth, toenails – any one of which might be used wrongly by sorcerers – animal bones and hair; carved stones and other objects. Almost anything will serve. The end justifies any means.

And what is the end? Simply to dispel fear: fear of gods, ghosts, spirits, shades, shamans, sorcerers. For the religion of the Eskimo is a religion of fear. As the great explorer Rasmussen was once told: 'We do not believe, we only fear. And most of all we fear Nuliajuk (Sedna) . . . Nuliajuk is the name we give to the Mother of Beasts. All the game we have comes from her; from her come all the caribou, all the foxes, the birds and fishes . . . We fear those things about us and of which we have no sure knowledge; as, the dead, the malevolent ghosts, and the secret misdoings of the heedless ones among ourselves.'

(See also SHAMAN)

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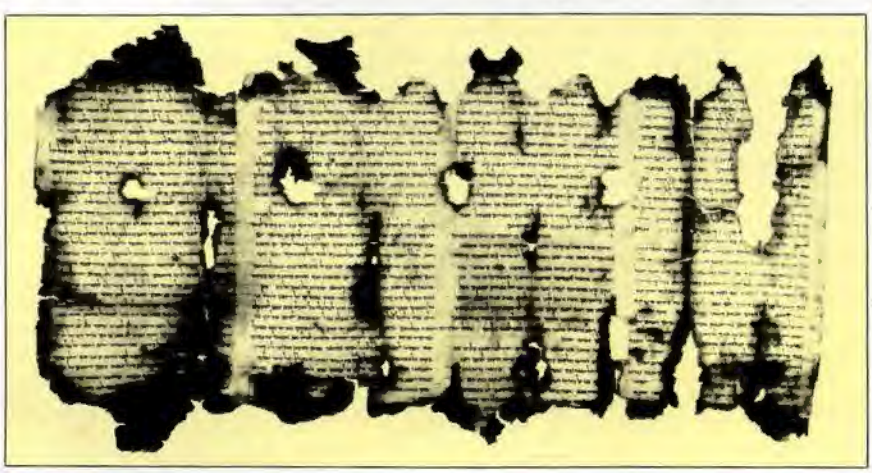

Essenes

A small pre-Christian sect, many of whose members retired in isolation to caves on the banks of the Dead Sea, to await the triumph of God over the powers of darkness: they have been identified with the community at Qumran which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls: through a life of simplicity and mysticism, devoted to the love of God, virtue and man, they aspired to the perfection which would initiate them into the mysteries of God.

See DEAD SEA SCROLLS.

ETERNAL RETURN

THE PROBLEM of the interpretation of history and understanding man's remote past are questions which have greatly fascinated the mind of modern man. The West has long been aware of these issues, but they came into sharp focus in the middle of the 19th century, when the doctrine of evolution undertook to explain the entire course of history from its distant origins to the present day in terms of a continuous and on the whole steady development. But despite the value of the evolutionary theory to the biological and geological sciences, it raised certain questions in the realm of the spirit which it was incapable of answering. It failed altogether to provide more than a temporary justification for the temporal process; in other words, it could not explain satisfactorily what was the ultimate *meaning* of history. And it was only able to speculate on the modes of thought of our ancestors.

Theories of origins – the origin of society, of religion, of mythology and many more – flourished; but almost without exception, they attributed modern attitudes to the past. It was assumed that the thought processes of 'primitive' man must be accessible to the investigator, and this assumption gave rise to considerable speculation concerning the nature of 'primitive mentality'; but in the absence of all but the most ambiguous evidence, such theories were never far removed from sheer guesswork.

Among the most recent, and the most consistently worked out, of these theories is that put forward by the Rumanian historian of religion Mircea Eliade in his book *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (1949) since published in English as *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*. In it, he undertakes both to offer an explanation of the workings of the mind of primitive man and to account for the essential differences between that and the mind of 'modern' man in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Briefly, Eliade's thesis is that primitive or archaic man was afraid of the passage of time, and sought to annul history by a repeated return to a mythical past (the 'eternal return'); Judaeo-Christian man, on the other hand, recognizes God at work within history, and can thus accept his historical existence and his own place in history without fear. In Eliade's own words: 'The chief difference between the man of the archaic and traditional societies and the man of the modern societies with their strong imprint of Judaeo-Christianity lies in the fact that the former feels himself indissolubly connected with the Cosmos and the cosmic rhythms, whereas the latter insists that he is connected only with History.'

No one can approach primitive religions, or study them on even the most superficial level, without being made aware of the importance to their structure of cycles of time – the recurrence of day and night, the progression of the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the reproductive cycles of human beings, animals and plants. In the widest sense this may be seen as the eternal struggle between life and death, light and darkness, fertility and barrenness, chaos and cosmos. Just as creation itself is believed to have been a conquest of chaos so each new fertile season and each new beginning is seen as a repetition of the same creative act.

Eliade maintains that this is the pattern which alone made life tolerable for archaic man. Eternal return is thus defined as 'the cyclical recurrence of what has been before' – and what has 'been before' is the creative act. Primitive man, Eliade holds, believes that 'everything begins over again at its commencement every instant. The past is but a prefiguration of the future. No event is irreversible and no transformation is final.' So the beginning of a new year for instance, is looked upon, not as something utterly and completely new, but as a repetition of what has already been.

In Ancient Mesopotamia, the recitation of the epic of creation, *Enuma elish*, at the New Year (*Akitu*) Festival, with its attendant ceremonies of atonement and regeneration, brings about the effective creation of another solar cycle. First chaos is temporarily re-established, as the king is deprived of his symbols of office; but then the creation of the world is re-enacted: the fates are cast for the subsequent 12 months, and finally the fertility of the land, man and beast is symbolically ensured by an act of hierogamy – ritual intercourse – between the king and a priestess.

The problem of pain and suffering is, in a sense, solved by this view of life. In archaic societies, pain, suffering and death are always believed to be caused; they never just happen. The Hindu doctrine of *karma* provides one possible explanation: suffering is brought about by moral and ritual lapses in a previous cycle of existence. Elsewhere the suffering of a god or goddess may be postulated, and this, too, provides a consolation, since the sufferer knows that his unhappiness is shared. Again, the suffering of the deity is seen within the framework of the repetitive, cyclical pattern of the eternal return. The typical vegetation deity of agricultural societies suffers and dies as the vegetation withers and dies at the onset of winter or the dry season, or, in a lunar-orientated setting, as the moon wanes.

Banishing the Terror of Time

Cyclical time is sacred time. The cyclical pattern is that pattern in which the *passage* of time is minimized, and in which man feels at one with Nature. The knowledge that the cosmos in which he lives periodically 'dies' and is renewed enables him to accept the troubles of life with equanimity, because no distress is other than transitory, and death is inevitably followed by resurrection. The mystery religions of the ancient Mediterranean world offered precisely this – assimilation by initiation to gods and goddesses (Isis, Osiris, Demeter, Persephone, Orpheus and many more) who themselves shared in the earth's universal pattern of death and resurrection (see DYING GOD).

The mysteries, therefore, satisfied a profound need – the need for security in the face of the changes and chances of mortal life. They abolished 'the terror of history'

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(Eliade's term) by offering an escape from the present moment into a timeless mythological past, in other words, by an 'eternal return' into myth.

The situation of modern man is very different. Judaism and Christianity postulated a linear view of time, in which the cosmos created by God pursues its course to the summing up of all things, and the destruction of the temporal order, by the same God. For centuries, this view was as it were superimposed on the cyclical view of the common people, and was scarcely accepted; but the new view of history which emerged in the West in the 18th and 19th centuries taught man to look to the future, and not to the past, for his fulfilment. Cyclical theories of time gave way to the ideas of progress, development and evolution. Every event came to be regarded as unique, irreversible and, at least in Christian theology, as a new manifestation of the will of God. Consequently, Western man came to concentrate as never before on capturing the essence of the irreversible instant: turned to the past, this means the obsessive writing of history and the cult of primary source; turned to the present, it means one or other form of existentialism; turned to the future, it means the spinning of utopian dreams or the prediction of catastrophe (the twin myths of science fiction). What modern man seems unable to do is to retreat from history into a timeless world of universal myth.

Man the myth-maker, deprived in the West of access to the myths that told of the time in the beginning when the world was shaped by the gods, makes myths out of film stars, pop singers and football players. Regrettably, whatever they may give him, immortality is not theirs to give.

Subconscious Level of Myth

Does the myth of the eternal return enable us to understand the mind of primitive or archaic man? And does it offer any explanation of the meaning of history? In a sense, the answers which one is prepared to return to such questions as these are as subject to intuition as they are to logic. The cyclical view of time which the myth of the eternal return presupposes is an incontestable fact of human experience. But does the evident fact that primitive man lives close to Nature necessarily mean that he *chooses* to identify himself with it? This is certainly Eliade's view. Concerning archaic man he writes that 'placed between accepting the historical condition and its risks on the one hand, and his reidentification with the modes of Nature on the other, he would choose such a reidentification.' It is the word 'choose' which rings a little false in this context, since it assumes that archaic man has the data on which a choice may be based, and that it is a conscious process.

Neither case seems to be proven. In fact, what the myth of the eternal return is offering us is a modern Western understanding of archaic man; whether archaic man would recognize himself in what is being said about him must be – and remains – an open question. True, this is what he seems to be doing: he seems to be living in a continual present; he seems to the sophisticated Westerner to be refusing 'to accept himself as a concrete being'. But a measure of agnosticism is never out of place when attempting to describe the remote and the exotic, and it is perhaps of more value, in the long run, to describe what can still be observed of the practices of primitives than to indulge in too much speculation about the mental processes that have given rise to them.

One must learn to discriminate. It is certainly a fallacy that all men of ancient cultures are to be judged by identical criteria. By the standard of pure antiquity, the cultures of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia are 'primitive' and 'archaic'. But both were writing cultures, and both knew the value of chronicles. As Professor S. G. F. Brandon has pointed out in his book *History, Time and Deity*, the Egyptian and Mesopotamian evidence can be interpreted in quite a different way from that proposed by Eliade. These early civilizations were far from being indifferent to history, much less afraid of it; kings and commoners alike sought to perpetuate the memory of their achievements, in dynastic lists, commemorative inscriptions (in the most durable of materials), portraits and autobiographical funerary texts, recording not only names but deeds. As Brandon writes, 'Such records of the past clearly attest a belief in the unique and definitive nature of the events thus commemorated, as well as the conviction that the memory of them was worth preserving.'

Perhaps we might conclude that in any civilization, except perhaps that of India, we are confronted by a superstructure of intellectual acceptance of history on the part of an effective minority; but that in practically all cases there is a vast and amorphous substructure in which instinct and tradition take precedence over reason. The myth of the eternal return works largely on this subconscious level, on the level at which instinct affirms the myths and archetypes. It is the critical Western mind which asks the leading questions, and disturbs the age-old patterns.

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Left **Medieval astrological calendar showing, in the centre, the dual aspects of eternal return; fertility and spring, a pregnant girl, and regeneration, an old woman before a fire, the element which renews itself from its own ashes. Circular to represent continuity and the cyclical repetition of life, it also contains the signs of the zodiac and activities associated with different times of the year** ***Right*** **12th-13th century gold plate from Peru; the earth goddess is surrounded by the fruits of the harvest and the sections around the rim of the plate represent the sowing calendar**

Michael Holford

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ETHIOPIA

Magical beliefs and practices are still widespread in Ethiopia, despite this country's ancient Christian tradition

WHILE ETHIOPIA STRUGGLES to pull herself into the 20th century, her large non-urban population clings to traditional manners and ancient beliefs. The nation is made up of a wide variety of peoples, faiths and cultures; it is dominated by the Monophysite Church (which believes in the single nature of the incarnate Christ) to which the Emperor and most of the ruling class owe allegiance. Many have commented on the almost Biblical stamp of Ethiopian Christian practice and have marvelled at the remnants of old pagan beliefs which lurk just below the surface. Yet, although Christianity is the official religion, almost half the population is Moslem and considerable numbers of pagans thrive in isolated groups throughout the land.

In their impenetrable mountain fastness, immune from any unwelcome outside influences, the dominant Amharas and Tigreans of the highlands have been Christian since very early times, living in family-based villages and pursuing a relatively advanced form of agriculture. The one foreign influence which they have been unable to resist is that of Christian (Coptic) Egypt which has always supplied their higher religious values and, until recently, their ecclesiastical leaders. Moslems are particularly strong in Eritrea and the Province of Harar where spiritual contacts with Arabia and Somalia are easily maintained, though there are also Moslem communities in the Christian regions.

The fertile lowlands of the south and west are the domain of animistic pagan tribes, often worshipping a sky god, such as the settled, agriculturalist Sidama group. The migration of Galla tribes with their high god, Wak, into Shoa and the western provinces, and the survival of aboriginal Agaw tribe remnants in and near Simen has added independent pagan islets to the cultural patchwork of the High Plateau. Among the Agaw tribes particular interest attaches to the Falasha, the indigenous Ethiopian Jews, who live according to the pre-Mosaic code of the Pentateuch in settled villages, fulfilling the despised roles of metalworkers and potters. Their Judaism is heavily tainted with pagan and Christian practices and permits offerings to Sanbat, Goddess of the Sabbath.

A few negroid remnants, such as the Kunama, survive on the north-western borders, formed into clans which marry outside the group and practising totemism. Their high god, Anna, having created Heaven and Earth, now remains aloof and leaves his people to worship ancestral spirits. In the Christian highlands, the various religious groupings tend to keep to themselves and fulfil specific roles in society, the Moslems engaging in trade and commerce and the pagans forming low-status artisan classes.

The Coming of Christianity

The original population of Ethiopia was probably negroid but in remote antiquity these were driven to the southern and western fringes by invading Cushitic tribes. At various periods during the first millennium BC, groups of South Arabian colonists migrated to Eritrea, bringing with them their Semitic language and religion along with other material benefits of their superior culture. Judaism may have followed in the

Federico e Aldo Patellani

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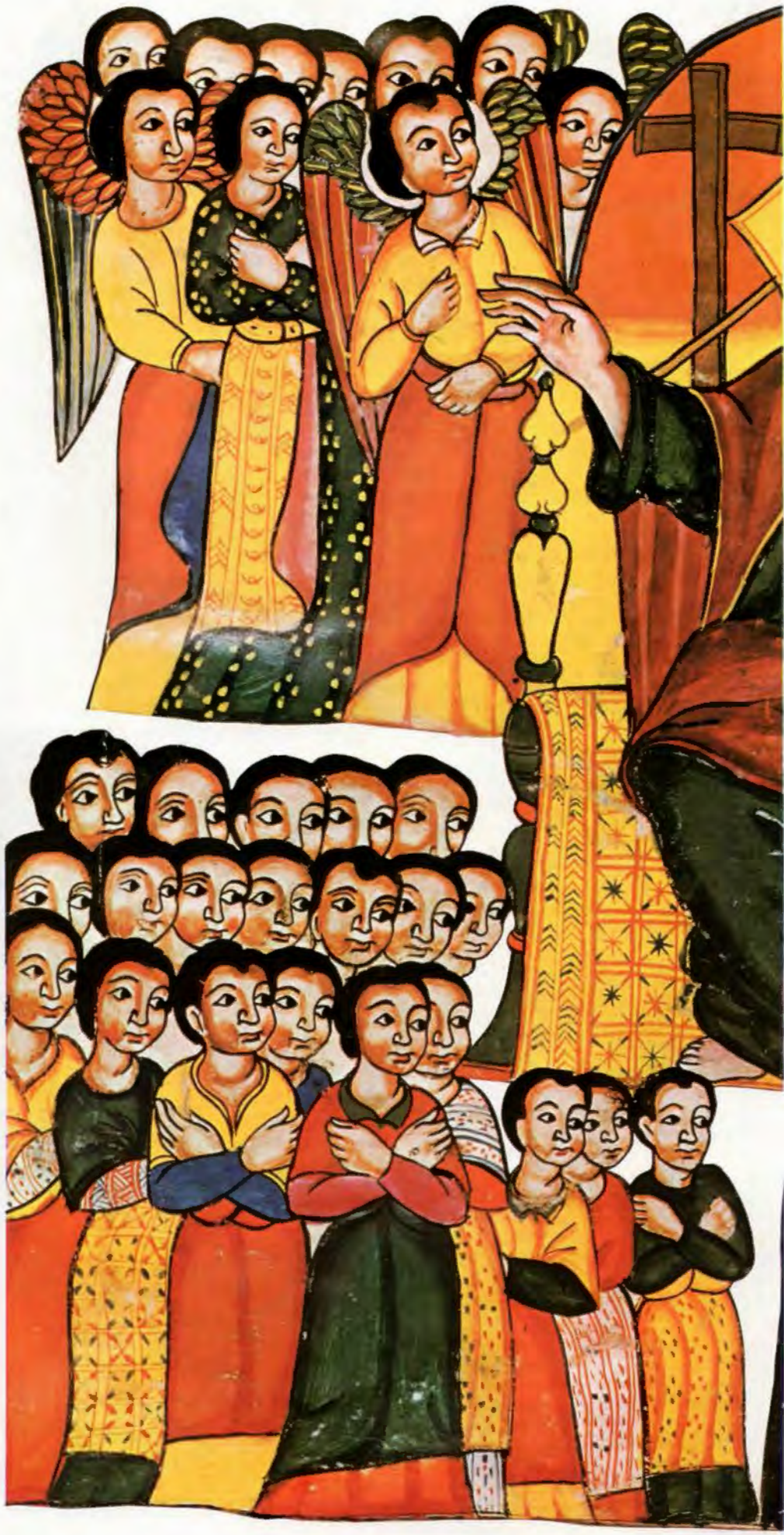
Left **Part of the royal treasure from the ancient city of Aksum; once the centre of Christian missionary activity and the home of Ethiopian emperors who were thought to be descended from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba** ***Right*** **A *dabtara* or lay preacher performs an improvised service with the traditional umbrella, icon and straying lamb**



wake of this movement. Though the invaders inevitably were submerged by the local population, their cultural values survived and, once adopted by the Cushitic peoples, permitted the development of a ruling elite in the northern highlands. This cultural synthesis matured in isolation and somewhere before 200 AD the city of Aksum rose to prominence as the centre of a large tribal empire covering much of the Horn of Africa.

Aksum was already familiar with Greek culture when, about 330 AD, Christianity was introduced under the Emperor Ezana; though there is reason to believe that the initial conversion of the court was politically motivated and that the true conversion of the people rather occurred in the following century when a number of Syrian monks came to the land to escape persecution after the Council of Chalcedon (451) had banned Monophysitism. Aksum now maintained close trading and cultural links with the Byzantine world, but the spread of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries isolated her from her spiritual contacts.

Son of the Invincible Ares

The South Arabians had introduced to Ethiopia their pantheon, which consisted of the moon god Ilmuqah or Sin, the sun goddess Dhat Himyam or Shams, and the male morning star Athtar, the Astarte of the Phoenicians. It is difficult to assign relative importance to these gods but it is significant that only Athtar was known to all the South Semitic peoples by the same name. Ilmuqah is purely Sabaean whilst Sin is from the Hadramaut, and the sun existed under many local designations. The crescent and circle symbol of the moon and sun is frequent in early Aksumite art and featured on some coins of the reign of the Emperor Ezana, latterly giving way to the cross. Even now it appears sporadically in magical drawings. However, only Athtar survived in the speech of the people to give a northern word *astar*, meaning 'sky' and 'god'. The pagan inscriptions of Ezana modified the pantheon into Astar, Beher or Medr (Earth) and Mahrem (War). It is clear that the last of these was the most important, for in several Greek inscriptions the king of Aksum styles himself 'son of the invincible Ares', and other deities receive no mention. The pagan

In isolated monasteries, monks passed their lives painstakingly illustrating the word of God. *The Last Judgement* from an Ethiopian version of the New Testament, now in the British Museum

British Museum

system has remained so rooted in the beliefs of the people, that the usual Ethiopic word for 'God', *Egziabeher*, literally means 'Lords of the Earth', while 'the Lord' is rendered by the plural form *Amlak*, obvious echoes of polytheism and an indication of how Christianity accommodated itself to popular feeling.

Despite internal threats in the 8th century, the Church somehow survived as the pivot of the state and so it has remained although occasionally troubled by schisms. However, as it has always been impervious to outside influences, except those transmitted by Coptic Egypt, its chief features remain decidedly Oriental. As Edward Ullendorff has pointed out (*The Ethiopians*, 1965), many elements in Ethiopian Monophysitism are unquestionably of Judaic origin and must be very ancient. One may mention circumcision, which conforms closely to Jewish practice, the maintenance of Mosaic dietary prohibitions, the insistence on ritual purity, and the ground plan of churches. Moreover, the Ethiopian national saga, which probably dates back to Aksumite times, argues that the royal house is descended from the union of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba, a legend now incorporated as a fact within the Constitution and no doubt a reflection of the Arabian origins of the dominant culture.

Cult of the Serpent

Paganism has left its mark in many areas. The favoured site for a church is a hill-top, usually in association with a sacred grove. The cross surmounting the church is often adorned with an ostrich shell, a practice encountered in shrines in Arabia and Syria too. Possibly a reflection of an ancient cult of the Mother Earth goddess may be detected in the excessive veneration accorded to the Virgin Mary, often to the detriment of God himself. Similarly local spirit worship may be viewed as the origin of the widespread cult of miracle-working saints, native and foreign.

The classic motif is that of the saint who comes from distant parts and enters an inaccessible region to convert the people and to found a monastery, by preference on a mountain-top and frequently in association with a cave. The multiplicity of recurrent festivals, of which the Ethiopians probably have more than any other branch

Mark Riboud-Magnum

Camera Press London

The reference to Christ as the Lion of Judah is one of the titles adopted by the Emperor of Ethiopia *Left* In the market at Addis Ababa hangs the banner of the Lion, embracing both Church and State *Above* The Emperor Haile Selassie in ceremonial dress

of Christianity, may also derive from an ancient cycle of pagan festivals; the New Year Masqal festival in September, for example, culminates in the burning of a mammoth bonfire on a hill-top, round which oxen and sheep are led three times before being sacrificed and left for the birds and jackals to consume.

Most of the races of Ethiopia draw on a common stock of mythical beliefs. There is abundant evidence in all faiths of an aboriginal cult of the sky god who is involved in fertility and rain-making rites, whilst the earth, particularly woods and streams, is inhabited by genii, not necessarily evil, but requiring propitiation.

The official Solomonic legend in its turn has had more ancient traditions grafted onto it. The Tigreans tell how in Tamben there once lived a tyrannical snake king, Waynaba, who required of his subjects an annual tribute of a maiden and a quantity of milk. The people of Aksum ultimately found a young man, Angabo, who was to become the father of Sheba, and he, by the exercise of magic, succeeded in killing the snake and thus became king of Aksum.

A snake cult, evidence of which is forthcoming in South Arabia and Socotra, must be deep-rooted in this part of the world. The Ethiopians believe that in ancient times the land was divided between those who followed the Hebrew faith and those who worshipped Arwe ('serpent'); another old tradition alleges that the world is encircled by two serpents, Leviathan and Behemoth. Attitudes to snakes nowadays vary from province to province. In Shoa house snakes are shown respect, but in Begemder they are regarded with outright fear and the people wear talismans of herbs to get protection from them.

Other creatures also assume importance from cultic association. Augury by the behaviour of birds is an important preliminary to any expedition or hunt, whilst the cock seems to be connected with kingship. The legitimacy of the future Solomonic king Yekuno Amlak (1268–83) is said to have been recognized when as a child he unwittingly consumed the head of a cock.

A very important symbol of royalty is the bee, whose honey and wax were formerly reserved to the king. A legend tells how the future greatness of the Zagwe king Lalibela (d 1220), builder of the famous rock churches, was recognized in childhood when a swarm of bees settled round his head. On a more general level the hunt had a major ritual function for all warriors as proof of bravery, and the coronation of a king was traditionally followed by one in which animals otherwise reserved to the king were killed, a clear sign of totemism.

Church's Attitude to Magic

Belief in the efficacy of magic is universal throughout Ethiopia, not least amongst the Christian communities. The attitude of the Church here is ambiguous. It accords at least tacit recognition to certain facets of magic which do not specifically run counter to Christian dogma. In the *Anaphora* of

Nucleus of the Truth

Mass in an Ethiopian monastery

There were twenty or thirty monks around us and some women and babies from the *tukuls*. Communion was administered to the babies, but to no one else. Many of the monks were crippled or deformed in some way; presumably they were pilgrims who had originally come to the spring in the hope of a cure, and had become absorbed into the life of the place. There seemed to be very little system of testing vocations in the community. The priests and deacons wore long, white-and-gold cloaks and turbans, and had bare feet. Now and then they emerged from the sanctuary, and once they walked round in procession. The singing was monotonous and more or less continuous, accompanied by a drum and sistrums (silver rattles). For anyone accustomed to the Western rite it was difficult to think of this as a Christian service, for it bore that secret and confused character which I had hitherto associated with the non-Christian sects of the East. . . At Debra Lebanos I suddenly saw the classic basilica as a great positive achievement . . . I saw the Church of the first century as a dark and hidden thing, as dark and hidden as the seed germinating in the womb; legionaries off duty slipping furtively out of the barracks, greeting each other by signs and passwords in a locked upper room in the side street of some Mediterranean seaport. . . The priests hid their office, practising trades; their identity was known only to initiates; they were criminals against the law of their country. And the pure nucleus of the truth lay in the minds of the people, encumbered with superstitions . . .

And I began to see how these obscure sanctuaries had grown, with the clarity of the Western reason, into the great open altars of Catholic Europe, where Mass is said in a flood of light, high in the sight of all, while tourists can clatter round with their Baedekers, incurious of the mystery.

Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People*

Jacob of Serug, for example, there occurs a reference to the magical name Melos, the fiery sword, which some have interpreted as a form of the name Solomon in reverse. A number of short magical texts where the religious content is clear have been given approval despite a ban on such materials issued by the Councils of Nicaea and Galatea. Consisting largely of extracts from the Scriptures, stories of saints and other holy writings, their magical content is innocuous, hardly more than the mention of 'acceptable' magical names, and their practical value to the owner is largely prophylactic, though a very few may find their way into use in Church services.

However, when confronted with witchcraft or anything suggestive of black magic, the Church takes a severely prohibitive, if unavailing, line. It has always been an offence to practise magic and in early chronicles one reads of punitive measures taken against pagan and magical cults. The Emperor Sara Yaqob (1434–68) in particular took a stand against such practices and personally composed disputations on the subject. During his reign large sections of the people had abandoned Christianity in favour of paganism and the Emperor is praised as one who 'eradicated Dask and Marit and Tafant and Maqawzay and Dino, magicians and all who worship idols and their sorcery.' The measures do not seem to have been effective, for even now these very names recur in magical writings.

The people, however, are more sympathetic. By nature conservative and superstitious, they lay greater stress on practice than on dogma. Their God is the jealous deity of the Old Testament rather than a source of compassion and they feel that the Church's promise of happiness to come is poor compensation for tribulation on earth. To some extent Christ and the Virgin are more reliable in this respect.

The superstitions to which they fall victim are prevalent throughout the Near East and North Africa. Perhaps the greatest fear is of the Evil Eye which they believe to be exercised by malevolent spirits and also by certain humans, notably blacksmiths and other artisan groups such as the Falasha. Talismans of coloured ribbons or gold and silver plates are often placed round the necks of children as a protective measure and most Ethiopians will not appreciate a compliment paid to a child, unless accompanied by the saving phrase, 'God be praised'. Animals and houses are also at risk and for the latter a dried aloe plant or a stuffed crocodile set over the door is held to afford some protection.

Names are another source of danger. The Ethiopians believe that a name is the essence or soul of the person or object to which it is applied. Whoever learns this name gains power over the bearer. Utterance of a name thus becomes a potential act of creation or of destruction. Though not perhaps as cautious in this respect as, say, the Berbers, Ethiopians are unlikely to reveal their baptismal names, if they can remember them, and the use of nicknames to thwart evil spirits is widespread. On a higher level great virtue attaches to the names of God, knowledge of which facilitates one's progress to Paradise. Since God has many powers and attributes, he also has many names and it is said that Christ revealed the greatest of these as Berhana'el. Typical is the belief that the three Persons of the Trinity existed in name only in primordial ocean and that each assumed form by pronouncing his name.

Possession by Zar and Buda

It is in the popular view of diseases as spirit-induced that we are best able to study magic in practice. Most of the evidence we possess concerns the northern provinces, particularly Begemder where the town of Gondar has emerged as a major centre for magic and sorcery.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous type of spirit is the Zar, whose name is variously said to be of Galla or Agaw origin. Although probably derived from Devil-worship, of which much evidence exists elsewhere, they are represented as white-faced and so are not evil. There are many Zars and their activities and social organizations exactly parallel those of humans. They have a king, own property and engage in various trades. They fall ill, are subject to the evil eye and may be attacked by other types of spirit. Unfortunately, they have a predilection for possessing humans, usually unmarried women who have offended them. The victim, called *faras*, or 'horse', betrays signs of mental illness, behaving like a horse and singing heroic songs. Since the Zar is not actually maleficent, it is sufficient to propitiate him and persuade him to leave his 'horse' and reside elsewhere. This is the task of certain individuals who are known to possess the powers of mediums. To the accompaniment of songs and dance and the burning of scented herbs, the victim is driven into a frenzy till the Zar, speaking through his victim, ultimately reveals his name. Once this is known, he can be persuaded to depart in return for various offerings, such as meal and the sacrifice of a cock. Although Zar possession provides a convenient opportunity, for malingering, reliable observers have often been convinced of its genuineness. Michael Leiris, a scholar who has made a particular study of Ethiopian magic, has drawn attention to the theatrical aspect of the performance and the fact that the victim will go through a set range of actions specific to the Zar without any apparent foreknowledge or prompting, to the extent of distorting his speech into an argot of which he will later claim no knowledge.

Far more serious is the malevolent Buda with his Evil Eye. He is not strictly a spirit but a human being practising black magic. One is born a Buda and cannot change. Blacksmiths and the Falasha are particularly suspect here and receive much ill-treatment in consequence. The Buda, who has the power to change himself into a hyena, is said to lure people to lonely spots, where he attacks them, eats them and drinks their blood. Less harmfully, he may change into a stone on a path and trip up his victim, or simply cast the Evil Eye on him so that he becomes unaccountably ill. The favoured season for this is the end of August after a shower of rain. The Buda is dealt with in a manner very similar to the Zar but his exorcism involves a contest of wills with the medium, rather than persuasion. Once he has been named, the unfortunate blacksmith will be summoned and forced to release his victim.

While possessed by a Buda one may experience a craving for charcoal, and afterwards there is total amnesia. As a talisman one may wear a hyena skin pouch containing the root of the tenadam plant (feonel).

Among the many lesser spirits there are the Ser'era, the midday spirits of rivers and deserts. Each household has one and he is good or evil according to his reception. There are also the Aganent who are river

To gain protection from diseases it is the custom to wear magical amulets, consisting of long strips of leather inscribed with texts intended to avert evil

deities who live in villages and possess property which one may see reflected on the surface of the water. They have human form and are black. Though some are liable to drown the unwary swimmer, others render assistance to men in the home or on the farm. When crossing a river one must conciliate the Aganent by throwing in herbs or food, naming oneself and the river and drinking some water. A deity associated with empty houses, thresholds and closed doors is Maggaña. Sacrifice must be made to him when a house is built, and most urgently when it is reoccupied. He is a menace to the first person to open a door, and dawn becomes a hazardous time to go visiting. To thwart his power one must spit into the house just as the door is opened.

Spells and Charms

All ailments are said to be the work of specific demons, and demand treatment as such. Infertility and complications of childbirth are attributed to Shotelay, whilst childhood illnesses are caused by a witch called Werzelya (probably identical with the Hebrew Lilith), who slew the son of Saint Susneyos and was speared to death by him. Another belief alleges that the negroid Barya tribe work in consort with the Devil to cause epilepsy.

To gain protection from diseases it is the custom to wear magical amulets, consisting of long strips of leather inscribed with texts intended to avert evil. The term for this, *ketab*, is pure Arabic, where it means 'book', above all the Koran. A brisk business in these is carried on by *dabtaras*, or lay Church deacons, as a lucrative side-line to their ecclesiastical and teaching duties. Dabtaras have a reputation for cunning and some are said to be able to conjure up the Devil from a stream and elicit from him information about the future.

Amulets, composed in the dead Ethiopic language, may be of a general nature and are often the semi-official texts approved by the Church, but there is a wide range of purely magical ones, drawing on a common stock of legends, prayers and hymns which are selected and adapted as required by the individual case. Into these are inserted innumerable magical names, of God, and the angels, Solomon, and the like, and also of less reputable personalities such as Satan. Frequent also are unintelligible magical words. These are only effective if not generally understood, so that foreign words are specially favoured. Research into these has revealed traces of words of Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and probably Cushitic origin. Hebrew is very desirable, though most examples given are highly suspect, and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are regularly named. Curiously one encounters the Ethiopian equivalent of the ancient Latin palindrome (a word or phrase that reads the same backwards and forwards), 'Sator arepo tenet opera rotas', in the garbled form 'Sador alador danat adera rodas'; the phrase is said to represent the names of the five nails of the cross.

The Semitic tradition underlying these texts emerges just as clearly from the drawings which punctuate the narrative, without necessarily being related to it. Designs themselves indeed may constitute an amulet. These have now been subjected to analysis by Ewald Wagner who has revealed thematic links with magical materials from Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, Iran, and Armenia. The drawings are often obscure and it is probable that there is a given range of motifs which the dabtara may draw on at will. Two popular designs are the open-ended Greek cross with the face of God in its centre, and a spider-like device, perhaps representing the net used by Solomon to catch demons. A common figure is that of a guardian angel with drawn sword, probably Fanu'el, the exorcist. The Werzelya amulet usually depicts Saint Susneyos, mounted, driving his spear into the prostrate, black-faced witch. Animals appear more rarely, though snakes, fish and lions are occasionally depicted. A convention of Armenian origin demands that an evil figure must be shown in profile to counteract the effects of the Evil Eye, or occasionally simply omitting the pupil of the eye. There are also groups of deformed Ethiopic letters bearing circles at their extremities, which are worked into the actual text; these were probably intended to ward off evil.

If a man falls ill despite these precautions, he may go to the local dabtara who will copy out a prescriptioo from his book of remedies and sell it to the invalid. Alternatively, he may prefer to consult a *tankway*, 'sorcerer', who will prescribe less orthodox, magical methods of treatment. The remedy may include the wearing of an amulet, repetition of magical words and names, burning herbs, sacrifice, and other forms of sympathetic magic. Specific days are regarded as propitious for treatment and the position of the patient is important. The scholars Marcel Griaule and Stefan Strelcyn have published examples of prescription books, and Maxime Rodinson has produced a sort of Ethiopian medical directory of specialists for the Gondar area. It lists their names, addresses, specialities, methods and their fees.

With a prayer stick from ancient Egypt the *dabtara* ceaselessly sings psalms while awaiting death and sainthood: these holy men are often consulted about the future

Ethiopian Christians crave for immortality and in order to assure their transitiоn to Paradise without too much tiresome preparation, they bury an amulet with their dead known as *Lefafa sedq*, which E. A. W. Budge names the 'Bandlet of Righteousness'; traditionally this should be the same length as the owner. Budge has drawn attention to many features common to this interesting document and the version of the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead' current in Graeco-Roman times. It lays great stress on knowledge of the secret names of God, by whom it was allegedly written. These names were revealed to Christ at the insistence of Mary who was anxious to spare her servants the terrors of Judgement and the torments of the River of Fire. The text contains many ideas derived from Egyptian Gnosticism and apocalyptic Hebrew works. It is noteworthy, however, that the elaborate funerary rites prescribed in the *Lefafa sedq* are not in fact supported by actual practice in Ethiopia, where burial is carried out with little ceremony other than dramatic mourning. The mere fact of possessing the amulet was a sufficient guarantee to the owner, who probably could not have read it anyway.

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The sombre, savage religion of the mysterious ancient Etruscans included a preoccupation with divination and sacrifice, and a morbid obsession with hell and damnation

ETRUSCANS

'MYSTERIOUS' is the word popularly applied to the Etruscans. This conventional epithet has arisen for many reasons: the uncertainty shrouding their origin, the fact that their language is partly undeciphered, the apparent concern of much of their religious beliefs with the underworld and divination, and the fact that when the archeologist first began to uncover their material remains the chief source of investigation was provided by large chamber tombs with frescoes which included scenes of the tortures of the damned, reminiscent of the Hell of some medieval painters.

The discovery of their civilization has sometimes led to an overappraisal of its achievements and similarly their religious beliefs have often been surrounded by an aura of mystery not always justified by the facts. As a result of this attitude, even a well-known Etruscan scholar can regard the central pillar in their chamber-tombs as symbolizing the uniting of the world and the underworld, whereas the prosaic fact probably is that the pillar was designed merely to keep the roof up.

Who were the Etruscans? A partial answer, with which few would quarrel, is that the Etrusci (or Tusci), as the Romans called them, lived in Tuscany in central Italy from at least the 7th century BC. They extended their influence southwards to the area around Naples (in the process engulfing the Latin city of Rome, where Etruscan kings ruled in the 6th century) and later northwards to the northern plain of the Po valley. About 500 BC the southern area including Rome shook off their rule, confining their power increasingly to the district of Tuscany, and in the 4th and 3rd centuries they were finally forced to submit to Rome's expanding might: they were absorbed into Rome's Italian confederacy and in 90 BC became Roman citizens.

It is when one tries to look back before the 7th century that difficulties arise as to their identity. It is generally agreed that their language, although written in a form of the Greek alphabet, does not belong to the Indo-European group which was spoken in historical times by most of the peoples of Italy (Iron Age peoples, Latins, Samnites, Greeks and others), and it is the opinion of most of the ancient writers from Herodotus onwards that the Etruscans had settled in Italy as a conquering aristocracy coming from Asia Minor. However, one Greek writer, Dionysius, who lived at the turn of our era, believed them to be indigenous, descendants of the prehistoric peoples of Italy. Today emphasis is laid less on the problem of origin and more on the fact that Etruscan civilization, as we know it, evolved on the soil of Italy.

Although perhaps insoluble, the problem is important, not least from the religious point of view. If the Etruscans came from the East, it is easier to explain certain affinities between their beliefs (in divination, for instance) and those found in Mesopotamia. In any case there is a strong 'oriental' element in Etruscan civilization which was partly transmitted from the Greeks. If they were indigenous to Italy, one would have to seek the origin of their religious beliefs primarily among the earlier inhabitants of Italy.

One thing is beyond doubt: the basis of the population of Etruria from the 7th century onwards was descended from the earlier Iron Age peoples. Either these people, who cremated their dead, somehow developed the Etruscan civilization, where burial was the main rite – and certainly this process would be a major mystery – or else a small minority of Etruscans with a superior culture came from overseas, conquered the land, and by exploiting its natural resources and the manpower of its earlier inhabitants, built up a complex political system based on city states in an area which had seen little more than the huts of the Iron Age villagers.

Clues from the Past

Our sources of knowledge of Etruscan religious thought and practice fall into three groups. Firstly, a few Etruscan inscriptions, secondly the archeological remains which are numerous but cannot speak and are subject to varying interpretation, and thirdly the writings of later Greeks and Romans.

The chief Etruscan inscriptions include a clay tablet from Capua (near Naples) of the 5th or 4th century BC, which deals with funeral ceremonies and contains the names of several Etruscan deities; a liturgical text written on the wrappings of an Egyptian mummy now in Zagreb, of the 2nd and 1st centuries; a model bronze liver with inscribed names of gods from Piacenza in northern Italy; a lead tablet with names of deities from Magliano, Tuscany; and two sheets of gold, discovered in 1964 at Pyrgi (southern Etruria) which date from about 500 BC. This source of knowledge, is however, limited by its paucity and our inability to translate it completely.

Archeological evidence includes numerous tombs and their contents. Whole cemeteries survive, at Tarquinii and Caere, laid out like towns containing streets of tombs of varying size and style, many being great tumulus mounds with circular stone bases cut in the rock. Usually the interiors are decorated like houses, which suggests that the Etruscans wanted the dead to 'feel at home' in replicas of their earthly houses, and often the walls were painted with scenes of daily life, depicting banquets, dancing, music, and athletic games. In the later tombs, however, the paintings are more concerned with the underworld and its terrifying demons suggesting that the earlier gaiety was being suppressed by a grimmer attitude to the hereafter.

These tombs underline a weakness in our evidence in almost all spheres: so much of it is late in time and represents the later stages of Etruscan history and belief; much less is known about the 7th century, and indeed about the lower classes in society than about the rich who could afford these magnificent burials. Reliefs on sarcophagi and urns depict the dead starting on their journey to the underworld, and their lids may bear sculptured figures of the deceased. Smaller objects, such as statuettes, reveal the characteristics of the various deities, while the backs of bronze mirrors often decorated with mythological scenes indicate how much the Etruscans borrowed and adapted from Greek mythology.

As for literary evidence, apart from scattered references throughout Greek and Roman literature, a valuable source was provided by such Roman writers of Etruscan origin of the 1st century BC as Tarquinius Priscus and Aulus Caecina, who translated into Latin some of the Etruscan religious books. Unfortunately only a few fragments survive, and even these are probably contaminated with later ideas; but they confirm the important fact that Etruscan religious belief, unlike Greek and Roman, was 'revealed'. It is said to have been taught to the Etruscans by seers, such as the mythological Tages, who miraculously appeared to a peasant and then revealed to the assembled Etruscans the science of divination by the inspection of the entrails of sacrificed animals or by the flight of birds. Many sacred books were later attributed to him (*libri Tagetici*), while a prophetess named Vegoia, or Begoe, expounded cosmology and the ordinances of the God Tinia, the Etruscan Jupiter, regarding the division of land. All this teaching was embodied in a code of religious practices, the *disciplina Etrusca*.

This sacred literature included the Books on Lightning, Books of Haruspices (diviners) and Books of Ritual. The first dealt with the interpretation of thunder and lightning: various gods threw thunderbolts which thus revealed their will if rightly interpreted in accordance both with the part of the sky in which they appeared – it was divided into 16 parts – and with the places or objects struck; the latter became sacred or taboo. Tinia threw three kinds of thunderbolt of varying import, while eight other gods threw one each. A special type of calendar known as brontoscopic, interpreting the significance of the bolts for each day of the year, has been preserved by a late writer, John Lydus.

The *haruspices* were priests concerned particularly with divination through the inspection of livers; this art, known as hepatoscopy, was a particular Etruscan ritual. On an Etruscan mirror the seer Calchas is depicted foretelling the future in this way; on another a *haruspex* is making predictions in the presence of a god and the Etruscan hero Tarchon. Even better known is the bronze model of a sheep's liver, found at Piacenza. It is divided into 44 sections inscribed with the names of gods and represents the heavens orientated by the cardinal points and the home (*Templum*) of the gods.

The liver of the sacrifice represents the state of the world at the moment of sacrifice and indicated the will of heaven; its various parts were related to the corresponding parts of the heavens, and predictions turned on the appearance (especially abnormalities) and colour of the liver. In later times the Roman Senate, when in doubt about the meaning of omens, would appeal to these expert Etruscan diviners.

Scala

Scenes of daily life, banquets, dancing, music and games, painted on the walls of vast Etruscan tombs, suggest that the Etruscans wanted their dead to 'feel at home' in replicas of their earthly houses: Tomb of the Lionesses at Tarquinii

The *Libri Rituales* probably contained directions for all aspects of public and private life. We know that they laid down instructions for the founding of cities, the consecration of temples and altars, the surveying and allotment of land, matters of property and many affairs which should be regarded as legal rather than religious.

Books of Fate and Death

There were also Books of Fate and Death which were probably included in the *Libri Rituales*. The duration of an individual's life was determined by fate, and even that of the Etruscan nation was limited to ten *saecula* or cycles, the eighth of which ended in 88 BC; although the threat of fate might be delayed by sacrifices until the tenth saeculum, thereafter it could not be averted. Similarly the universe, according to a late passage which may have been influenced by the book of Genesis, had its determined history of 12 millennia: during the first 6000 years the demiurge or creator of the universe had created heaven and earth, the firmament, the sea, waters and land, the sun, moon and stars, all that creeps, flies or runs in earth, air and water, and man, who would endure for the next 6000 years.

In Macaulay's poem, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, he speaks of the 'nine gods' by which Lars Porsena of Clusium swore 'that the great house of Tarquin' (the Etruscan king) 'should suffer wrong no more'. We know the names of more than Macaulay's nine gods worshipped by the Etruscans, but little about their functions and relationships, and while many have Etruscan names, they were early affected by Greek and oriental influences and equated with the names of Greek and Roman deities. Such equation of names does not of course always involve complete identity of function.

The chief god Tinia or Tin, a thunder-god, was identified with Zeus and Jupiter. Voltumna (Vertumnus) was also very highly honoured. Tinia was worshipped alongside Uni (Juno) and Menrva (Minerva) in tripartite temples of which the most famous is that on the Capitol at Rome, built by the Etruscan kings, in the 6th century BC. The god Sethlans was identified with Hephaestus-Vulcan, Fufluns with Dionysus-Bacchus, Turms with Hermes-Mercury, Turan with Aphrodite-Venus. The Greek Apollo, Artemis and Hercules appear as Aplu, Aritimi and Hercle. No doubt many of the gods had mythologies of their own before they were identified with Greek counterparts.

The Greek Charon and other lesser deities of the underworld gained increasing importance as this aspect of the future loomed larger in Etruscan thought. Other deities had local or family names, and the city of Populonia near Piombino may have been named after Fufluns. The process by which alien deities might be welcomed into the Etruscan pantheon is illustrated by the Pyrgi inscriptions which record the introduction of the Punic Astarte into the Sanctuary of Uni with the name Uni-Astarte. In addition, there were many groupings of gods and a host of minor deities. Beside the triad of Tinia, Uni and Menrva, there were the 'nine' gods who hurled lightning, *Dei Superiores* who counselled Tinia about when to throw his worst thunderbolt, other advisers named *Dii Consentes*, the Penates, the Lares and others, many of whom were perhaps regarded as gods of fate.

The gods were worshipped in temples, the earliest known dating to 600 BC. It may be that open air sanctuaries with altars were used in more primitive times. The temples were set in sacred precincts, usually against the rear wall, with an altar standing in the space in front. They contained the cult statue of the god: the most famous surviving one is the terracotta statue of Apollo at Veii near Rome.

Funeral Games

Little is known of the ceremonies, sacrifices and prayers, which may be described in the inscriptions found at Capua and Zagreb. Doubtless there were formal litanies. Votive gifts could take the form of statuettes of the deities to whom they were offered, and clay models of parts of the human body were offered in gratitude for the cure of these parts or the desire for such healing. Animal sacrifices took two forms: they were called *hostiae animales*, in which the soul or life of the animal was offered to the god in place

of a man's, and *hostiae consultatoriae* by which the sacrificer sought the will or advice of the deity in the victim's entrails. Prisoners were also slaughtered for sacrifice.

A less grim aspect of Etruscan religious life is reflected in the games, dances, music, horse-racing, processions, prize-fights and other activities practised in honour or service of the gods and indeed of the dead. Funerals of heroes as in Homeric times were followed by elaborate competitive athletic games, and they are represented in Etruscan art, wall-paintings and sarcophagi. In the Tomb of the Augurs at Tarquinii are depicted two wrestlers with august referees and bronze vases which were the prizes; the frescoes of the Tomb of the Olympic Games show horse and foot races, jumping, boxing and discus throwing. But even this had its sombre aspect. In the Tomb of the Augurs a masked figure (Phersu) with a wild dog on a leash fights a man armed with a cudgel and with his head covered by a sack. Such scenes lend colour to the belief of the ancient writers that Rome originally derived her bloody gladiatorial combats from Etruria, and they no doubt reflect a milder version of the human sacrifices which in more primitive days had accompanied the funerals of princes. We know little of religious festivals as such, but representatives of all the Etruscans met annually at the sanctuary of Voltumna near Volsinii.

The tomb frescoes, with their scenes of feasting and dancing and their more sinister glimpses of torturing demons, suggest the prospect of paradise or hell in an afterlife in which the individuality of the dead survives. Since the wealthy were buried with great riches – shields, weapons and chariots for the warriors and jewellery and toilet articles for the women – the fortunate may have hoped for a continuation of the joys of earthly life. The horrors of hell prefigure the demons of Michelangelo and Dante. The gruesome figures of Charun with his hammer and the vulture-beaked Tuchulcha with donkey ears and armed with serpents, carry off the dead. The parting, when the dead man starts on his long journey, either on foot, horseback, chariot or boat, is vividly shown on many sarcophagi.

Livy described the Etruscans as 'a nation more than any other dedicated to religion, the more so as they excelled in practising it', while the Christian writer Arnobius later described Etruria as the 'creator and mother of superstitions'. The general impression is that unlike the Greeks, the Etruscans felt the insignificance of man dominated by fate and the divine will. Heaven and earth were closely linked, the vault of heaven being orientated and divided up into sections where lived the various deities; sacred areas on earth were correspondingly orientated and divided, while the position in the sky where signs occurred, indicated the god responsible. The omens were interpreted by priests who played an important role in Etruscan society. By means of the received *disciplina* it was man's task to discover the divine will and then passively to follow. Seneca sums up: 'The difference between us (the Greeks and Romans) and the Etruscans is that whereas we believe lightning to be released because clouds collide, they believe that clouds collide in order to release lightning.'

H. H. SCULLARD

British Museum

The figure on this Etruscan cinerary urn of the 2nd century BC holds a *phiale*, the customary vessel for pouring libations for the gods: now in the British Museum

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Eucharist

The Lord's Supper, Mass or Holy Communion, the principal sacrament of Christianity, in which the worshippers partake of consecrated bread and wine: also sometimes used for the consecrated elements themselves, especially the bread.

See FOOD AND DRINK; MASS

Eve Arnold–Magnum

Euhemerism

The theory that mythology has its origins in history; propounded by the Greek scholar Euhemerus in the 3rd century BC, who tried to prove that the gods were in fact ancient kings who had been deified: in an account of a fabulous journey to islands in the Indian Ocean, he claimed to have discovered inscriptions commemorating great kings and heroes, whose names corresponded with those of the Greek gods: Christians later used the theory to discredit the pagan gods.

EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS

In an atmosphere of suspicion both inside and outside the courtrooms, witch hysteria rose to a peak in the 16th and 17th centuries, accusations breeding further accusations

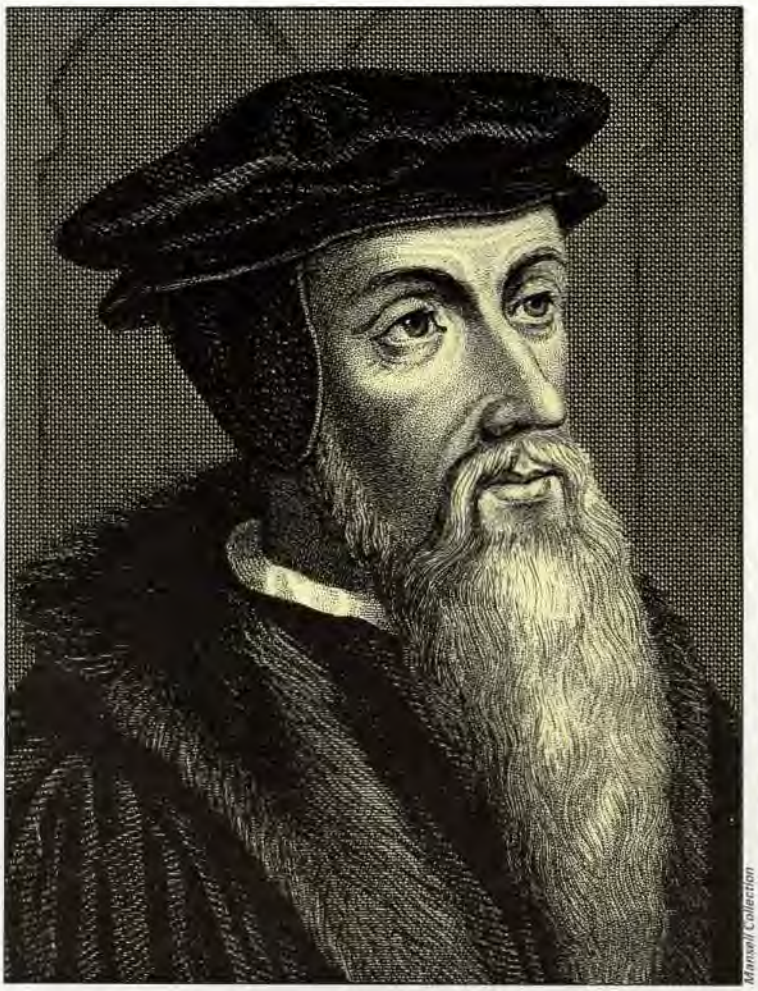
WITCH SCARES and witch-hunts in Europe began in the very late Middle Ages and culminated in the 16th and 17th centuries. Nothing of the kind is known to have happened before about 1300 AD. The whole historical problem involved in interpreting the phenomenon of these persecutions can be summed up in that one fact.

Sorcery – the use of, or pretending to, occult powers – was always against the laws of the Church. It was probably fairly common in early medieval society, but would have been handled by the ecclesiastical penitential system, which became vastly more ambitious in the 13th century. Secular legal codes of the period are mostly silent on the subject, not out of enlightened liberalism but because it was considered strictly the affair of the Church. The change to an atmosphere of public panic and the demand for violent solutions came quite slowly, and at a time which we are accustomed to think of as one of intellectual progress, although the same period saw an apparent increase in the practice of astrology and alchemy.

Geographically, the first witch-hunts of all were probably on French soil, but the centre shifted eastwards later. In the early stages the panic seems to have been most deeply rooted in the Alpine region. It lingered longest in the Danube basin where quite large scale persecutions occurred as late as the 18th century. Certainly the German-speaking countries suffered the most. After the Reformation persecution seems to have flourished predominantly in territory under Calvinist control, but a causal connection between Calvinism and witch hysteria has not been proved. In the British Isles the scare arrived very late – after the Reformation – and rose to a peak in the Civil War period. It then died down almost completely in England and Scotland; Ireland had scarcely been touched at all. In all three

Merely associating with someone suspected of witchcraft was sufficient cause for arrest and imprisonment: from the film *Witchcraft Through the Ages*

National Film Archive



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countries individual witches might be punished from time to time until new legislation under George II made it impossible, but individual cases are not persecutions.

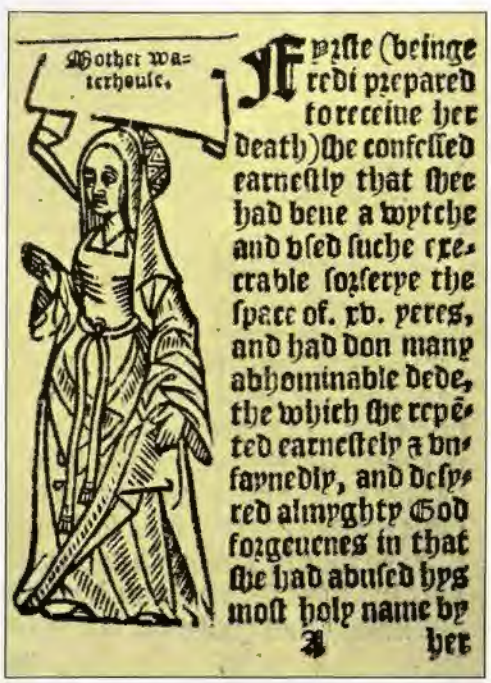
In countries controlled by the Inquisition (Roman or Spanish) there were no major witch-hunts in the period when panic was highest elsewhere. There may have been a continuous stream of trials, and certainly the Inquisitors were not reluctant to punish witchcraft – in the early days of witch-hunting they were the acknowledged experts in the field. In the age of the Reformation, Italy and the Iberian peninsula were more completely under the Church's control than anywhere else, which may account for the fact that they seem to have been more peaceful than elsewhere in this respect.

The Work of the Devil

'Witchcraft' is a word that can have several meanings, and it can be feared and give rise to public panic, for more than one reason. In the Renaissance epoch it is probable that not all those who participated in the persecution of people they thought of as 'witches' attached the same meaning to the word or could have given the same reasons for their fears, but the body of literature which grew up around the subject, including manuals for witch-finders, gives a fairly clear picture of what officials of Church and State understood themselves to be fighting against.

The type of witchcraft which men in authority were trying to stamp out – whether it really existed or not, and whether the general public understood it or not – was

Above left **Calvin, a ruthless persecutor of witches, saw in witchcraft the Devil's alarmed defense against the spiritual progress of the Reformed Church** ***Above right*** **Matthew Hopkins, the Witch-Finder General, charged high fees for his services: he specialized in finding the 'Devil's mark' and extracting confessions** ***Below*** **Extract from a horror pamphlet containing the confession of a notorious witch. These pamphlets helped to create the witch hysteria**



something quite different from the furtive fortune telling and spell peddling, cursing and blessing, which the Church had been trying to put down since the Dark Ages. This was looked upon as sinful, partly because many things that witches were believed to be able to do were obviously evil and partly because even their relatively benevolent practices implied disrespect towards Providence and the Church's own ministrations. It was almost irrelevant whether the culprits could or could not perform what they claimed, but probably most bishops and their judges thought that they could.

The new witchcraft, discovered and revealed to the world by zealous Inquisitors in the late Middle Ages, was something else again. The older kind indeed survived, and was taken into and absorbed by the new, but there was one vital new element in the situation: witchcraft had come to be recognized as the work of the Devil.

Of course, all sin is the Devil's work in a sense, but the Inquisitors, and later Protestant witch-finders, meant something altogether more precise. They meant that the witches (who from this point onwards begin to be of both sexes, although women, as in folklore, continued to predominate) had put themselves consciously under the guidance and command of Satan to work his nefarious will in the world, while gratifying depraved desires and ambitions of their own. Thus it followed that they really did enjoy occult powers, supplied them by their infernal master; it now became a mark of orthodoxy to believe in witchcraft, and a

The Devil's mark might take many forms, it might even be invisible, but it was a spot somewhere on the body which was insensible to pain

ground of complicity to deny it or express scepticism. Moreover, all witches being servants of one master were members of a huge all-pervading conspiracy. Eventually, the propagandists were to claim to know something about the details of the organization and by the time when we can reasonably use the phrase 'witch persecution' association of one suspect with another was sufficient evidence of guilt.

The Obscene Kiss

The associating together of witches had not been prominent in earlier beliefs so far as we can tell, but was not unknown. The two annual occasions when witches are supposed to foregather – Walpurgisnacht (30th April) and Hallowe'en (31st October) – are important in the folklore of most European countries and although it is impossible to be certain that those parts of folklore which are relevant to witches are not later accretions, it is unlikely. However, the older superstition most clearly involving the assembly of a number of witches is one that the Church had earlier tried to suppress as delusory. This is the story of the witches' ride, recorded in the so-called Canon Episcopi. This famous document (first referred to c 900 AD) denounced 'certain wicked women' who falsely claimed to have ridden by night, covering immense distances, with 'Diana', whose servants they were. The suggestion was that they had dreamed it and that good Christians ought not to believe that such a thing could really happen. In later copies Diana changed her name; her best known aliases being 'Herodias', 'Holda-Perchta' and 'Dame Habonde'. Until the 15th century a succession of churchmen, lawyers, poets and others continued to deny that this lady existed or that witches rode with her by night. None of them mention broomsticks. The witches rode on animals, presumably monstrous. As with other tales of supernatural journeys, it is very hard to guess whether in the teller's mind they actually flew or not. The witches' flying through the air eventually became an integral part of the idea of witch assemblies on such occasions as Hallowe'en. Witch-hunters believed that it really happened, and the Canon Episcopi was definitely inconvenient.

One thing they knew which Regino of Prüm, the earliest writer to use the Canon Episcopi, certainly did not know, was what happened at the assemblies. The real leader, of course, was Satan and not Diana. He appeared in the form of an animal – usually a goat – and required his devotees to kiss him under the tail – the '*osculum infame*'. The proceedings also included a sexual orgy. The participants, apart from the Devil, were naked. These details are fairly constant. There might also be some act of conscious blasphemy, but the Black Mass dear to modern magicians does not play a conspicuous part in the picture drawn by the propagandists. The remarkable thing about all these accusations is that they had previously been used to blacken the reputations of heretical sects such as the Waldenses.

In the 13th century, especially in the South of France, a variety of heresies became sufficiently firmly established to require vigorous action on the part of the Church; the Dominican Order and the Inquisition were both founded at this time and for this purpose. By the time that the Albigensians, Waldenses, Picards, Patarenes and so on had been thoroughly crushed, the Church's machinery of repression was stronger and more efficient than ever before, and Inquisitors and preachers had learnt a great deal about the way in which the Devil used dissident groups that fell under his control. By the end of the century it quite suddenly becomes easy to document the idea that he requires everybody who has become his servant, not only heretics, to kiss his hindquarters.

Indeed only one major charge that was useful to witch-hunters appears not to have been used by heresy-hunters. This was the charge that the Devil had physically marked the culprit as one of his own. The Devil's mark might take many forms, it might even be invisible, but it was a spot somewhere on the body which was insensible to pain. This belief differs from those already mentioned in being of very little use as a propaganda smear but useful as *evidence*; it suggested ways of detecting who was and who was not a witch.

This brings us to the subject of witch trials, about which remarkably little is known for certain. In all the countries of Europe, the survival of court records from the period of major persecutions is incomplete and dependent on chance, nor did official court records attempt to give a complete transcript of proceedings. Only occasionally and by accident do we know whether a confession was extracted by torture or not, and we can never hope to know what kind of ordeals were imposed on suspects by lynch mobs, although it is pretty obvious that much of the persecution took that form. The uneven survival of records makes it futile to attempt a statistical analysis of witchcraft cases. In addition to court archives, information about particular trials is sometimes found in general manuals for witch-finders such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* and often occurs in the numerous pamphlets that describe individual witch-hunts.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, was the most influential authority of all on the subject. It spawned a numerous progeny of handbooks, and nowhere else is the witch-hunting temper, in its earlier, pre-Reformation phase, better conveyed. It was the work of two Dominicans, Heinrich Kramer or Institoris, and Jacob Sprenger, natives respectively of the Tyrol and Basel and thus of the same general region, from which nearly all their examples are drawn. Kramer had been active, as Inquisitor, in witch-hunting in the Tyrol, where he had actually been removed from office for excessive zeal. The book was intended to vindicate him as well as to urge the necessity of witch-hunting in general. Pope Innocent VIII in some sense commissioned the work by his bull *Summis Desiderantes* of 1484, in which he speaks of immense harm being caused by supernatural means and Satanic influence; this bull was afterwards quoted as papal endorsement for the authors' views.

The *Malleus*, which ran into 13 editions by 1520, became for Catholics the most authoritative manual available, so that later works tended to appeal to its authority or to that of the bull. It conveyed in fairly developed form the picture of the Satanic witch cult described above; it disposed of the inconvenient Canon Episcopi with the argument that what was a dream and a delusion on one occasion might be true experience on another, and it supplied detailed advice to judges on how to go about examining witches.

Joan of Arc, who was tried long before this, in 1431, was asked whether her angels came to her in the form of naked men and whether she had danced round a tree which was reputed to belong to the fairies. Had she been tried after the *Malleus* and its imitators had gained currency she would

Examination of Witches

Item, there must be great persuasion used to all men, women, and children, to accuse old women of witchcraft . . .

Item, the little children of witches, which will not confess, must be attached (seized); who (if they be craftily handled, says *Bodin*) will confess against their own mothers.

Item, witches must be examined suddenly, and as unawares as possible: the which will so amaze them that they will confess anything, supposing that the devil has forsaken them; whereas if they should first be committed to prison the devil would tamper with them and inform them what to do . . .

Item, if they will confess nothing but upon the rack or torture: their apparel must be changed, and every hair in their body must be shaved off with a sharp razor.

Item, if they have charms for taciturnity, so that they feel not the common tortures and therefore confess nothing: then some sharp instrument must be thrust betwixt every nail of their fingers and toes . . .

Item, at the time of the examination there should be a semblance of great ado, to the terrifying of the witch: and that a number of instruments, grieves, manacles, ropes, halters and fetters, etc., be prepared, brought forth and laid before the examinate, and also that some be procured to make a most horrible and lamentable cry, in the place of torture, as though he or she were upon the rack, or in the tormentors hands: so as the examinate may hear it while she is examined, before herself be brought into the prison; and perhaps she will by this means confess the matter . . .

Item, if she will not yet confess, she must be told that she is detected, and accused by other of her companions: although in truth there be no such matter: and so perhaps she will confess, the rather to be revenged upon her adversaries and accusers.

Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*

probably have been asked as a matter of routine whether she believed in witchcraft. 'No' was the wrong answer, and almost proved one was a witch. Questions would follow about her more intimate relations with Satan, as well as any accusations that might emerge from neighbourhood gossip about actual wicked deeds. For witches, as for heretics, there was a presumption of guilt. The only authorized defence against any accusation was that the accuser was motivated by malice, but the accused had no right to know who the accusers were. Torture was highly recommended, even though it was sometimes held that the Devil could counteract its effects by anesthetizing his servants.

The familiar procedures of the Inquisition were of course normally employed on Catholic territory, and were reinforced by the technical advice of Kramer and Sprenger and their later disciples. Elsewhere secular courts with different procedures were sometimes involved. In England confessions were legally useless as evidence and therefore nobody troubled to extract them. The search for the 'Devil's mark' was accordingly more important. In the great panic of the 1640s in Britain, when witch-finders were encouraged by the Roundhead party in the Civil War, men such as the notorious Matthew Hopkins who specialized in locating the mark could charge £1 a head. (See EAST ANGLIAN AND ESSEX WITCHES.)

In a very famous case in Newcastle in 1649 the finder, having scared an hysterical subject out of her wits, stuck his pin into the chosen spot and duly demonstrated that the woman could not feel it. An unusually sceptical Roundhead officer insisted that the test be made again when she was calmer, and saved her. The finder eventually confessed that his method was a fraud.

Although they never had the same official sanction, there were of course other traditional ways of identifying a witch, such as the well-known practice of throwing her, bound, into water and seeing if she would float. If she was a witch, she would, because witches were believed to be preternaturally light. This could also be tested by weighing them against the big Bible in the parish church. This latter test was probably never accepted as evidence in a court; the water-test was occasionally accepted on the Continent, but most references to it are references to attempts to forbid it.

John Webb

Contagious Hysteria

It seems safe to assume that people accused of witchcraft were rarely given a fair trial, both because of the spreading panic that the accusation inspired and because the accused were nsually drawn from the poorer, more downtrodden and unpopular members of the community. What no court records can convey is the atmosphere of suspicion, inside and outside the courtroom. Yet this atmosphere, in which accusations breed further accusations, is the most outstanding feature of the witch persecutions.

It seems likely that popular hysteria was less important in the earlier part of the period and became a major factor later. The early Lutherans were relatively calm and sceptical, though they fell victims to the common dread about the 1580s. Calvin and his followers were zealous persecutors and in Geneva in the 1540s some hundreds were arrested, and 34 executed in less than a year. Calvin himself urged every severity, claiming that witchcraft was on the increase. He believed that the Devil, alarmed by the progress of the Gospel, was making a special effort to encourage sorcery in the territories of the Reformed Churches. Puritans of Calvinistic inspiration were active in the dissemination of horror pamphlets about witchcraft, and the persecution in Presbyterian Scotland was fiercer than in England.

A case could be made, however, that persecution was most virulent of all, if only for short periods, in the territories whose political and religious future was uncertain.

John Webb

Various methods of torture were employed to extract confessions from suspected witches *Left* The victim is stretched with ropes and a tourniquet is applied to his thighs *Above* Water is poured into the victim's mouth to force an admission of guilt

The Prince Bishop of Fulda in Germany recovered the city from the Protestants in 1602 and within five years he had burnt 250 witches, and his witch-finder, Balthasar Ross, claimed to have achieved 700 executions in his lifetime. In another threatened Prince Bishopric, Bamberg, the decade 1623–33 saw around 600 executions and they had been common enough before (see BAMBERG WITCHES). At Quedlinburg, Saxony, in 1589, where the ruler was Protestant and the population mixed, 133 witches were burnt in one day. These are among the most dramatic figures to be found.

A new element in the post-Reformation phrase is the much greater use of the printing press. Horror pamphlets could help spread hysteria among the general public in areas not previously affected. Some late scares look as if they were wholly stirred up by this means, notably that in Mohra, Sweden, in 1669 (see SWEDISH WITCHCRAFT). The evidence here supplied by children, was a fantastic mixture of standard anti-witch propaganda and local folklore, amounting to the tallest and most unbelievable tale in the whole literature of the subject. It was, however, believed. Three hundred were arrested, many of them children themselves and 100 were punished, a minority receiving the death penalty. There are obvious similarities between this and the best known American scare at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692 (see SALEM WITCHES).

On the other hand, the age that saw an increase in popular witch-baiting literature and an increase in the number of actual executions also saw the beginnings of counter-propaganda. The suggestion that witchcraft was a mere delusion, at one time a dangerous thing to say, was urged by many throughout the 17th century. Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) provoked King James I to write his *Daemonologie* (1597) in reply, but James,

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At the witches' sabbath the most notorious rite was the 'obscene kiss': the Devil supposedly appeared in the guise of an animal, usually a goat, and worshippers were required to kiss him beneath the tail

when investigating witchcraft cases in person, was extremely cautious and sceptical.

In the last age of persecution the impetus to persecute came from the common people, and judges and officials tried to restrain it. All the evidence goes to show that this was a late development, and that it was the official, ruling and learned classes who were the original instigators of the witch hysteria.

(See also articles on individual witches and witch groups, and on areas of Europe.)

ELLIOT ROSE

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Eve

According to the book of Genesis, the name of the first woman, 'built' by God from one of Adam's ribs to provide him with a mate: her Hebrew name, *Hauwah*, means 'the mother of all living' and her making from Adam's body is the origin of human love: by succumbing to the serpent's temptation and persuading Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, she was held responsible for bringing evil into the world, an example of the myth of the evilness of woman.

See FIRST MAN.

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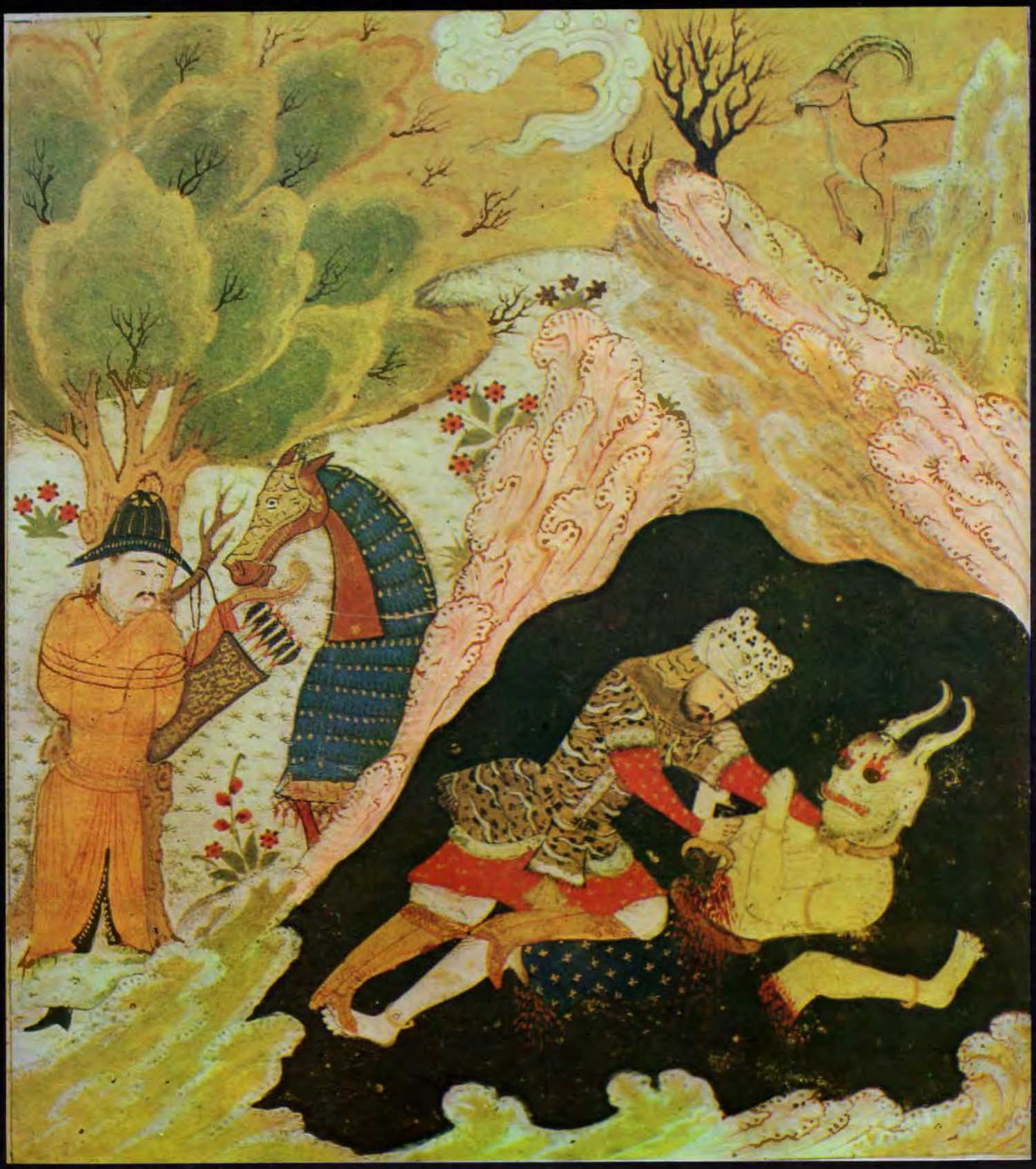

Bodleian Library

EVIL

The Persian hero Rustem was a great enemy of demons; his most famous exploit was his rescue of the King of Persia by slaying the White Demon within his cavern in the mountains of Tabaristan

Michael Holford

As Mahan journeyed through the Wilderness of Ghouls he met an army of evil monsters, whereupon his horse turned into a seven-headed dragon. Ghouls were demons of the Mohammedan world who inhabited lonely places and fed on human bodies; they seem to have personified the terrors of the desert: according to Babylonian legend, the appearance of demons was so dreadful that they fled in horror when shown reflections of themselves in giant mirrors: from a manuscript in the British Museum

How evil and its attendant woes of pain and death came into the world has been variously ascribed to the caprice of the gods, to human sin and to error. The belief that the Evil One had a hellish host of agents, bent on man's destruction, lasted well into modern times in Europe

TWO THINGS have been regarded by mankind down the ages as fundamentally evil: pain and death. Naturally these experiences have been seen in different ways. In some of the more sophisticated interpretations a deeper spiritual evil has been assumed behind the physical realities of pain and death: for example, Christian theology has followed St Paul's pronouncement that 'the sting of death is sin' (1 Corinthians 15.56). However, it is invariably found, on the last analysis, that the concept of evil is essentially inspired by man's experience of pain and his fear of death. The significance given to sin ultimately depends upon the evaluation of death in the pattern of human destiny.

Most religions, consequently, have sought to explain the origin of evil in terms of the cause of pain and death. And they have generally tried to find this cause in the action of some supernatural being or some primordial happening involving the supernatural. Very rarely have pain and death been regarded as natural features of biological life. The most notable exceptions to this general view have been Buddhism and Stoic philosophy. Buddhism, which accounts for the individual person as a temporary combination of various physical and psychical entities, the *skandhas*, explains death as an inevitable disintegration of this combination. Stoicism, a school of thought which originated in Athens, explained death as physical change occasioned by the physics of the universe, and counselled men to live 'according to Nature', in other words, to accept and endure the fact that they were part of a cosmic process that was not designed to accommodate their personal likes and dislikes.

The various explanations of the origin of evil advanced by the chief religions can be reasonably grouped under three headings: as attributable to divine action; as resulting from cosmic dualism; and as due to sin or ignorance on the part of human beings.

It is invariably found, on the last analysis, that the concept of evil is essentially inspired by man's experience of pain and his fear of death

The most notable example of the first view – that evil is the result of divine action – is provided by the religion of ancient Mesopotamia. The three peoples who lived in this area and shared in a common cultural tradition, namely, the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, viewed life very pessimistically. They believed that the gods had created mankind to serve them, but that they had withheld immortality from their human servants. One Sumerian myth told how the god Enki and the goddess Ninmah, after creating mankind, in their sport made various human freaks such as eunuchs and barren women or diseased and decrepit persons (see CREATION MYTHS). In other words, the evils of disease, malformation, decay and death were due to the gods. The most that the Mesopotamians could hope from their gods by faithful service to them was a long and prosperous life, and defence from demonic attack. Although they believed that their gods had arbitrarily imposed pain and death upon them, the Mesopotamians never seem to have questioned the justice of this.

A similar acceptance of the basic ills of life as being of divine origin occurs in some other religions, although it does not find such vivid mythical presentation: ancient Hebrew and Greek literature and the Koran provide examples. This interpretation of the origin of evil inevitably results when a religion assigns the creation of the world and mankind to divine agency alone, without suggesting the existence of an evil power that rivals that of God or the gods. The problem here is inherent in any monotheistic interpretation of the universe, and it finds expression in varying forms in the great monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The Battle of Good and Evil

What are known as dualistic interpretations of the origin of evil are based upon a more realistic estimate of man's experience of life than are those of the monotheistic faiths. Such experience seems to show that the world is a battleground between a good creative force and an evil destructive force, and that mankind is involved in the struggle both actively and passively. (See DUALISM.)

The most notable example of a dualistic religion is Zoroastrianism, which originated in Iran from the teaching of Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) who was born about 570 BC, and which became a distinctly presented dualism between Ohrmazd (identified with Ahura Mazdah) and Ahriman (Angra Mainyu). All that is good in the world was attributed to Ohrmazd, with Ahriman responsible for all that is evil, including death, disease, demons and noxious animals. (See AHRIMAN; ZOROASTRIANISM.)

Dualistic interpretations of life have been propounded in some other religions, though not so consistently as in Zoroastrianism. The Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva were conceived of as being both creators and destroyers of life; in China all existence was explained in terms of the two alternating principles of Yin and Yang (see CHINA). Judaism had come, by the 1st century AD, to account for evil in terms of a modified dualism. This view represented a change from the earlier conception of Yahweh (Jehovah) who, as the sole omnipotent deity, was regarded as the source of both good and evil: 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' asks the pious Job (Job 2.10).

However, probably due to Iranian influences during the Exile in Babylonia in the 6th century BC, the Jews developed a demonology which held that God's good purpose in this world was thwarted by the Devil and his demonic forces. Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian gospels show the prevalence of this dualistic outlook. In the latter, physical and mental disease are attributed to demons, and Jesus is tempted and afflicted by the Devil as the 'Prince of this world'. St Paul called death 'the last enemy' that Christ would destroy, and in early Christian thought death was often identified with the Devil.

The Soul in Prison

A dualistic explanation of the origin of evil of a very different type arose out of the conception of man as an immortal soul incarnated in a physical body, and doomed to inhabit a material world. Where the body was regarded as a corrupting prison of the soul, the origin of evil had to be sought in whatever put the soul in such a direful situation. One of the earliest explanations is Greek, given in the Orphic myth of the devouring of Dionysus-Zagreus, the son of Zeus, by the wicked Titans. From the ashes of these Titans, blasted by Zeus for their crime, mankind arose, having a dual nature, for they were compounded of the evil Titans and the divine Dionysus whom they had eaten. Each human being had, therefore, within his Titanic body a soul, divine of origin and longing to return to heaven. The Orphic mystery cult was designed to free the soul from its contaminating prison and the misery of existence in a material world, and enable it to ascend to the ethereal realm to which it rightly belonged.

Gnosticism, which flourished in the 2nd century AD, in a somewhat similar myth accounted for the present unhappy lot of mankind as being due to the incorporation of a divine soul, fallen from heaven, within a physical body derived of material Nature. Likewise Manicheism, which had a great vogue in Graeco-Roman society, explained the suffering of human existence as resulting from a primeval fall whereby the two contrary principles of the universe became intermixed; these principles were variously designated Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness.

Man's First Disobedience

The third way in which the origin of evil has been explained is in terms of some primordial sin or ignorance on the part of man. The best known and most influential version of the former view is the account of the Fall of Adam as recorded in the book of Genesis (2.4–3.24); it was composed about 900 BC. The writer was concerned to show that death and the miseries of human life were due to the sin of the first parents of mankind. Accordingly he represents Adam and Eve, after their creation by Yahweh, as living an idyllic existence in the garden of Eden. They are immortal; but Yahweh warns them not to eat of the mysterious Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the garden, for if they do they will surely die. (See FIRST MAN.)

There has been much discussion among scholars about the meaning of this forbidden Tree. For if 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' should mean moral or ethical knowledge, it would be strange that Yahweh should prohibit the first man and woman from acquiring such knowledge, and also threaten them that, if they did acquire such knowledge, they would die. The serpent, however, in tempting Eve, declares that 'God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,

and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' When they do eat the forbidden fruit, they do not immediately die; instead, they become conscious of their nudity. Their act of disobedience nevertheless has fatal consequences. For when God discovers that they have broken his command, he pronounces Adam's doom: 'In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' In other words, by disobeying his Creator Adam becomes subject to death.

There has been much speculation about how this penalty was connected in the mind of the Yahwist writer with eating of the Tree of Knowledge. The most likely interpretation seems to be that to this ancient Hebrew writer 'Knowledge of Good and Evil' meant knowledge of how to reproduce human life. This seems to be implied by the fact that the immediate consequence of eating the forbidden fruit was that Adam and Eve became conscious of their nudity, which meant their sexual potency; it is only after acquiring this knowledge that 'Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived' (Genesis 4.1). But such knowledge was fatal; for the first human pair thus created those who must inevitably replace them.

Whether that was indeed the idea of the Yahwist writer in connecting the Fall of Adam with the mysterious Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, must necessarily remain uncertain. What is certain is that he traced the origin of death to Adam's disobedience to his Maker's command. With death, as the penalty of that original sin, the Yahwist writer also associated the hard toil of agriculture and the pain of childbirth.

The part of the serpent in bringing these evils upon Adam and Eve must be noticed. In the Genesis story, the serpent is described as 'more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made' and it is represented as having the ability to speak. However, it is not identified with the Devil, as it was in later Hebrew and Christian thought; for instance, in the Wisdom of Solomon: 'By envy of the devil death entered into the world.' The part played by the serpent in the fall of Adam was possibly inspired by the serpent in the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*. In this celebrated poem the hero is robbed of his opportunity of immortality by a serpent, an idea doubtless derived from a primitive belief that the serpent, by sloughing off its old skin, rejuvenated itself (see GILGAMESH).

The Genesis story of the Fall of Adam exercised a profound influence on Christian thought about the origin of evil. It inspired St Paul to formulate the concept of original sin, which became one of the basic tenets of the Christian doctrine of salvation. He writes in his Epistle to the Romans (5.12-13): 'Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.'

Christianity, accordingly, came to teach that death and all the other ills which afflict men and women are due, primarily, to their partaking in the original sin of Adam. Furthermore, it taught that mankind add to this inherited penalty by their own actual sins, making themselves even more deserving of the wrath of God. Accordingly, Christianity accounts for the origin of evil in terms of human sin, both original and actual. However, since Christianity inherited the demonology of 1st century Judaism, it has also associated the origin of evil very closely with the Devil, sometimes tracing evil back to the Devil as a fallen angel named Lucifer, who revolted against God before the creation of the world (see DEVIL).

Ignorance or Error

Judaism and Christianity, therefore, both find the origin of evil in human sin, but with some dualistic suggestion of a pre-cosmic revolt of an angel or angels against God. Other religions have also traced evil back to man; however, they assign it to his ignorance or error, not to his disobedience to his Maker's command. Hinduism and Buddhism are the two great religions that account for evil in this way.

According to a view that first finds expression about 600 BC in Hindu compositions known as *Upanishads*, through a primeval ignorance *(avidya)* human beings have made two fatal mistakes: they have taken the phenomenal world, that is, the world apprehended by the senses, as reality; and they cling to existence in this world, believing that they are individual persons or selves *(atman)*. But behind this phenomenal world is the true Reality or *Brahman*, which is the source and ground of all being (see

Prodnose Studio

Demons took an immense variety of shapes, as shown by these illustrations from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*: from left to right, Amduscias, who gave concerts on the trumpet; Lucifer; Ronwe, who gave knowledge of languages; Orobas, grand prince of hell; Ukobach, inventor of frying foods; Xaphan, who fanned the furnaces of hell; and Eurynome, prince of death

BRAHMAN). By clinging to the phenomenal world as reality and involving themselves with it, men become subject to the process of *samsara*, a ceaseless process of birth and death, with all its consequent pain and suffering. Deliverance can be achieved only when the individual, by a vigorous mental and physical discipline, achieves effective detachment from desire to live in the phenomenal world and realizes his identity with Brahman.

Buddhism insists even more emphatically on the suffering and pain of human existence as constituting the essence of evil. In the legend of the Buddha, the beginning of the quest for enlightenment comes when the young Gautama is first confronted with the brute facts of disease, old age and death. He is represented as telling his disciples: 'Before my enlightenment . . . I thought: Into wretchedness, alas, has this world fallen; it is born, grows old, dies, passes away and is reborn. But from this pain it knows no escape, from old age and death. When indeed from this pain shall an escape be known, from old age and death? . . . And as I duly reflected there came the comprehension of full knowledge: it is when there is becoming (or desire to be) that there is rebirth . . .'

A sequence of causes is then traced out, ending with the original cause which is avidya (ignorance), meaning thereby ignorance of the true constitution of things. Buddhism, although it differs from Hinduism by rejecting the idea of a 'self', has also been concerned to offer a way of deliverance from the suffering of an unceasing cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and of achieving Nirvana, which is the negation of the phenomenal world.

It should be noted in conclusion that while evil has been primarily identified with pain and death, there has also been an ancient and widespread disposition to associate it with the violation of cosmic order. The idea of a cosmic order appears already in ancient Egypt in the third millennium BC, in the concept of *maat* ('truth' or 'justice'), with the maintenance of which the sun god Re is identified (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). What has been called the 'dawn of conscience' was closely linked with it. A similar conception appears in ancient India as *rta*, in Iran as *arta*, and in Greece as *themis* or *logos*. This notion of a cosmic order had its social aspect: it followed that the established pattern of social relations and behaviour was regarded as sacrosanct and its violation correspondingly heinous. However, in accounting for the origin of evil the religions of mankind have generally concentrated on explaining the causes of pain and death as the basic forms of evil.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Evil Spirits in Europe

Demonology, the scientific study of demons, belongs properly to the past, yet by some paradox it has revived in popularity only now that belief in Satan has reached its lowest ebb among the general public. As a subject it relates to the pre-scientific world of magic which, broadly speaking, was based upon the animistic concepts of the distant past. Animism was a primitive philosophy in which Nature's domain was peopled by elemental spirits, each having jurisdiction over a specific area of natural phenomena and supplying the motive power that induces change (see ANIMISM). The gradual evolution of elemental spirits which were capable of both good and evil into good spirits and bad spirits and finally demons and angels, was the product of ages of slow development.

Demons have been described as malevolent spirits having supernatural powers and dedicated to destruction. They were winged and travelled to the uttermost limits of the earth, always at night. They had the power to see, while at the same time remaining invisible, and were committed to a cruel conspiracy against the human race. Many theologians, in attempting to reconcile the role of demons with the existence of an omnipotent deity, classified the former as instruments of divine punishment, when not acting as agents of witches and sorcerers.

There was, therefore, from the beginning a tendency to regard demons as playing a somewhat ambivalent role. Although extremely powerful in their own right, they

Sonia Halliday

Above **In this wall painting from a monastery in Bulgaria, travellers visiting a witch are escorted by gleeful demons: according to medieval belief devils lay everywhere in wait to snatch unwary souls**

Right **The antipathy between good and evil was a popular Renaissance theme. Detail from an allegorical painting by the 15th century Italian artist, Andrea Mantegna, showing the warlike Minerva, virgin goddess of arts and learning, driving the spawn of vice out of the Garden of Virtue**

could be compelled to submit to the incantations of the magician. The problem was further complicated by the fact that the gods of conquered peoples tended to be incorporated among the demons of the conquerors.

Historically the development of a sophisticated creed of demonism, with a clear line of differentiation between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, coincided with the emancipation of social institutions from the thraldom of a mere subsistence economy. With the growth of the concept of gods and devils, the minor demons of earlier stages of belief tended to occupy a subordinate position in the diabolic hierarchy, at the same time retaining most of their distinctive features.

It was characteristic of demons in the East that they favoured lonely sites, particularly deserts, from which they emerged in truly terrifying hordes. The appearance of an army of demons that haunted the deserts of Assyria, said to be comprised of 'warriors, destroyers, vampires, phantoms and ghosts', was so dreadful that when shown their own reflections in giant mirrors placed on the walls of cities they fled in terror from the scene.

The Master of Evil

During classical times dualism survived among the Greeks; their *daimon*, later in history to be transformed into the more familiar demon of Christian mythology, combined good and evil elements. The ancient Jews shared the general terror of the demons of darkness, which is reflected in the words of Psalm 91: 'Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' In the earlier period of their history, before the development of the idea of Satan, the imaginations of the Jews peopled the deserts with malevolent spirits; these were later reduced to a minor role as servants of the Master of Evil. The word 'devil' itself derived from the Greek *diabolos*, and originally meant an accuser or traducer.

The emergence of Satan transformed demonology into a major influence in the affairs of mankind; for the pre-eminence allocated to the supreme Devil created the climate for the heresy of witchcraft. The Church became dominated by the conviction that Satan was intent upon making himself God's equal and that he sought ceaselessly to undermine God's kingdom by the corruption and destruction of humanity. That Satan was a truly formidable opponent is evident from the words of the eminent Johann Weyer, written in the 16th century: 'Satan possesses great courage, incredible cunning, superhuman wisdom, the most acute penetration, consummate prudence, an incomparable skill in veiling the most pernicious artifices under a specious disguise, and a malefic and infinite hatred towards the human race, implacable and incurable.'

The presence of a supreme spirit of evil in society's midst was a factor hardly conducive to emotional stability. Malevolent demons were held responsible for every mishap to which flesh was heir. Even the ordinary temptations of the flesh, the inevitable occupational hazard of anchorite and hermit, were laid at the door of demons who were assumed to feel affronted by chastity and piety. St Godric, a 12th century English saint, after being all but seduced by a demon disguised as a naked woman, was hurled from his bed and soundly thrashed with a stool. An unexpectedly sensitive demon, however, which attacked the Holy Man of Farne, withdrew in terror after being denounced in most vituperative terms by that sharp-tongued saint.

Even more troublesome were those agents of demonic lust, the incubi and succubi who harrassed men and women under cover of sleep (see INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS). St Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei*, written in the 5th century AD, had drawn attention to their activities in the following terms: 'It is a widespread belief that sylvans and fauns, commonly called incubi, have frequently molested women, sought and obtained coitus from them.'

An incubus was a demon that copulated with women, while a succubus had sexual intercourse with men. It was generally admitted that there were few nunneries free of the ravages of the former, while the latter were active among communities of monks. We have it upon the authority of Albertus Magnus (1206–80) that 'there were places in which a man can scarcely sleep at night without a succubus accosting him.' Learned theologians debated long and thoughtfully such points as how a demon, which was by definition sexless, could indulge in sexual intercourse. After earnest consideration it was decided that a demon had the power to utilize a corpse for this purpose or could create a body from the very air itself.

Demonic Specialists

There were dire physical as well as moral consequences in sleeping with incubi and succubi, for not only was the sin classed as bestiality but the offspring were likely to be monsters. Despite such dangers there was considerable interest in this specific type of demonic activity and it is on record that in 1468 an enterprising brothel keeper of Bologna staffed his entire establishment with succubi. These female demons had their own separate organization within the satanic hierarchy under an arch-demoness, Princess Nahemah. The penalty reserved by the heavenly powers for those who trafficked with demons was an eternity in hell, a domain of fiery torments under the ministration of hordes of demons skilled in the art of inflicting perpetual pain.

Opposing the satanic host was a vast army of angels organized in hierarchies, who from the general state of secular and ecclesiastical affairs would seem to have

Scala

Picturepoint London

been remarkably ineffective. As for the number and variety of demons, these grew ever more powerful as Christianity matured. Their numbers were greater than the sands of the desert, amounting to as many as 7,405,926; according to one demonologist they were divided into 12 classes whose functions were so organized as to cover every aspect of human suffering, ranging from hunger to death. According to another, demons were grouped under the headings of fire, air, earth and water, with subterranean devils and shadows thrown in for good measure.

The demonologist Binsfeld in 1589 compiled a list of devils to cover each of the seven deadly sins: Lucifer was the devil of pride, Mammon the devil of avarice, Asmodeus of lechery, Satan of anger, Beelzebub of gluttony, Leviathan of envy and Belphegor of sloth. Another writer increased the number of groups to ten, divided into fates, poltergeists, incubi and succubi, marching hosts, familiars, nightmare demons, demons constructed from human semen, deceptive demons, clean demons and those who deceived witches into the belief that they flew to the sabbath.

Demons were allocated specific territories, the north being under Zimmar, the south under Gorson, the east under Amayan and the west Goap. In addition there was a parliament of devils and an ambassadorial court which dispatched diabolical emissaries to every land of the earth. When the army of demons went on parade the whole earth trembled from the thunder of the march past of infernal dukes riding on the backs of griffins, winged dogs and phantom dromedaries screaming blasphemies in Egyptian. It is on record that the chief of the demons during the course of a conversation with three monks declared: 'The strength of our army is such that if all the Alps, their rocks and glaciers were divided among us none would have more than a pound's weight.'

This was the substance of accepted belief in devils in the 16th century held by the greatest intellects in Europe. Even by medieval standards the situation would have been ludicrous were it not for the fact that vast numbers of human beings were being driven almost mad by terror. In

Mankind stood perpetually on guard against the attempts of demons to penetrate the human body

Left The likeness to the fearsome goddess Kali is apparent in this representation of the Indian demon, Kalbhairab. In her more terrifying and destructive aspect, Kali was depicted with black skin, a hideous face and four arms, and humans were at one time sacrificed to her, to satisfy her thirst for blood *Above* Another Indian demon, Beyrevra, tore off one of Brahma's five heads as punishment for his insolence: from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

appearance most demons, and especially Satan, were truly horrifying. On the Continent Satan might assume the shape of a fearsome black cat, a horned dog, a goat or a hideous human being. As masters of disguise even ordinary demons could assume an infinite variety of shapes, as is indicated in the 14th century miracle play *The Passion of St Quentin*:

> Smooth Devils, Horned Devils,
> Sullen Devils, Playful Devils,
> Shorn Devils, Hairy Devils,
> Foolish Devils,
> Devils, Devilesses, and Young Devils,
> All the offspring of devildom,
> Come from your devilish tricks
> Quicker than light.

For protection against the hellish host there were in existence a number of time-honoured charms and similar devices of proven efficacy, including holy water, the sign of the cross, firelight, spittle, bread, salt, objects of iron, herbs, amulets and incantations, not to mention the rude gesture known as the 'fig'. Every symbol that could possibly be equated with the creative impulse might be utilized against an enemy who was in essence the spirit of corruption.

Raising the Devil

Inevitably perhaps, a number of people, disappointed by the inadequacies of piety and prayer, were tempted to turn to the Devil in the hope of obtaining a better guarantee of reward than that offered by the Deity. From such an attitude developed devil worship in its various forms, together with attempts to summon demons from the infernal regions by the aid of spells. Using books of magical directions called grimoires, the magician endeavoured to bind the demon temporarily to his will. There were certain rituals to which even the great Lords of Darkness, Lucifer and Beelzebub, had no alternative but to respond. The magician, armed with a magic sword, prepared a ritual circle and uttered words of occult power. In one ritual it was necessary to utter the nine mystic names: Eheieh, Iod, Tetragrammaton Elohim, El, Elohim Gibor, Eloah V a-Daath, El Adonai Tzabaoth, Elohim Tzabaoth and Shaddai. Following the ceremony the demon could be dismissed with the words: 'I am pleased and contented with thee, Prince Lucifer, for the moment. Leave thou in peace now, and go in quiet and without trouble. Do not forget our pact or I shall blast thee with my wand. Amen.'

The certainty that demons were always ready in waiting for the summons of the magician is attested by the old legend describing how the actor Edward Alleyn, after invoking Mephistopheles during a 17th century performance of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, discovered a real devil reeking of brimstone upon the stage. This experience impelled him to abandon the theatre once and for all and to embark upon good works, which included the founding of Dulwich College.

The age of diabolic domination was essentially one of social disarray and general anxiety which the demonologists, whether from conscious or unconscious motives, exploited to the full. Everywhere lurked the spirits of evil, terrifying the more neurotic among the community. Mankind stood perpetually on guard against the attempts of demons to penetrate the human body by one of its natural orifices and to assume diabolical possession. Catholics were well aware of the dangers from the warning given by Gregory the Great, in his description of the awful situation of the nun who had absentmindedly eaten a lettuce without crossing herself. Thus exposed, she fell victim to a demon who leaped down her throat. Protestants were equally wary but sought protection more in prayer and by the rejection of impure thoughts.

Demons often opened their attacks by buffetings and beatings or by obsessing the victim with abstractions that left his soul temporarily undefended. Diabolic possession was usually manifested by writhings, foaming at the mouth, twitchings, grotesque grimacings, insensitivity and occasionally paralysis. Another remarkable feature was the tendency for the victim to answer in French questions addressed to him by the exorcist in Latin. These disturbing symptoms lay completely beyond the comprehension of medical men of the time and were automatically ascribed to the Devil.

Beatings and Fumigations

To drive out the unwanted demon was a task requiring the trained specialist in exorcism, although there were occasions when a gentle admonition plus a sprinkling of holy water appear to have been sufficient. There was even an exceptional 17th century case in which an extremely sensitive demon retreated after being sneered at by the exorcist as a 'ninny, a drunkard and a sow'. In the main, however, demons were not so easily intimidated and every device of the exorcist's art was required to accelerate their expulsion. It was not uncommon for a group of Protestant divines to conduct a mass prayer meeting at the bedside of the writhing demoniac, while furious arguments and lengthy dialogues took place between the indwelling demon and the exorcist, the former often revealing the most intimate details of himself and his activities, including his name. Devils were expelled by forcing the possessed man or woman to inhale some vile-smelling concoction, or by beatings with sticks. One case is on record in which a demon was drawn out of the victim through the nostrils.

In an age when the whole of society seemed beset by the forces of hell it was inevitable that the Devil's agents upon earth, the witches, should have come under heavy attack; almost every type of natural calamity was laid at their door, particularly the onset of diseases, the sinking of ships at sea, storms and bad harvests. It was accepted theology that a witch attained her powers by a compact with Satan; and as a penalty for forswearing her immortal soul and imperilling the human race there existed no logical alternative but to kill her, for which there was sound biblical authority, in particular the injunction from Exodus: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' The pact with Satan became a standard charge against magical practitioners throughout Western Europe, but although it was rumoured that no less than seven Popes had traded their souls for temporal delights, there is no record of their prosecution for sorcery. Incidentally at

The Dweller in the Abyss

In the North African desert the magician Aleister Crowley and his disciple and scribe Victor Neuburg, also called Omnia Vincam, conjure up an evil demon

Crowley described the Tenth Aethyr as accursed, and before beginning the invocation he marked out amid the sand dunes a magic circle to protect Omnia Vincam, and fortified it with the holy names of God: Tetragrammaton and Shaddai El Chai and Ararita. Then he traced nearby a triangle in which he inscribed the name of this terrible demon Choronzon, the Dweller in the Abyss . . .

Suddenly the spirit of the Aethyr, that mighty devil Choronzon, sprang forth, crying aloud: 'Zazas, Zazas, Nasatanada Zazas!' . . .

Choronzon was 'the terror of darkness, and the blindness of night, and the deafness of the adder, and the tastelessness of stale and stagnant water, and the black fire of hatred, and the udders of the Cat of slime; not one thing but many things. Yet, with all that, his torment is eternal. The sun burns him as he writhes naked upon the sands of hell, and the wind cuts him bitterly to the bone' . . .

Then Choronzon broke out into another torrent of obscene blasphemy, and while the scribe was writing it down as best he could and had his eyes glued on to the page of his note-book, Choronzon began to throw sand from the triangle into the circle, so that a gap was made in the circumference . . . The circle was now broken and Choronzon, in the form of a naked savage, leapt from his triangle into the circle and fell upon poor Victor Neuburg, throwing him to the ground. 'He flung him to earth,' wrote Crowley of these memorable events, 'and tried to tear out his throat with his froth-covered fangs.'

But Omnia Vincam invoked the names of God, and struck at Choronzon with his magical dagger. The demon was cowed and writhed back to the triangle. Omnia Vincam then repaired the circle.

John Symonds *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*

this particular period of history any sudden and apparently inexplicable acquisition of fame and fortune might be automatically ascribed to a pact with the Devil.

The pact, which might be negotiated by either Satan or one of his subordinates, was signed in the witch's blood and ratified by the simple expedient of a bout of sexual intercourse, following which the contractee became bond slave to the Devil for the remainder of her short life. Ratification was far from pleasant since intercourse with a demon was generally painful. The next stage was for the witch to be supplied with a minor demon as a personal familiar; he had the dual task of keeping watch over her on Satan's behalf and carrying out the diabolical missions which she entrusted to him. The possession of a familiar was fraught with extreme danger, since it was laid down in Leviticus chapter 20 that 'a man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death.'

Familiar Spirits

The familiar assumed all manner of guises to deceive the authorities, including that of rabbit, sparrow, cat, dog, goat and chicken. One woman possessed as her imp a cat of brilliant blue. In the St Osyth witch trial of 1582 the accused, Ursula Kempe, admitted to maintaining four imps, two hecats called Titty and Jack, a black lamb called Tyffin and a toad called Pigin. The familiar was fed with blood from the witch's supernumerary nipples, and it was the finding of these, together with certain spots on the body insensitive to pain known as Devil's marks, that so often led to the witch's downfall and death. The unfortunate animal familiar was usually burned. A case is on record in which a familiar actually claimed to be the prophet Daniel, and another in which it materialized as a bishop vomiting streams of fire. The difficulty of deciding whether such phantoms were demons or ordinary workaday ghosts was further complicated by the opinion then current that ghosts were no more than devils in disguise.

In those many cases in which the Devil assumed human shape, he commonly took the form of a man dressed in black, who from the general description might well have been a Puritan divine. During the witch-hunts organized by the Witch-Finder General Matthew Hopkins, it transpired that a devil dressed in black had presided over a banquet where he had received homage from a congregation of witches. One man in black was active in the educational field, trading degrees in divinity for human souls; his clients, it appeared afterwards, committed suicide. In Scotland the man in black was described as 'sometimes hairy and grim and sometimes merely clad in black clothes and with cloven feet'.

The overrunning of most of Europe by hordes of men in black, witches and familiars, incubi and succubi, engaged the earnest attention of the most eminent minds of the day, including Jean Bodin, Nicholas Remy, Francesco Maria Guazzo of Milan and Pierre de Lancre (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT). On the other side of the argument were a few brave men who were, intellectually speaking, far in advance of their times, including Bishop Hutchinson of England, Robert Calef of New England and, most important of all, Balthasar Bekker, a Dutch clergyman who strove to demonstrate that the idea of a personal Devil was no more than an assumption. Opposition to orthodox opinion was not undertaken lightly in the witch-hunting days, since it led almost automatically to the stake, and the number of anti-demonists remained pitifully small.

Indeed it was not until the 18th century that mankind had matured sufficiently to shake off the influence of the Devil and his hordes, and this was due as much to a general reaction against religious dogmatism as to any conversion to new ways of thought. For yet a further century Satan played a prominent role in religious doctrine, although by now he had been divested of his retinue of minor demons, and the phantom rabbits, demonic dogs and diabolical toads were seen no more. Hell too remained long in vogue until outmoded by the greater horror of man-made warfare.

Hallucinations under Drugs

As for the victims of diabolical possession, these still remain in our midst, although the regular diagnosis of their disturbances as due to paranoiac phantasies has robbed their visions of much of their former glamour. There is very little difference in essence between the phantom cat seen by the so-called victim of Jane Wenham, the last woman to be charged with witchcraft in England, and the modern hallucinatory

Western philosophers arranged demons in elaborate hierarchies. Buer was a demon of the second class, who taught philosophy, logic and the virtues of medicinal herbs and brought health to the sick; he rolled like a wheel and commanded 50 legions: from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

experiences of elves, dwarfs and other phantoms under the drug LSD, as described by R. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston in their book *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* (1967). In one case cited a victim described how: 'Something was there all right. Something coming for me from a distant and empty horizon – and there loomed before me a devastating horror, a cosmic diamond cat. It filled the sky, it filled all space . . .'

It would perhaps be too much to expect that the great army of phantoms has now disappeared entirely from the domestic scene. In fact, much activity that seems explicitly diabolical in its evil has become something of a fad or fashion in many lands. Devil worshippers in London, for instance, in the fall of 1968, conducted a ceremony in which a newly buried corpse was impaled vampire-like through the heart. And other graveyard desecrations in Britain since have had equally Satanic overtones.

In the United States devil worship rides so high that a national magazine devoted much of an issue to it, in 1970, under the title 'Evil Lurks in California'. One writer said: 'The acid (LSD) vision bends the illusory vector from good to evil in a circle.' Evil as a by-product of the drugs culture is a modern fact of life.

(See also EXORCISM; FAMILIARS; PACT.)

ERIC MAPLE

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Evocation
In magic the summoning of evil spirits and on occasion the Devil himself: by performing rituals and reciting magic formulae, the magician tried to cause demons to appear and to impose his will on them: precautionary measures were taken to protect the magician from attack by the spirit.
See INCANTATION; MAGIC.

Excalibur
The enchanted sword of King Arthur: as a youth Arthur proved his right to kingship by drawing Excalibur out of a great stone; in later stories Arthur obtained his magic sword from the Lady of the Lake, and at his death ordered Sir Bedivere to return the sword by throwing it into the water; also called Caliburnus, Excalibur is probably connected with another magic sword, *Caladbalg*, which belonged to the Irish hero Fergus.
See ARTHUR.

Progressive rigidity and withdrawal from society has marked the history of this Nonconformist sect. The Brethren may not join a trade union, do not vote, shun entertainments and may even be called upon to leave husband or wife

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

THE CHRISTIAN SECT known as the Exclusive Brethren today has a significant following, not only in Britain but in America – particularly in the industrial areas of the eastern states and on the west coast, and in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The Brethren trace their origins to the same individuals who founded the better known movement of 'Plymouth' or 'Open' Brethren. The earliest Brethren came together in the late 1820s, when a number of devout Anglican clergymen, candidates for ordination and laymen became steadily convinced that the ecclesiastical organization of the Church of England lacked all scriptural, and all divine, warrant. The clergy in this group abandoned their orders and the attempt was made to restore the simple and, as they saw it, non-sectarian and non-denominational life of the earliest Christians. Although most of the early members were Englishmen, it was in Dublin that the movement first made itself known. Only somewhat later, when some of the founders had returned to England, and from their meeting hall in Plymouth had begun to evangelize the surrounding districts, did the name 'Plymouth Brethren' come into being.

The movement was intensely evangelical and accepted a fundamentalist interpretation of Scripture, including belief in the second advent (the second coming of Christ). The members rejected both doctrinal tests of fellowship and formal leadership, in particular disavowing any form of professional ministry. Liturgical practice was deliberately simple, and the principal ritual was the 'breaking of bread' at the common table, to which all who shared a Christian life could come. The leaders were convinced evangelists and they undertook, sometimes at their own expense, missionary work in Mesopotamia and in France, Switzerland and Germany, as well as in Britain.

The attempt to maintain an 'open table' at which Brethren were prepared to offer 'fellowship with all believers', as one of the early principals, John Nelson Darby, put it in 1836, proved more difficult than the Brethren had imagined. In the course of a few years there were those among them who wanted to define just what principles a 'believer' must necessarily accept, and just what was to be regarded as heresy. Darby himself came to lead the demand for clearer formulation of true beliefs, particularly after he discerned 'heresies' in the teaching of Benjamin Wills Newton, the leader at Plymouth, whom he also accused of behaving like a cleric in relation to the congregation of Brethren there. In 1845 Darby established a fellowship consisting only of those who accepted the Christian teaching that he endorsed, and who refused all dealings with outsiders. This action, and the rivalry between Newton and Darby, produced the first division of the Brethren. The 'open' Brethren continued to admit to their services and their communion table Christians who had not relinquished other Church affiliations, provided that they were fundamentalist Protestants. The 'closed' or 'exclusive' Brethren admitted only those who abandoned all other allegiances and all teachings other than those defined by Darby.

The two major branches of Brethrenism grew from this schism, the Exclusive Brethren or Darbyites dating their existence from this time. Abandoning the old interdenominational fellowship, the Exclusives became increasingly withdrawn. They came to emphasize the importance of their own distinctive teachings and rejected not only Christian fellowship, but any type of social intercourse with those who were not members of their meetings. Many assemblies of Brethren in London and the north of England became Exclusive, whilst those in the west country, where the influence of the two Bristol leaders, George Müller and Henry Craik, was strong, remained open fellowships. Nominally each side rejected all authority, but each had its own informal but well-recognized 'leading Brethren'.

Darby increasingly emphasized the importance of keeping apart from those who held false doctrines and this became the central issue for Exclusives as they adopted an increasingly sectarian position. As the great architect of distinctive Exclusivist theology, Darby was also the arbiter of disciplinary procedures within the sect; but all was done in the name of opposition to established ecclesiastical hierarchies, which were – and are still – referred to as 'system'. In fact, the Exclusive Brethren themselves evolved a much tighter internal pattern of control than any of the major Churches.

Exclusives came to believe that the truth about 'the Church' (with which they identified themselves) had been recovered by Darby. This was, of course, the spiritual body of the Church referred to in Scripture, not the apostate Church of England, much less the Church of Rome. Since Darby devoted himself to reformulations of biblical exposition and continued to develop new symbolic and allegorical interpretations of biblical events, the Brethren came to accept the idea that the truth was continually being 'opened up' to the Church through its faithful leading Brethren. Although these Brethren did not claim any special spiritual status, the idea of continuing revelation has persisted among Exclusives to the present day.

God's Plan for the Church
The need for the Church to be separate from the world was a thesis given repeated allegorical justification in Darby's distinctive interpretation of the Bible, which came to be known as 'Dispensationalism'. Interestingly, Darby urged that the Church of the saints was not part of God's original redemptive plan, since God's promise was to Israel, and 'Israel' was not a symbolic allusion to the Christian Church, as many theologians supposed, but literally meant the Jews. For the Church, God had quite different intentions. At the second advent, Darby argued, Christ would again offer the Kingdom to Israel, and David's throne would again be occupied; the temple would be restored; and the traditional Jewish sacrifices would be reinstituted. All this had nothing to do with the Church, however. The Church, Darby maintained, would be raised up before the tribulations that were to come on earth: indeed, through her special relation to Christ, she dwelt already with him in 'heavenly places'.

Since Darby's time, therefore, the Exclusives have not, strictly, expected the second advent, since they do not believe that they will still be on earth when it happens; they expect, rather, to be taken up to Christ before his reappearance on earth. The Church has no part in the tribulations of the world, no responsibility for it, and this

justifies the Brethren in remaining aloof. God's covenant with Israel put the Jews under the Law, but the Church had quite a different dispensation – that of grace.

Although Darby referred repeatedly to 'the Church', he did not explicitly claim that the Exclusive Brethren alone were the Church. He came near to doing so, but in the light of Scripture, the point would have been difficult to assert unreservedly. In practice, however, this has certainly been the informal assumption of Exclusives in recent times. The difficulties of this position were somewhat resolved by a teaching developed by one of Darby's 20th century successors, James Taylor Sr, whose doctrine of subjective and objective salvation distinguished salvation to be attained in heaven from the sense of salvation experienced on earth.

The Saintly Elite

The latter could be found only in an Exclusive assembly, the company of saints. Only there could the believer gain the practical enjoyment of eternal life, through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. Taylor went on to assert that 'morally' (a word of which Exclusives are particularly fond) the Church *was* Christ, and since salvation was in Christ alone, experience of salvation was to be had only in the assembly. This assertion and other 'lines of ministry', as Exclusives refer to new doctrinal trends, led to an increasingly sectarian position whereby Brethren were taught to see themselves as the saintly elite. The sect became the only acceptable context for the saint.

The process by which the Brethren came to accept this intensified separation from the world involved repeated schisms. Since there was no formal authority to judge issues, each separate assembly decided whom it would accept into fellowship. Diverse judgements, attempts at compromise and even hesitation in deciding led to recurrent and ramifying processes of schism, and intense insecurity. In more recent times, the telephone has helped to prevent embarrassment in assemblies faced with a stranger seeking to break bread with them; an informal network of information has become more readily available, so preventing the perhaps irreparable error of refusing to admit a righteous saint (recognized elsewhere) or the certainly irreparable error of admitting one who was elsewhere rejected. These difficulties led to a number of mutually excommunicated fellowships coming into being in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Exclusives proper trace their descent from Darby and, after him, through successive (but quite informal) 'leaders': J. B. Stoney, F. E. Raven, James Taylor Sr and, in the 1950s and 60s, James (Big Jim) Taylor Jr. This branch of the Brethren, in the course of repeated schisms, steadily abandoned their interest in evangelism, until today they are almost completely closed. The concern with inner purity has almost eclipsed the idea of preaching salvation to outsiders. Strangers are admitted to only one service, and if they repeat their attendance they are likely to come under very close scrutiny and interrogation. It is still possible to join the sect, but to do so is to put one's entire life and activity to the test. Former members, whether they have left or been expelled, are not readily received back.

Since 1950 or thereabouts, the Exclusive Brethren have undergone successive crises, and expulsions and divisions have become virtually the principal preoccupation of members of the movement. The period of leadership of Big Jim Taylor of New York has been characterized by uncertainty about the standing of particular individuals and the acceptability of particular 'lines of ministry'. The expectation that the truth will continue to be 'opened up' has led to a steadily accelerated development of doctrine. New variants of accepted teachings are continually propounded among them, and these are said to 'link on' with past teaching. But because of the uncertainty about authority, and the danger in which a man stands if what he expounds as new truth comes to be regarded as heresy, this process has been attended by acute anxiety.

Typically, young men seek prestige by asking questions of visiting speakers and by developing new lines of interpretation; this is one of the few ways they can acquire status. If a man's ideas are accepted, in his own assembly and beyond, prestige is gained and the individual rises in the unofficial status system of the movement. The process, however, is dangerous. The individual may develop a teaching that proves unacceptable and this will lead to humiliation or, if persisted with, to expulsion. Rivalries between 'up-and-coming' expositors of Scripture lead to keenly fought judgements and bubble reputations have burst on various occasions in recent years. In practice Big Jim Taylor, whose own position of leadership has not always been secure, has tended to be the final arbiter of acceptable teaching, though in fact the latent assumptions about how the truth of new teaching is to be tested are obscure. His inclination, following that of his predecessors, has been to drive the movement into ever more intensified separation from the world.

Today, in consequence of the most recently developed teachings, Exclusives rigorously avoid all other associations and all but the most essential contacts with the world. Trade union membership, and even membership of professional bodies, is not now permitted. A recent attempt to gain exemption for the pharmacists in the movement in Britain from compulsory membership of the Pharmaceutical Society failed when the House of Lords refused to pass a measure of toleration (already passed in the Commons and by the Pharmaceutical Society itself). In consequence all but one of these pharmacists abandoned their profession rather than abandon their sectarian allegiance. New regulations within the movement about not working on Saturday have caused difficulty for one sizeable community of Brethren, the fishermen of the Moray Firth in Scotland, but others have simply accepted the new regulations. Such is the dependence on the movement – members usually have no friends and few acquaintances outside it – that new regulations are almost always accepted by the Brethren.

The distinctive beliefs of the Exclusive Brethren were formulated by John Nelson Darby: his supporters left the original Brethren to become the first Exclusives

Bad Press Publicity

The Brethren espouse the strong 'work ethic' typical of extreme Protestant groups, and they value typical Puritan moral qualities. Family life is of special importance, but since separation from all who are not in fellowship is absolutely insisted upon, families expel their wayward members just as do assemblies. This demand for separation, even from a spouse who fails to fulfil the demands of the movement, has brought the Exclusives bad press publicity in Britain in recent years. Entertainment, including television, is avoided. Children are as far as possible insulated from other children. Brethren refuse to eat food cooked by outsiders; they will not occupy a flat in a house in which persons other than Brethren use the same door; they refuse to shake hands with non-Brethren. Members do not move to any place where there is no assembly in being. They do not vote, and they see their whole well-being in the 'heavenly' experience of the meetings. In recent years the interest of the newspapers in the Brethren has led, in both Australia and Britain, to much greater secrecy in their affairs.

Innovation in teaching and liturgy (which has grown more elaborate, and has come to include confessional exercises) has not, in recent years, led to schism so much as to numerous individual expulsions. Those expelled have not generally found it easy to form new assemblies. Membership has dropped and the sect appears to have entered a vortex of successive purges. It is difficult to assess the strength of the Brethren, but in Britain they probably number between 10,000 and 20,000, with strong concentrations in the southeast and home counties, the Midlands, industrial Yorkshire, the Clyde Valley, Moray Firth and around Belfast.

BRYAN WILSON

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British Museum

Excommunication

The ultimate penalty inflicted by the Church, whereby a flagrant sinner or heretic is excluded from taking the sacraments: in the greater form the offender is cast out of the Christian community and solemnly cursed with 'bell, book and candle'; in the lesser form the person to be disciplined is merely refused communion; the excommunication can be lifted if the sinner repents.

See CURSE.

Karen Hoddle

Exegesis

The interpretation of sacred texts, especially the Bible: deeper meanings may be found to underlie the plain sense, so that passages of scripture are seen as allegorical, as giving rules for moral behaviour or as referring to future events; the term also applies to textual commentary in general.

BIPS

BIPS

BIPS

The man kneeling before the altar, a postman, believes that he is possessed by an evil spirit which is trying to kill him; he has come for help to a London vicar who regularly performs exorcisms. The vicar lays his hands on the man's head, becomes tense with concentration and begins the exorcism: 'I rebuke thee! I rebuke thee! I rebuke thee! I abjure thee and summon thee forth from this man . . .'

Greater knowledge of psychosomatic illness and mental disease has led to the afflicted being treated by the doctor rather than the priest; yet even today the cleric is still sometimes called upon to use his powers in cases of apparent possession

EXORCISM

THE EXPULSION of an evil spirit by a command, ritual or prayer is called exorcism and supposes some theory of the inhabitation or infestation of a human soul or a place by evil spirits. Until quite recently much modern thinking on the subject was dominated by the view of E. B. Tylor (*Primitive Culture*, 1871), who propounded a theory of animism, saying that primitive man, when once he has built up a concept of his own soul out of dreams and other psychic experiences, extrapolates this same soul, finding its semblance in beasts and even in lifeless objects. Professor Evans-Pritchard, however, in his work on the Azande, a tribe in Central Africa (see AZANDE), refuted the theory of animism in this connection.

The Azande have the idea that the powers of witchcraft reside within a witch's body, and think that by cutting out a gland or pouch in the region of the witch's liver they can be removed. They hold that a wizard can have wizard sons but no witch daughters, and a witch likewise has witch daughters but no wizard sons. The Azande say that when a man has been bewitched 'the soul of the wizard's magic has eaten the soul of the flesh of that man'. Below the grade of wizard they recognize what they call 'gall-bladder men', who are thought to be less dangerous. All this is very physical. In a modern primitive tribe one does not necessarily see the same process of thought as can be projected

back into the earliest stages of humanity, yet this example is helpful because it suggests one way in which the idea of possession by evil spirits may have developed.

At the root of exorcism lies belief in the power to transfer a spiritual being from place to place by ritual acts and words. Such a belief seems to have been at work in the minds of the early Romans when they carried out their *evocatio*, which may be looked upon as an exorcism of a community rather than of an individual. In war, before the final assault on a hostile town, the Romans conducted a solemn ritual of calling out the gods of the enemy. This happened, for instance, in the campaign against the city of Veii. The gods were invited to join Rome, with promises of worship and good treatment if they did. Correct use of the name of the god or goddess was an essential part of the ritual, and fear lest an enemy should try to evoke Roman gods led to the concealment of the true name of the *genius* or guardian spirit of Rome; the Roman writers Servius and Pliny say that it was not known whether this original tutelary deity was male or female.

The Romans must have begun by regarding the gods of the enemy as themselves hostile, for otherwise the ritual of propitiation would have been pointless. This belief can be traced with some probability to the Hittites of Asia Minor; one of their tablets speaks of an offering of beer being set out for three gods of an enemy town, along with coloured ribbons to mark the way to the beer. The colours used are red, white and blue.

The Forgiveness of Sins

The Jews of the Old Testament were quite different in their outlook; the Baals – gods of enemy Canaanite towns – were not propitiated but looked upon as captives and slaves when victory had been won. In the Old Testament there are no stories of exorcism save for the episode of Tobias and Sarah in the Apocrypha (Tobit, chapters 6–8). Sarah was not in fact possessed by a demon but guarded by one, much as in later stories the princess is guarded by a dragon. Later Jewish writings have plenty of exorcism stories and the Qumran documents have shown (in the so-called Prayer of Nabonidus) that a Jewish exorcist could be credited with the forgiveness of sins and consequent healing. Josephus made the claim that Solomon had been taught by God the art of exorcism and that he passed this on in his writings, but the Scripture has no trace of this. Certainly by the time of Christ exorcism was well established among the Jews; apocryphal writings such as the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* bear witness to it, and in the Gospels (Matthew 12.27 and Luke 11.19) Christ refers to it as a well-known fact.

Christian exorcism was not originally confused with healing, for the Gospels differentiate between the two in their accounts of the

Onlookers beat their drums feverishly in an attempt to expel the evil spirits which have possessed the bodies of these two Zambian girls. Psychiatrists might attribute the girls' behaviour to depression

William Sargant

work of Christ (Matthew 4.24 and 8.16; Luke 6.17). Sometimes disease and diabolical infestation are regarded as combined: for instance, the woman bent double is said by Christ to have been bound by Satan (Luke 13.16). Some take this as a concession to the contemporary Jewish way of thinking, but more reasonably one may argue that psychosomatic maladies (whose roots are in mind, body and soul) are sometimes more and sometimes less spiritual in their origins. Human suggestion, by hypnosis or even by telepathy, can go to work upon a bodily flaw or weakness; superhuman intellects, if such can be thought to exist, would clearly be more powerful still.

Exorcizing the Water

Waterless places are spoken of in the Gospel (Matthew 12.43) as an unsatisfactory abode for evil spirits when they have been driven out of a man. It was generally thought that water was their element, and the Christian Church began quite early – about 150 AD – to have a blessing or exorcism of the water that was to be used for baptism.

The practice grew of treating all mental defectives and epileptics as if they were troubled by the Devil. A part of the church was set aside for those who came within this broad category and exorcists were appointed to stay with these sufferers during the service and keep them quiet. In Rome in 251 Pope Cornelius had a total of 52 men as exorcists, readers and doorkeepers. The regions into which Rome was traditionally divided were 14, and it is probable that the exorcists were one to each region. The overriding idea seems to have been that the afflicted should as far as possible be treated as a part of the Christian community, since this would help their rehabilitation. These official exorcists were more like male nurses and differed wholly from those rare individuals who were considered to have a gift from God to deliver men from evil spirits. St Paul drove a spirit out of a girl who foretold

Detail from Botticelli's painting, *Three Miracles of St Zenobius*: the saint has successfully exorcized two young men of evil spirits, which issue from their mouths in the form of black imps. Spirits were thought to enter and leave the body by the natural orifices

National Gallery, London

the future (Acts chapter 16) and he had unsuccessful imitators (Acts chapter 19). Even Christ had such imitators (Mark 9.38 and Luke 9.49–50). The magical papyri that have come to light in recent times advise exorcism in the name of 'Jesus, god of the Hebrews'; spectacular success in exorcism naturally bred imitation.

Baptism was preceded by exorcism from the earliest Christian times. The theory was that the candidate for baptism had been engaged in worshipping pagan gods who were no better than a cover for demons; in fact, the whole world was considered to be in the power of the Devil until it was redeemed by Christ. A voluntary renunciation of the Devil was required of the candidate, because the human will was a vital factor in the problem of possession; no one could be manoeuvred by the Devil unless he had given his consent. When infants were baptized, the renunciation was undertaken by sponsors on their behalf. An apocryphal work of the 2nd century, *The Gospel of Truth*, compares the baptized to jars which have been filled and then sealed; before filling with the Spirit of God they would have to be emptied of all previous contents.

The Neoplatonist philosophy developed in Greece in the early centuries of the Christian era brought in the concept of spiritual bodies for demons and angels, made of the most subtle of the elements, air. Some of the Greek theologians, from Gregory Nazianzen down to Michael Psellos in the 11th century, were attracted by the idea, and this made for much cruder theories of exorcism. If air had to be extracted from the possessed person, then the use of torture did not come amiss. Whereas in 1080 Pope Hildebrand could write to King Haakon of Denmark to say that women accused of weather magic and spells were innocent and that to attempt to punish them was foolish and would provoke the anger of God, in the East Michael Psellos was writing a blood-curdling treatise on the power of demons. In the West the Synod of St Patrick had decreed excommunication for anyone who brought an accusation of witchcraft or believed in witches, and this decree was copied into many of the early codes of canon law, providing a brake on popular scares which was lacking in the East. The learned cleric John of Salisbury (c 1115–80) gave stern warnings on the abuse of exorcism: holiness was required in the Church's ministers and if they were lacking in this, they might seem to effect an exorcism but the final outcome would be worse infestation.

A Willing Surrender

St Thomas Aquinas (c 1225–74) argued that intellect and will, the finer points of the human soul, are opaque to devilish scrutiny. Devils can infer from the play of imagination and stirring of sense-appetite what a man is thinking about or choosing, but they cannot be sure. Possession, when it occurs, must be due to a willing surrender on the part of the man or woman. An exorcism formula going back to Anglo-Saxon times prays that God will turn the thoughts and heart of the possessed man, that he may confess all his sins. It continues: 'Wherefore, accursed demon, recognize thy doom; give honour to God; depart from this his servant, so that, when grace comes to him, he may serve God with a pure mind.'

Such views excluded the possibility that men could be bewitched against their will. None the less, the influence of Arabic medicine and the beginnings of what may be called the experimental science of the Middle Ages (a confused welter of ideas about the properties of gems, herbs and rare or fabulous animals) led those familiar with the Neoplatonist teaching about demonic bodies of air to a ready belief that bewitchment and exorcism might both come about without reference to a man's own choice. A long conflict between 'progressive' Neoplatonist experimenters and conservative theologians ensued which had not been resolved at the time of the Reformation. One such progressive, Peter of Abano, in the early 14th century put down the deadly gaze of the basilisk to the emission of a corrupting vapour. The practice of testing a suspected witch by throwing her into water was based on the same set of ideas. If she floated, the devil, in the form of air, was proved to be still in her; if she sank, she was free.

The period of the witch-craze runs approximately from 1484 to 1648. Lorraine, the Rhineland, Scotland, East Anglia and Switzerland being the areas most affected. Exorcism was a more merciful proceeding in those times than witch-trial, when at the trial search was made for the witches' mark or the victim was condemned on the hearsay evidence of scared or hysterical citizens (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS).

Hearken, Then, Satan . . .

The following conjuration comes from the Appendix to the edition of the Rituale Romanum *published in 1631. It forms part of a ceremony for exorcizing a house troubled with an evil spirit and was to be pronounced by a priest*

I adjure thee, O serpent of old, by the Judge of the living and the dead; by the Creator of the world who hath power to cast into hell, that thou depart forthwith from this house. He that commands thee, accursed demon, is He that commanded the winds, and the sea and the storm. He that commands thee, is He that ordered thee to be hurled down from the height of heaven into the lower parts of the earth. He that commands thee is He that bade thee depart from Him. Hearken, then, Satan and fear. Get thee gone, vanquished and cowed, when thou art bidden in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who will come to judge the living and the dead and all the world by fire. Amen.

Quoted by H. Thurston
Ghosts and Poltergeists

Apart from the notorious case of the devils of Loudun (see GRANDIER), there were many instances of exorcism upon doubtful subjects. In 1618 a young widow, Elisabeth de Renfaing, while on pilgrimage to a shrine in Lorraine accused another pilgrim, one Dr Poirot, of trying to bewitch her. He fled in alarm, was caught at the frontier and, flight being taken as admission of guilt, was put to death. The lady was exorcized by two Sorbonne theologians. She spoke in English to a lay brother from the English Benedictines at Dieuleward with whom she was confronted, floated up to the roof of the chapel and performed other prodigies. Later she settled down to found a convent at Nancy (which is still there) and to care for the reformed prostitutes of the town.

Signs of Possession

The *Rituale* of Pope Urban VIII directs the exorcist to be slow to believe he has a case of possession before him. Diagnostic signs are the knowledge of matters (a language, for instance) which the subject could not have learnt normally and the use of abnormal strength. Urban also provided a ritual for the exorcism of places troubled by poltergeists.

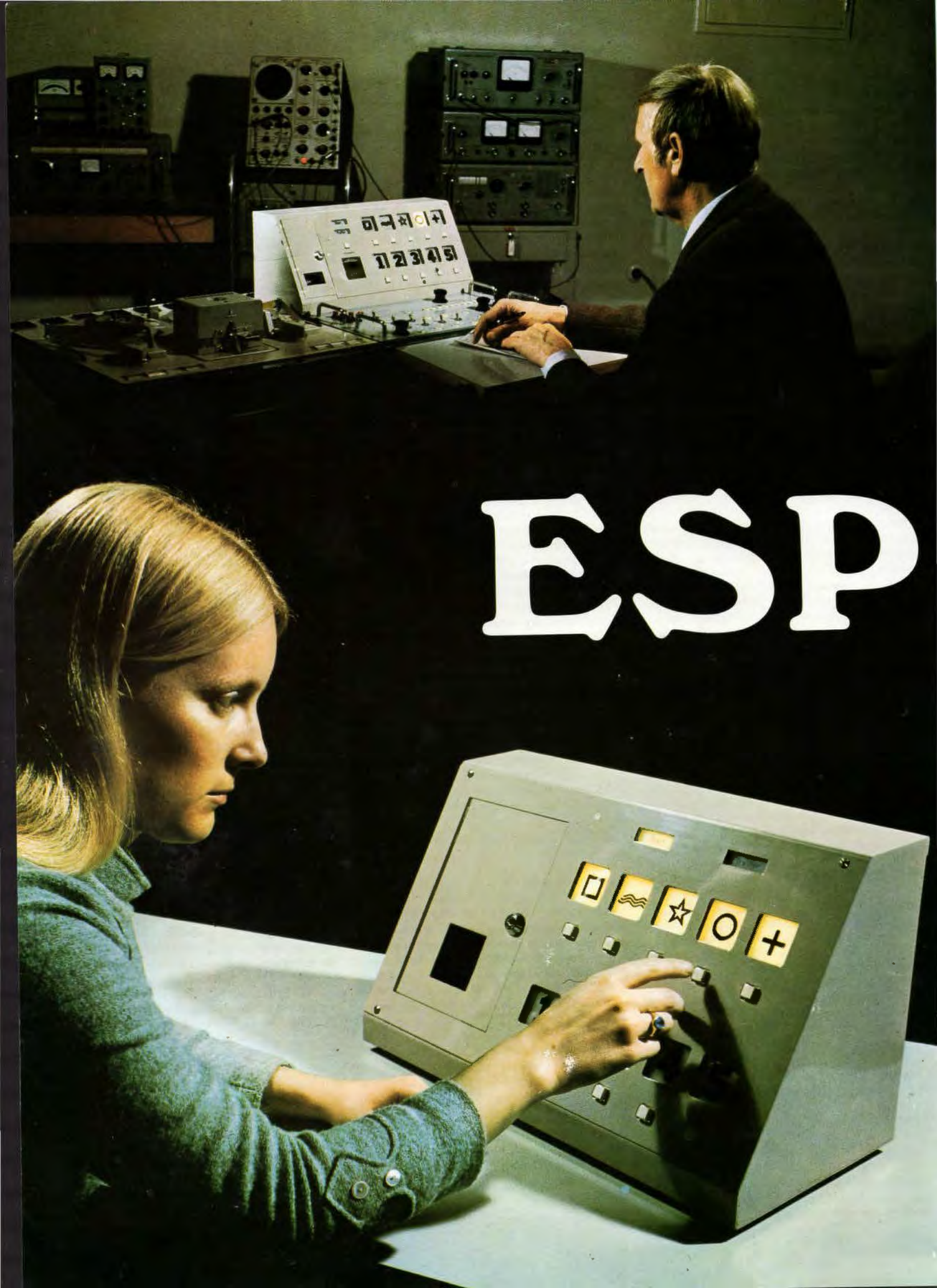
It is now known that the ancient symptoms of possession usually have natural causes, though the philosophy of Descartes (1596–1650), as it retarded the growth of psychosomatic medicine by its emphasis on the division between body and soul, for a long time rendered more difficult the diagnosis of true from false possession. Hypnosis can produce corpse-like rigidity, subconscious memory can bring up scraps of unknown speech and proofs of extra-sensory perception are now on public record. A modern exorcist, Fr J. de Tonquédec, who acted for the archdiocese of Paris from 1919 to 1939, has written that over 90 per cent of the cases submitted to him were of pseudo-possession, where psychiatric treatment was needed, but that there was a residue of what he thought to be genuine possession.

Telepathy between two human beings has been the subject of much recent investigation; it seems to be more in evidence when it has a physical basis, as between identical twins. The incursion of thoughts and suggestions from a being that is more than human (for this is what possession must amount to, if there is such a thing) would also perhaps require a basis in physical temperament as developed by the bias of a human will that is dedicated to what is evil. It would then be true that there can be no possession without consent.

(See also articles on possession.)

J. H. CREHAN

FURTHER READING: Article on 'Devil' by J. H. Crehan, *Catholic Dictionary of Theology* vol. 2 (Nelson, 1967); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1976); E. Nauman Jr., *Exorcism through the Ages* (Citadel Press, 1974); Jean Lhermitte, *True and False Possession* (Hawthorn Books, 1963); H. Thurston, *Ghosts and Poltergeists* (Regnery, 1955).


ESP

One type of extra-sensory perception, precognition or knowledge of the future through dreams, is typical of a vast amount of reported human experience

In June 1981, a British magazine told readers that Uri Geller would concentrate his powers to bend forks and spoons. They asked readers to write in and report any results of this. Many years' patient research into clairvoyance, precognition and telepathy indicates that extrasensory powers, working independently of known physical laws, may be common to all mankind.

THE RECEPTION of information by a person through other means than the senses is known as extra-sensory perception or ESP. It is thus one aspect of a two-way exchange with the environment that is not mediated by the senses and muscles. This more inclusive 'extra-sensorimotor' interaction is the area of study of the branch of science known as *parapsychology* (or psychical research), and it is now conveniently identified in common practice by the use of the Greek letter *psi*. Extra-sensory perception is therefore one kind of psi communication, the other or 'extra-motor' part of the exchange being called *psychokinesis* (the manipulating of matter by mind alone) or PK.

Three types of ESP have so far been recognized. They were known long before the term extra-sensory perception was first used in 1934. Clairvoyance is the ESP of objects or events, precognition that of future events, and telepathy the direct experience of another person's mental state.

This is obviously an odd way to divide up the sources from which knowledge might be gained by ESP – that is into objective events, future events and the thoughts of other people. Other claims have been made, as, for example, that of *retrocognition*, the ESP of past events, but it has no basis for acceptance in parapsychology. It is well to remember, however, that ESP may at some later time be subdivided differently than it is at present.

The types of human experience represented by these three ESP classifications are not only very old but broadly distributed through the cultures of mankind. One recognizes the similarity of examples throughout this very wide distribution. For example, premonitory dreams of personal tragedies, which are among the most commonly reported psi experiences in our own time, can be found among the records of ancient times. The dream credited to King Croesus, in which he foresaw the murder of his son, differed from the general type today chiefly in the point that it was the guard the King appointed as a consequence of his dream who turned out to be the murderer. This circular feature, which rarely appears in modern premonitory dreams, could well have been invented by a clever storyteller, as indeed the whole story itself may have been.

Abraham Lincoln's dream too, in which he is said to have seen himself in the coffin in which he lay some days later, also has to be viewed against the background of literary licence. But the point is that this type of ESP, precognition, in which information of a future event is seemingly acquired in the dreaming state, is typical of a really vast amount of reported human experience. The dream is one of the vehicles of extra-sensory communication; future events definitely appear to be conveyed in some way, even against the stream of time; and all this has been going on a long, long time all around the world. Just how many of the dreams people have are ESP dreams it is futile to guess. Not all ESP dreams are precognitive either; although a great many of them are, they can also be clairvoyant or telepathic.

The Person 'Just Knows'

In the waking state, however, while ESP can be carried along in the daydreams that sometimes intrude, the device that most often gets ESP to the conscious experience of the individual is intuition, a form of knowledge that hides the means by which it is accomplished. The person 'just knows', and while he may know of something yet to happen or may intuitively know the thought of a distant friend or loved one, somewhat more commonly he knows of an objective event. But in most of these cases of ESP in everyday life there is no sharp boundary and no one can tell for certain that a case is pure clairvoyance or half telepathy. The woman who knew there was something wrong at home and who insisted on being driven home by her host in the midst of a dinner party seemed to have only a dim half-awareness of the tragic situation; but this and the house afire, and her invalid husband asleep, at least suggest clairvoyance.

But the mother who in the midst of a bridge game telephoned her home to ask what was the matter with the baby may have been telepathically experiencing the baby's painful predicament at the moment rather than 'seeing' the objective picture by clairvoyance. What emerges is the strong probability that in a few rare cases it is thought alone that is conveyed. In other cases it seems as clearly to be the objective situation that is conveyed. Such experiences have provoked the scientist to ask the question: 'Is it possible for one mind to convey a message directly to another without using sensory channels? Is it possible for an objective crisis to be picked up in some way by a person far beyond sensory range?' The experiences as they accumulated and fell into types threaded themselves on a common hypothesis long before any experiments were undertaken to verify it.

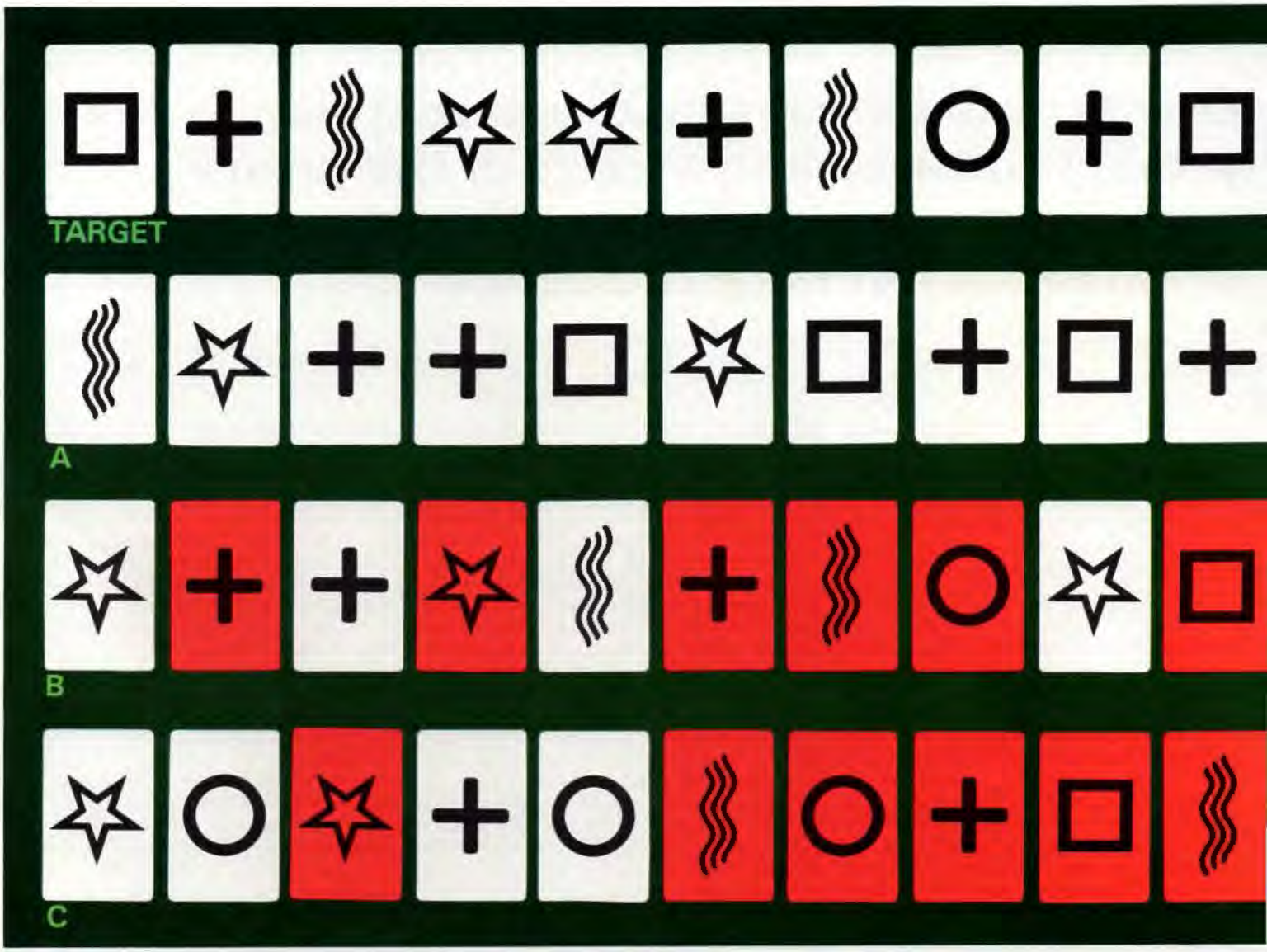
In the waking state there are other ways of getting information to a person's mind by ESP besides intuitions. One of these is hallucination, which is a comparatively rare experience, but among those that do occur telepathy is a common ingredient. The recipient usually sees or hears the person from whom he seems to be getting a message. Voices are more common than visual apparitions. A person experiencing the mental state of his 'sender' may undergo the specific state and even the suffering actually felt by the sender. This may involve going through the birth pains of the other, or the agonies of a heart attack, or even falling to the ground as the other had done in his crisis.

There will be no doubt in anyone's mind about the importance of these puzzling human experiences if they are what they seem. It was the fact, however, that it was impossible to be sure about them that so long delayed the investigation of the questions they raised. They were also not as easy to investigate as were the phenomena of the more objective physical and biological sciences.

These case reports of mysterious happenings represent a class by themselves. If reported, as most of them are, by sane and respectable people, they cannot be lumped with the pathological and they definitely do not fit in easily with any other branch of the sciences. If then they have any sound basis of fact it would have to be something new for

Machines are used in ESP research for strict control and efficiency, and often to randomize targets in clairvoyance or precognition tests, to exclude telepathy between subject and tester: Prismaton 70 used in Germany

Leif Geiges



The first column shows a possible target order of ESP cards used in parapsychological tests: 1 hit in 5 attempts can be expected on the basis of pure chance. Column A, where the subject has scored 4 hits out of 20, has to be put down to chance. Column B, with 8 hits in 20, is the type of result that suggests ESP. In Column C the subject has consistently anticipated the target, providing an example of 'displacement'

the scientific world – something different, radically different.

Because of this sharp difference the tendency developed among the easier and earlier sciences to regard these claims as not amenable to serious scientific treatment. They were looked down on as something that could not be explained, as most scientific findings could, by the known and familiar principles of Nature. This meant they would have to be classified as supernatural, which amounted to putting them on the shelf so far as scientific investigation went, and of course it greatly delayed their investigation.

ESP in Religion

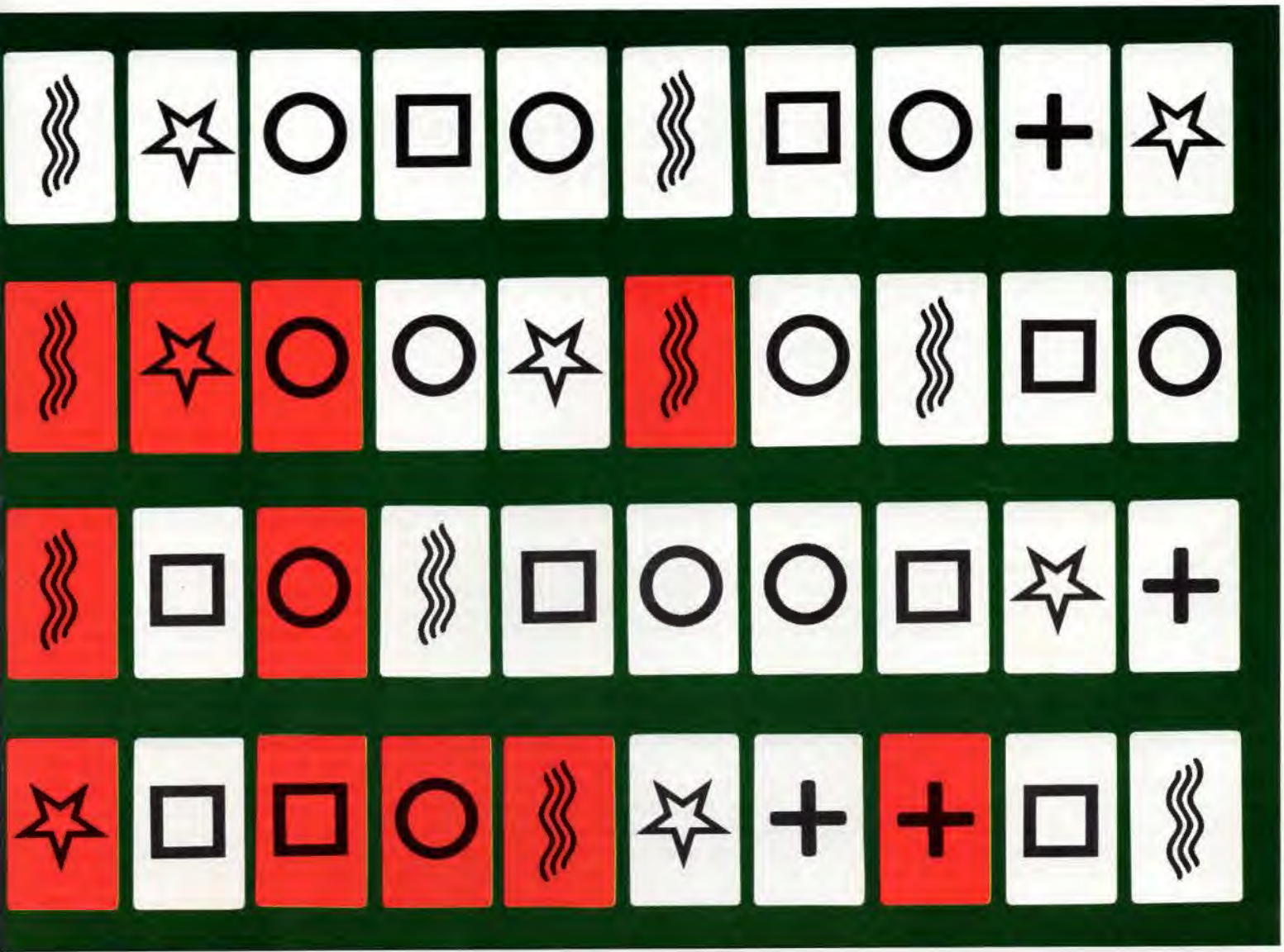
It can be said with unreserved confidence that man's belief in ESP (and the related ability, psychokinesis) has had a long and a powerful impact on his life and his institutions. Quite probably no other single belief has exerted so large an influence on mankind. But this is much harder to see now that over much of the world belief in ESP is at a low ebb in comparison with ancient times. Consider first what such belief did for the individual who could impress his fellow men with his superior powers of knowing of events to come, of distant happenings, of matters on all sides which the senses could not reach. Such a man, other things being equal, would assume leadership and power. Governing systems long clung to the counsel of the 'wise men', the prophets, the soothsayers, the oracles. Most of the magic which was such an important part of all cultures the farther back from modern technology we go, depended heavily upon belief in extra-sensorial cognitive powers. Even such magic as lingers in our Western cultures still usually carries an element of belief in ESP, obscured as a rule under other formulations. The dowser may have his theory of terrestrial magnetism, while essentially assuming an ability more properly recognizable as clairvoyance.

Even the popular concept of luck in games of chance comes close to qualifying as magic; and the casino games themselves so far approximate to loose tests of psi ability as to provide important elements for testing techniques for ESP and PK.

It is in religion, however, that psi has played by far its greatest role in human life, and here it is important to stress that it is belief in psi that is under discussion. How much genuine capacity has underlain this belief would be difficult to estimate. But it can be said that it is the belief in the powers of psi that has given the religions of mankind their main principles of communication between man and the divine. There is of course a great deal more to religion than the mere basis of exchange, the modes of interaction. But what has come to be called the supernatural (the miraculous and the transcendent) in religion is much the same as the types of capacity that are now the subject of study in parapsychology.

The parallel is rather impressive. All the types of psi are present in the theological system: precognition as prophecy, clairvoyance as revelation, telepathy in prayer, and the answer to prayer through physical miracles as psychokinesis. It would be hard to conceive of religion without psi principles of communication. In a word, the religious follower is bound to believe in psi. This is obvious regardless of the validity of either psi or religious doctrine.

The change from thinking of divine agency as the reason behind such puzzling



phenomena as psi, to thinking of psi as a natural principle of communication, called for some explanatory idea that made sense. The mere thought of a natural principle of that kind had to wait until men were at the cultural stage when they began to grasp at general laws that could explain natural phenomena. By the 18th century, however, the emergence of the science of physics had brought forth theories of universal fluids and interplanetary forces. Franz Mesmer's theory of a universal animal magnetism encouraged rational thinking as to how people could influence each other without sensory contact and how communication with the spirit world might occur. Emanuel Swedenborg was believed by his followers to have demonstrated that it actually did so. The 19th century concept of a universal ether and of wavelike communication in this medium favoured the search for a natural explanation for what had been hitherto regarded as completely miraculous. It brought within the bounds of the more venturesome speculation of the day the claim of survival after death of spiritual or ethereal bodies, as well as possible communication with the dead on telepathic lines.

The Spiritualist movement based on communication with the dead through mediums was a natural result of these and other favouring systems of thought. The somnambulism that developed from later mesmeric practices contributed an important device for the practice of mediumship. By the 1880s enough evidence from mediumship had accumulated to impress a number of scholarly people and to bring the methods of science to bear on the claims made. The Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882 in London to investigate 'mesmeric, psychical and spiritualistic claims', set an example that was followed by similar societies in a number of other countries in succeeding years. This movement was capably led, especially in Britain, and made considerable progress in drawing the problems connected with mediumship into better focus, but it did not succeed in bringing the major issue, that of spirit communication, to a scientific conclusion. Rather there was a growing realization over the next 40 years that the problem was much more difficult than the Spiritualist demonstrations had suggested.

Nevertheless the attack on the problem of survival after death did direct attention to the claim of thought transference. It was obvious from the start that a medium would have to be gifted with telepathy to intermediate between two worlds; but at the same time, if she were gifted with telepathy she might in this way be able to get the information for her messages from living sources rather than non-material. Telepathy became almost as important an issue as the survival issue itself. It led to experimental work not only under the sponsorship of the Society for Psychical Research but also, during the first quarter of this century, within university departments of psychology, particularly in America. The American universities of Harvard and Stanford and the University of Groningen in Holland, stand out especially. The experiments at these three universities, judged by the standards of the day, fully justified continuance but in no case did this happen. Telepathy turned out to be much more difficult to work with than most of the other mental abilities being tested in those days, and ease of demonstration had much to do with the eligibility of a subject for a university programme. Psychology itself was still on trial. Psychical research could add nothing to its respectability, and it could not offer young scientists a successful career. The effort was premature.

But something was established that was important. First, a number of psychologists had obtained significant results in telepathy tests; beginnings had been made. Second, in some of these tests the subjects were unselected volunteers, not especially gifted

If it had been easy to get significant evidence of ESP repeatedly and at will, there would probably have been little criticism

individuals. The way had certainly been made easier for the work undertaken at Duke University in North Carolina in 1927.

With the sponsoring interest of the Professor of Psychology, William McDougall, and a new and liberal university administration, a more favourable setting was provided for psychical research at Duke University in 1927 than had existed anywhere before. In addition, the two biologists, J. B. and Louisa E. Rhine, who went to Duke to work under McDougall, had undertaken the exploration after some years of independent and critical study of the claims and the evidence for ESP.

Clairvoyance Testing

The major problem, however, which brought the Rhines to Duke was not the problem of telepathy. It was the question of survival after death, as based upon the analysis of mediumistic communication. The telepathy problem was recognized as important, and research was to be carried out on that and related problems too. But the first issue was survival, so long as it could be scientifically handled.

That, however, was the question. Eight years later a tentative conclusion was reached that the mediumistic approach to the problem of survival could not bring a solution. The medium tested in the Duke Laboratory did obtain reliable information pertinent to the appropriate sitter in the adjoining room; and the evaluation of the results was done under what are called 'double-blind' conditions. But the question as to where the medium obtained her information could not be answered. Because it need not have been from non-material sources, the method could not be considered conclusive, and there the matter still stands.

Telepathy of course was part of the alternative explanation of the medium's success. Accordingly, as the survival question had lost ground, ESP had received more attention and by 1933 and 1934 was clearly in the ascendancy. In 1934 the Duke Laboratory issued its first report, a monograph entitled *Extra-sensory Perception*.

But telepathy testing too hit a snag almost at the outset. It was found, on making a survey of all the past telepathy experiments, that none had ever been carried out properly – that is, in such a way that the subject (the person trying to establish extra-sensory perception) could not have got his information by clairvoyance as well as by telepathy. The sender of the message had always looked at a card or other object. There had never been a pure telepathy test controlled to exclude clairvoyance.

As a matter of fact, it was not easy to carry out a tightly designed test for telepathy that excluded any possibility of clairvoyance. The sender could easily originate his own order of targets (the messages the subject would try to pick up) purely mentally and on each trial wait until the receiver recorded his response before making a record of the mental target. But this, although the tests succeeded, still left questions. Telepathy would have to wait, interesting though it was. If any headway could be made with clairvoyance, using tests with the simple guessing of concealed cards, as had been done as early as the 1870s by Professor Charles Richet and others, it would be an easily controlled performance. So clairvoyance testing became the first point of attack in the systematic experimental parapsychology begun in J. B. Rhine's laboratory in the late 1920s.

By 1933 experiments had been conducted with subjects under such conditions as to allow the conclusion that extra-sensory perception of the clairvoyant type had been demonstrated. Among other controls, the subject was sent to a building 100 yards away from that in which the experimenter handled the target cards. These were isolated one at a time at one minute intervals, and the card order was not recorded until after the run of 25 trials. The cards were of course kept face down throughout the run. The subject in the other building recorded his guesses as he made them. Duplicate records of both the cards and the calls made double, independent checking possible. With the completion of a planned series of 300 guesses under these conditions, over a six-day period, the results were so highly and so uniformly successful that there was no doubt the result could not be due to chance. Out of the 300 guesses, 60 hits were expected on the basis of pure chance; but with 119 hits, the odds were millions to one against such a result coming by chance.

The next stage brought in a two-experimenter arrangement to ensure increased vigilance against error or deception. The success still continued under these stricter conditions. Then other subjects were brought into the testing programme to broaden the range of people used. Later still, a wide variety of testing methods came into use with the aim of making still more certain that no experimental weakness could be involved in any general conclusions reached. Accounts of these methods may be found in the early volumes of the *Journal of Parapsychology* and in books published in the late 1930s.

Criticism and Self-Criticism

How was the ESP report in 1934 received by the scientific world? On the whole the reaction was at first comparatively open-minded and friendly. Many psychologists attempted to repeat the Duke experiments. None of these efforts was undertaken with anything like the long experience and training for ESP research that had accompanied the seven years of work at the Duke laboratory, and by no means all who tried succeeded. There is no way to estimate the percentage who did. Even among those who reported positive results, there were questions in some cases as to the adequacy of the precautions taken. In a number of instances there were requests to keep the work done confidential, while in several instances of research known to have been done by American psychologists nothing could be learned about the results.

If it had been easy to get significant evidence of ESP repeatedly and at will, there would probably have been little criticism. If ESP had been as consciously controllable a capacity as those with which the psychologists were already familiar, unreserved acceptance would probably have followed. But as a number of failures were reported and only a few of the successes reached publication, there was disappointment with the new claims. Unhappily press and radio publicity ran wild, and sensational writers gained excessive public attention; as they did so antagonism developed among psychologists. By 1937 and 1938 there were even sensational 'heresy trials' and published attacks on the ESP researchers. A few psychologists began also to think about the implications of the evidence that psi appears to be non-physical and ESP came under attack as 'impossible'.

J. B. Rhine

Camera Press

The progress of parapsychology is likely to bring about a greater scientific revolution than any that has occurred in the past. A long series of experiments at Duke University, conducted by J. B. Rhine and Louisa E. Rhine *(left)* produced the first major body of systematically gathered evidence for ESP. In England another celebrated parapsychologist, S. G. Soal *(right)* carried out a successful demonstration of pure telepathy

Most of the numerous critical reviews of the new findings about ESP came out during the years 1937 to 1940, and then they ceased almost entirely. In 1940 *Extrasensory Perception After Sixty Years* was published with the aim of answering all existing criticism. The seven leading critics were asked to contribute to it. Since then both the quantity and the quality of criticism by 'outsiders' has fallen to a level that does not deserve serious attention from the psi research field.

On the other hand self-criticism by the psi-workers within the laboratory continues as a necessary policy. It is important for ESP researcher and student alike to avoid easy conclusions, either positive or negative. Certain practices have been developed to insure against error, such as the appointment of one or more statistical editors to the *Journal of Parapsychology*. Unusually high standards of judging statistical significance have been maintained from the first and still continue. Certain devices have been used to help workers to avoid hasty conclusions. One of these is the requirement of a confirmatory repetition before publication. Others involve supplementary tests of consistency to buttress a finding that in other sciences would be accepted forthwith. ESP research is recognizedly 'far out', and is going farther yet. It needs all the devices of scientific method that reinforce the inquiry at any point, and it needs especially deliberate judgement in making conclusions.

Testing Precognition

By December 1933 the clairvoyant type of ESP seemed well enough established to justify taking the next step. However, the direction of the next advance did not appear a matter of course. Telepathy was still waiting. It was now clear that if the sender in a telepathy test had an objective record of the target, clairvoyance alone could enable the receiver to identify it, leaving telepathy only a hypothesis. But this only made it more important to develop a new design for a test of pure telepathy. However, there were easier things to do and equally important ones at that.

It was decided to try precognition next. Besides the ancient beliefs in this capacity, there had been many instances of spontaneous experiences to suggest the hypothesis of extra-sensory perception of future events. The ESP tests already carried out did not indicate any decline of success with increased distance of subject from targets. If space did not influence ESP performance, as seemed well indicated, there was no reason to expect time to limit success either. There was no suggestion as to how precognition could occur, but for that matter there was none for clairvoyance either. It was simply a good empirical question whether time could bar any principle such as ESP that distance could not.

The actual testing techniques for precognition were so simple a modification of those of clairvoyance, that they seemed almost too casual and trivial for so great an issue. In the last month of 1933 the same subject who had done so well in the distance tests of clairvoyance was asked to predict the order of cards in a pack as it would be after the cards had been put through a certain shuffling routine. For comparison he was also asked to call down through a pack of 25 cards as it lay in its box until the end of the guessing. In these two series, the one testing precognition and the other merely calling down through the pack as it was, the subject obtained approximately the same (significant) rate of scoring.

The method had been sufficiently successful to constitute a basis for a thorough reconsideration of the adequacy of the shuffling methods. Could it be that some psi factor might be entering in, even though the methods of shuffling were varied and the randomization of the card order was extended? It was finally decided by the research staff that the shuffling of cards by hand could be sufficiently guided by ESP itself, and that this 'psychic shuffle' could be a reasonable alternative explanation. Precognition itself was so difficult a hypothesis to accept that any reasonable alternative had to be honoured, and of course tested as well. And since the tests supported the 'psychic shuffle' hypothesis, a shift was made to mechanical shuffling of the cards for subsequent precognition tests.

It is true that no one in the laboratory really thought it likely that the various ways of shuffling the cards had contributed the continuing significance of the results obtained in precognition experiments. But in order to be sure, the older method had in every case to be abandoned and the final conclusion on precognition still further postponed. A very considerable amount of work had already been done; but now the question was almost back where it had been at the start, and mechanical shuffling of the target cards was begnn.

The results reconfirmed the earlier work, and all went well for a time. Yet this too ended in a similar stalemate many years after it had begun and fresh evidence of precognition had accumulated.

Mind over Matter

The story of the clash of psychokinesis (PK) and precognition is briefly this. A few months after the precognition experiments had begnn, the experimenters in the Duke Department of Psychology were precipitated, ahead of schedule, into an exploration of the claim popularly known as 'mind over matter'. The group had undertaken to test the claim that rolling dice could be directly influenced by mental concentration to fall as they were willed, with a designated face or combination of faces uppermost. This work had progressed to the point where the PK hypothesis, as it came to be called, was being taken seriously as probably another 'parapsychical phenomenon', one that was to be considered along with clairvoyance, telepathy and precognition.

But these different phenomena could not easily be separated; they tended rather to relate closely to each other as the research advanced. The reasoning ran thus: 'If extrasensory knowing occurs, why not extramuscular action on matter, as in PK?' The dice throwing tests had confirmed the PK hypothesis fairly satisfactorily, but the idea did not stop with cubes alone as target objects. One of the research staff members found that he could influence the behaviour of test cards in a mechanically operated shuffling machine, leading them to match to a significant degree a target series set up in advance. This was naturally

Serious investigation of parapsychology, with testing under controlled conditions, grew out of the intense interest in Spiritualism and mediums of the 19th century, when controls were at first rudimentary *Left* The famous medium Eusapia Palladino levitating a table (if genuine, a case of psychokinesis) *Right* An observer holds Eusapia's arm and leg to prevent trickery

an interesting variation on PK demonstration or at least a parapsychical effect of some sort. But it automatically devalued a large block of precognition results, at least as crucial evidence for that specific ability.

But with still another new start the precognition research went on. There was another retooling of the randomization method, one that again went on for many years before its adequacy was seriously questioned. Then, again, the same kind of readjustment took place, with further improvement to ensure that no human factor, with or without psi involved, could be influencing the randomization of the precognition target order. That brings the matter to the present day, when there is a very large block of evidence of freshly accumulated precognition test results.

Today the precognition test seems to be based on techniques that exclude all possibilities of PK. It has also become a favourite type of test because it is the most adaptable and safe. The subjects also like the special challenge of guessing future events. It has revolutionized psi testing in large groups and in public mass tests, since no precautions against deception or error are necessary until the point of checking results; also, there is the advantage that each subject can be given a different target order.

The conflict between PK and precognition, which made research on the latter so difficult, was not, however, all one-sided. Around the mid-40s precognition became in turn a counter-explanation for PK results and this too required some changes of method and some fresh experiments to accommodate them. A steadily increasing body of evidence accumulated over the years, showing that direct mental effect could be exerted upon moving dice and other objects. In a standard type of test, a pair of dice might be released mechanically or otherwise, and allowed to roll down an inclined plane onto a table top. A designated face or combination of faces would be set by the experimenter and a series of releases made, while the subject attempted to will the dice to fall with the designated targets turned up. In most experiments the selected target face was changed after a scheduled number of releases and, in order to keep a control against dice bias, each face was used as a target for the same number of releases.

Telepathy on the Cards

As soon as enthusiasm cooled a little with regard to precognition and PK, as had happened by the mid-40s when finally the results of both developments had got into publication, the psi research group at the Duke parapsychology laboratory turned its attention to the long-shelved problem of telepathy. A team of five members undertook to design and carry through an adequately safeguarded telepathy test on the following lines. With sender and receiver in different rooms, the former was to use a deck of 25 number cards connected with the standard ESP symbols by a code which he or she alone knew. The receiver was to identify the symbol of which the sender was thinking as the trial signal was given. At the end of the session of four runs of 25 trials each, the experimenter would check the subject's guesses against the target number code, making no indication of the hits but recording only the total number of hits for the page.

The aim in making no other record was to keep clear of any objective basis by which a subject could conceivably discover the experimenter's code precognitively and thus use the number cards as a basis for clairvoyant identification of them. By not making any translation of the number card record, precognitive clairvoyance would not have any access to the code at any time. This ruled out clairvoyance and precognitive clairvoyance.

However, the problem of getting an independent check on the accuracy of the record of the number of hits remained. To avoid this difficulty the code was communicated by the experimenter to an associate experimenter using no physical record and no actual spelling out. Rather, it was done by subtle reference to common memories that would not have meant anything to the subjects even if they had been

J. B. Rhine

present. The two experimenters alone could by means of hints and non-recorded signs of recognition transfer the code, and the recheck was made in the same fashion, dealing only in page totals. The results were quite significant and the experiment was so well supervised that it seemed to make a good case as far as this design can be considered a test of telepathy. Later, from 1941–1943, another successful demonstration of pure telepathy was carried out by S. G. Soal in England. In 1978, however, a study by Betty Markwick claimed that Soal had altered his figures to get results.

But as the English researchers R. H. Thouless and B. P. Wiesner pointed out, there are a number of ways of getting round the necessity of direct mental exchange even under the carefully guarded conditions of these experiments. Conceivably some contact with the receiver's or the sender's brain might intermediate and still leave no detectable indication.

But while these efforts were being made to identify the types of psi ability so carefully that every other type would be excluded, the attitude of workers toward this subdivision of the psi process was undergoing some reconsideration. The disputes between precognition and PK were vigorous, especially at first, and a similar contest arose later between different groups of workers over the adequacy of the claims made for clairvoyance. There was in fact some resistance in psychical researeh groups to the primacy given the work in

Modern tests of psychokinesis, or PK, in Russia and the United States *Left* Stills from a film recently taken in the Soviet Union, showing a woman apparently moving small objects about on a table without any physical contact. In the top picture she is concentrating intently: the pictures below show her efforts to move a number of matches, which had been placed under glass. Medical tests are said to have indicated that during the trials her endocrine system was disturbed and she suffered from vertigo and lack of co-ordination *Right* Thousands of experiments have been carried out in American laboratories to investigate PK ability: this girl has attempted to will two dice in a mechanically rotated box to fall with the two-spot face uppermost, and one of them has done so

J. B. Rhine

J. B. Rhine

Researchers now class the types of parapsychical ability (clairvoyance, precognition, telepathy and psychokinesis) as effects of a single ability, called 'psi'. Evidence for one of these effects, precognition, or the ability to forecast future events, has been found through tests which raise difficult questions about the nature of time *Left* One of the Schmidt Psi-Test machines with which significantly successful results have recently been obtained. The girl presses one of four buttons to indicate which of four coloured lights will come on next. The machine selects the order of lights by a method that starts with electrons emitted from a radioactive substance *Right* Children, who frequently do better in the tests than adults, try to guess which picture will fit the story being told them

clairvoyance. Telepathy had seemed a sort of halfway point to proving survival after death, since communication with the spirit world was of course dependent on telepathy. The research on clairvoyance and, later, precognition and PK, had tended to push telepathy off the map. It was argued on the British side that in the clairvoyance experiments the subject might be using precognitive telepathy to pick up the target order as the experimenter checked on the success of the subject's guesses. But this alternative explanation was considerably discouraged by the use of matching tests in which the order of the separate trials was not kept and the experimenter in checking up made no attempt to keep the sequence of several trials. From the American side the argument had been pushed equally strongly that the telepathy test had not excluded clairvoyance, and especially precognitive clairvoyance, until the two cases of pure telepathy experiments were produced.

The Unity of Psi

Another important development was the growing tendency to think of the different types of psi as only surface effects of a basically unified ability. With the suggestion of Thouless and Wiesner of a common inclusive term, the Greek letter *psi*, this became easier to adopt and there has been little discussion in recent years of any one of the types as an independent function in itself. Rather, as knowledge grows about these different psi phenomena, their common properties and similarities are so striking as to leave little doubt that a single psi process is involved, but one that can both bring information extra-sensorially and effect an extra-motor influence in PK. However, the integrated problem area loses none of its complexity in this working hypothesis of unity and each type still raises its own particular set of questions.

Perhaps nothing has helped more than this unitary character of psi to give the impression that, in this body of findings with its common problems, we have to do with a new branch of science, distinctive enough to be treated autonomously. In the monograph *Extra-sensory Perception* (1934), an attempt was made to define the boundaries of this group of problems even before it was as clear in its unitary tendencies as the succeeding years indicated. There the boundary line was said to be that 'its phenomena . . . escape . . . certain laws of the natural world . . . that we have come to regard with relative certainty', and that they had to do with persons or personal agency. We can say more simply that parapsychology deals with the exchange between a person and his environment without the mediation of his sensorimotor system.

It will be interesting also to see the ways in which parapsychology goes about its researches. By its methods and standards it can best be judged as to reliability. From the beginning under Professor McDougall at Duke University the more continuous experimental work has been guided by certain distinctive precautions. Emphasis has been laid on experimental tests and statistical appraisal, with other evidence regarded as at best suggestive. A larger ratio of odds against chance has been required for significance than is usual in other sciences. The two-experimenter plan of safeguarding against error has been used in all key experiments. Statistical editors were appointed for the *Journal of Parapsychology* to judge the mathematics of all papers and the pilot-confirmation plan of research was introduced to reinforce the standard use of statistical significance. These and a number of other special safeguards have characterized the research programme of parapsychology, giving it, as perhaps no other procedure could so well do, reinforced confidence in its own findings regardless of how far the scientific world in general may understand and recognize them. In this way it can become an actual branch of science without having to wait until it becomes a recognized branch of science.

Physics Powerless to Explain

It is time now to look at psi in general terms, and to ask first what common properties it is known to have exhibited. This is, in other words, to try to relate it more generally to the other sciences – physics, biology and psychology – asking what common descriptive terms will apply, and where there are lines of difference.

It is the relation of psi to physics that, as matters now stand, best indicates the uniqueness of psi and marks it off as a distinctive branch of study. Psi exchange can

The picture of psi ability as common to mankind led naturally to the question of whether psi is found in animals

be described not merely as extra-sensorimotor communication but as non-physical interaction as well. As may now be seen, it was this extra-physical character that gave religion its alleged supernatural quality, the factor that made the miraculous appear incredible to those who believed the entire universe to be physical.

It is true that this general acceptance of an all-encompassing physicalism is largely an act of faith in itself. On the other hand, all that can rightly be said at this stage about psi phenomena and physics is that psi phenomena are found not to be physically explicable. However, even that is saying a great deal.

What is the evidence? The best indication of the non-physical nature of psi, as far as the testing has gone, is provided by its apparent independence of time. The very fact that precognition can occur at all seems to exclude any tenable physical theory. By this time, however, there are so many other kinds of evidence against a physical theory of psi that it would be impossible to review them all. There is, though, some ground for keeping up the search for possible physical effects that may have secondary or indirect connections: for example, the way the subject thinks about distance may be a factor; or a physical situation may have secondary psychological effects or influences on psi operations. Then too it is hard to think of PK as not limited by physical considerations at all. (Can faith really move mountains?) But for that matter who can 'make sense' of precognition at all?

In any event it is not so much what one tentatively says about the physics of ESP or PK as what one does about it. Ideally the findings will lead on to further experimenting with the problem. The experience of the past is also encouraging, as when scientists have encountered physical phenomena which no existing energy could explain and another type has been inferred and later verified. New elements, new planets, and other natural entities have come to knowledge in this way. Since psi communication is real in the physical order in which it is measured, it is of course 'doing work', and that is what 'energy' means. In a preliminary way, this hypothetical energy has already been measured by a Swedish engineer in his PK researches. It does not matter that little is known as yet that could enable us to describe this hypothetical psi energy. Enough is known to justify setting it up as a worthy research objective; this is better than trying by rational speculation alone to decide whether or not it is possible.

In any case it is not a new step to infer a non-physical energetic determinant in the mental life of man. A number of outstanding psychologists have already proposed that mind requires a special energetic principle. The novelty is that this new claim of a special psi energetics seems to be experimentally verifiable, and the best aspect is that the research has only started. It opens a trail into some good basic research problems that are both physical and psychological.

Psi Common to All Mankind

Had the research on survival after death succeeded in proving that man has something in his personality that does not end with his bodily death, psi would probably have been described as not only extra-physical in character but extra-biological as well. But even if it can only be described as extra-physical, this almost gets it ruled out of what the biologist of today is likely to say is his acknowledged domain. Hardly any biologist will admit even to considering an extra-physical factor in the living organism. This means that biology has been largely physicalistic and has resisted the idea of a peculiar life energy, a specific vital principle. One sees no escape however for the biologist now, since parapsychology has given psi the status of fact. At least the human organism no longer completely fits the mechanistic theory that has long dominated the life sciences.

A first question for biology about psi ability is its distribution. Who haa it? While at first it was thought that only special individuals possessed psi capacity, none of these older limiting beliefs has been validated. Instead the working view has developed that psi ability is potential throughout the human species, and that individual differences of attitude, habit and interest determine whether or not psi will express itself or be inhibited. Work with people of different ages has given an impression that the younger the age of the subjects the more likely they are to adapt to the test conditions and respond favourably to efforts to elicit psi effects in tests. In recent years numbers of mass tests have been conducted throughout schools across America and also in the Netherlands, which have given only thinly distributed evidence of psi ability; but the effect is very widespread and so recognizably consistent that they reinforce the working hypothesis of psi as part of the natural inheritance of all mankind.

The ability appears to be 'normal' in other respects as well. No reliable connection has been found with pathology, either organic or mental. Only a few spontaneous cases suggest abnormality; for example, one of the hypotheses regarding the recurrent PK happenings called 'poltergeist phenomena' is that the violent physical effects disrnptive to the household may be due to the latent frustrations of one of its members; that is, they erupt in disturbances produced by his unconscious PK activity. But in such a case the psi function would, like any ability, be merely an incidental instrument.

This picture of psi ability as common to mankind led naturally to the question of whether psi is found in animals. Ample anecdotal material had been collected over the years to make a plausible case. As with human beings themselves, so much still remains mysterious about the behaviour of animals that it well may be that psi is a factor in some of the many remaining mysteries of the animal world. The research efforts to check up on this possibility have been few, as might be expected at this stage. The branching off of the 'Anpsi Project' occurred at the Duke parapsychology laboratory in the early 50s and involved studies of cats, dogs and pigeons. As a whole it left aome fairly solid indications of the existence of psi beyond the human species.

Recently the 'anpsi' problem has been taken up in a French university with rodents as the test animals; fortunately the experiment was initiated in a biological laboratory and was carried out with completely automatic equipment for the minimization of errors of observation. ESP evidence has been produced in this experiment that in general confirms the earlier findings on cats and dogs. This time however a new advantage was introduced: the completely automatic test equipment

Mental Radio

In his book *Mental Radio*, published in 1930, the American writer Upton Sinclair described a series of tests which he conducted with the assistance of his wife, Mary Craig Sinclair, who seemed to possess extra-sensory perception. Above are the results of three of these tests, in which Mary Craig, by concentrating on the thoughts of her husband, attempted to reproduce *(on the right)* little sketches drawn by him, without her having seen the originals *(on the left)*. Comments describing her 'mental visions' were often attached to indistinct drawings.

eliminated the possible role of the human observer, who might be suspected of adding his influence through psi itself.

These French workers are seeking a 'guinea pig', that is, an experimental animal that will offer advantages for psi research that lie beyond human limitations. As biologists, too, these workers have an eye on larger questions regarding the role of psi in evolution, its origin, its genetic character and other major problems. Indeed, an exciting field of comparative parapsychology may already be opening up, since this new work has already inspired several researchers on similar lines.

A Branch of Psychology

It is in psychology of course that one expects to find the greatest number of properties common to psi phenomena. While psychology is the university branch that is most affected by the findings of parapsychology, this is actually because (as the older psychologists such as William McDougall and William James well understood) parapsychology is only a branch of the properly conceived field of general psychology. Psi is of course as much a function of personal agency as the rest of the general field. It is likewise intelligently and purposively oriented; it involves an unconscious level of functioning; and psi tests closely parallel a number of psychological tests in which comparably marginal levels of conscious control are used. The card guessing tests long used in ESP research show some similarities to those in subliminal sensory psychology, and certain general principles apply to both.

The unconsciousness of the psi function is a very important property, and the recognition of it has given more help in the understanding of psi than any other single item. Something was known from general psychology as to what would be expected from an unconscious process and with this general information in mind some of the oddities of psi testing turned out to be 'normal': for example, the subject's sudden loss of his ability under emotional stress. This lack of conscious guidance also went far to explain why ESP could not be learned as most sensory skills could be. Understandable too was the fact that under certain conditions the subject might 'displace' in his ESP guessing and hit the target just before or just after the one he was consciously trying to identify.

Most revealing of all the clues given by the unconsciousness of psi was the explanation it gave of what has come to be called 'psi-missing'. The effect occurs when, under certain conditions, usually of stress or conflict, the subject goes into reverse and actually avoids the targets while going on using his ESP as well as ever. It was found that 'goats' (subjects who did not believe in ESP) would score on the negative side of the chance line while the 'sheep', the believers, would tend to score above. There were signs however that the goats were not just trying to miss and that the effect was unconscious. Similar situations have bolstered this interpretation: for instance, high school students who liked their teacher scored above the chance line while those who disliked the teacher scored below. Or if subjects are given a 'double header' experiment, in which two aspects are closely compared, they generally show a positive scoring trend on one of the conditions and a negative deviation on the other. This differential effect is so reliable it has become both an identifying criterion and a useful testing device.

These and many other side effects have come out of the realization that the essential judgement in psi is largely unconscious, although of course it would not be testable if it were not, at least to some extent, consciously directed. But while there are very few real distinctions between psi and the territory of psychology, the few differences that mark off the psi territory are very important at least for the present, and the more they disturb the general psychologist the more meaningful they may be to the ultimate understanding of man's nature.

For one thing, psi phenomena are the only mental operations that can be crucially tested for non-physicality. How much of the rest of mental life has a non-physical link in its operation no one knows, and apparently no one knows how to find out. But in parapsychology we do know how to find out something definite about the place of the mind in Nature, with regard first of all to physical nature.

Parapsychology has brought us a long way from the supernatural interpretation of such powers as ESP. In doing so it has followed the course that has been taken by all the basic sciences, giving to man a certain amount of control which his ancestors did not know was possible over the phenomena concerned. But it is well to remember that the major contribution of psi research thus far is in what it reminds him that he does not yet know. The findings have indicated still wider horizons and require a wide range of new explanations; for example, man now needs a concept of the universe that can explain his mental influence on matter at a distance and his precognition. Probably no greater scientific revolution has occurred in the past than that which parapsychology will bring about as it progresses into full recognition.

Naturally too there will be expanding interest in the practical application of psi as the ability comes under adequate control. While this will be exciting enough in its range of possibilities, the simple fact that man has psi at all overshadows all other foreseeable consequences. It must be obvious to anyone that if man can produce these amazing results (even irregularly as yet) under controlled test conditions in the laboratory, he must be close to the root principle his ancestors glorified as supernatural omniscience and omnipotence; as close, for example, as Benjamin Franklin's experiments with a kite in a thunderstorm were to demonstrating the power that lay behind the Jovian thunderbolt. It seems all the more important that the new world he has touched in this instance lies within his own nature.

(See also MEDIUMS; OBJECT READING; POLTERGEISTS; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH; PSYCHOKINESIS; PSYCHOLOGY; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.)

J. B. RHINE

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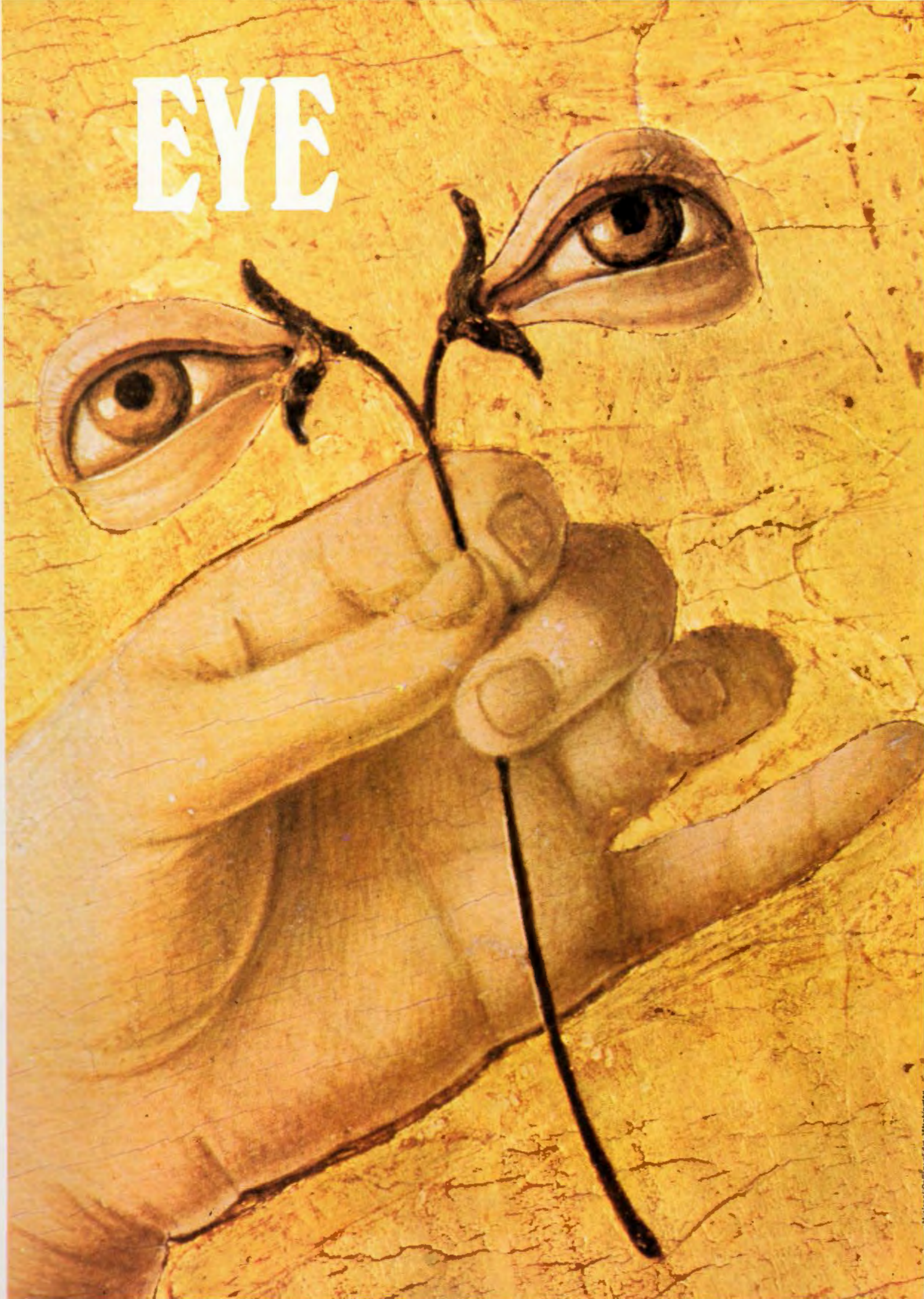
MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 4

Eye - Grea

EYE



The eye can stand for intelligence and spirituality in symbolism but it is also an emblem of terror, from the destroying eye of the sun to the dreaded Evil Eye of folklore

THE GLITTERING EYE of the ancient mariner in Coleridge's poem compelled the wedding guest to listen in spite of himself, and in literature a profusion of eyes that are bright, melting, twinkling, hard, commanding, suggest the effectiveness of the human eye in conveying emotions and influencing others. The importance of the eye in magic and symbolism stems from the fact that your eyes not only enable you to see but allow you to affect what you see, to organize the world outside you into shapes and patterns, to bend or persuade other people to your will (see BODY).

The eye is frequently connected with the sun (and sometimes with the moon) as the all-seeing eye that watches the world. The sun is the universe's source of light and the human eyes with which we see are like suns, lighting up the world about us. Light is itself a symbol of intelligence and spirituality, and if the sun is an eye, the eye is correspondingly a sun and stands for mental and spiritual 'vision'.

Deities and semi-divine beings are sometimes shown with several eyes as a mark of their all-seeing, and therefore all-knowing vision and power. The Babylonian god Marduk had four eyes. The Egyptian Bes had eyes all over her body and Isis was called 'many-eyed'.

In the Bible the ruins of the four wheels of Ezekiel's vision (chapter 1) 'were full of eyes round about'. In the vision of Zechariah (chapter 4) the seven lamps of the lampstand were 'the eyes of the Lord which range through the whole earth'. In Revelation (chapter 4) the four cherubim are 'full of eyes all round and within' and the Lamb of God (chapter 5) has seven horns and seven eyes, the horns for strength and the eyes for omniscience.

A great multiplicity of eyes sometimes stands for the stars which watch in the night sky, as in the case of the Indian god Varuna who had a thousand eyes. A French Tarot card shows the Devil with eyes all over his body, presumably a reference to the fallen angels, the Watchers, who were the stars which the Devil dragged down from the sky in the book of Revelation (see DEVIL; LUCIFER). Modern Cabalists, including Aleister Crowley, have also connected the Devil with the eye, by linking the Devil of the Tarot pack with the Hebrew letter *ayin* (our O) which is traditionally supposed to represent an eye.

The Third Eye

An eye shown in some abnormal position on the body may stand for supernormal sight, clairvoyant vision and power. In Hindu theory each man has a third eye, concealed from normal view, which is a channel of great hidden power. It is in the middle of the forehead, just above the point where the eyebrows meet, at the place where caste marks are made and where married women wear a red, yellow or white spot. The third eye of the God Shiva, the creator and destroyer, could wither the entire universe in its flame.

On the other hand, a creature with less than the proper complement of eyes, like the one-eyed Cyclops of Greek mythology, is likely to be an embodiment of subnormal vision and wisdom, brutish stupidity. We still use the expression 'one-eyed' for something substandard, as in a 'one-eyed town'.

Lady of Slaughter

The eye has a particularly important place in ancient Egyptian symbolism, usually in some connection with the sun which played a dominating role in the everyday life of Egypt and in Egyptian religion (see EGYPT). Many Egyptians wore an amulet called the Uzat-eye, made of gold, silver, precious stones or wood, and giving its wearer health, strength and well-being, the vigour of the life-giving sun.

In mythology, the evil god Seth tore out the eye of the god Horus. When Horus went to look for his dead father, Osiris, to restore him to life he took the eye with him and presented it to Osiris. As soon as Osiris was given the eye, he 'became a soul' or received new life in the afterworld, and so the eye of Horus became a symbol of the funeral rites which a son should provide for his dead father. Twin eyes frequently keep watch from the sides of Egyptian coffins, protecting the dead from harm.

The eye could also be a symbol of the sun's destructive power, of blasting and withering heat. One of the Pyramid Texts refers to a time when 'that fear did not exist that came into being through the eye of Horus'. In a coffin text the eye says of itself: 'I am the all-seeing Eye of Horus, whose appearance strikes terror, Lady of Slaughter, Mighty One of Frightfulness.'

Before 2000 BC the myth had developed that human beings had plotted against the sun god, who sent his Eye to punish them. It came upon them in the form of the goddess Hathor who slaughtered men in droves and would have exterminated mankind altogether if the sun god had not distracted her attention by making her drunk on beer.

According to one version of the creation myth of Heliopolis (see CREATION MYTHS), when the god Atum had created two other deities, Shu and Tefnut, the three of them lay embraced, locked together in the primeval waters. But this divine unity disintegrated, for Shu and Tefnut became separated from Atum, drifted away and were lost in the abyss. Atum sent his Eye

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Previous page **The eyes of Santa Lucia of Syracuse were invoked against blindness: detail from a painting by Francesco del Cossa** ***Left*** **Polyphemus, a one-eyed Cyclops of Greek mythology: creatures with only one eye were generally considered to be stupid and aggressive: detail from a fresco by the Italian artist Giulio Romano** ***Right*** **In the book of Revelation the Lamb of God is described as having seven eyes, standing for all-knowing vision and power: 12th century painting on the arch of a church at San Clemente de Tahull in Spain**

to find them and they returned with the Eye. Atum wept over them and man came into being from the tears of his Eye: this is partly a pun on the Egyptian words for 'men' and 'tears' but possibly also a lingering trace of the old connection between eyes and the great goddess, the mother of all living things (see below).

The Eye was furious with rage when it returned because Atum had put another eye in its place. To pacify it Atum placed the Eye on the front of his face, where it would rule the entire world. In other words, it became the uraeus, the rearing swollen-necked cobra placed at the front of the royal crown of Egypt. The Eye was the ruling sun in the sky and Pharaoh, the human sun, on earth. 'The Eye is personified might', says R. T. Rundle Clark, 'the essential violence that is used to protect the gods and kings against disintegration in the waters or spirit enemies in the created world.'

RICHARD CAVENDISH

The Eye Goddess

When an ancient Mesopotamian site at Tell Brak, in the Khabur valley, was excavated in 1937–8 by Professor M. E. L. Mallowan, the remains of a temple were found which has become known as the Eye Temple of Brak. The reason for this designation was the discovery of thousands of 'eye idols' in the temple, made of black and white alabaster. Their general form is that of a thin biscuit-like body surmounted by a pair of eyes. But there are variations: some specimens have two pairs of eyes placed side by side or one above the other; another type comprises two smaller eye idols superimposed on a larger one; others have crown or caps upon the head-knob. Somewhat similar objects have been found at certain other Mesopotamian sites, Ur, Mari and Lagash. These examples are of a similar design, having the same biscuit-like body surmounted by a pair of open loops which has caused them to be called 'spectacle idols'.

There has been much discussion about the meaning and purpose of these strange objects. That they had some cultic significance is obvious. Various explanations have been suggested: that they are votive offerings, representing themselves, made by devotees to the deity worshipped in the temple; that they are images of an all-seeing god who watched over the inhabitants of the city; that they depict a goddess. The last suggestion seems to be the best supported, and the goddess concerned has been identified with Ninhursag, the Sumerian goddess of childbirth, since one eye idol has been found engraved with the form of a stag, with a bird on its back, which was a symbol of this goddess.

If the identification is sound, this association of the Sumerian mother goddess with the symbol of a pair of eyes represents the earliest phase of a long traditon of such eye symbolism. The Brak Eye Temple dates from c 3000 BC. From the middle of the third millennium BC onwards the symbol, usually consisting of two eyes divided by a beak-like nose, can be traced westwards, mostly connected with megalithic culture, through Anatolia, Cyprus, Crete, Greece, Sicily, Malta, Italy, Spain, Brittany, Ireland and Britain. A striking British example is provided by two chalk-drums, found in an Early Bronze Age grave at Folkton, Yorkshire, dating c 1900–1700 BC.

Why the mother goddess should have been represented by a pair of eyes is unknown. The symbol appears on a great variety of objects, on crudely anthropoid images, pots, standing stones and rocks. The attribution of many eyes to deities, doubtless to symbolize their all-seeing power, has been a widespread custom.

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Evil Eye

The expression 'if looks could kill . . .' contains an echo of a very primitive and ancient fear of being watched, perhaps unaware, by an enemy. In ancient times man had not only to fear the gaze of his mortal enemies but also the watchfulness of the gods who might be envious. To primitive man, Nature is a capricious, vengeful and above all jealous god, perpetually seeking to regain from the hunter or farmer the riches so hardly won from the earth. Even the deserts were once assumed to be populated by hostile demons whose looks could, quite literally, kill; according to Pliny, Libya was once the domain of the basilisk whose eyes possessed such devastating power that it would itself die if it saw its reflection in a mirror.

From the idea that the eyes of envious gods, of demons and monsters had the power to harm develnped the terrifying belief that the human eye could emit a ray which under certain circumstances could be highly dangerous to the person on whom it was focused – particularly if the onlooker was malicious or jealous. An attack of this kind was usually anticipated at the birth of a child, or on those rare occasions when man seemed temporarily to have overcome the hostile forces surrounding him.

The Evil Eye took two distinct forms, the one voluntary, which was inspired by malice, and the other involuntary, over which the unfortunate possessor had no control: animals were often suspected of possessing an involuntary Evil Eye, and the sorcerers of Central American Indian tribes were kept especially busy counteracting the effects of the involuntary sort. Presence of the power in an individual was usually shown by some abnormality—crossed or diverging eyes, one eye set above the other, or eyes of contrasting colours. The English scholar Walter Map (c 1140–c 1209) wrote of Scythian women who had two pupils in one eye and the figure of a horse in the other, a truly frightening combination. While some in the West might adhere to the old proverb 'In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king', in India any individual so afflicted was shunned like a pariah. Those unfortunates whose eyebrows happened to meet above the nose were regarded everywhere with utter dismay. (This feature has other associations: it is seen as the mark of a murderer in America, but of a werewolf in most of Europe.) Others whose physical deformities were believed to indicate the ownership of an Evil Eye were hunchbacks and dwarfs. The glance of a woman when pregnant or in her menses was equally dangerous.

To a victim of the Evil Eye it must have been of little consequence whether the cause of the affliction was due to malice or otherwise, since the consequences were identical – ruin, sickness or death.

It excited the most terror when its effects were thought likely to cause the greatest disaster. The most vulnerable in the community were the most precious, young children and farm stock – especially the one cow or pig that would be the mainstay of many poor backwoods American farms.

British Museum

In modern Italy the term for the Evil Eye is the '*malocchio*', in France the '*mauvais oeil*' and in Germany '*bose Blick*'. The old word 'fascination' has long been superseded among English-speaking peoples by the term 'overlooked' and even this is rapidly becoming extinct. The Jews, inspired no doubt by the biblical proverb 'Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye' (Proverbs 26.3 in the Authorized Version), to this day remain wary of the *ayn-hara*.

The immediate effect of a blast from the Evil Eye upon a victim involved not only misfortunes of every kind but the infliction of the worst diseases, often leading to death. The sexual organs were particularly liable to psychic assaults of this character and almost as a matter of course impotence and frigidity were ascribed to the jealous eyes of some rival. Minor disorders such as headache and hiccups were common signs of having been overlooked. There once existed a curious belief that if the Evil Eye of the moon were cast upon a pregnant woman she would give birth to a monster.

Led Into Court Backwards

The situation of the involuntary possessor of the Evil Eye could become extremely precarious during phases of witch mania. This became apparent during the trial of the Malmesbury, Wiltshire witches in the 17th century, when the various forms of witchcraft came under discussion; even then, however, it seems to have been generally agreed that an individual so afflicted was more to be pitied than condemned. Two examples quoted were those of a man named Lee, of Christian Malford, near Chippenham, who had been responsible for destroying his own cattle 'by his natural evil look' and farmer Snigg of the adjoining parish whose children were appallingly thin and apparently wasting away - from the effects of their father's loving gaze. In a source quoted by Christina Hole in her *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions* reference is made to a Yorkshireman whose eyes were of such potency that he found it necessary to direct 'the first glance of the morning', generally agreed to be the most lethal, upon a pear tree which, as a result, gradually withered and died.

Any individual held responsible for inflicting the Evil Eye out of malice might find himself indicted for witchcraft during the 16th and 17th century witch-hunting manias, for it was then the fashionable doctrine that witches derived the power to cast spells with their eyes as the result of a compact with Satan. The *Malleus Maleficarum* handbook of the Continental Inquisition laid it down that 'there are witches who can bewitch their judges by a mere look or glance from their eyes . . .' and it was for this reason that those charged with this crime were generally led into court backwards.

Above **The thousands of 'eye idols' discovered at the ancient Mesopotamian site at Tell Brak are thought to represent an all-seeing mother goddess** ***Right*** **The ancient Egyptians held the eye in particular esteem and often equated it with the sun, believing it to have both the life-giving properties of the sun's rays and the withering power of its heat: detail from an Egyptian obelisk in Istanbul showing the sacred eye**

The close identification of the Evil Eye with witchcraft persisted in folk belief well into the 19th century. In America, New Hampshire legend tells of an old woman who took revenge on a household that would not make a breakfast for her. One glance from her eye and the doors of the house would not open, nor could anyone hear the householders' calls for an entire day. Other New England tales refer to witches killing pigs, breaking the yokes on oxen, preventing the secure tying of a horse, afflicting butter churns and so on – all with little more than a glare.

Occasionally the power of the Evil Eye was thought to need reinforcing: in parts of Britain, it was said that nine toads strung together and buried alive would aid the power. Nanny Morgan, a Shropshire witch who was murdered in 1857 was believed to keep a box of toads under her bed, to strengthen her eye.

Scotland was equally worried about the Evil Eye. If a stranger was seen examining a farmer's cattle, he would be offered some of the milk as an assurance against disaster. During childbirth a mother's house would be sprinkled with urine to defend against overlooking. If the Evil Eye was suspected, it could be offset by burning cloth cut from the witch's coat.

A community would usually defend itself from the Evil Eye by private rites and

C. M. Dixon

psychic defences, without recourse to the magical specialist. Among the most common was disguise of those considered to be specially vulnerable, which ranged from plastering a newborn child with mud or soot in order to render it unworthy of the jealousy of the supernatural powers, to dressing the boys of the household – these being the most valuable – in the clothing of their sisters to deceive the spirits. Another example of disguise was the bridal veil which is still regarded as affording protection against the envious, and therefore hostile, eyes by many communities.

Plants were also used for psychic protection, including sage and rosemary, in Spain and Portugal, garlic in Greece, and the shamrock in Ireland. The human body provided its own defence in the form of spittle, a universal panacea; to spit three times was considered a particularly powerful safegnard, as was the act of making the sign of the cross upon a child's forehead with the tongue. Artificial aids were also employed such as the wearing of little bells by children and cattle and the carrying of salt, symbol of eternal life, in the pocket.

Phallic Teething Rings

The first glance of the Evil Eye, especially if delivered from an oblique angle, was always the most dangerous. A precaution against this attack was to wear an amulet with a grotesque design of a toad or hunchback to distract the glance from the human being and to absorb its venom. Based on a different principle was the choice of the pig as a motif since this animal was known to be extremely vulnerable to the Evil Eye. The ancient Greeks wore the amulet of the Medusa, and the caduceus, the traditional wand or staff of the god Mercury, which protected him from the Evil Eye of the gods, was naturally a great favourite. The male genitals, symbols of the life-force, were pitted against the enemies of life—corruption and death – in the form of gold, silver or bronze phalli worn by the Romans, while babies were given coral phalli to use as teething rings. Beads bearing the design of the human eye were also worn. The fleur-de-lys, another symbolic barrier against the Evil Eye, became also the emblem of the white witches in parts of France. A curious example of a latter-day amulet was the necklace of white nuts, known as mullaska beans, which was hung around the necks of young children in the Isle of Harris. It was assumed that the beads would turn black if the child were ever in danger of being overlooked.

Far older and best known are the manual gestures still used as an act of psychic defiance, the most popolar being the *mano fica* in which the thumb is inserted between the first and second fingers with the fist clenched, and the *mano cornuta*, known as 'making the devil's horns', in which the two middle fingers are held down by the thumb and the first and little fingers are raised.

Psychic protection could also be secured by employing certain colours, words or designs. The Turks inscribed passages from the Koran upon the outer walls of their houses and suspended magical globes from their ceilings and from the caparisons of their horses. Coloured glass spheres known as witch balls performed a similar function in rural England. Blue beads seem to have been employed all over southern Europe for the protection of humans and domestic animals. An eye symbol was often tattooed on the back of a child or painted upon the prow of the fisherman's boat. American lore recommends a heart-shaped locket or brooch as a protection – or, oddly, a red spot painted on the forehead.

In England, in former times, the cautious householder placed a red ribbon over his front door, and ribbons of this colour were attached by the Scots to the tails of cattle. A reminder of the symbolic importance attached to the colour red is contained in the well-known lines:

> Rowan tree and red thread
> Will put the witches to their speed.

To achieve the maximum defence it was advisable to tie the thread in magical knots accompanied by an incantation. The power inherent in sacred or magical words, whether pronounced by the private individual or the specialist magician, provided another useful antidote to the malicious or injurious glance, as did special prayers and countercharms which were inscribed upon paper and worn in small containers upon the body. Known as phylacteries, these were very likely the ancestors of the modern locket.

Dangerous Praise

When complimenting a fortunate person, it was always necessary to be extremely careful with one's choice of words, since all forms of congratulation were likely to provoke hostile intervention from the jealous deities of fate. To express admiration of a herd of cattle would be tantamount to inviting its destruction. Even to remark favourably on a child's beauty could be disastrous; hence it was customary to speak disparagingly of it to the parents, who would be prepared if necessary to counter the malice of the gods by spitting judiciously. This curious process has been described by W. G. Sumner in *Folkways* (1959) as 'the Doctrine of Offsets – an artificial effect which will avert fascination', in the hope of offsetting the jealousies of both gods and men. At modern horse shows it is not unknown for owners to say 'break a leg' if they consider their entry likely to gain a prize. Vituperation

Sonia Halliday

Left **The immediate effect of a blast from the Evil Eye upon a victim involved not only misfortunes of every kind but the infliction of the worst diseases, often leading to death: the Evil Eye, a detail from a mosaic in the Antioch Museum** ***Above right*** **Fishermen often painted eyes on the prows of their boats to avert the dangers of the Evil Eye and to ensure a good catch: model of a Portuguese trawler, now in the Science Museum, London** ***Below right*** **Similarly, oracular eyes were fitted by Athene to the prow of Jason's ship, the *Argo*, to help him in his search for the Golden Fleece**

Science Museum

Mansell Collection

A self-styled Italian wizard attempted to bring occult influences to bear in support of his favourite football team, by putting the Evil Eye upon their opponents

and ribaldry, which in other circumstances would never have been tolerated for a moment, were used in the past against national leaders in their hour of glory to deflect the Evil Eye of the jealous onlooker or tribal god. Hence it was customary for soldiers in the triumphal procession of some Roman general to recite derisive verses drawing attention to his personal shortcomings and physical defects, to the delight of the otherwise envious crowd.

A direct appeal for intervention of the gods as a form of protection against the Evil Eye was integral in certain religious rites; whereas the Greek and Roman would address himself to Nemesis, the Christian made his appeal to St Nicholas of Myra, patron saint of children, whose picture was painted upon the walls of churches, affording protection to all who looked upon it.

One of the most ancient remedies for those who had been overlooked known to man is a form of transference, by which the affliction is passed on to another, by some means. Among the southern Slavs, the victim of the Evil Eye would ceremonially wash himself in water in which a copper coin had been placed, and, after muttering an incantation, charitably present the money to a blind beggar – hoping thereby to transfer the affliction with the coin.

To meet a cross-eyed person is still regarded as unlucky in some places, particularly by fishermen and miners and others in dangerous trades. In the theatrical profession, which is notorious for its superstitions because of a different kind of insecurity, many actors maintain a tenacious objection to the presence of peacocks' feathers on the stage, the eyes in the tail being reminiscent of Juno's jealous eye. The peacock was sacred to Juno who, after the death of hundred-eyed Argus, had his eyes put on the bird's tail so that they could keep a perpetual watch over

Left **Many people have a superstitious horror of peacock feathers because the eyes in the tail remind them of the dreaded Evil Eye** ***Above*** **According to a Greek legend, after the death of the hundred-eyed Argus, the goddess Hera placed his eyes in the tail of the peacock to spy on her husband Jupiter**

Michael Holford

Egyptian eye, probably from the inside of a mummy case: eyes were often depicted on the sides of Egyptian coffins to protect the dead from harm

her husband Jupiter's amours. (In New York in 1965 the peacocks were removed from the lawns of the United Nations building, because they made some delegates uneasy.)

There is one positive use of crossed eyes, from American folklore. The most effectual rabbit's foot is said to come from a rabbit killed in a graveyard at midnight under a full moon by a cross-eyed (and sometimes red-headed) man.

Among famous men considered to possess the Evil Eye in the past were the Emperor Napoleon III of France, King Alphonso XIII of Spain and the poet Lord Byron. Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII were believed to be similarly afflicted, much to the alarm of their congregation. The Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, is on record as having refused to travel in the same plane as two deputies who were reported to have the Evil Eye. Modern examples crop up frequently in the newspapers. In 1957 it was disclosed in the United States that an unscrupulous company had employed a well-known *iettatore*, the Italian phrase for the possessor of the Evil Eye, 'to keep dissatisfied workers on the job'. More recently, in 1966, a self-styled Italian wizard attempted to bring occult influences to bear in support of his favourite football team, by putting the Evil Eye upon their opponents, the famous team 'Internazionale'.

The progress of medicine has led to the discarding of many of the absurd beliefs of the past, and the reduction or elimination of many of the optical disorders once regarded as infallible signs of the Evil Eye. Nevertheless, the old fears are not yet extinct, even in communities apparently dominated by scientific principles. Many school children believe in the Evil Eye and in Ireland the 'Eye of Balor' is still feared, inspired by the ancient legend of the giant Balor, King of the Fomorians, who possessed a single lethal eye.

Modern Views of the Evil Eye

The modern approach to the problems of belief in the Evil Eye is discussed in an interesting article 'Delusions of Witchcraft' by M. Risso and W. Böker, published in *The British Journal of Psychology* (114, 963–972) 1968. It appears that in Luciana in Spain, where the fear of fascination is extremely strong, 'the nursing mother can often be the victim of the Evil Eye which may charm the milk away from the breast. The cessation of lactation in an impoverished country where practically no substitute for mothers' milk can be made is a threatening event.'

The Evil Eye, it would appear from the study of the past and present evidence, is a phobia most prevalent in societies living at subsistence level, and among individuals afflicted with strong emotional disturbances. Its presence symbolizes the eternal anxieties produced by the never-ending contest between primitive man and his gods for the right to happiness. As Sumner said in *Folkways*: 'The evil eye is an affliction that befalls the prosperous and fortunate in their prosperity . . . It is the irritated demons who inflict disaster at the heart of good luck.'

Certain psychologists have interpreted the Evil Eye as representing 'aggressive impulses turned inwardly, because of a guilty need for self-punishment arising from prohibited sexual urges', or as E. S. Gifford has said in *The Evil Eye*, it is the result of neurotic guilt feelings since individuals in prosperity tend to project their expectation of failure into the eyes of those whom they consider most likely to be envious. In this sense we are all victims of the Evil Eye, since it represents the envious demon called fate who stands poised at the very moment of human triumph ready to hurl presumptuous man from the pinnacle of success into the abyss of despair.

ERIC MAPLE

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Eyeless in the Next World

The eye *(akshi)* is regarded as a receptive, neutral organ, except when intent is added to seeing. It is said to be the last organ to come into activity, since the child within the womb employs all its organs except the eyes, which it opens only after birth. On this analogy sculptors used to give the final touch to an image after the rest of the work was completed, in a ritual operation called *nayononmīlana* (*nayana-unmīlana*, 'eye-unclosing'), the chiselling of the eye image. It was preceded by a period of meditation and prayer, and followed by the rite of 'enlivening' the idol.

Similarly it is believed that on death the deceased are quite blind, and grope about eyeless in the next world. The eye is essentially the organ of the earthly body and can only be transferred to the dead by special ceremonies, one of which is the *diakshu-dana*, 'eye-bestowal', performed by a certain class of professional painters.

The deliberate beholding *(darśana)* of an auspicious person or thing brings blessing, since the sight of the beneficent object infuses the beholder with its own virtue. Hence the visit of devotees to their spiritual leaders, of subjects to their rulers, of pilgrims to shrines, to obtain a darśan or viewing.

Benjamin Walker *Hindu World*

EZEKIEL

LAST OF THE THREE major prophets, Ezekiel was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. He was a priest by birth and his preaching combines prophetic and priestly elements. Scholarly opinion is divided regarding the biography of the prophet and the authorship of the book ascribed to him. Some hold that he was of Palestinian origin, receiving his call to be a prophet in 592 BC and beginning his ministry in Jerusalem. According to this view he left the city shortly before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps he was deported to Babylon together with King Jehoiachin in 597 BC, and later continued his ministry among the Babylonian exiles. Others again hold that his whole ministry was exercised in Babylonia and that the whole of the book was written there. It is not quite certain, however, that the whole book is by one hand, and some scholars argue for dual authorship and later editorial revision of the book.

The book clearly divides into two main parts: chapters 1–24, predicting the imminent fall and destruction of Jerusalem, and chapters 25–48 prophesying ultimate reconciliation with God, the return of the exiles, and the restoration of Israel, Jerusalem and the Temple. This second half of the book subdivides into three sections: chapters 25–32, containing prophecies against several foreign nations (Aram, Moab, Edom and others); chapters 33–39, prophesying the redemption and restoration of the Jewish people; and chapters 40–48 describing in great detail Ezekiel's vision of the reconstructed Temple and the ideal rule of God to be established in the future. It is in the attention to cultic details and in his emphasis on holiness and on the majestic splendour of the future Temple that the 'priestly' element in Ezekiel's prophecy is particularly noticeable.

There is a very strong visionary element in Ezekiel's prophecy, and his prophetic activity was often accompanied by symbolic behaviour of an almost compulsive character. He exhibits to an even greater extent than the other biblical prophets the overpowering effect of the divine call on both the prophet's mind and his body. Some psychiatrists have thought to detect schizoid tendencies in Ezekiel: his teaching shows an extraordinary combination of universalism on the one hand and consciousness of the unique election of Israel on the other, as well as the tension between the corporate and individual responsibility. Whilst he is mainly concerned with the collective defection of Israel and profoundly aware of the corporate character of the religious community, he also emphasizes individual responsibility (18. 2–31). He insists that 'the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son' – evidently in dispute of current misconceptions on the subject of collective guilt, which were probably part of a more general mood of despondency and despair that had seized the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. Whilst unremitting in his harsh denunciations of all forms of idolatry and iniquity, Ezekiel's message was one of hope, expressed most powerfully in his vision of the dry bones being clothed with flesh and skin and coming to life again (chapter 37) – a symbol of Israel's future regeneration.

The overwhelming splendour of the divine majesty and its throne of glory is described in the opening vision of the book (chapter 1). This vision formed the basis of later Jewish mysticism, the *Merkabah*, which taught the ecstatic ascent to heaven and the vision of the throne of glory (see CABALA), and also influenced subsequent angelology and apocalyptic writing.

The anthropomorphic elements in Ezekiel's vision of the throne of glory, as well as certain contradictions between his description of the future ritual in the Temple and the Law of Moses – that is between Ezekiel's priestly law and that contained in Leviticus – gave the book a questionable character. The ancient rabbis forbade the reading and study of chapter 1 in public, and some rabbis in the 2nd century even opposed the canonization of the book. Its authority was already too firmly established, however, and it remained part of Old Testament scripture.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

***Valley of Dry Bones*, a drawing by William Blake; Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones coming to life is a symbol of Israel's future regeneration**

Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

Fable

A short story with a moral purpose in which animals talk and act like human beings: a development of the animal tale, it is one of the earliest forms of folktale and is thought to have originated among the Semites and spread west to Greece and east to India: the most famous examples, dating from 600 BC, are those by the Ionian slave Aesop.

FACELESS GODDESSES

FIGURINES OF WOMEN, characterized by emphasis upon the sexual or maternal features of the body and the complete absence of any facial features have been discovered on many Paleolithic sites extending over a wide area from France and Italy to South Russia and Siberia. They are known technically as 'Venus-figures'. Sometimes the head is merely a knob; on the so-called 'Venus of Willendorf', in Austria, the whole head appears to be covered with horizontal layers of thick curls. Most notable among these Venus-figures is the 'Venus of Laussel', in the Dordogne, France, which is sculptured in relief on a slab. This figure has reasonably been interpreted as a Paleolithic prototype of the mother goddess, so widely worshipped later in the Ancient World.

Among the many problems connected with these Venus-figures is the absence of facial features. That this characteristic was deliberately intended by their makers, and not due to artistic ability, is certain from the fact that the bodily features are skilfully represented. The reason for this strange differentiation in treatment of face and body can only be guessed at; the most likely explanations would seem to be that either there was some reluctance, probably inspired by magical considerations, to depict the face, or attention was concentrated exclusively upon the sexual or maternal significance of the female as the source of new life.

Many millennia after the making of these faceless Paleolithic figurines, statues were made of a faceless goddess in the Greek city of Cyrene, in Libya. One of the most striking examples was unearthed by the Manchester University Cyrenaican Expedition during its excavations there in 1955–57. The statue has the form of the upper portion of a female body, in classical costume, holding in the left hand an alabastron or small vase. But, instead of a woman's neck and face, a cylindrical column rises from the shoulders, on top of which, at the appropriate level, the waved hair of a woman is sculptured; this, in turn, is surmounted by a *kalathos* or *modius*, a symbol of fertility worn by the Graeco-Egyptian underworld god Serapis, and also by Hecate and Cybele, goddesses who had similar connections. The

C. M. Dixon: National Museum of Valletta

Venus-figure from Malta, thought to represent a fertility or mother goddess because of the emphasis on sexual features

statue originally stood on a sarcophagus, from which the figure must have appeared as though it were emerging.

No inscriptions reveal the identity of the figure or its curious mounting upon tombs. There is, however, good reason for believing that it represents Persephone, the goddess of the underworld. This is strengthened by the existence of temples of Persephone and Hades or Pluto at Cyrene. If the identification be sound, then the half-length statues and their mounting could be well explained in terms of the myth of Persephone.

According to this myth, Persephone, the daughter of the corn goddess Demeter, was carried off by Pluto to Hades, his subterranean realm. The sorrowing mother sought for her lost daughter, neglecting her duties as the corn goddess. Zeus finally had to intervene; he arranged that Persephone should spend part of the year above the ground with Demeter and the remainder with Pluto in Hades (see DEMETER).

This annual ascent *(anodos)* of Persephone from the realm of the dead symbolized the resurrection of vegetation in spring – Persephone was the corn maiden – and gave hope for life after death. The Cyrene statues thus probably represent the anodos of Persephone as signifying the assurance of resurrection to a new life for the dead, from whose tombs the goddess appears to emerge.

This explanation, however, still leaves unaccounted for the faceless image of the goddess. A clue to the answer here is probably given by the cylindrical column that replaces the face and neck of the statue. It looks almost as though the body and hair have been attached to a stone column or pillar. Now, since there is evidence of a native Libyan cult of stone pillars connected with a fertility goddess, it would seem likely that with the establishment of Greek culture in Cyrene this native Libyan goddess, with her underworld attributes, was identified with the Greek Persephone, who had similar connections with fertility, the underworld and the dead.

The idea of an 'unknown god' finds its classic expression in the speech which the Apostle Paul is recorded to have made on the Areopagus hill at Athens (Acts, 17. 22–31). Paul, having been invited by certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers to explain his new religion, opened his discourse by remarking: 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, "To an Unknown God". What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.' Paul then proceeded to introduce Christianity to his Athenian audience.

Paul's reference to this altar and its inscription has long aroused curiosity and much learned discussion. There is no other evidence that there existed at Athens such a dedication to 'an unknown god' *(agnosto theo)*: but there are references by ancient Greek writers to altars to 'unknown gods'. Thus Pausanias (2nd century AD) records that on the road between Athens and Phalerum there were 'altars of gods named as unknown', and that near the great altar of Zeus at Olympia there was 'an altar to unknown gods'.

This evidence, although it does not actually confirm Paul's statement about the altar to an 'unknown god' does show that altars were dedicated to collective groups of 'unknown gods'. Who these deities were is a matter for speculation; but it seems likely that in Greece the reference was to foreign gods whom it was thought wise to propitiate – or such dedications could represent a kind of comprehensive religious insurance policy, based on the principle that it was dangerous to neglect any deity.

John Webb

FAIRIES

They are tricksy and unpredictable at best and at the worst, baleful and terrifying. Fairies of many shapes and sizes are believed to have existed alongside man since ancient times; sometimes to his benefit but often to his cost

BELIEF IN FAIRIES has been explored by many people, and frequently explained, but remains one of the most mysterious and bewildering subjects that the folklorist can investigate. One reason for the mystery is the widely held belief among believers that it is unlucky to speak of fairies. Besides this, the fairies themselves are so various and the theories about their origin so diverse that it is often difficult to paint a consistent picture of them.

The word itself is perhaps a very unfortunate one. The original word was 'fay', now so archaic as to seem hopelessly affected. It is believed to derive from the Latin 'fata', the individual fates of men, who were personified as supernatural women visiting the cradles of newly-born children. The word was used both as a noun and as an adjective, for 'fay' meant enchanted or bewitched, and 'fay-erie' (faerie) was used for both a state of enchantment and for an enchanted realm. The state became confused with the person, and 'fays' became 'fairies'. Even so, the believers in fairies did not think it wise to use the name, and the more complimentary the term could be made the better the fairies would be pleased. The principle was the same as that by which the Greeks called the Furies 'the Kindly Ones.'

The fairies of English tradition were thought to have their own realm with king and queen and royal courts: 'The Fairy Queen Takes an Airy Drive', from a series of water colours by Richard Doyle

Anyone who wants to study the characteristics of fairies all over the world cannot begin better than by reading a little book, which, though a century old is still extremely valuable, *The Fairy Mythology* by Thomas Keightley. The subject is a wide one; this article is confined to the fairies of the British Isles, including not only those of the Arthurian legends and medieval romances, and many other types of fairies, but also pixies, hobs, goblins, gnomes, mermaids, hags, bogeys and elementals.

Most fairies have powers of a kind, and can at least bring good or ill luck, strike mortals with paralysis, slay cattle and feed on the goodness of grain and milk

Fairies vary in powers, size, character, appearance, habits and the origins ascribed to them. When it comes to the question of origins, there are two different lines to follow. In the first place there are the opinions of those who have actually believed in fairies, either in the past or the present – and these are by no means unanimous – and in the second there are those of the students of folklore, who have advanced a number of different theories.

Aristocrats and Commoners

Fairies are said to range from the great and potent ones of more than mortal size to the very small creatures who are occasionally captured, and either make their escape or pine and die in captivity. Most fairies have powers of a kind, and can at least bring good or ill luck, strike mortals with paralysis, slay cattle and feed on the goodness of grain and milk. Some of them can do good or ill, some are wholly wicked; even the best of them need to be treated with respect. Many a helpful brownie has turned into a malicious boggart because some fool has played a practical joke on him.

There are first the heroic or romance fairies of the Arthurian legends and medieval romances. The great example of these is the Dana o'Shee of Ireland. They are the aristocracy of fairyland, who ride and fight and hunt, and live in a beautiful land exempt from death or change, the Land of the Ever Young. These heroic fairies are associated with many tales of the Fairy Ride (or Rade) in which a procession of these lordly creatures would be seen riding in a gallant troop, headed by their king and queen. In the English tradition these fairies are generally held to be a smaller race, sometimes tiny. They have their own realm with its royal courts, they enjoy music and dancing, and wear jewelled, glittering clothes; in some parts of England they are so tiny that the whole royal dais can be caught under a man's hat.

The common people of fairyland live either in small family groups or as solitaries and some of them live in villages under the fairy knolls. There are many little fairies who ask for help in mending tiny shovels or three-legged stools, and who pay their helpers with small gifts of food, and with good luck. An example of the solitary fairy is the leprechaun, the fairy shoemaker, whose hoards of gold are much coveted by mortals. These fairies are generally small, though varying from the size of a three-year-old child to a height of a few inches.

Forgotten Gods and Guardians

In a different category are the nature fairies and forgotten gods, spirits of streams, springs and lakes, and mermaids; spirits of individual trees or of woods, guardians of animals and plants and growing crops. These are rarer in Britain than in some other countries, but examples can be found even in English tradition, though they are more common in the Celtic parts of Britain.

Akin to these, though not identical with them, are the tutelary fairies, often guardians of one particular family, like that who gave the fairy flag to the MacLeods of Skye, or the one who watches over the Grants. Others are homely domestic spirits, brownies, lobs, cellar ghosts, down to Awd Goggie who guards the gooseberry bushes. The most tragic of these tutelary fairies are the Irish or Highland banshees, each attached to a family or clan. Banshee means 'fairy woman', but the general type has come to be applied to a special type of spirit possibly an ancestral ghost, who is to be heard weeping before the death of any member of her special family. Lady Wilde, in her *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1887), gives a vivid and poetic description of the banshee. In the Highlands of Scotland she is often called 'The Washer by the Ford' because she is generally seen washing the bloodstained garments of those about to die.

Brownies and other hobs are attached either to families or to places, but if they are offended they will move to another farm. Sometimes they follow the families to which they are attached. They have even been known to emigrate to Canada.

The fifth group consists of the bogey beasts and goblins. These are often closely linked to the homelier of the tutelary fairies. A boggart can be a brownie gone to the bad. John Rhys in *Celtic Folklore* has a rather touching story of a brownie who was driven from one farm to another, always leaving when practical jokes were played on him, until he came to a farm where there was a manservant called Moses, with whom he struck up a great friendship. He was perfectly happy and very useful until Moses went to fight for Henry VII, and was killed at Bosworth Field. Then the poor brownie went completely to the bad, and became so troublesome that he was at length caught by an awl thrust through his long, sharp nose, and kept pinned to the spot while an exorcism was read over him. Then the awl was drawn out, and a magical wind bore him away to the Red Sea.

Most of the boggarts are mischievous rather than dangerous, and Will o' the Wisps and various forms of bogey beasts are much the same. They delight in misleading travellers and playing practical jokes. A typical story is told of the bogey beasts known as the Hedley Kow. He took the form of a pot of gold, and was dragged along by a delighted old woman; then he changed in quick succession into a bar of silver, a piece of iron and a big round stone; then finally he shot up over four long legs, and leapt away like a lean colt, swishing his long tail in delight. But the old woman had the best of it after all, for she was equally delighted by every change for the worse, and finally uplifted with joy at having met the bogey beast in person, and made so bold with him.

The Hedley Kow is harmless enough, though mischievous, but some of the creatures of this class were dreaded as really evil and dangerous. The Border Redcaps are an example. They inhabited tower houses along the Border where violent deeds had been done, and their red caps were dyed in the blood of the travellers they had murdered. The Highland glaistigs appeared like beautiful women, but they were vampires who sucked the blood of any human partners who would dance with them. Shellycoat, a Scottish water spirit, dressed in seaweed hung with clattering shells, sometimes played Will o' the Wisp tricks

Previous page **Oberon and Titania, the King and Queen of the Fairies in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are reconciled after a quarrel over a little Indian boy changeling. At the same time Oberon reunites two mortal lovers who had fallen out, by instilling a magic love potion into their eyes while they are asleep. Painting by Joseph Noel Paton in the National Gallery of Scotland**

Left **'A Fairy Tree-Feller' by Richard Dadd, in the Tate Gallery; tree-felling was one of the many ways in which fairies were thought to assist mortals**

John Webb

John Webb

on travellers, but had been known to toss a benighted man up and down like a ball until he killed him. Water kelpies, like bogey beasts, often took the form of a horse, but their desire was always to carry their victims into the water and devour them.

The last group of fairy creatures consists of supernatural hags, giants and monsters. Giants are always creatures of the past; the evidence for them is the great works they have left behind, but even the most credulous believer never expected to see a giant. The same is true of dragons, though not of all monsters. The supernatural hags, Cailleach Beurh (the blue hag) or Cally Berry, as she is called in Ulster. Black Annis of the Midlands and a few more of the same kind are not believed in now, but they were once believed to be alive and dangerous.

Fairy Ethics

The fairies have a morality of their own that does not correspond in all ways with that of respectable humanity. They are great lovers of cleanliness and order, and expect this to be respected by the humans whom they visit. As a rule they have few scruples about taking any mortal goods, milk, meal or cattle, which they require, but they punish severely any mortal who steals from them. They hate miserliness above all things, and love a free, open, cheerful character. Perhaps because of their interest in fertility, they are rather free and wanton in their own conduct, and are friendly towards lovers. Politeness is very important in all dealings with them, though there are some that must not be thanked. They are passionate lovers of privacy, and punish spies and eavesdroppers. At the same time they are grateful for hospitality and kindness, and often repay it disproportionately. In fairytales, as distinct from these fairy legends, fairies are fond of disguising themselves in order to test the kindness of mortals, and reward a cheerfully shared dinner with magical gifts of great value; this is a widespread fairy trait.

Of all the fairy pilfering habits the most distressing to mortals is that of stealing babies out of their cradles and leaving changelings in their place. This belief has probably caused more cruelty and unhappiness than any other piece of fairylore, for the usual means of getting rid of a changeling is to ill-treat it, though very occasionally the mother is told to take special care of it, so as to win the gratitude of the fairy mother. (See CHANGELING.)

Children are not the only people stolen by the fairies. Nursing mothers were believed to be in special danger until they were churched, and they were coveted by the fairies to serve as foster mothers for the fairy babies who did not thrive. Young men with special skills were sometimes decoyed away, and young girls, particularly those with golden hair, were carried off as brides.

The Fairy Midwife story, one of the commonest and most widespread, may have some connection with this, for in one story at least the midwife recognizes in the young mother a mortal girl who has disappeared. In the most usual version of the story the midwife is called out at night by an odd-looking old fellow, and taken to a neat cottage where a young woman is in labour. She duly delivers the child, and is given a box of ointment with which to anoint its eyes. Accidentally or on purpose she touches one of her own eyes with the ointment, and at once the whole scene is changed. The cottage becomes a cave, the young woman a lady of great beauty, the children round the bed are seen as hairy imps, and the old father is even uglier than before. The midwife manages to keep her surprise to herself and gets away safely, but some time later she sees the old man pilfering in the market, and accosts him. He asks which eye she sees him with, and when she points to it, immediately blinds it.

Equally common is the story of the brownie, lob or pixie working for a farmer or in a huuse, and being left a gift of a suit of clothes. Various reasons are given for this, but the event is invariable. Another common fairy habit is to visit houses at night, to bath their babies in the water left for them. The room must be left tidy, the hearth swept, the fire made up and fresh water left in a pail by the fireside. The maid who attends to this will find sixpence in her shoe, which will be left after every visit as long as she keeps it secret; for fairy gifts must not be talked of. A lazy maid who neglects her duty is punished with cramps or lameness.

Fairy methods of flight and levitation are very like those practised by witches. A ragwort stem or twig is used by a small fairy instead of a witch's broomstick. Some form of incantation is used; the antiquary John Aubrey (1626–1697) gives the operative words as 'Horse and Hattock!' Sometimes the power of flight is given by a blue cap. The same story is told about both fairies and witches, in which a mortal joins the charmed flight and visits the cellar of a distant castle or palace, where he drinks so heartily that he is insensible when the time comes to return. He is found in the cellar next day, can give no account of himself, and is just about to be hanged for his offence, when he is rescued by one of his late companions. This story is told in England, Scotland and Ireland.

Rays of Coloured Light

The fairies vary even more in their appearance than they do in their other characteristics. The astral fairies seen by some of the modern Irish seers are described as of about seven or eight feet in height, radiant and beautiful, with rays of coloured light streaming from them. On the other hand some fairies of the Isle of Man described by Walter Gill in *A Third Manx Scrapbook*, as seen by a friend at the beginning of this century, were little men about 18 inches high, greyish in colour, like a fungus, their bodies rather swollen in front. Their eyes and heads were clearly distinguishable, and their heads moved as they danced. The Welsh Tylwyth Teg are small but beautiful; they generally wear white, though some Welsh fairies wear striped, many-coloured clothes. Green is the most usual colour for fairies to wear, both in England and Scotland. Geoffrey Hodson, a clairvoyant who claimed to be able to see fairies, described in his book, *Fairies at Work and at Play*, a group of fairies about six inches high, with oval fluttering wings, dancing in a ring, and wearing floating draperies of pale blue. This is an unusual colour for fairies. A fairy whose appearance in Perthshire is recorded in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies is described as 'a wee green man, with peakit boots, with a cap like an old gramophone horn on his head.' His face was dark and furrowed. The kings and knights of the Trooping Fairies are generally as beautiful as their ladies, but the men in the second grade of fairies are often wizened, hairy and stunted, though their women are beautiful. Pixies have turned-up, snub noses, red hair and squint eyes. They

Left Fairies, like witches, were supposed to be able to fly; but instead of broomsticks, they used ragwort stems or twigs and the smaller creatures rode on the backs of butterflies and moths: 'An Evening Ride', from Richard Doyle's series of pictures of Fairyland *Right* Flower fairies were considered to be the most exquisite and dainty: according to one belief, fairies were the souls of the dead who had died before their appointed time *Below right* The Chinese fairy Ma-Kuh lived in the 2nd century AD. She was a beneficent sorceress who reclaimed a large area of land from the sea and converted it into a mulberry orchard

generally wear green, but are occasionally naked. The tiny flower fairies are exquisite and dainty. There are any number of hideous fairy creatures, like the spriggans of Cornwall, who can be large or small at will, but are grotesque at any size. Brownies are grotesque, hairy and ragged, and were supposed to have no noses, only nostrils, while the boggarts had long, sharp noses.

Beauty and Shapeless Horror

The fairies of the British Isles have many characteristics in common, yet there is a different flavour about them in every region. The gentlest are the fairies of central England. They are often small in size, and though tricksy are not often dangerous. Their insistence on order and cleanliness, their habit of visiting houses, their influence over crops, all suggest that they were once agricultural spirits. If so, their function is gone. The fairies known to Shakespeare and Drayton, and recorded by Aubrey disappeared over a century ago. Only occasional single fairies have been recorded within the last few years.

In the Fen Country, along the east coast of England, the traditions are grimmer. The Yarthkins of the Lincolnshire Fens were small, ugly, malicious creatures, always ready to do evil. They have gone with the draining of the Fens, and no one can regret them. As we move north the picture becomes darker. Though there are still tales of little, merry fairies, there are also many boggarts and many bogey beasts, and on the Border we have the murderous Redcaps. The picture is again a little different in Wales, where there is a preponderance of female fairies, and the special feature of Welsh fairy lore is the Fairy Wife. There is a Welsh King of the Fairies, and many stories of the miraculous passage of time in fairyland. In the Lowlands of Scotland there are traditions of the Fairy Rade and the fairies of the Border ballads, but on the whole the creatures are more prosaic than in Ireland. In the Highlands the Celtic imagination has again full play, but the duality of the fairy nature is strongly stressed; there are the good and bad amongst them. Strains of great beauty are heard from the fairy hills, but there are traditions of monstrous creatures, blood-suckers and water kelpies and shapeless horrors.

The fairies assume their most beautiful

Michael Holford

Ian Pleeth

Belief in fairies has largely disappeared, but the fairy of pantomime, although sometimes a figure of fun, still captures the imagination of little children

form in Ireland. We hear much of their music, and of the beauty of their women and the stateliness of their men. There are small, grotesque, comical fairies, and even the most beautiful of the Irish fairies are dangerous; a man goes with them at his peril, and many of them that appear beautiful are the evil host of the dead. It is impossible in a short time to do justice to the diversities of these various creatures, and yet a strong resemblance unites them.

The early heroic legends of Ireland and the Highlands have been so well preserved in oral tradition that the fairy beliefs have retained a remarkable continuity; they have been more varied and fluctuating in England with its great admixture of races. In all countries the fairy beliefs are ancient, and probably stem back to primitive gods and religions. As it has already been said, *fata* is the accepted derivation of the word 'fay', and the sophisticated fairies who were guests at Sleeping Beauty's christening are remote descendants of the Fates who appeared at Meleager's cradle and of the Norns, who were the female fates of Nordic mythology. They were older than the gods, and more potent. In Greece, Italy and the Romance countries, the nymphs and *genii loci* – spirits of the place – became fairies. In Ireland the Dana o'Shee are generally accepted as the personifications of the lost gods of the land.

Fairy Weddings

In England the earliest mention of the fairies is the Anglo-Saxon charms against elf-shot, which was the infliction of disease by elf arrows; it is possible even that in the 9th century Utrecht Psalter we have the first picture of fairies with wings, in what appears to be the representation of an elf-shot man; a suggestion made by Brian Branston in *The Lost Gods of England* (1958). After the Norman Conquest less is heard of the elves, but the 12th and 13th century chroniclers have a variety of fairy anecdotes to record. Walter Map (born c 1140) wrote a fascinating book called *De Nugis Curialium* (Courtiers' Trifles). He told an early version of the Fairy Wife tale, already mentioned. It comes from the Welsh Border, and is the legend of a real historical character, Wild Edric, who for some time resisted the Norman Conquest; he fell in love with a fairy and snatched her away from a fairy dance in a house in the

The more uncompromising puritans held the opinion that the fairies were outright devils

Forest of Clun, near the Border. She consented to be his wife on condition that he never reproached her with her origin. They were happily married for many years and when Edric had made submission to William, he took her to Court, where her beauty was much admired. At last, however, in an impatient moment, he asked if she had been with her sisters, and at once she vanished. The fairy house in the forest was not to be found, and he sought her in vain until he died. He was long said to ride, with his lady beside him and his train following, over the Welsh Border country. The last recorded appearance was in the 19th century when they were seen by a girl and her father; the girl, though illiterate, correctly described their Saxon costume with the cross-gartered leggings.

An earlier ride described by Walter Map is that of King Herla, who ruled over Ancient Britain. One day, King Herla was visited by the King of the Fairies, a small grotesque creature riding upon a goat. He said that he was the lord of many realms, and he offered to attend King Herla's wedding, bringing some of his people with him, if King Herla would return the compliment a year later, and honour his wedding with his presence. King Herla promised to do this though he had no wedding in mind at that time. It happened that a match was soon arranged, however, and on the wedding day the Fairy King arrived, attended by many servants, as grotesque as himself, but all with courtly manners and loaded with gifts, food and drink, and many costly presents. They undertook the service of the banquet, and by their readiness, alacrity and good cheer they won the favour of all the guests. At cockcrow they departed, but before he went the King reminded Herla of his promise.

Accordingly, in a year's time King Herla set out, accompanied by his knights and carrying many rich gifts with him. He was royally received, and three days and nights were passed in feasting and merriment. Then King Herla wished to return to his young wife and his people. The Fairy King gave him many gifts, and last of all a little greyhound to sit on the King's saddle before him, and he charged them all not to dismount until the dog leapt down.

The King and his knights rode towards home, but everything was changed, and he could not find his palace. He asked the way of a peasant passing by, but he could hardly make himself understood, nor understand what the man said, for 300 years had passed since he entered fairyland, and in the meantime the Saxons had conquered Britain. When they understood this, some of Herla's knights leapt to the ground, and at once the weight of their years came upon them, and they crumbled into dust. Then King Herla remembered the warning of the Fairy King, and he called to his knights to ride through the centuries, waiting for the dog to leap down; it is said that he will never do this until the Day of Judgement. The belief in the supernatural passage of time in fairyland has persisted.

Dining on Roast Frog

Another source of fairy legends is Gervase of Tilbury, author of *Otia Imperialia*, who flourished about 1210. His stories come from several parts of Europe, but he tells of our earliest tiny fairies, called Portunes in England and Neptunes in France. They were only a few inches high, with faces like wrinkled old men, and came into human houses at night, where they roasted frogs in front of the fires left burning for them. Gervase gives us the first Fairy Midwife story, complete with the fairy ointment and the blinding of the seeing eye. He tells us too of the English Grant, a bogey beast who changes his shape like the Hedley Kow.

Some of the medieval chroniclers give interesting and curiously convincing fairy legends. The fairy changeling, Malekin, is from Ralph of Coggeshall, and he tells us too about Nicholas Pipe, the Merman, and the strange story of the Green Children. Giraldus Cambrensis gives us the story of Elidor and the Golden Ball, one of the best known of the early fairy legends. From William of Newburgh we have a story of a fairy mound and the theft of the fairies' drinking-cup, something like the legend of the Luck of Edenhall.

These fairy references of the early chroniclers are not frequent, but they cover a surprising number of fairy types and legends. There is not such a variety in the medieval romances. Except for giants, dwarfs and unexplained enchantments, we chiefly hear of the fairy women, with their power of enchantment. Some of these are treated as fairies, some as mortals with magical powers. In Malory, Morgan le Fay is a mortal, but she derives from a fairy, Fata Morgana. On the other hand, Nimue, the Lady of the Lake, seems to be thought of as a fairy, though the French author of *Lancelot du Lac* gives a determinedly matter-of-fact account of her: 'Now the story saith that the Damosel that carried Lancelot into the lake was a fay. In those days all maidens that knew enchantments and charms were called fays, and there were many of them at this time, and more in Great Britain than in other lands'.

According to this author the appearance of the lake was made by magic, but a German version of the same story has no doubt that Nimue was a fairy, and writes a highly picturesque account of her fairyland, protected by a magic wall through which none could enter, with flowers blooming all the year as if at the height of May; a land in which none could grow old or perish, even after a century had passed.

With Chaucer begins the refrain of the passing of the fairies, which has been echoed ever since. Two centuries after Chaucer's reference to the disappearance of the elves, this thought is echoed in the words of another poet:

> But now alas they all are dead
> Or gone beyond the seas.

In the 19th century Hugh Miller tells the same tale, 'The People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland'. Yet in spite of this, rumours of fairies continued to run through the land, and even today there are still people who claim to see them.

Fallen Angels or Ghosts?

What is the explanation of this strange, evanescent and yet recurrent body of belief? Very various explanations have been given, and no single one seems to cover the whole ground. Most medieval churchmen accepted St Augustine's suggestion that the supernatural beings of the heathen were not senseless idols but fallen angels trying to usurp the place of God. The more uncompromising puritans held the opinion that the fairies were outright devils, but a more charitable belief, still held in Ireland, is that the fairies were indeed fallen angels, but those deluded by Satan and not wholly in his councils. They were ejected from heaven with the rest, but were not wicked enough for the depths of hell. As they were falling, the Son held up his hand, and they stopped short in flight;

Deliverer of Dreams

O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
The collars, of the moonshine's watery beams;
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;
Her waggoner small gray-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prickt from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream, –
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are . . .
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five-fathoms deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts, and wakes;
And, being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night;
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes:
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them, and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage:
This is she –

William Shakespeare
Romeo and Juliet (Act I, Scene 4).

the most wicked, the *Lucifugi*, fell into the mines and caverns below the earth, and became gnomes, kobolds, and other light-hating creatures. Some fell into the sea and became mermaids and water spirits, others into woods or flowery places, others near men's habitations, who became brownies and hobs, whose duty it was to work for man without reward.

Another equally common belief was that the fairies were the dead who had died before their appointed time, or those that were too good for hell and not good enough for heaven. In Cornwall they say that the fairies are the ghosts of the old Druids, though their stock is recruited from time to time by kidnapped mortals. A less common theory is that the fairies fill an intermediate space between man and angels, 'spiritual animals', as one writer describes them. The 16th and 17th century magicians, who had many recipes for raising fairies and putting them to use, seem sometimes to have regarded them as elementals; that is, creatures made out of one of the four elements only, sylphs from air, undines from water, gnomes from earth, and salamanders from fire. Modern believers in fairies often regard them as nature spirits, whose special function it is to fertilize plants and look after flowers. They are presumably created specially for that purpose.

The theories of the students of fairy lore, who study the subject more objectively, are equally diverse. In the 19th century, a theory was put foward by David MacRitchie that the fairies were a conquered, pre-Celtic race; the primitive men who inhabited these islands, small, forced into hiding in caves and mounds, and therefore nocturnal in their habits. They knew the ancient traditions of the land, and were considered masters of its magic. They would be thought also to be on intimate terms with the local gods, and therefore formidable. They might occasionally make shy advances to their conquerers, and do odd jobs about the farms in return for food. They would be expert pickers and stealers, and might occasionally make raids on the new settlers to carry off cattle or brides. Some of the more matter-of-fact stories fit very well into this pattern; The Woman of Sanntraigh, for example, in Campbell's *Popular Tales of the Western Highlands* (1860), seems as if no other explanation would fit so neatly. There are, however, many elements of the fairy legends which are not covered by this theory. A variation on it is Dr Margaret Murray's suggestion that the fairies were the devils of the witches' sabbaths. They would be drawn from wandering bands of gypsies, or even from primitive peoples, forced into hiding generations ago.

Perhaps the best case of all is made out by those who think that the fairy beliefs originated in a cult of the dead. This view is ably presented by Lewis Spence in *British Fairy Origins* (1946). There is no doubt that there are many traditional connections between the fairies and the dead. In many of the Irish stories given by Lady Wilde the fairy host is explicitly stated to be the 'host of the dead'. The fairy man who advised Bessie Dunlop, one of the Scottish witches, was alleged to be a man killed at the Battle of Pinkie, in 1547, some 30 years previously. That striking story, 'The Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor', in Bottrell's *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall* (1870), gives a detailed description of the fairies who are also the pagan dead. Many of the brownies and hobs are expressly described as ghosts. The Cauld Lad of Hilton is one, and in Ireland the Phooka of Kildare, though it took the form of an ass, was the ghost of an idle scullery boy, forced to work in the house, until he was considered worthy of reward. He was laid, like other brownies by a gift of clothing. The minute size of the tiniest of the fairies can be plausibly accounted for by the primitive notion of a man's soul being a tiny creature, in human or insect form, which comes out of his mouth when he is asleep and whose wanderings account for human dreams.

There are other factors, which, though not accounting for the whole body of fairy beliefs, seem to have had their share in building them. Previous reference has been made to the lost gods as ancestors of the fairies, and as far as one can say that anything is a certainty in this perplexing subject, it may be taken as certain that a few of the fairies are descendants of the gods. Spirits of trees and woods seem to be true nature spirits and not the ghosts of people sacrificed in the groves in the time of primitive nature worship. The habit of personification is natural to man, and it would after all be strange if trees, streams, mountains and rocks should be left empty of personality in men's imaginations until a dead man could be found to haunt them. Animism is a primitive habit that dies hard. Certainly the foundation sacrifice beneath the hearth may become a ghost that in time grows into a tutelary spirit, but to what was the sacrifice made? Besides these, psychic phenomena, poltergeist activities and so on, whatever their cause, had an obvious part in building up fairy beliefs.

A further element, still to be explored, is the symbolism of the unconscious, which everywhere produces metaphors inexplicably satisfying to the souls of men. Jung's penetrating exposition of this theme has yet to be fully examined by folklorists. He has already investigated fairy tales, but fairy beliefs may prove to be equally relevant. All these together form a fascinating complexity of beliefs and theories which merit further investigation.

K. M. BRIGGS

FURTHER READING: K.M. Briggs, *An Encyclopedia of Fairies* (Pantheon, 1977), *The Anatomy of Puck* (Arno, 1977), *The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967); Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West* (Blom, 1968 reprint); Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (Bohn's Antiquarian Library Series, Gale, 1975).

Elves feasting and frolicking among the fuchsias, a water colour by Richard Doyle; elves were originally the fairy people of Teutonic mythology who possessed magical powers to help or harm mankind

John Webb

Fairy Rings
Circles of grass of different colour or texture from that of the rest of the field, where fairies are traditionally supposed to hold their dances: anyone running nine times round a fairy ring during a full moon was thought to be able to hear them talking and laughing, but it was dangerous to sit in the ring on May Eve or All Hallows' Eve as the fairies might spirit the offender away.

Faith
In theology, confident belief in religious doctrines, apprehension of religious truth apart from proof or logical argument: also a system of religious belief, as in 'the Christian faith': often contrasted with 'works', in the controversy over whether salvation is gained by faith in God alone, or by good behaviour, or by both.

Thousands of people have testified that faith healing 'works' – yet its efficacy, by its very nature, is incapable of scientific proof. What cannot be disputed, however, is that faith healing is 'a great source of hope to the otherwise hopeless'

FAITH HEALING

FAITH HEALERS CLAIM to have, usually in the absence of medical knowledge or skills, the gift of healing; treatment methods vary with the individual healer but in general are not those appropriate to orthodox medical practice. Attitudes about the faith aspect (that is, belief held in the absence of, or in spite of, logical argument based on available facts) of faith healing vary so widely that it is not even possible to establish that such belief is an essential element in the process either for the healer or for the patient. Noel Bayon and Maurice Colinon worked experimentally as healers during recent years without the slightest faith in their powers, but both achieved considerable reputations.

The words 'illness' and 'disease' arouse widely differing subjective and objective responses. Dr A. E. Clark-Kennedy gives a good working definition: 'A disease . . . so far as definition is possible, is that condition of man, woman or child of a certain psychosomatic constitution, and at a certain stage of his or her life, when a pathological process of body or mind is leading to alteration of structure or disturbance of function, with the result that he or she sooner or later starts to complain of symptoms, or signs are discovered on examination, most diseases being due to complicated interactions between genetic weakness, the adverse factors to which a man is exposed in his environment, and the psychosomatic machinery of his individual constitution. No two cases, therefore, are ever quite the same, although certain types of reaction are

Peter Goodliffe

From his 'sanctuary' at Shere, in Surrey, Harry Edwards practises both direct and absent healing. He claims a high percentage of successful cures and is visited by ailing people from all over the world. The pictures on the right show the faith healer trying to relieve a patient suffering from an acutely stiff neck

common, justifying the abstract conception of the real existence of disease, apart from the individual patients who actually suffer from them.'

Another authority, Professor Emilio Servadio, suggests that the study of healing and the study of cures is by no means the same thing, and that spontaneous recovery may be one of the reasons why no rational theory of healing exists. It is difficult to define a boundary between paranormal healing and orthodox medical practice; a doctor giving a patient a placebo (a pill or other medicine which is a 'dummy' and which has no known chemical action) in the hope and expectation that the sufferer will benefit by being humoured in this way is a good physician; the faith healer may *believe* that he is doing something positive and his actions and his belief may also serve as a placebo; the patient feels better.

The methods of orthodox medicine change continuously. Mesmer's 'unorthodox' activities were investigated in 1784 by a commission of physicians and scientists, including Benjamin Franklin, and their unfavourable conclusions forced him to retire 30 years before his death in 1815 at the age of 80. By the 1850s some of his methods, under the name of hypnotism, were again considered seriously and as a result of Professor J. M. Charcot's work had become respectable by the end of the century. (See MESMER.)

The concepts of the unconscious mind elaborated by the Freud-Adler-Jung group were embellished by discoveries with the aid of hypnosis of mental processes hitherto unrecognized. The relevance of the patient-doctor relationship has received increased recognition and in this sense some of the faith healing methods are being incorporated into orthodox medical practice.

Christ healed the sick man of paralysis by commanding him to 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk'. Christ and the disciples performed many healing miracles and saints too have been known to effect cures by the power of faith: painting by Jan van Hemessen

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Definition of a Cure

How does one decide whether a patient is cured, particularly of minor illness? Probably the majority of patients simply stop attending their doctor when they feel well. But few illnesses, major or minor are static: there are periods when the symptoms are worse, and periods when they are less severe, and these altered states may last for weeks, months or even years. A further problem is that at present only organic states are roughly measurable. 'Feeling better', though of tremendous importance to most patients, is not necessarily evidence of lessening of organic disease, of the complete elimination from the body of the anatomical, pathological state of illness. On the other hand, a doctor may have laboratory evidence and a healer reasonable belief that sufferers are cured although some may still continue to complain of symptoms.

Bearing these problems in mind, we can now consider the methods by which unorthodox healers work; these may be loosely categorized into three groups. Firstly, there are 'magical' methods not based on observable and constant cause and effect but adopted as a result of falling into the old trap of *post hoc propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this). These methods include the practices of early historical times – for example the use of charms and talismans.

The second group contains the vast array of methods involving touch – among them anointing with oil, 'stroking', the method used for his cures by Valentine Greatrakes (1629–1683) the laying on of hands and, according to Plutarch (c 46–120 AD), the highly individual method of laying on of toes by Pyrrhus, King of the Molossians.

The final group consists of those methods by which the patient has no physical object to reassure him and does not gain the comfort of touch. These include exorcism, commands to be well and merely being stared at, as advocated by the zouave Henri Jacob. Indeed, the sufferer may not be physically close to the healer, or even aware of his existence, as in some forms of absent healing.

Christ the Healer

There seems little connection between the evolution of faith healing methods and the intellectual evolution of mankind; although these groups are placed in what looks like an order of increasing sophistication no particular one seems more effective than the others; all are still in use and many healers do not confine themselves to a single technique or to one group of methods. Christ, for example, healed the right ear of Malchus by touch after it had been cut off by one of

the disciples – a rare example of the restoration of a severed part of the body – and he healed the centurion's servant of palsy without going near him.

Among the many other healing miracles performed by Christ is one of particular interest – the cure of the woman 'who had had a flow of blood for twelve years' (Luke 8. 43–48) – for in this case the sufferer who touched the border of his garment was healed without the conscious will of the Healer.

The disciples (who had sometimes failed to effect cures 'because of . . . unbelief') continued healing after the Crucifixion. St Peter excelled: 'they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.'

Christ's healing instructions to the twelve disciples were evidently not construed as intended for them alone: St Paul, after his conversion, was able to heal and a famous passage (James 5. 14–16) implies that healing gifts were normally to be expected among believers – although St Paul drew attention to the likelihood of specialization in spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12. 30): 'Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?'

The ministry of Christ and the healing work of his immediate successors, which may have been responsible for many conversions to Christianity, was followed by a decline in the activity of unorthodox healers. Some work continued, but the only massive revival was the Spiritualist movement. Spiritualist healers believe that not only do they have the gift of healing but that they are also actively assisted in their work by doctors and guides 'on the other side'. 'Spiritualism' was not, of course, unknown even in the Old Testament times : Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor might well be described as a seance (I Samuel 28. 7–19). But an organized sect did not emerge until the middle of the 19th century. Many unorthodox healers today encourage their patients to continue in the care of their family doctors, which is a valuable safeguard to the sufferers. Unfortunately, the safeguard makes scientific study in the field very much more difficult because so few patients receive unorthodox healing only. Of the religious healing groups, only Christian Scientists reject the need for doctors, but this is by no means true of all members.

Seven Rules for a Miracle

Many Roman Catholic saints have been renowned for their powers of healing, both during their lives and after death, and indeed when a pious soul is being considered for canonization healing miracles may be taken into account; shrines commemorate them and are visited by believers seeking miraculous cures. The best known of the Roman Catholic healing shrines is Lourdes, about which Dr D. J. West, in his book *Eleven Lourdes Miracles*, gives a wealth of detail, including the criteria for miraculous cure from the treatise on Beatification and Canonization by Pope Benedict XVI in the early 18th century. There are seven requirements and all must be fulfilled; they are as follows. Firstly, the illness should be serious, and impossible, or at least very difficult, to cure. It should not be on the decline or of such a nature that it might in any case improve. No medication should have been given, or if it has been given, its inefficacy should be clearly established. The fourth condition is that the cure should be sudden, instantaneous; it must also be complete. Sixthly, the cure should not correspond to a crisis in the illness brought about by natural causes, and finally, that after the cure there should be no recurrence of the illness.

On the subject of Lourdes, Dr Michael Balint states that 'inexplicable, almost miraculous, healings occasionally occur in the average medical practice', and adds that they belong in the same category as authenticated Lourdes miracles – they constitute recovery from psychosomatic illness, slowly progressing tumours of chronic incapacitating states and 'as is well known in medicine, these three types of illness may show sudden physical changes under normal medical treatment, or even spontaneously'; Dr West points out that 'there are no cases of lost eyes or amputated legs sprouting anew', although most Catholics would accept that God could and would achieve this if he felt it to be appropriate.

Attitudes among the Christian Churches towards faith healing vary from total disapproval to intense enthusiasm. As I said in my book *Faith Healing*, 'Possibly there is today a consensus that God wants men to be healthy: that prayer and other religious techniques can help to bring this about: that paranormal cures must be attempted with love and are at best only a means to the end of salvation. Beyond this we find . . . many voices but little harmony.' Despite this, the ministry of healing is by no means altogether neglected in Christian Churches today.

Christian Scientists and Spiritualists are committed to healing for its own sake, and in this they are akin to the orthodox medical practitioner. But many individoals work alone, outside the framework of any religious denomination. Britain's best known contemporary faith healer is a Spiritualist, Harry Edwards, born 1893. Since he began healing in the 1930s he has acquired an international reputation. Comparing his 'sanctuary' at Shere, Surrey with Lourdes at the time of the latter's centenary in 1958, he claimed to have cured 10,000 people, mainly 'incurable' in four years. He practises both direct and absent healing, claiming (in 1944) between 85 % and 90% success. In 1962 his average postbag was stated to be 10,000 letters a week, and over the years sufferers from all walks of life, including many eminent people, have come to the Shere Sanctuary.

Orthodox medical opinion as represented by the British Medical Association was summed up in 1956 in a booklet entitled *Divine Healing and Co-operation between Doctors and Clergy*. This contained the findings of a committee set up to assist the enquiry by the Archbishops' Commission. The medical committee concluded that they could 'find no evidence that there is any type of illness cured by "spiritual healing" alone which could not have been cured by medical treatment' and no evidence that organic disease is cured by the various methods of 'spiritual healing'.

This is the consensus of scientific opinion at present, but it makes no impact upon the faith of those who believe that paranormal forces frequently intervene in human affairs; healers believe they have a vocation to heal; sufferers believe that they have been cured by such healers when orthodox medicine may have failed them. The majority are not concerned with how the healing in which they believe happens; but answers to this question range from the simple reply 'from God' to the statement that the faith healer 'is feeding in nervous energy into the patient's body at the point where it is "leaking out". It is "leaking out" at the site of the pain which the patient experiences . . . The healer's energy, applied at the site of the pain, runs up the patient's nerves and reaches the seat of the trouble' (Faith Healing, *The Messenger*, June 1952).

Illness with a Purpose

Theories are continually being presented. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) began writing about conversion hysteria (a loss of physical function resulting from an emotional disturbance in the absence of disease) in 1886. Within recent years a vast amount of work has been done in the field of psychosomatic medicine. (Briefly, psychosomatic diseases are those in which harmful local changes occur in an organ, usually as a result of psychic stress). Both hysterical and psychosomatic disorders are, at least in their early stages, reversible and it is very likely that some of these illnesses lend themselves more readily to the unspecific methods of the faith healer.

Georg Groddeck (1866–1934) has been called the father of psychosomatic medicine. This assessment is largely based on his paper *The Psychic Origin and Psychoanalytical Treatment of Organic Disease* (1917) in which he says 'I consider it a basic and dangerous misconception to suppose that only the hysteric has the gift of making himself ill for whatever purpose. Every man has this ability and each uses it in an extension beyond comprehension. In being ill a distinct purpose is served' and he went on to say 'A great many miraculously easy cures which we credit to suggestion or to the personal influence of the doctor are basically to be led back to the sudden realization . . . that man will no longer need this or that protection.'

In *The Unknown Self*, a selection of his writings, Groddeck added in 1925 that a patient 'may reject the methods approved by scientific and ordinary experience and choose to be cured by other – in some cases quite ridiculous means, or without any assistance from other people . . . may work out his own salvation by using the conditions of his own environment.'

The theory does not explain why the will to health may be aroused by unorthodox approaches after conventional methods have failed, but it does illustrate the possible complexity behind the simplest symptom, and underlines Dr Clark-Kennedy's words

quoted earlier, 'No two cases . . . are ever quite the same'.

The will to health may finally express itself in the patient who has failed to gain relief of illness in the usual medical environment; and even though such a patient may say that he does not believe in faith healing, he has, usually unconsciously, reached the point at which he *must* become well, and this is the time when the healer may contribute to the reversal of a psychologically-based illness or to the mental well-being of a patient suffering from organic disease. It should be remembered that there is a common prejudice against neurosis and neurotic symptoms, implying that they are in some way less respectable than organic disease. Whatever the cause, the symptoms are just as real for the patient. Pain hurts.

Playing One's Part

Suggestion is, of course, relevant, to both orthodox and unorthodox healing. Argument still continues about the basic mechanism of hypnotism, which can certainly be used for the removal of symptoms, sometimes dramatically; and the removal of symptoms, which is of the greatest importance to the patient, rather than the removal by psychological methods of the cause of symptoms, has become academically respectable over recent years. This replaces the earlier assumptions that the relief of symptoms without insight into the nature of their origin would result in relapse or in a group of new symptoms.

While discussing suggestion the concept of 'role-playing' should be mentioned. In any given situation people will tend to do or say what they think or feel to be expected of them. In other words they fulfil the role indicated for them by the dominant factor in the situation — in this context, the healer. He will tell a sufferer, for example, to leave aside his crutches and walk, and at least for the time being that is what he can do. It is important to point out that he is able to do so because he feels expected to do so, even though before such an occasion he did not himself anticipate such a possibility. In the experimental situation it has been established that experimenters tend to get the results they anticipate; this does not mean that they are in any way consciously or deliberately mishandling data or results but that expectation is somehow communicated to their subjects.

It has not so far been possible either to prove or to disprove that faith healing cures organic disease, and further investigation is needed, particularly in the rigorous following-up of claims of reputed unorthodox cures. But man does not live by science alone, and so long as the obvious safeguard of medical supervision is respected it is unlikely that faith healing can do any harm. Indeed it can lead to an improvement in emotional state which is in itself a good thing in that it makes life easier for the sufferer even though it may not basically affect his physical condition.

In fact, it is doubtful whether hard-and-fast conclusions will ever be reached on this subject. The existence of adequate medical records implies that patients have undergone medical treatment, yet it is only with such records that the existence of disease can be established in retrospect. And even in the case of the patient with a full medical history who has been 'given up' by the medical profession and has subsequently been 'cured' by a faith healer, the conclusions of the British Medical Association in the report mentioned earlier should not be forgotten: 'The evidence suggests that many such cases . . . are likely to be either instances of wrong diagnosis, wrong prognosis, remission or . . . spontaneous cure'.

It may be that without some dramatic breakthrough in the methodology of investigation faith healing, like faith itself, must, in its very nature, remain beyond the realms of science. Not proven, not unproven, a subject for belief and ridicule and controversy; but perhaps most important of all, a great source of hope to the otherwise hopeless. (See also CAYCE; CHRISTIAN SCIENCE; HEALING GODS; LOURDES.)

LOUIS ROSE

FURTHER READING: G. W. Groddeck, *The Unknown Self* (trans. by V. M. E. Collins, Funk and Wagnalls, 1951); J. G. Howels ed., *Modern Perspectives in World Psychiatry*: see chapter on 'Phenomena of Hypnosis' (Brunner-Mazel, 1975); L. Rose, *Faith Healing* (Gollancz, London, 1968); C. J. S. Thompson, *Magic and Healing* (Gale, 1973). For a biography of Harry Edwards, see Paul Miller, *Born to Heal* (Spiritualist Press, London, 1962).

FAKIR

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THE ARABIC WORD 'fakir' means a poor person, in the sense of poor in the sight of God rather than needy by misfortune. In the Islamic world it is used of those often wandering mendicants, who have renounced the world and put their trust in Allah, remembering the famous saying of the Prophet Mohammed, *Al-fakr fakhri* — 'poverty is my pride'.

The concept of a fakir is clearly similar to that of the medieval Christian friar. Although this is the strictly correct usage of the term, fakir is, in European languages, also used to describe Indian ascetics, somewhat doubtful individuals often pictured by the popular imagination as lying on beds of nails. These latter are more properly named 'sadhus' but as the word fakir is widely applied to both, this article considers the true Islamic fakir and the Hindu ascetic.

The Islamic fakirs may be historically divided into two groups, those 'within the law' (*ba shor*) and those 'without the law' (*be shor*). The former have always strictly based their lives according to the doctrines and practices of Islam, while the latter, although describing themselves as Mohammedans, have been freer in their ways.

The ba shar fakirs are often called *salik*, a word denoting a traveller on the road to heaven. They have been organized in a large number of orders, all of which trace their descent back to either Abu Bakr or Ali, the first and fourth 'successors', or caliphs, to the prophet Mohammed. The earliest of these fraternities was founded about 770 AD. It seems that they were formed by religious enthusiasts as vehicles to ensure the continuance and transmission of the teachings of the prophet, perhaps more in a social rather than in a doctrinal sense. Not infrequently, an order of fakirs was drawn entirely from one walk of secular life — fisherman, camel-drivers and the like. These orders sprang up all over the Moslem world, obliging their members to devote time each day to private prayer and to attend a weekly prayer meeting called a *dhikr*.

The be shar orders were also numerous and often indulged in extremes of asceticism and self-mortification. The most popular order was founded by Zinda Shah Murdar, whose shrine is at Makanpur, in India. From this order have sprung the Islamic fakirs of India between whom and the Hindu sadhus there has been some interaction.

The Indian sadhu is a holy man, often an itinerant beggar, pedlar or wonder-worker, 'poor in the sight of God' like the fakir of Islam but usually more involved in the communal life of a still primitive country. Although sexuality may play an important part in the lives and practices of some, most folluw rigorous asceticism — one sect, for instance, wear an iron ring on the penis to show that their sexual desires

***Left* and *Right* Indian fakirs who practise various forms of self-mutilation as a means of acquiring spiritual or magical powers, often remain rooted to one spot for many years, maintaining one position**

E. O. Hoppe

E. K. Singh

This Indian holy man does penance by sitting in a circle of burning sods during the hottest part of the day

have been totally conquered. They engage in *tapas* – the way of 'active asceticism', the implacable mortification of the flesh, as opposed to mere contemplative, passive renunciation of the world. Their aim is to acquire both merit and spiritual or magical powers. Some remain immersed in water up to the waist for long periods; others wander about the vast country trying to bathe in as many sacred rivers as possible before they die. Some keep constantly on the move, others lie, sit or stand upon the same spot for years, until – it is said – creepers cover their limbs and birds nest in their hair. Some do indeed lie on beds of nails, others practise various forms of self-mutilation, including never unclenching their fists and allowing their finger nails to grow into the flesh. Many cover parts or all of their bodies with ashes, since ashes represent pure substances, the primal matter, present in all things, revealed by burning.

The sadhu may often also be recognized by characteristic possessions – his staff, for instance, frequently topped by representation of a skull, a trident or a phallus; his crutch, to support his chin or arm during meditation and his body at burial; his begging bowl (though some are forbidden to beg); his tongs, with which he tends his ritual fire and also uses as a clapper to accompany incantations. For many sadhus earn a living by magic and witchcraft maleficent and beneficent; others are fortune-tellers and interpreters of dreams, yet others makers and sellers of charms.

For many foreigners the Indian fakir has been the most obvious manifestation of the Hindu religion – and as many of them are undoubtedly rogues and their practices alien, if not abhorrent, to foreign sensibilities, Europeans and others have often gained a very perverted idea of Hindu beliefs and behaviour. But it is as well to reflect that when religion is a genuinely potent force, in a densely populated country still only superficially affected by modern technology, the religion of the market-place will, necessarily, be a very different thing from that of the palace or the cloister.

Falcon

To the ancient Egyptians a sacred bird, identified with the sky and the sun probably because it could fly so high: it was particularly associated with the god Horus who was depicted as a falcon or falcon-headed man and dead falcons were buried in expensive coffins.

See HORUS.

Michael Holford

Fall

The loss to man of divine grace as a result of disobedience: Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden after disobeying God's command and eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; their punishment was death, the pains of childbirth, the subjection of woman to man, and hard work: an angel with a flaming sword was set to guard Eden to prevent Adam, Eve and their descendants from returning.

See FIRST MAN.

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Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre

The petting of a small animal was often held to be proof that its owner was a witch. Many women were accused of giving suck to their 'familiars' in return for deeds performed by these supposedly supernatural companions

Previous page One of the 16th century Chelmsford witches with her imp or familiar ***Above*** Sketches by Breughel of witches capering and attempting to fly with broomsticks: they are attended by familiars including an owl and a cockerel ***Right*** At the sabbath demons were thought to assume the form of animals and the Devil himself often appeared as a goat and copulated with the witches

FAMILIARS

THE WITCH'S BLACK CAT has become firmly entrenched in popular imagination in Britain. Storybook witches all have cats as henchmen to help them with their spells and traditionally her cat is the one creature to which the witch is attached. Yet in the history of witchcraft the small animal kept as a crony appears fairly late, part of the final phase of witchcraft belief. Nor was the cat the only, or even the commonest, of the witches' pets: ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs, mice or any small common animal, also figure in reports. Blackbirds and crows were fairly frequent, being traditional birds of augury. Toads and frogs were also regarded as suitable pets, being cold blooded, but fishes are never mentioned – perhaps because the fish is an ancient Christian symbol as well as an emblem of chastity. There were also more exotic 'familiars' like the one that was said to have appeared to Bridget Bishop of Salem during the outbreak of witch hysteria there in the late 17th century: 'A black Thing . . . the Body was like that of a Monkey, the Feet like a Cock's, but the Face most like a man's . . .'

Ideas of witchcraft at the Salem trials were a direct import from the England of a generation earlier. In the rest of Europe, the pattern and traditions were rather different. In the widespread Continental witchcraft persecutions of the 15th and 16th centuries, accusations concerning familiars seem to have played little part: the pet imp in the form of an animal was a typically, if not exclusively, British phenomenon. Accusations of familiar-keeping occur as corroborative evidence most frequently in the 17th century British witch-trials, possibly because witchcraft only became a capital offence under the second Witchcraft Act of 1604. This Act, which also provided harsher penalties for the 'wasting' of men's bodies or goods – an accusation easy to make and hard to disprove – was particularly unfortunate for the aged, the anti-social and the isolated who were most liable to become obsessively attached to small animals. Hence one of the modern stereotypes of the witch – the poor old crone, persecuted because she has only her cat for company.

Breast-Feeding the Familiar

While there is undoubtedly some truth in this image, the association between witches and the animal kingdom is far more complex and its roots go far back to the origins of sorcery. The use of animals' skins and masks in ancient witchcraft fertility rituals and the legends of werewolves are both reflections of the persistent idea that witches could, at will, turn themselves into animals. Tales of this kind crop up all over the world. In countries where the bear and the wolf (the oldest incarnations) died out during the Middle Ages, the cat, already associated with the witch for other reasons, was substituted in the myth.

There are many 15th and 16th century tales, chiefly from the Continent and from Scotland, of witches who became cats at night for their revels and turned themselves back again into their human form at daybreak. Often these witches were unmasked because wounds which had been inflicted on the cats would be evident the next day on the bodies of highly respected female members of the community.

Such tales, particularly those in which the practitioner assumed animal shape when she wanted to perform some evil deed unobserved, were confused by some authorities with the keeping of familiars, but there is a distinction: the true familiar spirit was an imp or minor devil kept by the witch and distinct from herself. It was also distinct from the Devil in person. It was sometimes given or sold to the witch *by* that gentleman, but here too confusions arose on account of the Devil's own habit of assuming a variety

of animal forms. Thus Dame Alice Kyteler, a celebrated 14th century witch of good social standing, was said to be frequented by a dark man called Robert Artisson who also appeared to her on occasions in the shape of a cat or dog. Clearly this was thought to be the Devil-God himself – the name 'Artis' suggesting a possible derivation from a pagan deity of Mediterranean origin. (See KYTELER.)

Three centuries later, however, when the ancient fertility rites were further decayed and forgotten, those who reported on the trial of Abre Grinsett in Suffolk were probably mistaken when they assumed that the witch considered it to be the actual Prince of Darkness 'who did appear in the form of a Pretty hansom Young Man first, and since Appeareth to her in the form of a blackish Gray Cat or Kitling, that it sucketh of a Tett which searchers since saw in the place she mentioned.' Suffolk was then a backward, rural area; elsewhere by that date (1665) informed opinion had begun to take the view that it was surely unlikely that the Devil in person 'would consent to be at the beck and call of poor, doting women.'

In other respects the description of Abre Grinsett's familiar is within the classic tradition of such cases. The suckling of the familiar by the witch is a typical detail which throws light both on the true nature of the relationship and on the evil interdependence which was popularly believed to characterize it. The modern reader, inclined to take the part of the 'harmless old women' may believe that this tale of suckling was a dirty-minded calumny spread by the witch-hunters, but it should be remembered that such events are set in an era when people lived closer to Nature, when infants were universally fed at the breast for want of any other alternative method, and thus many women went on being 'in milk' and casually nursing other babies besides their own for the greater part of their reproductive lives. It was apparently not uncommon for an old granny, left to mind a baby, to put it to her dry breast just to soothe it if it were fretful. It will be appreciated that in these circumstances to give the breast to a treasured animal would be seen as an exaggerated piece of petting but not necessarily as an unnatural or perverted action.

In Russia, as late as the 19th century, there are cases recorded of peasant women being ordered by their masters to nurse bear cubs that were being reared for sport. It therefore seems likely that much of the evidence about women suckling their pets was quite genuine, especially since they themselves frequently gave the animals nicknames such as 'Suckin' or 'Titty'. A 16th century Somerset witch, for instance, stated that 'her Familiar doth commonly suck her right Breast about seven at night, in the shape of a little cat of dunnish colour . . . and when she is suckt, she is in a kind of Trance.' It is probable that what alarmed our ancestors was not the intimacy of the relationship between mistress and familiar, but the supposition that the woman was thus rewarding her creature for malevolent services it performed for her.

Cats Burnt as Devils

Some familiars were thought to carry the witch through the air to sabbath revels – a version of the common tradition that witches themselves could fly – though the evidence is further confused by the coincidence that 'cat' is also an old dialect word for 'stick' (broomstick). More commonly, the spirit was supposed to act as a medium for ill-doing. Elizabeth Device, one of the Pendle, Lancashire, witches, had a brown dog called Ball through whom she was said to attempt to kill people who had offended her (see LANCASHIRE WITCHES). Another classic case was recorded in 1619, when a witch named Margaret Flower and her sister Philippa were hanged at Lincoln for using witchcraft to murder the eldest son of the Earl of Rutland. She said that among other rituals intended to kill the Earl's children and render the parents sterile, she had rubbed certain personal belongings of her victims, which she managed to steal, against the body of her cat. To ensure that no babies would be born, she had obtained feathers from the Countess's bed and had rubbed them on the cat's belly: this meant that the marriage would henceforth be barren. It seems probable that this witch, like many others, indeed regarded herself as a witch and actually performed the actions stated.

The cat employed – and doubtless cherished – by the Lincoln witch and her kind falls into a different category from the luckless animal that Agnes Sampson and her accomplices seized at random, christened and then cast into the sea, in an attempt to bring about the death by drowning of the future James I. The christening and ritual sacrifice of cats was a piece of magic that related back to fertility cults and the ceremonial sacrifice of the god; it survived as a rite in certain places, notably Aix-en-Provence, till the end of the 15th century. Elsewhere it was generally replaced during the Middle Ages by the burning of live cats as 'devils' on Good Friday or other significant days – a good example of a barbarous practice originating from pagan rites but later sanctioned by the Church, unchanged in essence, and adopted for a different purpose.

There are shades of the sacrificed cat in the latter-day witch's familiar – it was not uncommon for witches to make a small ceremony of naming their pets, often with a name suggested by the Devil their Master. It is also significant that cats seem to have been employed particularly, as in the Rutland case cited above, to bring about sterility: Bast, the cat-goddess of Egyptian origin, patron of fertility, became in the Christian world associated with sterility, that reversal of fertility that consists of 'taking' things for the Devil.

Most true familiars, far from meeting a sacrificial fate, seem to have been particularly long-lived. Jennet Dibble, one of a company of witches who plagued the Fairfax family at Fuiston, Yorkshire, in the early 17th century, had 'her spirit in the shape of a great black cat called Gibbe, which hath attended her now above forty years.' Others were handed down from one

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Many witches were accused of keeping familiars to perform malevolent services for them ***Top*** **A 17th century woodcut from** ***The Strange and Wonderful History of Old Mother Shipton*** **showing an old witch standing in a magic circle surrounded by imps and familiar spirits which she has invoked** ***Above*** **Three of the witches implicated in the Earl of Rutland 'hexing' case, with their familiars, a white dog, a mouse, an owl and a kitten called Pusse: one witch admitted that she had tried to kill the Earl's children by rubbing certain of her victim's personal belongings against the body of her cat**

witch to another, a circumstance which reflects the persistence of the sorcery tradition in one place or one family for generations. Elizabeth Francis, one of the Chelmsford witches arraigned in 1556, had a white-spotted cat called 'Sathan' who had been given to her by her grandmother and to whom she talked in a special 'hollow' voice. At the recitation of the Pater Noster in Latin it changed into a toad – shape-shifting was attributed to many familiars. She kept it 15 or 16 years and then, becoming weary of it, passed it on to another witch, Agnes Waterhouse. It was kept in a basket fed on bread and milk, and given a drop of blood every time it did something for her.

The belief that the familiar fed not only on milk but also on blood was a common one, which lent a more sinister twist to the character of the suckling familiar. Abre Grinsett's imp sucked 'at a Tett which Searchers since saw in the place she mentioned' that is, a special teat or 'witch's pap' which might be anywhere on her body but most probably 'in the secretest part'. There is ample evidence concerning these unnatural teats, which came into the wider category of 'witch-marks' and were, for a time, infallible proof of a witch.

Matthew Hopkins, the notorious Witchfinder General who carried on his trade briefly but profitably during the Protectorate, employed a special female searcher to hunt out these 'paps' (see EAST ANGLIAN AND ESSEX WITCHES). Presumably some of them were quite genuine supernumerary nipples, which are not uncommon in either sex. Others were probably warts, or seem from their position to have been piles, though the searcher usually declared that they were unlike any piles she had previously seen. There is a contemporary engraving of Hopkins standing in an admonitory way over two witches and their attendant imps, among them a kitten, a rabbit, a polecat and a 'long-legg'd grayhound with a head like an Ox' called Vinegar Tom. Other names given to these familiars were Pecke-in-the-Crown, Grissel Greedigut, and Pyewackit. The outlandishness of these pet-names was considered at the time, by the unimaginative persecutors, proof of their Satanic origin.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that some of the defenceless old women arraigned with their pets must have been pathetic indeed, particularly when they were so confused in their wits as to implicate themselves readily. Delusion is not confined to paranoiac witch-hunters: it was found as often in the hunted, as a few of the more intelligent 17th century commentators pointed out. There is also the fact that, though torture was never officially sanctioned for witches in England, many an arrested woman was certainly bullied and harassed – put in a cramped gaol, walked up and down, nagged at for a confession, kept awake and watched continually to see if any small animal should creep in to visit her, in which case it would, of course, be a devil. As many of the country gaols of the period must have been squalid and tumbledown, infested with rats and cockroaches, it was all too likely that 'proof' should appear. This kind of circumstantial evidence on which a witch could be convicted (guilty unless proved innocent) is typified by the report of a trial at Bideford in 1682, a time when in better educated circles the whole reality of witchcraft was beginning to be called in question: 'This informant saith he saw a cat leap in at her window, when it was twilight: and this informant further saith, that he verily believeth the said cat to be the devil, and more saith not.'

Danger in Owning a Pet

But the keeping of pets was not confined to poor old women. At various times even eminent men fell under suspicion on this count including Oliver Cromwell who was said to have a familiar called Grimoald. Witchcraft seems to have been an issue, if a covert one, in the Civil War; each side suspected the other of practising it. It was whispered that the great storm that occurred on the night the Protector died was raised by the Fiend come to fetch him.

The distinguished German scholar Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) came under suspicion on the same count. A strange mixture of occultist and sceptic, worldly lawyer and genuinely original thinker he made a thorough and intensive study of alchemy, astrology and the occult arts and developed an analytical faculty which eventually led him to speak out against the whole unscientific basis on which the witchcraft hunts were carried out. He denounced the Inquisition at Metz, his

home town, and was forced to leave. Only his previous eminence and prosperity saved his life, for the automatic assumption was, as always when a witch-hunt is in process, that those who defend witches must be in league with them. At this point his pet, a much loved black poodle called Monsieur, naturally fell under suspicion as a familiar (see AGRIPPA).

It is perhaps not out of place to end this brief survey of the place of the pet in witchcraft with a quotation from a memoir which has nothing to do with witchcraft but is by a man who, throughout his life (he died in 1967) was an outsider of a modern kind, a highly promiscuous homosexual. After several decades in which, by his own account, he expended a disproportionate amount of time and energy in seeking ephemeral sexual gratification, he unexpectedly found peace and fulfilment in a close (but non-sexual) relationship with an Alsatian bitch – 'I don't believe there was anything special about her, except that she was rather a beauty . . . She offered me what I never had found in my sexual life, constant, single-hearted, incorruptible, uncritical devotion, which it is in the nature of dogs to offer. She placed herself entirely under my control. From the moment she established herself in my heart and home, my obsession with sex fell wholly away from me. The pubs I had spent so much of my time in were never revisited, my single desire was to get back to her . . . the fifteen years she lived with me were the happiest of my life.'

The witch in the 17th century sense of the term may have disappeared, the animal-magic on which the ancient rites were based may be virtually extinct in our civilization, but the human need of relationships with the animal world is not extinguished. The plane of spontaneous instinct and sensation which the animal represents continues to exert a powerful attraction for us.
(See also CAT.)

GILLIAN TINDALL

FURTHER READING: C. Hole, *Witchcraft in England* (Rowman, 1977) and *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (Irwin, Clarke, 1957); C. A. Hoyt, *Witchcraft* (Sth. Ill. Univ. Press, 1981); H. E. Wedeck, *A Treasury of Witchcraft* (Citadel Press, 1966).

Kevin Hoddle

Fan
Used throughout the world in religious ceremonies and processions: in the Middle Ages a *flabellum*, a silver plate or disc on a long handle was held by church officials to brush away flies from the sacred vessels, and fans made of peacock feathers are still carried by the Pope's attendants on state occasions: in Japan the spreading fan is an emblem of life and prosperity, and decorative examples are used by dancers to represent the rising sun, falling leaves and cascading waterfalls.

FASTING

THE DISCIPLINED CONTROL of the body's natural appetites as a means of spiritual progress is a practice which is common to virtually all religions, ancient and modern. Belief in the value of fasting is apparent in ancient times, as for example in the cults of Mithras, in those of Isis and Osiris and in the Eleusinian Mysteries. In the Old Testament, the fast imposed on the Ninevites (Jonah 3.5–10) involved not only human beings but also animals. And primitives fasted to purify themselves before rituals (as for instance the American Plains Indians before the great Sun Dance).

The purpose behind this denial of the flesh may be to atone for past sins and so avert divine wrath; to placate the gods in times of national calamity; or to prepare the self for communion with God by heightening the mental faculties and increasing spiritual receptivity. Indeed, the value of fasting for this last purpose is recognized not only in religion but in magic; the purpose behind Christ's fasting for 40 days in the desert before beginning his ministry may be compared with that of the magician who abstains from food and sex before attempting to perform certain tasks.

Fasting was an essential part of the Jewish religion from earliest times and *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, is still

R. K. Singh

Indian holy man fasting during the festival of Singhastha last held in 1968

observed by practising Jews everywhere. Christ himself was careful to observe Jewish laws relating to fasting, although he spoke strongly against the ostentatious practices of the Pharisees. Chief among the Christian fasts is Lent, the 40 days before Easter. In the 6th century the Church introduced fasting as a penance for sinners. Many Christian mystics have seen in fasting the means to apprehend the vision of God: the practice was incorporated in monastic life as an aid to prayer, although excessive fasting, after the Reformation, was condemned along with other extreme forms of asceticism.

In the East, fasting has formed part of the practice of nearly all the great religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam; in an extreme form by the sadhus and fakirs of India and the Sufis of Islam. In modern times Mahatma Gandhi adopted the practice for the twin purposes of using it publicly as a political instrument and privately as a form of self-punishment and atonement. Among his many 'fasts unto death' that of 1931 proved a successful form of protest against separate electorates for the deprived classes, 'the untouchables'.

In the world of Islam, the fast of *Ramadan*, enjoined by the Prophet, is observed daily for a month, during which the partaking of food, sex and tobacco is forbidden between the hours of dawn and dusk. In modern society, even schoolchildren over the age of ten are expected to observe *Ramadan*. Traditionally the moment when fasting is to begin is when the light of the dawn enables the faithful to tell a black thread from a white, and ends at nightfall, when he can no longer distinguish between these colours. In the words of the writer Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf, the purpose of fasting in Islam is 'primarily a spiritual discipline and as a consequence it inculcates a moral discipline.'

Today in the increasingly secular society of the West, fasting is more likely to be practised for reasons of health or vanity than as a spiritual exercise. But there is also a vague hope that from this chastening experience one will emerge 'a new man' or woman – preserving one of the original ideas behind fasting, that of purification.

(See also FAKIR; SELF-DENIAL.)

Are we the pawns of our genes, the prisoners of predestination, or have we the power of choice? The role of fate in our daily lives concerns not only the philosopher and the priest but the ordinary man in the street

FATE

FROM THAT DISTANT TIME when man first became a thinking animal he must have been concerned, however dimly, with fate: his own fate and that of the world about him. It is doubtful if his attitude has changed much since then. He ponders on what fate has in store for him: if his luck will be good in the future; what his destiny will be and that of the whole human race. His attitude hovers between a feeling of total submission to what is bound to come, and a defiant striving to discover some method by which he can avert the bad and encourage the good, and therefore bend fate to his desires. From these attitudes have grown doctrines of predestination and free will, the division between the theory of determinism and that of choice.

The word fate derives from the Latin *fatum*, meaning a spoken decree presumed to come from the gods. It is that principle of determining cause or will, by which things in general are supposed to come to be as they are, and events to happen as they do, in a word, destiny. That which is destined or decreed is known as one's appointed lot, and collectively, man's ultimate lot. The conception of a foreordained pattern of individual or collective existence has been anthropomorphized into a deity or deities evolved from a primeval shadowy entity.

The Greeks called the goddess of fate Nemesis, the divine anger, daughter of Night, the instrument through which the gods punished those men who grew proud through riches or fame, of whom they were jealous or angry. As time went by, civilization called for a more kindly spirit of destiny and this goddess was transformed into Adrasteia, the Inevitable One, whom no man may escape. The executors of the decrees of Nemesis were the Erinyes, known to the Romans as the Furiae. These Furies hounded out and punished parricides and those who violated their sworn word. The Erinyes were born of the earth goddess Ge or Gaea; their association with Earth helps to explain a title of Demeter, 'Erinys', representing one aspect of this goddess which was concerned with powers of vengeance. In this context the triple goddesses of fate were given the names Tisiphone, Alecto and Megaera. Their faces were black, with living snakes for hair. They hunted the evil-doers with flaming torches and scourges in their claw-like hands, and in hell they tormented the guilty.

Another name by which these fate goddesses were known to the Greeks was the *Moirai* or *Aisai* (Latin, *Parcae*) mighty goddesses of birth and death who allotted joy and sorrow to mankind. Hesiod recorded their names as follows: Clotho, the spinner of man's destiny, Lachesis who weaves the web of chance or luck by which his life is sustained, and Atropos the inescapable one, who cuts the life thread with her scissors when death comes.

Giraudon

Left **Orestes, hounded by the Erinyes after murdering his own mother, is purified by Apollo with a pig: in Greek mythology, the Erinyes or Furies carried out the decrees of the goddess of fate, and punished those guilty of parricide: Greek krater from the Louvre *Right* Astrology with the three Fates of Greek mythology, Clotho, the spinner of destiny, Lachesis, weaver of chance, and Atropos, who cuts the thread of life: French cabalistic MS**

M. Laléance

Eugen Kusch

British Museum

The common man, unconcerned with lofty concepts of fate and free will, felt himself to be at the mercy of capricious gods who had to be placated if the worst decrees of destiny were to be avoided *Left* A statue of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of fortune and prosperity *Right* Medieval representation of the goddess of fortune with six hands, symbols of providence and protection

The whole of man's life was thus shadowed by these sisters; they presided at his birth, were invoked at his marriage, and as the Keres were present at his death. Zeus permitted them to sit in the assembly of the gods so that they could carry out his decrees, but some say that he himself was under their dominion. They also held the powers of prophecy and as Hecate are worshipped by witches to this day. They bore still other names: Tyche or Fortune who wore a crown and became guardian of cities; Ate the Malevolent who drives men on to irresponsible action, and Litai the Supplicator, who offers prayers for suffering humanity. Stern matrons in their positive roles, they took on the appearance of withered, wrinkled and lame old hags when thwarting the enterprises of man.

The Triple Goddess

In the Scandinavian and Germanic traditions the Fates were known as the Norns. They sat at the foot of the Tree of Life and of the Universe, the Ash Tree *Yggdrasill*, and watered its roots. As with the Greeks, the Nordic Fate was originally one spirit, but eventually took on a triple nature. The Norns were the mistresses of fate, wise women who were judges of right and wrong and dispensers of good or ill fortune. Weavers of destiny, arbiters of life and death, they were named Urd, the Past, who was incredibly old, Verdandi, the Present and Skuld, the Future. The Valkyries, female warrior spirits who rode abroad when war raged, to gather in the souls of slain heroes and carry them to rewarding feasts in the Nordic heaven Valhalla, were instruments of their decrees.

In children's fairy tales today, such as the Sleeping Beauty, we find the Fates demoted into fairy godmothers who bestow such gifts as beauty and wisdom on a child at its baptismal party. The Romans called a birth fairy *Fata Scribunda*, 'she who writes the decrees' for the newly-born. In Arthurian legends these Fates condense into the personality of the enchantress Morgan le Fay, King Arthur's sister who led to Merlin's undoing (see MORGAN).

The Fates, as triple goddesses, were also known as the *Graiae* or Grey Ones of Hellas, having kinship with the Muses. Similar to or the same as the Norns, they lived in the icy north. They were sisters of the Gorgons, greyhaired from birth, and had but one eye and one tooth between them, both of which they passed around as needed. Perseus stole their eye and forced them to tell him the way to the Gorgons. Under whatever name they went, the Fates were all triple aspects of the Great White Goddess, as Robert Graves's researches make clear. The Great Goddess of the Mysteries guarding fate survives in the Tarot cards, appearing in more than one form in the Major Arcana. The pack of 78 Tarot cards, indeed, is known as 'The Book of Fate of the Bohemians, the Book of the Recorder or Thoth the god of Fate and Fortune' (see TAROT).

As far back as ancient Egypt and the Chaldeans, the seeming contradiction between the doctrine of fate and that of free will or the power to choose was felt. If man was fated to carry out an evil act, what place was there for moral choice? Yet the sages taught him to choose the good and reject the evil and he felt intuitively within himself that he had the will to choose, yet at the same time he had the feeling of the inevitability of destiny throughout his life. If all was predestined why petition the gods with prayers, why offer them sacrifices, why strive for better things to come about? The answer to this ancient question, as urged by the priestly scribes, was silence: out of the silence, the magi said, the answer would be made clear: 'The gods love the silent man more than him who is loud of voice.' Man was exhorted not to search too deeply into the hidden ways of the gods, but to accept their decrees though they might seem unjust and yet walk in the way of righteousness.

For the common man, unconcerned with lofty concepts of fate and free will, the important question was, as it has always been, how can one avert the worst decrees of destiny and encourage good fortune? How can one protect oneself and those one loves from the cruel slings and arrows of the gods?

How can one placate the Fates and gain the kind services of the good goddess Fortuna or Luck? Why, even the high gods could cast the Evil Eye of dire fatality upon us! Belief in the Evil Eye by both evil wishers and by the unsuspecting possessors of this gift or curse was universal, and since good fortune and fertility were inextricably mingled in the mind of primitive man, protective measures against this baleful influence frequently took a phallic form. The horn, another symbol of fertility, is still used in this connection. (See EYE.)

Fate and Necessity

The thinking man, however, sought to find a more profound interpretation of fate and attempted in various ways to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable. Greek mentality was capable of mingling an oriental strain of mysticism in which the magic and the irrational had a place with a rational belief in determinism. Indeed the thought of the more enlightened of the Greek philosophers was orientated towards rationalism. Respectful of the Mysteries before these fell into a decline under the Romans, they were swayed by reason where a study of natural laws and an attempt to discover a common sense politic for the State was concerned. It is as if the Greeks practised an almost perfect or harmonious way of life that allowed for the satisfaction of the irrational needs of the unconscious mind through the Mysteries and the rational needs of the conscious mind through philosophy. They were both religious in their dedication to their noble, if unethical, divinities, and moral in their search for a sober, dignified, truth-respecting way of thinking and behaving in the face of day-to-day happenings. They felt that each had his or its appropriate place, pattern and function in a universe which does not hang upon the whim of the All Father, who himself obeys cosmic law. This law of life was fated and one was compelled to realize its plan for one had no other choice. This is that necessity which applies not only to the ways of men but also to the heavenly bodies – indeed to the whole of life in manifestation.

In attempting to explain the variations which appear within this overall plan, a tendency to overstep justifiable boundaries was postulated. This factor leads to strife, or at least unpredictable change. It allows for our feeling that we have free will and so can exercise judgement upon our acts. The impersonal law which is that of fate, punishes *hubris* or pride – a setting up of oneself against the law of the gods, a sense of the 'I' in opposition to the whole, the rebellious side of man's nature. When punishment has fallen upon the man who has allowed unbalanced force to sway his actions, then the eternal order which the violator or aggressor sought to combat was restored. This explanation of the machinery of the universe led gradually to a conviction that an abiding natural and human law, the foundation of an individual ethic with a social ur political conscience, existed in man.

When Greek thought became permeated with the astrological notions from Chaldean Egypt and India, then an understanding of the decrees of fate and destiny was sought through the study of the planets and their effect upon the lives of men and nations. In that blending of civilizations we can see the mingling of the Eastern cult of the stars with the Greek or Western rationalistic belief in fate or destiny. Epicurus (c 342–271 BC) taught that the gods existed but they did not trouble themselves with the affairs of men, and that man although subject to the powers of Nature, which could be studied scientifically, yet had free will and was, within certain bounds, master of his fate.

Out of the dilemma in which all men have been caught grew the theory or doctrine called Determinism which teaches that acts of the will and social changes result always from determining causes. Human acts are not free but determined by motives regarded as external forces acting on the will. Total rejection of the freedom of the will gave rise to the doctrine known as Necessitarianism, the theory that results follow by invariable sequence from causes. So again and again, we see the goddesses of Fate and Necessity holding sway over our most learned savants. Such theories attempt to make the phenomena of manifesting and evolving life definite by setting limitations upon them, saying that all such phenomena are necessary results of previously existing conditions.

Free Will and Choice

The champions of free will are relatively few among the learned, if we except the theologians of the Catholic Church. Upholders of self-determinism see volition and action as sometimes being determined by the will of the individual and not only by some outside deterministic or materialistic fate; that is, they are capable of being independent of external influence or internal conditions. Here we have the theory known as Indeterminism which holds that it is possible for an individual to choose a course of action independent of the stimuli affecting him, or the motive prompting him at the time of his making his choice. An uprush of primitive emotion from the unconscious may drive a man to kill, but by an act of will he resists this urge and thus avoids committing a crime. He himself determines his course of action in the very teeth of a blind force that might have been called destiny. So self-determinism is the guidance of the individual by his own accord – although he undoubtedly is influenced by previously learnt moral commands – by his free will in this wide sense, that is, his moral purposefulness. Those who decry such a power of choice are called Materialists.

Whether philosophy influenced later religious thought or the reverse it is hard to say, but it would seem that the religious outlook came first, according to what we know of primitive peoples who reflected on the issues of fate and free will. The Roman Church upholds the doctrine of free will even though in the gospels Jesus was destined for the Cross by his Father, and Judas was fated to betray him that this might come about. The Stoic school of philosophers united their concept of fate with that of astrology, for which St Augustine pronounced them in error. For since angels and men have free will, he argued, their lives are not governed from without. It is true that God has foreknowledge of our sins, but we do not sin because of this foreknowledge. St Thomas Aquinas rejected astrology and in face of the question, is there such a thing as fate, said in effect: we may give the name 'fate' to that order impressed by providence, but it is wiser not to use the name 'fate' as it is a pagan word.

With the coming of the Reformation both Calvin, the propagator of the reform in France and Switzerland, and Luther, insisted upon the vital importance of original sin and predestination. God, those reformers taught – founding their dogmas as they believed upon the Bible – had destined from eternity some of mankind to salvation and eternal life in heaven, and others to damnation and life in an everlasting hell.

Kismet and Karma

The man who trusts only in 'luck' or 'good fortune' may easily be led into a slothful or negative attitude to life. In the East there is a temptation to interpret the 'will of Allah' as implying 'there is nothing that I can do about it.' Is the Moslem teaching concerning the will of God or *Kismet* to be considered a doctrine of blind fatalism, and similarly, the far older Hindu doctrine of *Karma*? Certainly not, in spite of popular misconceptions. Both the Hindu Scriptures and the Koran of the Islamic peoples indicate that the will of the Lords of Karma or the will of Allah or God is absolute. From this the uninstructed think that therefore negative submission is all that is required of them. But while Moslems say that God misleads whom he will, Hindus insist on man's own personal responsibility for his destiny. Simplifying it, one could say that the Moslem has to do his very best with that which God allots to him, while the Hindu himself has, through countless incarnations, woven his own destiny and is, in this sense, master of his fate.

In the doctrine of Karma we see an attempt to bring the two ideas of fate and free will together. Living in the illusive present a man may see that which happens to him in his daily life as his fate but in fact, from this point of view, he has woven what happens to him in past lives and is free to improve his character in preparation for future existences. He is therefore the chooser of his chances, good or bad, and as such has fashioned his own good or bad luck.

The Chinese call fate *Ming*, a word meaning destiny, decree or mandate; the first of a more or less anthropomorphized Heaven. Man, the sages taught, receives the decrees of Heaven and therefore is of a more lofty nature than the beasts. He who does not understand the decrees of Heaven cannot become a Superior Man, a Sage, according to Confucius. Besides human nature it was thought there existed an external factor known as fate or destiny. Nature (*Hsing*) and fate are distinct from one another for there are people whose characters or natures are good and who yet meet an

unlucky fate, whereas there are others whose natures are bad and yet who meet with a lucky fate. The doing of good or bad, being virtuous or evil, depends upon one's own character or nature. But calamity or good fortune depend upon fate. This, said Wang Ch'ung (1st century AD) is self-evident and refutes the popular belief that doers of good meet with good fortune while evil-doers meet with bad fortune, which through everyday experience we know not to be the case. That which happens without man's causing it to happen is from fate, said Mencius (c 371–288 BC). That which one meets by seeming chance is actually fate. So it is prudent to recognize and accept the inevitable and to quietly live at ease amidst events.

Stronger Than Instinct

Did fate relegate us to the shackles of mere heredity and environment? Did the Norns make us pawns of our genes? Of our physical, emotional and mental functions only? Our will to live is biological, that is, of the goddess Necessity. But our seeming will to choose may, under certain circumstances, be orientated otherwise than biologically, for we can choose to die as a sacrifice for others or by taking our own lives in despair or through a sense of honour.

The evolution of man's intelligence has permitted at least an appearance of some modicum of free will, of self-determination, and even if the range of this freedom is still extremely limited, there is no reason why it should not grow larger in the future.

Nothing in life is static, all moves, changes, has within it some urge to make something new, different, more complete. This rebel urge in the heart of the ordered workings of the law of life is what flowers in man as intelligence, the director of the will. It is the belief that anything is inexorable, solid, for ever fixed in a certain pattern that is illusion; that which flows into ever new channels is the real.

(See DIVINATION; LUCK; PREDESTINATION.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

Greek gold pectoral ornament of the 7th century BC depicting the Lady of the Beasts, possibly Artemis; bells were often attached to amulets, because their jingling was thought to avert the Evil Eye and bring good luck

Michael Holford

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

From a disreputable dabbler in the black arts to the apotheosis of mankind's dilemma: the transformation of Faust over the centuries is as strange as any of the miracles claimed by this 16th century magician

FAUST

THE STORY OF FAUST, or Dr Faustus, who sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for greater knowledge and power, has inspired countless plays and books over the centuries. Under Christian influence the revered magus of ancient days was transformed into a seedy charlatan who must suffer in life and face eternal damnation after death. Yet, this terrible fate emphasized rather than denigrated the powers of witch and magician, who were consequently feared by most people and secretly emulated by some.

The Reformation and the witch-hunters of the 16th century especially singled out the Faust tales, widely told among an uneducated populace, to serve as a dire warning against dabbling in the black arts to gain knowledge above that granted to ordinary men; Faust with his pact and mythical deeds, became the archetype of the legendary magician.

The historical Faust may be regarded as little more than a pebble round which has gathered the moss of later legend although

Aerofilms

undoubtedly, such a man existed some time in the early 16th century in Germany. It was formerly held that he was identical with a printer named Johann Fust (or Faust) who was born in 1400 and died in the plague in 1466, but this theory is now discredited. The facts about the 'real' Faust are still obscure and indeed the records relating to the name are so contradictory that it seems that they can only be accounted for by the hypothesis that either Faust possessed a dual personality – being at the same time a distinguished doctor of theology and a disreputable dabbler in the black arts – or that two men, Georgius and Johann, used the same surname. E. M. Butler has put forward an interesting theory that Georgius and Johann might have been twins.

A Faust who called himself Georgius Sabellicus Faustus Junior, and who claimed to be a necromancer, astrologer, alchemist, soothsayer and clairvoyant, was referred to contemptuously in a letter dated 1507 by the Abbé Tritheim of Spanheim in Germany, who called him a fool, an idle boaster and a charlatan. Several other contemporary writers had a similarly low opinion of this man, who it appears had to flee from his post at a school in Kreuznach when it was discovered that he had taken part in 'the most dastardly form of lewdness' with his pupils. In 1528 a Dr Georgius Faust 'of Helmstedt' was reported to be making wild astrological pronouncements and he was later to be banished from Ingolstadt for soothsaying. It is also recorded in 1532 that the city of Nuremberg refused a safe conduct to the 'great sodomite and necromancer', Dr Faust.

Over the same period it is recorded that in 1509 a Johann Faust obtained a theology degree at Heidelberg, where he distinguished himself brilliantly. Yet a few years later, in 1513, a man named Georgius Faust, described as 'the demigod of Heidelberg' (a title which would appear more appropriate to Johann) was overheard by the Canon of St Mary's, Gotha, boasting and spouting nonsense in an Erfurt inn. A number of other references to Faust between the years 1520–1540 are similarly confusing and fail to provide an answer to the question of the identity of the 'real' Faustus or to make it clear whether it was a case of dual personality or whether the records relate to two different people. It appears, however, that around 1540, his – or their – career came to an end, and prosaic records give place to fantastic rumour and legend.

Mansell Collection

Far left **Imaginative portrait of Dr Faust, described by contemporaries as a charlatan** ***Above*** **Later legends told how he performed feats of magic and made a pact with the Devil:** ***Dr Faustus*** **or** ***The Astrologer*** **by Rembrandt**

Miracles or Juggler's Tricks?

Whoever he was it seems that the Faust who was the basis of the later legend frequented the lower haunts of society, and consorted with charlatans, quacks and jugglers in shady taverns, where he boasted of his magical prowess and performed incredible feats. Thus it was first among ordinary folk that he acquired his supernatural reputation, and soon everyone was giving some wild but irrefutable example of the magician's uncanny powers.

It is not surprising that Faust makes little or no appearance in serious works on magic, for the humanist and genuine student of the occult poured scorn on his deeds, and were infuriated by the braggart who was a great magician solely in his own opinion. According to Faust's boasts his own miracles far outdid Christ's, and if the works of Plato or Aristotle were ever lost, he claimed he could not only reproduce, but improve them.

The fairly reliable recorder and demonologist, Johannes Wier (1515–88), exposed Faust as a charlatan in *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, and stated that the pseudo-magician had started the rumour that he was in league with the Devil, whom he familiarly called his 'brother-in-law' or 'crony', to give himself the mysterious reputation which had belonged to powerful wizards of the past. He refers to Faust as a drunken vagabond who had studied magic at Cracow and had practised this art throughout Germany 'with unspeakable deceit, many lies and great effect.' Another contemporary, the classical scholar, Joachim Camerarius (1500–74), spoke of Faust's 'juggler's tricks', and in 1539 a physician from Worms named Begardi classes Faust among 'wicked, cheating, useless and unlearned Doctors.'

A story supporting the view that Faust's magic was no more than trickery liberally laced with malice and impudence also suggests that he might go down in history as one of the inventors of a depilatory cream: the

special arsenical salve he prescribed for a client, to save him shaving, not only removed his beard but also the flesh.

The legends might have lost their impact and become merely another thread in the tapestry of German folklore but for the rising tide of Protestantism, with its anti-humanistic leanings which strove to quench the growing thirst for knowledge, and its unquestioning belief in the unlimited powers of the Devil. It was Johann Gast, a Swiss Protestant pastor, who first attributed genuine supernatural powers to Faust. In a sermon preached in 1548, Gast described his experiences when he once dined with Faust in Basle. The fact that out-of-season game was served at the meal naturally counted as supernatural detail, and Gast declared that Faust's horse and dog – which often took the form of a servant – were really demons. Popular belief in Faust's dealings with the Devil was not only strengthened but encouraged by Luther, and his colleague, Melanchthon; the latter retold how Faust had swallowed whole a rival magician, and tried unsuccessfully to fly to Venice.

More 'evidence' was presented to an ever-credulous public, but who could doubt the truth of the earnest Lutherans' words? It was said that the Devil came in person to claim Faust at his death, and that the house shook and rattled terribly from the supernatural force. Some claimed that the body was torn apart, others that the corpse turned on its face five times despite the efforts of witnesses to lay it on its back.

Compared with famous contemporary magicians such as Paracelsus, Nostradamus and Agrippa, who were also suspected of having dealings with the Devil, Faust's own magical reputation was in some doubt, yet only this shady charlatan became the centre of an undying legend.

Face That Launched a Fleet

So little was known about Faust even in his own century that this allowed great latitude for myth making. Between 1570 and 1578 a manuscript collection of five more-or-less apocryphal Faustian tales appeared. However, Faust's widespread fame is due to his anonymous first biographer, whose *Faust-book* was published in Frankfurt by Johann Spies in 1587. Some of the anecdotes were taken directly from Hogel's *Erfurt Chronicle*, while others, which had been told about Virgil, Merlin, Pope Silvester II, Albertus Magnus, and Simon Magus, were re-attributed to Faust.

Although crudely written and spiced with heavy humour about Faust's dupes, the first *Faust-book* contained the inspiration for later really great works. The summoning of Helen of Troy from Hades, which ensured Faust's damnation, fired the imagination of the playwright Christopher Marlowe to write some of the most beautiful lines in English poetry:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!

The unknown author's obviously sincere belief in the truth of his tale, and his vivid evocation of hell and the anguished mind of the magician have an undeniable conviction and give tremendous dramatic impact to this cautionary story. Many of the original passages from the Spies *Faust-book* were incorporated by the modern German writer Thomas Mann in his powerful and moving book *Doktor Faustus* (1947).

A fearful reality was also conveyed by the creation of Faust's familiar spirit Mephostophiles, which became Mephistopheles in the 18th century. The identification of a demon by name imbued it with a convincing and terrifying personality that could not be ignored. The first *Faust-book* was an immediate success, and was quickly translated into low German, Danish, Dutch, English and French, and later into Polish and Czech. In Germany other versions soon appeared, one in rhyme.

In 1599 another *Faust-book*, by Rudolf Widmann, was published. It was a very mangled edition of the original, full of pious preaching, and blatantly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic in its tone; this version was edited in 1674 by Johann Pfitzer. Lastly appeared around 1712 a version which became the most popular of all the *Faust-books*, under the anonymous authorship of 'A Christian Believer', it was entitled *The League with the Devil Established by the World-Famous Archnecromancer and Wizard Dr Johann Faust*. With the appearance of this well known chapbook the original *Faust-book* was almost forgotten, although its influence could be seen in much more

renowned and serious works. An English translation of 1592 inspired Christopher Marlowe's play *The Tragicall History of Dr Faustus* which appeared between 1592 and 1604. Marlowe's inclusion of a vein of comedy in the drama was instrumental in the degeneration of the original tragic tale into various farcical versions, such as William Mountfort's *Life and Death of Dr Faustus with the Humours of Harlequin and Scaramouche* produced in 1684, and John Thurmond's Drury Lane pantomime *Harlequin Dr Faustus* performed in 1724.

Marlowe's play was imported into Germany by companies of English strolling actors in the early 17th century, and as few people understood the English words, the comedy elements were stressed. Numerous German versions soon altered the text, and dispensed with much of the original in favour of the use of spectacular devices and a lot of coarse humour.

For 200 years Faust dramas of this flavour were widely presented on the European stage, with Marlowe's theme more-or-less retained in all of them. An English puppet production was staged in 1728, and such performances were very popular in fairground booths throughout Europe. These puppet plays, although giving tremendous licence to the antics of Caspar, the clown, never failed to show Faust's tragic death and final damnation.

19th century illustrations to Goethe's *Faust*: in Goethe's version the magician is saved from eternal damnation by the intercession of God *Left* Taken to a witch's kitchen by Mephistopheles. Faust is tempted by the illusory vision of a beautiful girl *Right* At the witches' sabbath on the Brocken, the tragic figure of the girl he has used appears to him and he suffers a pang of conscience

Debasement of Legend

Apart from the development of the Faustian theme in drama and literature, and later in ballet and opera, a very significant offshoot of the legend appeared in the form of magical books. They contained a jumble of ancient Chaldean words obtained from Greek and Roman papyri as well as elaborate Jewish rituals. Faust's name on the title pages, purporting to have written and successfully used the contents, as well as in the ceremonies and spells, widely publicized these manuals. The would-be magician of the 17th and 18th centuries believed, among other things, that the magic contained in these books could help in finding and raising buried treasure.

Compilers of these greedy and blasphemous works clung to the tradition that they could outwit the demons, yet in order to increase their sales utilized the name of the very magician whose own legend told only of damnation for dabbling in the forbidden arts. On the whole, the Faust of these magic manuals was a meagre, grasping fellow, who conjured up spirits to provide him with precious jewels or the Elixir of Life and threatened the demons into obedience. This is completely out of character with the Faust who vowed his body and soul to the demon Mephistopheles after 24 years in return for knowledge. The renunciation of God and an eternity spent in hell are very different matters from whistling up demons to do your bidding with the aid of an easily bought manual, and without incurring any risk to the magician.

The concept of magic in the Faust legend was dark and tragic, and the pact with the Devil the inevitable means of damnation. Yet, the Faustian rituals, no doubt partly in order not to scare off prospective buyers, ignored, denied, explained away, or even showed how to get around the diabolical contract.

Among the most famous of these manuals is *Magia Naturalis et Innaturalis* from the Grand Duke of Weimar's library. It gave the text of the soul-forfeiting agreement, but also showed how, while retaining the benefits, it could be renounced through the grace of God. It seems quite incredible that these mixtures of paganism, Devil worship and downright mumbo-jumbo should also have contained pious references to, and a confident belief in the intercession of the Christian God.

The Redemption of Faust

In the 18th century the German writers Lessing and Goethe, while obviously too enlightened to give any credence to the contents of these magic books, were well acquainted with them, and they introduced a totally new dimension into the Faust story: that of his eventual salvation through the intercession of God. Lessing was a

Scene from a National Theatre production of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*; Faust is confronted by the Seven Deadly Sins, Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth and Lechery

Reg Wilson

rationalist for whom the very quest for knowledge was the ennobling factor in mankind's evolution. He wrote a Faust drama (of which only fragments survive) and in some scenes suggested the magician's ultimate reconciliation with his maker. The idea appealed to a number of writers, including Goethe, whose much rewritten and revised *Faust* appeared in two parts: part one in 1808, and part two in 1832 after Goethe's death. The prologue in part one contains the promise of salvation and the final act in part two depicts Faust's redemption.

This masterpiece is not merely the retelling of an old legend with a differently conceived ending, but a philosophical and psychological study of the meaning of human destiny. Faust serves as the personification of humanity seeking wisdom. No matter what sins might be committed during that search, God will grant him salvation because of that very quest for knowledge and truth. In Goethe's *Faust* appears the final form and highest expression of the legend.

Other celebrated writers, however, remained unaffected by Lessing and Goethe, and belong to the traditionalist school of thought, adhering closely to Marlowe's tragic portrayal of a doomed Faust for whom there is no possibility of redemption. None of them seem able to accept Goethe's hopeful ending, and Paul Valéry's *Mon Faust* published in 1946, particularly emphasizes the harm in gaining absolute knowledge with its corresponding power. Thomas Mann's complex and symbolic novel referred to earlier, goes further in examining the very meaning of history, and the paradoxes inherent in an artist's nature and life.

European literature in the 19th century took the Faust legend and interwove it with another traditional tragic myth, that of Don Juan, as in Christian Grabbe's famous work *Don Juan and Faust* which was published in 1829.

From the shadowy reality of a despised charlatan, whose posthumous career took him through great as well as tawdry works of art, emerges not only the character of the legendary black magician, but also the apotheosis of mankind's dilemma.

There are two choices of thought open to those who wish to delve into the tangled skein of Faustian legend: either that of the traditionalist who believes that man is inescapably doomed to destroy himself through his thirst for knowledge and power, or that of the salvationist, who must believe that no matter what transgressions mankind commits in his attempt to attain wisdom, God has vowed to redeem him.

SANDY SHULMAN

FURTHER READING: E.M. Butler, *The Fortunes of Faust* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); Robert Nye, *Faust* (Putnam, 1981); M. Palencia-Roth, ed., *Perspectives an Faust* (Humanities, 1983); P.M. Palmer and R.P. More, *The Sources of the Faust Tradition from Simon Magus to Lessing*.

FEATHER

THE PROVERBIAL LIGHTNESS of the feather – so sensitive that held to the lips of a dying man it betrays whether he is still breathing or not – is the aspect which the ancient Egyptians associated with the hairbreadth balance between truth and lying. In the old Egyptian picture-language, the hieroglyph for Maat, goddess of truth and therefore also of justice, was the ostrich feather, and in their ritual beliefs about death and the consequent journey to the underworld, the symbolic feather plays a vital role in the Judgement of the Dead. The deceased entered the Hall of Judgement, which was presided over by Osiris seated on his throne, clad in a tight-fitting robe of feathers, emblem of righteousness. Around the hall sat the 42 judges, each with the feather of truth on his head. The heart of the dead man was placed in one pan of the scales and in the other was placed Maat, or her symbolic representative the feather, to test the truthfulness of his testimony. Only if the two pans were perfectly balanced, did Osiris give favourable judgement: 'Let the deceased depart victorious.'
(See JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.)

Symbol of Peace

Of course many American Indian tribes also used feathers in this way, adding an extra feather to their headgear for every slain enemy. From this practice grew the superb traditional war bonnets of the Plains Indians – cascades of feathers (usually from the golden eagle) down warriors' backs.

The bonnets seem to have originated with the Siouan tribes; other Indians had their own sort, such as the Blackfoot war bonnet, a crown of feathers standing upright around a headband. But the usual inter-tribal borrowings led to the widespread adoption of the Sioux bonnets.

Feathers also functioned most centrally in American Indian religious practice – there reflecting a basic mythological idea, that birds are links and mediators between men and gods. Feathers had a mostly ornamental use for many north-west Pacific tribes, though such ornaments would indicate rank and status in highly status-conscious communities. (Similar considerations operated with the magnificent feather cloaks worn by Mexican and south-east American Indians; and the Creeks and others had turkey-feather fans to be carried during ceremonies as a sign of leadership.) But the north-west tribes also brought feathers into religion, in the form of down – which, as a symbol of peace, according to P. E. Goddard, was strewn over men's hair on all religious occasions.

More importantly, feathers were a major part of the ceremonial decorations on many of the objects used in Indian religious worship. Feathers decorated the calumet pipe that was smoked in so many rites of the Plains – and that was borrowed (from the Pawnee and others) by eastern tribes, Iroquois and Cherokee. The eastern Indians also borrowed an important rite called the Eagle Dance, in which feathers naturally functioned – mainly in the form of fans made from four eagle, turkey or wild goose feathers which were carried by the dancers.

C. M. Dixon

Feathers have, predictably, many magical and ritual roles in the complex religious activity of south-western Indians. But their greatest prominence is as the primary symbolic decoration on the 'prayer sticks' that are so important to such tribes as the Pueblo or Navaho. The feathers seem to be the specific 'carriers' of the prayer that is being offered up by means of the sticks. Sometimes, indeed, a cluster of feathers not on a stick can have the property of carrying a prayer.

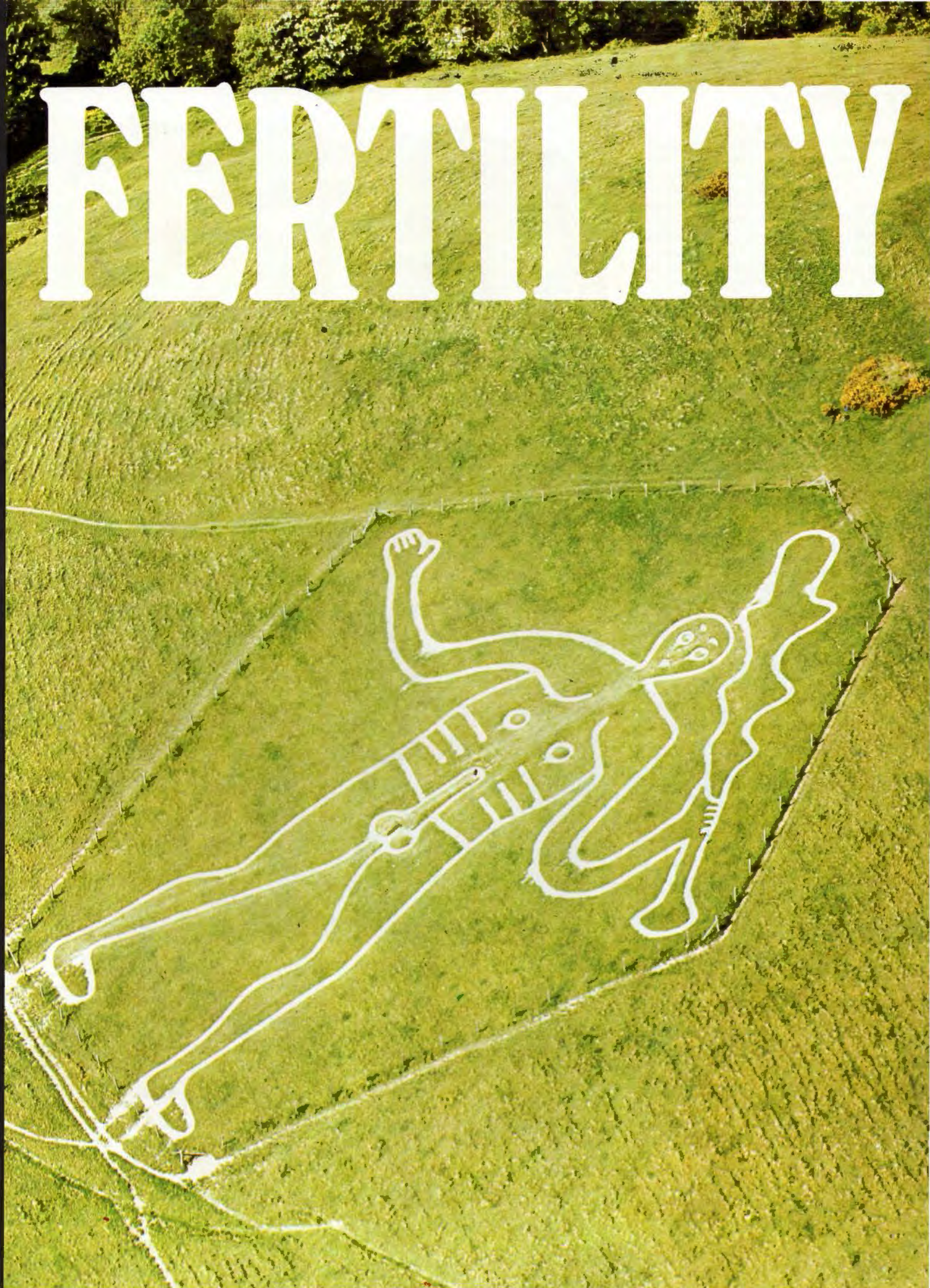
And it seems that different feathers can have different associations. So (to oversimplify the symbolism) eagle feathers that are tinted red are linked with curing societies, but in natural colours they are associated with the dead, as are turkey feathers; hawk feathers are connected with war, and so on.

In Hungary during the 15th century struggles against the Ottoman Turks, only a man who had slain a Turk was permitted to sport a feather. The so-called Prince of Wales's feathers, the crest consisting of three ostrich feathers, has a similar provenance. It was taken by the Black Prince from John of Luxembourg, whom he left dying on the field at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 and it has remained the badge of the Heir Apparent to the English throne.

Facing page **Carnival dancers in Trinidad adorn themselves with thousands of feathers** ***Above*** **The Egyptian goddess Maat wearing the feather as a symbol of justice**

Syndication International

FERTILITY



Jorgen Bitsch

Primitive man often made images of beings with exaggerated sexual features, hoping by means of magic to appropriate some of the powers of fertility with which those figures were identified *Left* The Cerne Abbas Giant, cut into a Dorset hillside, is shown with an erect phallus: it is thought to have been a cult figure of Hercules dating from Romano-British times *Right* The crudely erotic figures on this African hut in Chad are designed to promote fertility

Primitive man believed that fertility, the principle at the root of all life, was entirely subject to the control of the spirit world

THE FASCINATING WORLD of magic and religion is often bewildering due to the vast variety of beliefs and practices which a century and a half of scholarship has accumulated. It is drawn from every age of mankind, and from every corner of the world. Much of it is extremely remote either in distance or time, and therefore very difficult to interpret. And yet because of the common bond of humanity which links us with bygone races, the attempt at understanding should be made.

'Fertility' is an exceedingly common word in religious history. By it we mean firstly, the principle of reproduction and growth, as it is manifested in man, in animals, and in the plant world; and secondly, by implication, the belief that reproduction and growth can be controlled and furthered by magical or religious means.

Man has always had a passionate concern with fertility: it has been a consistent feature of almost every type of human society, and particularly, agricultural society. Consequently, scholars have often seized upon the ideas of, and the rituals connected with fertility, as a key with which to attempt to decipher the mysteries of primitive religion and magic.

Ripeness Is All

The obsession itself is not difficult to account for. Man's knowledge of the biological and physiological processes controlling fertility is of very recent date, and human life-expectancy only a century or so ago was assured only on condition of frequent reproduction, for as long as the female of the human species remained capable of bearing children. Death was perhaps a calamity; but not so great a calamity as barrenness. Human life depended, too, upon the fertility of the fields which man tilled, the fruit which he gathered, the animals which he ate, milked, or hunted. It is only in the technological societies of the West that man has become to some extent liberated from a life-and-death struggle for existence, in which the need to reproduce his kind, and to see his crops growing and his animals bearing young, has been paramount. Elsewhere in the world, and at almost any other point in human history than the 20th century, failure of fertility, whether of man, animal, or field, has meant simply and starkly death. Small wonder, then, that the idea of fertility has loomed so large in his thinking and feeling.

Man's constant attempts to promote fertility are equally easy to explain, at least on one level. We know that in the past, the world has not as a rule been particularly amenable to man's efforts to control it. But despite this, the human animal has obstinately refused to give in. We must not fall into the trap of supposing that archaic man's attitude to the world in which he lived was one of dull resignation. Where archaic and primitive man differs from modern man is that whereas modern man strives to master certain fields of knowledge and influence, and acts accordingly, archaic man was convinced that ultimate power was never in his own hands. There were sources of power, but these lay without exception in the spirit world – the unseen, supernatural world of gods, spirits, demons and ghosts. What man had to do was to establish contact and rapport with the unseen world, with a view to channelling and applying its power. For power was a property of spirit; and thus the spirit world had to be approached, and if possible controlled, if man was to have a share in its blessings. Equally, since that power could (and frequently did) work in ways inimical to man, it had to be propitiated and kept friendly, lest it should simply sweep him, his children, his cattle and his crops away.

If a woman conceived, it was not because she had intercourse with her husband but because the spirits had put a child into her womb

Fertility was entirely subject to the power and control of the spirit world, whose greatest gift was the gift of life. When life came into being, it was because the spirits had made it so; when life ebbed and disappeared, or was withheld, this too was the work of spirits. In this most vital area of human experience, there was no effect without its spiritual cause. If a woman conceived, it was not because she had intercourse with her husband, but because the spirits had put a child into her womb. If the corn sprouted in due season, it was because the Sky Father had impregnated the Earth Mother and caused her to bring forth. If a child died, it was not through disease or malnutrition, but because an evil spirit had stolen away the child's soul.

To archaic man then, the world appeared to be governed by its own immutable laws: not the biological laws we think we know so well, but the laws of universal cause and effect, of giving and withholding, of correspondence and adjustment. And fertility – which is, after all, only a convenient Western abstraction – was completely subject to this pattern.

Rhythm of the Seasons

The first characteristic of the pattern of fertility, as man has experienced it for the greater part of history, is its cyclical character. In the temperate zones the rhythm of the seasons, on which so much depended, was utterly reliable and could without difficulty be regarded as a divine ordinance, as in the ancient Hebrew tradition: 'While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease' (Genesis 8. 22).

In parts of the world where the seasons were less well defined, other patterns took their place – patterns dominated by the alternation of wet and dry periods, by the phases of the moon, and the like. To the seasons corresponded the stages in the growth of the crops, and the mating habits of animals. Crops, animals and humans had their appropriate gestation periods. The menstrual cycle of women was seen to correspond with the phases of the moon. All this adds up to a conception of time, not as an ordinary linear progression from point A to point B, but as an infinitely repeated series of cycles, in which growth succeeds birth, maturity succeeds growth, and death succeeds maturity. But even death was not the end, for spring came to drive out winter, and the annual miracle of the rebirth of the crops served to remind man that life was always latent in death.

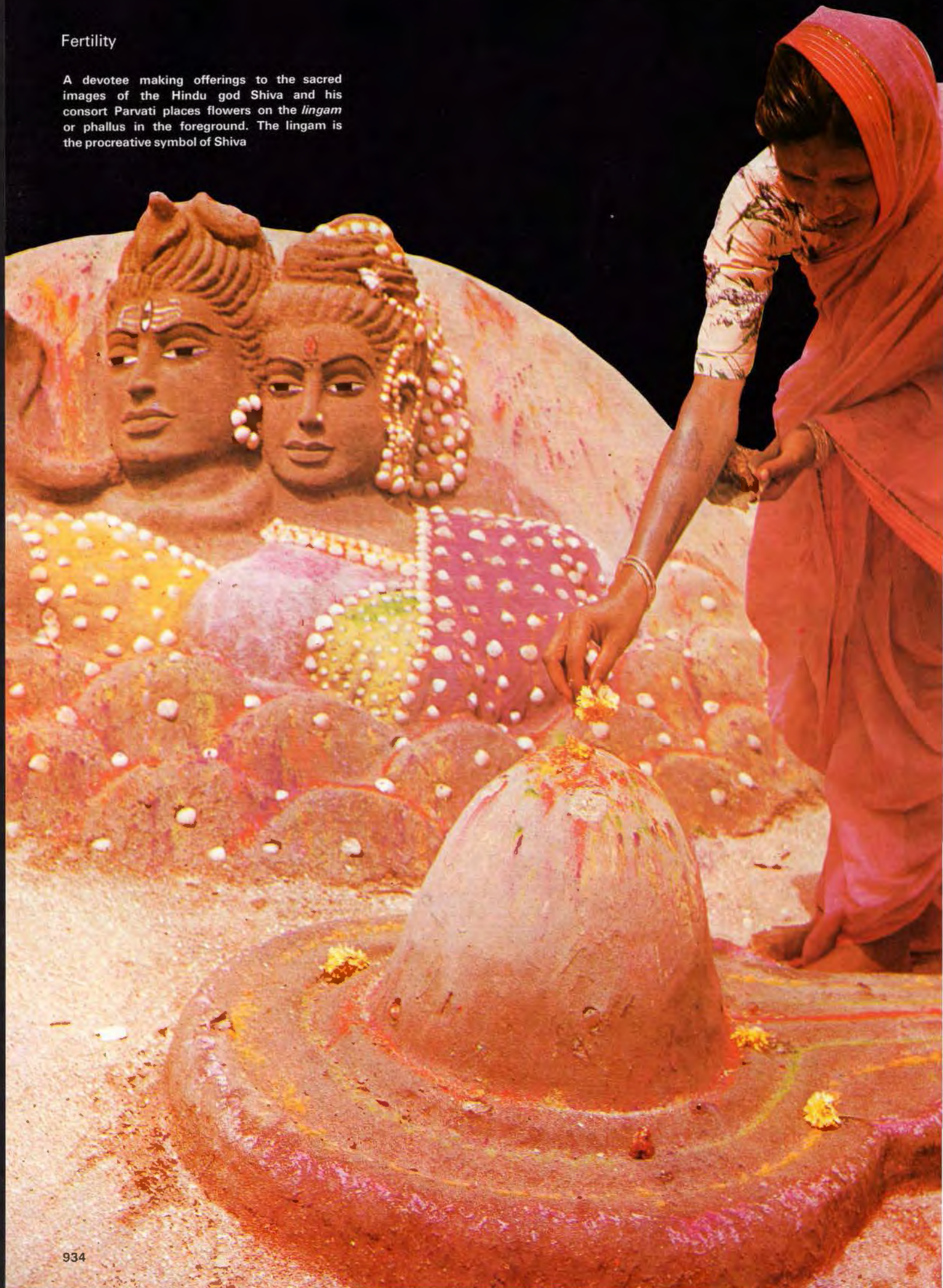
Left **Primitive 'Venuses', emphasizing the maternal aspects of woman, were probably used as fertility charms to induce pregnancy: 2nd century BC clay figurine from Yugoslavia** ***Above*** **Stetuette of the Canaanite fertility goddess Astarte, now in the British Museum** ***Right*** **Erotic Indian carvings from the temple at Khajurajo, testify to the importance of fertility in Hinduism**

It is easy thus to characterize the fertility cycle as a series of 'natural' phenomena; but archaic man did not think of it in that way. The power of life was not an impersonal entity, which merely needed to be left to its own devices. Accordingly we may say that its second characteristic was its personal, 'hierarchical' nature. Personal not necessarily because it was regarded altogether in human terms, but because it was able to be approached by humans, with whom it had some features in common, and could be, in some cases, communicated with. Hierarchical because it was thought of as a graded hierarchy of spiritual beings, from the mighty gods of the sky to minor, and in many cases malevolent, demons and ghosts.

Whether the various deities and spirits that went to make up the supernatural chain of beings were intrinsically benevolent or malevolent is an open question.

Fertility

A devotee making offerings to the sacred images of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati places flowers on the *lingam* or phallus in the foreground. The lingam is the procreative symbol of Shiva



The annual return of fertility was seen as a repetition of an original act of creation, in which order triumphed for the first time over chaos, fertility over barrenness

Many could be either or both, according to their moods and to the extent to which they had been acknowledged and propitiated. Perhaps it would be safe to say that any one of them *could* be dangerous, especially if slighted or ignored.

Art and Magic

The third characteristic of the fertility pattern, depended on the first two. The various cycles of fertility were thought to depend for their continuance upon the activity of the supernatural powers: the great cycles upon the great powers; the lesser cycles on lesser powers. In other words fertility, at whatever level, is always caused; it never just happens. Once the dependent nature of fertility in the thought of the greater part of mankind is recognized, it becomes clear firstly, that should the supernaturals choose for any reason to withhold the gift of life, this is a sufficient explanation for famine, failure in hunting, miscarriage and barrenness. And secondly, that the nucleus of primitive and archaic religion and magic alike concerns man's attempts to reconcile and appropriate the power, or life-force, that the supernaturals wield. Therefore man does what he can to ensure that the gods and spirits remain friendly. This may involve playing off one against another – a greater power against a lesser, or a benevolent spirit against a malevolent.

An example of this attempt to control Nature is the celebrated cave art of south-western France and the Pyrenees. It has been supposed by some authorities that their main purpose was magical: to ensure a supply of game animals, and success in hunting them. It has also been noted that the more dangerous the animal, the more often it occurs in the paintings, and the more seldom its bones appear in prehistoric kitchen refuse heaps. Scenes in which a bison, for example, is shown transfixed by spears or arrows, as well as recording an actual successful event may well have been intended to ensure repeated success. To this extent the purpose of the paintings appears entirely magical. But the underlying attitude, which saw the prey which a hunter hoped to catch as controlled by forces outside man's control, verges upon the religious; it presupposes the existence of a supernatural world, and the need for man to take that world into consideration.

Analogies from more recent pre-literate peoples may only be of limited value, but the various hunting tribes of the northern hemisphere (America, Europe and Asia) appear to exhibit a similar mixture of motives. North American Indian tribes, for instance, combine 'magical' rituals, designed to ensure the increase of the species, with a firm belief in the 'Owner of the Animals', who owns and rules the particular species in the same way as the Supreme Being rules over the universe and the world of men. The bear, which was always held in especial reverence, was hunted; but the killing was done with apologies and with as little blood as possible, and after death honour was paid to the skull. Doubtless the motive was in this case one of sharing in the great power of the bear; but in the case of the Ainu of Sakhalin Island in Japan, when a bear was killed, it was despatched with ceremony and sent home to its Owner, to tell of the good treatment it had received and to ask that more game be released. Should the Owner be offended, on the other hand, bear cubs would not be born and the bear could not be hunted (see BEAR).

Festivals to Ensure Fertility

In agriculture, the great fertility cycle is that of the seasons of the year, and in agricultural communities, two major events – the sowing of the seed and the harvest – were frequently the occasion for particular celebrations or festivals. Lesser festivals, though with virtually the same significance, took place at midsummer and midwinter. Traces of all these festivals survive to this day in the West, sometimes changed out of all recognition, sometimes – as in the case of the Scandinavian *Jul* (Yuletide or Christmas) – retaining enough of the original symbolism to demonstrate its origins. In the same way, the widespread 'first-fruits' and harvest rites practised by American Indians (in common with peoples all over the world) find a modern reflection in the American festival of Thanksgiving.

In all such cases, the objective was the continuation of the seasonal pattern, and the ensuring of a good and fertile year. The High Gods of the sky were the protectors of the cosmic order and the great givers of fertility, and so the festivals were centred, explicitly or implicitly, around the mighty deeds of these gods. A further feature which must be borne in mind is that the annual renewal of fertility was in very many cases seen as a repetition of an original act of creation, in which order triumphed for the first time over chaos, fertility over barrenness (see ETERNAL RETURN); accordingly, the festival itself was a magico-religious renewal of creation.

In the Babylonian *Akitu* (New Year) festival, the great epic of creation was recited, celebrating the victory of the god Marduk over the dragon of chaos. In addition there was a pattern of ritual, to which the myth served as a type of libretto. Centering on the figure of the king as the representative of the High God, this took the form of a symbolical dramatic confrontation between the god and the powers of chaos: chaos wins a temporary victory, law and order is forgotten for a time, the king is divested of his symbols of office; but then order is restored, rejoicing breaks out, the king is enthroned anew, and celebrates a 'sacred marriage' with a chosen priestess. New Year festivals of this type ensured the fertility of the land for another cycle. Since the power of fertility was in the hands of the High God, who stood at (or near) the head of the pantheon, only the king, as the head of the human hierarchy, could take it upon himself to approach the god and appropriate this power on behalf of his people.

The sacred marriage could be repeated on all levels of the hierarchy. Here, as elsewhere, we are confronted with an elaborate correspondence of man with the cosmos. The intercourse of the king and the priestess might be believed to further the fertility of the fields. References are scattered through the literature of popular religion and folklore to this practice. In the *Odyssey* there is mention of the occasion '. . . when fair-tressed Demeter, yielding to her passion, lay in love with Iasion in the thrice-ploughed fallow land . . .'. Intercourse on the field forms the climax of many recorded fertility rituals, and the 'May King' and 'May Queen' of European folklore may be supposed once to have symbolically fertilized the fields for another season.

This correspondence of function extends to the person of the woman and the 'person' of the earth. In mother goddess symbolism, the earth is regarded as a woman; conversely, the woman may be regarded as a ploughed field, and the male organ as the

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plough. Regard for the sacredness of the 'body' of the earth has, however, been known to give rise to a refusal to cultivate it. A North American chief is recorded as having said: 'You ask me to plough the ground! Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest. You ask me to dig for stone! Shall I dig under her skin for bones? Then when I die, I cannot enter her body to be borne again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men! But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?'

The Water of Life

Fertility as resulting from the interaction of male and female is a principle which animates virtually the whole of primitive and archaic religion. There is reason to suppose that many High Gods were at one time thought of as being androgynous, that is both male and female, but in historical times, one or other principle generally becomes dominant, usually, in the case of the gods of the sky, the male. The High God was the god of the sky and atmosphere, and as such controlled the phenomena of the weather, particularly the sun and the rain. Examples of this might be drawn from very many sources – the Greek Zeus, the Roman Jupiter, the Finnish Jumala and Ilmarinen, the Babylonian Marduk and the Israelite Yahweh. As it says in the Old Testament: 'He covers the heavens with clouds, he prepares rain for the earth, he makes grass grow upon the hills' (Psalms 147. 8).

The idea of the High God as sole dispenser of fertility accounts, however, for only a small part of early beliefs. Lesser gods, ghosts and demons have their own proper areas of influence, too. In a surprisingly large number of instances, the fertility of man is thought to rest with ghosts. One African tribe, the Nyakyusa, believe that the departed spirits control semen and seeds, and are always present at intercourse. Another tribe, the Lele, believe that human fertility is controlled by spirits residing in the deepest and dampest parts of the forest. Water has always been regarded as a major factor in fertility and amphibian or scaly animals are thought to be close to spirits and therefore especially 'powerful' in this regard. The connection between fertility and rivers, streams and wells is obvious.

In Derbyshire, the custom of 'well-dressing', is still carried out at more than a dozen villages, during which wells are decorated with flowers and various rites performed. The origins of this custom are no longer remembered, but its significance is evidently propitiatory: each well had its own guardian, who had to be honoured, lest he should cause the well to dry up. The custom is now Christianized, and takes place on Ascension Day, immediately following the three Rogation Days – days on which God's blessing is asked for the crops.

In India, there is a sacred grove, near Tiruttani, in Tamilnad, containing seven pools, or *yonis* (this is also the word for the female organ). Round the pools there are trees, in many of which votive offerings are hung by women wanting children. Offerings are similarly made in the precincts of many Hindu temples, usually under a pair of trees, male and female.

The Potent Gods

The symbolism and mythology of fertility in the cosmos corresponds to the interaction of male and female which is so large a part of human experience. In the cosmos, as in human experience, the generative power of the father is met and accepted by the receptive fecundity of the mother. A common overall pattern is therefore that of the Sky Father and the Earth Mother, repeated, with infinite variations, through the world of religions.

In the ancient Vedic religion of India there is the primordial pair Dyaus Pitar and Prithivi Matar, and in Hinduism Shiva and Shakti, Kali or Durga, Vishnu and Sarasvati, Krishna and Radha; in Egypt (where the pattern is to some extent reversed, the sky being regarded as the goddess Nut, sometimes symbolized as a cow) Osiris and Isis; in Mesopotamia Anu and Ishtar, Marduk and Sarpanitu; in Greece Zeus and Hera; in Scandinavia Frey and Freya. Not all these pairs can simply be identified with sky and earth, but rather with generation and fecundity as universal principles. Either may be dominant; the cult of the bull in the Semitic area and in the Minoan-Mycenean religion of Crete and Greece witnesses to the dominance of the male (see BULL; CRETE), while cow-worship in, for example, Hinduism points in the opposite direction (see COW). The 'mother goddess' figure in particular is capable of many varieties of expression, and may bear many names, as her attributes (the chief of which is that of the 'vessel') are taken over by local goddesses, belonging to the lower orders of the hierarchy.

Human male and female meet in the act of sexual intercourse; and the overall symbolism of fertility gods and goddesses is very frequently derived directly from that act. The great male gods were often represented with an erect phallus (ithyphallic), and mother goddesses either as pregnant, or with exaggerated breasts and labia. Ithyphallic figures are found in Paleolithic cave paintings and in the Bronze Age rock carvings of Scandinavia, as well as in the paintings and sculpture of many pre-literate peoples.

Evidence of phallic cults is found in the civilizations of antiquity: in Greece connected with Hermes, Demeter and Dionysus; in Rome, at the festival of Liberalia; in Egypt, Osiris was a phallic god, and the mysteries of Isis contained phallic elements. Farther north, in the greatest of the pre-Christian Scandinavian temples, that at Old Uppsala, in Sweden, it was recorded by the German writer Adam of Bremen that down to the 11th century the image of the fertility god Frey was ithyphallic. In early India, one of the best known of the seals discovered at the Indus Valley site of Mohenjo-Daro (c 2500 BC) represents a three-faced, horned deity, sitting in a yogic position and surrounded by animals; this figure, which has been identified with the later Shiva, is likewise ithyphallic. In later Hinduism, the phallus *(lingam)* is the symbol of Shiva, and although many Hindus would today contest the origin of the symbol, the evidence of erotic sculptures leaves the matter in little doubt.

Mother goddess symbolism is of many kinds, ranging from great crudity to great sophistication. Among the earliest attempts made by man to represent the symbol of maternity in plastic form are the so-called 'Venuses', rudimentary female figures shaped during the Upper Paleolithic period out of bone, ivory or stone. While their sexual characteristics are greatly exaggerated, their faces are seldom more than hinted at (see FACELESS GODDESSES). The use to which they were put must remain a matter of conjecture, but it seems at least likely that they were fertility charms, the possession of

Left The Wakamba fertility dance is frequently performed in many parts of Kenya. While the women stand in a circle and play on whistles, the men drum, dance and display their physical prowess by performing gymnastic feats, gradually working their way towards the women *Right* May Day celebrations begin with the gathering of flowers and branches and 'bringing home the May', or bringing the new life of spring, into the village. A maypole is erected and festooned, and young girls perform a dance around this phallic symbol

Barnaby's Picture Library

which was believed to bring about the condition they represent, that is, pregnancy.

A somewhat more sophisticated – at the same time more realistic – expression of the principle of fecundity is the figure of the mother and child. Images of this kind are found in Ancient Egypt, and an unbroken line may be drawn from these to modern figures of the Virgin and Child in Christian churches. Of course, the symbol has undergone many modifications in response to theological and other pressures, but its significance is still not far removed from that which it originally possessed – the divine principle of fecundity and motherhood nourishing the 'son of man' from her own body.

Cycle of Birth and Death

In the past it has frequently been believed that children are indeed born from the divine earth, from caves and ravines, springs and wells; and as man is born of the sacred soil, so he must one day return to that same soil from which he once emerged, perhaps to be reborn – the image on which the Greek mysteries depended – perhaps not.

The fact that the divine earth gives birth to man, beast and plant, and also receives the lifeless corpse in burial and decomposition – in other words, that the idea of fertility has as its corollary the idea of destruction – has been responsible for many grim images. Today we are apt to fall back upon abstract notions of the passage of time, such as 'Time, like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away,' but the myth-maker was once less easily satisfied. Particularly in those religions in which the female principle was dominant, in which the body was buried – returned to the womb of the earth – rather than being cremated, the same images which represented fertility also represented death and destruction. So it is that mythology tells how the great mother goddesses descend into the realm of departed spirits – the Mesopotamian Ishtar into the shadowy realm of dust and death, Kore (Persephone) into the House of Hades – symbolizing the annual death of vegetation and the fate awaiting all men. They emerge, however; and in the Greek mysteries, of which the rite of Eleusis may be taken as typical, the initiate may assure himself of immortality by assimilation to the cosmic fertility pattern they represent. Demeter, goddess of Eleusis, presides over birth and death alike, and offers to her devotees the gift of life – eternal life (see DEMETER).

Elsewhere there is hope of reincarnation. The most striking of these ambivalent images is perhaps that of the Hindu goddess Kali, who is undoubtedly a mother goddess but equally a goddess who devours even her consort, Shiva the destroyer. Her tongue protruding, her body wound round with snakes or with ropes of human skulls, her fangs dripping blood, she dances in triumph on the prostrate body of Shiva.

An ancient Hindu marriage ritual contains the words, spoken by the bridegroom, 'I am the sky, you are the earth.' To comprehend the place of fertility in the world of religion and magic one must understand the vast correspondence between the microcosm which is man and the macrocosm which is the universe in which man lives. Both depend for their life and their continuation on the power of the spirit world, and what is done in one reflects in unimaginable ways on the other.

(See also DYING GOD; EARTH; MOTHER GODDESS; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

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FETISH

A MAGIC CHARM or amulet, worshipped because of its significance to the individual rather than for its physical attributes or for any symbolic value, is called a fetish. It protects the possessor from harm by virtue of its inherent talismanic properties warding off evil. In many parts of Africa the use of these guardian objects has become an important sub-stratum of the established religion, and has earned its own name – fetishism. This cult employs fetishes in two distinct ways. For domestic use, common natural objects with supposed supernatural powers are preserved, rather as the horseshoe or four-leaf clover are valued in parts of the West. Sometimes they are impregnated by the medicine-man with a concoction, the composition of which depends on the intended purpose of the fetish. These objects therefore, not only safeguard, but cure, and they can be anything from teeth to snakes' heads, or may take the form of images of men or animals. Many of the fetishes on the West Coast of Africa are embellished with reflecting glass, an addition dating from the introduction of mirrors by Europeans and the resultant association with 'white man's magic'.

In the second, more social, aspect of the cult, the fetishes are considered to be divine ministers, harbouring the protective powers of the spirit-world. The important fetishes are guarded by fetish-doctors who act as the spirits' representatives. It is the responsibility of each fetish-doctor to carry out the rites and ceremonies appropriate to a particular spirit. In exchange he is protected by his spirit and can make use of some of its power for the benefit of the community at large. Each spirit has its own prescribed function and the fetish-doctors tend therefore to be specialized and cover a narrow field of activity: they may ensure a successful pregnancy, attract or deter alligators, cause or prevent a whirlwind, and so forth. When a native intends to go hunting, he applies first to the fetish-doctor of hunting who supplies him with the necessary charm. Some tribes possess a 'man-panther' fetish-doctor who is consulted to detect criminals and wrong-doers.

As Puckett makes clear in *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro*, the fetish concept was brought to America by the slaves, and for years formed an important sub-stratum of Southern folklore. Fetishes have gone by many names in America – conjures, hoodoos, jacks, goofers – while those who dispense them are perhaps most widely called 'root doctors' or 'conjure doctors'. Though the names are new, the pattern is the same: any object or combination of objects may make up the charm, mainly at the whim of the individual conjure doctor. (See CONJURE MAGIC; TALISMANS.)

Primitive man uses virtually any object as a fetish, as long as he believes it to be endowed with magical properties *Left* Nail fetish from the Bakongo of Portuguese Angola. *Above right* Steel articles for sale as fetishes in Cotonou market, Dahomey

Peter Larson

Ficino Marsilio

A Florentine philosopher and doctor who, in 1489, published a medical book, *Libri de Vita*, in which he suggested that a planet's favourable influences could be attracted by concentrating on images or mental pictures, characteristic of that planet's nature, and that these influences could be of great therapeutic value: by meditating, therefore, on a picture of a young girl holding flowers and apples, an image of Venus, the return of health and happiness would be assured.

Fifteen

The number closely associated with sex; sacred to Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of sexual love: reached by multiplying 5, the number of sexual pleasure, with 3, the symbol of genitals: in the Tarot pack, 15 is the card of the Devil, who often appears as a goat, in which form he is identified with lust.

See NUMEROLOGY.

Sacred to Bacchus, the fig symbolizes procreation, fecundity and wisdom and has been venerated in many parts of the world

FIG

THE FIRST PLANT mentioned in the Bible, where it occurs 57 times, is the fig, *Ficus carica*: 'Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked; and sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.' Many Biblical references testify to the importance of the fig (as much a symbol of security as a producer of food) such as 'a land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees' and 'every man under his vine and under his fig tree.' Its attractions as a fruit were praised by Mohammed, 'If I should wish a fruit brought to Paradise it would certainly be the fig.'

Besides being man's first garment – an attribute sometimes adopted by sculptors to conceal the private parts of their nude figures – there are legends which suggest that the fig – which belongs to the same family as the mulberry, hop, breadfruit and Indian hemp – was in fact the Forbidden Fruit rather than the apple which is traditionally associated with Eve (see APPLE). This would be in keeping with the mysterious and slightly suggestive appearance of the pear-shaped receptacle commonly referred to as the fruit, inside which are numerous tiny flowers, the only access for pollinating insects being a small opening at the end. As D. H. Lawrence wrote:

> The Italians vulgarly say, it stands for the female part; the fig fruit:
> The fissure, the yoni,
> The wonderful moist conductivity towards the centre.

One suggestion is that the incident of the Forbidden Fruit, with Adam and Eve and the aprons they subsequently made, is based on an ancient custom associated with the pollination of fig trees, during which those involved wore the tree's leaves. It has also been suggested that those carrying out the pollination were afterwards sacrificed as scapegoats, a theme which has a parallel in ancient Greece, where according to

Frazer: 'the Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity such as plague, drought or famine befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcasts as scapegoats. One of the victims was sacrificed for the men and the other for the women. The former wore round his neck a string of black and the latter of white figs.' In Asia Minor the scapegoat, once again sacrificed if calamity struck, was first made to eat bread, cheese and dried figs; he was then beaten on the genitals with squills and fig branches and was finally burned on a pyre.

Legends of the Fig

Another fig tree with Biblical associations was one, for centuries pointed out to visitors, under which the Holy Family was supposed to have rested on their flight into Egypt. This gave rise to a legend of a fig opening its trunk as a refuge to Mary and the infant Jesus when pursued by Herod's soldiers. The fig is also one of the many trees on which Judas is supposed to have hung himself and hence in some places, notably Sicily, a plant of ill omen.

Roman mythology brings in the fig several times, although in widely differing contexts. In one legend the Titan Lyceus, pursued by Jupiter, was transformed into a fig tree by Rhea, mother of the gods. Rhea's husband Saturn is elsewhere associated with the fig's creation, and for this reason the inhabitants of Cyrene crowned Saturn's statue with fig-wreaths. Bacchus is credited with creating the fig, which was therefore sacred to him; and certainly, during Bacchanalian festivities, the fig shared the honours with the vine, and Bacchus's virility was credited to it. Female votaries on these occasions wore necklets made from dried figs, while men carried statues of the phallic god Priapus carved from fig wood.

The Romans believed a fig tree to be responsible for the siting of Rome, as the cradle in which Romulus and Remus arrived became lodged in the roots of a fig on the banks of the Tiber. The resulting veneration for the fig can be traced over four centuries. This sacred tree became known as *Ficus ruminalis*. Ruminus was the surname of Jupiter, provider of mankind's food, while Rumina was goddess of the female breast. This strengthened the Bacchic connection in making the fig symbolic of fecundity and procreation, and it was sacred to Juno as goddess presiding over marriages.

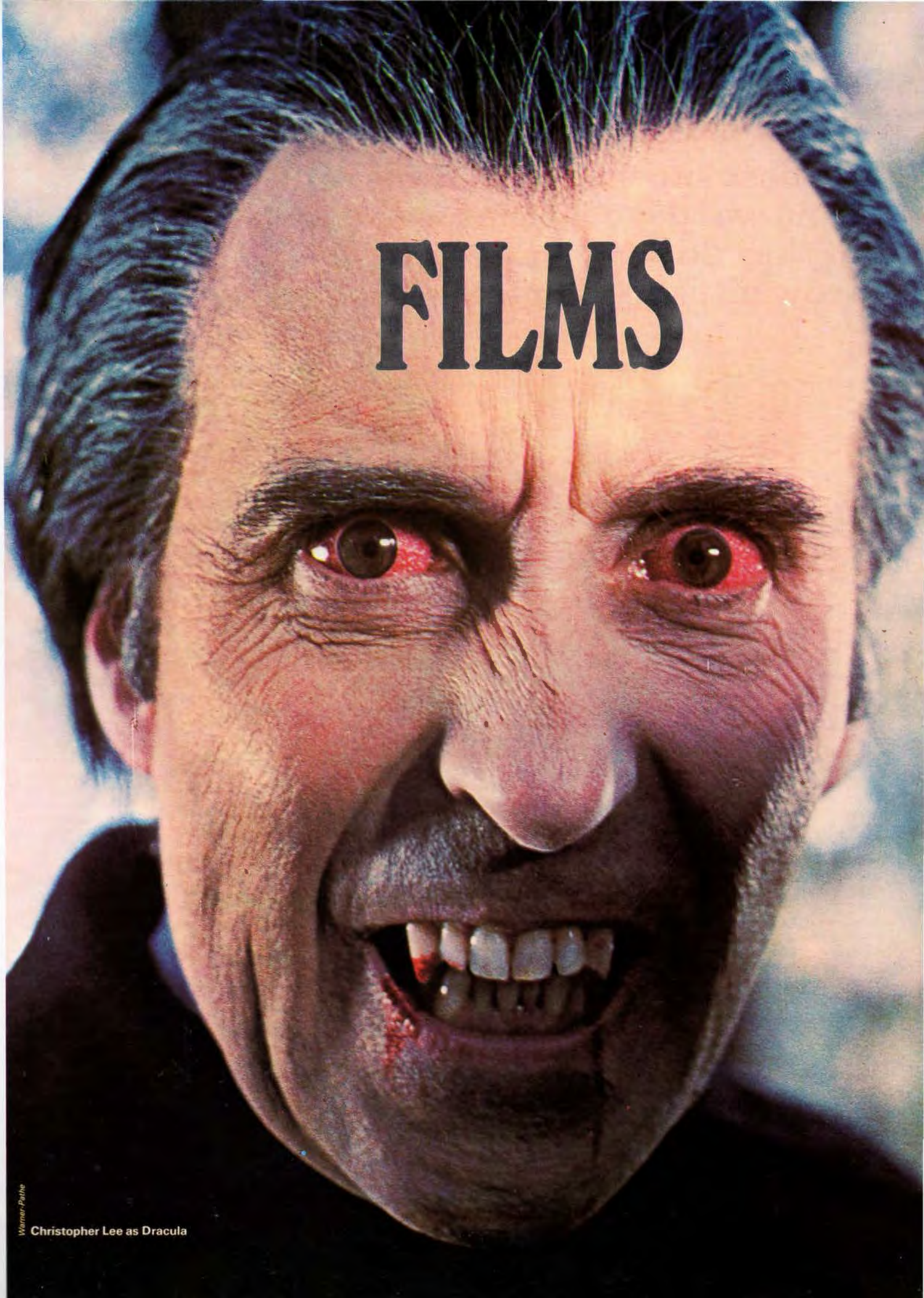
There are hundreds of species of fig and it is interesting that many of these are revered as Trees of Life and of Knowledge or, as in Central Africa, haunts of ancestor spirits. To Buddhists the most sacred tree was the Bo-tree, *Ficus religiosa*, because under it Buddha found wisdom. To his followers it combined the attributes of creation, wisdom and preparation for the afterlife. Mythologically it became a tree of creation, the *Asvattha*, sheltering the world – resembling the Nordic Ash *Yggdrasill*. The Asvattha's flower held ambrosia, bringer of intelligence to the eater. There are sacred Bo-trees all over India and, in the past at least, in China, some undoubtedly of enormous age. The famous specimen at Anurâdhapura, Ceylon, is reputed to have grown from a branch taken from Buddha's original Bo-tree, and planted in 288 BC.

Buddha is also reputed by the Chinese to have meditated under the Banyan, *Ficus bengalensis*, the tree under which Vishnu was born. One of its Sanskrit names is Bahupâda, the Tree of Many Feet, which drops vertical roots from spreading branches so that, over the centuries, a single specimen makes a whole grove of trunks. Like the Bo-tree, the Banyan seems imperishable, and on the Narbada river, near Surat in central India, is one reputed to be over 3000 years old, which is said to have been visited by Nearchus, an officer of Alexander the Great.

In the Victorian 'language of flowers' the fig meant 'to be prolific' – shades of Bacchus – while dried figs were an unlucky gift to a woman. To dream of figs should mean happiness, riches, long life and wishes fulfilled. A belief from the American South seems to deny the tree's positive value, saying that if you fall out of a fig tree, any injuries received will never heal. But American folk medicine reaffirms the fig's value: boiled in milk it will cure quinsy, the juice will cure warts, and it is claimed that figs will cure cancer.

Sacred fig or Bo-tree at Buddh Gaya in India: it was under a Bo-tree that the Buddha first received enlightenment

FILMS



Warner-Pathe

Christopher Lee as Dracula

The best supernatural films reflect an outward world that we all know; but they do so in ways that throw us psychologically off balance

To convey a genuinely supernatural atmosphere in a film is far more difficult than one might think; seeing is not the same as believing. Those which have succeeded best have drawn on certain mythical themes which evoke a universal response among filmgoers

OF ALL THE ARTS the cinema is, theoretically, the one that is best suited to suggesting the presence of the supernatural. Watching a film is rather like being at a seance. There is the same semi-darkness, the same atmosphere of sympathetic concentration and expectancy, the same opportunity for the individual's judgement to be swayed by mass emotions so that ready credibility is given to a materialization, the image on the screen, that is visible yet intangible.

Unfortunately, it is only very rarely that filmgoers gain any acute sensation of the supernatural from what happens on the screen. In fact, in the case of the supernatural and the cinema, seeing is *not* believing. There is a paradox here: the more markedly bizarre and mysterious the methods a film-maker uses to create a supernatural event, the less easily disposed are filmgoers to fall under the spell.

The very beginnings of film-making show this. The French director Georges Méliès, in the 1890s, made some short fantasy films with stop-action photography in which people seemed to vanish, and double exposures that turned the actors into transparent phantoms. Although audiences were delighted by the novelty, they looked for the technical explanation of the magic phenomena. Yet at about the same time two other Frenchmen, the Lumière brothers, were filming reality with documentary-like precision showing workers streaming out of their factories, trains steaming into a station, and so on. And audiences reacted violently. They cringed back in their seats as the trains bore down on them, they got out of the path of the advancing workers. As with primitive tribes who even today become actively disturbed when watching a film in which one character apparently vanishes off the side of the screen, the sheer realism of the events in the Lumière films induced uncertainty, unease or alarm in the early cinema audiences.

With far more sophisticated means, this is how the best supernatural films get their effects. They reflect the outward world we all know and can recognize, but they do so in ways that throw us psychologically off balance. In other words, to get to the dark at the top of the stairs, we first have to ascend the staircase; and the journey into the unknown is made even more frightening by keeping a firm grip on the banister. Sometimes a film-maker can 'jam' the rational censor in us that scoffs at the 'otherness' of things by using techniques that are not easily identifiable by lay audiences. For instance, infra-red film was used to shoot the night scenes of the haunted house in director Robert Wise's film *The Haunting* (1963). The tonal values of the eerie mansion appeared like those of daylight; but it was a daylight transfigured on the screen by the suggestion of a 'presence' not altogether normal.

The length of time in seconds or minutes for which a camera lingers on scenes, even on a chair, a bed, a corridor, can be another effective way of creating the supernatural. For it can endow inanimate objects with a sense of some 'thing' about to become apparent. It is almost always the instant before the apparition appears on the screen that is frightening – seldom the actual appearance. We project our apprehension far more powerfully on to an empty, but foreboding, scene than on to one filled by a spectre that all too often is the creation of a purely mechanical cinema projector.

But even with sophisticated techniques allied with the psychological exploitation of people's fears, the cinema still lacks the resources to explore some areas of the supernatural as effectively as literature. For example, there have been hardly any faithful film versions of stories by those two master writers of terror and the uncanny, Edgar Allan Poe and M. R. James. The reason is that both writers communicate an almost tangible feeling of the supernatural – and films, as yet, have no possibility of duplicating this effect. Poe's tales are for the most part fantasies about suffocation; they take their terrors, and their very tone of isolation, from the nightmare fear of some great weight that stifles, crushes or immures the victim. In *The Tell-Tale Heart* the victim is beneath the floorboards, he is behind the plaster in *The Cask of Amontillado*, literally walled up in *The Black Cat*, buried alive in *Berenice* – even *A Descent into the Maelstrom* deals with air being exhausted as a man drowns. But a film camera is unsympathetic to the idea of such horrifying claustrophobia: it tends to disperse the sensation when it tries to film it.

M. R. James's stories are equally hard to film, for they depend for their chilling effect on conveying the sensation of human flesh coming into ghoulish contact with something equally solid yet supernatural; a wallpaper pattern turning into human hair and creeping over the narrator in *The Diary of Mr Poynter*, a giant spider dropping on to a face in *The Tractate Middoth*, and, most unsettling of all, the bed sheet 'with an intensely horrible face of crumpled linen' that tries to smother the sleeper in *Oh Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad*. Jonathan Miller made an interesting television film out of this story but, significantly, he substituted the *sound* of the animate bed sheet for the sight of it – the *feel* of it was, of course, beyond his powers. The cinema made one sad little attempt to convey fear of this kind with a picture called *The Tingler* (1959) which tried to frighten selected members of the audience by wiring the seats for mild electric vibrations. But it proved too costly and risky; besides being artistically unsuccessful.

The Body Without a Soul

Films have excelled in portraying supernatural themes wherever directors and actors with gifted, almost obsessional, sensibilities have combined their talents to make films based on some of the myths, sexual, psychological, religious and even racial, that are deeply-rooted in human nature and which are shared, consciously or unconsciously, by the majority of filmgoers. Six main themes are the 'man-made monster', the 'devil in the flesh', the 'human fiend', the 'vampire', the 'old dark house' and the 'things from another world'. A Jewish theme lies both at the start and at the end of such a study.

It is important to realize that the early American film-makers were themselves European immigrants, largely from central and eastern Europe and that they tended to turn to the supernatural myths of Europe for films mainly because the tradition of magic and the supernatural is not indigenous to American culture. In the United States, myths, as befits a young

civilization, are more concerned with worldly things like land conquest, frontier life and folk heroes of flesh and blood, than with the phantoms of European imagination.

The 'man-made monster' owes its film genesis to the religious and folk traditions of the Jews of central Europe. In 1913 one of the earliest film versions of the Faust story, *The Student of Prague*, was made by the Danish director Stellan Rye. It told of a student who signs away his mirrored reflection in return for love, riches and honours, and eventually kills himself when he kills his double. (By killing the evil in himself, man destroys an essential part of himself: so ran the argument, as it does in the Jekyll and Hyde theme.) The star of the film, Paul Wegener, heard of the Jewish legend of the Golem, the 'body without a soul' which the 16th century Rabbi Loew made out of clay to defend the Hebrew community against the pagans. The story inspired Wegener to star in and co-direct, with Henrik Galeen, a film called *The Golem* (1914) in which the monster is brought to life, given lowly work to do, falls in love with its creator's daughter, runs amuck and is finally killed when it falls from a high tower.

Although the plot is essentially the same as the one used for *Frankenstein*, the famous Hollywood film starring Boris Karloff in 1931, there are striking differences. For instance, in *The Golem* a little child removes the Star of David from its chest and it becomes a lifeless statue. But in *Frankenstein* it is the non-sectarian monster that destroys the little child. The man-made monster of the American film is not presented as the supernatural weapon of Jewry against the invader, as it was in the original legend, but as the incarnation of man's irreligious challenge to a Christian God.

A Sense of Sin

The film was produced by a south German immigrant, Carl Laemmle, a Jew who was the head of Universal Studios where many of Hollywood's German-Jewish talents flourished from the early 1920s on. Significantly, the Frankenstein film has more in common with the Golem legend than with Mary Shelley's novel on which it is nominally based. But its original Jewish flavour was expunged in the Hollywood version.

Frankenstein introduced the element of explicable logic – the idea that every eerie event should have a rational basis – into Hollywood's portrayal of the supernatural. Boris Karloff's make-up as the monster illustrates this perfectly: the creature had a square skull since this, the box-shaped hinge of a primitive lobotomy, is the most basic cut used by grave-robbers on cadavers. The protruberances on the monster's neck were electric plugs and not bolts as is commonly misrepresented, since it was the Promethean fire from lightning that was meant to animate him.

National Film Archive

The 'fiend in human form', one of the main themes in early horror films, is an embodiment of a myth that is deeply-rooted in human nature: scene from *The Phantom of the Opera* showing Lon Chaney as the hideously deformed creature, his face a living skull, who lived in the depths of the Paris Opera House and kidnapped a singer for his bride

Although in this case it worked brilliantly, and despite all the ghoulish accoutrements Karloff's performance is vividly personal, such concern for logic was to have a banal effect on the growth of the supernatural film. The belief that audiences would not accept magic, ghosts or other supernatural agents unless they had an explanation that belonged to the natural world became ingrained in the minds of studio heads. Even today, for this very reason, a ghost film is one of the hardest of all types for which to find financial backing.

On the plus side, the early *Frankenstein* film was able to incorporate an element

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The early cinema was a moralizing force: to avoid denunciation films had to show a clear separation of good and evil

A 'human' monster, or one that is semi-human in appearance, is more frightening than a creature that has obviously been created in the special effects department of a studio *Facing page, above* Scene from *The Creature from the Black Lagoon.* In *The Cat and the Canary* (1927) the director Paul Leni established the ingredients that are still used to create an atmosphere in which the appearance of a ghoulish figure *(far left)* seems a natural development in a film's story *Left* Bela Lugosi, the screen's first Dracula, played the part of the count with such conviction that he has been identified with the role ever since *Above* Fredric March in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde:* in his playing of Mr Hyde there was a 'lurking sense of primitive man in pagan enjoyment of his powers'

largely lacking in more recent supernatural films. This is the sense of sin, of a divinity that is being sinned against. Today's films, including the Hammer Films remake of *Frankenstein* in 1956 and the many Roger Corman versions of Poe, are given much more to dealing with horror or sadism, perhaps as a result of the public's abandonment of more conventional religious values.

But the greatest contribution to the original *Frankenstein* came from the association of two Englishmen: the director, James Whale, and William Henry Pratt, better known as Boris Karloff, whose performance as the monster suggested the pathos of a being who had not asked for the life breathed into his miscellaneous parts. Between them they not only created one of the archetypal figures of the supernatural cinema, but they also raised the film well above any later type in the genre; even above its own sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). Again directed by Whale, this film combined the sense of sin with the new ingredient of sex though it allowed Elsa Lanchester, as the man-made bride, one unforgettable moment when she first sets eyes on the mate for whom she is destined – and registers utter revulsion. It is the high point in the distaff side of the monster-making tradition.

Despite this, and despite Karloff's playing which turns the monster into a Christ-like martyr figure, the film showed evidence, especially in Ernest Thesiger's performance as a rival monster-maker, that the Frankenstein theme was being guyed. Supernatural

The Monster Awakes

Frankenstein realizes with horror that he has created a monster:

It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips . . .

I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart . . .

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

themes very quickly degenerate in the hands of sequel-minded Hollywood into the horror-comic. Frankenstein ends up meeting not his Maker, but Abbott and Costello (Even the original *Golem* was followed by a film called *The Golem and the Dancing Girl*.)

Frankenstein, however, taught one lesson Hollywood could not ignore. It cost $750,000 to make and proved a tremendous commercial hit. It has since grossed over $13 million. It proved to Hollywood that the supernatural was commercial, and opened the way to the other great films of the 1930s.

The Jekyll and Hyde theme, the 'devil in the flesh', is probably the most often filmed story of the supernatural. Even before Fredric March starred in director Rouben Mamoulian's classic version in 1932, it had been made at least six times since 1908. One good reason was that the early cinema was a moralizing force: if films were to avoid denunciation from local pulpits, they had to show a clear separation of good and evil. The Jekyll and Hyde theme provided the perfect exemplary subject. John Barrymore, in 1920, had played the dual role and introduced a sexual element absent from Stevenson's story: he played Jekyll as a virginal Victorian gentleman misled by his cronies at a stag party into visiting a brothel, where his sexual instinct is awakened and becomes embodied in the bestial Hyde.

This interpretation is also true of March's virtuoso performance which, since it pre-dated the Hollywood censorship code of 1934, clearly implies Hyde's relations with the prostitute. But the bravura element of the latter film is the weird perfection of the transformation scene done without any help from a photographic laboratory, but with the camera looking Jekyll full in the face as he changes into Hyde. Even today, Mamoulian declines to reveal the secret, though possibly the then newish infra-red film was used, along with subtle changes in lighting, and special make-up visible in some lights and not in others. The film's sound effects, including the use of heart-beats, aided the creation of the supernatural. And Fredric March's conception of Hyde, catching a lurking sense of primitive man in pagan enjoyment of his powers and contrasting it with the sophisticated Jekyll's prayers for forgiveness, is a landmark in the supernatural cinema that quite eclipses Spencer Tracy's far less dynamic interpretation of the part in the 1940 version.

It is also significant that March's Hyde is linked with the natural elements – he greedily drinks the pouring rain – in a way that makes him part of the natural order. One recalls Karloff's monster in *Frankenstein* blinking in the first sunbeam he sees. In one case the effect is malignant, in the other benign: in both, oddly powerful. This elemental quality is also something of a lost dimension in recent films that harp on the horrors of the flesh, not of the soul.

The theme of the 'fiend in human form' is Hollywood's peculiar contribution to Gothic supernatural. Just as the 'old dark house' is the architectural embodiment of Gothicism, so a stunted, tortured, twisted, disfigured and hideous human form is the living embodiment of the same collective myth. Lon Chaney was the actor to whom the myth became a way of life and an artistic obsession. It seems that to fulfil himself as an actor, Chaney had to alter himself in some fearful way in each part by make-up of almost masochistic painfulness. He made the *Phantom of the Opera* (1925) because he needed a vehicle in which he could be physically repulsive; and found it in this story of a hideously deformed creature whose face when unmasked is a living skull and who inhabits the bowels of the Paris Opera House, kidnaps a singer for his bride, but is killed by the pursuing mob. This human fiend demands only to be loved in return, to be rendered more human and less fiendish: the kind of ending Hollywood would find commercially congenial.

'I am – Dracula!'

The idea of love as a mystic spell is also the motivating force in one of the most beautiful supernatural films yet made. Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* (1946). *Orphée* (1950), his love affair between life and death, is the most poetic reworking of the fiend in human form, represented in that philosophical fantasy by the haunting Maria Casarès as the messenger of Death. In the American manifestation of the theme, gruesomeness wins out over poetry. And Chaney's taste for the fiendish, the deformed and the mutilated was fully reciprocated by a director with whom he often worked, Tod Browning. It was Browning who made the third great seminal film of the supernatural – *Dracula* (1931).

Except for Browning, the talents contributing to *Dracula* were distinctly European in origin. It was made for the same studio as *Frankenstein*, selected for filming (from Bram Stoker's novel) by Universal's German story editor, photographed by the brilliant German cameraman Karl Freund, and, of course, starred the Hungarian-born Bela Lugosi who, like Karloff, identified himself forever with the supernatural role. The film's triumph lies in the absoluteness of the conviction with which Lugosi as the vampire count announces, 'I am – Dracula!'.

The 'vampire' theme probably owes its origins to the primitive belief in the regenerative power of human viscera, of the sacrificial victim whose blood refreshes the tribe. *Dracula* established that the supernatural had box-office appeal provided it was sufficiently fleshy and bloody, though the film had redeeming touches of jocular Gothic wit – as when the Count at dinner spots a tempting pinprick of blood on a guest's hand and refuses other refreshment murmuring 'I never drink . . . wine'.

Before very long, however, the purity of the Dracula theme became polluted; and supernatural films about vampires put an almost sadistic emphasis on the blood lust. The inevitable introduction of a female vampire soon came to imply a lesbian relationship between the female who was already a vampire and the innocent girl whom she made into one. The vampire films from Hammer's studios seem especially fond of such implications – and of course public opinion now permits the theme to be stated more openly if far less artistically.

The Danish director Carl Dreyer made his film *Vampyr* from a Sheridan Le Fanu story at about the same time as the Hollywood *Dracula*. This was a far more poetical and consciously aesthetic work than the American film, but lacked the latter's

The early Frankenstein films incorporated a sense of sin, of a divinity that was being sinned against; as the monster, Boris Karloff suggested the dilemma of a being who had never been asked to be brought to life. In *The Bride of Frankenstein* he turned the monster into a Christ-like martyr figure, as shown *(right)* in a scene from the film

Warner-Pathe

Warner-Pathe

The Vampire Count

Jonathan Harker describes his first impression of Count Dracula:

His face was a strong – very strong – aquiline, with a high bridge on the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily around the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.

Later, Jonathan Harker comes upon the Count lying in his coffin:

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half-renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood; he lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion.

Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

crude archetypal energy. Dreyer defined very precisely one of the atmospheric conditions for success in the supernatural genre. Instructing his cameraman in the effect he desired, he said:

> Imagine we are sitting in an ordinary room. Suddenly we are told that there is a corpse behind the door. In an instant the room we are sitting in is completely altered: everything in it has taken on another level: the light, the atmosphere have changed, though they are physically the same. This is because *we* have changed, and the objects *are* as we conceive them. This is the effect I want to get.

Technically he achieved it, simply but effectively, by placing a very fine gauze filter several feet in front of the lens, which gave a weird indistinct glow to objects and bathed the actors in an ominous perpetual twilight. In another vampire film, Murnau's *Nosferatau*, made in Germany in 1922, deep-focus photography was used for the similar purpose of filming that psychological space which is the gap between daily happenings and supernatural events.

The relevance of this can be seen in supernatural films of the 'old dark house' theme, where the architecture becomes an extension of weird characters or manifestations. The house itself becomes alive. Paul Leni who directed *The Cat and the Canary* (1927) established the atmospheric ingredients that are still used even in infinitely more sophisticated ghost films like Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* (1961): the spooky journey down corridors by a tip-toeing camera, the guttering candles, the wind-stirred curtains, the suddenly banging shutter and the apprehensively creaking floorboards.

Old dark house films are popular subjects not only because, having largely one set, they fit well into the economics of film-making, but because they adhere to the convention of the explicable supernatural: in other words, Hollywood's old formula of a happy ending. Filmgoers can be given their thrills, but are allowed to keep their self-respect when there turns out to be a rational, if far-fetched explanation. James Whale's *Old Dark House* (1932) gathers under one roof a hideous collection of benighted travellers, with Karloff as a horribly scarred and dumb butler. But there is nothing really supernatural about the film, which is merely a grotesque parody of freakishness. Indeed as the 1930s wore on, some of the old dark house films became battles with science rather than with the supernatural, testifying both to the exhaustion of the original classic stories of the supernatural and to society's growing unease over science's contribution to the insecurity of a period that was to end in the Second World War. Karloff and Lugosi, for example, co-starred in a film called *The Black Cat* (1934), only the title of which recalls Poe. The plot shows how the scientist had invaded the realm of the supernatural, for it is set in an ultra-modern castle in Transylvania whose host (Karloff) is no vampire but a scientist who has built his home on the site of a wartime massacre that was caused by his own treachery.

The Devil's Child

Old dark house films featuring the traditional English ghost are much rarer than one would think. This is partly because the English ghost, like the English accent, did not travel well in America, but also because, apart from such comedies as *Blithe Spirit* (1945) and *The Ghost Goes West* (1935), the true ghost story resists the easy explanation in the last reel beloved by film producers. But at least four serious and, in varying degrees, successful films of this kind have been made in Britain and America. One is *The Uninvited* (1944), directed by Lewis Allen and set in a haunted house in Cornwall where Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey feel, hear, and finally see the ghostly presence. Their sight of the ecto-plasmic apparition is, in fact, the film's weakest point: otherwise it suggests 'things' a great deal more effectively by showing a rose withering or the bristling of a dog's hair.

More recently, *The Innocents*, adapted from Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, the story of a governess and two haunted children, was a film of sharp intelligence, with some eerie passages when evil seemed to clot the English summer air; but overall it was ambiguous in its attitude to whether the ghosts were 'real' or simply projections of Deborah Kerr's sex-repressed fantasies. If they were the former, then it was a mistake to allow one of them to leave the ghost of a tear so solidly on one of the children's schoolbooks. In *The Haunting*, which has already been referred to, a psychic investigator was burdened with two female assistants, one of whom was a neurotic virgin and the other a latent lesbian. In spite of some horrifying moments produced by sound effects, the glib psychological explanation that the phenomena were the result of the disturbed relationship between the two women weakened the whole eerie fabric.

Undoubtedly the best example of the supernatural in a contemporary setting is director Roman Polanski's famous American film, *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), in which a young newly-wed wife living in a luxury block of New York apartments gives birth to the Devil's child. Polanski's ability to take the supernatural at an acute angle, rather than head on, is what makes *Rosemary's Baby* so successful. In the early 1970s audiences flocked to view *The Exorcist* which handled the theme of demonic possession with great power. Unfortunately, the effect was over-heightened by the use of mechanical aids such as a levitating mannikin exuding vomit and abuse in equal measure.

The 1980s witnessed yet another best-seller from the novel *The Shining*. Jack Nicholson played the hero in spine-chilling fashion.

Nuclear Age Movies

The supernatural film got a new lease of life in America in the late 1940s and 1950s. Ranging from *The War of The Worlds* (1953) to *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in the 1970s and 1980s the genre mutated into the science-fiction film, a post war school that gives potent expression to contemporary phobias and obsessions. Several elements link the science-fiction film with the supernatural one. It owes its basic origin to the public interest

Facing page **Vampires, undead beings who feed on human blood, have been a recurring theme in horror films ever since *Dracula*, the story of the vampire count of Transylvania and one of the great seminal films of the supernatural, was made in 1931. The fascination that the subject holds for film-goers probably reflects a subconscious belief in the regenerative power of blood: scenes from *Taste the Blood of Dracula***

National Film Archive

Films that have successfully conveyed the supernatural have generally dealt with universal myths, and themes that throw the audience psychologically off balance: scene from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, a 'haunted' film, preoccupied with violence and death, in which the director and designer created a nightmare world of legend and fantasy

shown in the United States space programme, which can be interpreted as postulating, at least implicitly, the possible existence of other, worlds where natural laws would not operate but would be replaced by a kind of magic.

Secondly the bombing of Nagasaki, Hiroshima, and the post-war threat posed by nuclear energy, predisposed people to accept the idea of mutants, or dehumanized figures, the radioactive age's equivalent of the zombies or living dead of pre-war supernatural films. Thirdly, the spells and omnipotent powers associated with earthly superstitions are embodied in the science-fiction film's monsters, or events of extra-terrestrial import or menace. For these reasons science-fiction can legitimately be seen as being a contemporary extension of the supernatural.

Demonic Computer

In *The War of the Worlds* (1953), the 'things from another world' took the form of armoured intelligences which could be halted in their destructive tracks only by such an earthly item of 'explicable magic' as a common cold germ. *The Thing* (1951) featured an extra-terrestrial monster that drank the blood of earthlings: like Dracula, it needed constant replenishment to survive. Other films were based on the idea of an advanced expeditionary force of supernatural beings landing on earth to form a kind of coven among the inhabitants, or to take over the latter's personal identities and human shapes, as in director Don Siegel's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). What is this but the extra-terrestrial projection of the magic spell of earlier times, the demonic possession of human beings? The monsters in such films are post-atomic metaphors for the evil that scientific man has unleashed on the world and on himself, much as Frankenstein's man-made monster was the creation of the sin of his maker. It is interesting that these films, for all their modernity, share one of the weaknesses of the conventional supernatural film where there is no Karloff or Lugosi to incarnate the evil: the actual sight of the monster is less impressive than the suggestion of its presence.

Demonic possession of human beings in science-fiction films like director Wolf Rilla's *The Village of the Damned* (1960), based on John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*, in which village women bear children with strange powers, can be traced back at least to the dybbuk, or unholy spirit, of Hebrew religion, a return to the Jewish tradition that inspired the early 'man-made monster' films. But it also has its Christian evocation in witchcraft, as in director John Krish's *The Unearthly Stranger* (1963), where the tears of the otherworldly visitant leave corrosive streaks on her cheeks in keeping with the belief that damned spirits may never show the human weakness of repentance.

But there is an even wider link between films of this genre and the Jewish emphasis present in much American culture. The literary critic Leslie A. Fiedler in his book of essays, *Waiting for the End*, expressed it in these words:

> The long dominance of the Western and the detective story is challenged by that largely Jewish product, science-fiction . . . The basic myths of science-fiction reflect the outlook, the social consciousness, the Utopian concern of the modern, secularised Jew . . .

The relevance of Dr Fiedler's view to this study becomes clear if one considers the most imaginative science-fiction film to date, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Actually fiction is a misnomer here, for this story of a deep probe into outer space, lasting many, many months, is documentarily accurate to the last real or predictable detail. It seems to be light years away

from the supernatural world of the old films. But one incident, a major one, is significant. The entire working and sleeping life of the astronauts aboard their space ship is masterminded by a computer of extraordinary but, as it turns out, demonic intelligence. Instead of merely looking after the welfare, and doing the bidding, of the space crew, this machine develops its own rebellion and sets out to annihilate its masters. What is this but the man-made monster of the supernatural films?

It is *The Golem* or *Frankenstein* creature projected into the future and rendered many, many times more sophisticated; but also more dangerous because it can now outthink and outwit its creators. Instead of the Star of David or the Mark of Cain, it wears on its body the non-denominational badge of some international computer organization; but it possesses all the capacity for developing human emotions ranging from anger to pathos with which Karloff and his brethren endowed their creations. In Kubrick's film the computer suffers audibly when an astronaut fights its rebellion by unplugging its brain cells, much as the monsters of earlier films were immobilized and destroyed by human agents.

In a recently published account of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, *A Walk Through the Garden* by Joseph Wechsberg, the author includes a detail which may serve as an ironic footnote to this article. The computers there are serviced by Yemeni technicians who have given to the machines they tend some names of interesting inspiration. One of the main computers is called The Golem, after the mysterious automaton created in Prague. Thus has a racial myth passed into a cinema tradition and been carried by imaginative mutation until it passes out as a scientific reality.

ALEXANDER WALKER

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FINDING OF WITCHES

AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE between witchcraft and sorcery in tribal societies (possibly also in pre-Christian Europe), and witchcraft in the Christian era is reflected in methods of finding witches and sorcerers. The relation between two facts, first that men in tribal societies tried through beliefs in witchcraft to explain the otherwise inexplicable occurrence of their particular misfortunes and second, that they held their personal enemies responsible for these has has been interpreted by E. E. Evans-Pritchard in his study *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

Tribal beliefs in witchcraft attempted to explain why it was that at a particular moment and in a particular place, a particular person suffered a particular misfortune – such as disease, the death of kin or animal stock, accident, the blighting of crops, and so on – when he had previously not been thus unfortunate and his fellows were still enjoying good fortune. His ill-fortune was ascribed to the malevolence of a personal enemy, operating by occult or supernatural powers. But witchcraft was not the only possible hidden occult cause of such events: gods and other spirits, or ancestral spirits, or breach of taboo, might be the mysterious cause of ill-fortune. Whichever of these causes were involved, it expressed a moral judgement. Witches and sorcerers harmed those against whom they felt envy and jealousy, spite, malice, hatred or anger. The ancestral gods usually also sent misfortune to either a wrongdoer who had broken a rule of morality which came under their surveillance, or one who had failed to render to them appropriate offerings or sacrifices.

Different tribal societies ascribed misfortunes to various occult causes in varying degrees: among the Azande of the Sudan it was primarily witchcraft which was blamed; among the Tallensi of Ghana it was primarily

Above **Immersion in water was at one time a common method of determining the innocence or guilt of a suspected witch: if she survived the ordeal she was guilty, and she was thought to be innocent only if she sank**

Divining bowls are used for detecting witches in various parts of Africa *Right* Divining bowl from Sierra Leone: other objects used for witch-finding include e bell and an alarm clock; from the British Museum *Below* Wooden bowl used by the Venda tribe in South Africa: the cowrie shell carved in the centre represents the spirit of the mother

Axel Poignant

British Museum

ancestral spirits or the earth goddess; among the Bantu of South Africa it was equally witchcraft or the ancestral spirits – though in all these societies there was some element of all these, and yet other, beliefs. Sometimes the occult cause of a misfortune was indicated by its very nature, but mostly it had to be sought by some form of divination or oracle, the latter of which might sometimes involve an ordeal.

There were many forms of divination, means of bringing the occult into the open. Some were mechanical devices, while others involved direct searching by specialist magicians (usually called witch-doctors, but better named, following J. A. Barnes, witch-detectives). These magicians were often believed to be helped or possessed by spirits, often ancestral, who spoke through them, in their search for occult causes. The most famous of such oracles were the Greek oracles of Apollo at Delphi and of Zeus at Dodona. Tribal diviners of this time, commonly called shamans after a Siberian model, were of this type.

Evans-Pritchard's illuminating study of these systems of belief among the Azande also analysed for us the hierarchy of divinatory and oracular mechanisms. When a Zande suffered a misfortune, he was likely first to consult a rubbing-board oracle: he rubbed together two grooved pieces of wood, while he pronounced the names of persons whom he considered to be inimical to him. It was believed that the boards stuck at the name of any man who might be the witch causing that particular misfortune. Or he might put two different kinds of twigs into a termite's nest, with the name of a suspected witch, and depending on which twig was the more eaten, he received confirmation of his suspicion or not.

The most important Zande oracle consisted in giving chickens a certain substance – a form of strychnine – which had been collected with many hardships in enemy territory, while observing many taboos. Questions, including the names of persons suspected of being the witches possibly responsible for the consultant's present misfortune, were put to the oracle-substance in the chickens; and the answer was 'no' or 'yes' depending on whether the form of the question called for the chicken to vomit the substance or to

Smelling Out A Witch

In the kingdom of the Kukuanas during their search for the legendary mines of King Solomon, Alan Quatermain and his companions are forced to watch a witch-finding ceremony:

Quicker and quicker she danced, till she lashed herself into such a frenzy of excitement that the foam flew in flecks from her gnashing jaws, till her eyes seemed to start from her head, and her flesh to quiver visibly. Suddenly she stopped dead and stiffened all over, like a pointer dog when he scents game, and then with outstretched wand she began to creep stealthily towards the soldiers before her. It seemed to us that as she came their stoicism gave way, and that they shrank from her. As for ourselves, we followed her movements with a horrible fascination. Presently, still creeping and crouching like a dog, the *Isanusi* was before them. Then she halted and pointed, and again crept on a pace or two.

Suddenly the end came. With a shriek she sprang in and touched a tall warrior with her forked wand. Instantly two of his comrades, those standing immediately next to him, seized the doomed man, each by one arm, and advanced with him towards the king.

He did not resist, but we saw that he dragged his limbs as though they were paralysed, and that his fingers, from which the spear had fallen, were limp like those of a man newly dead.

As he came, two of the villainous executioners stepped forward to meet him. Presently they met, and the executioners turned round, looking towards the king as though for orders.

'*Kill!*' said the king.

'*Kill!*' squeaked Gagool.

'*Kill!*' re-echoed Scragga, with a hollow chuckle.

Almost before the words were uttered the horrible deed was done. One man had driven his spear into the victim's heart, and to make assurance doubly sure, the other had dashed out his brains with a great club.

H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*

die. If the misfortune were a continuing one, the consultant could then, through a neutral intermediary, send the wing of a chicken to a man thus accused of being the witch responsible. The accused had to blow water over the wing and state that if it was his witchcraft which was at work, he was not aware of this, and by blowing cold water he 'cooled' his witchcraft. (Witchcraft in this context was a substance in the intestines, whose power could go out and harm others when it was animated by malevolent feelings, even if the alleged witch did not intend it to; immoral feelings set witchcraft power to work.) Should a man thus accused refuse to blow water, and merely assert that he was innocent, it would be taken as proof of his obdurate guilt.

The death of a kinsman on the father's side demanded that his fellows take vengeance. Before colonial rule was established the verdict of their oracle had to be confirmed by the chief's oracle; and the person held by the chief's oracle to be responsible for a death, had to pay compensation. After the Anglo-Egyptian government stopped such payments, the social demand for vengeance persisted; the kin of the dead person made vengeance magic against the unknown witch responsible for the death. This magic sought for the witch; and as other persons died in the neighbourhood, the kin asked if each was killed by their vengeance magic. If their oracle said 'yes', they had to get confirmation from their chief's oracles before they could stop mourning, their vengeance completed. Chiefs thus had sufficient information to see that each death both started, and possibly ended, a chain of vengeance magic; but in the plasticity of the system of beliefs, they could hold that a witch was killed both by the others' vengeance magic, and by the witchcraft of an enemy.

Azande also sometimes organized seances at which one or more witch-detectives would dance to work up the power of their magical substances, and detect particular witches at work, or clear away a general threat of witchcraft from around the organizer of the seance. He might give the witch-detective in advance the names of those he suspected.

Azande also consulted oracles before undertaking any important activity, such as betrothing a daughter, selecting a site on which to build a homestead, going hunting on a particular day in a particular direction, going on a journey, and so on. What they were doing was testing the alignment of threats from witchcraft against success, at that particular moment; if the answer were that witchcraft was threatening, they could, if eager to pursue the planned course of action, consult the oracles later to see if the alignment of occult forces had changed. Witchcraft from the future is in the present, and its threats may shift. Or they could use protective magic to control the witchcraft.

Certain important facts become clear in discussing the finding of witches and the threat of witchcraft, within a single society. First, we see that in most Azande techniques, the sufferer controls the names of the persons put to the oracle, so that he is likely to point out some person who has a grudge against him, or against whom he has a grudge, as the cause of his misfortune. For this reason many early observers of these systems of belief and action considered them to be fraudulent. But we must remember that for people who believed in the system in which they had been reared, it seemed very reasonable that personal enemies should be responsible for one's misfortunes; and since one was deeply concerned to avoid the misfortune, one had a greater interest than anyone else in detecting the responsible witch accurately. Nevertheless some persons in these societies did become sceptical of the whole process, particularly chiefs or those connected with chiefs, who were getting most information.

Azande witch-doctor or witch-detective: specialist magicians with the ability to search out witchcraft are highly prized in a society which believes that most illnesses are caused by malicious witches or sorcerers who must be identified if a complete cure is to be effected

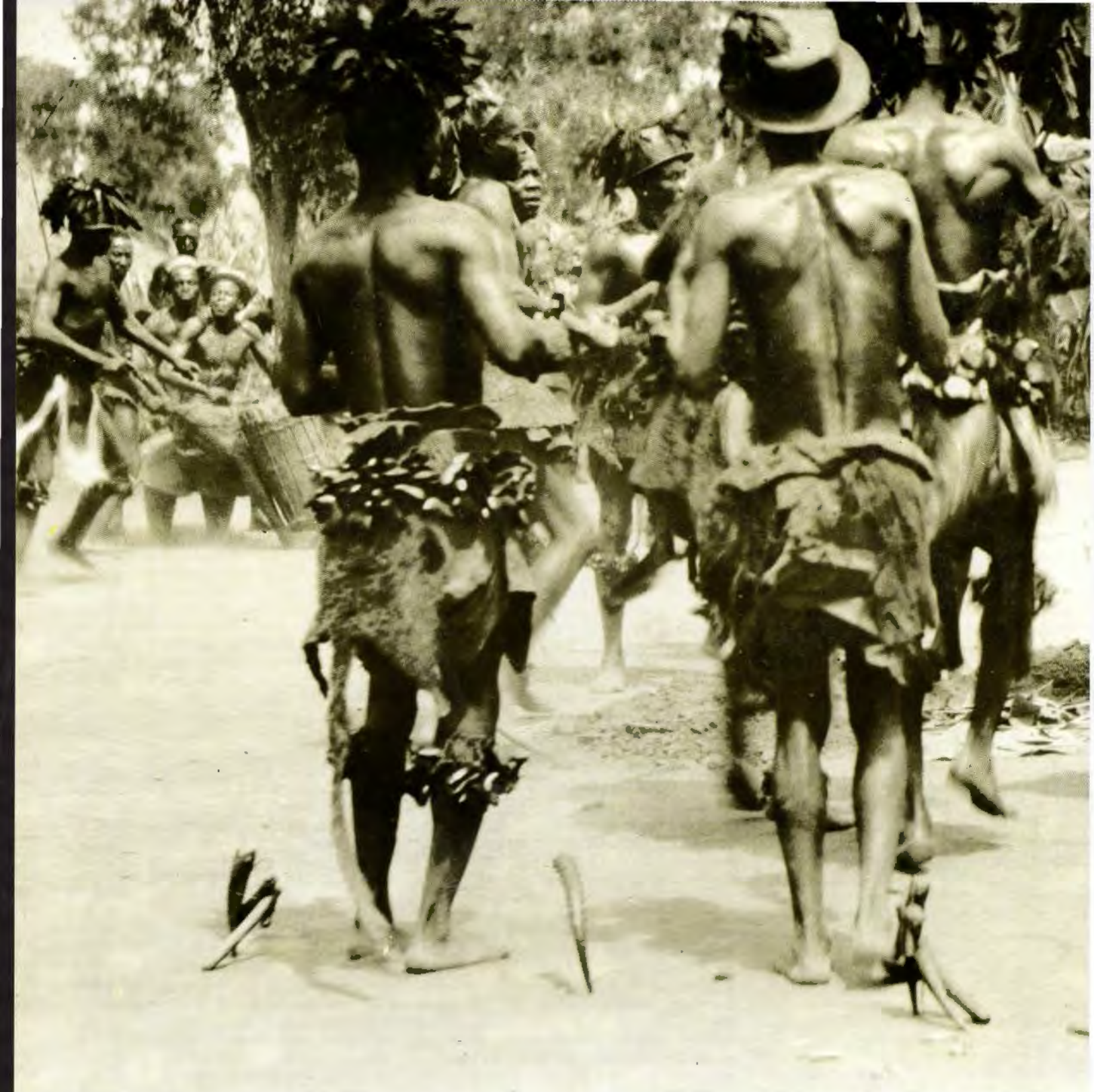
E. E. Evans-Pritchard

When a diviner or oracle spoke directly, in a trance, or through a possessing spirit, the clients were obviously much less in control of the course of divination. Such diviners, like the oracle-substance of the Zande which could not be in human control (as the rubbing-board oracle might be) were more trusted than others. It is usually assumed by anthropologists that these diviners acted on the basis of local knowledge; but since they did not specify a witch by name, but only indicated who he or she might be by the description of social characteristics, they often did not need detailed information about their clients. The range of kinship relationships was extended to bring more distant relatives under the term of near kinsfolk, so that everyone was likely to have some relatives, who could be described in general social terms.

Private and Public Witch-Hunts

In most of the tribal societies described, witches were considered most likely to be relatives of the actual victim, or of the person who was guardian of the victim. More recent researches have brought out that each divination might have to be understood in terms of a long process of development of social relationships, as sections of a village or large group of kinsfolk, or individuals, competed for positions of authority over the whole. Hence one section might reject a divination acceptable to another, and go to its own diviner; or a divination acceptable at one time might be rejected some time later, and quite a different occult cause postulated for the misfortune.

The search for witches in tribal societies was quite different from the great witch-hunts in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, or the outbreak of accusations at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. In tribal societies accusations of witchcraft were specific to particular social relationships; these might be set in the development of relationships within a group of relatives, bound together with strong sentiments of love and co-operation but also involved in competition for positions of authority and



limited resources. A witch was usually a witch with reference to the particular misfortunes of a particular person; and other persons might not be interested in the question. But in the European hunts for witches the whole community, and more particularly the Church, would be deeply involved. For witchcraft was closely identified with heresy, and with Jewry, and in some areas with Islam; and it was the task of the Church to root out heretics and witches.

After being denounced by some accuser, witches were then subjected to torture, under which they both confessed and implicated others as partners with them in the witches' sabbath. Alleged spectral visions of others and admissions against themselves extracted under torture were the principal evidence; and those judges who showed any leniency, or thinkers who might question the sense of the outburst, became suspect themselves. The only ordeals akin to those in tribal societies were those which required the thrusting of the arm into hot water and then judgement on its effects; or throwing the suspect into a pond: if she floated it was the Devil who bore her up, if she sank she was innocent, and lucky if she were rescued before being drowned.

It is true that the kinds of fantasies produced by persons subjected to torture and making confessions in European witch-trials, or the standardized beliefs and allegations by their accusers, bear similarities to the beliefs in tribal societies about the activities of the witches: riding in the air on familiars or objects, going naked, committing incest and indulging in sexual promiscuity, and so on. But the sociological setting of these forms of witchcraft were quite diverse, and so therefore were the methods of detecting witchcraft and witches. Some of those who observed the witch-hunts in Europe or in Salem commented that they reflected village hatreds and malice; and we have seen that malevolent motives in tribal personal relationships were believed to inspire witches to do harm. But this similarity of motives is too trivial to help us make sense of the quite different social and cultural systems of belief and action which share them; while the similitude of fantasies can be understood better by examining the limited number of emotional and moral

E. E. Evans-Pritchard

Azande witch-doctors: seances were sometimes organized at which one or more witch-doctors would work up their magical substances by dancing, and in this way detect individual witches or dispel the witchcraft which threatened the organizer of the seance

themes open to human beings in society. Hence the witchcraft and the witch-detecting of tribal societies and of the Christian world need to be understood in very different contexts, despite superficial similarities.

The outbreaks of witch-finding cults which periodically have swept through parts of Africa seem to be at least a first stage in the spiritual reaction of small-scale societies to their absorption in the economy and organization of the expanding Western world: hence they are in some ways akin to the situations of European witch-hunts, or the Salem trials. But they were not carried out in the name of a Christian orthodoxy, nor did they hunt directly for witches. They demanded that their adherents purify their hearts and get rid of their charms of witchcraft and magic; and lacking the support of an organized Church, and being opposed by the government, they were far less searching or punitive. They did induce many confessions. They appear to have been succeeded by millenary cults, which echoed Judaeo-Christian ideologies, but which included generally the idea of cleansing one's heart of vicious feelings against one's neighbours; and in societies which had indigenous beliefs in witchcraft, this entailed cleansing one's heart of witchcraft. Hence we can describe them as a community method of finding out witches – and at the same time curing these of their evil.

(See also AZANDE; SHAMANISM.)

MAX GLUCKMAN

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Michael Holford/British Museum

Fingers have been credited with spiritual powers in many societies: late Roman model, in bronze, of a hand in the attitude of benediction. Its effectiveness was thought to be increased by the pine cone on the thumb, the snake-like ring and the charms that embellish the palm and wrists

Each of your fingers was supposed to have a special significance in popular lore, and the exact position of a white spot on a certain nail foretold an event in the future

FINGERS

THE FINGERS OF THE HAND, which was man's first weapon and tool, have long symbolized in myth and religion both physical and spiritual power, with the added significance that the number five, sum of the fingers and thumb, is the symbol of humanity, health and love. From ancient times the fingers have played their part in the mysteries of religion and magic. Christ speaks of casting out devils with 'the finger of God' (Luke 11.20). In the world's religions it is an accepted principle that power may be communicated through the sensitive finger-tips, a belief that underlies Christian ordination and confirmation, and finds further expression in the legends of saints whose fingers gave forth fire and radiance, while certain clairvoyants lay claim to the power of seeing by means of the finger-tips. Pagan purification rites were often performed with the middle finger; while Moses dipped a finger in the blood of a bullock at a sacrificial ceremony. In early Christian times protection against demons and other hostile psychic influences was sought by inscribing an imaginary cross upon the forehead with the forefinger.

In English country lore each finger was given its individual name: Towcher for the index finger, Long-man for the middle finger, Lech-man or ring finger or gold-finger for the fourth, and Little-man for the small finger; the thumb was called Thuma.

The healing power of the fingers provides one of the most ancient of psychic endowments, the best known examples being the treatment of the King's Evil, and the cures of the famous 17th century mystic, Valentine Greatrakes, who achieved his remarkable successes by stroking the sick with his fingers, which he claimed enabled him to 'restore temperament of the debilitate parts and reinvigorate the blood' (see FAITH HEALING). In folk tradition the third finger of the left hand, or ring finger, has the power to cure a wound by the act of stroking. This finger is supposed to have a direct link with the heart.

There is a widespread belief that the index finger, known as the poison finger, must not be used to touch any wound as it will then never heal. According to an Oxfordshire tradition the index finger is also known as the 'witch' or 'cursing' finger; among the Negroes of the American South it is called the 'conjure' finger. There is a superstition in Turkey to the effect that one must eat with three fingers only because 'the Devil ate with the other two'. Crossing the first

and second fingers remains a popular rite for keeping the Devil at bay even today.

To point with the finger is not only rude but psychically dangerous, and if the object pointed at happens to be a ship at sea it will suffer misfortune or even shipwreck. American Negroes refuse to point for fear that the finger used will rot off, while to point at a fruit tree causes the fruit to decay. The Latin writer Ovid mentions an ancient rite in which the spirits of the unburied dead are held away by pointing the joined finger and thumb in their direction. To point at those celestial orbs, the sun, the moon and stars, brings misfortune upon the one who points.

In ancient times when mystical signs and portents were the rule in the 'science' of prediction, the finger was sometimes regarded as the symbol of fate itself. Thus Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*:

> The Moving Finger writes and having writ
> Moves on, nor all thy Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line . . .

In rustic fatalism the fingers were believed to indicate by their individual shapes the fates of their owners. Thus in England long fingers were a sign of improvidence, but in Scotland were the characteristics of the potential thief; hence the slang phrase 'fingers' meaning pickpocket. A 17th century writer, Gaule, ridicules the whole dogma of finger lore which was then current; citing the superstitions that short fat fingers indicate intemperance and foolishness, long lean fingers wit, and that those whose fingers crook upwards are 'brutish, ravenous and unchaste'. There is a superstition that those born with an extra finger are destined to be lucky in life, which is countered by the fate of Anne Boleyn who possessed six fingers on her left hand, a fact which was held to support the view that she was a witch.

Signs in the Nails

The practice of decorating the fingers has been carried out for both medical and magical purposes in the past. The Arabs tattooed their fingers as a protection against sprains at the joints; while finger rings of cabalistic design were worn for protection against the assaults of devils and witches. Some finger rings were said to endow the wearer with magical powers, including the art of achieving invisibility. Finger mutilation was performed in primitive rites for a variety of reasons: religious, sacrificial, magical, as a luck-bringer, for the propitiation of the gods, and often as a symbol of mourning. Imprints of hands on cave walls dating back many thousands of years suggest that this is an extremely ancient practice. The Hottentots and Bushmen had the custom of sacrificing the joints of the little finger of a newly-born child as a rite that, it was hoped, would prolong its life; while among the West African Benga tribe the first joints of the fingers of dead ancestors were handed down as precious relics from generation to generation. It is on record that as many as 100 fingers were amputated as part of the mourning ceremonies of a Fijian chief.

The lore of finger-nails is, broadly speaking, analogous to that of the fingers, consisting of a treasury of signs and portents of the future, and as an indication of personal character which in the past was commonly regarded as authentic. Sceptics such as Gaule, however, referred contemptuously to the belief that there was any esoteric significance in variations in growth and shape or the specks on finger-nails. In pre-Christian times, and later, the art of divination by means of the finger-nails was known as onychomancy and this has survived in popular superstition to this day. If you see white spots on the thumbnail, this means that you will receive a gift; if on the index finger-nail, you have as many friends as there are spots; the number of spots on your middle finger indicates the number of your enemies; those on your ring finger-nail are a sign that a letter or a lover will soon arrive; and spots on the nail of your little finger mean that a journey is promised.

A vast system of ancient taboos continues to be associated with cutting the nails, with an infinity of variations. It is lucky to cut them on a Monday or Tuesday, and moderately so on Wednesday; nail-cutting on Thursday portends an illness or a pair of shoes and on Friday is ill-omened. If you do this on Saturday it invites either a loss or the visit of a lover, while cutting the nails on Sunday makes it a certainty that 'the Devil will have you all week'. It is still believed by many that a child's finger-nails must not be cut until it is one year old, except over a Bible; otherwise it will become a thief. They may be bitten off by the mother, however, with perfect safety. According to popular lore, the child who bites his finger-nails is a potential criminal.

In many communities it is considered essential to prevent finger-nail parings from falling into the hands of sorcerers who might use them for evil spells directed against their owner. A Northamptonshire rite by means of which one could acquire the powers of a witch was to sit on the hob cleaning the finger-nails and muttering 'I wish I was as far from God as my nails are from dirt'. In the days when witches were generally feared, it was widely believed that scratching the forehead of a witch with the finger-nails until the blood flowed would break her spell.

Decoration of the finger-nails as a device to ward off evil spirits was practised by the ancient Egyptians. It was one of the minor idolatries banned in Cromwell's England. Chinese mandarins gilded their finger-nails as a sign of rank, and men and women of mixed blood in Spain and America used to colour them to conceal their ancestry which would otherwise be betrayed by their nails.

In affairs of the heart, the lore of finger-nails played a bizarre part. Nail parings discreetly inserted into the loved one's wine provided an irresistible aphrodisiac; while the Indian lover was reputed to use his nails to inscribe symbols upon the body of his mistress during the rites of love.

(See also GESTURE; HAND OF GLORY and PALMISTRY.)

Finger movements are an integral part of classical Hindu dancing, which portrays the thoughts and emotions of gods and men: Ram Gopal, a leading exponent of the art

Peter Larsen

FINLAND

The Struggle of Light and Darkness

'For the people of the North, magic was the goal of all knowledge' and the epic poem of Finland, the Kalevala, *is 'shot through and through with magic'. The first article deals with the religion of this great circumpolar region, and the second examines the folklore enshrined in the epic*

FOR MOST PEOPLE, the music of Sibelius is the only window into the world of Finno-Ugrian religion (a linguistic term meaning a family of languages spoken from Lapland and the Baltic in the west to the Urals in the east). In Sibelius's tone-poems, such as 'Pohjola's Daughter', 'The Return of Lemminkäinen' and above all 'The Swan of Tuonela', a romantic picture is evoked of dark forests, long nights and mystery. Knowing that the composer drew his inspiration from the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala*, we might suppose that if we knew this work we should have the key to the Finnish religious mind. In fact, the picture is much more complicated.

The peoples who speak the Finno-Ugrian languages belong today to Sweden (most of the Lapps), Finland, Hungary and Russia; they are widely scattered, and have been subject to many different religious influences. In some areas traditional religious beliefs survive only as half-remembered folklore; elsewhere, and particularly farther east, they retain their relevance, perhaps beneath a veneer of Christianity, Islam or Communism. But they have for the most part been superseded.

The earliest written sources date from the coming of Christianity. In 1551, Michael Agricola, the great reformer of the Finnish Church, included a list of the old gods in the preface to his translation of the Psalter. Needless tu say, his purpose was to be theologically controversial rather than scholarly, and these sources have to be used with care, and backed up wherever possible by folklore and anthropology. The same applies to the *Kalevala*, which in its present form is a 19th century compilation by Elias Lönnrot, the Finnish scholar, on the basis of popular traditional material.

The setting of the *Kalevala* is the struggle between life and death, light and darkness, represented by the kingdoms of Kalevala and Pohjola. Its heroes, especially Väinämöinen (a figure who has some affinities with Orpheus) and Lemminkäinen, meet death, but emerge victorious. Their quest is a quest for power; and the *Kalevala* is shot through and through with magic, in the sense of power over both the material world and the world of the spirits. For the people of the North, magic was the goal of all knowledge and all wisdom, and both Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen, like the Scandinavian Odin himself, were great magicians.

In this respect the *Kalevala* is a microcosm of circumpolar religion, from Lapland to Labrador, and the object of all its religious practices was to secure man's place in a dangerous world by means of magical techniques. Of trusting dependence on the great supernatural powers there is little or nothing; of fear, wisdom and cunning a great deal. Its typical figure is not the priest or prophet, but the shaman, with his power over the spirits and the capacity to project his own spirit through the air to the dwelling-place of the dead, as Väinämöinen does. In this, the Finno-Ugrians were at one with all the Northern hunters.

But for more than 3000 years most Finno-Ugrians have been agriculturalists, and like all agricultural peoples, their religious beliefs and practices must be seen in the context of the need for fertility – of man, animal and plant – and within the framework of heaven and earth, wood and stream, life and death.

At the head of the Finno-Ugrian pantheon stand the figures of the Sky Father and the Earth Mother, the primeval pair who are the joint sources and guarantors of fertility, to whom sacrifices are made in order that the fields may be fruitful. The Sky Father (either the sky personified or a personal living god in the sky) was called by various names: Jumala, Ilmarinen and Ukko ('grandfather') being the most common among the Baltic Finns. Jumala means 'sky', and Ilmarinen contains the word *ilma*, 'air, sky'. Similar words are found among the Cheremis of the Volga basin and the Votyaks in the Urals region. Jumala seems originally to have been a god of the sky; Ilmarinen a god of the atmosphere, wind, and weather (in the *Kalevala* he is a blacksmith, perhaps indicating an original connection with lightning); Ukko was a god of thunder, similar to the Scandinavian Thor, and, like him, was worshipped with spring sacrifices, libations, the consumption of intoxicants and sexual indulgence. After the coming of Christianity all three came to be identified in various ways with God, Jesus and saints such as St George, St Nicholas, and many more.

The Earth Mother, as the consort of the Sky Father, was known in Finland as Maan-Emoinen or Rauni (a word derived from the Swedish name of the sacred tree, *rönn*, or mountain ash), in Estonia as Maa-ema and among the Votyaks as Muzjem-mumi.

Monarch of the Forest

The omnipresent forest was sacred to the Earth Mother, but was also thought of as possessing a life, will and power of its own; as such, it might well be personified as a spirit (*haltija*) or spirits in human form. By and large, the forest spirit (*metsänhaltija*) was benevolent if treated with respect. He or she would provide game for the hunters, and guide the lost traveller; and to this end small symbolical offerings were made, perhaps on a tree stump. Michael Agricola recorded the forest spirit's name as Tapio, and his kingdom as Tapiola; but the spirit might be female, or even a family of spirits.

Of the animals of the forest, the bear was the incomparable monarch. The first drops of blood from any game animal had to be poured on the ground in order to propitiate the spirits, but the skulls of bears were accorded special reverence and were mounted on a sacred tree, looking in the direction of the rising sun: a rite that was probably nearly as old as the forest itself. Both bear and wolf might be identified with the spirit of the forest, and animals generally were known as 'Tapio's flock'. Each species was also believed to have its 'owner', or guardian spirit, the bear mother, fox mother, and so on. It is interesting that in Christian times, saints such as St Anne and St George have taken over from the haltija of the forest some of their functions as protectors of hunters. There were many lesser vegetation deities outside the forest, whose functions were also taken over by Christian saints.

The country east of Finland is a region not only of forests and fields, but also of lakes and rivers, and water spirits played an important role in popular belief. Just as the forest spirit owns the animals, so the water spirit, often pictured as a woman with long hair, is the owner of the fishes, and has to be

The Sacred Tree

Among the tribes of the Finnish-Ugrian stock in Europe the heathen worship was performed for the most part in sacred groves, which were always enclosed with a fence. Such a grove often consisted merely of a glade or clearing with a few trees dotted about, upon which in former times the skins of the sacrificial victims were hung. The central point of the grove, at least among the tribes of the Volga, was the sacred tree, beside which everything else sank into insignificance. Before it the worshippers assembled and the priest offered his prayers, at its roots the victim was sacrificed, and its boughs sometimes served as a pulpit. No wood might be hewn and no branch broken in the grove, and women were generally forbidden to enter it.

But it is necessary to examine in some detail the notions on which the worship of trees and plants is based. To the savage the world in general is animate, and trees and plants are no exception to the rule. He thinks that they have souls like his own, and he treats them accordingly. 'They say,' writes the ancient vegetarian Porphyry, 'that primitive men led an unhappy life, for their superstition did not stop at animals but extended even to plants. For why should the slaughter of an ox or a sheep be a greater wrong than the felling of a fir or an oak, seeing that a soul is implanted in these trees also?'

J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*

Ateneum, Helsinki

Lemminkäinen, one of the main characters in the *Kalevala*, the great epic poem of Finland, was torn to pieces by the son of Tuoni, Lord of the Dead, when he attempted to kill the swan that swam on the dark river surrounding the underworld. He was magically restored to life by his mother: this and subsequent paintings depicting episodes in the *Kalevala* are by A. Gallen-Kallela

propitiated when a good catch is desired.

In their houses, too, the Finno-Ugrians lived close to the world of the spirits. Each home had its own proper guardian spirit, who looked after the house and its inhabitants in return for small regular offerings of food and drink.

Finno-Ugrian beliefs and practices concerning the nature and destiny of man show remarkable similarities with those of Siberia and the northern parts of the North American continent. Common to all is the belief that man has more than one soul: he has a life-soul which is identified with the breath, and which animates the body, disappearing on death; and a free-soul, thought of as a man's 'double' (Doppelgänger), and which continues to enjoy independent existence after death, either in some land of the departed, or as a wandering and often mischievous ghost. It was believed that the dead themselves did not walk, and it was their haltijas, or spirits, that appeared as ghosts. In addition, there are vestiges of belief in the name-soul, in so far as a name was thought to carry with it qualities and attributes that could be passed on to a child.

In transactions involving the soul and the shaman, it is always the free-soul which is meant: sickness is believed to be caused by 'loss of soul', and a cure can only be effected if the lost soul can be caught and brought back by the shaman. Alternatively, cases of 'demon' possession would be treated by some form of exorcism. It was thought that death could occur when the soul of an afflicted person had passed entirely into the sphere of influence of some malevolent power. Death was never by 'natural causes'; always by supernatural.

The land of the dead, Tuonela or Manala, as pictured in the *Kalevala*, is beneath the earth, approached by a long and difficult path, and surrounded by a dark river, on

which a swan swims (the 'Swan of Tuonela', in Sibelius's tone-poem). The Lord of the Dead is Tuoni, and his consort is Tuonetar; their daughters are evil spirits, bringers of disease. The dead live more or less the kind of life they have lived on earth, even marrying and having children, but there are traces in folklore of the belief that the land of the dead was a 'mirror-land' in which the sun rose in the west and set in the east, in which everything was upside-down, and in which the dead gradually regained their youth. Some Finno-Ugrians also believed in a celestial 'heaven', peopled by heroes killed in battle or by lightning. Otherwise there is little indication of any kind of moral distinction being drawn between people after death.

ERIC SHARPE

Epic Poem of Finland

Finnish folklore is generally associated with the *Kalevala*, the great epic poem compiled by Elias Lönnrot (1802–84) from oral traditions he collected while practising medicine in North Karelia, now part of Soviet Russia. '*Kalevala*' means 'land of Kalevala', the great national hero of Finnish and Estonian folk poetry, and is generally thought to signify the 'fatherland of heroes'. The final version of the *Kalevala* was published in 1849, and consisted of 50 cantos containing 22,795 verses.

Elias Lönnrot's motive in collecting oral literature stemmed from nationalist sentiment: he wanted to show that the Finns had a cultural heritage comparable to that of other peoples. The desire to create an artistic whole explains why he arranged his material in a sequence unknown to the unlettered singers of folksong, why he often united several characters into one and why he even made up passages. Nonetheless the *Kalevala* clearly reflects the main themes of Finnish folklore. Although the basic plot is heroic, Lönnrot wove into his work every type of Finnish oral tradition ranging from legends, tales and epic poetry to lyric 'bird' poems, riddles and magic charms.

The action of the *Kalevala* centres on seven distinct episodes. It begins with the creation of the world from an egg and the birth of Väinämöinen, an ancient hero sage, whose mother was the Virgin of the Air, but who was born in the water. Väinämöinen uses his magic powers to prepare the primeval wilderness as a home

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Facing page **In the *Kullervo*-cycle, part of the *Kalevala*, Kullervo revenges himself upon the wicked wife of Ilmarinen by turning her cows into bears and wolves which then devour her: *The Curse of Kullervo*. Väinämöinen, an ancient sage and the chief hero of the epic poem, was frustrated in his desire to marry Aino, who flung herself into the sea to escape marriage with him *Above*** **Painting of the episode showing (*left*) Väinämöinen's meeting with Aino; the maiden preparing to enter the water (*right*) and (*centre*) the hero attempting to seize Aino, who has become a water divinity**

for the people of Kalevala. This is followed by Väinämöinen's wooing of Aino who prefers death by drowning rather than marriage to the old man. Then follows a description of the relations between the people of Kalevala and their northern neighbours in Pohjola, identified by most scholars as Lapland. Väinämöinen, Lemminkäinen the wild adventurer, and the hero-smith Ilmarinen all in turn undertake the hazardous journey to woo the daughter of Louhi, the Mistress of Pohjola. It is Ilmarinen who finally wins her, but only after accomplishing various tasks including the forging of the *sampo*, a magic mill that provided unlimited amounts of grain, salt and money.

Five cantos known as the *Kullervo*-cycle follow. Kullervo is a hapless youth separated from his family by a feud between his father, Kalervo, and his uncle, Untamo. While he is still a boy his uncle makes several unsuccessful attempts to murder him. Kullervo is finally sold as a slave to Ilmarinen, whose wife torments him beyond endurance; he takes his revenge by causing her to be torn to pieces by a pack of bears and wolves. Kullervo flees and by chance is reunited with his family. Fate still pursues him, however, and returning home one day he meets and seduces a girl only to discover that she is his long-lost sister. The girl commits suicide and in despair Kullervo sets out to slay his uncle Untamo. The cycle concludes with Kullervo taking his own life.

The death of Ilmarinen's wife provides the link back to the main narrative. Ilmarinen decides to return to Pohjola and woo his sister-in-law. Unsuccessful in winning her affection and angered by the ease of life that the sampo, the magic mill, has provided for the inhabitants of Pohjola, he persuades Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen to accompany him on an expedition to seize it. There follows a series of struggles during which the sampo is smashed and most of it lost in the sea; Louhi the Protectress of Pohjola sends diseases to Kalevala, and hides the sun and moon, but is finally forced to leave the people of Kalevala in peace.

Finally, Marjatta, a virgin, conceives by swallowing a whortleberry, and gives birth to a son. Väinämöinen wants to have the baby killed; but when the two-week-old boy reproaches him, he is forced to acknowledge a greater power. The boy is christened King of Karelia and Väinämöinen departs to a place between heaven and earth to await a day when his people will need him again.

Folk Tales and Legends

Finnish folklore, typified by the *Kalevala*, embraces elements from many ages and sources. For the purposes of a general analysis there are four major strata. The oldest stratum of Finnish folklore is represented by the pervading atmosphere of magic which owes much to the shamanistic cults of northern Eurasia. The same stratum also includes legends concerning the creation of the universe, struggles between men and animals, the worship of animals, and laments. Scholars are not entirely agreed on the date of this stratum, but it probably goes back to several centuries BC, before the ancestors of the Finns had emerged from Russia, when they were still in contact with other Finno-Ugrian peoples.

The second stratum dates from just before the birth of Christ, when the ancient Finns began to reach the east Baltic area and came into close contact with the ancient Balts and Germans. This period saw the distinctive *Kalevala*-type metre, and the 'origin' poems or spells. This is a form of magic which is rarely found beyond the Finnic area. By describing the origin of an object, displaying one's knowledge of its nature, the object could be created, in the case of fire or iron; overcome, in the case of the bear or other enemies; or warded off, in the case of illness. It is interesting that the actions of these spells were brought about by the power of knowledge, without appeal to a supernatural force. It is also thought that the poems about Väinämöinen, Joukahainen, who is also featured in the *Kalevala*, and Ilmarinen began to evolve during this era.

The third stratum dates from the early Middle Ages when contacts with Scandinavian peoples became more frequent. Evidence of these contacts is found in the borrowing of the Scandinavian ballad form and thematic concepts. The sampo-episode is reminiscent of a Viking raid and comparison with the Icelandic sagas shows that there can be no doubt of the sampo-cycle's Scandinavian origin.

The fourth stratum coincides with the introduction of Christianity in the 12th century, and the subsequent spread of medieval tales and legends, which often

Kurt & Margot Lubinski

The practice of magic was a central feature of Finnish life, and there was a magical formula to accompany almost every aspect of living

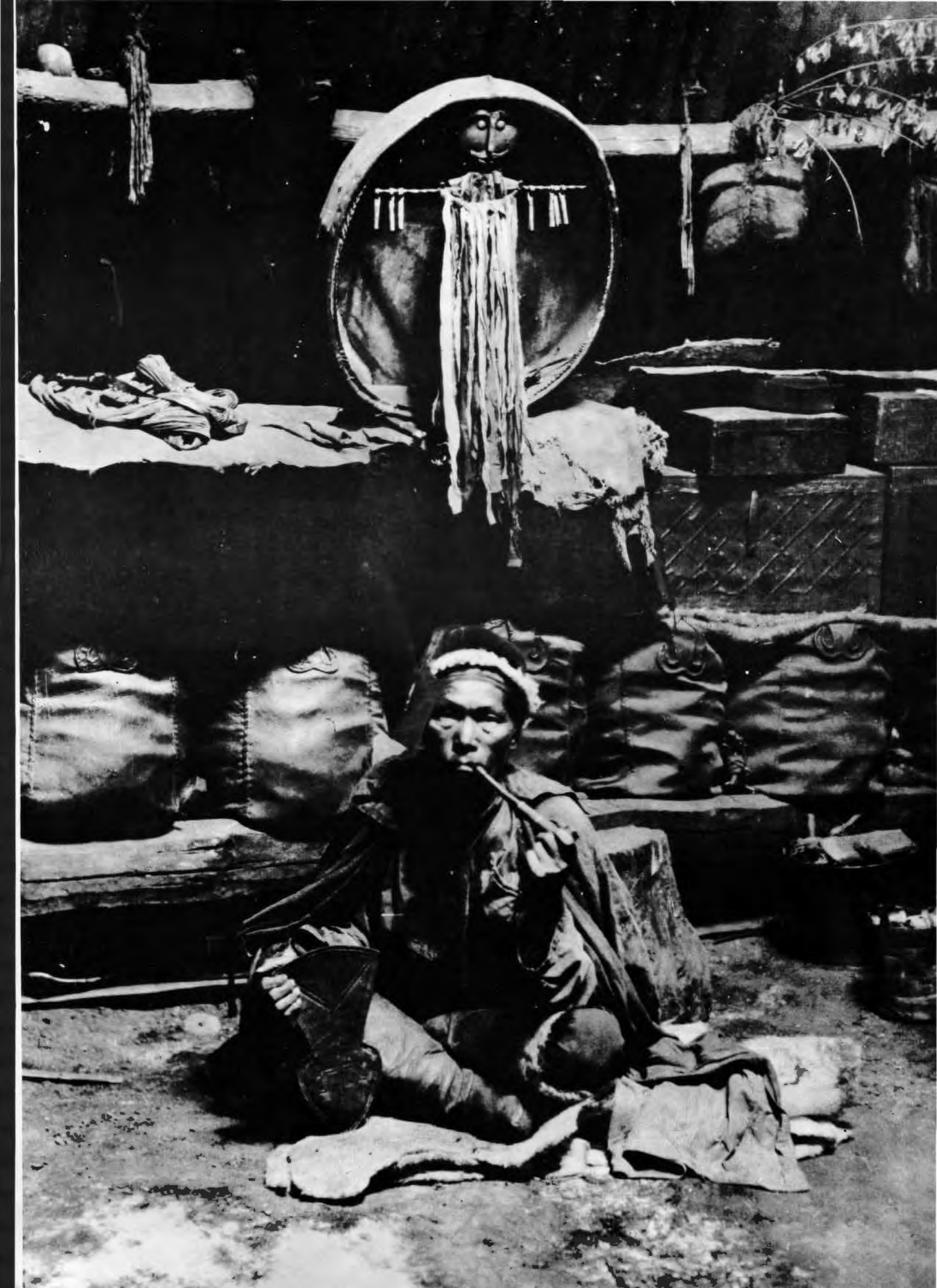
underwent considerable local modification both before and after reaching Finland. Among the themes dating from this period are the *Kullervo*-cycle, related by some scholars to the medieval *Amleth* or Hamlet tale; and Vainamoinen's playing of the zither-like *kantele*, which recalls the medieval versions of the Orpheus legend. The impact of Christianity on Finland's pagan culture is pleasingly symbolized by the episode in which Vainamoinen relinquishes his power to the child born of the virgin Marjatta. The same period is also characterized by a marked increase in folk literature forms with especial proliferation of spells, ballads, proverbs and riddles.

For centuries Finns have been reputed to possess demonic powers, but the practice of devil-worship within Finland itself does not seem to have been widespread. It is clear that the ecclesiastical authorities never had cause to fear witchcraft as it was feared in England and on the Continent, for in the whole of Finland's history less than 60 people were sentenced to death for this crime. The practice of magic, however was a central feature of Finnish life (and still is, in a few remote areas); it is also an essential feature of Finnish folklore and the *Kalevala* contains some 4,200 verses of spell poetry. Magic was used to ensure success, and sometimes protection, in hunting, fishing, farming and raising livestock; and spells were used to cure or ward off illness, to protect against evil and to foretell the future. In fact there was a magic formula to accompany almost every aspect of life.

There were various ways in which magic could be worked: the supplicant could make offerings to spirits of the forest, field and so on; he himself could recite spells; or he could have them recited by a recognized worker of magic, who generally performed the spell alone or only in the presence of the

The shaman, with his power over the spirit world and his ability to project his own spirit to the land of the dead, is the priest of Finno-Ugrian religion *Above* Shaman uttering incantations to the sound of a magic drum, his back decorated with feathers that will help him fly to the spirits, and with bells to announce his arrival *Right* Shaman in his tent; the magic drum is behind him

Kurt & Margot Lubinski



supplicant. He rarely performed before groups of people for fear of weakening the magic. The spell was often in verse, and the wizard would move his body to the rhythm of the chant. Sometimes this induced a state of trance which may be seen as a survival of ancient shamanistic practice. This state was much sought after, for it was believed to give greater effect to the spell.

Finnish magic has much in common with that practised throughout Europe and Asia, where much of it originated. The influence of the ancient spells of India and Egypt reached the Finns through the ancient Germans and easily took root in minds that regarded shamanistic magic as the driving force of life. The majority of surviving Finnish spells, however, spring from the Christian beliefs and legends that spread to Finland during the late Middle Ages.

M. A. BRANCH

FURTHER READING: For Finnish religion, see J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St. Martin's Press, 1980); for folklore and magic, see F. P. Magoun, Jr, *Kalevala* (Harvard University Press, 1963). This includes useful appendices on Lönnrot and Finnish folk poetry.

Ateneum, Helsinki

The *sampo*, a mill that provided unlimited amounts of salt, grain and money, was magically forged by the smith Ilmarinen; but in one of the climactic episodes in the *Kalevala* it is destroyed, and Väinämöinen is able to rescue only its scattered fragments: *The Forging of the Sampo*

Warrior-magician and poet, conqueror of giants and monsters, Finn is the central figure in a cycle of Irish heroic tales; his exploits are commemorated even today in the songs and legends of Gaelic-speaking Ireland and Scotland

FINN

THE TWO MOST RENOWNED heroes of early Irish tradition are Finn and Cu Chulainn. The latter is alleged to have lived about the turn of the Christian era, while Finn was reputed to have died in the second half of the 3rd century AD, aged 230 years – a sure indication of his superhuman nature. Each of these two warriors has attracted the interest of the Irish story-tellers, and each in his own way has stimulated their imagination and inspired their talent.

Similar though they were in many ways and, in the earliest tales, both operating in a heroic milieu, there are marked differences between their individual characters and their roles in their own society. Cu Chulainn never gained the hold on popular tradition that Finn and his followers obtained; and it seems that in the case of Finn there was a strong oral tradition concerning him amongst the common people at the time of the earliest manuscript records, and that this tradition was to persist. Cu Chulainn was the central figure in the so-called *Ulster Cycle* of tales (see CU CHULAINN), while Finn was the main character in the *Fenian Cycle*, the second group of heroic tales, which was named after the *fiana*, 'bands of warriors', whose deeds it commemorates. The leading personalities in this cycle of stories are Finn mac Cumaill, his son Ossian (Oisin), Diarmait mac Duinn and Goll mac Morna. Finn belonged to the Clann Baoiscne, which formed one faction of the company; Goll was a member of the Clann Morna and had been responsible for killing Finn's father Cumall.

According to tradition, Finn and Cu Chulainn are both warriors and both possess magical powers; both have direct and profound dealings with the gods and goddesses of the pagan otherworld. They differ in so far as they each portray different aspects of early Celtic society. Cu Chulainn figures as the hero within the tribal system, the protector of his people, the nephew of the king himself. Finn, on the other hand, stands for the hero outside the tribe, living off the land, fighting, hunting, plundering, living a life that was in essence nomadic. He was not subject to the tribal laws; he had renounced his kin, and his kin had given up all claim to him. They would not avenge his wrongs, nor would he protect them in their distress. He was *ecland*, 'clanless'. But Finn and the fiana, his bands of followers, although landless, did have the right to obtain justice.

The fiana had a recognized and respected place of their own in society; they could only become members of a *fian* or war-band by being chosen, and acceptance depended upon their proving themselves through a series of rigorous initiation ordeals. The following examples will give some idea of the nature of these rites: a hole, deep enough for a man to be buried in up to his waist was dug, and the candidate entered it armed with his shield and a hazel stick of prescribed length. Nine warriors then launched their javelins at him, and if any one of these touched him he was rejected. He had to braid his hair and run off through the woods with the Fenians after him; if caught he could not be accepted; if a branch cracked under his feet, or a twig caught his hair, or if his weapons trembled in his hands, he failed the test and was refused admittance to a fian. Various other ordeals that must be undergone by those who wished to break with tribal society and join one of these war-bands are described in the Irish tales.

The Magic Hood

A *feinid*, a member of a fian, must have been educated to an advanced standard (the Celtic peoples have always held learning in the highest esteem) and he must be familiar with the 12 traditional forms of poetry. In the summer months the Fenians lived a life of wandering, seeking for game and for military glory. In winter they lived off the country – but they cannot in any sense be considered to have been a mercenary army, such as the *Gaesatae* of Gaul. They had one extraordinary privilege which gave rise to much ill-feeling within the tribes: the right to have the first choice of any of the women of the tribe. No girl could in fact be married

until she had first been offered to the Fenians. Unlike Cu Chulainn, who had only one wife, Finn was polygamous.

Finn was the son of Cumall. The form *Cumall* is in fact an error which crept into the later Finn tales, and gave rise to the identification with the god Camulos, invoked at Colchester (Camulodunum) and elsewhere. Finn's father most probably was divine, but he could have had no connection with Camulos. The oldest recorded form of his name is in fact *Umall*; the form *macc Umaill*, 'Son of Umall', gave rise to the later *mac Cumaill*, the second 'c' of *macc* being transferred to the father's name. But Umall himself was in all likelihood of divine origin. It has been argued that Finn had as his father a Celtic ancestor-deity known as Nuadu, who, in accordance with universal Celtic custom, may have had other names, among them Umall. The Celtic deities were often known by several different names and descriptive epithets.

The supposition that Finn had a divine father is somewhat strengthened by the fact that Cu Chulainn had as father the great god Lugh himself; just as Umall and Nuadu may well have been the same person originally, so (it has been argued) may Finn and Lugh once have been identical. Be that as it may, there are certainly strong reasons for believing Finn to have been a pagan Irish deity who was given a historical basis by the story-tellers and turned into a warrior-magician with singular powers. According to one tradition, in fact, he was reborn in the form of King Mongan, a historical personage who lived in the late 6th or early 7th century AD, although 'Mongan would not let it be known' that he was a rebirth of Finn. In this form Finn could allegedly assume any animal shape. Again, another indication of his original divinity is the fact that there are hints in the early Irish genealogies of a triad (group of three) of Finns, much in

Finn may have been a pagan Irish deity who was later given a historical basis; there are hints in early genealogies of a group of three Finns, in keeping with the Celtic predilection for gods in triple form, and the meaning of the Gaelic name for Tara, early Ireland's main royal centre, is 'Tara of the three Fionns': interior of one of the mounds on the hill of Tara

C. M. Dixon

keeping with the Celtic predilection for the number three, and their liking for deities in triple form. The Gaelic name for Tara, County Meath, the main royal centre of early Ireland, means 'Tara of the three Fionns'; and there are also references to the 'Three Finns of Emania'. The god Lugh likewise appears in triadic form.

A triad of deities are Finn's enemies in an 8th century story: these were the Fothads, known as *Aendia*, 'Single God', *Trendia*, 'Strong God' and *Caendia*, 'Fair God'. Another divine opponent of Finn in another story of the same period, 'Finn and the Man in the Tree', is Derce Corra mac hui Daighre. A passage in this extraordinary tale, quoted in my *Pagan Celtic Britain*, gives a most convincing impression of genuine mythology, comparable to that suggested by certain reliefs from Roman Gaul:

> One day as Finn was in the wood seeking him he saw a man in the top of a tree, a black bird on his right shoulder and in his left hand a white vessel of bronze, filled with water in which was a skittish trout and a stag at the foot of the tree. And this was the practice of the man, cracking nuts; and he would give half the kernel of the nut to the black bird that was on his right shoulder while he himself would eat the other half; and he would take an apple out of the bronze vessel that was in his left hand, divide it in two, throw one half to the stag that was at the foot of the tree, and then eat the other half himself. And on it he would drink a sip of the bronze vessel that was in his hand, so that he and the trout and the stag and the black bird drank together. And then his followers asked Finn who he in the tree was, for they did not recognize him on account of the hood of disguise which he wore.

Finn himself had a magic hood which enabled him to be a different animal according to the way he wore it. A further hint of Finn's divinity may perhaps come from the fact that his equivalent in Welsh tradition is the shadowy figure, Gwyn ap Nudd. Like Finn, Gwyn is a hunter-warrior-magician; there is very little about him in early Welsh literature, but he is of the first importance in one of the *Four Branches* of the *Mabinogion*, namely the *mabinogi* of *Culhwch and Olwen* (see MABINOGION). Here he is associated with the hunting of the great mythical boar Twrch Trwyth, a transformed prince, who appears in Irish tradition as Orc Treith.

Prophetic Powers

It seems that a deity having a name similar to that of Finn, or containing the same element, was worshipped in Gaul (*Vind*, from *vindos*, 'white'). Such names as that of the god Vindonnus as well as evidence from certain place-names containing this element suggest that, like Lugh, Finn – or a closely related deity – was known in Gaul, and therefore was popular throughout the Celtic world. Like many other Irish and Welsh heroes, the divine Finn was replaced by the hero Finn under the influence of Christianity. Other indications of Finn's non-human nature are not difficult to find.

Finn possessed the gift of magic prophetic powers. The way in which these powers were allegedly bestowed upon him differs according to the various traditions; but it is interesting that the entire lore about Finn, ancient and modern, is in agreement in making him consistently a warrior-hero-magician who, when he chews his thumb, becomes possessed of second sight. One of the best-known versions of the story which tells how he obtained this magic gift is, in outline, as follows: Goll mac Morna killed Umall (Cumall), Finn's father, in a fight. His mother was pregnant at the time, and shortly afterwards gave birth to a son, Finn. His original name was Demne (just as Cu Chulainn was known as Setanta before he earned his real name) and he later became Finn. When he grew up he went to a certain poet in order to learn the poetic arts. This poet, Finn Eces, had been waiting for seven years to catch the legendary salmon of Linn Feic, which would bestow knowledge of all things upon him who ate it. When he had caught it he asked Finn to cook it for him, but said he must on no account eat any of it. Finn, however, burnt his thumb, and when he put it in his mouth he realized he had become possessed of the knowledge of all things, including, according to some later versions of the tale, the realization that his tutor was his enemy. He proceeded to kill him. Thereafter, Finn evoked his magical knowledge by chewing his thumb.

Tooth of Wisdom

This ritual is reminiscent of the rite performed by the pagan priests of Ireland, known as *imbas forosnai*: to evoke knowledge the priest chewed a piece of raw flesh from a cat, dog or red pig, which had been sacrificed in honour of the deity in question. Finn chewed his own thumb in order to obtain the same result. In the words of one folktale version of the episode (in T. F. O'Rahilly's *Early Irish History and Mythology*) Finn chewed his thumb from the skin to the flesh, from the flesh to the bone, from the bone to the marrow, from the marrow to the juice – and then he knew. Finn was also alleged to have possessed a special 'tooth of wisdom' and he is described as putting 'his thumb under his tooth of wisdom'.

Finn and his followers also manifest a semi-animal nature. Finn was the father of Ossian or Oisin, 'little deer', from whom the *Ossianic Cycle* was named. The Fenians lived very much on the outskirts of society, close to Nature, and were deeply involved with the supernatural world. One of Finn's wives, the mother of Ossian, was a doe called Saar. When her offspring was about to be born she was told that if she could refrain from licking it, it would be human; but that otherwise it would be a deer. When the creature was born she managed to deny her instinct to lick it, as she had been bidden, except that she could not refrain from touching its brow with her tongue. As a result Ossian had a tuft of fur on his forehead. Finn's two faithful dogs, Bran and Sgeolan, his companions on every venture, were his own nephews, sons of his sister Tuirenn; she had been turned into a bitch by a jealous rival. Finn himself could become a man, dog, or deer according to which way he wore his magic hood.

The evidence therefore all points strongly towards Finn's divine origin with counterparts in Wales and Gaul, and probably throughout the Celtic world, just as had Lugh (Lugus, Lleu) himself. But although he is likely to have originated as a god, he had no divine connotation for the later storytellers and the tradition-bearers of the surviving Celtic world. The growth of the legend of Finn as national hero of Ireland took place during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, when he was associated with the supernatural, with fighting and hunting, and with amorous adventures of all kinds. By the time of the famous narrative work, *Acallam na Senorach*, 'The Colloquy of the Old Men' in about 1200 AD, Finn had been fitted into a close historical context, and is represented as being in charge of troops at about the end of the 3rd century AD. He is still portrayed as a warrior and a hunter, possessed of outstanding poetic gifts and supernatural wisdom, but much Christianization has now taken place.

In length the *Acallam na Senorach* is second only to the epic *Tain Bo Cualnge* (the main story in the *Ulster Cycle*, of which Cu Chulainn is the central character). It is basically concerned with St Patrick's meeting with the survivors of the Fenians, namely Ossian, son of Finn, Cailte, and one or two others. They are wandering about in Ireland, lamenting the old days and their beloved companions in the chase and the fight. Ossian eventually joins his mother in a *sidh* (otherworld dwelling), and Cailte goes on by himself and meets Patrick. They travel throughout Ireland together, and Cailte tells Patrick all the heroic deeds performed by Finn and his followers in the past. He describes their encounters with the supernatural and with the pagan gods and goddesses, and Patrick questions him closely and listens with sympathy and enjoyment. Cailte explains why particular places have certain names, and tells the story of how these came to be bestowed. As a reward for the pleasure given to Patrick and to the kings who sometimes formed part of the audience, Patrick promises forgiveness and release from hell for Finn and other noteworthy members of the company.

Vital Tradition

The most famous prose tale of the *Fenian Cycle* is the 'Pursuit of Diarmaid and Grainne', a version of which goes back to the 10th century. Finn is married to Grainne, a danghter of Cormac the king. She prefers his son Ossian, but he refuses her for the sake of his father. She then falls in love with Diarmaid, and forces him to elope with her. The story is concerned with their adventures in escaping from the vengeance of Finn and his men, and Finn's ultimate revenge when Diarmaid is slain some years later hunting the great supernatural boar of Ben Gulban. Finn has many adventures with the inhabitants of the pagan otherworld, and a number of the modern folktales and ballads are concerned with these. Unlike the *Ulster Cycle*, and the stories of the great hero Cu Chulainn, the *Fenian Cycle* took a great hold on the popular imagination. In modern Irish and Scottish

Gaelic folktales elements have remained which in many instances seem to form a more direct link with the Finn of the earliest Irish written traditions than with later literary compositions.

As the collector of Scottish-Gaelic folktales, J. F. Campbell, wrote in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, published in 1862: 'Short passages, stanzas and lines of poetry, ascribed to Ossian, are even still recited through a great many parts of the Highlands, and tales about the Feinn, interspersed with verse, are yet to be heard in many districts from old men. There are very few Highlanders that cannot even now say something about Fionn and his heroes; how they fought and died . . . Rocks, hills and streams are called after the Feinne. Surnames are derived from them . . . and generally the Feinne and their exploits pervade all Celtic Scotland and all Gaelic tradition.' This is an impressive testimony to the longevity and vitality of a tradition which began in the distant Celtic past and persisted with no decrease in popularity down to the present day. For it is still possible, in the remaining Gaelic-speaking areas of Ireland and Scotland, to hear tales and to listen to songs commemorating Finn mac Cumaill, his son Ossian, and all the other colourful members of the fiana, tales and songs in which Finn is still the warrior, the poet possessed of supernatural knowledge, the conqueror of giants and monsters, the mighty hunter; preserving in his legend ideals and beliefs that belong to a remote, barbaric past, a pagan rather than a Christian world.

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: Gwyn and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion* (Everyman Library, 1949); T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin Institute, 1946); Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

Ossian, after whom the *Ossianic Cycle* of tales was named, was the son of Finn and of a doe called Saar; the only sign of his animal parentage was a tuft of fur on his forehead, where his mother had touched him with her tongue: Ossian's Grave in County Antrim, Northern Ireland

C. M. Dixon

Usually a symbol of fertility and constancy, the fir or pine was also associated with ancient funeral customs; in northern Europe and Russia it was the tree of the shaman or medicine-man

FIR

IN MYTHOLOGY references to the fir include not only the true firs but any kind of cone-bearing tree or conifer, and many of these are undoubtedly kinds of pine. The word 'fir' is used in the same way in the Bible. As one of the first timbers to be used for boat-building, the pine was sacred to the sea god in classical times.

In Phrygia the pine was sacred to Cybele, 'Mother of the Gods' and the goddess of fertility. Legend tells of her love for Attis, a young shepherd, whom she charged with looking after her temple, making him vow to remain celibate. In one version he fell in love with a nymph and, mad with remorse for neglecting his vow, castrated himself and bled to death beneath a pine. In a Roman version the goddess – now Rhea – prevented his death by turning him into a pine and was only consoled when Jupiter assured her the tree would remain evergreen.

The spring festival of Cybele involved cutting down a pine and carrying it, shrouded corpse-like and decorated with the violets believed to have sprung from Attis's blood, into the sanctuary. The third day was known as the Day of Blood when the eunuch priests wounded themselves, and some of those attending the ceremony became possessed and castrated themselves. Attis is therefore one of the tree spirits, but like Adonis, his history also represents the 'killing' of the corn by the reaper, its burial in the granary, and its rebirth on being sown. He has a further parallel in the Egyptian Osiris whose image, in his tree spirit manifestation, was buried in a hollowed-out pine log which was burned a year later. This ritual is illustrated in Osiris's hall at Denderah in Egypt, and was recorded by Firmicus Maternus in the 4th century AD.

The pine appears again as a rebirth

Because of its longevity, and because it is evergreen, the Japanese regard the pine as a symbol of constancy and long life; this concept is reflected in the aged couple, Jo and Uba, the spirits of the pine tree, who are depicted in this Japanese print: Victoria and Albert Museum

symbol in the Greek *Thesmophoria*, a ritual in which food and pine branches were cast into caves or vaults sacred to Demeter, and were brought forth a year later and placed on the altar. Those present seized the decaying morsels and sowed them together with the seed corn to ensure a fruitful crop. The immortality symbolism of the evergreen pine rendered it useful at funerals to signify man's belief in the immortality of the soul, a custom that was recorded in classical times and, more recently, in Norway and Russia, where pine or fir boughs were placed on coffins before they were interred. In Norway fir boughs were fixed to a house where a death had occurred to keep away evil spirits.

Pine Cones for Virginity

Immortality and perpetuation go together, and pine and fir were also used as fertility symbols. Virgil described the pine as *pronuba*, because of the pinewood torches used at weddings. In a Shrove-tide custom recorded in Hanover, the men begged gifts from the women, beating them with fir branches at the same time, which was supposed to encourage their child-bearing. Fir trees were placed before houses in central Germany when a wedding was taking place, and in northern Germany newly married couples went through a ceremony in which they held fir branches carrying candles. In the same area, when the cattle were driven to their first spring pastures, the drovers often fixed fir branches on the last cow, hoping to ensure productivity for the herd.

The Japanese regard the pine, an evergreen tree, as a symbol of constancy, and of married faithfulness. Because of the longevity of dwarfed or *bonsai* trees, the pine also represents long life in Japan. The Chinese likewise made the pine one of their emblems of constancy, because it was evergreen and withstood the adversity of winter without any alteration.

The Romans believed that unopened pine cones represented virginity, and virgins would wear pine garlands at ceremonies, as described by the poet Callimachus in his hymn to Diana, in the 3rd century BC.

The pine was also connected with Dionysus, whose followers would sometimes wear pine foliage; a cone tipped the god's thyrsos, a ceremonial staff twined with ivy or vine leaves.

It seems probable that the fir, often the only tree apart from the birch in northern Europe and Russia, was the tree of the shaman or medicine-man in those countries. At any rate, fir saplings, either nine or in multiples of nine, were set before or around the shaman's house; he had to climb the first sapling, leap from one tree to the next, and come down the ninth, to prove that man belonged to both earth and sky. The shaman became possessed and prophesied in front of fir saplings; and when he died his body or his coffin would be hoisted up into a fir.

The mysteriously hardening resin of conifers was believed to have magical properties and was used in incense when the Eastern materials were not available. Resin was also an ingredient of primitive fireworks, and as such connects the fir and pine with the Green Man. Basically, like Attis, a tree spirit or king of the woods, this figure is thought to have originated in a cult of priest-magicians who were custodians of fire and developed the art of making fireworks in order to impress their devotees. In the early 17th century the Green Man and his savage ally the Wodehouse, who dressed only in breeches and headpiece of leaves, were popular characters in plays and pageants. His symbol was a staff tipped with a pine cone.

As the Christmas tree, the fir plays an important part in modern Christmas celebrations, although the reasons why a fir is used are speculative. In an ancient German ritual girls danced round a fir, and having imprisoned the imp of the tree in this way, made him give them whatever they wished for. This pagan imp was later associated with the Christian St Nicholas, or Santa Claus. Since the tree was apparently decorated with eggs, among other objects, it seems likely that this was originally a fertility ritual, yet another example of the use of the evergreen conifer as a symbol of productivity.

These peasant rites, probably celebrated in many parts of Scandinavia, Europe and Russia, gradually spread. The popularity of the Christmas tree in Britain dates from its appearance at a famous children's party held by Prince Albert at Windsor in 1841: abetted by Charles Dickens, the royal family soon made the Christmas tree as universally popular in this country as it was in Germany (see CHRISTMAS).

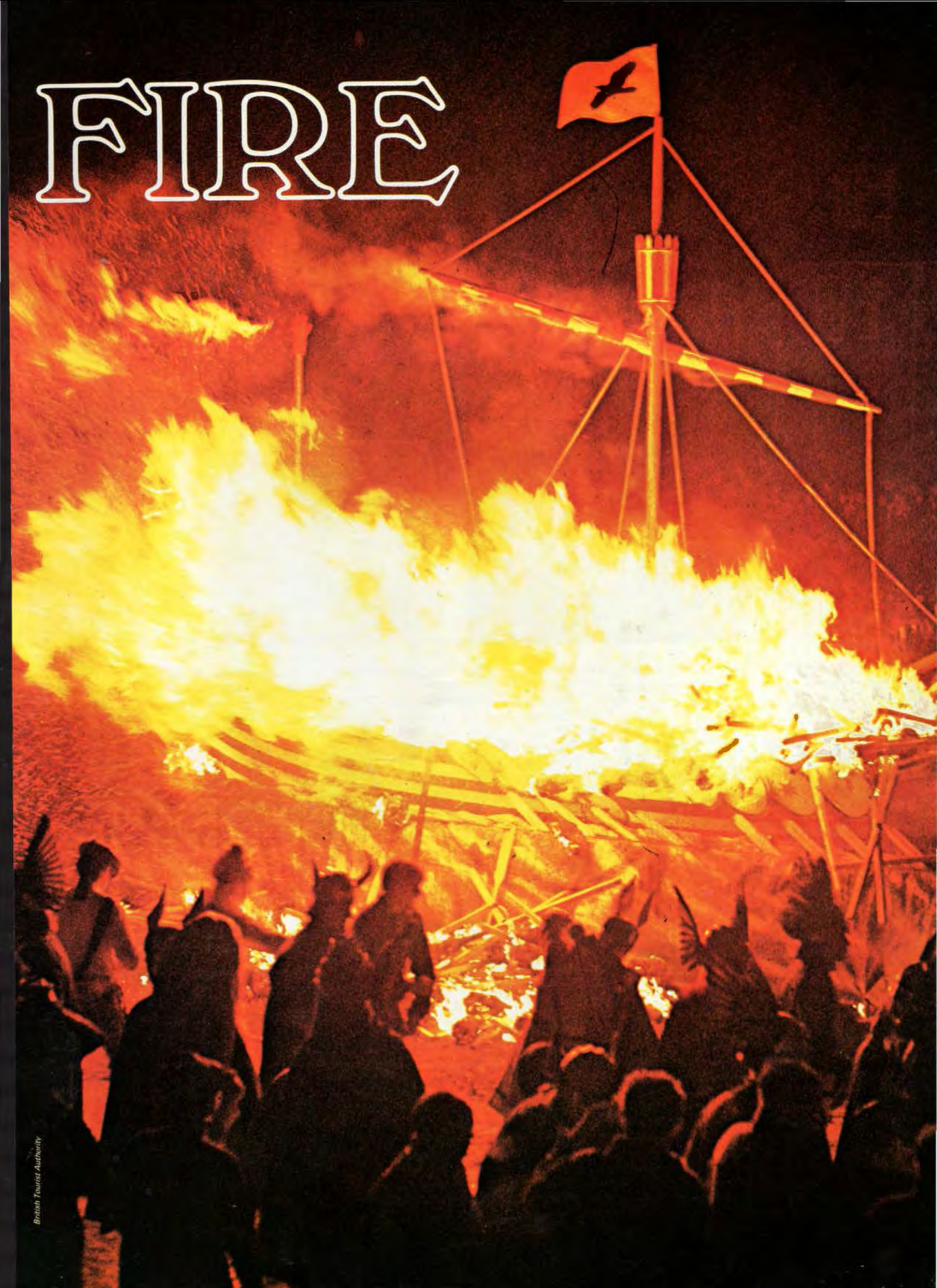
The Jews used evergreens in holy rituals: 'The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary' (Isiah 60.13).

Although to dream of a fir means suffering, it was thought possible to prevent nightmares by laying a branch at the foot of one's bed. A branch that had been partly burned was believed to be protection against lightning, and a bough on the barn door prevented the theft of grain by witches or human thieves. In the language of flowers, fir represents time, and pine is 'hope in adversity'.

(See also CYBELE.)

A. J. HUXLEY

FIRE



British Tourist Authority

Constantine Reyes-Valerio

The everlasting flames of hell have been used to terrify sinners for generations. But fires are also associated with festivals, as any child who celebrates Guy Fawkes' Day knows

ENEMY AND FRIEND of mankind, the element of fire occupies a dual role. Fire can be the blazing forest, the volcano belching forth sulphurous death, or the dreadful heat of the desert sun. In war it is the crimson terror engulfing cities and nations, but in peace it is the glowing industrial furnace, servant of man, and the friendly hearth, symbol of domesticity and peace. Yet fire remains an elementary force imprisoned within a man-made cage, ready at the least relaxation of vigilance to escape from its prison and reduce homes and cities to ashes.

Fire to the ancients represented the seed of life, to which all life must in time return. As one of the four elements in which the basic matter of creation found physical expression, it symbolized the ray of light, the lightning and gold and, in its material aspects, heat and dryness.

Fire is also the agent of purification and renewal, and therefore of sacrifice and resurrection. It has been used throughout history in the rites of sacrifice, for the burned offering was considered peculiarly appropriate as an atonement for sin. Sometimes the god himself might be ritually consumed in the fires in the person of a human substitute or in effigy, a rite devised for the purpose of liberating the spiritual element from the corruptible mortal bonds. This was the fate of the Cappadocian god Sandan, corresponding to Hercules, burned in effigy at Tarsus.

The idea that fire embodies a form of divinity is a basic theme of the world's religions. In the book of Exodus in the Old Testament we read of the miracle of the burning bush, which Moses saw as he tended his flocks: 'And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.' Fire, as a sacred element, was tended with infinite care, often as a religious rite. The divine fires of Vesta, Roman goddess of the hearth, were served by priestesses who were bound to chastity under pain of death. In Ireland a perpetual fire was maintained at Kildare and tended by nuns until the beginning of the 16th century, this being no doubt a relic of pagan fire worship carried forward into the Christian era. Similarly, in ancient Peru sacred fires were maintained by the virgin daughters of the Inca.

Masters of Fire

Every civilization, great and small, has incorporated in its pantheon of deities a god of fire, Apollo, Helios, Hestia, Loki and Lleu (Lugh) being those with whom we in the West are most familiar. There were gods of sun fire, lightning fire, forest fire, prairie fire, altar fire and hearth fire. Every society projected its own conception of fire on to its created gods. To the Mongols the fire deity was Mother Ut, whose father was steel and whose mother was flint. For many North American Indians fire was the sun's representative on earth; tribes of the Great Lakes worshipped 'Grandfather Fire' in a special cult.

The extensive fire mythology of the fire worshippers of ancient India centred upon the fire god Agni, symbol of earth-kindled fire, lightning and the fire of the sun; he was reincarnated daily from the fingers of holy maidens who twirled the fire drill. The Parsees, the modern representatives of Zoroastrianism, are so dedicated to the sanctity of fire that they will not burn their dead, exposing them instead on Towers of Silence.

A consistent theme of mythology has been the belief that the first fire was stolen either from the gods or the sun and handed on to mankind. Prometheus, in Greek legend the giver of the sacred flame to mankind, was

Previous page **A replica of a Viking longship is burnt each January as the high point of the Festival of Uphellya, at Lerwick in the Shetland Islands** ***Above left*** **Image of Xiuhtecuhtli, dating from the 7th to 9th century AD. Xiuhtecuhtli was the fire god of the Toltecs, an ancient people of southern Mexico: most civilizations have included in their pantheon a god of fire** ***Above right*** **The Titan Prometheus, in the best known version of a myth common to many peoples, stole a brand of fire from the gods to give to man: a painting by Rubens in the Prado, Madrid** ***Far right*** **Watched by Elisha, the prophet Elijah is carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire. In the Bible fire is often an attribute of the divine: painting by Giovanni Piazzetta**

National Gallery of Art Washington

The Indian fire god Agni was reincarnated daily from the fingers of holy maidens who twirled the fire drill

punished for the theft by the angry Zeus. The Finns held fire to be the child of the sun, descended from the heavens where it was rocked in a tub of yellow copper. In European folklore the agent of fire was commonly a bird. The theft theme is widespread among North American Indians, whose tales speak of fire stolen by a trickster culture hero, then passed from animal to animal in a relay, while the angry owners pursue it until finally it is given to humanity. Some tribes, including Indians of Brazil, believe the stolen flame to have been hidden among the trees, no doubt because fire could be found ready-made in the smouldering of a lightning-charred tree. Then too, fire was first produced by rubbing one piece of wood against another. For this reason the oak, a hard wood suitable for fire-making, was considered sacred; the mistletoe, which grows on the oak, became in consequence a protective charm against lightning, while an acorn carried in the pocket gave security to the traveller.

The priesthood of the oak, the Druids (see DRUIDS) were also Masters of Fire, as were lesser mortals who had acquired the supposedly miraculous art of igniting fire and who were considered in consequence to be inspired by the gods. Potters and smiths, who worked with fire, were craftsmen falling into this category, and for thousands of years the latter were credited with magical powers of a high order. This is confirmed by a Yakut proverb which declares that 'the first smith, the first shaman and the first potter were blood brothers'. Smiths, by virtue of their supposed knowledge of the secrets of fire and iron, were assumed to exercise a degree of power over the elements which extended to healing the sick. Although universally respected, they seem to have excited considerable apprehension among the early Christian clergy, and in an ancient hymn Christendom is warned to guard itself against 'the spells of women, smiths and Druids'. In a number of intriguing medieval legends smiths were regarded as agents of the Devil. Vulcan, the Roman fire god, was the patron of workers in metal.

The alchemists, who held that metals were living entities, were likewise Masters of Fire. Their mysterious philosophy involved

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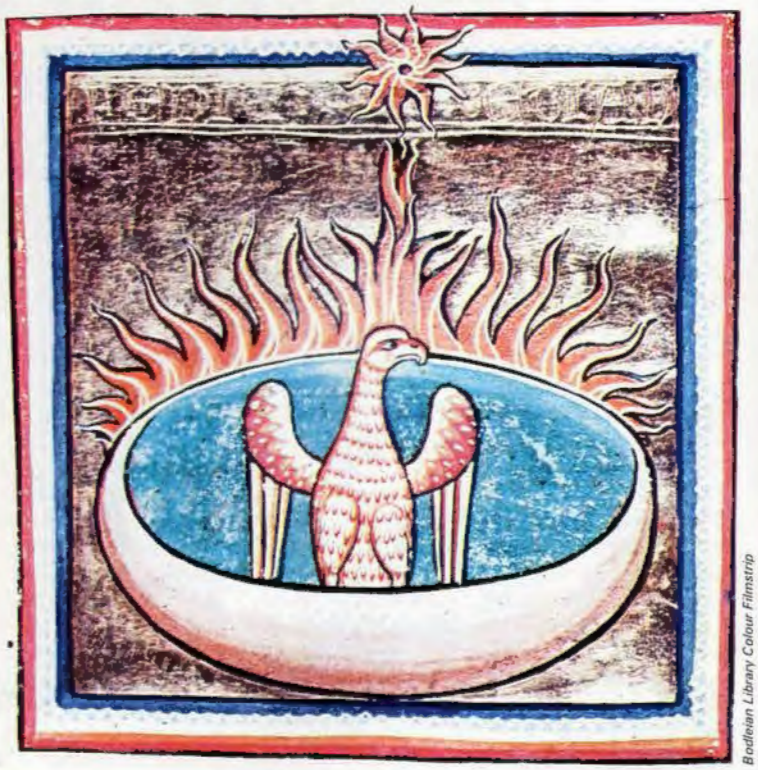
Above **Funeral of Prime Minister Shastri of India; in India cremation on a funeral pyre is the regular means of disposal of the dead** ***Below left*** **The flames of an altar fire take the form of a dragon, a sign that a human sacrifice is required: 14th century Italian illustration of an episode in** ***The Thebaid*** **of Statius. The Phoenix (*below right*) ignited its own nest and burnt itself to ashes, to emerge rejuvenated: early 16th century MS. Another mythical creature, the salamander *(opposite page)* lived unharmed within the element of fire: 15th century MS.**



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

British Museum

The salamander, a mythical lizard-like monster, could even live within fire without injury to itself

the doctrine that all physical substances consisted of a combination of body and spirit which, being submitted to fire, left a residue, the ash representing the body and the smoke the soul. They believed that a spark of the divine life descended from the heavens to be embodied in all matter; this suggests the old myth of the original fire having been stolen from the gods.

An essential function of many practitioners of magic was the public demonstration of man's mastery over the fire element. To this end wizards in their ceremonies walked over burning coals or swallowed fire, or handled red hot iron without apparent injury. The hereditary Holy Men of Fiji had the power to walk uninjured over red hot stones, while at the annual festival of the Feast of Fire in India certain adepts have been known to walk a distance of 40 feet over an area of flame.

A further faculty of the magician was the ability to quench fire by magic. The Norse god Odin in his role of wizard, as described in the *Elder Edda*, was master of this mysterious art. It descended during the course of ages to the magical priesthoods and later still to Christian priests and saints who were immune from injury from fire. St Catherine of Siena, for instance, fell into a blazing hearth and emerged unscorched.

Will o' the Wisp

Many complicated and extremely interesting fire rites have survived into modern times among the less sophisticated of the world's communities. It was believed by primitives, for example, that a forest blaze might be quenched by a ceremonial dance performed around a man-made fire, accompanied by the singing of a rain charm. As a means of halting a heavy rain shower by sympathetic magic Australian aborigines will pour water into a fire.

Magical fire precautions of a most primitive kind have been practised in Europe, particularly in Germany, and also in the Germanic areas of the United States. The most effective form of fire insurance was considered to be a text worn as an amulet upon the body, of which the following is an example: 'Like unto the cup and wine and the Holy Supper which our dear Lord gave unto his dear disciples on Maundy Thursday, may the Lord Jesus grant me in day time, and at night, that no dog may bite me, no firearm hurt me, no weapon, no steel, no iron, cut me, no fiends, no witchcraft and enchantment hurt me and no fire burn me.'

Engendered by Friction

We may note, however, that to produce fire in one's own body is a sign that one has transcended the human condition. According to the myths of certain primitive peoples, the aged women of the tribe 'naturally' possessed fire in their genital organs and made use of it to do their cooking but kept it hidden from men, who were able to get possession of it only by trickery. These myths reflect the ideology of a matriarchal society and remind us, also, of the fact that fire, being produced by the friction of two pieces of wood (that is, by their 'sexual union'), was regarded as existing naturally in the piece which represented the female.

Mircea Eliade *The Forge and the Crucible*

The old legend which declared that the spirit of fire, after descending from the remote heavens, made its home among men is echoed in a number of the intriguing folk beliefs of Europe. In Britain the flame which flickers over marshy places, sometimes luring lost travellers to their doom, was thought to be of supernatural origin and was known as Will o' the Wisp or Jack o' Lantern. The mysterious flame called St Elmo's fire, which sometimes clings to the masts of ships at sea, had ominous significance as described in the lines:

> Last night I saw St Elmo's stars
> With their glittering lanterns all at play
> On the tops of the masts and the tips of the spars
> And I knew we should have foul weather that day.

The human soul has also been conceived in terms of fire, taking shape as either a luminous ball or a flickering flame. Reminiscent of the firedrake, dragon guardian of hidden treasures, are those tales in which the souls of the old sea kings glowed as flame above the tumuli or burial mounds where they lay buried with their hoards. Balls of fire observed dancing at night on the shores were regarded by seafaring folk as the souls of drowned sailors eternally seeking rest. Often the soul would be manifested as a bluish light moving from the chamber of death.

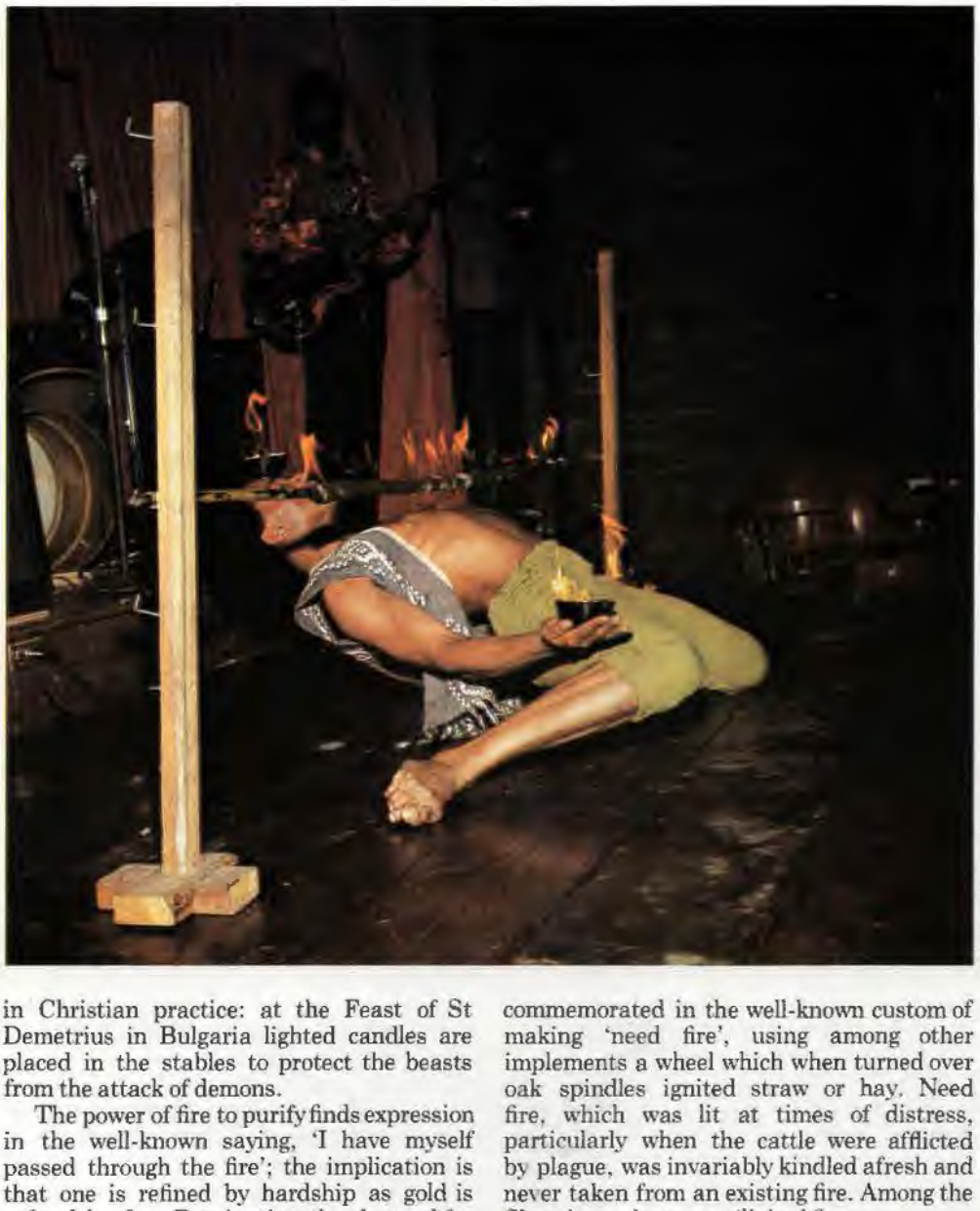
In the past, as a special act of deference to the one newly dead, all the household fires were extinguished to relieve the soul from the obligation of paying homage to the hearth, which was the altar of the god of fire where the family ancestors were worshipped. The concept that the soul left the body in the form of a flame inspired an old custom often employed to discover the missing body of a drowned person: a lighted candle was inserted in a crust of bread, which was then floated upon the water, the place where it stopped being the supposed site of the corpse. In this rite the flame was said to symbolize the soul, the bread the husk.

There are innumerable allusions to fire in the world's folk legends, in tales of fantastic cities, castles, thrones and even human beings and trees entirely composed of living flame. Animals and dragons breathing fire persistently haunted the imaginations of our ancestors. The salamander, a mythical lizard-like monster, could even live within fire without injury to itself, while 'salamander's feathers' was the name given by the pagans to asbestos. In the story of the Phoenix of Arabian legend may be observed the continuous theme of fire-lore, the statement that although the elemental may die it is immediately reborn. It was the Phoenix which, after a period of years, ignited its own nest and burned itself to ashes, emerging from the flames pulsating with new life.

Trial by Fire

Other legends tell of young maidens who are made to pass between raging fires as a test of chastity. This motif was reflected in the old trials by ordeal, in which an accused person submitted himself to the judgement of God, seeking to vindicate his innocence by walking barefoot over red hot coals or by carrying a red hot iron in his hand. Theological disputes were at times submitted to the somewhat arbitrary form of judgement by fire, and it was not unknown for conflicting liturgies to be cast into the flames, the one which emerged unscathed being declared the authentic version.

It seems to have been almost universally assumed that evil spirits, like wild animals, could be intimidated by fire. The Indians of South America carry flaming torches when entering the dark forests, not so much for the illumination they provide as to terrify the spirits lurking there. This theme is echoed



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Syndication International

Mastery over fire was one of the marks of the priest or the magician, and in the past many such practitioners would give public demonstrations of their powers – a tradition continued both by showmen and in certain Eastern cults *Above left* A limbo dancer in a night club in the Bahamas introduces fire into his act to make it more spectacular. The circus fire-eater *(above)* relies on technique but the ability of the fire-walkers in Hong Kong *(above right)* to pass unharmed through flame must be attributed, in the absence of any other explanation, to the power of faith

in Christian practice: at the Feast of St Demetrius in Bulgaria lighted candles are placed in the stables to protect the beasts from the attack of demons.

The power of fire to purify finds expression in the well-known saying, 'I have myself passed through the fire'; the implication is that one is refined by hardship as gold is refined by fire. Dominating the demand for the ritual burning of witches and heretics at the stake lay the same ancient theme of purification by the element of fire. Witches, it was thought, possessed tainted blood that could only be purged by the flame and it was for this same reason that the heretic was burned alive and his ashes broadcast or thrown into a stream. The identical theme is apparent in beliefs about the after-life, for purgatory, where souls are purged of sin, has been said to be a domain of fires spiritual and physical. Hell, for the damned, was notorious for its invisible flames.

The supervision of hell lay in the hands of a class of beings who in earlier cultures and mythologies had been fire elementals, but who were now degraded to the status of infernal furnace tenders and torturers of the damned.

A typical tool for the original practice of fire-making was a wooden bow, with which a hole was drilled in a piece of wood; the spark produced was then used to ignite a wisp of straw. It has been suggested that the impact upon social life created by this invention must have been equalled perhaps only by the modern discovery of steam. This primitive type of fire-making was commemorated in the well-known custom of making 'need fire', using among other implements a wheel which when turned over oak spindles ignited straw or hay. Need fire, which was lit at times of distress, particularly when the cattle were afflicted by plague, was invariably kindled afresh and never taken from an existing fire. Among the Slavs it was known as 'living' fire.

Bonfire Festivals

The great public fire ceremonies of ancient times were scenes of horrifying cruelty, if the reports of early travellers like the Greek Posidonius are to be believed. Huge wickerwork effigies containing living human beings and animals were set on fire and the ashes afterwards scattered on the soil. The later ceremonies as practised in Europe embodied relics of the original theme of sacrifice, in the burning of effigies or in rites in which pretence was made of hauling a man or woman into the flames.

Fires known in different places as bale fire, wild fire, will fire or neat fire were ignited to signalize the passage of the seasons, for purposes of purification and to revive by sympathetic magic the powers of the declining sun. They were lit to celebrate various points in the year: spring, the beginning of summer, midsummer, the beginning of winter and midwinter. It has been suggested that the Guy Fawkes bonfire ceremony replaced one of these ancient fire ceremonies. The early Church frowned on the pagan implications of these ceremonies but the ban had apparently little effect. The fires were in part at least dedicated to the expulsion of evil in the form of witchcraft, since sorcerers were terrified of fire. It was an old Scandinavian custom, known also in Iceland, to hurl a burning coal after a departing troll wife or witch to neutralize her spells. A relic of the old May Day festival, Beltane, is still celebrated at Peebles, Scotland, and in the early 1920s the custom was instituted in Cornwall of lighting a chain of bonfires on St John's Eve (23 June). A sickle was cast into the flames followed by the chant:

> In one bunch together bound
> Bonfire blossoms here are found
> Both good and ill:
> Thousandfold let good seed spring
> While ill weeds, fast withering
> This fire shall kill.

An even more recent innovation has been the introduction of fire-leaping ceremonies by

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the exponents of the modern version of witchcraft, as popularized by the late Dr Gerald Gardner of the Isle of Man. These performances are carried out in secluded places on the old seasonal feast days, usually in strict privacy but occasionally in front of television cameras.

In domestic spheres a remnant of ancient fire magic has persisted in a number of curious hearth superstitions, now disappearing under the impact of artificial forms of heating. Many people believe that a poker placed in an upright position against the fire bars to form a cross helps the fire to burn, while others consider that if the rays of the sun are permitted to shine upon the hearth the fire will go out. Sometimes the future is read from the state of the ashes. This custom was long practised in Yorkshire on the Eve of St Mark (24 April) to determine who in the family was destined to die next.

A General Conflagration

Fire being the seed of all existing things, to which they must in time again return, has suggested to generations of pyromaniacs the alarming idea that if humanity could only be consumed entire then it must, as a matter of course, arise from the flames renewed and purified; this doctrine became popular in 17th century England. One of the most notorious symbols of this revolutionary epoch was Solomon Eccles, a fanatical prophet of doom who walked through the streets of London in the nude, bearing a cauldron of burning brimstone upon his head.

A flaming torch is the symbol of freedom in New York's Statue of Liberty; and the same significance underlies the action of young men of the East and West who in recent times have set light to themselves, committing suicide as living torches, in affirmation of religious or political faith. (See also ASHES; CREMATION; ELEMENTS; HEARTH; ORDEAL; SACRIFICE.)

ERIC MAPLE

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Michael Holford

Firmament

The vault of the heavens: it was generally viewed in the ancient world as a solid crystal sphere, constantly rotating, to which the stars were fixed; it contained windows through which the waters above the firmament fell as rain; later it was thought of as the eighth sphere surrounding the seven spheres of the planets.

A beginning, anything new, a 'first time' of any kind, whether it be joyful or alarming, is specially significant; both these elements are implied in the rituals and precautions surrounding New Year's Day or the first sight of the new moon. The first child of a marriage, like the first fruits of the harvest, is particularly precious and for this reason to sacrifice it to the gods is a mark of the highest devotion

FIRST

THE OFFERING OF THE FIRST-BORN is the theme of one of the most dramatic stories in the book of Genesis (chapter 22.1–19). It concerns Abraham, the great patriarch of the Hebrew people, and in its present form it is clearly intended to demonstrate his unflinching faith in Yahweh, the god of Israel (see YAHWEH). However, the story was obviously based upon a very primitive custom, and in its original form it was doubtless an aetiological myth, that is, a myth designed to explain the cause of something.

The original theme is concisely stated in the opening verses. Yahweh is represented as commanding Abraham: 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.' Abraham is obedient to the terrible command, and the narrative vividly describes the journey and the preparations for the sacrifice. Having built an altar and laid his son, bound, thereon, 'Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.' At this fatal moment, the angel of Yahweh intervenes and Isaac is saved. Then, instead of his son, Abraham sacrifices a ram, 'caught in a thicket by his horns'. The episode ends with Yahweh again addressing Abraham: 'By myself I have sworn . . . because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore.' Thus the story achieves its conclusion of showing how Yahweh, having tested the faith of Abraham, promised that his descendants would henceforth become a great nation.

But behind this edifying tale of Abraham's faith there is clearly another purpose, that of explaining how an ancient custom of sacrificing first-born sons to Yahweh was superseded by the offering of an animal victim. There is an abundance of evidence in the Hebrew scriptures that such a custom was once observed by the ancient Israelites. For instance, in the ritual law set forth in the book of Exodus, Yahweh is depicted as commanding Moses: 'Consecrate to me all the first-born; whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine. . . . Every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every first-born of a man among your sons you shall redeem' (chapter 13). The reason assigned for this savage practice is that it commemorates Israel's exodus from Egypt, when Yahweh 'slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle'. But this historicized explanation is typical of many others given in the Bible to account for ritual customs of which the origin was unknown in later times.

The ritual killing of the first-born is found elsewhere among primitive peoples. It seems in origin to have been a propitiatory rite addressed to supernatural powers to ensure their benign attitude towards later offspring. There could be some variation of motive: for example, the first-born son could be made a sacrifice for the well-being of a city or offered as a vicarious sacrifice made by a father for his sin. 'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' asks the prophet Micah.

Babies Buried in Jars

The many skeletons of infants buried in jars which have been found on Canaanite sites attest to the practice of infant sacrifice among the ancient inhabitants of Canaan. In a revealing passage, describing the reforms of King Josiah at Jerusalem, it is recorded: 'he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech' (2 Kings 23.10). It is now generally accepted that the word 'Molech' was not the name of a god but a technical term for child sacrifice, indicating that the Israelites were once accustomed to burn their children as sacrifices, probably to Yahweh.

The same custom was practised by other Semitic peoples, for instance the Phoenicians and Carthaginians; the calcined bones of children, sacrificed to Tanit and Baal-Hammon, have been found at Carthage. Other forms of the sacrifice of the first-born among non-Semitic peoples are recorded by J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.

Every departure from the familiar in the life of mankind is in effect a step into the dark, a journey into the dangerous unknown. In primitive societies that are dominated by superstition, each new occurrence is generally regarded as potentially harmful unless its impact can be countered by rites specially devised to placate the gods. The passage of the seasons, the displacement of the old by the new, were once believed to be disturbing processes. The first action undertaken and the first object received, even the emergence of the new crop in the fields or the birth of a child, could be a source of danger to the community unless made safe by magical rites.

From time immemorial it has been the custom among many of the world's people to consume the first fruits of the harvest in a ceremonial feast, or dedicate it wholly or in part to the tribal deity, as a method of offsetting the jealousy of the gods or the envious dead, or the spirit of the crop itself. Fishermen in many countries nail the first fish of the season to the ship's mast and believe that it is possible to determine from its sex the prospects of the forthcoming fishing season. If the fish is female the hauls are expected to be good, but if it is male, poor. Closely allied to this custom is the importance attached to the first coin received by a merchant in his day's takings. Handsel money, as it is called, must be first spat upon and then kept separately in the pocket to ensure a good day's trading. Theatrical people believe it possible to determine the fate of a new production from the age of the purchaser of the first ticket. If he or she is old the production will have a long run; if young the future of the show is bleak.

Painting from a 16th century Italian dish showing Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac: the biblical story points to an ancient practice among the Israelites of sacrificing the first-born child to God

Michael Holford

Stepping Into Danger

The belief that the future of a building had to be insured against evil and misfortune on completion, before it was safe to use, lies at the root of many foundation rites, including the sacrifice of young children (see BUILDERS' RITES). The old terror of human sacrifice in turn probably reinforced the superstition that it is dangerous to be the first to enter a new house. Some form of protection is afforded, however, by taking the initial step with the right foot. The new bride is also shielded from baleful influences when she enters her home for the first time by being carried over the threshold. But in America this custom may spring from the old superstition that the first one of the newly-weds to step over the threshold will be the first to die.

Primary actions of any kind have all the force of magic behind them, a very well-known example being the 'crossing the line' ceremony with its mock ordeal and its attendant galaxy of sea gods. The significance of first actions permeates our superstitions. The seamstress who puts the first stitch in a bridal dress will be married within the year. In love magic, if nine peas are found in the first pod opened by an unmarried girl and one of these is placed on the lintel of the outer door, the first single man who crosses the threshold afterwards will be the one she will marry.

The newly-born child was believed to be extremely vulnerable to the influence of witchcraft in its first few days of life, and its first and therefore magically potent gifts often included salt, which was thought to

'Crossing the line': at sea each person crossing the Equator for the first time is ceremonially drenched, while 'King Neptune' directs operations

provide protection against the forces of evil. There was a time when even the first kiss received by a baby from any individual other than its mother was thought to transmit to the child the characteristics of the person who gave it; great care had to be exercised in warding off undesirable people.

Even greater dangers might face the dead, for the soul of the first person to be laid to rest in a new cemetery was assumed to become automatically the property of the Devil. Until very recently it was the custom in parts of eastern England for children to dance seven times round the oldest (or first) gravestone in a churchyard and at the conclusion to place their ears close to the ground and listen for the sound of 'the Devil rattling his chains'.

The New Year

The sense of wonder tinged with alarm at the transition from one phase of time into the next provides the motive force for those magical ceremonies which are still observed by the adult community. At the first sight of the new moon many people continue to turn over their money, reciting at the same time the ritual words 'white rabbits' as a charm to encourage good fortune during the next four weeks. With the emergence of the New Year the church bells acclaim the presence of a renewed first moment in time in which all enter a state of ritual rebirth. In the United States, the custom in most towns and cities of greeting the New Year's arrival with a prolonged torrent of noise, far greater than mere bell-ringing, resembles primitive noise-making to frighten off devils. Perhaps in this way the New Year noise clears the air of the previous year's evil, allowing for a fresh start.

In a practice that extends from East to West, the household prepares to usher in the New Year in symbolic form. In the British Isles the New Year will be represented by the first male person to cross the threshold after midnight, known as either First Foot or Lucky Bird. He must be tall and dark haired, and also bear token gifts representing the basic needs of the household for the year: money, coal and a piece of bread. It is important that there should be nothing ill-omened about his appearance and those with crossed eyes or with eyebrows that meet across the brow are rigorously excluded, since these are signs of the Evil Eye, the first glance of which is doubly lethal. American belief, where the 'first footing' custom still holds, finds other ill omens if the first visitor is a widower, or red-headed.

(See also NEW YEAR.)

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The story of the garden of Eden has been interpreted in ways as various as the doctrine of original sin and the belief that nudism is virtuous. It has kept its long hold on humanity because it deals with matters of vital human importance – evil, death, love, and the gulf between man and God

FIRST MAN

SOME GROUPS OF HUMAN BEINGS believe that they are closely related to animals and trace their descent from an ancestor who had both human and animal characteristics (see ANIMALS; AUSTRALIA; TOTEM). Others say that men are descended from the sun, whose light and heat preserve all life in the world. According to an Indian myth, for instance, the first man and woman were the twins Yama and Yima, who were children of the sun. There is a Maori story that the first human being was made of earth and given life by the sun: 'it was the sunlight fertilizing the Earth Mother.' The Zuni Indians of New Mexico said that men and all living things were the children of the sun and the earth. Elsewhere the sky and the earth are the original ancestors of humanity (see EARTH).

There is a very widespread tendency to give the earth an important role in the creation of the first human beings, sometimes in association with plants, which suggests a poetic parallel between human life and the life of vegetation, both springing from the earth and returning to it again in death. A striking example is a Pawnee story of how Mother Corn led the first men up to the earth's surface.

> Before the World was we were all within the Earth.
> Mother Corn caused movement. She gave life.
> Life being given we moved towards the surface:
> We shall stand erect as men!
> The being is become human! He is a person!

Another example is Gayomart, who shone like the sun, the Zoroastrian first man. Gayomart was killed by Ahriman, the evil power, but his seed fell into the earth and from it there grew a rhubarb plant which turned into the first human couple. (See AHRIMAN.)

A Greek myth says that the first men, the 'golden race', were born from Earth. 'These men . . . lived without cares or labour, eating only acorns, wild fruit, and honey that dripped from the trees, drinking the milk of sheep and goats, never growing old, dancing, and laughing much; death, to them, was no more terrible than sleep' (Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*).

Various episodes from the story of Adam and Eve are depicted in this illustration from the 15th century *Bedford Book of Hours*: within the garden of Eden, Adam names the beasts, God takes Eve from Adam's side, the guilty pair eat fruit from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge and are condemned by God; outside the garden Adam and Eve labour as their son Cain kills his brother Abel

Sometimes the human body is said to be made of earth, fashioned of clay. The Shilluk of the White Nile accounted for differences in skin colour by the differently coloured clay from which the various races of men were made. The Sumerian god Enki caused human beings to be made of clay and the Egyptian god Khnum was believed to fashion men on a potter's wheel (see CREATION MYTHS).

Some of these themes also appear in the first man myth which has had far and away the greatest influence on the western world, the story of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve

Perhaps no story ever told has been subjected to such a weight of exhaustive analysis and learned criticism as the opening chapters of Genesis. The great 19th century controversy has died away and it is now generally accepted that the world and man were not created in the way that Genesis describes; which is not to deny that Genesis contains truth of a different sort. It is also generally accepted that Genesis was influenced by the myths of other eastern peoples, the neighbours of the Jews. But in the quality of its insight into the human condition Genesis stands alone.

There are two different stories of the creation of man in Genesis. The first, in chapter 1, is the 'official' version, preserved by the Jewish priests. God created man 'in his own image', as an inferior copy of himself (an idea also found in Babylonian mythology). The point is not merely that God is thought of in human form but that man is thought of in divine form, as a miniature replica of God, which has provided a biblical basis for the theory that man is potentially God and can eventually become God.

God created male and female, ordered them to 'be fruitful and multiply' and gave them the lordship of all living things. The Hebrew word used for man is *adam*, which later in Genesis is the name of the first man, though most modern interpreters maintain that *adam* here means 'mankind' in general.

The second story (starting at Genesis 2.4) is longer, more vivid and older. It seems to have been a more popular version than the official, priestly account, with which it conflicts on various points of detail. It is the familiar tale of Adam and Eve, the forbidden fruit and the serpent, and it is clearly concerned with a couple who were the first of the human species.

The Making and Fall of Man

God formed a man out of dust from the ground, an implied play on the words *adam* (man) and *adamah* (earth). God breathed into the man's nose to give him life (another widespread theme – see BREATH), which provided a basis for the later sharp distinction between man's 'spirit' – the pure and godlike part of him – and his earthy material body with its earthy habits and desires, the part of man's being which so many ascetics and puritans have tried to suppress.

When he had given man life, God planted a garden for him 'in Eden, in the east'. Eden means 'pleasure, luxury' and judging from the description of its rivers, it was somewhere to the north of Mesopotamia. In the paradise garden was every tree which is beautiful to look at and whose fruit is good to eat. There were also the Tree of Life, whose fruit brought immortality, and the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruit Adam was forbidden to eat on pain of death.

God decided to give the man a helper. He made the animals and birds, also from earth, and brought them to Adam, who gave them all their names. But none of them qualified as a suitable helper and so God 'built' a woman from one of Adam's ribs. Adam hailed her with delight as 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' and her making from his body is the origin of human love. He named her *Hawwah* (which became Eva in Greek, Eve in English), meaning 'the mother of all living' – a play on words, linking her name with *hayah*, 'to live'.

Next comes the entrance of the serpent, the most subtle of animals. The serpent told Eve that eating the forbidden fruit would not bring death: on the contrary, 'God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So Eve picked the fruit and gave some to Adam and they both ate it. The immediate consequence was that they felt shame at being naked and made themselves aprons of fig leaves. In other words, the story refers the association of guilt and shame with sex to this original disobedience of God's orders (an idea echoed by Milton in *Paradise Lost*).

Adam and the Angels

We created man from dry clay, from black moulded loam, and before him Satan from smokeless fire. Your Lord said to the angels: 'I am creating man from dry clay, from black moulded loam. When I have fashioned him and breathed of my spirit into him, kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him.'

All the angels prostrated themselves, except Satan. He refused to prostrate himself.

'Satan,' said Allah, 'why do you not prostrate yourself?'

He replied: 'I will not bow to a mortal created of dry clay, of black moulded loam.'

'Begone,' said Allah, 'you are accursed. My curse shall be on you till Judgement-day . . .'

'Lord,' said Satan, 'since you have led me astray, I will seduce mankind on earth: I will seduce them all, except those that faithfully serve you.'

The Koran

Adam and Death

The devil is a skilful enemy: how many palms he has won! consider to what he has cast us down! That we are born mortal comes of this, that he in the first place cast down from Paradise our first ancestor!

St Augustine

In this light, actual death becomes a visible demonstration of the fissure between God and man which cleaves man's being to its very essence and which was opened at the very beginning of his spiritual moral history . . . Man's death is the demonstration of the fact that he has fallen away from God.

Karl Rahner *On the Theology of Death*

God discovered what Adam and Eve had done – Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent – and punished them with death, with the pain of childbirth, with the subjection of woman to man, and with hard work. To prevent Adam from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life and becoming immortal, God drove Adam and Eve from Eden and set an angel with a flaming sword to guard it.

The Meaning of the Story

It is clear that death was one of the punishments for Adam's crime but not clear in what sense. The story may have meant, originally, that man would have been immortal if Adam and Eve had not disobeyed God. Or it may have meant (a more sophisticated, perhaps too sophisticated, explanation) that man was subject to death in any case but would have seen it not as something frightening and cruel but as his natural end, 'no more terrible than sleep'.

Essentially, the story is about the double nature of man, a creature whose life is made of labour, pain, frustration, defeat and death but who knows himself capable of finer things, who has his moments of joy, beauty, splendour and power: man who is half animal and half God. Genesis says that the evils which afflict man came to him because he disobeyed God. 'By wanting to be like God,' as Gerhard von Rad puts it, 'man stepped out from the simplicity of obedience to God. He thereby forfeited life in the pleasant garden and close to God.'

That the serpent was the Devil is a later belief – Genesis does not say so – but the temptation the serpent offered was the possibility of becoming 'like God', of achieving all-embracing, superhuman power, which is the central aim of black magic. The Genesis story describes how man, who stands midway between the animals and God, tries to become God. In doing so, he overreaches himself and brings evil into the world. From a modern point of view, the story sees the roots of evil in man's refusal to submit tamely to the conditions in which he finds himself, in his attempts to master everything about him and, in this sense, to make himself God.

The Two Trees

The significance of the two trees is very unclear, and there may have been only one tree in the original story. If it was the Tree of Life, Adam was not forbidden to eat its fruit and parallels in other myths suggest that the serpent's role in the original story was to steal the fruit of the Tree of Life and so obtain the immortality intended for man.

Alternatively, S. G. F. Brandon has suggested that the tree in the original story was the Tree of Knowledge, and that by eating its fruit Adam and Eve acquired the knowledge of sex, knowledge of the means of reproducing life: it was this knowledge that made them 'like God', the creator of life. And this brought death upon them because of the myth of the overcrowded earth, the widespread belief that if birth exists but not death, the world will quickly become hopelessly overcrowded: death is the only solution.

The Wickedness of Woman

For hundreds of years, Eve's part in the story has powerfully reinforced the feeling, which spreads far beyond Jewish and Christian tradition, that woman is inherently evil. It was Eve who succumbed to the serpent's temptation and the legend grew up that the serpent had physically seduced Eve, infecting all her descendants with abominable lust. It was Eve who persuaded the weak-willed Adam to eat the fruit and so it was Eve who was responsible for the evils that the crime in Eden unleashed on humanity. 'From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die' (Ecclesiasticus 25.24).

In the late 2nd century AD the Christian writer Tertullian castigated women with, 'Do you not know that each of you is also an Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway, you are the unsealer of that forbidden tree, you are the first deserter of that divine law, you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was too weak to attack. How easily you destroyed man, the image of God! Because of the death which you brought upon us, even the son of God had to die . . .'

Origin of the Two Sexes

Genesis says that Adam was the father of Cain, Abel, Seth and other children, and died at the age of 930. According to other Jewish traditions, he wrote some of the Psalms (numbers 5, 19, 24, 92, 132) and his grave was in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, to the south of Jerusalem, where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were also believed to be buried. Christian tradition placed his grave at Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. This is the origin of the custom of showing a skull at the foot of the cross in paintings and sculpture, and is based on the link which Christians saw between Adam, who alienated man from God, and Christ, the second Adam, who reunited man with God.

Jewish stories said that Adam was originally a man on his right side and a woman on his left (the side of evil), and God separated the two halves. Or Adam and Eve were joined at the shoulders, back to back, and God split them in two with an axe. These tales were probably meant to reconcile the making of man in God's image with the belief that God is beyond sex and incorporates both male and female in himself. If Adam was a copy of God he must have been bisexual. The idea is present in the Genesis story, perhaps for the same reason, Eve being made from Adam's body.

Another story was that the angels were jealous of Adam. Some of them advised God against creating him in the first place but were destroyed by God in a rage. When Adam had been created, the Archangel Michael commanded the host of heaven to fall down and worship him. They all obeyed except Satan, who was too proud and was hurled out of heaven in punishment. Some writers explained that this was why Satan tempted Eve in the form of a serpent, to revenge himself on Adam. The story survives in the Koran.

The belief that the angels were jealous of man is part of the tendency of later Jewish writers to drawing glowing pictures of the glory and wisdom of Adam in Eden before the Fall. He was unimaginably beautiful, he looked like one of the angels, his skin was like a shining robe, and the ball of his heel outdid the sun in splendour. His body was so huge that it filled up the space between the earth and the sky, and stretched from one end of the earth to the other.

These notions seem comically exaggerated but there was serious feeling behind them. They stemmed from the belief that man was not condemned for ever to toil, pain and death but would one day recover Adam's greatness and beauty. Adam was the pattern of what God had intended man to be. He had fallen from grace but in days to come, when the Messiah appeared, the righteous would be restored to the splendour meant for man.

To the Christians, Jesus was the Messiah, and St Paul – who was, of course, a Jew and familiar with the teachings of the rabbis – explained that Christ has brought back to man the glory which Adam had lost. One of St Paul's great themes was the contrast between Adam, who had plunged all men into death and the power of the Devil, and Christ who had come to mankind's rescue. At least as far back as the 7th century, Christians called Adam's disobedience 'the fortunate sin' (*felix culpa*) because it had made necessary the coming of Christ. In other contexts, however, Christians did not take so kindly a view of Adam's crime.

Original Sin

Genesis does not say that Adam's rebellion infected all mankind with what was afterwards called 'original sin' – a germ of wickedness endemic in human nature so that babies at birth are already sinners. That death and the other penalties for Adam's sin have been transmitted to all later generations is clearly implied, and the Jews inherited from their nomad ancestors the tradition that the father of a family was its representative. If he committed a crime, the rest of the family were automatically implicated and had to take the consequences. The story of Achan (Joshua, chapter 7) is an example, and there was a popular saying that 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge', which is quoted with disapproval by Ezekiel (chapter 18). But although Jewish writers accepted that men have inherited the punishment of Adam's disobedience, most of them did not believe that men have inherited his sinfulness.

Whether St Paul invented the Christian doctrine of original sin or not is disputed. John Hick, summarizing the opinions of most commentators, says that St Paul believed that all men die because of Adam's sin; that all men have inherited from Adam a tendency to sin; that all men do in fact sin as a result of this tendency; and that Christ came to abolish sin and death. He concludes that, 'There is thus clearly present in St Paul the root idea of what was later to be called "original sin".'

The early Church had to contend with gnostic theories which saw the world as a thoroughly evil place that must have been made by a thoroughly evil god. Convinced

John Webb

Eugen Kusch

Above **God created man 'in his own image': the idea that man is a miniature replica of God has provided a biblical basis for the theory that man is potentially God and can eventually become God: watercolour by William Blake in the Tate Gallery *Left* Man, according to Greek myth, was fashioned from clay by Prometheus the supreme craftsman: this detail from a bas relief from a Roman marble sarcophagus shows the gods Poseidon, Hermes and Hera in the background as Prometheus prepares to animate his handiwork, which lies lifeless on the ground**

Eve in Eden

Never had Ransom seen a face so calm and so unearthly, despite the full humanity of every feature. He decided afterwards that the unearthly quality was due to the complete absence of that element of resignation which mixes, in however slight a degree, with all profound stillness in terrestrial faces. This was a calm which no storm had ever preceded . . .

Opposites met in her and were fused in a fashion for which we have no images. One way of putting it would be to say that neither our sacred nor our profane art could make her portrait. Beautiful, naked, shameless, young – she was obviously a goddess: but then the face, the face so calm that it escaped insipidity by the very concentration of its mildness, the face that was like the sudden coldness and stillness of a church when we enter it from a hot street – that made her a Madonna.

C. S. Lewis *Perelandra*

Gayomart, the first man of Zoroastrian legend, reclines on a tiger skin: his seed fell into the earth and became a rhubarb plant which turned into the first human couple; 15th century Persian manuscript

that God is good, Christians needed an explanation of how evil had entered the world and man, which God had created. Whatever St Paul may have intended, one of the explanations adopted was based on Romans 5.12, which in the original Greek says that sin and death entered the world through one man (Adam) and death came to all men, *for* all men sinned. The verse was mistranslated into Latin to read that sin and death entered the world through one man *in whom* all men sinned. St Augustine, who was primarily responsible for fastening the doctrine firmly into the fabric of Roman Catholic orthodoxy – and who was the first to use the term 'original sin' itself, in a work written in 397 – read Romans 5.12 in the Latin translation.

St Augustine thought different things at different times and a brief summary does not do him justice, but he believed that in Eden before the Fall Adam was wise and happy, free of disease, old age and death. He sinned by rebelling against God and his sin was inherited by the entire human race, who were his descendants and who were 'seminally present' in his loins. It follows that babies who die before they are baptized go straight to the Devil's clutches in hell, though St Augustine did suggest that the tortures inflicted on them might be comparatively mild.

Some Gnostics of the early centuries after Christ identified the god of the Old Testament as the evil being who created the evil world. This naturally involved them in standing the Old Testament stories on their heads. The god who made man was now an evil power and the serpent, the tempter, became a virtuous creature, sent by the good supreme God to teach Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil so that they could see for themselves the evil nature of the world which the Jewish god had made.

Gnosticism, Mysticism, Nudism

According to the gnostic 'Secret Book of John', for example, man was created by the god of the Jews, an evil supernatural being named Ialdabaoth (probably a corruption of Jehovah Sabaoth). He seduced Eve after the expulsion from Eden and fathered on her the two sons men call Cain and Abel, but whose real names are Jehovah and Elohim. The one has a face like a bear and the other like a cat. (Elohim, like Jehovah, is a name of God in the Old Testament.)

In Manichean theory, Adam was created by an evil power, begotten of the coupling of two great demons as a receptacle for certain particles of heavenly light, which had been captured by the forces of darkness. The Adam the demons produced was blind, deaf, fast asleep and unconscious of the divine light within him but the sowers of light sent a redeemer – called Ohrmazd or the Son of God or brilliant Jesus or Jesus the brilliant light – to rescue him. From his demon ancestors man has inherited his physical body and its desires but he also contains the divine light.

The Manichean Adam was spawned by evil as a copy of the heavenly 'primeval man', who had earlier been created by the powers of light. The two different creation stories in Genesis encouraged some Jewish and Gnostic writers to suggest that the first story describes the making of the ideal 'heavenly man', the image of God, a spiritual, non-material being who combined both sexes in himself; and that the second story describes the making of actual earthly man, a being who is part spirit and part matter (his body, made of earth) and who is divided into two sexes. Here again is the theme of the dual nature of man, material and spiritual, animal and divine.

The idea survived in Jacob Boehme's theory (which powerfully influenced William Blake) that there were two Falls. The original Adam was an angelic spiritual being, immortal, bisexual and virgin. He fell for the first time in acquiring a physical body and dividing into male and female. This was followed by the second Fall when the serpent successfully tempted Eve, bringing death and the necessity for reproduction of the species because man was no longer immortal. As in gnostic theory, everything which is physical, material, earthly is regarded as evil, and in particular sex.

The belief that the original Adam was the perfect pattern of humanity, which man had lost but might regain, inspired various medieval heretics to maintain that men and women should go about naked and refrain entirely from work, which would restore them to the state of perfection of Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall. In 1925 a group of Adamites were discovered in California. Their leader was Eve recreated, her husband was Adam and their farm was the Garden of Eden. They used to dance naked in the farmyard round a bonfire and a lamb was burnt alive on at least one occasion. It is a far cry from the beauty and far-reaching significance of the Old Testament story but the Adamite heresy may perhaps have contributed to the notion that nudism is physically and psychologically healthy.

(See also EVIL; MAN.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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FISH

IXΘYC

Jean Arland

On the walls of the catacombs of Rome are scratched representations of a fish, for to the early Christians the fish was the symbol of Christ. Inhabitants of a mysterious and alien world, since ancient times fish have been associated with the sacred and the supernatural

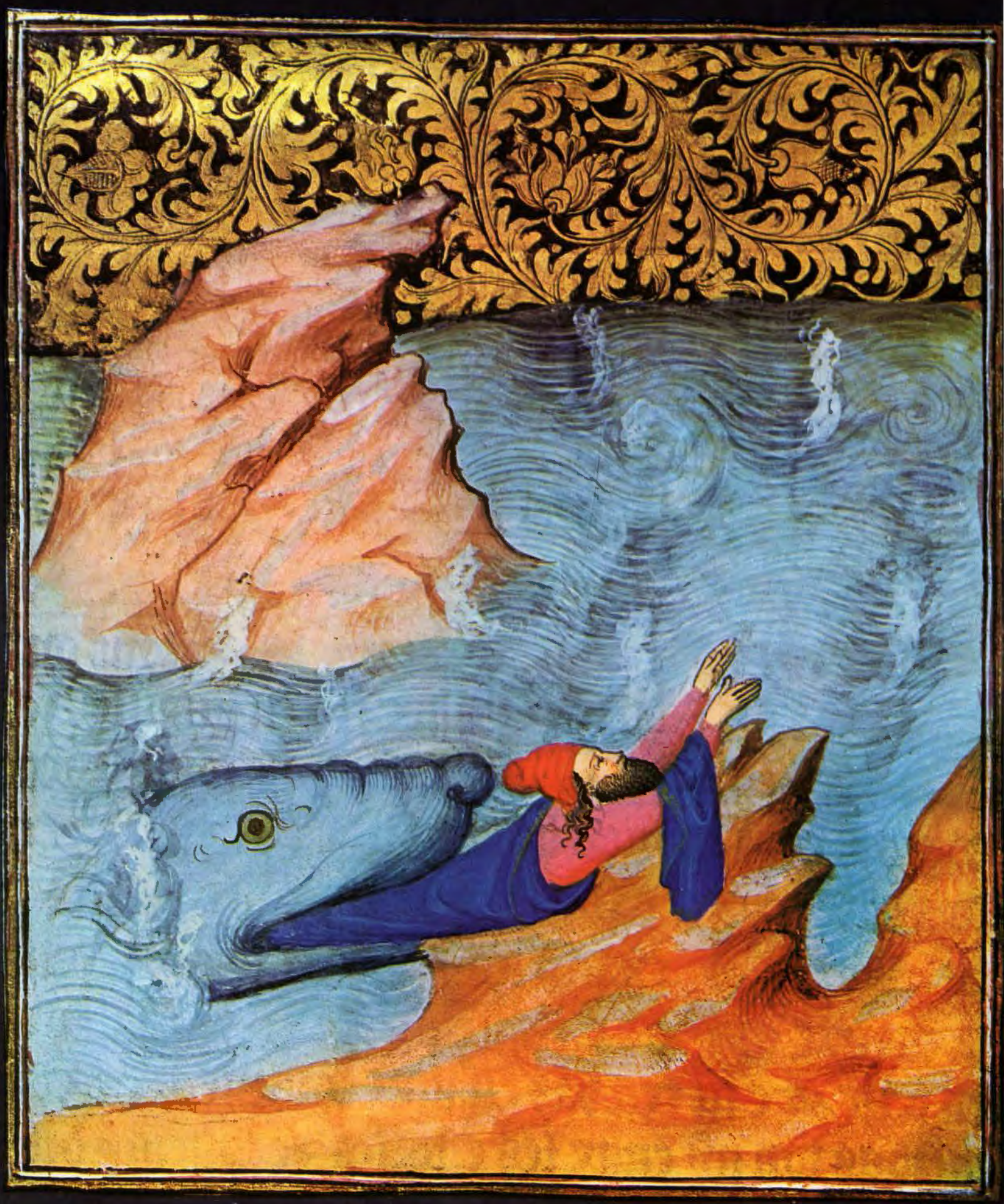
MANY MEANINGS are embodied in the fish, reflecting the various facets of its nature. Because of its affinity to the sea, from which all created life originated, it was widely held to be sacred. Like the Leviathan, the fabulous fish that bore the whole weight of the world upon its back, the cosmic fish is the symbol of the physical universe. The fish is also a symbol of sexual activity, because of its fecundity.

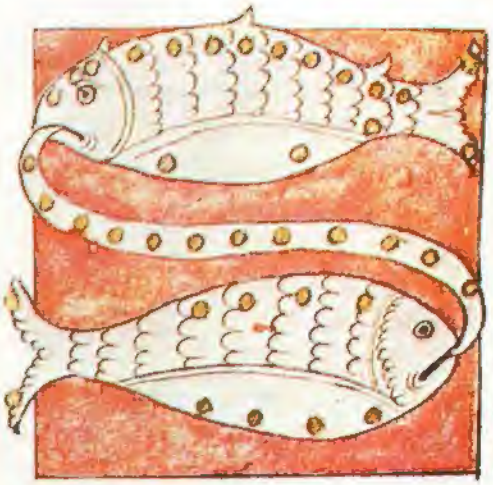
In the lore of the ancient Chaldeans, the swallow-headed fish was the expression of psychic regeneration, as was Pisces, the sign of the fish and the last sign of the zodiac. Pisces is closely bound up with the symbolism of water, while those born under the sign are said to have some of the characteristics of the fish.

In Asia certain cults practised fish worship and to their priesthoods the flesh of fish was taboo. Even at the most primitive level fish worship has persisted until modern times. The Indians of Peru not only revered those fish which came to their nets in the greatest profusion but held the doctrine that the first fish created in the world above bore the name 'Heaven' and was the mother of all the others. The zoologists of the ancient world tended to the belief that fish were the spontaneous creations of the water itself, and in a Sumerian legend the first fish to rise from the primordial waters became the teacher of the arts of civilization to men.

Top **Early Christian sign of the fish** ***Above*** **'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes' by the 15th century Swiss painter Konrad Witz: Christ's first followers were fishermen, later to become 'fishers of men'**

Innumerable are the legends of creatures half-human and half-fish haunting the rivers and coasts of the world (see MERMAIDS AND MERMEN). It is significant in this respect that the Sumerian god Ea, god of the waters, had a body like a fish, the tail of a fish and feet below like a man's.





Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The kraken was about a mile and a half in circumference and so vast as to be frequently mistaken for an island

Above **Pisces, the sign of the fishes, is formed of two constellations joined by ribbons of stars; in Syrian legend it was connected with the sacred fish of the goddess Derceto or Atargatis**

Opposite page **The great fish which swallowed Jonah, thus preserving his life in the midst of the sea, spews out the prophet on dry land; illustration from an early 15th century French Bible**

The existence of a fish cult in the Near East is by no means conclusive, although it is strongly suggested by the fact that the Syrian form of the goddess Derceto was a fish and also that her son Tammuz was probably associated with a fish. Under the name of Atargatis this deity has been identified as a local form of the Semitic Ishtar-Astarte, goddess of fertility and water. There were sacred fish ponds at Endessa and Ascalon and at Hierapolis, where the fish grew to an immense size and would answer to their names. Atargatis is said to have descended into the sacred pond at Hierapolis and to have returned to heaven bearing a fish – the ancestor of the sign of the Zodiac, Pisces.

Dagon, god of the Philistines, has been considered a fish god. This idea probably arose from a confusion between *dag*, meaning fish, and *dagan*, meaning corn, for there is every reason to believe that he was a corn deity. In Assyrian monuments, however, a god named Dakan or Dagan is represented as a man with the tail of a fish. Nina, the divinity of Lagash, who was the patroness of fishermen and goddess of maternity, was in fact a corn spirit who received offerings of fish. Egypt, where the harvest was considered with perfect truth and logic to be the gift of the River Nile, provided a fusion of aquatic and agricultural symbolism in the Egyptian fish deity Rem, who wept fertilizing tears over the land.

In India the creative gods Brahma and Vishnu could take the forms of fishes. The first man, Manu, is told by a fish in the Indian version of the flood story to build a ship to save himself from the coming deluge.

Fish have been consumed as holy food, and at the heart of Jewish fish symbolism is the belief that at the end of the world Messias will catch the great fish Leviathan and divide its flesh among the faithful. It would appear that the Jewish custom of eating fish was later adapted by the Christians, who partook of a sacramental fish meal. The fish in Christian symbolism represents Jesus Christ, and in the old Roman catacombs the fish symbol appears frequently. The Greek word for fish is *ichthus* and the early Christians saw in the letters of this word a monogram summarizing their faith: Iesous CHristos, THeou Uios Soter (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour).

The fish is introduced into the legendary lives of the saints. St Congall received a fish as the gift of an angel, while in the story of St Walter the fish giver is a bird. The great fish which swallowed Jonah is always associated with him pictorially.

Certain fish of a sacred character, possessing the power of foreknowledge and of healing, had considerable influence on the divinatory rites of Celtic peoples. At Ffynnon Beris in Carnavon the appearance of a trout was always considered a favourable omen, and as recently as the 18th century the movements of sacred fish or eel indicated the matrimonial prospects of young girls at Ffynnon Ddwynwen in Anglesey, where an old woman was always present to interpret the oracle.

Many fishing communities judge the weather from the movements of marine animals: thus cuttle-fish swimming at the top of the water are said to forecast a storm.

The Mighty Kraken

Some fish had the power to heal the sick from contact with their divinely 'charged' bodies. To this day, tench applied to the soles of the feet are used for the treatment of yellow jaundice in peasant Ireland; the tench also has the reputation for healing other fish, being known as the 'physician of fishes'.

Even more remarkable were nautical freaks, the monstrous squids, sea serpents, and the mighty kraken of the northern waters, described by Erik Pontoppidan in his *Natural History of Norway* (1752–53) as 'the largest and most surprising of all the animal creation'. The kraken was said to be about a mile and a half in circumference and so vast as to be frequently mistaken for an island, yet fishermen were often kindly disposed towards it, for its presence at the bottom of the sea was thought to drive shoals of fish into their nets. According to one legend, which would appear to link the kraken with the great cosmic fish of antiquity, only two of these fish existed and these were created at the beginning of the world and would die at the world's end.

The sea monk of Norway, described by Guillaume Rondelet in his *Books of Sea Fishes* in 1544, was a grotesque creature which derived its name from its monk-like cowl and tonsured head. The Chinese sea monk raised storms and attacked and capsized junks and was the terror of the Eastern seas. It could be kept at bay, however, by a ritual dance.

The inclusion of the fish in the totemic systems of many peoples from Alaska to Africa has led to corresponding taboos. A Polynesian would not eat eel or shark if it happened to be his own individual totem. The anthropologist Margaret Mead reported how certain brightly coloured fish were taboo until they had water poured over them; then they could be safely presented to the tribal chiefs. In Serbia fish is taboo to a pregnant woman; the Tasmanians rejected fish with scales, and the Bantu reject fish absolutely. On the banks of the Seine the John Dory is taboo and in Co. Sligo in Ireland it is the skate. The monk fish already referred to brought bad luck and if caught was always nailed to the masthead, for its presence upon a ship, like that of priests and clergymen, brought disaster.

Fish have provided the theme of many legends. Innumerable are the tales of fishes that return lost rings, perhaps the best known being that of the ring recovered from the body of a salmon, as recorded in the life of St Kentigern, patron saint of Glasgow. This miraculous fish found further immortality by being incorporated in the arms of this city. In the Chinese versions of the Cinderella story a girl receives help from a fish, and in the legend of the Cathedral of St Pol de Léon in Finistère a fish brought a bell to the Ile de Batz from England in the 6th century. There are other curious legends of human souls imprisoned within the bodies of fish and of fabulous rewards being offered to fishermen for their liberation.

Some of the most amazing beliefs form part of the contemporary lore of fishermen. Even the most prosaic of anglers can be victim of the superstition that a fish returned to the water will convey a warning of danger to its fellows. American anglers

British Museum

Mariners' tales peopled the depths of the sea with terrifying monsters such as the kraken, the sea serpent and the giant squid, which might even attack shipping

share this and other fishermen's superstitions: that an offering should be made, perhaps a coin put into the water; that fishing is best in a south or a west wind; that changing poles is unlucky, as is talking of how many fish you have caught.

Creature with Principles

Generally speaking, the fish has been thought of as on the side of the angels, although there is a solitary incident in the annals of English witchcraft in which a fish played the part of a familiar spirit, in Leicester in 1616. There seems to be a universal belief that fish are endowed with a kind of pre-knowledge, and also that they have an instinctive moral sense. Thus, blood shed by human beings in anger has been known to result in fish deserting a particular fishing ground.

Most fish superstitions contain vestiges of ancient modes of thought. One of the most interesting of these relates to the 'system of correspondences' (see CORRESPONDENCES) and takes shape in the belief that every land creature has its marine counterpart. Well-known examples were the sea horse and the sea cow, while the swordfish, which really exists, was the opposite number of the mythical unicorn. A suggestion of spontaneous generation is contained in the superstition that the eel springs to life from river mud or from a horse's hair in water, and of sun worship in the conviction that it cannot die until sundown.

A considerable body of mythological lore survives in the British Isles in connection with that once staple article of diet, the herring. According to an article in the journal *Folklore*, it was a Yorkshire fisherman's belief that the herring evolved from the sea anemone. Far more common was the belief in the Royal Herring, the monster leader of the shoal on sea journeyings, a creature so sacred that fishermen refused either to catch or harm it. Herrings, incidentally, if eaten raw were reported to bring visions of a future bride to Tyneside bachelors. Optimistic sea fishermen had the custom of wrapping inedible portions of herring in a piece of paper before discarding them, in the hope that the bones would knit together again and that the reconstituted herring would then summon its fellows from out of the sea.

Misinformation marches hand in hand with mythology in the lore of individual fishes: the shark is aware of forthcoming death at sea and follows the ship in anticipation of a meal; the skate loves music and can be caught by playing the fiddle. Crustacea and other forms of marine life possess their own individual mythologies. In Tahiti the sea-hermit crab is a god and if eaten without the proper rites can cause death; the shadows of the gods also take the form of crabs.

Harvest of the Sea

As with agriculture on land, the opening of the fishing season is accompanied by special rites, including blessing the boats and sometimes laying salt in the nets to placate the water spirits. In the Caroline archipelago in the Pacific there is ceremonial chanting followed by an obligatory silence; if this silence is not observed, the season will be a failure. Indeed success in fishing must never be mentioned as this constitutes a form of arrogance that is highly objectionable to spirits. Greediness among fishermen is always unlucky. One must never fish every day, as this might be construed as an expression of dissatisfaction with the bounty of the gods.

Inevitably the fish harvest is an occasion for thanksgiving ceremonies, a curious example being the mimetic dance of the Yuchi Indians of North America suggestive of the movements of a fish. More sophisticated are the various modern festivals like the 'harvest of the sea' services at Brixham in

The Almighty Fin

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.

We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto mud! – Death eddies near –
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyoud Space and Time,
In wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almigbty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.

Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

Rupert Brooke *Heaven*

Devon, when the churches are decorated with fishing gear and offerings of the catch. The nets and sea are blessed each year in a number of places.

Aids to Love

Preaching to the fish takes place in certain American Indian tribes, based upon the assumption that fish are more likely to submit to a friendly than an unfriendly group. The preacher must utter his words 'in full voice' to be effective. In Scotland at one time fishermen would make pretence to hurl a fellow fisherman into the loch and then haul him out as if he were a fish, providing a clear hint to the fish of what was expected of them.

Certain fish are luck-bringers, a well-known example being the fiddle fish, which is never eaten but instead towed behind the fishing boat until it falls to pieces. Even the eating of fish has its appropriate ritual. Mackerel, herring and pilchard must always be eaten from tail to head, never the reverse way or the main school of fish in the sea will turn tail and desert the fishing waters for the open sea. American belief says that goldfish are lucky, and that whooping cough can be cured by swallowing a live fish. New Englanders predict weather from how the cod are running. And backwoods superstition insists that a woman will die if she eats fish after childbirth, and that fish and milk consumed at the same meal will poison the consumer.

Fish as prolific breeders could hardly escape becoming sex symbols and as such they were incorporated in the monuments of the ancients. Symbolically the fish represents the male principle in an active state, while the head alone symbolizes the female. (Freud also conceived the fish to be the symbol of the male organ.) Fish have therefore been thought to influence the sexual activities of both men and women. To eat certain fish in Greenland led to pregnancy in either sex, and in Java the husband of a childless woman who ate fish from 'the Children's Sea' was likely to have offspring. It is quite common to prescribe fish for women during pregnancy, and virgins in Brazil, India and Samoa are said to have actually been fertilized by presents of fish.

On this 19th century silver sword guard from Japan, Kwannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, is shown standing on the back of a black carp; in Japan the carp was a symbol of strength and virility

Michael Halford Sotheby's

Such aphrodisiacs as oysters and the sepia octopus were favourites in classical times. The book of Tobit, written in the 2nd century BC, describes how the burning of a fish drove away a demon that impeded love. In pagan times a trigle, a kind of fish, was frequently sacrificed to Hecate, goddess of witchcraft and sorcery. It is not surprising therefore to learn that in medieval love rites fish were often burned rather than eaten, since the acrid smell of burning fish could be calculated to drive away the demonic enemies of love.

The presence of phosphorus in fish is said to have been responsible for the choice of this form of food as an aphrodisiac, and it would appear that even lower forms of life could be overwhelmed by too immoderate a dosage. It is on record that a drake which inadvertently drank phosphorus was aroused to such a frenzy of lust for an army of ducks that it died from exhaustion. Even more surprising is the widely held belief that fish as a food is good for the brains, a superstition which possibly arose from the fact that the monks, the educated class of an earlier age, ate large quantities of fish. Or perhaps it arose from the half-understood fact that phosphorus is a prominent constituent of human nerve and brain cells. (See also DOLPHIN; KRAKEN; PISCES; SALMON; SEAL; TROUT; WHALE.)

ERIC MAPLE

Fisher King

In legends of the holy Grail, the lord of the Grail castle and keeper of the Grail and the bleeding lance: he was crippled and fishing was his only pastime; his infirmity was bound up with the desolation of his land and people, and he could only be cured by a question asked by the Grail hero; the story combines Christian elements with earlier pagan themes.

See GRAIL.

FIVE

NERVOUS and highly strung, many-sided, fickle, attracted by everything but held by nothing, an opportunist, a gambler, a sensualist: this is the type of person you are supposed to be if your name adds up to 5 (see ALPHABET). A 5 is a versatile and resourceful person, clever and amusing, good company, good at languages and with words, optimistic and fun-loving, someone who makes friends and money easily and quickly. Jumpy, tense and restless, he lives on his nerves and he lives for excitement, sensation, amusement. He loves adventure, change, travel, anything new and untried. He hates to be in a rut or to be tied down, he is impatient of rules and conventions, and he is likely to be erratic, untidy, unpunctual, irritable and quick-tempered.

People whose number is 5 are lively, wide awake, inquiring and outgoing. Alert to seize their opportunities, they tend to be good at many things but supremely good at none of them. They are highly attractive to the opposite sex, they probably have active love-lives and they may be debauched, promiscuous or perverse. Not particularly creative or original, they can be boastful, sarcastic and rebellious. They loathe routine, detail, waiting for anything. Loyalty, patience, endurance and steadfastness of purpose are not among their virtues.

The restless, many-sided, experimentalist qualities of 5 follow from the fact that it is the halfway house in the series of numbers from 1 to 9, so that it 'faces both ways'. This also gives the number its characteristics of being outgoing, unreliable and unable to concentrate.

Liveliness, nervousness and the love of sensual pleasure, of physical excitement and human contact, stem from the association of 5 with the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell). This link, which was the principal clue to 5 in medieval numerology, makes it the number of the living flesh. The 12th century author Hugh of St Victor explained that 'because of the five senses, the number 5 naturally represents natural men who, though they are not shamefully dominated by carnal lusts, nevertheless pursue and love things that minister to the delight of their natural senses, since they do not know what spiritual delight means.' Christian numerologists also pointed out that since the flesh is imperfect it is fitting that the imperfect Old Law of Moses is contained in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. And it has been observed that in his body of flesh Jesus suffered five wounds (in the hands, feet and side).

Sex and Nature

Five is made of the first male number, 3, added to the first female number, 2 (for male and female numbers, see NUMEROLOGY), and so it is the number of marriage from the male point of view, an idea found in Hinduism as well as in the West. In 5 woman is added to man, in 6 she is multiplied by him, so that 6 is the female marriage number (see SIX).

Many of the characteristics attributed to 5 are based on this association with male sexuality – attracted by everything but held by nothing, impatient and impulsive, alert to seize opportunities, loving change and excitement, bold and aggressive. Some of them have a directly phallic reference – 5 is elastic and rebounds easily, hates to be tied down.

The association of 5 with the senses and with man was strengthened by the fact that the human body has 5 extremities and, shown with arms and legs extended, can be fitted into a pentagram, or five-pointed star (see PENTAGRAM).

Besides being made of 2 + 3, 5 is also made of 1 (God) plus 4 (the earth and matter), and so it is the number of living things, the animate world of Nature, divine life infused into the inanimate. This contributes to 5's character-picture the qualities of liveliness and of being good at animating things, getting things moving. In his essay on *The E at Delphi* Plutarch, the Greek philosopher and historian who lived at the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, notes that 5 is the number of marriage and goes on to say that it is also called Nature 'since by being multiplied into itself it ends in itself again', as wheat seed produces wheat ($5 \times 5 = 25 \times 5 = 125$, and so on). He quotes Aristotle's view that the universe is made of five elements, the four traditional ones plus a fifth which, he says, some call the heavens, others light, others the quintessence. The five elements in the universe correspond to the five senses in man as follows: touch to earth, taste to water, sound to air, smell to fire, sight to light or the quintessence.

As the number of man and of living Nature, 5 is the number of man as microcosm, as a miniature image of the universe. The four elements and the quintessence, the life-infusing element or the soul or spirit of things, can be taken to correspond not only to the five senses but to the head and four limbs of the human body or to the thumb and four fingers of the hand, and these in turn to the centre and the four directions in space (5 being the central number between 1 and 9). In the symbolic decoration of Gothic churches and cathedrals a five-petalled flower is sometimes shown at the centre of a cross, representing the quintessence and the four elements or the centre and the four directions.

In modern cabalistic systems 5 has an alternative and more ominous significance, for it is the number of the sefirah Geburah or Din, associated with violence, destruction and evil, and linked with Mars as the planet of destructive energy (see FORCES).

Michael Holford

The fact that in his physical body Christ on the cross suffered five wounds has reinforced the connection of the number five with the living flesh: painting by Velazquez in the Prado

'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' warned King Solomon, while an 11th century cardinal reckoned that 1000 self-inflicted lashes were the spiritual equivalent of ten penitential psalms. But flagellation is also a means of gratifying sexual and sodistic impulses

FLAGELLATION

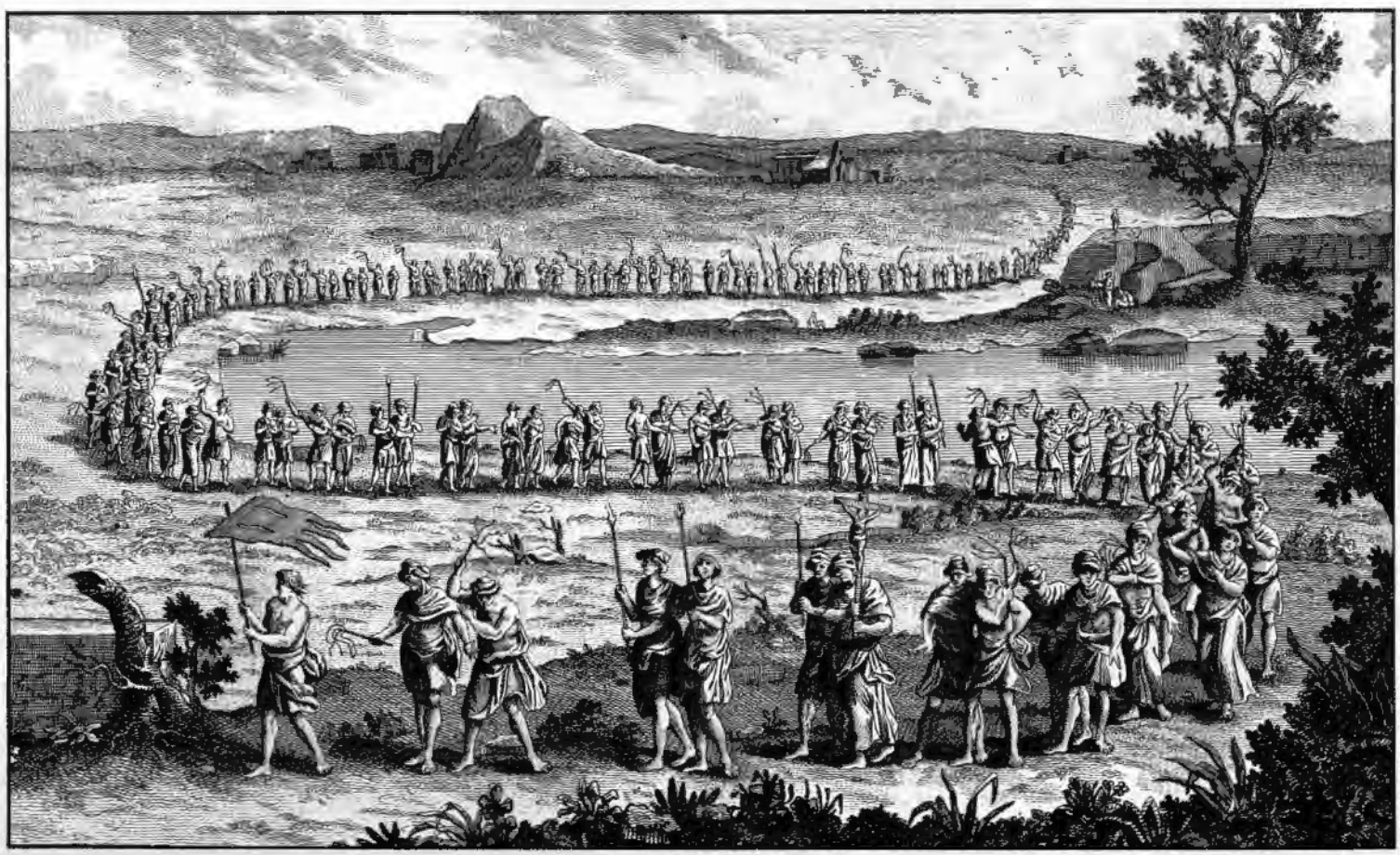
HEALTH SEEKERS who have indulged in the popular sauna bath know that the process traditionally ends with a light scourging of the naked skin by means of birch twigs. Devotees of the sauna reject imputations of sexual deviation, claiming that this mild birching is intended to stimulate the circulation, not the libido. And certainly flagellation – ritualized whipping, mostly engaged in voluntarily – has long been considered a healthful and curative practice. The ancient Romans, who were also great bathers, saw whipping as a cure for several diseases: Seneca used it for fevers, others for rheumatism. (Whips were used on the latter disease by many primitive tribes, too, such as the Hopi of Arizona.) The Romans turned to the whip to cure barrenness in women; practically every culture from Greece to Victorian England, and later, used it to cure incontinence in boys.

But then whipping has long been thought to cure boys of almost everything that needed curing, and some 20th century boarding schools have not let the tradition die. Most ailments of character or psychological make-up have been 'treated' at one time or another by flogging: Dr Christian Paullini, the 17th century German author of *Flagellum Salutis*, is only one of a long line who recommend flagellation to cure schoolboys of idleness, women of shrewishness, thieves of criminal behaviour.

In such cases the whip is laid on partly in punishment but mostly to rectify personality

Opposite **A female figure with dark wings wields the lash as part of the initiation of a young woman into the ecstatic cult of Dionysus: fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries outside Pompeii**

Camera Press London



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

flaws. It sets out to cure by ritual purification, to drive out evil from the recipient's body and mind. We may no longer believe that illness is caused by evil spirits or demonic possession; but some of our therapeutic techniques derive directly from this attitude. In the history of flagellation, this purificatory aspect has far more importance than another main ritual use of the whip, in the ordeal or test of endurance.

Many primitive peoples use whipping as a means of testing fortitude, usually in puberty rites or other initiation ceremonies. Such pain rituals can be found in the initiations of the fierce warrior tribes of American Plains Indians; and the late Gerald Gardner, who revealed much of the pagan background of present-day witch covens, hinted that whipping once formed a part of initiation into that ancient sect. But the ordeal side of flagellation seems very unimportant in the face of the fantastic life span of the purificatory, or penitential, or 'therapeutic' uses of the whip.

Wherever a devout individual or community has perceived evil needing to be driven out, the whip has made its appearance. Many societies cleansed their community by the use of a scapegoat, on to which all the evil afflicting them was laid before it was killed – often by beating it to death. The Bible (apart from Solomon's adjuration in the Proverbs not to spare the rod) clearly pictures the Messiah in this way, in the book of Isaiah: 'he was bruised for our iniquities . . . with his stripes we are healed.' The tradition of exorcism – the driving out of evil spirits from houses or bodies – is full of tales of flagellation (see EXORCISM). And of course the ascetic and ecstatic religions found flagellation a firm ally.

Opposite left **Sado-masochism, more or less overt, clearly underlies flagellation in all its aspects: the element of perversion is explicit in this frontispiece by Aubrey Beardsley** ***Opposite right*** **An initiate to a witch coven receives a ritual scourging from the high priestess; the reason given for such rituals is that they lead to a higher plane of consciousness through pain willingly undergone** ***Below*** **In the late Middle Ages long lines of Flagellants travelled across Europe, beating each other and themselves in penance for their sins and those of society**

Penitential Lashes

The ancient Greek cult of the Spartans had an annual purifying Feast of Flagellation; and early Christian monasteries resounded with the crack of the lash, but far more frequently. An 11th century cardinal reckoned that 1000 self-inflicted lashes were the spiritual equivalent of ten penitential psalms. The early Franciscans turned also to the whip. The object was mortification of the flesh and repression of any unchristian fleshly urges.

Out of this spirit of purification and penance came also that weird phenomenon, the Brotherhood of the Flagellants – never a real religious order, never recognized by the Church, but immensely widespread in 14th century Europe. Perugia, in central Italy, saw the beginning of mass flagellation in public in the 13th century; in the next century the practice took on new strength and spread like the plague that coincided with it. But the Flagellants did not turn to the whip because of the Black Death; they were active, especially in Germany, before the plague had reached that far. Certainly, though, the plague gave them their justification for bloodthirsty penance, and brought thousands of converts after 1349, the year of the plague. The Flagellants massed in public, vast crowds of partly naked men and women, lashing themselves and each other twice daily for 33½ days, with devices ranging from little cords to leather thongs knotted and holding metal points, for the more extensive penitential spilling of blood.

The Flagellant cult went to the New World with the conquistadores, giving rise to the movement called Los Hermanos Penitentes – still thriving, still self-flagellating with whips of cholla cactus in parts of New Mexico and southern Colorado. Their whips fly most during Holy Week, but also during the initiation of new brothers, the only time a brother is lashed by anyone but himself. It is a feast of pain when few initiates retain consciousness throughout the ceremony.

The Flagellants and their fellows used the whip to punish the sins inherent in the flesh and to scourge evil from the spirit. But this ecstatic flagellation has a positive side, too: it becomes a means of achieving a higher plane of consciousness, a more exalted state of being, through pain. The ordeal, too, aims to produce an exalted state: the initiate is not only being tested for endurance and courage, but is being directly infused with some higher power to fit him for his new role in the community or the secret society. The aspiration to a higher plane is also offered as the reason for the orgiastic aspects, including flagellation, of the various cults of evil that have proliferated in past centuries and apparently still thrive today.

Mention of the sexual deviation known as sado-masochism stirs up powerful emotional reactions. Undoubtedly many of the people claiming today to be practising Devil worshippers or black magicians may well be using the traditions of evil as a smokescreen behind which they are performing the usual antics of the sex orgy, deviant or otherwise. They can be said to be involved with orgies for orgies' sake, disguised as satanism.

A Perverted Pleasure

But it may be that, whatever the intention of the flagellant, sado-masochistic sexual pleasure is the root cause of the practice, in all its forms. Sadism and masochism were well documented long before De Sade or Sacher-Masoch, and modern sexology has dwelt upon them extensively. Fascination with the subject has become so widespread that one finds it nearly everywhere, certainly in a great many books, plays and films. One can hardly be blamed, then, for finding this sexual deviation in every manifestation of ritualized flagellation: not just in the overt 'whipping sessions' in brothels, but in a subliminal form in the self-mortification of saintly ascetics, whether Indian fakirs or Christian fathers.

So one considers every proponent of birch and rod – schoolmaster, politician, clergyman, saint – guilty of the perversion of sado-masochism until he or she is proved innocent. Modern horror stories involving flagellation underline the need for such proof. Many will remember the case in 1968 when a young girl, a member of an 'ascetic' religious sect in Switzerland, died following a fearful series of 'purificatory' beatings. Brutality to others performed in the name of spiritual or mystic ecstasy remains brutality; perhaps only the self-flagellants deserve, if not respect, at least a sympathetic hearing.

DOUGLAS HILL

Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Bibliothèque Nationale

Flamel

French alchemist (1330–1417): Nicholas Flamel, a Parisian bookseller and scholar, was wealthy, pious and respected; in 1357 he acquired an alchemical work, *The Book of Abraham the Jew*, which he had seen previously in a dream; with its help he claimed to have produced a white elixir which transmuted lead into silver and, eventually, a red elixir which changed mercury into gold.

Flamen

Sacrificial priest of ancient Rome: there were 15, each serving a particular god; the flamen Dialis, flamen Martialis and flamen Quirinalis were the most important, serving Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus respectively; they were always patricians, the other 12 flamens being chosen from the plebs; the flamen Dialis was a high ranking state official and subject to a great many regulations and taboos designed to guard him from pollution.

The preservation of the chosen few and the destruction by flood of the rest of humanity – often as a punishment for sin – is a theme which occurs in legend in many parts of the world

FLOOD

THE TRADITIONS of many widely separated peoples include legends of a great flood which, at some time in the remote past, overwhelmed vast tracts of land and flourishing cities, and drowned all or nearly all the inhabitants, men and beasts alike. In the more ancient forms of the legend, it is often the whole world that is inundated. One man only, with his family and, usually, a number of animals, manages to escape because, being supernaturally warned of the coming disaster, he is able either to build or acquire a ship that carries him safely through the deluge. Eventually, after a period varying in different traditions from a few days to several months, the anger of the gods is appeased, the floods recede and the dry land reappears. Life is preserved in the midst of universal destruction, and in due course the world is filled again by the decendants of the hero and of the animals that sailed with him.

The most widely known, though not the oldest, of all these ancient tales is that contained in the book of Genesis (chapters 6–9). In it is related how, when ten generations had passed since the time of Adam, Yahweh saw that the world he had created had become corrupt and full of wickedness. He resolved to drown all mankind and everything else that had life in one vast flood, with the exception of Noah, who was a righteous man and worthy to become the ancestor of a new race of human beings in a regenerated world. He commanded Noah to build an ark of gopher wood, giving him directions as to its size and design, and bade him go into it when it was finished, taking with him all his family and male and female creatures of every species known on earth – clean beasts by sevens and unclean beasts by twos.

Noah did as he was told, and Yahweh loosed the deluge. Rain fell without stopping for 40 days and nights, the water rose until even the tops of the mountains were covered, and the ark floated upon it. Every living being perished, except those that were with Noah. After a long time the floods began to subside. The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat in Armenia, and Noah sent out a raven, and then a dove, to discover how far the waters had abated. The raven flew away over the drowned land but the dove, finding no resting place outside, returned to the ark. Again, after seven days, it was sent out and again it came back, but this time it had an olive leaf in its beak. Finally, after a third flight, it did not return and Noah, looking forth, saw that the land was dry. He came out from the ark and built an altar on the mountain, and offered a sacrifice in gratitude for his deliverance. Then Yahweh made a covenant with him, promising that his descendants should multiply and fill the earth, and that never again should the whole world be destroyed by water.

The Original Noah

The Mesopotamian flood legend, from which the Genesis story is clearly derived, is far older. Abraham's people must have known it when they lived in their Chaldean homeland, and probably they carried it with them when they migrated to the land of Canaan. There are several known versions. One was incorporated by a Babylonian named Berosus in a history of his own country written in Greek in the 3rd century BC. According to Berosus's account, the god Cronus appeared to Xisuthros, tenth king of Babylon, in a dream and warned him that there would be a great flood which would destroy the human race. Xisuthros would be saved if he would obey the god's commands which were that, first, he must write a history of the world from its beginnings and bury it in the city of Sippara, and then he must build a ship and fill it with living creatures, men and birds and four-footed beasts.

Xisuthros accordingly buried his history at Sippara and constructed a stout vessel, five furlongs in length and two furlongs broad, on to which he took his family and friends and an unspecified number of animals and birds. The flood came as had been foretold and only those on the ship survived it. When the water began to go down, the vessel was stranded on a hilltop. Like Noah, Xisuthros sent out birds, and when the last of these did not come back, he disembarked with his wife and his daughter and his helmsman to build an altar and offer sacrifice. The other human passengers remained on board, and when their leader did not return they became anxious and went in search of him. They could not find him but presently they heard his voice speaking to them from the air, though he himself was invisible. He told them that he and his three companions had all been taken from this world to dwell with the gods. He went on to say that the mountain on which his hearers stood was in Armenia, and that they must make their way thence to Babylon, and dig up the writings that had been buried at Sippara. This they did, and by them and their descendants many cities were built, ancient sanctuaries restored and all the land repeopled.

An earlier and more interesting variant of the same story forms part of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which concerns the doings of Gilgamesh, king of Erech. He was not personally involved in the deluge, which took place long before his time, but he heard about it from his immortal ancestor, Utnapishtim.

Long ago, he said, when he lived in the city of Shuruppak on the banks of the Euphrates, the gods sat in council and decided to send a flood whereby all men would be drowned. Ea, Lord of Waters and of Wisdom, was present at this council and contrived, by a subterfuge, to warn Utnapishtim of what was about to happen. Instead of speaking to him directly, as Yahweh did to Noah, he addressed the wall, saying, 'O reed hut, reed hut, O wall, wall, O reed hut hearken, O wall attend,' and so conveyed his message without actually revealing the secrets of his fellow gods to a lesser being. He bade him build a ship, well-planned and strong, in which he could save himself and his family. He was to tell no one of the threatened deluge, and if anyone asked him why he was building a ship, he was to reply that he had incurred the wrath of the great god, Enlil, and must therefore seek refuge with Ea upon the ocean.

Even the Gods Were Afraid

Utnapishtim made a barge of wood, caulked with pitch within and bitumen without, and set on it a house of six storeys, each storey having nine rooms. Into it he brought his kinsfolk and his handicraftsmen, his cattle and other beasts of the field, and all that he had of living seed and of gold and silver. When the appointed time came, he went in and shut the door. Then the winds blew and the rain fell in torrents, the waters rose and whirlwinds rushed over them, and there was no light anywhere. For six days and nights the tempest raged, and so terrible was it that even the gods were afraid. They drew back, they cowered by the wall, they climbed up into the heaven of Anu for safety; and all but Enlil repented that they had unleashed such destruction.

On the seventh day the storm ceased, the turbulent waters became calm, silence succeeded uproar; but when Utnapishtim looked out he saw nothing but desolation and death. As the flood slowly receded, the

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hilltops reappeared and the ship grounded on Mount Nisir. Utnapishtim opened a window and loosed a dove, and after an interval, a swallow. Both returned because they could find no dry land, but when a raven was released, it found food to eat and ground on which to alight and it did not return. Then Utnapishtim knew that the water was going down and he came out of the ship, with all his companions, and offered a sacrifice on the mountaintop.

The gods smelt the sweet savour of the offering and gathered round it with delight. Only Enlil was angry when he saw that some human beings had survived, for he still desired the end of mankind. Ea was suspected of having betrayed the secret counsels of the gods, which indeed he had, though in such a way that he was able to deny the charge. He reproached Enlil because it was he who had wished for the deluge. Let it be enough, he said, to diminish the tribes of men by sending a lion, or a leopard, or a famine, or a plague, but let them not all perish together in a flood. Then Enlil relented, and taking Utnapishtim and his wife by the hand, he blessed them and promised that henceforth they should be like gods and live for ever.

The oldest known version of this story is that inscribed upon a tablet unearthed during excavations at Nippur, an ancient city of southern Sumer. It was written, apparently about 2100 BC, in the language of the Sumerians, the ancient people who flourished in Mesopotamia before they were conquered by the invading Semites. The hero in this legend was named Ziusudra. He was a king and also a priest of Enki, the god who, in the Sumerian pantheon, corresponded to the Semitic Ea. When Enlil called upon the assembled gods to destroy the world by a rainstorm, Enki warned his faithful servant. Like Ea, he did so by indirect means, bidding his priest to stand outside a wall and listen to a message addressed to that wall. Ziusudra built a ship, though because the tablet is broken at that point in the narrative, exactly how he built it and who sailed with him is not known. Then the winds and the rain raged together for seven days and nights, and the flood waters covered the earth. When they had at last abated, Ziusudra offered sacrifice and prostrated himself before Anu and before Enlil. In this version, Enlil's wrath was more quickly appeased than in the Gilgamesh story, and he bestowed upon Ziusudra both immortality and the title of Preserver of the Seed of Mankind.

The deluge is also mentioned in the

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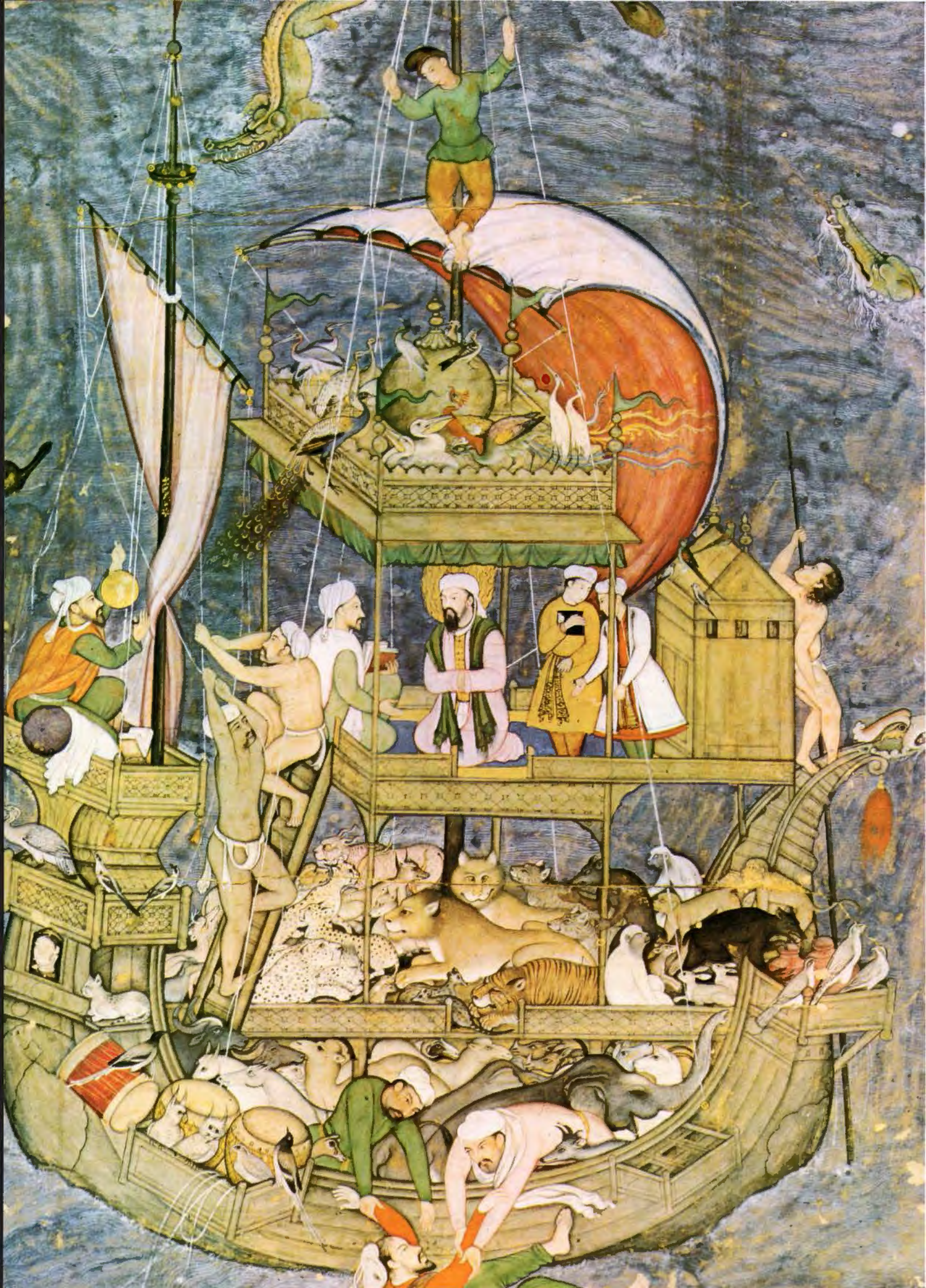
Far left **A Sumerian boat with passenger and boatman appears on the left of a cylinder seal of the third millennium BC: the Sumerian legend of a great flood strongly influenced the Jewish story of Noah**

Right **Indra, Hindu god of the heavens (mounted on the elephant Airavata), grew jealous of the worship given to Krishna and poured down rain to destroy mankind; but Krishna kept off the floods by holding up the hill Govardhana on his little finger for seven days like a canopy: 18th–19th century Indian painting**



Sumerian king lists wherein are enumerated their rulers from the country's first beginnings. After some early kings have been listed it is stated: 'Then came the Flood. And after the Flood, kingship again descended from heaven.' Archeologists of the 20th century have proved that the historians of those far-off days were right in supposing that their land had once been devastated by a catastrophic flood. In 1929, during his excavations at Ur, Sir Leonard Woolley found clear evidence of a widespread inundation, greater in extent and magnitude than anything subsequently known in the region, which had occurred about 3000 BC. It had been vast enough to cover practically the whole of Lower Mesopotamia and drown most of its inhabitants. For the few who survived, it must have been the end of the world they knew, even if it was not that of the entire earth, as the legend gives it.

Flood traditions are very widespread, though they do not exist everywhere. They are found in India, Burma and elsewhere in southern Asia, in Australia and New Zealand, New Guinea and the scattered islands of the Pacific, in North and South America, Mexico and in some European regions. Most of these stories resemble each other in general pattern, as records of a worldwide inundation sent by the gods, from which only one divinely favoured hero and his companions escaped, but they vary, naturally, in their details. India has several versions, of which the earliest known is preserved in an ancient treatise, the *Satapatha Brahmana*. In this it is related that the hero, Manu, was first warned and then helped by a fish. He alone survived the flood. When it was all over, the world was empty, but because he desired children, he practised austerities and offered in sacrifice butter, sour milk, and curds and whey. Out of these substances a woman was miraculously created and from the union sprang a new race of human beings – the race of Manu.

Deucalion and Pyrrha

Similarly, in the early form of a Greek flood legend, as told by Pindar in the 5th century BC, every living creature was destroyed, with the exception of Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha. These two weathered the storm for nine days and nights in an ark which Deucalion had constructed, and which finally came to rest on Mount Parnassus. When the floods had ceased they came down from the mountain and, at the bidding of Zeus, they too created mankind anew, by throwing stones over their own heads. As they struck the ground, the stones thrown by Deucalion became men and those thrown by Pyrrha became women. In this tale it is not recorded how the animals were preserved or re-created, but in a later version, which more closely resembles the Babylonian story and may have been influenced by it, Deucalion is said to have taken into the ark with him two of every kind of land animal, both the harmless and the dangerous, and these, by the power of the gods, lived together in harmony.

There was also a Greek tradition that Deucalion's flood was not the only great inundation in the history of the world. There had been two others, one before it in the time of Ogyges, king of Thebes, and one after it, when Dardanus was driven from his homeland by a sudden and terrible, but apparently not a worldwide, flood. He escaped upon a raft, or according to another version upon an inflated skin, and drifting to Mount Ida, he landed there and in due course became the founder of the city of Troy.

Most North American Indian tribes have some myth or folktale about a deluge, often with extremely odd causes, such as the tears of a deserted superhuman husband, or water from the punctured belly of some vast monster. Mankind is often saved by a warning from a culture hero; for instance, Dog warns a man to build a raft, in Creek mythology. Many Indians, especially western tribes, held to the belief that everything was once underwater, until the hero, usually called Earth Diver, brought up some soil from beneath the water and so caused the origin of the earth.

In his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, Sir J. G. Frazer has pointed out that the mythologies of Africa and of northern and central Asia contain no stories of a universal deluge, and this appears to be true of western Europe also. With the coming of Christianity, the biblical flood legend was, of course, accepted as divinely revealed truth, and continued to be so accepted for many centuries afterwards, but it does not seem to have superseded any pre-Christian west European myth of the same type. There are, however, several well-known traditions of partial and local floods caused, not by rain storms, but by land subsidence and violent encroachments of the sea.

Tales of Cities in the Sea

One of these stories is the Welsh legend of the Lowland Hundred. This was a tract of land lying westward of the present west coast of Wales, submerged now under the waters of Cardigan Bay. According to the most familiar variant of the tradition, it was a fertile and prosperous territory, 40 miles long and 20 miles broad, which stretched from Bardsey Island to the River Teifi. It was low-lying and was defended from the sea's encroachments by a system of embankments and sluices. It contained 16 noble cities, of which the chief was called Caer Gwyddno. The site of this vanished town was commonly supposed to be marked by a collection of large underwater boulders at the far end of Sarn Cynfelin, a rocky ridge running some seven or eight miles out to sea. This ridge, and two others like it, are natural formations, but in popular belief they were until fairly recently held to be either man-made causeways or parts of the defensive embankments.

The legend relates that in the early years of the 6th century AD, Gwyddno Garanhir was Lord of the Lowland Hundred, and Seithennin, son of the king of Syved, was keeper of its embankments. One night, when a great feast was held, the latter became exceedingly drunk and either through simple carelessness or as a drunken prank he left the sluices open.

In consequence the sea broke through the defences and in a very short time overwhelmed the whole territory. Only a few people managed to escape, including Gwyddno Garanhir, his son Elphin and Seithennin himself.

Another still more dramatic Welsh story – or perhaps a localized variant of the same story – is told of the lost land of Tyno Helig. This was a little kingdom, or chief's territory, which once extended northwards from the Carnarvonshire coast and is now sunk in Conway Bay. Over it, at some rather uncertain period between the 5th and the 7th centuries AD, Helig ap Glannawg is said to have reigned, and to have lived in a palace which bore the name of Llys Helig. Tradition said that this palace was situated some two miles out to sea from the present coastline, and that occasionally, when the tide

Freer Gallery/by courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution

British Museum

Opposite **The story of Noah receives a Moslem interpretation in this 16th century Mogul miniature: the best known of the many flood legends of the world, it has had a great appeal to popular imagination** ***Right*** **Noah's ark sails past as the rest of humanity drown: detail from an 18th century Ethiopian manuscript**

was unusually low, some ruined parts of it could be seen under the water. However, in 1939 F. J. North destroyed this interesting tradition by proving that the 'ruins' were in fact an accumulation of Iron Age boulders.

The catastrophe which destroyed Tyno Helig was popularly supposed to have been caused by the sins of the ruling family, and to have been prophesied by a disembodied voice four generations before it occurred. In one version of the tale, it was the crimes of Helig himself, or of his ancestors, that called down retribution upon the land, though he and his sons saved themselves by swift flight and thereafter led godly lives. In another, it was his daughter and her lover who were responsible. The daughter loved a man of low degree, but she would not marry him because he did not possess that sign of rank, a gold torque. To obtain one, he murdered a nobleman. As he was burying the corpse, he heard a voice crying, 'Vengeance will come!' He fled from that place, but when he told the girl what had happened, she sent him back to find out how soon the vengeance would come. The voice replied, 'In the time of the children, and of the grandchildren, and of the great-grandchildren, and of the great-great-grandchildren.' On hearing this, Helig's daughter said there was nothing to fear, for she and her lover would be dead by then.

They were married and lived to see their own great-great-grandchildren. One day, a great feast was held at Llys Helig, at which their kin of all four generations were present. A maidservant was sent to fetch more wine from the cellar, and found it half-full of water, with fish swimming about in it. She ran back to the hall and told the bard who, according to one variant, was the only person sufficiently sober to appreciate the danger. He, recognizing that the long-prophesied doom had come at last, fled at once, taking the maid with him. These two were the only survivors, for immediately after their flight the sea rushed in and all the land of Tyno Helig was drowned.

Lost Lyonnesse

Farther south, in Cornwall, we find the tradition of lost Lyonnesse. This legend is perhaps better known than any other British tradition of the same type because, in the course of time, it became involved with the Arthurian romances and the story of Tristan. Lyonnesse, which in Cornish was called Lethowstow, lay between Land's End and the Scilly Isles. Like Lowland Hundred, it was fertile and prosperous, with many flourishing villages and no less than 140 churches. There was also at least one great city, the site of which was said to be marked by the rocks now called the Seven Stones, lying some seven miles westward of Land's End. This place is still sometimes named 'the Town' and William Camden, in the 16th century, remarked that fishermen had been known to drag up windows and other traces of buildings there with hooks.

This land sank like the others, though here there is no tradition of sin or drunkenness to account for the disaster. The sea must have been encroaching alarmingly for some time before the final calamity, for the legend states that one man, the ancestor of the Trevilion family, took fright at its daily inroads, and sent his wife and family into Cornwall for safety. No one else apparently realized the danger, and Trevilion himself escaped only at the last moment, riding on a swift horse towards the higher ground of the Cornish mainland and reaching it only just in time. Every other dweller in Lyonnesse was drowned.

Legends Based On Fact

In western Brittany there is a more elaborate form of this legend which concerns the destruction of the city of Ker-Is. This city once flourished amid fertile lands that are now under the sea. Its site is usually given as in the Bay of Douarnenez, but in some versions of the tale it is said to be submerged off other parts of the Breton coast. It was protected from the sea by a strong dyke and by sluice gates, but it perished in the end because of the wickedness of its inhabitants who, though they were Christians, had fallen into evil ways.

Like Lyonnesse and Lowland Hundred, Ker-Is was believed to have vanished at some time in the early 6th century. It is of course obvious that so late a date is impossible. There is no evidence whatever, geological or historical, for the occurrence of floods of such magnitude as recently as the 5th or 6th century AD. The detailed accounts of noble cities, Christian churches, intricate sea defences and sinful human beings with known names and pedigrees are clearly later embellishments of what was probably once a far simpler story. Yet these ancient tales cannot be dismissed entirely as mere products of fantasy and imagination. It is a fact that the coasts of Wales, England and Brittany formerly extended farther than they do now, and that subsidences were still taking place when the lands thus lost were inhabited by our forefathers of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Traces of human habitation in regions now well below high water mark have been discovered by archeologists, such as, for example, the field walls on the submerged sandflats between some of the Scilly Isles, and artefacts in Mount's Bay and round the coast of Gower. If the men who made and used these things were forced by the encroaching waters to abandon their homes, they would have their own exciting tales of disaster to tell, and these, handed down for centuries and gradually becoming more elaborate, would become part of the traditional lore of the regions to which the first tellers migrated.

It is true that the legends take no account of the slowness of geological change, or the fact that the submergence of the lost territories was gradual and intermittent. In all the stories the inundations are swift and sudden. This may be partly due to the telescoping effects of time and repetition and a sense of drama, but here too it is possible that there is an element of fact. Unusually high tides and strong gales together can cause sudden local floods, limited in scope but violent enough, especially in low-lying areas, to do great damage and destroy life and property in a very short time, perhaps even in a single day. If this happened in the past, as it must have done more than once, it is easy to see how the legend could grow, a few drowned hamlets becoming in retrospect populous cities and their surrounding fields an entire kingdom.

(See also GILGAMESH.)

CHRISTINA HOLE

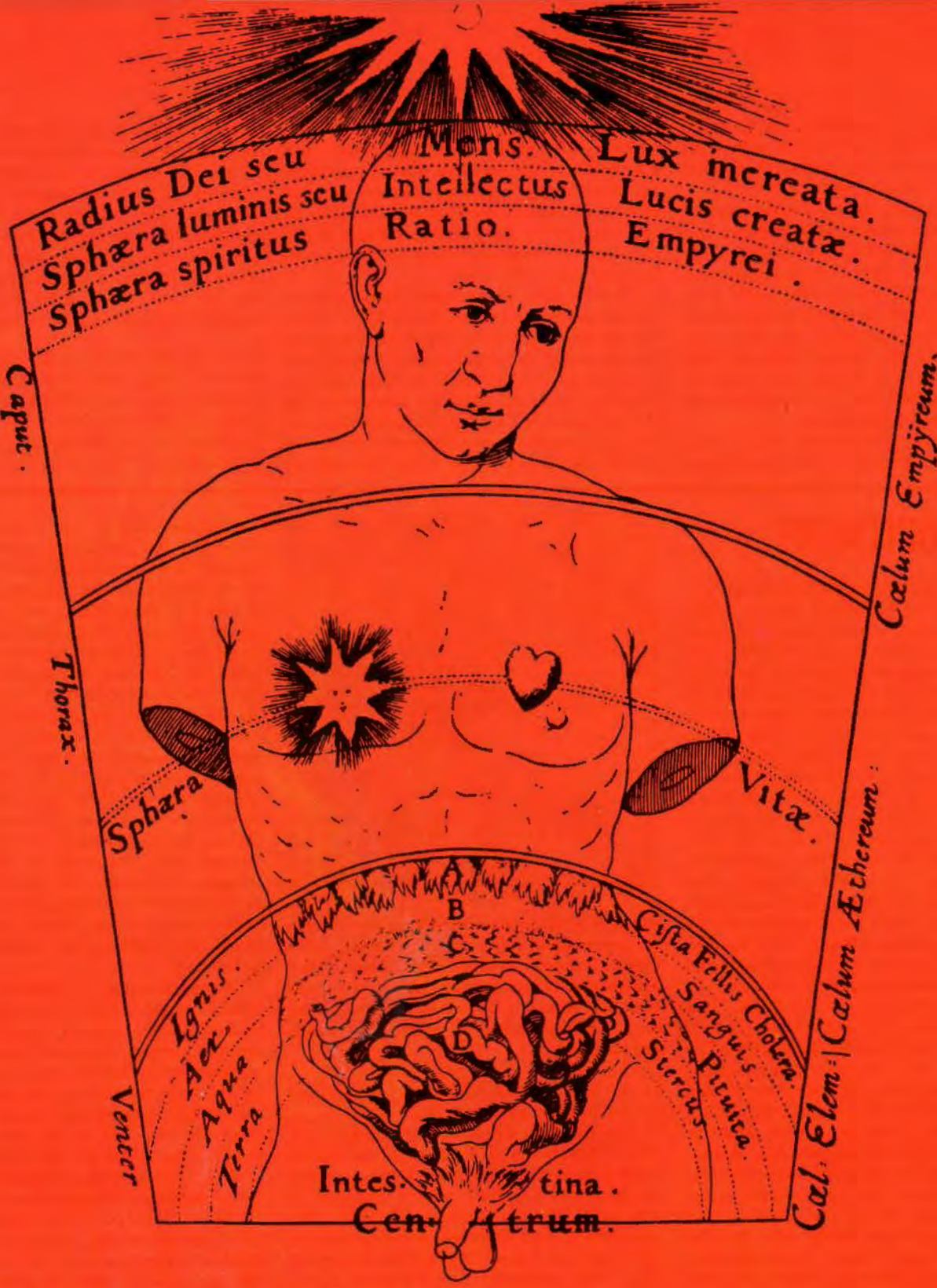
FURTHER READING: J. G. Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (abridged edn, Macmillan, London, 1923); T. Gwynn Jones, *Welsh Folklore and Folk-Customs* (Methuen, London, 1930); F. J. North, *Sunken Cities* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1957); Sir Leonard Woolley, *Excavations at Ur* (Barnes & Noble, 1963).

Flowers

Subject of many legends and superstitions: real flowers on stage bring bad luck in the theatre; many flowers are unlucky if brought into the house, particularly highly scented flowers, flowers with drooping heads and white flowers; to dream of white flowers is an omen of death, while it is thought that mixed red and white flowers brought into a hospital ward will be followed by a death.

See PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

Gerald Cubitt



Robert Fludd's key to universal anatomy; the physical and spiritual attributes of archetypal man, the microcosm, are shown to have their exact counterparts, on a larger scale, in the universe, the macrocosm

ROBERT FLUDD

AN ENGLISH PHYSICIAN and mystical philosopher, Robert Fludd was the son of Sir Thomas Fludd, paymaster to Queen Elizabeth's army in France and the Low Countries. Robert Fludd at first intended to become a soldier but abandoned this idea in favour of a life of study. Literature, philosophy, theology, medicine and especially physics, all attracted him and he was particularly fond of contemplating the marvels of Nature. To widen his knowledge he travelled on the Continent for six years, making a careful examination of everything of a rare or curious nature and seeking the company of famous scholars, with some of whom he formed lifelong friendships. It was at this time that he became acquainted with the writings of Paracelsus.

He returned home in 1605 and entered Christ Church, Oxford, where he obtained his medical degree, becoming a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1609. He set up in practice in London where he died at the age of 63.

Fludd is one of the leading English representatives of the school of medical mystics whose principal claim was the possession of the key to universal science. During his lifetime he was famous, though success brought him many detractors who accused him of making his patients the victims of occult practices. Despite this he was very popular with the public, and respected by learned men like John Selden (1584–1654), the brilliant jurist and antiquary. Abroad his ideas were opposed by some scholars, including the French philosopher and mathematician Pierre Gassendi.

Unlike Paracelsus he made no permanent addition to the list of known drugs, nor did his researches lead to discoveries in physiology, chemistry or surgery. His works are encyclopedic in character; in them he deals with all the sciences, arts and manufactures of his times; he writes of astrology,

alchemy, the art of warfare, how to make musical instruments and even offers an explanation as to the best method of crossing rivers without getting wet.

Fludd's works are indeed an odd mixture of rather curious science, book-learning and occultism. He does not deduce his ideas from facts, but acquires them through meditation or sheer erudition; yet he frequently tries to demonstrate them by means of a scientific experiment. For example, to show the identity between the divine substance and the light of the sun – an idea which he developed from the Cabala – he makes use of a kind of inverted thermometer.

He apparently discovered the Cabala while writing his *History of the Macrocosm*, in which he states that man is a miniature version (or microcosm), physically and spiritually of the universe (the macrocosm); he straightway began to demonstrate his system all over again, basing it this time on the teaching of the Rabbis, instead of the classical philosophers which until then had been his chief authorities.

Fludd's chief importance lies perhaps in his knowledge and exposition of the Cabala, though like many of his predecessors in the task he failed to extract a clear system from it. At least in his work we can find the principal ideas of cabalistic speculation on the unknowable God, on sexual cosmogony, on the correspondences between the various worlds. His other claim to be remembered is to be found in his spirited defence of the Rosicrucians in several of his treatises.

Fludd's influence is hidden rather than obvious. It is to be detected in Milton, for instance, and other poets of the 17th century. In more recent times occult writers like Madame Blavatsky owe some of their ideas to Fludd's works and others of his time, for all that these later exponents have covered them with a kind of Indian veneer.

FURTHER READING: J.B. Craven, *Doctor Robert Fludd – Robertus de Fluctibus – the English Rosicrucian* (William Peace & Son, 1902); J. Godwin, *Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (Shambhala, 1979).

FLYING OINTMENT

AN ANCIENT and very widespread belief held that witches could fly through the air, riding upon broomsticks, staves, forks, or upon the backs of demons in animal form, and sometimes, though more rarely, without any visible support. Usually they made ready for their journey by smearing their bodies, or the objects upon which they rode, with a magical ointment given to them by the Devil, or prepared according to his instructions.

It is known how some of these flying ointments are made because a number of English and Continental writers in the 16th and 17th centuries described the methods; all the recipes contained extracts from strongly poisonous plants. The ingredients most commonly listed were aconite, deadly nightshade, hemlock, and the boiled fat and marrow of babies who had been stolen from their homes before they were baptized, or dug up from their graves. Reginald Scot in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), recorded that the 'bowels and members' of such children were seethed in a cauldron, and the thickest part of the resultant grease was used as a basis for the ointment. Other ingredients mentioned in various prescriptions were cinquefoil, sweet flag, poplar leaves, the blood of bats or lapwings, parsley, soot and, if human fat was omitted, some sort of oil. Francis Bacon who, like Reginald Scot before him, was inclined to ascribe the supposed witch flights to imagination or drug-induced delusions, noted in *Sylva Sylvarum* (1608) that 'the ointment that witches use is reported to be made of the fat of children digged out of their graves; of the juices of smallage (wild celery), wolfbane, and cinquefoil, mingled with the meal of fine wheat; but I suppose that the soporiferous medicines are likest to do it.'

Although the use of flying ointments was widely credited, there was curiously little evidence for it in the recorded confessions of the witches themselves. Claire Goessen, a Belgian witch, confessed in 1603 that she had flown to the sabbath on more than one occasion, riding upon a staff smeared with an unguent. In 1460, in northern France, five accused women admitted that the Devil gave them a salve which they rubbed on their hands and on a small wooden rod, and then placing the rod between their legs, they flew

Michael Holford

Above **A witch is smeared with flying ointment in preparation for flight: detail from David Teniers' *Scène de Sorcière*. One explanation of the witches' ability to fly was that the ointment contained a hallucinatory drug *Right* Painting of witches by Austin Osman Spare**

away, 'above good towns and woods and waters' to their meeting-place.

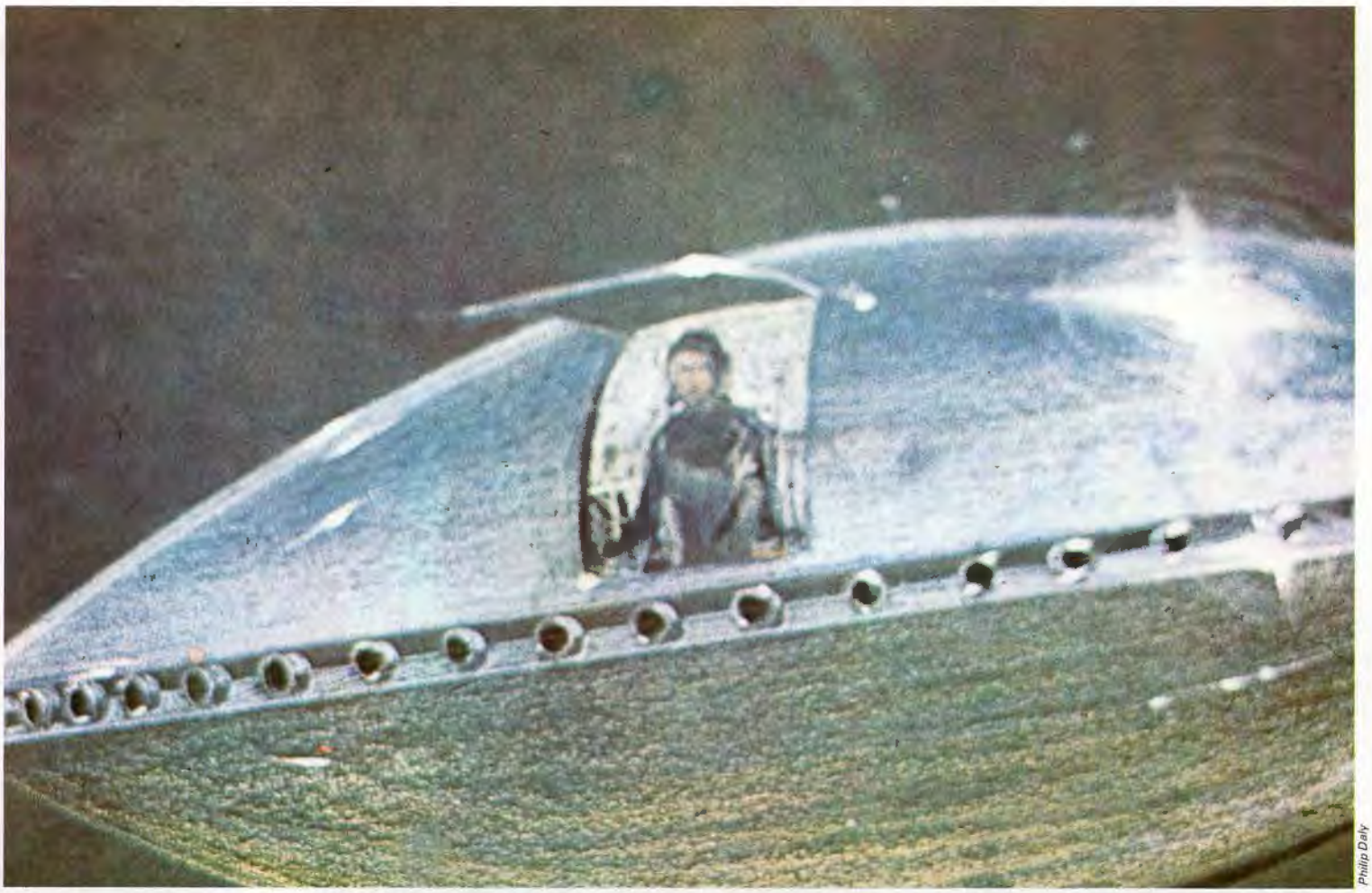
The Swedish witches of 1669, who rode 'over Churches and high walls' to Blocula upon a beast provided by the Devil, said that he gave them 'a horn with a Salve in it, wherewith we do anoint ourselves'. The members of two Somerset covens confessed in 1664 that, before they went to their meetings, they smeared their wrists and foreheads with a greenish oil, 'which smells raw', and which their Spirit gave them, 'and then they are carried in a very short time, using these words as they pass, *Thout, tout a tout, tout, throughout and about*.' The impression given in these, and other similar confessions, is that the occult properties of the ointment were essential to the power of flight, but evidently this was not always the case. Some witches spoke of flying without any preliminary anointment, simply by straddling a staff, or a straw, or a hollow stalk, and uttering an incantation. In *Disquisitionum Magicarum* (1599) Martin Delrio remarked that the Devil was able to carry witches to the sabbath without the help of any unguents, and that he often did so; but for several reasons, he preferred that his servants should first anoint themselves.

Learned opinion was never quite unanimous on the question of whether witches actually flew or merely imagined that they did. Most writers on the subject accepted that demonic transportation, with or without the use of flying ointments was possible, and did in fact occur. There were however others who held that the witches' confessions of flight were due to hallucinations or vivid dreams. As far back as the 9th century, the document known as the Canon Episcopi condemned as demon-induced error the claims made by certain women that they had flown through the air with Diana, riding in large companies upon beasts over immense tracts of country in the dead of the night. Such women were deceived by sinful fantasies inspired by Satan, who 'deludes the minds of his subjects in sleep, so that the victim believes that these things, which only her spirit experiences, she really experiences in the body.'

A tale recounted by Nider in *Formicarius* (1517) suggests that flying dreams could be caused by the magical ointment itself. A certain woman anointed herself with an unguent while she was sitting in a kneading-trough. She fell asleep and dreamt that she was flying, rocking the trough so violently that she fell out of it and injured her head. John Cotta in *The Triall of Witchcraft* (1616) quoted an Italian story related by the natural philosopher Giambattista della Porta (1540–1615) concerning a woman who, having rubbed herself with ointment, went into a trance, from which she could not be roused, even when shaken and beaten. When she finally woke of her own accord, she declared she had been flying over seas and mountains, and could not be convinced that she had been asleep in her own room all the time.

In an appendix to Dr Margaret Murray's *Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, Professor A. J. Clark pointed out that the strong poisons contained in flying ointments would have definite physiological effects, especially if rubbed into skins broken by scratches or the bites of vermin. Aconite produces irregular action of the heart; hemlock and belladonna (deadly nightshade) produce excitement and delirium. An unguent containing a combination of these drugs could cause delusions which, in some cases, might account for the witches' confessions of magical flight.

Michael Holford



Philip Daly

In 1973, ex-U.S. President Jimmy Carter said he had sighted a UFO. Carter, a trained naval commander with experience of navigation by the stars, is just one of thousands of people who report that they have seen UFOs. In the following articles, an astronomer and a sociologist discuss the phenomenon.

FLYING SAUCERS

THE TERM 'FLYING SAUCER' was coined on 24 June 1947. An American businessman making a routine flight in a private aircraft reported 'a chain of saucer-like things at least five miles long . . . flat like a pie-pan and reflecting the sun like a mirror'. His story was widely publicized, and the suggestion was made that the objects were nothing more nor less than spaceships from another world. More accounts followed, some of them as fascinating as they were unexpected. George Adamski, a café-owner in California, wrote a book describing his encounter with spacemen from Venus; Cedric Allingham, in England, reported meeting a Martian while bird-watching on the Scottish coast, and so on. Flying saucer societies sprang up like mushrooms, though before long some of them tried to drop the original term and substitute the more dignified 'UFO' – Unidentified Flying Object.

Saucer reports are of two main kinds: descriptions of meetings with spacemen, and more sober accounts of objects seen in the sky. So far as the visitors from space are concerned, it must be said that the evidence is – to put it mildly – rather slender, in as much as it rests entirely upon the statements made by isolated individuals; if extraterrestrial beings really wanted to contact us, it might be thought more logical for them to bring a saucer down in, say, Piccadilly Circus or Times Square rather than reveal themselves to café-owners and lone ornithologists such as Adamski and Allingham. Reports of unidentified objects or UFOs are sometimes quite plausible, but again there is no concrete evidence that the objects are artificial. A very thorough investigation carried out by a University of Colorado group, supported by a panel of scientists from the National Academy of Sciences, issued a lengthy report in 1969 to the effect that virtually all UFO sightings are due to natural phenomena – balloons, meteors, reflections of light and so on – and that little could be gained by investigating them further.

It is always dangerous to be too dogmatic, and one certainly cannot deny the possibility that the earth might be visited by extraterrestrial beings: after all, life is probably widespread in the universe. On the other hand, it seems as certain as anything can be that there is no intelligent life in our solar system, except on the Earth, so that the saucers would have to come from tremendous distances amounting to millions of millions of miles. For our present purpose it is permissible to assume that flying saucers are not, in fact, visiting spacecraft. With this qualification, let us examine the reasons for the spread of the UFO cult.

It is, of course, entirely harmless, and this must be stressed at the outset. Many of the flying saucer believers are not only completely sincere, but utterly dedicated – and they include some famous names. Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, Chief of Fighter Command during the all-important days of the Battle of Britain, often stated his belief in saucers as visiting spaceships; so also Professor Hermann Oberth, whose classic book *Rakete zu den Planetenräumen* (The Rocket into Interplanetary Space), published in 1923, was the first true mathematical treatise upon what is now the science of astronautics. Neither Lord Dowding nor Professor Oberth claimed to have seen a saucer at close range, and still less to have talked with an extraterrestrial being; they examined the evidence, and put their personal interpretations on it, which is of course entirely permissible.

The Divine Astronaut

Generally speaking, there is a close link between flying saucer theories and what may be loosely termed mysticism. Many devotees of the UFO societies are of an exceptionally religious turn of mind, and many of them are biblical fundamentalists, while Spiritualists and astrologers are also well represented. It has been claimed, for instance, that many of the miracles reported in the Bible are nothing more or less than rather garbled versions of interplanetary visitations, and in 1969 the London *Sunday Mirror* even ran a series of articles under the

Some people report that they have not only seen flying saucers, but that they have also met the spacemen who fly them *Far left* Artist's impression of the flying saucer which Joe Simonton of Wisconsin claimed he had seen *Left* He was nicknamed 'Pancake Joe' after he related how he was handed a pancake by the flying saucer men who landed in his backyard *Above* Under hypnosis Mr and Mrs Barney Hill of America gave a detailed description of the flying saucer and the saucer men they had both seen

title 'Was God an Astronaut?' This was based on the findings of E. von Daniken, of Switzerland, who claimed that spacemen from another world came to Earth not only in biblical times, but even before. According to von Daniken, Egyptian mummies are simply time-travellers who have been 'frozen' by means of techniques passed on to the pyramid-builders by the extraterrestrial beings.

Also, there is a link with the cult of Atlantis, the mythical land which is said to have developed an amazingly high degree of civilization before being drowned beneath the ocean waves (see ATLANTIS). Desmond Leslie, co-author with George Adamski of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, equates the 'vimanas' or flying machines which the Atlanteans are supposed to have possessed with UFOs, building up a picture which sounds outwardly convincing. There is yet another link with the idea that mankind has evolved from beings who used to inhabit another planet, and destroyed it by means of nuclear warfare. This is claimed by various UFO groups – notably the Aetherius Society, whose beliefs are described in the following article.

One reason for this sort of belief is the feeling that we of the present day are in danger of destroying ourselves in very similar fashion. Unfortunately, the danger is very real indeed; weapons capable of wiping out civilization actually exist, and could be unleashed. Subconsciously, the flying saucer believers are trying to give out a warning and their advice is eminently sound even though few scientifically-minded people can credit that anything of the sort has happened in earth history.

Most UFO followers claim – and with excellent reason – that our science has far outstripped our civilization, and that we have developed weapons which we are too undeveloped to control, just as a small boy playing with matches in a roomful of fireworks is likely to damage himself and others. It is reassuring to think that there may be friendly advanced beings watching over us, ready to come to the rescue if need be. This is different from a more conventional religious belief in an all-powerful God of goodness, but the underlying theme is of the same type, and it provides a feeling of security in our desperately uncertain world. On the other hand, there is the idea put forward in a book called *The Living Universe*, written in 1963 by J. Hebwynd and V. A. Rytov, who maintain that hypothetical races living on Venus are likely to leave us in splendid isolation until they are satisfied that we are no longer a potential danger!

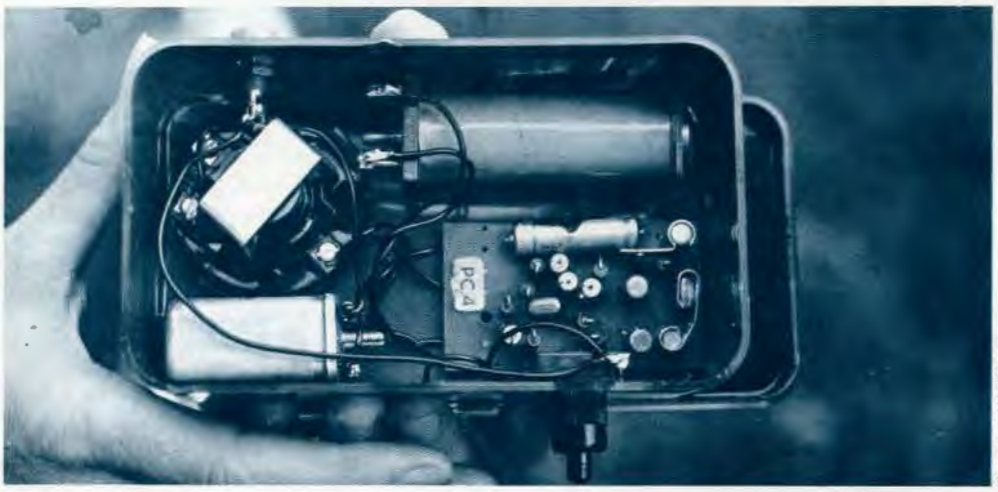
Veil of Secrecy

Astrology is also involved. Indeed, it may be said that astrology, the Atlantis cult, pyramidology and flying saucer beliefs tend to go together and this is understandable enough. Signs in the sky are reported in this connection – as, for instance, at Warminster in Wiltshire, where a local height, Cradle Hill, has been said to be the scene of many saucer phenomena during recent years. Here a team of watchers has been led by Sir Arthur Shuttlewood, a journalist by profession, whose sincerity is certainly not to be doubted. He, like many others, holds that the spacemen are visiting us with the aim of helping us over our present difficulties – and again we come back to the desperate wish to find that we are not to be left at the mercy of our own follies.

Escapism may also play a fairly major role. Much of what is read in the newspapers, described on television and broadcast on radio is very 'down to earth', and we have to admit that a great deal of world news is unsettling and unpleasant. To range out beyond everyday matters, into the realm of the intriguing and the unknown, provides a mental relaxation as well as a feeling of hope – and this leads on in turn to wishful thinking. A bright light crosses the sky, and is widely observed. It could be a weather balloon, a meteorological phenomenon or even a secret aircraft; but how much more alluring to regard it as a spaceship from another world.

One excellent case of this sort of thing occurred in April 1969, when a brilliant object flashed across Britain. It was seen from Selsey on the south coast across the Southwest, Wales and the Irish Sea, and was immediately claimed as a flying saucer. Actually it turned out to be a meteorite, as was proved when fragments of it were found in Northern Ireland. Had these pieces not come to light, as would have been the case if the object had fallen into the sea, doubts would have remained and another UFO would have been listed in the saucer societies'

Roy Flooks



Paraphysical Laboratory

records. It is only too easy to believe what one would like to believe.

In any cult which is beyond the run of everyday experience, there is a suppressed belief that officialdom is deliberately withholding essential knowledge. This is certainly true of flying saucers, as is brought out in the writings of various authors such as Major Donald Keyhoe, of the United States. Keyhoe maintains that world governments know quite well that we are being visited by aliens, but that the information is being kept back for political reasons. Again the 'veil of secrecy' idea brings an aura of mystery and even glamour to the whole question, and the cult is strengthened as a result. If people in general believe that something is being hidden from them, they will do their best to find out the facts. Occasional writers who suggest that the saucer men are hostile, and their visitations are being kept secret because of the danger of world panic, are not taken very seriously – and this, too, is significant.

Martian in Braces

There remain the hoaxers and the practical jokers, of whom there have been many. Flying saucer reports lend themselves to this sort of activity, but unfortunately it is never easy to tell which accounts are deliberately faked and which are not. There was, for instance, the luckless writer who described his adventures on board a saucer piloted by a beautiful lady from another world – and who was promptly sued for divorce by his wife. Cedric Allingham, who wrote an interesting book entitled *Flying Saucer from Mars* (1955), has been accused of insincerity, and certainly his alleged photograph of the Martian whom he claimed to have met on a lonely stretch of coast in north Scotland does not look very convincing; for one thing, his trousers seem to be held up by a rather obvious pair of braces. But again it is impossible to be sure one way or the other, and Allingham's book has much less of a mystical trend than most others of its kind.

It may well be that the saucer cult has achieved its wide popularity largely because of our changing ideas about the universe as a whole. Originally, Earth was regarded as the supreme body, lying at rest in the centre of all things, while the celestial bodies were provided for the special benefit of mankind. Even when Earth was shown to be a normal planet moving round the sun, men still thought that they must be particularly important. Nowadays our view is very different. The sun itself is a typical star, and is only one of 100,000 million suns in our star system or galaxy, while the number of similar galaxies is unbelievably great. It is

Above **Examples of unidentified flying objects photographed over America. According to the findings of a recent investigation into 'flying saucers', carried out by a team of researchers at the University of Colorado, virtually all sightings of this kind may be attributed to natural phenomena, such as balloons, meteors and reflections of light** ***Left*** **Machine used by UFO researchers to track down 'saucers'**

the height of conceit to suppose that in all this host, our sun is the only star to be attended by a life-bearing planet. And in this case, why should not other beings have reached a level of technological development great enough for them to overcome the immense distances, and make contact with us? Even though astronomers say – justifiably – that there is no proof that this has happened, we cannot rule out the possibility. And there can be few people on Earth who would not welcome the opportunity to meet men from other worlds.

Yet on the whole it is likely that the main factor is the realization that our civilization hangs by a thread; the wisdom of more advanced races might save us, and there is a strong wish to believe that helpers are not far away. Once the idea has been put forward, it is bound to develop; the misty evidence of the 'ancient teachings' is brought forward in support, and the whole edifice of UFO belief rises from such foundations.

It is not easy to decide upon the future of the cult. Flying saucer stories had their heyday in the 1950s, before the beginning of the Space Age with the launching of Russia's first artificial satellite in 1957; then, it was easy to claim that scientists might after all be wrong, and that evidence of past or enduring civilization would be found on the moon and at least some of the planets. With the advance of space research, the situation has become much clearer. No thinking man can now maintain that there is advanced life upon the moon: Venus has been shown to be hopelessly hot, and Mars is hostile by any standards. Therefore, if the saucers are still taken to be spaceships, they must be assumed to come from planets moving round other stars – and the plausibility of the whole idea is greatly weakened. But the subconscious wish to believe in friendly beings watching over us is too strong to be dismissed so easily, and there are a great many people who would like it to be true.

PATRICK MOORE

The Aetherius Society

At first sight the teachings of the Aetherius Society appear to be an elaborate form of science fiction. They deal with life on other planets, flying saucers and transportation in space, communication between planets and the guidance of less advanced planets like Earth, which are in danger of destroying themselves by their own folly. For the members of the cult, however, the difference is clear. Their teachings are not the inventions of a novelist's imagination but the authoritative messages of spiritually advanced mystics who actually live on Venus, Mars or Neptune. Through their founder, George King, the members of the Aetherius Society are the privileged recipients of regular messages from space. He is the appointed Terrestrial Channel Number 1 and is able to go into a trance and transmit, in English, the voices of Aetherius or the Master Jesus from Venus and of the contact called Mars Sector 6, who is based on an artificial satellite belonging to Mars.

The cult apparently originated in London on a Saturday morning in May 1954, when George King heard a voice saying 'Prepare yourself. You are to become the voice of the Interplanetary Parliament'. Uncertain what this meant, King, who had some previous experience of spiritual healing, was visited by a powerful *guru*, or mystic, who instructed him in the skills that he would need to perform his appointed mission. He was also instructed to reduce his personal possessions to nothing. It will be noted that this account of the beginnings of the cult has common features with the origins of other religious and quasi-religious movements which stem from some striking happening to an individual.

The early transmissions from outer space took place before gradually growing audiences, usually in the Caxton Hall in London. The Interplanetary Parliament was identified as a body anxious to help the world. Flying saucer sightings were explained both as part of a survey of the Earth and by the fact that some craft had been sent into the Earth's atmosphere to absorb the harmful effects resulting from atomic radiation.

The varieties of different 'sightings' that had been reported were given greater credence by a careful description of the forms and functions of the different spacecraft that were used. In a pamphlet prepared on the flying saucers George King argues that they are sent to Earth on the direct orders of the Interplanetary Parliament. The main purpose is to make a metaphysical survey of the Earth.

The saucers mainly come from Mars and Venus. Among them are the 'mother ships' which are cigar-shaped and may vary between two-thirds of a mile and 1000 miles in length. The type called 'Star of Bethlehem' is used only by the Great Cosmic Masters. Another type, Satellite Number 3, is a large craft which enters the Earth's orbit to radiate spiritual energy during the periods of 'spiritual push'. It is during these periods that the members of the Aetherius Society are exhorted to special efforts since their spiritual and religious practices are then, apparently, enhanced 3000 times. This satellite is not visible and cannot be detected by radar. All spacecraft are apparently powered by magnetic force, and an attempt is made in the literature published by the Aetherius Society to authenticate the scientific processes involved. Explanations are also given for the apparent ability of the craft to become invisible at will to observers on Earth.

The Venusian Master Jesus

On 23 July 1958 the three year long 'Operation Starlight' began and the movement received its first transmission from the Master Jesus, discovered to be a Venusian. This event took place on Holdstone Down in Devon and included the transmission of Twelve New Blessings, which rapidly became a central document for worship services by the members. The development of worship gave a definite focus for group meetings and emphasized the social aspects of the movement. Most significantly, the discovery of the Master Jesus helped to reconcile the Society's ideas about space with the Christian teaching which the members had received before they joined the movement. Further emphasis is given to this by the remarkable description of the meeting which took place between George King's mother, Mary King, and the Master Jesus in a spacecraft on the night of 19 January 1959.

This event, which is described in great detail in the publication *Cosmic Voice*, involved the collection of Mary King from a pre-arranged rendezvous and her travel in a flying saucer to link up with a larger vehicle. The Master Jesus then took the copy of The Twelve Blessings which she had brought with her and blessed it. The blessing ceremony included reference to George King as 'The one Whom Thou didst choose to be a Leader Among Men of Earth in this their New Age'. This additional authentication for George King's mission was further developed in the conversation which Mary King had with the captain of the spacecraft. He explained that in a former incarnation both she and the then secretary of the movement, Grace Abercrombie, had known Jesus and that in her case this explained her intense love for him. It is this part of the description which led some of the followers of the Aetherius Society to assert that she was Mary, the mother of Jesus, in an earlier incarnation and that consequently George King was Jesus returned to Earth. This suggestion has been strongly denied by George King in more recent publications.

Charging the Mountains

Three years were spent by George King and his close associates in climbing a total of 18 mountains in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland. The purpose of these trips was to 'charge' the mountains with spiritual energy by establishing a link, through George King, with the power of the Space People. Another mountain in Africa had been charged by one of the space intelligences, Saint Goo Ling, to make a total of 19 mountains in all.

These mountains have become places of pilgrimage for the movement; the pilgrimage is a means of tapping the spiritual power of the holy mountain. In a transmission by the Master Aetherius on 27 July 1962 further force was given to these pilgrimages by the information that the Space People themselves have linked all the charged mountains by underground connections, which can be used to balance and improve their metaphysical power.

More recently, the Aetherius Society appears to have concentrated on consolidating its teachings and its organization. By 1962 the headquarters had been established in Los Angeles, although the London headquarters has also been maintained. George King adopted the title Reverend at about this time and subsequently a Doctorate of Divinity has been added to his title. His two lieutenants in the United States, formerly Belgian air hostesses, and the Society's secretary in Britain have also been designated as 'Reverend' in recent literature. The Society has arranged a wide range of lectures, spiritual healing meetings, publicity and instruction to the followers in

Aetherius Society

Members of the Aetherius Society believe that through their leader, George King, they are in communication with advanced beings from outer space who regularly visit the Earth's orbit in gigantic spaceships. The purpose of their visits is to keep watch over man, who is in danger of destroying himself through his own folly

the tasks needed to prepare the world for the New Age, which will come about through the activities of the Space People.

The hopes of the movement were given further support by the announcement of the Cosmic Initiation of the Earth by the power of the Sun during the summer of 1964, as the result of a complex process achieved by a gigantic spacecraft. It is this power, now stored in the Earth, which will bring about the New Age at the appropriate moment.

There can be little doubt that the cult developed in part as a response to the general uncertainty about outer space, the reported sightings of flying saucers and the increasing interest in the space research programmes of the major powers. Neither the teachings of the Churches nor the wisdom of science could give authoritative answers to the new range of questions which people were asking about space. For those unprepared to accept the reservations of cautious scientists, there may well be attractive qualities in a cult which claims to have positive answers to resolve their doubts. The Society offers this certain knowledge and, indeed, a direct means of contact with space people themselves. The Society's solution satisfies those who have come to the movement from leanings towards mysticism, those who have approached it with an interest simply in flying saucers, which are now given a positive role in the salvation of mankind, and those who are seeking a new interpretation of Christianity. The belief-system of the Aetherius Society has been successfully developed into a consistent and logically related pattern which provides a satisfying reinterpretation of existence for its members, who at the same time gain the status of the potential elect in the New Age of which they are the earthly handmaidens.

J. A. JACKSON

Rustic dramas portraying the life-cycle, still performed as far apart as Britain and the Balkans, include characters which can be traced back to the fertility gods of the Middle East

FOLKPLAYS

TWO SEASONAL PEAKS, the summer and winter festivals, stand out prominently in the British calendar of folk customs. The summer customs stretch from Easter to harvest time, while winter covers customs from Michaelmas to Ash Wednesday.

Central to the summer group are the May Games and the Tree of Life, a term used to include both Maypole and Cross. The main feature of the winter group is the life-cycle, a dramatic portrayal of the death and resurrection of Nature as experienced at the turn of the year in Europe. This folkplay survives as fragments of a festival which must reach right back into Neolithic times. In the British Isles, it is known under a variety of names, the most common being the Christmas Mummers; these are play actors, local village folk, who disguise themselves by wearing masks or by blacking their faces with soot. They are known as guisers or guizards in the North of England, Geesers or Geese dancers in Cornwall. In some localities, the players appear at Easter and are called Pace-Eggers, or at Hallowe'en or All Souls Eve, when they are known as Soul Cakers. In the Isle of Man the actors are the White Boys and in Scotland the Galatians. Many of the plays revolve round St George and his hand-to-hand combat with such adversaries as the Turkish Knight, the Black Prince of Paradise and Bold Slasher.

Another set of folkplays portrays the life-cycle from another angle and with a different set of characters. Since these plays are acted on Plough Monday and include a courting or marriage scene, they are called Plough Plays or Wooing Plays. They have also been found as an integral part of the elaborate sword dances in the North of England. Irrespective of type all these plays depict the life-cycle and symbolize the continuing vitality and fertility of Nature.

Although Christmas mumming as a widespread village custom has largely died out in Britain, it survives overseas in the West Indies, Newfoundland and in those parts of North America where the English traditions have been carried on by settlers. Often the mumming is little beyond the disguising of faces and dressing up in garments of the opposite sex, wearing masks, or blackening the face with soot and visiting neighbours' homes to dance and sing. If a masquerader should by mischance be recognized, this is everywhere regarded as bad luck.

Central to the plot is the death by combat, or ritual murder, of a hero at the hands of antagonists. This sacrificial death is lamented and is followed by a cure or resurrection, and the mystery of life is celebrated in song and dance. The following outline of a Christmas mummers' play performed and recorded at Symondsbury in West Dorset recently, is more elaborate than most versions and contains features not often found associated in any single version.

There are four separate scenes: the exploits of St George, Tommy the Pony (a three-legged hobby-horse), a rough wooing and the 'singing of the travels'. The actors, all men, are disguised, St George and the 'Champions' wearing tall hats with paper streamers or ribbons hanging over the faces, except for Jan, the husbandman, dressed in a smock and Bet, his wife, in long-skirted dress and bonnet. Jan carries a club made out of a young crab-apple tree. Jan enters further disguised as Father Christmas to act as 'Presenter' and to prepare the way. He then introduces the next character whom he calls 'Room'; this is an accretion for normally the Presenter himself will say 'make room'. Introducing himself, Room goes on to tell of how St George in his travels met and married the King of Egypt's daughter. He then calls in the King of Egypt, who in turn summons St George. The latter boasts of his deeds and during his vaunting, one of his friends, St Patrick, enters. He offers to help St George to fight his battles and kills the first of the antagonists, Captain Bluster, who then retires back-stage to kneel on one knee leaning on his sword. The next antagonist reels in somewhat drunk, is slain by St George and joins Captain Bluster. The third adversary enters, is slain by St George and joins the other two victims while St George, wiping his blade,

calls on Colonel Spring. St George at once repeats his success, but Colonel Spring, after kneeling 'dead' beside the other three, suddenly rises to fight again before he is finally killed. The two victorious champions St George and St Patrick then express deep sorrow, lamenting for the dead men's wives and children. After discussing the merits of various doctors they call on a doctor who appears dressed in silk hat and morning coat. He talks of his travels and his skill, bargaining for a large fee before he gives his services. St George hands him a bag of money. Boasting and showing off he produces his bottle of medicine, elecampane, which cures 'all sorts' and after giving a drop to each of the four kneeling victims in turn, restores and dismisses them.

Fortune Telling Horse

In the second scene Bet enters leading in Tommy the Pony; the mummer, completely covered with a cloth, leans forward on a pole which protrudes from the cloth and is surmounted by a wooden horse's head. Bet mounts the back of Tommy and is riding him cleverly when Jan enters; she challenges him to ride Tommy. Jan accepts but is at once thrown by the hobby-horse. In a fury, Jan picks up his club and fells Tommy to the ground. Bet laments the death of her pony and persuades Jan to help her to revive it. They 'lay on hands', first blowing on them to warm them and swinging their arms to make the blood flow. They try to lift Tommy up but he falls down again. Defeated they call on the Champions who march in and set the horse back on his three legs. Bet now announces that her pony tells fortunes and asks Tommy to smell out certain evil-doers; the hobby horse picks out several innocent victims, to the delight of the spectators.

The third scene opens with Jan and Bet quarrelling. Jan knocks down Bet who lies as if dead. After much rude fooling, she is revived by the Doctor, and in the next scene Jan and Bet and the Pony form a family group. The other mummers march round the group once clockwise and once anticlockwise singing a version of the folk song *The Serving Man and the Husbandman*. At the end of each round the singers stand facing centre while Jan in reply speaks his verse rejecting the life of luxury and ease enjoyed by the serving man. At once the ring of mummers repeat their round dance, singing the verses for Jan to speak his unqualified rejection, each time seconded warmly by Bet. The Doctor makes a final speech inviting the mistress of the house to tie a piece of ribbon upon the Christmas holly bough, when on behalf of the mummers he wishes her and everyone present a happy Christmas.

The fundamental features of this type of play are the 'making of room' which may include a sweeper or whiffler to clear the space for the mystery drama; the 'calling on' or introduction by the Presenter of the combatants and other actors in turn; the dispute leading to death; the lament; the call for the Doctor; the cure and the quete or collection of the reward, important because by contributing to the collection the spectators become participators and so able to share in any benefits from the magic luck.

The other type of folkplay, the Plough Plays, belong, broadly speaking, to the Christmas season; they were performed usually in January, on the first Monday after Epiphany. The performers call themselves Plough Jacks, Plough Stots, Boggons or even Morris Dancers. Their leader is not St George but a 'Fool' accompanied by a man in woman's clothes called Bessy or Betty. There is some sort of conflict with a death and revival but there is also a wooing in which the Fool vies with his eldest son for the hand of the 'Fair Lady'. There is confusion and overlapping of incidents in the two types of play. St George may appear in the Plough Play and challenge and kill the Fool who is then revived by the Doctor. The Fool then courts and marries the 'Lady'. The Fool's wooing may be found without either the combat or the cure. Some of the dialogue has obviously been borrowed from printed sources which would suggest some contact between strolling professional actors and local folk mummers.

There are many European variants of the Masquerade, some leaning toward the popular carnival festivals, some preserving an intensely individual tradition as in the Basque festivals of the *Mascarades* and the *Pastourelles*. One primitive surviving custom

The Christmas mummers' play is a dramatic portrayal of the death and resurrection of Nature as experienced at the turn of each year: the sacrificial victim is restored to life in this scene from the Bampton Mummers

Brian Shuel

is the *'Poklade'* the pre-Lenten 'Play' of the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia performed on the two days before Ash Wednesday. In this custom there are three chief actors, a Fool, a Priest and a Baba or Witch. They are served by a retinue of a score of dancers in two contingents, ten men dressed as girls and ten girls dressed as men who dance alone and together. The three characters carry bags of soot and ashes which they throw over themselves and at the spectators when they are not fooling or behaving in an obscene manner.

In the case of the Rumanian version of the folkplay the action takes place within the hilt and point circle of sword dancers who never cease to 'step' while the play lasts. Here the hand-to-hand combat is between a Turk and a Russian. The latter is slain and an 'Orthodox Priest' attempts but fails to revive him. One more parallel may be mentioned from the village of Haghios Gheorgios in Thrace, where a festival is kept two days before Ash Wednesday. The leading actors are two 'gypsies', who must be married men, wearing head-dresses of animal skin brought down over the faces to form masks. Their shoulders are so heavily padded as to make them hump backed. Their hands are blackened and they wear sheep-bells round their waists. One carries a cross-bow made to shoot ashes from a horn and the other a phallus. With them are two unmarried boys dressed as their wives. An old woman, the Babo, carries a basket with a doll to represent a bastard baby. More gypsies with blackened hands carrying rods, whips and swords and a bagpiper complete the troop.

In the play proper, the first scene shows a gypsy man and wife sitting down forging a ploughshare. Then Babo cries that her bastard is too big for the basket and he becomes the Phallus-bearer and marries one of the Brides. The second scene shows the Cross-bow bearer stalking the Phallus-bearer whom he shoots. There is a lamentation and suddenly the victim comes to life. The forging of the plough is continued and a complete plough is then brought on drawn by the 'girls' while the blackfaced gypsies drive it. Later the two masked humpbacked gypsies are beaten with rods.

Actors of Prehistory

Further comparison of these Balkan folkplays emphasizes their close resemblance to some of the British examples. Were it not for the European analogues it might well have been assumed that the St George Mummers Play and the Plough Play were mere rustic echoes of the strolling theatrical companies familiar to country folk since Tudor days. Theatrical plays have been written round the legend of St George since the 16th century but it seems certain that the folkplays in origin long antedate any such dramatic invention and that it has been an integral part of country life familiar as an old tradition to Shakespeare and to playwrights long before his time.

The portrayal of the life-cycle with birth, death and resurrection is pre-Christian and probably pre-civilization. The principal actors can be traced back through recorded history to prehistory. The Fool and Baba or Bet under different guise can be traced to the Middle East where they merge with the Priest-King and the fertility Earth Goddess. The Mother Goddess has been traced to the earliest centre of civilization in Anatolia where she was worshipped by the Hittites. Later she appears in classical mythology as Artemis, Cybele and Demeter and in the still more familiar figure of Diana of the Ephesians. Ashes and soot must have been fertility emblems since earliest husbandry depended on burning a patch of forest or scrub to make room for the mystery of the sprouting seed.

Thus the folkplay in its various forms may be regarded as a starting point for investigation into mythology, drama and religion as well as more homely institutions such as Punch and Judy, the Pantomime and the Harlequinade. Indeed one can take any of the folkplay characters and embark on a voyage of surprising discovery.

(See also DRAMA: MYSTERY PLAYS.)

DOUGLAS KENNEDY

FURTHER READING: E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1903).

Brian Shuel

Brian Shuel

Left Scene from the Midgley Pace-Egg play performed on Good Friday: central to the plot of the folkplay is the death by combat, or ritual murder, of a hero at the hands of antagonists *Right* His death is lamented and the doctor is called upon to effect a cure or resurrection: scene from the Brighouse Pace-Egg play performed on Easter Saturday

Similar basic themes are found in the folktales of different ages and different parts of the world; even such a sophisticated, period tale as 'Cinderella' can have primitive origins

FOLKTALES

THE CUSTOM OF STORY-TELLING goes back to prehistoric times, and no race, nation or tribe has yet been recorded which had no stories; the habit is common to primitive savages and elaborate civilizations. Furthermore, incidents and practices which are easily explained in the savage tales make unexpected appearances in the civilized ones: often we can only judge the age of a story by the presence of these fossils embedded in it.

The Cinderella story, as we know it best in the urbane, courtly style of the 17th century Perrault, seems a very civilized affair indeed. There is a cruel stepmother, certainly, there are ugly stepsisters, but their cruelty is sophisticated and modern. They make Cinderella into a servant and a drudge, taunt her and mock at her, but there are none of the barbarities of some fairy tales. The story is an affair of a court ball and a royal marriage. The cruel sisters, instead of being put into a spiked barrel and rolled downhill, or some such atrocity, are forgiven in the end and have good matches found for them. The fairy who engineers the happy ending is a fairy godmother – a curious anomaly, combining Christian and pagan elements. One would say that never was there a story that was more securely rooted in its period, yet when one examines other variants of the Cinderella type more primitive things begin to emerge.

The Highland tale of The Sharp Grey Sheep is a good example. The whole setting here is simpler and less sophisticated. A native turn is given to it. The festivity here is not a ball, but attendance at church. What is most significant however, is the supernatural machinery. This is supplied not by a fairy but by an animal, which is killed by the wicked stepmother and is

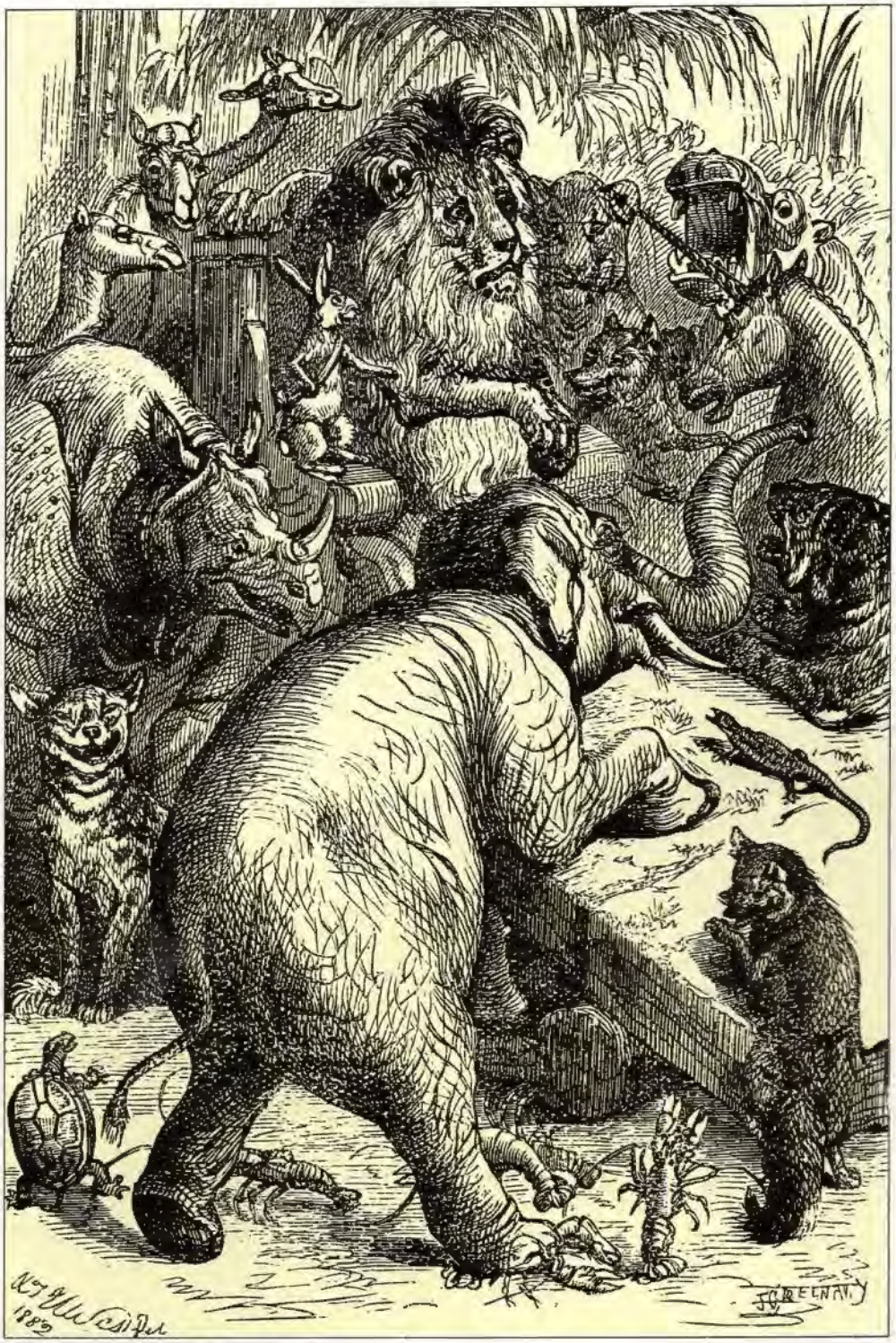
revived by putting together its bones and skin. In another version it springs up as a tree when its bones are buried. This is a motif in a Russo-Karelian version, The Wonderful Birch, to be found in Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book*. Here the animal who befriended the heroine was her own mother, turned into a sheep by the witch who supplanted her. It is probable that we arrive here near to the original tale, in which the magic was worked by the ancestral totem animal. Where we find these transmigrations and revivals in another form after death we guess at an early origin for the tale.

All this, however, is conjecture; but there are certain stories that can be dated. An example is The Tale of the Two Brothers, which was deciphered from an Egyptian papyrus at least 3000 years old and contains themes which are found again and again in tales told all over Europe up to the present day. It is a tale of the 'separable soul'. The hero hides his soul in a sycamore tree and his false wife betrays his secret to her lover, the Pharaoh, who has the tree cut down. Then the hero dies, but his brother finds him and brings him back to life and he takes the form of a sacred bull. His wicked wife has the bull slain, but he again takes the form of a tree; and when she has that cut down one of the chips flies into her mouth, and the hero is born again from his own wife; when he comes to manhood he destroys her as a punishment for her treachery.

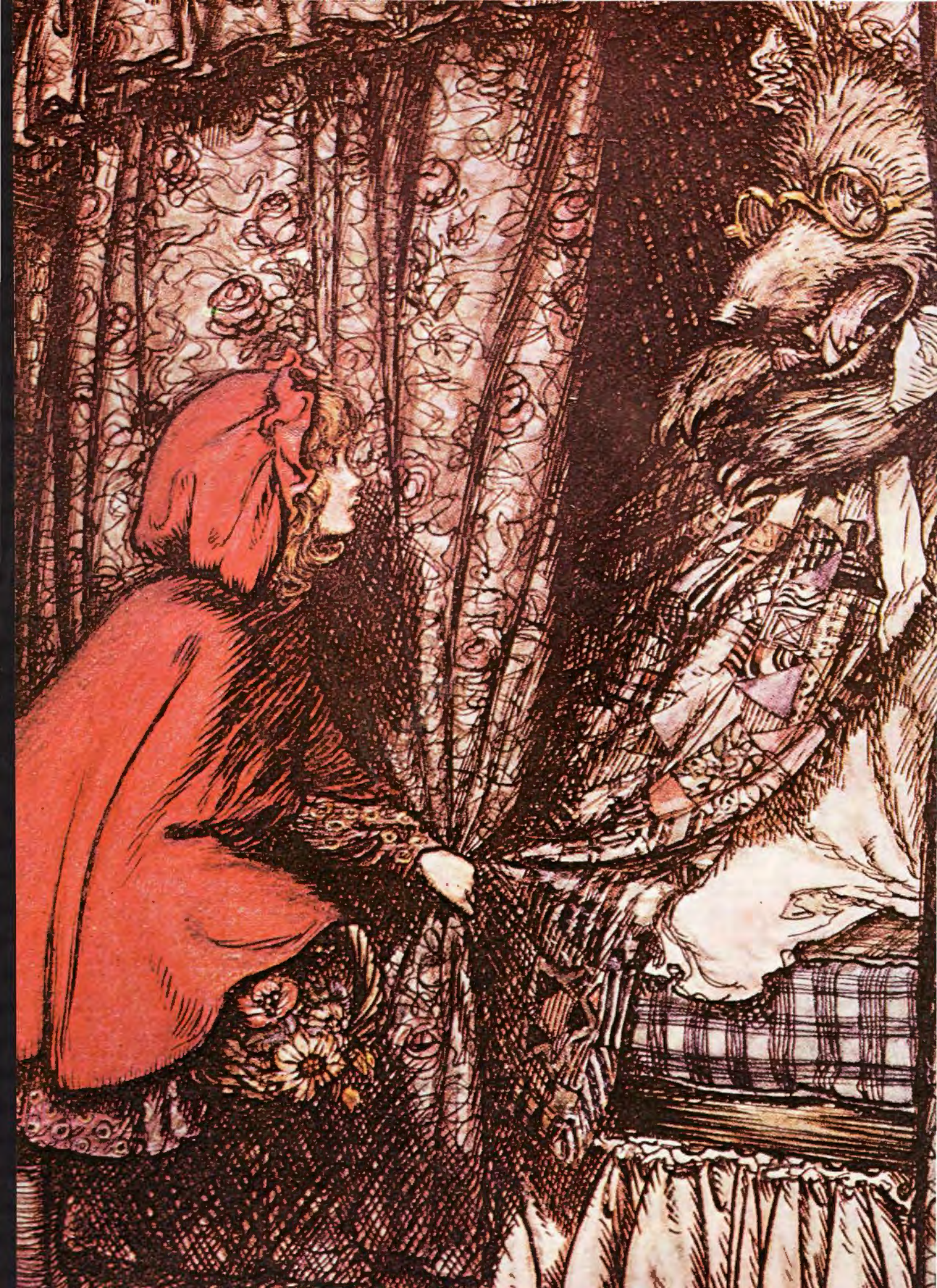
Here we have the same motif as in the more primitive Cinderella story mentioned earlier, in which the slaughtered sheep becomes a tree. (The idea that a birth follows the swallowing of some object occurs in the beautiful Irish tale of Midir and Etain which was dramatized in modern times in *The Immortal Hour*; Etain was a fairy girl who was turned by a jealous rival into a gnat, after which a mortal queen swallowed her and she was born again as a mortal princess.) Usually in modern folktales it is a giant or a witch whose soul is kept in a hidden place for safety. Often it is in an egg, and the giant cannot be killed until the egg is broken on his forehead. Until quite modern times this was told, not as a story, but as a solemn piece of belief. In Sarah Hewett's *Nummits and Crummits* she tells of a witch in Somerset who believed that she could not die until a bucket of toads under her bed was destroyed. She had hidden her soul in one of the toads, and she lingered on in pain until a neighbour destroyed them.

Andrew Lang in *Custom and Myth* traced the plot of the Jason legend through various modern versions, Nicht Nought Nothing, The Battle of the Birds, The Master Maid, through Red Indian, Samoan and Finnish versions, and found many remarkable resemblances. The main plot is the same, that of a hero in the power of an evil magician, who sets him impossible tasks, which the hero performs through the magic of the magician's daughter, who has fallen in love with him. The two lovers take flight, pursued by the magician, and make good their escape by flinging behind them delaying objects. In the Jason myth, which is realistically treated, Medea murders and cuts up her little brother and throws the fragments into the sea, and his father is delayed by gathering the floating members to give them burial. In the fairy stories magic objects are thrown behind the lovers, which transform themselves into obstacles, a comb into a forest, and so on. In all the stories the daughter's impiety is somehow punished, generally by a magic forgetfulness on the lover's part. In the Jason legend there is a fatal quarrel between Jason and Medea; in the Theseus and Ariadne story, which is another version of the same plot, Ariadne is deserted by Theseus on the island of Naxos; in the later fairy tales the lovers come together in the end. The excavations at Cnossus show that there is some historical foundation to the legend of the labyrinth of Crete and the fight with the Minotaur; the fact that some historical basis can be found for the Theseus legend does not however mean that the story originally sprang from there. Quite a slight resemblance seems to have the power of attracting to it a pre-existent legend.

The question of the origin of folktales has exercised scholars ever since folklore became a recognized discipline. How did these stories come to be told in the first place,



'De Elephent squashed anudder one er de Crawfishes,' from the Uncle Remus stories by Joel Chandler Harris. These stories are based on African folktales carried to America by slaves and were probably also influenced by the Great Rabbit of Algonquin Indian mythology



and how is it that strikingly similar tales can be found all over the world? These two questions were hotly debated by the folklorists and scholars of the 19th century. The first great theory on the origin of folktales was put forward with great erudition by Max Müller. According to him nearly all folktales – even the homeliest – had their foundation in solar myths, Sanskrit names for sun, dawn and sky, forgotten and distorted by a 'disease of language'. He cut the ground from under his opponents' feet by maintaining that no one could argue about the origin of the Indo-Germanic tales without a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. Such ardent disciples as George Cox pushed his theories to extreme lengths. Another group of scholars, the 'anthropological school' next arose, which did not completely abandon the solar myths, but found the origin of many of the tales in primitive fertility rituals and animistic belief. Andrew Lang was a notable exponent of this school of thought, which originated with Sir Edward Tylor and continued in the works of Sir James Frazer.

A slightly different theory put forward by Jane Harrison and later supported by Lord Raglan is that the folktales developed as an explanation of half-forgotten ritual. In more modern times it has been pointed out that those tales which employ the symbolic archetypes of the unconscious mind have a greater survival value than others.

Transmission of Tales

When we come to the question of transmission, various theories have again been urged. It used often to be said that all our European folktales originated in India and were carried through Europe on the waves of Indo-Germanic invasion. It is certain that many of them are very old and that many resemble each other too closely to have arisen independently. It seems an unproved assumption, however, that no tales arose later, and this theory does not account for the similar tales to be found in Australia, Japan and among the American Indians.

Folktales, handed on from generation to generation of ordinary people, are now being systematically catalogued by students of folklore, and their origins, similarities and diffusion are being carefully investigated; illustration to 'Red Riding Hood', by Arthur Rackham

Where there is an urge to tell tales some originators will be found. It must be noticed too, that tales are often classed together because of general similarity of theme such as might arise out of the human situation independently. All stories about cruel stepmothers need not stem from an archetype Cinderella story; there are second wives all over the world, and jealousy is, unfortunately a common human emotion. Where a difficult situation is insoluble and a happy ending is needed the Supernatural Helper might be paradoxically described as the natural solution.

There are said to be only eleven basic plots in the world but when we come to an intricate succession of detailed happenings some tales are too close to each other for them to arise by any other means than borrowing. Here we can sometimes date the twin stories by the details they have in common. Where, for instance, we have a coach in two stories we may be sure that one derived from the other in the 17th century or later. There were carts and chariots before then, but not coaches.

It must be borne in mind that there are other methods of tale transmission as well as mass migration. One shipwrecked sailor if he stays long enough to learn the language can carry a tale from Ireland to Japan. Foreign wives must have had great influence in transmitting tales in their time. Gypsies and tinkers have taken the place of wandering bards; slaves carried the Brer Rabbit stories from Africa to America. There are endless ways in which tales can be transmitted, but they must find congenial soil before they can take root.

The modern emphasis on folktale problems is rather on assembling data than on shaping theories. There are two principal ways in which this research can be carried out. The first is by the classification of all known tales in their relevant types and the second is the production of monographs on particular tales and their variants. The two methods are complementary to each other.

The fullest method of classification, now used in all national archives, is that instituted by the Finnish scholar Antti Aarne and completed by Stith Thompson. According to this system, all recorded tales are divided into broad classes: animal tales, ordinary folktales, novelle, religious tales, and so on, and each recorded plot within these boundaries is given a number. Some tales, of course, escape the mesh and have to be separately listed, but these are mostly tales with a local or national diffusion, and not those that have qualified as international tale-types.

There is one great class of tale which is hardly represented in this type list and that is folk legend. The omission is intentional; there is a broad distinction between folk narratives and folk legends. The former are folk fiction, not supposed to be factual, whereas legends were believed by the people who told them to have actually happened. Sometimes very similar tales are narratives and legends respectively. An example is the Jason legend, which has almost the same plot as undoubted fairy tales, like The Battle of the Birds, but was told of a hero supposed to have an historical existence. Some work has been done on the legends, but the lists of migratory legend types mostly relate to particular areas. Much work remains to be done here. A monumental work invaluable in studying both narratives and legends is Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. A motif is the separate strand of a tale, a perfect folktale is made up of a collection of motifs, though some anecdotes consist of only one motif.

Much progress has been made. New techniques of collecting have been worked out, the history, background and characters of tale-tellers is now studied, and each teller's variations on a story to suit different audiences. Nearly every country has established archives of folktales, and these are rapidly becoming crammed with tales accurately reported and carefully documented. The time will soon come when the emphasis can shift from collection and cataloguing, and we can set to work again on the problems of origin and diffusion.

(See also CINDERELLA.)

K. M. BRIGGS

FURTHER READING: E. Baughman, *Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America* (Mouton, The Hague, 1966); K. Briggs, *Dictionary of British Folktales* (Routledge, London, 1970); R. D. Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969); Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (2nd rev. ed. AMS Press); Stith Thompson, *The Folk-Tale* (University of California Press, 1977).

John Webb

Font

Receptacle for the water used in baptism in Christian churches; frequently eight-sided because eight is the number of rebirth, of making a fresh start: many Christian baptisteries, originally built for mass-baptisms, were octagonal for the same reason.

See EIGHT.

FOOD & DRINK

When Sir Charles McCarthy was killed by the Ashanti in 1824, the chiefs devoured his heart, and his bones were kept as national fetishes

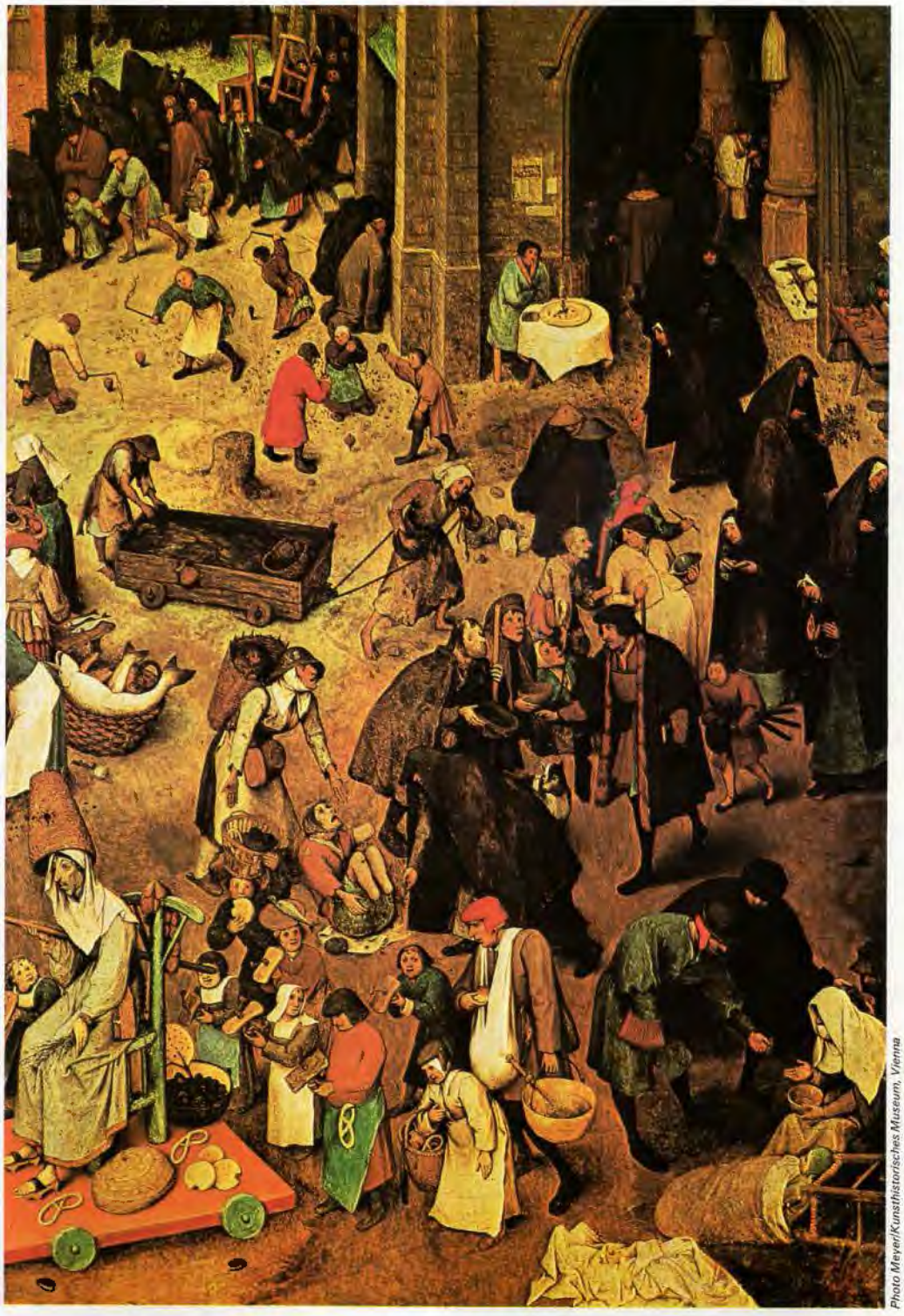


Photo Meyer/Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

The idea that to eat a person is to obtain his characteristics is contained in the cannibalistic rituals of primitive tribes and the symbolic consuming of the god in both pagan and Christian religions

SINCE THE DEEPEST NEEDS of man's nature are reflected in religion, myth, magic and superstition, it is hardly surprising that beliefs, ceremonies and prohibitions relating to food and drink should be found in all of them.

The idea expressed in the saying 'Man is what he eats' is basic in many primitive societies: men are thought to acquire the characteristics of the animals (or human beings, or gods) that they consume. Indians in Ecuador eat birds, monkeys and game rather than the flesh of heavier animals because they believe that such a diet will make them more agile. Some East African tribesmen used to eat the hearts of lions in order to acquire the courage of lions and avoided hares' hearts lest they should become as timid as hares. In different parts of the world, however, the attributes of the same animal may be variously assessed: in Borneo, for instance, the young warriors avoided venison because the deer was thought of as an animal that is easily scared; but North American Indians preferred to emphasize the deer's speed and sagacity. In *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer records that 'a Chinaman in Seoul bought and ate a whole tiger to make himself brave and fierce', and that 'a North American Indian thought that brandy must be a decoction of hearts and tongues, "because," said he, "after drinking it I fear nothing and I talk wonderfully."'

So much for the mythical virtues derived from eating animals, of which many more instances could be given. But the same principle has been widely extended to the eating of human flesh – most often the heart and liver of a conquered victim. Sometimes

Breughel's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*: Carnival was traditionally the period preceding Lent, taken up with feasting and revelry, in anticipation of the Lenten fast. Here King Carnival, astride a barrel and brandishing an impaled pig's head, confronts Lent, a wretched old woman holding out a wooden shovel with two herrings, the symbol of meagre fare

Left Goya's painting of the Roman god Saturn devouring his son: Saturn was identified with the Greek god Cronus who reigned in heaven until deposed by his son Zeus. He devoured his own children because one of them was fated to overthrow him, but Zeus escaped with the help of his mother Rhea *Right* Central to the action of the Christian Mass is the taking of the consecrated bread and wine; Christians disagree about whether this ceremony is symbolic or whether it is a literal 'eating of the god', the consumption of Christ's body and blood *Far right* Cannibalism is often based on the belief that by eating a person you acquire his characteristics

when a particularly gallant enemy was killed in battle, parts of his body were cut off and burned to ashes: the ashes were mixed into a kind of paste, and this was preserved until it was time for the tribal initiation rites, when it was solemnly distributed to the youths who were being initiated into full membership. In 1824, when Sir Charles McCarthy was killed by the Ashantis, the chiefs devoured his heart, and his bones were kept as national fetishes. Even today cannibalism is sometimes practised ceremonially, either to inherit the dead man's virtues or with the purpose of ensuring future food supplies. One person is responsible for this vital task – the king or chief of the tribe or a specially hallowed rainmaker. If there is a drought, and consequently a poor harvest, the unsuccessful rainmaker is likely to be killed; parts of his body are eaten ritually, the rest scattered over the fields in the hope that these may be thus fertilized. Until fairly recently a rain-making priest in the mountains of Ethiopia would be stoned to death if the harvest failed – and his nearest relatives had to cast the first stones at him.

The Witchety Grub

Imitative sympathetic magic is involved also in attempts to maintain the supply of food. Where fish is a main article of diet, a model of a fish may be thrown into the water and prayers chanted; or a wizard will mime the movements of a swimming fish. As recently as the late 19th century, in the Scottish Highlands, when boys went fishing without success, they would make as if to throw one of their party overboard and haul him in like a fish: it is recorded that the charade sometimes worked.

The most famous and the most elaborate example of this imitative magic is probably that formerly found among the Asunta, in the barren lands of Central Australia, where the tribes are divided into totem clans, a totem usually being an edible animal. Some of the tribesmen eat an insect called the witchety grub; so there is a clan whose totem is this grub. In order to ensure the increase of this insect for the use of the community, the men would sit inside a structure of branches shaped roughly like its chrysalis; they then shuffled out, squatting, and sang of the grub's emergence from the chrysalis. Comparable pantomimes were intended to

Giraudon

Mary Evans Picture Library

safeguard the supply of emus and white cockatoos.

A more macabre method of ensuring a good crop was used by the Lange tribe in Uganda at a festival held every five years. On this occasion there would be a raid on a neighbouring tribe, the Kumam; a tribesman and his dog were killed and their genital organs cut off. The scrotum of the man and that of the dog were stuffed with millet seed, and a rain dance was performed, and the millet shared out. The men took this specially treated millet home and mixed it with the ordinary seed before sowing. The results were said to be excellent. Such practices, horrifying as they seem today – not least to the educated Africans of Uganda – were truly a part of religion, in its magical aspect; magic seeking to provide, at whatever cost in human suffering, for the most basic human requirements.

Give Us Our Daily Bread

As civilizations advanced, less crude methods of achieving this end were evolved; but every civilization at whatever stage of development, has celebrated with special observances the seasons of sowing and harvest, and in these observances may always be traced vestiges of the same reliance on supernatural aid. Ancient Romans and Greeks, Jews and the various branches of the Christian Church – all have had their harvest festivals. In England, although the old festival of Lammas on 1 August was marked by the offering to God of a loaf made from the new wheat (the word Lammas is a corruption of loaf-mass), the Harvest Festival as it is now observed in the Church of England is a re-introduction from around the 1840s. With its piles of fruit and gigantic marrows, it is a function almost entirely pagan in feeling, with a thin top-dressing of orthodox Anglicanism. Equally pagan, but no less religious in origin, is the custom, still observed in Essex, Suffolk, and elsewhere, of weaving ornate 'corn dollies' from the last sheaf of corn cut on the last day of harvest. It was once believed that the spirit of the corn dwelled in them and that they must be kept safely until the next spring to ensure continuity. The Church is officially 'as by law established' in England and one large-scale farmer is reported annually to invite the rector of his parish to bless his crops, paying him £50 for doing so, and charging this as a necessary expense against income-tax – with a note to the Inspector of Taxes: 'I defy you to assert publicly that this does not improve the property.'

Among Christians, as among believers in other faiths, certain important occasions in life are observed not only by religious ceremonies but also by secular feasts; christenings, weddings and funerals are marked by the serving of special food and drink. In everyday life, believers are admonished to show thankfulness for their food: the prayer most frequently recited by Christians of every allegiance is the Lord's Prayer – a central petition in which is 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The custom of saying grace was once common among the middle and upper classes in Britain although nowadays it is mainly observed at public banquets and institutions. This constant reiteration of Christian concern for material goods and needs has parallels in other religions also – even among those great religions of the East which repudiate the flesh and bodily desire and aspire to pure spirituality. Some worshippers of Krishna, for instance, make an offering at his shrine – a plate full of food – before starting a meal. They believe that then the food they are eating has been blessed (and even, mysteriously, consumed) by Krishna, and that meditating on him while they eat will increase their resources of spiritual energy. (The anthropologist Malinowski held that the Trobriand Islanders did not understand the association between food and the maintenance of bodily strength: they ate simply because they wanted to, out of greed, or because it was the custom.)

Dangerous Food

At least as important as the positive aspects of sympathetic magic in the feeding habits of human beings are the negative aspects – the thou-shalt-nots of myth and magic which can conveniently be summed up in the word taboo. Positive magic means doing something to produce a desired result: negative magic means avoiding an unpleasant result by *not* doing something.

Even taboo, however, is not wholly a negative concept. It embraces two meanings that may seem to be opposite. A taboo person or object is untouchable, either because, being a tribal chief, a totem animal

Photo Chris Mackie

The person who touches a taboo object or eats taboo food becomes taboo himself, and if he survives, has to undergo lengthy penances and purifications

or god, he or it is too potent and sacred to be touched by lesser persons, or because, like a pregnant woman (in many primitive cultures) or the caste of untouchables in India, the person or thing is considered too unclean to be touched. In the first case, the profane contact will bring a terrible retribution on the toucher: he has been guilty of presumption, since in the words of Freud 'to touch is the beginning of every act of possession, of every attempt to make use of a person or thing.' Even an accidental offender may be so overwhelmed by guilt that he will not recover from his shame. The case is recorded of a healthy young Maori who happened to see the remains of a meal by the roadside and ate it without knowing that the food had been that of a high-ranking chief. As soon as he was told this, 'he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp.' He died at sundown.

In the second case – taboo meaning unclean – the infection is equally transmitted by touch. The person who touches a taboo object or eats taboo food becomes taboo himself, and, if he survives, has to undergo lengthy penances and purifications. The common factor between these two concepts is that, whether the person or thing is too holy or too unclean to touch, to touch him or it is dangerous. According to W. Wundt, in *Voelkerpsychologie*, the distinction between the two meanings did not exist in the earliest stages of taboo: there was simply a demonic power within the person or object that punished the toucher by bewitching him.

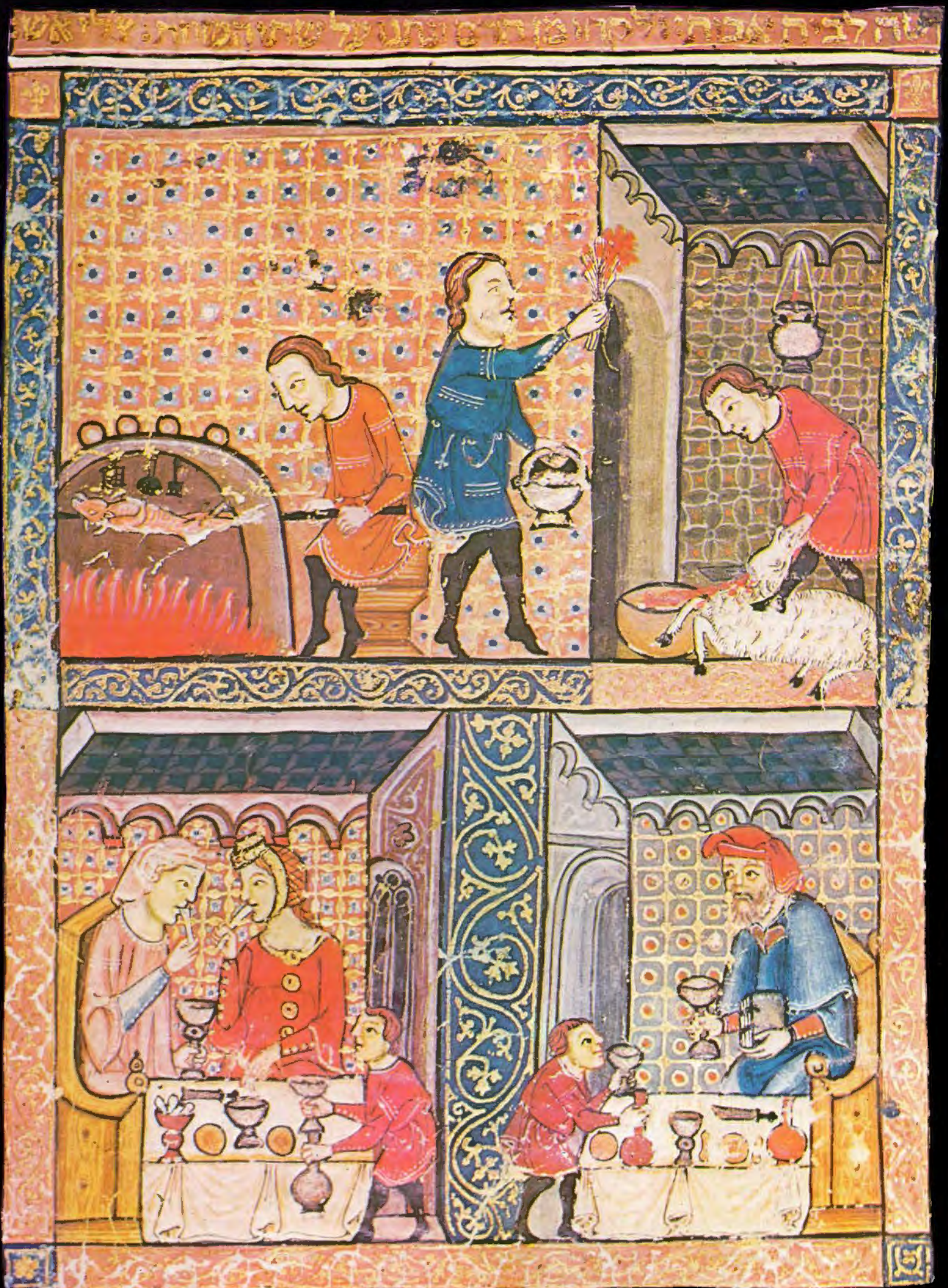
Above **Sugar skulls eaten by Mexicans on All Souls' Day when Catholics pray for the souls suffering in purgatory** ***Right*** **The Jewish observance of Passover, from the John Rylands Haggadah. The Passover meal consisted of a sacrificial lamb eaten in thanksgiving to God, benedictions, readings from the Bible over cups of wine, and the eating of unleavened bread**

The most obvious example of food taboo that is still widely observed is, perhaps, the dietary system of Orthodox Jewry. This is based on the Mosaic law as originally recorded in certain texts in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The prohibition: 'You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk', occurs first in

Eve's Dinner Party

But I will haste and from each bough and brake,
Each Plant and juiciest Gourd will pluck such
choice
To entertain our Angel guest, as he
Beholding shall confess that here on Earth
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heav'n.
So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes, not well joined . . . fruit of all kinds,
in coat,
Rough or smooth rin'd, or bearded husk, or shell
She gathers, Tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unsparing hand; for drink the Grape
She crushes, inoffensive must, and meathes
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams . . .
A while discourse they hold;
No fear lest Dinner cool; when thus began
Our Author. Heav'nly stranger, please to taste
These bounties which our Nourisher, from whom
All perfect good unmeasured out, descends,
To us for food and for delight hath caus'd
The Earth to yield . . .
So down they sat,
And to their viands fell, nor seemingly
The Angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of Theologians, but with keen dispatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate; what redounds, transpires
Through Spirits with ease; nor wonder; if by
fire
Of sooty coal th' Empiric Alchimist
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn
Metals of drossiest Ore to perfect Gold
As from the Mine. Meanwhile at Table *Eve*
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
With pleasant liquors crowned . . .

John Milton *Paradise Lost*



Exodus 23.19. Like all these Jewish dietary rules, this has been interpreted and elaborated by Rabbinical scholars: it is still taken to mean, in practice, that milk may not be drunk, or butter eaten or used in cooking, at a meal at which meat is eaten; and strictly *kosher* restaurants would refuse to serve a glass of milk if it were ordered at such a meal. More specific detail about permitted and forbidden foods is given in Leviticus, chapter 11 and Deuteronomy, chapter 14. The orthodox are allowed to eat beasts which are cloven-hoofed *and* cud-chewing, such as the ox, sheep and goat, but not to eat beasts which are cloven-hoofed but not cud-chewing – the swine – or cud-chewing but not cloven-hoofed – the camel, coney and hare. Finny and scaled fish may be eaten, but not shellfish. Eagle, raven, owl and many other birds are forbidden, but 'clean fowls' are permitted. Winged insects that 'go upon all fours' are forbidden, except for 'those which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth'; the locust and the cricket however are allowed.

Kosher (that is 'fit' or 'proper') meat is not only the flesh of one of the permitted categories of animals: it must have been killed by approved methods, which involve draining all the blood from the body. No animal which has died naturally may be eaten. Indeed – a clear parallel with the taboo customs of other cultures – anyone who merely touches or carries the carcase of such an animal 'shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the even.'

These dietary laws were instituted, according to Jewish authorities, 'for reasons of hygiene and the avoidance of idolatry.' Many non-Jews also regard them as sensible safeguards in a hot climate. This is so; but there is clearly no hygienic need for their continued observance in cool climates, and with modern refrigeration. This survival is valued by Orthodox Jews as a symbol and reminder of the earliest traditions of their race and of their special calling as Yahweh's chosen people. Non-Jewish anthropologists would see it rather (examining it objectively, and without any trace of anti-semitism), as an example of the tenacious hold on the human consciousness and practice of primeval taboos even when they have long ceased to have any practical relevance.

Sir James Frazer, analysing the Jewish taboo on the pig, remarks that (in pre-Christian centuries) 'the attitude of the Jews to the pig was ambiguous'. He goes on to say: 'The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them. On the one hand they might not eat swine; but on the other hand they might not kill them. And if the former rule speaks for the uncleanness, the latter speaks still more strongly for the sanctity of the animal . . . we must conclude that, originally at least, the pig was revered rather than abhorred by the Israelites. We are confirmed in this opinion by observing that, down to the time of Isaiah, some of the Jews used to meet secretly in gardens and eat the flesh of swine and mice as a religious rite . . . And in general it may perhaps be said that all so-called unclean animals were originally sacred; the reason for not eating them was that they were divine.'

Forbidden Flesh

There are striking similarities between the dietary laws of Judaism and those of another great religion that has grown and spread in Asia, Africa and elsewhere – Islam. The Koran forbids 'only that which dieth of itself, and blood, and swine's flesh.' The traditions and sayings of Mohammed supplement these injuctions: animals are unlawful food unless slaughtered by a method similar to that of the Jews, also if slaughtered by an idolater or an apostate from Islam.

Food can become unclean for a Moslem by contact with unclean persons or things. It is recorded that one extremely strict Moslem was away from home and his wife was busy, when their baby began to cry: to quieten him, a young woman who was visiting gave her breast to the baby. The father came in, snatched the baby from her, and held it upside down to drain out any of her milk, for fear it might be tainted if her observance of the dietary laws were less scrupulous than his own.

In general, however, the strictest observance of such taboos in Islam and Judaism, as in other religions, is nowadays tempered in practice with common sense. Wine is forbidden in the Koran, but most non-Moslems who have Moslem friends have known some of them to indulge, at least in private, in a glass of wine or beer. A Moslem prominent in public life will not do this in a public place; and few of these are so fortunate as a former Aga Khan – hereditary spiritual leader of the Ismaili community – who was able to drink as much champagne as he liked, since by miraculous dispensation it turned to water as it passed his lips. Even a comparatively lax Moslem, however, while sharing a bottle of wine at dinner, will scrutinize most carefully any stew or soup set before him, to satisfy himself that it contains no fragment of flesh of the forbidden pig.

Above **The stages of initiation into the cult of Dionysus are shown in this fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii: Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and intoxication, was the object of frenzied devotion and secret ritual** ***Opposite left*** **Part of a procession of sacred vessel-bearers from the Palace at Cnossus, Crete** ***Right*** **The Egyptians were concerned that the deceased should have an adequate supply of food and drink in the after life, lest they be forced to feed on their own excrement: mural of food-bearers from the Tomb of Nakht**

Whether Frazer's theory of the origin of the dietary taboos of Judaism and Islam applies to the domestic animals which are kept as pets in many countries, especially in Europe and America, is a matter for speculation. Cats, which were venerated in ancient Egypt, receive almost comparable attention from their owners in these Western countries, and dogs probably receive even more. These are modern versions of totemism: both animals are taboo as food, and so are eaten only at times of extreme necessity, as during the siege of Paris in 1870 or the siege of Madrid in 1936.

Eating the God

Certain attitudes, it seems, are common to both 'savage' and 'civilized' man, although in the more advanced societies a refined and often impressive symbolic ceremonial replaces the crude brutalities of primitive ritual. The devout Christian invokes Christ as the 'Lamb of God' and shares in a sacred meal; and this meal, however elevated the thoughts and emotions of those partaking of it, has something in common with the primitive tribal practices of which Frazer writes in the section of the *Golden Bough* entitled 'Eating the God'.

Indeed Catholics insist that the central action of the Mass – the sacrament of Christ's body and blood – is not merely a 'spiritual' or memorial rite, and that the

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Michael Holford

consecration by a priest of the elements of bread and wine brings about such a change in them that Christ himself is *really* present on the altar. So, after the consecration of the bread and the wine, those who approach the altar or pass before it bow the knee in homage to the divine presence; and when they share in the Communion – consuming token portions of the consecrated elements – they will thereby be strengthened and purified. No Catholic will agree with the scepticism of the Roman orator Cicero, who sneered at the sacraments of the corn god and the wine god. 'When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus, we use a common figure of speech; but do you imagine that anybody is so insane as to believe that the thing he feeds on is a god?'

Cicero anticipated the unbelief of modern humanism; but the age-long instinctive consensus of mankind is against him. When the Christian missionaries arrived in Mexico and in India, they found that the ancient local religions had their rites of transubstantiation: in Mexico, the pagan priests turned bread into the true body of their god; in India the Brahmins taught that the sacrificial rice-cakes were changed by the priests into actual human flesh.

But why is there this almost universal belief in the sacramental principle that real values can be conveyed through material instruments and, in particular, that this principle reaches its highest expression in a meal at which a divine entity – a totem animal, a god or a substitute for a god – is solemnly eaten by the worshippers?

There could be many explanations of the phenomenon. Freud followed Darwin in thinking that the first society – like that of the higher apes – was a 'primal horde' led by a violent chief or father, jealously possessing all the women and eventually killed by the strongest of the younger males. Later came the totemic clan, in which 'the totem animal is really a substitute for the father'; the totem animal was taboo – but on special occasions its killing and eating strengthened the clan's sense of kinship with it. (See also numerous articles, including BREAD; CORN; HARVEST; MASS; TABOO.)

TOM DRIBERG

The privileged position of the fool, the clown and the jester allows him a wide latitude for satirical comment on sacred institutions. By provoking laughter and bringing suppressed anxieties to the surface, he often plays a therapeutic role

FOOL

SHREWD MEN of all times and places have pretended folly ur madness as licence for social satire: the fool of ritual, court and stage, whatever his type, is no fool. Some types of fools have been jesters; others have impersonated fearsome supernaturals. The jesters were sometimes unfortunates who provoked laughter by their infirmities as cripples, idiots or dwarfs, but more usually they excelled in agility and intelligence. The ancient Egyptians for instance imported dwarfs from Central Africa – pygmies who were acrobats and clowns – and the Aztec ruler, Montezuma, engaged acrobatic clowns to amuse his court.

The heyday of the medieval fool came after the Crusades. Sometimes a superior jester was permanently attached to a court, like John Heywood in the retinue of Henry VIII and Kunz von der Rosen in the cortège of Maximilian I of Austria. Sometimes he wandered about, like Till Eulenspiegel of Germany, Italy's Bertoldo, Turkey's Nasa Eddin, and India's Muladeva, all famous wits of history and legend.

In the Middle Ages buffoons would travel on foot or occasionally in style with a patron's following. Clever buffoons could dance, turn cartwheels, juggle, sing and compose satirical verses. Some had a company to enact the burlesques. The majority were men, but an occasional female acrobat impersonated Salome, or groups of girls accompanied gleemen, as dance partners for trained bears.

The fools of the Renaissance (thought to be descendants of the Roman mime) provided entertainment during banquet interludes and during intermissions in the vast spectacles of the 17th century English, French and Italian courts. In Elizabethan masques they played roles as professional dancers. In elegant mythological pageants and in tragic dramas they provided interludes of relaxation comparable to the comic relief in Shakespeare's tragedies. After the decline of European courts, they moved to the professional stage, as characters in the *commedia dell' arte* and later became the tragi-comic figures of ballet productions – not only Harlequin but also Punchinello, Scaramouche and Pierrot.

The Fool in Folk Drama

A ritual fool plays a symbolic role in a number of British folk plays associated with Morris dances, sword dancers and mummers. Whether he wears tatters or motley, a fool's many coloured dress, the fool climaxes his clowneries in a symbolic death and resurrection.

In Christmastide dramas there emerge the central figure of the Fool or Medicine-Man, and his group of assistants who, disguised with black faces, form a secret society, of which he himself is the head. His 'act' is to suffer death in order that the community shall survive. His 'sons' (the members of the secret society) have to kill the head of the house, their 'father'. While he acts this sacrifice he visits the underworld, taking with him all the accumulated evils, burdens and difficulties of the past year. When his task is done he returns a revived leader, to resume his earthly responsibilities fortified for a new year.

An example of an English folk play in which the Fool plays a chief part was recorded at the end of the 18th century in the village of Revesby in Lincolnshire. The Fool has six sons, played by sword dancers, who plan to kill him. The Fool plays for time but eventually submits to the inevitable, is slain and falls dead – only to spring up again, claiming that he still has another life. The complicated sword dance pattern leading up to his death is repeated and the Fool is killed a second time. The sons lament the father whom they have killed, who once again revives and recounts his experiences out of the world. The Fool and his eldest son then vie for possession of the Lady (a man-woman); the Fool wins her and the performance ends with the actors joining in a final dance.

At times the Fool is associated with animal impersonations. He may wear a fur cap, a tail, and a bladder. He is dressed in skins, as leader of a company pulling a decorated Fool Plough on Plough Monday, usually the Monday after Epiphany, before ploughing begins.

In other European festivals the Fool skips about in human guise, with groups resembling Morris dancers, such as the Basque *Mascarades*, and the *Schäfflertanz* of Munich. Or he leads a company of uncouth dancers in animal masks, the *Bugios* (monkeys) of the Portuguese *Mouriscada*. On St John's Day at Sobrado in Brazil the Fool-Leader, wearing church vestments, rides into town backwards on a pony, sowing flax. He harrows, then ploughs with an upside-down yoke. During the battle between the Bugios and an orderly array of Mouriscos he is captured, but the Bugios recapture him with the aid of a dragon, and then the demons join their conquerers in saintly dance.

In the Austrian Alps, at Midwinter, shaggy creatures leap to promote the year's growth of crops – the *Schemen* of Imst, the *Huttlerläufer* and the *Zottler* of the Tyrol and the *Perchten* of Salzburg. They enact a battle with a troupe of victors in high, flowered hats. These masqueraders cavorted in medieval carnivals. Before that, they celebrated pagan vegetation rites, the Perchten as impersonations of the ghosts in the deity Berchta's train.

A cloven-hoofed, underworld deity became the devil of medieval lore, miracle play, and carnival, and he still capers and

Cartoon of the Duke of Wellington as the Lord of Misrule, by William Heathy: in the Middle Ages the Lord of Misrule held court each year for a brief period and conducted the Christmas festivities

John Webb

clowns in Iberia and Catholic Latin America. He is sooty, red or green, has horns and a harpoon tail, and wields a pitch fork. He is ushered in by fireworks, smoke and a sulphurous stench. Groups of devils dance elaborate quadrilles in Catalan carnivals.

Mexican Demon-Clowns

In Mexican carnivals the devils may be in the company of a skeleton and comics masked as native tigers, turkeys or goats and bulls. During the Yaqui Indian Easter fiesta in the Sonora region, three men in black, bearded masks leer and caper. The *Pascolas* (old men of the fiesta) are ritual hosts; they use exorcism gestures, dance without masks and amuse the crowd with obscene raillery.

During the same Easter fiesta, the Chapayekas, members of a votive clown society, impersonate demons and enact parodies, wearing long-nosed, long-eared, horned, hairy masks of goatskin. During Good Friday processions they stamp, wriggle their hips, rattle their belts of deer and goat hooves and clatter wooden staves. On Easter Sunday they burn their paraphernalia, destroying the malignant powers.

The Chapayekas appear related to clown societies of tribes north of the border – thus, in New Mexico, the *chapio* of Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, the *tsaviyo* of San Juan, the *k'apio* of Taos.

The tsaviyo of Pueblo Indians are also called *abuelos* – grandfathers – when they perform with the *Matachines*, relatives of the Morris men. With long whips they tease a Torro, a boy wearing the hide and hair of a bull, kill, quarter and revive him. Their attire varies from ordinary clothes to cowboy outfits, from rubber masks to hide masks recalling the Chapayekas.

Some tsaviyo are eerie rather than funny. On the eve of December 21 the white tsaviyo appears from the hill east of San Juan. He belongs to the winter moiety, the group of clans in charge of winter ceremonies for animals. He wears white hide trousers and a white kilt, moccasins, and hide mask. He has a fox fur collar, mica earrings, ear flaps, eye slits, and frosted hair. On December 22 the black tsaviyo of the summer moiety, the group whose responsibility it is to manage the crops, appears in a natural-coloured hide costume, yellow moccasins, and a black mask similar to the white tsaviyo's. Both have come from Truchas Peak, in the mountains, hence the frosting. They whisper in Spanish falsetto.

On December 23, just before dusk, both come out to make the people sweep the plazas. Dance officials go to the head of the town, below the cemetery, to meet the tsaviyo. 'Whitie' jumps and walks counterclockwise through the north plaza, around to the winter chief's house. He strikes his whip on the *nansipupinge*, a sacred stone pile symbolic of the earth centre, and the town's ceremonial centre, before entering the house. The summer 'blackie' goes clockwise by way of the south plaza to the summer chief's house west of the house block, and he strikes the ground with his whip. They enter the house of each chief and are welcomed to the town, before retiring to the sanctuary. Their ritual directions are significant, counterclockwise around the north for the winter, and clockwise around the south for the summer.

Other ritual clowns such as the *Koshare* of the Keresan tribe, and the *kosa* of the Tewa weave among dancers or act parodies. They represent spirits of the ancestors and arrive from the east where the dead are reborn. These clowns wear the ghost markings, black and white stripes on their bodies, white or black rings about the eyes and mouth, and a black, ragged apron. Traditionally, their poked head-dress was used in mankind's emergence from the earth, to bore a hole for exit. During rain and corn dances they bounce and gesticulate on the side lines. They are beyond censorship and may enact satire of sacred institutions, of the Catholic Mass, of tourists. Sometimes they discipline initiates or frighten spectators. Yet their first purpose is to amuse the people, as their name, 'the delight makers', indicates.

Other tribal comics enact preposterous roles. In western New Mexico, the mud-covered *Koyemshi* of the Zuni eat filth and engage in obscene interludes between masked dancers. They symbolize the spirits of the dead. In Arizona the Hopi god of death, war, fire and night, Masauwu, appears in a huge mask and performs all natural actions in reverse.

Maskers of the Great Plains

The Crow Indians of the Northern Plains have a society of fools who use mud for body paint and smear their cloth masks with charcoal. They ridicule whatever they wish, they fall down, pretend to die laughing and engage in obscene behaviour. In the 'hot' dance of the Dakota tribe, the *heyoka* immerse their arms in hot water and complain that it is cold. In breechclouts and white paint, they represent the god Haoka, stretching to giant height or crouching to dwarf size. The *windigokan* of the adjacent Bungi act foolishly in obedience to a dream of the thunder god. They burlesque warriors during ceremonies, wearing long-nosed sackcloth masks; they used to handle coals or hot water.

In the east, humpbacked *haduhi* of the Iroquois effect cures by means of ashes and grotesque dancing. They amuse and terrify the spectators in their big ceremonies at Midwinter. At the Onondaga ceremonies near Syracuse, New York, these False Faces sometimes wear their traditional black or red masks of basswood. Sometimes they put on ridiculous costumes and stone masks, to parody their own sacred rites for the bear or eagle spirits. In female garb one man burlesques the sacred food-spirit dance of the women.

To the south, in North Carolina, the Cherokee 'boogers' enact more ribald and caustic Midwinter satire. Each man selects a character for ridicule and an appropriate mask of wood or gourd, to represent a foreigner – German, Spaniard, Southerner – or growling bear. Some carry an imitation phallus under a quilt or sheet and they expose it to women and girls. Frank Speck in *Cherokee Dance and Drama*, emphasizes their boisterousness: 'The maskers are systematically malignant. On entering, some

Jesters, sometimes dwarfs or cripples, but more usually clever men who could dance, sing and compose satirical verses, held privileged positions at medieval courts: 15th century MS from the British Museum

of them act mad, fall on the floor, hit at the spectators, push the men spectators as though to get at their wives and daughters, and chase the girls toward the crowded walls'. During a round dance they engage in erotic display. In the course of their solo acts they give vent to suppressed aversions toward white men, as living beings or ghosts. They used to have magic powers for cure through their association with ghosts.

Release Through Laughter

Satire, social or personal, appears as a universal function of the fool, from the European court jester to the Cherokee booger. In other parts of the world laughter permits and releases pent-up indignation. The pygmies parody rites imposed by Negro tribes. The African Azande poke fun at individual foibles. Korean comics imitate a headman and clerk in ragged modern suits. Similarly, in the Mexican carnivals, fools imitate city people and tourists; buffoons in ragged suits harass photographers.

Taboos and repressions find a vicarious outlet in the phallic play of fools. Outside Europe the sex play may be as overt as the lewdness of the ancient satyrs. Papuan clowns make passes at women spectators; clowns of the Crow Indians enact a form of copulation between a male actor and a man dressed as a woman.

The chthonic or underworld function is related to the reverse behaviour, the backwards actions and speech, the progression contrary to the customary circuit, as in death rites. It is also expressed in elements of costuming; black and white stripes, black and white diamond design, or face whitening (the mark of the modern circus clown and of the mime, Marcel Marceau); or blackening with soot, at one time obligatory for all Morris dancers. The soot is especially potent, because of its derivation from purificatory fire.

Plant potency is symbolized in the foliage of England's Leafy Fool, the Green Man (see GREEN). Animal potency remains in

Right **The Fool, the first of the major trump cards from a French Tarot pack: a symbol of holy madness, he stands for the Nothing which contains the potential existence of all things** ***Far right*** **Fools can be sad as well as funny: a melancholy circus clown**

horned masks and shaggy or tattered clothes. The court jester's outfit with the horned fool's cap is similarly derived.

Suppressed fears of ghosts or other malignant spirits come to the surface in the grotesqueries of Europe's Dances of Death, the Koshare, and the African *Widah* spooks; in the demonic drolleries of the Bugios, the devil, and the Tibetan demons.

Often the demons also cure diseases, as in India, Ceylon and in the Iroquois False-Face ceremonies. But generally the fools are not frenzied shamans. Their therapy is mental rather than physical, and it is through their fantastic comedies that they bring anxieties to the surface. By inducing laughter they may avert any violent expressions of indignation and anxiety in their audience.

(See also DANCE; DANCE OF DEATH; FOLK-PLAYS.)

GERTRUDE KURATH

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FORCES

THE CLASSICAL GODS and goddesses ruled the life of men and of Nature and controlled certain, not always very clearly defined, spheres of influence or departments of life: Mars as the ruler of war, for example, or Mercury as the god of trade and commerce. The European magical tradition, which has its roots in pagan antiquity, also classifies the phenomena of the world in terms of the powers which control them, though these powers are no longer thought of as gods but as impersonal forces or currents of energy which are at work behind the surface appearance of things (see also CORRESPONDENCES).

In popular astrology the planets, which are named for Roman deities whose characteristics have powerfully influenced the astrological nature of each planet, cause events on earth and influence the personalities of men. They are traditionally the forces which cause events or, from a more modern point of view, their positions in the sky provide evidence of the way in which the governing forces of the universe are at work. Similarly, numerologists classify human characteristics and all the other phenomena of the world in terms of nine basic forces or 'vibrations' which correspond to the numbers from 1 to 9 (see ASTROLOGY; NUMEROLOGY).

Much modern occultism, influenced by cabalistic magic, is based on the idea of ten basic forces, the sefiroth of the Cabala's Tree of Life (see CABALA), which are linked with 'spheres' and numbers. The spheres come from the medieval picture of the universe, which was generally accepted until the 16th century and which saw the universe as a construction of concentric spheres, fitting one inside each other like the skins of an onion. The outermost sphere belongs to God, the next to the fixed stars, the next seven to the planets known in antiquity (the stars which move), and the innermost sphere to Earth. It is through these spheres that the soul must climb on its way back to God after earthly death, and through them too that the magician hopes to climb on his way to knowledge and power.

Although occultists no longer regard this picture as an accurate diagram of the construction of the heavens, they accept it as a secret and spiritual reality, as the pattern or design which exists behind all outward appearances. The sefiroth, planetary spheres and numbers correspond as follows:

Number	Sefirah	Sphere
1	Kether	God
2	Hokhmah	Fixed Stars
3	Binah	Saturn
4	Hesed	Jupiter
5	Geburah (or Din)	Mars
6	Tifereth	Sun
7	Netsah	Venus
8	Hod	Mercury
9	Yesod	Moon
10	Malkhuth	Earth

These correspondences, with their wealth of classical, cabalistic, astrological and numerological associations, provide the clues to the nature of the great driving forces of the universe, to the way in which the universe evolved, and to the ladder which leads from man to God.

Briefly, the *first* sphere is the force of God as First Cause, as Prime Mover, as the Unity behind all diversity, and the soul which reaches this sphere reaches God. It unites and reconciles the opposite qualities of the second and third spheres, which are respectively active and passive. The *second* sphere is the active principle in God and in the universe, the Father, the force which causes all action, change, growth, evolution. The *third* sphere is the passive principle, the Mother of all things, the force behind everything which is negative rather than positive, potential rather than actual, stable rather than changing. Hokhmah is what acts, Binah is what is acted upon. Binah is linked with Saturn, the planet of fate and time, the inevitable and eternal, and the energy of Saturn as ruler of death is the force which magicians attempt to tap in operations of death (see DAYS).

The next two spheres are those which govern evolving life and are again opposites. The *fourth* is the force which constructs and organizes, corresponding to Jupiter, seen as the benevolent ruler and organizer of gods and men: the *fifth*, Geburah, is the force which destroys and disorganizes. In the human body, for instance, Hesed is said to

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In popular astrology the planets, named after Roman deities and influenced by their characteristics, are traditionally the forces which cause events on earth and influence the personalities of men: 12th century English manuscript showing the planets

lie behind the building up of food into tissue, Geburah to lie behind the breaking down of tissue in the expenditure of energy. Geburah corresponds to Mars, the planet of violent destructive energy, inspirer of hatred, cruelty, havoc and war, and the force appealed to in magical operations of hatred and violence.

These two opposite forces of construction and destruction are reconciled and joined in the *sixth* sphere of Tifereth and the sun: the sun which nourishes animals and plants with the constructive energy of Hesed and which also withers them with the destroying force of Geburah. This is the sphere of the life-force, of vital energy, of the drive which impels all things to cling to survival.

The next three spheres again constitute two opposites and their reconciliation. The *seventh* is the force which lies behind the senses and passions, love and desire, instinctive drives, automatic and unthinking reactions. It is the sphere of the animal man as opposed to the civilized man, of the natural as against the contrived, of the full-blooded as against the inhibited, of impulse as against thought. The *eighth* sphere belongs to the force of intellect, reason, logic, considered reactions, ingenuity and of what are to magicians the highest abilities of the mind – inspiration, imagination, intuition. The two are balanced and united in the mysterious *ninth* sphere of the moon, the shadowy depths of the personality where each man's true self lies concealed, and of the magical power of the true self which springs from the combination of a man's highest mental faculties with his animal drives.

Finally, the *tenth* sphere of Malkhuth and Earth is 'the whole kingdom of God'. It unites and contains the forces of the whole Tree, as the number 10 contains those from 1 to 9, and also restates the number 1 (God) on a different plane.

FURTHER READING: Dion Fortune, *The Mystical Qabalah* (Weiser); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968).

A terrifying psychic experience led Dion Fortune to become a truly original writer on the dark and hidden aspects of the mind

DION FORTUNE

OCCULTIST, PSYCHOANALYST and novelist, Dion Fortune – whose real name was Violet Mary Firth – was born in 1891 and died in 1946. At a very early age she showed signs of extreme sensitivity to people and places and it soon became evident that she possessed strongly developed psychic faculties. Brought up in a Christian Science household, her marked independence of spirit and her penchant for prolonged day dreaming caused much anxiety. The power of imagination plays a great part in occultism, and in later years she learnt to make use of reverie, properly controlled and directed, in the kind of occultism she was to teach and practise.

When she was about 20 years old, Violet Firth suffered a traumatic experience which determined the course of her life. It occurred while she was working at an educational establishment. Her employer, the principal, was a domineering and unscrupulous woman of a particularly malevolent disposition, who had studied the techniques of yoga for many years in India. When Violet unwittingly antagonized her, she responded by attacking her with a form of yoga resembling hypnosis, perverting the process so as to produce destructive emanations. The attack left the girl shattered in mind and body. 'It was this experience which led me to take up the study of analytical psychology, and subsequently of occultism' she wrote in her most characteristic book, *Psychic Defence* (1930), a study of the abuses of occult power and the ways in which the victim can protect himself. Violet Firth first trained as a Freudian psychoanalyst and throughout her life retained a strong interest in psychology, publishing several books on the subject under her own name. 'As soon as I . . . watched the dissection of a mind under psychoanalysis,

Kenneth Grant

Helios Book Service

Right **and** ***Far right*** **Drawings by Steffi Grant of the ground and ceiling plans of the Vault of the Adepts of the Golden Dawn. Dion Fortune believed that her initiation into this occult society had healed her of the damaging effects of a 'psychic attack'** ***Below*** **The only known photograph of Dion Fortune**

I realized that there was very much more in the mind than was accounted for by the accepted psychological theories'; it was in order to understand these unexplained aspects that she originally took to occultism.

The terrifying contact with an undoubted practitioner of black magic was also the starting point of her later researches into ways and means of combating mental interference and domination by one person, or group, over another. She learnt how to diagnose and counteract the most insidious kinds of psychic attack; and soon developed and mastered the ability to travel in her astral body, to extrude her etheric double, to scry in the spirit vision, and similar practices of operative occultism (see ASTRAL BODY; DOUBLE; SCRYING). It was not until she was initiated into an esoteric society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, that she was fully healed from her encounter with evil forces. She claims that initiation sealed her damaged etheric body, which, since the time of her experience had been leaking energy like a broken vessel. In the Golden Dawn she applied herself systematically to the study and practice of magic, and emerged a fully fledged occultist. Her own group – The Fraternity of the Inner Light – was founded in the 1920s and is still in existence.

Under the assumed name Dion Fortune she wrote widely on the occult, her most important book being *The Mystical Qabalah* (1935); much of her material was related to Aleister Crowley's researches in the sphere of magical correspondences and symbolic affinities. Towards the end of her life these two adepts, both of whom were intent upon reviving the ancient mysteries, exchanged a number of letters (see CORRESPONDENCES; CROWLEY).

Like many occultists, Dion Fortune also used fiction as a vehicle for her ideas, well aware that she could disseminate truths otherwise incommunicable to uninitiated minds. Her novels are mainly concerned with the lives of ordinary people who, in the course of their experience, become so disillusioned through sorrow or suffering that their minds are forcibly turned inwards. This introversion taps the memories of previous incarnations; the individuals thus gain insight into the purpose of their present lives and are able to act accordingly.

Black Isis

Two novels, *The Sea Priestess* (1938) and *Moon Magic* (published posthumously in 1957) throw a great deal of light on her magical personality. In them she relates the history of a priestess of Isis who comes to restore paganism to a world that has lost touch with the elemental forces that make life truly dynamic. But it is not the Isis of simple unregenerate Nature, or primal emotional and sensual pleasure, but the

power of the Black Isis, the primordial and elemental essence of Woman in her power aspect. Mated to its complement in the male, stripped of the accretions of civilization by the realization of inherent divinity, this power is capable of effecting profound transformations in human consciousness.

Black Isis embodies the *sakti* (power) that destroys all that is inessential and obstructive to the soul's development. It is the power that liberates the spirit of man from the confines of limited experience. The basis of Fortune's practical work involves the bringing through into manifestation of this sakti, by the magically controlled interplay of sexual polarity. This is embodied in the priest, or consecrated male, and the specially chosen female. Together they enact the immemorial Rite and form a vortex in the ether, down which the tremendous energies of Black Isis rush into manifestation.

Dion Fortune believed that her work would form a nucleus enabling the ancient Temple mysteries to operate once more. She was, indeed, a priestess of the Western esoteric tradition, the ground plan of which is the Tree of Life which forms the subject of *The Mystical Qabalah*.
(See also GOLDEN DAWN.)

FURTHER READING: Dion Fortune, *Psychic Self Defence*; *Applied Magic*; *Sane Occultism* (Aquarian Press, London, 1967); *The Mystical Qabalah* (Weiser); fiction: *Moon Magic*; *The Sea Priestess* (Weiser, 1981); see also publications of the Society of the Inner Light.

Federico and Aldo Patellani

Fortune Telling

Analysing character or predicting the future, or usually both, by any of innumerable methods which are based on a denial of chance and on the belief that the universe has an underlying pattern, so that past and present events, however outwardly irrelevant or coincidental, contain clues to events in the future. See numerous articles, including ASTROLOGY; AUGURY; CARDS; DIVINATION; GEOMANCY; NUMEROLOGY; PALMISTRY; SCRYING.

FORTY

THE NUMBER FORTY has been sacred and mysterious to peoples as far apart in time and place as the ancient Babylonians and the modern Eskimo. In the British Isles, the superstition about St Swithin's day, the original meaning of the word quarantine, and proverbial sayings like 'Life begins at forty' are all survivals of ideas and beliefs prevalent in the ancient Near East, where the fundamental associations of the number forty were with weather, health and hygiene.

The Babylonians attached a very special significance to forty, and called it *kissatum*, meaning 'the excellent quality', which they understood as an expression of fullness, and the universe conceived as a totality. The number forty was sacred to Ea, the god of sweet waters, who was also the supremely intelligent god. Forty was the number of offerings to the gods at important festivals in Babylon, and at Nineveh the regular period for mourning and fasting was forty days.

Probably under the influence of Babylon, other ancient Semitic peoples regarded forty as a sacred number, and right down to modern times the Mandaeans, a religious sect living in the Shatt al 'Arab, have preserved rituals connected with forty which are specifically Babylonian in origin. Among the Hebrews the sacred numbers were at first twelve and forty.

After seven, forty is the most frequently mentioned sacred number in the Old and New Testaments, as it is also in the Talmud. The earliest association of the number forty was with days, and the association with years and finally with objects came later. In Genesis 7.12, the rain which causes the flood lasts forty days and forty nights, and in Exodus 34.28, this is the time Moses spends with God on Mount Sinai. In the New Testament, Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness at the time of his temptation. The children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, and it was the period for the desolation of Egypt. Applied to things, forty denotes a large or impressive number. Among many examples in the Bible could be quoted forty kine, the forty sockets of silver in the construction of the Tabernacle, forty camels' burden, forty shekels of silver, and

Giraudon

The Temptation of Christ: Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness, during which time he was tempted by the Devil

forty cubits long. The number forty from ancient times had a special importance in connection with pregnancy and childbirth. In Leviticus 12.1–4, the rule is laid down that a woman is unclean for forty days after giving birth to a male child, and during this period is not allowed to touch a hallowed thing or come into the sanctuary. This seems to be linked with the notion, prevalent among many ancient peoples, that human pregnancy lasted 280 days (seven times forty) and that forty-day phases were of particular importance in the development of embryos, young animals and even plants.

The Greeks developed the notion that the first forty days of a pregnancy were critical. According to Aristotle (384–322 BC) it was believed that the fortieth day was the day on which the male child was believed to stir in the womb for the first time; this was already an ancient belief in Aristotle's day. The followers of Pythagoras (6th century BC) had a well-developed theory about the forty-day phases of pregnancy, according to later authors. They celebrated the safe passing of the fortieth day, for which they had a special name, regarded the fifth forty-day period as the time during which the foetus began to move down, and the sixth, from the two-hundredth to the two-hundred-and-fortieth day, as the most critical.

The belief that women are unclean for forty days after childbirth is found in many parts of the world today, and was held by the Babylonians, the Israelites, and, as a 2nd century BC inscription from Lesbos shows, by some at least of the ancient Greeks. According to ancient Greek notions, the first forty days also marked a defined phase in the life of a new-born baby: Aristotle remarks that children do not smile or shed tears until they are forty days old.

From this particular connection with pregnancy and childbirth, the forty-day period took on a general significance for health and hygiene. It was a critical period, according to Hippocrates and other Greek medical writers, in the development and treatment of certain diseases, and this belief survived long enough to make quarantine – as the word itself indicates – originally a period of forty days. The phases of certain stars also contributed to the belief that forty was a sacred number. The ancient Greek poet Hesiod (8th century BC) says that the Pleiades – a constellation which loomed large in the imagination of all ancient peoples – disappear for forty days each year. The associations of the phases of the Pleiades with changes in the weather, taken with this observation of Hesiod's, probably accounts for the ancient and very widespread habit of making up rules about agriculture, fishing, sailing and hunting based on forty-day periods. The tradition that the flood lasted forty days and forty nights derives from this astronomical lore, and may have led to the frequent association of the period of forty days with mourning, fasting, penitence and atonement.

A Drink for the Dead

The idea of forty-day cycles in the weather has been perpetuated in many superstitions found in rural America – for instance that the weather on Ash Wednesday will 'rule' the weather for the next forty days, or that if it rains on 1 June it will rain for the next forty days and nights.

These ill-omened associations of the number forty may account for the belief, especially prevalent in Slav and neighbouring countries, that the soul of a dead person continues to dwell on earth for forty days. In these countries it was the custom until quite recently to place a jug of water beneath the icons in the house for forty days after the funeral, and to inspect it daily to see if the dead person had drunk any. Another train of thought behind these customs was that the first forty days after death were peculiarly significant in the same way as the first forty days after birth.

To philosophers of the great Pythagorean and later schools, the purely arithmetical properties of the number forty may also have played a part in its sacred history; but there is no evidence that such mathematical speculation ever entered the mainstream of folk traditions, in which the forty sons of Abdon the Pirathonite, the forty martyrs of Sebaste, the forty thieves of the Arabian Nights, the forty summers that besiege thy brow, and the forty days and forty nights of Christ's temptation in the wilderness are all part of a unified whole.

(See also NUMEROLOGY.)

The Romans believed that gods and goddesses, divinely descended heroes and the celebrated twins, Romulus and Remus, all played a part in the founding of Rome

FOUNDING OF ROME

THE NAME OF AENEAS, the Trojan warrior who is first mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, is linked in legend with the foundation of Rome. In the *Iliad* Aeneas's mother, the goddess Aphrodite, and the god Poseidon predicted that his heirs would rule over the Trojans in great glory; thus of all the Trojans only Aeneas was assured of survival after the Greek conquest. The figure of Aeneas also belonged to the series of legends on the wanderings of heroic warriors after the Trojan War. Because of the incidence of towns and other coastal landmarks which anciently bore names similar to his, Aeneas became the archetype of the wandering refugee who founded cities. The most remarkable of his postwar exploits were his visit to Carthage and a contribution to the beginnings of Rome, whose Italian empire was destined to fulfil Aphrodite's prophecy of the Trojan's enduring dominion. The legend of Aeneas's activities in the western Mediterranean is far older than Virgil's epic poem the *Aeneid*, which was published after the poet's death in 19 BC.

In this poem Aeneas flees from the sacked city of Troy in the company of his son Ascanius and his aged father Anchises. After many adventures Aeneas reached Italy where various sites were connected with his visits and dedications. Aeneas strengthened his band of Trojan followers by a dynastic marriage with the native princess Lavinia, whose father Latinus offered land to the Trojan and shared his kingship with Aeneas.

In some accounts Aeneas is represented

The mythical founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were the sons of Mars and a mortal maiden. Cast adrift on the river Tiber, they were rescued by a she-wolf and reared by her until found by a shepherd: Rubens' painting of the twins being suckled

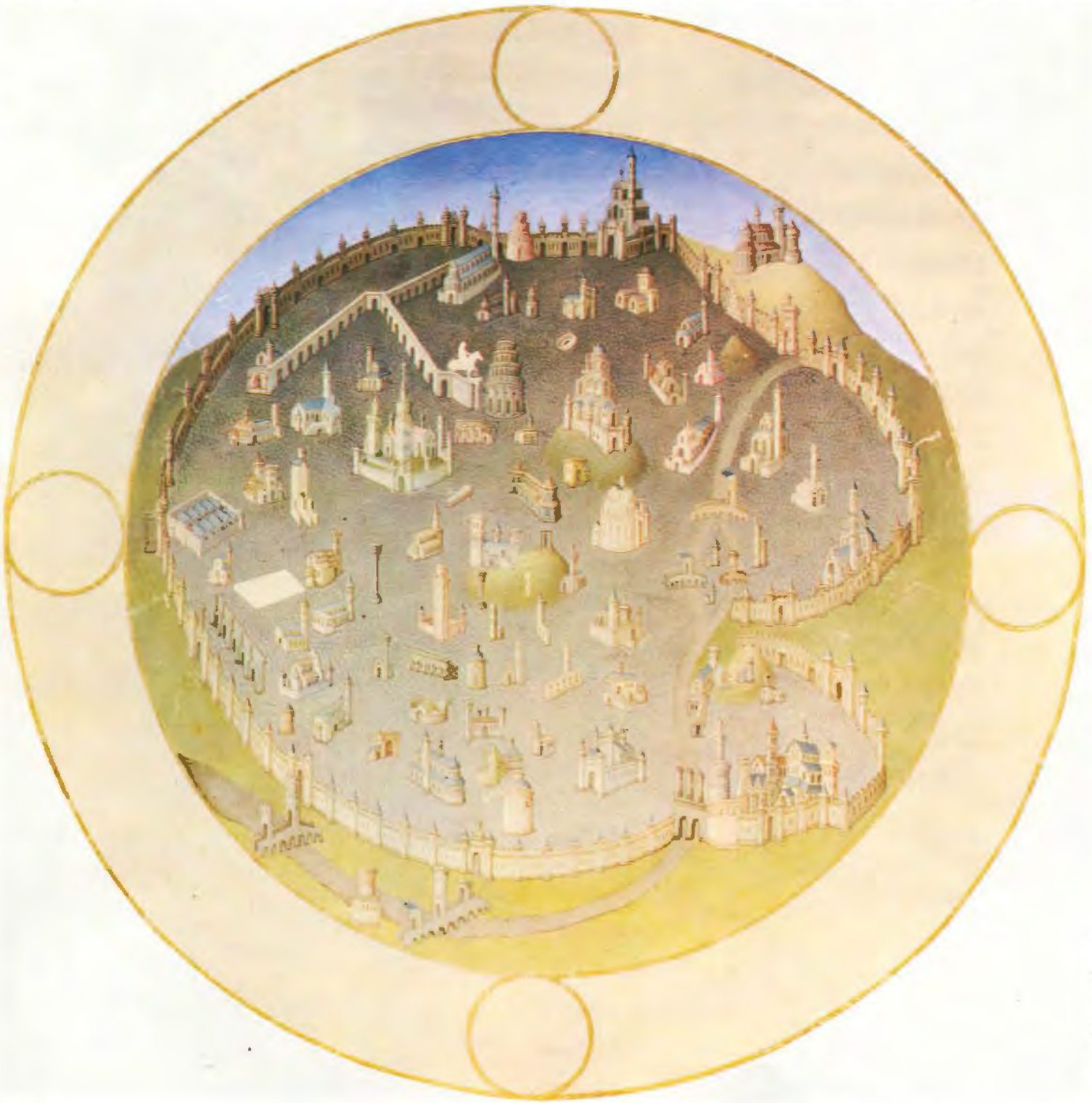
Scala

visiting the place which would later hold the city of Rome founded by his descendants. However, Aeneas himself never played an actual role in the foundation. Before the Romans began to investigate and record their origins there already existed two reports of the relationship between Aeneas and his descendant Romulus, who according to the older reckoning was the grandson of Aeneas. The accepted date of the destruction of Troy as around 1200 BC and the tradition of the foundation of Rome as c 753 involved both Greek and Roman scholars in a chronological discrepancy. This they solved by creating a dynasty of kings, usually named *Silvii*, who ruled over the people of the ancient Latian city of Alba Longa.

According to the literary tradition of the Silvian dynasty, Amulius deposed his brother, the rightful king Numitor, and consecrated his niece, Rhea Silvia, to the goddess Vesta so that she would remain forever childless. The maiden was loved by Mars and she conceived and gave birth to twins who were exposed to die. They were borne along by the Tiber and brought to land near the site of an archaic Roman shrine, the Lupercal and its neighbouring holy fig tree, the *Ficus ruminalis*: both landmarks play an important role in the legend of the twins. Although the literary devices of the tale bear the marks of a Greek legend, it also bears unmistakable traces of Roman invention by its attention to well-known local landmarks. The names of both Romulus and Remus refer to places: Rome itself and Remoria or Remona, evidently an old name of the Aventine Hill. Indeed Romulus itself means no more than 'Roman'.

Wolf-Mother or Wanton?

The Lupercal was a grotto at the foot of the Palatine Hill attached to the cult and ceremonies of the two old religious fraternities of *Luperci*, the *Fabiani* and *Quinctiales*, who annually purified persons and places during the festival of *Lupercalia* on 15 February. In consequence of the linguistic derivation of Lupercus from *lupus*, 'wolf', the Romans believed that a she-wolf had suckled the newborn twins. The suckling itself was suggested by the



Musée Condé de Chantilly/Giraudon

Ficus ruminalis, the name of which was thought to have come from an obsolete word for teat and the verb *ruminare*, 'to chew'. In fact, the manifest sense of the fig tree's variant names, Romula and Romularis, and the obsolete name of the Tiber river, Rumo, demonstrate that the sense of ruminalis was 'Roman'. In any event, the story of the wolf and the twins was already well established in 296 BC when two Roman magistrates dedicated a statue group of the three at the Lupercal.

A later rationalization of the tale attempted to suppress the unlikely animal by reinterpreting the wolf as a *lupa*, the common Latin designation of a whore. In this account the twins are discovered by the shepherd Faustulus who entrusted them to his wanton wife, Acca Larentia. A minor goddess, she was worshipped at her shrine in the place called Velabrum, also situated at the foot of the Palatine Hill.

Marking the Boundary

Reaching manhood among Faustulus and his fellow shepherds, Romulus and Remus assumed the leadership of a band of cattle-rustlers who plundered the territory of the usurper Amulius. Caught and brought before the deposed Numitor, Romulus and Remus pleaded so eloquently and regally that their identity became known to their own grandfather. Thus reunited and aware of their rightful inheritance, the twins overthrew the usurper and restored their grandfather. Yearning for their old haunts and impatient of waiting their turn at the Alban kingship, they returned to the place where the waters of the Tiber had once set them down. In the tradition of Alba Longa as the mother-city of Latian towns, they led a proper Alban colony to found a new city on the site. The brothers quarrelled over the colony's location and name and decided to seek a sign from the gods to settle the matter (see AUGURY). Remus took his place upon the Aventine Hill and Romulus upon the Palatine, and both watched the heavens for a sign. To Remus first appeared six vultures, but twelve vultures flew into Romulus's line of vision. In this fashion the god Jupiter indicated to the colonists the site and name of Rome.

Romulus himself drew the sacred boundary of the city which the Romans called a *pomerium*. The manner of marking the boundary was to plough a furrow with a team of a cow and a bullock. The plough had to be lifted over the place of each gate. The cow was yoked on the inside of the boundary, apparently to invite fertility within the city, and the bullock on the outside, to keep sterility beyond the town's boundary. Romulus forbade his brother to leap the boundary, a magical act evidently bringing ill-luck and in the most frequent version, himself slew Remus who taunted the founder by leaping over it.

Romulus's foundation was *Roma Quadrata*, 'squared Rome', a formal colonial settlement on the Palatine Hill which does in fact yield the oldest traces of continuous habitation at Rome. Romulus divided his colonists into three major divisions called tribes and these again into 30 subdivisions, the *curiae*. Traditionally, the three tribes represented the ethnic constituencies of Latins, Sabines and Etruscans, while the 30 curiae served the gods of the common people and were also military units of the primitive army. The usual treatment of the foundation relates that the first Romans numbered 300 cavalrymen and 3000 foot soldiers. The features of the foundation legend are entirely drawn from the Romans' experience of later colonization in Italy.

Romulus reigned long and well, leaving a much larger kingdom than he had founded. One day while performing some public act in the Campus Martius – the field of Mars – he ascended into heaven and joined the gods. Later a certain Julius Proculus announced that he had seen Romulus, who told him that he had become the god Quirinus. This apotheosis of Romulus is closely connected with the cult of Mars (see MARS).

It was Mars who fathered the twins on the Vestal Virgin and it was from the Campus Martius that Romulus ascended to heaven. In addition the name of Numitor seems cognate with a title of Mars, 'Numisius'. The word *Quirinus* was

Scala

Left **An early 15th century plan of Rome from the Duc de Berry's *Book of Hours*, now in the Musée Condé de Chantilly *Right* Escaping from the holocaust of plundered Troy, Aeneas, ancestor of the future founders of Rome, bears his aged father Anchises on his back to safety: detail from a fresco designed by Raphael**

commonly a cult-title of at least two Roman gods, Mars and Janus. It probably comes from *curia* and thus means 'of the (Roman) *curiae*'. Apparently in no case did a founder who had given his name to the city enjoy an actual cult at Rome. Rather, the Romans chose to see in Mars Quirinus the figure of their founding father. The festival of Quirinus *(Quirinalia)* fell on 17 February, just two days after the festival of Lupercalia.

Romulus's divine appearance to Julius Proculus belongs to the ancestral pretensions of Rome's Julian clan. The surname Proculus is related to the fiction of the Silvian dynasty of Alba which had a king Proca or Procas. The Julii clan claimed that through their ancestor Iullus, another name of Aeneas's son Ascanius, they were directly descended from Aeneas and Venus. The clan, though patrician, had not maintained a continuously dominant position among the vigorous and long-lived Roman aristocracy which for centuries controlled Roman politics. Hence their pretensions to divine and heroic ancestry complemented the Julii's eclipsed history and family position. In this framework Gaius Julius Caesar had created a third confraternity of Luperci called after himself, since the other two archaic ones bore designations related to other patrician families. On the occasion of the Lupercalia in 44 BC Mark Antony, serving as a Julian Luperus, offered Caesar the diadem of a king. It is this event which Shakespeare portrays in his *Julius Caesar*. Finally, both Caesar and his adopted son Octavian fostered the cult of Venus Genetrix, Venus the Ancestress. Indeed when Octavian became emperor he adopted the preferred honorific title 'Augustus' rather than 'Romulus'. Augustus also restored the architectural embellishments of the Lupercal. Both Caesar and Augustus proudly bore the title Father of the Fatherland which had a significance peculiar to their clan alone.

R. E. A. PALMER

FURTHER READING: Livy, *History of Rome* (in the Loeb edn); Plutarch, *Lives* trans E. Cary; vol I contains a chapter on Romulus (Heinemann, 1914); Virgil, *Aeneid* trans C. Day Lewis (Hogarth Press, 1952).

Michael Holford

As the springhead of living waters, source of fruitfulness and life, fountains have been seen as the haunt of virgin nymphs and as bestowers of youth and wisdom

FOUNTAIN

AUTHORS IN ANTIQUITY were often at pains to stress the difference between fountains and springs, which are living and natural sources of water, and cisterns and wells, which are man-made stores of motionless water. To the modern mind, there is an obvious distinction between the two, but one which depends on mere physical qualities rather than divine or magical attributes of moving water.

Water which moves, glistens, and makes audible sounds is regarded in primitive thought as either living or inhabited by animate spirits. These spirits were gradually made more and more personal, until in the Old Testament we find this essentially pantheistic conception of the fountain assimilated into Jewish monotheism: in the book of Jeremiah, the Lord says, 'My people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters', and more than one prophet alludes to the Messiah as a fountain which shall come forth.

Fountains are symbols of life itself, but more specifically they represent the source of fertility, the 'water of life'. The ancient Greeks peopled their springs with nymphs, and the original meaning of that word is 'nubile maiden'.

A typical Greek nymph myth is contained in the story of the huntsman Alpheios, who fell in love with Arethusa, a hunting maiden. She refused his advances, and took refuge in the little island of Ortygia in front of Syracuse harbour, where she was transformed into a fountain of fresh water. In despair, Alpheius turned himself into a river, but he still loved Arethusa as desperately as before, and so he sought a

In Hieronymus Bosch's painting *The Garden of Delight*, a fantastic fountain, symbol of life itself, gushes forth in the paradisal setting of the Garden of Eden: Old Testament prophets sometimes referred to the Messiah as the fountain which shall come forth

way under the sea until he reached Ortygia, where he mingled with the water of the fountain.

The Greeks, and other ancient peoples, attributed miraculous fertilizing powers to some fountains. There is a spring which still flows at a village on the eastern outskirts of Athens, where, according to Ovid, childless wives were taken in the belief that a drink of the sacred waters would cure them of sterility. The association between fountains and the bearing of children is found in more than one symbolical passage in the Old Testament, and a man's wife is referred to as his fountain in Proverbs: 'Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth.'

Fountains are the source of youth and rejuvenation and belief in a fountain of youth is world-wide. One Red Indian myth describes how it was created halfway between earth and heaven by two buzzards but was later destroyed for bringing only pain and grief to those who drank of its waters, as they outlived their children and their friends.

A Spanish writer of the last century says that long before his time a great many Indians travelled from Cuba to Florida in search of the fountain of youth, and rumours of its existence even attracted some travellers from Spain.

According to a Japanese legend, the white and yellow leaves of the wild chrysanthemum bring blessings from the fountain of youth, where Kiku-Jido the chrysanthemum boy dwells. The leaves were ceremoniously dipped in *sake*, the Japanese liquor that reputedly gives men health and a long life.

In mythology, fountains have been accredited with other powers besides that of conferring fruitfulness and everlasting youth. At Argos in Greece, the goddess Hera became a virgin again each year by taking a dip in the fountain of Kanathos. A similar idea underlies a Teutonic myth, which shows a strange blend of pagan and Christian beliefs. The shaggy wood-wife Rauhe Else came on all fours to the sleeping hero Wolfdietrich, begging his love. He agreed, on condition that she would be baptized. She carried him off to her own land, where she bathed in the fountain of youth, and was transformed into the lovely maiden Sigeminne.

Symbol of the Soul

One way that Christianity came to terms with pagan beliefs in the miraculous powers of fountains, springs and wells, was to transfer their guardianship to a saint, who now performed his own miracles making use of the revered waters.

Fountains have been regarded by many races as sources of wisdom. In an ancient Celtic myth the seeker after wisdom is drowned in a holy fountain, and in more than one Irish legend fountains are associated with the mysterious salmon of knowledge who gives advice to the hero. In Norse mythology, the god Odin goes to the fountain of the Nature spirit Mimir in which wisdom and cunning lie hidden. There he asks for a drink in exchange for a few sips of which he must pay the price of one of his eyes as a sacrifice to the fountain.

Some modern writers have sought to trace back these various mythological associations of the fountain to deeper underlying ideas. It has been remarked that in gardens, courtyards and cloisters, the fountain usually occupies a central position, and this has been linked with the four rivers which, in many mythologies issue forth from the centre of the earthly paradise. From this observation that the fountain usually occupies the central point, some writers have drawn the conclusion that the fountain is a symbol of the soul as the source of inner life and spiritual energy, and ultimately of individuality itself. Jung suggests that the fountain is a mother symbol and he also links it with the 'land of infancy', interpreting it as a symbol for the area of the unconscious responsible for the individual's moral behaviour patterns.

In mythology the fountain is not the formal construction of the kind found in courtyards and cloisters. It is essentially moving, living and natural water and there may be no need to look further than these characteristics to 'explain' the various myths and symbols that have grown up around the fountain.

(See also SPRINGS AND WELLS; WATER.)

FOUR

'FOR THOSE WHO exalt Four teach us a lesson that is not without value, that by reason of this number all solids have come into being.' This comment from Plutarch's *The E at Delphi* gives the key to the significance of 4 in Western numerology. The Pythagorean school of philosophy, which believed that the universe is constructed to a numerical pattern (see NUMEROLOGY), linked the number 1 with the point, which in theory has no dimensions; the number 2 with the line, which connects two points and has length but not breadth; and the number 3 with the triangle, which connects three points and has length and breadth but not height. To construct the simplest solid figure – the tetrahedron – a fourth point has to be added, above the triangle, and the four points connected. This suggested that the basis of the construction of all solid objects is to be found in the number 4.

Ever since, 4 has been the number of solids and solidity, of matter, of the way in which things are constructed. According to the old theory, everything is made of four elements (fire, air, earth and water) and four qualities (hot, cold, wet and dry). And 4 is especially the number of Earth, a solid object bounded by the four cardinal points.

It follows that someone whose name adds to 4 (see ALPHABET) is likely to be described by numerologists as solid and stolid, stable but sadly uninspired, like lifeless matter which lacks the vital spark. Plain and down to earth, he will be respectable, humdrum and stodgy, and will regard himself as a pillar of society.

Philip Rahtz

Four is particularly the number of Earth, bounded by the four cardinal points, and the cross which unites the four directions can be a symbol of 'the world'

Four is traditionally the unluckiest and grimmest of numbers because of its connection with earthly existence, which medieval numerologists saw as something gloomy, laborious, pain-filled and sin-ridden, contrasting unfavourably with the spiritual joys of life in heaven.

The association of 4 with agricultural labour, toil on the earth's surface, and so with the traditional stereotype of the rustic, gave the number its connotation of relentlessly hard work, usually for minimal and uncertain rewards. Those whose number is 4 are plodders, slow, cautious and conservative, suspicious of innovations and strangers. They have a bovine placidity, which is likely to be interrupted occasionally by violent outbursts of temper, these being the psychological equivalents of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. For the same reason, they will suffer from attacks of indigestion, and they will also be afflicted with fits of melancholy.

The unfortunate 4 does have many good qualities. Most of the time he is as steady and reliable as the earth itself, practical and sensible, calm and collected, an excellent worker and organizer, good at detail and routine. But essentially, though many modern numerologists prefer to gloss it over, 4 is the number of poverty, disappointment and defeat.

Fourteen
In numerology, the number of change and transformation, because the moon changes from new to full, and from full to new, in 14 days. See MOON.

GEORGE FOX

THE QUAKERS have survived vicissitudes which have swept away many lesser sects which arose during the English Civil War period and after. That they should have endured for so long and have done so with relatively little change in their values and organization is largely due to their founder, George Fox (1624–1691). Although a mystic and a prophet, Fox had both practical sense and organizing ability. Perhaps above all else he acquired the gift of communicating not only precepts and doctrines but a spirit of patience, tolerance and uprightness that has marked Quakers since the end of the 17th century.

Fox was born at Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire, the son of a puritan weaver. Although apparently intended for the Anglican ministry, Fox received little education; and he was eventually apprenticed to a shoemaker. As a young man he showed a restless disposition that expressed itself in the endless religious debates of the time. He disputed with a number of neighbouring Puritan clergy without finding satisfaction and in 1646 he came to the conclusion that a minister ought to be more than merely a scholar. His own claim to religious knowledge could not, of course, rest on scholarship, and, like other sectaries, he came to emphasize the superiority of inspiration and revelation to mere 'book learning'. The sense of Christ dwelling within became the legitimation of his own preaching and, subsequently, of Quaker practice.

In the late 1640s, Fox travelled about Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire preaching, testifying in churches and meeting with various groups of religious Nonconformists. The Baptists proved to be more receptive than others among the leading separatist groups, and from them and from the less clearly defined Seekers he won most of his following.

Fox's associates were known usually as 'Children of Light' or 'Friends of Truth'; the name Society of Friends was established ouly after his death although the term 'Friends' was often used. The name Quaker became current in the 1650s after a magistrate, Gervase Bennett, had thrown the expression at Fox during his trial in Derby in 1650. The word was already current, however, for sectarians who shook with the power of the Holy Ghost.

In his early years, Fox's preaching was clearly intemperate, and sometimes constituted a public disturbance, as when he went through the streets of Lichfield proclaiming 'Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield'. Early Quakers sometimes prophesied the early coming of the Day of Judgement and were often identified as Ranters. Others rejected all conventions and felt obliged to go naked in the streets. Fox himself did not object to those who were conscientiously moved to make their nakedness a warning to all men, but he saw the unwisdom of the millenarian prophecies and urged his followers in 1653 not to 'go out from the Spirit of God' into their own notions. Under this type of counsel Quakers became more restrained.

Fox had his earliest success in the north Midlands and the north of England in Westmorland where Swarthmore Hall, home of Judge Fell and his wife Margaret became a great centre for Quakers. Margaret Fell married Fox in 1669 after ten years of widowhood. In the 1650s he and some seventy preachers sought to convert men in the southern counties. They met frequent persecution and imprisonment: Fox was imprisoned eight times in his life.

Theodore Heizel

Inner experience of communion with God, or the Inner Light, formed the basis of George Fox's teaching and is at the heart of Quaker belief: portrait by C. W. Peale

His preaching, while inspired by visions, had considerable social content. He spoke out against injustice, against low wages, capital punishment, cheating by merchants, drunkenness and enclosures; although he was less radical than the contemporary Levellers and Diggers, he was a convinced pacifist and advised against political involvements. Different as his theology was from that of the Puritans, he shared much of their social ethic and condemned dancing, sport and stage performances as vain, and enjoined Quakers to plain speech and dress.

He instituted regular monthly and yearly meetings among his followers who in the mid-1650s numbered about 30,000 and these became the working basis of Quaker organization. Many followers had been converted as communities of Seekers, and the strong congregational policy that Fox encouraged provided a safeguard against the dangers of individual inspirationalism. His teaching of the 'Light within' (modern Quakers use the phrase 'inner Light') was thus set in a context of firm community control which disciplined excess and reinforced the standards of integrity that Quakers were bidden to adopt. Fox appears to have had little sense of personal sin but felt the weight of sin in the wider world: his message was that Friends should see the Light of Christ in other men.

Fox continued to work at his *Journal* until his death at the age of 67 and this is still of great importance to Quakers. He also wrote over four hundred Epistles and various other doctrinal writings. The appeal of his message probably lay most strongly in his teachings that Christ has redeemed man from sin and eternal damnation, and that if man turns to Christ and listens to his inner promptings, he will be forever saved.

(See also ENTHUSIASM.)

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ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

SAINT FRANCIS (Francesco Bernardone) was born at Assisi, a small city of Umbria in central Italy, in either 1181 or the next year. He died, also at Assisi, in 1226.

The age before his birth had been one of rapid change in Italy. A century (1050–1150) of widespread reform had been rich in capable and saintly popes, bishops, abbots and thinkers. Now reform and its institutions were beginning to flag. The cities began to expand and with increased population came an increase of those near or below subsistence level, as well as a new class of wealthy merchants and businessmen. The cities and towns formed small, intensely individual units, frequently at war with each other. It was in this turmoil of social and religious upheaval and questing that the orthodox orders of friars had their birth.

The son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Francis grew up at Assisi among a lively, pleasure-loving, extravagant group, and his energy and charm soon made him its leader. Then during a war between Assisi and Perugia (1201–2) he was captured and suffered a year's imprisonment. This was followed by a long illness and the first of a series of experiences which Francis began to interpret as divine warnings and invitations. In 1204, while embarking on another military mission, he was halted by a dream and he turned back to care for the needy and sick – particularly the lepers – and rebuilt the ruined church of San Damiano at Assisi. He then renounced his patrimony to become a hermit. Finally in February 1209 on hearing at Mass the gospel with the apostolic commission: 'Preach as you go . . . take no gold, nor silver nor copper in your belts' (Matthew, chapter 10) he accepted forever his vocation to follow the commands and counsel of Christ literally, and in absolute poverty.

He travelled the country preaching penitence and the imitation of Christ and was joined by his first brethren. In 1210 he visited Rome with 12 others and received from Pope Innocent III confirmation of a simple rule (the *Primitive Rule*) composed almost entirely of gospel precepts. For a short time the Little Brothers (*Fratres Minores*) lived together near Assisi at St Mary of the Angels, better known as the Porziuncula, traversing Umbria in couples, preaching and working for their daily bread. Such a group, with a manifestly saintly and magnetic leader, exactly met the religious demand of the age, and recruits flocked to join him. Their sisters heard the call and in 1211–2 Francis founded the House of the Poor Ladies by the church of San Damiano, for in the society of that day enclosure was essential for religious women. The nobly born Clare Favarone (later St Clare) and her nuns took vows of absolute poverty and were to pray for the brethren and assist them as best they could.

The numbers continued to grow but for a long while Francis refused to accept formal organization. Throughout his life he remained a magnetic, baffling leader who seemed often to despise elementary rules of prudence and commonsense, disappearing when most needed and unbending in the face of opposition, yet always possessed of luminous spiritual insight and wisdom in counsel.

Brother Sun

Before long a tension developed that was to continue in the history of the Order between the simple, exacting, heroic demands of Francis, accepted to the full by a few intimate followers, and the needs of a large body of friars, some of them men of learning and influence who, supported by papal authority, aimed at making his teaching viable by adapting it to the capabilities of the many. Cardinal Ugolino, first as devoted disciple and later as Pope Gregory IX, must take much of the credit – or blame – for translating Francis's intuitions into a code. For long Francis resisted: he wanted no order, no constitutions. If a brother heard the call he accepted the commands and counsels of Christ, and nothing else was needed. Compelled at last to write a rule, the so-called *First Rule*, he allowed Ugolino to promulgate it at a gathering of all the friars in 1221. It proved too exacting, too spiritual – or too vague – for the multitude, and after much suffering and labour Francis, assisted by others, rewrote it in language that was less spiritual and more

Samuel H. Kress Collection/Portland Art Museum

Painting attributed to Carlo Crivelli of St Francis receiving the stigmata

The Frick Collection

St Francis 'lived always on the spiritual level': he felt a unique sense of brotherhood with all living beings and the entire life of Nature. ***St Francis in Ecstasy,*** **by Bellini**

juridical. This, the *Second Rule*, was approved by Honorius III and has remained ever since in essentials the rule of the Franciscan Order.

This short account must omit many of the characteristic actions in the saint's life such as his missionary journey to Spain, or his sortie East with the crusaders, to be captured and to preach before the Sultan in Egypt, or missions of the friars to France, England, Germany, Greece, Morocco and elsewhere. In 1220 he resigned the official headship of his order, exhausted as he was both by illness and the oppostion to his ideals, and for the rest of his life he moved round Umbria surrounded by a group of his First Friars, of whom Brother Leo was the chief. In 1224 he went through a mystical experience on Monte La Verna, after which his hands, feet and side bore the five wounds of the crucified Jesus. Later he composed his magnificent praise of Creation, the *Canticle of Brother Sun*.

For the rest of his life he was ill and almost blind, but he retained his fortitude and spiritual clarity of mind, as also an exquisite tenderness towards his companions and friends. In his *Testament* he reiterated with poignant emphasis his commands of poverty, simplicity of mind, and avoidance of all privilege and honour. Cared for in his last weeks by St Clare at San Damiano, he died at the Porziuncula on 3 October 1226. He was canonized by his old friend Ugolino (Gregory IX) in 1228 and two years later was finally interred beneath a magnificent basilica bearing his name.

St Francis was indeed one of the most remarkable men of medieval Europe, in his personality, his creation of 'power-ideas' and his influence upon his contemporaries and posterity. While the Catholic Church has always venerated him as a saint with an immense following and as founder of a religious order which has for many centuries been the most numerous of all, he has been for many, both within and without the Christian allegiance, the most attractive saint of history.

The 'Only True Christian'

Francis, the gay, impulsive, naive, articulate Italian appears more clearly than any other historical character to embody the springlike delicacy of primitive Italian art and literature. His poetic masterpiece, the *Canticle of Brother Sun* is a hymn to the beauty of elemental creation – sun, moon, stars, wind, water – and of natural life in birds, animals and flowers. His unique sense of brotherhood with all living beings, his love of children, birds and animals is likewise entirely original, and this together with his wise and humorous treatment of his simplest brethren, admits us to his intimacy, without any reserve. His hatred of all that is mechanistic and legalistic in church life has endeared him to many at the present day.

He has been hailed as the most Christ-like of men, the 'only true Christian'. All saints by definition must be recognizable as followers and imitators of Christ, but St Francis as compared to a St Augustine or a St Hildebrand, will appear to many as it were a facsimile, a reappearance, of the Christ who walked in Galilee. No doubt this is to simplify, if not to blur the full vision of Christ. Yet if such a view misses many qualities of Jesus, Francis has a Christ-like capacity of seeing all creatures and all events from their centre, God, and in his last years he is seen more clearly than any other medieval saint as one sharing in the Passion of Christ. He resembles Jesus in another way also. Most men, faced with the eternal tension in religious life between law and liberty, choose one or the other on the purely human level, where law may become compulsion, and liberty, licence. St Francis, living always on the spiritual level, had the freedom of the sons of God, to whom law is a translation into words of their free choice. He would have nothing to do with monastic rules, canon law, scholastic theology, and dispensations because he had within him the law of life, the will of God.

But he was in no sense a revolutionary or as he used to be hailed, the first Protestant. He knew every least article of the teaching of the Church with the accuracy of a theologian, and he recognized in every detail the authority of priest, bishop and pope, the sanctity of the sacraments and the worshipfulness of the Bible

as the Word of God. Without all this, he could not, either in his person or in his order, have shared as fully as he did with St Dominic in the rebuilding of the Church. Therefore although many historians may say that he did no more than precipitate a vocation for which many of his contemporaries were groping, it was he who created the friar, a new type of religious person, differing from both the hermit and monk, who went out to the poor, to the city-dweller and to the pagan, calling the world to absolute poverty, and nakedly following the naked Christ on the Cross. The message of Francis was to live by the words of Christ accepted literally and fully. Like Christ's message it was uncompromising and impossible to human nature unaided. It was modified and glossed by those who came after, but Francis and his gospel remained and his call is still heard.

The life of St Francis presents many problems of chronology and critical interpretation, and none of the numerous modern *Lives* can be called definitive. The two classical pictures of the saint, St Bonaventure's *Life* and *The Little Flowers*, the one a model piece of hagiography, the other a jewel of early Italian prose, are equally unsatisfying; the former because of its selective, tendentious character, the latter because it is impossible to separate the historical and the mythical elements which are presented in it. The student of St Francis must go to the two *Lives* by his contemporary, Thomas of Celano, and to the mass of early reminiscences contained in the *Legend of the Two Companions*, the *Sayings of Brother Leo* and the enigmatic but fascinating *Mirror of Perfection*.

DAVID KNOWLES

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ST FRANCIS DE SALES

THE SON OF A NOBLEMAN of Savoy, in the French Alps, Francis de Sales (1567–1622), was one of the more attractive figures of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. He was educated by the Jesuits in Paris and studied law in Padua where he took his final degree at the age of 24; he then returned home to the family chateau on the Lake of Annecy and resumed the life of a young aristocrat.

Ever since boyhood he had wanted to be a priest, and had retained this ambition despite his father's opposition. An opportunity seemed to offer when the provostship of the chapter of Geneva fell vacant; it was felt that this was a post that the son of a nobleman could suitably occupy and Francis was ordained priest and given the benefice, with his father's grudging consent, in 1593. He devoted himself to the service of the poor and undertook a mission in the neighbouring region of Chablais, preaching to the militant Calvinists with some success, despite the considerable danger of the task and threats of violence. Within four years the area had returned to Catholicism, in recognition of which he was appointed assistant bishop of Geneva and in 1602 he succeeded to the see. Francis immediately set to work on a heavy programme of reorganization and reform and his fame as a preacher and spiritual director spread. For the rest of his life he devoted himself to this work with tenacity and enthusiasm.

While he was preaching a Lenten course of sermons at Dijon in 1604 he met Jeanne Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, the recently bereaved widow of a baron. Francis became spiritual director to the unhappy woman, who was to find her vocation by becoming co-foundress of his proposed new religious order for women. Known as the Order of the Visitation, it was intended for those with 'strong souls in weak bodies', single women and widows who, by virtue of their age or infirmity, would be refused admission to the older orders and would have had difficnlty in observing the strict rules. Such an idea met with considerable criticism and the original plan had to be modified before it found approval in Rome: enclosure was insisted upon, though the founders had planned at first to allow the nuns to go out and undertake works of charity. These first nuns were guided by a sure hand during the early days of their order, and by the time of St Francis's death in 1662 there were nearly 20 convents in existence. It was at one of these that he died, at the convent of Bellecour in Lyons, on his way home.

Chris Barker

St Francis de Sales was instrumental in altering the attitude that to live a fully Christian life it was necessary to cut yourself off from the everyday world: he believed that a life of devotion is possible in the everyday world. Portrait of St Francis from the 1630 edition of his work on mystical theology, *Treatise on the Love of God*

A Gentleman of God

Francis de Sales was known throughout his life for his gentleness and kindness; he was always a man of moderation, displaying great courtesy and an unusual sensitivity towards the feelings of others. Today he is remembered principally for his writings. These were largely occasioned by the requirements of his work as spiritual pastor and by his efforts to make his diocese a dynamic focus of Christian faith. His most important book is probably his *Introduction to a Devout Life* which was instrumental in altering the firmly entrenched attitudes to what people considered constituted the devotional life. The prevalent view of the time, particularly in France, was that the only path to holiness, to living a genuinely Christian life to the full, was to enter a strict religious order, thereby cutting oneself off from the world outside. Francis opposed this idea and in his book he purported to show that a life of devotion is possible in the world and indeed that this is the duty of every ordinary Christian.

Francis's other great work is his *Treatise on the Love of God*. In the *Devout Life* he is dealing with the theology of asceticism, knowledge of God through self-denial and preparation; in the *Treatise* his subject matter is mystical theology, knowledge of God through spiritual communion. He speaks of the love of God as an obligation which binds us all and therefore gives instruction of a very practical nature.

Francis himself was not at first a contemplative; he only seems to have explored the possibilities of deep meditation under the influence of the works of St Teresa of Avila and through understanding and sharing the mystical experiences in the lives of two women under his guidance: Jeanne Françoise de Chantal and Madame Acarie. The *Treatise on the Love of God* was written as a result of this new interest and his own progress in the mystical state. In it he shows how each individual can and must attempt contemplative prayer and the book therefore forms a natural complement to the *Devout Life*. For St Francis the whole purpose of contemplation is conformity of the human to the divine will. His so-called prayer of 'simplicity' which is 'indifferent' to all reward, even an eternal reward, was to exert great influence in religious circles during the next two centuries and editions of the *Devout Life* continue to appear.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

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AND GOD SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHT" AND THERE WAS LIGHT.

Masonic Diploma.

EMBLEMATIC CERTIFICATE OF

Bro.

No.

A.F. AND A.M.

RAISED TO THE SUBLIME DEGREE OF MASTER MASON

A.D. A.L.

INITIATED AS AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

A.D. A.L.

PASSED TO THE DEGREE OF FELLOW CRAFT

A.D. A.L.

This is to Certify that

whose signature is in the margin hereof has been regularly Entered, Passed and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason and that he is now a member of

No.

located at

And we recommend him as such to all Masonic Brethern wheresoever dispersed

W.M.
S.W.
J.W.
SEC.

This is to Certify that

No.

is a just and lawfully constituted Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons working under a Charter from the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of

Dated at This day of A.D. A.L.

ATTEST.

Grand Secy.

CALLED FROM LABOR.

A.D. A.L.

FREEMASONRY

Freemasonry began in the Middle Ages as an early trade union for builders. Its openness to all who accept a Supreme Being as the Great Architect of the world and its enticing air of mystery have made it the most papular of all secret societies

ONE DEFINITION of Freemasonry is that it is 'a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols'. Freemasons are members of a so-called secret society but membership is freely available to any man of good repute. There is no question of recruitment or invitation to join: individuals simply find their way to the Craft, mostly through a friend who is already a member.

Any brief attempt to explain Freemasonry's inner meaning, its historical development and its place in modern society, presents formidable difficulties. It is not that information is difficult to obtain. On the contrary, anyone sufficiently curious can learn a great deal from the available literature, which is enormous. A Masonic bibliography published in Germany in 1912 contains no fewer than 40,000 titles. It seems, however, that to begin to understand the inner meaning of Freemasonry one must belong to it, if only because the actual experience is more important and significant than merely 'academic' knowledge.

For the outsider the perplexing factors are Freemasonry's status as a secret society and the significance of the secrets that it allegedly so jealously guards. Again, it is often asked why so many adult and presumably sensible men should practise rituals that include secret words and signs. However, on the basis of any merely superficial assessment or, even worse, complete ignorance, it would be unwise to dismiss an international sociological phenomenon as complete nonsense.

The Craft, which is banned in all Communist countries, in Roman Catholic Spain and Portugal, although not in Italy, continues to attract members on a world-wide scale. Its appeal clearly operates on two different levels. For some the attraction is obviously social. The Lodge is an exclusive club and the business of 'working' a ritual is the prelude to a convivial meal. For others, however, Freemasonry's rituals, teachings and symbolism have a deeper and more spiritual content. In this context we encounter the Craft at its most attractive and significant level.

Band of Brothers

Freemasonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. It embraces all forms of religious belief which conceive of a Supreme Being and in a Lodge men of all creeds meet in complete amity. Its rituals, which in some respects resemble short Morality Plays or moral charades, simply reflect in symbolic terms concepts of idealism, humanity, charity and fraternity.

But why the necessity for secrecy? This, too, has a symbolical meaning. The tradition was inherited from the old

The three ordinary degrees to which masons attain are those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason *Left* The American Masonic Diploma awarded at the Third Degree bears the symbolic working tools presented to the candidate on initiation: the 24 inch gauge representing the hours of the day, the gavel, a symbol of conscience, and the chisel which stands for education *Above* The Masonic grip of the raised thumb, initially enabled members to recognize each other without openly revealing themselves

Operative or Working Masons, who because of the mobility of their profession, were denied the advantages of a static guild organization. The Lodges arose wherever masons were assembled for large scale building works, such as a cathedral, and formed a flexible network throughout the country. The masons required proof of professional skill before accepting an itinerant colleague as a master craftsman. If the newcomer knew the answers in their correct form to certain veiled questions, also certain passwords and signs, it conveyed to his interrogator that he really was a Master Mason, a master of his craft, and hence qualified to accept employment and if need be help from a fellow craftsman. In other words it was a form of primitive trade unionism.

Later the Speculative (Non-operative) Freemasons took over the traditional questions, passwords and signs, not as an antiquarian mumbo-jumbo, but simply to emphasize that oaths of fidelity, fraternity

Library of Congress/Syndication International

All Freemasonry in existence today can ultimately be traced to the Grand Lodge of England constituted in 1717

Chris Barker

and the like must never be taken lightly. Hence even Freemasonry's 'secrets' are symbolic. That they contain nothing incompatible with conventional religious beliefs is reflected by the fact that so many Anglican and Nonconformist clergy are Freemasons.

Gentleman's Club

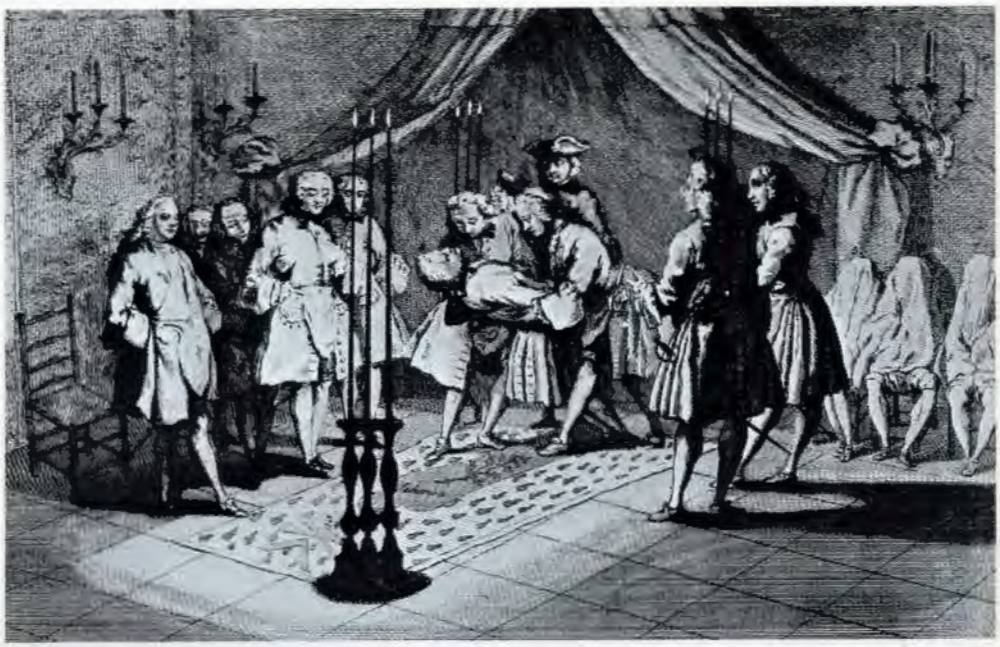
Speculative Freemasonry was a British development of the early 1700s. Operative Masons continued into the 17th century, as survivors of the medieval guild system, with its complex traditions and practices in which mutual aid was a prominent feature. Then late in that century men who were not professionally connected with building began to join the so-called Lodges of the Operative Masons. This was probably done in much the same way that individuals still seek membership of one or other of the ancient Livery Companies of the City of London. Gentlemen also joined because they were interested in architecture or keen to have their own designs executed. Elias Ashmole, the antiquary, recorded in his diary that he was 'made a Freemason' at Warrington in 1646, and he certainly had no links with Operative Masonry.

The history of the transitional stage from Operative to Speculative Freemasonry is both sparsely documented and obscure, as is the early history of Speculative Freemasonry. However, a notable event occurred in the year 1717 when the members of four London Lodges met at a tavern near Covent Garden and constituted themselves 'A Grand Lodge pro Tempore (for the time being) in Due Form and . . . resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to choose a Grand Master from among themselves, till they should have the Honour of a Noble Brother at their Head'. All Freemasonry in existence today can be traced, through one channel or another, to the Grand Lodge of England thus constituted in 1717. A 'Noble Brother' as Grand Master presented himself in the person of the Duke of Montague in 1721. Since then the office of Grand Master has always been held by one of noble or royal birth, for example a recent Grand Master has been H.R.H. the Duke of Kent.

Initially Grand Lodge must have been

Masonic aprons are decorated with symbols and emblems *Above* A drawing from an 1869 edition of *Vanity Fair* showing the Worshipful Grand Master the Earl of Zetland *Below* A calico apron *Below left* An apron from the English Lodge known as the 'Antient' Lodge

Right In the 18th century some Masonic groups in France and Germany dabbled in occultism: 18th century engravings of a French initiation ceremony *Above* The candidate is symbolically lowered into the grave *Centre* His head is covered with a bloody cloth and the members of the Lodge point their swords at him *Below* The Grand Master raises the newly received Apprentice with the mason's grip



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an informal affair with not very much to govern. In 1721, however, the representatives of 16 Lodges commissioned Dr James Anderson (1684–1739), a minister of the Church of Scotland, to prepare and edit a slim quarto volume, published in 1723, that subsequently became famous as *Anderson's Constitutions*. The inclusion of 39 General Articles for the government of the Craft indicates the beginning of a more formal administration.

It is probable that the rituals were still in an early stage of development. In most Lodges there were only two degrees, namely those of Apprentice and Fellow. The modern system of three degrees, that is, Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, taken in three separate steps, came into being a little later.

There was a rapid expansion of interest in Freemasonry during the 1720s. A list of Lodges published in 1725 includes 64 names. The first Provincial Grand Masters, namely those for North and South Wales, were appointed in 1726. The first overseas Lodges were constituted in Bengal, Gibraltar and Madrid by 1728.

One of the most surprising features of Speculative Freemasonry's early history is the Craft's vigorous and speedy expansion in Europe. An English Lodge was founded at Paris in 1732 and three years later Freemasonry had reached Portugal, Holland and Sweden. The first German Lodge was established at Hamburg in 1737. During the next decade the Craft took root in many other European centres, although not without encountering, here and there, official hostility. The first Papal Bull against Freemasonry (*In Eminenti*) was proclaimed in 1738 by Clement XII.

According to F. L. Pick and G. N. Knight, the authors of *Pocket History of Freemasonry*, 'when Freemasonry spread beyond our Islands it fell into hands not content with the plain unvarnished story taught in its original home. The links with the homely operative past were not appreciated by the more modish followers of what was proving a fashionable cult, so a host of brilliant ceremonies were quickly developed, many of which proved ephemeral while others have lasted to the present day and are accepted and respected throughout the world.'

The 'plain, unvarnished story' refers to

The Entered Apprentice's Song

Come let us prepare
We brothers that are
Assembled on merry occasion:
Let's drink, laugh and sing:
Our wine has a Spring.
Here's health to an Accepted Mason.

The World is in pain
Our secrets to gain
But still let them wonder and gaze on:
They ne'er can divine
The word or the sign
Of a Free and an Accepted Mason.

'Tis This and 'tis That,
They cannot tell What.
Why so many Great Men of the Nation,
Should Aprons put on
To make themselves one
With a Free and an Accepted Mason . . .

Then join Hand in Hand
T'each other firm stand
Let's be merry and put a bright face on;
What mortal can boast
So noble a Toast
As a Free and an Accepted Mason.

Rev James Anderson *Book of Constitutions (1723)*

what was taught in Great Britain in the traditional three degrees. Masonic innovators in Europe, and later in North America, introduced many new Orders, Rites and degrees of great number and complexity.

Continental Lodges

The history of Freemasonry in France and Germany is particularly interesting. During the 18th century the Craft attracted many men of distinguished lineage in both countries. In France, for instance, the royal Duke of Orleans, nicknamed Philippe Egalité, presided over the Grand Lodge of France until it ceased to function during the Revolution. During the second half of the 18th century alongside the regular and so-called 'High Grade' Freemasonry there were, in both France and Germany, a number of Masonic sects that dabbled with alchemy and occultism, while in Germany there was the so-called Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross (see ROSICRUCIANS). In England during the 1880s the famous magical society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn adopted most of the latter's grades (see GOLDEN DAWN).

Of the 18th century French Lodges the most interesting is probably the Loge des Neuf Soeurs (The 'Nine Sisters' Lodge), whose membership included some of the nation's most progressive intellects: the astronomer Lalande, the mathematician Condorcet, and the publicist Camille Desmoulins, who led the storming of the Bastille during the Revolution. Benjamin Franklin, the American ambassador, was also a member. The hypothesis that the Freemasons and, above all, those in the Loge des Neuf Soeurs, instigated the French Revolution is untenable although it could be said that as the ideals of Masonry are toleration and free-thinking, their spirit influenced both the French and American revolutions.

Since the 1870s relations between the French Grand Orient and the United Grand Lodge of England have ceased because of the removal of the affirmation of the Great Architect of the Universe from the Grand Orient's Constitutions. To outsiders, at least, the question of whether Freemasonry is or is not agnostic has always been a complex one. A. E. Waite, a Masonic historian, has simply observed that there is no preponderating religious sentiment, but a tacit agreement to abide informally by certain conventions. In this respect the British genius for compromise is very evident.

The original growth of Freemasonry in Germany owes much to the support of Frederick the Great, who was initiated in 1738, two years before he ascended the Prussian throne. Successive generations of the Hohenzollern family were members of the Craft, the exception being the last Emperor, Wilhelm II, who was originally antipathetic and later hostile. Germany was the home of the legend that the First World War was instigated by 'international Jewry' which, in turn, was alleged to have dominated the French Grand Orient. Hence it is not surprising that as soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933 they ruthlessly suppressed Freemasonry and imprisoned or even murdered many members. Since the early 1950s there has been a modest Masonic revival in Germany.

In North America Speculative Freemasonry had already taken root by 1730, on lines approved by Grand Lodge in London. Benjamin Franklin, who was hostile to the Craft in the early days, nevertheless became a Mason in 1731 and remained devoted to the cause until his death in 1790. George Washington was Master of his Lodge when he became the first President of the United States of America in 1789.

Such is the size of the United States that there is no single Grand Master but, instead, a Grand Lodge for each State. Another feature of American Freemasonry is the very large membership of many Lodges. Some years ago the average membership in each of the thousand or so Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of New York was about 280. It is also on record that very recently there were 43 Lodges in Texas with between a thousand and three thousand members. To anyone familiar with the intimate character of many British Lodges, with their 50–70 members, these very large numbers are somewhat intimidating.

Library of Congress

Freemasonry with its ideals of toleration and free-thinking has attracted many eminent men in its history: George Washington was Master Mason of his Lodge when he became first President of the United States

SHINGTON AS A FREEMASON
G
PAST GRAND MASTER OF THE GRAND LODGE OF TENNESSEE
JACKSON
BEAUTY
STRENGTH
WISDOM
DIED
Dec. 14.
A.D. 1799.
TEMPERANCE
JUSTICE
ER OF THE AMERICAN ARMY, 1775. PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. 1789.
52. IN FREDERICKSBURG, LODGE Nº 4, VIRGINIA. PASSED, MARCH 3RD 1753 RAISED, AUGUST 4TH 1753.

Chris Barker

In 1884 the pope issued an encyclical condemning Freemasonry: a cartoon appearing in *Puck* the same year satirized the conflict between the Church and Masonry

So much for the history of the Craft, but what of its detailed practice? The average modern Freemason, at least in Great Britain and the Commonwealth, is content to pass through the traditional three degrees which may be outlined as follows.

Secrets of Initiation

Freemasons meet in a specially furnished Lodge room. The Worshipful Master, the Wardens and other officers of the Lodge sit in their appointed places. In the ante-room adjoining the Lodge room a functionary known as the Tyler keeps guard to forbid the entry of strangers. First it is necessary to 'open' the Lodge in whichever degree is being 'worked'. A dialogue is held, in the form of questions and answers, between the Worshipful Master and various officers of the Lodge. Its time-honoured purpose is to remind the participants of the symbolical or allegorical nature of the ceremony they are performing.

When an initiation ceremony takes place the Lodge is opened in the First Degree. Outside in the ante-room the candidate is prepared by the Tyler. His collar, tie and jacket are removed and he lays aside his money: with this demonstration that the Lodge accepts him even in penury, he accepts the same obligation towards his fellow Masons. He is then led into the room blindfolded. The Tyler presents him to the Master and in reply to the question 'Whom have you there?' replies: 'A poor Candidate in a state of darkness.' The implication is that the darkness is spiritual but that he will be shown Light.

In the course of the ceremony the candidate swears a solemn oath not to reveal Freemasonry's secrets which, once again, are all symbolical. The blindfold is then removed. He is also shown certain grips and signs, a survival of the old Operative Masonry, and told certain words which refer to the symbolical building of King Solomon's temple.

He is presented with the First Degree Mason's working tools, and the Master explains their significance: the 24-inch gauge represents the 24 hours of the day, to be divided between prayer, work, refreshment and helping a friend; the gavel represents the power of conscience; the chisel represents the advantages of education. Finally the Master explains the symbolism of the First Degree tracing board, a rectangular plank containing a painted representation of the symbols appropriate to the First Degree. The Lodge is then 'closed' in the First Degree according to the appropriate ritual.

In due course the Entered Apprentice will be advanced, normally at intervals of about three months in each case, to the Second Degree (Fellow Craft) and finally to the Third Degree (Master Mason). In each case there is a specific ritual and the disclosure of more information. As a Master Mason the new Brother has nominally reached the end of the road although he can proceed further to the Royal Arch, which can roughly be described as an extension of Craft Masonry, and may later elect to ask for membership of the other available degrees and Orders. This is entirely a matter of choice.

The three Craft Degrees, then, form the basis of the whole Masonic system as practised in English-speaking countries. Together with the Royal Arch they form the sum total of Freemasonry as officially recognized by English Grand Lodge. However, for those who are interested there are certain 'Higher Degrees', such as Mark Masonry, the Knights Templar, the Rose-Croix and others.

It is possible to buy printed editions of the three Craft rituals but some material will be omitted. Any outsider can obtain at least a notion of the structure of these rituals. It appears however that nothing short of personal experience of participation in the rituals will serve to convey an understanding of what the Craft means to so many men. This means, in effect, that no outsider can ever really grasp Freemasonry's inner meaning.

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The upheavals of the French Revolution shook even the stable structure of the Church. For a brief time, Christ was dethroned and Reason, the State and Nature worshipped in his stead

FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL upheavals of the French Revolution were inevitably to have repercussions on organized religion and worship. But a direct confrontation between the forces of the Revolution and the different churches was an unforeseen consequence, particularly in the case of the Catholic Church. To begin with, the lower ranks of the clergy were amongst the most enthusiastic supporters of the Revolution. When the different estates of the realm, representing the clergy, the aristocracy, and the commons met on 5 May 1789, and when the Third Estate quarrelled with the two privileged orders, they were gradually joined by the majority of the clergy, including several bishops. Religion and revolution seemed to go hand in hand: the National Assembly considered itself to be Catholic and proclaimed that no one was to be molested for his opinions, 'even his religious opinions'.

The Assembly's act which was to have grave consequences was the decree of 2 November 1789, which stated that all Church property was at the disposal of the State. The Revolution was now committed to the idea that the Church only possessed the use of its land and properties, and that in reality this belonged to the general community of believers. It was therefore possible for the State to take over this property and because of the financial crisis it was thought desirable to do so. As a corollary to this the State would have to maintain the clergy and the Church was to be independent of the papacy and foreign prelates. In July 1790 the Civil Constitution of the clergy was voted. By this it was stated that both bishops and parish priests were to be elected in the same way as other officials, that is to say by property owners. Elections were to take place on a Sunday, and since it was legally assumed that every Frenchman was a Catholic, no one was excluded on the grounds of religious disbelief. Bishops were expected to inform the Pope of their appointment, but they would receive canonical institution not from him, but from other bishops. When some of the clergy showed themselves hesitant about this constitution, the Assembly advised an oath of loyalty to be taken by all priests.

This oath caused a schism in the French Catholic Church. Already many of the higher clergy had hesitated since they found themselves despoiled of much of their wealth. But they now objected to a lay Assembly legislating in religious matters. When the Pope, who had for some time showed his disapproval, condemned the Civil Constitution in April 1791, this reinforced the refusal of many of the clergy to take the oath. Probably about half of the clergy and the overwhelming majority of the bishops refused to take it. These refractory clergy were particularly strong in the west of France, as well as in areas of the extreme north and of the east.

There thus arose a conflict in which it seemed certain that Catholics were hostile to the Revolution which if it were to succeed, would have to overthrow them. And measures of hostility against these unco-operative priests were accompanied by a development of non-sectarian and patriotic worship. Altars were placed in the open air on the occasion of ceremonies; the church of Sainte-Geneviève was transformed into a national Pantheon for the illustrious dead and received the ashes of Voltaire, a vigorous anti-Catholic; it was maintained that liberty of conscience was a property which had to be protected as any other property.

In April 1792, when France went to war, and again in March 1793, when there was a rising against the Revolution in the Vendée (in the west), the situation became more bitter. Many of the bishops

Musée Carnavalet/Bulloz

As the French Revolution progressed, Christian symbols were removed from churches and replaced by busts of such heroes of the Revolution as the anti-Catholic Voltaire, or Rousseau who accepted that man and Nature had been created by the Supreme Being but believed that Church institutions corrupted human nature: *Homage to Rousseau*, by Jeaurat de Bertry, showing the philosopher presiding over the 'Eye of Truth'

had emigrated and it was said that all priests, even all Catholics, had to be considered enemies. Since the Revolution was in danger, was threatened by foreign powers and by an uprising which was thought to be clerically organized, militant patriots began to talk of abolishing religion. A wide variety of anti-religious measures were taken: streets called after saints were re-named, priests were encouraged to marry, cemeteries were equipped with the inscription 'Death is an eternal sleep', the philosopher Descartes was honoured because he had caused men to reason rather than to follow blind faith, and the Gregorian calendar was replaced by the republican calendar (beginning with year 1, and instituting new names for days and months as well as new festivals). This movement is usually called the movement of de-Christianization. Its extent varied, but its most notable successes were often to be found in the provinces, and were the work of some representative of the Paris government.

The Deification of Reason

But the process of de-Christianization could not only be a negative one. It was necessary to have ceremonies to celebrate the Revolution; it was necessary to have religious ceremonies. There are a number of examples of how the signs of the Catholic religion were removed from churches, covered up, and replaced by a variety of other insignia. Sometimes the dedications were to 'Philosophy'; there were sometimes busts of philosophers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau; there were times when the churches, or the places where the ceremony was taking place, were decorated by busts of contemporary political leaders. It was quite frequent for the Virgin Mary to be replaced by a statue representing Liberty, or for young girls, wearing the red, white and blue of the Revolution, to parade in personification of the principles evoked by Republican France. Churches everywhere were changed into temples of Reason, since the French Revolution was supposedly the triumph of the reason of man. Superstition and tradition had been overcome; in their place men were using their unique gifts to organize the world as they thought best. It was natural that their god should be the god of Reason.

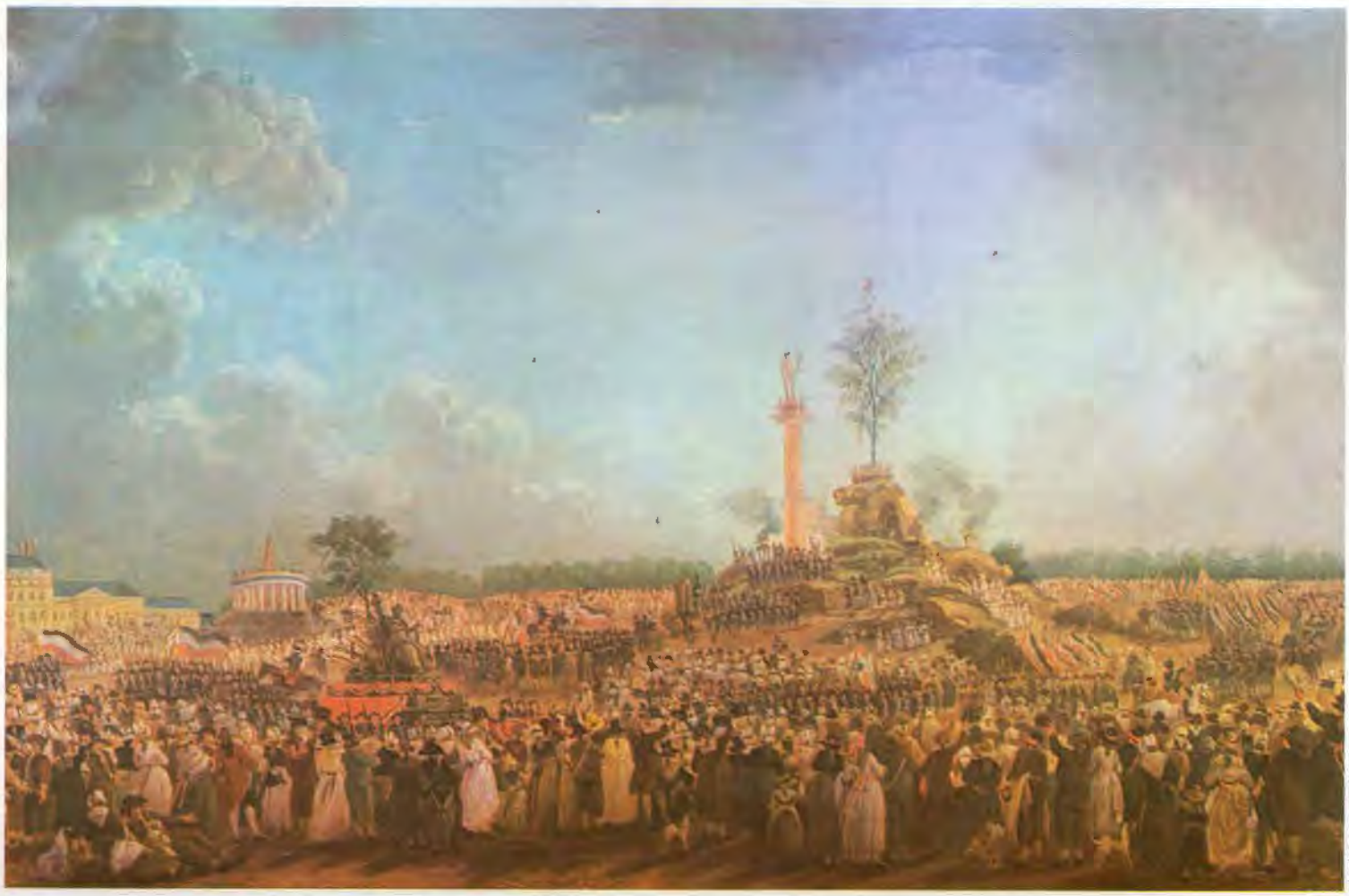
It was not only the Catholics who suffered from the movement of de-Christianization and the cult of Reason. Both Calvinists and Lutherans found themselves frowned upon and had to adapt themselves to new conditions, by abolishing Sunday worship and organizing their chief religious celebrations every tenth day to conform with the new calendar. But the effect of the whole movement seems to have varied according to the political and the military situation. Wherever there was danger to the Revolution, either from hostile powers or from French political opponents, the new cults were most energetically and insistently promoted.

Natural Religion

In April 1793 a Committee of Public Safety was appointed to supervise the executive. Clearly they were concerned by the religious situation. Their most famous member, Robespierre, was opposed to the progression of de-Christianization into irreligion and atheism. He believed that atheism was an aristocratic characteristic; whereas the worship of God was the religion of Nature, and such worship engendered the morality and understanding which made for good society.

He therefore launched the cult of the Supreme Being, which was officially organized in May 1794. By this decree the French people recognized the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul; they declared that the best service of the Supreme Being was the practice of the duties of man; they respected the weak and the oppressed, they opposed treachery and tyranny; and a whole series of festivals commemorating dates both of recent French history and of Nature, were to be instituted. A great festival was organized in which Robespierre set fire to a statue representing Atheism and launched the reign of virtue.

It is not easy to know why Robespierre



Contemporary painting of the festival of the Supreme Being in Paris, at which Robespierre set fire to a statue representing Atheism and launched a new era of revolutionary virtue. The Supreme Being's existence had been officially decreed in May 1794

Musée Carnavalet/Bulloz

behaved as he did. Some have said that it was because he was a disciple of Rousseau (who believed that man and Nature created by the Supreme Being were good and pure, but that urbanization and institutions were corrupting man, who should return to his original kinship with Nature). Others have suggested that his whole view of religion was based on social utility, and that he would, in different circumstances, have accepted Catholicism. At all events the overthrow of Robespierre was accompanied by a lessening of the national emergency and early in 1795 some legal freedom was restored to Catholicism. It was not long before the return of clergy who had refused to take the oath of loyalty took place and a reconciliation was announced between the Revolution and Christianity. Liberty of religion was restored and Church and State were separated. This was the system which prevailed until Napoleon came to an agreement with the Pope in 1802.

It is difficult to judge how effective the religious innovations of the Revolution had been. It is certain that in many parts of France worship remained unaffected by events. Even where the cult of reason or of the Supreme Being was established the faithful sometimes attended holding their missals. Yet at the same time there was a middle-class which easily accepted forms of Deism, and historians have been impressed by the ease with which some of the peasantry apparently gave up their traditional religion and acknowledged the new forms of worship. The most that can be said is that all these matters have to be seen within the framework of events. Religious affairs of this period are part of the crisis of revolutionary affairs, and the two evolved together.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON

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At Avignon, when he climbed onto a large stone to be worshipped the Devil turned into a great black goat: in the Savoy he turned into a black dog. The European witch mania had its early development largely in France

FRENCH WITCHCRAFT

THE PATTERN of witchcraft in Europe, as it emerged in the time of the great persecutions, combined two different ingredients. One was what could be called 'cottage-industry witchcraft', the use of spells and potions to work black magic or white. The second and newer ingredient was the belief that witches were the storm-troops of the Devil. The witch was now not a mere rustic wise-woman, who would provide a healing charm as readily as a poison (though this was what some of the accused witches may have been in reality). She – or he, there were plenty of male witches – was entirely dedicated to evil and had deliberately enlisted in the malevolent service of Satan (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS).

In its early days, this picture of witchcraft was developed largely in France. It drew heavily on the accusations made against earlier heretical sects, and it was confirmed by putting leading questions to accused witches and torturing them until they confessed. They were forced to name other people as witches, who were then interrogated and tortured in their turn. Through the confessions and the books in which the persecutors reported their experiences, a clear pattern of witch behaviour and witch beliefs was built up, a pattern which may have attracted some people to bring it to life, to become witches of this new type which had now been generally recognized.

The central feature of the new witch religion was the sabbath, the meeting at which the Devil was worshipped (see also SABBATH). The earliest accounts of it which have survived come from the south of France, from Toulouse in 1335. A woman named Anne-Marie de Georgel confessed that many years before a tall dark man, who had fiery eyes and was clothed in skins, appeared to her while she was washing. He asked her to give herself to him and she agreed. He breathed in her ear and on the following Saturday, merely by willing it, she was somehow taken to the witches' meeting. The meeting was presided over by a goat, which taught her secret ways to work evil. She had used these secrets ever since and had done all the harm she could.

Another woman, Catherine Delort, said that every Saturday she fell into a curious sleep in which she was transported to the gathering of the witches. There she worshipped the goat and submitted her body to him and to the other witches. They worked evil by spoiling harvests and killing cattle, and at their meetings they feasted on the bodies of babies.

Both women stated a dualist view of God and the Devil which, coming from an area that had been the principal hotbed of Catharism in the previous century, suggests Cathar influence – whether in the minds of the women or the minds of their questioners (see also CATHARS; DUALISM). Anne-Marie de Georgel said that God ruled in heaven and Satan on earth. They were equal partners, locked in conflict throughout the ages, but she believed that Satan would soon triumph.

The effect of this type of confession in arousing popular interest and emulation is suggested by the fact that in 1352 at Carcassonne, not far from Toulouse, seven people were found guilty of mentally adoring the goat. They did this, allegedly, because they hoped to gain admission to the meetings of witches but failed because their faith was not strong enough.

A World Full of Witches

In the following century, from c 1425 on, there was an extensive persecution in the Dauphiné, spreading eastwards from Lyons to Grenoble and Briançon. One old man, Pierre Vallin, who was sentenced in 1438, confessed that he had given himself body and soul to the Devil long before. He had also given the Devil his baby daughter and the Devil had killed her. On the Devil's orders he used to stir up destructive storms by flailing the waters of a stream. He rode to the witch meetings on a stick and there copulated with the Devil, who took the form of a girl for the purpose.

The anonymous *Errores Gazariorum*, written c 1450 in a French-speaking region of Savoy, gives a more detailed description of the sabbath. It says that a new recruit is taken to 'the synagogue' (an early name for the gathering) by someone who is already a witch. He is presented to the Devil, who takes the form of a man or an animal, usually a black cat. He swears an oath to be faithful to the witch society, to bring in new members, to reveal none of the society's secrets, to kill small children and bring their bodies to the synagogue, to avenge all injuries to the society and its members. After this he worships the Devil, kissing him under the tail. Then the witches feast and dance. The lights are put out and the Devil cries *Mestlet, mestlet* (mingle, mingle) and there is a promiscuous orgy. Before they leave, in mockery of the Christian Eucharist, the witches urinate and evacuate in a cask.

The confession of a woman named Antoine Rose, a witch of the Savoy who was tortured and tried in 1477, confirms this description and adds some extra details. The first time she was taken to the synagogue she saw many men and women there, enjoying themselves and dancing backwards. The Devil, whose name was Robinet, was a dark man who spoke in a hoarse voice. Kissing Robinet's foot in homage, she renounced God and the Christian faith. He put his mark on her, on the little finger of her left hand, and gave her a stick, 18 inches long, and a pot of ointment. She used to smear the ointment on the stick, put it between her legs and say, 'Go, in the name of the Devil, go!' At once she would be carried through the air to the synagogue.

At the meeting the Devil would turn into a black dog which they all kissed, under the tail. He ordered them to do all the evil they could and gave them ointments and powders with which they could harm men and beasts. He also told them to worship him and not Christ, and not to adore the consecrated host in church but to spit it out. At one meeting a consecrated host was brought and they all trampled on it.

In 1452 a witch tried at Provins, near Paris, said there were only 50 or 60 witches in all France, most of whom carried mirrors in their hats. Five people were promptly discovered with mirrors in their hats, and were arrested. A small boy said that his father and mother had twice taken him to witches' meetings and that if they

The French magistrate and witch-finder, Pierre de Lancre, devoted the latter part of his life to energetically ferreting out evidence, real or imaginary, of devil-worship and witchcraft: he boasted of having consigned 600 witches to the flames. In his *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges (Description of the Faithlessness of Evil Angels)* he gives a first-hand account of his witch-hunt in the Basque region of France *Right* An illustration from the *Tableau* (1612) beneath which is de Lancre's description of the scene

Satan is shown in the form of a goat preaching from a golden chair; the flame issuing from one of his five horns, is to light the sabbath fires. On his right sits the Queen of the sabbath and kneeling before them a witch presents a child she has abducted. Partaking of the sabbath feast are witches and demons: only the meat of corpses, hanged men, hearts of unbaptized children and unclean animals never eaten by Christians, are eaten. At the extreme right, poor witches who dare not approach the high ceremonies, watch the festivities. After the banquet, the devils lead their neighbours beneath a cursed tree where, forming a ring facing alternately inward and outward, the company dance in the most indecent manner possible. At the left of the picture musicians play in accompaniment to the dancing and below them a troop of women and girls dance back to back in a circle. A group of noble lords and ladies mingle with rich and powerful witches who are disguised or masked to avoid recognition and who conduct the important business of the sabbath. During the sabbath, witches arrive on pitchforks and broomsticks, or on goats with their children whom they will present to Satan. Children with sticks, to prevent toads from getting out of a stream, assist witches to brew poisons: one witch holds serpents and toads, the other skins them and throws them in the pot.

were stripped and searched, a raised white mark, the size of a pea or bigger, would be found on their bodies. This is an early reference to the famous 'Devil's mark'.

The suggestion that there was only a handful of witches in France was contradicted by the poet Martin le Franc, who maintained that in the mountain valleys to the east and south of Briançon anything from 3000 to 10,000 people attended the sabbaths, and that more than 600 women had confessed to copulating with demons at these gatherings. Alphonsus de Spina, a convert from Judaism who became a Franciscan, wrote a book called *Fortalicium Fidei* in c 1459, in which he says that witches were particularly numerous in Dauphiné and also in Gascony, in the south-west of France, where they met at a rock to worship a boar and kiss its backside. Many of them had been executed and in the house of the Inquisitor at T'oulouse there were paintings showing their meetings and also the punishments inflicted on them.

The insistence of so many persecutors on the enormous numbers of witches helps

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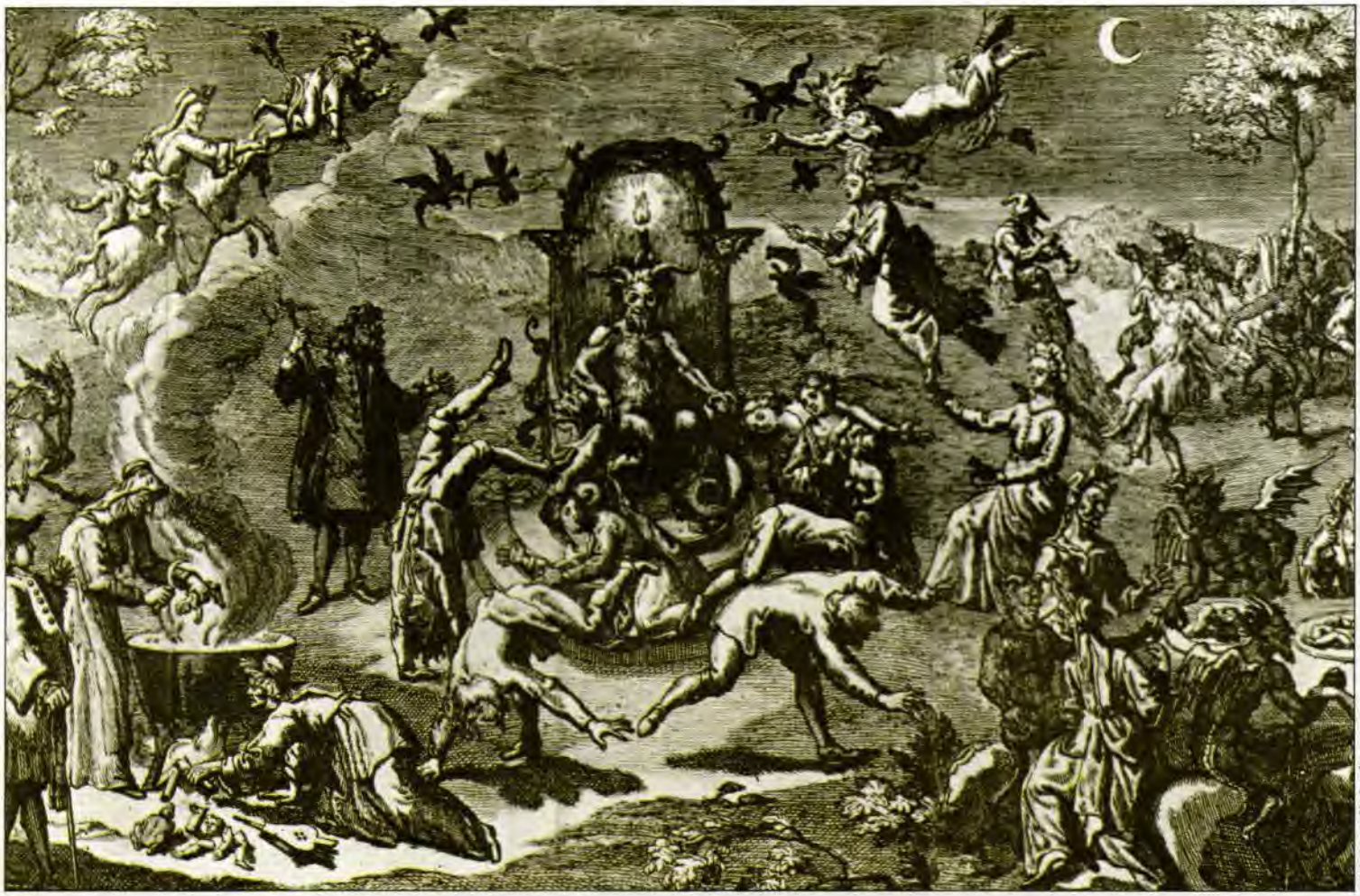

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An etching of the witches sabbath from an 18th century French book *The History of the Ridiculous Extravagancies of M Oufle,* a parody of de Lancre's *Tableau*

to explain the growing fear of them and the cruelty with which they were treated. The American scholar H. C. Lea commented: 'The world was full of them and no one knew whether his family and friends or anyone whom he might meet was not a sorcerer gifted with the awful powers granted by the demon. That the terror was fantastic and imaginary did not render it less real and it accounts for the craze which devastated Europe in the 17th century.'

Another important factor was the belief, found in many primitive societies, that what we regard as accidents of Nature are not accidental at all but are caused by the malice of witches. At Metz in 1456 and 1457 witch-hunts were sparked off by unusually bad weather which harmed the crops. Again in 1488 a disastrously cold summer was put down to witchcraft at Metz, and 28 people were burned.

All sorts of natural misfortunes, from minor illnesses to the failure of a harvest, were lumped together as *maleficia* or 'evil doings', and attributed to witches. In 1460 Martin of Arles announced that all *maleficia* involved an implied agreement to serve the Devil. Nicholas Remy, author of *Demonolatreiae* (1595), maintained that, 'Whatever is not normal is due to the Devil.'

The Witches of Arras

The linking of witchcraft with the worship of the Devil was originally the work of the Inquisition and was later adopted by the secular courts, though in the 15th century civil courts in France were still sometimes dealing with cases of witchcraft without bringing the Devil and the sabbath into it at all. By contrast, when a number of witches were examined by the ecclesiastical authorities at Arras in 1460, the suspects were tortured into confessing that they worshipped the Devil and had attended the sabbath. Their master appeared to them in human form but he never showed his face. (Presumably, if he existed at all, he was a man with his head covered or wearing a mask.) He made them all give him the obscene kiss. They feasted luxuriously until all the lights went out and there was a wild orgy.

One of the accused had been cruelly beaten by the Devil when he threatened to leave the society. Another had attended many meetings, holding a lighted candle in the Devil's honour and kissing him under the tail, had signed in his own blood a formal pact making over his soul to the Devil, and had used powders and ointments to harm men and cattle.

Altogether, 34 suspects were arrested and 12 were executed. It is interesting that apparently very few people believed in their guilt. A hundred years later the weight of popular opinion would go the other way.

The first work on witchcraft to be written in French was an anonymous pamphlet of c 1460, *La Vauderye de Lyonois* (Vauderye from the heretical sect of Waldensians), describing trials at Lyons. The Devil appeared at the sabbath as a man with horns and talons or in a variety of animal forms, and he spoke in a harsh and terrifying voice. The meetings were usually held on Thursday nights. In church, witches would not cross themselves properly but would make a kind of circle. They turned their eyes away at the elevation of the host and took consecrated hosts to the sabbath to be contemptuously fouled.

Full Flood

Almost all the accusations about the witches' behaviour at the sabbath had earlier been made against the heretical sects – including the worship of the Devil, his animal forms, the obscene kiss, the violent hatred of Christianity, the cannibal eating of babies, the promiscuous orgy. In the early 14th century the Knights Templar were accused of worshipping the Devil; trampling on crucifixes, copulating with demons, and obscene kissing. In the 14th and 15th centuries there were various trials of important personages, notably Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais, in which accusations of witchcraft played a part and which helped to create popular belief in the prevalence of witches.

From the end of the 15th century the tide of persecution began to run at full flood. Year after year, suspects were nosed out, interrogated, agonizingly tortured and condemned. Forty witches were burned at

Toulouse in 1557, four at Poitiers in 1568, 18 at Avignon in 1582. In 1580 the political philosopher and witch judge Jean Bodin published *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, in which he observed that burning over a slow fire was an inadequate punishment for a witch, as it took only half an hour or so.

In Lorraine Nicholas Remy condemned 900 witches in a few years after 1581. There were witch-hunts in Normandy between 1589 and 1594, and again between 1600 and 1645. In Burgundy Henri Boguet exterminated some 600 witches and wrote the famous *Discours des Sorciers* (1602) which went through 12 editions in 20 years. In 1609 Pierre de Lancre descended on the Basque-speaking provinces north of the Pyrenees and claimed to have executed 600 witches in four months (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT).

In the 17th century there was a rash of outbreaks of supposed demonic possession in convents (see articles on possession). Staggering confessions of witchcraft and deviltry were poured out by hysterical nuns. Some of these ravings were so improbable that they helped to undermine belief in the reality of witchcraft.

By about the middle of the 17th century the tide had turned. Occasional trials occurred down into the 18th century and belief in the old-fashioned type of witchcraft lingered on in country districts. As late as 1885 at Sologne a suspected witch was burned alive by her daughter and son-in-law. But the virtual end of the persecution of witchcraft as the Devil's religion came in 1670, when Louis XIV reprieved 12 witches who had been condemned at Rouen, commuting their death sentences to banishment from the province, and restoring the property which had been confiscated from them. A royal edict of 1682 helped to put witchcraft back into its much older category of 'superstitious practices' and 'pretended magic'.

The Devil's Mass

The Devil was the witches' god, and de Lancre said that they would go down on their knees to him and hail him as 'Great Lord, whom I adore'. A new member of the society would say to the Devil, 'I put myself entirely in your power and into your hands, recognizing no other god, for you are my god.' According to Boguet, before they began their feast the witches said a kind of grace, 'but with words full of blasphemy, making Beelzebub the author and protector of all things.'

A witch named Antide Colas confessed in 1598 that, 'Satan ordered her to pray to him night and morning, before she set about doing anything else.' According to Silvain Nevillon, tried at Orleans in 1614, 'they say to the Devil, we recognize you as our master, our God, our Creator.'

Since witchcraft had been identified as worship of the Devil, it was naturally a stock accusation that witches consciously and formally renounced the Christian faith. De Lancre quoted a girl of 16, named Jeannette d'Abadie, who said that she was made to renounce and deny her Creator, the holy Virgin, the saints, her baptism, her father and mother and family, heaven, earth and everything there is in the world.' She also said that she saw the children of witches being enrolled in the Devil's service by baptism at the sabbath. Silvain Nevillon said that the witches baptized babies and anointed their heads with oil, muttering phrases in Latin.

The belief that the witches perverted the Mass into a ceremony in the Devil's honour followed naturally enough from their notorious detestation of Christianity. Boguet said that the celebrant was an apostate priest who wore a black cope with no cross on it. Instead of the host he consecrated a piece of turnip stained black, and the congregation cried out, 'Master, help us!' At Aix-en-Provence, Madeleine de Demandolx accused the priest Louis Gaufridi (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS) of inventing the saying of Mass at the sabbath, consecrating the elements to Lucifer and sprinkling the wine on the worshippers, who responded with 'His blood be upon us and our children.'

Silvain Nevillon said that the sabbath was held in a house and he saw there a tall dark man, reading in an inaudible mumble from a book which had black and crimson leaves. Presently he elevated a black host and then a chalice of cracked pewter, 'all foul and filthy'. Another witch of Orleans, Gentien le Clerc, described how the Devil himself said the Mass. He wore a chasuble on which was a broken cross, and turned his back on the altar when elevating a black host and a black chalice. He muttered the words of the service from a book, bound in some soft and hairy material like a wolf's skin, and with red, white and black leaves. (See also BLACK MASS.)

The Black Goat

The Devil frequently appeared to his followers in animal form, and especially as a goat (see also GOAT). At Poitiers in 1574 he was 'a great black goat who spoke like a person.' At Avignon, when he climbed onto a large stone to be worshipped, he turned himself into a great black goat, though normally he appeared as a man. In Puy de Dôme in 1594 he was a black goat with a candle between his horns. He might also show himself as a dog or a cat, a bull or a stag, or even as a pig or a sheep. Many of the descriptions suggest a man wearing a mask and an animal's skin.

The Devil also very often appeared in human form. In 1567 a witch nf Amou in the southwest said that they all danced round a great stone on which sat a great black man, whom they called Monsieur. Françoise Secretain in 1598 said that the Devil was a great black man. Barthélemy Minguet of Brécy, tried in 1616, said that he saw the Devil at the sabbath 'in the shape of a man, who held a horse by its bridle, and that they went forward to worship him, each one holding a pitch candle of black wax in their hands.'

How much truth there is in these accounts, and in all the descriptions of the sabbath, is very hard to determine. It is clear that hundreds of innocent people were harried and tormented into confessing anything whatever that was demanded of them. But it seems quite likely that among the hordes of the innocent there may also have been a few whn were guilty.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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The Black Book of Death

From the sentence pronounced against witches at Avignon, 1582:

. . . you and each of you have renounced the one and triune God, the creator of us all, and have worshipped the merciless Devil, the old enemy of the human race . . . in pledge of the faith professed in the demon you have given him a fragment of your garments; and in order that your name should be removed and obliterated from the Book of Life, by the command of the Father of Lies, with your own hand you have placed your sign in the black book of perpetual death and of the reproved and damned; and, in order that he might bind you more firmly to such great infidelity and impiety, he branded each of you with his mark or stigma, as being his own property . . . you and each of you have bound yourselves by oath to obey his orders and commands, trampling on the cross and the sign of the Lord; and in obedience to him, mounted on a staff and with your thighs anointed with a certain most execrable unguent prescribed to you by the said Devil, you have been carried through the air . . . to the appointed spot on certain days, and there, in the synagogue . . . by the light of a noisome fire, after many jubilations, dancings, feastings, drinkings and games in honour of the presiding Beelzebub, prince of demons, in the form and appearance of a most black and filthy goat, you have adored him as God, by acts and words . . . asking his aid to punish all your enemies and those who refuse you anything, and, taught by him, inflicting revenge, injuries and enchantments on men and beasts . . . you men have fornicated with succubi, you women with incubi . . . And what is the most detestable of all, when you receive the most august sacrament of the Eucharist in the church, by instruction of the said serpent ejected from paradise, you have retained it in your mouths and nefariously spit it out on the ground so as to insult our true and holy God . . .

H. C. Lea *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*

The artist, the mystic and the occultist are in touch intuitively with the hidden recesses of the mind: Freud developed a scientific method of exploring the unconscious which has influenced every aspect of contemporary life

FREUD

THE FATHER of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud can be ranked with Darwin and Einstein as one of the giants of the last 200 years whose work has radically changed Western concepts about the human animal, his environment and the relationship between the two. The extent to which Freud revolutionized conventional thought is apparent in the way in which it is now axiomatic that there are large regions of the mind of which people are normally quite unconscious, yet which have a direct influence on their conscious behaviour. And yet in the 19th century it was equally generally accepted that a person's character could be adequately deduced purely from his outward actions and behaviour. When in the 1890s Freud dared to uncover hidden motivations and when moreover he linked these with sexual drives, his ideas were immediately attacked for being not only impossible but indecent.

This attitude, although deeply rooted at the time, has not always been the accepted one. The phenomenon of man's ignorance of the unconscious aspects of the mind, in terms of the whole of human history, is a brief aberration. To understand what happens at these normally unconscious levels has never been easy, but the fact that these levels do exist has seldom been so steadfastly ignored as it was at this period. For several centuries Europe had forgotten almost as thoroughly as if it had never known what the religious, mystical and esoteric schools of East and West had always taught: that invisible and subtle levels of perception, even if not conscious,

A painting of Sigmund Freud at the age of 12 with his younger brother and five sisters. As a young doctor specializing in neurology, he isolated a cerebral paralysis in children which was later named after him

can influence human behaviour and states of mind; that the consciousness of these subtler or more fruitful perceptions can be obscured by a fog compounded of selfishness, fear, and wilfully immature demands of the personality; that dreams are messages from those unconscious regions of the mind whose myths and symbols embody instructive material which can dispel the fog.

This has been the concern of various so-called religious and mystical schools throughout human history and this essentially is the nature of Freud's contribution. Considered from this point of view, therefore, Freud was not the innovator and inventor of the ideas which have so captivated and caged 20th century thought, but his achievement was rather to re-introduce certain concepts which had been forgotten and, most important, to be the first man to find a way to scientifically explore the working of the human mind.

Search for the Inner Mind

Sigmund Freud was born at Freiberg, Moravia, in 1856, the son of an unsuccessful Jewish wool merchant. He spent most of his life in Vienna, but in 1938 when the Nazis annexed Austria he escaped to London where he died in 1939 at the age of 83. He studied to be a doctor and specialized in neurology, making a name for himself by isolating a form of paralysis, later called after him, and by the co-discovery of the local anaesthetic effects of cocaine. But in 1884 he became interested in the therapeutic uses of hypnosis, upon which he was to build his theories of psychoanalysis. In 1895 he and his colleague Josef Breuer published *Studies in Hysteria*, in which the two men examined the results of work in which they had used hypnosis to probe the minds of their patients. At the time this was a remarkably humane approach to hysteria, which was normally treated with a brutal lack of sympathy.

Shortly after the publication of this book, Freud quarrelled with Breuer and continued his researches alone. He gave up the use of hypnosis in favour of 'free association', in which patients were asked to relax on a couch and say whatever came into their minds, however absurd, unpleasant or obscene it might appear by everyday standards. When that was done it seemed that powerful emotional drives swept the uncontrolled thoughts towards the area of psychological conflict. Great relief – 'catharsis' – seemed to follow and Freud noticed that frequently forgotten and painful memories were found to relate to unpleasant, buried sexual experiences in childhood.

At about this time he also discovered a fruitful source of emotionally significant ideas in his patients' dreams, and decided that there must be some truth in the ancient theory that dreams had symbolic meaning and that they appeared to be disguised forms of repressed desires and needs. 'Instead of dreaming about a penis,' writes G. A. Miller in his recent book *Psychology*, 'the dreamer may substitute the image of a gun, a snake, a fountain pen, the number three, and so on. For masturbation the dream symbol may be climbing a tree or playing the piano. By recognizing these substitutions, therefore, it is possible to recover the true meaning of the dream.'

This passage indicates well the particular prejudice through which Freud filtered many of his ideas. The over-emphasis on sexual interpretation which he gave to almost every human motive from infancy onwards may in fact have been the product of his own personal obsession; colleagues and contempuraries have noted that Freud himself was a puritanical and inhibited man. Perhaps he exaggerated partial truth to look like a universal state of affairs, and he would have been encouraged in this by having to contend with the sexual repressions of the times.

In the summer of 1897, after the death of his father, Freud decided to apply to himself the techniques he had formulated. Using his own dreams as the principal source of study, he worked to discover the unconscious processes which were responsible for forming them. He published his major account of this work in 1900 in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and it took eight years to sell the first 600 copies. Apart from a small group of 'disciples' no one seemed interested, yet today this book is considered his most important work, and the final chapter contains the theory of the human mind which he was to amplify and develop in the period ahead.

The practice of free association had led him to make discoveries about various psychoneuroses which threw light on the workings of the normal mind. The three most fundamental were: the existence of the unconscious and its effect on the conscious; the splitting of the mind into layers as the result of internal conflict, the most important of which is repression; and the existence and importance of infantile sexuality, producing a sexual attitude towards its parents, with its accompanying jealousy and hostility, which he termed the Oedipus complex, from the ancient Greek myth of Oedipus.

In his early work Freud used a simple twofold distinction between the conscious and unconscious mind. Later he described the total personality as organized into three major systems – the id, concerned with the funnelling of energies and tensions; the ego, which is the administrative, daily self which deals with the interactions of the personality with the environment; and the superego, which represents the conscious, or the moral aspects of the personality, which passes judgements. Towards the end of his life Freud formulated two groups of instincts which provide energy for the id. One served the porposes of life and growth, and was called the libido. The second arose in the service of death – the 'death wish'.

The unconscious automatically 'represses' knowledge or feelings which upset the conscious mind, without necessarily being harmful to the personality. In some cases however, the repression seeks an outlet in a different form, frequently some type of inconsistent or unstable behaviour. The function of psychoanalysis in this case is to uncover and release the repression.

By the amplification of his elaborate theory on the development and maturing of the sexual instincts, he forced people to examine the idea that sex does not suddenly appear at puberty, but exists from infancy. He believed that the child's sexual gratifications came from different areas – 'erogenous zones' – at different ages, and that in unfortunate circumstances a child can become 'fixed' at an infantile stage, and by so doing develop personality traits corresponding to that particular level.

Freud and the Cabala

Although philosophers and poets in the past had guessed at the existence of the unconscious (indeed ten years before Freud's birth, Karl Carus, court physician to the King of Saxony, had stated that the key to the understanding of the life of the mind would be found in the region of the unconscious), Freud, with his techniques of dream analysis, free association, attention to symbolism and probing for buried memories was the first to discover a method of exploring this area. But undoubtedly his ideas were subject to influences in the climate of his time, including many forces which were later to be labelled 'Freudian'.

There was another more specific and powerful influence in his own background: the tradition of Jewish mysticism and the Cabala (see CABALA). David Bakan, in *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* says:

> Freud often wrote with obscurity . . . motivated consciously or unconsciously to hide the deeper portions of his thought, and these deeper portions were Kabbalistic in their source and content. The Kabbalistic tradition has it that the secret teachings are to be transmitted orally to one person at a time, and even then only to selected minds by hints. This indeed is what Freud was doing in the actual practice of psychoanalysis, and this aspect of the Kabbalistic tradition is still maintained in the education of the modern psychoanalyst.

Bakan attempts to show that many of Freud's unacknowledged sources were Cabalistic. He quotes a passage of the *Zohar*, a Jewish mystical book of the 13th century, and sets it next to a passage of Freud's work, pointing out as he does so that the differences between the two texts are readily explicable in terms of Freud's own theories of substitution and symbolism.

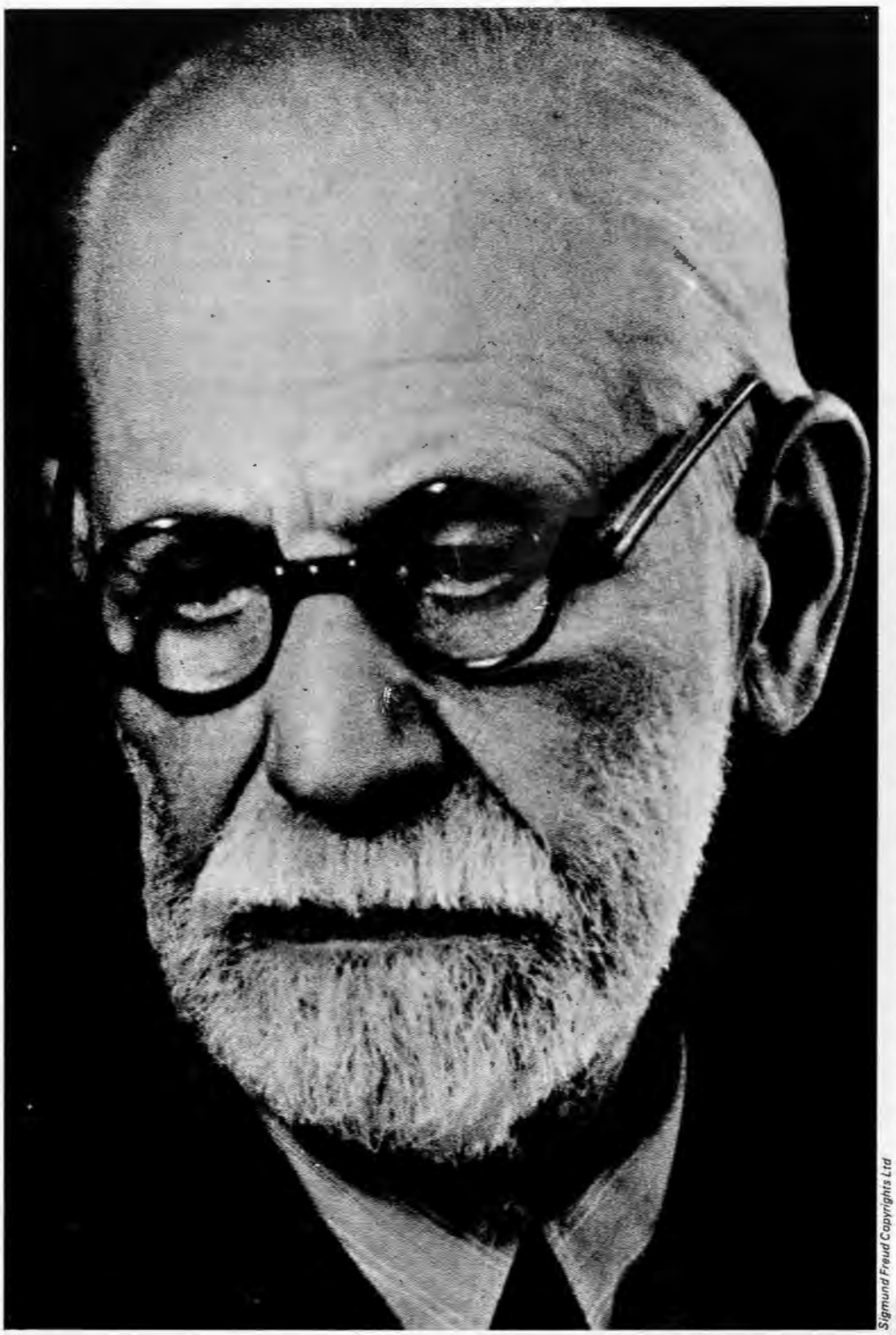
But even if Freud had been conscious of the role that Jewish mysticism played in his work, as Bakan points out there were excellent reasons for not specifying the tradition. 'Anti-semitism' he writes, 'was so widespread and intense at the time that to indicate the Jewish sources of his ideas would have dangerously exposed an intrinsically controversial theory to unnecessary and possibly fatal opposition.'

Certainly, although Freud's theories were unequivocally materialistic and nothing approaching mysticism was allowed to disorder the psychoanalytic scheme of things, Freud himself showed an interest in subjects such as telepathy and extra-sensory

Freud and the Jewish Mystics

We find a conception of sexuality which is startlingly close to Freud's in the Kabbalistic tradition . . . Never in the Jewish tradition was sexual asceticism made a religious value. The commandment to be fruitful and multiply was always taken extremely seriously in both rabbinical and mystical traditions. In contrast with other ascetic forms of mysticism, the Jewish mystics ascribed sexuality to God himself. The Jewish Kabbelist saw in sexual relations between a man and his wife a symbolic fulfilment of the relationship between God and the Shekinah . . . It is to be noted that the ideal form of sexuality is conceived of as heterosexual, and in particular as realized in marriage. Marital sexuality becomes the symbol of creativity. Thus Freud's use of the idiom of sexuality as the basic one for the expression of all the deeper and more profound problems of mankind is entirely in the spirit of the Kabbala.

David Bakan,
Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition



Sigmund Freud Copyrights Ltd

perception. He looked for prophetic dreams in his patients – though found none – and was fascinated by the meaningful recurrence of certain numbers in his life. Several interchanges between Jung and Ferenczi, men who were more interested in the occult than Freud, suggest that he may have cut short a growing fascination for the mysterious and magical because it would have interfered with the organization of his own theories. Indeed in a letter late in life to the psychical researcher Hereward Carrington, Freud went so far as to say: 'If I had my life to live over again I should devote myself to psychical research rather than psychoanalysis.'

Apart from restoring the idea of the unconscious to Western culture, Freud's other important contribution was to produce a technical vocabulary more acceptable to his time – 'repressions' and 'complexes' rather than 'devils' and 'spells' – with which to begin to isolate concepts and mental 'sets' which folklore and superstition encompassed but did not understand.

After the initial derision and opposition Freud's concepts became so cemented into the structure of contemporary thought that it was difficult to be sure if any concept was entirely uninfluenced by his ideas. They permeated everything, for the ideas he tapped were potent, and inevitably were not contained within the confines of medicine and mental disorders, which were his special field. They spread into every sphere of contemporary life, and influenced the way in which Western society came to regard the arts, the social sciences, social reform, child rearing, and every problem regarding human relationships.

It is only recently that it has become much clearer that Freud's explanations do not account satisfactorily for all human needs; that though his insights and techniques can be valuable, a deeper human hunger seems to lie underneath the levels of being with which he is concerned. Jung showed almost contemporaneously with Freud that if there are many things in our own personalities we are unconscious of, there are also lying beneath these, as it were, vast unknown areas which we hold in common.

(See also DREAMS; JUNG.)

PAT WILLIAMS

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'If I had my life to live over again I should devote myself to psychical research rather than to psychoanalysis': photo of Freud in 1938

In Scandinavian mythology the gods and goddesses associated with fertility and peace were the Vanir: amoral deities concerned not with justice or morality but with bringing new life and power into the world

FREYR, FREYJA, FRIGG

ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS give us little help in visualizing these members of the Scandinavian community of gods and goddesses, since the only recognizable image surviving from the Viking Age is a little phallic figure in a pointed cap from Rallinge in Sweden, presumably an amulet, which is thought to represent the god Freyr. The goddesses go unrepresented, although their influence permeates the myths, and their symbols and those of Freyr are found continuously in pagan art. There is no doubt of the importance of these deities, and the medieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson who collected many of the surviving myths, declared that Freyja alone of the gods still remained alive.

Freyr and Freyja were said to be the twin children of the Njörd, the god associated with fertility and the sea. They belonged to the group known as the Vanir, the deities of fertility, who were distinguished from the Aesir, the group to which Odin and Thor belonged. Frigg was the wife of Odin, occupying in the late myths the position of Queen of Heaven. It is not very easy however to differentiate her from Freyja. Both goddesses were invoked in child-bearing, both could fly in bird form, both were called weeping goddesses, and both were renowned as givers of good gifts to mankind. It seems as if they may represent different aspects of the ancient, ambivalent goddess of the earth who gave fruitfulness, and who ruled the realm of the dead. She was worshipped in Scandinavia from the Neolithic period, and small figurines of a woman with bare breasts, clad in a short skirt and neck-ring and with her hair in a plait, survive from the late Bronze Age, about a thousand years before Christ. In the myths of the Viking Age – from about the 9th century AD – Frigg appears primarily as wife and mother, while Freyja is the mistress of gods and men alike, accused of taking lovers everywhere and greatly desired by the giants. Possibly the older, Germanic Frija, wife of Wodan, who has given her name to Friday, was the predecessor of both goddesses.

Although we know little of Frija, one interesting myth about her has survived from an early chronicle of the Lombards, the *Origo Gentis Langobardum*, used by Paul the Deacon in the 8th century AD. Here Frija persuades her husband by a trick to give a name to the tribe who sought her help. She turned Wodan's bed to face the east, and then told the people to come out at sunrise, the women with their long hair hanging over the faces. 'Who are these Longbeards?' asked Wodan in surprise, and since he had bestowed a name on them, he was bound to give them the gift of victory that went along with it. There are similar stories of Frigg persuading Odin to support her suppliants,

Historiska Museet, Stockholm

In Norse mythology, Freyr was the god of peace, prosperity and fruitfulness, and there was a close link between the god and the king of the pagan community: grotesque Viking statue thought to represent Freyr

and it was said that she sent an apple to King Rerir, the founder of the Volsung race, when he sat upon a burial mound and besought her for a son: he shared the apple with his wife and the hero Volsung was born. The most important myth involving Frigg concerns the death of her son Balder. At his birth she sought to protect him from harm by extracting a pledge from all created things not to hurt him but she overlooked the humble mistletoe that was finally instrumental in killing him. After his death she called on all the world to weep for him so that he might return from the realm of the dead. This is perfectly in accord with the widespread and ancient pattern of the Earth-Mother Goddess lamenting over her dead son found in many parts of the ancient Mediterranean world (see BALDER).

Goddess of Giving

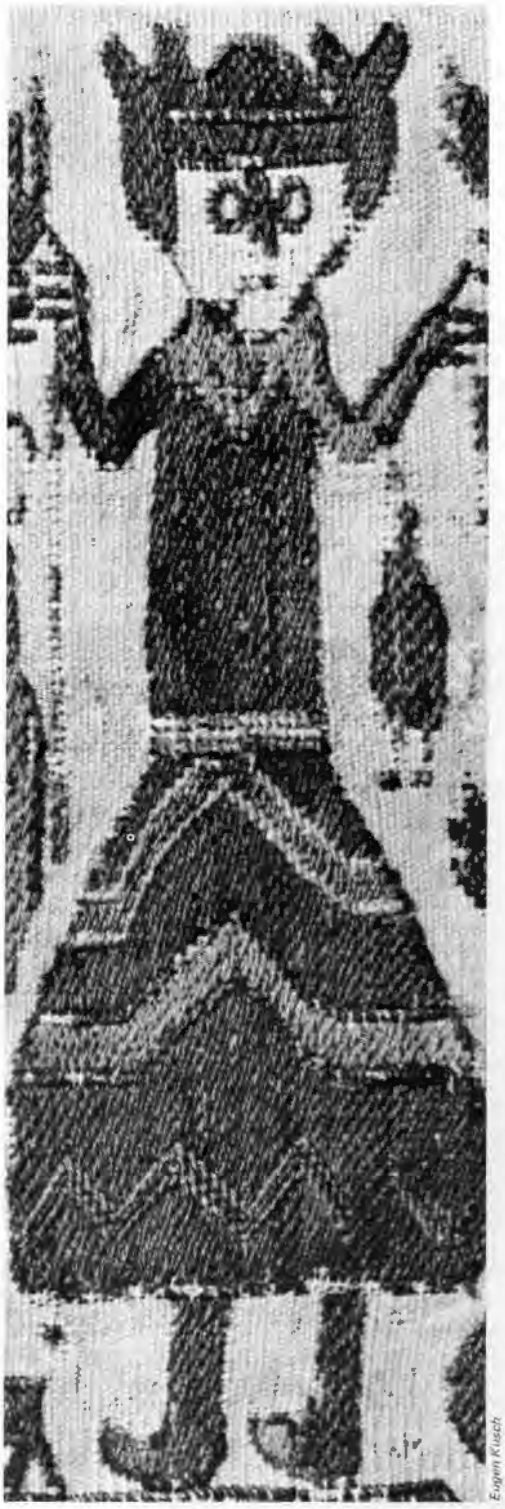
In the late Viking age however Frigg is overshadowed in the myths by the more vivid character of Freyja, called the bride of Vanir. Her name means 'Lady' while that of her twin brother and consort Freyr means 'Lord', and it is made clear that she was worshipped under many different names. Some, like Gefn, emphasize her as a Goddess of Giving and others suggest an association with crops or with the sea. The giantess Gefion, who turned her sons into giant oxen to plough round the peninsula of Swedish Zealand and make it into an island to give to her Danish people, probably represents another aspect of the same goddess of fertility, associated with the sea as well as the underworld. Idun, guardian of the apples of eternal youth which kept old age away from the gods, and which were once stolen by the giants with fearful results, may well be yet another personification of the same deity.

Freyja's famous treasure was her necklace (thought by some to have been a girdle) named Brisingamen, and this has been an attribute of the goddess since the Bronze Age. There is a story of how she obtained it from the four cunning dwarfs who made it, paying for her acquisition by sleeping a night with each in turn, and of how Loki stole it from her by entering her bower in the form of a fly, so that Odin could make use of it to strike a bargain with Freyja.

Freyr had his own ship, Skipbladnir, said to be large enough to hold all the gods, but small enough to fold away into a pouch when not in use. Tales of a supernatural boat which could travel with incredible speed may be linked with this magic vessel of the gods. There is a widespread tradition also of a boat which carries a divine child across the sea to become the founder of a kingdom, found in the opening section of the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, and this tradition too seems to be associated with the Vanir. The practice of ship-burial, when the dead man or woman was laid on a boat in the grave, or burnt in one on the funeral pyre, seems to have been part of the Vanir cult. (See BEOWULF.) Horses, pigs and birds, all creatures associated with the fertility deities, were slain at the great ship funerals in Norway and Sweden in the Viking Age, while the seedcorn, hazel nuts and apples found in the Oseberg ship burial of the late 9th century are typical symbols of fruitfulness. It has indeed been suggested that the young woman buried with great pomp at Oseberg may have been a priestess of the Vanir. A beautiful little carved wagon was found buried with her, recalling the famous description by Tacitus of the journey of the goddess of fertility through parts of Denmark in the 1st century AD. He calls her Nerthus or Mother Earth, and describes her journey in a wagon unseen by men, bringing prosperity and respite from war and welcomed everywhere by the people. The resemblance between the name Nerthus and that of Njörd, father of Freyja, provides us with what may have been an earlier pair of deities of the fertility cult.

Sacrifice of Horses

Freyr and Freyja owned a golden boar, named Gollinborsti or Goldbristles, reckoned among the treasures of the gods. The boar was a widespread symbol of the pagan period, especially on helmets, since it was thought to protect the worshippers of the Vanir in battle (see BOAR). One such helmet, surmounted by a gilded boar with gold studs for bristles and ruby eyes, has survived from the Anglo-Saxon burial mound at Benty Grange in Derbyshire, and similar helmets are pictured on metal plates from 6th century



Eugen Kusch

Frigg, the Norse mother goddess and protectress, appears with the gods Thor and Wotan on a detail from the 12 century Swedish tapestry of Skog in Hälsingland, in the Stockholm Historical Museum

Sweden. The early kings of Sweden possessed helmets with names like 'Battle Boar', and these may have been used as boar masks in ceremonies connected with the Vanir.

The horse was also sacred to the Vanir, and there are references to horses sacrificed to Freyr, and of a horse dedicated to the god by its owner, which no man was allowed to ride. This forms the theme of one of the famous Icelandic sagas, that of Hrafnkel, priest of Freyr, and while this is not a historical account, it probably preserves partly remembered traditions of earlier customs. There is every indication that the horse sacrifice, a regular ritual for centuries over a large stretch of Europe and Asia where horse-rearing played an important part in men's lives, was an essential rite in the cult of the Vanir. We have an account of Hakon the Good, the first Christian king of Norway, attempting to avoid the ceremony but being forced to conform by the people, and this describes the king presiding at the sacrifice, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the slaughtered animal. The custom of horse-fighting, described in the sagas and also shown on early memorial stones, may have formed part of the sacrificial ritual.

There was a close link between Freyr and the king of the pagan community, and ancestor kings in their burial mounds, like those at the sacred place at Old Uppsala in Sweden, appear at times to be identified with the god. Freyr was said to have been carried round the land to bring blessing to his people after death, before he was laid in a mound and the same is told of King Frod of Denmark, an early ruler whose reign was represented as a golden age. The name Frod was apparently borne by many Danish kings, and seems to have been another title of the Vanir god, possibly meaning 'fruitful'.

Orgies and Ecstasies

The main emphasis in the Vanir cult was on the maintaining of the existing order, and in particular of the seasonal round which brought new life and food to sustain it. Men turned to the Vanir for help by divination and Freyja's name is associated with one particular divination rite, that of *seidr*, which she was said to have taught to the gods. This was usually performed by a woman known as a *völva* or seeress, who sat on a high platform and fell into a trance induced by the singing of spells, after which she answered questions on certain aspects of the future, particularly about the coming season or the destinies of children. *Seidr* could also be a dangerous activity, used to bring harm and even death to others. There was one type of horse sacrifice too, when the skull and sometimes the whole carcass of the horse was raised on a pole and used as a hostile rite against an enemy. Such practices as these no doubt belong to the darker side of the Vanir cult, hinted at but seldom clearly defined in the literature, which led to bitter condemnation by the Church. The Vanir were indeed amoral deities, concerned not with justice nor morality nor the keeping of oaths, but essentially with the bringing of new life and power into the world. This power might be put to good or evil purposes, and such life-bringing deities are always worshipped in strange, even revolting forms, with orgies, ecstasies and sacrificial rites. To some extent the cult would seem to rival that of Odin, god of magic, ecstasy and the dead, and the myth of the war between the Aesir and the Vanir, which ended in a truce may be based on this. Thus it was that Freyr and Njörd came to Asgard to join the Aesir, while both sides spat into a bowl to symbolize their agreement, and with its contents fashioned the wise giant Kvasir, from whose blood was formed one of the greatest treasures of gods and men, the mead of inspiration. Indeed the three main cults, those of Odin, Thor and the Vanir, between them covered the main needs and concerns of men, and while there was some overlapping and occasionally enmity between them, the picture as a whole is one of acceptance, and of the gods dwelling peaceably side by side, in accordance with the myth.

(See also BALDER; GERMAN MYTHOLOGY; ODIN.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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Friday

Day of the week named after the Germanic goddess Frija, wife of Wodan: it has particularly grim associations for Christians as the day on which Christ was crucified: it was long costomary for Christians to eat no meat on Fridays; traditionally an unlucky day on which to put to sea or get married, but lucky for those born on Friday, for 'Friday's child is loving and giving'.

See DAYS AND HOURS.

Sotheby & Co.

Friends, Society of

Commonly called Quakers, a Christian sect founded in England in the 17th century by George Fox: members believe that the light of Christ shines in the heart of every individual and is revealed in experience rather than dogma; meetings are conducted in silent prayer in which all share, and there is no formal service or ordained minister: many Quakers emigrated to America in the 17th century, among them William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania.

See FOX.

Michael Holford

Although the frog is said to be the enemy of the moon and the greedy devourer of the earth's waters, his medicinal properties are widely valued

FROG

IN MYTHOLOGY, the frog appears comparatively rarely but, when he does, he seems to evoke either extreme repulsion or respect. The ancient Jews, for instance, regarded him with abhorrence. In the book of Revelation, seven angels 'pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God'; when the sixth does so, 'three foul spirits like frogs' appear; 'demonic spirits, performing signs'.

The Jewish attitude to frogs doubtless goes back to the early days of their culture, when these creatures were called up by Moses and Aaron as the second plague of Egypt (Exodus, chapter 8). The Egyptians themselves, on the other hand, clearly regarded the frog in quite a different light: Heket, their gentle goddess of childbirth, had the head (and sometimes the entire form) of a frog and, in a variant of the Egyptian myth of the creation of the world, she and her ram-headed husband Khnum were the first to 'build men and make gods'.

The frog also plays an important part in a central Asian creation myth, in which Otshirvani the creator and his assistant Chagan-Shukuty came down from heaven and saw a frog playing in the primeval waters. Chagan-Shukuty picked it up and put it on its back on the surface. Otshirvani sat on the frog's stomach and told his assistant to dive and see what he could find beneath the waters. After repeated attempts, Chagan-Shukuty brought up some earth. At Otshirvani's behest he sprinkled it on the frog which sank, leaving the little earth, just big enough for the divine pair to rest on, afloat on the deep. As

The frog makes one of his rare appearances in Greek mythology in the legend of Leto's wanderings after she has given birth to Apollo and Artemis. To revenge herself upon rude shepherds who prevent her from quenching her thirst in a pool of water she changed them into frogs: earthenware plate in the Victoria & Albert Museum, based on a 16th century Italian woodcut

they slept, Shulmus the devil came and saw his opportunity to destroy the gods and the still tiny earth by flinging them into the waters. But when he picked up 'the earth' it grew so that he could not see around him; he ran, but the more he ran the bigger grew the earth. Finally, he gave up and dropped the now enormous earth just as Otshirvani awoke. Shulmus escaped to continue his evil work in new ways. In other Asian myths the frog supports the world (as he does in Ceylon, beneath a turtle, a snake and a giant).

The frog is also connected with the deluge myths found in many parts of the world. In Queensland, Australia, the aborigines say that a great frog once swallowed all the water in the world, causing great drought and suffering. It occurred to the people that if only they could make the frog laugh, he would bring up the water and all would be well again. Several animals did comic turns and dances for him; but he remained unamused until the eel, by squirming and wriggling about, made him roar with laughter. As he laughed the waters burst out, flooding the world and drowning most of mankind.

The Huron Indians of North America have a similar story saying that all water was in the belly of a huge frog until Ioskeha, the great hero of creation, stabbed him and returned the waters to the lakes and rivers. In other North American legends animals brought order to the world, which was then destroyed by monsters bearing fire and flood; according to the Alaskan tribes, one of these demons was a monstrous frog-woman.

Naturally enough, for many peoples the frog is associated with rain. This is especially so, it seems, in India and South America. Orinoco tribes in Venezuela have kept frogs captive and beat them in time of drought. A hymn in the Hindu *Rig Veda* seems to show that frogs were worshipped for bringing rain or that, awakened themselves by showers, they brought long life and prosperity; the gods granted rain when the frogs croaked but the moon killed them with the dew. It was also thought that the much-needed moisture could be summoned from the skies by pouring water over a frog or by hanging it up. In Malaya the same result could be achieved by swinging it on the end of a cord. Some Chinese tales say the dew brings frog spawn down from the moon; the frog is called the 'celestial chicken'. By contrast, the Shan and the Karen tribes of Burma regard the frog as the enemy of the moon, the demon that swallows it at eclipses.

In Europe, the frog figured chiefly as an ingredient of magic and was highly regarded in the 'medical' half-world between magic and science. Although toads were preferred to frogs in the practices of witchcraft, the latter were certainly credited with magical qualities; in some countries frogs were always killed on sight because they were thought to be witches. In America and other countries, though, it was deadly bad luck to kill a frog; at the least it would make your cow's milk bloody. Here the frog is a creature of positive magic; it is lucky if one enters your house, or if you dream of frogs. You make a wish on the first frog heard in spring; and gamblers will be winners if they meet a frog in the road on their way to gamble. American superstition still retains the belief that a hook-shaped bone of the frog will act as a love charm, if placed among the clothing of the person whose love is being sought.

Beliefs in the frog's medicinal powers go back a long time. Pliny the Elder, who died in 113 AD, discusses the 'magic' (which he himself professed to regard as silly or wicked) introduced from the East into the Graeco-Roman world. In this magic the frog had a variety of uses. It would be carried around a cornfield and buried in the centre before sowing, and dug up before harvest. It would be hung up in orchards and vineyards to protect them from fog and storms, or in a granary to preserve the grain. A person found to be suffering from acute inflammation of the left or right eye could be cured by hanging the corresponding eye of a frog round his neck. The physician Galen considered that to hold a frog, boiled in water and vinegar, in the mouth for some time is quite good for toothache. A later Latin physician, Marcellus, who lived in about 400 AD believed toothache could be cured by spitting in a frog's mouth and asking it to take the pain away; an Arabic text of the 9th century recalls an ancient belief that a woman who performed the same action would not conceive for a year. On the other hand, the primitive Wends, Slav tribes, maintained that it was the frog and not the stork that brought new-born children.

The frog was used in medicine until the 17th century. Sufferers from epilepsy were said to have been cured by a powder made of frog's liver; and the eye of a frog, plucked before sunrise and swallowed, or worn as an amulet, was a remedy for fever. It still functions in folk medicine. In American belief a soup made from nine frogs will cure whooping cough. In other cures the disease has to be 'transferred' to the body of a frog by some magical and usually inhumane process. For instance, to cure headache, you must bind a live frog to your head and keep it there until it dies.

(See also TOAD.)

CHARLES DE HOGHTON

The frog is generally respected in Japan, where he is one of the animals of the zodiac: 19th century statuette in the Victoria & Albert Museum

C. M. Dixon

The transformation of the Furies from vengeful fiends to benevolent guardians of the established order reflects the typically Greek belief in the triumph of reason

FURIES

IN THEIR ORIGINAL and best remembered form the Furies are among the most fearsome products of the Greek imagination. They are the avengers, three loathsome and implacable female beings, fulfillers of curses and especially of curses called down upon those who murder their elder kith and kin. Born of blood, roused from hell by the shedding of blood, they are satisfied only by the blood of their quarry.

In the dreadful beginnings of the gods, Uranus, lord of the sky, fathered the Titans upon Gaia, the earth. Uranus was afraid of his children and hid them away in the body of their mother. At length she could bear it no longer and persuaded Cronus, her youngest son, to attack her husband (see CRONUS). Cronus took a sickle and castrated his father, and when the blood from Uranus's genitals fell upon the earth, his wife, she conceived and bore the Furies. It seems strange that they, whose chief task was to hunt down the betrayers of blood kinship, should themselves have been born of their father's blood, shed by their brother. But they came into being out of an act of revenge that was done in defence of their mother; and it is the rights of mothers, even when they are unjust, that they uphold with particular ferocity.

The ancient authors describe the Furies with relish. They are horrifying in appearance and they stink. With snakes in their hair, they brandish torches and metal-studded whips. They bark like bitches, virgin hell-hounds. They have suitably ominous names: Alecto, 'the Endless'; Tisiphone, 'the Retaliator'; Megaera, 'the Envious Rager'. Although their main duty was to avenge those murdered by their kin, they also sometimes took it upon themselves to right the established order in other ways.

The Greek word for Furies was Erinyes, and they were also called Maniai 'raging women', and, more interestingly, Eumenides, 'the kindly ones'. This last name may have been given them by prudence and, almost, wish-fulfilment, rather as the Black Sea, noted for its violent storms, was called the Euxine or 'the Calm'. Robert Graves, writing of the Furies, says it was 'unwise to mention their (real) name in conversation'. But it is perhaps more likely that the name, at least in historical times, is a sign of a typically Greek habit; the taming of something wild not by weakening it but by finding a place for it in an existing ordered system.

The classical Greeks, heirs to a fierce and ancient myth like that of the Furies, emphasized the positive and preserving, rather than the negative and destructive, aspect of these savage beings. They dwelt on their role as guardians of the social order more than on their being avengers of crime. And as guardians the Furies were kindly. Moreover, an educated 5th century Athenian would be quite prepared to accept the Erinyes, the avengers, as credible inhabitants of a mythical, heroic past, as doubtless did those who lived in that past; but as a citizen of his time he would more readily believe in the Eumenides, the guardians of the proprieties and values of his urban society.

Ancient, Mindless Fiends

This transformation of the Furies, in nature and role as well as in name, is vividly portrayed in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus, which is concerned not only with the Furies' most famous pursuit, but also with their being tamed, and established as Athenian divinities.

The drama opens in the precinct of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Orestes has come there in the hope of throwing off the Furies who are, quite literally, after his blood. For he has killed his mother Clytemnestra, and also her lover Aegisthus, for their murder of Agamemnon his father. Orestes did this terrible deed out of duty, his inescapable duty to avenge his father at any cost; and he did it after much agonized self-questioning, and having sought the guidance of Apollo. But the Furies, more ancient beings than Apollo, know nothing of this duty. Their fate-appointed task is to track and destroy all those who slay their elder kin, and particularly those who kill their mothers. Mitigating circumstances or the code of the younger gods mean nothing to them.

At the beginning of the play, the Furies are lying senseless on the ground, put to sleep by Apollo. It is possible to see that they are female but they are too loathsome to be called women. Their skin is black, they are dressed in foul rags. Their breath is hot as they snort in their disgusting sleep and a noisome ooze drips from their eyes. Apollo gazes at them in horror, for they are hated by both gods and men. He is of a younger, more gracious generation of divinities, dwelling in the bright sunlight and, god though he is, he has far more in common with the man Orestes, trapped in the toils of conflicting duty, than with these ancient, mindless fiends from the gloom of Tartarus.

Clytemnestra, however, thinks differently.

'Ghastly yet magnificent fiends', the Furies were originally avengers whose main task was to track down and destroy those who had murdered their elder kin, particularly those who had killed their mothers: 18th century statue in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Photo Meyer

Despite their fearsome origins, the Furies were eventually transformed into guardians of the social order, and were often depicted as grave winged maidens, sometimes carrying torches: relief on a sarcophagus showing one of the three sisters who has come to take away the soul of a dying warrior

Her ghost appears and rebukes the Furies for sleeping. They begin to whine and moan. As they writhe awake they spit out their first words, a ferocious string of sounds: '*Labe, labe, labe, labe, phradzou!*', 'Seize him, seize him, seize him, seize him, mark him!'. They revile Apollo who, a younger god, has broken the ancient laws by harbouring a doomed transgressor of these laws. He turns them out of the sanctuary. They are eager to go, for Orestes has fled to Athens to throw himself upon the mercy of Athene. During his flight Orestes has tried to expunge his guilt by ritual purifications but the Furies remain unplacated.

We see them in pursuit and then, having reached Athens in their 'wingless flight', performing a horrific *danse macabre*. They shriek of human blood, the scent of which fills them with delight. They intend to suck the living blood from Orestes and take him alive to hell to torture him there. They boast that their song drives their victim mad, binds his soul and withers his life. The gods may not touch or impede them in the inexorable task set them by fate. They do not care if they are dishonoured and despised. Nothing can hinder them, although they are separated from the gods by 'a light not of the sun'.

Respectable Matrons

Athene enters and is amazed at the extraordinary and revolting spectacle. But when the Furies explain themselves she says she knows their lineage and name. They, somewhat surprisingly, say they are willing to let her judge Orestes, since they reverence her and her birth. This the beginning of their transformation, though at this point they probably trust Athene more than Apollo simply because she is female, and they expect her to side with the mother rather than the son; they are soon to be disappointed by Athene's championing of the rights of the male over the female.

Orestes puts his case to the goddess. She is sympathetic but is afraid that if the Furies are cheated of their prey the venom of their resentment will fall on the ground and afflict the land with 'intolerable and perpetual pestilence'. Athene therefore decides to have the issue tried by her court of citizens, the Areopagus.

The Furies accept this decision but declare, in effect, that if Orestes is acquitted all the ancient virtues will be subverted by a new permissiveness. They call themselves 'the Furious Ones that keep watch upon mortals', particularly concerned to guard parents from impious children. Some fear, they say, is good and should 'abide enthroned as guardian of the heart'. Although the content of the Furies' speech, the sacredness of the ties of kinship and filial reverence, is similar to their earlier ragings, the tone is now very different. There is a stern and lofty conservatism, an almost matronly respectability, which contrasts very strongly with the savagery and odiousness of the first scenes of the play. One feels the Furies have had a bath and changed their clothes. But when Orestes is acquitted, by the casting vote of Athene, their rage breaks out anew. The younger gods 'have ridden down the ancient laws', they cry in Athene's face, and, quite forgetful of their acceptance of her arbitration, they threaten to poison and pollute the land.

The final scene of the play depicts Athene's difficult struggle to placate the Furies. She offers them a temple and a home in Athens, and a role as guardians of the city and its virtues. For a long time the Furies refuse, enraged at the decision of the court. But although they are furious, it is now only because they believe ancient justice has been violated; they no longer shriek for blood. They are outraged but they are no longer hounds from hell. Gradually, in a dying fall, they succumb to Athene's pleadings and promises and move off in a solemn procession to dwell in a cave beneath the Acropolis, and to watch over the well-being of the city.

In the surrender of the Furies, these ghastly yet magnificent fiends, and their acceptance of a tamer role as guardians rather than avengers, we may see the triumph of reason over unreason; 'the furious ones' have become 'the kindly ones', a characteristically Greek transformation.

(See also FATE.)

CHARLES DE HOGHTON

Scala

Gabriel

An archangel of Jewish and Christian tradition; one of God's chief messengers who was sent to explain certain visinns to Daniel, to inform Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist, and to announce to the Virgin Mary the conception of Jesus: in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Gabriel was set to watch over Paradise: Mohammedans call him the spirit of truth, and believe that he took Mohammed to heaven where the Koran was dictated to him.
See ANGELS.

John Webb

GALAHAD

'BUT IN THE SIEGE Perilous there shall no man sit therein but one, and if there be any so hardy to do it he shall be destroyed, and he that shall sit there shall have no fellow.' These are Merlin's words in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and the knight who had no equal and who took his appointed place in the Siege Perilous, the empty seat at the Round Table, was Galahad.

The coming of Galahad to Camelot, one year at Pentecost, marked the beginning of the quest of the Grail and the end of the fellowship of Arthur's knights. A sword had been found, embedded in a great stone and with lettering on the pommel which said that only the best knight in the world could draw it out. Lancelot refused the attempt but Gawain and Perceval tried and failed. When the knights sat down to eat at the Round Table, an old man came in, leading the young Galahad without sword or shield but with an empty scabbard. The old man led Galahad to his place at the Siege Perilous. The other knights marvelled and showed Galahad the sword in the stone. He drew it lightly out and settled it in his scabbard. Arthur himself, of course, had drawn a yet more celebrated sword from a stone in his own youth (see ARTHUR).

A greater portent was in store, for after a tournament in which Galahad proved his prowess as a fighter, when they all went to supper they heard a terrible roll of thunder, a ray of bright sunlight shone into the hall, 'and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost.' Unlike Christ's disciples who spoke in tongues at the first Pentecost, with which a parallel and a contrast are being drawn here, the knights sat as silent as if they had been struck dumb. 'Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it.'

Awestruck, Gawain and most of the other knights vowed to go in search of the Grail. King Arthur sadly lamented that he had been bereft of 'the fairest fellowship and

Sir Galahad, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in the Tate Gallery: it was Galahad's stainless purity that won him the Grail

Unlike the other Arthurian heroes, Galahad's history does not go back into the pagan past. He was a character deliberately invented to contrast the ideal of the perfect Christian knight with the brave but essentially worldly ideals of chivalry. He was fitted into the older tradition by making him the son of Lancelot by Elaine, conceived after Lancelot had been bewitched into mistaking her for his mistress, Guinevere. *Left* Galahad asleep under a tree, resting from the adventures of the quest, from an early 14th century French ms *Above* Galahad, from a 13th century ms *Below* Galahad with Lancelot and Elaine, from *Roman de Lancelot du Lac*, 14th century

British Museum

the truest of knighthood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world: for when they depart from hence I am sure they shall never meet more in this world, for they shall die many in the quest.'

The Saintly Knight

Malory drew the material for this part of his work from the French *Queste del Saint Graal*, written in the early 13th century, and Galahad 'had no fellow' in more senses than one. He was a literary interloper, not a hero of pagan legend more or less Christianized, but a character invented by the author of the *Queste* and a wholly Christian invention at that. His name comes from Mount Galaad – Gilead in English translations of the Bible – in the Song of Solomon (chapter 6), a passage which had already been interpreted as referring to Christ. Galahad is not quite Christ himself but he comes very near it. He is the holy knight who is free of mortal sin and, in this version of the legend, the only one who penetrates fully to the heart of the mystery of the Grail. Like Christ, he is descended from King David, and in the *Queste* a monk tells him that his coming must be compared to the coming of Jesus, adding hastily, 'in semblance only, not in sublimity'.

Galahad was fitted into the older Arthurian traditions by making him the son of Lancelot by the fair-Elaine, daughter of the lord of the Grail castle, conceived after Lancelot had been bewitched into mistaking Elaine for his adored mistress, Guinevere. But the fruit of this intended adultery is the purest of mortal men and with his coming the ardour of the knights turns away from the duties and pleasures of chivalry in the world of the Round Table, from jousting, courtly love and adventure for its own sake, to search for a different, spiritual world in the quest of the Grail.

Galahad ends the fellowship of Arthur's knights because he devalues it, which accounts for the attacks that lovers of the older stories have launched at him as a prig, an inhuman cardboard saint. His character was strongly influenced by the ideals of the Cistercians, a monastic order of great influence at the time when the *Queste* was written. At one point in it a hermit lists the Christian virtues in order of importance: chastity ranks highest (with lust as the root of all evils), followed by humility, patience, justice and charity. These are scarcely the virtues, nor the order, which the older heroes would have adopted.

Galahad's virginity is strongly stressed. He is pure of body and pure of heart. He is also kindly and merciful – he does not kill an opponent if he can avoid it – but he seems inhuman, partly because he is totally concentrated on his task but more because he has no failings. Unlike some of the other knights, he makes no spiritual progress during the quest, because he is perfect to begin with.

The knights set off in quest of the Grail and Galahad comes to an abbey of white monks (Cistercians) where there is a shield which kills or wounds everyone who takes it. It bears a red cross on a white ground and can be carried only by the finest knight in Christendom. The symbolism of the white and red is explained later in the story when Galahad is told, 'you are as pure and virginal compared to other knights as the lily flower, the symbol of virginity, is white beyond all other. You are the lily of purity, you are the true rose, the flower of strength and healing with the tint of fire: for the fire of the Holy Ghost burns in you so brightly...'

Victoria & Albert Museum/A. Fleming

Galahad receives the key of the Castle of Maidens, after rescuing them from slavery to seven knights, who represent the seven deadly sins: ivory casket, c 1320

The Vision of Heaven

Galahad rides many journeys and finds many adventures. With Perceval and Bors he comes to a miraculous ship (the ship of Faith) in which is the sword that struck what Malory called 'the dolorous stroke', the blow that killed King Lambar and turned his kingdom into the Waste Land. Lambar, the *Queste* explains, was the father of the Maimed King, who had himself tried to draw the sword. At that instant he was transfixed through both thighs by a flying lance, in punishment for his presumption, and the wound had never healed.

Galahad took this sword and eventually, after years of search, the three knights came to the castle of Corbenic, the home of the Maimed King and the Grail. Here they saw the Grail itself, the dish from which Christ ate the Passover lamb at the Last Supper, and also the Holy Lance, with which the crucified Christ was wounded in the side and from which drops of blood were still falling. They saw a vision of Christ appearing from the Grail, and he said to them: 'My knights, my servants and my faithful sons who have attained to the spiritual life whilst in the flesh, you who have sought me so diligently that I can hide myself from you no longer, it is right you should see some part of my secrets and my mysteries . . . Take now and eat of the precious food that you have craved so long and for which you have endured so many trials.' He gave them the Communion from the Grail and 'it seemed as though the essence of all sweetness was housed within their bodies'.

Galahad no longer desired to live, for the Grail had revealed to him 'those things that the heart of man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'. He had been 'translated from the earthly plane to the celestial, to the joy of the glorious martyrs and the beloved of Our Lord'. After further adventures Perceval became a hermit and Bors made his way back to Camelot. But Galahad, who had seen the supreme vision of heaven, could not return to the world of men. His prayer to die was granted and his soul was borne to heaven by rejoicing angels. A hand came down from the sky and took the Grail and the Lance, and carried them to heaven also, and no man has ever seen them since.

(See also GRAIL.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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National Film Theatre

GAMES

The Myths of Play

Hockey was played by the Wichita Indians in spring, to symbolize the conquest of winter; it is one of the many games which have religious or legendary connections, the subject of the first article. The second describes the ideals which gave birth to the Olympic Games

GENERALLY PLAYED for entertainment and recreation in the modern West, games have been recorded throughout history, and often reflected the social customs, and sometimes the religious beliefs, of the players. Some of the older games claim a legendary or mythical origin, and, because chance plays a large part in their attraction, divination, fortune telling and magical beliefs are in many cases associated with them.

Distinctions may be drawn between a sport such as archery, once of national importance and the more familiar ball games such as football and hockey. There are also games of chance played mainly with cards and dice, and board games such as chess.

Archery originated in the Stone Age, when small, delicately chipped arrow heads were used for hunting and in war; in Saxon England they were called 'elf darts' and were treasured as charms.

In ancient times arrows were widely regarded as mediums for divination and fortune telling. In Palestine, Chaldea and Arabia the usual method was to shake the quiver in front of an image of the god being addressed, and note which arrows, previously marked, fell out. When Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, was unable to decide whether he should attack Jerusalem or Ammon, he used several methods of divination, one of which was the shaking of arrows (Ezekiel, chapter 21). Also in the Old Testament is the story of how the dying prophet Elisha laid his hands on those of Joash, King of Israel, as the latter shot 'the Lord's arrow of victory over Syria'. He then commanded the King to strike the arrows on the ground, and prophesied that Joash would overcome Syria in battle as many times as he had struck the ground (2 Kings, chapter 13).

In fairy tales the hero often shoots an arrow into the air and follows its path to fortune. Arrow heads are found buried under the foundations of buildings or built into

Peter Clayton

Peter Clayton

Games are often mysterious matters, closely linked with social and religious customs ***Facing page*** **Chess is one of the most ancient of board games, its origin obscured by a mass of legend and mythology. A 'war game', it is rich in symbolism: scene from** ***The Seventh Seal,*** **in which the returning Crusader plays chess for his life against Death** ***Right*** **A game similar to chess was played in Ancient Egypt: scene on an Egyptian tomb, c 1300 BC** ***Above*** **In classical Greece dice were made from bones, and were originally instruments of divination; eventually this method of determining the wishes of the gods developed into a gambling game in which the winner was the player who received the best 'omen' when the dice were cast: Greek statuette in terra cotta, 300 BC**

the walls of houses or churches to protect them from evil influences, and they were at one time placed in stables to protect the animals from disease.

Wherever there is anything which may be used as a ball, there is a potential game; ball games have been played through the ages. The balls used may have been 'natural', such as pebbles, a block of wood or a lump of clay, or they may have been fashioned from wood, bone or ivory, made from plaited straw, or from strips of skin or fibres. A skin or woven cover may have been stuffed with hair, wool or other material, or inflated with air. Unfortunately all except those made of stone or bone were perishable, and there is little archeological evidence of their existence, although the remains of balls

made from skin filled with grass or hay have been found in early Egyptian tombs.

Rubber balls were used in South America long before rubber was first brought to Europe; in North America red and yellow balls symbolized the sun, and ball games celebrated the conquest of day over night, and light over darkness.

Football is one of the most popular and possibly one of the most sophisticated games in the world today; but in its primitive form, needing nothing more than an object to kick and someone to kick it back, it has been an obvious form of game since unrecorded times. It is not mentioned by name until the 14th century, and then chiefly in prohibitions as, for instance, when Edward III told his sheriffs to suppress football as the game interfered with training in archery.

Medieval football was independent of grounds and of rules. The ball was placed in a neutral place, often the churchyard, and the villagers, perhaps a hundred to a side, hurled themselves on it, and attempted to carry it off to their base.

Traditionally the game was played on Shrove Tuesday when it symbolized the conquest of spring over winter. As a contest between married and unmarried men, the game appears to have been a relic of a fertility rite. Shrovetide football was also played vigorously by women as well as men until well into the 19th century, a custom that has continued into modern times.

In Chester, football was believed to commemorate kicking the head of a captured

Modern football is one of the most popular and possibly one of the most sophisticated of modern games; in fact, in its primitive form, requiring only an object to kick and someone to return it, it has been played through the centuries. In various parts of the world the game has acquired a symbolic meaning, sometimes as a fertility rite, sometimes portraying the conquest of spring over winter *Above* American football: although the rules are sophisticated, this version still retains some of the roughness of the game which was played in medieval times *(below)* where 'there one's maim'd, who never saw the ball': this 17th century illustration from Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* is probably the earliest one showing organized football *Right* Football players by Rousseau, 1908

Mansell Collection

New York, S. Guggenheim Museum

Henri Rousseau
1908

Mansell Collection

Played since classical times, hockey has a ritual significance in some parts of the world; in Morocco, for instance, it is played to induce rain *Above* Until comparatively recently hockey in England was a rough game, not suited to 'weakly or timid players': illustration from *The Popular Educator* by F. Wentworth, published by Cassell

Dane; in Derby it was thought to celebrate a local victory over the Romans. At St Ives in Cornwall the Mayor used to throw a ball coated with silver, perhaps a relic of sun-worship, from the pier and crowds fought for it, without limit and without rules.

Hockey, which is known as 'hurling' in Ireland, and 'shinty' in Scotland, possibly originated in Persia; a similar game was played by the Greeks and Romans. In Morocco it appears to have some connection with fertility rites, as it is played in the spring to induce rain and at other times if there is a drought.

The Wichita of Oklahoma believed that the game was handed down to them by a mythical ancestor, and it was played during their spring festival. The team with the green hockey sticks and balls overcame the opposing side, symbolizing the conquest of winter. In the south-western desert region, the Hopi Indians believed they could foretell the maize yield by playing hockey with a buck-skin ball filled with seeds. If the seeds spilt out the harvest would be good; if the ball failed to burst, crops would fail.

Princely Pastimes

Chess, one of the oldest and most honoured of board games, originated in Asia and is commonly assumed to have been brought to Europe through the Arabs. 'Checkmate', from *shah mat*, 'the king is dead', is derived from Arabic, but it is not known whether the Arahs were introduced to the game in Persia or in India. Early names for the game, and for some of the pieces, are Indian.

An Indian legend, one of the many concerning the origin of the game, relates how chess was invented by the wife of the giant Ravana, King of Ceylon, to entertain him when Rama, the mythical hero of the *Rama Yana* (which dates from about 500 BC), was besieging him in his palace. But gaming boards and primitive chessmen have been discovered by archeologists in Palestine on sites which date from 1500 BC or even earlier. Boards, with small blue pottery cones and pyramids, were revealed when a large house near Jerusalem was uncovered; and inlaid gaming boards have been discovered in Crete.

The Crusaders are generally credited with bringing chess to England from the East after the Crusades of the early Middle Ages, but there is evidence that the game was known long before then. In Irish folktales King Arthur plays chess with the Irish knight Owain, and the chieftain-god Midir the Proud wins the fairest maid in the world by checkmating Eochaid, the King of Ireland.

Playing cards are believed to have descended from the Tarot cards, which are popularly supposed to have been imported into Europe by gypsies, who originally brought them from Egypt. The modern pack of 52 cards came to England from France in the 15th century. These have been used for innocent amusement and for reckless gambling, for divination and for fortune telling ever since.

There are many superstitions connected with playing cards, which the Presbyterians nicknamed the Devil's Picture Book or the Devil's Bible. A player will get up and walk round the table, or he will turn his chair round, to change his luck. A number of cards have their own superstitions such as the Ace of Spades, which is connected with death, and Nine of Diamonds, known as the 'curse of Scotland'. Sailors and thieves regard all cards as unlucky; cards are thrown overboard in a storm and no thief will include a pack in his loot. (See CARDS.)

Gambling with dice was common in ancient times in Egypt, the Far East, Greece and Rome; and there is possibly even earlier evidence of the use of a form of dice for gambling, or for divination, in the pebbles painted in red ochre, which were found among artefacts dated to about 7000–5000 BC, in the cave of Mas d'Azil in France.

The dice used in classical times were derived from the little cuboid bones known as *astragali* which are found in the joints of many animals, especially sheep, and in human ankles. They have been discovered on the site of Ephesus in Asia Minor, and in Sparta. Bone or wooden dice, their six sides marked with dots or numbers, were commonly used for telling fortunes.

ALISON H. QUIGGIN

The Olympic Games were described as 'the Flower of Festivals, excellent as water, bright as gold, brilliant as the noonday sun'

The Olympic Games

The first Olympic Games of which there are historical as opposed to mythical records, were held in 776 BC, to mark a truce between the states of Elis and Pisa in western Greece. For the next thousand years they were one of the greatest unifying influences in the Greek world, providing satisfaction in athletic accomplishment for both competitors and spectators, and also pleasing the gods who were thought to look down with favour on the highest achievements of mortals.

The Games had their origin in the myths surrounding the feats of god-like creatures, once mere men, who existed in the heroic age of Greece. Hercules is said to have cleansed the Augean Stables, the sixth of his twelve labours, by diverting a river at Olympia, the site where all later Olympic Games were held.

The ancient Games developed partly as a result of man's desire to predict the unpredictable. There was a primitive anxiety that the earth might never come to life again after winter. With the soil bare and food scarce, who could give an assurance that another year would bring a fresh harvest? The saviour of the harvest was the person with the magic of victory in him, the athlete born of Zeus the sky god. A simple race was the way to choose this man.

Later the man who embodied all the qualities of goodness or excellence was sought. Bronze statues, probably modelled from the victors, overlooked the stadium and were called *zanes*, a word that is derived from Zeus. In this way the heroes of the ancient Games were almost deified.

Rule of Nakedness

The Games developed until in the 5th century BC, the poet Pindar described them as 'the Flower of Festivals, excellent as water, bright as gold, brilliant as the noonday sun'. This was a superlative extension of athletics to the world of art, poetry and sculpture, but the importance of the Games still lay in the search for one man, a hero who embodied all this excellence.

It is not known for certain why the Games were held every four years if they were associated with an annual event; but it is probable that the Greeks felt that a complete cycle consisting of a sun cycle and a moon cycle was required. Using their primitive algebra, they calculated this to be four years.

In the early Olympic Games the prize for the Olympic victor was a crown of wild olives, possibly showing that the victor represented vegetation, that is, he was the new life of the year. Alternatively the olive crown could have represented simply the great distinction of the victor, and have been of no value in itself.

The honours were shared fairly equally among the various city-states. Athletes came from all parts of Greece and at the time of the Games there was a general truce to hostilities. The contests were open to all men of true Greek descent. The only woman admitted to the Games was the priestess of Demeter, the corn goddess. In fact, this rule acted as a spur to contestants' mothers and sisters, and there are various stories of women obtaining entry disguised as men. In an attempt to restrict entries to men, it is said that the rule of nakedness was extended to trainers as well as contestants.

Apart from the chariot races, the main contests were four running events, boxing,

Metropolitan Museum, New York

The Olympic Games developed partly because men feared that the earth might never come to life again after winter; the saviour of the harvest was thought to be the man who had the magic of victory in him, and he was chosen through a simple race. Later, the man who was the embodiment of goodness and excellence was sought: scene on a Greek vase, c 525 BC

National Film Archive

National Film Archive

The lighting of the Olympic flame is a recent innovation, but in symbolizing a period of truce for the Games, it perpetuates a tradition that originated in classical Greece, and emphasizes the ideals that are common to both the ancient and modern Olympic Games: scenes from *Olympische Spiele*, directed by Leni Riefenstahl

two types of wrestling, and a pentathlon consisting of javelin, discus, long jump, running and wrestling, in each of which the competitors took part. This basic pattern of events remained almost unchanged for a thousand years.

The runners completed distances which were multiples of the *stade*, about 180 yards. The name of any man who achieved a particular combination of victories for the first time was recorded. Our word 'agony' is derived from *agon* which is Greek for an athletic contest.

When Rome inherited the power of Greece the Games became more international, professionalism crept into sport, and the Games eventually became a great tourist attraction. Physical training was carried out in gymnasia which were also known as centres of learning. Intellect and physical fitness were not thought to be mutually exclusive, as has so often been the case in other civilizations.

Sport has never since been held in such esteem, yet at the same time the Greeks had a sense of proportion. For instance, the delicate and skilful art of wrestling was preferred to the more brutal boxing, and was the sport of the common man.

The early Christian Church rejected all athletics, believing that they were a pagan indulgence. By the 4th century AD the Games had become vulgar and discredited, and they were finally abolished by the Christian Emperor Theodosius I in 393 AD.

The Olympic Games owe their revival in the 19th century largely to the enthusiasm of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the French educationalist. The first of the modern series of Games was held in Athens in 1896 and since then they have been held every four years, apart from the intervals caused by the two world wars.

Competitors must take an oath declaring that they are true amateurs, and the winners are awarded silver-gilt medals. In victory ceremonies the flag of the victor's country is raised, and his national anthem is played. The lighting of the Olympic flame, a modern innovation, accompanies the release of pigeons from the stadium, to signify a period of truce for the Games just as, more than 2000 years ago, the city-states of Greece agreed to keep the peace during the ancient Olympic Games.

ROGER BANNISTER

B. Mondhe

India's most sacred river is divinely personified as the goddess Gongo, whose most important role is that of purifier from sin; every year many thousands of Hindus travel to the Ganges seeking to benefit from the cleansing powers of its waters

GANGES

THE INDIAN RIVER most renowned for its incomparable sanctity is the Ganges, known in Sanskrit and several other Indian languages as Ganga. Its source lies in the Himalayan region of Tehri, 13,800 feet above sea-level. Draining the western Himalayas and the northern slopes of the Vindhya range, the Ganges flows eastwards and near the town of Allahabad it is joined by the Jumna. The two rivers enclose a fertile expanse of land known as Doab or Antarvedi, which is thought to be the holy land of the early Hindu settlers. In Bengal the Ganges is joined by its greatest tributary, the Brahmaputra. The total length of the Ganges is 1557 miles.

The belief in the sacredness of the Ganges does not stem from the earliest period of Hindu history, for according to the oldest Aryan traditions embedded in the Vedic hymns, the rivers Jumna and Sarasvati were considered even holier, and in the *Rig Veda* the Ganges was mentioned only twice. But as the Aryans spread from the Punjab eastwards along the broad and fertile Ganges valley, respect for the river deepened and the sanctity of the Ganges was firmly established by the second half of the first millennium BC.

Like other natural phenomena, the Ganges was personified as a divinity, the goddess Ganga, who is still the object of a widespread cult. Some myths represent the Viyadganga, or 'heavenly Ganges' as flowing from the toe of the god Vishnu. According to a legend contained in the epic *Rama Yana*, the Ganges was brought down from heaven by the prayers of the saint Bhagiratha, in order to purify the ashes of King Sasava's 60,000 sons, who had been burnt by the angry glance of the sage Kapila. The goddess Ganga was angry at being brought down from heaven, and the god Shiva, to save the earth from the impact of her fall, caught the river on his brow, and compelled its waters to flow through the labyrinth of his matted locks.

Hindu mythology regards the goddess Ganga as the wife of the King Santanu, to whom she bore a son, Bhishma, one of the heroes of the *Mahabharata*. Sometimes she is also identified with Parvati, a mountain goddess and wife of Shiva, or other forms of the mother goddess. Many temples on the banks of the Ganges are dedicated to the goddess Ganga. Most important among them is the Ganga shrine at Hardwar, near the source of the river, while in Benares, the holy

According to Hindu mythology, the goddess Ganga, divine personification of the Ganges, was angry when she was brought down from heaven; to save the earth from the impact of her fall, the god Shiva caught the river on his brow, and its waters were compelled to flow through his matted locks

city on the bank of the Ganges, the goddess is worshipped as Annapurna, the goddess of food. Images of Ganga are found also in other parts of the country such as the cave temples of western India; and representations of Ganga and the river goddess Jumna flank the entrances of many temples built during the 4th and 5th centuries AD, the classic Gupta period. Whereas in northern and western India, Ganga is usually depicted as a woman, south Indian sculptures often represent her as a water-sprite, who is half woman, half fish.

'Hail Mother Ganges!'

In popular Hindu religion Ganga appears invariably as a benevolent figure, bestowing good health, offspring and prosperity on her worshippers. But her most important function is that of a purifier from sin, and in this respect, her waters are believed to be specially efficacious at points where the Ganges joins tributaries such as the Jumna. Though the water of the Ganges and other sacred rivers has the power to purify, it should itself be protected from impure contacts: the pollution of the Ganges, in particular, is a serious outrage. According to orthodox tradition a Hindu should not cross a river unless it is necessary and he should not bathe in it naked. He should not spit directly into the water but spit first on his palm, which he should then wash. A Hindu woman in her menses must not bathe or wash clothes in a river, and a pregnant woman should neither wash in a river nor cross it. This also applies for 40 days after the child's birth.

The purifying power of water in general, and of Ganges water in particular, is partly due to its cooling power. Many Hindu practices are based on the idea that power is heat and that cooling this heat with water renders the power innocuous. Water is also believed to destroy the evil power of spirits, and to avert the Evil Eye. Ganges water possesses all these qualities to the highest degree. The reverence of Hindus for the Ganges is non-sectarian: all castes seek to benefit from its power of purification and its blessing by bathing in the sacred water. High merit is gained by pilgrimages to the Ganges, and pilgrims catching their first glimpse of the river shout 'Hail Mother Ganges'. Every year many thousands of Hindus travel to Benares and other sacred places on the banks of the Ganges and bathe in its waters. Many shave their hair and offer it to the goddess Ganga, reinforcing the physical link between themselves and the sacred river in this way.

A special festival in honour of the birthday of the goddess Ganga is held in April or May, when her devotees bathe and give alms, and little girls float dolls on the water. The supervision of these bathing fairs lies in the hands of a special class of Brahmins, known as Gangaputra, 'sons of the Ganges'. The greatest of these fairs is held every 12 years when Jupiter enters the sign of Aquarius.

Hindus utilize the power of Ganges water on many other occasions. It is carried to all parts of India by pilgrims or professional carriers and is used as a charm to repel evil spirits; it is also put into the mouths of the dying, and sprinkled over bridal couples to encourage fertility.

To die on the banks of the Ganges is believed to improve a person's chances of a happy fate in the afterlife, and for this reason the sick are carried to its shores and the dying immersed in its water. Many Hindus have committed suicide by hurling themselves into the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna in the hope of gaining a blissful future life. Those living within reach of the Ganges cremate their dead on its banks, and throw the ashes and unburnt bones into the water. If this is not possible, the ashes may be dispatched to one of the holy places on the Ganges to be cast into the sacred river.

The sanctity of water is firmly rooted in Hindu belief. When Brahmins perform their daily ablutions, they invoke the holy rivers, among them the Ganges and all its sacred branches. Often they offer oblations to water by casting into rivers small pieces of gold and silver, and sometimes pearls and other valuable jewels. When rivers were first spanned by railway bridges passengers threw coins into them in order to propitiate the divinities manifested in the rivers. While such customs have gradually become obsolete, the belief in the sanctity of the Ganges and other sacred rivers continues to be an important and enduring element of Hindu ideology.

(For purification by water, see also BAPTISM: WATER.)

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

GARLIC

ALTHOUGH MOHAMMED is recorded as saying, when he refused a dish containing garlic, 'I am a man who has close contact with others', garlic *(Allium sativum)* has a widespread reputation as a beneficent vegetable.

It probably originated in central Asia, and there is a Mohammedan tradition that garlic sprang up where Satan, as he was expelled from Paradise, placed his left foot, while the onion appeared from his right footprint.

The Jews' oriental origin is reflected in their liking for garlic and the Talmud's direction that numerous foods should be seasoned with it. Although the Crusaders have been credited with bringing it to Europe, it is clear that it was eaten in ancient times in both Greece and Italy, where it was thought to give strength and courage. Virgil tells how countrymen ate a salad called *moretum*, made from bruised garlic and thyme leaves, flour, cheese, oil and vinegar. Now, of course, no French or Italian meal is likely to omit garlic.

One of the earliest accounts of the magical properties attributed to garlic is in the writings of Theophrastus, the Greek philosopher who lived in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. He describes how the ancient Greeks placed it at crossroads to sustain and propitiate Hecate, underworld goddess of magic. With her pack of hell-hounds she was often to be found where roads met, as well as at tombs and scenes of crime, and her three-faced image was frequently erected at crossroads. Garlic was among the offerings placed before these statues.

According to Pliny, both garlic and onion were regarded as divine by the Egyptians and were invoked when an oath was made, and Juvenal, the Roman satirist, said that 'Each clove of Garlic hath a sacred flower'.

Poor Man's Treacle

The belief in garlic's magical qualities is found all over Europe, Asia Minor, India, China and Japan and the plant is widely believed to give protection against witchcraft and the Evil Eye; its Sanskrit name means 'Slayer of Monsters'. The 16th century Flemish botanist Clusius tells of German miners taking cloves of garlic down mines for protection against evil spirits. At Bologna in Italy, on the Festival of St John, everyone bought garlic to ensure a successful year free from poverty.

Garlic was placed in a new-born baby's cradle during the dangerous interval between birth and baptism, together with other protective substances such as salt and iron. In Sicily it was put into the beds of women during childbirth, and making the sign of the Cross with garlic charmed away certain kinds of tumour. Placed in an English child's socks it mitigated whooping-cough; while a Cuban might avert jaundice by wearing a necklace of 13 garlic cloves for 13 days.

Some of these beliefs are clearly only extensions of the actual and believed virtues of garlic as both food and medicine. In the process of time, garlic became thought of as a cure-all; in the 2nd century AD, the physician Galen called garlic *theriac*, which originally meant an antidote to poison and later a universal panacea. Chaucer and other writers refer to it as Poor Man's Treacle, which is a corruption of 'Theriac'.

This faith in garlic's beneficence stemmed partly from the Doctrine of Signatures, with its assertion that objects are related to each other even by insignificant attributes; a proposition that led to the belief that 'like cures like' (see DISEASE). In Lauremberg's *Apparatus Planterum* the author points out: 'The tissue of Garlic is ruddy: it expels blood. It has a hollow stalk, and it helps affections of the wind-pipe.'

Garlic is recommended to prevent sunstroke, cure dropsy, relieve hysteria and drive out intestinal worms. It was also thought to be a specific against leprosy, a cure for smallpox, and a protection against plague and other infectious fevers. It was reputed to make cocks more aggressive during cock-fighting, horses strong, and if placed in the ground it would cause moles to 'leap forth'.

Garlic's genuine values include an undoubted tonic and toning-up quality; it probably helps digestion and is used in lotions for skin disorders. In the First World War the raw juice of garlic, placed on swabs of sphagnum moss (a type of moss which grows in bogs) was used as a successful antiseptic dressing.

Garter
Part of the insignia worn by members of The Most Noble Order of the Garter: founded by Edward III c1348, it is the highest order of knighthood, comprising the sovereign and 25 knights: according to legend, it was established after Joan, Countess of Salisbury, accidentally dropped a garter while dancing with the King, who having restored it to her made the remark, *'Honi soit qui mal y pense'* (evil to him who thinks evil of it): the garters worn by a bride were thought to bring good luck, and modern witches often wear garters as badges of rank.

Gathas
The name given to certain sections of the *Zend-Avesta*, the sacred writings of the Zoroastrian religion: generally believed to have been composed by the prophet, Zoroaster, himself, they contain hymns and poems mainly addressed to the supreme god, Ahura Mazdah: these holy writings are still used by the Parsees, the surviving followers of Zoroastrianism.
See ZOROASTRIANISM.

Miraculously conceived and born, Gautama Buddho, founder of Buddhism, achieved Enlightenment after six years spent practising extreme austerities, and after being assaulted by the Evil One and his demons

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA, the Buddha or 'enlightened one', also known as Sakyamuni the Sage of the Sakya tribe, is unlike most ancient Indians in that tradition furnishes enough supposed facts about him to sustain a lively controversy over the exact year of his death. All Buddhist traditions agree that he was 80 when he died, so if he died in 483 BC (the middle date of the three currently proposed by scholars), he was born in 563 BC. His father, Suddhodana, was a chieftain in the borderland town of Kapilavastu, 150 miles north of Benares. His mother, Maya, was his father's cousin.

The canonical texts tell little about the birth of the Sage of the Sakyas. In the later *Lives* of the Buddha, however, a charming birth-myth is told, adorned with much detail. When the Bodhisattva (future Buddha) decended from the Tusita Heaven, Queen Maya dreamed that a white elephant entered her body, and as a result she conceived without defilement. After a preternaturally happy pregnancy, she withdrew to the garden of Lumbini. There, standing up and grasping the branch of a tree with her right hand, she gave birth to the Bodhisattva from her right side. His birth, as immaculate as his conception, gave his mother no pain. A hermit sage came and predicted that the infant would grow up to become either a universal monarch or a Buddha. Queen Maya died seven days after the birth of her son. Her sister Prajapati became Suddhodana's second wife and cared for the future Buddha.

The legends of Gautama's youth picture him mastering the standard branches of learning, and the sports and martial arts proper to a member of the Kshatriya caste. The Pali Canon barely mentions that Gautama had a son and a wife. The non-canonical *Lives* elaborate a fine tale of his betrothal, marriage and eventual fatherhood. They say that he was engaged at 16 to a beautiful Sakya girl of noble family whose name is most often given as Yasodhara. The *Lalita Vistara* adds a typical Epic episode in which the girl's father withholds his consent until Siddhartha proves his worth by winning a public athletic contest, the high point being an archery match. After his marriage, Siddhartha lived 13 years in his palaces surrounded by great luxury, attended by singing and dancing girls, and, the legends say, shielded from acquaintance with worldly strife and suffering by his father, who feared that his son would indeed leave the household life as the hermit had predicted.

The *Lives* present the prince's awakening to the existence of suffering in a dramatic manner. One day Gautama went for a ride in his chariot, and saw a decrepit old man. On later rides, he saw a diseased man, and a corpse. Questioning his charioteer, he learned that old age, disease and death come to all men. While brooding on this realization, he rode out again, saw a religious wanderer, and resolved to leave the household life. He arose in the middle of the night, and took a last look at his wife and his newborn son, whom he called Rahula, 'the fetter'. He rode

C. M. Dixon

After living a life of luxury, shielded from worldly strife and unhappiness, Siddhartha Gautama was dramatically awakened to the existence of suffering when riding through the city; he resolved to leave home and become a wanderer: relief in the Victoria & Albert Museum, showing Gautama riding in his chariot

out of the city some distance, dismounted, cut his long hair, and sent his charioteer back with his horse. He traded garments with a hunter and joined the ranks of homeless wanderers.

Gautama's first teacher, according to the canonical accounts, was the ascetic Arada Kalama, who taught a way of meditation. Having mastered this teaching and found it insufficient, Gautama went on to study under Udraka Ramaputra, who taught a path of trance leading to 'the realm of neither perception nor non-perception'. Thinking that there must be something higher, Gautama moved on and, in the company of five other ascetics, practised extreme austerities for six years, starving himself till he became utterly emaciated. When such mortifications did not produce great insight, he abandoned them and began eating again, whereupon the five ascetics left him disdainfully.

All traditions agree that Gautama attained the Great Enlightenment in his 35th year, in about 528 BC – on the full moon night of Vaisakha (April–May) while seated under the Bodhi Tree (also known as the Bo-Tree) at Bodhgaya in the Indian province of Bihar. The *Lives* say that Mara the Evil One tried to prevent the Enlightenment; he assaulted Gautama with an army of fearful demons, with arrows of desire, and with invocations of Mara's own moral might. Gautama remained unmoved, and Mara departed.

The Pali Canon says that on the eve of the Enlightenment Gautama entered the first, second, third and then fourth meditative trances. In the first watch of the night he attained memory of his former lives. In the second watch he achieved a super-knowledge with which he saw the passing away and rebirth of living beings. This cosmic vision showed that good deeds lead to good rebirths, and bad deeds to bad afterlives. In the third watch, he achieved knowledge that for him the outflows (sensual craving, craving for existence, and ignorance) had been extinguished, that he was now an *arhant* (adept), a Buddha (awakened one), free from further rebirth.

The Four Holy Truths

The Canon says that the new Buddha hesitated to declare the Dharma, thinking it too difficult for anyone to understand. But Brahma came down from his heaven and implored him to teach the Doctrine, saying that many receptive people were suffering for lack of it. This awakened the Buddha's compassion and he saw with his cosmic vision that Brahma was right.

The Buddha set out for the Deer Park at Sarnath, near Benares, where he delivered his first discourse to the five ascetics who had been his companions. He proclaimed the Middle Path between sensuality and self-mortification, and declared the Four Holy Truths. His preaching manifested the Dharma in the world, and when the five ascetics were converted and became arhants, the order of monks came into existence.

The Canon relates in abundant detail the founding of the orders of laymen and laywomen, the conversion of the most famous disciples and of his own family, the sending forth of missionaries to various parts of north India, and the friendship and patronage of kings and wealthy merchants. He taught for 45 years and saw his religion spread and flourish. Finally he was taken gravely ill, apparently with dysentery. At Kusinagara, 60 miles south-east of Kapilavastu, he lay down between two trees and died, surrounded by disciples.

The canonical Pali accounts of Gautama's life abound in miracles and prodigies. The later *Lives* and commentaries add new wonders and magnify the old ones. All the sects participated in this process, and the monks, who wrote most of the texts we have, were at least as avid wonder-mongers as the laity. At no stage now discernible is the Buddha-story the life of Gautama as it happened. But it is a tale of the highest religious and artistic power, uniting the Buddhist community's evaluative re-creation of its founder with substantial recollections of his life.

(See also BUDDHISM.)

RICHARD H. ROBINSON

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First a pagan hero, then the flower of Arthur's chivalry, Gawain failed in the crucial test of the search for the Grail

GAWAIN

THE FIRST of King Arthur's knights to dedicate himself to the search for the Grail was the one whose spiritual bankruptcy was most clearly demonstrated in the quest. Originally a hero of pagan legend, Gawain became the very model of a chivalrous knight, famous for courage, loyalty, generosity and courtesy. But in the later stories he is overshadowed, first by Lancelot and then by Galahad.

His name may be derived from the Welsh *Gwallt-advwyn*, 'of the bright hair' or 'of the splendid hair', reinforcing the link between Gawain and the sun found in some of the French romances and in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. Gawain's strength increases all through the morning, as the sun's does, until noon when it wanes again. But little emphasis is placed on this and Gawain's solar connections have lost their significance in the stories which have survived.

Gawain appears in various Welsh tales as Gwalchmai, one of Arthur's leading captains. In *Peredur*, for instance, he is famous for his prowess as a fighter, for good faith, and for courtesy and tact. Arthur says of him, 'He does more with his fair words than we by dint of our arms'. In *Culhwch and Olwen* he is 'the best of walkers and the best of riders', who 'never came home without the quest he had gone to seek.'

In Geoffrey of Monmouth (see ARTHUR) Gawain is Arthur's nephew, a hothead and a notable warrior. In the campaign against the Romans he starts a skirmish when greatly outnumbered, because he is infuriated by the sneers of the enemy, and he strikes one opponent such a terrible blow with his sword that he splits him through helmet and skull down to the breast. He is killed in battle at Richborough when Arthur's army lands to settle accounts with the treacherous Mordred.

William of Malmesbury, writing a few years before Geoffrey, said that in 1087 the tomb of Arthur's noble nephew Walwin had been discovered on the Welsh coast. It was 14 feet long. In a sculpture of c1100 at Modena Cathedral in Italy, Galvaginus is one of the knights helping Arthur to rescue Guinevere.

The Broken Sword

Chrétien de Troyes portrayed Gawain as the pattern of chivalry. No lady in distress ever appealed in vain to 'the good and gentle lord Gawain', and to equal or outdo him was the final test of heroic valour. The early 13th century German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach said of him in *Parzival* that: 'on the battlefield his heart was a fortress, towering so against sharp attacks that he could always be seen in the thick of the fray. Friend and foe acknowledged that his battle-cry rang loud in pursuit of fame . . .'

In the Austrian Grail romance *Diu Krône* Gawain is successful, but generally he loses stature when the story-tellers take him out of his native element of courts and fair ladies, jousts and battles, and send him in search of the Grail. The first sequel added to Chrétien's *Conte del Graal* in the late 12th century contains a hauntingly mysterious account of Gawain's experiences at the Grail castle. Riding a horse which he allowed to carry him wherever it would, Gawain came to the sea and a wide causeway, stretching far out to sea. Trees grew on each side of the causeway and roofed it over, making it frighteningly dark. Gawain hesitated but his horse bore him on willy nilly, and at the end of the causeway he found a house, where he was greeted with excited joy and the words, 'Fair sir, God has brought you to us, and long we have desired your coming.'

Gawain was left alone in a spacious hall, in the middle of which was a bier covered with a great scarlet cloth emblazoned with a gold cross. Lying on the bier was a corpse, and on its breast half of a broken sword. Presently a king and his courtiers came in and sat down to feast, with Gawain honourably placed at the king's side. The food was served by 'a rich grail' which moved about by itself, and which also filled the golden cups with wine. At the end of the meal the company vanished and Gawain was left alone with the bier. Now he saw a lance with blood flowing down its shaft, standing upright in a vessel of silver. The king returned, bringing the other half of the broken sword. He asked Gawain to fit the two halves together, to see if they would

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Gawain was one of the greatest heroes of the Round Table, famed for courage and courtesy. *Above* Setting out on a quest he takes leave of Arthur and Guinevere *(left)* and rides through a forest *(right)*. *Facing page* 14th century illustration to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a story which may contain echoes of a ritual combat between Winter and Summer. Gawain cut off the Green Knight's head with an axe. The Green Knight cheerfully picked it up and rode away. A year and a day later, Gawain had to stand a blow from the Green Knight in his turn

reunite. Gawain tried, but without success.

The king sadly told Gawain that he had failed in his mission, but thanked him for his courage in making the journey and offered him any gift he cared to ask. Gawain, who had been riding all night, was very sleepy by now but he forced his eyes open and asked to be told the truth about what he had seen. The king explained that the lance was the one which pierced Christ on the cross, and that the sword was the one which struck the fell blow that destroyed the kingdom of Logres. By this time Gawain could listen no longer and fell asleep.

When he woke he was lying in a field. The house of mysteries had disappeared. Bitterly reproaching himself for not staying awake, Gawain rode away through a countryside rich in woods, meadows and streams. The country people hailed him with, 'Sir, you have both slain and healed us.' What had been the arid Waste Land the night before had turned green again the moment he asked about the bleeding lance but if he had kept awake to learn why the Grail served, then: 'No one could tell the great joy that would have come of asking.'

Blind to the Sacred

In this story Gawain has at least partially succeeded. In another French tale, *Perlesvaus*, he fails entirely. He is told that when he reaches the Grail castle he must ask a question (this is a stock motif in the romances) and he is told what question to ask. But when he sees the Grail, he 'is lost in thought and such great joy fills his mind that he thinks of nothing but God.' He is despairingly urged to speak, for this is his last chance, but he fails to hear and remains wrapped in contemplative silence.

According to the Prose *Lancelot* of the early 13th century, Gawain failed for a far less creditable reason. He saw the Grail as a chalice, 'the richest vessel that might be beheld by the eye of mortal man'. But it was carried by a girl of astonishing beauty and unfortunately the hero was far more interested in the girl than in the Grail. For this he was thrown out of the Grail castle, dragged through the streets of the town in a cart and pelted with dung and mud.

In the *Queste del Saint Graal* (see GALAHAD) Gawain is shown failing totally because he does not understand that the search for the Grail is a spiritual quest, not a knightly adventure of the accustomed type. Relying on his own plentiful resources of courage and honour, he is incapable of seeing that he cannot win the Grail without God's help. He is unfavourably contrasted with the saintly Galahad as part of the *Queste's* attack on the worldly values of chivalry and on the ideal of the knight as the supremely self-reliant man instead of the supremely God-reliant man. As P. M. Matarasso puts it, 'He is so rooted in the creed of his caste, so embedded in the secular, that the sacred passes him by unrecognized'. The *Queste* says that 'he enjoyed a more widespread popularity than any man alive' but one of its numerous moralizing hermits tells him that his faults are lechery and pride, and the lack of the Christian virtues of chastity and humility.

This picture of Gawain colours his character in Malory though at the end, when the Round Table is finally brought to disaster, he is given back something of his old high quality. Opposing his half-brother Mordred and his brother Agravaine, he remains loyal to Arthur. Wounded in combat with Lancelot, his last actions are attempts to heal the breach between Lancelot and Arthur. He dies, and is buried in a chapel in Dover Castle and, Malory says, 'there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Lancelot gave him in battle.'

The Beheading Game

In Britain meanwhile, Gawain had remained an admired hero and he is the central character of a magnificent 14th century poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Arthur's court was at dinner in Camelot when a trumpet sounded outside and in came a tall and terrifying figure. His skin was as green as grass, his clothes were green, his horse was green, and he carried holly in one hand and a monstrous axe in the other.

The Green Knight proposed what he cheerfully called a game. He would allow the Round Table's champion to deal him a blow with the axe, on condition that he had the right to return the blow a year and a day later. Gawain accepted the challenge, took the axe, and struck the Green Knight a blow that cut off his head. The Green Knight merely picked it up and rode off, carrying his head by the hair.

When the time came, Gawain rode north to seek the Green Knight and came to a handsome castle, where he was welcomed by the lord of the castle and by the lord's surpassingly lovely young wife. The lady made every effort to seduce Gawain, who resisted her with great difficulty. Gawain and the lord struck a bargain that each would give the other whatever he acquired each day. Gawain failed to keep the bargain for he did not hand over to the lord a magic girdle which the lady gave him, telling him it would keep him from all harm.

On the appointed day Gawain rode out and met the Green Knight. He readied himself for a lethal blow from the axe but the Green Knight gave him only a light tap that just nicked the flesh. He then explained

British Museum

that he was really the lord of the castle in disguise, that he had not killed Gawain because the knight had honourably refrained from making love to the lady, and that he gashed him for concealing the gift of the girdle. The whole adventure had been devised by an enchantress to test the honour of the knights of the Round Table.

The story ends with everyone happy, except Gawain, who feels he has disgraced himself and laments 'the faithlessnesss that was found in me'. His fault was to break his word to the lord of the castle to save his own life, for he hoped that the magic girdle would protect him from the Green Knight's axe. It is a fault he is bitterly aware of but one which few human beings could readily condemn, and Arthur's court agree that each knight of the fellowship shall wear a green belt for Sir Gawain's sake, as a mark of honour to him and of renown to the Round Table.

The main incidents in the poem, including the beheading game and the trial of the hero's virtue, occur in earlier tales but there is no precedent for the greenness of the Green Knight. It has been suggested that the uncanny challenger was green because it was the fairy colour, or alternatively that the beheading challenge is based on fertility ritual, green being the colour of vegetation (see GREEN). There are probably traces in the Green Knight of a figure representing Winter who fights an annual combat against Summer but, whatever pagan motifs have survived in the poem, the attitude of the author is that of a Christian, though a Christian far more admiring of the code of chivalry than the author of the *Queste*.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: R. S. Loomis, *The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol* (Univ. of Wales Press, 1963); P. M. Matarasso trans, *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (Penguin, 1969); B. Stone trans, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Penguin, 1959).

Gawain was the first of Arthur's knights to swear the quest of the Grail but he failed miserably: the Arming of the Knights, setting out in search of the Grail, tapestry by William Morris, design by Burne-Jones.

City of Birmingham Art Gallery/Reilly Constantine

GELLER, URI

BORN IN ISRAEL in 1947, Uri Geller has now become something of a psychic superstar. He has given displays of his psychokinetic talents in many public contexts, and is best known for his skill in bending metal. He can also apparently start clocks, stop elevators, and does very well in experiments in ESP, such as sending and receiving images by telepathy. Reactions to him are mixed. The author Colin Wilson believes that he is an unconscious 'medium' for psychic energy.

FURTHER READING: Uri Geller, *My Story* (Robson, 1975); Charles Panati, ed., *The Geller Papers* (Houghton Mifflin, 1976); Colin Wilson, *The Geller Phenomenon* (Aldus).

GEMATRIA

THE FACT that the letters of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets also stood for numbers is the basis of *gematria*, a method of finding hidden meanings underlying the surface of a written text by turning a word into a number and then finding another word which has the same total. An example is the word 'money' in the passage: 'And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you . . ."' (Esther 3. 11). The letters of the Hebrew word add up to 165, and the word for 'gallows' also adds up to 165, so the money was said to foreshadow the gallows on which the wicked Haman was to hang.

Most examples of this kind are the work of ingenious commentators but there are several probable cases of the use of gematria in the Old Testament itself. For instance, Abraham is said to have 318 retainers (Genesis 14.14), a figure apparently based on the name Eliezer, which adds to 318. Eliezer was the only one of Abraham's servants whose name was remembered.

Gematria has a long history in Jewish mysticism, especially among Cabalists, but it also has been used by Mohammedan and Christian numerologists. Jesus as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, was symbolized by a dove because the Greek word for 'dove' (*peristera*) adds to 801, which equals the number values of the Greek letters alpha and omega.

(See also NAMES; NUMEROLOGY.)

GEMINI

ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONAL system, people who come under Gemini, the third sign of the zodiac, are those who were born between 22 May and 21 June. Gemini, whose sign is the 'heavenly twins', is ruled by Mercury, the planet of speech and writing. The smallest planet, Mercury is never further than 28° from its father the sun, and is associated with children and education. People whose zodiacal signs are ruled by this planet usually succeed at school, and they are often attracted to professions such as the nursing of young children and teaching, also to academic careers. Often talented writers, they frequently succeed as authors or journalists.

Geminians have the reputation of not taking things too seriously and certainly seem to enjoy life. In fact, Geminians hate loneliness and enjoy parties, even those 'in line of duty'; for this reason they often do well in official positions. The motto of the person born under this sign seems to be 'Life's a game', but despite this Geminians will sometimes devote themselves to causes and, as they do not take danger any more seriously than they take anything else, they sometimes acquire a reputation for devotion and heroism, often to the surprise of those who think of them as casual, playful and frivolous. Curiously enough, this sign came out top in a statistical study designed to reveal under which sign the largest number of physicians are born.

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Gemini is represented by the 'heavenly twins'. Castor and Pollux: illustration from a 12th century treatise on astrology

Youthfulness is another Geminian trait, carried occasionally to the extent of childishness in people old enough to know better. Some Geminians talk their own private language, or at least have a few private words or abbreviations of which they are especially fond; this may occasionally take the form of family slang, or even using 'baby talk' on unsuitable occasions.

Music, astronomy, and mathematics are all subjects which are said to interest Geminians. Although they are not averse to taking risks, soldiering has no attractions for them; according to the Roman astrologer Manilius, Geminians 'wish war and trumpets far away'.

Because Gemini is represented by the twins, Castor and Pollux, astrological writers have often insisted on the 'two-sided' nature of this sign, but this should not be taken too seriously; many people, other than Geminians follow two trades at once, or change their careers in middle life.

Geminians are said to be quick-witted, good at repartee, and easily able to change from one type of business to another. They find this easy because, however seriously other people may take them, they never take themselves entirely seriously. They sometimes play tricks for the mere pleasure of admiring their own skill. To a Geminian scientist, science is just fun and cannot have moral implications.

Most Geminians, however, appear to be quite ordinary respectable people, in spite of their love of playfulness which is never far below the surface.

Gloucester City Museum

Genius

Latin word for each man's guardian spirit: literally 'the begetter', the genius seems to have been the procreative force in a man; it was honoured in Roman birthday celebrations; in English, genius means the characteristic intellectual or artistic endowment of a person, or a person of extraordinary abilities.

See GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

GEOMANCY

THE ART OF DIVINING by means of 'magicked' earth cast upon sacred ground is known as geomancy, a broad term which includes scrying by inspecting the configurations made by scattered pebbles, the blowing of dust upon a smooth surface such as a marble table-top, the strewing of grains of sand, or seeds, themselves born of the earth. Geomancy can also be practised by falling into a trance when watching the ashes on the hearth, or even by gazing at dead leaves floating on a forest pool, or at thrown twigs, matchsticks or spillikins. The word is derived from two Greek words, *gaie*, *ge*, the earth and *manteia*, divination.

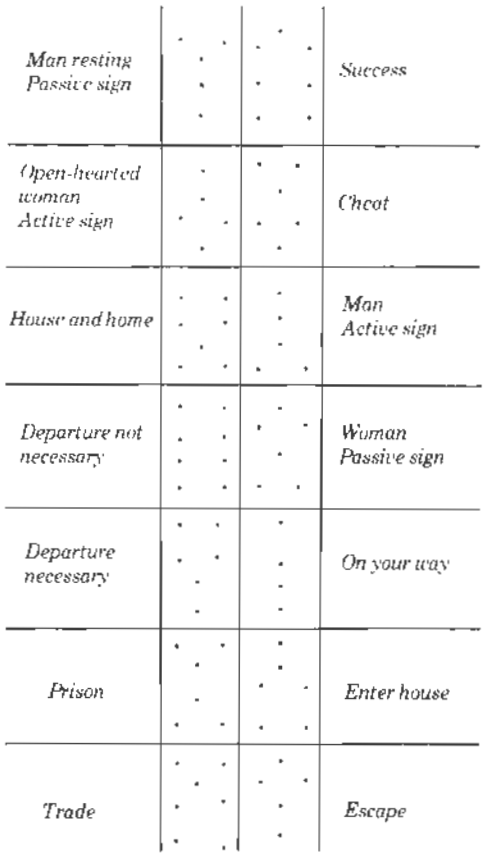
These ancient methods of uncovering the past, grasping the significance of the present and revealing the future, as well as of reading character, are closely linked to many others, such as the use of ink blot patterns or the shapes made by melted lead or candle wax dropped into a bowl of water. The divination of objects cast upon the earth also developed into the interpretation of lines or dots made more or less haphazardly on paper with a pencil.

The trigrams and hexagrams of the *I Ching* or Book of Changes of the Chinese, which is still consulted by seers and fortune tellers in the East, are a development of early geomantic methods of divination; and these same methods are the basis of the system of numerology developed by the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, and used by the Jewish Cabalists in their interpretation of the Bible. They are also apparent in the theories of Paracelsus, and in the writings of mystics and philosophers such as Raymond Lully and Robert Fludd.

There appears to be an underlying link that connects all methods of divination from the most primitive, naïve or humble to the most advanced, complex and exalted; from the geomantic casting of pebbles, coloured marbles or a few selected semi-precious stones, from tea-leaf or coffee-ground reading, to the reading of hands or feet; from the interpretation of the bumps of the head or the moles of the body, to the 'science' of astrology. For if that which is above is reflected in that which is below, a basic

concept of magic, it follows that what is revealed in the heavens by planets may be discerned down below in the apparently random fall of a handful of earth. The opposite, too, applies.

In the divinatory ritual of casting earth, sand, pebbles, sticks, arrows, small bones, marbles or jewels, as in the inspection of tea-leaves, coffee-grounds, ink blots and other kinds of intentional, if random, splodging or scratching, the seer looks for, and attempts to interpret, certain formations, numbers and densities. It is by no means easy to put down in writing what these are likely to be and exactly what they signify.

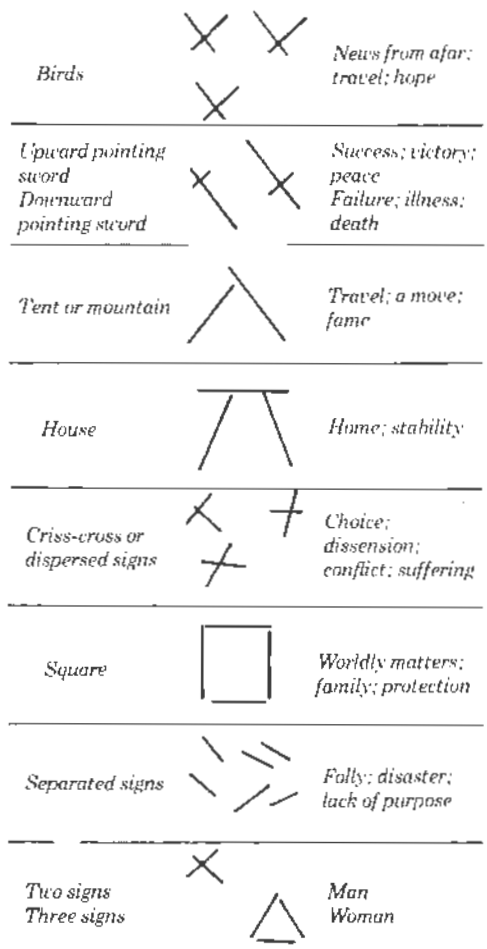


(a)

The art should really be passed from one seer to another, from teacher to pupil 'outside words' as a Zen Master would say. Words come from the lips of the seer only as he perceives clairvoyantly the message given by his oracular method. This is probably why so little has been written concerning the more primitive methods of geomancy, while the much later and more sophisticated systems have been dealt with fully.

The basic number configurations in the diagram (A) above are said to correspond to planetary signs and the zodiac. Needless to say a certain amount of imagination or guesswork is required of the seer if he is to identify them, as earth or other thrown things rarely fall in a uniform way. These interpretations of the patterns most likely to be found were given by a Moslem gypsy.

Geomantic methods of divining vary from land to land. They are still practised by village witches, gypsies and tinkers, and by desert nomads. Individual seers have their own preferences as to procedure. Generally the material to be used is carefully chosen and 'magnetized' or blessed by the seer, and the surface upon which it is to be cast is magically consecrated according to instructions received from an initiate or master.



(b)

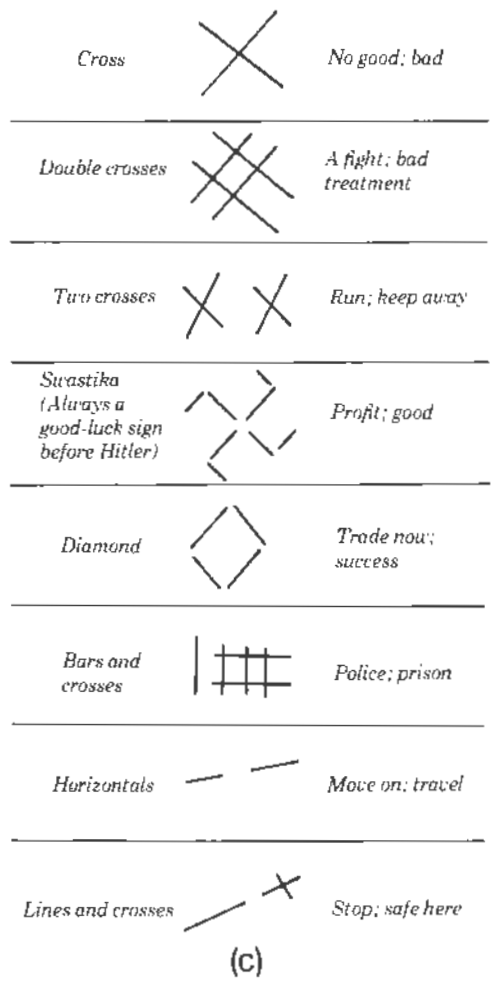
Earths are selected for their colours, a red or white earth being highly valued, for example, and a magic circle or square is traced with the first and second finger upon the ground where the earth is to be thrown. Generally the seer holds a handful of earth in his left hand and, after uttering some magical formula under his breath, casts it down. But occasionally the person who is asking the question is invited to hold and to cast the earth for himself. The interpretation follows after the seer has concentrated for some moments on the configurations that have appeared. When the prediction has been made, he removes all traces of these by passing his right palm over them. Sometimes the seer draws lines or signs in the earth or sand as he begins a reading.

Discerning clear configurations in earth or sand is not easy, and a simpler method for the would-be geomancer to use is to take a number of matches, hold these for a few moments while concentrating, and then throw them down. Some of the configurations are in the diagram (B) above.

Tinkers throw twigs not only for divination, but also arrange them in special groups, or cut meaningful incisions in trunks of trees, as indications for other 'travellers' coming the same way later on. A similar method is also used by true Romanies. Some of the configurations which they look for in fallen or thrown twigs, or those that have been deliberately arranged, are shown in the diagram (C) below.

Divining by sand, originally an Arabian form of divination, is also practised in the West: dry silver sand is poured into a tea-tray to a depth of two to three inches, and smoothed flat. The seer is blindfolded and holds an ivory stick or long pencil. His hand is guided over the tray while he goes into a trance. Meanwhile the person who is seeking information tells the seer what he wants to know. After a while the diviner will feel an impulse to press the stick into the sand; when he does so the stick begins to move of itself, the hand being but its support. The stick is allowed to wander as it pleases, but only when it stops of its own accord does the diviner remove the blindfold from his eyes. He is now at liberty to scrutinize the marks, signs, letters, numbers, words or sentences that have been traced. From these he deduces the decree of fate.

A simple 'Y' for 'yes' and 'N' for 'no' answer many questions, but the initials of people concerned with the questioner's request, and numbers referring to quantity, time, age, or date, may also appear. Often a whole message may be written out. Occasionally the words are written backwards and must be read from right to left, or the message must be viewed in a mirror. Some Arabian seers say that the area of sand that they have squared off for this art, the tea-tray in Western practice, represents a year, and that a series of horizontal marks tells the months



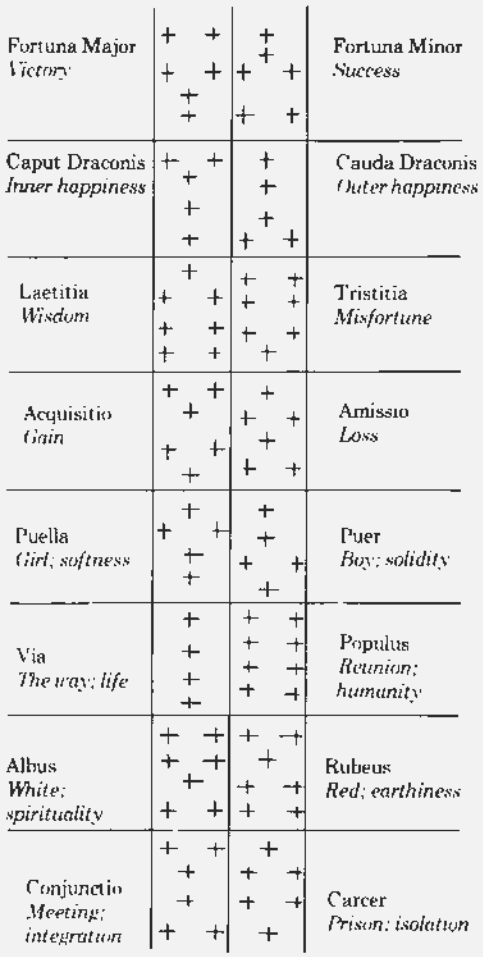
(c)

that are relevant to the questions posed.

As in the case of other such trance or automatic methods of prediction, the sitting should not be allowed to continue for long periods; the strain on the seer is great, and the moving stick will show a resistance to proceeding and may even write 'stop'. Some sticks have been known to scribble swear words when they are being overworked by the diviner, or unduly tormented by an importunate questioner.

Simple signs that can be easily interpreted are: long lines for journeys; wavy lines for crossing sea, desert or mountain; short lines foretell guests; crosses indicate obstacles to be overcome, trouble, illness or restrictions; diagonal crosses represent affairs of the heart; and marriage is shown by circles. Large, irregular circular areas are a sign of family problems or bad luck while triangles indicate success when upright, misfortune when reversed.

It is possible for an individual to practise divination on his own behalf, using only a sheet of paper and a pencil. After formulating his question, he half closes his eyes and focuses them on the paper, which should be held as far away as is practical. Making his mind blank, he makes four sets of four parallel, horizontal lines of random dashes, as many dashes as he feels inclined to make in each line, with the pencil. The number of dashes in each line in each of the four sets are then counted. If there is an uneven number of dashes in a line, one cross should be marked while two crosses represent an even number; the crosses should be marked one below another, to form a pattern. By comparing the patterns of each of the four sets of crosses with the groupings shown in the diagram on the left, he will find the answer to his question.



After passing out of the hands of the huntsman-soothsayer of the cave dwellers, the art of geomancy was practised by the prophesying maidens and crones who embodied the corn goddess of early agricultural peoples, and by the priests of antiquity. Roman augurs, initiated by the Etruscans, exchanged earth for corn, and practised geomancy by inspecting the signs revealed by grains that had been scattered by their poultry. In Scandinavia, runic letters replaced pre-alphabetic symbols; and in spite of persecution, the methods used by the Jewish Cabalists of old still retain a living power of prophecy.

The 'forbidden science' survived all attempts to destroy it; it flourished, and was elaborated upon by some of the finest minds of the Middle Ages; and was even more openly expounded as the Renaissance dawned upon the West. Once men had broken through the stranglehold of the Inquisition, a tide of reasoned spirituality surged through Europe, and continues to this day. Much that was mere superstition was perhaps perpetuated; but much that was essential and beneficial for the future of humanity has also been transmitted.

(See also I CHING; TEA-LEAF READING.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

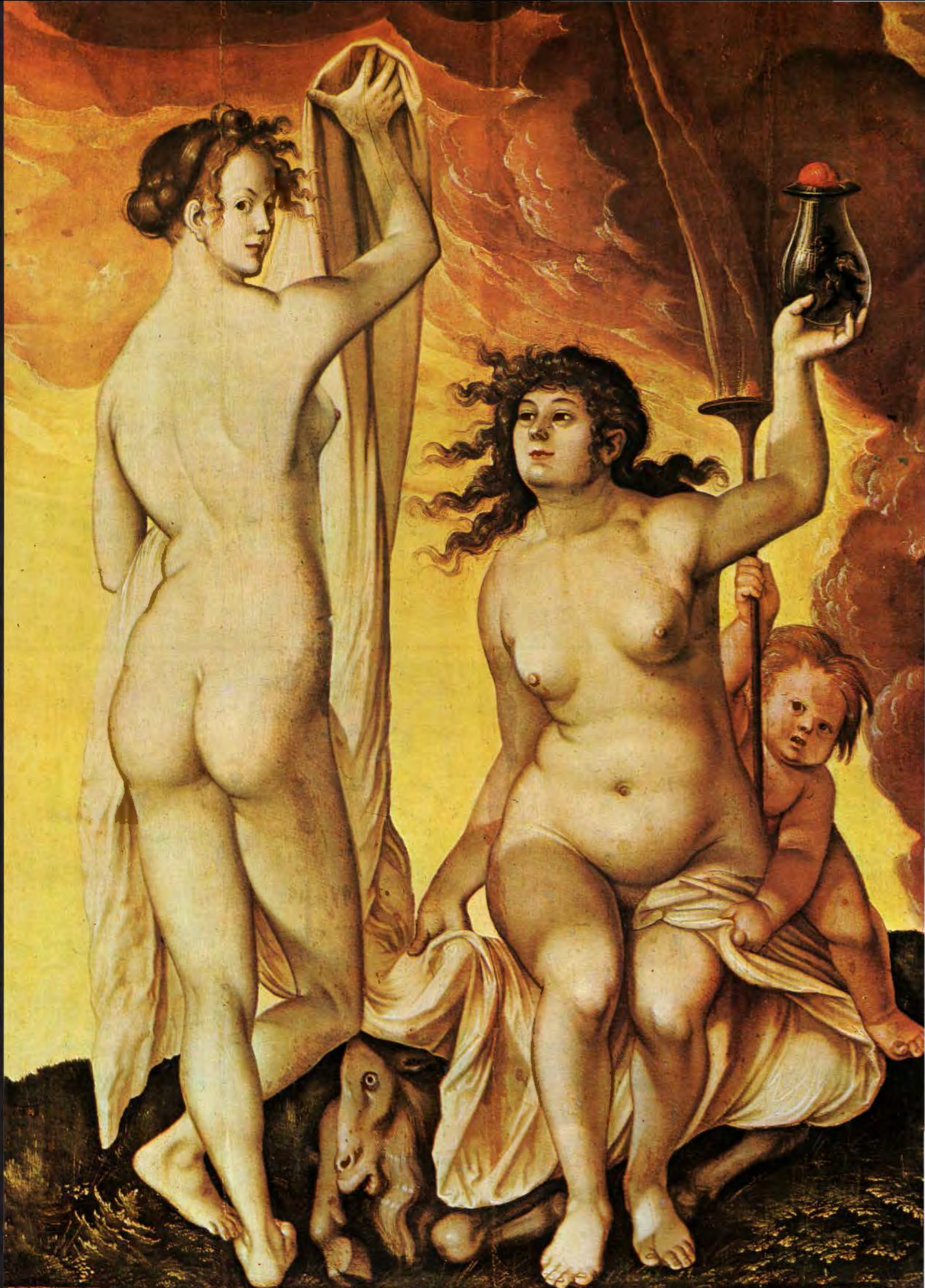
Witch trials began comparatively late in Germany but the scale, ferocity and ruthlessness of the mass persecutions of Franconia and the Rhineland were unparalleled elsewhere in Europe. The use of torture to induce confessions was not only sanctioned but prescribed by the law of the Holy Roman Empire, to which the multiplicity of states belonged, and before torture commenced, it was the custom for a priest to bless the instruments. In all it is estimated that by 1775, the date of the last execution for witchcraft, more than 100,000 men, women and children had been put to death

GERMAN WITCHCRAFT

ALWAYS UNJUSTLY PERSECUTED, the victim of the notorious witch trial era was the defendant in legal proceedings which followed the judicial procedure as laid down by the Inquisition; this contained certain features which automatically put the accused at a disadvantage particularly in that he or she was not allowed a defence. Witches could be seized and imprisoned merely 'on suspicion'. In other words, on circumstantial evidence alone. This general principle of the legal code in force at this

In Germany, notorious for its witch persecutions, the law ordered that suspected witches should be tortured into confessing; 16th century methods of torture included disembowelling, beheading, gouging out the eyes, cutting off the ear or hand, and flogging

Cornell University Library



period, whereby informing against a witch was enough to gain her immediate arrest, had alarming consequences during the witch persecutions.

During local outbreaks of witch hysteria, sometimes leading to hundreds of convictions, many communities erected so-called 'witch towers' or 'witches' houses' which served as special jails for this type of prisoner, and in which incredibly sadistic outrages took place. Defence witnesses were not even admitted to the witch trials and relatives of an accused person were allowed to visit him only on condition that they agreed to try and persuade him to make a confession of his witchcraft activities. Such confessions could not be made seriously, for most of the offences with which the accused were charged, such as a pact with the Devil, the ability to bewitch, visits to the sabbath and intercourse with the Devil, cannot in reality be committed.

The majority of court records are of a monotonously stereotyped nature. The accused victims made their confessions – usually extracted under torture – according to a standard formula, prepared by the local torturer, and based on those used in the trials against demon-worship dating back to the 4th century. The Emperors Constantine, Valentine and Valens established the use of the Roman penal code, including the practice of torture, against sorcerers, as supporters of a subversive pagan group; and the confession formulae continued to be used by executioners and torturers during both the heresy trials and the witch persecutions over a thousand years later.

Climate of Terror

The sentence in the witch trials was of equally stereotyped severity. In the majority of cases the accused witch was sentenced to death by burning. He or she might be strangled or executed with the sword beforehand as an act of clemency. If methods of torture failed to produce a confession from the more resolute defendants, they might subsequently be sent into exile; this was more common during the later phases of witch persecution. Those permanently invalided by torture were often pushed over the border in carts.

The whole process contains all the ingredients of mass suggestion but it was always accompanied by protest, misgivings and opposition. The reality of law was experienced as the justice of terror, the essence of which consists in the fact that the terror could not openly be referred to by name.

The principle of suspicion made such a climate of terror possible. To be denounced as a witch was enough to destroy the lives of both rich and poor alike. Even into the latest phase of the witch persecution era, merely associating with a witch, or with a relative suspected of witchcraft, was thought to be proof of one's own guilt. Devil-worship was believed to be transmitted to a child either by its godmother, skilled in magic, or through its own mother, shortly after birth.

There is a basic sociological difference between a magic-orientated culture, believing in the existence of men and women gifted with the power of sorcery, and the notorious witch persecutions of the 12th to 18th centuries. It lies in the belief that 'we', as members of an orthodox Christian community, neither wish nor are able to practise magic, but that there are others, outsiders, apostates, enemies of civilized man, who can perform these arts. Magic and witchcraft, therefore, are imputed to an imaginary group of antagonists in order to be persecuted. The object is to exclude the concept of magic, so that we can put our trust in the natural order of things, and prevent the laws of causation from being repeatedly brought into question through the work of the Devil.

While the persecutors themselves think in terms of magic, that is to say, believe in the existence of witchcraft, their aim is to free the world of the plague of sorcery through 'extermination', a word often used in demonologies. With fire and sword they prepare the way for a magic-free world. They effectively disseminate witchcraft mania by instilling a morbid fear of persecution. As far as the man in the street is concerned, the victim *must* have been guilty of witchcraft otherwise it follows that the Church, the courts and the government have been accessories in the most terrible murder. But this adoption of the persecution ideology into the public consciousness always remained ambivalent. There was an element of doubt in nearly every individual case, if not in general. This is apparent in one of the first German testimonies, that of Mathias Widman, who was Court Chaplain to the Elector Friedrich von der Pfalz in Heidelberg in 1475. On the one hand Mathias Widman describes the horrible rites performed by witches, and the heretical Gazariorum sect, only to make an exception of those people known personally to him who have been indicted for witchcraft. This more or less sympathetic reaction to the persecution victims is typical of the majority of people.

Children on Trial

Particularly striking is the adoption of these ideas by children and youths in those areas where the trials had been in process for some time. Gangs of children 'hounded' suspected witches with unusual venom, before the unfortunate victims were finally imprisoned. They accused each other of sorcery and boasted that they could bewitch people as if it were a game, without understanding the serious implications of their actions. They invented imaginary stories of nightly feasts and revels, reminiscent of delusions caused by fever. The authorities pounced on such tenuous information and children's trials were frequent, at which small children would appear not only as witnesses but also as defendants.

The most comprehensive account of these conditions is given by Friedrich Merzbacher in his book *Die Hexenprozesse in Franken (Witch Trials in Franconia)* published in 1957. He gives a detailed account of the wave of witchcraft trials in the Bishopric of Würzburg in the 17th century where 900 people were tried between the years 1623–1631 alone and the even more notorious Bamberg trials of the decade 1623–1633 (see BAMBERG WITCHES).

It seems highly probable that some of the major figures in this network of persecution were psychopaths and people suffering from paranoia. At the same time, the presence at these trials of credulous and perhaps intimidated local dignitaries, as well as those who commanded the respect of the common people – priests of both denominations, lawyers, scholars and writers – helped to guarantee recognition of the witchcraft ideology and its perpetuation.

Crime and Corruption

There are, however, many examples of witch-finders being motivated by criminal urges to line their own pockets through blackmail and exploitation. Jakob Bithner, an official of the province of Styria, provides just one example of this corruption. He was originally given the task of ridding the countryside of vagrants, mostly disbanded mercenaries; he took it on himself to include 'those criminals who dabble in sorcery', and eventually became a professional witch-finder. After trapping his suspects he would hand them over to the authorities for payment. Similarly, a soldier named Geiss of Lindenheim offered his services to the town's officials as a witch-finder, hinting that the church and a local bridge could be repaired as soon as enough money had been accumulated from the richer citizens by means of witch trials. Geiss instituted a true regime of terror, until public indignation forced him to flee.

It is possible to compile a whole list of these clearly recognizable criminal types; men such as the infamous Count Balthasar Voss or Noss, who carried on his activities for 15 years, and boasted that he hoped to achieve 1000 convictions. In 1603 the Supreme Court of the Holy Roman Empire intervened to put an end to his excesses.

Many persecutors, like Jörg Abriel from Schongau attracted a large number of followers. They were not in a position to overrun villages and communities on their own authority, because they required the legitimate sanction of a secular or ecclesiastical body. But in the same way that hand in glove with criminals there is often a respectable 'front' man, so at Esslingen, near Stuttgart, for instance, the fanatical witch-finder Nagogeorgus was supported in his actions by the judge of the nearby village of Wiessenstein. Sometimes, however, individual itinerant witch-finders were seized by enlightened magistrates and prevented from doing any more harm. An executioner's assistant from Eichstätt, who had started to propagate rumours of witchcraft, was punished at Nuremberg. Hans Schock from Fürstenfelden in Austria, who had attempted to earn money by denouncing suspected witches in Strasburg and Basle,

Witches were popularly believed to be able to ruin crops and wreak havoc on the countryside: in this painting by Hans Baldung Grien two witches, accompanied by a goat and a dwarfish child, invoke a storm; one of the witches holds up a bottle containing an imp she has captured

Joachim Blauel/Städelsches Kunstinstitut Frankfurt

was finally sentenced by a court to death by drowning.

If we begin to reckon up and to pursue the names that appear in court records, it becomes increasingly clear that in this whole system, designed to torment people with oppressive nightmares and induce delusions, there were in fact at any given time only very few fanatics in local positions of authority and a minority of sadists in the terror groups.

Evil Breeds More Evil

The relationship between criminals and respectable men in positions of authority, on the one hand, and their atrocities which were upheld by a legalized doctrine of terror, on the other, were far from simple: the situation was not purely one of induced delusion. There was also the factor of revenge; especially where terror practices were employed, the infliction of wrong set up a chain reaction, so that injustice was passed on. This is particularly evident in the accounts of the activities of a man named Kothmann, who later became mayor of the town of Lemgo. During the first wave of mass trials in the area, Kothmann's mother was burned as a witch, and coming from an affluent family background, Kothmann was forced to roam the country as a poverty-stricken law student. He finally returned to Lemgo where he ingratiated himself with the then mayor, an influential man and former witch-hunter. After the latter's death in 1666, Kothmann assumed the role of intriguer and on the basis of his terrorist activities was elected, like his predecessor, to the position of mayor. With the assistance of a group of self-seeking accomplices he set about revenging himself on all those families who had held positions of authority and respect in the town at the time of his mother's death. Although these citizens complained and presented petitions to the regional authorities, the Supreme Court and the Church, Kothmann remained in office until his death in 1684 and was responsible for the execution of 90 people. At the end he undoubtedly believed in his own delusion, but his motives almost certainly included a desire to revenge himself on society.

Spreadeagled on his back, a victim of the German witch-hunting mania is confronted by one of his persecutors in this 16th century allegorical illustration; beyond him a woman is seized by an evil beast

Repeated efforts to keep the hysteria in check were made by a number of lawyers and others in positions of authority. In 1628 Vice-Chancellor Hahn of Bamberg became a victim of the persecution because of his known leniency towards the witches. If one were to erect a memorial to any one resistance figure, however, it would be to the Jesuit Father Friedrich von Spee. As a result of his experiences as a confessor to the witches of Würzburg, he wrote a book *Cautio Criminalis* in which he examined and exposed from his first-hand knowledge the whole process of witch persecution, from a sociological standpoint. In spite of his work being published anonymously in 1631, he was forbidden to make his views known and was disposed of discreetly by being sent as confessor to those sick with the plague. Spee sympathized with the predicament of accused witches who had implicated themselves under duress. The unfortunate victims were only entitled to the services of a confessor if they first gave a guarantee that they would not recant their previous confessions – so that they were put in the impossible position of either having to admit their witch crimes, or, if they recanted, being subjected once again to the rigours of torture and the extracting of a new confession. Spee began to doubt if witches really existed and was convinced right from the beginning that the number of genuine witches was negligible.

Showing a remarkable understanding of the group psychology which underlay the persecutions, he came to the conclusion that the impulse which led to the witch trials originated at the lowest level of society and worked its way up; that the persecutions were engendered by the common people themselves, 'the irrational and, generally speaking, jealous and base rabble'. In process of time the people had become accustomed to the witch trials and pressure was brought to bear therefore on those in authority to act. 'If the authorities did not immediately seize upon baseless rumours', says Spee, 'there would be a great outcry that the officials themselves were afraid for their wives and friends, and that they (the common people) were being hoodwinked by the rich.'

The publication of this book at such a period in history, by a man who had reason to fear for his life, shows that it is possible even in such stressful circumstances to examine detachedly the process of terror involved in the witch persecutions and to see it clearly for what it was.

(See EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS.)

WANDA VON BAEYER-KATTE

FURTHER READING: John A. Rush, *Witchcraft and Sorcery* (C.C. Thomas, 1974).

GERMANEN ORDER

THE CHIEF SIGNIFICANCE today of the Germanen Order, which flourished from 1912 to about 1922, lies in the fact that some of its members had connections with the early National Socialist Movement, and that it cherished so many of the myths that prevailed in extremist German nationalist circles. For instance, there was the delusion that the truly German master race (*Herrenvolk*) was descended from heroic Nordic ancestors who were fair-haired and blue-eyed, representing a racial ideal. Then there was the obsessive belief in the existence of a 'Jewish peril'. Jewry as a whole was said to represent a world-wide conspiratorial movement, and there were many who believed in the existence of a small, secret and immensely powerful international group of Jews who sought to rule the world. Since Freemasonry was supposed to be dominated by Jews, this also represented an international conspiracy.

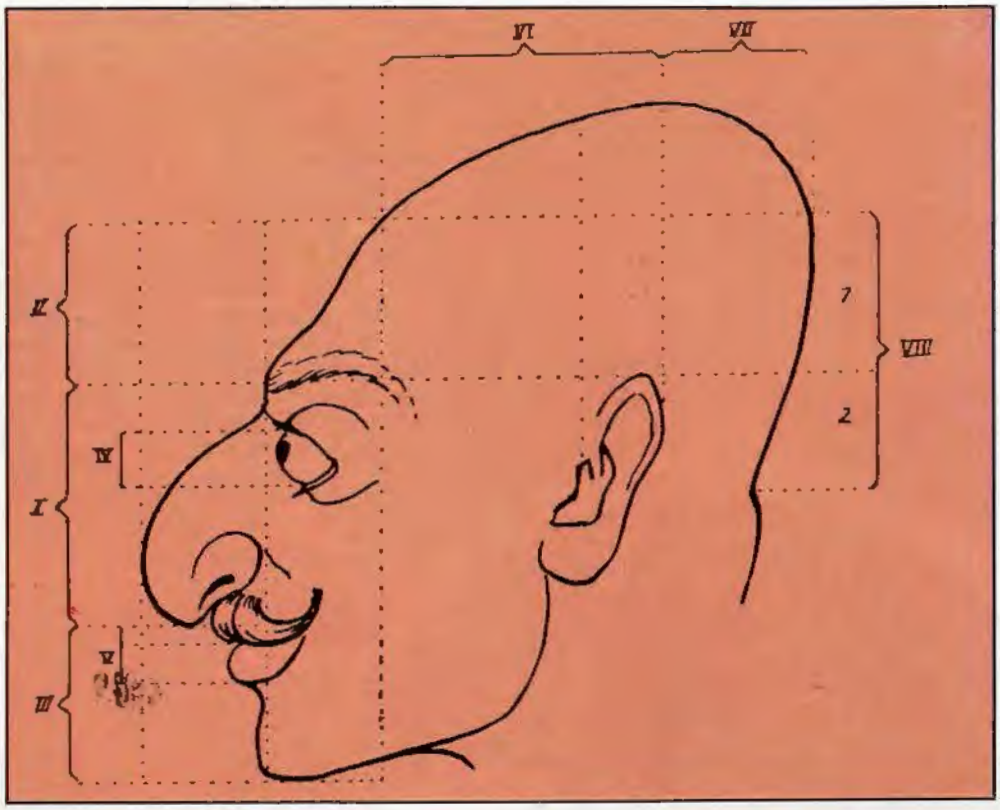
There were several reasons for the decision to establish the Order on pseudo-masonic lines. Unconsciously, at least, there was the desire to use their opponents' 'magic', in the form of rituals. Also, they supposed that secrecy was essential to prevent the Order being penetrated by Jews.

The founders of the Order were all obsessional antisemites. They included Theodor Fritsch, publisher of the antisemitic periodical *Hamm[illegible]* Philipp Stauff, an obscure journalist, Professor Heinrich Krager and Hermann Pohl, who was probably a renegade Freemason.

Candidates for admission were required to sign an attestation that they had no Jewish blood in their veins and were not married to a Jewess. A photograph was also necessary because the Order's physiognomical experts were confident of their ability to identify Jewish descent at a glance.

Candidates for membership of the Berlin lodge of the Germanen Order had their skulls measured with a 'platometer' to make sure that they conformed to the Order's 'Nordic' racial ideals: 30 years later Heinrich Himmler organized a similar measuring operation on Russian prisoners

Wiener Library



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The only known copy of an initiation ritual of the Germanen Order is preserved at the German Federal Archives. While the candidate waits in an adjoining room the Master and his two Knights take their places. They are clad in white robes and wear helmets adorned with Wotan's horns. 'The Master of the Music' sits at the harmonium and the Lodge members enter singing the Pilgrims' Chorus from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. The candidate, who is blindfolded and wears a pilgrim's mantle, is brought into the Lodge room. He listens to a solemn address from the Master and is informed that what separates him from the Hebrews and members of other inferior races is 'our Ario-Germanic concept of the world and life'. The Bard ignites a sacred flame and the bandage is removed from the candidate's eyes. The Master takes Wotan's holy spear and holds it in front of him. His two Knights cross their swords upon it. Meanwhile the Music Master plays extracts from *Lohengrin*.

The Order was more or less inactive during the First World War. In 1916 Hermann Pohl made an undignified exit and founded a rival order. The original Germanen Order became active again in 1919; the Grand Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg, a prototype German nationalist, was Grand Master. In 1920 the three 'secret chiefs' of the Order were General von Heimerdinger, Dr Bernhard Koerner, a cranky member of the former Prussian College of Heralds, and Eberhard von Brockhusen, a Pomeranian landowner. The latter was as much anti-Polish as antisemitic. It is clear from surviving documents that he and Koerner were followers of Guido von List (1848–1919), the Viennese occultist; also that much of the Order's lunatic teaching came from this source (see LIST).

However, while the Order's leaders were conducting their eccentric ceremonies, links were being made with such right-wing conspiratorial groups as the notorious Organization Consul.

At Munich early in 1919 members of Pohl's splinter group, led by Baron Rudolph von Sebottendorff, were deeply involved in the right-wing opposition to the short-lived Communist regime. Some of Sebottendorff's people had close links with the German Workers' Party, which Hitler joined in September 1919 and speedily transformed into the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Hitler was never a member of the Germanen Order and had no use for it. Indeed, when he came to power previous membership of the Order precluded an individual from attaining any rank in the National Socialist Party.

After 1922, the history of the Order is obscure. It is possible that it was obliged to dissolve or go underground.

ELLIC HOWE

Above **A non-Nordic face, drawn by Burger-Villingen, inventor of the platometer. The Germanen Order's founders, who were violently antisemitic, shared the 'master race' delusion that later influenced the Nazis. Johann Albrecht, Grand Duke of Mecklenburg *(below)* was at one time Grand Master of the Order**

The slaughter of prisoners of war and the deliberate damage of the spoils of battle – evidence of which has been found in the peat bogs of Denmark and north Germany – was part of the tribute which Germanic tribes paid to their gods in return for victory

GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY

THE STUDY of Germanic mythology is complicated by the shortage of contemporary records and the extent to which the Germanic people are spread over northern Europe. We first hear of tribes of German-speaking peoples sharing the same general religious beliefs in about the 4th century BC, when they were established in the south of the Scandinavian peninsula, the islands of the Baltic and the land between the Rhine and the River Vistula. Subsequently they spread further into Scandinavia, while the tribes of the Angles and Saxons migrated from Germany into Great Britain from the 5th century AD onwards. Thus scattered, the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon branches tended to develop their religious beliefs along distinctive lines.

The greater part of present-day evidence for the early beliefs of the Germanic peoples was written down long after their conversion to Christianity, and therefore needs to be treated with caution. Germany and Anglo-Saxon England were converted by about the 7th century AD. The conversion of Norway, Denmark and Iceland, however, did not take place until about the 10th century, and that of Sweden later still, so that Scandinavian literature provides us with much of our information about the heathen gods in their later, Scandinavian forms. The Icelanders in particular retained a great interest in their heathen past, and mythological poems and stories of heathen times were written down in their monasteries along with conventional Christian works.

The pagan Germanic tribes left no written material, apart from their brief inscriptions in runic letters on stone, bone or metal, since only with the coming of Christianity did they learn to read and write Latin letters and make books on parchment. Runic inscriptions are notoriously difficult to interpret, but sometimes give valuable information about the worship of the gods or the practice of magic. Contemporary written accounts come mostly from Greek or Roman historians, of varying reliability. We depend considerably on the *Germania* of Tacitus, which was written at the end of the 1st century AD.

Place names can tell much about the distribution and importance of the various cults, while the titles given to Germanic deities in Roman times, proper names, and names of the days of the week also offer valuable clues about the heathen gods. One invaluable source is archeology: cult images, ritual objects, burial customs and holy places may be revealed by archeological discovery, and in this way it is possible to check the reliability of literary evidence.

Remains from the Scandinavian Bronze Age, a period dating roughly from 1400 to 600 BC, provide the earliest evidence of mythology in northern Europe. Extensive carvings on the rocks of Sweden, Denmark and Norway of scenes which appear to be associated with religious ritual, together with tiny bronze figurines and ritual objects recovered from the peat bogs, enable us to reconstruct something of the cult of the Earth Goddess, continuing from the Neolithic period (in northern Europe about 2000–1400 BC). In the late Bronze Age, about 600 BC, she seems to be pictured as a woman with bare breasts, wearing a neck ring and a short skirt and with her hair in a plait; these characteristics probably explain the offerings of plaits of hair and neck rings recovered from the Danish peat bogs. There is evidence also for belief in a male god of the sky. Male figures have been found holding axes and wearing horned helmets, and also a gigantic figure brandishing a spear. It is difficult to know whether these figures represent independent deities, one primarily connected with the sky and the seasons and the other with battle, but what is known of other early religions suggests

'Odin calls to the prophetess on the edge of Hell' by Fuseli. Odin was the Scandinavian equivalent of the Germanic Wodan, lord of the dead and the god of magic, poetic inspiration and frenzied rage. He went to Hel, the country of the dead, and called up a prophetess from the grave to learn the secret of the fate of the god Balder

Michael Holford

that they may be different aspects of the high god who ruled the heavens and the journeying sun, controlled the seasons of the year, and also led his followers in war. Certainly the axe and the spear were of great importance in the Bronze Age as symbols of divine power.

There is also evidence of twin deities, a divine male pair who are mirror images of one another. Horned animals like the stag, as well as the bull, the horse, the boar, the bird and the serpent, are already important religious symbols at this period. There is some evidence for the ritual sacrifice of such creatures, and also of their association with the deities of earth and sky.

Supreme God of the Sky

In the Iron Age (from 600 BC onwards) we find the earliest evidence for a specifically Germanic religion. There are again indications of the worship of a supreme god of the sky, whose name is thought to have been Tiwaz. This was the god whom the Anglo-Saxons in the 5th and 6th centuries worshipped as Tiw in England, while he was remembered in Scandinavia as Tyr. The third day of the week, Tuesday, was called after him throughout the Germanic world. The name Tiwaz is related to the Greek Zeus and to an earlier form of the Roman name for Jupiter, and these names are all thought to be derived from the Indo-Germanic word for god, probably associated with the light of the shining heavens. The Anglo-Saxon Tiw is remembered in a number of place names, including Tuesley in Surrey, Tewin in Hertfordshire and Tysoe in Warwickshire.

Only one major myth about Tyr survives in Scandinavian legend, but this is an important one. It is the story of how he alone was able to bind the Fenris wolf, a monster which threatened the safety of the gods. As the wolf grew huger and fiercer, none but Tyr dared come near him, and the creature broke all chains and fetters laid upon him. Finally a magic chain was wrought by the dwarfs, which looked like a silken cord but was impossible to break. The wolf was suspicious of it, but finally agreed to have it round his neck if Tyr would place his right hand between the wolf's jaws as a pledge against treachery. The wolf found that all his giant strength could not break this leash, and in his fury he bit off the god's hand, so that Tyr remains one-handed. This connection between Tyr and the power to bind is an important one in northern symbolism.

It is possible that one of the most mysterious accounts of the worship of a Germanic deity in the Roman period, described by the Roman historian Tacitus, also refers to Tiwaz. We are told that the Semnones, a tribe living between the Rhine and the Oder, worshipped a god called God and Ruler of All. They met with other tribes yearly near a sacred wood, held in great awe as a holy place, and anyone who entered this wood had to be bound with a cord as a symbol of humility. He might not get to his feet again if he stumbled but must roll over the ground. It is not clear from this account whether this was a divination ritual, or a sacrificial ritual to determine a victim, or both, but the connection with binding is important.

Tiwaz was equated by the Romans with the god Mars, also a god of the third day of the week, and so must have been seen by them primarily as a god of battle. One of his titles however was Mars Thingsus, which associates him with the *Thing*, the local assembly where free men met to deliberate together. This aspect of Tiwaz was taken over by Thor in the Viking Age.

The swearing of oaths on weapons and the sacrifice of weapons in thanksgiving for victory are both known to have been part of the cult of the Germanic gods. Tacitus states that the Germans sacrificed for victory to Mars and Mercury, that is, to Tiwaz and Wodan (or Wotan). One form which this took was the slaying of captives taken in war, and there is also archeological evidence for the plunder won in battle being deliberately damaged and then thrown into pools or left lying in heaps on the ground. Such offerings have been recovered from the peat bogs of Denmark and North Germany, and the great finds like those of Vimose and Nydam have added considerably to our knowledge of Germanic weapons and craftsmanship from the 2nd to the 6th century AD, as well as emphasizing the religious awe and stern discipline which demanded such costly sacrifices. Tacitus records that the Hermundari and the Chatti both vowed to sacrifice everything which they won in return for victory, and that the Hermundari, who were successful, carried out their vow.

Ruler of the Dead

Such practices began in Roman times, and may be due to the increasing influence of the cult of the god Wodan among the Germanic peoples. It had become customary a little earlier, in the Celtic Iron Age in Denmark, to bury weapons in the graves of the wealthy dead, and to leave in their graves dishes of roasted meat, with cups, jugs and horns of wine and mead, the equipment for a feast. Since in the Viking Age both weapons and feasting were consistently associated with the kingdom of Odin in the other world, such practices may indicate the spread of the cult of his predecessor Wodan among the Germans. Wodan was the god who ruled the land of the dead and was also associated with inspiration and magic. He was a god of cruel sacrifices, and his human and animal victims are said to have

Michael Holford/British Museum

Left **Detail from 8th century Northumbrian casket, showing the revenge of Wayland the Smith on King Nithhad. Wayland, on the left, holds in his tongs the head of the king's son, whose body lies beneath the anvil; the female figure is the king's daughter, whom Wayland dishonoured; Wayland's brother Eigil killed birds to make the feather cloak used by the smith in his subsequent escape** ***Right*** **Battle scene from a memorial stone in Gotland, showing a woman holding a horn who may be a Valkyrie, the welcomer of dead heroes to a happy life in paradise. Battle spirits of this kind were known to the Germanic peoples from early times**

N. Lagergren/Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet

Michael Holford

The eagle was the bird of Wodan, probably partly in imitation of the Roman eagle of Jupiter. Small eagle brooches and figures of eagles on shields, like this one from Sutton Hoo, were used by the Germans as amulets to ward off danger

been suspended from trees. References to such sacrifices come from Greek and Roman writers and are in general corroborated by what we know of the worship of the god Odin in later times in Sweden.

Another aspect of Wodan may be represented by traditions of the Wild Hunt, a host passing through the sky on stormy nights. The riders were on black horses and were followed by wolflike hounds, which could be heard baying in the air, and in some parts of Sweden, Denmark and Germany the leader was said to be the god Odin or a spirit called Wode. Since Wodan was a wandering, restless god, the leader of spirits of the dead, who was associated with the horse and the wolf, this may well be a genuine pagan tradition going back to pre-Christian times.

Wodan's name is probably connected with the Gothic *wut*, which signifies fury or extreme mental excitement. The name Odin (Othiun) in Old Norse appears to have had a similar basis, coming from an adjective applied to a violent storm or fire but also used for poetic genius or furious rage. Odin was the god of magic, inspiration, ecstasy and intoxication, and the Germanic Wodan and Anglo-Saxon Woden may be assumed to have had the same general character.

Odin, as god of battle, was followed by his Valkyries, the battle spirits who went out to choose the slain, sometimes described as dignified women on horseback and sometimes as bloodthirsty creatures revelling in slaughter. Such battle spirits were known earlier to the Germanic people, and female spirits called the Alaisiagae, with various symbolic names associated with battle, are mentioned along with Mars on stones at Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall.

A Grim Pun

The raven and wolf, creatures of the battlefield, are also closely linked with Odin. These are the vultures of the north, feeding on corpses of men and beasts, and as such would seem to belong to the sinister cult of the dark power Wodan rather than to Tiwaz, the god of the sky. They were not viewed solely as scavengers, since Odin was attended constantly by two ravens which flew round the world to bring him tidings and came to tell them in his ears. The symbol of a figure or a human head between two birds, which seem to be pecking it from either side, was known both to the Germans and the Celts. It might be seen as a grim pun in the German heroic style, representing the birds which peck at the corpse and the hanged man, and at the same time serve as the messengers bringing tidings to the god of death.

The eagle also was a symbol of the god, partly imitated no doubt from the Roman eagle which stood for the divine Emperor and which was carried by Roman armies. Small eagle brooches and fine eagle figures on shields, like those on the great ceremonial shield from Sutton Hoo, were used by the Germans as protective amulets. Another widespread symbol of the god was the spear, which in Norse literature is called Gungnir; one of the great treasures of the gods, it was flung over the host which Odin had doomed to defeat. The spear was an important symbol in the Bronze Age, and may have been originally the weapon of Tiwaz as god of battle. Little silhouettes in bronze, dating from the 6th and 7th centuries, of a warrior riding a horse and carrying a spear – often a weapon of exaggerated size – are found widely distributed over the Germanic continental area.

The Axe and the Oak

While there is a considerable amount of evidence for the cult of Wodan among the Germanic peoples, there is far less for that of the third of the main deities whom they worshipped, the god Donar (Thunor to the Anglo-Saxons), whose name connects him with thunder and after whom the fifth day of the week, Thursday, was named. Donar was identified by the Romans with both Jupiter and Hercules; the first association was evidently based on the power of the god over the storm and the thunderbolt, while he was linked with Hercules because he was seen as the protector of men against giants and monsters.

Clearly the functions of Donar must have overlapped considerably with those of the sky god Tiwaz, and his cult may have belonged to the tribes who lived in the thickly forested areas of Germany. It was linked with the oak forests of England, and places named after him are found in Saxon rather than Anglian districts. They are often formed from the element *leah*, meaning a forest clearing, like Thunderley and Thundersley in Essex. The name Thunaer is included in an early Saxon renunciation formula as a heathen god to be renounced by the Christian convert. Donar may have been represented by the oak tree or the axe before figures of the gods in human form became known among the Germans owing to Roman influence.

Donar's thunderbolt was symbolized by the axe, a sign of divine power from Neolithic times onwards. At some stage in the north it came to be pictured as a hammer, and tiny hammer-shaped amulets have been found in Anglo-Saxon graves. Prehistoric stone axes and fossil stones known as 'thunder weapons' were treasured in Denmark, Germany and England up to modern times; they were held to protect the house against lightning, fire and other calamities, and they were carried by German soldiers as protection against bullets in the Franco-Prussian war. A case was recorded from northern Germany in this century of a farmer who kept three prehistoric stone axes in the house and laid them in the first holes made by the drill at sowing time, and there is no doubt that the thunder god was associated with the fertility of the earth as well as the control of storms and the well-being of the community.

The deities known in Scandinavia as the Vanir, gods and goddesses connected with fertility, are the hardest to trace in early Germanic mythology. Clearly the worship of the Earth Goddess continued throughout northern Europe from the Neolithic period onwards. In the Viking Age this goddess had many names, of which Freyja is best known, and the sixth day of the week, Friday, was called after her predecessor, Frija, throughout the Germanic world. No convincing evidence of cult places called after her has survived in England, although some of those called 'Friday' may have been associated with the goddess.

German goddesses of bounty are known from Roman times, and stones of this period from England and Germany show two or three seated goddesses with fruit, bread or horns of plenty, or sometimes one figure alone. The sacred place of one of these goddesses, Nehalennia, has been found under the sand on the Island of Walcheren in the Netherlands, and it is clear that travellers appealed to her for a safe crossing over the North Sea.

Evidence for a male god like the Swedish Freyr, Freyja's brother, is harder to find. However, naked phallic male figures in wood and metal, roughly shaped with bearded faces, have been found in Denmark and North Germany, dating from the Roman period. A male and a female figure in wood from Braak in Schleswig-Holstein might well represent twin fertility deities; they are simple but impressive shapes, larger than human, which have by chance been preserved in the peat. Freyja's symbol, the boar, which she shared with the male fertility god, is well represented in Anglo-Saxon England.

Twin Gods

Tacitus mentions twin gods called the Alcis who were worshipped along the North Sea coasts in the 1st century AD. They could have developed from the twin deities of the Bronze Age, and would correspond with the protective brothers known to the Greeks as the Dioscuri, the sons of the sky god. There are what might be twin gods on the gold horn from Gallehus, dated about AD 500, and twin dancing figures on helmets of the 6th century. There is little sign of such twin figures in the literature of the period except for pairs of brother kings in early Swedish tradition, and the Anglo-Saxon pair Hengest and Horsa, whose names mean Stallion and Horse, and who are said to have led an invasion of England in the 5th century; the Dioscuri were consistently associated with horses.

Other myths concerning the gods and their world may be dimly glimpsed in Germanic tradition. The myth of the creation of the world from the body of a giant may have been associated with Tuisto, who according to Tacitus was the father of Mannus, the ancestor of the German race; he would be equivalent to Ymir in Norse mythology. A belief in the ultimate destruction of the world, an important element of Norse mythology, was probably also known to the pagan Germans.

There are indeed many isolated clues to the lost mythology of the Germanic peoples in the pagan period, and the study of their rich symbolism, constantly coming to light in fresh finds of decorated cremation urns and brooches and weapons of the Roman and later periods, will doubtless help us in due course to integrate these, and to gain a fuller knowledge of early religion among the Germanic tribes.

(See also SCANDINAVIA; and articles on individual deities.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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William MacQuitty

C. M. Dixon

Left **Bronze statuette of an Indian female deity, 'waging war against the enemies of religion'; her gesture shows disapproval of the forces of evil** ***Right*** **Early Christian roadside cross from Ravenna in Italy. The thumb and two fingers pointing upwards represent the Trinity. The same gesture is used by the Pope in blessing the faithful**

Certain gestures are found to recur in widely different times and cultures, for the language of hand and body is international. In a few countries, however, like India and Bali, ritual gesture has developed into a complex and distinctive art form

GESTURE

TO CONVEY MEANING without words, attitudes of the body and especially movements of arms and hands are employed. The effect is to give a dramatic charge to meaning by acting it out in a universal sign language, for good gestures, except for certain specialist ones, are immediately comprehensible.

In fact everyone without realizing it knows a great many ritual gestures. There is the Fascist salute of the open hand flung up, which was taken from the ancient Roman salute; it showed that a man held no weapon and therefore came in peace. The corresponding Communist clenched fist implies determination and even a threat, and seems to say: 'But I do have a weapon!' In medieval religious art God is shown with open hand, and rays are often represented coming from his fingers. The open hand was a sign of victory in Phoenicia, and the Roman legions used it in a similar sense, putting it at the tops of their standards as shown on Trajan's column in Rome.

Fingers are crossed 'for luck'. The original intention was the ceremonial stoppage of evil influences, and legs or arms were crossed for the same reason. Three fingers closed, leaving the thumb and little finger erect, gives the sign of the Horned God or 'Devil'. This sign has a long history: called the *mano cornuta* in Italy, it was earlier a general sign for the moon goddess, and used in the cults both of Dagon in the Near East and of Brahma in India. The hand turned sideways, with first and little fingers

only extended, is popularly supposed to avert the Evil Eye and is in wide use in Italy and the Near East.

The Devil has much to do with luck, and lucky charms are often sold showing the Devil with his fingers to his nose, in vulgar parlance 'cocking a snook'. The gesture appears to be sexual in origin, nose and thumb being reckoned as phallic symbols.

The most famous popular gesture of recent years, the V for Victory sign popularized by Sir Winston Churchill, seems to be a horns-up sign, implying the power of a horned animal. Another version of this gesture is the old sign of Tudor and earlier times 'Horns to you,' used for telling someone that his wife is being unfaithful. This hoary jest, which never failed to amuse on the Elizabethan stage however often it appeared, was based on the idea that the wronged husband was supposed to be sprouting horns on his brow.

The thumb appearing between the first and second fingers is the common Italian gesture *fica*, 'I don't care a fig,' called *manus obscaena* in late Roman times. It showed contempt to the highest degree. But the thumb has a more noble siguificance: extended, in Christian baptism it is used for making the sign of the cross in water on children, following the Old Testament custom of using the thumb to apply blood in the ritual of ordination (Leviticus 8, 23–4; Exodus 29.20). Thumbs up or down was the sign whereby the Roman Emperor signified life or death to the defeated one in the gladiatorial shows of the ancient world.

A Catholic priest celebrating Mass makes use of gesture to indicate to the congregation the point of the service which is being reached. For the most part these gestures arise naturally from the action. When the priest is offering prayer on behalf of the people, he holds the hands open and upward and facing towards the altar. Facing away from the altar, the priest raises one open hand to bless the people. The pope, and later a bishop as well, could bless instead with the third and little fingers closed, so that the thumb, first and second fingers were left to represent the Trinity. This is the ancient *mano pantea* represented at Pompeii, and also well known in India.

To express penitence the right hand bent inwards strikes the breast. Rather more distinctive is the gesture commonly used whilst holding the Host. The priest holds the hands together with thumbs parallel and first fingers bent, having the tips joined upon the tips of the thumbs; the Host is held between the four tips, while the three other fingers are extended joined.

Christianity and Islam share the gesture of joining the thumb and first finger in a circle, leaving the other three fingers extended. The Greek Orthodox Church used it in blessing, and with hands in this position the Moslem recites his creed. A certain threat is implied if the hand is held horizontally; when elevated it means love.

The common ritual gestures of the Buddha are in effect four. The seated Buddha calls the earth to witness with the downward pointing right hand, whilst he receives from above with the upward turned left hand laid in his lap. When the Buddha's hands are together they are holding the begging bowl. When one hand is held up, palm outward, this is known as 'turning the wheel of the law', as this is the gesture which would be used to spin a real wheel. It is also the general 'teaching' position, and is used when Buddha is in the standing position with the staff of pilgrimage. The other seated position is that of meditation, with the hands simply folded on the lap. The reclining Buddha has one hand upturned, receiving guidance during repose; the other arm supports the head, the eyes being closed.

Seated Bodhisattva 'receiving from above' with hand turned upward. A Buddha's hand pointing down is 'calling the earth to witness', if the hands are together they are holding the begging bowl, if one hand is held up with the palm outward it is called 'turning the wheel of the law'

William MacQuitty

The Movements of Magic

Ceremonial magic naturally employs many gestures. In one of the more intelligible the arms are outstretched to form a cross with the body, expressing suffering and death, applied in Egyptian magic usually to Osiris; this action also occurs in the Christian Mass. In another gesture the forearms may be held up in a St Andrew's cross, making the pentagram and signifying a rising from the dead. The gesture of the Egyptian god Shu, supporting the heavens with uplifted hands, also occurs in the Mass as a gesture of offering thanks and prayer.

Magical gestures can be traced back to Neolithic and even to Paleolithic times. At St Duzac, Brittany, is a menhir (ancient monumental stone), one of whose carvings shows a god with arms held up supporting a goddess. This bell-skirted lady has her arms crossed, but her hands are held up in a gesture that may mean the union of true hearts or possibly signifies the stopping of birth. At the top is a pre-Christian figure with the arms extended upon an equal-armed cross.

The ceremonial gestures of ancient Egypt may be deduced from pyramid and tomb reliefs and paintings. In funeral ceremonies the first thought was perhaps to raise the soul. This idea is expressed by holding the hands, palms upwards, above the head. Actual mourning was a matter of holding the arms in a gesture of throwing dust upon the head, and uttering the cries of the professional mourner. Intercession with the gods for the dead is shown by the arms held directly upward. To send away the threatening evil spirits from the dead a pushing movement was made. The ceremony of making offerings to the gods involved specific gestures such as the picking up of the offering and making the offering in the sign of the lotus, which was the most usual flower to be offered; the double lotus is a much fuller and more striking gesture than the single one.

Some of the most striking examples of the use of ritual gesture appear in dance forms. Of the fully developed systems the greatest are those of India and Bali.

Language of Signs

Of great antiquity, the Hindu dance is generally considered to be based on the 108 poses carved in the Gopurams (terrace passages) of the temple of Shiva Nataraja – (Shiva as lord of the dance) at Cidambaram in southern India. The Hindi word *Natya* means both acting and dancing; that is, gesture with meaning is recognized as an essential part of the dance. Thus there are 108 standard *mudras* or hand gestures in the classical Hindu sacred dance, single or double-handed – the most complete gesture language in the world.

The meaning is essentially mythological; its elements came, it is said, from the basic four sacred books of the *Vedas*. The main centre of action and movement is in the upper body rather than the legs. Poses are prescribed for features and head: there are 52 types of glances, 13 positions for the mouth and 20 for the head and neck. There are also numerous prescribed postures for the hands.

Perhaps the most significant and easily recognized positionings are those that portray a god, of which there are some 16. Five positions represent various manifestations of Shiva: the three-eyed god, the cobra-crowned one, he who wears the moon in his tresses, he who rides the bull, and the Creator of earth and heaven. The monkey god Hanuman has two earthly hands pointing down. The popular Krishna and his milk-girl mate Radha are shown by five gestures. A goddess in general has a mudra of protection – hand up – and of bestowal – hand down; the particular goddess is shown by attaching to the general mudra the gesture depicting her mate.

The more general gestures, like this one, often have several meanings according to context. Of these, the *pataka* means Brahma, victory or grace, and is shown by an open hand held up as a blessing. It shows awareness of the god or gods and, when pointed downwards, awareness of the lower worlds. Two hands joined together, palm to palm, and accompanied by a bow, is the usual Indian polite greeting, called *angali*; the hands thus held over the head are used in salutation to deities. When the palms are a little separated they form a gentler gesture used when addressing the elderly.

The palm in Indian dance symbolizes the calm centre of action – the meditative control over the five senses or fingers agitated around it. To show the palm as the most important part of the hand is basic to the Indian dance.

The dances of Bali are also highly developed, including mythological acting partly derived from India, the miming of beasts and birds, the use of masks, and trance possession. The wealth of gesture defies representative selection, while the costuming, especially the head-dresses, would of itself constitute a major study.

(See also DANCE; FINGERS.)

ROSS NICHOLS

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Sometimes called 'the greatest Moslem after Mohammed', Ghazali combined theological orthodoxy with mysticism, and scholarship with a profound understanding of the human soul

GHAZALI

KNOWN TO WESTERN EUROPE in the Middle Ages as Algazel, Abu Hamid Mohammed ihn Mohammed at-Tusi al-Ghazali, mystic, theologian and jurist, was born in 1058 at Tus near Meshed not far from what is now the north-east frontier of Iran. His mother tongue was Persian, but he and his brother Ahmad were taught to master Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, at a very early age.

Abu Hamid Ghazali had a far-reaching education in the various branches of Islamic learning, at Tus, Jorjan and finally at Nishapur, where at the age of 19 he became a pupil of the theologian Juwayni for whom the Vizier Nizam al-Mulk had specially founded a school. Here Ghazali remained for about eight years, completing his education in theology and law, and even at that early age his teacher described him as a 'bountiful ocean' of learning. From others, both at Tus and Nishapur, he received instruction in Islamic mysticism, that is, Sufism.

It was not long before he attracted the attention of the Vizier himself, who sent him in 1091, at the age of 33, to be professor at the famous Nizamiyya school which he had founded in Baghdad. Here Ghazali lectured for four years, mainly on theology and law, and was considered among the most eminent men of the capital.

After four years of brilliant success in Baghdad, Ghazali went through a brief period of scepticism from which he was saved, to use his own words 'by a light which God threw into my breast'. As a result he became keeuly aware of the futility of the life he was leading as compared with a hermit's life of contemplation. But at first he could not bring himself to break away. He tells us that for six months in 1095 he was torn between the attractions of his life in Baghdad and 'the claims of the hereafter', and that finally providence intervened by afflicting him with a temporary impediment in his speech which made it impossible for him to lecture. This decided him. But he knew that if his plans were suspected, his friends would do everything in their power to stop him from giving up his work, and the Caliph himself might intervene.

He therefore let it be understood that he was going on the pilgrimage to Mecca and would shortly be back. In fact he went to Damascus, where he spent two years, more or less in solitude, for the purpose of meditation. From there he went on to Jerusalem, and from there he did make the pilgrimage, after which his family persuaded him to return to his native Tus where he continued to live as far as possible in retirement. It was here that he wrote his most famous work – one of the most frequently consulted treatises in all Islamic literature – *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, the aim of which is to restore spiritual significance to every aspect of Islamic life.

In 1105, ten years after the momentous change in his life, great pressure was put upon him to take up teaching again, this time at the Nizamiyya of Nishapur where he himself had received most of his education. He agreed to do so partly because he knew that such outward activity would no longer have any power to disturb his inner life – 'though I went back, yet I did not go back' – and partly because some of his Sufi friends persuaded him that it was his destiny to be the 'renewer of the religion' that the Prophet had promised for the end of every century; and few indeed are those Moslems who would deny that Ghazali had that function for the fifth Islamic century. Before his death in 1111 he had again returned to Tus, where he had Sufi disciples and a hermitage.

Breadth of Vision

It has been said that Ghazali was the greatest Moslem after Mohammed. If this is an exaggeration, the fact that the remark could be made at all is highly significant, pointing as it does to a rare combination of qualities seldom to be found below the rank of prophethood. Ghazali was remarkable for the wide scope of his comprehension with regard not only to the different branches of learning but also with regard to the souls of men. He was truly great because his extreme versatility was knit together by single-mindedness, and his tolerance was tempered by an implacable firmness when he felt that anything of real importance was at stake. If mysticism may he called the heart of religion, it was his function to enable the heart's blood to flow freely through the body, that is, the Islamic community, to its most outlying parts. This was the aim not only of his *Revival* but also of *The Saviour from Error*, his autobiographical treatise in which he affirms that Sufism is the highest way of life and the only sure antidote to scepticism.

But not withstanding his unqualified praise of Sufism, Ghazali knew that it is not merely useless but dangerous to offer men more than they can assimilate. Nor was he ignorant of the spiritual limitations of the majority of his contemporaries, and of the existence of many different spiritual levels. He addressed now one level, now another, speaking the language of each so well that his enemies sometimes accused him of duplicity. But although, like the philosophers of his day, he could make a wide distinction between the intellectual elite and the rest of the community, he was acutely conscious of the interpenetration between the different levels.

His insistence on the universal importance of observing outward forms is typical. An intellectual may know that the act of taking off his sandals before entering on the pilgrimage to Mecca symbolizes ultimately stripping himself of 'the two worlds' (heaven and earth), but his higher knowledge does not exempt him from actually taking off his sandals. 'One must pass to and fro,' he says, 'from the one to the other, from outward word (or act) to inward secret.'

Ghazali is generally classed as a 'moderate mystic' but this can be misleading. It must be remembered that in those works which he wrote especially for Sufis, such as *The Niche of Lights*, he was altogether uncompromising in his formulations, above all as regards the truth that God is the sole reality in the face of which all else is pure illusion; and he is perhaps the only Sufi to have actually used the term 'deification' in defining the end and aim of the mystic path.

(See also SUFIS.)

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Light on the Threshold

'Do you not see,' I reflected, 'that while asleep you assume your dreams to be indisputably real? Once awake, you recognise them for what they are – baseless chimeras. Who can assure you, then, of the reliability of notions which, when awake, you derive from the senses and from reason? In relation to your present state they may be real; but it is possible also that you may enter upon another state of being which will bear the same relation to your present state as this does to your condition when asleep. In that new sphere you will recognise that the conclusions of reason are only chimeras.'

This possible condition is perhaps that which the Sufis call 'ecstasy', that is to say, according to them, a state in which, absorbed in themselves and in the suspension of sense-perceptions, they have visions beyond the reach of intellect. Perhaps also Death is that state . . . Our present life in relation to the future is perhaps only a dream, and man, once dead, will see things in direct opposition to those now before his eyes . . .

Such thoughts as these threatened to shake my reason, and I sought to find an escape from them. But how? In order to disentangle the knot of this difficulty, a proof was necessary. Now a proof must be based on primary assumptions, and it was precisely these of which I was in doubt. This unhappy state lasted about two months, during which I was, not it is true explicitly or by profession, but morally and essentially a thorough-going sceptic.

God at last deigned to heal me of this mental malady; my mind recovered sanity and equilibrium, the primary assumptions of reason recovered with me all their stringency and force. I owed my deliverance, not to a concatenation of proofs and arguments, but to the light which God caused to penetrate into my heart – the light which illuminates the threshold of all knowledge. To suppose that certitude can be only based upon formal arguments is to limit the boundless mercy of God.

C. Field trans *The Confessions of Al Ghazali*

GHOST DANCE

TOWARDS THE END of the 19th century, a new religious movement sprang up among a group of North American Indian tribes. The name 'Ghost Dance' is derived from the term used for it among the Sioux and Arapaho and refers to one of the central doctrines of the movement, the imminent resurrection of the dead. It was first and foremost a messianic movement, but differed from similar movements elsewhere in that it looked towards the restoration of a past golden age rather than to an unknown salvation in the future.

Although it was virtually the last and most desperate attempt by the Indians to escape the effects of the white man's civilization, the Ghost Dance was foreshadowed by a number of similar movements which had flourished and died throughout the 19th century. Among its forerunners were the 'Good Message' movement founded by Handsome Lake among the Iroquois confederation in 1799, that started by Tenskwatawa among the Shawnee and their allies, the Dreamers founded among the Columbia River tribes west of the Rocky Mountains by Smohalla, and the Shakers (not related to the sect of English origin with the same name) founded among the Squaxin tribe in the early 1880s. All these movements had certain features in common. First and foremost, a rejection of the white man and his civilization including alcohol, weapons and technology; secondly, the preaching of brotherly love, honesty and unity among Indians, even between those who had for centuries been tribal enemies; and thirdly, a revival of Indian customs and religious traditions.

Despair and Nostalgia

To these general beliefs the Ghost Dance movement added at its height specific ingredients of despair and nostalgia that were the inevitable consequence of the reduced position of the Plains tribes. Only recently pacified, their nomadic life replaced by confinement to reservations where they were dependent on the goodwill and beef of the United States government, frequently hungry and unable to adapt to farming, they were largely in a state of sullen apathy in which the medicine-man and the visionary held out the sole hope for the future. Above all, by the end of the 1880s the last of the buffalo herds, the basis of their economy and much of their religious expression, had gone, slaughtered by white hide hunters.

It was not, however, among the warlike Plains tribes that the Ghost Dance originated. Its prophet or messiah was a member of the Paiute tribe, Wovoka (the Cutter). He was born on a reservation in Mason Valley, Nevada in 1856. His father, Tavibo, had been a prophet and leader of a minor Indian revivalist movement in the early

The Ghost Dance, painted on buckskin by a Ute Indian in 1891. The prostrate figures in the centre are in trance. The round object is a blanket, near which a medicine-man is hypnotizing a subject

Museum of American Indian (Heye Foundation)

Ghost Dance shirt of buckskin, painted with a design of birds and stars

1870s and Wovoka was also known as a medicine-man within the shamanistic tradition of his tribe. But it was not until 1886 during an eclipse of the sun, and while he was in a high fever, that he had the experience which was to inspire the Ghost Dance. In his own account he told how, 'When the sun died, I went up to heaven and saw God and all the people who had died a long time ago. God told me to come back and tell my people that they must be good and love one another and not fight or steal or lie. He gave me this dance to give to my people.'

The doctrine preached by Wovoka as a result of his vision embodied these basic beliefs: the white men would disappear from the earth after a general catastrophe from which the Indians would emerge renewed after three days; the buffalo would come back; the Indian dead would return bearing gifts and the old way of life would last for ever. To bring all this about Indians were not only to practise the precepts communicated by God to Wovoka, but were also to renounce alcohol and farming and abandon traditional mourning rites, because the resurrection was near at hand (it was promised for the spring of 1891). And they were to dance the Dance. This consisted of a slow shuffling movement quite unlike other Indian dance steps, in which the participants intertwined fingers and formed a circle or series of concentric circles and moved slowly following the course of the sun. It was to be performed four or five days running and accompanied by singing but no musical instruments. Both men and women were to take part.

The first dance was held on Wovoka's reservation in January 1889. Word of the ceremony spread quickly to other Rocky Mountain tribes, notably the Utes, Bannocks and Shoshone. By the autumn emissaries from the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho had carried back Wovoka's teaching to the Plains reservations. As it travelled, Wovoka's peaceful message of hope became transformed, particularly by the Sioux, who numbered 26,000 and were the largest tribal group in the United States. Although each tribe added different elements from its own ritual traditions, it was the Sioux who added two specific elements not included in the messiah's original teaching. These were the deliberate use of hypnosis to induce trances and communication with the dead, and the 'ghost shirt' made of cloth or buckskin, which was believed to render the wearer immune to bullets.

Massacre at Wounded Knee

Foremost among the Sioux leaders who took up the Ghost Dance with enthusiasm was Sitting Bull, the medicine-man and war leader who had returned a few years previously from Canada, where he had fled after the massacre of General Custer and his troops. It was he who was largely responsible for encouraging trances, although he was reported to have been disappointed by his own failure to achieve a vision. As the Ghost Dance movement spread and increased in fervour towards the spring of the promised resurrection, the military and Indian Agency officials became alarmed. In December 1890, two months after he had presided at his first dance, Sitting Bull was killed by Indian troops while resisting arrest. His followers fled from Standing Rock reservation to the nearby Bad Lands to join the band of Big Foot and Kicking Bear, the medicine-man who had been among Wovoka's first visitors. Rounded up by white and Indian troops at Wounded Knee creek in freezing weather, the warriors resisted arrest, confident that their ghost shirts would protect them. The shirts proved powerless against the two-pound shells of four Hotchkiss guns. Approximately 300 men, women and children were killed.

Although the Ghost Dance continued to be danced among tribes further south, particularly the Kiowa, throughout the 1890s, it came to its real end at Wounded Knee. With it ended the last hopes of the Indians. Many of Wovoka's ideas were absorbed by the peyote cults which flourished in the 1920s and 30s and which still survive today.

Ironically Wovoka, the messiah who had once been identified with Christ, died in total obscurity in 1932, but not before he had allowed himself to be exhibited, during the 1890s, at the Mid-Winter Fair in San Francisco.

(See also NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS; PEYOTE CULTS.)

CHRISTOPHER BUSBY

GHOSTS

Faceless women and lifelike apparitions, ghostly dogs and spectral trains, eerie lights and unnatural sounds: the wide range of ghostly manifestations makes it difficult to find an explanation which will account for them all

BELIEF IN GHOSTS means to many people an unequivocal acceptance of the souls of the dead in sheets and chains, squeaking and gibbering in Gothic ruins. This caricature has grown from second-rate horror stories, films and comic strips, and it remains current in spite of the impressive number of people who go on seeing much less melodramatic spectres.

For instance, a British family were rehoused by their local authority in 1966 because of the effect on their health of strange happenings in their two-year-old council house. The father saw a man's shadow on the stairs where no man was standing; the daughter saw weird lights moving in her room. Police, clergymen and others investigated and found nothing, but no one seemed to scoff; the council produced another house, the priest exorcized the first one, and the *Guardian* reported it all without any of the contempt that newspapers once reserved for such stories.

It may be that belief in ghosts grows out of, and is a response to, some basic and universal human need. The need, of course, is for some assurance of survival after death. In history and prehistory, ghosts were an integral part of religious belief. Religion carried the promise of immortality, which meant that the spirits of the dead had to be taken into consideration.

The Ancestral Spirits

Naturally the ghosts of a community's forebears would be the most prevalent. So ancestor worship can be said to be one of the first, perhaps the first, form of religious awareness that developed in man. Even the cave dwellers of the early Stone Age buried their dead with some ceremony, which

Though ghosts are reckoned to be very difficult to photograph, there are hundreds of alleged photographs of apparitions in existence, usually conforming to accepted ideas of what a ghost should look like: 'Yolande', photographed in 1890, wears a veil and drifting shroudlike garments

Popperfoto

In all societies and from the earliest times men have feared the return of the dead. The spirits of the ancestors might be reverenced in Japan, but hostile ghosts *(right)* were still feared *Far right* A lean spectre peers over a victim's shoulder

suggests belief in an afterlife and also some kind of worship of the dead.

Where ancestors are worshipped, they have taken on the role of gods, gaining supernatural power as they enter the supernatural world. Often they are only minor gods, perhaps divine only to their own families. But equally often the forebears can be the major gods of the community. They then become the principal overseers of the tribe's ethical and spiritual welfare.

The ancestors are viewed as protectors, interposing their power between the living and various supernatural evils. More important is the negative view that if the goodwill of the ghosts is not maintained – if the offerings, praises and so on slacken off – the ghosts punish such laxity with calamities like disease, crop failure, accidents and death. If such disasters occur, the tribe concludes that someone has angered the ghosts, and a whole system of appeasement, or *propitiation*, goes into action.

The need to propitiate ghosts is just as important in those primitive societies which do not directly worship their forebears. Some of these societies, many South American jungle tribes for instance, see all spirits as basically vindictive and dangerous, and so requiring propitiation. It is as if the fact of death makes the spirit automatically hostile to the living, whatever its personality while alive. Sometimes the object is not appeasement so much as warding off the spirit: magic spells are set up in a house after a death in the family, to keep the ghost at a distance; or the body is buried in such a way that the ghost cannot find its way back. Ghosts are often believed to have a poor sense of direction: in fairly recent times the bodies of hanged criminals, executed witches and so on were buried at crossroads to confuse the ghosts.

Doomed to Walk the Earth

The more complex primitive societies and most civilizations developed the idea of a distinct spirit world – the happy hunting ground, Elysian Fields, Valhalla and the like. They saw ghosts as yearning for these places but being somehow balked. Thus arises the concept of the wandering ghost who infests this world while craving access to the next world and his eternal rest. Ghosts of murder victims remain to harass the living, like Hamlet's father, until vengeance

Victoria and Albert Museum/Michael Holford

A Schoolmaster's Night Visitor

'We – McLeod and I – slept in a dormitory at right angles to the main building. Sampson slept in the main building on the first floor. There was a very bright full moon. At an hour which I can't tell exactly, but some time between one and two, I was woken up by somebody shaking me. It was McLeod; and a nice state of mind he seemed to be in. "Come," he said, –"come! there's a burglar getting in through Sampson's window." . . . Naturally I came and looked, and naturally there was no one there. I was cross enough, and should have called McLeod plenty of names: only – I couldn't tell why – it seemed to me that there *was* something wrong – something that made me very glad I wasn't alone to face it. We were still at the window looking out, and as soon as I could, I asked him what he had heard or seen. "I didn't *hear* anything at all," he said, "but about five minutes before I woke you, I found myself looking out of this window here, and there was a man sitting or kneeling on Sampson's window-sill, and looking in, and I thought he was beckoning." "What sort of man?" McLeod wriggled. "I don't know," he said, "but I can tell you one thing – he was beastly thin: and he looked as if he was wet all over: and," he said, looking round and whispering as if he hardly liked to hear himself, "I'm not at all sure that he was alive."'

M. R. James *More Ghost Stories*

Victoria and Albert Museum/Michael Holford

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Two early montages show spirits in *(left)* hostile and *(above)* more benevolent aspects *Right* Interference with a grave was strongly resented by the ghost of the person buried. An early 19th century engraving by George Cruikshank depicts an enraged ghost rising from the earth, a thighbone in each hand, to ward off a graverobber

is done. Ghosts remain also when their bodies have been improperly buried, or not buried at all, as with Odysseus's friend Elpenor. This idea remains strong today: Britain's famous ghost hunter, Harry Price, felt in the 1930s that the main 'haunt' of Borley Rectory would depart once Christian burial had been given to some old bones he found under the Rectory.

The association of ghosts with improper burial reveals another long-lived assumption: that there is a mystical connection after death between the corpse and the spirit. Many of the propitiations aimed at ghosts by primitives are in fact performed upon the corpse or the grave. Offerings are placed at the graveside, and all over the world the dead have been buried with food, ornaments, amulets and weapons for the spirit to have with him after death. Of course desecration of the grave or disturbance of the bones brought instant retaliation from the ghost.

In spite of the various links between corpse and spirit, the notion of a land of the dead became of vital importance, and the corollary idea began to arise that for a ghost to be operating in this world was a clear punishment. Shades of evil-doers remained among the living because they had earned no right to eternal rest. Others, not evil in life, were trapped here if they had been murdered or inadequately buried, or if they had left something important undone. No wonder so many ghosts are supposed to be malevolent; no wonder that moans and howls and shrieks are associated with them, as they bewail their inability to go to rest. There are very few tales, past or present, in which a ghost is willing and happy to stay in this world.

Many of the foregoing primitive attitudes to ghosts and the dead remain in folklore and legend. But the old beliefs about what ghosts look like, and their nature generally, have been added to a little. Primitive ghosts are often indistinguishable from devils, and so may appear as horned giants breathing fire or as unusually large and vicious animals. Such visions do indeed still figure in old wives' tales; but a great many ghosts seen by modern man apparently take remarkably human form. This tendency has been confirmed by various societies of psychical research, which try very hard to take a scientific, clear-eyed view of ghosts. They are at pains to show that most of the more reliable and straightforward accounts of apparitions describe the figures seen as quite ordinary-looking people – three-dimensional, solid and wholly human.

Apparitions of the Living

Many of these accounts are of apparitions of the living, which usually appear at some crisis in the life of the person who is seen. A well-known case illustrates the point: a young Englishwoman living in India in 1917 was startled to see her brother, a Royal Flying Corps pilot, standing in her living room one day. She thought he had come on a surprise visit; only when the brother disappeared did she realize she had seen an apparition. She later learned that it had materialized at the moment when her brother's aeroplane was being shot down over France. Apparitions of the dead (which are often of loved ones or close relatives) share this apparent realness; so do the many other apparitions that have been seen at the point of death of the person who appears.

Sometimes, indeed, the reality and solidity of the apparition is more than visual – as in the case of a bewhiskered ghost in a 19th century Bristol vicarage, who had a nasty habit of entering bedrooms and waking people up by shaking the bed. Or the affectionate 'haunt' of a British stately home, about 1885, who awoke a maiden lady sleeping in the haunted room by bestowing a ghostly kiss. But many other apparitions lack any other aspect of a physical presence than their appearance, and so are all the more frightening. Many accounts mention that the apparition seems to 'glide' soundlessly; few apparitions have left footprints where a flesh and blood person would have done; many have seemed to float well above the ground. Odd clothing is often abnormality enough: strange figures roaming the night become all the more eerie when they are wearing

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authentic 18th century dress. And terror would mount if they were also seen to walk through a wall or to be transparent.

One compiler of modern ghost stories tells of a company director driving through the British countryside at night, who saw what appeared to be an encampment of Roman soldiers in some woods. He assumed it was a film company on location, until he realized that he could see the trunks of trees through the soldiers' bodies. Nor was he the only person to have seen that ghostly camp. In another case, a tall clergyman was seen regularly to visit a London church to pray: quite unremarkable, thought the vicar of the church, until one day he accidentally bumped into the praying figure and walked right through it.

Apparitions often reveal their non-corporeal nature by suddenly disappearing for no obvious reason. They may also disappear if the living interfere with them. Ghosts may sometimes like to touch people or kiss them or shake their beds, but they seem to object when the living take the initiative. Try to grasp an apparition, to set traps for it, like hidden cameras or powder for possible footprints, and it will vanish. In fact, though there are hundreds of alleged photographs of apparitions, the creatures are notoriously camera-shy.

Some mention must be made of the ghostly occupants of 'haunted houses'. 'Haunts' are, above all, recurrent, walking regularly as clockwork – the same night, the same time, over the same distance. They often take little or no notice of the living (less, anyway, than most of the apparitions which appear only once), but they, too, will promptly disappear if the perceivers try to interfere with them. Haunts generally seem less lifelike than other apparitions; some authorities have described them as 'somnambulistic', even mindless. Patrolling the same area, performing the same actions, they are like a visual record stuck in one groove.

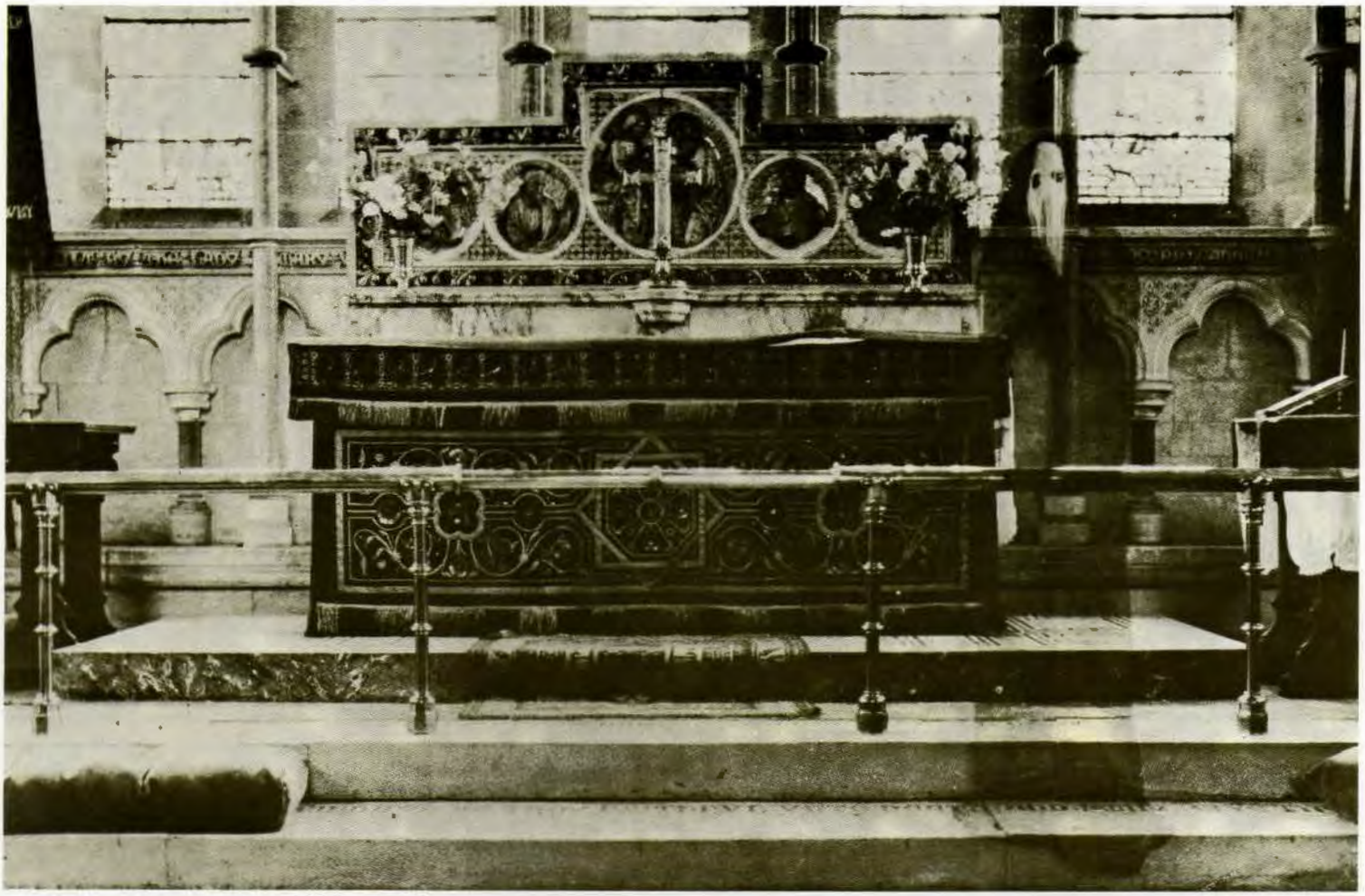
The Sheeted Dead

For every lifelike apparition in psychical research files or in folktale – lifelike even when the illusion slips a little, as when the ghost floats or is transparent – there are at least an equal number of stories of visitations that resemble rather the inventions of horror fiction. These include the female ghost in a Norfolk manor who had empty, fathomless hollows instead of eyes; the faceless woman who haunted a churchyard in Canewdon, Essex; and the bodiless head which in 1953 drove a series of residents from a house in Hamburg, in spite of a cruel housing shortage. Other outlandish horrors carry with them the signs of how they met their deaths, like the victim of drowning who was said to haunt a New Orleans bridge, and who was always seen dripping with spectral seaweed. Numerous cases exist of apparitions in the form of mouldering corpses, even skeletons; these are related to the appearances of ghosts in sheets (in other words the shroud or winding sheet from the grave), which provide further instances of the age-old connection of corpse with spirit.

Nor do all apparitions manifest themselves in human or even partly human form. Spectral animals are widely common, with Britain predictably leading the field; dogs figure most frequently in these tales. In many cases the animal ghosts are friendly, but more often they are semi-demonic, like the Manthe Dog that traditionally haunted a castle on the Isle of Man and the ghostly pack of hounds that made Cornwall's moors horrible with their baying. Horses occur in many ghost legends, often with a rider, just as often not; they also are seen pulling phantom coaches. So it seems legends allow inanimate objects a ghostly existence.

Prominent among such objects are various means of transport. Many are phantom ships, including the famous *Flying Dutchman* and the French ship *La Belle Rosalie*. Ghost trains also reappear to rumble through the night on their old runs, whether the railway lines still exist or not. One famous legend concerns the funeral train carrying the coffin of Abraham Lincoln, which is said to roll along a stretch of track in New York State every April, and to have on board a phantom military band playing busily, though its music cannot be heard by living ears.

Apparitions may take much less substantial and well-defined forms than the ones considered so far. For instance, a revenant (one who comes back from the dead) created by some violent death in the past may be



People

Raymond Lamont Brown

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

In a large majority of cases of clearly seen or heard ghosts, a definite sensation of cold has been reported

Above Dressed as a lawyer, the Smithfield ghost passed through Smithfield market every Saturday night, pulling joints of meat off the butchers' stalls: 17th century woodcut *Left* A photograph taken by the vicar of Newby Church in Yorkshire reveals a cowled figure standing to the right of the altar. Photographic laboratories have confirmed that the film has not been interfered with in any way *Below left* Ghosts have always been thought of as fearsome and malevolent: this ghost from an early German film appears as a tall, threatening figure *Below right* Spirits are sometimes said to glow in the dark, and a ghostly manifestation may take the form of a light which has no natural cause. Photograph of a 'ghost light', taken in 1907 at Basle Zoological Gardens in Switzerland

not a full-scale haunt but instead take the form of a mere bloodstain. A 19th century tavern keeper in Massachusetts murdered and robbed a traveller one night, but from then on was plagued by bloodstains in the victim's room which could not be removed. Several cases exist of ghostly manifestations in the form of clouds of mist: sometimes, though, the mist will form itself into a recognizable human shape, as happened in France in 1951 when a film writer believed he saw such a mist cloud take the form of the ghost of the actress Maria Montez.

An Eerie Moving Light

Ghostly lights frequently occur when other forms of apparition are absent, and often contribute to haunted-house legends, as with the flickering lights repeatedly seen round the notorious Borley Rectory during its several uninhabited periods. It is obvious that an empty house could easily have temporary tenants, such as tramps, exploring children or vandals, who might light their way with flickering candles or matches. Yet the legends go on, related to the notion that spirits sometimes glow in the dark. So, in America, the ghost of a North Carolina railway conductor haunts a particular trestle bridge in the form of an eerie moving light: he had been decapitated near that spot, and the light is said to be his head on an eternal and forlorn search for its body.

With phantoms formed of mist and light must be reckoned the phantoms associated with smoke. Even the smell of smoke can apparently breed ghost legends, as in the story of the 17th century American girl who was burned to death for no good reason, and whose ghostly presence is recognizable by its accompanying pungent odour of smoke. Visible smoke led to another ghost tale being added to the lore of the Tower of London. In 1954 a sentry left his post in pursuit of a smoke cloud that moved as if of its own volition, changed its shape, but did not seem to diffuse or drift like ordinary smoke – until it disappeared with alarming suddenness.

Lying Beside a Ghost

Setting aside apparitions, of whatever shape or form, there is an immense variety of non-visual ghostly happenings. Many of these must be ascribed to the poltergeist, seemingly the most widely occurring form of haunting in the present day. Poltergeists are those ghosts which tend to toss objects around, whatever their weight or danger to bystanders, and also (as the name implies, meaning 'noisy spirit') to produce various kinds of noises. Spiritualism first began by investigating the kind of poltergeist that announces itself by knocking, and much of its continued research is based on the kind of poltergeist that moves tables. Associated with poltergeists are all those uncanny occurrences of church bells ringing themselves, pianos or organs being played by invisible fingers, weird laughter or screams or footsteps echoing through empty corridors.

Less overtly poltergeist ghosts would include those invisible manifestations that lay their cold hands on people or touch them in other ways, like the kissing ghost mentioned earlier. In Sheffield in 1956 an invisible phantom made itself known to an elderly lady by lying down on the bed beside her, making the mattress sink and the springs creak. Somewhat closer to the traditional poltergeist, perhaps, is the invisible ghost of a former Bank of England cashier who now tends playfully to disarm the guards; and the Bavarian ghost first heard of in 1949 who gained the name 'Gus the Nazi' when he persecuted women who fraternized with Allied Occupation troops. He was said to have cropped the hair of one girl, with scissors held by his invisible hand, in full view of her parents.

A Sense of Evil

Last of all the categories of ghosts are the totally intangible phenomena which can loosely be described as 'eerie feelings'. In a large majority of cases of clearly seen or heard ghosts, those who have experienced such phenomena have reported a definite sensation of cold, a feature that occurs as often in well-attested psychical research files as in the annals of folklore. But sometimes this chill that has no physical cause can occur entirely on its own, or can occur before the apparition is seen, usually giving the percipient an almost instinctive feeling that something evil or fearful is present. Animals, particularly dogs, are believed by occultists to be specially attuned to supernatural manifestations; many sensible people have told psychical investigators of their pets' unexplained fear of something that apparently only the animal could see. Dogs, for instance, were often frightened round Borley Rectory, even in broad daylight; and Dennis Bardens relates the story of a modern visitor to Compton Castle near Torquay, whose pet greyhound was riveted to the spot in utter terror of something only it could perceive.

Sometimes such presences make themselves felt without the aid of chills or whatever special senses dogs may have. A 'creepy feeling' – a non-physical awareness of some presence – occurs to a great many people in quite ordinary circumstances. It often happens that someone enters unfamiliar but quite ordinary surroundings (like an empty house or flat visited during a house-hunting excursion) and has a definite feeling of oppression, depression or similar 'atmospheric' reaction from the place. Nor need this reaction be due to any perceptible physical factors, such as poor lighting, dank overshadowing trees, rising damp, atrocious wallpaper or bad smells. Many people have admitted their personal experience of this unpleasant sensation in an apparently ideal dwelling, as if there were some sort of 'psychic emanation' from the very walls of the place, reminiscent of past horrors that took place there.

The forms and habits of ghosts may be incredibly varied, but their reasons for returning, the basic purposes behind their presence among us, tend according

The death of the Duke of Buckingham was foretold by an armour-clad apparition of his father, which appeared several times to one of the Duke's servants. Ghosts are often harbingers of death

to folklore to be fairly limited. Many of the reasons for ghosts returning suggested by past and primitive societies can still be found in modern legend. So ghosts can return apparently out of sheer malevolence. Vampires, a special kind of revenant, return solely for evil purposes as, in many tales, do the ghosts of executed witches.

Return for a Purpose

Haunting ghosts seem to return to re-enact some crisis scene from their former lives – usually their death scene. Ghosts in modern lore, as in the past, have been said to return to seek vengeance on their slayers, to punish the living for crimes against them or against their descendants, to seek proper burial, to complete some task left undone or merely to continue one. The ghost of an American farmer returned for the specific purpose of informing his heirs where he had hidden his will; another American ghost returned to claim what it felt to be rightfully its own. This was the deceased wife of a thrifty New England farmer, whose husband had removed her rings before the funeral, eventually to pass them on to his next wife. But the second wife awoke in terror one night to find the apparition of her predecessor angrily pulling the rings off her fingers.

Quite a number of ghosts have appeared to announce their own deaths, in the 'point of death' form of apparition met so often in psychical research. But others are said to appear as harbingers of someone else's imminent death. The spirit of a deceased loved one might appear to a person, perhaps beckoning; Josephine's ghost apparently came to Napoleon in this way, some days before he died. Or some ancestral figure might appear to the title-holder of a noble family, heralding his death, as a spectral Black Friar was supposed to visit members of Lord Byron's family.

Some stories exist of ghosts appearing because the person has, before death, promised to return in order to indicate the continuance of life 'on the other side'. Dennis Bardens gives several accounts of such promises that were apparently kept, including that of the 19th century Lord Brougham, who materialized in the presence of a friend. Predictably, several people whose lives were devoted to psychical research are said to have returned, or at least to have sent messages back – like the 'spirit writings' transcribed by a medium that were asserted to be from the great pioneer of British psychical research, F. W. H. Myers (see CROSS CORRESPONDENCES).

Tricks of the Senses?

The foregoing must of course be taken as only a broad sample of what people have believed regarding ghosts, their nature and habits. To make some sense of it, we must now look at some of the answers that experts have given to the question of the reasons behind this universal belief.

The short answer that is often given is, obviously, that people who see ghosts experience nothing except a temporary derangement of their senses. It is true that our senses do often play tricks on us, when we are in an excitable or suggestible state, or when we are drunk, ill or half-asleep. Certainly quite a few accounts of ghosts can be dismissed on this account. The 'creepy feeling' mentioned before in connection with specific houses might be ascribable to a collection of possibly unconscious impressions – signs of decay or odours and the like, not consciously perceived but nonetheless affecting our reactions. At the very least, no occultist has yet come up with a convincing explanation of why certain tragedies in certain houses should breed these ghostly emanations, or should produce haunts, while others do not; yet there must be a great many houses quite happily occupied today that have tragic or horrific histories. In the same way, one tends to mistrust sightings of ghosts that are traditionally in residence in particular buildings. Too often people see what they expect to see.

Many psychologists tend instantly to dismiss accounts of ghost sightings as the 'product of a disturbed mind'. But for a few men in this field the easy answer does not satisfy. Freud searched for explanations among the repressed relics from our primitive past, the ancient ghost fears of primeval man now hidden within the unconscious mind, but sometimes slithering into conscious awareness. Jung looked for answers in his theory of the collective unconscious, the contents of which can in his view take on almost an autonomous life of their own, being projected or manifested as seemingly outer occurrences.

Both Freud and Jung made it clear that these views should not be taken as complete answers, but more as avenues of approach for psychoanalytic researchers. Other theorists depart from these standpoints, but still share with the two great psychological pioneers the idea that phenomena like ghosts are at least worth the time and effort of study. As the American psychologist William James put it, 'it is bad method to ignore them'. James himself produced one of the more interesting theories concerning apparitions, based on the idea of spontaneously produced hallucinations. Like other psychical researchers after him, he turned to extra-sensory perception – telepathy, clairvoyance and so on – as the possible cause of these hallucinations.

Phantom of a Living Wife

One of the best-known cases of the ghost of a living person concerns the wife of John Donne, the poet, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral . . . At the time of this happening, Donne and his wife were living in a house in Drury Lane with a friend, Sir Robert Drewry. King James decided to send a mission by Lord Hay to the court of the French King, Henry IV, and Sir Robert, who also had to go, asked Donne to go with him.

Mrs Donne was expecting a child, and when her husband told her of the plan she expressed the gravest misgivings. She begged him not to go, and he agreed to stay at home – but on Sir Robert's repeated insistence he changed his mind, and his wife, reluctantly, let him go.

Sir Robert and John Donne took about twenty days to reach Paris safely. Two days afterwards Sir Robert left Donne alone in a room where they had dined with some friends, and returned to find him in a kind of coma. 'I have seen a dreadful vision,' Donne told him, 'since I saw you; I have seen my dear wife pass twice through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders and a dead child in her arms; this I have seen since I saw you.'

Sir Robert tried to reassure Donne. 'Here Sir, you have slept since I saw you, and this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake.' But Donne was adamant. 'I cannot be surer that I now live, than that I have not slept since I saw you; and I am as sure that, at her second appearing, she stopped and looked me in the face and vanished.'

The following day Donne's anxiety had not abated, nor his conviction as to what he had seen. Sir Robert, convinced now that his friend *had* seen something, despatched a special messenger to Drury House to discover how Mrs Donne was and what had been happening, if anything. In due course the messenger returned. Mrs Donne lay very ill at Drury House. After a long and dangerous labour she had delivered a stillborn child – at the very hour of the very day that her husband had seen the distressing vision.

Denis Bardens *Ghosts and Hauntings*

However, even after years of concentrated research into ESP very few conclusions about ghosts have been drawn or could have been, in spite of the mountains of statistics amassed from years of experimentation. So, to the layman at least, explaining ghosts in terms of telepathy is of only abstract interest. Nonetheless, it is interesting to find William James describing apparitions as products of our own unconscious minds when they are being stimulated by other minds. This telepathic contact, he says, produces an 'objective' hallucination (as opposed to the subjective kind that our minds can produce by themselves, without help from an outside agency). F. W. H. Myers had a comparable idea that the other minds did not stimulate our minds directly, but tinkered with part of the environment we were looking at to produce the hallucinatory apparition. Another great British student of the paranormal, G. N. M. Tyrrell, offered the idea that the other minds telepathically affect the sensory apparatus (like the optic nerve) of the percipient, so that the brain receives the message that a ghost is standing there.

Psychons and Astral Bodies

None of these theories accepts the possibility that something with objective reality might indeed be standing there. For these experts, apparitions are hallucinations, however caused. Other theories tend to grow a trifle more fanciful. Students of the occult who recall the many hundreds of accounts of 'astral travelling' – when a person's 'astral self' seems to detach itself from his body and move about, fully conscious and supernaturally mobile – often relate these astral selves to ghosts. An explanation of haunting has been offered on the basis of psychic emissions rather like the particles emitted in radioactivity, but of course non-physical, non-material; the particles are called 'psychons', and the theory suggests that they remain in a house, carrying an imprint of a particular scene, which becomes perceptible to certain minds in certain circumstances. Or there is the idea that every piece of matter – a person, a dog, a train – has an 'etheric' non-material counterpart that exists in 'psychic space', which sometimes cuts into physical space and becomes visible to a percipient.

Most of these theories, acceptable in terms of the frequently occurring 'phantasms of the living', raise difficulties when applied to apparitions of the dead. For if we accept the possibility of telepathically projected apparitions, or astral bodies, or etheric selves, we must accept that these transmissions can come from the dead; that, in short, a person's mind and psychic qualities can cross the barrier of death. That means that we must accept the idea of the survival of the individual personality after death. Or, if we balk at that, we must accept the idea of a striking time-lag in the case of post-mortem apparitions – that the telepathic or other emanation came from a living agent, perhaps at the point of death but no later, and did not reach a percipient's mind until some time after the agent's death.

None of these explanations is wholly satisfactory, for none seems applicable to the whole range of ghost lore. It seems likely that the question will remain open until, somehow, man is able to discover what, if anything, transpires after death. Meanwhile, for whatever reason or amalgam of reasons, people will go on seeing things or have experiences which tradition teaches them to call ghostly.

These experiences can apparently happen to anyone, however rationalistic, nerveless, phlegmatic or hard-headed he thinks he is. And hardly anyone has been able to hang on to his total disbelief in such phenomena after having had such an experience, in any form. There is a mystery, here, which man is no nearer solving than he was when he strung amulets round his hut to keep out the spirits.

(See also ASTRAL BODY; BORLEY RECTORY; BURIAL; CULT OF THE DEAD; DOUBLE; ESP; HAUNTED HOUSES; POLTERGEISTS; VAMPIRES.)

DOUGLAS HILL

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Michael Holford

Ghoul

From Arabic *ghul*, a demon which feeds on corpses or small children in Eastern stories; known throughout the Mohammedan world, it lives in the desert, in lonely places or in graveyards: more generally used of any vampire or cannibal spirit.

In general the giants of the past had a bad reputation. Greedy, boastful, brutish, with cannibalistic tendencies, their immense size and strength made them objects of terror

GIANTS

THE BELIEF in the former existence of a race of giants is world-wide. They feature in the mythologies of most peoples, in local legends and in folktales. The evidence relating to them is as complex as their appearance is ubiquitous, but from the collected mythologies of the world it is possible to trace their development. The evidence suggests that descending from their original status as 'sons of heaven', the giants finally came to feature as grisly monsters and demons.

The deepest and most ancient significance of the myth of giants lies in the cosmogonic cycles (cycles of creation myths) of many peoples. These allude to the existence of an immense primordial being who, in order to make possible the creation of the universe, and in particular of the earth, had to sacrifice himself. The first beings on this earth were creatures that manifested qualities and powers akin to those of this one mythical being.

Seen in relation to man, giants are personifications of the overwhelming manifestations of the natural universe. Similarly, on a psychological level, they may be seen to represent man collectively as a species asserting himself on this planet, or they may be regarded as symbolizing all those forces in man which he is unable to control.

In nearly all traditions the giants appear as miraculous and ominous manifestations, that is, they represent all that surpasses human stature and achievement. But often giants exhibit inferior qualities such as stupidity and helplessness, which render them subordinate to man. According to traditions preserved in mythology and folklore, giants died out because they came into conflict with either gods or heroes. Essentially, the giant is a symbol of dissatisfaction, in that he either aims at dethroning the gods or destroying the work of man. The hero's deed is to restore the equilibrium that had been upset by the giants' overturning of the universal order.

Goliath of Gath

Their mythological or early legendary character is clearly in evidence in the giants mentioned in the Old Testament. Biblical sources make only very scanty reference to what was probably a much larger body of current local folklore, which entered literature more extensively in the apocryphal writings. There is a passage in Genesis chapter 6, which speaks of a race of giants that sprang from a union of angels – called the 'sons of God', the 'Watchers' of the apocryphal writings – and women or the 'daughters of men' (see DEVIL). This passage appears to be a short fragment of a myth accounting to the Hebrew mind for those giants that were already known to common folklore. The contest of the giants with God appears first in the Apocrypha (Ecclesiasticus 16.7) and is developed greatly in later writings. In the other biblical references to giants the terms Nephilim and Rephaim, among others, are used to signify a race of giants who inhabited Palestine as the predecessors of the Canaanites. 'Rephaim', incidentally, is connected with the word meaning 'shade' or 'ghost' and thus fits the mythological references to the extinct races which were supposed to have inhabited the land. In general, Hebrew legend attributes long life and abnormal stature to prehistoric races. In these ancient myths, referred to in Genesis 6. 1–4, we find the origin of the idea of angels of high estate who fell from the grace of God. This idea was perpetuated through the millennia, finding its personification later in the figure of Satan in the New Testament, as well as in the figure of the dragon. It came to be widely expressed in Christian literature, as for example in Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*.

More realistic descriptions are found in relation to the giants Og and Goliath. In

A famous Indian epic poem, the *Ramayana*, tells how a virtuous Indian prince made war on the demons who lived in Ceylon: in this illustration of a scene from the epic, a sea demoness of gigantic size swallows soldiers of the invading Indian army. Wall painting on the inner wall of a courtyard in the temple of the Emerald Buddha in Thailand

William MacQuitty

Deuteronomy chapter 3 we are told of the former: 'For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.' Of Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistines who was slain by David, it is said that his bronze coat of mail weighed 5000 shekels, which is 208 pounds; about his weapon we are told 'the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron' (approximately 25 pounds).

In Greek mythology there are various accounts of the birth and the subsequent fate of giants; always they are closely related to the pantheon of gods. Hesiod speaks of their origin in his *Theogony*, written in about the 8th century BC. Uranus (sky) begot immense beings, the Titans and the Cyclopes, with Gaia (earth) and then shut his offspring in the depths of Tartarus. But Gaia in revenge incited the Titans to attack their father. This they did, led by Uranus's youngest son Cronus. Armed with a sickle Cronus castrated his father. The Titans then released the Cyclopes from Tartarus and awarded to Cronus the sovereignty over the earth; however, no sooner did Cronus find himself in supreme command than he confined the Cyclopes again to Tartarus.

Another account speaks of how certain tall and terrible giants, the Gigantes, with long locks and beards and serpents for feet, plotted an assault on heaven. They were enraged because Zeus, the successor of Cronus, had confined their brothers the Titans to Tartarus. Without warning they seized rocks and firebrands and hurled them upwards from the mountain tops against Olympus, disdaining the lightning of Zeus. An oracle had declared that the gods could not conquer them except with the assistance of a mortal. The hero Hercules was called to the aid of the gods and he slew the most formidable of the giants. The remainder perished by the hands of the gods or fled. Local legend explains those places noted for volcanic eruptions, as for instance the islands of Cos and Sicily, as being the spots where the giants were buried. The Gigantomachia, or War of the Giants, is also referred to by the Roman poet Ovid at the beginning of his *Metamorphoses*.

In revenge for the destruction of the giants, Gaia lay with Tartarus and brought forth her youngest child Typhon, the largest monster ever born. 'From the thighs downward he was nothing but coiled serpents, and his arms which, when he spread them out, reached a hundred leagues in either direction, had countless serpents' heads instead of hands. His brutish ass-head touched the stars, his vast wings darkened the sun, fire flashed from his eyes, and flaming rocks hurtled from his mouth. When he came rushing towards Olympus, the gods fled in terror to Egypt, where they disguised themselves as animals.'

The human hero in all mythologies takes part in the battle with the giants. In his *Odyssey* Homer related how Odysseus intoxicated and outwitted the one-eyed, human-eating giant Polyphemus who lived on Sicily. As forgers of thunderbolts the giants were assistants of Hephaestus, the smith of the gods.

Tradition holds universally that before the close of the mythical Golden Age people had been much taller and much stronger. Survivals of such beliefs are found in the mythologies of many peoples, and references to them are frequent, especially in Eskimo, North American Indian, Mexican and Persian legends and stories. All the Greek and Latin poets and historians shared the opinion that they and their contemporaries were dwarfs compared with their ancestors.

Immense Stone Figures

The fact that ancient peoples have possessed a belief in giants is further evinced hy the vast images of their gods and their colossal monuments in sculpture and architecture. Examples of such edifices and statues abound and survive from civilizations all over the world. The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the world, exemplifies the ancient taste for the vast human figure. Grecian temples in general portray the gods and goddesses as being of superhuman size. In front of the portals of the palace at Karnak in Egypt are placed gigantic human statues, and in one of the courts there are erected 12 immense stone figures, each of a height of about 52 feet. Similarly, at the outer gate of the Temple of Longevity at Canton were four gigantic figures. Many more examples could be cited. The various ancient representations of huge human forms were the corporeal shapes of those gigantic mythical figures which existed in the imagination of our ancestors and which, having been perpetuated in stone, served to continue the early belief in giants.

Norse and Germanic mythology assign an important place to giants. Our knowledge of northern mythology is derived mostly from the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson, which he wrote in the 13th century. The Icelandic scholar relates in it that according to Norse mythology there were in the beginning two regions: the South, full of brightness and fire, and the North, a world of snow and ice. Between them there stretched a great void. When the heat and the cold met in the midst of this expanse, a living creature appeared in the melting ice: he was Ymir, a great giant. From under his left arm grew the first man and woman, while from his legs the clan of frost giants was begotten. Ymir was thus the ancestor of all the giants. When he was slain the earth formed under his body. There is also mention in Nordic creation legends of the giant Bergelmir who escaped in his boat from the flood caused by the blood of Ymir which overwhelmed the world. Having escaped he then founded a new race.

Subsequently the giants of the *Edda* feature either as companions of the gods or as their adversaries, as in tbe following account. One day the god Thor and Loki, a giant's son, set out to the land of giants. Towards evening they came to a huge building with an opening to one side. They groped their way in and spent the night there. But as there was a deafening noise coming from outside and as the building shook with a continuous earthquake, they sat up most of the night in terror. At daybreak they discovered that not far from this building there lay a giant. He was Skrymir, who when he rose picked up what Thor and Loki had taken for a building, but which was in fact his glove. The passage in which they had spent the night proved to be its thumb.

The giants slain by Thor are characterized by their enormous size, power and greed and by being particularly jealous of the possessions of the gods. Gods and giants intermarry. Born from such a union was Loki, who was handsome to look at but was evil in his ways. He was a cunning schemer who both helped and hindered the gods in their work. He was the father of the wolf Fenris, the World Serpent, and Hel, the ruler of death.

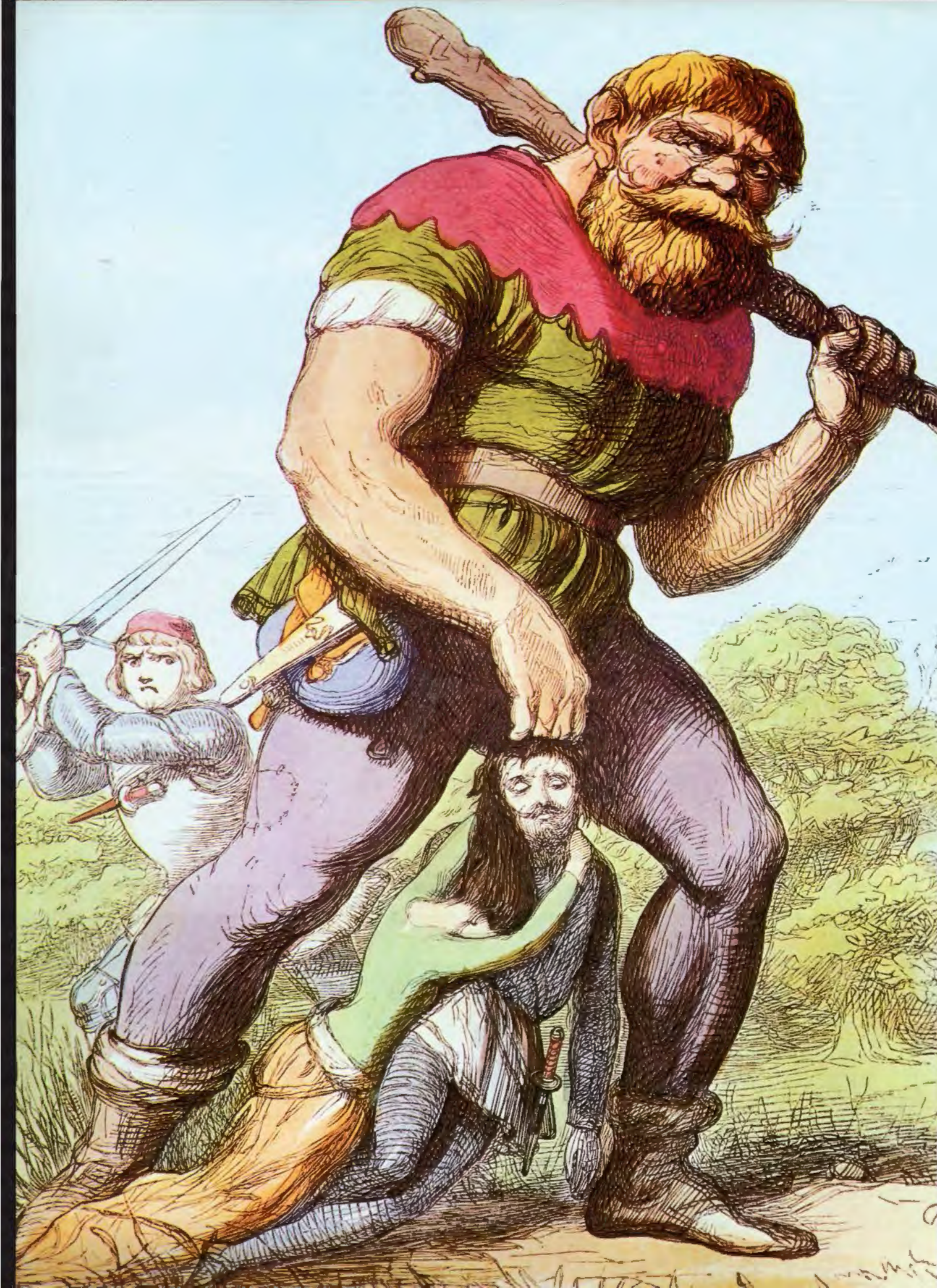
Legends universally ascribe the numerous stone structures of a former age to the work of giants. These stone structures are found particularly in Palestine, Greece and Central Europe, and are almost exclusively associated with buildings known as *cyclopean*. Apart from these edifices there are very numerous megalithic structures, both above and below ground. These *cairns*, heaps of stones akin to *dolmens*, known as *Riesengräber* in Germany, are found throughout Europe.

Local legend frequently pictures giants as throwing rocks about by way of trying each others' strength. According to a Dorsetshire legend, two giants once stood on a hill contending as to which of them could hurl a rock the longer distance across the valley to another hill. He whose stone fell short was so mortified by his failure that he died of vexation; he was buried beneath the mound which has since been known as the Giant's Grave. Similar legends are often attached to blocks of stone which occur naturally, and which appear strewn about, as it were, by some giants in an antediluvian game.

Gog and Magog

Giants are frequently counected with old mythic histories of the foundation of cities. Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c 1135) recounts the fate of Gog and Magog, the only survivors of a race of giants inhabiting Britain who had been slain by Brutus, legendary founder of the British race, and his companions. Gog and Magog were brought to the newly founded city of London, where they were compelled to officiate as porters at the gate of the royal palace.

Finds of huge skeletons and bones all over the world have frequently led to the belief in a former gigantic tribe of men. Pliny relates that in the time of Claudius Caesar there was a man named Gabbaras, brought by the emperor from Arabia to Rome, who was nine feet nine inches high, 'the tallest man that has been seen in our times'. The Emperor Maximus, so the story goes, was about eight or nine feet tall and of great bulk. He was in the habit of using his wife's bracelet for a thumb-ring. His



shoe was a foot longer than that of any other man and his strength was so great that he was able to draw a carriage which two oxen could not move. He could strike out a horse's teeth with one blow of his fist and break its thigh with a kick. He generally ate 40 pounds of meat every day and drank six gallons of wine.

Such gigantic people have been a great attraction in popular entertainment at all times. In the 1720s there appeared the following description of a human giantess in a London handbill: 'Advertisement. This is to give notice to all gentlemen and others, that there is lately arrived from Italy, a tall woman, being above seven foot high, and every way proportionable, weighing four hundred and twenty-five pounds weight. She has been shown before the Emperor of Germany, as also to the grand Czar of Muscovy, to the wonderful admiration and satisfaction of him, and the rest of the great princes of Christendom. She is to be seen every day from ten in the morning till seven at night (without any loss of time) at the Blue Boar and the Green Tree in Fleet Street, next door where the Great Elephant is to be seen. Vivat Rex.'

Folk tradition uses the term giant in connection with a supposed race of mortals of immense size who inhabited the world in early times. In most European folktales giants appear as cruel and stupid savages, often one-eyed and given to cannibalism; sometimes they are akin to monsters. The hero of the folktale, like the English Jack the Giant-killer and Grimm's Valiant Tailor, always emerges victorious from a battle with them. Kindly giants occur only in a few stories, as in the legends of Rübezahl, the giant of the Bohemian forest. The majority of them, however, were feared and hated, although marriage between their daughters and the hero of the story was not impossible. Jonathan Swift invented a race of benevolent giants in the second part of his satire *Gulliver's Travels*.

The figure of the superman in the ancient myths, legends and tales speaks of man's inherent tendency to magnify real occurrences, to idealize them and present them in the imagery of dreams. The human hero is a being of more than life-size ability and physique, who is presented as conquering giants, demons and dragons; thus the giants gradually come to embody almost exclusively negative qualities.

Man's love-hate relationship with the abnormal and the extraordinary, the violent idealization or rejection of the giant-hero, is apparent too in contemporary myth-making. The giant and the hero overlap. The negative giant, the master villain and the hero's enemy, embodies those qualities that are rejected by the current code of values or the ideology of a given community. The hero-giants may be cosmonauts, secret agents, political figures or other popular heroes always winning against odds and excelling in power and intelligence.

(See also CREATION MYTHS; CRONUS; JACK; LOKI.)

MARIA-GABRIELE WOSIEN

FURTHER READING: M. Grumley, *There Are Giants in the Earth* (Doubleday, 1974); R. Norvill, *Giants* (Aquarian Press, 1979).

Camera Press London

Left A giant who is carrying off a knight and his lady is about to be slaughtered by the crafty and intrepid Jack, a popular children's hero: from *Jack and the Giants*, illustrated by Richard Doyle *Right* Buildings and statues of colossal size have often been attributed to giants in later ages. Conversely, human heroes have been represented in giant proportions to emphasize their superhuman qualities: at Tirumallaiyaval in India seven wise men keep guard in a temple courtyard

GILGAMESH

THE GREAT HERO of Sumerian and Babylonian mythology was Gilgamesh. His deeds are recorded in an epic poem no less adventurous than the *Odyssey*, put into its final written form not more than about a century after the Greek poem. The received text of the Gilgamesh epic was written down on a series of 12 clay tablets inscribed in the cuneiform script used by the Sumerians, the Babylonians and the peoples of Assyria. The fullest version that has come down to us was originally held in the great palace library of the king of Assyria, Ashurbanipal, who made a vast collection of contemporary and ancient texts in the course of three decades between about 660–630 BC.

This famous epic became a set book in the scribal schools and has been reconstituted from fragments found not only on many Mesopotamian sites, but also at places as far apart as Megiddo in Palestine and Ugarit in Syria. Evidence of the poem has been found at Sultantepe and Boghaz Koi, the great Hittite capital in Asia Minor. The Assyrian version ultimately derives from a much older Babylonian text which must have been composed before 1800 BC, for there is no mention of Marduk the god of Babylon, whose cult became the state religion in the reign of Hammurabi. But the earliest versions of all stem from Sumerian texts of the late third millennium BC, at which time this epic was perhaps not a continuous story, but consisted of a disconnected series of episodes in which Gilgamesh took a prominent place.

The epic itself is enthralling for the insight which it gives into the psychology of the Babylonians and their Sumerian forebears. We also become aware of the historical background and of a heroic age which, though associated with stories about the gods, may be authenticated by historical, or semi-historical, literature such as the Sumerian king lists, and by archeology. The historical position of Gilgamesh is firmly established by an episode in the Sumerian version of the story, which tells of a battle between Gilgamesh and Agga, King of Kish, a name already known from the Sumerian king lists. Indeed the name of Agga's father

John Webb

Michael Holford

has been identified on an alabaster bowl from the Diyala valley, dated about 2700 BC. Thus in the epic we can visualize a real king, Gilgamesh, as well as a world famous historical event, the Sumerian Deluge, the memory of which has been preserved in the book of Genesis.

From this poem we learn that Gilgamesh was a renowned and powerful king who had built the great walls of Erech, one of the most extensive cities of Sumer and Babylonia. Gilgamesh, however, was an arrogant, oppressive and philandering ruler who had exasperated his subjects. In consequence an appeal was made to the gods for a champion who would contend for their rights against the omniscient and headstrong oppressor within their city.

The Hairy Hunter

The champion elected to liberate Erech was a hairy hunter named Enkidu, a Sumerian wild man who lived with the animals and protected them. He was seduced by a courtesan, who tempted him with the delights of the city, and Enkidu who had never before partaken of bread developed a taste for strong drink also. On entering Erech he engaged in a wrestling match with Gilgamesh, but after honour was satisfied on both sides the two heroes became firm friends and decided to embark on an adventurous journey together.

In a mountain of cedars, perhaps the Amanus or the Lebanon, they sought out the demon Humbaba and slew him. In this episode we may see a relic of early dynastic Sumerian conquests in Syria recently attested by excavations at Mardikh and Chuera. The two friends returned in triumph to Erech, and the goddess Ishtar became enamoured of Gilgamesh. Unwisely he spurned her advances and accused her of having seduced men and beasts. The goddess, a woman scorned and enraged, induced the high god Anu to send down from heaven an avenging bull to trample on the city of Erech, but Enkidu killed it, thereby sealing his own doom and initiating a long drawn tragedy. After his death, which was foretold in a dream, there follows a lament for Enkidu, for whom an expensive funeral is arranged.

Gilgamesh, bereft of his friend, began to fear for his own life, and resolved to embark on a journey in search of the secret of immortality, although as we are reminded in the ninth tablet of the epic, 'two thirds of him is god, one third is man'. Between twin mountain peaks he penetrated the gate of sunrise which was guarded by the scorpion-man and his wife, and after a long journey through an immense and impenetrable darkness arrived in a garden where the trees bore carnelian and lapis lazuli. He was on his way to find Utnapishtim, the Sumerian Noah who, as he hoped, would reveal the secret of his immortality to him. The sun god warned Gilgamesh that he was on a vain quest and advised him to seek what pleasure he could in life:

> Day and night be thou merry
> Make every day a day of rejoicing.

This part of the narration in Tablet X concludes with a passage worthy of the book of Proverbs in which Gilgamesh reflects on the impermanence of life and its mutability.

The ensuing Tablet XI is the famous Deluge tablet, which breaks the thread of the narrative. This is thought by many authorities to reflect an identifiable event or events which, according to another Sumerian tablet, may be related to the reign of king Ziusudra who is thought to have lived not more than a century or two after 3000 BC.

Above **Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu subduing wild beasts: plaster cast of an Akkadian seal** ***Below*** **Terracotta figure of Gilgamesh from Khorsabad, Iraq**

Michael Holford

Robbed by a Serpent

The conclusion of the eleventh tablet is that with the advice of a ferryman named Urshanabi, Gilgamesh, his feet weighted by stones, dived deep into the sea and discovered a plant like a thorn, the wondrous plant whose name was perpetual youth. His triumph was short lived, for on his way home, whilst refreshing himself in a pool, a serpent robbed him of his trophy and stole the secret of eternal life.

The last tablet of the series, Tablet XII, is an appendix to the whole, for in it Enkidu lives once more. It contains a Semitic version of a Sumerian story. Here we have a remarkable episode concerning a willow tree and its magical properties coveted by Inanna, queen of heaven. Enkidu, who has meddled dangerously on her behalf, goes to his death, and the story ends with an interview between Gilgamesh and Enkidu's ghost, who gives a woeful account of the underworld. Here we have an unrelieved picture of gloom which, with few exceptions, is typical of Sumerian and Babylonian thought.

(See also FLOOD.)

M. E. L. MALLOWAN

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GILLES DE RAIS

THE LIFE of Gilles de Rais, culminating in his trial and execution, presents an incredible study of a dual personality. To the outside world he was cultured and artistic, interested in drama and music and skilled at ornamenting manuscripts. Though he lived like an emperor surrounded by magnificent luxury, he was a brave soldier, and his worst failings appeared to be pride, hot temper and extravagance.

However, at the trial in 1440 a ghastly side of de Rais' character emerged. It seemed his inordinate public piety and liberal acts of charity had been zealously exercised to save him from damnation, while privately he practised the most diabolical and bloody rites. The charges of the ecclesiastical court and Inquisitor included heresy, apostasy, conjuration of demons, sodomy, sacrilege and reading forbidden works on magic. The civil court arraigned him for about 140 child murders. Evidence supporting these charges must be some of the most obscene and cruel on record. It describes monstrous sexual perversions using living and dead children, specially procured for their beauty. De Rais was said to have voluptuously kissed and gloated over the loveliest corpses, which were then burned or hurled into cesspits.

It is hardly surprising that the far older Breton legend of Bluebeard became interwoven in many minds with the deeds of Gilles de Rais, though there seems little foundation for assuming him to be the archetype of that character.

Born in 1404, Gilles de Laval, Baron de Rais (or Retz) was heir to riches and great estates in Brittany. During his solitary childhood he was treated as a prince. He grew up wild and headstrong, spending much time reading about the depravities of the Caesars in his vast library of Latin manuscripts. Unaccustomed to female company, his sensual appetites found outlet in homosexual pleasure.

Jean de Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes and the Inquisitor, Jean Blouyn hear evidence at the trial of Gilles de Rais in 1440: 15th century French manuscript

Bibliothèque Nationale Paris/Snark

The Baron's wealth was further increased by an early marriage to the great heiress Catherine de Thouars. This union was not happy, but it made him one of the greatest nobles in Europe. When he was only 16, his skill and courage during a campaign won him the particular interest of his overlord, the Duke of Brittany. Six years later de Rais entered the service of Charles VII, maintaining a large troop at his own expense. He fought courageously against the English and was entrusted with watching over Joan of Arc, fighting at her side outside Paris.

Profligate Spending

During Charles's coronation at Reims in 1429, Gilles de Rais, aged 25, was created a marshal of France. Abruptly in 1432 he retired from active life, and then commenced his grisly career. De Rais was surrounded by hangers-on, like Roger de Briqueville and Gilles de Sillé, who became his intimate confidants. Availing themselves of his munificent hospitality, these parasites inexpertly managed his affairs. Wherever he went excitement and envy were aroused. Ugly rumours began to circulate around his estates of Machecoul, Malemort, La Suze, Champtocé and Tiffauges: two women in the Baron's employ, Etiennette Blanchu and La Meffraye, were said to lure into his castles beautiful children who never returned. As de Rais was virtually omnipotent in his own domains, it was impossible to level any unconfirmed accusations at him.

In time his profligate spending forced de Rais to begin selling up his lands. In 1436 his alarmed relatives succeeded in getting the King to make an order preventing further disposal of the estates. The decree was observed everywhere except within Brittany, where Duke Jean and his chancellor, Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes, were busy purchasing the Marshal's lands, on which there was a redeemable period of six years.

To gain the wealth he needed for his projects, and also because alchemy was his serious interest, de Rais sought the Philosophers' Stone, which would transmute base metals into gold (see PHILOSOPHERS' STONE); to this end he lavished further money on all those who promised to help him. A Florentine priest, Francesco Prelati, joined the other magicians. De Rais evidently believed in and liked this utterly unscrupulous charlatan. Prelati claimed he invoked when alone a demon called Baron, who would grant gold if the right sacrifices were made. Numerous terrifying ceremonies took place. Once de Rais placed a child's heart, eyes, hand and blood in a glass container for Prelati to offer. The rite was a failure: 'Baron' refused the offering, which was then buried in consecrated ground. Though the Marshal acquired a reputation for using countless bodies of children to summon demons, this was the only real case cited at the trial.

Both duke and bishop were anxious to remove de Rais because of the redemption clause, and also to gain further land, but it was difficult to destroy a man in the Marshal's exalted position. However, the ungoverned temper of de Rais played into their waiting hands. One of his castles, St Etienne Malemort, was purchased in July 1440 by Geoffroi Le Ferron, the Duke's treasurer. His brother, a priest, Jean Le Ferron, went to collect the title deeds. A quarrel arose. Le Ferron was chased from a church and then beaten and imprisoned by de Rais. By so doing the Baron committed sacrilege and violated clerical immunity.

Brought to Trial

At the end of July Malestroit began collecting evidence against de Rais, concerning the disappearance of children and matters of a heretical nature. The case of Jean Le Ferron gave him the opportunity to bring the Marshal to trial, and the Inquisitor, Jean Blouyn, presented a charge of heresy. At the same time Duke Jean arranged for a civil trial in the ducal court under the presiding judge, Pierre de l'Hôpital, President of the Breton parliament, to hear evidence about the missing children.

If de Rais was declared a heretic, then duke, bishop and inquisitor stood to gain, for all his property would be legally forfeit. A fortnight before the trial opened Duke Jean sold his anticipated share in the estate, which strongly suggests that Gilles de Rais could not be allowed to go free. Rumours spread. De Briqueville and de Sillé fled.

On 19 September Gilles de Rais was summoned to appear in court. His servants and agents, including Prelati, were arrested and taken to Nantes. The remains of one body were discovered at Machecoul. The preliminary proceedings elicited little public outcry, but by the hearing on 8 October crowds of bereaved parents were clamouring for justice; popular opinion had been skilfully incensed.

The civil and ecclesiastical trials ran concurrently. After torture the Baron's associates, including the two women procurers, gave evidence against him and in minute detail Prelati described the attempts at necromancy. De Rais' two personal attendants, known as Henriet and Poitou, gave evidence before both courts. On 21 October de Rais was tortured until he promised to confess 'voluntarily and freely' before Pierre de l'Hôpital and the bishops. He admitted all the charges. Prelati was called; each confirmed the other's statements and the two men parted with tearful affection. On 22 October the proud Baron asked leave to confess publicly, adding further detail, piling horror upon horror, as if he believed this act of abject humiliation would help him obtain God's pardon. Then he begged forgiveness of the bereaved parents and commanded all those present to love and honour God and the Church. The Bishop embraced him and prayed he might be purged and redeemed.

On 25 October de Rais was brought for sentence before the ecclesiastical court. No sentence was passed but he was excommunicated for heresy, which grieved him deeply. The civil court condemned Henriet and Poitou to be hanged and burned. In return for not recanting his confession Gilles de Rais was granted the unusual mercy of complete strangulation before burning. In Nantes on 26 October, after prayer and penitence, the Marshal and his two servants went to their execution followed by a procession of clergy and populace singing and praying for Gilles de Rais' salvation.

Undoubtedly Gilles de Rais must have been guilty of some of the crimes. However, the many irregularities surrounding his trial suggest at best a mystery, at worst a conspiracy. Much of the evidence was hearsay. Only two accomplices were executed; other associates, whose testimonies against de Rais contained damning confessions of their own terrible guilt, were freed. Despite his acts of necromancy, which was regarded as a grave offence, even Prelati went unpunished.

SANDY SHULMAN

Girlingites

Or Bible Christians, Children of God or English Shakers; a 19th century ecstatic sect, followers of Mary Anne Girling, who styled herself 'Bride of Christ'; they believed that if they remained celibate they would never die; at their meetings they danced and jumped up and down, and as a result were commonly known as Walworth Jumpers.

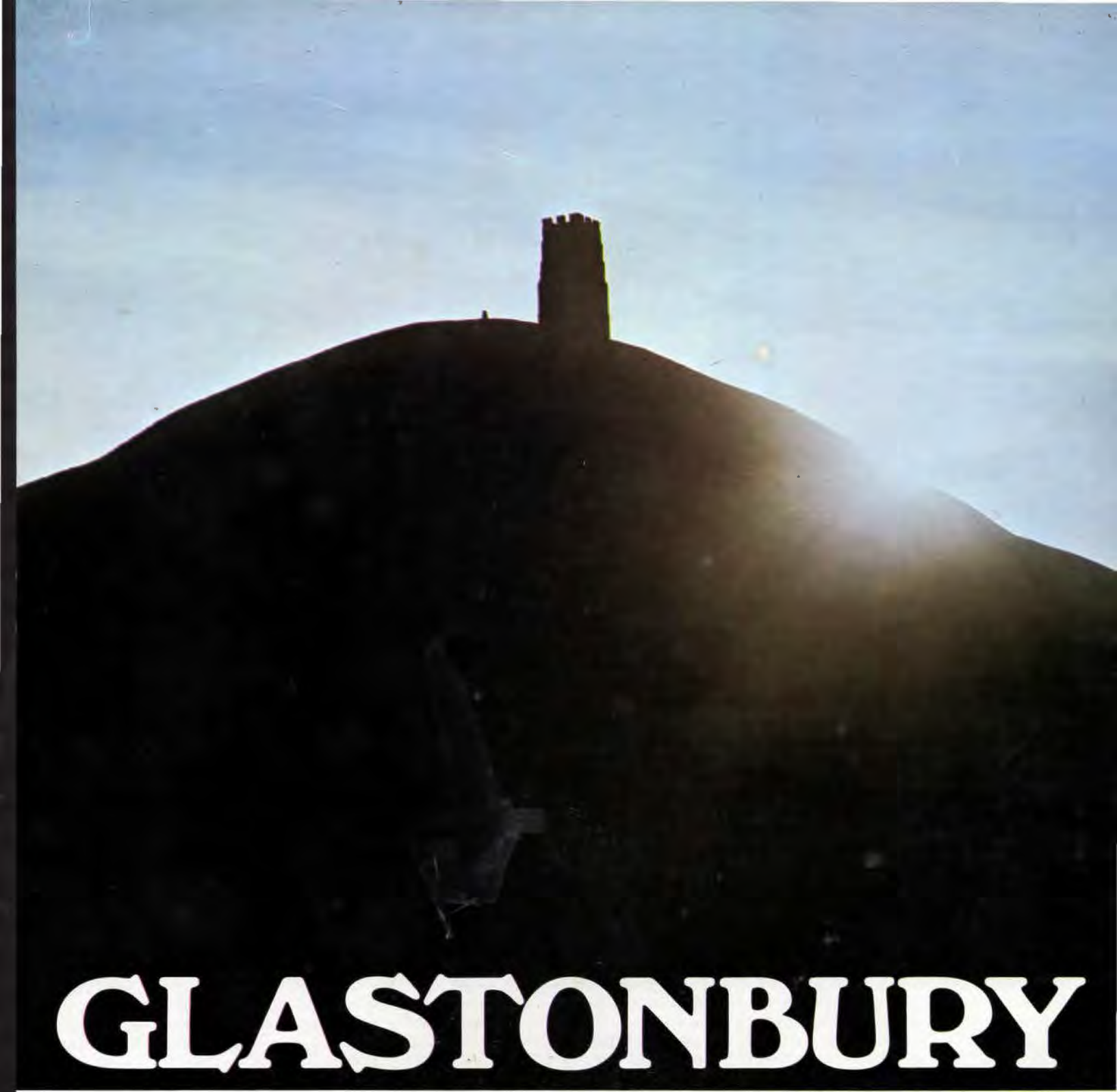
See WALWORTH JUMPERS.

John Montgomery

Glass Mountain

In European legends and folktales, a mountaiu of glass inhabited by supernatural beings at the end of the world, on the borders of the otherworld; probably originally the home of the dead, and possibly thought to be made of amber.

Petersburg Press



GLASTONBURY

Nicholas Barrington

An island with a hill on it was well qualified to possess a sacred aura for the Celts. A Welsh legend preserves the belief that Glastonbury Tor was an entrance to the otherworld, and the chapel on top of the hill was dedicated to St Michael, the vanquisher of evil powers

Built on the site of the ancient Isle of Avalon, Glastonbury is reputed to be not only the first Christian foundation in Britain but the last resting place of King Arthur

THE SMALL TOWN of Glastonbury in Somerset, famed for its ruined Abbey, is dominated by the Tor, a hill rising about 500 feet above sea level and commanding a wide expanse of low-lying country. The abbey is the centre of a vast complex of legends as it is traditionally the oldest Christian foundation in Britain, and in some sense a repository of pre-Christian mysteries.

At the start of the Christian era, Glastonbury was virtually an island encircled by lagoons and rivers. To the British Celts it was a place of great religious awe, the enchanted Isle of Avalon, consecrated to the shades of the dead. An alternative name for it was Ynys-witrin, the Isle of Glass and 'Glastonbury' is a corrupt Anglo-Saxon rendering of this.

The legend recounts how in the 1st century AD Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who buried Christ, brought the Holy Grail to Avalon. In obedience to a vision, he and his companions built a wattle chapel, the 'Old Church'; this was still standing in the early Middle Ages, dedicated to the Virgin and deeply venerated.

By the 5th century, Christian hermits were living on the spot and worshipping in the Old Church and St Patrick reorganized the little community and gave it a monastic rule. King Arthur, after receiving mortal wounds in his famous last battle, was reputedly buried in the Abbey graveyard.

When the Saxon conquerors took Glastonbury they were no longer heathens themselves: hence, this is the one place in Britain with Christian continuity stretching backward without a break to King Arthur, to the Romans, in fact to the apostolic age. It is a national shrine, with a spiritual character which has always set Britain apart from the rest of Christendom.

Philip Rahtz

Aerial view of Glastonbury, in legend and perhaps in reality the site of the oldest Christian foundation in Britain. To the Celts it was the enchanted Isle of Avalon, the home of the dead. It has been suggested that the corrugations round the Tor may be the remains of a ritual maze

Lake Isle of Avalon

The etymology of the place-names – 'Glastonbury' itself, 'Ynys-witrin,' and 'Avalon' – is confused. The 'glass' motif recalls the magical and otherworldly connotations of glass in Celtic myth, bot it is very probably a mistake. Ynys-witrin could mean 'island of glass,' but both this name and Glastonbury can be derived from Celtic words meaning 'woad'. A Celtic legendary figure named Glast has also been cited. It is sometimes claimed that Ynys-witrin is not the old British name at all, but a false translation of the Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury. Against this view there is the evidence of a charter – though a poorly authenticated one – that the area was already called Ynys-witrin in 601 AD, before the Saxon conquest of central Somerset and thus before the name Glastonbury came into use. The most that can be said safely is that both names go back to Celtic roots, although 'bury' is Anglo-Saxon.

As for Avalon, this is usually construed as the 'place of apples' like the Garden of Hesperides; the Irish Celts had a mythical Isle of the Blest which was so called. It suggests a hazy idea of pre-Christian Glastonbury as a pagan holy place in the midst of water and indeed most of the region used to be subject to flooding, with permanent lagoons. Massive drainage was carried out by the Abbey during the Middle Ages, but 17th century maps still show a fair-sized lake called Meare Pool. Somerset itself got its name, the 'Summer Land,' because it was a seasonal area. The dwellers on neighbouring high ground formerly drove their animals down to pasture when the summer sun made the meadows drier and more accessible. Geology indicates that before the drainage, and especially in the late Roman and Dark Age periods, Glastonbury Tor with its satellite hills must often have been nearly cut off.

In the light of Celtic mythical concepts, we can say that an island with a hill on it was well qualified to possess a special, sacred aura. The evidence that this one actually did is sketchy and conjectural. As no lake-village burials have ever been found, some archeologists have suggested that the burial site was on the island. The earthwork of Ponter's Ball, to the east, may be the boundary of a Celtic sanctuary containing Glastonbury Tor. A legend of the Welsh saint, Collen, preserves undatable folklore ideas about the Tor as an entrance to Annwn, the underworld, and as a home of Gwyn-ap-Nudd, lord of the fairy folk and leader of the Wild Hunt, in which the spirits of the dead were snatched away through the clouds. A chapel which the monks built on top of the Tor was dedicated to St Michael, vanquisher of the powers of evil.

Traces of inhabitants on the Abbey site in Roman times have been found but no indication of their religion. Recent excavations on the Tor revealed human settlement there also, notably around 500 AD, the Arthurian period. As for the monastery, it was certainly founded by British Christians, on the present site, before the Saxon conquest. Archeologically a date early in the 6th century appears likely. However, a study of the various 'Lives' of British saints of the Dark Ages discloses the interesting fact that while several of them – David, for instance – are said to have visited Glastonbury, there is no saint whose biography credits him with its actual foundation. The community is simply there, in some form, its origins unexplained and farther back still. Hence it remains arguable that the Old Church and a small group of hermits may have been present before the 6th century.

The West Saxons overran central Somerset in 658. Their Christian king, Cenwalh, maintained Glastonbury without a break. It became the first major institution in which Celt and Teuton co-existed and co-operated – the birthplace, in a sense, of the United Kingdom, and a point of convergence for different traditions, which were thus readily available in the medieval revival of Celtic legend. During the 10th century St Dunstan was abbot and under his enlightened and capable rule Glastonbury became the fountain head of the recovery of learning after the Danish wars. Its monks laid the foundations of medieval civilization in England,

'No other hands than those of the disciples of Christ erected the Church of Glastonbury'

and several of them later became archbishops of Canterbury. After a rich and magnificent career throughout the Middle Ages, the Abbey was one of the last to be dissolved, succumbing only in 1539; the Abbot, Richard Whiting, was then convicted of treason and hanged.

'Not Built by Art of Man'

Most of the legends of Glastonbury's Christian past seem to have grown round the Old Church. The British monks were unable to tell the Saxons any clear story of its foundation, which was already lost in antiquity. As a result, around the year 1000, the biographer of St Dunstan assures his readers that the Old Church was 'not built by art of man, but prepared by God himself.' This passage, coupled with one or two cryptic phrases elsewhere, may have inspired the notion that Christ himself came to Britain as a boy and lived at Glastonbury.

The first specific stories are in the work of William of Malmesbury, who carried out researches at Glastonbury Abbey between 1125 and 1130. By the standards of his time he was a good historian, unwilling to record what he judged to be mere legend. His book *On the Antiquity of the Church at Glastonbury* survives only in a later edition, heavily interpolated by a different hand, but much of his own text can be recovered from passages which he copied into another book. He says: 'There are documents of no small credit, which have been discovered in certain places to the following effect: "No other hands than those of the disciples of Christ erected the church of Glastonbury."'

Whatever William's informants told him about this 1st century advent, he names no names, and passes on rather hurriedly to a supposed restoration of the Old Church by two papal envoys toward the year 170. The interpolated edition, however, expands his brief remarks into an account of 12 missionaries coming to Britain in 63 led by Joseph of Arimathea. It stated that the British king, though unmoved by their preaching, granted them land on Ynyswitrin, where they settled as hermits and built the church.

This enlarged text of William's book was compiled at the Abbey about 1240. Hence the Joseph legend was established at Glastonbury by then – although the monks distrusted and omitted the Grail part of it. The problem of its origin turns on the question of what happened between William and his interpolator. Did this Arimathean story come in as literary fiction, or as monastic fraud, or as a genuine rediscovery of ancient tradition?

Some of the Grail romances narrow the search. Thus *Perlesvaus*, written about 1225, cites a Glastonbury Abbey source. Robert de Borron's unfinished *Joseph*, assigned to the 1190s, takes us a little farther back again. Here Joseph of Arimathea never reaches Britain himself, but his followers are commanded to take the Grail there, and seek out the 'Vales of Avalon'. That phrase, at that date, undoubtedly points to Somerset.

The Joseph legend was therefore current in some form toward the close of the 12th century. While there are good reasons for thinking that Robert de Borron took it from an earlier source, no one has traced it back any farther. The tale of Joseph's westward mission is connected somehow with the legend of the voyaging Maries, Mary, sister of the Virgin, Mary the mother of James and John and Mary Magdalene, who are said to have come to Provence, with the Arimathean saint in their company. An Anglo-Saxon Glastonbury missal shows that the Maries were venerated at the Abbey before the Norman Conquest. Unfortunately it does not name Joseph with them.

We are left, then, with suspicions that Joseph's mission was invented after William of Malmesbury. Too much has been made of William's failure to mention Joseph. He may have heard the story, but dismissed it, as he did dismiss various tales of Arthur which he heard but believed to be worthless fables. Or there may have been a Welsh legend of Joseph which was first publicized in England – as many others were – in the Arthurian vogue a few decades later, but was far earlier in its origins. The claim that the official version was a pure fabrication of 12th century romancers or monks raises the query: Why pick on Joseph of Arimathea? He was neither a likely apostle nor a particularly honourable one. There were ready-made legends that brought much more glorious Christians to Britain – St Paul, for instance. Yet neither monks nor romancers made use of them.

If we set aside the simple but overwishful theory that Joseph actually did come, we confront a number of proposed datings for the legend of Glastonbury's Christian beginnings, a number of guesses at the reason why Joseph was chosen as the hero. As the second point, most of the guesses postulate a misunderstanding (wilful or otherwise) of phrases in earlier texts, or of some inscription or ruin now vanished. Scholarly opinion favours an invention by Grail romancers, afterwards annexed by the Abbey. *Perlesvaus*, however, implies at least some degree of borrowing in the reverse direction and so perhaps does another romance, the *Grand Saint Graal*.

Whatever errors or falsehoods may have occurred, there is now a tendency to take the legend more seriously, not as literal truth but as an attempt to rationalize a cloudy historical tradition. Thus the late Professor Treharne, while totally ruling out Joseph himself, concluded that the legend might still reflect a fact – namely, that 'coming from the southwest, and along the south coast of the Bristol Channel, it was under Glastonbury Tor that Christianity found its first secure shelter and abiding-place in our remote land.'

The other stories of major Christian figures at Glastonbury are easier to explain and less interesting. Their growth was prompted by the monks' wish to increase the Abbey's prestige and attract pilgrims. Some of the Dark Age saints who are alleged to have come there – not only Patrick and David, but Bridget and others – may actually have come. What the monks manifestly did was to exaggerate their role.

Patrick was the most prominent, and the saint who received the most attention from document-fakers. It was claimed that after his long Irish ministry he returned to his native Britain, organized the hermits at Glastonbury into a more formal community, died among them and was buried. Before the 9th century his tomb being shown on the right of the altar in the Old Church, and a stream of Irish pilgrims prayed there. The fact that they accepted the tomb as genuine, despite the natural wish to have Patrick in their own country, suggests that its credentials were strong. The hypothesis of 'another man of the same name' is a dangerously easy way out, but in this case there is some early evidence to support it.

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Left King Arthur, from an early 14th century manuscript. In legend Arthur was taken to Avalon after being wounded in his last battle, and in 1190 the monks of Glastonbury announced the discovery of his grave
Facing page above Part of the Abbey ruins. Legends say that Joseph of Arimathea or his descendants, the keepers of the Grail, brought Christianity to Glastonbury. Archeological evidence suggests that there was a monastery there from at least the early 6th century
Below left The Holy Thorn, which blooms near Christmas time, may have been brought to the Abbey by a medieval pilgrim *Below right* The surrounding area is rich in Arthurian tradition: this stone near Slaughterbridge is known as 'King Arthur's stone', though the inscription does not name him

Legends of Arthur

The first known story that connects Arthur with Glastonbury is told by Caradoc of Llancarfan. About 1150 Caradoc wrote a Life of the 6th century British monk and historian Gildas. In this he says that Gildas lived for a time with the Glastonbury community. Meanwhile Arthur (portrayed by Caradoc as a somewhat dubious upstart) was trying to extend his power over Britain. Somerset was independent under its king Melwas, who had a stronghold close to the monastery. He carried off Arthur's wife 'Guennuvar' and kept her there. Arthur arrived with troops from Devon and Cornwall, but the marshes hindered his advance. Gildas and the Abbot mediated and, meeting under the sacred roof of the Old Church, the kings agreed on a pact and the lady was restored.

In the Round Table romances the story reappears, but the geography beeomes vaguer and the characters change. Melwas turns into 'Meleagant' and Lancelot takes Arthur's place as the rescuer. The abduction of the Queen looks like a Celtic fairy tale motif. However, the recent discovery of what may be interpreted as a Dark Age citadel on the Tor suggests that Melwas may have been a real local king, in which case a war and treaty involving Arthur become more plausible.

The better-known story of Arthur's grave is confused by the doubts over the name Avalon and its application to Glastonbury. The island of Avalon, the otherworldly apple orchard, may have been originally the island of Avallach, an unlocalized hero of Celtic legend. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, composed between 1135 and 1140, says that Arthur's sword was forged in the Isle of Avalon, and that he was taken there after his last battle for his wounds to be healed. However, Geoffrey's Avalon is no definite place, and in a later work he makes it a sort of Isle of the Blest in the Atlantic. Here again it is Arthur's last earthly destination.

Glastonbury may have been a pagan centre and a supposed gateway to Annwn, the realm of shades and fairy folk – which indeed is sometimes equated with Avalon in Welsh folklore. Its pagan aura may even account for the monastery, if the founders' motive was exorcism and purification. But all this is conjecture. If Arthur was buried there, the reason was simply that the monks' graveyard, with its relics of saints, was an honourable burial place. His alleged exhumation in 1190 pinned down the name Avalon on the map without proving much about it.

Several medieval authors describe the event and the account by Giraldus Cambrensis is valuable because he was a sceptic about King Arthur when most people were credulous. Ostensibly, the secret of Arthur's burial was betrayed to Henry II by a Welsh bard. The grave was between two 'pyramids' or memorial pillars in the cemetery of Glastonbury Abbey. King Henry had strong motives for discovering the remains on an 'English site: it would reinforce his own title to the Arthurian succession and also, by proving that Arthur was dead, it would undermine the Celtic hope of his Messianic return, a hope which was a political irritant in several parts of the Plantagenet domains. Henry indicated the direction of his thoughts to the abbot. For some years no action was taken. In 1184 most of the Abbey, including the Old Church, was burnt down, and in the course of rebuilding the monks who were digging at the site struck a stone slab and a lead cross, inscribed HIC IACET SEPULTUS INCLITUS REX ARTURIUS IN INSULA AVALONIA (here lies buried the renowned King Arthur in the Isle of Avalon) together with a coffin made out of a hollowed-out oak log containing the bones of a tall man with a damaged skull, and – according to some versions – some smaller bones, taken to be those of Guinevere.

These relics were placed in a casket and suitably enshrined. Edward I re-interred the casket before the high altar, but the contents were dispersed at the Abbey's dissolution.

The 12th century monks, like Henry himself, had powerful inducements to find what they were looking for, since Arthur's fame could help them in raising funds to rebuild their Abbey. Yet the theory of a total fraud is unsatisfactory. Despite the blow to Welsh hopes and pride, no Welshman seems to have challenged the find, or produced a rival Avalon. It is thus likely that the bardic tradition about the Glastonbury grave was at least an old and respected one, too firmly rooted to dismiss, once the secret was out.

The area was re-excavated by C. A. Ralegh Radford in 1962 and '63. He ascertained that the monks had indeed dug where they said. There were traces, not only of their spade-work and filling-in, but of the two memorial pillars, and the stone lining of an important grave at a great depth. By considering the stratification of the cemetery, the nature of Dark Age gravemarkers, and the style of lettering in old drawings of the leaden cross, which was preserved until the 18th century, Radford was able to reconstruct the history of the grave in a way which amounted to a case for its genuineness, though not conclusively.

Archeological findings at Cadbury Castle (see CAMELOT) have increased the likelihood of a link of some sort between Arthur and Glastonbury. The two places are ouly a dozen miles apart, and in sight of each other. But there are no certainties.

The Flowering Thorn

In the words of the Victorian historian E. A. Freeman, 'We need not believe that the Glastonbury legends are records of facts; but the existence of those legends is a very great fact.' The proofs of imaginative falsification, monastic and post-monastic, are beyond dispute, yet they are powerless to destroy the spell. This is partly due to Glastonbury's real age, genuine importance, and visual fascination, but partly to subtler causes arising from the nature of myth in general, and the peculiar concentration of themes which has occurred here.

The spell has gone on adding to the

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Seal of the Abbey, 14th century, showing the Holy Thorn. The story that it grew from Joseph of Arimathea's staff, planted in the ground, has not been traced back before 1716

mythology. Thus, the famous Holy Thorn is a fairly late comer. On the eve of the Abbey's dissolution we find a few allusions to a thorn tree on Wearyall Hill which bloomed at Christmas. It was cut down by Puritans, but some of its descendants are still flourishing in the neighbourhood, and elsewhere. The tale that Joseph of Arimathea planted the staff in the ground, and that it came to life and grew, appears first in 1716. Owing to the change-over to the Gregorian calendar in 1752, the Thorn now blossoms in January. It does in fact resemble Syrian types of thorn; the parent plant might have been brought over by some medieval pilgrim.

Another focus of religious and antiquarian speculation is Chalice Well, in the valley between the Tor and the smaller hill beside it. This has been connected with Joseph and the Grail, and it plays a major part in John Cowper Powys's novel *A Glastonbury Romance*. However, there is no sign that any special notice was taken of it before the 18th century. Today it is preserved in a garden by the Chalice Well Trust, a society which has sponsored much of the archeological work of the 1960s.

Finally, mention must be made of two theories promoted in recent years. One of these asserts that Glastonbury is the centre of a huge zodiac. Ancient astrological symbols are said to be marked out over the surrounding district, and to be discernible from the air. The second theory is that a number of horizontal corrugations which run round the Tor are the remains of an early ritual maze. Both these ideas relate to the pagan past, to the presumed Avalonian aspect and insofar as any archeologists are disposed to accept either, they tend to prefer the maze theory.

(See also ARTHUR; GRAIL.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

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Glossolalia

Technical term (from the Greek words for 'tongue' and 'talking') for speaking in tongues, the ability to speak in unknown and mysterious languages in a state of intense religious excitement: the speaker is believed to be the vehicle of, or in touch with, a supernatural power: Acts, chapter 2, describes the experience of the apostles when 'filled with the Holy Spirit': there has been a recent revival of glossolalia among some Protestant groups.

See SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

Gnomes

Name invented by Paracelsus for the elementals of the earth, dwarfish spirits which live underground and guard buried treasures: Paracelsus said that they move through the earth as easily as we move through the air.

See ELEMENTS; FAIRIES.

Now regarded as a religion in its own right, rather than as eccentric Greek philosophy or Christian heresy, Gnosticism was the religion of those who were convinced of the presence of a divine ingredient within themselves, the 'divine self'; this realization was the essential gnosis, the knowledge which brought salvation

GNOSTICISM

SOME EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS, including Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius, tell us that there existed in their time certain sectarians or heretics who called themselves Gnostics ('those who know') because they claimed to possess *gnosis*, 'knowledge'. In modern times the label has been applied to a whole set of Christian heretics, from the early centuries AD onwards, who had some characteristics in common and of whom Valentinus in the 2nd century was the most important.

The fragments of Gnostic teachings transmitted to us by their early Christian opponents have been thoroughly studied, especially by German scholars. The gnosis that the Gnostics claimed was not scientific or philosophical knowledge, acquired by the use of reason, but knowledge acquired through a revelation given by the grace of God, a 'knowledge of the heart' as one Gnostic writing (the Gospel of Truth) calls it. It consisted of intuitive knowledge and esoteric lore, which was believed to carry with it the salvation of its possessor.

An Absurd Universe

It has also been established that Gnosticism was not specifically Christian. It has its counterparts in pagan Hellenism (in the collection of Greek-Egyptian occult writings called the *Corpus Hermeticum* – see HERMETICA) and even in Judaism. Professor Gershom Scholem has discovered a Jewish form of esoteric and ecstatic mysticism which he calls 'Jewish Gnosticism', though it lacks one of the beliefs generally characteristic of Gnostics: the distinction between the unknown supreme God and the demiurge, the lower spiritual power that created the world.

These findings led some scholars to consider Gnosticism as a religion of its own with its own characteristic features, by contrast with earlier views of it as a system of Greek religious philosophy, or as a Christian heresy, or as the descendant of Babylonian, Persian and Indian concepts. According to Hans Jonas (*Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*, 1933) Gnosticism was neither Greek and philosophical nor a survival of oriental ideas but a new and revolutionary movement, rebelling against the structures of this world, which the Greeks venerated as a harmony and the Jews believed to have been created by God. Gnosis was an awareness of being a stranger in the world, of having been thrown into an absurd universe. The systems of the Gnostics should be read as an expression of such basic experiences as fear, anxiety, disgust and despair.

This picture is correct but one-sided. In my *Gnosis als Weltreligion* (1951) I suggested that Gnosticism expressed a specific religious experience, which was frequently turned into a myth. An example is the story that when Mani, the founder of the Manichean religion, was 12 years old God sent an angel to him, to inspire him. When he was 24, the angel came to him again and said, 'The time has now come to make your public appearance and to proclaim your own doctrine.' The name of the angel means 'twin' and he is the twin-brother or 'divine self' of Mani.

This Manichean myth expresses the encounter between the I, the ego, and the divine self. In the system of Valentinus we find the similar concept of the guardian angel, who accompanies a man throughout his life, who reveals the gnosis to him, forms a couple with him and is not allowed to enter eternal bliss without him. This encounter of the I and the Self, their distinction and yet their fundamental unity, was certainly a tenet of Valentinian Gnosticism and seems to reflect a personal experience. The Gospel of Truth, for instance, possibly written by Valentinus himself and certainly originating from his school, offers no explicit system but impressively describes the Gnostic's experiences, the nightmare of his life in this world, and his discovery of the self when he hears the call from above.

It seems clear that at least some of the major Gnostic systems were inspired by vivid emotions and personal experiences. And it is now generally accepted that Gnosticism was not a philosophy, or even a Christian heresy, but a religion with its own specific views about God, the world and man. God is the suffering God, the world is an error, man is a stranger whose inward self is of the same substance as God.

God and Demiurge

The discovery in the 1940s of Gnostic texts written in Coptic, at Nag Hammadi in Egypt has greatly enlarged our knowledge of Gnostic beliefs. These manuscripts also threw new light on the origins of Gnosticism. They show that Gnosticism had its roots, or some of its roots, in Judaism.

This new solution of an old problem was stubbornly opposed as long as Judaism was identified with the Pharisees and was regarded as a monolithic, monotheistic religion. After all, the early Gnostics rejected the Jewish god who created the world, relegating him to the position of demiurge, and rejecting the Old Testament. But at the beginning of our era Judaism embraced various different groups.

There were the adherents of Wisdom, of which the book of Proverbs speaks. According to their literature, Wisdom was a companion of God. She created the world, became the paramour of the wise man and, according to certain versions, left the earth and returned to her heavenly abode. It is in this perspective that we must see the doctrine of Simon Magus of Samaria, according to which the Idea of God, called Wisdom or Helen, springing forth from God and knowing his will, descended to the lower regions and brought forth the angels and powers (the rulers of the heavens) by whom this world was made. This is a gnostic development of the Samaritan and Jewish concepts that Wisdom was instrumental in creating the world.

There were also the Essenes (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS), who taught a dualism of light and darkness, and stressed the importance of knowledge of God. Much remains uncertain here, because the relationships between the Essenes, John the Baptist and Gnosticism are obscure.

The Fathers of the Church considered the Samaritans Dositheus, Simon Magus and Menander to be the first Gnostics. The books of the Samaritans, who were heterodox Jews, reveal a mythological imagery which could easily lead to Gnosticism, and it is

probable that Gnosticism did begin in Samaria, that is, on Palestinian soil.

It would be unwise to be too specific, however. In many cases we can find in Gnosticism certain elements derived from Judaism without being able to identify the exact channels through which these concepts were transmitted.

But how could the Gnostics, who distinguished between the high unknown God and an inferior creator, the Jewish god or demiurge, to whom they were violently hostile, be Jews or in sympathy with Jews? Some find here traces of antisemitism, which was by no means absent in Antioch and Alexandria, centres of early Gnosticism. Others point out that the Gnostics usually regarded the demiurge as an angel, and that there was a sect among the Jews who held a similar opinion. This was the pre-Christian sect of Magharians, who distinguished between God and an angel who is the creator of the world and is responsible for all the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Old Testament.

So it would seem that the Gnostic concept of the world-creator as an inferior angel was derived from Jewish sources, though from rebellious and heterodox ones. This is important for Gnostic origins in general. Some scholars distinguish between absolute dualism and relative dualism. The first is called 'Iranian', implying that it must be of Iranian origin, because Iranian religion is an absolute dualism of light and darkness, good and evil (see AHRIMAN). But the concept of the demiurge as an angel reflects a relative dualism, which seems to be the original concept. Absolute dualism is Gnosticism in a secondary and later development.

The Divine Spark

The Gnosticism of the 2nd century sects involved a coherent series of characteristics that can be summarized in the idea of a divine spark in man, deriving from the divine realm, fallen into this world of fate, birth and death, and needing to be awakened by the divine counterpart of the self in order to be finally reintegrated. This idea is based on the concept of a downward movement of the divine whose periphery (often called Sophia or Ennoia) had to submit to the fate of entering into a crisis and producing – even if only indirectly – this world, upon which it cannot turn its back, since it is necessary for it to recover the *pneuma* (literally 'breath', the fallen divine element).

Valentinus expressed these ideas in a myth which is not transmitted by any author of antiquity but which can be reconstructed. His followers split into an Occidental school led by Ptolomaeus and Heracleon who introduced some innovations and alterations, and an Oriental school which remained more faithful to its master. So the myth of Valentinus can be hypothetically reconstructed in the following way (and it may be added that the recently discovered Valentinian treatises of the Jung Codex have confirmed this hypothesis).

In invisible and ineffable heights Depth was pre-existent. With him was Silence. Together they generate the Pleroma (fullness of the spiritual world), consisting of 30 aeons (patterns of thought or archetypes). The very youngest of these, Wisdom (Sophia), led astray by pretended love, which was actually *hubris* (overweening pride), desired to understand the unfathomable depth of God and is expelled from the Pleroma. (The underlying idea is that philosophical reason cannot penetrate the mysteries of God and is the origin of the fall.)

In the empty space devoid of knowledge which she had created by her trespass, Sophia brought forth Jesus in remembrance of the higher world, but with a kind of shadow. And he purged the shadow of deficiency from himself and returned to the spiritual universe above. Left outside, alone, Sophia was subject to every sort of passion, sorrow, fear, despair, ignorance. (From these passions the elements of the world together with the world-soul and the demiurge were to be derived.)

At her request, Jesus asked the aeons to help Sophia. After the Holy Spirit had revealed the gnosis of God to them, the aeons together formed the Saviour, Christ, who is the perfect expression of the spiritual world. He was sent with his angels to Sophia, the world-spirit in exile, and delivered her from her passions, which became the world.

There are three layers of reality in this universe: the sublunar, material world, dominated by the Devil; the celestial, psychic world, dominated by the demiurge or Yahweh, who tends to be hostile; and the world above the planets, where Sophia and the spiritual beings are. Correspondingly, in man there is a material part, the body; a soul, the seat of ethical awareness and the power of reason; and a spirit, which dreams unconsciously in man and is the divine spark, of the same substance as Sophia and even God.

Not all men are spiritual. Some are materialistic, the pagans. Others, called 'psychics', have a soul and believe in the demiurge but have no awareness of the spiritual world above: these are the Jews and the ordinary Christian churchgoers. So history is a progress from materialism and paganism, by way of religion and ethics,

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Left and facing page **Gnosticism was a religion but some of its ideas lent themselves readily to magic. The gnostic conviction that the world was made and is ruled by evil powers stimulated the use of amulets to ward off harm. Examples of the so-called 'Gnostic gems'**

The True Self

The very word *gnosis* shows that the Gnostic *knows*. He does not know because he has gradually learned; he knows because revelation has been given him. He does not believe, for faith is inferior to gnosis. And his gnosis, 'the knowledge of the ineffable greatness', is itself perfect redemption. Two famous definitions come from the Valentinians. The first explains that 'gnosis is redemption of the inner spiritual man', not of the body or the soul. The second tells what the questions are to which gnosis provides answers. Gnostics know 'who we were and what we have become; where we were or where we had been made to fall; whither we are hastening, whence we are being redeemed; what birth is and what rebirth is' . . . Gnostics know that they were originally spiritual beings who have come to live in souls and bodies; they once dwelt in the spiritual world above but have been made to fall into this world of sense and sin. Now, thanks to their self-knowledge, they are hastening back above, having been redeemed from this world below . . . The Gnostic is a Gnostic because he knows, by revelation, who his true self is. Other religions are in varying measure God-centred. The Gnostic is self-centred. He is concerned with mythological details about the origin of the universe and of mankind, but only because they express and illuminate his understanding of himself.

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to spiritual freedom and gnosis. All this is a necessary process. The world-spirit in exile must go through the Inferno of matter and the Purgatory of morals to arrive at the spiritual Paradise. The spirit in man is united with the soul so that it may be formed and educated in practical life, for it needs psychic and sense training.

Gnosticism and Christianity

In this system it is Christ who brings the decisive revelation of gnosis. He assumed or 'put on' Jesus at baptism, and thereby the whole of spiritual mankind, and saved it through the Resurrection. Since Christ, man can become aware of his spiritual self and can return to his origin above. When every spiritual being has received gnosis and has become aware of his divine being, the final consummation of the world-process will take place. Christ and Sophia, who have been waiting for the spiritual man at the entrance of the Pleroma, enter the bridal chamber to achieve their union. They are followed by the Gnostics and their guardian angels as higher Selves, who are bride and bridegroom also. In the Pleroma they perform 'the spiritual and eternal mystery of sacred marriage', which is the complete union of the I and the Self.

This doctrine of Valentinus should be compared with the Apocryphon of John, of which three copies were found at Nag Hammadi. In antiquity Irenaeus said that the doctrine of Valentinus was based on an earlier and more primitive system. This could be a system like that of the Apocryphon of John. There too we find an impressive description of the unknown God and his female counterpart, who together bring forth a spiritual world of aeons. The last of these, Sophia, falls through lust, brings forth a hostile demiurge and brings about the world-process, in which the spirit fights against evil and is delivered through gnosis. But in this system Christ has no part as Saviour. It would seem that this system (dating from c 100 AD) is non-Christian in origin.

The Christian influence on Valentinus now becomes clear. According to him, it is Christ who brings gnosis, or 'self-consciousness', to mankind. The philosophy of history which saw the delivery through Christ as the surpassing of paganism and Judaism, and as the central event in the evolution of the universe, appears as a new idea. Valentinus has hellenized and Christianized an existing gnostic myth which was essentially non-Christian.

His followers of the Occidental school went further. Valentinus taught that God was two, Depth and Silence: an adherent of the Occidental school, quoted by Irenaeus, declared that God is one. Valentinus described the demiurge as generally hostile: according to the Occidental school, the demiurge, though ignorant, was friendly and helpful. Valentinus thought that Christ had only a spiritual body. Ptolemaeus said that Christ also had a soul and a psychic body. This implied that not only the spiritual men but also the psychic men, if they behaved well, could be saved and would live eternally in the spiritual world at the entrance of the Pleroma.

These clumsy innovations, which made the Valentinian position so confused and bewildering, reveal the desire to compromise with the Church, which taught that God was one, that Christ was a real man, that the simple true believer would inherit eternal life. But these concessions could not disguise the fact that Gnosticism was a different religion from Christianity. Even if the demiurge is friendly, he is not the creator of heaven and earth who is the Father of Christ in Christianity. Even if Christ has a psychic body as well as a spiritual body, he is not a real man. Even if the ordinary churchgoer as well as the Gnostic could become spiritually immortal, this is far from the doctrine of the Church, which taught a bodily resurrection and a final ending of the material universe.

Free Fall

The Gnostic doctrine of the inferior demiurge, and their denial of the real body of Christ and of bodily resurrection, remained the principal targets of Christian authors like Irenaeus and Origen in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. But though Origen opposed Gnosticism, he accepted many Valentinian ideas and in a way continued the Christianizing process which Valentinus had begun and which had been carried further by Heracleon.

It seems probable that the Tractatus Tripartitus, one of the treatises of the Jung

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Codex, is due to Heracleon. In it we find several doctrines which come very near to the concepts of Origen. For example, the Tractatus Tripartitus stresses the freedom of the will, which is responsible for the fall of Sophia. Sophia fell through her free will. This is completely different from the original concept of Valentinus, in which the fall of Sophia is the outcome of a crisis in the Pleroma. This 'passion' first arose among the higher aeons and passed as if by contagion to Sophia, like an illness that starts in certain parts of the body and comes to an outbreak in others. The fall is the outcome of a necessary process within God, not the consequence of the free will of a spiritual being, as in the Tractatus Tripartitus.

According to Origen, the fall is due to the free decision of the spirits who lived in the spiritual world before our world was created. This emphasis on freedom is the main contention of his system, for he uses the belief in free will to attack the Gnostic view that only a few men, the spiritual men, will be saved. But the Tractatus Tripartitus shows that at least one Valentinian Gnostic had given a lead to Origen. In this perspective the theological system of Origen is the end of the process of the Christianization of Gnosticism.

It is more difficult to measure the influence of the Gnostics on the philosopher Plotinus (see PLOTINUS). He was a friend of Gnostics (Valentinians, as it transpires) and tolerated them for years in his school before he wrote a famous treatise against them. His system has much in common with Valentinus and Heracleon, and so Gnosticism served as a fertilizer of the two main streams of thought which were to dominate the future of the West, Christian theology and Neoplatonist philosophy.

Gnosticism did not disappear. Gnostic schools persisted in the Roman Empire for many centuries but they were no longer a deadly threat to the Christian Church and they do not have the historical importance of the schools of the 2nd century. Outside the Roman Empire, Gnosticism deeply influenced Mani and it was in the religion which he founded that Gnosticism became a world religion. Obscure eastern sects which were probably influenced by Gnosticism in turn influenced the medieval Bogomils and Cathars. The theosophical movement of this century has much in common with Gnosticism and rightly lists the Gnostics among its spiritual ancestors.

(See also BOGOMILS; CATHARS; DUALISM; MANICHEANS; SIMON MAGUS.)

G. QUISPEL

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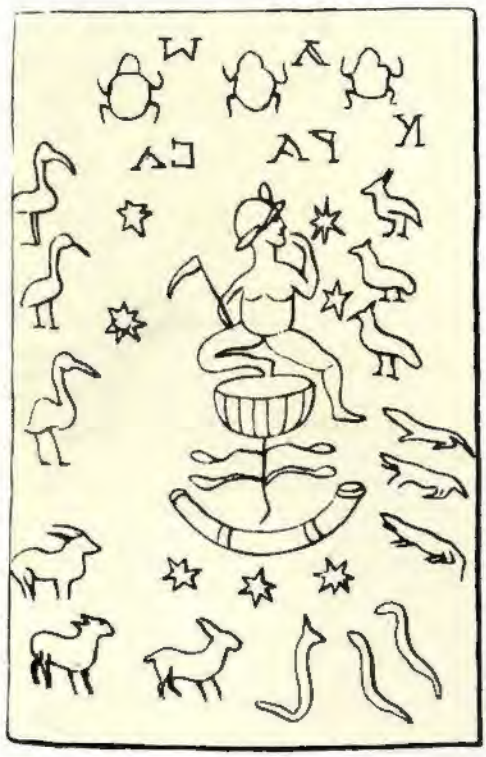


British Museum

Left **Drawing of a gem showing Venus at her mirror, probably intended to draw love towards the wearer as it is made of magnetic haematite *Centre* Magic symbols on what is probably a medieval gem *Right* The Egyptian god Horus as Abraxas, a supernatural power who ruled the year**

GOAT

THE GOAT is sometimes a symbol of agility and sometimes of an obstinate insistence on having one's own way (and so its Latin name is enshrined in the word 'caprice'). In popular traditional astrology those born under Capricorn are assigned the goatish characteristics of leaping over difficulties and butting away obstacles. But the goat is far better known for its proverbial lechery, its stench and its link with the Devil, all of which are connected in the reports of the witch trials in Europe.

Among the earliest surviving accounts are those of Anne-Marie de Georgel and Catherine Delort, accused at Toulouse in 1335 of copulating with the Devil in the shape of a goat (see FRENCH WITCHCRAFT). An attack on the witches of Arras in 1460 says that the Devil appeared to them as a goat, a dog or a monkey, but never in human form. They made offerings to him and worshipped him. 'Then with candles in their hands they kiss the hind parts of the goat that is the Devil . . .'

That the Devil never appeared in human form was contradicted all over Europe but that he was frequently an animal, especially a goat, was confirmed in many confessions extorted from suspects (though not in England and Scotland, where there is no trace of the Devil as a goat). A character in Martin le Franc's *Champion des Dames*, of the mid-15th century, says that at 'the obscene synagogue' the witches gazed upon the Devil in the form of a cat or a he-goat.

Some of the descriptions suggest a man dressed up as an animal. At Poitiers in 1574 the Devil was 'a great black goat who talked like a man'. At Avignon he was a man until the time came for him to mount a rock to be worshipped, when he turned into a goat, described in the sentence pronounced in 1582 as filthy, stinking and black.

Witches were sometimes accused of

Right **Witches were widely reputed to worship the Devil in the form of a goat: *Scène de Sorcellerie* by Goya**

Giraudon

riding to their sabbaths on demonic goats. The Italian witch judge Paulus Grillandus said that in 1525 a suspect told him that she went to witch meetings riding on a he-goat which would be waiting for her at her door when she wanted to set off.

Pan and Satyrs

To judge from some of the confessions and the pictures which artists based on them, the Devil often looked not unlike the Greek god Pan, who had a human body with the horns, ears, loins, legs and hooves of a goat. He was an amorous god and his function was to make flocks fertile. At an annual festival in February in Rome, the Lupercalia, goats and a dog were sacrificed to Faunus, who was identified by classical writers as Pan. Two young men, naked except for girdles made of the skins of the sacrificed animals, ran round the boundary of the old city of Rome on the Palatine hill. They struck at anyone they met with strips of goatskin. They themselves were popularly called 'he-goats' and a woman struck by them was supposed to be delivered from barrenness.

The name of the festival suggests warding off wolves or propitiating a wolf god. It is thought that the ceremony was a rustic ritual mingling purification and fertility magic with the beating of the bounds.

Some writers have assumed a connection between the Devil of the witches and Pan or the satyrs, the lustful goatish creatures who revelled in the train of Dionysus. Dionysus himself, also a god of fertility in some of his aspects, was sometimes connected with the goat (though more often with the bull). At the village of Eleutherai outside Athens he was called Melanaigis, 'he of the black goatskin', and the 'goat-song' in his honour eventually developed into the Greek tragedy (see DRAMA).

A Goat for Azazel

It is unlikely that the witch religion was a survival of the worship of Pan, Dionysus or any particular pagan deity, but the figure of the lustful man-goat may have influenced the linking of the goat with the lord of witches, who were renowned for their transports of animal lechery.

Another possible source of the goat's link with the Devil can be found in both classical

The Devil Rides Out

and Jewish traditions, and is again connected with one of the features of witchcraft which most obsessed the persecutors – the orgy in which the worshippers copulated with their master and sometimes with his subordinate demons. There were plenty of classical myths in which human beings had intercourse with gods – who to Christians were devils – and the belief that the powers of darkness desired the love of women also occurred in Jewish lore, especially in the legend of the Watchers, the fallen angels who sinned through their lust for the daughters of men (see DEVIL).

The leader of the Watchers (according to 1 *Enoch*, a Jewish apocryphal book) was Azazel, who was associated with Mars, the planet of war, and who, after his descent to earth, taught men evil by showing them how to make weapons of bloodshed. This same Azazel was connected with the Jewish scapegoat ritual. Down to 70 AD, a goat was selected each year 'for Azazel'. It was formally loaded with the sins of the people and sent away into the wilderness 'to Azazel' (Leviticus, chapter 16). The ritual was not forgotten and in the 13th century Rabbi Moses ben Nahmen explained that:

> God has commanded us, however, to send a goat on Yom Kippur to the ruler whose realm is in the places of desolation. From the emanation of his power come destruction and ruin; he ascends to the stars of the sword, of blood, of wars, quarrels, wounds, blows, disintegration and destruction. He is associated with the planet Mars. His portion among the peoples is Esau, a people who live by the sword; and his portion among the animals is the goat. The demons are part of his realm and are called in the Bible *seirim* (he-goats); he and his people are named Seir.

The scapegoat ritual tended to connect the goat with evil and, through the link with Azazel, with the fallen angels and the Devil. This association was hammered home by St Matthew's gospel (chapter 25) in which Jesus likens the righteous to sheep and the wicked to goats, and says that the goats will be condemned to 'the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'.

The seirim or goat-demons assigned to Azazel by Rabbi Moses ben Nahmen are mentioned several times in the Old Testament. Azazel and the Watchers lusted for mortal women and it seems that the seirim may have done so too, for Leviticus 17.7 says, 'So they shall no more slay their sacrifices for satyrs *(seirim)*, after whom they play the harlot' (and, 'neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it' – 18.23). The translation 'satyrs' itself indicates the mingling in western Europe of classical and Jewish traditions about goatish beings which desire women.

The link between the scapegoat, Azazel, the Watchers or fallen angels, and the lecherous goat-demons may have influenced the medieval belief that witches adored the Devil by copulating with him in the form of a goat. The belief was probably strengthened by the passage in Exodus (chapter 22) which was so frequently cited as a justification for witch-hunting: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live', followed immediately by, 'Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death. He that sacrificeth unto any god save the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed' (Authorized Version).

The copulation of women with a divine goat is reported in antiquity from Egypt. In the 5th century BC, Herodotus (book 2) says that the people of Mendes in the Nile Delta venerate all goats, especially male ones. 'One of them is held in particular reverence, and when he dies the whole province goes into mourning . . . In this province not long ago a goat tupped a woman, in full view of everybody – a most surprising incident.'

Herodotus identified the divine he-goat as Pan. Much later, Plutarch (died c 120 AD) says that the most beautiful women were selected to lie with the divine goat of Mendes. Much later still, it turns up as Eliphas Levi's Goat of Mendes or Baphomet of Mendes (see BAPHOMET), which he believed to have been the Devil of the witches' sabbath.
(See also SABBATH; SCAPEGOAT.)

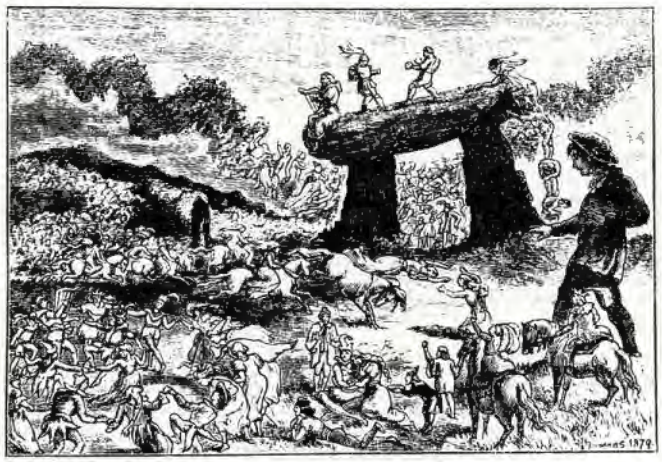
Devil with the head of a goat *(left)* from a recent film of Dennis Wheatley's novel *The Devil Rides Out*. Many of the witches' descriptions of the Devil suggest a man disguised as an animal: exhibit in the Witches' House Museum, Boscastle *(below left)*. A comparison is sometimes drawn between the goat-Devil of the witches and the lustful goatish creatures associated with the cult of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and revelry: terracotta statuette of Dionysus on a goat *(below right)*

Michael Bustelle

Michael Holford

Goblins

Or hobgoblins, mischievous, and sometimes dangerous fairies or imps: descriptions of their behaviour in a house, rapping on walls, breaking crockery, clattering pots and pans, whisking bedclothes off sleepers, frequently resemble accounts of poltergeist phenomena: a way of getting rid of one is to sprinkle flax seed on the floor.
See FAIRIES.



GODIVA

ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS GODGIFU, Godiva was the wife of Earl Leofric of Mercia, one of the four powerful earls who ruled England under King Canute in the 11th century; Godiva herself owned extensive lands in six Midland counties. The most valuable of these estates was Coventry, consisting of more than 60 farms, and both she and her husband were buried in the Abbey there which they founded to replace an earlier religious house destroyed by the Danes. Godiva was warmly praised by ecclesiastical writers for her piety, wisdom and generous gifts to the Church, and is remembered with affection as the founder and benefactor of Coventry. The date of her death has recently been established as 10 September 1067.

Her fame rests chiefly on the story of her ride, naked, through the town in order to persuade her husband to free Coventry from a burdensome tax. The earliest versions of this are in two Latin Chronicles by monks of St Albans Abbey, one of the late 12th century by Roger of Wendover and the other of the early 13th by Matthew Paris. These tell how Leofric, angered by his wife's continual entreaties on the people's behalf, declared he would only do as she wished if she rode naked from one side of the marketplace to the other when all the people were assembled there. On a certain day she carried out this condition, covered only by her long fair hair, and returned rejoicing to her husband, who regarded it as a miracle that she was seen by none. He granted a charter to free Coventry as he had promised.

There are two brief references to this Godiva story from the 15th century, one in a window in Holy Trinity church (now lost), and the other in a rhyme pinned to the church door by rebels protesting against excessive taxes in 1495. A local version of the story from the 16th century by Richard Grafton, a printer and Member of Parliament for Coventry, explains the apparent miracle by the fact that Godiva first called on the leading men of Coventry to keep all the people off the streets with doors and windows shut as she rode past, and that because of the love and gratitude they felt for her they did as she asked.

Godiva as Lady of Coventry would herself be responsible for taxes, but the Earl of Mercia had the duty of collecting the much hated *heregeld*, a tax which in Canute's time paid for the king's Danish bodyguard. It was repealed in 1051, and before this the Earls could occasionally grant remission of it, so that there is nothing inherently improbable in this part of the tale. The incident of Peeping Tom, telling how a foolish man tried to see Godiva and was struck blind for his temerity, is not found before the late 17th century, and does not occur in the popular ballad on the ride of 1650. The claims of Robert Graves, Lewis Spence and others that the story preserves the memory of a pagan rite, where a naked woman representing a goddess appeared to the people, depend largely on the blinding of Peeping Tom, since this falls into line with various tales of the human who trespasses on the secrets of the supernatural world and is punished accordingly. These claims do not seem to be justified, either from the literary evidence or from what is known of the pre-Christian religion of north-western Europe in early times.

First Played by a Boy

There is little doubt, however, that the story of Godiva has been influenced by various types of folktale, such as those of the husband who imposes an ordeal on his wife when she wants to help the poor, the cunning maid who solves the riddle by fulfilling apparently impossible conditions, and the noble heroine miraculously saved from public shame. Christian folklore may have some influence also, and memories of the figure of Eve, who appeared at the Corpus Christi festival associated with the Coventry Miracle Plays before the Reformation, may have resulted in the demand for the introduction of Godiva into the later pageants.

The annual fair and procession at Coventry was revived after the Restoration, and Godiva first appeared represented by a boy in 1678. After this her part was played by a woman, usually a minor actress or dancer from outside Coventry, and her appearances caused much speculation and controversy beforehand and never failed to draw large crowds. Peeping Tom also appeared in the procession, and at one time was played by a man in a little house on a wagon, popping his head out with comic gestures to amuse the people. There is evidence also for the wooden figure still to be seen in the Leofric Hotel in Coventry being carried in the procession, decked out in a wig and cocked hat and regularly painted for the occasion. It is a wooden figure over six feet high, in armour of early Tudor times, and is probably the figure seen by a visitor to Coventry in 1679, who was told that a statue which he saw there represented the man struck blind for trying to see Godiva. This sounds like a local joke, perhaps based on the anguished expression and blank eyes of the wooden figure. The Coventry Peeping Tom was so popular that several copies of him still survive.

Godiva last appeared in the pageant of 1692, and in 1967, on the anniversary of her death, there was a service in the Cathedral and various ceremonies to mark the occasion. Study of the evidence suggests that the story of her ride is a genuine local tradition going back to Anglo-Saxon times, based on some historical incident which has developed under the influence of folktales, and been kept alive by the regular processions at the Coventry Fair. It may be that Godiva performed some act of penance on her husband's behalf and appeared bereft of the usual marks of rank as a sign of humility and penitence. It is known that Leofric was hostile towards the Church in early life, but later reconciled with it under the influence of his wife and their confessor, the Prior of Worcester. Such an act may have been exaggerated into an account of her riding naked, and become popularly associated with her efforts to free them from a grievous tax. It is difficult now to establish the exact nature of her service to her people, but the traditional story of her deed, of great interest to folklorists as well as to historians, has also proved an inspiration to poets, novelists, playwrights, painters and sculptors, who have treated it sometimes romantically and sometimes satirically.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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The earliest surviving story of Lady Godiva's still famous ride dates from the late 12th century, within 100 years of her death: *The Self-Sacrifice of Lady Godiva* by J. Van Lerius

Koninklijk Museum Voor Schone Kunsten

Mary Evans Picture Library

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At the age of 81 Goethe said that he had at last discovered the only sect to which he could wish to belong: the Hypsisterions of the 4th century who revered the best in all religions

GOETHE

FEW POETS can have had more practical repercussions than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), not just in the sense of effects upon the private or public conduct of individuals (the testimony of Albert Schweitzer is but one among many) but also in the sense of organizations or institutions inspired by his thought. One has only to recall the foundation of a world-wide Anthroposophical Society by Rudolf Steiner (distinguished mathematician and editor of Goethe's writings on natural science – see STEINER), or of the Institute of Botany in the University of Mainz directed by Wilhelm Troll on Goethean principles, or of the many acknowledgements to Goethe by adherents of Gestalt psychology. No wonder T. S. Eliot could incline to the view that Goethe was more of a thinker than a poet!

Which was more responsible for his influence is still a matter of debate. There are those who argue that but for his prestige as a poet no one today would be interested in his thought. Others treat the whole canon of his work, poetry no less than prose, as a kind of lay Bible from which to cull snippets of life-wisdom. Yet others explain the power of his scientific as well as his poetic works by reducing them to some few powerful insights gleaned from his youthful dabblings in alchemy, astrology and other occult 'sciences'.

The case of Goethe the Scientist is altogether a very strange one. Why has he not been relegated to an object for dispassionate scrutiny by historians of science? How is it that he can still provoke impassioned and even acrimonious attack, or sympathetic interest, where not outright defence, from many who are by no means to be dismissed as cranks (the physicists Max Planck and Werner Heisenberg, for example)? Presumably because his probing, if undismayed, gaze was turned upon an issue which has become urgent in our own day: the double-facedness of man's inventive curiosity, the seemingly inextricable involvement of his impulse to make and to know with his impulse to power and the control of Nature.

It is an insight which informs the whole of Goethe's dramatic treatment of the Faust legend (see FAUST), achieving its most poignant symbolization in the tragic events consequent upon his hero's otherwise admirable technological project for the reclamation of land from the sea. For Faust's splendid vision of a community of

Goethe's *Faust* presents 'the tensions inherent in the whole history of Western man's endeavours' but this 19th century German illustrator was evidently more interested in romantic horrors: Faust drinking the witch's potion *(above)*, Mephistopheles and Faust pursuing a Will-o-the-Wisp *(below)*

free people, earning their freedom each day anew on this hard-won land – a vision quoted so often out of context and in support of such disparate political ends – is made to follow, not only upon his abjuration of magic in the shape of Mephisto's help, but upon his own blinding by Dame Care, an evident projection of his guilty conscience.

Is this an ironic acknowledgement of man's inveterate tendency to gloss even his most disreputable motives with the veneer of respectability? Or is it a sober recognition that even his highest endeavours are prompted by mixed motives, some of them worse, but some also better, than he knows at the time? Probably both. The general tenor at any rate coincides with Goethe's maxim that 'whatever emancipates the mind without giving us control over ourselves is dangerous'. Such a warning could, and probably did, have reference to dangers contingent upon the control over the universe which man has acquired through the predictive power of Newtonian science. But it is by no means confined to these. For all his polemic against Newton (which by no means precluded recognition of his genius), it is only by a prejudicial selection of evidence that Goethe could ever be accommodated to such anti-Newtonians as, say, William Blake. Or to any romantic Jeremiahs, old or new, whose proposals for 'an alternative society' are confined to such products of the creative imagination as poetry, art and myth.

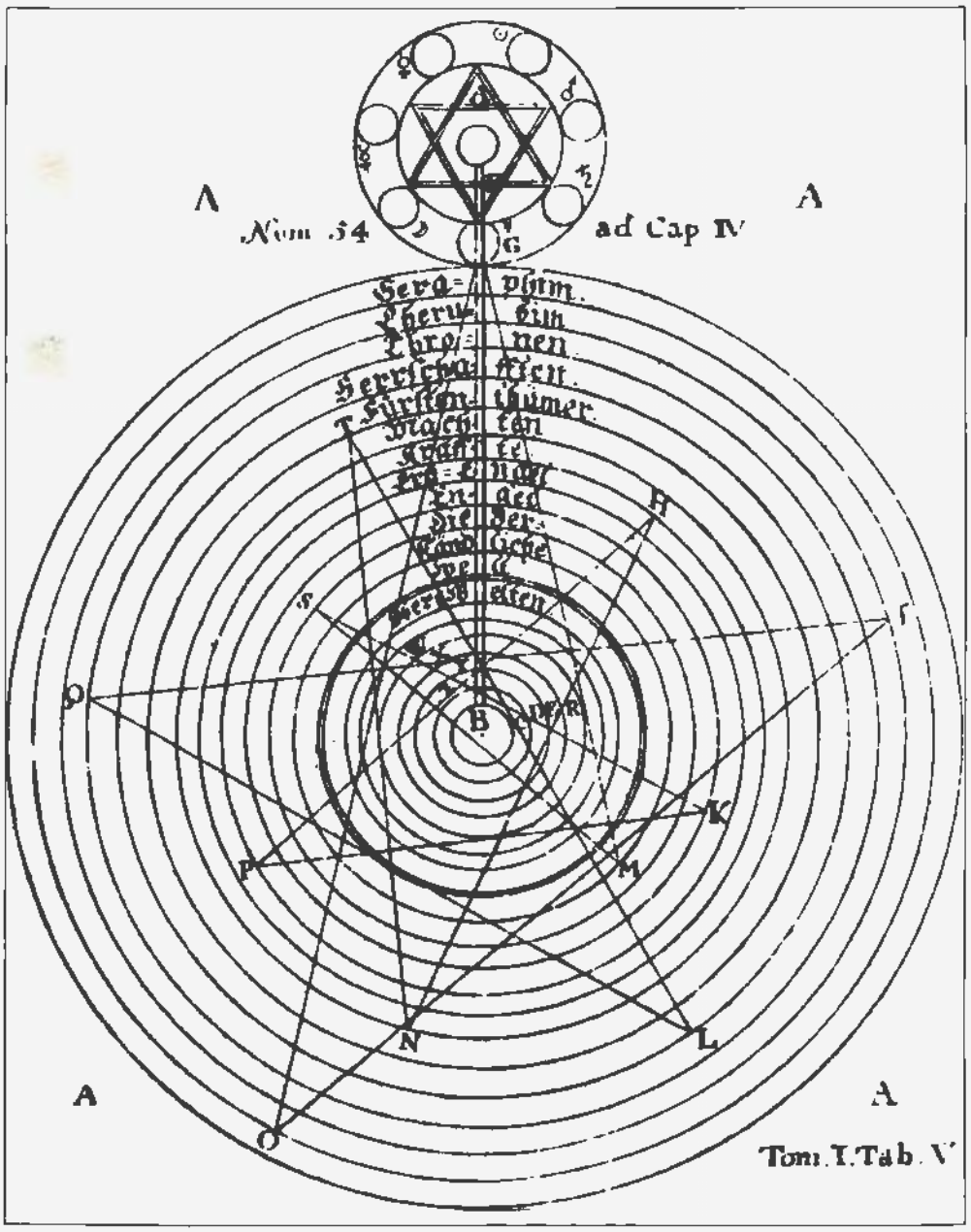
For Goethe, science too, whether pure or applied, was no less a product of man's Promethean reach. He may have said in a much-quoted aphorism that man's appropriate stance before the unknowable is to explore the explorable and quietly revere the inexplorable. But he offset this by another in which he insisted that man must persist in his belief that the incomprehensible may yet be susceptible of comprehension, for otherwise he would cease to explore.

The Whole Man

Clearly no single factor is adequate to account for the manifold influence of anyone so complex. One reason for it must obviously be his power to transmute an immensely wide range of thought, as well as feeling, into an astonishing variety of matchless verse and prose: it is this which puts him into the select company of the world's greatest poets. Yet another is his openness to an immense variety of cultural traditions, of the East as well as of the West – theological, philosophic, scientific, mythological, alchemical, cabalistic – and his power to 'condense' their perennial truths into symbols of inexhaustible potency. It is this which has attracted the attention of C. G. Jung and his followers, enabling them on the one hand to enlist him in support of their notion of a 'collective unconscious', on the other to shed new light, out of their therapeutic experience, on the more esoteric aspects of works such as *Faust* (the circularity of the procedure has not gone unremarked).

A third reason for Goethe's continuing influence must undoubtedly be the time through which he lived. Born just before the meridian of the 18th century into the heyday of European Enlightenment, he was not to die until the various phases of Romanticism had come and gone, the political face of Europe been completely changed by revolution and reaction, and Western man was clearly headed for the technological era in which we now live. To all these changes he responded, not without misgivings, but with an unfailing curiosity and an essentially forward-looking commitment. What, rising 80, would he have most liked to live to see? The completion of such great technological projects as the Suez and Panama canals. And what was the humane ideal proposed in his great two-part novel about education and self-education, *Wilhelm Meister*? Not the Renaissance ideal of the many-sided man according to which he himself had been raised, but one more attuned to the modern world; how to educate 'whole men' in an age committed to one-sided specialization. Goethe has been called 'the last universal man'. But Oscar Wilde was right too in calling him 'the first of the Moderns'.

The world into which he was born marks a decisive phase in the long transition from the God-centred world of medieval times to the man-centred universe of our own. It was then that Western man, putting his trust in the knowledge which his own reasoning can furnish, decided to stand on his own feet and work out his salvation for himself. A decision asserted not with that sense of sinful pride which haunted the Great Renaissance figures, and found dramatic embodiment in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. Rather with a modest confidence which trusted that the progressive enlightenment of men's minds would bring about a decrease in man's inhumanity to man.



The pattern of the universe, from Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum*, a popular 18th century work which influenced Goethe in his treatment of the famous *Faust* legend. At the top of the diagram is the throne of the Splendour of God, surrounded by the seven planets. Below is the 'middle world' consisting of the 12 circles or choruses of innumerable spirits and angelic hosts. At the centre are the seven circles of the inner world, with Satan (at point B) in the middle

Flight to the South

The only period in his life when Goethe was tempted to take older modes of thought literally, was brief. It lasted at most from the autumn of 1768 to the summer of 1770. Returned from the 'rationalistic' University of Leipzig with a severe physical complaint (from which he was apparently cured through the secret, and alchemically derived, salt of a Pietistic doctor) he remained throughout that winter confined to his room in a state of psychosomatic depression. And open by both temperament and environment to supernatural experiences – his maternal grandfather claimed the gift of second sight, and passed on to him his interest in the interpretation of dreams, while he himself as a boy had erected in his room an altar to 'The Unknown God' – the disillusioned and despairing youth felt drawn to such possibly mind-enlarging experiences as alchemy, astrology, and the mystical rites and rituals proffered by a Pietistic relative, Fräulein von Klettenberg. To a revolutionary and cynically minded young man the central gospel of Pietism, with its reassertion of Luther's claim that every human soul has the right to direct communication with God without benefit of clergy, could not fail to appeal.

Three stages may be distinguished in Goethe's emancipation from any desire to take literally either the procedures of the occult sciences or the doctrines of any religion. The first and most decisive was his encounter with J. G. Herder in Strasbourg, where he went to resume his studies in 1770. Rightly regarded as one of the progenitors of European Romanticism, Herder was nevertheless a man of the Enlightenment: a stickler for distinctions in both thought and language, rigorously schooled in classical rhetoric as well as in theology, a pioneer in comparative religion as well as in the origins of language and the history of ideas. Among the many lessons he taught Goethe, the most unforgettable were the need to inspect his own mental processes, as both man and artist, and the danger of confusing contexts of thought and modes of discourse.

The second stage was Goethe's lifelong and patient devotion to a number of observational and experimental sciences, which he somehow managed to pursue alongside both his literary activities and the manifold ministerial duties which devolved upon him as friend and general factotum of the Duke of Weimar: mineralogy and geology, botany and zoology, optics and theory of colour, meteorology and theory of clouds. And the third stage was his flight from the ten-year long burden of administrative duties, and from an increasingly frustrating love-affair, to the clear skies of the Mediterranean, cradle of our Western civilization. This flight he repeatedly described as a process of rebirth and self-discovery. It brought not only the completion or promotion of poetic works which had long been hanging fire, but the precipitation of scientific discoveries he had long been on the verge of making. It brought above all an understanding of the archetypal, whether in Nature or in man. And hence, a new attitude to myth.

The clearest evidence of this is in his essentially 'modern' treatment of Greek myth in his verse drama *Iphigenia*, portraying as it does man's power to free himself from the tyranny of his myths by recognizing them as projections of his unconscious needs, fears and insights. In Goethe's version the curse laid upon the race of Tantalus – the seemingly inexorable chain of violence and vengeance, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' and worse – is lifted, not by the intervention of any deity, but by the painfully acquired power of human beings to 'read' the oracle aright, and to put their faith in truth and trust between man and man.

Alchemy and Astrology

All this is not to say that Goethe henceforth lost interest in myth and magic, in religion or occultism. Far from it. Whenever the need arose – whether for his poetic works, his autobiography, or that historical prelude to his *Theory of Colours* which some have claimed as the first history of science – he again had recourse to the whole body of Pansophic knowledge, most of it familiar to him from his youth: Paracelsus, Boehme, Bruno, Pico, Ficino, Kepler, Swedenborg, the anonymous *Aurea catena Homeri*, not

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Portrait of Goethe: he once said that man should explore the explorable and quietly revere the inexplorable, but he also insisted that man must persist in trying to understand the incomprehensible, for otherwise he would cease to explore

to mention such widely read 18th century works as Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum* or Gottfried Arnold's *Unbiassed History of the Church and its Heretics* and *History of Mystical and Symbolic Theology*. But there was no longer any question of his writing, as he did to a friend in January 1769: 'The Saviour has got me at last!'. Or in the next year to Fräulein von Klettenberg 'Chemistry is still my secret passion'.

Chemistry is, after all, itself a kind of 'magic', destroying as it does the familiar perceptual world in order to reveal a world of relations hitherto unsuspected. Alchemy, by contrast, unless interpreted symbolically, is essentially superstition: a misuse of the genuine and the true, a mendacious flattering of man's hopes and desires.

Astrology likewise. Its mumbo-jumbo, satirized by Mephisto in *Faust* was in Goethe's view one of many examples of the false application of mathematics; and his attempt at casting his own horoscope at the beginning of his autobiography is distinctly ironical in tone. On the other hand, the possibility of scientific validation of the age-old belief in the connection between all living things and the subtle rhythms of cosmic origin is never ruled out: it received poetic tribute in the opening verse of his *Orphic Utterances* and in the figure of the wise woman, Makarie, in *Wilhelm Meister*, scrutinizing the heavens from her astronomer's tower.

Altogether this was the older Goethe's way: not to deny early experiences, but to put them in perspective. It is a temper which informs the whole of his autobiography, and accounts for its title *Poetry and Truth*. The hesitant gropings of his youth are recalled with a tender regard for the reality of all genuinely felt experience, but also with the 'physical distance' won through the ever widening experiences of a long life. He never indulges in irony for its own sake. What he does do is to strip away the attachment to the letter found in fundamentalists of whatever persuasion in order to get to the kernel of a sacramental view of life wherever it is to be found. It is this essentially syncretic endeavour – the desire to find what is common without obliterating differences – that inspires all Goethe's utterances about religion: his great Eastern ballads, *The God and the Bayadère* and *Pariah*; that most mystical lyric of his cycle *The West-Eastern Divan*, 'Ecstatic Yearning'; and his unfinished poem *The Mysteries*. It is this that inspires his treatment of comparative religion, whether in *Wilhelm Meister*, or in the Fourth Book of his autobiography. It is this that could make him say at the age of 81 that he had at last discovered the only sect to which he could wish to belong: the 4th century Hypsisterians, whose whole endeavour was to revere the best in all religions, whether Christian, Jewish or heathen.

These Serious Jests

The poetic use Goethe made of the diverse cultural materials he inherited varied from work to work. And if we concentrate too much on the materials themselves, or on their sources, we run the risk of missing the new import he intended to convey through the artistic form he devised. It is above all with *Faust* that the inadequacy of any single key becomes most apparent. Goethe's characterization of the Second Part, in the last letter of his life, as 'these profoundly serious jests' applies to the whole of the work. And the whole of it lights up in a new way once we are aware of the immense variety of historical traditions that have gone to its making: theological and philosophical, scientific and literary, as well as mythological, mythical or mystagogical. Much can indeed be revealed about the psycho-symbolic significance of certain figures by bringing alchemical knowledge to bear. But we do well not to overlook Goethe's historical allusions: to the scientific controversies of his day between Neptunists and Vulcanists about the origins of life; or to the great sinners of the New Testament, the three Marys, who also play their part among the many who intercede for the salvation of Faust's soul. Or miss the anticipatory power of his symbols – whether it be our knowledge that during its nine months in the womb the human embryo 'condenses' all the stages of evolution; or that scientists themselves are now plnnging into the oceanic depths in order to discover more about man's own humble origins; or that the trend towards 'unisex' may betoken a new readiness towards reciprocal exchange of the masculine and feminine principles of the psyche.

For what Goethe was attempting in *Faust* was neither a rival to that of his greatest predecessor, Marlowe, nor the creation of a new myth. It was rather the dramatic presentation of the tensions inherent in the whole history of Western man's endeavours: his triumphs and his failures, and the constant threat that he may destroy himself. And if he decided to 'save' the soul of his constantly erring anti-hero, it was not as a reward for either his 'innate virtue' or his 'ceaseless striving', though both played their part. But rather the redeeming grace of 'love from above', under which complex notion Goethe comprised all the manifold symbols the human mind has conceived in order to give expression to the hope that, for all his transgressions, man may yet be enabled to survive.

Goethe summed up his outlook to a reviewer of his *Theory of Colour* in a letter of November, 1812: that since men are all too prone to have recourse to the magical, the unfathomable, the inexpressible, he himself had determined in all his work – poetic, artistic or scientific – to give prominence to the clear rather than the opaque, to the rational rather than the vaguely intuitive, so that in giving form to the outward the inward might be tacitly revered.

L. A. WILLOUGHBY

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Spectrum Colour Library

Gog and Magog

The names of two mythical giants, statues of which now stand in the Guildhall, London: according to legend, Gog and Magog were the last survivors of a race of British giants overcome by Brutus, who had them taken to London where they were compelled to work as porters at the gates of the royal palace: in the Bible, Gog is described as a terrible ruler living in the north, and in the Apocalypse the terms Gog and Magog stand for all the enemies of the kingdom of God.

See GIANTS.

GOLD

CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT human history, from the earliest of the known civilizations, gold has been treasured and valued in its physical substance and also as a symbol of something of equivalent value and rarity in the mental and spiritual life of man.

The following description by Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD) of the properties of this metal can be read equally easily both in the sense of the material metal and as an analogy for the qualities of the intangible equivalent buried in the hearts of men:

> It alone of all substances loses nothing on heating and survives even conflagrations and the funeral pyre. In fact, the oftener it is heated the better . . . the best proof of purity is a high melting point. It is strange, too, that a substance subdued by charcoal, made from the most fiercely-burning wood, is swiftly heated by the chaff, and that is fused with lead to purify it . . . . Another reason for holding gold in esteem is that it is least worn away by use . . . Again, nothing can be beaten into thinner leaves, nor divided more finely . . . Above all, it alone is found in nuggets of fine dust . . .
>
> Finally, neither rust nor verdigris can waste its excellence or diminish its weight. Again, brine and vinegar, the conquerors of matter, make no impression on it.

From this passage, it is plain to see why gold in its physical form is used, through all known cultures in human history to represent light, riches, wisdom, excellence, the essence and elixir of life, and stands for what has been called the 'irreducible minimum in the human spirit'. One can see, too, why it stands as a central symbol in the religious traditions – as the golden sun stands at the centre of our physical universe, giving life and light. In the magical system of correspondences, gold is indeed linked with the sun (see CORRESPONDENCES).

The Greek writer Hesiod relates that at the beginning of time the Olympian gods first created the men of Gold, who lived like gods in unalloyed happiness. In the Christian nativity story the Magi brought gold as one of the offerings to the infant Jesus and in Christian symbolism gold represents the divine spirit, glory, joy and love.

In our own culture, and not necessarily linked to any form of religion, gold stands for perfection in such phrases as: 'the golden age', 'the golden mean', 'the golden rule'.

The Perfect Metal

In the folklore of all cultures there are stories in which gold is the lure and prize, as in the recurring tale of the remote city – be it El Dorado, Timbuktu, or many others – where the streets are paved with gold, and in which there is wealth beyond dreams.

Nothing, of course, is consistently lucky and good – it depends who you are and what are your motives. So it is not surprising to find that on the other side of the coin, gold can symbolize greed, temptation, corruptibility, waste and treason. The tale of King Midas, who was punished for his greed by everything he touched turning into gold, is an example of what can happen if the user's intentions are baser than the precious metal.

Eric Cross

As well as standing for perfection and riches, both earthly and spiritual, gold also symbolizes greed and temptation *Left* A miser is dispossessed of his gold by the skeletal figure of Death: from the *Dance of Death*, a series of woodcuts by Holbein *Above* Sarcophagus made of 22 carat gold, which contained the mummified body of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen

Naturally there is much day-to-day folklore associated with gold as well. Even today, it is thought by many people that a gold bead worn round the neck will prevent or cure a host of ailments – anything from a sore throat to scrofula. It was also believed to protect the wearer from drowning; in the past, British sailors often wore plain gold ear-rings as amulets. In connection with this use of gold for magical reasons, it is significant that the magician reserves gold for the highest and most ceremonial magics.

The vast literature of alchemy is concerned with the transmutation of baser metals into gold, both in the literal sense and as a symbol of the development of the alchemist himself. Alchemy as practised since the 8th century bears the stamp of Jabir ibn Hayyan, surnamed El-Sufi (known in the West as Geber), who propounded the theory that all metals are composed of two principles resembling sulphur and mercury. He accounted for the existence of different varieties of metals by assuming that these two principles are not always pure and that they do not always combine in the same proportion; when this is the case, the result is silver, lead, tin, iron or copper. When, however, the sulphurous and mercurial principles are perfectly pure and combine in perfect balance, the result is gold.

The idea that in both a scientific and a metaphorical sense gold represents the sum of perfection occurs also in a 13th century work *Speculum Alchemae* (Mirror of Alchemy) which is attributed to Roger Bacon, the English philosopher and scientist: 'I must tell you that Nature always intends and strives to the perfection of Gold: but many accidents, coming between, change the metals.'

(See also ALCHEMY; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

PAT WILLIAMS

ORDER OF THE

GOLDEN DAWN

The chance discovery of a coded manuscript in 1880 led to the founding of a secret society, said to be 'the only repository of magical knowledge' in the West in modern times, and to which many famous people belonged

THE HERMETIC SOCIETY of the Golden Dawn or Stella Matutina was formed in 1887 by three members of the Rosicrucian Society in England, which had been founded in 1866. The Order had 11 grades or degrees, subdivided into three groups: the Golden Dawn in the Outer, with five degrees, and the Stella Matutina comprising the Rosea Rubiae and Aurea Crucis, each of three degrees. In addition the Silver Star, or Argenteum Astrum (three degrees) was said to consist of 'Secret Chiefs'.

René Guénon in *Le Théosophisme* (1921) wrote: 'The English secret society of the Order of the Golden Dawn in the Outer is a society of occultists studying the highest practical magic, somewhat akin to Rosicrucianism. Men and women are admitted on equal terms. There are three principal officers, Imperator, Praemonstrator and Cancellarius'. The grades, besides that of Neophyte, were four (corresponding to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton or personal name of Yahweh in the Old Testament): Zelator, Theoreticus, Practicus and Philosophus; also a sub-grade, the Portal, leading from the Golden Dawn to the Rosea Rubiae and Aurea Crucis, the Inner Order.

The story of the founding of the Order follows the mysterious pattern characteristic of the Rosicrucians. In 1880 an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, bought some cipher manuscripts from a bookstall in Farringdon Street in London which he showed to two Masonic and Rosicrucian colleagues, Dr Woodman and Dr Wynn Westcott, an antiquarian, scholar and London coroner; both Masons of high standing and learned in the Cabala. Accompanying the manuscripts was a letter in German, saying that whoever cared to decipher the text should communicate with Sapiens Donabitur Astris (S.D.A.) through a Fräulein Anna Sprengel, and would receive further information. The manuscripts were duly deciphered; they were found to consist of notes and rough diagrams for the five rituals of the Outer Order (grades 0 = 0 to 4 = 7) together with certain lectures on elementary occult and cabalistic knowledge.

S.D.A. then instructed Westcott and Woodman to elaborate the rituals. This was done by another Freemason, a Scot, Samuel Liddell Mathers (who later, under the influence of the Celtic movement, called himself MacGregor, and later le Comte de Glenstrae), assisted by Dr Westcott. The poet W. B. Yeats, who was initiated into the Order 'in a Charlotte Street studio' in 'May or June 1887', had met Mathers while both were working in the British Museum Reading Room: 'a man of thirty-six or thirty-seven, in a brown velveteen coat, with a gaunt resolute face, and who seemed, before I heard his name, or knew the nature of his studies, a figure of romance'. Yeats, who became a prominent member of the Order, and Imperator of the London lodge in 1901, helped Mathers in the writing of the rituals. These were published in America by Dr Israel Regardie, a member of the Order in its later days. The main body of the ritual consists, according to Regardie, of 'the sonorous and resonant versicles of the Chaldean Oracles – the translation, I believe, of Dr Westcott.' There is also a strong influence, especially in the rituals of the Outer, of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and – doubtless through Yeats, who was editing the works of Blake at the time – marked traces of Blake's 'Prophetic Books'.

Apart from the cipher manuscripts and other Hermetic literature found in libraries both in England and on the Continent by Mathers, most of the early teaching was received by Mrs Mathers clairaudiently.

The authors were presently told that they would be permitted to form an elementary branch of the Rosicrucian Order in England; and finally S.D.A. wrote to Dr Westcott authorizing him to sign his (or her – S.D.A. may have been Fräulein Sprengel herself) name to any warrant or document necessary for the constitution of the Order, and promising further rituals and advanced teachings should the preliminary Order prove successful. On 1 March 1888, a warrant was drawn up according to a design given in the manuscripts and was signed by Dr Woodman, MacGregor Mathers and, for S.D.A., by Dr Westcott. In 1889 a letter was published by Mathers announcing that 'this society studies Western traditions . . . the Theosophical Society is in friendly relations with them.'

In 1891 Dr Woodman died, leaving the management of the Order to Westcott and Mathers, who for some years seem to have worked together in harmony. In 1897 Westcott withdrew from his office and Mathers reigned supreme until 1900.

A. E. Waite, an early member of the Order, recapitulates in his *Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (1924) much of the above information about 'the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Students of the Golden Dawn.' He concludes that the cipher manuscripts were post-1880, and were probably part of the reorganization of Westhaupt's Illuminati in 1880. According to another view, the French magician Eliphas Levi (whose *Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum* interpreted by the Tarot Trumps was translated by Wynn Westcott) was one of the continental originators. Evidence for this is a cipher note of more recent date

'Greek Cross of the Zodiac', drawn from a Golden Dawn manuscript: the zodiac signs converge on the wheel of the sun and the year, and are linked by the coils of the snake biting its own tail, the ourobouros, a symbol that 'All is One'

Light of Occult Knowledge

Initiation of Aleister Crowley into the Order of the Golden Dawn

He was waiting without the portal under the care of a sentinel while the Hierophant (Mathers), between the pillars and before the altar, addressed his chief officers and the assembled members. Crowley was clothed in a strange, feminine-looking robe with a hood over his head so that he couldn't see a thing, for the light of the natural world is but darkness compared with the radiance of Divine Light. And he was held by a triple cord, a token of nature's tie which bound him. A voice cried from within the Hall of Neophytes . . .

'Child of Earth! wherefore hast thou come to request admission to this Order?'

A voice answered for him. 'My soul is wandering in the Darkness seeking for the light of Occult Knowledge, and I believe that in this Order the Knowledge of that Light may be obtained.'

John Symonds *The Great Beast*

The Angel Axir

From a ceremony of evoking the angel Axir by means of his magical signature (Sigil), painted on a talisman (Pentacle) and carried by the Magus:

Bind and veil Sigil with white cord and black cloth. Place it without the Circle at the West, and say: Hail unto ye, Lords of the Land of Life, hear ye these my words for I am made as ye are, who are the formers of the soul. With the divine aid, I now purpose to call for this day and hour from the dark depths of my sphere of sensation the Angel Axir of the Lesser Earthy Angle of the Northern Quadrangle, whose magical seal I now bind with this triple cord of bondage, and shroud in the black darkness of concealment. Even as I have bound about this Sigil this cord so let Axir be bound in his abode and habitation that he move not therefore save to manifest unto the Light before me. Even as with this veil of black I shroud the Light of Day from this Sigil, so do I render him in this place, blind and dumb, that he may in no wise move except into manifestation and appearance before me. And the reason of this working is to obtain from that Angel the true knowledge of Earth, how I may securely fix within my being the secret philosophical stone of creation whereupon is a hidden name inscribed. To this end I implore the divine assistance in the names of Adonai ha-Aretz, Auriel, Phorlach, Emor Dial Hectega, and Ic Zod Heh Chal.

Draw the Pentacle into the circle with the front of the Sword.

Creature of Sigils, enter thou within this sacred Circle that the Angel Axir may pass from concealment into manifestation.

Consecrate immediately with Fire and with Water at the West of the Circle.

Creature of Sigils, purified and made consecrate, enter thou the Pathway of Evil.

Israel Regardie *The Golden Dawn*

The original intention of the Order was 'to prosecute the Great Work: which is to obtain control of the nature and power of my own being'

added to the original instruction on 'the Tarot Trumps and their attribution to the Hebrew Alphabet' signed A. L. C. – Alphonse Louis Constant, or Eliphas Levi. All that seems certain is that somewhere on the continent there existed a Society, possibly Rosicrucian, from which Rudolf Steiner and the Golden Dawn, as well as the Theosophical Society, ultimately derived.

Astral Meetings

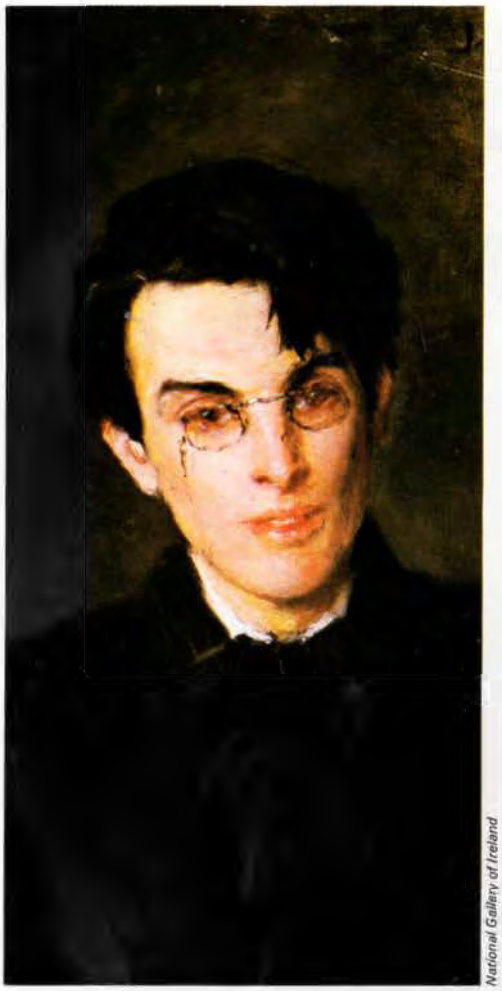
For the first few years all went well and the Order flourished. Among its early members were A. E. Waite, Florence Farr the actress, the writer Arthur Machen, and Allan Bennett, later famous as the Buddhist Bikku Ananda Mattaya. Besides the mother-lodge in London (Isis-Urania) there were formed new temples or lodges in Paris (the Ahathoor) Horus in Bradford, Osiris in Weston-super-Mare, Amen-Ra in Edinburgh. Algernon Blackwood was a member of the Edinburgh lodge.

However, the Order soon ran into difficulties. MacGregor, now living in Paris, became increasingly autocratic, presently claiming that he alone was in communication with the 'Hidden and Secret Chiefs of the Third Order', by whom, he said, those parts of the rituals received clairaudiently by Mrs Mathers were 'dictated'. Communications from these Masters gave him the only true interpretation of existing manuscripts. In a fantastic manifesto dated 29 October 1896 Mathers claimed initiation by those 'secret and unknown Magi' into the Third Order. 'I have but very rarely seen them in the physical body,' he wrote, 'and on such rare occasions *the rendezvous was made astrally by them*. They have met me in the *flesh* at the time and the place which had been astrally appointed beforehand. For my part I believe them to be human and living upon this earth; but possessing terrible superhuman powers. When such a *rendezvous* has been in a much frequented place, there has been nothing in their personal appearance or dress to mark them out as differing in any way from ordinary people except the appearance and sensation of transcendent health and physical vigour (whether they seem persons in youth or age) which was their invariable accompaniment: in other words, the physical appearance which the possession of the Elixir of Life has been traditionally supposed to confer. On the other hand, when the *rendezvous* has been in a place free from easy access by the Outer World they have usually been in symbolic robes and insignia.'

Mathers had become increasingly preoccupied with black magic; and the last straw was when in 1900 he sent the notorious Aleister Crowley to take over the London lodge. 'This person,' Yeats wrote in a letter to Lady Gregory, 'seized the rooms and on being ejected attempted to take possession wearing black mask and in full Highland costume and with a gilt dagger at his side. Having failed in this he has taken out a summons on the ground that he is Mathers' 'envoy', and that there is nothing in the constitution of the Society enabling us to depose Mathers.' However, that is just what the Isis-Urania Lodge did in the summer of 1900.

But that was only the beginning of the end. In 1901 Yeats, then Imperator of Isis-Urania, wrote a pamphlet entitled *Is the Order of the Golden Dawn to Remain a Magical Order?* in which he refers to the break with Mathers. A. E. Waite was now objecting to the system of examinations by which candidates passed from one grade to the next, and also calling in question the reality of the Third Order. Yeats defends the examination system and, without committing himself to any opinion of their nature, the reality 'whether in the body or out of the body' of the 'secret and unknown Magi'. Waite and his following broke away, however, in 1903, objecting to occult work and saying that they must work on purely mystical lines. Waite and those who seceded with him retained the name of the Golden Dawn and still used the same magical rituals, somewhat modified to suit Waite's mystical ideals. He ceased to be chief of the Order in 1915, and soon after it went into abeyance.

The remainder of the Order, under a Dr Felkin, continued until 1905 when Yeats, Arthur Machen and Wynn Westcott resigned. Dr Felkin founded a second offshoot, the Stella Matutina, or 'Order of the Companions of the Rising Light in the Morning', with a temple called Amoun in London. Dr Felkin founded a second but smaller temple in London, whose membership was restricted to members of the Rosicrucian Society in England, and he also



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The Golden Dawn's rituals were written by W. B. Yeats *(left)* and MacGregor Mathers *(right)*. Yeats became Imperator of the London lodge after the expulsion of Mathers, who is seen here celebrating a Mass of Isis, and who claimed to be in touch with 'Secret Chiefs' who met him on the astral plane

founded the Hermes in Bristol. In 1917 he resurrected the Isis-Urania temple as the Merlin temple of the Stella Matutina. Dr Felkin then retired to New Zealand where he started yet another temple; all but the Amoun were short-lived.

Subversive Powers

Meanwhile Mathers had trouble with his 'black' *enfant terrible*, Crowley, who in 1905 broke away to found his own Order, the Argenteum Astrum (A.·. A.·.) or Silver Star. The Golden Dawn had at no time practised any form of sexual magic but Crowley identifying himself with the Antichrist under the sign of the Great Beast 666 of the Apocalypse, made sexual rituals central to his Order. Mathers died in 1917, broken, some say, by Crowley, whose stronger personality proved too much for him and who stole many of the rituals which were in fact Mathers's work. After the death of Mathers the Ahathoor lodge was closed. According to an article on the Golden Dawn by Gerald Yorke, 'the A.·. A.·. survives in New York, the Stella Matutina though dormant is not quite defunct, and the Golden Dawn in its original form is no more'. A member of the Golden Dawn, 'Dion Fortune', whose real name was Violet Firth, founded the Society of the Inner Light, which is still in existence (see FORTUNE).

A Miss Stoddart, at one time an ardent follower of Dr Felkin, wrote an anonymously published 'exposure' of the Order entitled *Light-Bearers of Darkness* (1930). She believed that, in common with all magical societies, the Golden Dawn was controlled by Secret Chiefs, subversive powers whose aim is the direction of the destinies of the earth; the Thule group said to have been behind Hitler is a more recent instance of this kind. It is well known that under cover of the Freemasons subversive groups were at work before the French Revolution; and according to Miss Stoddart, Mathers was 'doing political work under the Secret Chiefs and was mixed up in war and military matters.' Miss Stoddart expressed violently antisemitic opinions, and disapproved of Mrs Besant's work towards the overthrow of British rule in India (see BESANT). Her evidence seems to be largely imaginary, so far as the Golden Dawn is concerned.

A more plausible criticism comes in Gerald Yorke's article, quoted earlier; he writes of magic as 'an anachronistic survival of pre-Christian thought. It is both simpler and safer to put your trust in Christ and his Church.' According to this writer, 'To be successful a magus must become conscious of all the elements of his soul without exception. This is often represented as a descent into Hell, since it is precisely these unknown parts of the soul — of the subconscious — that are the abodes of demons. Many who are rash enough to rouse these demons by evocation end by succumbing to them.' It is nevertheless true that modern psychology claims to carry out a comparable process of enlargement and integration of consciousness; and the Golden Dawn may be seen as one among a number of manifestations of a process to which, in one form or another, this generation is committed; what Yeats calls 'the revolt of soul against intellect now beginning in the world'.

The Great Work

Gerald Yorke says that, 'In the main the brethren fell by the wayside.' Dr Israel Regardie, on the other hand, considers that, 'there can be little or no doubt that the Golden Dawn is, or rather was until very recently, the sole repository of magical knowledge, the only Order of real worth that the West of our time has known.'

Magic was indeed only one aspect of the work of the Golden Dawn. The original intention of the Order was 'to prosecute the Great Work: which is to obtain control of the nature and power of my own being.' According to some of the texts the purpose was even more specifically Christian: 'To establish closer and more personal relations with the Lord Jesus, the Master of Masters, is and ever must be the ultimate object of all the teaching of our Order'. There was at one time in the Society a strongly Anglo-Catholic bias; besides the scholar Charles Williams, a number of members of

Kenneth Grant

Drawing of a wand used in Golden Dawn rituals. The central rites were a dramatic portrayal of 'the spiritual rebirth or redemption of the candidate, his resurrection from the dark tomb of mortality through the power of the Holy Spirit'

the Anglican Society of the Resurrection were members, and even, briefly, Evelyn Underhill, the writer on mysticism. Lectures and papers were circulated expounding the Catholic doctrines of the Apostolic Succession, the seven Sacraments, the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, or teaching the three grades of prayer. None of these papers is included in Israel Regardie's four volume publication of the rituals; which gives in this respect, a one-sided impression.

The studies and practices of the Adepti centred round the cabalistic Tree of the ten Sefiroth (see CABALA); especially as taught by the Christian cabalist tradition. Mathers, quoting from Eliphas Levi's *Histoire de Magie* wrote that, 'the absolute hieroglyphic science had for its basis an alphabet of which all the gods were letters, and all the letters ideas, all the ideas numbers, and all the numbers perfect signs'. Astrology and geomancy, scrying and travel on the astral planes were taught, besides the theory of alchemy. Every adept had to prepare his own magical apparatus: cup, wand, dagger and pentacle, together with an elaborate symbolic Rosy Cross. He must also consecrate a sword. Ceremonies were performed in robes whose colour varied according to grade and the nature of the work.

Three varieties of magic were taught: the Clavicula of Solomon the King, the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage, and the Enochian system with its peculiar alphabet and language as revealed to Dr John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's astrologer (see DEE). Mathers was industrious in translating cabalistic literature into English; *The Key of Solomon the King* (1889), *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (1889) and *Abra-Melin the Mage* (1898).

The central rituals are based upon the description, in the Rosicrucian *Fama Fraternitatis*, of the Vault of the Adepti; translated by A. E. Waite in his *Real History of the Rosicrucians*. This consists of a symbolic enactment of the uncorrupted body of 'our father Christian Rosencreuz', symbolic of the buried sleeping higher Self. In the words of Dr Regardie, 'the whole concatenation of symbols is an elaborate and dramatic portrayal of the central theme of the Great Work. In a few words, it depicts the spiritual rebirth or redemption of the candidate, his resurrection from the dark tomb of mortality through the power of the Holy Spirit.'

(See also CROWLEY; YEATS.)

KATHLEEN RAINE

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Golden Fleece

In Greek mythology, the object of the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts, who, helped by the enchantress Medea, stole it from Colchis on the Black Sea, where it hung on a tree guarded by a dragon: it was the fleece of a ram which could think, speak and fly, sent by Hermes to save two children whose lives were threatened by their cruel stepmother.

Gong

Principal musical instrument of Asia, with religious and magical uses similar to those of bells in the West: sounded to accompany religious ceremonies, to drive away evil spirits or to expel the demons of disease: drinking from one after taking an oath gives the oath a binding significance: gongs are male or female according to tone, and are sometimes given individual names.

William MacQuitty

National Film Archive

Head of the golem, from a famous film, *The Golem*. The story of the artificially created human being which turns on its master became associated with Rabbi Judah Loew, of Prague in the 16th century, but without historical foundation

Jewish legend has its own Frankenstein's monster, a human being created by magical means who threatened to destroy his master

GOLEM

A GOLEM is a creature, especially a human being, created artificially by magic. In the late Jewish form of the legend, as told by Jakob Grimm in his *Journal for Hermits* (1808), the golem is the figure of a man, made of clay or mud, and brought to life when the miraculous name of God is pronounced over it. The golem is dumb (though other versions of the legend do credit it with the power of speech) but it can understand orders and is used as a servant to do the housework. It must never be allowed to leave the house. On its forehead is written the word *emeth* (truth). With every day that goes by, the golem gains weight and it gradually becomes bigger and stronger than anyone in the house, until they become afraid of it. They then rub out the first letter of the word on its forehead, altering it to *meth* (he is dead). The golem immediately collapses and turns back into clay again.

One man's golem, according to Grimm, grew so tall that its forehead was too high to reach. Its owner ordered the golem to take off its boots, so that when it bent down he would be able to reach its forehead. The golem did as it was told, and the owner succeeded in erasing the first letter but the mass of dead clay fell on top of him and crushed him.

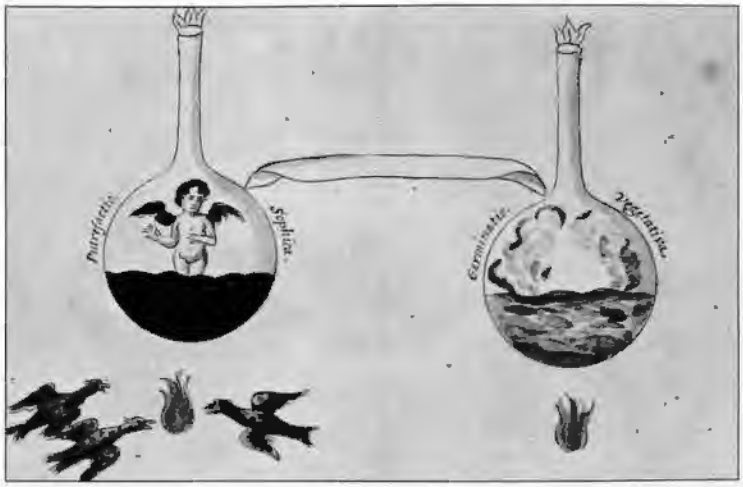
The Hebrew word *golem* occurs once in the Old Testament (Psalm 139. 16), where it means a human being which is not yet fully formed, an embryo. In the Talmud (the oldest extant code of Jewish law) the word is used once for Adam's body during the first hours of its existence but before it was fully endowed with life and consciousness. Elsewhere in the Talmud the word is used to denote an uncultured, boorish man. In medieval Hebrew the word was used as a technical philosophical term equivalent to the Greek *hyle*, that is, hylic matter, matter without form. Only at a much later stage was the word golem associated with magical traditions about the possibility of creating human and other beings by means of formulae, divine names, and permutations and combinations of Hebrew letters.

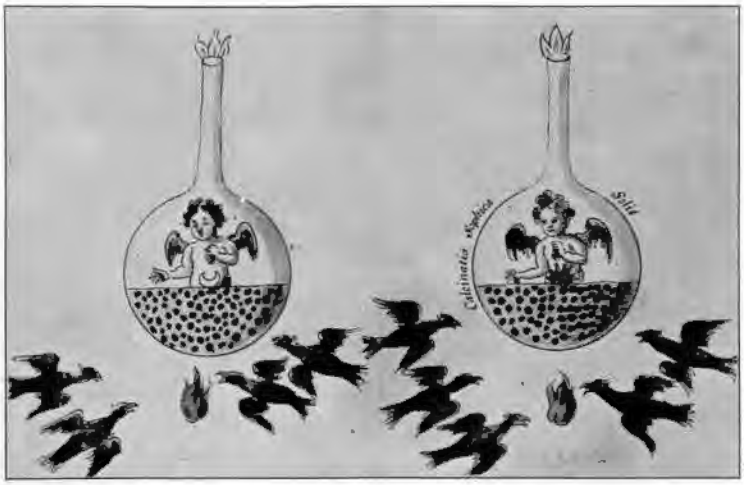
Act of Creation

The idea that it is possible to create living beings or to endow lifeless images or statues with life by magical means is widespread. In classical antiquity it was frequently associated with the alleged imparting of the power of speech to idols and statues. The Talmud too contains evidence that legends about such magical feats were current among Jews. One rabbi is said to have 'created a man' and sent him to a colleague. When the latter spoke to the messenger but received no reply, he recognized his true character and commanded him, 'Return to your dust'. Two other rabbis are reported to 'have made a calf for themselves' on the eve of every Sabbath and to have eaten it. They produced this calf by busying themselves with the book *Yetsirah*.

The reference to the *Sefer Yetsirah* (the Book of Creation) indicates the range of ideas and concepts underlying the theory of the magical creation of living beings. There is no way of knowing whether the *Sefer Yetsirah* (or *Hilkhoth Yetsirah*) of the Talmudic legend is or is not identical with, or similar to, the extant book bearing that name (see ALPHABET; CABALA). According to this book which came to be highly regarded in later Jewish mysticism, the world is derived from 32 elements which are the first ten numbers and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. All reality is a reality of the letters, the elements of which the cosmos is formed.

These ideas, which go back in part to Talmudic notions concerning the creative power of the letters of the name of God or of the Hebrew letters in general (because all combinations of these were held to be mystical names of God), obviously lent themselves to magical interpretation and application. Whereas the idea of creating living beings by magical means was associated in Greek and Arab magic with astrology, the emphasis in the Jewish tradition is on letter mysticism. These concepts were developed in the commentaries on the *Sefer Yetsirah* that





British Museum

The idea of the golem was linked with the belief that artificial human beings could be created by alchemy, a belief stimulated by symbolic pictures like these, showing the creation of a spirit in the vessel. 'Let two or at the most three parts of our mercury liquefy, one part of silver or gold of the vulgar, subtiliated, and they will become one body, spongious and inseparable, which is called our silver or gold, and not of the vulgar . . .' from *Cabala Mineralis*, an alchemical manuscript in the British Museum

were composed from the 12th century onwards. In these commentaries the word golem also begins to appear as a technical term for a being artificially created by applying the mysteries of the *Sefer Yetsirah*.

In the circle of Jewish mystics of the 12th–13th centuries known as the 'Hasidim of Germany' these conceptions gave rise to a mystical rite of creating a golem. There is little doubt that this ritual, in spite of its magical character, did not serve any materialist purpose (such as creating a robot servant) but was essentially a spiritual experience fraught with symbolic meaning. At the conclusion of their studies of the *Sefer Yetsirah* and similar texts, these mystics would perform a ritual 'act of creation' symbolizing their level of spiritual achievement. In this ritual the participants would take earth from virgin soil and shape it into a golem, or, according to another version, bury a golem made from clay in the earth, and bring it to life by walking round it and using the appropriate combination of letters and mystical 'names of God'. By the act of walking in the opposite direction and reciting the magic formulae in reverse order, the golem would again become lifeless.

Rebellious Servant

What was essentially a mystic-symbolic ritual in the circles of the German Hasidim soon became a subject for popular folklore and legend. Concurrently the golem too became an actual creature serving his master and fulfilling menial and other tasks laid upon him. Legends of this kind were fairly widespread among German Jews after the 15th century and came also to be known among non-Jews; Goethe's *Sorcerer's Apprentice* is indebted to the golem legend.

Earlier legends implying the possibility of resurrecting the dead by putting a piece of parchment with the name of God into the mouth or on the arm, were transferred to the golem, which it was believed could be made lifeless again by removing or inverting the mystical formula. The idea of a golem also linked up with the alchemists' notion of an artificial man produced by alchemical means (the homunculus of Paracelsus). As in the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the idea that the golem could get out of hand and his creator might no longer control or master him became a major feature of popular legend. The golem would grow to giant size, and become a serious threat to others, even to his master or members of his household. To reduce this Frankenstein's monster to dust again it would be necessary to remove the parchment with the mystic formula from his forehead. The golem's giant size made such an attempt very hazardous.

The best known form of the golem legend is associated with Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (16th century) but without any historical foundation whatever. As a result of this association, which seems to date from the end of the 18th century, most current forms and versions of the golem legend, popular as well as literary are connected with the history of the ghetto and the old synagogues of Prague. The first legendary biography describing a rabbi as the creator and master of a golem servant appeared in connection with Rabbi Elijah of Chelm (died 1583), and its substance was later transferred to Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague. In the later versions the golem is credited not only with enormous strength but also with uncanny instincts which enabled him to serve the Rabbi and the Jews of Prague by discovering plots against the Jews – especially accusations of ritual murder – and preventing their execution. Many stories relating to Rabbi Judah Loew and the golem are meant to 'explain' special liturgical practices of the congregation of Prague.

In the 19th century the golem legend became a favourite literary subject both with Jews and non-Jews. First in German literature, and later in Hebrew and Yiddish, the legends were expanded and interpreted in diverse ways. The verses emphasizing the golem's function in preventing libellous accusations and their consequent dangers to the Jewish community were probably composed after the resurgence of accusations of ritual murder in the 1890s. Among the best known works inspired by the legend are the mystic-occultist novel *Der Golem* (1915) by Gustav Meyrink, published in an English translation as *The Golem* (1964) and the Yiddish drama *Der Golem* by H. Leivick.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

The Golem of Prague

It must have been . . . toward the middle of the 18th century that the Polish legend about the rabbi of Chelm moved to Prague and attached itself to a far more famous figure, the 'Great Rabbi' Loew of Prague (*c* 1520–1609). Of course the Prague legend may have grown up independently, but this strikes me as very unlikely. In the Prague tradition of the early 19th century, the legend was associated with certain special features of the Sabbath Eve liturgy. The story is that Rabbi Loew fashioned a golem who did all manner of work for his master during the week. But because all creatures rest on the Sabbath, Rabbi Loew turned his golem back into clay every Friday evening, by taking away the name of God. Once, however, the rabbi forgot to remove the *shem* (from the *Shem Hameforash*, the ineffable name of God). The congregation was assembled for services in the synagogue and had already recited the 92nd Psalm, when the mighty golem ran amuck, shaking houses, and threatening to destroy everything. Rabbi Loew was summoned; it was still dusk, and the Sabbath had not already begun. He rushed at the raging golem and tore away the *shem*, whereupon the golem crumbled into dust. The rabbi then ordered that the Sabbath Psalm should be sung a second time, a custom which has been maintained ever since in that synagogue, the Altner Schul, but buried his remains in the attic of the ancient synagogue, where they lie to this day. Once, after much fasting, Rabbi Ezekiel Lander, one of Rabbi Loew's most prominent successors, is said to have gone up to look at the golem. On his return he gave an order, binding on all future generations, that no mortal must ever go up to that attic . . .

Gershom G. Scholem
On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism

FURTHER READING: G. Meyer-Meyrink, *The Golem*, trans. by Madge Pemberton (Ungas, N.Y., 1964). See also chapter 5 of Gershom G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965).

Hirmer

GOOD SHEPHERD

THE FIGURE of a shepherd bearing a sheep upon his shoulders frequently appears in early Christian art, either as a statue or carved on the sides of sarcophagi, or painted on the walls and ceilings of catacombs. The figure depicted is sometimes bearded and wearing a short tunic. In these various forms, it was used as a decorative symbol by Christians from c 200 to 400 AD. It has been customary to identify such figures as representations of Christ as the Good Shepherd, and in support of the identification good evidence could be cited. In the gospel of St John (chapter 10) Jesus is recorded as saying: 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep'; and the gospel of Luke (chapter 15) contains the parable of the Lost Sheep, which the shepherd seeks and, finding, lays upon his shoulders with rejoicing. The image appeared to be an easily intelligible one, and its popularity is further attested by its use on cups or bowls, on terracotta lamps, and even on knife handles.

More recent research, however, has questioned both the identification of this 'shepherd figure' with Jesus, and also whether it was originally a Christian symbol. It has now been shown that the figure of a man bearing a sheep or goat has a very long ancestry in the art of the ancient Near East. It appears in Mesopotamian art as early as the 3rd millenium BC, in the form of a man carrying a kid in his arms, for sacrifice to a deity. Hittite art of the late 2nd millenium BC provides an even closer prototype of the Christian 'Good Shepherd' in depictions of a man bearing a goat upon his shoulder as an offering to the gods: in either hand he holds a pair of the victim's legs. These figures doubtless constituted a familiar symbol of the pious service of the devotees of the gods concerned. Greek art introduces another phase of the tradition with the statue of Hermes *kriophoros*, 'ram-bearing', made about 450 BC for the ancient city of Tanagra in Boeotia. This represented the god Hermes as the divine patron of shepherds, bearing across his shoulders a ram. The god is shown in heroic nudity and initiates a form of presentation found later, that of nude shepherds carrying sheep which appear on sculptured sarcophagi of the Roman Imperial period (c 300–400 AD). The dying god Adonis is depicted in a similar state, bearing a ram and accompanied by the female figure of a Nature goddess, on the ceiling of a 2nd century Roman tomb.

However, a tradition gradually developed of portraying these sheep or goat-bearing figures simply dressed in shepherd's costume without specifying identity with a particular deity. This transformation coincided with the craving for an idealized pastoral life that characterized sophisticated Graeco-Roman society, and is reflected in the poetry of Theocritus and Virgil, and other contemporary poets and philosophers. The image of the shepherd, and his tender care for his sheep, came thus to symbolize the newly appreciated virtue of *philanthropia* or *humanitas* and was used, significantly, on the sculptured sarcophagi that became fashionable, for the burial of the wealthy, together with other imagery of pagan origin, expressive of virtues and hopes related to the afterlife.

It would, accordingly, appear that the 'shepherd figure' was adopted into Christian art from contemporary pagan art, and careful examination of its use on Christian sarcophagi of the period indicates that, with two possible exceptions, it denoted the virtue of *philanthropia* or, in Christian terminology, love of one's neighbour.

Analysis of the use of the 'shepherd figure' in catacomb art, however, suggests that an identification was made here with Christ in a very significant context. It was the practice to cover the *arcosolium*, the cavity in the catacomb wall in which the corpse was placed, with a marble slab which was decorated with various religious symbols and an inscription. The 'shepherd figure' was often depicted here as a representation of Christ in the role of the *psychopompos*, or guide of the departed soul on its perilous way to the next world. Hermes had this office in pagan religion; but it is more likely that Christ's role in this connection was inspired by Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. However, Christ was regarded as the *psychopompos* for a short while only, and the office was soon attributed to the Archangel Michael (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

The 'Good Shepherd' figure disappears from Christian iconography after the year 400. But the idea of Christ as the Good Shepherd, enthroned among his sheep, is magnificently portrayed in a 5th century mosaic in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna.

FURTHER READING: A. Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1967) and *Byzantine Painting* (Rizzoli Intl., 1979); F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (Nelson, 1958).

Christ as the Good Shepherd, a 5th century mosaic from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna: the figure of the shepherd was also well-known in pagan religious art

Michael Holford

The impressive spectacle of huge flocks of geese flying overhead with the return of spring, anciently gave rise to goose myths and ceremonies, usually associated with fertility; strangest of all bird beliefs, is that of the barnacle goose: 'they are not flesh, nor born of flesh'

GOOSE

IN MANY PARTS of Europe and Asia the goose has played an important role in local folklore, custom and mythology, and in the British Isles it is one of the few birds still involved in ritual observances. The preservation of such folk rites in a sophisticated society usually indicates the very great antiquity of the beliefs originally associated with them.

The principal goose ritual in England is a goose dinner which is eaten at Michaelmas (29 September), a custom which persists in the Yorkshire Dales and used to be much more widespread; a similar feast is held in Denmark on or near Martinmas (11 November). It might at first seem absurd to regard having goose for dinner as anything more than enjoying a good meal but customs which are observed at specific seasons of the year often have an interesting history and there is plenty of documentary evidence to attest to the great age of the Michaelmas goose feast.

A record dating from the time of Edward IV states that: 'John de la Hay was bound to render to William Barneby, Lord of Lastres, in the county of Hereford, for a parcel of the demesne lands, one goose fit for the Lord's dinner on the fast of St Michael the Archangel.' George Gascoigne wrote in 1575:

> And when the tenants come to pay their quarter's rent
> They bring some fowl at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent
> At Christmas a capon, at Michaelmas a goose;
> And somewhat else at New Year's tide for fear their lease flies loose.

By the 16th century, therefore, the Michaelmas goose was believed to be a propitiatory gift to keep landlords in good humour. It was also believed that eating goose at Michaelmas brought good luck: 'If you eat goose on Michaelmas Day you will never want for money all the year round.' A cookery book of 1709 informs the housewife:

> So stubble geese at Michaelmas are seen upon the spit; next May produces green.

'Green geese', mentioned by Shakespeare in 'Love's Labour's Lost' were birds fed on green pastures and the rhyme obviously implies fertility, increase and good fortune.

Bird of the Sun

Beliefs and ceremonies associated with the goose used to be characteristic of most northern countries. In pagan Sweden the goose figured as a grave offering; in Germany geese were sacrificed to Odin at the autumnal equinox and there was apparently a goose goddess at Cologne. During the 13th century the inhabitants of Friesland were accused of a form of witchcraft in which a goose was involved.

Goose beliefs and cults were not confined to Europe. Among Siberian tribes the bird figured in various ceremonies. One tribe sacrificed it to the river or sky god while another made a 'nest' for the goose god of skin, fur and cloth. Further south, in India, the wild goose is considered of great significance and the god Brahma is frequently depicted riding on a gander. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was also shown being borne through the air by a goose. In China a goose was carried at the head of processions and a pair of geese or duck might be presented to a newly married couple; the mandarin duck is a symbol of marital fidelity.

All these beliefs and rituals appear to have originated in an association between the goose and the sun, and consequently with fertility. In early times people were greatly impressed by the spectacle of huge flocks passing overhead in spring and they connected the birds with the lengthening of the days, greater warmth, growth or vegetation and the mating of birds and beasts. Wild geese thus came to represent the power

The flight of the wild geese has always moved and impressed mankind, and deities are often shown riding on them. *Above* 18th century Japanese calendar print, in which the girl is representing the goddess Kosenko *Right* Drawing from southern India of the god Brahma, riding on a cosmic gander

which wrought these changes – the sun or sun god.

Goose feasts may be a dying tradition in the British Isles but another ritual, derived from goose beliefs, is still widely observed though without realization of its origin – the custom of 'breaking the wishbone' when a chicken is served for dinner. A Bavarian physician, writing in 1455, describes the procedure by which the weather might be forecast by examining the breastbone of the Martinmas goose. He adds that the Teutonic knights in Prussia 'waged all their wars by the goose-bone'; that is, they judged by this kind of oracle whether the weather would be propitious for their campaigns. In Yorkshire it was believed that the breast-bone of a goose appeared dark in colour before a severe winter and much lighter if the winter were to be mild. It is a natural corollary to belief in the supernatural powers of the goose to attribute oracular significance to its remains.

The Barnacle Goose

The remarkable Irish belief that geese hatch from shellfish relates in particular to the barnacle goose which still winters around the coast of Britain in great numbers. It is now known that barnacle geese only breed north of the Arctic Circle, and in the past the breeding of this noisy, conspicuous species of goose was a mystery, because no nest had ever been found or reported even by those who sailed up to Iceland. After a severe storm, the bodies of birds might be found drifting among flotsam on the beach, covered with barnacles, and so it could be believed that it was the shells themselves which generated the geese.

A 10th century Arab diplomat writing of a country called 'Shasin', probably Ireland, reported: 'There is something marvellous there, such as is nowhere else in the world. On the sea-shore grow trees, and from time to time the bank gives way and a tree falls into the sea. The waves toss it up and down so much that a white jelly is formed on it. This goes on until the jelly increases in size and assumes the shape of an egg. Then the egg is moulded in the form of a bird with nothing but both feet and the bill attached to the wood. When Allah wills, the wind that blows on it produces feathers and it detaches

Chris Barker

British Museum

Michael Holford

the feet and bill from the wood. So it becomes a bird which scuttles into the sea about the surface of the water. It is never found alive, but when the sea rises it is thrown by the water on the shore, where it is found dead. It is a black bird similar to the bird that is called the Diver.'

In 1186 the Welsh writer Giraldus Cambrensis, returning from his travels in Ireland, lectured on his experiences to members of Oxford University: 'There are in this place many birds which are called Bernacae,' he said. 'Nature produces them against Nature in the most extraordinary way. They are like marsh geese but somewhat smaller. They are produced from fir timber tossed along the sea and are at first like gum. Afterwards they hang down by their beaks as if they were seaweed attached to timber, and are surrounded by shells in order to grow more freely . . . They do not breed and lay eggs like other birds, nor do they hatch any eggs, nor do they seem to build nests in any corner of the earth. Hence Bishops and religious men do not scruple to dine off these birds at the time of fasting, because they are not flesh nor born of flesh.'

The tradition was given wide currency by John Gerard in his *Herball* of 1597. He was unscrupulous in his borrowing and often careless in regard to facts. As he and others copied and improved on the illustrations of barnacle geese hatching, these became increasingly realistic, showing birds issuing from barnacle-like fruit growing on a tree by the waterside.

A contributory factor to the survival of this type of myth, lay in the supporting evidence of travellers' tales of fabulous creatures, which gained wide currency and were popularly believed. A Friar Odoric, who made a journey to the Far East in 1313, noted in his journal that he had heard of a tree reputed to bear melons containing 'a little beast like a young lamb' – probably a garbled description of a cotton plant. He added 'I myself have heard reported that there stand certain trees upon the shore of the Irish Sea, bearing fruit like a melon which, at certain times of the year do fall into the water and become birds.'

The barnacle goose legend, as Giraldus had realized, several hundreds of years earlier, provided an excellent excuse for eating goose on fast days. The Irish sense of humour has often come to their rescue, when living was hard and food scarce, so they clung to the belief in the generation of the barnacle goose from shellfish and thus were able to conform to the requirements of church discipline without offending their consciences.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: Edward A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Dover, 1970); W. Harter, *Birds: In Fact and Legend* (Sterling, 1979).

Above **Barnacle geese could be said to hatch from shellfish or trees, because no one had ever seen their nests (they breed north of the Arctic Circle)** ***Below*** **Aphrodite riding a goose: Greek, 5th century BC**

Anyone rash enough to gaze on the Gorgons was petrified, literally and metaphorically, for their gaze was so terrible that it turned the onlooker to stone

GORGONS

THE GREEKS APPLIED the name Gorgo or, less commonly, Gorgon to female monsters which are a favourite subject in their extant art, sometimes terrifying but sometimes, to all appearances, humorous. In mythology, the Gorgons figure chiefly in the story of Perseus. The ancient lore concerning them is most fully summed up in Apollodorus's *Library of Mythology*, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and in Lucan's *Pharsalia*. These accounts written between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD, are all late versions of the myth of Perseus, and depend on much older poetry, which has been lost. It is not known that there was ever a complete epic that described the adventures of Perseus in his quest for Medusa.

The scattered references to the Gorgon or Gorgons in earlier poetry and poetical fragments known to us are usually to the terrifying aspect of the Gorgon's head, as for instance in the *Odyssey* (book II) where Odysseus fears that Persephone may send up the Gorgon's head to confront him if he stays longer by the entrance of Hades. In Hesiod's poem *Shield of Hercules* the Gorgons are said to be represented on the shield pursuing Perseus as he flies away carrying the head of Medusa, which is so large that it covers all his back. After him rush Medusa's sisters, the other Gorgons, 'not to be approached and not to be described, eager to seize him. The shield rang sharp and shrill with a loud din as they trod on the pale adamant, on their belts were two serpents writhing and arching their necks and darting out their tongues and furiously gnashing their teeth as they savagely glared. And over the terrible heads of the Gorgons a great Dread quivered.'

The Three Sisters

This is the earliest continuous piece of poetry dealing with the Gorgons (except for the summary account of their origin and dwelling in Hesiod's *Theogony*). In the common versions of the myth of Perseus, at least in those which became accepted by such writers as Apollodorus, there were three Gorgon sisters, daughters of the ancient sea gods, Phorcys and Ceto, namely Stheno and Euryale, who were immortal, and Medusa who was mortal. According to most writers, they lived on the Atlantic shores of Africa, which seems to link them with the underworld, which was likewise placed in the far west. According to the philologists, the name Gorgons should once have denoted a terrible roaring or bellowing. But in Greek usage the name always suggests their glaring eyes.

Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae, grew up on the island of Seriphos, whose king Polydectes conceived a passion for Danae, while Perseus protected her. To get Perseus out of the way, Polydectes sent him to fetch the Gorgon's head, an enterprise which would, he hoped, lead him to his death. But Perseus was helped by Hermes and Athena. The nymphs gave Perseus the winged sandals of Hermes, the *kibisis*, apparently a large sack or wallet, and the cap of Hades which made its wearer invisible. Hermes also gave him the sickle (*harpe*), a special curved sword with which he was able to cut off the head of Medusa.

Once Famous for her Beauty

Perseus flew to the home of the monsters where he found the three Gorgons asleep, their heads covered with snakes instead of hair, and their mouths armed with great tusks like those of boars. Their gaze turned to stone all who beheld them. As they slept, Perseus stood over them, Athena guiding his hand, and looked away at a polished shield while he cut off the head of Medusa. From her as she died sprang forth the winged horse Pegasus. Perseus put the head into the sack and set off homeward, pursued by the other two Gorgons, who could not see him but tracked him by smell. They failed to catch him. On his way back he made use of the Gorgon's head against his enemies, and when he arrived at Seriphos he turned Polydectes and his followers to

'And over the terrible heads of the Gorgons, a great Dread quivered'; it seems likely that such fearsome creatures had a special connection with the underworld: Greek head of a Gorgon, from Syracuse in Sicily

C. M. Dixon

stone. He returned the sandals and other gifts to the nymphs and finally gave the head of Medusa to Athena to adorn her goatskin shield.

Though in Ovid and other writers Medusa is said to have been once famous for her beauty, she was grotesquely ugly when she had taken on the nature of a Gorgon. In art, particularly on vases and architectural ornaments, the Gorgons are shown in human form but with wings and very wide faces to contain their immense tusked mouths and thick lolling tongues. Their great eyes glare in an inhuman manner, sometimes like those of wild beasts and sometimes those of cuttlefish. Their pursuit of Perseus, as described in Hesiod, is often shown with the details that he gives. The *gorgoneion*, or gorgon-face, was one of many demon-faces that existed in archaic Greek art. One of its purposes as a magical object was to frighten away evil beings. It seems likely that the Gorgons have a special connection with the underworld because they are so lethal. If so, the expedition of Perseus might fall within the class called 'the harrowing of hell' (see HELL) to which the similar expedition of Hercules to Hades to fetch up Cerberus certainly belongs.

If the origins of the Gorgons are sought outside Greece, the most likely source is the Near East, Anatolia, Phoenicia or Mesopotamia, where religious art abounds in monsters. It has been plausibly suggested that the origin of the Gorgon face is in the Anatolian and Syrian sculptures of open-mouthed lions with lolling tongues which were attendant on the gods. Perseus has a connection with Joppa in Phoenicia, where he delivers Andromeda from the sea monster. His sickle-shaped sword, like that used by Cronus to castrate Uranus, is of Near Eastern origin.

FURTHER READING: Apollodorus, *Library of Mythology* (Loeb edn.); K. Schefold *Myth and Legend in Early Greek Art* (Thames & Hudson, 1966).

The gaze of the Gorgons turned all who beheld them to stone. Gorgon faces were common in archaic Greek art and were intended to frighten eway evil beings. Head from Didyma

Sonia Halliday

The Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral

Gospel
Literally 'good news', the doctrines preached by Christ and his apostles: the news of Christ's life and work in the accounts by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the evangelists (from a Greek word meaning 'good news'); all four gospels were probably composed before 100 AD, with Mark's the oldest, but the dates are disputed; the first three, which share a common view of Christ and his teaching are called 'synoptic'; the traditional symbols of the evangelists are respectively the man, lion, ox, and eagle.

For reasons which we can only speculate about today, a respectable Scottish farmer's wife spontaneously denounced herself as a witch in 1662. Her confession included stories of intercourse with the Devil and rides to fairyland

ISABEL GOWDIE

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

THE NAME of Isabel Gowdie continually crops up in surveys of British witchcraft. The completeness of her case ensures that a reference to her is in place over a wide range of topics – magic murder, wind-raising, 'shape-shifting', flying, sterility rites, coven membership, spirits, excursions to fairyland – the Gowdie case has them all, and more. For some writers she seems to represent a sort of ideal witch, a prototype, the product of the final wave of witch persecution, when the popular and legal image of the witch had been clearly defined and everyone, including the witch herself, knew just what was expected of her.

This is not, however, to suggest that Isabel Gowdie herself was a victim of one of those classic trials in which the weapons of intimidation, circumstantial evidence and the primary assumption of guilt combined to carry an innocent woman to her death. On the contrary, Gowdie's confession is famous, though not unique, for being totally spontaneous. Before she made it to the surprised and discomforted elders of Auldearne kirk in Morayshire in 1662, no one, not even her husband apparently, had suspected her of illicit practices. She made no attempt to dissemble or excuse herself but, like Agnes Sampson, another famous Scottish witch, had apparently decided to 'tell all'.

Mischief for Idle Hands

Isabel Gowdie was an attractive, red-headed girl, married to a farmer living on the edge of Lochloy near Auldearne. She seems to have married young, and quickly grew bored on the lonely farm: she was childless and it was said that her husband was a boorish man, her social inferior, lacking her wits and education. Nowadays we might say that Gowdie was neurotic because of the unsatisfying conditions of her life; in her own era it was believed, more literally, that Satan found mischief for idle hands to do. By her own account the 'man in grey' who in 1647 accosted her one day on the downs found her ready and even eager to follow him. He baptized her that same evening in Auldearne kirk, giving her the name of 'Janet', a typical non-Christian nickname. She dedicated herself to him, and he put a witch's mark upon her, sucking her blood.

This ceremony and its site, suggesting as it does a parody of the Christian ceremony, provides classic evidence for supporters of Dr Margaret Murray's view that the witchcraft cult was quite real and coherent, and that the similarities between it and Christian ritual date back jointly to one common primeval source of cult and myth. On this hypothesis, it is entirely possible that what Gowdie said on this and other subjects was substantially true, that she was indeed approached by a man who may or may not have been already known to her, and who was presumably the Devil-god of a local coven. Her acquiescence to his invitation would suggest that, whether the kirk elders knew of it or not, there was already a thriving organization of several covens in the neighbourhood, to which a number of local women belonged or were soon to belong.

'Each one of us has a Spirit to wait upon us, when we please to call upon him.' If they were real at all, these spirits may have been male members of the witch organization, dressed up. A witch with demonic spirits, by Ryckaert

In evidence, Gowdie was eventually to give their names (13 to a coven) and also the

names of the personal spirits or fairies who attended upon each:

> Ilk one of us has a Spirit to wait upon us, when we please to call upon him. I remember not all the Spirits' names; but there is one called Swein, which waits upon the said Margaret Wilson, in Auldearne; he is still (always) clothed in grass-green; and the said Margaret Wilson has a nickname called Pikle nearest the Wind. The next Spirit is called Rorie, who waits upon Bessie Wilson, in Auldearne; he is still clothed in yellow; and her nickname is Throw the Corn Yard . . . Jean Marten is Maid to the Coven that I am of; and her nickname is Over the Dyke with It, because the Devil always takes the Maiden in his hand next him, when we dance Gillatrypes; and when we would leap . . . he and she will say 'Over the Dyke with it!'

Her own Spirit, she added, was called the Read Riever and habitually wore black. She seems to have regarded these beings as supernaturals, but the 'spirits' were presumably, like the Devil himself, male members of the organization dressed up. The gay dances suggest the traditional rituals, such as 'follow-my-leader', and the circles 'widdershins', against the course of the sun. The meetings were apparently held regularly, with a grand meeting at the end of each quarter. They ended in the traditional phallic orgy, which has led some modern commentators to suppose that the whole business was the product of the disordered imaginations of frustrated women, but which equally supports the suggestion that the meetings represented a degenerate version of an ancient fertility cult.

Gowdie and her friends copulated with their spirits and also with the Devil himself. Her comments on the Devil's person suggests that some sort of artificial phallus of horn or leather may have been used: 'His members are exceeding great and long; no man's members are so long and big as they are . . . (he is) a meikle, black, rough man, very cold; and I found his nature as cold within me as spring-well water . . . He is abler for us that way than any man can be, only he is heavy like a malt-sack; a huge nature, very cold, as ice.'

Other activities on these occasions included eating, drinking, mischief-making and romping through the countryside. Once they entered a dye-works at Auldearne, and bewitched the vat so that ever afterwards it would only dye black, the Devil's colour. Isabel Gowdie claimed that she and other witches had the power to turn themselves into hares or cats, and said that once when she was a hare she was chased by dogs and only just escaped by running through her own house and out into another one.

She had a little horse on which she rode to meetings, crying to it 'Horse and Hattock in the Devil's name!' Or rather, she seems to have flown, though whether through the air like the traditional witch on a broomstick or simply skimming along the ground, 'even as straws would fly upon a highway', is not quite clear from her evidence. The impression given of covering great distances in an unorthodox manner with dreamlike ease is typical of witches' accounts of their travelling, and supports equally the theories that they were victims of total delusion or that the various toxic ointments with which they rubbed themselves, and the ceremonies in which they indulged, created in them a state of light-headedness; so that actual long journeys on foot or horseback did indeed pass for them in an effortless, timeless manner.

Visit to Fairyland

She described a visit to fairyland undertaken in this manner, a claim which would have appeared credible at that period, when respectable and sensible people in Scotland believed that fairies led a real existence, similar to and alongside man's own, though hidden away for the most part in fairy mounds and little-frequented uplands. It may be that there were actual, remote communities living in such places, hill-tribes who had been driven into retreat many centuries before by more advanced invaders (see FAIRIES). More probably, all such communities had died out long before the 17th century, but their legend survived and perhaps was applied to bands of outlaws. It is quite possible that Gowdie really did, as she said, visit their abode, since an understanding between local outlaws and local criminals is at least as likely, on a practical plane, as the supernatural connection between witches and fairies in which Gowdie herself believed. Although some contemporary commentators were inclined to believe that fairies were neither angels nor devils but 'of a middle nature', wanderers on the face of the earth – Isabel Gowdie was apparently in no doubt that fairy tribes were hosts of hell, and identifiable with the demonic spirits at coven meetings, one of whom was actually called Thomas a Faerie.

'I was in the downie hills . . . the hills opened, and we came to a fair and large braw room in the day time . . . and I got meat there from the Queen of Faerie, more than I could eat. The Queen of Faerie is brawly clothed in white linen, and in white and brown clothes; and the King of Faerie is a braw man, well favoured, and broad faced. There were elf-bulls, routing and skoyling up and down there, and affrighted me.' Here she saw the Devil making elf-bolts, those famous and lethal weapons which sound, from their description, like prehistoric flint arrowheads – another pointer to the fairies' ethnic origins: 'The Devil sharps them with his own hand, and delivers them to Elf-boys, who whittles and dights them with a sharp thing like a packing needle.' Later she herself was taught how to use them: 'We have no bow to shoot with, but span them from the nails of our thumbs.' The Devil took her and the others on what sounds like a coven outing; they shot and killed a ploughman and then Gowdie herself brought down a woman.

Murder by Magic

The Auldearne witches also achieved murder by the more devious traditional method of a clay image, the essential 'magic murder' which was a capital offence in Britain long before other witchcraft practices came into this category. The company in this case wished to destroy the Laird of Park's male children:

> John Taylor brought home the clay, his wife brake it very small, like meal, and sifted it with a sieve, and poured water among it, in the Devil's name, and wrought it very sore, like a rye-bowl (a rye-pudding); and made of it a picture of the Laird's sons. It had all the parts and marks of a child, such as head, eyes, nose, hands, feet, mouth, and little lips. It wanted no mark of a child; and the hands of it folded down by its sides . . . We laid the face of it to the fire till it strakened (shrank in the heat); and a clear fire round about it till it was red like a coal. After that we would roast it now and then; each other day there would be a piece of it well roasten. The Laird of Park's whole male children by it are to suffer, if it be not gotten and broken, as well as those that are born and dead already . . .

On another occasion Gowdie and several intimate friends dug up an unchristened child in the graveyard; the object seems to have been to use it in spells rather than to offer it to the Devil in direct sacrifice. They shared the body with another coven, as a generous folk doctor might share a rare herb he had collected. Their own piece they buried in the middens of a neighbouring farmer, as a means of magically 'taking' his crops. By other long-distance charms they similarly 'took' milk from cows, but they do not seem to have had the milk or crops for themselves, or to have derived any personal benefit from their spells other than the pleasure of seeing the farmers discomforted.

Apart from the vandalism of these acts there is an alternative aspect: what was sterile and 'wasted' to the victim of the witches' attentions could fairly be said to be 'fertile' to the Devil-god who was supposed to be the mystic recipient of the goods thus wasted. In much of the behaviour of the Auldearne covens there seems to be an element of mysticism, however debased, a concept of serving the master with a logic in it beyond mere evil-doing, a hint of ritual sacrifice. Such ideas seem to be behind Gowdie's miniature ploughing session, a famous example of 'sterility magic', when she and her cronies used toads as oxen, couch-grass as the traces and the horn of a castrated ram as the ploughshare. All the accessories are carefully chosen to suggest sterility but the action of ploughing itself is clearly an imitative fertility-bringing ritual. Presumably the witches were 'taking' the land they ploughed for the Devil to sow his own harvest there.

Sacrificial Victim?

Some fifteen years after the 'man in grey' first appeared to her, Isabel Gowdie appears to have tired of her occult activities; or perhaps it was some secret squabble which led her to dramatic revelations, in which she inculpated herself and a number of others. 'Alas,' she was to tell the court at the trial in 1662, 'I deserve not to be sitting here, for I have done so many evil deeds, especially killing of men . . . I deserve to be riven upon iron harrows, and worse if it could be devised.' Was this mere histrionics, the self-dramatization of a personality who,

Isabel Gowdie said she flew to the witches' gatherings on a horse, though whether they flew through the air or skimmed over the surface of the ground is not clear. A famous picture of witches flying, by Goya

Mansell Collection

for years, had fed on the heady ideal of its own evil power?

Psychologically she is a most interesting puzzle. If we are to believe that, even in her confession, she was still serving the ends of her Satanic master, it is arguable that she *wanted* at this point to die, and that she may even have been elected by her coven as the sacrificial victim in a decadent version of the immemorial pagan rite – the killing of a god-substitute in order to ensure the reigning 'god's' continuity.

Seeker of Limelight

An alternative explanation of her behaviour is that something caused a complete change of heart in her, and that her words of repentance were genuine. A number of the women arraigned before the court were obviously confused or senile but this does not seem to have been the case with Gowdie, who impressed everyone with her apparent sanity and coherence. There is no sign of her 'confession' being a tale that grew and altered with the telling; in the course of four separate examinations she never once contradicted herself.

The most likely answer is that she was emotionally abnormal, a seeker of limelight with only a theoretical grasp either of the reality of other people's lives or of the punishments that might be meted out to her, but certainly not mad by the criteria of her own society, or perhaps, ours. Her tale obviously contains elements of fantasy, possibly drug-induced – the flying, the shape-shifting – but probably also a strong basis of fact. Most witches, and Gowdie is no exception, commonly confessed to forms of witchery that were already well-recognized. It was as if they were bent, in practice as well as in 'make-belief', on fulfilling a legend already there for them.

GILLIAN TINDALL

FURTHER READING: Christina Hole, *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (Rowman, 1977) and *Witchcraft in England* (Collier-Macmillan, 1966); M. W. Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies* (Octagon Books, 1972).

Grace

In Christian theology, the undeserved favour of God which grants a man salvation; in the New Testament usually translates the Greek *charis* (see GRACES): views of it have differed considerably in different Christian denominations; St Paul says, 'For by grace you have been saved by faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God' (Ephesians 2.8): a 'state of grace' is the condition of being free of sin and inspired by the strengthening goodwill of God.

Graces

The three *Charites* (plural of *charis*) of Greek mythology, Aglaia (the radiant), Thalia (the flowering) and Euphrosyne (joy), personifications of grace and charm, companions of the love goddess; originally there were more than three of them and they stood for the joy and beauty of fertile Nature; associated with flowers, especially the rose and the myrtle; later, they conferred on human beings not only beauty and charm but also wisdom, intellectual power and artistic ability.

GRAIL

The knights of the Round Table rode out in search of the Grail, the precious relic of Christ which was guarded in a mysterious castle. But in the end the winning of the Grail brought the end of their fellowship

FULL OF ADVENTURE and excitement, of wonders and enchantments, the stories of the Grail are particularly enthralling for their air of mystery, of some tremendous secret that is hinted at but not revealed. We are not told exactly what the Grail means. It is unimaginably sacred, unimaginably precious. It is the fruit of blessedness, the essence of all sweetness, the perfection of paradise, the centre of high secrets and mysteries, but essentially its secrets are 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'.

The origins of the Grail have been searched for in Christianity, in paganism, in Byzantine, Persian, Jewish and Mohammedan traditions. Traces of gnostic ideas have been revealed, and hints of possible Templar and Cathar influences. For the different stories that have come down to us vary very considerably, and the great American authority R. S. Loomis plaintively observed that 'the authors of the Grail texts seem to delight in contradicting each other on the most important points.'

The stories contradict each other because there is no single Grail legend but a number of variants embroidering on not one but several themes. They tend to be rambling and inconsistent because they were originally told, not written. They are part of the larger mass of Arthurian legends, with their remote origins in Celtic paganism, spread through western Europe by travelling story-tellers who altered the stories, forgetting or misunderstanding parts of them, inventing other parts, and giving the tales a new emphasis and a new significance (see ARTHUR).

Shorn for the moment of most of their enticing details, the Grail legends are basically about a knight who comes to an eerie and magnificent castle which is the home of a crippled king, the Fisher King or Maimed King. In the castle the hero sees a magic sword and a lance which is dripping blood. During a lavish feast he

Essentially its secrets are 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate'

Birmingham Art Gallery

Vision of the Holy Grail, detail from a tapestry by William Morris, to the design of Burne-Jones. The Grail is shown as the cup of the Last Supper. An angel holds two other sacred objects of the legends, the dish and the lance. Galahad kneels at the door of the chapel while Bors and Perceval, who were less spiritually perfect, are further off

sees the Grail itself, variously described as a dish, a cup, a ciborium (the vessel in which the sacred host is kept, a cup with an arched cover surmounted by a cross), or even as a stone. The Grail is carried in procession during the feast, or sometimes itself serves the feast. The hero is supposed to ask a question. If he fails to ask it, he has failed in his quest and calamities follow. If he asks the right question, the Fisher King is healed and, in some versions, the Waste Land which he rules is once again restored to fertility.

The Otherworld Quest

Looming dimly in the background behind the medieval legends are older Irish and Welsh stories in which a hero visits the otherworld, sees its marvels and mysteries, and sometimes seizes one of its treasures. The close connection between the Grail and feasting is one of the clues to its origins in Celtic mythology, which is rich in 'vessels of plenty', magic vessels which provide limitless quantities of food and drink. Feasting was one of the great Celtic pleasures and naturally the feasting in the otherworld was beyond anything to be found in this one. The smith god Goibniu, for instance, brewed beer in a cauldron for an otherworld feast which made everyone who took part in it immortal (see CAULDRON). In many mythologies it is the food and drink of the otherworld which keeps its inhabitants forever young.

The magic vessel of plenty is not always a cauldron. It may be a dish, like the platter of Rhydderch the Generous which instantly provided the food anyone wanted, according to a 16th century list of the Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain. In *Culhwch and Olwen* (one of the stories in the Welsh collection called the *Mabinogion*) four magic vessels have to be obtained for Culhwch's wedding feast: a

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence

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Entry of the Grail

And then the king and all estates went home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong to the great minster, and so after upon that to supper, and every knight sat in his own place as they were toforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought the place should all to-drive. In the midst of this blast entered a sunbeam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other, by their seeming, fairer than ever they saw afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the Holy Grail covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world. And when the Holy Grail had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became: then had they all breath to speak. And then the king yielded thankings to God, of His good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the king, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly for that he hath shewed us this day, at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost.

Sir Thomas Malory *Le Morte D'Arthur*

cup in which is the best of all drink; a platter or table on which everyone would find the meat that he wanted; a horn for pouring out the drink; and the cauldron of Diwrnach the Irishman, for boiling the meat. The variety of Celtic vessels of plenty may be one reason for the later variations in the shape of the Grail.

The cauldron of Diwrnach was stolen from Ireland by Arthur and his men. It was probably an otherworld cauldron originally, for the same list of the Thirteen Treasures includes the Cauldron of Tyrnoc (or Dyrnawg) the Giant, which would boil food for a brave man but not for a coward. A similar otherworld cauldron was seized by Arthur in a Welsh poem called *The Spoils of Annwn*. 'The cauldron of the Chief of Annwn, what is its nature? Blue round its rim and pearls; it will not boil the food of a coward. . . .'

Another celebrated cauldron is the one which belonged to Bran the Blessed (see BRAN). According to the story of *Branwen* (also in the *Mabinogion*) this cauldron restored the dead to life: 'a man of thine slain today, cast him into the cauldron, and by tomorrow he will be as well as he was at the best, save only that he will not have power of speech.' This cauldron's failure to restore speech may have something to do with the failure of some of the Grail heroes to speak at the crucial moment of the quest.

Bran was probably the prototype of the Fisher King, whose name in some of the medieval romances is Bron. The son of a sea god, he died from a poisoned spear wound in the foot, which might be the origin of the Fisher King's crippling wound in the thighs. His head was cut off and taken by his companions to a great hall, where they passed a joyous 80 years in its company, never seeming to grow any older. This scene seems to reappear in the French romance *Perlesvaus*, written c 1225, in which Gawain sits down to feast in the Fisher King's hall with 12 knights, each of whom was 100 years old but none of them looked more than 40.

The Grail's close connection with eating and drinking probably stems from its remote origins among pagan magic vessels of plenty. Christianized as the container of the body or blood of Christ *Above* Joseph of Arimathea, the first custodian of the Grail, bearing the Christ-child (the sacred host); before him is the Holy Lance which pierced Christ's side on the cross, described in the legends as ceaselessly dripping blood *Below* The Grail appears to the knights of the Round Table and provides each man with the food he most desires: it is shown in this 14th century French MS as a ciborium, the container of the consecrated host

At the Grail Castle

The oldest surviving romance of the Grail is the unfinished *Conte del Graal* (or *Roman de Perceval*), written c 1180 by the French poet Chrétien de Troyes, who says that he based it on a book his noble patron had given him. The principal hero is Perceval, an uncouth young man who was brought up in seclusion by his widowed mother in the remote wilds of Wales, from which he made his way to Arthur's court. He knew nothing of the ways of the world but was advised by an older knight not to talk too much or pester people with questions.

Trying to find his way home again, worried by the fact that his mother had fainted when he left her, Perceval came to a river and saw a man fishing from a boat. The fisherman invited Perceval to his castle nearby. At the castle, a squire came in, carrying a white lance which dripped blood from its point. Curious but mindful of advice, Perceval asked no questions. Next a beautiful girl came in, carrying in her hands 'a grail', made of gold, set with jewels and giving off an intensely brilliant light. The company sat down to eat and with each course the Grail passed before them but Perceval reigned in his curiosity and 'did not ask concerning the grail, whom one served with it.'

Perceval was shown politely to bed but next morning the castle was completely deserted. He rode out over the drawbridge, which was promptly raised behind him. He shouted to whoever had raised it but there was no answer. Riding away into the forest, he met a maiden who told him that the castle belonged to the rich Fisher King, who had been wounded in battle by a javelin which pierced both his thighs. He was now crippled and fishing was his only pastime. Perceval had done ill by not asking about the lance, and worse by not asking about the Grail, for his questions would have cured the Fisher King 'and much good would have come of it'. What held his tongue was his sin against his mother, who had died of grief for him.

Perceval returned to Arthur's court, where a hideously ugly damsel – 'never was there creature so loathly save in hell' – rode in on a mule to reproach him. 'Fortune is bald behind, but has a forelock in front . . . you did not seize Fortune when you met her.' He should have asked why the lance bled and who was 'the rich man whom one served with the grail.' If the Fisher King is not healed, 'Ladies will lose their husbands, lands will be laid waste . . . and many knights will die.'

Perceval was determined to discover the answers to the two questions. For five years he rode out, proving his mettle in many a strange adventure, but in all this time he never went into a church or worshipped God. One Good Friday he met a knight who reproached him for bearing arms on the day Christ died. Perceval went to a holy hermit to confess his sins. The hermit told him that the one who was served with the Grail was the father of the Fisher King. What it served him with, and all that he lived on, was the sacred host. On this diet he had lived 15 years without ever quitting his room. The hermit told Perceval to 'believe in God, love God, worship God', to go to church and to serve his fellow men. At this point the story breaks off.

The Question

Partly because it is unfinished, the story raises more difficulties than it solves. The lance is not explained, nor why the question should heal the Fisher King. Confusingly, there are two kings in the castle (as in many of the later romances). There are three different explanations of Perceval's silence. The Grail is described at the end as a large dish on which the sacred host is served to the Fisher King's father, but most uncanonically by a woman instead of a priest. All the same, it is a hauntingly powerful story.

Some authorities doubt whether Chrétien himself wrote the last part of the tale but as we have it, at any rate, it is clearly not a pagan story, even though it uses motifs which were originally pagan. This is driven home by the sound Christian advice which the hermit gives Perceval at the end.

In the legends the Grail and the Lance are both connected with the body and blood of Christ, torn and spilled to save men from death and the Devil, and also the sacramental food and drink of the Mass, in which Christ himself was present, the sustenance which a Christian should most desire. Angels collecting the crucified Christ's blood in cups, as Joseph of Arimathea was said to have collected it in the Grail

One of the pagan motifs is the question Perceval should have asked, 'Who is served with the Grail?' A similar question is asked in an Irish story known as *The Phantom's Frenzy*, existing only in a 16th century manuscript but possibly dating from the 11th. The hero, Conn of the Hundred Battles, goes to the hall of the sun god Lug, where he sees a vessel of gold, a vat of silver and a golden cup. A girl in a golden crown serves Conn with food but before giving him ale she asks, 'To whom shall this cup be given?' Lug answers, 'Serve it to Conn of the Hundred Battles'. As she keeps repeating the question, Lug names each of Conn's descendants who will rule Ireland after him. At the end Lug and his hall vanish.

The Blood of God

After Chrétien's death, other authors turned their attention to the Grail legends and the old pagan themes were increasingly Christianized. Chrétien's *Conte* itself was continued in four different sequels. In the First Continuation (probably before 1200) Gawain sees the 'rich grail', which moves about by itself at the feast, serving each course and filling the wine-cups. The lord of the castle explains that the lance which bleeds is the Holy Lance with which a Roman soldier pierced Christ on the cross, 'and at once there came out blood and water' (John 19.34).

Gawain is also told that the broken sword he had earlier seen in the castle is the one which destroyed the whole realm of Logres (Britain). At this point Gawain, most irritatingly, falls asleep and the rest of the explanation is lost, but an interpolation by another author brings in Joseph of Arimathea, the rich Jew who took Christ's body from the cross for burial (see also GLASTONBURY). Joseph caused the Grail to be made and took it to Calvary, where he caught in it the blood that flowed down over the feet of the crucified Jesus. After Joseph's death the precious vessel passed on to his descendants, down to the Rich Fisher.

Joseph D'Arimathie, c 1200, by the Burgundian poet Robert de Borron, says Joseph used the Grail to collect the blood of Christ crucified and that it was the same chalice which Jesus used at the Last Supper, when he took a cup and the apostles drank of it and he said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many'

Kunst und Museums Bibliothek der Stadt, Köln

Ronald Sheridan

'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.' The belief that the cup of the Last Supper was guarded somewhere in secret was an immensely exciting one in an age which believed in the miraculous power of sacred relics. The Last Supper vessel in the unusual form of a two-handled jug, from St Clement's at Ohrid, Yugoslavia, 13th century

(Mark 14.24). With his brother-in-law, Hebron or Bron, Joseph left Palestine for foreign lands. He founded the table and service of the Grail, which only those who believe in the Trinity and lead clean lives may attend, and there they have everything their hearts desire. An empty seat at the table, corresponding to the seat of Judas at the Last Supper, is reserved for a descendant of Bron (this is the Siege Perilous which Galahad would later fill). On the Grail table is a fish, the symbol of Christ, placed there by Bron, who in consequence is called the Rich Fisher.

Fruit of Blessedness

Both the Lance and the Grail have now been connected with the blood of Jesus, the blood which was spilled to save men from death and the Devil. The Grail itself has been identified as the cup of the first Mass, containing the wine which was not merely figuratively but in all reality the life-blood of God. Most of the great relics of the life and death of Jesus had been found, or at least it was believed they had been found, and the idea that the cup of the Last Supper was still in existence and was guarded somewhere in secret was an immensely exciting one in an age which believed in the miraculous power of relics. What had been long before a magic vessel of plenty, which in giving food gave immortal life in the otherworld, was now the Christian vessel which gave immortality, the heavenly life after death of the faithful Christian.

Not that all the remaining romances identified the Grail as a cup, far from it. In another variation on Perceval's adventures, *Parzival* by the Bavarian poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, written c 1200–1212, the hero comes to the Maimed King's hall and sees the Grail, 'which surpasses all earthly perfection'. The company sit down to feast and 'whatsoever one reached his hand for, he found it ready, in front of the Grail, food warm or food cold, dishes new or old, meat tame or game . . . for the Grail was the fruit of blessedness, such abundance of the sweetness of the world that its delights were very like what we are told of the kingdom of heaven.'

Parzival refrains from asking questions 'for courtesy's sake', because it would be impolite, but later he is reproached for callousness towards his crippled host. 'You should have felt pity for your host, on whom God has wrought such terrible wonders, and have asked the cause of his suffering.'

The Grail, it turns out, is a stone. 'There never was a human so ill but that, if he one day sees that stone, he cannot die within the week that follows. And in looks he will not fade. His appearance will stay the same . . . the same as when the best years of his life began, and though he should see the stone for 200 years, it will never change, save that his hair might perhaps turn grey. Such power does the stone give a man that flesh and blood are at once made young again.' From the stone 'derives whatever good fragrances of food and drink there are on the earth, like to the perfection of Paradise. I mean all things the earth may bear. And further the stone provides whatever game lives beneath the heavens, whether it flies or runs or swims.'

The parallel with the pagan vessels of plenty is very clear and the Grail castle recalls the pagan otherworld, where there is no aging and no disease, and where the immortals feast on whatever they like best. But the Grail is now a stone, which resembles the Philosophers' Stone of the alchemists. It too surpassed all earthly perfection, cured disease, and kept its possessor forever young. It is likely that Wolfram was also indebted to the stone in a legend of Alexander the Great, the stone which was heavier than any quantity of gold but, when a little dust was sprinkled on it, was lighter than a feather, and which was an object-lesson in the renunciation of worldly pride and ambition (see ALEXANDER THE GREAT).

The Waste Land

In a brilliant book, *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) which was influenced by Frazer's *Golden Bough* and which in turn influenced T. S. Eliot's poem 'The Waste Land', Jessie L. Weston argued that the central themes of the Grail legends were connected with pagan fertility ritual, the restoration to vigorous life of the dying god of vegetation; that the Fisher King was so named because the fish is a symbol of swarming life; and that beneath the surface of the legends can be discerned the rites and symbols of a secret cult, which had transmuted primitive fertility ritual into an 'initiation into the secret of Life, physical and spiritual'. The sacred objects of the legends were the sacred symbols of the cult: the dish from which the worshipper ate the communal meal, the lance and cup together as symbols of male and female, the sources of physical life, and the Holy Grail itself as the source of spiritual life.

The majority of scholars have rejected this theory, for lack of adequate evidence of the existence of any such cult. What is generally accepted, however, is that the theme of the Waste Land preserves the ancient belief that the fertility of the land depended on the life, vigour and sexual potency of the ruler. In Chrétien the Fisher King is wounded in both thighs, which is thought to be a euphemism for the genitals.

So long as the king was maimed, no crops were sown, no child was born, no meadow turned green, no beast or bird bore young

In Wolfram's *Parzival* there is no euphemism: the Maimed King was pierced through the testicles by a poisoned spear.

In a comparatively late romance, *Sone de Nansai*, dating from after 1250, the Fisher King – usually said to be a descendant of Joseph of Arimathea – is identified with Joseph himself. When God wounded him in the loins, to punish him for marrying a heathen princess of Norway, the land of Logres fell under an enchantment. So long as the king was maimed, no crops were sown, no child was born, no meadow turned green, no beast or bird bore young.

In the *Suite du Merlin*, of c 1230, it is the lance of the Grail castle which deals what Malory later called 'the dolorous stroke'. The hero Balaain (Balin in Malory) came to the castle of King Pellehan. Attacked by the king and searching hurriedly for a weapon with which to defend himself, he found a lance standing point downwards in a vessel of silver and gold. He snatched up the lance and drove it through Pellehan's thighs. Instantly the walls of the castle collapsed. Outside, Balaain found that the trees had fallen, the crops were destroyed and the inhabitants were all dead. From that time on the land came to be called the Waste Land.

Logically, the all-important question which the hero must ask at the Grail castle ought to heal the Fisher King and restore the Waste Land to bloom. In some of the romances it does, but in by no means all (and there is no suggestion of the question restoring an arid land to fertility in the Irish story of *The Phantom's Frenzy*). In Chrétien, the Waste Land is not mentioned at all or, at most, is only hinted at. We are told that if the Fisher King is not healed, 'lands will be laid waste,' but this seems to be seen as the result of coming wars, not of infertility.

In the First Continuation Gawain succeeds in restoring the fertility of the Waste Land by asking about the lance. But even so, he has not fully achieved the quest for if he had stayed awake long enough to ask about the Grail, 'no one could tell the great joy that would have come of asking.'

The more determinedly Christian the intentions of the author, the more the Waste Land theme is thrust into the background, presumably because of its obvious pagan connotations. The *Queste del Saint Graal* says that the father of the Maimed King was killed by the blow of a sword, which unleashed such wrack and ruin that 'never again did the land requite the ploughman's toil, for no corn sprouted there, nor any other crop, nor did the trees bear fruit, and there was a dearth of fish in pond and stream.' Later, the Maimed King himself tried to draw the same sword from its sheath and was instantly transfixed through the thighs by a flying lance. But though the Grail-winner, Galahad, heals the Maimed King nothing is said of restoring the Waste Land. On the contrary, the Grail itself is taken away from the land altogether.

End of the Fellowship

In the *Queste* the Grail is the dish from which Christ ate the Passover lamb with his disciples. It was brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea and was guarded by his descendants at their castle of Corbenic. It retains some of its earlier functions, for the sight of it heals the sick and when it appears at King Arthur's court it provides each person with the food he desires. But Arthur and his knights are told that the quest of the Grail 'is no search for earthly things but a seeking out of the mysteries and hidden sweets of our Lord, the divine secrets which the most high Master will disclose . . .'

The *Queste* is part of the compilation called the Prose *Lancelot* (1215–1230), which deals with the adventures of Lancelot and his love affair with Guinevere. There are warnings in the *Lancelot* that his adultery with Guinevere will debar him from achieving the Grail, and the author of the *Queste* invented a new character as the Grail-winner, Galahad, who was 'so grounded in the love of Christ that no adventure could tempt him into sin.'

When his knights swore the quest of the Grail, King Arthur lamented that this meant the end of the fellowship of the Round Table. He was right, for the *Queste*'s author intended Galahad's success to be a demonstration of the superiority of Christian ideals and the inadequacy of the worldly ideals of romantic chivalry. The one knight who is utterly dedicated to God and entirely free from any contamination of worldliness is the only one who fully achieves the quest.

Galahad, Perceval and Bors receive Mass from the Grail at the hands of the crucified Christ himself and 'it seemed as though the essence of all sweetness was housed within their bodies.' But only to Galahad was revealed at that moment 'those things that the heart of mortal man cannot conceive nor tongue relate, my heart was ravished with such joy and bliss . . . for so great a host of angels was before me and such a multitude of heavenly beings, that I was translated in that moment from the earthly plane to the celestial . . .'

Here the supreme experience of the Grail is the vision of union with God, the discovery of the 'secret and hidden wisdom of God' which St Paul had preached: 'what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Corinthians, chapter 2). The Grail has translated Galahad from the barren Waste Land of life in this temporal and imperfect world to the eternal rapture of heaven.

Malory took the bulk of his Grail material for the *Morte D'Arthur* from the *Queste*. The Grail is taken away from Britain because of the sinfulness of the inhabitants. Galahad dies and the Grail is carried up into heaven. This is immediately followed by Lancelot's return to Guinevere and the public denunciation of the lovers. The knights divide into warring factions, the fellowship of the Round Table is destroyed and Arthur's reign comes to its bitter close.

(See also GALAHAD; GAWAIN; LANCELOT; PARSIFAL.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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A philandering priest, a web of political intrigue and the unhealthy atmosphere of a French convent formed an explosive combination which manifested itself in outbreaks of alleged demonic possession

URBAIN GRANDIER

BORN IN 1590 at Bouère near Le Mans, Urbain Grandier was educated by the Jesuits at Bordeaux. He entered the priesthood and in 1617 was appointed parish priest of St Pierre de Marché in Loudun, Vienne. Grandier was a handsome, attractive man of cultivated tastes who despite his calling had an eye for young women: a worldly type of priest, not uncommon in 17th century France. Unfortunately he lacked discretion in the conduct of his affairs, while his unguarded tongue made him many enemies.

In time his affairs became so notorious that they attracted attention in high places; matters came to a head in 1630 when he not only carried on a scandalous relationship with Madeleine de Brou, one of his young penitents, but was accused of being the father of an illegitimate child born to Philippa Trincant, daughter of the public prosecutor of Loudun. Trincant lodged a complaint against Grandier and persuaded La Rocheposay, Bishop of Poitiers, who disliked Grandier, to arrest him. On 2 June 1630 Grandier was charged with immorality and found guilty, but succeeded in persuading Archbishop Sourdis of Bordeaux to free him and lift his suspension from clerical duties.

Grandier returned to Loudun to find that his opponents had joined forces with Father Mignon, a priest who held the post of confessor to the nuns of a small Ursuline convent at Loudun and who was an old enemy of his. A conspiracy was apparently hatched to damage Grandier further by persuading some of the sisters that they were possessed by demons and to confess under exorcism that Father Grandier had bewitched them. Sister Jeanne des Anges, the Mother Superior, co-operated willingly and soon she and several other nuns gave bizarre signs of demonic possession, going into convulsions,

National Film Archive

adopting erotic postures, holding their breaths and distorting their faces and voices. One of the nuns at the height of an attack mentioned Grandier's name and soon several others began saying that Grandier was the cause of their possession. They claimed that the demons tormenting them had whispered the name of the parish priest of Saint Pierre, and Sister Jeanne herself confirmed his guilt, saying that her nuns were possessed by two devils, Asmodeus and Zabulon, at the bidding of Father Grandier. Gradually the story grew and became elaborated. The motive commonly imputed to Grandier for the alleged possession was thwarted ambition, a desire to revenge himself on the nuns because Jeanne des Anges was known to be opposing his advancement.

Alarmed at the growing scandal, in 1633 Monsignor Sourdis stepped in and again came to Grandier's rescue. He sent his own doctor to Loudun who pronounced that the nuns were not possessed and forbade Father Mignon to practise any further exorcism, 'as well as everybody else to interfere in exorcism under pain of losing their rights'. These sensible measures put a stop, as if by magic, to the nuns' convulsions.

Bewitched by a Bunch of Roses

Although peace was apparently restored at the convent, the conspiracy continued to fester. A relative of Sister Jeanne des Anges named Jean de Laubardemont, an agent of the Crown and a close supporter of Cardinal Richelieu, was sent to Loudun on government business. Learning that Grandier had published a satire which had infuriated the Cardinal and also that one of the nuns in the now notorious convent was related to his master, he reported back for orders to Richelieu.

For purely political motives, Richelieu wished to revive the institution of the Inquisition; he wanted to stage great public exorcisms which would impress the Protestants and clear the way for revoking the Edict of Nantes, under which freedom of worship was permitted to all demoninations. Seeing in Father Grandier's case an opportunity to instigate such a trial at Loudun – and at the same time to pay off an old personal score – he gave orders to Laubardemont to form a handpicked commission to arrest and convict Grandier.

To gain witnesses to support the original case against him, the Crown agent appointed three priests to exorcize the nuns publicly; under the ministrations of Father Surin, a Jesuit, Father Lactance, a Franciscan, and the Capuchin Father Tranquille, the women repeated their accusations of possession, displaying renewed symptoms of even greater intensity than in the previous outbreak. Grandier himself was coerced into exorcising the nuns, since it was alleged that it was he who was responsible for their condition. Besides the original charge of causing the nuns' possession, Grandier was accused of committing incest, sacrilege and other crimes, even in the church precincts, and some sixty witnesses were found to attest to these crimes. The Mother Superior herself swore that the nuns had been bewitched by Father Grandier tossing a bouquet of roses over the convent walls.

Even at this stage, Grandier appears to have totally underestimated the power of the forces ranged against him and to have considered that he had little to fear since the offences with which he was charged were imaginary. On 30 November 1633 he was suddenly thrown into prison in the castle of Angers. Proof of his guilt was immediately sought in the form of 'Devil's Marks' – spots on the body that were insensitive to pain, and found on four areas of his body; a not surprising result in the light of a later account by Nicholas Aubin who maintained that the method employed was to stab the priest with a lancet in one place causing a sharp pain, and then immediately after, using the blunt end of the instrument, touch him lightly elsewhere, predictably causing no reaction.

At the trial, in 1634, Richelieu's calculated choice of an investigating committee to handle the case, in place of the normal secular court procedure, denied Grandier his legal right to appeal to the Paris *parlement* and led to a complete travesty of justice. When the Bailli of Loudun led a public protest against the very irregular procedure, the movement was quashed by Laubardemont who represented it as a criticism of the King, and hence treasonable. All evidence in support of the priest's innocence of the charges was disregarded and pressure was brought to bear on a number of would-be witnesses for the defence, to induce them to keep silent on pain of incriminating themselves as witches. Several of the nuns had a change of heart and attempted to recant their previous statements, but the court refused to allow them to be heard. Jeanne des Anges herself was refused a hearing when it became evident that she wished to disclaim her previous evidence.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Left **After a frenzy of demonic possession, Jeanne des Anges and her nuns lie prostrate in submission while prayers are offered for their release from the grip of devils; from *Mother Joan of the Angels*, a film about the Loudun case *Right* Urbain Grandier was burned alive in 1634 for bewitching the nuns of Loudun**

Proof of Grandier's guilt in the form of an alleged pact with the Devil, signed by Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Leviathan and Astaroth, was produced by the prosecution, who asserted in all seriousness that the document had been stolen by the demon Asmodeus from the Devil's own files. When it was shown in Court, the words were found to be written from right to left, in 'mirror writing', following the widely held belief that devils performed most actions in reverse to show their hostility to Christianity.

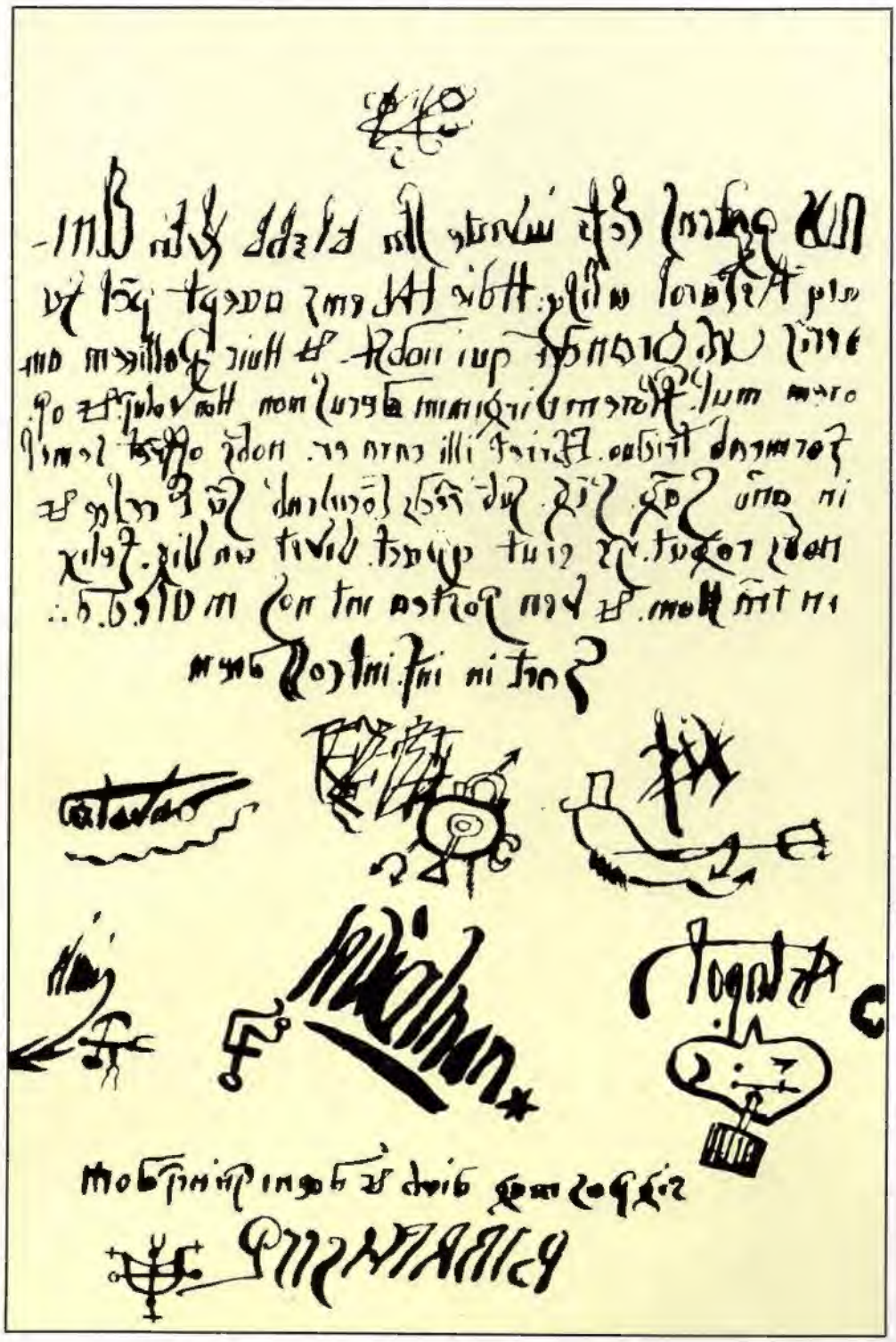
Judgement was pronounced on 18 August and Grandier was found guilty of the crimes of magic, maleficia (attempting to do harm by witchcraft) and causing several nuns to be possessed by demons. Sentence was passed, the priest being condemned to be tortured according to the 'first and last degrees', with the purpose of forcing him to incriminate others. After this, on the day of his execution, he was to ask God's pardon before the door of St Pierre, and then be taken to the public square of St Croix and burned alive.

Grandier's extraordinary dignity and courage under torture – a contemporary writer records that this was so extreme that the marrow oozed out of his broken bones – served merely to infuriate his persecutors, in particular the Capuchin friars. Grandier refused to gain remission by naming imaginary accomplices and although he had been assured that he would be strangled before reaching the fire, the rope was knotted in such a way by the friars that it could not be drawn tight enough: he was burned alive.

Today Grandier's innocence is no longer in doubt, even among Roman Catholic authorities who accept that there were several authentic cases of possession. Even before the publication in 1880 of Dr Legne's *Urbain Grandier*, containing contemporary documents, the case had been summed up 20 years earlier by Abbe Lécanu, who wrote: 'it must be admitted . . . that apart from the evidence of the possessed, who never described a single act capable of being proved, there cannot be found in the enormous dossiers on this affair any proof, any indication that he ever entered into any traffic with Satan' (*Histoire de Satan*, 1861). Indeed among Grandier's own contemporaries many theologians were shocked by the contradiction of the evidence which led to his sentence; according to all Christian tradition Satan is an eternal liar, yet in the eyes of the committee which tried Grandier, Satan became an essential witness.

A Demon Named Zabulon

After Urbain Grandier's death the authorities were faced with the embarrassing situation that not only did the possessions continue, affecting indeed the Mother Superior herself, but the agitation had spread beyond Loudun. The government was being lampooned and scurrilous songs were being sung about the Cardinal. If only to justify Grandier's execution, it became imperative to exorcize Jeanne des Anges. An intelligent and saintly man, Father Jean Joseph Surin, was appointed her spiritual adviser; his memoirs taken together with Jeanne's autobiography, throw some light on her personality and the extraordinary events at Loudun. 'I was more determined than ever,' wrote Father Surin, 'to follow the path of penitence and prayer in making these nuns serve God with more fervour than before'. He offered himself to God 'to be burdened with Jeanne des Anges' evil and to feel all the sensations so far as being possessed by the Devil, provided it pleases his divine goodness'. This close association, in which the exorcist and victim, as it were, exchanged roles, went some way to healing Jeanne's soul. She began to have mystical visions of God and not all of these appear to have been invented, although undoubtedly some were embellished.



Formal agreement, signed by the demons Satanas, Beelzebub, Lucifer, Elimi and Astaroth, promising Grandier the love of women, wealth and worldly honours in return for his allegiance. Written backwards and from right to left because demons do everything in reverse, this document was produced in evidence at Grandier's trial

Under the Jesuit Father's spiritual direction, considerable success was also achieved in exorcizing the nuns who were still possessed. The withdrawal of the 'pension' which Richelieu had granted to the possessed nuns for testifying against Grandier, when the Cardinal lost interest in the case, brought about further improvement. Unfortunately, Father Surin was recalled by the Jesuits before Jeanne's demons were completely exorcized. A demon named Zabulon whispered to her that he would never leave her except at the tomb of St Francis de Sales. After Jeanne made a visit to Italy to visit the tomb, the demon duly departed and by 1638, four years after Grandier's death, the possession had been won over.

A number of explanations, in the light of modern knowledge, could account for the extraordinary behaviour of Jeanne des Anges and her nuns. It is still debated whether she was really possessed, a fraud, a hysteric, or possibly an epileptic.

Undoubtedly there was a strong exhibitionist streak in her nature. 'The Devil', she wrote, 'often tricked me with a little pact that I had gyrations and other peculiar things he did with my body. I took tremendous pleasure in hearing people talk about it and I easily appeared worse than others'. In rare moments of honesty she confessed: 'Very often I realized very clearly that I was the prime cause of my troubles and that the demon only acted according to the cues I gave him'.

The events in her life which led up to and followed her involvement in the Grandier trial illumine, if they do not explain, her part in this extraordinary drama.

Born Jeanne de Belcier, of moderately wealthy parents living in the western province of Saintonge in 1602, as a child she was physically handicapped with one shoulder higher than the other. It could perhaps be argued that her desire to compensate for this personal defect led to the exhibitionist tendencies and disturbed fantasies which became apparent in later life. The Abbey of Saintes where she went to school from the age of ten to fifteen, and where one of her aunts was prioress, asked her to leave before she had completed her studies. At 18 she entered the Ursuline convent at Poitiers and apparently proved an indifferent novice, fretting against the discipline and bored with prayer. 'I was looking,' she said later in her autobiography, 'in so far as my condition allowed, for pleasure – although I found it in nothing.' She discovered the art of shamming sanctity, claimed to experience visions and generally counterfeited an image of saintliness. Her conduct impressed her superiors and in 1627, at the age of 25, she was nominated prioress of the Ursuline convent at Loudun. She was unpopular with the nuns and there was bitter opposition to the appointment.

To her convent parlour came gossiping friends from the outside world and it was here that she first heard the name of Urbain

Grandier, the parish priest whose affairs were the talk of the town. The nuns and in particular their dissatisfied and embittered Mother Superior became obsessed with the thought of Grandier, who had come to epitomize the forbidden pleasures off the flesh. There are indications that the motive put about by Jeanne for Grandier's alleged possession of the nuns – that it was ao act of revenge because she had stood in his way when he applied to be appointed confessor to her convent – was the distorted projection of a neurotic personality and that the opposite was nearer the truth. It seems far more likely that Jeanne, fascinated by Grandier's reputation as a womanizer, attempted to persuade the priest to accept the appointment and was rejected. Plain and lacking in affection, Jeanne des Anges needed above all to draw attention to herself and it was in this situation that the advantage of simulating possession probably occurred to her, either consciously or unconsciously. Better to be possessed, she may have reasoned, than to remain unnoticed and distinguished.

After the pilgrimage to the tomb of St Francis and the expulsion of the last of the demons, a new life began to her; no less spectacular and self-absorbed than before, it encompassed visions, prophetic utterances and alleged healings. The climax occurred when her left hand was said to have developed stigmata in the shape of the names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Francis de Sales. She attracted even greater notoriety than before and received the ultimate accolade of being received at Court and being granted an audience with Richelieu, who found her stigmata 'admirable'. Apart from her autobiography, there is little contemporary evidence either for the stigmata or for the miracles which she claimed.

In time the events at Loudun, a psychological drama intermingled with politics which ended in tragedy for Urbain, faded into oblivion. Jeanne died at Loudun on 29 January 1665, shortly before Father Surin.

MARYSE CHOISY

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GREAT BEAST

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The mouth of hell, from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, probably influenced by the Great Beast of the Apocalypse, which was like a leopard and to which the Devil gave his power and throne and great authority on earth

'AND I SAW a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads.' This creature is the Great Beast of the Apocalypse, whose identity is concealed behind hints, symbols and a numerological puzzle.

In chapter 11 of the book of Revelation an angel announces that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God. This proclamation is immediately followed by the titanic rebellion of the powers of evil and the coming of Antichrist. Satan appears as the great red dragon, there is war in heaven, and the dragon is hurled down to earth and his angels with him. A voice in heaven prophesies, 'woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.'

In chapter 13 this 'woe' takes the form of the beast which rose from the sea. It was like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. 'And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.' One of its heads 'seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed.' The whole earth followed the beast with wonder and worshipped it, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?'

The beast held sway for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, during which it made war on the saints and conquered them, it had power over every tribe and people, every tongue and nation, and everyone on earth worshipped it except only those whose names were written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the crucified Christ.

'Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth.' This was the first beast's lieutenant, which worked great signs and wonders, and which ordered the people to make an image of the first beast and worship it. It caused everyone to be marked on the right hand or the forehead with the mark of the first beast, which was its name or its number. 'This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is 666.'

From the Sea

The early Christians believed in a coming struggle between God and a great opponent, an evil counterpart of Christ, who would claim to be God, work delusive miracles in parody of Christ, and deceive people into worshipping him (see ANTICHRIST; BELIAL). Some commentators identified the second beast, the one which rose from the earth, as Antichrist because it worked signs and wonders. But it is more likely that for the author of Revelation the Great Beast 666 was Antichrist, though he does not use the term Antichrist itself. The second beast is called 'the false prophet', a reference to the 'false Christs and false prophets' of whom Jesus spoke, who will show signs and wonders to lead the elect astray (Mark, chapter 13). Its ancestry goes back further, to Deuteronomy (chapter 13) where the people are warned against a prophet and dreamer of dreams who will show a sign or a wonder and try to persuade them to worship false gods. The passage in Mark suggests that as the second beast is the false prophet, it is likely that the first beast is the false Christ.

The first beast unites the characteristics of the four beasts seen in a vision in the book of Daniel (chapter 7), which stand for four empires which in turn oppressed the Jews – Babylon, Media, Persia, and the Greek empire of Alexander the Great. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of the beast's rule also come from Daniel (chapter 12), the 'time, two times and half a time' after which the power of the persecutor will come to an end, the persecutor being Antiochus Epiphanes, the first human model for the figure of Antichrist.

The beast comes up from the sea, which in Revelation is the home of the forces which oppose God. This harks back to Mesopotamian, Canaanite and Jewish myths in which to create the ordered universe, or keep it in being, it is necessary for the monster of the deep, the chief of the powers of chaos, to be defeated (see CREATION MYTHS; DRAGON). When Revelation comes to the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, we are told that 'the sea was no more'.

It is generally accepted that if the Great Beast is Antichrist in the spiritual sphere, on earth it is Rome, the empire which now oppressed Jews and Christians. The worship it insists on is the cult of the deified emperors, and the false prophet probably stands for the local authorities responsible for the imperial cult. The fact that the Great Beast comes from the sea (from abroad) and the false prophet from the earth (from at home) may reflect this. In chapter 17 the whore of Babylon (the city of Rome) is seen riding on a scarlet beast, which is probably identical with the Great Beast. The seven heads of this beast stand for hills (the seven hills of Rome) and also for seven kings (Roman emperors).

The head that was mortally wounded but healed looks like an allusion to the persistent rumours that Nero, the persecutor of Christians, who committed suicide in 68 AD, was not really dead but would return with an army to conquer Rome. The image of the beast recalls Caligula's orders, issued in 30 AD but never carried out, that his statue be placed in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, an intended sacrilege which horrified the Jews.

In chapters 19 and 20 the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies do battle with the forces of God, led by the rider on a white horse, the Word of God. They are decisively defeated and then

Michael Halford

Tapestry showing the Great Beast which rose from the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, and which represented Antichrist in the spiritual sphere and on earth the Roman Empire and the cult of emperor-worship

slaughtered. The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into 'the lake of fire that burns with brimstone', where they will be 'tormented day and night for ever and ever'. The Devil himself is shut away in the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

Number of the Beast

The number riddle which has produced so many solutions, some of them singularly eccentric, is an example of gematria (see GEMATRIA). Evidently the Great Beast's name or title will add to 666 if its letters are turned into numbers. The obvious candidate for the honour is Nero but Revelation was written in Greek and his name in Greek, Neron, adds to 1,005. However, if his Greek title Neron Kaisar is turned into Hebrew letters, the total is 666 (nun – 50, resh – 200, waw – 6, nun – 50, qoph – 100, samech – 60, resh – 200). Nero also has the advantage of explaining the western tradition that the number was really 616, for if the Latin Nero Caesar is turned into Hebrew letters, it adds to 616.

Austin Farrer pointed out the interesting connection between 666 and the number of Jesus, which is 888 (see EIGHT). Eight is the number of rebirth and resurrection, and 888 shows that Jesus rose from the dead on the *third* day, which was a Sunday, the *eighth* day from the beginning of Passion week. The Friday on which Jesus was crucified, and on which the powers of darkness apparently triumphed, was the *sixth* day from the beginning of that week. So if 888 is the number of Jesus, it is fitting that 666 should be the number of Antichrist. In addition, 8 and 666 are connected because $8+7+6+5+4+3+2+1 = 36$, and if the same process is applied to 36, the total is 666.

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GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

IN MODERN TIMES the phrase 'great chain of being' is often applied to a way of looking at reality, developed from the thought of Plato and Aristotle, which became predominant in the ancient world during the first centuries AD. In it the universe, 'all things visible and invisible', is thought of as proceeding from a transcendent first principle in a continuous series of ordered stages, a great chain of being which descends from God through the ranks of spiritual beings and the visible heavens, to end with the material bodies of the world below the moon. Man's position in this static, hierarchical world is in the middle. He is an embodied soul, a spiritual being of the lowest rank of the frontier of the spiritual and material worlds: sometimes he is by no means the highest kind even of embodied spiritual being if the sun, moon and stars are thought of as alive and divine, or if angels and spirits are thought of as having some sort of ethereal or aerial bodies. He has to control the material beings below him and his own bodily life by his reason, but he is only able to do so because he can look upwards in contemplation and travel up in spirit through the hierarchy of beings above him to its transcendent source.

Often man is thought of as a microcosm, a little universe, containing within himself in his own mind, life and body all the ordered levels of being (and responsible for effectively keeping them in proper order). This view of the universe, with important variations but very little essential modification, continued to dominate European and much Moslem and Jewish thought throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. When medieval Aristotelianism was challenged and to some extent superseded by Renaissance Platonism the influence of 'great chain of being' thinking on men's minds was strengthened rather than weakened. Like the various kinds of Christian Platonism in the earlier Middle Ages, the Aristotelianism of the great medieval scholastics was a derivative of Neoplatonism, which already in its earlier forms had a large Aristotelian element in it, which had contributed a great deal to the formation of its 'great chain of being' school of thought. The Platonism of the Renaissance looked back directly to Neoplatonism and produced a more literary, less logically rigorous, more passionate and imaginative understanding of the 'great chain of being' which was very powerful for a time. It was only well on in the 17th century that it was generally superseded by more modern ways of thinking.

The One and the Many

In this way of thinking about the universe, especially in its earliest pagan Platonic form, the transcendence of the First Principle from which the great chain of being proceeds is very much stressed. It absolutely surpasses everything which it produces, and it does so especially by being absolutely single and simple. For those who thought like this, the seed in its concentrated unity was far superior to the evolved structure of the tree with its complex of separate parts. This first One from which the Many proceed in order is absolutely self-sufficient in its infinite perfect simplicity. It gains nothing by producing, needs nothing of what it produces, and remains unchanged and undiminished by its production. There is therefore some difficulty in seeing why and how it produces anything at all.

Sometimes it was maintained that, just as the First Principle itself in its infinite simplicity is beyond the reach of our thought, so no explanation can be given of how or why the unthinkable Absolute creates. In Christian versions of this way of looking at the universe, creation depends on the free will of God, and his freedom to create or not to create is very much stressed, sometimes in a way which suggests an arbitrary whimisicality at the fount of everything. Generally some attempt is made to explain the how and the why, to bridge the gulf between the One and the Many, to hook the great chain of being firmly onto the Absolute.

In pagan Platonism intermediaries are sometimes multiplied, and in some forms of early Christian theology the Logos, the Word and the Son of God, is the intermediary link between the Father and creation. The 'why' is most effectively explained in this way of thinking by appealing to the principle that good naturally diffuses or imparts itself. In Platonic thought this is an important part of the meaning of 'good'. Being good means doing and producing good; so the Absolute One, being absolutely and supremely good, is supremely productive and creative. This can be maintained without denying its freedom.

The principle that good naturally imparts itself carries with it in this way of thinking what is known as the 'principle of plenitude'. The Absolute Good must expand the creativity which is an essential part of its goodness to its furthest limits. It must bring into being all that can possibly exist, from highest to lowest. Everything is good in its own order and degree, though some good things are very inferior to others. But it is better that even the most inferior should exist, for the sake of the completion of the whole. Material reality is not sharply separated from spiritual, or living from non-living: the great chain of being goes down unbroken through all its degrees. In fact an important feature of this type of thought is that the material universe is thought of as an organism, not as a machine, a great complex living being containing innumerable living beings. Life and soul are prior to and produce mechanical movement, not the other way round. Everything is thought of as being an image of the First Principle in its own way and on its own level, and the material world is generally thought of as an image of the spiritual world.

The view of man's function in the universe which goes with this conception of it is the ancient contemplative one of Greek thought. Man is to contemplate it, rather than master it by his technological powers. He has to know his place in the world and fulfil his active functions, but his main object is to rise through the levels of being to contemplation of and union with the Supreme. Attitudes to the world of non-human nature can vary in this way of thinking. The natural world can be despised in comparison with the spiritual, or it can be greatly valued as a universe of signs in which God makes himself present to our spirit. But it is never thought of primarily as raw material for human exploitation.

Knowing His Place

In social and political thinking the 'great chain of being' obviously goes well with the sort of hierarchical society in which this kind of thought developed. It makes a hierarchy of more or less fixed social classes and ranks, each with their own function to perform, culminating in an absolute monarchy ruling by divine right, seem an appropriate way of organizing human society, and is liable to lead to the emphasis on the importance of everyone 'knowing his place' and keeping it. But there are, after all, a number of different ways of ranking human beings, and this mode of thought should not be assumed to involve inevitably the unquestioning acceptance of the claims of the absolute monarchy or of a social pecking order based on hereditary status. The philosophers who originated this kind of thought considered that only virtue and wisdom entitled a man to rank high among his fellows, and this ideal of goodness and wisdom as the only things which ought really to matter in human society never entirely lost its power. And among Christians, not only was holiness supposed to confer the highest possible human status, but the position was further complicated by the existence of the Church hierarchy, which in theory was wholly independent of the worldly hierarchy of birth, rank and wealth. An ordinary Christian during the period when 'great chain of being' thinking was prevalent would have considered a poor and low-born holy man, especially if he also happened to be a bishop, superior to a king or even a high-born pope of notoriously evil life. And everyone would have agreed in despising a very rich man without high birth, virtue and wisdom. Of course, there was always a tendency towards the pompous fiction that those holding high rank in Church or State were automatically virtuous and wise.

The influence of the 'great chain of being', not only on philosophy and theology but on European art and literature throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance was immense. In art, the idea of the hierarchical universe under the transcendent God found expression in the architecture and decoration of Byzantine churches, and in literature 'great chain of being' thinking is particularly apparent in English literature of the 16th and 17th centuries. Its last great champions in England were the Cambridge Platonists who fought a determined, though in the end unsuccessful, battle against the newer view of the universe, practical, mechanical and non-hierarchical, which accompanied the scientific developments of the 17th century and eventually superseded the older way of looking at reality.

(See also MACROCOSM; NEOPLATONISM.)

A. H. ARMSTRONG

Great Plains Indians

Eric Cross

In Great Plains Indian mythology, the buffalo were believed to have once been a race of savage, horned human beings, the predecessors and hunters of man *Left* The Mandan buffalo dance, commemorates the emergence of man from beneath the earth by the sacred tree and the subsequent period of man-hunting, before the buffalo were metamorphosed into animals: 19th century painting by Karl Bodman *Right* The Sioux conception of the happy hunting ground was of a place where warriors were borne through the sky on magnificent steeds; birds were believed to carry messages to heaven: the *Sky People*, a modern Indian painting

Central to the American Plains Indians' view of life were the twin ideals of unflinching bravery and union with the supernatural through visions. In their most important ceremony these aims were united; a fearful heroism was required to endure the tortures of the mystical Sun Dance

LONG BEFORE the white man reached North America, tribes of Indians roamed the great plains: primitive and poor, they struggled to survive the hardships of prairie life. Then, in the later part of the 18th century, they briefly achieved wealth and power, both materially and culturally. This change was due to their acquisition of horses, from the wild herds that were offspring of horses brought to Mexico by the Spaniards. Mounted, the Plains Indian became a master buffalo hunter and a fierce, dangerous warrior and this has remained the popular image of him, in spite of the fact that by the mid-19th century his rule of the Plains had been destroyed by the white man's rifle, which decimated the buffalo and (with whisky, disease and other adjuncts of civilization) killed Indians. But the Plains Indians have become a modern legend, for the glorious futility of their wars against the whites, their ferocity in battle – they were perhaps the finest light cavalry in history – and their embodiment of many traditionally heroic traits.

Although the Indians reached a fairly high level of culture in their brief heyday, their social and cultural structures remain comparatively simple, with none of the complexities of the Pacific Northwest tribes, or of African peoples with deep-rooted and ancient traditions. The major cultural changes wrought on the Plains tribes by the advent of the horse tended to iron out the major cultural differences among the individual tribes. The Comanche of the south-west, the Cheyenne and Pawnee who fought over the central plains, the Sioux and Blackfoot who ruled the grasslands near the Canadian border – these tribes and the others, in spite of language barriers and continual wars, had much in common.

The gods of the Plains Indians were rarely conceived of as a clearly structured, hierarchical pantheon. The gods or spirits were a more or less vague grouping of powers, seldom ranked as lesser or greater, not always with specifically defined attributes or supernatural roles. Some of the tribes did have a definite idea of a supreme deity, who appears in their creation or origin myths. The Dakota Sioux and the Blackfoot tend to give pride of place to the sun, but the Blackfoot complicate matters by ascribing creation to a fairly explicit 'trickster' figure, a god or spirit in temporary animal form. The Pawnee possess myths of the great god Tirawa, meaning father or 'Power Above'; but even in this case the supreme god is little more than a rather cloudy abstraction. He may or may not be identified at times with the sun or some other obtrusive natural phenomenon like thunder or the morning star. But predominantly he tends to be a character in mythological tales rather than an omnipresent god with whom man can come in contact.

The Trickster Spirit

Environment plays an important role in Plains myth and most Plains Indians ascribe godhead to the sky, the stars, the moon, the wind and so on. The Pawnee, with a sound if embryonic astronomy, were especially devoted to star gods, and share with other tribes a high regard for the hero-god of the morning star. Water gods are important to the Sioux and others; fire and thunder, constant companions to the people of the level, dry plains, appear in many tales of mighty spirits. Sometimes the fertility goddess known the world over as the Great Mother or Earth Mother, plays a role in the old tales – probably carried over from the days before the horse, when maize was as economically important as buffalo.

Animal gods occur frequently in the Indian myths, sometimes as one of the great gods temporarily in animal form, more usually as a generalized spirit or power in that form appearing for a specific purpose, and it is in these explicit guises that the Indians make contact with the supernatural in their prayers and worship. In the myths and tales, however, one such animal spirit takes definite precedence: the trickster figure, one of the most complex but fascinating concepts in all mythology.

This god, or hero, is a lesser deity but at the same time he is one of the first gods, who existed before creation. His actions are often heroic, fighting great battles, righting wrongs and punishing evil-doers, and sometimes his role expands into that of the creator of the world or of mankind. Yet many of the trickster stories involve him in the most farcical mischief-making, showing him to be a clever but small-minded practical joker.

The trickster goes by many names among North American tribes: in the Pacific Northwest he is the hero Raven; on the Plains, he is Coyote to the Pawnee. The Cheyenne call him 'Wihio', translatable sometimes as 'white man', sometimes as 'spider'. The Blackfoot trickster is Napi, and has much in common with the Cheyenne's: his name can mean 'white old man' but is often rendered as just 'old man', especially when his role of creator is implied.

The myths of the trickster as creator often show him bringing about the origin of some natural phenomenon more or less by accident, or as the casual side effect of some

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joke or piece of mischief. Often the joke is on the gods: the trickster fools and bedevils them into some action that will directly or indirectly benefit the earth and man.

There seems to be little contact, in the sense of direct worship, between the trickster and his believers. He figures in myths that explain Nature and in comic tales, and the Indians seem content to leave it at that. When they wish to make representations to the supernatural world, they direct their prayers and supplications to animal gods or Nature spirits, which can be seen as concentrations of spirit power that have become focused in animal form. So it is not to the buffalo god or the eagle god that the Indian prays – but to the buffalo or eagle power, one area of supernatural power that flows to man through certain animals or natural phenomena, such as thunder power or wind power. These animal or natural powers serve to a great extent as guardian spirits. Tribal spirits are dictated by tradition and the old tales; but individuals can acquire their own direct contact with a specific spirit or power. Some individuals acquired deeper knowledge of the tribal spirits and closer contact with the supernatural, and these became shamans, or medicine-men.

Role of the Medicine-Man

The medicine-man had certain prescribed functions within the tribe. He often looked after the community's major religious relics and paraphernalia, and led the religious ceremonies. He made the broad appeals to the gods or powers on the tribe's behalf, and was often the source of vital prophecies about matters such as the location of the buffalo or projected success in war. Quite often the medicine-man and the tribal chief were the same person, religious and secular leadership in one.

Semi-nomadic peoples like the Plains Indians see their shamans differently from more settled, agricultural tribes. The hunter, it seems, places more value on individualism. Any man can make contact with the supernatural, so to some extent every man is his own shaman. The medicine-men are not a separate priestly caste, as occurs in other primitive organizations, with priests jealously guarding their rights as the sole repositories of power, monopolizing the links between men and gods. Plains Indian medicine-men may have extra-sharp 'antennae' for godly matters, an extra capacity for religious ecstasy or magical power. But the ordinary Indian has these abilities too. In terms of curing the sick, for instance, the ordinary tribesman knows enough rites and prayers for purposes of first aid, while the medicine-man's more extensive spirit contacts provide specialist help.

Indian ceremonials primarily involved special dancing, accompanied by songs and prayer chants, backed by music from drums, rattles and whistles. Often the dancing took on magical overtones: a Blackfoot war dance required the dancers in full battle regalia to gallop their horses round the fire and then to dance on foot in a manner representing the proud dancing step of horses. Most tribes had special magic rites to 'call' the buffalo, often similarly involving mime of a buffalo herd. Tribes like the Pawnee who combined agriculture with hunting had special planting and harvesting rituals with magical protection for the fields and insurance of good crops. At one time the Pawnee sacrificed a captured girl from an enemy tribe as part of their planting rite, possibly a remnant of Aztec influence.

Many Plains tribes engaged in semi-religious and semi-social ceremonials, including one called the Grass Dance in which specially costumed celebrants enjoyed a feast, gave away possessions as a form of self-denial and imposed temporary celibacy on themselves. Scalp dances, in honour of victorious warriors, can also be seen as both social and religious celebrations. And celebration was the undercurrent beneath the ritual that became not only the highest expression of the Plains Indians' religious individualism, but also the greatest single religious event of the year. It was the terrible and exalting Sun Dance, the core of Plains Indian religious and magical belief.

Agony of the Sun Dance

The Indian warrior's personal path to the gods, the supernatural powers, was by way of the Sun Dance. It was basically a 'vision quest', the most sacred and crucial of all the ways in which visions could be obtained. The whole superstructure of the religion depended on the vision, in which the supernatural became manifest to the individual man; without it he would have no guardian spirit, no 'good luck' magic, no supernatural

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The Indians owed to the buffalo their food, clothing, livelihood and wealth, and something of the animal entered into every ceremony
Left **Sioux Indians in ceremonial dress, the medicine-man bearing the badge of the buffalo**
Right **A variant form of the buffalo dance served as a rite of sympathetic magic, the dancers imitating the animals which they wished to summon for the hunt**

assurance of survival and success. Visions might come through ordinary dreams, or could be induced by fasting, by magical means such as sleeping near the grave of a once-powerful shaman, even by drugs. Peyote, derived from the mescal cactus that is Nature's own hallucination-producing drug, became popular in the late 19th century as a quick route to visions (see PEYOTE CULTS). But always the most memorable and most admirable visions sprang from the awful tortures of the Sun Dance, still practised as late as the 1940s. The Indians knew as well as any early Christian ascetic the value of mortification of the flesh as an open door to hallucinations; they also saw the Sun Dance as a splendid test of their courage and endurance.

The ceremony had only little to do with the sun itself, in the sense of active worship of that god. The Sioux name for it is more specific, 'Sun Gaze Dance', for the dancer's suffering was magnified by his being required to perform the ritual while under the brazen midsummer sun, shining through the open-roofed medicine lodge. The effect of the sun was in turn increased by the purifying preparations of the sufferer before the dance, when he went without food and water, often for several days. Perhaps he would also have spent time in the 'sweat house', a primitive sauna bath consisting of a closed hut with steam rising from water thrown over hot stones.

Once purification was completed, the medicine-man or some other appointed elder of the tribe would bring the dancer to the appointed place and make the final preparations. He would be ritually painted, complete with simulated tears on his cheeks to anticipate the real ones that would flow. Then two sets of vertical incisions would be made in the dancer's pectoral muscles, and sometimes also in the upper muscles, and back. The incisions were arranged so that wooden skewers could be thrust through the muscle, looking like the pins put into cloth by a seamstress to mark her line. Rawhide ropes would then be tied to the skewers, their other ends attached to a high 'sun pole'.

The dancer had to lean his full weight on the ropes, that is on the skewers, and dance round the pole under the cruel sun until the skewers were torn free from his flesh. Sometimes heavy shields would be hung from the back skewers, or other means used to wrench them free in the same way. Sometimes, too, the dancer would be lifted off the ground by the ropes, to hang until his flesh gave way. And throughout the agony he would sing ritual songs, and appeal to the powers for a special vision.

When release from the skewers came, the terrible wounds would be treated by the medicine-man, and the dancer would go alone to his lodge to await a vision out of the pain-drenched and delirious sleep that might follow – unless, of course, he had been lucky enough to experience hallucinations while on the ropes. Because his whole culture had prepared his mind with a firm belief in visions and their necessity in a warrior's life, visions usually came – most often in the accepted form, where a particular god or power assumed animal shape, or that of some natural phenomenon. If the supernatural visitor came as a hawk, then the dancer's guardian spirit would from then on be the hawk, and his whole life would be overseen by the special power that the hawk represented.

The Sun Dance had a central role, with only the most trivial tribal variations, in the religious practice of all Plains tribes. In the later years of their decline another religious ceremony grew up, similarly common to most of the tribes, and nearly rivalling the Sun Dance in its short-lived importance. The Ghost Dance, which was performed towards the end of the 19th century in a final attempt to get rid of the white man, with the help of the ghosts of the Indian dead, and return to the old way of life, was inspired by a vision experienced by a Paiute Indian (see GHOST DANCE).

The Indian gods can be seen as a grouping of rather abstract supernatural powers, less explicity conceived of in human terms than, say, Greek or Norse divinities. When a

Behind the Plains village lie the rows of Indian dead, wrapped in skin and laid on scaffolds. The skulls are preserved and women place offerings of meat before the sun dried heads of their relatives: a Mandan village on the Upper Missouri

vision, engendered by the Sun Dance or other means, illumines an Indian's individual guardian spirit for him it also provides him with some personal magic. Many of the common amulets and talismans in use among Plains Indians were introduced through such visions – for instance, the 'thunder bow', an ornamented bow with a lance-head on one end, partaking of 'thunder power', or what we could call the power of the thunder god. It was a general talisman to bring good luck but also gave protection against lightning and against being wounded in battle.

Magic Bundles

But no amulet, no other container of magical power, protective or otherwise, could rival in importance the tribesman's personal 'medicine bundle'. The bundles were collections of odd objects and artefacts, most of which were related in some way to the form taken by the god or power in the Sun Dance vision. The objects would be wrapped in some special way, and the whole bundle would never be far from its owner – especially when some major undertaking was planned, when the bundle's power and protection would be invoked by the songs and prayers that might also have been dictated by the individual's vision.

Special taboos often went along with a medicine bundle, relating to the shape taken by the visiting spirit who conveyed its contents to the visionary. If an Indian's vision had concerned a beaver, so that he owned a beaver bundle (probably wrapped in the fur of that animal), he could never show fear of water – his guardian's favourite element. A man owning a snake bundle could never break any bone within his house. Ordinarily, though, Plains Indian beliefs were by no means as taboo-ridden as those of other primitive peoples. Such proscriptions occurred mainly in areas of life directly connected with the vision quests and the medicine bundles – such as the obvious taboo against freeing a Sun Dancer from his agony before the final tearing of his flesh, or the taboo when the tribe was on the march against anyone passing in front of the man carrying a tribal medicine bundle.

Tribal bundles were immensely powerful and venerated objects, handed down over many generations from their legendary origin – some distant divine visitation. One or more medicine pipes served as tribal bundles for the Arapaho, Blackfoot, Dakota and some others; they were never smoked but their spiritual power remained accessible. Special individuals – often medicine-men but not always – took charge of the pipes by inheritance, and through them led the tribe in prayer for prosperity, cures for the sick, victory in battle and so on. The Cheyenne put their tribal belief in a handful of ancient and sacred arrows and, among the northern branch of the tribe, a sacred hat made of buffalo skin topped with horns.

Such community bundles served active purposes as well as the passive function of tribal protection and the bringing of luck. The Pawnee used a special bundle called a 'storm eagle' – a dead eagle stuffed with magical objects – to raise storms over enemies. The Cheyenne performed spell-casting gestures with the sacred arrows before a battle, in a mime of the foe's defeat. So the general idea of magic working, like the general idea of amulets and taboos, never gets far away from the focus of the vision and the medicine bundle. The Plains Indians had no really rich store of spells and incantations for historians of magic to plunder. The Blackfoot and Cree had a few gentle love charms, involving birch bark images. Comanche medicine-men might work evil sorcery against rivals, or a forsaken maiden might throw a spell on her erstwhile lover (by burying a segment of her own flesh on a mountain peak and praying that the lover would decompose along with the piece of herself). But such elements in Plains Indians lore are comparatively rare. Certainly the men were too proud of indulge in magic: the anthropologist Ralph Linton records that among the Comanche, 'malevolent magic was never used between rivals of war age.'

So to a large extent magic, like religion, was kept firmly in its place by the Plains Indians. They were hunters and warriors, first and always – restless, wide-ranging, individualistic and proud. Life for an Indian before the white man came was usually short, always hard, often cruel; afterwards life was shorter, harder and even more cruel. So it might be said that the Plains Indians had little time or energy to spend on working out involved and sophisticated pantheons of gods with neatly arranged aspects and attributes – nor could they concern themselves with too extended and detailed approaches to the craft of magic. Perhaps they obtained most of the magic they needed from their ecstatic and agonized vision quests. And perhaps they found most of the religion they needed in their awareness of their awesome environment – the interminable prairie grasslands and the immense prairie sky.

(See also NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS; PACIFIC NORTHWEST INDIANS.)

DOUGLAS HILL

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MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 5

Gree – Init

Michael Holford

GREECE

Sonia Halliday

In the religion of classical Greece elements from Crete blended with elements from the Greek mainland: 'the most dramatic form of this lengthy process was a struggle, never quite to be resolved, between the concept of a mother goddess and the newer concept of a dominating male god, Zeus'

THE HISTORY OF GREEK RELIGION reflects an uneven, halting but recognizable development from magic to officially sponsored religion; from an epoch when men had not clearly separated themselves from Nature and natural forces to a time when gods and goddesses were worshipped in human shape. However, the uniformity of this process should not be overestimated. For magic continued to be inseparably associated with religion, especially in the realms of popular cult, just as birds, beasts and flowers continued to be identified with particular gods and goddesses.

The traditional polytheistic religion of classical times incorporated, in varying forms and with varying emphasis, many survivals from earlier periods, including the Minoan and Mycenean periods of the Bronze Age, especially in Nature-religion and fertility cults. Broadly speaking, the Greek religion of classical antiquity was an amalgamation of early Aegean with later Indo-European elements, the latter having been contributed by people who spoke Greek as one of the Indo-European family of languages.

However, realization of this is comparatively recent. A hundred years ago there were no accepted objective criteria, in the form of buildings, pottery, jewellery and armour, which were relied upon to form an independent witness of the realities of the world which emerges in the Homeric poems. The history of Greece was thought to have begun with the first Olympiad in 776 BC, and

Previous page **Castor and Polydeuces, the divine twins, carrying off the daughters of Leucippus. Raising her hand to her hair is the love goddess Aphrodite and at the far left, wreathed in laurel, is Zeus *Left* The supreme god of classical Greece, Zeus was descended from the great weather god of the Greek warrior chieftains but his title of 'Cretan-born' connects him with quite a different god and indicates the strong Cretan strands in Greek religion *Right* Hera, Zeus's wife, was thought of as woman deified**

everything that went before including the Homeric Age, was legend or myth.

Now, however, what is sometimes described as the Aegean civilization has been discovered by archeologists. In consequence, the objective criteria of Greek pre-history reach back to the beginning of the Iron Age (roughly 1000 BC), and through the two millennia of the preceding Bronze Age into the earlier Neolithic period.

This vast change in outlook is mainly the result of the work of two men, Heinrich Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans. Schliemann's excavations at Troy, Mycene and Tiryns proved that there was some historical reality behind the Homeric epics. Sir Arthur Evans began to excavate the Bronze Age palace of Minos at Cnossus 70 years ago. One of the many consequences of his factual discovery of the Bronze Age civilization of Crete is that no student of Greek and Near Eastern religion in antiquity can afford to ignore the Cretan (or Minoan) background.

This background, complex though it may be, is shown by a variety of evidence collected from many different sites that date from the earliest periods to the later Bronze Age, when the Minoan and mainland Mycenean traditions became increasingly interfused.

There is now a mass of symbols, representations on seals and frescoes, cult paraphernalia, and idols and statues collected from tombs, cemeteries, cult-rooms, altars, shrines, sanctuaries and temples, which have to be set beside the mythology, poetry and general literature of the period. There are also numerous inscribed documents which, although they are often fragmentary, sometimes throw light upon religious beliefs and practices.

The abiding mystical concepts derived from Cretan religion are significantly marked by the influence of a mother goddess and a dying god, associated with the bull, who later became worshipped as 'Cretan-born Zeus'. This Zeus, who died and was born again, was different from the Olympian Zeus of the familiar Greek pantheon. He was much more comparable with the Greek Dionysus, also a bull god and a dying god. These two different concepts help us to establish distinctions between the Minoan and the Mycenean phases of earlier Greek religion.

The historian Herodotus records that the poets Homer and Hesiod were the first to compose theogonies, poems dealing with the origin of the gods, and gave the deities their epithets, allotted them their offices and occupations, and described their forms. It is probable that these traditional Greek theogonies derived from the Greek epics which were rooted in the Mycenean period of the late Bronze Age.

Traditional mythology recorded legends about conditions before the Mycenean pantheon of the Olympic gods became paramount. Before this time, the Titans, the children of Uranus and Gaia (Heaven and Earth) held sway. To prevent Cronus, the youngest Titan, from swallowing his baby son Zeus, his wife Rhea bore him secretly in Crete and substituted a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes for the infant, who was reared in hiding (see CRONUS). The legends about the birth of Zeus in Crete were responsible for the specific epithet of the supreme god as 'Cretan-born'. This epithet and the oriental connections of his mother Rhea, indicate that he was an old Minoan god, involved in the same basic pattern of oriental ritual which prompted the myths of Ishtar and Tammuz, Isis and Osiris, Venus and Adonis. It is probable that Greek-speaking people who arrived in Crete gave the name of their sky god to an old Minoan deity whose ritual and character can be guessed from the evidence of later times.

The Olympian Zeus was the leader of the traditional Greek pantheon. There is reason to suppose that the hierarchical organization of the gods and goddesses as portrayed in the Homeric epics reflects the actual social conditions of the Mycenean period. The Homeric Greeks (the Achaeans), burst the bonds of their own ancestral tribal organization and adapted their control of Bronze Age techniques to warfare. The martial character of the Myceneans of the later Bronze Age is exemplified in their fortification of their urban centres, in marked contrast with the unfortified cities of Minoan Crete. Similarly, the Achaean chieftains of the Homeric poems dominate the battlefield.

The heroic age of ancient Greece, as it is portrayed in Homer, represents the violent and ruthless conquest of an older, sophisticated, peaceful and refined civilization by warlike adventurers. Its richest and most important centres were away from the mainland, especially on the island of Crete; so the greatest prizes were out of reach until the Achaeans became sailors.

Syndics of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The Supreme God of All

Of course, Zeus is far more than a blend of these two elements only, Indo-European sky-god and Cretan babe or Kuros or bull (that is, Cretan fertility-spirit). To the Greeks he is throughout their history the supreme god of all . . . There is scarcely a department of nature or of human life with which he was not connected by his worshippers. This is reflected by the titles and epithets which they heaped upon him, and which include almost everything that a Greek held sacred. In a dozen different names they call him king and lord. He is Zeus of the clan and of the ancestors, Zeus who guards the home, who minds the storehouse, the protector of suppliants, the god of hospitality to strangers, of the sanctity of the oath, the bringer of justice, guardian of the city – and there are countless others, too well known to need enumeration. Let us only note before we leave him that the Greeks carried the notion of a universal god considerably further than anyone had ever done before, and very nearly as far as anyone has carried it since. So firmly were his supremacy and universality established that his name came to be used by poets and philosophers almost as the name of God might be used by a Christian or that of Allah by a Moslem. Aeschylus felt no incongruity in applying it to the great moral power which was his conception of God, and in the second century AD, in the deeply philosophical writings of a Marcus Aurelius, we find that the sublime Stoic belief in the brotherhood of man can be fitly expressed by calling the world the City of Zeus.

W. K. C. Guthrie *The Greeks and their Gods*

After 1400 BC the leadership of the Aegean world passed to mainland Mycene; and the Mycenean pantheon presumably spread its influence as the Mycenean social and economic system penetrated widely from its mainland centres. The ensuing social conflict, and fusion of peoples and customs, was paralleled by increasing complexity in cults and in mythology, and in the composition and organization of the pantheon. The most dramatic form of this process was a struggle, never quite resolved, between the old concept of a mother goddess and the newer concept of a dominating male god, Zeus.

Under the monarchical leadership of Olympian Zeus, the gods and goddesses were gathered together in a single heavenly stronghold. Their dwelling-places, built by Hephaestus, surrounded the central palace of Zeus. Although the authority of the supreme male god had become fairly stable, it was not unchallenged. In fact Hera, wife of Zeus, was amongst those who intrigued against his authority.

This Homeric picture of the Olympian hierarchy is paralleled by the Homeric picture of earthly conditions. Even in the midst of war, Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek expedition to Troy, could claim only a loose kind of authority: his control was often disputed by his fellow-chieftains. This instability has its analogy in the inability of the Achaeans to establish a centralized, enduring Bronze Age economy similar to the older oriental type.

There is, too, a lack of uniformity in the Homeric accounts of the Olympian system. In two passages of the *Iliad* Zeus is living alone on Olympus. In one passage he hurls a thunderbolt, in the other he sends a storm. It is highly probable that Olympus itself was a kind of generic term for 'mountain'. However, in a well-known evocative passage of the *Odyssey*, the heavenly Olympus is described in a way that is more appropriate to the Minoan Fields of the Blest than to a lofty, mountainous seat of storms, rain and lightning.

The growth of the Olympian pantheon was a process of tribal federation which led to military kingship. The mortal prototype of the weather god who was lord of storms, rain, lightning and thunder, and reigned in a mountain fortress, was the Mycenean overlord. The companions of the god, with their differing functions, at first lived apart from him but eventually, although they kept their traditional functions, they went to live with the Olympian overlord in his stronghold and were subject to his will.

Dying God from Crete

The traditional function, or privileges, or spheres of influence of the gods were the outcome of heavenly tribal warfare. Legend tells how Zeus made a promise to his supporters before he went to war against the old order represented by Cronus and the Titans. He swore that if he won he would guarantee the rights they already had, and would apportion rights to those who had none; when the conflict was over he became the supreme overlord and bestowed the honours. The traditional province of Hephaestus, for instance, was fire; Atlas held up the skies; Apollo was concerned with music and dancing; Hades with lamentation; the nymphs cared for mortals in the time of their youth, and so on.

The Twelve Gods who were early united into a sort of official Olympian society were normally Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athene, Hephaestus and Hestia. There were sometimes modifications to the list, as when Dionysus replaced Hestia in the representation of the Twelve on the east frieze of the Parthenon in Athens.

Dionysus has a place of special importance in Greek religion, essentially popular and non-Olympian. However, the cults which he personified and which played such a major role in historical times, had their counterparts elsewhere in much earlier times. Explaining why the cult of Dionysus was conspicuously absent in Crete, M.P. Nilsson observed in *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*: 'The reason why Dionysus does not appear in Crete can only be that he was not needed there, the religious ideas of which he was the herald having already been applied to the Cretan Zeus.'

The copious amount of legendary material regarding the birth of Zeus in Crete emphasizes its pre-eminence compared with other birth-stories of Zeus. However, the very existence of such a remarkable birth-story, and the cults associated with it, inevitably meant that places other than Crete were also credited with being the site of Zeus's birth. These included Messenia where Zeus was reputed to have been reared by nymphs on Mount Ithome; Arcadia which, apart from Crete, made the strongest claims, with a legend that Cronus had swallowed the stone on Mount Thaumasius and that Zeus was born and reared on Mount Lycaeus; and Olympia, which was said to be Zeus's birthplace in a legend of the founding of the Olympic Games.

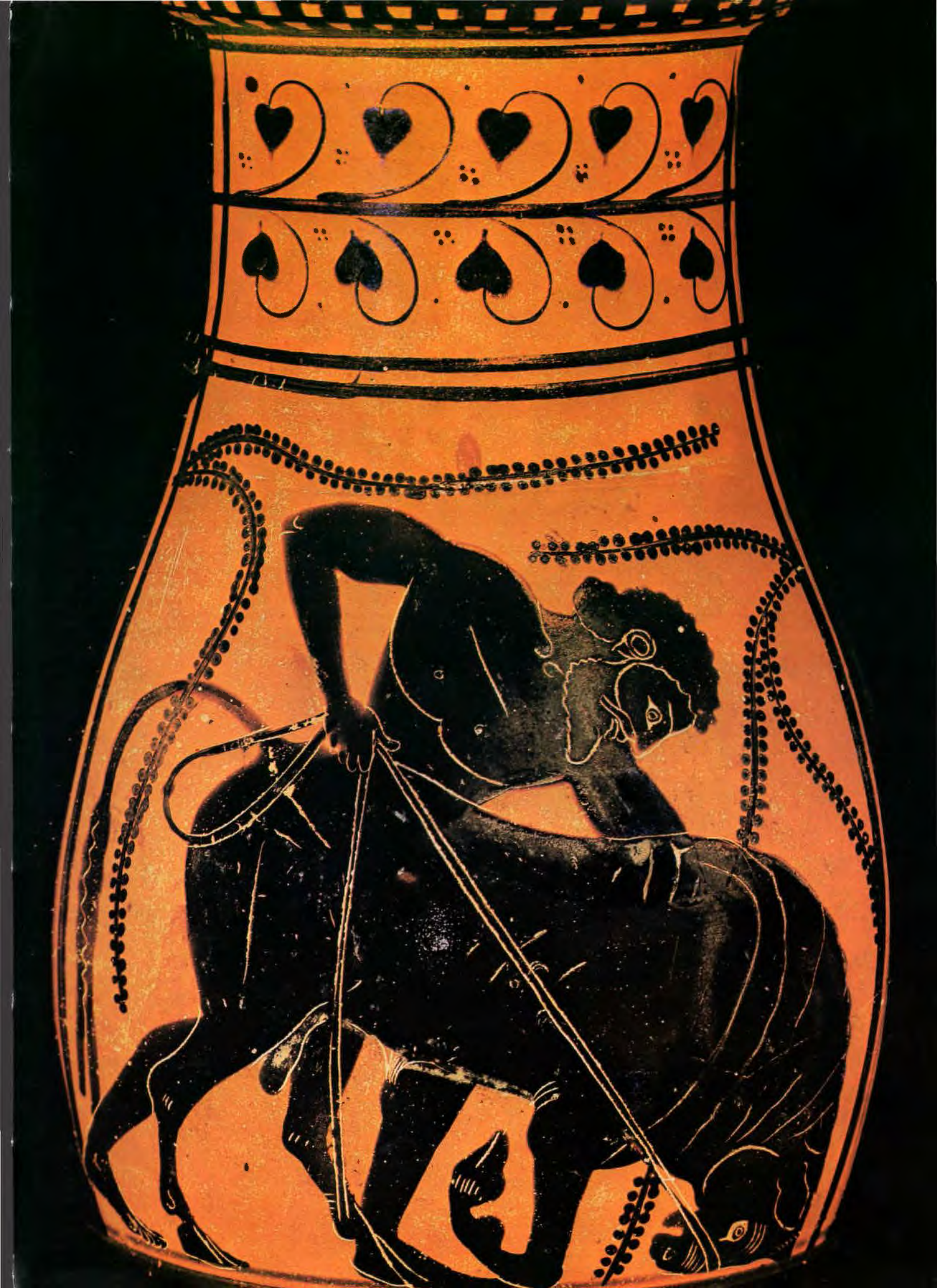
It was quite consistent that the dying god, Zeus of Crete, should not only have had his sacred marriage to Hera commemorated in an annual ceremony during which sacrifices were offered with traditional wedding rites but that his death also should have been mourned. This explains why the legend of Zeus's tomb, supposedly located at various places in Crete including Cnossus, Mount Ida and Mount Dicte, has endured from ancient to recent times.

There are a number of versions of the inscription on this legendary tomb, which suggests that 'Zan', the old name for Zeus, was certainly well known in Crete, and also that the cult of Cretan Zeus was involved with, if it did not actually develop from, an earlier cult of Minos. A common link was an annual festival celebrating a god like Adonis or Tammuz, at which this god was eaten in the form of a bull. The evidence for the tomb, relatively late though it may be, indicates that Cretan Zeus was looked upon as a dying god, with the implication that he died annually and was born again.

Initiation, which may well have originated in the Bronze Age, continued to play a major part in various Greek cults and in social life generally. The death and rebirth of an initiate tended to be dramatically represented, often with a contest and some kind of ordeal. It was not only the god, or his animal symbol, who continually died and was born again. A similar pattern persisted in the training of the youth of the Greek city-states in classical times.

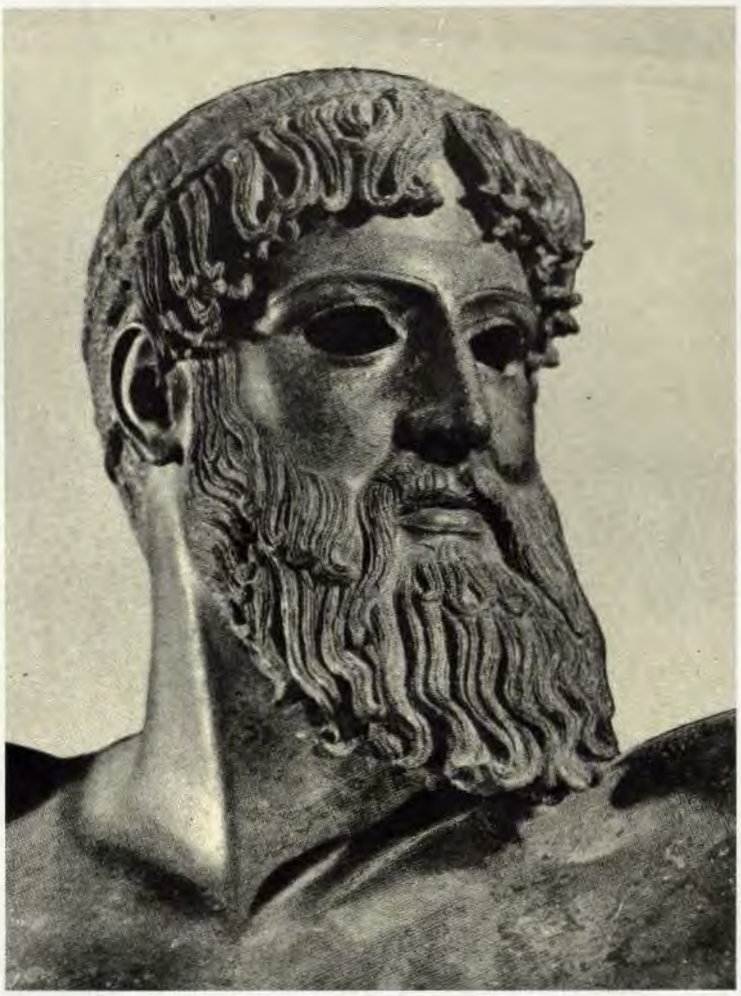
The late appearance and subordinate status of a male Minoan deity served to emphasize the over-riding importance of the Minoan goddess. In Neolithic times there seems to have been no concept of a male

The hero Hercules, renowned for his gigantic strength, captures the Cretan bull in the seventh of his 12 labours. The mainland Greeks 'captured the Cretan bull' in a sense, when they conquered the rich and peaceful civilization of Crete



Mansell Collection

The Twelve Gods of Olympus, with their own functions or spheres of influence, lived with Zeus in his stronghold and sometimes challenged his authority. *Above, left to right* Demeter was concerned with agriculture and the fruits of the earth (relief at Eleusis). Apollo, god of music, prophecy and healing, and as god of oracles 'the ambiguous one', was identified with the sun and inspired much Greek art and literature (statue in the National Museum, Naples). Artemis, goddess of the chase and of wild animals, was probably descended from the Cretan Lady of Wild Beasts (statue in the National Museum, Naples). Hera was the wife of Zeus and presided over all phases of the life of women (relief in the National Museum, Palermo). *Below left* Poseidon, whose dominion was the sea: bronze statue, c 460 BC *Below right* Hermes, god of travellers and the messenger of Zeus, was also responsible for guiding souls on their way to the underworld



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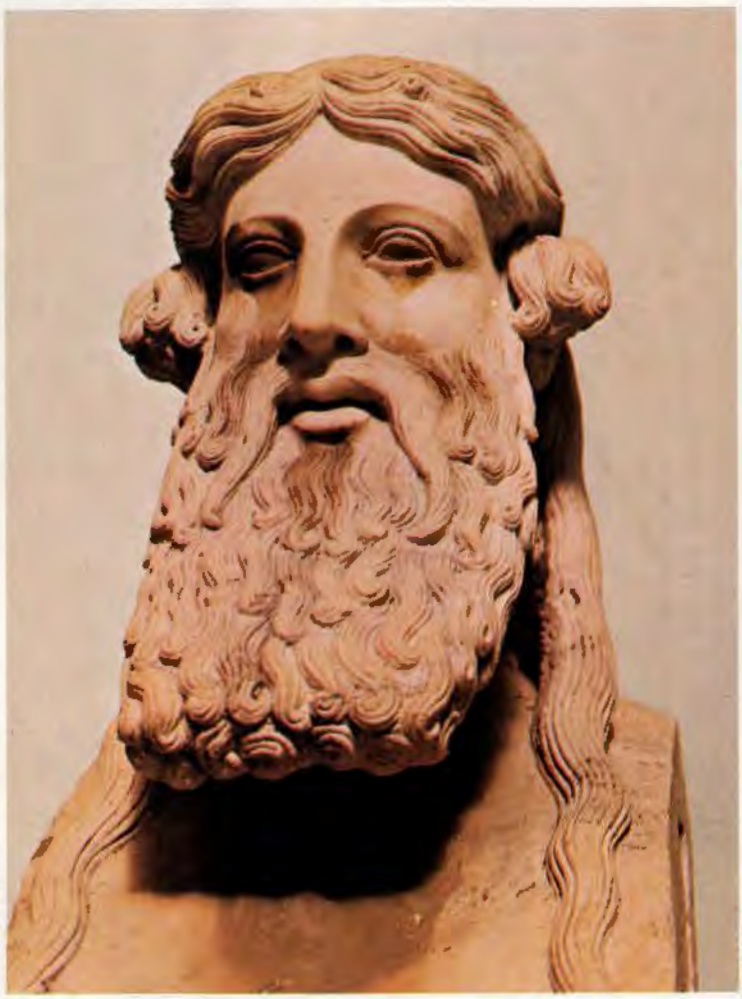


Sonia Halliday

The Greek's Demeter, who was divine protectress of agriculture and the fruits of the earth, perpetuated the role of the old Minoan mother goddess

divinity in human form. He emerged later, as a secondary deity, but the tendency to raise him to a superior status was clear by the end of Minoan times. With the decline of the mother goddess, the bull became associated with the Minoan kingship, which perhaps had important functions in relation to the governing of the calendar. Hence the bull became a symbol of the sun, and both were fertility symbols. Bull-worship and snake-worship remained associated with traditions of the prehistoric Bronze Age kingship.

The Minoan goddess is a central feature of Minoan religion, just as the palace was a central feature of Minoan social life. In surviving monuments and artefacts she is shown in association with animals, birds and snakes; with the sacred pillar and the sacred tree; with poppies and with lilies; with the sword and the double axe. She appears to have been huntress and goddess of sports, she was armed and also presided over ritual dances; she had male and female attendants, and she held sway over mountain, earth, sky and sea, over life and death. She was household goddess, vegetation goddess, Mother and also Maid.

There are many examples of figurines from Minoan Crete, including votive images from sanctuaries, cult idols from shrines, and statuettes which have been recovered from graves and tombs. The various attitudes assumed by these figurines, which include the 'gesture of benediction' familiar in portrayals of the mother goddess, sometimes recall the postures of a sacred dance. The sitting or squatting position of early specimens could well represent the attitude actually assumed for childbirth. Hence the differing gestures depicted by later statuettes could also have been supposed to have had a beneficial influence on childbirth and on the growth of crops.

As puppets, the images had clear associations with birth and with death, accounting for their presence in graves and tombs. As votive offerings, they represented worshippers appealing for the protection of the goddess in sickness or childbirth, an initiation, marriage or bereavement; or the statuettes could represent the goddess herself. Figurines dating from the earliest times onward have been discovered in Greece, showing that the ancestral idols of magic did not easily yield to the deities of religion.

By Minoan times the bull, the dove and the snake had already acquired special prominence. Large numbers of votive offerings included figurines of oxen, goats, rams, swine and dogs. There is no doubt that the birds that are so often portrayed in Minoan religious contexts, perched upon double axes, columns, trees or idols represent divine manifestations. In fact, the birds of the domestic shrines are not mere votive offerings but real representations of deity; and the idea of birds as manifest forms of the spirits of the dead was persistent in later Greek religion.

The mother goddess of Crete held sway over mountain and earth, sea and sky, life and death: figurine of the goddess, her hands in a gesture of blessing

Mansell Collection

The most conspicuous Minoan domestic cult was that of the snake, especially in connection with the so-called snake goddess. Snake cults are world-wide, and are associated with the belief that snakes are incarnations of the dead. They also signify immortality because they cast their skins and renew themselves, personifying the ability to be reborn. Both dreaded and revered, snakes became beneficent, guardians of the house. Snake-worship was common in later Greek religion and indeed plays a part in modern Greek folklore.

All these powerful traditions seem to have played their part in the formulation of the mother goddess as an abstract and unifying principle, both one and many. It was perhaps in the Cretan palaces of the Bronze Age that the Neolithic figurine developed most rapidly into a female deity in human form, still attended by magical and totemistic symbols, in the form of trees and stones, animals, birds and flowers. The most sacred Minoan flower was the lily.

Hero and God of Health

Some goddesses of the later conventional pantheon markedly perpetuate the role of the old Minoan mother goddess. Demeter was said to have reached Greece from Crete; she was regarded as divine protectress of agriculture and the fruits of the earth. The myth of Demeter and Persephone recalls the Minoan concept of the mother goddess as both Mother and Maid. The famous Eleusinian Mysteries performed at Eleusis near Athens (see ELEUSIS), were in their honour. These mysteries may have originated in the East, but there is little doubt that they were brought to Greece from Crete.

The cult of Apollo and his mother Leto originated in Asia Minor. Their association with Crete has long been recognized, together with evidence that the cult of this goddess survived more markedly in Crete than in mainland Greece, where her cults are few and of uncertain age. Other deities and semi-divine heroes were loosely connected with the official Greek pantheon and with traditional Greek mythology. They include Eros ('Love'), Selene ('the Moon'), Hercules, and Asclepius.

The hero of physicians, elevated to divine status, Asclepius had a cult and temple at Lebena in Crete in historical times (see HEALING GODS). The snake, his constant

Mansell Collection

The so-called mask of Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks in the siege of Troy according to Homer: gold funeral mask of a prince of Mycene, the great fortress-city of pre-classical Greece. The organization of the gods and goddesses portrayed in Homer reflects the social conditions of the Mycenean period

companion and symbol, indicates his association with earlier phases of religion, recalling the prominence of the snake cult in Minoan belief. He did not really become a god until the end of the 6th century BC; excavations at Epidaurus, the most famous centre of his cult, revealed that the buildings dedicated to him cannot be dated earlier. But the cult, with its combination of superstition, miracle cures and genuine medical lore, enjoyed an increasing respect in the Greek world in later antiquity, which has rightly been contrasted with the growth of scepticism towards the traditional Olympian hierarchy.

By the Christian era the worship of Asclepius had spread widely and was a potent force while other cults had lost ground. In fact, Asclepius was looked upon as the chief opponent of Christ in the late pagan period: he was firmly entrenched in his position as one of the great, and one of the most popular, ancient gods when the final struggle between Christianity and paganism ensued. The Christians did not deny that he possessed real power, just as they had to acknowledge the reality and strength of the other heathen deities. They admitted that he was able to heal but as with other gods and goddesses whom they opposed, they believed that Asclepius was weaker than their own Lord.

(See also CRETE; and articles on individual deities and heroes.)

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: W. Burkert, *Greek Religions* (Harvard 1985); W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* and *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Methuen, 1952 and 1950 respectively); M.P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, 1927) and *The Mycenaen Origins of Greek Mythology* (University of California Press, 1983); R.F. Willetts, *Ancient Crete: A Social History* (Routledge, 1965) and *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (Routledge, 1962).

As the colour of vegetation, green was prominent in spring celebrations throughout Europe; it is also, traditionally, the colour of envy

GREEN

THE GREEN MAN of British inn signs commemorates an important figure of the old springtime festivities. In England he was called Jack in the Green or Jack in the Bush. On May Day in 1894 at Lewisham the Jack was a man encased in a tall framework shaped like a bottle, covered with ivy leaves and crowned with paper roses. The May Queen and her maidens danced round him while he revolved solemnly on his axis. In 18th century London the black-faced chimney-sweeps danced on May Day, led by a Jack in the Green. He was hidden inside a framework which might be as much as ten feet high, to which green boughs of holly and ivy were fastened, with flowers and ribbons at the top.

All over Europe, green as the colour of vegetation, the reviving life of plants and trees, was prominent in the celebration of spring. The maypole was garlanded with greenery, and children paraded about with green branches. In Britain May Day was connected with Robin Hood, not unsuitably, since that great outlaw lived in the greenwood and dressed his men in Lincoln green. One May Day in the 16th century Henry VIII and his courtiers rode a-Maying to Shooter's Hill, where they found 200 archers, dressed all in green with green hoods. Their leader, who was called Robin Hood, insisted that the king stay to watch them shoot. (See also ROBIN HOOD.)

Green George

In parts of Russia and the Balkans the equivalent of Jack in the Green was Green George, also a man masquerading as a tree. One custom on St George's Day (23 April) was to fell a tree, decorate it with flowers and carry it in a procession led by Green George, who was covered from head to foot in branches of birch. He was ducked in a stream or a pond to make sure that enough rain would fall to keep the fields green in summer. In Switzerland the Whitsuntide Lout was a boy enmeshed in leafy branches who carried a green bough. He was ducked in the village well, which gave him the right to sprinkle water on everyone else. In Germany the May King might be concealed in a wooden frame, with a bell inside it, covered with birch boughs and flowers. People had to guess who was hidden inside. At a wrong guess the May King shook his head, which made the bell ring, and the unsuccessful guesser had to pay a forfeit.

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer treated these customs as relics of tree worship. It seems clear that the Green Man was the spirit of the reviving vegetation, immersed in water as imitative magic to ensure rain for the fields and crops. Many old European customs involving holly, ivy and other evergreens mark, or look forward to, the renewal of life in the spring (see HOLLY AND IVY; MAY DAY).

The evergreen plants which stay green all through the winter inspired the Christian symbolism of green as the colour of 'hope for eternal life', and the 'green pastures' are the eternal meadows of heaven. The connection with water, as the bringer of life, appears again in the story of the man who drank the water of life and promptly turned green, which crept into the legends of Alexander the Great (see ALEXANDER THE GREAT). In popular Mohammedan belief 'the green one' is Khidr or Khisr, who long ago drank from the Fountain of Life and has lived on ever since, travelling the seas and protecting sailors. Interestingly enough, he was identified with St George, who was himself connected with the Green George in eastern Europe.

Green is also frequently worn by fairies and, for some unknown reason, it is the colour of envy. This seems to lie behind an old Scottish rule that if a girl was married before her older sisters, she gave them green stockings. In Fife knitted green garters were secretly fastened to the clothes of an older unmarried sister or brother of the bride, and in the west of England an elder sister should dance in green stockings at her younger sister's wedding.

But the prevailing symbolism of green is as the colour of the beauty and harmony of Nature. It does in fact seem to have a peaceful and soothing influence on people, and is often lavishly used in the decoration of hospitals, for this reason.

(See also COLOURS; CORRESPONDENCES.)

The Green Man of British inn signs originally represented the reviving life of vegetation in the spring. Covered from head to foot in green branches, he danced and capered at springtime festivities, and might be ducked in water to ensure rain

Chris Barker

Gremlin
Mischievous air spirit believed to cause mishaps to airplanes; the name is said to have been coined by a British bomber squadron in India, not long before the Second World War, by amalgamating Grimm's Fairy Tales with Fremlin's Elephant Ales; the gremlin has now largely disappeared from British and American airmen's lore.

JEAN GRENIER

THE BELIEF THAT a human being could transform himself into a wolf at will appears frequently in medieval European stories and indeed much later. Generally those accused of this offence were brought to justice, if they were not killed by terrified peasants. A typical case was that of Jean Grenier, a 13-year-old youth, who was tried in 1603 by the court of Bordeaux.

Neglected by his parents, the boy lived by begging and minding cattle, and it was the accusation of another child similarly employed which led to his arrest. The girl's story was that she had been attacked by a wolf-like beast and that afterwards she had realized that her attacker was Jean Grenier.

Even before his arrest Grenier had boasted of his exploits, claiming that he was able to become a wolf and that he had killed and eaten dogs. He even said that he had eaten a girl 'apart from her arms and legs'.

During his trial Grenier agreed with the statements of several peasants whose children had been attacked or eaten by a werewolf. He confessed to meeting a 'Gentleman of the Forest' who rode a black horse and had brought him a wolf's skin and given him a special cream which he rubbed on himself; and he told the court how, when he wore the skin, he was transformed into a wolf or any other animal he wished.

Jean was later described as being rather small for his age with a vacant expression, haggard eyes, large fang-like teeth and long dirty finger nails.

Although there was enough evidence to send the boy to the stake, the court was presided over by an understanding and humane magistrate, who took into consideration the age and situation of this 'stupid and ill-nourished child . . . whom wicked seduction and despair had corrupted . . .' He preferred, he said, 'to save a soul for God rather than consider it lost'.

The verdict was that Jean Grenier should be confined to a Bordeaux convent for the rest of his life, where he died 'a good Christian', some seven years after his trial.

Generations of children have been fascinated by the folktales of the Grimm brothers, who were not only distinguished linguistic scholars but also the founders of scientific folklore

GRIMM

ENTHUSIASTIC COLLECTORS and antiquarians, with a deep and lasting interest in folklore and mythology, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm are best known today for their collaboration on *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, popularly known as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. In fact, they also published many other works, separately and in collaboration.

The combination of rare talent and early recognition of their merits and the extent of their contribution to scholarship, made them not only the most distinguished scholars of the German Romantic period, but also favoured their reputation abroad. Both Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) carried out most of their work together after obtaining law degrees from the University of Marburg. Jacob subsequently visited Paris where he was appointed first librarian, then auditor to Jerome Bonaparte, King of Westphalia. Later he became secretary of the legation to the minister for Hesse at Paris and the Congress of Vienna. Wilhelm was appointed librarian at Kassel, where Jacob joined him in 1816.

In 1829 they both became members of the staff of Gottingen University, as professor and librarian respectively; but Jacob supported the protest of seven professors against the *coup d'état* of the elector of Hanover, and was exiled in 1837. In 1838 both brothers moved to Kassel, and in 1841 they were given chairs at the University of Berlin where, by appointment of Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, they were elected to the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

Of the two, Jacob was the grammarian and historian, specializing in the science of language, and Wilhelm was primarily the literary scholar. Jacob contributed greatly to the advance of linguistic studies and published a number of important books on these and other related subjects; in collaboration with Wilhelm he produced an inventory of the entire German language. His *Deutsche Mythologie* was published in 1835. Wilhelm's principal independent work is the *Deutsche Heldensage* (1829), which he wrote as a result of his studies of German heroic myths. These he placed historically between history and mythology.

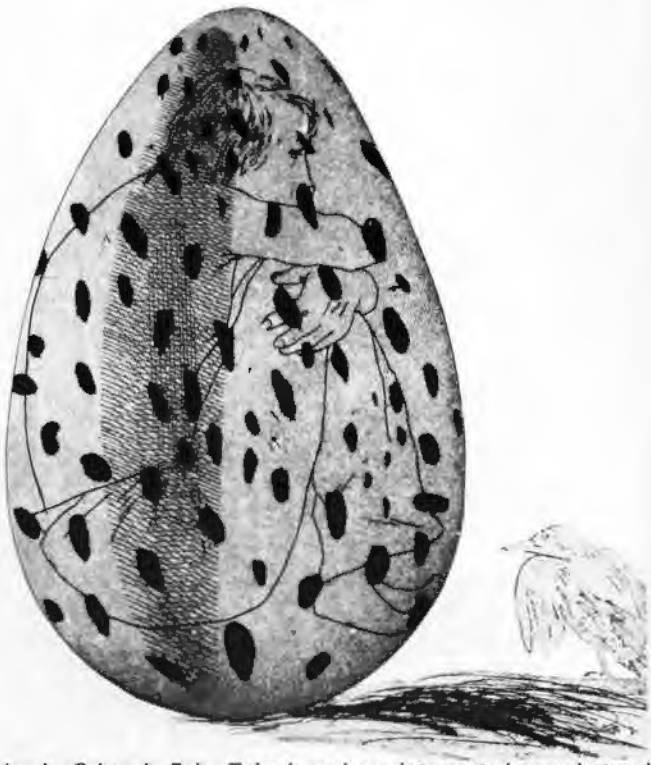
From the very beginning of their researches the brothers Grimm devoted much time to seeking out and deciphering medieval manuscripts, and to collecting and studying the so-called Folk Books of the 16th century. Their aim was to discover all sources of German antiquities which might possibly throw light on the origin and connection between heroic sagas, mythology and folktales. Gradually this became their chief occupation and provided the impetus for all their researches. Either separately or together, they brought out their editions of various German medieval texts, and of the *Edda* (1815), a major source of information about early Scandinavian beliefs and culture. They also interested themselves in the manner in which medieval songs were performed.

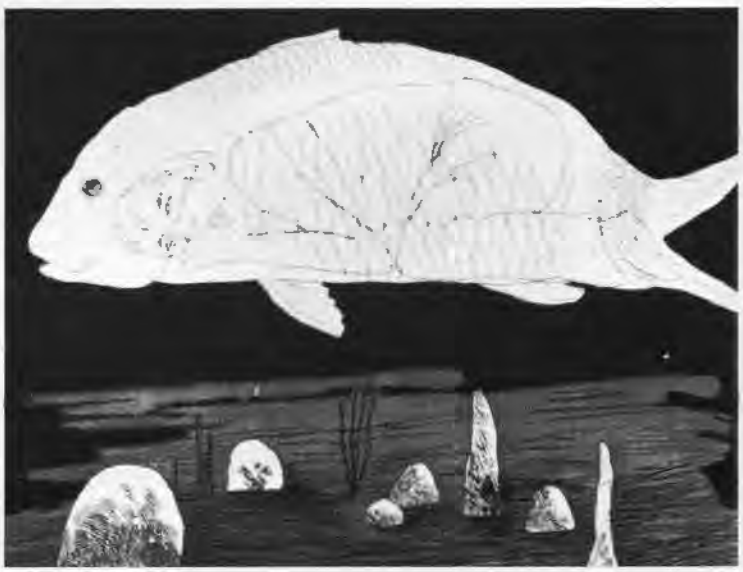
A stimulus and great encouragement to their collecting of tales had been their aquaintance with the so-called Heidelberg group of Romanticists, especially with the writers Clemens Brentano and Joachim von Arnim, who at this time were collecting folk songs, legends and fairy tales. Encouraged by the success of their collected folk songs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* published in 1805, the Grimm brothers also began to collect tales with a view to publishing them. In this they showed a scholarly regard for the sources, and respect for the creation of the people that was unusual at this time.

The tales that were known and published before the brothers' collection in 1811 were not folktales as the term is understood today. They were mostly satirical, didactic or moralistic stories, often told with supercilious contempt; or they had been neglected by scholars and the public alike, or treated at best as mere curiosities. Partly as a reaction to this unjustified attitude to the creations of the common people, and

Belief in magic and miracles pervades the folktales collected by the Grimm brothers; in 'The Jew in the Bush', a dwarf gives the hero a fiddle that sets everyone who hears it dancing: illustration by Arthur Rackham to *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 1900. In the Victoria & Albert Museum

Grimms Fairy Tales





Petersburg Press

The stories in *Grimm's Fairy Tales* have been interpreted as archetypal dreams; the life force animates all levels of existence, and the hero has the unique task of mediating between them. He liberates enchanted beings, and is transformed and perfected in the course of his travels: a selection of David Hockney's illustrations to the folktales

partly inspired by a wave of nationalistic feeling, the brothers' own treatment of the material was to see it as the source of popular beliefs and wisdom.

The idea of the unity of the nation, a new ideology that arose as a result of the Napoleonic armies having overrun Europe, was a matter very close to the hearts of both brothers. They were convinced that they could find in the past material that would lead to the answers that were needed in the present. For this reason they both tended to idealize the past, as is evident in Jacob's *Deutsche Mythologie* which was written from an idealistic conviction that the time of German antiquity was a time of freedom, a kind of Golden Age. The historical view presented in this work is that the pagan period of the Germans was followed by the strict and rigid Middle Ages which led to a period of despotic, absolute government.

In *Deutsche Mythologie* Jacob substituted deductive reasoning, partially based on his own ideas of a somewhat glorified Germanic past, for scientific observation. As in most countries where Christianity superseded the pagan religions, there are few reliable records of early times, and the data cannot always be established with certainty. Jacob therefore sought to obtain supplementary material for his thesis wherever it might be found and with this aim in view he used the collection of tales that had grown up over the years; he exploited the material he found in them for his *Deutsche Mythologie*, and supplemented the German data with material from Nordic countries for the same reason. He made comparisons with Hellenic, Slavonic, Celtic, Ugric and Oriental material. Consequently it is not really possible to extract from his account of Germanic mythology a factual history of Germanic religion.

Jacob presented the pagan religion of the Germans as an animistic Nature religion characterized by an abundance of spirits, good and evil, which are part of Nature, such as giants and gnomes. The gods have human characteristics and are similar to man in that they display his virtues and weaknesses. The pantheon of gods is engaged in a constant struggle with the dark demons and giants, but their magical powers combined with the assistance of wise

gnomes may keep the giants, the Midgard snake and the Fenris wolf in check. But above them is the relentless power of Fate which turns against them with the murder of Balder. The central theme of the old Germanic myths is the struggle of the divine gods against the powers of darkness that want to destroy Valhalla, their home. Only a few gods survive, but there is another myth which speaks of a resurrection of the old destroyed world. It mentions the coming of a new and better world in which the divine powers triumph over the demons of darkness (see GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY).

The publication, between 1812 and 1814, of the three volumes of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, familiar to English readers as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, was perhaps the most outstanding single event in their career as scholars. This work represents the most universally known aspect of their work and was to have the most lasting international influence. From the point of view of scholarship and the development of the study of folklore as a science, their collection proved to be the most important of all collections of folktales. The stories enjoyed immediate success. They were available in their English translation from 1823, and gained immense popularity throughout the English-speaking world, while their effect in scholarly circles was to transform attitudes towards creations of the common people. The folklorist's evolution from antiquarian and amateur collector and enthusiast dates from this event.

The Grimm brothers spent 13 years collecting their stories. The story-tellers were mainly simple folk from farms and villages, but they also received many stories from friends. The brothers searched for material everywhere, and were eager to include any story they could find in their collection, even if it came from literary sources. Because earlier collectors had manipulated the folk material, and had endeavoured to make it acceptable reading for the sophisticated, the Grimms were concerned that the stories should be printed in the idiom in which they had been related.

A little earlier, before the brothers published their tales, the German Romantic poet Novalis had pronounced the folktale to be the primary and highest creation of man. The brothers told how they endeavoured to preserve the tales in the way they had found them: 'Our first aim in collecting these stories has been exactness and truth. We have added nothing of our own, have embellished no incident or feature of the story, but have given its substance as we ourselves received it . . . Whenever we found that varying stories completed each other, and that no contradictory parts had to be cut out before they could be joined together, we have given them as one, but when they differed, we have given the preference to that which was the better, and have kept the other for the notes.'

Although both brothers agreed that tales should not be merged, they nevertheless combined them, added material from other tales, or left out recurring episodes. Wilhelm was responsible for the greater part of the work on the tales; he gave them their literary form. Gradually he began to work on them alone, and Jacob later used the material for his *Deutsche Mythologie*. Wilhelm aimed to keep the sentence construction simple and he took special care to retain the imagery, and some of the folk phrases, which gave the tales their freshness. He therefore kept to the repetitions which usually occur in a threefold sequence, and the stylistic formulas that are repeated between the episodes relating the action. But in spite of the attempt to preserve much of the folk-style and the idiom, the version of the tales available to the public is the product of men of great literary talent.

Fragments of Myths

For their material the Grimms were greatly indebted to their principal story-teller Katharina Viehmann (1755–1815) who was in her middle fifties when they met her. In the preface to the first edition of the second volume of the *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* Wilhelm describes her as having 'a strong and pleasant face and a clear sharp look in her eyes; in her youth she must have been beautiful. She retains fast in mind these old sagas – which talent, as she says, is not granted to everyone; for there be many that cannot keep in their heads anything at all. She recounts her stories thoughtfully, accurately, with uncommon vividness and evident delight . . .'

The brothers published a volume of commentary and a comparative study of the tales in 1822. More ideas on their content and significance may also be fonnd in Wilhelm's essay in the second edition of tales in 1819. His main ideas on the content and meaning of the tales were that those stories which most resemble each other were undoubtedly derived from a common Indo-European ancestry. He was convinced, as was his brother, that the tales were fragments of old myths and heroic tales. He expresses a similar idea in the *Kleinere Schriften* (Minor Works). 'All tales have this in common that they express ancient beliefs which are reflected in their imagery, and embody supra-sensual phenomena.' His conviction that conditions existed which were so natural and basic that the tales could appear everywhere, and that peoples borrowed folklore materials from one another, was later taken up and developed further by a number of scholars.

The brothers Grimm did not retell the tales exactly as they had heard them. On the contrary, they prepared them very carefully, simplifying or embellishing them according to their poetic taste and to make them suitable for children: they chose their material from among the narratives that seemed to them to be poetically most striking, and in their choice they were not independent of the taste of their time. But their version of the tales is still universally read today, proving that their work has not dated in any way. Jacob would have preferred to have had the tales published in their folk-idiom but their widespread popularity is chiefly due to Wilhelm's talent in giving them their literary form.

Subsequent collecting of folktales revealed that their plots and themes were largely identical with those in the stories and myths of other peoples, suggesting that folktales and myths were once one. In the tales folk-belief and the fanciful came to dominate over the profound *Weltanschauung*, or philosophy of life, which is embodied in them. In their collection the Grimms included literary tales that were recorded in the 16th century, some stories translated from Latin, sagas, legends, riddles, incantations, games, rhymes and anecdotes in keeping with the diverse character of folk art.

In this way their collection is similar to the story books of the East. Many of the folktale elements can be found in surviving written sources, such as the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* or the Egyptian tales. Similar or identical features that reflect the unity of the oral tradition and mythology may also be found in the narratives of ancient India, the Old Testament, the epics of Homer, the oriental collection of *A Thousand and One Nights*, in Germanic mythology or in the *Edda*.

Many of the Grimm brothers' tales embody a perennial philosophy shown in the stories which portray the hero's journey in search of the Elixir of Life, in the form of the water of life or the princess of the distant kingdom. These he obtains only after many obstacles have been overcome which is synonymous with having proved himself to be the true hero. Christian elements have found their way into the tales which feature God, Christ or the Devil as actors involved in the fate of man. Pre-Christian figures such as giants and gnomes, once part of pagan mythology, appear and so do magicians and witches. The principal fignres such as kings, princesses and artisans are generally borrowed from the medieval social scene. Animals in the role of helpers or enemies abound, while transformation from man to animal, from plant to mineral, or the other way round, is a central theme. The life-force, as envisaged in the tales, is all-pervading and animates all levels of existence. It is the unique deed of the hero to mediate between these levels, to liberate enchanted beings, to transform and perfect himself in the process of his travels and to return to the world with gifts to bestow on his fellow men.

The belief in magic and miracles is a distinctive feature of the tales. There are countless examples of transfornnation through imitative and sympathetic magic, or through pronouncing a wish or speaking a thought in the form of a magic formula, which results in instantaneous action. This folktale magic is characteristic of the philosophy that any aspect of the whole may fulfil the function of the whole. For instance, the ring given by the supernatural helper to the hero carries his qualities and helps the hero in a difficult situation. The themes of the power of love that can break the spell that binds and imprisons the heroine, of wakefulness in face of danger and in relation to the execution of a task, and of the disguised hero under the mask of a fool are basic folktale motifs.

Characteristics of all types of folk art may be found in the folktales edited by the brothers Grimm: they are a mixture of the

Victoria & Albert Museum/C. Barker

Illustration to 'The Frog Prince', by Walter Crane, c 1870: transformation from man to animal, or the other way round, is a central theme in the tales

Magical possessions, such as the sword that cuts off heads when its owner cries 'Heads off!' *(above)* and the blue light with which a soldier summons his supernatural servant *(below)* abound in the folktales, as do beings like the giant in 'The Young Giant and the Tailor' *(below right)* and the dwarf who helps e soldier whose nose grows enormously long *(above right)* when he eats a magical apple: illustrations by Cruikshank

religious and the profane, of 'high seriousness' and burlesque. Novel and ancient features have been assimilated in the course of their long existence; but in spite of all these diverse elements the tales have retained a fundamental unity of theme, structure and style, transcending any given period of time by embodying the timeless qualities expressed in the overall theme of the search for 'paradise lost'.

The folktale as an artistic creation is a mixture of the most diverse elements. It contains survivals of an ancient view of the world based on a fundamental dualism, separating it into sacred and profane, upper and lower, good and evil: all folktale figures are exponents of one force or the other united through the hero's deeds. The tales mirror beliefs in the supernatural and in magical practices, they embody ethical principles and display a belief in survival beyond death. They incorporate dream-motifs, they attempt to resolve the fear of death, the overcoming of which is the central aspect of the hero's battles. All these elements are united and given form through the fanciful imaginations of the bearers of tradition.

It is not possible to assess in detail the influence exerted by the tales in the field of scholarship. Scholars set out to find the 'archetype' or original story which gave rise to all others, and attempted to trace its evolution, its place of origin, its significance in the religious, historical and social life of a given people. More recently the tales have been interpreted as projections of man's psychological structure, as 'archetypal' dreams and so on. All the many and varied interpretations arose from a realization that these stories often embody a race's entire heritage, and from an attempt to elucidate the universal similarity of themes, and the stories' perennial relevance to man. No doubt, the brothers Grimm would have been delighted to see the extent to which their work has initiated collecting, editing and classifying of folktales all over the world.

M. G. WOSIEN

FURTHER READING: R. Michaelis-Jena, *The Brothers Grimm* (Routledge, 1970) and *New Tales from Grimm* (Chambers, 1960); J. Stern, *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Routledge, 1948).

GRIMOIRE

AN ATMOSPHERE of Christian piety is perhaps the most surprising quality of the grimoires, the textbooks of the European tradition of magic. They contain instructions for summoning up spirits or demons, constantly calling on God for assistance, and they give directions for making powerful talismans and performing other magical operations. Most of them date from the 16th to the 18th centuries, though they preserve older material.

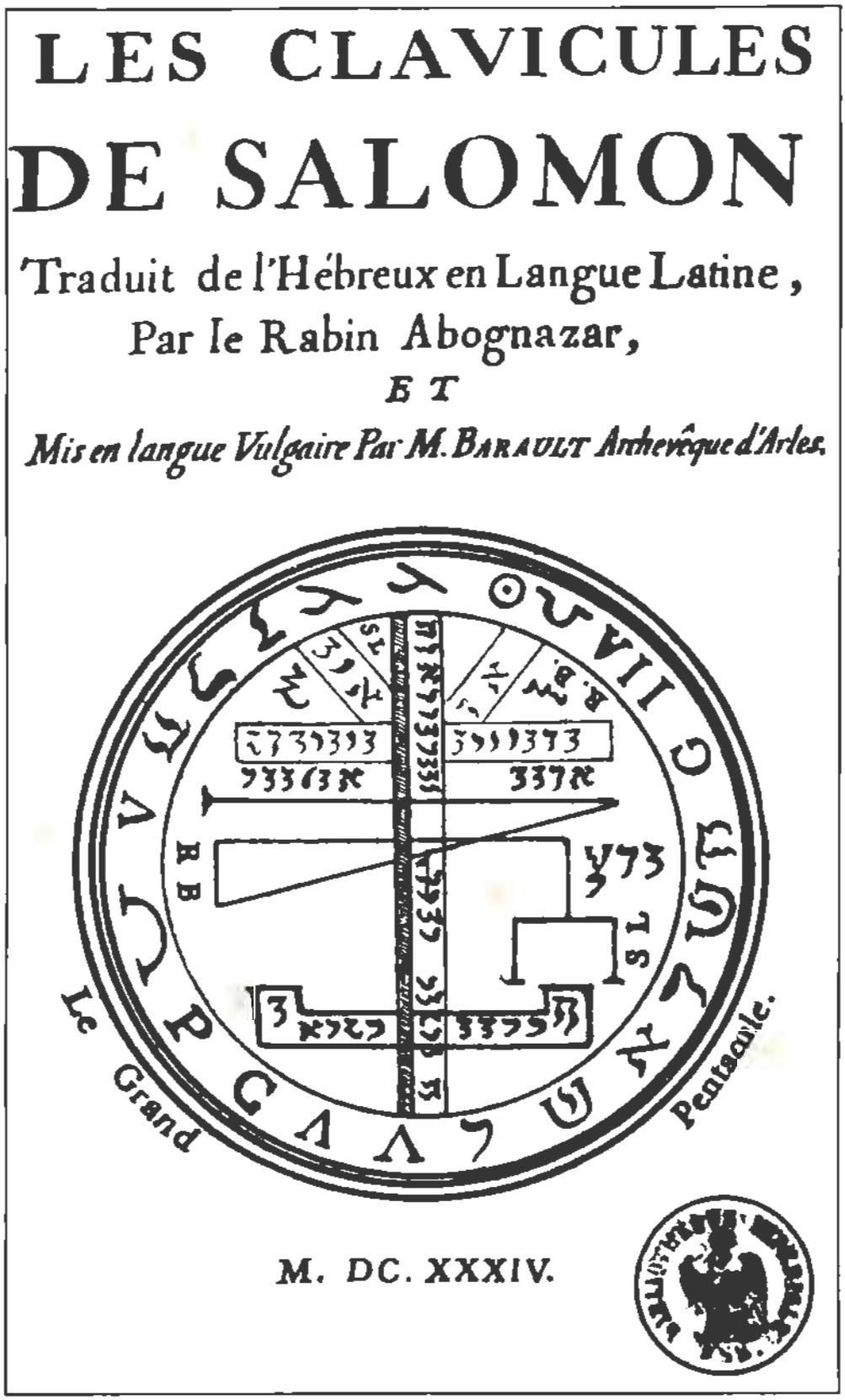
'Grimoire' is basically the same word as 'grammar' (and 'gramarye' is an old term for magic and enchantment) and the implication that language is supremely important in magic is fully born out by the grimoires themselves. The most influential of them is the celebrated *Key of Solomon*, on which many of the others are based. Strongly influenced by cabalistic and astrological magic, the *Key* sets out the lengthy preliminaries, the choosing of a suitable time and place, the weapons, robes and 'pentacles' or diagrams which the magician will need, the drawing of the magic circle, the incantations for summoning spirits and for compelling their obedience. As usual in the grimoires, the processes are complicated, elaborate and difficult. E. M. Butler commented that they 'read like the worst sort of obstacle race' and 'are certainly calculated to deal the death-blow to any notions harboured by intending practitioners that magic is a short cut to their desires.'

Infernal Devices

Printed copies of the *Key* are extremely rare (the edition which MacGregor Mathers published in 1889 is heavily expurgated) but it exists in numerous manuscripts in various languages. Most of these date from the 16th century or later but a Greek version in the British Museum may date from the 12th or 13th century. Solomon enjoyed a great legendary reputation as a powerful magician and a worshipper of strange gods, and as far back as the 1st century AD the Jewish historian Josephus referred to a book of incantations for conjuring up demons, supposedly written by Solomon. The *Testament of Solomon* (not the same as the *Key*) dating from c 100 to 400 AD, lists the names and powers of demons which Solomon had subdued with his magic ring. In the 13th century Roger Bacon, himself a reputed magician, knew of magical works attributed to Solomon and c 1350 *Le Livre de Salomon*, containing methods of evoking demons, was burned by order of Pope Innocent VI.

The key of the title is the instrument which unlocks the doors of hidden power and wisdom, a symbolism strengthened by the words of Jesus to St Peter which magicians took as a kind of warrant or charter. 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . .' (Matthew 16.19).

Also attributed to Solomon is the *Lemegeton* or *Lesser Key of Solomon*, divided into four sections and dating from the 16th century or earlier. The first section lists 72 chief demons, with their names and powers,



Above **Frontispiece of a 17th century version of the *Key of Solomon*. The most influential grimoire, the *Key* is strongly influenced by astrological and cabalistic magic. It sets out the preparations that must be made in order to summon spirits and compel their obedience, advice on choosing a suitable time and place for the ceremony, what kind of weapons, robes and pentacles are necessary, and instructions on drawing a magic circle *Right* Sigil or linear representation of the archangel Gabriel; 'He is to be invoked on a Thursday before daybreak. His power is very Great and he can do you great good, in which he will instruct you': from the *Grimoire of Armadel*, translated by MacGregor Mathers**

Gerald Yorke Collection/Michael Halford

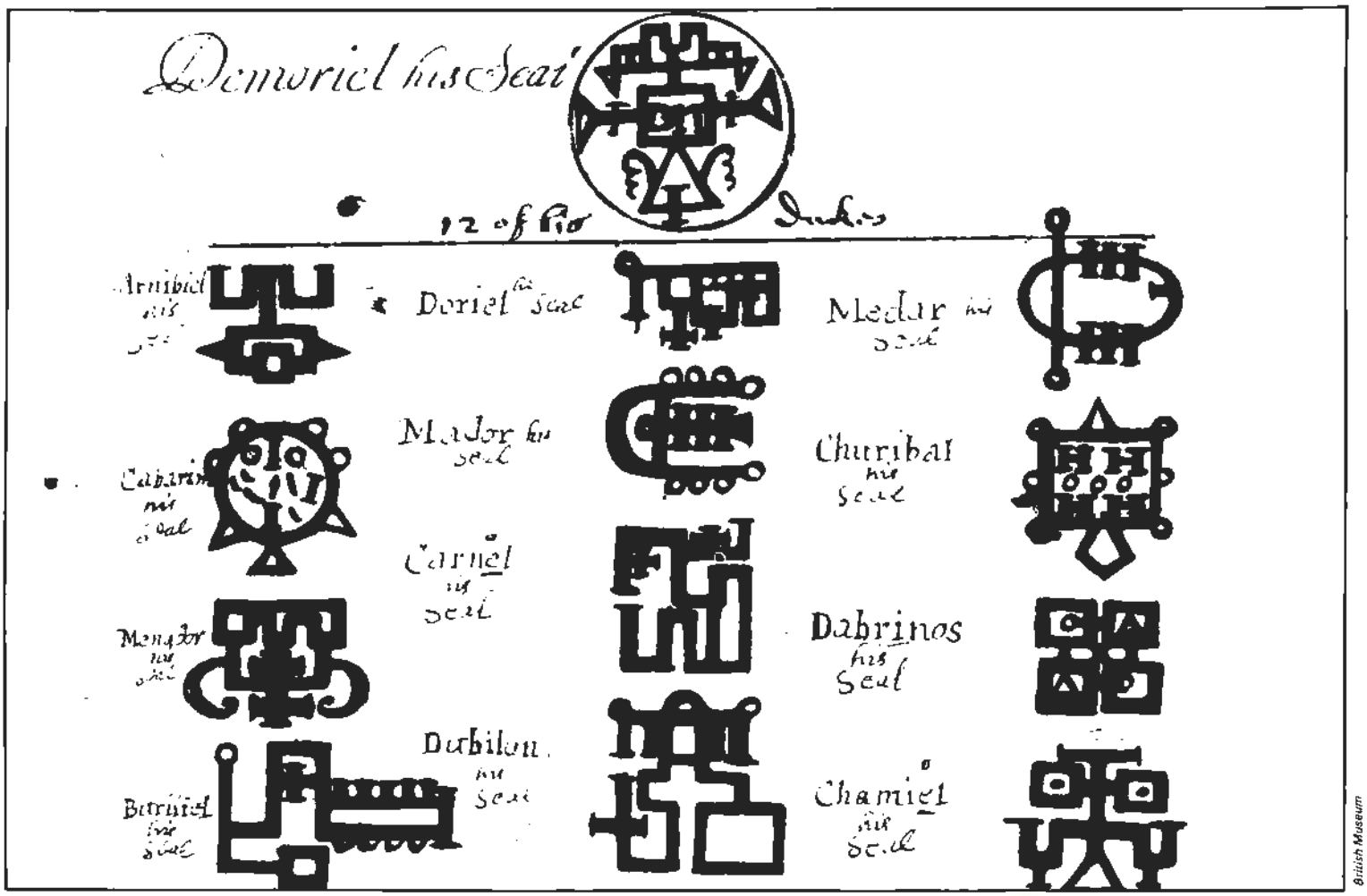
and the directions for summoning them.

Three famous French grimoires were based on the *Key* and the *Lemegeton*. The *Grand Grimoire* first printed in the 17th century, contains 'the Infernal Devices of the Great Agrippa for the Discovery of all Hidden Treasures and the Subjugation of every Denomination of Spirits, together with an Abridgement of all the Magical Arts.' Also known as the *Red Dragon*, it explains how to make a pact with the Devil and how to use 'the dreadful Blasting Rod, which causes the spirits to tremble.' *True Black Magic* or 'The Secret of Secrets', published at Rome in 1750, includes a collection of magical symbols and talismans. The *Grimorium Verum* also belongs to the 18th century though characteristically claiming to have been published by Alibeck the Egyptian at Memphis in 1517.

The French *Grimoire of Honorius the Great* probably dates from the late 16th century and is the most laborious and most paradoxically Christian of all. Its array of prayers, psalms and pious sayings of Mass, harneased to the calling up of the Devil, have given it a particularly black reputation.

Among many other grimoires are the *Arbatel of Magic*, allegedly published at Basle in 1575 and mainly concerned with the summoning of the seven Olympic Spirits which rule the planets. Typically, its aims range from acquiring the supreme knowledge of God to making money and prolonging life. The Fourth Book, added to Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* but probably not written by him, provides methods of invoking the planetary spirits. The *Heptameron, or Magical Elements* is a sequel to the Fourth Book and gives procedures for summoning the Spirits of the Air and for controlling supernatural beings which will find hidden treasures, cause wars and hatred, nose out secrets, open locked doors and procure the love of women.

FURTHER READING: A. E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970); Idries Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970).



The seal of Demoriel, ruler of the North, from the *Key of Solomon*; below are the seals of 12 of the spirits who serve him

British Museum

Griselda
Symbol of patience, heroine of a popular medieval story; the beautiful daughter of a peasant, she married a nobleman who subjected her to cruel tests of her love; the message of the story was the duty of uncomplaining acceptance of the will of God; the cruel husband may originally himself have been a supernatural being; the story is told in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and in the Clerk's Tale in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Grove
Sacred groves of trees have played an important part in the religions of many societies, including those of the Semitic peoples of the Near and Middle East, the Greeks and Romans, and the early Germanic tribes: trees have been widely worshipped for their size and strength, their periodic renewal of foliage, their vertical growth and flow of sap, their mysterious rustling in the wind.
See TREES.

Guardian Spirits

The belief that human beings have spirits which help and protect them is very widespread: 'cults of affliction' in two African societies throw light on the different social roles which this belief can play

TO APPEAL FOR HEALTH, personal welfare, or release from suffering and affliction, men serve guardian spirits. If some religious beliefs are pure and simple, the belief that human beings have personal protectors among the spirits is not. It is grasped through diverse modes of symbolic action which are an integral part, and therefore less than the sum total, of ritual appealing to the gods or the shades of the dead to allow men to live well, both morally and materially.

The guardian spirits of the Kalanga of Botswana in southern Africa and the Ndembu of Zambia will be discussed here, because there is almost a polar contrast between their cults. Moreover, the evidence for the Ndembu cults is rich, perhaps the richest in recent anthropological studies.

When the Kalanga of Botswana appeal, in domestic ritual, for the well-being of their children and themselves, the ritual makes them recognize a dangerous likeness: a likeness to non-human virtue. Where they have failed their kin, they have acted as becomes creatures of other orders, not men. They must face, and even seek, blame for sins and moral faults. What they desire is relief from personal suffering, and they come to appease afflicting demons, *mazenge*. The Kalanga beg to be freed from a wide variety of afflictions, from minor ills and aches to chronic diseases, severe pain during pregnancy, and childlessness. Their concern is the failure of kin to act with humanity and meet their family obligations.

The epithets of mazenge demons condense meanings which are expanded in the acts, metaphors and stylized clichés of ritual. The epithets are:

> Crushers of Meat,
> They of the Great River,
> They prey at the Tall Grass,
> Of snatching without shortcoming,
> They came from far, far,
> They should mock cramping.

These epithets convey remoteness, contrariness and a paradoxical purpose of the demons. From a distant grassland near plentiful water, where the guardian demons prey, the demons came in order that they should deceive or mock 'cramping, oppression, pinching'.

Mazenge are capricious demons that possess women. An initiate of the cult may sing of herself as 'carrying an evil'. For these afflicting demons, unlike mankind, are not bound to act according to specific ethical rules. Their demonic order represents disproportion, rapacity, and chaos for mankind. It is in their nature to act according to *lunya*, 'peevishness, spite, antipathy to children'. Their viciousness and contrariness is like human contradiction, it represents the derangement of human morality. Through the cult, congregations catch a glimpse of the kind of world they could expect when evil triumphs.

During the ritual, a woman acts as cult initiate or host. The guardian demon 'come from far, far' is believed to be performing her ritual acts. No longer herself, she becomes a 'lion' and wears a mane of white and black beads on her head; about her body, a mantle of red and black cloth, or of blue printed on white, sometimes with geometric patterns, and usually with lions or cocks and a surrounding design. About her legs are strings of rattles made from the cocoons of winged ants. With a gourd rattle symbolic of the staff of an elder or chief, she regulates the rhythm while dancing or leading a song.

In this role of host she is told of the affliction and pollution, the 'dirt' and 'rubbish' which concerns members of the congregation. She is asked what faults bring on affliction and treats her patients, her kin, with herbs which she digs up while she is possessed. She is expected to be overcome by awe and to enact human vice. Through her symbolic acts she grapples ritually with the sins and faults which are thought to have caused mazenge demons to send affliction: the denial to relatives of the share which they are entitled to 'eat', for example, the cattle of inheritance, bridewealth or slaughter at a feast; the failure to feed relatives and give them their dues from one's earnings; favouring some kin at the expense of others; or the stealing of a kinsman's wife through adultery – exacting the lion's share. In her role as host she grapples with selfishness and rapacity which cheats and dispossesses close relatives of what should be theirs.

The Song of Creeping

During the dance of a ritual, plaints are chanted about suffering from neglect, from old age and from the meanness of relatives, their mocking, and ingratitude. The plaints are addressed to a high place, 'a knoll that has in it mazenge demons', a ritual phrase for the possessed woman. This is the text of a song sung by an old woman, a childless widow, during a ritual on behalf of a sick elder. The chorus is the first two lines, and is repeated after each succeeding line:

> *Oh knoll,*
> *Oh knoll, having within it mazenge demons.*
> Let us stamp.
> Where we have danced.
> Let us stamp.
> I tire, I cannot cope.
> Where we have danced.
> The chief of the black string of bast.
> Oh lions, you defecate dung.
> Awe, the creeping, creeping.
> The spirit of others falls.
> Mine is like the stamping block's.
> About to be stamped upon, it lies outside.
> Most have ended, long ago.
> My children died, long ago.
> If only I should die myself.
> If only I should die myself . . .
> My child remained outside.
> Let us offer for the spirit of the father.
> The spirit of (the sick elder).
> How is it mine is so hard?
> Mine is like the stamping block's,
> About to be stamped upon, it remains outside.
> A lullaby stolen in, its owners not here.
> Let us offer for the spirit of the father.

The soloist sings of a basic activity of domestic life, an activity on which it depends and which is the special preserve of women: the provision of meal. The singer calls on another cult member, who is reluctant to join her in possession, and compares this woman to a stamping block. The singer urges that this reluctance, and remaining outside in neglect, should be compared to a block about to be used and thus left around in the cooking compound. Her step pounds on the floor of her kitchen in the rhythm of the pole on the block, and she sings of her dancing as stamping: the rhythm of the household economy is the rhythm of the ritual. She alludes to her childlessness – the children she bore died – and she comments on the conduct of her kinswoman

who is, in the cult, her 'child'. In the ritual, too, she is 'childless' for her 'child' is hard, with the hardness of the block to be beaten, and denies a father (the sick elder of this hamlet) the ritual services which he requires to be healed.

The soloist's plaint has its force through a coalescence of meanings, characterizing her personal lot in life and the events of the immediate performance. Three lines show this most clearly: The chief of the black string of bast; Oh lions, you defecate dung; Awe, the creeping, creeping.

The first of these lines represents her as the 'chief of black grief'. She wears an emblem of seniority, the black string of bast. This is an emblem of affliction, for 'string' and 'cry' are one word and symbol in Kalanga. It is a symbol of black grief. In the next line, she sings of defecating. A host feeds on special food, for she should defecate distinctively and ritually. Doing so is an act symbolic of a host's role and its part in pollution: she must 'make the occult patent'. In this song, the soloist's use of the image of lions defecating sets in relief, by juxtaposition, her chiefship.

Next, she sings of 'the creeps', the awesome feeling, which Kalanga say is a sensation of the hair standing on end. A host ought to feel this at the onset of possession, when she must act as though overcome by the urge to dance and fall possessed. The singer threatens that the reluctant host is to be the prey of the demons and is to feel the creeps. The singer represents herself as being like a tracker of animals, finding them before seeing them, by their dung and its location. The phrase 'creeping, creeping' used for awe, *manyawi nyawi*, plays on that for 'you defecate', *manya*. It conveys what is unseen yet known to the tracker: the frenzy, the excitement, the terror, the exaggerated self-confidence of the prey. The chiefship of black grief, dung, awe, thus follow together, belong in one single image and, within a unity, represent primary aspects of the role being ritualized.

Through such metaphors and acts of the cult, close relatives declare symbolically their shared anticipation, their mutual dependence, and their subjection to commandment within a realm of domesticity. They carry on a dialogue about animal virtue which

The singer threatens that the reluctant host is to be the prey of demons and is to feel the creeps

Belief in supernatural guardians is found in many parts of the world; they may take the form of protective spirits who accompany and care for men during their lives, or they may guard temples or other places of worship ***Left*** **At the Wat Po temple in Bangkok the figure of a Dutch sea-captain, evidently regarded as a peculiarly formidable guardian, keeps evil spirits at bay** ***Right*** **The cherubs of European art are sentimentalized descendants of fierce spirits which guarded Assyrian temples. In the Old Testament cherubim guarded the garden of Eden and the Ark of Yahweh**

compels them to share a universe of meanings about human sins and faults. A realm of experience is enhanced and given its special location in a symbolic order through the Kalanga cult of affliction.

Close relatives are coerced, ritually. However, they are not involved in a widening circle of outsiders or disinterested persons. The congregation at a Kalanga ritual of affliction is, at its widest, a body of kin and neighbours. It is not a casual assembly but a congregation of persons brought together because of their specific interests in one another. Highly exclusive events are confined to the closest relatives.

Competition for Status

The Ndembu have many cults of affliction in which they placate their guardian spirits, the shades of the dead. These Ndembu cults are a luxurious growth and each one is lush in symbols and secrets. Elaborate and distinct regalia blazon one and all. They are thick with special privileges and duties: no one need lack a place. Taken together, they represent a vast splendour of all-absorbing emblems and ritual qualifications.

Almost any Ndembu, through their cults, can convey secret notions to some, and exclude from a universe of meanings others of his close relatives, fellow villagers neighbours and friends. In these cults the closest kin continually promote symbolic disharmony. They do so through symbols that are intelligible to unrelated persons but not to all the congregation of close kin. Indeed, some kin in the congregation are mystified in their ignorance. Each of the multitude of cults may be understood by some of the kin, but not by all.

Embarrassment and shame at ignorance are necessary features of the Ndembu cults of affliction. A man, driven to overcome his shame, can never succeed. Once he gains understanding as a novice there is yet another cult beyond his comprehension, there is yet a further elaboration of esoterica to grasp. Secret associations multiply. It is fitting to speak of a 'ritual man' among the Ndembu; for the more a man invests in cults, the more he extends his wealth of symbols and the range of persons with whom he is bound through shared secrets. But he must continually participate in the exclusion of others, including some who have lived or still live in the greatest intimacy with him; and he is compelled by his increasing investment in cults, to sustain greater and greater symbolic disharmony.

V. W. Turner points out that the impact of these rituals is important for linking inter-village and internal village relations. The rituals' consequences are not confined to a distinct body of relatives, to one village or smaller area within the wider Ndembu region. According to Turner, the Ndembu invoke 'the participation of the wider society, represented by adepts drawn from all over the Ndembu region, in the conflicts of the narrower unit of the village.' He considers that in some of their rituals the Ndembu urge one another to come to terms in quarrels. However, they do not act in rituals of affliction in order to seal off strife between relatives, and contain the struggles within an arena of their immediate village or kinship relationships. Turner suggests that such rituals 'may have the subordinate function of reintegrating the ritual subject's village.' He observes that they 'dominantly emphasize the unity of all Ndembu'.

Both the Kalanga and the Ndembu compete for status through their cults. The Kalanga do so, however, without upsetting the seniority between generations and so re-ordering other relationships between kin. As a Kalanga host ages, her seniority increases. Her status is the highest in the cult, because her authority is extended through the great number of hosts whom she has initiated and who are her juniors. By contrast, among the Ndembu, there is a multiplication of ritual privileges, duties and claims against others, irrespective of their kinship or residence. Most Ndembu join several cults. Some begin with one, others with another and they advance their status in each at varying rates and at irregular intervals during their lives. The standing of kin in a cult may be the reverse of their standing as senior and junior kin and as this varies from cult to cult the multiplicity of cults intricately complicates the relationships between kin. Each performance promotes the differential advancement in status of particular kin and associates. A member's status becomes higher the more he or she takes part in rituals and invests in payments to acquire knowledge of the cult's medicines and techniques.

A Universe of Meanings

Any series of economic transactions may add up as relative gains or losses in status. However, goods offered in a cult of affliction are links in a chain of symbolic statements which, among the Kalanga at least, fix the meaning of domesticity and of close kinship and neighbourliness. Among the Kalanga close relatives are compelled to recognize and make manifest the occult, not merely affirm its existence. The paradoxes of their interdependence are made the subject of concurrence in a symbolic idiom. They tell one another home truths through the cult. But they must do so within an idiom which is symbolic and cryptic in the sense that all its statements speak of the occult, of what is hidden and unknowable. The secrets of a group of kin are grasped, ritually, within prescribed metaphors, cliches, take-offs, jokes and puns. Mockery and humour too, is ritualized in the cult, and kin must meet to share it among themselves, with a subtlety of innuendo which they alone can fully appreciate.

To understand their deployment of the symbols, in any of its subtlety, one must be an intimate or a kinsman and conversely, being an intimate, one is required to deploy these symbols in expression of one's relationships of intimacy and domesticity. The symbols advance the relationships, and the relationships sustain and carry forward the symbols. Close relatives compete and struggle with one another through and about their ritual investments, for it is through investment in symbols that they invest in each other.

Those present in the congregation are required to pledge themselves to carry forward relationships and to reconstitute, in

C. M. Dixon

Left **Guardian spirit from a Chinese tomb. The belief that human beings have personal protectors in the spirit world occurs in various forms in many societies** ***Far right*** **For the ritual through which the Kalanga of Botswana appeal to their guardian spirits, the 'host' women wear rattles made from cocoons of winged ants around their legs; their black and blue garments symbolize rain, and coloured beads are worn to please the sky god** ***Right*** **A woman of the tribe performs a ritual dance in her kitchen; the food cooking in the pot symbolizes the closest relationships of kin**

agreement, a universe of meanings, symbolically representing what must ultimately be unknowable – the occult. At any performance, some kin can be (indeed, they must be) excluded from the congregation, while being included in the dialogue of the occasion. They are not excluded from the knowledge of the symbolic discourse that is pursued although they cannot and must not attend. Most of the significance of the discourse, in their absence, and about them, depends on the expectation of the congregation that, in the future, some of the excluded relatives will become aware of what has transpired and will have to modify their conduct accordingly.

R. P. WERBNER

Guardian Genius

Belief in guardian spirits is found in many other parts of the world besides Africa, in various forms. A man may be believed to have a protective spirit which accompanies him all his life, and which he acquires at birth or at puberty; sometimes it is the spirit of an ancestor, sometimes not; it may cease to exist when its human companion dies, or it may live on. The guardian is particularly important in the lore of American Indian peoples, where it usually shows itself to a man in a vision and in animal form. Supernatural beings may guard places as well as people, like the spirits which ward off evil from oriental temples or the dragon that guards the treasure-hoard.

In modern English we have turned what was originally a guardian spirit into the characteristic intellectual or artistic endowment of each person. This is the 'genius', which was the Latin word for each man's spirit protector (the guardian spirit of each woman was called a Juno). The word means 'the begetter' and the genius seems to have been the procreative force in a man, principally occupied in helping him to satisfy his natural appetites. The genius was honoured in Roman birthday celebrations. The Greek equivalent was the personal daemon, mentioned by some writers as accompanying a man throughout his life, and it may be that growing belief in the existence of this personal guardian was responsible for the increasing attention given to celebrating people's birthdays in classical times.

The Romans also believed in the *genius*

Richard Werbner

Richard Werbner

accompanying a man throughout his life, and it may be that growing belief in the existence of this personal guardian was responsible for the increasing attention given to celebrating people's birthdays in classical times.

The Romans also believed in the *genius loci*, which guarded a particular place. It had its Greek counterparts in the nymphs and animistic spirits attached to streams, trees, mountains and other natural features.

In the Old Testament the book of Daniel (chapters 10, 12) mentions angels who watch over different kingdoms and peoples. The garden of Eden was guarded by cherubim (Genesis 3.24), winged creatures descended from Mesopotamian spirits believed to intercede for men with the gods and placed at the entrances of temples and palaces to guard them. Two cherubim with wings outstretched guarded the Ark of Yahweh (Exodus 25.18).

Jesus advised his disciples not to despise children, 'for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father' (Matthew 18.10). This was taken to mean that each child has a protecting angel and influenced the belief, accepted by medieval theologians, that every Christian has a guardian angel. The early Christian *Shepherd of Hermas* says that each man is accompanied by an angel of righteousness who inspires his good actions and an evil spirit which inspires his bad ones.

In Mohammedan belief, each man is guarded by two angels during the day and another two during the night. They protect him from harm and record all his actions, in preparation for judgement day. Sunset and sunrise, when these angelic sentries change guard, are particularly dangerous moments in which a man may fall into the clutches of demons.

(See also ANGELS; ANIMISM; DOUBLE; GREAT PLAINS INDIANS; LARES; NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.)

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Guinevere

In the Arthurian legends, the wife of Arthur and mistress of Lancelot; in early Welsh stories she was Gwenhwyfar, and there were said to be three of her; there was an old theme of her abduction and rescue; in the later legends, she brought Arthur the Round Table as her dowry, and the traitor Mordred seized her, or tried to, when he usurped Arthur's crown; the monks of Glastonbury said that she was buried there, with Arthur.

See ARTHUR; LANCELOT.

British Museum

Guisers

People dressed up, a general term, used particularly in Scotland, for the dancers and masqueraders who appear in curious costumes, disguises and masks at folk dances and ceremonies; the masked dancers and children in grotesque costumes at Hallowe'en are examples.

Michael Busselle

A modern mystic who believed that man could develop spiritually only by consciously labouring and suffering, Gurdjieff's teachings brought not so much peace as 'a special kind of inner warfare'

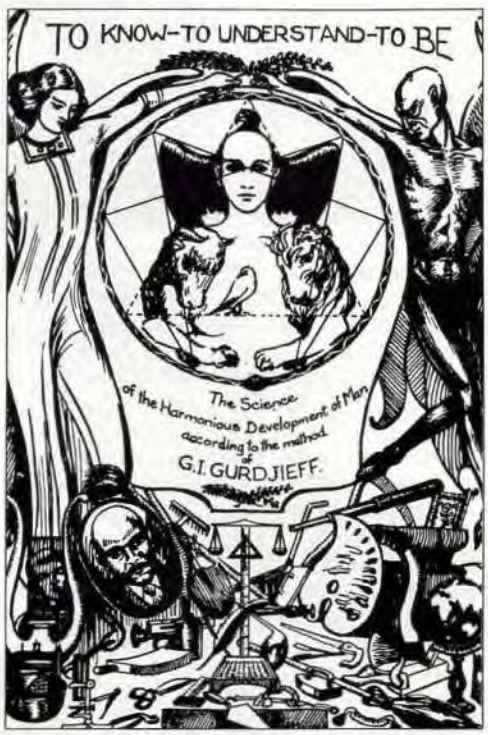
GURDJIEFF

BORN IN ALEXANDROPOL, near the Persian frontier of Russia in about 1877, of a Greek father and an Armenian mother, George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff was brought up in an antique, patriarchal world where children were put to sleep at night with the story of Gilgamesh, the great hero of Sumerian and Babylonian epic poetry. While he was still a very young man, Gurdjieff 'disappeared' into that cauldron of history, tradition and ideas that we know as the Middle East. Indeed, in his second book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, he describes an even wider orbit, taking in the Gobi Desert, Mecca and Tibet; but in this case the names may stand either for places or for symbols in his unremitting search for a 'real and universal knowledge'. 'I was not alone,' his disciple, the Russian writer P. D. Ouspensky quotes him as saying. 'There were all sorts of specialists among us. We called ourselves "The Seekers of Truth"'. Ouspensky recorded his first meeting with Gurdjieff as having taken place in the autumn of 1914. 'I realized,' he wrote, 'that I had met with a completely new system of thought surpassing all I had known before. This system threw quite a new light on psychology and explained what I could not understand before in esoteric ideas.'

During the first two years of the First World War Gurdjieff elaborated his teachings to groups in St Petersburg and Moscow but with the onset of the Russian Revolution, flight was inevitable. His journey with his followers through Russia to the Caucasus, then to Constantinople and at last to the West has all the elements of a modern thriller. But it is given an epic quality and an extra dimension by the fact that Gurdjieff used the hardships and dangers – always for him the true stuff of existence – to exemplify his teaching, and required of his pupils that they should escape not merely with their lives but with their Life. It was not until 1922 that he succeeded in bringing to the West what he had found in the East, by establishing his pilgrim band at the Chateau du Prieure, near Fontainebleau, where he founded his *Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man*.

Gurdjieff never openly disclosed the source of his teaching. By examining his writings and the numerous commentaries upon them it might be possible to discover parallels in various traditions but the fundamental features of his method cannot be traced to any one source. Ouspensky quotes him as admitting 'I will say that, if you like, this is esoteric Christianity.' In fact, there seems to be no reason to reject this when one remembers that Christianity, as Gurdjieff knew it, was the heir to centuries of religious tradition and must have drawn into itself early pre-Christian Hittite, Assyrian, Phrygian and Persian elements; and that there is nothing so explosive as old ideas restated in contemporary terms – as the Western world was to discover when Gurdjieff burst upon it.

Design for the programme of Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, 1923. Gurdjieff insisted that man is asleep: only when he wakes, to both consciousness and conscience, does his true evolution begin. The guardian angel and attendant demon support the symbols of the four evangelists in a pentagram, symbol of man as the potential god



Intentional Suffering

His impact was tremendous. It was clear that he had come not to bring peace but a special kind of inner warfare, and that his mission in life was to destroy men's complacency and make them aware of their limitations. Only by such means, by what he called 'Conscious labours and intentional suffering', was it possible to bring about man's inner development. It very soon appeared that the Work, as his method came to be called, had been only too accurately named. Writers, artists, and men and women from all kinds of professions found themselves digging wells, chopping down trees and breaking stones by day, while at night they were required to take part in sacred dances or 'Movements', or to assist at one of Gurdjieff's great feasts where, under the influence of good food, vodka and the watchful eye of the Master, opportunities were provided for those who had the courage to come face to face with themselves.

By 1924 the Work was sufficiently well established for Gurdjieff to set out on the first of his visits to the United States where in January, in New York, a group of 40 pupils gave demonstrations of his Movements. Two thirds of these evenings were devoted to the sacred dances, and the remainder to what was described as 'Trick, Semi-Trick and Real Supernatural Phenomena'. The audience was invited to distinguish between them and reminded that 'the study of the first two was held to be indispensable to the study of the third, since to understand the last a perfectly impartial attitude and a judgment not burdened by pre-established beliefs were necessary'.

It is clear from Gurdjieff's writings that hypnotism, mesmerism and various arcane methods of expanding consciousness must have played a large part in the studies of the Seekers of Truth. But none of these processes had any bearing on black magic, which according to Gurdjieff 'has always one definite characteristic. It is the tendency to use people for some, even the best of aims, without their knowledge and understanding, either by producing in them faith and infatuation or by acting upon them

through fear. There is, in fact, neither red, green nor yellow magic. There is "doing". Only "doing" is magic.' Properly to realize the scale of what Gurdjieff meant by magic, one has to remember his continually repeated aphorism, 'Ouly he who can *be* can do'; and its corollary that, without 'being' nothing is 'done', things simply 'happen'.

The American tour hrought a new influx of pupils to the Prieure and, as usual, Gurdjieff, by deliberate indirection, set them to find directions out. 'The teaching', wrote one pupil, 'was given in fragments – often in unexpected ways – and we had to learn to put the pieces together and connect them up through our observations and experiences.' It was in the late summer of 1924, that Gurdjieff, slowly re-assembling his forces after a near-fatal car accident, hegan to put those separated fragments together in the form of a book.

While helping the pupils who remained, Gurdjieff wrote incessantly at Fontainebleau, on his frequent motoring trips, or seated at a table in the Café de la Paix in Paris where he had long heen a familiar figure.

Called *All and Everything*, the book attempts to cover every aspect of the life of man. Into it Gurdjieff gathered the fundamentals of his teaching. Man, we are told, has a unique function in the cosmological scheme and enters into obligation by the very fact of being horn. But the awareness of this is not a gift of Nature; and neither are individuality, consciousness, free will and an immortal soul. These attributes, which man mistakenly believes he already possesses, have to be acquired by his own special efforts. Above all, the book repeatedly insists that man is asleep. It is only at the moment when he wakes, not merely to consciousness but also to conscience – indeed, for Gurdjieff, the words were synonymous – that his true evolution can begin.

Monsieur Bonbon

The manuscript, constantly revised, now became the focal point of the teaching, not only in France but also in New York during his two visits to America in 1929 and 1933. In the latter year the Prieure was sold and his life entered another phase. Gurdjieff never stood still but was always growing, always experimenting, always searching. After enjoying his fame for nine years, he seems to have retired into the shadows, clearly for reasons of his own. 'He is no longer teaching,' said his older pupils when new people wanted to make direct contact with him. But one of his pet tenets was that the Work was designed not to discover something new but to recover that which is lost, and an intrepid few set out to do just that. If Gurdjieff accepted them as pupils, they were put into small intimate groups, each member depending upon the others, like mountain climbers upon a rope, no group having any connection with the others. Gurdjieff's teaching was essentially intimate and personal, and his insistence that by the very nature of the Work he could not have many pupils appears valid and inevitable.

The published reminiscences of various members of these small groups bear witness to the fact that he was, indeed, teaching in the '30s; but quietly, as though it were a question of holding his powers in reserve. Those who knew Gurdjieff as a teacher could gather only by rumour and hearsay that there were other Gurdjieffs: the healer of psychic illnesses, the curer of alcoholism, the business man and the Gurdjieff known as 'Monsieur Bonbon', an old eccentric gentleman whose sole mission in life, it appeared, was to dispense candy to local cronies and children.

In 1939 Gurdjieff again visited America, a country that he held in affectionate regard because of its 'brotherliness'. On his return to Paris, war was close and when it hroke out Gurdjieff disappeared from the sight of all but his French pupils until the Liberation. It is said that he sustained himself during those lean years by putting about the rumour that he was heir to a Texan oil well. Nobody was more surprised than the French shopkeepers to find, when his British and American pupils streamed back and paid the bills, that the story was essentially true.

The year 1946 marked the beginning of the last phase of his teaching, a period that, for those who had known him earlier, was richer than any that had gone before. For a little over three years new adherents and old pupils who brought their own pupils and children, flocked to his small room to listen to a reading from one of his manuscripts, *All and Everything; Meetings with Remarkable Men; Life is Real Only When I Am;* to hear him play on his small hand accordion the music he had composed for the different chapters; or to receive the bounty of his teaching in whatever form it might be given. 'If take, then take, no sipping, no trifling', was one of his favourite aphorisms and for many the special nourishment that was offered in addition to the delicious edibles was indigestible, hard to stomach.

The exotic flavours and the vodka in which the famous 'Toasts to the Idiots' were drunk ('idiot' in this case having its original Greek meaning of private person, that which in myself I am) did not make things easier. But easiness was not the aim. The patriarchal host, massive of presence, radiating a serene power at once formidable and reassuring, dispensed this 'food' in various ways, always unexpected; sometimes in thunderclaps of rage, sometimes telling a story that only one of all the table would know was meant for himself, sometimes merely by look or gesture thrusting home the truth. Masks were mercilessly stripped off. Beneath the exacting henevolence of Gurdjieff's gaze everyone was naked.

But occasionally for those who could face their own situations, he would fleetingly let fall his own mask. It was possible then to see that behind the apparent mercilessness was sorrow and compassion. At such moments his 'humanity-ness' (a key word in his odd English vocabulary) would radiantly declare itself. If his aim was to teach men how to rise to the possihility of saying 'I am', he never forgot that 'thou art' and 'he is' complete the conjugation.

The Desire to Awake

Gurdjieff describes his concept of good and evil:

'A permanent idea of good and evil can be formed in man only in connection with a permanent aim and permanent understanding. If a man understands that he is asleep and if he wishes to awake, then everything that helps him to awake will be *good* and everything that hinders him, everything that prolongs his sleep, will be *evil*. Exactly in the same way will he understand what is good and evil for other people. What helps them to awake is good, what hinders them is evil. But this is only so for those who want to awake . . . Those who do not understand that they are asleep . . . cannot have understanding of good and evil.'

P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*

'Man Must Live Till He Dies'

In addition to the activities in his own apartment, Gurdjieff now instituted at the Salle Pleyel daily practices of the Movements that were so essential a part of his teaching. But it was not only in Paris that the Work progressed so vigorously year by year. There were groups in England and the United States and others were now established in Holland. Sweden, Germany and South America. During what was to be his last visit to America, on 13 January 1949 Gurdjieff announced that he was ready to publish *All and Everything*. At the same time, those English disciples who had joined the Paris groups after Ouspensky's death in 1947, arranged for the publication of *In Search of the Miraculous*, Ouspensky's long withheld account of his early years with Gurdjieff.

These two books, the first giving an added dimension to the second, and the second clarifying the first, opened up the teaching. Gurdjieff's health was now faltering but such was his powerhouse of inner strength that few could believe it. Throughout the summer, after his return from New York, the Work went on with added intensity. While serenely putting his own house in order, Gurdjieff used every moment as a moment of teaching, and every aspect of his fading strength as a reminder to his pupils that 'Man must live till he dies'. In Gurdjieff's sense, to 'live' was consciously to labour and voluntarily to suffer. This he himself did, with constancy and deliberation, until 29 October, 1949.

Since his death his chosen pupils have carried on his work, and groups are to be found everywhere in the Western world. The Movements have been accurately documented in a series of films; his second book, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, has been published and the third is in preparation. The siftings of time are likely to prove that these records are his proper monument. In them the man and his myth are one.

P. TRAVERS

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EDMUND GURNEY

J. H. Cartan

Portrait of Edmund Gurney, completed shortly before he died in June 1888; he was one of the first scientific investigators of paranormal phenomena

A FOUNDER of the Society for Psychical Research and one of the most important pioneers in the scientific investigation of ostensibly paranormal phenomena, Edmund Gurney was born on 23 March 1847. After being privately educated he entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1866 as a Minor Scholar in Classics. His undergraduate career was unusually prolonged, owing to spells of ill-health, but he succeeded in being elected to a Trinity Fellowship in 1872.

Gurney was more interested in music than in classics, but after years of dogged application, he had to admit that he could never have been more than a moderately competent performer. However, he continued to reflect on the theory of music, and in 1880 published *The Power of Sound*; the great American psychologist William James considered that when it appeared it was 'the most important work on aesthetics in the English language'.

Gurney decided to become a doctor and studied medicine partly in London and partly in Cambridge, from 1877 to 1881. But throughout his life he was intimately aware of, and unusually sensitive to, the sufferings of men and animals, and early in 1881 he abandoned medicine. In May 1881 he became a student at Lincoln's Inn in London, but within a year had abandoned his law studies. In 1877 he married Kate Sara Sibley. They had one child, a daughter, born in 1881.

The foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in February 1882 supplied the occasion and the motive for the astonishing output of first-class work which he achieved in the few years that remained to him. He was Honorary Secretary of the Society from October 1883 until his death in June 1888.

Gurney's main achievements, after the publication of the *Power of Sound*, were concerned with philosophical and ethical reflections, and with psychical research. The former are mostly collected in the first volume of his two-volume book *Tertium Quid*, containing an essay on 'The Nature of Evidence in Matters Extraordinary' which is directly relevant to psychical research and it is probably still the best critical treatment of this fundamental topic. The main subjects in the other essays in this volume are Gurney's doctrine of pain in general, and the ethics of vivisection in particular; his contempt for the idealization of natural science and its practitioners, and for the optimism associated with it; and his grounds for thinking that survival of bodily death is at any rate abstractly possible.

Gurney's position may be summarized roughly as follows. He held that the notion of survival is not inconceivable, and that it is not so improbable as to be unworthy of further consideration. He himself had little if any desire to survive. He realized that even if survival was a fact, things might possibly be as bad as, or even worse than, they would be if no one survived. But he felt certain that if no one survives, and there is therefore no possibility of the evils and injustices inevitable in this life being redressed, then the world is so predominantly bad that a reasonable man in a cool hour would desire the early and complete cessation of the human race.

Gurney's work in psychical research deals mainly with hypnotism and phantasms of the living. His research into hypnotism falls into two main divisions. The first is a study, theoretical and practical, of the purely psychological features of hypnotism, without regard to any paranormal phenomena which may be associated with it. The second is an experimental study of ostensibly paranormal features in connection with some cases of hypnosis, for example, in the telepathic induction of the hypnotic state, in community of sensation between operator and subject, and in some of the feats performed by subjects under hypnosis.

Overdose of Chloroform

Most of Gurney's experiments were done in Brighton, with a Mr. G. A. Smith as hypnotiser, and with subjects chosen by him. Smith had been a stage hypnotist, and he subsequently became Gurney's secretary and trusted assistant. There can be no doubt that he produced genuine deep hypnosis in certain subjects. But he had formerly been associated with a man called Blackburn who, very much later when he mistakenly believed Smith to be dead, alleged publicly that they had at one time been co-operating in the production of fraudulent (non-hypnotic) phenomena, and this has cast a certain shadow on all experiments in which Smith played an essential part.

A book called *Phantasms of the Living* was published under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research in 1886. The authors were given as Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and F. Podmore. Myers contributed the introduction and an important note in the second of the two volumes, and Podmore gave invaluable help in collating and examining the evidence. All the rest of the book is due to Gurney.

The essential factual basis of the work is the reports of 357 spontaneous cases, for all of which the evidence is first-hand and is regarded by the authors as being of first-rate authority. Some idea of the labour involved in producing the book can be judged from the following facts. Gurney often spent eight or nine hours a day writing 50 to 60 letters in his own hand, and almost every living person who gave evidence concerning the 'phantasms' was personally interviewed by at least one of the three authors. The chief part of this delicate work fell on Gurney.

A 'phantasm of the living' is experienced if, and only if, a person has a hallucinatory apparent perception as of seeing, hearing, or touching someone else, who is at the time out of range of the first person's actual sense-perception, and if the latter is alive in the flesh at the time, or was alive very shortly before. Such an experience is classed as 'veridical' (that is, coinciding with realities) if, and only if, the actual state and situation at the time of the person appearing corresponds in considerable detail with the hallucination. Otherwise it is 'delusive'.

Stories of such experiences, alleged to have been veridical, have been common in all ages and places. Many of these are no doubt false. Others, which may well be true, may reasonably be ascribed to mere chance-coincidence, or explained by a combination of normal causes and unusual circumstances. The question is whether or not there are nevertheless a substantial number of cases which fall under neither of these heads; and, if so, what is the most plausible kind of paranormal explanation of them.

The authors of *Phantasms of the Living* concluded that there was, in the cases which they investigated, a substantial residuum of well-attested veridical experiences of the kind in question, the veridicality of which cannot reasonably be assigned to mere chance-coincidence, and cannot plausibly be explained by any combination of generally acknowledged normal causes. The most probable explanation of the veridicality of these is in terms of telepathic communication of experiences between the two people concerned.

The book gave, for the first time, a clear formulation of the questions at issue and an extremely acute and fair-minded discussion of each of them against a background of relevant experimental work, and of a large number of carefully scrutinized reports of spontaneous cases.

Edmund Gurney died in June 1889 at the age of 43 at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton, where he had taken a room for the night. Next day he was found dead, with a sponge-bag pressed over his nose and mouth. At the subsequent inquest the jury returned the verdict that death had been accidental, and that it had been the result of an overdose of chloroform inhaled to relieve pain. Very naturally, from that day to this, there has been some suspicion that he committed suicide. There is no good reason to doubt the evidence on which the jury reached their verdict; and there is no positive evidence for the view that Gurney had some special reason for committing suicide. Nevertheless in view of his known temperament and his published opinions, suicide seems by no means unplausible.

C. D. BROAD

British Museum

Guy of Warwick
Hero of a popular early 14th century English prose romance, named after him; his legendary feats included the slaughter of a destructive dragon in Northumberland; he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where, among other adventures, he killed a Saracen giant; he came back to England to rescue King Athelstan from the Danes by killing another giant who was the Danish champion.

MADAME GUYON

Believing that God had entrusted her with an evangelical mission, Madame Guyon left her family and travelled through France and Italy, teaching her philosophy

THE FRENCH WRITER and mystic Madame Guyon has been described as 'the most enlightened person of the 17th century' but during her lifetime she was harshly condemned by the Church, and was imprisoned for several years in the Bastille because of her quietist writings. Quietism was a religious movement that swept through France, Italy and Spain during the 17th century; it was based on a blind reliance on God's charity, one of its doctrinal keystones being passive prayer and the relinquishing of the active war against evil (see QUIETISM).

Born in 1648, the daughter of a wealthy and aristocratic French family, Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe early became fired with religious fervour. By the time she was 16, this had become so intense that she was terrified of losing her soul and prayed constantly to the Virgin Mary to save her.

In an attempt to calm these fears and anxieties, her father married her to Jacques Guyon du Chesnoy Champoulet, a rich invalid 22 years her senior. But the marriage was unhappy, and the young woman soon regretted that she had not become a nun. Even the births of her four children failed to console her, and she took refuge in stubborn silence, retreating into a secret inner life, channelling all her energy into good works and tending the sick with an almost masochistic fervour.

When she was 19 a priest pointed out to her that it is only in the innermost recesses of oneself, in total prostration, that the voice of God is revealed. It was a dazzling revelation for her. 'I was suddenly so changed,' she wrote, 'that I was no longer recognizable either to myself or to other people . . . Everything seemed to be consumed like straw in a fierce fire'.

This inner fire burned within her from that time on. The writings of mystical saints became her everyday reading, and she felt that she was about to find the way to ecstasy. Two paths were open to her: the sacrifice of her body and senses through pitiless asceticism; and intense prayer and meditation. She wore a hair shirt that scratched her skin, a horsehair belt that constricted her stomach and kidneys, and she put stones in her shoes so that she could not walk without pain. Attempting to achieve union with God, she spent nights praying and meditating.

When one of her daughters died in 1672 Madame Guyon saw in this the hand of God; and when her husband died four years later she decided to renounce her family and the world. She felt herself destined for an apostolic task, a belief that was strengthened by the advice of her spiritual director, Father Lacombe, a Barnabite monk who predicted that God would entrust her with an evangelical mission.

In 1681 she set out with Father Lacombe on travels that were to take them through Savoy and south-eastern France. During the five years that they journeyed together spreading their mystical ideas, they acquired an immense vogue.

Both were exceptional people and both were credited with powers of healing. In Rome Father Lacombe had been friendly with mystics who were interested in the occult; and many people believed that he could perform miracles. On one occasion, when he was crossing Lake Geneva in a small boat, a storm had blown up which he was said to have stilled by placing his hands on the waves; and it was claimed that he had cured Madame Guyon of a fever simply by laying his hands on her forehead.

Madame Guyon was believed to have the ability to communicate telepathically, and to foretell the future. She was also an automatic writer, sometimes covering page after page, believing that she was the instrument of divine inspiration.

Dedicated to Misery

Many people believed her to be a saint, a belief that Father Lacombe strongly affirmed. He distributed two short works she had written, *Spiritual Torrents* and *Middle Way*. These were widely read, but the Church was angered by Madame Guyon's behaviour and eventually both she and Father Lacombe were ordered to return to Paris. When they arrived there in July 1686 the priest was put under surveillance; he was finally condemned to life imprisonment and died in prison, insane. Madame Guyon was arrested in 1688 but released in 1689.

During that same year she became part of the court circle at Versailles presided over by Madame de Maintenon, the secret wife of Louis XIV, where she met the Abbé de Fénelon. He was moved and impressed by her religious fervour, considering her to be an emissary of God, and believed that this strange, pious person, who was dedicated to misery, was able to make disturbing mystical paths clear to him.

Doubts about Madame Guyon's orthodoxy caused Madame de Maintenon to call upon Bossuet, the influential Bishop of Meaux, and several other clerics, including Fénelon, to draw up a formulary of articles describing the proper doctrine of the love of God, in which the extravagances of the type of quietism practised by Madame Guyon were condemned. On account of his championing the cause and character of Madame Guyon, however, Fénelon, now Archbishop of Cambrai, quarrelled with Bossuet and as a result was condemned by Rome and had to retire from the court.

Madame Guyon was again imprisoned, being finally released in 1702. After her liberation she retired to her son's estate near Blois and spent the rest of her life in charitable and pious work, until her death on 9 June, 1717.

An ancient Celtic divinity who has affinities with the gods of Germany and Gaul, Gwydion is a poet and magician, prophet and astronomer; he embodies the virtues and skills that the Celts revered in both their gods and their heroes

GWYDION

A SURPRISING AMOUNT of genuine pagan tradition is contained in medieval Irish and Welsh literature. In both Irish and Welsh mythology there seems to have been the concept of a hierarchy of deities, headed by the mother of the gods and her three sons. In Welsh literature these beings are the central characters of the tales in the 'Four Branches' of the *Mabinogion*, stories which are concerned with gods, not with men, and in which fragments of ancient cult legends are fused and confused with folklore motifs and Christian allusions (see MABINOGION).

One of these characters is Gwydion, a powerful sorcerer and skilled craftsman, whose name possibly means 'the prophetic one' or 'the inspired one', and who was the son of the Welsh divine mother, Don (the equivalent of Danu or Anu in Ireland). By an incestuous union with his sister, the goddess Aranrhod, Gwydion was the father of Lleu Llaw Gyffes, who as Lugus in Gaul and Lugh in Ireland was one of the most widely invoked deities of the pagan Celtic world (see LLEU).

Gwydion is mentioned frequently in early Welsh literature and is one of the principal characters in the story of *Math, son of Mathonwy* in the *Mabinogion*. Gwydion and his brother Gilfaethwy are nephews of Math, a renowned magician who has instructed Gwydion in enchantment and sorcery. Math was forbidden to be without a virgin in whose lap his feet were held, except in time of war. This virgin is Goewin, a girl of exceptional beauty and virtue. Gilfaethwy falls in love with her and Gwydion, detecting this, determines to help him. Extreme care is necessary, for as Gilfaethwy says to his brother: 'Thou knowest the peculiarity of Math son of Mathonwy; whatever the whispering, however low, there be between men, once the wind has met it he will know of it.' But Gwydion uses his powers of sorcery to outwit his uncle.

Otherworld Swine

The next motif is important because it connects Gwydion with swine and gives him the role of culture hero, the bringer of benefit and improvement to his people. He promises to fetch the wonderful otherworld pigs which belonged to Pryderi, ruler of Dyfed. With 11 others disguised as bards, he goes to Pryderi's court and is made welcome there, for Gwydion is 'the best teller of tales in the world' – an essential requisite for a Celtic deity. In exchange for the swine he gives Pryderi 12 stallions, 12 greyhounds and 12 golden shields. These he has made by magic but the spell will last only for a day, and Gwydion and his men hurry away with the swine. Pryderi and his men overtake them, and Math joins in the battle. This leaves the virgin Goewin on her own: Gwydion and his brother return to Math's court where both rape the girl in Math's own bed. Then they return to the battle.

Gwydion finally defeats Pryderi in single combat. When Math discovers what has happened to Goewin, he marries her and transforms his nephews into wild animals. Gwydion becomes a stag and Gilfaethwy a hind, and they go forth for a year, returning at the end of it with a fawn which Math turns into a fine boy, whom he then sends to be fostered. He strikes the men again, turning Gilfaethwy into a boar and Gwydion into a wild sow. At the end of a year they return, accompanied by a young animal which, when touched by Math's wand, becomes a handsome auburn-haired boy. Next, Math turns the two brothers into a wolf and a she-wolf. They return at the end of the year, accompanied by a wolf-cub which Math transforms into a boy in the same way. He then restores the men to their own shapes, and tells them that the punishment is over.

Flowers of the Oak

The episodes concerning Lleu Llaw Gyffes begin here. Aranrhod, Gwydion's sister, is proved not to be a virgin when she undergoes Math's chastity test. When she runs from the room she drops a boy-child, and also a 'small something else'. Gwydion snatches this up before anyone has seen it properly, and hides it in a chest. It is another boy, clearly the result of his incestuous union with his sister. Gwydion looks after the boy himself.

One day Gwydion and his son set out for Caer Aranrhod, his sister's home. She welcomes him but refuses to give the boy a name, and Gwydion vows she will do this in spite of herself. Next day he walks with his son along the sea-shore where he forms a magical ship. 'And they began to fashion shoes, and to stitch them.' When they are seen from the fortress, 'he took away their own semblance, and put another semblance upon them, so that they would not be recognized'. Aranrhod asks for a pair of golden shoes, but Gwydion will not make a pair of the correct size until she comes to have her foot measured. This she does, and a wren alights upon the ship while she is there.

Her son aims at it and hits it perfectly. 'Faith,' says she, 'with a deft hand has the fair one hit it.' Gwydion says: 'He has now got a name and good enough is his name. Lleu Llaw Gyffes is he from now on.' (*Lleu* means 'fair', *llaw* 'hand' and *gyffes* 'deft, skilful'.) Everything magical now vanishes and the son is changed back into his own shape. Gwydion's sister swears a destiny on her son, that he will never bear arms until she herself equips him with them.

In due course, Gwydion and Lleu, who is now a young man, go once again to Aranrhod's dwelling in the guise of two youths, claiming to be bards. They are welcomed, for 'Gwydion was a good teller of tales'. They go to bed and 'at early cock-crow Gwydion arose. And then he summoned to him his magic and his power'.

By daylight the countryside was in a state of uproar and Aranrhod bursts into the room crying, 'We cannot see the colour of the deep for all the ships thronging together.' She goes to get arms for the two men and Gwydion tricks her into arming her son completely herself. All the turmoil then ceases and she realizes that Gwydion has got the better of her yet again. She swears Lleu shall never have a wife 'of the race now on earth'. Gwydion goes to get Math's aid, and together they make a wife for Lleu from the flowers of the oak and of the broom, and of meadowsweet.

Lleu is given land by Math and settles down to rule prosperously. However, on one occasion when he is away from home, his wife Blodeuwedd is unfaithful to him; she and her lover, Gronw Bebyr, plot his death. Although Lleu is practically invincible, his wife persuades him to tell her the one way in which he can be killed, and the lovers make their preparations. Lleu is struck by Gronw with the fatal, poisoned spear in the manner which he has divulged. He screams and flies away in the form of an eagle.

Math and Gwydion are deeply distressed when the news reaches them; and Gwydion sets out to find his son. Eventually he comes to an oak tree, to which he has been led by a sow which has been feeding on Lleu's rotting flesh and maggots, and sees him emaciated in the tree. He persuades him to come down to his lap and turns him back into human form. Lleu is only skin and bone but skilful physicians nurse him back to health in less than a year. Gwydion finds Blodeuwedd and says to her: 'I will not slay thee. I will do to thee that which is worse; that is' said he, 'I will let thee go in the form of a bird.' He turns her into an owl and she flies away. Lleu then slays Gronw with his spear; and rules his territory in peace and prosperity once more.

Sorcerer and Hero

In this tale, as in other fragments from medieval Welsh literature, we get glimpses of a much more archaic world than the one which the story-teller describes, a world which is fully familiar in terms of Celtic mythology. Gwydion is clearly an ancient deity who has affinities with Lugus himself, with Odin of Germanic tradition, and with Mercury. His cunning and magical skills are matched by his brilliant craftsmanship.

He fights as an armed hero and as a sorcerer, combining both powers in order to attain invariable success. He is a poet, a splendid story-teller, a prophet and an astronomer. Animals and birds are closely linked with his legend. The frequency with which pigs figure in the tale may indicate an earlier and more specific association with these and other animals, as may the transformations practised upon him and his brother by Math. In origin Gwydion must have been a god of the most sophisticated type, according to Celtic preference. His virtues and his many skills are those that were most deeply revered by the Celts in their gods and in their heroes alike.

ANNE ROSS

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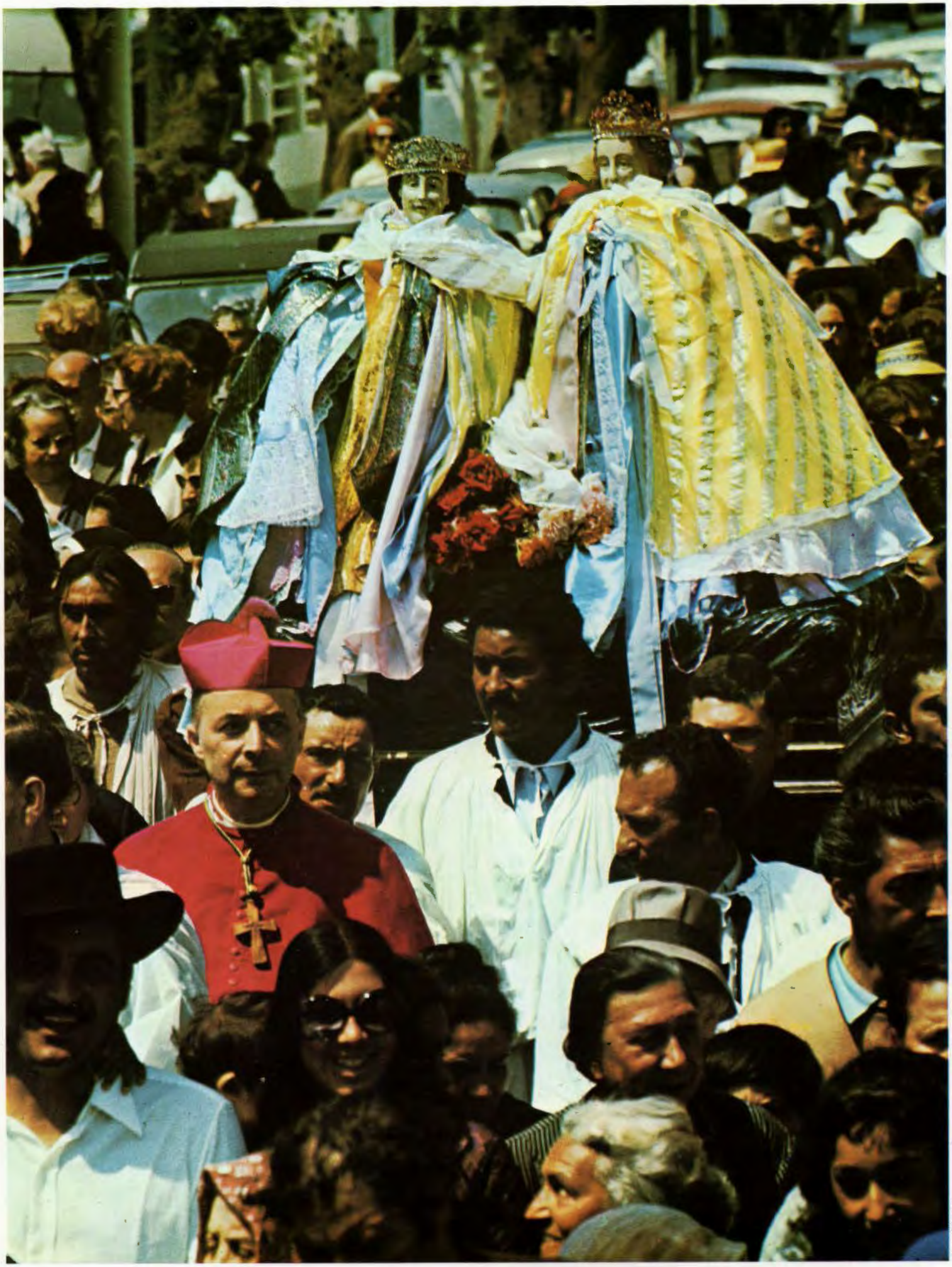
Gypsies



Hans Silvester

There is a legend that the gypsies are the descendants of Cain, cursed and doomed to be fugitives and vagabonds

Fortune telling and the provision of charms, love potions and herbal remedies are part of the gypsies' stock in trade. Distinctive myths, beliefs and ceremonies preserved through their wandering existence help to set them apart from the rest of society

MOST PEOPLE fear gypsies. Their manners are strange, their customs outlandish, their nomadic way of life at odds with the conventions of settled societies. But fear is often tinged with a kind of fascination. Countless painters, musicians and writers have had their imagination stirred – and some of their public have had their heads turned – by romantic notions about gypsy weddings and blood brotherhood, scenes of passion to the sound of violins, moonlight, mystery and magic, fortune telling, divination and secret powers.

Somewhere between the extremes projected by this romantic image and by the disenchanted view of landowners and gamewardens who find their coverts raided and their land fouled and littered (often by non-gypsy travellers) lies the truth about the gypsies: that they are indeed an outlandish people, who in the course of their history have preserved and sometimes perhaps acquired beliefs, customs and traditions which are paralleled in many cultures. Some of these probably date far back into antiquity, others have certainly been modified during the gypsies' centuries of wandering.

One of the difficulties in reconstructing these wanderings is that the gypsies are virtually an illiterate people. A degree of literacy has been forced upon them in recent times as a condition, for instance, of obtaining the licences for the cars which nowadays often tow their caravans, but their society is essentially an oral rather than a literate one. And being nomadic the gypsies have not left behind archeological evidence of settlement, cultivation, artefacts and gravegoods.

In May each year gypsies gather from all over Europe at the Mediterranean fishing village of Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, where according to legend the 'Three Marys' of Christian tradition took refuge with their servant Sara la Kali (the Black), patroness of gypsies. Their images are carried in procession (*previous page*) and are dressed in bright robes for the occasion (*left*): on the left is Sara la Kali, on the right Mary Magdalene

Apart from a few documentary references in European archives from the 14th century onwards, their history is preserved in their own oral traditions and legends, not in written records; legends and traditions which are often seemingly at variance with one another. The same is true of their customs and beliefs, whose systematic investigation and study is a comparatively recent, and as yet uncompleted, exercise. Investigators find that gypsies are as likely to be reticent, or deliberately misleading, about these subjects as they are about their past journeys or future movements. But enough headway has been made for a general account to be given of gypsy life, customs and beliefs though these vary from group to group and family to family.

There are four main groups of gypsies in Europe: the Kalderash, mainly coppersmiths and tinsmiths based in eastern and central Europe; the Gitanos, centred in the Iberian peninsula, North Africa and the south of France; the Manush or Sinti in France, Germany and northern Italy; and the British gypsies who are probably of mixed Kalderash and Sinti stock. Great numbers of gypsies are also found in Asia, as well as in New Zealand, Australia and America.

Most American gypsies are of Kalderash or Sinti families. Early large-scale immigrations came from Britain. In later years gypsies have drifted to America from all over Europe; many hundreds of Serbian and Balkan families came at the time of the First World War. In the 1920s the author Irving Brown estimated some 50,000 gypsies in the United States. A more recent estimate, in 1962, placed nearly 5000 gypsies in New York, nearly 10,000 in Los Angeles – cities where the gypsies tend to congregate during the winter.

The word 'gypsies' derives from the self-bestowed title of 'Dukes' or 'Lords' of Egypt (sometimes Little Egypt) by which they were known when they appeared in Europe. Advance bands had no doubt infiltrated before the first recorded appearances – in Greece and the Balkans towards the middle of the 14th century; in Central Europe, Italy and France in the first quarter of the 15th century; in Spain and probably England and Wales, in the middle of the century; certainly in Scotland, Scandinavia, Poland and Russia by the end. They were, however, not of Egyptian origin, though some modern gypsies still repeat the story.

Gypsies repeat other legends also. Some stem from biblical sources, for instance, the story that the gypsies are the descendants of Cain, cursed and doomed to be fugitives and vagabonds; or that they are the descendants of Tubal-Cain, 'the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron', mentioned in Genesis (chapter 4). Christian influences are seen in other legends: that it was a gypsy blacksmith who forged the nails for the Crucifixion and kept or stole the fourth nail; that the gypsies refused to help the Virgin Mary at the flight into Egypt; that as Christ's bodyguard they got drunk and failed to defend him; and in punishment for these sins they have been condemned to wander the earth.

Stories of Creation

But the gypsies also preserve older, pre-Christian myths, some of which may echo man's earliest attempts to explain the universe and the nature of life. In one such myth the earth is called De Develeski, the Divine Mother of all existence, echoing the Sanskrit *deva* meaning 'celestial being'.

The creation of mankind and the personification of the principles of good and evil appear in another myth which shows parallels with the account of the creation in the book of Genesis. On the earth one day appeared o Del (God) and o Bengh (the Devil), who competed in making figures of clay. The Devil fashioned them in the shapes of man and woman, and God breathed life into them. These were Damo and Yehwah, Adam and Eve. One gypsy myth tells that their clay became flesh only when they were touched by the branches of a pear tree and plum tree growing beside them. Adam ate a pear; the serpent tried to prevent Eve from eating an apple, but was stopped by God – a reversal of the story in Genesis – and the fruits aroused their sexual desire. Adam was soon satisfied, but Eve demanded more; and since then woman has not ceased to crave for love. In this mythical account, in contrast to Genesis, God later made the sun and the moon out of the earth.

Another gypsy myth says that before man

The gypsies began to move into Europe in the 14th century. The mystery of their origin, their romantically nomadic way of life and their supposed magical powers surrounded them with a lasting atmosphere of awe and fear. Gypsies on the march, two engravings by Jacques Callot, early 17th century

was created, Sky and Earth had five sons – Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind and Fog. They all quarrelled with each other and their parents. First Moon attacked his mother, Earth; then Fog and Fire their father, Sky; but without success. Sun was equally unsuccessful in attacking Earth. But Wind rushed at Earth and separated her from Sky. Then Earth banished Wind, Sun and Moon, but let Fog and Fire stay with her. Since then, Sky and Earth have been separate, and their five sons remain in perpetual conflict.

In happy contrast with the guilt-laden Christianized legends about the origins of the wandering exiled gypsy race, there is the story that God made the figure of a man out of lime and baked it in the oven. But he forgot to take it out in time. This was the ancestor of the Negroes. Next time he erred on the safe side, and that was the ancestor of white men. But the third time he baked a nicely browned man, and he was the ancestor of the gypsies.

A tale which hovers on the borderland between myth and legend recalls the spurious Egyptian origin of the gypsies. The Pharavono made war on the Horachai (Turkish and Jewish Christians), and having blasphemed were swallowed up by the sea. Only a few escaped, and their descendants, having neither power nor country, State nor Church nor writing, are the underprivileged gypsies of today.

Facts, however, as opposed to fancies, point to an Indian origin for the gypsies. Various other hypotheses of their descent have been advanced in the past, ranging from Nubian and Abyssinian to Assyrian, Chaldean and even Jewish origins. But linguistic evidence provides a safe guide. Although Romany, the gypsy language, has developed several varieties amongst the main branches of gypsies, it clearly belongs to the Indo-European family of languages and is descended from Sanskrit. About half its primary vocabulary (the words for numbers, parts of the body, and basic nouns, verbs and adjectives) is closely connected with the languages and dialects spoken today in northern India, while many grammatical forms follow Sindhi and Hindi patterns. Onto this basic stock have been grafted words from various Near Eastern and European languages, which reflect contact with these cultures as the gypsies migrated and eventually developed sub-cultures. Work still remains to be done on the way in which different European languages have modified the linguistic structures of the various Romany dialects.

Sara the Black Virgin

Gypsies are on the whole deeply religious. But it is interesting that their religion seems to operate on two separate planes. Gypsies share the religious observances of non-gypsy groups, but also have special rituals of their own. These reveal parallels with the observances of other ethnic groups of eastern origin.

As part of the process of accommodating to the various societies in whose midst they live, gypsies have adopted at various times and in various places Mohammedanism and Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, and have even joined special sects like the Methodists and Lutherans. The Church is normally called in for such ceremonies as baptism and burial; but non-Christian rituals on the occasion of births, marriages and deaths are also observed, and clearly play a major role in the religious life of the gypsies.

This is true even on formal occasions of Christian observance, as when Catholic gypsies go on pilgrimages. The best known is that to Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in the Camargue region of France, where there is a special cult of Sara la Kali (the black). In Catholic tradition she was the black servant who accompanied the three Marys (Mary the sister of the Virgin, Mary the mother of James and John, and Mary Magdalene) when they were transported to France. In gypsy tradition she was a gypsy woman who had visions of their arrival and helped them to reach land. The pilgrims keep vigil before a statue of Sara in the church crypt. Medallions and photographs of the sick or absent are pressed against the statue and votive offerings of kerchiefs and rags hung around it – a practice which recalls the Dravidian custom in India of purifying the clothing of the sick by hanging it on a sacred tree. (Irish tinkers are also known to place rags and coins in certain trees for luck, but any connection between these customs remains speculative.) Later the gypsies leave the church and go in procession to the sea where they totally immerse themselves.

Icons and holy pictures are often seen in gypsy caravans, Sara the Black Virgin appearing alongside the Virgin and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But the consolations of the Christian religion are not enough. Belief in demons, witches and supernatural creatures is rife, and at life's crises recourse is had to older rituals which Christians and sceptics might term pagan or superstitious.

A man or woman is a gypsy by right of birth. Anyone who marries outside the gypsy race loses caste: neither he nor his children remain true gypsies. The adoption of a non-gypsy as a blood brother, despite popular notions, is extremely rare; nor does it seem that such a person is regarded as in all respects fully a gypsy.

The family unit is all-important. Property, apart from personal accoutrements, belongs to the family, not the individual; and although traces of a matrilineal kinship system have been found, amongst east European gypsies in particular, the father is the head of the family and, in extended family systems, 'king' of his tribe. But much respect is also paid to the mother's and grandmother's authority.

Gypsy Weddings

Traditionally, betrothals and marriages are arranged and a bride-price is asked, though this practice is nowadays declining. So are the practices of marriage by 'rapt', carrying the girl off, and its conventionalized substitute, abduction with consent or 'runaway' marriage, when the boy runs off with his girl and some weeks later brings her back to her parents' camp, where mock reprobation is heaped on the couple before they are eventually forgiven.

Marriage ceremonies vary. Today many young couples go to priest, minister or registrar, but the traditional gypsy rites are usually enacted also, civil ceremonies customarily following the gypsy rites as if in confirmation of the marriage. Bride and

Mary Evans Picture Library

groom hold hands or have their wrists tied with ribbon, while the head of the family breaks bread, sprinkles it with salt and gives a portion to each. These portions are then exchanged and eaten. The family feast may last two or three days. Among Spanish gypsies proof of defloration is sometimes obligatory.

Fidelity in marriage is strictly enforced, though divorce and remarriage are admitted. While gypsy prostitutes are not unknown, they tend to be despised, as do unmarried girls who lose their virginity. Sexual jealousy is strong. An adulterous wife is commonly punished by having her hair shaved off; a male adulterer is more likely to have his life made miserable by continuous upbraiding on the part of his wife and female relatives.

The lurid tales of promiscuity to be met with in romantic literature about gypsy life have little basis in reality. Modesty is obligatory, as may be seen from the ankle-length dresses worn by the women and the fact that married women usually have their arms covered except when working at such tasks as washing-up. But modesty, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. For gypsies in general the breasts have no erotic significance: a gypsy mother will feed her baby in public quite unselfconsciously.

It is often remarked that gypsy women bear their children with the minimum of fuss under a hedge, and a few hours later go on their way as if nothing had happened. This needs qualification. Admittedly the active outdoor life keeps gypsy women's muscles in good trim, and labour is often easy and quick. But few would choose to travel on at once unless compelled to by hostile landowners or the application of vagrancy laws.

A Secret Name

Gypsy births entail their own special observances. Men are banished from the scene, for a woman in confinement is unclean and, for instance, may not prepare food for some weeks after the birth. Before labour starts, all knots in her clothes must be undone to encourage an easy birth – an example of imitative magic. To avoid polluting the caravan or tent, the woman must give birth outside it. If the weather is bad, she may take shelter under the van or a special tent may be erected.

Baptism is usually conducted twice: firstly by total immersion, when the child is named within the gypsy tribe or family; and secondly according to the rites of the Church, when a name for official use is conferred. There are reports of yet another secret name being conferred by the mother in a whisper at the moment of birth. This is explained as a device to mislead evil spirits who, not knowing the child's true name, will be powerless to harm it – an ancient and widespread magical belief.

As in birth and marriage, gypsies operate on two religious levels in the face of death. Burial according to the forms of the Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant Churches is normal, though even here special features are to be found. But there are also other, specifically gypsy rituals to be observed.

A dying gypsy is customarily taken outside his tent or caravan, often into a death tent erected for the last hours. He is dressed in his best clothes, usually with new boots. After death the male relatives keep vigil over the body until it is placed in the coffin. Certain articles are commonly placed close to the body – a sod of turf on the chest, personal possessions such as the deceased's knife, fork and drinking mug, and perhaps a tobacco pipe or violin, or harness and corn. A woman's personal jewellery is buried with her if she has no daughters of full gypsy blood to inherit it. The relatives file past and drop amulets or coins into the coffin, which is normally pierced with holes on the lid and at each side of the head. Thus prepared for his final wanderings in eternity, the gypsy is buried according to the rites of his Church.

The Gypsy's Violin

Whatever his occupation may be, the Gypsy knows how to play the violin, and cannot live without this instrument. Gypsy legends have not failed to relate the miraculous origin of the violin . . .

There lived formerly in a forest a young girl, with her father, mother and her four brothers. The beautiful Mara was in love with a foreigner (a non-Gypsy) and, in spite of her beauty and powers of seduction, she did not succeed in attracting the glances of the brave *gadjo*. Whereupon she had recourse to the Devil. The latter, only too willing, promised to help her, but on condition that she betrayed her four brothers to him. Of these he made four strings, and of the father a sound-box, and next her mother, of whom he made a bow. From the five souls that were sold was born the violin. Mara learnt to play it, and the music soon fascinated the hunter who no longer resisted the beautiful girl's charms. But the Devil, always dissatisfied, suddenly reappeared and carried them both off. Only the violin remained on the ground abandoned. One day a poor Gypsy who was passing picked it up, began to caress it, and set out from village to village bringing laughter and tears.

Jean-Paul Clébert
The Gypsies

Ritual Destruction

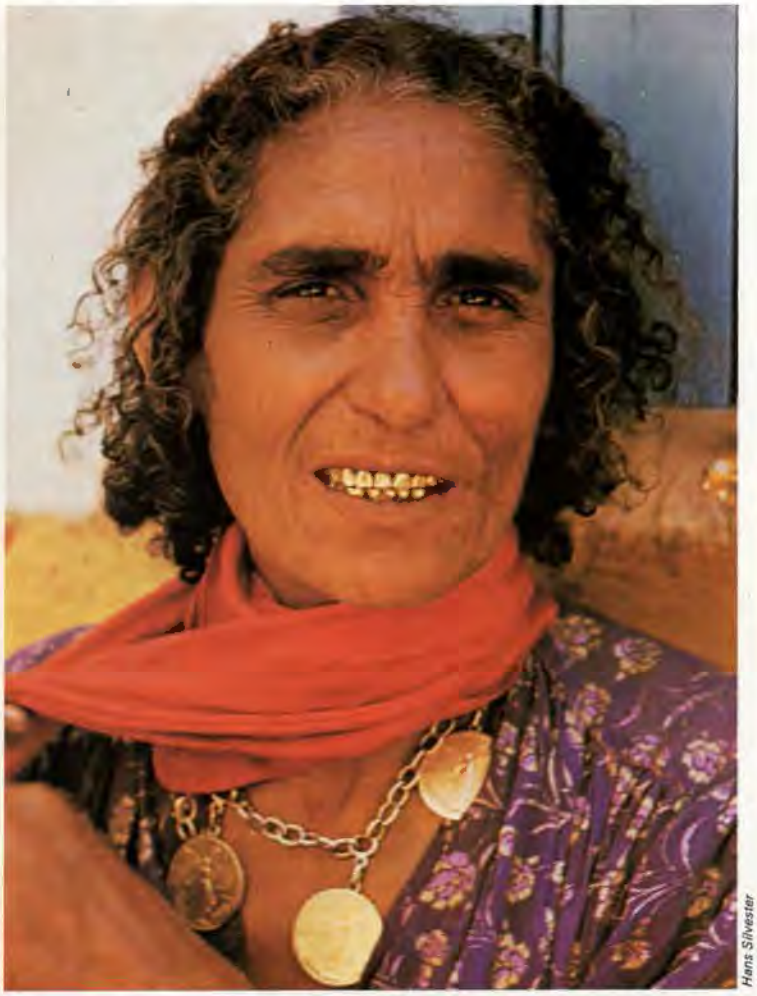
By traditional custom his caravan or tent is then destroyed by burning and its ironwork hammered out of shape and buried. Family property such as china and ornaments are first removed; but if the children have married outside the gypsy race then this is destroyed too. In the past the deceased's horse was slaughtered and buried – a ritual which recalls that of the nomadic Scythians of antiquity – but nowadays it is usually sold to a non-gypsy. In Britain, at least, this is often the fate of an expensive modern caravan. By this means any ill-luck, or haunting of the van or horse by the spirit of the dead, is diverted from the gypsy community to non-gypsies.

The ritual destruction of horse and van is so important that it is sometimes carried out symbolically, for instance, by placing on the coffin wreaths of red flowers formed in the shapes of horses and vans (red is a common mourning colour amongst gypsies). In 1965 an English gypsy woman's coffin was bedecked with wreaths in the shapes of a dog, a bird-cage, matches and cigarettes, a chair, a cushion, a cooking-tripod, a boar's head and a horse collar – all articles prized in life and likely to be appreciated on the last journey.

Some of the commonest and oldest themes of folklore underlie these observances. Such themes include fear of the malevolent return of the dead; fear of their jealousy if their possessions are enjoyed by the living; propitiation of the spirits; and provision for their sojourn in the other world.

Remedies for rheumatism, aches and pains are peddled in exchange for crossing a palm with silver

Bernd P. Cardinal



Hans Silvester

Left **A gypsy 'king', head of one of the tribal groups** ***Above*** **This gypsy carries her gold round her neck and within her head; when a gypsy woman dies her jewellery is buried with her, a continuation of the very old and widespread custom of providing the dead with 'grave goods' for the next life** ***Right*** **A Turkish gypsy showman wrestles with his tame bear. Itinerant bear-leaders in the Balkan area were commonly gypsies, and the bear is a popular figure in gypsy folklore**

As a nomadic people, gypsies are skilled food gatherers and trappers. Wild fruits and berries, fungi, many kinds of small animals and birds, and to a lesser extent fish, feature in their diet. If hedgehogs, squirrels and even rats are acceptable meats, however, certain others are strictly forbidden. There is a dietary prohibition of the flesh of horses, dogs and cats. Dogs are regarded as unclean by many gypsies, who refuse to drink water from a stream where a dog is drinking, but happily drink the same water as their horses.

In many gypsy groups there is a prohibition against washing dishes in the same basin that is used for washing clothes or the person. As one might expect of travelling folk whose water supplies are limited, personal ablution is sparing and not popular.

Wild herbs, including garlic, add savour to gypsy cooking and are also used medicinally. As is commonly found in folk medicine, the medical lore of gypsies is a strange medley of magical rites and the physical administration of various herbal and animal brews, some of which are effective.

'Cross My Palm With Silver'

The gypsies often use their traditional knowledge of herbal remedies to impress and even exploit non-gypsies. Remedies for rheumatism, aches and pains, are peddled in exchange for crossing a palm with silver, while means of producing an abortion, of unproven reliability, are also offered to gullible housewives. The demand for love potions and aphrodisiac preparations is also catered for; these are generally used in conjunction with charms and incantations.

The extent to which gypsies themselves believe in the efficacy of all this is open to question. It is a question they perhaps do

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Hans Silvester

Popperfoto

Right **A candle is lit by a gypsy in front of the statue of Sara la Kali in the church at Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer; Sara is a popular object of gypsy devotion** ***Below right*** **At a gypsy funeral the dead woman's caravan is set alight according to custom; the two horses would be shot**

not ask of themselves, and one, if put by an outsider, to which they could hardly be expected to give a straight answer. But on balance it would appear that gypsies are in this respect like the members of other traditional communities: only the most sophisticated – and therefore untypical – would doubt or disbelieve.

Gypsy folklore encompasses belief in many kinds of supernatural events, powers and creatures. Tales are told of witches and vampires, demons, fairies and ghosts. As a consequence of these beliefs, various kinds of magic are used either to circumvent evil forces or on occasion actually to inflict ill upon others.

From their first appearance in Europe, these nomads with their strange language, secret signs and mysterious ways impressed themselves on their hosts as sorcerers and magicians. No doubt the use of the *patrin*, or sign language, by which information about a household is left by one gypsy family for another, contributed to the notion that gypsies had occult powers and supernatural perceptions. They were not, and are not, slow to exploit this, especially in telling fortunes or, when crossed, in trying to frighten the superstitious by invoking curses or predicting ill-fortune. It has indeed been argued that their reputation for supernatural powers is greater amongst non-gypsies than amongst themselves.

In the practice of black magic, gypsy folklore displays the features found universally. Power over an enemy is exercised by gaining possession of hair, nail parings or articles of clothing. Figurines of wax are melted to the accompaniment of curses and spells, or clay figurines are transfixed with pins in order to cause illness or death. Belief in the Evil Eye is frequent.

There are various counter-measures which can be taken against bewitchment. These include the well-known remedy against witchcraft of binding a red thread round the wrist or finger; licking or spitting three times in the eye; and protecting young children by washing them in water which has been run over a knife blade or used to cool a smith's irons.

Amulets and talismans are also much in use, either worn as ornaments or sewn onto the clothes. Magical symbols on these amulets include the sun, moon and stars; zodiacal signs; snakes and other creatures;

and arrows. The relationship of these symbols to gypsy and other eastern religions and mythologies requires further study.

Patterns in the Tea Leaves

It is especially in the arts of divination and fortune telling that the gypsies enjoy high repute. This is entirely a female skill and occupation. The use of Tarot cards (see CARDS; TAROT) is less frequent today than in the past but consulting playing cards or patterns formed by tea leaves or scattered beans remains standard practice. Even more frequent at fairgrounds is the use, often by practitioners pretending to be gypsies, of the crystal ball for occult vision. Palmistry is perhaps the most common method of all.

In gypsy palmistry the various lines on the palm have the usual significance (see PALMISTRY). But in addition, the thumb and fingers play important roles. The thumb is associated with misfortune, the index finger with good luck and decision, the middle finger with death and destiny, the fourth finger with health and liveliness, and the little finger, nicknamed 'the magpie', with theft or the acquisition of goods. Palmistry is used to predict love and lovers, marriage, children, fortune and death, and is almost invariably practised on non-gypsies, a fact which arouses interesting speculations in those with an ironical turn of mind.

The number of full-blooded gypsies – always difficult to ascertain – is dwindling, in common with so many other traditional cultures. Their customs and way of life are also on the decline, many gypsies tending nowadays to reject them. The systematic recording of these customs is therefore an urgent academic task, for gypsy studies have a major contribution to make to the understanding of human history and development. But one does not need to be either a scholar or a romantic to recognize the colourful contribution gypsies have made to human imagination and the arts.

STEWART SANDERSON

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Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Hades

'The unseen', the Greek god of death: later the name of the underworld which he ruled, the home of the dead: later still, another word for hell: feared as pitiless and unyielding, Hades had little cult and was not often represented in art; his queen was Persephone, who spent the winter with him in the underworld.

See DEMETER; EARTH; HELL; PERSEPHONE; PLUTO.

British Museum

Hagiography

Or hagiology, the biographies of saints; one of the earliest is a 2nd century life of St Polycarp; the oldest biographies in English literature are lives of saints in the Anglo-Saxon period, including Adamnan's life of St Columba and Bede's biography of St Cuthbert.

See SAINTS.

Underlying the story of Samson's disastrous haircut is a primitive belief which persists in many parts of the world: that strength, virility and magic power reside in the hair, and to allow it to fall into hostile hands is to court danger

HAIR

THE HUMAN HEAD has been associated with innumerable rites and taboos arising from a common belief that it was the abode of forces of great power (see HEAD). The hair, because of its close physical association with the head, was assumed to have magical properties of its own and was surrounded with its own system of magical rites, devised for the purpose of protecting the head from psychic injury and of protecting those who had the task of dressing or cutting the hair from the anger of the indwelling spirits.

Analogous to this was the superstition that human strength resided in the hair and that cutting it reduced bodily vitality. This is the motif of many folktales, including the biblical story of Samson and Delilah (Judges, chapter 16). Deprivation of hair was always regarded as a dreadful form of punishment, a superstition that was exploited to the full by the penal authorities in the Dutch East Indies who, by threatening to remove the hair of their prisoners, usually managed to secure an immediate confession without recourse to torture.

The belief that the strength of the community might in some mysterious way be bound up with the profusion of its monarch's hair was the reason why the locks of the old Frankish kings always remained unshorn. Communal prosperity might likewise be promoted by a profusion of hair: for instance, in ancient Mexico, girls wildly tossed their unbound hair in ritual dances in honour of the maize goddess, the 'long-haired mother', as this encouraged a luxuriant growth of the maize crop. The same magical principle applied in witchcraft, for a witch could double the power of her spell by shaking her hair loose in the wind.

There is an element of reasoning behind the supposed connection between bodily strength and hair growth: boys and eunuchs

are beardless and, by inference, virility must have been equated with the presence of a profusion of hair. This no doubt explains why the cutting of the hair was once considered a violation of Nature and, if imposed by force, a shameful punishment.

Cropping the beard of a defeated enemy has always been one of the most humiliating insults that could be offered him. Shearing the hair of criminals has long been practised not only to ensure easy identification but as an act of degradation, while in the aftermath of war female fraternizers with an enemy occupying force have suffered a similar humiliation at the hands of their compatriots. Shaving the hair as an act of ritual mourning has always represented an extremely abject form of personal sacrifice.

Best Time for a Haircut

A complicated system of taboos and social prejudices therefore surrounded the cutting of hair for thousands of years in communities both primitive and sophisticated. The hair might be cut in accordance with the waxing or waning of the moon, dependent upon how quickly it was required to regrow. Some of the precautions, especially among savages, have been taken to extreme lengths, as in Fiji where the chief of the Namosi tribe used to eat human flesh whenever he had a haircut. The ancient fear that an incautious haircut might outrage Nature had great force among the citizens of ancient Rome, who held it to be one of the major causes of storms. For this reason, many Romans postponed their visits to the hairdresser until those times when a storm had actually broken out. Modern American superstition advises against cutting your hair on a Friday or a Sunday, while a belief from Washington sees ill luck in shaving on Monday. Girls should not cut their hair in March, or it will become lifeless, and cutting the hair after dark reduces sexuality.

From a conviction that cut hair, although separated from the body, continues to be linked to it by an invisible bond, people in many parts of the world have been prompted to dispose secretly of their shorn hair to prevent it from falling into hostile hands. Sometimes it would be cast into a stream where it would be borne away out of danger. In ancient Rome the discarded locks of the *flamen Dialis*, the priest of Jupiter, were

invariably buried for safety beneath a magic tree. Even the notorious modern magician Aleister Crowley was careful to secrete from enemies his shorn hair and nail clippings.

The association between cut hair and the person to whom it had originally belonged might be used to the owner's advantage, however. Included in the magical practices of the European witch-doctors known as Cunning Men or Conjurers was the ritual burning of portions of hair taken from a victim of a spell, in order to project the pains of fire into the body of the witch; this action in itself was a diabolical form of counter-magic. And in the Negro 'conjure' magic of the Old South, hairs were crucial ingredients in the deadly conjures placed in a person's path to harm him.

Shaving a Witch

The supposed continuing association between an individual and his hair found further expression in the European superstition that should birds happen to build their nests with discarded hair, the late owner would suffer from severe headaches or even become insane. A number of other bizarre beliefs still survive: the writer of this article was told in all seriousness that a woman who had burned tufts of her hair in the living room fire became ill almost at once. Rural American lore still advises the 'transferring' of an illness by placing some of the patient's hairs into a hole in a tree, tying them to a frog, and so on.

It was one of the strongest beliefs in witch-hunting times that the magical potency of the sorcerer resided in the hair; in consequence, depilation of the witch frequently preceded torture. Once shorn of her bodily hair, it was thought that the most obdurate of witches would become helpless and make the confession required of her. The notorious Inquisitor Jacob Sprenger (see MALLEUS), it would appear, was satisfied with merely shaving the heads of his victims, holding this to be completely effective. Depilation was similarly practised by the Aztecs to neutralize the magical powers of witches and sorcerers prior to their execution.

The Gorgon Medusa, whose head was struck off by Perseus, had snakes instead of hair: *Head of Medusa* by Rubens

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Because of its inherent magical powers and its association with virility, hair was employed for centuries as a charm to lure a loved one; it also played its part in the love philtres manufactured by village quacks. In Ireland an amorous young man would run a hair from the girl of his choice through the fleshy part of the leg of a corpse in order to make his girl-friend 'mad with love'. More common was the gift of a hair bracelet or lock of hair between lovers, which has been described as 'an act of surrender and faith', since according to the laws of magic such a gift gave the recipient absolute power over the life of the donor.

A love charm could rebound somewhat drastically on the head of an unscrupulous lover, however, as the Scottish wizard John Fian was said to have discovered to his cost when he attempted to obtain some of the pubic hairs of a young girl for use in a philtre to make her love him. The ruse being discovered and hairs from the udder of a young cow substituted, the villain found himself pursued all over town by an excessively amorous heifer.

As an index of character fair hair is said to signify timidity, curly hair good temper and straight, lank hair cunning of the lowest order; whilst red hair is regarded as a sign of bad temper. Brown and black hair are thought by many people to indicate bodily strength; black hair is often regarded as a luck-bringer, particularly in the ceremony of the First Foot at New Year (see FIRST).

The hair is also known to respond to the emotional state of the individual, giving rise to the common belief that shock can turn a head of hair white or grey in a single night. There are a number of interesting historical accounts of such cases, notably those of Queen Marie Antoinette and the luckless Damiens, who was fiendishly tortured in public before being torn to pieces between four horses, as a punishment for his attempt on the life of Louis XV of France.

An abundance of hair on the arms is said to portend wealth. Conversely, loss of hair is unlucky, being an omen of loss of children, health and property. Hair growing to a peak in the centre of a woman's forehead, known as a widow's peak, foretells widowhood; in the United States, however, it is considered an extremely lucky sign.

Hair and beard styles, like religious dogmas, have succeeded in dividing mankind into warring camps, the conflicts being resolved less by the clash of swords than by the malicious snipping of barbers' shears. Ever since St Paul issued his famous dictum that 'if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him' (1 Corinthians 11.14), the champions of the short haircut have conducted a relentless warfare against their more hirsute fellow citizens. St Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester in the 11th century, became notorious for sudden assaults upon unsuspecting passers-by, whose beards he proceeded to hack with his knife, thrusting the severed tufts into their outraged faces with the command that they shave off the remainder or go to hell.

Top **Hair has sometimes been taken as an indication of character: the head on the left, from a 16th century work on physiognomy, shows a typical head of hair of an arrogant character, and that on the right the hair of a weak character** ***Bottom*** **Girls from an Amazon Indian tribe have their hair plucked out on reaching the age of puberty**

Harald Schultz

A Tax on Beards

The vanity of princes has influenced tonsorial fashions to an alarming degree. Philip Duke of Burgundy in 1461 compelled 500 of his nobles to sacrifice their hair, for no better reason than that he had lost his own as the result of illness.

When Francis I of France decided to grow a beard to conceal a scar on his chin, the whole male population of his kingdom were ordered to follow suit. Filled with reforming zeal, Tsar Peter the Great of Russia attempted to reduce the vast acreage of hairiness in his dominions by the simple expedient of taxation. Any beard seen in public without an accompanying tax receipt could be hacked off on the spot.

Long hair in men still excites the most violent emotions among otherwise rational citizens and is assailed as symptomatic of degeneracy and effeminacy, on the assumption that the wealth of the nation and the virility of its male citizens can in some mysterious way be threatened by delaying a visit to the barber. In Syria the long-haired are liable to be jailed, while in Greece recently they have been compulsorily shaved. (See also HEAD-DRESS.)

ERIC MAPLE

"The Golden Bough" see index

Picturepoint, London

Halcyon
Fabulous bird, supposed to breed at midwinter in a nest which floats on the sea; the wind and waves remain calm for seven 'halcyon days' to make this possible; from the Greek word for 'kingfisher'.

Halo
Disc of light surrounding the head or sometimes the whole body of a god, spirit or holy person in religious art; the halo round the head is called a nimbus; the halo round the whole body is an aureole. See DOUBLE.

The power of the thunder god Thor lay chiefly in his hommer, Mjölnir the 'crusher' or 'grinder', with which he subdued giants and kept mankind in awe

HAMMER

TO EARLY CRAFTSMEN, the hammer was an essential instrument, used particularly in the forging of metal; assuming a wider significance, it became one of the earliest symbols drawn from technology. In myths it stands for creation and fertility as well as for ordinary physical force: the idea of sexual potency is also sometimes implied. In historical times, the hammer represents military, political or industrial power.

In the 8th century, Charles Martel, or Charles 'the Hammer', the grandfather of Charlemagne, inflicted Christendom's decisive victory over Islam at Poitiers in 732. 'Hammer' was also the name assumed by the Russian revolutionary Molotov. The Bolsheviks adopted the hammer and sickle as a symbol of the union of the industrial working class and the peasantry as early as 1918, although it was not the official flag of the Soviet Union until 1923. The hammer on that flag specifically symbolizes 'the power of the working people'.

The Bolsheviks were not the first to associate the hammer and sickle. The southern Gauls had a god who was sometimes represented with a hammer and sometimes with a sickle. The god with a hammer was an important deity in the ancient Celtic pantheon. He was often depicted on altars and a famous statue of him was found at Prémeaux. He was sometimes regarded as an ancestor of the Gauls, and under the name Sucellus ruled the underworld. He was regarded as a benevolent god, associated with the great Earth Goddess, and his hammer was a symbol of creative power.

In most ancient mythologies there is a god with a hammer. In Greek mythology Hephaestus the smith, god of fire, is the son of Zeus for whom, with his hammer, he makes thunderbolts. At a certain stage in the development of civilization the hammer became the supreme symbol of the power of creation, and in one Chinese myth the Creator himself is described as having a hammer and chisel in his hands.

The hammer is one of the earliest symbols to be drawn from technology and in the Soviet Union symbolizes the power of the working people: the combined motif of hammer and sickle represents the alliance of the industrial working class and the peasantry

But it is in the Icelandic sagas, the great medieval collections of Nordic poems known as the *Eddas*, that the hammer, in the hands of the thunder god Thor, comes into its own as a mythical object with a proper name, Mjölnir, the 'crusher' or 'grinder'. Thor, the most powerful of the gods, destroyer of giants, was never without his hammer, or the iron gloves he wore to get a proper grip on it, if he could help it. If he ever was deprived of Mjölnir, the best part of his power was lost.

Mjölnir the Murder-Greedy

Mjölnir had been forged by the dwarf Sindri, who made the haft too short. But however heavy the blows Thor struck with it, the hammer never failed him. It would also return to his hands like a boomerang, however far he hurled it. Mjölnir also had the miraculous quality of shrinking in obedience to Thor's will.

Mjölnir was the terror of both the frost giants and the hill giants, to whom it was known as 'murder-greedy'. The hammer was identified with the thunderbolt: when the ground was struck by lightning, Thor had hurled his fiery hammer down to earth.

In a 10th century saga the story is told how Thor's hammer was stolen by the giant Thrym while he was asleep. Thrym then buries Mjölnir eight miles deep and demands the goddess Freyja for his wife. At the suggestion of the cunning Loki, Thor reluctantly disguises himself as Freyja, putting on a woman's head-dress, necklace, girdle and dress, and goes to the marriage feast, where he astonishes Thrym by eating an ox, eight salmon and all the dainties set out for the women guests, and drinking three huge vessels of mead. When the moment comes to consecrate the marriage, Thrym orders the hammer Mjölnir to be brought and laid in the maiden's bosom, 'that Vor, goddess of vows, might bless both bride and groom'. Thor then throws off his disguise, seizes Mjolnir, and slays not only Thrym but all his companions.

The 'sign of the hammer' was regularly used by the ancient Nordic peoples in the consecration of marriages as a means of bringing fecundity and warding off evil powers. It was also made over cups of liquor at sacrifices, and was believed to heal sickness. When a newborn child had been acknowledged by its father and allowed to live, its acceptance was solemnly confirmed by washing it and making the sign of Thor's hammer over it. These customs survived into the early Christian period in Iceland, and there are incidents in the saga which point to rivalry between the symbolism of Thor's hammer and that of the Cross.

Among some Scandinavian peoples hammers, as a result of the myths about the thunder god, were credited with magic powers. Small hammers were sometimes worn as amulets, and beautifully carved double-headed hammers made of reindeer horn were, along with drums, part of the mysterious equipment of the Lapp Shamans. The Lapps also offered up large wooden hammers, smeared with blood from sacrificed deer, to their thunder god.

A Hand of Glory from Whitby Museum: this unpleasant charm was made from the hand of a hanged man, pickled and dried; used as a candleholder or with the fingers themselves set alight, it cast those exposed to its influence into a stupor and stopped sleepers from waking

HAND OF GLORY

TO MAKE a Hand of Glory, a human hand was cut from the corpse of a hanged man, and dried and prepared in a prescribed manner. It was used as a charm to prevent sleepers in the vicinity from waking, so enabling the possessor to carry out robberies with impunity or, according to another account, to stupefy any person to whom it was displayed and render him or her incapable of speech or movement. There were two ways of using it. Sometimes a specially made candle was fixed in the hand, as in a holder; sometimes the hand itself became a five-fold candle, the outspread fingers and thumb being set alight to burn slowly for as long as was necessary. Belief in the powers of this gruesome object was once widespread in a number of European countries including England and Ireland, and tales of its employment by witches, and also by robbers, are still remembered.

A method of making the Hand of Glory and its accompanying candle is described in a book entitled *Marvellous Secrets of the Natural and Cabalistic Magic of Little Albert*, published at Cologne in 1722. The author's knowledge was apparently gained from hearsay; he tells us that he has never proved the efficacy of the charm for himself but that he had several times been present when sentence was passed upon criminals who confessed to using it in the course of their robberies. The hand, left or right, had to be taken from the body of a felon hanging on a roadside gibbet, wrapped in a piece of winding sheet, and squeezed as tightly as possible in order to drive out any drops of blood that might still remain in it. It had then to be put into an earthenware jar in which it was left for two weeks, together with nitre, salt, long peppers and a mysterious powdered substance known as 'zimat' or 'zimort'. Then it had to be exposed to the sun in the dog-days, or it could be dried in an oven heated by fern and vervain.

A 'sort of candle' had then to be made from the fat of a hanged man, virgin wax and 'sisamie de Laponie'. This last has usually been translated as Lapland sesame; but Grillot de Givry, in his *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy* (1931) gives sesame and 'ponie' as separate ingredients, and says that the latter word is of unknown significance today. He suggests that horse dung was possibly intended, since 'ponie' has that meaning in a dialect of Lower Normandy, and horse dung, which burns well if thoroughly dried, would not be an altogether unsuitable material. When the candle was finished, lighted and thrust between the fingers of the prepared hand, the charm was ready for use.

Although witches were supposed to employ the Hand of Glory for their own dire and secret purposes, and were sometimes accused of doing so at their trials, it is the thieves' use of the charm which is most often recounted in surviving stories. By its power they were able to break into houses without fear of discovery. As long as the fingers, or the candle, remained alight, no one already asleep could be roused from his charmed slumber. John Aubrey, the 17th century antiquary, refers to 'a story that was generally believed when I was a schoolboy (before the Civil Wars) that thieves when they broke open a house, would put

Tindale/By courtesy Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society

a candle into a dead man's hand, and then the people in the chamber will not awake.'

The same belief evidently existed in Ireland two centuries later. The *Observer* of 16 January 1831 reported an attempted burglary that had taken place some days earlier at Loughcrew, Co. Meath. The robbers took a Hand of Glory with them, 'believing in the superstitious notion that . . . if a candle in a dead hand be introduced into a house, it will prevent those who may be asleep from awaking.' In this case something seems to have gone wrong with the magic, for the householders did waken in spite of it and the burglars fled, leaving the hand behind them.

Quenched Only by Milk

When the dead hand was used by itself, without the added candle, the fingers were lighted at the tips and left to burn like five baleful tapers at the top of the upright hand. If the thumb would not catch fire, it was a sign that someone in the house was still awake and free from the effects of the charm. It was generally believed that the flames could not be blown out by any ordinary person, nor could they be extinguished by any liquid thrown over them, with the exception of milk.

An English version of a story also known in other countries relates how a beggar came one night to an inn (variously located in Yorkshire or Northumberland) and asked for shelter. No bed was available for him, but he was allowed to lie down in front of the kitchen fire. When the household retired to rest, one of the maids, mistrusting the man's looks, stayed up and watched him through a hole in the door. She saw him take a dead hand from his pocket and set it upright in the candlestick on the table. He then smeared it with ointment and lit the four fingers, but was unable to light the thumb. The frightened girl rushed upstairs to rouse the family but was quite unable to do so. Returning to the kitchen, she found that the thief had left it, but the burning Hand of Glory still stood upon the table. She tried to blow out the flames, and then to quench them first with water and afterwards with beer, but they only burned more brightly. Finally she emptied a jug of milk over them and immediately they went out. The spell being broken, the inmates of the house awoke and easily overpowered the beggar, who in due course was hanged. An almost exactly similar tale is told of a band of thieves and a brave servant at Huy, in the Low Countries, and there are other variants elsewhere.

The author of *Marvellous Secrets*, having described how the Hand of Glory is made, obligingly supplies his readers with an antidote to its evil powers. The charm will, he says, become ineffective, and thieves will be unable to use it, if the threshold of the main door and all other possible entries are smeared with an ointment specially made in the dog-days from the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen and the blood of a screech-owl.

Mary Evans Picture Library

A Hand of Glory holding a candle, made, according to one recipe, from the fat of a hanged man, wax and 'sisamie de Laponie'

Hanuman

Monkey god of Hindu mythology who plays an important role in the *Ramayana*, an epic poem about a war between the rulers of India and those of Ceylon; he has many temples, especially in southern India, and is also popular in Japan; the hanuman monkey which bears his name is one of the commonest Indian monkeys.

R. K. Singh

Hara-kiri

Literally 'belly-cutting', vulgar term for ceremonious suicide by disembowelling in Japan; long practised by the Samurai, the warrior class, when in disgrace; one or more cuts were made with a short sword, drawn across the abdomen and turned upwards; sometimes the execution was swiftly completed by a friend or relative who beheaded the victim; the act of hara-kiri, performed with due ritual solemnity, restored the personal honour of the suicide.

Thousands of Indians alive today believe that a remarkable holy man, who was born in 1865, was the promised reincarnation of a saint, and an embodiment of the god Krishna

HARANATH

THE REINCARNATION of Gouranga, the 16th-century saint who was renowned throughout India as an embodiment of Krishna, was prophesied in 1592 by Manohardas Goswami, a Bengali sage. Exactly 273 years later, on 1 July 1865, Sri Haranath was born at Sonamukhi – which means 'Golden Mouth' – in western Bengal, the son of a Brahmin. His disciples believe that he was the reincarnation of the saint and that he came, as he had come before, to distribute *Krishna prem* (divine love) on a vast scale.

It is related that Haranath's father, Jayaram Banerji, while on a visit to Calcutta had a dream in which a *sadhu* (holy man) visited his house at Sonamukhi and requested hospitality of his wife, Sundari Devi. Being overwhelmed by the radiance of the sadhu, she admitted him to a magnificent temple of Shiva which Jayaram had built before leaving for Calcutta. There she served the sadhu devotedly and locked the outer gates of the temple after the evening ritual. Next morning there was no trace of the sadhu, although the temple walls were too high to scale.

So vivid was the dream that Jayaram returned immediately to Sonamukhi and related it to his wife. He was astonished to learn that a sadhu had indeed been received by Sundari the previous evening. Soon after these events, Haranath was born. His unusual life and, later, his appearance, suggested that he and the sadhu were identical.

The saintly Gouranga (or Krishna Chaitanya, as he is sometimes called) had fired all India with his ecstatic chanting of Krishna's name; but his mission had not been wholly fulfilled. Being a *sannyasin* (celibate sadhu) his life was incomprehensible to the mass of the people. Consequently, as the centuries passed his influence waned and a new impulse became necessary. This was initiated by Haranath. He lived the

life of an ordinary householder engaged in worldly activities. He married Kusuma Kumari Devi when he was 14 years old, she being nine at the time. Later in life he implied that Kusuma was Vishnupriya, who had been the wife of Gouranga before he renounced all worldly ties to tread the austere path.

Very early in life Haranath is said to have manifested strange powers. His mother would conceal various objects in fun and he would locate them immediately, unerringly, no matter how far from the house she hid them. He frequently went into trances and, while studying for his degree at the Burdwan Raj College, Calcutta in 1889, fell into such profound ecstasies that he could only be aroused with difficulty. He would then roam the Calcutta streets, unconscious of his surroundings. His college days were spent listlessly. He had no real interest in worldly knowledge; his mind was continually being absorbed by a mysterious inner power and he spent most of his waking life in the contemplation of spiritual truths. Because of this he did not pass his B.A. examination, for which he sat three times. With characteristic resignation to the will of Krishna he told a devotee: 'I could not possibly have passed if I had appeared a *lakh* (100,000) times more, because no worldly object could then attract me.'

Chanting the Name of Krishna

When not lost in meditation he was busy organizing parties in which the chanting of Krishna's name and the commemorating of Krishna's divine activities were the dominant features.

Haranath earned his living in government service in Kashmir. He raised a family, thereby fulfilling one of the chief duties of a householder according to Hindu thought. But his love was seen to flow out to all beings and his small family soon increased to embrace many tens of thousands in India and other places.

Although living at a great distance from his wife and family during the 20 years of his service in Kashmir from 1893 to 1913, he asked his devotees always to couple her name with his, thus forming the sacred incantation or *mantra* 'Kusuma Haranath'. The full and tremendous potency of the mantra would, he said, be discovered only after his death.

Haranath exercised superhuman powers that affected all kinds of people, many of whom were personally unknown to him. There are cases on record of his conversion of vicious people into saints, of ferocious animals into harmless and affectionate companions. He could leave his physical body at will and travel on the astral plane in order to warn his devotees and friends of impending dangers, saving their lives or enabling them to avoid agonies of mind and body. He had the power of hearing spirit voices and communing with divine beings, of seeing through opaque bodies, and visiting the abodes of Vishnu, Krishna and other gods. He also possessed the power of clairvoyance to a very high degree. He never claimed any of these powers as his own, always referring them to Krishna alone.

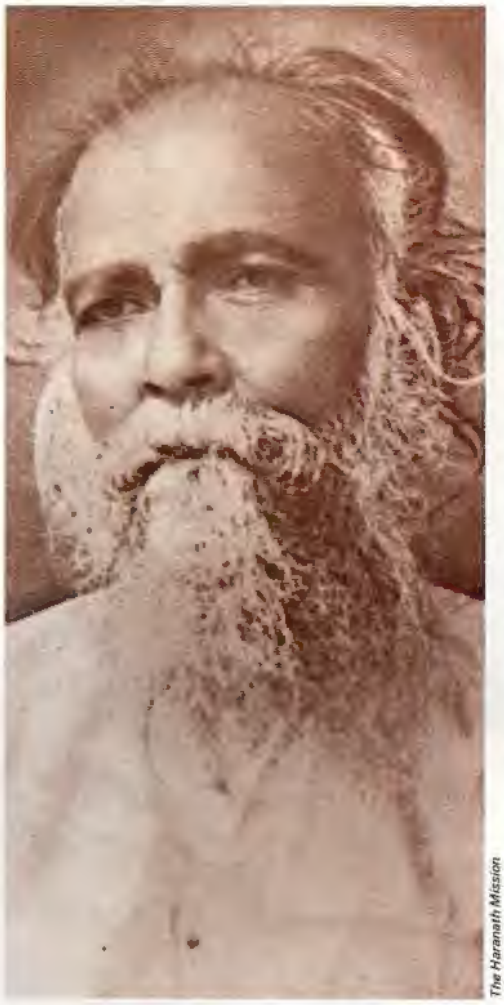
Crazy with the Love of God

During the time of his service in Kashmir there were some who recognized him as an *avatar* (direct incarnation) of Krishna, but to the majority of his devotees he was Pagal Haranath, so called because he was crazy *(pagal)* with the love of God. He imparted his mood of divine joy to all, regardless of caste, age, sex or creed. He wrote thousands of letters during his life; they all extolled the efficacy of 'taking name' (repeating a divine name) and showed the way in which Krishna himself could be ensnared by his devotee in the net of love and longing.

Haranath said of the sage Narada, that he gave salvation through his harp; of Krishna, that he gave salvation through his flute; while he claimed his own pen to be sufficient means of salvation in the present age. The first volume of his letters appeared in 1910 under the title *Pagal Haranath*, and it is today the main devotional book of his followers. Like all the letters which flowed unceasingly from his pen, *Pagal Haranath* is steeped in divine love.

Haranath had no equal as a healer, and relieved sufferers by absorbing diseases into his own body. For hours and sometimes days afterwards his body registered the symptoms and agonies of the sufferer; yet he described the sensations as blissful. Such was his overwhelming love for humanity, especially the weak and the vicious, that he was willing to assume all their burdens. The only fee he asked was that they should chant aloud, or repeat mentally, 'any divine name that melted their hearts', such as Radha-Krishna, Rama, Vishnu, Christ or Gouranga. It began to be customary for those he healed or enlightened to repeat the name Kusuma Haranath, and this is still done by multitudes in India and elsewhere today.

Haranath is recognized by many Indians as an avatar, a divine personality whose mission was to initiate a spiritual rebirth among Hindus: he was clairvoyant, had remarkable powers of healing and was said to travel on the astral plane and commune with spirits



The Haranath Mission

Dead for Ten Hours

The most critical experience in Haranath's life occurred in April 1896. He was about to journey from Jammu to Srinagar but on stepping into the carriage he lost consciousness. This occurred at three in the afternoon. He remained absolutely inert until one o'clock the following morning and was given up for dead. His heart had stopped beating, all signs of life had disappeared, and his travelling companions made arrangements for the body to be cremated. During the ten hours of death, however, Haranath claimed to have experienced the most intense interior activity. This included communion with a *Mahapurusha* (Great Being) whom he had seen before as a child of five while out walking with his elder brother. On this first occasion a vast form had hovered over them, as high as a two-storeyed building close by. He had at that time been mysteriously absorbed into the Mahapurusha; now it was the latter's turn to be absorbed into Haranath.

This great being was none other than Haranath's own self – Gouranga; and when he returned to life at one o'clock the following day, the merging had been accomplished. Haranath remained silent about the full significance of this experience. But his complexion underwent a permanent change to a fair golden hue (Gouranga means *the golden one*). Haranath became literally the 'one who spoke golden truths from a golden mouth', as Manohardas had prophesied centuries earlier.

During the period of 'death' it is said that the Mahapurusha dismembered Haranath's body into 64 parts. This he did in order to effect some kind of spiritual regeneration. On reassembling them, three were found to be missing. Haranath urged that these would not be necessary. He was anxious to re-enter the body again, not because he feared death or what might follow, nor because he cared particularly about living in a bodily form, but because of the anxiety which he knew his mother felt at that moment, having become telepathically aware of his sudden 'death'. The Mahapurusha therefore made up the missing parts with 'earthly matter taken from the hills', and Haranath revived.

Haranath left his reconstituted body permanently in May 1927. His followers explain that his devotees had become too numerous for individual attention and he consequently became universal once more so that he could appear to all who needed him, as Krishna himself had appeared to each of his devotees, intimately and uniquely.

KENNETH GRANT

Formerly associated with the moon and reverenced as a holy creature, the hare came to be feared as a beast of ill omen. Witches often took the form of hares to work their mischief, and in this shape could only be killed by a silver bullet

HARE

'NOW WE WILL BEGIN with the hare. And why Sir will you begin with the hare rather than with any other beast? I will tell you. Because she is the most marvellous beast that is on this earth.' So wrote William Twice in his 14th century treatise on hunting.

Marvellous indeed is the hare. As a symbolic figure from the unconsious the hare constantly recurs in dreams, and in world mythology it is closely associated with the moon. It has performed the role of deity and devil, of witch and witch's imp, and for reasons hard to comprehend this most timid of creatures has been regarded by mankind with a mixture of horror and awe.

It was generally accepted that a witch could assume the shape of a hare at will and resume her true form by an incantation. Witches in the shape of hares were notorious for ravaging the farmer's fields and for stealing the milk of cows. They could only be destroyed by a silver bullet – symbol of the moon – fired from a gun. If they were merely injured a search was at once begun for a woman with a similar injury; if such a woman was found, she was often condemned to death.

The Algonquin Indians worshipped the Great Hare, who was credited with forming the earth (see ALGONQUIN INDIANS). In Greece and China the hare was associated with the moon; in the former country it was connected with the lunar goddess Hecate and in the latter with the powers of augury. Buddha in one of his reincarnations took the form of a hare, which leaped into a fire and implanted its image upon the moon.

In pre-Christian Europe the hare was regarded as a symbol of fertility and therefore of the spring. The Romans divined the future from its movements and its sacred flesh was denied to ordinary mortals.

Many people feel an aversion to eating the meat of the hare and there is a suggestion of totemism underlying this objection. But it is possible that it was also based on the rules of magic: it would be extremely dangerous to consume the flesh of so timid an animal for fear that this same timidity would be transmitted to the eater.

The hare was reverenced in Europe as the spirit of the corn, particularly in Germany, Holland, France and Ireland, where the reaping of the last of the corn was known as 'cutting the hare'. Reapers were urged on at their labours at harvest end with the cry, 'We'll put the hare out of it today.'

Many relics of the old traditions of divining the future from the movements of the hare survive in modern Europe. In the British Isles a hare running down a village street is an omen of fire. For a hare to cross the path of a traveller is highly ominous, especially if the traveller is a pregnant woman. In this case it is necessary for a piece of cloth to be torn from her clothing to prevent her from giving birth to a hare-lipped child. Fishermen were known to abandon a day's fishing after a hare had crossed their paths, and under no circumstances could the word 'hare' be uttered at sea. A fatal accident in a mine was thought to be foreshadowed by the presence of a white hare or a white rabbit; this is in itself an interesting example of a superstition originally associated with the hare becoming attached to the rabbit, a later arrival in Great Britain.

The white hare also occurs in ghost lore. A typical example was described by Robert Hunt in his *Popular Romances of the West of England*, in the legend of a betrayed girl who died from grief and returned in the shape of a white hare to haunt her lover.

Melancholy as a Hare

Hares have acquired a reputation for melancholia. Many people shunned the flesh solely from fear that by eating it they would become contaminated by melancholy. The belief that the hare's melancholy increased to the point of madness in the month of March (when this creature is specially shy and wild, this being the mating season) survives in the expression 'mad as a March hare'.

The hare strikes a happier note as one of the symbols of the Easter festival, for it was the Easter hare that laid the Easter egg. The ceremony of scrambling for hare pie, which still takes place on Easter Monday at Hallaton in Leicestershire, however, has undertones of ritual sacrifice.

Possibly the best known surviving reminder of the hare's ancient powers is the custom of carrying a hare's foot as a charm against colic, rheumatism and misfortune generally. It is mentioned in the diaries of Samuel Pepys, who remarked after touching a hare's foot to cure the 'colic', or severe indigestion: 'Strange how fancy works, for I had no sooner handled his foot but I became well and so continue.'

Horner Sykes

Left **Every year on Easter Monday the Hare Pie Scramble takes place at Hallaton in Leicestershire** ***Right*** **Illustration by Arthur Rackham of Aesop's fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise: overconfident at the start, the hare loses through his own folly; the hare's weakness of intellect was proverbial**

Arthur Rackham

Harlequin

Pantomime clown, his clothes covered with triangular patches of many colours, who carried a stick (the original 'slapstick') which later became his magic wand; descended from Herlequin, a jester connected with the Devil in medieval French mystery plays; in Italian comedy of the 17th century Arlecchino turned into a hero of satire.

Michael Holford

Harp

Musical instrument venerated in many societies and believed to keep evil forces at bay, as in the case of David soothing Saul (1 Samuel 16.23), though he may really have played a lyre: in the tomb of Rameses III in Egypt priests are shown playing harps: in Western Europe the harp is associated with bards and fairies: the belief that angels play harps in heaven probably stems from Revelation (14.2) in which harps are associated with the redeemed on Mount Zion.

B. Peacock

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

Harpies are commonly described as birds with the faces of women, and this is how they are depicted on the Tomb of the Harpies in Asia Minor; they appear to be carrying away evil-doers for punishment by the Furies. With their habit of carrying off people and food, the Harpies are associated with whirlwinds and sudden squalls: they 'keep pace with the blasts of the winds on their swift wings, for they swoop high aloft'

To call a woman a harpy is to imply that she is a fierce, grasping hag. The original Harpies of antiquity were winged monsters with women's faces, who descended like birds of prey to snatch up their victims with long, hooked claws

HARPY

LIKE THE SIRENS, the Furies and the Gorgons, the Harpies were female monsters of Greek legend. They were depicted in art and literature as winged women, or as birds with women's faces and long, hooked claws, and their peculiar activity was to swoop upon human begins, or at least upon their food; their victims were carried off to unknown places. The origin and nature of the Harpies are in dispute, but they seem to have a definite connection with the underworld, having some of the characteristics of ghosts.

Wind and spirit were closely allied in ancient thought (see BREATH), and the Harpies are linked in literature with storms, whirlwinds or sudden squalls such as are particularly dangerous at sea and damaging on land. They appear first in Homer, where the Harpy Podarge (swift-foot) is mentioned in the *Iliad* as mating with the wind Zephyrus, and giving birth to the two supernatural horses of Achilles, Xanthus and Balius. In the *Odyssey* (book 1) Telemachus says that Odysseus has been away so long that he must have been carried off by the Harpies 'with no tidings, out of sight'. So too, in her grief, Odysseus's wife Penelope wishes that she had been carried away to the mouths of Ocean by a storm such as swept off the orphan daughters of Pandareus. A legend relates that the goddess Aphrodite, who had been protecting these girls, left them unattended for a period while she interceded for them on Olympus. The Harpies then swept them off and 'gave them as servants to the hateful Erinyes'. Since the Erinyes or Furies belonged to the underworld, the Harpies must have brought the maidens alive to dwell among the dead. This was the fate which Odysseus's family and friends imagined had overtaken the hero.

In Hesiod's *Theogony* two Harpies are mentioned, Aello (storm-wind) and Ocypete (swift-flier), children of two vague figures, Thaumas and Electra, who were also the parents of Iris, the goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods. These Harpies 'keep pace with the blasts of the winds on their swift wings, for they swoop high aloft'. In some Hesiodic fragments more details are found. The historian Strabo (c 64 BC–21 AD) quotes from the *Guide to the Earth* the story of King Phineus who was carried off by the Harpies 'to the land of the eaters of milk-curd who have waggons for houses'. These are obviously nomads living to the north of the Black Sea. This seems to be a different story of Phineus from the well known one, where Phineus's food and not his person was carried off.

Snatching at Table

Persecution by the Harpies was one of the punishments sent by the gods on Phineus, the blind king who indiscreetly used his gift of prophecy to reveal secret plans of the gods. In Aeschylus's play *Phineus* they appear with ravening jaws and snatching hands, and wearing ankle-boots and stout socks, to seize food from Phineus's table. In one of the fragmentary plays by Sophocles also called *Phineus*, the Harpies are called snatchers; in the other they are compared to locusts.

The Harpies belong particularly to the Argonautic legend, in which the Argonauts visit Phineus on their way eastward to Colchis to find the Golden Fleece, and the fullest account of them, which has become traditional, appears in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, written in the 3rd century BC. The Argonauts arrive at the palace of Phineus on the west coast of the Black Sea and are welcomed by him because they will deliver him from the Harpies. Phineus had accepted the gift of prophecy even at the price of blindness and a long old age, but had misused it and offended the gods. As his punishment, the Harpies

were sent to swoop down upon his table at every meal, carrying off nearly all the food but leaving enough to keep him alive and miserable, and leaving also a disgusting stench which could be smelt for some distance.

A Chase Through the Air

Fortunately, among the Argonauts are the winged Boreades, Zetes and Calais (sons of the north wind), who promise to rid Phineus of the Harpies if this is permitted by the gods. When the Harpies appear, they chase them away through the air with drawn swords; they catch them by the Plotae islands and are about to kill them when Iris flies down from Olympus to forbid it, promising that the Harpies will never return to plague Phineus. The Boreades turn back at the islands, now to be renamed the Strophades or Turning Points, and the Harpies dive into a cavern on Crete.

In a fragment from Apollodorus is another version of this legend, where the Harpies Nicothoe (victorious speed) or Aellopus (wind-foot) and Ocypete are pursued by the sons of the north wind. Nicothoe falls into the River Tigris in the Peloponnese (called Harpyes after her), and Ocypete flees to the Strophades; these islands were not originally localized but were later placed west of the Peloponnese.

Later poets, including the Latins, add little more information about the Harpies. Virgil, however, in the *Aeneid* (book 3) makes the Harpies sweep down on Aeneas and his Trojans as they try to spread a banquet on the beach of one of the Strophades Islands. The Harpies behave as they do in the account in the *Argonautica* but they are not driven off successfully; one of them warns Aeneas that his men will suffer hunger before they found a new city.

Ancient poets, commentators and lexicographers were inclined to derive the name 'Harpies' (Greek *Harpyiai* or sometimes *Arepyiai*) from the root of the Greek verb *harpazein* meaning 'to seize' or 'to snatch'. Modern philologists, concentrating on the form *Arepyiai*, tend to interpret the name as meaning 'tearers' or 'slicers'.

HARRANIAN RELIGION

THE CITY OF HARRAN in northwest Mesopotamia became in ancient times the centre of a mysterious religion that included the worship of the planets. Information about this religion is sparse and difficult to interpret, especially since much of it comes from hostile sources.

As far back as the second millenium BC, Harran was an important centre of the cult of Sin, the moon god. The original centre of the cult was the Sumerian city of Ur, known in the Bible as Ur of the Chaldeans. The Bible preserves an interesting connection between these two cult centres of moon worship; for according to the book of Genesis (11.31) Abraham, a native of Ur, journeyed with his father Terah and wife Sarah from Ur to settle in Harran.

In Mesopotamian mythology, Sin was an important deity connected with the regulation of time through the lunar month. He was regarded as the father of Shamash, the sun god, and of Ishtar, the goddess of fertility, who was identified with the planet Venus (see ISHTAR). The great temple of Sin at Harran was patronized by various Assyrian kings; but its greatest patron was Nabonidus (555–539 BC), the last king of Babylon. He claimed that he had been directed in a dream to rebuild the temple of Sin, where his mother was priestess. A stele (monumental stone) commemorating this rebuilding in 552 BC shows Nabonidus worshipping the emblems of the moon, the sun and the planet Venus. The temple of Sin attracted many visitors during the Roman period, including the emperors Caracalla and Julian.

Although the great temple of the moon god at Harran has vanished without trace, recent excavation at Sumatar Harabesi, in the Tektek mountains about 18 miles from Harran, has provided some valuable evidence about Harranian religion. A group of seven ruined stone buildings around a central mound were found to be of various shapes – round, square, and round on a square base. Inscriptions in Syriac discovered there mention Sin and a deity named Marilaha. The identity of the latter is a mystery. 'Mara' (lord) was a title of Baal-Shamin, 'master of the heavens'. There is evidence that Sin was sometimes called 'Sin Marilaha', thus equating him with the supreme deity. The cult signs of Marilaha were a sacred pillar and stool; Sin's emblem was a pillar, crowned by the upturned crescent of the moon and adorned with two tassels.

In neighbouring Edessa curious evidence of the cult of Atargatis, with whom Ishtar was identified, still survives in the form of teeming pools of fish which are tabu and never eaten: fish were associated with the ancient cult of the goddess (see FISH).

This archeological evidence, fragmentary and enigmatic as it unfortunately is, is supplemented by equally puzzling accounts by early Moslem writers. They identified the Harranian pagans with the Sabians, mentioned in the Koran as one of the religious communities permitted to exist. According to these writers, the Sabians of Harran recognized a supreme deity who was the primal cause of the universe. This deity had no contact with mankind but had placed the universe under the rule of the planets. Hence the Sabians worshipped the planets, or rather the demonic beings that governed them.

Rites of Human Sacrifice

Each planet was believed to have a special influence over some particular type of person. The Sabians were also reputed to celebrate 'mystery' rites, addressed principally to Shamal, lord of the *jinn*. In these secret rites they were suspected of using human sacrifice. There was a curious Harranian tabu on the eating of beans, because they were elliptical in shape whereas the celestial sphere is globular.

The Harranians and their planetary religion disappeared during the Mongol invasions in the 12th or 13th century. Some scholars believe that the Sabians still survive in the Mandaeans, a religious community living on the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates; on the available evidence this identification seems unlikely.

FURTHER READING: J. B. Segal, 'The Sabian Mysteries: the planet cult of ancient Harran' in *Vanished Civilizations* ed. E. Bacon (Thames & Hudson, 1963).

Giraudon

Harrowing of Hell

The harrying or despoiling of the land of the dead by a hero who enters the underworld, defeats Death and returns alive; the most famous example is Christ, who harrowed hell in the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection: in Greek mythology Hercules, Theseus, Orpheus and others visited the underworld and returned: King Arthur was said to have successfully raided the otherworld.
See HELL.

HARVEST

Linked with death, for the corn came from under the earth where the dead resided, but even more with fertility and new life, the harvest was accompanied by rituals the world over, to ensure an abundance of crops

IT IS DIFFICULT for us to realize nowadays, with tins and frozen foods available throughout the year, and imported tropical fruits on our tables even in the middle of winter, the anxiety which our ancestors felt as they waited for the annual harvest. When man first progressed from the primitive stage of gathering wild foodstuffs to cultivation of the soil, the procession of the seasons became increasingly important. In an agricultural economy his very life depended on the success or failure of the crops, and enormous efforts were made to ensure a fruitful harvest.

The Jews still celebrate Succoth – the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles – as they have done since the time of the command in Deuteronomy (chapter 16), 'You shall keep the feast of booths seven days, when you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press; you shall rejoice in your feast.' Citron, palm, myrtle and willow (the 'four kinds') are carried in procession during the synagogue service, and each family builds a booth before the festival begins. As a rule it is set up in the garden if there is one, or if not, on the flat roof. The top of the booth is covered with green boughs, arranged in such a way that the starlight can shine through. This is to remind the Jews of the time of the Exodus, when they were nomads in the wilderness. Inside are gay decorations taken from the season's produce – apples, grapes, pomegranates and brightly coloured Indian corn.

The Harvest Supper

Churchgoers today send vegetables, fruit and flowers to the Harvest Festival service, a popular occasion followed by the traditional Harvest Supper. Best known as Harvest Home, it had many dialect names, like Kern, Mell and Horkey Supper.

On the evening of the day when the last load had been brought in, the farmer and his wife would traditionally provide a good meal for the reapers. As a rule it was served in the barn, which had been specially decorated with garlands and branches. In Lincolnshire the Old Sow often put in an appearance. This was two men disguised with sacking and wearing a head stuffed with furze, which they used for pricking the others.

Frumenty sometimes used to be served, a milk pudding made from wheat boiled in milk with raisins and currants, and flavoured with spices and sugar. More often there would be a round of beef, followed by plum pudding and served with plenty of beer.

Probably it was the memory of suppers such as these that the Pilgrim Fathers carried with them from England to America. During the autumn of 1621, settlers in Plymouth Colony gathered to give thanks for the harvest after their first difficult year in the New World. This was America's first Thanksgiving. The exact date of this first celebration has never been established (it has even been said that it was in February). But in 1864 President Lincoln set aside the last Thursday in November as the appointed day. (Canadians hold Thanksgiving earlier, in October.)

Today Thanksgiving Day is an important family occasion, with a traditional meal that includes roast turkey, corn on the cob, and pumpkin pie, in honour of the Pilgrims' typical fare. The day is also rich in special leisure activities, among them important football games. Interestingly, the ancient Mayans held an annual harvest celebration each autumn, on a particular day, which also featured turkey on the festive menu and ritual ball games. And many forest Indians of the American South, such as the Natchez, celebrated the harvest with a feast of specially grown corn and their own forms of ball games.

The English ancestors of the Pilgrim Fathers traditionally brought in their harvest with great style. The last load, decorated with branches and garlands, was taken triumphantly through the village. Handbells were rung, everyone cheered and shouted, and children who helped were presented with slices of plum cake. At some stage people hiding in the bushes threw buckets of water over the cart; the custom was rooted in imitative magic, being designed to ensure rain for next year's crop.

Seated on top of the load, and probably drenched to the skin, were the Lord of the Harvest and his Lady. Before the coming of mechanization farmers were obliged to engage extra hands to assist with the harvest. The men appointed one of their number to negotiate with the farmer and take the lead in the scything: he was called Lord of the Harvest. The second reaper, a man dressed as a woman who replaced the Lord in his absence, was known as the Harvest Lady. If anyone swore or told a lie in front of the Lord of the Harvest, he was obliged to pay a fine. In Cambridgeshire each new workman was 'shoed' by the Lord of the Harvest, who tapped the soles of his shoes in return for a shilling.

Mechanized farming eliminated the Lord and Lady of the Harvest. Gone too are the elaborate rituals surrounding the cutting of the last sheaf, in which it was supposed that the power of the harvest resided. In some countries a few ears of corn were left standing in the field because people were afraid of exhausting the strength of the crop. They were said to be an offering for Odin's horses, or those who dwell under the earth. However, cutting the last sheaf was a more usual ceremony. This could be a great honour, but it also seems to have been regarded as a disagreeable duty. In England the men sometimes used to throw their sickles at it in turn, as if they were anxious that the responsibility should be shared. Behind this custom lay the old belief that the spirit of the corn had taken refuge in the last sheaf.

Crying the Mare

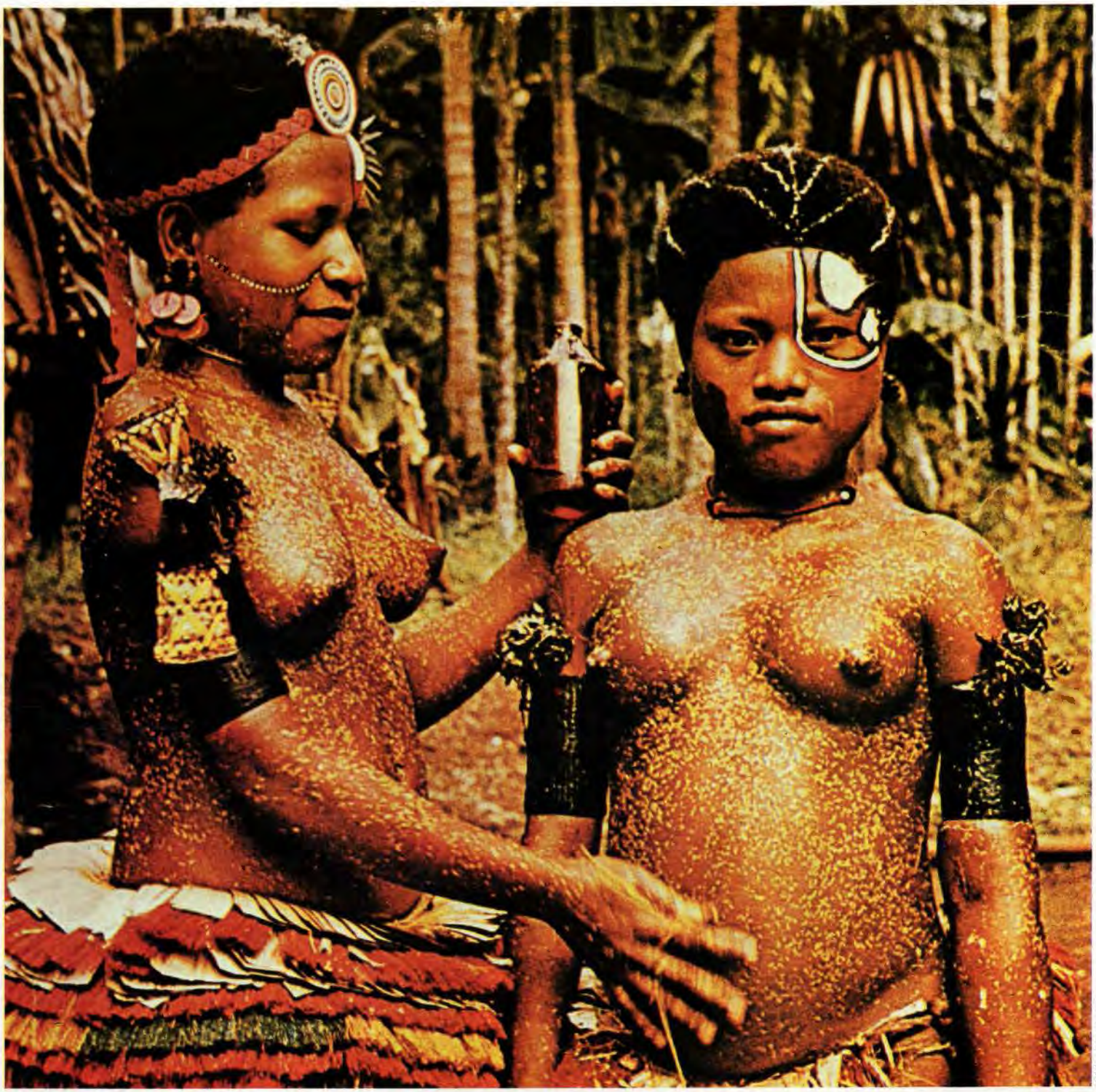
Sometimes it was carried in triumph to the farmhouse but often it was dumped on a neighbour's land to get rid of it, in case it brought bad luck. Around Herefordshire and Shropshire the final handful of corn was grasped and tied together. The men flung their sickles towards it and whoever was successful cried:

'I have her!'

A brief ritual exchange followed:

'What have you?'
'A mare, a mare, a mare!'

This was called Crying the Mare. An old Devonshire custom known as Crying the Neck suggests, on the contrary, that the final sheaf was thought to bring good luck. While the reapers were finishing, an old harvester went round, selecting all the best ears he could find. These were gathered into a bundle, known as the neck, which he plaited and arranged as attractively as possible. When the work of harvesting was



Richard Harrington

To celebrate the yam harvest festival, girls in the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia wear bands of leaves round their arms, which they believe contain magical properties; they also rub their bodies with coconut oil, afterwards plastering themselves with marigold petals

done, everyone formed a circle and the man who had made the neck stood in the centre, holding it firmly with both hands. He stooped, lowering the neck down to the ground, and all the men took off their hats; they too bent low, hats in hand. Then slowly standing upright, they raised their hats above their heads, and the man with the neck held it high in the air. Everyone cried 'the neck', and the whole ceremony was repeated three times over. There was a great deal of cheering and, during the melee which followed, someone seized the neck and ran with it to the farmhouse. A maid was waiting, ready at the door with a bucket of water. If the man could get past her, or enter the house by any other route, he was allowed to kiss her. But if he failed she soaked him thoroughly with water from her bucket.

Harvest competitions of this kind used to be very popular. In Scotland and the north of England, groups of three or four men each took a ridge of grain and raced to see who would finish reaping first. But there used to be a day when 'kemping' as this was called, and indeed all harvesting, was forbidden. As John Brand, the Newcastle antiquary, tells us: 'There is one day in harvest on which the vulgar abstain from work, because of an ancient and foolish tradition, that if they do their work the ridges will bleed.'

A version of this strange belief turns up in the Shetlands. Swinaness, on the Island of Unst, was traditionally thought too sacred for cultivation because, so it was said, the sea kings had fought many furious battles there. One man ignored the prohibition and planted some seeds of corn but when the time for harvesting came, to his horror the ears dripped, not dew, but salty tears and the stalks were filled with blood.

This suggests that there was thought to be some connection between the harvest and the realm of the dead – 'those who dwell underneath the earth'. In Germany peasants used to break the first straws of hay brought into the barns, saying, 'This is food for the

With the change from merely gathering crops to deliberately growing them, the sowing and the harvest became two of the great ritual occasions of the year: harvest scenes from the Tomb of Menena in Egypt showing *(above left)* winnowing in progress, as bearers transport the grain in baskets and *(below left)* grain being trodden out of the husk, to be carried away by boat

Right 'False Face' harvest mask: these grotesque wooden masks were worn by North American Indians of the eastern seaboard during agricultural rituals, to drive off evil influences and encourage a successful harvest

dead'. Many peoples throughout the world hold annual festivals honouring the departed. The time of year chosen varies according to the region but there is a tendency to associate it with harvest.

In Arabia the last sheaf is ceremonially interred in a miniature grave, specially prepared with a stone placed at the head and another at the foot. The owner of the land, announcing that the Old Man is dead, prays that Allah will send 'the wheat of the dead'.

But if the harvest fields are associated with the realm of the dead, there are probably more ways in which they are linked to fertility and new life. In some countries people used to speak as if a child had been separated from its mother by the stroke of the sickle. A Pole who reaped the last handful of corn was told: 'You have cut the navel string.' In Prussia the last sheaf was called the Bastard: a boy was concealed inside, and the woman who bound it cried out as if in labour. An old woman acted as midwife until the 'birth' took place, and the boy inside the sheaf then squalled like a baby. The sheaf was swaddled with sacking and carried into the barn.

The Baby Rice Soul

In early Egypt fertility of the crops was closely associated with human fecundity. Min, god of vegetation and sexual reproduction, is always represented with phallus erect, a flail raised in his right hand. He was honoured as Lord of the Harvest, and temple carvings show him receiving a ceremonial offering of the first sheaf. Indonesians perform a ritual marriage at the time of the rice harvest. Two sheaves are fastened together in a bundle: this is called the bridal pair. One sheaf contains a special rice, the bridegroom. The other, which contains rice of the ordinary variety, represents the bride. A magician lays them together on a bed of leaves, so that their union may increase the next yield of rice.

Elaborate rituals surround the 'birth' of the Baby Rice Soul at harvest time in Malaya. Rubbish and unpleasant smelling herbs are burnt in advance to drive away evil spirits, and a magician is employed to choose seven stalks of rice, which are cut and swaddled like an infant. The Rice Baby is carried to the farmer's house, and all the protocol surrounding a human birth is carefully observed. On each of the three days

Bystanders at the burning of Latimer and Ridley are said to have remarked that the executions might have saved the crops, performed at the proper time

Museum of the American Indian

following, only one small basket of rice is allowed to be gathered. The reaper works in silence, taking care that his shadow never falls across the plants. But the real work of harvesting cannot begin until the seventh day after the birth of the Baby Rice Soul. Whatever is gathered then must be donated towards a feast held to honour the spirits of dead magicians.

Dolls Made of Corn

The power which was thought to exist in the crops was in fact often personified, not necessarily as a baby. Sometimes it took animal form – a wolf, pig, goat, hare or cock – perhaps because small creatures often took refuge in the final sheaf when the rest of the field had been scythed. In England the last sheaf was used to make an effigy which was dressed in women's clothes and carried on the Horkey Cart to the Harvest Supper, where it sat on a special chair. This puppet had many regional names: kern baby, mell doll, harvest queen and, in Kent, the ivy doll. The Yorkshire mell sheaf was made from different varieties of corn, plaited together and decorated with ribbons and flowers. It was placed in the middle of the room for people to dance round. Sometimes the kern baby was hung up in the farmhouse and kept through the following year to bring good luck and be a protection against witchcraft. A Lancashire farmer is said to have laid a curse on anyone damaging his puppet before the coming harvest.

In 1899 an Old Lincolnshire woman remarked that one of these dolls – made of barley straw and stuck up on a sheaf facing the gate – would ward off thunder and lightning: 'Prayers be good enough as far as they goes, but the Almighty mun be strange and throng with so much corn to look after, and in these here bad times we musn't forget old Providence. Happen it's best to keep in with both parties.'

Rick decorating used to be quite popular in England. A corn dolly was worked into the corner of the stack to bring good luck. Some stacks in the west of Somerset still carry a little stook at each end of the ridge, and a peaked projection on some cottages in that area is called the dolly by very old people. A few farmers leave the last stook in the field to stand till it falls apart, or it may be hung in the barn. But if the farmer is questioned about this custom, he usually replies that it is intended for the birds; the meaning has been forgotten.

Harvest knots – twists of straw in attractive shapes – are still made in parts of Ireland. Girls wear them in their hair and men fasten them to their coats. At one time they were exchanged as tokens of love. In England, if an engaged girl wished to bear children from her marriage, she went secretly to the harvest fields on a Friday night. Taking a straw from the stooks for every child desired, wheat for a boy and oat for a girl, she plaited them into a garter, murmuring a charm referring to the straw on which the Christ Child lay in the manger. The garter had to be worn until the following Monday morning. If it stayed in place the omen was good, but if it broke or slipped the spell would not succeed. It was also very important that the girl's fiancé should know nothing about this. Only a virgin could use the charm: a girl who was not would cause harm to all her children.

In southern Europe, 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, is sometimes called the Feast of Our Lady in Harvest. In Italy it replaced the festival of the goddess Diana on 13 August: further north, where the harvest comes later, the crop is dedicated to the Virgin Mary on 8 September, the Feast of her Nativity.

A young virgin features in the central role of a once popular Polish custom. *Wienjec*, the harvest wreath or crown, was made from the final sheaf and prettily decorated with a variety of flowers, nuts and apples and perhaps even a gingerbread cake. It was blessed in church, usually on the Feast of the Assumption when herbs were also blessed, and worn by the chief girl harvester. It was essential that she should be chaste for, if she were not, it was supposed that the fertility of the land would be destroyed and the harvest would be a poor one. The girl was expected to walk in procession to the farmhouse door, where she was received by the farmer who drenched her with water – a rain charm again.

This custom of throwing water on the last sheaf, or else on the person who brings it, is widespread. In the north of the Greek island of Euboea, when the corn sheaves had been stacked, the farmer's wife brought out a pitcher of water and offered it to the men for washing their hands. Each sprinkled water on the corn and on the threshing floor. The farmer's wife then held the pitcher at an angle and ran as fast as she could around the stack without spilling a drop. When this had been done she made a wish that the stack would last as long as the circle she had just made.

Human Flesh to Aid Crops

Rituals of this kind are harmless by any standards. Not so some of the customs of the past: 'The seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest' (2 Samuel, chapter 21). This ambiguous remark, referring to the killing of seven men in time of famine, dates back to biblical days. However, English bystanders at the burning of Bishops Latimer and Ridley on 16 October, 1555 are said to have remarked that the executions might have saved the crops, had they been performed at the proper time.

The Khonds, a tribe of Bengal, offered a sacrifice to assist the harvest until the middle of the 19th century. The victim, often the descendant of other victims, was

Harvest Booths

Boughs of fruit-trees, branches of palm-trees, of leaf-trees and of Arabah-trees from the river beds were taken, and from them and their foliage, booths were constructed in which the congregation of Israel dwelt during the Feast of Tabernacles. The later texts alleged that this was done to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt, but this was clearly a reinterpretation of an earlier agricultural practice, the purpose of which was to promote fertility at the end of harvest, and to secure the much-needed rain at a critical moment marked by the Rosh hashShanah (New Year's Day) on the first of Tishri, when the autumnal rites began.

No doubt in their Canaanite form they included feasting and erotic dancing such as obtained outside the vineyards at these seasons, referred to in the book of Judges, when ecstatic revels not very different from those engaged in by the Maenads of Dionysus in Thrace and Phrygia, were held in joyous abandon for the bounty received, and to secure a fresh outpouring of vital energy in the crops and in mankind in the forthcoming season.

E. O. James

Seasonal Feasts and Festivals

Verkehrsamt

Barnaby's Picture Library

Left **The harvest pillar remains the focal point of the Cannstatt festival held each September at Stuttgart; begun in 1818, this great harvest festival now includes a funfair and cattle market, and goes on for 12 days** ***Above*** **Font in a Somerset church decorated with field and garden produce: the practice of holding a Harvest Festivel Service, established in the 19th century, has ousted the Harvest Home**

called the *Meriah*. About two weeks before the sacrifice was due to be offered, his hair was all cut off, and he was taken in procession to a virgin forest and anointed with melted butter. When the moment arrived he was drugged and crushed to death, or roasted over a fire, and cut into little pieces. Representatives from many villages arrived for the occasion. Each of them was given a small portion of flesh, which was taken home and ceremonially buried in the fields. What remained, chiefly the bones and head, was buried and the ashes scattered over the farmland so that the harvest would be successful. This custom was eventually brought to an end by the British authorities.

In Tibet, to the north, the chief purpose of the Harvest Festival was to propitiate the *Zhidah*, local spirits of the mountains, so that they would send enough sun and rain to assist the crops and hold back any frost or hail. The *Yonnehcham*, Dance of the Sacrificers, was performed specially in their honour. This took place around the middle of September. For 100 days before, the priests stayed indoors to avoid accidentally stepping on any of the many worms and summer insects about at that time of year. They were forbidden to quarrel amongst themselves and anything borrowed had to be returned. It was also very important that the sky should not look upon a corpse, so anyone who chanced to die during the festival was temporarily buried in a stable. Since there was always the risk of light from moon or stars, even night burial was ruled out. Harvest was a gay occasion and large crowds came to see the dancing. They pitched tents and cooked on great outdoor stoves: some popular favourites were noodles, meat balls, steamed wheat bread, green peaches and buttered tea.

Evidently the Zhidah were among those spirits well disposed towards mankind. Probably the forces appealed to by ringing church bells in England were imagined to be less benign. The ostensible purpose of this custom was to ensure the safety of the gathered crop. In Cheshire bells were rung three times over oats, twice over wheat.

'Burning the Witch', a Yorkshire custom, perhaps also derives originally from some ritual disposing of a malevolent influence. At harvest time peas were left to dry in small piles, known locally as 'reaps'. On the last day, when the remaining corn had been cut, some of these piles were pushed together and burnt in the straw. Boys and girls ran about, blacking each other's faces with charred straw. Everyone enjoyed the peas and there was dancing and Cream Pot Supper – cream and currant cakes flavoured with caraway.

In Shetland the menu for the *Foy* was not dissimilar. This traditional party, held at the skipper's house, is interesting since it was, in effect, a Harvest Home of the sea. It was held at the beginning of August, when the summer white fishing season closed. Crew members and their wives were entertained with high tea and plenty to drink. A favourite toast was: 'Lord! Open the mouth of the grey fish, and hold thy hand about the corn.' (See also CORN).

VENETIA NEWALL

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Spreading from the ghettos of Poland to Rumania, Hungary, the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe, Hasidism produced a rich vein of legend and folklore. A popular movement based on the mystic teachings of the Cabala, it was strongly opposed by the orthodox rabbis

HASIDISM

THE SITUATION of East European Jewry in the 18th century was very conducive to a religious revival. They lived in abject poverty and misery, and had not yet recovered from the disastrous massacres of the 17th century, when the Cossacks and local peasantry had killed over 100,000 Jews. These terrible events had undoubtedly predisposed Polish Jewry to accept the message of the pseudo-Messiah Sabbatai Zevi. The shameful collapse of this messianic movement (the messiah apostatized and became a Mos[illegible] to save his life) left behind it a trail of confusion, despair, despondency and moral chaos. The poverty-stricken and – by rabbinical standards – ignorant masses suffered from a sense of religious inadequacy, heightened by the intellectual presumption of the rabbinical elite, who held that only Talmudic learning opened the gates to the full religious life.

There were also circles of 'spirituals' associated with the mystical tradition of Lurianic Cabalism (see CABALA) or with groups that had arisen in the aftermath of the Sabbatian messianic movement; these were keenly aware that the traditional forms of piety, such as meticulous observance of the law, Talmudic learning, strict asceticism and mortifications, did not assure spiritual perfection. It is against this background of misery, demoralization and spiritual bewilderment that the rise in southern Poland of the religious and mystical revival known as the hasidic movement has to be seen.

The term Hasidism is derived from the Hebrew noun *hasid* which, in biblical Hebrew and especially in the Psalms, means one who is steadfast in his trust and faith in God and in his devotion to him. The plural form *hasidim* or 'pious ones' came to be used more than once to designate groups outstanding for their religious fervour and devotion. The circles of Jewish zealots in Palestine who took up arms, in the times of the Maccabees, against the repression of the Jewish religion were known as Hasidim, and the same term was used by a circle of Jewish mystics that flourished in Germany in the 12th and 13th centuries. There is, however, no historic connection between these earlier movements and 18th century Polish-Russian Hasidism.

Master of the Good Name

Among the impoverished masses superstitious practices were part of the current folk-religion. For them the Cabala was connected with the use of amulets and charms to ward off sickness and other evils, and 'masters of the name' (masters of the powerful names of God, capable of preparing potent amulets or of healing ailments) were much sought after. The founder of Hasidism was such a 'master of the name' (in Hebrew *Baal Shem*), but he was also a genuine mystic with a message.

'Palphot' Herzlia

Two members of the Hasidim wearing their traditional costume buy willows in a Jerusalem market for the New Year ceremony of shaking away their sins. Israel is now one of the main centres of Hasidism

Little is known about Israel ben Eliezer (c1700–1760), the *Baal Shem Tov* ('master of the good name') and the halo of legend that very soon surrounded his life and personality makes it extremely difficult to reconstruct his biography and teaching with any precision. According to hasidic hagiography, his career was a chain of miraculous events: his birth was foretold by the prophet Elijah, his soul was a spark from that of the Messiah, he was taught by celestial mentors, and his life was shot through with miracles and heavenly interventions.

An increasing number of admirers flocked to him seeking his blessing, intercession and guidance for their spiritual as well as physical welfare. Among those who became his disciples were some scholars, one of whom, R. Dov Bev of Mezhiritch, became the leader and organizer of the movement after the Baal Shem's death. The presence of these scholars and their acceptance of the Baal Shem's authority helped to counteract hostile propaganda to the effect that his following consisted exclusively of the ignorant and superstitious.

For opposition was not lacking. The mystical heresies and moral chaos that had come in the wake of the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi had made the rabbinical leadership doubtful of any new movement, and the Hasidim were suspected of heresy or at least of religious anarchy. In fact there was little that was completely new in hasidic teaching and many of its elements and formulations were derived from traditional rabbinical, moral and cabalistic doctrines. The Hasidim never thought of questioning the authority of rabbinical law, or the competence of the rabbinical authorities to interpret and administer it. But their emphasis on the 'inner meaning' of the law and on the paramount necessity of ecstatic devotion and singleness of heart in its performance, their fidelity to charismatic leaders and their adoption of certain slightly different devotional and liturgical practices only antagonized the opposing camp even more.

Thus their emphasis on inwardness and spiritual exaltation (that is, on the right 'mood' of joy and enthusiasm) made them attach less importance to the exact times prescribed for the statutory prayers. They also adopted the Sephardic rite of the prayerbook because they held that this rite lent itself better to the practice of mystical meditation. The Baal Shem himself said that his mission was 'to stir the hearts of those seeking communion with God. This contains nothing new . . . It is merely a strengthening of the faith which has somehow been forgotten.'

A Scandal to the Orthodox

Like many other spiritual movements, Hasidism ranged from pure contemplative mysticism to the crudest forms of popular enthusiasm and superstition. The Baal Shem's doctrine of 'serving God with joy' and 'in bodily things' shocked the stern rabbis, especially as this joyful service expressed itself in ecstatic singing, wild dancing and not infrequent resort to strong drink. Anti-hasidic writers may have exaggerated in their descriptions of these excesses; yet the fact that Hasidism very emphatically did not wish to teach the way of perfection to a small spiritual elite but sought to bring the living experience of communion with, and love of, God to all and sundry, inevitably meant a vulgarization of spiritual values and techniques. Thus prayer was considered as a state of ecstatic communion with God in which the personality was free from the trammels of the body; and hasidic legend tells how the body of the Baal Shem used to tremble violently at prayer so that bystanders were also seized by trembling and the building would shake. When this ecstatic prayer spread to the hasidic masses, it would take the form of shouting and twisting of the body – enough to make the hasidic key concepts of *simhah* ('joy'), *kawwanah* ('inwardness'), *devekuth* ('communion with God') and *hithlahavuth* ('enthusiasm') objects of scandal to the orthodox and of ridicule to the rationalists.

For any adequate understanding of the movement it is necessary to take into account its various components. There is the teaching of the hasidic masters as laid down in their voluminous writings (mainly in the form of commentaries and homilies on biblical books); there are the stories and anecdotes told about the great masters; there is the popular hasidic literature (mainly extolling the miraculous powers of the hasidic saints); and there is, last but not least, the actual life lived by the Hasidim.

Lifting the Divine Sparks

Hasidic doctrine, whilst continuing to use the vocabulary of Lurianic Cabalism, added new emphases which in fact gave it a totally new quality. The hasidic use of the traditional phrase 'there is no place empty of him' had a meaning that went far beyond the orthodox one and came very close to pantheistic heresy. Hasidism took over from Lurianic Cabalism the idea of the cosmos as a chain of emanations in which 'higher' and 'lower' worlds reflected and influenced one another, and in which man occupied a key position, precisely because he could act upon the higher (and even divine) spheres through the meditative quality of his actions. In Lurianism this had meant that man had the task of performing the *tikkun* (restoration) of the fallen world by liberating and 'lifting up' the sparks of divine light that had fallen into matter and into the grasp of the demonic powers. But in terms of hasidic spirituality this meant that man fulfilled his religious calling not merely in specifically ritual acts but in everything and in everyday activity. Because the divine sparks, yearning to return to their source, are buried everywhere in the world and embedded in all things – in human beings as well as in all animate and inanimate beings – man encounters them in every situation and engages in the redemptive activity of *tikkun* and of the 'lifting of the holy sparks' in everything he does – the most ordinary labour, business, small talk, eating and drinking – provided he does it with the proper meditative intent, kawwanah, devekuth and total sincerity of purpose.

The Role of the Tsaddik

The connecting link between the spirituality of the charismatic mystic and that of the mass of simple folk was the institution of the *tsaddik* (literally the 'righteous', the hasidic leader). The tsaddik, having reached the higher rungs on the ladder to spiritual perfection, could bind to himself in a bond of mystical community the souls of his followers. In precisely the same way as he could stoop down and perform the descent into the lowest spheres in order to lift up the fallen sparks, so he could bind to himself imperfect souls and raise them, with himself, to spiritual perfection.

A new type of loose social organization evolved round the hasidic leaders. In the centre was the tsaddik surrounded by his close disciples and his permanent and often sumptuous court; next to them was the mass of followers and devotees who would make the pilgrimage to his court on festivals or special occasions when they felt the need of help and advice in spiritual or mundane matters. Whereas some hasidic leaders opposed 'tsaddikism', others made it a cornerstone of their doctrine. To many orthodox people the hasidic doctrine and practice of tsaddikism came dangerously near the notion of a 'mediator' between the individual and his god – a notion generally considered to be typically Christian and heretical from a Jewish point of view.

Tsaddikism, for all the socially integrating role it played in the development of early Hasidism, subsequently became a demoralizing and corrupting factor. The leading disciples of the great hasidic masters became founders of dynasties, and their descendants acted as tsaddikim and commanded the loyalty and devotion of their followers by an almost matter-of-course right of succession. Eventually the various hasidic groups came to be distinguished not so much as schools or sects (although there were doctrinal and other differences between them) as by loyal adherence to dynasties.

Spread of Hasidism

The Baal Shem's way of 'serving God' in joy and mystical contemplation attracted an increasing number of followers. Although he left no writings, many of his teachings and sayings are quoted in the works of his disciple R. Jacob Joseph of Polnoye. His other disciple, R. Dov Bev, the 'Great Maggid' of Mezhiritch (d 1772), succeeded him as the leader of Hasidism and became the real organizer of the movement. The great leading figures and early masters of Hasidism were all direct or indirect disciples of Dov Bev. From Mezhiritch the movement branched out in three main directions. There was a Ukrainian branch, a Lithuanian branch and a Polish-Galician branch, represented by Hasidism as it developed in the Jewries of Poland, Rumania and Hungary.

Rabbinical opposition to the new Hasidic movement was conducted with all the bitterness of which the Jewish communities in the ghettos of Eastern Europe were capable. The leader of the anti-hasidic struggle was Elijah of Vilna (d 1797), the leading rabbinical authority of the age and an outstanding Cabalist. (Evidently the conflict was not between 'rabbinical' and 'mystical' Judaism but between institutional rabbinical forms – which included Cabalism – and what appeared to be a dangerous mass movement of spiritual anarchy.) Bans of excommunication were issued by Elijah of Vilna against the new movement, and for several generations feeling ran high. Only the rise of the modern enlightenment in the Jewish ghetto brought the two groups together: in face of the common enemy the two types of uncompromising and fundamentalist orthodoxy closed ranks.

The propagandists and polemicists of the enlightenment took Hasidism as their special butt, for to them it represented the very incarnation of superstition, bigotry and stupid obscurantism. The dependence of the believer on the tsaddik and the faith in his unlimited miraculous powers, the custom of making pilgrimages to the tsaddik's court and depositing there one's request accompanied by a gift of money, the luxurious growth of hasidic legend and folklore (including stories of demonic possession and of exorcisms performed by the power of the tsaddik), these and many other manifestations of Hasidism could easily be held up to ridicule. Historical scholarship has tended, until recently, to be unsympathetic to Hasidism, which was viewed as a sad, though perhaps understandable product of the dark and miserable ghettos. With the emergence of romantic tendencies in Jewish life and literature, a reappraisal of Hasidism began. Its mystical orientation, its yearning for a pure intensity of life, its folk-character which seemed to make it a manifestation of the soul of the people, its folkloric expressions in song, dance, tales and legends – all these were extolled in a new, romanticizing literature. This tendency reached its peak in the monumental work of Martin Buber, who devoted many of his writings to an interpretation of Hasidism in terms of his own, essentially existential, philosophy.

The main centres of Hasidism having been in Eastern Europe, they were wiped out by the Nazis in the Second World War. At present the main centres are in Israel and in the United States, where a number of hasidic dynasties have re-established themselves.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

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Daily Telegraph Colour Library

Lady Lisgar, who in 1881 married Sir Francis Fortescue-Turvile of Bosworth Hall, a Roman Catholic stronghold since 1630, refused to allow a priest to give supreme unction to a dying maidservant; as a result she was condemned to haunt the house, and her ghostly figure has been seen in her bedroom and at the end of corridors

'Some people have experienced such intolerable sensations of misery and fear in that corridor that they have found it impossible to remain in it': there are too many well-attested cases of hauntings to write the whole phenomenon off as an illusion

HAUNTED HOUSES

MOST PEOPLE, when they think of ghosts, think first of haunted houses. This is not, of course, because apparitions are generally supposed to appear, or strange happenings to occur, only in family dwellings. On the contrary, if it were possible to compile a detailed map of all the places which are now, or once were, said to be haunted, a great diversity of open-air sites would have to be marked upon it, as well as many buildings other than homes. Ghostly manifestations have been recorded in the vicinity of prehistoric barrows and ancient burial-grounds, in fields where medieval deserted villages once stood, on battlefields known to history and sometimes in places where tradition preserves the memory of some battle or local skirmish about which history has nothing to say (see ARMIES).

Nevertheless, a host of stories, some very well attested, support the popular belief that many houses of all ages and sizes, from castles to cottages, are or have been haunted by those who lived or died in them, and sometimes by entities more difficult to account for than simply the returning dead. Sights and sounds outside normal experience have undoubtedly been seen and heard in such houses, and have been vouched for by a great number of reliable and serious witnesses. Various theories have been put forward in an attempt to explain these happenings, ranging from acceptance of the oldest and most usual

belief that they are straightforward visitations from beyond the grave, or possibly instances of telepathy between the living and the dead, down to the view that every such experience is purely subjective and due to hallucination on the part of the percipient.

Ghostly manifestations are of many different kinds. Some apparitions are no more than fleeting and elusive forms, suddenly perceived and quickly gone. Often they are quite unknown to those who see them, no legend accounts for them, and they seem to be unaware of, or uninterested in, the living occupants of the house. Yet they cannot be dismissed as mere illusion, because they appear again and again, and have been seen at different times by a variety of witnesses. Others are distinct and recognizable figures, and some are so normal in appearance that they are mistaken for living people, at least at first. Or that which haunts the house may not be seen at all. Noises are heard, though nothing visible makes them, sometimes loud and terrifying, sometimes slight yet clearly audible, like the faint murmur of voices, or the sound of crying, or footsteps passing along a corridor or down the stairs. There are houses which contain rooms that are 'restless'. They are not haunted in the sense that anything ghostly has been seen or heard in them, yet it is impossible to sit in peace in them, or concentrate upon any work, for more than a very short period. Others have rooms or passages which from time to time are filled with a brooding atmosphere of sadness or fear. A curious phenomenon frequently recorded by ghost-hunters as a preliminary to certain forms of psychical activity is a sudden and distinct fall in room-temperature, and in one haunted farmhouse at Yarnton in Oxfordshire, the inmates are warned that the ghost is about to 'walk' by the slow spread through the house of a peculiarly sweet scent.

To the difficult question of what causes some houses to be persistently haunted, sometimes by more than one ghost, there can be no certain answer in the present state of our knowledge. These ghosts may perhaps be accounted for by the theory that somehow, in some manner we do not understand, they are bound to their old homes by emotional ties so strong that even death

cannot sever them. The popular belief is that these ties are nearly always the result of some past state of bitter unhappiness, or violent terror, or the guilt of an unexpiated sin, and in many recorded cases, family tradition runs along the same lines. There are, however, other tales which suggest that the dead sometimes return for no other reason than that they loved, and were happy in, the places that they now haunt.

The *Athenaeum* of January 1880 contains an account of what must surely have been a ghost of this unharassed type, written by Dr Augustus Jessop, the antiquary. He relates how, on 10 October 1879, he went to stay with Lord Orford at Mannington Hall in Norfolk. His purpose was to consult certain rare books in the library, and that night, at his own request, he was left alone to work in an adjoining room after the rest of the household had gone to bed. At about one o'clock in the morning, while he was quietly writing, he suddenly perceived, first, a hand within a foot of his own elbow, and then, when he turned his head, a figure which he described as 'a somewhat large man, with his back to the fire, bending slightly over the table and apparently examining the pile of books that I had been at work upon.' The apparition was seated, with his face turned away from the observer, so that only part of it was visible; he had closely cut reddish-brown hair and wore 'a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk, or some such material', with a close-fitting upstanding collar. Dr Jessop realized instantly that the figure was not of this world but he felt no fear, only curiosity and keen interest. 'There he sat,' he writes, 'and I was fascinated: afraid, not of his staying, but lest he should go.'

He did go, a moment later, when the antiquary stretched out his hand to move one of the books. The living scholar went

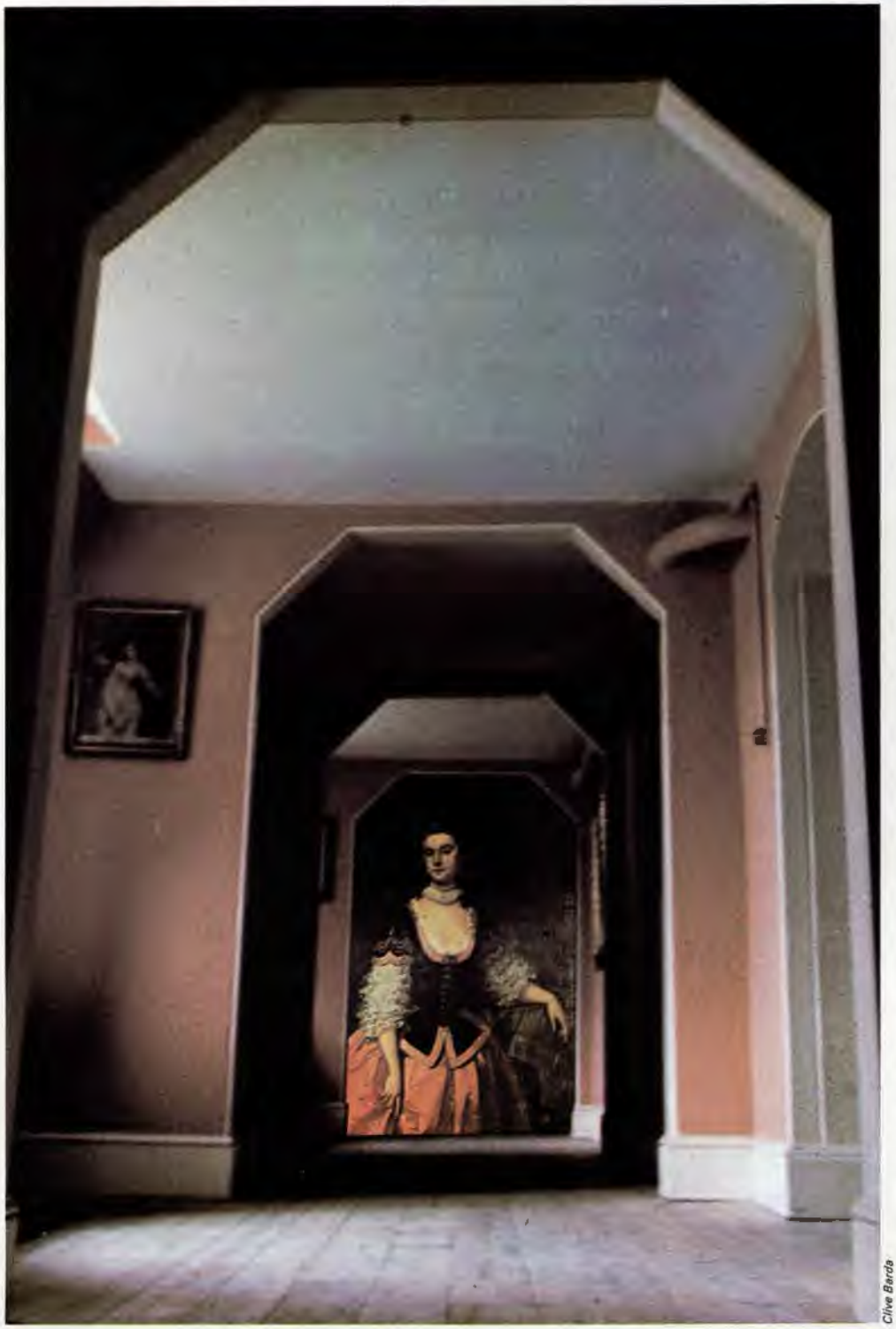
Glamis Castle, the home of the Earl and Countess of Strathmore: somewhere in its thick walls lies the Secret of Glamis, a chamber where a previous Earl is supposed to have hidden his son who was half man and half beast; Malcolm II of Scotland was murdered in the castle in 1033, and for years there was a bloodstain on the floor of a room known as 'Malcolm's Room'

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

Chris Barker

Left **The name 'Jane' was allegedly carved into the wall of Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London by the husband of Lady Jane Grey; one of the many ghosts that haunt the Tower, she was imprisoned there after her short reign of only nine days**

Below left **One of the two ghosts that have been seen at Longleat, home of the Marquess of Bath, is that of a woman, said to be the wife of the second Viscount Weymouth, who appears in a passage at the top of the house in an agony of terror and grief; according to tradition she was present when her husband killed her lover in a duel and then buried the body. Some years ago when central heating was being installed in the house, the remains of a young man wearing 18th century clothing were found in the cellar**



Clive Barda

on writing and after about five minutes, the ghost reappeared in exactly the same place and attitude as before. Side by side they sat, the only beings still awake in the silent house, the phantom still intent upon the books, and Dr Jessop trying to think of something to say to his companion, until he suddenly found he was afraid to speak. He finished the last few words he had to write and threw down the book he was using; at the slight sound it made in falling, the apparition vanished again. This time he did not return, though Dr Jessop waited for a few moments to see if he would do so. Then, his work being done, he carried the books back to the library; but on second thought, he kept one of them 'and laid it upon the table where I had been writing when the phantom did me the honour to appear to me.' He went to bed and slept very soundly, and we shall never know now whether his visitor returned or not to read the book that had been left out for him.

In his *Early Reminiscences* (1923), Sabine Baring-Gould describes the haunting of his house at Lew Trenchard in Devon, by the ghost of an ancestress, known in her day as Madam Gould. Her son dissipated a good part of the estate by his extravagances, and when he died, she set herself to restore the property. This she did by sheer hard work and business ability. She died in 1795, sitting upright in her chair because she refused to allow illness to drive her to bed, and thereafter she haunted the house.

Footsteps believed to be hers were heard on more than one occasion, passing down the Long Gallery. Once, when a member of the family was very ill, the night-nurse was roused from sleep by a loud knock on the door and a woman's voice saying, 'It is time for her to have her medicine.' No one was visible when the door was opened, and no one was afterwards traced as the speaker. In 1918, when two of Baring-Gould's grandchildren were staying at Lew Trenchard, their two nurses gave notice because they had both seen a ghostly figure bending over the children as they slept. A guest going alone into the drawing-room saw an elderly lady in a satin dress and an old white-haired man sitting, as though in conversation, on opposite sides of the fireplace. No such people were staying in the house but from the description given, it seemed likely that they were Madam Gould and her friend

Parson Elford, who often used to sit together there when they were alive.

A variety of other stories were remembered by the local people, some of which suggest that the family ghost had absorbed other legends of the district, as strong-minded spectres sometimes do. These tales can be discounted but the actual haunting of the house is well attested. It is difficult to think of any reason for it other than Madam Gould's unwillingness (or perhaps, inability) to leave the place which had been the centre of her earthly hopes and affections for so long.

Corridor of Agony

Longleat in Wiltshire, now famous as the home of lions, has at least two ghosts. One of them is a friendly and unalarming figure, an old man wearing a long black robe reminiscent of the garments favoured by elderly Elizabethan gentlemen, who haunts the Red Library. The identity of this phantom is not altogether certain but the most probable theory is that he is Sir John Thynne, the builder of the house, who died in 1580. If he now returns occasionally to the immense and lovely house which was his greatest achievement, it is perhaps not entirely surprising.

The second haunting is of a quite different character. In a passage at the top of the house, the ghost of a woman appears, walking up and down in an agony of grief and terror. Even when she is not visible, some people have experienced such intolerable sensations of misery and fear in that corridor that they have found it impossible to remain in it. The ghost is believed to be that of Lady Louisa Carteret, whose portrait may be seen in the Lower Dining-Room. She died in 1736, and a grim family legend accounts for her continued presence in the house.

She was the daughter of the Earl of Granville and the wife of the second Viscount Weymouth. The latter seems to have been a man of somewhat difficult temperament, and the marriage was not happy. Tradition says that she had a lover, though who he was is not now remembered, and that her husband, returning unexpectedly to Longleat after an absence, found the young man and his wife together. The two men fought a duel then and there, up and down the passage, without seconds or any witnesses except the horrified girl. The lover was killed; and since his death in this furtive and unwitnessed fight was legally murder, his body was hastily and secretly buried in the cellar.

This story is legend, not history, but there is some evidence to support it. Soon after the time when the duel is supposed to have taken place, Lord Weymouth appears to have taken a strong dislike to Longleat. He left it and went to live at Horningsham, returning to his home only on rare occasions. From then on, he neglected the place entirely, and when his son (afterwards the first Marquess of Bath) inherited it in 1751, he found the house in a state of disrepair, and the once elaborate formal gardens an overgrown wilderness. We do not know what reasons Lord Weymouth had for acting in this way but if he had in fact murdered a man and buried his corpse there, that might be a sufficient explanation. Some years ago, a curious discovery was made, which looks very much like a confirmation of the legend. When central heating was being put into the house, the cellar flagstones had to be lifted. Under them the remains of a young man wearing jackboots and clothes of the early 18th century were found. It cannot be proved that these bones were those of the unhappy lover but it seems very probable that they were, especially as no other known incident in the history of the house can account for them.

We cannot tell why, of the three persons involved in this tale of hatred, jealousy and crime, it should be Lady Louisa alone who haunts the house, and not either the murderer or his victim. As yet, we do not understand the laws that govern these matters; nor do we know what it is that causes some ghostly manifestations to persist for years, even centuries, and then cease for no obvious reason, either abruptly, or by a gradual process of fading. Genuine ghost-tales are rarely neatly rounded off, as are their fictional counterparts, though there are, of course, cases where the haunting has, apparently, been ended by some human action, such as resort to exorcism, or the burial in consecrated ground of hitherto unhallowed remains, or occasionally the destruction of the house involved. This last is not always as effective as might be expected; sometimes the psychic power is transferred to a new building on the same site, which may account for curious happenings recorded in council houses.

In a Black Cloak

Sudden death, and especially death by violence, has often been cited as a reason for known hauntings. So has suicide, which was once widely regarded as an unforgivable sin, and which in any case presupposes extreme unhappiness, amounting to despair, in the person concerned. A house at Clifton Hampden in Oxfordshire was haunted for many years by the ghost of Sarah Fletcher, who hanged herself from the curtain-rod in her bedroom in 1799, when she was only 29 years old. She is traditionally said to have been driven to suicide by the news that her husband, a naval officer then away from home, was planning a bigamous marriage with another woman. No mention is made of this in the report of the inquest printed in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for 15 June 1799, but we are told that 'the derangement of her mind appearing very evident, as well as from many other circumstances, the jury, without hesitation, found a verdict – Lunacy.' It was thus made possible for her to be buried in Dorchester Abbey, where her tombstone can still be seen. Nevertheless, from then on her house at Clifton Hampden was haunted by her restless ghost.

In the mid-19th century it became a boys' school. At first, the children seem to have been unaware of the haunting, but some of the masters heard footsteps coming out of Sarah Fletcher's old room and going along a passage and down the stairs. One man said he had heard these steps coming down as he was going up, and had felt a cold wind passing him, but had seen nothing. In 1854, Edward Crake, the headmaster's son, heard some invisible person entering his bedroom during the night, seeming to hesitate, and then going out again. This happened on three successive nights; on the third occasion he followed the sounds into the passage and saw a young woman standing there. She wore a long black cloak and had a purple-red ribbon in her hair, which was auburn and curly. As he looked at her, she vanished. He saw her again several times during the following year and then, suddenly, the haunting ceased.

For ten years the house remained untroubled but in 1865 the manifestations began again as inexplicably as they had ended. Now, however, there was a difference. The ghost was seen by several people, including some of the boys, and extraordinary noises were heard, as of furniture being moved, doors opening, bells ringing, and iron laths being dropped on the floor. Edward Crake, who by now had become a clergyman, tried to exorcize the spirit but the effects were not lasting. The disturbances continued until, for this and other reasons, the school was moved elsewhere.

With the departure of the school, the more violent manifestations came to an end but the house remained uneasy and no one stayed long in it. At one time it was divided into cottages, and later it was used as an institution for girls. In *True Ghost Stories* (1936), Maude ffoulkes writes of a visit which she paid to this institution in 1913. Whilst waiting for the Matron, she saw in clear daylight the figure of a woman in a black cloak standing near her in the passage. The apparition looked at her for a few seconds with an expression of deep melancholy, and then vanished. The Matron, on being questioned, admitted that odd noises were heard in the house but supposed this was natural in an old building. She added that she had never seen anything unusual herself, and though she knew that queer rumours circulated in the village, she preferred to ignore them. Since then, the house has once again become a private dwelling. No ghostly sights or sounds have been reported there for some years now and it is possible that the haunting has faded out at last.

Groaning Skulls

At Burton Agnes in Yorkshire a human skull is said to have been bricked up in some part of the walls in order to prevent its removal from the house. Tradition says that whenever it has been moved in the past, violent noises and disturbances have immediately broken out, and continued until it was brought back. This house was built by Sir Henry Griffith in the early 17th century and passed after his death to his three daughters, one of whom, Anne, was passionately attached to it. It is her skull which is now walled up there. She died while still young as the result of injuries received in an attack made upon her by footpads on the Harpham road. In her last moments, she made her sisters promise that her head should not be buried with the rest of her

remains, but should be separated from them and kept in the house. When, perhaps understandably, they failed to keep this promise, life was made hideous for them by nightly outbreaks of extraordinary and terrifying noises, including groans, crashes and the violent slamming of doors. On the advice of the local clergyman, the head was removed from the grave and brought into the house, where it has remained ever since, except on a few occasions when someone has ejected it, with the same result as before. It was to prevent any unbelieving busybody from moving it again that it was buried in the walls, though its exact position in them has now been forgotten.

Burton Agnes is not the only old house in which the skull of some former inhabitant is, or was, carefully preserved because of a legend that it is unsafe to remove it. When Theophilus Brome of Higher Chilton Farm in Somerset died in 1670, he required his heir to detach the head from his corpse before the funeral, and to keep it permanently in the house. His reasons for this demand are not known; but that a skull kept in a cabinet in the hall was his appears quite likely because, when his grave in Chilton Cantelo Church was opened some 70 or 80 years after his death, the skeleton was found to be headless. Collinson, in his *History of Somerset* (1791), remarks that several later tenants attempted to bury it, but were always forced to restore it to its place by 'horrid noises portentive of sad displeasure.'

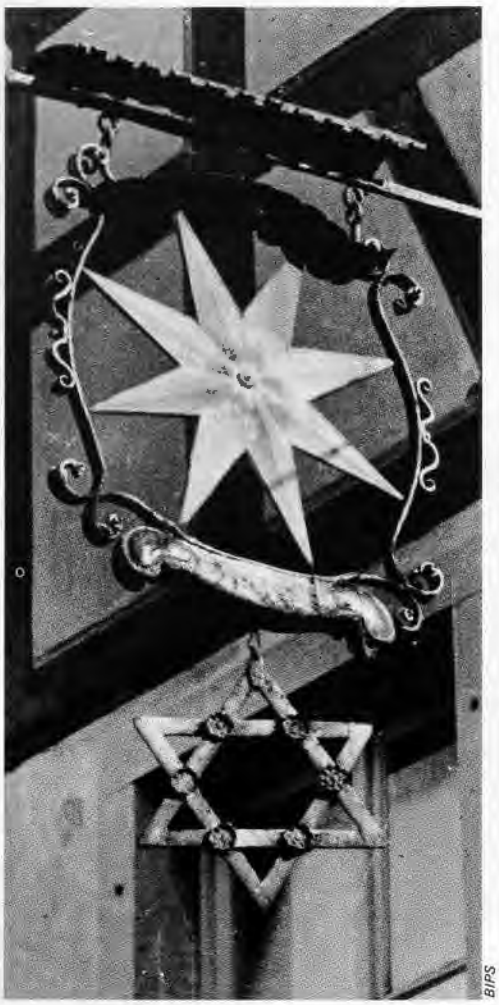
At Bettiscombe Manor in Dorset an imperfect skull, now sealed up for safety, is supposed to be that of a Negro servant who died there of consumption in the early 18th century. If this is so, it is not easy to understand why it should have been retained in the house in the beginning. It can hardly be imagined that this exiled West Indian can have wished it for himself. Nevertheless, every attempt to shift it, even to give it Christian burial, is said to have been instantly followed, not only by the usual disturbances indoors, but also by serious bad luck on the farm.

At Tunstead Farm, near Chapel-en-le-Frith in Derbyshire, a skull, locally known as 'Dickie', was variously said to be that of Ned Dixon, a former owner, or of a woman whose ghost haunted the house in visible form. In both versions of the tale, the cause of death was murder, though the details of the crime were only vaguely remembered. This skull, like the others, resented removal and retaliated in the same distressing manner, but it also had some less usual habits. It gave warning, by sounds varying from gentle tapping to loud thuds and clatterings, of an impending death in the family, or any emergency requiring the farmer's attention in the lambing season, or when a cow was calving, and of the approach of strangers. These last it disliked intensely, so much so that, on more than one occasion, Irish labourers, brought in for haymaking and housed in the outbuildings, were kept awake at night by constant and inexplicable noises. In *Wilmslow Graves* (1886), Alfred Fryer records that he was told of the skull's activities by the farmer himself and that the latter spoke of the occurrences, not as traditions of the past, but as part of his own direct experience.

It is not always, and indeed rarely, possible to find evidence that would satisfy the Society for Psychical Research for stories of this type. They are nevertheless extremely interesting, not only because the presence of skulls in houses is itself a curious fact, but also because the tales seem to be rooted in concepts of great antiquity. Bones, like blood, were once believed to be the centre of psychic power and to retain a kind of life and consciousness after the death of their original owners. This is especially true of skulls. In some cases, these gruesome relics were regarded as guardians of the houses

Many houses are said to be haunted, generally by ghosts who are bound to their old homes by strong emotional ties *Below left* In *The Ghost Goes West* Robert Donat played a long-dead Scotsman who accompanied his old home to the United States *Below* In the 16th century Emperor Maximilian of Austria always sent a party of guards ahead of him when travelling, to make sure there were no ghosts in the hotel he intended to stay in overnight; this eight-pointed star above the Star of David, outside an inn in West Germany, is one of many that were erected as 'all clear' signals *Facing page* 'Hauntings have been scientifically investigated for many years': Benson Herbert, who has constructed machines designed to detect ghosts, in his paraphysical laboratory

National Film Archive



BIPS

that contained them. 'Dickie' certainly acted as a protector of his home, and it may be that both Theophilus Brome and Anne Griffith had some such idea in mind when they made their strange and inconvenient requests. A ghost which is commonly supposed to be that of the latter has occasionally been seen at Burton Agnes, in the form of a small woman in a fawn-coloured gown.

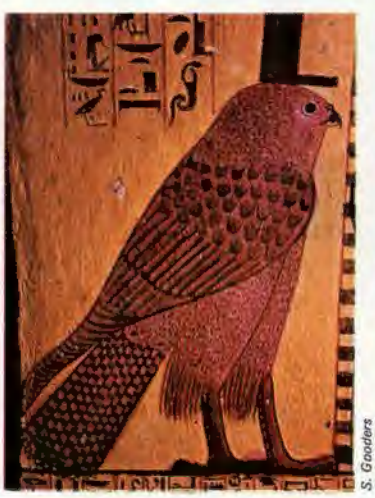
Finally, one last paranormal appearance may be mentioned, out of the many hundreds available, because of the extraordinary nature of the apparition. It was seen in 1817 by Edmund Lenthal Swifte and his wife, when he was Keeper of the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London, and lived with his family in the Jewel House. The Tower is, of course, haunted by many known ghosts but this was not one of them. According to his own account, published in 1860 in *Notes and Queries*, Mr Swifte, his wife, his little son and his sister-in-law were all at supper one night in a curtained and candlelit room, with the doors closed. He and Mrs Swifte both saw something like a cylindrical glass tube, filled with a dense and moving liquid, hovering between the table and the ceiling. It moved slowly round the room and, passing behind Mrs Swifte, paused above her for a moment, whereupon she crouched down in terror and cried out, 'Oh Christ! It has seized me!' Her husband struck at it with a chair and hit the wainscot behind it, the apparition vanishing as he did so. It was not seen again and the most minute enquiries failed to produce any rational explanation. The other two people in the room saw nothing from first to last. The whole thing might indeed be written off as a delusion on Mr Swifte's part but for the fact that his wife saw it as clearly as he did, and was terrified by it. As it is, the manifestation remains as inexplicable today in its nature, origin and purpose, as it was in 1817.

(See also BORLEY RECTORY; GHOSTS; POLTERGEISTS; SKULL.)

CHRISTINA HOLE

FURTHER READING: E. Bennett, *Apparitions and Haunted Houses* (Faber, 1939); H. Holzer, *Where the Ghosts Are: Favourite Haunted Houses in America and the British Isles* (Parker, 1984); D. Norman, *The Stately Ghosts of England* (Muller, 1963).

Peter Goodliffe/Paraphysical Laboratory



S. Gooders

Hawk

Like the eagle and falcon, hawks are frequently connected with the sun in symbolism, because of their flight, dominating ferocity and yellow eyes: the sparrowhawk belonged to Horus in Egypt and was a solar bird in Greece and Rome: the kite was sacred to Apollo as lord of the Delphic oracle, because circling in the sky it sees everything; in Japan there was a divine golden kite, Nihongi

HAWTHORN

MAY DAY was originally an agricultural festival, the beginning of summer, and the may, hawthorn or whitethorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) became its foremost plant emblem. At many festivals it was believed that witches and fairies were especially active on this day and farm produce in particular had to be protected against otherworld influences. Although in Ireland and Scotland the rowan or mountain ash answered these purposes, in England and France the most important of many plants associated with May Day was the hawthorn. In some places trees were cut down and set before houses (see also MAY DAY).

Spencer and Shakespeare both mentioned the May Day festivities and the may tree's use; perhaps the most charming contemporary evocation is that of Herrick, in 'Corinna Going a-Maying', a poem published in 1648:

> How each field turns a street, each street a park
> Made green and trimm'd with trees: see how
> Devotion gives each house a bough,
> Or branch: each porch, each door, ere this,
> An ark, a tabernacle is,
> Made up of whitethorn neatly enterwove . . .

The last line quoted refers to the importance of weaving magical plants into circlets or crosses, which increased their power. Herrick's poem goes on to describe lovers plighting their troth, for May Day was the best moment for engagements; in France hawthorn adorned girls' windows in particular. Geoffrey Grigson has remarked that 'the stale, sweet scent' of the hawthorn blossom was suggestive of sex (although also suggestive of decay, and it was later believed that the flowers preserved London's plague-smell).

To the Greeks the hawthorn has long been a symbol of betrothal. In ancient times, if possible, its boughs in bloom were carried by attendants at weddings, and torches of hawthorn lit the newly married couple to their room. Till quite recently, and possibly still today in some places, Greek brides wore hawthorn wreaths. In Britain during the last century hawthorn was used in various forms of marriage divination. Norfolk girls bringing home May Day branches had to remain silent, because if they uttered a word they would not marry that year.

Flowers of Death

As with many magical plants, churchmen came to terms with pagan hawthorn and allowed it into their churches, both literally on May Day and in carved ornament, where the plant can still be seen, in company with carvings of the Green Man (see GREEN) with branches sprouting from his ears or hornlike from his head. There is an entry in the Reading churchwardens' accounts for 1499 for 'the gathering of Robin Hood' which takes us straight back to the Green Man, alias Jack-in-the-Green, alias the May King, and the ancient notion of a tree spirit.

The use of hawthorn on May Day, involving much cutting of the tree, is in curious contrast to considerations still existing here and there that it is unlucky to cut down a hawthorn. Anyone who had to do this, however, could be protected by having a Bible close by, offering a prayer, or by initially asking permission of the fairies.

Naturally enough, hawthorn had protective power against evil at all times, especially if picked with certain rituals or on specific days, which varied according to locality. It has been suggested that its supernatural powers as well as its thorns made it a recommended hedge plant (haw is an ancient word for hedge) and that its use for walking sticks derived equally from its magical properties.

But hawthorn could turn on you; it is still widely believed to be unlucky, to the point of bringing death, to bring its flowers into the house. This seems to be a fairly modern superstition. And, as in many similar cases, the fact that hawthorn protects against fairies associated it with these spirits. This made it unwise to sit under a hawthorn on days when fairy activity was to be expected, such as May Day, Midsummer Eve and Hallowe'en. To do so courted the risk of enchantment. Despite this it was generally

Michael Holford

In France it was believed that Christ's Crown of Thorns was made of hawthorn, and Norman peasants wore a sprig in their caps: *The Crowning of Thorns* by Hieronymus Bosch, in the National Gallery, London

advisable to shelter beneath a thorn in a storm, for the hawthorn safeguarded against lightning.

A rather comical use of hawthorn by witches is as one ingredient of a sleeping potion which they gave their husbands on nights when they wished to be abroad.

As with other solitary trees, a single hawthorn – 'Lone Thorn' or 'Fairy Thorn' it was called – was particularly to be avoided, for fairies met or even lived there. In Ireland, however, it was customary to plant a single hawthorn above holy wells, on which the locals still leave offerings of pieces of clothing – as on fig trees in Palestine – to ensure recovery from illness or fulfilment of wishes.

In France it was until recently believed that hawthorn composed the Crown of Thorns. Norman peasants would wear a sprig of the tree in their caps as appropriate reverence. A Herefordshire farmers' custom connected with this belief was that of the hawthorn globe. This ball of hawthorn twigs was made on New Year's Day. Each year, before dawn, the old globe would be taken down. While the women made a new one the men took the old globe to their fields, and, in a ceremony called Burning the Bush, carried it aflame over the wheatfield or burnt it on a bonfire. Because the hawthorn globe stood for the Crown of Thorns, its burning would drive the Devil – in the shape of the wheat smut disease – from the farmland.

The Crown of Thorns link is seen again in the manifestation of the Glastonbury Thorn (see GLASTONBURY). This was, and is, a freak hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna praecox*) which flowered in late December as well as in May. Legend has it that its Christmas flowering occurred because it had been the Crown of Thorns. Another legend was that Joseph of Arimathea thrust his magic hawthorn staff into the ground on reaching sacred Glastonbury, where it grew. The three original Glastonbury Thorns are there no longer, but this old form propagated by cuttings, can be purchased.

In the Victorian language of flowers, hawthorn stood for hope, while in the Turkish equivalent the gift of a hawthorn twig expressed the wish for a kiss.

A. J. HUXLEY

Hazel is a particularly powerful tree in magic, used to make magic wands and divining rods. The wands of Moses and Aaron were traditionally made of hazel, and its branches were used as lightning conductors

HAZEL

THE WANDS of priest and magician are as ancient as mythology itself; there are references to them in Chaldean and Egyptian records. Hazel *(Corylus avellana)* was one of the main plants to be used for wands, and also for royal sceptres. It is to be found as such in Hebrew, classical and Nordic mythology; in Scandinavia it was sacred to Thor, and a protection against lightning. The Romans believed that Mercury was given a hazel rod by Apollo, which he used to calm human passions and improve their virtues. This ancient heraldic staff, or *caduceus*, was imagined as intertwined with serpents and bearing a pair of wings at the top, and was taken over by Aesculapius to become the symbol of the medical profession.

Pilgrims carried hazel rods which they would retain all their lives and which were buried with them. Such staves have been found in Hereford Cathedral.

On a more practical plane the hazel was used in divination, and we find Pliny explaining its use for the discovery of subterranean springs. It was widely believed to assist in finding metal deposits and buried treasure, and to this day the water diviner will carry out his scientifically belittled but undoubtedly effective occupation with a forked hazel twig (see DOWSING). Divining rods were even used for tracking criminals.

In the 17th century Sir Thomas Browne wrote of the 'forked hazel, commonly called Moses' Rod, which, held freely forth, will stir and play if any mine be under it.' He mentions 'the magical rods in poets – that of Pallas, in Homer; that of Mercury, that charmed Argus; and that of Circe, which transformed the followers of Ulysses: too boldly usurping the name of Moses' rod; from which, notwithstanding, and that of Aaron, were probably occasioned the fables of all the rest. For that of Moses must needs be famous to the Egyptians, and that of Aaron unto many other nations, as

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Hazel wands were used for royal sceptres, and traditionally the rods of Moses and Aaron, like those of other priests and magicians, were made of hazel. Illustration from a late 15th century Book of Hours, showing the miraculous blossoming of Aaron's rod which has grown a lily, symbol of purity

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

A hazel rod is the traditional tool of dowsers: an Austrian diviner searches for gold in Wales

being preserved in the Ark until the destruction of the Temple built by Solomon.'

Hebrew tradition traces the rod of Moses from one originally cut by Adam in the Garden of Eden, taken by Noah into the Ark, passed down to Shem, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, given to Joseph and to Moses. Unfortunately, modern translators often turn these hazel wands into almond rods.

The making of a magic wand was inevitably attended by ritual. An old Hebrew tradition stipulates the use of a 'virgin branch' – a young growth with no sideshoots upon it. Divining rods were also cut under very special conditions. They had to be made at night on holy days such as Good Friday, St John's Day, Epiphany or Shrove Tuesday. They could also be made on the first night of a new moon or on the previous night. The cutter had to face east, the rod had to be cut from the eastern side of the tree, and the freshly cut rod had then to be presented to the rays of the rising sun.

There are many lesser beliefs connected with hazel. It was anciently held in Germany to be symbolic of immortality, perhaps because of its end-of-winter flowering. More recently it was linked with happiness in marriage, a belief arising from the paired nuts; at Black Forest weddings the leader of the procession would carry a hazel wand. In medieval England the hazel nut symbolized fertility.

Ireland's lack of poisonous snakes is attributed to St Patrick who, holding a hazel rod, caused all the snakes to come together, and then cast them into the sea. In Ireland, incidentally, the hazel becomes the Tree of Knowledge. In Sweden the hazel nut was believed to confer invisibility, in Bohemia to cure fevers, in Ireland (a nut in the pocket) to keep off rheumatism, and in Devonshire (a double nut) to cure toothache. One amusing tradition is that a piece of hazel cut at midnight on Hallowe'en will, if carried in the pocket, prevent its owner from falling over, however drunk he may be.

Hazel was generally efficacious against the machinations of witches, fairies and evil in general, not merely as a protector but, in the form of a rod, as a positive means of forcing evil spirits to restore things or powers they had taken. This could be extended to human enemies: a hazel rod cut on Good Friday or St John's Eve, if swished through the air with appropriate naming of the victim, would cause him appropriate pain wherever he was. The Scots would keep double nuts handy to throw at witches. The hazel rod was used to protect animal feeds and grain in general; in Prussia, a rod cut in spring was used, during the first summer thunderstorm, to make the sign of the cross over all stored grain.

Lightning Rod

To pick hazel nuts on a Sunday was to risk the Devil appearing before you. This belief probably derives from older associations with specific demons, elves or boggarts who guard hazels – the Churn-milk Peg from Yorkshire, the Melsh Dick of the north country, or the Hind Etin, whose activities are celebrated in a fine antique ballad. When May Margret comes to the copse to pick hazel nuts:

> She had na pic'd a nut, a nut,
> A nut but barely ane,
> Till up started the Hynde Etin,
> Says, Lady, let thae alane.

But after threatening to kill her, he is taken by her beauty, marries her and they have children to the magic number of seven.

Branches bearing catkins (lambs'-tails) and kept in water at farmers' houses at lambing time would help the sheep; branches picked on Palm Sunday and similarly kept would protect the house against lightning. This lightning protection could extend to fire-proofing a house if three hazel dowels were fixed into its beams.

In Wales a cap or wreath of hazel twigs would bring luck to its wearer, and protection from shipwreck if he was a sailor. In Scotland it was customary to give infants born in nutting time a 'milk' made from the nuts to ensure health and good fortune.

Like many another plant with ancient pagan associations, hazel was 'Christianized'. The medieval Normans decreed that it should be known as the nut of St Philibert, a Benedictine monk of the 7th century, originally a nut-grower, who founded a famous abbey. From this we find the English filbeard or filbert. St Philibert's feast day is on 22 August, when hazel nuts should be ripe.

In more recent time the nuts were used in divination of a different kind from that of the rod. A girl, wishing to know if her lover was faithful, placed two nuts side by side on the bars of the grate. If they burnt as one, true love was assured but if one failed to burn, or the nuts popped apart, her lover was surely faithless. A charm that accompanies double nuts of various kinds – like the almond – was to share a double hazel nut with whoever you wished would love you. If the other person ate the kernel as you ate yours, in silence, the charm was a sure one. A nut with two kernels in one shell, as opposed to the double nut, was especially magical. The finder of such a nut made a wish, eating one kernel and throwing the other over his left shoulder. He had to maintain silence until someone asked him a question to which he could reply 'yes'. Wishes would also be granted if a hazel nut, thrown into the fire, flared up brightly as the wish was repeated to oneself.

To dream of hazel trees, and especially of eating the nuts, means happiness and wealth, and to dream of finding hidden nuts means the finding of treasure (perhaps the divining rod in reverse). If an Irishman dreamt of finding buried treasure he would dig for it after marking three crosses on a hazel stick to the accompaniment of a blasphemous formula. In the language of flowers, hazel stands for reconciliation.

(See also WAND.)

A. J. HUXLEY

Jörgen Bitsch

Mongolian devil-mask: since prehistoric times the head and the skull have been thought to contain the essential being, the personality, and therefore the power of a human being or a spirit

HEAD

Belief in the healing power of water drunk from an ancestor's skull survived into this century in Scotland: this is one example of the conviction that the human head contains powerful magic, which comes out particularly strongly in the headhunting of primitive peoples and in the role of the head in Celtic religion.

HEADHUNTING is based on the belief that the human head has magical powers of great potency, which benefit those in possession of a skull severed from someone's body. The motives for the practice are diverse and complex, however, and the cultural implications differ from region to region. In colonial territories headhunting was suppressed wherever an effective administration was established. But even in the first half of the 20th century there were still many populations addicted to the custom of capturing heads, and various anthropologists have been able to observe the accompanying rites and ceremonies. Today organized headhunting raids are confined to a few remote regions, but rites previously connected with headhunting are sometimes performed as a sequel to individual cases of homicide.

In Southeast Asia headhunting was widespread among tribal populations which had remained outside the spheres of Hindu, Buddhist and Moslem civilizations, including many of the hill tribes of Assam and Burma, the aboriginals of Taiwan, the mountain peoples of Luzon in the Philippines, and some of the more archaic peoples of Borneo, Celebes and Sumatra. All these

Jorgen Bitsch

populations practise agriculture and there is a deep-seated belief that the capture of heads has a beneficial influence on the fertility of the soil and on the growth of crops. Human blood is considered a substance capable of promoting fertility (see BLOOD), and both headhunting and human sacrifice served to ensure good harvests. Additional incentives for the capture of heads were the prestige gained by successful headhunters and the desire to avenge the losses of one's own clan or village by killing enemies and bringing in their heads as trophies.

Among such tribes as the Nagas of the Assam-Burma borderlands (see also NAGAS) the wish to capture heads was the cause of many feuds between villages which otherwise had no conflicting interests. Only in exceptional cases did warriors set out on a raid with the intention of wiping out an opposing village. The main aim of raiding was the capture of heads. These were carefully preserved, and there was a definite belief that their presence enhanced the fertility and prosperity of the village. To maintain their magical power they were fed with rice-beer at all village feasts. The sex, age and status of the victims had little relevance. Old people, women and children would be killed as occasion offered, and the capture of their heads earned the slayer scarcely less prestige than the killing of armed warriors. Those who were keen on acquiring a head without risking their own lives, could buy slaves who were killed.

When the head of a victim was brought to the captor's village, all the men of the village turned out to welcome the headhunters. The first rites were performed outside the village. The captured head was put down and the senior man of the captor's clan smashed raw eggs on the head; this was meant to blind the kinsmen of the dead foe. A clan elder then poured rice-beer into the mouth and in doing so addressed the victim with the request to call his relatives and kinsmen, in order that they too might be compelled to come and fall victim to the spears of the victorious tribesmen.

The head was then carried into the village and tied to a large log gong, which was beaten in a rhythm announcing the capture of a head. There was dancing and singing

Captured heads were thought to enhance the prosperity of a village; the Naga tribes used to feed the heads with rice-beer to maintain their magical powers

Headhunting is based on the belief that the human head contains powerful magic. The taker of a head is given some mark of distinction, like the tiger's teeth worn by this headhunter of Borneo *(left)* The Jivaro Indians believed that the possession of a shrunken head *(right)* would ensure good luck for the owner

Michael Holford/Horniman Museum

most of the night, and next day all the men of the village dressed in ceremonial clothes and painted their bodies and faces with lime. The head was carried in procession to an upright stone standing in a ritual place. There a priest cut off small pieces of the ears and tongue, and called again on the kinsmen of the dead man or woman. He killed a chicken and sprinkling its blood on the stone repeated the incantation. Next the head was taken to a tree and hung up there to dry.

About a month later a great feast was celebrated to mark the final disposal of the head, which was taken down from the tree and fed once more with rice and beer. Finally it was deposited either in the community house or the ancestral house of the headtaker.

Some of the Naga tribes believed that the victim of a headtaker remained close to the killer until the latter's death. Then he would accompany the headtaker to the land of the dead, where he became his servant or slave. Most Naga tribes were firmly convinced that the capturing of heads was essential for the well-being of a village and that a community which failed over a period of years to bring in a head would suffer a decline in prosperity. The capture of a head gave a Naga the right to a special tattoo on the chest and face. Among some Naga tribes a youth was not considered fully adult until he had participated in a head-hunting raid, and among other tribes a sham raid, imitating the incidents of a head-hunting expedition, formed part of the initiation rites for adolescent boys.

The Cherished Heads

Several hill-tribes of Assam and Burma and some of the tribes in the interior of Borneo considered the taking of a head a necessary precondition for the termination of mourning for a dead chief. The captured heads were placed on the tomb, or alternatively slaves would be killed to provide the chief with servants in the land of the dead. Here headhunting and human sacrifice were closely linked and intended to serve similar purposes.

Among the Dayaks of Borneo heads were captured and preserved mainly in order to obtain the helpful presence and power of the spirit adhering to the head. At the feast celebrating the capture endearments were lavished upon the head and food was thrust into its mouth. Its spirit was told that he was adopted into the captor's tribe, and must henceforth hate his old kinsmen and friends.

The Kayans of Borneo dried and smoked captured heads in a specially made small hut. Then they were solemnly installed in the house of the captor, hung up over the main hearth on a beam on which old heads were hanging. At all times the heads were treated respectfully and somewhat fearfully. The fire beneath them was always kept alight so that they should be warm and dry. On certain occasions pork and beer were offered to them, and their presence in the house was believed to bring prosperity, especially in the form of good crops (see also BORNEO).

In the Philippines headhunting used to be practised by such tribes as Ifugaos, Kalingas, Igorots and Ilongots. Usually raiding-parties were organized with the intention of taking revenge for an injury suffered by a village or kin-group. The warriors armed with spears, head-axes and shields stole into enemy territory, carefnlly avoiding pit-falls and traps set up by all villages as a protection.

AMAZING FACULTY
SLYNESS
PRIDE
SLEEPINESS
Doctrine Particularum
Self Knowledge
Commentaria Critica
Lavater
Harriette Wilson
Duty of Man
Mackenzie
Combe
Bells Brain
GALL
Aristotle
BUMPS
Sold by
ROYAL PATENT
PHRENOLOGICAL
HATS
ADAPTED TO EVERY
PROTUBERANCE
of
FACULTY OR ORGAN
YET DISCOVERED
TO BE HA
CASTER
Treatise on Elements
TREMAINE
SCOTT
Pollard

LIFE'S (A) DRAMPER
Mr Liston as
TOBY TAMPKIN
Consequence
ABSTRACTION
SUSPICION
PRYING
De Ville
Gall

Werner Forman

Previous page **Phrenology, the attempt to analyse personality from the shape of the head and its 'bumps', was all the rage in the early 19th century: satirical cartoon (from the collection of Peter Jackson)**
Above **Guardian spirit, represented by its head, from the Sepik River country in New Guinea**
Below **By altering the look of a head, a mask changes the man who wears it into someone or something else: masks from Java and Peru *(left* and *right).* The human head was supremely important to the Celts throughout their evolution, and their cult of the head has left traces behind it ever since: copy of a triple head, presumably representing the Trinity as 'three-in-one', in Salisbury Cathedral, c 14th century *(centre)***

Open encounters with the enemy were avoided as far as possible but lone travellers or wood-cutters were easy victims. The raiders would swoop down on the defenceless or out-numbered victim, and the head was quickly severed and carried home in triumph.

The returning warriors were greeted with shouts of joy and preparations for the rituals and festivities began at once. Pigs were slaughtered and food prepared. The skull caps might be removed from the captured heads, the brains mixed with sugar-cane beer and consumed by the warriors. The head was then boiled and the bones and broken bits of the skull distributed among the participants. The most potent and highly prized part of the skull was the lower jaw, and jaw-bones were used as handles of metal gongs. Anyone participating in a successful headhunting expedition, not only the actual killer, was entitled to a special very extensive tattoo covering chest and arms. Occasionally young women accompanied small raiding-parties and helped them by carrying supplies. These women were given a share of the captured heads and were accorded the right to a special tattoo. There was a widespread belief that taking of the life of an enemy would cure childlessness and result in general prosperity. But the overt motives for capturing heads were the desire to retaliate for injuries suffered, to even the score when the community had lost a life through illness or accident, and above all to gain prestige and status. A record of many killings made a man feared and respected

Salisbury & S. Wiltshire Museum/Michael Holford

The Celts worshipped the human head and believed that in it lay the soul, the essence of being, the reflection of divinity

and earned him the title of 'brave warrior'.

It is likely that in the past the termination of the period of mourning for a deceased kinsman was the occasion for a headhunting raid. Even today the Kalingas indicate the end of mourning by staging a symbolic raid. A party of men in war-attire proceeds to the border of the village-land and throws spears at a figure made of ferns. They then return to the village with chants of triumph similar to those marking the return from a successful headhunting raid.

Skull Trophies

The ritual use of head trophies was not confined to the headhunting tribes of Southeast Asia but occurred also in other parts of the world. In the Solomon Islands, for instance, skulls of enemies were set up on a post when a canoe was launched, and canoe houses were decked with skulls. The heads of slain enemies were prominently displayed by certain African peoples: in Dahomey they were placed on the roofs or the gates of the king's palace.

The practice of preserving as a trophy the head or some other part of the body of an enemy is very widespread in South America. A great variety of psychological, social and religious motives underly the taking and preparation of these trophies, which may be classified into four main types: skulls; mummified heads; shrunken heads; and skull caps. The most famous of these trophies are the shrunken heads of the Jivaro Indians, who severed the heads of slain enemies, smashed the skulls and extracted the bone-fragments through an incision. The remaining flesh, skin and scalp were dried till they shrank to the size of a small monkey's head. The possession of such a miniature head was believed to ensure good luck to the owner, first because it contained magic power, and secondly because it secured the good will of the ancestors whose desire for revenge was satisfied.

Early and recent accounts alike mention head trophies among the Amazon tribes. Among the Tupinamba, the skulls of enemies were stuck on posts in front of huts or on the palisades. The Shipay greatly valued the skulls of their enemies and hung them in nets from the roofs of huts. The trophy heads of the Mundurucu are famous because of the skill with which they were prepared. After the brain and soft parts had been removed, they were plunged in oil and then exposed to the sun and to smoke. The empty sockets were filled with artificial eyes made of wax, and a carrying cord was laced through the lips.

The use of head trophies is reported also from many historic civilizations. The Babylonians and Assyrians cut off the heads of fallen enemies, and a similar custom prevailed in ancient Egypt where kings were depicted holding bundles of heads. The ancient Scythians also presented their king with the heads of slain enemies, and often attached scalps to their bridles.

Although headhunting in the narrow sense of the word was most highly developed in Southeast Asia, similar ritual practices involving the use of heads are found among a variety of peoples and cultures. However, there is a fundamental difference between the capture of heads undertaken primarily for the purpose of obtaining the powerful soul-substance adhering to the skull, and the temporary display of the heads of slain enemies as trophies and symbols of victory in battle. The latter custom occurred in many civilizations of very different nature, whereas headhunting for the sake of gaining magical powers is restricted to comparatively primitive societies in certain specific parts of the world.

CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

The Severed Head

The hero Peredur sees the Grail as a head:

Thereupon he could see two youths coming into the hall, and from the hall proceeding to a chamber, and with them a spear of exceeding great size, and three streams of blood along it, running from the socket to the floor. And when they all saw the youths coming after that fashion, every one set up a crying and a lamentation, so that it was not easy for any to bear with them. The man did not, for all that, interrupt his conversation with Peredur. The man did not tell Peredur what that was, nor did he ask it of him. After silence for a short while, thereupon, lo, two maidens coming in, and a great salver between them, and a man's head on the salver, and blood in profusion around the head. And then all shrieked and cried out, so that it was hard for any to be in the same house as they. At last they desisted therefrom, and sat as long as they pleased, and drank.

The Mabinogion (trans G. and T. Jones)

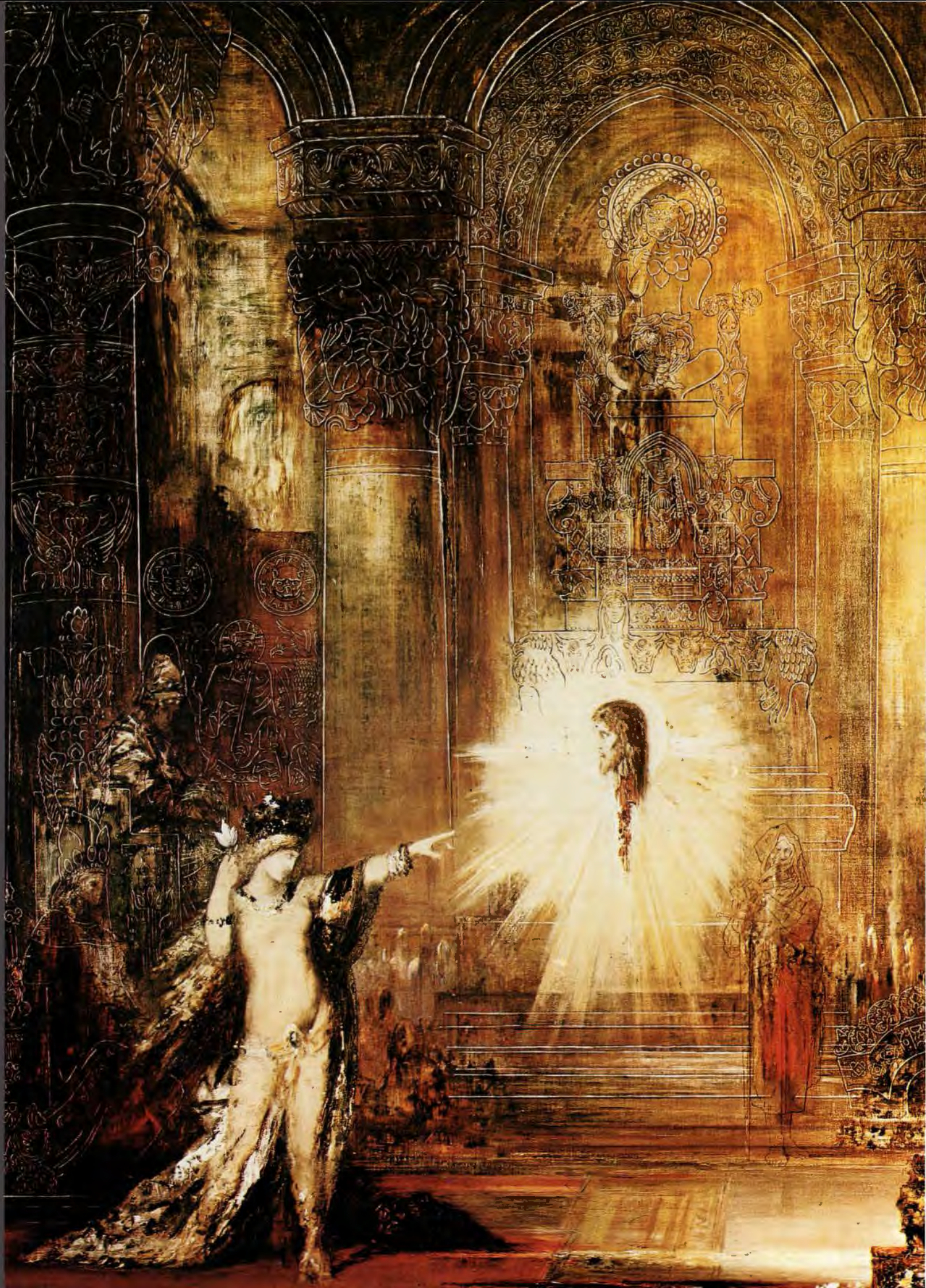
The Celts and the Head

The human head was of supreme importance to the Celtic peoples at all stages of their evolution and can be said to have served as a symbol of their religious attitudes, in the same way that the sign of the cross symbolizes the Christian faith, or the crescent the Mohammedan. Not only did the Celts hunt the heads of their enemies, as did many other barbaric peoples, but they actually worshipped the human head, and believed that in it lay the soul, the essence of being, the reflection of divinity. They venerated real heads, and they fashioned imitation heads from a variety of materials, thousands of which are still in existence.

Individual deities were sometimes portrayed as heads alone, perhaps bearing some distinctive characteristic such as horns or animal ears, or having two, three or four heads. Again, the head was used simply as a symbol of the concept of divinity, a shorthand method of summing up a complete way of religious and superstitious thought.

The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) said of the Celts: 'When their enemies fall, they cut off their heads and fasten them about the necks of their horses . . . and carry them off as booty, singing a paean over them and striking up a song of victory, and these first fruits of battle they fasten by nails upon their houses . . . the heads of their most distinguished enemies they embalm in cedar oil and carefully preserve in a chest, and these they exhibit to strangers, gravely maintaining that in exchange for this head someone among their ancestors, or the speaker himself, refused the offer of a great sum of money. And some men among them, we are told, boast that they have not accepted an equal weight of gold for the head they show . . .' Human skulls recovered from the Celtic fort of Puig Castelar were found to have retained the actual nails from which they were hung. An altar from Apt dedicated to the war god had a deposit of human skulls buried underneath it. The Roman historian Livy (died 17 AD) comments on the Celtic custom of decorating human skulls with gold, and using them as cups for their libations.

Archeological evidence confirms this veneration of the human head. The stone temple at Roquepertuse, dating from the 2nd century BC or earlier, contains convincing evidence of the cult of the head in



Mary Evans Picture Library

Left: **The severed head of John the Baptist appears to Salome, in *L'Apparition* by the 19th century French painter Gustav Moreau. She demanded John's head on a charger and took it as a trophy to her mother (Matthew, chapter 14)** ***Above*** **Human head with bat's wings, one of the fantastic creatures that peopled North American Indian mythology**

this region of the lower Rhône. The portico was surmounted by a great stone goose, a bird sacred to the Celts. Below was a frieze of horses, and niches in which human crania were set; the human heads had all been taken from young men in the prime of life, and were therefore presumably those of esteemed enemies, offered to the appropriate deities in the sanctuary.

Another temple of this kind, dating from the 2nd century BC, at Entremont, also in the lower Rhône region, tells the same story. There is a stone pillar decorated with human heads in relief, and several examples of severed heads, including one of a male head with a mask-like appearance being gripped in a very sinister fashion by a large hand, perhaps a symbol of death.

The heads of the slain were sometimes dedicated to Taranis, 'the Thunderer', one of the great Celtic gods. The 9th century Irish glossary of Cormac refers to the threefold goddess of war Macha. (She was one of the three *Morrigna* or Morrigans, with their crow or raven transformations.) Cormac glosses her name in this way: 'Macha, that is a crow; or it is one of the three Morrigna. *Mesrad Machae*, Macha's mast, that is the heads of men after their slaughter'. Thus the human head in Ireland was regarded as this goddess's tribute.

The Mask of Protection

In Britain human skulls were found in the fortifications at Bredon Hill and at Stanwick, and their position suggests that they had either been attached to poles beside the gateway or nailed onto the structure of the gate itself. Heads feature a great deal on native Celtic coins, being treated with typical Celtic fantasy, having distorted or non-natural features, huge eyes and wild hair, and often showing tattooing on the cheeks and bearing, or being associated with, cult symbols such as the boar. Sometimes smaller heads are chained to a larger central head; some have horns, others are janiform (two-faced) or in triplicate.

A great many heads must have been made of wood (often oak) and although considerable numbers have undoubtedly perished enough survive, and are being found from time to time, to show that this must have been an important medium. The astonishing discovery in 1963 of 190 figures, all of oak heart-wood, at the Gallo-Roman sanctuary to the goddess Sequana at the source of the River Seine, contained 40 heads, and 16 pieces of wood carved with two or three heads. Again, several wooden heads were found in the Temple de la Fôret d'Halatte. So the Celts not only venerated actual human heads, but made images of them in stone, in wood and in metal. La Tène art contains endless variations on the theme of the human mask, often highly stylized, forming part of a flowing design, or decorated with leaf crowns or swelling horns, and associated with masks of animals and birds. The placing of this vital symbolic object on articles used in everyday life – personal ornaments, weapons, horse-trappings – would ensure protection from evil forces and assist in victory against opponents.

The evidence of the classical writers, and the major contribution made by archeology towards an understanding of the cult of the human head, is supported and enlarged by the written literatures and the folk traditions of the Celtic world. It is these references which make it possible to appreciate the overall nature of the significance the head possessed as a venerated object, by providing details of the various qualities with which it was believed to be imbued.

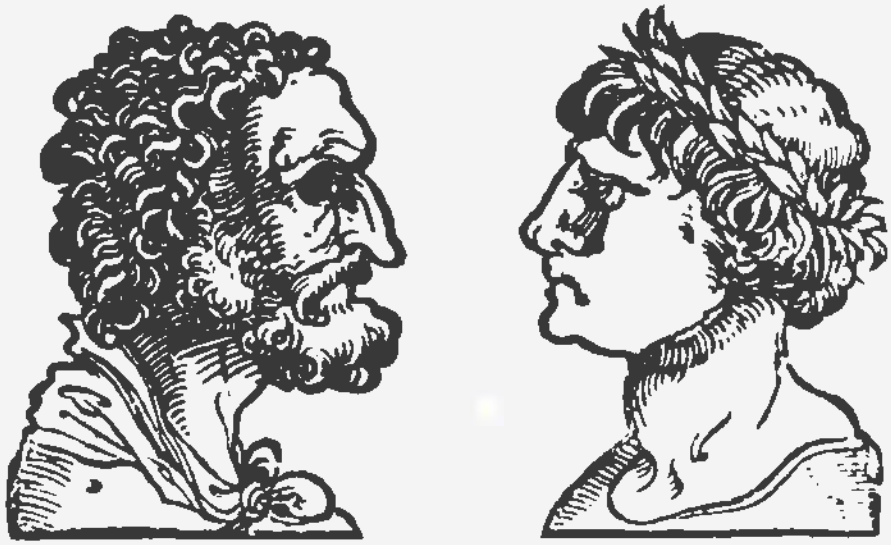
One of the most striking and convincing pieces of evidence for the role of the head in Celtic mythology occurs in a medieval Welsh tale in the *Mabinogion*. This concerns the magic head of Bran (see BRAN) who was clearly of divine origin. In the story his head, after his death, continues to live and remains uncorrupted, providing magnificent hospitality and entertainment in a magical realm until such time as Bran's followers ignore the warning he gave them before his death. All the magic then ends, and it remains for the head to be buried in the White Mount, in London. There it keeps at bay all plague and evil from the country. Its talismanic qualities cease when it is discovered and exhumed.

The Speaking Head

This tradition of a severed head presiding at a feast, or participating in festivities in this world or the next, is also found in the literature of early Ireland. The motif occurs in one of the tales connected with Finn (see FINN). Lomna, Finn's fool, chances upon Finn's wife in the act of committing adultery with a warrior, Coirpre. When Lomna informs his master of this association, Coirpre decapitates the fool in revenge and carries off his head. When Finn finds the decapitated corpse he puts his finger in his mouth, and thereby is able to divine whose body it is, for Finn has the power of supernatural knowledge. He goes in search of the head and comes upon Coirpre who is cooking a salmon, with Lomna's head stuck on a stake beside him. When the warrior is apportioning the fish he does not offer any to the head. The head speaks, but it still gets none. It speaks again, and Coirpre puts it outside the door. The fish is divided out once more, and when the head is again not given any it speaks from outside.

Heads are also associated with feasting in a story about the death of one of the Irish gods, Fothad Canainne, who was known as Caindia, 'Fair God'. The Celtic deities were not regarded as invulnerable. Fothad Canainne never sat down at a feast without having decapitated heads before him – this no doubt refers both to his prowess as a warrior as attested by these trophies, and also obviously points to the traditional association of severed heads with feasting and merry-making. Fothad's chief enemy is Ailill Flann Bec of Munster. Fothad desires his wife, and abducts her. In the resulting clash between the two warriors Fothad is worsted and falls, and Ailill decapitates him, according to custom. Fothad's mistress raises up his head which immediately chants a long poem to her, bewailing its condition and instructing her about future action.

Two essentially pagan traditions about the power of the severed human head occur in the tale of the battle of Almu (preserved in an 11th century Irish manuscript), in spite of the predominant Christian atmosphere and historical setting. Fergal Mac Maile Duin is slain while fighting against the Leinstermen. His head is taken to Cathal, king of the opposing side. A remarkable passage then occurs in the text, which



Illustrations showing the forehead of a vain man *(left)* and of a lustful man *(right)*: from Cocle's *Compendium of Physiognomy*, published in Strasbourg in 1533

tells how Cathal honours the head of his enemy: he has it washed and its hair braided, and he drapes it with a silk cloth. He then causes seven oxen and seven sheep and seven pigs to be cooked, and placed in front of the head – a strange reference to the actual veneration of a head. The Christian emphasis of the tale is reasserted when the head is made to blush and open its eyes and give thanks to God for the great honour and reverence shown to it.

The same tale contains another episode which illustrates an additional aspect of head worship that is well attested in the pagan tradition. Donn Bo, a youth who was renowned for the sweetness of his singing, was also killed in the battle, and decapitated. He had given his promise that he would sing that night for Fergal, no matter where they might be. One of the Leinstermen goes out onto the battlefield to take a head back to the feasting place. As he draws near he hears the severed heads entertaining the dead king. Donn Bo's voice is by far the sweetest. When the warrior goes to lift the head it protests, and says it is pledged to sing that night to Fergal alone. In spite of this the head is taken to the feasting hall and set upon a pillar. When requested to sing to the company it turns to the wall, so that it is in darkness, and then sings with moving sweetness. After this it is returned to the battlefield. Here again the head is alleged to be capable of independent movement, speech and powers of entertainment after its separation from the body.

The Well of the Heads

Wells and springs were of fundamental cult importance to the Celts and according to Celtic belief a sacred severed head, when brought into conjunction with a venerated well, increased the powers of both. The Church, instead of forbidding the continued worship of wells countenanced it, converting well-worship associated with pagan forces into well-worship presided over by saints, some of whom are the old deities thinly disguised. Thus, in the Christian context, the heads of saints rather than those of deities are connected with the sacred waters. Many sacred springs and sources have been found on excavation to contain, amongst other cult objects, one or more human skulls.

The earliest literatures, the lives of the Christian saints, and later Celtic folklore and tradition abound in references to the motif of severed heads in wells; and the amazing wealth of legends still current in Celtic-speaking parts of the British Isles indicates the fundamental character of this ancient concept. The firm belief in the curative powers of water drunk from the skull of an ancestor, especially in the case of epileptics, was still operative in the Scottish Highlands in the 20th century, and no doubt still lingers on in places.

A striking parallel to the Celtic material, and one which may owe its origin to a Celtic source, is that of the Old Norse tradition of Odin and the head of Mimir. Mimir's head was cut off by the Vanir (divine beings having powers of fertility). Odin took the head and preserved it with oils and herbs (as did the Celts) and kept it in a well. He recited magical charms over it, and it became capable of speech and obtained prophetic powers; and thereafter was a valuable source of information to the deity. Another tradition, this time preserved in an Elizabethan play, contains elements which again are purely Celtic in feeling. In Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* Zantippa goes to the Well of Life with a pitcher to draw water. As she is about to dip it into the water, a head rises above the surface and in true Celtic fashion speaks and makes meaningful statements. This is clearly connected with fertility and all the powers attributed to severed heads in Celtic mythology.

Many of the early Celtic saints are associated with such traditions. For example, St Melor of Cornwall and Brittany was murdered, and in the place where his assassin, who was carrying his head, almost died of thirst the head commanded him to strike his staff into the ground and a spring would appear. The staff grew into a fruit tree, and a holy well sprang from its roots. Like several other Celtic saints Melor was associated with healing springs over a wide territory; the powers of healing, prophecy and fertility believed to be inherent in the severed head were easily transferred into a Christian setting.

A story still current in the island of Vatersay, in the Outer Hebrides, contains all the ancient pagan elements. Three brothers are murdered and decapitated at a well known as *Tobar nan Ceann*, 'the Well of the Heads'. The father recovers the heads of his sons from the well, and makes for home to bury them. As he approaches a standing stone one of the heads speaks and makes a prophetic statement. A woman who is pregnant by this son at the time gives birth to a son; and as the head prophesied this boy in the fullness of time avenges his father. He decapitates the murderer as he bends over a well to drink. He leaves the head in the well, which from then on is known as *Tobar a' Chinn*, 'the Well of the Head'.

Finally, a passage from a Scottish folktale reveals the ancient belief in the powers of independent action and speech by severed heads. In the story of 'The Knight of the Red Shield' *(Gaisgeach na Sgeithe Deirge)*, 'One looked hither and one thither, and they saw a head coming in a flame of fire, and another head singing the song of songs. A fist was struck on the door of the mouth of the king, and a tooth was knocked out of him, and there was no button of gold or silver on the coat of the king but showered off him with shame. The head did this three years after each other, and then it went home.'

All the evidence for Celtic religion emphasizes the fundamental importance of the human head to early Celtic society. It was a prized trophy in battle; but much more than this it was a potent symbol of the total religious attitudes of the Celtic peoples. The head stood for divinity. It was the supreme conveyer of hospitality, the distributor of the divine feast. It had powers of prophecy, healing, fertility, speech, independent movement and incorruptible life. It was regarded as the essence of being, the seat of the soul, the symbol of evil-averting divine power. Its meaning for the early Celtic peoples is clear throughout every phase of their history – it can truly be said to contain the essence of their religious philosophy and to be the most distinctive and powerful of all their cults.

(See also CULT OF THE DEAD; HAIR; HEAD-DRESS; MASKS; PHRENOLOGY; SKULL.)

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Routledge, 1967).

HEAD-DRESS

The impracticability of many types of military headgear reflects the fact that 'the element of magic is never entirely absent' from head-dress

THE RATIONALISTIC NOTION that people put things on their heads to protect themselves against rain or sun is plainly an inadequate explanation of all the various kinds of headgear that have appeared in human history. Other considerations must, from the first, have entered into the matter. The desire to enhance the personality by making oneself look taller is an obvious motive. The desire to adopt a badge of office, to express superior social status, the desire to frighten an enemy, to propitiate the gods, to frighten away evil spirits, to nullify the Evil Eye; all these have contributed to the size, shape, colour and decoration of the structures which men have put on their heads. The element of magic is never entirely absent, even in the case of modern hats.

Not all peoples have at all times worn hats. The hats of the ancient Greeks were more in the nature of parasols, hats with very wide brims worn, for the most part, on the shoulder and only put on the head when the heat of the sun became oppressive. The Romans did not usually wear hats; they merely draped a fold of the toga over the head when in mourning or for some religious ceremony. The ancient Egyptians were content with a fold of cloth, or a wig, but the pharaoh wore a crown, or rather two crowns: the Crown of the North and the Crown of the South. These symbolized his rule over both parts of Egypt but they probably had a deeper significance for they form a perfect example of the *lingam* or union of the masculine and feminine principles. Almost all the deities in the Egyptian pantheon were provided with symbolic head-dresses: Isis had the sun disc between cow-horns, Thoth also had the disc between horns, Hathor had the disc between two feathers.

Crowns would seem, therefore, to have preceded hats in the modern sense and to have been worn for magical purposes. A

Camera Press London/John Blumer

The notion that people wear hats for protection against the weather fails to explain the weirder kinds of headgear. Horned head-dresses are frequently meant to give the wearer the strength and virility of powerful horned animals like the bull: small boy of the Ashanti people of Ghana

Eric Cross

Eric Cross

Impressive headgear is particularly important to fighting men and priests, to instil power and frighten enemies, natural or supernatural. Some American Indians added a feather to a warrior's head-dress for each enemy he killed *(left)*: Caraja medicine-man of Brazil going into trance to cure a patient *(right)*

crown is merely the rim of a hat with neither top nor brim. It is a simple ring into which the wearer inserts his head. Freud maintains that every putting on of a hat is a symbolic coitus, and it seems likely that what the early kings were doing when they put on their crowns was to symbolize their mystical marriage to their people or to their land.

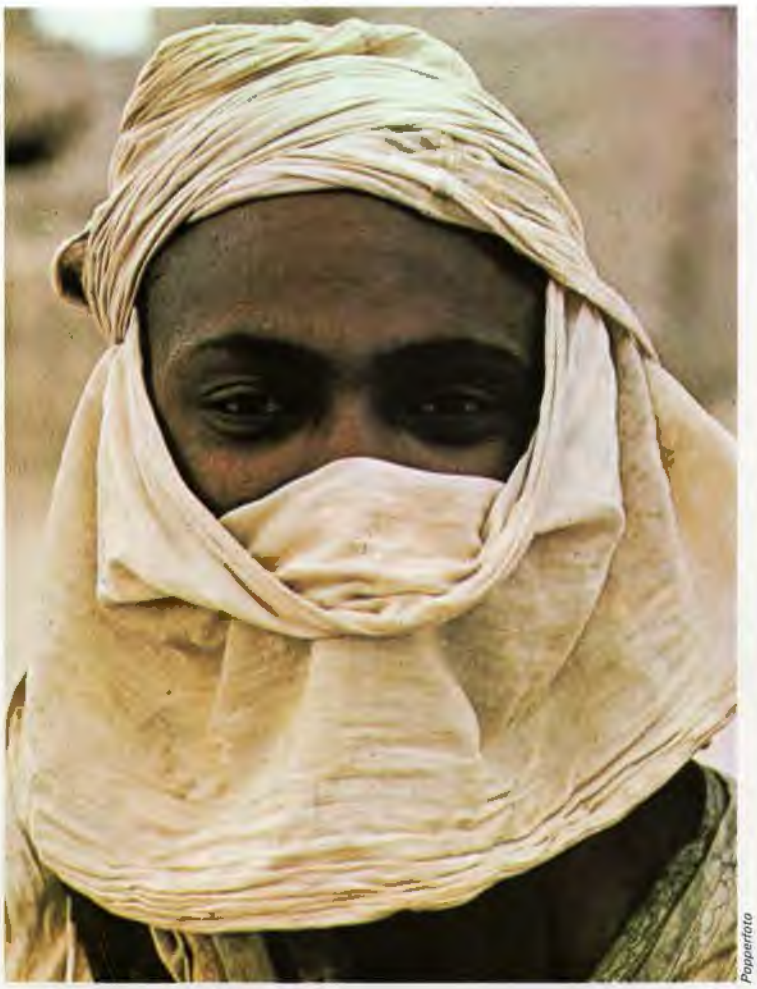
A special head-dress for priests is of immemorial antiquity. We learn from the Old Testament that Moses ordered the priests, and in particular the high priest, to wear a special kind of head-dress, but the Bible does not give a detailed description. However, the Jewish historian Josephus does describe the high priest's headgear at the beginning of our era. He tells us that it consisted of a hand of material wound round the head and sewn to resemble a turban. Over this was another strip of finer material wound round it. Josephus also speaks of a bonnet of blue material encircled with a triple gold crown. In the front was a plaque, called the ziz, on which was inscribed the name of God.

The Fish and the Mitre

The early Christians adopted a headgear of their own which (except in the Armenian Church where all priests wore it) was reserved for bishops. The word *mitra*, or mitre, had in the beginning no particular liturgical significance, being worn also by women. It certainly took a long time to attain its final form, for when the tomb of St Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne in the 7th century, was opened his forehead was adorned merely with a gold circlet set with precious stones. It is difficult to determine exactly when this form of sacerdotal headgear was abandoned in favour of what is usually called a mitre. This was at first a kind of folding cap, the two sides lying flat when not worn. A mitre of this kind, reputed to have been worn by Thomas Becket, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. By the 12th century it had been assumed by all bishops of Western Europe as their proper liturgical head-dress. Mitres with peaks on either side were worn by the end of the 12th century but the custom grew up of wearing the peaks back and front, and it is this shape that has survived. What has happened, however, is that it has grown taller and fuller, reaching what is probably its final form in the 17th century. The curious thing is that this final form bears a close resemblance to the headgear of the priests of Dagon. Dagon was a Phoenician fish god and it is the head of a fish with open mouth that this ancient pagan headgear resembles. As such it conferred upon the celebrant the power of the god. It is at least curious that Christ was often, in early Christian times, symbolized by a fish.

There can be little doubt that in the 14th and 15th centuries there was a real witchcraft cult in Western Europe which involved not only the peasantry but some of the highest in the land, and there is a curious diabolism in the fashionable clothes of the time. It was indeed at this period that 'fashion' may be said to emerge. Between the fall of the Roman Empire and the mid-14th century there is hardly anything that could be called 'fashion' at all. And then, in a single generation, in the luxurious courts of France and Burgundy, and in England too, the scene was transformed. Instead of being clothed in shapeless garments which made it impossible to divine the body underneath, and with the head concealed by a veil, women began to exploit their natural charms. The three weapons of fashion were invented in a single generation and these were: tight-lacing, décolletage and elaborate head-dresses.

The veil, which had for so long been the only headgear allowed to women, suddenly began to take on, as it were, a life of its own. The coiffure consisted at this time of a kind of network studded with pearls and enclosing the hair, and from this by means of pins the veil was raised from the head. Moreover it began to be made of so fine a material as to be almost transparent with the result that, instead of concealing the head and part of the face, it drew attention to them. Various shapes were tried but the most popular was the horned head-dress, which immediately brought down upon its wearers accusations of immodesty and even of witchcraft. For


Popperfoto

Homer Sykes

Womanish headgear on men ***Left*** **The veil gives the feared Touareg of the Sahara a highly sinister appearance** ***Right*** **Druid in ritual robes**

what did the horns signify if not an implied worship of the Devil? Certainly the clergy of the period thought so and the Archbishop of Paris even went so far as to offer indulgences to those who would insult women wearing the new head-dress in the street. The preaching friars took the same line and when, in the next century, the horned head-dress was replaced by a steeple-like structure not without phallic significance, the denunciations grew louder.

It is interesting that in men's clothes at this period the phallic significance is to be seen not in the headgear but in the footgear. The *cracawe* or *poulaine* shoe came to an elongated point in front and was sometimes actually formed in the shape of a phallus. These styles of women's head-dresses and men's shoes lasted until the second half of the 15th century.

Ferociously Virile

Something must be said of the magical element in soldiers' helmets. From the earliest times military headgear had been something more than defensive equipment for turning aside the stroke of an enemy's sword. It was also intended to make the wearer more imposing, and therefore more frightening, by increasing his apparent height (this motive being plain in all military headgear until modern times), to scare the enemy off by a ferocious appearance (the final example of this being the skull on the fur cap of the 'Death's Head Hussar') and to nullify the influence of the Evil Eye. This last desire perhaps explains the extraordinary prevalence of horns added to helmets, 'horns of power' being an accepted protection. Viking helmets are an obvious example.

Long after such considerations had ceased, or had sunk into the depths of the unconscious mind, soldiers' headgear continued to develop in a way which had nothing to do with efficiency in combat, and indeed was often hostile to it. It was of no advantage to a medieval knight (except perhaps for purposes of identification) that his helmet should be surmounted by an elaborate heraldic structure; and when we come to more recent times, we find the same principle at work.

Military uniform does not really come into being until the last quarter of the 17th century, and it is astonishing to find that it is much less suitable for its purpose than the clothes worn, for example, by the men who formed the armies of Cromwell. The sensible 'pot' or steel helmet was replaced by the three-cornered hat, difficult to keep in place during a charge, especially when placed on the top of a full-bottomed wig. The principle of utility did, however, impose itself on the dress of those of the infantry whose weapon was the grenade: the grenadiers. These men found it almost impossible to throw a grenade without knocking off their three-cornered hats. They were therefore provided with a soft cap rather like a nightcap. And then an extraordinary thing happened. It was as if the cap had been made of erectile tissue. It began to experience a kind of tumescence, to rise from the head, until it became the stiff mitre-cap to be seen, for example, in Hogarth's engraving of 'The March of the Guards to Finchley'. The behaviour of the later 'bearskin', still worn by the Guards when they parade in full dress, was even more extraordinary. The bearskin was originally a cap with a fur border, and this border gradually swallowed the rest of the structure, rising ever higher and higher until it was a third of the height of the whole body, was of great weight and could only with considerable difficulty be kept on the head.

A similar tendency can be observed in female head-dresses in the last quarter of the 18th century. At the beginning of the century there had been a high head-dress in the form of the *fontange*, but in the next generation this had disappeared in favour of a neat little coiffure like that worn by Madame de Pompadour. And then, in the late 1760s, women's hair began to rise from the head. By 1776 coiffures had attained the most astonishing proportions, sometimes rising to a yard in height. In its earliest form the head-dress consisted of a wire or other frame placed on the head. The natural hair was drawn over it, artificial hair was added, and the whole was adorned with colourful plumes and ribbons. The inconveniences of following such a fashion were considerable. Women going to court had to spend several hours with the coiffeur and

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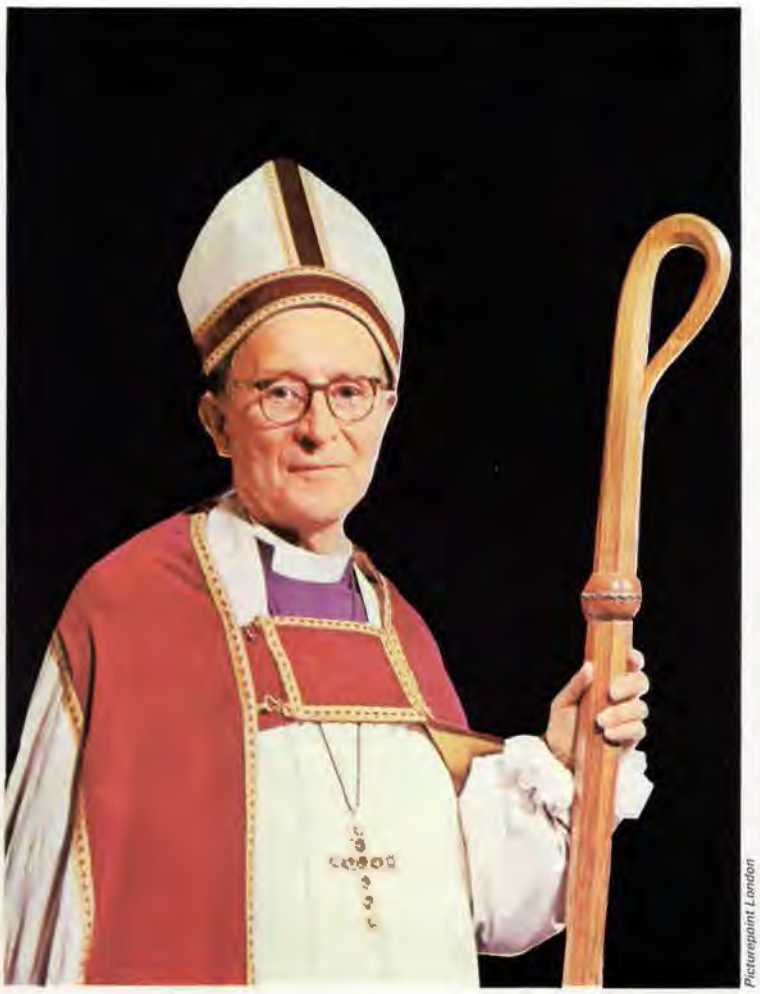


Picturepoint London

once erected, the structure often remained in place for weeks or even months making, one would have thought, natural sleep impossible. Another disadvantage was that the flour mixed with pomatum with which the hair was daubed formed an excellent breeding ground for lice.

Meanwhile men had abandoned the tricorne and assumed an early form of the top hat. In origin this had been a utilitarian hat, a hunting hat, with very narrow brims so as not to catch the wind when riding to hounds, and a very tall crown to serve, if the wearer was unhorsed, as a kind of primitive crash helmet. In the early 19th century it became the accepted town wear of the Regency dandies and for the rest of the century it was worn by men in all ranks of society.

Left **The hoods of the Ku Klux Klan were worn to terrify**

Right **The bishop's mitre took centuries to reach its final form: whether deliberately or by chance it resembles the head of a fish, an early Christian symbol of Christ**

It varied considerably in height and it has been suggested that it is possible to estimate the degree of male domination (if we accept the view that a high hat is an affirmation of virility) by noting its height. It would certainly seem that at the last high water mark of the patriarchal system (say, in the middle of the century) the top hat had an exalted crown. And then, with the emergence of the 'New Woman' in the 1880s men modified their pretensions and adopted the new low-crowned straw hat known as the 'gent's boater'. At the very end of the century came the Homburg hat, with its dented crown which, curiously enough if seen from above, is the very symbol of femininity; the 'yoni-on-top'. In our own day both men and women have largely abandoned hats altogether; and the astonishing implications, social, religious and magical which have been seen in the past in the headgear of both sexes, have finally faded away.

(See also COSTUME; CROWN; HORNS.)

JAMES LAVER

FURTHER READING: L. Langner, *The Importance of Wearing Clothes* (Hastings House, N.Y., 1959); M. Harrison, *The History of the Hat* (Herbert Jenkins, 1960).

The Cap of Liberty

A brief word on this hat (the Phrygian cap): made famous for us moderns when the first French Republic adopted it as the symbol of freedom. It provides us with a good example of how any ordinary useful object – in this case an ordinary working-cap – may be endowed with a symbolic character. 'The head-dress of the Persian Monarchs,' Layard wrote in his *Nineveh*, 'appears to have resembled the Phrygian Bonnet or the French Cap of Liberty.'

The cap of this particular type became the symbol of liberty because, when a Roman or Latin manumitted his slave, he made the man a present of a cap, as a symbol of the ex-slave's newly acquired freedom. And though hats were not generally worn by men in the Roman state – Servius considered it a matter of reproach to the Phrygians that they 'dressed like women', because they wore hats – a newly manumitted slave used to wear, for some time after his being freed, the cap which proved his rank of freeman.

Of course, it was because hats and caps had fallen out of use among the Romans that a cap – any cap – could acquire some symbolical value. In the countries where caps were worn, this type of cap had no other than a practical purpose; and before the Greeks gave up wearing hats, the Phrygian cap was to be seen, along with a number of other basic types.

Michael Harrison *The History of the Hat*

HEADLESS SPIRITS

THE IMPORTANCE of the head in the constitution of the body is obvious, and from the earliest times a unique significance has been accorded to it in myth and ritual magic (see HEAD). Conversely, headlessness has been regarded as a baleful state of being and has inspired some strange and eerie conceptions.

In the later Paleolithic era, at Mineteda in eastern Spain, headless human figures were engraved on rocks. They are depicted in upright posture and apparently in movement, and have been interpreted as representations of spirits. Possibly the horror of a decapitated body prompted the fear that the decapitated dead would be especially baleful and vindictive towards the living.

A different significance seems to attach to the depictions of headless persons in the remarkable mural paintings found recently at Catal Hüyük in Anatolia. At the Neolithic settlement on this site, which dates back to the 7th millennium BC, the ruins of a shrine dedicated to a goddess were excavated. From various objects found there, it is evident that this goddess was connected with both fertility and death. Among the frescoes which adorned the shrine were pictures of great black birds, of horrific appearance, menacing decapitated bodies. These depictions have generally been interpreted as representing vultures preying on human corpses. But there are reasons for doubting this interpretation. In the first place, such a subject would seem to have no relevance, and also to be inappropriate, to the cult of a mother goddess. Then there is the problem of the headlessness of the corpses – if indeed they are corpses; for they appear very animated in their postures. Since both human and vulture skulls were found specially deposited in the sanctuary, it would seem that the headless bodies have some hidden meaning beyond our knowing (see also HELL).

In ancient Egypt the famous mortuary god Osiris (see OSIRIS) could be conceived of as 'the headless one' for, according to his legend, his murderer Seth mutilated his body. His severed head was subsequently recovered and buried at Abydos, which became the chief cult-centre of Osiris. But in ancient Egyptian inconography, Osiris is never depicted as headless (except in bas-relief at Philae where his headless corpse is the subject of a magical ceremony). The whole purpose of the Osirian mortuary ritual was, on the contrary, to ensure the complete re-constitution and eternal preservation of the body of the deceased, with emphasis upon the security of the head.

However, in Greek magical papyri of Egyptian origin Osiris became 'the strong Headless One', the 'Creator of Heaven and Earth, Day and Night, Light and Darkness', 'the Lightener and Thunderer', 'the God who holds the eternal Fire' (meaning the sun). He is also referred to as the 'good Osiris, who no one has seen with eyes'. This mysterious being, called in the Greek text *Akephalos* ('Headless'), is imagined as having a head and face at his feet, and a mouth burning with fire. In two magical papyri of the period (now at Oslo and Berlin respectively), fantastic representations are given of headless monsters, showing some distorted remembrance of Egyptian symbols. There may also be some connection in this strange

A large black bird threatens headless bodies on this fresco from the shrine of a mother goddess at Catal Huyük

E. A. Lowcock/University of Manchester

and horrific imagery with the fact that the first decan god of the constellation Capricorn, in the Egyptian star-map, was shown as headless. (The decans are divisions of the zodiac signs.) This decan god was associated also with the incidence of fever. The association is particularly interesting, since there is other evidence connecting headless spirits with disease and its cure.

Another class of headless spirits were the ghosts of those who died by decapitation, and were in consequence restless and haunted the living. A similar belief existed in connection with those who had been hanged or crucified. The folklore of many northern peoples contain instances of such belief, of which the well-known idea of the decapitated ghost, holding its head under its arm is a romanticized version. It is interesting to note also that the Nordic god Wotan, in one of his manifestations, was the 'headless rider on the white horse'.

The medieval English Romance of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see GAWAIN) which is related to the Arthurian cycle of legends, contains a remarkable episode of the beheading of a being who continues to live on headless. It seems likely that the 'beheading game' in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* preserves some reminiscence of ancient Celtic religion in which ritual decapitation and a cult of severed heads were practised.

Headless deities and heroes are also known in India. In the Hindu *Markandeya Purana*, the goddess Devi assumed the form of Chhinnamastaka (the 'Headless'), in order to destroy the demon Nisumbha. In the Punjab, at Bahraich, where his headless body was buried Ghazi Salar is venerated as a headless champion of Islam. The headless trunk of Lakkhe Shah Darwesh is fabled to have fought its way to Ambala, to curse the wells there with brackishness. At Panipat, the Binsira was a 'headless saint' of the Hindus.

Medieval Christian art graphically contributed to the imagery of the headless dead. The legends of many saints told of their martyrdom by beheading; in consequence they were sometimes depicted headless and holding their heads as, for example, St Nicasius is represented in the sculptures of the Cathedral of Rheims.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Many successful cures at the shrines of Asclepios were effected by dreams – an early example of what we now call psychosomatic medicine, the healing of the body through the mind

HEALING GODS

THE MOST FAMOUS healing god of classical antiquity was the Greek Asclepios (the Roman form of his name was Aesculapius) who was at first a divine being of the second rank, not a great Olympian god like his father Apollo. For that reason alone he was closer to mortals than the great gods and more concerned with their affairs, but he was closer still because his special province was the art of healing. In his relations with his worshippers or patients he showed many of the traits of a good human physician, and he was consulted on many other problems of life beyond those arising from sickness. He also sometimes punished presumptuous or deceitful patients.

The Epidaurian *Iamata* or 'cures' are records of cures and miracles at the god's great temple at Epidaurus in southern Greece. They were inscribed on tablets along the inner wall of the colonnade, on the north side of the sacred enclosure. Six tablets alone remained in the time of the famous traveller Pausanias (2nd century AD) but earlier there must have been more. This building was designed for those who came to sleep and to be cured. Its inscriptions, like those at many other centres, were an official compilation by the priesthood, written to maintain belief and awe.

The Epidaurian 'cures' are not written in any classified order and the more extraordinary acts and events often burst upon the reader without warning. Pandarus of Thessaly suffered from a mark on his forehead. Asclepios, appearing in a dream, put a bandage round his head, which he was to take off when the god had gone. When Pandarus did take off the bandage, he found the marks transferred to it. Echedorus, who had a similar mark, was sent by Pandarus to pay over money for a statue of Athene to be put in the shrine. When Asclepios appeared and asked about

the money, Echedorus denied receiving it but promised to paint a picture and dedicate it. Asclepios bound Pandarus' bandage round Echedorus' head; when he woke and took it off, Echedorus found no marks on the bandage, but on his own forehead the marks of Pandarus added to his own.

Euhippus, who had a spear point embedded in his jaw, was cured in his sleep by the god, who drew it out and left carrying the point. A man with an ulcer on his toe was cured in his sleep when one of the sacred snakes licked it. In his dream he had seen his toe treated with a remedy by a handsome youth. When Arata of Laconia had dropsy, her mother slept at Epidaurus for her. The mother dreamed that Asclepios cut off her daughter's head, emptied out the liquid and then replaced the head. The daughter had the same dream, and had recovered when her mother returned. Clinatas of Thebes was cured of lice when Asclepios in a dream swept him down with a stiff broom.

These are some of the more unusual tales among much more ordinary cures. It is not always possible to see what happened in dream and what in the waking state. It seems to have been assumed that operations seen in dreams were done on some sort of ghostly counterpart of the body, and took effect on the actual body.

Diary of a Hypochondriac

The curious case of Aelius Aristides in the 2nd century AD is described in the *Hieroi Logoi* or 'Sacred Tales', which Aristides himself wrote by compiling a diary of his experiences. He became a permanent invalid or hypochondriac after the rigours of a journey across the Balkans to the Adriatic and to Rome, undertaken in mid-winter. On his return in very poor health to his house at Smyrna, he was summoned in a dream to become a patient and devotee of Asclepios in the great shrine at Pergamum (now Bergama) in Asia Minor where, in the intervals of sickness and cures, he lived a zealous literary life.

Aristides was hysterical, and no unified diagnosis of his various ailments seems possible, but he was as tough as only a chronic invalid can be. He was afflicted with periodic paralysis, convulsions and difficulties in breathing, in combinations characteristic of hysteria. Asclepios prescribed not only baths and special food but also long periods of fasting without washing, which left Aristides extremely thin and exhausted under his blankets, especially as they were sometimes accompanied by emetics, and by constant purges and blood-lettings. In the throes of these ailments, and of this treatment, he was from time to time ordered in midwinter to run naked round the sacred enclosure and to take plunges in frozen rivers and lakes. He survived each ordeal in triumph, when physicians and friends expected him to fall into convulsions. When Aristides accepted human doctoring, the god was liable to punish him with deadly chills, catarrh and digestive disorders. He lived thus for 17 years, making occasional excursions from Pergamum, while Asclepios arranged for the defeat of his literary rivals, for his winning the imperial favour, for his escape from punishment when he was charged with not carrying out official duties required by the Roman authorities, and for his preservation in time of plague.

According to Homer, Asclepios belonged to Tricca in Thessaly, and it is agreed that his first cult was there. He was the son of the nymph Coronis and the god Apollo, who among his other attributes had powers of causing health or sickness. While she was still pregnant with Asclepios, Coronis took a mortal lover. Apollo in his anger sent the goddess Artemis to slay Coronis and many of her neighbours with her shafts, which could be a mythological way of describing an epidemic. As Coronis lay dead upon a burning pyre, Apollo snatched their baby son from her body and gave him to Chiron, the centaur, to rear and to instruct in medicine. Asclepios grew up to be a famous healer, but overstepped the mark when he brought a man back from the dead. For this, Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt.

But after his mortal life, Asclepios became a famous hero in the full Greek sense, one of the mighty dead who received cult. In time his status gradually rose until he became greater than ordinary heroes and took rank first as a minor god and later even as one of the great gods.

His cult spread southward, from c 600 BC onward, and its most famous centre was at Epidaurus. The remains of the ancient precinct with its temple, theatre, stadium and other buildings, are well known to tourists. The cult also reached the island of Cos in the eastern Aegean, though the great shrine there is of later origin. It was introduced in some form at Athens in 420 BC by the dramatist Sophocles who for a time housed one of the sacred snakes.

Below **The chief healing god of antiquity, Asclepios or Aesculapius, with his staff and sacred snake. Beside him is the little god of convalescence, Telesphoros. Patients came to sleep at his shrines and were cured in dreams** ***Right*** **Aesculapius and Chiron the Centaur hand Plato a book on herbal medicine: from an English 11th century manuscript. In mythology it was Chiron who instructed the young Aesculapius in medicine**

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Rome, Shrines and Snakes

The Roman cult of Aesculapius began in consequence of a mission in 292 BC, which sought deliverance from a plague and was advised by the Delphic Oracle to go to Epidaurus. When it arrived, an immense serpent glided down from under the base of the great statue of Asclepios. Turning its head from time to time as it went, as if to bid farewell, it boarded the Roman ship and coiled itself up under a tent. On the voyage it swam ashore at Antium, where it hung from a tree for three days before it came aboard again. As the ship sailed up the Tiber, the serpent went ashore on Tiber Island and disappeared. The plague immediately came to an end. At this spot the Roman temple of Aesculapius was founded.

The shrines of Asclepios at Epidaurus, Cos, Pergamum and elsewhere were elaborate combinations of a hospital and its grounds with something like a cathedral precinct. They contained long colonnades or peristyles where the patients or devotees slept, springs, baths and groves of trees, usually cypresses. There were temples, often more than one, of Asclepios and other gods, and great altars open to the sky. At Epidaurus there was a renowned theatre; at Pergamum there was a library for the wealthy and cultured patients. Beside the sacred snakes, for which such places as the labyrinth under the round temple at Epidaurus were intended as pits, there were also sacred dogs.

The statues of Asclepios were usually of a grave bearded man of middle age, often with a curiously distant look in the uplifted eyes. Occasionally there were contrasted statues of a youthful Asclepios. Most often, he was shown seated on a throne attended by his great snakes, executed in bronze. The whole of each shrine had a well-marked bonndary, within which neither birth nor death was permitted to happen. Very often the sites were on hillsides exposed to the sun and health-giving breezes, like our sanatoria for the tuberculous.

The cures, whether by Asclepios or by saints of later times, were not brought about by the known methods of clinical medicine and surgery. The decisive element was the direct power of the god, which was felt in a psychic manner. Much illness is now recognized to be psychosomatic, showing physical symptoms but originating from mental causes.

Dreams and Visions

Many other supernatural beings, whether gods or heroes, were approached for help in healing. Apollo, who was famous for sending plagne on offenders, was also a healer. Connected with Apollo was Paieon or Paian, who may have been the personification of a song called *paian* (our 'paean')

which was originally a healing song but was also a song of victory, not only over disease but over other afflictions and perils.

As the popularity of Asclepios grew steadily in the later centuries of antiquity, so did the vogue of the alien Isis and Serapis (or Sarapis), until these divinities too were overcome by Christ and his saints. Isis was believed to sustain the vigour of the healthy and to give health to the sick, particularly in diseases of the eye. At some of her shrines, especially in Egypt, the sick took up residence by her command to be healed, usually by visions in which she performed miracles or gave instructions.

Even in ancient times the origin of Serapis was a little mysterious. It was said that Ptolemy I (3rd century BC), soon after establishing his rule in Egypt, saw the god in a dream and was ordered to fetch his image (apparently a Greek statue of Pluto) from Sinope on the coast of the Black Sea and establish it in Alexandria as a blessing to the realm. When Ptolemy delayed, Serapis appeared again in a more threatening manner, so that the king in alarm had the image fetched and installed with due pomp in the new Serapeum in Alexandria.

The Graeco-Egyptian god Serapis healed the sick through dreams and visions. In spite of poverty, discomforts and quarrels, some patients could not tear themselves away from the shrine until the god ordered them to go, a striking demonstration of the strength of the faith which made the cures effective: Roman head of Serapis

G. Drury/Guildhall Museum

Like Asclepios, Serapis appeared in dreams and visions to heal those who slept in his temples. At Memphis and elsewhere he had a class of resident devotees who were in a state called *katoche*, which seems to have meant that they were detained by the inner compulsion of the god's command until he should let them go. Papyri have been discovered which show their uncomfortable and poverty-stricken condition, and their bitter quarrelling with one another, with the priests and with the population.

Another healing god was Imouthes, who was originally a real person, an Egyptian royal official named Imhotep. After his death he was credited with all manner of wisdom, especially in medicine, and he rose to the rank of a god. He was one of a circle of deities worshipped with Serapis at Memphis, where he had his own shrine. A papyrus of the 2nd century AD tells how the writer, who had delayed translating into Greek a book on the miracles of Imouthes, was punished with a high fever. The god appeared to him, holding a book and saying no word but merely looking at him. The patient then broke into a sweat and was cured of his fever.

Most of the shrines of these gods had special quarters where the devotee-patients could sleep or even spend periods of many weeks. Those of Asclepios were famous for their buildings, gardens, springs and baths laid out in the most elegant Greek style. Those of Serapis and other such gods were no doubt less agreeable. The Serapeum papyri from Egypt give a picture of uncomfortable and crowded rooms which were sometimes open to outsiders but sometimes walled off so that the inmates could communicate with others only through a small window.

The practice of incubation, as this 'sleeping in' is called, cannot be traced to any one place of origin. It would arise in any community which had great faith in dreams and visions to be received only on holy ground. It is a feature of old Japanese religion also, where no influence from western Asia or Europe need be assumed. The basis is entirely in faith healing and trust in supernatural beings, whose orders must be obeyed however paradoxical they seemed, both in medical treatment and often in the conduct of life in general. The divine healers, like human physicians and psychiatrists, might be consulted on any matter which had a deeply emotional significance for the worshipper.

(See also IMHOTEP; ISIS; SERAPIS.)

E. D. PHILLIPS

FURTHER READING: E. and L. Edelstein, *Asclepius* (Arno, 1976 – two volumes) contains many of the cures; C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Hakkert, 1968) contains the diary of Aristides; C. Kerenyi, *Asklepios* (Thames & Hudson, 1960) makes speculative use of Jungian theories. See also W. A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations* (AMS Press reprint).

The symbol of a heart is popularly used to signify that love is emanating from the very centre of being: a Valentine card of 1846

HEART

Among the vital organs of the body, the heart, 'that secret hidden centre', holds a supreme place. It has been seen as the seat of the soul, of the emotions and of the intellect; in magic, it dominates the rites of love and hate

HEART

IN LITERATURE, in art and in the language of communication the term heart suggests a wide range of emotional and intellectual phenomena, ranging from coldness of heart at one extreme to the melting of hearts at the other. To many peoples the heart has symbolized the centre and essence of being. The common expression 'take heart' meaning 'be of good courage', is the relic of the old belief that moral courage had its residence within the heart, physical courage being supposed to be sited in the stomach.

Because of its important function in the government of the body, the heart has played a profound role in psychic beliefs. In prescientific ages when occult properties were ascribed to all physical forces that lay beyond the understanding of mankind, the heart was considered to be a symbol of eternity and the true seat of the intellect, the brain being thought to be no more than purely instrumental.

From the evident fact that the heartbeat responds immediately to variations in the mental state, as in moments of extreme anxiety, tension and terror, when the heart pounds and the pulse races, this organ also became in mythological terms the seat of the emotions.

In symbolism the heart shares with the lotus flower and the rose the qualities of the secret centre that is hidden beneath the outer surface of things. In numerology the heart number represents the hidden character and the real identity which is secreted behind the facade of the interior. To the alchemists the heart was the sun's image within man.

Extreme care was taken by the priests of Egypt to safeguard the heart of the dead, so that it might duly accompany the body into the afterlife. The hearts of the dead were weighed in the balance in the presence of Osiris (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

Tabernacle of Virtue

Biblical teaching incorporates innumerable poetic allusions to the traditional properties of the heart: it is the seat of the affections, of the desires, of hopes and motives, of the understanding, the intellectual perceptions, and is representative of the spiritual nature of man. Yet from this tabernacle of infinite virtue it can degenerate into the most repulsive vessel of sin. Michel de Noble, who lived at the turn of the 16th century, published a series of remarkable pictures describing the various vicissitudes which can befall the unwary heart in its contest with the temptations of the mind and flesh, and representing the soul in a state of mortal sin as a heart occupied by a grinning devil, while a soul which is in a state of grace is depicted as a heart containing at its centre the representation of the crucified Christ.

In Christian art the heart is an attribute of St Teresa and the flaming heart a symbol of charity, often associated with St Augustine. The Order of the Bleeding Heart is a semi-religious order established in the Middle Ages in honour of the Virgin Mary 'whose heart was pierced with many sorrows'. The symbolism of the heart occurs repeatedly in Martin Luther's works; his sermon at the celebration of the consecration of the castle church at Wittenberg included a passage in which he says: 'Christ must be sought with a heart . . . Such a request coming from the heart, God will grant . . . Thus He would have our hearts; and thus every feast of dedication should not merely be an outward consecration of a Church but rather of a consecration of a heart unto God.'

The dedication of the heart to the deities controlling the destinies of man found its most awe-inspiring form in the rites of the Aztecs of Mexico, who tore the hearts from the breasts of living prisoners in order to feed the voracious appetites of the gods of the earth and sun. The ancient Maya sacrificed to the sun god the hearts of living animals which they cast into the flames. There is a modern echo of this cruel theme of heart sacrifice in M. R. James's macabre story *Lost Hearts*, in which hearts are torn from the bodies of children to obtain command over the elements.

Equally barbaric, but not without a certain logic, was the long-standing custom among some primitive tribes of eating the heart of heroic enemies in order to acquire

Cine International

their valour. In some communities in the past, the hearts of dead kings were ritually eaten as a matter of course by their successors. The hearts of animals were also eaten to acquire their characteristics; lions' and leopards' hearts were always in great demand by aspiring heroes, but that of the jackal was naturally shunned since this animal is notorious for its timidity.

As one would expect, rituals involving the heart formed part of witchcraft practices the world over, for by the control of the heart of another a corresponding command could be gained over his whole being. It was a common belief in 13th century Germany that a witch could steal the heart of her victim, replacing it with a bunch of straw. An almost identical belief was held by an Indian tribe of the southern United States who regarded sickness as a sign that the heart had been stolen by witchcraft; to recover it they battled with the invisible forces of evil, returning in due course with a symbolic heart consisting of a stuffed ball of rags containing grain at its centre, which the sick person had only to swallow to regain health.

The belief that the heart is the seat of the soul occurs in many religions *Below left* Aztec human sacrifice from a painting by H. M. Herget: priests tear open the chest of a voluntary victim to offer his still throbbing heart to the god; the soul then ascended to the highest of the Aztec heavens *Below* The heart of the deceased is weighed in judgement against the feather of truth: from the Egyptian Book of the Dead

In the British Isles protection against this form of witchcraft could be obtained by laying a leaf of the Bible over one's heart. This was a perfectly logical remedy if one seriously believed that an enemy was attempting one's destruction by the traditional method of inserting pins and thorns into a sheep's heart which was then thrust up the chimney, to be consumed by flame and smoke. As recently as 1897 a Devonshire woman, imagining her disabilities to be the result of witchcraft, is said to have stuck pins into a sheep's heart while reciting the following spell:

May each pin
Thus stuck in
This poor heart
In hers go
Who hurts me so
Till she departs.

As a defensive measure against attacks of cattle plague, cows' hearts were boiled and stuck full of pins in Yorkshire just over a century ago.

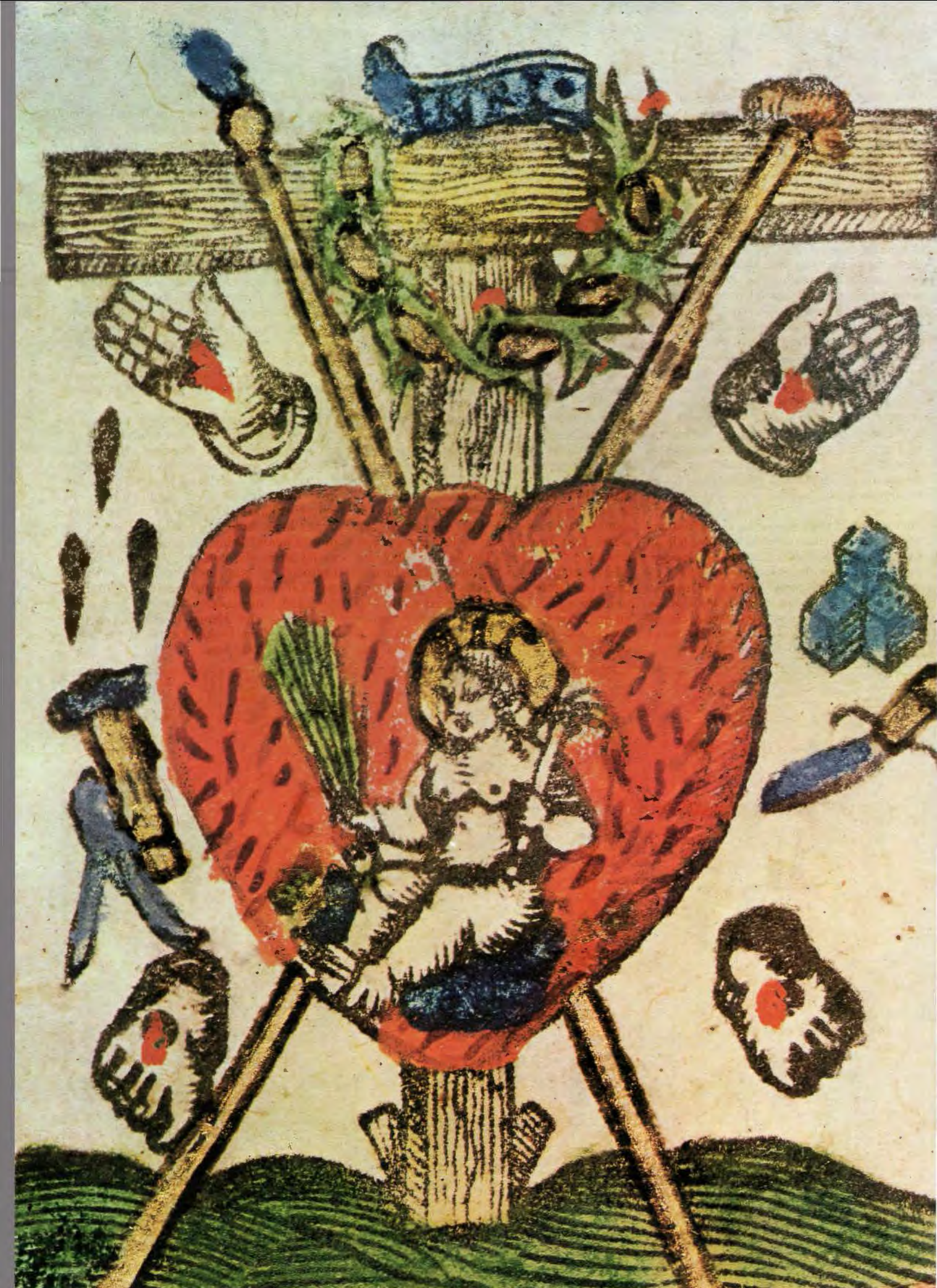
Burial for Noble Hearts

In popular symbolism, however, the heart is more familiar as the sign manual of love rather than hatred, and to 'lose one's heart' means to fall in love. The heart symbol signifies that the lover has become the instrument of a force that impels the whole being towards a focal point. The heart pierced by an arrow represents the female mystic centre penetrated by the male phallus, and is a clearly defined symbol of conjunction and therefore of sexual intercourse.

In its emblematic form the heart signifies that love emanates from the very centre of being, the core of illumination and joy. It is often depicted as surmounted by a cross, a crown, flames or a fleur-de-lis. As a motif in art the heart remains fairly popular, particularly in the Valentine card and in the stylized symbolism of the cartoonist. Yet it is no doubt a sign of the decline of romantic love that the pierced heart, while making an occasional appearance on the tattooed torsos of seamen, is less frequently discovered carved upon tree trunks nowadays. In the past the heart found its rightful place as an ingredient of the love charm, and in a ceremony said to be still practised today among young girls in parts of the United States, the raw heart of a chicken is swallowed as a means to acquire both beauty and beau.

Disappointment in love was thought, in the past to be the cause of a 'broken heart' in a literal sense. Stevens' *History of Methodism*, published in the 1850s, refers to the case of a girl who died within a few days of being deserted by her lover; the writer explains that 'One of the ventricles of her heart burst, so she literally died of a broken heart.' While few medical men today would deny the possibility of death being hastened by grief, its association with the physical heart remains hardly more than an outdated metaphor. Great men like Artaxerxes and Henry II are supposed to have died from broken hearts at the rebelliousness of their sons.

William MacQuitty



Significant evidence of the belief that the heart once represented the centre of spiritual and bodily existence is provided by the custom of heart burial, common in the 12th and 13th centuries, when the hearts of nobles who died abroad were frequently returned to their native lands for interment. Monarchs whose hearts have been buried separately include Richard I ('Lion Heart'), Henry I, Henry III, Edward I and the exiled King James II. The most romantic story of heart burial is that of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland (d. 1329), who willed that his heart should lie in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Douglas was entrusted with the mission, but he broke his journey to help the Spaniards fight the Moors and was killed with the heart around his neck in a casket.

The Dashwood Museum at West Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, contains an urn which once held the heart of Paul Whitehead, Secretary of the notorious Medmenham Hellfire Club; it had been buried with great solemnity in a mausoleum in 1775 but was stolen half a century later and never recovered. Shortly before his death at Genoa in 1847 Daniel O'Connell, the Irish patriot, issued his last request: 'Let my heart be carried to Rome and my body to Ireland'. A box containing his heart was in due course solemnly buried in the church of St Agatha.

The study of heart totemism among the common people has sometimes produced unexpected results. During an investigation into the curious circumstances surrounding the attempted peasants' revolt in the Canterbury area, led by Sir William Courtenay in 1838, the author of this article discovered that not only were tufts of hair cut by the labourers from the beard of their revered leader after his death at the hands of the military, but that his heart was secretly extracted from his body and preserved as a precious relic for over a hundred years.

Centre and Essence

Children, when they wish to give a pledge of secrecy, still say 'Cross my heart and hope to die'; this link between the heart and the taking of oaths occurs also in legends of pacts between human beings and elves, in which the penalty exacted for any breach of faith on the part of the mortal was the forfeiture of his heart and its replacement by a stone.

The effigy of a heart was once considered to be an effective prophylactic against storms and other perils of the sea and for this reason heart-shaped cushions stuck with pins were presented by wives and sweethearts to sailors before they embarked on a voyage, while among landsmen the familiar heart-shaped horse-brass protected the animal against witchcraft. In jewellery the heart-shaped locket containing the portrait of a loved one represents a modern survival of the same ancient principle, while in playing-cards the theme of the heart as the symbolic centre is asserted yet again; according to some authorities, the Hearts suit originally represented the ecclesiastical powers, at one time central figures in the community.

Heart lore also entered into the old philosophy of medicine known as the Doctrine of Signatures (see DISEASE) for some plants with heart-shaped leaves were used for the treatment of heart disease, among them the wild pansy still known as Heartsease.

Language abounds with allusions indicating the multiplicity of roles once played by the heart as the symbolic mainspring of the intellect and emotions. A 'heart-to-heart' talk is a frank conversation between two people and the person who 'wears his heart on his sleeve' is one who exposes his feelings to the world.

Clear evidence that in the unconscious level of the mind the heart occupies a position of special importance exists in the considerable disquiet which has been aroused recently by the subject of heart transplants. There is a powerful emotional resistance to the idea, which is not felt to the same extent towards the transplanting of any other organ. Plainly there are deep psychological implications involved in the transference of the human heart, which has always been regarded as the very centre and essence of being, from one individual to another.

(See also BODY; BLOOD.)

ERIC MAPLE

The heart, which beats faster at times of emotion, is a popular symbol for love *Left* The Sacred Heart of Jesus, token of his redeeming love for mankind *Below* A tattoo, a tree carving, and a Valentine card

John Deakin

John Stewart

Frank Staff

HEARTH

THE EVOCATIVE TERMS hearth and home conjure up visions of domesticity and peace, for the hearth is the traditional centre of family life, symbolizing warmth, security, and companionship; a place for dreaming where it becomes possible, by peering into the embers, to find physical and mental renewal and to discover by signs and portents the secrets of the future. In another sense the glowing hearth is the symbol of the domestic sun, the Promethean fire stolen from the heavens to become the caged servant of the human race, a feeble yet significant snbstitute for the parent sun.

Basically the hearth consists of a clay or stone slab placed at the centre of a cave or hut to supply a foundation for the domestic fire, and in this form it continued relatively unchanged from prehistoric to Norman times. In the Middle Ages it was moved to the wall, and later still, in the 16th century, the grate was introduced. From surviving traditions and relics of ancient customs it appears that a communal fire was maintained in former times within each village or township, providing the basic 'stock' from which the community drew its individual requirements. This fire was religiously maintained by specially appointed fire-tenders and delivered to each household by runners. The fire-tender's role was vital to the community for should the communal fire ever be allowed to go out social life might be threatened, while symbolically such an omission represented the destruction of the community's collective spirit or soul. This attitude prevailed long after the act of fire-making had become general; and was maintained as a magical rite sanctified by time and by usage. Within the home itself the fire symbolized the soul of the family and it was traditional that when a son broke away from the family unit to set up a separate establishment he took a portion of the ancestral fire with him, thus keeping alive from age to age the sense of domestic continuity. The lighting of this first fire in the new home has come down to us in modern times as 'house warming'.

Sotheby's Michael Holford

In pre-Christian times the bride, upon entering her house for the first time, would be ceremonially taken to the hearth and presented with a pair of tongs as a symbol of her new authority. In the East it was the younger son who became the hereditary tender of the domestic hearth. In Irish peasant life the importance of preserving the domestic fire as an unbroken link between past and present was a restatement of the same theme. The turf fire was tended continuously throughout the year as a symbol of family continuity, and is responsible for the expression, 'When the turf fire goes out the soul goes out of the people of the house.'

Altar of the Domestic Gods

Side by side with the domestic and public fire rites there developed a cult of sacred fire which provided a focal point for the religious instincts of the community. Indeed, the Latin word *focus*, from which our word is derived, conveys the meaning of fireplace, home and altar. The sacred fires of the Greeks were under the jurisdiction of Hestia, the fire goddess, protectress of household, family and city, who symbolized not only the home but the earth's centre and later even the earth itself. Among the Romans the cult of Vesta with its sacred fire-tenders, the Vestal Virgins, probably represented a survival of an earlier practice in which the daughters of a chieftain or king were allocated the task of keeping alight the tribal fires. For the Romans the hearth constituted the core of family life, the altar of the domestic gods, the Penates and of the divine Vesta.

Relics of hearth worship continued to persist in European folk customs until very late and took many curious forms. As an act of propitiation to the spirit of fire the Estonian bride flung a handful of coins into the hearth, while her Bohemian sister threw breadcrumbs instead; such a custom had no place in the British Isles, where the burning of bread was considered to be a crime against man and God. However, there is evidence in Britain of sacrifice to the hearth gods from the discovery of the bones of animals buried beneath the floors of old cottages, and coins and in some cases mummified animals and birds bricked up in chimney breasts.

In European folklore the fire spirit is generally represented by the grotesque bearded dwarf or house fairy of about the size of a young child, who often dwells by the hearth and makes his entries and exits by the chimney, and is known variously as Kobold, Nis, Brownie, or Billy. The Irish peasant housewife had as her last duty at night to 'smoor' the fire, that is to ensure that a glowing turf was left burning in the centre of the ashes 'or otherwise the fairies would be displeased'.

There is a distinct possibility that at some period in the past the worship of the fire spirit became fused with ancestor worship. This is suggested by the fact that the Russian household spirit is named Domovik, meaning 'Father of the Family'; when the Russian peasant removed to a new house he would take with him an ember from his old hearth which he would place on the new hearth saying 'Welcome, grandfather, to the new home'.

On special ceremonial occasions such as sacred anniversaries it was once the custom in Europe to light a new fire by friction. This special fire was known in the British Isles as 'need fire', and it was essential at this time for the fires in every household to be extinguished or the spark would not come. Once ignited, brands from the need fire were carried to each household, sometimes by runners, and the domestic fires were then rekindled from the 'new life-giving flame'. It was essential for the need fire to be carefully tended and never extinguished until the next kindling of need fire, if the luck of the household was to be preserved.

An analogous principle lies behind the custom of igniting the Yule-log at Christmas. This log, which was in reality a combustible fire-back, was borne into the house on Christmas Eve with a great deal of ceremony and sometimes with a girl enthroned upon it. It was essential that it should be kindled from a portion of last year's Yule-log which had been preserved for that particular purpose. The Yule kindling was a domestic symbol of family

The household hearth is the symbolic centre of the home and the soul of the family: at one time its fire was never permitted to die. The Yule-log was lit each year among great festivity from a fragment of the previous year's log, to ensure continuity and good fortune: 19th century engraving

Mary Evans Picture Library

regeneration and a time of fertility.

It was customary in the West of England to burn an ashen faggot, in an identical ceremony. In Ireland a carved tree stump sometimes called 'Cailleach Nollich' (The Old Woman of Christmas) was burned to ashes in the heart of a peat fire in the belief that it would 'keep off the Angel of Death' for the ensuing year.

At Burghead in Scotland a very ancient fire rite called Burning the Clavie is still observed at the New Year. A large tar or herring barrel is ignited with burning peat, and the pieces then distributed to the various houses to bring luck. Finally the Clavie becomes the nucleus of a huge bonfire of split casks on the site of a Roman altar called Doorie. The villagers scramble for portions of the burning barrel from which they kindle their own domestic New Year fires, while the embers are placed in the chimneys as a defence against witches.

In Lancashire the hearth fire was religiously kept burning throughout the night of New Year's Eve, but not a single ember or lighted candle would be passed to another householder, however desperate his need, as this would transfer the good luck from the house.

Fortune in the Fire

The original connection between the sun and its domestic counterpart is very possibly responsible for the well-known superstition that sunlight has the power to extinguish the domestic fire. There is a suggestion here of a reluctance on the part of the greater luminary to countenance the presumption of the lesser one. In this respect it is interesting to note that the blazing sun was the symbol selected by the founders of the Sun Fire Office. An imagined connection between the sun's rays and the glance of the human eye is no doubt responsible for the American superstition that anyone who looks into a fire while it is being kindled will hinder its combustion.

Inseparable from the cult of the hearth is the lore of the chimney which appears as a frequent motif in folk beliefs. The chimney sweep, if seen in his working clothes, brings the luck of the hearth spirits to the bride who meets him on her wedding day, but only if he is walking towards her; and a 'sweep's sixpence', a blackened silver coin brings good fortune to its finder. On the other hand, witches and devils, those implacable enemies of domesticity, were said to preside over smoky chimneys, by means of which they entered and left the home and from which vantage point they constantly sought to extinguish the fire in the hearth. It was for this reason that the poker was frequently placed against the top bars of the grate, ostensibly to make the fire draw, but in reality to form a cross and frustrate their designs. It was perhaps only poetic justice that the last case of witch-burning in the British Isles, that of Bridget Cleary at Clonmel, Ireland in 1894, was carried out by members of her family upon the domestic hearth.

Our ancestors used to see signs and portents, as they sat by the hearth, and innumerable were the inferences drawn as to the vicissitudes of fate from the behaviour of the fire. A hollow oblong cinder which spurted from the coals represented a coffin and was therefore an omen of death, while an oval cinder symbolized a cradle; most welcome of all, a round cinder indicated a money box. One might even receive advance information of a visitor, for if the fire suddenly blazed up or a flake of soot became suspended on the bars it meant that a stranger was about to enter one's life. Should the coals burn brightly after being poked, it was an indication from the oracle of the hearth that the absent lover, husband or wife, was in good health for the spark of life still burned. To dream of seeing a spark fall on another's arm or breast signified that a dead child would soon lie there.

Before the days of the barometer, fire served mankind as an infallible weather prophet, for in Wellsford's *Nature's Secrets* (1658), we learn that 'When our common fires do burn with a dull flame they presage foul weather. If the fire do make a buzzing noise it is a sign of tempests near at hand. If the ashes on the hearth do clodden together of themselves it is a sign of rain.' Ashes provided an ever potent oracle for these were in effect the seed of fire, a manifestation of the elemental spirits of the hearth. For a flame to spurt without warning from the ashes was a symbol of good fortune. In the Isle of Man the ashes were carefully examined for signs and if a shape like a footprint were discovered pointing towards the door, it was thought to signify a death in the family, but if pointing inwards a new arrival, a birth.

From camp fire to house fire, the domestic hearth has continued to provide a point of contact between man and man. In the course of ages rigid rituals grew up around this most sacred of the symbols. The master of the house sat at the right of the hearth of the home and the mistress on the left. The custom was universal among the Gaels of Ireland and the Highlands; the Mongols also allocated the right hand side to the men, and the left to their womenfolk.

(See also ASHES; FIRE.)

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways*, and L. Wright, *Keep the Home Fires Burning* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957 and 1964 respectively).

The Vestal Virgins

Whatever happened to other people's fires, there was one which must always have been carefully tended in a little early community, and that was the domestic fire of the chief or king. So long as that burned, there was a supply of fire for the whole people, and there is some reason for saying that it was in a sense an embodiment of the communal life . . . So it is not to be wondered at that there was a public Vesta in Rome, and that her fire was tended by virgins, the successors of the king's daughters . . . There were six of these women in historical times, originally, it is said, four. They were chosen, while still little girls, from families of patrician origin, that is to say descended from original or early settlers of Rome, and they served for 30 years (originally it had been but five), during which time they must not marry. If one of them was found unchaste, she was not executed, for she was too holy to kill, but put into an underground chamber in the Field of Ill-Luck *(Campus sceleratus)*, and there left to die of hunger and lack of air, or be miraculously rescued, if Vesta chose thus to vindicate her innocence. It was an ordeal, not an execution. Her lover, if known, was beaten to death.

H. J. Rose, *Ancient Roman Religion*

Mansell Collection

In classical times the communal or sacred hearth, was kept continuously alight; Vesta, the Roman hearth goddess, was served by Vestal Virgins whose duty it was to tend the perpetual fire in her temple: 5th century statue from the Museo Communale, Rome

Heather

Popularly thought to bring good luck, white heather is considered to be particularly effective and is often sold by gypsies and worn as a charm: at one time heather was burnt to induce rainfall and the broomsticks on which witches rode to the sabbaths were traditionally made of heather or broom.

Chris Barker

Heaven

The final home of the righteous after death: the joy of the Christian heaven consists in being eternally close to God; in Valhalla, the paradise of the Norsemen, warriors engaged in tournaments during the day and feasted at night: the Egyptian dead were thought to live in eternal happiness with the sun god or to be ritually assimilated to the god Osiris: the Mohammedan paradise contained the beautiful black-eyed houris to serve the pleasures of the faithful. See PARADISE.

Bodleian Library

Tate Gallery/Layton-Sun

The Greek goddess Hecate, mistress of ghosts and spectres and of everything dark and uncanny, is shown in a painting by William Blake in company with nightmarish, eerie creatures

Heralded by wolves, she journeys through the night with a band of uncanny followers, terrifying the unwary traveller; because of her association with the underworld, the goddess Hecate's aid is often enlisted by sorcerers, black magicians and necromancers

HECATE

A MINOR GODDESS of the Greek pantheon, Hecate was not a true Olympian. But she was the most important representative of the uncanny, a powerful figure in the kind of popular and private belief that is ignored in Homer. Indeed she is not mentioned in the *Iliad* or in the *Odyssey* or in fragments of heroic epic. If her name is Greek, it is the feminine form of the epithet *hekatos*, which as applied to Apollo means 'far shooting' but might in her case mean merely 'distant' or 'remote'. She has connections with Apollo's sister Artemis, also an archer, and she may share with Artemis a common origin in Asia Minor.

The earliest full account of her is in Hesiod's *Theogony* (c 8th century). Most scholars consider this an interpolation, though an early one, interesting in its own right. Most recently it has been argued by M. L. West that it is on the contrary a personal confession of faith by Hesiod, who was less interested in his other deities. In this passage Hecate is said to be daughter of the Titan Perses by Asteria who was sister of Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis. 'Zeus honoured Hecate above all and gave her glorious gifts, to have a portion in the earth and in the unharvested sea'; she thus has a portion or a footing in earth, in heaven and in the sea, and is invoked by any who make sacrifices to the gods. Those whose prayers she receives favourably achieve great honour and wealth. Though she had been among the Titans defeated by the gods, Zeus did her no violence and she continued to be honoured on Olympus. She sits by kings in judgement, helps speakers in the

assembly and gives victory and glory in war to those whom she favours. She is a helper in games, in sea-fishing and in cattle-breeding. She is appointed by Zeus to be nurse of the young.

In strong contrast to this dignified, universal and wholly anthropomorphic goddess stands the figure presented in nearly all the other references. Her special connection with the underworld appears in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter where she alone, except for the sun god Helios, hears the cry of Persephone as she is carried off by Pluto to Hades. By the end of the 5th century BC literature presents her in her usual character, which must have been much older in common belief, as the mistress of ghosts and spectres and of everything dark and uncanny. She appears sometimes with the title of *antaia* (she who meets), since travellers or walkers by night might meet her in lonely places as a terrifying apparition. In this aspect she was also called *einodia* (the goddess who appears on the way), once apparently a name for a goddess in her own right, and *triodos* or *trioditis* (the goddess of parting ways). She is in many scattered references connected with the ghosts of suicides or of those who had died untimely, who could join her host of uncanny followers at night. Her favourite animal was the dog, which was often sacrificed to her. She was even reckoned the mother of the monster Scylla with her many dogs' heads; she could send up ghosts from Hades, drive people mad, and cause epilepsy by her assaults. She is associated with sorcery and black magic, and in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius, the sorceress Medea shows her beloved Jason how to win Hecate's aid by a sacrifice.

Medea instructs Jason to bathe in the river and then, alone and clothed in dusky raiment, to dig a round pit. In the pit he is to kill a ewe and sacrifice it whole on a heap of faggots and to propitiate Hecate he must pour on honey from a goblet. He must then retreat from the pyre and not turn back when he hears the sound of feet or the baying of hounds, or he will spoil the rites and may even not return to his comrades. Jason carries out these instructions, wearing a robe given to him by his former lover, queen Hypsipyle of Lemnos. He pours mixed libations on the victim as it lies on the faggots, calling on Hecate under the name of Brimo (Mighty One) to be his helper in the ordeal which faces him, of yoking the fire-breathing bulls of Aeetes. When he steps back, Hecate, who has heard the invocation in her cave, comes to receive the offering. Round her head is a garland of oak leaves, among which are fearful snakes. There is a gleam of innumerable torches and shrill howling from her infernal hounds. The ground trembles at her tread and the river nymphs cry shrill.

Queen of the Ghosts

Hence we find a grim and fantastic Hekate who is queen of the ghosts, and therefore of all manner of magic, the blacker the better. In this capacity she is also goddess of the cross-roads . . . for cross-roads are great centres of ghostly and magical activity in wellnigh all countries. It is apparently for this reason that her statues are often triple, so that she may look down all three at once of the roads which meet at the point where she stands. At this uncanny spot, then, offerings of food for Hekate were commonly placed . . . and here the goddess was believed on occasion to appear, especially by night, in terrible aspect . . .

H. J. Rose *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*

She Who Makes Dogs Shiver

In Theocritus Simaetha weaves a love spell to win back her faithless lover, in the course of which she prays to Hecate of the underworld 'before whom even the dogs stand shivering as she comes over the graves of the dead and the dark blood' to make her drugs potent. In Lycophron's *Alexandra* Cassandra prophesies that Hecuba will be turned to a dog, will be stoned to death and will then become one of the hounds of Hecate, terrifying with her baying all who will not worship the image of the goddess. Ulysses, who will lead the stoning, will later on his wanderings be forced to build a cenotaph to Hecuba in Sicily, fearing the anger of the three-necked goddess.

So too in Virgil's *Aeneid* Aeneas is instructed by the Sibyl to invoke Hecate for her necessary help if he is to be admitted to the underworld, and Hecate's coming is attended by the howling of wolves and the trembling of the ground. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Hecate is one of the powers invoked by Medea to help in rejuvenating Aeson by magical rites. In Lucian's *Philopseudes* (*The Liar*) Hecate is raised to bring with her Chrysis, who had been the lover of Glaucias. But she disappears at dawn with Chrysis and all her infernal spectres. From these passages it is clear that Hecate's help was needed in many forms of magic, particularly of black magic, including necromancy.

Hecate seems to have originated in Caria, in the south-west corner of Asia Minor, where Greek personal names based on hers, such as Hecataeus, were most common. The boundary between her and Artemis is not always easy to define, particularly because both have some connection with the moon, but in Homer and in the more accepted mythology the two goddesses have different places in the divine genealogies. The explanation of this affinity between dark and infernal Hecate and bright Artemis who may not stay in the presence of death, is no doubt historical. Artemis herself in some cults was savage and in Ephesus had many breasts, like a mother goddess. The Greek imagination, so productive of myths like later philosophical thought, was increasingly given to clear distinctions and definitions. Natural forces and phenomena which even for us have contrasted aspects, were personified in ancient myth in deities that had often contradictory natures. In Greek myth the contradictory aspects of a great Nature goddess were developed into distinct goddesses, rather as white light is broken into component coloured rays by the spectroscope. One of these aspects was Hecate, who retained primitive characteristics. Thus in the Orphic *Argonautica* of the 3rd century AD she still appears with three heads, on the left that of a maned horse, in the middle that of a savage snake, on the right that of a frenzied bitch.

Statues or other representations of her with three heads or three bodies joined back to back, facing three ways, appear only late in Greek art, but must represent an ancient conception. The threefold aspect of Hecate, however represented, is clearly an antique notion, recalling that of savage idols as depicted in other mythologies and traditions of art.

E. D. PHILLIPS

FURTHER READING: M. P. Nilsson, *History of Greek Religion* (Greenwood, 1980).

Sonia Halliday

Hegira

Arabic meaning 'the departure', marking the occasion of Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD to escape his persecutors who were conspiring against him: the term also signifies the beginning of the Mohammedan era from which Moslem dating commences, in the same way as the Christian calendar is reckoned from the birth of Christ.

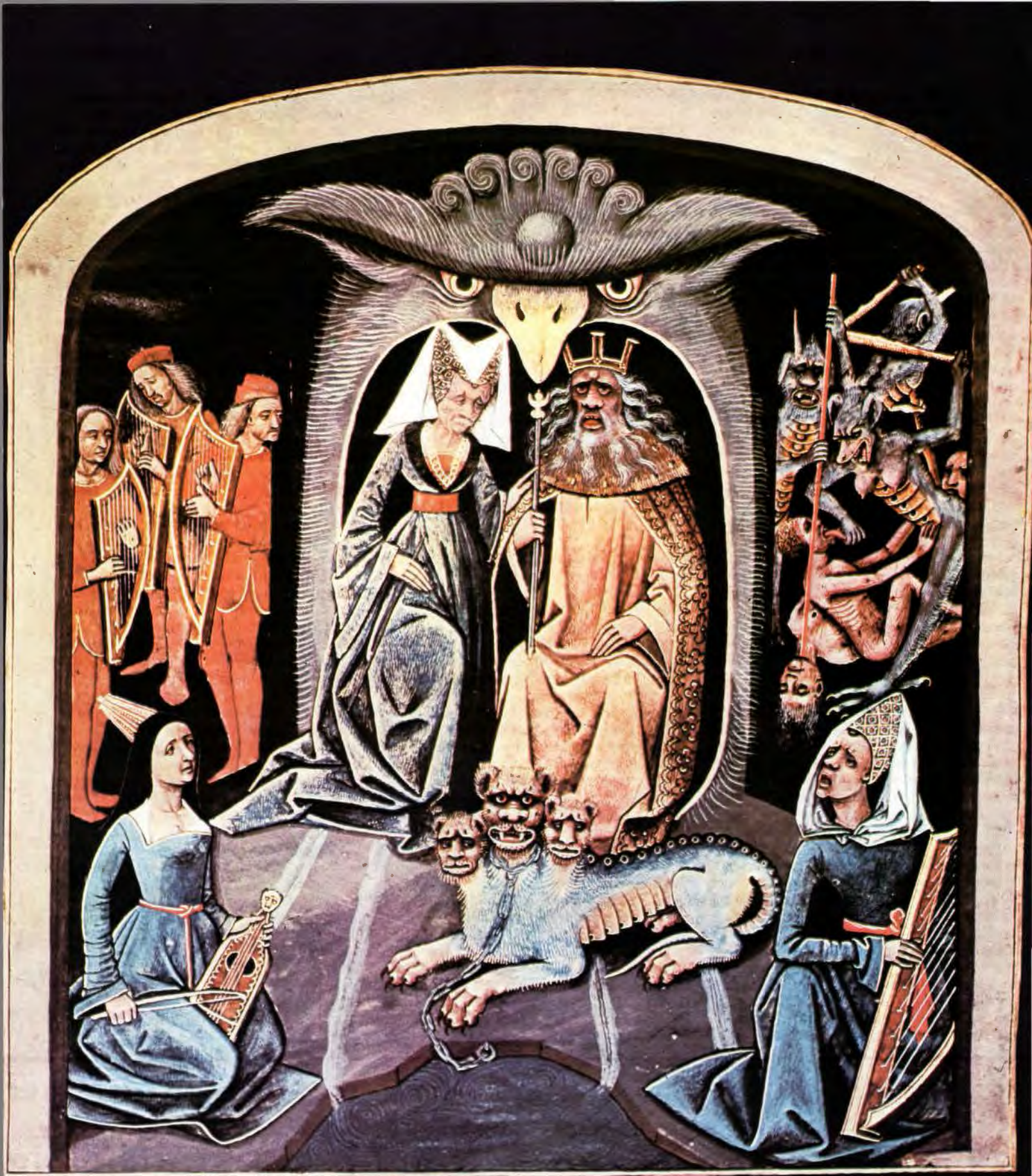
See MOHAMMED.

Villa Guilia Museum

Helen of Troy

According to Greek mythology, the most beautiful woman in the world: daughter of the mortal Leda and the god Zeus in the guise of a swan: her beauty attracted all the princes of Greece and to avoid strife her foster-father made the suitors vow to defend the chosen husband against anyone who resented his good fortune; she married Menelaus, and on her abduction by Paris, the former suitors stood by their oaths and besieged Troy: Helen reappears in some of the Faust stories of the Middle Ages.

See FAUST; SIMON MAGUS; TROY.



HELL

Det Kongelige Bibliotek Copenhagen

The cold darkness of the grave, reflected in early ideas of the underworld, turned in Judaism and Christianity into a hell of eternal fiery torment for the wicked

'Oh, you knotty, rugged, proud piece of flesh! You stony, rocky, flinty hard-heart, what wilt thou do when thou art roaring amongst the damned?' Bellowed by a hellfire preacher of the 17th century, the question frightened a ten-year-old boy named John Rogers half out of his wits, and he went to sleep every night with his hands in an anxiously prayerful attitude in case the demons came to fetch him. Ola Elizabeth Winslow quotes the story in her life of John Bunyan, who as a boy was so haunted by nightmares of hell that he wished he was a devil himself, on the principle that it would be better to be a torturer than one of the tortured. Another famous preacher of the day, Vavasor Powell, traced his conversion to a bout of toothache which caused him to wonder, if the temporary pain of toothache was so hard to bear, what would the eternal agony of hell be like?

At this period the established doctrine of hell was beginning to be challenged, though rarely in public because those who disbelieved in it considered the threat of hell the supreme deterrent to atheism, immorality and crime. But hell kept its hold on most Christians, though with steadily weakening force in succeeding generations, into this century. In 1916 James Joyce published, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, one of the most powerful descriptions of the horrors of hell ever written, based on what he had been taught at a Roman Catholic school in Ireland. And on the Protestant front, fundamentalist hellfire preaching is by no means extinct.

Hell retained its long grip on the Christian mind because its existence is stated in the New Testament, because of its supposed value as a deterrent, and because of the common human observation that in this life the wicked flourish while the good suffer, with the consequent demand for rewards and punishments to right the balance in the life to come. In descriptions of hell, much ingenuity was frequently devoted to making the punishment fit the crime.

In addition, though to explain belief in hell solely in terms of sado-masochism is to oversimplify, there is no mistaking the lip-licking avidity with which its torments were relished. For hundreds of years the 'dooms', horribly imaginative pictures of the tortures to come, were carved and painted on the walls of churches to warn unbelievers and sinners. The *Apocalypse of Peter* of the early 2nd century, which ranked second in popularity among Christians only to the beauties and terrors of the Book of Revelation itself, described the 'place of punishment':

> And some were there hanging by their tongues; and these were they that blasphemed the way of righteousness, and under them was laid fire flaming and tormenting them . . . And there were also others, women hanged by their hair above that mire which boiled up; and these were they that adorned themselves for adultery . . . And in another place were gravelstones sharper than swords or any spit, heated with fire, and men and women clad in filthy rags rolled upon them in torment. And these were they that were rich and trusted in their riches . . . Beside them shall be girls clad in darkness for a garment, and they shall be sore chastised and their flesh shall be torn in pieces. These are they that kept not their virginity until they were given in marriage . . .

The medieval picture of hell, a gigantic concentration camp of appalling fiery heat far underground, with its entrances through volcanoes like Etna (or through the gaping mouth of Leviathan, the terrible dragon of the Old Testament) hit on something very close to geological truth, as Jacquetta Hawkes has pointed out (in *A Land*) for beneath the earth's surface the rock substance is molten with heat. 'Only a score of miles below the surface on which we walk the crust is molten . . . we do in fact maintain our fragile lives on a wafer balanced between a hellish morass and unlimited space.' It also hit on a psychological truth, for accounts of hell closely resemble some visionary experiences, and some states of mind induced by drugs or by mental illness.

Prehistoric burials suggest that the earliest human beings were believers in some sort of existence after death; and the custom of burying the remains in the earth suggests the belief that the dead lived on underground (see CULT OF THE DEAD; EARTH). Depictions of headless figures, if they represent the spirits of people who had been beheaded in life, may contain the glimmerings of the idea that what happened to a man while he was alive would affect him after he was dead. The headless figures attacked by huge black vultures at Catal Hüyük may even, at a guess, represent the wicked being punished after death (see HEADLESS SPIRITS).

Land of No Return

The earliest people who definitely believed in a judgement after death, with rewards and punishments, were the Egyptians (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; EGYPT) but they concentrated on the rewards and said little of the punishments. There is one reference to the wicked being tortured in pits of fire but generally the Egyptians thought that those who were weighed and found wanting after death would be eternally annihilated.

In Mesopotamian literature there is no punishment after death, and no reward either. All the dead, good and bad, rich and poor, powerful and humble alike, go to the 'land of no return', the house of darkness which was like a gigantic communal grave, surrounded by walls and barred by gates, where the ghosts flew about like spectral birds and gnawed miserably on clay and dust.

Homer's underworld is also not a hell but a place of dreary darkness to which all, or nearly all, the dead go. This was the house of Hades, the god of death, whose name means 'the unseen' and who ruled what the *Iliad* calls 'the hateful Chambers of Decay that fill the gods themselves with horror.' Some vengeful lines of Sappho emphasize the hopeless condition of the dead:

> When you are dead you will lie in your grave, forgotten for ever,
> Because you despise the flowers of the Muse; in Hades – as here –
> Dimly your shadow will flit with the rest, unnoticed, obscure.

The Greeks feared death so intensely that they did not like to name it, saying as many people still do that someone who died had 'departed'. In the *Odyssey* the ghost of Achilles says that he would sooner be alive

Left **Pluto, the king of the Greek underworld enthroned in the 'hateful Chambers of Decay' with his wife Persephone. At their feet lies the monstrous dog Cerberus, guardian of the entrance: from a French MS** ***Above*** **The Devil dragging away a sinner: 15th century German illustration**

The Stench of Hell

They lie in exterior darkness. For remember, the fire of hell gives forth no light. At the command of God, the fire of the Babylonian furnace lost its heat but not its light, so, at the command of God, the fire of hell, while retaining the intensity of its heat, burns eternally in darkness. It is a never ending storm of darkness, dark flames and dark smoke of burning brimstone, amid which the bodies are heaped one upon another without even a glimpse of air. Of all the plagues with which the land of the Pharaohs was smitten, one plague alone, that of darkness, was called horrible. What name, then, shall we give to the darkness of hell which is to last not for three days alone but for all eternity?

The horror of this strait and dark prison is increased by its awful stench. All the filth of the world, all the offal and scum of the world, we are told, shall run there as to a vast reeking sewer when the terrible conflagration of the last day has purged the world. The brimstone, too, which burns there in such prodigious quantity fills all hell with its intolerable stench; and the bodies of the damned themselves exhale such a pestilential odour that, as Saint Bonaventure says, one of them alone would suffice to infect the whole world. The very air of this world, that pure element, becomes foul and unbreathable when it has been long enclosed. Consider then what must be the foulness of the air of hell. Imagine some foul and putrid corpse that has lain rotting and decomposing in the grave, a jelly-like mass of liquid corruption. Imagine such a corpse a prey to flames, devoured by the fire of burning brimstone and giving off dense choking fumes of nauseous loathsome decomposition. And then imagine this sickening stench, multiplied a millionfold and a millionfold again from the millions upon millions of fetid carcasses massed together in the reeking darkness, a huge and rotting human fungus. Imagine all this, and you will have some idea of the horror of the stench of hell.

James Joyce *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

as the servant of a landless peasant than be king of all the dead.

Hades became a name for the underworld itself, and later a name for the Christian hell. It was either far in the west, where the sun died in the evening, or deep underground with the entrances at many places on the earth's surface. These entrances may be the legacy of an earlier belief that the dead stayed in the places where they were buried. The Styx, a stream in Arcadia, which disappeared underground, became the principal river of the underworld, across which the dead had to be ferried by Charon (see CHARON). What later became the most famous entrance of all ('easy is the descent to Avernus') was at the lake of Avernus, not far from Naples in Italy, which Virgil described in the *Aeneid*. 'There was a deep and rugged cave, stupendous and yawning wide, protected by a lake of black water and the glooming forest . . . poisonous the breath which streamed up from those black jaws and rose to the vault of sky.'

An intense love of, and concentration on, this life naturally tends to reduce the next world to a faint shadow-play. But although the Homeric picture of the dead remained extremely influential, there were other views. Some of the more important dead lived on their tombs, where they were venerated and consulted by mortals. Belief in different treatment for different people in the next world was stimulated by the mystery religions which promised a blessed afterlife to those who were initiated (see ELEUSIS; MYSTERY RELIGIONS; ORPHEUS).

Punishment in the underworld appears even in Homer. In the *Iliad* the Furies 'make men pay for perjury in the world below' and the deposed god Cronus and his allies (see CRONUS) are imprisoned in 'the bottomless pit' of Tartarus, 'where the deepest of all caverns yawns below the world, where the Iron Gates are, and the Brazen Theshold, as far below Hades as the earth is under heaven.' In the *Odyssey* (book 11) a fortunate few go to a happy afterlife in Elysium and a few who have personally insulted Zeus are tormented in Tartarus.

In Plato's time (4th century BC) there were stories about punishment after death. A character in the *Republic* mentions them and says that when a man grows old he cannot help uneasily wondering whether the stories are true. In the last book of the *Republic* the 'myth of Er' describes how the dead are judged and how the unjust are sent down under the earth. For every wrong they have done they will suffer tenfold and after a journey of 1000 years under the earth they will be purged. Er saw tyrants and other peculiarly evil men at the mouth of a cavern. When any of them who had not been sufficiently purged tried to emerge from it, the mouth 'gave a roar' and 'wild men of fiery aspect' seized them, flayed them with scourges and took them away to plunge them into Tartarus.

The descent of Aeneas to the underworld influenced the medieval picture of hell, and especially Dante's *Inferno* (see DANTE) which was so graphic that simple-minded people assumed that the poet had really visited hell. In the *Aeneid* (book 6) Aeneas sees the great battlements of Tartarus and the burning Phlegethon. The entrance is guarded by a Fury and from inside comes the sound of savage flogging, the clanking of iron chains and a terrible lamentation.

The Valley of Fire

The picture of life after death as a powerless obscurity in darkness, found in the literature of Homeric Greece, Mesopotamia and early Palestine, conflicts with the archeological evidence from the same areas that the dead were buried with grave goods, implying an active life in the otherworld. Evidently the literature does not adequately reflect the full range of beliefs, and in Palestine it seems clear that the adherents of Yahweh as the one supreme god deliberately discouraged belief in an active life after death, to prevent people from trafficking with any other supernatural beings.

In the older passages in the Old Testament all the dead, good and bad alike, go to Sheol where they live in dust and darkness (like the Mesopotamian dead) and where they know nothing, so that it is no use trying to consult them. Sheol is a great pit or a walled city, 'the land of forgetfulness', 'the land of silence'. Maggots are the bed beneath you there and worms are your covering. No god rules in Sheol and the dead are forgotten by Yahweh. But as the story of the witch of Endor (I Samuel, chapter 28) shows, they were not entirely forgotten by men and some tried to enlist their help.

Jewish hatred of foreign oppressors, with the desire to see them punished in the next world if not in this, was partly responsible for a change of attitude. So was the old problem of the unfairness of life, vividly expressed in the book of Job (chapter 21): 'One dies in full prosperity, being wholly at ease and secure, his body full of fat and the marrow of his bones moist. Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having tasted of good. They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them.'

Considerations of this kind led to a growing belief that the lot of all men after death was not the same. In the 2nd century BC the Jewish leader Judas Maccabaeus made an offering of money at Jerusalem on behalf of some of his dead soldiers, on whose bodies have been found objects consecrated to idols. This was 'a reconciliation for the dead that they might be delivered from sin' and implies the belief that they would otherwise suffer in the afterworld (2 Maccabees, chapter 12). The book of Daniel predicts the 'many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

There is no mention of physical torture here, but there is in another work of the same period, *1 Enoch*, which includes a vision of 'a place chaotic and horrible' with 'seven stars of the heaven bound together in it, like great mountains and burning with fire.' It was here that the angels who lusted after human women (see DEVIL) would be punished, an early trace of the belief that the fallen angels, or demons, live in hell. Then Enoch sees Sheol itself, a mountain in the west with hollow compartments in it where the souls of the dead are to wait for the day of judgement. One is for the righteous and one is for the sinners, who wait there 'in great pain' (chapters 17–22). In a later passage there is 'a deep valley with burning fire. And they brought the kings and the mighty, and began to cast them into the deep valley' (chapter 54).

This valley of fire was Gehenna where, it came to be believed, the wicked would writhe tormented in the flames. Some of the Jewish rabbis said that the punishment there would not last more than 12 months. Some said that the righteous would go straight to paradise, the wicked to eternal pain in Gehenna, and the in-between would suffer for a year in Gehenna and then be annihilated. Gehenna has three entrances, one in

For hundreds of years sadistically imaginative visions of the horrors of hell served as a warning to sinners and unbelievers. Great ingenuity was exercised in giving each sin an appropriate punishment. In the *Damnation of Lovers* by the 16th century German artist Mathias Grünewald *(right)*, the flesh in whose joys the sinners have luxuriated is aged and withered and is pierced by noxious beasts, representing the poison and corruption of lust
Following page **Detail from Giotto's *Last Judgement*, showing the hell pictured by Dante with the monstrous Satan chewing on the body of Judas Iscariot. Dante's account of hell was so vivid that people thought he had actually been there**

Giraudon

the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem. It was next door to paradise, with the implication that part of the misery of the condemned was to see the bliss they had lost, an idea that passed into Christian theology.

The development of a Jewish hell may have been influenced by Persian Zoroastrianism in which the 'followers of the lie' are punished after death. Hell is in the far north, deep down beneath the earth, dark and stinking, the home of demons and lies, a place of stench, filth, pain and misery. There the damned soul must remain until Ahriman himself is destroyed (see AHRIMAN), by which time it will at last have come to understand reality and the wickedness of Ahriman, and will be ready for its release.

A holy man named Artay Viraf saw hell in a vision induced by hashish. It was like the inside of a grave. He experienced 'cold and an icy wind, dryness and stench', and he saw a narrow and fearful pit, thick with darkness. Noxious beasts tore and worried at the damned. And this hell had also the horror of the grave's solitariness, for each soul thought 'I am alone'.

Fire and Brimstone

From Gehenna the Christian hell developed. Jesus said that when the Son of Man comes in glory, he will separate the good from the wicked like sheep from goats. The goats will be driven away 'into eternal punishment' in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matthew, chapter 25).

The association of fire with hell, sometimes taken as a symbol of purging, seems to have originated in the idea of burning up rubbish. Gehenna took its name from the valley of Hinnom where the rubbish of Jerusalem was burned. There is the same notion in Malachi (4.1): 'all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up.' Again in Matthew (chapter 13) Jesus tells a parable about the burning of weeds and explains it with: 'The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

Many of St Paul's references to the fate of the wicked suggest that they will be annihilated, though in Romans (chapter 2) dealing with 'the day of wrath', he says that

Giraudon

British Museum

Sinners descended to the bottomless pit through the gaping maw of a monster *Left* The mouth of hell, from the 12th century Winchester Psalter *Above* After his crucifixion, Christ was believed to have descended into hell, broken open the gates and released the dead from the chains binding them: *The Harrowing of Hell* by a 15th century painter of the School of Savoy

for every human being who does evil 'there will be tribulation and distress'. In the book of Revelation (chapter 21) 'the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death' is the final destination of the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars. The brimstone is sulphur ('burning stone') and the reference is to Isaiah (30.33): 'For a burning place has long been prepared . . . the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.'

Only one passage in the New Testament (Matthew 25.46) says that the punishment in hell will last for all eternity and in the 3rd century the great theologian Origen suggested that the torment in hell would not last for ever, that the wicked and even the Devil himself would eventually be redeemed and evil totally annihilated, and that the 'fire' of hell might not be a real fire but the pangs of guilty conscience. Even he was worried that by questioning the eternity of punishment he might weaken the chief deterrent to immorality, but in fact his views were rejected by the majority of Christians and condemned as heretical by the church.

The Harrowing of Hell

In the medieval hell the damned suffered 'the pain of loss' the agony of being cut off from God, and 'the pain of sense' the physical tortures inflicted by demons. Most of the dead did not go to hell, or to heaven, but to purgatory where they were purified of sin and could be helped by the prayers of the faithful on earth, but in most descriptions of purgatory the agonies are almost as frightful as those of hell itself. Many modern Christians have returned to the outlook of Origen, seeing hell as a place where the guilty are purged of evil and unbelief, but not by physical torture. Others reject hell entirely, believing that God's infinite mercy will extend to everyone, or alternatively, that the irredeemable are not tormented and tortured but are simply annihilated.

Christ was crucified on the first Good Friday and, as the Apostles' Creed says, 'descended into hell'. He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday and the story grew up that in the interval he had 'harrowed' or despoiled hell by conquering Death and releasing his captives. The souls of the dead were in the darkness of the underworld when at midnight there appeared a great light, like the light of the sun, and a voice like thunder demanded, 'Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be lifted up, ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.' Death skulking in his lair asked, 'Who is this King of Glory?' and was answered, 'The Lord strong and mighty in battle' (Psalm 24). The gates and bars were broken down, the dead were loosed from their chains, the King of Glory entered in the form of a man and all the dark places of Hades were filled with light. Christ trampled on Death and seized Satan, ordering him to be tied hand and foot. He raised up Adam and the patriarchs and prophets, the righteous men of old from Abraham to John the Baptist, and led them to paradise.

Outside Christianity there are many

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

Hell, final resting place of the damned, is the demonic counterpart of Heaven, home of the righteous. The Devil rules in the nether regions, while Christ sits enthroned on high: medieval manuscript illustration

stories of descents to the underworld, including those of Odysseus, Aeneas and the hero of the *Kalevala* (see FINLAND). In some of the stories the hero harrows hell by stealing one of its treasures, which may carry immortality with it (as Arthur stole the otherworld cauldron – see ARTHUR), by releasing a victim from Death or by alleviating the pains of the tormented. The Greek hero Theseus went to the underworld but was held fast there until he was released by Hercules, who also fetched away Cerberus, the many-headed dog who guarded the gate of Hades. This Labour of Hercules may really have been a quest for immortality and a conquest of death. According to the *Iliad*, Hercules shot Hades with an arrow at the gate of the underworld and left him in agony. Xenophon's *Persian Expedition* says that the Greeks anchored near the Acherusian peninsula on the south coast of the Black Sea, 'where Heracles is said to have descended into the lower world to fetch Cerberus, and where they still show evidence of his descent for a quarter of a mile down into the earth.'

There was a Sumerian myth that the goddess Inanna went to the underworld to bring back her lover Dumuzi (Tammuz). She turned into a corpse but was revived by the messengers of the god Enki and came back to earth. It is likely that in the original tale she succeeded in rescuing Dumuzi. In Hindu mythology the god Krishna went to the kingdom of the dead and obtained the release of a favourite pupil. In Buddhism a Bodhisattva often enters a hell and releases the sufferers there from their pains. The Chinese Buddhist goddess Kwan Yin visited a hell in a trance and it was turned into a paradise.

King of the Dead

The word 'hell' itself comes from an Anglo-Saxon root meaning 'to cover' or 'to conceal' with an obvious application to a grave. The Scandinavian goddess Hel ruled those who died of old age or disease (those who fell in battle went to a happy afterlife in Valhalla). She was fierce and pitiless and her underworld of Nifelheim was freezing cold, like the lowest circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*.

The Islamic picture of hell resembles the Jewish and Christian ones, by which it was influenced. In India the idea of punishment of the wicked after death is very old but in both Buddhism and Hinduism the numerous hells are not places of eternal torture but stages in the chain of birth, death and rebirth which the self must undergo unless it can escape from the cycle altogether. At each death the self goes to a paradise or a hell corresponding to the way it has behaved in each life.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead says that after death each person goes before Yama, the King of the Dead, who holds up to him a mirror in which his deeds are reflected. 'The mirror in which Yama seems to read your past is your own memory, and also his judgement is your own. It is you yourself who pronounce your own judgement, which in its turn determines your next rebirth.' The terrible god and the frightening monsters which are seen are 'an illusion'. But popular belief in India, China and Japan imagines tortures and torturers as real, as vindictive and as ingenious as any in the western traditions. The history of hell is a descent into the infernal pit of the human mind.

(See also FIRE; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD; PURGATORY.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Bibliothèque Nationale Paris

Homer Sykes

HELSTON FURRY DANCE

THE HABIT of giving vent to communal rapture, protest or solidarity by means of some form of procession has grown out of that most ancient of folk rituals, the processional dance. In the ancient borough of Helston, in Cornwall, the beginning of May is made the occasion for a civic festival which may be older than the borough itself. At the centre of this annual celebration is a procession, or succession of processions, known locally as the Furry Dance, which now takes place on 8 May. Throughout the day the town band play the 'Processional' tune, one of the oldest folk tunes in Europe and head each column of dancers as it wends its way along one of the prescribed routes. In their gala dress, bedecked with sprigs of lily of the valley, the files of men and women move forward for the first phrase of the melody and then turn inwards to 'swing corners' and 'swing partners' on the second phrase, before heading forward once again.

This street perambulation is broken occasionally by a 'mark time' and, while the band continue to play in position, the column melts into single file and the dancers enter a nearby house, threading through the rooms and lobbies, knocking on doors or ringing the bell and touching the wall as they go, before re-emerging into the street. The bearing and style of the dancers conveys both the gaiety and dignity of the ritual, calculated to express both a

Homer Sykes

The Helston Furry Dance performed in May, celebrates the conquest of good over the forces of evil and darkness, and the welcoming of the new spring; it embodies an amalgam of myths and lore *Above* The parade figure of a dragon relates to a local legend of the defeat of a dragon *Right* Children garbed in white perform a traditional Flora's Day dance in the streets

deliverance from the powers of darkness and a welcome to the miracle of spring.

The occasion is known as Flora's Day. It is in essence one of the great May Day folk customs of antiquity and was formerly celebrated on 1 May; in recent times it has been held on 8 May, the feast day of Helston's patron, St Michael. This shift of date and the move from pagan tradition to a Christian feast possibly indicates its adoption by the Church, as happened with so many other seasonal folk festivals. For the Furry Dance on Flora's Day in Helston is analogous to the many forms of spring perambulations still surviving in Europe and other parts of the world.

A significant aspect of the Day which has only recently been revived and admitted into the 'proceedings' is the second dance called the *Hal an Tow*, possibly a corruption of 'heel and toe'. A party of youths set out in the early morning light to gather fresh branches of sycamore in the woods, then foregather outside the town by St John's Bridge to enter singing the Hal an Tow song – another ancient folk melody. While they sing, the young men wave the sycamore branches and perambulate along their prescribed route. The words and tune of this Hal an Tow song with its chorus 'For Summer is acome O and Winter is agone O', find an echo in other May Day revels, such as the Padstow Procession of Mayers.

There is little doubt that the greenery collected by the Hal an Tow contingent was once available for all the Furry Dances. They may be all regarded as 'Mayers' performing their office of purging away from the streets and houses the darkness and evil of winter and bringing in the life and light of summer in a prehistoric ritual of 'spring-cleaning'.

Helston no longer has a central dramatic character to portray death and revival in its annual ritual, as at Padstow, but instead there are local legends of dragons and of the Devil himself, that beast of darkness, being driven off by St Michael, which account for the procession of rejoicing Mayers. Comparison with May Day folk festivals in other countries conjures up a picture of centuries of dancing life-givers dispensing their magical spells as they perambulate the bounds of the community in the spring of each year.

Hirmer Fotoarchiv

The divine smith of Greek mythology, Hephaestus was cast into the sea at birth by his mother Hera, who wished to rid herself of such an ugly child. Found and reared by two nereids, his fame as a craftsman quickly reached the ears of the gods and he was summoned to assume his rightful place in heaven: the return of Hephaestus to Olympus, from the Clitias krater

The word 'volcano' comes from Vulcan, the Latin name of the lame smith god Hephaestus; his role as god of elemental fire and patron of metal-workers caused him to be feared and respected by mankind

HEPHAESTUS

THE UNCOUTH GOD of smiths, who was himself a smith, Hephaestus (or Vulcan as he was known to the Romans) was originally a god of fire, in the aspect of flaming gas rising from the earth in certain places. It was only later that he came to be associated with volcanoes in Sicily and Italy. His name was used poetically as a synonym for fire from Homer down to poets who were familiar with Nature-philosophy. He was not in origin a Greek god, his name having no etymology in Greek, but his cult spread from Lycia in southwestern Anatolia to various parts of Greece; there are frequent references to him in Greek literature.

In the *Iliad* he is the son of Hera, who threw him into the sea in shame at having borne such a weakly infant. He was rescued by the nymphs Thetis and Eurynome and remained with them in secret for nine years, making jewels and ornaments, until his talents were discovered by the gods and he was given a smithy on Olympus. Reconciled with his mother, he once tried to protect her from the anger of Zeus, but for this interference Zeus seized him by the foot and hurled him out of heaven. He fell for a whole day before finally striking the island of Lemnos, crushing his legs in the fall: this is only one explanation for his lameness. Hephaestus built the palaces on Olympus and Zeus's golden throne, but is particularly famous as a maker of armour: of Diomedes' breastplate, of the sceptre and also the aegis, or shield held by Zeus, which when shaken produced storms and thunder, and of the arms made for Achilles to replace the armour lost with the slaying of Patroclus. Among his other wonders are mechanical handmaidens of gold, possessed of thought and speech, who support him as he moves, and who assist him at his work. Sometimes he acts as cup-bearer at the feasts of the gods, who laugh at him as he bustles round clumsily on his lame legs. In his elemental character he is called by Hera to drive back the river Xanthus because the river god is furious at his stream being blocked with corpses slain by Achilles, and threatens to overwhelm him. Hephaestus spreads fire everywhere, burning the corpses and the vegetation by the river, and then begins to dry up the river until Xanthus entreats Hera to stop him.

A Net to Ensnare Lovers

In the *Odyssey* Hephaestus, with Athene, is called 'skilled in making gold flow round silver'. He is the maker of a silver mixing bowl with gold edges given by Phaedimus of Sidon to Menelaus; also of the gold and silver hounds that guard the palace of Alcinous, immortal and ageless animals. In a celebrated mythological scene, the lay of Demodocus, minstrel of Alcinous, Hephaestus takes revenge for the faithlessness of Aphrodite, here his wife. While he is away in his favourite island of Lemnos, Aphrodite is joined by her lover, Ares, but at dawn they are trapped together by an invisible gossamer-light metal net which Hephaestus had forged for the purpose. While they are ensnared, the gods are called in to laugh at them.

Hesiod in the *Theogony* states clearly that Hera bore Hephaestus without any union with Zeus because she had a bitter quarrel with him at the time. This could be the reason why Hephaestus was born lame: Hera on her own was not breeding in the normal manner. Hephaestus's wife here is Aglaia, the youngest of the Graces. Hesiod relates how Zeus, who wishes to punish men for having acquired fire through Prometheus, orders Hephaestus to create the beautiful Pandora to be a plague to them. She was fashioned of clay in the form of a beautiful maiden, like the immortal goddesses, and other deities gave her other qualities, including a deceitful nature and a shameless mind.

In the Homeric Hymns it is said that Hephaestus, like Athene, taught men on earth to make glorious works. They had formerly lived in caves in the mountains like beasts, but now, having learned crafts through him, they live in safety and comfort all their lives in their own houses. Much the same claims are made by Aeschylus for Prometheus as teacher and benefactor.

Among the lyric poets, Simonides (c 556–468 BC) said that Hephaestus made for Minos of Crete the bronze giant Talos who guarded his coasts. Pindar, following others, mentions Hephaestus as maker of the bronze axe which split open the head of Zeus for the birth of Athene. In his *Pythian Odes* the expression 'fountains of Hephaestus' is used for the volcanic fires of Etna which are said to be the breath of the monster Typhon. In Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* Hephaestus appears with the giants who drag Prometheus to the place where he is to be chained on the crag. They remind him that he has orders from Zeus to fasten Prometheus to the rock in bonds of adamant, impenetrably hard, with wedges driven through his body. He is most unwilling to do so and greatly pities Prometheus, a god of his own kin. The sound of his cosmic hammering disturbs the nymphs of Ocean in their caves so that they rise to lament with him.

In Sophocles's *Philoctetes* Hephaestus's fire on Lemnos is mentioned, and in his *Daedalus* the making of Talos by the smith god is prominent. In his satyr-play *Cedalion* it seems that the scene was Hephaestus's workshop on Lemnos, and that the god gave to the blinded giant Orion, his servant, the dwarf Cedalion, as a guide to keep him walking eastward until the rising sun struck his face and restored his sight. In Plato's *Protagoras* Hephaestus works with Athene in a heavenly workshop from which Prometheus steals fire.

In Callimachus's *Hymn to Artemis* the goddess as an infant is taken by her mother Leto to visit Hephaestus on the island of Lipara, where he has his forge and the Cyclopes Arges and Steropes are working under his direction on a golden horse-trough for Poseidon. In Apollonius's *Argonautica* the returning Argonauts pass the smith god's forge in the Aedian islands. Iris swiftly brings word to him from Hera that he shall keep his fires quiet until the Argo has passed. Later Hephaestus drops his hammer to watch, as other deities do, the passage of the Argo through the Wandering Rocks.

God of Erupting Fire

The presence of Hephaestus in the volcanoes of Italy and Sicily becomes even more marked from the time of Aeschylus and Pindar onward, in the 6th century BC. By their day the Greek colonists who settled on these coasts, some of whom came from the eastern Aegean, had transferred to their new homeland the scene of Hephaestus's

In his heavenly smithy, Hephaestus, known to the Romans as Vulcan, forged many fabulous and magical objects, from a shield for Zeus which caused storms and thunder, to golden handmaidens who could both walk and talk: *Vulcan* by Rubens

Prado Museum

activities, as of other fiery manifestations. The god's first western home was apparently Lipara (now Vulcano) also called Hiera Hephaistos, the sacred isle of Hephaestus. He came only later to Etna, where the earlier established Cyclopes became his workmen.

The original seat of Hephaestus was in Lycia where the Lycian Olympus, as described by Maximus of Tyre 'gives forth a flame from its summit, not like the fire of Etna, but peaceful and moderate. This fire is regarded by the Lycians as the temple of the god and his visible images.' The hot gas, as modern travellers have found, was in fact a small escape of burning petroleum. In the Aegean there was such an escape of gas on Hephaestus's mountain Mosychlus on Lemnos, his first foothold. The sudden spread of fire which Hephaestus was able to make is most like that of igniting gas over a wide area. The vents of gas were commonly regarded as the chimneys of his underground forge.

In Asia Minor Hephaestus had 50 shrines but far fewer in other Greek lands, though his cult as a craftsman god was well known in Athens. The Greeks who arrived in the Sicilian and Italian volcanic belt attributed its much more devastating fires to the same god, no doubt fusing him with earlier native gods of fire and volcanic action.

The history of the Roman Volcanus (Vulcan) forms a rather puzzling epilogue to that of the Greek Hephaestus. In classical Latin literature Vulcan makes his appearance very much in the style of Hephaestus. The name Volcanus is of doubtful origin and meaning, but there appears to be an Etruscan deity Velchanos; scholars are inclined to think that Volcanus or Velchanos is an eastern deity, perhaps brought by the Etruscans, and perhaps having a common origin with Hephaestus. Volcanus is a god of fire, but usually of a more menacing or destructive fire than thatt of the original Hephaestus in his normal manifestations. Thus his name is the source of our word 'volcano'.

E. D. PHILLIPS

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Michael Holford

The goddess Hera was possibly an ancient Minoan mother goddess who, with the increasing supremacy of the Greek Zeus, was linked with him in sacred marriage; they were honoured as patrons of lawful marriage despite their own marital irregularities: section from the Parthenon, from the British Museum

Although the queen of heaven was traditionally the patron of lawful marriage, she was frequently unfaithful to the philandering Zeus and their union produced no lawful offspring; as special protectress of females, there is a hint of her origin as a mother goddess

HERA

'LADY' OR 'MISTRESS' was possibly the original meaning of the name Hera, which indicates a line of descent from the old Aegean mother goddess. She became a goddess of marriage and, especially in this capacity, she was worshipped in most areas of Greece in historical antiquity. Yet there can be no doubt that her principal cult centre was the Argive territory in the north-east of the Peloponnese. Tracing the origins of the cult back into Mycenean times, it becomes clearer that the Argolid peninsula was her real domain and that other genuine early centres are indeed rare. In fact these can be reduced to three: Euboea, the large island which lies adjacent to the coasts of Attica, Boeotia and the southern part of Thessaly, whose inhabitants are called Abantes by Homer; Samos, another principal island of the Aegean, off the coast of Ionia; and Olympia, a small plain in Elis, in the west Peloponnese, where there was the sacred grave of Zeus and where the Olympic games were celebrated.

In Euboea, the myth and ritual of Hera were almost identical with the Argive. The name Euboea means the island 'of fair oxen'. Legend said that the Abantes settled there under the leadership of Abas, an early Argive king.

Her temple on Samos was very large and her cult there of considerable antiquity. Tradition said that her image came there from Argos, though the Samians disputed this and believed she had been born under the willow tree in the sanctuary. The confusion in the tradition may support the view that Hera had supplanted an even earlier cult of a goddess but again there is memory of a connection with the Argive.

Hera's temple at Olympia was the oldest and this would imply an association with the tradition that the games were founded by the Argive Hercules – the hero 'called after Hera' (see HERCULES).

Here the chief centre of her cult was the Argive Heraion, 'Our Lady's Temple', built on the lower slopes of a mountain called Euboea and said to have been so called after Hera's nurse. As the principal goddess of the Argive plain, where Agamemnon's royal stronghold of Mycene was situated, she gave wholehearted support to the cause of the Achaeans in the Trojan War. 'The three towns I love best,' says Hera in the *Iliad*, 'are Argos, Sparta and Mycene.'

The Spartan cult of Argive Hera was brought from Argos. Hera's most northerly shrine was at Pharygai, on the Gulf of Malis, in south Thessaly, and this was founded by settlers from the Argolid. She had cult centres in most of the cities of Boeotia, but the oldest appears to have been on Mt Cythaeron at the top of the Corinthian Gulf. Here she had cult centres too at Corinth, Heraia and Sicyon, which are included in Agamemnon's domains as they are defined in the *Iliad*. It seems from excavation that her cult at Heraia was actually derived from the Argive Heraion and, according to tradition, her cults at Sicyon derived from the same centre.

It has been plausibly argued by G. Thomson (in his *Prehistoric Aegean*) that, if the focus of Hera's worship on the mainland was the Argive Heraion, it follows almost of necessity that she must have reached the Argive plain from overseas. Her oldest image in the Heraion, made of pear wood, had been brought there from Tiryns, which was only a short distance away from Nauplia, with its fine natural harbour, which could well have been a main port of call for Minoan traders. At Nauplia there was a cult of Hera Parthenos, 'the Maiden'. At Hermione there was another good

harbour. Here also there was a cult of Hera Parthenos; and there was a tradition that Zeus and Hera landed at Hermione when they arrived in Greece from Crete.

Uneasy Marriage

Not the least contradictory aspect of the relationship of Zeus and Hera, traditional Olympian patrons of lawful marriage, is its lack of lawful offspring. Zeus is father of many children, but Hera is not their mother. Hera has fewer children, but Zeus is not their father. According to Hesiod, Hebe, Ares and Ilithyia at least were the children of Zeus and Hera, but it is doubtful if this claim can be substantiated. Ilithyia, however, could well have been Hera's daughter. For the birthplace was a cave near Cnossus in Crete.

The evidence from inscriptions and from coins in historical times certainly confirms the continuing importance of Hera in Cretan religious belief. Her early Cretan associations are decisive for the view that she was originally a manifestation of the Minoan mother goddess; and they equally support the inference that, despite, or rather perhaps because of, the supremacy of Argive Hera on the mainland, the worship of Hera had been carried over from Crete into Greece.

Hence the uneasy marriage relationship of Zeus and Hera has been plausibly explained as the result of the intrusion of a Greek patriarchal deity, whose original partner may have been called Dione, into the province of the Minoan mother goddess, whose partner, supplanted by Zeus, had once been the hero 'called after Hera', that is to say, no other than Hercules himself. Certainly the Greek evidence for a sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera, though most of it is comparatively late, in part does indicate that Zeus seems to have had an older partner who was not Hera, or Hera an older partner who was not Zeus.

It should be explained that the sacred marriage *(hieros gamos)* is part of the Oriental ritual pattern underlying the concept of such relationships as the Great Mother – Attis, Ishtar-Tammuz, Aphrodite-Adonis (see CYBELE). In our oldest literary source, Homer, there was a sacred marriage in Crete between Iasion and Demeter in a thrice-ploughed field, that is to say, in a field prepared for sowing. The sacred marriage was involved with the religious conception of a vegetation cycle, of the death and rebirth of crops (see DYING GOD; FERTILITY).

There are definite mythological grounds for the view, maintained by Sir James Frazer and A. B. Cook, that, at Cnossus in Crete there had once existed a ritual marriage of sun god and moon goddess in bovine form. In later cult the ritual became a sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera, which reputedly occurred near the river Theren, where a sanctuary was built and yearly sacrifices were offered with traditional wedding rites. Similarly, at Gortyna, also in Crete, the goddess Europa, possessed by Zeus in the form of a bull, became identified with Hera.

Here mention should be made of the view that Hera, described by Homer on many occasions with the traditional epithet *boopis* ('cow-eyed', 'cow-faced') was originally a cow goddess. Her priestess at Argos was Io, who was ravished by Zeus when she had been transformed by him into a cow. The myth of Io also reflects a sacred marriage, the bride being the priestess of Hera, the bridegroom the priest of Zeus disguised as a bull. The ox-herd Argos who watched over Io was *Panoptes* ('all-seeing') – an epithet of Zeus and the sun; and Argos wore a bull's hide.

Mother of the Minotaur

According to the famous myth, Pasiphae ('She who shines on all', that is, the moon), wife of King Minos, conceived a passion for a bull, sent in answer to the prayers of Minos. Instead of sacrificing this bull, as he had promised, Minos sent it away among his herds and sacrificed another one. His punishment for this piece of deception was the unnatural passion of his wife. Daedalus made for Pasiphae a hollow wooden cow on wheels, sewed it up in the hide of a cow which he had skinned, and put it in the meadow where the bull grazed. Inside this image he put Pasiphae, and the bull coupled with it. In due course Pasiphae gave birth to Asterios ('Starry One'), who was called the Minotaur ('Minos bull'). The Minotaur had the head of a bull, but the rest of him was human. In obedience to certain oracles, Minos then shut him up under guard in the labyrinth, which had also been made by Daedalus. The labyrinth, in the Greek tradition, was a building whose intricate windings led astray those who sought to escape from it.

The cow and bull became such integral factors in the life of the communities that they figure in mythology as guides in the founding of cities by those who followed the advice of the sun god. The story of Cadmus, who, in obedience to the Delphic oracle, followed a cow until it lay down on the site of Thebes, is familiar. Since the sun was conceived as a bull, it seems likely that the labyrinth at Cnossus was an actual arena of solar pattern designed for the performance of a mimetic dance, in which a dancer may have masqueraded as a bull and represented the movement of the sun. The labyrinth supposedly built by Daedalus was recognized in antiquity as an imitation of the Egyptian labyrinth, which, in turn, was generally believed to be sacred to the sun. The dances in the labyrinth were connected in antiquity with the Roman Game of Troy, performed by bands of armed youths on horseback.

Juno was identified by the Romans with Greek Hera, and she was worshipped as the queen of heaven, protectress over females, as was Jupiter over males. She was supposed to watch over women from birth to death and the month of June which was named for her, was supposed to be most favourable for marrying.

The Etruscan Herkle and Unial and the Roman Hercules and Juno were in the same sort of mythological relationship as Greek Hercules and Hera. At Roman weddings the bride's girdle was consecrated to Juno and its knot, untied by the bridegroom on the marriage couch, was called the 'Herculean knot', which, as Cook concluded, indicates that, when the cult of Hercules spread to Italy, at a very early date, the acknowledged partner of Hercules was Hera.

(See also ZEUS.)

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: M. P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, Sweden, 1950); G. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1949); R. F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (Greenwood, 1980).

Dill water, which has been given to babies for centuries to cure them of wind, was once thought equally effective for driving out witches; the real or imaginary properties of herbs led to their use for both medical and magical purposes

HERBS

IN MAGIC, as in medicine, herbs have been used since ancient times. As early as the 5th century BC the Greek doctor Hippocrates listed some 400 herbs in common use and Dioscorides (1st century AD) wrote a herbal using 600 plants, which became the basis of many later works. It was in the Dark Ages, however, that ignorance and superstition combined to pile magical attributes on to plants, sometimes with minimal reason, and to preserve the mystery of herbalism the 'herbwife' took to elaborate rituals, such as the need to gather plants at night, preferably by moonlight. Only in this way, unseen by the sun, was the hurt to the plant and the theft from Mother Earth or the Earth Mother to be cancelled.

One of the most popular herbals ever written was that of Nicolas Culpeper (1616–1654). In his explanation of healing herbs, astrology and the Doctrine of Signatures came together. The latter is the notion that Nature has indicated the uses of plants by their appearance (see DISEASE). Once in a while there was real value in such a plant, and many herbs found their way into medical books and pharmacopoeias.

The wood anemone has an antique mythology through its more colourful Mediterranean relations. The scarlet anemone is often connected with the death of Adonis, representing his spilling blood after he was mortally wounded by a boar; and red flowers were strewn at the ritual celebrating his death and rebirth dating back to perhaps 3000 BC. Greek legends suggest that Anemos, the Wind, sent his plants – the anemones – as heralds of spring.

Angelica, a stately plant related to cow parsley, is widespread in Europe and was highly valued for medicinal purposes; indeed the root was still listed recently in some European pharmacopoeias. In Eastern Europe there are records of ancient customs

in which the plant was carried into towns to the accompaniment of chanting before being offered for sale, which suggests a ritual origin. More recently angelica became associated with the festival of the Annunciation, whence came its Latin specific name – *Angelica archangelica*. It was sometimes linked with St Michael the Archangel and was even called 'The Root of the Holy Ghost'. As such it protected against witchcraft, evil spirits, spells and enchantment.

The King of Plants

The main mythological interest in the group of plants named after Asclepios, the founder of medicine, is in that of the soma plant, an Indian native which was personified as Soma, one of the Vedic gods. The ninth book of the *Rig-Veda* is devoted to his praise, and here the soma plant is described as the king of the plants. The juice was prepared at a sacred ceremony, by crushing the plant between two millstones, and it was supposed to be a drink of the gods, conferring health, long life and immortality. Under its influence Indra created the universe. In later writings soma became identified with the moon.

Sweet basil is believed by some to have derived its name from the basilisk, the fabulous dragon-like creature that was deadly to anyone who looked at it. This may well be based on an old belief that basil attracted or even begot scorpions. Parkinson (1629) wrote that 'being gently handed it gave a pleasant smell, but being hardly wrung and bruised would breed scorpions'. Culpeper quotes the experience of 'Hilarius, a French physician, who affirms upon his own knowledge, that an acquaintance of his, by common smelling of it (basil), had a scorpion breed in his brain'. Culpeper goes on to assure us that basil, connected with scorpions as it is, will draw the poison out of an insect sting or snake-bite. In India, it was sacred to Vishnu and Krishna, and was regarded as a protective plant – even more than that, as a benificent spirit. A basil leaf on the body of a dead Hindu was his assurance of reaching Paradise. Bush basil, a smaller species, was used in Italy and Moldavia as a love token and in Crete represented 'love washed with tears'. To the ancient Greeks, however, it symbolized hate and misfortune.

Betony is supposedly the original herb of magic and medicine discovered by Chiron the Centaur, used by Asclepios and mentioned by Dioscorides. In a 10th century collection of herbal remedies it cures the elf-sickness. In Pechey's *Compleat Herbal* (1694) nothing seems capable of withstanding it: 'It discusses, attenuates, opens and cleanses'. Culpeper wrote that it was 'a very precious herb . . . most fitting to be kept in a man's house both in syrup, conserve, oil, ointment and plaster.' It was even believed that wounded animals sought it out, and there is a legend that snakes placed in a ring of betony would kill each other. Alas, betony has no real medicinal virtues; as Geoffrey Grigson says, this plant, once believed to be 'a pharmacopoeia in one herb', is really a fraud. Not surprisingly it was believed magically powerful as well, generally useful against evil spirits. It was used in amulets, planted in churchyards, and equally sown around houses.

The pink-flowered bistort gets its name, meaning 'twice-twisted', from allusion to the twisted root, which somewhat resembles a snake. Hence it has the English names snakeweed or adderwort and, according to the principles of sympathetic magic, was regarded as a cure for snake-bite and other poisons. Among its other names is Easter ledger, a corruption of *logia*, derived from *Aristolochia*, the name of a group of plants. Now Aristolochias are called birthworts because they encourage conception, help childbirth and keep away witches; and bistort also according to a 16th century herbal 'hath virtue . . . to cause to retain and conceive'. The Easter ledger pudding, of which bistort was an ingredient, is still eaten in the Lake District around Easter, to help conception.

The blackberry, which must have been one of the earliest foods of man and his ancestors, was a holy plant. In the Highlands they called it the 'blessed bramble', and evil spirits could be kept off by a wreath of bramble, rowan and ivy, while

The use of plants for medicinal purposes is as old as civilization, and the first known written record of curative plants was a Sumerian herbal of 2200 BC: illustrations from a 12th century copy of the herbal of Apuleius, showing the digging up of herbs and the mixing of medicines

brambles – or alternatively osiers – would be plaited around graves to prevent the dead from rising as ghosts. Legend has it that Christ used bramble to drive the money-changers from the temple and to spur his donkey on his ride to Jerusalem. Various ailments could be cured if the sufferer passed under an archway of bramble rooted at each end.

In autumn, blackberries ferment or mildew. This normally occurs in early October, and in former times Michaelmas Day, now 29 September, fell on 10 October. It was on Michaelmas that the Devil was believed to spit or urinate on the blackberries, because when he was first cast out of heaven by St Michael, he landed on a bramble bush, and consequently curses the plant anew on the anniversary of his fall; for this reason it was not recommendable to eat the fruit after that time. The Irish, however, went on picking blackberries until Hallowe'en, when the puck, or hobgoblin was thought to defile the fruits.

The yellow broom and its relatives were used herbally and according to John Gerard, author of the famous *Herball* published in 1597, a decoction of broom had tonic properties for the liver and kidneys; he also writes of 'That worthy Prince of famous memory Henry the eighth King of England' who 'was wont to drink the distilled water of broom flowers against surfeits, and diseases thereof arising.' Culpeper thought it effective also against dropsy, gout, ague, black jaundice, sciatica and pains in the joints. The custom of wearing a broom sprig in the cap perhaps arose from broom's ancient reputation as a plant both useful to witches and against them, as a magic sleep inducer and as a power in love.

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Herb of Beaten Wives

White bryony, which is unrelated to black bryony, is remarkable because it makes enormous roots which, with a little assistance from the witch or herbalist, could pass for mandrake, always a very expensive commodity, which was supposed to make women fertile (see MANDRAKE). Bryony mandrakes in the form of children, sometimes with grass seed sown on the 'head' to provide hair, were to be seen in English herb shops 150 years ago. It is a poisonous plant once used as a purge and recommended for a number of complaints. In Lincolnshire this plant was called womandrake and mandrake was reserved for the black bryony; this also has large roots but they are tubers, the plant being related to the yams. It seems possible that it was once known to enchanters and witches as a useful ingredient of potions; in France it was known, among other names, as the 'herb of beaten wives', because, as Gerard tells us, the berries and roots 'do also very quickly waste and consume away black and blue marks that come of bruises and beatings.'

The starry pink-flowered centaury is another herb reputed to have been discovered by Chiron the Centaur who used it, to quote Gerard, to open 'the stoppings of the liver, gall and spleen', and to cure fever; the family was once named *Chironia*. Centaury was reckoned a powerful herb against wicked spirits and witches, while a translation of a French work on magic, the *Little Albert*, tells us that 'if it be joined with the blood of a female lapwing, or black plover, and put with oil in a lamp, all that compass it about shall believe themselves to be witches, so that one shall believe of another that his head is in heaven and his feet on earth; and if the aforesaid thing be put in the fire when the stars shine it shall appear that the stars run one against the other and fight.' In Ireland, centaury was a sacred and good luck herb, while in the Isle of Man it was called *Keym Chreest*, 'Steps of Christ' because it had supposedly grown on the path to Calvary.

Because the bright blue flowers of the chicory open only when the sun shines, the plant was believed by sympathetic magic to be a cure for failing sight and sore eyes. If gathered according to a special ritual it would make a person invisible and also open locked doors and chests. The ritual was to cut the plant with a gold blade at noon and midnight on St James's Day, 25 July. If a word was spoken during the cutting, the gatherer would surely die.

The Latin name of the cinquefoil is *Potentilla*, meaning 'small and powerful'. The herbal and magical species is the creeping cinquefoil or five leaf grass. It is still used to allay fever and as an astringent. Its five-lobed leaves have given it names meaning 'five-fingered' since ancient times and in Gaelic it becomes 'five fingers of Mary'. It

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was hung in doorways to keep out evil spirits, and can be seen occasionally in carvings on cathedrals. Less pleasant is its association with witches, whose standard ointment, according to Bacon, contained cinquefoil among its ingredients.

The Devil's-bit scabious, when established, has a tap-root that looks as if it had been bitten off. Gerard explains that 'old fantastic charms report that the devil did bite it for envy because it is a herb that have so many good virtues and is so beneficial to mankind'. Apart from this legend, the plant was widely renowned for dealing with anything from the plague and other diseases to curing snake-bite. In Cornwall, where it was called the 'Devil's button', to pick the plant invited a nocturnal visit from the Devil.

Dill, an annual of the cow parsley family which shares its reputation as an anti-witch plant, is a culinary herb which has an ancient renown and was known to Dioscorides. It was a popular general-purpose drug in the Middle Ages; its name is believed to be derived from old Norse *dilla*, to lull, from its soothing properties, and indeed it is still given to fretful babies to this day. It was also popular both for making spells and for keeping off witchcraft.

The brilliance of the blue flower of eyebright, coupled with the stripes and speckles on the petals, led to its comparison with a bloodshot eye. Thus it became, according to the Doctrine of Signatures, a cure for sore or failing eyes. In *Paradise Lost* we find the Archangel Michael, after Adam's fall, anointing his eyes with a mixture of eyebright and rue with three drops from the Well of Life.

A herb with genuine wind-expelling properties, fennel was one of the herbs used in medieval times to keep away evil spirits, especially on Midsummer's Eve when, in company with the herbs like St John 's Wort, it was hung over doorways. Keyholes blocked with fennel seed prevented the entry of ghosts. It was cultivated by the Romans, as in modern Italy, as a flavouring and (a related species) for the succulent roots; it was known to Pliny as a cure for many complaints and especially for improving sight. He records that serpents were known to eat it or rub themselves against it, on casting their skins, in order to 'sharpen their sight'.

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Facing page above **A doctor brings a sick man peonies, to cure him of epilepsy** ***Left*** **The soothing properties of the aromatic rosemary were considered helpful for sore or inflamed eyes: two illustrations from a 14th century herbal. Each herb had its own particular virtue and legendary lore** ***Below*** **from left to right: anemones, which according to a Greek myth sprang from the blood of Adonis after he was mortally wounded by a boar, were used to cure colds, gout and leprosy; betony, named after Beronice, a woman healed by Christ, was believed to cure almost all ills, both of the body and of the soul, and it was a powerful protection against witchcraft and evil spirits; blackberry brambles were legendarily used by Christ to drive out the money-changers from the temple, and children were at one time passed through a bramble arch as a cure for rickets; bryony, used by witches in spells was taken as a purgative and is still considered a potent aphrodisiac; chicory was credited with great magical virtues, including the power of invisibility and of opening locked chests and subterannean caverns for those in search of treasure; eyebright, which was rubbed on Adam's eyes to permit him to see the future mortality of man, is still used by modern herbalists for eye complaints; Solomon's seal, which has the mark of a magic pentacle on its roots, was a useful anodyne for the after-effects of a brawl, while its flowers were used in love potions; in popular tradition viper's bugloss was believed to help lumbago and increase milk production in nursing mothers**

It was further believed to convey longevity and to improve both strength and courage.

The Latin name for the foxglove is *Digitalis*, formed from a word meaning fingers. The foxglove is so called in English because the fox was given the 'gloves' by the fairies so that he could invade the chicken run without fear of capture. It has always been associated with fairies and elves: if the 'little people' put on these 'gloves' they could do almost whatever they liked. It was considered dangerous to cut foxglove, but once you had done so it was a defence against the little people; in Wales the plant's juice was rubbed into the floor in the form of a cross for this purpose. It could in addition be used to kill a changeling child, either by giving it 'tea' made from the leaves (which would be poisonous) or by rubbing the changeling with the foxglove juice. In Scotland it was considered unlucky to have foxglove in the house, or on board ship. Some of the other names of the foxglove, such as 'deadman's fingers', 'thimbles' or 'bells', probably come from the belief that the souls of the dead inhabit the flowers. Variously used as medicine, the plant became well known for its powers as a purge and to make one vomit, which led to its serious investigation by Dr William Withering. He noted its effect on the heart, and digitalis came to play an important part in treating heart disease.

The insignificant 'herb Robert' has been known by over a hundred local names in Britain alone, an indication of its importance in country folklore. The plant is associated with Robin Goodfellow and his counterparts in several parts of Europe, the red, hairy appearance of this plant being thought to resemble the red-faced and bushy-haired goblin. Just as it was unlucky to offend Robin, calamities could follow the destruction or picking of herb Robert; its Cumberland name was 'death-come-quickly'. And just as Robin Goodfellow's plant was herb Robert, so his bird was the robin, similarly unlucky to kill; the plant is also known as 'poor Robin', 'little Robin', and so on in many countries.

St John's Girdle

Mugwort, a pungent relation of wormwood, has long been considered to have both medicinal and magical properties: it

Su Gooders/Linnean Society

was known as *Mater Herbarum*, mother of herbs, and throughout Europe as St John's Herb. Some believed that John the Baptist wore a girdle of mugwort during his sojourn in the wilderness. Like St John's Wort it was picked on St John's Eve, purified in the magic bonfires, and placed over doors to keep away evil. Such use was certainly still active in the Isle of Man during the last century. Besides this powerful protective magic, mugwort – very much a wayside herb – was reputed to prevent weariness in a traveller who carried it with him.

The tubers of many species of orchid and its relations are still gathered in many parts of Europe and in Asia for the preparation of *salep*, a nutritive flour-like substance usually taken mixed with water, and once carried on long sea voyages as an emergency ration. The name of this family comes from the Greek word orchis meaning testicle, for these plants have a pair of tubers, one for this year's growth, one for next. The resulting symbolism and magic are doubtless plain: Dioscorides recorded how women in Thessaly would make a salep with goat's milk, using the full, new tuber if they wanted to excite desire, the emptying old one to discourage. It was also believed that the sex of children, could be controlled by similar means, male children being born if the man had eaten of large new tubers, girls if the women had eaten small old tubers. All over Europe orchids became aphrodisiacs; one kind was at one time known as *Satyrion*, after the lecherous satyrs. The early purple orchid is the 'long purples' in Ophelia's garland – 'to which the liberal shepherds give a grosser name, but which cold maids do dead men's fingers call'.

A relation of the orchid, the 'autumn lady's tresses', was called sweet cullion by Gerard (cullion, a word used by Chaucer, means testicle) and he remarks how 'The full and sappy roots of Lady traces eaten or boiled in milk and drunk, provoke venery, nourish and strengthen the body, and be good for such as we are fallen into a consumption of fever hectic'. There we have the whole gamut of the herbal use of orchids – and all quite unjustified.

Parsley was not regarded by the ancients as a herb; it had connections both noble and funereal. Thus it was made into wreaths at games – dried parsley at the Isthmian games, fresh at the Nemean. The Greeks also strewed it on graves, and the phrase 'to be in need of parsley' was used of people near death.

There is a legend that, because it often takes so long to germinate, it goes nine times to the Devil before appearing above ground. In some places one had to sow it on Good Friday to counteract the Devil's influence, and it was unlucky to sow it at any other time. In some quarters it was thought unlucky to grow parsley at all, and there is still a widespread belief that parsley should never be transplanted. Other sayings suggest, according to locality, that parsley grows best where the wife 'wears the trousers', or for an honest man, or alternatively, only for the wicked. To plant parsley might, if you were a young woman in Lincolnshire, result in your bearing a child

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In addition to their curative powers, many herbs had magical properties and were used by witches and exorcists: casting out devils, from the herbal of Apuleius

soon; but if you did get into this plight before marriage you might rescue yourself from it by eating parsley three times daily for three weeks.

The reason we use parsley as a garnish is its long reputation as an antidote to poison, so that to place it on a dish of food was a token of trust. In William Turner's *New Herball* of 1597 there is the delightful suggestion that 'the seed taken beforehand helpeth men that have weak brains to bear drink better.'

The peony's medicinal properties were known to the ancients and it is named after Paeon, who is recorded as a physician, even to the gods. It was, in ancient times, regarded as of divine origin; it would keep off evil spirits and storms, and protect in particular shepherds and their flocks, farmers and their crops. It was believed to be dangerous to dig up, like the mandrake, and similar precautions had to be taken when extracting it. It was further thought necessary to make sure that no woodpecker was near or the gatherer would lose sight.

Sage for Long Life

The plantain weed has been used for a great many ailments, and herbalists still recommend it. In Northern Ireland the plantain is still known as *Slan-lus*, 'healing herb', and in Scotland as 'healing blade'. In earlier days the way plantain stood up to being trodden on suggested its use for wounds and bruises and Dioscorides recommended it for this. According to the Anglo-Saxon *Charm of the Nine Herbs*, plantain, here referred to as 'waybread', was reputed not only to resist crushing by chariot wheels and the trampling of bulls, but to withstand 'the venom that flies through the air, and the loathed things that through the land rove.'

The handsome, aromatic rosemary has a long list of supposed medicinal virtues and also many holy and magical attributes. It was supposed to be effective against the dreaded plague; it was believed, in various differing recipes, to remove the effects of poison, to assuage gout, to make hair grow, to cure giddiness, to improve sanity, reduce anxiety, and avoid nightmares. It was until recently common for mourners to drop sprigs of rosemary on a coffin to show that they would not forget the dead person – 'There's rosemary for remembrance,' as Ophelia said. It was also used at weddings as a symbol of fidelity; it was woven into bridal wreaths, and sprigs of the plant would be dipped into the wine to ensure the happiness of the married pair. From there it is a small step to marriage divination; there were several ways for a young woman to foretell her future husband by using rosemary. Rosemary is said to grow well for the righteous; it is also said only to flourish where the wife rules the household. Among its other attributes was the affording of protection against all kinds of spirits, physical injury, thunder and lightning; it could also help special enterprises to succeed and renew youth.

Sage, now used mainly as a culinary herb in Britain is still used medicinally in the United States, mainly as a gargle. It has an ancient reputation for healing and was thought to confer long life. There is a tradition that as the plant flourishes or dies, so the owner's business will succeed or fail.

Solomon's seal is said to bear a symbol on its roots, the two interwoven triangles which make up the Star of David, the magic pentacle which scares off evil spirits. However, though Gerard at one point suggests that this symbol may be imagined occasionally upon the fleshy roots, elsewhere he states that the name comes from the plant's supposed capacities to seal and heal up 'green wounds'. He leads on to explain how Solomon's seal 'taketh away in one night, or two at the most, any bruise, black or blue spots gotten by falls or women's wilfulness, stumbling upon their hasty husbands' fists or such like.' In the Middle Ages the plant was also called seal of St John or of the Virgin. Besides its supposed value against bruises it was also believed to knit bones together, and was given for consumption, bleeding of the lungs and other haemorrhages. The white flowers were used in love potions.

Tarragon is also known as 'little dragon', and is reputed, like the pungent mugworts and wormwoods, to have sprung up where the serpent passed on its banishment from Eden. Dragons were both protective and terror-inspiring, and a dragon plant was protective, in particular with the ability to cure snake-bite.

Viper's bugloss derives its English name simply enough from the resemblance of its seeds to a viper's head; this was made by Dioscorides who therefore believed it both a cure and preventative of snake-bite. Yarrow is noted for its wound-healing powers and is also called bloodwort, soldier's woundwort and knight's milfoil. It also had magic power and was anciently regarded as a herb dedicated to the Devil.

A. J. HUXLEY

HERCULES

Possessed of more than human qualities, Hercules became one of the most important gods during the last years of paganism

Michael Holford

Though Hercules was fathered by Zeus and eventually became a god himself, his courage, physical strength and occasional bursts of fury made him a peculiarly human hero; a quality for which he was chosen to be the special representative of the gods in their dealings with mankind

THE GREATEST HERO of Greek legend, Hercules (in Greek, Herakles) was the only one to become an Olympian god. His legend is complex and widespread, being associated in Greece with Boeotia and the Peloponnese, while some of his exploits are set in eastern and western regions remote from Greece and imperfectly known. He was adopted by the Romans because of his doings in Italy.

Hercules is one of the great wanderers, like Perseus, the Argonauts and Odysseus. His legend, like theirs, contains material of great vitality which comes from folktale and supernatural myth. Only with these more than human qualities could he have ended as not only a god but as one of the most important gods during the last years of paganism. His deeds, even though he sometimes leads an army, are individual feats of strength. Attended usually by his squire, Iolaus, he faces perils and monsters too great for human valour.

In this he is like the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh or the English Beowulf, whose greatest deeds were not done on human battlefields. Such primeval figures are but little modified by the conventional traditions of a heroic age. Yet his most famous deeds, the Labours, were not done by him as a free agent but by order of the unworthy ruler Eurystheus, whom the gods decreed that he should serve. In his own character Hercules was noble as well as valiant but was subject to fits of fury or madness, in which he committed terrible crimes.

His name is puzzling but evidently significant. There is no reason to disbelieve those ancient writers who interpreted it as 'glory of Hera'; yet Hera (the Latin Juno) queen of heaven, appears as his relentless enemy during all his earthly life. Some light on its original sense may perhaps be got from the myth of Gilgamesh, who was persecuted all his life by the great Nature goddess and queen of heaven, Ishtar (see GILGAMESH). She had first desired Gilgamesh for her lover, but he refused and thus was punished. It appears that some Babylonian and Sumerian kings were regarded as official consorts of Ishtar or Inanna. Does the name Hercules descend from a remote time when some Greek kings were regarded as Hera's consorts?

During the 19th century some scholars argued that Hercules, who was certainly in classical times a favourite of the Dorian Greeks, was originally a Dorian hero only, and was no more than an intruder in legends inherited from the Mycenean Greeks whom the Dorian invaders overthrew. But although Dorian chiefs claimed later to be descendants of the exiled children of Hercules who departed northwards, there is not sufficient reason to tear Hercules loose from his pre-Dorian setting, which represents the Mycenean age of history.

The gods decreed that Hercules should perform 12 Labours imposed upon him by Eurystheus, the ruler of Mycene *Previous page* Hercules's ninth Labour was to fetch the girdle of Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons, for Eurystheus's daughter; scene on a clay shield, c 700 BC, showing Hercules battling with the Amazons *Above* Commanded to bring back alive the wild boar of Mt Erymenthus, Hercules captured it in deep snow; according to one version of the legend, the sight of the beest so terrified Eurystheus that he hid himself in a wine jar: Greek vase in the British Museum *Right* In order to accomplish his first Labour and bring Eurystheus the skin of the invulnerable Nemean lion, Hercules stunned the animal with his club and then strangled it: Greek vase in the British Museum

Early poetry dealing with Hercules has come down to us in fragments or in allusions only. A complete cycle of myth concerning him may be assumed with certainty, but it is not likely that this was well ordered or consistent. Nor can it be shown that there was a complete cycle of formed poetry about him. However, the distinction between legend and its literary embodiment is hard to draw for ages when literature itself was oral. Our material of all dates does make possible a general outline of Hercules's life through his Labours until his death or deification. But there is no definite relation between his stray exploits and the well-known Labours which he carved out for Eurystheus. The clearest among continuous narratives are those of the late compilers

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of mythology, Diodorus (1st century AD) in a legendary part of his *Universal History* and Apollodorus (c 1st century BC) as represented in the summary *Library of Mythology* attributed to him.

Hercules was born at Thebes to Alcmena, wife of Amphitryon who had come from Tiryns to live at Thebes. His father was Zeus who took the form of Amphitryon, then absent, for a supernaturally prolonged embrace. At the same birth Alcmena bore Hercules's twin brother Iphicles, the son of Amphitryon. Hera in her jealousy sent two serpents to kill the infants as they lay cradled in a shield but Hercules strangled them. As he grew up, he was taught chariot-driving, wrestling and the use of weapons, particularly bowmanship; Linus, brother of Orpheus, also taught him music. When Linus struck his pupil once to discipline him, Hercules in a fit of temper killed him with the lyre. He was sent to guard cattle, and while on watch killed the lion of Cythaeron whose skin he afterwards wore with the head as helmet or hood.

When Erginus king of Orchomenus in Boeotia sent envoys to demand tribute from the Thebans, Hercules outraged the envoys, so that Erginus made war. Hercules killed him and compelled the Minyan inhabitants of Orchomenus to pay double the tribute that they had exacted from the Thebans. As a prize for valour, Creon, king of Thebes, gave him his daughter Megara to be his wife. By her he had three sons but later, driven mad by Hera, he killed them. When he recovered his reason, he went into exile and inquired of the Delphic oracle where he should live. He was ordered to settle in Tiryns, his family's original home, and to serve its overlord Eurystheus of Mycene, for 12 years; in some accounts his servitude was decreed even before his birth. He was to perform the Labours that would be imposed on him, but after these had been accomplished he would be made immortal.

The number and details of the Labours vary in different sources, but eventually a canon of 12 was recognized. The earliest evidence for this total appears in the reliefs on the pediments of the temple of Zeus at Olympia carved during the 5th century BC. Firstly, Hercules was to bring back the skin of the invulnerable lion of Nemea in Argolis; on finding that his arrows had no effect, he stunned the lion with his club and then choked it. Next he had to kill the Hydra, the many-headed water-snake that infested the marshy plain of Lerna in Argolis; it had nine heads, the middle one being immortal, while the rest grew again whenever Hercules smashed them with his club, until Iolaus burned their roots. Hercules cut off and buried the immortal head, but this feat was not accepted by Eurystheus because of Iolaus's help.

Thirdly, Hercules was set the task of catching the Cerynean hind and bringing it from the border of Arcadia to Mycene. It had golden horns and was sacred to Artemis (Diana). After hunting it for a year, Hercules shot it as it was crossing the River Ladon, and was eventually allowed by Apollo and Artemis to carry it alive to Eurystheus. His next Labour was to bring back alive the boar of Mt Erymanthus in Arcadia. On his way Hercules was entertained by centaurs but eventually fell out with them, so that he had to disperse them with arrows and flaming brands; he caught the boar in deep snow and carried it to Mycene.

The fifth task was to carry out the cattle dung from the stables of Augeas, king of Elis, in a single day; the stables had not been cleaned for many years. When Hercules arrived, Augeas promised him a tenth of the cattle if he accomplished this. He did so by diverting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus through the stables. But Augeas broke his promise and would not pay the reward; later Hercules made war on Augeas, killed him, and devastated the country. Hercules next had to rid the Stymphalian lake in Arcadia of a great flock of birds that used their feathers as darts; he did so by scaring them with castanets of bronze presented by Athene and shot some of them on the wing.

The seventh Labour was to bring to Mycene the bull given to Minos by Poseidon (Neptune) but not sacrificed as promised, so that Poseidon drove it wild. Hercules captured it and brought it to Mycene, but Eurystheus let it go. After this Hercules had to bring to Mycene the man-eating mares of Diomedes, king of the Bistones, in Thrace. After fighting with the Bistones, Hercules succeeded in taking the mares to Eurystheus. The next task was to bring back the girdle of Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, who lived by the River Thermodon in northern Asia Minor. When Hercules's

Hercules in his greatness and his fits of madness is quoted as a legendary example of the melancholic man, the ancient forerunner of our man of genius

ship arrived at Themiscyra, her capital, Hippolyta promised to give him the girdle. But Hera, disguised as an Amazon persuaded the women that Hercules intended to carry off their queen. When the Amazons charged down on horseback to the ship, Hercules killed Hippolyta and set sail with the girdle to Mycene. On his way back he set free Hesione, princess of Troy, who had been chained on a rock as prey for a sea monster. The monster had been sent to ravage the country by Poseidon and Apollo, who had fortified Troy for King Laomedon and had been cheated of their reward. Hercules killed the monster, but was also cheated; later he besieged and took Troy.

The tenth Labour was to fetch the cattle of Geryon from the island of Erytheia in the far west. Geryon had three heads and bodies joined at the waist, below which again he had three pairs of legs and feet. Hercules journeyed through Libya, destroying many wild beasts, until he came to the western end of the Mediterranean, where he erected two great rocks known as the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar and Ceuta on Mt Hacho in Morocco) before going on to Tartessus and Erytheia. He crossed to Erytheia using the boat of the sun god, and killed Geryon, his servant and his hound. Returning eastward with the cattle by Iberia and Liguria to Italy, he crossed to Sicily in pursuit of a bull stolen by Eryx, son of Poseidon, whom he killed. He then drove the cattle round the Ionian (Adriatic) sea, but lost many of them when a gad-fly sent by Hera dispersed them about Thrace. When he brought them to Mycene, Eurystheus sacrificed them to Hera.

After this exploit, Hercules had to fetch the golden apples of the Hesperides, nymphs who lived in the far west of Libya, though sometimes they were thought to dwell in the far north of Europe. The apples were guarded by a gigantic many-headed serpent, usually said to have been immortal. According to some accounts Hercules persuaded the Titan Atlas, who held up the heavens on his shoulders, to approach and charm the serpent and so bring the apples for him, while he supported the burden. The last of Hercules's Labours was to fetch the three-headed hound Cerberus from the entrance of Hades; Pluto allowed Cerberus to be carried off by Hercules provided he was brought back again.

On one of his journeys, Hercules was bringing home a new wife, Deianeira, when the centaur Nessus offered to carry her over a swollen river. Nessus attempted to rape Deianeira and was shot down by Hercules with his poisoned arrows. Before he died, Nessus told Deianeira to preserve his blood, saying that it would be a charm for reviving Hercules's love for her if it should fail. Some time later Hercules came home from the wars with a captured girl, Iole, and Deianeira in her distress gave Hercules a garment stained with the blood of Nessus to wear. The tunic stuck to his skin and spread deadly poison through his body. Maddened with pain, Hercules had himself burned on a pyre on the top of Mount Oeta. The myth held that after his death he became an Olympian god, was reconciled to Hera and married Hebe, daughter of Zeus and Hera. But a shadow of him went to Hades.

A number of well-known works, passages or fragments within surviving poetry and drama deal with Hercules. Homer says that Zeus swore irrevocably, when the birth of Hercules was expected, that on that day the next child born of his own blood would rule over all that dwelt about him. Hera, by delaying the arrival of Hercules, contrived that the first birth should be that of Eurystheus.

Hesiod's *Theogony* tells how Hercules killed the eagle that fed on Prometheus's liver, of his origin, of his killing of Geryon, and of his marriage to Hebe and immortal bliss. The poem *Shield of Hercules*, attributed to Hesiod, relates the battle between Hercules and Cycnus, son of Ares, and describes Hercules's elaborate shield.

Among lyric poets, Stesichorus of Himera in Sicily told of Hercules's expedition to fetch the cattle of Geryon. Pindar tells vividly the stories of his birth and killing of the serpants; of his expedition against Troy; of his journey through Libya and his wrestling with the giant Antaeus; and of his founding of the Isthmian and also the Olympic Games. He mentions his journey to the Ister (Danube) to get an olive spray to plant, so that he himself and later athletes might have shade. Other details given by Pindar include Hercules's gluttony, his eating of two oxen seized from the plough and, curiously, his short stature.

Among dramatists, the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles covers all the events leading up

The Strength of Ten

Hercules sighed gustily. 'The poor child is an orphan. I killed his father myself. This was what happened. I was wandering through western Thessaly on some expedition or other, and one day I happened to feel hungry. I came across a Dryopian farmer ploughing a fallow field in a sheltered valley, and uttering, for luck, the usual obscene imprecations. I saluted him with: 'My lucky ploughman, I am so hungry that I could eat an ox.' He answered, with a smile, but continuing to curse, that I should at any rate not eat his ox until the field had been ploughed and harrowed too. 'Holy Serpents,' I cried, losing patience, 'I will, if I like.' 'Hold hard,' said he. 'I am Theiodamas the Dryopian. I must ask you not to speak to me in that peremptory way.' I answered: 'To the crows with your "peremptory." I am Hercules of Tiryns and I always say, do, and get, just whatever I please. At Delphi the other day I told the Pythoness exactly what I have just told you; but she refused to believe me. I pulled the sacred tripod from under her and carried it out of the shrine. "Now," said I, "if needs must I will have an oracle of my own." Ho, ho! That soon brought her to her senses.' But Theiodamas either had never heard me or else could not believe that I was I. He threatened me with his ox-goad, so I gave him a friendly tap with my club and cracked his skull like an eggshell. Alas, I never meant to kill him. I never know my strength, that is my curse. The same thing happened to me when I was a boy learning to play the lyre, and my music-teacher, a pompous fool named Linus, rapped my knuckles and told me that my fingering was incorrect. I gave him a playful whack with the lyre and dashed out his brains. A pure accident, that I swear! I pleaded self-defence and the affair blew over, but I have never touched a lyre since.

Robert Graves *Hercules, My Shipmate*

For his eleventh Labour, Hercules was ordered to fetch the golden apples guarded by the Hesperides, nymphs who lived in a fabulous garden in the far west: Hercules and the Hesperides, relief in the Villa Albani, Rome

to the death of Hercules on the pyre on Mount Oeta, but contains no mention of his deification, though he appears as a god at the end of *Philoctetes*. Euripides's *Mad Hercules* presents the insane frenzy of Hercules as he is struck by the demon Lyssa, sent by Hera, and tells of how he kills his children. His *Alcestis* shows Hercules first as a greedy, cheerful and insensitive guest in the grief-stricken house of Admetus, after the death of his wife Alcestis, but later as the deliverer who restores Alcestis after defeating Death. The cruder aspects of Hercules are shown in Aristophanes's *Frogs*, where everyone in the underworld remembers his plundering gluttony.

Ambassador of Zeus

Among prose writers, the Sophist Prodicus, (c 5th century BC) appears to have originated the idea of the Choice of Hercules, made between the lives offered to him by the seductive figure of Vice and the austere one of Virtue. This was the beginning of the long history of Hercules as a symbolical figure used by the philosophers. He was a useful subject for sermons because he was a famous folk hero everywhere in the Greek world and had ended in unique glory.

Hercules's slow change of character from hero to something more was foreshadowed by the Athenian orator Isocrates (436–338 BC), who celebrates his intelligence. In Aristotle's *Problems*, in a discussion of the melancholic man, the ancient forerunner of our man of genius, Hercules in his greatness and in his fits of madness is quoted as a legendary example of the type. In Roman times the Stoic philosopher Dio of Prusa developed the idea of the Choice of Hercules as one between tyranny and kingship. Hercules was moving toward being a pagan saint. Among the Stoics he became a symbol of divine energy and order.

Meanwhile the Romans themselves had eagerly adopted Hercules. This is shown in literature by the litany of his exploits which appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*. A peculiarly Roman addition was his killing of the monster Cacus who had driven off the cattle of Geryon to his cave in the Aventine Hill. His sufferings and his death on the pyre as treated by Ovid and Seneca make explicit in another way his change to divine nature by telling how the pyre burned away only the mortal part of him.

Hercules continues to grow in stature and in wisdom in late philosophical and religious literature. Because he had fought and suffered as a man battling against beasts and monsters and hardship, he became a saviour who had much greater appeal than the traditional Olympians who had never endured the mortal state. He came to be regarded as the special representative of Zeus or Jupiter in dealing with mankind.

The development had gone far by the 4th century AD when Christianity was made the official faith of the Empire by Constantine. Scholars have noticed an affinity between the legendary Hercules, who had acquired a new religious and philosophical significance, and the Christ of Christian theology. Though some have exaggerated this, there was certainly an analogy between the Herculean theology and Christian belief, which was influenced by Stoic modes of thought. In some writings of the apostate Emperor Julian, Hercules appears to be a figure maintained as a rival to Christ. But Hercules was not more than a legendary or mythical figure and no more than one of many gods. He could not really rival Christ, the historical saviour and manifestation of one God.

(See also HERO.)

E. D. PHILLIPS

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Among Christians heresy was a grave evil which must be mercilessly rooted out; in Spain, during the Inquisition, the first Grand Inquisitor was credited with burning at least 2000 heretics

HERESY

TO MOST PEOPLE the word 'heresy' is connected with the Christian religion. It is also linked with the Inquisition, as the notorious means by which the Christian Church sought to exterminate heresy, a view that is soundly based in historical fact. However, before dealing with the subject in this context, it would be well to look first at earlier forms of the idea.

The English word is derived from the Greek *hairesis*, meaning 'selection' or 'choice'. It was most notably used in the Graeco-Roman world to describe adherence to ideas or beliefs of a philosophical kind. Those who adhered to such notions or principles were recognized as forming a school, party or sect. The Jewish historian Josephus in the 1st century AD described the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots, the chief religio-political parties of his day, as 'heresies'. The term is applied in no derogatory sense. It is similarly used of the Pharisees in the Acts of the Apostles. But it soon takes on an opprobrious meaning in the New Testament, as when St Paul puts heresy together with such vices as idolatry and sorcery (Galatians 5.20).

In Christian usage 'heresy' became a technical term for religious belief and practice deemed contrary to the established form of the faith. This meaning naturally implied that there was a right form of Christian doctrine or 'orthodoxy' (from Greek *orthos*, 'right', and *doxa*, 'opinion'). Deviation from this orthodoxy was regarded as a dangerous evil, to be condemned and rooted out. This attitude became a distinctive feature of Christianity. It played a decisive part in the development of faith; and was responsible for the infliction of terrible cruelties on those condemned as heretics.

The persecution of people for religious errors has, however, occurred in religions other than Christianity and it is necessary to look at some examples in order to appreciate what was peculiar in the Christian attitude to heresy. The earliest known example is the attempt of the Egyptian king Akhenaten (see IKHNATEN) to change the religion of his country. He has often been called 'the heretic Pharaoh', and the title is apt, if not strictly accurate. Theoretically, the Egyptian pharaoh was the sole representative of the Egyptian people before their gods. He was also the divine son of the sun god Re, the supreme deity of Egypt. Hence the king's religion was necessarily the religion of Egypt. But Akhenaten set out to change the established form of Egyptian religion for one of his own choosing, and took action to suppress the cult of the god Amun, the chief rival of the Aten, his own deity. There is, however, no evidence of his having persecuted the devotees of Amun. Akhenaten's case is unique: he was a heretic in relation to the religion of which he was the supreme representative. It was only after his death that the traditional religion asserted itself, and his memory was execrated.

Other religions provide sporadic instances of the persecution of heresy. It usually took the form of the defensive reaction of traditionalists against new ideas. The Greek philosopher Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (c 500–428 BC) was accused of impiety and driven from Athens for teaching that the sun was a red-hot mass and not a god, as Greek religion held. Political issues were, however, involved in his condemnation. Socrates was also condemned in Athens for impiety and introducing new 'daemonic things'; he ended his life in 399 BC. The death of Mani, the founder of Manicheism, in 277 AD resulted from charges made by the Magi that his teaching was contrary to Zoroastrianism, the established religion of Iran (see MANICHEANS). In 922 AD, in Baghdad, Mansur al-Hallaj the famous Sufi mystic, was crucified for having identified himself with God. In the eyes of orthodox Moslems, his teaching, which was based on deep mystical experience, was heretical.

Two Christian Gods?

Such examples of the persecution of heretics, though each is very notable, are really more significant for their rarity. They reveal, in contrast to Christianity, that in other religions there has been no deep concern about heresy. The reason for this undoubtedly has been that they have never been as concerned about orthodoxy.

The reasons for Christianity's attitude towards heresy are complicated, and are bound up with the origins of the faith. Largely as the result of the teaching of St Paul, the Jesus of Nazareth whom the Romans had executed in about 30 AD was regarded as a divine being sent into the world to save mankind. Such a belief inevitably involved a host of theological problems, the chief ones being the relationship of Jesus to God, and the nature of Jesus. If Jesus was divine, were there two gods; God and Jesus? Such a view was wholly unacceptable, and some solution had to be found that would explain how Jesus was divine. One solution seemed to lie in the description of Jesus as the 'Son of God'. But the relationship of son to father implies the prior existence of the father, and this meant that Jesus as the Son of God was not eternal. For there must have been a time when God existed alone, before the generation of his Son.

This question led to one of the greatest controversies in early Christianity. A theologian named Arius became the exponent of the view that Jesus, though divine, had been created by God. He was opposed by Athanasius, who defined orthodoxy as involving belief in Jesus as 'co-eternal' and 'co-equal' with God. The dispute became so serious among Christians that the Emperor Constantine called a general council of bishops at Nicaea in 325 to decide the issue. The teaching of Arius was condemned as heretical. Jesus was defined as being *homoousios*, a Greek word meaning 'of the same substance', with God. Arius and his chief supporters were sent into exile. This political penalty for heresy is significant. Under the Emperor Constantine Christianity had become the established religion of the Roman Empire, and this meant that heresy might now be punished by the state.

The condemnation of the Arian heresy had resnlted from the desire to assert the full divinity of Jesus. The problem of the nature of Jesus arose out of the belief that he was both human and divine. Already by the 2nd century certain Christians, called Docetists, from the Greek *dokeo*, 'I seem', maintained that Jesus only 'seemed' to be a man. They explained that his physical body and sufferings were illusory. These Docetists were connected with Gnosticism, a widespread movement in the Graeco-Roman world, concerned with the duality of spirit and matter. Since Jesus was regarded as a divine spirit, he could not therefore have been really born as a human being. The 'orthodox' Christians rejected this view as heresy. They argued that Jesus, if he had not been a real man and suffered physically, could not have saved mankind.

In these early controversies about the nature of Jesus, the orthodox Christians conld only condemn and dissociate themselves from those they regarded as heretics. After the time of Constantine I, they were able to impose legal penalties on their opponents in controversies about the same issue. As a result, Apollinaris, who taught that in Jesus the divine Logos, 'Word', took the place of the rational soul, was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381; and in 388 the Emperor Theodosius banned his followers 'from walled cities, from civilized society, from the communion of saints'. Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, was condemned as a heretic for rejecting the title of *Theotokos*, 'God-bearer', for the Virgin Mary. He maintained that Mary was the mother only of the human nature, and not of the divine nature of Jesus Christ. He was banished to Upper Egypt, where he died in about 451.

First Execution for Heresy

The Church's attitude to heresy had taken a more ominous turn in dealing with Priscillianism, an obscure movement that seems to have been related to Manicheism; it also denied the pre-existence of Christ before his birth from the Virgin Mary. Its leader, Priscillian, Bishop of Avila, was condemned by a synod of Catholic bishops at Bordeaux. He appealed to the Emperor Maximus, but was sentenced to death on a charge of magic and was executed in 386, together with some of his followers. This was the first instance of capital punishment for heresy. Although it drew forth a protest from St Martin of Tours, the execution set a grim precedent for future persecutors.

During the Middle Ages heresy took on a somewhat different form from that current in the past. The major doctrines of Christianity had now been defined and authoritatively established, and as a result no longer represented opinions about matters on which Christian belief had yet to be formulated. Instead, new movements appeared which virtually sought to set up a new form of religion. Often these movements were

reactions against the corruption and formalism of established Catholicism, and particularly against ecclesiastical government.

The most notable heresy of this type was that of the Albigenses. The name was derived from the city of Albi in south-west France, which was the centre of the movement. The Albigensian heresy was related to that of the Cathars, 'the pure ones', which was found in other parts of Europe (see CATHARS). According to its teaching, which was based on Manichean dualism, there were two eternal principles of Good and Evil. The Good principle created spirits; the Evil principle created gross matter. Spirits were imprisoned in material bodies as a punishment and transmigrated from one body to another until they had expiated their original fault and merited heaven. The Albigenses taught that Christ was an angel, with a phantom body. He had become the Saviour by revealing the true (Albigensian) doctrine, which the Church had corrupted. The sacraments of the Church were rejected, together with its doctrines of hell, purgatory and the resurrection of the body. Albigenses lived according to a rigorous discipline: they condemned marriage, and even recommended suicide by starvation.

The Church regarded the movement as menacing both the Christian faith and ordered society. After unsuccessful attempts to convert its members by missions, in which St Dominic was involved, Pope Innocent III (1160–1216) launched a crusade against it. It was led by Simon de Montfort, and was conducted with great cruelty. Among the atrocities was the massacre of Béziers in 1209, in which 20,000 people were alleged to have died. The crusade ended in 1218. In 1233 Pope Gregory IX instituted the Inquisition to seek out and destroy the remnants of the heresy, a task that was entrusted chiefly to the Dominicans and Franciscans.

Pope Gregory's action followed quickly on that of the Emperor Frederick II, who in the previous year had commissioned state officials to hunt out heretics throughout his domains. The Pope doubtless deemed it unwise to allow laymen to become responsible for such a task. The papal Inquisitors travelled about a specific area, calling on those guilty of heresy to confess their sin. Voluntary confession involved a lighter penalty, such as fasting or making a pilgrimage. After a month's grace, the real work of the Inquisition began. Suspected persons were summoned by the parish priest concerned to appear before the papal Inquisitor, who was assisted by a select body of clergy and laity. Evidence for the prosecution was accepted on the testimony of at least two witnesses. The accused was permitted to have a counsel; but the duty of this officer was not to defend his client but to see that justice was done.

At first, when a confession could not be obtained from the accused after the production of evidence of his guilt, rigorous imprisonment under severe conditions was ordered. Since this course of action evidently did not secure the desired results, in 1252 Pope Innocent IV permitted the use of torture to obtain confessions.

British Museum

Because of their opposition to the established Church, heretics were sometimes considered to be agents of the Devil: illustration from a 13th century manuscript, in which heretics are shown as evil-looking demons shooting arrows at a symbolized Trinity

Judgement was pronounced publicly at a ceremony known as the *Sermo Generalis*. After an exhortatory sermon, the sentences were solemnly read out. The penalties ranged, in graver cases, from confiscation of property, imprisonment either temporary or perpetual, to execution. The Church did not carry out the sentence of death; instead, the condemned heretic was handed over to the secular arm, and was usually burned at the stake. In Spain, the final ceremony was known as the *auto-da-fé*, meaning 'act of faith'. In this the accused was paraded in a special dress called *san-benito* which consisted of a yellow penitential garment, with a red cross on the front and back, and a yellow mitre. The garments of the unrepentant were embroidered with the forms of grotesque devils. According to the Bull *Ad Extirpanda* issued by Innocent IV in 1252, execution had to follow within five days of sentencing.

The Spanish Inquisition, which became particularly notorious, had a distinctive character, because of its close association with the state. It was originally established in 1479 by King Ferdinand V and Queen Isabella, with papal consent, to deal with a special problem. Many Jews and Moors,

Madir bound About a Globe And his skin flayed of his head & face

Aber hanged And his skin flayed of

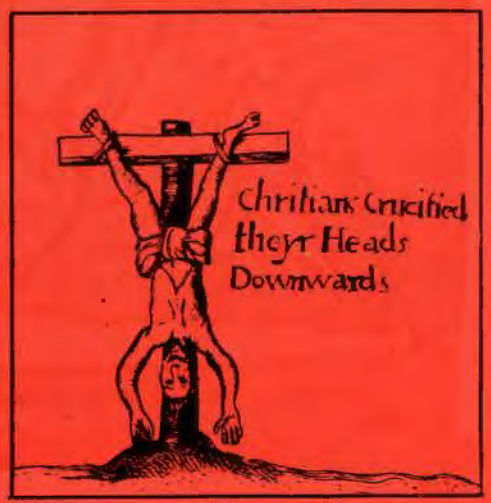
The Mother whipt And her Dugge pulled of

Achas Broken in a Mortar

Jacob fryed in a pan

Azreth bound to a piller his head downward And Rosted

Som had their mouthe slit to their eares


christians Crucified Theyr Heads Downwards

Iohn put into a Cauldron of Boiling oile

Somthrowne out at windowes vpon speares

christians Gored vpon stakes one End Fastned in the Ground the other Coming out of theyre mouthes

Som had their armes Cut of

Tortures used to extract confessions from heretics: *General Martyrology* by Samuel Clarke (1675–1729)

called Marranos and Moriscos, had been converted to Catholicism, usually under duress. The sincerity of their profession had, however, become suspect, and more stringent control was thought to be necessary. The first Grand Inquisitor, Tomas de Torquemada (1420–98), a Dominican friar, was especially zealous in rooting out heretics; he is credited with the burning of at least 2000 of them. The last execution at the stake took place in Seville in 1781. The Spanish Inquisition continued until its final abolition in 1820. Joseph Bonaparte suppressed it in 1808 during the French occupation of Spain, but it was re-established in 1814.

The Inquisition had been instituted originally to deal with heresy. But in 1320 Pope John XXII instructed the Inquisitors to deal also with witchcraft, if connected with heresy. This decision represented a departure from what had generally been the saner attitude taken by ecclesiastical authorities towards witchcraft in earlier centuries. The situation worsened in 1488, when Pope Innocent VIII strongly commended the publication of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, 'Hammer of Witches', written by two Dominican Inquisitors. It has been claimed that in about 150 years the Holy Office of the Inquisition was responsible for burning 30,000 witches. This savage mania against witchcraft was not peculiar to the Inquisition; it was also shared by Protestants, who killed thousands of alleged witches during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The persecution of heresy entered upon a new phase with the rise of reforming movements such as that of John Wycliffe in the 14th century. Wycliffe attacked both the papal government of the Church and certain medieval doctrines such as that of transubstantiation. Although he died peacefully, his followers, called Lollards, suffered much persecution. In 1401 the English Parliament passed the Act *De Haeretico Comburendo* to deal with the movement, and many Lollards paid the penalty for their heresy at the stake. John Huss, the Bohemian Reformer, who was influenced by the writings of Wycliffe, was excommunicated by Pope John XXIII and burnt at Constance in 1415.

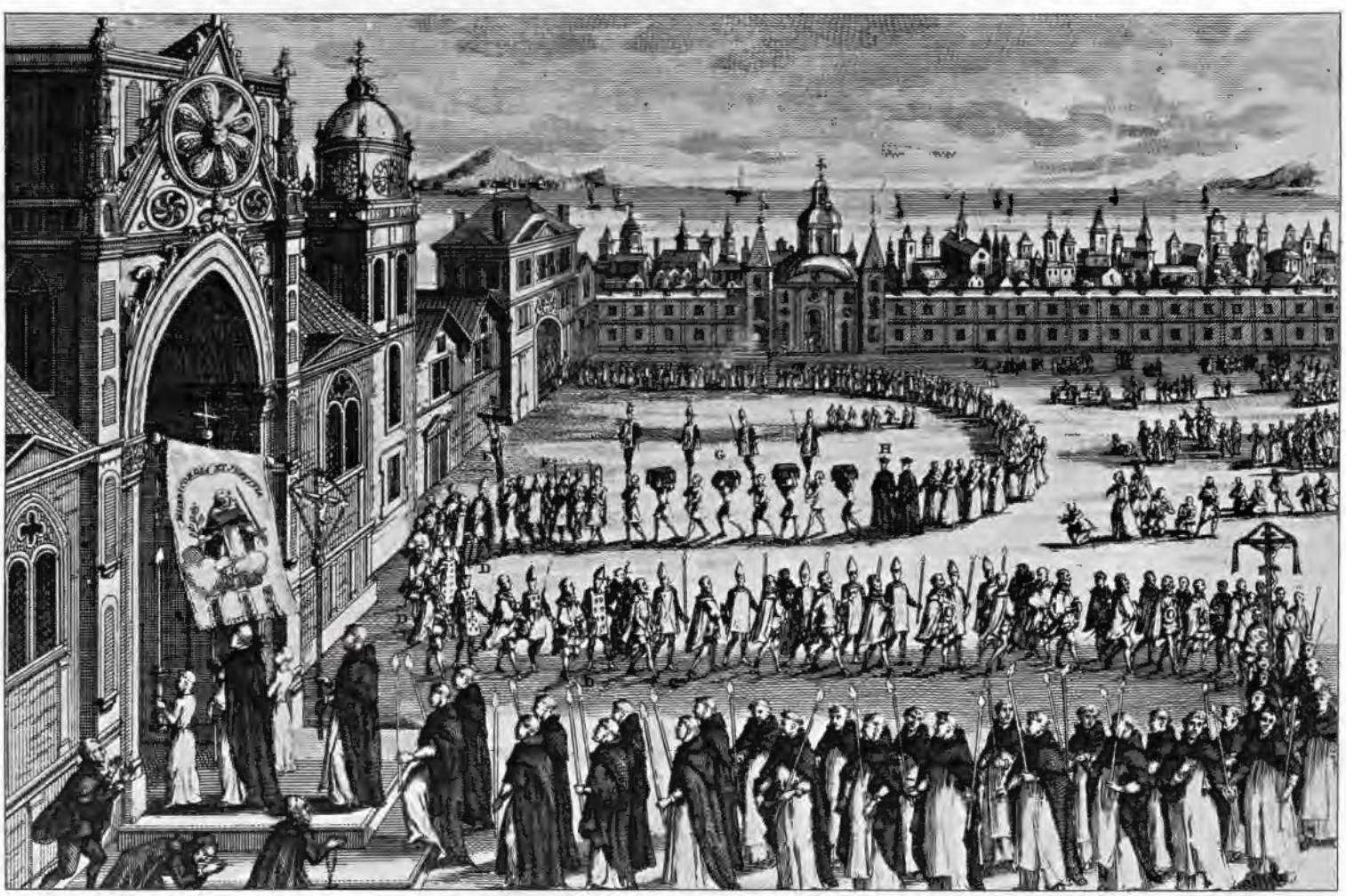
The Inquisition was used by the Catholic Church to stop the spread of the Reformation in most European countries and its cruelties left an indelible impression on the minds of Protestants. In 1542 Pope Paul III set up in Rome the Congregation of cardinals and officials commonly known as the Holy Office, as the final court of appeal in trials of heresy. In 1557 Paul IV caused the Congregation of the Inquisition to issue the first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, 'List of Prohibited Books', in an effort to warn the faithful against heretical writings. To keep this up to date, Pius V established in 1571 a special 'Congregation of the Index', to maintain and revise the list.

Persecution of what was considered to be heretical opinion was not confined to the Catholics but was also zealously undertaken by many Protestants. John Calvin was personally responsible for one of the most shocking instances: Michael Servetus, distinguished for his rejection of the dogma of the Trinity, escaped from the Inquisition to Geneva, Calvin's headquarters. But Calvin also regarded him as a dangerous heretic. Servetus was arrested and, on refusing to recant, was burnt at the stake on 27 October 1553.

With the increasing secularization of society, toleration of diverse religious opinion steadily grew. But condemnations for heresy have occurred even in modern times in both the Roman Catholic and other Churches. Where clerics have been involved, deposition from office has usually followed: the help of the state can no longer be invoked in punishing heretical laymen. However, the Church still evaluates heresy as a most awful evil. In its Litany it prays: 'From all false doctrine, heresy and schism, Good Lord deliver us'.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: H.O. Brown, *Heresies* (Doubleday, 1984); M. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy* (Holmes & Meier, 1977); E. Peters, ed., *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980); S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge University Press, 1955).



In the final ceremony of the Inquisition, known as the 'act of faith', heretics were paraded through the streets wearing special garments, before being handed over to the civil authorities to be executed; illustration from Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*, published in 1731, with the procession headed by Dominican Friars

Mansell Collection

Hereward the Wake

Anglo-Saxon outlaw and resistance leader against the Normans, who became the hero of popular legends; he and his followers helped the Danes to sack Peterborough Abbey in 1070; his stronghold on the Isle of Ely was besieged and taken by William the Conqueror; Hereward escaped but nothing more is known of him; there is no evidence that he was called 'the Wake' in his own day, and the name probably comes from his supposed connection with the Wake family from Bourne in Lincolnshire.

HERMAPHRODITE

THE NOTION of a bisexual divinity seems to have arrived comparatively late in the ancient Greek world: there is certainly no trace of it in Homer and Hesiod. Hermaphroditos, the god who was described by the Latin poet Ovid as 'neither man nor woman, who seemed to be neuter, yet bisexual', is mentioned for the first time by a later 4th century author, who says that superstitious folk put garlands on his statue on the seventh day after a child's birth.

According to Ovid (43 BC–18 AD), Hermaphroditos was the son of the love goddess Aphrodite and Hermes, the messenger of Zeus. To conceal his birth, Aphrodite entrusted him to the nymphs of Mt Ida, who brought him up in the forests. In his teens, though as beautiful as both his parents, he was a savage young man chiefly interested in hunting. One day in Caria, as he was bathing naked in a clear lake, the naiad Salmacis saw him and fell in love with him, shouted out, 'He's mine!', and flinging all her clothes off, plunged in after him. The bashful youth resisted her kisses in vain, and the gods granted her prayer never to be parted from him by uniting their two bodies in one.

It is obvious that the name Hermaphroditos gave rise to the myth, and not the other way round, though the local men used the story as an excuse for the loss of their virility, blaming the lake waters for their enervating effects, whereas, according to Strabo (64 BC–19 AD) their effeminate and self-indulgent habits were the cause.

It cannot be said that Hermaphroditos was the subject of any important cult, and the representations of bisexual gods and heroes in Greek painting and statuary, which are fairly common from the 4th century BC onwards, are due to a variety of inspirations, ranging from the individual artist's more or less idle fancy to half-understood notions derived from Cyprus, Persia and Asia Minor. The treatment varies from the depicting of a beautiful young man with a woman's breasts to, at a later period, an Aphrodite-like figure with male limbs. It has been pointed out by one authority on the subject that the more the feminine aspect is stressed, the more 'unnatural' the hermaphrodite appears.

The treatment of the hermaphrodite in Greek plastic art links up with a side of ancient life of which we get only occasional glimpses in the texts which have survived. A Sicilian Greek historian, contemporary with Julius Caesar, says that Hermaphroditos is a god who sometimes appears to men, and it may be assumed that this is an allusion to the observation of human hermaphrodites whose incidence must have been a cause of great fear among ancient peoples. If we turn from physical hermaphroditism to psychical bisexuality, there are scattered references to bisexual or 'unisex' customs in the ancient world. At Argos, for example, it was at one time the custom for a bride to put on a false beard (there was also a curious statue of a bearded Aphrodite in Cyprus in Aristophanes's time in the 5th century BC), and at Sparta the newly-wed girl put on man's clothing to go to the bridal bed. There are various stories of men and women exchanging clothes at certain religious festivals, but as all these customs are only briefly mentioned, at different periods of history and in different places, we have no means of assessing their social significance, if any, let alone of reconstructing the psychological experiences to which they possibly related.

Alongside these public manifestations of interest in the phenomena of bisexuality there were also speculations of a private or individual kind. In Plato's *Symposium*, a curious story to explain the origin of sexual love is put into the mouth of the comic playwright Aristophanes. Mankind is descended, says Aristophanes, from an earlier race of circular beings, some male, some female, and some hermaphrodite. The reason that there were three sexes was that the male came originally from the sun and the female from the earth, while the bisexual beings came from the moon, which shares the nature of both sun and earth. These circular beings had four arms and legs, four ears, two mouths and two sets of genitals. They became so uppish, however, that the gods decided literally to cut them down to size, which they did by bisecting them. Since that time, each one of us is constantly looking for his or her other half, which may be male or female, irrespective of our own sex. For in this scheme only those descended from the androgyne will be seeking a mate of the opposite sex.

Michael Holford

When Hermaphroditos, the son of Aphrodite and Hermes, resisted the advances of the nymph Salmacis, she prayed that they should never be parted; the gods granted her wish by uniting their two bodies in one: statue in the British Museum

The link between the moon and bisexuality is found in a North American Indian legend where, of course, it cannot possibly have any connection with the ancient Greek or Egyptian myths. According to the Tsimshian Indians, the moon is a halfway house between heaven and earth, and is the domain of Pestilence, who is attended by four destructive, hermaphrodite dwarfs. There are a number of hermaphrodite myths in American Indian culture. The

Navaho tribe, for example, ascribed the invention of pottery and the wicker water-bottle to the hermaphrodite twins who were the first of five sets of twins born to the first man and the first woman.

One Pueblo Indian tribe, the unaggressive Zuni people, are reported to believe in a bisexual Creator, and hermaphrodite gods are connected with birth, self-perpetuation and rejuvenation in many places on earth, including ancient Egypt and pre-Columbian Central America. In American Indian mythology, the hermaphrodite may have originated with men who dressed as women and played an ambiguous role in tribal life, some of whom have been observed by missionaries and anthropologists, though it must be stressed that the connection, if any, between physical hermaphroditism and transvestism or other psychologically bisexual practices is obscure, and is only now being investigated scientifically.

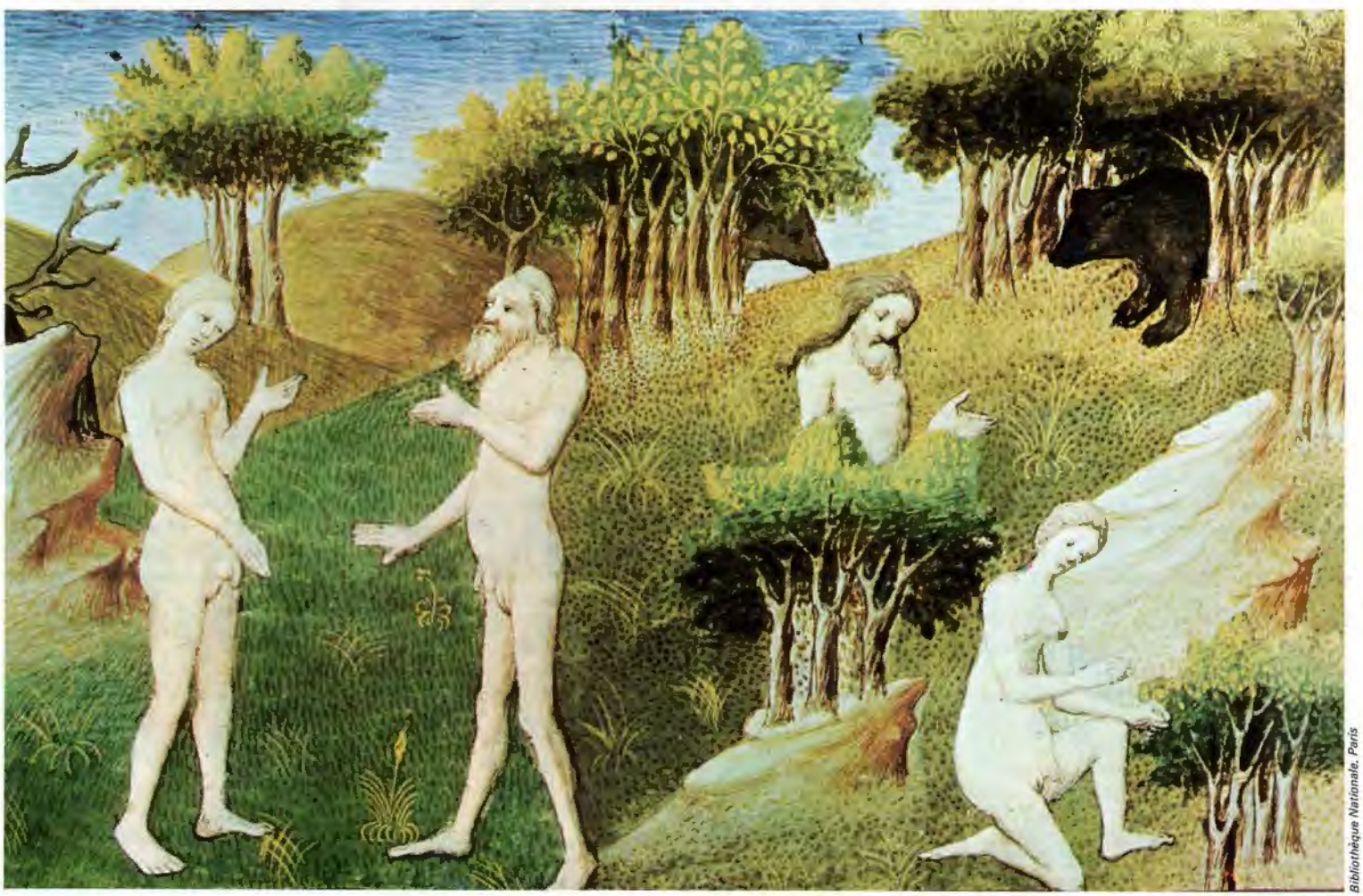
It is possible that more fundamental notions underlie these myths. Analysing a myth of the Pawnee Indians of the North American Plains, in which a young boy is made pregnant as the result of a magic spell cast upon him by a malevolent medicine-man, Lévi-Strauss (in his *Structural Anthropology*) finds that confusion of sex in the boy is opposed to its irrevocable differentiation in the medicine-man. 'All of Pawnee metaphysical thought,' he adds, 'is actually based on the idea that at the creation of the world antagonistic elements were intermingled and that the first work of the gods consisted in sorting them out. The young child is asexual, or . . . the male and female principles co-exist in him.'

The idea of a bisexual deity occurs in ancient Indian religion, where the Hindu god Shiva is sometimes conceived as androgynous. Shiva is among other things a god of reproduction, and as such his cult is centred on the sacred *lingam*, a phallic emblem, which in temples and in the form of a small, portable object, is usually a round conical stone, rising perpendicularly from a stone platform, on which an oval rim is incised. The oval stone is the *yoni* or *bhaga* symbolizing the female genitals, so that this combination of *lingam* and *yoni* represents in some sense a bisexual principle. At the same time, the *yoni* symbolizes Shiva's wife, the goddess Parvati. It is not clear, however, how conscious the worshippers of these ancient Vedic gods are of the sexual connotations of these cult objects, which seem to be among the most time-honoured idols in India.

It has been asserted, for example by H. P. Blavatsky, that the concept of an androgynous god is universal in primitive religion, but if this is so, it is still doubtful to what extent we are confronted with a unified phenomenon. Moreover, in the few instances where some history of the hermaphrodite god can be traced, a number of ideas and experiences seem to have contributed to its invention. Human hermaphrodites (of which modern science distinguishes several distinct types, only the rare, extreme case having both male and female sexual glands) were regarded as ominous in ancient Babylon, as is known from an early text, and presumably elsewhere in the world. The impression they created on the primitive mind may have been the starting point of speculation about a bisexual divinity.

One notable point is that for the most part, Hermaphroditos, under whatever name he or she is known and worshipped, is a minor and peripheral deity. It remains to be seen whether there is any deep-lying connection between this deity and the bisexuality which some modern psychologists believe to be universal in human nature. At the turn of this century there was a great deal of interest in the subject in psychoanalytic circles, and Freud planned to write a book on the subject in collaboration with the Berlin physician Wilhelm Fliess (1858–1928), to whom Freud wrote in 1899: 'I am accustoming myself to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved.' But a bitter dispute grew up between Freud and Fliess over precedence in the matter of having realized the significance of bisexuality, and though Freud was influenced by Fliess and by one or two other writers who developed the theme, it did not become the major theme in his work that it at one time promised to be.

DAVID PHILLIPS



The modern belief that bisexuality is a significant element in human nature is foreshadowed in this illustration depicting Adam and Eve, the first man and woman of the Old Testament, as hermaphrodites: from an early 15th century French manuscript

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

HERMES

IN MANY WAYS Hermes is the most sympathetic, the most baffling, the most confusing, the most complex and therefore the most Greek of all the Olympian gods. Like the Olympian goddesses, he had a prehistory; he is a very uneasy kind of Olympian, with deep popular roots.

There seems to be little doubt that Hermes signifies 'the god of the stone heap', the spirit immanent in stones set up as cairns or pillars to serve as boundaries, or as landmarks for the wayfarer. Truly a god of the countryside, he was associated with the Minoan pillar cult and there is evidence that the cult of Hermes existed in Crete in historical times.

Coins found at Cydonia and dated to about 250–267 BC, feature a nude Hermes with his wand and familiar broad-brimmed hat. It seems that at Cydonia Hermes could have had very special associations with the old Minoan population. According to the historian Ephorus (4th century BC) certain festivals were regularly celebrated for the serfs of this district, during which no free persons entered the city; the serfs were masters of everything and even had power to flog the freemen. It is tempting to connect this account with another old tradition that festivals of Hermes were celebrated in Crete, and that while the serfs were feasting their masters assisted in menial duties. On these occasions they would have been assuming temporarily the free status which their old Minoan ancestors had once enjoyed.

As W. K. C. Guthrie explains Hermes was named by the Greeks from *herma* or *hermaion*, a cairn or heap of stones. To explain this connection the Greeks characteristically invented a myth to account for it, that when Hermes killed the many-eyed monster Argus, he was brought to trial by the gods. They acquitted him and, in doing so, each threw his voting pebble at his feet and a heap of stones grew up around him. In fact Hermes must simply have been the daemon or spirit of the stone heaps themselves, about which there were several superstitious beliefs. Even now, in some parts of Britain, the wayfarer who wishes for good luck will add a stone to the cairn which he finds on the hilltop. This custom also prevailed in antiquity; and belief in the spirit of the cairn is still an occasional feature of northern European belief.

As the mythological explanation suggests, the *herma* consisted of an upright monumental stone with a heap of smaller stones around its base. Gradually the god, and the pillar which represented him, became more and more human in conception. He was given a phallus to promote fertility, and finally emerged as a fully human figure. Yet even in the 5th century the 'herma' which stood in front of Athenian houses had not thrown off all traces of their origin, and were no more than half-human in shape.

As Charles Seltman put the matter, it is now becoming apparent that, just as in Christian theology there are always two distinct influences, one Jewish and the other Greek, so in pagan theology there are two distinct influences, one pre-Hellenic, the other Hellenic, for all the most important Olympian deities. This is certainly true of Hermes, whose name is Greek but whose nature and functions are mainly derived from the beliefs of earlier peoples. He seems to emerge as a pastoral god and a guide to travellers because of his association, in remote antiquity, with cairns.

The later Greek-speaking peoples did not know the name that the pre-Hellenic inhabitants had given to the god of these stone heaps; and the name, as often in similar cases elsewhere, was doubtless withheld from them. Therefore they could only refer to him as 'Hermes' from their word for 'stone heap'. In the Laconian dialect which some of them spoke, he was known as 'Herman', 'He of the stone heap', or more familiarly, 'Old Heapy'.

The most versatile of all the Greek deities, one of the many roles of Hermes was that of messenger of the gods; Hermes with Herse, one of two sisters who had disobeyed the goddess Athene: painting by Paolo Veronese

The Syndics of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

It is true, as Seltman added, that recent research has provided a clearer perception of what the Greeks at different times thought and felt about Hermes, and more is known about him than about several other deities. The multiplicity of his titles and functions must not be allowed to disguise the fact that he is one of the earliest and most primitive of all the gods of Greece. In the prologue to the *Ion* of Euripides Hermes introduces himself in this way:

> Atlas, who wears on back of bronze the ancient
> Abode of gods in heaven, had a daughter
> Whose name was Maia, born of a goddess:
> She lay with Zeus and bore me, Hermes,
> Servant of the immortals.

This introduction modestly stresses his prehistoric origin and his subordinate status in the Olympian hierarchy. Further insight into the varied functions of this truly popular god is given in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, and in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, familiar to English readers in Shelley's translation, and one of the longest and most charming of all the Homeric Hymns. It tells the tale of the infant god's adventures following his birth in a cave on Mt Cyllene in Arcadia, the ancient seat of his worship. From there it was carried to other parts of Greece.

Hermes escaped from his cradle, went to Pieria and carried off some of Apollo's oxen, which he drove to Pylos, in the neighbourhood of Olympia. Returning to Cyllene, he found a tortoise at the entrance to his cave, placed strings across its shell and so invented the lyre on which he promptly played. Apollo discovered the theft, went to Cyllene and charged Hermes with the crime. Hermes's mother Maia showed the god the child in his cradle but Apollo took him to Zeus, who obliged him to restore the oxen. By giving him the lyre Hermes won the friendship of Apollo and also various prerogatives, including a share in divination, lordship over herds and animals, and the office of messenger from the gods to Hades.

As herald of the gods, Hermes was god of eloquence. Prudent and cunning, he was master of fraud, perjury and theft. He was also credited with a variety of inventions apart from the lyre. God of roads, he cared for travellers; and as inventor of sacrifices, he protected sacrificial animals, and was worshipped by shepherds. He was god of commercial transactions and good luck, and patron of gymnastics. The famous sculpture of Hermes by Praxiteles is one of numerous representations of this most versatile of all the Greek gods.

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods* (Methuen, 1950); C. Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians and their Guests* (Parrish, 1956).

Because man combines a godlike and a mortal nature, he is superior to the lesser gods who are only immortal, and to other creatures who are only mortal, and for the same reason he can create gods: these are among the ideas of the Hermetic texts of the early centuries AD

HERMETICA

THREE DIFFERENT intellectual movements met in the world of late antiquity. There was a style of philosophy which instead of busying itself with pedantic subtleties concentrated on those questions which move man to his depths, in the manner of Plato's great dialogues to which the Roman thinker Cicero and many of his contemporaries looked back. There was a new style of religious feeling, which searched for an intimate personal relationship with God. And, stimulated but not originated by the conquests of Alexander the Great, there was an intense interest in the old civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and in their 'ancient wisdom'.

One product of the mingling of these movements was a religious and philosophical literature which must have developed between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD. The works which make up this literature are called Hermetica because the principal character in them is usually Hermes Trismegistus. The name Trismegistus (thrice-greatest) shows that this is the Egyptian god Thoth (see EGYPT), who had been equated with the Greek Hermes by c 500 BC.

The Hermetic writings are in the form of dialogues in which, besides Hermes Trismegistus, the chief characters are Tat (Thoth again), the healing gods Asclepius and Imhotep, Ammon, Isis and Horus. Their purpose is to teach the understanding of God, man and the universe, and they announce their doctrines with the authority of the 'ancient wisdom' of Egypt. But they rarely make full use of the pretence that the speakers are Egyptian gods and demigods, and there is little genuine Egyptian tradition in the dialogues. The bulk of their teaching stems from Greek philosophy, especially from Plato and Aristotle. At times we have the impression that the writer has been satisfied with cursorily revising a Greek philosophical treatise or dialogue, with an air of solemnity and edification but quite often debasing or even mutilating the original thought. The Hermetic dialogues are not remarkable for consistency of thought or uniformity of terminology and the versions which have come down to us are crowded with obscurities and contradictions.

Quite a number of collections of Hermetic writings must once have existed. Some were gathered together at an unknown date in what is called the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which still exists. Another collection was made by John Stobaeus in the 5th century AD and most of it has been preserved. We know little of three others: one used by the Christian writer Lactantius c 300 AD; one quoted by the philosopher Iamblichus (early 4th century); and one of 15 books cited by the scholarly Christian theologian Cyril of Alexandria (early 5th century). Two other, longer texts stand alone. The first is the *Asclepius*, preserved in a Latin translation, possibly of the 3rd century AD. It is known and cited by St Augustine and is the text which defined the image of Hermetism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The second is a dialogue between Isis and Horus, which has the strange title of *Kore Kosmou* (which might mean 'daughter of the world' or 'pupil of the world'). Stobaeus contains extracts from it.

Hermetism has frequently been compared to, and linked with Gnosticism and there are certainly many similarities. Gnosticism (see GNOSTICISM) flourished in the same period, is equally concerned with knowledge of God, the world and the soul, and equally teaches that the human soul can only escape from its bondage to matter if it possesses the true knowledge or understanding (the *gnosis*) which is the privilege of a select few. Large speculations about abstract cosmic powers are characteristic of Gnosticism and sometimes appear in the Hermetica too, and both were influenced by astrology.

But the extent of the connection should not be exaggerated. Much can be explained by common dependence on Platonism. Unlike the Hermetica, the gnostic texts were the sacred writings of communities of initiates and constituted a serious threat to the early Church. Hermetism and Gnosticism are related by the fact that they originate in the same period and spring from the same intellectual background but there is no closer connection.

Pictorial representation of the Hermetic philosophy of Nature; at the centre of the spheres of the seven traditional planets and the fixed stars is the Serpent of Wisdom, twined around the Tree of Life; the reference to the Philosophers' Stone points to the link between the hermetic tradition and alchemy: 15th century illustration to *Opera Chemica* by Raymond Lull

The first text of the *Corpus Hermeticum* is the most famous text in the collection, the *Poimandres*. The author tells us that he has been carried away in the spirit and met a superhuman being, Poimandres, the spirit of omnipotence. The author asks for understanding of the nature of things and knowledge of God. He is answered in a vision, in which he sees Darkness and Light. From Darkness comes moisture, and from it the other basic elements of which the world is made. Light is the Spirit (*Nous* or Mind) and from it comes reason (*Logos*). The original spirit gives birth to a second spirit, who is the demiurge, the creator of the world, which has two levels, the heavens and the earth.

The original spirit also gives birth to the original man, to whom is assigned the world of the stars. But earthly Nature falls in love with the original man, and as he looks down from above he sees himself reflected in the waters. He falls in love with his reflection, descends towards it and is embraced in the arms of Nature. This is clearly an interpretation of the Greek myth of Narcissus, who fell in love with his reflection in a pool.

Next, ordinary human man comes to life, with a mortal body, but he is also immortal because he contains part of the original man. As a mortal being he is subject to Fate but as an immortal being he is master of all things. At first all things were androgynous, combining both sexes, but then male and female were separated from each other, and the procession of the generations began. For man all that is important is to know 'who he is', that is, so far as he is the original man. Whoever knows himself reaches surpassing goodness but whoever remains enmeshed in love of the body stays in darkness and loses his immortality. The author is deeply moved by this pronouncement of Poimandres.

On Becoming God

For the Hermetists . . . it is through mystical experience that man attains liberation. In that experience, at its greatest intensity, the soul is wholly absorbed in the vision of God. 'Father,' says Tat to Hermes, 'you have given me my fill of this good and most beautiful sight, and my mind's eye is almost blinded by the splendour of the vision.' 'Nay,' Hermes rejoins, 'the vision of the Good is not a thing of fire, as are the sun's rays . . . It shines forth much or little according as he who gazes upon it is able to receive the inflow of the incorporeal radiance . . . He who has apprehended the beauty of the Good can apprehend nothing else; he who has seen it can see nothing else . . . He forgets all bodily sensations and all bodily movements, and is still. But the beauty of the Good bathes his mind in light, and takes all his soul up to itself, and draws it forth from the body, and transforms it wholly into the essence of God.'

In the ecstatic vision of the divine, man's being is deified; he passes into the divine Light.

In another tractate the writer suggests that it is possible to rise to the knowledge of God, which implies identification with Him, by the application of the principle that 'like is apprehended by like'. If thou canst not make thyself equal to God, thou canst not know God.' Such equalization to God can be attained by the illimitable extension of our being. 'Expand thyself into the immeasurable greatness, passing beyond all bodily limits; raise thyself above all time, become eternal. Then thou shalt know God.' A man is to transcend all spatial and temporal limits – to 'become higher than all height, lower than all depth', to take to himself 'the qualities of all creatures', to conceive himself to be in every place, in the living and the dead. By such an expansion of the range of his consciousness man may rise into oneness with God, who is Himself the Whole.

Sidney Spencer *Mysticism in World Religion*

Ego sum rerum naturaliū doctor
Scribe q dicam ille mulierem
nominat h ea ferre et forore sua
Scribe q dicam tibi rem
ut ipsum
ne ipsius iaculo interficiat se ipsum
lusorem deglutiendo
Ego sum homo nudus et pasper fabulis ingens interficere draconem
Ego sum res gloriosus diadema portans in capite suo
Ego suscipe regem uestrum abigne uenientem diadematē coronatum et ipm nutrire
Et ego sum res fortissimus et pulcritudinis
omnibus uentibus ut ineo dicetur
Nota q dicamo mente filio pariens
Sapiens filio et cinere
Et q apis fit ex bubulo
Et q ex leone
Et q ex apibus
Et q ex equo
Et q ex serpente
Et q ex homine
Et q ex cane
Et q ex asino
Et q ex vulpe
Et q ex lupo
Et q ex ursa
Et q ex simia
Et q ex leopardo
Et q ex pardo
Et q ex tigride
Et q ex elephante
Et q ex camelo
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At death, Poimandres explains, man abandons the body, the senses and the two lower parts of the soul, passion and desire. Then he ascends through the spheres of the seven planets, leaving behind him in each of them part of his being, the part which the original man had received from the stars. Finally he will be reduced to just himself and can enter the eighth sphere and join the powers assembled there. With them he comes before the Father and enters God. 'For this is goodness and the aim for all those who have intelligence: to become God.'

Poimandres disappears, telling the author to teach this knowledge to those who are worthy of receiving it. The author explains how he has tried to do this, and the text ends with solemn praise of God.

The story seems strange and fantastic but on careful examination almost all its ideas can be traced back to Plato and his followers, to Aristotle, and to the Stoic philosophers. The same thing is true of the other texts in the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

The extremely influential *Asclepius* is a discussion between Hermes, Asclepius, Tat and Ammon. It begins with an incoherent exposition of the belief that 'all is one' and of the hierarchy that leads from God down to animal and plant life. Then follows an impressive consideration of the position of man in the universe and his task in life. The task is a double one, to show piety towards God and, by order of God and together with him, to rule the earthly world. The main virtues of men are piety and a contempt for the body and matter. Whoever co-operates with God merits release from his mission in the world and a return to the godlike life of the pure spirit. Those who fail to do this are reborn after death in other forms. False philosophy is attacked, the study of mathematics, musical theory and geometry, for the only use of these sciences is to induce admiration of the splendour of the ordered universe. All else is 'sophisticated subtlety'.

The work goes on to discuss God, matter and the evil which is part of the universe. God has given men spirit, knowledge and reason to fight evil. A hierarchy of gods is introduced. The first god is androgynous, without limit and incessantly begetting, because he is good and passes on his goodness. All other beings have their procreative power from him. Man has reason and knowledge, and because he combines a godlike and a mortal nature, he is superior to the gods who are only immortal, and to the other creatures who are only mortal. That is why he is capable of creating gods – the gods who live in the temples and enjoy the worship of the people. In the statues of these gods live divine souls, put there by men, which prophesy the future and send the people both diseases and cures.

Unexpectedly, we next come to praise of Egypt and a vision of its future. One day the gods will leave Egypt, religion will perish, barbarians will rule and the people will be ruined by cruelty and godlessness. But God will intervene and destroy all evil-doing with fire or flood or pestilence and restore the old glory of the world. The lower gods will return and assemble in a town in Egypt to which all mortals will gather. Asclepius asks where these gods are at present, and is told, 'They are in a very big town on the Libyan mountain. But now enough.'

The Creation of Gods

Eventually, after telling us that physical death is followed by the judging of the soul, with the punishment of offenders, the *Asclepius* returns to the subject of man's ability to create gods. 'Our ancestors discovered the art of creating gods.' They made statues, 'and because they could not create souls, they conjured the souls of demons or messengers (angels) and introduced them by holy and godly mysteries into the images of the gods, so that they received the power to cause good and evil.' The first Asclepius and the first Hermes were among the gods created in this way, and they are the ancestors of the speakers in the dialogue. Isis was also made in this way. These gods are approached through sacrifices, hymns and praises.

This is a strange theory of the images of the gods. Educated Greeks and Romans knew, of course, that the man-made statue of a god merely represented the presence of a god in his temple. But the beliefs of the less educated were probably never so clear-cut. It is typical of the period that ideas previously ignored as superstitious by the sophisticated now come to the surface and are formulated in literature, and it is doubtful that the idea of man installing demonic or angelic beings in the statues originated with the Hermetic authors. Certainly the theory was not confined to them.

The *Asclepius* ends with the statement that enough nourishment has now been given to the souls of the listeners and it is time for the body to have its share. A final prayer is said, requesting God to 'preserve us in the love of your knowledge so that we shall never be separated from this form of life', and the speakers sit down to a vegetarian meal.

Originality is not a virtue of the Hermetica. They contain scarcely a paragraph which cannot be considered as a development or continuation of older and more original ideas. Almost all the material is drawn from Greek philosophy, with a little from ancient Egyptian beliefs and Mesopotamian astrology, and still less from the Old Testament. But the spiritual atmosphere is distinctly impressive. God, the world and man are the topics that continually recur. The spirit is godly and good, matter and the body are evil. Man must live in conformity with the spirit, which means that he must try to know God and to share with God the task of administering the world of matter. Understanding and piety are the only important things.

The negative aspect of this is that the Hermetica do not offer us theological argument, still less any treatment of natural science or natural philosophy. Even though they discuss the creation and ordering of our world, scientific astronomy, meteorology or biology are matters of complete indifference to the Hermetic authors. Nor do they offer any guidance in practical ethics. Only to a small extent is this due to their device of setting the dialogues in a time long before, when the concrete ethical problems of life in the Hellenistic centuries could not yet exist. It is due far more to the fact that for the Hermetic authors there is really only one virtue: the piety that shows itself in longing to know, to understand, God, the world and man.

OLOF GIGON

FURTHER READING: A. D. Nock and A. J. Festugière ed., *Corpus Hermeticum* (Budé series, Paris, 1945–54) includes the *Asclepius*; W. Scott, *Hermetica* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1924–36). See also Sidney Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religion* (Penguin, 1963) with bibliography; H. Idris Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Ares Publishers, 1977).

Hermit

Or eremite, a person who lives in solitude, retreating from the bustle of the world and human company to concentrate on religious devotion; from the Greek word for 'desert', because the first Christian recluses were those, like St Anthony, who lived alone in deserts; hermits were common and much respected in medieval times; with the craze for Gothic medievalism in the 18th century it was briefly fashionable to pay a 'hermit' to live picturesquely in a grotto on the grounds of a country house.

See ANTHONY; SELF-DENIAL.

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HERNE THE HUNTER

THE CURIOUSLY PERSISTENT legend of Herne the Hunter has been associated with Windsor Forest for at least four centuries, and may quite possibly have been part of the local traditional lore in medieval times. It concerns the ghost of a man named Herne who is said to have been one of the keepers of the Forest during his lifetime. Because of some crime he had committed, varying in different accounts from poaching to witchcraft, he fell into very serious trouble, and eventually hanged himself upon an oak tree in the Forest which was afterwards known as Herne's Oak.

The period in which all this happened is as uncertain as some of the other elements of the tale; in some versions, the reign of Queen Elizabeth is mentioned, in others that of Henry VIII or Richard II. Nothing in the Windsor records supplies any evidence for the existence of a keeper named Herne, or for his tragic death. In a manuscript in the British Museum it is stated that one 'Rycharde Horne, yeoman,' was examined on a charge of hunting unlawfully in the King's Forest in Henry VIII's time. It has been suggested that this incident may have been the origin of the legend, but as nothing further is known about this yeoman, or the manner of his death, the connection cannot be regarded as proved.

Whoever Herne the Hunter may have been in life – always supposing that he ever had any real existence in the world of men – tradition is clear that he haunted the vicinity of the oak tree after his death, and was sometimes seen in other parts of the Forest as well. Moreover, his was not a simple and harmless phantom, but a malignant and, in some ways, a demon-like ghost. He wore horns like those of a stag upon his head. His appearance boded ill to all those who saw him, and many local misfortunes, including cattle ailments of various kinds, were commonly attributed to his evil influence.

Shakespeare knew this story, and it is from him that we have the earliest-known written reference to it. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act 4 Sc. 4), when Mistress Page is plotting to frighten and make a fool of Sir John Falstaff, she says:

> There is an old tale goes, that Herne the hunter,
> Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
> Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
> Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
> And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
> And makes milch-kine yield blood, and
> Shakes a chain in a most hideous and dreadful manner . . .

The great tree that Mistress Page knew disappeared in George III's reign. In Collier's map of the Little Park, dated 1742, it is shown as 'Sir John Falstaff's oak', perhaps because the map-maker did not care to perpetuate ghostly legends. The little hollow beside it, commonly known as the Fairy Dell, is marked but not named. In 1790,

Mansell Collection

A malignant and demon-like ghost, Herne the Hunter wore horns like those of a stag: engraving by the 19th century artist George Cruikshank, showing the phantom huntsman riding through Windsor Forest

Herne's Oak died, and was cut down in 1796, when a number of other dead trees in the Forest were felled. But the legend did not die with it. Another withered oak was commonly pointed out as that on which Herne hanged himself, and round it the various traditions continued to be centred. Cooper-King, in his *History of Berkshire* (1887), remarked that 'it is but a counterfeit'.

Eventually, Edward VII caused a new tree to be planted on the site of the old one, and this now flourishes in the Little Park, a part of the Forest that is not open to the public. It, too, might be called a counterfeit, since it is neither Herne's true oak nor descended from it; but it can at least claim to be growing in the right place, and to be drawing its strength from soil that has been permeated with ghostly traditions for many centuries.

In the course of time, the details of Herne's legend have changed a little. Cattle diseases in the district have long since ceased to be attributed to his malice, nor is he now supposed to 'shake a chain in a most hideous and dreadful manner'. Stories told within this century speak of him as hunting by night through the Forest, and across the common at Cookham Dean near Maidenhead. Nothing is seen, but the sound of his horn is heard, and the noise of baying hounds and galloping horses. The fact that the horses are always mentioned in the plural suggests that he has become confused with the Wild Huntsman, and now rides at the head of an invisible ghostly band (see WILD HUNT).

He is also said to have been seen occasionally on the old site in the Little Park, horned as in the past and usually alone, though in some variants of the tale he is accompanied by a spectral white stag. What appears to be a more or less modern addition to his legend is the belief that his appearances, now fortunately rare, are forewarnings of some misfortune threatening the Royal Family, or of a national disaster.

Herne the Hunter is still usually considered to be the ghost of a forest keeper, even though practically nothing is known for certain about the man himself, and the curious detail of his horns is unexplained. One version of his story definitely connects him with witchcraft, and it has been suggested that he may once have been the horn-wearing 'devil', or chief, of a witch coven in the Forest. Another theory bypasses the man altogether, and associates the apparition with a local survival of the 'horned god' belief.

The most likely explanation seems to be that he began life as a forest spirit, perhaps as one of those borderline entities akin both to fairies and to demons who are often found in medieval legend; and eventually, when his true origin was forgotten, he became a ghost, as others of his kind have done in the folktales of many countries.

HERO

The hero in his quest for some priceless treasure blazes a trail for the less adventurous to follow; his end is often untimely but above all it is for the way in which they die that the great heroes of literature are remembered

USED IN EVERYDAY speech to mean an outstandingly brave man, or to designate the main character in a literary work, the word 'hero' may also be used in a specialized sense, to refer to figures in so-called 'heroic' literature. Such literature has flourished in many lands in many periods of history, whenever tales and songs are composed about a race of men whose strength and courage are above the ordinary, who accomplish great deeds, have dealings with supernatural beings, and may themselves be of supernatural parentage.

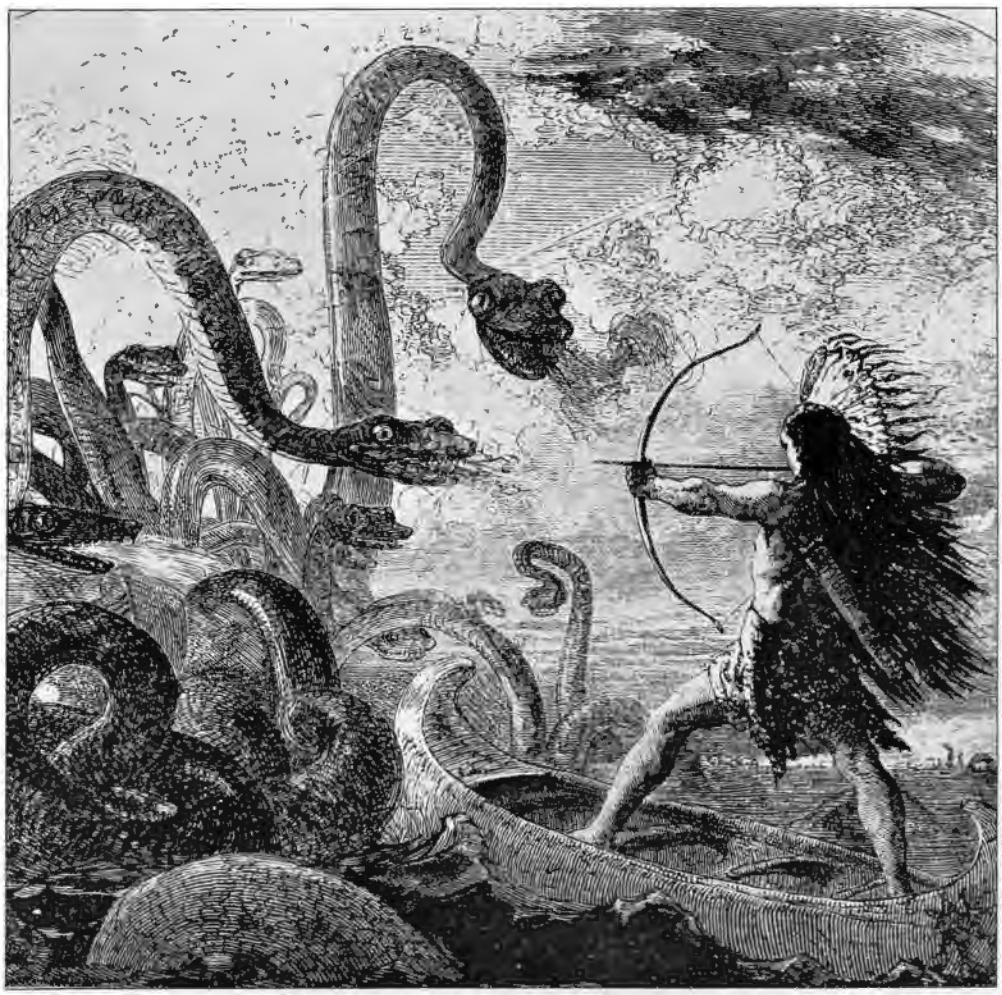
The heroes may occasionally become objects of local cults, with shrines erected to their memory and games held in their honour. Such cults existed among the Greeks, in particular the cult of Hercules, the semi-divine hero of enormous strength who accomplished a series of celebrated deeds, and saved the Greeks from many dangers.

In some cases the traditions of the heroes of the past have produced great epic poetry, as with the Homeric heroes whose exploits are the subjects of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the Germanic heroes, who inspired such works as *Beowulf* and the *Nibelungenlied*. Elsewhere there are songs, stories, ballads and more sophisticated written literature which has developed out of the early heroic tales told by people who themselves could neither read nor write. Interest in heroic literature has developed greatly during the present century, since travellers and scholars have collected much material from native poets and reciters who composed their work

Left David, who fought and conquered the giant Goliath, is one of the heroic Jewish leaders whose exploits are recounted in the Old Testament: *David and Goliath* by Caravaggio, in the Prado Museum, Madrid *Right* Greek tradition is rich in heroes; Perseus, who rescued Andromeda from a dragon, is typical of this race of men who accomplished great deeds, often with supernatural aid: *Perseus and Andromeda*, painting by Lord Leighton, in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Scala

John Mills



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National Museum of Archaeology, Sofia

The hero is not content with the limitations of human existence, and his adventures may be seen as a spiritual quest

orally and never attempted to write it down.

Many heroic figures survive from the literature of the past, although countless names once of supreme importance have been lost for ever. The heroic poetry of Gaul, for instance, has disappeared without trace, while the Roman orator Cicero (1st century BC) lamented the disappearance of the old poems telling of the ancient Roman heroes such as Romulus and Horatius, who are remembered only in brief summaries of their exploits given by later Latin writers. Fragments of the very ancient *Epic of Gilgamesh*, now believed to go back to the 3rd millennium BC, show that the central figure was a human hero of outstanding powers, who defied the goddess Ishtar and went on a hazardous journey to the world's end to search for his comrade Enkidu who had gone down into the land of death, and to find some hope of escape from the mortality to which man is doomed (see GILGAMESH). Already the hero is not content with the limitations of human existence, and his adventures may be seen as a spiritual quest.

The epic poems ascribed to Homer, the finest example of epic poetry known to us, go back to the 8th or 9th centuries BC. The heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are of magnificent stature, living an idealized existence in small independent kingdoms in the eastern Mediterranean, and winning lasting glory by their courage and mighty deeds in times of war and peace. The gods support and oppose them in a very human way, and converse familiarly with one another in the background of the human conflict, while the realities of everyday life are convincingly portrayed. Yet there is nevertheless the sense of boundless possibilities opening out for the human mind and spirit, extending far beyond the limitations of the ordinary world.

There were a host of Greek heroes outside the Homeric stories. Figures like Prometheus the Titan who was imprisoned by Zeus for giving fire to mankind, a legend which has been remembered up to recent times in the folklore of the Caucasus; Theseus who slew the Minotaur, and Jason who sailed to find the Golden Fleece, have remained famous even though their stories have come to us only in fragments. Scenes from their adventures may be seen on many early

Michael Holford/British Museum

Greek vases, and in the case of heroes like Theseus and Jason it would seem that fact and fiction have become inextricably intertwined. For many of these heroes, what is important is the journey or the quest which they undertake and their end is often a tragic one.

Another heroic work of epic proportions from the ancient world is the *Mahabharata* of India, which contains much heroic and mythical material, although it has been extensively edited by the Brahmins so that it is difficult to reconstruct its early form. The Jews too had their own heroic age, when they were fighting to establish themselves in Palestine and overthrow the rival tribes which surrounded them. The historical books of the Old Testament contain some fine heroic leaders like Gideon and Samson, while the story of David and his followers is a heroic saga of splendid proportions, with the inner core of seriousness which marks out heroic literature at its best.

There is a wealth of heroic poems and stories from western Europe dating from early medieval times. The contribution of Britain is no small one, for it includes the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, the tale of a northern hero who battled against monsters, established himself as a great king, and died defending his people from a dragon. All this is set against a more human background of wars and family feuds, which has proved of much value to scholars reconstructing the history of early Scandinavia and studying the way of life at this period. The epic has

Although some heroes are purely mythological figures, others are based on historical characters *Far left* Hiawatha defeats the Kenabeek, a many-headed monster; according to Iroquois tradition, he was a prophet who lived in the 16th century *Centre* The Hero God of Thrace *(above)*; the exact nature of his cult is not known, but more than 1000 memorials to him can still be seen in the Balkans. Robin Hood *(below)* the outlaw of Sherwood Forest, was commemorated in countless ballads *Above* St George, traditionally the patron saint of England, probably lived in Palestine in about the 3rd century: his legendary battle with the dragon is probably an allegorical expression of the Christian hero's triumph over evil: illustration from a 17th century Ethiopian manuscript

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Revolution Press

claims to greatness in its own right as fine and moving poetry. The theme of man's struggle against evil powers and the constant threat of mortality at the height of human achievement links it with other heroic works, and once more the pattern is that of the quest of the hero, his fight against great odds, and his tragic end (see BEOWULF).

Other heroic poems from the Anglo-Saxon period exist only in fragments, but there are so many references to heroes that it is clear that there was a vast body of traditions surrounding them, known to the Anglo-Saxons and to the kindred Germanic nations of north-western Europe. The Vikings continued the heroic tradition, and added to the stock of stories and poems by their own exploits in many parts of Europe and beyond.

One of their greatest heroes was Sigurd the Volsung, who is commemorated on carved stones in both the British Isles and Scandinavia. He slew a dragon and won the gift of secret knowledge together with a mighty treasure, but the gold brought a curse along with it, and he was slain by his brothers-in-law in the course of a feud which he was powerless to prevent. Sigurd was the son of another mighty hero, Sigmund, and the tragic history of this family, many of whom went courageously to their deaths fighting against overwhelming odds, is a stirring one even in the comparatively late form in which it has reached us, in the *Saga of the Volsungs* and a number of poems in Old Icelandic which deal with separate incidents and characters from the extensive *Volsung* cycle of stories.

These tales illustrate the importance of women in heroic tradition. Sigmund's sister Signy dared and suffered much to avenge her father and brothers whom her husband had treacherously killed. Sigurd's ill-fated wife Gudrun and the proud Valkyrie Brynhild, whom he reached by riding through a wall of fire to awaken her from her enchanted sleep, are two unforgettable figures who inspire the finest poems in the Icelandic collection. Brynhild slew herself at Sigurd's funeral, while Gudrun lived on to see tragedy repeated among other members of her family. The story of the Volsungs also inspired the Middle High German epic, the *Nibelungenlied*, in which Sigurd and Gudrun appear as Siegfried and Kriemhild, and which later still won new fame in the operas of Wagner (see NIBELUNGENLIED).

Celtic Britain also had its heroes. Early Welsh poems from medieval times have many references to the mysterious King Arthur (see ARTHUR), whom scholars have sought to identify with a leader who fought against the Anglo-Saxon invaders at the close of the Roman period, and whom they have attempted to place in many different areas of Britain. Around King Arthur and his band of famous warriors a rich body of poems and stories developed in Brittany, France and medieval England, in which many of his celebrated followers had links with the otherworld, rode on strange quests and encountered supernatural adversaries. The most haunting and mysterious of these heroic tales are those which are concerned with the quest of the Grail, in which Christian mysticism is mingled with ancient symbols of Celtic mythology (see GRAIL).

The heroes of Ireland, of whom Cu Chulainn and Finn are two of the most famous (see CU CHULAINN; FINN), are remembered in a large collection of prose stories in early Irish, which extend over a long period and are believed to contain elements from pre-Christian times. In these Irish sagas and in the Welsh tales of the *Mabinogion* about Arthur and other heroes (see MABINOGION) there is a strong element of the fantastic and the marvellous, so that the atmosphere differs from that of the Homeric and Germanic heroic stories.

Later still, romantic tales about Arthur and his knights developed in the form of the *Chansons de geste* in France, which in turn influenced English medieval literature. Another celebrated band of heroes were the knights of the Emperor Charlemagne, who appears as a warrior-leader, differing considerably from the ruler known in historical records, and whose influence in this guise lingers on in the folk drama of several countries. A short epic in medieval French known as the *Chanson de Roland*, composed in the 11th century, tells of the heroic fight of one of Charlemagne's heroes against the Saracens, and in the next century a group of Spanish poems, the most famous of which is the *Poema de mio Cid*, deals with the heroes of Castile.

From eastern Europe there is a group of narrative poems in Russian, the *byliny*, dealing with the early heroes of Kiev and Novgorod and the later Cossacks. Some of

Even in modern times, heroic legends can spring up in societies which are 'engaged in fighting and conflict on a local scale, the kind of fighting that gives rise to acts of heroism and personal tragedy.' The Mexican revolutionary Zapata (*far left*), murdered in 1919, turned in legend into a modern Robin Hood. Adulation of Che Guevara (*left*), revolutionary leader and guerilla fighter, reached the proportions of a hero cult among young people who longed to identify themselves with his actions and ideals. The fame of Nelson, greatest of all British naval heroes, killed at the moment of his supreme triumph at Trafalgar, rose to such a pitch that Benjamin West painted him being carried up to heaven like the saints and martyrs of earlier centuries (*right*)

Michael Holford

these heroes are kings or warrior-leaders, and some famous outlaws. The poems concerning them were never written down, but were mostly collected from peasant reciters in the 19th century, who still held their audiences enthralled with tales of these old heroes.

Heroic poetry is by no means confined to ancient civilizations, or even to the medieval past. In the last 100 years a great deal of narrative poetry about the exploits of heroes has been collected from the Tartar people of Asia, while the Yakut of Siberia, the Ainu of northern Japan, and various tribes in Arabia have continued to compose poems of this kind up to modern times. So too have a number of African peoples, such as the Galla of Ethiopia, the Touareg of the Sahara and the Zulu of South Africa. The North American Indians have a wealth of heroic stories, including many concerning heroes who were also shamans or magicians, and whose adventures took them into the supernatural world. Another extremely rich collection of poetry and tales was collected in the course of the last century from the Polynesian islands of the Pacific. These deal with heroes of the past, with voyages of discovery in the southern ocean, inter-tribal warfare and family feuds, and also with heroes who journey into the otherworld, and visit the land of the dead.

It is clear that providing that there is a live tradition of poetry and story-telling which ensures that great deeds are remembered, recorded and retold many times, tales of heroes can spring out of any society which is engaged in fighting and conflict on a local scale, the kind of individual fighting that gives rise to acts of heroism and personal tragedy. This is the soil of heroic literature, and out of it can develop great cycles of poems and sagas, and even epic works of enormous length and scope. Historical characters and events come to be drawn on a scale larger than human, and the heroes grow into figures which bear comparison with the great names of antiquity.

The revolt of the Slavs against the Turks in the early 19th century gave rise to much heroic poetry in Yugoslavia, while in western Sumatra the long war against the Dutch East India Company also produced many poems. The composer of one of these died as recently as 1897. Similarly the 1917 Revolution in Russia inspired a number of poems in which Lenin was presented as a hero in the old tradition, and described like a hero of the past.

Brief Life and Lasting Glory

The inspiration behind heroic literature may be a national struggle for freedom, individual deeds of war or adventure by an outstanding individual, or the exploits of a leader and his band of followers. These range from Alexander the Great and the Emperor Charlemagne to Robin Hood, the outlaw of Sherwood Forest in the time of the Plantagenets, who was commemorated in a number of ballads and who still inspires countless tales of adventure for the young (see ROBIN HOOD). In America there are Davy Crockett and other figures who were outstanding among the early American settlers at a time when they were establishing their frontiers and pushing westwards into hostile Indian territory.

Magic and the supernatural enter constantly into heroic literature, and the heroes have many adventures in the otherworld. Maui the Polynesian hero climbs a huge tree which leads him into a world above the clouds; Sigurd rides through a wall of fire to rescue Brynhild; with the help of Hermes, Perseus strikes off the head of the terrible Gorgon in order to rescue Andromeda from the monster.

The end of heroes is often tragic and untimely: Achilles dies in battle, choosing a brief life and lasting glory rather than to live long without great achievements;

Samson pulls the pillars of his enemies' hall down upon himself and perishes together with the multitude whom he destroys; Ragnar Lodbrok the Viking leader dies in a snakepit defying his enemies with a laugh; Sigurd dies by the swords of his kinsmen because he cannot keep faith with both Gudrun and Brynhild. It is for their deaths above all that the heroes are remembered, and these are in themselves so memorable that the tales remain moving and effective even when retold for children in a style and language far removed from that of the original tradition.

Sometimes the hero attains the height of a demigod. He may, like King Arthur, be borne living into the otherworld, so that legends of his return live on as vigorous folk belief. Gawain is represented in the Arthurian tales as a noble Christian knight, but he has certain aspects which have led to the suggestion that they represent memories of an ancient Celtic divinity, while Cu Chulainn shows such supernatural strength and rage as to reach the proportions of an awesome deity.

It has been pointed out with some truth that in many different cultures the pattern of heroic legend may be seen as a departure from the everyday world, through dangers, trials, and initiation to the acquisition of a great and lasting treasure, which may take the form of wealth beyond reckoning, a radiant bride, or the gift of inner wisdom. The hero, whether he be king's son, warrior-leader, saint or semi-divine being, blazes a trail for the less adventurous to follow. He is a kind of shadow of the hero-god of the great religions of the world, and such tales should be seen not as an escape into the world of fairy tales but as a source of deep wisdom. This could account for the wide distribution and long life of heroic literature: the hero is a concept necessary for the full development of man's mind and spirit.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

FURTHER READING: D. Brinton, *American Hero Myths* (Johnson Reprint); J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton University Press, 1968, 2nd edn).

Hestia

Greek goddess of the hearth, both the household hearth as the focal point of the family and the public hearth of a community as the centre of its life; daughter of Cronus and Rhea, and a virgin, she has little mythology: her Roman counterpart was Vesta, whose sacred flame was tended by the Vestal Virgins.

See HEARTH

Hex

Spell, charm or curse intended to injure a person or his property; also a counter-charm to protect against witches; derived from the German word for witchcraft; among the Pennsylvania Dutch in the United States a hex may be put on a victim by a 'hex doctor' and colourful 'hex signs' are still painted on barns to protect crops and animals against bewitchment and to counteract the Evil Eye.

Camera Press London

HEXAGRAM

A HEXAGRAM made of two triangles, one superimposed on the other, is used in European magic to master spirits and to banish evil influences. The hexagram's two triangles, one pointing up and the other down, combine 'above' and 'below', and so it is a symbol of man as God. It also contains occult power because it combines male (the triangle pointing up) and female (the one pointing down). These triangles are the symbols for fire and water, and in alchemy the hexagram may stand for distillation or sometimes for the Philosophers' Stone itself, which some said was made of fire and water.

The Star of David (in Hebrew *Magen David*, 'David's shield') is much the best known use of the hexagram as a symbol but its origin is obscure. There is no reference to it in the Bible or in Jewish rabbinical writings, and though it has been found in some early Jewish synagogues and graves, it has been found more often in non-Jewish contexts. By at least the 12th century it was being used on Jewish amulets intended to attract good luck and ward off misfortune. It does not seem to have become distinctively identified with Jewry until after the 17th century. It was adopted by the Zionist Organization at the First Zionist Congress, in 1897, and has now been incorporated in the flag of Israel.

Star of David above the doorway of a house in Galilee

William MacQuitty

Hieroglyphs

Or hieroglyphics, a system of picture-writing: literally, in Greek, 'sacred carvings', the picture-writing on the walls of Egyptian tombs and temples, which the Egyptians called 'the speech of the gods', who invented it; the symbols were believed to have magical powers.

See ALPHABET.

Hierophant

One who reveals sacred things, from the title of the chief priest of Eleusis who displayed the holy objects in the main ceremonies of the Mysteries: in occult societies often the title of the official who presides over initiation ceremonies: name given by occultists to the card of the Tarot traditionally called the Pope.

See ELEUSIS; TAROT.

Scala

High Gods are generally identified with the sky, and their attributes are often associated with the weather; Zeus, the supreme deity of the Greeks, was armed with thunderbolts which he used against the Giants when they attempted to overthrow the gods: painting by Perin del Vaga

Yahweh of the Old Testament, Zeus of the ancient Greeks and the sky gods of primitive belief are all examples of the High God, a supreme being who is the lord of life and death

HIGH GODS

AN OMNIPOTENT and omniscient creator god, living in, or more often identified with, the sky, is known as a 'High God'; the term appears to have been coined towards the end of the last century by the Scottish anthropologist and folklorist Andrew Lang. In a chapter of his book *The Making of Religion* (1898) entitled 'High Gods in Low Races', he points out that if the evidence is to be trusted, many pre-literate peoples believe in a Supreme God in the sky, a being who takes precedence over lesser gods, ghosts and demons.

Lang could not imagine that this belief in a High God could have 'evolved out of the maleficent ghost of a . . . medicine-man' but did not go so far as to suggest that religion therefore originated in some primeval monotheism, from which it degenerated into animism. 'Both elements,' he wrote, 'are found co-existing, in almost all our races, and nobody, in our total lack of historical information about the beginnings, can say which, if either, element is the earlier, or which, if either, is derived from the other.'

At the time, Lang's views were largely ignored by the scholarly world as just the day-dreams of a dilettante, but the work of a number of later scholars, among them W. Schmidt in Austria, R. Pettazzoni in Italy and G. Widengren in Sweden, has confirmed the essential correctness of his analysis. Almost all primitive races do in fact have some belief in a High God; evidence of such belief can be found among primitive societies in Australia, Africa, America and Asia.

It must be emphasized however, that nowhere is the belief in a High God dissociated from belief in lower gods and other spiritual beings; accordingly, the gods of primitive man normally take on the appearance of a hierarchy. The High God is supreme, all-powerful, omniscient, the lord of life and death; but since he is so powerful and so remote, it is usually necessary to approach him through his lesser servants. Frequently in practice, his very remoteness means that he receives no particular worship, the people preferring to concern themselves rather with winning the favour of his emissaries. In extreme cases, it may be proper to speak of him as a *deus otiosus*, 'a resting god', who has deliberately withdrawn into his inaccessible heaven away from human ken.

Lord of the Elements

Widengren has pointed out that the High God is master of human destiny, but that he is above good and evil. He may be regarded, more tangibly, as both good and evil, or at least as completely unpredictable; the aspects of good and evil may become virtually separate deities, or even come to be regarded in myths as his 'sons'. In some cases the High God, particularly as Creator, may be regarded as both male and female, a mythological expression of the idea that the High God contains within himself all contradictions, and is beyond all such this-worldly distinctions.

Since the High God is identified with the sky, it is only natural that celestial and atmospheric phenomena should be seen as evidences of his working. These include sun, moon and stars, which may be regarded as the god's eyes, or worshipped separately as independent, though subordinate, deities; and storm, wind, rain, thunder and lightning, which may again be attributes of the High God, or may take on independent existence within a separate sphere between heaven and earth.

'Piler of Clouds'

So it is, for instance, that many of the attributes and epithets of the Greek Zeus, such as *keraunios*, 'lord of lightning', and *nephelegereta*, 'piler of clouds', have to do with the weather, while others refer to his character as giver of fertility, or to his authority over the fates and the lives of men. Similar characteristics may be observed in ancient Roman religion, where Jupiter, the parallel of Zeus, is known as *Iuppiter Fulgar*, 'lightning', *Iuppiter Tonans*, 'thunder', or *Iuppiter Pluvialis*, 'rain'.

In the Old Testament, Yahweh exhibits most of the characteristics of a High God; he rules the tempest and the hurricane; he 'sits enthroned over the flood' (Psalm 29.10); he gives grain, and wine, and oil; the farmer is taught his business by God; and of course he created earth, sky and the heavenly bodies, as well as man. 'I made the earth, and created man upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens; and I commanded all their host.' (Isaiah 45.12). Yahweh is lord of fate, and his decrees are not to be questioned: 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy' (Exodus 33.19).

Although in cases such as this, the work of creation is entirely carried out by the High God, in other primitive societies it was held that the world in its present form is rather the work of some subordinate being. This pattern is clearly seen in the religion of the North American Indians, where there are many High Gods, the Algonquin Kitci Manitou, the Pawnee Tirawa-Atius, the Sioux Wakonda or Wakan Tanka and the Winnebago Earthmaker, but where the Supreme Being is not thought to intervene directly in human affairs.

Old habits of thought die slowly, and it is still common to find scholars and others who regard the figure of the High God as a relatively late development in the history of religion. Close study of the evidence reveals, however, that this is very far indeed from being the case. Indeed, man's earliest religious experience may conceivably have been his sense of standing under the power and protection of the over-arching sky. Whether or not this is the case, the figure of the High God is now recognized as being almost universal in the religion of early man. What the result will be for the general theory of religious evolution it is yet too early to say.

FURTHER READING: W. Schmidt, *High Gods in North America* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1933); R. Pettazzoni, *The All-Knowing God* (Arno, 1978); E. O. James, *The Worship of the Sky-God* (Athlone Press, 1963).

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

KNOWN AS the 'Sybil of the Rhine', Hildegard, Abbess of Rupertsburg, was one of the most remarkable women of the 12th century. She belongs to the tradition of the great German mystics, in company with Eckhart, Suso and Tauler. She was born in 1098 at Böckelheim in the Rhineland, and at the age of eight was entrusted by her parents to the care of Jutta, a woman of noble birth, who was living as a recluse next to the Church of St Disibod near Hildegard's home.

Hildegard took the veil at the age of 15 and joined the Benedictine community founded by Jutta. It was at this time that she began to have the visions and prophecies and other phenomena that were to continue for the rest of her life.

For many years her life in the convent was unremarkable so far as external affairs were concerned. In 1136 Jutta died and was succeeded as prioress by Hildegard. Her community had grown too large for its house and she found it necessary to move it to another at Rupertsburg, near Bingen. This was not accomplished without opposition from the monks of the neighbouring monastery of St Disibod which owed some of its importance to the convent and Hildegard's growing reputation as a seer. However, she managed to overcome the opposition and the move took place between 1147 and 1150.

Hildegard wrote hymns and anthems, a morality play and a great number of homilies to be read to the nuns in the chapter house. She invented a language that was a mixture of low Latin and German, she wrote the lives of St Disibod and St Rupert, and conducted a voluminous correspondence, most of it being in the nature of allegorical treatises and prophecies. She wrote to kings and popes, bishops and abbots, often upbraiding them for the abuses rife in the Church at that period of its history.

Despite her chronic ill-health she journeyed about the Rhineland between 1152 and 1162, founding a convent at Eibingen near Rudesheim, visiting monasteries and convents and rebuking their inmates in no uncertain terms when she found them failing to observe their Rule. And she contrived to find time to write, among other things, on natural history and medicine, even dealing with morbid psychology and pointing out that sometimes physical ills upset a man's reason. This makes people think that a man is possessed of the Devil, but it is not so.

At the end of her life Hildegard was in trouble with the Church authorities at Mainz regarding the burial in the convent cemetery of a young man who had been excommunicated. As a result, her convent was put under an interdict for a time, and the difference was resolved only a short time before her death. She was now exceedingly infirm; she could hardly stand and had to be carried from place to place. Right to the end she was counselling her nuns and many others, by word of mouth and by letter. She died on 17 September 1179. Although attempts were made to canonize her they were never successful, but she is honoured as a saint in some parts of the Rhineland.

From an early age Hildegard was subject to visions and other phenomena; she seems to have foretold the future, especially when rebuking ecclesiastics, and prophesied the terrible things which would happen if they did not amend their lives. Her visions and her accounts of them, particularly in her principal work *Scivias*, an abbreviation of *Nosce vias Domini*, 'Know the ways of the Lord', have a Blake-like quality about them, more especially in the use of symbols and images. She has also been compared with Dante. In many of her visions a prominent feature is a point of light, or a group of such points, which shimmer and move, and are most often interpreted as stars or flaming eyes. Often the lights give the impression of working, boiling or fermenting that is described by so many visionaries from Ezekiel onwards.

A great deal of her writing, particularly in *Scivias* and her more mystical treatises, may well be an early example of what nowadays is called automatism. Nevertheless, it is true to say that Hildegard certainly thought herself inspired by heaven.

The German mystic, Hildegard of Bingen receives the light from heaven: illustration from the 12th century *Wiesbaden Codex*

WALTER HILTON

A MYSTICAL WRITER in the great tradition of English devotional literature, Walter Hilton was one of a group of 14th century English mystics who included Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich and the anonymous author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. All that is known of him is that he lived during the 14th century, that fairly late in life he joined the order of Augustinian canons at Thurgarton in Nottinghamshire, and that he died in about 1395.

Of his writings there are three that can be attributed to him without doubt, and several others which are probably his. His major work is the *Scale of Perfection*, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1494. The *Epistle to a Devout Man in a Temporal Estate*, also known as *Epistle on Mixed Life* (1506), and *The Song of the Angels* (1521), are the two other works which were certainly written by him.

Among those attributed to this writer at one time was the *Imitation of Christ* which, as almost everyone now agrees, was written by Thomas à Kempis. Hilton's supposed authorship of it can probably be explained by the fact that a manuscript in Latin and English called *Musica Ecclesiastica* was in circulation in the 15th century soon after Hilton's death. The first three sections of this manuscript are identical with the first three books of the *Imitation*. If, as seems probable, the *Imitation* first reached England anonymously, when it was translated into English it was naturally attributed to the best-known mystical writer in English.

Walter Hilton is known to have been friendly with and influenced by the Carthusian monks, whose priory at Beauvale, founded in 1343, was near Thurgarton; his teaching reflects therefore something of their traditions. In any case it is not surprising that it should do so for Hilton was in the mainstream of the Alexandrian tradition, as represented by Dionysian mysticism, which had begun to spread throughout Europe in the Middle Ages (see DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE). Hilton also reflects some of the ideas of the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and it is hardly surprising that this work too has been ascribed to him.

The *Scale of Perfection* is a remarkable and valuable treatise on the spiritual life; it has been called a guidebook for the journey to the spiritual Jerusalem which Hilton describes as 'contemplation in perfect love of God'. Like all the 14th century school of English mystical writers, and unlike the Rhineland and Flemish mystics who are speculative, Hilton is severely practical. He is writing for an anchoress, a female recluse, and he takes it for granted that her goal is to strive for contemplation which he described as the restoration, the 'reforming', of the image of God in man.

Before the Fall man was in the image of God; the three powers of man's soul – memory, understanding and will – were directed primarily to God. As a result of Adam's sin man fell from this happy state 'into forgetfulness and ignorance of God, and into a monstrous love of himself'. Through Christ's Passion and death man can be restored to the image of God fully only in heaven, partially here on earth. This partial restoration may be in faith only, when a man is in a state of grace; or in faith and feeling, when by the power of the Holy Ghost man is aware of the working of grace in him. To reach this state is the object of the contemplative life.

Contemplation is reached by the action of God in the soul; and Hilton goes on to speak of the effects that it produces in the soul. The distinguishing marks of the book are beauty of thought and simplicity of expression and homely and effective imagery; although it is concerned with an advanced state of the spiritual life it is full of practical guidance.

Hilton's *Epistle to a Devout Man in a Temporal Estate* has some affinities with the *Introduction to a Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales (see FRANCIS DE SALES). It contains spiritual guidance and counsel for a religious man of wealth and social position, showing how the activities that are inseparable from his state of life may be pleasing to God, and used as a means to inflame desire for him and for the spiritualization of ordinary life. The *Song of the Angels* is a mystical treatise dealing with the action by God on the soul of the contemplative, and the spiritual consolations granted here on earth to the soul that is 'in perfect charity and purified by love'.

Hilton, like the other English mystics of the 14th century, was writing before Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross had schematized methods of mental prayer (see TERESA OF AVILA; JOHN OF THE CROSS). So his approach is simpler; for him the basis of prayer is what has come to be known as 'vocal' prayer, as distinct from 'mental' prayer. Anything beyond this he regards as inspired or contemplative, at least to some degree.

Lastly he is practical. Compared with the rather fearsome programmes of physical penance, fasting and other hardships recommended by some of the mystics and spiritual writers of his period, Hilton's advice is strikingly sane. 'Moderation is best' he says.

FURTHER READING: *Scale of Perfection* translated into modern English with introduction and notes by G. Sitwell (Burns & Oates, 1953); see also Geraldine E. Hodgson, *English Mystics* (Gordon Press, 1977) and G. Sitwell, *Medieval Spiritual Writers* (Burns & Oates, 1961).

The *Scale of Perfection* has been called a 'guidebook for the journey to the spiritual Jerusalem': frontispiece to edition in the British Museum

John Webb

Hinayana

Lesser course or vehicle, name given to the type of Buddhism prevalent in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, as distinct from the Mahayana (great course or vehicle) of China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam; alternative term for Theravada (the doctrine of the elders), a sect which established itself in Ceylon by the late 3rd century BC.

See BUDDHISM and SINHALESE BUDDHISM.

HINDUISM

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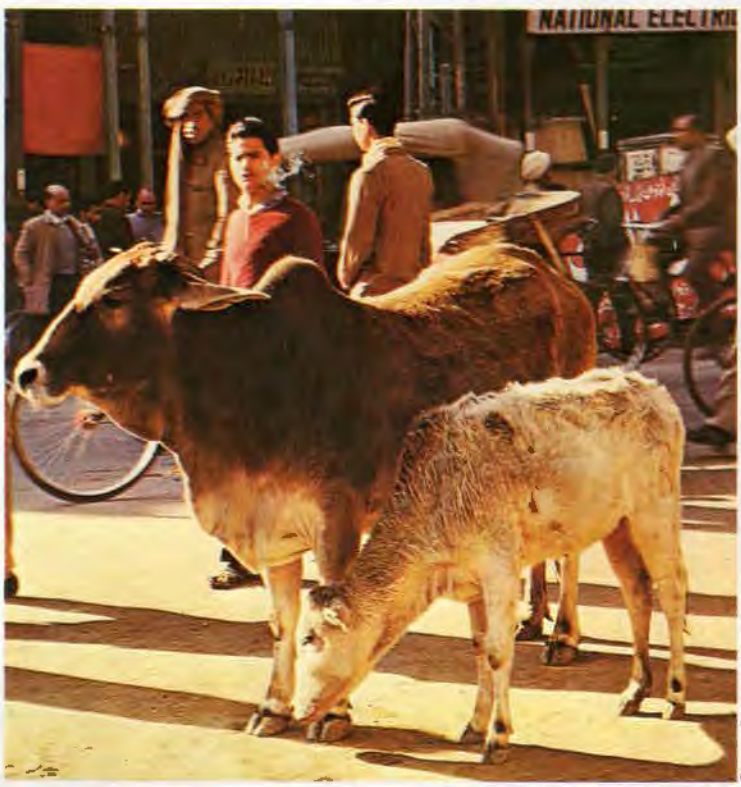
Previous page Many Hindu images are shown seated upon a lotus, like this flower-strewn holy man in the temple of Lakshmi Narayana in Delhi; the lotus, an important religious symbol, generally signifies creative force. Lakshmi, the lotus goddess, was the wife of Vishnu and goddess of fertility and fortune *Above* Hinduism embraces many sects, including the worship of the sun god Surya as supreme deity. One of Surya's devotees, while bathing in a sacred pool, turns to face the sun as he worships

Below left Cows wander freely in the streets of Delhi. Devout Hindus respect all animal life but cows in particular are venerated; their slaughter is forbidden and all their products are held sacred *Below right* Many Hindu organizations resist the movement to introduce cow slaughter *Right* The giant-sized effigy represents the wicked King Ravana of Lanka (Ceylon), leader of the Rakshasas or demons, whose defeat at the hands of Rama is celebrated at the festival of Dussehra, held in October



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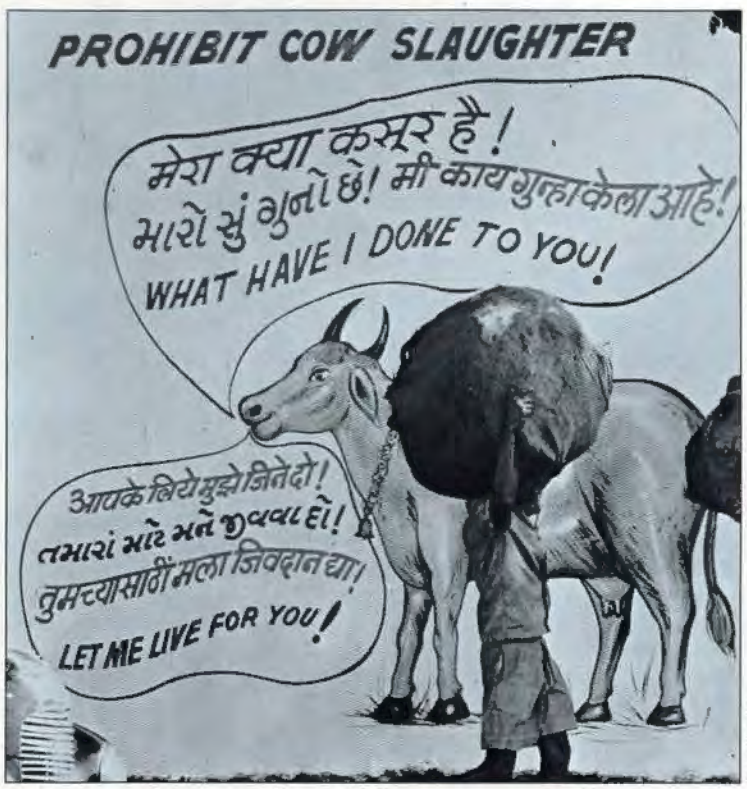

Peter Larsen

Transworld Feature Syndicate

'Hinduism has always been mystical to its core, since it has always taught that by Yogic techniques man can realize here and now the eternal and divine within himself. So immanent is the Deity that to claim to be God is quite natural since, in some sense, everything is God'

'HINDU' is a Persian word and it means simply 'Indian'. Thus for the Moslem invaders of India the 'Hindu' religion was identified with the Indian people. It was the national religion of India, just as Judaism is the national religion of the Jews. The Indians themselves, however, never refer to their religion as the 'Indian' religion: rather they call it the *Sanatana Dharma*, the 'eternal *dharma*', distinguishing it thereby from all other religions, which have known founders and are therefore rooted in history. Hinduism is 'eternal and ageless' (*Sanatana*): it has no known founder and is considered to have existed for all time. But this does not mean that its forms do not change in the course of time: the essence is changeless but the forms in which it expresses itself are ever-changing. It is the religious expression of the very stuff of Nature and the Divine as the Hindus see them – perpetual change seen against a changeless and timeless background.

Hinduism is also a dharma, a word which has a great variety of meanings. It is derived from the root *dhr* which means 'to hold together' – something, therefore, that gives coherence to what appears to have none. Etymologically it is connected with Latin *firmus*, 'firm', and *forma*, 'form', the abiding form of things that makes them as they are and not otherwise. In this sense it is 'law', both the eternal law that governs Nature and the moral law that rules or should rule among men: it is law, religion and righteousness, the norm by which men live in the wider context of Nature and the universe. It is not something man-made but the principle that governs all things and to which the gods themselves are subject.

'The gods' because Hinduism is a polytheistic religion, but a polytheism that is also in some sense a monotheism. This sounds paradoxical but it is not really so, for even in the earliest times the gods are only manifestations of an immanent and unitary principle which is the ground of the universe – a principle that is at first regarded as being an impassive absolute but which may also appear as a personal God.

The Veda

Although Hinduism has no founder it has, like all the 'higher' religions, a body of sacred literature. This is called the *Veda*, a word meaning 'wisdom' or 'knowledge'. The Veda is a vast collection of sacred texts containing material that seems to have little coherence, for its earliest strata which are frankly polytheist seem to be quite different from the later which are frankly pantheist (holding that God is in everything). It is the latter period, however, that is important, for it set the tone once for all for the later development of this highly complex religion.

There are three strata within the Vedic canon: the *Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*, succeeding each other in time and each expressing a different point of view. In the *Samhitas* we meet with a polytheism that is recognizably related to that of the Latins and Greeks, but more clearly so to the religion of India's neighbours the Iranians, who share many of the Indians' gods. The *Samhitas*, usually called simply the 'Veda', were originally three in number, and they are composed of hymns extolling one or other of the gods who make up the Vedic pantheon. These hymns were the accompaniment of the all-important sacrifice, the function of which was to mediate the good things of this world to man. The gods were real and powerful, and the sacrifice was the means by which contact was established between them and man to the mutual advantage of each. Through the sacrifice man gave gifts to the gods so that the gods might give man gifts in return – prosperity, abundance of sons, victory in war, and so on: 'for sustained by sacrifice the gods will give you the food of your desire. Whoso enjoys their gift yet gives nothing in return is a thief, no more nor less,' as the *Bhagavad Gita* says. By sacrifice too man enters into communion and fellowship with the gods: he partakes of their nature and thereby of their immortality.

In the second stratum of the Vedic canon, the *Brahmanas*, sacrifice becomes all-important. It is the reflection of the world-process itself, and its correct performance assures the regular working of the cosmic process. In a sense it *is* the cosmic process, and since the gods themselves are dependent

Liberation from Life's Pigsty

In Hindu mythology there is a story of Indra, king of the gods, who once became a pig and lived very happily in his sty with his family. Missing their king, the gods came down from heaven and said: "O Indra, you are king of all the gods, why do you wallow in this mire?" And Indra replied: "Leave me alone. I am quite happy here. Why should I care for gods and heaven when I have my family?" Being at their wits' end, the gods finally slew Indra's sow and all the little pigs; seeing them all lying dead, Indra began to wail and mourn. Whereupon the gods ripped open the pig-body of their king and Indra came out, and laughed at the hideous dream he had had. He wondered how he ever could have been happy in that pig-life, even to the point of wanting the whole world to share in it!

Man in his ignorance clings to his limited consciousness and the surface life of his wakeful state. Yet he is not exactly satisfied, for there is always a sense of lack and of unfulfilled desires as long as he remains within the boundary of his limited consciousness. When his discrimination ripens he begins to realize the vanity and emptiness of this prolonged dream – the so-called normal consciousness – and there arises in him a longing for God, for the abiding Reality behind the changing phenomena of life. This longing has to be intensified. Sri Ramakrishna used to give the illustration: a disciple went to a teacher and asked to be taught the knowledge of God. The teacher remained silent. When the disciple had repeated his request many times, the teacher took him to a river, and suddenly taking hold of him, held his head under water for a long time. When he let go he asked him how he had felt while under the water. As soon as the disciple could speak he said, "O for a breath of air!" Then the teacher said, "When you can long for God as intensely as you longed for air, you will find Him."

Swami Prabhavananda 'God in Everything' (in C. Isherwood ed. *Vedanta for the Western World*)

on this process, the sacrifice now takes precedence over the gods who *must* therefore do what the sacrifice demands of them. The gods are thereby demoted and become little more than the servants of the sacrifice and of man who manipulates it. The stage is now set for the third stage in the Vedic development, the stage represented by the *Upanishads*.

In the course of time the supreme efficacy of the sacrifice came to be demoted: the supposedly infallible magic no longer seemed to work, for whatever the sacrifice might bring about, it could not satisfy Indian man's deepest desire, his desire to transcend the world of flux and to win for himself immortality. The old religion of the gods had already passed away in favour of an all-pervasive and all-powerful sacrifice. And now, in its turn, the sacrifice too must pass away. External religion has proved a broken reed: man must turn his glance within himself, for it is only there that he can discover the immortal principle which at the same time sustains the whole dharma of the universe.

This is the crucial turning-point in Indian religion. The ancient polytheistic heritage which the Indians had shared with their sister Indo-European peoples is now definitely put behind them, the gods surviving only as superior beings, differing from men in length of days and power but subject, like men, to the relentless wheel of birth and death, re-birth and re-death. The early Indians did not believe in reincarnation but believed that men lived only once, being rewarded at death by a life of bliss in heaven with the gods, if they had lived a good life, or by punishment in hell if they had done evil. This uncomplicated belief they had shared with the Iranians. But now all this was to change.

We can only assume that the original inhabitants of India, whom the invading Aryans conquered, held religious beliefs totally different from those of their conquerors; and, as is so often the case, the religion of the conquered utterly transformed or replaced the religion of the victors. So it must have been in India; for it seems clear that the Dravidians, as the native inhabitants are called, must have believed in reincarnation with a total belief; for, from the time of the *Upanishads* on this belief becomes ineradicably ingrained not only among what we may now call the orthodox Hindus, but also among the Buddhists and Jains who split away from them. So strong was this belief that it would be wrong to call it a dogma. It is much more than this; it is accepted as a self-evident fact of existence that no sensible person would query. And it is this that in part accounts for the totally new perspective of the *Upanishads*.

A famous episode from the *Ramayana*: the demons of Lanka set fire to the tail of the monkey god Hanuman when he came to spy out their defences, but he, jumping from building to building, set the enemy citadel ablaze before making his escape

Michael Holford

The Grievous Burden

But in part only: for throughout the earlier Vedic literature a tendency had developed which tended to identify everything with an all-embracing Whole: the plurality of gods were seen to reflect one single reality and the sacrifice was thought of as identical with the world-process or at least as a reflection of it. One thing was generally agreed and that was that life in its endless repetitions was a burden too grievous to be borne and that the one thing needful was somehow or other to put a stop to it forever, to break away from it and so to become free. But how?

The Buddha who appeared in the 6th century BC claimed to have found the definitive answer. The world of flux in which we live, to which we return and from which, apparently, we cannot escape, is by its very impermanence synonymous with suffering. The cause of suffering is desire. Find a way of life which eliminates desire, and you will have won salvation. But salvation is not at all what Christians understand by that word, but rather total liberation from the shackles of earthly life which tie us remorselessly to impermanence and pain. The way of life which leads to the transcendence of earthly life as we know it the Buddha claimed to have found: he called it the Noble Eightfold Path, and it led one to a type of existence totally distinct from the life we know, a state called Nirvana, which means the extinction of desire and therewith of all becoming, of all coming-to-be and passing away. Nirvana is pure impassivity and impassibility, a timeless citadel to which the seeming pleasures and real sufferings that bedevil our life in time have no access. Between the two there is a gulf fixed and man's goal is to pass, by dint of much religious effort, to the stable and inviolate state of Nirvana (see BUDDHISM: NIRVANA).

This was the Buddhist solution but it was not the way of the *Upanishads*. The Buddhists were not interested in any Absolute on which the world of relativity might depend: they were interested only in escaping from the relative world altogether. The Hindus were more metaphysically minded; above all they wanted to know what was the changeless principle that held the changing world together and gave it coherence.

'What is it on which the worlds are woven, warp and woof?' 'Who is it, abiding in the earth, who is other than the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who controls the earth from within?' These were the kind of questions they were asking. This unknown Something they called Brahman (which originally meant 'sacred utterance' or 'sacred action') or Atman (originally meaning perhaps 'breath' but very soon settling down in the meaning 'self'). Their answers were at first perhaps rather naive: it was food, or it was breath, mind, understanding, space or joy. None of these answers, however, seemed satisfactory; for when all was said and done, this eternal Something could indeed by experienced, but it could not be described. 'This Self – what can you say of it but "No, no!" It is impalpable, for it cannot be grasped; indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed; free from attachment, for it is not attached to anything, not bound. It does not quaver, nor can it be hurt.' Whatever it is, it is the timeless and spaceless principle of eternal Being which indwells the heart of man and which envelops and exceeds the whole physical universe (see BRAHMAN).

The account of Brahman in the *Upanishads* is a brave attempt to put into words an essentially mystical experience which transcends verbalization. It is what is sometimes called 'cosmic consciousness' which, in the words of a modern Canadian author who had the experience himself, shows 'the cosmos as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive, it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life; it shows that the

Shiva and Vishnu each appears as supreme God in Hinduism *Left* Shiva with his wife Parvati and sons Ganesha and Karttikeya, the elephant-headed god and the six-faced god of war; Shiva and Ganesha are stringing together the skulls of the dead, for Shiva in one of his aspects presided over cremation grounds *Above* Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi riding Garuda; besides acting as the chariot of Vishnu, Garuda, half man and half bird, was king of the birds and the enemy of serpents *Right* Vishnu is worshipped particularly in his eighth reincarnation as the handsome, dark-skinned Krishna, who inspired passionate desires by the sweet music of his flute; the love of Krishna and the milk-girl Radha, celebrated in hundreds of poems and paintings, is sometimes taken to represent the union of the soul with its God

universe is God and that God is the universe, and that no evil ever did or ever will enter into it.' This is absolutely true of the dominant thought-pattern of the *Upanishads*: the man who has realized himself as Brahman has passed beyond good and evil. Being the All and at one with the principle that keeps the All in being, he is invulnerable because he is outside time and cannot be affected by what takes place in time.

> Those who see all beings in the Self
> And the Self in all beings
> Will never shrink from it.
>
> When once one understands that in oneself
> The Self's become all beings,
> When once one's seen the unity
> What room is there for sorrow?
> What room for perplexity?

These passages are typical of the pantheism of the *Upanishads*. In the state they describe, all dualities, all seeming discords, disappear into a perfect harmony grounded in the One of which all so-called created things are only imperfect appearances. This is and remains the essence of Hinduism: what is divine and eternal in the heart of man is the same as the divine and eternal which pervades all Nature. If the essence of God is pure Being, then this is equally true of the essence of man. Since both are Brahman, it is possible to say that both are God. 'This finest essence – the whole universe has it as its Self: that is the Real: that is the Self: that *you* are.'

Here there is no attempt to separate the eternal from the temporal, the relative from the Absolute, for the 'All' – the universe – is at the same time the One, and by realizing the One Brahman in himself man realizes himself as God. This is the main tenor of the *Upanishads*, but since the Hindus were and are born metaphysicians, they were not prepared to let this pantheistic mystery be; and so in the later *Upanishads* two divergent trends develop, one 'monistic' and the other 'theistic'. The monistic tendency is represented by the *Mandukya Upanishad*, the 'theistic' by the *Svetasvatara*.

Following up earlier Upanishadic ideas, the *Mandukya* speaks of a 'fourth state' in which all is *absolutely* One, static and eternal. This is 'conscious of neither within nor without, nor of both together . . . one with whom there is no commerce, impalpable, devoid of distinguishing mark, unthinkable, indescribable, its essence the firm conviction of the oneness of itself, bringing all development to an end, tranquil and mild, devoid of duality, such do they deem this fourth to be. That is the Self: that is what should be known.'

This is the classical text on which the philosophy of absolute monism of Sankara and his school was to be based. It is a radical departure from the dominant Upanishadic position in which Brahman is seen as the One manifesting itself in the many: here the many are simply eliminated as being purely illusory. Only the One remains, and that is the *real* man and the divinity beyond God – God seen as creator and sustainer of the universe being, in the last analysis, as unreal as the universe he sustains. This absolute monism has dominated Indian philosophy from Sankara, who lived in the 9th century, up to the present time; but it has not dominated Indian religion, as indeed it could not, since it abolishes God as being ultimately unreal.

The Personal God

On the other hand, through the *Upanishads* a theistic movement had been developing which tended to make a distinction between the 'highest' Brahman, now called the 'Lord', and the individual 'selves' who had realized themselves as immortal and eternal. The 'Lord' who is at the same time the highest 'Self' of all things is now

'For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the setting up of the law of righteousness I come into being age after age'

seen to transcend and comprise not only the universe but also all individual selves. The totality of existence is compared to a wheel, and of this wheel the Lord is both the hub and the rim whereas individual 'selves' are the spokes that connect the two: they are inseparable from God but they are not identical with him.

Brahman in the *Upanishads* was the 'Real of the real', transcending and indwelling both the eternal and the temporal. In the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* this supreme position is assigned to a personal God – the ancient Vedic god Rudra, who is now also referred to as Shiva (or Siva), the 'Mild'.

In the *Upanishads* Brahman is usually thought of as an impersonal Absolute, but sometimes he appears as a personal God. In the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* he or it is identified with the Vedic god Rudra. This *Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita* complement each other, for in both a highly personal God is raised to a supreme eminence, higher than Brahman, the principle of eternity itself. In the *Svetasvatara* the God is Rudra-Shiva, in the *Gita* it is Vishnu incarnate as Krishna. Neither god was prominent in the earlier literature, and it still remains rather a mystery how these two gods finally emerged as God with a capital G. Each has his own characteristic mythology, but each is for his own devotees the supreme Being, both Brahman as eternal Being and the God from whom the universe emanates, by whom it is sustained and into whom it dissolves. Though Brahman may be both the eternal and the temporal, the great God Shiva rules over both these aspects of it.

> In the imperishable, infinite city of Brahman
> Two things there are –
> Wisdom and unwisdom, hidden, established there:
> Perishable is unwisdom, but wisdom is immortal:
> Who over wisdom and unwisdom rules, he is Another.

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* is important because it exalts the personal God Shiva over both the perishable and imperishable aspects of existence. The destiny of the individual self which is a 'part' of God in some sense, however, still remains isolation or entry into Brahman (that is, eternity), not union with the personal God. As yet there is no idea of a real mystical *union* in and through love which is the core of the experience of the Christian mystics. All that will change in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The army of the Kauravas clashes with the forces commanded by Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna; the heroic wars between the Kauravas and their cousins the Pandavas form the subject of the immense Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*

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A Religion of Love

In the *Bhagavad Gita* the supreme God is Vishnu, and he is incarnate in the form of Krishna (see BHAGAVAD GITA). The *Gita*, unlike the *Upanishads*, does not form part of the Veda, and theoretically it does not enjoy canonical authority. Its supreme importance was, however, acknowledged from very early times and not only has it been commented on by all philosophers of note, it has also been and remains a popular classic, which the more abstruse *Upanishads* have not. The reason is that it introduces an entirely new element into Hinduism, the element of love. For Vishnu, in his incarnation as Krishna, is above all a God of love, and the ideal becomes intimate union and communion with the incarnate God, both in his timeless essence and in his ceaseless beneficent activity in the world of action.

As in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* God is Lord of the perishable and imperishable alike. The 'perishable' is identical with matter, and matter, though controlled by God, nevertheless does act as a barrier and a veil. Hence it is first of all necessary to divest oneself of matter and to realize one's own eternity, if one is to commune with God who is the source of both eternity and time. To 'see oneself in all beings and all beings in the self' is then only a preliminary to seeing all beings in God and God in all beings, and to realizing that this cosmic vision is to see everything with God's eyes, not with one's own. This makes the immortal timeless 'self' realize that he is not an independent unit but wholly dependent on God. This gives rise to a deep love of God and intimate communion with him, for the self or soul now realizes that this personal God, Vishnu-Krishna, is 'the base supporting Brahman – immortal Brahman which knows no change – supporting too the eternal law of righteousness and absolute beatitude'. By realizing one's own timeless immortality one becomes Brahman, and 'once a man has become Brahman, with self serene he neither grieves nor desires; the same to all contingent beings he gains the highest love and loyalty to me (Krishna is speaking). By love and loyalty to me he comes to know me as I really am, how great I am and who; and once he knows me as I am, he enters me forthwith.' And just as the liberated soul enters into God in an ecstasy of love, so does God love him in return.

This is the significance of the *Bhagavad Gita:* it exalts the personal God above Brahman seen as principle of eternity, and it shows that God is a God of love, identical with you in so far as you have Being, but separate from you in so far as he is the object and subject of love. After the *Bhagavad Gita* popular Hinduism becomes predominantly a religion of love.

Vishnu and Krishna

In the canon of the Veda the gods Vishnu and Shiva (Rudra) played a very minor part. Just how and when they rose to supreme eminence we do not know, but each of them appears as the Supreme Deity by the time of the *Mahabharata* (? 300 BC – 300 AD). At first there is rivalry between them, but later, as is usual in Hinduism, they coalesce, each being regarded as the 'personal' form of the Absolute. Thus Hindus tend to be worshippers of Vishnu or Shiva.

As the supreme God, Vishnu becomes incarnate from time to time, 'for whenever the law of righteousness withers away and lawlessness arises, then do I generate myself on earth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the setting up of the law of righteousness I come into being age after age.' In fact Vishnu is worshipped not so much in himself as in his two principal incarnations, Rama and Krishna. Rama is the hero of a great epic, the *Ramayana*, and he is the model of ethical and chivalrous man – obedient to his parents, devoted to his wife, affectionate to his family, impatient of evil, brave, chivalrous and courteous. He is God incarnate as morality.

The Krishna of popular religion is not the Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita* but the

R. K. Singh

William MacQuitty

The lofty metaphysics of the Vedas has been overlaid by the worship of countless idols, though these may be explained as different manifestations of the divine unity *Left* Jewelled image of Hanuman *Above* Guardian deity from Nepal *Right* Surya the sun god, who with the weather god Indra and the fire god Agni formed a triad of ancient Vedic gods *Far right* Many-armed image of Shiva, garlanded with flowers and riding a tiger; an extremely complex deity. Shiva was a god of both asceticism and sexuality

Krishna who develops in the later literature, notably in the *Bhagavata Purana* dating from about the 9th century AD. Much more than Rama he is the object of the devotee's passionate love. Pre-eminently he is worshipped as a ravishingly handsome young cowherd who seduces the wives and daughters of the local cowherds with the sweet tones of his flute. He arouses passionate love in them and incites it the more in that from time to time he hides from them only to give himself more fully to them later. Sexual union is here used to represent the union of the soul with God.

This has sometimes shocked Protestant missionaries, but we find precisely the same phenomenon in the Christian mystical tradition, in which the Song of Songs, a clearly erotic poem which somehow or other found its way into the canon of the Old Testament, serves as a text on which to hang the most exalted conceptions of God's love for man. This does not, however, prevent the Krishna cult from degenerating at times into pure emotionalism, a frenzied ecstasy for its own sake. Then the devotee imagines that he or she is Radha, Krishna's beloved concubine, and gives himself or herself up to him in total self-immolation; for in its relationship to the Deity the soul is always female, God the male.

Shiva and Shakti

Shiva is an altogether more austere deity. He is an extraordinarily complex figure, for he is both the model of all Yogins and ascetics and the ithyphallic God who delights in the worship of his erect phallus. As ascetic he is eternally at rest (the static 'Imperishable' of the *Upanishads*), 'isolated' and rapt in the contemplation of his own unfathomable Being, while in his phallic capacity he is eternally productive of forms. In him the infinite (the male principle) and the finite (the female) meet, and in him all the opposites are reconciled. In mythology Shiva has a consort variously called Uma, Parvati, Durga or Shakti (Sakti). In theology this consort, appearing in the form of Shakti, represents the divine creative power, very like the Christian Logos, that 'through which all things are made'. And so it is said that 'Shiva begets Shakti and Shakti gives birth to Shiva. Both in their happy union produce the worlds and souls. Still Shiva is ever chaste and the sweet-speeched Shakti remains ever a virgin. Only sages can comprehend this secret.' The soul in its relationship to Shiva through Shakti must again play the part of the female, abandoning itself wholly to the divine lover just as the individual 'self' is merged in the personal God in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Sometimes, however, the divine Shakti is worshipped to the exclusion of Shiva; for in this scheme of things Shiva is forever immersed in Yogic trance and is therefore deaf to the prayers of men and unaware of their needs. Shakti, on the other hand, is creative force and destructive power, an intensely living Goddess and in her destructive aspect very much to be feared. In Bengal bloody sacrifices of goats are still offered to her in her terrible form of Durga, but this does not prevent her from being the object of intense and passionate devotion, for she is above all things the Mother and, despite all appearances to the contrary, really devoted to her children. The worship of Shakti in its so-called Tantric form (see TANTRISM) has always offended the puritanism of Anglo-Saxon missionaries; for her devotees of a later time would re-enact physically the ideal union of Shiva and Shakti, of the male and female principles in the One, by combining the strictest control of the senses with the sexual act itself. In this close embrace the cosmic unity is realized; the distinction between liberation and creativity, between eternity and time is transcended; and controlled sexuality is seen to reflect the Unity in diversity of cosmic existence.

Such practices, however, were aberrations from the norm of *Bhakti*, as the cult of loving devotion to a personal God was called. More typical are the hymns of the devotees of both Shiva and Vishnu in South India

British Museum

William MacQuitty

which not only breathe a spirit of total self-abnegation but also a sense of deep unworthiness that is truly reminiscent of Christianity at its best. Two examples must suffice: both are addressed to Shiva.

> Thou gav'st thyself, thou gained'st me;
> Which did the better bargain drive?
> Bliss found I in infinity;
> But what didst thou from me derive?
> O Shiva, Perundurai's God,
> My mind thou tookest for thy shrine:
> My very body's thine abode;
> What can I give thee, Lord, of mine?

Or again we find a sense of deep guilt and inadequacy in the face of the divine majesty:

> Evil, all evil my race, evil my qualities all,
> Great am I only in sin, evil is even my good.
> Evil my innermost self, foolish, avoiding the pure:
> Beast am I not, yet the ways of the beast I can never forsake.
> I can exhort with strong words, telling men what they should hate,
> Yet I can never give gifts, only to beg them I know.
> Ah! wretched man that I am, whereunto came I to birth?

So far we have been dealing with Hinduism as a religion of mystical salvation; and this is right, for the goal of life is *moksha*, 'liberation' from the bonds of earthly life though not necessarily from earthly life itself. This 'liberation' can be experienced either as 'cosmic consciousness' or as a personal God in an act of pure love. In any case 'liberation' is the consummation of the four legitimate aspirations of man. The other three are, in ascending scale: *Kama*, 'pleasure', *Artha*, 'the acquisition of wealth' and *Dharma*, 'righteousness'.

Four Stages of Life

In Hinduism there is room for everything – for the sexual adept described in the *Kama-sutras* as much as for the fiercest ascetic. There are endless discussions on the relative merit of *Kama*, *Artha* and *Dharma*; and although it is generally agreed that dharma, or the quest for righteousness, is the highest of the three, since it alone can create a condition of soul that fits it for 'liberation', the other two are nonetheless legitimate activities and should not be shunned by people who have a natural bent that draws them either to the satisfaction of their desires or to the amassing of a fortune. Indeed from the earliest times Hindu society was divided up into four main classes which roughly correspond to the four legitimate aspirations of man (see CASTE). Thus, men are not born equal, and this for the obvious reason that one's class or caste in this life depends on one's *Karma* in previous lives – on the good and evil deeds that have piled up to one's profit or loss throughout millennia of successive incarnations (see KARMA). What you have sown in previous lives you reap in this one. This is the automatic way of the world and there is no injustice in it.

No doubt the four great classes existed in all their purity in ancient times but very soon a full caste-system developed, each caste being governed by its own rules, particularly as regards marriage and diet. In addition to the ideal four-class system, which very soon ceased to have any relation to the social reality, the law-books laid down a fourfold way of life which members of the three 'twice-born' classes were theoretically supposed to follow. On attaining the age of reason and being invested with the sacred thread (a rite symbolizing his second birth), the now 'twice-born' youth was supposed to leave his home to study the scriptures with a Guru (spiritual director). To this Guru he owed absolute obedience and he had, moreover, to lead a life of complete chastity. Once he had become proficient in the scriptures he was to return home, take a wife, raise a family and, if possible, make a fortune. To his wife and family he would then be as a god and his wife in particular would owe him absolute obedience. The man was entitled to as many as four wives, but no woman could have more than one husband. There was no question of equality between the sexes.

This second stage of life is called that of a householder. It comes to an end when the householder 'sees that wrinkles are beginning to appear and that his hair is growing grey and when his sons are themselves fathers of sons'. At this point he should enter the third stage, that of a 'forest-dweller'. With or without his wife he retires to the forest where he lives on fruit and roots, wearing only a skin or tattered garment. He spends his time meditating on the *Upanishads* and chastising his body in

Bathing in Ganges

Little bands of men and women who had travelled here together from their villages, some of them very old with skin like crumpled parchment, the women singing sadly but triumphantly, lurched barefooted across the silt towards the pragwals, evil-looking men who performed their duties with an air of patent cynicism, in contrast with that of the pilgrims themselves who wore expressions of joy. They had all been shaven with varying degrees of severity in the barbers' quarter: women from the south and widows had had their head completely shaven; the men were left with their chhotis, the small tufts on the backs of their skulls, and those who had moustaches, but whose fathers were still alive, had been allowed to retain them; natives of Allahabad were allowed to keep their hair; Sikhs gave up a ritual lock or two. At one time the hair was buried on the shore of the river; now it was taken away and consigned to a deep part of the Ganges downstream. Like pilgrims everywhere they were not allowed much peace . . . policemen and officious young men wearing arm-bands tried to move them on, but they were in a state bordering on ecstasy, and were oblivious to everything but the river which they had come so far to see, bathe in and perhaps to die by this very morning; for some of them were so decrepit that it seemed impossible that they could survive the sudden shock of the immersion.

The women dressed in saris, the men in loin-cloths, they entered the river, dunking themselves in it, drinking it, taking it in their cupped hands and letting it run three times between their fingers with their faces towards the still invisible sun. Shivering but happy and, if they were fortunate enough to possess them, dressed in clean clothes, they allowed the pragwals to rub their foreheads with ashes or sandal wood and make the tilak mark. They offered flowers and milk to the river, and those who had never been there before bought half-coconuts from the pragwals and launched the shells filled with marigolds on the water, which were afterwards appropriated by the pragwals to be sold again.

Eric Newby *Slowly Down the Ganges*

preparation for the fourth and last stage, that of a fully-fledged Sannyasin (one who has finally renounced this world). He has now discharged his three 'debts'; he has absorbed the teaching of the Veda, has reared up sons to continue his line, and has offered sacrifice according to his ability. Still in the world though not of it, he is now ready to put aside for ever the fetters that bind him to death and re-birth.

The four classes of society and the four stages of life were supposed to be the framework within which society functioned. In practice the classes split up into and absorbed a vast variety of castes and sub-castes, each forming a self-contained social unit. The religious ideal for all remained 'liberation' but for the masses this always remained an infinitely distant ideal, for 'among thousands of men but one, maybe, will strive for self-perfection, and even among these Yogins who have won perfection but one, maybe, will come to know God as he really is.' This is not for the common run of men, who must pile up good Karma or 'merit' by the strict performance of their caste-duty, by performing the daily domestic rites, by frequenting the local temple, by pilgrimage to holy places, by being lavish in their gifts to Brahmins. Then at the end of countless incarnations they will have acquired sufficient merit to be reborn in the 'family of men well advanced in Yoga, possessed of insight.' But even so 'such a birth as this on earth is exceedingly hard to obtain.'

Reform and Renewal

The rise of the *bhakti* sects added a new dimension to Hindu spirituality but it did not threaten in any way the rigid social structure based on caste. Successive Moslem invasions from the 7th century on were quite another matter. Islam is of its nature a proselytizing religion, and with the conversion of the Central Asian Turks it became aggressively so. Conversions were effected *en masse* both by force and, more often, by consent, for conversion could only mean social improvement and emancipation for the lower castes and above all for the outcastes who were regarded as little better than animals. Hinduism's reaction to this stranger in its midst was to turn in upon itself; for Hinduism has always been mystical to its core, since it has always taught that by Yogic techniques man can realize here and now the eternal and divine within himself. So immanent is the Deity that to claim to be God is quite natural since, in some sense or other, everything is God. Hence the utterly transcendent Allah of Moslem orthodoxy held out no appeal for the Hindu. On the whole the new Moslem rulers did not interfere with his customs nor were they given to righteous indignation.

With the advent of the British and the Protestant missionaries who came in their wake things were very different. The missionaries were nothing if not stern moralists. To them the burning of widows, child marriages, and the treatment of the outcastes were an intolerable scandal, and they did not mince their words. However tactless they may have been, they did at least succeed in arousing a social consciousness among the Hindus which had been noticeably lacking before. In the first flush of their optimism the missionaries had hoped that the conversion of India might be in sight. They reckoned without the Hindus' endless capacity to adapt and absorb alien ideas. Conversions were few, largely because conversion meant a complete break with the family and the caste into which the family was compactly built, and so with the whole fabric of Hindu society. Hinduism, on its side, was quite happy to absorb whatever of Christianity it found to its liking.

Christianity entered India as the religion of a conquering and technically vastly superior race. The missionaries were well aware of this and regarded Hinduism as a hideous hotch-potch of idolatry and superstition, making no effort to penetrate to its inner core, let alone to assess its spiritual value. Among the educated Hindus some were indeed converted to Christianity. Others who realized that the strength of the British lay in their superior technocracy and perhaps also in the democratic principles they practised at home, not in their Christianity, abandoned religion altogether, while yet others sought to absorb the Christian ethic as preached in the Sermon on the Mount into Hinduism itself.

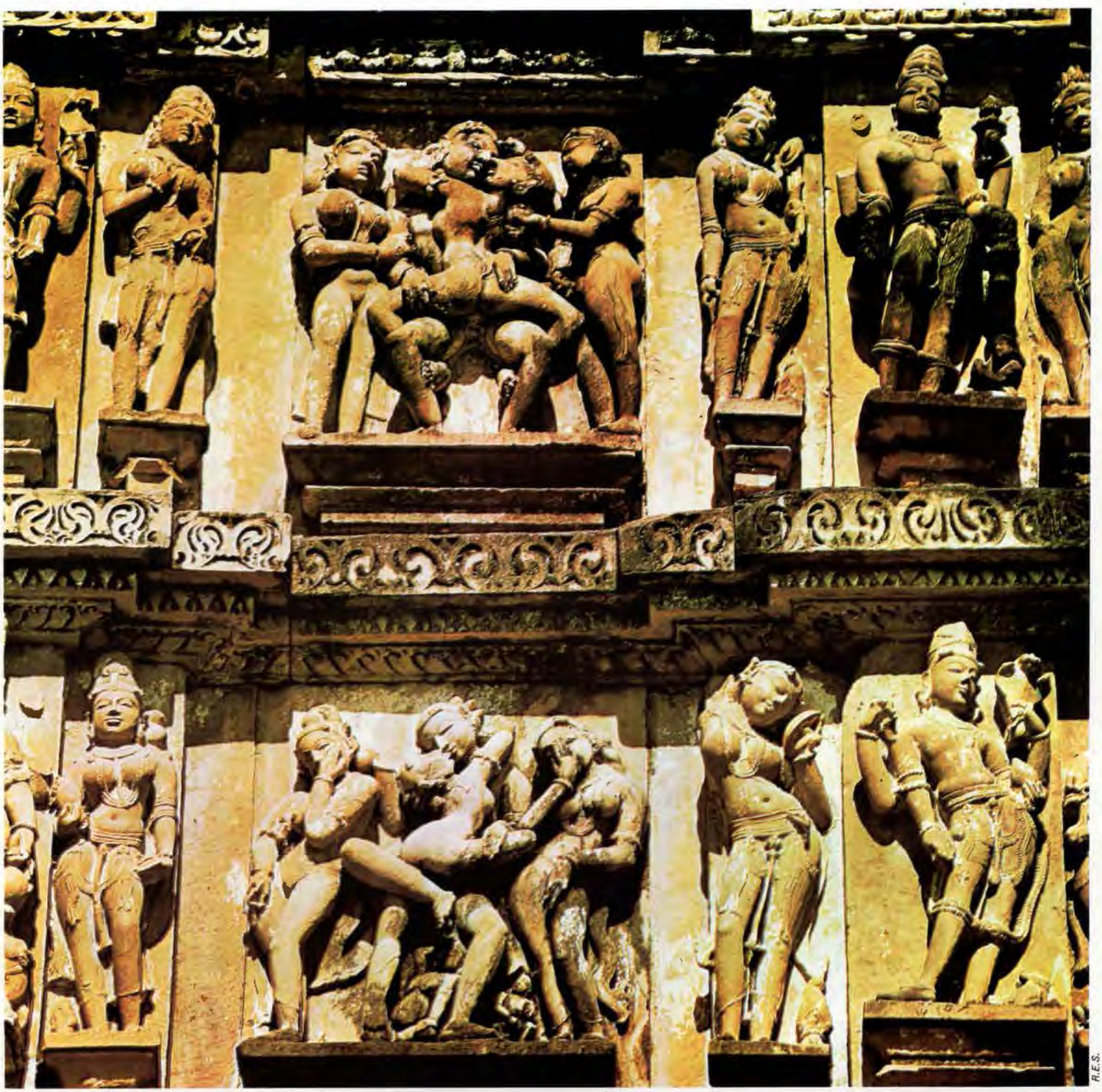
The various reformist Hindu sects of the 19th century and after oscillated between a policy of absorption and of reaction. The first of them, the Brahmo Samaj founded by Ram Mohan Roy, was as iconoclastic as its Protestant mentors. It turned its back on all the specifically Hindu rites and modelled its ritual on Protestant services. Though it had a certain success among the elite, it did not succeed in striking any deep roots and was in any case riddled with schism from the beginning.

Quite different was Dayananda's Arya Samaj; for while being quite as inimical to the corruptions of the Hinduism of its day, it did not look to Christianity for inspiration but to the most ancient stratum of the Veda as interpreted by Dayananda himself. With the Arya Samaj, Hinduism for the first time took the offensive against the imported creeds, Islam and Christianity. Its aim was both to reconvert those who had embraced Christianity and Islam, and to integrate the untouchables into its own form of Hinduism if not into orthodoxy itself.

Ramakrishna and Gandhi

Of more importance was the movement started by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and continued by Swami Vivekananda. The purely religious impetus was supplied by the first, the drive and organizing ability by the second. Ramakrishna was a charismatic personality and a visionary. He studied under every kind of Guru and even joined in the religious life of the Moslems and Christians. He continually had visions of the Divine Mother, to whom he remained passionately devoted; or again, imagining himself to be Radha, he would experience the presence of Krishna too. When among Moslem mystics he had a vision of Mohammed and study of the Christian Gospels duly induced a vision of Christ. The great variety of his religious experiences convinced him that all religions must be true, all being but different paths leading to the one goal which is to realize the absolute oneness of all things in the One Brahman. Hence, after he had himself realized his own oneness with Brahman, his aim was to induce this state in others too. He was not interested in good works as such. 'By these philanthropic activities,' he said, 'you are really doing good to yourself. If you can do them disinterestedly, your mind will become pure and you will develop love of God. As soon as you have that love you will realize him.'

Ramakrishna above all had the gift of spontaneity: he had no talent for organization nor did he see himself as the head of



R.E.S.

Above **Eroticism has an accepted place in Hindu religion and many temples contain a lingam, or phallic symbol, or are covered with frankly erotic carvings**

Following page **The most notorious carvings are those on the walls of the now ruined sun temple on the east coast at Konarak, also called the Black Pagoda; according to the Moslems it was an accursed place where sinister and licentious rites took place**

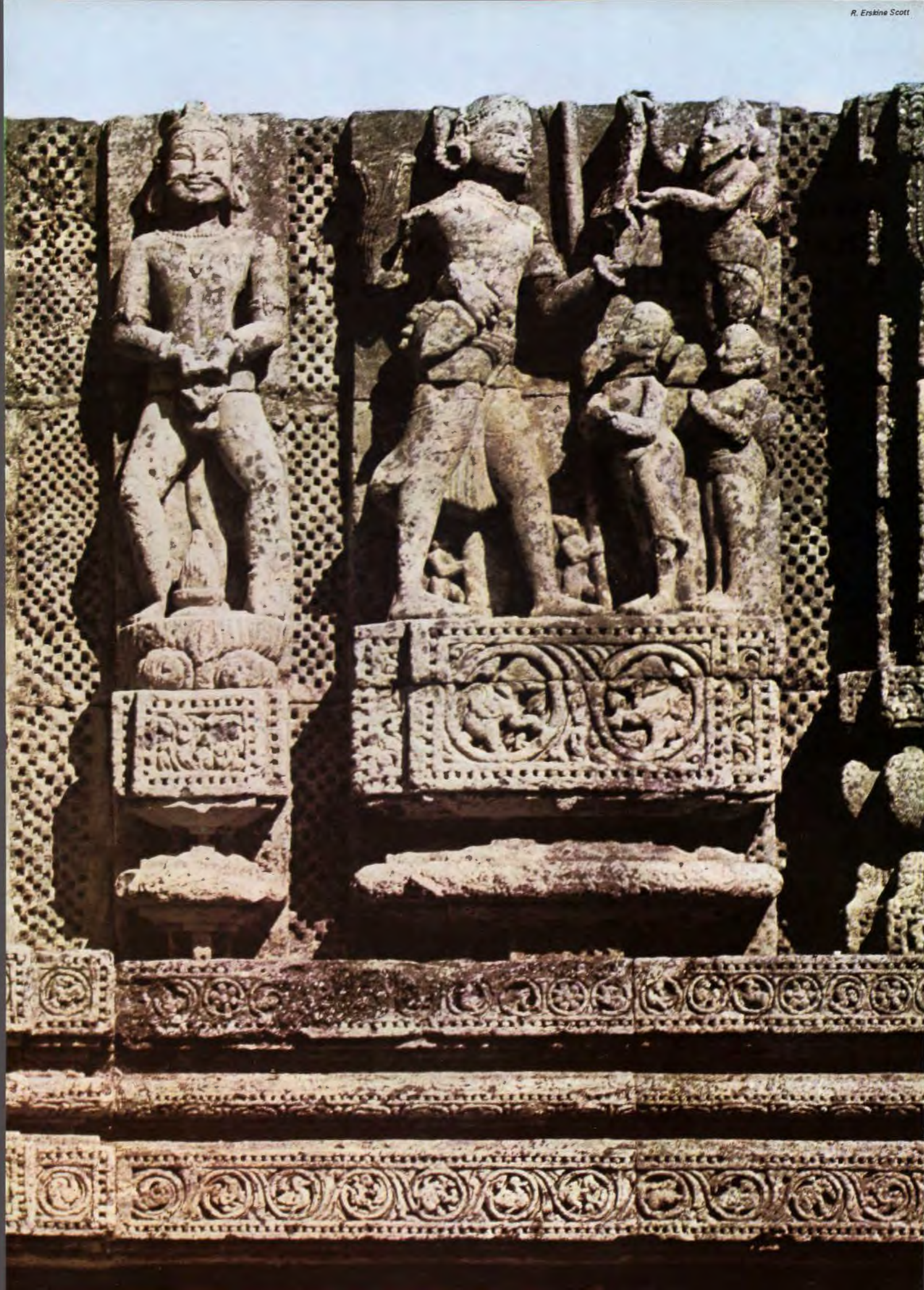
a movement. Vivekananda, whom he made his spiritual heir, not only had a most incisive personality but had also great administrative gifts. At the first session of the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 he spoke of himself as belonging to the 'most ancient order of monks in the world' and of his own religion as the 'mother of religions'. Although he said, 'We accept all religions as true,' and although he condemned proselytism of any kind, this did not prevent him from founding Ramakrishna centres in America and Europe, many of which have been extremely successful; for it is the Ramakrishna Mission which has spread the 'gospel' of Hindu monism ('all things are one') in the West and which has made such distinguished converts as Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard and Christopher Isherwood.

In the West the Ramakrishna Mission has concentrated on disseminating its own inward spirituality, thereby challenging conventional Christianity on its home ground. In India itself, however, it has concentrated on doing in a Hindu spirit what the Christian missions had done before to the shame of Hindu orthodoxy: it has sought to clothe the naked, feed the poor and instruct the ignorant. Both in India and the West it is still very much alive.

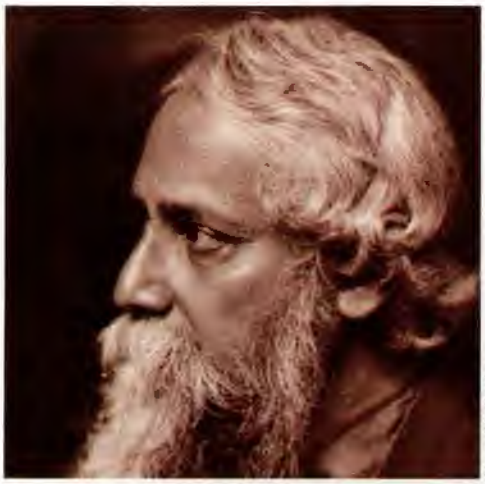
The Ramakrishna mission gave back to Hinduism that confidence which in its first confrontation with Christianity it had so grievously lost. There were to follow many other individual propagandists of this new form of Hinduism, men like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and India's distinguished ex-president Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, but without any doubt the greatest and the most influential of them all was Mahatma Gandhi.

Seeing himself always as an orthodox

R. Erskine Scott



Gandhi did not hesitate to absorb into his own religion what he considered to be best in Christianity and Islam for, like Ramakrishna, he believed that all religions are true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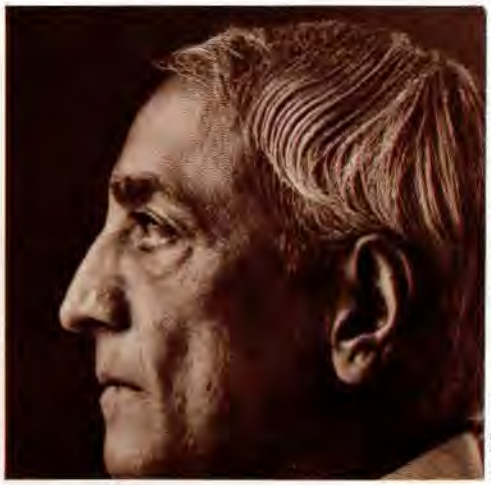
Cecil Beaton

The past century has seen considerable interaction between Hindu and Western ideas *Opposite* British lions baffled by the saintly Gandhi, who sits calmly at his spinning wheel; though a devout Hindu, Gandhi acknowledged his debt to the New Testament *Left* Rabindranath Tagore, poet, author and mystic, and winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1913, helped to make Indian thought better known in the West *Centre* Ram Mohan Roy, 19th century founder of a Hindu sect which modelled its ritual on Protestant services *Right* Krishnamurti was hailed as a new messiah by Annie Besant; occult movements like the Theosophical Society found much that was congenial in Indian mysticism *Bottom* Maharishi Mahesh Yoga, the guru whose teachings attracted the Beatles

Hindu (for none exceeded him in his reverence for the cow) Gandhi nonetheless attacked orthodoxy in some of its most firmly entrenched positions. Unlike Tagore and Radhakrishnan he was not primarily interested in Hindu mysticism, for intellectually he was quite as dependent on the Sermon on the Mount and on Tolstoy as he was on his own beloved *Bhagavad Gita*. Rather, he was interested in putting into practice what he conceived to be the true Hindu dharma here on earth. If his own interpretation of the dharma conflicted with Scripture so much the worse for Scripture.

Acceptance of Untouchables

'My belief,' he said, 'in the Hindu Scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired . . . I decline to be bound by any interpretation however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason and common sense.' His God is not the impersonal Brahman of the philosophers. God, rather, 'is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness; God is the source of Light and Life, and yet he is above and beyond all these. God is conscience.' God is, in fact, Gandhi's own Inner Light, and the weapons he will choose against evil will therefore be truthfulness, non-violence, courtesy and love. The supreme evil in Hinduism was, he thought, untouchability, and against this he directed all his moral force; and so great was his prestige that for the first time in history the orthodox were forced to open their temples to these 'people of God', as Gandhi in his deep compassion named them.

Gandhi saw himself as a Sannyasin and lived as one; but it was not the world that he renounced, but the evil that is endemic in the world – desire, anger, avarice and sloth – and it was his fervent desire that India should renounce them too, so that she might be liberated not only from the British but also from all the petty egoism that is inseparable from fallen man. He wished to be all things to all men and did not hesitate to absorb into his own religion what he considered to be best in Christianity and Islam for, like Ramakrishna, he believed that all religions are true. The resulting fusion he offered back to the Indian people as their true dharma, changed it is true, hut the eternal dharma still.

Gandhi came not to destroy but to fulfil. Thus despite the Brahmins' defence of untouchability he never attacked the Brahmin priesthood as such, for it was the one cement that held Hinduism together. So too he saw nothing amiss in the veneration of idols or in the near-worship of the cow (see COW), much less in the immemorial rites in home and temple through which Hinduism transmits its own feelings of the Divine to its most humble adherents. The abuses, of which untouchability was by far the worst – 'the ineffaceable blot that Hinduism today carries with it' – had to be done away with; but the core of the Hindu religion and the religious structure that enshrined it had to be maintained. And for Ghandi the core of Hinduism was contained in the first verse of the *Isa Upanishad*:

> All this that we see in this great universe is permeated by God.
> Renounce it and enjoy it.
> Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession.

Indeed if Hinduism in all its manifold forms has a single message it is this: since all things are permeated by the Divine, renounce all that prevents you seeing this, renounce all egoism and all sense of separateness, so that you may return to what you have renounced but with a benevolent detachment that will enable you to benefit your neighbour spontaneously, not as self-imposed duty. 'Renounce and then enjoy.'

(See also INDIA; KALI; KRISHNA; MAHATMA; SHIVA; VEDANTA; VISHNU; YOGA.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

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Picturepoint

The Jews and, later, the Christians believed that in the events of history could be seen the guiding hand of God

HISTORY

BECAUSE RELIGION is concerned with the nature and destiny of man, it has to take some account of his past. Most religions have creation myths which provide an explanation of how and for what purpose mankind was created. Some include a kind of legendary history recording the invention of the fundamental arts of civilization.

Of all the religions of mankind two have become so involved with history, or rather with a peculiar version of it, that they derive their distinctive character from this involvement. They are Judaism and Christianity. Their bracketing together is not accidental; for Christianity took over and expanded the Jewish view of 'history'. 'History' in this sense does not mean an objective record of past events; it is rather a presentation of the past, interpreted according to a peculiar belief in divine activity.

The Jewish view of history finds expression throughout the whole of the Old Testament. Sometimes it is presented in the form of historical narrative, as in the books of Genesis or Exodus; sometimes it inspires the outlook of the writing concerned – as, for example, the prophetic books or the Psalms. Its theme is simple, though strange. It is that the god of Israel, Yahweh, had promised Abraham, the nation's first ancestor, that his descendants should possess Canaan and dwell there as his Holy People. To fulfil his promise, Yahweh guided events over many centuries until Israel was successfully settled in Canaan.

Its theme opens in Genesis (chapter 12) with Yahweh's first promise to Abraham. Then follows a series of narratives recounting the fortunes of the first four generations of Israel's ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons. Jacob's 12 sons become the founders of the 12 tribes of Israel. Their descendants grow into a nation in Egypt but are reduced to slavery by the Egyptians. The narrative continues with Yahweh's marvellous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses. Eventually the divine promise is fulfilled: Israel, Abraham's descendants, conquers Canaan and settles there.

Israel's conquest of Canaan was a historical fact. Scholars also agree that the Exodus from Egypt had some basis in fact. But the biblical writer interprets these facts as due to the providence of Yahweh. That is not all. He prefaces his account of Israel's ancestors and the Exodus with a record of mankind's history from the Creation to the birth of Abraham.

A conspectus of the past is therefore provided from the Creation to Israel's settlement in Canaan, which demonstrates Yahweh's control and guidance of events. This providential interpretation of history so firmly established itself in the Jewish mind that it coloured the whole of the Jews' subsequent outlook on world affairs. As later Hebrew literature shows, in the darkest hours of misfortune the Jews continued to believe that as Yahweh had guided past events for their ancestors, so he was still working in world history for the ultimate vindication of his Chosen People. From the 2nd century BC this belief became embodied in the Messianic hope – that Yahweh would eventually send his Anointed One to deliver Israel.

Christianity was in origin a Jewish Messianic movement. It therefore took over the traditional Jewish view of history, merely adjusting it to its belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But after the destruction of the Jewish national state in 70 AD, Christianity was freed from its involvement with Judaism and became an independent religion with a world-wide mission. This new situation required a fresh assessment of Christianity's relation to Judaism. It also made defence necessary against pagan criticism that Christianity was a dangerous upstart religion; for antiquity was considered a necessary attribute to give a religion respectability.

The need was met by developing an idea formulated earlier by St Paul. It was that the Church was the true Israel. That the Jews, by rejecting Jesus as their Messiah, had forfeited their divine heritage, which

The Israelites safely cross the Red Sea, while their Egyptian pursuers drown; the story of the Exodus was taken by the Jews as evidence of God's special care for their race

British Museum

had passed to the Christians. Hence, the claim was made that Christianity had its roots far back in history – indeed back in God's original promise to Abraham. The Hebrew scriptures were also claimed as the Church's rightful legacy and designated the Old Testament, as distinct from the later Christian writings called the New Testament. The two were embodied in the Christian Bible as documenting successive phases in God's plan of salvation.

On this basis Christian theologians worked out an impressive philosophy of history. They interpreted the past, from the Fall of Adam, in terms of the operation of God's plan to save mankind from the consequences of the primeval Fall. According to them, the first stage of the divine plan is described in the Old Testament. This stage was a preparation for the incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God, as the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of mankind. The Church had been founded, after the Ascension of Jesus, to mediate the fruits of his salvation to mankind. The world would continue until the second coming of Christ. Then all the dead would be resurrected and the Last Judgement would be held.

This Christian philosophy of history has left its stamp on our chronology. We divide the stream of time into two eras, so that years are designated either BC (Before Christ) or AD (Anno Domini – in the Year of our Lord). The latter designation was introduced in the 6th century, the former in the 18th century. It has also left its impress upon our minds. The Western peoples, brought up for generations on the idea that 'God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year', identify the passage of time with the development of purpose. We expect history to have a meaning.

Western thought differs in this respect notably from Eastern thought, which has been influenced profoundly by Hinduism and Buddhism. For these religions regard history as the repetitive pattern of illusory phenomena in a perpetual cyclical movement. History can therefore have for them no abiding significance nor inspiring purpose.

S. G. F. BRANDON

A number of Hittite myths show a Babylonian origin, while others are paralleled in the legends of the Greeks. But much remains obscure about the religion of this ancient empire

HITTITES

GERMAN EXCAVATIONS since 1907 within the walls of an ancient city on a hillside near the Turkish village of Boghaz Koi in Asia Minor (Anatolia) have revealed the existence of a kingdom which had that city as its capital and which lasted from about 1700 to about 1200 BC. It was called 'the Land of Hatti', its capital was Hattusas, and its people are known as the Hittites, by reason of the undoubted, though remote, connection of the name Hatti with the Hittites, or sons of Heth, mentioned in the Bible. During those five centuries the rulers of Hattusas extended their dominion over populations speaking languages different from their own. One of these was the Hurrians, whose centre was in upper Mesopotamia and whose name is also reflected in the Bible in the form 'Horites'. Our present knowledge of Hittite and Hurrian religion and mythology is due entirely to the German excavations at Boghaz Koi, which have brought to light thousands of broken clay tablets inscribed in the cuneiform script, once the royal archives of the Hittite kings. The archives of the Hurrians themselves have not been found.

Land of 600 Gods

The Hittite texts present us with a bewildering number of divine names. This is mainly because not only each linguistic area within the Hittite empire, but each individual cult centre had its own names for its deities, though they might have similar attributes to those in other places. For example, the weather god was Tarhun in Luwian (and probably in Hittite), Taru in Hattic, Teshub in Hurrian; the sun god was Istanu in Hittite, Estan in Hattic, Tiwat in Luwian, Tiyat in Palaic, Shimegi in Hurrian. Some 600 names have actually been counted. The basic type to which a deity belonged is often shown by the word sign with which his name is written, meaning sun god, weather god, moon god and so on. Otherwise it may be deduced from a description of his cult statue or emblem, from his association with other gods of the same type, or from allusions to his sphere of activity in prayers, myths or other texts. But in many cases the texts give no information about the deity's attributes, so that he or she remains a mere name to us.

The Hittites themselves occasionally recognized an identity, as when we read in a prayer: 'Sun goddess of Arinna, my lady, queen of all countries! In the Land of Hatti thou givest thyself the name "sun goddess of Arinna", but in the country which thou makest a land of cedars (Syria) thou givest thyself the name Hebat.' But when listing divine witnesses to a treaty with a vassal-king they would include not only the sun goddess of Arinna and of Hebat as distinct deities, but also the gods and goddesses of the individual cult centres, even though they might not have distinct names.

The State Cult

The great goddess of Arinna (which has not been located) was exalted as patroness of the state. Her name in Hattic was Wurusemu, but the Hittites appear to have addressed her under the epithet Arinnitti. She is always called a sun goddess, but there are indications that in origin she may have been a deity of

Sonia Halliday

Procession of priestesses from Carchemish in Upper Syria; Hittite influence remained strong in this area for many centuries, while the influence of Mesopotamia is in turn apparent in Hittite mythology

the underworld, her solar attributes being secondary. The king and queen were her high priest and priestess, and in this state cult her husband was the weather god of Hatti, a great figure who bestowed kingship, brought victory in war and might represent the nation in its dealings with foreign powers: thus a treaty with Egypt is said to be for the purpose of 'making eternal the relations which the sun god of Egypt and the weather god of Hatti have established for the land of Egypt and the land of Hatti.' This national weather god is probably the original sky god of the Indo-Europeans, akin to Zeus and Jupiter, brought in by the immigrants who introduced the Indo-European Hittite language into Anatolia in the 3rd millennium BC, and married to the indigenous mother goddess. The weather god of another city, Nerik, was made their son, and they had daughters named Mezzulla and Hulla and a granddaughter, Zintuhi.

Among the deities of the state cult must also be numbered the spirits of past kings and queens, who received regular offerings. 'Became a god' is the normal euphemism for 'died' used by the Hittites when referring to kings.

During the later years of the Hittite kingdom the state cult came under strong Hurrian influence. It was at this time that the sun goddess of Arinna and the weather god of Nerik were identified with the Hurrian Hebat and her son Sharruma. Finally, at a holy place near the capital, now named Yazilikaya, a rocky outcrop forming a natural open chamber was adorned with a series of figures in relief representing a national pantheon. The central group is recognizable as the family of the sun goddess, but the names in Hittite 'hieroglyphs' attached to each deity, including the central group, are those of the Hurrian pantheon. It therefore appears that by the end of the Hittite period, in the late 13th century BC, the Hittites had achieved a measure of unity of worship.

The Hittite mythological texts are, on the whole, poorly preserved, and consequently any account of Hittite mythology must necessarily be incomplete. It seems, however, that in Anatolia itself mythology remained on a rather primitive level. The most elaborate myths preserved in the Hittite archives are either of Hurrian origin or are simply Babylonian myths transmitted to the Hittites by the Hurrians. In the latter class (though it is legend rather than myth) is the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, of which there is even a fragment in the Hurrian language. Even where the gods or heroes in these myths are ostensibly Hurrian, they can often be recognized as ancient Babylonian or Sumerian deities under a garbled 'Hurrianized' name. These tales appear to be recorded simply as works of literature. They are of considerable interest on account of features in them which reappear in Greek mythology.

The myth 'Kingship in Heaven' tells how the kingship was held by a series of gods for periods of nine years. Alalu is defeated by Anu and sent down to the underworld; Anu in turn is mutilated and defeated by Kumarbi, who is apparently overthrown by the weather god Teshub. Anu is the Babylonian sky god; the conception of former generations of defeated gods who were banished to the underworld also derives from Babylonia. But Teshub and Kumarbi are Hurrian gods. The myth closely resembles the *Theogony* of Hesiod, where the sequence Uranus-Cronus-Zeus corresponds to Anu-Kumarbi-Teshub.

The king and queen acted as high priest and priestess to the sun goddess of Arinna, patroness of the state, and were both deified after death ***Above*** **Hittite king from Malatya in Anatolia** ***Right*** **Wife and child of the king leading an animal**

A Monster of Stone

The longest mythological poem is entitled 'Song of Ullikummi'. It has a similar theme and tells of a plot by Kumarbi to replace Teshub as king of the gods by a stone monster named Ullikummi, whom he begets for the purpose.

> Kumarbi takes wisdom into his mind
> and an evil spirit as enemy he raises . . .
> At Cool Pond a great Rock is lying;
> her length is three leagues,
> but her width which she has below is one and a half leagues.
> His mind sprang forward,
> he slept with the Rock
> and his manhood flowed into her.

After a considerable gap the Rock bore a child, Ullikummi, who was made of stone. The child was taken to earth and placed on the shoulder of Upelluri, a giant like the Greek Atlas, who supported heaven and earth. Here he grew up in the sea, which only came up to his waist. The sun god saw him and went to report the matter to Teshub, who with his brother Tashmishu gave battle. At first they were unsuccessful and the Stone even came to overshadow Teshub's town Kummiya. Tashmishu reported to Teshub's wife, Hebat, that her husband would have to give up his throne, a message which almost caused her to fall off the roof where she was standing. But Tashmishu and Teshub decided to consult the wise god Ea, who in his turn went first to Enlil and then to the giant Upelluri. Upelluri's reply was as follows:

> When heaven and earth were built on me
> I knew nothing (of it).
> And when they came and cut apart heaven and earth with a "cutter"
> that too I knew not.
> Now something is hurting my right shoulder,
> but I know not who he is, that god.

When Ea heard these words, he had only to turn Upelluri's right shonlder and there was the Stone standing on it. But Upelluri's words had given him an idea. He ordered the 'former gods' in the underworld to produce the ancient tool with which heaven and earth had once been cut apart. With this he severed the Stone from Upelluri and so destroyed its power. Teshub went out to battle again, and though the end of the story is lost, we may be sure he emerged victorious.

This tale too has its parallel in the Greek story of Typhon. The reference to the

Sonia Halliday

building of heaven and earth in one piece on the shoulder of a giant and their separation by cutting is the only surviving hint in the Hittite records of a creation myth.

The myths associated with Anatolian – mainly Hattic – deities are much simpler and more primitive. The 'Slaying of the Dragon' is said to have been recited at a great annual festival called *purulli* and is connected with the Hattian city Nerik. The weather god and the dragon fought together and the weather god was defeated. According to one version, he then appealed to the other gods for help and the goddess Inaras planned a ruse. She invited the dragon to a feast, with barrels of every kind of drink. The dragon came up with his children and they became so drunk that they could not go back to their hole. So the goddess's human assistant was able to tie them up, and the weather god came and killed the dragon.

According to another version of this myth, when the dragon and the weather god fought, the dragon not only defeated the weather god but incapacitated him by gaining possession of his heart and his eyes. The weather god then begot a son by the daughter of a poor man. When this son grew up he took as bride the daughter of the dragon, and his father told him to ask for the stolen organs on entering his bride's home. The demand was instantly met, and the weather god, fully restored, went out to battle again; he succeeded in defeating the dragon, but his son took the part of the dragon and was killed with him.

Myth of the Missing God

Several myths about Anatolian deities belong to a type which we may call for convenience 'the Myth of the Missing God'. They tell the story of a god who disappears and thereby causes a blight on earth, the search for the missing god, his eventual return, and the restoration of health and vigour to the world. In one such myth the weather god withdraws in anger and the search is conducted by the sun god (whose messenger is an eagle), the father of the weather god, his grandfather and his grandmother Hannahanna. In another it is Telipinu, son of the weather god, who is angry, and the gods who search are the sun god, the weather god and Hannahanna, the grandfather being omitted. In both these versions the missing god is found by a bee sent out by Hannahanna. In another similar story the sun god and Telipinu are missing, not from anger, but because they have been seized by Torpor, a demon who has paralysed all Nature. All these myths are accompanied by a magical ritual, the purpose of which is to attract the god back into his temple and to remove some misfortune which his absence is thought to have caused. They are 'ritual myths', recited to enhance the effect of the ritual. In no case is the ritual connected with the seasons. Such magical rituals are in fact common in the Hittite archives.

Other fragments of mythology are found embedded in rituals. One text tells how the moon fell down from heaven and how the weather god sent storms and wind after him to frighten him. Another has a passage describing how an eagle found two goddesses of the underworld in a forest holding spindles and spinning long years for the king – forerunners of the Greek *Moirai*, Roman *Parcae* and Germanic *Norn* (Fates).

The underworld contained, beside the dead, an older generation of defeated gods and some others, such as the Fates just mentioned. Its ruler was Lelwanis, whose gender is uncertain and who seems in some way to be identical with 'the sun god of the earth' and even with the sun goddess of Arinna in some passages.

'Come Back Into Thy Temple'

The Hittites regarded their relationship with the gods as one of servant and master. 'If a servant has anything on his mind,' prays King Mursilis, 'he appeals to his master and his master hears him and takes pity on him and puts right what is troubling him. And if a servant has committed an offence and confesses his guilt before his master, his master may do with him whatever he pleases; but because he has confessed his guilt before his master, his master's spirit is appeased and his master will not call that servant to account.' But a well-intentioned master might still be capricious, and would have his own interests to attend to. 'Now if, honoured Telipinu, thou art up in heaven among the gods, or if thou art gone to the sea or to roam in the mountains, or to battle against an enemy country . . . come back again into thy temple.'

A god must be fed, tended, appeased, flattered. His actions, even when attending to his duties, might not always be wise and might entail unforeseen consequences; it would then be the duty of his faithful servant to point this out to him, so that he might correct his mistake.

If, however, misfortune comes as a punishment for sin, it will not be lifted until the sin has been confessed and expiated. Possible causes of divine anger would be brought to light by questioning the priests or by searching the records. It was then necessary to find out by divination which particular offence was the cause of the present misfortune. 'Now, O gods, whatever sin you see . . . let the old wives, the seers, or the augurs determine it, or let men see it in a dream.' The 'old wives' practised a form of divination by throwing dice; the seers were the experts in the ancient science of haruspicy (inspection of the entrails of the sacrificial victim); the augurs took the omens from the movements of birds. The omens, being either favourable or unfavourable, would give an answer 'yes' or 'no'; in this way, by a lengthy process of elimination, it was possible to discover the precise offence which required expiation. The records of these questions and answers (the latter in technical and barely intelligible language) are among the longest and most numerous tablets in the archives.

O. R. GURNEY

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Brian Shuel

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

R. Mander & Joes Mitchenson Theatre Collection

Though 'the filthy practice of dressing up like a horse' was for centuries condemned by the Church, hobby-horses are still to be found from the west of Ireland to Sarawak

HOBBY~HORSE

A PERSON who 'rides his hobby-horse' is one who dwells obsessively on his own special interest. But the original hobby-horse was a man who appeared at certain seasons in the guise of a horse, sometimes in the company of dancers and other characters.

A primitive form of hobby-horse is made from a pole on which is fixed a horse's head, sometimes made of wood but often a real horse skull. This is known as the skull-and-pole type of hobby-horse. The skull is cleaned of flesh by burying it for several months; it is sometimes painted and the bottoms of glass bottles are inserted in the eye sockets. The man carrying the pole is shrouded in a sheet so that the horse seems to be rearing.

The hobby-horse is mentioned again and again in early ecclesiastical and civic prohibitions as appearing at house doors during the Saturnalia and the Calends of January. The skull-and-pole type was frequently accompanied by a stag and a calf made in the same way. The Bishop of Barcelona speaks of a stag-maker in 370 AD; this is the earliest mention of the custom. He was followed by St Augustine (354–430 AD) who forbade the 'filthy practice of dressing up like a horse or a stag'. Through the centuries these pagan animal masks continued to be forbidden.

The Tourney Horse

Some time before the 16th century, when the hobby-horse started to take part in masques and entertainments, he began to appear in the form of a man riding a horse – the tourney horse. It is in this form that he is now usually to be seen at his seasonal outings, although the more primitive skull-and-pole type has by no means died out. This heavy tourney type of horse required all sorts of adjuncts – a sword for the man, a pair of false legs in stirrups or dangling free, and many trappings and decorations.

Great Britain keeps alive some remarkable hobbies, notably the Padstow Old Hoss, which comes out regularly on May Day and attracts crowds of local Cornish folk and visitors from much further afield. He is made of a round frame about five feet wide covered with black tarpaulin, with a smallish horse-head in front and a tail at the back; the effect is more like a round dining-table than a horse. The man wearing the frame has a tall pointed cap, and a strange painted face mask with whiskers and a red tongue hanging from the mouth; that is, the figure

Above **The Padstow Old Hoss, with his round frame covered with black tarpaulin, draws crowds of Cornish folk every May Day** ***Centre*** **The tourney hobby, in the shape of a horse with rider, had made its appearance by the 16th century** ***Below*** **The hobby-horse was well known for foolery and 'horse play' – a tradition continued by the comic horse of pantomime**

riding the horse is a horse as well. Another character, the Teaser, dances backwards directing the Hoss with his curious padded sceptre. Both Teaser and Hoss dance beautifully a series of small rapid steps. The Hoss pursues and catches women and girls under his 'cloak' (his round body) and this is considered a powerful fertility action.

The Minehead Horse, another hobby of the tourney type, is still larger, but oblong. The man wears a tall pointed cap and a metal mask. The horse body has lost its head, but boasts a long rope tail in which niggardly onlookers are wound up. They can be swung off their feet and 'booted', that is, beaten ten times with a boot carried for the purpose, while the blows are counted aloud.

The Cheshire horses appear at All Souls (2 November) after the Soulers have given their mummers' play. The hobby-horse, sometimes called Dicky Tatton or Old Ball, then appears with his Driver or Jockey and is sold. He then shakes himself to bits at the feet of his new owner.

Glass-Eyed Mari Lwyd

The best known skull-and-pole type of hobby-horse, with glass bottle bottoms for eyes and a pair of old gloves for ears, is the Mari Lwyd, the famous horse of South Wales. He is beautifully decked out with ribbon and horse-bells, and appears at midwinter, rearing and plunging in the dark street, while the party accompanying him holds a singing contest with the inhabitants of whichever house they visit. Each side improvises a verse. If the householders give out first they must admit the horse and give refreshments all round. If the Mari Lwyd gang is at a loss first they have to retire and try their luck at another door. Once admitted, the horse teases and nudges the girls and, neighing, pretends to bite them.

The Mari Lwyd is accompanied by a Sergeant, a Merryman who is the fiddler, and a couple now called Punch and Judy who may be recognized as the figures known throughout Europe as the fool and Old Woman. The latter is a man dressed as a woman, carrying a broom. These characters often blacken their faces for a disguise.

This type of Mari Lwyd is known in Glamorganshire and Carmarthenshire and is still being made. Another, very rare, type was made from a square of canvas stuffed with straw, sewn up to form a head and snout; it could be made to move about on a pitchfork stuck into the stuffing.

The Great White Horse of Kerry in Ireland was a skull-and-pole creature eight feet high, the man carrying it being covered with the usual white sheet. He came out at midsummer, chased the women and jumped the midsummer fires. This was a rite in honour of the sun and to promote increase of every useful kind.

Continental Horses

In France the hobby is called *le cheval-jupon*. The most celebrated dancer is the Zamalzain in the Soule province of the French Basque country, who is accompanied by a whole company of dancers, singers and musicians. On the Spanish side of the Pyrenees are other Basque hobby-horses. There is a very primitive one at Lanz in Navarre, connected with a giant; at Pamplona there is a Zaldiko-Maldiko (horse-mule) which lashes out with a fool's bladder; also in Navarre two stuffed hobbies, heavy and difficult to manipulate, are brought out at a local feast. There are many hobbies, 'cavallets' and 'wild mules' in Spain and Portugal which take part in processions, but processing seems to have detracted from their more ancient ritual character.

Belgium has hobbies of all shapes and sizes. Few of these carry out ritual acts, but they frequently accompany processions. A hobby-horse representing Cheval Bayard, a giant horse of legend, carries the four sons of Aymon on his back high above the crowds in various festival processions.

In Switzerland, hobbies recite carnival verses outside houses, loudly whinnying to the girls. The Schimmel, the white horse of Upper Murthal in the Austrian Alps, follows a troop of carnival runners calling in high falsetto voices, whose leader cracks a long Alpine whip. When these bringers-in of spring have run off to their next place of call the Schimmel appears and is put up for sale, as amongst the Souler-Mummers in Cheshire villages. If anyone is foolish enough to buy him, the white horse shakes himself to pieces at his new owner's feet.

On the Slovenian side of the Alps lives Rusa, an inoffensive hobby though his head and neck are covered with porcupine quills. Sometimes he is accompanied by terrifying human maskers of strongly Alpine influence. Like nearly all hobby-horses, Rusa is a seasonal horse: he helps to bring in the spring and must be paid for his services.

In Bohemia hobby-horses are so large that three men hide beneath the cloth, while another rides. In the same region, and around Brno in Moravia, a horse-head carved in wood is carried on a stick at the head of wedding processions. The general name for these heads is the Klibna, said to mean Mare; they tend to be comic rather than frightening. Sometimes accompanied by goat-maskers, they come out during carnival; occasionally they appear on St Nicholas's Day (6 December). They too bring in the spring and fertilize farm stock, not forgetting the women and girls who, screaming, join in the kitchen skirmishes with annual zest.

Poland too owns hobbies round about Cracow; one celebrated one which appears in early summer on Corpus Christi Day in a suburb of that town is said to commemorate a victory over a Tartar invasion. The horse rider is supposed to be dressed as a Tartar. The hobby rushes through the streets and lies down for a few minutes on the steps of the bishop's palace; this may signify a momentary death.

Village Comedy

The hobby-horse is known far beyond Europe, providing an important link in Indo-European tradition. In southern India at Madura, a village comedy is enacted in which a woman – really a man dressed as a woman – is robbed as she sleeps, even to the pillow beneath her head. Two hobby-horses appear, one takes the woman as his own and refuses to let anyone come near her. These horses go to weddings, as in many European regions.

Sometimes musicians give chase to the horse, who at last allows himself to be caught and dances with his captors. Near Mysore, the horse prances on stilts, and halfway through the performance sheds his outer garment and appears as a woman. Yet another hobby makes his own horse's head on the spot, cut out of an areca palm; attendants of the local deity sit on the ground and the horse prances round them, finally falling into a trance. Here the horse ritual has been combined with the local religion.

Beautifully plaited rushes form the hobbies of Sarawak, and the ritual animal-masker is a well-known figure in China.

VIOLET ALFORD

Mary Evans Picture Library

Hogmanay

Name for New Year's Eve in Scotland and parts of the north of England; the departure of the old year and birth of the new is celebrated with much feasting and drinking; children go from door to door singing songs and asking for cakes, small gifts and coins; also the occasion for the custom of First Footing.

See FIRST; NEW YEAR.

Holda

Germanic sky goddess, sometimes also a fertility goddess or goddess of the hearth; she was commonly the leader of the Wild Hunt which rode on stormy nights; snow was caused by Holda shaking her feather bed, while rain fell when she washed her veil; in Germanic folklore she became identified with the Queen of the Elves and was also associated with witches, herself appearing as an old, witch-like woman; Grimm's fairy tale *Frau Holle* (an alternative name for Holda) repeats many of the motifs of earlier legend.

HOLINESS MOVEMENT

AFTER CONVERSION, the man who was saved might seek and obtain a second blessing, by which he might be entirely sanctified. This was a doctrine widely current among Protestant evangelicals in the 19th century. The more extreme maintained that sanctification was instantaneous, some of them asserting that after sanctification a man could not sin and was perfect; while the moderates believed that this second blessing, of the Holy Ghost, led to a gradual cleansing of the heart.

Although the Holiness movement is a 19th century phenomenon, and continues to be significant in the 20th, its roots go much further back. As the name suggests, Holiness owed much to Pietism, which laid emphasis on leading an exemplary moral life in conformity to religious commitment and, if need be, in dissociation from the world. Pietism had developed among some of the Lutherans, of whom the German Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760), patron and leader of the Herrnhut community of Moravian Brethren, was the most important to the development of Holiness ideas.

Zinzendorf emphasized the doctrine of grace and the encompassing love of God; and it was from the Moravians that John Wesley acquired in the 1730s confirmation of his own teachings about the holy life, and at their hands that he underwent a profound 'heart-experience'. Wesley had had his own Holy Club whilst at Oxford, and lay societies emphasizing the holy life had existed in England in the late 17th century; but the idea of holiness touched off by a distinct experience and as a second blessing appears to stem from this time. Wesley's theology taught that man could obtain assurance of salvation, and that this condition of assurance was associated with leading a sanctified life that manifested holiness of heart. Although this emphasis on holiness was a central part of Wesley's theology, many Methodists paid less heed to it as time went by. There were always a minority, however, who emphasized holiness. Particularly in the United States, small groups met, from the 1830s onwards, to seek the experience of sanctification.

A State of Perfection

Another stream of theological thinking in the United States contributed to the Holiness movement. This had Presbyterian origins, but became fully convergent with Methodist Holiness ideas in the sermons of Charles G. Finney. Finney believed that through the power of the Holy Spirit men might reach a state of perfection similar to that of Adam before the fall.

Perfectionist ideas had also arisen independently in various parts of New England, where some of their advocates had preached that, since they were sanctified and could not sin, whatever they did was, by definition, not sin. The irregularities occurring among them and the advocacy of sexual communism by the Perfectionist, John Humphrey Noyes, created profound distrust of Holiness ideas among the general public.

During the 1860s increasing numbers of Methodists met to cultivate Holiness experience and to seek the second blessing. The Methodist churches generally distrusted this development and tension arose between Holiness advocates and other Methodists. The growing appeal of Holiness may be associated with the shift, particularly marked in revivalism, from 'hell fire' preaching to increased emphasis on the love of God, who was now presented less as a punitive Jehovah and more as a benevolent being eager to love all mankind.

It is important to emphasize that this Holiness belief in the action of the Holy Ghost at the second blessing, and the expectation that 'the fire would fall' and give rise to intense emotional expression, is quite distinct as a theological idea from that which arose in the early 20th century among the movements that came to be known as Pentecostal. Holiness advocates used very similar terminology to that which the Pentecostalists employed later on, and the more extreme groups expected manifestations of Holy Ghost power, but their expectations were much less precise than those of the Pentecostalists. Holiness people did not assert that the gifts of the Spirit (as described in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14) were in operation in their own times; they did not produce theological justification for speaking in tongues and uttering prophecy, and did not suggest that these phenomena should occur in their church services.

Many Holiness advocates were anxious to remain in their previous church fellowships, and this was generally the position favoured by the revivalists. Most of them were not originally interested in starting new sects, against which their general evangelical position strongly disposed them. In England, many evangelicals in the Church of England and in the Noncomformist denominations were attracted to Holiness ideas, from the time of the second evangelical awakening in 1857, and as a result of campaigns brought to Great Britain by Dwight L. Moody in 1873 and 1883, but most of them continued in their existing fellowships.

The Salvation Army

Most important of all the British developments that were influenced by the Holiness movement was the Salvation Army. Its founder, William Booth, had been a Methodist New Connection preacher who struck out on his own. He accepted Holiness ideas and rejoiced when 'the fire fell' at his meetings. Salvationism, however, is a many-sided movement and its development cannot be wholly accounted to Holiness teachings.

In the United States, where many Holiness groups among Methodists were organizing camp meetings and prayer meetings, church officials grew more and more hostile to these minorities that professed superior

Chris Barker/Victoria and Albert Museum

Holiness ideas flourished in the periodic religious revivals of the 19th century. Emotional behaviour when 'the fire fell' was easily ridiculed by contemporaries

blessing and affected more holy attitudes in everyday life. The more radical groups provoked unfavourable public notice, and their severe attitude to tobacco, jewellery, musical instruments and adornments of dress disturbed the less rigorous rank-and-file of Methodists. Perhaps no less important was the disregard that Holiness preachers paid to denominational boundaries which was a more explicit challenge to ecclesiastical officials.

Church of the Nazarene

When separate and independent sects did emerge, some of them took the title 'Pentecostal', and one of the largest amalgamations, finally effected in 1907, took the name Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. In 1919, in order to distinguish themselves from the 'tongues movement', as they called the later Pentecostalists, these Holiness believers dropped the word 'Pentecostal' from their title. This body became one of the largest Holiness sects, with thousands of adherents all over the United States, and a small following in Britain.

Holiness sects are numerous in the United States, and there are a number in Britain. Some consist of no more than one local congregation. Some continue to emphasize freedom of worship, and are 'Holy Rollers'. Others, such as the Church of the Nazarene, have adopted a more staid evangelical form of worship. Yet others have retreated into an introverted cultivation of holiness. Some remain vigorously evangelical, but others have adopted a more élitist position – always a possible interpretation of ideas of a second blessing and entire sanctification. Many Holiness groups have remained disdainful of ecclesiastical organization, regarding Holy Ghost power and the sanctified life as all that men need for life and worship. Although there has been a very considerable effort in the mission field, some groups have become somewhat inward-looking and are indifferent to the recruitment of what they sometimes call 'joiners'.

(See also HOLY ROLLERS; PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT.)

BRYAN WILSON

The praises of the holly and the ivy are sung in many carols. But even in pre-Christian times these plants were valued for their magic power and their ability to keep off evil

HOLLY AND IVY

TWO EVERGREEN TREES, the holly and the ivy, are regularly linked together. Both are inseparably associated with Christmas, and everyone knows the carol celebrating

> The holly and the ivy
> When they are both full grown . . .

There is a less well-known one in which it is said:

> Christmastide
> Comes in like a bride,
> With holly and ivy clad.

Ivy is the more ancient plant, mythologically speaking, first of all in connection with the god Dionysus, who was born after Zeus had bedded Semele, daughter of Cadmus, King of Thebes. Zeus's wife Hera, in the guise of a nurse, suggested to Semele that she should ask Zeus to unveil himself to her. But when he did the divine flames consumed her, and would have killed the unborn child but for a sudden growth of ivy. Zeus placed the infant in his own thigh until it was ready for birth. Another version of this legend makes Semele abandon the infant under an ivy bush. *Kissos* or *cissos*, the ancient name for ivy, was supposed to have been Dionysus's earliest name. Kissos in another legend is the name of a nymph who danced with such abandon at a Dionysian feast that she collapsed and died of exhaustion before the god; he, grieving at this untimely death, changed her into ivy.

Dionysus (also called Bacchus) was often portrayed with an ivy wreath on his head, and the plant is mentioned in many of the legends associated with him. There was a Dionysus ivy in the Attic town of Acharnae (as there were other trees elsewhere linked with Dionysus as god of trees). Plutarch records that the Bacchae ate ivy and that the resulting intoxication gave rise to their 'inspired fury' (although ivy was later supposed to diminish drunkenness). If the priests of Jupiter even touched ivy this was thought to put them into a prophetic trance.

From its association with Bacchus, god of wine – a reputed source of inspiration – ivy became a suitable plant for a poet's crown; Virgil thought it should be accorded to woodland or bucolic poets rather than urban ones. At one time ivy was the recognized wreath-plant for victors in the Isthmian games held at Corinth, and ivy crowns were also presented at a Spartan festival honouring Hyacinthus. At Greek wedding ceremonies, a wreath of ivy was given by the priest to the newly married couple since – presumably because of its twining propensities – ivy is an ancient symbol of fidelity.

Sign of a Tavern

Again reflecting its association with Bacchus, ivy was used by the Romans to signify a wine shop; it was either trained over a booth, made into a 'tavern-bush' on a wooden frame, or hung in a bushy mass on the tavern door. The custom was introduced into northern Europe and there are allusions to it in later literature. Thomas Nashe, in his comedy *Summer's Last Will and Testament* of 1600, speaks of 'Green ivy bushes at the vintner's doors', and it is from this practice that we get the expression 'good wine needs no bush', meaning that a good commodity needs no advertisement. It occurs at the end of *As You Like It* when Rosalind says, 'If it be true that good wine needs no bush, 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue.'

Mary Evans Picture Library

Holly, associated with Christmas since the time of the Roman Saturnalia, forms a fitting crown and sceptre for Father Christmas himself

Despite these associations with the tavern, ivy has an ancient reputation as a preventer of intoxication. Pliny recommended a brew of ivy berries before a drinking bout, and there are later recipes for vinegar in which ivy berries had been steeped, to be taken before drinking, and a preparation from ivy leaves, to be taken afterwards to prevent a hangover. Cato wrote that one could cure drunkenness by taking wine in which ivy leaves had been steeped, and the use of a cup made of ivy wood was also recommended. In the 17th century, wine was thought to prevent infections if it had stood in an ivy-wood container. More specific folk remedies recommended the leaves, prepared in various ways, to treat corns, serve as an eye lotion and cure skin rashes and running nose in a cold; powdered ivy berries were recommended against plague and an ivy wreath to prevent baldness. These suggestions are all rather curious, because ivy is somewhat poisonous.

Protection against Evil

Holly and ivy were plants of magic power and were used as a protection against evil long before Christmas was celebrated. In Roman times any sacred fire was best started by rubbing together a piece of ivy and one of bay wood. Ivy growing on a house protected it against witchcraft and other evil, and if it withered or fell off this was a sure sign of misfortune to follow; in Wales it was supposed to mean that the house would somehow pass into other hands. In Scotland small wreaths of ivy, sometimes combined with mountain ash and honeysuckle, placed over the entrance to a byre and under the milk containers protected the animals and their produce. German cowherds made ivy wreaths for their cattle when they led them out to the spring pastures for the first time. In France ivy was often included as one of the protective herbs of St John (see ST JOHN'S WORT).

Holly was likewise protective in ancient times. Pliny describes its value planted near

a house, to keep away lightning, spells and evil. He went on to suggest that it had power over animals: if a branch were thrown at any creature it would cause it to lie down and obey the thrower. He also believed it would protect agaiust poison, and that its flowers would freeze water.

Saturnalia Decorations

Holly and ivy presumably first came together as decorations in the Roman Saturnalia, the midwinter festival which the *Oxford Dictionary* describes as 'a time of general unrestrained merrymaking, extending even to the slaves': it was in fact a celebration of the equality between human beings which was supposed to have existed in the reign of Saturn. It was also a time of exchanging presents, and it was customary to decorate rooms with various evergreens. This practice doubtless derived from a very ancient custom of gathering green branches at the winter solstice as part of the magical rites which ensured the rebirth of crops and other vegetation in the spring.

When the early Christians decided to celebrate the birth of Christ at midwinter they continued to decorate their houses in this way. As time went on the Saturnalia languished, but the Christians continued to use evergreen decorations at the midwinter festivities, besides keeping up other ancient customs such as the use of mistletoe.

Early Christians may have encouraged the use of holly by calling it Holy Tree, an easy corruption, as an alternative to trying to crush an ancient practice. The word holly, incidentally, derives from Norse *hulfre*, which Chaucer wrote *hulfere*. Holly was quite recently used in Italy, with other plants, to deck mangers in commemoration of the infant Jesus's first bed. Ivy, however, with its vinous links, was frowned upon as a church decoration and was only thought fit to be placed in doorways.

The holly leaf, being normally prickly, could be thought of as repelling enemies: it was thus considered a protection at any time. The red of its berries provided extra protection, and the combination of leaves and berries was especially effective against the Evil Eye. The Christians linked the spiny leaves and red berries with the Crown of Thorns and the drops of blood it caused. It was naturally unlucky to injure holly.

One curious and rather unpleasant custom was still carried out about 150 years ago at Tenby, Pembrokeshire. Men and boys went out 'holly beating' on Boxing Day, which meant striking any girls they met on the arms with holly branches.

A pleasanter custom links the holly with 'First Footing', still carried on in Scotland and the North of England. First Foot is the ritual good luck bringer: the first visitor on New Year's Day, he arrives soon after midnight, bringing bread, coal and salt, which symbolize adequate food, warmth and money for the household in the coming year (see FIRST). He also carries an evergreen branch, often a holly, as a token of life. If he does carry a holly bough it has to be male holly: female holly would bring bad luck. Male holly is traditionally, though erroneously, thought to have prickly leaves and 'she-holly' smooth ones.

Holly Bears the Crown

Ivy is as magical and protective as holly, being used especially to protect farm animals and produce, while holly protects the house. In spite of this, ivy has become subordinate to its partner. We know from the carol that

> Of all the trees that are in the wood
> The holly bears the crown.

In a medieval poem the same theme occurs:

> Then spake holver (holly) 'I am fresh and jolly;
> I will have the maistry (mastery)
> In lands where we go.'

However, one should certainly include ivy in the Christmas decorations, because it brings luck to women. Moreover it has many qualities, as another carol tells:

> The most worthy she is in town;
> He that sayeth other do amiss;
> And worthy to wear the crown:
> *Veni, coronaberis.*
>
> Ivy is green, with colours bright,
> Of all trees best she is,
> And that I prove will now be right.
> *Veni, coronaberis.*

It was supposed to be unlucky to bring holly, ivy and all other Christmas greenery indoors before Christmas Eve or to discard them before the end of the festivities; to do the latter would be to throw away prosperity and possibly cause a death in the household. Originally greenery was left until Candlemas (2 February), the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and the original end of the Christmas period. Nowadays Twelfth Night (5 January) is the accepted time.

In some districts it is considered desirable to burn the greenery; in others bad luck would follow this. In every case it is unlucky to burn the greenery while it has any life in it, especially the holly. A sprig of holly can be preserved, for it will bring good luck to the house all the year round. It is unlucky to crush a holly berry underfoot or to bring indoors a sprig in flower.

There are a number of minor myths connected with these two plants. Leaves of a she-holly placed under their pillows assisted North country girls and boys to dream of their future consorts. Nine leaves had to be collected at midnight on a Friday and tied with nine knots in a three-cornered handkerchief. The charm would only work if no word was spoken until the following dawn. Holly was used in the 'witch's chain' of holly, juniper and mistletoe berries, linked with acorns and wound around a branch, which was burnt with due ceremony by three unmarried girls. As the last acorn went into the flames each girl would see an image of her future husband or, if doomed to remain single, a coffin.

Ivy also had its uses in divination. In Oxfordshire, if a girl put an ivy leaf in her pocket, the first man she met would surely wed her even if he was already married. In Scotland the leaf was put into the girl's bosom while she said this verse:

> Ivy, ivy, I love you.
> In my bosom I put you.
> The first young man who speaks to me
> My future husband he shall be.

Fortunes could also be told with ivy. If an ivy leaf, placed in water on New Year's Eve, was still fresh on Twelfth Night, the year ahead would be favourable. If black spots formed, illness was certain, its seat depending on the part of the leaf affected; spots all over meant death within the year. In Herefordshire the formation of a coffin-shaped mark on a soaked leaf denoted death. It was lucky to dream of ivy, for this foretold happiness.

In the language of flowers holly stood for foresight and ivy, not surprisingly, for fidelity and marriage. A sprig of ivy with tendrils meant 'assiduous to please'.

A. J. HUXLEY

Holy

Sacred, set apart: the term is commnnly applied to the divine and what belongs to the divine; also applied to human beings who are reverenced for their religious devotion or pious life.

Sonia Halliday

Holy Ghost

Or Holy Spirit: the third person of the Trinity, represented in Christian art by a white dove; generally thought of as divine energy active in the world, seen first in the spirit of God or *ruach* which inspired prophets and heroes in the Old Testament; the Holy Ghost plays a much greater part in the New Testament, being particularly connected with Christ's birth, baptism and temptation, and with the events of Pentecost.

See BREATH; DOVE.

British Museum

Generally simple people with few emotional outlets, the Holy Rollers make religious meetings the occasion for hysterical outbursts and violent paroxysms of leaping, jerking and rolling on the ground, sometimes for hours at a time

HOLY ROLLERS

NO RELIGIOUS GROUP describe themselves as Holy Rollers. The term has, however, been widely used, certaiuly since the middle of the last century, to designate religious congregations where emotional display is encouraged and violent physical activity is not ouly socially approved but taken as evidence of the power of the Holy Ghost. Although such groups are known in Britain, they are much more common, and the term is more widely used, in the United States.

The Holy Rollers belong to the revivalist tradition of the American frontier, where itinerant preachers would call men to redemption by vigorous depictions of hell fire awaiting all those who were not saved. At the camp meetings common in the 18th century in Kentucky, Tennessee and other frontier states, preachers judged their success by the numbers 'slain' for the Lord—caused to drop in a swoon-like state to the ground. Groaning and weeping were common, and various kinds of paroxysm, such as jerking, were well-known; commentators wrote of men, convicted of their state of sin, shrieking, bounding about 'like live 'fish out of water' or rolling on the ground for hours at a time. These acrobatics, from which the name of Holy Roller is derived, were generally explained as the result of anguish for sinful lives rather than as ecstasy at the prospect of eternal bliss.

Revivalist Origins

The Great Revival in Kentucky at the end of the 18th century gave rise to perhaps the most sustained and widespread outbreak of these phenomena in Western history. Camp meetings were frequent and the revival spread over a wide area, leaving a strong imprint on the style of religion in the Mid-West. Revivalism continued intermittently throughout the 19th century in these areas; it provided both dramatic relief from the rigours of everyday life, and prospects of assurance in a society that gave rise to many hazards and uncertainties. Among a rural, unsophisticated public, lacking both a stable tradition and the example of better educated classes, the excesses of the revivals were to be expected. Various groups operated on the fringe of the early revivals, and may have stimulated their emotionalism: such were the Shakers, whose name derived from their practice of trembling vigorously when seized by the Spirit, The principal preachers in the Kentucky Revival, however, were Methodists and Presbyterians.

The tone of revivalism became more restrained as the 19th century advanced, particularly among the better established denominations. After the 1820s, the Presbyterian revivalist Charles G. Finney discouraged the writhing and rolling that had occurred at his early meetings. The evangelist Dwight L. Moody, who was active in the 1860s and '70s, also disavowed excessive emotionalism.

Outside the orthodox denominations, however, holy rolling continued, particularly in backwoods areas in Kentucky and neighbouring states where the ecstatic revivalist tradition persisted. In recent decades these phenomena have usually occurred in locally-run assemblies that are unattached, or only very loosely attached, to any larger organization. Doctrine is evangelical and fundamentalist, often of a crude variety, and the principal interest is in the shared experience of seeing 'the fire fall', as the onset of emotional and hysterical behaviour has often been termed. Spontaneity in worship is highly prized, but inhibitions are often released in such meetings by the repetition of particular phrases shouted in invocation or praise. 'Jesus', 'Come Lord, come' are typical phrases, but others, such as 'Blood', also occur.

Backwoods Congregations

Holy Roller congregations have been drawn almost exclusively from the poor and uneducated of rural areas, from people whose lives are often emotionally barren except in early childhood and in early motherhood, and whose emotional control is little developed. Women predominate in such meetings, and some accounts suggest that they often outnumber men by two, three or even four to one. The sanctioning circumstance of a meeting called in God's name, which enables the congregation to experience emotions otherwise socially inhibited, and at the same time to enjoy the status of becoming a vessel for the Holy Ghost, or a sinner redeemed by God's love, readily calls forth abandoned behaviour. The force of suggestion and of imitation is evident in such meetings, but there can be no doubt that those engaged do experience sensations that they interpret as a great infusion of power, usually attributed to the Holy Ghost.

In this, some difference will be noted between the interpretation given to rolling at revival meetings, and the justifications that are offered for the bodily exercises encouraged in the Holy Roller assemblies. At revivals, the individual was being convicted of sin, and his behaviour was seen either as a punishment, as a manifestation of mental anguish, or even as the effect of the exorcism of evil from his body. At the meetings of extreme Holy Roller sects, whilst an individual may writhe in anguish at the recollection of sin he is, in such an assembly, theoretically already a saved person. His bodily exertions therefore tend to be regarded as the 'in-filling' of the Holy Spirit, and are interpreted as confirming his redemption, rather than as redemptive. Holy Rollers themselves, however, are not usually sophisticated about doctrinal distinctions, and both interpretations are sometimes current.

Although Holy Roller congregations are

Ronald Sheridan

A vigorous display of holy rolling by American visitors in front of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem

not concerned with formal doctrinal justifications for their behaviour, their thinking was influenced by the Holiness Movement (see HOLINESS MOVEMENT), with its emphasis on the second blessing of sanctification and the accompanying experience of the 'latter rain' (of which mention was found in Joel 2.23 and James 5.7), when it developed in the latter half of the 19th century. Many of the more extreme Holiness preachers were themselves intense believers in Holy Ghost power, and that power was only evident when their congregations made it manifest. They prayed for the 'holy dynamite', and some of them became much more preoccupied with vigorous emotional expression than with the sanctified life and 'heart-cleansing' that were emphasized in more sophisticated Holiness theology.

'Speaking with tongues': under the impact of Pentecostal teaching, which encouraged such emotional behaviour, all forms of holy rolling became more common

Camera Press London

Fire from Heaven

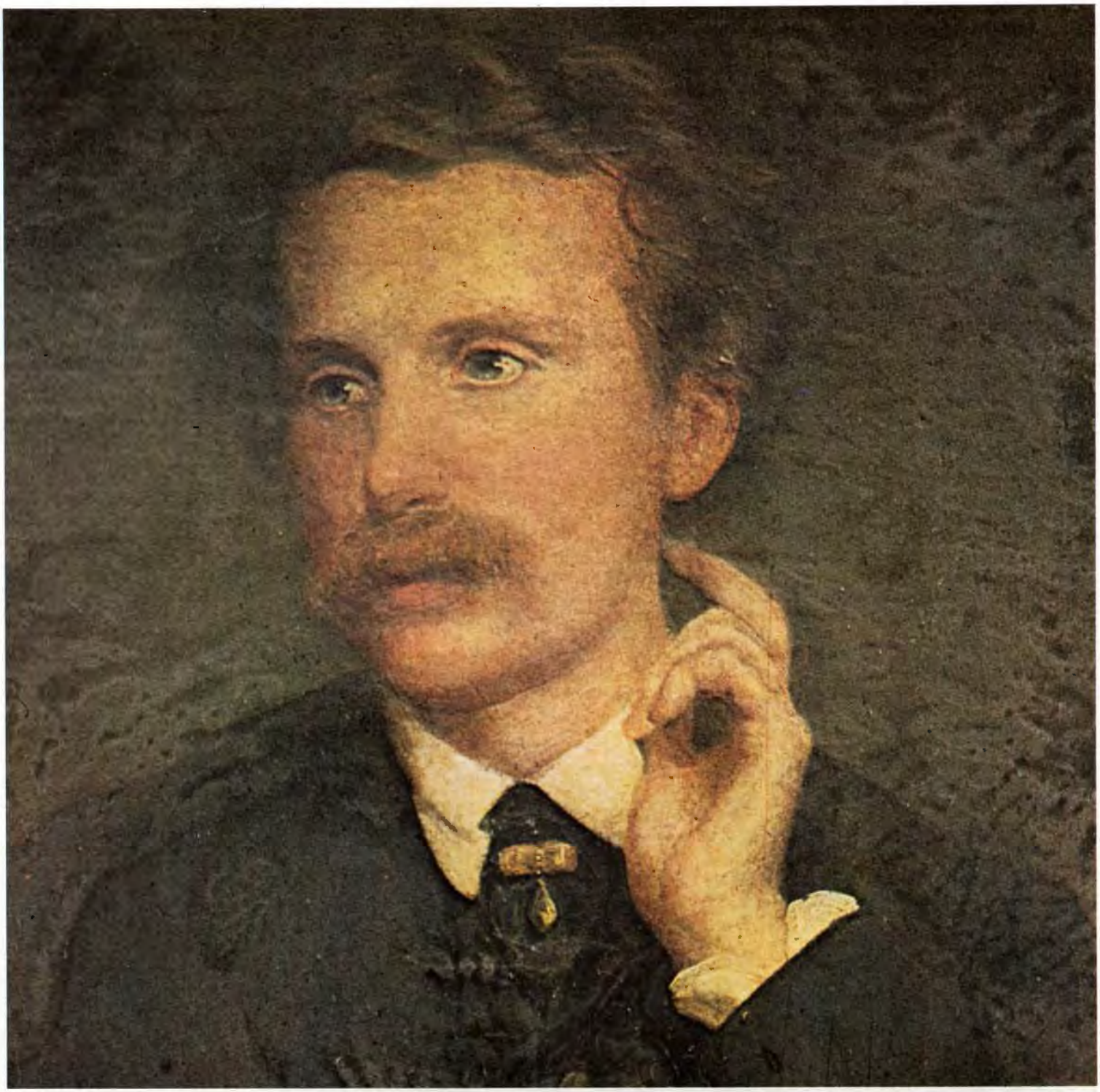
Holiness churches – not all of which were by any means to be identified with the Holy Rollers – became natural contexts for the acceptance of Pentecostal ideas and practices, when these were formulated in the early 20th century (see PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT). Pentecostalism did more than pray for the 'fire to fall'; it regarded the first experience as a person's 'Holy Ghost baptism', and thereafter, by its teaching of the continued operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost (speaking in unknown tongues, interpreting tongues, prophecy, discernment of spirits), it provided a continuing justification for highly emotional behaviour at meetings for worship. Men could now be on fire for God and believe that their behaviour was entirely prompted by the Holy Ghost. In the first couple of decades of the 20th century, under the impact of Pentecostal teaching, all forms of holy rolling became more common. In time, as properly organized Pentecostal denominations arose, a pattern of Church order was evolved in which the gifts of the Spirit were given a more defined and circumscribed place, and holy rolling disappeared from the better established churches of the more respectable Pentecostal sects, although it continued, as it does to this day in backwoods areas.

It has been noted that recruits to Holy Roller and other highly emotional sects are frequently people experiencing 'cultural shock'. This may arise in areas where the inhabitants have come to feel their cultural isolation or backwardness in relation to metropolitan centres. Or it may arise among migrants from rural areas experiencing the disturbance of encounter with urban values and the anonymity of urban life. Holy rolling appears, in these cases, to be a spontaneous expression of anxiety and demand for reassurance.

People referred to as Holy Rollers are generally gathered in independent local congregations: centralization has tended to curb emotional behaviour. Many of these local congregations refer to themselves simply as 'Baptist' or 'Holiness' churches, particularly among the poor whites of the southern and border states in the United States, and among American Negroes. Some of these independent groups have slowly become associated with each other, but the emphasis on freedom of worship has prevented the development of powerful central control. Where some co-ordination has been established, titles such as 'The Church of God' have been adopted in an attempt to emphasize the absence of human patterns of organization.

One such group, which arose in Tennessee and North Carolina in the 1890s, was the Church of God (Tomlinson), so named after its first superintendent. This movement fragmented on a number of occasions, and subsequently claimed to be the first established Pentecostal denomination. The movement divided again at the death of its founder, one group following Milton Tomlinson as the Church of God of Prophecy, a sect with a considerable following in the West Indies and among West Indians in Britain; the other followed his brother, Homer Tomlinson, who claimed (perhaps exaggeratedly) 75,000 followers in the 1960s and who, in his later years, crowned himself 'King of All the Nations of Men'. Although the larger Holiness sects have rejected those forms of behaviour common among the groups from which they grew, some of the smaller bodies, which often have bizarre names, maintain the freedom of worship in which holy rolling occurs.

BRYAN WILSON



Camera Press London

One of the most celebrated mediums of all time, D. D. Home displayed his gifts before emperors and peers, poets and scientists; despite the closest scrutiny of his demonstrations, he was never discredited

D. D. HOME

ON 21 NOVEMBER 1867, the Earl of Dunraven was sitting at a polished mahogany table in the dining-room of his London house. The table, covered with a green cloth, was described as very heavy, one which required considerable force to move at all; it was seven feet long by five wide. Beneath it was a Turkey carpet. Dunraven's son, Lord Adare, 24 years of age and wearing a monocle, was sitting at one end of the table, and a Miss Gallwey was at the other. Dunraven sat at one of the sides and opposite him was Daniel Dunglas Home (pronounced Hume), the famous spiritualist. Home, red-haired, tall, gaunt, tubercular, was 34 years old and at the height of his fame and powers. Suddenly, in the midst of the light conversation (which Home preferred to silence) raps were heard on different parts of the table, a sign that the spirits were present. Then the table vibrated very strongly with uniform and powerful vibrations. Dunraven was astounded when the table suddenly moved a foot at right angles of Home in the direction of Adare; then, reversing, it moved towards Miss Gallwey who cried out, 'May I stop it?' Home replied, 'I don't think you can.' 'Yes, I can', said Miss Gallwey, pressing her hands forcibly against the table edge. But she was mistaken. Her hands fell back and the table leapt a foot towards her. Dunraven saw another, and smaller, table in the room move by itself towards Home.

This was one of the 78 seances of Home's which Adare and others witnessed between 1867 and 1869; they were recorded by Adare (or by Dunraven) and published in 1870 for private circulation under the title of *Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home*. Dunraven, who died the following year, supplied an introduction.

The most famous of these seances took place after dinner on 16 December 1868

at Adare's rooms at 5 Buckingham Gate, London. There were four persons present: Lord Adare and Lord Lindsay, Home and Captain Charles Wynne. They all sat round a table in a small room. Home went into a trance and the spirit of Adah Menken, an actress who had died in the summer of that year and whom both Adare and Home had known, spoke through him. A chair moved by itself from the wall to the table and came to rest between Wynne and Home. Wynne said he felt there was someone sitting in the chair. Lindsay was more certain; the chair was occupied, he said, by someone who was leaning his arm on Wynne's shoulder. Doubt on this matter was due to the room being in darkness. Home got up from the table and began to walk about the room. He was both raised in the air and elongated (to what extent we are not told). He then said, 'Do not be afraid, and on no account leave your places', and went into the passage. Lindsay exclaimed, 'Oh, good heavens! I know what he is going to do; it is too fearful.' 'What is it?' demanded Adare. 'I cannot tell you; it is too horrible!' But he told them nevertheless: Home was going to float out of one window – they were on the third floor – and in at the next, the two windows being on opposite sides of a triangle and seven feet apart. They heard Home enter the next room and open the window. A few moments later, Home reappeared, standing upright outside the window of the room he had left in the ordinary way; he opened the window and re-entered the room. Adare went into the other room to shut the window; to his surprise he found that it was opened only a foot. He asked Home how he had managed to squeeze himself through. 'Come and see' said Home. They returned to the other room and Home told Adare to open the window as it was before. Adare did so. 'Stand back,' said Home, and without ado went through the window again, head first, rapidly, horizontally and, as far as Adare could judge, rigidly. This time Home returned to the same room, feet first. 'It was so dark,' commented Adare, 'I could not see clearly how he supported himself.' Adare asked Lindsay how he had known what Home was going to do. Lindsay replied that the spirit of Adah Menken had told him, had whispered into his ear in an unearthly voice, a voice which to him was not human. Home, coming out of his trance, was greatly agitated, and said he felt as if he had gone through some fearful peril.

Embarrassing Powers

Other manifestations occurred that evening: tongues or jets of flame were observed to proceed from Home's head; all of them heard noises as if a chirping bird was flying about the room; a great wind was both heard and felt as it rushed through the room. Adare described the moaning, rushing sound as the weirdest noise he had ever heard. Home, falling again into a trance, broke into speech in an unknown tongue.

Many years later, in 1924, Lord Adare, now the fourth Earl of Dunraven, allowed his *Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home* to be republished by the Society for Psychical Research. He added a preface in which he stated that his belief in the genuineness of the phenomena had remained unshaken and that he had not continued the experiments only because he had other things to do and the study of the occult was not really congenial to him. Furthermore, he had found that, beyond a certain point, there was no progress in the manifestations, the phenomena were all of the same kind, mainly physical, 'designed apparently to prove that some force or forces other than physical, as we understand it, could be made to operate on inanimate objects.' He had seen a great deal of Home during 1867-9, had travelled abroad with him, slept in the same room with him and even in the same bed. He said Home was proud of his gift but not happy about it for he could not control it and at times it involved him in embarrassing situations.

While *Experiences in Spiritualism* was in the press, the celebrated scientist, William Crookes (see CROOKES), began to grow convinced of the genuineness of Home's powers. On one occasion the table round which Crookes, Home and others were sitting with linked hands rose six inches in the air and floated about. This stirred them to sing 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' 'After that,' wrote Crookes in a letter to Dr Huggins, 'D. D. Home gave us a solo – rather a sacred piece – and almost before a dozen words were uttered Mr Herne was carried right up, floated across the table and dropped with a crash of pictures and ornaments at the other end of the room. My brother Walter, who was holding one hand, stuck to him as long as he could, but he says Herne was dragged out of his hand as he went across the table.'

Crookes observed of Home's singing that it appeared to drive off low influences and conjure up something more elevated; for at the conclusion of 'For he's a jolly good fellow', a very sweet spirit voice, high above the table, remarked 'You should rather give praise to God.' While they were all holding hands, an accordion was lifted by spirit force above the table; it floated about the room, came within inches of their faces, playing exquisite music all the while. Crookes concluded his long letter to Huggins by asking him to be careful to whom he showed it, because he did not want to be shut up in a lunatic asylum or turned out of the society of men of science. On another occasion Crookes recorded having seen Home handling red-hot coals 'as if they had been oranges'.

Bell that Rang Itself

Home was born at Currie, near Edinburgh, on 20 March 1833. His father, who called himself Humes, was apparently an illegitimate son of the tenth Earl of Home. At the age of nine, Home was taken by an aunt to America; and by the time he was 17 he was competing in the States with the famous Fox sisters, Margaret and Katie, in the production of spirit raps which

Peter Larsen

D. D. Home was fond of music and his accordion was frequently present at seances; sounds would issue from it when there was no visible sign of a player

inaugurated the modern Spiritualist movement. He had no difficulty in deciding the choice of a career.

In March 1855, aged 22, he arrived back in Britain and put up at a hotel in Jermyn Street, London, the proprietor of which, William Cox, was sympathetic towards Spiritualism and occultism. Home immediately rewarded him by letting him see two decanters where previously there had been only one.

A seance was speedily arranged in the hotel at which Cox, Home, Lord Brougham and the scientist Sir David Brewster were present. According to Brewster, the table shuddered and 'a tremendous motion ran up all our arms'. Unaccountable rappings were heard all over the table, which actually rose up, apparently of its own accord, when no hand was upon it. Sir David was impressed, and still more so when a hand-bell, its mouth on the carpet, 'actually rang when nothing could have touched it'.

During the same year, a certain William White took Home in a hansom cab from his lodgings in Jermyn Street to the house of a gentleman in Islington. White described Home as a pale, consumptive-looking young man. When they arrived, they were shown into the dining-room where 12 gentlemen were waiting for them, most of whom were strangers to Mr White. Home had never seen any of them before and he was taken aback, remarking that large and mixed companies made manifestations extremely difficult to achieve, 'but we cannot now do better than try'.

The blinds were drawn but the room was well lit by candles. They all sat round a long dining-table. Home told them to place their hands on the table and talk freely. Within five minutes raps were heard on the table, the walls, the floor. 'Will the spirits kindly rap here?' asked Home. They promptly obliged with a rap or two on the table in front of him; other guests asked for, and received, their complement of raps. A small hand-bell was set on the floor and shortly began tinkling.

Home asked for an accordion. There was not one in the house but a servant went next door and returned with a concertina, which Home said would do. He placed it on the floor under the table and in a short while it began playing by itself, Home's hands being above the table.

Mr White observed that the gentleman sitting opposite him had his face bathed in sweat. He spoke to him and he replied that his hand had been repeatedly grasped in the affectionate manner in which his dead father used to grasp it. Then White saw a boy's hand on the breast of the sweat-covered gentlemen opposite. 'I saw it', he wrote, 'as distinctly as if it had been a hand pushed through a door.' Suddenly there was a scream, and one of the gentlemen jumped up from the table in alarm. The mystic hand had moved along the table and laid itself on his forehead.

Soon Home was the talk of the town, and carriages began to arrive at his lodgings in Jermyn Street to convey him to the houses of the nobility. The novelist Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton (see LYTTON), entertained

Mary Evans Picture Library

During seances, objects floated about the room and hand-bells rang, but most dramatic of all were the occasions on which D. D. Home levitated, seemingly effortlessly: illustration from Louis Figuier's book *Physical Science*

him at Knebworth in Hertfordshire. To Bulwer Lytton's satisfaction, Home called up the spirit that had influenced him to write his famous occult novel *Zanoni*. Bulwer Lytton talked of Home to his friends the poet Robert Browning and his wife who, shortly afterwards, met Home in the house at Ealing of a retired solicitor, John Snaith Rymer. The table shuddered and at Home's request the evoked spirit seized a garland of flowers and, to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's delight, placed it on her head. In a letter to her sister, Henrietta, she wrote that she had heard raps, had seen the table move, and been touched by the invisible. She described the mystic hand that had placed the garland on her head as snow-white, beautiful and of the largest size. And she had raised her glass to see better other hands which, as far as she could judge, were coming out from under the table. She reported the opinion of Robert Lytton, the son of Sir Edward, that they rose from *out of the wood* of the table. Finally, a spirit hand elongated to two yards over the table and floated out of the window.

Seance Before an Emperor

Robert Browning was neither impressed nor pleased; he regarded the whole business as a cheat and an imposture. A few days later when Home and Rymer called on him, he pointed in a rage to the way out and said to Home, 'If you're not out of that door in half a minute, I'll fling you down the stairs.' Before Home departed, Mrs Browning (according to Home) placed both her hands in his and said in a voice filled with emotion, 'Oh, dear Mr Home, do not, do not blame me. I am so sorry but I am not to blame.'

Disagreement between the Brownings over Home was total and while Elizabeth Barrett was talking and writing excitedly and appreciatively about Home to her friends, Robert was composing his long satiric poem, *Mr Sludge, the Medium*, which was intended to demolish Home for good but which has only helped to keep his memory green.

> Now, don't, sir! Don't expose me! Just this once!
> This was the first and only time, I'll swear –
> Look at me – see, I kneel – the only time,
> I swear, I ever cheated, – yes, by the soul
> Of Her who hears (your sainted mother, sir!)
> All, except this last accident, was truth.

Meanwhile, Home continued his incredible progress and not even the opinion of Charles Dickens, who called him a ruffian and a scoundrel, stopped him. In 1857 he was demonstrating his powers in the Tuileries before Napoleon III. At his first seance there, it seemed to Home that the entire court were present and he had to explain to the Emperor and Empress that a seance was not a theatrical performance. His Majesty ordered the room to be cleared, leaving only a small circle. Home soon got the table rising from the floor. During the third seance, he materialized a hand which seized a pencil and wrote the one word 'Napoleon'. The Emperor declared it to be Bonaparte's veritable signature.

Home did not charge fees for his services although he accepted gifts of jewellery. He was never discredited. The question of how he did it has remained unanswered to this day. Speculation is endless. The only clue left today is Home's handwriting. What powers, if any, does it reveal? If it is possible to control matter magically, that is, to transfer one's psychic force to matter till matter moves, then Home (graphologically considered) was the person to do it. He was certainly inflated enough; and the great men of his age, from the Tsar and the Kaiser and the French Emperor to Lord Adare, who sat before him, provided the terrific stimulus he required. He would not perform for anyone. From time to time he complained that the power had left him, and he was incapable – not the words of a charlatan or a trickster who can always perform until he is found out. He exploited himself ruthlessly; there was nothing to hold him. Like a priest in a fertility cult, he moved his psychic force into the table and made it vibrate and rise. The heaviness of the table had nothing to do with it; and he made himself immune to pain when he picked up red-hot coals. Those who do not believe in the powers of the psyche but only in the power of matter, unable to find a satisfactory explanation, are driven to dispose of the awkward facts by the hypothesis of mass hallucination or deception.

JOHN SYMONDS

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Chris Barker

Homoeopathy is based on the theory that human beings have within themselves a healing force which the physician must stimulate rather than interfere with. Drugs producing the same symptoms as those from which the patient is suffering, are administered in minute doses: Nelson's homoeopathic pharmacy in London

The principle of 'like cures like', which has parallels in magical practice, underlies homoeopathic medicine, in which infinitesimal doses of drugs derived from plants, spider venom, gold and many other natural sources have been found to assist the body to heal itself

HOMOEOPATHY

LIKE MANY BRANCHES of fringe medicine, homoeopathy was introduced, developed and made popular by one man: Samuel Christian Friedrich Hahnemann. Born in 1775 in Meissen in eastern Germany, the son of a decorator of porcelain, he was educated at a provincial school as a charity scholar. As a young man he showed an early talent for languages, and was a school teacher for a while before starting off on a medical career at Leipzig University.

For a couple of years or so he studied in a rather dilatory fashion, moving to Vienna where he met the Austrian physician F. A. Mesmer, who at this time was trying unsuccessfully to establish the validity of his unorthodox theories before the critics of a special commission (see MESMER). One of Hahnemann's biographers tells us that the aspiring young doctor was influenced, to his detriment, by Mesmer's 'transcendental absurdities'. In any case the future father of homoeopathy was clearly at this time at loggerheads with orthodox medicine, which he stated 'knew no treatment except to draw from diseases the injurious materials that are assumed to be their cause. The blood is made to flow mercilessly by bleedings, leeches, cuppings, scarifications, to diminish an assumed plethora which never exists'. Eventually, after working as a translator and a librarian, Hahnemann qualified as a doctor in 1779.

During the next few years, however, the young physician enjoyed little success as a doctor, although he made several attempts to set himself up in practice in various small towns and villages in southern Germany. In 1806, having had, it has been stated, 'less practical experience of acute disease than any physician', he published his pamphlet, 'Medicine of Experience', that was to be the forerunner of all his subsequent writings on homoeopathy.

Hahnemann was now over fifty. Like many of his contemporaries he deplored the crudities of medicine and surgery that were practised in the early days of the 19th century – so much so, we are told, that he formulated his own system of medicine. He came to believe that human beings have within themselves a healing principle, and that the physician's task is to discover and if possible remove the cause of the trouble; and at the same time to stimulate rather than to interfere with the body's own vital healing force. To this day, it is a keystone of homoeopathy that the whole patient should be treated and not simply his disease.

Bark and Spider Venom

Exactly what gave Hahnemann the vision to develop the system of medicine which he christened homoeopathy (from the Greek *homios*, like, *pathos*, suffering) remains in doubt. Sir John Weir, the celebrated homoeopathic physician, opined that the idea was sown in his mind when he was translating Cullen's *Treatise on Materia Medica* – on the medical action of Peruvian bark or cinchona, from which quinine is derived. Hahnemann had read of its medical use as a cure for malarial fever and he took a little of this bark himself. When this had the effect of producing a fever in him, Hahnemann immediately came to the conclusion that Peruvian bark both caused fever in a healthy person and cured it in one already suffering from this complaint; and therefore all diseases can be cured from compounds that produce their common symptoms; this principle differed radically from that underlying orthodox or 'allopathic' medicine, which aims to cure diseased action by inducing action of a different kind.

Hahnemann explained his principle, which is basic to all homoeopathic practice, on a more metaphysical plane in his *Organon of Rational Healing* (1810). 'Homoeopathy . . . can easily convince every reflecting person that the diseases of man are not caused by any substance, any acridity, that is to say any disease matter, but that they are solely spirit-like (dynamic), derangements of the spirit-life power (the vital principle), that animates the human body. Homoeopathy knows that a cure can only take place by the reaction of the right force against the rightly chosen remedy that has been ingested, and that the cure will be certain and rapid in proportion to the strength with which the vital force still prevails in the patient.'

Hahnemann, having stated his claims, vigorously set about proving them. This 'proving' was initially carried out on himself and his friends, healthy volunteers who took Hahnemann's medicines in order to reveal their pharmacological qualities. Instead of using drugs in the dosages prescribed by orthodox medicine, he tried them out in incredibly small dilutions until an effective homoeopathic *materia medica* was elaborated. Remedies were gradually derived not only from plants and herbs but from animal and mineral substances such as bee stings, snake and spider venom, gold and even sand; these substances, many of which were reputedly poisonous, were prepared in a special way to gain maximum efficacy and protect the patient from side-effects. Today more than 2000 homoeopathic remedies are known, although a much smaller number is in common use.

One of the most difficult things to understand about homoeopathic medicine is, of course, how such minute doses of drugs can have any effect at all upon the human frame. Homoeopathic medicines were 'attenuated' to dilutions of one millionth of a grain in many cases, following Hahnemann's paradoxical discovery that less of a substance could be more effective and that the more dilute the similar remedy, the more active it was. This did not prevent one eminent critic from saying that the only advantage he could see in the new medical belief was that the whole of its *materia medica* could be carried about in your waistcoat pocket.

Outcry from the Chemists

Nevertheless, homoeopathy flourished, and its motto *Similia Similibus Curantur* (like cures like), spread like wildfire. Of course there was violent and organized opposition both from the medical profession as a whole, and from the chemists who saw their business in jeopardy. If such minute doses of drugs were necessary to cure disease, what would become of their profits? Eventually, however, it was realized that as the homoeopathic pharmacopoeia, or official drug list, increased in complexity there was ample room for the specialist homoeopathic chemist, and so pharmacological opposition gradually decreased.

The new system of medicine was introduced into Britain by Dr Frederick Foster Harvey Quin, in face of almost hysterical medical opposition. The effect of anti-homoeopathic propaganda, however, probably helped to publicize the new faith.

Another advantage was that Dr Quin enjoyed very influential patronage. As personal physician to the Duchess of Devonshire and to Prince Leopold, uncle of Queen Victoria, he rapidly established homoeopathy's cause within the Royal Household. He also influenced literary circles, as a close friend of Dickens and Thackeray. At last Quin established the first homoeopathic hospital in London's Golden Square in 1850.

Quin's influence was so great during the middle of the 19th century that he was able to press Parliament to secure an amendment to the Medical Registration Bill, which provided that homoeopathic medicine could be practised by medically qualified practitioners. This was a remarkable achievement despite violent opposition, especially from the Royal College of Physicians.

Medical opinion of homoeopathy was influenced favourably in a general sense by studies made some ten years previously, in 1848, when homoeopathic treatment for cholera, then a common disease, was compared with orthodox treatment. To the surprise of many doctors the homoeopathic method appeared to be much more effective. Only a third of the patients died, compared with two thirds treated conventionally. Such a claim, however, only stimulated orthodox practitioners to collect other statistics that compared orthodoxy with homoeopathy, and it was soon pointed out that in general hospital studies (apart from cholera), orthodox medicine was winning hands down.

Typical was a study made in 1842-3, in which the death rate at Fleishmann's Homoeopathic Hospital in Vienna, which claimed an overall mortality for all diseases treated of 6.26%, was compared with the Edinburgh Infirmary, where the overall mortality was 11.9%. Although an apparent victory for homoeopathy, on closer examination it becomes obvious that at the Vienna hospital a high proportion of the patients admitted had non-fatal complaints, like neuralgia, gout, shingles and chickenpox. At the Edinburgh Infirmary, however, 'very dangerous diseases' were over four times more common.

By now, of course, homoeopathic practice was becoming much more varied and perhaps less as Hahnemann would have liked to see it – a point made by Sir Benjamin Brodie, an eminent Fellow of the Royal Society, and surgeon to King George IV, in a letter written to *Frazer's Magazine*. He complained that, 'Hahnemann treats the subjects in one way, Dr Curie in another, and Mr Sharp (another well known homoeopathist) in another way too.' There seems little doubt that this was substantially true.

Medicine of the Elite

Nevertheless, homoeopathy grew in popularity, especially among the elite. In 1841, Dr Harris Dunsford, dedicated a book, 'with permission', to Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, and regaled his readers with stories of the glory of homoeopathic medicine's success among the nobility. It was not really until the turn of the century that this branch of medicine began to lose ground in Britain, although Sir John Weir still treated Royalty, including Queen Mary and later King George VI, together with a most fashionable practice.

Mansell Collection

Press Association

Left **Samuel Christian Friedrich Hahnemann, founder of homoeopathy, was an unsuccessful doctor who eked out a meagre living by translating scientific books. When he was over 50 he began to publicize his new theories and he died a millionaire** ***Above*** **Dr Margery Blackie, Physician to the Queen, is one of the many modern doctors in Britain who regularly practise homoeopathy**

In all probability the spectacular successes of 20th century orthodox medicine partially sealed the fate of the homoeopathic physician, although homoeopathic doctors work to this day within the framework of the National Health Service. As Brian Inglis points out in his *Fringe Medicine*, the difficulty has always been to prove that the infinitesimally small dosage used in homoeopathic medicine works.

But there were other factors that seem to have reduced the influence of the homoeopath. In all probability the aura of the aristocracy that hung over its early practice for so long – an aura which is symbolized today by the Queen's personal appointment of a homoeopathic physician, Dr Margery Blackie in 1969 – has eventually diminished its appeal as far as the average man and woman in the street were concerned. Then again, to be really effective, homoeopathy needs time to work, time indeed for Nature to be stimulated to produce a cure. The pharmacological revolution produced rapid, intensive 'miracle' cures for illnesses that many people remember near relatives dying of, or at the very least being very ill with. This new quick-acting, almost 'press-button' medicine was therefore attractive, and appeared vastly superior as far as the ordinary man was concerned to Hahnemann's minute doses of medicines and vast doses of patience and faith.

Although homoeopathic medicine was free to march side by side with its orthodox counterpart in the 20th century, there has been a distinct lack of enthusiasm for it within the inner sanctum of fringe medicine. Dynamic leaders, of the calibre of Hahnemann and Quin are notably absent from the modern scene. Although under the National Health Service Act of 1948, the existing homoeopathic hospitals in the United Kingdom were officially recognized, and in 1950 the Faculty of Homoeopathy Act was passed to enable qualified medical men and women to take a diploma in the 'Knowledge and Practice of Homoeopathy', response has been poor. Perhaps in embracing the orthodox, and insisting that its practitioners qualify in allopathic medicine first, homoeopathy has hastened its own decline. Once qualified, the young doctor is usually too busy climbing his own professional ladder of promotion to bother very much about strolling down a by-road of medicine.

It does not seem likely, however that this branch of medicine will ever be entirely absent from the medical scene. Although orthodox medicine has enjoyed many victories, of recent years there has been ever-growing evidence of iatrogenic (drug-induced) disease. The side effects of therapeutic doses of some potent drugs in the allopathic practitioner's therapeutic armoury can be devastating, and even lethal. Sometimes indeed, the patient has a heart-searching decision to make – to continue with orthodox treatment at risk of side-effects of the drug that helps them or to stop taking the drug and perhaps become ill again. Apart from the hazard of side-effects involved in allopathic treatment, there is also the acknowledged risk, while large quantities of potentially addictive drugs are manufactured and prescribed, of drug addiction; a misuse which is never remotely possible in homeopathic practice. Outside Britain, the advantages of homoeopathy are widely recognized on the Continent, and in recent years Russian scientists have examined the scientific basis of Hahnemann's theories.

Exactly how Samuel Hahnemann would react to the place that homoeopathy holds in the modern world it is impossible even to guess. When he died in Paris in the year 1843, it must have been with a feeling that his work had been an unqualified success, for he was a millionaire.

ERIC TRIMMER

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Homosexuality

Danish National Museum

Among some peoples, one of the distinguishing marks of a shaman or medicine-man: the Algonquin Indians believed that those showing homosexual tendencies, because of their abnormalities, were closer to the spirit world than ordinary men and could therefore act as intermediaries: Navaho shamans sometimes thought of themselves as magically transformed into women and often dressed in women's clothing.

See ALGONQUIN INDIANS; SHAMAN.

HOMUNCULUS

THE MAN-MADE MAN of ancient and medieval alchemy, the homunculus, is the forerunner of the test-tube baby of modern scientific experiment and speculation. The first recorded dream of an artificial man appears in the work of the alchemical writer Zosimus, an Alexandrian Greek of the 3rd or 4th century AD, who describes a vision he had of the transmutation of metals, in which a homunculus changed successively from copper, to silver and then to gold, the process being helped by burning the blood and bones of a dragon. At about the same time, a Christian writer accused the 'arch-heretic and sorcerer' Simon Magus of making an artificial man with an instrument resembling a cupping glass. Here again, the homunculus passed through several stages, the spirit taken from the body of a dead boy being changed successively to air, water, blood and finally flesh. Simon also had the power of changing the homunculus back to air.

It is possible that the medieval alchemists knew something of these ancient traditions. One of the first to have the manufacture of a homunculus attributed to him was Arnold of Villanova (c 1238 – c 1313), a famous alchemist, astrologer and court physician in his own day. If Arnold really did make any experiments in this direction, they may have been linked with his long search for a medicine which would rejuvenate man in body and soul, and with his belief that the aim of alchemy was to transform the natural elements into something more spiritual and more divine.

The most detailed instructions for the manufacture of a homunculus are to be found in the writings of Paracelsus (1493-1541), a life-long student of magic and the supernatural, whose researches led him into anthropology, medicine and alchemy (see PARACELSUS). In his recipe for a homunculus, Paracelsus says that a man's semen must be put into a hermetically-sealed retort, buried in horse manure for 40 days, and 'magnetized'. During this time, it begins to live and move, and at the end of the 40 days it resembles a human form, but is transparent and without a body.

The homunculus must now be fed daily with the 'arcanum' (hidden mystery) of human blood, and be maintained at the constant temperature of a mare's womb, for a period of 40 weeks, and it will grow into a human child, with all its limbs developed, as normal as any child born of woman, except that it will be much smaller. 'It may be raised and educated like any other child,' Paracelsus adds, 'until it grows older and is able to look after itself.' The secret of how to make the homunculus was known to the ancient philosophers or miracle men, some of whom were themselves said to have been begotten by the process, but this is 'one of the greatest secrets, and will remain a secret until the end of days, when everything will be made known.'

It is likely that it was not mere morbid curiosity which prompted these experiments of Paracelsus, as the semen and blood mentioned were regarded as carriers of the *pneuma* or soul-substance, and as such represented the *materia prima*, or elemental matter of which, in alchemical theory, all substances were ultimately composed.

An early test-tube baby? Our knowledge of attempts to make a homunculus stem from folktales and alchemy

Similar experiments were reported by one of Louis XIV's physicians, Borel, who also conjured a human form, which emitted bloody rays of light, from distilled blood. The physician and mystical philosopher Robert Fludd (see FLUDD) also distilled blood, and claimed to have removed a human head, complete with face, eyes, nose and hair, from the retort after he had heard a frightful noise coming from it.

A story which through various film versions has become known to a wide public, is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), 'an adolescent's version of the eternal story of Man's attempt to create human life' (as Richard Church characterizes the novel), which owed its immediate inspiration to a conversation between the poets Byron and Shelley about the experiments of Dr Darwin (the grandfather of the author of *The Origin of Species*), who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case until it began to move of its own accord. 'Perhaps,' wrote Mary Shelley in the introduction to her story, 'a corpse would be re-animated . . . perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together and endued with vital warmth.' The Count Frankenstein of the story, had developed his own interest in natural science through reading Paracelsus and other alchemists.

In 1873, Dr Emil Besetzny published an elaborate account of ten homunculi generated in bottles by a certain John Ferdinand, Count of Kufstein in the Tyrol, in 1775, with the aid of an Italian mystic and Rosicrucian, the Abbé Geloni. This account purported to be based on a collection of Masonic manuscripts and on the diary of the Count's butler. Whether stories of this sort were circulating in Europe at the time Mary Shelley wrote her story (in Switzerland) and whether she also heard them cannot be known for certain, but it seems not unlikely. The homunculus belonged, by the beginning of the 19th century, to a double tradition, a literary one partly based on folktales and a pseudo-scientific one based on alchemy. In our own time, these two strands are represented by science fiction and horror films on the one hand, and test-tube fertilization and genetic experimentation on the other. The homunculus, it seems, has a future even more interesting than its curious past.

(See also GOLEM.)

The golden honeycomb made by Daedalus the legendary craftsman for the Temple of Aphrodite has been copied by the artist Michael Ayrton – complete with live bees

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

The period immediately after marriage is still known as the honeymoon, an indication of the ancient association with fruitfulness of this first sweetener known to man, which also figures in magical and witchcraft practices

HONEY

AS A FEATURE of human experience, honey is as old as language, perhaps even older. The Chinese, Sanskrit and ancient Greek words for it have a common root from which the English word mead also derives, and one of the earliest paintings in existence, a rock painting from a cave near Valencia in Spain, shows men gathering honey in a basket.

For many thousands of years, honey was the only sweetener known to man, and it was also the first means of making an intoxicating drink. It is no wonder, therefore, that the ancient Babylonians swore solemnly by the honey god, or that in the *Rig-Veda* honey and *soma* drip from the fig tree that represents the universe.

In the belief of more than one ancient people, honey is abundant in holy or divine places: in the book of Exodus, the God of Abraham promises the elders of Israel that he will bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. In Jewish tradition, the Messiah feeds the pious in heaven with honey and manna, and in a number of medieval mystical prayers, Christ himself is addressed as the honeycomb.

In keeping with its sacred character, honey was poured in offerings and libations, and in many places played a part in rites connected with birth, marriage and death. In Babylonia, honey was frequently offered to the gods Marduk and Ishtar in order to secure their help against witchcraft, and the fact that burnt offerings of honey are specifically forbidden in the Old Testament (Leviticus 2. 11) shows that the custom must have been prevalent at some time among the ancient Hebrews. Indeed, the association of honey with a sacred offering lingered on into early medieval times. The Synod of Auxerre (585 AD) expressly forbade the consecration of wine mixed with honey, and a Synod of 692, the offering of milk and honey at the altar.

According to a manual of ancient Vedic law, a newly-born boy is to be fed with honey and butter, and his lips touched with a golden spoon; and Isaiah comforts King Ahaz with the sign of the child Immanuel, to be born of a virgin, who shall eat butter and honey, 'that he may know to refuse evil and choose the good.' In Greek mythology, the infant Zeus is hidden by his mother Rhea, in a cave on Mount Dicte, which is full of sacred bees, and fed on honey and goat's milk.

Symbol of Fruitfulness

In some parts of India, honey is still given to the bridegroom on his wedding day, a survival from the ancient custom of offering honey at the wedding sacrifice, chiefly to propitiate evil spirits. In Croatia it was the custom to smear the threshold with honey as the bride entered the groom's house, and to give the bride a jar of honey, and similar customs have been observed elsewhere. In southern Germany, beehives were at one time festively decorated at a wedding, so that bees and men could rejoice together.

In his account of the life of the Thonga, a South African tribe, Henri Junod reports that during the betrothal a suitor was not allowed to eat honey on his first visit to his girl's parents, 'because honey slips away like a fish, and the girl might also slip through his hands.' When the man is married, he must refrain from eating honey with his wife for a year, until she has given birth. He may eat it in the bush, but must not leave any traces of it on his hands, in case his wife notices, and runs home. The origin of this taboo is obscure, though it may be related to the beliefs about honey's magic powers at weddings – and on honeymoons – in other parts of the world.

Honey is a widespread symbol of fruitfulness in love and marriage, and has a long history even as an aphrodisiac. The ancient Greek doctor Hippocrates, the 'father of medicine', recommended ass's meat and milk with honey as an aphrodisiac, and honey was a favourite food for this purpose in the harems of imperial Istanbul. It was also used in the love potions of the southern Slavs, and in other parts of Europe mixed in cakes intended to be eaten by the boy or girl whose love one hoped to win. It is reported that the Magyars used to smear the sexual organs

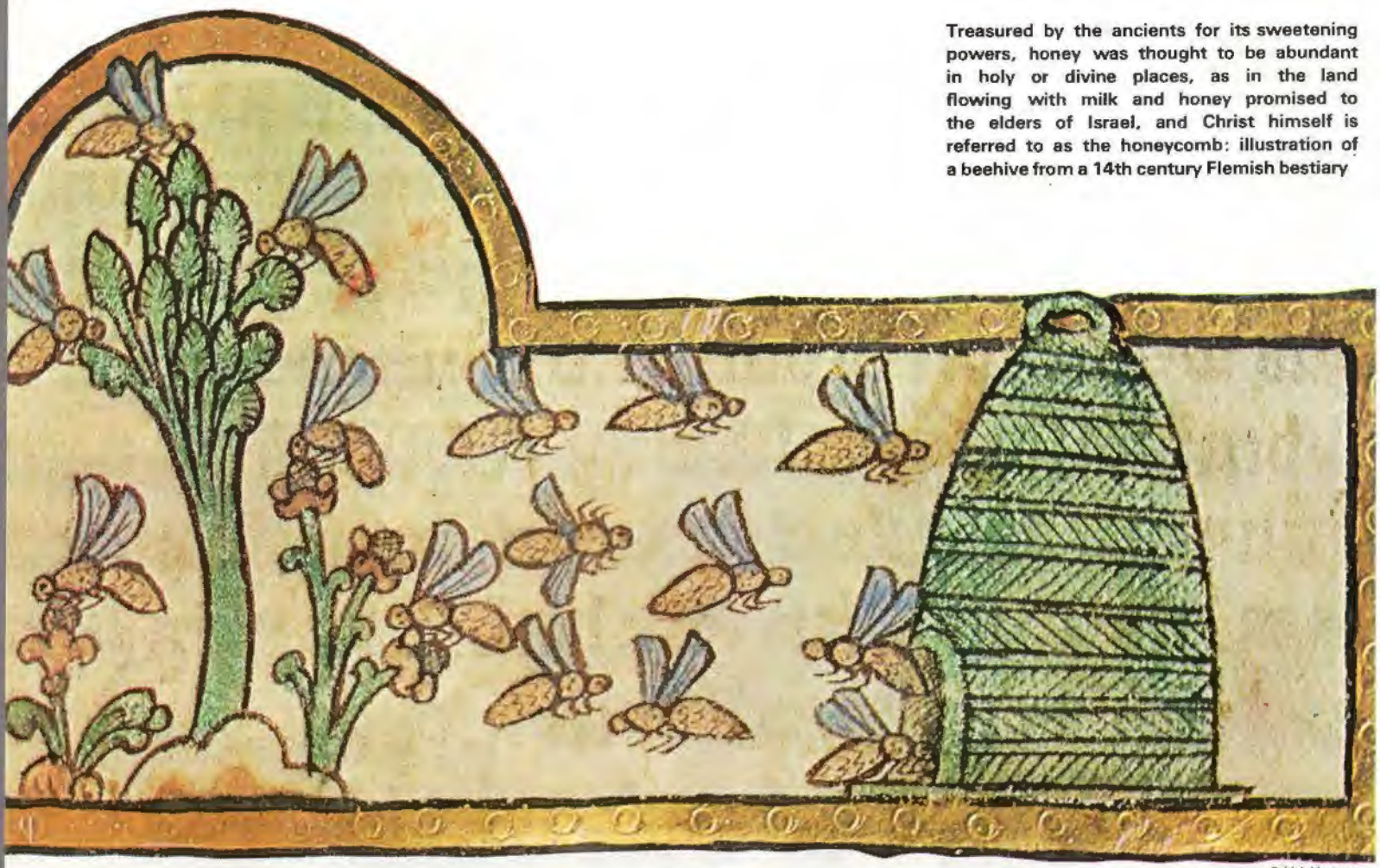
of young girls and boys with honey, to ensure their greater popularity with the opposite sex, and in some parts of the Balkans it was the custom to smear the bride or the groom's face with honey.

Though less common than the association with birth and marriage, there is also a connection in some religious rites between honey and death. In the great Vedic funeral hymn, the priests are commanded to pour an offering of honey to Yama, the god of death, and in another ancient Indian ritual, the bones of the dead were placed in an urn filled with curds and honey. Corpses were sometimes cleaned with honey, or, in ancient Egypt, preserved in it. At the funeral of Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, in the *Iliad*, oil and honey were placed in jars near the pyre, the intention, being perhaps that a man might enjoy in the next world what had given him pleasure in this. In the same way, it was once the custom in Russia to place a cup of honey by the corpse at a funeral, or to reserve a honey cake for the dead person at the funeral feast. This custom may also have derived from the very ancient belief that honey was effective in keeping malignant spirits at bay.

In fact, the offering of honey to the spirits of the dead appears to be one of the oldest of all cults, and mead was sometimes poured into the ground for the departed man to drink. Although the custom must be thousands of years old, its earliest mention in literature is probably in the *Odyssey*, where the witch Circe tells Odysseus to dig a trench and pour mead, wine and water into it, in order to call up the spirit of the blind seer Teiresias.

From its use in these libations to the dead, honey came to be used also in magic. In Silesia, it was used in the preparation of a magic decoy fox used by huntsmen: the honey in this case had to be found at midnight and carried over three boundaries between properties. Honey is mentioned in the records of a witches' trial in Switzerland in 1499, as an instrument of black magic which afflicted whomsoever tasted it with the death

For many thousands of years, honey was the only sweetener known to man, and it was also the first means of making an intoxicating drink: *The Discovery of Honey*, a painting by Piero di Cosimo, late 15th century



Treasured by the ancients for its sweetening powers, honey was thought to be abundant in holy or divine places, as in the land flowing with milk and honey promised to the elders of Israel, and Christ himself is referred to as the honeycomb: illustration of a beehive from a 14th century Flemish bestiary

British Museum

agony. Witches were also supposed to be able to steal honey by magic means, as they could milk, and three years' severe penance were imposed on offenders. It was also debated in the Middle Ages whether it was right to eat honey from bees which had stung a man to death. Conversely, it was believed in some parts of Southern and Central Europe, that honey must not be given to anyone who was suffering from a serious illness as this would cause the bees to die.

More frequently, however, honey was revered for its healing properties. Sick people were exorcized in the name of honey in ancient Babylonia, and the custom of offering milk and honey to the demons of disease lingered on, for example in the Balkans, until comparatively recent times. Honey does, in fact, have antiseptic properties, and its quality of being rapidly digestible makes it an ideal source of energy, not only to invalids, but to healthy people as well. These properties were recognized in very ancient times, and in the Egyptian medical papyri, in particular, honey frequently figures in prescriptions. The so-called virgin honey (the first pure honey drained from the comb without heat or pressure) has always been especially valued for its medicinal powers, particularly as an ophthalmic remedy.

So strong is the appeal of honey to the imagination of unsophisticated folk, that even dreams of honey are invested with a peculiar significance. To dream of honey is a sign of unexpectedly overcoming a difficulty, and it also promises cleverness, because the bees have been so clever in making it. If a king dreams of breaking a honeycomb and eating from it, it means his people will bring him happiness and wealth, but if an ordinary man dreams that he has been given honey when he did not have any, it means he will lose his wealth. In the Indian *Book of Dreams*, to dream of eating honey is a bad omen, and there are superstitious beliefs that show a dread of honey recorded from several places—for example, that it is fatal to eat honey without getting the mouth and hands smeared. But these beliefs about the harm honey may portend are no more than the reverse side of the universal love of and reverence for honey on the part of a mankind ever grateful to the substance that first sweetened earthly life.

Hood

A covering for the head, consequently a symbol of being apart from the everyday world; a cowl is the hood worn by some orders of monks: a hood which completely envelops the head, and so masks the individual personality of the wearer, may be a symbol of penitence (see CHRISTIANITY; EASTER); or it may be intended to terrify, like the hoods of the Ku Klux Klan.

Transworld Feature Syndicate

Hoodoo

A form of popular magic practised by the Negroes of the southern United States; it has many features in common with Voodoo as found in Haiti, and both are thought to have been imported by Dahomey slaves from West Africa: magic charms known as hoodoo hands are variously used to bring the wearer good luck, or, directed against an enemy, to cause sickness, ruin, and even death: in modern American usage, hoodoo signifies bad luck.

Mary Evans Picture Library

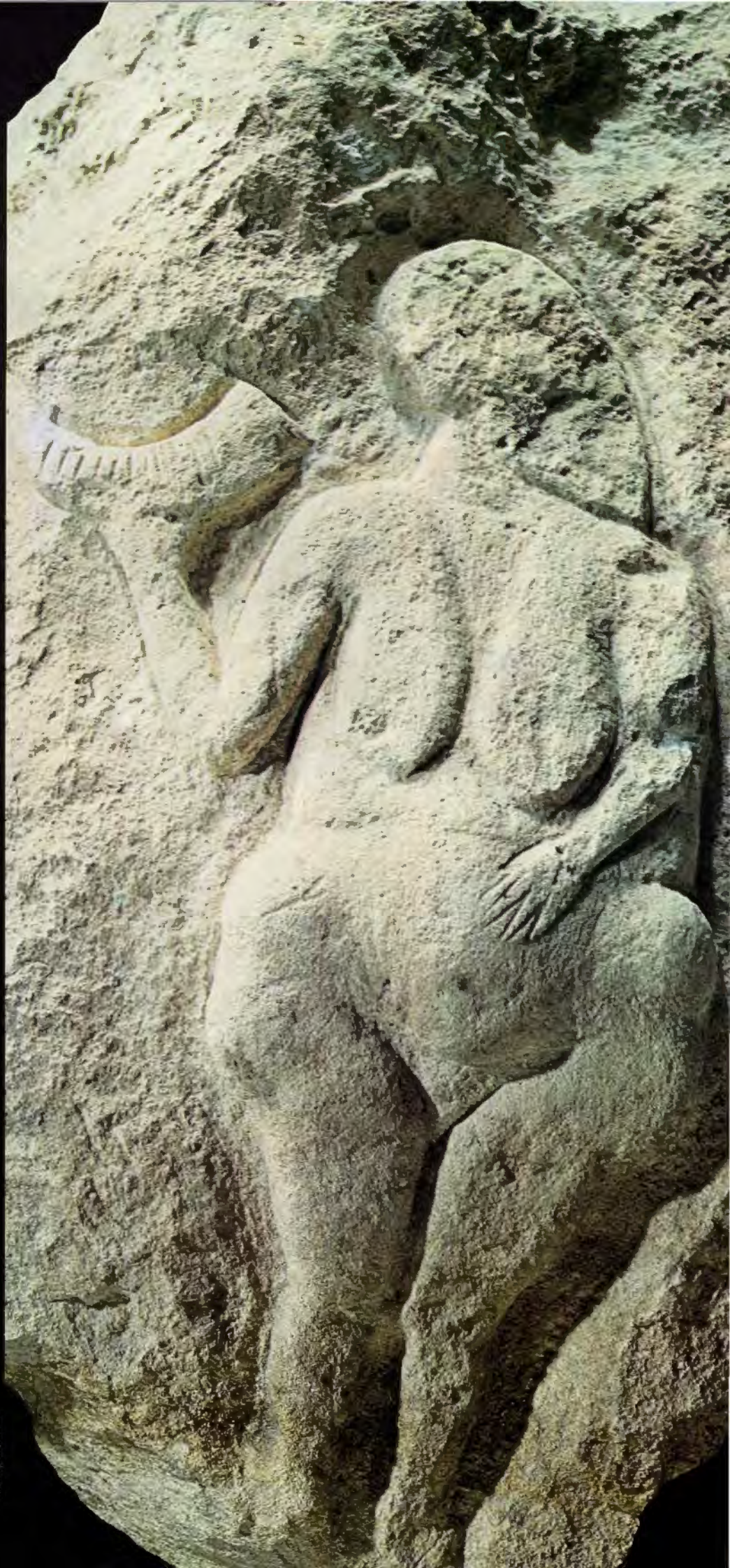
HORNS

The outstanding courage and virility of the male horned animal led man to adopt the horn as the emblem of manhood; the gods themselves were frequently depicted as horned in ancient times. In Celtic religion the role of horned animals was of special importance; and in an old fertility dance which has survived into this century the dancers wear reindeer horns

A CHALLENGE to man's strength, horned creatures have been both feared and admired by him for millennia. Living in herds they presented an ideal source of food to our hunting ancestors, yet such herds were protected by one or a few dominant males which, when attacked, responded ferociously. Horned males will generally fight to the death against other species, even when severely injured, rather than retreat back into the herd. This savage and completely fearless behaviour even in the face of insuperable odds must have deeply impressed man throughout history as a hunter.

Male horned animals have an additional characteristic that won the attention and admiration of man: their exuberant sexuality. By the Neolithic Age, when man had begun to have some understanding of the male role in procreation, it must have became obvious to him that only a very few bulls or rams were necessary to impregnate an entire herd of female animals. Since strength, courage and sexual power were the primary male virtues in human society, it is little wonder that man constantly used bulls and rams as yardsticks for measuring his own worth. Nor is it difficult to see why he came to believe that these creatures were either endowed with supernatural power or were actual manifestations of gods themselves.

The earliest archeological evidence for the use of animal horns by man comes from a Neanderthal burial site dating from about 60,000 to 70,000 years ago. In this Middle Paleolithic cave of Teshik-tash, located in the mountains of south-western Uzbekistan (Central Asia), the remains of a boy of about nine years of age were discovered. That he was ritually buried seems certain since his head was surrounded



The 'Venus of Laussel', a mother goddess carved on a slab of rock in the Dordogne, clasps a bison's horn to emphasize her role of fertility and creative power

Bodleian Library

Left The Egyptian god Khnum was an ancient god of the Nile, the principal bringer of fertility in Egypt. He was maker of the earth, and creator of gods and men, and his symbol was a ram's head. Isis and Nepthys flanking the sun god Re shown with Khnum's head: from the tomb of Nefartary

Dancing and fertility magic are closely connected in pagan and primitive societies *Above* 14th century Flemish manuscript showing humans dancing and wearing animal heads, a device often used in early rituals as a means of magically acquiring an animal's peculiar attributes *Below* The Abbots Bromley Horn Dance *(left)*, an ancient British ceremony still performed annually in September, and Tanganyikan dancing *(right)* both employ horns to emphasize the fertility aspect of the rite

by five pairs of ibex horns turned with their points down into the earth. One can only speculate as to the significance of this burial, but when we consider the inverted position of the large, recurved horns of this mountain goat, and the youth of the boy, many questions emerge. Was this the son of a great hunter, perhaps the chief of the group? Were the horns symbolic of how he died, did they wish him good hunting in an afterlife, or did they, even at this remote time and place, indicate a phallus-horn equation?

The Horned Sorcerer

Later, in the Magdalenian era (25,000 to 15,000 years ago), our own ancestors also related themselves to horned animals. In the cave of Les Trois Frères in southern France, there is a painting of a 'Horned Sorcerer' – a depiction of a man wearing large stag or reindeer antlers, skins and a tail. It is generally believed that this figure is a representation of a shaman performing sympathetic magical rituals in connection with animals. Other representations of sorcerers have been found in other caves; some are bull-men, some bison-men, while others are bird-men or stag-men. Other aspects of the horn in the Upper Paleolithic are indicated by the so-called 'Venus of Laussel' incised on the walls of a cave in the Dordogne. This figure is that of a nude woman who holds a curved horn in her upraised right hand.

With the coming of the Neolithic Age, and the change in the relationships of man to

Popperfoto

Camera Press London

Right **The horned Christian devil may have been derived from the great bull god of Mithraism, or from the goat, sacred animal of the Teutonic god Thor; as late as the 17th century, British witches admitted that the Devil had appeared to them in the guise of a bull; devil bearing off a young woman, by Signorelli; from Orvieto cathedral** ***Far right*** **A Hindu horned demon, fierce, blood-drinking and man-eating, from** ***A Treatise on Astrology and Divination*** **by Mohammed al-Sudi**

the animals he had hunted for his food, the cattle-raising cultures of the south and east spread across the lands where formerly the great herds of bison, reindeer and wild cattle had roamed. In this new culture bulls, while still symbols of strength and power, came to be valued for their fertility and procreative power as well. In the Late Neolithic Age this concept of fertility was utilized in agriculture itself, in the magical securing of a bountiful crop. For centuries following the invention of the plough man continued to give the credit for better crops to the bull and not to the plough itself, which was regarded as merely serving the function of opening the earth to let in the great fertilizing force of the bull. The earliest method of ploughing seems to have been done by attaching lines to the horns of a bull and leading them directly to a plough. Thus the horns themselves were believed to be charged with great fertilizing power and for centuries after the invention of the yoke, ploughing of a ceremonial nature continued to be done in this manner. Not only were the horns symbols of the power of death and destruction but of the power of life as well.

With the rise of historical civilizations examples of the horn as a symbol of supernatural power abound. Gods of antiquity were frequently depicted with horns, and kings and priests were horned to indicate their special powers. Horns became disassociated from the powerful animals they originally represented and were frequently given to animals with which they are not associated in Nature. This is true of the Thracian horned snake Zagreus and a similar horned snake in American Indian legend. The art of Central and North American Indians shows many examples of horned and plumed serpents, dragons and jaguars, in addition to the buffalo bulls' horns which were attributes of many American Indian gods. Likewise the Chinese Dragon of the Infinite was horned.

Status Symbol

There was a strong tradition of horn symbolism among the Teutonic peoples of Northern Europe. Like that of the Celts, the old Norse religion has to be studied mostly from writings made long after the religion had been abandoned. It is thought, however, that the figure of three interlocked horns found on a rune stone in Snoldelev in Denmark was the sign of the god Odin, and that the goat was one of the oldest attributes of Thor (or Donar). A Scandinavian rock carving of the Bronze Age shows a figure with two hammers and a horned head and these symbols of divinity may be older in fact than the belief in Thor. The ancient Teutonic god Heimdall was associated with a ram and an early myth relates that the sound of his horn could be heard throughout the world. The horned head-dresses characteristic of Scandinavian warriors of 2000 BC were still worn as late as 1000 AD by the Viking raiders who ravaged the coasts of Europe. The wearing of horned helmets was probably derived from an earlier custom of wearing a head-dress of the skin of the animal, with horns attached, as a means of securing the power of the animal. In addition, it appears likely that a widespread belief existed that by wearing horns one received supernatural protection. Not only the Scandinavians but the Sardinians, Etruscans, Romans, Greeks, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Huns and others wore such horned helmets.

In the Indus River civilization of the 3rd millennium BC there is much evidence that the bull was the centre of worship. Many clay seals from this region depict the aurochs (wild ox) or a Brahma bull in what appears to be a ritualistic context. On several seals the god is depicted in a humanized form as bull-horned and three-faced. The origins of the Hindu god Shiva have been traced to this early bull god. The hymns of the later *Rig-Veda* refer to the various Aryan bull gods:

Scala

Bibliothèque Nationale Paris

Indra the bull with a thousand horns, Parjanya the god of thunder and rain, Dyaus the remote overlord, Rudra the god of the lightning flash and lord of the thunderbolt, Agni the horned god of fire.

Nowhere were horned gods more widely and deeply revered than in the ancient lands of the Near East and the Mediterranean world. As early as 3000 BC the supreme god of fertility of the Sumerians was the bull god Enlil. In addition to this high god many of the various city gods of early Sumeria were horned gods, some depicted as bulls, some as men with bull's heads or horns, some as human-headed bulls. Sumerian and Babylonian priests wore horns on their head-dresses and were perhaps themselves manifestations of the gods they served. Kings began to wear bull-horned head-dresses as symbols of their divine appointment and power. There are many seals and stelae (inscribed slabs or pillars) which indicate the relative status of the depicted deities and kings by the number of horns in their mitres. With the rise to eminence of the city of Babylon (c 2000 BC) the sun god of the city, Marduk, became the supreme god of the pantheon. He was also a bull god and virtually fused with Enlil. He is shown on the Stele of the Code of Hammurabi as a man wearing a horned mitre, and on a relief from Nineveh with horns branching from his head. The symbol of the god Anu was a horned cap and these caps, mounted upon shrines, often served as boundary markers in Babylonia. At the ancient cities of Susa and Babylon the chief temple itself was furnished with horns.

The beginning of dynastic Egyptian history is marked by the uniting of the Upper and Lower Kingdoms of the Nile Valley under Narmer-Menes (c 3500 BC). The symbol of this king was a bull and with unification the bull cult of Apis spread throughout Egypt. At a very early date Egyptian bull worship became identical with king worship. The related symbolism of bulls and kings is shown by a tomb of an early king of the 1st Dynasty which is surrounded by a frieze of clay bulls' heads mounted with actual bulls' horns; Egyptian queens were associated with cows. Another cult, that of the bull Mnevis, was instituted during the 2nd Dynasty. Osiris, the god of vegetation and fertility, was fused with the dead Apis to become Serapis and in Graeco-Roman times his cult was spread by the Roman Legions over most of the civilized world. His spouse, Isis, was a horned cow-woman goddess as was Hathor, who was the celestial cow bearing the moon between her horns. The latter sometimes wore ram's horns as the female counterpart of the ram of Mendes. In addition to these major gods there were also the cults of the golden bull of Canopus, the white bull of Min and various other local bulls.

The Bull of Jacob

The gods of the peoples of the ancient Levant reflect the poor soil and unpredictable rainfall of that region. The supreme god was a god who ruled over the rain, lightning and thunderstorm and he was believed to be a wild bull. The bucranium, a bull's head viewed from the front with great, curving horns is a motif commonly occurring on artefacts of the 4th millennium. Later, when the Hittites rose to power, the worship of the bull as weather god was one of the basic features of their religion. It was the only divine animal among the Hittites. The conception in human form of the bull-weather-god is Teshub who wears a horned cap and frequently holds a leashed bull. Closely related to Teshub is a bull god known according to his location as Adad, Hadad, Ramman, Sandas and Baal. The earliest known bull god of the Hebrews was called the 'Bull of Jacob' and the estrangement between Moses and Aaron as described in Exodus was either the result of the clash between two rival bull cults or

The horn was a symbol of fertility and the broken horn with its liberated power was considered to be the horn of plenty, the cornucopia

between two leaders for the control of one cult. Moses himself is described as 'horned' in the Vulgate perhaps having assumed the sign of power of the old horned god. The Hebrew god of the storm, Yahweh, was fused in time with Baal and this Yahweh-Baal fusion continued until the death of Solomon, when Jeroboam urged the northern tribes to return to the worship of their old bull gods. Like the bull, the ram was originally a sacred animal to the Jews so that the ram's horn, the *shofar*, was to represent the voice of the god. The Assyrian horned god Asshur was both a warrior god and god of fertility.

The Minoan civilization of Crete was the location of a great solar bull cult, although to a lesser degree the bull was linked with earthquakes. Minos the king was apparently the incarnation of the island bull god and the focus of cult activities. The stone 'horns of consecration' (formalized horns, indicating sacredness) were used to designate holy places and the horned altar appears in the Theseus legend. These ritual horns probably originated in the shrine of a buried bull which was regarded as a focus of life itself. One important aspect of the bull fertility rites is that of horn grappling. In Crete as in Asia Minor there existed the belief that the great procreative and physical power of the bull was somehow brought to a focus in his horns. The ritual athletes of the Cretan bull cult arena grasped the horns of the sacred animal as it charged them and were somersaulted over its back, thus absorbing the potent strength and fertility of the creature for the benefit of all men (see CRETE). The sacred animal was sacrificed to obtain his blessings for the land and its people.

Bull Cults of Greece

In Greek religion, c 1000 BC, there are two converging strains of bull worship, those of the tribes of Ionians, Achaeans and Dorians from the north and of the Cretan colonizers of the south. One of the oldest and most popular of the Grecian bull cults was devoted to the worship of Dionysus, a god of fertility. Among his many titles are 'Horned Child', 'The Horned Deity', 'Bull-horned' and 'Horn-bearing'. His images were frequently horned. In the Dionysian mysteries there is a fusion of bull-worshipping traditions from all over the ancient world.

Zeus, the father god of Greece, is linked in several rites with bulls. As a bull himself he figures prominently in Greek mythology. Zeus *Olbios*, from northern Greece, was a god of fertility depicted as a bull-horned man. Zeus's wife, Hera, was associated with the cow and at Samos her image was a wooden post with cow horns attached near the top. The satyrs, representatives of the spirits of the woods and mountains, wore goats' horns. And Pan, who was once worshipped as a ram, also was horned.

As in Crete, so in Greece, the horns of the bull were considered to be the seat and focus of his strength. Numerous examples in Greek architecture show where the horned frontal portion of the ox skull was attached to the frieze of a temple. There is some evidence that the volutes or spiral conformations of Ionic architecture are derived from horns. The horn was a symbol of fertility and the broken horn with its liberated power was considered to be the horn of plenty, the cornucopia. A Greek vase painting shows Hercules about to break the horn of the bull-bodied river god Achelous while a nearby horn is shown as the source of a stream of water. In this connection it is interesting to note that the sacred River Ganges is represented in Hindu myth as arising from the head of the bull god Shiva.

Evidence of ancient bull cults, both prehistoric and historic in time, in the form of figures of bulls and bull-horned men has been found throughout Italy and in Sicily and Sardinia as well. These would appear to be gods of strength and fertility. Likewise a river god with the horns of a bull is widely depicted in Etruscan art. The Itali worshipped the bull god Mars, lord of battle, and wore the horns of bulls on their helmets. The Salii, priests of Mars, also wore a horned head-dress. In the middle of the 1st century BC, the Persian cult of Mithras came to Rome and developed into an immensely popular and powerful rival of Christianity. Mithras was early associated with the cult of the bull and as Lord of Fecundity was in part the fertilizing bull he slew in the best known of his myths.

In addition to the horned gods, there are horned demons. For example, in Persian mythology the animal representations of evil powers were often horned. There are horned demons in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. The Devil of the Christians may be the great bull god of Mithraism surviving through the familiar process whereby former gods of eclipsed religions become the demons of the new; a principle known as 'henotheism'. According to the first theological definition of the Devil, reached at the Council of Toledo in 447 AD, he is 'a large black monstrous apparition with horns on his head, cloven hoofs . . . an immense phallus, and a sulphurous smell.' There are other evidences of the survival of this horned figure during the first ten centuries of the Christian era. Indeed, as late as the 16th and 17th centuries in England and Scotland, accused witches admitted that the Devil had appeared to them in the form of a bull. Whether he was derived from the Mithraic bull or, as some folklorists believe, from the goat as the sacred animal of Thor (Donar) the Teutonic god of thunder, one has only to attend the services of certain fundamentalist religious sects in the United States and Europe to realize that the idea of the 'Horned One' as an all powerful and fertile benefactor in Western society has been changed into that of a diabolical and satanic creature.

JACK CONRAD

Celtic Horned Gods and Beasts

The Celts, like many other peoples, venerated horned beasts and used the horns symbolically as insignia of virility and divine power. Many early Celtic helmets were decorated with horns, and a warrior, by wearing such head-gear would not only stress his own martial and male qualities, but ensure for himself the protection of the deity whose particular attribute they were. A god bearing the horns of his cult beast added the strength and powers of the horns to his own magical godhood. The Celts, like their immediate ancestors, the bronze-using people known to archeologists as the Urnfield people, held the symbol of the horn or antler in such superstitious awe that they frequently adorned non-horned beasts and birds with them, or exaggerated those of horned animals by

In early societies the horn was a symbol of supernatural power and protection. The wearing of horned helmets probably stemmed from an earlier custom of wearing a head-dress of the skin of the animal with horns attached as a means of securing the power of the animal: illustration from the *Edda* showing the Norse god Hermod in a horned helmet assailing the gate of the underworld to fetch back the beautiful Balder

Hermöd til Heliar reyd: Kana þan a
Nastrondu, Hvórgi sybur hesti a Sbeyd
hleipti ad Dutz Kiaptinum.
Þo Helia þarfa hefdi þan, hulin svó
tum Daudans Mock, Hermód eyhræda
van, Hálfs blaalita þenan Skrock.
Les XLIII. Eddu, Dæmisögu
Balldur hin Bödi
Hún
gur
dsbr
Sultur
Knýfur

The Miraculous Horn

The unicorn was most renowned for the miraculous power against poison supposedly possessed by its horn. The rich had drinking cups made of unicorn horn, the poor had small pieces with which to test their food and drink, for it was firmly believed that even the tiniest fragment would sweat and change colour in the presence of poison, and two famous horns which are still in St Mark's in Venice are worn thin from innumerable scrapings. Alicorn, a unicorn's horn, was an essential item of the apothecaries' stock until the eighteenth century, and at one time powdered horn was valued at ten times its weight in gold, while whole horns were almost beyond price. There were famous horns: one kept in a dark vault in the French Cathedral of St Denis, so potent that even the water in which it had been steeped would cure the sick.

Peter Lum *Fabulous Beasts*

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Horned male animals will generally fight to the death even when injured and by blowing a horn it was hoped to inspire courage and strength *Above* King Arthur receives requests for help and summons his knights with horn blasts *Right* The ram was a sacred animal worshipped by the early Jews and the ram's horn, the shofar, was thought to represent the voice of the god himself. It is still sounded for devout inspirational purposes on the most solemn religious occasions: blowing the shofar at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

adding knobs to the end of flamboyant bull horns, or giving a horned beast three instead of two horns.

Gods and goddesses alike were given this badge of physical power and sexual force. In some instances the horns or antlers were fashioned from the material used for the whole portrayal, in others, holes were left for the insertion of these – real horn in some cases, and in others no doubt made of some precious metal such as gold or silver. In the case of stone sculptures it was easier to portray horns in vestigial form, on top of the head or flat along the brow, rather than as fully developed and standing free from the crown; and this was frequently done. In the case of the early metalwork they are often used schematically, to blend with the overall pattern, or are grossly exaggerated into great swelling protrusions on either side of the head.

The superstitious veneration which the Celts accorded to horned beasts and to the symbol of the horn, then, was nothing new in Celtic times, and was probably ancient by the time of the Urnfield period, that is between about 1400 and 700 BC. As early as Hallstatt times (c 700 – 650 BC) the composite cult animal so familiar in later Celtic iconography, the ram-horned or ram-headed serpent, has appeared amongst the grave goods of the rich iron-using aristocracy of this early Celtic period. This strange beast was to become the regular companion of the powerful stag god in subsequent Celtic mythology, as well as being a frequent companion of the native war god, whose attributes remained fairly consistent while his name varied from place to place, from tribe to tribe, throughout the Celtic world. The very prominent position occupied by this beast, its large size, and the various ways in which it is depicted suggest that rather than being a mere attribute or cult symbol of these deities, it was divine in itself. However, in the insular literature the sacred beasts are invariably imbued with the powers of human speech and understanding, and there is usually a legend explaining their origin and existence in human shape before they took on animal form, and such may in all probability be the case with the ram-serpent.

The Celts had many basic religious concepts in common with the other barbarian peoples of Europe, but it is what they did with these ideas, and how they developed them and made them distinctively their own, that is so interesting. Just as the Celtic artists borrowed basic designs and motifs from the ancient Northern European world, from the Greeks and Etruscans with whom they had trade contacts, and from the vivid and powerful animal art of the Scythians, and blended the various elements into a whole which is quite unique and original – so they used religious ideas common over a wide geographical area, and wove them into a distinctive mythology.

Many people venerated horns, and used them as some symbol or other in their religious expression, but the Celts not only venerated horns and certain horned animals – they had a complex mythology in which, even in the fragmentary state in which we are now able to view it, horned animals and their relationship with the anthropomorphic deities played a fundamental and systematic role.

Guardian of Peace and War

Two very distinctive, but by no means mutually exclusive, cults of horned deities can be detected throughout the Celtic world. The first cult is that of an antler-bearing god whose appearance in representations is suggestive of a benign deity, concerned with fertility and economic prosperity; but, like all Celtic deities, he was also a god of war and protector of his people. But it is his pacific aspects which predominate in his representational character, and these are reflected in the traces of him which can be detected in the written literatures of the Celtic world. The second cult is that of a ram-horned or bull-horned god, aggressively militant, usually naked – the Celts traditionally went into battle unclad – weapon-bearing, often phallic; he is essentially the god invoked by restless warring tribes, and there is some evidence that he is a god much favoured in pastoralist societies where there was constant internecine strife. But the two cults cannot be completely separated and, like the antlered god, the bull-horned god is often brought into rapport with the Roman Mercury, no doubt in his earlier role of protector of flocks and herds. In the case of the stag god, the Roman deity's concern with economic prosperity would provide a convincing link, while the Celtic god's frequent appearance as 'lord of the animals' would associate him with Mercury in his pastoral role, and also with his cruder counterpart in his milder aspect. As would be expected, in Britain the horned warrior god is found in the restless, pastoralist north, while the stag god is concentrated in the mild, economically prosperous and pacific south-western region.

The stag god seems to be one of the most ancient and widely distributed of the Celtic deities. In one inscription, from Paris, he is called *–ernunnos*; and it has been supposed, very reasonably, that the missing initial letter was C, giving a reading *Cernunnos*, 'the Horned One'. It is convenient to refer to the stag god by this name, but there is no evidence that he was so called throughout the entire Celtic area, although it is possible that this was the case. He appears as early as the 4th century BC on a rock carving in the ancient sanctuary at Val Canonica, in northern Italy, bearing antlers, carrying the sacred torque (neck ornament) that was one of his most regular attributes. There are other early examples of the stag god, but the most impressive dates to the 1st century BC and shows the god in his most typical aspect. He is figured on the famous silver bowl found in a bog at Gundestrup, in Jutland. Exaggerated antlers spring from his head, matched by those of a stag which stands on his right side. A wolf attends him on his left. Other beasts complete the scene, the god sitting in mastery over all.

One of the most impressive verbal accounts of the god – although the deity in question is unspecified – comes from the *Mabinogion* in the story of 'The Lady of the Fountain'. It is prophesied that Cynon, son of Clydno, will encounter a huge black man twice the size of ordinary men, one-footed and with one eye in his forehead, sitting in the middle of a mound in a forest,

Palphot

with wild animals grazing about him. The prophecy is duly fulfilled and Cynon asks the man 'what power he had over the animals'. Grasping his mighty club, the man strikes a stag so that it gives out a great sound, to which wild animals 'as numerous as the stars in the firmament' flock into the clearing, bowing their heads 'even as humble subjects would do to their lord'.

The mention of the single foot and single eye of this character emphasizes his divine nature; the use of one leg, one arm and one eye was a ritual posture among the pagan Celts. He is also described as being dark, and of great size, characteristics of otherworld beings. Although there is no specific reference to horns, it is clear that this figure is a divinity having complete mastery over the animals; and the fact that it is the stag that compels all the other beasts seems to be clear proof that we are in fact concerned here with a deity of the type of the stag god Cernunnos, just as we are on the plate of the Gundestrup cauldron, which portrays such a character surrounded by the beasts of whom he is in complete control. The fact that he figures in medieval manuscripts with his horned serpent attribute in the role of a devil further emphasizes the powerful nature of his cult.

The second type of horned god, the ram-horned or bull-horned deity of a warlike, pastoral people, is also attested by the iconography of Roman Gaul and Britain, and by the early Celtic literatures. A portrayal of this deity from Unterhambach equates the Celtic bull-horned god with Mercury, holding a purse and accompanied by serpents. The other, from Nantes, shows the god with enormous, exaggerated horns. His left hand is raised and his right hand grasps a spherical object in the manner of some of the horned gods of North Britain. Below the god is a ram, and to the left a serpent. In North Britain, the horned god may figure as a war-god, or as a naked, phallic deity with obvious affinities to Silvanus (a Roman god, similar to Pan). Sometimes, in most typically Celtic fashion he appears as a horned head alone.

Warriors and Divine Beings

Over and above these two clearly defined types of horned god there is a selection of horned figures which do not seem to fit closely into either division. For example, an impressive horned bust from Moresby, Lancashire, is clearly of native import, but the pleated garment which covers his shoulders and the general appearance of the work seem to have little connection either with Cernunnos or with the bull-horned god so prevalent in these northern regions. The early literatures contain fascinating references to horn-bearing divine beings and there are allusions to horn-bearing warriors which seem to have puzzled the Christian scribes themselves, and which are sometimes rationalized by them. For example, in one of the early Irish manuscripts, the 'Fitness of Names' *(Coir Anmann)*, a person called Furbaide Ferbend, 'Furbaide the Horned', is mentioned. He is described as having two horns of silver and a horn of gold out of his helmet, but in another version of his story he is said to have been horn-bearing: 'two horns grew on the head of staunch, fair Furbaide.' Another hero, Feradach Fechtnach, 'Feradach the Fortunate', is described as being a magnificent warrior; he is referred to as 'the horned one'.

The early Welsh triads contain references to bull-warriors which seem intended to be understood in two ways: they associate the strength of the hero with the powers of the bull in a purely conventional way while, at the same time, there may well have been an echo from the earlier mythology in the references to 'Three Bull-spectres of the Island of Britain', and 'Three Bull-protectors of the Island of Britain' and 'Three Bull-chieftains of the Island of Britain'.

Horns were venerated amongst the Celts, and horned beasts were hunted and adored as deities and symbols of godhood and martial powers. Perhaps one of the most impressive divinities of the pagan Celtic world was the great brown bull of early Irish mythology, the Donn of Cualnge, round whose deeds a whole epic was centred. Like his rival, the Findbennach, 'White-Horned,' he originally had a human form, taking on bull form after a series of metamorphoses but retaining his human reason and understanding. He is clearly the god of a pastoral, warlike society, having the mighty bull as his tangible form. This great bull god, protector of warriors, averter of evil, conveyor of fertility and maker of

magical music, who is so important in Celtic tradition, seems to epitomize the horned warrior-god we have seen from the early iconography. The cult of horns and horn-bearing and antler-bearing deities may be said to constitute one of the most ancient and deeply rooted of all Celtic cult concepts, to such an extent that the horned god was one of the most repugnant and hostile of pagan divinities in the eyes of early Christianity, and one which strong measures were taken to exorcize.

ANNE ROSS

Fertility Dance of the Horns

EACH YEAR on the Monday after the first Sunday after 4 September, a group of men gather at the door of the church of St Nicholas in Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire. They receive from the vicar the six sets of reindeer horns, the hobby horse, the crossbow and other properties and costumes required for the Horn Dance, which is unique in Great Britain.

The small company of about a dozen men lines up for its first 'run' on the vicarage lawn. This is the start of a 'progress' out of the town and across country. On reaching a farm they form a line, the music strikes up and they begin to run.

Each run follows a regular sequence. There are six deer-men, each carrying on his shoulders a set of reindeer antlers. These six lead a dance in single file. They are followed by four other characters – a hobby horse, a man-woman (called Maid Marian), a fool and a small boy with crossbow and arrow. Two musicians play.

Three of the deer-men have blue antlers, three have white. At first the Blue and the White keep apart, both small columns coiling and twisting in serpentine patterns. When Blue leader meets White, they bend and curtsy with their antlers in greeting. The four extra characters tail along behind impassively except for an occasional clack from the Crossbow, as he takes a shot at the Blue leader.

After a while, the Blue leader gives a signal and the coil opens out into a circle, flattening to a longways set with all ten dancers facing inwards. Three Blue antlers then face three White antlers, while Horse and Maid Marian face Crossbow and Fool.

Meeting and crossing follows in country dance style while antler meets antler in momentary battle. After meeting and crossing, Blue leader swings away from the set into the follow-my-leader single file and serpentine running is resumed.

The Dance that Creates Life

The Horn Dance seems to be a relic of pagan worship which has been, paradoxically, preserved from ancient times by the Church – possibly as the most practical way of controlling the ceremony.

Dancing and fertility magic are closely connected in primitive societies. The rhythm of the dance creates in the dancers, a feeling of increased liveliness and animation. And so the act of dancing is thought to create life in the broader sense of promoting the fertility of men, herds and crops. The interweaving meet-and-cross figures are as symbolic of fertility and the generation of life as the more obvious symbols of phallus and ladle, carried by two of the characters.

In the early accounts of this dance, the Hobby Horse was the chief actor, and it was known as the Hobby Horse Dance. The Horse has a small carved head, with a hinged lower jaw which can be made to snap at a pull of the rein and a wispy tuft of horsehair. The head and hair are fixed at opposite points of a metal hoop, slung from the dancer's shoulders and concealed by his cloak.

Besides the Horse, there is the Maid Marian, a man dressed as a woman, who used to carry the ladle as an emblem of femininity. Her origin is obscure but she may be a faint surviving echo of the great mother goddess of old. The Fool wears the costume of a court jester and carries a phallus, but he represents a much older stock character of mythology, legend and folklore. Crossbow is perhaps the youthful god, the son of the mother goddess, who stands for the rebirth of the crops in spring.

(See also BULL; COW; STAG.)

DOUGLAS KENNEDY

FURTHER READING: For horns and horned gods in general: Jack Conrad, *The Horn and the Sword* (MacGibbon and Kee, 1959); H. R. Hays, *In the Beginning: Early Man and His Gods* (Putnam, New York, 1963). For the horn in Celtic mythology see Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967).

Horoscope

In astrology, a chart or diagram of the heavenly bodies showing the relative positions of the planets at a certain moment in time: given an exact time and place of birth, an astrologer casts an individual's horoscope from which he makes deductions about the person's character and fortunes, and advises on future courses of action.

See ASTROLOGY.

British Museum

To change a horse's name is to alter its luck; a horse hair will turn into an eel if left in water; these and many other beliefs surround an animal which was once considered divine

HORSE

THE MODERN domesticated horse is of Indo-European origin, arriving in Europe and the Near East as part of the vast migration westward of entire peoples. It has been truly said that in the Old World, civilization marched at the pace of the horse for the social development of primitive societies proceeded in direct ratio to the utilization of 'horse power' in its literal sense. South American civilization, in the absence of the horse, relied instead upon the ox and llama as beasts of burden. The triumphant progress of Cortez in Mexico was due as much to the alarm created among the Indians at the sight of the war horses as to the fighting capacity of the invaders.

As a symbol of terrestrial power, the horse was projected into the heavens in the form of the divine horses of the ancient religions, and in this manner became integrated with sky gods. In classical mythology, Poseidon or Neptune is said to have created the horse which became sacred to him, and to have invented horse racing. Among other myths concerning the origins of the horse is that which declared the horse to have been created out of an egg, the symbol of creation.

In Christian art the horse is represented as the symbol of the three saints Anastasius, Hippolytus and Quirinus, who are shown being torn asunder by wild horses. However, to horse-users everywhere, the horse has always symbolized power, speed and pride.

In its role as a divinity the horse has played many parts, of which the divine horses of King Diomedes and the Celtic goddess Epona are prominent examples. Epona, a divinity of the Gauls, was both a goddess and protectress of horses, a tribute to the valour of the Celtic warriors.

Many gods, goddesses and demi-gods

Tate Gallery

The four horsemen of the Apocalypse brought destruction and ruin. The rider of the white horse was armed with a bow, the red with a sword, the black with a balance, and on the pale one rode Death himself: *Death on a Pale Horse* by J. M. W. Turner

were closely associated with the horse in antiquity and Demeter, the Greek fertility goddess, was sometimes represented with the head of a horse. In almost all of the ancient civilizations the sun was believed to have been drawn across the sky in his chariot by celestial horses. It was in this august fashion that Dag, the Norse god of day, was conveyed through the heavens by the white steed 'Shining Mane' which spread its light across the whole living world. According to Norse mythology Mani, the moon goddess, travelled across the sky in a car drawn by Alsvidur, 'the All Swift'. Diana, goddess of the moon, travelled likewise in a horse-drawn chariot. The gods Thor and Helios drove their cosmic chariots through the heavens, while the mighty Odin was borne through the clouds on the back of his eight-footed steed.

Driven Over Precipices

In sacrifice we submit our most precious possessions to the gods, and the horse, the symbol of social power in ancient societies, was accorded this dreadful honour. In Imperial Rome, the October Horse was sacrificed as an offering to Mars. In some of these barbaric rites, horses were driven over precipices as offerings to the sea deities.

Part of the funeral rites of the warlord of old was the obligatory killing of the war horse in order that it might continue to serve its dead master in the afterlife, a custom which continued until as late as the 14th century. The traditional military funeral with its riderless horse, carrying its dead master's boots reversed on either side, is a last surviving relic of this form of sacrifice. The nomadic tribes of the Altai Mountains of Central Asia continued the sacrifice of horses until well into the 20th century, despite attempts to suppress the custom by the Soviet government. In a government poster of the 1920s the skins of flayed horses are displayed on poles above the legend: 'There are no gods. No sacrifices of horses will deliver you from your need.'

In Western Europe horses were burned alive in rural districts as late as the 18th century as a magical device, intended to remove disease from the remainder of the herd, or were burned alive in order to prevent the death or theft of the other animals.

To ancient man the drama of the heavens was performed by demi-gods, animals and men, the gigantic reflections of their pale selves on earth. The hooves of the divine horses pulling the celestial chariots accounted for the thunder; the whip-lash was the lightning that flashed terrifyingly across the sky; and there were the famous Wind Horses among whom were Pegasus and Hofvarpnir, steed of Gna, messenger of the divine Frigg. Sometimes the heavens would be agitated into a fury of terrifying commotion, as if an army was marching through the clouds. Out of this was born the legend of the Wild Huntsman with his diabolical horse and baying hounds, searching for human souls (see WILD HUNT).

Satanic Steed

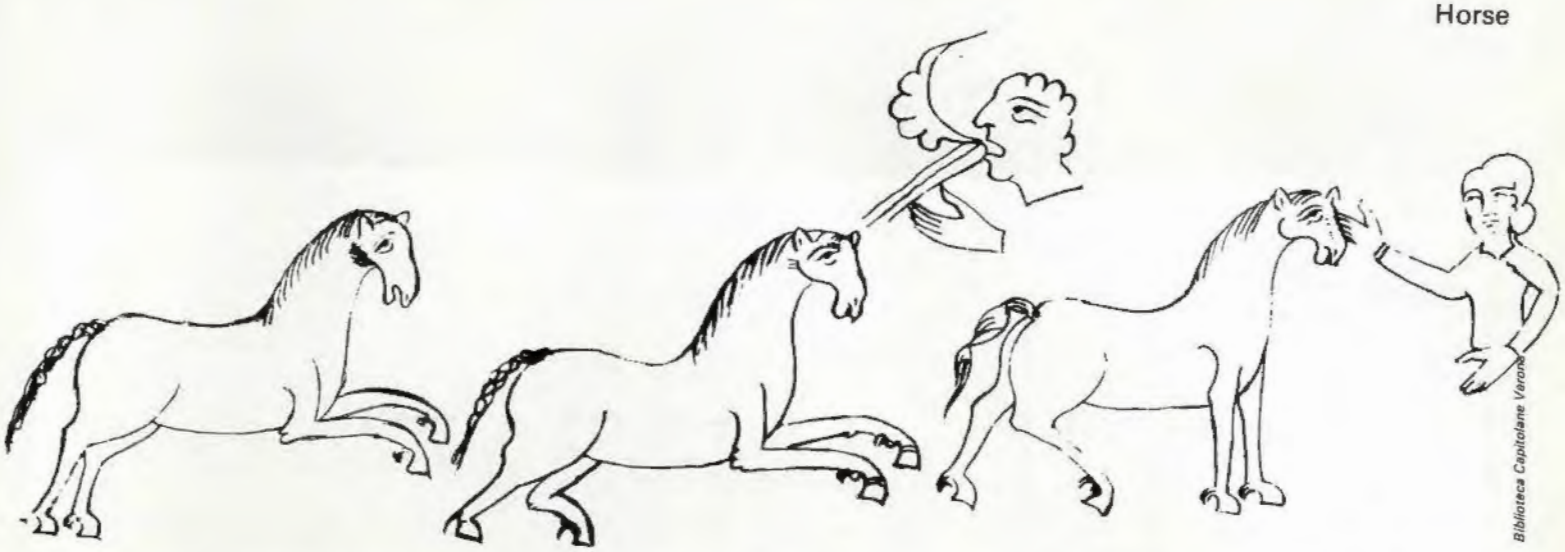
Allusions to mystical, allegorical and cosmic horses find a place in many religions including Christianity. In both the Old and New Testaments occur supernatural horses. Elijah and Elisha saw visions of fiery horses and in Revelation, St John describes the terrible horses that harry mankind, having 'tails like serpents'.

Fairy horses and horsemen were an integral part of the mystical lore of the past, whether

it was the enchanted horse of the Arabian Nights or the minute mounts of the elves and leprechauns of the West. Fairies were supposed to travel from place to place at fantastic speeds once they had uttered the magical cry, 'Horse and Hattock'. In the demonic beliefs of the past the horse played a central role. There was the colt-pixie, an evil spirit in the guise of a human being which lured horses to their doom. In the annals of witchcraft diabolic colts sometimes become the familiars of witches. Satan himself had been known to manifest himself in the guise of a horse and it was perhaps for this reason that a famous performing horse of the 16th century was burned as a witch in Rouen when taken abroad by its English master.

It was believed that a human being could be transformed by witchcraft into a horse. If the witch approached a sleeping victim and threw a magic halter over his head, he would be immediately transformed into a mount and could be ridden to the witches' sabbath. However, the bewitched human could turn the tables on the hag if he could slip off the bridle and throw it over her head, for she would be transformed into a mare and could be ridden over the countryside until she sank to the ground with exhaustion. Devils and witches were thought to delight in tangling the manes of horses and stealing into the stables and riding them undetected into the night. As a magical defence against such intrusion an amulet in the form of a stone with a hole in it was hung inside the stable door. An example of one of these, recently discovered in Epping Forest, near London, is in the shape of a crudely formed pentacle. Verbal charms both sacred and profane were commonplace in magically-minded Europe. In the

Above **The five senses depicted as the horses which draw the chariot to heaven: sight, the swiftest of the senses is shown winged; touch, the horse rears up to press against the earth; hearing is shown as the response to the sound of speech; smell and taste: illustrations from a late 13th century manuscript** ***Below*** **Centaurs, part human, part horse, were Greek mythological creatures who often behaved in a savage way: Piero di Cosimo's** ***Fight between the Lapiths and Centaurs***



Biblioteca Capitolare Verona

Durham Ritual the aid of Abraham is sought to protect the horse from the powers of darkness, a significant example of the manner in which Christian ideology became permeated by pagan concepts. The ever-popular horse brasses in the shapes of suns, crescent moons, hearts and swastikas, among other symbols, were originally worn as a form of defence against the Evil Eye, to which the horse was thought to be peculiarly susceptible.

The horse played a part in European fertility rites. The character of the Hodening Horse, a man disguised in a white sheet and horse's head who trots around Kent villages at Christmas and All Souls' Day, and the Welsh custom of the Mari Lwyd involving a horse skull (possibly a relic of Roman horse sacrifice), probably survive from fertility rituals. In many May Day festivals the hobby-horse plays a prominent role, the best known of which is the Padstow Horse which dominates the local Spring rites (see HOBBY-HORSE). In primitive communities such as those of the North American Indians, the horse dance was sometimes performed as a rite to emphasize the importance of the horse to the tribe.

Phantom Horses

Over the centuries the sharper outlines of the old divine myths have sometimes become blurred, overlapping into traditional ghost lore. There are innumerable tales of phantom horses which often pull ghostly coaches along lonely country roads. In Devon the ghost of Sir Francis Drake still drives his horrific black hearse pulled by headless horses. At Wyecollar Hall near Colne and at Loughton, Essex, the phantom horsemen gallop down their respective beats; the last being Dick Turpin, the infamous highwayman with the ghost of the woman he murdered clinging to his back. There are also many fascinating legends of phantom horses and riders who sleep through the centuries within caverns buried deep in the hillsides, ready to gallop forth at the clarion call of invasion in defence of their native lands. An interesting example of the fusion of ghost and elemental was the phantom white horse which was once observed at Oxwich, Glamorgan, walking upon its hind legs and then disappearing into the churchyard well. Until about 50

National Gallery London

Bodleian Library Colour Facsimile

Hartnoll & Eyre/Michael Holford

The horse of King Dundhi *(left)*, a fabulous creature of Indian mythology, like the zodiac sign Sagittarius *(above)*, is depicted as a horse with a human head. The mounted archer also appears in Greek mythology as the centaur

years ago a phantom woman riding through the skies on a white horse could be seen at Mayland in Essex, if one looked through the branches of a certain oak tree.

Horses reputedly possess certain clairvoyant powers of their own which enable them to perceive otherwise invisible intruders from the spirit world. They are notorious for obstinately halting at haunted crossroads, quite unresponsive to the proddings of spur or whip, and there are cases where horses have refused to pass a spot where it afterwards transpired that a funeral was to pass that day. According to the ancient system of divination from horses known as hippomancy, the Celts made their sacred horses walk in procession behind a chariot and ascertained the future from its movements. Germanic priests drew inferences from the carefully observed manner in which their divine horses emerged from the temples; if they advanced right foot first the omen was favourable, while the left was unfavourable. Well into modern times the horse continued to play a modified role in rustic divination. In some places it is still considered lucky to meet a white horse, while in others it is unlucky. A once common ritual was the custom of spitting and making a wish on seeing a white horse and crossing the fingers until a dog was seen. A similar superstition was applied to piebald horses.

Until the early years of the present century, and still surviving in some country places, there was an elite class of horse-handlers known as 'Whisperers', whose members were supposed to exercise an uncanny power over horses. This mysterious art, which was known also in America, enabled the handler not only to tame the most intractable of animals but to paralyse its movements if he so desired – in other words, apparently to bewitch it. According to a recent investigation of this practice by George Ewart Evans, the Whisperers' power was due not to witchcraft, to which it was commonly imputed, but to a shrewd understanding of horse psychology and physiology, certain secret aromatic oils being used to halt or attract the animals.

The magic of the horse has had its influence upon both interior and exterior domestic architecture. Attached to the gable ends of German houses the horse's head served as a defensive charm against evil spirits, while horse skulls were often employed as household amulets.

Many eccentric theories in folklore survive in either direct or indirect examples of the supposed magical power of the horse, such as the belief that horse hairs placed round the neck cure goitre, or inserted in a sandwich will banish worms in children, or again, if left in water the hairs will become transformed into eels. John Wesley, who was interested in folk remedies, recommended as a cure for cancer an infusion of dried and powdered horse spurs (the callosities on the inside of the horse's leg) in warm milk and ale. Pennsylvania Germans attempted to free their children from witchcraft by passing them through a horse-collar.

Many horse superstitions are still religiously observed by horsemen. To change the name of a horse, it is thought, changes its luck. It is still a common practice when entering a horse for a show to mutter 'break a leg' as a prophylactic charm against the hostile intervention of the jealous gods. To dream of a white horse is an omen of death in some places in Britain, but generally the horse that appears in a dream is a good sign and understandably so, since it is the traditional friend and servant of mankind.

(See also CENTAUR; HORSESHOE.)

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Arthur Vernon, *History and Romance of the Horse* (Gale, 1975); M. Oldfield Howey, *The Horse in Magic and Myth* (Folcroft, 1979).

HORSESHOE

THE IRON HORSESHOE has a long history as a lucky charm in most countries where horses are used. Various suggestions have been made as to why this should be so. Blacksmiths working with iron, the magic metal, and employing that mysterious substance fire, were traditionally thought to possess supernatural powers (see SMITH). Then again, the iron shoe was enhanced by its close association with the horse, worshipped in early times as a sacred animal (see HORSE). Other authorities have found a relationship between the horseshoe and the crescent moon, which it resembles in shape.

Today, as one of the most popular modern emblems of good luck, it is a familiar sight on greeting cards and wedding-cakes. But to our ancestors it was a powerful protection against the malice of witches and evil spirits: 'Your wife's a witch, man; you should nail a horseshoe on your chamber door,' remarks one of the characters in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Redgauntlet*, and the antiquary John Aubrey, describing contemporary habits of the 17th century, was able to say: 'A Horseshoe nailed on the threshold of the door is yet in fashion: and no where more than in London: it ought to be a Horseshoe that one finds by chance on the Road. The end of it is to prevent the power of Witches, that come into your house.'

A popular greeting of the same period expressed the wish 'That the Horseshoe may never be pul'd from your Threshold.' In 1813, 17 horseshoes were counted outside houses in Monmouth Street, in London's Soho, and there were as many as seven left in 1855. Farmers suspended them above their horses or nailed them to the stable door, to prevent evil spirits from riding the animals at night and tiring them out; this was known as 'hag-riding'. In Silesia three were nailed over the door of the byre before Walpurgis Night, the eve of May Day, when witches traditionally ride to hold their Sahbath. Sailors also nailed them to the masts of ships to avert storms and shipwrecks, and Nelson, who was superstitious, had a horseshoe fastened to the mast of the *Victory*. A correspondent of *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1822) wrote in to say that: 'It (the horseshoe) has been often seen in the ships of war in the royal dockyards.' They were even placed on churches. Aubrey saw a tile with a horseshoe on it under the porch of Stanningfield church in Suffolk.

An 18th century cynic, protesting against the repeal of the Witchcraft Act, observed: 'To secure yourself within doors against the enchantment of witches, especially if you are a person of fashion, and have never been taught the Lord's prayer, the only method I know of is to nail a horseshoe upon the threshold. This I can affirm to be of the greatest efficacy; insomuch that I have taken notice of many a little cottage in the country with a horseshoe at its door, where gaming, extravagance, routs, adultery, Jacobitism, and all the catalogue of witchcrafts have been totally unknown.'

During the last century, a carpenter at Ely, who had fallen ill, became convinced that he had been bewitched. The blacksmith was summoned and told to nail three horseshoes on his bedroom door as a protective measure. The woman supposedly responsible for the carpenter's illness, whose name was Gotobed, was so annoyed that she soon afterwards walked into his bedroom unannounced. Everyone was amazed that the charms had not prevented her from doing this, until it was discovered that the shoes belonged to the wrong animal – a donkey.

Bewitched Churns

In folk tradition, witches were supposed to cast their spells over food in the dairy. If the butter refused to come, it was assumed that the churn was bewitched and the dairymaid would drop in a heated horseshoe to break the spell; in Ireland a horseshoe was actually nailed to the bottom of the churn. In Dunboe, in Londonderry, a woman whose churn had been bewitched called in the local wise man, who shut all the doors and windows and boiled the right fore shoe of an ungelded horse in a new iron pot with other objects made of iron. Soon a man approached the house and asked to be let in. He was refused and, when the pot eventually boiled over, he screamed in agony. The pot was only removed from the fire when he had promised never to interfere with another churn. Not long after, so the story goes, the male witch emigrated to America and was never heard of again.

Such charms were not always so successful. In 1903 the *St James's Gazette* reported the case of a man who, thinking his horses had been bewitched, fed them soup containing horseshoes, nails and iron filings. Shortly afterwards one of the animals died. A similar type of recipe, used for curing impotence in Morocco, involves less personal risk. If a man finds himself impotent, a charm is written on a horseshoe, preferably an old one, which is heated by a blacksmith and dipped in water. If the patient then drinks this every morning for a week on an empty stomach, his virility will return. In Ireland if a child pines for no apparent reason, a charm is prepared from old horseshoe nails, hen manure and salt, but it is hung up and not consumed. Germans used to cure whooping cough by feeding the child from a plate which had been branded with a horseshoe.

Occasionally witches were accused of using horseshoes, traditionally a protection against their activities, to further their own ends. At the time of the witchcraft trials in Scotland, a certain Elizabeth Bathcat was indicted because a horseshoe was nailed to the door of her house and this was 'A devilish means of instruction from the Devil to make her goods and all her other affairs to prosper and succeed.'

Horseshoes were sometimes used in marriage divination. Perhaps this is why, if a girl loses her virginity, the Germans say: 'She has lost a horseshoe.'

Chris Barker

The guardian horseshoe, made of iron and shaped like the new moon, has hung on stable doors for centuries to bring good luck and general prosperity

Awarded the sovereignty of Egypt over his rival Seth by a divine tribunal, Horus became the pre-eminent Egyptian god; he is represented in mythology in many different guises and roles

HORUS

Michael Holford/Abbey Museum

The falcon god Horus was identified with the living Pharaoh. Horus the child on the lap of his mother Isis is a common motif in Egyptian art and the early iconography of the Madonna and Child owes something to this pagan tradition: bronze statuette c 600 BC

AS THE ROYAL and national god of ancient Egypt, Horus enjoyed a position of such importance that no rite or festival involving the nation or its king could be celebrated without giving him a prominent place. One of the largest of Egyptian temples, that at Edfu, belonged to him. In form he was a falcon – the peregrine falcon, the most fierce and terrifying of all the birds of prey which scoured the Egyptian sky. His name means 'he who is on high' or 'the distant one' and refers to his domain as a sky god.

Horus was identified with the living Pharaoh, just as Osiris was identified with the Pharaoh in death, and from the 1st Dynasty onwards the Pharaoh called himself Horus (with other names). In the Cairo Museum there is a beautifully impressive seated statue of King Chephren of the 5th Dynasty which shows the Horus-falcon stretching out his wings protectively behind the king's head, recalling somewhat the Old Testament phrase 'in the shadow of Thy wings'.

Horus was the leading god of the confederation of clans or tribes which secured sovereignty over the whole of Egypt when the kingdom of Menes was established. The evidence of totemistic systems reveals the striking fact that the totem is identified with the human leader of the clan. Although totemism is not attested in all its features in early Egypt, this particular religious phenomenon can be recognized in the royal status of Horus.

The Horus-confederation was apparently opposed, in the final predynastic struggle for Egypt, by a league under the aegis of the god Seth (see SETH), a deity of canine aspect whose home was in Upper Egypt. It is tempting to connect the political strife which resulted in the enduring unity of Egypt with the early myth concerning the conflict of Horus and Seth, although other explanations have also been offered. According to the myth, Horus and Seth were two feuding brothers, who inflicted frightful wounds on each other. Seth tore out an eye of Horus and devoured it, while Horus deprived Seth of his testicles. A trial ensued before a divine tribunal, in which Horus was vindicated and awarded the legitimate sovereignty of Egypt.

Horus and Seth Reconciled

There are suggestions that the god Thoth had tried to intervene in the quarrel in a reconciling role, although he sometimes appears as a helper of Horus, especially as the god who restored to him his lost eye, and more rarely as one who sympathized with Seth. An ambivalence, then, is apparent in the position of Thoth; perhaps it is a two-facedness to which mediators inevitably expose themselves. A tradition of reconciliation is certainly reflected in the symbolism of Egypt's dynastic unity, for whereas Horus is the victorious deity who is permanently incorporated in the personality of the Pharaoh, yet the two gods are shown co-operating for the king's benefit in the ceremony of the 'Baptism of Pharaoh'. The king's jubilee festival (called the *Sed*) used to conclude with a processional visit to the chapels of Horus and Seth, and in the purification of 'baptism' of the king the two gods are shown pouring water over the Pharaoh's head.

Similarly, in the ceremony of 'Uniting the Two Lands', the symbolic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt, the reed and the papyrus, were joined by the two deities; Horus being usually associated here with Lower Egypt. Again, the stolen eye of Horus which was healed and restored was symbolic of the crown. In a royal context, therefore, the ceremony of presenting the eye suggested that the sovereign power of the king had been confirmed.

At a quite early stage the myth of Horus was merged with that of Osiris (see OSIRIS), and the main reason for the merger was the double identification of the king. When he died he became Osiris, but as a living Pharaoh he had been Horus. From this divine doubling followed a transfer of the story of the conflict to Osiris. If Seth had been the enemy of Horus, he was now the enemy of Osiris, and the myth maintained that Seth had murdered Osiris. In the early Horus myth the mother of Horus was Hathor, and his father was Geb. Now, in the new Osirian framework, Isis becomes his mother, Osiris his father, and Seth his nephew. In the new framework, similarly, a new Horus is evolved – Horus the child – and the impact of the kingship on this mythic situation is clear: if Horus the king has died and become Osiris, yet the succession in the male line finds a legitimate heir in a young Horus. A further effect of the fusion is that the vendetta against Seth is carried on by the young Horus, who eventually overthrows his father's slayer.

Horus the Child

Horus the child (called Harpocrates by the Greeks) gradually assumed an important place in mythology. Many stories were told about his childhood, when he was nursed by Isis or by a foster-mother in the papyrus swamps of the Delta and defended by his mother's magic against the wicked onslaughts of Seth. It will be recalled that Moses too was a babe hidden in the bulrushes, and the legend of Horus may well have influenced the Biblical episode. Among the misfortunes inflicted on Horus the child was the homosexual attack made on him by Seth; the first version of this appears in a Middle Kingdom papyrus, and it tells of the unavailing efforts of Isis to prevent the assault. Seth also attacks Horus in various unpleasant insect and animal forms; Horus may be bitten and injured, but he is healed by the magic of Isis his mother. A curious feature of the childhood legends is that they also tell of a disagreement between Horus and Isis. One version described Horus and Seth fighting in the form of hippopotami in a river. Isis expresses feelings in favour of Seth, whereupon Horus cuts off his mother's head; one source adds that Thoth restored it as a cow-head. According to Spell 113 of the Book of the Dead the hands of Horus were cut off and thrown into the water through a magical curse uttered by his mother. In a few sources the episode takes a sexual form and Horus violates his mother. Mother-incest has indeed been attributed by some to the Egyptian interpretation of kingship, with the suggestion that Isis is regarded as both the mother and the wife of the Horus-Pharaoh.

Horus the child on the lap of his mother Isis forms a well-known group in Egyptian art, and the early iconography of the Madonna and Child owes something to the pagan tradition. Christian art was also influenced by representations of Horus the fighter on horseback, although this does not occur till Roman times. Certainly the evolution of St George and the Dragon owes something to the way in which Horus was shown attacking the Sethian crocodile. A series of small stelae (tablets) depicted the young Horus dealing triumphantly

Sue Gooders

A sacred bird to the ancient Egyptians, the falcon was particularly associated with Horus, the sky god; as a terrifying bird of prey that dominated the Egyptian skies, it was an apt living form for Horus, also the royal god: Horus on a plinth from the Tomb of the Nobles, at the ancient city of Thebes

with snakes, scorpions and crocodiles. These stelae functioned as magical aids against such threatening creatures, the underlying principle, as so often in magic, being that of analogy. Just as Horus triumphed, so will the possessor of the stele. The principle of analogy extended also, of course, to mythical events described in texts. Many medical texts which rely partly on magic use this technique. A spell in the Papyrus Ebers addresses Isis explicitly as the one who healed Horus and pleads for the same treatment in the case of the patient: 'O Isis, great in magic, release me! Free me from every bad, evil and bloody thing . . . as you released and freed from (every evil) your son Horus.'

Horus as the ancient god of the sky maintained his status only by a process of assimilation to the cult of another god of heaven, the sun god Re. Egyptian religion teems with theological 'take-over-bids' of this kind. The composite name thus evolved was Re-Horakhty (Re-Horus-of-the-horizon), and the amalgam was expressed in art by means of a falcon with a sun-disc on his head.

(See also EGYPT; EYE.)

J. GWYN GRIFFITHS

Hospitallers

Or Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, originally a religious military order, founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century, for the welfare of pilgrims: later known as the Knights of Rhodes and later still as the Knights of Malta, after they were forced to move to those islands: the order spread to Europe, and besides their nursing activities, the knights also engaged in warfare against the infidel: the St John Ambulance Brigade grew from an independent branch of the order in England.

British Museum

Host

The consecrated bread of the Eucharist or Communion service; from the Latin *hostia* meaning a sacrificial victim, it is generally in the shape of small wafers or discs of unleavened bread: regarded after consecration as the body of Christ offered up as the victim of sacrifice: whether it is Christ's body really or symbolically has been much disputed.

See MASS.

Michael Holford

Houri

The name of the beautiful black-eyed virgins who inhabit the Mohammedan paradise: according to the Koran, each believer who is admitted to heaven after death is allotted 72 houris who minister to his needs.

See PARADISE.

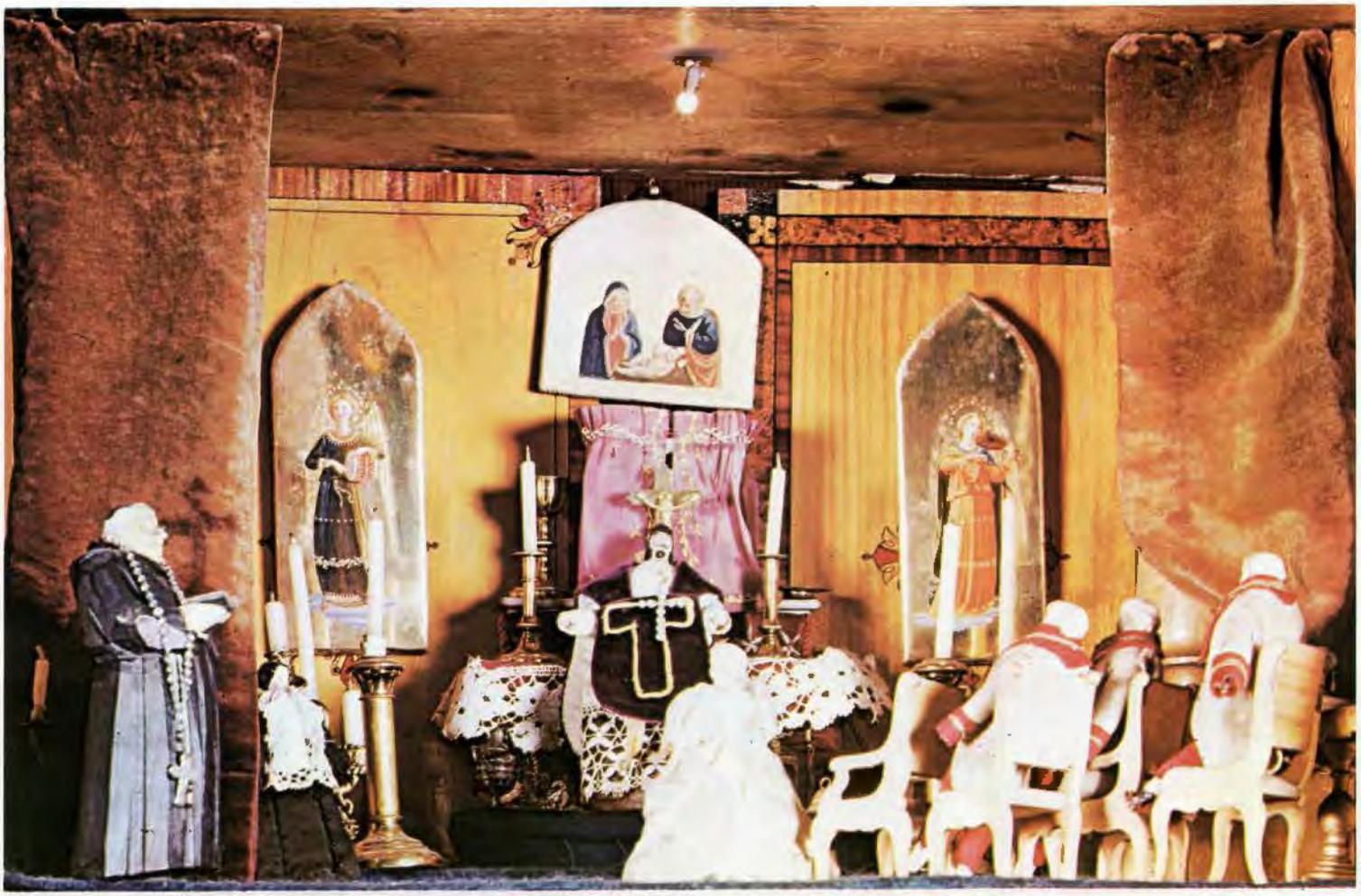
British Museum

Hours

Important in astrology and magic, because each hour, as well as each day, is thought to be controlled by a certain planet: by performing an operation in the appropriate planet's day and hour a magician would hope to bring that planet's influences to bear on the success of the operation.

See DAYS AND HOURS.

Ministry of Public Building & Works



C. Barker

HOUSE

In symbolism the house has a female character and, because it is a secret enclosure, it is said to be the repository of all wisdom; in the interpretation of dreams it represents security. In fact, the house has been a symbol of safety and comfort ever since prehistoric times when man sheltered in his cave from the dangers of untamed Nature, and as with other children's games, playing with dolls' houses is partly a magical imitation of grown-up life

Previous page **Part of the Currie doll's house, built in 1874, and (*above*) the private chapel on the second floor of this miniature house: in Bethnal Green Museum**

Facing page **The song 'Home, Sweet Home' sums up man's attitude to the place in which he lives: Victorian bookmark in the Victoria & Albert Museum**

Many of the magical practices surrounding the house were aimed at keeping evil spirits, or the elements, at bay; window blind bobbins shaped like acorns are a relic of the belief that the oak, sacred tree of the thunder god, could protect a house from lightning

THE EARLIEST HOUSE was probably erected to shelter the helpless infant from the cold and was designed as an imitation of the lairs and burrows of wild animals. Almost certainly the most primitive forms of architecture were based on Nature, whether in the form of tree branches thatched to provide protection against rain and sun or the chieftain's grave, which was so often a mound that was the replica of the green hills of the countryside.

In the cold North the prehistoric cave was man's first home, usually selected because it faced in a westerly direction to avoid the biting east wind of winter. The cave entrance must have been of immense physical and psychological import from the beginning for it provided not only the means of egress and ingress but was the way of entry for the elemental powers of Nature – light, wind, rain and sun. Within the cave there could he security, warmth and relaxation while outside lurked the dangers of untamed Nature, often in the demonic shapes with which mankind peopled the realms of darkness. It is perhaps understandable that the recesses of the cave should have been dedicated to religious rites and that cave art provided perhaps our earliest experience of abstract form (see CAVE ART; CAVES).

With the development of more sophisticated types of habitation – firstly the stone house on the hillside and later the log hut in the valley – the house must have become ever more important socially, for the more widely one's awareness of the world develops, the more intense are the terrors it excites, and it is only within four walls that man can be completely insulated emotionally against the enervating and destructive power of fear. At a later stage still came the hall, a single-storied, unpartitioned room with the hearth at its centre, the entrance or threshold of which provided a barrier separating the known from the unknown.

In symbolism a house is expressed as an

The house with its storeys doors and windows has been seen as a psychic projection of the human body with its various layers and apertures

enclosed space and also as a receptacle which, like the chest and the womb, is female in character. As a secret enclosure it also symbolizes the repository of all wisdom. There are mystics who have seen in a house, with its storeys, doors and windows, a psychic projection of the human body with its various layers and apertures. It is certain that the sophisticated symbolists of our present age have endowed the house with qualities that would have been inconceivable before the development of psychoanalysis, as for example in the interpretation of dreams in which it is said to represent the different layers of the psyche.

As a further extension of the same theme, the exterior of the house is said to symbolize the human personality, the roof representing the mind and the subconscious being relegated to the basement. The kitchen becomes 'the laboratory of psychic transmutation', echoing Paracelsus's definition of the belly as 'the grand laboratory'.

While such philosophical speculations would have been beyond the comprehension of the ancestral house-owner, it is evident that certain abstract qualities were never far from his mind when he erected his home, since the whole process of building continued to be associated with elaborate magico-religious rites until comparatively modern times. The selection, orientation and layout of the site was determined by augury, for any false alignment in relation to the sun could cast a blight upon the future.

Psychic Household Insurance

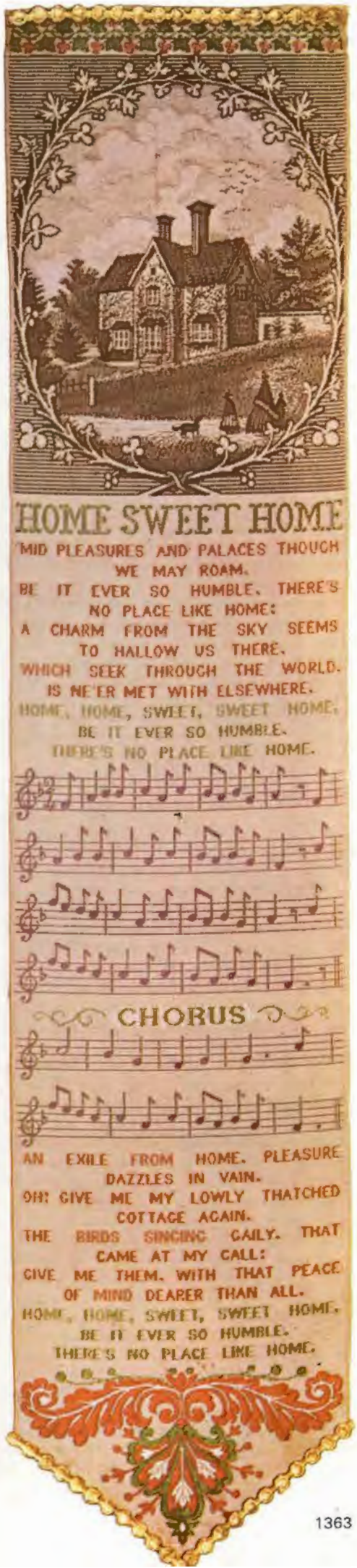
The foundations of households in old-world Europe were customarily 'laid in blood', the sacrificial rite devised to neutralize the enmity of the earth deity and to ensure the stability of the structure in accordance with primitive architectural theory (see BUILDERS' RITES). As a relic of this old practice, the superstition is still common in the North of England that the building or rebuilding of a house or the cutting of a new doorway results in the death of one member of the family. A further reminder of the custom of burying human victims alive beneath a cornerstone is provided by the superstition that corner houses are unlucky places in which to live.

Originally it would have been necessary for any new building to be consecrated by a priest before it could be occupied, to provide ritual protection against demons and ghosts. In the Celebes, in Indonesia, the most elaborate ceremonies were carried out even in modern times to protect those who entered their new homes from the psychic dangers within, and in many lands including Persia and China offerings were always made to the protective spirits before entering a house. A comparable superstitious practice is still observed by those of Anglo-Saxon stock in northern Europe and America who carry bread and salt into a new house to ensure the prosperity of the occupants.

The belief still prevails in many parts of Europe that a newly completed house should be placed under the protection of a lucky tree or bush, and as a further insurance against the attacks of hostile spirits the houseleek, a plant dedicated to Thor, is sometimes grown upon roofs (see HOUSE-LEEK). As an additional insurance with the household deities human and animal skulls were used as magical amulets, and were sometimes embedded in walls, those of the horse being particularly favoured in northern Europe.

The main defence of the house against intruders of all kinds consisted of the wall, which has been described as a 'restrictive force that kept out prying eyes and enemies'. Infinite care had to be observed in its construction. In Ireland it is still considered dangerous to build part of a gravestone into a new wall as this 'builds death into the house'.

The window or 'wind eye', originally a mere hole in the wall protected by branches or a curtain and exposed to the wind, in symbolism represents the idea of penetration; if situated at the summit of a tower it becomes the symbol of consciousness. In addition the window opens the inner darkness to the holy power of light. It is said that some primitive communities worshipped the first ray of the sun when it reached the window. In Ireland a cup of milk is placed on the sill as refreshment for the wandering family ghosts who chance to pass that way at Christmas time. The entry of an alien spirit by way of the window could be prevented by suspending a witch ball, a multi-coloured glass sphere, near the opening, where it distracted the eye of the approaching witch and was thought to absorb the first impact of her venom.



Sweetening the Kitchen God

On the 24th comes the sacrifice to the Tsao Wang or Kitchen God, who is one of the oldest of the household deities . . . In the household he plays a dual role, for he not only looks after the hearth, but has constituted himself the censor of morals of the family. He is the connecting link between God and Man and, seven days before the New Year, he is despatched to make his annual report. Where officials are concerned it is axiomatic in China that every man has got his price, and the Kitchen God is no exception to the rule. The family, whose record is about to be laid before the All Highest, makes every effort to ensure that a favourable report shall be rendered. As a rule, the effigy of the Tsao Wang occupies a small bamboo or wooden shrine, and he is depicted with his horse beside him. On the night of his departure incense is burned, and some straw, or in the North, kao-liang, is ignited by the stove as forage for the steed's journey. A bowl of water is also poured out by the stove. A special sticky sweetmeat, named T'ang Kua, is part of the sacrifice, and a portion is burned with the picture of the god. This is to ensure that he will only say sweet things, but it is not unusual to make certain of his silence by smearing his mouth with opium, or steeping the effigy in wine, to render him drowsy or fuddled when he reaches the end of his journey. He then risks expulsion for drunkenness before he can get a word in with the Jade Emperor and, as the family is free from his surveillance for seven days, they are indifferent as to how he spends his time.

V. R. Burkhardt
Chinese Creeds and Customs

The threshold of the house has always been an important centre of household rites as it is essentially a barrier against the enemy without, whether human or elemental. In mysticism the doorway, the place of 'comings and goings', represents the free will, while its archway has long been the site of purificatory rites and ritual healing. Specially devised ceremonies, often involving sacrifice, were performed at the threshold of the house to propitiate the household or guardian spirits and to protect the family from evil. There are many who even today believe that it is unlucky to enter a new house for the first time by the back door, which is in effect an unconsecrated aperture, or to leave a house by a different door from the one at which one came in.

In biblical times the threshold or gateway was the scene of mystical ceremonies as in Exodus (chapter 12) where we read that the blood of a lamb, sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts of the Israelites' houses, protected them when God killed the first-born of Egypt. After the erection of the principal entrance to an Indian building the woodwork is even today ritually anointed with the oil of the sandal-tree. The sacrosanct character of the house imposed many prohibitions upon those who entered it, including the need to avoid any contact between the foot and the threshold; in the Orient, for instance, visitors remove their shoes. The sanctity of the doorway is further emphasized by the inscriptions that traditionally appear above it. These may vary from the sacred to the profane, and in the Far East are often obscene. In parts of North Africa the genitalia of animals are set above barn doorways as a warning to the passing demon. An interesting feature of some older English houses is the stone carving of a woman's head that can often be seen placed above the doorway. The grotesquely designed door knockers on old English cottages also served to warn off devils, as did the horseshoes that were nailed to the doorways of barns.

To certain gods and goddesses have been allocated the task of supervising the threshold of the house, and altars were erected near the entrances in their honour. The Roman Janus (see JANUS), god 'of the beginning of things', is perhaps the best known deity of gates and doors and his name is related to our modern 'janitor'.

The symbolism of the door key pervades mythology and religion, for whether it is expressed as the key of heaven or as the key to wisdom, it is the symbol of entrance to the mysteries. For this reason priests and priestesses of the ancient religions carried keys as evidence that they were participants in the rites of the gods. Even in the modern world the key is of great symbolic importance, and to welcome an honoured guest by handing him the keys of the city is in effect to offer him open house.

The keyhole represents a chink in the armour of the household, an aperture by which the devils may enter and it must therefore be rendered secure; however, if the key is left in the lock the home is safe. Many people once believed that stopping the keyhole was extremely important during childbirth to prevent fairies from stealing the baby, and that this action also barred the terrifying evil spirit known as the nightmare from entering the house.

In the past, certain special actions performed with a strict eye to magic were involved in entering or leaving a house, some of which remain part of contemporary folklore. The new bride is still carried over the threshold when she enters her home for the first time, while stumbling at the threshold must be avoided if one is embarking upon a journey. Until recently it was customary in Devon to scrub the bride's footprints from the front doorstep of her parental home after her departure as a sign that she had left her old house and had chosen another.

Ladder to the Gods

The various rooms of a house are said to be symbols of individuality; a closed room without windows is an obvious symbol of virginity. The stairway, leading upwards and downwards to unite the various floors, symbolizes the principle of ascension, graduation and communication between different levels of the personality. This however is little more than a reiteration of the old folk theme that steps and ladders provide a mode of ascension to the land of the gods. For this reason it is considered unlucky to pass someone on the stairs, since he could well be a god in human shape who would resent the presence of a mortal on his sacred territory. There is a pleasant domestic rite still observed in many places in which a baby is carried to the top of the stairs on its first journey, in the belief that it should 'go up in the world before it comes down'. Superstitious flat-dwellers have been known to resort to a step-ladder for the same purpose, so tenacious is this old tradition in our midst. (See also STEPS AND LADDERS.)

The furnishings of the rooms are included in the magical framework; a change in the clock's rhythm being a death omen, especially if it should strike 13. Sleeping has its magic rites, for the bed should face east-west in alignment with the sun, or otherwise the sleeper will suffer from nightmares. New shoes must never be placed on the table as this brings death upon the household, a superstition doubtless arising from the old custom of placing a new pair of shoes on the feet of a corpse. In East Anglia it is considered a sign that a visitor will never enter the house again if he should stand his chair against the wall before leaving the house. A falling picture is an omen that a member of the household will die, especially if it is his portrait, while three knocks on the window, or the presence of crows encircling the roof, is advance intimation to the householder that he would be wise to keep his life insurance up to date.

Death in the Home

Although a house may be protected by magical and religious rites from the assaults of external spirit forces it is, paradoxically, the abode of domestic elementals who have one common feature in that they are capricious, troublesome, hard to please, and even spiteful. The household spirit is known as the boggart, brownie, fairy, goblin or kobold, according to nationality. The kobold was a common feature of English domestic life and as long ago as the 12th century a house-kobold caused a considerable stir at the Suffolk home of Sir Osborn de Bradwelle by discussing learnedly in Latin 'on Scriptural subjects'. A Danish kobold advanced further in this field, ultimately becoming clerk to an archbishop. Promotion from domestic spirit to the higher ecclesiastical ranks was rare, however, and in the main the kobold was restricted to passing the time by playing tricks upon the household; hiding farm equipment and consuming considerable quantities of food. Today the last relics of kobold lore have been reduced to a vague belief in lucky and unlucky houses possessing happy or unhappy atmospheres.

Innumerable are the magical rites

United Press International

Mark Gerson

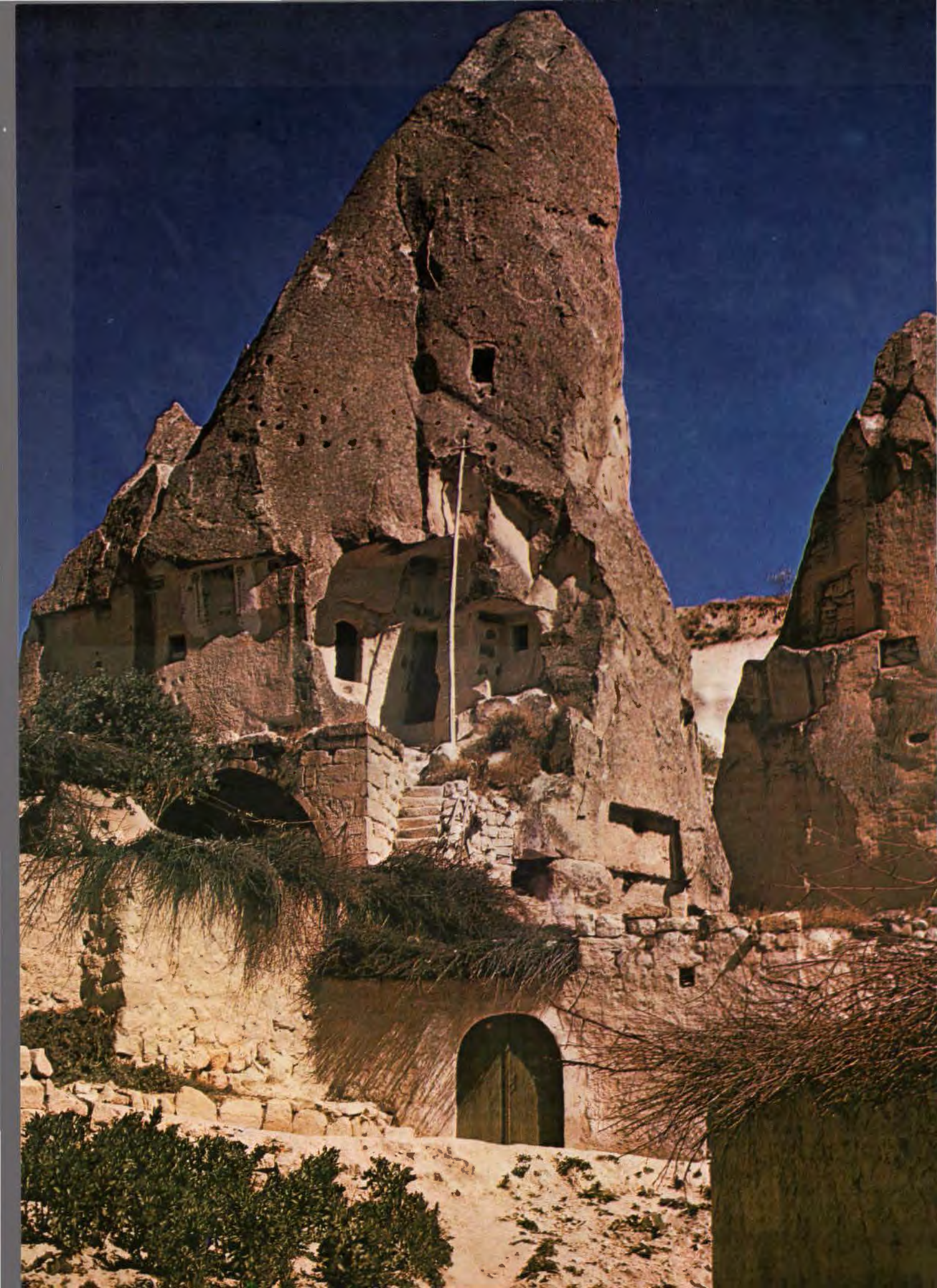
The key, the instrument which unlocks the door to the house, has always been of great symbolic importance; in ancient religions and mythology it represented entrance to the mysteries, and even today to hand an honoured guest the keys of a city is, in effect, to offer him open house *Above* Tunku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of Malaysia, receiving the Freedom of the City of London *Right* A 21st birthday key, symbolically opening the door to adult status and responsibilities

associated with the interior of the house, which were once employed as protection against evil. People with some unusual feature or defect such as red hair, cross-eyes or whose eyebrows met across the nose, were never permitted to cross the threshold as they were either bad luck bringers, witches or involuntary possessors of the Evil Eye. A witch who entered the house immediately acquired power over its occupants; she could be kept from the threshold, however, by secreting a pair of scissors or a knife beneath the doormat, for like all enemies of good she was unable to step over cold iron.

It is in matters connected with death that the magic of the house is most apparent. When one of the family is due to pass over, according to tradition, the family ghosts discreetly return and await the reunion. If the dying are not to suffer a 'hard death' the death-bed must be in alignment with the floorboards and never across them. An older superstition held that if pigeons' feathers were used to stuff the mattress the death agonies might be prolonged indefinitely. Immediately after death all the mirrors in the room were covered lest the soul in its departure (which had previously been facilitated by the opening of every door and window in the house) should snatch at a mourner's reflection and bear it away to keep it company in the afterlife.

The old belief that a house might in some mysterious manner become 'impregnated' by death has often taken strange forms. For example, the Kamchadales of north-east Asia abandoned the cabins in which members of the tribe had died. There are many who fear to live in a house of death believing this to be an open invitation for the spirit of death to embrace the living. In some primitive communities this morbid terror has been responsible for houses being burnt down as a purificatory rite, following a death.

It seems that none of the elaborate precautions undertaken to guard the threshold from evil spirits provides adequate protection against the return of the family ghost. At one time a room would be shut up after a death, often for years on end; the 18th century essayist Addison refers to a house as being 'three quarters locked up as haunted'. There appears to be some connection between the common European belief that an empty



Left **Caves were regarded as sanctuaries as well as dwelling places, and early Christians sought refuge in ones like these in Turkey** ***Right*** **In many parts of the world rites to ensure that evil spirits are neutralized, and that a house will be safe from psychic dangers, are still practised: llama foetuses for sale in Bolivia; they are buried under the foundations of a new building** ***Right below*** **Among the Pela-Pela tribe of Dahomey, a man's dwelling place becomes his tomb; he is buried in his hut and his family build themselves a new one**

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house is an abode of ghosts and the old tradition that after a dwelling has been empty for some time it becomes occupied by devils. In the author's own collection of ghost stories from the North of England is a terrifying legend of a house 'haunted by a pair of eyes'. These had apparently entered the building while it was empty, and finally drove the new tenant insane.

When the family dead choose to return to their old homes they show all the old traits they once possessed as living humans, being either quiet, philosophical and good-tempered, or petulant and vengeful. Sometimes the contest between the dead and the living for the possession of the house becomes so disturbing that an exorcist has to be called in. In Pliny's day houses were 'hallowed' against evil spirits with brimstone. Once the spirit is expelled the house will often remain free of unwelcome intruders of this kind for a considerable time.

Exorcism constitutes possibly the last surviving magico-religious ceremony associated with the house. It appears that there are certain wanton household spirits who do not submit as readily as ghosts to the commands of the exorcist. These are the poltergeists whose activities are closely bound up with the family. The poltergeist has much in common with the old kobold, of whom it is doubtless a direct descendant, being capricious, troublesome and occasionally violent, hurling stones and wrenching bed clothes off people who are sleeping, and occasionally setting a house alight. In the Isle of Man immediately before the Second World War reports of a household elemental in the shape of a talking mongoose created a national sensation. There are few houses as adequately secured against hostile presences from both inside and outside the threshold as Bettiscombe Manor in Dorset, which is protected by a human skull that successfully prevents any evil spirits or ghosts from troubling the tenants.

In dream lore a house is a symbol of security, and to dream of standing outside one indicates a forthcoming change of plans, while to enter the house means a fresh start in life. A house in course of erection symbolizes happiness to come but if it is being pulled down it portends an unhappy love affair. Folk-tales contain a wealth of lore reflecting the importance of the house in childhood fantasies. This is as it should be for the house began as a sanctuary for the helpless child,

Jorgen Bisch

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The belief that a house must be protected against hostile presences who may wish to enter and harm the occupants still survives in various countries *Far left* A disc inscribed with magical symbols used to decorate the thatched roof of a hut in Malawi in southern Africa. The threshold of a house is essentially a barrier against the enemy without, and the arch of the doorway, the place of 'comings and goings', is traditionally the site of purificatory rites and ritual healing; the doorway's sanctity is often emphasized by inscriptions or carvings: the Mexican door knocker (*left*) is a relic of the belief in the need to warn off evil spirits and demons, as is the grotesque carved figure (*below*) that supports the lintel of a doorway

Peter Goodlife

only developing into a psychic shrine with the passage of the years.

The garden is in effect part of the precinct, an extension of the house itself; it has been described as a place 'where nature is subdued, ordered, selected and enclosed'. It is here that protective plants and trees were grown for the purpose of providing a first magical barrier against approaching evil. The mountain ash protected the home against witchcraft and the bay withstood the assaults not only of witches but of devils and storms. The plants purslane, pennyroyal and pimpernel were ever potent defenders of the house against devils and misfortune generally.

Certain garden flowers have long been associated with sickness or death and for this reason are rigorously kept from the house. The white lilac is among the most notorious of these flowers, but even the purple and red varieties are said to bring disaster. The lily, perhaps because of its close association with funerals, is considered a death omen, while the white flower of the hawthorn is almost universally excluded from the house since it brings with it tragedy (see HAWTHORN). The glorious daffodil, beloved of the poets, has a more dubious reputation in terms of bad luck and for this reason is banned from the house in some parts of the North of England (see PLANTS AND FLOWERS).

The acorn, on the other hand, the seed of the oak which is the sacred tree of the thunder god, affords protection to both house and home against storms and lightning; it is for this reason that the bobbins on window blind cords are traditionally acorn-shaped. A more positive device for keeping misfortune at bay is to cultivate the visit of bees to the house, since they are not only great luck-bringers but firm friends of domestic harmony. At one time it was the rule to 'tell the bees' of every change in the household or otherwise the whole hive might take umbrage and fly away. The common house spider is also a luck-bringer to any home. 'If you wish to live and thrive, let a spider run alive' is a useful maxim for the superstitious home-lover.

(See also HAUNTED HOUSES; THRESHOLD).

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Dorothy Donnelly, *The Golden Well* (Sheed & Ward, 1950).

HOUSELEEK

THIS LARGE GROUP of hardy succulent plants, forming rosettes and usually growing in mountainous regions, has the Latin name, *Sempervivum*, meaning 'ever-living'. Although individual rosettes die after flowering, each produces many youngsters around it.

One very variable, widely spread species of houseleek has the name *Sempervivum tectorum* – the houseleek of the roofs. The first reference to this plant is by Theophrastus (4th century BC) who described it as growing 'upon flat shores, on top of earthy walls, and particularly on roof tiles'. Some 300 years later, Dioscorides wrote of how 'it grows in mountainous places, and some plant it on the tiles above their houses.'

The Romans called it *Iovis caulis*, the stalk of Jove or Jupiter, and Diopetes, 'fallen from Zeus'. All over Europe there are equivalent names to houseleek, or variations on 'thunder-beard', derived from Thunor or Thor, who gave thunder its name. 'Jupiter's beard' is another name which, in its Latin form *Jovibarba*, has recently been revived botanically for one group of the species.

All this builds up to a plant of special attributes, a plant of the lightning-hurling Zeus or Jupiter, ever-living and evergreen, thrown down by him to protect man's houses against lightning and fire, and hence planted on roofs as a living insurance policy. Even now it can frequently be seen in the country, and in previous centuries it was very common indeed. Charlemagne ordered it to be planted in this way; Sir Thomas Browne records its uses as 'a defensative against lightning'. There are records of widespread houseleek-planting in the 17th century, especially on inflammable thatch, where it would normally be grown on the clay ridges and corners.

As well as providing protection against lightning and fire, the houseleek was a magical insurance of the wellbeing of the house occupants, keeping away witches and evil spirits. Even today to remove a houseleek from a cottage roof is to bring bad luck; to pick one of its flowers may mean death to an occupant. In some quarters the flowering was considered unlucky and as soon as a flower stalk appeared it would be cut off.

The plant was also considered to be of value in treating burns, scalds or inflammations. Dioscorides quotes its use to cure such ills, and even today 'Singreen ointment' (from Old English *singrene*, 'evergreen') or the juice of the fleshy leaves, sometimes macerated with those of plantain, are used in country districts. Sometimes the leaves would simply be laid and bandaged onto the injury.

The astrologer and pharmacist Nicholas Culpeper (1616-54) had a long list of its curative properties: 'Our ordinary Houseleek is good for all inward health as well as outward, and in the eyes or other parts of the body: a posset made of the juice is singularly good in all hot agues . . . it cooleth and restraineth all hot inflammations . . . scaldings and burnings, the shingles, fretting ulcers, ringworms and the like; and much easeth the pain of the gout . . . it easeth also the headache, and the distempered heat of the brain in frenzies, or through want of sleep . . .'

The 16th century botanist Gerard has a rather peculiar nostrum which includes among its ingredients: 'Juice of the Houseleeke, Garden Nightshade, and the buds of Poplar, boiled in hog's grease.' Albertus Magnus, the 13th century philosopher, suggested that if one rubbed one's hands with houseleek juice one could then handle red-hot iron with impunity. The juice of the houseleek does in fact have soothing qualities and is used today for corns and warts.

Mustograph Agency

Because the houseleek was thought to protect buildings against lightning and fire, it was planted on roofs, especially inflammable thatch, as a living insurance policy

Musée de Lausanne/André Held

Huguenots

French Protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries who were branded as heretics and subjected to severe persecution by the Catholic authorities: defiantly resisting their oppressors in the wars of religion which ravaged France in the late 16th century, they were rewarded in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes which granted Huguenots freedom of conscience and full civil rights; the Edict was revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV and many Huguenots fled to England and Prussia.

Michael Holford

HUNTING MAGIC

IN CONTEMPORARY Western societies hunting magic persists in the attenuated form of sporting hunters' and fishermen's use of good luck charms and other common 'superstitious' practices. Among primitive peoples, whose understanding and control of the natural world are relatively rudimentary, but who often depend heavily on hunting and fishing for their sustenance, magic may assume great cultural importance.

Hunting (and fishing) magic in such societies may reflect profound cultural concepts of the essential qualities that distinguish men from animals, and of the complex and delicate relationship between human society and the natural world. Less obviously, the beliefs and practices of hunting magic may indirectly reveal much about the tensions and problems of the societies in which they are found. This is because dependence on such inherently uncertain sources of food poses special problems for simple cultures whose fragile yet rigid social structures are threatened in a variety of ways by fluctuations in the luck of the hunters.

Magic is a means of establishing a personal relationship with an otherwise indeterminately related, unknowable and uncontrollable object or situation, which makes possible effective knowledge or control of that situation. It works by symbolically projecting onto such relationships and situations the orderly, predictable or controllable, yet potent properties of familiar social or natural phenomena. The magical act of symbolic projection thus necessarily relies upon a systematic and logically coherent set of ideas about the relations between the magician, the object of his magic, and the symbolic properties of the substances used in his magic. Magic may take the form of positive action directed toward the achievement of a goal; but magical beliefs may be equally important in a passive or negative sense, as explanations for the occurrence of unfortunate or unusual events, or as rules for the avoidance of certain contacts or associations which would have the effect of frustrating the achievement of a purpose, or bringing about actively harmful consequences.

The natural world, and above all the

animate beings, the birds, animals and fish, that inhabit it, constitute the domain of uncontrollable, unpredictable and unknowable events. They form a mysterious realm beyond the ken or control of the laws of human society. The magic of hunting cannot be understood unless it is realized that the hunt is frequently defined in cultural terms as a kind of rite of passage, a venture out of the safe and secure domain of human society into the ritually perilous, alien world of natural beings.

The structure of the hunt itself resembles that of an initiation ritual. The hunter must first prepare and separate himself from society, then encounter and subdue his prey, which requires him to enter into a relationship with an inhabitant of the asocial, natural world, and finally he must return again to human society. The return is often a ritually complex operation, for in many cultures the hunter cannot become fully reintegrated into the society of men without taking the necessary measures to purify himself of his relationship with his prey, which is magically dangerous because of its asocial, inhuman and hostile qualities, and to protect others from its effects. In some societies, this is achieved simply through the social distribution of the meat; in others, by rites of purification for the hunter; in still others, by ritual treatment of the corpse of the victim. The prey itself undergoes its own rite of passage, a transition from its wholly 'natural' existence, through the stage of contact and slaughter by the hunter, to its complete integration into the human cultural world as cooked food.

Lord of the Animals

Magical rites and beliefs may surround every phase of both hunter's and victim's passage between human society and Nature. The hunter's weapons and auxiliary animals (usually dogs or horses) are also frequent objects of magical treatment. There is, of course, enormous variation from culture to culture as to which aspects of these complex phenomena become the objects of magic, what are the explicit and implicit goals of the magical practices, what constitutes the objective content of the magical rites and beliefs themselves, and what basic ideas underlie them.

In some cultures, all hunters share knowledge of the important magical techniques; in others, each man may have his own techniques, either learned from others or discovered by himself. In still others, only specialists, shamans or priests possess the requisite knowledge or are able to perform the necessary rituals or provide the requisite medicines or charms. In certain societies, the ritual of hunting magic is performed by an entire band or community, in others by lone individuals. The techniques employed vary widely: they include the use of spells, amulets, charms, shrines and medicines; offerings or sacrifices to the animals themselves, to the divine guardians of the animals, or to the familiars or gods of the hunters.

Certain cultures concentrate on producing clairvoyant visions and telepathic or dream communication with the animals, to learn their location or secure their co-operation with the hunter. Others stress the establishment of a special relationship between an individual hunter and a particular species of animal, which may consist in an ability to understand its language, a particular skill in tracking or killing it, or occasionally a compact with that species under the terms of which its members allow themselves to be killed and taken by that hunter. A frequently employed technique is the application of medicines or charms to the weapons and body of the hunter or his dogs. The making and manipulation of representations of the quarry, whether in dance, song, or in art, seems also to have been a common device of hunting magic since Paleolithic times.

Much of the magic associated with hunting is directed at the quarry itself, with varying purposes, such as to cause it to multiply as a species, to locate it and perhaps to induce it to come to the hunter, to pacify it or neutralize its strength if it is dangerous. Hunting magic may also be practised to deceive the animal with respect to the hunter's presence or real intentions toward it, to kill it, to make it lighter so that it can be the more easily carried home, to placate or compensate it for being killed and eaten, to forestall the vengeance of the dead animal's spirit or supernatural patrons or protectors, or to counteract the potentially dangerous effects of contact with its physical substance (it is widely believed that the hair, meat and blood of wild animals has a dangerous 'potency').

Another array of magical practices is concerned with preparing the hunter (through fasting, sexual continence, performance of rites, and so on) for the hunt, in ways calculated to sharpen his powers of tracking and finding the game, his strength, skill and endurance in all phases of the hunt, or perhaps to protect him from attack by his quarry or other wild beasts. Still other techniques are employed for making the hunter invisible or otherwise imperceptible to his quarry, for protecting him from the supernatural danger that may result from his having killed, and purifying him after the kill so that he may be reincorporated into human society.

The concept of the man-animal relationship underlying the practice of hunting magic is often extremely sophisticated and complex, and also varies widely from culture to culture. Many primitive peoples base their beliefs and behaviour toward wild animals on a tacit, or occasionally explicit, assumption

Facing page **The hunt has been defined as a '. . . rite of passage, a venture out of the safe and secure domain of human society into the ritually perilous, alien world of natural beings'; before the hunt, it was necessary for the hunter to prepare himself, and separate himself from society: Assyrian relief showing winged divine figures anointing King Assurnasirpal before he leaves on a hunting expedition. According to Nigerian belief, members of a hunting party were brought together at the end of the chase by a tune which was played by the piper who was said to accompany Sango, the hunter god** *Right* **Sango's piper and** *(far right)* **his dog**

Camera Press London

The natural world and the animals that inhabit it form a mysterious realm, and the hunters who have to journey through it appeal to various gods or spirits: the Mexican god of hunting, the protector of man, comes to the aid of a hunter

of reciprocity and equilibrium between the wild species and themselves. This is frequently expressed by beliefs that animals at one time possessed culture and language, and bestowed their gifts upon man, thereby losing them for themselves.

In some societies, it is thought to be man's responsibility to perform the rituals necessary to insure the renewal and fertility of the animal species: in this way man, through the ritual increase of game species, counterbalances the reduction caused by hunting. There are widespread beliefs in the necessity to apologize to, or otherwise placate, the game animal for taking it, often associated with beliefs in supernatural 'parents' or protectors of animal species who must be placated by the hunter.

In many cases animals are directly linked to notions about human death. Among the Desana of the Colombia-Brazil border, according to Reichel-Dolmatoff, it is believed that the souls of the dead who have led sinful lives are captured by the 'Lord of the Animals' and taken by him to the caves in the mountains which the Desana believe are the 'wombs of the animals', to be reincarnated in animal form. To kill an animal is therefore to kill a man; animals and men share a common kinship of souls, and, as the Desana put it, of blood. A hunter must propitiate the Lord of the Animals, or distract his attention by inducing him to remain slumbering in one of his caverns, if he is to succeed in his quest.

It is tempting to conjecture that the great painted caves of Paleolithic Europe, which are often chambers buried deep in the cliffs or mountains far from the sites of human habitation, and which seem to have been used solely for ceremonial purposes, may have served as 'wombs' of the animal species found painted so vividly on their walls, somewhat along the lines of the Desana conception. Effigies of animals modelled in clay and pierced by spear-thrusts have been found in the caves, lending some support to the conjecture that hunting rituals may have been practised in the caves, but we shall probably never know with certainty what beliefs and rituals were celebrated by the Stone Age hunters in their subterranean sanctuaries (see CAVE ART).

A more extreme example of the belief in the relation of game animals, hunting and human death is reported by Edward Schieffelin from certain New Guinea tribes, who believe in a dual universe. In this system, every human soul has, as a 'double', an animal soul in the 'parallel' world. The souls of the animals of this world are, in the same way, the doubles of the people of the other world. To kill the animal double causes the death of the human counterpart in the complementary world. Human deaths are thus explained as the results of hunting by the men of the other world, and hunts are occasionally organized by the tribes in question to retaliate against the men of the other world for causing deaths by their hunting.

Such beliefs, however bizarre they may seem, reflect a fundamental belief in the interdependence of human and animal life, expressed in the concept that both form parts of a delicately balanced equilibrium which men only upset at their peril. Hunting magic often serves as the vehicle of these ideas, sometimes by imposing significant restrictions on the behaviour of the hunter (such as sexual abstinence) as preconditions of success, or sometimes by more overtly emphasizing the contractual nature of the hunting relationship between man and animal, for instance by requiring reciprocal rites or gestures by the hunter toward the quarry animal or its species.

It would be misleading, however, to interpret such beliefs as being based solely upon an objective grasp of the principles of the balance between human society and the animal populations of its surrounding territory. In simple societies, the concept that is formed of the balance between man and Nature is often tightly bound up with the character of the social relations between man in his role as hunter and his fellow men.

Hunter's 'Luck'

The Brazilian anthropologist Roberto Da Matta, for example, has shown in a brilliant analysis of the magical beliefs about 'bad luck' in hunting and fishing held by the population of a small Brazilian town on the Amazon, how these beliefs tend to maintain the inflexible social structure of the community. The lowest strata of the town's population, the hunters and fishermen, have no means of raising their status in society other than through some 'lucky' contact or event originating outside the social structure of the community itself. This might take the form of help from a distant relative, a generous employer from the big city, or persistent luck in hunting and fishing. This would provide an opportunity for the successful hunter to expand his network of social relations and raise his social standing by distributing presents of meat to those he might wish to put under an obligation.

The hierarchical social structure of the town is, however, too rigid to tolerate such mobility: it depends on maintaining the amount of hunting at a fairly rigidly fixed level, as well as on strictly regulating the distribution of the proceeds of the hunt. The magical beliefs and taboos surrounding the distribution of meat by the hunter are so defined that any man who hunts with unusual frequency and success would be almost sure to violate one, thus bringing 'bad luck' in hunting upon himself. This system of taboos tends to constrain hunters to limit their activities, at the cost of losing their 'luck'. It also tends to inhibit their losing their place in the social structure of the community.

There is a separate system of beliefs in the same town that animal species, watercourses and other natural resources have 'mothers' who permit modest utilization of the resources under their protection but punish 'over-exploitation' beyond the normal subsistence needs of an individual and his immediate family. This set of beliefs, counterparts of which are found in many primitive and peasant societies, obviously has the same social effect as the system of taboos surrounding the distribution of game.

The main point of Da Matta's analysis is that societies with simple but rigid social organizations, like most primitive and rural or peasant communities, may attempt to restrict their relations with the natural world (above all, hunting) within narrowly prescribed limits of quantity and quality, in order to protect their inflexible social structures from the repercussions that would result from uncontrolled individual variation in hunting productivity.

Those that do not attempt to regulate hunting production frequently surround the distribution of the meat with taboos tending to ensure equitable sharing, in this way minimizing the danger of conflicts arising from discriminatory distribution and inequalities in hunting luck and skill among individual hunters. For a rigidly structured simple society, natural equilibrium (including the equitable distribution of natural produce) is the prerequisite of social equilibrium. Magical beliefs, as Da Matta shows, may fulfil a vital function as regulating mechanisms of this double equilibrium, by establishing direct connections between the hunter's behaviour and relationships within society, on the one hand, and his fortunes as a hunter, on the other.

The hunting magic of the Ndembu of Zambia, although radically different in form and content from that of the Brazilian backwoodsmen analysed by Da Matta, reveals the same intimate link between the social relations of the hunter and his success as a huntsman. The Ndembu, whose society and rituals have been excellently described by Professor Victor Turner, are a simple society of shifting cultivators. Game has become increasingly scarce in their territory, but enjoys a degree of prestige as food that is out of all proportion to its actual quantitative importance as a component of the Ndembu diet. Hunting has become a specialized activity pursued as a vocation by a small number of men, who characteristically scorn to have normal families and settled lives in conformity with the accepted life style of the agricultural villages.

Hunters enjoy great prestige, in large part because they are considered, by the nature of their professions, to be quintessentially masculine, tough, and to some extent above the law of ordinary men. These very qualities, however, make them to some extent a threat to the fabric of conventional social relations. They are, for example, likely to boast of their numerous adulterous affairs. The stereotype of the Ndembu hunter reflects the culturally significant properties of hunting as an economic activity: it is a difficult craft demanding considerable skill, physical endurance and luck, pursued in isolation from settled communities, prestigious but peripheral to the central social and economic life of the people.

Among the Ndembu the craft of the hunter is bound up with two (very similar) cult associations, which exist for the purpose of performing rituals to 'cure' bad luck in hunting. The Ndembu conceive of huntsmanship as analogous in certain respects to a physical substance, that can be lost or spilled and replenished by magical means: the rites of the Ndembu hunting cults are aimed at restoring and increasing the powers of huntsmanship, while attacking the agency responsible for their loss. This is invariably conceived to be

the shade of a recently deceased ancestor who was himself a hunter, and who has become displeased because the unlucky hunter has failed to honour one of a wide variety of social or ritual obligations to his kinsmen, to other hunters, or to the ancestral hunter's shade itself. The hunting rituals simultaneously propitiate the ancestral shade and initiate the novice hunter into the cult of hunters, which doubles as a kind of professional association. Great emphasis is placed on the solidarity of initiated hunters.

However, the presence or assistance of the novice's kinsmen, and the reaffirmation of his social bonds with them is as important for the performance of the rites as the support of his prospective colleagues of the hunter's cult. The magical rites of the hunting cults, which focus upon the erection of a shrine to the shade of the hunter-ancestor who is causing the affliction, serve to confront and reconcile two sets of relations and qualities that are to a large extent opposed and contradictory in normal life. On the one hand, they emphasize the distinctness of the calling of the hunter and the very qualities that serve to set him apart from, and to some extent in conflict with, conventional society; on the other hand, they stress the integration of the hunter into conventional society through the ritual reaffirmation of his ordinary kinship obligations, which form the basis of the Ndembu community.

The hunting ritual of the Ndembu, a primitive African tribe, and the magical beliefs of the backwoodsmen of modern Brazil illustrate a common point: the underlying purpose of hunting magic is frequently as much to integrate the hunter safely into human society as to promote the success of his ventures into the animal world.

TERENCE TURNER

FURTHER READING: Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Cornell University Press, 1968); J. G. Frazer *The Golden Bough* (abridged edn, Macmillan, 1967 reprint).

Primitive man practised various rituals in an attempt to ensure success at hunting, and cave paintings are generelly thought to be one of the devices he used to gain magical power over his quarry: Bushman paintings in Lesotho, southern Africa

Gerald Cubitt

Mental illness and crime are virtually unknown in the Hutterian communities of the United States and Canada; descendants of the religious dissenters of 16th century Europe, their way of life is determined by principles that have changed little over the last 400 years

HUTTERIAN BRETHREN

RECRUITED FROM the Anabaptists, an amorphous and widespread body of dissenters in early 16th century Europe, the Hutterian Brethren, or Hutterites, came into being as a distinct religious group in the late 1520s.

The Anabaptists were not an organized or coherent sect, and the name, which came from their insistence on the baptism of adults, was applied generally to the many differing and contentious dissenters in Europe at that time. The Hutterians took their name from Jacob Hutter, or Huter, although the group had already become a separate congregation of believers before he took over their leadership in 1529.

Anabaptists of any sort were liable to imprisonment or sentence of death in Switzerland and in the Hapsburg Empire, and many religious refugees made their way to Moravia (in what is now central Czechoslovakia) where the local nobility were prepared to grant them asylum. Among them were the earliest group to become known, later, as Hutterians.

The Anabaptists who settled on the estates of the Liechtensteins at Nikolsburg in Moravia were not a unified body; they differed in particular on the currently important matter of the legitimate means by which they should be prepared to defend themselves, and the nature of a Christian's duty to the state. The extreme party were adventists who rejected resort to arms and who demanded the community of goods. These ideas were expressed by Hans Hut (not to be confused with Jacob Hutter) and a group espousing these principles arose round Jacob Wiedemann. Under him they eventually left Liechtenstein's estates after that aristocrat had sought in vain to persuade the various dissenting groups to adopt common principles; and, such were their pacifist principles, they left because they objected to Liechtenstein's resorting to arms to protect them from King Ferdinand's special commissioner, who had been sent to persecute the Anabaptists at Nikolsburg.

The group fled to the estates of the Kaunitz family near the Moravian town of Austerlitz, and there they were joined by Tyrolean Anabaptists under Jacob Hutter, who quickly established a more rigorous communistic policy for the group than they had had previously. The disruption of the very different wing of Anabaptists at Münster in 1534 (see ENTHUSIASM) provided King Ferdinand with strong arguments for the expulsion of all Anabaptists from Moravia. The Hutterians took to the forest, and soon afterwards Hutter was captured and burned to death at Innsbruck.

A new leader emerged in Peter Riedemann, who travelled over many parts of Germany and Austria visiting scattered sympathizers. While imprisoned by the relatively sympathetic Landgrave Philip of Hesse in 1549, Riedemann wrote his *Rechenschaft* or 'Confession of Faith' which thereafter became, and remains to this day, the authoritative statement of Hutterian belief. The *Account*, as it is known in English, emphasizes the status of believers as children of the Covenant, through whom Christ's spirit works. Disobedience is seen as the source of sin, and the disobedient must be expelled from the Church. This emphasis on the 'ban' is widely found among Anabaptist groups (including the various Mennonite sects) and becomes the symbol for withdrawal from evil and the world. Pacifism and community of goods was reaffirmed by Riedemann, as demonstrations of *Gelassenheit* (surrender) and the elimination of selfishness.

Retirement at 45

Despite intermittent persecution by the authorities the Hutterians prospered: they numbered some tens of thousands in the 1570s, and developed skilled crafts in the service of their aristocratic protectors (although they refused to undertake work that was connected with warfare or work which contributed to sinful pleasures). They were driven from Moravia, Slovakia and Transylvania, when the Catholic Church and the Hungarian monarchy sought to impose infant baptism upon them, to prohibit their communism and to enforce their conversion to the Roman Church.

After successive flights they were eventually offered favourable terms by the government of Catherine the Great to settle and cultivate land in the Ukraine. They prospered there, and later in other parts of Russia, although, under the influence of the Mennonites with whom they became associated to some extent, some of them abandoned for a time their practice of communism. In the early 1870s the Russian government decided to impose obligations of military service on the various groups of foreign sectarians who had helped to settle their frontier regions, and the Hutterians decided, firmly in accordance with their principles, to resort once again to that pattern of response to the world that they had practised over the centuries. They migrated; and the entire population of about 700 Hutterians settled in the territory that was to become South Dakota.

Even in the United States the Hutterians were not safe from persecution. Although they received formal guarantees exempting them from military service and permitting them to establish independent schools, when the United States entered the First World War in 1917, the Hutterians, as German-speaking pacifists, encountered local social and political hostility. A court action was brought against them to enforce the dissolution of their corporations, and in this way to bring their communistic organization to an end. The grounds of the action were that in selling their produce to the wider society (a pattern on which they, like other communitarian sects, were dependent) they contravened the law under which they had corporate status. In the face of these threats the great majority of them migrated to Canada in 1918 and 1919. There, in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan they have prospered economically and multiplied in number.

Today, the Hutterians consist of three slightly differentiated groups distributed in well over 100 colonies in Canada and about 50 in the United States. The three groups are analogous to closely associated and friendly clans rather than to religious parties. The distinctions between them are marginal differences in customs and life style; their religious beliefs are identical. Each individual colony has about 50 to 150 members, a figure that remains constant as, when a group grows to about 150 it divides and establishes a daughter colony.

The increase in the Hutterian population has given rise to fears in parts of Canada that they will eventually drive other farmers from the land, particularly since the Hutterians have, as communitarians, the advantages of bulk purchase and the means to buy expensive equipment, and advantages in its use. They have been able to farm successfully on marginal land and to operate more efficiently than individual farmers. The Hutterians do in fact incur heavy repeated expense because of their growth in numbers and their needs for capital equipment to establish new colonies. But they live economically because their religious principles do not allow any luxuries, and although they eat well and do not overwork (men retire at about 45) they are self-sufficient in house-building, clothes-making and in the construction of the simple furniture that they use.

Production Not Pleasure

All members work in the colony, and farming is the staple employment, although each group has its craftsmen who do ancillary farming work. Some tasks such as milling flour have now been abandoned. They use modern equipment, electricity, timber, cement and other commodities that they cannot make for themselves. Unlike the Amish of Pennsylvania they have not maintained embargoes on such things as motor vehicles – as long as they are used for productive purposes and not for pleasure. Economic advantage is not pressed, however, where it might endanger community morale. Therefore, although they realize that there are more mechanized methods, they employ their womenfolk to paint their houses by hand, recognizing in labour an intrinsic virtue and also a means of demonstrating commitment to the community.

The Hutterian colony is both a community and a congregation. The two concepts are synonymous for them, and religious principles dominate their way of life, which has changed little in its social ethic since the mid-16th century. Avoidance of the world, surrender, pacifism, adult baptism and communism of goods are the principles that they derive from the Bible. Life is in, and for, the community. Although there are no means by which a colony can enforce a member to remain, few ever leave. Those who do are mainly young men who are lured

into the outside world to work, and most of them return. Those who do not, tend to stand by their Hutterite beliefs, even though these, without community of goods and communal living, can be only a shadow of real Hutterianism.

'Teaching the Young Idea'

Each colony is presided over by a minister, whose duties are those of pastor and supervisor, and who is selected from a number of candidates nominated by the members of the colony. These must be approved by ministers and leading brethren from other groups and the final appointment is made by lot. Each community also elects a steward, who is concerned with the economy and administration, and under him are the elected heads of the various departments of the colony's work activities. Everyone in the community is assigned a task, and willingness to do what one is called to do is a basic assumption of Hutterian life, although the individual is also given some freedom to ask for a charge of work from time to time.

At some periods the Hutterians have separated young children from their parents and brought them up communally, but today families live in their own houses, even though all meals are taken in the community dining hall where men and women sit apart from each other. The colony kindergarten remains important, however, and is attended by all children over the age of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. Later the children attend a German school where they learn High German, their language at home being a Tyrolean dialect.

By agreement with the Canadian government they also receive normal school education in English and quite often a school run by the government is established in the colony. This development might yet be the most significant inroad into Hutterian apartness from the world, not only in introducing young Hutterians to the values and attitudes prevalent in the outside society, but in providing them with a good knowledge of English. Learning the langnage of the dominant culture has often reduced the insulation of migrant sects and has facilitated their assimilation into the wider society.

High Birth Rate

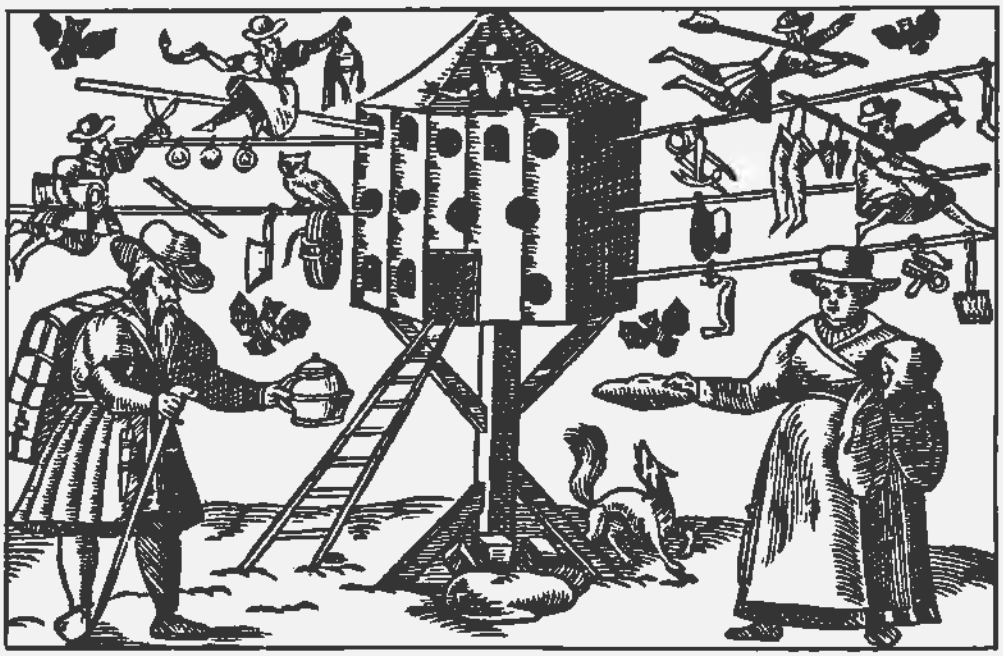
The Hutterians keep the education of their children to a legal minimum, and have shown no interest in the world's institutions of higher education. Wisely they recognize that, for life as a Hutterian, worldly education is unnecessary, and might be a cause of discontent and disruption. The sect is not without its own culture, however, and the accumulated religinus writings of earlier leaders, and accounts of sect history, which, since the 1920s, have been printed, are in constant use among them. They read Mennonite newspapers, too, and farming periodicals.

The movement has grown rapidly since settling in North America, and its membership has been estimated at over 12,000 in Canada and more than 5000 in the United States. Growth has been almost entirely due to the extremely high birth rate of the Hutterians. There have, however, been some attempts by outsiders to join the movement, particularly after the Second World War when the Arnoldites, followers of Eberhard Arnold, who had settled in Paraguay and who also called themselves the *Bruderhof*, gained recognition from the Hutterians as fellow religionists. The association did not last, however, principally because the Arnoldites mixed with the wider society in order to evangelize, and tolerated dancing and smoking.

In addition to their remarkable fecundity, the Hutterians' very low incidence of mental ill-health, and the absence of social pathology among them have attracted the attention of psychiatrists and sociologists. Crime, suicide, drug addiction, homosexuality, illegitimacy, alcoholism and divorce are virtually unknown, and they appear less subject to mental disturbance than those living in the wider society. They are freed from much of the stress of life in advanced society, and as far as such judgements are possible, it appears that the Hutterians are more contented and happier than most of their fellow men.

BRYAN WILSON

The Hutterian Brethren were persecuted and derided intermittently during the 16th century *Below* Illustration from the title page of a book lampooning the sect, in which members were referred to as pigeons *Bottom* 16th century illustration of a Hutterian family



HYENA AND JACKAL

THE NOCTURNAL WANDERINGS of the hyena, its association with death and the uncanny call of the striped species, which is said to resemble demoniacal laughter, have been responsible for the animal's importance in witchcraft. Although it is found mainly in the warmer regions of Asia and Africa, it is also credited with magical properties in European folklore.

Among the Matabele of Rhodesia it was said that wizards dug up corpses which they then turned into hyenas to use as messengers or steeds, while in Africa generally there was a widespread belief that wizards could transform themselves into hyenas. In Abyssinia tales were told of men transforming themselves into the animals while in full view of other people, and in the Sudan it was thought that magicians became hyenas at night in order to roam the countryside howling and gorging themselves. It is said that a soldier who shot a hyena followed the trail of blood to a hut where he found a wizard dying of a fresh wound; the soldier himself died shortly afterwards. In England tales of this kind were told of wounded hares later discovered to be witches. The Wanika of East Africa regarded the hyena as one of their ancestors and it was an offence to imitate its call. Like some South African Bantu they exposed their dead to be eaten by these animals.

In Europe a great variety of magical properties were attributed to the hyena. Greek writers recounted the Arab belief that if one of these animals stepped on a man's shadow it deprived him of the powers of speech and movement. They also reported that if a dog, standing on a roof in the moonlight, cast its shadow where a hyena could step on it the dog would fall to the ground. The statement by the 16th century writer, Bartholomew, that the hyena by circling an animal three times, could charm it into immobility may be a later elaboration of these notions.

Cure for Crocodile Bites

The supposed similarity between the hyena's howls and human cries or laughter, which contributed to African beliefs in humans changing into hyenas, also led to strange European notions. Aristotle stated that the hyena lured dogs by imitating the sound of a man vomiting, and Bartholomew elaborated on this idea in an account of how hyenas approached houses at night, mimicking the human voice and even calling men by name in order to devour them. Sir Kenelm Digby, the 17th century scientist, varied the theme; he wrote that the hyena could imitate the calls of all sorts of animals so that they flocked to him and were captured.

Among Pliny's prescriptions concerning the magical virtues of the hyena's body were the following: if haunted by nocturnal spirits wear a tooth from the beast suspended on a thread round your neck; to foil the charms of wizards smear the blood of a hyena around the doorposts of the house; to cause a woman to fall in love with you touch her lips with a whisker from the muzzle of one of these beasts.

Encouraged by such statements English writers of the 15th to the 17th centuries pleased people who liked to be told of the strange qualities of unfamiliar animals by providing them with far-fetched ideas that owed more to imagination than to tradition. It was said that witches ate the heart and liver of the hyena in order to perform witchcraft. Topsell, whose *History of Four-footed Beasts* was published in 1607, stated that a hyena's skin hung on the gate of an orchard would ward off hail or lightning. He also remarked: 'The dung or filth of an hyena, being mingled with certain other medicines is very excellent to cure the bites and stingings of crocodiles and other venomous beasts.' According to this fanciful writer a man wearing a hyena's skin could pass unscathed through the midst of his enemies and the marrow of the animal's right foot 'is profitable for a woman that loveth not her husband, if it be put into her nostrils'.

Guardian of Cemeteries

Christian hermits living in the Egyptian desert in the 4th century were on familiar terms with hyenas and did not attribute magical properties to them. Stories are told of a hyena who led a hermit far into the desert to the cave where another was living; of another which on finding a hermit lost in the wilderness guided him to safety; and of St Macarius of Alexandria who, when a hyena brought her blind whelp to him, cured it by applying saliva to its eyes.

In a number of biblical contexts the word translated as fox refers to the jackal, an animal that appears in folklore and folktales as crafty and shrewd rather than malicious. As a scavenger and eater of carrion it acquired in some areas an association with death: in ancient Egypt Anubis, the jackal-headed guardian of cemeteries guided the dead to the judgement of Osiris. According to the ancient Indian laws of Manu a faithless wife would be a jackal in her next incarnation. The animal's apparent timidity is the reason why the Bushmen of southern Africa protect their children against becoming timorous by forbidding them to eat the animal's heart.

In Indian folktales the jackal has a role rather similar to that of the cunning fox in Europe. In one story a crocodile seizes a jackal's leg but the jackal talks the reptile into believing he is holding a tree root. In another a Brahmin who compassionately releases a tiger from a trap is about to be eaten when a jackal persuades the tiger to re-enter the trap. In yet another, an elephant swallows a jackal but dies when it is eaten by the animal inside it. The jackal finds himself trapped in the elephant's dried-up skin but calls for rain and escapes when rain falls and softens the hide.

William MacQuitty

The jackal was associated with death in some areas; in Egypt the jackal-headed Anubis was thought to guide the dead to the place of judgement: wall painting showing Anubis with Nefertiti, the wife of Ikhnaten

Sonia Halliday

Hymn

In Christian tradition, a song of praise to God, usually sung to music in public worship: the ancient Greeks composed hymns in honour of their gods and heroes, the most notable being the Homeric Hymns; there are records of early hymns from ancient China, Egypt, Babylonia and India, usually in praise of their gods, but sometimes also sung to enlist aid in averting sickness or disaster.

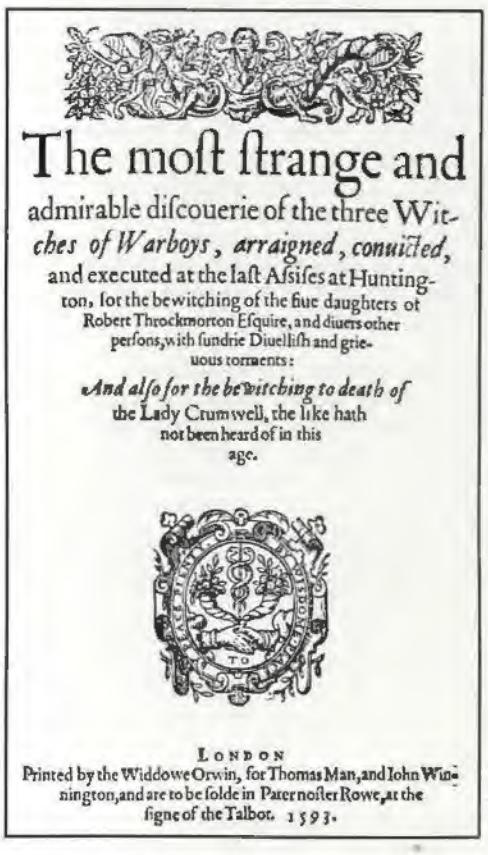
Mary Evans Picture Library

Hypnotism

The inducing of a sleep-like trance by repeated commands and mental concentration in which the subject acts only on the suggestion of the hypnotist: in such a trance state subjects are able to recall long-forgotten experiences: from the Greek *hypnos* meaning 'sleep', it is also termed mesmerism after F. A. Mesmer (1734–1815), an early pioneer of hypnotism, who called it 'animal magnetism', believing it to be an occult force: hypnotism is often used therapeutically to treat nervous disorders. See MESMER.

It now seems certain that many of those who were believed to be bewitched were in fact suffering from forms of mental illness and sexual repression; and that the attitude of society created a climate which fostered exhibitionism and hysterical manifestations

HYSTERICAL POSSESSION AND WITCHCRAFT



The moſt ſtrange and admirable diſcouerie of the three Witches of Warboys, arraigned, conuicted, and executed at the laſt Aſsiſes at Huntington, for the bewitching of the fiue daughters of Robert Throckmorton Eſquire, and diuers other perſons, with ſundrie Diuelliſh and grieuous torments: *And alſo for the bewitching to death of* the Lady Crumwell, the like hath not been heard of in this age.

LONDON
Printed by the Widdowe Orwin, for Thomas Man, and Iohn Winnington, and are to be ſolde in Paternoſter Rowe, at the ſigne of the Talbot. 1593.

John Welsh

After one of the most important witchcraft trials in England, Alice Samuels and her husband and daughter were executed as witches after the five daughters of Robert Throckmorton, a squire of Warboys in Huntingdon, had accused the family of bewitching them; this was the first of a series of similar cases in England: frontispiece to a tract on the 'Witches of Warboys' as the case became known, which was published in 1593

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN in the last 50 years on the psychology of the witch herself. It seems undeniable, on the evidence of trials and personal testimonies, that in every era a number of the people who were accused of witchcraft did believe themselves to be witches. Isabel Gowdie, whose spontaneous confession in 1662 amazed and discomforted her contemporaries is a classic example of this type (see GOWDIE).

On the basis of this and comparable cases there is now a substantial modern literature which treats the witch as a mental case, a person suffering from a classic psychosis, often associated with senility, characterized by delusions as to her own importance and powers. While there is undoubtedly much truth in this view, it seems important to realize that the insanity was by no means one-sided. Frequently as much emotional abnormality, irrationality and sheer ill-will was displayed by the witch-hunters and the witches' 'victims' as by the witches.

Seen in the context of their own time, not all witches were grossly abnormal nor were all the 'bewitched' constitutionally inadequate or hysterical. Nor indeed were all the judges sadistic and neurotic: many were averagely decent, Christian men of their time, doing what they believed to be their duty. Nevertheless it is undeniable that the rigid, tendentious nature of Church law on witchcraft during the centuries of persecution, with the tendency to regard many circumstantial facts as automatic evidence of sorcery and to consider an accused witch guilty unless proved innocent, rather than the other way round, did load the dice consistently against the accused. This provided the opportunity for the abnormally impressionable or paranoid person, to give full rein to his or her imagination.

In every era there are a substantial number of people who are ready, indeed eager, to believe themselves harmed or threatened. The paranoiac who today believes that 'they' (the police, the government, the Jews, the blacks, the Communists, the Arabs) are conspiring against him or his society, is the same man as the suspicious citizen of past centuries who accused witches. The focus of paranoia changes with regimes and fashions in belief, but the type of emotion remains constant. Moreover most paranoiacs display a dreary lack of originality. The repetitive accusations against witches in the past ('they're cursing my pigs – blighting my crops – laming me') are paralleled today by accusations such as 'they're trying to kill me by radar' (or 'by electricity'), which are familiar to every mental health officer.

Unchanging, too, is the paranoid tendency to ascribe the evil not just to one individual's malevolence but to an organized conspiracy of ill-doers; hence the collective prejudice against a mythical 'secret society' – of witches, or Jews, or coloured people. The belief that the scapegoat-group are physically different in some way from ordinary people, and that they are plotting to multiply their number and gain control over society also seems to be constant. The probable explanation for this apparent flaw in the argument is that the accuser, having made a particular group into his collective scapegoat, has to justify his persecution of its individual and apparently defenceless members by making out that there is some widespread organization behind them. The judges who followed the dictates of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) and similar manuals would no doubt have found it difficult to condemn many of the simple old hags dragged before them unless they had fixed in their minds the idea that it was the whole secret society of witchcraft they were attacking, not just this individual.

Self-induced Symptoms

It may be felt that accusations made by individual paranoid schizophrenics can hardly account for the large-scale witch persecutions that took place, especially on the Continent, in the 15th and 16th centuries. In fact, though such clinical paranoia may have been relatively rare, even one isolated case in a town could (and still can) serve to excite the milder, more generalized but equally irrational paranoid tendencies and prejudices found among otherwise sane members of the community. Therefore, although there are probably only a few people in a community at any one time who are convinced that they themselves have been singled out by the scapegoat for evil attentions, there are many more who will concede the possibility of such things happening.

There is also another form of unbalanced behaviour which is in itself less ominous than paranoia but which can be just as

devastating in its social effect if it is not recognized for what it is. This is characterized by the production of hysterical ailments, usually believed by the subject himself to be genuine. The prime reason for them seems to be a desire to attract attention and sympathy, but often an accusation is thrown in to substantiate the hysteric's case. The accusation is therefore not an essential part of the syndrome, but when it is made, and believed, the effect is the same as with the primary accusations of the paranoiac.

In short, while the paranoiac develops a rooted distrust of one particular person or group, and only then invents his injuries, often fantastic ones, the hysteric reverses the process. He – or, perhaps more typically, she – produces symptoms of injury, often in great variety and abundance, and only then casts around for a scapegoat on which the blame can convincingly be laid. Usually this process seems to be unconscious, but it also seems possible that in many cases the hysteric does know, at some level, that her afflictions are self-induced, and therefore finds it particularly necessary to have a good story about their origins. There is no doubt that both types of person, the paranoiac and the hysteric, made a substantial contribution to the history of witch-persecution.

Very little was generally known or accepted about the working of the human mind in the Middle Ages or, indeed, until the 19th century. At various times individual physicians and scholars preached what we should now regard as sound sense: Agrippa (1486–1535) was one and he narrowly escaped being branded as a witch himself for his pains (see AGRIPPA). His pupil the Dutchman Johannes Wier or Weyer was another, and so were the 16th century English squire Sir Reginald Scot and, slightly later, an English doctor named John Cotta. Other writers, such as James I of England in his *Demonologie* (1597) and Joseph Glanvil in his *Saducimus Triumphatus* (1681), while subscribing in the main to popular prejudice on the subject of witchcraft, were sufficiently intelligent to discount certain aspects of it, or to point out rampant abuses. Glanvil, who was in principle a persecutor of witches, admitted that it was 'very improbable that the devil who is a wise and mighty spirit would be at the beck of a poor hag, and have so little to do as to attend to the errands and impotent lusts of a silly old woman.'

But such flashes of reason have to be set against a background of radical ignorance and prejudice. The ancient belief in possession by devils was entrenched in Christian thought; the madman in the New Testament whose 'devil' Christ was supposed to have cast out was the prototype for an interminable series of lunatics in the 16th and 17th centuries whose madness was blamed on the evil attentions of a witch. Inevitably, if society has this basic concept of 'bewitching', the supposed signs of it are taken at their face value without further examination. There was little realization, in the centuries of persecution, that vomiting, pains, disturbance of the menses, impotence, paralysis and indeed 'wasting disease' and fits, could be psychosomatic or hysterical ailments, having their root in the sufferer's own fear or in desire for attention rather than in any organic interference on the part of another.

Chris Barker

Mary Evans Picture Library

Hysteria Due to Repression

One of the oldest charges against witches was that they caused impotence, either (in the most ancient accusations) by stealing the male organ, or by 'impeding the conjugal action of men and women' in some less drastic way. This may be taken as simply one manifestation of the general link between witchcraft and sterility, the distortion of the original fertility cults into a 'black' form. It may also be considered as evidence for an important psychological source of witch-fear, the rejection of the mother figure and the buried, infantile fear that the mother is all-powerful and has the power to castrate. The sexual roots both of certain forms of

Above left **Although she was clearly demented, Isobel Gowdie persuaded others that she was a witch: George Cruikshank's illustration of the Devil chastising his followers was inspired by her colourful account of the sabbaths she attended. Mental illness was in fact the cause of many cases of apparent possession** ***Left*** **Engraving of a scene in Bedlam from** ***The Rake's Progress*** **by William Hogarth** ***Right*** **Inmates of an 18th century French asylum are unchained as a result of the humane intervention of Dr Pinel, a pioneer psychiatrist**

witch activity and of witch-phobia are obvious, but as time went by the emphasis within this psycho-sexual area changed.

The male accusing the witch of stealing his masculinity largely disappears, and instead there appear in the records numerous women displaying what to modern eyes seem clear symptoms of hysteria due to sexual repression. These they frequently blamed on male demons and, ultimately, on a specific witch, male or female, who was said either to be wishing the demons onto them or, if a man, 'possessing' them, in two senses, in spirit form. The earliest such recorded case occurred among a group of nuns at Cambrai, in France in 1491, shortly after the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the Bull of Pope Innocent VII had alerted the gullible public to the dangers of witchcraft all round them. The nuns had fits in which they showed superhuman strength, barked like dogs and foretold the future. Eventually the nun who had first begun to have fits and who was therefore the ringleader of the hysteria, was 'unmasked' as a witch herself.

This was by no means the last occasion on which a 'witch's victim' was finally declared to be a witch herself, and this illustrates the confusion that existed on the whole subject of possession. Literally, the root of the word 'possess' implies that the person is actually being inhabited by an alien spirit sitting within it, as distinct from 'obsessed', the linguistic root of which means 'sitting *by*'. Since witches were commonly regarded as being 'possessed by the Devil', in the sense of owned by him, and also as having intercourse either with him or with 'possessing' demons in the forms of incubi and succubi, the assertion that one was 'possessed' could be rather double-edged.

At the same time, since it was also believed that witches could 'shift shape', go forth in spectral form and send their own spirits or those of attendant demons out to inhabit hapless bodies, a plea that one was possessed could also be regarded as a protestation of innocence. 'Involuntary possession' could therefore be a legal defence and a let-out; it was used as such by Johannes Wier when defending accused witches. This doctor of medicine, who has been called 'the founder of modern psychiatry', was a pious man who subscribed

Culver Pictures, New York

to the established belief in devils but at the same time displayed an admirable insight, common sense and frequently courage, in judging particular cases, rejecting hearsay evidence and carefully scrutinizing notions of bewitchment. 'The uninformed and unskilled physicians,' he wrote in his book *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, 'relegate all the incurable diseases, or all the diseases the remedy for which they overlook, to witchcraft . . . In all such cases a good doctor is to be consulted because nothing is more important than to make the clinical situations as clear as daylight, for in no domain of human life are human passions so freely at play as in this one, these passions being superstition, rage, hate and malice.'

Wier's lifetime (1515–1588) was the heyday of possession cases on the Continent, and many of them involved communities of nuns or single young women. Writing at the beginning of the 17th century, Guazzo, an Italian 'authority' on witchcraft, noted that 'those especially afflicted were bound by a vow of virginity', but the only conclusion he drew was that 'it was wonderful with what wiles the Devil surrounded them to deter them from chastity'. Elsewhere in his book *Compendium Maleficarum* his list of the symptoms of possession makes one wonder if some of the possessed were suffering not merely from an excess of enforced chastity but from epileptic fits: he notes rigor of the limbs, contortions, rolling eyes, fainting, the appearance of being strangled, palpitations, panting, vomiting and coma.

Another list of symptoms, drawn up by a priest at Louviers in France, after an outbreak among the nuns there, points more to a purely psycho-sexual hysteria. They included: denial of knowledge of the fits after paroxysm had ended; incessant obscenities and blasphemies; circumstantial descriptions of the sabbat; fear of sacred relics and sacraments; violent cursing at any prayer; lewd exposure and acts of abnormal strength; and finally similar manifestations in others around. A feature of witchcraft outbreaks this last symptom strongly suggests that the desire for attention played an important part in cases of 'possession'.

French nuns, in particular, continued to show signs of being possessed well into the 17th century. A company of them at Lille in 1613 claimed to be leading a life which was one long orgy. A similar outbreak in Madrid, in 1628, petered out when the Inquisition dispersed the nuns involved to different convents. Far more lasting in its effects was the most famous case of all, that of the bewitched nuns of Loudun in the outbreak of 1634; even after the execution of the worldly priest Urbain Grandier, who had been charged with causing their demonic possession, the hysteria spread (see GRANDIER).

In Protestant countries this showy form of mass-possession never seems to have been quite so popular, partly because the Protestant faiths have been wary of too definite a belief in spirits, tending to veer away from them as 'popish fancies', and so have favoured prayer rather than exorcism in cases of possession; a less dramatic and less rewarding treatment from the hysteric's viewpoint. As a modern writer, T. K. Oesterreich has put it, 'possession begins to disappear among civilized races as soon as belief in spirits loses power'. In England possession was never popular among adults, but there are numerous 17th century English cases concerning children and adolescents of both sexes.

Snails and Puppy-Dogs' Tails

The pattern of such cases, however, seems to have been based, like so much in English witchcraft, on Continental prototypes of a generation or so earlier, described by English writers. There was, for instance, Richard Baxter's account of what seems to have been a classic case in Louvain in 1571. A 15-year-old girl, Catherine Gualter, took to vomiting 'great flocks of hair, with filthy water, such as in ulcers, and sometimes like the dung of doves and geese, and in them pieces of wood, and those like new chips lately cut off an old tree, and abundance of skins like parchment shavings . . . After this she vomited innumerable stones, some like walnuts, and like pieces broken out of old walls and with some of the lime on them.' The writer added cautiously, 'that she was cured by the priest's means does not render the story incredible, though there be many deceits.'

Baxter seems to have suspected, as a modern reader may, that the girl herself had been deliberately swallowing a variety of unpalatable objects – a symptom not unknown in present-day hysterical psychopaths. It is also possible that she had not really vomited all the matter produced at all, but simply pretended to have done so. No doubt this is the explanation of many of the recorded instances of people apparently vomiting an extraordinary selection of things, from pins and needles to snails, puppy-tails and live frogs; and also of some of the related cases of 'bewitched' women giving birth to such creatures as leverets or kittens. Other of these unnatural progeny may, in fact, have been deformed, aborted human foetuses which were not recognized as such.

In Vienna, in 1583, after a 16-year-old girl had complained of abdominal cramps, a group of Jesuits spent eight weeks exorcizing her. In the end they claimed to have expelled from her 12,652 living demons which her grandmother had been keeping as flies in glass jars. The grandmother was then tortured into confessing intercourse with the Devil in the shape of a ball of thread, and was burnt to death. If that adolescent's secret motive had been to spite and reject her matriarch, she had succeeded all too well.

The first of a series of such cases in England was the Warboys case, which was also the most discussed witchcraft trial in the land before 1600. In 1589, the ten-year-old daughter of Robert Throckmorton, a squire of Warboys in Huntingdon, began to have fits. These she blamed on the influence of Mrs Alice Samuel, a respectable, elderly neighbour, and presently her four sisters, aged from nine to 15, began to have fits. A local doctor hinted at the possibility of witchcraft, and though the parents were at first inclined to dismiss the whole thing as children's 'wantonness' they reluctantly agreed to confront Mrs Samuel with the girls. Upon this the fits naturally became more dramatic – though presently the girls reversed their ideas and began to have fits in the old woman's absence, so that for a time she was forced to live in the house with them, suffering many indignities in what must by then have been a most unpleasant atmosphere.

When this had been going on for nearly a year and had become the talk of the neighbourhood, a distinguished visitor to the house, Lady Cromwell (grandmother of Oliver Cromwell) attacked Mrs Samuel physically, slashing off part of her hair, which she ordered to be burnt. The significance of this attack, an example of the old custom of 'scratching a witch' to destroy her power, was not lost on poor Mrs Samuel who cried, 'Madam, why do you use me thus? I never did you any harm as yet' – a probably innocent remark which was later made to seem ominous when the 'yet' was emphasized. Lady Cromwell died two years later, when the fits were still going on.

At last, to placate the family, Mrs Samuel ceremonially ordered the girls to stop. They did so, of course, which was taken as proof that she was a witch indeed. She was nagged by the local parson into 'confessing', but next day retracted her statement. She was however brought before the Bishop of Lincoln and held in custody to await the Assizes along with her husband and her daughter Agnes, whom by this time the girls had also implicated. The fits went on, and now the children began saying that the Samuels had magically murdered Lady Cromwell. By this time the neighbourhood was aroused, and there were additional stories of sorcery. The Assize jury found all three suspects guilty, and old Mrs Samuel confessed to intercourse with the Devil. Agnes, however, refused to confess and further declined to save her own life by pleading pregnancy (a recognized escape route) with the fine remark 'Nay, that I will not do: it shall never be said that I was both a witch and a whore.' All three were hanged. The Throckmorton girls appear to have passed on into a normal adult life.

Adolescent Fantasies

The case was an important one because, for the first time in England, the families involved were people of education and influence. It was widely reported and this must have helped to spread and confirm popular superstitions and to give them credence among the law-making classes. A series of comparable cases followed over the next two generations. In 1596 at Burton-on-Trent a boy called Thomas Darling had fits in which he claimed to see green cats. He accused a woman called Alice Goodridge, who was convicted and died in jail. He was allowed to 'scratch' her, at which she said, 'Take blood enough, child. God help thee.' The child answered, 'Pray for thyself, thy prayers can do me no good.'

Another boy, in Pendle in 1634, accused a number of people, among them Janet Device, daughter of a convicted witch, who, as a child, had been responsible for getting her own mother executed (see LANCASHIRE WITCHES). He later retracted his statement,

Credulity, Superstition and Prejudice, **an engraving by William Hogarth, indicates the social climate in which belief in witchcraft was able to flourish**

By courtesy of the Trustees of the Wellcome Library Sonia Halliday

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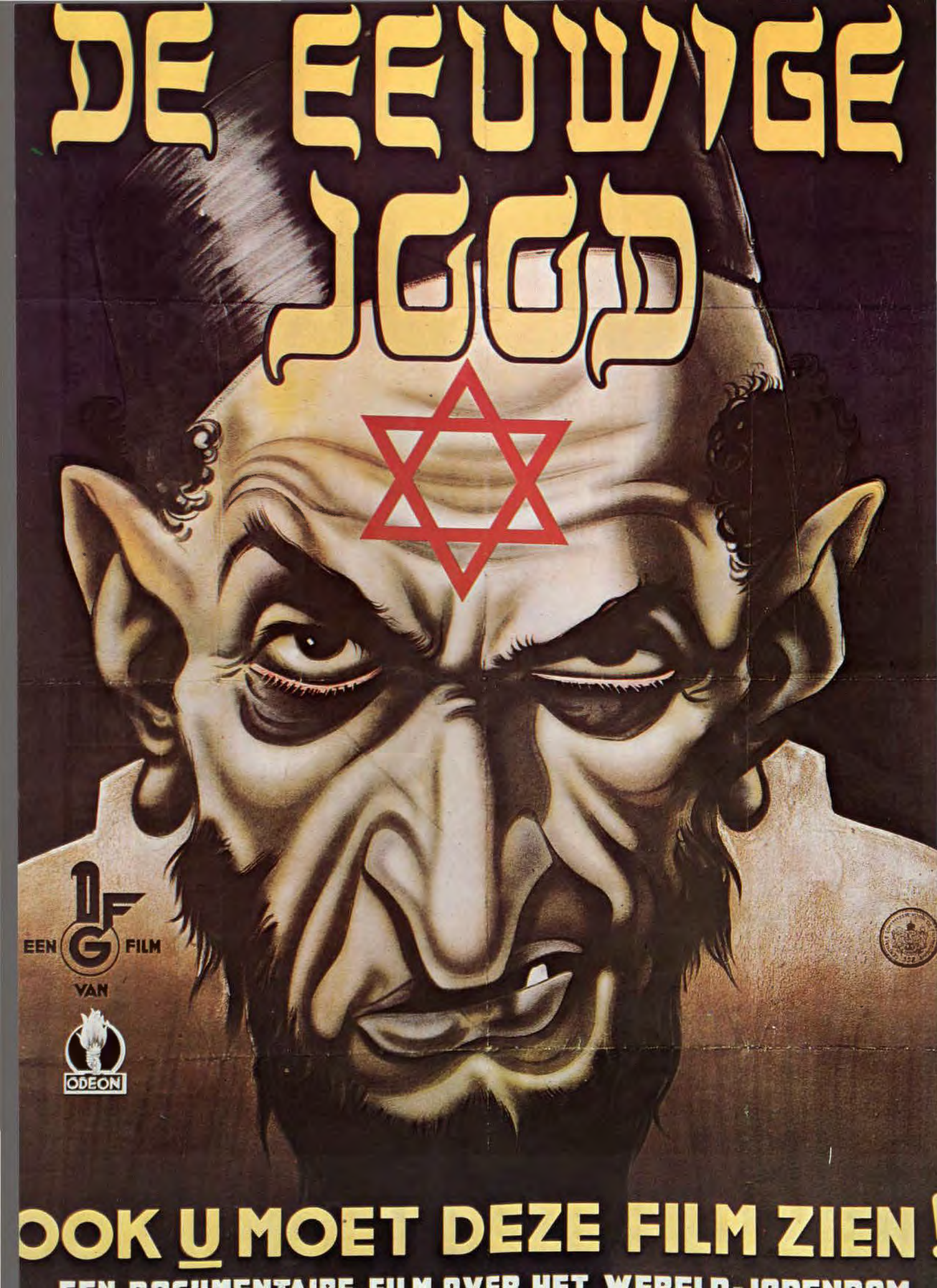
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hut by this time three of the accused (although not the indestructible Janet) had already died in prison. Yet more children's evidence, at Bury in 1644, brought about the execution of two hitherto respected women, after a trial at which the scholar Sir Thomas Browne gave 'expert' evidence for the prosecution. But many English juries were uneasy about such testimony, even at the height of the witch-phobia.

A famous case occurred in 1620, when a boy claimed to be bewitched, to be vomiting oddments and to be voiding blue urine. He was kept under observation and was caught pouring ink into his chamber-pot and also stuffing ink-soaked paper under his foreskin – behaviour not untypical of a neurotic child in any era. His particular devil was supposed to send him into fits on hearing the first verse of the first chapter of St John, but those watching the boy were soon to discover that the devil did not apparently understand it read in Greek. The boy was made to apologize publicly to the witch he had accused, and the case was withdrawn. The contemporary comment that the boy had probably been coached in his symptoms by a Catholic priest, sheds a slightly more sinister light on the issues of principle and belief involved in such cases.

In every era there have always been a substantial number of people who are prepared to believe in a mythical 'secret society' conspiring against them. In the past this delusion resulted in the persecution of witches; in the 20th century Jews were victims of the same kind of prejudice: Dutch poster advertising an anti-semitic film in the 1930s

Probably no case of witchcraft possession is as famous as that of the 'Witches of Salem' which occurred in the New World in 1692, at a time when the idea of witchcraft was being officially relinquished in Europe. In many respects it comes closest to the Warboys case of a century earlier, in that in Salem, as in Warboys, a group of adolescent girls got the bit between their teeth, and rocked a whole community by their malevolent fantasies and exhibitionism. In Warboys only three people died; in Salem, however, over 150 were arrested of whom 31 were tried and sentenced to death. Of these 19 were hanged, two died in jail, one was pressed to death and five others made confessions which secured them reprieves. The remainder escaped death for various reasons.

The only reason the holocaust was not much greater was that within a year, the wave of witch hysteria began to pass; the soberer citizens of the New England township were beginning to come to their senses and doubt was cast on the very principle of 'spectral evidence'. Within a generation the whole affair came to be officially regarded as an unfortunate and backward-looking error of judgement, and some paltry restitution was made to the survivors of the trials. The girls responsible went unpunished and only one ever recorded anything like a confession (see SALEM WITCHES).

Striking contrast is afforded by the case of Jane Wenham in 1712, the last conviction for witchcraft in England, though a witch was burnt in Scotland some years later. Jane's accuser, the servant maid of a minister, claimed to suffer from fits, visions of cat-devils and the vomiting of pins. Jane Wenham, who had long been known as the 'wise woman of Walkerne', was arrested, searched for witch marks, and made a confession. Under her pillow was found 'magic ointment' allegedly made from human fat rendered down, and also cakes of feathers. Clearly Jane thought of herself as a witch, and may have had malevolent intentions. But those concerned with her case had more enlightened ideas. A pamphlet war raged around her in true 18th century style and she was reprieved.

It is the treatment of the maid that is most interesting from a modern point of view. A doctor examined this girl, and ordered that she wash her hands and face twice a day, and that she be confined under observation. Her keeper was to be 'a lusty young fellow'. This was done. The fits and other inconveniences ceased forthwith, and the lusty young fellow later married her. Light, it seems, had at last broken on the true nature of possession and the real needs of many of the possessed.

GILLIAN TINDALL

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IBN ARABI

GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED as one of the greatest mystics of Islam, Mohammed ibn Ali ibn Arabi, of the Arab tribe of Ta'i, was born in 1165 at Muriac in south-east Spain. He is known as *Muhyi 'd-Din*, 'the Vivifier of the Religion' and *Ash-Shaikh al-Akbar*, 'The Greatest Sheikh'.

When visiting Cordova as a very young man he came into contact with an aged woman saint who was one of his first spiritual guides. He considered himself to be also, and above all, the disciple of Abu Madyan who was looked on as the greatest spiritual master of the age and who is now the patron saint of Algeria. 'My sheikh' he calls him, though he received his teaching through a disciple and never actually met him.

In 1198, at the age of 33, Ibn Arabi had a vision in which he received a Divine Command to go to the East, and he set off in the direction of Egypt, never to return to the lands of his birth and upbringing. From Cairo he went to Jerusalem and from there, in 1201, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca where he spent two years. After visiting Baghdad and Mosul in south-western Asia he lived for a while in what is now eastern Turkey. The Sultan of Konya showered gifts upon him, and later Ibn Arabi went to Aleppo where the king, a son of Saladin, also received him with great honour. He married more than once, and had several children. The last ten years of his life were spent in Damascus, where he died in 1240 at the age of 75. His tomb on the slopes of the hill at the north end of the town has been a much-visited shrine ever since. Two of his sons, both of them Sufis, survived him, and are buried beside him.

Ibn Arabi was the most prolific of all Sufi writers (see SUFIS). His unique combination of quality with quantity is in a sense a vindication of his claim, repeated again and again throughout his works, that everything he wrote was forced upon him by the Divine Spirit. His writing was never motivated, he says, by the desire to compose a book. It was simply, as he puts it, 'a way out' from the fire of inspiration which he sometimes felt would burn him up. This inspiration, he is careful to state, is below

that of a prophet, being such as belongs by right to 'an heir of the prophets'. His largest surviving work, *The Meccan Revelations* which the 'angel of inspiration' ordered him to begin during his first visit to Mecca, consists of 565 chapters (about 3000 printed pages) and was written over a period of 30 years. It contains much about his own life and the lives of earlier Sufis, and is also rich in information about the symbolism of letters and numbers, about astrology, symbolic geometry and other esoteric sciences. His most read work, a book in 27 chapters usually known in translations as *The Wisdom of the Prophets*, was revealed to him in its entirety in a single night when he was was already 65. The prophets (each chapter is devoted to one) range from Adam to Mohammed, and include Jesus and John the Baptist.

But some of Ibn Arabi's shorter treatises, often more concerned with practice than with speculation, best reflect his own life, which was essentially one of invocation, spiritual retreats, contemplation and pilgrimages to saints both living and dead, interspersed with the most remarkable visions. The long prayers which he formulated for his own use and for his disciples are still used in some of the Sufi orders, for although the order which he himself founded never became very widespread, he belongs in a sense to all the orders in virtue of his outstanding authority.

In a list of his writings which he drew up about six years before his death he gives a special section of 'books which the All-Highest Truth commanded me, in my heart, to set down but which He has not yet commanded me to bring forth to mankind'. Of these, 176 in number, only 16 have come down to us. Many of his 'publishable' writings also seem to have been lost.

'Oneness of Being'

In addition to his other gifts, Ibn Arabi is also one of the greatest poets of Islam. Particularly important is his *Interpreter of Longings* (*Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*) a collection of spiritual love poems addressed to the daughter of a Persian sheikh whose acquaintance he made in Mecca, a young woman of great beauty, piety and eloquence who was for him something of what Beatrice was for Dante. After his first visit to Mecca he does not appear to have ever seen her again, but the impression that she made upon him was lasting.

The most exalted and at the same time the most generally known aspect of his writing lies in his formulations of 'Oneness of Being', a doctrine known as 'monism' to Western scholars who have, more often than not, failed to realize that it is in no sense the invention of Ibn Arabi. 'Oneness of Being' is the doctrine that only God *is*, and that the existence of anything else is pure illusion. The created universe is nothing other than the overflowing of God's merciful infinitude, which does not thereby cease to be its one indivisible Self. This has always been the basic doctrine of Islamic mysticism and it stems, as far as Islam is concerned, from the Koran itself and from utterances of the Prophet. What characterizes Ibn Arabi is his extreme and sometimes provocative explicitness, where most of his predecessors had preferred to express themselves by aphorism. 'Men are asleep, and when they die they wake', said Mohammed; Ibn Arabi points out that the world as man sees it is a dream-world and that like a dream it stands in need of interpretation; and he relentlessly strips the dream-mask of illusory plurality from the face of the 'One Reality' on every possible occasion and, it must be admitted, on some occasions where it is pointless to do so.

Ibn Arabi is however criticized far less for his occasional lapses than for the doctrine itself, which is especially associated with him and which is too profound not to be misunderstood.

But if he has had violent critics in every generation since his death, these have always been far outnumbered by his devotees – witness the great number of commentaries that have been written on his works, especially on *The Wisdom of the Prophets*. Moreover eminent authorities have made pronouncements in favour of Ibn Arabi's orthodoxy; and in the 16th century a mosque was built in his honour over the site of his tomb by the Ottoman Sultan Selim II.

MARTIN LINGS

FURTHER READING: H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1969); Seyyid Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1964).

IBO

BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR in Nigeria, the Ibo were estimated at some 7 million and lived on both banks of the Niger. Though they occupy a continuous territory and their language is the Ibo branch of the Kwa group of West African languages, they are composed of a number of communities whose membership varies from a few hundreds to many thousands. These often bear the name of a hero, for example the Umundri or descendants of Ndri, and appear to have arisen as a result of the breaking up of large family groups. These speak related dialects, but show marked cultural differences.

A myth of origin exists among the Umundri. The following version was narrated to me by a gathering of priests. 'The name of our founder is Ndri, the son of Eri: Namuku is his wife. Eri and Namuku were sent down by Chuku (a sky god). All the first things happened at Aguleri where the Umundri group started. When Eri came down from the sky he had to stand on a termite mound as all the earth was then a morass. Eri complained to Chuku who sent a metal worker, Awka, with bellows, charcoal and fire to dry up the land. Awka did so.'

While Eri was alive, the priests continued, he and his dependants were fed by Chuku and their food was sky-substance. Those who ate of it never slept. When Eri died, this food supply ceased and Ndri, Eri's son who had founded Aguleri, complained to Chuku that there was no food. Chuku replied that if Ndri were to slay and bury his eldest son and daughter he could obtain food from their graves. Ndri said this was impossible. Chuku then sent Dioka from the sky to Ndri to carve certain patterns (called *ichi* patterns) on the faces of these two children. Thereafter Ndri was to cut their throats and to bury them in separate graves. Ndri did so. Three Ibo weeks later plant shoots appeared from these graves. From the grave of his son Ndri dug up a yam, cooked and ate it and fell asleep. When he woke up his family were astonished and said they thought he had died. He told them what he had done, and they also ate of the cooked yam and fell asleep.

The next day Ndri dug up *koko* yams from his daughter's grave, ate them and likewise slept. For this reason the yam is called the son of Ndri and the koko yam the daughter of Ndri. When a man takes up the post of *eze* Ndri, that is the kingship, he does not have to slay his first-born son and daughter, though both have the ichi pattern carved on their faces.

Chuku told Ndri to distribute this food to all mankind. Ndri demurred, saying it was obtained by the death of his first-born children. Chuku insisted and stated that in return Ndri and his descendants would have the right of cleansing every Ibo town of abominations or breaches of taboo, of crowning the king at Aguleri, of tying the ankle cords whenever a man took the title of *ozo* or immortality; Dioka's descendants would carve the ichi pattern on their faces.

M. D. W. Jeffreys

Ndri and his descendants would also have the right of making the magical yam 'medicine' each year for ensuring a plentiful supply of yams in all surrounding towns. For these and other privileges the surrounding Ibo would pay tribute to Ndri and his descendants. So Ndri distributed the yams and the koko yams and in this way mankind was supplied with food.

Ndri introduced the system of ranking titles. He became the first eze Ndri or divine king while other individuals took and continue to take the title of *eze ozo* after him and in memory of him.

The carving of the ichi pattern on the faces of the son and daughter of the divine king shows clearly the sun cult pattern of Ibo religion. A drawing done by an untutored, illiterate Ibo was explained as representing the moon, the sun and the wings and tail of the hawk. Another design may be compared with, for instance, the Hittite winged solar disc where sun, moon, wings and tail of the hawk are displayed. It is accepted that this design was borrowed from Egypt, where the pharaoh wore on his head a golden diadem known as the winged solar disc. There is no gold available to the Ibo who instead has the same pattern marked on his head and so conforms with the essential requirements of a sun cult. This pattern is restricted to certain Ibos: the divine king, his eldest son and daughter, and those men who take the highest ranking title, namely the ozo title.

The name Chuku or Chiuku can be separated into *uku* 'great' and *chi* or *chu* 'sky being'. Chuku has three aspects or qualities: Chuku, Anyangwu and Agbala. Anyangwu means 'eye of the sun': Agbala splits up into *agba* 'female' and *ala* 'earth' and may mean 'mother earth', 'fertility'. The Umundri declare that there is ouly one Supreme Being and that there is no image or representation for Chuku's aspects whereas there are representations for *alushi* (children of the sun) or patron deities of villages or persons, and no shrine or special priest allotted. These concepts are abstract.

There is, however, a special cult object, the *ofo* (a small wooden image) owned by the Umundri and conferred when the ozo title is conferred upon an individual. This object must be held in the hand and pointed at the sky when prayers are offered. The ofo is thus the outward and visible sign that the holder has the right of audience with the ancestors and through them with the deity.

The ofo is the medium through which the owner obtains spiritual audience with the supernatural and without which no Ibo is entitled to enter the presence of the ancestors. He cannot pray effectively without this liaison between himself, the Supreme Being and the departed. Men not

Far left **Ibo divine king: he wears a crown of light white feathers, and a robe made from special blue cloth** ***Above*** **Ibo temple in eastern Nigeria: stylized figures are painted on the walls and skulls from sacrifices hang from the lintel** ***Left*** **Painted clay sculptures: the female figure in the centre is the Earth Mother, and beside her is an effigy of a white man riding a motor cycle**

entitled to own the ofo suffer the second death, in that after their death they become the forgotten. Through the ofo a man establishes his connection with the immortals and is assured while alive of immortality after death. Hence the striving to take the top ranking title ozo. The titled men dominated and controlled Ibo society. The custody of the ofo remains in the line of descent from the ancestor who acquired it.

The divine Umundri kingship does not go by descent, though the king must come from one of the recognized royal families. Technically, he has no brothers or sisters. The ancestral spirits indicate who is to be the next eze Ndri, often after a long period during which there is no ruler. At the time of his coronation, he must be without parents.

His coronation ceremony contains many elements of a sun cult where the office is immortal. The ceremony opens with a symbolic death, burial and resurrection. The ofo holders assemble under the guidance of the Okpala Okaka, or head of the Adama lineage, who is the custodian of the royal regalia and master of ceremonies.

The divine king-to-be is stripped, washed, rubbed over with red camwood, wrapped in burial clothes and laid out in a shallow grave in his own house. The grave is lined with *iroko* planks while the Okpala Okaka, holding an ofo, prays: 'You who are about to enter the grave, rise up again with a white and shining body. May no harm befall you. Rise as previous divine kings have arisen.' A plank is placed over the grave and earth is thrown on its top. The candidate's family now go into mourning, his wives donning the garb of widows. At the foot of his tree of life a goat and a fowl are sacrificed; the tree is then cut down and burnt. This destruction of the tree of life is the recognized sign that its owner is dead. When eventually the man does die there is no mourning ceremony. He is entombed in a special tomb and is said to have gone back to the sun.

The man is left in the grave till sunset when men from the Adama lineage exhume him. A banana stem replaces the body in the grave, which is filled in. The man has now left his family home for ever. Standing on a bull-hide, he is stripped of his grave-clothes and is washed with water from a sacred lake. Then his body including the hair of his head is smothered in a coating of white clay. He thus fulfils the prayer that he should rise with a white and shining body.

Re-creating the World

Henceforth he must wear only special white or blue cloth. Copper greaves are placed on his ankles but, strangely, he remains barefooted. He is now regarded as a sky-being or god, and his body is sacred. Only members of the Adama lineage may touch him or his belongings. All his servants must now come from this lineage. His food is prepared by a pre-adolescent boy of this group who, as he approaches puberty, is replaced by a younger lad.

The new king, whitened, now proceeds on his circumambulation which, beginning and ending at the sacred town of Aguku, takes several months. Mounting a special termite mound to pray to Chuku and ancestors is the first step. He eats food alone, in silence in a palm-leaf booth. Gods do not need terrestrial food, so no one sees him eat.

On reaching Aguleri he sits on a heap of stones and publicly consumes white clay presented to him in the form of rays. It is significant that he eats that which caused his body to be white and shining. Writing of the Egyptian dead, A. E. W. Budge stated: 'Those who chose the Boat of Ra sailed with him over the skies, they fed upon light and were arrayed in light; . . .' One recalls that in the origin myth of the Umundri, Eri was fed by Chuku on sky-substance or light.

At Aguleri, as the new divine king, he must prove his divinity by re-creating the world, by raising a lump of white clay from the waters of the Anambra creek. A sacrifice is made on the river bank. The new king points his ofo over the water and prays that all dangers be removed. Whereupon a man plunges in to the water to bring up a lump of white clay. In this way the new king re-creates the world and therefore the world is his. This lump of clay, retrieved from the waters, has its counterpart in the orb of other coronation ceremonies.

On his return to Aguku, which he will never leave again, he lives a year in a palm booth while a new palace and temple are built. An Ibo week after his return he demonstrates his control over the food supply: sacrifices are made, holding his ofo the king prays, an oil palm obligingly flowers, fruits and ripens in one day, and the oil is distributed for sacrifices for fertility.

Carry Bevington

Head-dress worn at an annual ceremony to propitiate the Earth Mother; the custom was abandoned at the end of the 19th century

The king's enthronement in the temple upon a stool on an earth dais covered with cow-hides and containing the skull of his predecessor is preceded by a ritual combat against youth and age. Then follows the presentation of the regalia, brass face mask, sacred spear, the ofo and the lump of clay or orb. The Okpala Okaka, ofo uplifted, invokes long life and prosperity, and invokes ancestors to abide with and guide the king, who is exhorted to conduct himself as his predecessors have done. After this comes the crowning of the king by the Okpala Okaka who places on his head a cow-hide diadem adorned with eight white plumes from the fish eagle. This crown is buried with him. The king now mounts the throne and announces his new name. He is, however, saluted by the term Igwe or Sky.

As soon as he has been crowned a wide road is made from the temple to the main road of the town. The entrance to the temple is through an arch of triumph where today the sacrifice of a cow replaces that of a human. The rest of the day is spent in feasting and games. The king now occupies his throne daily all day for 12 days during which time delegates from surrounding areas come to make obeisance to him.

The next step is the ceremonial establishment of the markets. Four sacred stakes are driven into four cylindrical mounds about six feet apart in the courtyard of the palace. Each stake is tied to the next with palm-leaf fibre. A fowl is sacrificed at each stake, each of which receives a name from each day of the four-day Ibo week. The king has now completed the ritual by which a human man is converted into an immortal god.

There is another cult object among the Ibo traceable to the sun cult of Egypt, a ram head image called Ihenga. In 1878 A. Burdo, describing the cult objects of the Ibo chief of Oputa on the Niger wrote: 'At the end of the room there was a ledge, near which were placed three wooden idols, curiously painted; a sort of *lares* (household deities), called Tshi, Ikenga and Ofo' (*The Niger and the Benue*, 1880).

P. A. Talbot in 1926 wrote that 'another protective spirit, worshipped by most of the Iho suh-trihes is Ikenga . . . It is the genius of a man's strength and of his fortune' (*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, 1926). Margaret Murray in *The God of the Witches* (1933) remarked: 'The chief of the horned gods of Egypt was Amon . . . He is usually represented in human form wearing the curved horns of the Thehan ram.' These parallels between the Umundri religion and that of ancient Egypt are sufficient to establish the Umundri religion as a sun cult that has been diffused from Egypt.

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Chris Barker

It is said that this ancient Chinese source of wisdom, which has been used for divination for thousands of years, yields astonishingly apt counsel to the serious inquirer but gives a random or even a rude reply to the frivolous

I CHING

PROBABLY THE OLDEST extant book in the world, the I Ching or Book of Change is certainly one of the most extraordinary. This abstruse Chinese classic is known to English readers by several names. I Ching (pronounced Ee Jing) is the official romanized Mandarin spelling, while Yee King, Yik King and so on are spellings representing certain Chinese dialects. Often called the Book of Changes, it is better rendered in the singular form; either would suit the Chinese characters, but its authors were concerned with the principle of everlasting change which governs the exquisitely balanced universal harmony; the transient individual changes that result are of secondary importance. Though this ancient work has long been used primarily for divination, it is revered also as a source of wisdom and as containing in cryptic form the quintessence of an incredibly ancient philosophy.

For well over 2000 years, philosophers have been debating the purpose and meaning of the I Ching. The discrepancies in the various English versions are an indication of the profundity of the Chinese text.

By a complicated manipulation of yarrow stalks, one of 64 possible hexagrams is obtained; the inquirer then consults the appropriate section of the I Ching for the answer to the question in his mind

Its hoary antiquity, its extreme terseness and the mystical nature of its contents all combine to make it highly enigmatic. Chinese scholars who have devoted whole decades to its study disagree on many points; and the scores of Chinese commentaries, both ancient and modern, are similarly at variance with one another. It is indeed quite possible that the enigmas are intentional, that the I Ching, like many other mystical works, was written in a secret language whose significance was revealed only to initiates.

Deserving 50 Years' Study

That it was immensely important in ancient times is apparent from what Confucius has to say about it. He tells us that the leathern thongs binding the tablets on which his copy was inscribed 'thrice wore out' from constant use and that, could his life have been prolonged, he would have given 50 years to studying it, thereby perhaps becoming a man 'without grave fault'. What use he made of it is not recorded. While he may have loved it wholly for its deep insight into the mysterious workings of the universe, he may also have esteemed it as a practical book of divination. What is certain is that it came to be included among the 'Four Books' and 'Five Classics' which, for nearly 2000 years, were required study for Chinese candidates taking part in the all-important Imperial Civil Service Examinations.

There have been stern scholars who believed that so lofty a classic was shockingly besmirched by being put to use by soothsayers. For all that, it is certain that it has been used for divination since before the days of Confucius (550–480 BC). Certainly it owes much of its reputation – now swiftly extending to the West – to the surprising accuracy claimed for its predictions. Today in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam – the four countries where scholars readily understand the Chinese script – there are countless people, ranging from pious mystics to street fortune tellers, who peer into a future revealed by means of its curious diagrams. The present Chinese government, in its campaign against 'ancient superstitions', is likely to have banned its use but it would not be surprising to learn that Communist generals and administrators still seek its advice in secret. They must know, for example, that in 17th century Japan, Yamaga built up the Samurai into the finest fighting force in Asia by teaching them a type of strategy that accorded with a special interpretation of the I Ching. Though it is not a military book, it teaches how all activities benefit from being made to harmonize with the universal cycles of everlasting but orderly change, involving advance and retreat, progress and retrogression, each in due season.

System of Diagrams

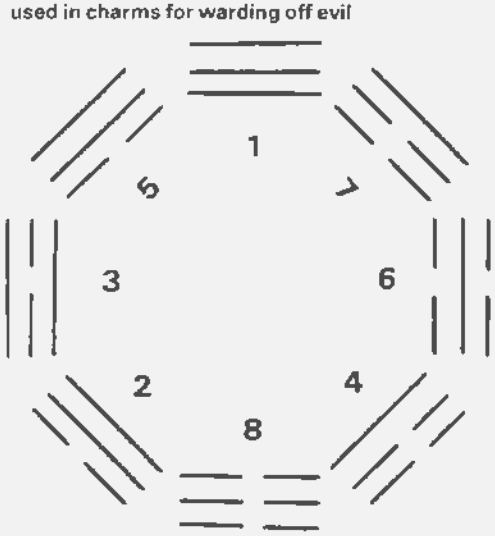
The I Ching is the product of a religion that antedates both Confucianism and Taoism (see CHINA; TAOISM) and goes back to the very beginning of Chinese civilization. According to its teaching, the womb of the universe is a limitless, imperceptible void – T'ai Chi, the Absolute. In it all objects have their being and each owes its transient individuality to a particular combination of Yin (negative) and Yang (positive).

A system of diagrams illustrating this concept is attributed to Fu Hsi, who is said to have lived 30,000 years ago (see box opposite page). Even assuming that he never existed or that so vast a stretch of time is a fanciful exaggeration, the fact remains that the diagrams are perhaps more ancient than any others in the world. Probably these diagrams had already existed for thousands of years when, if the traditional belief is accepted, King Wen (c 1150 BC) and his son Duke Chou provided each of them with an explanatory text. Modern scholars believe the text to have been produced at a later period, but it cannot have been much later as Confucius regarded it as belonging to high antiquity. This text, coupled with a commentary written either by Confucius or by some of his immediate disciples, forms the work as it now stands. Since Confucius lived some 2500 years ago, the main text must be somewhere between 2500 and 3100 years old and the commentary, just about 2500.

The main body of the book consists of 64 sections, each headed by a different diagram in the form of a hexagram (figure made up of six broken or unbroken lines). The hexagram is followed by a short explanatory text attributed to King Wen. Here is an example: 'Integrity. Sublime success. Righteous persistence brings rewards. Those opposed to righteousness meet with harm. It is not favourable to have any goal (or destination) at this time.' Next follows a terse Confucian commentary which amplifies the meaning of the text and usually explains how it came to be derived from the hexagram. Then comes a brief note on the symbolism and its implications: 'This hexagram symbolizes thunder rolling across the whole earth; from it all things receive their integrity. The ancient rulers gave abundant and timely nourishment to all.' So much for the hexagram as a whole. Next come notes on each of its separate lines, attributed to Duke Chou: 'Line 1. Moving onward with integrity brings good fortune.' Each note is followed by a Confucian commentary on the line text: 'What is willed comes to pass.'

Obviously a book containing so many sections, each composed of terse, disjointed aphorisms, does not make for smooth reading. There are readers who, believing that an inner significance relates the parts to one another, read and re-read the book from cover to cover as regularly as devout Christians read the Bible. But mostly it is read a section at a time in connection with the act of divination. The soothsayer (who may be anyone at all) burns incense, prostrates himself thrice before the silk-wrapped book and, by a complicated manipulation of yarrow stalks (a plant also used for divination in the West) or by tossing three coins six times, receives in answer to the question in his mind one hexagram or, in many cases, two of them, usually with the emphasis directed to one particular line. As there are 64 hexagrams, each capable of giving seven answers (either with reference to one of the six lines or without emphasis on any of them), the total number of basic answers is 448. As two hexagrams are often drawn and more than one line may be stressed, the number of possible answers is much larger. They are considered sufficient to take care of any eventuality, though in one sense all of them are variations on four themes – proceed energetically, proceed with caution, stop, or go back.

Circular arrangement of the eight trigrams used in charms for warding off evil



High Moral Tone

In another sense this is a gross oversimplification, for almost every word in the text, the commentary, the note on symbolism and the individual line or lines particularly stressed is carefully weighed for its bearing on the question and on the circumstances governing both question and inquirer. Because of the seemingly mechanical means of obtaining an answering hexagram, this method could be dismissed as fortune telling of the most arbitrary sort were it not for at least two special characteristics. First and foremost, the I Ching does not regard the future as fixed, so that ordinary fortune telling is out of the question. The answers tell the inquirer, not what will happen, but how he should act. Secondly, the book's high moral tone makes it quite useless to people who intend to act from selfish motives. The answer 'cautious progress' does not mean that the inquirer will act in that way, which is what a fortune teller would be likely to imply, nor does it mean that to progress cautiously would be to the inquirer's immediate material advantage. What it does mean is that, under the circumstances, it would be morally right to do so and therefore it would redound to his ultimate good and perhaps to his immediate advantage, but in the higher sense.

However, where impersonal objects, events or forces are involved, there is indeed a powerful element of prediction, for it is assumed that normally all things, unless disturbed by deluded man, progress in accordance with the cycle of events to which each belongs. Yet even where such predictions do suggest fortune telling, the moral tone of the book still sets it quite apart from what is usually understood by divination. Again and again there are references to 'the Superior Man', the paragon of virtue whom the inquirers are expected to take as their model.

The one seemingly crude aspect of the whole process is that, mathematically speaking, the manipulation of the yarrow stalks or of the three coins produces results apparently just as random as those achieved by the ordinary tossing of a coin. However, Western sceptics who on that account feel inclined to dismiss such divination contemptuously are sometimes deterred by C. G. Jung's preface to Richard Wilhelm's German translation of the I Ching, in which it is apparent that the eminent Swiss psychologist was convinced of the value of its predictions. Unfortunately his explanation of 'how it works' is less satisfactory than his description

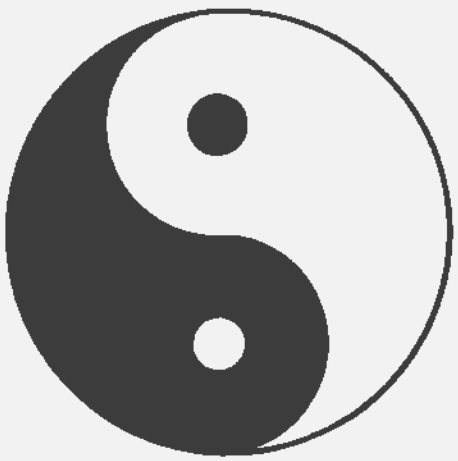
of 'what it does'. One gathers he had faith in the I Ching's ability to foretell many of our actions quite accurately, and attributed this ability to the fact that the images it employs relate to the collective unconscious and make a powerful though perhaps imperceptible appeal to us to act or expect things to happen in a certain way. His attempt to explain the mechanics of working the oracle is by no means clear. The traditional explanation is that what happens to the yarrow sticks or coins while held in or falling from the inquirer's hands is not at all accidental but bears a hidden relationship to the cycle of events to which the answer belongs.

As it is impossible to demonstrate such a relationship, there will always be scoffers – Chinese as well as Western. However, doubters open-minded enough to persist for a while in using the I Ching are, it is said, often astounded by the accuracy of the answers and by their sometimes extraordinary appositeness both to the question and to the surrounding circumstances. According to a commonly accepted belief, it does not take long to discover that the responses are random or even discourteous when the act of divination is performed for fun; whereas they are most likely to be strikingly correct when the 'diviner' acts in all seriousness and when, while putting questions and interpreting the answers, he allows his mind to enter a state similar to that reached in the early stages of Buddhist or yogic meditation. From this one may infer that Jung was perhaps right in supposing that the symbols and words which constitute the oracle convey messages directly to the mind, at a level beyond everyday consciousness.

It is apparent that the Book of Change is wholly concerned with the attainment of inner serenity and of harmony with man's surroundings and not at all with material success, except to the extent that, in a universe governed by moral law, material success may well be the ultimate result of righteousness. There are Chinese philosophers and mystics who read it for its spiritual counsel, using it less often (if at all) for divination, and they appear to be untroubled by the disjointed nature of the aphorisms. Perhaps they really are able to discern a sublime pattern hidden from ordinary readers. Chinese tradition claims that the book reveals the secret workings of the universe; also, that its careful study would lead a man to live a blameless life largely free from frustration, because all his thoughts and actions would be in serene accord with the mystical order of being that governs the activities of the ants and the bees, the smooth progress of the seasons and the majestic movements of the stars.

The Diagrams of Fu Hsi

In the centre of Fu Hsi's pattern is a circle representing the Absolute, but divided into overlapping positive and negative sections, each containing the seed of its own opposite, thus



Around this is a circle of eight trigrams and beyond that a larger circle of 64 hexagrams (figures made up of six lines), all of them built up of positive (unbroken) and negative (broken) lines.

Each of the hexagrams in the outer circle is a different combination of two trigrams, for instance ䷇ or ䷬. These also have names and attributes and represent further subdivisions of creation

The eight trigrams or symbols of the primary subdivisions of creation are named below:

Adapted from John Blofeld, *The Book of Change* (Allen & Unwin 1968)

Ch'ien	Heaven	sky	cold		creative active strong firm light
Tui	Lake	marsh	rain	autumn	joyful pleasurable
Li	Fire	lightning	sun	summer	beautiful depending clinging
Chên	Thunder		thunder	spring	active moving arousing
Sun	Wind	wood			gentle penetrating
K'an	Water	cloud a pit	moon	winter	enveloping dangerous
Kên	Mountain		thunder		stubborn immovable perverse
K'un	Earth		heat		receptive responsive yielding passive weak dark

All Versions Satisfactory

Of the three available translations in English, Legge's was produced about a century ago, under the inevitable handicaps of those days – lack of dictionaries and reference books and of learned teachers fluent enough in English to check what he wrote. It is an extremely literal translation and thereby doubly puzzling. Richard Wilhelm's, rendered into English from his German version, is on the whole excellent; it is marred by a few sentences of which the sense is far from clear, but that is perhaps to be expected in a book designed for use as an oracle. His notes and explanatory chapters are most valuable. Blofeld's rendering is less scholarly and has much less detailed explanatory material; it is a popular version with introductory chapters specially written to make the book's use as an oracle as straightforward as possible. A comparison of all three translations reveals discrepancies on every page and there are research scholars, both Chinese and Western, whose interpretations agree with none of those published. Fortunately, faultless accuracy matters somewhat less than in most other books; there is often so little connection between the terse sentences that a mistake made in one is not likely to perpetuate itself in those that follow.

A remarkable observation frequently heard is that all three versions produce satisfactory results when used for divination. This is further evidence in support of Jung's theory that the symbols make a direct communication to the unconscious mind. If this is so, it would seem that errors in the translation (and some small errors or divergencies in the various Chinese editions) are, as it were, by-passed.

JOHN BLOFELD

FURTHER READING: John Blofeld, *The book of Change* (Allen & Unwin, 1968); A. Douglas, *How to Consult the I Ching, the Oracle of Change* (Putnam, 1971); R.L. Wing, *I Ching Workbook* (Doubleday).

ICONOGRAPHY

The urge to make pictures and sculptures of the gods is a human need which has found expression in most religions, although some, notably Judaism, have prohibited it. As Christianity developed, images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints became objects of reverence, sometimes credited with the power to perform miracles

THE HUMAN MIND is so constructed that for most people comprehension of anything implies the ability to picture or visualize it. This is why the understanding of abstract ideas is difficult for the ordinary man. Popular expositors of such subjects as philosophy or physics are successful only when they can find vivid images to serve as analogies to the abstract ideas that they want to explain. In a similar way the idea of deity, or of a particular god, can only be comprehended by most people when they can see a linear or plastic representation of it.

That such a need was felt by man as soon as he became capable of conceptual thinking may be accepted as certain. And the earliest evidence that we have of human culture offers apparent confirmation. For Paleolithic archeology provides two possible examples of the way in which the Old Stone Age peoples (c 15,000 BC) tried to express ideas of supernatural beings whom they conceived of as existent and powerful.

The first example is carved on a slab of rock, found at Laussel, in the Dordogne area of southwest France. It shows the figure of a faceless woman. She is nude, with her maternal features grossly emphasized, and holds a bison's horn in her right hand. The failure to delineate the face must have been deliberate, for such facelessness also characterizes the many female figurines found on other Paleolithic sites (see FACELESS GODDESSES). The makers of such images clearly had the skill to carve facial features but for some reason they refrained. For them the maternal features appear to have been all-engrossing. The Venus of Laussel (to give the figure its customary name) was so positioned, when found, that it had obviously been the centrepiece of a rock sanctuary, probably used for fertility rites. The carving may justly be regarded as the earliest known representation of the mother goddess. We can only guess at the idea that inspired its making. Its emphasis on maternity or fertility doubtless expresses a conception of a creative power, productive of new life, of which the mother was the physical embodiment.

The motive behind the transformation of such an idea into a figure carved from stone represents a problem basic to all religious iconography. In the Venus of Laussel it poses itself for the first time. The idea of a creative power, the source of all life, was presumably a communal idea. But who thought of representing it as a faceless woman? The phenomenon of birth doubtless suggested the figure of the mother. But how came the carved stone figure to be accepted in such a way that it became the cult object of a sanctuary?

We have not the knowledge to answer these questions. But it is important at least to define them, for they represent problems raised by the first images of deity in every religion. The one certain factor in primitive art is the magical aspect of creativity, the fact that to draw a figure or carve one out of stone gives new and significant form to what has previously been formless. Michelangelo,

G. Tomsich, Rome

Ankara Museum/Michael Halford

Left **'Our Lady of Victory', a Byzantine icon in St Mark's, Venice, which was believed to have the power of bringing triumph in war. Images of Christ, the Virgin or the saints were regarded as holy in themselves and many of them acquired a reputation for curing disease or warding off misfortune**

Right **A prehistoric 'Venus' from Catal Hüyük: for the makers of these figures the maternal features were all-important, presumably as an embodiment of the power that creates new life**

A strange figure, partly painted and partly engraved, the Dancing Sorcerer may be the earliest known image of a god

Marseilt Collection

thousands of years later, was to think of himself as freeing a spirit imprisoned within stone when he carved his superb figures. The Paleolithic sculptor must surely also have wondered at the strange power that enabled him to bring such a form out of a rock. For once it was carved it was no longer a rock; it was endowed with a new form of being.

The Dancing Sorcerer

That the Venus of Laussel is the earliest known image of a deity there can be little doubt. Its cultic purpose is obvious. But not so obvious is the purpose of another notable product of Paleolithic art, sometimes known as the Dancing Sorcerer. This is a strange figure, partly painted and partly engraved, on the wall of one of the innermost recesses of the so-called cave of the 'Trois Frères' at Ariège, in the Tarn department of south-west France. The figure is roughly human in shape, and its posture seems to depict the action of dancing. It has the antlers of a stag, the eyes of an owl and a long tongue or beard. It has also the hairy pelt, tail and genitals of an animal and is placed high on the wall of the cavern, above drawings of other animals (see HORNS).

There has been much expert discussion about the significance of this curious figure. The name Dancing Sorcerer represents one interpretation. Some scholars have maintained that the figure is that of a sorcerer, disguised as an animal, performing a magical dance. Other prehistorians have suggested that the depiction represents a god, a kind of 'Lord of the Beasts'. They argue that these Paleolithic peoples, who lived by hunting, conceived of a great being which combined the attributes of various animals. It was thought to own all the animals, and so had to be propitiated by the hunters. If this theory could be proved, the so-called Dancing Sorcerer would be the earliest known image of a god, as the Venus of Laussel is the earliest image of a goddess.

The next known examples of divine images date from the seventh millennium BC. They were discovered in the Neolithic settlement at Catal Hüyük, in Anatolia. They represent the mother goddess, with the same emphasis upon the maternal attributes as the Paleolithic prototypes. The sanctuaries in which they were found indicate that the goddess was associated with both life and death. The exact purpose of the images is not clear. One, having the form of a mural bas-relief, seems to have been a cultic object. Much of the adornment of sanctuaries – the mural depiction of a bull and mounted bulls' horns, drawings of human hands, skulls of foxes and vultures, models of female breasts – appears to have had a symbolic meaning.

The religious iconography of the earliest civilized states of the Near East can be traced back to the fourth millennium BC. In Egypt it already shows its characteristic mixture of animal and human forms. The slate palette of the Pharaoh Narmer (c 3200 BC) provides both the earliest and most significant evidence of the fluidity of the Egyptian imagination in portraying deity. On one side of the carved palette the figure of Narmer dominates the scene, as he smites a kneeling enemy. To the right of the king a hawk is depicted, perched on six papyrus plants which grow out of a curious human-headed rectangular object. The hawk has a human right arm, which holds a cable hooked into the nose of the head below. This complex symbolism obviously relates to the Egyptian belief in a royal god, Horus, who took the form of a hawk. The pharaoh was regarded as the incarnation of this divine hawk. The depiction, therefore, may either show Horus as helping Narmer to overcome his enemies, or represent the king as the incarnation of Horus in victorious action. At the top of the palette two cows' heads symbolize the goddess Hathor. On the other side, the pharaoh is shown as a bull breaking up a fortified town and trampling on a foe.

The strange imagery of this famous palette of Narmer provides a clue to understanding the iconography of the Egyptian gods. The fact that on the same object the king can be depicted both in human form and as a bull, and possibly also as the Horus-hawk, reveals that reality for the Egyptians did not reside in the outer form or appearance of a thing.

Another significant but more aesthetic example, dating from about seven centuries later, is provided by a sculptured group of King Men-kau-re and two goddesses. All three figures are realistically human. The goddesses wear contemporary Egyptian costume, and might well represent two Egyptian women. Their divine status is denoted by symbols on their heads. Hathor has the horns of a cow, between which is the disc of the sun. The other goddess is a local deity and wears the standard of her district.

Statues Treated as Living

With a few exceptions, most ancient Egyptian deities were portrayed in one of three ways: in human form, with an appropriate symbol on the head; in animal form, usually with a symbol; with human body and animal's head, surmounted by a symbol. Their cult statues, after being made, were endowed with life by a special ritual known as the 'Opening of the Mouth'; the same ceremony was performed on a mummy to reanimate it. In the temples the cult image was regarded as the focus of the divine presence and treated as a living being. It was housed in a special shrine in the innermost sanctuary. Each day it was awakened and fed, and a toilet ceremony was performed. At the great festivals it was carried out of the temple, set on a ceremonial boat borne by priests. In some instances it was taken to visit a neighbouring deity to whom it was considered to be related.

The ancient Egyptians were an intelligent people, and it is difficult to believe that they thought the cult image was really the god. Moreover, images of the gods abounded in Egypt; in the same temple there might be many representations of the chief god besides the cult image. The cult image was the focus of their attention and worship; they treated it as the visible presence of the deity. It was the concrete expression, though symbolically presented, of those qualities which they imagined to be invested in a particular god or goddess.

The religious iconography of the Sumerians, which equals that of Egypt in antiquity, was wholly anthropomorphic; the Sumerians, and the neighbouring Akkadians also, thought of their gods as being of majestic human form. The typical Sumerian god was represented seated, wearing a long robe and a horned head-dress; the number of the pairs of horns which he wore seems to have been the chief index to his status. Usually an appropriate symbol was shown: a crescent moon, for instance, denoted Sin, the moon god. There are, however, two notable exceptions to this Mesopotamian representation of deity. In what has come to be known as the Eye

G. Tomsich, Rome

Louvre/Michael Holford

Top left **Drawing of the Paleolithic figure often called the Dancing Sorcerer, some scholars maintain that it represents a magician, others that it depicts a god** ***Left*** **Detail from** ***The Transfiguration*** **by Giovanni Bellini: the picture of Jesus with a beard and long hair is a medieval convention, and the early Christians visualized Christ as beardless and with close-cropped hair** ***Above*** **The Greek idea of deity found satisfaction in the contemplation of superbly beautiful forms and the Greek gods were human beings on a grand scale: the Piombino Apollo**

Temple of Brak the deity concerned, possibly the fertility goddess Ninhursag, was symbolized by two eyes. This strange symbol for a goddess seems to have had a wide currency later, becoming a characteristic symbol of Megalithic culture (see EYE). The other exception is provided by two bronze figures found at Ishchali, representing a pair of four-faced deities. Such monstrous features, of which there are parallels in some other religions, may indicate an attempt to show that the god was all-seeing. It is significant that in the *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian creation epic, Marduk, the god of Babylon, is described as having four eyes and four ears.

The gods and goddesses of the other peoples of the ancient Near East were invariably portrayed in human form. Sometimes they were given an appropriate attribute. Weather gods such as Baal, Adad or Reshef, brandish a weapon symbolizing lightning. Fertility goddesses of the Ishtar-Astarte type offer their breasts. An interesting example of religious syncretism or 'borrowing' in art is found on an Assyrian cylinder seal, now in the British Museum. The god Assur is depicted set in a winged sun disc, which was a characteristic Egyptian symbol for the sun god. A similar instance of borrowing occurs in Iranian representations, dating from the 5th century BC, of the supreme deity Ahura Mazdah. The Egyptian winged sun disc had evidently established itself as an attribute or symbol of the supreme deity.

Anthropomorphism also characterizes the religious iconography of ancient Crete. The Great Goddess was depicted in human form, wearing the typical flounced dress of contemporary Cretan women. Some statuettes show her wearing a high tiara, which appears to have been an exceptional ornament that probably indicated her divinity.

That the Greeks conceived of their deities as 'human beings writ large' is common knowledge. Homer's descriptions of the Olympic gods inspired an essentially anthropomorphic conception of them, and his authority sanctioned its realistic presentation. The peculiar Greek sensibility for perfection of form and a restrained harmony, however, soon transformed the archaic images into the assured products of classical

Reproof from an Image

Hard by under a portico there is a statue of St Peter, repentant, and over him there is a cock still crowing . . . This cock is said to have been the chief instrument in a miracle not less noteworthy than any recorded in connection with the Sacro Monte. It seems that on the 3rd of July 1653 a certain Lorenzo Togni from Buccioleto, who had been a martyr to intemperance for many years, came to the Sacro Monte in that state in which martyrs to intemperance must be expected generally to be. It was very early in the morning, but nevertheless the man was drunk, though still just able to go the round of the chapels. Nothing noticeable occurred till he got to the Caiaphas chapel, but here all on a sudden, to the amazement of the man himself, and of others who were standing near, a noise was heard to come from up aloft in the St Peter chapel, and it was seen that the cock had turned round and was flapping his wings with an expression of great severity. Before they had recovered from their surprise, the bird exclaimed in a loud voice, and with the utmost distinctness, "Ciocc' anch' anc'uei." . . . These words I am told mean, "Drunk again today also?" . . . The bird repeated these words three or four times over, and then turned round on its perch, to all appearance terra cotta again. The effect produced upon the drunkard was such that he could never again be prevailed upon to touch wine . . .

Samuel Butler *Ex Voto*

Bodleian Library

Above **The Trinity, from a 14th century psalter: the Father, with the crucified Son in his lap and the Spirit radiating light from his breast** ***Right*** **Tibetan Buddha of the 18th century: in early Buddhist art the presence of the Buddha was denoted by his footprints, an empty throne, the wheel of the law, or a riderless horse**

art. And we may assume that the Greek conception of deity found satisfaction in the contemplation of such superbly beautiful human forms. This certainly seems to have been so with the famous gold and ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia. It was ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and created a profound impression on all who saw it. A tradition records the answer of its sculptor Pheidias, when asked how he intended to portray Zeus, the supreme god of the Greek pantheon. He said that he desired to convey in sculpture what Homer had expressed in words: 'The son of Cronus (Zeus) spake, and nodded assent with swarthy brows; the king's ambrosial locks flowed downwards from his immortal head, and he shook great Olympus.' Another celebrated cult image was that of Pallas Athene, in the Parthenon at Athens. The work of Pheidias, this gold and ivory statue was 40 feet in height. It showed the goddess armed with helmet, shield and spear. Her right hand held an image of Nike (Victory), and on her breast was the famous *aegis*, with the Gorgon's head in the centre.

Representations Forbidden

This brief survey of the religious iconography of the ancient world must include a note about the curious Jewish prohibition of images. Its classic statement is in the Second Commandment: 'You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God. . .' (Exodus 20.4–5). The prohibition is curious because it ran counter to contemporary religious practice. It was also a departure from the practice of the Israelites themselves, for the Golden Calf described in Exodus, chapter 32, was obviously a cult image of Yahweh. Moreover, it is not consistent with the instructions given for the making of the Ark of Yahweh, since these directed that two golden images of cherubim be made (Exodus 25.18–20). However, the prohibition was gradually established as a basic tenet of Judaism, which became the supreme example of a religion which forbade the representation of the deity in human or animal form; a prohibition followed later by Islam.

With a few rare exceptions, the religious iconography of the ancient Near Eastern peoples and of Graeco-Roman society was restrained in its use of symbolism. Such restraint has not characterized the iconography of Hinduism and the religions of the ancient Central American peoples. Indian art has traditionally sought to represent the diversity of divine power by endowing the divine image with many arms. Thus in the statues of Shiva Nataraja, representing the great god as the manifestation of divine energy, the figure has four arms. Each hand holds an object that symbolizes some essential attribute or makes a significant gesture. The whole figure does in fact constitute a complex exposition of the divine nature. Even stranger and more repulsive are the images of the goddess Kali. She is black and a chaplet of severed heads hangs round her neck; her teeth are hideous fangs and her tongue lolls out. The hands of her four arms hold objects symbolizing both her creative and destructive power, for Kali personifies the ambivalence of deity, which manifests itself, according to Indian tradition, in the unceasing cycle of life and death, creation and destruction.

To the non-specialist in ancient American art the representations of Maya and Aztec gods appear even more mystifying than those of the Hindu gods and equally repulsive. The idiom of the art has clearly first to be learned, before its religious iconography can be understood. But even when the imagery becomes familiar, the concept of deity still remains essentially horrific. It is not surprising that gods of such a nature should have required the myriads of human victims that the Aztecs zealously provided.

Buddhist iconography provides interesting evidence of a change of thought about the propriety of representing the Buddha in bodily form. The fundamental tenet of the Buddha's doctrine was that of the necessity of detachment from physical existence in the material world. In the earliest forms of Buddhist art the presence of the Buddha was, accordingly, denoted only by his footprints, or an empty throne, the wheel of the law, or a riderless horse. However, some five centuries after his death images of the Buddha began to appear in northwest India. The change probably reflects the steady transformation of Buddhism into a popular religion. The Buddha became increasingly regarded as a divine saviour incarnated in perfect human form. An iconographic tradition was established concerning the posture of the Buddha's body and the positions of his hands and fingers; each posture or gesture had its own particular significance. The supernatural status of the Buddha figure was also indicated by the nimbus that encircled the head – a symbol that occurs in Hindu, Iranian and Christian iconography. National characteristics have made themselves manifest in the way in which the Buddha is represented: there are distinctive Indian, Tibetan, Southeast Asian, Chinese and Japanese types.

Christian Iconography

The first Christians preserved no record of the physical appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. Such an undertaking, if the idea of it had ever occurred to them, would doubtless have been dismissed as useless. For they were concerned with the future, not the past. They looked forward to the imminent return of Jesus with supernatural power and glory as the promised Messiah of Israel. And when that hope waned after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Christians had become more interested in Christ as a divine being than as a man. They did indeed stress the reality of his human nature but this was a doctrinal issue, not the result of interest in 'the historical Jesus'. It is significant that the earliest known description of the physical appearance of Jesus, the so-called *Letter of Lentulus*, is a 13th century forgery. The true situation was frankly stated by the great scholar and theologian, St Augustine of Hippo, writing about 400 AD: 'We do not know his face, any more than that of his mother'.

But if the original disciples of Jesus, who had seen him, had not been interested in preserving the memory of his physical appearance, later generations certainly felt the urge to portray him in either linear or plastic art. Their purpose, however, was a doctrinal one. It first finds expression chiefly in two forms: in mural paintings in catacombs and in sculptured sarcophagi. The catacomb paintings do in fact provide the earliest

British Museum/Michael Holford

Above **Symbol of the Babylonian sun god, Shamash, from a boundary stone of the 9th century BC: the winged disc was also a characteristic Egyptian symbol for the god of the sun** ***Right*** **Early medieval English manuscript showing the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, around Christ; in Christian art the traditional symbols of the evangelists are respectively the man, lion, ox and eagle**

specimens of Christian iconography, beginning about 200 AD.

Because the catacombs at Rome were burial-places, the Christians chose subjects for depiction there that symbolized divine salvation. The subjects were taken from both the Old and New Testaments. Among the former the story of Jonah was most frequently used: Jonah's being thrown to the sea monster and his subsequent deliverance provided a graphic analogy of salvation, which had been sanctioned by Christ's use of the incident as an allegory of his Resurrection. The New Testament subjects chosen were relatively few: the baptism of Christ, the miracle at Cana, the multiplication of the loaves, the healing of the paralytic man and the resurrection of Lazarus are the chief. In the scenes no attempt was made to represent Jesus as a 1st century Palestinian Jew. He is generally portrayed as a young beardless man, wearing a long robe of the toga type. The Crucifixion is never depicted in the catacombs, and there is only one problematic scene of the Passion, namely, the Crowning with Thorns and Mocking of Christ. The accent in the catacombs is clearly on salvation and new life. The Good Shepherd figure appears often, but it is doubtful whether it always represents Christ (see GOOD SHEPHERD).

Resemblance to Jupiter

The catacombs offer few examples of what might be specifically called a portrait of Christ. One occurs in the catacomb of Commodilla, dating from the 4th or 5th century; it shows a majestic bearded face, with luxuriant hair, and is reminiscent of contemporary statues of Jupiter. The head is encircled by a nimbus, and the Greek letters alpha and omega indicate that it represents the eternal omnipotent world-ruler. Another example of the adaptation of pagan iconography was found in the excavations beneath St Peter's, Rome. It appears to be a mosaic depiction of Christ as Helios (the sun), together with the sun chariot; it probably dates from about the 4th century.

The sculptured sarcophagi, used for the burial of the dead and dating from the 3rd to the 5th centuries, constitute a rich treasury of early Christian iconography. On them Christ is invariably depicted beardless and in Roman costume. Among the scenes additional to those portrayed in the catacombs are the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the arrest and trial of Christ. One of these sarcophagi is particularly notable for its representation of the Resurrection. The subject is treated with an interesting mixture of reality and symbolism. The trial before Pilate and the carrying of the cross by Simon of Cyrene are shown realistically but the centre panel presents a large cross, surmounted by a laurel crown of victory, inset with the Chi Rho symbol, a sacred monogram representing the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ; beneath the cross two sleeping Roman soldiers recall the miracle of the empty tomb.

A sarcophagus, now in the Lateran Museum, deserves special attention for its attempt to portray the creation of Adam and Eve as the combined operation of the Trinity. The triune Godhead is represented as three identical bearded persons. This early essay in the iconography of the Trinity, essentially a difficult subject for pictorial representation, was rarely repeated in later times.

The Crucifixion of Jesus, which had been avoided earlier as a pictorial subject, began

St Godric claimed that he once saw a little boy come out of the mouth of the figure of Christ on a crucifix and sit in the lap of the nearby image of the Virgin

to figure in Christian art from the 5th century; but it remained for many centuries a comparatively rarely treated topic. The Church was still primarily concerned with Christ as the divine Saviour, whose transcendental significance far outweighed that of the few years of his earthly life. But the depiction of the events of that life becomes more frequent, doubtless because they provided graphic themes for the teacher and the artist. Indeed the purpose of their representation was didactic. But with the development of the use of mosaic for mural decoration, scenes from the life of Christ provided suitable subjects both for the ornamentation of church walls and the instruction of the laity. The fine series of such scenes in the nave of San Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, executed in the 6th century, are notable examples.

Cult of the Icon

Although the idea of a cult image of Christ similar in purpose to that in pagan temples would have been repudiated as idolatry, the development of the basilica church during this period provided an opportunity for depicting such images, which was fully exploited. The domed ceiling at the eastern end of such churches afforded a large concave area which suggested the vault of heaven, and soon these areas glowed with mosaic representations of Christ. Such majestic figures as those in Santi Cosma e Damiano, Rome, and San Vitale, Ravenna, must have focused the attention of the worshippers so compellingly as to become the object of their devotion.

The popular appeal of holy images steadily grew, especially in the Eastern Church. The need was met by the production of icons, small portable depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary or various saints. Usually painted on flat boards, they could be used for private as well as for public devotion. They were treated as intrinsically holy, being kissed, bowed to and censed. Many icons acquired a reputation for curing disease or warding off misfortune. Some, such as the icon of Christ of Edessa, were regarded as *ocheiropoietos*, 'made without hands'. The cult of the icon provoked a powerful reaction in the Greek Church from c 725 to 842, known as the Iconoclastic Controversy. It started with an edict of the Emperor Leo III, condemning all images as idols and ordering their destruction. After much bitter persecution, the orthodox Christians eventually won and the icons were restored. The first Sunday of Lent is still kept in the Greek Church as the Feast of Orthodoxy, commemorating the defeat of the iconoclastic party.

In the Western Church the use and veneration of images was not seriously challenged until the Reformation in the 16th century. Although officially the nature of the veneration to be paid to images was carefully defined, popular piety often accorded to them a devotion that was indistinguishable from worship. What intensity of devotion could achieve is vividly seen in the case of St Francis of Assisi. He believed that the ancient crucifix in the little church of San Damiano spoke to him, charging him with his fateful mission: 'Go and restore my falling Church'. It may be noted also that from the 9th century the image of Christ on the cross became more realistic, and attention was given to representing the body as tormented to death.

Stories of miracle-working images abound in medieval literature. St Godric, a 12th century English saint, claimed that he once saw a little boy come out of the mouth of the figure of Christ on a crucifix and sit in the lap of the nearby image of the Virgin, who fondled him for three hours. At Château-en-Brie it was reported that a man cursed the image of the Virgin and broke its arm. Blood immediately poured from it, and the miscreant was seized by a demon. That the clergy were not above making wonder-working images was publicly demonstrated by the famous 'Rood of Grace' outside St Paul's, London. Brought up from Kent by Henry VIII's agents, its mechanism for moving the eyes and lips was exposed as evidence of priestly duplicity.

The 'Bible of the Poor'

But in spite of such abuses and popular superstition, iconography played an important educative and cultural role in medieval Christendom. In an age when the mass of the people were illiterate, knowledge about their religion was acquired by verbal instruction and visual illustration. The cathedral and parish church, through their images and paintings, constituted the 'Bible of the poor'. Ordinary folk saw the Trinity represented as a venerable man in papal attire holding the crucifix while the Holy Spirit, as a dove radiating light, emanated from his breast. They were shown how Christ had risen from the tomb after harrowing hell, how he had crowned his mother Mary as Queen of Heaven; and they knew how he would appear at the Last Judgement.

In great churches such as cathedrals the arrangement of the sacred scenes portrayed was carefully planned. At Chartres the main themes depicted were: Christ; Mary; the Church as the Bride of Christ; as Christ's body; and as the community of the saints – with the Eucharist as the divinely ordained link uniting the Church with Christ. Indeed, the medieval cathedral in its layout, sculpture, painted glass and murals, and with the drama of the Mass performed at its high altar, epitomized the universality of Christianity; it seemed to extend from this temporal world to the eternal world of Christ and his saints.

The destruction of images was in the forefront of the programmes of most religious reformers of the 16th century. Although their iconoclasm ended certain abuses, the damage done to the artistic heritage of many countries was irreparable. In Catholic countries the Counter-Reformation exploited the emotive potential of sacred iconography as a stimulus to piety and loyal devotion; El Greco's *Burial of Count Orgoz* and Bernini's *Ecstasy of St Teresa* are notable examples. The cult of images still flourishes vigorously among Catholic peasant populations in both the Old and the New World, involving many strange practices and curious beliefs.

The influence of the traditional image of Christ remains powerful for both Catholics and Protestants, and indeed even for secularists. The bearded, long-haired portrait which became established by the early Middle Ages has so dominated the imagination that puzzlement, if not shock, is felt when the artist departs from this convention. But it is chastening to reflect that the early Christians visualized Christ as beardless and with a close-cropped head.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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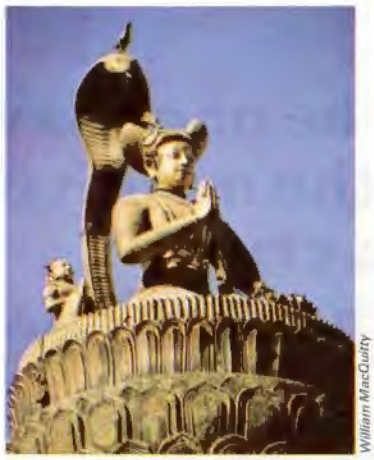

William MacDuffy

Idol

An image or object representing a divine being; the more sophisticated worshipper may take it as a symbol of the thing reverenced, but at more popular levels of belief the image is thought to possess power in itself and is treated as if it was the god himself, or the abode of the god.

Ignis Fatuus

'Foolish Fire', the pale flickering light sometimes seen hovering over marshy ground or graveyards; it is thought to be caused by the spontaneous combustion of gases from decaying matter; also called will-o-the-wisp, jack-o-lantern, fox-fire, corpse light, friar's lantern, fairy fire; in folk belief it is ascribed to a mischievous spirit which misleads night travellers, or to fairies or witches; in Germany it is said to be a wandering soul, in Russia the soul of an unbaptized child; sometimes taken as an evil omen.

See WILL-O-THE-WISP.

After his death the name of Ikhnaten, the heretic pharaoh, was obliterated from the king lists. He had challenged the power of the priests of Thebes by attempting to abandon Egyptian polytheism for the worship of a single divinity, symbolized by the disc of the sun

IKHNATEN

PHARAOH AMENOPHIS IV of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt, who adopted the name of Ikhnaten (or Ikhnaton, or Akhenaten), is the most remarkable individual figure in the history of Egyptian religion. After a period of sometimes excessive admiration, later scholars have sought to reduce his stature. It has been claimed that the introduction of new art forms, as well as the monotheistic religious teaching for which he is famous, had already begun before he ascended the throne – indeed the monotheism itself has been questioned. It has been said that the more permissive, peace-loving and internationalist values with which he has been credited are altogether illusory.

Though the new interpretations are partly justified, the greatness of Ikhnaten remains. Whether the force that drove him is called fanaticism, megalomania, or will and imagination, there can be no question that this pharaoh by his own genius succeeded in changing the overwhelmingly conservative traditions of ancient Egypt. Looked at from the point of view of the future history of man, it can be seen that his changes were enlightened. The fact that his endeavour plainly contained the seeds of its own destruction turns drama into tragedy. No wonder that modern man has been stirred by his story – even to the point of intensifying and recolouring it.

Amenophis IV was the son of Amenophis III and Queen Tiye. His boyhood was probably divided between their great Malkata palace at Thebes, and Memphis, the old capital which kept its importance as a royal city. During his father's long reign of some 38 years, the New Kingdom attained its greatest height of cosmopolitan opulence.

The problem which profoundly affects the historical interpretation of the reign of Ikhnaten and his immediate successors is that of his possible co-regency with his father. A minority of Egyptologists are convinced that Ikhnaten was crowned as early as the 28th year of Amenophis III and therefore ruled beside him for about 11 years. While there is a considerable amount of inconclusive evidence on both sides, it is very difficult in human terms to believe that Ikhnaten was carrying out his revolutionary policies while his powerful father was still on his throne and still orthodox.

Ikhnaten's reign lasted 17 years. Those who hold that it began only after the death of Amenophis III assign it to c 1367–1350 BC, while those who favour the co-regency must date it to c 1378–1362 BC.

The parentage of his beautiful queen, Nefertiti, is uncertain. She was closely associated with him in his religious ideals, and appears to have enjoyed love and domestic happiness with him until near the end of his reign. She then either died or was estranged. She bore him six daughters. The eldest of these was married to Smenkhare, who ruled beside Ikhnaten for a short time but died before him; the third daughter became the queen of Ikhnaten's successor, the Pharaoh Tutankhamen.

Roger Wood

Left **Ikhnaten identified himself with the supreme godhead and an intensified reverence was required from his subjects. On the other hand, the pharaoh was no longer idealized in art, but portrayed realistically** ***Right*** **Egyptian stele showing Ikhnaten and Queen Nefertiti making offerings to the Aten, the solar disc, from which emanate long rays each ending in a beneficent hand**

Roger Wood

Radiance of the Aten

The Thebes of Ikhnaten's youth was dominated by the city god, Amun. Linked with the royal sun god, Re, he stood for the unseen, creative solar force, and the wealth and power of his priesthood was very great. Probably under the theological leadership of the learned prieste of Re at Heliopolis, there had long been a tendency to merge the divinities of Egypt's bewildering pantheon with the sun god. He was seen most often in the form of Re-Herakhty, compounded of Re and the falcon sky god Horus – who was Pharaoh (see HORUS). In one early text Re is the 'sole god who has made himself for eternity', and other deities appear as his 'bodies'.

It has been supposed that the development of solar religion during the 18th Dynasty may have been in part an attempt to return to the conditions of the Old Kingdom, when the solar cult of Heliopolis gave Pharaoh unique power – a move by the crown and the northern priesthood to counter the hegemony of Amun. It is also suggested that the emergence of a new form of the solar cult, that of the visible sun disc or Aten (in which the spirit of Re was manifest) represented a compromise that could win new adherents.

There is no doubt that this growth took place. At their deaths several kings of the 18th Dynasty were said to have been reunited with the Aten; under Tuthmosis IV the Disc appears as a distinct divinity associated with the power of Pharaoh. In his father's reign Ikhnaten would certainly have witnessed a mounting concern with the Aten. By now the god had a cult centre in Thebes, and the title 'Radiance of the Aten' was applied to the state barge, the Malkata palace and probably even to Amenophis III himself.

Although these developments may have anticipated Ikhnaten's teaching, yet they were a slender growth in the forest of Egyptian polytheism – and at Thebes were quite overshadowed by the great tree of Amun. Amenophis III built several temples to Amun and to others of the old gods. The break which Ikhnaten had to make to achieve an uncompromising monotheism was therefore more revolutionary than evolutionary.

Already in the second year of his reign he was planning a huge temple of the Aten at Thebes. At this time the deity was still shown as a falcon or falcon-headed man crowned with the sun disc. Now the first great innovation was made. The human and bird forms were swept away, and instead the divine power was expressed by a disc bearing the uraeus of kingship and long rays each ending in a beneficent hand. These rays stretched out to all and sundry, giving a new unity to every scene, yet they offered the ankh, symbol of life, only to Ikhnaten and Nefertiti. At the same time the king seems to have demanded a deeper obeisance from those approaching him. This intensified reverence, so contrary to other trends in the royal life, can be explained in both theological and personal terms. The living Pharaoh had been one among the gods, the divine Horus. Now with one god alone, Pharaoh, too, became the sole divinity. The young king must also have felt complete identification with the godhead that had been revealed to him personally. On a boundary stone at Akhetaten he declares that it was his father the Aten, and he alone, who had shown him the site for this new city, and at the end of his famous sun hymn he says, 'there is none other who knows thee save thy son Ikhnaten. Thou hast made him wise in thy plans and power.' The same concentration on the divinity of Pharaoh is shown in the private tombs at Akhetaten. Where in the past the tomb owner himself would have appeared before Re-Herakhty, now there was only the Disc shining upon the royal family.

Temples Open to the Sun

After the adoption of the rayed disc, the next revolutionary step was the move to Akhetaten (now El Amarna) halfway between Thebes and Memphis. Thebes was heavy with the old gods and their priesthoods. The Aten needed his own residence in his own city. The site was probably first established in the fourth year of Ikhnaten's reign, and was ready for occupation two years later. It was in this sixth year that Ikhnaten changed his name from Amenophis.

The temples of the new city imitated that of the sun god at Heliopolis. In place of the dark sanctuaries of most Egyptian temples their courts were wide open to the rays of the Aten. The royal family must often have worshipped in them. As for the litany, it must have followed the lines of the marvellous hymn to the sun (see EGYPT).

The composition of this great poem is always credited to Ikhnaten himself. It celebrates the eternal return of the Aten, his creation of all lands, peoples and living things – and his care for them. Nature is shown rejoicing in its creator: vegetation burgeons, beasts gambol, fish leap and birds raise their wings in his praise. The monotheism of the hymn is absolute.

Ikhnaten's teaching on the life after death is imperfectly understood. He had, of course, banished Osiris and his judgement of the dead. The sun hymn was inscribed in tombs, and its equation of night with death is suggestive. Pharaoh probably taught that through him the dead shared in the solar resurrection.

The New Naturalism

Ikhnaten's ideas transformed not only religion but also art and the habits of court life. Egyptian art had always shown movement arrested, now it became an art of movement. Where before Pharaoh had been idealized to the verge of impersonality, Ikhnaten had his peculiarities provocatively exaggerated. The formal public scenes gave way to the liveliest portrayals of the royal pair embracing, eating and driving out together, dandling their babies. Traditional scenes glorifying Pharaoh as hunter, warrior, trampler of subject races were rare, at Akhetaten almost absent. The palaces at Akhetaten were bright with realistic paintings of the plante and creatures of the Nile. It would be foolish to judge these facts in the light of modern liberalism, but it is legitimate to see behind them a consistent mind and personality.

The inevitable negative side of the Atenist revolution is represented by the ruin of old temples and priesthoods, and the economic dislocation that resulted. Some authorities consider that it was only in his last years that Ikhnaten gave the command for all names of other gods, all words implying a plurality of gods, to be struck from the monuments.

The closing events of the reign are much disputed. Certainly Ikhnaten's boy successor quit Akhetaten, changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamen and devoted himself to restoring the supremacy of Amun and the temples and statues of the old gods. It was not, however, until the coming of the 19th Dynasty that Ikhnaten's name was obliterated and removed from the king lists.

JACQUETTA HAWKES

ILLUMINATI

THE ORDER OF THE ILLUMINATI, which was founded in 1776, took its name from the Latin, meaning 'the enlightened ones', and the aims of this society were to combat ignorance, superstition, religious restraint and tyranny in various forms. Although it has frequently been described as a prototype subversive secret society and has been accused, for example, of conspiratorially paving the way for the French Revolution, and of planning to achieve the political domination of Europe by unknown secret chiefs, nothing could be further from the truth. Initially its membership was confined to Bavaria and it never recruited adherents outside Germany and Austria. If we ignore its rather childish policy of secrecy and mystification, it represented little more than a society which attracted men of progressive rather than conservative views. The Order began as a protest against the old-fashioned, Jesuit-influenced system of Bavarian university education and if its founder, Adam Weishaupt, had not been an eccentric monomaniac, might have achieved more than was actually the case.

Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830), a product of the Jesuit educational system, who was appointed Professor of Law at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt when still a very young man, conceived the plan of using Jesuit methods to found a secret school of wisdom. His idea was that young men of intellectual promise should have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with areas of knowledge which the priests had successfully banned from the southern German universities, typically Voltaire's writings and the works of the French Encyclopedists. Secrecy was essential in order to avoid attacks from the Bavarian Jesuits, who in any case mistrusted their former pupil.

Weishaupt now studied the history of the secret societies of antiquity, such as the Pythagoreans and Essenes, but without obtaining any very useful information. In 1774 he happened to meet a Protestant Freemason from Hanover who told him a little about the Craft, about which he had hitherto known very little. He briefly considered a union with Masonry but this was rejected

Left His anti-clerical views led Adam Weishaupt, a Bavarian Professor of Law, to found the Order of Illuminati in 1776; as a secret school of wisdom it set out to encourage the study of areas of knowledge which had been banned by the ecclesiastical authorities in southern Germany *Below* Baron Adolph Knigge reorganized the Order on more or less Masonic lines but quarrelled with Weishaupt on matters of policy and finally left the Order

because the latter did not have the character of an Order, in the Jesuit sense. Although fanatically anti-Jesuit he proposed to fight them with their own supposed methods.

Spartacus the Secret Chief

The Order of Illuminati was accordingly founded on 1 May 1776 with five members, all of whom received fanciful pseudonyms. Weishaupt became known for Order purposes as Spartacus. He was under the impression that once recruits were won the German Freemasons would flock to join his Order. Nothing of the sort happened and after two years the total number of Illuminati did not amount to more than a score. The hoped-for expansion nltimately came in Municb where a few prominent citizens joined, upon learning that they wonld be granted the mysterious title of Areopagite.

No activity worthy of the name was evident until 1779 when Weishaupt finally produced a scheme of organization and a 'curriculum'. The Order was now to consist of three grades: in ascending order of seniority those of Novice, Minerval and Illuminated Minerval. A candidate for the Novitiate, who had to be introduced and vouched for by a member in good standing, had to swear an oath binding him to complete secrecy and unconditional obedience to his superiors.

An extraordinary system of mutual espionage was introduced. At the end of every month the Novice had to deliver to his proposer a sealed letter. This contained a detailed report on every aspect of his relationship with his mentor, who sent it unopened and unread to Weishaupt through an appropriate channel. The proposer, in his turn, had to furnish similar information about the Novice. Weishaupt devised printed forms for these 'intelligence reports'. An incredible volume of information had to be supplied. For example, he wanted complete details about a man's character, intellectual interests, family, friends, financial standing and so on. This mutual espionage was a feature of all the Illuminati grades.

Every Novice had to undertake a course of prescribed reading, based on the works of classical and modern authors, including those of the French Encyclopedists, and write regular essays. He was only allowed to know his proposer. The situation changed when he was considered worthy of promotion to the Minerval grade. For this there was a solemn initiation ceremony. The candidate was taken at night to a dimly lit room where he was received by an unknown individual who asked him certain questions. Provided that satisfactory answers were given, a password and certain secret signs were communicated.

As a Minerval a member was allowed to know others of his grade, but the identities of those in the higher Illuminated Minerval degree were not disclosed. The Minerval meetings were not unlike those of a learned society. Those present reported upon the books they had recently read, and discussed the latest scientific discoveries.

The degree of Illuminated Minerval could be taken without much ceremony. The member merely undertook further obligations, such as to instruct the younger bretbren and strengthen their devotion to the Order's somewhat vague principles.

By the end of 1779 the Order had achieved very little and certainly had no political significance. Indeed, Weishaupt received one complaint after another from Munich about his dictatorial rule and the time-wasting correspondence. At this point he realized that far from the Order capturing the Freemasons, members were leaving it to join Masonic Lodges.

Infiltrating the Masons

However, a solution presented itself: the Illuminati must infiltrate Freemasonry and conquer it from within. A charter for a new Masonic Lodge at Munich was obtained from the Berlin Grand Lodge Royal York. The Munich Lodge, which quickly recruited members, including a number who were already Freemasons, immediately declared itself independent. Initially, at least, most of those concerned had no precise idea of what Weishaupt was contriving.

The most influential of those who then became Masonic Illuminati was Baron Adolph Knigge (1752-96), who was soon to be the most important man in the Order. Knigge, who had assumed the pseudonym Philo, quickly put an end to the quarrels between Weishaupt and the senior members at Munich. Since he travelled far and wide in Germany, he immediately brought in new recruits. Much to his dismay, however, he speedily discovered that Weishaupt's plans for the Order were still very vague. Knigge, who was a first-class organizer, gave it a new

structure on more or less Masonic lines and there was a very rapid expansion. Among those who now joined were Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, Duke Ernest of Gotha, and even the illustrious Goethe.

Hitherto the Order had been so obscure that it had attracted little attention. Now, however, it had a number of enemies, not least among the Freemasons, who realized that they had been duped. To add to the complications, Knigge quarrelled with Weishaupt. The Baron was in favour of a more democratic organization and wished to restrain his colleague's anti-clerical and, above all, anti-Jesuit policies on the grounds that they were politically and tactically unwise. Weishaupt was stubborn and Knigge left the Order.

Politically Suspect

So far the Order had not experienced any trouble with the Bavarian authorities. But its expansion coincided with a period when conservative and clerical forces were gaining ground in Bavaria. All manner of rumours, mostly untrue, about Weishaupt and the Order were now circulated. The Order became politically suspect, although there were few grounds for considering it as a dangerous revolutionary organization. Without naming the Order, the Elector of Bavaria sanctioned a decree forbidding all secret societies, including the Freemasons, on 22 June 1784.

Yet another decree, dated 2 March 1785, named both the Illuminati and the Freemasons and confirmed the ban on all further activity. There were many arrests and Weishaupt was obliged to leave Bavarian territory. The Order collapsed in southern Germany and was soon moribund elsewhere.

The Order of the Illuminati was revived in Berlin in 1906 by Leopold Engel at the behest of Theodor Reuss, who had a hand in every conceivable variety of pseudo-Masonic activity. It then came under the spacious umbrella of Reuss's Order of Oriental Templars. Yet another revival of the Order has been attempted very recently at Frankfurt am Main.

ELLIC HOWE

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The Step-Pyramid at Sakkara, tomb of the Pharaoh Zoser and first of the great Egyptian pyramids, bears witness to the technological genius of its architect, Imhotep, Zoser's vizier and 'chief of all the works of the king'; he was also renowned as a great healer

The man who designed the great Step-Pyramid at Sakkara was transformed into a god some 2000 years later, and became the Egyptian god of healing

IMHOTEP

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SAGE Imhotep has two claims to unique distinction. He provides the best documented instance of the deification of a man and he is the first individual of genius known to us. His reputation, moreover, was due to his wisdom and technological ability, not to success in war, too often the qualification for fame.

Imhotep was the vizier of the Pharaoh Zoser of the 3rd Dynasty (c 2778–2723 BC). Among his titles were 'overseer of the king's records', 'chief of all the works of the king' and 'supervisor of that which heaven brings, the earth creates and the Nile brings'. His personal name Imhotep meant 'he who comes in peace'. His father was Kanofer, 'chief of the works of the south and of the north-land'; his mother's name was Khreduank. These facts are significant; for they show that Imhotep's human origins were well known and recorded.

One famous monument created by his genius still survives – the Step-Pyramid at Sakkara. This is the first-known stone building, and it was planned by Imhotep as a tomb for Zoser. Interesting evidence of the connection between king and architect has been provided by the finding, within the mortuary-temple complex of the Step-Pyramid, of a statue of Zoser bearing both his and Imhotep's names. The scientific and technological knowledge involved in the erection of the pyramid and its adjacent buildings at this early period impressively attests to the genius of Imhotep. But such an achievement does not explain how Imhotep came to be regarded as a god some 2000 years later, in about 525 BC, according to the

British Museum/Chris Barker

Imhotep, 'he who comes in peace': his wisdom became a legend in Egypt. This bronze statuette shows Imhotep wearing a skull cap, without any of the attributes of divinity which he later acquired

earliest available evidence of his deification.

From Egyptian sources, however, we learn that Imhotep had a reputation for other abilities than his skill as an architect. An inscription of the Ptolemaic period (330–30 BC), on the island of Sekel near Aswan, preserves an ancient legend about Imhotep. Egypt, during the reign of Zoser, was afflicted by a terrible famine owing to the failure of the Nile for seven successive years to reach the flood level necessary for the irrigation of the land. Zoser appealed to Imhotep to find the cause. After withdrawing to consult the sacred books, Imhotep revealed to the king 'the hidden wonders, the way to which had been shown to no king for unimaginable ages'. In the inscription Imhotep is described as 'the chief *Kheri-heb* priest ... the son of Ptah'. The description, in this context, is significant. The office of Kheri-heb involved the reading of magical texts during the performance of rituals believed to achieve supernatural results. Hence the holder of the office was associated with magical knowledge and ability. The legend indicates that Imhotep had a pre-eminent reputation in this connection. It also shows that he was regarded as the son of the great god of Memphis, Ptah (see EGYPT), although the name of his earthly father was also known.

An interesting reference to Imhotep occurs in the curious sceptical poem known as the *Song of the Harper*, which dates from the Middle Kingdom (c 2060–1788 BC), and was sometimes inscribed on the walls of tombs. It reads: 'I have heard the discourses of Imhotep and Hardedef, with whose words men speak everywhere – what are their habitations (now)?' The 'Harper' seems to imply that the wisdom of the great sages of old had not saved them from the ravages of time – Hardedef, incidentally, was the son of the Pharaoh Khufu (Cheops), builder of the Great Pyramid; but he never attained the posthumous fame enjoyed by Imhotep.

Healed in a Dream

In some way Imhotep also acquired great renown as a physician or healer of disease. A Greek papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus, an ancient city of the Nile valley, dating from the 2nd century AD but claiming to preserve an older Egyptian record, suggests that Imhotep's medical reputation was already well established by the reign of the Pharaoh Menkaure (c 2600 BC). The papyrus, which was written by a certain Nechautis, who sought appointment as priest in a temple of Imhotep, contains interesting evidence of the Egyptian practice of incubation – sleeping in a temple in the hope of divine healing. It relates how the mother of Nechautis, suffering from quartan ague, slept in the temple of Imhotep and was cured after dreaming that the god had visited and healed her by 'simple remedies'. After this miracle, Nechautis also became ill. He too slept in the temple, accompanied by his mother who remained awake. She suddenly saw 'someone whose height was more than human, clothed in shining raiment and carrying in his left hand a book.' The presence intently regarded the sleeping Nechautis from head to foot and then vanished. Recovering herself, the mother found her son bathed in perspiration, but free of his fever. On awaking, he described a similar vision, and was conscious that Imhotep had cured him. When mother and son duly offered sacrifices of thanksgiving to Imhotep, they learned that the god wished Nechautis to fulfil a long-standing promise. This was to translate into Greek the ancient Egyptian book which the papyrus claims to embody, so that 'Every Greek tongue will tell thy story and every man will worship the son of Ptah, Imouthes (the Greek form of Imhotep).'

The story graphically illustrates the manner in which the ancient architect of the Step-Pyramid had been transformed, some 2000 years later, into a healing god. The Greeks identified Imhotep with their own divine physician, Asclepios.

The gradual deification of Imhotep seems to have been completed about 525 BC. It was paralleled by a change in his iconography. Previously he had been represented, in small bronze statuettes, as a man, generally seated, wearing a short waist-cloth and skull cap, and without any symbol of deity; he held an opened papyrus scroll on his lap. Later, particularly in mural representations, he was shown with all the customary attributes of divinity: the Puntite beard, a long narrow artificial beard worn after the fashion of the men of Punt (Abyssinia), the uas-sceptre (see EMERALD) and the ankh, symbol of life. His divinity is clearly attested in the following inscription, adjacent to his picture in the small Ptolemaic temple at Kasr el-Agouz, near Luxor: 'Son of Ptah, beneficent god, begotten by the god of the south wall (Ptah), giver of life, who bestows gifts on those he loves, who listens (to those who call upon him), who provides remedies for all diseases.'

Imhotep's deification led, in turn, to the deification of his mother and his wife Renpetnefert. His father did not share in this exaltation, for already Ptah had been credited with the siring of the divine physician. At Memphis Imhotep came to form a divine triad with Ptah and the goddess Sekhmet.

Three temples are known to have been dedicated to Imhotep in Egypt, the chief being at Memphis, which became a famous medical centre, and on the sacred island of Philae in Upper Egypt. Many temples contained special shrines for his worship; on the upper terrace of the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir-el-Bahari there was a sanatorium for those who sought his help. The centre of his cult was probably at his tomb at Sakkara, near the Step-Pyramid. Excavations are now in progress at Sakkara and there are hopes that the tomb of the man who became the Egyptian god of medicine will eventually be discovered.

(See also HEALING GODS.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: J. B. Hurry, *Imhotep* (Humphrey Milford, 1926).

Imitative Magic

The use of a doll, made of wax, clay, lead or other material, to kill, injure or seduce the person the doll represents, is known from all over the world, ancient and modern

The quickest way to murder someone by witchcraft is to 'make a Picture of clay, like unto the shape of the person . . . then take a Thorn or a Pin, and prick it in that part of the Picture you would so have to be ill'

MIMICRY for magical purposes is deeply embedded in human nature. One of the common reactions to danger, for instance, is to keep absolutely still and shut your eyes. What you are doing is to pretend you are not there, so that the danger cannot strike you. We all know that this is not a sensible way to avoid a car which is out of control, or the anger of someone who is offended, but we do it automatically.

At racetracks and athletics meetings you may find yourself tensing and straining, to imitate a surge of energy in a runner, in the magical hope of spurring him on. Another simple example is observable at bowling greens where, after releasing the bowl, a player gestures with his arms and curves his body to persuade the bowl to curve in the way he wishes. Another is the simple device employed by doctors to make an embarrassed patient urinate when a sample is needed. The doctor turns on a tap and very quickly the sound of trickling water produces the desired result. This is an interesting parallel to primitive rain-making magic in which water is poured out to make the gods urinate from on high.

A familiar piece of imitative magic is to look at yourself confidently in a mirror and say, 'Every day in every way I am getting better and better.' This depends on mimicking what your inner feelings and outward behaviour would be if you improved each day, with such conviction that you do improve. Though much mocked, it is often effective, and this type of playacting to yourself is an ingredient in most ways of trying to change your character. In his book on *Magical Ritual Methods*, which contains many examples of imitative magic, W. G. Gray describes a method of banishing a bugbear by mentally imitating it looming up in the mind and then mentally shrinking it away to nothing.

Image Magic

The use of a doll, made of wax, clay, lead or other material, to kill, injure or seduce the person the doll represents, is known from Egypt and Mesopotamia, from India, Greece and Rome, and from all over the world, ancient and modern. The quickest way to murder someone by witchcraft, according to old Mother Demdike at the trial of the Lancashire witches in 1612 (see LANCASHIRE WITCHES), is to 'make a Picture of clay, like unto the shape of the person whom they mean to kill, and dry it thoroughly: and when they would have them to be ill in any one place more than another; then take a Thorn or a Pin, and prick it in that part of the Picture you would so have to be ill: and when you would have any part of the body to consume away, then take that part of the Picture, and burn it. And when they would have the whole body to consume away, then take the remnant of the said Picture and burn it: and so thereupon by that means, the body shall die.'

The principle is not extinct in the modern West. In 1964 the figure of a naked woman, six inches long and made of modelling clay, with a sliver of hawthorn piercing its heart,

Harald Schultz

Left **A painting of witches, by the English occultist and artist Austin Osman Spare. Their paraphernalia includes a figure with a pin stuck into it, and imitative magic of this type, meant either to kill or to seduce, is known from all over the world and all through history. It has its roots in the experiences of childhood, when a child believes that a doll is a real person and can be cosseted or hurt**

Right **This Brazilian Indian chieftain is being painted to resemble a jaguar, a piece of mimicry which is intended to give him the strength and hunting skill of the animal**

Imperial War Museum

Above **The soldier at bayonet practice is not far removed from the primitive warrior performing a war-dance; in both cases the actions and emotions of a real battle are vigorously and violently imitated**

was found near Sandringham in Norfolk. It may have been meant to kill its victim or to seduce her by piercing her heart with love. In 1939 it was reported from Cairo, Illinois, that 'a sure way to kill a man is to place his picture under the eaves at the corner of your house during rainy weather and let the water pour upon it.' Modern technology has allowed sorcerers and witches to use a photograph of the victim, pinned on to the doll to make identification certain, and the reluctance of some primitives to be photographed, because it puts them in the photographer's power, is well known.

In 1900 a figure of President McKinley, riddled with pins, was burned on the steps of the American Embassy in London. According to Lady Charlotte Campbell in her diary for 1814, Caroline of Brunswick, the unhappy wife of the Prince Regent (afterwards George IV), frequently made wax images of her husband with fell intent. One evening after dinner, she made one of these dolls and 'gave it an amiable addition of large horns; then took three pins out of her garment and stuck them through and through, and put the figure to roast and melt at the fire.'

The Killing Doll

In England in 1324 a magician named John of Nottingham was said to have made seven images of wax and canvas to represent King Edward II and other notables, in order to murder them. The seventh figure represented a courtier named Richard de Sowe who, as C. L'Estrange Ewen dryly remarked, 'somewhat inconsiderately was included for experimental purposes'. To test the procedure, a 'curious pin wrought of sharp lead' was driven into the forehead of de Sowe's image, two inches deep. The next day one of the magician's accomplices went to Richard de Sowe's house and found him raving and shrieking. They left him in this condition for a month or so. Then they pulled out the pin and stuck it into the image's heart, and Richard de Sowe died.

Image magic was also used by medieval Jews, frequently to force a thief to restore stolen goods. A picture of the suspected thief would be drawn on a wall and nails would be driven into it, usually into the eyes. This would cause the thief such pain that he would give himself up. A man's name could also be used against him (see NAMES).

In 1649 John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott were executed at St Albans. They were said to have made a clay figure of a woman which they put on a fire. As the figure was slowly roasted, their victim writhed in agony and when it was completely consumed, she died. Not only human beings but inanimate objects could be harmed in this way. Margaret Barclay, an Ayrshire witch executed in 1618, had quarrelled with her brother-in-law, who afterwards went on a sea voyage. She was accused of making wax models of the ship and captain, with which she caused the ship to sink and her brother-in-law to be drowned.

The British tradition crossed the Atlantic. In the walls of the cellar of the house of Bridget Bishop, one of the witches of Salem (see SALEM), 'poppets' were discovered, made of rags and hog's bristles into which headless pins were stuck. In Goody Glover's house were found small dolls made of rags and stuffed with goat's hair. She was prevailed on to admit that she tormented a victim by wetting her finger with spit and stroking one of the dolls.

Images have been used to provoke love, as well as to injure. A magical textbook called Picatrix (see PICATRIX) provides a method of making a girl fall in love with a man. Make an image of each of them, from pulverized stone mixed with gum, and put the two images, facing each other, into a vase with seven twigs. Bury the vase in the hearth, then light a fire in the hearth and put a piece of ice in the fire. When the ice has melted, dig up the vase and the spell is complete. The fire melting the ice, of course, is love melting the hearts of the man and the girl.

A Black Vitality

As an alternative to sticking an image with pins or burning it, it can be sunk in a running stream to be gradually worn away. Or it can be broken, twisted, mangled, buried, hanged on a tree, plunged in boiling water or suspended in a chimney.

It is significant that the images are so often called dolls, 'child's babies', poppets, puppets or mommets – names which point to the roots of image magic in the experience of

Axel Poignant

Above **Australian aborigines performing a dance round a shark totem: they mime the taking of young sharks from the belly of the totem as a way of magically ensuring an ample supply of sharks**

childhood. A child accepts that a doll is alive, is a person, and can be cosseted or hurt. For many sorcerers of the past, the fact that the doll represented the victim, and the mimic torments inflicted on it, would be enough by themselves to cause the victim harm.

In more sophisticated magical theory what harms the victim is the concentrated malice of the sorcerer, for which the image acts as a focus. In the making of the doll, in the gleeful torture of it, the magician arouses his own inner hatred, concentrates it and projects it at his enemy. If the image is accidentally damaged, the victim is not harmed. Only when the image is 'charged' with hatred and deliberately maltreated does the victim feel the effects. The rites of 'charging' are ways of concentrating the sorcerer's fury but, even so, the image takes on an evil vitality of its own. Bernard Bromage says (in *The Occult Arts of Ancient Egypt*): 'An image can be charged in a number of ways: inverted "prayer"; the burning of incense; actual blood sacrifice in its vicinity; the sheer impact of petrifying venom – all these can play their part in causing an image – especially one already associated with destruction – to spring into a black, abounding vitality which can burn itself into the conscious and subconscious, especially during sleep...'

It is essential that the image be linked with the victim, so that the magician's hatred hits the right target. 'It is not enough to pretend that your wax image is the person you want to bewitch,' says a character in Aleister Crowley's novel *Moonchild*, 'you must make a real connexion. That is the whole art of magic, to be able to do that.' The image should look as much like the victim as possible, and it may be given his name. The witches of North Berwick (see NORTH BERWICK WITCHES) made a wax image of James VI (afterwards James I of England) which they intended to roast on a fire. But first ten of them met the Devil, their master, near Prestonpans and passed the doll from hand to hand, saying formally, 'This is King James the Sixth. . .' Other ways of linking the victim with the image are to mould into it his nail parings, a lock of his hair, a piece of his clothing, or anything else that has been in close touch with him.

That it is the venomous hatred focused on the image, and through it on the victim, which does the damage is not a new theory. In the 14th century Antonius de Monte Ulmi said that image magic may work in practice, especially if the maker of the image exerts 'strong volition, so as to affect his own body and multiply emanations from its pores'. He goes on to say that some people of strong personality can cure diseases by incantations, though the words themselves are idle.

In cases where image magic works, as it sometimes does, the simplest explanation is that if you believe in a magician's powers and you know that he is projecting a violent current of hate at you with a determined resolution, this knowledge itself may bring about the harm which the magician intends. A curse or any other form of hostile magic can equally be damaging and even lethal when directed at a victim who believes in it. Cursing procedures themselves frequently involve imitative magic – the twisting of a piece of cord in the Azande ritual of blood-brotherhood, for example, which imitates the grip the blood will take on the vitals of a man who breaks the oath, or the tying of a piece of wire round a lead cursing tablet to make the spell 'binding' (see CURSE).

Leaping for Increase

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer regarded the principle of mimicry, 'that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause', as one of the two basic principles of magical thought. The other he called 'the law of contact or contagion', which is 'that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed.' In practice, as he noted, the two are often combined (as in the case of adding the victim's nail parings to a wax image) and he gave the two principles together the label of Sympathetic Magic, the belief 'that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy.'

Certainly, the principle of imitation is fundamental to magic and to many religious rituals as well. Ritual gesture, for instance, often involves mimicry. Fingers are crossed for luck, to bar the path of evil influences, or in a gesture of blessing two fingers are closed

Banishing a Bugbear

A good way to begin is to take some problem or other which is a matter of personal worry, annoyance, or to which there is a definite and constant reaction. Evoke and conjure it up in the consciousness until reaction sets in, then deliberately banish and neutralise it into Nil, the principle being that what is called up on purpose can also be dismissed on purpose. The diminishing effort is but a continued and inversed energy-flow of the original invocation. The purpose of all this is to bring the power of consciousness under control of the will and intention.

To ritualise all this is quite simple. It needs associating with appropriate circuits of consciousness through components of adaptation such as gestures, words of command, visual vehicles, and so forth. Suppose we try putting this in practice.

First the Time-Space-Event field is rapidly built up. Then a simple invocatory gesture and command is made while the subject of invocation is brought to mind as strongly as possible. Elaborate pentagrams and wordy pieces of prose are a complete waste of time and effort. A neat and effective gesture is opening a double door, which is that of bringing both hands forward together, then back towards the body and out to both sides. At the same time the plain command; 'Come in' is given either aloud or mentally, while the concept invoked is considered as advancing through the open doors upon the invocant. A positive reaction must be made appropriately. If the concept is enjoyable, then pleasure must be felt, or if otherwise, then whatever is called for in the way of aversion. We have now 'called up' or 'raised' a definite formation of consciousness and recognised it reactively, which gives it reality in mental dimensions.

Now we must expel the concept from our world. This is done by mentally pushing it through the open portal, making the closing gesture of bringing the hands together and forward again as if pressing the door shut, and saying clearly; 'Go out'.

W. G. Gray *Magical Ritual Methods*

so that the open thumb and two fingers are left to represent the Trinity (see GESTURE). In magic a symbol does not merely stand for something else, it *is* the something else, hence the Egyptian reluctance to put a complete hieroglyph of an animal inside a tomb in case the animal came alive (see ALPHABET), or the simple belief that an image of the victim is the victim. In religious ceremonies, especially at the popular level of belief, there is always a tendency to confuse the mimicry or the symbol with what is imitated or symbolized, hence the widespread belief in the magical powers of the consecrated host, and the theological debate over whether the elements of the Eucharist are really the body and blood of Christ or only represent them, whether the ceremony, in imitating the Last Supper, re-enacts it or only commemorates it.

Striking modern examples of imitative magic are found in the cargo cults of the Pacific (see CARGO CULTS), where air strips are built and model planes set up in shrines in the hope that real planes will arrive, full of desirable goods. At the other end of human history, it has long been thought that some prehistoric cave paintings are examples of imitative hunting magic – an animal is shown wounded so that the hunters will wound it in reality (see CAVE ART).

Games in which children ceremoniously jump up and down have been connected with imitative magic, in the form of leaping to make the crops grow tall, as in the old hymn of the Curetes: 'To us also leap for full jars, and leap for fleecy flocks, and leap for fields of fruit. . .' European customs in which girls rise high into the air on swings or people are lifted up in the air seem to have had the same magical purpose, and became connected with Easter through another imitative link, that of rising in the air with Christ rising from the grave (see CHILDREN'S GAMES; EASTER).

The Horse Sacrifice

Imitative magic ranges all the way from minor spells and superstitions, like the use of words which shrink away to nothing to reduce fever (see ABRACADABRA) or the belief that if a dying man's bed is set across the floorboards, instead of parallel with them, he will 'die hard' (see HOUSE), to major magico-religious rituals like the mock death and burial of an Ibo king, which is followed by his restoration to life on a new, divine plane (see IBO).

Other examples are those rituals which depend on the principle that sexual intercourse magically promotes the growth of crops and the fertility of cattle. One of these, described by Benjamin Walker in *Hindu World*, is the *asvamedha* or horse sacrifice offered by kings centuries ago in India. A young male horse, preferably white, was chosen and sacrificed, after elaborate preliminary rites. Once the animal was dead, the king's four wives walked nine times round its corpse, fanning it with their robes. The horse was identified with the god Prajapati and it was necessary for the chief queen to be 'impregnated' by him. The sacrificial pit was covered with a sheet, under which the queen went through a mimic copulation with the dead horse. After this the chief queen, the other queens and the four officiating priests exchanged obscene remarks, and it is possible that the queens had intercourse with the priests. 'The whole ceremony is believed to be part of a long-forgotten fertility rite for bringing prosperity to the realm.' An asvamedha was offered by a ruler of Jaipur as late as the mid-18th century.

Dance and drama are largely rooted in imitative magic, in the principle that by mimicking an animal, a person or a supernatural being you can be carried out of yourself and become that being, momentarily at least, share in its innermost nature and sanctity and control its actions (see DRAMA). In ceremonial magic, the 'assumption of god-forms' depends on the same principle, the imitation of a supernatural

In magic, to imitate or act out an event with sufficient vividness and concentration is to make the event occur in reality, a principle also found at the roots of dance, drama and many religious rituals *Below left* A doll may be pierced and mangled to inflict the same injuries on the real victim *Below centre* Two 'bones' strung with human hair, used by Australian aborigines for 'pointing the bone', in which the medicine-man jabs the bone in the direction of his victim with fierce thrusts and twists, acting out the harm he means to inflict *Below right* Sheep's heart riddled with pins and nails to neutralize a spell put on sheep and cattle *Right* The Inca offers a libation to the sun and since he is an incarnation of the sun god, he acts out the drinking of the offering himself: from a 17th century Peruvian manuscript

Chris Barker/Prodnose studio

Axel Poignant

Horniman Museum/Michael Holford

EL TERZERO CAPITAN CVCIVAVCHIRE

Chinese illustration of the curious child-birth custom of couvade, known in many parts of the world. The father takes to his bed and behaves as if he, not his wife, is having the child. Sometimes he roars and rocks about in agony, evidently with the intention of magically transferring the birth pangs from his wife to himself by imitating them. The origin and underlying significance of the custom is uncertain. It may have kept the father quiet so that no evil influences could harm the baby through him

being or force, through which the magician attempts to become it and control it.

A love of playacting is another human characteristic which comes out strongly and spontaneously in children, but the point of it is not a mere liking for dressing up and strutting the boards but a longing to escape from yourself and, by imitation, to become someone or something else. We require a willing 'suspension of disbelief' by both actors and audience, a temporary agreement to accept that an actor *is* what he impersonates. Long ago, and in societies less affected by Western rationalism, 'suspending disbelief' was more easily achieved. In the totem-lodges of Australian aborigines, for example, where the actors imitate the actions of the hero-ancestors of the Dreamtime: 'the chanting goes on and on; the decorated actors appear; but they are no longer the men of a few hours earlier. They are now the heroes of the Dreaming' (see AUSTRALIA).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Immaculate Conception

Virgin birth; in theology, the Roman Catholic dogma asserting the sinlessness of the Virgin Mary who, alone among humanity, was conceived free from sin and preserved from all taint throughout her life; this long-held Catholic belief was made an article of faith by a papal bull in 1854; the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on 8 December.

See MARY: VIRGIN BIRTHS.

Sonia Halliday

Immanent

Indwelling, inherent; term applied in theology to God, to express the idea that God pervades the universe, existing within and throughout the created world; the opposite of 'transcendent', which suggests God's existence above and apart from his creation, and not subject to its limitations.

If man survives in some form into the future, may he not also have had an existence in the past? Plato's proposition, one of the greatest puzzles concerning immortality, was echoed by the poet Wordsworth, who said that 'the soul that rises with us . . . cometh from afar'

IMMORTALITY

THE BURIAL CUSTOMS of primitive man cannot be cited in proof of his belief in human survival of death and continuance into endless life. The fact that many of the skeletons found at Mount Carmel and other prehistoric sites had the legs tucked up behind the pelvis could be taken to mean that the living were afraid that the dead might 'walk' and were seeking to immobilize them. It could just as well mean that they thought of death as a return to the womb from which life came and that they were preparing the dead body accordingly, in the posture of an unborn child; or it might mean that they thought that the dead body had to be bundled up small so as to gain access to a new world, to which the sun retired each day through a tiny hole in the western sky. Finally, given the limitations of primitive tools, the real reason might be that the living did not want to have to make a very large hole to serve as a grave. Not until written records became available along with burials (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) is it possible to infer anything about the beliefs of the people concerned.

The great value of Herodotus, that observant Greek historian of the 5th century BC, is that he went about taking notes in the manner of the modern anthropologist. His reports of the burial customs of the Scythians in South Russia agree remarkably with what has been found there in modern times; royal *kurgan* graves have yielded up skeletons of horses (as many as 50 at a time), cup-bearers, attendants and concubines, just as Herodotus describes. These practices, which ensured that the dead prince would be provided with a retinue, point to a belief in immortality of a sort, even though it might have been a selective immortality that was to be enjoyed by princes only.

Mesopotamian literature tells of the descent of the goddess Ishtar (or Inanna) to the underworld through its seven gates; there she is sprinkled with the water of life and then ascends through the seven gates to rejoin the world of men. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* includes an episode where the hero brings up a wonderful plant from the sea bed, the virtue of which is to restore life and youth. Where such tales were told, the belief in survival cannot have been weak.

An Egyptian papyrus dated as early as 2000 BC contains a sophisticated dialogue between a man and his own soul. At the end his soul advises: 'Desire to reach the West (the abode of the dead) when thy body goes into the earth, that I may alight after thou hast grown weary.' The papyrus describes 'those who are yonder'. They are shown as 'men of knowledge; they punish sinners and 'stand in the barque of the sun, giving choice gifts to the temples'. This is a remarkable description, far removed from what Hebrew thought had achieved by the same epoch.

The sojourn of the Jews in Egypt did not affect their beliefs about the fate of the dead. Jacob grieved for his lost son, Joseph, saying: 'I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning' (Genesis, 37.35). Sheol was the darkling abode of the dead, where personal survival was at a very low ebb. Those in Sheol could not praise God but were condemned to a state of weakness and dullness. Saul might visit the witch of Endor and call up the spirit of Samuel from Sheol, but the rest of the dead had to bear an existence that was a pale shadow of life upon earth.

Escape from Sheol

Gradually, towards the end of the Hebrew Scriptures, there appears the idea of a general rising from the dead, an escape from Sheol to a life that is once more enriched with bodily sensation. The just, in the words of the Wisdom of Solomon (in the Apocrypha), are to receive the kingdom of glory and the diadem of beauty from the hand of God. They will confront their persecutors, who will then become objects of ignominy suffering remorse. A similar picture is given by the prophet Daniel.

The Greek philosophers, according to their habit, looked at the problem in rational fashion. A distinction between body and soul, and the destiny of each, was current in Greece in the time of Herodotus, for the war memorial to the Athenians killed at the siege of Potidaea (in Macedonia) speaks of their bodies committed to the ground and their souls flying upward. Over a generation later Plato (in the dialogue *Phaedo*) draws a portrait of Socrates discoursing on immortality during the last hours that his disciples were allowed to spend with him in the condemned cell. The setting of the dialogue implies that it was in the main a true report of what was said. The argument runs from the existence of eternal objects of knowledge which are not liable to change (such as the idea of beauty) to the eternity of the knowing subject. The whole Greek theory of knowledge rested on the proposition that like is known by like. Plato was at pains to show Socrates refuting the Pythagorean idea that the human soul was a harmony, for a harmony could be dissolved. Since death and life are contraries, the onset of death forces the soul either to withdraw or be annihilated; it cannot be annihilated, and so it withdraws from the function of animating the body.

Existence Before Birth

In an earlier dialogue, the *Gorgias*, Socrates is shown by Plato propounding a purified version of the Greek myth that there was a judgement after death and that souls passed either to the Islands of the Blest or else to prison and torture. In the *Meno* he presents the case for the pre-existence of the soul, based on the phenomena of memory and of the spontaneous understanding of mathematical problems by the young; this can be made to look like a memory of what was understood in a previous phase of existence. With this conclusion Plato formulated what has proved to be one of the great puzzles about immortality: if it is good for the future, why not for the past also? If the soul is to exist in the future, may it not also have existed in the past?

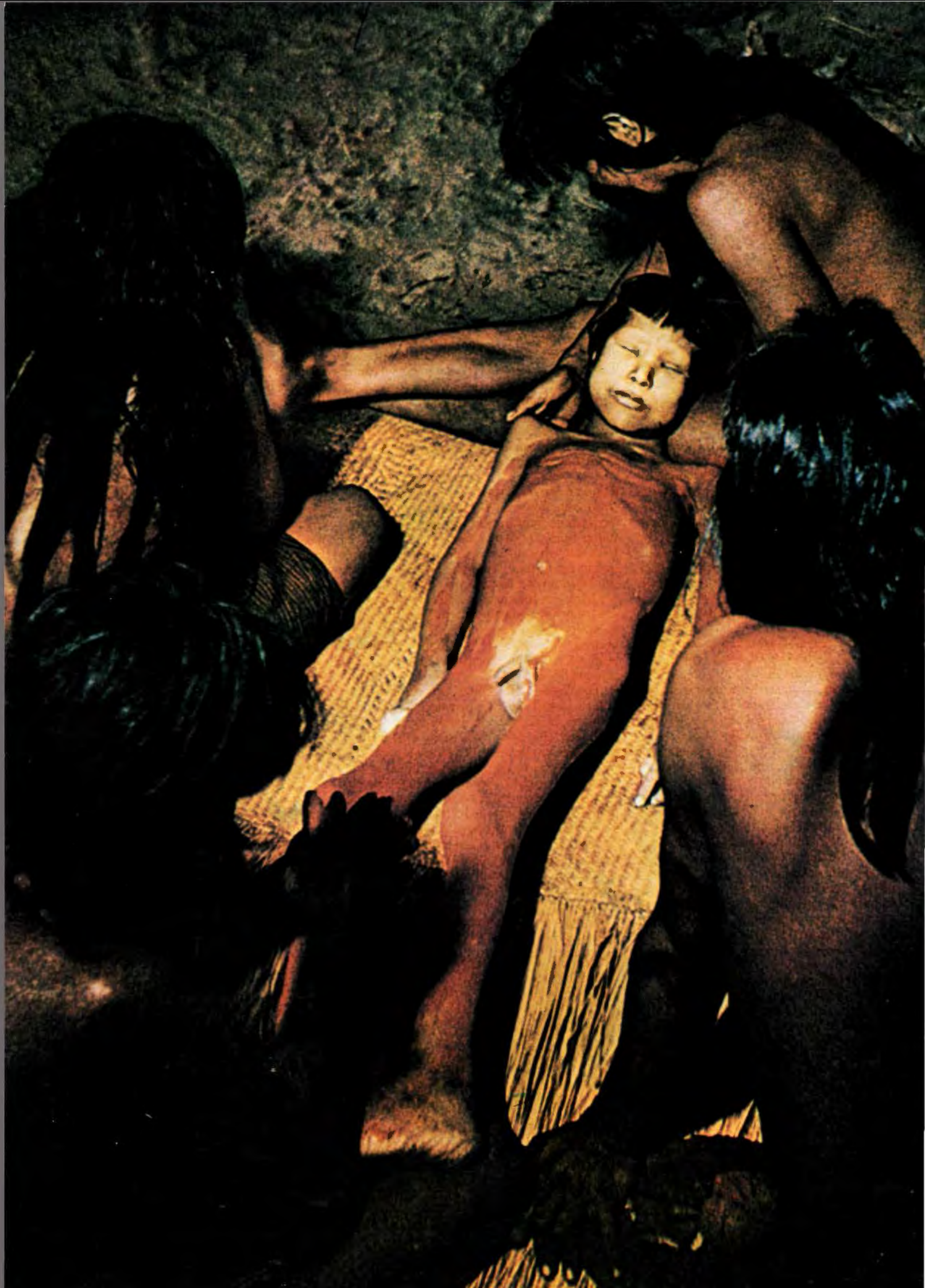
Plato never quite made up his mind about the individuality of the human soul. If it was strictly of the same nature as the eternal objects of knowledge (from which its existence was deduced) it ought to be looked on as a universal idea. Aristotle accepted this conclusion readily; for him there was a world-intellect which performed in each man the higher functions of understanding and which withdrew from man at death. In life a man should 'play the immortal as far as he can', but there would be no future for him when he had done.

Transmigration of a human soul from one body to another lent it a bogus universality, and it was to this solution that Plato himself inclined. The charm of his work won for Plato many Christian admirers. In 380 Gregory, the Bishop of Nyssa, wrote a dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection* after the death of his brother, Basil, and his sister, Macrina; it is a close imitation of the *Phaedo* in style but its argument reaches out beyond Plato.

Christian thinkers from the 2nd century

Bildarchiv Foto Marburg

The Egyptians believed that the dead might be brought to life, provided the funerary rites were correctly carried out. The process was often illustrated by a god holding an ankh, symbol of life, to the nostrils of the corpse to restore the breath of life. In this relief from the temple of Abydos in Upper Egypt the Pharaoh Seti I holds to his nose the sa ankh, a symbol which combined life-giving properties with those of protection



onwards speak of themselves as a third race, neither Jew nor Greek, and thus one may look for some attempt by them to combine the Jewish idea of a risen and restored body in the hereafter with the Greek idea of immortality for the soul alone. It is not surprising that some of the early Christian thinkers found it difficult to combine Jewish ideas from the Old Testament with the Greek philosophy they had learned as young men. Thus in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch in the 2nd century AD, one finds a notion that God did not make man mortal or immortal by nature, but indifferent; if he lived a good life, he would be immortal but otherwise he would be condemned to mortality. St Paul had left no doubt about his own beliefs; he spoke of the resurrection of the body for the just and unjust alike, as he acknowledged to the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24.15). The Athenians to whom St Paul was preaching, seem to have thought that he was advocating the worship of two gods, Jesus and Resurrection, so much had he to say about the latter (Acts, chapter 17).

Left **Brazilian Indians cover a dead boy with red ochre so that he may be reborn; the face and genitals are left uncovered so that he may have the choice of being born either as a boy or a girl. The practice of painting dead bodies red in order to endow them with life is common to other primitive peoples**
Below **A similar ceremony will be performed by a Nepalese fakir on his dead assistant** ***Below right*** **During the proceedings the body is covered with a cloth**

Purpose of the Soul

Athenagoras, a Christian Platonist of the late 2nd century, wrote a lengthy treatise on the resurrection of the body, since it was this feature in Christian teaching which most scandalized the Greeks. Why say that the body would be reconstituted, when Plato and so many others had argued that immortality came through getting rid of the body? The Christians claimed that their ideas about the future life had come to them from Christ but the human mind could grasp them, when once they were set out, and could find reasons to make them plausible. It was these reasons that Athenagoras undertook to give. He dropped the threefold view of human nature, which divided it into body, soul and spirit, though Plato, the Stoics and the Jews all accepted it; instead, Athenagoras used a twofold division, body and soul, and this afterwards became generally accepted. His main argument for immortality was based on the purpose of the creation of the soul. God did not make the soul idly, nor yet for any need of his own, nor again for the service of any other creature, since no creature with reason and judgement has been created for any other's sake. The only purpose that will answer is that man was created for society with God who is eternal.

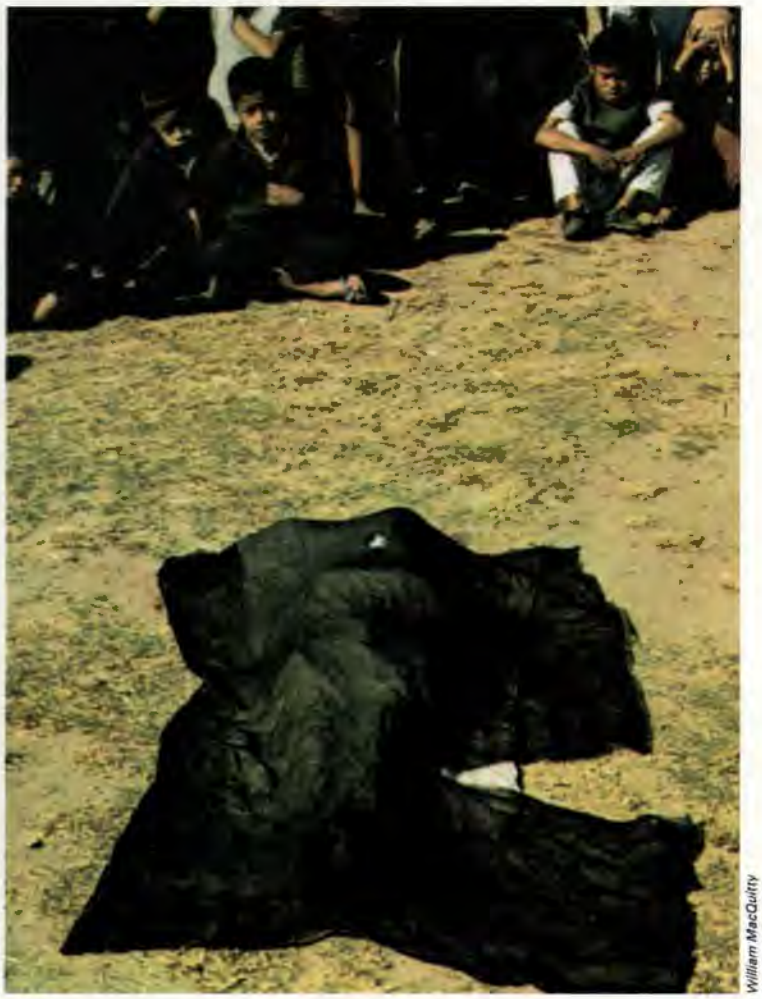
The theologian Origen (c 185–254 AD) was so taken with this argument that he developed from it the conclusion that, since society with God was the goal for man, there would be a general amnesty for all men at the end of the world, whatever their sins might have been. The Church rejected this on the evidence of the New Testament but also on the rational ground that human free will, if once it becomes immobilized in enmity to God, is enough to exclude a man from society with God for ever. The other line of thought developed by Origen was a renewal of the Platonic theory of the pre-existence of the human soul. He held that the fact of some men being born with active minds and others with minds wholly obtuse and incapable of instruction pointed to their having existed in another world, where some had sinned and drawn upon themselves a punishment in the next round of life. Other Christian Platonists, such as Gregory of Nyssa, brushed aside the transmigration theory: a soul at death was left incomplete, but this did not mean that it must seek another body and another life. It would be completed by the resurrection.

Immortality before and after life on earth was still a difficulty for St Jerome (340–420 AD), who in a famous letter sets out the possibilities of the case. He rejected the idea of the emanation of the soul from God, and envisaged three alternatives: all human souls could have been created at one time and then kept in reserve until wanted for life in the world; or they could be created each time there was a human conception; or else they might be passed on from the parents. Jerome himself adhered to the second alternative.

Love Eternal

St Thomas Aquinas (c 1225–74), theologian and philosopher, held that the eternal truths which the human mind can contemplate must be anchored in a supreme truth, and that this is the goal desired by the human mind as it

Eric Cross



William MacQuitty

William MacQuitty

contemplates. He also held strongly that it was good and natural for the soul to be in a body; if all souls had been created at one time, then most of them would have suffered violence and been under restraint until they received their bodies, and of this there was no sign. In 1513 the fifth Lateran Council defined that it was heretical to say that the soul was mortal, but it did not elaborate the grounds for immortality. Luther accepted this definition.

Gradually in modern times interest in proving immortality has centred upon the value of the person and of that most personal of relationships, love. The unique quality of love lends more force than ever to the traditional argument that man is meant for society with God, once it can be entertained that love of God is a possibility. The British philosopher McTaggart (1866–1925), who was professedly an atheist, held a firm conviction of human immortality which was based upon the unique and timeless quality of love.

One of McTaggart's difficulties about immortality was that 'even the best men, when they die, are not in such a condition of intellectual and moral perfection as would fit them to enter heaven immediately.' As if in answer to this, Karl Rahner has recently been advocating the idea that death is not simply a passive condition of being snuffed out but a personal deed, a final affirmation of what one's life has been, since death must be considered to affect both body and soul. A certain amount of experimental evidence has been gathered from those who have come very close to death through some accident and then been restored to life; the trend of this evidence is to support the idea that at the moment when death was nearest they passed in review the events of their whole life. Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859) noticed this fact, a kinswoman of his having reported that she had seen the whole of her life arrayed before her when she had fallen into a river, not successively but simultaneously, 'and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part.'

The Ascension of Christ; the gospel account of how the resurrected Christ was taken up from the sight of the disciples and ascended into heaven, as pictured by a 15th century Italian miniaturist. St Paul took the resurrection of Christ, 'the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep', as proof of a general resurrection; generations of theologians after him hotly debated the questions raised by the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul

G. Tomsich, Rome

The Attainment of 'Being'

Investigation into the phenomena of telepathy and other branches of psychical research in the present century have greatly increased the interest in the problems of immortality. The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, in the Myers Memorial lecture of 1955, recounts that it was these factors that quickened his own interest. He has elaborated a distinction between 'being' and 'having': fears and desires belong to the realm of 'having', while a loving collaboration with the liberty of another helps both to attain 'being'. Thus a basis is provided for justifying the unique and timeless quality of love. Thought transference without any physical link, where it can be verified, offers the prospect of an activity of the human mind that does not depend upon the body. The phenomena of Spiritualism are of more doubtful quality, for whatever their causation they do require a physical basis.

The value of the human person may thus be seen as the main prop of all arguments for immortality. Stunted or split personalities, or other psychological wreckage, make no difference to the argument, which takes 'person' in the metaphysical sense of an intelligent being who is an end in himself. When Aristotle said that slaves were animated tools, cogs in the social machine, he was repudiating the notion of person as he had repudiated immortality.

(See also BURIAL CUSTOMS; CULT OF THE DEAD; HELL; PARADISE; PURGATORY; REINCARNATION.)

J. H. CREHAN

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IMP

AN IMP is a small demon, usually malignant, though at least one magician in London will provide an invisible but allegedly helpful imp that lives in an empty wine bottle. The bottle is corked and sealed with red sealing-wax. Around it is a piece of paper bearing magical signs and numbers in pencil and green crayon. The imp's chief duty is to prevent papers from going astray.

Paracelsus was supposed to keep a small demon shut up in the crystal pommel of his sword but the most indefatigable demon-bottler of history was a Frenchman named Alexis Vincent Charles Berbiguier, who died in 1851. For the first nine years of his life he was crippled and he early decided that demons were persecuting him. His room was full of ox-hearts stuck with pins and the aroma of anti-demonic soups, and his clothes and bed were riddled with pins, each of which transfixed the body of a wriggling imp. He stupefied the imps with tobacco and shut them up in bottles, 'where they would later awaken to grin and gibber at their conqueror.'

An 18th century French grimoire, *Secret des Secrets*, has a formula for conjuring a demon into a bottle. It is summoned by God, by Jesus, by the Holy Trinity, by the virginity of the Holy Virgin, by the four sacred words spoken to Moses by God (Io, Zati, Zata, Abata) and by the nine heavens, to appear 'visibly and without delay in a fair human form, not terrifying, without or within this phial, which holds water prepared to receive thee.'

The small familiar spirits of British witches were commonly called imps. In Suffolk in 1645, for example, Mary Scrutten of Framlingham confessed that she had three familiar imps which she suckled at night. She told her husband they were mice but he was not convinced.
(See also FAMILIARS.)

FURTHER READING: for Berbiguier see E. J. Dingwall, *Some Human Oddities* (Home & Van Thal, 1947).

An imp with a broomstick at *The Witches Banquet*: detail, 16th century Flemish painting

Museo de Bilbao

Language is one of the great weapons of sorcery, and the magical use of words can be seen not only in the incantations of the grimoires but in many prayers

INCANTATION

WORDS ARE WEAPONS of power in magic because they are weapons of power in ordinary life. We use them to influence each other. Gestures and facial expressions help, and are also used in magic, but to state your wishes with commanding clarity or persuasive charm you usually resort to speech. The magical theory is that just as someone of powerful personality can use forceful words to dominate other people, so the magician armed with the lightning of concentrated will-power and the thunder of overwhelming language can dominate anything in the universe, natural or supernatural. 'In magic,' according to the French magician Eliphas Levi, 'to have said is to have done', and again, 'to affirm and will what ought to be is to create; to affirm and will what ought not to be is to destroy.'

In other words, to assert that something is so makes it so – at least under certain conditions. One condition is that the assertion must be made with sufficient strength of will. Another is that the words used must be the right words. They may be 'right' because they are tested by experiment and found effective by the magician who uses them or because they are hallowed by time and tradition, which means that they have seemed effective in the past. The Lord's Prayer, for example, has often been turned to magical uses. In the 13th century Arnald of Villanova said that a priest cured him of over 100 warts in 10 days. The priest touched each wart, made the sign of the cross and repeated the Lord's Prayer, but substituting for 'deliver us from evil' the words 'deliver Master Arnald from the wens and warts on his hands'. Then he took three stalks from a plant and put them in the ground in a damp and secluded place. When the stalks began to wither, the warts began to go.

Evidently the priest believed that the words of the prayer contained power which could be used for wart-charming, and Arnald believed it too and it worked. In some societies, among the Maori in New Zealand, for instance, or some of the Pueblo tribes in North America, the words of an incantation or a prayer must never be changed. In others, as in Europe, the magician may experiment with words and phrases until he hits on those which seem to work best for him, though considerable respect is still paid to traditional formulas. This respect is not confined to magicians. In 1963 the Ecumenical Council voted to authorize the saying of Mass in languages other than Latin, provided that Latin was retained for 'the precise verbal formula which is essential to the sacrament', the words spoken by the priest, assuming the person of Christ and using the same ceremonies used by Christ at the Last Supper, which transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood.

Perhaps long ago, as language developed, the use of words had natural elements of awe and magic in it, a feeling that words gave man a grasp of reality which he had previously lacked. This is suggested by the old and persistent belief that everything has a 'real' name, a name which enshrines the essence of the thing, which *is* the thing. To know and pronounce the real name of a god, a man or an animal is to exercise power over it.

Lord of the Gods

For magicians in Europe the great example of the magical use of language was the creation of the world as described in Genesis. 'God said, Let there be light; and there was light.' It was assumed that God brought his creations into existence by pronouncing their names.

Besides knowing the name, knowing and reciting the qualities of a thing gives a man magical power over it. The Semang people of Malaya have a song about a particular species of monkey, which describes its behaviour. It tells how the monkey stamps his feet, drags along, climbs up and away, swarms up the bamboo, hangs down, seizes fruit, bends the bough for a leap, lets the bough fly upwards. This song is not just an expression of delight in Nature (though it is that in part) but a hunting spell. The vivid description of the animal, the clear picture of it in the hunter's mind, gives him power over it, and the moment at the end of the song, when the monkey is about to jump, is the moment when the hunter means to kill it. Similarly, early Greek hymns to a god begin with a recital of the god's names and attributes, which was probably intended to catch the god in the net of his own nature, and to concentrate the worshipper's mind on him, so as to give some measure of control over the god.

In the same way, in a magical ritual devised by Aleister Crowley and called *Liber Samekh*, the magician recites the names and characteristics of a supremely powerful 'spirit', who created the heavens and the earth, night and day, darkness and light. 'This is the Lord of the Gods: this is the Lord of the Universe: this is He whom the winds fear.' He commands this

William MacQuitty

In the same way as the poet or orator depends on the power of words to convey impressive ideas and to sway his audience, so the magician with his incantations and sometimes the suppliant with his prayers, although fulfilling different needs, make deliberate use of compelling language, both engaging in sound and clear in meaning ***Left*** **Wall painting on the tomb of Senedjem at Luxor near the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, showing Senedjem and his wife chanting prayers to the sun** ***Right*** **Imaginative picture from** ***The Astrologer of the 19th Century*****: by means of magical incantations the sorcerer commands a spirit to appear and orders it to do his bidding** ***Far right*** **This Buddhist pilgrim to a temple in Katmandu, Nepal, although silent, makes pious avowals of faith by repeatedly turning a prayer wheel**

spirit, 'Come thou forth and follow me: and make all spirits subject unto Me so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether, upon the Earth or under the Earth: on dry Land, or in the Water: of Whirling Air or of rushing Fire, and every Spell and Scourge of God, may be obedient unto me.'

The spirit is the divine being who is the magician's own inner self, and he announces his identity with it at the climax of the ritual by repeatedly proclaiming, 'I am He'. By describing the spirit, by vividly imagining it, the magician summons it up and controls it. He commands it to come forth and with every ounce of energy in his being he asserts that he and it are one. Finally the command 'Come thou forth', is repeated again but as if by the spirit itself, which has now taken possession of the magician.

Sound and Fury

This ritual was adapted from a Graeco-Egyptian magical text, itself descended from ancient Egyptian spells and incantations, like those in the Book of the Dead which identify the dead man as Osiris, or protect him from dangers in the afterlife, or give him power over his enemies. Here again, the belief that saying a thing is so makes it so is fundamental. The dead man's identification with Osiris depends heavily on the solemn assertion that he is, as in the spell identifying the dead Pharaoh Unas with Osiris (see BOOK OF THE DEAD).

Crowley's *Liber Samekh* also illustrates another essential principle of incantation, the use of sonorous, rhythmical, rhetorical language which is not spoken flatly but chanted, with steadily rising intensity as the ritual proceeds. This contributes to a rising state of intense excitement and self-intoxication, in which the magician convinces himself that the words he utters are charged with invincible power and are actually taking effect.

Because the chanting is an aid to self-intoxication, a magical operation of high importance and difficulty is likely to involve repeating several incantations several times over. A short spell or charm is usually applied only to comparatively minor and simple acts of magic. This is not always the case: a grimoire called *The Black Pullet* says that you can open any lock at a touch by reciting the words Saritap Pernisox Ottarim, but you can equally call up all the powers of heaven and hell by chanting the magic words Siras Etar Besanar. But it is doubtful whether many magicians would take this seriously.

The words 'incantation' and 'enchant' are both derived from Latin *cantare*, 'to sing' (and 'charm' is from Latin *carmen*, 'song'). The element of singing or chanting is magically important because it means that the words are put together deliberately – not in the slapdash hurry of most everyday speech – and are rhythmical. Not only do they build up the magician's own excitement but their impressive sound and beat influence the supernatural forces which he attempts to control. These forces are believed to be swayed by compelling sound in the same way that human beings are moved by poetry, oratory, preaching or honeyed words of love – all of which depend for their effectiveness on their combination of meaning and sound.

In *The Anatomy of Puck*, Katharine Briggs quotes an incantation in which the magician appeals to the judge of hell to discipline an obstinate demon. Part of it runs:

> O thou most puissant prince Rhadamanthus, which dost punish in thy prison of perpetual perplexity the disobedient devils of hell, and also the grisly ghosts of men dying in dreadful despair, I conjure, bind and charge thee by Lucifer, Belsabub, Sathanas, Jauconill and by their power, and by the homage thou owest unto them, and also I charge thee by the triple crown of Cerberus his head, by Stix and Phlegiton, hy your fellow and private devil Baranter, that you do torment and punish this disobedient N. (naming him) until you make him come corporally to my sight and obey my will and commandments in whatsoever I shall charge or command him to do. Fiat, fiat, fiat. Amen.

This incantation uses language which is impressive in sound, evocative and atmospheric, and clear in meaning, a combination which, with all his own inner powers concentrated on his object, the magician believes will exert an irresistible force on the lords of hell.

There is an obvious basic difference between a magical incantation and a prayer.

John Webb

William MacQuitty

The essence of incantation is command and the magician orders supernatural forces to do his bidding. A prayer is not a command but a request: the worshipper begs for help (though prayer can be turned to many other purposes, including thanksgiving, praise, confession of sin, and repentance). The prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, in horror of his approaching torment, makes the difference clear: 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee: remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt' (Mark 14.36).

Apology to an Elephant

But though this distinction is clear in theory, and often in practice, human beings do not always keep their attitudes to the supernatural in separate compartments. Many of the incantations in the European grimoires mingle prayers, perfectly sincere petitions that God will come to the magician's aid, with monomaniac declarations of supreme power. On the other hand, prayers are not always free of a magical use of language, an underlying belief that the right form of words, the right tone and delivery, will themselves compel the desired effect. The prayers of primitive peoples tend to run the gamut from respectful petition to reproaches, orders and even threats. Among the Pueblo tribes, a farmer puts down prayer-feathers in his field and says commandingly, 'My field, you will be good all the time.' Part of a song found among the Pygmies, apologizing to a slaughtered elephant, nicely blends orders and cajolery.

> Do not make us feel your wrath.
> Henceforward your life will be better,
> You go to the country of spirits.
> Our fathers go with you to renew the alliance.
> Henceforward your life will be better,
> You go to the country of spirits.

This verse, with two significant lines repeated, may also be intended magically to send the elephant to the spirit country and make him happy there.

In the account of Elijah's great contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings, chapter 18) there seems no essential difference in the methods used by both sides, and Elijah's address to the Almighty is distinctly peremptory in tone. There is an inextricable mixture of the magical and religious frames of mind in the vengeful prayer of the priest Chryses to Apollo in the *Iliad* (book 1): 'Hear me, god of the Silver Bow, Protector of Chryse and holy Cilla, and Lord Supreme of Tenedos. Smintheus, if ever I built you a shrine that delighted you, if ever I burnt you the fat thighs of a bull or a goat, grant me this wish. Let the Danaans pay with your arrows for my tears.'

Some prayers employ a magical 'as . . . so' formula, based on the underlying belief that if an appropriate past event is cited, a parallel future event will occur. St Hildegard of Bingen (12th century) mentions a cure for bewitchment. You take a wheaten loaf and cut a cross on it. Draw a jacinth through one arm of the cross and say, 'May God who cast away all the preciousness of gems from the Devil when he transgressed his precept (the reference is to Ezekiel, chapter 28), remove from you, so-and-so, all phantoms and magic words and free you from the ill of this madness.' Then draw the jacinth through the other arm of the cross, saying, 'As the splendour which the Devil once possessed departed from him because of his transgression, so may this madness which harasses so-and-so by varied fantasies and magic arts be removed from you and depart from you.' Then the patient should eat the bread around the cross.

When prayers have fixed formulas, or are accompanied by prescribed postures and gestures, or are associated with sacrifice, an element of magic, if not always present, may at least be in the offing. Humanity's sense of the magic of language is so strong that its use creeps even into sincerely religious prayers and ceremonies.

(See also ALPHABET; MANTRA; NAMES: POETS; RITUAL MAGIC; SONG.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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INCARNATION

A FUNDAMENTAL TENET of Christianity is the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity as the historical Jesus of Nazareth. The term devised to express this derives from the Latin: *in carne*, meaning 'in flesh'; *incarnore*, 'to make flesh'. In this context flesh is understood to mean the physical being of a human person, including the mental and psychical constituents of personality. Although it has only been strictly defined and formulated as a doctrine in Christianity, the idea is both ancient and widespread.

The ancient Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was the incarnate son of the sun god Re, the chief state deity. How the acts of divine generation and birth were accomplished is graphically depicted in a series of sculptured scenes in the temple of Amun at Luxor. The scenes portray the divine birth of the Pharaoh Amunhotep III (1402–1364 BC): at this period Amun was identified with Re. Amun is shown with Queen Mutemuya as she conceives the future king. The goddesses Selqet and Neith, beneath the bridal couch, assist the conception. Another scene represents the consequence of the divine act of generation. The god Khnum fashions on a potter's wheel the infant king and his *ka* or soul, while the goddess Hathor animates them with the *ankh*, the symbol of life. In other scenes the actual birth, and the presentation of the infant Amunhotep to Amun-Re, his divine father, are depicted. According to Egyptian belief, the pharaoh acted on earth as the viceregent of his heaveuly father, and at death he was reunited with him. The idea of the pharaoh as an incarnate deity was long-established and effective in Egypt (see EGYPT); but its metaphysical implications were never discussed.

Belief in divine incarnation *(avatara)* is a basic tenet also of Hinduism. It finds its most notable expression in the cult of the great popular deity Vishnu, who, as Narayana, is conceived as the Supreme God and upholder of the cosmic and moral order of the universe. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Vishnu declares: 'For the rescue of the pious and for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the establishment of the Law I am born in every age.' Ten incarnations of Vishnu are popularly recognized. Some are of an obviously mythical kind, for instance, as Fish, Tortoise and Boar; some have an apparent historical character; such as in the form of the heroes Rama and Krishna, and as the Buddha.

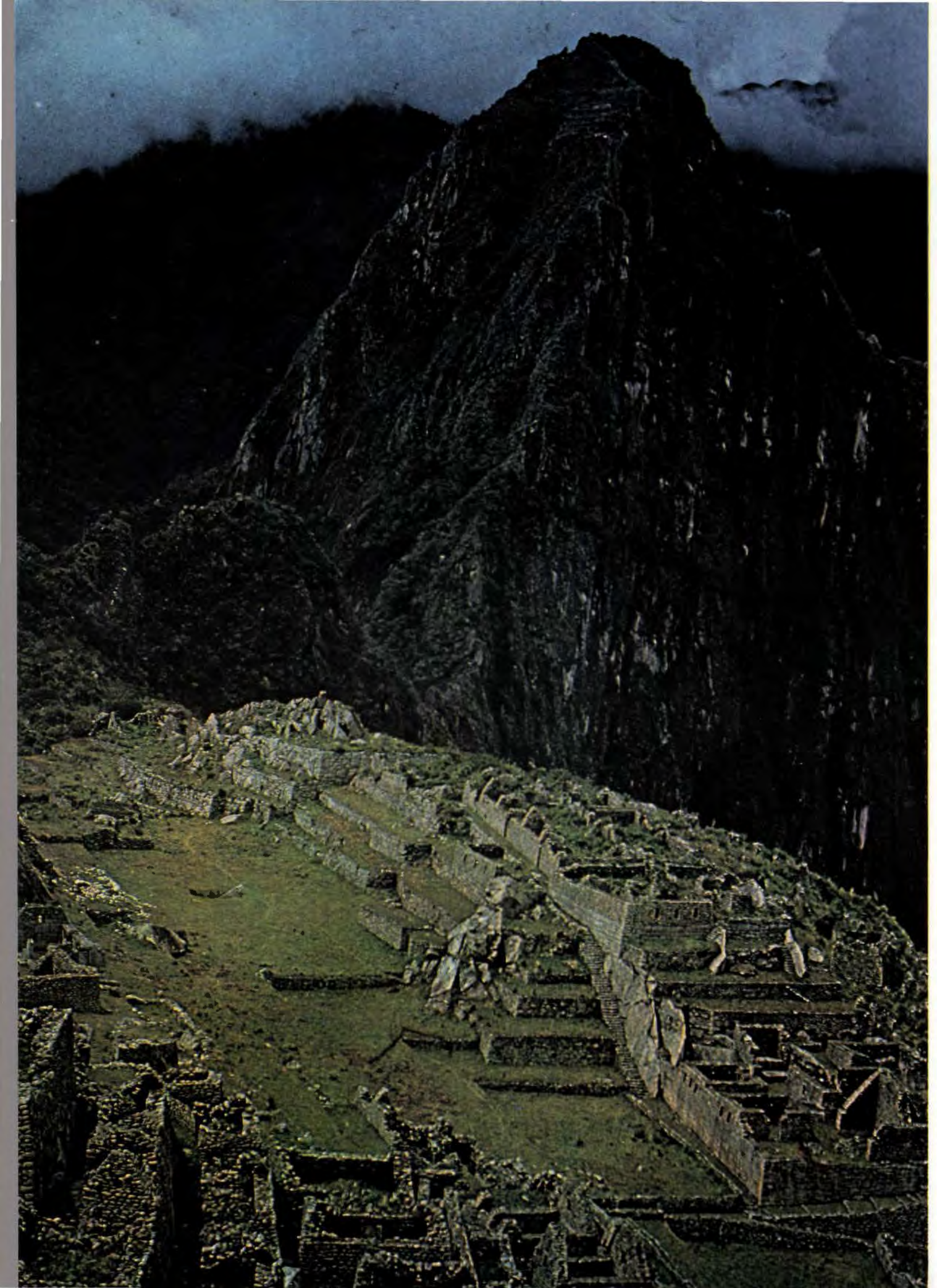
In Buddhist thought the Bodhisattva is really thought of as a divine saviour who becomes incarnate periodically to save mankind. Buddhist metaphysics, however, made the idea of incarnation by way of sexual intercourse unacceptable, and other modes of entry into the world were devised: Maya, the mother of Gautama, conceived the future Buddha through a vision of a white elephant (see GAUTAMA BUDDHA).

The story of the Virgin Birth of Jesus served a similar purpose in Christian theology. The deification of Jesus of Nazareth, which the apostle Paul initiated, inevitably entailed a number of theological and metaphysical problems, among them that of the nature and mode of the Incarnation. For Christian thinkers had to explain and reconcile two obviously incompatible beliefs: that Jesus was essentially God, and that he had become truly a man. After much bitter controversy about metaphysical niceties concerning human nature and divine nature, the orthodox position was authoritatively established at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. The declaration was there made that Jesus Christ was 'the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, very God and very man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things, sin except . . . born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God . . .' But the definition of the orthodox view of the Incarnation did not justify it intellectually, and it remains an abiding problem of Christian theology. In one respect, the idea of Christ's Incarnation differs from other conceptions: it is regarded as a permanent state of being, and not a temporary aspect. Christ is believed to have ascended into heaven in his human state.

(See also JESUS.)

FURTHER READING: J. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (Westminster, 1980); A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (John Knox Press, 1975).

The Hindu god Vishnu assumes a different physical form in every age in order to succour the pious and destroy evil-doers: Indian drawing of Vishnu's second incarnation as the turtle



INCAS

CHILDREN OF THE SUN

The Incas were invincible in their faith that the ruler of their powerful empire was a direct descendant of the sun; but when the throne was usurped the theocracy with its glittering temples of gold fell to the invading Spaniards

WITHIN FOUR CENTURIES the Inca family expanded from rulers of part of a small town to a semi-divine tribe of which the head, the Sapa Inca, ruled an immense empire which they termed *Tahuantinsuyu*, the Four Quarters, to imply that their father the sun god destined them to rule the entire known earth. In the mid-11th century, about the time of the Norman Conquest of Britain, a family of American Indians came from the East and ascended the mountains into a civilized country which had broken up into warring tribal troups. Their legend tells us that they were commanded to find the very centre, the navel or *Cuzco*, of the earth. To ascertain this they carried a wedge of gold, symbol of a sun ray, and at each stopping place they placed the wedge upon the ground to see if it would sink into the earth and disappear. This at last happened when Inca Manco and his sister Mama Occlo, who were the only survivors of the family, came to a little mountain town near the headwaters of the Apurimac river. They were allowed to rule half of the town which they now named The Cuzco, and although they were respected because of the mystery of their origin, it was not until the reign of their great-grandson that the Incas ruled the whole of the town. This must have been in the first half of the 12th century of our era.

At the time of the Inca arrival Peru was divided. The mountain peoples were heirs to three previous empires. The earliest originated around Chavin de Huantar well before 1000 BC and its characteristic art styles enable archeologists to show how it dominated much of the northern part of the Peruvian Andes. It has a close artistic relationship with the peoples of the more southerly part of the Peruvian Coast around the Paracas Peninsula, where there was a typically Peruvian cult of the dead, important people being sun dried after death, and then wrapped in great quantities of elaborately embroidered cloths. The strange art of these peoples was obsessed by the forms of serpents, pumas and condors, sacred animals representing earth, mountains and sky. A slightly later development of this religious art centred around Nasca on the southern half of the Peruvian Coast and was expressed in the creation of beautifully painted pottery, which in the early centuries AD included the first near realist figures of human beings in Peru.

Further to the north, again in the early centuries AD, another culture had arisen. These Mochica people lived in city states, were apparently often at war with each other, and built temples on great pyramidal mounds of brick. Their pottery is well modelled and painted simply with terracotta colours on cream, and here also arose true portrait modelling. Presumably this was part of the cult of the dead for the best vases are all found in the pits in the coastal sands where the mummified bodies of people were buried with their household treasures bundled in fine tapestries and woven cloths.

The people of the highlands seem to have developed separately and by the 6th century AD formed into two rather similar groups around the northern city of Huari and the

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Left **Lost city of the Incas; the remains of the city of Machu Pichu, first discovered by explorers in 1911, is sited on an almost inaccessible ridge of the Andes. The advanced culture of the Inca sun kingdom declined rapidly with the arrival of the Spaniards in the early 16th century** ***Right*** **Modern Peruvian witch-doctors, like their earlier Inca counterparts, are thought to be able 'to converse with the spirits of the air, and the creatures of the earth'**

Right Many Christian festivals among the Sierra Indians of Peru contain practices which are relics of forgotten Inca beliefs. At the feast of Corpus Christi, dancers wear masks bearing both the cross and the ancient Inca symbol of the sun *Centre* Headhunting was prevalent in Peru before the advent of the Spanish; it was believed that the possession of another man's head increased the new owner's spiritual powers: llama wool fabric depicting warriors grasping shrunken heads *Far right* In honour of their great father the sun, the Incas celebrated elaborate festivals of feasting and rejoicing: wooden beaker showing a ceremonial procession

Camera Press London

famous southern one of Tiahuanaco near Lake Titicaca. In the 8th century or perhaps a little later, the Tiahuanaco people defeated the tribes around Nasca and imposed their culture upon them. But the conquest did not last, and eventually Tiahuanaco itself fell in some catastrophe beyond our knowledge. Similarly the Huari power broke up. In the 10th and 11th centuries central and southern Peru and all the highland regions fell into a chaos of small conflicting tribal states. Only on the northern half of the coast was there much development. The Mochica towns were taken over by a warrior group who came on balsa rafts from the north, led by a great king known as the Great Chimu.

Chimu culture prospered exceedingly and from the 12th to the 15th centuries the kingdom was centred around the great city of Chan Chan. On that rainless coast it was built of mud brick covered with brilliantly painted plaster. The artisans worked in gold, silver, turquoise and crystal. Women created beauty in workshops, weaving quantities of clothing for the townspeople. Irrigation of the narrow river valleys passing through the arid coastlands made the plantations of maize, beans, pumpkins, melons and chilli peppers fruitful and rich. These people worshipped the stars and forces of Nature, but above all they adored the moon god, Si, who spared them from the fierce heat of the sun and guided their fishing boats over the calm seas on moonlit nights. From all the evidence they were a rich comfortable people, loving colour and jewellery. Their fertility festivals were gay and often enough thoroughly and happily pornographic, to the shocked indignation of their highland neighbours, the Incas, who were becoming a powerful force to be reckoned with by the late 14th century.

Merciful Masters

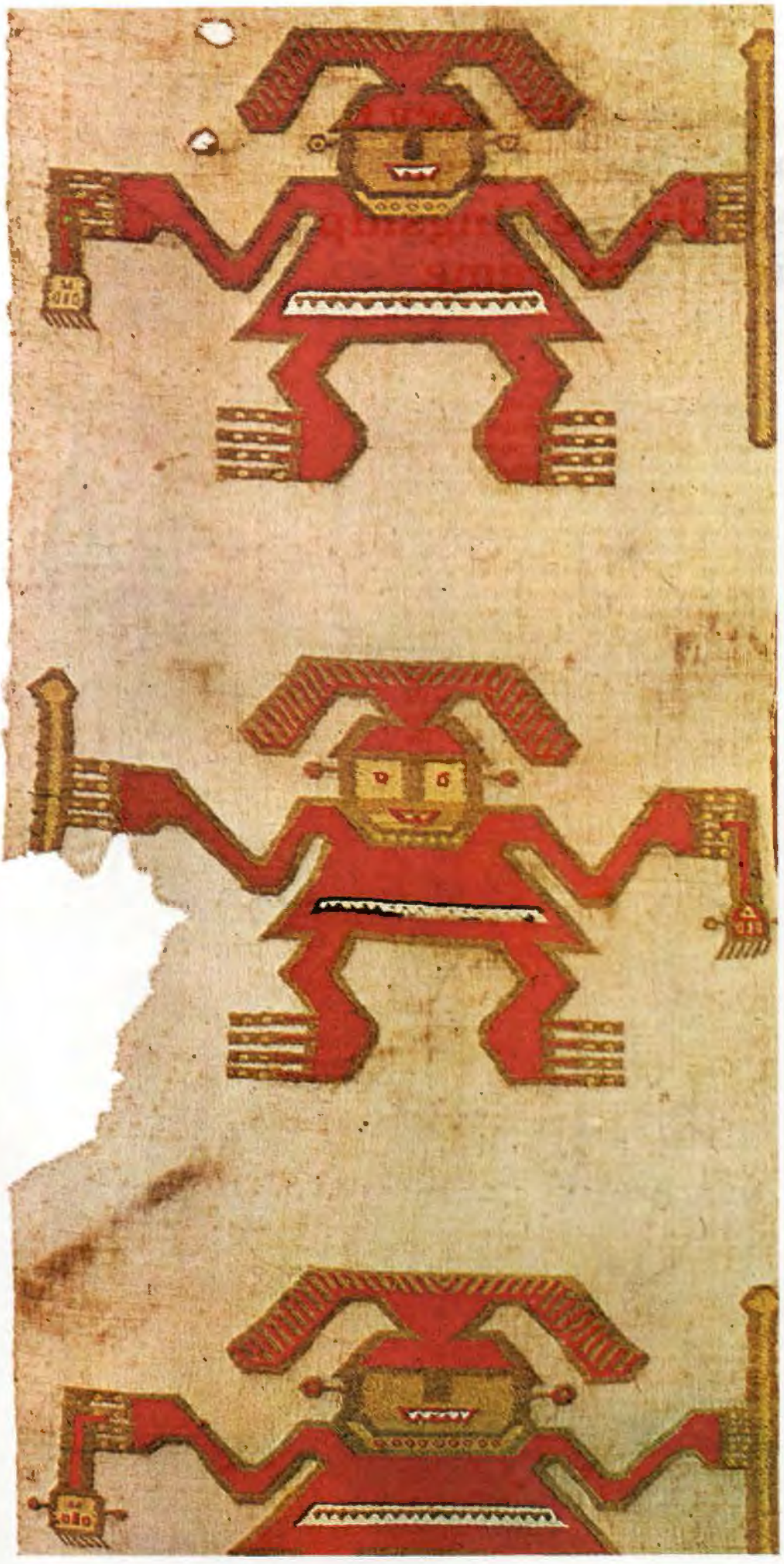
The Inca city of Cuzco had been slowly growing in importance, and the Inca family claiming descent from the sun god actively worked to spread their rule. The Inca was so holy that he could not be born from normal human parents. He was always the firstborn son of the divine marriage of the previous Sapa Inca with his sister (some say first cousin) the Ccoya, who was of equally pure lineage from the sun. In the male line there was only one breakdown – the Prince Yahuarhuaccac, He Who Weeps Blood. It seems that the growth of Inca power in the Cuzco Valley roused the jealousy of a group of Highland tribes known as the Chanca confederation. The young Inca was terrified of the power of the confederated armies and he lost a battle. His own family had him killed and appointed his brother to rule. The new ruler dared first to state the gravity of their plight by taking the name of Viracocha, the Creator. Only under that protection could they hope to win. In a series of outflanking raids and unexpected attacks the Inca forces destroyed the Chanca confederacy and Inca Viracocha found himself in command of all the mountain tribes around Cuzco. In another generation the Incas spread their rule over the whole Peruvian part of the Andes, including the sacred though ruined ancient city of Tiahuanaco.

Eventually the clash with the Chimu kingdom developed. The ruling Inca was becoming elderly but he sent his son Prince Tupac to conduct the campaign. After some fighting the Chimu capitulated. The Inca made their burden light, taking all the gold in the country for the glory of the sun god, but allowing the Chimu to retain silver ornaments. The Chimu were permitted to worship their own gods, but every temple had to support an oratory to the sun which made it quite clear that his children, the Incas, were the real rulers of the country. The Chimu crown prince was taken to Cuzco to learn Inca ways. He was treated well and married to an Inca Princess, which made sure that his children would also be of proper Inca descent.

The capture of the Chimu kingdom made the Incas masters of all the civilized areas of Peru. Under the great Tupac Yupanqui when he became Sapa Inca, the Inca armies faced a movement of tribes from Argentina, so he decided to spread the Empire down to Chile. His son Huayna Ccapac turned northwards and captured the Cara kingdom of southern Ecuador and took the Cara princess as one of his hundreds of junior wives. He was so in love with her that he decreed that on his death Huascar, his son by his sister, should be Supreme Inca in Peru, but that his son by the princess, Atahuallpa, should rule the northern section of the Empire. As things turned out, on the death of Huayna Ccapac, the two princes engaged in a terrible civil war. The true heir, Huascar, was taken prisoner and shut up in a cell in Cuzco and the false Atahuallpa called himself the Supreme Inca. Peru was paralysed because the people realized that this was no true child of the sun. Just at this time the Spaniards arrived. In a short campaign they captured Atahuallpa, and murdered him; but not before he had had Huascar, the true heir, killed. Thus in 1533 fell the divine sun kingdom of the Incas.

Golden Temple of the Sun

In their years of power the Incas achieved a great deal. Believing themselves to be directly descended from the sun god they felt it to be their duty to spread the benefits of divine rule throughout the lands which they controlled. They improved the road systems and arranged for storehouses of food and clothing in all parts of Peru so that in times of catastrophe there was always a reserve for the people. They greatly extended the



Michael Holford

use of the coloured knotted cords by which they transmitted messages instead of writing. Most important of all from their point of view was the establishment of a sun temple in every town of their dominions.

In Cuzco the great sun temple was surrounded by smaller buildings which held the lesser gods of all the peoples of the empire, as if they were servants waiting to obey their master. There was only One more powerful than the sun. Inside the sun temple was a wall covered with gold. Upon it there were figures of the sun, moon, thunder, and rainbow. The first humans were there and the first Inca. Then there were the constellations of stars and in their midst an open blank space, which astronomers now know as the 'coal sack' because of its comparative blackness in the Milky Way. This centrepiece of the golden wall was always empty. It represented the mystery of the Creator, Viracocha, the Breath of Life who was everywhere unseen but eternally giving life, even to father sun. The temple was so placed that once a year the rays of the rising sun shone through the doorway and lit up the golden wall with living burning light. On that occasion the Sapa Inca was alone in the temple. He was without his crown and barefoot, having meditated all night and prayed that the sun, which was now at its furthest point away from his kingdom, should return to spread light and life again. Outside, the people of the city had spent a night of penitence without fire and food, weeping for their past evil-doings. The priests had worked magic over a black llama so that it would take the sins of the peoples on its back before being driven away into the mountains.

Then when the returning sun had shone upon the golden wall the Inca put on his diadem and his golden sandals. After he had sacrificed a pure white llama the people burst into songs of rejoicing and the city was filled with processions, singing and dancing. On that occasion strangers kept outside the city for fear. From the royal storehouses food was distributed and every individual was given a vase holding about half a gallon of maize beer. After the day of rejoicing was over the streets of the city were lined with people in a quiet, happy stupor, for the drunken Peruvian preferred sleeping to fighting. They were happy that once again the sun was returning through

There is nothing else in history to compare truly with Inca Peru; it is an example of divine kingship taken to the ultimate extreme

the skies, every day shining higher and higher, until the day came when he sat on his stone throne in every town and cast no shadow because he was right overhead, showering blessings on the four quarters of the earth ruled so wisely by his son, the Sapa Inca.

In addition to the great powers of Nature the Peruvians found magic in all manner of things which they thought were lucky charms. They collected strangely-shaped stones, reverenced unusual animals, and found an aura of power in the dried bodies of the dead. Wise men knew how to interpret the language of animals and predict the future from the flight of birds. On occasions of great disasters they might offer a few human sacrifices, but normally they made little presents of food and small animals and birds to their gods. They well understood that sometimes the powers of Nature were terrible, but they accepted that the Nature gods took their own human victims as they pleased. Famine might be sent by the gods but the storehouses of the sun and the Inca existed to return the divine bounty to help the afflicted people.

Society and Custom

Under the Incas social organization was thorough. Every event in a village was recorded on the knotted string *quipus*, or cords, and sent to the town for the archives. Abstracts of these reports were knotted up and sent to the supreme administration in Cuzco. The Inca was in his massive stone palace for all great festivals, but he also travelled widely inspecting towns, ordering the construction of roads, bridges and storehouses, and impressing his people that all were interdependent in the kingdom of the sun. The taxes for the Inca and the sun god, each taking a third of the harvest of every field, were largely returned in the paternalistic welfare service. Only his direct servants, the High Priest and his closest relatives might look closely on his face. Others threw themselves down and turned their faces to the earth as the divine king passed close to them.

It appears that people discussed the Inca as an individual, and on a very few occasions protested against new regulations, but on the whole they regarded him as a natural phenomenon, a divine sun child sent to guide them in the pleasanter paths of life.

In such a society marriage was important because good family organization was the basis of the state. Once a year in every district there was a great ceremony in which young couples were married. They had only a very small choice of partners, but there seems to be little record of domestic unhappiness. They accepted the chosen partner whom they had almost certainly known from childhood, reared their families, looked after the flocks, cultivated the fields, and made pots and wove cloth for the home. For the family of the Inca himself, however, arrangements were different. Each Sapa Inca was married to his sister who was the sacred queen, the Ccoya. In addition he was expected to take many more wives. The daughters of defeated chiefs were often

Gold funerary mask of the Chimu people, who were conquered by the Incas: they worshipped the stars and the forces of Nature, but especially the moon god who guided their fishing boats 'over the calm seas on moonlit nights'

Infant Sacrifice

The children destined for the sacrifice were brought by their own mothers who were proud that the gods should accept such a gift. So that their children should appear beautiful to Viracocha, they were dressed in all their finery and more wreaths of flowers. Then the little ones were given a sleeping draught; in the case of babies, the mothers suckled them shortly before the sacrifice took place. Then with great ceremony the Tarpuntary took the children from their mothers, led them round the altar and laid them on the sacrificial stone with their faces to the sun. At the next moment they were killed in the particular manner prescribed by the ritual – strangled, garotted or their breasts torn open with a sharp obsidian knife. With their blood the ceremony of 'Vilacha' or 'Pipano' was performed; this consisted in the smearing of the sacrificer or certain privileged persons with red stripes from ear to ear. The same blood was allowed to dye sacrificial utensils and finally these and the children were lowered into a common grave.'

Siegfried Huber *The Realm of the Incas* trans M. Savill.

taken into the harem of the Inca, an honour which bound their family in allegiance. Important tribal areas were kept happy within the empire if their noblest young ladies bore children of Inca descent.

In the general field of religion there were the functioning priests from the High Priest of the sun right down to the cleaners in the temples. A third of the wealth of the country secured their welfare and was used to keep the store rooms full in readiness for times of shortage. In Cuzco there was a college for young ladies who were chosen from all the kingdom for their intelligence and beauty. They were known as the Virgins of the sun. They wove beautiful clothing for the Inca and for the priests and temples. Some of them remained dedicated to the service of religion all their lives; but most were married off to nobles and visiting rulers. They became the gifts of the Inca to those whom he delighted to honour.

The position of women in Inca Peru was of equality with men, but within the sphere of women's work. They were not warriors and roadmakers, but no men made pottery or wove cloth. Everywhere in the empire the woman and mother was treated with respect and honour, and the Ccoya was queen of women's employment just as the Inca was king over the male side of life. Some women became professional healers. They had a deep and scientific knowledge of herbal medicine, and knew the value of massage and of bone-setting. There were also many women as well as some men who were inspired by spirits and who gave advice when in a state of trance. They were supposed to be able to converse with the spirits of the air, and the creatures of earth.

There is nothing else in history to compare truly with Inca Peru. It is an example of a divine kingship taken to the ultimate extreme. By good fortune the individual Incas seem to have been men of very high character with a real care for the welfare of their kingdom. They used the thousands of cousins in the Inca family as a disciplined and closely knit civil service. The organization of every facet of life made administration easy, but it was also scientific. There was not much freedom, yet very few revolts. Progress was not great because there was enough food, clothing and entertainment for everybody and no one wished to introduce innovations into a contented, divinely-inspired civilization. On the whole the gods and mankind had found a *modus vivendi*, a way of living that was mutually acceptable, for a few generations. But at the beginning of the 16th century came the strange end, with the Divine Inca deposed and murdered by his more earthly brother; and then a total change when the bronze age theocracy was taken over by the feudal iron-using Spanish invaders from over the great oceans.

C.A. BURLAND

Michael Holford

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INCENSE

THE BURNING of sweet-smelling substances in religious ceremonies, both public and private, is of great antiquity and common to many peoples. Pleasing odours have been thought to delight the gods and to be offensive to evil spirits. Smoke from glowing aromatic substances has been taken to symbolize the ascent of prayer to heaven, and in death rooms and at funerals it is believed to bear the souls of the departed to their eternal rest. Sweet fragrances have been used to ameliorate the stench of blood and burnt offerings and as purifications to clear the air of nasty material smells and, by implication and extension, of foul immaterial presences.

Many different combustibles have been used for ritual purposes, particularly aromatic woods, barks, resins and herbs. North American Indians offered the smoke of tobacco to their gods and the Aztecs and Mayas that of copal, a kind of resin. Some substances used in pre-Columbian Mexico gave off narcotic fumes that drugged the senses of human sacrificial victims. The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun god Re with the burning of resin as he rose in the morning, of myrrh as he stood at the zenith at noon and of *kuphi* as he sank westwards in the evening. Kuphi, an elaborate compound of 16 ingredients including honey, wine and bitumen, was mixed by the priests according to a secret ritual, to the accompaniment of the chanting of sacred texts. It had a mystical significance of order and harmony, since the number of ingredients, four times four, represented the squaring of a square and brought calm and quiet to those who breathed it.

Such burnt aromas are commonly spoken of as 'incense' but true incense is what is properly called frankincense, the gum resin of trees of the *Boswellia* family growing chiefly in the hinterland of the Somali coast of East Africa. Frankincense was one of the 16 ingredients of kuphi and the Egyptians valued it highly. They organized expeditions to the 'land of Punt', as this area was known to them, to acquire it. The Greek traveller and historian Herodotus mentions this trade in the 5th century BC and says that the trees were guarded by winged serpents. The more prosaic historian Pliny (c 23–79 AD) records that the trees were tended by 3000 families which had a hereditary right to them. When the trees were being pruned or tapped, the men were forbidden intercourse with their women or the sight of a corpse.

The use of incense seems to have spread south-east and west from the Semitic lands. From early beginnings in Egypt and Babylonia, it was taken up by the Greeks (probably in the 8th century BC) and later by the Romans. It was often included in the aromatic substances with which burnt offerings were stuffed and was much used in processions and ceremonials. Grains of incense were customarily burned privately by the Romans before the images of the *lares*, the household gods, and publicly before those of the emperor. Incense has never been used in Moslem religious rites, as such, but may be burned at the shrines of holy men and during funerals. It was also used for magical purposes in Islamic countries, to ward off the Evil Eye and in a curious ritual of incantation. Different perfumes were associated with letters of the alphabet and the initial letter of the name of the person on whose behalf the incantation was made determined the choice of the aromatic used.

Frequent references to incense in the Old Testament have given rise to the mistaken view that its use goes back to very early times among the Jews. In fact, the Authorized Version often uses the word to refer to the aroma of burnt offerings and the ancient Hebrews may indeed have regarded the use of incense, so popular with the Babylonians, as a mere trapping of idolatry. Scholars are now agreed that the burning of incense was not introduced into Judaic ritual until the 7th century BC but that, once adopted, it became more and more important in the acts of worship. The incense used was compounded of few ingredients – stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense – and its mixture by the priests was regarded with much the same reverence as was given to the making of kuphi by the Egyptians. It was burned with meat offerings and with the first fruits and, on its own, at morning or evening on a special altar; and also once a year on the Day of Atonement, in the inner sanctum of the temples.

Christianity was also slow to adopt incense into its rites. The services of the early Church were very simple, and incense, save as a practical purification, was eschewed as something Jewish or pagan. Indeed, during the Roman persecutions the burning of grains of incense before the statue of the emperor was a test of an individual's loyalty to the state, and hence to the state religion, and also a symbolic act of apostasy. From the 5th century onwards, however, incense was gradually but increasingly used in church services. By the 14th century it had become part of the established ritual of High Mass and other services such as Vespers, at the consecration of churches and in processions and funerals. Although usage varied from place to place, incense, along with other external rituals, was driven from the churches by the Reformation. In the second half of the 19th century its use by the High Anglican movement to enrich church ceremonial became a highly controversial issue.

The passions aroused by the 'incense question' in the English church may now strike many people as somewhat ridiculous. But incense is curious stuff and may be if not physiologically at least psychologically addictive. It is a matter of personal temperament but, for many people, the sweet smell and the swirling patterns of the smoke, in a candle-lit church filled with solemn music, have a strange power.

(See also PERFUME.)

CHARLES DE HOGHTON

Aaron, brother of Moses, burning incense during a religious ceremony: detail from a 16th century fresco in Bressanone Cathedral

A. Tomsich

National Film Archive

INCEST

AN ESKIMO MYTH relates that the sun and the moon were once sister and brother. They lay down together and made love in a house where there was no light. When the sister discovered that her lover was her own brother, she tore off her breasts in her shame, and threw them to her brother with the cry, 'Since my body pleases thee, taste these too!' Then the sister took a torch and fled, pursued by her brother, who was also carrying a torch. As the sister rose in the sky, her torch burned bright, and she became the sun. The brother's torch spluttered out, as he ascended after his sister, and he became the moon.

Freud suggested that 'the beginnings of religion, ethics, society and art, meet in the Oedipus complex'; scene from Pasolini's film *Oedipus Rex*

Almost all human societies prohibit marriage and punish or disapprove strongly of even casual sexual intercourse between persons of certain specified degrees of relatedness. Modern investigators set themselves the task of distinguishing clearly the problem of incest, which has to do with sexual relations, from the institution of exogamy, the rule which forbids marriage within a group. This distinction is not always made however, in the older anthropological literature, and it is by no means certain that it is absolute in the minds of all the

John Webb

16th century woodcut by Gerard de Jode of an incestuous relationship; incest myths of great antiquity often make a brother and sister the first pair of all mankind

members of the societies which have been most intensively studied in this respect. An important point is that the group on which the exogamy rule is based need not be a family in the sense that the word would normally be understood in contemporary civilized society. In many societies, the group is identified with a specific plant or animal which constitutes its totem (see TOTEM), and though totemism is found without exogamy and exogamy without totemism, the two are so frequently associated that some writers have treated them as inseparable.

The complex of incest – exogamy – totemism crop up in unrelated societies all over the world, and the near universality of taboos on incest does invite the formation of an all-embracing theory. In the Eskimo myth already quoted there are several features which have striking parallels in incest myths from other parts of the world, and other periods in history. Thus the offending pair act in ignorance, accounted for here by the naïve device of their lying together in darkness. The sister's reaction on discovering her sin is to mutilate herself out of horror and shame.

The Story of Oedipus

Several of these details find an echo in the most famous incest myth of all, the story of the Greek king Oedipus. Oedipus obeyed the inexorable rule of his own destiny in murdering his father Laius and marrying his mother Jocasta. The Greek myth incorporates an imaginative episode to explain how both these crimes were committed in complete ignorance. Oedipus's reaction on the discovery of his true relationship to Jocasta is also one of extreme horror and shame, and he, too, punishes himself through mutilation, putting out his eyes (the source of light in ancient Greek belief).

Freud was not the first to sense the universality of the Oedipus myth. As early as 1855, Burckhardt wrote that there was 'an Oedipus chord in every Greek that longed to be directly touched and to vibrate after its own fashion.' For every Greek, Freud substituted every man, and made the Oedipus complex, as he called it, the pivot of his psychoanalytical theory. In the book he devoted to the twin problem of incest and totemism, Freud wrote: 'the beginnings of religion, ethics, society and art meet in the Oedipus complex. This is in entire accord with the findings of psychoanalysis, namely that the nucleus of all neuroses as far as our present knowledge of them goes is the Oedipus complex.'

According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, however, social constraints such as incest taboos, cannot be explained as the effects of emotions which crop up again and again in different parts of the world at different periods in time. It is, rather, the taboos and rituals which give rise to the emotions. But both Freud and Lévi-Strauss would agree in putting the incest taboo at the very basis of the human condition. For Freud, the incest prohibition blocks the iufantile longing for the mother, and forces the libido along the path of life's biological purpose. For Lévi-Strauss, the 'universal presence of the incest taboo means that in human society a man must obtain a woman from another man, who gives him a daughter or a sister.'

Awareness of incest as a practice to be hedged about with prohibitions goes back to a very early stage in man's development. The earliest known incest myths agree in imputing the practice to the first-born among gods and men: in Greek mythology, Rhea is the sister-spouse of Cronus, and Hera of Zeus. In Hawaii, Kii (or Tiki) is the ancestor of all men by incestuous union with his mother, and myths which make a brother and sister the first pair of all mankind are found over the face of the earth. The myths also show that incest has an ambivalent power of attraction and repulsion to the majority of mankind. It is not without reason that the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles is the one surviving ancient Greek tragedy that retains an undiminished hold over modern audiences.

DAVID PHILLIPS

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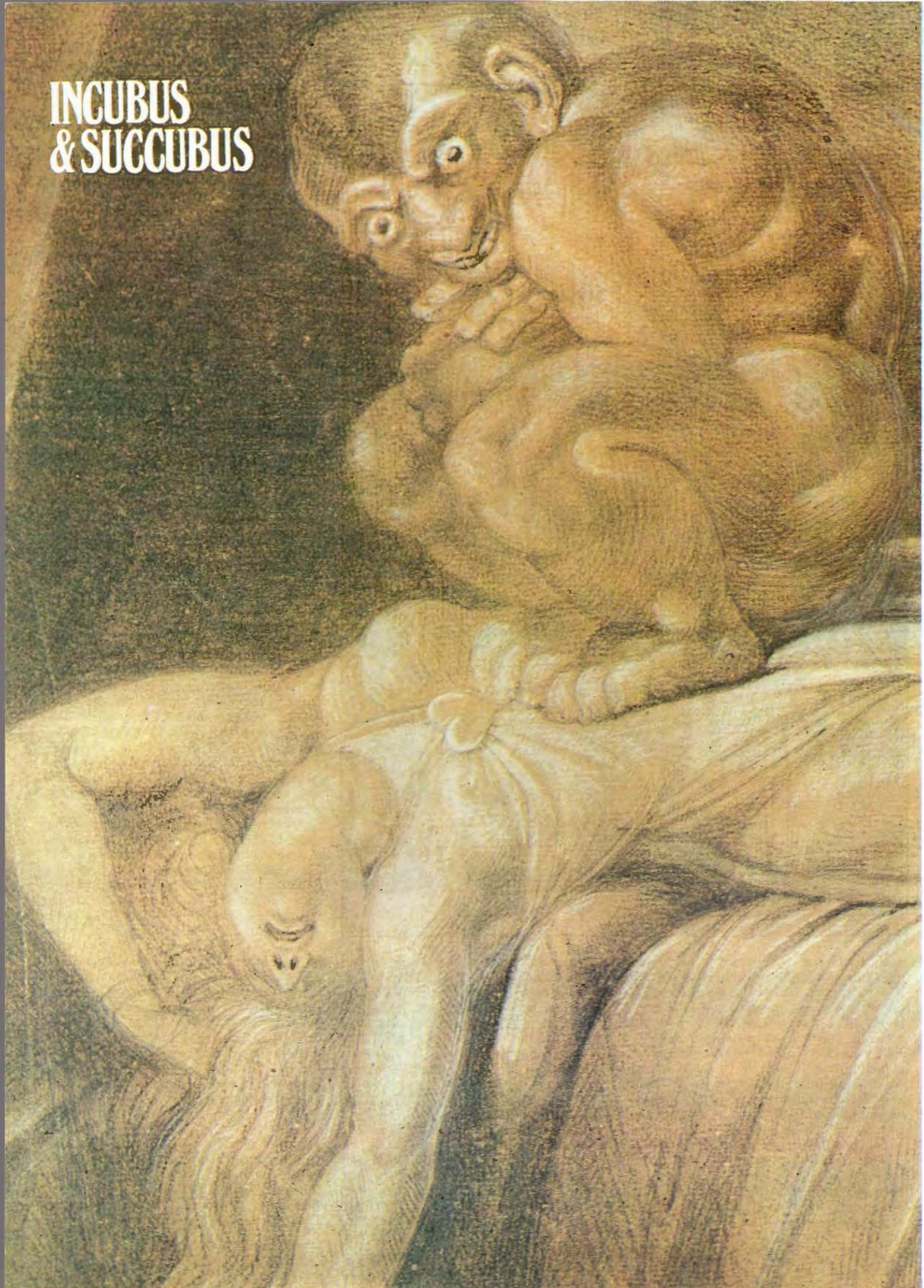

INCUBUS
& SUCCUBUS

The theme of the demon lover occurs repeatedly in Romantic poetry. The antecedents of this nocturnal visitor are far older, however, and reach back to the incubus, one of Satan's legions sent to torment mankind in terms of sex

THE INCUBUS was a devil who was thought to visit his lust upon women, while the demonic succubus attended to men. Most Christian demonologists of the Middle Ages, and later, agreed that unbridled sexuality (which they apparently defined as anything this side of joyless procreation) offered one of the most slippery paths to hell. And if human seducers did not present threat enough to the potentially virginal, these lecherous demons – and in rare cases even the Devil himself – would happily perform the same function.

Usually the incubus or succubus was believed to assume human form for its purposes and, naturally, a sexually attractive form. The theologians insisted, however, that demons were spirits: hence the human form they put on had to be an animated corpse, or a fleshly fabrication endowed with movement and artificial life; the notion that devils can create life was and is a heresy. Frequently the demon lovers appeared to their partners, or victims, in the semblance of a human husband, wife or lover. Sometimes, too, they appeared in equally familiar but less welcome shapes – as in the case of a medieval nun who claimed to have been sexually attacked by one Bishop Silvanus, though the Bishop insisted that it was an incubus who had assumed his form.

But certain signs could reveal the true demonic nature of the incubus in human form. When a woman willingly admitted it to her bed, it had the ability to put others in the house into a deep sleep – and could even render a husband so soundly asleep that it could enjoy his wife in the bed beside him. At times, the demons gave away their evil origins by the unpleasurable sensations they caused. But this aspect of their love-making did not gain wide credence until the time of the great witch persecutions. The witch-hunters believed on the one hand that initiate witches had to have sexual relations with their Satanic master, and on the other hand that they never enjoyed it. Victimized witches claimed at their trials (or rather, were made to claim, usually by torture) that Satan's sexual organ was cold as ice, or painfully large, or made of iron, or all of these. Some even described it as two-pronged. Occasionally, too, men would confirm the unpleasurable nature of this supernatural intercourse.

Demon Lovers

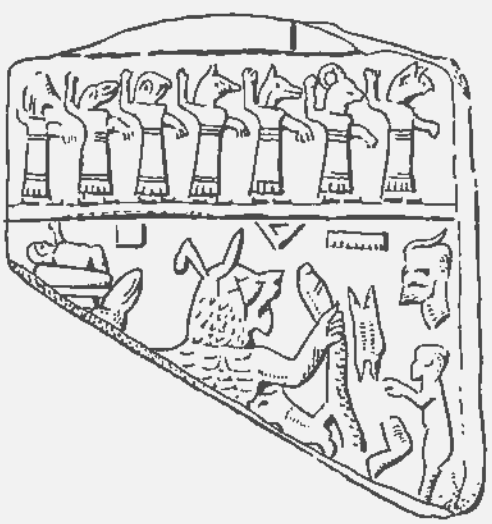
It was a common belief in the Middle Ages that the Devil himself could easily assume female form, to tempt some male saint such as the beleagnered St Anthony. It was a short step, therefore, for the incubus and succubus to be seen as the same devil, putting on a male body one night to visit a woman, a woman's body the next night to tempt a man. Out of this idea came the belief that devils, spirits or not, could impregnate humans. Some demonologists said that they saved up the semen of corpses; but most theorists preferred to assert that the incubus ejaculated semen which it had gathered, earlier, when in the guise of a succubus. In spite of the fact that this demonic form of artificial insemination used human sperm, the children of such unions were generally expected to be monstrous – physically deformed, or more subtly odd. Even twins were viewed with suspicion, as likely products of an incubus's attentions. The magician Merlin was in some tales reputed to have had one demonic parent. Because devils were not humans, sexual intercourse with incubi or succubi was considered to be bestiality – and some writers threw in sodomy as well – so any humans suspected of willingly taking a demon to bed would be punished not only for diabolism but also for sexual perversion.

And of course the demonologists and their hysteric inheritors the witch-hunters were by nature suspicious people; their victims were guilty until proved innocent. These people believed that witches were given incubi as lovers and familiars in return for entering the service of Satan. Necromancers, black magicians and the like also received demonic mistresses from their master, rather in the way that Mephistopheles conjured up Helen of Troy and other delights for Faust. Such people, when caught, and when 'confessions' had been wrung from them by torture, were invariably punished for their general heresy – of which sexual relations with devils played only a minor part. But ordinary people who were accused of sleeping with devils, were tried entirely for sexual sins. They might defend themselves by saying that they were seduced – even raped, for the incubus took by force what it could not get by blandishment and temptation. And then the line of innocence or guilt had to be drawn too finely for the judges in the days of the witch-hunting frenzy. Seduction by an incubus was as punishable as succumbing to temptation in other sinful directions; besides, the witch-hunters said, a girl who 'falls' sexually (to a devil or not) is more easily drawn into total corruption.

Nevertheless, many young women (including, during the Middle Ages, quite a few nuns) claimed rape by an incubus when the loss of their virginity became evident. So the belief became a convenient excuse for unmarried mothers, adulterous wives, women ashamed of a deformed child, and so on. Men found it a handy escape from accusations of paternity of an illegitimate child, and also an easy road out of marriage; evidence, however spurious, that their wives were sleeping with devils usually brought a quick annulment. In a famous 17th century case a noblewoman gave birth to a child in spite of the fact that her husband had been away from home for four years; she claimed that her husband had come to her in a dream, and had impregnated her. Learned theologians wrangled over whether the dream lover had really been the husband (in which case the child would be an heir to the estate) or an incubus in her husband's semblance. No one seems to have doubted for a moment the lady's honour – not, at any rate, in public. The husband's opinion is not recorded.

This extreme of credulity on the part of demonologists, whose gullibility reached astonishing proportions and complexity, indicates some crucial thinking about the incubus and its origins. In the legend of this demon it appears in one instance as a night visitor in the flesh (whatever flesh), but in another as a spirit visitor arriving in the form of an erotic dream. Naturally, it was assumed that any lewd thoughts entering the sleeping mind of a devout and celibate churchman, or a maritally devoted churchgoer, must have been sent by a devil. No one conceived of the idea that such dreams might erupt because the lid was clamped too firmly on a normal sexual drive. So the devil as incubus or succubus came to be seen as interchangeable with the nightmare, a word then in use both for horrifying dreams and for the devils who were thought to give rise to them.

The Latin word for nightmare, *incubo*, comes from *incubare*, meaning 'to lie upon'; the nightmare's content was described as uniquely terrifying, usually erotic, and conveying a feeling of a great weight pressing on the chest. Clearly, to the celibate clergy and other 'pure' minds, any erotic dream was horrifying; but of course the erotic content might often have been symbolic rather than explicit. Havelock Ellis, in company with other modern sexologists, sees erotic dreams and fantasies as the main impulse behind 'those conceptions of *incubi* and *succubi* which played so important a part in the demonology of the Middle Ages.' He adds the comment: 'Such erotic dreams of the hysterical are by no means always, or even usually, of a pleasurable character.' So the chaste and devout medieval Christian, fearing and abhorring his or her own



Previous page Nightmares with their sensation of horror and eroticism, were long considered the work of incubi and succubi, demons who could assume either male or female form: in Fuseli's *Nightmare,* the young girl is tormented by an incubus *Left* The Hebrew demon Lilith, queen and mother of succubi, was the successor of sexually insatiable Babylonian demonesses: amulet of the lion-headed Lemashtu and her seven demons *Right* Female devils assailed St Anthony, to tempt him from the path of righteousness

Firma Schmoz and Huth

sexuality, was denied any enjoyment even in the dreams that the unconscious mind put up to try to correct the dangerous imbalance.

Bachelors' Invisible Wives

The belief in incubi and succubi did not spring entirely from the murky depths of medieval hysteria and repression. It had its antecedents in more permissive times and places. Many ancient civilizations had their forms of the nightmare or incubus demon and also saw it as operating either in the flesh or in dreams. The early Assyrian *lili* was a sexually insatiable female demon who roamed the night looking for a mortal men to lie with; and she became, in ancient Hebrew myth, the monster Lilith (referred to in the book of Isaiah as the 'night hag'), the very queen and mother of succubi (see LILITH). The Graeco-Roman world had its equally sexually rapacious wood nymphs and the like, who led men to their doom. Their male counterparts, the satyrs and fauns, are pre-Christian incubi; just as the woodland god Pan, with his horns and cloven hooves, antedates Satan and influenced early Christian conceptions of the Lord of Evil.

The Teutonic Lorelei and the Greek Sirens were succubus figures, leading men to disaster through sexual desire. The Arab *jinn* were spirits who tended to kill their human lovers by means of excessive sexual demands – in exactly the way that an early Christian hermit, seduced by a succubus, was said to have died within a month trying to satisfy her. Such relations were not always fatal, however: in Arab tales of the jinn the female version was believed to serve as the invisible wife of any unmarried man – and many men who in legend had such wives were exceedingly unwilling to exchange them for mortal women.

The Celtic *dusii* and the Hindu *bhut* are further examples of the demon lover. A great many of the fairies, elves and other creatures of British legend operated sexually in this way until their stories were prettified and bowdlerized for children's consumption. Along with these slightly more distant relatives of the incubus can be included the vampire, who visits its victims at night while they sleep; the werewolf belongs here too, with its definite overtones of perverted sexuality, as do those shaggy and virile wild men of the woods of folk legend, variations on the satyr. The gorillas in the 'penny dreadfuls' of the 19th century, who spent most of their time carrying off beautiful white women, may also be numbered among this company.

So it seems that to some extent man's mistrust of his own sexuality has at all times caused him to depict it as a demonic figure. Medieval Christian man, however, took this depiction to new and obsessive extremes. He even saw the incubus as powerful enough, in its obtrusion into our most rational or spiritual lives, to resist exorcism: many stories exist of the sexual devil ignoring the exorcist, laughing at him, even attacking him personally. Demonologists ascribed the ability of the incubus to withstand exorcism to the fact that it was of the lowest order of demons, and so more thick-skinned and stupid. Similarly, remarkably few magical cures exist in folklore for people plagued by incubi. One or two writers allude to certain herbs that can protect innocent beds, including St John's wort, vervain, dill, and garlic, which is also reputed to hold off vampires. Otherwise, the early Christian fathers apparently relied solely on the hope that their usual prescription of prayer, mortification of the flesh and so on would keep their chastity intact.

If these tactics failed, the medieval Church and the later witch-hunters resorted inevitably to driving out the incubus through punishment of the victim. The revolting tortures that followed were obviously aimed, by the vicious hysterical minds that devised them, at the normal sexual urges of men and women. It is clear that the Church believed that no innocence could escape tainting, once exposed to the devil of lust in dream or otherwise. That belief, and the cruelties perpetrated in its name, reveals the scale of the sexual repression that existed in those centuries of the Church's dominance. The myth of the incubus remains one of the most ugly manifestations in all history of man's frequent attempts to cripple and pervert his own sexuality in the name of religion.
(See also EVIL.)

DOUGLAS HILL

Unlike the lords of Olympus, the deities of prehistoric India cannot be arranged in a neat family tree; brought together from a variety of sources, they imparted a breadth and tolerance to later Hindu thought

INDIA

THE HISTORY OF INDIA, in any modern sense of the term, begins to take a personal and coherent shape in the 6th century BC. Then great moral philosophies, which still between them influence millions of people in the East, combined with a spreading literacy and a complex but increasingly codified religion to introduce historical elements into the Indian record. There remained large gaps and uncertainties in that record, but the year 500 BC may be taken as the approximate divide between prehistoric and historic India.

The prehistoric period is not an entirely uncharted landscape. India was a land where oral tradition flourished with an astonishing persistence and exactitude. Thus when we speak of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* as the oldest literature, not merely in India but in any Aryan language, and ascribe them to the second millennium BC, we are thinking of hymns transmitted then by word of mouth and not written down (as the word literature implies) until unknown centuries later. Nevertheless those ancient hymns convey to us with something of the precision of literature the ideas and belief of the Aryan invaders who entered north-western India perhaps between 1700 and 1200 BC and helped to shape the cultures of the northern half of the subcontinent down to modern times.

These Aryan invaders were a rough, mobile folk with no cities and few material possessions of a durable kind but with a close-knit tribal organization eventually systematized in four classes: priests *(Brahmins)*, warriors *(ksatriyas)*, peasants *(vaisyas)* and serfs *(sudras)*. The tribal chieftain was the *raja* who led his tribe into battle but did not interfere with religious ritual, though he and his peers were partial to an inebriating drink, *soma*, sanctified and used at sacrifices. This *soma* or nectar, has been identified tentatively as a drug derived from hemp or, in a more recent theory, from the fungus fly agaric (see DRUGS).

The most accomplished products of the prehistoric Indus civilization to survive are steatite seals: pectoral from Mohenjo-daro of an ox-like beast shown with a single horn, nicknamed a 'unicorn'

Josephine Powell

The Aryan religion was based upon sky worship, and the early gods were *devas* or 'the shining ones', the father god being known as Dyaus, equivalent to the Greek Zeus and the Latin Jupiter. But when the Aryans reached India this remote Almighty had faded into the background and survived principally as the parent of a more real and active brood. Of these the most prominent was Indra, god of war and the weather, who destroyed his foes with a thunderbolt, drank soma immoderately and bragged freely of his prowess. Typically, in one of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* he proclaims, 'Like wild winds the draughts have raised me up. Have I been drinking soma? As a carpenter bends the seat of a chariot I bend this frenzy round my heart. In my glory I have passed beyond the sky and the great earth. Have I been drinking soma?' Across the sky with him rode into battle the charioted spirits of the storm, singing wild and warlike songs as they sped. Amongst his achievements was that of dragon-slayer. In one way and another he links up with religious ideas of Mesopotamia and as far afield as Germanic Europe. He was pre-eminently the warriors' god, violent and jovial in an age of heroic barbarism.

But though foremost, Indra was not the only Aryan god whose special zone was the sky. There was, for example, Surya or the sun god who drove across the heavens in a flaming chariot, like the Greek Helios or Apollo. The twin husbands of Surya's daughter, the Asvins, also used the sky and are comparable with the twin Dioscuri of the Greeks, but were specially concerned with shipwrecked mariners and generally with warding off the ills that beset mankind. Vishnu, who was later to become one of the two great gods of the Hindu world, was another frequenter of the Vedic skies. So too was Pusan, though, like the Asvins, occupied with peaceful missions such as protector of herds and herdsmen.

Next in esteem to the boisterous Indra was the somewhat mysterious and complex god or presence, Varuna, who reigned as a heavenly king in a celestial palace and was surrounded by a godly court. Upon Varuna rested responsibility for the order of the universe, for ensuring that day and night and the seasons followed one another in proper succession. Varuna's great quality was that of knowledge. He was present at all human interchange, and he abhorred sin, including the drinking and gambling which characterized Aryan society. He punished wrong-doing and was approached with awe and penitential humility.

In this he was quite unlike Rudra who had no moral sense but was a stormy archer god whose arrows brought disease; grim, though like so many of the ancient gods, capable of occasional beneficence.

Ritual Slaughter

A significant feature of the Indo-Aryan system, in distinction from that of the classical theocracy of the West, was its lack of close corporate inter-relationship. The Olympian complex can be expressed genetically in the form of a family tree. Not so that of the Vedic Aryans. These were content with a loose assemblage of divine skills and characters, brought together no doubt from a great variety of sources and confronted on arrival in India with a further multitude of regional deities and powers, which they lacked at first the political cohesion to co-ordinate into any very closely knit unity. In large measure this heterogeneous quality remained a characteristic of the developing religions of the subcontinent.

The ritual focus of the Aryan cult was animal sacrifice. In the *Rig-Veda* mention is made of great sacrifices in which numbers of animals were slaughtered for the pleasure of the gods and doubtless also for that of the worshippers, with whom the gods shared the sacrificial feast. The more mystical and elevating aspects of the occasion were no doubt encouraged by the soma which accompanied the banquet. Later records speak of smaller sacrifices at the domestic hearth, and the basic principle of the cult, on whatever scale, would appear to be the widespread reverence for the hearth as a centre of life and comfort, of dreaming and of utterance, which the *Rig-Veda* combines in the mystical word *Brahman*. The possessor of this supernatural quality was *Brahmana*, the priestly magician of the Vedic tribe (see BRAHMAN). In a special sense the Brahmana was the priest of the fire god Agni (equivalent to the Latin *ignis*) who was the spirit of hearth and home and dwelt in the timbers of the sacrificial fire itself as a sort of intermediary between gods and men. The sacrificial priest alone had full knowledge of the divine mystery and of the exact meaning of the words and formulae which themselves had a magic value and so were preserved with an astonishing fidelity.

Sacred Horse of the Sun

Of individual sacrifices the greatest fame attaches to the *ashvamedha* or horse sacrifice, which was the prerogative of kings. It is not known to the *Rig-Veda* but appears in the later Vedic period, approximately 1000–500 BC, when the centres of Aryan dominance had moved from the north-west frontier to the jungles and rivers of the northern plains. In this region and period the old tribal assemblies were being replaced by a defined monarchical system, comprising the king with his relatives and court officials; a system which, in however shadowy a form, continued in many parts of India until modern times. An obvious weakness of this regime arose when a ruler's advancing age and decreasing powers encouraged the ever-ready intrigues of an entourage chosen perhaps on grounds other than ability. It was important therefore to preserve or increase the king's vitality, from middle age onwards, by every heavenly device. The most potent medium was that of the horse sacrifice. The procedure was to release a specially consecrated horse so that it ran wild for a year. It was followed by a band of selected warriors, who saw that the rules were strictly observed: namely, that any king on whose territory the horse chose to wander must either do homage or fight. The thinking behind this strange ceremony is, as usual in such cases, hard to discern. It may be observed, however, that the horse had specific associations with the nomadic and warlike Aryans; that it was associated with the sun, one of the major powers of life; and that the ceremony included a quasi-coupling with the queen, thus representing the fecundity of nature. In other words, it symbolized an Aryan life-source (see also IMITATIVE MAGIC).

In one way and another, the act of sacrifice, however difficult of interpretation and probably in part because of its incomprehensibility, became the central mystery of the Brahman doctrine. This meant that by the late Vedic period (middle and latter part of the first millennium BC) – that of the *Upanishads* – the individual characters and qualities of many of the gods of the *Rig-Veda* had become obscured, or had merged into new complexes: a process which may be ascribed partly to the fusion of Aryan with non-Aryan elements and partly to inevitable changes wrought by time and changing environment. A notable example of this was the gradual exaltation of the fierce Rudra of the *Rig-Veda* into the mighty Shiva of classical Hinduism. *Shiva* meant 'propitious', and was in origin the placatory epithet of Rudra but eventually assumed a separate and independent status as one of

Josephine Powell

Seals from Mohenjo-daro showing cult scenes *Top to Bottom* A 'unicorn' seal: the animal is by an incense burner. A horned ithyphallic god squats in a yoga position, bangles along his arms: possibly an early form of Shiva. The three-headed animal on the next seal may be Shiva in the character of Pasupati, Lord of Beasts. Seal depicting a rhinoceros. Horned goddess in a fig tree with priestesses or sacred dancers. Horned animal

the two great cosmic deities of the Hindu world, the other being Vishnu. In character, Shiva was an irreconcilable mingling of the hopes and fears and questionings of his worshippers. He is the destroyer; he haunts battlefields and burning-grounds; he is himself both time and death; he wears a garland of skulls and is surrounded by demons. At the same time he is the creator and is ithyphallic (represented with an erect phallus). Again, on Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas he sits upon a tiger skin in deep meditation. But also he is Lord of the Dance. He wields the trident, and is constantly accompanied by his gracious wife Parvati and his 'vehicle', the Nandi bull. He rules menacingly over his adherents, with whom he nevertheless shares the Hindu urge towards reflection and yogi. He brings together in one stern but ineluctible Being many of the principal strands of Indian religious thought and sensation.

Antecedents of a God

Archeology suggests that, in spite of links with the Aryan Rudra, Shiva owes much in his complicated character to native Indian, non-Aryan, prototypes. Although difficulties, often insurmountable, obstruct the interpretation of undocumented material relics in terms of religious or metaphysical thought, it is permissible to recognize elements of a worship approximating to that of Shiva in the great prehistoric Indus civilization of north-western India. This civilization extended from the foot of the Himalayas at Rupar to the Arabian Sea west of Karachi at an approximate period of 2500 to 1700 BC, and there can be little doubt that its walled citadels such as those of Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and Kulibangan, represent the fortified sites proclaimed in the *Rig-Veda* to have been destroyed by the invading Aryans sometime within that millennium. At least there are no known rival claimants. Now amongst the steatite (soapstone) seals which are the most accomplished products of that civilization are three from Mohenjo-daro in Sind bearing the figure of a Shiva-like deity squatting on the ground or a low stool. One of these is particularly notable: it shows a somewhat sinister three-faced and horned god squatting in an attitude of yoga on a low throne; he is apparently ithyphallic, and his arms are covered with bangles. On either side of the god are four animals – elephant, tiger, rhinoceros and buffalo – and beneath the throne are two deer. It is generally accepted that the representation is that of Shiva, or a proto-Shiva, in the character of Pasupati, Lord of Beasts. And, since it is equally accepted that the Indus civilization is rooted in pre-Aryan India, it would appear necessary in this instance to reconcile this pre-Aryan 'Shiva' with the Aryan Rudra. The answer may well lie in the probability that the so-called 'Aryan invasion' was a fairly protracted penetration and that there was some sharing of ideas and beliefs.

Other seals from Mohenjo-daro show cult scenes, including suggestions of some sort of tree worship such as has survived into modern Hinduism. One seal shows a horned goddess sitting in a peepul, or sacred fig tree.

Josephine Powell

Stone bust of a priest-king or deity from Mohenjo-daro: the many gods of the Vedic Aryans bequeathed to later Hinduism a liberalness and tolerance which tend to be lacking from more sternly monotheistic faiths

Another seal shows a god or hero grappling with two tigers, a scene recalling the familiar representation of the Sumerian hero Gilgamesh between two lions.

In one way and another it is evident that the main outlines of Hindu belief took shape in the second millennium BC, and represent a fusion of Aryan, non-Aryan and perhaps Sumerian sources, with an appreciable admixture of more local elements. As time went by, and more settled social and economic conditions supervened, there was an increasing trend towards meditation and introspection, culminating in the great moral philosophies of Buddhism and Jainism during and after the 5th century BC (see BUDDHISM; JAINS). But alongside these philosophies, and rarely in active opposition to them, the traditional religious beliefs and practices continued as they continue today to provide the religious beliefs and usages which still form the broad basis of Indian life. (See also HINDUISM; SHIVA; VISHNU.)

MORTIMER WHEELER

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INITIATION

The youth in a primitive society who submits to being severely stung by hornets, and the Western apprentice who accepts the bullying and ragging of his workmates are both activated by the same principle: the acceptance of an ordeal which must be undergone and surmounted before initiation into a new status

IN EVERY INITIATION ceremony there is some idea of a new birth as part of the process of assuming full status in the group. 'Except a man be born again' is the Christian phrasing for a process which in many ceremonies involves acting out a return to a symbolic womb. Part of the ritual of the Kunapipi, an Australian aboriginal group, involves the initiates being brought into the sacred ground 'to enter the Mother; they go into her uterus, the ring place, as happened in the beginning.' In acting out the ritual they are covered over with bark and hung from a pole. 'They are', as Mircea Eliade shows, 'in the womb, and they will emerge reborn – "their spirit comes out new".'

The theme of rebirth is paralleled by the equally important recurring theme of death. Both are closely linked structurally in the whole process of initiation. The new life cannot start until the old has been disposed of. Ritual death to the old life, the former sinful, corrupt condition, is expressed in the elaborate mythology surrounding most puberty rites. In the Congo on the Loango coast boys between ten and twelve years old have a ritual death in the village when they are given a potion to make them unconscious as a prelude. Now 'dead', they are taken into the jungle, circumcised, buried in the fetish house and painted white, a sign that they are ghosts of their former existence.

Rebirth may be similarly expressed by the infantile behaviour of the initiates when they return. They may appear helpless, like babies. The stay in the bush serves the important function of signifying the death of the previous relationship between a son and his mother. Initiation ceremonies serve several functions in relation to the social

Harald Schultz

Puberty rites, frequently involving circumcision of boys and artificially induced vaginal bleeding in girls, are an initiation into adulthood, connected with the religious and magical qualities associated with sex: puberty rites among Brazilian Indians

Trials of strength and endurance as tests of fitness to share the sacred membership with the ancestors or folk heroes, are common to all initiations

Camera Press

Initiation marks a change of status, a break with the old life *Above* Africans perform their last warrior dances before becoming junior elders *Right* Apache maiden during initiation: she is coated with yellow pollen to ensure that she will be fertile

structure but they also emphasize the deeper belief system. The newly initiated have a special status because they have learned the mysteries, survived the ordeals, having escaped the belly of whale or serpent or whatever other experience may be central to the creation myth of the group.

Initiation into secret societies, shamanic or other groups of priests, witches or warriors, follows a similar patteru but with a more elaborate and distinctive indoctrination of the individual. In these ceremonies the demonstration of some magical, divine or shamanic power by the initiate is looked for as a sign that he has attained the appropriate characteristics of a god, animal or spirit. A transcendent existence, and the powers that go with it, replace the mere human condition. In most hero legends the young warrior characteristically undergoes an experience of a sacred, mystical kind which gives him superhuman powers or magical elements which he can use in his ordeal. The tasks which are set to those who hope to win the hand of the beautiful princess in the classical fairy tales depend on more than normal attributes in the performer. The hero becomes seized with power, he becomes heated, baptized with fire. Eliade describes how in Germanic secret societies the young man became a berserker in a frenzy of fury. 'He became "heated" to an extreme degree, flooded by a mysterious, non-human and irresistible force.' The initiation of the Kwakiutl Indian warrior in British Columbia involves a similar frenzy of possession and heating and the same thing is recorded in the Irish hero legends of Cu Chulainn or the Greek and Indo-European initiations of cultural hero figures.

Rebirth Through Pain

Trials of strength and endurance, as tests of fitness to share the sacred membership with the ancestors or folk heroes, are common to all initiations. Formal learning and preparation for the new status in the

During the recent initiation of a new garage hand, he allowed himself to be tied up and petrol was sprinkled round him and set alight

'initiation school' is only part of the experience which is bound up with a complex of fear, awe and dread in face of the mysteries. The adult must be brave in the face of danger and must be steadfast in the face of pain. Consequently the novice is subjected to the fearful noise of the Melanesian bull-roarer – a wooden instrument which makes a booming sound – or to the beating with stinging nettles and the dropping of hornets on to their backs which the Naudi adolescents in East Africa experience.

The common experience of fear and pain provides an important social bond between the novices who have survived the experience. They are incorporated into a group distinguished sharply from outsiders who have not shared in the ordeal. By having passed through the sacred experience they have attained a new status prescribed by tradition. Their circumcision, the decoration of their skin by cuts, their ordeals in the initiation school, their skill as warriors, show that they are boys nn longer but men ready to take a full part in the life of the community.

One Melanesian experience described by R. M. Berndt includes a progressive series of nose bleedings caused by slivers of bamboo which are covered with salt and then twirled in the nostrils. The tongue is also cut and the penis rubbed with rough, abrasive leaves. By the time he is 18 or 20 years old the young man is introduced to penis bleeding caused by progressively larger objects pushed into the urethra and twirled. Some of the puberty rites for girls include similar insertions into the vagina to cause bleeding. These rites demonstrate strength (if a man's penis is strong his arrows will be also) while blood has importance hoth as a symbolic representation of menstruation and of the religious and magical qualities associated with sexual elements.

Ritual Rapes and Panty Raids

The ritual rapes of Kikuyu warrior bands following circumcision have attracted a certain amount of notoriety, particularly when English women living in the Kenya highlands were the victims. The explanation for the ceremonial rape lies in the need of the young men to purify themselves after the initiation rites. This could be achieved by passing on the 'contagion' to a woman through intercourse before they could return to the group to claim a wife of their own. Often a band of young men wandered the countryside far away from their homes until they found a woman who was of married status and a stranger to them.

Something very similar is to be found in some of the ceremonies and 'dares' demanded of newcomers to the armed forces and in particular those aspiring to membership of male fraternities in American colleges and universities. These may range from the 'panty raid' on the women students' residence (ritual rapes) to tasks requiring the initiates to collect some prized possession which signify their mauliness and daring – bringing back G-strings from night clubs or placing chamber pots on Oxford spires. Various forms of the 'chicken' game, especially when played with cars or motor-cycles, are of the same order. Such activities may he part of the official conditions of membership of the group but often they represent an unofficial response by the existing members to the newcomer. Apart from tests of skill and daring, initiates are often subjected to debasing ceremonies of an equivalent kind. Initiates of one fraternity must wear an iron ball and chain padlocked to their ankles for a week, others must wear women's or children's clothing or have their hair cut in a special way. Another quite common practice involved an initiate being taken to a deserted spot often at a considerable distance and there left without clothing or money (or with a minimum of each) to see if he could get back.

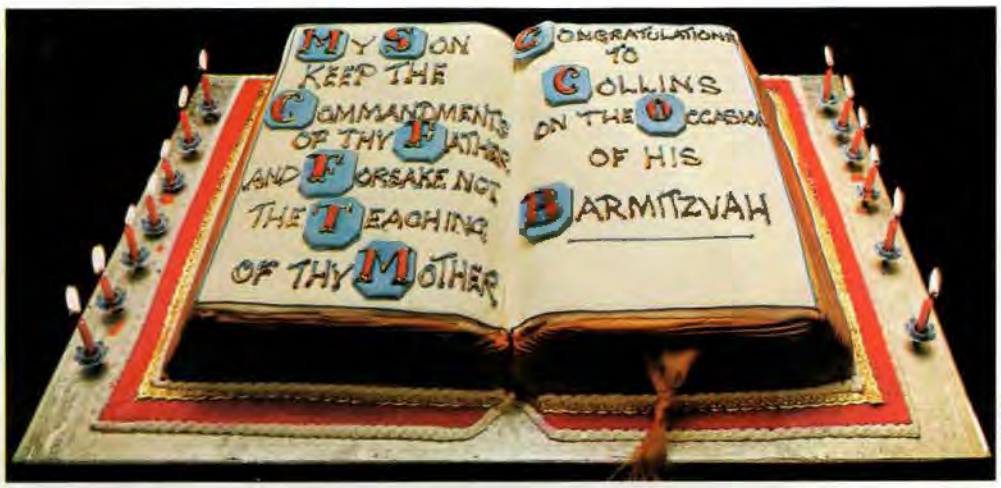
Similar, less formal initiation rites are conducted in most social groupings to emphasize the common and shared trials through which members have passed and on which their solidarity is based. A typical newspaper report (*Daily Telegraph*), from the 1970s, describes the bullying of a 16-year-old garage hand on his first day at work. After a certain amount of general ragging of the 'new boy' he was tied up and petrol was sprinkled round him and set alight. In this case he was badly burned but it was noted in the court hearing that he had submitted willingly – recognizing that this kind of initiation ritual was a condition of his acceptance by his workmates.

Tests of endurance, strength, ridicule and fear are used in the more elaborate initiation 'schools' as a means of emphasizing and disciplining the novice as he learns the cultic knowledge and mysteries of the group. An important feature of many initiation ceremonies, especially in the secret preparation period or 'school', involves the use of figurines symbolizing traditional magical or religious characters, ancestors, or elements in the total knowledge and moral structure of the society. These figurines are often carefully guarded by the members of a particular group and are not allowed to be seen by those who have not been initiated. They have spiritual significance and consequently are carefully guarded from enemies. The special rituals appropriate to each are similarly reserved for fear that the sacred objects might be angered or polluted by those who had no right to see them, or did not know 'how to behave' in their presence. The sacraments are similarly reserved in the Christian Church for those who have become full members.

Lessons in Sex

Initiation figurines are either kept as part of a store of sacred objects or are fashioned anew for each group of novices. Examples from East Africa include instructive, cautionary and punitive figures. They are all associated with songs, proverbs or riddles which the novice must learn. One example of a simple and obvious kind is the model of a hare used by the Sambaa as part of the rites for boys. The teaching that is depicted is that it is foolish to be quarrelsome and the associated words state that the hare is cleverer than most animals but he is never anxious to start a fight. A large majority of the figurines are used to convey lessons about sexual behaviour or morality and here again proverbs are taught to the initiates to define correct hehaviour. A good example of such a riddle is shown in the female figurine used by the Zigua with a riddle which runs: 'There is only one person who laughs when she should mourn and who rejoices in her loss', to which the answer is 'A girl on her wedding night'. As well as being used in puberty ceremonies, these figurines are used in the entry rites to secret societies and associations. Clay or wooden figures are handled ritually and associated with a fixed form of words sung or recited. Again the objects depict familiar social roles, or common objects as well as highly stylized art with a very complex symbolism. The figures and the form of words are treated as sacred and are kept

The transition from youth to adulthood, acceptance into an order or into a trade, are important turning points in a person's life and are marked with appropriate ceremony ***Right*** **Barmitzvah cakes are presented to Jewish children as part of the celebrations marking their coming-of-age** ***Centre*** **The candidate for admission to the Order of Freemasons undergoes an initiation ordeal** ***Below*** **A cooper apprentice is initiated by being rolled in a tar barrel**



Chris Barker

Staatsbibliotek, Berlin

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secret from those who are not initiated.

The initiation schools and the lengthy process of disciplined teaching of the lessons associated with the puberty rituals in tribal societies have inevitably been affected by social change. Often lack of time and the constraints of formal education or occupation have meant that both the ceremonies and the training period of the initiation must be curtailed. Where figurines are used the number may be limited or the verses only will be learned. These effects of social change only serve to emphasize the important and complex function served by the initiation of adolescents in tribal society. They ensured that each individual was fully educated in the central belief system, moral codes and normative standards of the society and was intellectually as well as emotionally prepared for an adult role in the community.

One particular set of initiation ceremonies involves the installation of new incumbents into various offices. Kings, chiefs, presidents, professors are all expected to observe formal ritual procedures and take part in ceremonies connected with their assumption of the prerogatives of office. Coronation ceremonies are an elaborate example of the combination of rituals designed to acknowledge formally and acclaim publicly and anoint the one chosen for the office. Part of the ceremony usually involves admission to a ritually appointed place or locus of office. The professor has no actual 'chair' but a bishop has a cathedral throne and knights of orders of chivalry are ceremonially led to their stalls in the chapel of their orders. Similarly with a mayor or president the office holder is sanctified with the symbolic elements of authority: orb and sceptre, crown and sword, seal or gavel. These objects signify that the incumbent has been properly chosen, indoctrinated and acquainted with the mysteries that surround the office. The laying on of hands, the anointment, represents the conferring of divine or magical power which alone sets the initiated incumbent of office 'apart'. Where the succession to office is hereditary, or where the successor is selected in childhood (as in the case of the Dalai Lama before the Chinese invasion of Tibet), the whole process of growing up forms an overall initiation which points toward the eventual attainment of office.

Jorgen Bitsch

The common experience of fear and pain promotes a social bond, distinguishing the initiated from the outsiders: in Chad, cicatrization or the decoration of the skin by painful cuts, indicates the fully fledged member of the community

Humiliation and Abuse

Much of the ritual surrounding the initiation of new holders of office shares the characteristics that have been noted in the rites surrounding puberty. The symbolic death of the old and rebirth to the new condition and status is represented in the divesting of original clothing, and the profane objects of life. The new ruler, as in the coronation ceremony of the British monarch, assumes a new royal robe as well as other symbols of office: orb or sceptre, crown and sword.

Some of the ceremonies are dignified and formal, enshrined with pomp and circumstance, but it is significant that even the most solemn occasions also have a festive and irreverent side in which 'the gods are mocked'. The chancellors of Scottish universities, elected by the students, however honoured and dignified, endure a bombardment of flour, missiles and abuse as part of their inaugural ceremony, and it is customary for the professors at some American universities to be subjected to similar horseplay. These examples show clearly the conflicting and complementary elements of debasement and honouring that characterize the initiation process. Just as we have seen with puberty rites, the candidate must be 'cut down to size' and divested of his former status before he can assume the new. The experience of the army recruit is no different once he joins up. The admonition 'Get your hair cut – you're in the Army now' demonstrates the removal of the civilian status and the assumption of the new status of 'soldier' with uniform, dress, style, regulations and equipment just as clearly.

Modern examples of initiation rituals abound and demonstrate many of the features already noted. In some cases the ceremonies are merely vestigial remnants of earlier, more elaborate and public rituals, involving the whole community. Infant baptism 'casts out the devil' and 'makes new' and the baptismal water is an

All religious groups, cults and societies develop a conscious boundary between those who have membership and those who do not

indication of the washing away of sin. Adult initiations in some churches often involve baptisms by total immersion and 'speaking in tongues', spiritual trance and 'possession' in the new member. The transcendental religious or magical recognition of the new member both fortifies the faith of the group and signifies that the initiation procedure was correctly performed.

The organization of fraternities and sororities probably has been most fully elaborated in the Western world in bodies such as the Masonic Order, Guilds, Knights, and more recently formed bodies, most of which claim ancient lineage such as the Orange Lodges, the Lions, Elks and many others. Freemasonry is defined in the ritual of symbolism associated with great religious orders and categories of progressive initiations in Ancient Egyptian, Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Similarities have been pointed out between the Eighteenth Degree of the Freemasons, 'Knight of the Pelican and Eagle and Sovereign Prince Rose Croix of Heredom' to which any Master Mason of one year's standing is eligible and the initiation rites of the Australian Bora aborigines. The symbolic teaching of this degree describes the passage of man through the valley of the shadow of death, accompanied by the Masonic virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and his final acceptance into the abode of light, life and immortality.

Symbolic Social Statement

Just as in the initiation ceremonies of secret societies, in simpler societies membership represents a distinct and far-reaching social statement about the individual. Being adult or being a Mason or being a Baptist or a witch represent far more than the mere labels. They are involved statements about the whole society and the place and significance of different groups within the society; statements which have significance in all those aspects of the social structure in which particular kinds of belonging can be a means of articulating social relations. The questions of whom you may marry, where you can live or whom may you work with are not idle when belonging to the Roman Catholic Church or the Loyal Orange Order become the prime defining characteristics of life in Northern Ireland; or being a Jew or an Arab define sharply the possible relationships in a situation of conflict in the Middle East. Where 'belonging' in this sense is open to the individual the significance of the transition from one condition to another is very apparent. Those who have 'passed' from Negro culture to white in the United States or those who have succeeded in the world of espionage, are acutely conscious of the dimensions and social significance of the new roles they have chosen to adopt. But even in these rather mundane examples the questions are not simply social in the sense of setting out rules of behaviour. They are symbolic, as all social statements are inevitably symbolic, because they are statements about man, the world, the cosmos and the possibilities of human existence, as well as statements about life and death. It is precisely in those areas where the maintenance of distinct boundaries is most important to the people in a particular society that one finds a particular emphasis on their maintenance and on the proper observation of the boundary-crossing rituals of initiation.

In some societies age distinctions may be pivotal, in most societies sex differences, and in many societies differences of race or ethnic origin or language may serve to demarcate structurally the bounds of social relationships. In many societies the division between male and female is sharply observed in territorial definitions of space in the settlement or living quarters. Male and female areas for eating, washing and defecation are reserved and this latter distinction can be seen also in contemporary Western societies. A good example is the division by sex of public lavatories and the recognition that for very small children the rigid differences generally observed are considered unimportant. In the Southern United States the problem was multiplied in some areas by the belief that it is necessary to provide facilities for white and coloured as well as for male and female: four separate spaces to fulfil one natural function. The point of importance is that these particular divisions are pivotal for the world view of these particular societies. It is not surprising that one finds fraternities of men or sororities of woman's groups of one kind or another which as distinct sex groups serve the important function of emphasizing and symbolizing these distinctions which their own initiation into the particular group both recognizes and supports.

In her interesting book *Purity and Danger* Mary Douglas shows how important is the act of separation between sacred things, places and persons from the profane or polluting world. All religious groups, cults and societies develop a conscious boundary between those who have membership and those who do not. Fear of malevolent or benevolent spirits or beings often characterizes the concern with which it is felt necessary to observe the proper 'passage' ceremonies which connect these two states. Quite apart from the examples of initiation that we have already discussed, birth and death are surrounded by similar ritual observations designed to placate various forces which may have an influence on the destiny of the child or the dead person. Even in tribal societies no necessary claim will be made for these rites as essential and empirical measures which will bring the desired result. But man is not only a practical being and even in contemporary societies initiation ceremonies convey the mixture of beliefs at a variety of levels – mystical, magical, metaphysical and religious, as well as scientific – which can co-exist without difficulty in the same individual and group.

Initiation rituals surrounding death are often elaborate, both at the level of preparation and in the way in which the dead are treated. There are numerous examples in the rites of burial of the placing of money in the hand or mouth to secure the passage of the dead across the Styx which illustrate that the characteristics of initiation are found here as well. Burial in the foetal position also symbolizes the recognition of rebirth following death.

Death and rebirth indeed characterize the features of all initiation rites. We have seen this illustrated in boys' puberty initiation schools and it is found equally in the often less developed puberty rites for girls. Girls' ceremonies tend to involve a less intentional process than those of boys which represent a more deliberate introduction to a world of spirit and culture. For girls, as Eliade points out 'initiation involves a series of revelations concerning the secret meaning of a phenomenon that is apparently natural – the visible sign of their sexual maturity.'

This does not preclude considerable emphasis being given to some female puberty rites in certain societies. The Dyaks

Journeys through the Dark

The soul (at the point of death) has the same experience as those who are being initiated into great mysteries . . . At first one wanders and wearily hurries to and fro, and journeys with suspicion through the dark as one uninitiated: then come all the terrors before the final initiation, shuddering, trembling, sweating, amazement: then one is struck with a marvellous light, one is received into pure regions and meadows, with voices and dances and the majesty of holy sounds and shapes: among these he who has fulfilled initiation wanders free, and released and bearing his crown joins in the divine communion, and consorts with pure and holy men, beholding those who live here uninitiated, an uncleansed horde, trodden under foot of him and huddled together in mud and fog, abiding their miseries through fear of death and mistrust of the blessings there.

Attributed to Plutarch
(trans George E. Mylonas)

Initiation into the mysteries of Isis:
. . . I will record as much as I may lawfully record for the uninitiated, but only on condition that you believe it. I approached the very gates of death and set one foot on Proserpine's threshold, yet was permitted to return, rapt through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining as if it were noon: I entered the presence of the gods of the underworld and the gods of the upper-world, stood near and worshipped them.

Well, now you have heard what happened but I fear you are still none the wiser.

Apuleius *The Golden Ass*
(trans Robert Graves)

exemplify this in the separation and isolation of girls for a whole year in a white cabin, dressed in white and only eating white foods. This separation – the wilderness experience – recognizes the fact that during this period the initiate is 'nothing', neither man nor woman, asexual. Together with other separations – Christ's 'forty days in the wilderness' – it is a condition of the attainment of spirituality. The emerging initiate is reborn in a symbolic and spiritual way. The return announces that the mystery of rehirth has been accomplished. Eliade gives the example of the Kavirondo Bantu to illustrate a characteristic imagery found also in Brahmanic initiation in India and the recognition of the double character of birth in the egg from which the chick emerges when the shell is broken. It is said of the Kavirondo initiates when they complete their ritual: 'The white chick is now creeping out of the egg, we are like newly fired pots.'

One final example will serve to illustrate something of the elaborate character of initiation mythology. An ascetic period of isolation is characteristic of many North American Indian initiations. The novice leaves the community in order to obtain those dreams and visions which will identify for him a particular spirit with which he will then continue to be associated. He will fast and exhaust himself until the spirit appears to him, usually in animal form. Once he has achieved this personal sacred experience he can return to the tribe, having died to be rehorn with his guiding spirit.

The Dancing Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians studied by F. Boas show a more elaborate version of the same isolating and sacralizing experience. The ritual commences with the initiate falling into a trance to signify his death to the profane world. He is then carried off to be initiated by the spirits. He may be taken to a cave or to a special hut in which the spirit lives. An extreme example is that of the Cannibal Society where as part of the initiation the candidate is served by a woman while he is secluded in the forest. He is identified with the god and demonstrates this by swallowing strips of a corpse which she prepares for him. His cannibalism is a reversal of the horror of the Kwakiutl for human flesh. To overcome this revulsion he must indeed be divine and the similar acts of frenzy in which he engages on his return serve also to demonstrate this possession by the god.

In the final ceremony he acts like a beast of prey attacking all he can reach, biting their arms. He is almost impossible to restrain but finally is subdued after the woman who served him in the wilderness dances naked before him with a corpse in her arms. His frenzy is finally subdued by repeated immersions in salt water and his new personality and identity is achieved.

J. A. JACKSON

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Tate Gallery

A squire keeps an all-night vigil in church to dedicate himself before receiving his arms and being initiated into knighthood

Inquisition

Or Holy Office, Roman Catholic tribunal instituted by Pope Gregory IX in 1233 to suppress heresy; in 1320 the Inquisition was ordered to deal with witchcraft, if connected with heresy; the Spanish Inquisition, which was particularly notorious, was established in 1479 by Ferdinand and Isabella with papal consent the Inquisition's cruelties made it the object of violent Protestant hatred, though Protestants themselves were not backward in persecuting witches and heretics.

See HERESY.

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 6

Inse – Mani

INSECTS

Until the 17th century it was generally believed that insects were spontaneously generated, and beetles were said to arise from putrefying flesh and from dung. In some parts of the world butterflies were believed to be the wandering souls of men, and they have also been regarded as disease spirits; fire-flies are said to be the eyes of gods slain in battle

INSECTS

THE INSECT WORLD comprises an enormous group of organisms, many with very different characteristics. There are, for example, over 250,000 species of beetle, some of which are microscopic, while others are larger than the smallest birds; their coloration varying from dull and inconspicuous to brilliant iridescence. The characteristics of insects have become associated with mythology and folklore giving rise to remarkable beliefs and superstitions.

Man has been interested in insects not only out of curiosity but because some have forced their attentions unpleasantly upon him as parasites, pests and destroyers of his crops. The locust, the tsetse fly, the plague-disseminating flea and the mosquito have profoundly affected human history and economy. Only the bee and the silkworm have been effectively 'domesticated'. The mythology and folklore of insects has been mainly concerned with their origins, transmigrations, oracular significance, the explanation of their characteristics, devices for the expulsion of noxious species and the use of insects in magic and medicine.

From ancient times ants have been mentioned in proverbs and fables as paragons of industry. In Thessaly their digging activities caused them to be associated with agriculture through the myth of the nymph Myrmex who falsely claimed to have invented the plough. Athene, who had actually done so, transformed her into an ant. There was a 16th century fancy that the ants of Ethiopia and India dug for and treasured gold. An ancient German belief was that they could be driven away by ringing bells. In England it was said to be a sign of rain when ants were seen carrying their pupae but in Germany this was interpreted as indicating fine weather. In ancient and more recent times treatment in various ways with ants was believed to have medicinal value, especially for people suffering from fever.

Thunder Chrysalis

It was a common belief, mentioned by Aristotle and persisting into the 17th century, that insects were spontaneously generated. Beetles were said to arise from putrefying flesh and from dung, where they were often seen to gather. The ancient Egyptian belief in the scarab (see SCARAB) as a symbol of life beyond the grave appears to have arisen from observations of beetles emerging from the ball of dung in which some beetles place their eggs. The ladybird is called by names which associate the insect with Our Lady, such as *Marienkäfer* (Mary beetle) in Germany. It is still the custom in Britain for children to place a ladybird on a finger and say to it:

> Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home,
> Your house is on fire and your children
> are gone.

In some areas it was thought that the direction in which it flew indicated from whence a girl's 'true love' could be expected and in Sussex when a ladybird alighted on someone its spots were counted to ascertain how many happy months to expect. In the Hebrides its five spots are said to represent the wounds of Christ; the number of spots vary with different species.

Beliefs concerning the cockchafer have

Previous page **Swarm of locusts: after a plague of these insects had been excommunicated in Ethiopia in 1590, a storm destroyed them, reinforcing confidence in the effectiveness of the rite of excommunication *Below far left* Dragon-fly with its prey: it was said that these insects would sew up the mouths of cursing men and scolding women *Below* Butterflies had a sinister reputation in some areas where they were thought to be witches or the souls of witches *Below right* Stag beetle: because these creatures appeared to have black horns they were sometimes thought to be connected with the Devil *Below far right* The dung-beetle or scarab was a symbol of life to the ancient Egyptians, probably because they were seen to emerge from dung: beetle in a ball of dung**

Stephen Dalton

W. Zepf, Bregenz

some similarities to ladybird beliefs and there may have been transference from one to the other. The cockchafer is regarded with favour in France and Germany; in Bavaria it was considered a good omen if this beetle settled on the hand and in France it was carried in processions. Like the ladybird it appears to have been anciently associated with spring and fertility.

The stag-beetle was connected with thunder and in Germany was called *Donnerpuppe* (thunder chrysalis) perhaps through its association with the oak tree, the tree most often struck in a thunderstorm. In Scotland blindfolded boys struck at it, probably on the assumption that a black, horned creature must be devilish. According to a Hebridean legend the burying-beetle betrayed Christ during the flight into Egypt by telling his pursuers that he had passed by the previous evening, but the dung-beetle contradicted it, saying that he went by a year ago. Therefore, boys kill the burying-beetle but turn the dung-beetle on its back because although it lied it was in a good cause.

Irish folk say that the devil's coach-horse beetle is putting a curse on you when it raises its tail and there are still folk in Britain who are disquieted when they hear the tapping of the death-watch beetle. In Africa, Baronga women threw noxious beetles into a lake, screeching obscenities characteristic of rain-making ceremonies. Arabs used to employ sympathetic magic to recall a runaway slave, tethering a beetle of the sex of the fugitive by a thread to a nail, in the belief that as it crawled in diminishing circles the slave would be drawn back. In East Anglia at the end of the 19th century a beetle was suspended by a thread round a child's neck to cure whooping cough, on the assumption that as it decayed the ailment would disappear.

It has been widely believed that butterflies, being ethereal creatures, were the souls of people. A myth of the Pima Indians of North America relates that the Creator flew around as a butterfly to find a place for man. On Greek vases the soul was represented as a tiny winged human being and later artists depicted it as a butterfly. Among the tribesmen of northern Asia it was thought that the soul-substance could leave the body during life, so causing illness or unconsciousness. A grey butterfly or moth was tied in a cloth round the patient's neck in order to restore it to him.

There was a Gaelic tradition that a butterfly flitting over a corpse was the soul and in Ireland such an event indicated its everlasting bliss. In 1810 an Irish girl was reprimanded for chasing a butterfly because it might be the spirit of her grandmother. According to a Gaelic folktale a soul in the guise of a butterfly went wandering and was about to enter a sleeping man when it was killed. In Calabria, Italy, a white butterfly fluttering around a cradle was called the baby's spirit and in East Anglia to see a white butterfly signified that a baby had died.

According to an Australian tale an aborigine who left his starving son in a shelter of bark and branches while he hunted for food was reassured on finding the larva of a case moth (a species which surrounds itself with a case of bark) clinging to a tree. The boy had evidently been changed into this insect. In the Solomon islands a man could choose the creature of his reincarnation and often selected a butterfly. In China and Japan this insect has propitious symbolism. One Japanese *Noh* play is based on the theme of a human soul transformed into a butterfly.

Perhaps the widespread association of butterflies with the soul vacating the body in some areas and in particular circumstances has given them a sinister reputation. From Scotland to the Balkans they were sometimes thought of as witches or the souls of witches. Rumanians said that naughty children became butterflies and that these should therefore be killed. They have also been believed to be disease spirits. In some English counties it was the custom to kill the first butterfly seen and in Westphalia children knocked at doors on St Peter's Day, 22 February, bidding the butterflies go away. The householders themselves might go through the rooms to expel the insects by this ritual which, if omitted, could entail misfortune such as the multiplication of vermin or outbreaks of cattle disease.

According to the number seen or their hue butterflies could have different significance. In Cambridgeshire to see three was lucky while in other counties this portended misfortune. In the North of England red butterflies were killed. A dark butterfly forecast illness in Bulgaria, a white

George E. Hyde

Bruce Colman/Des Bartlett

As pests, parasites and destroyers of crops, insects were identified with destruction and evil in some parts of the world: ancient Peruvian painting depicting a demon in the form of an insect, capturing a bird

one in Ruthenia in the Russian Ukraine. The death's-head hawk moth, because of the similarity of its thorax markings to a skull and its ability to squeak, was also regarded as sinister.

The wormlike appearance of the caterpillar, the larva of the butterfly or moth, is probably the reason for the widespread superstition that it was made by the Devil, or by witches with the help of the Devil. In Switzerland there is a belief that tree spirits are responsible for caterpillars, and that they send them to creep into a man's brain and drive him mad. In Rumania they are said to have originated in the Devil's tears, and the Bantu of South Africa believe that the souls of the dead take the form of caterpillars.

The insect has some virtues in folk medicine; according to English lore carrying a caterpillar around will ward off fevers, and in ancient times the bite of a poisonous snake was rubbed with a mixture made from a cabbage caterpillar and oil.

The Devil's Darning Needle

Cicadas and crickets early attracted special attention because of their chirping or stridulating calls. Alike in ancient Greece and in Shantung in China they were believed to live on wind and dew. According to Plato's account of the story told by Socrates the Muses live again in these insect songsters. Early Chinese authors wrote enthusiastically about them and the Chinese still keep them in small cages. Aesop's fable of the Ant and the Cicada (or Grasshopper) is very ancient. In Japan the cricket is regarded as giving warning of the approach of winter.

In Europe if crickets forsake a house it may be regarded as an evil omen but occasionally one of these insects chirping in a house where they have not been heard before is considered to be an omen of death. These are instances of the tendency for some unusual occurrence to be considered to foretell a calamity.

Magical ceremonies were widely conducted with the aim of destroying or expelling locusts and grasshoppers. An Arab writer mentions a golden locust set up to guard a town from infestation and it is reported that Naples was rid of grasshoppers by means of bronze or copper images of them. In Japan straw images of larvae of a certain species of insect which was damaging the rice fields were paraded around the infested area by villagers bearing torches, ringing bells and beating drums. The images were then thrown into the river or burned. In the Argentine tin cans were beaten to frighten away grasshoppers, as in Europe beekeepers made a similar din to encourage swarming bees to settle.

When locusts or beetles were destroying the crops in Albania the women would go in funeral procession to a stream and drown a few in the hope of eliminating them all. In Mirzapur, India, an insect was caught, its head marked with a red spot and dismissed with a *salaam* on the assumption that it would lead its fellows away. Among the Wajagga in Africa a locust's legs were tied together and it was let fly in the belief that the horde would accompany it beyond the boundaries of the tribe. In 1590 a plague of locusts in Ethiopia was excommunicated and confidence in the effectiveness of the procedure was reinforced by the outbreak of a storm which destroyed them.

The long, slender bodies of dragon-flies have given rise to their being called 'Devil's darning needles'. They have been viewed with suspicion partly because their claspers at the end of the abdomen have been supposed to be stings. It was said that they would sew up the mouths of scolding women and cursing men. In Cambridgeshire an elderly man said recently that it was lucky to see a dragon-fly skimming over a pool. He would then cross his fingers and wish, as he had been told to do during his boyhood. In Japan, where the dragon-fly is an emblem of summer it is regarded as a lucky talisman. It symbolizes courage and the return of the dead to their homes on earth. On the South China coast when dragon-flies appear in numbers they are believed to presage a typhoon.

Fleas were said to be generated from dust, filth or horse urine, whereas lice were believed to appear spontaneously from greasy cloth or 'from the very flesh of man'. In East Anglia infestations of lice were attributed to the malevolence of witches. The remedy was to stick pins into a piece of flannel which had been next to the patient's skin and then burn it at midnight. In Ireland it was thought that strewing foxgloves around would cause fleas to leave and in England until the end of the last century a housewife would rise early on 1 March to brush around the lintel and hinges of the door; it was assumed that the fleas would know better than to enter or to remain where the lady of the house was so diligent.

It was also believed that one could rid one's person of fleas by leaping across the Midsummer bonfire. The 1st century writer Pliny advised those who would banish fleas to scrape up earth from beneath the right foot when the cuckoo was first heard. The ancient Egyptians smeared a slave with asses' milk to attract the insects to him and American farmers brought a sheep or goat into the house for the same purpose. The story of the fox which rids itself of its fleas by wading deep into a pond carrying moss in its mouth, until all the fleas retreat into the moss, and then lets it float away, is generally held to be a fable.

Children's Night-Lights

Luminous insects, such as the fire-fly and glow-worm, are so unusual that myths were devised to explain their origin. Among the tribespeople of Orissa in India a number of such myths are current. It is said that after a battle among the gods many were killed but their eyes remained and became fire-flies. Another story relates that sparks from a fire kindled to drive off mosquitoes were transformed magically into these insects. Among these tribes, bats were reputed to carry fire-flies to their homes because their children could not endure any other light.

In the island of Nias in Indonesia the sorcerer treated a sick person as if his soul had escaped and had become, or taken refuge in, a lantern-fly, so he would catch one in a cloth and place it on the patient's forehead. In parts of China a luminous insect whose larvae live in decaying vegetable matter appears in swarms in hot weather about the time when the summer festival of the dead was celebrated. At such times illness tends to be commoner than usual and the insects were held responsible. The 'vital spirits' of corpses were believed to give rise to these flies which were said to have appeared as five girls in embroidered garments representing north, south, east and west and the centre of the universe. If these insects entered a house some calamity might be expected. Burning incense was used to expel them.

In England it was said that glow-worms were born of putrefaction. Possibly this belief was encouraged by observations of luminous fungi. During the Second World War the

Ants on the March

The 'vagrant' calls the ants to arms.

To arms! To arms! The road between the blades of grass
Is threatened. Do you hear? The cranny from blade to blade,
A span of earth from grass to grass, your sacred rights,
The greatest interests of the state, the greatest problem in the world,
All is at stake. Ants, to arms!
How could you live, if another possessed
The world between two husks. If another carried
Ant-baggage into a strange ant-heap.
A hundred thousand lives for these two blades of grass
Are too few. I was in the war, oh,
That's a handiwork for insects, indeed. Dig trenches,
Root yourself in clay, hurrah, an attack in extended order,
At the double over stacks of corpses, fix bayonets,
Fifty thousand dead, to capture
Twenty yards of latrines. Hurrah, to arms!
The interest of the whole is concerned, the heritage of your history is concerned,
Nay more, the freedom of your native land, nay more, world-power,
Nay more, two blades of grass. Such a mighty cause
Can be settled only by the dead. To arms! To arms!

CHRYSALIS The whole earth is quivering
Something mighty it is delivering,
I am being born.

To the beating of a drum the troops of the ants advance with rifles, bayonets, and machine-guns, with metal helmets on their heads, and line up in ranks . . .

VAGRANT (*Passing along the ranks.*)
See what good training does. Attention! Sound the roll-call.
Soldiers, your country is sending you to war,
That you may fall. Two blades of grass
Are watching you.

Josef and Karel Capek, *The Life of the Insects*

In Rumania the caterpillar is thought to have originated in the Devil's tears, and in Switzerland there is a superstition that they creep into men's brains and drive them mad: the caterpillar in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* sits on a magic mushroom: illustration to *Alice in Wonderland*

floor of a London anti-aircraft site was thought to be covered with glow-worms but in the morning they were found to be fragments of decayed wood infected with a fungus.

The fly had a place in early forms of worship according to Pliny, Pausanius the Greek traveller and geographer, and Aelian the Roman teacher and writer. A Jewish legend relates that Elisha was recognized as a prophet because no fly approached his place at table. Among the Greeks an ox sacrifice took place annually at the temple of Zeus at Actium to honour him as an averter of flies. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have freed Constantinople from flies by setting up a bronze fly. Hera is reputed to have set a gad-fly to chase Io because of her amorous relations with Zeus and in Norse mythology Loki transformed himself into a fly to torment his enemies.

In the folktale motif of 'hiding from the Devil' the hero conceals himself first in a raven's egg, then in a fish and finally in an insect. There are affinities with the Irish myth in which Etain is transformed into a fly. Among Christians, flies were regarded as having devilish affinities but the legend of St Colman mentions a kindly fly which marked his place in a book when he went to take part in services.

In northern tundra regions mosquitoes and midges may occur in such numbers as to make life difficult. Throughout much of northern Asia and in Mongolia a tale, known in a number of variants, explains how these insects originated. The Ostyaks of western Siberia say that a cannibal demon woman in the far north created them. According to other versions a hero, sometimes said to have been born of a virgin, attacked a man-devouring monster and slew him. From his decaying carcass came clouds of mosquitoes to plague mankind. A different version tells of the monster being reborn again and again until his carcass was burnt; then the mosquitoes appeared from the ashes.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

John Webb/National Gallery

Inspiration

Breathing in: in Genesis God breathed into Adam to bring him to life: poets, prophets, oracles, diviners, medicine-men and shamans are frequently believed to be inspired by the presence of a god or spirit in them which enables them to discern truth: in Christian theology inspiration results from the direct action of the Holy Spirit: sacred scriptures are often believed to be divinely inspired and the Vatican Council of 1869–70 confirmed the old doctrine that the Old and New Testaments 'have God as their author'.

INTERROGATION OF THE DEAD

IN ISLAMIC TEACHING the interrogation of the dead begins when the burial is complete and the mourners have retired. Tradition describes this in detail, but it is not clearly spoken of in the Koran.

It is commonly said that two angels, Munkar and Nakeer, come to examine the dead. They make the dead person sit up, and question him. The righteous replies that his Lord is God, that Islam is his religion, that Mohammed is God's messenger, and that he has learned this from reading God's book and believing in it. A voice then cries from heaven that he has spoken the truth, that a bed and clothing from paradise are to be provided for him, and that a door is to be opened towards paradise. This is done, he is refreshed by the air and perfume, and abundant space is made for him.

The infidel is made to sit up and is asked the same questions, to which he replies that he does not know. A voice from heaven cries that he has lied, that a bed and clothing from hell are to be provided for him, and that a door is to be opened towards hell. Some of its heat and pestilential wind come to him, the grave closes in on him and crushes his ribs. He will remain there suffering severe punishment until the resurrection.

The Koran speaks clearly of a final judgement in which man has little chance to defend himself, for everything is recorded and so is a foregone conclusion; but sura (chapter) 16.112 mentions man's attempt to defend himself. Judgement takes place on the day of resurrection. There are vivid accounts of the terrors of the last day, when mankind will be raised up and stand before God to receive justice.

The Koran speaks of the books, or scrolls, to be produced containing the record of everyone's deeds. The righteous will receive their books in the right hand and the unbelievers will receive theirs in the left. This is followed by the reward of the Garden (paradise), or the punishment of hell. The evidence of the books makes interrogation unnecessary: 'When the scrolls shall be unrolled . . . then shall a soul know what it has produced.'

There is also reference to the balances. Several passages speak of those whose balances are heavy prospering and of those whose balances are light losing their souls. It is commonly held that the deeds are weighed, the good and the bad being in opposite scales, and men being judged according to which is heavier. On the day of resurrection the balances will be just, and no one will be wronged.

Tradition speaks of the *Sirat* (literally a road), which is a bridge over hell, 'finer than a hair and sharper than a sword', which all must attempt to cross. Believers will keep their footing, but unbelievers will slip and fall into hell.

The Koran does not speak of such a bridge, but attempts have been made to show that it does. 'Not one of you but shall go down to it' (sura 19.72) does not really bear such an interpretation, for it is obviously addressed to the Meccans who rejected Mohammed's teaching about resurrection. The following verse says, 'Then we shall deliver those who have shown piety and leave the wrong-doers kneeling there.' It is evident that this verse refers to hell and not to a bridge over it.

Al-Ghazali, the famous theologian and mystic quotes sura 3.23 regarding the wicked, 'Guide them to a road to hell and stop them for they shall be questioned.' The word sirat is here used for 'road', but there is no indication that it is a bridge over hell. The wicked, although they are to be interrogated, are to be led on the way to hell before the interrogation seems to take place. It is striking that from a comparatively early period statements of belief include belief in this bridge.

(See also ISLAM.)

JAMES ROBSON

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Bibliotheque Nationale Paris

According to Islamic tradition, after they have died believers successfully cross a bridge over hell, but unbelievers slip and fall: Indian miniature, c 1700, showing two of the dead crossing the bridge; below them unbelievers plunge into hell

Chris Barker

Inverted Symbols
Symbols which are upside down, backwards or the wrong way round, usually connected with evil; inverted crucifixes or other Christian symbols are used in black magic because they deny God and the accepted order of things, and state disorder, abnormality and evil; prayers are sometimes said backwards in the Black Mass and it was long believed that demons write backwards.
See PACT; PENTAGRAM; and SYMBOLISM.

INVISIBILITY

THE HERO who owns a ring or a cap, hood or helmet which makes him invisible is a familiar character in folktales and legends. A ring which makes its wearer invisible plays a crucial part in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Perseus, the great Greek hero who slew Medusa (see GORGONS), had a cap of darkness which prevented anyone from seeing him.

The idea of the cap or hood of darkness may be based originally on the simple ostrich principle employed by a small child who hides from you by putting his hands over his eyes: if your head is covered so that you cannot see other people, then they cannot see you. There is something nf the same principle in the symbolism of the taking of the veil by nuns, who retreat into 'invisible' seclusion from the life of the everyday world.

The Buried Head

Some invisibility magic attempts to make you literally invisible, even to yourself, but more often the aim is the slightly less ambitious one of preventing people from seeing you, as in the charm recommended by a 14th century Jewish work, the *Sefer Gematriaot*, which is to recite Genesis 19.11: 'and they struck with blindness the men who were at the door . . .' This depends on the principle that the power inherent in holy writ will cast an enchantment of blindness over those about you.

Similarly, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (15th century), in its day the leading authority on witchcraft, says that witches 'can take away the male organ, not indeed by actually despoiling the human body of it, but by concealing it with some glamour . . .' It cites the experience of a Dominican friar, who was visited by a young man who 'woefully said that he had lost his member.' The friar examined him and, finding no sign of the missing organ, asked him whether he suspected anyone of bewitching him. The young man said yes, he suspected a woman of his acquaintance, and the friar advised him 'to soften her with gentle words and promises.' The young man followed this advice and returned a few days later to show that he was whole again. 'First,' says the *Malleus*, 'it must in no way be believed that such members are really torn away from the body but that they are hidden by the devil through some prestidigitatory art so that they can be neither seen nor felt.'

A process in the *Grimorium Verum* for becoming invisible says that you must begin the operation before sunrise on a Wednesday. You need seven black beans and the head of a dead man. Put one bean in the head's mouth, two in its ears and two in its eyes (which makes only five beans – presumably the other two are meant to go in the nostrils). Then trace a certain symbol on the head, and bury it in the ground, with the face turned up to the sky. Every day for nine days, before sunrise, water the buried head with good brandy. On the eighth morning a spirit will appear to you and ask what you are doing. You reply, 'I am watering my head.' He will ask you to let him do the watering but you must refuse until he shows you the same symbol that you traced on the the head. This proves that he is the spirit of the head and not a deceiving spirit. Let him water the head, and on the ninth morning you will find that the beans have ripened. Test them by taking one of them at a time, putting it in your mouth and looking in a mirror. 'If you cannot see yourself, it is good.'

What you have done, in effect, is to give the beans the deadness of the head (and you have also identified yourself with it by announcing, 'I am watering *my* head') so that when you put them in your mouth the invisibility of the dead and buried head is transferred to you. It is better not to swallow the beans because you can only become visible again by removing them from your mouth.

The link between invisibility, death and burial appears again in the frequent references to shrouds in a long invisibility ritual devised by the Order of the Golden Dawn. After certain preliminaries, the operator recites an 'Enochian Spirit Invocatinn' beginning: 'Ol Sonuf Vaorsag Goho Iad Balt, Lonsh Calz Vonpho. Sobra Z-ol Ror I Ta Nazps . . .', and continuing in this vein for some time.

The Blue-Black Egg

Next he invokes the Recording Angel, 'O Light invisible, intangible, wherein all thoughts and deeds of all men are written,' commanding him to 'concentrate about me, invisible, intangible, as a shroud of darkness, a formula of defence; that I may becnme invisible, so that seeing me men see not, nor understand the thing that they behold.' It is clear that the ritual is not intended to make the operator literally invisible but to allow him to pass unnoticed, inscrutable.

The magician continues by conjuring the Lady of Darkness to clothe him with ineffable mystery and tu send the great Archangel Tzaphqiel to formulate about him a shroud of concealment. After further incantations, the ritual instructs the operator to 'formulate the black egg around you, the idea of becoming invisible. Imagine the results of success, then say, "Let the shroud of concealment encircle me, at a distance of 18 inches from the physical body . . ."' Next, the operator declares that he is formulating around himself the blue-black egg of Harpocrates (the Graeco-Egyptian god Horus the Child – see HORUS), 'as a shroud of concealment . . . that I may pass unseen among men to execute the will of my Genius.'

Presently, he repeats a fine incantation which states that he has formulated 'the light that shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not' (the reference is to John 1.5). Then, mentally formulating the blue-black egg with great force, the magician declares: 'Darkness is my Name, and Concealment. I am the Great One Invisible of the Paths of the Shades. I am without fear, though veiled in darkness, for within me, though unseen, is the Magic of the Light divine.'

In the Abyss

Incantation for becoming invisible:

I have set my feet in the North, and have said: I will shroud myself in mystery and concealment. The Voice of my Higher Soul said unto me, Let me enter the path of darkness, peradventure thus may I attain the Light. I am the only being in an Abyss of Darkness; from the Darkness came I forth ere my birth . . . And the Voice of Darkness answered unto my soul. I am He that formulates in darkness, the light that shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. Let the Mystic Circumambulation take place in the Place of Darkness.

Israel Regardie *The Golden Dawn*

Invocation

Appealing to a god or spirit by prayer or incantation; summoning up a god or spirit; the poets of antiquity invoked the Muse for inspiration; invocation, 'calling on' a good supernatural being or force, is sometimes distinguished from evocation, 'calling out' an evil one, but the two words are frequently used interchangeably.

See INCANTATION; MAGIC.

Iris

Greek goddess of, and personification of the rainbow; sister of the Harpies in Hesiod, in the *Iliad* she is a golden-winged messenger of the gods; she seems to have had no cult.

See RAINBOW.

Michael Holford/British Museum

IRON

THE TAMING OF FIRE opened the door to the mastery of metals, which in turn forged the key to human progress. Iron was the agent of this transmutation which enhanced the quality of life from the brutish to the civilized. This would in itself have been sufficient in non-materialistic ages to have given iron a reputation for the supernatural – a reputation which it also acquired on the grounds that the first iron, having descended from the heavens in the form of meteors, was of celestial origin. It was called by the ancient Egyptians 'the metal from the sky' and by the Aztecs, among whom it was a rarity, 'the gift of heaven'.

The earliest known iron implements date from the third millennium BC but long before this period iron had been regarded with admiration and awe. Ancient monarchs were won over with presents of iron or steel daggers and Achilles proposed a ball of iron as a prize in the funeral games instituted in honour of Patroclus.

The technical development of iron has now completely overshadowed its psychic aspects although it is still within living memory that schoolchildren would touch cold iron for luck and recite the magical charm, 'Touch wood, no good, Touch iron, rely on.' In the more distant past, humanity testified to iron's magical qualities by attitudes which might appear contradictory in that this metal was regarded as both dangerous and protective.

Iron was tabooed in certain religions, no tool of iron being permitted in the temples of ancient Greece, while in the Temple of Solomon 'neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house when it was being built' (1 Kings 6.7). A relic of this old antipathy survives in the custom which prohibits the use of scissors to cut a baby's fingernails until the completion of its first year.

As long ago as 1350 BC amulets of meteoric iron were placed reverently in the tomb of Tutankhamen to protect the sarcophagus against evil spirits, thus testifying to the ancient role of this metal as protector of mankind. The Romans believed that the association of iron with the war god Mars endowed it with its protective powers, but this must be regarded as no more than a rationalization of what was even then a universal myth.

Chris Barker

Iron has been credited with supernatural powers for many centuries, and in Italy it is still thought to afford protection against the Evil Eye: charm made from a lemon pierced with iron spikes

Long after the fall of the Roman Empire the magic of iron continued to dominate the folk practices of peasant life. In Italy iron pyrites were used as a charm against eye diseases; in China they kept dragons at bay; in Burma they intimidated crocodiles; while throughout Europe they guarded the home against lightning. In the 19th century iron bars used to be laid across barrels to protect the beer from thunderstorms in Europe, and in India cold iron was integral in funeral rites; it was believed to counteract any ill-effect from spirits which succeeded in escaping from the corpse.

The power of iron over ghosts was proverbial and as recently as 1854, on the occasion of the evocation of the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana, which took place in London, it was considered expedient to create a magic circle of magnetized iron to neutralize all dangers from the ghost.

Medieval man approached the fairy kingdom fearfully and took elaborate precautions, many of which involved the use of iron. He who ventured into a fairy mound ensured his safe retreat by driving his knife into the earth by the threshold. Iron was also laid in the cradle of the new-born baby to prevent the fairies from substituting a changeling. It would appear that one group of supernatural beings alone was impervious to the power of iron – the Teutonic dwarf, traditional miner and ironmaster of northern Europe, and forger of enchanted swords (see DWARFS).

The nightmarish forces that haunted the waking hours of ancient man were fortunately believed to be susceptible to iron's magic power, whether it took the form of the horseshoe attached to the cottage door or a knife secreted beneath it. According to the Roman historian Pliny, iron coffin nails on the lintel of the door provided protection against all wandering spirits.

A form of white magic which was employed against suspected witches until well into the 19th century consisted of filling a bottle with pins and heating it intensely, which had the effect of so tormenting the hag that she was compelled to relinquish her hold upon her victim. Equally potent and still observed in modern Italy is the custom of touching cold iron to counteract the Evil Eye (see EYE). A *jettatore*, an individual with the power to 'fascinate' or cast the Evil Eye, can also be overcome by the jangling of iron keys, since to all devils the very sound of iron is anathema. Even in this century the hapless King Alphonso of Spain, a notorious jettatore, was embarrassed by the constant jangling of iron keys wherever he travelled in Italy, and was actually refused an audience by the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini.

On the outer walls of some English cottages large spiral ties may be seen as reminders of the old superstition that iron afforded protection against fire. Much of the magical aura of the blacksmith was largely derived from the fact that he was a worker of iron; in comparatively modern times the primitive smiths of the Celebes maintained a god of iron in their forges to oversee the quality of the metal.

(See also AXE.)

Although the majority of Iroquois are now Christian, there is a remnant whose beliefs and culture are based on the visions of the prophet Handsome Lake

IROQUOIS

THE ORIGINS of the Iroquois, the most advanced group of American Indians north of the Pueblos, are lost in the confusion of archeological time. Their legends assume that they were always in their historical homeland of New England.

The Iroquois had many gods, who were essentially the powers of Nature. It was very apparent to the Indians that they were dependent upon the goodwill of powers beyond direct human knowledge; the wind and the rain, the passing seasons, the lightning and the sunshine, the forests and the rivers, all were active and seemingly alive. Thus it was felt that men must act so as to propitiate the living powers of the universe they saw around them.

It does not follow that life is dull and oppressive when people feel the gods are all around them; on the contrary there was a feeling of being part of the whole world of Nature. When Nature rejoiced mankind also danced and shared the happiness; when she was preparing for winter mankind also stored away the things of summer and rested hopefully for the coming of spring.

The gifts of Nature were maize and beans, wild deer and beaver, many kinds of timber, birch bark, apple orchards, maple syrup and honey. These things the Iroquois received with gratitude and cared for them, developing their usefulness as best they could. If a hunter killed an animal he made a little offering to its spirit so that more animals might be reborn. If a woman planted a maize field she walked naked around it, sharing her fertility with the food plants.

There were many tricky and dangerous spirits to be charmed away, and they were conjured with in the dances of the False Face society, so called because of the carved wooden masks worn by the performers (see FOOL). Unhappily there were cruel and deadly human enemies, and they were weakened by magic and defeated by the young warriors. The overshadowing presence above was felt mostly through the spiritual life-force known as Orenda, coming in varying degrees to human families.

Some families descended from great ladies whose magical powers were greater than most other ancestresses. Some chieftainesses had sons and nephews who were vehicles of the inner wisdom gleaned through contact with ancestral spirits. Some men were given great powers direct from the spirit world. Such men were like lone pines standing high among the forest trees. Such a one was Dekanawida, the law-giver and friend of his fellow philosopher and law-maker, Hiawatha.

The two great law-givers of the Iroquois lived at the time when Elizabeth I was ruling in England and the great Mogul, Akbar, was ruling in India. They were different from those civilized monarchs, however, for their work was done among peoples dressed in skins and living in houses made from tree bark. In those days the life of those Iroquois was not unlike that of Europeans at the end of Neolithic times, about 4000 years ago. The tribes used arrow-heads of flaked stone, cultivated the ground with wooden hoes and cut down the forest with stone-bladed choppers.

Mary Evans Picture Library

An Iroquois philosopher and law-maker, who later became a demi god, Hiawatha lived during the 16th century; in his narrative poem *Hiawatha* Longfellow used the name of this great Iroquois chieftain, but all other material is Algonquin: in this illustration to the poem, Hiawatha's grandmother Nokomis attempts to dissuade her grandson from setting off on a dangerous quest

Their villages consisted of a few hundred people living in two or three long-houses in separate family rooms in a vast apartment dwelling. The huts were surrounded by earthen defences surmounted by a defensive wall of wooden stakes. Inside the village were storehouses for dried maize and beans, which were always built on bluffs near a river so that water could be drawn up in buckets made of birch bark in times of trouble. Stores of nourishing pemmican, made from animal suet beaten up with wild berries, ensured a store of food rich in vitamins. It was used by hunters and traders, and was a reserve in time of trouble.

The five nations who spoke Iroquoian languages were always at war with one

Rochester Museum of Arts & Science, New York

another in those early days. It was because of the sorrows and stupidities of wars between related people that Dekanawida and Hiawatha came together. Like all innovators they were unpopular and treated with suspicion, but after a period of exile they persuaded the tribal councils to come in peace to a series of conferences.

Hiawatha was a Mohawk, but his work began among the Onondaga tribe. The opposition from the Onondaga chief Wathatotaro was so intense that he caused Hiawatha's daughters to be murdered. The teacher then went to the Oneida who persuaded the Mohawk to join them and to invite the Cayuga to the gathering. Then the three nations approached the Onondaga again, and this time Wathatotaro agreed provided that they would bring the Seneca to join them. the Seneca agreed and the whole five nations joined into a league of mutual friendship and protection which they called 'The Extended Lodge', meaning that the Council Lodges of each nation were now joined together.

The five nations now controlled the area from the shores of Lake Erie to the lower reaches of the Hudson River, the greater part of New York State. Yet a century later, at the time of their greatest power, their total population was only about 16,000.

Dekanawida was traditionally of Huron birth, but his parents tried to drown him because of a prophecy that he would cause trouble to the nation. He survived, and later left home to live among the Iroquois, where he was the great law-giver and was also regarded as a prophet and magician. He is ranked by the Iroquois among the demigods.

Among the laws he established was the one which ended the blood feud among the Iroquois. It laid down that a human life was valuable, and a death by violence was to be atoned for by the payment of five strings of wampum. However the man who had committed the crime had also forfeited his own life, and that was worth five strings of wampum also. Hence the next of kin of the slain man was to receive ten strings of wampum from the killer. Wampum was a high unit of value and such a penalty was a great discouragement to homicide. It was largely instrumental in preventing the recurrence of inter-group wars among the people of The Extended Lodge.

Wathatotaro has become also a demigod of a thoroughly terrifying demonic character in more recent Iroquois belief. He was regarded as having strange powers in his own day, and was renowned for pride, sexual prowess and strength, as well as a subtle mind. These qualities made him a very great chief and in spite of his stubborn resistance to the idea of a union of the tribes he was able to gain a predominant position for his Onondaga people within that group. They had 14 hereditary chieftainships in the council of the confederacy whereas each of the other four nations only had ten each. The chief holding Wathatotaro's position was to be the only one empowered to summon a meeting of the confederation.

Thus the three most important chiefs who were concerned with making the league became demigods in tradition and entered the realms of the legendary while still remembered as historical persons.

History Told in Beads

While the Iroquois had developed agriculture and the communal hunt for food production, and had evolved an advanced social system based on inheritance in the female line, they had not reached the point where money was necessary for trade, and their writing was still in the primitive symbolic stage. They engraved pictures of events on pipe-stems to record an adventure, and they used strings of wampum beads often made up into belts with symbolic patterns as historical reminders.

The wampum was made from the thick valve of a spondylus shell. The valve was broken off and polished on a stone, then it was slowly bored through from end to end. The resulting beads, some white and some purple, were carefully polished and strung on sinew. The message on a wampum belt could not be read in our way but it was a reminder of a story, in much the same way as a page of pictures may remind a child to recite the appropriate nursery rhyme. Each nation had an official Keeper of the Wampum, who on ceremonial occasions could bring out the belts in his possession and recite remembered verses telling of the event which the belt commemorated.

The coming of European settlers and military forces was a disaster for the Iroquois. At first there were minor squabbles

The many gods of the Iroquois Indians were essentially powers of Nature, for it was clear to the Indians that they were dependent on the goodwill of powers beyond direct human knowledge – wind, rain and sunshine *Left* Food crops were thought to be blessed by protective feminine spirits: watercolour showing the corn, bean and squash maidens, by Earnest Smith, a Seneca Indian *Right* The products of the earth were used for ceremonial costumes, emphasizing the close relationship between man and Nature: mask made from maize leaves. Husk Faces, wearing these masks, guide evil away from the house

New York State Museum

at the same time as a good deal of trade; but later the rivalries between the great powers of the day brought the Iroquois as mercenaries into the wars of the colonial epoch. Mostly they fought on the side of the English, because they had been attacked by a party of Canadian Indians under French command and they resented the insult.

The wars altered the way of life terribly. Villages were raided and burnt and the people massacred. Money was paid for scalps of captured enemies, and there were reports of Europeans occasionally assisting the tribesmen in the ghastly tortures of captured enemies which had for long been part of the war honours system of the tribe. The wars brought no happiness to the Iroquois; they were fought by foreigners for overseas possessions rather than for the benefit of the Indian inhabitants of the land. Sometimes honourable men insisted that the treaties signed with the Iroquois must be kept, but more often the pressure for land and power drove the white man to dispossess the Indians and drive them from their native soil.

The Visions of Handsome Lake

In this period of increasing uncertainty the Iroquois were threatened with total disruption. Some of them opposed the American Revolution and eventually removed over the Canadian border, while others remained on their reservations, trying to preserve something of the past. The old religion was much weakened, and the missionaries persuaded most of the people that there was another way of life with regard to the spiritual powers behind the world of Nature.

The Iroquois now have a heroic and persistent little saint of their own in Kateri Tekathawitha, who suffered much to ease the ancient barbarism. She was a member of the Catholic group of the Iroquois who had settled at Cauhnawaga in Canada.

Other missionaries worked in the United States among the Iroquois, and most of the people became Christians, though there was always a minority opinion against the preachers who persuaded them to accept the many injustices which they suffered at the hands of the master race. The minority became the followers of Handsome Lake, the brother of the famous chief Cornplanter. In June 1799 a vision came to Handsome Lake; he saw three noble beings who told of happier days to come. Later he was introduced to a fourth who was the Creator, who had taken pity on the suffering Indians.

The new religion was a serious effort to reorganize the ancient Iroquois beliefs and preserve old customary ceremonies, while adapting to the new knowledge which had become available. It was rather strict, and stood firm for abstinence from alcohol. This followed another vision in which the prophet saw a lake full of Indians in their canoes, who were trading good food for liquor handed out by an evil being in the guise of a trader. This was the Devil leading the Indians to self-destruction.

Handsome Lake's prophetic mission was to bear its fruit much later, but he had given his people a new focus of unity in the revival of old tradition and in the re-creation of a mystical unity in the long-house which symbolized the meeting-place of the founder nations of the Federation.

The prophecies of Handsome Lake are unusual in the history of prophetic visions among peoples suffering from cultural oppression, because they gave rise to no insurrection. They rather led to a withdrawal from close contact with the white man on the part of the older and more conservative among the Indians. This continued to be the case for nearly a century, so that the traditions remained alive only through a small minority of the Iroquois. Since the first accounts of the prophecies were transmitted by word of mouth there grew up a disagreement on what was actually said, and there were two later attempts to codify the system. It is now printed and the consensus of opinion is that the tenor of the original revelation has been faithfully preserved.

The present codified state of the Handsome Lake beliefs is well adapted to the needs of a new kind of Iroquois community living within a highly organized modern state. It is more important than the actual membership would suggest, because it has become a focus for the preservation of the Indian basic culture. The majority of the Iroquois however go to one or other of the Christian churches.

Early treaties gave the Indians the right to move freely between their reservations and in modern times they have fought politically to keep their freedom of movement across the frontiers. Their struggle against giant corporations which would make good use of their lands has also been intense, not because of any obstructionist will to resist, but because there were constant threats to override the rights of the communities as guaranteed by past treaties, and sealed by the exchange of wampum belts. The struggle has become a political one, not against the white man but against the covetousness of commercial interests.

Fertility and Healing Dances

Some of the ancient customs have survived, half as ritual, and half as folklore. They have altered less than the Godiva rides and maypole dances of Europe; the False Face society still knows healing rituals and the Husk Faces, who wear masks made of plaited maize leaves, still whisper and guide evil away from the house. An ancient happy occasion used to be the Naked Dance in which the young people used to dance

British Museum

Wampum beads constructed from shells were made into belts with symbolic patterns that served as reminders of Iroquois tribal history; each of the nations that spoke the Iroquois language had a Keeper of the Wampum who recited the stories commemorated in the belts on ceremonial occasions

entirely naked and a chosen couple brought fertility to the plantations in sexual intercourse while the others danced around. Now the original purpose of the dance is commemorated in the name Shaking the Branches (really the maize plants shaking in the wind and fertilizing the seed in this way); the dancers, now clothed, dance waving imaginary leafy plants in their hands. The overt sexual magic is no longer there.

Dances are seasonal affairs, and the New Year Dance is perhaps the most important nowadays. In this the heralds of the festival are the Husk Faces. They bring in the other dancers and open and close ceremonies, whispering like the breath of the wind and teaching by signs. The formal dancers are masked and wear modern clothing. By tradition men and women exchange clothes and, like European mummers, pretend to be of the opposite sex. It could be that this may have come from contact with the early settlers who preserved many of the folk customs of their homeland; but the basic idea was Iroquois. One can imagine the difficulties of the young warriors trying to dance in girls' long skin gowns.

The False Face dancers at this ceremony did not have to show their healing magic. They represented diseases and had the power to take disease away with them. In old times the members of the society cut their masks from a living tree, but now they are made of wood from the timber yard.

Apart from the New Year festivities the False Face society used to hold special dances for healing sickness. The patient was laid down beside a wood fire. The dancers wearing their hideous masks and carrying rattles capered around chanting an appropriate song. They scooped up hot ashes from the fire and rubbed their hands in the hot embers, showing no signs of pain. Then they would turn the patient and rub hot ashes into selected parts of his body. This was magic, they thought, taught to the first members of the society by an ancient giant who had been subdued by the Great Spirit.

The giant was the giver of illness, and he was forced to teach the healing ritual to counteract his powers of evil. In fact, the heat and massage stimulated nerves and internal organs and could have a beneficial effect. However the more precise powers of modern medicine have in most cases driven the False Faces into being symbols of bad luck who, by their dance, can charm ill fortune away from the household where they perform. In due course their ritual will be simply a folklore frolic like the Helston Furry Dance.

In the modern world the Iroquois people have become normal citizens, with special treaty rights securing their home reservations from total assimilation into the national states. Many of their younger men earn big wages as steel erectors. In this dangerous trade they have earned a reputation for fearlessness and skill. This appears to have replaced to some extent the ancient initiation into warrior societies; and it is in fact far more dangerous. After nearly four centuries of contact with the civilized world, and much suffering, the Iroquois have managed to retain a tribal organization, some old customs, and a homeland in the shape of a group of reservations.

C. A. BURLAND

IRVING

A misfit in the grim severity of Scottish Presbyterianism, Edward Irving went to London to attract the fashionable world by his stirring oratory. His belief in the imminence of the Second Coming was taken up by his followers after his death

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Edward Irving, founder of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church: he believed that he was the leader of a faithful group of worshippers whom God was gathering together as the end of the world drew near

SUNDAY SERVICE for a Victorian Presbyterian was a long, serious and hardly colourful affair. Yet for those who had followed the fashionable Scots preacher, Edward Irving, Sunday worship became three hours of ritual, intricately performed with incense and holy water by nearly 50 clergy and servers, all clad in colourful liturgical vestments. It was indeed a rather startling product for the dour Scots' Church of the time and hardly reflected its Calvinistic origin. No wonder that these erstwhile Presbyterians had chosen for themselves the name Catholic Apostolic Church, while the world tended to continue to call them Irvingites.

At the age of 30, Edward Irving had had a rather unsuccessful ministry in Scotland and was on the point of leaving for the mission field when the Caledonian Church in London's Hatton Garden invited him to be their minister. His congregations in Edinburgh had found their young minister's sermons rather bewildering and even a prominent divine of the day was prompted to compare them to 'Italian music – only appreciated by connoisseurs'. Nevertheless, Irving was a success among the poor, bringing a simple Christianity into the slums and entering each home with a blessing 'Peace be to this house'. He had an impact on the lives of ordinary people which derived from the two opposite sides of his character: he was both dramatic and sincerely humble at the same time. It was this contrast within his powerful personality which was to bring the crowds to Hatton Garden.

London in 1822 presented Irving with a challenge much more suited to his taste than had his Scottish ministry. He went to the Caledonian Church with the avowed purpose of attracting the fashionable world. He believed that he could find a way to their hearts by speaking to them in the words that they used and drawing his illustrations from the current plays, novels, and newspapers. Here would be the audience of connoisseurs which he needed.

His assessment was right. The Londoners of the Regency were inveterate sermon tasters and a fashionable preacher would draw congregations from all quarters, almost irrespective of denomination. Irving's remarkable oratory was soon mentioned by George Canning, then Foreign Secretary, in a speech to the House of Commons. Society took Canning's hint and the chapel in Hatton Garden was soon too small to accommodate all who wished to hear Irving. In 1827 the congregation moved into a new building in Regent Square where Irving continued to attract the crowds.

His success was due largely to his ability to project his personality, but also to the ringing modernity of his tones. He was a great controversialist and sharply critical

of the current fashions, so that the publication of a volume of his sermons became a real literary event, drawing the fire of all who had suffered from his denunciation. He strove to be a fashionable preacher and his personality needed the limelight, yet he continued to combine publicity-seeking with a real humility and undoubted sincerity.

Sense of the Dramatic

By this time Irving's teaching had become highly personal rather than Presbyterian. The fashion for his preaching began to fade and as it did so his opponents began to question the validity of his views and the orthodoxy of his doctrines. He had been increasingly influenced by Adventist beliefs and his sermons were made the more immediate by his growing insistence that he and his congregation were living in the last days before the Second Coming of our Lord. The mystical works of Coleridge and of a Roman Catholic priest who wrote under the pseudonym Ben Ezra influenced Irving considerably and he began to point to the portents which heralded the end of the world. His willingness to acknowledge spiritism, faith healing, and 'speaking in tongues' as signs of this Second Coming was too much for the Presbyterian Church and in 1833 he was deposed from the ministry by his home presbytery of Ancrum.

Yet it was the London presbytery which had made the first move when, three years before, it had excommunicated Irving for teaching that Christ's human nature was not perfect but liable to sin. The validity of this charge is difficult to assess. His doctrinal position was inconsistent and changed with remarkable rapidity. He would often allow his sense of the dramatic to make him overstate a perfectly legitimate point, and it would seem that it was not so much what he said but the way he said it which was under attack. Irving's followers were certainly extremely orthodox in their teaching on the historic doctrines of the Church and it does seem likely that the London presbytery had picked on some loose language in order to be rid of a minister and his flock who seemed generally to be moving further and further away from what they knew as Presbyterianism.

As a result of growing hostility, the Irvingite members left Regent Square in 1832 and moved to a dark chapel in Newman Street, where they set themselves up as the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Irving was beginning to see himself as the leader of a faithful remnant whom God was gathering together as the end of the world came near. His Romantic views which, as a young man, had meant that he had carried a volume of Ossian's poems about with him, had been further strengthened by his contact with Coleridge and he was more and more convinced that the new Apostolic Age was about to burst upon the world. Further proof of the imminence of the Second Coming came during a tour of Scotland when spirit manifestations and speaking in tongues were recorded. The stage seemed set for a Pentecostal revival, with perhaps a few Romantic additions suited to the temper of the age and Irving's own predilections. Yet when Irving died in December 1834 he left behind him no distinctive body of doctrine, no blueprint for a Church, no liturgy or ministry; and every expectation was that the fledgling Catholic Apostolic Church was destined to an early oblivion.

Awaiting the Second Coming

This, however, was to reckon without the remarkable influence which Irving's personality had had upon his followers. Meeting at the home of a banker named Henry Drummond, the leaders of the Catholic Apostolic Church drew up a constitution for the new body. They were preparing a suitable vehicle for the gathering together of God's elect for his impending coming. From the Church emerged 12 apostles who were to be the interpreters of God's mysteries. They appointed 12 prophets who were to explain the Scripture and exhort the people to holiness, and 12 evangelists to teach doctrine. There were also 12 pastors to care for the people and seven deacons to aid them. Each of the apostles was assigned a tribe and the Apostolic College was set up at Albury in Hampshire, where Henry Drummond had his seat and where he built a fine church in the Gothic style.

The movement was under way and all vestiges of spiritism and speaking in tongues were soon removed. The followers of Irving differed from the High Church members of the Church of England in their assurance that the Second Coming of Christ was near and in their conviction that they would be among the first to welcome him. Their services became more and more elaborate and in 1842 the liturgy of the new Church was compiled, based upon Roman, Greek, and Anglican models. Regulations for daily prayers and services were laid down and on Sunday the Solemn Eucharist would take nearly three hours. The distinction between priest and preacher meant that equal emphasis was placed upon the sacraments as upon preaching; and the Catholic Apostolics believed in the real presence of Christ as fervently as any Anglo-Catholic.

Small, Pious Group

The new Church prospered financially. Besides Drummond, a number of rich men belonged and all its members paid a tenth of their income to the church. A tenth part of this tithe went to the headquarters at Albury and the rest was used for the upkeep and growth of the movement. It grew rapidly. Soon there were seven churches in London besides others in many of the main provincial towns and the Irvingites spread overseas, particularly to Germany and the United States.

There was however no provision for the continuation of the hierarchy. The Advent of Christ was so firmly expected that although the apostles, who were alone able to ordain, were manifestly mortal, the Irvingites faced the likelihood of the Church's dissolution with equanimity. The ritualist movement within the Church of England meant that there was increasingly no real need for the Catholic Apostolics. They became a small, pious group, very orthodox in belief and less and less insistent upon the Adventism which had been their one distinctive trait. Their churches passed into the hands of other bodies which needed them: Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox. Individual members made their submission to Rome or to Canterbury and finally in 1963 the great cathedral church in Gordon Square was leased to the Church of England as their chaplaincy to the University of London. The last apostle died in 1903 and there are now no clergy left, although some services from the Irvingite liturgy are still read in Gordon Square. The Church, now dedicated to Christ the King, stands as a magnificent memorial to a movement founded by a small group of connoisseurs whose lives Edward Irving had changed.

J. S. GUMMER

Michael Holford/British Museum

Ishtar was a radiant goddess rapt in beauty, terrifying and tempestuous, 'lady of resplendent light': eight-pointed star, symbol of Ishtar, from a boundary stone, c 1120 BC

ISHTAR

ISHTAR was the Semitic name for the old Sumerian goddess Inanna, the most powerful goddess in Mesopotamia. Representing the full potency of womanhood and maidenhood, and possessed of subtle powers in shaping the fortunes of man, she was worshipped for more than 2000 years. Doubtless many facets of her character altered during this period; and different aspects of the goddess were venerated in different cities.

For the appraisal of Ishtar there is no more revealing source than the Sumerian hymn, *The Exaltation of Inanna*. Composed in about 2350 BC by Enheduanna, the daughter of King Sargon of Agade in Akkad, in the north of Babylonia, this long poem describes the struggle for her supremacy over Nanna, the moon god in the southern city of Ur, and her final acceptance in the city of Uruk (Erech), also in the south, by the high god, An.

Reading between the lines, we can see how King Sargon, a usurper, set the divine seal to his empire over Sumer and Akkad by equating Sumerian Inanna with Akkadian Ishtar. Here is a glimpse of the kind of

political and religious struggle so frequent in the long history of ancient Egypt, but more rarely revealed in Mesopotamia.

This poem, which begins with the description of Inanna as the lady who possessed all the attributes of divinity, tells of her many accomplishments. Following the description of the dramatic struggle against the older divinities and against the wicked collusion of the older gods in Ur and Uruk, we end in a hymn of praise, through which the high priestess and her goddess emerge triumphant.

Inanna is the radiant lady rapt in beauty, terrifying and tempestuous, but she is also seen as a lady of resplendent light, beloved of heaven and earth. Inanna-Ishtar is also the dread goddess, who can, if she will, accurse vegetation and command fear in mankind. Not only is she possessed of sexual potency, able to control both fertility and sterility, but she is also a mighty goddess in battle, and this martial quality of Ishtar was as pervasive as any in the later development of her character.

Terrifying Seductress

In the hymn, she is described as 'the lady mounted on a beast' and as 'lent wings by the storm'; and in art she is frequently shown mounted on a lion or lioness, or leading both together. For example, on the high rock carvings of Maltai in Assyria, she occupied a prominent place in the procession of the gods; she was mounted on a lioness, and no doubt gave her blessing to the Assyrian armies as they marched through the defiles which separated Assyria from Iran, on their annual campaigns.

The description of her as having been 'lent wings by the storm' recalls the goddess's many sinister images, among which one of the most striking is the great terracotta, known as the Burney relief, in which the naked, winged goddess, usually called 'Lilith', with feathered legs and birds' talons, mounted on lions, appears in the guise of a seductive vamp of terrible aspect. Here she is seen to be of 'terrible countenance', in the words of the poem. In the early poems another side of Inanna-Ishtar's character is revealed, namely, of the goddess who presided over divination, incubation and oneiromancy, the interpretation of dreams. She was invested with all the great powers of womankind, and while possessed of seductive beauty and charm, could, if so moved, turn rivers to blood.

Inanna-Ishtar presided over one of the most important ceremonies of the year – the ritual marriage of the god, in the course of which the king was wedded to the high priestess and in this way induced for his people the promise of agricultural prosperity. Indeed, on the famous stone vase from Uruk, c 3300 BC, Inanna herself may perhaps be recognized, taking part in the spring festival. There is certainly evidence from later periods of the king's special relationship to Ishtar, the goddess who in the words of A. L. Oppenheim 'becomes the carrier, the fountainhead, of his power and prestige'.

For the people of Agade, Ishtar was an incarnation of the planet Venus, which was known as Dilbat. In military history, Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela are prominent in battle and ensure victory for the Assyrian armies. A famous war poem of Tukulti-Ninurta I, referring to an event in the 13th century BC, tells how Ishtar intervened at a critical point in the battle as a result of which the Assyrians triumphed over Kashtiliash, King of Babylon.

Ishtar was also invoked as a healer: indeed she made a memorable journey in about 1375 BC from Nineveh to Thebes, in Egypt, in order to lay hands on the aged and ailing King Amenophis III. This was not the first occasion on which her powers had been so used. But the most sinister episode in the mythology concerning this goddess is the account of her descent into Hades, a tale of early Sumerian origin, in which Inanna strives dangerously with her sister, the queen of the underworld, and only narrowly succeeds in escaping from it.

The Eyes of Death

In a Sumerian poem, the judges of the underworld pronounce death on Inanna:

The pure Ereshkigal seated herself upon
her throne,
The Annunaki, the seven judges, pronounced
judgement before her,
They fastened their eyes upon her, the eyes
of death,
At their word, the word which tortures the
spirit . . .
The sick woman was turned into a corpse,
The corpse was hung from a stake.

S. N. Kramer *Sumerian Mythology*

Lady of the Dawn

Ishtar, however, is often thought of as an erotic goddess concerned with sexual intercourse, and later in history her hierodules or prostitutes were to earn a licentious and evil reputation, especially in the city of Uruk, where there was an elaborately organized college of priestesses of Ishtar, the head of which was the high priestess herself. This cult enjoyed a considerable expansion elsewhere, and finally emanated in the lewd practices of the Phoenician Astarte, and Hebrew Ashtaroth, so much condemned by the Old Testament prophets.

There is evidence that organizations similar to the one in Uruk existed first in Ashur, and then in Babylon. In Ashur, the religious capital of Assyria, the remains of a temple which belonged to Ishtar *dinitu*, 'the lady of the dawn', or the 'lighting up' have been excavated. What happened within the sacred precincts may be deduced from a series of lead discs and tokens found elsewhere in the same city. These plaques showed men, and women who were probably hierodules in the service of the goddess, enjoying sexual intercourse on the brick pillars of the temple. Other figures are also engaged in an erotic dance.

This practice has an interesting counterpart in Herodotus's account of a strange marriage practice in Babylonia, in the course of which eligible women sat in the temple and intending suitors cast a coin in their laps, invoking the name of the goddess in settlement and witness of the marriage contract.

(See also ASTARTE; GILGAMESH; MESOPOTAMIA; PROSTITUTION.)

M. E. L. MALLOWAN

FURTHER READING: W. W. Hallo and J. J. A. Van Dijk, *The Exaltation of Inanna* (AMS Press, 1979); S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972); A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia, Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964).

ISIS

THE GREAT GODDESS of the ancient Egyptians, Isis was the wife of Osiris, the god who died and was restored to life. He had been king of Egypt, but his evil brother Seth, whom the Greeks later identified with the monster Typhon, had killed and dismembered him and buried the pieces in various places. Isis searched for and found the pieces, put them together and revived him. Osiris became king of the underworld and their son Horus, called Harpocrates by the Greeks, became ruler over Egypt.

As Queen of Egypt, Isis' hieroglyphic symbol is the throne. She is also the exemplary mother who has taken infinite pains to nurse, protect and bring up her son Horus and she is frequently depicted suckling him. With care and incantations she protected him from all diseases, and after the death of Osiris she saved him from Seth who wanted to murder him. When Seth brought a lawsuit against Horus before the court of the gods, intending to become king of Egypt himself, Isis intervened and enabled her son to win the case. Isis therefore did everything that a good woman can do for her husband and child, and became the model for all Egyptian women.

Her sacred animal is the cow, the mother of calves and provider of milk, 'the fruitful image of the all-producing goddess'. For Isis gives life, fertility and prosperity to people, animals and fields.

As man fertilizes woman, and Osiris Isis, so did the annual flooding of the Nile fertilize the soil of Egypt; coming in the middle of the hot summer, this inundation was looked upon as a miracle and attributed to Isis. When the river dried up in the summer, it meant that Osiris was dead, killed by Seth-Typhon, the hot wind of the desert. But Isis searches for the dead Osiris and finds him on the day of the Nile flood in the river's holy waters. The water, Osiris, flows over the withered earth, Isis, and fertilizes it.

The Nile flood coincides with the first appearance of Sirius, just before sunrise, and this was interpreted as a causal event; Sirius (Egyptian Sothis) was seen as the star of the Nile flood and the star of Isis.

The day of the rising of Sirius and of the river's flooding became the sacred New Year's Day of the Egyptians.

After the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 331 BC the country was ruled by Greeks for 300 years, and during this period the cult of Isis became completely Hellenized. When the Romans took over the government in 30 BC they relied on the support of the Greek middle class in Egypt and the language of administration remained Greek; during this era, the goddess's cult spread over the entire Mediterranean basin. It was only when Constantine the Great, after his victory at the Milvian bridge in 312 AD raised Christianity to the level of the national religion, that the Isis cult lost its importance and was subsequently prohibited.

Seeking the Dead Osiris

The Greeks identified the Egyptian Isis with their Greek goddesses: Isis, the provider of corn, was the Greek Demeter; Isis, the goddess of love, was Aphrodite; Isis, wife of the king of the gods, was Hera; Isis, the goddess of magic arts, was Hecate, and so on. By depicting Isis as the prototype of the human woman, she was put on a par with the Greek heroine, Io, who was loved by Zeus and had been changed into a cow, the Isis animal. A gad-fly sent by Hera chased poor Io over land and sea until, after a long and frantic flight, she came to Egypt. There, on the banks of the Nile, Zeus changed her back into a woman. This myth was a consolation for everybody who was hunted throughout life as Io was; at the same time it demonstrated the close connection between Greece and Egypt.

Isis was also compared with other goddesses such as Artemis, Persephone and Nemesis, and especially with Tyche, the goddess of fortune (the Roman Fortuna), and with Providence. These various identifications are the expression of living religious feeling. The great goddess appears in many different forms and always reveals new aspects. She is called *myrionymos*, 'the one with ten thousand names', and a Latin inscription is translated as: 'Thou, the one who is all, goddess Isis.' Her whole being is impenetrable, but behind her many faces and names there is one and the same divine Unknown.

Next to Isis are always her husband Osiris and her son Horus and she can never be viewed individually, without her family. However, during the Greek period of Egypt a change set in as other sides of the nature of Osiris were given prominence, and he was given the name of Osiris-Apis, abbreviated to Serapis. Apis was the sacred bull of Memphis, the old capital of Egypt, and Serapis was the god of this city. However, he also became the god of the new capital Alexandria and of the new Greek dynasty, the Ptolemies.

Isis' ancient role as throne goddess, the Queen of Egypt was perpetuated among the Greek kings; Cleopatra appeared on official occasions in the costume, one might even say in the guise, of Isis. The Isis religion therefore had a political element, it was the national religion of the Egyptian state: those who worshipped Isis and Serapis acknowledged their loyalty to the reigning royal house.

This fact encouraged the spread of the Isis and Serapis cult in the Greek ruling circles of the Ptolemies, in Cyrene, Cyprus, Crete, the coastal towns of Asia Minor and the Greek islands whose religious centre was Delos. On the other hand, for political reasons, an expansion beyond the sphere of influence of the Ptolemies was not regarded favourably anywhere. There were only branches of the Isis cult in seaports, such as Athens, Salonika and on Euboea. But even in Egypt itself, linking the royal cult with the Isis-Serapis religion was in many respects a disadvantage as pure religious feelings cannot arise when the practice of a religion is welcomed and rewarded so distinctly by those in high places.

The political decline of the Ptolemies, which started in 200 BC, followed by the complete loss of autonomy that resulted from Egypt's incorporation into the Roman Empire, provided a real opportunity for the Isis religion to expand. Having lost its political aspect, it became possible for the religious and ethical aspect to be strengthened. On Delos, for instance, the Isis cult became purely religious, and as Delos was an important centre for trade with Italy, the Delian cult even reached that country.

The transformation of the cult of Isis into a religion of Mysteries first occurred in the Roman Empire. Because there was no longer a political aspect to worshipping the goddess, the cult now appealed to people as individuals: each one was personally offered salvation, and promised regeneration after death. If a man entered into the service of Isis it was his own personal decision.

The consecration ceremonies of the Isis Mysteries during the Imperial period are described in detail in *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. There was a wealth of rites: the morning opening of the temple, the vigils, the abstention from wine, meat and love; the rites of cleanliness which included wearing white linen clothes, shaving the head and ablutions. Novices lived for a time within the precincts of the temple; the statue of Isis was contemplated, there was ecstatic prayer and obligatory tears were shed. The worthiness of the candidates was tested at a kind of hearing, and anyone who had sinned gravely was rejected. Sins were confessed and forgiven through immersion in water, and worshippers pledged themselves under oath to the service of the deity and to secrecy. With every new variation the sacred myth of Isis was restated, the seeking and the finding; in each procession Isis sought the dead Osiris, and found him every time the holy water was drawn.

The initiation into the Mysteries was in three stages and consisted of a voluntary ritual death and revival. The initiate stepped on to the 'threshold of Proserpina' (the Greek

Roger Wood Studio

Isis was the mother of the god Horus, with whom the pharaoh was identified: in this wall painting from a tomb the goddess is shown embracing Prince Amun-kher-khopsh, son of Ramses III: 12th century BC

Persephone) and went on a journey 'through all the elements' for which mechanical appliances were probably used. As in the case of Freemasons, there also seems to have been a coffin ritual, and perhaps a baptism of fire. In all probability, a 'sacred wedding', a sexual union, was an integral part of the initiation. Finally, the initiate received a new name and the mystics then partook of a communal meal, with music and dancing.

Garden of Religion

There was an entire vocabulary of religious symbols: the life of man was a pilgrimage or a sea journey, the sinful world was the sea, the religion of Isis was the ship and the haven, and Isis herself the mast and the sail. Her priests were the fishermen who rescued the souls from the sea, the evil world, or bird-catchers who caught the souls (birds or butterflies) with their lime-twigs; the mystics were soldiers on holy military service for Isis, or gardeners who laboriously cultivated the garden of religion. The Isis priests were the true philosophers, who attained the perception of God, and the functionaries in the religious organization of the community were the legitimate 'consuls'; the community itself was called Ecclesia, like the Greek general assembly and later the Christian Church.

The wheel was the symbol of Isis, the sponge indicated the purification of the mystics, and the ladder their spiritual advancement. The anchor symbolized the religion that granted security, the bosom the all-providing goddess, the amphora, a two-handled vessel, the holy water; the lamp stood for the night-feast of the goddess, and the yardstick, justice. The winnow, in which the grain is separated from the chaff, represented the cleansing of the soul in the initiation, the palm the 'victory' of the mystic and his rebirth.

Great pilgrimages were undertaken in the service of Isis, from Rome to Egypt, and indeed as far as Syene, now Aswan, where the source of the Nile was said to be, and where the holy water was drawn when the Nile was in spate. Above all, outstanding festival cycles took place in the service of Isis. One of these was the festival of the goddess as mistress of navigation on 5 March. This was a spring festival, when the beginning of the navigation period was ceremonially inaugurated by the 'voyage of Isis'. The goddess's worshippers walked through the town in a long procession, wearing masks, and accompanied by music and choirs, and the first ship was then put to sea. The festival was also called *ploiaphesia*, which can be roughly translated as a 'launching'. Isis herself inaugurated the navigation for the year, as according to the myth she had been the first to set sail on a ship. There were two other important festivals, one on 24–25 December and the other on 5–6 January, dates which were also important holy days in the competing Christian religion.

The abolition of all frontiers in the Mediterranean area under the *Pax Romana*, with trade and communication among countries restricted less than at any time in history, encouraged the spread of the Isis Mysteries. Like the Jews and the Christians, the Greeks from Egypt formed small communities in all the towns of Asia Minor in order to practise their native cult, and also helped one another in other ways. Anyone who came into an Isis community did not suffer materially; he would have friends and helpers.

It is clear that the 'church' of Isis had a 'mission' during the Imperial period, and that Memphis and Rome were the holy cities. At four places in Greece and Asia Minor, when Isis sanctuaries were being excavated, identical sacred texts were discovered, depicting Isis proclaiming her power. There is therefore no doubt that propaganda was being spread. It may be assumed that there were Isis sanctuaries or shrines in all the Mediterranean ports, and also in many inland cities and towns.

The cult's growth was partly because of its rather exotic nature: the strange and mysterious rites were an attraction, and at the same time it was Hellenized to such an extent that people quickly became accustomed to it. On the other hand many Egyptian concepts still clung like tiresome and disregarded eggshells to the Isis religion. This was particularly the case with regulations concerning priests. They had to be born into the caste, as they could not be elected, they had to cut their hair, wear only linen garments, refrain from eating various kinds of food and on the whole observe many taboos. Only a native Egyptian could be considered for high office in the priesthood; a large-scale mission was impossible and in view of the tolerant nature of the religion was probably never envisaged. In any case a type of lay clergy had evolved in Greece and Rome, the 'bearers of the shrine', who held leading positions in the religious community. In Egypt itself they were a group of laymen who were called in to act in a subordinate capacity without being accepted into the priest-caste.

Mistress of the Elements

In the Roman Empire the Isis and Serapis shrines had characteristic features in common. The temples were built in the Greek style; but instead of the old roof construction they often had vaulted roofs. Most of the statues were in the Greek style but there were also those in the style of Egypt, or simply stiff-limbed statues imported from Egypt. There were also representations of Apis, the son Horus with a hawk's head, the servant Anubis with a dog's head, and the sacred animals.

Several hymns were written in honour of Isis, but *aretalogies*, reports of the miraculous deeds of Isis and Serapis which were recorded in the temple, are the most characteristic feature of the literature that developed through the worship of the goddess. For fishermen who were dying with thirst on the high seas Serapis changed the salt water into fresh water; he helped one of his priests on Delos in a critical legal dispute; and he also lengthened the life of a servant by causing a stranger to become drunk and die in his place, for this god was able to 'change the clothes of destiny'.

Michael Holford/British Museum

The exemplary mother of the ancient Egyptians, Isis was later identified with various Greek and Roman goddesses; her cult eventually became a religion of Mysteries: glazed porcelain bust of Isis *(above)* and *(facing page)* relief of the goddess; she wears a disc set between cow's horns on her head-dress

According to a recent theory, the literary form of the love story developed from these accounts of miracles. Several classical novels such as the story of Psyche and Cupid by Apuleius, would therefore be coded texts of the Isis religion.

During the period of the Roman Empire the Mysteries of Isis were strongly influenced by Greek philosophical theories. Isis is 'provider of all things in Nature, mistress of all the elements'. She embodies all contrasts: light and dark, day and night, fire and water, life and death, beginning and end. Whoever enters her service as a slave will achieve true freedom. Apuleius describes Osiris as Creator of the world.

The psychology of the Mysteries was apparently quite Platonic: the soul is not bound firmly to the body but comes from the Beyond; it plunged into the sinful body and must try to free itself and return to God. The whole life of man is governed by the goddess. The many external vicissitudes of life, all mishaps and trials, appear to be afflictions of wayward chance, of the goddess Fortuna. But if a man becomes converted and enters the service of Isis, it will be seen that all the vicissitudes were caused by Providence only in order to lead mankind to salvation. Fortuna and Providence therefore come together in Isis. The influence of the stars, blind Fate, so much feared by the people of late antiquity, was broken by Isis; her servants were confident that the goddess was standing above the stars and, as Providence, was guiding both them and Fate.

R. MERKELBACH

Roger Wood Studio

ISLAM

The faith of Islam encompasses both a simplicity that a child can understand and complex mysticism which is far beyond the grasp of the ordinary Moslem; the creed 'God is the only God; Mohammed is God's messenger' is whispered in the ear of the new-born baby, repeated throughout life and traditionally is the last utterance of the dying

ISLAM (properly al-Islam), a word which indicates submission to God, is the name given to the religiously-based system resulting from the mission of the prophet Mohammed in Arabia in the 7th century AD. One who submits is a Moslem, a title including nominal adherents. A distinction is made in the Koran between submission and belief, or faith; belief is not mere acceptance of doctrine; it involves a pattern of behaviour.

At about the age of 40 Mohammed began to receive revelations in Mecca, but he had much opposition to face, and his movement was not really established until after his migration to Medina about 12 years later, in 622. There he found a larger number of followers and gradually built up a community of Moslems, a kind of theocracy in which he, as God's representative, must receive obedience. Islam does not distinguish between the sacred and the secular; it regards all aspects of life as coming under God's control.

There are divisions within Islam, but the vast majority of Moslems belong to the main

The Koran, God's eternal and uncreated word, revealed to Mohammed, is regarded as infallible... it threatens severe punishment in the hereafter, or promises delights in the garden of paradise

body commonly called Sunnites, who developed a system with four bases. First, the Koran, God's eternal and uncreated word, revealed to Mohammed from time to time during the Meccan and Medinan periods, is regarded as infallible. It gives guidance on many subjects, summoning man to submit to God and to do God's will, threatening severe punishment in the hereafter, or promising delights in the garden of paradise, commending those who observe worship and pay legal alms, and at times expressing mystical thought in language of great beauty. But as Islam expanded many problems arose with which the Koran did not deal, so another authority was sought.

This was eventually provided in Tradition, traced to Mohammed, or at least to his Companions. During the first two centuries much energy was expended in collecting such material, but only in the 3rd century of Islam were the collections of Tradition which became canonical written down.

In the collections each tradition is preceded by a chain of transmitters, and remarks are commonly added about the quality of its reliability. An elaborate science developed regarding the transmitters, types of traditions, methods of receiving and transmitting. The chain, while an important element in deciding reliability, was not the only one.

Schools of the Sunnites

The third basis is agreement of recognized authorities, even perhaps of the general community, for a tradition represents Mohammed as saying, 'My people will never agree on an error'. This basis has an element of vagueness, for Islam has had no councils for formulating doctrines or reaching decisions. But with the passage of time matters of agreement were recognized.

The fourth basis is deduction by analogy *(qiyas)*. In earlier times some authorities gave decisions on the basis of their own opinion, or held that a certain procedure was for the good of the community. This was too subjective, so eventually qiyas prevailed; so qualified authorities form decisions by seeking an analogy in the other three bases.

According to Sunnite theory these bases provide guidance on all subjects. Schools of thought developed in Sunnite Islam, four of which survived. The Hanafi is traced to Abu Hanifa of Kufa who died in 767, but the real founders of the school were two of his pupils. It became the school of the Turkish Empire and the Indian subcontinent. The Maliki school is traced to Malik ibn Anas of Medina (d. 795) who compiled a law-book, and whose ideas were developed by followers. It is now mainly found in North Africa.

The Shafii school goes back to Mohammed ibn Idria al-Shafii (d. 820), an outstanding authority whose writings exerted great influence. He studied with Malik and spent some time in other centres, eventually settling in Egypt. This school has been predominant in southern Arabia, Indonesia, Upper Egypt and East Africa. The Hanbali school is traced to Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855) who had been a pupil of Shafii. In some respects it is stricter than others. It is now found in central Arabia, and has had some influence on certain reformers in Egypt.

These schools are not sects, for there is no serious difference on matters of theology; but their views differ regarding a number of details of legal practice. The law, called *sharia* (path), is a divine law, given by God and developed from this in matters of detail under divine control. It deals with all subjects, for God's law applies in every sphere.

Facing page **Devout Moslems perform formal acts of worship five times each day: muezzin calling the faithful to prayer** ***Below*** **Allah is the only God according to the Islamic faith: design using the letters of his name in a mosque in Istanbul; pictorial representations of Allah are forbidden**

Sonia Halliday

Paul Watkins

The Five Pillars

In modern times adaptations have been made to the teaching of the schools. Some modern states have made selections from the teaching of different schools, but in some aspects of the law, states have separated from the sharia. In subjects such as family law and inheritance they follow the sharia, but other matters are dealt with in civil courts. To Algeria and the Indian subcontinent this is nothing new. In Turkey the ancient Moslem system has been completely replaced. Egypt and Tunisia have abolished sharia courts; the sharia family law is now administered in civil courts. Tunisia has enacted a law enforcing monogamy. There is a growing tendency for states to change the administration of the law without interfering with the conduct of purely religious practices.

There are five pillars of practical religion. The first is the recitation of the attestation of belief: 'God is the only God; Mohammed is God's messenger.' This stresses God's uniqueness and Mohammed's mission as the final prophet. It is whispered in the ear of the newly born child; it is continually repeated throughout life; it should be the last utterance of the dying; and mourners chant it as they carry the bier to the grave.

The second pillar is worship. The formal worship *(salat)* is performed five times daily, preceded by ceremonial ablution and an expression of one's intention. The times are before sunrise, after midday, in mid-afternoon, soon after sunset, and when the night has closed in. Worship is performed facing Mecca, the focal point towards which all prayer is directed being the *Kaaba*, God's House, in Mecca. Various postures are adopted, standing, bowing, kneeling, prostrating, and sitting back on one's heels. Koran verses, expressions of adoration, and some petitions are recited. Worship is essentially adoration, which may be followed by private supplications.

A certain number of sections *(rakas)* are prescribed for each period, and some supererogatory prayers are recommended in addition. These are said individually without a leader; but the prayers said in company with others in a mosque or elsewhere

The Blue Mosque in Istanbul: it is customary for Moslems to attend a mosque for midday worship on Friday, but apart from this it is not considered necessary even to pray in company; although worship is led by an imam, who stands in front of a group of worshippers, he cannot be compared with the Western clergyman as Islam allows no priest between man and God

must have a leader *(imam)* who is followed by the company in words and postures. One need not pray in a mosque, or even in company, but if a group worship together one member must stand in front as imam. Mosques have their regular imam, but he is not to be compared with a clergyman; Islam allows no priest between man and God. Attendance at the mosque is customary at midday worship on Friday, when a sermon is preached; afterwards people are allowed to resume their business, for Friday is not a sabbath.

Legal almsgiving *(zakat)*, the third pillar of religious duty, is now largely neglected because of other methods of taxation, but there are many who still pay it gladly. It is a tax on property possessed for one year, provided it exceeds a prescribed minimum. Assessments vary according to the nature of the land and whether the agricultural land is irrigated or depends on rain (the latter has a higher tax). Other criteria for the tax are animals, money and general possessions. It may be paid to a collector or directly to one of the classes entitled to benefit. In paying the intention must be expressed, otherwise it is just voluntary charity.

The fourth pillar, fasting, applies mainly to Ramadan, the ninth month of the Moslem lunar year, when one must abstain from food, drink and bodily satisfactions from early morning when one can distinguish a black from a white thread till after sunset. Travellers and invalids are exempt, but when the journey or the illness is over they should make up for the days of abstention missed. The lunar year is 11 days shorter than the solar, so the months go round the seasons in 33 years, which means that the observance is severe in hot countries when Ramadan occurs in summer.

A sincere Moslem carefully observes the fast, the only modification being in a country of high latitude with long days in summer and short in winter, when he may calculate an average length of day. Some, however, are content to fast at the beginning and end of the month, and others pay little heed. Fasting on a festival is forbidden. The two main festivals are the day of sacrifice during the Pilgrimage and the day following Ramadan, when the holiday often lasts four days. Ascetics have observed additional fasts, but Tradition states that three days at a time are the limit. Some

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Interior of the Blue Mosque: engraving by Thomas Allom of the scene when crowds gathered there in 1839 to see the Sacred Standard of the Prophet, which was being displayed in the mosque

misdemeanours or sins of omission are expiated by fasting (see FASTING).

Pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of practical religion. In the pre-Islamic period rites were observed at the Kaaba at different times, and at some places within about 12 miles from Mecca in the twelfth month of the lunar year. The purely Meccan rite is called *umra* and the other *hajj*. The umra may be performed at any time; the hajj, which has specified days in the twelfth month, is a duty which should be performed once in a lifetime by adults who are sane and have sufficient means. Women must be accompanied by a relative. If a person has the means to observe the hajj, but is incapacitated, he may pay the expenses of a deputy to perform it on his behalf, the deputy acquiring no merit for himself.

Kissing the Black Stone

Pilgrims must halt at a station outside the sacred area and don the pilgrim garb *(ihram)*. Men wear two garments, one thrown over the left shoulder and tied at the right side, the other tied round the waist and reaching below the knees. Women wear a long robe and commonly, though not necessarily, cover the face. In donning the ihram one must express the intention. If careful about the wording, a person entering Mecca some time before the hajj may remove the pilgrim garment after the umra and resume it later in time for the hajj.

The umra consists of going round the Kaaba seven times, kissing, or at least saluting, the Black Stone fixed in the wall, praying at certain holy spots, and running seven times between two hillocks, al-Safa and al-Marwa; a rite connected with Hagar's search for water when Abraham sent her away with Ishmael.

A sermon giving instructions about the hajj is preached on the seventh day of the twelfth month, the eighth day being the first day of the hajj proper. The people go out to Mina, but some go straight on to Arafat where, from after midday till sunset on the ninth day the people stand on or round a sacred hill, this being the high point of the hajj. The pilgrims next stampede to Muzdalifa and go on the following day to Mina where there are three pillars, at which they throw stones. They are said to be stoning Satan, but the origin of the practice is not clear. Animals are sacrificed, a rite observed that day throughout the Moslem world.

This is the great festival. The head should be shaved, or the hair cut, after which ordinary clothing is assumed. For three days the pilgrims throw stones at the three pillars in the valley of Mina, at one on the first day, and at all three on the others, then go to Tanim where they put on the pilgrim dress before performing a farewell umra, after which they may leave. Many come to Mecca hoping to die there, bringing their shrouds which they dip in the sacred well Zem Zem; pilgrims commonly take some of the water home with them. Many visit Mohammed's tomb at Medina, a natural act of piety, but not a religious duty.

Islam has had its theological differences. The Koran is not a theological treatise, for Mohammed was primarily a preacher, and like many preachers he was inclined to overemphasize the point he was making. This is clear in references to God's omnipotence at one moment and to man's responsibility at another. If one chooses one's texts from the Koran, ignoring those which contradict them, it is possible to argue that man is responsible for his actions and able to do right, or that God is the only agent with man somewhat of an automaton.

Mohammed obviously did not believe the latter, for if so it would have been useless to urge men to obey God. But some who felt that he did, turned the argument against him by saying, 'Had God so willed we should not have served anything apart from him' (sura 16.37), to which Mohammed's only reply was that their fathers had spoken similarly. Discussions soon took place and parties arose.

Out of the discussions an important movement developed which made use of rational arguments to uphold its views. It was called Mutazilitism, coming from a root meaning 'to withdraw'. The conventional explanation speaks of someone seceding from the community, but there is reason to question this. The Mutazilites called themselves the people of unity and justice,

Many Moslems come to Mecca hoping to die there, bringing their shrouds which they dip in the sacred well Zem Zem

indicating two important doctrines. They believed so strongly in God's unity that they rejected the doctrine of the eternity of the Koran, as this suggested an eternal being alongside God. For the same reason they denied that God has attributes, for this seemed to indicate multiplicity; and when it was said that God's attributes were in his essence, this appeared even worse than the Christian Trinity. They held the attributes were God's essence. The insistence on justice means they held that God does what is best for his creatures, and this involves man's free will.

Some earlier Western scholars thought the Mutazilites were free-thinkers, but further knowledge has discredited this. They were sincere Moslems, and although some of them indulged in speculation, insistence on God's unity – the fundamental Islamic doctrine – coloured all their thinking. It was unfortunate that the Caliph al-Mamun issued a decree in 827 stating that the Koran is created. There was violent opposition, and an inquisition started, but so persistent was the opposition that some 20 years later the Caliph al-Mutawakkil declared official the doctrine of the eternity of the Koran, and instituted persecution of the Mutazilites.

The doctrine of al-Ashari (d. 935) who had been brought up in Mutazilite teaching but eventually abandoned it, and of others like him, was argued by rational methods learned from them. The Sunnite theology hardened under the scholastic theologians, among their chief doctrines being the eternity of the Koran, God's decrees, an acceptance of Koranic anthropomorphic phrases without asking how they could be used of God, and acceptance of items of eschatology, such as the bridge over hell (see INTERROGATION OF THE DEAD).

An attempt at mitigation was made regarding the decrees by a doctrine called *kasb* (acquisition), meaning that while God is the only agent, man can acquire his actions. It has been said this means little more than that man is the place where they occur. 'God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It will be credited with the good it has acquired and debited with the evil it has acquired' is claimed as a basis for the doctrine. Some may argue that if God is the only agent it matters little where his actions occur, and man's being credited or debited with actions cannot be called just.

The famous mystic and theologian, al-Ghazali (d. 1111), argued that tyranny can occur only when one interferes with another's property. As all property is God's, what he does cannot be called tyranny. This may do justice to God's omnipotence, but it suggests a low conception of man. One must not, however, assume that because of theological doctrines all Moslems are fatalists. There is an element of fatalism, especially among the common people, but no one can be a practical fatalist. Many stoutly uphold man's free will.

The Path of the Sufis

There were ascetic tendencies in early Islam, connected with which a significant movement developed. This was that of the Sufis, a name derived from *suf* (wool) referring to the coarse woollen garments of ascetics. Sufis have similarities to mysticism in other religions, but their beliefs are closely related to the Koran and Mohammed. Those who wished to join the Sufis normally attached themselves to a spiritual director who demanded implicit obedience as he guided them in following the Path and controlled their excitable tendencies.

From the 12th century Sufi orders developed, tracing themselves to some great Sufi. In addition to the prescribed prayers they have their own rituals observed by those who spend their lives in worship and by others who visit their centres to share worship. A typical practice is the *dhikr*, which may consist of repeating the name Allah, or some sacred phrase, and is often associated with music which has no place in mosque worship.

Many Moslems have held that there is something evil in music, especially stringed and wind instruments, which have been called the Devil's pipes. A dance may also be associated with the dhikr, the Mevlevi dervishes being specially noted for this (see DERVISH). The dhikr may lead to a state of trance, novices being under the supervision of a spiritual director.

The Sufi Path has for its goal union with God, and some Sufis have uttered what orthodox Moslems consider as blasphemy. A notable example is the saying of al-Hallaj, 'I am the Truth', for which he was crucified in 922. There are sometimes suggestions of pantheism, especially connected with the doctrine of the Oneness of Being which teaches that God is the only absolute reality. But Sufism found a place within Islam, thanks largely to the influence of al-Ghazali, the great teacher who resigned his chair in Baghdad and devoted himself to solitude for 11 years.

Belief in the virtue of saints developed, and still has a firm hold on the common people. There are different categories of saints, in descending scale from those who sustain the world to saints connected with Sufi orders and local saints. They have the virtue of conveying blessing *(baraka)*, so their tombs are often visited and their prayers are sought. Each saint has also a special season when people gather at the tomb for the annual visit *ziyara*, when a fair is held.

In North Africa *marabouts* (hermits and monks) exert great influence, both alive and dead, and are consulted in time of need. In Shiite Islam visits are paid to the shrines of the *imams* (hereditary semi-divine rulers) at Meshed, Karbala, Najaf and Kazimayn; and so important are the imams that many feel such visits are equivalent to the hajj.

In the early period the caliphate's role was also important although at no time had the caliph the right to determine matters of faith, however some might have liked to do so. He is not to be compared with the pope, as was sometimes done in the past. He was simply the defender of the faith and head of the community.

The Imams of the Shia

There is, however, within Islam a party which considers a leader of paramount importance. This is Shiite Islam, the official religion of Iran and the religion of important communities in Iraq, India, Pakistan and elsewhere. The Shiites speak of an imam whose function as a leader is more comprehensive than that of a caliph. The movement, with political origins as is characteristic of Islam, developed among supporters of Ali, Mohammed's cousin, who, they felt, should have been first caliph.

In the course of time some doctrines, different from those of the Sunnites, began to develop. The Imamites, the main body of the Shia, believe in 12 imams, the first being Ali, the next two his sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and the remainder in direct line

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The basis of the Islamic faith was founded on revelations received from God in about AD 610. However, the movement was not truly established until some 12 years later; even then there was strong opposition in many quarters to the teachings. Fierce battles were fought with the unbelievers. These miniatures from the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul show some of the major events in the history of Islam. These include some interesting battle scenes, in which the enemy forces make use of elephants in their cavalry

of descent from al-Husayn who, with his followers, was killed at Karbala, an event which is remembered annually. The imams are held to be sinless, and it is believed that a divine light passed from one to another. The 12th imam, Mohammed al-Muntazar, withdrew from human affairs in 878, but is still ruling the world. At its opening early this century the first parliament in Iran was said to be held under the auspices of the hidden imam.

The imams are invested with an almost divine aura, not conveying any idea of incarnation, but rather that they are endowed with divine qualities. The 12th imam, who is to return at the end of the age, is believed to have absolute rule. Love of the imams is necessary for salvation. It is believed that on the bridge which all the dead must attempt to cross, one of the barriers is love of the imams. No one lacking this can cross.

Shiites have their own collections of traditions, transmitted through imams, but there is no place for the analogical deduction and consensus of recognized authorities of the Sunnites. Instead there are *mujtahids*, 'men who exert effort', agents of the imam, who have complete knowledge of the Koran and traditions and guide the people.

In doctrine Shiites teach free will, and they differ from Sunnites in minor details of ritual, as well as adding a phrase to the call to prayer. A temporary marriage with a specific date for its termination is allowed. A Shiite may dissemble his beliefs when in danger because of them.

The Ismailites are a smaller branch of Shiites, but came into prominence earlier than the Imamites. They believe in seven imams. A dynasty was established in Tunisia in 910 headed by Ubaydallah, called the Mahdi, a reputed descendant of Mohammed's daughter Fatima. This was the Fatimid Caliphate which conquered Egypt and ruled there till overthrown by Saladin in 1171. During its ascendancy Egypt was a centre of culture, and many Fatimid buildings and works of art remain.

There have been splits among the Ismailites. The Aga Khan, head of one section, is invested with an element of divinity. The Nusayrites in north Syria broke off from the main stream, a notable feature of their doctrine being belief in Ali's divinity.

'The Only True Moslems'

Another early split in Islam was that of the Kharijites who had fought on Ali's side against Muawiya, but objected to the dispute being put to arbitration. They were originally warlike and puritanical, some more so than others, and for long were a thorn in the side of the caliphate.

They taught free will, insisted that faith must be proved by works, held that serious sin is apostasy, and felt they were the only true Moslems. They admitted no superior class or hereditary claim, holding that anyone, no matter what his origin, was eligible to become caliph, provided he was a sincere Moslem and possessed the requisite qualities. If a caliph proved unworthy he could be deposed. For them fighting to spread the faith was a missionary task.

Today they are represented by the Ibadites in Oman, East Africa, and parts of North Africa, but are not uncompromising like their ancestors. They are prepared to intermarry with other Moslems, making no excessive claims for themselves. They do not believe the Koran is uncreated, they allegorize Koranic anthropomorphisms, and hold that serious sinners will go to hell for ever, contrary to the common Sunnite view that Mohammed will intercede for his people and that all who have had a grain of faith will eventually be taken from hell.

Early Islam saw much fighting, first in Arabia, then farther afield. The word *jihad* (striving) has been used for what is called the holy war, but it has a much wider connotation. The Koran rebukes men who failed to go out to fight, but Mohammed was fighting against Arab pagans.

In later times many have argued that jihad is not primarily armed conflict, but

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Moslem worship is essentially adoration of God, and is performed facing towards the Kaaba, the house of God in Mecca: the worshippers recite verses from the Koran, expressions of adoration of God, and sometimes pray for God's help: Moslems praying in Dakar, West Africa

Picturepoint London

is striving in general, the hardest struggle being that against one's lower nature. This does not mean that the sphere of Islam was not spread by the sword in many regions. The extensive domains, at one time stretching from Spain to the borders of China were certainly gained by fighting; but the fighters were more interested in spreading the sphere of Islam than in compelling conversion, for Jews, Christians and others with scriptures were accepted as protected peoples and allowed to retain their religion.

In many regions the extension of Islam has been due to the influence of traders, notably in Malaya, Indonesia and farther east, also in East, Central and West Africa. In addition Islam has conducted a lively missionary work in Europe and America.

In the 19th century a new spirit seemed to be stirring within Islam. A strong movement for a liberal presentation of Islam was making its views known. Thinkers such as Sir Mohammad Iqbal, Abdul Kalam Azad and Asaf A. A. Fyzee advanced ideas that would bring Islam into line with modern ideas, and laws passed in the mid 20th century reflected this. Women in Iran, for example, were given a greater degree of equality and the wearing of the *chador* became an anachronism. But in the late 1970s, a conservative backlash showed that a majority of Moslem fundamentalists disapproved of the relaxation of traditional values. In 1979 Iranians led by religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini overthrew Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, thereby ending the constitutional monarchy and declaring the country an Islamic republic. The new government based its laws on the teachings of Islam. In the same year Islamic zealots occupied the great mosque of Mecca, an act that brought about changes to enforce Islamic law more strictly.

The shooting of the Egyptian president Sadat in 1981 raised many questions as to where responsibility lay. Again, Moslem fundamentalists had been vocal in their disapproval of governmental flouting of Islamic principles.

In Iran, women now veil themselves again, and the practice is becoming usual in other Moslem countries.

The religious fundamentalists who held the Grand Mosque made similar protests against the Saudi Royal Family that the Iranians made against the Shah: profligacy and corruption of royalty had led to the collapse of morality in the kingdom. It is this belief, that adoption of the ways of other cultures leads to the erosion of the best Moslem principles, that has ensured the current ascendancy of conservatives over liberals.

(See also DRUSES; JINN; MAHDI; MOHAMMED; MOHARRAM; SUFIS.)

JAMES ROBSON

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Isles of the Blest

Or Fortunate Isles, a happy otherworld of lovely flowers and trees, music, feasting and beautiful women, to which souls go after death; usually located in the far west where the sun sets; St Brendan voyaged to the Isle of the Blest or Earthly Paradise; shown on medieval maps, somewhere in the Atlantic.

See BRENDAN.

Ismailis

Sect of Islam, named for Ismail (d. 760), eldest son of the sixth imam or spiritual leader of the Shia Moslems, excluded from the succession by his father: in the 9th century Ismaili preachers proclaimed the imminent return to earth of Ismail's son as the Mahdi, or Messiah: the Fatimid rulers of Egypt from the 10th century were Ismailis and so were the Assassins, the terrorists of Persia and Syria in the 12th and 13th centuries: the present imam of the Ismailis is the Aga Khan.

See ISLAM; MAHDI.

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The witches of Italy were famed as masters of their craft. They were heirs to a tradition which reached back to the time of the Romans and Etruscans and which continues today, particularly in Sicily and the south

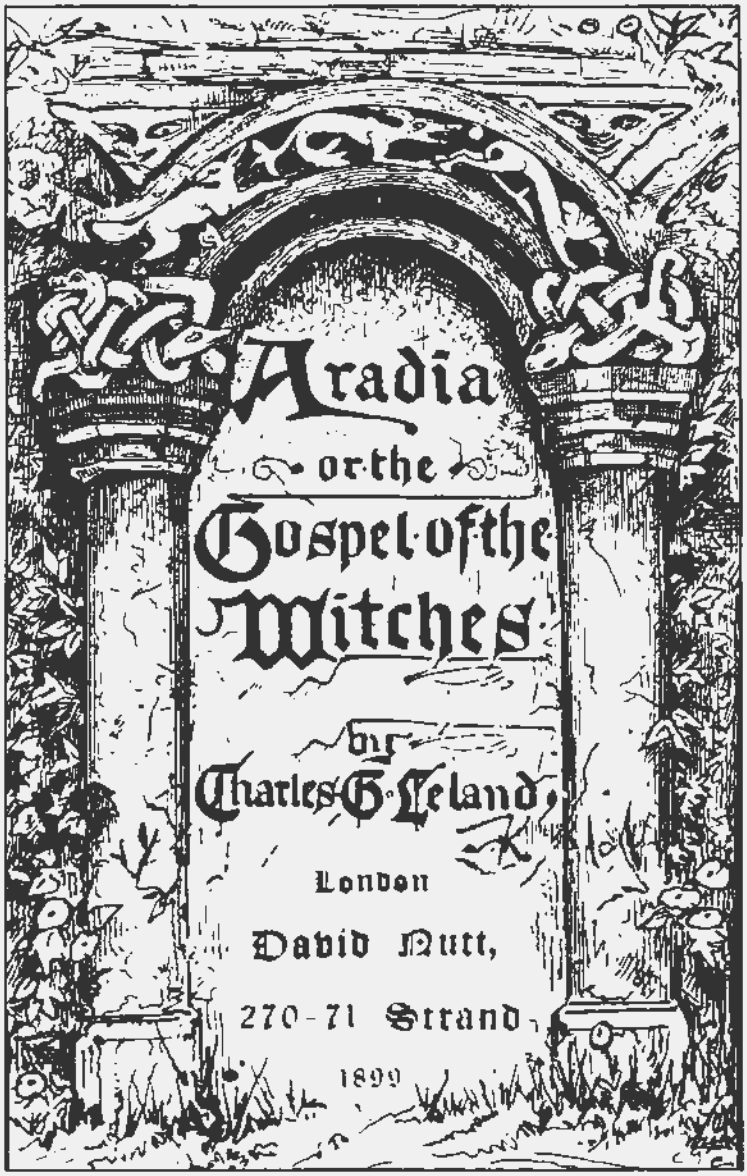
ITALIAN WITCHCRAFT

LA VECCHIA – the Old Religion – is still the title given to both black and white witchcraft in Italy and Sicily. Since these practices have their foundations in the beliefs of the ancient colonizers, the name is highly appropriate.

Greek, Etruscan and Egyptian rites were incorporated into the official Roman religion; and astrology, augury and divination were employed in imperial policy making. Yet it is important to understand that pagan authority condemned the dark side of magic just as zealously as the Inquisition of Christian times. Frequently, all sorcerers were driven from Rome, accused of harming state or emperor with their evil spells. Nocturnal ceremonies to invoke the infernal deities, the making of wax images and the tying of knots to cause pain, death or sexual impotence, and of course the manufacture of poisons (employed to speed up the supernatural processes) were offences punished by crucifixion or being thrown to the wild beasts.

The Roman poet Horace (1st century BC) among other classical writers described the feared magical practices in minute and horrifying detail. Apuleius (2nd century AD) gave an account of old and ugly crones and their gruesome art in *The Golden Ass*, a story about a young man who is turned into an ass through dabbling in witchcraft. The similarity between their exploits and those revealed under hideous torture during the witchcraft trials, some 1400 years later, is quite startling. Another of his works, the *Apologia*, made a careful distinction between harmful and helpful magic, the

The people of southern Italy, perhaps more than anywhere else in Europe, still retain their belief in witchcraft. Villagers in a remote district of the Campania burn a lamb in a ceremony designed to keep witches at bay *Patellanni*



Above left Pope Urban VIII: in the early 17th century, three friars, a cardinal's nephew and a notorious sorcerer were convicted of casting spells and holding a mortuary mass in an attempt to shorten his life *Above right* Title page from *Aradia,* the book in which Charles Leland described the practice of witchcraft in Italy and Sicily; Aradia, or Herodias, was the daughter of Diana, goddess of witches

latter including astrology and the conjuration of demons to give the sorcerer advance knowledge of future events. The Roman witch, therefore, named *strix*, *saga* or *volantica* – nocturnal bird, wise woman or night flyer – was the forerunner of the Italian *strega*, the peak of whose dreadful persecution endured from the 15th to the 18th century.

In the first years of Christianity all private magical rites were forbidden and only public augury permitted. The Ostrogoths, who invaded Italy under their leader Theodoric in the 5th century, were Arian Christians; they classified divination as paganism, and therefore an offence to be punished by death. In 500 AD all sorcerers were driven from Rome. When in the following century the Lombards reached Italy they sold magicians as slaves outside their province, irrespective of whether the magic was successful.

Pagan Under the Skin

Only fragmentary evidence exists of witchcraft during the Dark Ages. While feudal rulers fought to gain control of the new kingdoms left vacant by the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Church was involved in consolidating her own supreme authority over temporal powers and destroying the early heresies. It took many centuries for the majority of simple folk to absorb Christian tenets. Gradually pagan temples were rededicated, and St Apollinarius presided over the healing spring which had once belonged to Apollo. For a long while Christianity must have been only a veneer covering far older customs, especially since the priests were often not much better informed than their ignorant flocks. The evidence produced by the Inquisition shows that paganism and Christianity merged into a curious paradoxical faith.

Though virtually at the heart of Christian Europe, Italian peasants adhered to their ancient rites and beliefs. In the lonely glades and woodlands set aside for such pre-Christian revels they continued to honour Venus, Bacchus or Diana Herodias. The last goddess was the evil spirit said in later centuries to lead countless bands of witches on flights through the night. It is reasonable to assume that the pagan gatherings survived in the form of the notorious witches' sabbaths.

Two strands must be distinguished in Italian witchcraft. The wise women dealing in love and healing potions, and their destructive opposites, who told simple fortunes, gathered herbs by moonlight and muttered charms, were only to be found in country regions. Although sometimes subjected to village lynch laws the pastoral witch, on the whole, remained unharmed until the hysterical outburst against witchcraft provoked by the Inquisition at the beginning of the 15th century.

Her urban counterpart, associated with the major cities of Rome and Naples, was a more sophisticated exponent of magic, a descendant of the classical sorcerers. Such people studied astrology and divination, and their interests extended to alchemy, medicine and astronomy in pursuit of a wider knowledge of the universe. Their clients were not an illiterate peasantry but the educated members of the ruling class.

The Church's attitude to sorcery was imprecise and depended upon the varying opinions of her leaders. Among the educated

Illustrations taken from 17th century Italian editions of the *Compendium Maleficarum*, showing typical scenes at a witches' sabbath; accounts of such practices extracted at Italian witch trials differed little from those obtained in other parts of Europe *Top right* Children are boiled and roasted; witches were often charged with child murder and cannibalism *Centre right* Presentetion of children for the first time at the sabbath *Bottom right* Dancing at the witches' sabbath

Federico Arborio Mella

there was a passion for knowledge and desire to see into the future, using part-magical, part-scientific processes. Popes, kings and learned men studied astrology and thereby indulged in the same grisly practices ascribed to sorcerers. To the superstitious anyone seeking to probe the unknown was disobeying God's laws, approaching heresy or in league with the Devil.

Poisons and Potions

Throughout history the particular Italian failing seems to have been making and using poisons. With their potions the witches were apparently following the national tradition. One of the earliest examples of secular legislation against such practices was instigated by the 12th century Norman king of the Two Sicilies, Roger II. He stated that the concoction of love potions, whether they worked or not, was a crime. In 1181 the Doge Orlo Malipieri of Venice also passed laws punishing poisoning and sorcery.

Emperor Frederick II of Sicily (1194–1250), known for his wide learning as '*stupor mundi*', 'the wonder of the world', employed Saracen diviners and invited to his court the Scottish sage, Michael Scot, who was reputed to be a wizard. With Frederick's permission his astrologers practised the forbidden augury, using flights of birds and victims' entrails, but the Emperor had no real belief in sorcery, despite the reputation his clerical adversaries gave him. He upheld the law made by Roger, and set down that anyone tampering with food or drink to provoke love or hatred must be executed if the recipent died or lost his senses; if nothing happened the would-be sorcerer faced a year's imprisonment.

Throughout the 13th century sorcery was in Italy an offence punished in the secular courts. Astrology was not included among the forbidden arts, and papal decisions were sometimes made with the aid of astrologers. Every royal court in the kingdoms which made up Italy had its resident astrologer. But such practitioners, even though they were respected and believed, walked on thin ice. If, like Peter of Abano and Cecco d'Ascoli, they were led by their studies into heresy, they were in as much danger from the Inquisition as the sorcerers.

The witch mania which swept through Europe reached Italy in the mid-15th century; the northern territories, nearest Germany, were particularly affected. The more the Inquisition sought, the more cases of witchcraft came to light. Papal Bulls, like the one issued by Innocent VIII in 1484, turned the persecution of witches into an uncontrolled epidemic. In the first year of its publication 41 people were burned in

Como after the zealous investigations of the Dominican Inquisitors.

Fear, ignorance and superstition, fanned by the desire to stamp out heresy, sent countless innocent people to the stake. Anything out of the ordinary was thought to indicate witchcraft. A woman, neither young nor pretty, who inspired love in a man, would be suspect. The village wise woman who healed, procured abortions or made love philtres was naturally assumed to have the Evil Eye and to work in conjunction with demons. When children became sick their hysterical parents sought a scapegoat and confused, lonely old women were accused of witchcraft. The most terrible tortures were then employed to extract confessions. Details of witches' sabbaths obtained in this way varied very little from those found in the rest of Europe, which suggests that the Inquisitor, wherever he might be, asked the same questions until the required answers were given.

La Volta

One particular characteristic of Italian witchcraft was the dance called La Volta. This was described as having such fantastic leaping steps as to make it incredible to the onlookers. At Como and Brescia children between eight and twelve years old, who had attended sabbaths but been reclaimed by the Inquisition, performed this dance. It appeared so difficult and skilful that the learned men concluded it could not have been learned from human beings.

It is not really surprising that reports were soon circulating which suggested that witches would outnumber the faithful. In 1510, 140 witches were burned at Brescia, and 300 in Como four years later. Fantastic stories spread that at least 25,000 people attended a sabbath near Brescia. At Valcanonica 70 more people were burned and the Inquisitor claimed to have another 5000 under suspicion.

Venetian secular authority protested vigorously because the area was threatened with depopulation. In theory, the secular court was supposed to carry out the sentences if they agreed with the findings produced by the Inquisition. In 1521 Leo X issued a Bull which gave the real state of the law, and showed that the secular court was expected to do no more than confirm the proceedings. The Inquisition was given the right to use excommunication and interdict if sentences on witches were not carried out.

The Venetian Council of Ten bravely produced a most enlightened reply and suggested proper legal regulations for future trials. They pointed out that the witch-hunters' greed for money prevented anyone from being found innocent, adding that if so many of the ignorant peasantry were in error they had need of really good preachers rather than persecutors. Such sensible attitudes were ignored.

More sophisticated magicians turned hurriedly to astrology to prevent being charged with witchcraft, but the Italian sorcerer's reputation was known far afield. When in 1439 a French baron, Gilles de Rais, had wanted to procure gold by supernatural means he had sent to Florence for a priest and necromancer named Francesco Prelati (see GILLES DE RAIS).

Despite his thirst for knowledge the cultured man of the Renaissance was extremely superstitious. The new classical studies revived interest in magic. Omens were studied. There was a widespread belief in ghosts, and in ceremonies that could evoke devils to do man's bidding. Such attitudes among literate people increased the witch-hunting atmosphere.

Devils in the Colosseum

In his autobiography, the great goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini wrote of a learned Sicilian priest who invited him to take part in some magical ceremonies to conjure up the spirits of the dead. Accompanied by some friends, Cellini went to the Colosseum. The priest donned sorcerer's robes, drew circles on the ground and heated perfumes. The rites continued for an hour and a half, in which time Cellini said the Colosseum was filled with legions of devils.

In a notorious case in 1633 the pope himself was the victim of sorcery. A certain Giocinto Centini was told by a prophecy that his uncle, Cardinal d'Ascoli, would be the next pope. In order to shorten the life of the present pope, Urban VIII, Centini hired an Augustinian friar and notorious sorcerer, Peter of Palermo. Two other friars helped cast spells and celebrate a mortuary mass. Their attempts failed and they were all arrested.

A picture of a typical sabbath emerges from the evidence at a witch trial in 1646 when an old woman known as La Mercuria was arrested at Castelnuovo. Long suspected of being a witch, the woman was charged with the offence that, instead of swallowing the host at two Communions, she held it in her mouth to use afterwards for some devilish purposes. It was also alleged that her spells had caused a young noblewoman to miscarry. Under torture La Mercuria named other witches who in turn were tortured. One, Domenica Gratiadei, described the sabbaths at which they feasted, danced and worshipped Satan. They smeared themselves, she said, with ointments made from dead babies, among other equally appalling ingredients, and then had sexual relations with the Devil, to whom they also gave the hosts they had purloined. When the trial ended in 1647, eight people were beheaded and their bodies burned.

In 1789 Giuseppe Balsamo, known as Count Cagliostro, and his wife set up as sorcerers in a house in the Piazza Farnese in Rome (see CAGLIOSTRO). His illustrious clientele included princesses and priests. Three years later the Inquisition condemned him to death. Pope Pius VI commuted the sentence to life imprisonment and shut Cagliostro's wife in a convent.

At the end of the last century Charles Leland wrote a book entitled *Aradia*, in which he described practices that were still rife in Italy and Sicily. In most cases witches claimed to be descendants of families where the craft had been practised for generations. At their sabbaths they wore no clothes, said incantations over meal, salt, honey and water, and worshipped Diana and her daughter Aradia, or Herodias, as the female messiah. After supper they danced, sang and had sexual intercourse. Stones with natural holes through them were valued as having special powers, and the witches dealt mainly in the preparation of love philtres.

Almost more than anywhere else in modern Europe, the people of southern Italy and Sicily still retain the customs of La Vecchia. The Evil Eye is feared and the phallic sign invoked to destroy its power. Wax hearts and images are stuck with pins, and wise women consulted for charms to make people fall in or out of love, and to gain lucky lottery ticket numbers.

(See also EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS.)

SANDY SHULMAN

Ithyphallic

'With an erect phallus': male gods are sometimes depicted in this way to emphasize their virile fertilizing and creative power; ithyphallic figures appear in prehistoric cave paintings and are connected with religious and magical rites in many parts of the world, including India, Central and South America, and Greece and Rome; in some ancient Egyptian ceremonies ithyphallic statues were carried in procession.

See PHALLIC SYMBOLISM.

Roger Wood

Ivy

Powerful magical plant, associated with holly and with Christmas; as an evergreen, connected with the Roman Saturnalia and other winter festivals to mark life's continuance and coming rebirth in the spring; plant of the Greek god Dionysus and the Roman Bacchus; the god was often depicted wearing an ivy wreath and his worshippers, the Bacchae, were said to chew ivy as an aid to attaining frenzy; also connected with inspiration and poetry, and believed to diminish drunkenness.

See HOLLY AND IVY.

Axel Poignant

JACK

Mary Evans Picture Library

Jack in the Green – a man hidden inside a framework covered with green boughs – figured in the old May Day festivities, often representing the spirit of the reviving vegetation

AS LONG AGO as 1414 it was recorded that anyone called John was likely to be nicknamed Jankin or Jack, and Jack also very early became a general term for an ordinary man, one of the common people. In the Coventry Mystery Plays and the Towneley Mystery Plays, both dating from the mid-15th century, the names Jack and Jill are used to mean any boy and girl.

Jack is the central character of several nursery rhymes. One of them is 'Jack Sprat', which in a version of 1639 also contains Jill – 'Jack will eat no fat, and Jill doth love no lean'. Another is 'This is the house that Jack built', first printed in 1755, in *Nurse Truelove's New-Year's-Gift: or, the Book of Books for Children*. But the rhyme is probably much older and has equivalents in many European languages. Then there is 'Jack and Jill' itself, which seems to date from c 1600–1650, though it has often been suggested that it contains older mythological and folklore themes, partly because the top of a hill is the last place to which anyone would normally go for water. One theory is that it is based on a Scandinavian myth in which the two children are kidnapped by the moon while they are drawing water. They can still be seen in the moon, with the water-bucket hanging from a yoke on their shoulders.

The Wise Fool

Jack is also the hero of many folktales, well-known in Britain and the United States, and with parallels on the Continent where the central character's name is Hans, Jean, Juan or whatever is the local equivalent. Jack is sometimes the wise fool, the young man whose rustic naivety is really an openness to experience that brings him rich rewards, rewards that are denied to the more cynical and materialistic. Sometimes he is the crafty, aggressive opportunist who tricks the stronger but stupider giant (and the popularity of the stories may owe something to the underlying motif of the common man turning the tables on the rich and powerful).

An example of the 'wise fool' role is the story of 'Jack and his Bargains', in which Jack is the son of a poor farmer who is heavily in debt and sends Jack to sell a cow at the fair. This happens three years running and each time, to his father's despair, instead of selling the cow for a good price, Jack exchanges it for something magical, first a wonderful stick which beats people on command, next a dear little bee with a lovely singing voice, and finally a beautiful fiddle that plays by itself. But all turns out for the best, because Jack and his three magical possessions are the only things which can make the king's daughter laugh, for she has never been known to smile. So Jack is given her hand in marriage, 'an' if they ain't dead, they're livin' yet.'

The famous tale of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' begins in much the same way, with Jack being sent by his poor widowed mother to sell a cow, but he exchanges it for five magic beans which, planted in the evening, have grown by morning into a towering beanstalk which reaches to the sky. The insatiably curious Jack promptly climbs up it till he comes to the sky, where he finds an enormous woman in an enormous house. She is the wife of an ogre who loves to eat 'boys boiled on toast', and when the ogre appears she hides Jack in the oven. The ogre sniffs the air and says:

> Fee-fi-fo-fum,
> I smell the blood of an Englishman,
> Be he alive or be he dead,
> I'll grind his bones to make my bread.

The ogre's wife puts him off the scent and while he is asleep, Jack steals a bag of gold and takes it home. On later visits he steals a hen that lays golden eggs and a golden harp which plays by itself. Eventually the ogre catches Jack red-handed and chases him down the beanstalk but Jack cuts the beanstalk down with an axe. 'Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown and the beanstalk came toppling after' (there is a parallel line, of course, in 'Jack and Jill'). Jack and his mother become very rich on the giant's treasures, he marries a princess and they all live happily ever after. The version current in the hill country of the American South follows the same pattern but the objects Jack steals are a rifle, a skinning knife and a coverlet with gold or china bells on it.

In this story Jack turns from wise fool at the beginning to crafty trickster by the end, and one begins to feel rather sorry for the giant. Again, attempts have been made to discern mythological themes under the

surface. According to one not very probable theory, the bag of gold stands for raindrops, the hen for the sun and the harp for the wind, and the whole story is about the restoration of the fertilizing activities of the forces of Nature to the earth.

The Giant-Killer

Jack's greatest fame is as a slayer of giants. One version of 'Jack the Giant-Killer' is set in Cornwall in the time of King Arthur and Jack kills the giant of St Michael's Mount, who in early Arthurian legend is slaughtered by Arthur himself. This giant, named Cormelian, is 18 feet high and 9 feet round. Jack digs a pit outside the giant's cave, camouflages it with a covering of sticks and earth, and then sounds a blast on his horn. Cormelian rushes out, falls into the pit and is finished by a blow from Jack's axe. Jack is awarded the giant's treasure.

Later, putting up for the night at a house, Jack discovers that it belongs to another giant, who welcomes him in. But in the night Jack hears the giant singing to himself, 'Though here you lodge with me this night, you shall not see the morning light; my club shall dash your brains outright.' So Jack puts a log of wood in his bed. The giant creeps in and batters the log with his cudgel. Astonished to find Jack alive and well in the morning, the giant gives him a hasty pudding for breakfast. Jack puts it in a bag and hides it inside his coat. Offering to show the giant a clever trick, he stabs the concealed bag with his sword and the pudding tumbles out. The giant tries the same trick, plunges a sword into his vitals and expires.

There are many versions of the giant-killing story, differing in detail and containing many motifs known in folktales. They are part of the widespread general theme of the human hero who outwits a giant, kills him and so obtains his treasure.

(For Jack in the Green, see GREEN; for Jack-o'-Lantern, see WILL-O-THE-WISP.)

FURTHER READING: K. M. Briggs, *Dictionary of British Folk Tales in the English Language* (Pantheon Books, 1980); I. and P. Opie, *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford University Press, 1951).

Jackal

In Indian folktales, a shrewd and cunning animal, like the fox of European folklore which it resembles; as a scavenger and eater of carrion, often associated with death; Anubis, the Egyptian guardian of cemeteries who guided the dead to the judgement of Osiris, was depicted as a jackal or dog: traditionally a timid creature, and Bushmen would not eat the heart of a jackal in case they should become cowardly themselves.

See HYENA AND JACKAL.

William MacQuitty

JADE

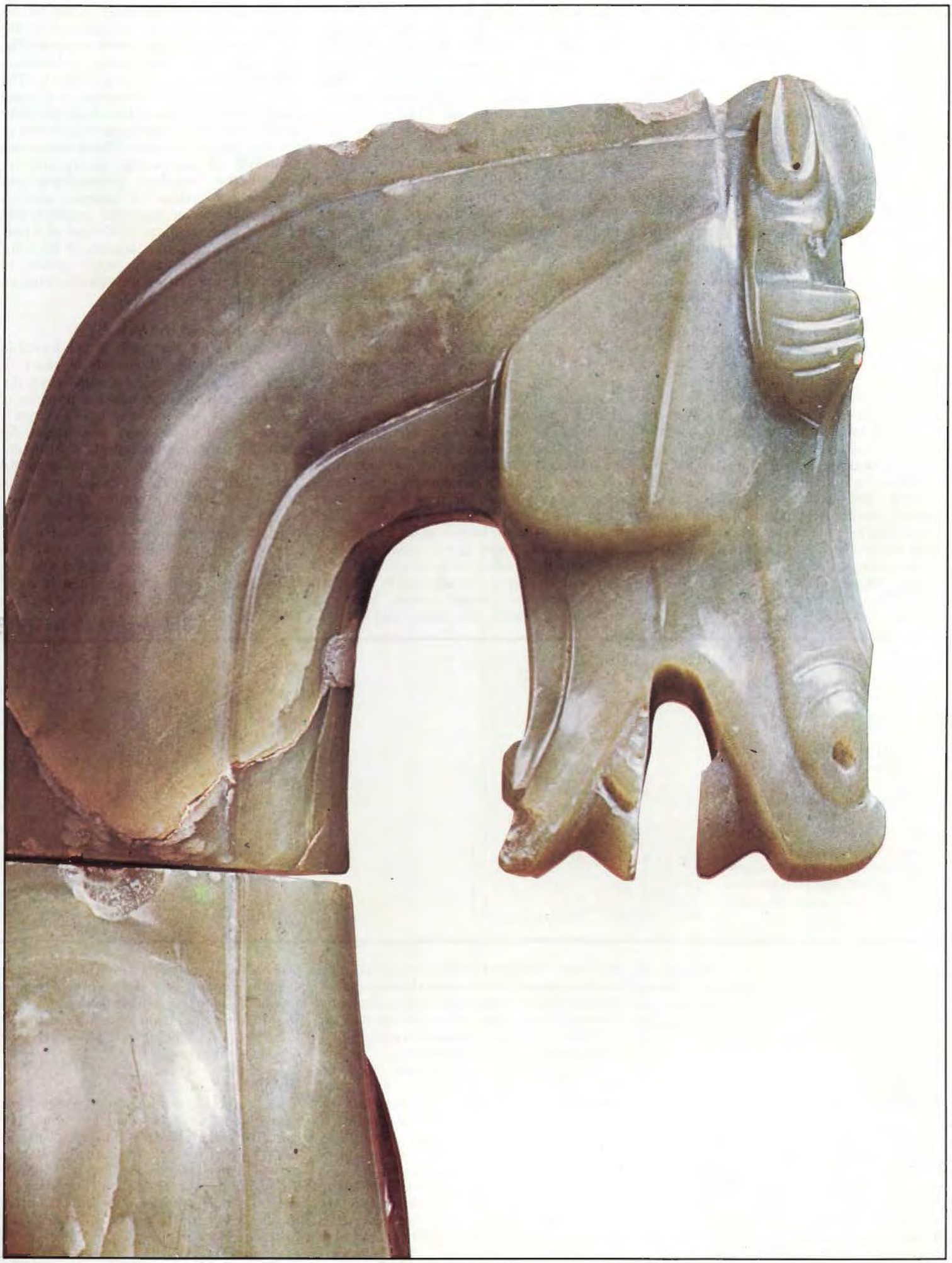
THE TOUGHEST STONE on earth, jade has been used since prehistoric times for the making of tools, ornaments and weapons. It has also, among certain peoples, been credited with mystical significance and medicinal properties. The English word 'jade' comes, through the French, from the Spanish *piedra de ijada*, the 'stone of the loin'. The mineral acquired this name because Europeans first encountered it not, somewhat surprisingly, in their contacts with the Far East, but when the Spaniards invaded Mexico early in the 16th century. The Aztecs offered their unwelcome visitors objects and pebbles of jade which they themselves regarded as of the highest value, not only for their beauty and rarity but because of their powers of healing.

Jade was considered effective for curing and warding off ailments of the groin and kidneys. (Hence it was also sometimes called the 'kidney stone', which ultimately led to the use of the word 'nephrite' for a variety of jade, from the Greek for kidney.) Sir Walter Raleigh, writing his *Discoverie of the Empyre of Guiana* in 1596, tells how the 'Amazones' would barter gold for jade to treat disorders of the spleen. It may be that as jade was harder than all other stones, it was thought it would break up gallstones and kidney stones. It seems that the original inhabitants of Central America treated these ailments by laying jade against the skin near the affected part, encouraged

Hamlyn/Sir Isaac Wolfson

Axel Poignant/British Museum

Left **Chinese jade figure of the late 17th century, thought to represent an attendant presenting an offering to a deity *Above* Hei-tiki amulet from New Zealand *Right* The Chinese regarded jade as the most precious of gemstones, using it for their most sacred objects and finest works of art: horse's head of the Han dynasty**



Hemlyn Group/Victoria and Albert Museum

sometimes by the stones being similar in shape to the diseased organs. However, 50 years after the discoveries of Cortez, European doctors were recommending jade, crushed and powdered and mixed with water, as a specific not only for spleen and kidney troubles but for a variety of more common ailments, including biliousness and swollen feet. We may be sure, however, that quacks and charlatans took advantage of the simple-minded and did not scruple to use other ingredients when claiming to prescribe jade. Perhaps this was as well, since powdered jade taken in any significant quantity would be harmful, if not fatal.

Some experts make a similar point about the Chinese use of jade for medicinal purposes; they suggest that what their doctors claimed as jade may in fact have been a form of marble, similar to Parian marble, which can often look very like off-white jade and is less harmful when taken. Chinese physicians prescribed 'liquor of jade' for manifold disorders, from weak blood to asthma, and pronounced it good for the voice and for shining hair. They believed that the material grains of jade passed through the body, while its immaterial virtue remained to do its healing work. The Chinese also believed that jade could prevent, or at least retard, the decomposition of corpses. The nine orifices of the body were stopped with jade plugs or had amulets of the mineral laid upon them – a cicada on the tongue and almond-shaped discs on the eyes. The Aztecs and certain Pacific islanders had similar customs.

Stone of Emperors

Jade objects have been regarded in many parts of the world as talismans of good luck – a belief that survives to the present day, even in 'advanced' countries. The most intriguing examples of these talismans are the *hei-tiki* of the Maoris of New Zealand. (There are quantities of jade in the South Island.) Hei-tiki are curious amulets or pendants resembling a little man. Some believe them actually to picture the human embryo and to be symbols of fertility but others consider they represent a more abstract idea of continuing life force. The objects are handed down in families or from friend to friend. Eskimos and North American Indians also regarded jade as lucky but did not appear to attach mystic or medicinal significance to the stone.

It is the Chinese above all who have held jade in the greatest veneration. The Chinese word for jade, *yu*, also signified beauty of spirit or body and the stone was a symbol of the five cardinal virtues of charity, modesty, courage, justice and wisdom. The ideogram or written character also signified jewel and treasure. Jade was considered the most precious and beautiful substance of all. The emperor wore jade sandals, worshipped at a jade altar and carried a jade seal and sceptre. The stone was used for badges of high rank and for the most prized grave ornaments, as well as for the loveliest works of art.

The most sacred Chinese objects made of jade, from the earliest times, included symbols of heaven and earth and of the deities of the four cardinal points of the compass. Heaven was represented by the *pi*, a circular disc with a hole in the middle, and earth by the *ts'ung*, a vertical cylindrical tube, square on the outside. The god of the east was symbolized by a green tablet, that of the north by a ring, the deity of the south by a red sceptre and that of the west by a tiger tablet. These objects are frequently of astonishing beauty and are among the supreme achievements of Chinese, or indeed of human, art. A typical example of the more practical side of the Chinese genius is the use of a jade plate as a tiny gong. Records of the 23rd century BC show that jade's ability to produce a pure musical tone was known even at that early date.

Jade Queen of the West

It is interesting that jade is not found in China proper. For thousands of years all the jade worked in China came from the far west, from what is now the province of Sinkiang. It was not until 1784 that a regular trade in Burmese jade began. An ancient Taoist legend reflects the distant origin of jade. It tells how the beautiful Jade Queen lived in a fabulous palace in the inaccessible Mountains of the West. She was sought out by the emperor, who reached her fastnesses in the course of a single night by riding eight bewitched stallions in turn. Another ancient Chinese tale relates that the moon is the home of Yu-t'u, the Jade Hare, who brews the elixir of life from crushed jade.

Jaguar

An animal which plays an important part in South American Indian myths, being regarded as a brother-in-law, as man's rival in killing game, and as a rival in sexuality: some tribes believe that the hero who gave them their culture was a jaguar and that a Celestial Jaguar will one day make an end of the world: in Brazil it is thought that the sun takes the form of a jaguar at night and shamans are possessed by the jaguar spirit, sometimes turning into were-jaguars at death. See BRAZIL.

Constantino Reyes-Valerio

Non-violence is carried by the Jains to an extreme; this small but influential Indian sect go to elaborate lengths to prevent the accidental killing of even a fly or a mosquito, or the harming of atoms in wind or water

JAINS

THE RELIGION of the *Jains*, or *Jainas*, an Indian community some 1,700,000 persons strong, is of great antiquity. It derives from the same school of thought which produced Buddhism and the Sankhya philosophy (a branch of Hinduism). Whereas Buddhism, whose origins roughly coincide with the growth of Jainism, became a world religion, the latter remained confined to India. The onerous demands its austere doctrine makes on its adherents as well as its uncompromising atheism may have militated against its spread to other countries and restricted its appeal even within its homeland.

The name Jainas is derived from the title *jina*, 'the conqueror', given to Mahavira, the last of the prophets or saviours of the Jain faith. Mahavira, a historical figure and contemporary of Buddha, born about 540 BC, has sometimes been described as the founder of Jainism and his was certainly a prominent role in the development of the community and its ideology. But Jains regard him not as the first but as the last of a long line of saviours, a line believed to stretch far back into primordial times. The traditional number of these saviours is 24. They are said to have attained complete liberation from the world. They are transcendent, cleaned of temporality, omniscient, actionless and absolutely at peace.

The 23rd Saviour

The penultimate saviour, Parsva, is supposed to have attained liberation 246 years before Mahavira, that is, about 743 BC. There is reason to believe that Parsva actually lived and taught a doctrine approximating to the historic Jain ideology. His life story as preserved in Jain tradition is a prototype for the lives of all Jain saints. In his previous incarnation he ruled as the god Indra in the 13th heaven, and when

the time for his return into the human world came he descended into the womb of Queen Vama, the wife of King Asvasena. He grew to be a prince of great beauty and strength, but showed no interest in mundane pleasures and ambitions. He renounced the world and achieved a state of omniscience by overcoming his *karma*, the accumulated results of deeds in previous existences (see KARMA). After this enlightenment he lived for many years teaching and moving among mankind until he died at the age of 100. Parsva, like the previous 22 saviours, revealed by his example and teaching the Jain religion, which is believed to he eternal, having existed throughout the ages from the very beginning of time.

Vardhamana Mahavira, far from being the 'founder' of Jainism, was the son of pious Jain parents and worshippers of Parsva, who were of Kshatriya caste and lived in Bihar near the present town of Patna. He married and had a daughter, but like the Buddha he left his family and possessions and led the life of a wandering monk, preaching and gathering many disciples. Though Mahavira and the Buddha moved through the same country at the same period, and both attained great fame in their lifetime, there is no record of any meeting of the two great religious figures.

The disciples of Mahavira were organized in communities of monks and nuns, to which their leader gave a constitution and a code of laws. According to tradition his followers consisted of 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns, 150,000 laymen and 358,000 lay women. At the head of these communities were 11 chief disciples; there was great emphasis on discipline and a rigid regime of austerities, penances and fasts, besides meditation and daily routine duties.

For some two centuries the Jains remained a small community of monks and followers. But in the 4th century BC they gained strength and spread from Bihar to Orissa, then to South India and westwards to Gujarat and the Punjab, where Jain communities became firmly established, particularly among the mercantile classes.

Clad in Space and Whiteness

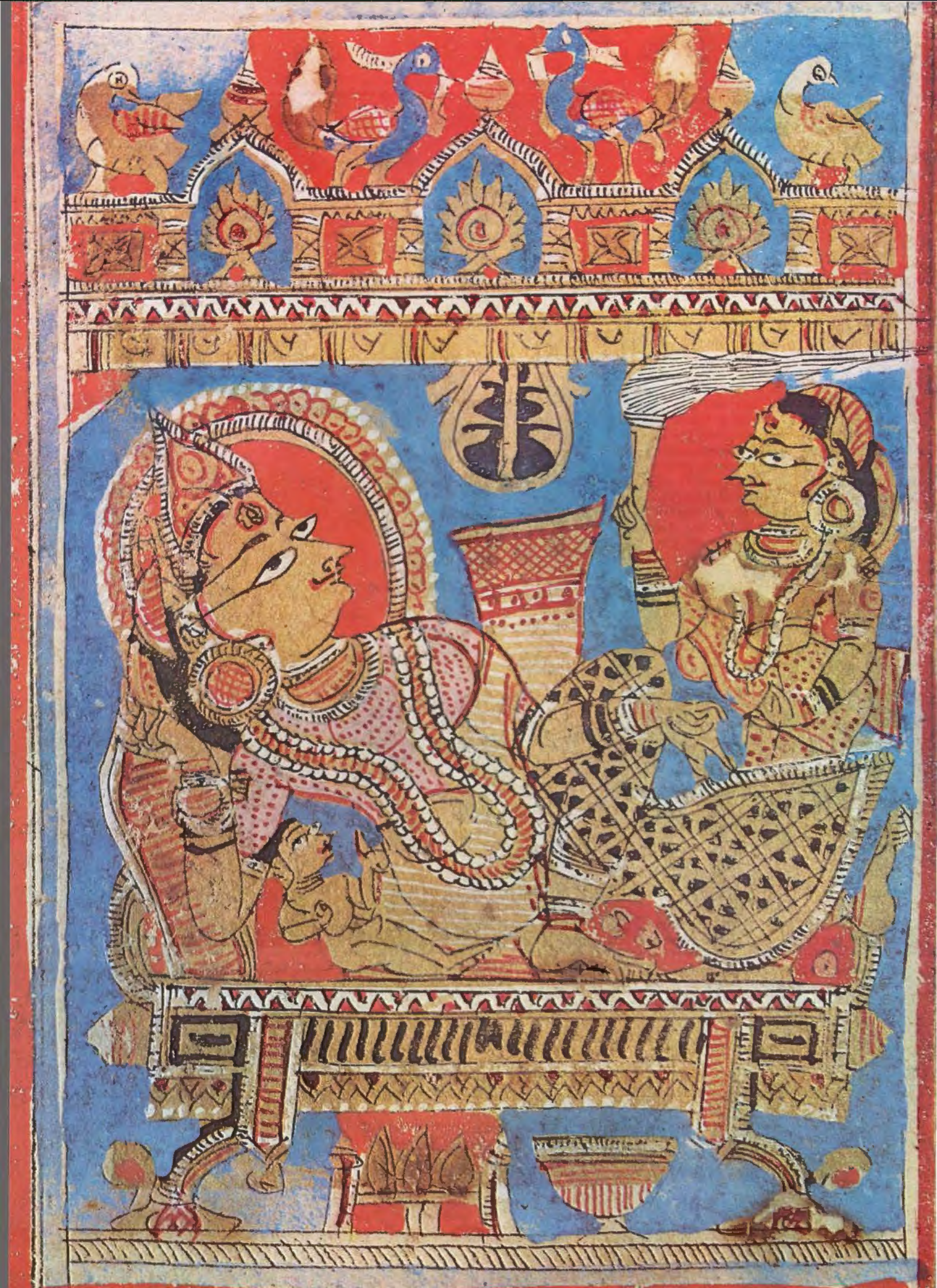
In South India, and notably Mysore, Jainism attained considerable importance, and it was there that the sect divided into separated branches known as the Digambaras ('space-clad' or naked) and the Svetambaras ('white-clad'). The monks of the former branch dispensed with all clothes, and went about as completely naked as Mahavira is believed to have done. The members of the other sect owed their name to the white clothes which they wore. This difference in appearance gradually led to opposition between the two branches of the Jain community. The Digambara sect denied the ability of women to attain liberation, arguing that because in the context of Indian society women could not completely dispense with clothes, they also could not reach the necessary degree of asceticism.

The two sects, Digambara and Svetambara, have separate sets of ceremonial books. An oral literature was passed down from the days of Mahavira, but when the recollection of the original texts became unreliable, a council was called to reconstruct as accurate a canon as possible. Only the Svetambaras accepted this as authentic, and at the end of the 5th century AD it was committed to writing at a council in Kathiawar. But by that time many texts had become corrupt and new material had been added.

Richard and Sally Greenhill

The doctrine of non-violence and reverence for every part of creation is central to Jain beliefs. Jain monks wear a cloth in front of their mouths, to avoid damaging any of the atoms of the air, and carry brooms with which to sweep the ground before them, in case they should inadvertently crush some small insect

Jain philosophy is as pessimistic as that of Buddhism, but in its content it is very different. It is characterized by a strictly mechanical materialism in its simple view of the universe, which is regarded as eternal and indestructible. It functions through the interaction of six constituents. First there are the countless life-monads *(jiva)* or living souls, each of which is uncreated, imperishable and endowed with infinite energy. Though intrinsically all alike, they have been modified and diminished by perpetual contact with the non-living entities *(ajiva)* which comprise space and everything other than life-monads. The third constituent of the universe is *dharma*, a word having many meanings and in this context standing for the medium through



The birth of Parsva, the 23rd saviour of the Jain faith and an incarnation of the god Indra: his mother, Queen Vama, had seen a serpent by her 'side' one night during her pregnancy and the child was accordingly named Parsva, meaning 'flank'

which movement is possible; it is comparable to water in its relation to the fish which move through it. The fourth constituent is *adharma*, the medium which makes immobility possible; the fifth is *kala*, time, which facilitates change, and the sixth and last constituent is *pudgala* or matter composed of minute atoms.

The life-monads, which are eternal, take on innumerable transient forms of life as so many masks. According to Jain philosophy even the gods are nothing but life-monads wearing temporarily favourable masks in fortunate circumstances. Jains believe in the freedom of the individual: thoughts, words and deeds, if virtuous and unselfish, lead the life-monad to enlightenment, but if bad and unconsidered fling it into darker, more primitive conditions. This belief in the effect of accumulated merit and demerit on the fate of the individual in a future reincarnation, Jainism shares with Buddhism and Hinduism. When a life-monad or soul is freed from all bondage created by previous actions, it obtains release from the cycle of births. It then achieves *moksha* of complete deliverance and enters Nirvana (see NIRVANA). But Jains believe that the escape from transmigration, by shedding all the subtle matter adhering to the soul in fine atomic form, is a difficult process. Many souls will never accomplish it and will continue to transmigrate for all eternity. Full salvation is not possible to the layman. To attain Nirvana a man must abandon all material fetters, and consequently a monastic life is essential for salvation.

Jainism is characterized by an extremely severe practical discipline and vigorous standard of conduct, not only for the ascetic but also for the layman. It emphasizes enlightenment, faith and right knowledge as well as a long list of acts of self-control and restraint. Purification of the mind through meditation is insisted upon as the starting point of all ethical life. Anger, conceit, intrigue and greed are regarded as the cardinal sins, and central to the ethical system is the doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence, which involves a deep respect for all life including the lowest forms of animal life.

Value in all Living Things

Jains carry non-violence to an extreme. Even lay-followers must take care lest they cause unnecessary inconvenience to their fellow beings. They must not drink water after dark, for some small insect may be swallowed and killed. They must not eat meat of any kind, or kill flies and mosquitoes which annoy or bite; indeed credit may be gained by allowing them to settle and have their fill of blood. Bed bugs may not be killed, and wealthy Jains employ special persons to lie on their beds and attract the bugs before they themselves go to sleep.

The ban on even the incidental killing of any living being rules out many professions. Agriculture, involving such activities as ploughing or hoeing the soil, is incompatible with Jain ethics, and Jains are mainly engaged in trade, certain crafts, banking and money-lending. While laymen have to avoid only violence affecting living beings, the obligation of non-violence imposed on a monk goes even further. He must not snap his fingers or fan the wind, for that disturbs and causes damage; if he falls into a river he must not swim with violent strokes but should float gently in order not to injure the water atoms. The Jain community, therefore, preserves in an extremely fundamentalist form the doctrine of universal piety and respect for all forms of life, which first came into existence in the first millennium BC, and which has since gone through numerous changes in the civilization of India.

Jainism encouraged the commercial virtues of honesty and frugality, and the Jain lay community became largely mercantile at an early period. The wealth of its members was utilized for the construction of impressive temples, such as those on Mount Abu, and the raising of colossal rock-cut images, such as the 10th century statue at Sravana Belgola in Mysore. Although there was no real compromise with theism, Hindu gods were accommodated in Jain temples, and the Jain community adjusted itself to the Hindu social order by dividing into distinct castes.

(See also HINDUISM.)

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

The word 'janitor' is derived from the name of Janus, the mysterious two-faced Roman god of gateways and passageways, who was also the protector and promoter of beginnings

JANUS

THE PRECISE ORIGIN and earliest character of Janus eluded even Roman savants. His name denotes any passageway, usually the classical arch, and yields the common Latin word for 'door' *(ianua)*. The god was considered present in every door or gate. Nevertheless he remains best known for his function in certain public arched gateways which did not belong to a fortification system. It is not clear whether *ianus* primarily meant the passageway itself or its god. Equally unclear was Janus's function within the passageway.

The month of January and invocation of Janus by the Salian Brothers, an ancient priestly group, authenticate Janus's long-standing worship. The Salian Brothers, serving the god Mars, and the month were traditionally instituted by Numa Pompilius, Rome's second king, around 700 BC. Although over five centuries later it became the first month of the civil year, January was reckoned the eleventh month of the

Victoria and Albert Museum

Michael Holford/British Museum

Roman coin with a double-headed Janus: the god facing both ways was believed to be present in every gate, door and passageway

liturgical year. The reasons for making January the first month were entirely secular but the Romans interpreted the choice as a sign of Janus's protection of all beginnings, which had developed from his supervision of entrances. On 9 January Janus received his only regular state sacrifice, which took place in the Regia, the chief pontiff's house in the Forum, where Rome's priest-king offered a ram. Ceremonies on his behalf must have been observed at the famous arched gateways and his few temples on diverse occasions. Scraps of the very old Salian Hymns contained special prayer-songs to Janus. These were sung in March at planting time when Janus seems to have aided vegetation: rather curiously, since a god particularly concerned with passageways seems to have little relationship with a vegetation deity.

The Good Creator

In the 2nd century BC, Janus appears in connection with two private sacrifices. One was made to Ceres, goddess of the growth of crops, and took place before the harvest. This association recalls the Salians' invocation of Janus as 'the good creator', for Ceres meant no more than 'growth' before her apotheosis. In the harvest ceremony Janus was invoked along with Jupiter and Juno. The second ceremony was an agricultural rite of Mars which required preliminary invocation of Janus and Jupiter. Preliminary invocation of Janus in these and a few other ceremonies is assumed to derive from his function as protector and promoter of beginnings. However, his name does not stand first in most prayers and rites. In the oldest surviving records the god belongs to a group of vegetation deities and deserves the name of good creator. The passageway does not occur in such invocations.

According to Roman belief Janus was exclusively Roman. Early in the 2nd century Rome's first specialist in the calendar stated that the name January came from Latium, a region surrounding Rome, and had not originated at Rome itself. The Romans also recognized Janus in a cult image taken in 241 BC from Falerii, a town of the middle Tiber valley. The Faliscans were related by language to the Latins and by culture to the Etruscans and Sabines. Rome remained the paramount centre of Janus's cult. Some of her oldest coins carry the usual and famous representation of Janus *bifrons*, 'two-faced'. Occasionally a four-faced Janus, *quadrifrons*, is mentioned. The former anthropomorphic Janus belonged to the simple passageway and the latter to the gateways comprising two intersecting paths, where Janus faced in the direction of each of the four ways.

Some of the god's epithets were thought to indicate his divine functions; Patulcius and Clusivius (or Clusius) pointed to Janus being open or closed (from *patere* and *claudere*), while Consivius was related to the root of the word for sowing seed, *conserere*. These old interpretations are subject to the linguist's doubt. Both Patulcius and Consivius seem to be found in Janus's Salian song. Other epithets are Junonius, Curiatius and Quirinus. The first recalls Janus's association with Juno in the harvest ceremony. The altar of Janus Curiatius was paired with an altar of Juno Sororia. Curiatius must be referred to the *curiae*, primitive divisions of Rome. His rites may have comprised purification of adolescents on their coming of age and entrance to their ancestral curia. Quirinus belonged to the same civil system and his name also derived from this word. However, Janus Quirinus was worshipped by all the curiae and was a state god. (See FOUNDING OF ROME; MARS.)

The Closed Doors of Peace

Janus Quirinus possessed the most famous 'temple' of Janus, situated off the Forum. The origin of the shrine is clouded in antiquity overlaid by folktale. The small rectangular building had double doors at each end, which caused this Janus to be called *geminus*, 'twin'. The side walls did not reach the roof, but were surmounted by grates. A statue of the two-faced god stood within this bronze enclosure that was presumably a monumental gateway on the street leading from the civic centre. This unusual temple stood as a symbol of war or peace to the Romans. Many Latin writers confirm how the open Janus betokened war and the closed Janus peace, the opposite of what might be expected. In explanation of this anomaly, students in modern times have argued that Janus was imbued with the vigour of war and therefore was closed in peace and open in time of war. Except for the connection with Mars, who was also an ancient god of vegetation and fertility, Janus shows few signs of belligerence. Moreover, when Augustus Caesar closed Janus Quirinus to herald a new era free from civil war, he mentioned only one closing in 235 BC, some six years after the first war with Carthage. There is very little truly old evidence for understanding the occasion of opening and closing Janus, when one normally expects a gate or passage to be closed during war. A recent study attempts to solve the problem by arguing that a *ianus* had originally been a bridge with a simple structure of two uprights and a crossbeam at both ends which was dismantled and thus 'open' during war. This theory depends upon a close topographical connection of ianus to water crossings; since archaic Rome was covered by a network of streams of which very few needed a bridge convertible to defence, this ingenious thesis cannot be proved.

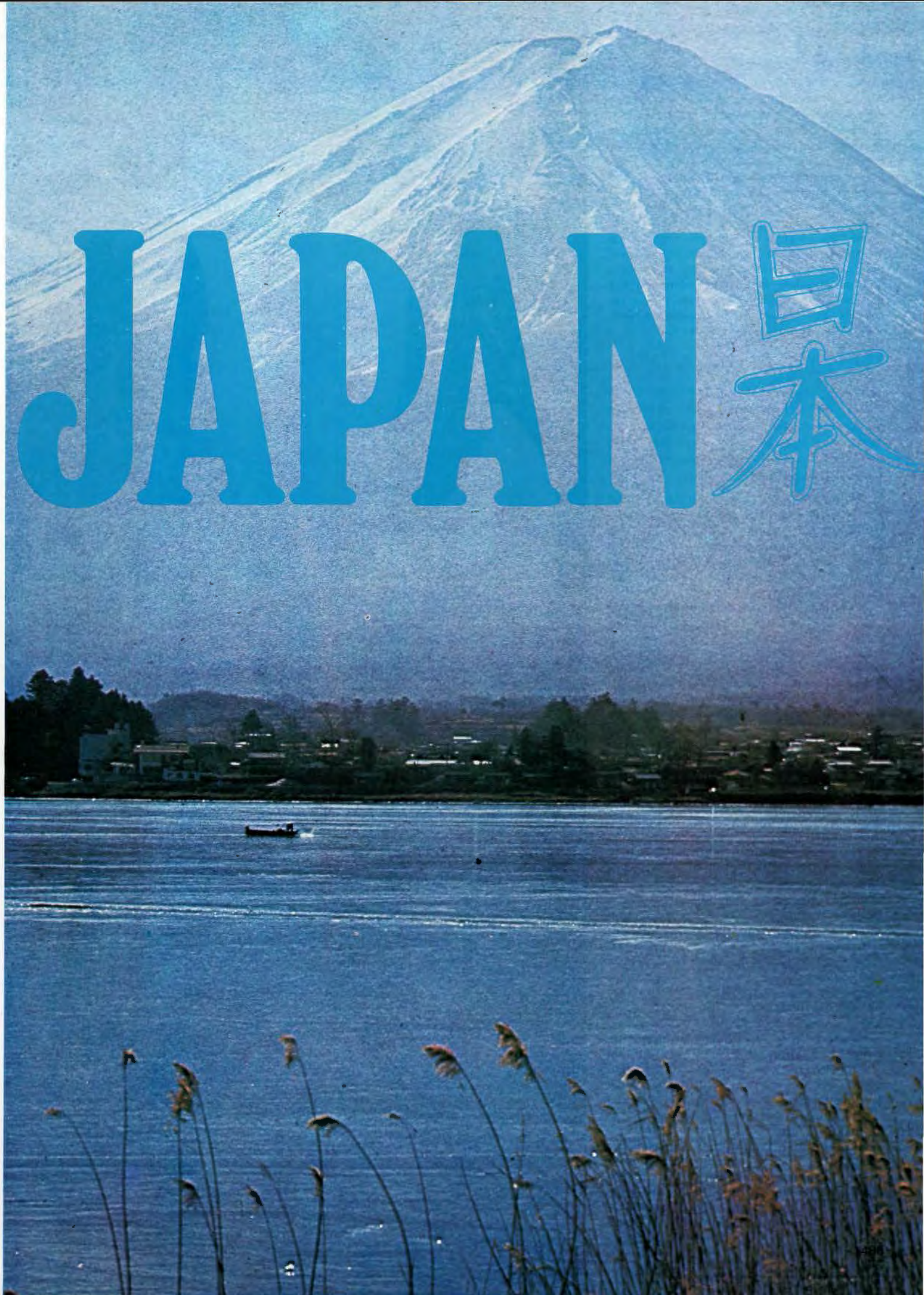
Janus appeared unwarlike to the Romans, and so they stressed his role in peace. Such a divinity of peace does not recall the modern aspiration for peace. Rather the closed Janus put the mark of success and security upon the Roman empire and its policy of peace through armed intimidation. Putting aside his relation to agriculture, ancient and modern authors have laid particular emphasis on Janus in an original capacity of lord of beginnings. This capacity owes much to the accident of January's position in the civil calendar.

R. E. A. PALMER

Reverse side of a Roman coin, with Janus as a bearded man with a double face; this was the most usual way of representing him

Michael Holford/British Museum

Morris Newcombe


JAPAN
日本

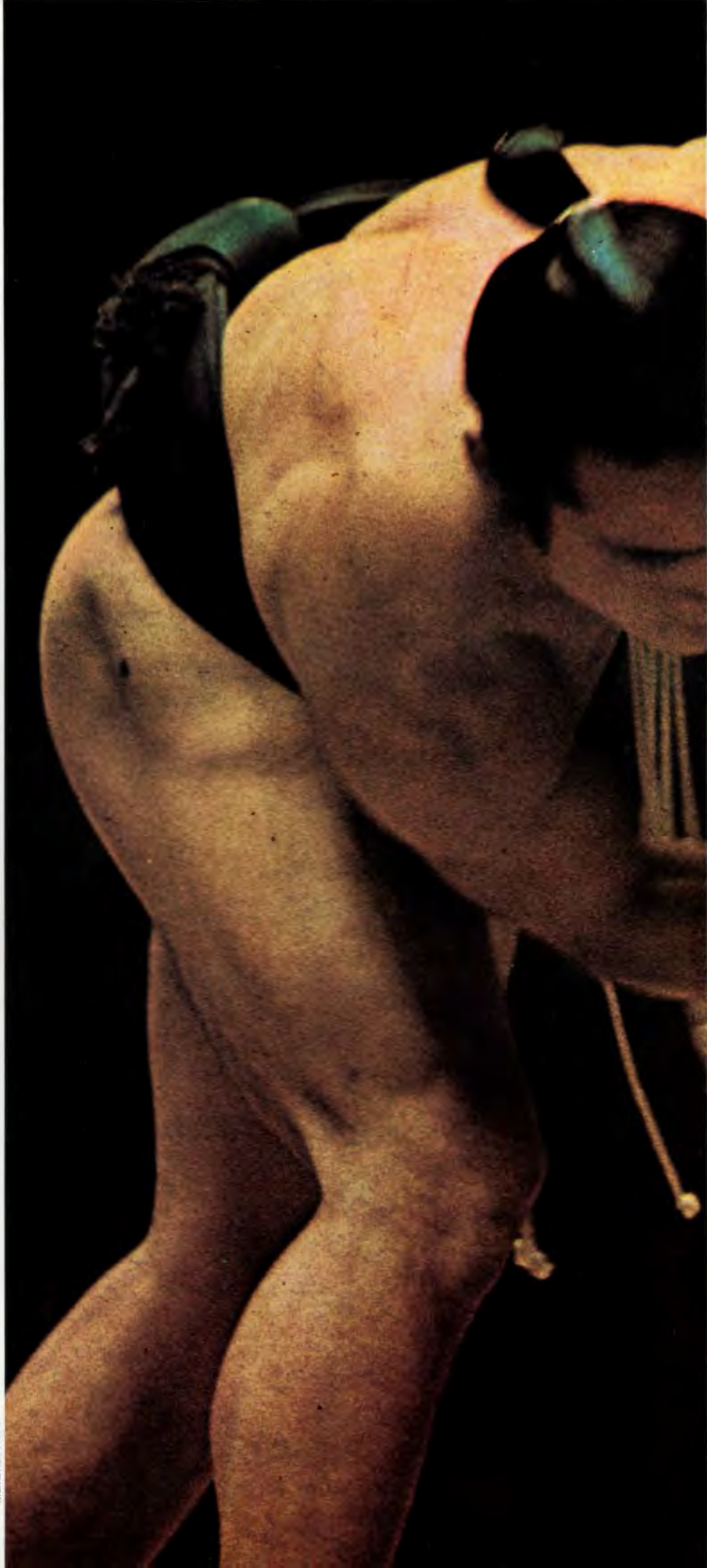
Although traditional Buddhism and Shinto have lost much of their appeal for the modern Japanese, popular religion continues to recognize hundreds of gods, shrines and holy places *Previous page* Mount Fuji, the best-known sacred mountain in Japan. In the summer pilgrims climb this extinct volcano to worship the rising sun. On the peak there is a sanctuary dedicated to Sengen-Sama, the goddess of Fujiyama *Right* Sumo wrestlers, of huge size and strength, compete naked except for a loincloth. The patron god of wrestlers is Sukune, winner of the first bout ever recorded in Japan, in the 1st century BC. Contests are conducted with great formality and semi-religious ritual

For 1000 years Buddhism dominated life in Japan; now its power is largely spent, its heritage remembered only in rituals and temples. But modern Japan is remarkable for the number of new sects which it has produced, many of them containing Buddhist elements

THERE IS A PARALLEL between the adoption of Christianity in England and that of Buddhism in Japan. Neither religion was indigenous to the country, and in both cases the derivation was not a direct one from source but through an intermediary: in the case of England not directly from Palestine but through Rome; in the case of Japan not directly from India but through China.

The Buddhism that percolated through to Japan in the 6th century of the Christian era was what is called Mahayana Buddhism (see BUDDHISM), an essentially liberal elaboration of Buddha's teachings with a tendency to compromise with foreign beliefs. On its way through Central Asia and China this Buddhism had absorbed Taoist and Confucian teachings and thus, by the time it reached Japan, contained philosophical modifications and theistic accretions and rituals unknown to Buddhism in its more primitive form.

The early Buddhist sects established in Japan in the Nara Period (628–784 AD) remained strictly Chinese in their use of Chinese styles in temple architecture, Chinese costumes, Chinese rites and even the Chinese language. With the dawn of the Heian Period (784–1185 AD), however, the Japanese founded two sects – *Tendai* and *Shingon* – of their own. While these sects certainly borrowed extensively from parent organizations on the Asian mainland, they nonetheless compromised sufficiently with the indigenous Japanese religions to represent a true departure from a Chinese tradition that, until then, had been wholly dominant. Finally, while Buddhism was waning in India, the land of its origin, Japan produced in the Kamakura Period (1187–1333 AD) forms of Buddhism – Amidaism, Zen Buddhism, Nichiren – that not merely represented a great spiritual awakening but were distinctively Japanese in all their essential elements. Since that time no major developments have taken place in Japanese Buddhism, though some of the earliest sects



Morris Newcombe

Morris Newcombe

Peter Gaston

Above left **The Bunraku theatre in Osaka presents puppet drama of great artistry. This form developed in about 1600 AD from puppet plays performed at shrines and temples, presenting scenes from Buddhist and Shinto legend** ***Above right*** **The language, costumes and settings of the classic No theatre have not changed since the 16th century; this Japanese dance-drama derived in part from religious dances performed at shrines. Masks are worn by the principal characters, and movements and speech are extremely stylized. The plays, which often involve Shinto or Buddhist deities or other supernatural beings, are charged with symbolism and Zen mysticism**

have dwindled away to nothing and many sub-divisions have appeared within the larger sects.

Faith from Across the Water

The date 552 AD is usually given for the official introduction of Buddhism into Japan. In that year the King of Kudara (Paikche) in South Korea sent an envoy to ask for Japanese aid against an invasion from the North and the envoy brought with him as presents a small image of Buddha, scriptures and commentaries. At once a conflict arose in the Japanese court; a progressive and liberal faction favoured the acceptance of the new religion, while a conservative faction, fearing retribution from the native Shinto divinities, urged its rejection. This conflict was only resolved when a female sovereign, Suiko, ascended the throne, while the young crown prince, Shotoku, assumed control of the government as prince regent on her behalf. Shotoku was a devoted scholar of Buddhism; in his desire to bring about political reforms in his country he despatched a large official delegation to China, he sent a military expedition to Korea and inaugurated a new governmental system in which promotion depended on ability and merit. Above all, he wanted to bring a spiritual awakening to his subjects. At his instigation Buddhism became, in effect, the state religion of Japan; its function was to secure divine support for official policies. In consequence, during the Asuka Period (552–628), the heads of many of the ruling families not merely adopted Buddhism but vied with each other in the building of superb Buddhist temples. A great number of Japanese scholars and religious leaders were sent to China for study and training; and with the introduction of Chinese culture on a large scale, since philosophy, art and literature were all imported with the new religion, Japan emerged from being a primitive society and took her place among the civilized nations of the East.

The nature of Buddhist belief at that time was not of a generally high level; it was often regarded as little more than a formula for the invocation of happiness and prosperity or the banishment of illness. Prince Shotoku was an exception in his profound understanding of Mahayana Buddhism: he studied the scriptures, wrote commentaries on them and gave himself up to long periods of contemplation. In Chuguji Temple in Nara there is an inscription which he is said to have composed for his wife: 'False is the world, only the Buddha is true.' A favourite subject in Japanese art is the victory of Shotoku over Mononobe-no-Moriya, who championed the old native Shinto religion against the Buddhist innovators. Mononobe-no-Moriya had set up a candidate for the Imperial crown of whom Shotoku, the Regent, disapproved; an appeal to arms was made, the Shintoists were beaten by Shotoku and Mononobe-no-Moriya was killed. Perhaps the contest is symbolic of the ascendancy Buddhism now gained over Shinto.

On the death of Prince Shotoku the national enthusiasm for Buddhism showed no signs of waning, and the court continued to take a lead in embracing the new faith from across the water. The Emperor Shomu was especially pious; he ordered that a Buddhist temple should be erected in every province so that Buddhism might spread throughout his kingdom. He built the famous Todaiji Temple in Nara and set in it the great image of Buddha Vairocana, perhaps the most magnificent in the world. He prostrated himself before this image, calling himself 'Servant of Buddha'.

Although no one would question the genuineness of the religious faith of men like Shotoku and Shomu, in general the Buddhism of the 7th and 8th centuries was embraced by the ruling class not so much out of a deep belief in the teachings of Buddha as from a desire to cement a centralization of power. What was remarkable was that the adoption of the new faith

Kukai regarded all phenomena as activities of Buddha's body, voice and mind; these three aspects of Buddha he termed 'the three secrets'

was attended by such a vigorous development of the fine arts and music. The Todaiji Temple, the Yakushiji Temple and several other temples dating from the same time remain to this day as monuments to the Buddhist culture of the period. But brilliant though this culture was, it was enjoyed and appreciated chiefly by government officials and temple priests: it was a culture not for the masses but for an elite.

The Lotus and the Three Secrets

With the removal of the Japanese capital from Nara to Kyoto in 794 and the inauguration of the Heian Period, one of the most brilliant in the whole history of the country, there were significant developments in the Buddhist faith. Two influential priests, Saicho and Kukai, crossed over to China in search of more spiritual forms of Buddhism and eventually each returned to found a sect of his own. The Tendai sect was founded by Saicho in 805, and the Shingon sect by Kukai in 809; both these were to dominate the spiritual and cultural life of Japan for centuries. The Tendai monasteries on Mount Hiei and the Shingon monasteries on Mount Koya soon became centres of learning, from which Buddhist doctrines emanated.

Saicho (767–822), known posthumously as Dengyo Daishi, had early recognized the need for reformation and freedom from the orthodoxy of Nara Buddhism. The Tendai philosophy that he founded was essentially eclectic, embracing as it did almost all the contradictory sectarian teachings of Chinese Buddhism and leaving the choice of a method of salvation to the individual alone. Its comprehensive teachings included esoteric mysteries, abstract contemplation and faith in the saving grace of the Buddha Amida – all the basic Mahayana doctrines. However, Tendai especially emphasized the *Lotus Sutra*, which it considered to be the greatest of all Buddhist scriptures, and taught that 'the supreme truth' is to be realized only through meditation.

Kukai (774–835), founder of Shingon Buddhism, became posthumously known as Kobo Daishi. His philosophy, a peculiar mixture of realism and idealism, was one of pantheistic mysticism. The whole universe, according to his teachings, is the body of the cosmic Buddha Dainishi, and since his body is the whole of material existence, then it must follow that even a grain of dust partakes of his spiritual life. As differentiated aspects of this all-embracing Buddha, Kukai's faith included a pantheon of numberless Buddhas, Bodhisattvas (Buddhas-to-be), deities, demons and angels. He regarded all phenomena as activities of Buddha's body, voice and mind. These three aspects of Buddha he termed 'the three secrets', since most people are incapable of understanding them without enlightenment. By assiduously training himself in these 'secrets' an individual could make himself identical with Buddha in this life, by performance of mystical signs with the fingers, by the recitation of magic formulae and, above all, by constant meditation. Although Kukai imported many of his mystical doctrines direct from China, he contributed a number of innovations of his own.

Even if Kukai's life had lasted 600 years instead of 60, he could hardly have carved all the images, painted all the pictures, scaled all the mountain peaks or performed all the miracles with which he is popularly credited. But there is no doubt that he is the most remarkable figure in the whole history of Japanese Buddhism. It is asserted by his followers that he did not die but merely retired into a vaulted tomb on Mount Koya (still in existence), where he awaits the coming of Miroku, the Buddhist Messiah. Kukai also attempted the unification of Buddhism with Shinto, identifying the indigenous Japanese gods with Buddhist deities. Saicho, too, made an attempt to merge the two religions: the term 'Ryobu-Shinto' (dual-aspect Shinto) was, in fact, coined by him.

From the 9th to the 12th centuries, Japan enjoyed peace and prosperity; the foreign culture imported during the Asuka and Nara periods had by the Heian period been absorbed into a new culture that was at last distinctively Japanese. The great achievements in the arts, literature and architecture were all ascribable to the continuing spread of Buddhism. One of the most impressive Buddhist buildings of the period is the Amida Hall of Byodoin Temple in the southern suburbs of Kyoto, erected at the behest of a powerful politician of the time. The elaborate decorative work in the interior, the way in which the whole temple seems to float on the water of a pool, preparatory to taking flight, and above all the image of Amida Buddha, quietly contemplating, in the centre of the hall, were deliberately planned to suggest an earthly paradise. It was from the latter half of the 10th century that faith in Amida Buddha began to gain in popularity; a book by the priest Genshin of the Tendai sect, setting forth the way in which the earthly paradise could be attained, enjoyed great popularity among the noblemen of the time.

A Religion for the Populace

For 400 years, from the end of the 12th century to the latter half of the 16th century, civil war and natural calamities were frequent. Inevitably, the uncertainty of life and the mutability of all worldly institutions forced people to look for salvation and solace in religion. With the removal of the political centre of Japan from Kyoto to Kamakura and the start of the Kamakura Period in 1185, a great spiritual awakening took place. Tendai, already established by Saicho, had within it seeds which fructified under the influence of a number of dynamic leaders. These men founded new sects, based on Tendai teaching, which still remain the dominant Buddhist influences in Japan. Reacting against the aristocratic Buddhism of the Heian period, their aim was to establish a faith for the common people.

The first significant development in this religious revival was the rapid spread of Amidaism. Amidaism had a great popular appeal for it offered salvation on easy terms; all it demanded of its followers was absolute belief in the Buddha Amida; and rebirth in the western paradise was promised to all those who called on the name of Amida in simple faith (see AMIDA). In 1175 Honen, a Tendai priest, founded the Jodo sect; he was followed by one of his disciples, Shinran, who in turn founded the Jodo Shin sect in 1224. The doctrines of both these reformers rapidly spread among the less educated people.

The second major development in the great spiritual awakening of this period was the introduction of *Zen*. Zen, like Amidaism, was known in Japan in the Nara Period, but its teaching did not become the basis for a new school of Buddhism until a Tendai priest named Eisai founded the *Rinzai* sect in 1191. The *Soto* sect, founded

One of the chief surviving functions of Buddhism in modern Japan is to bury the dead and hold memorial services. Priests of the Nichiren sect, one of the main branches of Japanese Buddhism, celebrate San-Ju-San Kaiki, the 33rd anniversary and final official service for the departed; previous ceremonies will have been held on the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th and 23rd anniversaries *(1)* Priests pray in the cemetery before beginning the service *(2)* The relatives also pray before the tombstones; on the left are stacked boards inscribed by the monks with wishes for the dead *(3)* Within the Homyo Temple on the outskirts of Tokyo, priests offer up prayers in front of the gilded altar before *(4)* the chief priest takes the lead in conducting the ceremony. He burns incense *(5)* and the mourners step forward to pray at the altar and offer incense in their turn *(6)*; the boards bearing wishes for the dead will be implanted beside their tombstones after the ceremony is over. A great bell, rung by swinging a wooden beam against it *(7)*, sounds the end of the service

1

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Keystone Tokyo

The Art of Tea

Two aspects of Zen as it developed in Japan were unique. One was its unexpected alliance with the military classes. The other was its enormous influence on everyday life. In China, the influence of Zen, even in its heyday, tended to be largely restricted to the monasteries. In Japan it permeated every facet of Japanese culture, from architecture and landscape gardening, costume and theatre, to the presentation of food and the art of flower-arranging. It exercised perhaps its most profound aesthetic influence through the tea-ceremony and the formulation of what was called 'Tea-Taste'.

Tea has been known in China from very early times. The ancients drank it as a medicine, the Taoists considered it an essential ingredient of the elixir of immortality, and in the Buddhist monasteries its invigorating effect was utilized to combat drowsiness during the long periods of meditation. Apart from this practical use in keeping awake, the Zen monks also drank tea on ceremonial occasions. In particular, they were accustomed to gather before an image of Bodhidharma, the legendary founder of the Zen sect, and in turn sip tea from the same bowl in a solemn ritual which was no less than a communion service. The choice of beverage is significant. Ogata-sensei considered it most appropriate that tea, which refreshed but did not excite, should be closely associated with a religion which preached dispassionate calm and detachment, while wine should be associated with Christianity – from the Buddhist point of view a heady, passionate, intoxicating faith. It was this ritual drinking of tea in the Zen monasteries which developed into *Cha-no-yu* or the 'Art of Tea'.

Wim Swaan *Japanese Lantern*

by Dogen in 1244, assisted in the spread of Zen philosophy. By the 14th century Zen Buddhism had become the most influential religion in Japan. Its adherents engaged in silent meditation and abstract contemplation, attempting through mental discipline to attain intuitive perception of the fundamental truth of reality. Zen required of its followers complete detachment of the self from all transitory phenomena and from concern for personal gain. Its strict spiritual discipline secured for it many adherents among the *Samurai* or warrior class, who found that Zen gave courage in battle and self-reliance in administration (see ZEN).

The third major development of this period was the appearance of a fiery reformer named Nichiren. He believed that all the sectarian interpretations of his day, including Amidaism and Zen, were perversions of Buddha's true doctrine. After studying at the Tendai institution on Mount Hiei, he eventually decided that true Buddhism was to be found only in the teaching of the Lotus Sutra. He set about attempting to reform Japanese Buddhism, proclaiming that anyone who recited the sacred formula 'Adoration to the Sutra of the Lotus of the True Law' would receive moral virtue and attain paradise. At the same time, he not only attacked the teachings of the established sects as heresies but also was bold enough to denounce the policies of the government in Kamakura. Although he was persecuted mercilessly by both ecclesiastical and political authorities, his supporters soon numbered many thousands, becoming a vital factor in the religious life of the nation.

Nichiren's zeal and intolerance appear to have been inherited by his spiritual children, the *Nichiren-shu* or *Hokke-shu*, as the sects derived from him are also called. The chief outward and visible – or rather audible – sign of their temples is the drum, which the faithful beat for hours together to keep time to their chanting of the sacred formula.

While Zen Buddhism tended to be a religion for an aristocratic elite – the whole code of *Bushido* (Japanese chivalry) was markedly influenced by Zen principles – the Shinshu and the Nichiren sects have always been the most democratic of Japanese Buddhism. The Shinshu, which is divided into ten branches, has never regarded married life on the part of the clergy as an obstacle to salvation, the founder Shinran having married and left hereditary successors to the headship of the sect, or rather of each branch.

Through the great spiritual awakening of the Kamakura period, Buddhism became truly indigenous to Japan. The Shingon, Tendai and some of the Nara sects continued to have a following; but three other of the earliest sects did not survive the rising tide of Amidaism, Zen and Nichiren which swept the country. It is worth noting that the seeds of each of these three new doctrines had been present in the eclectic Tendai philosophy, expounded by Saicho, so that the monasteries which he founded on Mount Hiei may be regarded as the fountainhead of the revival of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Priests and Politics

In the Ashikaga Period (1333–1568) many minor sects appeared within the larger sects, but there were few men of real stature to carry on the work of the great reformers, and priests and institutions once more became involved in politics. Despite its loss of religious vitality Buddhism dominated the political and cultural life of the nation as never before. The Tendai priests on Mount Hiei were by now persecuting the newer sects and intimidating the helpless court. There were incessant minor wars between the different factions, with armed monks roaming the streets of the capital, fighting duels and terrifying the common people.

Zen Buddhism, owing to the support it enjoyed from the warrior class, became virtually the state religion of the Ashikaga Period. At a time of turmoil, the Zen monks contributed much to the country, engaging in business and devoting themselves to the betterment of society. They also played an important role in the preservation of the national culture. Many of them were thinkers and intellectual leaders and in their monasteries they created and preserved masterpieces of literature and art which otherwise might have perished. Buddhist painting and sculpture reached their peak at this period. Painting in black and white was closely related to Zen; as was the Tea Ceremony, tea being first brought from the continent as a medicinal herb by the Zen priest Eisai.

After the period of civil war that lasted almost a century from the close of the 15th to the end of the 16th century, the reunification of Japan was at last achieved and a feudal system securely established. The art of the Momoyama Period (1568–1615) shows evidence of a complete emancipation from the fetters of religion, symptomatic of a decline in Buddhist belief. A ruthlessly authoritarian shogunate (office of hereditary military overlords) sought for some moral sanction to ensure the efficient functioning and permanence of its rule. Buddhism, which in no way represents a unified body of religious opinion, could not provide this; nor could Shinto, which was now in a weak position. Confucianism could. This is not to say that the spread of Confucianism robbed Buddhism of all authority. Household registration, burial services and memorial services for the dead were still a Buddhist responsibility; learning still throve in the great monasteries; and new sects continued to multiply. But the peak had been passed.

When the revolution of 1868 took place, with the ousting of the shogun and the restoration of the authority of the emperor, extremists urged the total suppression of Buddhism and the establishment of Shinto as the sole religion of the nation. But the reform was eventually limited to the complete separation of the two religions, the Buddhist priests being expelled from the Shinto temples which they had so long 'contaminated' with their sway.

The modern Japanese take religion calmly, even indifferently. Like Christianity in Europe, Buddhism in Japan has left behind a rich heritage of art, architecture, music and literature; but as a vital religious force it is spent. There are new sects that appeal to a vociferous and usually ignorant minority; and Zen still exerts an influence over a thinking few. But in general the role of Buddhism in modern Japan is merely to bury the dead and to keep their graves. It may seem paradoxical to say this of a religion that still has a priesthood, possesses scriptures, conducts regular services, maintains magnificent temples and large estates, administers

Aki-no-Kami Taira-no-Kujanori encounters the apparition of the fox goddess Koki-teno: print by Kuniyoshi. The fox figures extensively in the folklore of Japan as a cunning and dangerous animal skilled in magic, often having the ability to take the shape of a beautiful woman

Michael Holford/Victoria and Albert Museum

盛衰記人品

Victoria and Albert Museum

Courtesan engaged in the Tea Ceremony: 18th century print by Kitagana Kikumaro. The elaborate Tea Ceremony, a central feature of Japanese culture, developed out of the ritual drinking of tea in Zen monasteries

schools and engages in social welfare. But among the intelligent young in Japan it is far more common to find a burning faith in Marxism than in Buddhism. Buddhism has become a matter of rituals, of services and of festivals; it has long since ceased to have an organic life of its own.

Writing in 1907, the English scholar Basil Hall-Chamberlain could say: 'One, alas! of the characteristic features of the Buddhist temples of today is the decay into which most of them have fallen, not because of any general conversion to Christianity, but owing to the disendowment of the priesthood and the materialistic tendencies of the age.' The priesthood remains disendowed, the materialistic tendencies have accelerated. But the wooden architecture of the temples, so attractive when fresh and so shabby and ramshackle when neglected, is probably in better repair now than at any time since its first erection. A parallel can be found here with the stately homes of England. Both the Buddhist religion and the English aristocracy have become anachronisms; but the monuments left by the power they once enjoyed continue to survive for purely historical and aesthetic reasons.

FRANCIS KING

Modern Japanese Sects

Allegiance to sectarian movements has grown steadily in many parts of the world since the end of the Second World War; but nowhere have sects had quite the dramatic impact that they have had in Japan. The sects that have grown there have not been the Christian splinter movements but indigenous cults, sometimes embracing Shinto and Buddhist elements. Most of them have made very little impact outside Japan except among expatriate Japanese communities in Latin America and among a few American ex-servicemen who have married in Japan and been converted there.

A number of Japanese sects trace their origins to the 19th century or to the 1930s, but their dramatic growth has occurred only

Tenri-kyo teaches that there is no evil, nothing more than types of dust that lodge on the soul and represent hatred, greed, arrogance and other reprehensible dispositions

since 1945. That year marked the disruption of traditional life-patterns, of political authority and of the nationalist, ethnic and religious myth that had been fostered in Japan in and before the Second World War. To the shock of defeat was added the diffusion of American values by the occupying forces and, in particular, the establishment of official attitudes of tolerance in religious matters. Sects that had emerged earlier and suffered state prohibition revived in a favourable atmosphere for growth: their values were clearly divergent from those of the now discredited government. And new sects also emerged.

Most of the sects active in modern Japan have adapted important features of Buddhist and Shintoist belief, but they have combined these with other elements, so that many of them offer a new philosophy of life in which certain strains of traditional Japanese culture are still evident. The older sects, founded in the 19th century, betray more magical and miraculous elements, whilst the newer movements are characterized by a variety of radically adjusted values drawn largely from American sources: freedom of expression and the overcoming of inhibitions, formerly denied by Japanese culture, are conspicuous examples.

It is not easy to say just how many new sects there are in Japan. After the war Japanese taxation laws gave certain exemptions to religious movements and in consequence a number of astute but essentially secular Japanese businessmen registered their premises as places of religious worship to take advantage of this financial concession. The law has been changed and the number of sects has fallen accordingly, but estimates of new movements still vary from 170 to more than 700. Even if the smaller figure is more nearly accurate, the size and influence of Japan's new sects is still impressive. Several of them have recruited hundreds of thousands of members, built impressive headquarters and have sometimes constructed holy towns as their centres.

Emphasis on Healing

One of the longest established of the new sects is *Tenri-kyo* (Divine Teaching), which originated in the middle of the 19th century. A middle-aged farmer's wife, Nakayama Miki, became possessed by a deity in 1837 and subsequently became convinced that ten deities had forced themselves upon her. Miki was clearly a somewhat mentally disturbed woman, who had at various times attempted to commit suicide. The emphasis of the cult which evolved through her agency was on healing and painless childbirth. As is typical of religioua movementa in non-Western societies, Miki did not immediately demand that her followers should avoid other places of worship. Towards the end of her life, she wrote down all her revelations, included in 17 books of *Ofudesaki*. Like other cult leaders, in later years she held herself aloof from her following; this enhanced her reputation for saintlineas and facilitated the accumulation of legenda about her miraculous power.

The Tenri-kyo Church arose only after Miki's death at the age of 90 in 1887, a period when the new movement was experiencing some harassment from the Japanese government which, at that time, was promoting the Shinto religion. Fear of government persecution led to the modification of Tenri-kyo doctrines and practices to gain protection as a Shinto cult. A similar adjustment was made during the Second World War, when Miki was claimed as a great Japanese patriot by her followers. After the war these tendencies were quickly reversed and older forms of worship were restored with a new emphasis on the then fashionable principles of democracy.

Tenri-kyo has been likened to Christian Science by some commentators, although it evolved quite independently and, indeed, rather earlier. It teaches that there is no evil, nothing more than types of dust that lodge on the soul and which represent hatred, animosity, greed, arrogance and other reprehensible dispositions. From Buddhism, Tenri-kyo acquired a belief in reincarnation but the movement has been increasingly influenced by Christianity in recent years, and more and more has come to emphasize joy, and the acceptance of voluntary labour in menial tasks as a way of overcoming greed and learning humility. Much of this voluntary work is undertaken in public parks, prisons and in relief work for the needy. Miki stressed generosity to the poor, but in recent decades the leaders of the movement have preferred to collect benefactions from their followers and to distribute them from headquarters rather than to encourage purely spontaneous local charity. This development may be seen as an example of the institutional and bureaucratic trend that typically takes place in established religious movements. It also reflects the fascination of the Japanese with their newly learned facility in voluntary organization.

Understandably, given its origins, Teurikyo has an inheritance of primitive magical concepts: animal deities and fertility symbols abound. These elements were closely associated with the preoccupations with the miraculous of the founder and her early followers. There is also a belief in a type of millennium when heaveuly manna will fall and bring into being an age of joy and brotherhood among mankind. This optimistic vision is a central theme in the sect's extensive propaganda, which is now disseminated by methods of modern mass communication. Tenri city is a place of pilgrimage for believers, both as a shrine with sacred objects and a place for the performance of important liturgies, and as the headquarters of the sect. Tenri-kyo claims to have more than 15,000 churches and hundreds of thousands of followers.

Great Honourable Goddess

A sect of quite different origin, *Tensho Kotai Jingu-kyo*, was also founded by a farmer's wife, Kitamura Sayo. Very much in the style of Miki, Mrs Kitamura claimed, in 1945, to speak with the voice of God, and she was thereafter referred to by her followers as Great Honourable Goddess. Like Miki, she believed that God had come to dwell inside her body, but she refused, at least until the early 1960s, to build a church. Her teachings are simple and little formalization has occurred since Mrs Kitamura, as a supreme charismatic leader, has resisted such a development. She preaches that there are six roots of evil: to regret; to desire; to hate; to covet; to love or to be loved intensely or beyond reasonable limits. The world is peopled by evil and benign spirits. Mrs Kitamura does not claim to expel evil spirits but to redeem them, and this she does by chanting a short prayer. Her sermons are often chanted, interrupted by hand-clapping and scrubbing motions to sweep away evil.

The most renowned aspect of Tensho Kotai Jingu-kyo is its emphasis on dancing and it is sometimes called 'the dancing religion', even though dancing occurs in

Morris Newcombe

Left **Trees festooned with unwanted fortunes. At one of the many Japanese shrines slips of paper telling your fortune are on sale; if the fortunes are not favourable, they are hung on a tree in the hope that the ill luck will blow away** ***Right*** **The Todaiji Temple at Nara, which contains the magnificent 53-foot-high image of Buddha Vairocana. Built in the 8th century by the Emperor Shomu, the temple testifies to the advance in cultural achievement which accompanied the adoption of Buddhist beliefs by the Japanese**

many modern Japanese sects. The importance of the dance for this sect is that if one has sincerely confessed one's sins and accepted with gratitude others' assessments of one's faults, then one has been brought to the gates of heaven: the dance of non-ego, *Muga no Odori*, will dance one through the gates. Estimates of Mrs Kitamura's following vary because of the absence of formal organization, but they generally fall between 100,000 and 200,000 persons.

A third woman, the unhappiness of whose life was responsible for a formerly important sect, *Omoto* (the religion of the Great Source) was Mrs Nao Deguchi. The decline of the sect has been caused by schisms which have given rise to several offshoots, today counting many more adherents than Omoto itself. Nao had eight children when she became a widow. Two of them went mad and another was killed. In her distress she turned to the Shinto sect, *Konko-kyo*, but in 1892 she had a revelation of a messiah soon to come and she left the Konko-kyo movement. Soon after her vision a wandering religious enthusiast, Ueda Kisaburo, who later called himself Onisaburo Deguchi, arrived at her village claiming to have had identical revelations, and he was eventually recognized by Nao as the promised messiah. He married Nao's daughter and organized the Omoto cult into a separate sect which, until Onisaburo was prosecuted by the government in 1921, grew rapidly.

An immensely active man, Onisaburo sought to establish a World Federation of Religions; he dictated 81 volumes of his experience of the spirit world; and he recruited some two million followers to the faith. The government moved against Omoto again in 1935; Onisaburo was imprisoned for seven years. Only in 1945 was the sect permitted to practise again, and Onisaburo reorganized it under the name *Aizen-e*, (Garden of Divine Love). Its following had fallen away, however, and it has remained small. The sect has an elaborate set of teachings. The spirit world is emphasized and man's eternal life there. An interesting teaching that is curiously parallel to the Mormon doctrine of baptism of the dead is that ancestors who died unsaved might be saved by the faith of their successors.

Offshoots of Omoto

Several sects were founded by former members of the Omoto religion. One of these, *Ananai-kyo*, was founded in 1943 by Nakano Yonosuke, who had been a fellow pupil of Onisaburo as a young man. Nakano claimed to have experienced revelations long before he set out to found his own religion. Although he followed an independent path, he remained on good terms with the leaders of Omoto, in keeping with a tenet that both sects shared – the kinship of all religions. Nakano taught that there would be a world catastrophe but that men might escape it by obtaining God's spirit in special meditation and by the saviour that God would send to lead men into happiness. This movement emphasizes the return to pure Shinto faith. It also teaches that religion and astronomy are one and for a long time devoted resources to building observatories. In common with the Bahai faith, a movement of Persian origin with which it established links, it organized international conferences at which the unity of all religion was the central theme.

In 1930, a 38-year-old man named Masaharu Taniguchi began to have revelations. He had been one of the scribes to Onisaburo and a devotee of Omoto; later he had become an adherent of *Ittoen* (Garden of Light), a movement that emphasized arduous toil as the way to nobility. Taniguchi recorded his revelations and soon after he began a magazine that proved to be the beginning of a sect, *Seicho no Ie* (House of Growth). Initially he denied that his movement was a religion: it was rather a philosophy of life. In its early days it was more like a publishing concern, but eventually it came to claim that it was indeed a religion. Its teachings are highly eclectic, embracing ideas from Omoto, Ittoen and elements that the founder acquired from his study of Christian Science, Spiritualism and orthodox Christianity.

Seicho no Ie teaches that the individual may attain absolute freedom, conquering pain and disease. One of its messages is, 'Do not love your enemy – because there is no enemy.' Another, reminiscent of Christian Science, urges believers, 'Drive the disease-idea out of your mind and you are sure to recover health at once.' The sect suffered in the years immediately after the war because Taniguchi had been a vigorous nationalist, but the recovery of Japan in the 1950s produced a more favourable climate for Taniguchi's demands for the restoration of traditionalism in education. The sect has come out strongly for the revision of the Japanese constitution and the annulment of laws imposed in 1947 when the Americans were very much in control. It claims over a million adherents and has a strong appeal to the more prosperous and to some intellectuals.

The best-known of the Omoto sects is *P L Kyodan*, even the name of which reveals the strength of Western influences, since P L stands for Perfect Liberty (Kyodan stands for Church). Under other names this movement existed long before the Second World War, but took its present name after the leader's release from prison in 1945.

J. Allan Cash

Persecution by the Japanese wartime government was, at this time, a great advantage to the renewed sect which quickly adopted American styles and emphasized modernization. The pre-war ethic of *Hito no Michi* (the name by which the sect had then been known) was reasserted with these modern trappings. That ethic had encouraged virtue in familial and work relationships and promised rewards for right conduct. The 21 precepts of the faith were re-established. They assert that life is art, that the individual, as a manifestation of God, should live radiantly, equally with others, revealing himself by effacing his ego. The environment is said to be a mirror of the mind, but everything makes for progress and development. To forget that one is an artist is held to be a way of encouraging misfortune. Dancing, poetry, baseball and other sports are encouraged and opponents have called P L Kyodan 'the golf religion'. But daily early morning services are also part of its way of life with a communal breakfast afterwards. Voluntary good works are also sometimes performed.

The organization of P L Kyodan is tightly-knit but in many ways traditional. An extensive counselling system is maintained, the therapeutic principles of which are that suffering is a warning from God that there is something wrong in a person's thought, that he is failing in artistic self-expression. Teaching is also undertaken over a wide range of subjects, including traditional Japanese arts. At the head of the faith are a small elite of *Oyasama* (parents) who are endowed with a divine gift of diagnosis of personal ills and who can take upon themselves the ills of others. They do not, however, act as ordinary counsellors, whose work involves a large clerical staff. The strong psychotherapeutic emphasis of the movement does not preclude it from maintaining a modern hospital of a conventional kind. P L Kyodan promotes extensive propaganda, trains able young men as administrators and recruiting agents and urges all its followers to bring in 20 new believers every month. In the early 1960s the movement claimed more than 700,000 members.

Mandala and Lotus Sutra

Several modern Japanese sects have arisen in the name of Nichiren, the 13th century Buddhist monk who believed himself to be designated as the nation's saviour, and who considered that all necessary truth was contained within the Lotus Sutra. The Sutra was held to contain the final teachings of the Buddha, that promised salvation to men by faith and invocation. Nichiren composed a recitation to the Sutra and taught that the mandala, the scroll on which this salutation was written, should be adored. An element of belief in a messiah was also found in the Nichiren teachings, which were carried on by a number of older Buddhist sects.

Reiyuka (the Association of Friends of the Spirit) came into being when a worker in Yokohama who had lost two children began to tend the graves of the temple cemetery. He encouraged others to do likewise and, in 1925, Kakutaro Kubo and his sister-in-law, Kotani Kimi, launched a new movement which attributed contemporary evils to failures in duty to the spirits. The mandala and Sutra were central features of the movement, particularly the transfer of merit to ancestors by reading the Sutra. The home remained the place of worship and an altar and a copy of the mandala were set up by each family of adherents. The movement never developed any intermediary organizations between the home of the believer and headquarters, although periodic conferences are arranged at which individuals are encouraged to express their opinions freely. Perhaps because of this looseness of its structure, and also because of a series of scandals about tax evasion, in which Kotani Kimi was involved in the early 1950s, the movement has been highly schismatic. Nonetheless it claims about four million members.

One of the rapidly growing offshoots of Reiyuka is *Rissho Koseikai*, the Society for Righteousness and Friendship. It began in 1938 when Niwano Nikkyo, then 32, and the 47-year-old Mrs Naganuma Myoko combined as organizer and spiritual medium respectively to form a new movement which was not, initially, very different from Reiyuka. Subsequently, although continuing to practise two sorts of divination (foretelling the future from a person's name, and by astrological means), Rissho Koseikai came to display a less magical attitude to the still important mandala, regarding it as a liturgical instrument without the intrinsic power imputed to it by other Nichiren sects.

Hamlyn Group/British Museum

Utensils for the Japanese Tea Ceremony: the serving of tea was elevated by Zen Buddhism into a dignified ritual expressing the beauty to be found in the mundane routine of life. Tea was first brought as a medicinal herb to Japan from China by a priest, Eisai, at the beginning of the 13th century, along with the philosophy of Zen

Nichiren is not claimed to have been the eternal Buddha and, since her death in 1957, the extreme reverence that had grown up for Mrs Naganuma, who had come to be regarded as a living Buddha, has been discouraged.

Repentance, good living, ancestor worship and neighbourliness are demanded. A practical demonstration of neighbourliness is provided by voluntary public service. More central to the sect's success, however, is its development of the counselling system that it inherited from Reiyuka. Each day at headquarters, and at other centres, small circles gather under a teacher to discuss their personal problems and seek religious solutions. The *hoza* (truth-sitting) is a dramatic departure from Japanese traditions of reserve and social inhibition; each sitting is usually drawn from one particular age and sex group. The hoza, the dramatic festivals sponsored by the movement and its well-disciplined organization are perhaps principally responsible for the growth of this style of lay Buddhism. In the mid-1960s it claimed some two million adherents.

Aggressive and Intolerant

The most important sect in Japan is *Soka Gakkai* (Value Creation Society) which denies being a religion at all. It claims to be a lay organization that promotes the Nichiren cult *Shoshu*, an extremist cult that emphasizes not only the mandala as intrinsically powerful, but the mystical oneness of Buddha, Nichiren and believers. This aggressive movement, which unlike other Nichiren sects is completely intolerant of all other religions and which maintains a vigorous political party, began in 1930 with the publication of the first volumes of Value Creation philosophy by Makiguchi Tsunesaburo. He and some of his small following were imprisoned in the Second World War, after which leadership passed to Toda Josei, who promoted the utilitarian creed of Makiguchi with unexcelled vehemence. The Nichiren Shoshu was held to prove its superiority to other faiths by its literary, theoretical and practical value, the only source of genuine happiness.

Soka Gakkai, in a way not dissimilar to the publishing organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, became the agency of evangelism. Its methods of 'break and subdue' *(shakubuku)* earned the movement a bad reputation – but they achieved results, not least in winning many adherents in Hokkaido, the northern island in which the miners' union, Tanro, had previously held undisputed sway. Part of its appeal is the clear manifestation of power communicated by the movement and its methods of proselytizing. It provides, too, a simple folk Buddhism focused on daily worship of the mandala: it demands no initial faith, and offers its practices to pragmatic test. The movement has evolved an elaborate system of ranks and titles and confers a variety of semi-academic distinctions. It is, in some ways, ruthlessly modern and efficient; in others it maintains the attraction of an ancient, nationalistic cult. The denigration of other religions, the condemnation of political parties as corrupt (and its own support of a Clean Government Party which attained considerable success in the early 1960s soon after its foundation) and the military-like discipline of the movement are calculated to give the impression of certainty of purpose and resolution. In the cultural confusion, civic disorders and political scandals of the last two decades, this image has had great appeal in Japan. Soka Gakkai claims over three million families among its adherents: from its political successes this claim may not be exaggerated. (See also SHINTO; ZEN.)

BRYAN WILSON

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Acknowledging duty only to the one true god, Jehovah, the Witnesses look forward to the early return of Jesus and the establishment of the New World society on earth; to this end they make use of the media of the competitive business world, proselytizing with pamphlets, recordings, radio and doorstep canvassing

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

ONE OF THE MOST RAPIDLY growing Christian sects during the post-war period has been Jehovah's Witnesses. Distribution of the movement's publications, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* is done voluntarily by members. The world membership in 1981 peaked at 2,361,896, and in that year several million people attended the sect's annual memorial supper services in Kingdom Halls throughout the world. In 1981 there were some 588,000 witnesses in the U.S.A., 85,000 in the U.K. and 101,000 in Germany. In 1981 in Zambia, Witnesses constituted over 10,000 of the population. World membership was calculated to have increased in 1981 by 3.3%.

The movement began in 1870 when Charles Taze Russell, a draper's son from Alleghaney, Pittsburgh, became convinced that the Second Coming of Christ was imminent. This idea has been a recurrent enthusiasm in America; in the 1830s thousands had believed the prophetic exposition of William Miller by which he calculated that Christ would return in 1843 or 1844. Russell adopted some of Miller's calculations, and in 1875 became convinced that Christ had already but invisibly returned during the previous year. He soon came to believe that Christ would be visibly present on earth by 1878. Later he believed that 1878 was the year that the dead had been resurrected in heaven, and he regarded 1914 as the year destined to end the time of the Gentiles, in the great battle of Armageddon foretold in scripture.

Using his considerable means, he devoted himself to promulgating these ideas. A group of Bible students gathered and Russell became their pastor: the different congregations of Russellites were linked together by a periodical, *Zion's Watch Tower*. In 1884 he formed a legal corporation, Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society, to control the movement's publications which, over the following years, included his seven-volume work *Studies in the Scriptures*. A system of full-time workers (later called pioneers) was recruited to distribute the movement's publications. Never before had adventist ideas been so widely diffused so quickly as by this organization: by 1914 Russell had followers in all the northern European countries, South Africa and in many American cities, and his publications were circulating in central African territories. Disappointed expectations for 1914 caused some to withdraw, and after Russell's death in 1916 the movement reached a low ebb. But for the efficiency of his successor, Judge Joseph Rutherford, it might have dwindled away.

Deathless Millions

Rutherford inherited a disenchanted rank and file, a revolt in the hierarchy over leadership, schisms among European followers as well as in America, and the suspicion of the United States government that Watch Tower propaganda was subverting the war effort; on this account Rutherford and some of his closest associates were imprisoned in 1918, sentenced to 20 years, but released in 1919. Under the slogan 'Millions Now Living Will Never Die', Rutherford launched the movement on a new path, whilst continuing to assert the imminence of the millennium. The year 1874 was superseded by 1914 as the year of Christ's invisible Advent. Gradually Russell's writings were allowed to go out of print, to be replaced by the many books of Rutherford himself. From 1931, when the name Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted, a mass recruitment policy has been implemented, with door-to-door canvassing, gramophone records and later by street advertising and radio broadcasting.

Throughout the 1930s the central direction of the movement grew: local officials became nominees of district or national authorities that were in turn controlled from Brooklyn, where the movement had

Mass baptism at an International Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in London. Witnesses hope that they will see the time of the battle of Armageddon when Christ will defeat Satan, the United Nations, the Churches and other forces thought to be hostile to Jehovah

Keystone

its printing and publishing concern and effective headquarters. In the last years of his life Rutherford receded from his central position, and authority in the movement became increasingly anonymous in keeping with its theocratic claims. This trend was continued under the presidency of Nathan Knorr, who succeeded Rutherford in 1943 and Frederick W. Franz who succeeded Knorr after the latter's death in 1977.

The central belief of the Witnesses has remained the imminence of Christ's appearing and the establishment of the New World society on earth. Since 1914, when Christ is held to have established his heavenly kingdom, the movement has not fixed specific dates, although 1918 is regarded as the time when he cleansed the heavenly temple (an analogue with the purging of members disloyal to Rutherford) and 1925 was a year of intense expectation. Informally, there was great hope of 1975 as the time of the battle of Armageddon when Christ and his heavenly hosts will defeat Satan and the armies of the nations, the Churches and the United Nations.

The interim period between 1914 and the establishment of the New World order is held to have been a period in which the last of the anointed class of 144,000, who will reign in heaven with Christ, were being gathered. Some of these are thought still to be alive, and those Witnesses who are certain of this election alone partake of the emblems at the annual memorial supper, whilst others simply attend. From the number who partook in 1966, of the two millions present at the supper throughout the world, it appears that about 10,000 of this class, sometimes collectively referred to as 'God's Woman', then remained alive. This class is the elite of the movement: the differentiation in types of salvation arose under Rutherford and was the theological concomitant of becoming a mass movement. The elect would reign with Christ, whereas other Witnesses, who came to be called Jonadabs, would inherit eternal life on earth. To these must be added a more obscure category of those who had not rejected the truth, who would have a chance to prove themselves during the millennium. Those who failed this test, and those killed at Armageddon, and those who had persecuted Jehovah's Witnesses, would be annihilated.

Prophetic exposition and eschatology (doctrine of the 'last days' and the state to come) constitutes the core of Witness doctrine. Jehovah's principal concern is to vindicate his name, Witnesses are called for this end, and this is the purpose of all history. Jehovah's power is more evident than his love, and man's redemption is only a secondary purpose in his plan. The Trinity is rejected: Jesus in the flesh was not God but a man. His resurrection was spiritual, and it was then that he received immortality. This representation of Christ is analogous to the destiny of the anointed class. As in other adventist movements there is a denial of the immortality of the soul.

Witnesses use their own New World translation of the Bible, which gives renderings that support their teachings. *The Watchtower* is not merely the main vehicle of propaganda, but it is also a vital catechizing instrument. Each week a Watch Tower Study is held in each Kingdom Hall, and a procedure of question and answer ensures that doctrine is thoroughly understood. A public talk is also given weekly, and two other meetings are devoted to methods of evangelization and training of 'publishers'. At a fifth meeting one of the official texthooks is used as a basis of teaching and discussion.

Pioneers and Publishers

Each congregation is presided over by a congregation servant, assisted by five others, and these officials are not locally elected but appointed by 'the Society'. Beyond them, circuit servants and district servants co-ordinate the work of local congregations. Central organization is established through three separate corporations with interlocking directorates who run the publishing concern. Apart from the full-time officials at international, national, district and circuit level, there are also 'pioneers' who, for very modest expenses, devote at least 100 hours a month to selling the movement's literature. Beyond this, every Witness who can is expected to spread the truth, giving his spare time to doorstep canvassing without recompense; all congregation members in fact are known as 'publishers'.

The movement has a dual structure. There is a community of Bible students supposedly held together by nothing but their recognition of the truth, and there is the publishing agency, a human organization working to bring God's word to mankind. In practice the Bible students are organized by the publishing agency, which collects statistics from every 'publisher' for every hour of his active work for the movement, very much on the model of a large-scale corporation. Divine service is not worshipping but 'publishing.' The organization is not so much concerned with persons as with activity stated in work hours, production figures and sales. The dual structure allows the movement to resolve one of the central paradoxes facing contemporary religious movements: the apparent contradiction between the value-commitment of religious activity, which is essentially extra-rational, and the need for rational organization in the competitive modern world. Distributing literature provides a practical (in contrast to a ritual) activity for members. Continued activity is ensured by the steady flow of titles from the publishing house: old publications are superseded by new periodically, and the existence of a large following ensures a ready market for new books and the possibility of fixing economic prices for them.

Every Jehovah's Witness who can is expected to give his spare time to canvassing from door to door: 'pioneers' devote at least 100 hours a month to selling the movement's literature

Jehovah's Witnesses

At Odds with Government

The movement has frequently been in difficulty with governments in various countries. Witness teaching demands primary loyalty to Jehovah: nation states are sinful entities soon to be swept away, so that Witnesses claim to belong to a different and superior organization. From the mid-1930s Witnesses stopped saluting national flags and in the war years this led to a conflict with the United States government and to widespread public hostility to Witnesses, who eventually obtained exemption from this observance for their children, who would have been expected to salute the American flag at school. In Germany they were banned by Hitler and were put into concentration camps, where they gained a reputation for being able to withstand torture better than most prisoners. The movement was banned in Australia and New Zealand in the Second World War. It has long been banned in Russia, and more recently in Egypt and Malawi.

Witnesses are not pacifists, since they would fight at Christ's command. But they have been conscientious objectors in wars between nations. They sought, but failed to obtain, exemption from military service as ministers of religion in a test case in Scotland. They come into periodic conflict with medical authorities when they refuse blood transfusions on the basis of biblical injunctions (Psalm 16 and 1 Chronicles 11, 17–19). In other matters they accept normal medical treatment. Whilst not intensely ascetic, they follow a rather rigorous code of sex ethics. For moral lapses, as for doctrinal deviations, the offenders are expelled from the fellowship. Dancing, drinking and tobacco are not absolutely prohibited, but the good Witness is too busy and too serious about his evangelizing work to have much time for entertainments and diversions.

BRYAN WILSON

FURTHER READING: For a good general up-to-date account of the movement: Alan Rogerson, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (Constable, 1969).

JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, the capital of King David and his successors and since 1948 the capital of the state of Israel, has been from ancient times a centre of great religious significance. It is mentioned for the first time in ancient Egyptian texts of the 19th–18th century BC, but archeological excavations have proved it much older. The name of the city means 'Foundation of Shalem (God)' but was later interpreted – as a result of the similarity of sound in the Hebrew word *shalom* meaning peace – as 'City of Peace'.

Jerusalem seems to have been a cult centre from time immemorial. At an early date a hill-fortress, it became a holy city for the Israelites after David had conquered it from the Jebusites at the beginning of the 10th century BC. There David established his capital and brought the central Israelite sanctuary, the 'Ark of the Lord', to Jerusalem. David's son and successor Solomon built a magnificent temple and Jerusalem soon became in Israelite belief the city which 'God had chosen'. This belief was taken for granted by biblical prophets such as Isaiah, and by historians in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. The Psalms are eloquent witness to the significance of Jerusalem and Zion (one of the hills of Jerusalem, probably the Temple Mount, but used as synonymous with Jerusalem) in Israelite piety and devotion. Jerusalem became the symbol of God's covenant with his people and with the royal house of David; it was regarded as a spiritual capital from which the word of God was to issue forth to all mankind (Isaiah 2.3), as the seat of justice and righteousness (Isaiah 33.5) and as the messianic city of God (Isaiah 66.8) in a redeemed world. The attachment of the Jews to the city, both as an earthly reality and as a symbol of their historical identity and future hopes, is evident both from the ancient Psalms: 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!' (Psalm 122.6), 'If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!' (Psalm 137.5), from the constant evocation of Jerusalem in Jewish liturgy and ritual practice, and from the modern nationalist movement of Zionism.

The spiritual and eschatological significance of 'Jerusalem' became more pronounced during the period of the second Temple built by Herod the Great and after its destruction in 70 AD; and the image of the heavenly Jerusalem complemented that of the earthly city.

The role of Jerusalem in Christian piety and symbolism is determined by two elements. The decisive events of the ministry of Jesus such as the Last Supper, his Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection, took place in or near Jerusalem and hence Jerusalem, as a city of 'holy places' associated with the life and death of Christ, has always been an object of pilgrimage. To this was added the idea of the earthly Jerusalem as a symbol and terrestrial reflection of the true, ultimate and spiritual Jerusalem in heaven. The latter was symbolically identified with the Church, and a great wealth of images and symbols expressed this identification in poetry and iconography. Occasionally, the idea of Jerusalem fired religious enthusiasm, and together with other social and political factors stimulated powerful religious movements such as the Crusades. Christian spiritual writers (unlike the Jews, for whom the earthly concrete city was always primary in spite of the many additional spiritual meanings) often exhibited an ambivalent attitude to the terrestrial Jerusalem; pilgrimages and the like were seen as a possible temptation to substitute a crudely material conception for what should have been a spiritual symbol for the Kingdom of Heaven.

By the time of the rise of Islam in the 7th century Jerusalem had been established for many centuries as a holy city for both Jews and Christians, and since the founder of Islam had been profoundly influenced by the two earlier religions, Jerusalem very soon came to hold a special place in Moslem tradition. The associations were of course not historical as they had been for Judaism and Christianity but were based on a verse in the Koran (sura 17): 'Praise to Allah who brought his servant at night from the Holy Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.' Whatever the precise original meaning of this verse the earliest Moslem tradition already interpreted it as referring to Mohammed's miraculous journey on a winged steed from Mecca to Jerusalem. During the night of his ascension to heaven to receive his revelation, the prophet was first transported from the 'Holy Mosque' at Mecca to the 'Farthest Mosque' at the site of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Thus Islam absorbed the Judaeo-Christian traditions regarding the sacred character of Jerusalem and the city ranks for Moslems as the third holiest after Mecca and Medina. In fact the Arabic name for Jerusalem is simply *Al-Kuds* ('the Holy One'). In Islam the emphasis is on the prophet's miraculous night journey to the site of the Temple and the Rock; hence the two mosques there are called the 'Dome of the Rock' and the *Al-Aksa* ('the farthest') mosque. In Christianity the emphasis is on the heavenly Jerusalem as a symbol of the Church and man's spiritual home. The earthly Jerusalem, its holy places, Via Dolorosa, the Holy Sepulchre, the Mount of Olives, serve as a reminder of the earthly ministry of Christ. In Judaism, the holiness of Jerusalem derives from the city's character as the centre and concrete symbol of God's covenant with his people, the promise of an ultimate restoration and messianic future. Few cities have acquired so many and so varied religious symbolic significances as Jerusalem.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

Jerusalem is a holy city in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, a fact which has frequently contributed to violent conflict *Previous page* Jews at the Wailing Wall, containing stones from the Temple and the traditional site of lamentation for the dispersion of Jewry *Below* The Dome of the Rock, a Mohammedan mosque built on the site of the Temple

Spectrum Colour Library

William Macquitty

JESUS

Though primarily works of theology, rather than biography, the gospels contain vivid scenes from the life of Jesus which have become inspiring themes of piety and art *Previous page* The infant Jesus in the arms of St Joseph: statue at Mosta in Malta *Right* Two 16th century Bulgarian murals, showing the Nativity scene *(above)* and the flight into Egypt to escape from King Herod *(below) Far right* The baptism of Jesus, with the Holy Spirit descending as a dove: mural at Assinou in Cyprus

Sonia Halliday

Sonia Halliday

Those who have questioned the existence of 'Jesus' have often confused Jesus of Nazareth, who is recorded as having been executed by the Jews, with his theological interpretation, Jesus Christ; the transformotion into the Saviour of mankind was largely due to the Apostle Paul

IT WAS ONCE FASHIONABLE in certain circles to deny that Jesus of Nazareth had ever existed. Although this view never became widely established and was rejected by most scholars, it was not wholly wrong. Its chief error lay in confusing 'Jesus of Nazareth' with 'Jesus Christ'. For 'Jesus Christ' generally represents a theological interpretation of the person and career of the historical Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by the Romans, outside the walls of Jerusalem, c 30 AD. In other words, it is necessary to distinguish between the historical Jesus and the theological interpretation of him. The task, however, is not easy; but it is vitally necessary, if the origins of Christianity are to be understood.

The historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth must first be established. Generally, the existence of some person from the past is not questioned, unless what is recorded is incredible in terms of ordinary experience. Thus, for example, we do not doubt that Socrates existed and was condemned to death by the Athenians for impiety; but we are sceptical about Osiris whom the Egyptians believed had risen from the dead and had become the ruler of the next world.

Ironically, the best-attested fact about Jesus is that of his death. His execution for sedition, on the orders of Pontius Pilate, the Roman *praefectus* of Judaea, is recorded both by Christian writers and the Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote early in the 2nd century AD. The Christian evidence is especially significant. The execution of Jesus as a rebel against the Roman government of Judaea was an embarrassment to the early Christians. It caused Christianity to be regarded as a politically subversive movement by the Roman authorities, and prompted them to persecute Christians. The gospel writers, therefore, would have never invented such an end for Jesus; in fact, they endeavoured to explain it away.

The Roman execution of Jesus constitutes the strongest evidence of his existence as

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It is evident that the Christian gospels contain genuine traditions about Jesus, but, on closer examination, it is clear that they are not accurate historical records of the career of the historical Jesus

a historical person. The subsequent Christian interpretation of his death as a sacrifice to save mankind from perdition must be investigated as a basic factor in the development of Christian theology; but it does not detract from the historicity of the event, which in any case was recorded by Tacitus, an independent witness.

A 'Pernicious Superstition'?

From the certainty of the crucifixion of Jesus by the Romans one must work backwards in an endeavour to reconstruct the course of his life, for our only information about Jesus comes from the New Testament writings, and almost exclusively from the four gospels. Tacitus tells us nothing more than that Pontius Pilate executed Jesus, and that the 'pernicious superstition', as he called Christianity, not only broke out again in Judaea, but spread to Rome. There is a passage about Jesus in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, the Jewish historian. If the passage were genuine, it would be of great value, because Josephus lived in Judaea shortly after the lifetime of Jesus. However, there is strong reason for suspecting that, as it stands, the passage is a later Christian forgery which replaced the adverse account that Josephus originally wrote.

The Christian gospels appear, at first sight, to be biographies of Jesus, and it is evident that they contain genuine traditions about him. But, on closer examination, it is clear that they are not accurate historical records of the career of the historical Jesus. Instead, they are presentations of someone whom the authors believed was the incarnate Son of God. For example, the earliest gospel, that of St Mark, describes itself as 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. This fact is of fundamental significance for an evaluation of their testimony since it means that the authors of the gospels were not writing history, but theology. They were using material about the historical Jesus; but they interpreted it to demonstrate that Jesus was the divine saviour of mankind. This estimate of the gospel writers is not intended to convict them of conscious deceit or distortion of their evidence. They were not writing as historians, even though Luke professes to do so (1.1–4); they were writing as convinced Christians about their master, whom they believed was divine, who had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, which they located in the sky. They were writing also for fellow Christians, and they drew not upon their own experience of the historical Jesus, but upon traditions which they had inherited about him. Moreover, they all wrote long after the Crucifixion, when the original community of Jesus's disciples and apostles had disappeared in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. And they wrote for Greek-speaking communities of Christians situated in various places in the Roman Empire, outside Judaea.

The Message of the Gospels

The problem is that a Jew named Jesus of Nazareth, who was executed as a rebel by the Romans about 30 AD, is the subject of four biographical accounts, written some 40 years or more later by followers who believed that he was the Son of God. These accounts were designed to attest his divine origin, to show that he was the Messiah of Israel, that his death was for the redemption of mankind, that he arose from the dead three days after his crucifixion, and that he ascended into heaven, whence he would shortly return with supernatural power and glory to judge the world. Thus, the basic issue is how these extraordinary things about the historical person whom the Romans executed came to be believed during the course of some four decades.

There are two obvious answers. First, that Jesus had told his disciples that he was divine and that his coming death was designed to save mankind, and second, that he did in fact rise from the dead and was seen to ascend into heaven, as the Christian sources relate. But both answers are so fraught with difficulties of various kinds that they cannot be accepted as adequate explanations. For example, no authentic writing by Jesus survives, and we cannot be sure that we have an exact record of his teaching, of what he said and the circumstances in which he said it. Indeed, every recorded saying is essentially obscure, and often conflicts with other sayings. The accounts of his resurrection and ascension are similarly at variance. For example, there is a fundamental divergence of testimony about the location of these extraordinary events. According to the author of the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, the appearances of the risen Jesus took place in and around Jerusalem, and he ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives: and the disciples were expressly forbidden to leave Jerusalem at this time (Acts 1.4). On the other hand, the gospel of Matthew, with which Mark's gospel appears to concur, locates the appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples in Galilee, where they had been told to go; and the Ascension apparently took place there (Matthew 28.10,16; 16.7). It is amazing that a difference of opinion about such important events should occur within some 50 years of their happening. And it serves to warn us of the inexact nature or fluidity of the earliest traditions concerning Jesus. There is a similar conflict between the accounts of the birth of Jesus in Matthew and Luke (Matthew 1.18–2.23; Luke 1.26).

The existence of such contradictions about Jesus in the primitive tradition makes one despair of obtaining any reasonably reliable information about him, apart from his crucifixion by the Romans. But the problems already mentioned are not the most serious ones that concern Jesus in the earliest Christian writings. There is another even more basic problem but, paradoxically, although it is so serious, it actually provides the key to a better understanding of the historical Jesus and of the process that led to his divinization.

The Interpretation of Paul

The earliest surviving Christian writings are not the gospels but the Epistles of St Paul (see PAUL). They were written about 20 years before the gospels, and provide evidence of Christian life and thought some 20 years after the Crucifixion. When these epistles are carefully examined they reveal that already an amazing conflict of opinion existed about Jesus. In two separate letters, Paul denounces certain opponents who 'preach another Jesus' and 'another gospel' (Galatians 1.6–9; 2 Corinthians 11.4). Since Paul cannot possibly mean that these opponents were preaching about another person named 'Jesus', his denunciation must signify an interpretation of Jesus different from his own.

This problem is very complicated, and

Jesus driving the money-lenders out of the Temple, by El Greco: his attack may have been primarily directed at the priestly aristocracy, to whom the economic activities of the Temple were a rich source of income

National Gallery

The Sweet Cold Death

After this Christ shewed part of his Passion near his dying.

I saw his sweet face as it were dry and bloodless with pale dying. And later, more pale, dead, languoring; and then turned more dead unto blue; and then more brown-blue, as the flesh turned more deeply dead. For his Passion shewed to me most specially in his blessed face, and chiefly in his lips; there I saw these four colours, though it were afore fresh, ruddy, and liking, to my sight. This was a sorrowful change to see, this deep dying. And also the nose clogged and dried, to my sight, and the sweet body was brown and black, all turned out of fair, lively colour of itself, unto dry dying.

For that same time that our Lord and blessed Saviour died upon the Rood, it was a dry, hard wind, and wondrous cold, as to my sight, and what time the precious blood was bled out of the sweet body that might pass therefrom, yet there dwelled a moisture in the sweet flesh of Christ, as it was shewed. Bloodlessness and pain died within; and blowing of wind and cold coming from without met together in the sweet body of Christ. And these four, – twain without, and twain within – dried the flesh of Christ by process of time. And though this pain was bitter and sharp, it was full long lasting, as to my sight, and painfully dried up all the lively spirits of Christ's flesh. Thus I saw the sweet flesh dry in seeming by part after part: dying with marvellous pains.

And as long as any spirit had life in Christ's flesh, so long suffered he pain. This long pining seemed to me as if he had been seven nights dead, it meaneth that the sweet body was so discoloured, so dry, so clogged, so deathly, and so piteous, as (if) he had been seven nights dead, continually dying. And methought the drying of Christ's flesh was the most pain, and the last, of his Passion.

Julian of Norwich *Revelations of Divine Love*
ed Roger Huddleston

here a summary statement only can be given of its solution. It would appear that Paul, who had not been an original disciple of Jesus but had been converted by some profound inner experience, became the exponent of a new interpretation of Jesus. Paul believed that this interpretation had been specially revealed to him for the evangelization of the Gentiles. For, although he was a Jew, Paul had a hellenistic background and appreciated the spiritual needs and outlook of contemporary Graeco-Roman society. He was convinced that the interpretation of Jesus presented by the original apostles of Jesus was not adequate to Gentile needs, and that God had therefore given him this new interpretation or 'gospel' (Galatians 1.15–17). Paul's 'gospel' can be reconstructed from his epistles. The main outline is that mankind had become enslaved to the demonic powers that ruled the planets. To save humanity from this fatal condition, God sent into the world a pre-existent divine being, whom Paul called the 'Lord of glory'. Incarnated as Jesus, the demonic powers mistook him for a human being, and crucified him. In so doing, they lost their control of mankind, because the Lord of glory could not be held by his death and rose triumphantly to life (1 Corinthians 2.6–8; Colossians 2.14–15). In his interpretation, Paul paid scant regard to the historical circumstances of Jesus's career; even his crucifixion is ascribed to the demonic powers, with no reference to Pilate and the Jewish authorities.

The 'Other Gospel'

If this was Paul's gospel, what was the other interpretation of Jesus against which he inveighed so strongly? The evidence points unmistakeably to the original apostles and disciples of Jesus, located at Jerusalem, as Paul's opponents and the protagonists of the 'other gospel'. As Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, and the primitive Christian community there and its records lost, this 'other' gospel has to be reconstructed from various indirect sources, including Paul's own writings. However, enough can be learned to know its chief tenets. It appears that the original disciples of Jesus believed him to be the Messiah (*Christos*) of Israel. His death at the hands of the Romans had been a hard blow to their faith; for, according to contemporary Jewish thought, the Messiah should overthrow Israel's enemies, not be killed by them. However, through visions experienced by certain disciples of Jesus after his crucifixion, it was believed that God had raised him from the dead, in order that he might return again, with supernatural power, to 'restore the kingdom of Israel' (Acts 1.6). His death was explained as a martyrdom for Israel, caused by the nation's failure to accept him as the Messiah. These original Jewish Christians continued to live as devout Jews, worshipping in the Temple. They did not regard their faith in Jesus as constituting a new religion, separate from Judaism; neither did they regard Jesus as divine, because Jewish monotheism precluded any conception of the Messiah as a deity.

Critical analysis of the New Testament writings reveals, therefore, that within two decades of the Crucifixion two different interpretations of Jesus were current within the Church. The original disciples of Jesus proclaimed him as the Messiah of Israel, who had died a martyr's death for his people; but God had raised him up and he would shortly return to complete his messianic role. Paul, in contradiction, taught that Jesus was the incarnation of a divine 'Lord of glory'. His death had been planned by God, in order to save mankind from their fatal enslavement to the demonic rulers of the world.

These evaluations of Jesus were mutually incompatible. As soon as the Jerusalem Christians realized the nature of Paul's gospel, they repudiated both it and him. They sent emissaries among Paul's converts, warning them that Paul was not an apostle and that his teaching was not the original form of the faith. Paul's situation was basically insecure: he could not repudiate the authority of Jesus's own apostles and his own doctrine could easily be rejected as the errors of a late-comer to the faith, who had not shared the original experience of Jesus. Paul's cause suffered defeat, and it is probable that all trace of his teaching would have been lost but for the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66–70 AD when the original Christian community at Jerusalem disappeared during the destruction of the city, and with it its authority and teaching. A rehabilitation of Paul followed, which assured that his interpretation of Jesus as the divine saviour, incarnated and crucified to save mankind, should prevail and become orthodox Christian doctrine.

Thus, the historical Jesus of Nazareth was transformed into the Saviour God of Christianity. Is it possible to discern behind this transformation something of the original human Jesus? The evidence of the gospels is very puzzling. They all admit that Jesus was executed by the Romans for sedition. This fact would be of superlative importance if Jesus had indeed been guilty of rebellious activity against the Roman government in Judaea for it would mean that, as the Messiah, he had sought to deliver Israel from the oppression of heathen Rome. Such action would not have made him unique; because as Josephus records, many others sought this end and died at the hands of the Romans.

The gospels, however, maintain that Jesus was innocent of sedition, and that the Jewish authorities forced Pilate to execute him on such a charge. Such a miscarriage of justice is feasible; but there is strong reason to think that this gospel presentation of Jesus as innocent of sedition against Rome resulted from consideration of defending Christianity. Critical analysis of the account in Mark of the trial of Jesus, which set the pattern for the other gospels, shows that its author, writing in Rome about 71 AD, sought to explain away the embarrassing fact that Jesus had been condemned as a rebel by transferring the responsibility for the Crucifixion from Pilate to the Jewish leaders. Mark also represents Jesus as ruling that the Jews should pay tribute to Caesar (Mark 12.13–17) and, significantly, he disguises the fact that one of Jesus's apostles was a Zealot, that is, a member of the Jewish 'resistance' against Rome (see ZEALOTS).

Pacifist or Rebel

Looked at carefully, it appears that Pilate condemned Jesus because he thought that he was truly guilty of sedition. And this conclusion is borue out by certain other facts recorded in the gospels. For example, Jesus deliberately planned a triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the Messiah King on his last visit to the city. He checked to see that his disciples were armed before going to Gethsemane (Luke 22.36), and there was armed resistance at his arrest. Such actions are not consistent with a pacifist who endorsed the Roman rule of Judaea, and who wanted

Mural by Giotto, of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; this is one of the actions of Jesus which suggest that he may have regarded himself as the divinely appointed deliverer of Israel from subjection to rulers other than God. 'And such actions render intelligible his execution by the Romans for sedition'

to keep himself aloof from contemporary Judaeo-Roman politics. Instead, they suggest the action of one who believed himself to be the Messiah, divinely charged with the deliverance of Israel from its current subjection to masters, both Jewish and Roman, other than God. And such actions render intelligible his execution by the Romans for sedition.

As far as it is possible to reconstruct the career of Jesus from the problematic evidence of the gospels, it would seem that he succeeded John the Baptist in proclaiming the imminence of the kingdom of God and in seeking to prepare Israel for its coming. The idea of this divine kingdom involved the end of the prevailing world order and consequently the overthrow of the Roman government. Widely supported in Galilee and popularly regarded as the Messiah, Jesus became increasingly conscious of the opposition of the Jewish authorities, including the priestly aristocracy, from which the high priest was appointed by the Romans. The members of the priestly aristocracy supported Roman rule both in their own interests and because they believed it to be in the best interests of the nation. Furthermore they derived a considerable income from control of the great Temple at Jerusalem.

It is possible that Jesus finally decided to challenge the Jewish authorities on their own ground, the Temple, and perhaps to seize it and set up a new high priest, who was not a Roman nominee. The Zealots did just this in the revolt of 66 AD. Whether that was his intention or not, Jesus did enter Jerusalem as the Messiah, with his followers, and attacked the economic activities of the Temple, which was a lucrative source of income to the priestly aristocracy. His attack on the Temple seems to have coincided with a Zealot attack on the Romans, which was probably commanded by Barabbas. This apparent

coincidence raises the question of Jesus's relations with Zealots. The fact that one of his disciples, Simon, was known as 'the Zealot' indicates that the rest were not; but it also suggests that belief in Zealot principles was not incompatible with adherence to Jesus and that there was probably a close bond of sympathy.

According to the gospels, it would seem that Jesus's attack on the Temple was abortive, but he was too strongly supported to be arrested. The Zealot revolt was suppressed by the Romans with casualties, and Barabbas and others were captured. Jesus stayed on in Jerusalem until the night of the Passover. Realizing that his attempt had failed, he decided to withdraw to Galilee. But his rendezvous in Gethsemane that night was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and he was captured after an armed struggle. After interrogation, the Jewish authorities handed him over to Pilate, charged with sedition. It would seem that they accused Jesus as being the leader of the recent revolt, and not Barabbas. Pilate accepted the charge and ordered the Crucifixion of Jesus as the rebel Messiah King of Israel. He also ordered that Jesus should be crucified between two Zealot prisoners, whom he evidently regarded as Jesus's followers.

The story of the empty tomb (Mark 16) appears to be a later explanation of the disciples' conviction that they had seen Jesus alive again after his death. However, although they believed that he had risen from the dead, Jesus was not seen by any non-believer nor did he resume his former life. Instead, it was claimed that he had ascended to heaven, whence he would soon return to complete his messianic mission. His Jewish disciples devoted themselves to proclaiming him as the Messiah to their compatriots; and it was left to Paul to transform Jesus into the Saviour God of mankind.

(See also CHRISTIANITY.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Scribner, 1968); *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (Stein and Day, 1968) and *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (Allenson, rev. ed. 1957).

Ashmolean Museum

The bishop's ring, gold with an amethyst, is worn on the third finger of the right hand. In the occult tradition, the amethyst is 'the jewel of the high priest, of one who is not confused, distracted or overwhelmed by the intense fascination of external phenomena.' In this sense it protects the wearer from drunkenness, which is its old traditional role. It is also used in magic to gain political power

From the regal diamond to the humble coral jewels and semi-precious stones have been valued not only for their rarity and beauty but for their place in occult symbolism; their traditional associations with the planets accord them mysterious powers for good and evil

JEWELS

KETHER, THE SUPREME Crown of the topmost sefiroth of the cabalistic Tree of Life – studded with gems of elemental brilliance, glistering fire, shining water, sparkling air, and richly glowing earth – is the archetype of all earthly crowns that have adorned prophets, priests and kings throughout the ages. In former times, jewels were often selected for their symbolic value: the diamond for unyielding durability, the pearl for purity, the flaming ruby for the administration of justice, the topaz for nobility and regal splendour; all have formed, at sometime, an essential part of royal diadems.

Behind these more obvious attributions lay a complex scheme of occult correspondence elaborated by priests, magicians, wizards and sages. The entire mineral kingdom was involved, and even stones that were not, strictly speaking, precious stones became endowed by tradition with celestial values that exalted them to the rank of veritable jewels. Yet it was not merely the symbolic value that mattered, nor the intrinsic worth of a stone in a commercial sense; it was its peculiar occult property, that gave it a place among sacred gems.

The scheme of classifying the various stones and their properties involved the planets, whose influences were believed to be very strong in certain stones. Consequently, they were considered to be their vehicles or transmitters.

Quartz is one example. It is particularly associated with the moon, and is an important constituent of the earth's crust. It has been compared with the reproductive system because, just as gold is concealed in quartz, so is the sex factor contained within the human organism. Quartz is also supposed to possess the remarkable property of rendering opaque bodies invisible. Apollonius of Tyana, the famous 1st century mystic (see APOLLONIUS), used it for this purpose when Caesar Domitian suddenly summoned him from a great distance. The sage made himself invisible, materialized before Domitian, and subsequently dematerialized again, reappearing shortly afterwards near the distant Mt Vesuvius.

In modern times, a Viennese scientist named Pribill attempted to demonstrate this property of quartz. He claimed that the secret lay in the way in which the stone had been cut for magical purposes since time immemorial, maintaining that it was cut to a certain angle and placed in the mouth after exposure to tropical sunlight. The magician then intoned a secret incantation which, combined with the occult properties of the sun-impregnated quartz, gradually caused his body to disappear.

The Crystal Window

The moon is also associated with rock crystal, which stimulates the faculty of clairvoyance. This stone is also used in healing; the affected part is immersed in water charged with the psychic energies

Magical Use of Gems

If thou wilt know whether thy wife is chaste or no.
Take the stone which is called Magnes, in English, the lodestone, it is of sad blue colour, and it is found in the sea of India, sometimes in parts of Almanie, in the province which is called East France. Lay this stone under the head of a wife, and if she be chaste, she will embrace her husband, if she be not chaste, she will fall anon forth of the bed . . .

If thou wilt provoke sorrow, fear, terrible fantasies, and debate.
Take the stone which is called Onyx, which is of black colour. And the kind is best which is full of white veins. And it comes from India, unto Arabia, and it be hanged upon the neck, or finger, it stirs up anon sorrow or heaviness in a man, and terrors, and also debate, and this has been proved by men of late time.

If thou wilt overcome thy enemies.
Take the stone which is called Adamas, in English speech, a Diamond, and it is of shining colour, and very hard, in so much that it can not be broken, but by the blood of a goat, and it grows in Arabia, or in Cyprus. And if it be bound to the left side, it is good against enemies, madness, wild beasts, venomous beasts, and cruel men, and against chiding and brawling, and against venom, and invasion of fantasies . . .

If thou would make any man's wit sharp and quick, and augment his riches, and also prophesy things to come.
Take the stone which is called Smaragdus, in English speech, an Emerald. And it is very clear, shining through, and plain, but it that is yellow is better. It is taken out of the nests of grypes or griffons, it does both comfort and sane, and being borne, it makes a man to understand well, and gives to him a good memory, augments the riches of him that bears it, and if any man shall hold it under his tongue, he shall prophesy anon.

The Boke of Secrets of Albertus Magnus, of the vertues of herbs, stones and certayne beasts

which the crystal is thought to contain.

The best documented case of crystallomancy, or divination by the crystal, is that of the Elizabethan magicians Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley (see DEE). The crystal, or the shewstone as they called it, served as a window revealing other realms of existence. The classical scholar, Meric Casaubon, described their occult experiments, and the process by which they summoned angels to appear forms the substance of one of his treatises. This process was known as scrying. Kelley was the scryer or seer, and Dr Dee recorded the visions which his collaborator received. A complex system of magic derives from the work of these magicians which involves a weird and unearthly language called Enochian, communicated by the angels.

The pearl and the moonstone are other gems connected with the moon, the moonstone being a direct image of its namesake, while the pearl represents the purity and virginity traditionally associated with that solitary planet.

The pearl, the typical stone of the sea, is attributed to the moon owing to its influence over sea tides and women, whose monthly cycle corresponds to the lunar cycle. Its iridescent qualities link the pearl to astral visions in contrast to visions of brilliant light, which characterize solar or spiritual experiences exemplified by the topaz and diamond. This is why pearls are frequently worn during ceremonial invocations of lunar forces which involve astral activity. Another moon jewel is amber, whose positive electrical characteristics link it with animal magnetism and the voluptuousness of sensual love. It is worn while casting enchantments and is said to render its wearers, especially women, irresistibly attractive.

To Mercury are assigned chiefly the opal, the agate, and to a lesser extent, alexandrite, tourmaline and Iceland spar (a colourless, transparent stone). The opal has the power of luring its possessor into strange and unknown realms, probably because Mercury, in one of his forms, is the guide of souls that have quitted earth and wander in the kingdom of the dead.

The subtle emanations of the agate avert or offer protection against violent storms, due to the close connection between Mercury and the element of air. Thus any air movement, from breeze to tempest, falls naturally within his province. The agate is also potent against the sting of scorpions, because Mercury's activities include miracles of healing.

Tourmaline absorbs light and conducts electricity, hence its affinity with Mercury whose nature typifies the electrical phenomena of transmission. Because they polarize light alexandrite and Iceland spar are classed as Mercurial stones.

Venusian influences are concentrated in the emerald and the turquoise. In ancient Egypt the emerald stood for resurrection; it was used in the construction of talismans and amulets which symbolized the periodic return of the spirit of man (see EMERALD). The Eye of Horus which was often depicted in emerald was symbolic of reproduction and of the door to the womb through which the spirit entered to take on flesh for its reappearance on earth. The emerald was worn to achieve a favourable reincarnation; in later ages it was believed to ensure perpetual fertility.

Both the emerald and the turquoise were used in rites for inciting love and passion. Both these stones typify the transmission of vital force from one organism to another.

Venus is associated with the element of water, and therefore with the aquamarine and the beryl, both of which represent water in the mineral kingdom. Paracelsus (see PARACELSUS) claimed that a person's familiar spirit could be invoked in visible form in a mirror of beryl. Its power of facilitating intercourse with familiar spirits caused it to be worn by people wanting to know the inmost secrets of others.

Power and Radiance

The topaz, yellow diamond, cat's eye and chrysolite are particularly attributed to the Sun and, in the case of the cat's eye, to the Sun's associated sign, Leo. The glorious gold of the topaz symbolizes the Sun in the mineral kingdom. This planet, whose symbol in the animal kingdom is the lion, typifies courage, royalty and leadership, and the topaz makes its bearer fearless and wise. It is also a remedy against lunacy, because it concentrates the solar rays and neutralizes the baleful effects of the moon. The topaz also gives power over wild beasts, which, interpreted in terms of the human organism, implies the conquest of man's lower nature and its transformation into the nobility, symbolized by the king of the beasts, the lion.

The yellow diamond is attributed to the Sun for similar reasons, while the chrysolite, as its Greek name signifies, is a golden stone and also a vehicle of solar energy. It bestows the power of acquiring wealth, as do all solar stones.

If radiance is the special attribute of the Sun, fiery energy characterizes Mars. The stone ascribed to this characteristic of Nature is the ruby, which represents the spirit of violence and destruction. This stone is also associated with blood, the special vehicle of energy. Robert Fludd, the 17th century mystic and philosopher (see FLUDD), likened the ruby to the red earth, or flesh, of which Adam was formed.

There are, however, more sinister stones connected with Mars, one of which is the snake-stone, another the greenish turquoise. To both these gems are attributed certain occult powers pertaining to corruption and putrefaction; the snake-stone because of its connection with Scorpio, the zodiacal sign associated with Mars; the greenish turquoise because of its association with Venus, and its tendency to deteriorate into green. This not ouly destroys its value but suggests the outer allurement and inner corruption of Venusian attraction. These stones are connected with the infernal rites of necromancy, and the putrefying substance associated with alchemy.

To Jupiter, the father of the gods, were assigned the amethyst, the sapphire and the lapis lazuli. The deep blue of the lapis lazuli symbolizes the highest form of Jupiter, whose 'pure' colour is the uncompromising blue of heaven. In earliest times, before he became father of the gods, Jupiter had a feminine as well as a masculine aspect; and lapis lazuli is the Stone of Laz, the Arabian goddess of love. The sexual organ of Ishtar, the Assyrian Venus, was sometimes carved in this stone.

The violet amethyst is the stone traditionally associated with episcopal rank. It is the jewel of the high priest, of one who is not confused, distracted or overwhelmed by the intense fascination of external phenomena. In this sense the amethyst preserves its wearer from drunkenness. In some legends of the Holy Grail, the sacred vessel is said to have been fashioned of pure

amethyst. This jewel is also employed in magical rites to achieve political power and other types of ascendancy over the masses. In its highest aspect, however, it was believed to confer the Vision of Love, whereby Jupiter, represented by the wise ruler, governed the universe.

Jewels of Darkness

Like lapis lazuli, the sapphire also had its feminine symbolism, and in one of the ancient Indian Tantric texts the goddess Lalita is described as 'the Sapphire Devi (goddess) whose slender waist, bending beneath the burden of the ripe fruit of her breasts, swells into jewelled hips heavy with the promise of infinite maternities'. According to the 19th century occultist, Madame Blavatsky, the Buddhists ascribed to the sapphire 'a sacred magical power, which every student of psychological mesmerism will understand, for its polished and deep-blue surface produces extraordinary somnambulic phenomena'.

The star-sapphire, the onyx, the black diamond and the chalcedony are attributed to Saturn, the oldest of the gods. The star-sapphire symbolizes a void of darkness with a starry light at the heart which represents Saturn who, as the earliest, was also the sole light.

The dull and often black onyx is attributed to Saturn on account of the gloomy and leaden nature of that planet. It is used by sorcerers in works which are connected with malediction and death.

The black diamond is connected with the idea of nothingness, the starting point, the mystical void or chaos out of which all things emerged. It also typifies the pupil of the eye, and the Hebrew cabalists assigned to it the letter *Ayin*, which means an eye. The black diamond is therefore a symbol of Sight in Darkness, and of the Unseen Seer. Magicians seeking information, while remaining unseen, employed the Evil Eye; evil because feared; feared because unseen, although known to be present. The black diamond, with that curious reversal characteristic of many ancient symbols, from being an emblem of the Evil Eye, came to be regarded as a charm against it.

Chalcedony, a kind of onyx, is ascribed to Saturn because it is said to drive away

sadness; and Saturn is the epitome of melancholy and dark dread. A person who wears this stone is believed to be protected from the depressing influences symbolized by this planet.

To the ultimate God is ascribed the white diamond, the essence of brilliance. This jewel is a symbol of the True Will, of spiritual energy in its purest form.

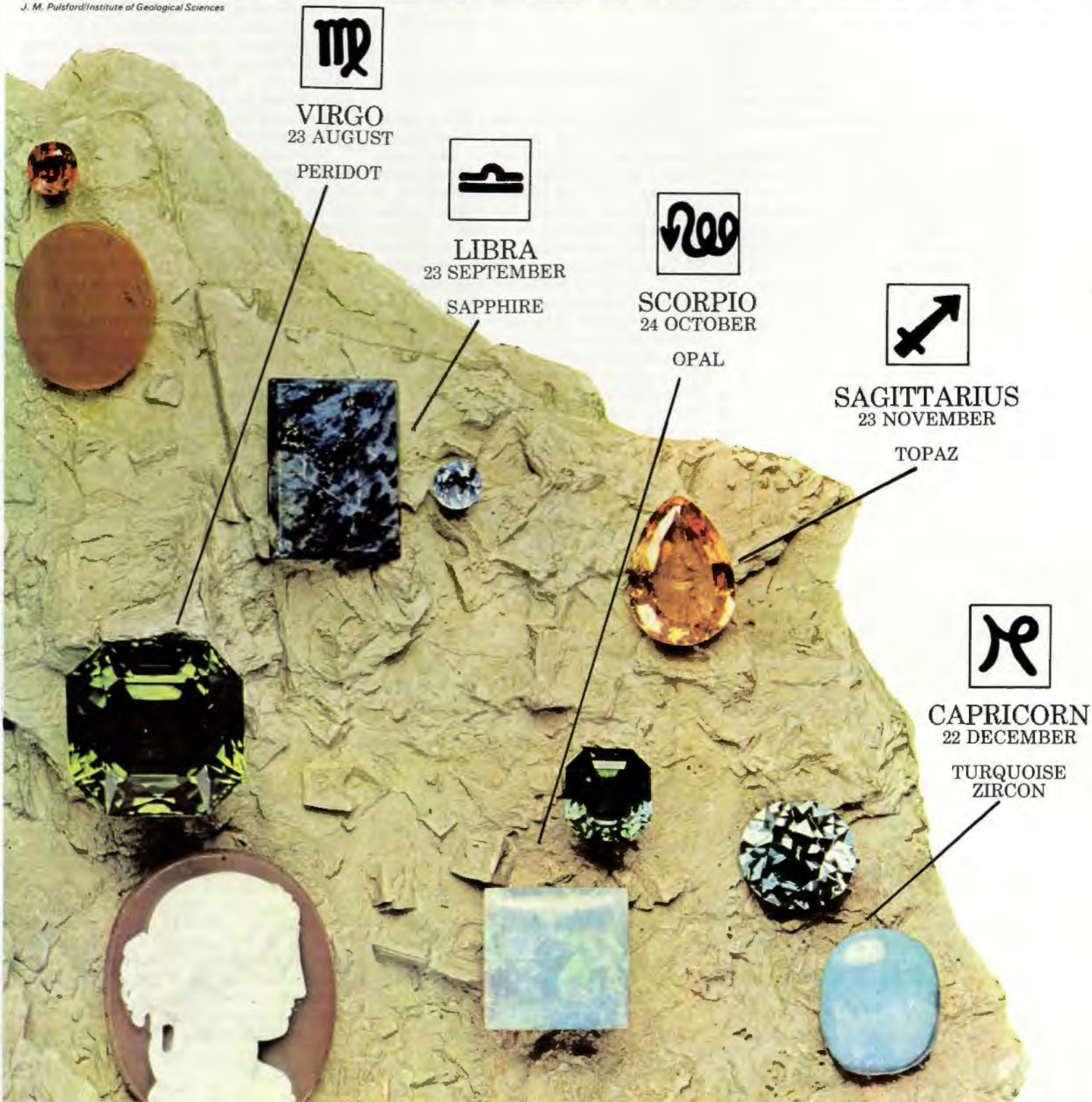
In Tantric Buddhism the diamond is likened to the *vajra*, or thunderbolt, symbolic of the Adamantine Consciousness which sustains and underlies existence. It is always coupled with the lotus, the feminine aspect of Consciousness, which acts as the objectifying agency of manifestation. The celebrated Tibetan prayer *om mani padme hum* (O, the jewel in the lotus), refers to the diamond vajra in union with its vehicle of manifestation. It is force manifesting as form; will manifesting as idea; the self manifesting as the world.

Disastrous Diamonds

In geometry, the diamond is constructed from a vesica, a pointed oval, which is formed by two intersecting circles. The vesica, like the lotus containing the vajra, also contains a diamond. The vesica was known under the name of the Evil Eye, and the talisman used to avert its baleful powers was the phallus. Thus both Eastern and Western systems of symbolism, associate the diamond with the emblem of male creative energy.

The legends surrounding such historic stones as the Regent Diamond, the Great Mogul, the Orloff Diamond, the Moon of the Mountains, the Koh-i-Noor and the Hope Diamond illustrate a totally different aspect of the diamond. The last of these has occult interest. It is said to have been stolen from an Indian temple and was sold to Louis XIV in 1668. The man who sold it was struck by various misfortunes, during which he lost all his money. He set sail for India again to make a second fortune but died during the journey. This diamond next appeared adorning the Marquise de Montespan, the beautiful and infamous mistress of Louis XIV who was involved with a group of magicians headed by the obscene Abbé Guibourg. He performed a series of Black Masses at her instance, in order that she

J. M. Pulsford/Institute of Geological Sciences



might obtain supreme power and bind the king's affections to herself alone. During the ritual, Guibourg slashed an infant's throat, the blood being consecrated over the naked body of the living altar, the Marquise herself. It was said that her sole ornament during the rite was the diamond. It was charged by the blood of repeated murders, committed to the accompaniment of diabolical profanations and blasphemies. But the evil sorceries recoiled upon the Marquise, for instead of advancing her cause in the royal household, she experienced an unobtrusive fall from favour (see BLACK MASS).

A century later the same diamond is said to have been in the possession of Marie Antoinette, and again it brought disaster for the 'Diamond Necklace Affair' was one of the incidents that led up to the French Revolution. Marie Antoinette lent the diamond to the Princesse de Lamballe. Shortly afterwards, fate overtook the Princess and she was butchered by the mob, parts of her body being displayed under the windows of the Temple where Louis XVI and his family were imprisoned.

Various other misfortunes attended successive owners of this malignant stone. It is said to have been bought for £18,000 by the London banker, Henry Thomas Hope, after whom the stone was named. In due course his descendant, Lord Francis Hope, came into possession of it, and he lost his fortune shortly afterwards. The trail of disasters continued — suicide, fatal accident, bankruptcy, disgrace — covering in all a period of two hundred years.

The Philosophers' Stone

The alchemists believed the diamond to have attained the pinnacle of beauty and perfection, equal only to that of gold among metals and the Sun among planets. Among the symbols of the alchemists was the Shameer, the strange diamond wrested from the beak of a cock, with which Moses is said to have cut the precious stones for the ephod, a Jewish priestly vestment, and which opened for King Solomon the ultimate gates of wisdom.

But of all precious stones, the star ruby is undoubtedly the most magical. It represents the creative energy of the Sun, or creator star, and symbolizes the star of magic, the pentagram. This star has been used from earliest times to conjure and control angels, demons, elementals and occult entities of all kinds.

The elusive yet far-famed Philosophers' Stone which the adept Trautmansdorf claimed to have discovered was bean-shaped and of reddish hue, emitting flashes of light when in total darkness. It is interesting to compare this with an Indian Brahmin's account of the Pentarbe, a magic stone that was exhibited before Apollonius of Tyana: 'In the night-time it glowed like fire, for it is red and emits rays; and if you look at it, it smites your eyes with a thousand gleams. And this light within it is a spirit of mysterious power, for it absorbs to itself everything in its neighbourhood.'

The Eastern version of the Philosophers' Stone seems to have been the fabled Chintamani, or wishing-gem which has the power to grant all desires. It is said to have belonged to Brahma, the creative aspect of the Hindu Triad. A *Tantra* describes the Supreme Goddess, united with her lord in a room of Chintamani stone, surrounded by a grove of heavenly trees on the island of gems, set in the ocean of ambrosia.

Of no less interest are the toadstones and corals of witchcraft: the Kaustubha jewel of Hinduism and the lightning stones of the ancient Mexicans.

Sir Walter Scott described his family's most curious possession as 'a toadstone . . . a celebrated amulet. It was sovereign for protecting new-born children and their mothers from the power of fairies, and has been repeatedly borrowed from my mother, on account of this virtue.'

The toadstone was any stone that resembled in shape or colour the toad or frog. But the most treasured kind was supposed to be found in the head of a living toad. In *As You Like It* Shakespeare speaks of 'the toad, ugly and venomous', as wearing 'a precious jewel in his head'. This stone was held to be an infallible remedy against curses and witchcraft.

The coral was believed to have similar powers. Paracelsus claimed that the wearing of red corals was a remedy against melancholy. Red corals transmit the solar influence; brown corals, on the contrary, transmit lunar vibrations. The red variety wards off evil spirits while the brown attracts them and helps them to manifest.

In Hinduism, the Kaustubha was a jewel obtained at the churning of the ocean, after Indra, the king of the gods, had been cursed by Shiva for slighting the sage Durvasas. It was a wish-granting gem worn by Krishna and Vishnu.

Lightning stones, sometimes known as thunderbolts, were created when the god of fire, in the form of lightning, flashed into sand, fusing and converting it into vitreous serpentine tubes. The ancient Mexicans revered them as the phallus of the fire god, and used them in their rituals of fertility.

During the course of centuries the tradition of the secret significance of jewels and precious stones became obscured and debased. The ascriptions of various stones to individuals, according to their date of birth, were calculated according to planetary influences operating through the Zodiac. And to the twelve zodiacal signs were allotted the stones with which tradition has familiarized us. In this way, the tradition has been passed down and become merged in the lore concerning the lucky stones and charms of modern astrology.

(See also ALCHEMY; EMERALD; JADE; PEARL; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

KENNETH GRANT

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The Purity of the Pearl

The idea of pearly purity is inseparably linked with the name Margaret, derived from the Persian *Murwari* (pearl, or child of light) . . . The use of the word as a proper name among the early Christians was doubtless suggested by the sweet simplicity and loveliness of the pearl, and by the beautiful symbolical references to this gem in the Scriptures; and the meaning of the name has been strengthened by the pure lives and the good deeds of the many beautiful Margarets in all lands, including the virgin martyr, St Margaret of Antioch . . . who, before the fifth century, was the embodiment of feminine innocence and faith overcoming evil, and also is often represented wearing a string of pearls.

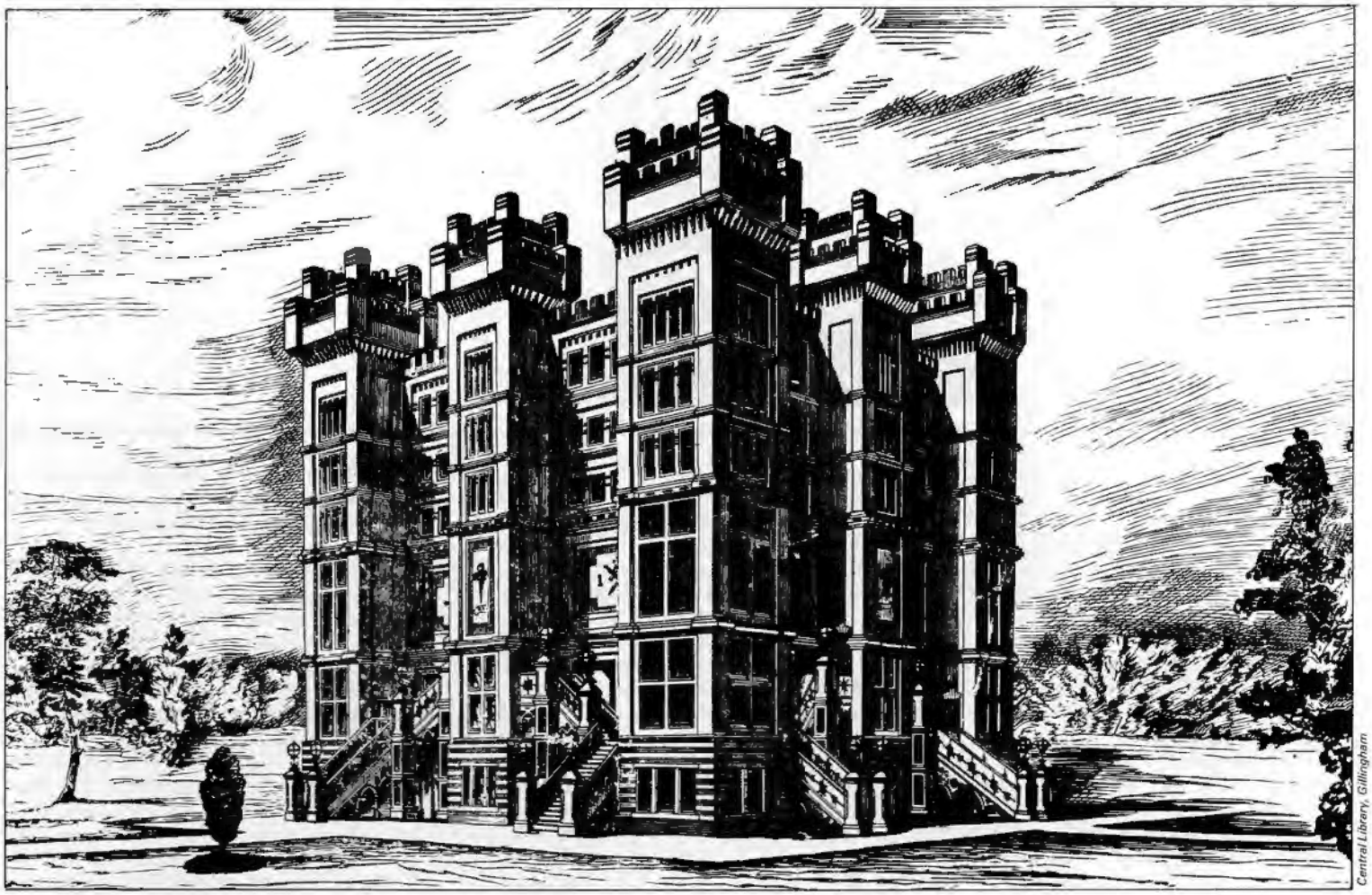
G. F. Kunz and C. H. Stevenson
The Book of the Pearl

Founded by James Jezreel, the New and Latter House of Israel preached exclusive salvation to its believers. But schism followed Jezreel's death and the massive half-built temple, a testimony to the prophet's power, fell into ruin

J. J. JEZREEL

THE NEW AND LATTER House of Israel, also known as the Jezreels or Jezreelites, were a minor religious sect of the 19th century. Until 1960 the terraced houses of Upper Gillingham in Kent were overshadowed by their headquarters, a great ruined hulk of a building. Its sides were adorned with huge plaques of carved trumpets and scrolls and local legend had it that the tower was built by the Jezreelites to reach to heaven, but the money ran out before that desirable end could be achieved. Since the followers of this sect made it a point never to cut their hair or shave, it was popularly believed by schoolboys that the Jezreelites expected God to return to earth and pull them up to heaven by their hair.

The truth is in a sense even more unlikely than the local stories. The massive tower was begun by the founder, James Jershom Jezreel, and should have served as a central preaching home for his sect. Jezreel's origins remain mysterious; he is known at one time to have served as a private in the army. He arrived in Gillingham in 1875 as James White but after getting in touch with a small religious group who believed themselves to be the elect of God, he announced himself as the messenger of the Lord and took his new name, a move which provided him with a fine apocalyptic set of initials. Jezreel's views were set down in 'the Flying Roll' which he claimed was divinely inspired and which distinguished his followers as the 144,000 (mentioned in Revelations 7.4) whom God had specially marked for salvation. It was in essence the same message preached by the 18th century prophetess Joanna Southcott (see SOUTHCOTT); and a similar exclusivity lives on in the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses



Central Library, Gillingham

An artist's impression of Jezreel's tower, which was intended to serve as the headquarters of the Jezreelite movement at Gillingham in Kent; according to local legend, the tower was planned to reach heaven

and of the British Israelites. Jezreel acknowledged his debt to Joanna Southcott and called himself the Sixth Trumpeter – one of a succession of people who had presented the new revelation.

He soon gathered around him a group of faithful followers and was able to move into Woodlands – a large house in Gillingham. There, he opened a school which taught a very narrow curriculum largely based upon Jezreel's own writings. He was not unaware of the importance of music and singing and this became a central part of the services which he held. In its daily conduct the sect had all the characteristics of the Protestant underworld. Like the aged retainer in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, they 'ransacked the Bible, pulling all the promises to themselves and flinging all the curses on others.' At the same time exclusive and eclectic, the New and Latter House of Israel clung to the belief that they and they alone were chosen by God.

The school and the centre at Woodlands drew the movement together in Gillingham, and converts in other places sold up their belongings and came to join the community. They deposited their worldly wealth in the treasury and many began to run the businesses which Jezreel started to set up in connection with the society. These included printing shops to produce the tracts and copies of the Flying Roll, and general stores and cobblers to serve the Jezreelites and any others who would use them. The organization was never very large but it attracted a number of wealthy people who put their entire fortunes at the disposal of Jezreel. Soon he conceived of a great temple which would serve as the focal point for his new religious community.

The Reign of Queen Esther

Land was bought high above the Medway River and, after the builder had modified the original plans, the work was under way. Below were to have been the printing presses while above it was intended to provide a great preaching deck where the prophet could address the faithful. In 1885 the foundations had been laid and building began when disaster struck – Jezreel himself, the successor of Joanna Southcott, the Prophet of God, died and the sect was thrown into disarray. Many followers were unable to believe that God's own prophet could have died and the leadership was very much in doubt until Jezreel's widow, now named Queen Esther, by sheer persistence and imperious self-will gained control.

In contrast to Jezreel, Queen Esther was singularly lacking in tact and organizational ability, she was autocratic and proud and soon complaints of her rule became widespread. People who had given all their money to the movement demanded it back, and some claimed to have been left in appalling circumstances by the Mother of Israel as the new leader styled herself. The society was threatened with schism and the threat became a reality when one faction seceded and moved to London. Work on the temple was held up when the builders demanded their money, and finally stopped when the money was not forthcoming.

The local press was loud in its denunciation of the Jezreelites and it was in the midst of a decidedly hostile community that Esther herself died in 1888. Serious dissension broke out among the remaining followers of Jezreel and the movement split into warring groups, just as the various sects claiming descent from Joanna Southcott had split earlier. There was a short revival of fortunes when an American calling himself Prince Michael arrived to claim leadership, but his endeavours to re-establish the New and Latter House of Israel met with no lasting success.

The London secessionists carried on and up to the late 1950's bearded speakers at Hyde Park Corner were still telling of the wonders of the Flying Roll. They disclaimed any connection with the Gillingham believers who lingered on, their temple uncompleted and derelict; in 1960 the edifice was destroyed. Although the New and Latter House of Israel has ceased to exist, buses still stop at 'the Jezreels', copies of the Flying Roll can still be bought, and James Jershom Jezreel is still reckoned as the Sixth Trumpeter by the present followers of Joanna Southcott, the Panacea Society of Bedford.

J. S. GUMMER

Jihad

An Arabic word meaning a 'striving', used specifically in Islam to denote a holy war or religious crusade against unbelievers; Mohammed resorted to arms to suppress his opponents in Mecca and later Moslem rulers often proclaimed jihads: those who died fighting in such a war became martyrs and were assured of eternal bliss with Allah; in a broader sense jihad means the struggle against one's lower nature.

See ISLAM: WAR.

Sonia Halliday

JINN

JINN IS A better spelling for the common English 'genie'. According to the Koran, Jinn were created of scorching heat or of a smokeless flame, and by popular report inhahited the earth long before Adam. It was believed that they lived underground or in Mt Qaf, which is said in Arabic mythology to encircle the earth.

Jinn are frequently mentioned in the Koran. Seemingly, pagans had treated them as semi-divine, for sura 6.100 says they worshipped them alongside God and sura 37. 158 that they believed in a relationship between God and the jinn. But in general, the jinn are treated as a race parallel, though inferior in honour, to man. Solomon is said to have commanded troops of them (sura 27.17; 34.11), his power over them being popularly believed to have lain in a ring inscribed with God's greatest name.

Jinn are mortal, are believed to propagate their species and to be long-lived. God created men and jinn to serve him hut many jinn are unbelievers and will go to hell. The first part of sura 72 tells of some jinn who heard Mohammed reciting the Koran and became believers, and sura 46. 28–31 tells of jinn hearing the Koran, summoning their people to belief, and warning them God cannot be frustrated.

Pagans, says the Koran, accused prophets, such as Noah, Moses and Mohammed of being jinn-possessed, *'majnun'* (a word which is now used generally to mean mad). Such accusations were strenuously denied. In the same way, when Mohammed was called a poet, this was refuted – not on the score of poetry being held disreputable, but because Arabs believed poets were inspired by jinn. Mohammed insisted that his inspiration came from God.

Jinn are generally thought of as having a group existence, with no separate identity, but there are classes which do have an individuality. Among these is the *ifreet*, mentioned once in the Koran (sura 27.34), as offering to bring Solomon the Queen of Sheha's throne. They are dreaded for their maliciousness. Another class is the *ghul* (from which the English word ghoul is derived), said to be ugly but to be able to change its form. It lurks in desert places, lights fires to mislead travellers, and entices them to their destruction. According to tradition, Mohammed denied the existence of the ghoul, but this has not made people abandon the belief.

There is some doubt about Iblees (from Greek *diabolos*, devil), chief of the devils (in Arabic, *shayatin*, plural of *shaytan*, Satan). He is called one of the jinn (sura 18.51), and Iblees says God created him of fire (sura 7.11), which connects him with the jinn; but elsewhere he is a rebellious angel cast out of heaven because he refused to join the other angels in obeying God's command to do obeisance to Adam. The Koran speaks both of devils and jinn listening outside heaven and being driven away by a bright flame, and it is uncertain whether devil is another name for jinn, or whether they both attempt to learn heaven's secrets.

Tradition often mentions jinn. It says everyone has a partner, one from the jinn and one from the angels; the former is disposed to lead one astray, thnugh Mohammed's jinn had accepted Islam. A tradition tells of an ifreet of the jinn unsuccessfully trying to interrupt Mohammed's prayers. Another says that on the first night of Ramadan the devils and rebellious jinn are chained. One says house snakes must not be killed, for they are resident jinn; but another says one should tell the snake to go away. If it remains after a third telling it is to be killed, for it is an infidel. Warning is given to bring children inside in the evening, for jinn are about and may seize them.

An Ifreet

The caravan . . . came at last, at the fall of a certain night, to a column of black stone to which a strange being was chained, one half of whose body was visible and the other half deeply hidden in the ground. The upper half seemed to be that of some monstrous birth imprisoned there by infernal powers. It was as black and large as the trunk of an old and naked palm-tree: it had two great black wings and four hands, of which two were like the taloned feet of lions. A shaggy covering of rude onager-tail hairs moved savagely upon the terrible head, while under the roofs of the sockets flamed two red eyes, and a third shone immovably green like that of a tiger or a panther, between the twin horns of the bull-like brow.

The Thousand and One Nights
(trans by Powys Mathers)

Right **A 19th century illustration from *Sindbad the Sailor* showing an ifreet – a malicious type of jinn – being burned out of the sky**

Jinn are believed to live in trees, wells, marshes, uninhabited and even inhabited houses, and to frequent lonely roads, market places, cemeteries, privies and drains. A pillar of sand rushing across the desert is a jinn driving along, and so is a waterspout. Inter-marriage between humans and jinn is possible, but the human partner may suffer.

Fortunately there are various methods of protection from the dangers of the jinn. If one climbs a date palm the jinn can be effectively frightened by singing, so that the work can proceed without incident. Loud sounds, music, and the shrill cries of women at weddings scare them away.

Jinn fear iron and steel, so some people wear a steel ring, and others put daggers or knives in places where protection is sought. Salt is another means of protection, for jinn abhor it.

Koranic and other sacred words are the most effective protection. Written charms, bearing verses from the Koran, names of God, magic squares, a group of magical signs called the seven seals, are commonly tied on children and animals and are also worn by adults. They protect the wearer from the machinations of the jinn who, in addition to producing calamities, are notorious for causing diseases. The last sura of the Koran includes a petition for protection from the jinn.

Some modern Moslems have tried to explain away the jinn, even suggesting they were microbes. Mohammed Ali, in his commentary on the Koran, has various explanations. At times he seems to feel they were devils invisible to men, but elsewhere he suggests they were strong men, slaves employed by Solomon, or Jews who heard the Koran recited. However, the common people's belief in a race of jinn who can harm or sometimes help, is more in keeping with the original meaning.

JAMES ROBSON

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British Museum / John Freeman

Did Joan of Arc's voices really come from God? Posterity, like her own time, has been curiously ambivalent in its attitude to the Maid of Orleans; at various times and in different quarters, she has been seen as a great warrior patriot, a deluded hysteric, a Devil-inspired witch and a stained-glass-window saint

JOAN OF ARC

THERE ARE FEW people nowadays who would dispute the spiritual stature of Joan of Arc, one of the most remarkable women who has ever lived, although over five centuries after her death there is still no common agreement as to the exact nature and source of her inspiration. The opinion of the judges at her trial in 1431, however, which led to the stake, was totally at variance with this assessment. They held that her visions were worthless, denied her the gift of prophecy, accused her of sorcery and above all censured the heretical pride which had induced her to believe that she was answerable only to God, and not to God's ministers on earth, which her judges represented.

A similar contradiction of views has persisted down the intervening centuries; defended in her own century by Thomas Basin, historian and Bishop of Lisieux, in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* Joan was represented as 'a sorceress condemned to burn', in fact, a witch (a view which was also put forward in recent times by Margaret Murray in her *Witch-Cult in Western Europe*). In the 16th century the Jesuit Father Guillaume Postel, himself known to practice magic and alchemy, defended her. In France Voltaire took the view that she was an unhappy wretch, given to hallucinations; and not long after Joan had begun to achieve the status of a national heroine, the celebrated writer Anatole France echoed this view of her as a deluded unfortunate in a biography published in 1908. Immediately, the Scottish writer Andrew Lang replied with his own biography, *The Maid of France*, maintaining that it was Anatole France himself who was deluded. In Bernard Shaw's eyes, Joan was a Protestant who insisted on the validity of her own personal vision, contrary to the view of Paul Claudel and Charles Péguy, the eminent Roman Catholic poets, who revered her as a mystic and a saint.

Voices of the Saints

The historical truth behind all these opinions is hard to establish. It has been suggested that she was the illegitimate daughter of Louis d'Orleans and Queen Isabeau, widow of Charles VI, and therefore half-sister of the Dauphin, Charles VII. Although this claim fails to stand up to close examination, it is strange, nevertheless, that the Dauphin gave her a coat of arms – an azure shield, a silver sword with a gold pommel, supporting a gold crown and flanked by two fleurs-de-lis in gold – a tremendous honour for an uneducated peasant girl. Despite this, it seems much more likely that she was the daughter of prosperous peasants from the village of Domrémy in Lorraine, close to the border of the kingdom of France, which at this time covered the region of Paris and was being sorely harrassed by the English.

The meteoric rise to fame of this illiterate country girl, her astonishing career, her miracles and her eventual martyrdom all stem from her belief in her power to deliver France from the English, a power which she was convinced had been divinely conferred on her for this purpose. As a little girl, she would often have been told how the kingdom of France had been lost by a wicked woman (Queen Isabeau, who had defected to the side of France's enemies), and that a virgin would restore it. There was another story that at the beginning of the 15th century a soothsayer named Marie d'Avignon had gone to the King and told him that the country was about to be ravaged by war, but that a maid would come who would lead France to victory. Since Joan was probably familiar with both these legends, she would not have thought it strange when 'voices', which she later identified as those of St Gabriel, St Michael, St Marguerite and St Catherine, began speaking to her one day when she was about 13 years old. Under a 'fairies' tree' close to her home, she made a vow to remain a virgin and to live a pure and godly life. At first the voices told her to go to the land of France, but later, when the news of the siege of Orleans reached Domrémy, they instructed her to rescue the city.

Despite her spirituality and growing reputation as a young visionary fallen from heaven, Joan was very much aware of practical realities, and her skill in dealing with unforeseen problems was considerable. In 1429 she asked the officer in command of her area, Robert de Baudricourt, to provide her with a horse and escort to enable her to go and see the Dauphin. After insisting that she should first be exorcized by a local priest, de Baudricourt agreed to her request. Furnished with an introduction to the Dauphin, Joan set off across occupied France to Chinon. Difficulties seemed to vanish before her; she made her way past road blocks, ambushes and sentries. When she arrived at Chinon, Charles hid himself among his courtiers, but she recognized him immediately, went up to him and whispered in his ear certain facts which were known only to him. Joan assured Charles, who had been thinking of relinquishing his throne, that he would be victorious and would reign with power and honour. She made four predictions: that she would deliver Orleans, if she were taken there with the troops; that Charles would be crowned at Rheims with Joan herself at his side; that Paris would return to French control, and that the Duke of Orleans would come back to France.

Mansell Collection

Three images of St Joan *Left* An idealized portrait of Joan as the saintly patriot *Right* Joan brought to trial as a heretic, weak against the combined might of Crown and Church: illustration from the Armagnac manuscripts *Following page* An incarnation of purity and truth, Joan leads the French troops into battle. She believed her bravery to be a gift from God, who had sent her to deliver France from the English: 19th century painting by Frank Craig

God's Field Commander

The court at Chinon was immediately mistrustful of this strange young girl who said she consorted with saints and angels, and who announced that she was sent by God; they suspected that she might be using diabolic powers. Joan had to undergo a lengthy ecclesiastical examination at Poitiers, in which she conducted herself well and impressed the clerics favourably. Later, with Charles, she declared that she would fight and that she was able to command through the grace of St Michael. Charles was convinced. Joan was sent to Tours and provided with armour and troops. She requested that a sword be brought to her from behind the altar of the church of St Catherine-de-Fierboys. On her standard, to which she was entitled by her military rank, was painted the King of Heaven holding an orb, together with the words 'Jesus Maria'. Thus equipped, she set out to join the army at Blois for the relief of Orleans.

At first, her military campaign was successful. Orleans was relieved, the English put to flight, and town after town in the Loire fell before her. On 17 July 1429 Charles was duly crowned at Rheims, as she had predicted. But victory was short-lived; on 23 May of the following year, outside the walls of Compiègne, she was taken prisoner and handed over to John of Luxembourg, the Burgundian commander, who eventually sold her to the English. Held captive in the castle of the Luxembourgs at Beaurevoir she again heard 'voices'; and obsessed with the idea of going to the help of the people of Compiègne, she leapt from the tower, suffering minor injuries. A second attempt to escape was similarly unsuccessful. Joan was then moved to Rouen, the English military centre, and imprisoned in the castle.

Her trial, on the charges of sorcery and heresy, began early in 1431. The English, for political reasons, were determined that Joan should be convicted, in the hope

Was Joan a Witch?

This intriguing theory of Joan's death has been rejected by most scholars

The witch-cult being a survival of an ancient religion, many of the beliefs and rites of these early religions are to be found in it. Of these the principal are: the voluntary substitute, the temporary transference of power to the substitute, and the self-devotion to death. As times changod and the ceremonies could no longer be performed openly, the sacrifices took on other forms . . . when the time came for the God or his substitute to be sacrificed, recourse was had to methods which hid the real meaning of the ceremony; and the sacrifice of the incarnate deity, though taking place in public, was consummated at the hands of the public executioner . . .

Read in the light of this theory much of the mystery which surrounds the fate of Joan of Arc is explained. She was put to death as a witch, and the conduct of her associates during her military career, as well as the evidence at her trial, bear out the fact that she belonged to the ancient religion, not to the Christian . . .

The belief that Joan was God Incarnate will account, as nothing else can, for the extraordinary supineness of the French, who never lifted a finger to ransom or rescue Joan from the hands of either the Burgundians or the English. As God himself or his voluntary substitute she was doomed to suffer as the sacrifice for the people, and no one of those people could attempt to save her . . .

An intensive study of this period might reveal the witch organisation at the royal Court and possibly even the Grand-master to whom Joan owed allegiance, the 'God' who sent her. Giac, the King's favourite, was executed as a witch, and Joan's *beau duc*, the Duke d'Alençon, was also of the fraternity.

Margaret Murray *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*

Private collection, London

that this would discredit Charles and so improve their failing fortunes. Joan was handed over to Pierre Cauchon, a dispossessed anglophile Bishop who had applied for the office of judge in the hope of personal preferment; to this end he selected a tribunal likely to favour and achieve a conviction.

Trial and Judgement

The lynchpin of Joan's trial was to resolve whether it was God or the Devil who guided her. The theologians of the Church, the clerics and masters of the University of Paris were agreed that Joan had used witchcraft. It was claimed that the judges had proof that she was a 'magician, a heretic, a schismatic'. It was alleged that her 'voices' were the result of mandrake, a plant containing a narcotic juice which causes delirium and to which many magical properties were ascribed, including the power of speech; it was said that Joan had kept a root of this plant in her bodice. Her judges insisted that her apparitions were in fact infernal spirits, that her voices were satanic interventions, that her premonitions were witchcraft, and that her battles were diabolic crimes.

The indictment held that she was 'superstitious, a soothsayer, an idolator, an invoker of devils, a blasphemer against God and his saints'. It enumerated her 'detestable and wicked crimes and sins' as fruits of her 'proud spirit'. The Inquisition refused to believe that the saints had visited her. Charles VII's coronation had been 'a work of hell', because she had invoked evil spirits. It was further maintained that she was 'perfidious, cruel, tainted with human blood'. The University of Paris, whose opinion had been sought, affirmed that Joan was 'a woman of Belial, Satan and Behemoth'. On these grounds the accused was found guilty of heresy, and liable to the extreme penalty unless she submitted. Confused and appalled at her imminent fate, Joan recanted and was taken back to prison. Abjuring her recantation, she was handed over to the secular arm and on 30 May 1431 was burned as a relapsed heretic.

Seen to Exhale a Dove

After the fire had consumed her, there were some who doubted whether she had actually suffered this fate, so the executioner was ordered to separate the ashes and show the people that her remains really were there, as it was thought that her witchcraft had caused her to disappear, just at the crucial moment. The believers wept and crossed themselves; they thought that they had burned a saint, and it was murmured that as she breathed her final breath, she was seen to exhale a dove, the symbol of the Holy Ghost. The executioner cut open her pathetic remains, and destroyed what was left of her entrails. He was ordered to throw the heart and the ashes into the Loire lest any miracle-working relics should remain.

At Joan's trial, the most highly esteemed judges, jurists, prelates and the Dominican Inquisitor had affirmed her diabolism, her heretical and schismatic condition; only Jean Gerson, Master of the University, had defended her in the first place and declared her innocence when the clerics united against her. Some years later, however, in 1456, other equally eminent judges with similar assurance proclaimed the iniquity of her first trial, asserted her orthodoxy and admirable merits, and annulled the judgement of 1431. Nearly five centuries later, in 1909, Joan was beatified and in 1920, canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. On the latter occasion, one saw the curious spectacle of her being acclaimed at the same time by the Royalists and by the Communists, who saw her as a daughter of the revolutionary people, by the anti-clerical faction who saw her as an opponent of the priests, by the militant atheists and by the occultists. More recently still – and perhaps still more curious – Joan of Arc, whose effigy with its sword and banner may be seen in many cathedrals, was described by the eminent Jesuit, Cardinal Danielou, as 'a model of lay saintliness'.

Thus the Church, which had first sent her to her death and centuries later canonized her, has now placed her on the fringe of its holy community and regards her as a laywoman, as if she were not recognized among its saints.

F RIBADEAU DUMAS

FURTHER READING: For a translation of the trial, see W. P. Barrett, *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (Gotham House, 1932). See also Frances Gie, *Joan of Arc* (Harper and Row, 1981); R. Pernoud, *Joan of Arc* (Stein and Day, 1969).

How can innocent suffering be reconciled with the image of a just God? This is the central theme of the book of Job

JOB

PROBABLY THE MOST significant book in the Hebrew Bible, the book of Job expresses in dramatic form a great crisis that had gradually built up in Hebrew religion, and it represents a noble but unsuccessful attempt to solve that crisis.

Ancient Hebrew religion was essentially ethnic in character. It centred on the relation between God, Yahweh (see YAHWEH) and his chosen people, Israel. In this relationship, the individual counted only in so far as he promoted or hindered the nation's service to its god. He had no ultimate significance; when he died, his shade descended into the gloomy depths of Sheol, beyond the care or interest of Yahweh. The only hope was that his pious service to Yahweh would be rewarded by a long and prosperous life, and that his children would succeed him within the holy community of Israel.

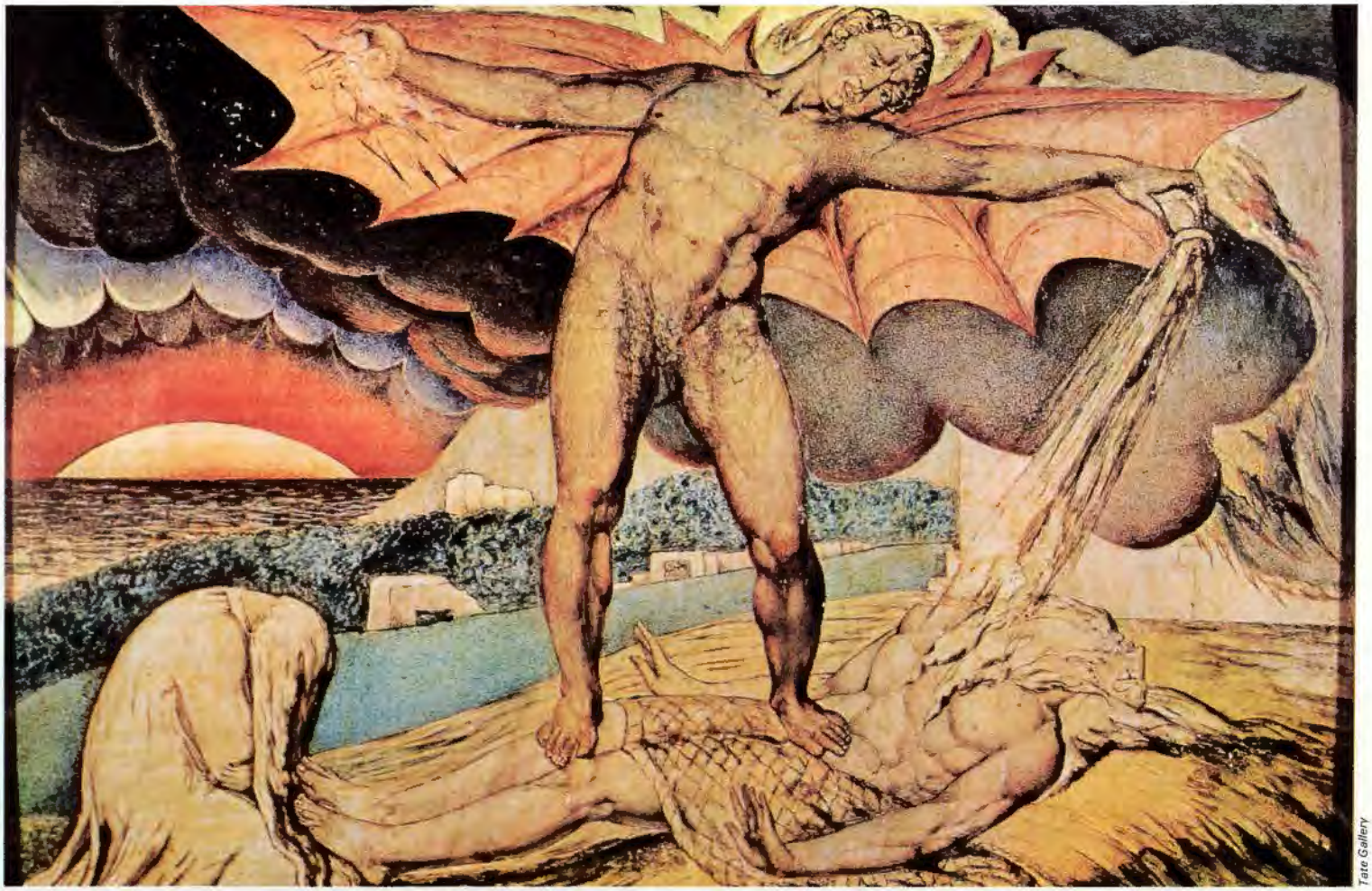
Hebrew religion in its early form, therefore, held no promise of a happy life after death. Many Israelites found consolation in in the mortuary cults of Canaan, which presupposed that the dead lived on in their tombs; but such practices were fiercely condemned by the Yahwist prophets. In time, however, a sense of individuality began to emerge, and it coincided with a significant development in the conception of Yahweh. The prophets increasingly emphasized both Yahweh's omnipotence and his moral character. This changing conception inevitably raised a difficult problem about the fate of the individual and Yahweh's attitude to him. Experience often showed how specious was the Yahwist doctrine of man; for frequently it was not the pious but the wicked who lived long and prosperously. How was this fate to be reconciled with the idea of Yahweh as a just god? For there was no hope of restitution in the grim pit of Sheol. This problem was felt most keenly by those who wished to believe in the justice of Yahweh, but could not close their minds to the facts of experience. Such a one was the anonymous author of the book of Job who sought to answer this challenge to his faith in Yahweh.

Satan Challenges Job

The book of Job contains a multitude of literary problems for which no certain solution has been found. Scholars date the book between 700 and 200 BC. They are generally agreed that the prose prologue and epilogue were originally distinct from the main poetical dialogue, and that the speech of Elihu (Joh 32–37) was a later interpolation. Of Job himself nothing is otherwise known although there are a few brief references to him in the Bible.

The prologue (Job 1–2) sets the scene for the ensuing drama. It starts by representing Job as a rich sheikh, dwelling in the land of Uz (possibly the neighbourhood of Edom or the Hauran, east of the Dead Sea). He is described as 'blameless and upright, one that feared God, and turned away from evil'. The scene then changes to the court of Yahweh, where the 'Sons of God' assemble, and among them comes Satan. At this stage in Hebrew thought Satan was not yet the Devil, but a cynical observer of mankind. When Yahweh praises the rectitude of Job, Satan answers that Job fears God because God has blessed him with success and happiness. And he goes on to suggest that if misfortune befell Job, he would renounce God. The challenge is accepted, and God allows Satan to afflict Job.

In the subsequent series of personal disasters Job loses all his wealth and his children are killed. But his faith in God is not shaken. Satan, however, is not impressed, and suggests that Job's integrity would not stand up to the test of physical suffering. Yahweh again allows Satan to try the unfortunate Job. He is tormented by boils; in his misery 'he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes'. His wife exhorts him to renounce God and die; but he remains steadfast in his allegiance. Then Job's so-called 'comforters', Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, visit him. They do not come to comfort him, but to endeavour to explain Job's misfortune in terms of the traditional Yahwist view of life. With their arrival the prologue ends. The stage is now



Tate Gallery

Challenging his faith, Satan smites Job with boils: from the series illustrating the book of Job by William Blake

set for the series of dialogues in which Job and his 'comforters' debate the cause of his unhappy lot.

Job's problem is that of reconciling innocent suffering with belief in a just and omnipotent God. The poignancy of Job's dilemma lies in his acceptance of the orthodox Yahwist creed that man did not survive death. This belief is presented with vivid imagery (Job 14.7–12):

> For there is hope of a tree,
> if it be cut down, that it will sprout again . . .
> But man dies, and is laid low;
> Man breathes his last, and where is he?
> As waters fail from a lake,
> And a river wastes away and dries up,
> So man lies down and rises not again,
> Till the heavens are no more he will not awake,
> Or be roused out of his sleep.

The theme of the 'comforters' is that misfortune is the inevitable penalty of misdoings (4. 7–9):

> Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?
> Or where were the upright cut off?
> As I have seen, those who plough iniquity, and sow trouble reap the same.
> By the breath of God they perish,
> and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

But Job knows that he has not merited such punishment, and he rejects their shallow philosophy. As the dialogue proceeds, Job turns more to interrogating God than answering his 'comforters'. In the depth of his despair, he implores the Almighty to cease from tormenting him. But he cannot leave the problem of the seeming injustice of God, and finally he calls on God to justify himself.

God's answer is to overwhelm Job by a parade of his cosmic activity, so that Job's personal problem is dwarfed into insignificance, and he is made to abhor himself in dust and ashes (chapters 38–41). This was the only solution that the author could offer for the problem of innocent suffering. In the prose epilogue that follows, an even more unsatisfactory ending is offered. God rebukes Eliphaz and his friends, and endows Job with greater prosperity than he had before, thus endorsing the orthodox view that God rewards the just with material blessing (Job 41. 7–17).

The book of Job, or at least the poetical part of it, is thus a noble failure. Its author had agonized over the problem of innocent suffering, but had failed to find a really adequate moral answer. The tension was only eased finally in the 2nd century BC, when Hebrew religion accepted belief in a resurrection of the dead and a post-mortem judgement (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

An ancient Mesopotamian writing that is sometimes called 'The Babylonian Job' contains a long complaint from a just man overwhelmed by undeserved misfortune. But the purpose of the writing seems rather to be that of commemorating the ultimate saving intervention of the god Marduk than of discussing the problem of innocent suffering in relation to the gods.

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Splendour of God

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:
Gird up your loins like a man;
I will question you, and you declare to me.
Will you even put me in the wrong?
Will you condemn me that you may be justified?
Have you an arm like God,
and can you thunder with a voice like his?
Deck yourself with majesty and dignity;
clothe yourself with glory and splendour.
Pour forth the overflowings of your anger,
and look on every one that is proud, and abase him.
Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low;
and tread down the wicked where they stand.
Hide them all in the dust together;
bind their faces in the world below.
Then will I also acknowledge to you,
that your own right hand can give you victory.

Job, chapter 40

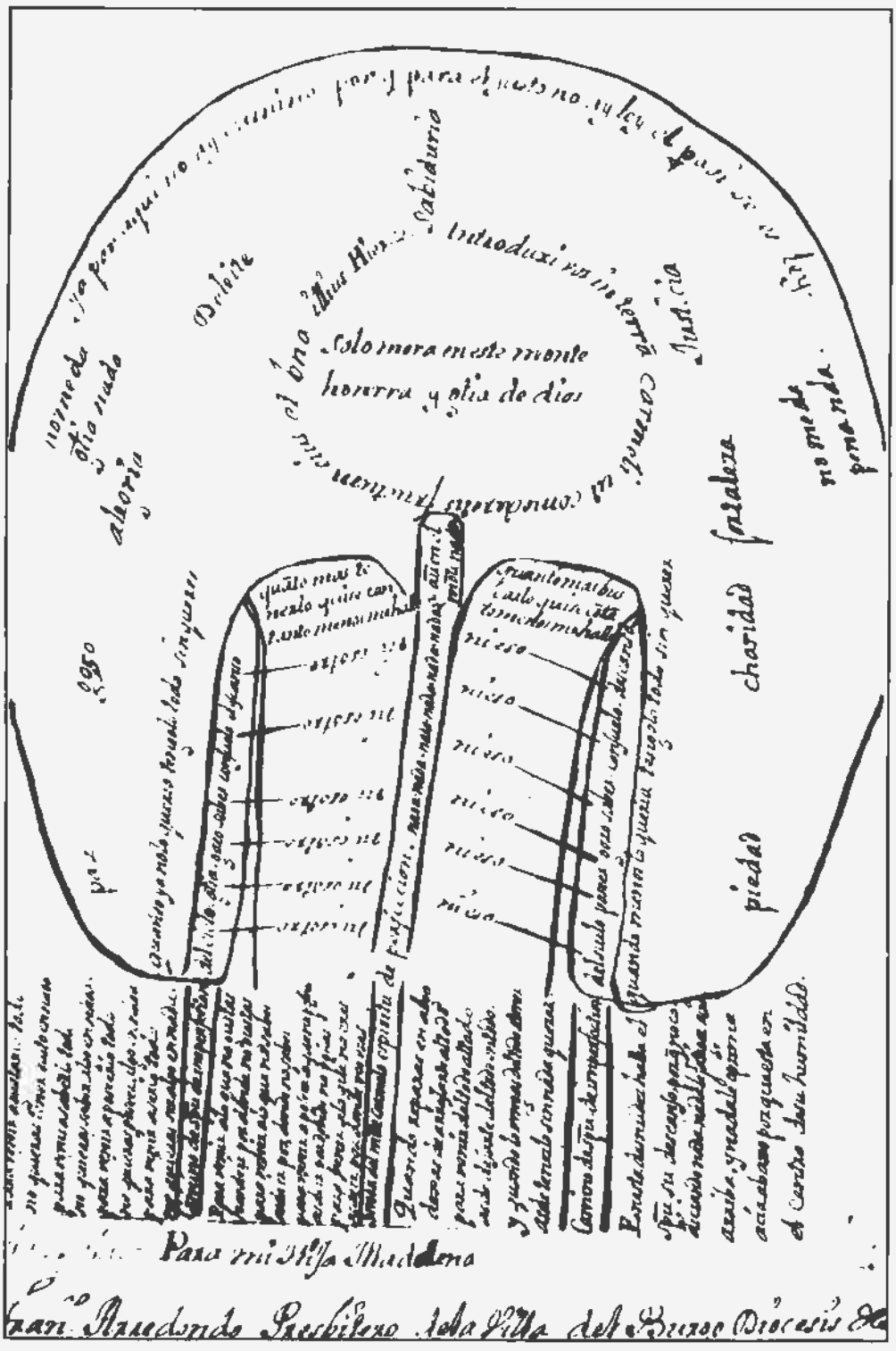
FURTHER READING: R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Harper and Row, rev. ed. 1948); J. Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible* (Scribner, rev. ed. 1963); S. G. F. Brandon, *Man and his Destiny in the Great Religions* (University of Toronto, 1962).

The teaching of St John of the Cross, contained in his beautiful mystical poems and commentaries, reveals how the soul becomes purified in its development towards a perfect union with God

JOHN OF THE CROSS

THIS GREAT SPANISH mystic was the third son of Gonzalo de Yepes, a Castilian silk-merchant. When Gonzalo died, less than three years after John was born, the family fell into great poverty and the mother and the eldest child, Francisco had to work to support them. John himself, as he grew up, was apprenticed to various trades but was able to attend the Jesuit grammar school at Medina. At the age of 21 he entered the Carmelite monastery in the same town, taking the name of John of St Matthias. He then went to study at the University of Salamanca and in 1567, at the age of 25, he was ordained priest, after which he returned to Salamanca for a final year of study. He had already formed a wish to enter into a stricter way of life and had contemplated joining the austere Carthusian Order, when a meeting with Teresa of Avila brought a realization of his true vocation. Teresa had already begun her great work of Carmelite reform and had been instructed to found two monasteries for Carmelite friars who wished to practise the primitive rule (see TERESA OF AVILA).

John met Teresa immediately after his ordination and when he had finished his studies, along with two others he entered the reformed house at Duruelo, and changed his name to that of John of the Cross. For some years all went well, but in 1575 a violent reaction set in against the whole movement for reform and John was imprisoned at Toledo by a Carmelite community of the mitigated rule, who were opposed to reform. He was placed in a small, badly-lit cell, where he was inadequately fed and harshly treated in an attempt to persuade him to give up his adherence to the reform. His spirit remained unbroken and after some eight or nine months he escaped from Toledo to southern Spain. For the remaining 13 years of his life he acted as confessor and spiritual adviser to many nuns of the reform, in addition to holding various administrative positions in the Order. He died in 1591, at the age of 49.



Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid

Left **St John's sketch-plan of the Ascent of Mount Carmel: a summary of his teaching, it depicts the process by which the soul reaches the heights of mystical contemplation** ***Right*** **An inspired re-creation of a familiar theme: the Crucifixion by Salvador Dali, from a drawing of a vision by St John; below the cross is a seascape reminiscent of the Sea of Galilee**

Journey of the Soul

Apart from his letters of spiritual advice, John's systematic treatment of mystical theology is contained in a number of poems, which he subsequently explained in a series of commentaries. *The Spiritual Canticle* is a long dialogue between the soul, the Bride, and her Beloved, clearly inspired by the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament. The greater part of this poem was composed during his imprisonment in Toledo, the commentary having been written in 1584 and later revised. The Bride complains of her Lover's absence and tells of her longing for him. He is all in all to her, yet he eludes her. But this is the testing, purifying process, to prepare her for the raptures of final union.

Ascent of Mount Carmel is a study of the process by which the soul reaches the heights of mystical contemplation. It is cast in the form of a commentary on a poem, *The Dark Night* (composed between 1579–81), though there is another commentary on the same poem, written apparently at much the same time as *The Ascent*. A later poem, *Living Flame of Love*, was composed at some date between 1582–85, with a subsequent commentary. It is universally recognized that John's poetry is of the highest quality, although his prose style is of a lower level of inspiration.

Two other works should also be mentioned: John's remarkable drawing of Christ crucified, the result of a vision, and his sketch-plan of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, which summarizes his teaching on the subject of spiritual and mystical progress.

The basis of the teaching of John of the Cross, drawn largely from his own experience, is that the human person is, in St Augustine's words, 'made for God' and can only be fulfilled, perfected, become fully itself 'in God'. He describes the process by

which this absorption into God is achieved and the state of the soul when thus absorbed. John's teaching is addressed primarily to the enclosed, 'contemplative' religious, though it has its value for all Christians. Whilst he sketches out an ideal, typical journey of the soul towards God, he is the first to insist that no two souls are alike and that each man's way of coming to God will be peculiar to him and will not necessarily be helpful to another. Yet there is little doubt that what John has to say has been, and will be, of practical value for all who are seriously interested in the mystical way.

Night of the Senses

The soul moves towards God in two stages, which are really complementary aspects of one conditioning. That conditioning is the stripping away of all the obstacles that come between the creature and its Creator. The obstacles may be divided into what may roughly be called moral and what may be described as psychological. The moral obstacles are the desires which spring from selfishness or any form of self-regarding feelings. These must be purged away in the 'night of the senses'. All stirring of desire, even for innocent pleasure, must be 'mortified', put to death, annihilated. This purification is the work of normal asceticism, the ordinary acts of self-denial, self-discipline, the refusal of all enjoyment, the training of the will to an actual preference for the harder, more distasteful, more painful. Thus, he says: 'Strive not after that which is most easy, but after that which is most difficult . . . not after that which is most pleasant, but after that which is most unpleasant. . . Strive not to desire anything but rather nothing.'

'The night of sense is common and the lot of many; these are the beginners. The night of the spirit is the portion of the very few. The night of sense is of ordinary occurrence. Recollected persons enter the dark night sooner than others after they have begun their spiritual course. In general there lapses no great length of time after they have begun, before they enter the night of sense, and most of them do enter it, for they suffer aridities' (a feeling of distaste for prayer and that sense of the absence of God, which are the special suffering of those whose lives are, by dedication, God-centred and prayer-centred).

'During the aridities of the night of sense, God is drawing the soul out of the way of sense into that of spirit, from meditation to contemplation . . . God is leading them by the way of contemplation, which knows no imagination or reasoning . . . All they have to do is to keep their souls unembarrassed and at rest from all thoughts and all knowledge, contenting themselves with directing their attention simply and calmly towards God. . .'

The second stage of this purifying process is the 'Night of the Soul' or 'the Spirit', a night more terrible still, in which the soul, passive under the influence of God, finds memory, imagination, intellect, and will itself emptied of everything that is familiar and normal. This is because the normal objects of

Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum

memory and imagination, of intellect and will are necessarily finite and therefore, compared with the infinity that is God, can only betray and falsify the ultimate truth. If the powers of the soul are to be made fit for the vision of God they must be stretched beyond their normal capacity. So long as they are concerned with what is less than the pure being of the Infinite, they will be unable to rise above their own limitations. Nor can the soul achieve this purification by any effort of its own. God takes charge and does the work in and for the very centre and core of its being.

A Positive Purgation

All this sounds, and could be interpreted as being, so negative and destructive as to be totally inhuman, Yet, in principle, there is no difference between the demands of John of the Cross and the obligation that the poet John Milton felt himself to be under, '. . . to scorn delights and live laborious days'. For the doctrine, however starkly and forbiddingly stated, is essentially positive and constructive. The purgation is, and must be seen to be, no more than a means to an end, an end that is one of total fulfilment, perfection, sheer bliss. Certainly it should not be interpreted as suggesting that any created reality is in itself tainted, corrupt, sinful. Not only would this be contrary to the whole Christian belief in the creative activity of God and in the Incarnation which implies the involvement of God in his own creation; it is also contrary to John's own attitude. His poetry is filled with a sense of the beauty of creation, which would be impossible in a man who had stripped himself of all appreciation of natural reality:

> Of flowers and emeralds fine
> Gathered when dawn's dews gleam,
> Gay garlands we shall twine.
> Fragrant with your love's tender breath,
> Bound with one hair of mine.

John's doctrine is essentially one of balance. In God is found the fullness of all perfection, of beauty, of happiness, of wisdom. To arrive at union with that source of all that is worth while it will be necessary to pass through a preparatory stage in which experiences of everyday life seem to disappear. But the more completely the soul gives itself up to this process of purification, the more rapidly and completely will it find again all that it had thought lost, all that and so much more. Yet, if the surrender is not total, if the ascetic is in effect giving up *in order to* profit more completely, this is no true purgation. It is simply an act of selfishness. So the surrender must be absolute with no thought of recompense.

Again, as is the way of mystical writers, the final union of the soul with God is pictured in language drawn from the analogy of human love-making:

> O, burning, burning sweet!
> O wound, O welcome blow!
> O gentle hand, O touch that soothes and thrills,
> Filling with life complete,
> Cancelling all I owe:
> Love's sword revives even as it kills.

By contrast, John's prose commentary, couched in the language of scholastic metaphysics, loses something of this passion. 'The end I have in view is the divine Embracing, the union of the soul with the divine substance. In this loving, obscure knowledge God unites himself with the soul eminently and divinely.

'This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God himself who is then felt and tasted . . . This touch of knowledge and of sweetness is so deep and profound that it penetrates into the inmost substance of the soul . . . The soul prays to see the Face of God, which is the essential communication of his divinity to the soul, without any intervening medium, by a certain knowledge thereof in the Divinity. This is something beyond sense and divested of accidents, inasmuch as it is the contact of pure substances, that is of the soul and of the Divinity . . .'

Although much of John's teaching is concerned with the process of purification, and he insists on the need for self-denial, the 'self' here is not the true personality, but represents all those tendencies and limitations in our nature which impede our true self-development. In the end, our happiness is seen to lie in the perfection of love, which transforms, as only love can, through union with the beloved. 'At the end of life it is on love that we shall be judged.'

THOMAS CORBISHLEY

FURTHER READING: **K. Kavanaugh, trans., *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross* (ICS Publications, 1979).**

Giraudon/Bibliothèque de Moulin

The book of Jonah is important not only because of its descriptions of the adventures of Jonah, but because it carries a warning from God against Jewish religious exclusiveness

JONAH

IN POPULAR THOUGHT Jonah is inevitably linked with the 'whale' that swallowed and regurgitated him. It is unfortunate that attention is concentrated so excessively on this intriguing incident, for it means that the real significance of Jonah's story is missed.

According to a brief reference in 2 Kings 14.25, Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a native of Gath-hepher and renowned as a prophet; he seems to have lived in the 8th century BC. The book of Jonah, which records his adventures, was written much later and probably dates between 400 and 200 BC. Its author is unknown.

The book of Jonah can be classified

For Christians, the story of Jonah has come to be linked with the Resurrection, for Christ likened Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale to his own three days 'in the heart of the earth' *Left* Illustration from the 12th century *Bible de Souvigny* showing Jonah being cast from the boat into the jaws of the whale, to abate the storm *Right* Jonah disappears into the body of the whale; detail from a mural by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

as a *midrash*, a Jewish moral tale, destined to correct the Jewish disposition to believe that God was concerned only with the Jews, and not with the Gentiles also. Jonah typifies Jewish exclusiveness, and his story is intended to show how God sought to persuade him to take a wider view of human needs and divine providence.

The story opens with Yahweh (see YAHWEH) commanding Jonah: 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.' Jonah tries to avoid the mission, but not from fear as it later transpires. He takes a ship from Joppa to Tarshish, which was probably a Phoenician port in the western Mediterranean; its remoteness from Palestine indicates Jonah's desire to get as far away as possible from the God of Israel. But Yahweh was not to be thus circumvented. He sends a storm that almost wrecks the ship. And the sailors said: 'Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.' The lot falls on Jonah. Realizing he is the cause of impending disaster, Jonah tells the Phoenician crew: 'Take me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; . . . it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.' When they do so, Yahweh 'appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights'. It should be noted, incidentally, that the Hebrew *dagh gadhol* means 'great fish', not necessarily a whale; it is in the reference to the story in the gospel of Matthew (12.40) that the English translation presents the monster as a 'whale'.

At Yahweh's instruction, the great fish 'vomited out Jonah upon the dry land'. Having learned his lesson, Jonah proceeds to Nineveh and proclaims Yahweh's message. What Jonah had originally feared then happens. The Ninevites repent and Yahweh forgives them. To Jonah this was intolerable, for the Ninevites were the pre-eminent enemies of his people. In his anger, he reproves Yahweh for not punishing the hateful nation. He has to be taught a further lesson. It is very hot, and Yahweh causes a gourd to grow up miraculously and shade Jonah. But as Jonah is rejoicing in the shade, Yahweh destroys the gourd, and as Jonah faints

Scala

After three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, Jonah is thrown up onto dry land: 19th century German print

Ted Binet

under the hot wind, the divine lesson is finally driven home. Jonah is reproved by Yahweh for lamenting the destruction of the gourd, while desiring that Nineveh and its inhabitants should all perish.

The historical significance of the book of Jonah thus lies in its being a Jewish protest against the racial exclusivism of the Jews. But in Christianity it acquired another significance: 'the sign of Jonah' became a prototype of the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is recorded to have said: 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12.40). The symbolism caught the imagination of the early Christians, and depictions of Jonah being cast to the sea monster (shown as a kind of dragon) and resting under the shade of the gourd often appear in the iconography of the catacombs and the sculptured sarcophagi of the 4th and 5th centuries. The use of 'Jonah' as a synonym for one who brings or attracts misfortune derives from the predicament in which the Phoenician sailors found themselves.

FURTHER READING: J. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Scribner, rev. ed. 1963); L. H. Brockington in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Nelson, 2nd ed. 1962).

Joseph of Arimathea

In the Bible the rich Jew who took Christ's body from the cross for burial; in the Middle Ages he became the subject of many legends concerning the Holy Grail which he caused to be made and in which he caught the blood of the crucified Christ: according to one account he brought the precious relic to Glastonbury in Britain, the site in the ancient Isle of Avalon, where, in obedience to a vision, he built a chapel.

See GLASTONBURY; GRAIL.

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence

Joss-stick

A fragrant tinder mixed with clay; burnt as an offering in Chinese rituals because the aromatic smell is thought to be pleasing to the gods and possibly odious to evil spirits: the word joss, meaning a Chinese idol, was coined by 16th century Portuguese sailors in the East Indies, and derives from the Latin *deus* meaning god.

See PERFUME.

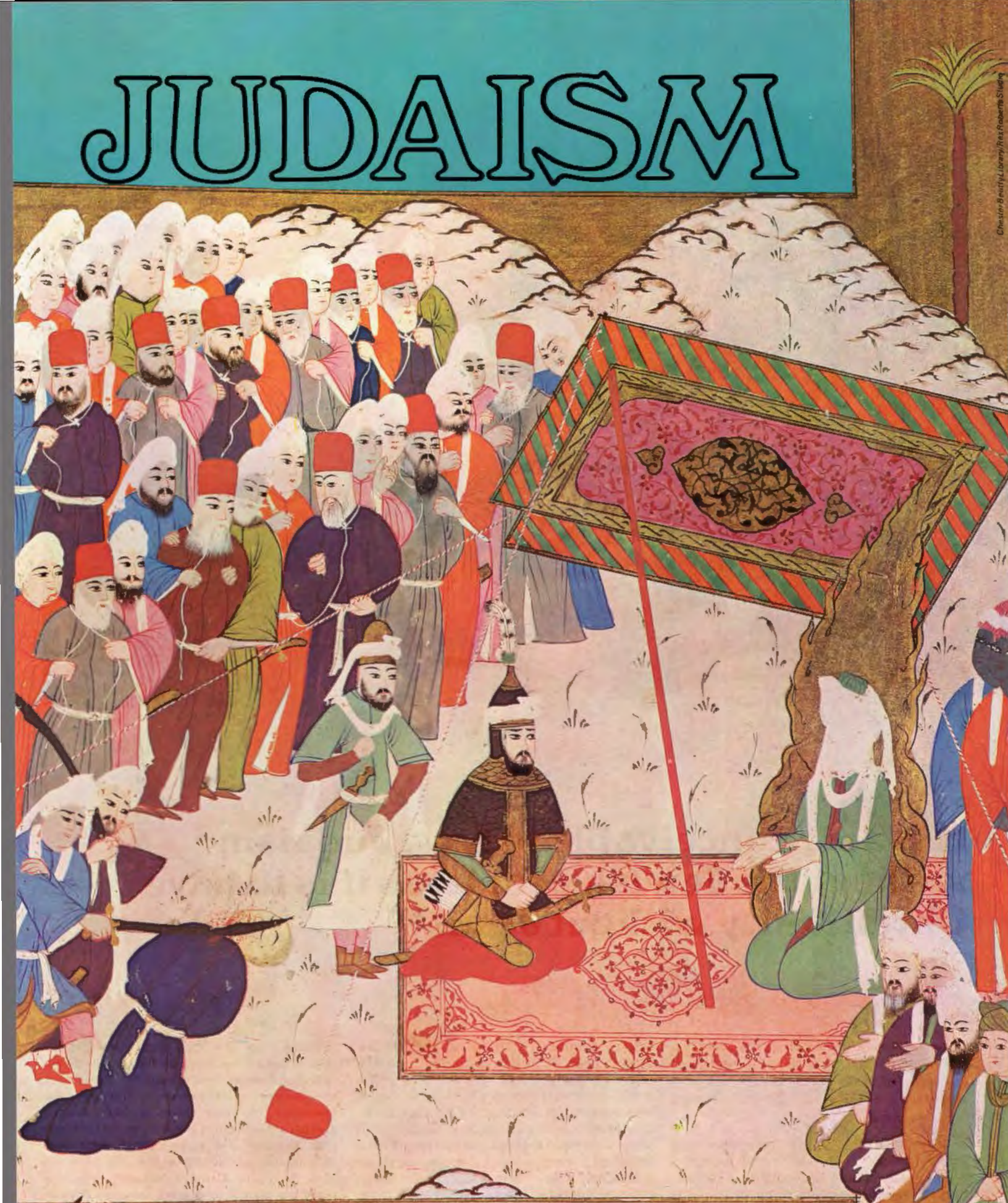
Camera Press, London

Journey

Symbol of man's attempt to gain salvation, spiritual perfection, paradise; examples include Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the quest of the Grail; a method of attaining holiness or wisdom is often called a path, road or way; in the religion of Isis human life was a voyage across the sea of the sinful world; similarly a pilgrimage is an expedition to a holy place for spiritual merit.

See PATHS; PILGRIMAGE.

JUDAISM



دیدی هر یکی مسلمان برجهودی ولد دلر ابن هشام ایدر اول تاجرکم
محیصه سلم شدی انی اول کون ولد ردی قرنداش حویصه اول کونک

Samuel H. Kress Collection, of Arizona Art Gallery

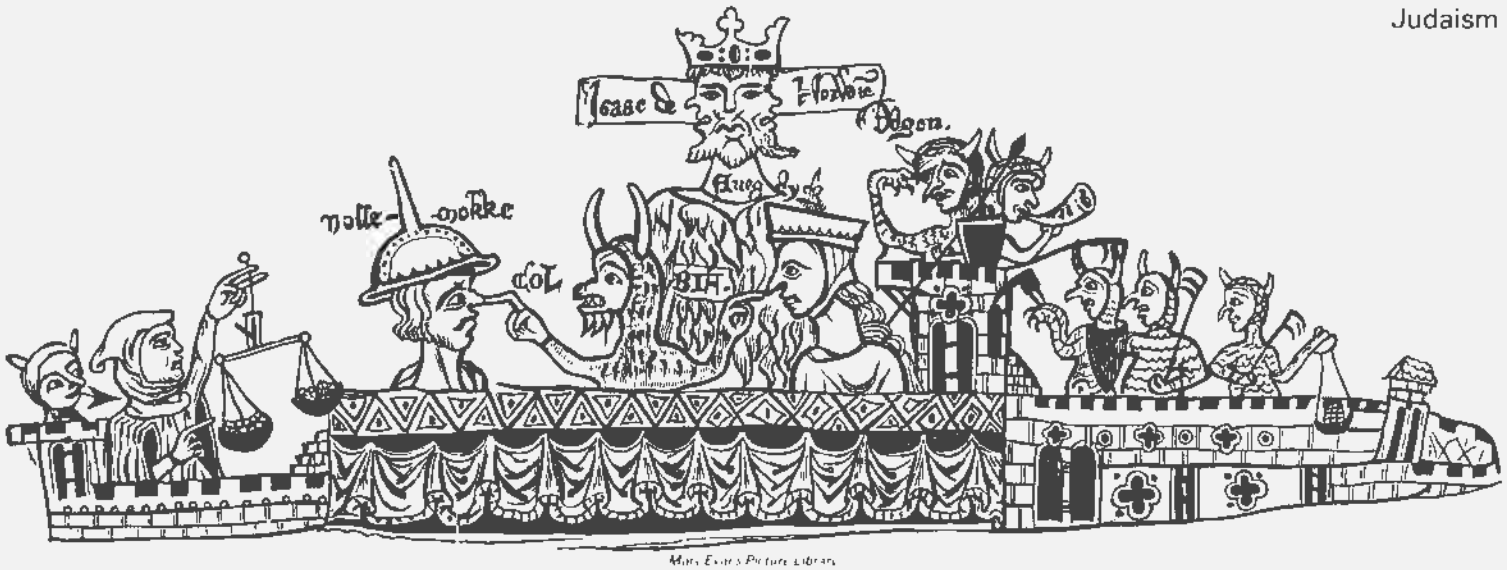
It is as inconceivable to have Judaism without the Jewish people, as it is to have Christianity without Jesus

The progenitor of all subsequent monotheistic religions, Judaism is based on the belief that there is only one God. Unlike other faiths, Judaism is centred not on a prophet or saviour but on the idea of a chosen people

A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR in the understanding of Judaism is that it centres around a people, rather than an individual. Important though Moses or Abraham or Isaiah is for Judaism it is quite possible to imagine the Jewish faith without any of these. But it is as inconceivable to have Judaism without the Jewish people as it is to have Christianity without Jesus, Buddhism without Buddha or Islam without Mohammed.

In 1981, it was estimated that there were about 14½ million Jews throughout the world, around 6 million in the United States, over 3 million in Israel, and the remainder distributed over the rest of the world. Some of these have no religious belief whatsoever, but the majority do subscribe to the faith known as Judaism, though with many differing emphases in matters of both belief and observance. One large division (an ethnic rather than a doctrinal one) is between Oriental Jews together with those hailing from Spain and Portugal, and Jews from other parts of Europe. The former are known as Sefardim (from the Hebrew name for Spain, *Sefarad*) and the latter as Ashkenazim (from the Hebrew name for Germany, *Ashkenaz*). The differences between these two groupings are in minor liturgical rites, customs and popular foods.

Previous page The idea of the Jews as the chosen people has been partly responsible for the persecution and hostility they have encountered: Mohammed ordering the execution of Jews, from a 16th century Turkish manuscript *Above* In accordance with Levitical law, every Jewish male must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Originally a rite of initiation, it is now practised mainly for health reasons: *Circumcision of the Children of Israel,* by the 18th century Italian painter G. B. Tiepolo *Above right* Satirical drawing of the Jews of Norwich which appeared in the Jews' Roll, a list of tax payments in Henry III's reign; antisemitic feeling ran high in medieval Europe and in England Jews were afforded protection only on payment of exorbitant taxes



Another division is between Zionists, who see the main future for Jews in the State of Israel and who tend to look upon the Jews as a nation, like the English or the French, and the non-Zionists, who see Judaism purely as a religion, and in non-nationalistic terms. This does not rule out the existence of many religious Zionists and there are even a few anti-Zionists. Still another significant division is between Orthodoxy and Reform; the main difference between these two groups concerns the nature of revelation and the permanent binding character of the ceremonial law.

The Crown of the Torah

The Jewish place of worship is the synagogue, from a Greek word meaning simply 'place of assembly'. Some Reform synagogues are called 'temples', chiefly because Reform Jews, unlike the Orthodox, do not believe that the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt in the days of the Messiah and animal sacrifices again offered there, so that the synagogue has now taken the place of the ancient Temple. In the modern synagogue the rabbi and the cantor – the reader of the prayers to music – officiate at the services, but there is nothing in Jewish teaching to prevent any Jew from officiating at any service, including the marriage service. The rabbi is not a priest. The word rabbi means 'teacher' or 'master' and his chief function is to be an expounder of the Jewish religion. There is, in fact, no priesthood nowadays in Judaism, except for vestigial remains of a very peripheral order. Jews claiming descent from the Temple priesthood, who frequently have the name Cohen, from the old Hebrew name for 'priest', recite the priestly blessing 'May the Lord bless you and keep you' in Orthodox synagogues on the great occasions of the year, but otherwise very little is left in present-day Judaism of the hereditary priesthood.

In fact, until the 14th century there were no professional rabbis, the Jewish teachers earning their living by practising such crafts as that of physician while teaching Judaism without fee in their spare time. The rabbis of an earlier period were drawn from every walk of life. Some of them were businessmen, others smiths or cobblers. The sole qualification was proficiency in the Torah. This word, meaning 'teaching', refers in the first instance to the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses, but then, by extension, to the whole range of Jewish teaching.

There is to be observed in Jewish history a definite substitution of an aristocracy of learning for the older aristocracy of the priesthood. This received its most dramatic expression in two sayings dating from as early as the 2nd century: that only the son of a king can be a prince and only the son of a priest can be a priest, but the crown of the Torah lies in a corner and anyone capable of so doing can don it; and that a bastard learned in the Torah takes precedence over an ignorant High Priest. Love of learning and respect for things of the mind has been a distinguishing feature of Judaism so that a non-believing Jew like Freud could still feel himself strongly attached to Judaism for this reason.

The Thirteen Principles

The most obvious way of describing a religion is to state the beliefs it expects from its adherents. There are, however, notorious difficulties when one tries to describe Judaism in this way. There has never been in Judaism any proper machinery for the formulation of dogmas, no synod or body of representative Jewish teachers to decide authoritatively and categorically what it is that a Jew must believe in order to be a Jew. This has resulted in an extremely wide range of diverse views among Jewish theologians.

It would be wrong to conclude, as many 19th century scholars were in the habit of doing, that Judaism has no dogmas, that a Jew can believe what he likes and still remain an adherent of Judaism. This is clearly an absurd position to adopt: as Solomon Schechter (d.1915) pointed out, it would make the central idea of Judaism the dogma of having no dogma. What does emerge from a study of the classical sources of Judaism – the Bible, the Talmudic literature produced in Palestine and Babylon during the first five centuries AD, and the medieval Jewish writings – is a kind of consensus of opinion among believers as to the distinguishing features of Jewish belief but with much room for individual interpretation and the possibilities of strong but legitimate differences in some matters.

With these reservations the 13 principles of the Jewish faith can be examined as formulated by the greatest Jew of the Middle Ages, Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). These are the nearest thing to a Jewish catechism. They have been printed in many prayer books and are recited daily by the pious. But many modern Jews do not accept them without considerable qualifications and there are other beliefs, such as that of the divine election of Israel, for example, which are not included among the 13 but which many Jews would consider to be basic. Maimonides's principles are: belief in the existence of God; in his unity; his incorporeality; his eternity; and that God alone is to be worshipped; belief in the prophets; that Moses is the greatest of the prophets; that the Torah is from heaven; that it is unchanging; belief that God knows the deeds of men; that he rewards the good and punishes the wicked; belief in the coming of the Messiah; and in the resurrection of the dead.

The first five principles have to do with the nature of God. Maimonides's choice of principles was chiefly in response to the particular challenges of his day and the second, third and fifth principles are fairly obviously directed against Christianity. While in the Middle Ages and later there were to be found Jewish teachers of note who were prepared to acknowledge that the Christian doctrine is not tritheism and that Christianity is not 'idolatry', Jews have been unanimous in declaring the doctrine of the Trinity, and especially the doctrine of the Incarnation, in which Jesus of Nazareth is the Second Person in the Trinity, to be a breach of pure monotheism and therefore incompatible with Jewish belief. The Jewish declaration of faith is the *Shema*, 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is One' (Deuteronomy 6.4). The Jewish child is taught to recite the verse as soon as he can speak. The devout Jew recites it daily, in the morning and at night. The dying repeat it as life's last affirmation.

Beyond Time and Space

There has been a wide spectrum of belief regarding the nature of God, from the negative theologians who wax eloquent in declaring how little one can say of God as he is in himself (some of these observe that one cannot, strictly speaking, say that God exists, since 'existence' is a term too heavily laden with human associations) to the Jew of simple faith who is not bothered

Justification for Living

Western civilization professes one God and lives in polytheism. We Jews are connected to this civilization with thousands of strands, but if we share in its dualism of life and profession of faith, we shall forfeit our justification for living. If we were only one nation among others, we should long ago have perished from the earth. Paradoxically, we exist only because we dared to be serious about the unity of God and his undivided, absolute sovereignty. If we give up God, he will give us up. And we do give him up when we profess him in the synagogue and deny him when we come together for discussion, when we do his commands in our personal life, and set up other norms for the life of the group we belong to. What is wrong for the individual cannot be right for the community, for if it were, then God, the God of Sinai, would no longer be the Lord of peoples, but only of individuals. If we really are Jews, we believe that God gives his commands to men to observe throughout their whole life, and that whether or not life has a meaning depends on the fulfilment of those commands. And if we consult our deep inner knowledge about God's command to mankind, we shall not hesitate an instant to say that it is peace. There are many among us who think this command is intended for some more propitious future; for the present, we must participate in the universal war, in order to escape destruction. But it is only if we do participate in this war that we shall be destroyed; for as far as we are concerned, there is only one possible kind of destruction: God letting us slip out of his hand.

The Writings of Martin Buber (ed W. Herberg)

at all by the problem of anthropomorphism. Even the belief that God can, if he so chooses, assume a bodily form (as in the legend, when he appeared on the altar in the Temple to consume the sacrifices in the form of a lion of fire) is not, according to some theologians, sufficient to cause those who hold it to be excluded from Judaism. Maimonides does, indeed, declare such persons to be heretics and his third principle states this emphatically but some of Maimonides's critics, while themselves rejecting any belief in God's corporeality, feel that the anthropomorphisms in Scripture encourage this belief so that although the sophisticated understood these in a non-literal sense the more naive believers cannot be condemned for holding opinions which, for them, have the full sanction of holy writ.

God is beyond time and space (the fourth principle) and the universe is subordinate to him. He is both transcendent and immanent. He is apart from the world and yet involved in it. Judaism rejects both deism, which denies God's immanence in the universe, and pantheism, which denies his transcendence and identifies God with the universe.

Prayer and worship are to be offered to God alone (the fifth principle). Even prayer to God through an intermediary is forbidden. In the hasidic movement (see HASIDISM) which arose in the 18th century one does, however, find the idea of prayer through an intermediary, the hasidic saint or master. This was one of the reasons why the movement met in its early stages with such vehement rabbinic nppositiun. But the prayers are never offered *to* the holy man. It is rather that he prays on behalf of others who present their petitions to him; the hasidic movement believed that the prayers of the holy teacher can accomplish that which sinful men are incapable of achieving by themselves.

The sixth to the ninth principles (belief in the prophets of whom Moses is the greatest, and in the heavenly origin and unchanging character of the Torah) are concerned with revelation. The seventh and ninth principles appear to have been particularly stressed by Maimonides as a response to the claims of both Christianity and Islam that a greater prophet than Moses had arisen and that Judaism, though once valid, had been superseded. Until modern times, with very few exceptions, Jewish teachers held that the books of the Hebrew Bible (the 'Old Testament') were divinely revealed to man, albeit in differing degrees. The Pentateuch (the Torah proper) was thought of as being divinely dictated by God to Moses. The manner of the divine communication was, to be sure, variously understood in the Middle Ages (Maimonides himself held that all the people heard was an inarticulate sound which Moses put into words) but the content was conceived of as the very words of God. The prophetic books of the Bible (and this includes the historical books with the exception of Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles) were written by the prophets under the impact of prophecy (a lesser degree than the inspiration vouchsafed to Moses) while the books of the Hagiographa (including Psalms and Proverbs) were thought of as conveyed by the still lesser degree of inspiration known as the holy spirit. This is expressed in Jewiah practice by forbidding the placing of the books of the Hagiographa on top of the prophetic books and the prophetic books on top of copies of the Pentateuch. The Torah was seen as twofold: firstly the written Torah, or the Pentateuch and the other hooks of the Bible, and secondly, the oral Torah or the teachings held to have been conveyed by God to Moses by word of mouth, together with those elaborations and applications now found in the rabbinic works produced during the first five centuries AD, the most important of which is the Talmud. There are two Talmuds; the Palestinian edited around the year 400, and the more authoritative Babylonian edited around the year 500.

Orthodoxy and Reform

Orthodoxy holds fast to the position that the present text of the Pentateuch is the word of God, infallible, sublime, created before the world came into being. Both the written and the oral Torah are from God in a direct sense with the corollary that the precepts of the Torah in their rabbinic interpretation are eternally binding upon Jews and immutable. In the Orthodox view all biblical criticism, whether 'higher' or 'lower' (that is, literary criticism and textual criticism) is heresy because it expresses doubts as to the correctness of the present text and because it sees the Pentateuch itself as a composite work produced at different intervals and with contradictions between the Codes of Law found therein.

Reform Judaism, on the other hand, accepts the new picture of the Pentateuch and the rest of the Bible which has emerged as the result of modern historical investigation and criticism. Reform holds the view that a radical re-interpretation of what revelation means is now called for and abandons the idea of an immutable law. A compromise position between Orthodoxy and Reform is represented chiefly in the United States by Conservative Judaism, to which the precepts are binding not because they were given by God in the direct sense in whicb Orthodoxy understands it but because God is seen, as it were, in the process as a whole. The real source of authority is the tradition of the Jewish community of believers, just as the Church in Catholicism is for Christians.

To illustrate the differences an example can be given from the dietary laws, such as abstinence from eating pork and shell-fish. Orthodoxy insists on the observance of these laws as God-given ordinances. Reform leaves such observances to the individual conscience but holds in any event that it is the moral rather than the ritual and ceremonial law which is permanently binding. Conservative Judaism believes that the binding character of these laws derives not so much from any kind of direct divine communication but because the laws have evolved through the historical experiences of the Jewish people and are therefore part of the divine-human encounter in human history and can serve in the present, as they have done in the past, in furthering the ideal of holiness in daily living. With regard to the ethical law there is complete unanimity among all sections of Jewry that this has binding force for all time.

The tenth and eleventh principles (that God knows the deeds of men and rewards or punishes them accordingly) are accepted in outline by all religious Jews, although there is considerable difference of opinion as to the exact nature of divine Providence and as to how reward and punishment are to be understood. Does the doctrine mean that God rewards directly in this life those who keep his laws and punisbes those who do not, or does it mean that virtue brings its

The annual feast of the Passover celebrates the Exodus from Egypt when God rescued the enslaved Jews from Egyptian bondage. Today on Passover Eve, Jews eat bitter herbs, to remind them of slavery, and drink wine, in celebration of their freedom: 13th century Haggadah illustrations of the plagues of Egypt

Palphot

Keystone

'A bastard learned in the Torah takes precedence over an ignorant High Priest'. Torah means 'teaching' and refers in the first instance to the Five Books of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) but by extension to the whole range of Jewish teaching *Above* At a children's village in Israel the class learns to read from the Torah *Left* In the synagogue part of the Torah is read each week

own rewards and vice its own punishments? Does it mean that there is reward and punishment in the afterlife and if it does, what is the nature of heaven and hell? Is there a hell at all and, if there is, is it a place or a state of remoteness from God? Is punishment in hell eternal or only for a period? On these questions there are still differing answers among Jews.

The Beginning of Redemption

The twelfth principle refers to the belief mentioned frequently in the Bible that the day will come when this world will be perfected, when war and hatred will be banished from the earth, and when the Kingdom of God will be established and all men will recognize him as their Maker. The Orthodox belief is in a personal Messiah (a word meaning 'the anointed one', in reference to the practice of anointing kings with oil), a human being of great renown but in no way divine who will be a descendant of King David and who will be sent by God for this purpose. Non-Orthodox opinion since the last century has tended to place all the stress on the

Judaism does not believe that salvation is only possible for Jews but that the righteous of all peoples have a share in the world to come

dawning of the messianic age and to reject the doctrine of a personal Messiah as savouring too much of the magical. The basic idea is that God will eventually intervene in human affairs so as to bring about the perfect society envisaged.

In the last century many Jews tended to interpret the doctrine in purely naturalistic terms, that better education and social reforms in the Western world will themselves bring about the millennium. The horrors of this century have made such a belief in automatic human progress towards the desired goal remote and even ludicrous, though this theory is by no means dead. It has been related by many to the events which led up to the establishment of the State of Israel. The fact of the holocaust in Europe in which 6 million Jews died and the setting up of the State of Israel have both encouraged religious Jews to see the new State as having messianic dimensions. A number of religious Jews today tend to look upon Israel as 'the beginning of redemption', believing that the first steps have been taken towards the realization of the age-old messianic vision. At the same time they believe that the world still needs redemption and that the full realization, in which the perfect society under God will be established for all mankind, is still awaited and will only be achieved when God himself intervenes. It should be noted that the messianic belief concerns events here on earth. Whatever the Jewish views on the afterlife, Judaism believes that God will not permanently abandon this world to chaos and that one day mankind here on earth will find its complete redemption.

Immortality of the Soul

The last principle, relating to the resurrection of the dead has also been variously interpreted. Originally the doctrine of the resurrection referred to the dead rising from their graves and living again here on earth. It was closely connected with the messianic hope. After the advent of the Messiah the resurrection would take place on earth. As its name implies, the doctrine means that death is really death and resurrection a new birth of the body. In the course of time, however, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came into Judaism. There may be traces here and there in the Bible of the doctrine that the soul lives on after death but these are few and vague. When the two doctrines – of the resurrection and the immortality of the soul – were fused, as eventually happened, the official view became that when a person dies his soul lives on in another realm until the resurrection, when it is reunited with the body on earth.

Maimonides seems to have been embarrassed by the whole idea of the body living on and, indeed, by the basic notion of the resurrection. In his earlier writings he is very indefinite about the idea and towards the end of his life he put forward the view that the resurrection is only for a time and that it is the soul alone which inhabits eternity. The ultimate bliss for the righteous is, in the words of the rabbis, to bask forever in the radiance of the divine presence. The references in the classical sources, of which there are many in the post-biblical period, to the world to come are both to the soul's fate in the afterlife and to the resurrection.

Reform Judaism, and for that matter even some Orthodox interpreters, prefer to think, as Maimonides seems to have done, of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as the really significant part of this principle. Many modern Jewish thinkers accept this with the proviso that it does not refer to the mere survival of a nebulous 'soul' but to the continuing existence of the total human personality which, it is claimed, is really what is implied in the doctrine of the resurrection. It must also be appreciated that Judaism is not a religion of salvation, in other words, Judaism sees this life as good in itself, and not only as a means of acquiring eternal life. Life would be worth living even if this world were all man can hope to have. The paradox inherent in Judaism as a religion that is both this-worldly and other-worldly was finely expressed by the 2nd century teacher who said: 'Better one hour of good deeds and repentance in this world than the whole life of the world to come but better one hour of spiritual bliss in the world to come than all the life of this world.'

Judaism is a people-centred religion but it is not an exclusive religion. Converts are accepted although they are required to show clear evidence of sincerity. Moreover Judaism does not believe that salvation is only possible for Jews but that the righteous of all peoples have a share in the world to come. The idea that the religion depends on the peoplehood of Israel is frequently expressed, in the Biblical idiom, by saying that God has chosen Israel. This notion presents difficulties all of its own and is liable to misconceptions. There is nothing racialist about the doctrine that Israel has been chosen to serve God and all mankind. The convert to Judaism, whatever the colour of his skin and whatever his background, becomes a full member of the Jewish community.

Yet tensions inevitably exist between the universalism taught by Judaism – God as the Father of all mankind – and the particularism inseparable from the idea of divine election. Some modern Jewish thinkers, notably Mordecai Kaplan in the United States, have found the doctrine so open to misrepresentation that they have suggested it be dispensed with entirely. But the majority of religious Jews prefer to live with the tensions, trying to further the richness of the idea of Israel as God's covenant people without losing sight of the fact that, as Judaism itself repeatedly stresses, God loves all men.

That this is no idle dream can be seen from the contribution Judaism has made in the past to civilization. Judaism's daughter religions, Christianity and Islam, have received many of their most significant beliefs and institutions from Judaism: the doctrine of the one God, the patterns of worship in church and mosque, the reading of the Scriptures, the teachings of the prophets. The stories of the book of Genesis, for instance, with their strong moral sense have been a powerful aid in the moral education of children of both Jewish and other faiths. Movements of social reform and freedom from tyranny have found inspiration in the Old Testament passion for justice and the narrative of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Words like *Hallelujah* and *Amen* have become part of the vocabulary of worship for millions. The rhythm and concreteness of Hebrew prose and its powerful idioms have influenced, through biblical translation, all the European languages.

Festivals and Rites

Jewish practices are of two kinds, the ceremonial and the ethical. On the ceremonial side there are colourful rituals both in the home and the synagogue. The sabbath and festivals are celebrated with joy. These

When asked if a Jew might hunt animals for sport, an 18th century rabbi replied that he could not imagine a Jew wishing to do so

always begin at nightfall and end at nightfall. On the eve of the sabbath two candles are lit as a symbol of peace in the home and increased spiritual light. The master of the house recites a benediction over a cup of wine in which he praises God for creating the world and giving his people sabbath rest. Tuneful table hymns are sung during the meal, the whole family joining in. The sabbath is a day of rest and of spiritual refreshment.

Orthodoxy adheres strictly to the laws prohibiting all kinds of creative activity on the sabbath in acknowledgement of God as Creator and giver of life's blessings. Some Orthodox Jews refrain even from switching on electric lights on the sabbath. Orthodox Jews do not ride on the sabbath, do not write, engage in business, smoke or carry anything in the street. Reform Judaism has relaxed many of these laws but has not lost sight of the ideal of the sabbath as a day devoted to spiritual pursuits.

During the sabbath service in the synagogue a scroll of the Pentateuch is taken from its place in the Ark at the eastern end of the synagogue and carried in procession around the building while the congregation stand. The scroll must be written by hand and there are detailed traditional rules which the scribe must observe while carrying out his sacred task. It is adorned with silver ornaments, especially bells which tinkle while it is being paraded. A portion is read from it each week; this portion is divided up and members of the congregation are given in turn the honour of reading from the scroll (or, since many cannot read the Hebrew nowadays, of having it read for them by a competent reader). In this way the whole of the Pentateuch is read each year. The reading of the complete scroll is concluded in the autumn of the year. On this occasion no sooner is the reading complete than it begins again. The persons given the great honour of reading the last portion and the first of the new cycle are called respectively: 'Bridegroom of the Torah' and 'Bridegroom of Genesis'. These two invite the rest of the congregation to festivities to mark the event.

The Jewish calendar is rich in festivals. The three pilgrim festivals (so called because in Temple times people would ascend to Jerusalem, then in joyous pilgrimage to the Temple) are the Passover in the spring, Pentecost seven weeks later, and Tabernacles in the autumn. Passover is in celebration of the Exodus from Egypt, when God led the enslaved people out of Egyptian bondage; in their haste to depart they had not time to bake their bread properly, so that they were obliged to eat unleavened bread. On Passover eve, in a delightful home ceremony, the family partake of unleavened cakes and they eat bitter herbs as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery, and they drink wine, in joy at the new-found freedom. At this meal the *Haggadah* (literally 'the telling') is recited. This is a dramatic presentation of the Exodus culled from biblical and other sources, in the course of which the youngest child present asks four questions regarding the unusual ceremonies he sees and the father and the rest of the company reply. Pious Jews refrain from eating leavened bread during the whole eight days' duration of the festival.

Pentecost is a celebration of the giving of the Torah, that is, of the revelation on Mt Sinai, as told in the book of Exodus. During the synagogue service of the day the portion from Exodus describing this tremendous event and containing the Ten Commandments is read from the scroll. Tabernacles celebrates the dwelling of the Israelites in 'booths' in the wilderness after they had gone out of Egypt. Many Jews build a booth in their gardens, the roof of which is open to the sky but lightly covered with foliage or straw, in which they eat all their meals for the seven days of the festival. On this festival a palm branch and other plants are taken in the hand during the recitation of Psalms in the synagogue in thanksgiving for God's bounty.

Historically considered, the three pilgrim festivals were originally agricultural feasts pure and simple but the genius of Judaism transformed them into festivals celebrating historical events. Some Jewish thinkers today see this as part of a long process in which religion was gradually freed from subservience to place. Unlike many pagan gods the true God is not bound to single spots on the earth's surface and he manifests himself through human history.

The Day of Atonement

The New Year festival in the autumn is a solemn occasion, the major portion of the day being spent in prayer. In the home on the eve of the festival an apple is dipped in honey and eaten at the festive meal, while prayers are offered to God to grant a sweet and good year. The central feature of the synagogue service on this day is the blowing of the ram's horn, the oldest musical instrument known to man. Many ideas have been read into this ceremony, the best-known of which is that the piercing sound of the horn affords a shrill warning to man to awaken himself to his duties and responsibilities in the year ahead. Another explanation is that trumpets are blown at the coronation of a king and at the beginning of the New Year God is hailed as king of the universe.

On the tenth day after the New Year festival there falls the great fast of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Devout Jews fast for 24 hours, partaking of no food or drink whatsoever and spending the better part of the day in prayer. The Day of Atonement is a day of pardon. Jews confess their sins and throw themselves on the divine mercy. But solemn though the day is, it is in a way a joyous occasion because on it man is reconciled to his God and to his fellows. The name 'Black Fast', which is sometimes given to it by non-Jews, is a misnomer. In fact, the readers of the services and many members of the congregation dress in long white robes symbolizing purity and divine compassion.

Obligations of the Faithful

Two minor feasts are Purim (literally 'lots'), celebrating the deliverance of Jewry from the machinations of Haman as recounted in the book of Esther, and Hanukkah (literally 'dedication') celebrating the deliverance of the people in the days of Antiochus and the re-dedication of the altar, as told in the books of the Maccabees. On Purim the book of Esther is read amid jollification. On each of the eight days of Hanukkah candles are kindled in the Menorah (candelabrum), one on the first day, two on the second and so on (see CANDLE). Legend has it that when the soldiers of Antiochus profaned the Temple there was only one small jar of pure oil left uncontaminated. This was used for kindling the Temple Menorah and although there was only sufficient for one night it burned by a miracle for eight days. The miracle of the oil became symbolic of the victory of the spirit which is the main theme of the Hanukkah festival.

The most vivid description of what

Telaviv Museum/A.P.A.G.P. Paris

Jew with the Torah, **a painting by Chagall; the persons having the honour of reading the first and last portions of the Pentateuch each year are called respectively 'Bridegroom of the Torah' and 'Bridegroom of Genesis'**

Judaism demands of its adherents is found in the book of Deuteronomy (6. 4–9):

> Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates.

The passage is repeated in slightly different words in Deuteronomy, chapter 11. At an early period in Jewish history the last verses were taken literally so that to this day the devout Jew has these two passages inscribed on parchment and fixed in a little case (the *mezuzah*, 'doorpost') to the doorpost of his house, reminding himself of God's law whenever he enters and leaves his house. Similarly, the passages, together with two others, inscribed on parchment, are placed into little boxes known as *tefillin*, meaning 'attachments' or 'phylacteries'. They are affixed with leather straps to the left arm, opposite the heart, and to the head and worn during prayer; they symbolize the Jew's dedication of mind, heart and hand to God's service.

Ritual observances, important though they are in the scheme of Judaism, are far from being the main features of the Jewish faith. At the heart of Judaism is an ethical affirmation. This is that man can imitate God by practising justice, righteousness and holiness and by showing compassion. This is the way to be God-like. It is for this reason that those biblical passages which breathe the spirit of passionate concern for the downtrodden and which speak in the most urgent terms of the pursuit of justice have always been favourite Jewish texts; such as those enjoining concern for the poor and needy, for the hired servant and for the stranger; the spirit of neighbourliness, and just and upright dealings. There are innumerable examples of this constant demand for sound ethical conduct as the basis of human life and such teachings were not seen by the Jewish teachers as mere preachment but as divine imperatives. The rabbis, the post-biblical teachers, elaborated on these precepts, discussing in great detail, for example, the question of fair prices and fair and unfair competition in business, of the laws against overcharging and having false weights and measures, of the prohibition of misleading others and the need for a community to take adequate care of its poor and needy, of regulations between employers and employees, masters and servants, parents and children. Even animals have their rights and have to be treated with kindness. A distinguished 18th century rabbi when asked if it is permitted for a Jew to hunt animals for sport replied that he could not imagine a Jew wishing to do any such thing.

Jewish ethical teaching is not confined to laws and deeds alone. Character formation is of the utmost significance. There has grown over the centuries a vast moralistic literature produced by Jewish teachers and studied by Jews regularly, inculcating the formation of good character traits and the rejection of vicious tendencies. Hatred of one's neighbour, sloth, pride, lust, anger, spite, envy and jealousy, are to be fought against, while compassion, kindliness, benevolence, the love of learning and of one's fellow-men are to be pursued vigorously. In the words of an 11th century Jewish moralist, Judaism certainly knows of 'duties of the limbs' but, even more important are the 'duties of the heart'. It was in this spirit that the Talmud contains a passage in which it is said that there are three distinguishing marks of the Jewish people: they are compassionate, they are bashful, and they are benevolent. In another Talmudic passage it is said that it is the heart of man that God wants.

The conflict in man's soul between his higher and lower nature is described by the Talmudic rabbis as a conflict between the 'evil inclination' and the 'good inclination'. By the evil inclination they mean man's ambitions and his bodily instincts. These, though called 'evil' because they can lead

The Star of David (in Hebrew 'Shield of David', *Magen David*) as a symbol of Jewry was adopted as the emblem of the Zionist organization in 1897 and is now part of the flag of the State of Israel

to such, are essential to life and provide it with its driving power. With some exceptions Judaism is not an ascetic faith but it holds strongly to the need for self-control. Its ideal is neither life's denial nor its exploitation but its sanctification. In a rabbinic homily the Torah, the law of God, is compared to a plaster on a wound. While the healing plaster is on the wound the wounded man can eat and drink safely and freely and the wound will not fester. As Judaism sees it, man should not try to live as a hermit or a recluse. He should live in society and be of constant help to his fellows, he should marry and have children, he should enjoy life as a precious gift from God, but he should always be aware of the call to higher things and see himself, in the marvellous imagery of Jacob's dream in Genesis, as a ladder with its feet firmly planted on earth but with its head reaching to the heavens.

This short survey of the Jewish faith can be fittingly concluded with a Talmudic tale about the great teacher Hillel who lived 2000 years ago. A prospective convert to Judaism came to Hillel and asked the sage to teach him the whole Torah while he stood on one leg. Hillel replied: 'That which is hateful unto thee do not do unto thy neighbour. This is the whole of the Torah. The rest is commentary. Go and learn!'

(See also ANGELS; BAPTISM; DANIEL; DEAD SEA SCROLLS; ELECTION; EZEKIEL; FIRST MAN; GOLEM; JERUSALEM; PROPHECY; YAHWEH; ZEALOTS.)

L. JACOBS

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JUDAS

THE MOST FAMOUS traitor of history, Judas Iscariot has naturally not fared well in subsequent remembrance. In the lowest circle of Dante's hell, the Devil as 'Emperor of all the realms of woe', encased to his chest in ice, chews three arch-sinners in his three monstrous mouths. One mouth gnaws on the head of Judas, and in the other two are mangled the bodies of Brutus and Cassius, the treacherous assassins of Julius Caesar. At one point in the story of St Brendan's voyage (see BRENDAN), the saint sees the unhappy Judas sitting naked on a rock, buffeted by the waves. He explains that he is allowed out of hell to squat forlornly on this rock on Sundays and Christian feast days. There were other stories that when Christ harrowed hell and released the souls of the dead, Judas, Cain and Herod were left behind there.

The meaning of 'Iscariot' is uncertain. It may simply indicate the village from which Judas came (*Ish Kerioth*, 'man of Kerioth'). Or it may be derived from Latin *Sicarius* ('assassin'), which would mean that Judas was one of the fanatical Jewish patriots called Zealots (see JESUS; ZEALOTS). In that case, it may be that Judas's real motive in betraying Jesus was his bitter disappointment at the latter's failure to take political action.

The gospels, however, imply that Judas acted as he did out of sheer greed. Mark (chapter 14) says that Judas went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Jesus to them for money. At the Last Supper, Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray him, and each of them said sorrowfully, 'Is it I?' Jesus said, 'It is one of the twelve. . .' Later, knowing that Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas led there a party with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests, and identified Jesus by kissing him and calling him 'Master'.

Matthew (chapter 26) adds that the amount of money involved was 30 pieces of silver. When Jesus predicted the coming betrayal, Judas said, 'Is it I, Master?' and Jesus answered, 'You have said so.' Luke (chapter 22) says that Satan entered into Judas and caused his treachery, and makes it clear that the point of the betrayal was to give away Jesus's whereabouts at night, so that he could be arrested quietly without creating disturbance among the crowds assembled in Jerusalem for the Passover.

12th century stone carving from Old Sarum depicting Judas in the mouth of hell

Michael Holford

The traitor's kiss took a strong hold on the imagination of later generations, and so did the scene at the Last Supper. In medieval representations of it, Jesus and the rest of the disciples are frequently shown sitting at one side of the table with the traitor alone at the other. On the table there is often a plate containing a fish, and this fish and the seat of Judas have a role in the Grail legends (see GRAIL).

There are two different accounts of what happened to Judas afterwards. One (Matthew, chapter 27) is that when he saw that Jesus was condemned, Judas repented of what he had done and tried to return the money to the authorities but they took no notice. So he threw the pieces of silver down in the Temple, 'and he went and hanged himself.' But Acts (chapter 1) says that he used the money to buy a field, 'and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.'

Later it was generally accepted that Judas had hanged himself on a tree, and various different trees were associated with the deed. One of them *Cercis siliquastrum*, is called the Judas-tree.

JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD

Museo di Santa Croce

Virgil's account of the underworld as a place of retribution, where demons and writhing snakes plague sinners, greatly influenced the medieval concept of hell: in Orcagna's *Inferno*, the wicked are their own tormentors

The idea that the final destination of the individual in the life to come depends on his conduct in this world is common to many religions; the manner in which the final judgement is reached varies from faith to faith

THAT THE FATE of the dead is decided at a post-mortem judgement is an idea which is very ancient and widespread. It naturally involves belief that the dead survive death, that they remember their past lives and are conscious that they are now dead, and that they can experience the pain of punishment and the joy of reward. Where death is regarded as the virtual extinction of personality, as it was for example in ancient Mesopotamian and Homeric religion, there is no basis for belief in a post-mortem judgement – the shades of the dead, good and bad, are doomed to virtual non-existence.

The earliest known evidence of belief that the dead would be judged for their conduct in this life occurs in Egyptian records dating c 2400 BC. The belief was obviously already well established by that date, and its origins doubtless lie back in a more remote past. In the Pyramid Texts inscribed on the interior walls of certain pyramids at Sakkara near Memphis (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) two different conceptions of this judgement were apparently current. One is of an unsophisticated kind, and it was probably inspired by contemporary juridical practice. It finds expression in a series of anticipatory declarations of innocence made by the deceased in respect of various crimes. The idea behind these declarations seems to be that in the next life complaints might be brought against the dead as they were brought against the living in this world. As, in the primitive courts of Egypt, the accused would vehemently reject the charges and protest his innocence, so it was apparently thought well to anticipate such charges in the afterlife by prior solemn declarations of guiltlessness. In these passages, however, no reference is made to a judge of the dead.

The other conception was of a much more

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Medieval representations of the judgement emphasize the horrors of hell. Dante's *Inferno* describes ten divisions of hell in which the punishment is suited to the crime *Above left* Dante is shown a frozen lake where icy figures symbolize the extinction of all feeling *Above* Tyrants boil in a river of blood *Right* Detail from a 12th century mosaic in Torcello Cathedral: angels thrust the damned into the flames while the Devil sits with Antichrist in his lap

involved kind. In one Text it is said of the dead pharaoh: 'He desires that he may be justified *(maa kheru)* through that which he has done'. The words *maa kheru* meant literally 'true of voice', and they acquired a specific significance through the legend of Osiris (see OSIRIS). The ancient Egyptians believed that the case of the divine hero Osiris, after his resurrection from death, had been brought before a tribunal of the gods of Heliopolis. Osiris was there adjudged *maa kheru*, 'justified', and his murderer Seth was condemned. Since the dead king, in the Pyramid Texts, was ritually identified with Osiris in order to participate in his resurrection, this identification also caused him to acquire Osiris's title in the state after death of *maa kheru*. The Pyramid Texts thus reveal the origin of an idea which later came to dominate the Egyptian conception of the judgement of the dead.

Warning from the Tomb

Certain tomb inscriptions of about the same period, or slightly later, reveal an important development in this idea of a posthumous judgement. At that time the royal government of Egypt was weakening, with much resultant social disorder. Tombs were being either robbed of their funerary equipment or taken over by others for their own mortuary use. To the law-abiding, such happenings were most terrible, for they threatened their hopes of a blissful afterlife. Some Egyptians sought to meet the danger by threatening inscriptions on their tombs. Thus Herkhuf, an Aswan noble, warns any would-be robber: 'As for any man who shall enter into this tomb as his mortuary possession, I will seize him like a wild fowl; he shall be judged for it by the Great God.'

The 'Great God' whom Herkhuf here invokes was doubtless the sun god Re, who was regarded as the upholder of *maat*, the principle of cosmic order. In other words, Herkhuf not only claims that, though dead, he was able to attack any who might rob his tomb; he confidently asserts that Re himself would punish so vile a crime. But the thought of the divine judgement that would fall on the robber apparently led Herkhuf to think about his own situation. For he goes on in his inscription to declare: 'I was one saying good things and repeating what was loved. Never did I say aught evil, to a powerful one against any people, for I desired that it might be well with me in the Great God's presence.'

In other words, this ancient Egyptian not only threatened any would-be violator of his tomb with divine judgement; he was mindful that he had himself to undergo such judgement.

No hint is given in this earliest evidence of how the judgement after death was imagined. Some kind of tribunal was evidently envisaged. Herkhuf seems to imply that Re was the judge, but he makes no reference to the way in which the verdict was reached. A clearer picture emerges from the next document that mentions the post-mortem judgement. It is known as the Instruction for King Meri-ka-re, and dates from c 2100 BC. The dead are depicted as being tried by a panel of judges with Thoth, the god of wisdom, acting as prosecutor. Their deeds are set before them in two heaps, presumably of the good and the bad. This imagery, however, did not establish itself and the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom period (c 2160–1580 BC) reveal a fluidity of concept about the judgement.

During this period, however, a new idea emerged that was to dominate the later conception of the judgement. References occur in the Coffin Texts to weighing on balances as the mode of assessment. How this weighing was done is obscure: in one passage the balance is actually personified as 'this god of mysterious form, whose two eyebrows are the two arms of the balance, who casts his lasso over the wicked (to hale them to) his block, who annihilates the souls, in that day when evil is assessed, in the presence of the Master of all.'

The motive that inspired the idea that the dead would be assessed by weighing is an interesting subject for speculation. On the available evidence, it would seem

Scala

that the ancient Egyptians sought for an image that would express the absolute impartiality of the judgement after death. Doubtless their experience of legal chicanery caused them to avoid the imagery of earthly tribunals. The earlier idea of assessing the dead by the witness of their good and evil deeds set out in heaps had invoked the practice of the market place; but, though a vivid image, it was evidently found inadequate. The process of weighing must obviously have been deemed a better conception, and by the New Kingdom (c 1580–1090 BC) it was developed into one of the most impressive scenes in the religious iconography of the ancient world.

Weighed Against the Truth

The best representation of the scene, beautifully drawn and coloured, is in the Papyrus of Ani, now in the British Museum. The scene depicts the dead scribe Ani and his wife watching apprehensively the weighing of Ani's heart in the Hall of the Two Truths. The great balance occupies the centre of the scene. In one scale-pan the hieroglyph symbol of the heart is represented, and in the other the feather symbol of *Maat*, truth. The heart of Ani is being weighed against truth. In ancient Egyptian psychology the heart was regarded as a kind of independent censor or witness within each person and in most copies of the Book of the Dead the heart is implored not to witness against the deceased at this decisively critical moment.

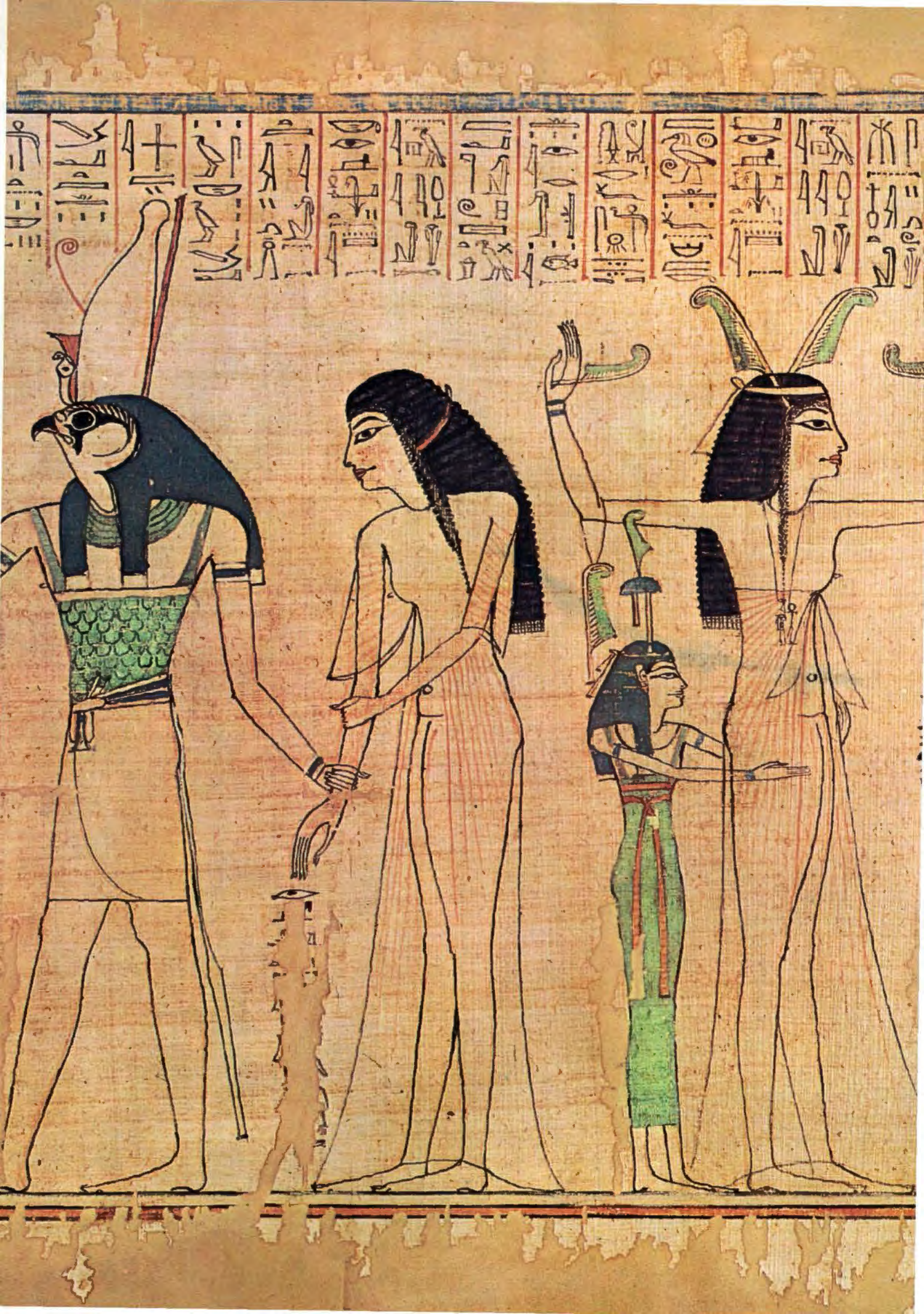
The fateful balance is attended by the jackal-headed mortuary god Anubis, who adjusts its plummet, while the text above him exhorts him to be exact. To the right of the balance stands Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom, who records the verdict of the weighing on his scribe's tablet. The adjacent text gives the report which Thoth makes to the divine assessors seated above. Ani is acquitted: 'His soul *(ba)* has stood in witness thereof. His case is exact on the Great Balance. No crime has been found in what he has done.' In turn, the divine tribunal is represented as replying to Thoth: 'Confirmed is that which comes forth from your mouth. Just *(maa)* and righteous is Osiris (namely) the scribe Ani. He is justified . . . Entrance into the presence of Osiris shall be granted to him.'

The scene ominously indicates the fate which awaited the guilty. Behind Thoth is depicted the fantastic monster Am-mut, the 'eater of the dead'.

This judgement scene is followed by another representing the god Horus (see HORUS) leading the justified Ani into the presence of Osiris, who sits enthroned and attended by the goddesses Isis and Nephthys. Subsequent vignettes in the Papyrus show Ani and his wife enjoying the delights of the otherworld, over which Osiris ruled. In most other depictions of the judgement scene Osiris is represented as presiding in person over the transaction.

The presentation of the judgement in the Book of the Dead is complicated by chapter 125, which is entitled: 'Words spoken when one enters the Hall of the Two Truths. To separate N from his sins, and to see the face of all the gods.' Then follow two lists of what are often called 'negative confessions', but which are more correctly designated 'declarations of innocence'. The first, and shorter, is addressed to Osiris; the second to 42 other deities. The sins, of which the deceased declares that he is innocent, range widely and include moral offences, such as murder and unnatural sexual relations, and ritual offences like hindering the procession of a god. The conception of the judgement implied in this chapter is quite different from that presented by the weighing of the heart. The discrepancy is probably to be explained by the conservatism of the Egyptian mind. For these 'declarations of innocence' doubtless derive from the primitive asseverations of guiltlessness from specific sins that appear in the Pyramid Texts. Never willing to discard ancient traditions, the Egyptians retained this one even when the idea of the weighing of the heart had become the dominant theme of the judgement. They apparently reconciled the differing conceptions by representing the 'Declarations' as being made first by the deceased on arrival at the Hall of the Two Truths. The subsequent weighing of his heart against the symbol of truth proved whether his protestation of innocence could be accepted as truly justified.

This Egyptian conception of the judgement after death is unique in the ancient world. It remained an effective belief in Egypt until the Christian era; it is only in Christianity that the idea achieved a like importance and such dramatic presentation.



第一等活地獄
第二黒縄地獄
第三衆合地獄
第四叫喚地獄
第五大叫喚地獄

'And the pit of torment shall appear, and over against it shall be the place of rest: and the furnace of hell shall be shewed, and over against it the paradise of delight'

Previous page **The ancient Egyptians were among the first to conceive that the dead would be judged for their conduct in this life: Anhai is led before the tribunal who are to witness the weighing of her heart against the feather symbol of truth: detail from the Papyrus of Anhai in the British Museum** ***Left*** **The ruler and supreme judge of the dead in Japanese Buddhism is Emma-O: the sinner is weighed and his sins are reflected in a mirror; he is then condemned to a particular hell according to the sins he has committed**

Until the 2nd century BC Hebrew religion did not provide the necessary basis for belief in a judgement after death. According to its view of human nature, man was a psycho-physical organism which death irreparably shattered. The shade that survived this dissolution descended to Sheol, conceived as a deep pit far below the foundations of the world, where all the shades of the dead dwelt in dust and gloom, with no distinction between the just and the unjust. However, about the time of the Maccabaean Wars, a change took place. Belief in a resurrection of the dead suddenly made its appearance, together with the idea of a judgement of the dead. The earliest evidence is the following brief statement in the book of Daniel (12.2): 'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake . . . some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' The statement is admittedly obscure, particularly in its limitation of resurrection to an undefined 'many'. However, this first problematic evidence of the belief is soon supported in Jewish literature by an abundance of references to, and descriptions of, a future judgement of the dead. In turn, the conception of Sheol changes from the place where all the dead dwell, undifferentiated by their moral character, to a place of punishment for the wicked.

The Jewish conception of the judgement of the dead was essentially conditioned by the strong nationalist factor in Judaism. It had long been believed that there would be a 'Day of Yahweh' when the god of Israel would signally punish the oppressors of his people. In later Jewish apocalyptic literature, owing to the deterioration of Israel's political position, this belief was gradually changed into an intense conviction that Yahweh would soon intervene dramatically in the existing world situation. The 'Day of Yahweh' was, in consequence, transformed into a Last Judgement, coincident with the catastrophic end of the world. The following passage from the apocalyptic writing known as II(IV) *Esdras* (chapter 6) vividly presents this Last Judgement at which the god of Israel would pronounce the doom of the Gentile Nations, who had afflicted his people:

> And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and so shall the dust those that dwell in silence, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that are committed unto them. And the Most High shall be revealed on the seat of judgement, and compassion shall pass away, and longsuffering shall be withdrawn: but judgement only shall remain. . . And the pit of torment shall appear, and over against it shall be the place of rest: and the furnace of hell shall be shewed, and over against it the paradise of delight. And then shall the Most High say to the nations that are raised from the dead, see and understand whom ye have denied, or whom ye have not served, or whose commandment ye have despised. Look on this side and that: here is delight and rest, and there fire and torments. Thus shall he speak unto them in the day of judgement.

In Jewish apocalyptic belief the Last Judgement was primarily an 'Assize of Nations', at which the Gentiles would be punished for their oppression of Israel. It was to be preceded by a general resurrection of the dead, and accompanied by cosmic cataclysm. In some versions of the belief the Messiah, instead of God (Yahweh), would be the judge. This idea of a Last Judgement was taken over by Christianity, and profoundly influenced its doctrine concerning the 'last things'.

Punishment in Hades

Neither the Greek nor the Roman religion offered hope of a significant afterlife, and therefore no ground existed for belief in a post-mortem judgement. The description of the dead given in Homer's *Odyssey* (book 11) set the pattern for what might be called the classical view of human destiny. At death the *psyche*, a wraith-like image of the living person, descended to the gloomy realm of Hades. There it joined the other dead, who dwelt there bereft of consciousness. The logic of this situation negated belief in a judgement after death.

The idea of Hades as a place of retribution, thus implying a judgement, gradually developed, chiefly through the influence of Orphism (see ORPHEUS) and Neo-Pythagoreanism. The fate of the dead turned on whether they had been initiated or not into the Mystery cults concerned (see MYSTERY RELIGIONS). However, the post-mortem judgement gradually came to be thought of as a moral test. A vivid description of Hades as a place of retributive punishment for sins is given by Virgil in the *Aeneid* (book 6). In the underworld, his hero Aeneas comes to a parting of ways: one leads to Elysium; the other to Dis, a great fortress-like place, encircled by a flaming river. Here Rhadamanthys 'holds his iron sway; he chastises, and hears the tale of guilt, exacting confessions of crimes, whenever in the world above any man rejoicing in vain deceit, has put off atonement for sin until death's late hour'. Awful demons, with writhing snakes, torment these sinners. This horrific depiction greatly influenced Dante as his *Inferno* shows, and it is reflected in many medieval descriptions of hell.

Bridge of the Separator

The teaching of Zarathustra, the ancient Iranian prophet (c 628–551 BC) faced every man with the fateful decision of aligning himself on the side either of the principle of Good or of Evil, which struggled unceasingly for mastery of the universe (see ZOROASTRIANISM). In the *Gathas*, in which Zarathustra's teaching is preserved, there are enigmatic references to the consequences in the afterlife of each person's decision. Mention is made of retributive punishment by molten metal; but more notable is his reference to the *Cinvato paratu* or 'Bridge of the Separator'. The crossing of this bridge appears to constitute a post-mortem ordeal for the dead – the wicked would fall from it to some awful doom below. In the later literature of Zoroastrianism the crossing of this fateful bridge is elaborated into a definite act of judgement. A deity named 'just Rashnu' weighs the deeds of the dead with the strictest precision. Those adjudged just pass with ease across the bridge to eternal bliss, while the wicked, unmasked by Rashnu, are seized by the demon Vizarsh. This judgement apparently took place shortly

Michael Halford

Judgement in Black and White

O nobly born (so-and-so), listen. That thou art suffering so cometh from thine own *karma*; it is not due to any one else's; it is by thine own *karma*. Accordingly, pray earnestly to the Precious Trinity; that will protect thee. If thou neither prayest nor knowest how to meditate upon the Great Symbol nor upon any tutelary deity, the Good Genius who was born simultaneously with thee, will come now and count out thy good deeds (with) white pebbles, and the Evil Genius who was born simultaneously with thee, will come and count out thy evil deeds (with) black pebbles. Thereupon, thou wilt be greatly frightened, awed, and terrified, and wilt tremble; and thou wilt attempt to tell lies, saying 'I have not committed any evil deed'. Then the Lord of Death will say, 'I will consult the Mirror of *Karma*'.

So saying, he will look in the Mirror, wherein every good and evil act is vividly reflected. Lying will be of no avail.

The (one of the Executive Furies of) the Lord of Death will place round thy neck a rope and drag thee along; he will cut off thy head, extract thy heart, pull out thy intestines, lick up thy brain, drink thy blood, eat thy flesh, and gnaw thy bones; but thou wilt be incapable of dying. Although thy body be hacked to pieces, it will revive again. The repeated hacking will cause intense pain and torture. Even at the time that the pebbles are being counted out, be not frightened, nor terrified; tell no lies; and fear not the Lord of Death.

Thy body being a mental body is incapable of dying even though beheaded and quartered. In reality thy body is of the nature of voidness; thou needest not be afraid. The Lords of Death are thine own hallucinations. Thy desire-body is a body of propensities, and void.

W. Y. Evans-Wentz ed
The Tibetan Book of the Dead

after the death of the individual; but Zoroastrian doctrine also included a final judgement. In the classic description of it in the *Bundahisn*, at the ultimate rehabilitation, the dead would be resurrected and all mankind assembled for judgement. They become aware of their good and evil deeds, and the good go to heaven and the wicked are cast into hell. How this ultimate judgement was related to the immediate judgement after death is not clear; a similar problem exists in Christian doctrine.

The Last Trump

Christianity originated in Judaea as a Jewish messianic movement. Its outlook was thus conditioned by current apocalyptic belief. Jesus was identified with the Messiah and, after his crucifixion, it was believed that he would soon return with supernatural power to complete his messianic task. This belief finds dramatic expression in the gospel of Matthew (25.31–33), where he presides at the Last Judgement: 'when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.' Although the passage at this point suddenly changes from envisaging an Assize of Nations, according to Jewish apocalyptic, into a trial of individual persons, the judgement is the traditional Last Judgement at the end of the world. The most graphic presentation of this Judgement in the New Testament is given in the Revelation of John (20.11–13); it conforms to the traditional apocalyptic pattern by including the resurrection of the dead: 'Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done.'

The first Christians believed that the return of Christ and the Last Judgement would happen within their own lifetime. But the non-fulfilment of this expectation gradually caused a change of outlook. Although belief in an apocalyptic Last Judgement was never abandoned, subsequent generations of Christians had to adapt their faith to the fact that they would doubtless die before Christ returned. The question inevitably arose, therefore, of the situation of the dead until the Last Judgement determined their eternal fate. A solution was found in the idea of a judgement immediately after death, which was implied by Christ's parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke, chapter 16). Hence emerged the concept of two post-mortem judgements in Christianity: an immediate or particular judgement and a final judgement. And with it developed the doctrine of purgatory. It was taught that immediately after death the soul would be judged and sent to purgatory, unless its sins were such that it was already damned beyond redemption. In purgatory expiation was made for past sins, in the hope of ultimate acquittal at the Last Judgement, when the purified soul would be admitted to the beatific vision.

A distinction was drawn between the torments of purgatory and those of hell. In purgatory the souls of the dead were disembodied; hence their sufferings were not physical as they would be in hell, where the damned sulfered in their resurrected bodies. Further, the souls in purgatory suffered in the hope of ultimate deliverance; but the pains of hell were eternal. However, despite these theological distinctions, it would appear from medieval art and literature that the torments of purgatory were imagined just as realistically as those of hell.

The prospect of immediate judgement and purgatory did not lessen concern about the judgement to come. From about the 12th century the representation of the Last Judgement became a major theme of Christian art in both the Eastern and Western Church. These medieval depictions are generally composed of three registers of scenes. At the top Christ appears as the awful Judge; he shows the wounds of Crucifixion, and attendant angels bear the symbols of his Passion. On either side the Virgin Mary and St John kneel, supplicating the stern Christ to spare sinful humanity. In the bottom register the dead rise from their graves at the sound of the Last Trump. It is in the central register, however, that the crucial drama is enacted. Generally, the Archangel Michael is represented weighing the souls of men, and repelling the attempts of the Devil to interfere with the verdict. This *psychostasia* or weighing of souls was derived from ancient Egypt, by way of Coptic Christianity; its adoption into the medieval Doom constitutes a fascinating instance of the transference of ideas.

In this painting by St John of Climax, judgement takes place on a ladder, symbolizing the link between heaven and earth: the blessed mount towards God and his angels, while the wicl are dragged off to their doom below

In the Doom (the name by which representations of the Last Judgement are known in England, where they often appear on the chancel arch of a church), the weighing of souls divided the two groups of the redeemed and the damned; the division was obviously intended to denote its decisive nature. The redeemed are usually represented as being carried by angels to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16.22). Abraham is quaintly depicted as seated, with a crowd of diminutive souls looking complacently out from the bosom of his robe. The damned, on the other side, are herded by demons, horrible and relentless, towards the mouth of hell or cast into the cauldron of hell. The medieval Doom vividly testifies to the importance of the idea of the Last Judgement in medieval Christianity. Although the depiction of it virtually ceased after the Reformation, the idea continued to haunt Christians and it was a basic theme of both Catholic and Protestant teaching until the 19th century.

In Islam the final judgement was a foremost topic of Mohammed's teaching, and reflects Judaeo-Christian concepts. The idea of a post-mortem judgement occurs also in popular Buddhism, where it has been adapted to the idea of the transmigration of the soul and the doctrine of *karma*.

(See also EGYPT; HELL; PURGATORY.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Roger Wood

JULIAN OF NORWICH

JULIAN OF NORWICH was one of a number of women who have made their mark on Christian mysticism, although very little is known of her life. Dame Julian, as she was known, belongs to the small band of 14th century English mystics, among whom her affinities are with Richard Rolle rather than with the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* (see CLOUD OF UNKNOWING) and Walter Hilton (see HILTON), though she seems to have been influenced by both; like Teresa of Avila, she describes her own experiences instead of offering a treatise on the theory of mysticism. In her own day, her works appear to have been nothing like as popular as Walter Hilton's or the *Cloud of Unknowing*; there are around 50 extant manuscripts of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, for instance, while there are only five of Julian of Norwich's writings.

The copyist of one of Julian's earlier manuscripts speaks of her as 'a devout woman whose name is Julian . . . a recluse at Norwich'. She herself tells us that she was 'thirty and a half' years old in May 1373; this places the date of her birth towards the end of 1342 and it is known from references in wills that she was still living in 1416. Margery Kempe of Lynn in her spiritual autobiography, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, tells how she was 'bidden by our Lord to go to an anchoress in the same city (Norwich) named Dame Jelyan . . . for the anchoress was expert in such things and good counsel could give'. Dame Julian refers to herself as 'a simple creature unlettered', though her writings by no means give the impression that she was uneducated. She could certainly read and wrote her own language in a vigorous style. She was well acquainted with the English Bible for her works are full of biblical quotations and allusions.

Julian was an anchoress or recluse enclosed in a cell attached to St Julian's church, Norwich. There she followed a way of life that was not uncommon in the Middle Ages and which was carefully regulated by the Church. Some of the hermitages or cells contained more than one room, like a modern flat, while others had a small garden where the occupant could cultivate vegetables and take the air. A servant of some sort was needed to buy food and ensure essential relations with the outside world. References to two of Julian's servants have been found; she herself tells us that at one time she had a servant named Alice.

Julian's book, her only known work, is *The Revelation of Divine Love*, of which two versions exist. The first, which is the oldest and shortest of the manuscripts, may well preserve a description of Julian's experiences as a result of a severe illness, in the course of which she received the last sacrament, as it was written soon after their occurrence in May 1373. The longer version was the result of her pondering on the meaning of the visions which she had experienced at that time, the subject of which absorbed her attention for almost 20 years. During this time she received, she says, 'teaching inwardly' to help her to understand their full meaning.

Like Teresa of Avila (see TERESA), Julian had a keen mind, a fund of common sense and an attractive style, but does not write as a theologian. Like all the mystics, too, she finds great difficulty in conveying in ordinary language what she had been 'shown' in her visions. They took place before she became a recluse, probably when she was living at home, since she mentions the presence of her mother, and also the parish priest.

She tells us how on 8 May 1373 she experienced a series of visions of the Passion of Christ, and indeed her book has been likened to a prolonged meditation on that subject. She plunges straight into her story. 'I desired three graces by the gift of God: the first was to have the mind of Christ's passion; the second was bodily sickness, the third the wound of wilful longing for God.' There follows the account of her experience which was to furnish her inspiration for the rest of her life. But she took no credit for what she had seen: 'Because of the showing I am not good, but only if I love God the better . . . I saw it for the profit of many others. For truly it was not showed to me for that God loves me better than the least soul in grace . . . For if I look singularly to myself, I am right naught.'

From visions of the Passion of Christ she goes on to what she calls the 'ghostly sight', that is, the spiritual perception of various matters of her faith. Thus she sees more clearly and understands more vividly God's care for all creation, his infinite goodness and immanence in all things and the malice of the Devil. After a time of trial and temptation to disbelief in her visions she comes to final reassurance in a vision of the indwelling of God: 'Know it well: it was no raving you saw today. But take it and believe it, and keep thereto, and you shall not be overcome. He said not, "You shall not be tempested, you shall not be travailled, you shall not be distressed", but he said, "You shall not be overcome."'

The longer version, which is the better known, was completed at least 20 years after the visions. It is based of course on the shorter version but is about three times as long. A good deal of revision and addition, a certain elaboration, indeed, has taken place; the doctrinal implications are brought out and there is much inherent advice about prayer and the spiritual life, together with allusions and references to the writings of the Fathers of the Church. There is an obvious Neoplatonist influence which can be accounted for perhaps from Julian's reading of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the works of Walter Hilton.

Visions, revelations, 'shewings' as Julian called them, of their very nature raise all sorts of difficulties. Opinions regarding the authenticity of Julian's experience may well differ; some indeed would regard it as purely subjective, deriving wholly from her own mind, while others, admitting a subjective element, would regard it as of supernatural origin. But what is impressive in Julian's case is the balanced nature of her writings and her sound religious sense; despite the deep emotion there is no hint of emotional instability.

The southeast wall of St Julian's church in Norwich showed clearly where the anchoress's cell once stood with its window on to the high altar; the wall was destroyed in an air raid in 1942 and the site has now been made into a chapel adjacent to the restored main building.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

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JUNG

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL psychiatrist, after Freud, of the 20th century has been Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). He was born at Kesswil, a Swiss hamlet near the falls of the Rhine. His grandfather, a Rosicrucian freethinker, was reputed to have been an illegitimate son of Goethe; exiled from Germany, he moved to Switzerland, and became professor of surgery at Basle. Jung's father was a rather rigid pastor, whose hobby was philology. Jung took a medical degree at the University of Basle and then, like Freud before him, went to Paris to study psychological medicine. On his return he was appointed lecturer in the Psychiatric Clinic of Zurich University. His first important publication was a systematic report of a series of experimental studies, carried out by means of Galton's 'word association test' (during which the subject replies in turn to a disconnected series of words read out to him with the first word which comes into his mind). This led him to formulate the notion of a 'complex' – a cluster of emotionally toned ideas and memories all associated with some central theme and largely, if not wholly, unconscious.

In 1907 he met Freud, and for long remained his foremost disciple. However, his own psychiatric work soon led him to question some of Freud's fundamental principles. Freud, he believed, laid far too much stress on repressed sexual tendencies in the production of nervous disorders. Instead of seeking the main causes in forgotten infantile experiences, greater importance should be attached to the effects of emotional conflicts, and to the strains and stresses of the patient at the time of his breakdown. Jung's concept of the 'libido', which in Freud's usage meant the energy of the sexual instincts, was that of a kind of general emotional energy, with sex, fear, anger, and the like as merely some of its specialized forms. His book on *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912) included criticisms too drastic for Freud to brook. This led to a final rupture a year later. Thereafter Jung preferred to call his theories and therapeutic methods 'analytical

psychology', leaving the older description 'psychoanalysis' to Freud and his more faithful followers.

Temperamental Types

Freud's aim was to develop a dynamical theory of mental structure and mental processes which would be universally applicable. Jung, on the other hand, largely as a result of his early experimental studies, became profoundly impressed by the influence of innate individual differences. These he sought to classify in terms of temperamental types. His first and best known distinction was between the 'extravert' and the 'introvert'. The 'extravert' is one whose interests and emotions are directed predominantly towards the external world of Nature and other persons; the 'introvert', one whose interests and emotions are directed predominantly towards the inner world of the self and his own private thoughts and feelings. Later he proposed to subdivide mental processes into four primary activities – sensing, feeling, intuiting and thinking. According as one or other of these activities tended to dominate the life of the extravert or the introvert, he was thus led to distinguish eight 'psychological types'. The contrast between the extravert and the introvert has since been abundantly confirmed by experimental and statistical research except that, instead of clear-cut 'types', most present-day psychologists prefer to talk of 'tendencies', varying in degree.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature in Jung's conception of the structure of the mind is his belief that below the 'personal unconscious' consisting of the half-forgotten relics of the individual's past experiences from infancy onwards, there is the deeper layer of the 'collective unconscious', which contains the persistent after-effects of the primitive experiences of the human race during the earlier phases of its evolution. Thus it includes not only what are commonly called instincts – the impulses of sex, fear, aggression, parental love, and the like – but also certain 'primordial images' or ways of thinking, which Jung termed 'archetypes'. These he described as 'inherited complexes'. They may be discerned most clearly in the analysis of dreams; but they tend to mould all our attempts to interpret the universe as a whole – mythology, religion, philosophy and even science.

One of the commonest archetypes is the so-called 'father-figure', often pictured as a wise and masterful old man, the representative of authority and power. Another is that of the Great Mother, the embodiment both of fertility and of benevolent protection. The serpent or dragon commonly stands as a symbol of evil. As in heraldry, various animals – the lion or leopard, the sheep or lamb, the eagle and the raven – occur again and again as emblems of certain quasi-human characteristics. Some of the archetypal conceptions, however, are relatively abstract,

Bats and owls swarm over the head of a dreaming man; a painting by Goya. It is in the analysis of dreams that Jung's concept of 'primordial images', patterns of thinking, or archetypes may be most clearly discerned

for instance the polar opposites of male and female, hate and love, repulsion and attraction, which so often appear in both popular and scientific thought.

When Jung first developed his concept of innate archetypes, it was widely believed that acquired habits and ideas might eventually become hereditary, so that recurrent experiences of primitive man might be transmitted as part of our common racial inheritance. Today almost every biologist rejects the theory that characteristics acquired by the individual can so affect the germ-plasm that they reappear in the offspring. There is no doubt about the frequent emergence of these symbolic concepts in the folklore, superstitions and religions of widely separated races. Nevertheless, most contemporary anthropologists regard them as due, not to inheritance, but rather to the early diffusion of primitive culture. Jung, in his later replies to biological critics, contended that his own theory of archetypes did not necessarily entail the direct inheritance of experience as such, and suggested that they might be an indirect effect of natural selection, operating during man's prehistoric evolution: as a result 'all human brains would to some extent be similarly differentiated'.

Secret of the Golden Flower

In the course of his therapeutic work Jung discovered that one of the commonest causes of nervous breakdown was 'loss of religious faith'. For this, the strictly materialistic and fatalistic outlook of Freud and his followers seemed to provide no cure. To combat this growing materialism Jung's main interest began to turn (as he expressed it) 'from therapy to the art of living'. Most of his later studies were concerned, not with psychiatry, but with topics that his colleagnes and critics dismissed as 'antiquated superstition, unworthy of a genuine scientist's interest or attention' – alchemy, astrology, spiritualism and popular folklore. Even if wholly false, so he maintained, the reasons for their widespread prevalence called for psychological investigation.

As a pastor's son, he had always been both interested in, and critical of, the traditional religion in which he had been reared. Quite early in life his curiosity had been aroused by the accounts brought back by missionaries and others of the religions of the ancient East, particularly by the Chinese 'meditation school' and by Indian yoga, wondering whether they might be adapted for psychiatric treatment. In 1928 he published, jointly with Richard Wilhelm (an authority on Chinese philosophy), a book called *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. The 'secret' was the familiar conception that (in Jung's words) 'man is a cosmos in miniature, and is not divided from the Great Cosmos by any fixed limits; Tao, the Undivided, all-embracing ONE, gives 'rise to two opposite reality-principles – Darkness and Light, Yin and Yang'. The 'Golden Flower' is a form of meditation aiming at their reconciliation. This suggested to him the idea of 'individuation' as an aim both for psychotherapy and 'the conduct of life'. 'Individuation' is his term for integrating the personality 'so that the person becomes in the true sense an "individual"'.

Syndication International

Most of Jung's later studies were concerned, not with psychiatry, but with alchemy, astrology, spiritualism and folklore: in certain esoteric teachings he discerned 'a profound philosophy which is nothing if not practical . . .'

But there seems to have been a more intimate reason for this radical change in the direction of his investigations. In his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections* (1963), he describes a quasi-mystical experience of his own during a serious illness at the beginning of 1944. When, according to his physician, he was actually at death's door, he felt himself caught up out of his body in a state of ecstasy into the remoter part of the heavens, and seemed on the point of entering an illuminated temple. 'The whole phantasmagoria of terrestrial existence was stripped from me; I became a historical fragment'. He wondered what would happen next and felt that as soon as he entered the temple he would receive the answer. At that moment he heard his doctor's voice recalling him to earth. From the time of this experience he dated what he described as 'the second and most fruitful half of my long life'.

In the same book he related how he himself was apparently endowed with paranormal powers – telepathy, precognition and even psychokinesis (psychic control over inanimate objects – see PSYCHOKINESIS). Among other instances he recalls a discussion on parapsychology with Freud, who in those days rejected such ideas as nonsensical, though later he accepted them. On this occasion Jung twice demonstrated his powers to Freud; and an extant letter from Freud himself attests the 'poltergeist phenomenon' so produced. It was, he says, to gain a better understanding of his own mystical and paranormal experiences that he was driven to search for historical parallels. Suggestive explanations and examples he thought might be discovered in the writings of the early alchemists, such as 'the visions of Zosimos' (an Egyptian of the 4th century), and particularly the cryptic disquisitions of his own compatriot, Paracelsus (see PARACELSUS). 'Here', says Jung in his *Paracelsica*, 'seems to be the bridge that has led from early gnosticism to the modern psychology of the unconscious'.

The Alchemical Heritage

'Alchemy', he observes, 'has been called a dream of primitive medicine'; and, like ordinary dreams, he argued, its superficial or 'manifest content' might at once conceal and symbolize a deeper 'latent content'. It was by no means a mere bogus science practised by mercenary charlatans. Philosophers like St Thomas Aquinas, physicians like Sir Thomas Browne, scientists like Sir Isaac Newton had studied it. Like gnosticism, alchemy appears to have originated in the Hellenistic culture of Alexandria in Egypt. The Egyptian metallurgists possessed the trade secrets of extracting and purifying the 'nobler metals', gold and silver, for the wealthy, and cheaper imitations for those who could not afford the ornaments of the rich. The operations carried out in the laboratory were interpreted in terms of Aristotelian physics and Alexandrian Neoplatonism (which also influenced early Christian doctrines). A leading conception was that the microcosm – the world of man – mirrored the macrocosm – the universe as a whole, with the heavenly bodies. Mesopotamian astrology thus became closely linked with alchemy. Each metal had its celestial counterpart: gold was associated with the sun, silver with the moon, quicksilver with mercury, and so on. To effect the 'great work' of transmutation, 12 successive laboratory processes, associated with the 12 signs of the zodiac, were necessary. And the astronomical symbols were borrowed to represent the chief chemical substances and processes.

As Jung points out, the explanatory theories, like those of the modern scientist, were often suggested by more or less fanciful analogies. Later alchemists were frequently physicians, and consequently thought of the chemical processes as analogous to those of human physiology and medicine. Just as lowlier animals had to be sacrificed, cleansed and burned before they could live again as part of the human body, so the humbler metals had to be 'killed, washed, and fired' before re-emerging as nobler metals. Ideas were introduced from Chinese alchemists who regarded the transmutation of baser metals into silver and gold as of secondary importance; their own aim was rather to supplement the use of herbal medicines, which served to cure minor ailments, by a pill or elixir prepared from minerals and

metals, which might confer immortality.

All these ideas reappear in the writings of Paracelsus. Jung maintained that Paracelsus should be regarded, not only as the founder of iatrochemistry (the application of chemistry to medical theory), but also of psychological medicine, since he professed to cure not only physical but psychical disorders as well. In its psychological aspect, he believed, Paracelsan alchemy is 'a path of salvation for the soul'. Jung was one of the first to emphasize the fact, which present-day historians of chemistry now fully recognize, that alchemy had both an exoteric or popular aspect and an esoteric or secret one. Exoteric alchemy was largely centred on the preparation of the Philosophers' Stone – a magical substance capable of converting lead, tin and copper, not into a compound or alloy, but into 'purified' metals such as silver and gold (see PHILOSOPHERS' STONE); esoteric or mystical alchemy regarded these mundane transmutations as symbolic of a devotional system by which sinful man could be transformed into a perfect and immortal being.

Expressing the Inexpressible

Underlying the teaching of the esoteric school, so Jung contended, we can thus discern 'a profound philosophy, which is nothing if not practical, and therefore a religion rather than a science or a metaphysic'. The symbolism of the Judaeo-Christian religion was that of a sheep-rearing and agricultural community; and its symbols and rituals – bread and wine, the blood of the lamb, the sacrifice on the altar – seemed inappropriate to the bolder thinkers of the early Renaissance. They therefore sought to express their religion and their conception of the universe and man's destiny in what they took to be a more up-to-date and scientific symbolism. The reason why symbolism was necessary was not merely that the religious doctrines

18th century Tibetan mandala, a mystical diagram often used in Eastern meditation. Quite early in his life Jung became interested in the religions of the ancient East, particularly in the Chinese 'meditation school' and Indian yoga, believing that their techniques might be adapted to psychiatric treatment

Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, Rome

themselves would have been condemned as heretical, but because 'the inexpressible can only be expressed in terms of symbol and myth, parable and allegory'.

Jung made a couple of brief statistical studies to check predictions drawn from astrological horoscopes, and believed that on the whole the results confirmed them; but he fully recognized that his methods were too simple to carry conviction. Partly to explain the way in which celestial phenomena might affect human life, he put forward what he called the 'principle of synchronicity'. Natural science has commonly treated causation as the supreme explanatory principle; and causation implies temporal succession. However, events that are not successive but simultaneous may, he maintained, also be connected in a manner which appears intuitively meaningful. This supplementary principle would furnish an explanation of such paranormal phenomena as telepathy and clairvoyance – examples of which he quotes, not only from the literature of psychical research, but also from his own experience.

In several of his writings he discusses the possibility of the survival of the individual mind or personality after death and of its pre-existence in an earlier incarnation. On both these topics, he declares, he has no evidence of his own to offer. He thought it quite conceivable that the phenomena cited in support of such doctrines might really be no more than 'projections of the unconscious'. The most we can safely assert, he says, is summed up in a dictum of the American psychologist, William James: 'Whatever it may be on the *further* side, the 'more' with which we seem to feel connected in religious and mystical experiences is on its *hither* side essentially a subconscious continuation of our own conscious life'.

(See also ALCHEMY.)

CYRIL BURT

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Juno

In Roman mythology, the wife and sister of Jupiter, identified with the Greek goddess Hera; she was the queen of heaven and protectress of females; she was particularly associated with childbirth and with the month of June, which was considered a favourable month in which to marry: at Roman weddings the bride's girdle was consecrated to Juno.

See HERA.

Michael Holford, National Gallery

The elaborate and curious prohibitions which the special priest of Jupiter had to observe attest to the overriding importance of the father of the gods to the Romans; similarly, in astrology, those influenced by the planet Jupiter are likely to be dominant characters and leaders of men

JUPITER

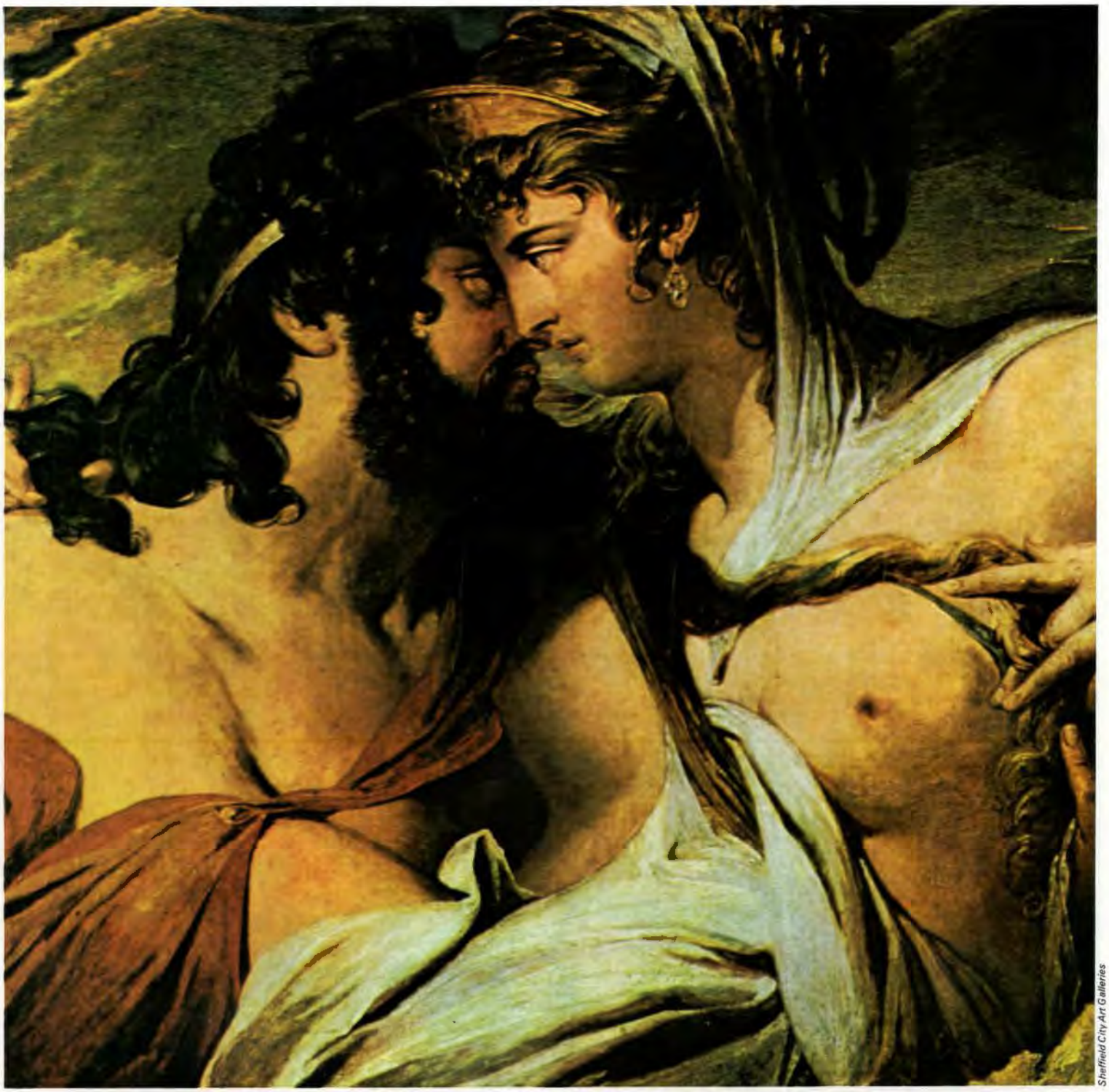
ROME'S MOST IMPORTANT and powerful god. Jupiter came to Italy with the migrations of Indo-European speaking people. His name's first element, giving us 'Jove', is related to the Greek Zeus and to the Latin and Germanic words for 'day'. Its second element is simply 'father', bestowed on him and a few other Roman gods, just as Zeus was often so addressed. In their own literature the Romans transferred the many tales of Zeus to his Latin counterpart. Jupiter's cult was found in most parts of Italy and his functions readily became fused with those of Etruscan, oriental and north European gods of like character.

In Italy Jupiter was revered as lord of sky and daylight. Rain and its consequences were owed to him. Thunder and lightning were sent by this god whom the Romans majestically represented with the thunderbolt and eagle which otherwise adorned every military standard. Because the ancient Italians trusted to natural phenomena in ascertaining the divine will, both thunder and lightning, together with the flights of certain birds were scrupulously observed as sent from Jupiter. All important public business could be validly transacted only if and when such heavenly signs were propitious. The Romans developed the interpretation of the signs into a fine art, the 'auspices' (see AUGURY). Official consultation of Jupiter probably led the Romans to accord him pride of place among the political gods of the state religion. Since Zeus, too, enjoyed a comparable position in many Greek city states, the Romans and others may have imported into Italy the idea of the god as a defender of the people.

Jupiter's religion exhibits a number of cult practices. On the Aventine Hill, for instance, Jupiter Elicius had an altar, or a mere stone, by which the Romans could summon heaven's gift of rain. Smaller stones might be employed to solemnize oaths, for Jupiter also stood as guarantor of man's good faith. This aspect of his worship strengthened Roman political reliance on Jupiter because he sanctified the many treaties which played a fundamental part in ancient warfare and diplomacy. Besides stones, some trees such as the beech and certain oaks were sacred to Jupiter; this attachment apparently arose from their relative susceptibility to his lightning. Thanks to his control of the rain, the god was beneficial to Mediterranean farming, and one of Jupiter's many festivals concerned successful grape harvesting.

Not only Rome's chief magistrates but also a priest and his priestess wife, the *flamen Dialis* and *flaminica*, ministered to Jupiter. No priesthood supplies a better index to the primitive quality which marks Rome's old religion. The flamen was compelled by law to observe and eschew many practices to which no other priest was bound, with the object of protecting him from pollution. Jupiter's flamen was forbidden to mount a horse, gaze upon the army, swear an oath, touch a corpse or enter a sepulchre; he must not wear a ring unless perforated and without a stone, lend fire from his hearth unless for prescribed rites, knot his clothing or hair, or walk under grape bowers; he was not permitted to touch or speak of female goats, uncooked meat, ivy or beans, or to eat leavened bread, or to uncover himself out-of-doors where he was seen by his god. On the other hand, he was required to have his hair trimmed only by a free-born barber, and the hair trimmings and nail parings were buried under a fruitful tree; to sleep on a bedstead whose legs were smeared with clay; to sleep no more than three nights away from home; to allow no one to sleep in his bed and to keep sacrificial cakes at its foot; and at all times to wear his special white pointed cap *(apex)*. By an outmoded ceremony he wed only a lady of his patrician caste whom he might not divorce; if she died, he quit the priesthood.

His priestess wife, the flaminica, was bound by her husband's restrictions and by a few of her own. For instance, she wore specially dyed clothing, kept a twig from a fruitful tree in her elaborate head-dress, and did not ascend a ladder beyond the third rung. On certain days, she might not comb or arrange her hair although she



Sheffield City Art Galleries

Jupiter was the chief god of the Romans and like the Greek Zeus had many loves; despite his unfaithfulness, Juno was a determined wife and made frequent attempts to win back her husband: *Jupiter beguiled by Juno,* by Barry

apparently still wore the head-dress. Some of these restrictions obviously belong to the priest of a sky god; others are simple taboos against flatulence or corruption by the dead. It is little wonder that towards 200 BC the flamen botched a sacrifice, thereby forfeiting his office and that thereafter eligible candidates for the priesthood rarely came forward. Ceremonial limitations left many priestly functions to the chief magistrates, the consuls.

Gorgeous Spectacles

In matters of war and government the Romans ever looked to Jupiter for help and advice. His major shrine on the Capitol gave him the name *Capitolinus* although the official style was *optimus maximus* 'best and greatest'. This temple had three chambers, one each for Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. In the central chamber stood his statue garbed like a triumphant general in resplendent toga. Every fifth year the statue's complexion was reddened with lead paint. The god, as well as his triumphant model, had once been smeared with the blood of a fallen foeman. Founded by Rome's last Etruscan king, its liturgy was partly inspired by the Etruscans although the temple was dedicated by the new republican government in 509 BC. The god's puissance among the Romans encouraged them frequently to convene voting assemblies in its precinct. On the same height was situated the small temple of Jupiter Feretrius, a god of oaths. On its walls hung three sets of armour taken by Roman chief magistrates from enemy chieftains whom they had slain in battle with their own hands.

Jupiter enjoyed cult through public games that began as religious ceremonies and developed into those gorgeous spectacles for which the Romans were renowned. Feretrius's games included boxing matches and foot races held on oiled animal skins. Others comprised chariot races and, later, stage-plays produced under Etruscan and Greek influence. Like the triumphal games to

which they are related, Jupiter's festivals were preceded by a lavishly-mounted parade of statues of almost every deity installed at Rome, of state priests and the magistrates. The statues were borne upon platforms which also held paintings and religious paraphernalia. His games fell in September, October and November and at one time totalled 29 days. On 13 September, he received a banquet in return for the rain which had made possible the harvest.

Of equal historical importance was the festival of Jupiter Latiaris on the Alban Mount. Since time immemorial the Latins foregathered to offer annual sacrifice under a rotating presidency from the several constituent peoples of Latin stock. In later republican times the sovereign Roman consuls presided over this religious remnant of a Latin league. A truce of the god secured the sharing of the meat of sacrificial victims by the assembled Latins or, later, by their representatives. From an imperial point of view the Roman consul could no more omit this ceremony than he could fail to greet Capitoline Jupiter before and after his military expeditions.

While in late pagan times Jupiter's divinity attracted astrological and philosophical speculation and quickened religious syncretism (or intermingling), his Roman cult retained the savour of its simple beginnings and propagated veneration of the Empire's greatness. From first to last the Romans acknowledged him as their patron and lord.

R. E. A. PALMER

The Kindest Planet

Ever since the development of astrology as a study in itself in the 7th century BC, Jupiter, the largest of the planets, has been supposed by astrologers to be the most kindly-disposed of them, and for that reason is often spoken of in astrological literature as 'the greater benefic', the lesser being Venus, which is smaller. The zodiacal sign ruled by Jupiter, even when he was still the father of the gods and not yet a planet, appears always to have been Sagittarius.

Jupiter as a planet is constantly associated with wealth, high position, getting one's own way, promotion, prosperity, and all forms of status. Anyone who wants to choose a time to begin an undertaking, to make sure that it shall not go wrong, would be advised by an astrologer to pick a time when the Moon is going to be in a strong 'good aspect' of Jupiter. Similarly, if he chooses a time when Jupiter is fortified (that is to say, when he is in a favourable position), there should be no financial difficulties.

Although the chief association of Jupiter is with money matters, he is also concerned with social position, so that any question connected with snobbery can always be answered by examining the aspects of Jupiter. He is also 'the greater benefic' in an entirely general way, and signifies success of any kind, including the recovery of health. Success is always thought to be indicated by the influence of a favourable planet, so even if one were setting out to commit a burglary, say, or any other crime, it would be prudent to try to have Jupiter on one's side. Even if this precaution did not lead to financial gain, it might bring luck to one's illegal enterprise by causing a policeman to look in the other direction at the critical moment.

The signs ruled by Jupiter are Sagittarius, the Archer, which is regarded as positive and masculine, and Pisces, the Fishes, which has been described as negative and feminine, though the sexes symbolically allotted to these two signs should not be taken too seriously. Both signs have a touch of that happy-go-lucky optimism which is one of the most characteristic gifts of Jupiter to his natives.

Typically, a person born under Jupiter will be good-looking, if not handsome; like those born under Leo, although to a lesser extent, he will have the dignity of a natural ruler. He knows what is due to him and expects to receive respect accordingly. He will probably have an impressive manner and in consequence is likely to be elected to official positions in clubs and other organizations. Such men are often successful businessmen or heads of companies, for they like making money. They usually uphold the established order and their dress is conventionally respectable.

People whose horoscope is dominated by Jupiter in his less favourable position spend their lives betting but are unlikely to meet with much success. Looking on the bright side, however, they may well win a competition, be promoted unexpectedly, or meet with some other kind of unforeseen good fortune.

Until a century ago, travellers in lonely parts of India ran the risk of being ritually strangled in honour of Kali, the black-faced, vampire-fanged goddess who represented the terrifying aspect of the Earth Mother

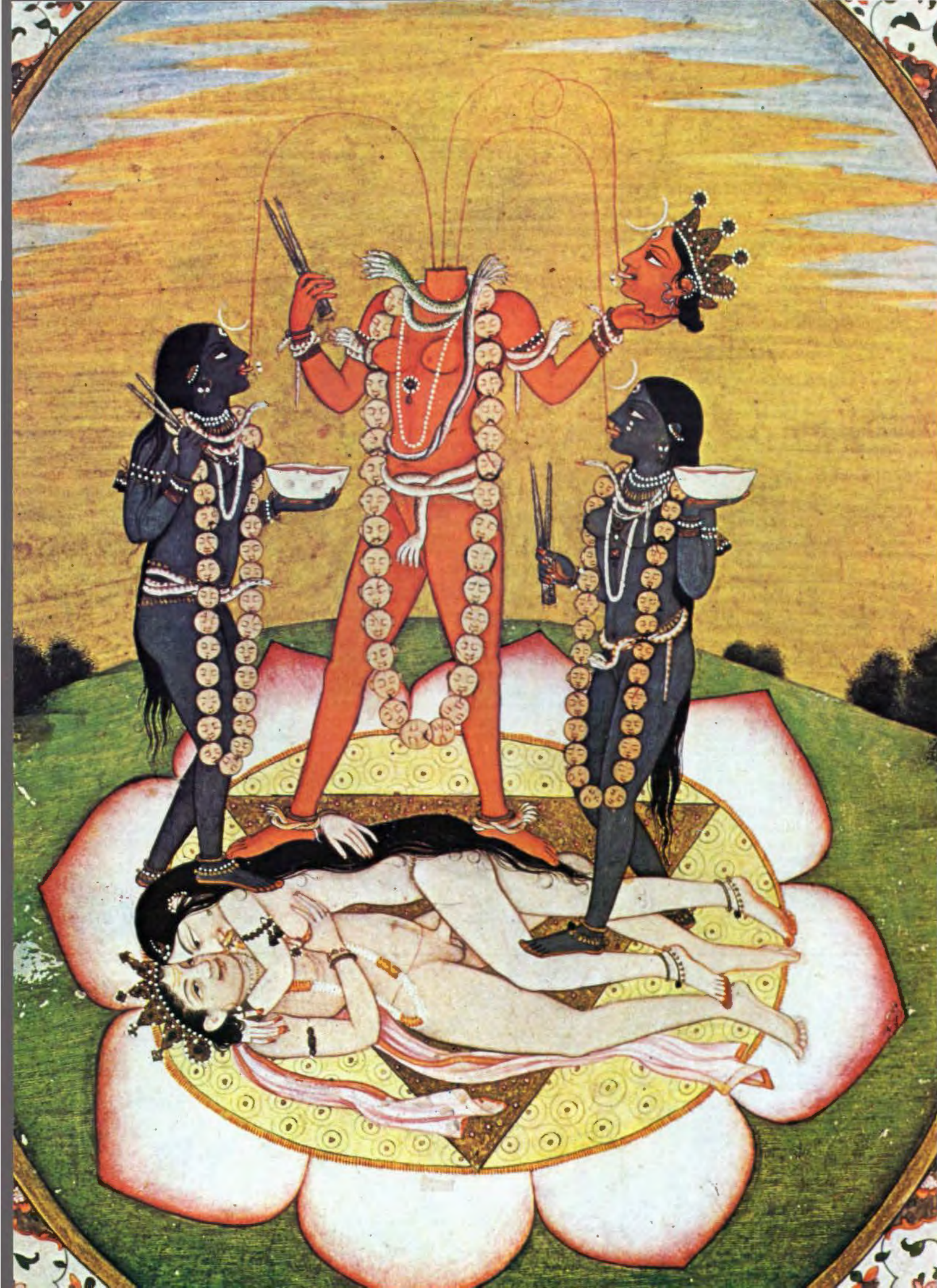
KALI

THE CREATIVE DEITY of the universe was regarded in a number of religious systems from earliest times as a Great Mother, a fertility goddess, carved or modelled with generous breasts and ample haunches, giving promise of the full measure of the earth's abundance. Through the ages this mother goddess developed several subsidiary aspects besides the nourishing and maternal being who was the universal provider. These aspects became separately personified and were worshipped as varying manifestations of the great deity. Frequently she was a sex goddess, a courtesan or divine harlot. Sometimes she was the goddess of illicit love; sometimes the devoted spouse, or the spotless virgin.

But there was yet another face, an awe-inspiring image typifying the deep-seated dread aroused by the unpredictable hazards of man's existence. This dire concept of woman recurs in mythologies the world over. The benign mother-protectress then emerges as a goddess of warfare, of the chase, of pestilence, of blood sacrifice and death, and the other manifold terror-shapes which invest the primordial and mysterious Female in man's mind. As such she stands for the cruel, unpitying, avenging side of the cosmic process. In classical myth these qualities manifest as the child-stealing Lamia, the Harpy, the Gorgon and the Fury; in Tibetan Buddhism as the wrathful and destructive female demons. Hinduism has a host of such deities, but in none are these attributes more forcefully conceived than in the figure of the goddess Kali.

The name Kali means 'black'. She may be

An 18th century painting of Chinnamasta, a manifestation of the bloodthirsty Kali; the goddess represents the terror side of cosmic female potency and is shown standing on the love god Kama-deva in union with his wife Rati



called the Indian counterpart of black deities who appear in the pantheons of several old religions. Ancient Egypt had a Black Isis; Rome had a Black Venus, and a Demeter *Melaina*, 'Black Demeter', was the Greek version of the dark-visaged goddess.

But Kali probably takes precedence in the hierarchy of black-hued deities because although her blackness may ultimately be due to her tropical, aboriginal inheritance, she is in essence Blackness personified, ruling over all the dark elements of Nature.

Black Strangler

In Hinduism the mother goddess assumes a variety of forms, several of whom are the wives of the god Shiva, each symbolizing an aspect of his being. These aspects, taken collectively, represent the female cosmic principle, known as Shakti. Shiva's power is effective and can operate only through his Shakti, an all-pervading female potency that suffuses the universe like a vast web in which the manifest world is enmeshed and on which the sequence of the human puppet-drama is played out. Kali represents the terror side of this Shakti principle. Her presence gives not only shape and reality but also a fierce vital energy to the things that exist. She is the dynamism of the cosmos.

Traditionally Kali is portrayed as an emaciated hag with a very dark complexion. Often she is shown with bulging bloodshot eyes and matted hair. She wears a necklace of human skulls and a girdle of human teeth. Between protruding fangs her long pendulous tongue drips gore. Human entrails are her especial delight. In the bony fingers of one hand she holds a human head, and in the other the blood-stained sword with which she has severed it. Her two other hands are raised to encourage or bless her devotees. Occasionally she is shown holding a rope to strangle her victims, and an iron hook to impale and drag them to their doom.

Closely linked with Kali and frequently identified with her, particularly in Bengal, is the goddess Durga, commonly depicted riding on a lion or tiger and accompanied by eight female demons who gnaw at the bones that remain after she has feasted.

Kali is held responsible for smallpox, plague, cholera and other pestilences that beset mankind, and for the high fevers that rage before death. Regular blood sacrifices are therefore performed to propitiate her wrath and gain her favour, and until the middle of the last century these not infrequently included the immolation of human beings. On one occasion, in 1830, a rajah sacrificed 25 adult males in her honour, and in various scattered communities her followers offered her a human victim or two when occasion demanded and opportunity offered. In the shrine of Danteshwari (dedicated to the 'Fanged Deity') in Bastar, Central India, human heads were regularly presented at her altar.

Most other gods of India today are satisfied with simple offerings of flowers, coconuts, rice and fruit, but Kali remains the chief goddess to whom blood sacrifices continue to be made, though owing to the restrictions imposed by enlightened legislation the victim is now usually a goat.

Demons Born from Blood

Certainly the most ardent and extreme of Kali's worshippers were the members of the once widespread secret society called Thugs. Their name comes from a Sanskrit word meaning 'conceal', and they had good reason to be secretive about their cult, for they were professional stranglers who terrorized the Indian highways for centuries, waylaying and garrotting unwary travellers as a pious act of devotion to their goddess (see THUGS).

The legend goes that Kali once had an encounter with a demon and decapitated him. But to her dismay she saw that from every drop of his blood there sprang another demon equally ferocious, and as each was slain other demons arose from the spilt blood. The goddess finally tore off the border of her garment, twisted it into a rope and used it to strangle her demon adversaries. She then applied her vampire fangs to their throats and drained their blood.

In commemoration of this event Kali summoned a few select devotees and ordained that they should henceforth strangle human victims in her honour. On a clay dummy she taught them the art of doing this correctly with a *rumal* (handkerchief) and presented them, as an emblem of their religion, with one of her curved fangs, which the Thugs worshipped as their sacred pickaxe. The practice of *thuggee* remained an accepted part of the dangers of travel in India into the 19th century.

Kali has been the subject of innumerable legends, songs and sculptural representations throughout India's long history. What is perhaps her earliest prototype can be seen in the Indus Valley civilization which flourished between 2500 and 1000 BC, where one of the seals shows a mother goddess standing under a fig-tree awaiting the sacrifice of a goat which a worshipper is bringing to slay before her. She appears in the *Mahabharata*, the great epic of India, exulting in flesh and animal sacrifice. In subsequent literature she is the exterminator of demons, but also *Kali Ma*, 'Mother Kali', the great protectress, the granter of boons. Kali personifies the Permanent Reality of the Tantric texts, those medieval writings devoted to the Shakti creed. Reformist societies in India today still revere her as the Mother who nourishes but also punishes, and submit to her dread judgement both in this world and the next. The worship of Kali remains widely prevalent in Bengal among all classes of the population, and the biggest temple raised in her honour is that of Kalighata; Calcutta, which was built in the environs of a small village where the temple stands, is an anglicized version of this name.

Kali reigns supreme as the goddess of fatality who determines the destiny of things. The Greeks believed that retribution follows *hubris* or inordinate pride against the gods; but Kali is *nemesis* or retribution, which is undeserved. She expresses the terror that underlies every activity. Her influence is felt wherever fear and worry are present. In terms of modern psychology she represents the shadow side of the psyche; the sombre archetype of the *anima*, the female element that is the permanent guest within ourselves. Outside ourselves she is the looming menace behind Nature; ever present in what we believe is meant to nurture and mother us. Within us or without, she reveals her power in the dark flame that flickers like a panic band in the spectrum of existence. A frightening paradox: Kali Ma, the Dread Mother.

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Kama

The Hindu concept of Desire, personified as the god of love and depicted as a beautiful youth riding a bird or elephant, armed with a bow made of sugar-cane; his chief festival, *Madanotsava*, was celebrated by dancing and singing, culminating in sexual union: it is recounted that Desire was the first thing that stirred at the dawn of creation, Kama's power over humanity henceforth ensuring the continuing creation of the world.

KAMIKAZE

'EVERYONE TALKS about fighting to the last man and the last round,' General Slim remarked during the war in Burma, 'but only the Japanese actually do it.' Among the most dramatic examples of the Japanese conviction that death is preferable to the dishonour of surrender were the attacks made by *kamikaze* pilots on American and Allied warships in the Pacific during the Second World War. The pilots were told that in their heroic efforts to save their Emperor and country from defeat, at the cost of their own lives, they would become gods. They attempted to crash their planes, which were loaded with bombs, onto enemy ships. Many of them were shot down before reaching their objectives but they sometimes caused sinkings and heavy damage. For instance, during the American assault on the Philippines, the *Nashville*, flagship of a task-force sailing by Surigao Strait to Mindoro, was struck by a kamikaze plane which crashed into the superstructure. The ship was put out of action, 131 men were killed and 158 wounded.

The original kamikaze, or 'divine winds', were the storms which dispersed Mongol invasion fleets in 1274 and 1281, and which were believed to have been sent by the gods of Japan. The belief that death is the honourable and desirable objective of the fighting man also goes back to medieval Japan, to the code of behaviour of the *samurai* warrior caste, which was later called *bushido* and survived the abolition of the caste itself. Bushido involved an ideal of utter loyalty and obedience which put a warrior's life totally at the disposal of his superior officer. The warrior regarded himself not so much as a man but as a weapon, a tool in the hands of his master, and his honour required that if he was ordered to die, he obeyed. Early in the Second World War the Japanese Prime Minister, General Tojo, enshrined this principle in the instruction that a soldier should be ashamed to surrender, however hopeless the circumstances. He should fight on until he was killed, or else kill himself.

Kamikaze pilots deliberately crashed their planes onto enemy ships, believing they would become gods by dying for their country

The law of cosmic requital for one's good and bad deeds, known as karma, is a central concept of all Hindu and Buddhist sects, the chief aim of which is the acquittal of the soul of its debts; this is achieved by successive rebirth until the slate is wiped clean

KARMA

REWARD FOR the virtuous: punishment for the wicked. In one form or another this principle of elementary justice underlies every social and religious attitude. Throughout the world every society, however primitive or however far advanced, gives its prizes and its penalties according to a predetermined law. Worldly esteem, high estate, honour and a place in heaven after death, on the one side; disgrace, jail, failure, and the fires of hell on the other. This is the law in its simplest form.

It is fundamental to the Greek concept of *heimarmene* or destiny, the inescapable chain of cause and effect which arises from the pressure of impersonal forces upon personal behaviour, and which draws down reward or retribution. We get what we deserve. 'Heaven,' says Plato, 'is guiltless.' It is the rigid framework upon which the heroes of the great Greek tragedies were racked, for their own deeds, or for events played out at a distance by other protagonists, the repercussions of which were reflected in their own tragic fates.

It permeates the logic of the Hebrews as expressed in the book of Job (chapter 4) by Eliphaz the Temanite: '"Who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? . . . those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the same."'

But in no religious system has the law of cosmic requital been more profoundly explored and become more deeply rooted than in Hinduism. In Hindu philosophy the term embracing the idea is *karma*. The word is derived from a Sanskrit root which signifies action, as implicit in every form of human activity, thought and feeling.

Deeds and thoughts are seeds. If what is sown is good, the fruit is good. If the seed is bad, the fruit is bad. The only significant contribution of a man's life consists in the sum total of his actions as they relate to his karma. Even so, the impact of karma may not be immediately evident on the physical plane; its final impress is stamped upon the invisible sphere and remains unseen. Like the hero of Oscar Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian Gray* we may live out our lives oblivious of the consequences of our actions, but like the portrait in the attic the soul is all the time undergoing a slow transmutation, reflecting in each line of its features the mounting consequences of every single deed and thought.

Logically considered, the karma doctrine is not without its beauty. It extends the principle of causation to the sphere of human conduct and commits a man to the obligations of a truly moral life. The precise accounting of human behaviour falls into an exactly balanced scheme, which seems to fulfil the requirements of a perfectly ordered and just universe. It provides an explanation for the existence of evil, inequality and injustice. It answers the problem of suffering with a reasonable explanation.

Victoria & Albert Museum

'Every action, every thought, every passing wish is a link in the chain that tethers man more firmly to the wheel of birth-death-rebirth'; he must continue to return to earth until all karma, a basic concept in Buddhism and Hinduism, is expended *Above* and *Right* Two Tibetan examples of the 'wheel of life', to which all men are shackled

Karma determines our condition both in the next world and in the next life on earth. In a very literal sense we fashion our own fate. The doctrine's precepts might be called a metaphysical elaboration of the popular wisdom enshrined in such notions as that of a man being captain of his soul; or sowing a thought and reaping a destiny; or of the battle being lost for a horseshoe nail.

The Divine Essence

Hindu and Buddhist doctrines concerning what occurs after death vary to some extent with different theologians. How the soul is judged, and by which roads it travels via the moon, sun, stars and celestial abodes of the ancestors and the gods is not always consistently stated in the texts on the subject. Most agree that a judgement takes place in the Hall of Yama, situated in the underworld, where the record-keeper Chitragupta reads out the balance sheet of our deeds.

Those who in this life were so far advanced in purity and truth as to have totally avoided any evil thought or act, and who therefore have no entry in the adverse side of their ledgers, are translated immediately to the heavenly realms and enter the state of everlasting beatitude. In other words, those who have attained the highest degree of the soul's evolution have no residue of karma left, and they do not, like lesser mortals, have to repeat the earthly pilgrimage. For them ultimate emancipation is assured. They are merged with the Divine Essence.

All the rest, the innumerably vast majority of mankind, are predestined to return. The very good who fall short of perfection, the moderately good, the bad and the supremely wicked, must all come back. They must try again.

But before re-entering the physical plane each one receives his share of reward or punishment according to the way he has lived. For the virtuous the reward after death, according to some scriptures, is a period of joy in paradise. They taste the delights of bliss in the abode of the gods. The wicked, on the other hand, are visited with punishment in one of several hells appropriate to their transgressions. They suffer the pangs of thirst or physical torment. They are drowned in mire, prodded by fiends, suspended from the spiked branches of poisonous trees, or suffer in lakes of fire.

This interim punishment or pleasure does not, as one might suppose, liquidate the debt. Heaven and hell are mere interludes, a reminder, as it were, of what awaits them after their next birth. Having met his

just deserts in the next world, man's account is not balanced yet. For the heavens or hells provide no permanent means of reparation or absolution. It is only on earth that imperfect acts can be wiped out. Earth is therefore known as *karma-bhumi*, 'karma-place'. Only here, in man's material condition, are actions generated; only here are evils expiated; only here is righteousness rewarded.

The vast majority of men are therefore fated to come back to earth, and to continue to return until all karma is expended. Relentlessly and remorselessly the wheel turns. Every action, every thought, every passing wish is a link in the chain that tethers man more firmly to the wheel of birth-death-rebirth. And bound in this way he returns and keeps returning until the balance sheet is clean.

This recurrent cycle of coming and going of the human soul to the scene of its actions is known as *samsara*, or transmigration: the soul's journey to the otherworld after the death of the body which has marked it with its stains; and then a pleasant or painful interval in the next sphere, followed by the inexorable return to earth reincarnated in a higher or lower scale of life according to the soul's merits. The sinner can try again and make amends. The impure and imperfect are given another chance and allowed another term to learn and cultivate the redeeming virtues that perfect the soul. Until then the soul must continue to reinhabit body after body for repeated trials and probations until the stage is reached when it is completely purified.

Karma is inseparably linked with the idea of reincarnation. No karma, no rebirth. The soul comes back because of karma, and the bodily form it occupies depends on the way it has acquitted itself in its previous life. Today, these forms, as described in the law-books of Hinduism, often have a bizarre ring, for they reflect the social background prevailing in early and medieval Indian communities. The last section of the compilation of laws by the great Hindu lawgiver Manu (500 BC) is concerned with the 'fruits of karma'. Says Manu: 'The individual soul enters a womb in this life as a result of what it has done in a previous birth.' The slayer of a Brahmin enters

Victoria & Albert Museum

the womb of a sow or she-ass; a priest who drinks intoxicating liquor will be reborn as a bird that lives on excrement; the thief who steals gold will become a lizard. Men who delight in doing hurt will become carnivorous animals; those who associate with outcasts become cannibals. He who steals grain will be reborn as a rat.

The consideration of what does and what does not constitute accountable action, the foundation of karma, is an intricate one, and has been the source of a great deal of metaphysical speculation. Some philosophers have held that the power of karma operates solely in clearly intentioned acts. Only willed or desired activity, with a clearly defined motive and a distinct end can be called accountable action, meriting the full impact of the laws of karma. Secular legislation prescribes severe and well-deserved punishment for the perpetrator of such acts of transgression, and religious law is no less clear-cut on the issue. But, to use legal jargon, if wilful murder is karma-carrying, does manslaughter, an accidental slaying without premeditation or intent, also have a karma content? Is motive the sole factor that determines the operations of karma? Strictly speaking, the teachings of the karma doctrine leave no room for this kind of distinction. The action is clear, hence the consequences are clear. An accidental killing is still a killing.

And what of actions that redeem, or at least lighten the burden of karma-bearing? Does obedience to scripture, ritual observance, 'doing good' as ordained by the *dharma* or law, mitigate man's imperfections? Is it possible to escape wrong action by non-activity? By renouncing the flesh and spurning its pleasures? By asceticism, self-denial and self-chastisement? The law is adamant. The whole field of human endeavour falls within the domain of karma. To live is to act, and all action is inherently liable to produce karma.

Nothing is exempt. Everything counts. Not only behaviour deliberately intended and directed towards evil; not only the consequences resulting from accidental misdeeds; not only activity meant to counter wrongful activity; but man's very emotions. Self-seeking, covetousness, jealousy, wrath, ambition, lust and hatred, even if not translated into physical action, are still karma-generating.

What then of unconscious thoughts, innocent ruminations, harmless fantasies? St Augustine, aware that his dreams could not bear close inspection, thanked God that he was not responsible for them. But the law of karma does not exclude dreams from its scope. Although they seem to come unbidden, they come to the dreamer, and each dreamer must account for them.

Enmeshed in His Own Web

Karma grinds down and measures the tiniest shreds of each man's hidden personality. Everything that constitutes even an atomic fragment of what might be regarded as his self is put into the scales. Otherwise the rigid law of justice would not be properly served. And it would seem that exponents of the doctrine have the support of psychoanalysis, for there is, according to Freudians, a hidden wish behind dreams, inadvertencies and apparent whims, behind casual errors and mistakes.

Man is entirely enmeshed in a web spun by himself. His own nature entraps him. As long as he lives on earth he is subject to the inexorable law of karma, and he can do nothing but submit to it. This doctrine has been called the 'nightmare' of Hindu and Buddhist thought. Birth-death-rebirth is the lot in perpetuity of almost every mortal soul. Unless a person possesses the exceptional, indeed almost superhuman, qualities needed to achieve the required state of enlightenment, he faces the prospect of a recurrent sojourn on earth till the end of time. All Hindu and Buddhist sects have as their chief aim, the release of the soul from the shackles of karma.

A new idea was introduced into the concept of karma some time in the early centuries of the present era, the idea of the grace of God, known in Sanskrit as *bhakti*. Although there are some tenuous references to bhakti in the early Hindu scriptures the concept first began to be systematically developed sometime after the advent of Christianity in India, and gained ground in the areas where Christianity was first established in the country. To some extent the new religion may have influenced the growth of the bhakti cult. The term 'bhakti' means variously: faith, grace, charity, love, devotion (see HINDUISM; KRISHNA). And the idea behind it is that it is possible through bhakti to obtain release from the cycle of reincarnation.

No matter if man, struggling towards the mirage of perfection falls short of the glory of God; or if, feverishly striving for enlightenment by asceticism, self-mortification and penance he still remains sinful; or if he continues backsliding despite his most frantic exertions: there is no need to despair. The heavy debit entries marked on the balance-sheet of the soul's accounting can be more than offset by simple faith in the saving power of God. And bhakti demands no exertion. Not even an act of will. Rather, the abandonment of the will; the relinquishment of effort. It merely requires surrender.

Nor does bhakti need understanding. It renounces knowledge, for the chief obstacle between man and God is not ignorance but unbelief. It does not insist on the need for good deeds, since this would suggest the efficacy of man's works, and so diminish the area for the operation of God's superabundant grace.

How far must man go in his faith? According to one school of thought, man must be like the baby monkey and cling to God, as the monkey clings to its mother; he has nothing to fear. But another school regards this 'monkey-hold' theory as requiring too much effort on man's part and therefore lacking in faith. Man does not even have to cling. He must lie prostrate and helpless like a kitten. And just as the mother cat takes hold of her kitten and carries it off to a place of safety, so does God with the man of faith. No clinging is required on his part, no effort whatsoever; only complete abandon and trust.

Bhakti is total, all-consuming and all-sufficing. With one sweep of God's grace the ill effects of every action are permanently effaced and the soul emancipated from the dread bondage of eternal return.

Karma is divine justice. Bhakti is divine mercy. And for men of faith God's mercy is greater than God's justice.

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Kava

A mildly intoxicating drink made from the chewed or pounded root of a Polynesian shrub; it is drunk on formal social, political and religious occasions in Polynesia and is accompanied by elaborate ceremony; it is also taken as a cure for rheumatism and venereal disease.

Axel Poignant

Kelpies

Water spirits or fairies of Scottish folklore, who often took the form of a horse; usually mischievous, they were thought to graze on the banks of rivers and lakes; having enticed travellers to mount them, they tossed them into the water and devoured them; to see a kelpie was said to be a sure portent of drowning.

See FAIRIES.

Staatliche Museum

Keres

In Greek mythology, malignant spirits who brought all kinds of misfortune and trouble including disease, old age and death; some believed them to be the executors of the will of the Fates and others that they were the souls of the dead.

Verein zur Erhaltung des Xantener Domes E.V.

Key

An important symbol in magic, religion and folklore because it provides and prevents access to some sought after place or spiritual condition: associated with entrance to the Mysteries, and to degrees of initiation; in many religions the key has the power to open heaven and hell; freedom of a city is symbolically granted by being given the keys, and a decorative key is presented on 21st birthdays to 'unlock the door' of adult status.

See SYMBOLISM.

Before committing the acts against white colonists which so horrified the Western world, the Mau Mau warrior of the Kikuyu took a solemn oath, the breaking of which was believed to have terrible consequences; magic pervades every aspect of Kikuyu life and is especially potent in oath-taking

KIKUYU

THE LARGEST of the 48 tribes living in Kenya, the Kikuyu, number some $1\frac{1}{2}$ million people. They came to the attention of the outside world in the 1950s because of their membership of the Mau Mau, a terrorist organization whose avowed aim was to drive the white man out of Kenya. The Mau Mau tactics consisted largely of ritual murders which, under the terms of an oath, required the killer to cut off the victim's head and drink the liquid of his eyeballs.

The Mau Mau, however, were not representative of the majority of the Kikuyu who usually prefer diplomacy to open warfare with their neighbours. They belong to the great Bantu-speaking group of Negroes and are predominantly agriculturists and goatherders. Traditionally, they live in family homesteads protected by a stockade which encloses a collection of huts, one for each wife and her children.

The Kikuyu religion is fundamentally pagan and animistic, as religion has always been throughout Black Africa. The Kikuyu have a chief god who inhabits the sky and the peaks of high mountains. He is called Ngai and was probably originally a sun god, for the Kikuyu pray to him at first light when the sun comes over the horizon.

But Ngai is a rather vague deity, and much more meaningful are the ghosts of the ancestors and the spirits of the earth. All these gods and ghosts have to be continually placated with sacrifices, for they are ever-present, loitering around the hut and particularly the hearthstone, extremely interested in the affairs of the family and frequently intervening in them.

As a result, religion animates every aspect of Kikuyu life. No public or private act can

John Moss

Mount Kenya is sacred to the Kikuyu, who believe that it is the earthly dwelling-place of the Creator god

John Moss

be performed without the approval, if possible, of the family gods. For if that approval is not obtained, if the spirits are displeased, misfortunes are bound to follow – sickness, barrenness, and death itself.

The spirits of the earth must also be heeded. They inhabit many inanimate objects, trees, waterfalls, and rocks. The Kikuyu believe so profoundly in their existence that when clearing a forest they always leave the largest tree as a refuge and home for the sylvan godling. Sacrifices are offered at the bole of these sacred trees, and the area round about is considered so holy that fugitives are permitted to take refuge there.

Closely bound up with these religious beliefs and rituals are the tribal magicians, both those concerned with black magic and those concerned with white. White magicians, or medicine-men, have always had an honourable place in African societies, though their function has been greatly misunderstood by Western observers. The medicine-man's job is primarily to diagnose and treat diseases, sometimes by the use of herbs, sometimes by magic (a method of healing which has much in common with psychotherapy) and often by a combination of both. He is also a soothsayer, priest, counsellor, and stern opponent of witches and wizards. The medicine-man, in short, is a public servant who works in the open and in daylight.

In contrast, the black magician is a creature of the night whose hold over other men is based on the psychology of fear. The wizard has no need to make himself known to his victim. Creeping up to a hut by night, he will place gazelle horns by the door and wait for his enemy to lie down and voluntarily 'give up the ghost'. On the other hand, if the wizard is 'smelt out' by the genuine medicine-man, his death is terrible. The Kikuyu peg him to the ground and leave him to die of starvation and exposure. Those unfortunate people who are born with the 'Evil Eye', however, are not regarded as witches, provided they observe proper etiquette. They must not, for instance, look anybody directly in the face, or praise anything or anybody too highly.

So magic, it is seen, pervades many aspects of Kikuyu life, and it is especially potent in oaths and oath-taking, which have a far more profound mystical significance to tribal people than they do to Western man. In fact, oath-taking is such a solemn, elaborate and even dangerous proceeding that it is only undertaken as a last resort. This is the oath which the Mau Mau warriors swore at the time of their war against the white colonists:

> I swear that if I am ordered to kill, I will kill, no matter who it is. In the event of my killing anyone, I will cut off their head, extract their eyeballs, and drink the liquid from them. When I go to kill someone, I must take with me a strangling rope, a small knife to extract the victim's eyes, and a handkerchief to cover my hands against fingerprints.

The most important thing about this oath was not the wording, but the ritual by which it was sanctified. For the ritual involved powerful magic in the form of the so-called 'oath-stone'. This was usually a boulder pierced with seven holes to represent seven orifices of the male human body – two ears, two nostrils, a mouth, anus and penis. The medicine-man and the chief elders would poke sticks into these holes as the oath was being sworn, in order to ensure that the vow could not escape.

The climax was reached when the swearer called upon the oath-stone to bring about his death and the death of all his clan if he was guilty of perjury or false evidence. Further, all the parties involved, both the principals and their relatives, were debarred from sexual activity for seven planting seasons, a prohibition that also applied to their male animals which therefore either had to be castrated or sent away. In other words, a Kikuyu oath is so binding and so severe that parties to a dispute will do everything in their power to avoid having to swear it.

Naturally, the solemnity of an oath varies with the gravity of the dispute or the accusation. For instance, a man accused of homicide who pleads innocence must take the oath while sacrificing a sheep whose apertures, including the eyes have been closed up. The accused is required to carry this animal around the circle of the elders while swearing his innocence and then to throw the sheep into a fire for ritual burning. For the next year neither the accused nor any of his kin are permitted to have sexual intercourse. And if he or any of his relatives on

The main concern of the women of the Kikuyu tribe is their status, and at one time all young girls had to undergo rites such as clitoridectomy and abdominal cicatrization, both of which were presided over by the old women of the tribe, to prepare themselves for their future roles as wives and mothers *Left* Women performing a ritual dance *Right* Kikuyu woman in the kind of colourful costume that was worn during Kenya's Independence celebrations

his father's side die during the year, he is declared guilty.

Such an oath is considered so powerful that the Kikuyu are convinced that it could kill all the members of a homicide's clan and therefore prove his guilt and that even relatives as much as 100 miles away, without any knowledge of the crime, would die. For this very reason, the aged and sick are deliberately excluded from the effects of the oath, to make sure that there is no coincidence in the working of the magic.

It follows that some wrong-doers will refuse to take such a dangerous oath, preferring to pay a fine assessed by the elders. If a guilty man then refuses to pay the fine, the tribe has further means of punishing him. They use the sanction of total ostracism, which extends to his wife and children whom nobody will help or even speak to. Very few men whose lives are so dependent upon a small rural community can withstand such social pressure for long and, in any case, his wife or wives would very soon see to it that he paid his fine in order to be 'cleansed' of his wrong-doing.

A related form of oath-swearing is uttering curses which, provided they are spoken or acted out in the open, are regarded as legitimate weapons of attack and defence, particularly for women. When a woman's first child is born, the amniotic fluid is usually cursed in order to preserve the secrets of the mother's private life.

Women's Secret Meetings

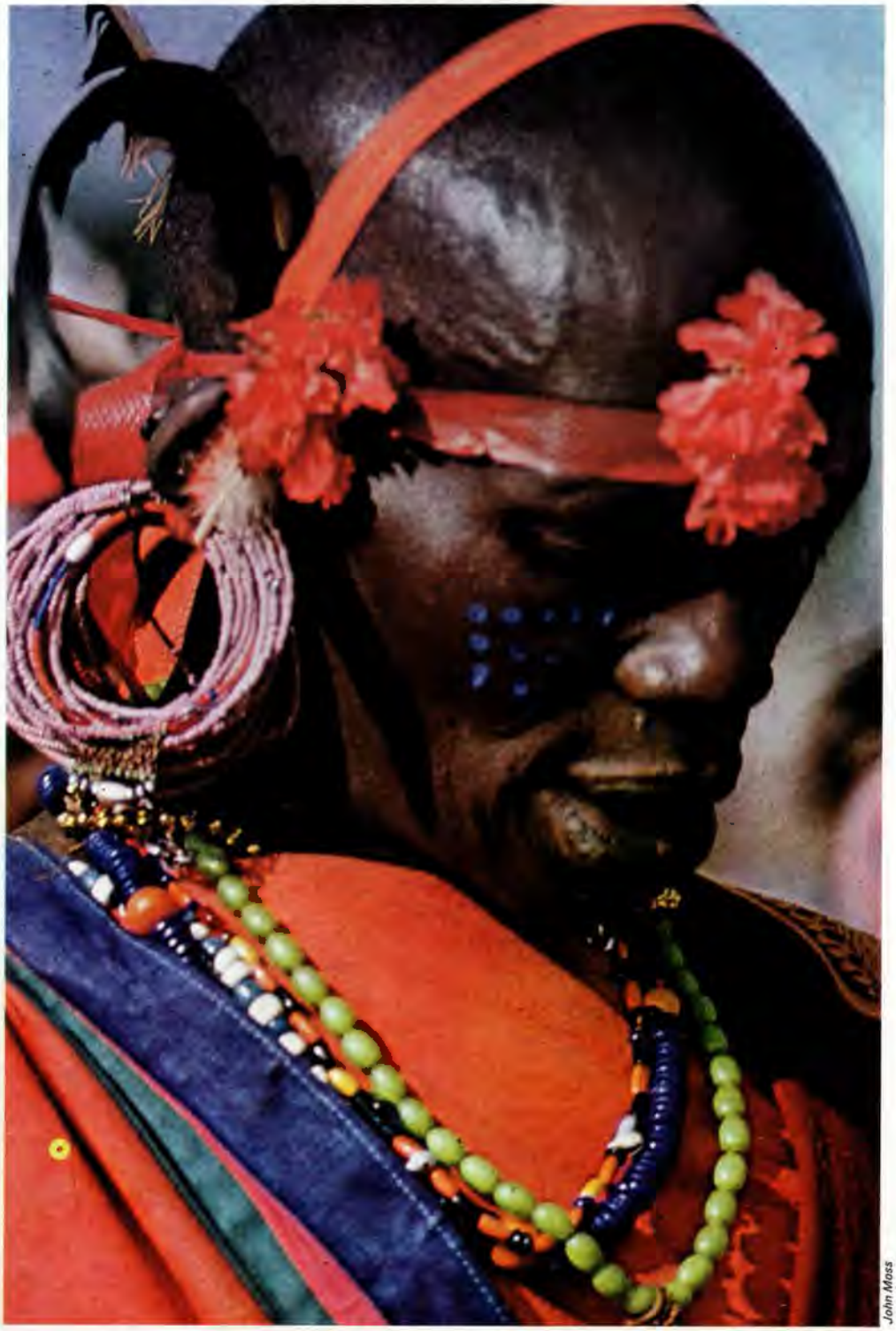
A very common form of threat used by women is to exhibit their private parts with appropriate gestures. For instance, if two wives quarrel about the boundaries of their gardens, one may uncover herself in the presence of the other and then make obscene gestures towards the ground, which consequently is cursed. Such symbolic 'cursing' is not unknown in Western societies.

An even more solemn variation is the procedure whereby the women of a village will demonstrate their stern disapproval of another group, male or female, by lining up, removing their undergarments, bending forward with their buttocks directed towards the offenders, then, at a signal from their leader, lifting up their skirts over their backs. The spectacle of some score or more women in this position is considered horrific enough to make even the most blasé offender mend his ways.

It is by such means that women make their wills and wishes felt in a strictly masculine society, though their actual organizations are so secret that few white men or, for that matter, the Kikuyu males themselves, know what they are. The natives usually refer to 'secret meetings of the dames', but usually take good care not to get involved.

Obviously the main concern of the women is their status – as potential wives and mothers. This involves a number of rites and ceremonies which are presided over by the older women, who supervise the clitoridectomy of the young girls and the abdominal cicatrization. The former operation, like the circumcision of the boys, has some sort of ancient religious significance. The abdominal scars resulting from the cicatrization of the belly are supposed to cause sickness in illicit male lovers and hence ensure the good behaviour of a wife. Both practices are frowned upon by Christian missionaries, and the Kikuyu themselves were persuaded in 1932 to pass an order limiting the operation of female circumcision to an incision of sufficient depth for the removal of the *glans clitoridis* only.

A basic concept of the Kikuyu religion is a belief in the spiritual uncleanness of anybody who has broken one of the tribal laws or taboos, whether deliberately or involuntarily. He must then be purified by an elaborate ritual in case he contaminates other members of the community. In other words, the Kikuyu regard crime or misbehaviour as a physical sickness, like measles, and they treat the 'patient' accordingly. Proof of their conviction that spiritual uncleanness is a disease is provided by the fact that a malefactor will often show all the symptoms of sickness – persistent headaches, aching joints, vomiting,



John Moss

debility, and so forth. He needs, therefore, to undergo a cure. The cure, or cleansing, always entails the sacrifice of a goat or lamb; the drinking of a potion containing the undigested food in the animal's stomach; the smearing of the patient with the entrails; and the relevant incantations. All such ritual has to take place in public, otherwise black magic would be suspected.

The concept of cleansing or purification underlies many of the initiation ceremonies which mark every stage of Kikuyu life. Initiation proceeds by age groups, and begins just before puberty with the circumcision of both boys and girls. This operation, which is always dangerous in view of the primitive instruments employed, takes place soon after the harvest, between February and April.

Marriage Insurance

Circumcision is followed by a curious ceremony called *kuihaka muunya*, which requires the 'rape' of a woman who is a stranger and for this purpose, the boys roam through the countryside on the look-out for such a woman, and in theory every member of the band must have sexual intercourse with her in order to cleanse himself. It seems that in practice some of the boys complete the rite by masturbating in the woman's presence. Barbarous though this custom seems, it is none the less so deeply rooted in the Kikuyu culture that no man can marry until he has purified himself in this way.

Girls, too, had to be cleansed before marriage by full intercourse with a strange man, not an easy procedure since no man would want to risk being 'tainted' in this manner. Consequently girls often sought out immature boys for their purpose, since children were not considered subject to the 'taint'. The anthropologist can recognize in this ancient custom the strong taboo concerning blood.

After initiation, both boys and girls belong to their appropriate groups, the boys to a regiment of warriors, the girls to a club. The boys now go hunting and fighting; the girls learn personal hygiene, the use of ornaments, and the rules of the limited sex-play permitted by custom between unmarried young people of the same age group.

It is time now for a Kikuyu male to think about marrying, which is described as 'bride purchase' by some Western observers and 'marriage insurance' by others. In either

Peter Larsen

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Left **A modest version of a traditional cursing procedure in which the women of a village showed their disapproval of another group by removing their undergarments, directing their buttocks towards the offenders, and lifting their skirts up over their backs *Above* Formalized make-up is worn by young men taking part in the Muchungwa, a dance in which girls are also allowed to participate**

case, the procedure is always much the same. A Kikuyu will choose a wife from among the girls who grew up in his set and were his dancing partners during the important social occasions which were connected with the initiation rites.

The bride-price, which involves a great deal of haggling between the parents, is assessed in terms of goats, cattle, and land; the basic price for a desirable bride used to be three heifers and two bulls. This custom means that the wife has a certain insurance if the marriage breaks down because of the husband's inadequacy. The payment and acceptance of cattle and land, therefore, go a long way to ensuring a good marriage and to avoiding the complication of divorce, which the Kikuyu strongly oppose.

Polygamy is permitted, as it is throughout pagan Africa. The second and subsequent wives are usually chosen by the first, or senior, wife, who naturally often selects a friend who, for some reason or the other, has not obtained a husband. In addition, there exists the curious custom called *kuheero*, which permits a single woman to look around for a married man she considers would make a good husband and then to take steps to attach herself to him. To do this, she will enter his hut after he has gone to bed and offer herself to him. If the man accepts her and allows her to remain, he is obliged to make her his legal wife.

Although such customs appear to be arbitrary and highly permissive, there is neither prostitution nor illegitimacy in traditional Kikuyu society, nor are there unwilling spinsters. It was inevitable that the early missionaries should condemn the custom of kuheera and, in any case, conditions in big cities like Nairobi, where husbands and wives are not separate and independent each in their own hut, have tended to undermine the custom.

The attitude of the Kikuyu towards sex and procreation has always been simple, since there was no guilt-complex attached to either. In the case of childbearing, it was taboo for a woman to have another baby until the child at her breast was weaned, which did not take place until the infant was two or even three years old. The limitation to one child every three years was not the result of abstinence, but of birth control by the use of herbal contraception.

Once a Kikuyu child was able to walk, his education began and continued all through his life. The stage after childhood was that of junior warrior, then senior warrior, then married man, junior elder, senior elder, magistrate, and so on. The whole object of this training was to make the Kikuyu a good citizen, which meant a gradual process of learning tribal law and religious ceremonies, so that the older a man or woman grew, the more he or she was valued by the community.

Most of the customs described here are changing rapidly as the Kikuyu, along with other African tribes, turn their faces towards the modern world. Western methods of exploiting Nature tend to undermine their traditional reverence for forests, rivers, waterfalls and mountains, once the haven of spirits, now the source of new wealth. Christian missionaries have taught the young Kikuyu that polygamy and premarital sex-play are wicked and, in any case, urban living does not permit the old customs of kuihaka muunya and kuheera. Medicine-men have been discredited; and the old people, who were once the most respected members of the tribe, are becoming a burden on the young, as they are in Western society.

All these developments during the years since 1963, when Kenya became an independent state, have led some observers to fear that the traditional religious beliefs and social customs are being discarded too rapidly, with no positive standards to take their place. This, however, is the general effect of progress and Westernization throughout Black Africa.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: H. E. Lambert, *The Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1956); L. S. B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu* (Methuen, 1952).

KING

'Kingship, like the gods, has for most people at most times had an appeal far profounder than its purely practical and political significance would explain': in many parts of the world kings have been reverenced as being sacred, or even divine

FOR ALL PEOPLES who regard the king and the gods as vitally important for their welfare, kingship inevitably has a sacred aspect, since the regulation of the realm under the king is an integral part of a divine regulation of the world. The association of human and divine authority in the person of the king is thus well known in modern as in ancient history, and the European debate about the divine right of kings was a sophisticated, legalistic expression, in special historical and theological circumstances, of a universal concern for harmonizing secular and sacred powers in a single cosmic order.

So it would be to misrepresent modern studies in social anthropology to suggest that a specifically *primitive* form of divine kingship could be usefully isolated for study. In so far as the word 'primitive' means anything in this connection (and in social anthropology it comes to mean less and less in any context) all sacral kingship might be said to be primitive, in that it seems to draw upon sentiments and symbols which lie very deep in human experience.

Nevertheless 'divine kingship' as a quasi-technical term in anthropological writings has a particular history which has given it a particular meaning. It was first introduced as a central theme in Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), and thereafter captured the imagination of a most varied public. For professional anthropologists as for general readers, the study of 'divine kingship' starts with that vast work.

At the very beginning of *The Golden Bough*, Frazer introduces a form of kingship reported from the ancient Mediterranean world as the source of his interest in the immense survey of beliefs and superstitions that follows. In the poetical prose which has carried so many readers along with him, he conjures up a scene of the long distant past from a woodland lake at Nemi outside Rome. By this lake – '"Diana's Mirror", as it was called by the ancients . . . lapped in a green hollow of the Alban Hills' – was the sacred grove of Diana of the Wood. There, Frazer writes:

> . . . grew a certain tree round which at any time of day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword, and he kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer; and the man he looked for was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. Such was the rule of the sanctuary. A candidate for the priesthood could only succeed to office by slaying the priest, and having slain him, he retained office until he himself was slain by a stronger or a craftier. The post which he held by this precarious tenure carried with it the title of king. .

Frazer's sources for the story are references in Greek and Latin classics, whence also comes the information that this king was known as 'King of the Wood'.

By piecing together fragments of classical literature Frazer began to form the idea of a type of king, who was also both magician and priest, who represented a stage in the early evolution of kingship and more widely, a stage in human intellectual development from magical to religious, and eventually to scientific thought.

But why should this king be killed by a more vigorous successor when his strength began to fail? The clue lay in his title. As King of the Wood he was king of the trees, and as king of the trees he was the incarnation of the spirit of all vegetation. He was thus the source and cause of natural abundance and fertility, and if his vital energies were allowed to decline, those of Nature itself would decline with them.

Beliefs bearing a certain resemblance to these are reported from many times and places, as Frazer himself shows in his encyclopedic survey of ethnographic and historical literature. But perhaps the most anthropologically authoritative confirmation of his views came from two distinguished professional scholars in his own field, Professor C. G. and Mrs B. Z. Seligman. Unlike Frazer they travelled widely to make their own first-hand observations, and during visits to the southern Sudan from 1910 onwards they found there among the Shilluk nation a kingship resembling the divine kingship already familiar to them from *The Golden Bough*.

The Seligmans' report, finally published in *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* (1932) but available much earlier, has become a standard source for students of divine kingship, and Frazer himself cited it in later editions of *The Golden Bough* as a striking empirical confirmation of his interpretation.

Though it contains much new and valuable ethnographic material, and is hedged with doubts about some of the more essential details, its generalizations sometimes follow those of Frazer so closely that they raise questions of how far his persuasiveness as an anthropological visionary and personal repute as a scholar actually predisposed other students to cast their material in his mould. Take for example the Seligmans' account of night-time in the Shilluk court. The King (for some reason not explained) then without his bodyguard: '. . . was represented as passing the night in constant watchfulness, prowling fully-armed, peering into the shadows or standing silent and watchful in some dark corner. Then, when at last his rival appeared, the fight would take place in grim silence, broken only by the clash of spear and shield, for it was said to be a point of honour for the *reth* (king) not to call for help.'

At the present state of our knowledge we cannot deny the possibility of such a scene, nor that (as the Seligmans say) 'many commoners will give some such account (though) there is no reason to suppose that the above represents what really happened during the recent period. . .' But even so it seems strange that African commoners in the 20th century should appear to express themselves in language so like that which Frazer used to describe an Italian priesthood of remote antiquity.

Human and Divine

This mutual confirmation of ideas by three outstanding anthropologists nevertheless established with an authority not readily challenged the broad outlines of a definition of divine kingship. Only much later did experienced scholars of similar standing question not so much the basic principles of divine kingship posited by Frazer and the Seligmans (that the king, as the source of natural abundance, must always be intellectually and physically fertile himself),

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In ancient Egypt the pharaoh was believed to be divine, the child of the sun god Re; he was also thought to be an incarnation of the god Horus who had been given the throne of Egypt by divine decree after the death of his father Osiris. The pharaoh became an Osiris when he died, and his son and successor was Horus: wall painting from the tomb of Amenophis II showing the king with Osiris

but the sense of proportion with which the earlier writers presented those principles.

For sacral kingships, it is clear, have their practical, political aspects too. To concentrate only on the ritual drama and mystical beliefs which they involve, appealing as these are to the imagination, is to leave out those features of kingship which are human as well as divine. So E. E. Evans-Pritchard in *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan* (the Frazer Lecture for 1948) and himself the foremost expert on Nilotic peoples, concluded from an examination of all the literature that the reasons for the premature deaths of Shilluk kings were political rather than religious. Other princes raised rebellions against kings who had become unpopular, and times of national misfortune (such as failure of the harvest) were the most likely times at which such unpopularity would be incurred. And A. I. Richards in *Keeping the King Divine* (the Henry Myers Lecture, 1968) gives us a small insight into the rational component in divine kingship which an earlier tradition of writings on the subject (though often maintained by anthropologists who were agnostics themselves) tended to play down. Of the divine king of the Bemba of Rhodesia, in 1957, she writes: 'When told by his religious advisers that lions were becoming more and more common owing to his failure to do the purification rites, he replied, "I shall just ask the District Commissioners for an extra gun licence and more bullets."'

And with respect to the relationship between kingship and divinity, and the symbolic thought and action surrounding it, the Frazerian account must now appear too limited, intellectualized and materialistic. A large symposium entitled *The Sacral Kingship* (1959) draws together information from most of the world to show that some

Coronation of the Pharaoh

No connected account of an Egyptian coronation has survived and at best the reliefs give us only a selection of the more significant items, and even the exact order of the ceremonies is uncertain. It is evident, however, that to the Egyptian the death of a king meant the temporary disruption of the Two Lands, and that one of the main purposes of the coronation was to restore that unity and to ensure that the new king became a god. The first ceremony was a purification, the Baptism of the Pharaoh as it has been called: the king was purified by the gods of the cardinal points. The purification was not by water alone: the reliefs frequently depict the symbols of life and power or dominion as issuing from the vases, and it would appear that the ceremony was intended to transfer to the new king the powers of the gods of the cardinal points. The king was then led into the Dual Shrines, or the Per-wer and Per-neser, and crowned by the gods, in theory being invested with each individual crown. This was followed by investiture with crook and flail and the presentation of the little casket containing the title-deeds or testament. It was probably at this juncture that the symbolic ceremony of Uniting the Two Lands was performed and it was apparently at this point that Thoth or the Immutef-priest proclaimed the god's decree declaring that the newly crowned king was his legitimate successor, and the Ennead gave their endorsement. The king was then led towards the god, Thoth proclaimed his full titulary, and Thoth and Seshat, goddess of writings and annals, inscribed his years and life-span on the leaves of the sacred persea tree. Finally, apparently after presentation of a scimitar and perhaps investiture with other regalia, the king was led into the presence of the god who formally adjusted the crown as the king knelt before him . . .

H. W. Fairman, 'The Kingship Rituals of Egypt' (in S. H. Hooke ed *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*)

fusion of ideas of the king and the god is and has been widely characteristic of the human imagination. Accounts of it come from the Americas, the Far East, India, Iran, Christian and pre-Christian Europe, as well as Israel, Greece and Rome, and of course ancient Egypt where it is at the centre of a complex theology and literature.

But the contributions to that symposium show also that the actual killing of the king in the belief that the natural world will be thereby rejuvenated is but one among many beliefs about sacral kingship, from among which different combinations emerge in different faiths and societies. In such a highly developed religious kingship as that of ancient Egypt, where theocratic interests were so conspicuously dominant, the aging king was not killed. Instead, through a subtle and elaborate theology and mythology, his natural death was represented as a spiritual transfiguration and resurrection. The kings, father and son, Osiris and Horus, followed each other in an endless cycle of spiritual and social regeneration. We have some faint echo of that theme in the saying 'The king is dead; long live the king.'

And among peoples who have believed that their kings must not be allowed to decline through sickness and senility to an enfeebled death, the means of appearing to forestall that death are various. Frazer himself cites examples from several different regions where the king's death, far from being a 'murder', is a voluntary suicide, even a self-immolation, accepted in the belief that through it his people will receive new vitality. This is certainly so among the Nilotic Dinka, whose most important leaders, custodians of sacred ancestral spears, asked their people to release them when their lives became a burden, and towards their end were placed in chambered graves, whence they continued to the last to admonish and bless the tribe.

Students of comparative religion have always sensed an analogy between the sacred king who dies for his people and the sacrifice of Christ, himself both priest-king and man-god. The intense interest aroused by anthropological studies of divine kingship may well be partly explained by their wider religious implications. For rationalists, they seem to demonstrate that cardinal tenets of Christianity are paralleled among many whom the Victorians would have described as savages, while for believers the ubiquity of the divine king appears to confirm that their own faith is grounded in profound psychological and theological truth.

The Centre of Order

The re-creation of natural and social life out of the king's death, and the sense of human involvement through the king in a cosmic order to which man can make some contribution, are basic features of divine kingship. But there are many others which anthropologists interested in more precise and systematic classification have attempted to use. Tor Irstam (*The King of Ganda*, 1941) considered over 30 associated criteria, of which quite a large number are found sufficiently widely distributed to require some mention. Among them are that there should be special modes of election and installation; that the king is hedged round by prohibitions against eating in public, touching the bare earth, or being physically disfigured; that there are sacred regal insignia and an organization of the royal court designed to sustain the majesty of the king; and that the king himself may be regarded as partaking of the nature of the gods and as an incarnation of divine powers. Thus the king is placed at the centre of the social and natural orders. The births and deaths of kings are then often connected with exceptional natural phenomena such as falling stars or violent storms, as when the murder of Duncan in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is associated with other unnatural events.

A. M. Hocart (*Kings and Councillors*, 1936) pointed to the way in which the king is believed to be the source and symbol of life and order, and draws attention to the frequent use of imagery relating the king to the light-giving and life-giving sun, in maintaining the ordered rhythm of the world. Hocart also emphasizes the dual nature of kingship which others have elaborated upon since his time. On the one hand the king is the spiritual leader, the priestly, even god-like, guide and peacemaker. On the other hand he is the giver of victory, the vanquisher of his people's enemies. Sometimes these spiritual and temporal qualities are represented in the person of a single leader, the king. Sometimes this dual nature of power and leadership gives rise to dual personal leadership. Among the Winnebago Indians for example, the spiritual chief, concerned with peace and harmony, was drawn from a family in one division of the tribe, while the temporal chief concerned with justice and discipline was drawn from a family in another. Hindu doctrines of kingship also represent a separation of the priestly from the warlike attributes of kingship, their functions in ensuring the welfare of the state being ideally complementary. It has commonly been found that though kings are accredited with both spiritual and secular superiority, in fact their executive powers are far smaller than the deference shown them would suggest, and the old European maxim that 'the king reigns rather than governs' has become a commonplace in anthropological work on the subject.

So to modern anthropologists 'divine kingship' suggests a whole complex of beliefs, rituals and ceremonies surrounding the idea of sovereignty, rather than the dramatic and exotic institution which captured the imagination of their predecessors. Certainly these beliefs and the rich imagery in which they are expressed indicate that kingship, like the gods, has for most people at most times had an appeal far profounder than its purely practical and political significance would explain. The king actually reigning at any given time symbolizes the kingship, and the kingship symbolizes the order of the world in which it reigns. Hence it may be imagined that while that order flourishes, individual kings die in one way or another but *the* king never dies. The myth which generated Frazer's study of kingship in *The Golden Bough* is one among many ways in which peoples have expressed their sense of this immortality, in which they see an image of their own constant social regeneration.

GODFREY LIENHARDT

The King in the Ancient World

The term 'divine kingship' is generally used with reference to those forms of monarchy in which the leader of the community is at the same time king and priest. In some cases the king is also thought to be descended from the gods or to share divine qualities in some way or other. Some feel that the term 'divine kingship' should be confined to these cases and would like to use 'sacral kingship' as a broader term, denoting all forms of kingship in which the king has religious functions without being considered divine.

The sacred king who dies for his people in the belief that they will receive new vitality through his death is characteristic of various different cultures: scholars of comparative religion have always sensed an analogy between this tradition and the 'sacrifice of Christ, himself both priest-man and man-god': Christ carrying the cross; painting by El Greco in the Prado Museum, Madrid

Michael Holford

In *The Golden Bough* Frazer regarded sacral kingship as a development of primitive chieftainship, the chieftain of a tribe being at the same time its chief magician. He also placed special emphasis on the king's close connection with the dying and rising god of fertility (see also DYING GOD). A. M. Hocart in his monograph *Kingship* (1927) developed the theory that the belief in the divinity of kings was the primitive religion of mankind. On the basis of material from various parts of the world, he tried to reconstruct a common pattern, especially for the rites of coronation. S. H. Hooke and his collaborators in the collection of essays called *Myth and Ritual* (1933) concentrated their attention on what they considered as a common 'myth and ritual pattern' in the ancient Near East, one conspicuous feature of which was the way in which the king played the role of the chief god in the cult-drama of the New Year Festival in order to ensure fertility and success for the year to come. Scandinavian scholars, such as G. Widengren and I. Engnell, carried these viewpoints further, applying them also to biblical religion and Messianism.

According to Hocart's analysis, as modified by Widengren in his *The World of Religion* (in Swedish, 1953), the almost universal pattern of coronation includes the following characteristic points: a sham fight or ritual combat from which the king emerges victorious; the king is proclaimed the master of the world; the king is asked to reign with justice, and promises to do so; the king is invested with a symbolic garment and receives other regalia, such as a sword, a sceptre, a ring; the king is given food and drink, supposed to give immortality, and he is baptized in water and anointed with oil; the king is proclaimed the son of the god; the king is seated on a throne and receives one or several throne names; the king celebrates the sacred marriage. The aim of all these is obviously to transform the king into a new being, endowed with divine power and divine authority.

From other points of view, it is obvious that there are different types of kingship according to the various degree of close connection with the divine. C. J. Bleeker, at the International Congress in Rome in 1955 entirely devoted to the institution of sacral kingship, suggested the following types: the king's authority rests on his supernatural or divine qualities; or the king is regarded as the son of the deity, thus representing the god on earth; or the king reigns by divine election; or the king has come to be regarded as divine because of his outstanding qualities. It must be admitted, however, that these types are rarely pure and there is considerable overlapping.

Strictly speaking, the institution of divine kingship belongs to the type of society in which sacred and profane order coincide, as in ancient Egypt or the ancient Near East. In Greece and Rome the monarchical constitution was abandoned and the priest took over the king's religious functions; the same is true of the high priest of Israel after the Exile. A different development occurred in the Byzantine Empire and in many European monarchies, in which the king had no religious or cultic functions but was thought to have authority from God.

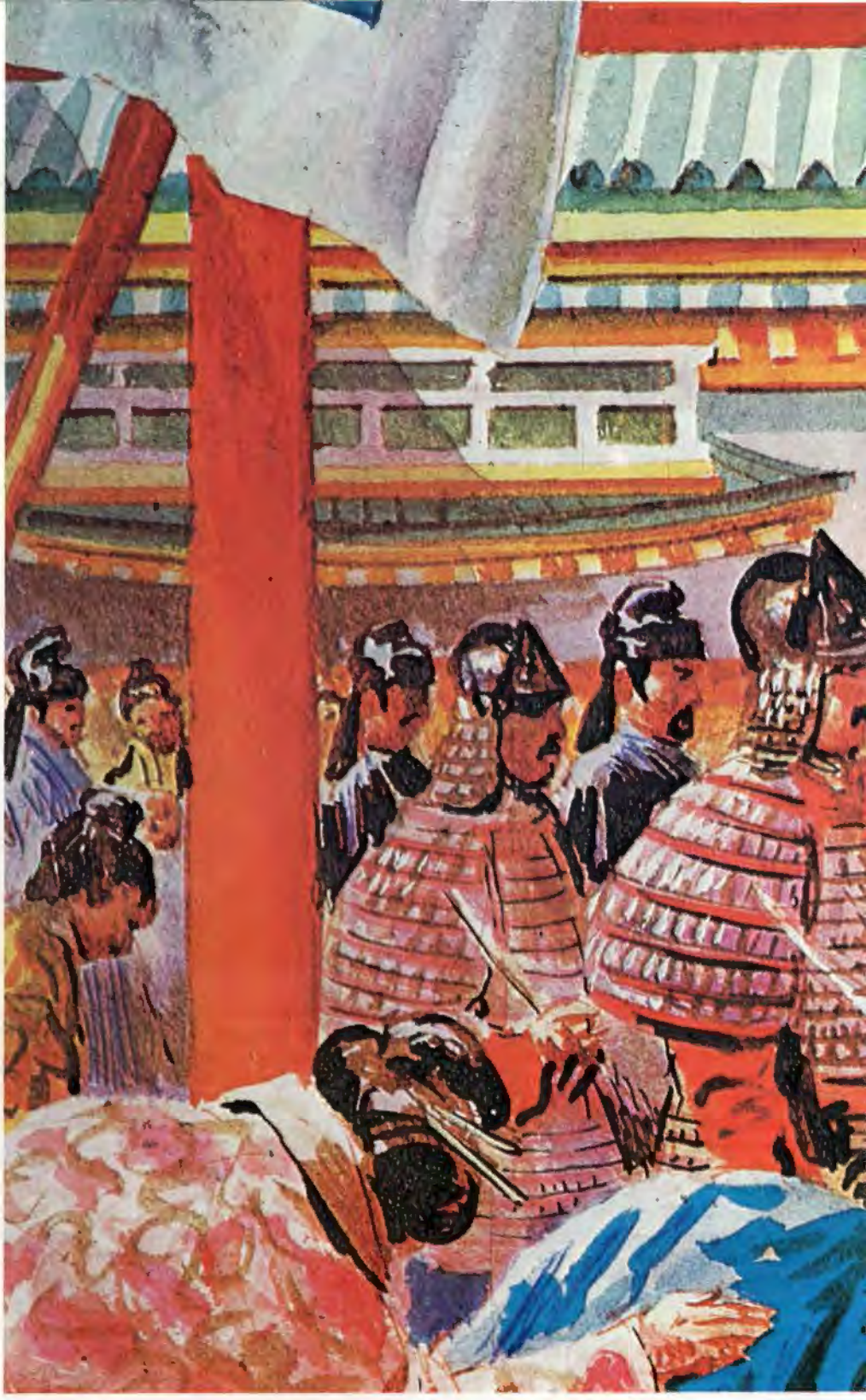
In ancient Egypt, the pharaoh was regarded as divine, one of his titles being 'Son of Re'. This emphasized his divine origin in so far as his birth was believed to be the result of divine intervention. Inscriptions tell us that the sun god took the shape of the reigning pharaoh and begot the royal child. But the king is also the incarnation of the god Horus. Since it was believed that Horus was the son of Osiris and was by divine decree given the throne after the death of his father, this accentuated his position as a rightful sovereign. On his death the king became an Osiris, while his son and successor was Horus. At the same time the deceased king was thought to become united with his divine father, the sun god.

As a ruler the pharaoh exercised divine functions. He represents the god who creates order in the world; he is responsible for *maat*, a concept which comprises both cosmic and social order. It is characteristic that the same verb is used for the official appearance of the king at his accession or at a cultic festival as for the appearance of the sun god at creation and in every sunrise. Just as the sun god put an end to chaos and created the world and its order, the king's accession to the throne meant a renewal of creation and his rule the maintenance of its order.

The king is the shepherd of his people, and as a symbol of this he carries the shepherd's crook as his sceptre. He is to maintain justice in the land, and to care for the livelihood of his people. Like the god, he is equipped with the authoritative word and with wisdom: 'He knows everything that happens in the land.' Thus his commands are wise and are carried out accordingly. He is also responsible for the inundation of the Nile, the normal course of the seasons and the growth of crops. His cultic activity is necessary for maintaining the fertility of the soil. It is also his duty to vanquish the enemies of the country who threaten order and balance. In theory he was often thought to win his victories alone, without his army, thus repeating the events of creation when the primeval god, being alone, defeated the forces of chaos and brought maat into being.

As intermediary between gods and men, the pharaoh was the head of the state cult.

The king is often believed to be the source and symbol of life and order, and imagery associated with the sovereign frequently relates him to the sun which gives light and life: in Japan the emperor was thought to be descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu; known as 'the ruler of heaven' or 'the sun of heaven', he was worshipped as a god by his people



In theory, it was he who had to fight Seth, the murderer of Osiris, every year to maintain life and prosperity in the land. In practice, however, these tasks were mostly delegated to the priests.

In ancient Mesopotamia the divinity of kings was not as strongly accentuated as in Egypt. Some of the Sumerian kings claimed divinity by adding the sign for 'god' to their names, and hymns were written to them exalting their divine qualities. But as a rule the kings of Babylonia and Assyria were only regarded as the sons of deities. In some cases, however, there are legends about the miraculous birth of kings. Of Sargon of Akkad (c 2350 BC), it is told that he was born of unknown parents and exposed in a basket made of reeds in the Euphrates, where he was found by a water-bearer who brought him up. It is interesting that similar stories are told of Moses, the Persian king Cyrus, and Romulus and Remus; obviously the aim of this legend is to emphasize the divine protection of the royal child.

Kingship as an institution was thought 'to have come down from heaven' from the gods. The king was chosen for his task even before his birth, he was 'called' by the god and 'sent' on his mission. His ascending to the throne was praised as the beginning of a new era of happiness and prosperity for the country. 'The harvests become plentiful, the blind have their eyes opened, the lame walk and those who were in captivity are set free.' As the representative of the gods the king claimed dominion of the whole world. There is an intimate relationship between the king and certain symbols of life and fertility, such as 'the plant of life' and the water of life. In the New Year Festival the king acts out the myth of creation, thus representing the creator god and ensuring the order of the world and a good year for his country.

The Anointed of Yahweh

On the other hand, the king represents his people before the gods and is responsible to them. In the New Year Festival at Babylon the king had to kneel before the high priest of Marduk and was deprived of his royal insignia until he had recited a negative confession, saying that he had not broken the rules of the gods. When some evil was thought to threaten the country, sometimes a substitute king was chosen and ultimately put to death, thus bearing the responsibility of the real king.

In Israel kingship was introduced by Saul, and was developed by David and his son Solomon. The model of Israelite kingship was that of Canaan which obviously had great similarity with Egyptian and, above all, Babylonian kingship. Thus, in the so-called royal Psalms, the Israelite king is addressed by Yahweh as his son (Psalm 2, for instance) the implication being that he is adopted by Yahweh (the formula is 'today I have begotten you'). The king is chosen and appointed by Yahweh (Psalms 2 and 89). He is consecrated by anointment with oil, which at the same time implies that he is equipped with God's spirit (1 Samuel, 10.6). Consequently his title is the Anointed of Yahweh (*meshiakh Yahweh*, from which our word Messiah is derived). Though Israel was a small country, her king, in theory, claimed world dominion: 'he shall reign from sea to sea and from the river (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth' (Psalm 72). He was thought to reign on God's behalf and defeat his enemies with God's help (Psalms 72, 89, 110). His great domestic responsibility is for the maintenance of *sedaqah* or 'righteousness' in the country, assisting the weak and supporting the needy; as a consequence, rain will fall and the crops will grow abundantly (Psalm 72).

It is clear that the king was responsible for the Temple and its cult. Once he is referred to as a priest, 'after the order of Melchizedek' (Psalm 110) but there is little clear evidence of his functioning in this

capacity. However, David performed cultic ceremonies at the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel, chapter 7), Solomon dedicated the Temple (1 Kings, chapter 8), and Hezekiah and Josiah worked for the reform of the cult. It is possible that certain functions of the high priest (for example, on the Day of Atonement – Leviticus, chapter 16) were originally royal prerogatives. It has also been argued, on the basis of certain Psalms (18, 22, 88, 89, 116 and 118), that the king was ritually humiliated at a night-time ceremony in the New Year's Festival and restored in the morning. This theory, however, has not been definitely proved.

The royal ideology of ancient Israel is of great historical significance, since out of it grew the expectations of a coming ideal king who was to save Israel from all evil, the Messiah. It is these expectations that the writers of the New Testament regard as being fulfilled in Christ.

Burning Like Fire

Moving farther eastwards, we find sacral kingship in ancient Iran. Here the king enjoys the special protection of Mithras, and is often regarded as the incarnation of that god. He should be born like Mithras in a cave from the descending star as a saviour of mankind. His birth marks the beginning of a new golden age. He is praised as a divine being and greeted with prostration like a god. He is called the brother of the sun and the moon. His real nature is fire, for he has descended from heaven as lightning in a column of fire. Therefore he is also surrounded by a nimbus of fire or radiance, called *khvarenah*, a word which also denotes the king's fortune, or luck.

The king is the ruler of all the world, the champion of justice, the protector of the poor and the defenceless. In his person he unites the three social classes (priests, warriors and peasants) which he shows by dressing in the colours of the different classes on certain occasions. He is also a cosmic ruler, whose power is symbolized by his star-studded mantle, representing the sky and the universe.

The Persian king often functioned as a priest, offering sacrifices and, above all, performing the acts of fire-worship. There

Being divine the king should not be seen by ordinary people, nor should he touch the ground with his feet

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The custom of consecrating the sovereign by anointing him with oil is part of an almost universal pattern of coronation: ampulla and anointing spoon used at the coronation of British monarchs

are several indications that in ancient times he also performed the role of the mythical dragon-slayer in the annual festival.

In India the king was in ancient times considered as a *deva*, or divine being. However, in later theory, it is kingship and not the king that is really divine. According to the Law of Manu the king was created from eternal and essential particles of the eight devas (gods) who are called the guardians of the world and who are believed to protect the eight main points of the universe. The king thus has something of these gods in him and is the protector not only of his people but of the whole universe. The king should be burning and dispel the beings of darkness like the sun; he should be gentle like the moon and promote vegetation and fruitfulness; he is the judge, like Yama; he is the master of wealth, like Kubera, the god of the north; his anger destroys like Agni, the fire; he is the lord of *dharma* (law and order) like Varuna; he controls the powers of fertility and causes rain, welfare and the growth of crops, like Indra; he is free like the wind; and he is the protector of all, like Vishnu, and gains control over the universe by taking the three strides of that god.

Being divine the king should not be seen by ordinary people, nor should he touch the ground with his feet. His insignia represent his sovereign authority and connect him symbolically with various gods. The royal throne is a representation of the sovereign seat of the god; it is often compared with the altar, also the support of a sacred being. The king is believed to incarnate various gods, especially Indra: 'May the king, the slayer of Vritra (the dragon) be our king and defeat the enemy.'

A further development of these ideas is found in the Buddhist concept of *cakravartin* or 'wheel king'. This is a legendary, universal ruler with conspicuous features of a solar hero.

In the Far East both China and Japan have known a well-developed sacral kingship. The Chinese emperor was regarded as the Son of Heaven. He thus held a unique position as God's representative and it was very important that he should have the divine mandate. He was to interpret the will of heaven, and as long as he properly took care of his office he was regarded as the guarantor of harmony in Nature and society. It was he who performed the most important sacrifices of the state. After death he attained divine rank.

The emperor of Japan was regarded as the descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu and was called *tenno*, the ruler of heaven, or *tenshishama*, the sun of heaven. The term *mikado* 'the sublime gate', was used only in poetry.

The Manifest God

In Greece and Rome there was a peculiar development of kingship. At an early date monarchy was abandoned but the title of king (*basileus*, *rex*) was retained for a priest who exercised some of the king's sacral functions.

With the coming of Alexander the Great there was a change in the Greek outlook. Apparently under the influence of oriental ideas, the Hellenistic rulers began to claim divine prerogatives. They were given divine titles, such as *Soter*, 'saviour', and *Epiphanes*, 'manifest (deity)'. They were represented with a radiant crown, symbolizing their divine nature. In many cases they even received worship, at least after death. In philosophical writings the king was described as a representative of the godhead on earth, his duty being to imitate in his reign the divine rule of the universe. A true king is 'a living law', the very embodiment of universal order. Of rather theoretical interest is the idea that a good king has to suffer and be humiliated, the model being Hercules who was the son of Zeus but nevertheless had to humble himself and suffer.

Roman emperor worship was in many respects a continuation of the Hellenistic sovereign cult, but was probably also linked with ancient Roman ideas. Initiated through Julius Caesar and Augustus, it was originally concerned with the emperor's *genius*, and only after his death was he raised to the sphere of the gods (*apotheosis*). But gradually, beginning in the provinces, the emperor was acclaimed 'saviour' and 'god', and given divine epithets. Thus as time went on, a 'sacral emperor ideology' developed.

The emperor was thought to be the son of a god (Jupiter, Apollo) or the manifestation of a god on earth. Legends about the divine parentage of the emperor are found in the cases of Augustus and Nero. The emperor was Jupiter's deputy and image, and consequently the ruler of the world. The globe of the world belonged to his insignia – this is the prototype of the royal orb. Some emperors also claimed influence on the progress of the year and the order of Nature. The emperor's ascent to the throne was thought to inaugurate a new golden era, the effects of which extended to Nature and fertility. According to Seneca, the prince is to fulfil the functions of the gods on earth. So in his rule he should imitate the gods. He is the soul of society and its unifying force, the vital spirit of mankind.

With the introduction of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire much of this ideology became impossible. But many traits of it lived on, with a different interpretation. The emperor was regarded as God's and Christ's representative and deputy, and as the defender of the Church. The Empire became a dominion 'by the grace of God'. Much of this continued down through the ages and formed the background of medieval and even later theories of kingship. The symbolism of the royal insignia can be understood only against this background. There are even instances in England and France of the belief that the king can cure diseases (see KING'S EVIL).

H. RINGGREN

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KING'S EVIL

THE HEALING POWER of touch has been recorded throughout history among communities at all stages of social development as a faculty peculiar to specially endowed individuals including kings and magicians. Many of the healing miracles of Christ were effected by this means, and among anointed kings who were long believed to possess this quasi-divine power, were the emperors of Rome. Vespasian is said to have cured the maimed hand of one of his subjects by a single touch of the royal foot. The kings of France also practised healing by touch, traditionally instigated by Clovis in the 5th century, and in common with the kings of England they possessed the art of curing the King's Evil, or scrofula, a disease characterized by the enlargement and degeneration of the lymphatic glands. In 1686, on Easter Sunday, Louis XIV is said to have touched 1600 people.

According to William of Malmesbury, an English historian who lived in the 12th century, the first English monarch to exercise this art was Edward the Confessor (d. 1066) who was encouraged to do so by a woman to whom it had been revealed in a dream that the King could restore her health by the power of touch. Touching to cure the King's Evil became one of the minor functions of the English monarch, and this power was bequeathed as a royal heritage to successive kings, although records of subsequent cures do not in fact commence until the reign of Henry II in the 12th century.

The Tudor monarchs seem to have practised the rite extensively, usually at the behest of the parish priest who issued the necessary authority, but it was Henry VII who in the late 15th century established a definite touching ceremony for the first time. This consisted of the laying on of hands followed by the presentation of a small piece of gold. Henry VIII made a gratuity of 7s. 6d. to each of those he touched. Andrew Boorde, his physician, referred to the art in his *Breviarie of Health* (1547) as a power given by the grace of God to the anointed king. According to William Tookes, a 16th century authority on the subject, the reign of Queen Elizabeth I was characterized by innumerable cures among individuals of all social ranks. James I, who succeeded her, attempted to dispense with the rite altogether, although he finally consented to retain it for reasons of public policy.

A Corpse's Touch

During Charles I's impoverished regime in the 17th century silver was often substituted for the gift of gold, although occasionally no present whatsoever was made. The Restoration of the Stuarts saw the ceremony at its peak with vast hordes of the sick and suffering clamooring for the touch of the royal hand, and it is on record that Charles II touched 92,107 persons during his reign. Specially designed touch-pieces were introduced at this time showing the archangel Michael and a dragon on one side, and on the other a ship. This medallion, which was usually made of

Michael Halford/British Museum

University Library Cambridge

gold, was known as an 'angel'. A special prayer was included in the ceremony from 1684 until 1715.

James II continued the custom, which was referred to in the diary of Bishop Cartwright in his entry for 27 August 1687. 'I was at his Majesty's levee from which at 9 o'clock I attended him into the closet where he healed 350 persons.' The sceptical William III never performed the ceremony and is on record as having addressed one who sought his touch in the following terms: 'God give you better health and more sense.' Queen Anne was the last of the English sovereigns to touch for the King's Evil, one of her patients being the infant Samuel Johnson who was presented with his piece of gold in 1712, when he was less than three years old.

This royal rite finally became extinct in England during the Hanoverian succession, although even after its official discontinuance a lay 'toucher' named Tunis was apparently curing the King's Evil in Scotland by rubbing the affected spot with his hands. He claimed no special powers of his own but declared that 'it is God that cures'. Lay practitioners of the art were usually seventh sons of seventh sons, one of the more eminent of whom was Valentine Greatrakes, a Civil War veteran, who acquired national fame for curing the King's Evil and a multitude of other maladies, all of which he attributed to evil spirits. Yet another healer, James Leverett, claimed to have cured more than 600 people simply by touching them.

British Museum

A Kirlian photograph of a steel ball bearing showing the characteristic light discharge

KIRLIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

KIRLIAN PHOTOGRAPHY is a way of photographing an object by exposing it to a high energy electric field. An effect like the miniature lightning storm shown in the illustration is typical. The object (in this case a steel ball bearing) appears surrounded by discharges of light. Kirlian photography is the result of an accidental discovery made in 1939 by a Russian electrical repair man, Semyon Kirlian, and developed over the next 30 years with his wife, Valentina.

Kirlian photography does not use a camera. The object to be studied is simply placed in a darkened room between a high energy electric field and a photographic plate. The flares and flashes are then recorded on the plate. In the case of inanimate objects, the colours of the energy discharges are constant. In the case of organic subjects, the flashes fluctuate and change colour.

It was originally believed that Kirlian images reflected the aura or energy field surrounding living matter, and that this made possible a new way of diagnosing illness from the condition of the aura. It is now thought that the radiant colour effects are the result of the process itself.

There is some indication that variations occur when do seem to relate to the state of the individual's physical and emotional health. So far, however, there is no trustworthy and controlled system of using the process as a therapeutic tool. Research into Kirlian photographic methods is continuing, and scientists are still hoping to develop new ways of using it.

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ERIC MAPLE

Kiss

Gesture of love, respect, worship; the Greeks and Romans kissed images of the gods: visitors to the pope customarily kiss his ring or foot: the kissing of sacred objects such as the altar, pictures of the saints, and relics is common in Roman Catholic countries and to kiss the Bible is to confirm an oath taken; at the sabbath, witches were said to kiss the Devil 'under his tail'. See SABBATH.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Kite-Flying

A popular pastime in many parts of the world, it is also a significant feature of many Eastern religious customs and festivals; kites, often in the shape of birds, men, fish and dragons, were flown over houses at night to keep evil spirits at bay, and in Siam large paper kites were flown in the hope that their fluttering would attract the seasonal winds.

Picturepoint London

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

British Museum

IDEALISM, CHIVALRY and religious fervour inspired the Order of the Temple, founded c 1188 by Hugh de Payens of Champagne, and eight companions. This militant fellowship of knights dedicated their lives and wealth to the defence of pilgrims and the routes to the Holy Land; with such idealistic aims, they could not have foreseen that 250 years later the Templars' honour and renown would be destroyed by charges of heresy, unnatural vice and Devil-worship, levelled by a greedy and unscrupulous monarch, implemented by a timorous pope, and put to trial by the torturing hands of the Inquisition.

Within ten years of its inception the Order's white mantles (later emblazoned with a crimson cross), and black and white standard with its legend 'Non Nobis Domine' so fired popular enthusiasm that the noblest Europeans sought to join, while others endowed it with riches, lands and produce.

The Templars cut off their hair, let their beards grow long, and took monastic vows. The vow of poverty related only to personal property, each knight owning only the clothes, weapons and domestic utensils granted at his initiation, but the Order itself grew rich from gifts and benefits, which later aroused envy and antipathy.

Chastity was rigidly enforced, and the knights slept fully clothed in lighted chambers. They were forbidden to kiss even their mothers, or attend any gathering which might inspire longings for family life. This total avoidance of female company resulted in imputations of homosexuality. Such unnatural practices horrified the common people because of their heretical associations; many gnostic heresies, for instance, shunned normal sex because of its connection with birth.

The vow of humility required total submission to superior officers. No possessions might be locked away, and every personal letter had to be read aloud before the Grand Master. If captured, a knight could not expect to be ransomed, for that would incur the dissipation of the Order's funds on one individual.

Each group was organized as precisely as the Cistercian Order on which their rule was based, and every contingency governed by 62 rules set down by St Bernard, the ecclesiastical reformer who made the Cistercians into a world power. The Grand Master alone stood above these laws giving flexibility to an otherwise rigid code, and also making the Master the supreme ruler to whom every Templar owed total allegiance. As well as the cadre of knights there were lower categories composed of priests, soldiers and servants, all bound by equally strict rules, and associate members who flocked to the Order to secure religious benefits and indulgences.

Two factors distinguished the Templars from other monastic orders: their devotion to fighting, and the total secrecy surrounding all chapters, ceremonies and initiations. This secrecy eventually damned them for wild rumour fed on mystery, yet it is understandable that security such as this would be necessary in any military group. Despite differing language and nationality, the Templars became a closely-knit organization with branches throughout Europe. Only later did individual kings and prelates recognize and fear the potential danger from this independent and strong body, whose worldly power in time corrupted their former humility.

Their laudable aims and strict vows won the Templars papal acclaim, and the Order was showered with every religious privilege and immunity; they were exempted from taxes and secular laws, and became answerable only to the pope who threatened to

excommunicate anyone hindering or harming a Templar.

As soldiers, the Templars won an honourable name, even though the Crusades were a failure. With its immensely strong castles and enormous wealth the Order took on the role of financier. During truces it transacted business with the enemy, and undoubtedly absorbed some of the infidel's culture. So much confidence was placed in their complex of fortified estates like the Temples of London and Paris, that kings deposited their riches there for safekeeping.

The last years of the 13th century witnessed the inglorious finale of the Crusades. The Templars were the last to leave the Holy Land, and their famous Castle Pilgrim between Haifa and Arsuf was the final Christian stronghold to fall. Meanwhile the Church contented itself with promises of a fifth Crusade, which never took place, and a fiery resolve to hunt down the heretics in its midst, rather than to drive the infidel out of the Holy Land.

The Templars' career did not come to an end with the collapse of the Crusades and Cyprus became the new headquarters of the Order. Yet the power it possessed had subtly altered both the Templars' role and their reputation. Hatred and envy was stamped on the other side of the coin of admiration, for people dislike their creditors. The high-born resented the privileged knights who barely needed to pay homage to any monarch. The lowly resented that because of special tax exemptions the Templars undersold wine and wool from their estates. The Order's reputation for avarice grew alarmingly as the knights seized domains they considered rightfully to belong to them.

Individual members often played important parts in European affairs, having high positions in royal courts, and acting as special papal emissaries. The Order's coffers advanced money to kings for wars and dowries, and Templars hired themselves out as mercenaries.

It was for their wealth that the Templars were eventually destroyed. Philip IV of France, despite a devout reputation, had a devious, shifty character. He was eager to raise as much money as possible to finance his wars, and taxed his people unmercifully, while scheming to gain ascendancy over the papacy. From the outset this monarch desired the Templars' ruin in order to acquire their wealth, cancel his own debts to them, and curtail their power. He even tried, unsuccessfully, to join the Order. While showing ostentatious friendship to the Templars he sent his capable and cunning minister Guillaume de Nogaret to collect evidence against the Order.

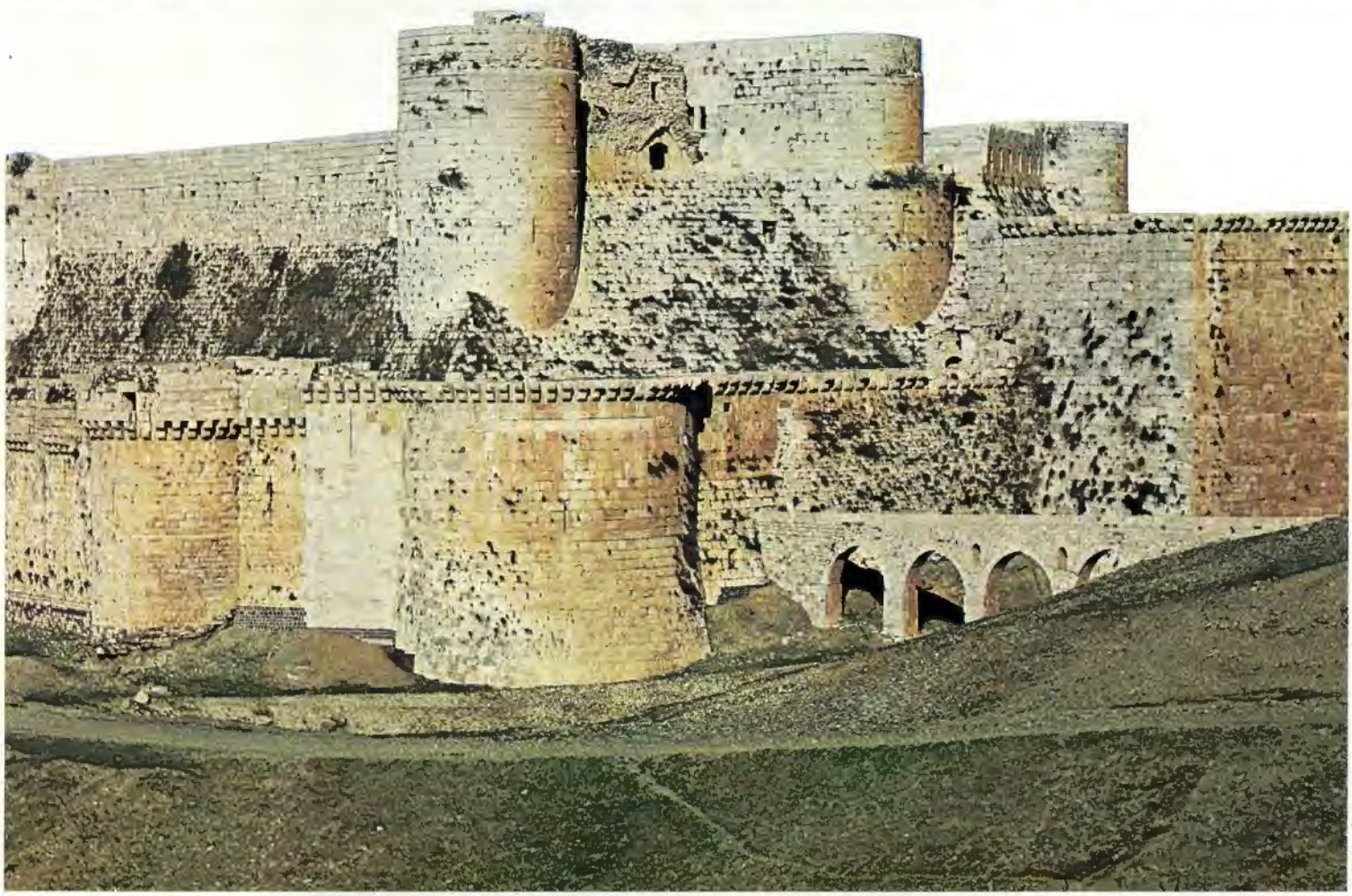
Heresy was the safest accusation to bring, for the Inquisition was bound to act on it, and it was almost impossible to get free from its clutches. For the Order's possessions to be confiscated in France it had to be dispossessed throughout Europe, and to do this Philip required Pope Clement's co-operation. The threats and exchanges between the two were dubious and dishonourable to say the least.

Worship of Baphomet

At daybreak on 13 October 1307 140 Templars and their Grand Master Jacques de Molay were arrested by de Nogaret in the Paris Temple, and their wealth was impounded, while all over France other members were seized. The atmosphere buzzed with rumours about the knights' vile deeds, and Philip encouraged popular hatred by announcing that the Templars' exemption from taxation had bled the country white, and that if the Order were dissolved debts would not have to be paid.

Torture was used to extract confessions; when these were retracted even grimmer measures were employed to punish the relapse. It is not surprising that in most cases the victims admitted their guilt. Briefly the charges were as follows: the knights put their Order before every other principle, swearing to enrich it by any means; at initiation a neophyte was required to spit or urinate on the cross and renounce Christ; indecent kisses were

The first aim of the Order of the Knights Templar had been to protect the pilgrim routes to Jerusalem and other holy places; later they became enormously rich and were destroyed for this reason by Philip IV of France who, greedy for their wealth, accused them of heresy *Left* Philip IV attends the execution of Jacques de Molay and other members of the Order: illustration from a 15th century Flemish manuscript *Below* Krak des Chevaliers in Syria; one of the Templar strongholds



A. F. Kersting

exchanged, and unnatural sex commonly practised and encouraged within the Order; they worshipped Baphomet (see BAPHOMET), sometimes said to be a stuffed human head, sometimes a head with three faces, and at other times described as a human skull, and the cord they wore over their shirts was hallowed by being wrapped about it, while an ointment made from murdered babies was used to anoint this grisly object. It was also said that they had betrayed the Crusades, and that their priests did not consecrate the host during Mass; that the Templars had worshipped the Devil in the form of a black cat, which they kissed beneath its tail. The life of anyone who confessed was to be spared, but refusal to confess meant death. However, the confessions were an odd assortment, and none of the charges was conclusively proved.

An element of truth probably exists among the accusations. The contact with the East had inclined some Templars towards Oriental attitudes; they may well have adopted some of the gnostic theories underlying Mediterranean civilization, and a few probably practised ritual magic. In such a closed society homosexuality is not unusual. With regard to the charge of the infamous kiss, the crude horseplay of the age may have produced a ceremony in which nobly-born knights forced underlings to show their subservience by kissing the preceptor's backside, while the alleged denial of faith could in fact have been a test of absolute obedience.

On 22 November 1307 Clement was more or less forced by Philip to issue a Bull ordering all sovereigns to arrest the Templars and seize their property. At this juncture monarch and Pope had both gone too far to risk the Templars ever being freed to join with friends in order to wreak vengeance on their oppressors.

Holy Relics from the Ashes

In several European countries the Order was not rigorously persecuted and there were no general confessions; Clement had to issue another Bull to force Edward II of England to use torture on English Templars. In France the Inquisition attempted to force the truth from the Templars for nearly three years. Many died from their ordeals. In 1310 a number of knights came forward to defend the Order, and Philip, unwilling to risk doubt being thrown on the proceedings, had 54 Templars burned to death. All refused to confess.

In 1312, the unhappy Clement, author of so many disgraceful Bulls, had to admit that there was not enough evidence to prove definite heresy. But the Templars' reputation was irretrievably damaged, and he dissolved the Order, stipulating that its funds should be transferred to the Hospitallers, a rival crusading order. Templars who had not perished by fire or in jail were allowed to join another order or to revert to the secular state.

Philip held on to the Order's property, enjoying its revenues during his lifetime, and finding various pretexts for making the Hospitallers pay over large sums, since the six-year inquiry into the Templars' misdeeds was said to have cost the state a fortune. With similar excuses Edward II, who had never very zealously attacked the Templars, retained their possessions, and squandered them on his favourites. In Spain, Portugal and Germany, where the Order had suffered least, and had in fact received royal protection, its estates and members were absorbed by existing orders, or diverted to found new ones.

On 19 March 1314 the final scene of the tragedy was enacted. After nearly seven years of captivity, Jacques de Molay was taken from prison to make a public confession after which he was to be imprisoned for life. To the consternation of the authorities de Molay declared himself guilty of only one offence: that of allowing torture to force him to lie, and declared the Order to be pure and innocent.

At sunset on the Ile de Palais in the Seine, de Molay slowly burned to death, protesting his innocence and winning admiration from the watching crowds, some of whom collected his ashes as holy relics. It was rumoured that de Molay's last words were to summon the Pope and the King to meet him before God's throne within a year. Strangely enough both Philip and Clement died within that time.

SANDY SHULMAN

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Knot

A powerful magical weapon, because to tie a knot is to impede the person against whom the spell is directed; to untie the knot is to release the victim from the spell; 'the witches' ladder', a string with nine knots, was believed to slowly throttle the victim to death; in many societies knots were tied at wedding ceremonies to strengthen love and marriage; tying knots is widely believed to prevent conception, and untying them is thought to ease child-birth.

See STRING.

Mary Evans Picture Library

Koran

The sacred book of Islam, God's eternal and uncreated word, which was revealed to Mohammed while he was at Mecca and Medina; it contains 114 chapters, or suras, and is regarded as infallible.

See ISLAM.

British Museum

Kosher

From Hebrew 'fit' or 'proper': term for food permitted by Jewish dietary laws, applying particularly to meat, not only of an acceptable animal, but also prepared by the approved methods such as the draining of all blood; often applied more generally to mean anything sanctioned by Jewish law and custom.

See FOOD AND DRINK; TABOO.

Chris Barker

'In the ocean many things are hidden': the kraken is said to be the largest of many gigantic sea monsters that reputedly lurk in the ocean depths

KRAKEN

'AMONGST THE MANY things which are in the ocean and concealed from our eyes or only presented to our view for a few minutes is the Kraken. . .' The sea monster described here by Erik Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen, in his *Natural History of Norway* (1752), was reputed to be the largest in the world. Also known as the kraxen, krabben or sea korven, it was so elusive as to be dismissed by ancient and modern sceptics as nothing more than a sailor's myth.

Throughout history, however, a few writers have mentioned a giant sea creature with characteristics similar to those of the kraken. Pliny wrote of a monster in the Straits of Gibraltar which blocked the entrance to ships; other experts on sea life referred to a mammoth starfish that had been found in the waters around Sicily.

It seems likely that the kraken was a kind of giant polyp or cuttle-fish, perhaps a survival of some almost extinct prehistoric sea creature. Bishop Pontoppidan, who wrote quite extensively about this inhabitant of Norwegian waters, had a theory that the floating islands which suddenly appeared or disappeared in Northern seas, were in fact kraken; and also that the medusa or jelly-fish might be its ovum.

Another bishop, cited by Pontoppidan as a reliable witness, claimed that in 1680 the remains of a young kraken were found putrefying when the creature got wedged among some rocks in a fiord. Apparently, the monster was not particularly dangerous, except because of its size. Any ship, even one as large as a man-of-war, that was caught up in the swell of a submerging or surfacing kraken would be wrecked.

The creature only appeared on hot summer days when the sea was calm. Norwegian fishermen, who rowed out several miles to where they reckoned the sea should be at least 480 to 600 feet deep, would suddenly find a depth of only 120 to 150 feet, and the water teeming with shoals of cod and ling. This they took to be a sign that a kraken was present. If the water began growing shallower they stopped fishing immediately, and rowed some distance away, for it meant that the monster was about to emerge.

Owing to its enormous size, the whole body was never visible; an entire kraken could be observed only when it was young. The back of a fully grown monster was estimated to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference, and at first sight the creature looked like a number of small bumpy islands, surrounded by fronds of floating seaweed, with fish leaping about the shallows. After a time, huge tentacles were said to appear, with which the kraken propelled itself along, and gathered food.

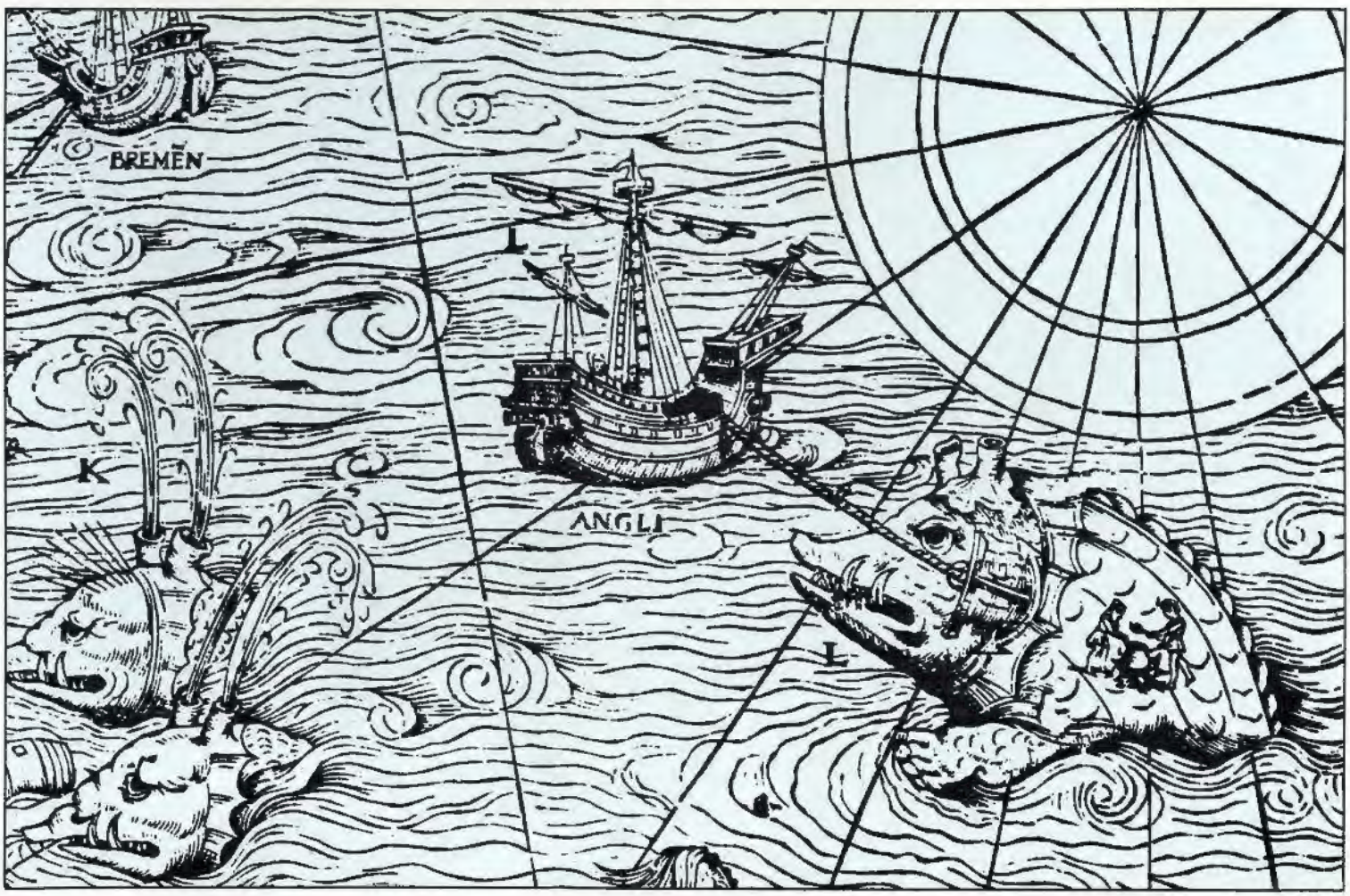
The kraken only remained on the surface for a short while. Its descent into the ocean was a treacherous time, for it churned the waters around it into a whirlpool and drew everything into its depths.

A Pungent Sea

The creature lived according to a definite rhythm. For some months it was seen only to eat, and at others solely to excrete. During the latter period the sea's surface became thick and disturbed and gave off a pungent aroma. The smell and muddiness attracted the shoals which gathered to feed, and the kraken then opened up its tentacles and drew in all the fish, which were converted into bait for the creature's next feeding period.

Whether the kraken was merely a legendary sea monster, or the remains of some primeval sea creature, or the over-dramatized account given by lonely sailors of an extremely large cuttle-fish, Bishop Pontoppidan's own words seem particularly apt in describing all those monsters which the modern world has not glimpsed: 'In the ocean many things are hidden.'

(See also FISH.)



The kraken was said to surface only on summer days when the sea was calm, and because of its enormous size its entire body was never visible; at first sight the monster could be mistaken for an island, or a group of islands surrounded by fronds of floating seaweed with fish leaping about in the shallows: 16th century *Carta Marina*, a map of the North Sea showing a ship anchored to one of these gigantic creatures; two sailors have disembarked and are cooking a meal on the monster's back

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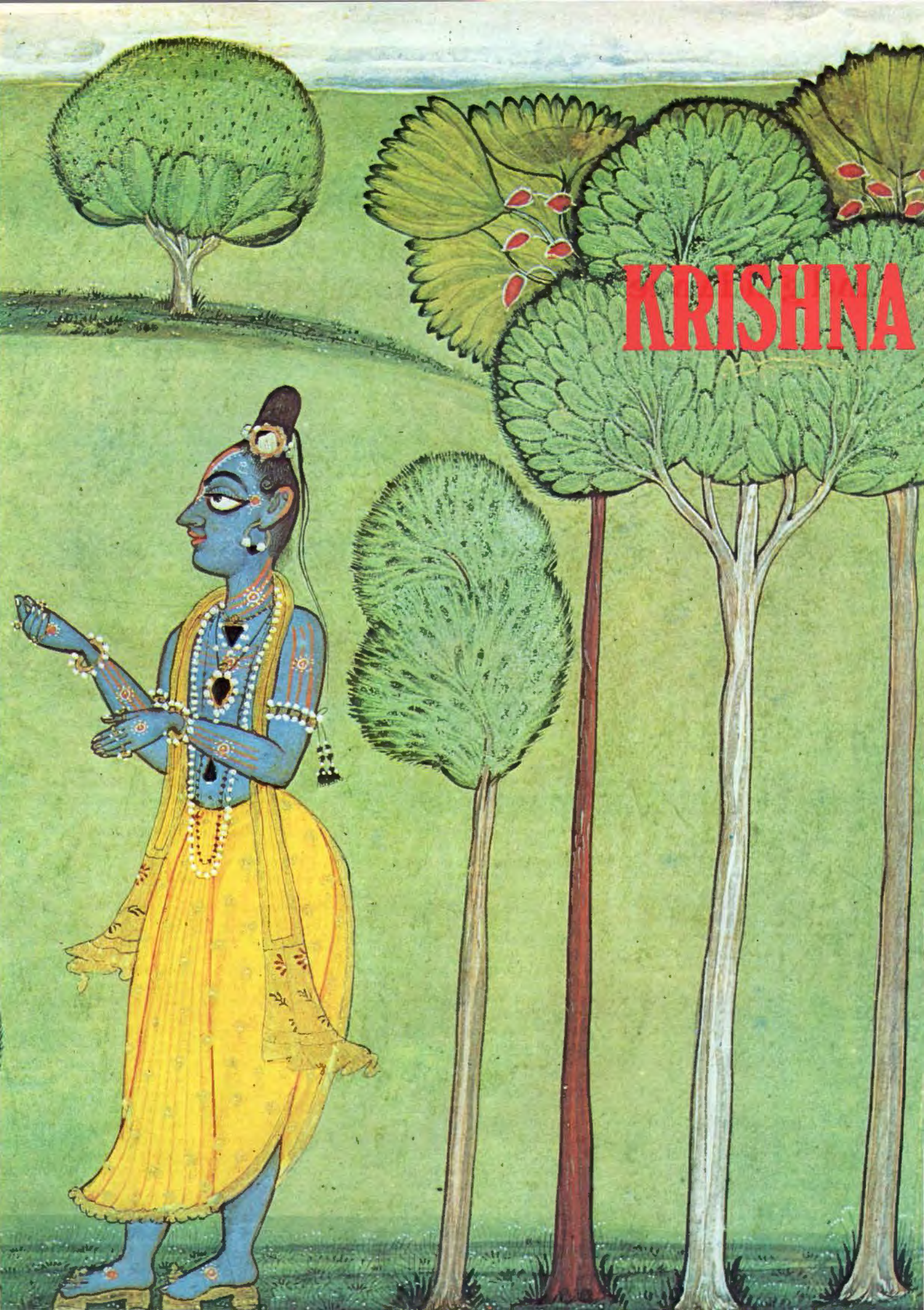
KRISHNA

Indians have believed that Krishna was a god for more than 2000 years, and from him they have derived inspiration and guidance in ultimate matters

Believed by some scholars to be based an a historical figure, Krishna had many endearing human characteristics and was regarded as the fount of all sacred and profane love; to the devout Hindu he is the eighth incarnation of the great god Vishnu

LITERALLY 'the dark-coloured one', Krishna is one of the major gods of Hinduism, and has been the centre of a richly varied system of religious beliefs for more than 2000 years. Although his importance has been obscured to some extent by his association with the god Vishnu, of whom he is generally said to be the eighth incarnation, it is likely that Vishnuism has been enriched by the devotion and meditation inspired by Krishnaism, its seemingly subordinate branch.

Even in the oldest texts Krishna is represented as a god, or more often as God. In the *Mahabharata*, the voluminous Indian epic that tells of the war between two related royal families, Krishna is the divine charioteer, cousin and friend of Arjuna one of the protagonists. Arjuna seeks Krishna's guidance on the eve of battle, and the god's reply constitutes the text of the *Bhagavad Gita*, an immensely influential and much-admired work (see BHAGAVAD GITA). Krishna reveals himself as God the Absolute, and Arjuna wins the battle with the help of the god.

The *Mahabharata* deals with the war and there is no consistent characterization of Krishna. This vacuum is filled by a group of texts known as *Puranas*, literally 'old traditions', whose origins date back to the last few centuries BC. Myths, legends, fairy tales and stories about Krishna were collected for about 1000 years, and were summarized in an extensive 'biography' in the *Bhagavata-Purana* which, according to some scholars, was written in the 10th century AD.

Dallying with Milkmaids

According to this text, the goddess Earth asked Vishnu to free her from the many demons that oppressed her, and the god decided to 'descend from heaven to earth' (a phrase that gave rise to the concept 'avatar', 'one who has descended') to be born as Krishna and kill the demons.

It had been prophesied that a demon king Kamsa, who reigned over Mathura in northern India, would be killed by the eighth child of Vasudeva, a relative of his. He therefore had Vasudeva's first seven children murdered but the eighth, Krishna Vasudeva, was exchanged, while still an embryo, for the daughter of Yashoda, the wife of a herdsman called Nana. Saved from Kamsa's persecution, Krishna was born among cowherds in the lovely country of Gokula near the river Yamuna, now known as the Jumna. Many legends tell of the miraculous deeds he performed during his childhood and youth, protecting the lives of the herdsmen from demonic attacks. As an adolescent boy, being extremely handsome and skilful at playing the flute, he won the love of all girls and women in Gokula, referred to in literature as *gopis*, 'milkmaids', and spent his time in amorous dalliance. But he had to continue his mission against the demons, and eventually left Gokula and his mistresses, never to return.

He went first to Mathura where he killed Kamsa and gained his kingdom; further stories tell of battles with other demons, and of one instance when Krishna and his people, forced to flee, moved to the legendary city of Dvaraka. He continued to further his mission against the demons in the war described in the *Mahabharata*, as a result of which many more oppressors were killed. Krishna's stay on earth came to an end when, cursed by a hermit, his sons and relatives killed one another while drunk. He himself was shot in the foot – his only vulnerable spot – by a hunter who mistook him for a deer, and returned to his heavenly abode.

There are certain gaps in this synopsis of the life of Krishna and scholars have tried to solve the problems raised by separating different layers and milieus in the mythical accounts, in an attempt to trace an original Krishna figure. It has been said that he was originally a herdsmen's god, or a fertility god, and that another Krishna was a shrewd politician, or the teacher of a religion which later deified him. But Indians have believed that Krishna was a god for more than 2000 years, and from him they have derived inspiration and guidance in ultimate matters.

Oversimplification of the god's character to single aspects cannot do justice to Krishnaism as a religious movement. No scholarly analysis can further understanding unless it centres around Krishna as the god who has become part of Indian religious consciousness. Research by W. Kirfel and W. Ruben throws new light on his background. Their investigation of relevant texts reveals that Krishna was a tribal king or chieftain involved in warfare and possessed of predominantly human characteristics, who was possibly a historical figure. This theory facilitates understanding of Krishna: mythical tradition has faithfully preserved his historicity while transforming him into the universal protector and lover.

The 'dark-coloured one', Krishna is the most celebrated of all Hindu gods; it is said that the goddess Earth asked Vishnu to free her from the demons that oppressed her, and the god decided to be born as Krishna and kill the evil-doers *Previous page* A monk approaches Krishna in a grove *Right* The god destroys the demon Nikumbha: both illustrations are from the Victoria and Albert Museum

Krishna's historical origin gives a richness to Vishnu's appearance on earth that no imaginary account could have given, an astonishing human richness justified by tradition, that inspired philosophical discussions of immense spiritual fertility. For example, Krishna's love-affairs with the wives of cowherds in Gokula are contrary to all moral standards. An idealized legend with no historical basis would have eliminated this stumbling-block; but the tradition of Krishna's humanity inspired not only lengthy theological discussions but also gave new insights into the essence of love and, in marginal religious circles, motivated certain religious sexual practices.

The two elements in Krishna, the human and the divine, were fused in a process that is viewed differently by scholars and by Hindu believers. The former regard it as a process of deification that took many years, in which essential characteristics were abstracted from a historical person and interpreted in the form of myth, fairy tale and legend until Krishna finally became a god and was identified with Vishnu. To the Hindu the process is one of 'incarnation': the god Vishnu decided to he born among men as Krishna.

Krishna was God to a large group of Hindus over a long period of time, and accounts of his life inspired not only philosophical and theological reactions

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The divine, that which saves and heals, the means through which man may obtain release from the endless cycle of rebirth, is embodied in Krishna

but also affected religious practices and the patterns of thought on which they were based. A few examples of these reactions, which took many different forms and which appeared all over India, are given here, and show how the believer understood and interpreted the concept of Krishna, ignored by, or even in the face of, official doctrines.

The many, complex responses to Krishna are summarized by the term *bhakti* which can be roughly translated as 'devoted loving attachment'. Basically this concept refers back to human relationships such as those between king and vassal, husband and wife, and so on. The *Mahabharata* contains examples of this relationship: between Krishna and his wife Satyabhama, or between the god and Arjuna. Transformed into religious love the relational aspect is retained as being essential, in contrast to the other religious ideal, to become one with the Absolute, which is found especially in the *Vedanta* and schools of Shivaism.

Bhakti has many shades and nuances and makes use of various levels of the human personality. The most archaic expression of religious response to Krishna could be described as 'materialism'; but this word has various undertones and associations. The term 'substantialism' is preferable; this is the concept that the divine, that which saves and heals, the means through which man may obtain release from the endless cycle of rebirth, is embodied in Krishna. This divine is transmitted to anyone in contact with Krishna, either through his physical touch or through the thought of him, for to think of Krishna is in a way to be filled with that 'substance' – even if the person concerned has no moral, positive or negative, attitude towards the god. There are stories of demons and rascals who were saved through contact with Krishna when he killed them. Though only Krishna's contemporaries could benefit from his touch, all were able to think of him. This idea is now archaic but it is still reflected in certain practices; a man may, for instance, achieve salvation by constantly murmuring the name of Krishna.

Much more important than this archaic belief was a form of religious response that can be roughly described as 'emotionalism'. Certain elements in the Krishna myth gave ample scope for light-hearted enjoyment, his jokes as a child, for instance, or his love-affairs with the milkmaids. The devotee of Krishna creates a relationship between himself and his god by filling his soul with the wonders and pleasures of Krishna's earthly life, and not through rational thought or as a result of performing impersonal rites.

The origin of this emotional bhakti is still obscure, but it seems to have started in southern India where it flourished from the middle of the first millennium. A group of ecstatic men and women known as *Alvars*, 'the immersed ones', wandered around this region preaching, and worshipping Vishnu and Krishna through songs, dances and music. It is likely that the *Bhagavata-Purana*, which presented the Krishna life

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Krishna was regarded as the fount of all love, sacred and profane *Left* The god was said to have had many mistresses and wives, but his special beloved was a cowgirl called Radha, and the theme of their love for each other became the focus of medieval Krishnaism: Krishna and Radha, 17th century miniature *Right* The god rides through the air on a symbolic elephant made from young women

C. M. Dixon/Victoria & Albert Museum

While still an embryo Krishna was exchanged for the daughter of Yashoda, the wife of a herdsman, in order to escape death at the hands of the demon king Kamsa; he spent his early years among the cowherds of Gokula: sandstone carving of Krishna with a bull

as a series of wonders, full of emotional flavour, was closely related to this movement. From the start this form of devotion was closely associated with the arts; the music and dancing of the Alvars, and the beauty of the language in the *Bhagavata*. This continued throughout the history of Krishna bhakti, and even today a great deal of Indian music is based on the Krishna legends.

Universal Fount of Love

The most attractive theme for this emotional devotion was naturally Krishna's colourful adventures as a lover. Radha, a special beloved of his, is introduced into texts from about 500 AD onwards (but not into the *Bhagavata-Purana*) and the Radha-Krishna theme became the focus of Krishnaism in medieval India. A host of documents of all kinds, geographical, cultural and above all religious, reflects the immense appeal of this motif for the Indians.

The poet Jayadeva (12th century AD) retold the story of the love between Radha and Krishna in the form of a series of love songs, using the elaborate rules of Sanskrit poetry; the seemingly profane character of these creates for the devotee an intense erotic atmosphere, which he can release into the fount and origin of all love, the divine lover Krishna.

The key concept of the Indian theory of poetry was *rasa*, 'flavour', which denoted an aesthetic sensation suggested through the emotive quality of the words of a poem, and this concept was transferred to religious experience: the person of Krishna and the incidents in his life could evoke a religious rasa, and in a religious context even secular poetry could give rise to the same sensation. These ideas were eventually incorporated in an elaborate system of religious poetics by the Bengali philosopher and poet Rupa Gosvami (16th century AD), a pupil of the mystic Chaitanya.

Chaitanya took from the Radha-Krishna theme the aspect of Radha's final separation from Krishna when he left her, never to return, and used this theme to express his own mystical experiences as unfulfilled longing for Krishna; in other words, he looked upon himself as participating in the very suffering of Radha.

It is interesting that one group of devotees, the Sahajiya sect, made use of the imagery of the Radha-Krishna theme but transferred it from a mythical to a psychosomatic level: Radha and Krishna are two essential elements in every human personality and through their union, which is brought about by physical acts, final salvation may be achieved.

It can be seen that a rich and varied world of religious beliefs and responses has developed around the figure of Krishna, the human god who presents always new, and sometimes shocking, aspects to his followers. While the theologians, believing that the beliefs and practices of the Krishna sects should be acceptable to orthodoxy, worked ceaselessly through the mass of Hindu philosophical and theological speculation and tried to incorporate Krishna and Krishna bhakti in a universal system of thought, the mystics repeatedly broke the accepted social distinctions, stressing that in the presence of Krishna and his grace social status was not essential.

In the West, Krishna is famous mainly as the teacher of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and it is tempting to see him as the founder of a new religion, a point of view that is in a way justified by the enormous influence he has exerted through the *Gita*; but this work may well be an early theological reflection on Krishna, put into his own mouth. The richness of Krishnaism can probably be best understood if it is seen as a basic force that produced many different expressions, inspired by the intense bhakti relationship between devotee and Krishna, and the former's intense meditation on the person of the god.

(See also HINDUISM; VISHNU.)

FRIEDHELM HARDY

FURTHER READING: W. G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna* (Grove Press, 1958); S. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy* (Orient Book Distributors, 1975); M. Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes* (Greenwood Press, 1981). R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1966).

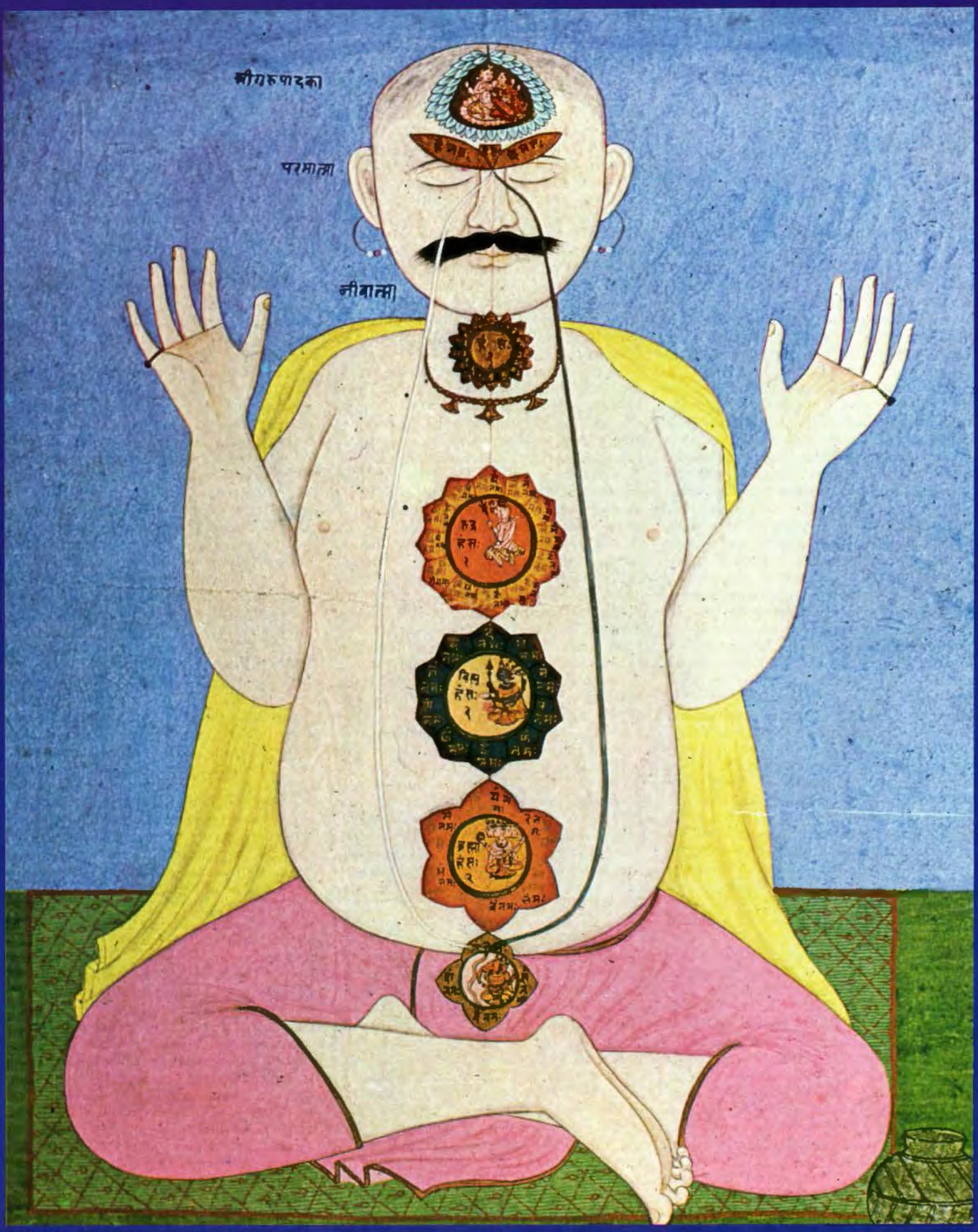


Diagram of the major chakras situated along a shaft from the base of the spine to the top of the head. When awakened, the kundalini rises through these centres of psychic energy releasing potent forces

KUNDALINI

Within every man, according to Hindu mystics, sleeps a tiny coiled serpent, a potential source of immense power but extremely dangerous if aroused without due care and preparation

KUNDALINI

THE KUNDALINI might be described briefly as 'the fiery serpent-power within', if one is not too exacting about definitions. Such a symbolic description would be in accordance with that given in Hindu texts on the subject. The kundalini forms part of what is called the 'subtle body', an interesting concept of esoteric physiology, and one that has been minutely investigated by exponents of yoga (see YOGA). In many occult systems it is believed that apart from the muscles, veins, arteries and nerves that are known to regular anatomy, there exists in man an intricate network of invisible ganglia radiating out through his whole body like a spider's web. The strands come together at certain points, not only among themselves but also where they connect with the physical body. In yoga these junctures where the physical and subtle bodies meet and interact are known as *chakras*, or 'wheels'.

The chakras, great or small, are thought to be psychic dynamos, centres of superphysical energy. They have no physiological existence, because although the corresponding points of their contact with the physical body are known to occultists, such as the point near the solar plexus, an examination of that area in the physical body will not disclose its presence. It remains invisible, intangible and 'subtle'. And no part of the subtle body can be subjected to laboratory analysis or studied under the microscope.

What the chakras are in reality presents another problem. For while the anatomical description of the heart, liver and lungs in two different textbooks will be identical, the description of the astral body and the chakras may not necessarily be the same, the reason being that our information about the subtle body is based entirely on subjective or interior knowledge. The chakras cannot be laid out on a dissecting table like pieces of tissue; they can only be known through meditative experience.

The actual juncture-points between the subtle and the physical bodies are said to be numbered in hundreds. But these have relevance largely to a system of healing by 'pressure-points', such as is used in Chinese therapy by acupuncture, where healing is effected by pricking the body at these points with a needle (see ACUPUNCTURE). Only the major chakras need to be taken into account when considering the kundalini. They are arranged along a shaft of the subtle body that is believed to pass through the human frame from the base of the spine to the top of the head. This shaft, called the Rod of Brahma, is located within the spinal column, and within it again there run three channels, a central one (the *sushumna*), one on the left of it (the *ida*) and one on the right (the *pingala*). The central channel is normally closed.

The major chakras are said to be seven in number, situated approximately as follows: one is at the base of the spine, near the tail bone (called the *muladhara*); the next is in the region of the sex organs; the third in the region of the solar plexus; the fourth at the level of the heart; the fifth at the base of the throat; the sixth behind the meeting-point of the eyebrows; and the seventh just above the crown of the head (called the *sahasrara*).

Hindu occultists visualize the kundalini as a small serpent lying in a spiral of three and a half coils at the base of the spine, near the coccyx and between the anal and genital regions. It is frequently personified as a goddess, whose spouse Shiva resides in the sahasrara. Although an invisible and 'astral' element, the kundalini is the central nucleus of vital energy, and a repository of material, physical and sexual force.

In the astral body of the average person the kundalini lies asleep, with its head blocking the central channel, the sushumna of the Rod of Brahma, the 'gateway of ascent'; the man is left undisturbed by its presence and indeed unaware of its existence. This is all to the good. For the ordinary man it is important that the serpent should remain dormant, since it has a tremendous power when aroused. If disturbed, accidentally or by recourse to techniques ignorantly applied to awaken it, this force can prove very dangerous. Then the kundalini raises its head and begins to move about in a disorganized manner, raging unrestrained through the lower chakras and causing an abnormal excitation of the baser instincts and passions.

The correct method of arousing the coiled potency is extremely complex, being concerned with the controlled direction of the released force by certain definite stages upward through the chakras till its contact with the highest centre, the sahasrara, is achieved. Those who wish to further their knowledge of the kundalini by practical experience, or who desire to achieve the powers that the aroused kudalini engenders, have to submit to a long period of preparation, for the ability to control the released force takes many years of arduous training to acquire.

Long Discipline

Awakening the kundalini is the climax of a long discipline involving practically every major technique of yoga. It calls for a combination of bodily posture *(asana)*, hand gesture *(mudra)*, mystic syllables *(mantra)*, breath control *(pranayama)*, eye-focusing *(trataka)*, symbolic diagrams *(yantra)* and super-concentration *(dharana)*. The practitioner seats himself on the floor in the classical cross-legged squatting position, with hands on knees, thumb-tips touching finger-tips. He then 'focuses' his eyes on an imaginary spot at the top of the head, or on his forehead just above the meeting point of the eyebrows, or on the tip of the nose.

Breath control plays a part of great importance in the kundalini technique, and without its proper application the conditions for awakening the serpent can never be successfully fulfilled. Breathing must be co-ordinated with certain 'interior' exercises, which in themselves can prove to be dangerous if not correctly done: for they can upset the natural working of the breathing apparatus so that one is unable to breathe normally and automatically, but is forced to do so like an asthmatic, gasping for air and forcing the ribs to open and close until the regular rhythm is restored. Expert guidance is absolutely essential.

The first step in breath control is to establish a pattern. A common ratio adopted is 3-2-3: three units for drawing the breath in, two for retaining it and three for expelling it. The unit, known as the *matra*, may be one second or other fraction of a minute, but is usually calculated by the time it takes to stroke the knee with a circular motion three times and then snap the finger and thumb once.

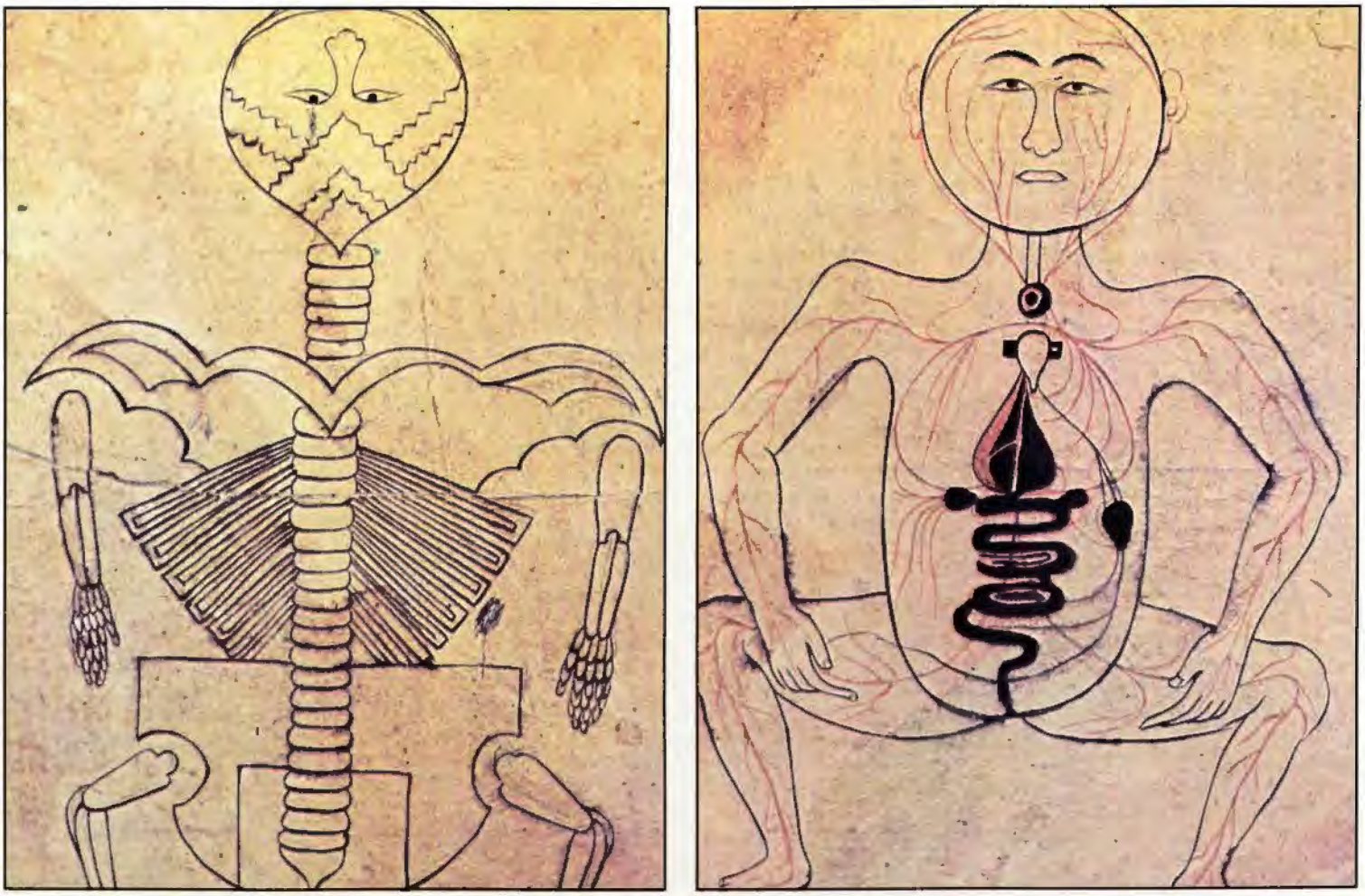
The breathing is then diffused into two streams of subtle breath *(prana)*: an upward moving breath from below, and a downward moving breath, both breaths being directed towards the diaphragm to be collected there as if charging a battery. At a certain moment, which may be internally triggered or may be signalled by the guru (the teacher), the two breaths are conjoined. Breathing is instantly stopped, the two breaths are suddenly impacted and directed down towards the kundalini. The two lateral columns within the Rod of Brahma are blocked and the central column, the sushumna, is opened and the kundalini awakened.

Body Filled with Fire

In the figurative wording of the Hindu texts the kundalini first stretches itself, the three and a half coils uncurl and the tiny serpent begins to tremble. A sensation of warmth is one of the earliest symptoms of the kundalini's awakening. The feeling starts from the muladhara, the basal chakra at the lower end of the spine. The temperature rises from warm to hot, followed by a sensation of burning heat that may spread through the whole body. From the tips of the toes to the top of the skull there seems to be a sense of flaming power. By this time the serpent is upreared, ready for its journey.

Once kindled the serpent-fire must be carefully directed, otherwise it will become a destructive force. The proper progression of the kundalini lies through the secret gateway of ascent and then upward through the various stations of the chakras in order. And here the long years of preparatory discipline must be brought to bear in mastering the fierce energy that has been aroused. In the uninitiated experimenter its awakening can create a sense of acute distress mounting to a feeling of uncontrollable panic, because he has no means of checking the rampaging creature unless it be in prolonged and agonizing bouts of sensual indulgence to afford some measure of relief.

Under the tutor's guidance, the acquired techniques are now brought into operation. The normal ratio of inbreathing, retention and outbreathing has to be changed once more, and this change must be co-ordinated with the intonation of specific mantras. A mantra is a mystic formula, which often



In yoga, the kundalini, when aroused, rises along a shaft called the Rod of Brahma. This is located within the spinal column *(left)* and within it again there are three channels. Normally the kundalini serpent *(right)* lies coiled asleep with its head blocking the central channel, the *sushumna*, but can be induced to awaken by the application of certain yogic disciplines. Two anatomical drawings of the 1st century AD

consists of a single syllable (see MANTRA). Although meanings have been ascribed to them their main purpose is to create a particular 'vibration' within the subtle body and urge the kundalini along the stations of Brahma's Rod, directing it from chakra to chakra until it reaches the sahasrara at the top of the head. As it moves up the column it either touches or pierces the chakras one after the other. Each chakra is compared to an inverted flowerbud pointing downwards; as it is pierced it folds in upon itself, closes into a tight ball and then blossoms out, its petals unfurled and facing upward.

As the kundalini rises it becomes progressively filtered and sublimated. Each chakra pierced and opened brings a new power, a new experience and a new vision. The opening of the basal chakra confers regenerative power; the solar plexus gives control over the internal processes; the heart plexus controls the subtle winds; the throat chakra the etheric elements; the eye chakra rules elemental beings; and the sahasrara brings ultimate understanding of Nature's mysteries.

Among the many phenomena accompanying the activated kundalini are strange auditory experiences. These sounds are not externally heard. Their sequence begins with a high shrill, like the chirping of crickets, and the novice may be deluded into interpreting the sounds as 'voices'. In such cases the attempt should be discontinued, for he is not yet sufficiently adept to carry on. If all goes well, however, the shrill sound begins to change. It is lowered in pitch and becomes like the buzzing of a bee, then a dull drone, the sound of a flute, a bell, a deeper boom, and then the roar of a distant ocean.

At some time during the auditory stage physical symptoms also begin to manifest themselves. The practitioner suffers from a sense of dizziness accompanied by nausea. His balance is disturbed and his body sways as he sits. Foamy saliva fills his mouth and he is beset with a feeling of suffocation and dread.

The Voice of the Inner Silence

In this welter of sensations he gradually becomes conscious of a pinpoint of silence. He must concentrate his attention on that point but should not seek to enlarge it. It will expand on its own, like the ripples of water when a stone is thrown into a pool. He will become aware of a growing space of absolutely 'colourless' sound, soundlessness which is more than a mere absence of sound. This phenomenon is known as the voice of the inner silence. It is the field of the potentiality of sound; the abstract region where no sound dwells but where Sound emanates.

To the inner perception there is simultaneously presented a vision of light, which passes from a bright glow to a heaven full of brilliant dots, like stars; then flaming tongues of fire, geometrical radiances and coloured shapes. All this is apprehended as if just behind the eyes or the meeting point of the eyebrows. There follows a sudden suffusion of shining whiteness that is no longer beheld as an 'optical' experience, but is an awareness of the supreme Radiance itself.

If the basal chakra be the negative pole of the subtle body, the sahasrara is the positive, and when the two polarities are linked the experience is described in language reminiscent of the sublimest raptures of the mystical spirit. Within the subtle body of the yogi the God and Goddess, Shiva and Shakti, meet in close embrace. All normal mental processes are suspended; the traffic of the senses is brought to a standstill; the ego is extinguished. All things become one; differences vanish and the oneness of the self and the Infinite is apprehended in the highest dimensions. This is Union, Absorption, Identity. The whole psyche is illuminated and the yogi, merged with the Resplendent Void, achieves the transcendent state of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. (See also DEATH.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

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ALICE KYTELER

THE FIRST, and the most famous, witch trial in Ireland was that of Dame Alice Kyteler of Kilkenny, in 1324. She was a member of an Anglo-Norman family long established in Kilkenny, and a woman of considerable wealth and influence. At the time of the trial, she was the wife of Sir John le Poer, but she had been married three times before. Her first husband was William Outlawe, a banker of Kilkenny, by whom she had a son, also named William Outlawe. Her second and third husbands were Adam le Blund, of Callan, and Richard de Valle. All these men in their turn had bequeathed the bulk of their property to her, or to her son William, thereby impoverishing their other children. The latter suspected, and were later to declare in formal charges against her, that she had enchanted their fathers in order to make them dispose of their wealth in this manner, and that she had subsequently murdered them, either by poison or by sorcery. When her fourth husband, Sir John le Poer, began to suffer from a curious wasting disease which reduced him to a state of extreme emaciation and weakness, and caused his hair and his nails to fall off, she was suspected of bewitching him also.

Sir John himself seems to have thought his illness was natural until a maidservant in his house warned him that it was more probably due to spells cast upon him by his wife. He then commanded Dame Alice to give him her keys, and when she refused, he took them by force. Inside some locked chests, he found certain magical powders and ointments, and other things indicative of sorcery. In his *Chronicle of Ireland* (1587), Holinshed says that these included 'a wafer of sacramental bread, having the devil's name stamped thereon instead of Jesus Christ, and a pipe of ointment wherewith she greased a staff, upon which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin, when and in what manner she listed' (see BROOMSTICK). These two items are not, however, mentioned in the contemporary records, and it is possible that they are later additions to the story. Sir John gave all his alarming finds to two trusted friars, who carried them, on his instructions, to the Bishop of Ossory.

The Bishop at that time was Richard de Ledrede, an Englishman who had been trained in France. This was a period when the notion of witchcraft as a singularly evil form of heresy was gaining ground in Europe, and the Bishop already believed that he had found evidence of 'a certain new and pestilential sect' in his own diocese. He ordered a close investigation to be made into the affair of Dame Alice and subsequently charged her, and ten others, her alleged followers or accomplices, with practically every kind of heretical wrongdoing mentioned in the later witch trials of the 16th and 17th centuries. Apart from the murder of her first three husbands and the bewitching of Sir John, Dame Alice was accused of denying Christ and abstaining from Christian worship, offering sacrifice to demons, consorting carnally with a familiar spirit called Robin *filius Artis*, or Robin Artisson (see FAMILIARS), and a variety of other abominations.

This Robin Artisson was curiously described as *ex pauperioribus inferni*, one of the poorer folk of hell. He appeared sometimes as a cat or a shaggy black dog, and sometimes as a black man of low stature, accompanied by two others similar to, but taller than himself. From him, Dame Alice had acquired all her wealth; since she had actually inherited it, this probably meant that he taught her how to enchant her husbands so that they left it to her. She and her followers had offered to him cocks and other living creatures which they tore to pieces at the crossroads, afterwards using the entrails to make ointments and powders for purposes of evil magic. The other ingredients of these horrible compounds were herbs of various kinds, spiders, black worms, the flesh of serpents, hair and nails taken from dead bodies, and the brains and wrappings of an unbaptized child, all boiled together in the skull of a decapitated felon over a fire of oak-logs. In addition they sought advice and responses from demons by means of lots; and they had used blasphemous mock rites of excommunication against Dame Alice's husbands, cursing them in every part from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet and, at the end of the ceremony, solemnly extinguishing the candles by which it had been lighted.

When the long indictment had been drawn up, the Bishop wrote to the Chancellor, Roger Outlawe (who was related to William), asking for the immediate arrest of Dame Alice and her confederates. He was soon to learn that the affair could not be handled quite so easily. It is possible that he was not very popular in his diocese. The Bishop's subsequent history soggests that he was hot-tempered and overbearing by nature, and a heresy-hunter of a type not previously known in Ireland. He was also an Englishman, which would not endear him to his Irish associates. In the course of several heated disputes with Sir Arnold le Poer, the Seneschal of Kilkenny and probably related to Dame Alice's fourth husband, the latter referred to him as 'an English foreigner' and 'that good-for-nothing rustic runaway from England'. What is certain is that he underestimated Dame Alice's strong local influence and family connections. William Outlawe sprang to the defence of his mother, sheltered her in his house and appealed to the Chancellor and to the Seneschal. The Chancellor refused, or delayed, the necessary warrant on legal grounds, whereupon the Bishop excommunicated Dame Alice and summoned her, on his own authority, to appear before him. She ignored the summons and withdrew into hiding.

The Bishop then cited William Outlawe for heresy. When he refused to withdraw this charge, Sir Arnold le Poer threw him into prison and kept him there until the date named in the citation was past. Nothing daunted, the Bishop placed the whole diocese under an interdict and cited William Outlawe again. Twice he presented himself, in the full splendour of episcopal robes and mitre, at the Seneschal's court, to state his case and demand the arrest of the accused persons, and on both occasions he was refused entry.

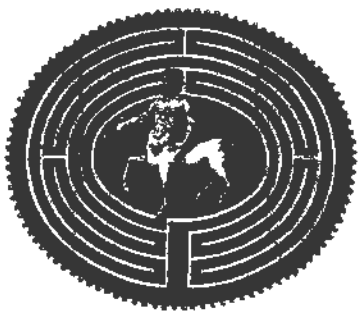
Meanwhile, even in concealment, Dame Alice still had sufficient influence to cause him to be summoned to Dublin to explain the serious matter of the interdict and her own excommunication. Then, at long last, the tide turned in his favour. After some further trouble William Outlawe was forced to submit and was imprisoned for nine weeks. A hollow (and as it turned out, impermanent) reconciliation took place between Sir Arnold and the Bishop; and Dame Alice was cited to appear at Kilkenny and answer the charges against her. She escaped, however, and fled to England, taking with her Sarah de Meath, one of her followers. Although she was subsequently condemned in her absence as a witch and a heretic, nothing more is certainly known about her. She is usually supposed to have remained in England, untroubled and in safety, for the rest of her life.

First Irish Witch-Burning

The other accused witches were not so fortunate. Robert of Bristol, John, Ellen and Syssok Galrussyn, William Payn de Boly, Alice Faber, Annota Lange, Eva de Drownestown and Petronilla de Midia (or Meath) were all arrested, convicted and sentenced to various punishments. The unhappy Petronilla seems to have been pursued with peculiar venom by the Bishop, perhaps because she had been the personal servant and close friend of Dame Alice and so became a kind of substitute for the latter in his mind. She was flogged six times by his orders, excommunicated and finally burnt. She confessed that she had taken part in most of the crimes of her mistress. She had denied the Christian faith, sacrificed to Robin Artisson, consulted with demons and caused goat horns to grow, or seem to grow, upon the heads of certain women. She said that in all this, and much else, she had been led and instructed by Dame Alice, who was a witch of far greater power and knowledge than the rest. She also attempted to implicate William Outlawe, declaring that he knew all about his mother's sorceries, and had himself worn the Devil's girdle a year and a day.

She was burnt on 3 November 1324, the first person to suffer death by fire for this cause in Ireland. Of the others, some are said to have been burnt also, some whipped, some marked with a cross upon their garments, some banished. There is, however, no official record of what happened to them, and only Petronilla's fate is certain. It is an interesting fact that, after her time, witch trials were relatively few in Ireland. The Irish believed in the existence of witches, like other people, but they remained singularly free from the witch-mania which afflicted so many other lands. Some trials there were, particularly after 1586, when the Irish Parliament passed a statute corresponding to the English Witchcraft Act of 1563, but there were never more than a few throughout the whole of the period between the 14th and the 18th century.

CHRISTINA HOLE



Labyrinth

Or maze, a complex arrangement of buildings or intricate network of enclosed paths, from whose centre it is difficult to find a way out: to penetrate it and then return symbolized spiritual death and resurrection: to the ancients the labyrinth was linked with the idea of a sacred centre of ritual, reserved only for the initiated; the famous Labyrinth of Cnossus, was said to have been built by Daedalus on the orders of King Minos of Crete, to hide the Minotaur.

See MAZE.

British Museum

Ladder

A symbol of spiritual ascension; because it gives access to a higher level, the ladder was seen as a connecting link between heaven and earth, providing a stairway to the otherworld: in ancient Egyptian belief the dead king climbed up to the sky on a ladder, and in his dream Jacob saw a ladder set up between heaven and earth, on which angels were ascending and descending: the superstition that it is unlucky to walk under a ladder is very widespread.

See STEPS AND LADDERS.

At the head of Tibetan Buddhism, officially suppressed since the Chinese invasion, stands the Dalai Lama; now in exile, he has established a small kingdom at Dharmasala in Northern India to preserve the religion. This article deals with the sacred office of the lamas before the occupation, whose succession is traditionally by reincarnation.

LAMAS

IN TIBET the principle of reincarnation determined the succession to high ecclesiastical office for at least 500 years. The religion of the country was Lamaism, a development of Mahayana Buddhism, first introduced into Tibet from India in the 7th century AD. Before the Chinese invasion in 1950 the lamas (abbots of the Tibetan monasteries, though the term is also used for all fully ordained Tibetan Buddhist monks) enjoyed immense power and prestige.

The belief in reincarnation or the transmigration of souls, though an essential element of Buddhist ideology, is adopted from Hinduism. Hindus believe that by living in accordance with the rules of their caste, they can attain a rebirth in a higher form of existence, either on this earth or in the realm of the gods. The Buddhist also believes that a soul may be reborn in any of six spheres, and that those who have attained highest merit may achieve supreme enlightenment (Nirvana) and enter into the paradise of the Buddha. But according to the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine, saintly men entitled to this supreme bliss may after death voluntarily forego final liberation from the cycle of rebirths and choose to be reborn into this world as teachers and saviours in order to help suffering humanity. A lama choosing this fate is known as a *Bodhisattva*: a manifestation of Buddhahood, he descends as a saviour to the human world in order to direct the spiritual destinies of its inhabitants. As the task of salvation cannot be achieved in the course of one human lifetime the spirit of a Bodhisattva enters one body after another.

Memory of an Earlier Life

The Tibetans describe such reincarnations as *tulku* (emanation bodies). The earliest documented case of such a reincarnation is that of the first Dalai Lama of the Gelugpa Church, the most important of the Tibetan Buddhist sects. After his death in 1475 he was reborn, according to contemporary belief, in a child identified by oracular signs, and this boy was duly installed as the second Dalai Lama. The heads of the Gelugpa sect, who after 1640 were also the secular rulers of Tibet, were subsequently chosen on the basis of the belief that the deceased priest-king was reborn in an infant, recognizable by his ability to identify various objects associated with his previous life. This manner of establishing an uncontested succession to major ecclesiastical posts soon spread throughout Tibet, and countless reincarnate lamas functioned as the heads of monastic institutions.

The practice of succession by reincarnation was based on the belief that those who voluntarily chose rebirth remembered their previous existences, and by doing so attained a level of accumulated wisdom such as could not be acquired in the course of one single life.

The methods of discovering a reincarnation relied mainly on a child's memory of his earlier life, and only to a lesser extent on oracles, dreams or visions. A saintly lama expecting to die sometimes gave his disciples certain hints as to where he would be reborn, or one of his followers might have a dream indicating where the new incarnation should be sought. More frequently a young boy might announce his status as the reincarnation of a deceased lama or demand to be taken to a certain monastery which he described as his real home. Such requests were likely to be ignored at first, but if the boy insisted the parents might take notice and consult some local lamas. Provided the boy's claim appeared reasonable, he would be taken to the monastery of the late lama and be subjected to a test. He would be confronted with a collection of objects, among which there were some of the possessions of the late lama. If the boy was a genuine reincarnation

he chose without hesitation the articles formerly owned and used by the lama whose reincarnation he claimed to be. The ability to identify the correct articles was taken as proof of his status as a reincarnation of the previous owner.

Caretaker Monks

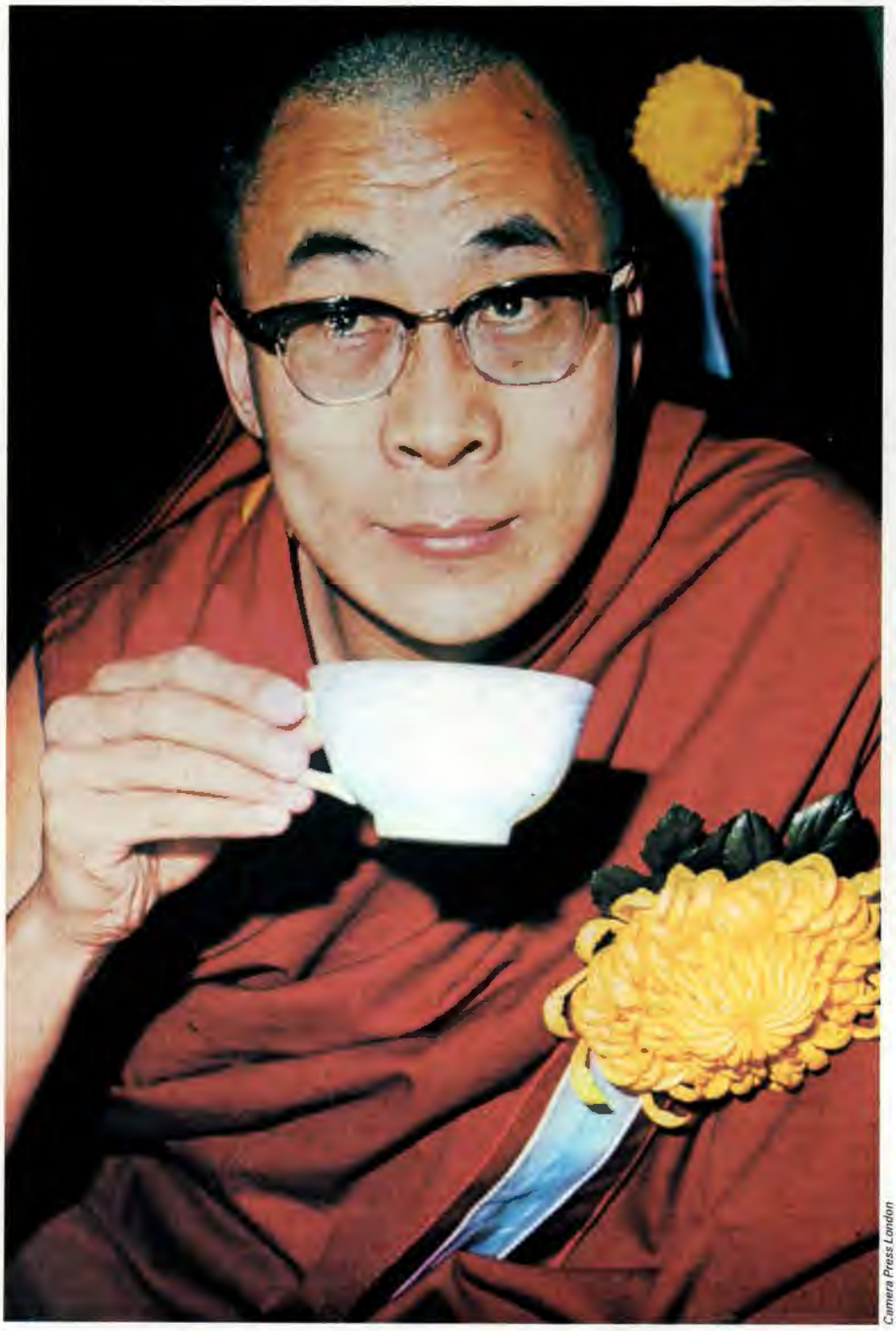
Sometimes there were several claimants for recognition as the reincarnation of a prominent lama, and more than one might be genuine. For according to Tibetan belief every personality was made up of body, voice and heart, and the theory was that these three components could be reincarnated separately. If no double or triple reincarnation was suspected the names of the claimants might be submitted to an oracle for selection of the one to be recognized as genuine tulku.

A boy accepted as the reincarnation of an abbot assumed his religious role as soon as his identity was verified and sanctioned by the competent authorities. But being a small child he required education and training, and these he received at the hands of the most learned monks of the monastery. During the infancy of the reincarnated abbot his secular duties were discharged by a senior monk acting as caretaker, but on reaching maturity, usually at the age of 16 to 18, the young abbot assumed his position as head of the monastery, and even the most senior monks were required to submit to his authority.

However, a reincarnation, once selected and installed, was not under an inescapable obligation to lead a monastic life. He could renounce his priestly role or take up purely secular duties while his position in the monastery was taken by another monk. Provided he had not led a scandalous life and brought dishonour upon his monastery he might even be reincarnated after his death and once more assume the function of abbot.

Reincarnations were not confined to the abbots of monasteries. Lamas and nuns of less exalted status might be reborn in children who recalled some experiences of their past life. Nor were reincarnations always within the same sex. Even laymen without special claim to sanctity were sometimes reincarnated in children conscious of their previous life. Such reincarnations, however, were of little practical importance. A reincarnate abbot took over the personal property as well as the official position of his predecessors, but the reincarnation of a layman had no claim to the property owned in his previous life. Whereas the reincarnations of laymen were unusual and unforeseen events, the disciples and kinsmen of a lama of learning and reputation for holiness sometimes expected him to be reborn and waited for the appropriate signs.

The Dalai Lama, photographed in Tokyo; he is regarded as a reincarnation of all his predecessors and as a manifestation of the national god of Tibet. The child in whom a dead lama chose to be reborn could be recognized by his ability to identify objects associated with his previous existence on earth



Camera Press London

The Dalai Lama

As a political phenomenon the system of succession by reincarnation played an important role in the shaping of the power structure of Tibet. The abbots of the great Gelugpa monasteries of the holy city of Lhasa were almost exclusively reincarnated lamas, and they exercised an important influence on the government of the country and the selection of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and the regents ruling Tibet during the infancy of the Dalai Lama. At the peak of the hierarchy stood the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. The Dalai Lama was regarded as a reincarnation of all his predecessors in the exalted position of head of the Gelugpa Church and, like them, a manifestation of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the national god of Tibet. The Panchen Lama was regarded as a manifestation of Amitabha 'Unlimited Light', one of the five Buddhas of Contemplation and father of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Under them were the other tulku lamas. Each one was a saviour in his own right by reason of birth and discovery and not because he had received ordination from above. The ecclesiastical organization was based on these manifestations of the Buddhahood, and the process of reincarnation assured a stable and orderly succession, which by reason of the celibacy of the lamas could not be hereditary through descent from father to son.

(See also BUDDHISM; REINCARNATION; TIBET.)

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

ACL

Lamb

Often the victim of sacrifice in early times because it stood for unblemished purity and innocence: in Christian tradition it is a symbol of Christ, who is referred to in the Bible as the Lamb of God; Van Eyck's painting, the *Adoration of the Lamb*, is one of many examples of this concept in art: the term 'flock' is used to denote the members of the Church, when Christ is seen as the Good Shepherd.

See SHEEP.

Two rival families of disreputable Lancashire peasants, each headed by an aged hag, were implicated in the sensational witch trial of 1612; wild accusations and counter-accusations, and the testimony of a nine-year-old girl, brought ten people to the gallows

LANCASHIRE WITCHES

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the 17th century Lancashire lay under a religious despotism, with an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic population dominated by a hostile and punitive Protestant government. If the parish churches were well attended it was only because absence from the service incurred a heavy fine, for the cure of souls lay almost entirely in the hands of Jesuit priests who were harried from priest-hole to priest-hole under threat of the most cruel punishments. The fires of the Reformation had as yet failed to cleanse this rebellious countryside of its so-called Popish superstitions. The prevalence of witches must also have strongly occupied the minds of the magistrates, for the Elizabethan Witchcraft Act of 1563 had been reinforced in 1604 by a further Act of Parliament and the air was alive with rumours of magic, white and black.

There were at this time two rival families living in the Pendle Forest in East Lancashire, who were widely reputed to have sold their souls to the Devil. They were an unkempt woodland folk, beggars and poachers in the main, and regarded with apprehension by the countryfolk for miles around. At the head of each family was an old crone, spiteful and hideous in appearance: Elizaheth Sowthern, an 80-year-old blind beggar, known locally as Old Demdike, and Anne Whittle, equally ancient and decrepit, known as Old Chattox. Both of them looked the very picture of a witch.

Brampton Studio

Brampton Studio

Two woodcuts depict exploits of the witches of Pendle Forest in Lancashire, who achieved great notoriety as a result of a chapbook published after their trial and execution in 1612 *Above right* Witches fly through the air to the sabbath *Right* A witches' revel: reports of the meeting held at Malking Tower by the Demdike and Chattox families, at which it was decided to blow up Lancaster Castle, provided a factual basis for such scenes

Right Children offered to the Devil. The murder of children by witchcraft was one of the charges brought forward at the Lancaster witch trial of 1612 *Far right* 'The witch of the woodlands' with her familiar spirit. Old Demdike claimed to have as her a familiar a diabolical dog named Tibb, while other canine familiars belonged to her daughter Elizabeth Device and her rival Old Chattox

There is reason to believe that each woman had attempted to exploit her reputation for casting lethal spells, in order to boost her trade in simples. The result was that they had both come under strong suspicion of causing most, if not all, of the unexplained deaths in the district.

The First Interrogations

The story begins in the early months of 1612 with a theft carried out by Elizabeth Whittle, daughter of Chattox, at the home of Old Demdike, as the result of which Elizabeth was sent to prison in Lancaster Castle. She had in the meantime branded her accuser, the 11-year-old Alizon Device, Demdike's granddaughter, as a witch. The latter, in attempting to defend herself, revealed that her grandmother had in fact tried to initiate her into witchcraft. At this point it is fairly certain that nothing more coercive than words was employed to extract a series of confessions in which each individual was led into the betrayal of the other, until finally both families were compromised up to the hilt.

Shortly after this young Alizon had the misfortune to quarrel with a pedlar, whom she roundly cursed. To her horror the man collapsed within minutes, complaining that he had been pierced with knives and sickles. Once again Alizon found herself under interrogation by a local magistrate, Roger Nowell, together with her mother and simple-minded brother James. Between them they blackened not only the reputations of each other but also those of Old Demdike and Old Chattox who, early in April, were summoned for interrogation. Demdike appears to have admitted freely that she was a witch. Many years earlier she had been approached by an evil spirit dressed in a brown and black coat and having the appearance of a boy. This demon, who bore the name of Tibb, negotiated with her for her soul, promising that in return she could have her heart's desire. Tibb manifested himself at a later date as a brown dog, in which shape he sucked blood from beneath her left arm and aided her in killing by witchcraft the child of Richard Baldwyn. Baldwyn had previously threatened to have both Demdike and her granddaughter, Alizon Device, executed as witches and whores, in the following terms: 'Get out of my ground, whores and witches. I will burn the one of you and hang the other.'

Chattox, in her feverish struggle to extricate herself from her difficulties, attempted to cast the blame for her initiation into witchcraft upon Demdike. Only because of Demdike's wicked persuasions had she ever consented to become a witch and acquired her familiar, which in the likeness of a spotted bitch 'promised her worldly wealth'. To make certain of Demdike's downfall she accused her of murdering by sorcery Robert Nutter, a local landowner. At the same time she implicated several others.

Plot to Blow up the Castle

The magistrate, now satisfied that these confessions supplied all the evidence needed for a conviction, dispatched Alizon, Old Demdike and Old Chattox to Lancaster Castle together with a fourth prisoner, Anne Redfearne, the daughter of Chattox, who was apparently also involved in the death of Robert Nutter. The families of the imprisoned women were reduced by their mutual calamity to a state of utter consternation but, setting aside their hostility for once, they called a conference at Malking Tower, the house of Demdike's daughter Elizabeth Device. It took place on Good Friday, 10 April, exactly eight days after the arrests. Those present consisted of about 20 persons, of whom only two were men. From subsequent confessions it would appear that the gathering, while feasting on stolen mutton, considered for a time the possibility of blowing up Lancaster Castle and killing the jailer in an attempt to rescue their kinsfolk. They also utilized the occasion to plan various murders and even attempted to summon up an evil spirit, the familiar of Alizon, for the purpose of giving it a name.

Present also on this occasion was Jennet Preston, a Yorkshire witch who had attended the conference in order to secure the aid of her fellow hags for the destruction of one who had caused her to be prosecuted for witchcraft at York. Finally the assembly adjourned for a twelvemonth, agreeing to meet again on Good Friday 1613 if there was no occasion for an earlier meeting. This would suggest that by the time the banquet had reached its conclusion the revellers were far too overcome by liquor to remember either the purpose for which the conference had been convened or the hopeless situation of their relatives imprisoned in Lancaster Castle.

Once apprised of this latest threat to public order Nowell struck again. He arrested a number of the former revellers, including Elizabeth Device, the convener of the meeting, her son James Device, the simple-minded labourer, and his nine-year-old sister Jennet, although many others appear to have escaped the net. Despite suggestions to the contrary there is no reason to believe that those in authority regarded the events at Malking Tower as a witches' sabbath, for even in the official report of the trial the assembly was described as a 'special meeting' of 'children and friends'.

The fresh batch of prisoners was interrogated and sent to join their fellows in the dismal, airless cells of Lancaster Castle, together with eight other suspects from Salmesbury who had been charged with bewitching a farmer's daughter to death. The examination of the Pendle suspects produced the anticipated crop of bizarre revelations, extracted by the skilled questioning of Roger Nowell and a fellow

magistrate, Nicholas Banister. Elizabeth Device confessed to murdering three persons by witchcraft and making a clay image at the instigation of her familiar, a dog named Ball, but she strenuously denied the existence of any plot to blow up Lancaster Castle. It was unfortunate for her, however, that she should have been cursed with a personal defect that longstanding superstition had decreed to be the hallmark of the witch: for she had one eye looking down and the other up, a feature then regarded as an infallible sign of the Evil Eye.

The trial of the Pendle witches at the summer assizes of 1612 was preceded by the death in jail of Old Demdike, a not unexpected occurrence in the insanitary and noisome holes in which the 17th century prisoner was left to rot. It was interrupted by the trial of the witches of Salmesbury who, after satisfying the court that they were the victims of a Jesuit plot, were found not guilty and discharged.

Found Guilty

The court with its judge, Sir Edward Bromley, then considered the evidence against the prisoners, the bulk of which consisted of written confessions and mutual denunciations made before the Justices of the Peace during the preliminary examinations. Those from Pendle who were brought to trial at Lancaster Castle were 11 in number and consisted of: Anne Whittle, (Old Chattox) and her daughter, Anne Redfearne; Old Demdike's daughter, Elizabeth Device, and her son and daughter, Alizon and James Device; Katherine Hewit, alias Mould-heels; John and Jane Bulcock, Isabel Robey, Margaret Pearson and Alice Nutter (described as a gentlewoman). Jennet Preston was tried at York, where she was found guilty and hanged.

The prisoners were foredoomed by their own admissions and severely prejudiced by the evidence given against them by James Device's nine-year-old sister Jennet, who also incriminated her own mother Elizabeth Device. Anne Redfearne was found not guilty of bewitching Robert Nutter to death but the court then declared her guilty of the murder by witchcraft of his father, Christopher Nutter, who had died railing against witches. Her old mother, the equally doomed Chattox, pleaded upon her knees in vain for her daughter's life. James Device was far too ill even to stand; now in open court he withdrew the confessions he had made to the magistrates and entered a plea of not guilty, but was sentenced to death.

Alizon Device was indicted for bewitching John Law, the pedlar who had become crippled after her quarrel with him. 'Transformed beyond the course of Nature', the pedlar was led into court while the accused girl with guilty tears begged forgiveness for a crime for which she obviously believed herself responsible. The cripple, it was said, 'had the left side lamed all save his eye', which suggests that he must have suffered a stroke.

John and Jane Bulcock, despite a plea of not guilty, were sentenced to death for 'bewitching to madness' Jennet Deane; the evidence against them was given by James, Elizabeth and Jennet Device. Katherine Hewit, alias Mould-heels, who had also been betrayed by the Devices, was charged with being present at the Malking Tower meeting and with bewitching to death Anne Foulds, described as 'a child of Colne'.

One of the unsolved mysteries of the Lancashire witch trials was the indictment of Alice Nutter, a wealthy property owner and the mother of the fatally bewitched Robert Nutter, for the murder by witchcraft of Henry Mitton. She had been named by Jennet Device as having attended the Good Friday meeting and despite her plea of innocence was sentenced to death. Isabel Robey pleaded not guilty to bewitching Jane Wilkinson and Peter Chaddock. The latter had become 'sore pained' in his bones and for this he held Isabel responsible, while Jane Wilkinson complained of being 'suddenly pinched in her thigh'. For these crimes the accused was sentenced to death.

All but one of the prisoners died on the gallows on 20 August 1612. The exception was Margaret Pearson, accused of killing a mare by witchcraft, who was sentenced to stand in the pillory at Clitheroe, Paddiham, Whalley and Lancaster on four market days with a paper describing her offence upon her head, and then to remain in prison for a year; this in itself was almost the equivalent of a death sentence. The child Jennet Device did not escape the odium of witchcraft, for 22 years later she was one of the accused in the second great trial of Lancashire witches in 1634.

From the records which were carefully noted by Thomas Potts, a lawyer, and subsequently approved by Sir Edward Bromley and published as a chapbook in 1613, under the title of *The Wonderful Discovery of Witches in the County of Lancaster*, it is evident that in the fury of the witch-hunts the unsupported testimonies of children, of senile women and of a half-witted labourer were considered to be sufficient evidence for a sentence of death. In this part of Lancashire the suspicion lingered on for many years that the rich Alice Nutter had been implicated in the case by those who stood to gain possession of her property in the event of her being executed.

Popish Charms

The story of the Lancashire witches provides valuable insight into some of the more eccentric beliefs that dominated the minds of rich and poor alike when the witch-mania was at its height. In the records of the trial we read of familiar spirits in the forms of human beings and diabolical dogs, and of a mysterious 'thing like a hare' which begged sacramental bread from James Device; we also hear of the cries of witches in a night made hideous by 'a foul yelling like unto a great number of cats'. It is obvious from the nature of some of the 'popish charms' referred to in court that the accused had remained quite unaffected by the Reformation and had continued to employ Roman Catholic terminology, which was of itself

highly suspicious to Protestant ears. An example is the following charm used by Elizabeth Device for the cure of one bewitched, which began:

> Upon Good Friday I will fast while I may
> Until I hear them knell
> Our Lord's own bell

and concluded:

> Lord I am beset with stick and stake
> That I can neither sleep nor wake
> Rise up Gabriel and go with me.
> The stick nor the stake shall never hurt thee
> Sweet Jesus our Lord, Amen.

From this it would be logical to infer that the accused must have practised a kind of benevolent 'white' witchcraft. Further evidence in support of this conclusion appears in the form of a charm to be used over bewitched milk, which was included in the confession of Old Chattox. This refers to the 'ill Eye' and 'ill Tongue' which has caused the bewitchment and offers as a remedy 'Five Paternosters, five Aves and a Creed, in worship of five wounds of our Lord'. We learn also that to be in 'hanck' meant in the language of Lancashire witchcraft to be caught in the grip of a witch; and that butter could be manufactured magically without the milk being the least reduced in quantity. Of the more grisly charms we have the revelation by James Device that Old Chattox took 'three scalps (skulls) from Pendle Churchyard', the teeth of which were extracted and then buried with a clay image of the intended victim.

There are still families in the Pendle witch country who claim descent from the Lancashire witches, sometimes with a degree of pride, while the more commercially minded commemorate the dark events of 1612 with organized tours which include the homes of Alice Nutter and other principal characters in this old tragedy.

(See also FAMILIARS; IMITATIVE MAGIC.)

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: E. Peel and P. Southern, *The Trials of the Lancashire Witches* (Taplinger, 1970).

Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal

Left **Scenes from a French MS showing: the birth of Lancelot; Lancelot with his mother and the Lady of the Lake; his knighting at Arthur's court; and his vision of the Holy Grail *Right* In company with other great medieval lovers, Lancelot (third from the left) pays homage to Venus, goddess of love: early 15th century Italian tray**

LANCELOT

'NO KNIGHT was ever born of man and woman, and no knight ever sat in a saddle, who was the equal of this man.' The earliest surviving romance of Lancelot of the Lake, greatest and most tragic of the heroes of the Round Table, is the *Lancelot* (or *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* – the Knight of the Cart) of Chrétien de Troyes (see ARTHUR). It tells how Queen Guinevere was kidnapped by the wicked Meleagant, son of the king of an enchanted land from which no prisoner could escape. Lancelot, who was passionately in love with Guinevere, and she with him, drove his way through all dangers, obstacles and enemies to rescue her, so breaking the enchantment and setting free all the other prisoners held captive there.

Chrétien may have been the first author to exploit the theme of the love of Lancelot and Guinevere, which plays such a crucial role in the later Arthurian legends. It is significant that the poem, which exalts the lovers' passion almost to the level of religious rapture, gives them an excuse by showing Arthur himself as a weakling and coward who is taunted and defied by the evil Meleagant.

The story that Guinevere was kidnapped, however, is older than Chrétien. The famous carving at Modena Cathedral apparently shows her being rescued from an enemy castle, and Caradoc of Llancarfan's *Vita Gildae* (possibly c 1100) says that Melwas, the king of the Summer Country, carried Guinevere off to his stronghold at Glastonbury and Arthur had to come to her rescue.

Lancelot himself is also older than Chrétien. In the Welsh tale of *Culhwch and Olwen* he is Llenlleawc the Irishman, who may originally have been the Irish god Lug. Later, he has strong ties with Brittany (see BRITTANY). He takes his title 'of the Lake' from the tradition that he was brought up by a lake fairy. Chrétien mentions that he owned a magic ring which freed anyone who gazed on it from the power of enchantment, given him by the fairy. In the late 12th century German *Lanzelet* the infant Lancelot is stolen from his mother by a fairy who takes him to her castle on a crystal mountain, in a magic island of 10,000 maidens where flowers and trees bloom all the year round. When he grows up, she sends him to Arthur's court to be knighted.

In the French prose tale of *Lancelot* (early 13th century, part of what is called the Prose *Lancelot* or Vulgate cycle) the fairy is called the Lady of the Lake. Before sending Lancelot to Arthur's court, she gives him arms and the magic ring, and instructs him in the duties of chivalry and the importance of protecting the weak and defending the Church. He becomes the best knight in the world, the indomitable hero of innumerable battles, jousts and quests. As Malory puts it, 'in all tournaments and jousts and deeds of arms, both for life and death, he passed all other knights, and at no time he was ever overcome but it were by treason or enchantment.' But Lancelot and Guinevere fall helplessly in love and because of their sinful liaison Lancelot fails in some of his adventures. He is told that a better knight will appear and will win the Grail. This proves to be Galahad (see GALAHAD) who is Lancelot's own son, begotten on the daughter of the keeper of the Grail castle while

Lancelot is under an enchantment and thinks himself in the arms of Guinevere.

In the next work in the cycle, the *Queste del Saint Graal*, Lancelot fails in the Grail quest because he is a sinner. He has always kept sternly silent about his affair with his royal mistress but now, bitterly disappointed, he breaks down and confesses to a hermit: 'I have sinned unto death with my lady, she whom I have loved all my life, Queen Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur... For her love alone I accomplished the exploits with which the whole world rings. She it is who raised me from poverty to riches and from hardship to the sum of earthly bliss. But I know full well that this bond is the sin that has earned me Our Lord's dire wrath. . .' He promises to renounce her and because of his repentance he eventually reaches the Grail castle and is granted a partial and passing experience of the Grail.

The search for the Grail has destroyed the old fellowship of the Round Table by devaluing its aims and standards, and the last work in the cycle, the *Mort Artu*, relates the final tragedy. Malory used these French tales with consummate skill in the *Morte D'Arthur*. After the winning of the Grail by Galahad, Lancelot returned to Arthur's court and renewed his adulterous relationship with the Queen, haunted by his failure in the Grail quest and by the irreconcilable conflict between his passion for Guinevere and his loyalty and affection for Arthur. Guinevere was abducted by Sir Meliagrance and rescued by Lancelot. The court gossiped about the lovers and eventually they were openly denounced.

There followed the final disruption of the Round Table in civil war, the treachery of Mordred and the fatal wounding of Arthur. Heavy with guilt and grief, Lancelot hurried to England, said his last farewell to Guinevere, and became a hermit. Seven years later, Guinevere died and Lancelot left his hermitage to bury her at Glastonbury. He himself died soon after, broken-hearted, and one who was with him saw in a dream how the angels carried him up to heaven and the gates of heaven opened for him. Malory's words about Guinevere apply equally to him, 'that while she lived she was a true lover, and therefore she had a good end.'

RICHARD CAVENDISH

LOUVRE

LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM

St Anselm in the 12th century considered it spiritually dangerous to sit in a garden because it is so pleasant to the senses

The river of death, the city of God, the valley of humiliation, the garden of paradise, the deserts and mountains of revelation, the tower of strength – vividly evocative images drawn from landscape run all through the Western tradition of symbolism

ALMOST EVERYTHING the human eye has rested on has been used by someone somewhere as a symbol and landscape, which constitutes most of what we see around us, is no exception. It is an old and widespread tendency to discern in Nature a powerful element of the divine, to make the earth a goddess and the sky a god, to people with a multitude of spirits 'every rock and hill, every tree and flower, every brook and river' (see ANIMISM). And in literature, art and dreams, landscapes or particular features of landscape frequently stand for ideas, beliefs, moods, things not fully expressible in plain language.

All consideration of symbolism is bedevilled by the fact that a symbol will have different meanings for different minds, or for the same mind in different moods, and still more by the fact that since symbols are attempts to express what is otherwise unexpressible, they can hardly be satisfactorily elucidated in words. Although a few symbols have a clear and definite significance – the sealed fountain or the closed gate as images of the virginity of the Virgin Mary, for instance – most have meanings which are necessarily large and vague, and often inherently contradictory.

The resolution of contradictions is the theme of one of the finest of the many examples of landscape symbolism in the Old Testament. 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together' (Isaiah, chapter 40). Here flatness of landscape stands for the destruction of all height and depth, all opposites and distinctions, all surface appearances, when they are transcended in the last days in the glory of God. But equally, a landscape of hills and valleys can also convey the essential unity of all things in the existence and love of God, as in Bellini's famous picture of *St Francis in Ecstasy* (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI) of which Kenneth Clark says: 'No other great painting, perhaps, contains such a quantity of natural details, observed and rendered with incredible patience: for no other painter has been able to give to such an accumulation the unity which is only achieved by love.'

Left **The Fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the garden of Eden: from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. The paradise garden appears as an enclosed place with pleasant trees and lawns, while the dangers and discomforts of the outside world are symbolized by a line of barren mountains in the foreground. A place set apart, where Nature is tamed and beauty cultivated, the garden became a symbol of perfection, earthly and divine** ***Following page*** **The vast emptiness of the wilderness can be a symbol of unchanging eternity and infinity: in Salvador Dalí's painting *The Persistence of Memory* a dreamlike, timeless landscape is the background to the foetal creature and the limp clock faces**

Giraudon

Deserts of Vast Eternity

The desert or wilderness is a particularly rich and ambivalent symbol. It may stand for 'the undifferentiated', the unity behind surface appearances, the level plain of Isaiah, for 'the realm of abstraction', for the negation of landscape, the vast eternity of emptiness which is outside the normal scenery of human and animal life. From this point of view, it is the place in which to find God, to receive divine revelation. St Anthony and other early Christian hermits went into the desert to find solitude, silence and God. The Israelites escaped from their bondage in the corrupt land of Egypt and fled into the wilderness, where God made his covenant with them, before leading them on to the Promised Land.

But on the other hand, the desert is also a symbol of spiritual sterility, of the absence of God, of the demonic. St Anthony and the desert hermits were famous for the attacks which devils launched against them. That the desert was the home of evil spirits was a commonplace of Jewish belief and the scapegoat loaded with the sins of the people was driven out into the wilderness, to the demon Azazel.

So the desert combines the idea of spiritual fecundity and the presence of God with the opposite idea of the barren waste from which God is absent (and can stand for the sterile worldly life of men, far from God). After his baptism Jesus retreated into the wilderness where he experienced the assaults of the Devil but also found comfort and strength.

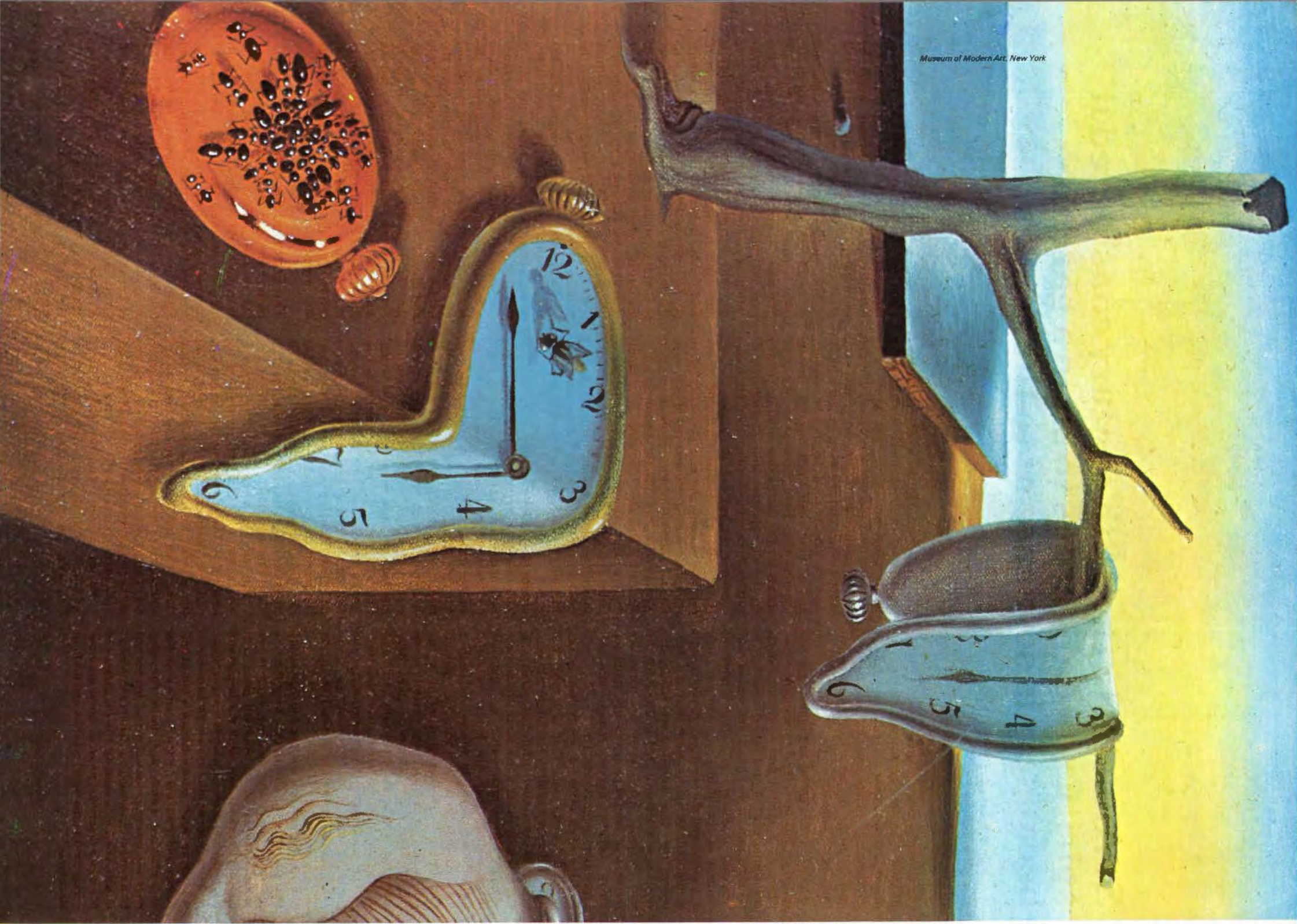
The pitiless dearth of the wilderness is the drought of asceticism, in which the body is parched for the saving of the soul. The desert is the domain of the sun, of the pure and blinding light which is the realization of truth. Since the wilderness is naturally barren, its spiritual fecundity is due solely to God, to the saving light of God's grace. In Bosch's magnificent painting of *The Seven Deadly Sins* (see BOSCH) the dead rise from their graves in the desert to face the withering and punishing blast or the saving, gracious illumination of Christ in Judgement. The landscape contrasts with the equally sterile but unclean, citified scenery of hell in the opposite corner of the painting.

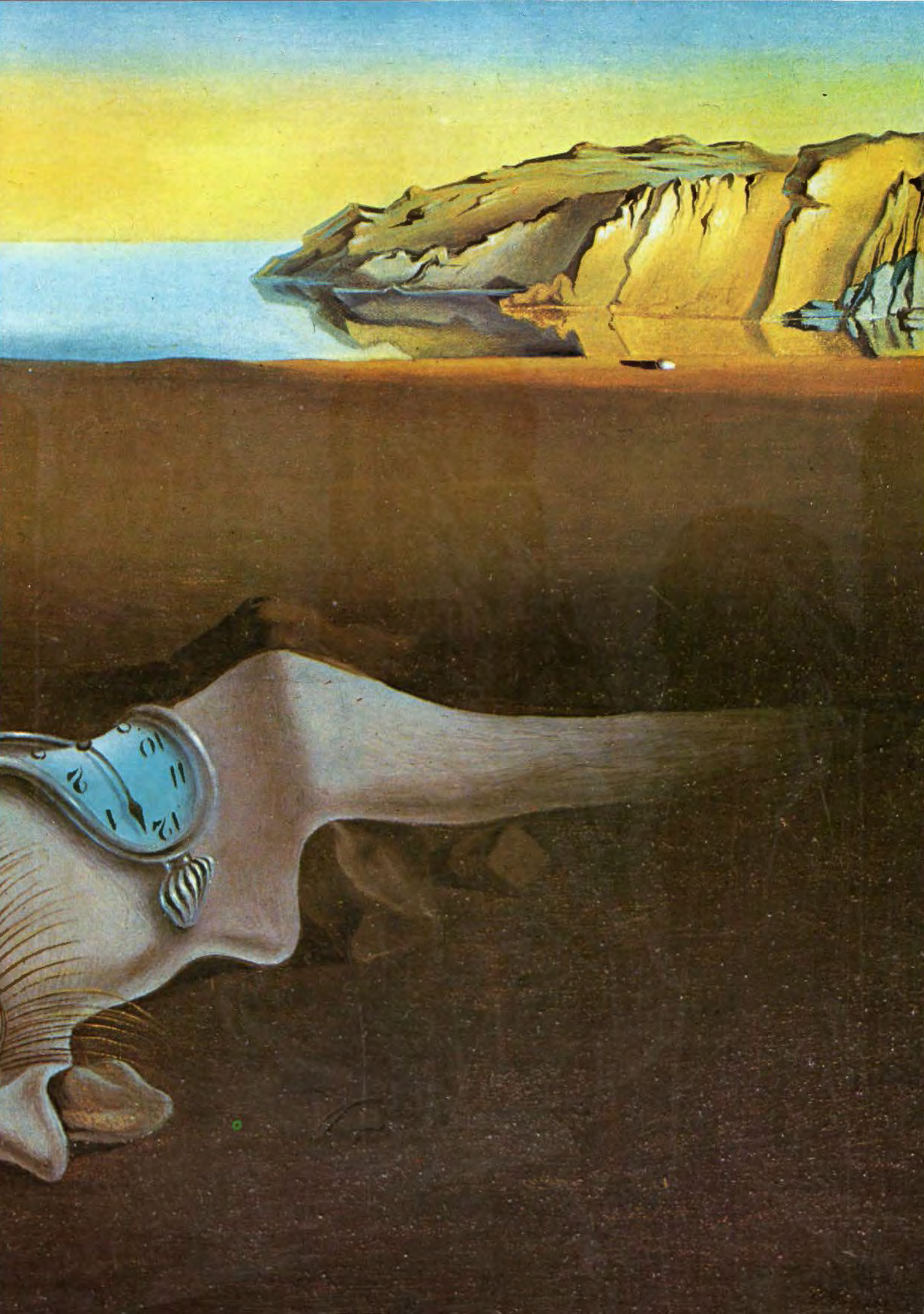
The garden is also set apart from the normal world but, unlike the desert, it is a place where Nature is tamed and beauty cultivated. St Anselm in the 12th century considered it spiritually dangerous to sit in a garden because it is so pleasant to the senses. But in other parts of the world and in Europe in the later Middle Ages the garden was a symbol of perfection, earthly and divine: 'a flowery meadow cut off from the world of fierce accidents,' to quote Kenneth Clark again, 'where love, human and divine, could find fulfilment.' God planted the garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, and in it, according to legend, the animals lived before the Fall as peaceable as snowdrops and primroses.

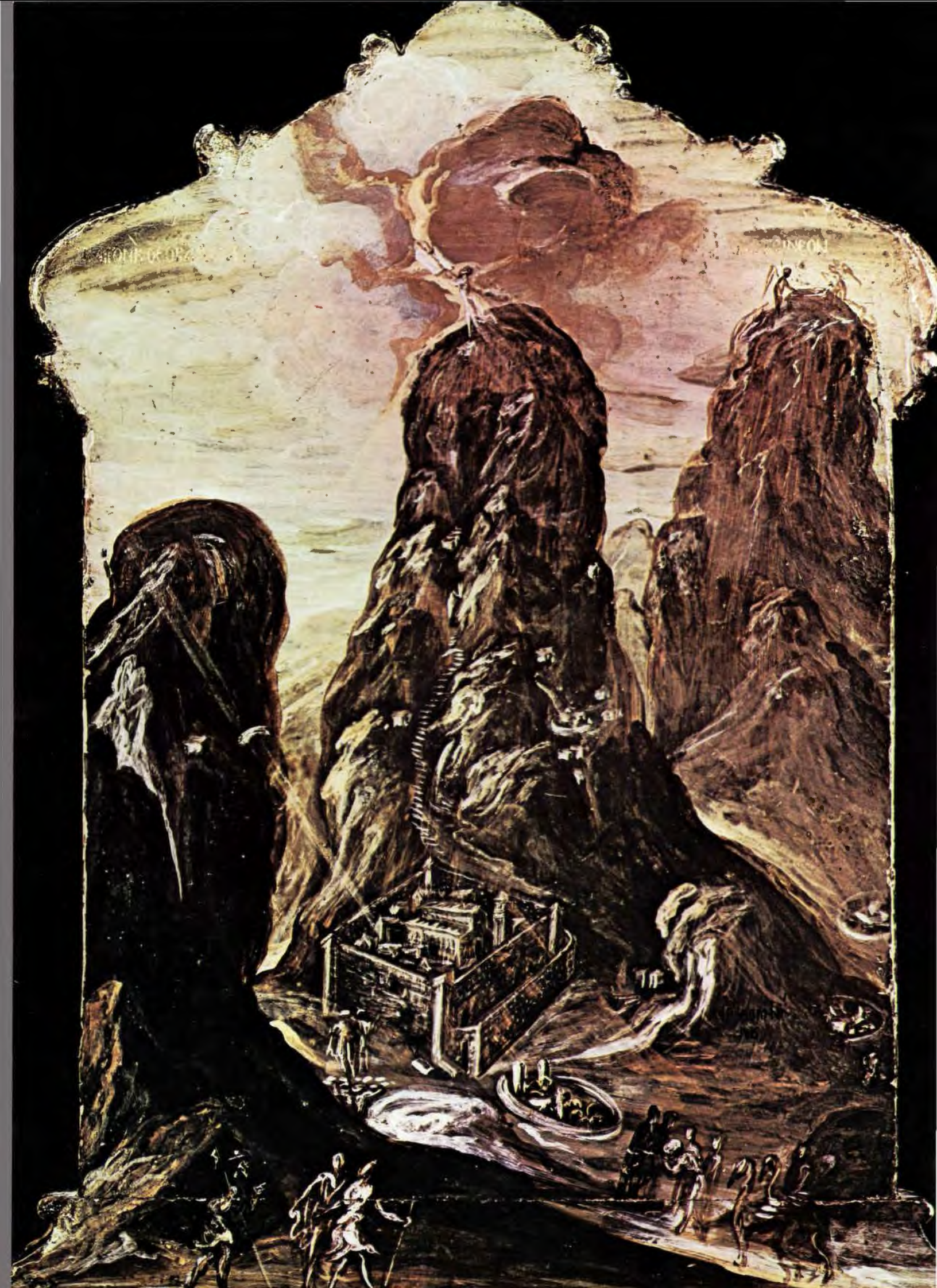
The Enclosed Garden

Both garden and desert are places of retreat but in the garden the escape from the everyday world is not to the desert's blinding light of revelation but to a paradise of ordered beauty, rest and gentle love. In the scene of the temptation and expulsion from Eden in the *Très Riches Heures*, the loveliness of the garden is framed by an ominous wood in the background and a line of barren mountains in front, which stand for the world outside the garden, the world of death, disorder, toil and violence from which the garden is exempt.

A garden, like other enclosed, womb-like


Museum of Modern Art, New York





Left **Because they reach up from the earth to the sky, mountains frequently symbolize the ascent from the earthly plane to the spiritual. Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai, the Greek gods lived on Mount Olympus, and many other peoples have located their gods on mountain-tops. El Greco's painting of Mount Sinai, with the monastery of St Catherine at the foot, brings out the eerie quality of the mountain peak as the home of the divine, and mountains often have a sinister aspect in symbolism** ***Right*** **Another place in which to find God is the desert or wilderness, which is outside the normal world of human and animal life. An altarpiece by Grünewald, showing St Anthony with St Paul the Hermit, who lived in the Egyptian desert, where he was fed by a raven**

Scala

Giraudon/Librairie Flammarion

spaces (a walled city, a courtyard or square, a castle, a cave or den, a church, an arbour or bower) is frequently a symbol of the feminine, and especially of the mother. In the mother's womb new life is created and in the paradise garden of symbolism there is often the secret of life itself – the fountain of life, the Tree of Life in Eden, the golden apples of immortality in the garden of the Hesperides at the world's end (see APPLE).

In the later Middle Ages the *hortus conclusus*, the enclosed garden which shelters the Virgin Mary, the second Eve, and the baby Jesus, the second Adam, became a favourite theme of painting and 'enclosed garden' was one of the stock epithets of the Virgin. Eithne Wilkins explains that: 'The *hortus conclusus* connects both the source and the goal. The garden is the virginal matrix in which the Saviour is conceived. . . It is also the Paradise into which the Saviour draws the soul. The Virgin Mary, as the second Eve, transforms the original garden of Paradise, from which the human race was driven out, and she does so by containing it within herself.'

> A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
> Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choice fruits . . .
> A garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon.

This double allusion (in the Song of Solomon, chapter 4) to the virginity of the locked garden and the sealed fountain, but also to the exuberant fecundity of the orchard and the well, caused Christians to take the passage as a reference to Mary, who was both virgin and the mother of God. A 12th century hymn salutes her as 'Sancta Maria, closed gate, opened at God's command – sealed fountain, locked garden, gate of Paradise.'

Because wild Nature is subdued and controlled in a garden, in modern psychological interpretations a garden is often taken to be a symbol of the conscious mind, as opposed to the forest, which stands for the dark, tangled, rooted growths of the unconscious. Forests do in fact tend to play an uncanny and ominous role in literature and art.

Lush fields and meadows may be symbols of fertility, of infinite space, and of the

A Landscape of Desolation

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms –
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof – to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful! all along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded, – good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!
– It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage –

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

And more than that – a furlong on – why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel – that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk?

Robert Browning *'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came'*

immortal life of heaven – the 'green pastures', or the Elysian Fields of Greek mythology. In Fra Angelico's *Last Judgement* (see CAROLE: DUALISM) the angels dance among grasses and reeds, trees and blossoms. In Jan van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb* (see EASTER) there is a rich and flowery meadow, and the fountain of life. In the background of both pictures is the city of heaven itself.

The Celestial City

'God the first garden made, and the first city Cain' (the reference is to Genesis 4.17), and the longing to escape from the crowded turbulence of the town to the immemorial peace of the countryside is expressed in many landscape paintings. But the city also has a powerful positive symbolic role in the idea of heaven as a city, the Celestial City of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* which stood upon a mighty hill, with its foundation higher than the clouds. This is the new Jerusalem of the book of Revelation: 'And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God is with men"' (chapter 21).

C. G. Jung believed that the city is primarily a maternal symbol, 'a woman who harbours the inhabitants in herself like children', and pointed out that cities are frequently spoken of as women in the Bible. In Galatians (4.26) St Paul says that 'the Jerusalem above . . . is our mother' and Revelation itself describes Babylon the great (Rome) as a harlot and the new Jerusalem as the bride of the Lamb. There is an interesting contrast between the earthly paradise of Eden, which is mainly vegetable in composition, and the celestial city which is mainly mineral. The wall of the new Jerusalem of Revelation is built of jasper, its foundations are adorned with jewels, its gates are pearls and its street is gold (see also JERUSALEM; REVELATION).

One More River

Rivers, fountains and wells share the general symbolism of water as the source of life, and the endless flow of a river may signify the flow of birth-death-rebirth, of things eternally ceasing to be and coming into being. A river may mean fertility because it irrigates the soil, or it may be the ever-rolling stream of Time which bears all its sons away to death and oblivion, or there are the black and burning rivers of hell which are currents of destruction and torment. To descend a river from its source to the sea may be symbolic of the merging of a single life in the One, the greater whole of which all things are part. To ascend a river to its source is equally to return to the One, the fount and origin of all things.

A winding stream is a symbol of the tortuous course of human life. To cross a river is to pass the barrier which separates two realms, two states of mind or spiritual conditions. In *Pilgrim's Progress*, for example, the river of death is the last obstacle which the pilgrim must negotiate to reach the heavenly city.

Some individual rivers are either themselves divine, like the Ganges in Hindu belief (see GANGES), or have some important supernatural significance, like the Jordan which separates the wilderness (life in this world) from the land flowing with milk and honey, the Promised Land (heaven). To cross Jordan in many hymns and spirituals, is to cross the river of death and attain the life of the world to come.

Similarly, a ford can symbolize the passage from one realm to another and in legends is quite often a place of combat, representing the difficulty of the crossing. Jacob wrestled with God at the ford of the Jabbok (Genesis, chapter 32) and was given the new name of Israel, as a mark of his new spiritual condition and as a sign that God would favour him and his descendants. There are many combats at fords in the Arthurian legends. In the *Lancelot* of Chrétien de Troyes, for instance, the hero has to overcome the guardian of a ford to cross into the enchanted country to which Guinevere has been taken (see LANCELOT).

Lakes are mysterious, and frequently sinister because the water or life-current in them is still instead of flowing – 'the sedge has withered from the Lake, and no birds sing' in Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. Deep in the water of a lake there may be a magic palace of diamond and crystal, of shimmering jewels, the home of fairies, nymphs, seductive and dangerous enchantresses. This palace can be interpreted as an illusory paradise, which shatters at the touch of reality as the images on the surface of the water waver and break on contact with anything solid, and it can stand for the inspired but illusory creations of the imagination.

Valley of the Shadow

Mountains and hills have an extremely varied symbolism, illustrated by the Delectable Mountains, the Hill Difficulty, Mount Caution and the Mountain of Error in *Pilgrim's Progress* (which is packed with landscape symbols – the Slough of Despond, the Valley of Humiliation, the town named Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle and many others). A range of barren, jagged, towering mountains suggests primitiveness, difficulty and danger, spiritual sterility or positive evil – as in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, where the sinister land of Mordor is walled by black and savage peaks. The names given in modern times to some peaks and ranges in the American West – Funeral Peak in Death Valley, for instance, or Skull Mountain in Nevada, or the aptly named Superstition Mountains of Arizona – illustrate the uncanny and ominous quality of mountain scenery.

But mountains are also beautiful and uplifting to the spirit, emblems of the stable and eternal, and because they reach up from earth towards the sky are symbols of the ascent from the earthly plane to the spiritual. St John of the Cross described the way of the mystic as the climbing of a mountain. The Celestial City usually stands on a mountain top. It was on Mount Sinai that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. The Greek gods lived on Mount Olympus, the Canaanites worshipped their deities in the 'high places' on the hills, and the gods of many other peoples have been located on mountain-tops.

By contrast, the valley is a place where human, animal and plant life flourishes with comparative ease and so it may be a symbol of fertility and of the created world in all its richness. But valleys are also low-lying, at the opposite pole from the mountain summits of the gods, and so they may be evil and ominous. We live in a 'vale of tears' and our journey will bring us to 'the valley of the shadow of death'. A narrow defile or gorge may mean danger, because of its military significance, the home of the forces of evil, the depths of the unconscious mind.

Prado Madrid

***Charon's Boat*, by Joachim Patinir: a river can symbolize the barrier which separates two different spiritual realms, and in classical belief the souls of the dead had to be rowed across the river of the underworld by the grim ferryman Charon. Similarly, in many Christian hymns and spirituals, the River Jordan must be crossed to attain the life to come**

Caves, like other enclosures, sometimes stand for the womb of the mother. The cave was a secure shelter for the earliest human beings and in Jungian theory a cave is primarily a symbol of the security and impregnability of the unconscious. Like all deep and dark places, caves suggest mysteries, shadows and terrors. The dragon guards the treasure-hoard in a cavern deep in the heart of a mountain. The White Demon lives in a mountain cave, where the hero Rustem slays him (see EVIL). Milton's 'loathed Melancholy' was 'born, in Stygian cave forlorn, 'mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy'. The cave is both grave and womb, the place of death and rebirth, where enchanted sleepers wait to return to the world.

The Landscape of Woman

The idea of Mother Earth expresses the parallel between landscape and woman. Caves, valleys, clefts and chasms, hills, groves, woods and thickets have obvious symbolic connections with the human, especially the female, body and with love-making. The dream-scenery of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* includes 'that deep romantic chasm which slanted down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover! A savage place, as holy and enchanted as e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted by woman wailing for her demon lover!'

Among many other examples, a more recent one comes from Ross Macdonald's novel *The Three Roads*. 'Her kisses were the fulfilment of a promise too sweet to be believed, like a springtime in midwinter. Somewhere inside him the ice went out with a rush. The black night flowed like a river toward the delectable mountains, through a narrow, desperate gorge, into a warm valley . . .'

The Great Rock

The castle, standing on a hill or in a forest, battlemented and moated, hard to reach and dangerous to penetrate, is another place set apart from the normal world. In it some great and perilous secret may be guarded, like the Grail, or the sleeping beauty, or the prince who is under an enchantment. The castle is the otherworld and there are many medieval stories of a dark castle, ruled by a king or lord who takes prisoner all those who enter his land.

The tower may stand for strength, watchfulness and the ascent to the spiritual plane. It is sometimes a phallic symbol, because of its shape, but in Christian art and literature an enclosed tower is another emblem of the virginity of Mary. The Tower of Babel also stands for ascent but in the sense of the folly of human beings who try to grasp power which is beyond them, who reach unavailingly for the skies, and in Breughel's *Tower of Babel* (see BREUGHEL) the massive and crumbling edifice of ambition is contrasted with the peaceful scenery of ordinary human life.

Ruins are among the most evocative of landscape symbols. They convey a sense of beliefs, ideas or lives destroyed by the passage of time, monuments brought low, the futility and yet the grandeur of human achievement. A rock, on the other hand, stands for the solid, the permanent, the unyielding, and is a symbol of the presence of God and of spiritual support and comfort. When water miraculously flowed from a rock during the Israelites' passage through the wilderness, it was a sign that God was with them (Exodus, chapter 17). And Isaiah (chapter 32) says of the coming king who will reign in righteousness and the princes who will rule in justice: 'Each will be like a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.'

(See also BRIDGE; CAVE; FOUNTAIN; MOUNTAIN; PATHS; WILDWOOD.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (Philosophical Library, 1972, 2nd ed.); K. Clark, *Landscape into Art* (Beacon Press, 1961); C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton University Press, 2nd ed. 1967); E. Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game* (Herder and Herder, 1969); J. Chevalier, *Dictiannaire des Symboles* (French and European Publications, 1973).

Brompton Studio

Daily Telegraph Colour Library

Brompton Studio

The Lapp's reputation as sorcerers was partly derived from the *History of the Northern Peoples*, published in 1555, in which Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Uppsala, described the magical practices of these people of the far north *Above* Two illustrations from the book show (*left*) a reindeer hunt on skis and (*above*) a reindeer impaled by a spear *Left* The reindeer were sacrificial animals, their blood being smeared on sacred objects and used for medicinal purposes; they were sometimes buried alive with their antlers protruding above the ground

Stallo, the stupid giant of Lapp legend, may reflect the Lapps' opinion of their dominating neighbours. Among this small, hardy race, spread across the far north of Europe from Russia to the Atlantic coast, pagan practices survived alongside Christianity until well into the 19th century

LAPLAND

EUROPE was first startled by accounts of Lapland witches in 1555, when Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Uppsala, published his *History of the Northern Peoples*. Some years later an Englishman, Giles Fletcher, remarked after visiting Russian Lapland: 'For practice of witchcraft and sorcery, they pass all nations of the world.' The poet Milton referred to them in *Paradise Lost* (book 2) to colour his description of hell:

> . . . the night-hag, when, called
> In secret, riding through the air she comes,
> Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
> With Lapland witches, while the labouring moon
> Eclipses at their charms.

The ancient Norwegians, believing that the Lapps were skilled in sorcery, were in the habit of visiting them secretly to learn their art: indeed their medieval kings were obliged to prohibit journeys to Finnmark for the purpose. (Finnmark is the most northerly province of Norway, where many Lapps live.) After the appearance of Magnus's work, rumours began to spread that Swedish military victories resulted from Lapp sorcery. This greatly offended the Swedes and perhaps helped to provide the impetus which, more than a century later, was to launch an officially commissioned programme of research into Lapp culture and traditions.

Today we would probably not use the word witchcraft to describe the Lapp religion; but it accurately reflects the attitude of the period, when pagan cults and sorcery were held to be synonymous. The Lapps were extensively converted towards the end of the 17th century, and the change from pagan to Christian belief is reflected in certain of their legends, telling of people killed or otherwise visited with disaster through laughing at the planets or the powers of Nature.

The Shaman's Magic Drum

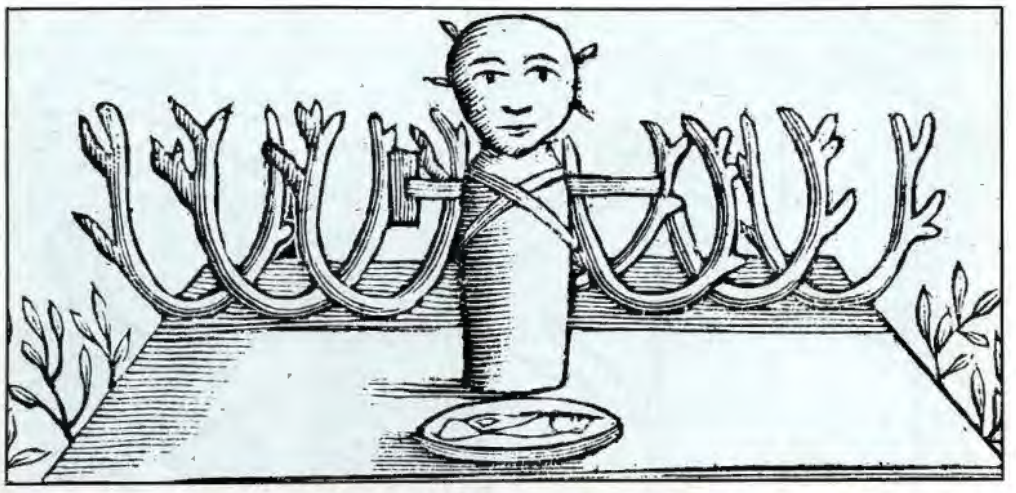
Perhaps the most striking Lappish cult – certainly the best known – was what we call shamanism (see SHAMAN). The *noaide* or shaman acted as an intermediary between the world of man and the supernatural. With the assistance of his magic drum (see DRUM), he fell into a trance and it was then supposed that his spirit left his body and journeyed to the otherworld. The shaman – who might strengthen himself for the ordeal with a concoction of seal oil, and the heads, bones and intestines of fish – produced this state of ecstasy by beating his drum and singing magical songs known as *yoik*. This drum was the chief cult instrument in pagan times and every family possessed one. By the 19th century it had virtually disappeared but a number of examples are preserved in Scandinavian museums.

The shaman's drum was regarded essentially as a magical object rather than a musical instrument; certain rules governed its manufacture. It had to be fashioned from the wood of a fir, pine or birch which had grown by itself in a remote spot, where the sun's rays could not shine on it; additionally, the stem of the tree had to be twisted in a clockwise direction. Its reindeer skin membrane was elaborately decorated with figures of gods and men, spirit animals, and scenes and objects from Nature, all painted with the juice of alder bark, which becomes blood-red when chewed.

The underside of the drum was often hung with brass devices and magic bones or animal parts suspended from leather straps, such as the penis of a bear, its teeth and claws. These objects greatly

increased the magic powers of the drum because to the Lapps, as to many Arctic peoples, the bear was a sacred creature (see BEAR). Large, dangerous and chief game animal, its mysterious winter sleep inspired awe. So did the habit of occasionally walking on two legs, like a human being, which gave rise to ideas that the bear must be semi-human. The shaman was imagined to assume the form of certain animals, of which the bear was one.

Carl Linnaeus, the distinguished 18th century Swedish naturalist, was told of a magic technique for bear-catching. Fresh warm bear dung is mixed with that from a cow. The bear will then follow the cow, attracted by the power of sympathy.



Ritual Bear Hunt

Lapps called the bear by special names – Grandfather, Woolly One, Old Forest Apples, Honey Paws – and the ritual of hunting it involved certain ceremonies. In March or April, when the hibernation period ended, a group of men walked in procession to the creature's den; their leader carried a staff with a brass ring attached. There they planted spears, at such an angle that the bear would impale itself when it came rushing out. The hunters then begged the dead animal's pardon and whipped its body with twigs. When they returned home, the women first looked at them through a ring of brass, with one eye only, and spat red alder juice into their faces.

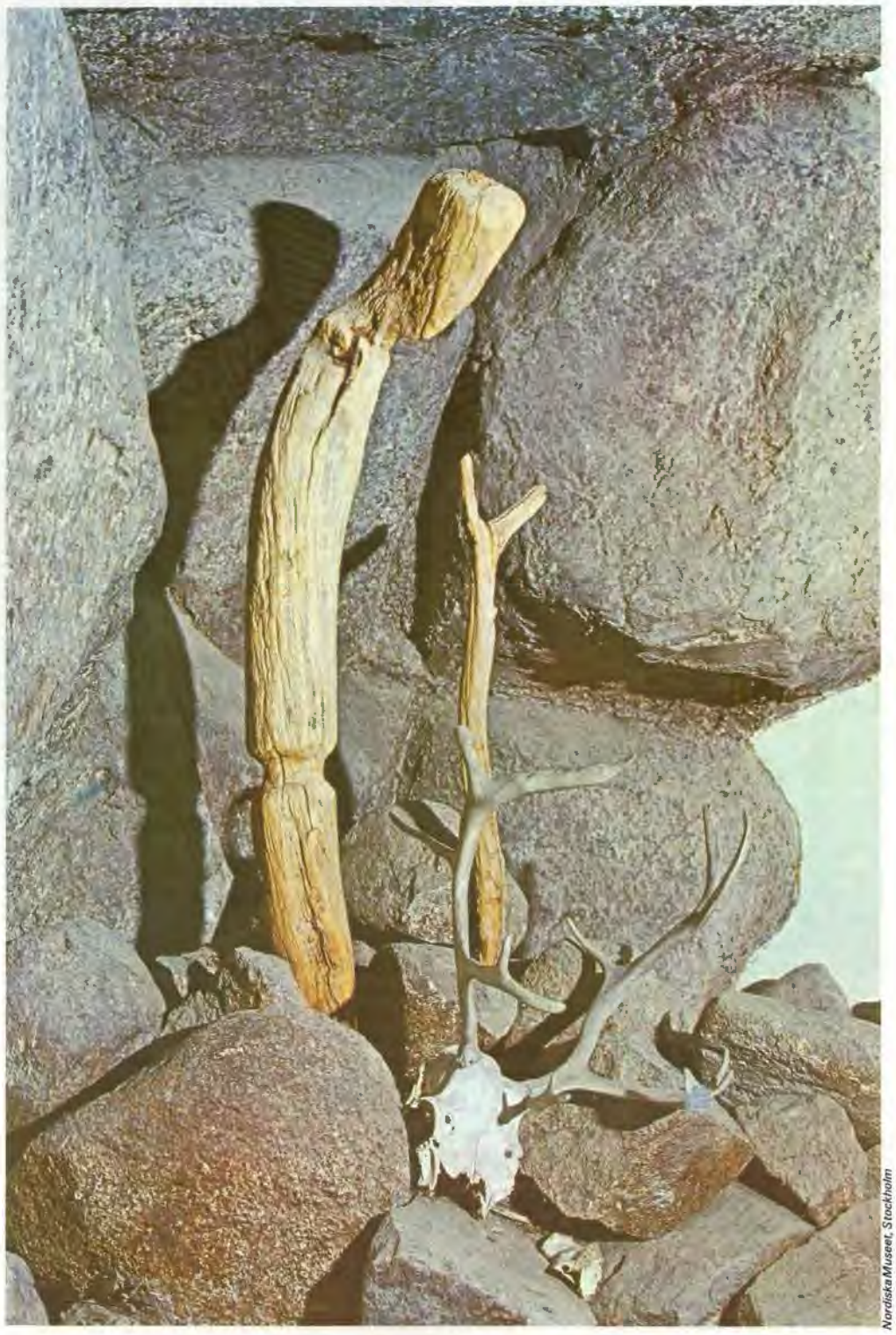
Cooking the meat was a task reserved for men. Women, who absented themselves while this was done, were only allowed to eat certain portions; these were cooked in a separate pot and handed out on wooden sticks. The bones, which might on no account be broken, were set aside and buried so that one day a new bear would arise.

When the meat from a kill was nearly gone, a solemn feast was held and every last morsel had to be consumed. The hide was then propped up like a target and the women shot at it with bows and arrows, blindfold. The husband of whoever scored a hit was reckoned to be the next to kill a bear. Every woman was careful not to travel on the sledge which had borne the bear's carcass until a year was up. Anyone who did would run the risk of becoming sterile.

Men who took part in the hunt were usually not permitted to cohabit with their wives for three full days; five in the case of the man who had slain the bear. In some places, when the last feast was over, one man seized the iron chain hanging over the fire, circled the fireplace several times and ran out of the door. The women threw ashes after him, a signal that cohabitation might start again.

Healing Blood

Certain parts of the dead bear were saved for medicinal use: the grease as an antidote to gout, the gall against heart disease, and milk poured three times through the animal's bronchial tube as a tonic for ailing children. But it was the blood in particular which was supposed to be strongly potent. Indeed the Lapps were in the habit of drinking blood, and not necessarily that of the



Nordiska Museet, Stockholm

Left **A crude image of the god Thermes – the Lapp equivalent of the old Scandinavian god Thor – incorporates his sacred hammer and the horns of reindeer. Birch and pine twigs are strewn along the approach to the simple altar** ***Below left*** **A Lapp seide or idol was usually a curiously shaped stone or piece of wood. This reconstruction in Nordiska Museum, Stockholm, of a Lapp place of sacrifice includes the forked stick on which sacrificial gifts were hung, and the skull of a reindeer** ***Below*** **A shaman, the Lapp community's leader in religious matters, lies in a trance, his magic drum on his back; it was believed that on these occasions his spirit left his body and visited the otherworld. The shaman's drum, which helped him to achieve a state of ecstasy, was a vital part of his equipment and elaborate rules governed its manufacture**

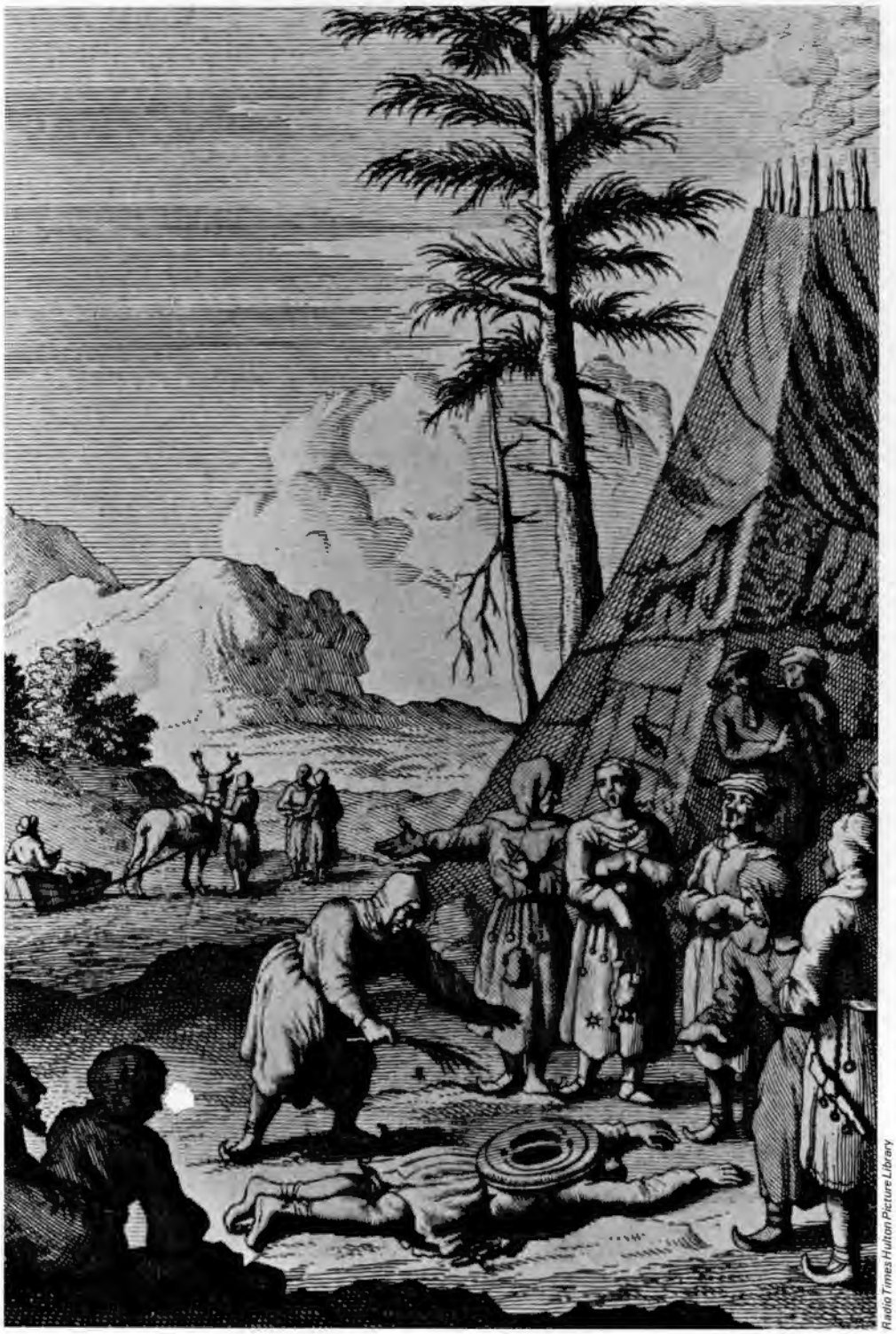
bear, to heal various complaints. In 1732 Linnaeus wrote in his diary:

> Lying-in women at this place are accustomed to drink brandy seasoned with pepper, partly for the sake of its intoxicating quality, by way of a narcotic, and partly to bring on the labour pains. The clergyman's wife told me an infallible method, as she said, to prevent the pains which often follow childbirth. When the woman's first child is born, and the umbilical cord divided, a spoonful of the blood is given her to swallow. This is to be practised at every succeeding labour, and I was assured that each would be rendered more easy, without any after pains.

Puerperal fever was cured by securing a plump female reindeer and stabbing the chest: the blood which came spurting out was consumed by the patient, as much as possible, to the extent of several cupfuls. Reindeer blood and other portions of the animal's body were also preserved and used. Linnaeus says:

> The animal being secured with a halter, the Laplander takes his spear and sticks it into the thorax behind the shoulder, so as to pierce the heart. By this means the blood collects in the cavity of the thorax, none of it appearing externally. After the skin is flayed off, the blood is found coagulated in the thorax, from whence it is extracted, and bruised into a soft mass. With this the poorer sort of people make a kind of soup by boiling along with it the brains of the animal, which the rich do not eat. The testicles are never eaten by any sort of people. The penis serves to make a thong to draw the sledges.

This making use of whatever is to hand characterizes the ingenuity of these people, struggling to survive in one of the world's most inhospitable regions. A Lapp Creation myth tells how, in the beginning, two brothers were created. When the first fall of snow arrived, one brother hid in a cave. The other remained outside and survived: he was the ancestor of the Lapps.



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Stallo Legends

A people without a country of their own, the Lapps are spread across a vast area which stretches from the Atlantic shores of Norway to the Kola peninsula in the Soviet Union: they extend across the territories of four countries – Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. This political dependence, and the inevitable problems which it has created, are possibly reflected to some extent in the traditional cycle of *Stallo* legends.

These stories, which are sometimes 'acted', are about a stupid man-eating giant who is always outwitted, and may contain memories of fights against hostile neighbouring peoples; for the Lapps are not a tall race, and seldom exceed five feet in height. Some scholars see in Stallo recollections of an alien tax collector. At the beginning of the 19th century, in western Finnmark, small groups of young men used to call at the houses, demanding 'the king's tax', and among these Stallo was always represented by the tallest youth. Dressed in rags, he prodded the girls in each house with a phallus made of wood and asked for payment of the tax;

Once, so it is said, Stallo forced a Lapp girl to marry his son. When it was time for the wedding feast, the bride contrived to tip the cooking pot over the groom, in such a way that his stomach and genitals were completely destroyed. Another story centres round a curious item of material culture. The Lapps thought it very unhealthy to drink water straight from a well, so they made special drinking tubes from the shin-bone of a bird. Stallo's wife had an iron tube which she used for drinking blood. One day a Lapp tricked Stallo into coming out on a frozen river, where he struck him down through a gap in the ice. The giant's wife fetched her drinking tube to come to the rescue, but failed to notice that the Lapp

women had secretly put it on the fire. When she tried to suck it, the blazing coals went into her mouth and she burnt to death, while her husband froze in the icy river.

Stallo and his wife, Lutakis the Treacherous, were specially active on Christmas Eve, and they ate up any children who passed their way at that time of the year. The dreaded *joulo-gadze*, or Christmas Spirits, were also about and the Lapps put steel or flint in the water source to prevent them urinating in it. Offerings of miniature boats, smeared with reindeer blood, were made to them.

A propitiatory sacrifice was also made to the *akkas*, spirits who dwell beneath the threshold, fireplace and cowbyre, in the form of brandy poured out on the ground. These spirits are offended by noise late at night, and the alcohol was intended as an atonement. It was also to induce their aid in childbirth, and after the successful arrival of a baby Lapp women put out meat and cheese by way of thanksgiving. Brandy was evidently regarded with a certain respect. Linnaeus says:

> After they have laid hold of the mug, they dip their forefingers into the liquor and rub a little on their foreheads, as well as on the middle of their bosoms. On enquiring the reason, I was told their intention was that the brandy might not prove hurtful either to the head or the breast.

Another interesting food ritual was the eating of sun-porridge on Midsummer Eve. *Jubtse*, as it was called, was a mixture of flour, milk and butter, eaten by men and women in honour of the sun. First they would kneel and ask the sun to shine benignly on their reindeer herds and the food supply. Then the porridge was consumed and the kneeling ceremony repeated. This magic ritual was evidently intended to promote the strength of the sun at the time of year when it is at its highest point in the sky.

Idols and Holy Places

Lapps worshipped the forces of Nature. They also believed that inanimate objects possessed supernatural power. A *seide* (idol) was, generally speaking, a curiously shaped stone or piece of wood, which the worshipper cushioned on a bed of twigs and surrounded with a semicircle of reindeer antlers. It was offered sacrifices to ensure good luck in hunting and fishing.

These idols often occur in the vicinity of a *saiva* (sacred) lake or mountain. Indeed scholars have found it difficult to say whether the seide is to be regarded as an image of the local divinity or simply as his dwelling, it being the most important object within the sacred area. In Lapp belief saiva lakes are double-bottomed, and a small hole links the two levels so that, if they wish, the fish can easily avoid the fisherman's rod. If this happened, it meant that the spirit of the waters was displeased.

When a Lapp was going to offer a sacrifice, he wore his best clothes and a head-covering. Since it was expressly forbidden to make a noise near holy places, he refrained from saying anything. No Lapp would live in such a neighbourhood, nor even spend one night in the vicinity; hunting in the locality was also taboo. Departure for the sacrifice was through a special door at the back of the dwelling; women were not permitted to use it, nor might they take part in the ritual. They could not go into the holy area, nor could they touch a magic drum, or even look at one. If a woman happened to pass along the same route as a drum, a sacrifice had to be offered by way of atonement and the drum itself was given a piece of silver.

Seidis, like certain other cult objects, were customarily smeared with the blood and grease of a bear or reindeer, and pieces of the slaughtered animal were suspended in the nearby trees, especially the heart and lungs. As sacrificial animals, reindeer sometimes suffered live burial, with their antlers showing above the ground.

Christian missionaries first went among the Lapps in the 13th century. But as late as the early 1900s it is recorded that a Lapp fisherman, disappointed with his catch, struck out at the local idol with his oar and knocked its head off – an interesting case of missionary activity subverting belief in the local divinity, without destroying it.

(See also FINLAND.)

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: Roberto Bosi, *The Lapps* (Thames & Hudson, 1962); Ernst Manker, *People of Eight Seasons* (C. A. Watts, 1965).

They could be found in every Roman household, in field shrines, at busy crossroads and in state temples. By an astute political move the homely and ubiquitous Lares were associated with a new cult – that of the emperor himself

LARES

AS TUTELARY DEITIES the Lares usually protected a given place which supplied them with their distinguishing epithet. Far and away the most frequent, if not oldest, manifestation is met within the household *(familia)*, where the single Lar Familiaris (Household Lar) received regular monthly offerings of garlands on the hearth as well as daily observance at mealtimes. This Lar protected the household and its wealth, no matter how small, and was invoked on important family occasions: sometimes he also gave oracular signs to the householder. The Lar in fact came to symbolize the home.

In the oldest fully surviving Latin prayer, however, the Lares, together with Mars and certain 'seed gods', are invoked by the Arval Brothers (an ancient Roman college of priests) at the boundaries of the cultivated land *(arvum)*. Where two fields joined, the Lar of each boundary line was honoured by the farmer and his slaves; both the convergence of boundaries and its marker were called *compita*. The compital shrine was a small tower with niches for every Lar thought to be present; here the Lares Compitales were found. Because the boundaries of property were usually marked by a path or a road, the Lares Compitales are best known from worship at rural crossroads and busy urban intersections. Sometimes they were the only or chief deities at country junctions where a hamlet comprised a few huts. At a normal junction, made by two roads, two Lares would be jointly worshipped; the practice became established, so that no matter how many lines converged, only two Lares were thought present. Even the Lar Familiaris was depicted in duplicate, although each household had only one Lar. The Lares Semitales were venerated for their protection of paths *(semitae)* and the Viales for their protection of highways *(viae)*.

The great annual festival of the Lares was the movable feast of Compitalia, which fell soon after the winter solstice. Like other winter festivals Compitalia called for artificial light, and the liturgical use of candles first appears here. Indeed, not a few aspects of Compitalia became an integral part of the Western Christmastide. The Lares' victim was the pig, which remained traditional Christmas fare until challenged by fowls.

Very early the Lares enjoyed the veneration of the humble and came to be the most important gods of society's lowest stratum, slaves and freedmen. Such people were of alien extraction, and the Lares exercised a strong force in their assimilation into Roman society. Slaves and freedmen especially observed Compitalia, for it was one of the few state cults to which all persons were admitted, regardless of condition. Much merrymaking accompanied performances of crude, extemporaneous farces. As early as the 5th century BC the Roman government expressed concern over the intrusion of foreign rites at the urban compita. It is highly likely that the first importation of foreign drama was by foreign slaves and freedmen into the winter festival.

Imperial Takeover

Rome and her colonies were officially divided into neighbourhoods *(vici)*, and the countryside into villages (also *vici*), to which belonged a public cult of Lares Vicinales or Compitales. Because the greater population often consisted of slaves and freedmen, the freedmen mayors and slave attendants of each neighbourhood and village supervised regular worship. Shortly after 12 BC, Augustus Caesar converted this cult into the worship of the Lares Augusti, Lares of 'increase' associated with the worship of his *genius*, his personal 'procreative force' (see GUARDIAN SPIRITS). Every householder's genius had been propitiated beside his Lar Familiaris; in this way Augustus successfully adapted a long established cult to the new Imperial religion without imposing his direct worship in Italy (though outside Italy he was directly worshipped). On compital altars portraits and symbols honoured the

emperor and his family; sometimes Augustus donated statues of neighbourhood gods, who acquired the epithet *Augustus*. In the months of May and August the altars were strewn with flowers on his behalf.

At many Roman intersections the Lares' marble altars stood before a small temple housing statues of two Lares and a genius. At most compita in Italy stood a simple altar of stuccoed brick, built against a wall on which were painted the three figures. Lares were represented as Greeks wearing tunics and holding a wine bucket and Greek goblet; usually they appeared to dance while their faces betrayed tipsiness. In contrast, a Roman toga clothed the genius, who held a sacrificial saucer and cornucopia.

Grunting Gods

Lares rarely enjoyed grand worship in state temples. Among the exceptions were the Lares Praestites, 'protectors' of the Roman people. The 'grunting' Lares Grundules, called after the pig victim, numbered 30 and probably protected the 30 civil divisions. The title 'Lar' could also be applied to other gods, such as Silvanus, lord of the forest. Aeneas, the legendary Trojan ancestor of the Roman people, is addressed as a Lar on a dedication of around 300 BC. This designation very probably reflects the custom of adding the appellation Lar to foreign deities or heroes after their cult had been appropriated by slaves and freedmen: Orpheus, for instance, was venerated as a Lar.

The Lares' cult affected a remarkable social change by admitting the slave or ex-slave, now a citizen, to the native religion and giving him a public task. In 214 BC Philip V, Macedon's last great king and Rome's adversary, declared the worth of Roman practice in bestowing minor public office on freedmen. The Italians of southern Italy even imported the Roman cult of the Lares onto Delos, their island mercantile centre in the eastern Mediterranean. By the end of the 2nd century, Greek and oriental slaves of Italian and Neapolitan Greek traders had formed societies of *Kompetaliastai* on Delos.

An inestimable contribution to the growth of Roman culture was made through the development of theatre beyond the urban intersection, while universal participation in compital worship worked towards the assimilation of foreigners. The Lares Augusti marked the first stage of the Imperial cult and continued to thrive till the time of the Christian emperors. But such was the tenacity of this pagan domestic cult that vestiges still linger with us on 25 December and New Year's Day.
(See also ROME.)

Friends of Man

The Calends of May witnessed the foundation of an altar to the Guardian Lares, together with small images of the gods . . . The reason for the epithet applied to them is that they guard all things by their eyes. They also stand for us, and preside over the city walls, and they are present and bring us aid. But a dog, carved out of the same stone, used to stand before their feet. What was the reason for its standing with the Lar? Both guard the house: both are faithful to their master: cross-roads are dear to the god, cross-roads are dear to dogs . . . wakeful are the Lares, and wakeful too are dogs.

Ovid *Fasti* trans J. G. Frazer

Scala

Two Lares, depicted as young men wearing short tunics and holding wine buckets and goblets, are painted in dancing posture on either side of a genius, or guardian spirit, dressed in a Roman toga; this shrine is typical of the altars which stood at many Italian boundaries and crossroads. Lares, who were usually shown in duplicate, were particularly venerated by the lower classes of Roman society

Bodleian Library

Last Judgement

In Christian tradition, the final reckoning on the Last Day or Day of Wrath, when the Last Trump sounds and the dead rise from their graves to be judged and consigned to heaven or hell: distinguished from the 'particular' judgement immediately after death: in Judaism the Day of Yahweh, when God would punish the oppressors of his people, became a Last Judgement at the end of the world.
See JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.

C. M. Dixon

Last Supper

The last meal which Jesus ate with his disciples before his betrayal, arrest and execution; the earliest surviving account of it is in St Paul (1 Corinthians, chapter 11); it is commemorated or re-enacted in the ceremony variously called the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Eucharist or Mass.
See MASS.

Mansell Collection

According to a Greek myth, the nymph Daphne, fleeing from the amorous god Apollo, called for help and was transformed into a laurel tree. Apollo covered his head with the leaves and decreed that the tree should be sacred to him

Poets, military heroes and Olympic victors all sought the crown of laurel as the highest honour. Sacred to Apollo, the laurel or bay was also associated with oracular powers

LAUREL

THE BAY, *Laurus nobilis*, is the laurel of mythology, not the cherry laurel, *Prunus laurocerasus*, nor the Alexandrian laurel, *Ruscus racemosus*, with which Paris was once crowned. The Greeks, however, call it Daphne in colloquial speech (although botanically the genus *Daphne* is entirely distinct), recalling the myth in which the unwilling nymph of that name, daughter of the river god Peneus, was amorously pursued by Apollo (see APOLLO); she called for help and was transformed into a laurel tree. Apollo, his ardour cooled, crowned his head with the leaves and decreed that the tree should be evergreen and be held sacred to him.

Apollo's prophetess at Delphi probably chewed laurel leaves and inhaled their smoke from a fire to reach a state of inspiration. Many other oracles, including the one at Dodona, made use of this stimulant. The prophetess was concealed from sight by a barrier of laurel, and those asking her advice were supposed to wear a laurel wreath. Later it was considered sufficient for a prophet to hold a laurel bough to foretell the future; another belief was that a laurel leaf under the pillow would enable the sleeper to foretell the future in dreams. Sprays might be burnt during incantations, and omens could be established from the way the leaves crackled. The diarist John Evelyn (1620–1706), repeating these beliefs, added that laurel would also inspire 'poetical fury'.

The Greeks used the laurel wreath to honour poets, military heroes, priests, the victors in the Pythian and Olympian Games and certain high officials. Greek military heralds carried a branch of either laurel or olive, while the Athenian heralds used the Harvest Wreath or *eiresione*, a similar branch bound with wool to which fruits in season would be attached. This wreath was carried in the Harvest Festival procession and was eventually fixed over the farm door for the coming year as an augur of prosperity.

The Laurels of Victory

The sanctity of laurel was very important to the Romans. As J. G. Frazer tells us, records from Imperial times indicate that magistrates presiding over the games at the Circus, and generals celebrating victory, wore the costume of Jupiter as he appeared enshrined in his Capitol temple. Apart from the special robes and crown, the eagle-topped sceptre and the reddened face attributed to the god, they carried a laurel branch in one hand and a laurel wreath on the head, while the four horses pulling the chariot were likewise crowned with laurel.

Generals not only wore a laurel wreath on returning in triumph but would send the emperor their despatches announcing victory in a wrapping of laurel leaves; these despatches were called *literae laureatae*. The messenger also carried a branch of laurel, which was placed on the statue of Jupiter. After a victory not only the commander carried laurel but his soldiers also. It has been suggested that this was partly to show that they were sanctified in this way from the pollution of blood.

Young doctors in former times were crowned with a wreath of laurel in berry – *bacca lauri*. Baccalauréat, the name for a certificate in French, and bachelor, its corruption in English, are derived from this. The practice of presenting a laurel wreath continues in Swedish universities. From the word and its usage comes also, of course, Poet Laureate.

The association of bay with medicine comes from antique times, when physicians regarded it as a panacea and statues of the healing god Asclepios would be laurel-wreathed. The supposed clinical efficacy of laurel can be judged by the advice of the Emperor Claudius's doctors to move the court, during a pestilence in Rome, to Laurentum, capital of Latium, where great numbers of bay trees grew.

Bay was widely regarded as protective

against lightning, and it is recorded how the Emperor Tiberius, who was terrified of storms, would place a laurel wreath on his head and hide under his bed when the thunder rolled. The Greeks believed that laurel was protective against spirits and spectres, and the saying 'I carry a laurel branch' showed that the speaker had fear of neither poison nor sorcery. The Greeks fixed laurel boughs over their doorways when anyone was ill, to keep away evil spirits. Theophrastus (c 370–288 BC) records how superstitious people kept a bay leaf in their mouths all the time, to protect them against ill fortune. Roman merchants would bless their goods with a laurel branch.

The belief that laurel protected against evil spirits and witches was widespread in more recent times. In some Christian areas a twig of bay would be thrown on the coffin at burial, as Sir Thomas Browne recorded in the 17th century; and bay was always a valuable ingredient of the evergreen Christmas decorations of church and home, as a couplet from John Brand's *Popular Antiquities* shows:

> Now with the bright holly all the temples strow,
> With laurel green, and sacred mistletoe.

Christmas dishes were often garnished with bay and John Aubrey tells us how, 'At ye feasts in the halls of the City of London the stewards do wear garlands of laurel.'

Two isolated, more recent beliefs are worth recording. One is the honouring of the magpie, once practised in France, by tying branches of laurel and heather to tree tops, because the birds gave such audible warnings of wolves. The other concerns the 'footling', a person born feet first who was believed to possess special gifts, notably that of healing. It was thought that a footling was prone to accidents which would make him lame, and to avert this the midwife would rub his legs and feet with laurel leaves shortly after birth.

To dream of laurel signifies, first of all, pleasure and victory. To an unmarried girl, it means marriage very soon; to a married woman, that she will soon have a child; to a married man, an inheritance through his wife. In the language of flowers laurel stands, appropriately enough, for glory.

J.K. LAVATER

CALVINIST DIVINE, poet, mystic and investigator of the supernatural, Johann Kaspar Lavater is now chiefly remembered for his work on physiognomy, or the judging of a person's character from his physical features. The 12th son of a doctor, he was born in Zurich in 1741. After being ordained in 1769, he marked the beginning of his career by denouncing the tyrannical bailiff of Gruningen. His confederate in this public-spirited enterprise was his schoolfellow, the future painter Henry Fuseli.

Lavater's interest in the supernatural was deep-rooted. In later life he remembered going as a child into the room where his brother lay dead of consumption, only to be driven out by a 'pale, shapeless phantom', which for long afterwards gave him a horror of being alone. During his whole career he remained fascinated by the apparently miraculous. In about 1771 he issued a circular asking for details of supernatural experiences and amassed a collection of case histories, much as more recent psychic researchers have done. His enemies accused him of credulity and of encouraging eccentric practices, like those of Catherine Kinderknecht, who cured a relation of Fuseli with prayers and a poultice of cabbage leaves. His verdict on the exorcism of the Catholic priest Gassner also earned him notoriety: for though he did not himself witness any of Gassner's cures he believed that the priest possessed a certain power 'which resides in all men, as the image of God . . . a magical power of the mind over the bodies and powers of the corporeal world . . .'

His beliefs brought Lavater into contact with most of the occult fashions of the day. He felt forced to accept the truth of Emanuel Swedenborg's revelations of the spirit world (see SWEDENBORG), although as a Christian he felt 'almost everything repulsive' about them. When the theories of Franz Mesmer (see MESMER) and other supporters of 'animal magnetism' came into vogue, Lavater carried out an investigation, experimenting on his wife. Accused of believing in imaginary cures, he replied that he preferred an imagination which made people well to a reality which left them ill.

But Lavater's chief claim to fame is as the author of the *Physiognomical Fragments* published in 1775–78, a European best-seller on the reading of character from the face, in which his friend and travelling companion Goethe probably had a hand. Physiognomy, said Lavater, is 'the science or knowledge of the correspondence between the external and internal man': for example, as anger makes the muscles stick out, an angry man's protuberant muscles provide a good indication of his temperament. (See PHRENOLOGY AND PHYSIOGNOMY.)

Lavater thought that physiognomy could be made as exact a science as any but mathematics and laid down more exact rules for the judging of character. The physically unfortunate might be thus summed up:

> Inanimate thoughtlessness will be universally perceived in this countenance. The experienced only will discover the peculiar vapidity of the mouth.

Or

> To be avoided: Large bulky persons, with small eyes; round, full, hanging cheeks, puffed lips and a chin resembling a purse or a bag; who are continually occupied with their own corpulence . . .

The physiognomist had himself to be well-proportioned: no one could be a judge of character who had 'a debased mind, an ill-formed forehead, a blinking eye, or a distorted mouth'. 'A strange theory of

aesthetics followed. 'The handsomest painters were the greatest painters. Rubens, Vandyke, and Raphael, possessing three gradations of beauty, possessed three gradations of the genius of painting.' To all objections that often one met with a talented or virtuous person who was physically ugly, Lavater replied that these were the exceptions that proved the rule. Even the study of animals reinforced his theory. 'The crocodile,' he remarked sagely, 'proves how very physiognomical teeth are.'

His own undoubted skill in reading character made him a legend in his own lifetime. Once, for example, after he had been introduced to a stranger, he observed privately, 'This is the face of a murderer'; several days later he discovered his new acquaintance was one of the assassins of the King of Sweden. Physiognomy could therefore be of great practical benefit to the man of the world. 'Three things appear to me to be indispensable to travellers,' he once wrote, 'health, money, and physiognomy.'

Lavater's unorthodox beliefs often caused trouble with the Church authorities, although he was always vindicated. He was visited by half the nobility of Europe, wrote a poem at the request of Queen Charlotte of England and sold his collection of physiognomical drawings to the Empress of Russia.

In 1799, when Zurich fell to Massena's Republican army, Lavater was shot and badly wounded by a French grenadier. He died as a result of his wounds in 1801.

The revival by Lavater of physiognomy may well have had violent repercussions. When later combined with the theories of evolution and survival of the fittest, it could be taken as providing proof of the superiority or otherwise of racial types. Lavater believed that he could tell a person's nationality from his face. 'Englishmen,' for example, 'have large, well-defined, beautifully curved lips.' It is not such a long step to the Nazi with his callipers measuring doubtfully 'Semitic' noses. In 1777 Lavater admitted to the Emperor Joseph II that he often became giddy at the thought of what the universal acceptance of physiognomy might do to mankind. 'But,' he added, 'it will produce no such changes.'

J. C. N. WEBB

WILLIAM LAW

THE BRITISH have always had a healthy mistrust of mysticism, believing it to 'begin in mist and end in *schism*' and it is therefore hardly surprising that we have produced no John of the Cross and no St Teresa. Yet there is an important English spiritual tradition which, in medieval times, reached its peak with Dame Julian of Norwich and Richard Rolle and in the 17th century in the Caroline divines. William Law comes at the end of this second period of distinctively English spirituality. He looks back to the men who made the Prayer Book and beyond them to the medieval mystics, but he also looks forward beyond the Anglicanism of the 18th century to the Catholic revival.

Law was born in 1686 at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire, where his father was a grocer. He was educated at Cambridge and in 1711 he was elected a fellow of his college – Emmanuel – and was ordained. When Queen Anne died in 1714 and the government failed to reinstate the Stuarts but instead brought the Hanoverian king, George I, to rule in Britain, William Law, like many others, refused to swear allegiance to the new king as he had espoused the Jacobite cause and supported the Stuart pretenders. This meant that he was expelled from his fellowship at Cambridge and was not allowed to take on a parish. He therefore did occasional service in London and acted as a sort of curate until 1727, when he became the tutor of the father of Gibbon, the great historian. Gibbon called him 'the much honoured friend and spiritual director of the whole family' and Law remained with them for ten years. This was a fairly typical arrangement for those clergy who could no longer hold parishes because they refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Hanoverians. The non-jurors were an influential set of people, largely comfortably off, who sympathized with, or actively fought for, the Stuarts and whose religion was often a traditional High Church Anglicanism. They took into their homes the clergy who had lost their positions because of their non-juring views and within these families grew up a simple and strict piety which is peculiarly English.

It was here, as a tutor, that Law began to influence the Wesleys, both of whom were friends of the Gibbons, and his influence upon Methodism and its direct, simple Christianity was profound. In 1740 Law returned to his family home at King's Cliffe and set up a household. He was joined by two of the people he had met while living with the Gibbon family, Mrs Hutcheson and Miss Hester Gibbon, and together they organized and ran two schools and some almshouses. They lived a life of simplicity and devotion until he died in 1761.

Law's great contribution was, of course, his writing, in which he excelled – both as a controversialist and as a mystic. As a non-juror he was naturally drawn into the fierce theological battles of his time. He joined with great spirit into the controversy between the non-jurors and the Bishop of Bangor, Dr Hoadly, who was an extreme latitudinarian, supporting the new Hanoverian monarchs and attacking any claim of the Church to divine authority. The High Church party was forced to reply to Hoadly's neutral views which denied the existence of the visible Church. The most effective pamphlet among the welter of charges and countercharges was that written by Law, 'Three letters to the Bishop of Bangor'.

Universal Appeal

Yet it is not for his controversial writing that Law is remembered but for his *Serious Call to the Devout Life*, and his other devotional and mystical writings. Although he led a practical life as a tutor and then looked after the old and the young, his real contribution was as the author of a simple and direct kind of spirituality. He was fundamentally influenced by St Thomas à Kempis and Jan van Ruysbroek, and brought into his books something of their spirit, but it was the vigorous writing, which also characterized his controversial works, which made the *Serious Call* so different. Law was concerned to express the value of a moral and ascetic Christian life, a life lived in simplicity and direct contact with God. The methods he counselled were the fundamental ones of meditation, good works and ascetic practices. He believed that temperance, humility and self-denial were the fundamental Christian virtues, through the practice of which man lives the life ordained of God. The *Serious Call* became a classic and had a more profound influence on the English Church than perhaps any other book, except Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It was not merely taken up by the Methodists and the Congregationalists but it was also one of the serious influences upon the Evangelicals in the Church of England, who reacted against the lifeless conformity of the 18th century Church.

More than this, the *Serious Call to the Devout Life* was one of the most precious for the Tractarian leaders – Cardinal Newman and Richard Hurrell Froude. Newman says in his *Apologia*, 'the main Catholic doctrine of the warfare between the city of God and the powers of darkness was also deeply impressed upon my mind by Law's *Serious Call*', and Froude chides one of his friends for calling this 'a pretty book' by saying it was just like referring to the battle of Armageddon as 'a pretty sight'! It is this universality of appeal to both Catholics and Evangelicals that is the remarkable fact about the *Serious Call*. It is indeed remarkably direct and well written, and obviously had a profound effect on the minds of some of the greatest of Church leaders. It does, however, lack any real sense of the community of Christians.

Despite the fact that Law had High Church views about the Church as a divine institution, he makes no real mention of the Church's year or its services as aids to the Christian life. This was, of course, partly because Law was a non-juror and was therefore excluded from much of the life of the Church. Nevertheless, this tendency towards individual ascetic religion became more and more pronounced, particularly after Law's reading of Boehme's works (see BOEHME). Law's later works were highly esoteric and postulated an individualist Christianity which had very little to do with life as it is normally lived.

Despite all this, the *Serious Call* remains one of the great classics of spirituality. Its influence was felt throughout the English Church and its effect on Cardinal Newman's thought must have contributed fundamentally to the Catholic movement in the Church of England and to the reform of Roman Catholicism which Newman began and which culminated in the second Vatican Council.

LEAD

THE DARKEST and heaviest of the seven metals corresponds to Saturn, the dimmest and slowest-moving of the seven planets, and to the colour black (see CORRESPONDENCES). As the outermost of the planets known in antiquity, Saturn was associated with the idea of limitation, with the setting of boundaries, and lead was used to bring its influence to bear.

Religious relics were often encased in lead caskets, to keep their sacred force within an effective boundary and prevent it from dissipating into the air. Similarly, a seal in the form of a lion was made from lead for the medieval Pope Boniface VIII to keep the pain of an operation for stone within bounds, the lion standing for courage and mastery.

Saturn was also the planet of death, with which both black and lead are also connected. In the ancient world a curse intended to kill or harm an enemy was written down, frequently on a piece of lead, and was either buried in the ground or placed in a tomb, the lead and the ground or the tomb carrying a current of death and evil (see CURSE).

A German grimoire called *Doctor Faust's Grosser und Gewaltiger Meergeist* (Doctor Faust's Great Powerful Sea-Spirit), which claimed the notorious Faust himself as its author, says that in operations of black magic the magic circle should be made of lead. Inside there should be a triangle made of three chains taken from a gibbet and nails which have been driven through the head of a man broken on the wheel. The magician should wear a blue robe and his girdle should be a cloth which has been used by an executioner to wipe his sword after beheading a criminal. The lead and other trappings are intended to give the circle a powerful and sinister aura of death and violence.

There is a widespread belief that witches and enchanters, creatures in league with the powers of death and evil, cannot be killed with lead bullets or lead shot: silver has to be used. In the Highlands of Scotland, for instance, it was long believed that if a witch in the form of a hare was shot with a lead bullet, the bullet would rebound and strike the man who had fired it.

Ponderous and dull, lead occupied the bottom rung of the ladder of the seven metals and was regarded by alchemists as the most imperfect of them, the one nearest to the lifelessness of First Matter. From the 'leaden' blackness and inertia of the base material in the alchemist's vessel the perfect gold was to be hatched, and some alchemists called their material 'lead of the air', implying that everything contains its own opposite, for the apparently dead material contains 'the radiant dove' of the spirit, of new life.

Michael Holford/British Museum

Lead coffin lid, from the Minories, London. Lead is traditionally the metal of death and of Saturn, the planet of limitation: holy relics were often encased in lead to keep their sacred force intact

Leaping and Jumping

A way of expressing religious fervour and of inducing ecstatic excitement; high leaps in Basque, Russian, Balkan, British and other folk dances may be rooted in imitative magic, in the form of jumping to make the crops grow tall and the herds increase, as in the hymn of the Curetes of ancient Greece, 'leap for fleecy flocks, and leap for fields of fruit'.

See DANCE; IMITATIVE MAGIC.

Syndication International

Left

Traditionally the side of evil; probably because the left hand is normally the weaker; black magic is 'the left-hand path' and to move deliberately to the left in magic is to appeal to evil influences; the Latin word *sinister* meant both 'left' and 'evil': in palmistry the left hand represents what you are born with, the right what you make of yourself.

See DIRECTIONS; PALMISTRY.

LEMURIA AND MU

THE LOST CONTINENTS of Lemuria and Mu were, if they existed, more extensive than Atlantis and have inspired almost as much fantastic speculation as the more famous vanished land (see ATLANTIS). The idea of Lemuria originally occurred to scientists in the middle of the 19th century when the first flush of enthusiasm for the new methods of biological classification and analysis began to reveal some odd coincidences. It was discovered that the animal and plant life, and even the geology, of continents separated by thousands of miles of sea showed remarkable similarities.

P. L. Sclater, the Zoologist and Fellow of the Royal Society who first gave a name to Lemuria, put the case for his lost continent: 'So certain, indeed, has the law been found to be of adjoining countries producing similar or nearly similar animals and plants, that the converse of this proposition is now generally accepted by naturalists – . . . that if the animals and plants of two countries are alike, they must either now be or recently have been in geographical connection.'

The name Lemuria was taken from the lemur and its relatives whose habitat is limited to Africa, south India and Malaya, although in the Eocene Age they probably inhabited the entire northern hemisphere. Thus the area which Lemuria might have occupied extends from the Malay Archipelago across the south coast of Asia to Madagascar. Further similarities between animal and plant life on opposite sides of the Indian Ocean were observed: for example, out of 35 species of fossil found in Natal, 22 were identical with forms discovered in southern India.

In the 19th century Lemuria received some distinguished testimonials. The great evolutionist Thomas Huxley admitted his belief in the existence of a Miocene continent in the Indian Ocean. Alfred Russel Wallace, the naturalist, thought Sclater's Lemuria 'undoubtedly a legitimate and highly probable supposition' and Ernst Haeckel, the celebrated German biologist, agreed. Haeckel seems to have been the first to suggest that Lemuria was 'the probable cradle of the human race, which in all likelihood here first developed out of anthropoid apes.' This speculation fitted in with the contemporary theories of how mankind had scattered itself over the earth in a series of migrations. From this idea it was only a short step to postulate that Lemuria was in effect the garden of Eden.

A Vanished Race

The concept of Lemuria attracted the occultists, who were attempting to reconcile a fundamentally religious approach to life with the findings of the scientific method. In particular, Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society (see BLAVATSKY) were responsible for incorporating this perfectly legitimate scientific hypothesis into an occult world view. In Mme Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), that resourceful lady declared that the findings of her own 'esoteric ethnology' tallied with the speculations of Sclater and his fellow scientists. There had been, she thought, five vanished races living on the earth, of which the first lived in a mysterious continent called 'The Imperishable Sacred Land', the second in a 'Hyperborean continent' off the north of Asia, the third in Lemuria, the fourth in Atlantis and the fifth in America. Present humanity was the sixth race, which was fast developing towards a seventh race of superbeings. Mme Blavatsky believed that Lemuria had extended across the Pacific Ocean, and declared that the South Sea Islands were all that remained of that once immense continent.

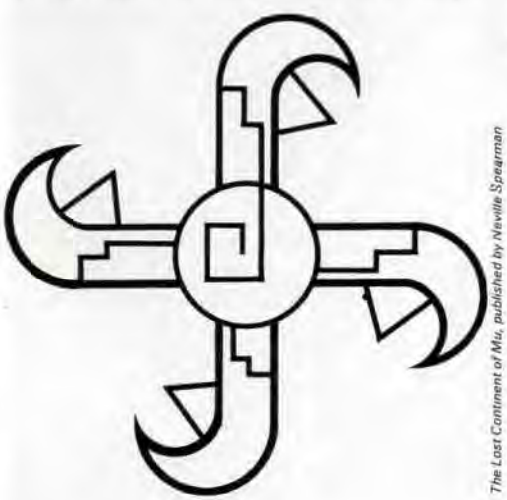
It was in the Pacific that Colonel James Churchward located the continent of Mu. During a famine in India in the 19th century he was engaged in supervising relief work with a Hindu priest with whom he later became great friends. The priest taught Churchward the remains of an ancient language *Naacal*, which he believed to be the original tongue of mankind. With this knowledge, Churchward claimed to have deciphered a series of ancient stone tablets hidden in the temple of which his friend was in charge. These tablets revealed the story of Mu. Mu was a large continent in the Pacific Ocean, with its centre a little south of the Equator; from east to west it measured 6000 miles, and from north to south 3000 miles. It was the historical garden of Eden where 200,000 years ago man had first arisen and had developed an extremely sophisticated form of civilization. When Mu was destroyed in a cataclysmic outbreak of volcanic action the population of the continent totalled 64 million.

The First Colonists

From Mu all human races developed. Racial differences derived from the colonists who were sent out from the motherland in tribal units; after the disappearance of Mu the colonists became degenerate, and their original tribal differences became more marked. Of these colonists, the most powerful unit had been the Uighur Empire, whose capital city is now buried 50 feet below the Gobi Desert; the remainder of the Uighurs became the Aryans.

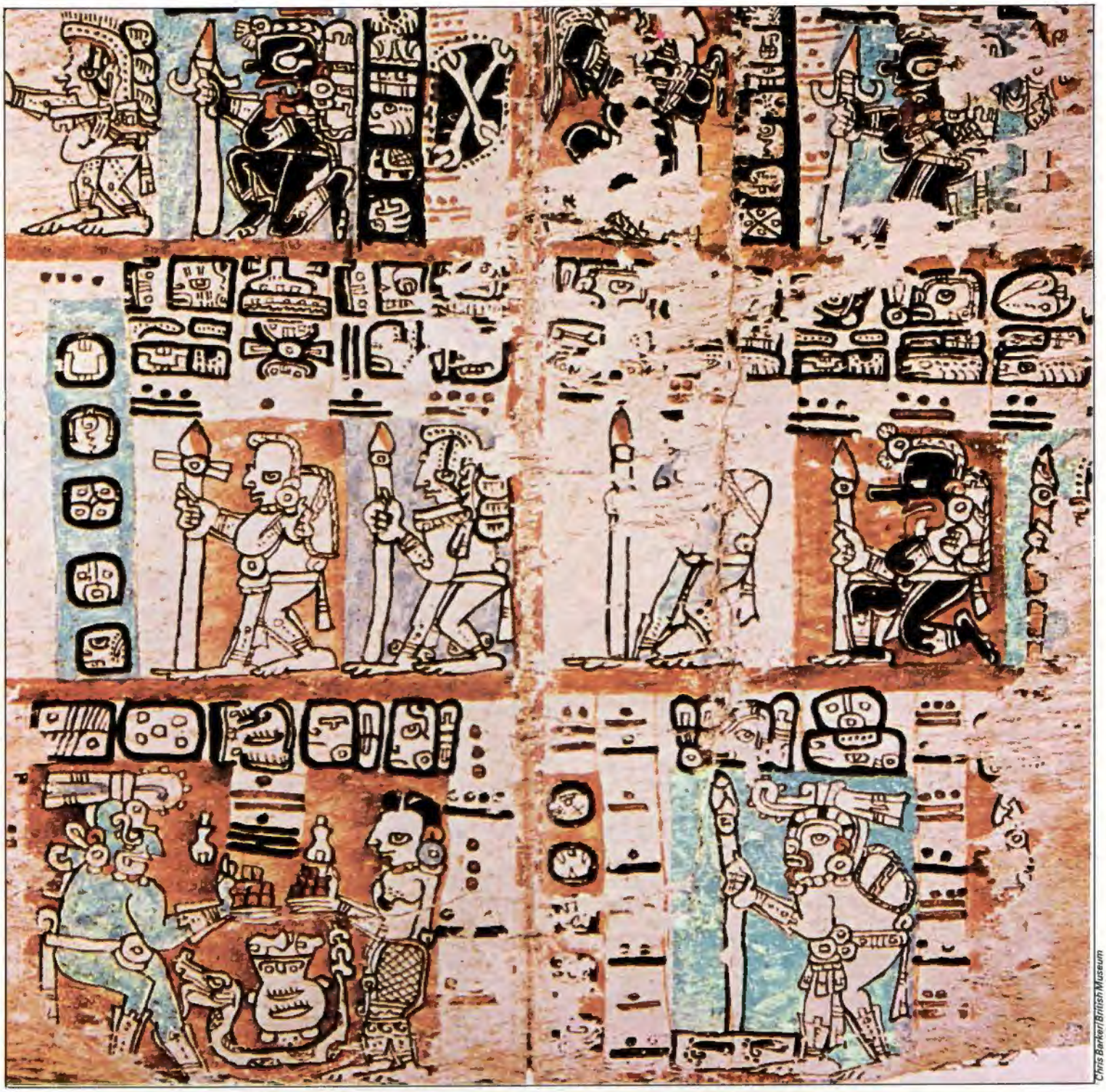
Colonel Churchward's sources were not the most impeccable. He published no direct transcripts of the Naacal tablets, and as corroborative evidence used almost every enigmatic carving in the eastern and western hemispheres.

The most credible of these carvings are a collection of Mayan tablets discovered in



The Lost Continent of Mu, published by Neville Spearman

Left **The Naacal tablets were deciphered by Colonel James Churchward, who believed that they revealed the story of Mu, a lost continent in the Pacific, site of the garden of Eden and the cradle of the human race, which had been destroyed in a volcanic cataclysm. He interpreted this design as showing the symbol of the Sacred Four, the Creator's commands which brought order out of chaos** ***Right*** **The Troano Manuscript, an ancient Mayan work from Central America, has been interpreted as recording the destruction of Mu, which has inspired almost as much speculation as the more famous Atlantis**



Chris Barker/British Museum

Mexico, purporting to show that the Maya came from the west. His photograph of a painting showing a 'king and queen of the Uighurs', the queen carrying a 'sceptre', shows two figures seated in the lotus posture, with the female holding an article known in Japan as a 'thunderbolt', and used as an aid to meditation. The Colonel's description of the society of Mu included the essential subservience of the coloured to the white race.

Churchward belonged to the same school of thought as the Theosophical Society; and he admitted that the old priest who taught him Naacal was also his guru. The two would communicate with each other by 'cosmic telegraphy', and once travelled back in time to see themselves as they had been in a previous incarnation. From Mu, the Colonel maintained, came the 'original religion' of mankind; and he explained the last words of Jesus on the cross, *'Eli, Eli, lama, sabach-thani'*, as being *'Hele, Hele, lamat zabac ta ni'*, which others have described as Maya, but which for Churchward was the original language of Mu. Both in Maya and in Mu the words mean 'I faint, I faint, the darkness is coming over my face.' It is not surprising to find the Great Pyramid invoked as an expression of the religion of Mu, or to discover that the last work of Churchward, *Cosmic Forces of Mu*, although first published in 1934, was begun in 1870, at the beginning of the late 19th century occult revival.

Lemuria and Mu may well have existed. But those who have most keenly argued their existence are not the best qualified to prove it. Both Mme Blavatsky and Churchward pounced upon hopeful elements in scientific thought which at one time seemed to deny any religious view of life, and eagerly incorporated these into a system which allowed belief. Their argument from the evidence of published inscriptions and the existence of lemurs is legitimate but their argument on the grounds of their faith cannot be upheld.

JAMES WEBB

FURTHER READING: James Churchward, *The Lost Continent of Mu*, one of five books in the 'MU' series (Neville Spearman, 1963 reprint).

LEO

THE LION'S ASSOCIATION with the heat of summer led to Leo being chosen for the fifth sign of the zodiac, after the constellation in which the sun arrived at the summer solstice. In the days when every country had its king, Leo had good reason to be believed the most important of the 12 signs. Leo, which includes those born between 23 July and 22 August, was the 'natural significator' of kings and rulers. Those genuinely born under the Lion often have a lordly bearing, and expect to be treated with the respect due to their status. If their rank does not merit respect, they require it none the less, for they are confident of their own worth.

It is impossible to bully the Leos, they are only overawed by older persons or by those who are more powerful. They like large jewels, but it never occurs to them that to wear such adornments is sometimes interpreted as conceit. It would be uncharacteristic of Leos to give up using any title or honour that they have earned. They are brave in an emergency, but otherwise they may appear too casual, for they do not easily believe that they are vulnerable to danger. When they are generous, it may not be genuine unselfishness, but simply to boost their own reputation. The poet Manilius (48 BC – 20 AD), wrote that Leo spends on himself any wealth he may acquire, and that he is too selfish to make a good trustee.

Leo is one of the most religious signs and in a temporal sense, too, the typical Leo tends to respect those in power and authority. His sympathies are always more likely to be with the established order than with the revolutionaries. In appearance, he is not often extravagant, for he is likely to think it more important to be conventionally respectable than to dress in an ostentatious manner.

The person born under Leo is usually interested in politics, but in spite of this he is not cunning and prefers everything to be open. He likes to delegate the less important aspects of his life to inferiors, but occasionally he may be cheated, for his mind is straightforward rather than devious, and he is not as perceptive as he would like to think. Leo is self-confident, and in consequence is an obvious choice for any job demanding leadership. Usually he is extremely robust and does not tire easily, but may at times be mentally and physically lazy. He may also he somewhat insensitive, for he has never felt weakness and does not know what it feels like to be at the mercy of someone else. This creates a danger of complacency, for Leo does not easily see himself in the role of victim.

In astrology, those born under the sign of Leo reveal many of the characteristics associated with the proud, lordly lion; the sun is in the fifth sign of the zodiac during summer when the crops are ripened by the heat of the sun: 14th century French manuscript

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Ashmole 1511

MRS LEONARD

ONE OF THE FEW first-class mediums who have been studied at length by trained neutral investigators, Gladys Osborne Leonard was born of prosperous parents in Lancashire in 1882 and died in 1968. Her autobiography, *My Life in Two Worlds*, gives some interesting hints as to the origins of her mediumship. As a child, she was protected from the fact of death and when she first met it in painful circumstances she was badly shocked. She tells how she used to have 'beautiful visions' which she dared not mention for they upset her parents. Then, in adolescence she encountered Spiritualism, but when she reported this joyful discovery, her mother angrily pronounced it 'wicked and vile'. At the age of 22 she was away from home earning her living as her family had fallen upon hard times. She knew her mother was ailing but one morning she had a vision of her happy and well; in the afternoon came a telegram saying that she had died. This finally convinced Gladys Leonard of the truth of Spiritualism. Not long after, when playing at table-turning with some friends, she fell asleep and on waking was told that she had been acting as a medium. Her friends said that her mother had communicated through her, and also a young girl called Feda who wanted her to practise her mediumship, with Feda as her spirit control, as she had important work to do by this means.

Shortly before the First World War, Feda said that something great and terrible was going to happen to the world and that she would have to help many people, through Gladys Leonard. As a result, the young woman decided to become a professional medium and to devote her life to the task of putting the bereaved in touch with their departed relatives. It is a tribute to her character that at the same time she was prepared to co-operate wholeheartedly with investigators from the Society for Psychical Research, whose avowed object was to search for possible alternative sources for communications which she herself believed came from the dead. On one occasion detectives were engaged to check that she had not obtained information by normal means about a house she described with great accuracy.

The main task of an investigator into the evidence for survival produced by mediums is obviously to seek for alternative mundane sources of information which mediums maintain comes from the dead. He must first try to eliminate such normal explanations as fraud, rational inference, unconscious memory, carelessly revealing remarks by sitters, accidental coincidences and so on. If that can be done, the simplest paranormal explanation of the 'hits' achieved by a medium seems to be telepathic interaction with a sitter – provided that the sitter himself knows about the events referred to. When he does not know about them a more remote source must be sought. That Mrs Leonard seemed able to tap some such source was suggested by many proxy sittings (in a proxy sitting, the sitter represents another person and may be given information relevant to that person and his dead friends which he does not know already). On one occasion, for instance, Miss Radclyffe Hall and Lady Troubridge acted as proxies for a friend who was travelling in Turkey and Mrs Leonard told them facts about that friend's movements which were contrary to their expectations, and others about her adoptive father of whom they knew nothing. On another occasion she went further, warning a regular sitter, the Rev. Drayton Thomas, to expect a letter from a middle-aged man who lived near his previous home – Morton, or some such place – and who had lost a son in a car crash. Within a fortnight came a letter from a man living at Norton, under two miles from where Mr Thomas had once lived. He had been meaning to write ever since he heard Mr Thomas lecture a month earlier, because his son had been killed in an air (not a car) crash. In two subsequent sittings the son himself purported to communicate, and identifying material was produced which meant nothing to the father but was confirmed as correct by another son. The purported son also referred to a friend, the clue to whose identity was a model ship, and again the living son confirmed that a friend of his dead brother's, who had worked for a firm making model ships, had been killed a year after the brother's death.

Mrs Leonard's spirit control, Feda, was passionately concerned to establish that she and other communicators were genuine discarnate (disembodied) spirits and to that end she offered to indicate something printed on a particular page of a particular book which had been placed for the test on a shelf in a house which Mrs Leonard did not know. Five hundred such book tests were analysed by an extremely critical psychical researcher, Mrs Henry Sidgwick, Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. She classified 92 tests as successful, 100 as approximately so, 96 as dubious, 40 as all but failures and 204 as failures. In other words, nearly a fifth were good 'hits'.

In a further attempt to eliminate the hypothesis of telepathy from any of the persons concerned with the tests, Feda then offered to 'sense the meaning' of passages in books written in a language which neither the sitter nor Mrs Leonard knew. In response to this, Miss Radclyffe Hall and Lady Troubridge bought some books in Greek and set them out on a shelf in their house. Out of a group of 14 tests on these, Mrs Sidgwick classified four as definite 'hits', a further four as probably right, four as very dubious and one as definitely wrong. A typical good 'hit', made ten days before the Armistice of 1918, was to locate the Greek word for armistice on the right line of the right page in the right book and to comment that that was what the communicator was wishing for on the sitters' behalf.

In one ardent attempt to convince an anonymous sitter, Mrs Hugh Talbot, of the continued existence of her dead husband, Feda produced some information which appeared to be known to nobody living at the time. She said that as evidence of his identity he described a small dark leather book, about eight to ten inches long. 'It's not exactly a book,' she went on. 'It's not printed . . . It has writing in.' She rejected Mrs Talbot's repeated suggestion that it might be a red log-book of her husband's. No, it was darker, and would Mrs Talbot please find it and look for something written on page 12 or 13. 'There are two books,' she said. 'You will know the one by a diagram of languages in the front . . . Indo-European, Aryan, Semitic languages . . . a table of Arabian-Semitic languages . . . There are lines, not straight, going like this.' Mrs Talbot was so sure that Mrs Leonard was talking rubbish that on her return home she could scarcely be persuaded to look for the book. Eventually she did so and found right at the back of a top bookshelf, a shabby black leather book of the shape described by Feda. To her great surprise it contained a 'Table of Semitic or Syro-Arabian languages' and on page 13 there was a long and apt extract from an old book entitled *Post Mortem*, describing the blissful situation of the author after death.

It is hard to give a balanced picture in brief of Mrs Leonard's 50 odd years of active mediumship. To concentrate solely on the highlights may create the impression that she never gave vague or indecisive sittings; but no medium can be on top of her form on every occasion and with every sitter. What can be said is that much of her work was studied by experienced investigators, that her integrity was unquestioned, and that she produced a great deal of material which cannot reasonably be ascribed to normal sources. Whether such material was due to an incredible series of accidental coincidences, whether a subconscious level of her personality ferreted it from scattered mundane sources by means of superlative extra-sensory perception, or whether it came from the dead, is still an open question.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

Psychic News

One of the greatest and most intensively studied of modern mediums, Mrs Leonard 'produced a great deal of material which cannot reasonably be ascribed to normal sources'

Leprechauns

Fairy shoemakers of Irish folklore; they own buried hoards of gold which are much coveted by human beings; if caught, a leprechaun can be forced to reveal where his treasure is hidden but he will vanish if you take your eyes off him; leprechauns live alone and vary in stature from a height of a few inches to the size of a three-year-old child.

See FAIRIES.

Mansell Collection

Leprosy

Disease often believed to be caused by a breach of taboo, or to be the punishment of sin: in the Old Testament the regulations governing lepers and the ritual of their purification are described in Leviticus (chapters 13, 14): the leper Naaman was cured by washing seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kings, chapter 5); a traditional cure is to bathe in human blood, especially that of children: in alchemical pictures, a symbol of the impurities of matter.

Bibliothèque Nationale

LETTERS TO THE DEAD

Michael Holford

THE BELIEF of the ancient Egyptians in a life after death is attested by a rich abundance of material, ranging from the great pyramids of Gizeh to the treasures of the tomb of Tutankhamen. But nothing more vividly illustrates the intense reality of that belief, and also its pathos, than what Egyptologists call 'Letters to the Dead'.

The known examples range in date from the Old Kingdom (2780–2280 BC) to the 19th Dynasty (1320–1200 BC), which indicates that these 'Letters' represent a long-established practice in Egypt. They generally take the form of messages written on pottery vessels, used for making food offerings to the dead. The logic behind the selection of such means for communicating with the dead is obvious. The dead would surely see the messages when they partook of the food in the vessels concerned.

The contents of the 'Letters' reveal that the dead were regarded as still having a lively interest in the affairs of their families, and able to work for their well-being. Thus a widow asks her dead husband to watch over the interests of his heirs, whom false friends were endeavouring to rob of their inheritance.

These messages to the dead were not all appeals for help to promote the interests of relatives in this world. The dead were also feared as being capable of tormenting the living, as the following 'Letter' shows. It was written about 1200 BC by a husband to his dead wife, Ankhiry. He asks: 'What harm have I done you that you so distress me?' He reminds her of their past life together: 'From the day that I became your husband until this day have I done anything that I should conceal? . . . I married you when I was young . . . I did not desert you. I refrained from any action that might grieve your heart.' To reinforce his appeal, he threatens that he will complain about his wife to the gods who sit in judgement as assessors of the dead in the next world.

In ancient Egypt attempts to communicate between the world of the living and the dead were not made only by the former. In some inscriptions the dead speak to the living from their tombs. For example, warnings to would-be violators of their tombs were sometimes given, such as that by Harkhuf, an Aswan noble who lived about 2500 BC: 'As for any man who shall enter into this tomb as his mortuary possession, I will seize him like a wild fowl.' Even stranger, perhaps, in view of the situation implied of the dead as opposed to the living is a tomb inscription, now in the British Museum, dating about 71 BC. A lady, That-I-em-hetep, addresses her husband, who is still alive: 'O my brother, my husband, my friend . . . cease not to drink, to eat, to be drunken, and to marry wives, and to enjoy thyself, and follow the desire of thy heart by day and night.' After this generous exhortation, the dead lady tells of her own grim condition: 'I no longer know where I am, now that I have arrived in this valley of the dead. Would that I had water to drink from a running stream . . . O that my face were turned towards the north wind . . . that the coolness thereof might quiet the anguish of my heart.' We can only wonder at the imaginative effort that went to the composition of this inscription – did it record a message that the husband believed he had received from his dead wife?

In any study of modern magic, one name crops up repeatedly: that of Eliphas Levi, the 19th century French occultist who once claimed to have summoned up Apollonius of Tyana

ELIPHAS LEVI

UNDOUBTEDLY the most renowned French occultist of his generation, Eliphas Levi (Abbé Louis Constant) was born in 1810 and died in 1875. His best-known books, such as *Transcendental Magic, The History of Magic*, and *The Key of the Mysteries*, which are still available in English translations, have been read by successive generations of students of magic and occultism since the first of them was published in 1856. Levi was, however, an indifferent scholar and though his writings contain much that is illuminating, they should be read as literature rather than as technical manuals.

The son of a humble shoe-maker, Levi was born and died in Paris. Educated at Roman Catholic schools and seminaries, he became persuaded that he had a religious vocation; he was ordained a deacon in December 1835 but did not become a priest. He first became interested in occultism in about 1844 and began to study the works of ancient authors such as Guillaume Postel, Raymond Lull and Cornelius Agrippa (see LULL; AGRIPPA). This new phase in his life coincided with his disastrous marriage to Noémi Cadiot, who was 18 years younger.

The major formative influence on Levi's subsequent career as a professional occultist was undoubtedly the eccentric Polish mathematician Hoëne-Wronski (see WRONSKI). Very little is known about their relationship, but it can be inferred that Levi was Wronski's pupil.

In May 1854, after his wife had left him, he visited London for the first time, hoping to earn some money by giving private lessons in occultism. He had not yet published anything in this field but nevertheless came to London with a great reputation as a magus and furnished with letters of introduction to eminent persons. One of them was Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the author of the famous 'Rosicrucian' novel *Zanoni* (1842), who was regarded as a major authority on magic and occultism (see LYTTON).

In most respects the visit was a disappointment. He knew little or no English and was therefore unable to make money by teaching. Much to his dismay, he was expected to perform 'miracles' and give practical demonstrations of ceremonial magic. In *Transcendental Magic* he mentioned that he had hitherto purposely avoided this kind of activity. However, after much persuasion and due preparation he finally consented to attempt the magical evocation of spirits on behalf of a titled lady who was a friend of Bulwer Lytton. This was probably his only experience of ritual magic. An account of these ceremonies in a specially prepared 'Temple', in which only he himself took part, and the alleged conjuration of the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana (see APOLLONIUS), will be found in *Transcendental Magic*. Levi was inclined to treat the manifestation as an entirely subjective experience. Nevertheless, he observed that it had been sufficient, as far as he was concerned, to demonstrate the effectiveness of magical ceremonies, although he condemned them as dangerous on moral and health grounds.

Three illustrations by Levi to his *Transcendental Magic*: the Double Triangle of Solomon *(above left)*, showing 'the God of Light and the God of Reflections, mercy and vengeance, the white Jehovah and the black Jehovah'; another symbol *(above right)* of light and reflection, good and evil, the hand making the sign of blessing and projecting the Devil; the seven seals of the book of Revelation *(below)*

Upon his return to Paris in August 1854, Levi was without either a home or money, but was helped by Adolphe Desbarolles (1801–86), who later achieved fame as the author of *Les Mystères de la Main* (1869), the most important 19th century work on palmistry. He now began to attract pupils who studied the Cabala under his tuition. Indeed, during the next 20 years until his death his life was relatively peaceful and satisfying. Although by no means a public figure, his name was now well known in occultist circles in France and Great Britain and to a much lesser extent in Germany.

Wisdom of the Tarot

Levi paid his second visit to England in May 1861, this time in the company of his pupil Count Alexander Branicki, in order to stay with Bulwer Lytton at Knebworth. According to A. E. Waite in *The Mysteries of Magic* (1897) Levi and Bulwer Lytton performed a magical invocation on the roof of the Pantheon building in Oxford Street, but this may be an invention.

In December 1861 he received a visitor from London, Kenneth Mackenzie, who claimed to have received a genuine Rosicrucian initiation in Germany and was later to become well known in esoteric Masonic circles. Later Mackenzie published an account of his meeting with Levi in *The Rosicrucian* (April, 1873), the organ of the Masonic Rosicrucian Society in England. Levi told Mackenzie that he had been studying the symbolism of the Tarot cards for 26 years. He never published a complete Tarot manual, but the stray allusions to these cards in his books greatly influenced the generation of French occultists that appeared upon the scene about a decade after his death. Papus's theory (see PAPUS), outlined in his *Tarot of the Bohemians*, that the 22 major trumps are related to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and hence have a cabalistic significance, derives directly from Levi. The latter once observed that were he to be again condemned to a prison cell, the only 'book' that he would need would be a Tarot pack since the major Trumps, in his opinion, incorporated a complete system of esoteric wisdom.

Professional occultism ultimately provided Levi with both a refuge from reality and a living. It is unlikely that he ever taught his devoted pupils anything very useful, but since he was a kindly and modest man it is equally unlikely that he ever did them any harm, which is more than can be said for some who followed in his footsteps. His reputation as a learned occultist owes much to legends invented during his lifetime and soon after his death. Nevertheless, for students of the history of modern occultism Levi's life and work represent a fascinating and important phenomenon.

ELLIC HOWE

FURTHER READING: Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*; *The History of Magic* trans. by E. Waite and *The Key of the Mysteries* trans. and ed. by A. Crowley (all three published by Weiser, 1980).

Levitation

Rising and hovering in the air, or making a person or object rise and float in the air, by paranormal means; an ability credited to various saints, mystics and eastern holy men, and one of the characteristic phenomena of physical mediumship; D. D. Home, for instance, was said to levitate both himself and objects including an accordion.

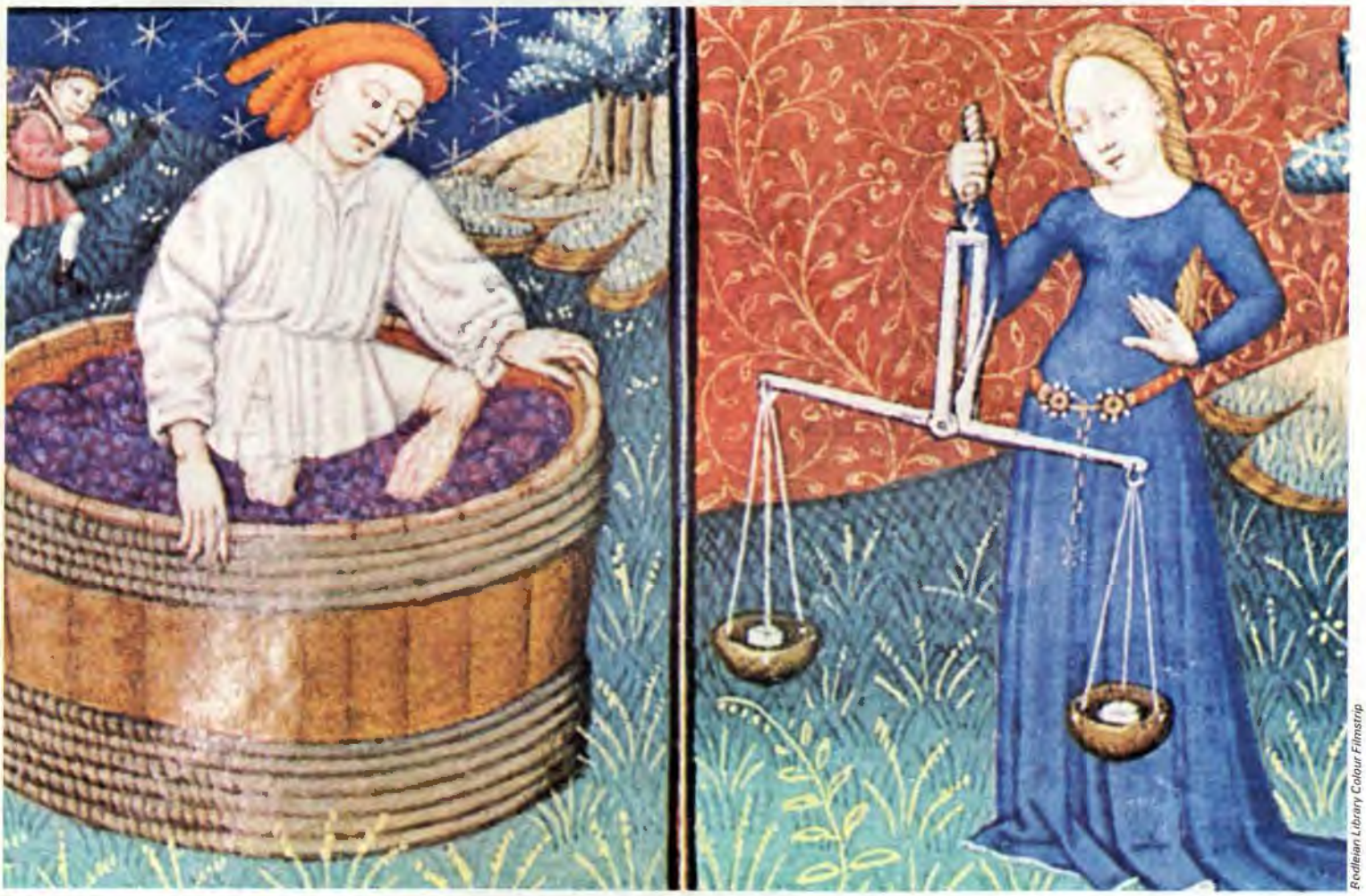
See HOME; MEDIUMS; PSYCHOKINESIS.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Libation

A drink offered to a deity, or the pouring out of the drink: the offering might be poured on the ground or floor, on an altar, on the body of a sacrificed animal, or on the fire; the Greeks and Romans poured a libation to the household gods at mealtimes; blood or wine were frequently offered to gods and the dead.

Michael Holford



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

LIBRA

THOSE BORN BETWEEN 23 September and 23 October are traditionally placed under the sign of Libra, the Scales, the seventh sign of the zodiac. Modern writers describe Libra as the most desirable of the 12 zodiacal signs although the ancient Greeks and Romans preferred Virgo. Libra has been admired because it is ruled by Venus, the planet of love and beauty; but Saturn, the stern planet of righteousness also influences Libra. Thus, Librans do not spend all their time in amorous misadventures or in exercising their charm. Although they are not ambitious they are often interested in politics and administration, and make good civil servants. They are often successful as businessmen or lawyers, for as their sign, the Scales, suggests, they have a keen sense of equity and are good at weighing up conflicting claims and reaching a compromise.

In their attempts to please everyone Librans may sometimes appear rather dull and characterless. But any attempt to be striking involves risks, and this is not a Libran characteristic. Although Librans have a tendency to degenerate into conventionality and timidity, all types are mixed, and if the Sun, Moon and Ascendant are all in Libra, the compromising aspect of their personality will be dominant.

The arts are traditionally ruled by Venus, and a large number of poets, painters, novelists and composers are Librans. Those born under Libra are often collectors or experts, those interested in knowing origins and details of specimens.

Librans are useful people, for they will always try to see that justified claims are met, but in doing this they risk abuse. The Sun is in decline in Libra, and as a result Librans do not like taking the initiative; they prefer to have some text or rule that they can quote before they put forward any suggestion. The ancients, however, thought Libra exceedingly trustworthy, a man who can be allowed to handle other people's money even if he has none himself.

The sun is in Libra, the Scales and the seventh sign of the zodiac, in autumn, the season for treading grapes: 14th century French MS

LIGHT

Light can be the life-creating radiance of the sun but also the scorching and destroying flame that withers the desert

Bibliothèque Nationale

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light': illumination, an encounter with light, not only as a symbol but as a real experience, has been reported by mystics in many different traditions

ON THE NIGHT of 21 September 1823 at his house in Palmyra, New York, Joseph Smith, then a boy of 17, was deep in prayer. 'While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air . . . Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.' This radiant personage was the angel Moroni, who told Joseph Smith where to find the buried golden plates of the Book of Mormon (see MORMONS).

In religion, legend and symbolism light is primarily connected with good and with creative power. Gods and saints are said to radiate light, and 'illumination' is a term frequently used for the revelation or discovery of the divine, not merely as a symbol but, as in the case of Joseph Smith, as a description of an actual experience, an encounter with light.

Among the first experiences of a baby must presumably be the sensation of coming out of darkness into light, and all our lives long one of the fixed characteristics of our environment is the alternation of light and darkness, on which we pattern the basic rhythm of our lives. In daylight we are active, at night we turn off our conscious energies and go to sleep. Light lets us see, darkness walls us in and makes us blind, groping and afraid. The light and heat of the sun bring Nature to life in the spring, the winter comes in with darkness and cold.

As a result, light naturally means good, activity, creativity, spiritual vision, while darkness means evil, fear and doubt, inactivity, sterility and spiritual blindness. What is done in the light of day is open, public, innocent, but what is done in the dark is secret, furtive, harmful or shameful. The crowing of the cock at the first glimmer of dawn puts to flight the evil beings which infest the night.

But nothing, in symbolism or in reality, is as simple as this clearcut antithesis. The darkness of love-making, of dreams, of the womb or the depths of the mind, has its own powerful fruitfulness. Light can be the life-creating radiance of the sun but also the scorching and destroying flame that withers the desert (which, conversely again, may be a symbol of revelation and the presence of God in the wilderness of asceticism – see LANDSCAPE). Ghosts emit a faint and ghastly radiance, the luminescence of putrefaction. The flickering will-o'-the-wisp leads the unwary traveller astray. Satan puts on the guise of an angel of light.

Let There be Light

People generally seem to feel that darkness precedes light. Darkness is somehow older, more primitive, more fundamental, and light penetrates a darkness that was there before it. 'From non-being lead me to being,' says the *Bradaranyaka Upanishad*, 'from darkness lead me to the light, from death lead me to immortality.' For the Jews and Arabs, the Germanic peoples, the Celts and many others, each day begins in the evening – the night comes first and the light afterwards. Similarly at the very beginning of things: 'at first,' according to a creation hymn in the *Rig Veda*, 'there was only darkness wrapped in darkness.' In Hesiod's *Theogony*, 'Out of Void came Darkness and black Night, and out of Night came Light and Day, her

In most traditions darkness precedes and is older than light, and when light came into being it penetrated a darkness that was there before it, just as the rising sun banishes sleep and the blindness of night and brings the daytime of activity. We pattern the basic rhythm of our lives on this alternation of night and day *Previous page* Sunrise over Lake Hanuel Haupi in Argentina *Left* 'And God said, "Let there be light"': in Genesis God creates light before fashioning his other creations: 12th century manuscript *Right* One of the most popular pictures ever painted, Holman Hunt's *Light of the World,* expresses the Christian imagery of the Saviour as the kindly gleam of hope and spiritual illumination in the darkness of worldliness and sin: the missionary activity of Christians was seen as the bringing of light

children.' In Genesis, in the beginning there was darkness and God said, 'Let there be light'. It was only after making light that God went on to fashion his other creations.

Some people, however, have maintained the opposite tradition, that light existed first and darkness came later. One explanation of why this happened is that the Creator grew weary of endless light and created darkness for relief from it. Or some say that light and darkness have coexisted from the beginning. In China the two great opposites of Yang and Yin correspond to light and darkness respectively. According to a Scandinavian myth, there was a great abyss of emptiness which was charged with magic power. To the south of it was a realm of blazing heat and to the north a realm of freezing darkness. It was the meeting in the abyss of ice from the north and sparks from the south which made life, so that creation resulted from the mingling of opposites, of light with dark and heat with cold. But when the *Prose Edda* comes to deal with day and night, night existed first and was the mother of day.

The Armour of Light

In both the Old and New Testament light is connected with God and goodness. 'There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, O Lord!"' (Psalm 4). When God becomes king over the whole earth, there will be perpetual light and warmth: 'there shall be neither cold nor night, for at evening time there shall be light' (Zechariah, chapter 14). But God manifests himself not only in light and lightning but also in smoke and darkness. When the Israelites were in the wilderness and camped below Mount Sinai, there was a thick cloud on the mountain and a violent thunderstorm with flashes of lightning. 'And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly . . . And the people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was' (Exodus, chapters 19, 20). Again, in the vision of God's glory in Ezekiel (chapter 1), 'a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually . . .'

Keble College, Oxford

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'

In other passages to be in a state of sin, to be far from God, is to be in darkness, and in the New Testament Christ is 'the true light that enlightens every man' (John 1.9), which echoes a famous verse in Isaiah (9.2): 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.' Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life' (John, chapter 8). 'For God sent the Son into the world', says St John (chapter 3), 'not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him . . . And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

The missionary work which carried Christianity outside Judaism was seen as the bringing of light to the Gentiles. Warning the faithful to be ready for Christ's imminent return to the earth, St Paul says, 'Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light' (Romans 13.12). Light of Light became a title of Christ, and the Devil, by contrast, was chief of the powers of darkness.

There is the same imagery of light as good and darkness as evil in the Koran. 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth' but the doings of unbelievers are like 'darkness on a bottomless ocean spread with clashing billows and overcast with clouds; darkness upon darkness . . . Indeed the man from whom Allah withholds his light shall find no light at all' (sura 24).

In Zoroastrianism, with its rival gods of good and evil, the contrast of light and darkness is sharply drawn. The good god Ohrmazd lives in eternal light. 'That light is the space and place of Ohrmazd . . . omniscience and goodness are his totality.' His opponent Ahriman is the master of darkness, 'the will to smite is his all, and darkness is his place.' In the end when Ahriman has been defeated, 'all Ohrmazd's creation will be reunited with him in the eternal light and in unceasing joy for ever and ever' (see OHRMAZD).

In ancient Greek religion there is a contrast – though not clearcut as far as a distinction between good and evil is concerned – between the Olympian gods who lived in a 'comprehensible and business-like atmosphere of daylight', and the chthonian powers who lived underground, shrouded in mystery and approached by night. Behind this is the broad contrast between the worship of sky gods who live in the light of day, and the worship of the Great Mother whose roots are deep in the darkness of the earth (see EARTH; MOTHER GODDESS).

The Divine Spark

The Manicheans, who drew heavily on Zoroastrianism (see MANICHEANS), taught that there were two eternal and uncreated entities, God and Matter, which could also be called Light and Darkness or Truth and Lie. As a result of a complicated succession of mythological events, the powers of darkness were able to seize some of the particles of the divine light, which meant that they had captured part of the essence of God. To keep these ill-gotten spoils in their grasp, they fashioned Adam and Eve, in whom they imprisoned the captive light. Adam and Eve were ignorant of the light within them, until they were redeemed by a heavenly messenger, himself sometimes called 'Jesus the brilliant light'.

The sun as the creator of light and heat has a prominent place in many mythologies. Major Egyptian deities were shown with the disc of the sun as an emblem of power and creativity: Horus with sun disc

The theme of the divine spark, the gleam of heavenly light imprisoned in man and matter, also appears in the Gnostic systems of the eastern Mediterranean and has had a profound influence on mysticism and occultism in the West. It is a way of expressing the belief that in a man's innermost being there is an element of the divine. The discovery and liberation of this inner potential godhead, the true self, is a basic theme of European magic and occultism (see MAN).

A magician is usually very ready to think of himself as a potential god but for a mystic the problem is to avoid putting man on a level with God while claiming that there is a divine element in human nature. In the 14th century, for instance, Meister Eckhart said that there is a spark of divine light in man but emphasized that his soul is a mere receptacle of God's light (see ECKHART). A German Protestant mystic of the 16th century, Hans Denck, said: 'No man can see

The Supreme Radiance

Considered as a whole, the different experiences and appraisals of the interior Light advanced in India and in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism can be integrated into a perfectly consistent system. Experience of the Light signifies primarily a meeting with ultimate reality: that is why one discovers the interior Light when one becomes conscious of the Self *(atman)*, or when one penetrates into the very essence of life and the cosmic elements, or, last of all, at one's death. Under all these conditions the veil of illusion and ignorance is torn. Suddenly a man is blinded by the Pure Light; he is plunged into being. From a certain point of view one may say that the profane world, the conditioned world, is transcended – and that the spirit breaks out into the absolute plane, which is at once the plane of being and of the divine. Brahman, and the Buddha also, are at once a sign of the divine and of being, of the supreme reality. Indian thought identifies being, the divine and the mystic consciousness, the act by which one becomes conscious of reality. That is why one meets the Light both in meditating on being – the practice of the Upanishads and of Buddhism – and in trying to attain a revelation of the divine, the method followed in certain forms of yoga and the mystic schools. Since being is identical with the divine essence, divinities are necessarily luminous or reveal themselves to their worshippers in manifestations of light. But men also radiate light when they have destroyed the system of conditions under which worldly life is lived: that is to say when they have acquired supreme knowledge and attained the plane of liberty.

Mircea Eliade *The Two and the One*

Roger Wood Studio

Christ is 'the true light that enlightens every man'; by his resurrection Christ expressed the triumph of light and life over the darkness of death. *The Resurrection* by Andrea Mantegna

Musées des Beaux Arts, Tours

The god Vishnu reveals himself in a flash of lightning as bright as the light of a thousand suns, and 'by penetrating this light mortals skilled in yoga attain final deliverance'

or know himself, unless he sees and knows, by the Life and Light that is in him, God, the eternally true Light and Life . . . He must find God in himself, and himself in God.' And again, 'The Kingdom of God is in you (a reference to Luke 17.21) and he who searches for it outside himself will never find it; God, the all-highest, is in the deepest abyss with us, and is waiting for us to return to him.'

In the 17th century the doctrine of the 'inner light', the divine light within each human being, was central to the teaching of George Fox and his first followers were sometimes known as 'Children of Light' (see FOX). In the 18th century William Law (see LAW) took up the same theme: 'Consider the treasure thou hast within thee: the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee, as a spark of the divine nature . . .'

The Splendid Lights

In the Cabala the process through which the hidden God makes himself known is described in terms shot through with the imagery of light. It begins with a concentration of divine energy in a 'luminous point' or a point 'dark with luminosity'. The sefiroth, which are aspects of God and stages in the process of divine self-revelation, are called 'splendid lights' in the *Zohar*, and God is 'an absolute light but in himself concealed and incomprehensible', who can be comprehended only through the 'luminous emanations' of the sefiroth.

The *Zohar* also contains the doctrine of the divine spark, the element in man which can eventually find reunion with God from whom it came. According to the Lurianic Cabala the infinite light of the godhead retracted itself, to create a vacuum into which God infused his light. But the vessels containing the light shattered and some of the divine sparks fell into chaos (see CABALA; LURIA).

In the early Church baptism, the initiation into Christianity, was sometimes described as 'illumination' and it was the custom for the candidates at the baptism service to carry torches. Whether this piece of symbolism was borrowed from the mystery religions is disputed but at the climax of the Eleusinian Mysteries there was a sudden blaze of torches.

The sun as the creator of light and life is traditionally linked with gold, the most valuable of metals, and the aim of alchemy was to create the life-giving radiance of the perfect gold: from *Splendor Solis*

British Museum

The Encounter with Light

The illumination is sometimes not a metaphor but an experience. When the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, 'a sound came from heaven like the rush of the mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them' (Acts, chapter 2). St Paul was converted on the road to Damascus, when 'a light from heaven flashed about him' and he heard the voice of Jesus (Acts, chapter 9).

The sight of light playing on the surface of a dish stimulated in Jacob Boehme a mystical experience which he called a 'spiritual triumph' and which could only be compared with 'that where life is born in the midst of death'. Ghazali, the great Mohammedan mystic, was saved from scepticism by 'a light which God threw into my breast'. In the Indian tradition, among the experiences of the adept who successfully awakens the kundalini is 'a vision of light, which passes from a bright glow to a heaven full of brilliant dots, like stars', eventually followed by a 'suffusion of shining whiteness that is . . . an awareness of the supreme Radiance itself' (see BOEHME; GHAZALI; KUNDALINI).

Mircea Eliade says that 'for Indian thought the Light mystically perceived denotes transcendence of this world, of profane and conditioned existence, and the attainment of another existential plane – that of pure being, of the divine, of supreme knowledge and absolute freedom. It is a certain sign of the revelation of ultimate reality – devoid of all attributes. This is why it is experienced as a dazzling white Light . . .'

In the *Mahabharata* the god Vishnu reveals himself in a flash of lightning as bright as the light of a thousand suns, and we are told that 'by penetrating this light mortals skilled in yoga attain final deliverance'. In the *Bhagavad Gita* when the god Krishna shows himself in his true form, he is compared to the radiance of a thousand suns shining at once. 'I see the splendour of an infinite beauty which illuminates the whole universe. It is thee with thy crown and sceptre and circle. How difficult thou art to see! But I see thee; as fire, as the sun, blinding, incomprehensible.'

Light of Battle

That divine beings radiate light is accepted in all the major religious traditions. There is a Buddhist legend that a crowd of gods went to visit Buddha, who was meditating in a cave. The cave was filled with brilliant light, which some said was the radiance of the assembled gods but others said came from the fiery ecstasy of the Buddha himself. In Japan, Amida is 'Lord of Boundless Light', his head is encircled by a halo of light and he

The Memory of Nature

Within this Astral Light which individually we carry with us at all times and in all places, we live and move and have our being. Every thought that we think stamps an indelible impression on the impressionable substance of that plane – in fact tradition has it that it coalesces with one of the creatures of that plane and then passes away from our immediate control into this pulsating ocean of vitality and feeling to influence other minds for good or for ill. Every living thing breathes and intakes this Light freely, and to none is it exclusive or private. Indeed in it we live very much as a fish lives in water, surrounded on all sides and in every direction: and like a fish we constantly breathe it in and out through astral gills, as it were, taking energy therefrom and adding a variety of impressions thereto with the passing of each moment. Not only is this magical agent the Imagination of Nature, but it also fills the role of the Memory of Nature, for each act that we perform, each thought that enters our brain, each emotion as it leaves the heart, registers itself on the astral matter, remaining there for all time as an eternal record so that those who are able to may see and read. On this topic Eliphas Levi has significantly remarked that 'The Book of Consciences which, according to the Christian doctrine, will be opened on the Last Day, is nothing more than the Astral Light in which are preserved the impressions of every Logos, that is every action and every form. There are no solitary acts and there are no secret acts; all that we truly will . . . is written in the Astral Light.'

Israel Regardie *The Tree of Life*

C. W. Leadbeater's Man Visible and Invisible

Gods, heroes and holy men have long been believed to radiate light, and many occultists maintain that human beings, especially in strong emotional states, emit a luminosity called the aura, which can be seen by peculiarly sensitive observers. Three illustrations from C. W. Leadbeater's book *Man Visible and Invisible*; 'Intense anger' *(left)*: the red zig-zag lines represent the arrows of uncontrolled rage. 'A sudden rush of devotion' *(centre)*: a spiritual experience sweeps over a nun at prayer. 'The Irritable Man' *(right)* is flecked with scarlet depicting the vexations of life

is more glorious than the sun at noon (see AMIDA). Mohammed's face shone with its own light, and so did the face of the Scandinavian god Balder.

The face of Jesus shone like the sun and his garments became as white as light when he was transfigured before his disciples on the mountain and the voice of God pronounced, 'This is my beloved Son' (Matthew, chapter 17). In Christian art the Father, the Son, the Virgin Mary and the saints have haloes of radiant light (see DOUBLE) and the Holy Spirit emits fiery rays of light (for example, in El Greco's *Annunciation* – see BREATH).

Not only does sanctity emanate light but in legends and folktales so do beauty and blood-lust. There are Indian folk stories, for instance, of a prince who marries a woman so lovely that she lights up the bridal chamber on the wedding night. In the *Iliad* (book 18), when Achilles went out in berserk fury against the Trojans, the goddess Athene 'shed a golden mist around his head and caused his body to emit a blaze of light.' When the great Irish hero Cu Chulainn was roused in battle, the warrior's light rose from his forehead as long and as thick as a whetstone. We talk of the 'light of battle' being in someone's eye. Similarly, the 'heat of battle' is a familiar figure of speech, and when Cu Chulainn's dreaded battle frenzy was upon him, the heat he radiated was so intense that he boiled and burst two vats of water. (See CU CHULAINN.)

The radiating light of sacredness is also the light of spiritual vision. Eliade quotes Eskimo shamans who say that you cannot become a shaman without going through an experience called 'illumination' or 'lightning'. After long preparation, the shaman suddenly feels in his head and body a mysterious light, 'an inexplicable searchlight, a luminous fire'. This light enables him to see in the dark, not only literally but in the sense that he becomes clairvoyant. He also has the sensation of rising upwards – 'it is as if the house in which he is suddenly rises; he sees far ahead of him through mountains, exactly as if the earth were one great plain.'

The sensation of rising upwards is one of the distinguishing marks of being in what western occultists call the astral body or 'body of light', which is also an inexplicable searchlight that casts its rays on things not visible to ordinary sight. Agrippa spoke of the spirit vacating its body and spreading over space, like a light escaped from a lantern (see ASTRAL BODY).

The astral plane is said to include but extend beyond the physical plane of our everyday world, and the astral light (the light created by God's command 'Let there be light', according to Eliphas Levi) transmits the rays or waves or vibrations of human will-power, thought, feeling and imagination. In terms of Jungian psychology it is the medium of the archetypes, the basic ideas and symbols of the collective unconscious. In the astral plane thought, fancy and emotion have the same concrete reality as a solid object here on the physical plane, and the astral light is a great reservoir of occult power (like the *mana* of the Polynesians or the *orenda* of the North American Indians). Every human thought makes an imprint on the astral light, it is said, and in it the seer can read the history of the distant past in the Akashic Record or Cosmic Memory, through it the occultist can discern the reality behind the surface appearance of things, with it the magician works as a smith works with metal in his forge, shaping the subtle substance of the astral light with the tools of concentrated imagination and will.

(See also CANDLE; ECLIPSE; FIRE; MOON; NIGHT; SUN; WHITE.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

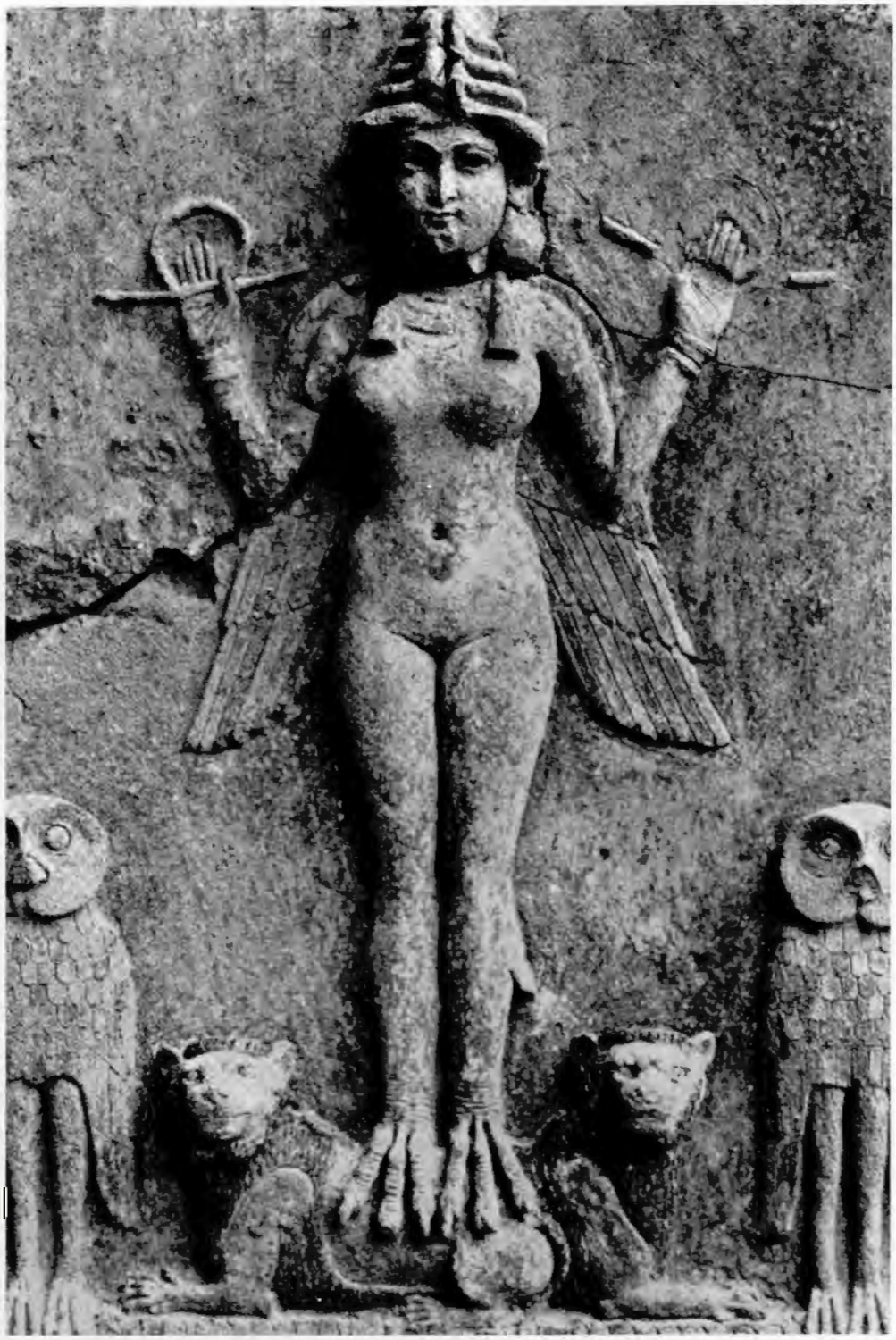
FURTHER READING: Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One* (University of Chicago Press, 1979); Sidney Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religion* (Peter Smith). See also Israel Regardie, *The Tree of Life* (Weiser, N.Y., 1969).

LILITH

CHIEF OF THE DEMONESSES of Jewish tradition, Lilith preyed on newly born babies. Until a boy was eight years old, or a girl 20 days old, there was a danger that Lilith might steal in and kill the child. A typical precaution to keep her at bay was a magic circle containing the words 'Adam and Eve, barring Lilith', drawn in charcoal on the wall of the room where the child lay, with 'Sanvi, Sansanvi, Semangelaf' written on the door.

Lilith also attacked men who were sleeping alone, seducing them in their dreams and sucking their blood. It is this aspect of Lilith which is most prominent in the legends about her. It was said that Adam's first mate was not Eve but Lilith, who was formed by God out of mud and filth. Adam's offspring by her were demons. Adam and Lilith were not happy together, because Lilith considered herself Adam's equal and objected to lying under him in their embraces. When he tried to force her into this subordinate position, she flew away. Adam complained to God, who sent three angels, named Sanvi, Sansanvi and Semangelaf, to bring her back. They found her beside the Red Sea, where she was coupling with lascivious demons and giving birth to a brood of demonic children called *lilin* or *liliot* at the rate of over a hundred a day. The angels told her to return to Adam but she refused, though she promised that if she saw the names of the angels written near a newborn child, she would spare him.

All this occurred before the making of Eve, and it was only after Lilith had declined to go back to Adam that God created Eve. The legend shows how the two different creation stories in the early chapters of Genesis gave room for speculation. Genesis 5.3 which says that Adam fathered a son 'in his own likeness' on Eve was taken to support the belief that he had previously fathered children not in his own likeness, the demons. Lilith is the 'night hag' who lives in the wasteland with wild beasts and hyenas, in Isaiah (34.14), and she may well be the 'terror by night' of Psalm 91.
(See also INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS.)

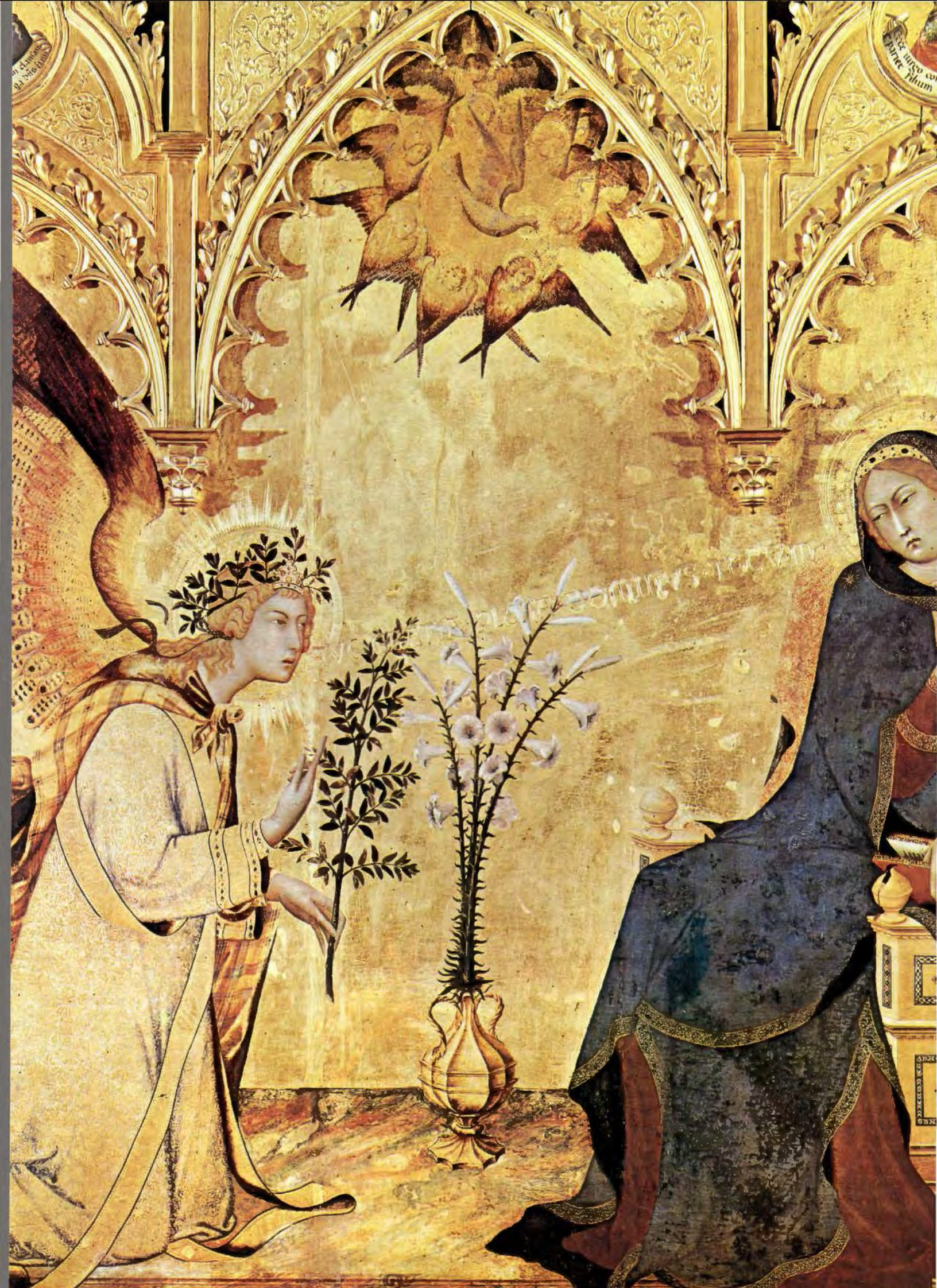


A Sumerian demoness, one of the predecessors of the Jewish Lilith: from a cult plaque

LILY

THE TRUMPET-SHAPED Madonna lily *(Lilium candidum)* is the lily which is usually represented in mythology. Its common name indicates its later importance as a symbol dedicated to the Virgin. Long before the birth of Christ, however, the lily was significant. In early civilizations this flower was a symbol of motherhood and fruitfulness: there are references to it in the mythology of Sumeria, Babylon, Assyria and Egypt. In Crete, where representations of the lily are frequent on pottery, it was sacred to Britomartis, the 'sweet virgin', who was pursued by Minos. After leaping to her apparent doom she was saved in the nets of a fisherman and afterwards became Dictynna, 'mother of the nets' and mother goddess. Both Greeks and Romans placed wreaths of lily and corn – symbols of virginity and fertility – on the heads of brides. To the Greeks the lily was the flower of Hera, who was goddess – among other things – of marriage and childbirth, while the emblem was readily transferred by the Romans to Juno, who had similar responsibilities. One Jewish legend suggested that the lily grew where Eve had shed tears on discovering, after her expulsion from Eden, that she was pregnant.

Most of the many references to the lily found in the Bible – the 'lilies of the field' is a well-known example – are probably mis-translations. It seems possible that *Lilium candidum* was once widespread in Palestine; and there is also a red lily, *L. chalcedonicum*, which may once have been abundant. The only passages which appear to refer specifically to these plants occur in the Song of Solomon: the white lily in the verse, 'My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to pasture his flock in the gardens and to gather lilies'; and the red in the verse, 'His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh.' Even in biblical times the lily represented power against evil; when Judith killed the Assyrian general Holofernes, she wore a crown or wreath of lilies.



Flower of the Virgin Mary

The date of the lily's adoption by Christianity is uncertain, but Ross, in his *View of All the Religions of the World*, wrote in 1696 how 'The Order of the Lily or of Navarre was instituted by Prince Garcia . . . in the city of Nagera 1048 AD, where the image of the Virgin Mary issuing out of a lily was discovered in the time of the King's sickness, who thereupon suddenly recovered his health; and in token of gratitude instituted the Order of Knights of St Mary of the Lily . . .' Louis IX of France established a similar order in 1234, whose members wore a chain of lilies entwined with broom, emblem of humility. Despite these and other ennoblements of the lily, there seems little doubt that the *fleur-de-lis*, France's emblem, was not the lily but the iris, as its stylized heraldic representation clearly shows. The name seems to come from *fleur de luce*, possibly a corruption of *fleur de Louis*, following the tradition that Louis VII, on setting off for the Crusades, took the iris as a badge. In French romance literature, at any rate, the lily is king of flowers, the rose being queen, echoing Pliny, 'The Lily is next in nobility to the Rose.'

In Lady Chapels and indeed generally in churches and religious buildings the lily will be seen among other carved flowers and leaves. This is especially so in Cistercian monasteries where the monks regarded the Virgin as their patroness and the lily was their symbol.

The Madonna lily is in flower at the Feast of the Visitation – 2 July – a festival inaugurated by Pope Urban VI to commemorate Mary's journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Paintings portraying this event almost always show a vase of three white lilies; they will also be seen in some pictures of the Last Judgement. The white lily that accompanies the Virgin in innumerable representations is due in part to a papal edict of 1618 which laid down rules 'as to the proper treatment of the white lily in pictures treating of the Immaculate Conception . . . roses, palms and lilies should be employed as the flowers suitable to be scattered by angels . . .' One legend recounts how St Thomas, refusing to believe in the Virgin's resurrection, caused her tomb to be opened; inside was simply a mass of lilies and roses. In the Roman Catholic Church the lily is also the attribute of some eight saints and the angel Gabriel. Considered the most appropriate flower for church decoration, the lily in former times would often have the stamen and pistils removed, so that it would be truly virgin.

The sacred associations of the lily led to its use against witches and their spells; it was one of the flowers used in protective magic on the Eve and Feast of St John and lilies were always prominent on that occasion in the city of London.

Lilies of Heaven

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth,
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven . . .

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling chasm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm

Dante Gabriel Rossetti
The Blessed Damozel

The Greeks and the Romans crowned brides with wreaths of lilies as symbols of purity and fertility; Christians mainly associate the lily with the purity of the Virgin Mary *Left The Annunciation* by Martini and *Right* Catholic Communion Card for Santa Maria Goretti

'Unspotted' and 'Unsullied'

Shakespeare mentions the lily on a score of occasions, always as an emblem of purity, 'the unsullied lily', and sometimes as a direct synonym for whiteness. In *King Henry VIII*, Cranmer says of Queen Elizabeth:

'Yet a virgin,
A most unspotted lily shall she pass
To the ground.'

According to an old superstition, if a man treads upon a lily, he endangers the purity of his wife and daughters.

Symbol of innocence in the living, the lily also signified the removal of sin from the shriven soul at funerals. European folklore tells of lilies springing up on the graves of those executed for crimes of which they were in fact innocent. But such beliefs associate the lily with death, and many people will not have white lilies indoors since they see them as an ill omen. In the garden, however, lilies are a barrier to ghosts.

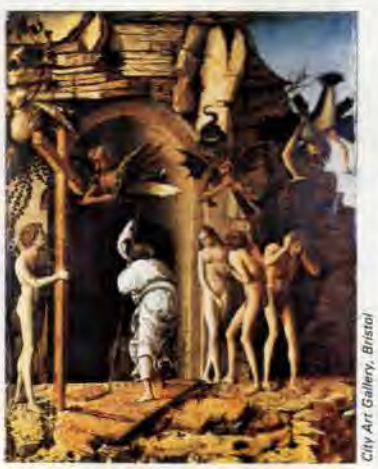
On a more practical level this flower is still used by country people to cure boils. The petals will 'draw' inflammation if their rough side is laid on the spot, and heal with the smooth side. They should preferably be steeped in brandy first. Leaves of tiger lily serve equally well. A Lincolnshire recipe used the mashed-up bulb as a poultice.

In the language of flowers the white lily stands for purity or sweetness, but a yellow one for falsehood or gaiety. To dream of lilies means good luck.

A. J. HUXLEY

Limbo

In Christian tradition, an area on the edge of hell which was not a place of physical torment but of banishment from God's presence: reserved for the righteous who lived before Christ and so had no opportunity of being saved by him; also for children who died before baptism and so could not go to heaven but who did not deserve the pains of hell; and for fools who were not worthy of heaven but were also not responsible for their actions (for them it was a 'fools' paradise').


Scala City Art Gallery, Bristol

Lingam

The phallus, particularly that of the god Shiva in Hinduism, an emblem of male generative and creative power; an object of reverence in Hindu shrines; known from the earliest Indian art where it is a plain stone carving of the penis; often shown in combination with the yoni, the corresponding female symbol, which serves as a base to it.

See PHALLIC SYMBOLISM.

William Macquitty

Chris Barker

Left 'Out of the strong came out sweetness'; the lion as a trade mark suggests the strength and integrity of the product *Below* Bronze head and shoulders of Sekhmet, the lion-headed Egyptian goddess *Right* 15th century Greek mural showing St Mamas riding a lion; in legends the lion often appears as a friend and helper of man

LION

THE SIZE, strength and magnificent appearance of the lion caused it to be associated in ancient times with divinity and hence with royalty; leonine qualities were attributed to gods and goddesses and this animal is still referred to as the 'King of Beasts'. The Egyptian goddess Sekhmet was represented as lion-headed. At Syracuse in Sicily a lion was led in procession in honour of the Greek huntress goddess Artemis and at Baalbek (in modern Lebanon) chants were sung to a lion apparently regarded as divine, while it ate a calf.

The beast appeared frequently in the role of a guardian, a function which persists to this day. Effigies of the lion guarded temples; a chained lion guards the palace of the Emperor of Ethiopia. Even in China, the guardian lion is a common symbol and at the New Year Festival lion dancers used to gambol in the streets.

In recent times the natural habitat of the lion has become greatly curtailed. Only a few remain in western India, and south of the Sahara they exist in diminishing numbers, although they are plentiful in the reserves and national parks of East and South Africa. The symbolism, mythology and folklore of the lion differs in various regions, according to the extent to which people are familiar with it. Among those who know the beast only by hearsay or in captivity its characteristics have been exaggerated and embellished, whereas in the lore of African tribesfolk accustomed to living among lions, they may be revered or regarded, as in some folktales, as rather stupid and ridiculous animals.

'This Land Is Mine'

African names for the lion and sayings about it may express respect or familiarity but seldom horror or terror. The Arabs of Algeria who used to hunt the lion called him by a name equivalent to 'Mr John Johnson' while in Botswana his name means 'the Boy with the Beard'. Such names are sometimes given to awe-inspiring animals or beings from fear of invoking their appearance, if the real name were used. An African tribe calls it 'the Owner of the Land' and according to a Swahili saying the beast's roar means, 'Whose is this land? Mine, mine, mine.'

Among many primitive peoples the distinction between man and animal is blurred; some African tribesfolk believe that a sorcerer can transform himself into a lion and the Bushmen think that a lion can become a man. The Dinka of Sudan regard lions as their totemic ancestors, sleep out in the wilderness without fear and leave portions of the animals they kill for them. On the Congo and Zambesi Rivers the souls of dead chiefs are believed to pass into lions but among the Ngonis of Central Africa this was not thought of as a privilege reserved for chiefs. Some tribes treated a dead lion with ceremonial respect.

In contrast, the lion of folktales may be depicted as easily outwitted by smaller and weaker animals, as in versions of the widespread and universal motif in which the downtrodden get the better of the mighty (as in Cinderella). In the *Panchatantra* (a Sanskrit book of fables), a Tibetan folktale and some African stories the lion is tricked by the jackal or the hare. One of these relates that a lion one day found a hare leaning against a rock. In answer to the lion's inquiry the hare said that the rock was liable to fall. Would the lion kindly help to support it? The lion obligingly put its weight against it while the hare sneaked away, leaving the lion pushing against the perfectly stable rock. This story illustrates the diffusion of folktales for versions of it are told in Georgia and Puerto Rico, as a part of the cultural heritage brought to the New World by slaves. In contrast to this story, the lion in Aesop's fable, 'The Lion's Share', outwits the other animals.

Michael Holford/British Museum

Magnanimous Beast

There are many tales of the magnanimity of the lion, in which the beast spares or befriends human beings. One of the earliest is the story of 'Daniel in the Lion's Den', and the 'Androcles and the Lion' motif is also ancient. A similar story is told of St Jerome, who is often depicted in art with the lion from whose paw he extracted a thorn. According to another variant, a Christian hermit unable to bury his friend in the hard soil of the desert is surprised and gratified when two lions appear and scrape out a grave with their paws.

Although St Peter compared the Devil to 'a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour', in Christian thought the lion acquired symbolism connecting it with noble virtues such as courage and generosity. Christ was called the 'Lion of Judah', and because of the animal's friendly associations with the early Christian desert hermits it became symbolic of the contemplative life, wisdom and generosity. As the emblem of St Mark it became associated with the city of Venice in Italy.

Natural historians of the 15th and 16th centuries gathered together a great store of fabulous lore concerning the lion, most of it quoted or elaborated from earlier Greek and Latin authorities. Although the greater part of it is fantastic, it includes some grains of truth probably gained from observation; such as, that the lion when gorged will go for two or three days without eating and that it will not kill a man except when in great hunger. Among the fabulous appears the old story that the beast is frightened by the crowing of a cock. We are told that the lion, when ill, may be healed by the blood of an ape, that it charms other animals by circling around them marking a line with its tail, that it is afraid of a mouse or a cart-wheel and that clothes wrapped in a lion's skin are safe from moths.

Today the lion remains a symbol of sovereignty and nobility, appearing alike on the Royal Standard and as a trade mark on articles of merchandise.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Sonia Halliday

The nationalist fervour of pre-1914 Germany and Austria was an appropriate backdrop for the mystical sect of Guido von List

GUIDO VON LIST

FOUNDER OF THE OCCULT German nationalist sect of the Armanen, Guido von List was born in 1848. Whereas his close acquaintance Lanz von Liebenfels, who also had a devoted following (see NEW TEMPLARS), was obsessed with the concept of race, List was mainly preoccupied with occult Germanic folklore. While the youthful Hitler was acquainted with von Liebenfels's writings, there is no evidence that he ever read List's. Nevertheless, it is apparent that there were many members of the pre-1914 German youth movement, and also of the influential *Deutschnational Handelsgehilfenverband* (Clerical Workers' Union), which represented extreme right-wing German nationalist views, who were familiar with List's abstruse theories. Although it would be too much to suggest that List was a major prophet of National Socialism, his name would have been known to most early members of the Nazi Party who were interested in Germanic mysticism.

List was the eldest son of a prosperous Viennese leather-goods merchant, and was 29 when his father died in 1877. He then left the family business, which was so mismanaged by his mother that he lost his inheritance. Until the end of the century he made a precarious living as an author, playwright and journalist.

As early as 1862, when he was only 14, it is said that he stood in front of a dilapidated altar in the crypt of St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, and exclaimed: 'When I grow up, I will build a temple to Wotan!' While the history of the revival of Wotan worship in modern Germany is obscure, List may well have been one of its pioneers. At an early age he was steeped in Germanic and Nordic folklore, in that strange world of gods and demons commemorated in Wagner's '*Ring*' cycle.

List's first major published work was *Carnuntum*, a historical novel of the 4th century AD and was followed by his *German Mythological Landscapes* (1891). It was only in 1908 that he emerged as a 'personality' and a Guido von List Society was founded in his honour. The Society was formed at the instigation of a few wealthy admirers to enable him to publish the substance of his 'discoveries', which so far had only been revealed in more or less private lectures. Among the books issued under the Society's imprint were *The Secret of the Runes* (1908); *The Armanism of the Ario-Germanens*, (1908–11); *The Rites of the Ario-Germanens* (1908) and *The Transition from Wotanism to Christianity* published in 1911.

Apart from the Society there was also a secret brotherhood of initiates known as the Armanen. List had invented an ancient race of Germanic wise men of priestly stature whom he called the Armanen. He put forward the theory that their successors, of whom he was the last, had secretly survived throughout the centuries and had left traces of their temples in the names of places, hills and streams. List himself claimed an intuitive or clairvoyant memory of the distant past. All this led to his completely irrational philological techniques which enabled him to discover traces of the Armanen in place names here, there and everywhere. Only List, for example, could have transformed the word hieroglyph, which is of Greek origin, into '*ir-og-lif*' and given it a new and fictitious Germanic source.

Sacred Swastika

Another of his theories was that the swastika was one of the Armanen's most holy symbols. Possibly the earliest allusion to this emblem in a modern German context is List's account of a summer solstice excursion in 1875 to a hilltop near Vienna where he and his friends ceremonially buried wine bottles arranged in the shape of a swastika.

List derived his legendary Armanen from a Germanic tribe, the Herminones, whom he called Irmionen, mentioned by Tacitus, whose *Germania* was prescribed reading for a new generation of Germans who liked to indulge in enthusiastic and seldom historically justifiable ancestor worship. The ancient Germans described by Tacitus were fair haired and blue eyed and for List and his followers they represented a racial ideal. According to List the word 'Irmionen' meant 'children of the sun'. During List's lifetime there were 'Sun' or 'Light' religion groups in existence in Germany but they are unfortunately sparsely documented.

The sacred books of the Armanen, according to List, were written in a 'double language', whose meaning was hidden to profane outsiders but which could be understood by initiates, such as himself. List saw Armanen symbolism everywhere: in old heraldic devices and even in the wooden exterior beams of old houses where, he suggested, they had a runic significance.

The 'Secret Tradition'

Although the Guido von List Society had been founded in Vienna, it had a fair number of members in Germany. These included Philipp Stauff (1876–1923), a violently antisemitic hack journalist who was the Society's official representative in Berlin. Stauff was a founder member in 1912 of the secret Germanen Order which soon recruited a hard core of monomaniac antisemites. The Germanen Order was organized on pseudo-Masonic lines and was intended to be a strictly German counterpart to conventional Freemasonry which was equated with 'international Jewish high-finance' among List's followers (see GERMANEN ORDER).

The Order's original rituals were composed by Hermann Pohl, of Magdeburg, who had previously belonged to a Germanic 'Sun' religion group. In due course Stauff infiltrated a lot of List's eccentric lore into the Order's 'secret tradition'. A lengthy typewritten document drafted in 1921 (now in the West German Federal Archives) indicates the extent to which the Order's leaders envisaged an ideal German state – a prototype for the Third Reich – based upon List's Armanen theories.

List died within a couple of days of his arrival in Berlin in May 1919. He had been invited to spend a holiday at the Pomeranian estate of Eberhard von Brockhusen, the Chancellor of the Germanen Order, but did not survive the strenuous journey from Vienna. The Guido von List Society survived for a few years after his death and then quietly disappeared. Its publications, which now fetch fairly high prices, are still collected by Germans who presumably believe that List had something important to reveal.

ELLIC HOWE

Little People

Respectful and often affectionate term for fairies: believers in fairies frequently preferred not to name them directly for fear of summoning them, and instead used vague, preferably complimentary, terms like 'the little people' or 'the people of peace'; despite the term, not all fairies are believed to be diminutive creatures.

See FAIRIES.

Liturgy

The forms of service used in churches and places of worship; derived from a word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to denote the service of priests and Levites in the Temple: also used more narrowly to mean the Eucharist or Communion service.

to be uſed at Sea.

At the Burial of their Dead at Sea.

LIVER

HARUSPICY, THE EXAMINATION of the internal organs of animals, is a mode of divination of great antiquity. Of all the organs, the liver has been particularly favoured for its prophetic utility. This is because among 'primitive' people the liver was (and sometimes still is) regarded as the seat of life. Furthermore, it was believed that when an animal is sacrificed to god it is in a certain sense absorbed by the god. Hence, the examination of the animal is almost the same as an examination of the god and is therefore a means of ascertaining the divine will and the course of future events. If the liver is the primary organ, it follows that its inspection will be a very powerful form of divination. The art of 'liver-gazing' is known as hepatoscopy.

The earliest known practitioners of hepatoscopy were the Babylonian *baru* priests, who developed the art to a very high level of complexity. It was regarded with great veneration and its use was reserved for kings and the highest in the land. The questions put to the god (usually Shamash, the sun god) to whom the animal was sacrificed were worked out in great detail and precision, as may be seen from the clay tablets on which they were recorded, a large number of which have been discovered by archeologists. Several clay models of sheep's livers have been found that were apparently used for reference and teaching. The oldest of these probably dates from about 2000 BC. Every part of these remarkable objects is covered with symbols, since each was believed to relate to different types of future events. It was not only the general shape and condition of the liver that was thought to be significant but the state and colouring of its component parts. For instance, a swollen gall-bladder betokened an increase in power, a depression in the liver-gate (the *porta hepatis*) a lessening of power. Vein markings and colourings, which are different in every liver, were interpreted according to their resemblance to the weapons and symbols of the gods.

Hepatoscopy has been practised in many parts of the world and still is in regions of Southeast Asia, Borneo and Africa. It was one of the ancient Greek forms of divination and, according to Aeschylus, was among the arts taught to men by Prometheus. In the *Prometheus Bound*, the god, impaled and fettered to the rock, tells the chorus of Oceanids how he showed mortals how to interpret 'the smoothness of the entrails, and what colour the gall must have to please the Deities and the good mottled aspect of the liver.' But it never seems to have been so developed as it was in ancient Babylonia and later in Etruria, whence it passed to Rome. The Etruscans (see ETRUSCANS) believed that the art of haruspicy in general had been taught to them by a minor deity named Tages, a grandson of Jupiter. The legend had it that he appeared from a newly ploughed furrow and told the people many marvels of the secrets of divination which were later written down in 12 books.

The Etruscan *haruspex* was a diviner of many parts. He was adept in the interpretation not only of the entrails and organs of sacrificial animals but also of portents and omens such as thunder and lightning. The latter were believed to be signs of the gods, while from a close examination of the former the divine will could be foretold. The Etruscans developed the art of hepatoscopy, it seems, to a degree of 'accuracy' rivalling that of the Babylonians. A bronze liver discovered at Piacenza in 1877 dates from the 2nd or 3rd century BC and its complex markings show that 'liver-gazing' had joined forces with the astrological ideas of the time. It is divided into 40 zones, each connected with a different god or one of the elements.

The liver, regarded by many primitive peoples as the seat of life, was also used in divination: this bronze Etruscan liver from Piacenza is divided into 40 zones, each connected with a different god or one of the elements

Museo Civico, Piacenza/Fotocolour Gianni Croce, Piacenza

Military Appointment

The early Romans were highly suspicious of foreign cults and beliefs, even when they originated in neighbouring areas such as Etruria. They had strict rules of divination that sought to gain a simple sign of divine approval or otherwise of a proposed course of action. The augurs limited themselves to the observation of the flight of birds or of natural phenomena (see AUGURY; BIRDS). But when their own lore and sacred texts failed to provide satisfactory answers, the Romans called in the foreigners.

The Romans themselves originally used *extispicium* (the examination of *exta*, entrails) only to determine whether or not an animal was worthy of being sacrificed but they gradually turned to it for divination as the old rules were relaxed. One reason for this was that traditional Roman methods of augury were difficult or impractical for an army in the field. When a quick decision was needed, disaster might overtake a force if the commander wasted time scanning the skies. For this reason extispicium, and hepatoscopy in particular, was first used widely by the Romans from the time of the Second Punic War (218–201 BC) for military purposes. By the end of the Republic in the 1st century BC, a haruspex was a permanent member of the staff of every commander-in-chief and was consulted on general campaigning policy and tactics.

During the Roman Empire the opinion of the haruspices was sought not only for military but for civil and even for private purposes. But they were never incorporated into the state religion and although they challenged and in many ways superseded the traditional augurs, the haruspices were never accorded the same reverence as the latter. The Emperor Claudius (41–54 AD) granted them equestrian rank and organized them into a College of Sixty. Yet even then the old doubts prevailed and the College was not an order of priests but a body of salaried experts, rather like a modern firm of consultants. It survived until the early 5th century AD.

Now still as a rock, now darting like quicksilver, this ancient creature's unpredictable movements have inspired both awe and fascination; associated with the life-giving sun, the lizard was believed to cure anything from fever to impotence

LIZARD

IN THE WARMER REGIONS of the world, lizards, a group including some 2500 species, are more numerous and conspicuous than in northern Europe. They vary in size from a few inches to creatures such as the so-called Komodo Dragon ten feet in length. Many of the smaller species bask or run about actively on sun-warmed rocks though the larger lizards and chameleons tend to be sluggish. Some, including the European green lizard, are brightly coloured, others have strange adornments such as skin excrescences or patches of colour which are displayed during courtship. The ability of some species to replace a lost tail is one of their many characteristics that has aroused man's curiosity and wonder.

The sun-loving behaviour of many species has inspired various beliefs that they are associated with the sun. In the ancient Near East they symbolized overpowering heat, and in Egypt they were associated with fecundity, probably because of their increased activity when the Nile floods stimulated the resurgence of life. In Dahomey, the lizard is said to have fetched fire from the sun. The reappearance of lizards after hibernation seemed mysterious and in Europe it was believed that during this period they became blind. It was said that in spring these creatures climb up an eastward-facing wall and look to the east; when the sun rises their sight is restored. European lizards are mostly keen-sighted and so the belief arose as long ago as the time of Pliny (1st century AD) that a lizard talisman restored sight to the blind. Lizards appear carved on corbels in medieval cathedrals, such as Southwell and Wells; they symbolize the life-giving and enlightening power of the gospel.

The idea of the lizard as a god, kin to the gods or their messenger, appears to have been due mainly to its associations with the sun. Such beliefs are particularly characteristic of Polynesia, where lizard cults were observed. The Samoans revered several gods in lizard form. The Maoris considered the green lizard to be an incarnation of Tangaloa, the heaven god, and for the Hervey islanders of Polynesia, Tongaiti, the night heaven god, was a nocturnal spotted lizard. In Africa the Shilluk had a tribal lizard god. The Australian Aranda connected the lizard with their sky and earth myths and believed that the sky would fall if they killed one of these creatures.

Like some other animals this reptile tended to be regarded in some places as evil, in others as beneficent. In the medieval Church it stood for rebirth and resurrection, a significance which it may have owed partly to the influence of the Romans who depicted it on grave monuments as a symbol of hope in life beyond the grave, but among other folk it was associated with death. The Santals of India who believe that the soul may appear as a lizard tell the following tale: as a man lay asleep his soul went off as a lizard to drink from a pitcher but the owner placed a cover on it and the man died. Soon afterwards the pitcher was uncovered and the man revived. Such notions arise among peoples who do not distinguish clearly between unconsciousness and death.

Beliefs of a somewhat similar kind linger in Europe. In Austria it is said that a lizard runs out of the mouth of a delinquent child and quickly disappears. In German folklore there are tales of a lizard who is really a bewitched princess, of another appearing as a lizard after death and of witches transforming themselves into these reptiles. There is a belief in Italy that fairies appear as lizards.

Progeny of Devil and Witch

The dualistic ideas associated with lizards are particularly evident where witchcraft and good and bad luck are concerned. Among the Jews, the lizard was considered unclean – a creature born of sexual intercourse between the Devil and a witch. The somewhat hand-like feet of the lizard may have contributed to the notion that it had an uncanny affinity with human beings. In some areas of France and in Schleswig-Holstein a lizard buried alive under the threshold was considered an antidote against witchcraft and in regions of the Near East lizard amulets were worn. From ancient times the lizard figured in sorcery, as used among the ingredients of the witches' brew in *Macbeth*. A concoction including parts of a lizard was smeared by the door of the person it was hoped to bewitch in some parts of Germany.

Because of their resemblance in some respects to snakes, there was a fairly widespread belief in Europe that lizards could sting. On the other hand, among the Slavs as well as the French and English, the lizard was regarded as a protective spirit against snakes and it was the custom to fix one on the roof of a stable to ward them off. In Périgord in France there was a saying: 'The lizard is man's friend'. In parts of Britain it was believed that if a lizard saw a snake approaching a sleeping man it would awaken him, but that for a lizard to cross the path of a bride was ominous.

In general lizards are considered luck-bringers in France and Germany but in the Central Celebes, Indonesia, they are killed to ward off misfortune. When a lizard's tail is seized by a predator it becomes detached and another grows, but an injury at the base may cause an abnormal two-tailed appearance; Italians regard such a two-tailed lizard as particularly lucky. The Latin writer Aelian (170–235 AD), unaware that a lizard after losing its tail could grow another, stated that the body and tail became reunited.

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Detail from *The Fall of Man*, a painting by Van der Goes, showing Eve being tempted, not by a snake, but by a human-headed lizard; but the lizard has also been regarded more favourably, as a symbol of resurrection

Lizards were regarded as sacred in various parts of the world. Samoans venerated the creature as the son of the High God and the rainbow, possessing power to ask the weather god for propitious weather. According to a local German tradition the lizard licked away Christ's drops of blood and therefore should not be molested. Sicilians say that the little lizards called San Giovanni must not be killed because they are in the presence of the Lord in Heaven and light the lamp to the Lord.

Administered medicinally, potions containing lizard ingredients have been regarded as cures for many kinds of disease varying from running eyes, liver complaints and syphilis to getting rid of warts. On Easter Eve gypsies in southern Europe placed the dried remains of a lizard, together with herbs, in a specially constructed receptacle. Then all the members of the clan spat on the reptile as it was carried from tent to tent before being thrown into running water. It was believed that in this way the illnesses which might have affected the community during the coming year were banished. In Arabia lizard medicine was prescribed to remedy the impotence of aged men – probably on the assumption that they would acquire some of the vitality of such an active creature. To cure fever a lizard would be buried alive in Madagascar. During the Middle Ages it was believed in England that by licking a lizard a person could acquire the ability to heal wounds and sores by licking them. There was a belief in Germany that rupture in children could be cured by catching a lizard, making the child bite it, and then suspending it on a reed in the smoke of a fire. As the lizard died the rupture would be cured.

Lizard medicine was also administered to remedy the ills of cattle and horses, though, in contrast, Bretons believed the green lizard to be poisonous and blamed it for killing cows by biting them on the nose. In antiquity it was thought that fruit trees could be prevented from bearing unsound fruit by smearing them with the bile of the green lizard. Pliny advocated this procedure and Konrad Gesner, the 16th century Swiss biologist, also recommended it. In Silesia the practice continued into the 20th century.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

The god Lugus or Lugh, who was widely invoked among the Celtic world under a variety of names, appears in medieval Welsh stories as the heroic Lleu, many-skilled warrior and possessor of magical powers

LLEU

THE BIRTH of Lleu, how he acquired his name, his youthful deeds, and his 'death' by his transformation into an eagle is told in the 'Fourth Branch' of the *Mabinogion*, the story of *Math*, which dates to the latter part of the 11th century. The story is heavily embroidered with motifs of an obvious international folktale type; but underneath, and apart from these elements, a nucleus of genuine Celtic mythology can be detected. The tale clearly contains fragments of an ancient cult legend in which the hero Lleu is in fact the god who was widely invoked throughout the Celtic world, in the form Lugus on the Continent, Lugh in Ireland and Lleu in Wales. Lleu is portrayed in the Welsh tales as the son of the sorcerer-warrior Gwydion (see GWYDION) as a result of his incestuous union with his sister, the goddess Aranrhod. Gwydion, who is sometimes referred to as the boy's uncle, carries off the child immediately he is born, and rears him. When he is four years old, 'and it had been remarkable for a boy eight years old to be as big as he', he takes him to see his mother at her stronghold, Caer Aranrhod. She rejects him, and swears he shall have no name unless she herself bestows one on him. This is a dreadful destiny, for in pagan Celtic society the name had a sacred significance – without a name one was virtually without identity. Gwydion deceives his sister, and brings it about that she does in fact name her son.

By magic, Gwydion turns seaweed into fine leather. He creates a splendid ship out of dulse and sea-girdle and, having first transformed himself and the boy into people of different appearance, he sails to the entrance of Caer Aranrhod. 'He took away their own semblance and put another semblance upon them, so that they would not be recognized.' "What men are in the ship?", asked Aranrhod. "Shoemakers", said they.' She asks for a pair of the golden shoes he is making. Finally she goes to the ship herself to be fitted. Gwydion is cutting out and the boy stitching. As Gwydion is measuring Aranrhod's foot, a wren alights on the ship; the boy aims at it with supreme skill. 'Faith,' she said, 'with a deft hand has the fair one hit it.' Thus she inadvertently names her son Lleu Llaw Gyffes (*lleu*, 'fair, bright': *llaw*, 'hand': *gyffes*, 'deft, skilful'). The story goes on to say that 'For that reason he was known as one of the three golden shoemakers'.

One of the early Welsh triads is entitled *Three Golden Shoemakers of the Island of Britain* (a form of literary composition in which subjects or statements are arranged in groups of three in accordance with Celtic custom):

> Caswallawn . . .
> and Manawydan . . .
> and Lleu Skilful-Hand when he and Gwydion were seeking a name and arms from his mother Aranrhod.

Of particular interest in connection with the above episode is the fact that the Gaulish Lugus is invoked in plural form on an inscription from Uxama in Spain set up by the *collegium sutorum*, 'college of shoemakers'. So, among the many skills that this god evinces, that of shoemaking seems to have been of importance.

Wife Formed From Flowers

Lleu's mother, angry at having given her son his name unintentionally, swears that he shall never carry arms until she herself equips him with them – a sorry fate for a hero-elect. In the course of time, Gwydion once more outwits his sister with Lleu's assistance – for they are both powerful magicians. They set out for her stronghold disguised as bards. Gwydion delights the company with his tales, and the two men finally retire leaving the gathering well pleased. Early next day Gwydion uses his magic powers to create an invading host; Aranrhod hears a great clamour, and sees a vast fleet of ships on the water. She comes to the two poets for aid; Gwydion contrives it that she actually provides her son with arms, and puts them on him. At once the magical illusion ceases; Gwydion is triumphant again. Aranrhod, furious at being tricked, swears that Lleu will never have a wife 'of the race that is now on this earth'.

Math, Gwydion's uncle, himself a powerful sorcerer, assists him in fashioning a wife for Lleu out of flowers; she is given the name Blodeuwedd, meaning 'flowers'. All goes well for some time, until she is unfaithful to him while he is absent from home. Blodeuwedd and her lover plot to kill Lleu, but he is almost invincible. By flattery she gets him to tell her the complicated way in which his death can be brought about. Her lover, Gronw, then strikes the fatal blow as Lleu is 'rehearsing' his death for his wife's edification. Here there is a very interesting development in the tale, one in which the mythological elements stand out clearly from the background of international folktale motifs. When Lleu is 'killed' by the poisonous spear 'the shaft started out of him and the head stayed in him. And he flew up in the form of an eagle and gave a horrid scream. And after that he was seen no more.' When he has taken on bird form he in fact flies off and perches in the upper branches of a marvellous oak tree, a tree having special significance for the pagan Celtic peoples (see OAK). This tree is reminiscent of a whole group of sacred, venerated trees in the early Irish tradition. It is situated on a plain, as were many trees of this religious character; it could not be soaked by rain, nor destroyed by fire, a sign of its immortality.

Gwydion goes to seek out Lleu, and finds him in a sorry state in the tree. While Gwydion sings to Lleu, the eagle descends the tree, then alights on Gwydion's knee; Gwydion strikes it with his magic staff and it becomes Lleu again, but pitifully emaciated. Within a year he is healed and is completely restored to his former beauty and vigour. The episode in the tree is in itself fascinating; Gwydion refers to the nine score hardships the 'fair lord' has suffered in the tree. This is strangely reminiscent of a passage in the *Havamal* (a poem in the *Poetic Edda*) which describes a sojourn of the Germanic god Odin (see ODIN) in the sacred ash tree, Yggdrasil, when he sacrificed himself to himself. 'I know that I hung full nine nights on the windy tree, wounded by the javelin, given to Odin, myself to myself.'

Lleu, with Gwydion's aid, takes his revenge on his slayers. The lover Gronw is killed, and the episode is commemorated

in one of the early triads, the *Three Faithless War-Bands of the Island of Britain*: 'The War-band of Goronwy the Radiant of Penllyn, who refused to receive the poisoned spear from Lleu Skilful-Hand on behalf of their lord, at the Stone of Goronwy at the head of the Cynfal . . .' The faithless wife is turned into an owl; 'and for that reason birds are hostile to the owl; and the owl is still called Blodeuwedd.' The story ends with Lleu restored to his former position, ruling prosperously and at peace.

Lleu's counterpart in Ireland, Lugh, was known as *samildanach*, 'skilled in many crafts', which is paralleled by the Welsh epithet Llaw Gyffes, 'skilful hand'. The story of *The Second Battle of Moytura*, like the mabinogi of *Math*, points to the original character of Lugh-Lleu as a god of craftsmanship amongst other things. Lugh wields a powerful spear; 'the spear that Lugh possessed was one of the marvellous things that the Tuatha Dé Danann (tribes of the goddess Dann) brought with them to Ireland'. In the Welsh story Lleu can only be killed by a specially-made spear; here the tale is given a Christian slant, but Lugh-Lleu's connection with a magical spear seems to be endemic in the early pagan tradition.

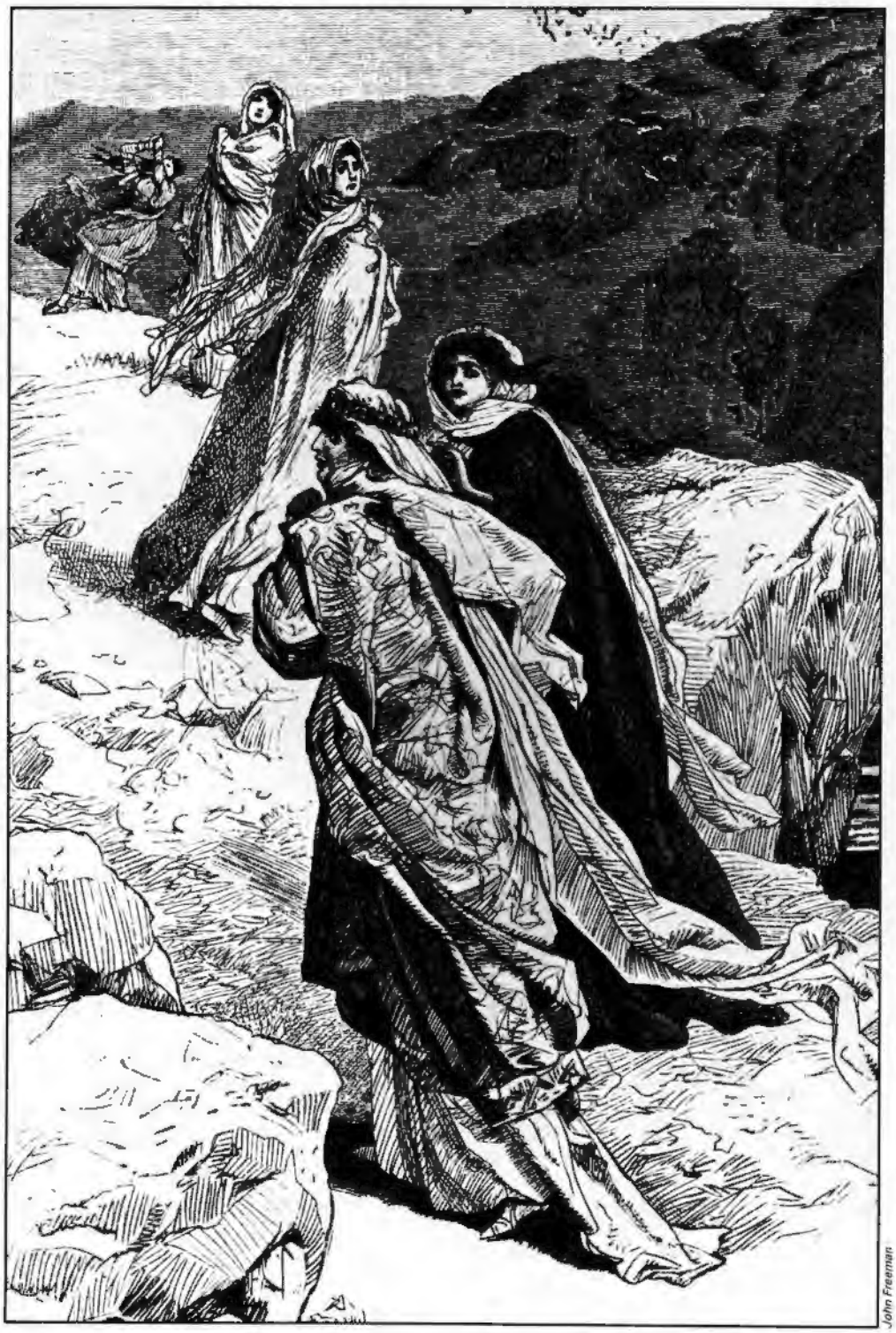
In *The Second Battle of Moytura* the arrival of Lugh at the court of Nuada the king is described. The gate-keeper demands to know what art he practises, for no one can enter the gates without a specific craft. Lugh claims to be a carpenter; 'We do not need one, we have a carpenter,' says the gate-keeper. Lugh then says 'I am a smith'. 'We do not need one, we have a smith'; he continues to claim to be a champion, a harper, a hero, a poet, a historian, a cupbearer, sorcerer or leech, and so on. Finally he tells the gate-keeper to ask the king whether he has any man who possesses all these skills together. Nuada finally says 'Let him into the enclosure, for never before has a man like him come into this fort'. Lugh then, like Lleu, is young, brilliant, a sorcerer, a warrior, an all-skilled divinity of the type so esteemed in Celtic mythology. He is represented as being the divine father of the great hero Cu Chulainn (see CU CHULAINN); he aids him in battle, and when he is mortally wounded he sends him to sleep and heals his wounds with his magic herbs:

> When the young warrior was come up to Cu Chulainn he spoke to him, and condoled with him for the greatness of his labour and the length of time he had passed without sleep . . . "But I will bring you help" said the young warrior. "Who are you then?" asked Cu Chulainn. "Your father from the otherworld am I, even Lugh son of Ethliu . . ." Then it was that the warrior from the Sidh (an otherworld dwelling) laid plants and healing herbs from the Sidh fortress, and put a healing charm into the cuts and stabs, into the sores and gaping wounds of Cu Chulainn, so that Cu Chulainn recovered during his sleep . . .

On the Continent, as in Britain, there are various place names containing the name of this divinity. *Lugudunum*, for example, 'Fort of Lugus' (modern Lyons), where his great annual festival Lughnasa *(Lugnasad)* on 1 August was clearly replaced by the Festival of Augustus under Roman influence. The feast of Lughnasa has survived widely in the folk traditions of the Celtic world. Other names, such as *Luguvalium*, 'Strong in the god Lugus' (Carlisle), testify to the widespread popularity and influence of this pagan Celtic deity. The mythological stories of the early Irish literary tradition; the evidence of place names and inscriptions; the fragments of true mythology which underlie the international folktale elements in the mabinogi of *Math* – all these show that in the bright dynamic character of Lleu Skilful-Hand we have the genuine remains of a divine figure and of original cult legends; tales which commemorate the deeds and exploits of an early Celtic deity – a god of many skills, possessor of potent magic; a good wielder of weapons, a fine poet; a wise ruler, a good teller of tales.

(See also MABINOGION.)

ANNE ROSS



Blodeuwedd flees from her husband Lleu accompanied by her maidens: determined to take his revenge on his slayers, Lleu catches up with his faithless wife and turns her into an owl

John Freeman

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Sometimes god, sometimes giant, a trickster and thief, Loki was primarily responsible for the death of the beautiful Balder

LOKI

THE AMBIVALENT CHARACTER of Loki – god or giant, jester or demon – presents one of the most tantalizing problems in Scandinavian mythology. Loki plays an important part in the myths. He carries out pranks which bring the gods into danger and then by his cunning rescues them again. He accompanies the great gods, Odin and Thor, on many enterprises and proves himself an accomplished shape-changer and master of duplicity. Finally, out of seemingly inexplicable malice, he causes the death of Balder and so opens the way to the catastrophe of the Twilight of the Gods.

There is no serious evidence that any cult of Loki ever existed in pagan Germany or Scandinavia, yet carved pictures of some of his doings survive on stones of the Viking Age in the British Isles. Possibly the darker side of his character has been influenced by the conception of the Christian Devil, and a menacing horned figure in bonds on a cross fragment from Kirkby Stephen in Westmorland could depict either Satan or Loki.

In the myths Loki is closely associated with the treasure of the gods. One story tells how he mischievously cut off the hair of Thor's wife Sif, and Thor would have killed him had he not found two cunning dwarfs to fashion new hair from real gold. The dwarfs also made a magic ship for Freyr and a spear for Odin. Then Loki set two other dwarfish craftsmen to compete with these smiths, wagering his head that such treasures could not be equalled. The second pair made the golden boar of Freyr and Odin's magic ring Draupnir, and finally began to forge a hammer for Thor (see HAMMER). Fearing he might lose his wager, Loki turned himself into a fly and tried to

Loki maliciously caused the death of Balder at the hands of the blind god Hoder, an act which opened the way to the final catastrophe of the Twilight of the Gods: from an MS in the Royal Library, Copenhagen

Royal Library, Copenhagen

Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

At a banquet given by Aegir, lord of the seas, Loki insulted all the gods and goddesses, and was driven out by Thor: a painting by Constantin Hansen

spoil the work, and as he stung the smith on the eyelid at a crucial moment, the hammer was left with too short a handle. Nevertheless the gods pronounced it the finest of all the treasures, and Loki only kept his head because he insisted his neck was not included in the wager and might not be touched; in the end they sewed his lips together instead.

Troublemaker of Asgard

When the giants try to steal the treasures of the gods, Loki is always involved. Once the giant Thjazi bore him off to the land of giants and only released him on condition that he brought him the golden apples which ensured the gods perpetual youth. Loki lured Idun, who guarded the fruit, out of Asgard and Thjazi bore her off with her apples, leaving the gods to grow old and wrinkled. Loki was threatened with death if he did not bring the apples back, so he flew to giantland in the form of a falcon, turned Idun into a nut and flew back, pursued by Thjazi in the form of an eagle. He reached the walls of Asgard just in time, and the gods set fire to a heap of shavings and singed Thjazi's wings, so that he fell into Asgard and was slain.

Another giant, Geirrod, captured Loki while he was journeying in falcon shape and starved him for three months until he promised to entice Thor to his abode without his hammer or belt of strength. Loki managed this but Thor was helped by a giantess who lent him her staff, another belt and iron gloves. Possibly Loki was also responsible for the theft of Thor's hammer by the giant Thrym. If so, he made amends, for he accompanied Thor, who was disguised as Freyja, on an expedition to retrieve the hammer and managed to allay all suspicions by his quick answers. There is also a tale of how Loki stole Freyja's necklace for Odin, turning himself into a flea and biting her as she slept so that it was possible to unclasp and remove the treasure.

On another occasion Loki brought Odin and Hoenir into danger when, with a well-aimed stone, he killed an otter eating a salmon by a waterfall. The otter was the son of Hreidmar in animal form, and Hreidmar seized and bound the gods and demanded as payment for his son's life sufficient gold to cover the otterskin completely. Loki was sent to find the gold, caught the dwarf Andvari swimming as a fish in the river, and forced him to surrender a great golden treasure in exchange for his release.

Loki helped the gods once more when a giant was building a marvellous horse, Svafilfari. The giant had been promised the goddess Freyja as his wife, with the sun and moon thrown in as extra payment, if he could finish the work in the course of one winter, and the gods became afraid that he would succeed and claim his reward. Then Loki turned himself into a mare and lured away the stallion, so that the giant could not fulfil the conditions and fell a victim to Thor's hammer. The result of Loki's encounter with Svafilfari was a wonderful foal with eight legs, and this became Odin's horse Sleipnir, who carried him on his journeys to the land of the dead.

Most of the Loki stories ended happily for the gods, with one important exception, the death of Balder (see BALDER). When the gods realized Loki's guilt, they resolved to kill him. He evaded them for a while in the form of a salmon, but Kvasir the wise found the shape of a burnt net among the ashes of Loki's hearth, reconstructed it and caught the salmon by its tail. The gods then bound him with the entrails of his son, beneath three flat stones. Above his head a snake dropped poison but his faithful wife Sigyn caught it in a bowl, and it is only when she goes to empty this that the writhings of Loki cause the earth to quake. He is doomed to lie thus until the end of the world, and in the account of what will happen at the destruction of the world Loki reappears to fight beside the giants and help to encompass the final overthrow of Asgard. A panel which seems to represent Loki in his bonds and Sigyn beside him with her bowl may be seen on the Gosforth Cross in Cumberland, a Viking monument of the 10th century. Thus behind the merry tales of Loki's pranks, there are more sombre associations with death and evil. He appears as a bitter-tongued troublemaker in the mythological poem *Lokasenna*, when he reviles all the gods and goddesses in turn, accusing them of stupidity, cowardice and

every kind of scandalous behaviour. Sometimes he appears as a terrible giant in the underworld, and his children are said to be the wolf who finally swallows up the sun, the world serpent who lurks in the depths of the sea, and Hel, the corpse-like queen of the realm of death. The picture of the bound Loki struggling in the depths of the earth resembles that of the bound giant in a series of myths and folk beliefs from the Caucasus, and possibly this particular myth may have been influenced by tales brought back by the Vikings from Russia and the Near East. This might explain the tradition about Utgard-Loki, the Loki of the Outer Regions, who in the Latin history of Saxo Grammaticus appears as a loathsome giant lying in a cavern surrounded by death and decay.

Many attempts have been made to explain the strange contradictions in Loki's character. It has been suggested that he was originally a fire god (*logi* means fire), or that he may be identified with a mysterious god Lodur who is mentioned among the deities who took part in the creation of mankind. Another more helpful suggestion is that he is an example of the trickster figure (see TRICKSTER) who is found, for instance, in the myths and folklore of the North American Indians. The trickster takes on animal form, and often becomes a female, as Loki does; he appears in many comic and disgusting situations, and plays many pranks, sometimes appearing as a mocking shadow of the creator god; he is also a culture hero who brings benefits to mankind. He is a popular character among storytellers, and many folktales are adapted so as to present him as the central figure. Dumezil believed that the figure of Loki as the arch-thief is an extremely ancient one, perhaps going back to Indo-European conceptions of the gods. Whatever his origin, Loki will be remembered as long as Norse myths continue to be told, above all for his part in Balder's death.

(See also RAGNAROK.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

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Lord of Misrule

Master of the revels, who presided over the festivities and buffoonery of the Christmas season in medieval times; in Scotland he was called the Abbot of Unreason; probably descended from the mock king of the Roman Saturnalia; the Bean King presided over the revels of Twelfth Night.

See BEAN; CHRISTMAS

Lorelei

Tall rock on the right bank of the Rhine, near St Goar in Germany, which is noted for its echo; also the name of the water nymph who haunts the rock, combing her hair and singing, to lure boatmen to death on the rocks below; invented in the 19th century, the story is best known from a poem by Heinrich Heine.

The belief that people of British stock are descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel is one of the theories based on the disappearance of these people after their deportation from Palestine in the 8th century BC

LOST TRIBES OF ISRAEL

THE PROBLEM of the whereabouts of the so-called 'lost tribes' of Israel has provoked much speculation which, in the light of biblical prophecy, has frequently taken a religious turn. The background of the problem is that on the death of Solomon, about 926 BC, his son Rehoboam succeeded to the throne of Israel. When the new king rejected demands for reform, the northern part of the country seceded and became a separate state under Jeroboam, the popular leader. Northerners and southerners were alike Israelites, claiming to be the chosen people of their God, but while the north appropriated the name of Israel, the southern kingdom, centred on Jerusalem, was known as Judah. Its people were the ancestors of the Jews: despite all migrations and intermarriage with Gentiles, the main body of the Jewish community everywhere is of Judahite descent, hence the word 'Judaism'. The 'lost tribes' are the descendants, or presumed descendants, of the northerners.

'Israel' first appears as an historical people in an Egyptian inscription dated between 1230 and 1215 BC. The Hebrew serfs depicted in Exodus had probably left Egypt under Rameses II, somewhere about 1280. At the time of the inscription they were gradually settling in Canaan. Moses had given them a loose unity by his own leadership and the cult of Yahweh, the Lord God, who had rescued them from bondage and promised them the land of Canaan.

The book of Genesis, which was compiled after centuries of reflection on these events, portrays Yahweh as the Supreme Being, and asserts the Israelites' descent from patriarchs who possessed the same country long before, with Yahweh's blessing.

The Twelve Tribes

There is no doubt that Israel began as a group of tribes, or that Genesis draws on credible traditions about their origin. The full number is always given as 12. However, the list of tribes with their territories is a little confused. Genesis (chapter 49) traces them back in semi-mythical style to the 12 sons of the patriarch Jacob or Israel, from whom they took their names: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. But the parcelling-out of Canaan described in the book of Joshua does not provide for a Joseph tribe but instead for two half-tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, supposed to be descended from Joseph's two sons. The Levites are a priestly caste rather than a tribe, and live in all parts of the land.

After various changes, the tribe of Judah, which was at first small and perhaps rather heterogeneous, rose to supremacy in the south. It absorbed part of Simeon, and more or less annexed Benjamin. The southern bloc thus formed was always somewhat aloof from the north, and the strip of land between was debatable. David began his reign as king of the south only. When the north submitted to him, he was anointed separately. The split between north and south under his grandson Rehoboam was, to some extent, a return to the pre-Davidic state of affairs.

After the secession, the northern group of tribes counted as ten, the southern as two. The arithmetic was imprecise. Judah gave its name to the southern kingdom, and a recognizable Benjamin survived within this, as well as a Levite element. The southern Simeonites were no longer thought of as distinct. The north, the 'kingdom of Israel', claimed such Simeonite remnants as still maintained an identity, and most of the Levites, making up, with the other tribes, a total of eight-and-two-large-fractions, or (by courtesy) ten. Despite the discrepancy in number of tribes, the difference in size between the two kingdoms was not great.

Judah kept Jerusalem, the Davidic dynasty, the Temple, and the Ark of the Covenant which was housed there. It was a poorer, more rustic state than Israel, but less prone to disturbance, political or spiritual.

Michael Holford

In the 8th century BC the Assyrians invaded the kingdom of Israel, which had split away from the southern kingdom of Judah, and deported many of the inhabitants: this is the origin of the mystery of the 'lost tribes of Israel'. Details from reliefs in the British Museum, showing King Tiglath-Pileser III, one of the conquerors of Israel (*left*), and his captives being counted and taken away in carts (*right*)

The north was more sophisticated and open to pagan influence, as is shown in the story of Ahab and his defection to the worship of Baal. Also, as it lacked the Temple, its kings set up new shrines for Yahweh which never enjoyed the same prestige. In spite of its assumption of the sacred name 'Israel', and in spite of the zeal of its great prophet Elijah, the northern kingdom drifted into religious ambiguity. The Old Testament writers who record its history are of southern allegiance, and denounce even its Yahweh cult as semi-idolatrous. With every allowance made for their bias, it is clear that while paganizing tendencies were checked in Judah by prophets and reforming sovereigns, they made deep inroads among the tribes of the north.

Deported by the Assyrians

The disaster that befell them was therefore considered to be a divine judgement (2 Kings, chapter 17). In 734 Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria invaded the northern kingdom, deported some of its people, and held on to part of its territory. The Judahites were his allies. After further upheavals the Assyrians besieged Samaria, the northern capital, which was taken and destroyed by Sargon II in 721. Following precedents set by his predecessors, he effected a mass transfer of populations.

This event is the point of origin of the 'lost tribes' problem. The Bible implies that all the northerners were deported. An Assyrian inscription gives the figure as 27,290, and although this may refer only to one instalment of several, it is unlikely that the conquerors emptied the country altogether. Probably they took away most of the Israelites who were concentrated in the larger inhabited places – the upper part of society, the dominant strata of all ten tribes – and left only a poor and disorganized peasantry.

They then refilled the area with colonists from Babylon and other cities. Racial and religious intermingling produced, in time, the hybrid Samaritan stock practising a debased version of the Israelite religion, which the Jews so deeply detested. The surviving strain of the ten tribes in the Samaritan populace dwindled steadily. Whatever pedigrees individuals might still claim, the northern tribal system was dead in its homeland. The topic which has engrossed so many minds, however, is the fate of Sargon's deportees, and the possibility that in some part of the world the northern tribes do still exist in much the same way as the southerners may be said to, because their Jewish descendants still maintain a collective identity which derives from them, however much it may have been spiritualized.

The Faithful Remnant

In 587 Judah suffered the same fate as the north. The Babylonians captured Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and carried off the upper stratum of the inhabitants. But these Israelites of Judah, sustained in exile by prophets and teachers, remained faithful to their religion. In 539 the Persian king Cyrus took Babylon and allowed them to return. Among the few who did, to build a new Temple in Jerusalem, were Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Jerusalem was again the religious headquarters, and the majority who did not return were still spiritually loyal to Zion, wherever they might be dispersed.

These heirs of Judah, inside and outside Palestine, were the original Jews. They produced the Old Testament in its present form. With the end of the northern kingdom and its confusing political use of the name 'Israel', this name could revert to its true sense of the chosen people. The Jews were the faithful remnant who inherited the Lord's promises. From the 5th century BC onward, they were 'Israel', and apart from a few ambiguous phrases, there is no biblical indication that anybody else was. The Israel of Malachi, one of the last books of the Old Testament to be written, is the Jewish community and the same usage occurs in the New Testament.

The Jews who restored Jerusalem under Persian protection were willing to accept the surviving Yahweh-worshippers of the south back into the fold (Ezra 6.21). But they refused to accept the hybrid northerners, despite their Israelite blood; the northerners, in their view, were all condemned by the ancestral paganization and rejected by the Lord. Samaria was thus driven into permanent schism. The Jews considered themselves to have become the true representatives of all the 12 tribes (Ezra 6.17).

Some of them seem to have allowed, eventually, that if Jews intermarried with people of northern ancestry, the descendants could count as belonging to whichever northern tribe was concerned. This at least is the simplest explanation of the reference in Luke (2.36), where the Jewish prophetess Anna is 'of the tribe of Asher'. An implication that the Jewish community may contain vestiges of all the tribes, and certainly represents them all spiritually, reappears in the Epistle of James (1.1). Jesus refers to the 12 tribes in Matthew (19.28). When he speaks of his ministry to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' (15.24) he may be referring to people of Israelite antecedents, in or out of Samaria, who have lost touch with the faith which should be theirs.

At all events there is no reason to think, as some theorists do, that the reference is to the northerners deported in 721 BC, or that Jesus knew where these 'lost tribes' lingered on and contemplated a mission to them. It is first necessary to grasp what

conclusions the Jews did reach about their fate. The Assyrians 'placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes', according to 2 Kings, 17.6; the author says they are there 'until this day', that is, the date of writing. In other words the deported ten tribes still had a recognized identity in the 6th century BC, when 2 Kings was composed, and were living at the time in Mesopotamia and Persia.

The Jewish historian Josephus, in the 1st century AD, speaks of the ten tribes as somewhere east of the Euphrates River. He does not seem to regard them as lost; they are 'an immense multitude' dwelling beyond the Roman frontier. The apocryphal book 2 Esdras, a little later, gives a story of the tribes wandering on past the Euphrates into a region called Arzareth. Arzareth, however, is not the name of a real location but is taken from two Hebrew words meaning 'another land' (Deuteronomy 29.28).

The Talmud which, after Scripture itself, is the foundation of orthodox Judaism, preserves an obscure hope that the missing tribes will at last be found, purified, and re-grafted to the faithful Judahite stock in the Promised Land. But the rabbis are not so rash as to speculate in detail. The lost tribes are generally ignored, or rather left to God. In some sense they still have a separate existence and are still ten, and that is all we can say.

Jewish tradition adds a few further stories. One concerns a man named Eldad, who turned up in medieval Europe and allegedly belonged to the tribe of Dan. No one was certain who he was or where he came from. There is also a legend of a River Sambatyon, and a secret fastness beyond, where the tribes are hidden. Sabbatai Zevi, who claimed to be the Messiah in the 1660s, was expected to fetch them home to Jerusalem. He failed to do so. Here the Jewish trail ends.

The speculative quest for the lost tribes is a non-Jewish phenomenon, and sometimes vocally anti-Jewish. A recurrent idea is that the Jews have disguised the truth in an attempt to monopolize the divine blessings, and that in reality they themselves are the apostates (more or less), while some other nation is the true Israel of God.

The British Israelites

Ethnologists, in general, deny that the lost tribes could still be a distinctive grouping at all. The deportees must long since have been absorbed by other nations. Some, as noted, may have intermarried with Jews of the dispersion and thus re-entered the continuing Israelite body. Probably far more intermarried with Gentiles. The northerners as a whole never attained the elaborate and stubborn religious identity which preserved the Jews. Intermarriage must almost always have ended distinctiveness after a very few generations. It is possible that a few so-called Jewish communities in Kurdistan and the Caucasus are of northern Israelite descent. But even if they are, they do not constitute a people.

The least fantastic of the theories which profess to locate the lost tribes asserts that the Afghans are Israelites. A claim has been advanced for the Japanese, and study of the American Indians has prompted several fancies on the same lines. The tribes are supposed to have crossed the Bering Strait on the ice and marched southward. Curiously enough, one of the most valuable pioneer works on ancient Mexico was produced by Lord Kingsborough in an effort to prove this thesis.

Most famous of all is the British Israel doctrine. It declares that the exiles wandered through Europe and settled in the British Isles. They became totally paganized on the way, but were converted to Christianity in their new home, and have since proved their character as the chosen of God by taking a lead in the Reformation.

Most of the ethnological and philological arguments employed to support such notions are flimsy in the extreme. We are told, for instance, that 'British' is the Hebrew *b'rit'ish*, meaning 'Covenant Man'. The historical arguments are seldom much better. But the near-worthlessness of the facts adduced is not always fatal to the case. Often these are regarded, not as the evidence at all, but merely as checks or verifications of a belief to be held on other grounds.

British Israelites do not claim that the British people are the lost tribes *because of* the legends and alleged linguistic coincidences which are cited in support of that view. Their starting-point is the Bible, read in a fundamentalist spirit. The prophets foretell various things about Israel which have not been fulfilled in the Jews: that God's people will be powerful, that they will be 'a nation and a company of nations', and so forth. Also, a few passages (notably Ezekiel 36.15–25) certainly seem to keep up the distinction between Israel and Judah after the exile of both, and to foreshadow a final return and reunion.

God's Promises

Fundamentalists refuse to admit that an inspired prophecy can ever be conditional unless it is explicitly stated to be so. Nor do they acknowledge that different inspired writers can use terms in different senses. The outcome here is a logic which runs as follows: firstly, that God's promises must be literally fulfilled; secondly, that they have not been fulfilled in the Jews and, in fact, never can be entirely fulfilled unless there is an Israel distinct from Judah, which must therefore exist; thirdly, that this Israel must still be what it was when the distinction arose, that is, the complete northern tribal system; fourthly, that the prophesied reunion with Judah has not yet happened, and finally, therefore, that the complete northern tribal system must still exist somewhere as a distinct entity, destined sooner or later to be revealed and – presumably – to win the allegiance of the more enlightened Jews.

The British Israelite, or any other theorist

Four knights hold banners with the emblems of four of the 12 Jewish tribes, the lion of Judah, the eagle of Reuben, the bull of Ephraim and the serpent of Dan: from a German Pentateuch, 14th century. The British, Afghans, Japanese and American Indians have all been claimed as the descendants of the 'lost tribes'

who thinks on these lines, feels no obligation to produce scholarly proofs that the lost tribes exist. He already knows that they do because, on biblical grounds, they must. Their reality is an axiom, not a conclusion. His non-biblical arguments are offered mainly as indications confirming the belief he already holds.

While the British Empire endured, the prophetic part of the British Israel theory had a certain force. It was at its strongest after 1917, when Britain took charge of the Holy Land and sponsored Jewish settlement. In that context, the accession of Edward VIII, known to his intimates as David, looked like a fulfilment of the prophecy in Ezekiel (37.24). But while a case could be made out for the Empire being Israel in some symbolic sense, the case for literal ethnic links with the lost tribes could not be sustained. It was altogether too complicated. Celtic Britons, Scots, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, all had to be Israelites of the northern branch. So the Welsh national designation 'Cymry' was equated with 'Cimmerians', the Saxons were alleged to have been 'Sacae' or Scythians, and the Cimmerians and Scythians were then said to have been identical with each other and with northern Israel.

The theory was handicapped further by prejudiced views on the history of the Church, and by entanglement with such aberrations as pyramidology. After 1936 it slowly declined. Its solid appeal lay in the public events which seemed to bear out some of the prophecies. In the post-imperial age, the absence of any such apparent fulfilments reduces the lost tribes to a theme of speculation only.

GEOFFREY ASHE

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Throwing dice or coins, or selecting a biblical verse with a pin are seemingly random operations, but the patterns of chance may be subject to occult laws which as yet we can only guess at; the drawing of lots may be a method of unveiling wisdom concealed deep in man's unconscious

LOTS

THE DIVINERS OF ANTIQUITY believed in the possibility of predicting good or ill fortune. The materialist may scoff but there are many in the West today, and far more in the East, who do not for a moment doubt it, provided certain techniques are mastered and applied. Among the many methods for discovering what the future holds and the answers to the vast number of problems set by the human condition is the time-honoured one of casting lots, a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon, *hlot*. Known as astragalomancy or astragyromancy, this method is supposed, rightly or wrongly, to make clear to man the designs of providence, the will of the gods, the decrees of fate. And by this seemingly chancy proceeding disputes may be settled, decisions arrived at and forthcoming periods – propitious or the reverse – illumined.

The objects used in casting are dice, dominoes or tiddlywinks, coins that bear a different image on either side or pairs of knucklebones. In addition, many other small objects with or without distinguishing marks or symbols on them may be used, such as coloured marbles, glass beads, pebbles or precious stones (cleromancy; lithomancy). They are shaken or mixed in an urn or similar receptacle, from which one or more may be drawn or thrown on the ground at random. Arrows, sticks, rods, discs or plates can serve the same purpose.

The meaning of the number, colour, shape, symbol or marking is interpreted by a seer, or with the help of works such as the Chinese I Ching in which these numbers and symbols are equated with written 'answers' or predictions (see I CHING). The gift of clairvoyance of course gives a deeper interpretation than the written word.

A modern method of divination from dice, which is not intended to be taken too seriously, is shown in the diagram. Choose a question from the list, or make up a question of your own. Concentrate on it while shaking two dice and throwing them within a circle that has been traced on the top of a table. Add the two numbers revealed. Then throw again, adding these numbers to the former. With this total consult the list of answers (see diagram).

String of Destiny

The Greeks used verses taken from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, while the Romans preferred to take theirs from Virgil. Such verses were inscribed on a number of discs which were strung together, called *sortes* (from the Latin *serere*, to string). Their popularity led to the title Sors being added to the many names bestowed upon the goddess Fortuna. At the famous oracular centre of Praeneste, the sortes were inscribed upon tablets carved from sacred oak trees and housed in a chest or ark made of hallowed olive wood. To ascertain the ruling of the presiding deity the inquirer received a tablet drawn from this chest by an acolyte, which could only be done on certain days of the year. The prophetic words found upon the tablet were then made clear or interpreted by a learned and pious priest. If the prediction proved to be favourable and was eventually fulfilled, it was the custom for the satisfied inquirer to present a votive offering to the temple of the goddess. Later, in Imperial Rome, the Virgilian Sortes of the Latin augurs were one of the most renowned and successful methods employed to discover the decrees of fate for man.

With the official establishment of Christianity, the words of Virgil were replaced by verses taken from the Gospels. The method, the Sortes Sanctorum, was to open the gospels at random and prick the page with a pin, with the eyes shut or blindfolded. The text upon which the pin alighted revealed the answer to the question posed. After the Reformation, Protestants made use of both the Old and the New Testaments for this purpose.

References in the Old Testament to the casting of lots are numerous. In Leviticus (chapter 16) Aaron is commanded by God to take two goats to the door of the Tabernacle and cast lots upon them. One lot was for the Lord and the goat upon whom it fell

Destiny From the Dice

A simple method of divination from dice. Choose a question from the list below (or make up one of your own). Concentrate on it while shaking two dice and throwing them in a circle traced on a table. Add the two numbers shown, throw again, and add the second total to the first. With the combined total consult the list of answers

QUESTIONS

Shall I fall in love?
Will happiness be mine?
Will danger threaten?
Will I find what is lost?
Shall I gain my wish?
Will I be successful?
Will the debts be paid?
Is good fortune on the way?
Will I get the expected letter?
Must I wait for bad news?
Must I wait for good news?
Will I be found out?
Am I being betrayed?
Shall I try another profession?
Does my beloved love me?
Should I go to law?
Can I trust my colleagues?
Should I move house?
Will I go on a journey?
Am I to be married soon?
Will I love more than once?
Will I make him/her happy?
Will I be rich?
Will I have children?

ANSWERS

4 Yes, if you are unselfish
5 No, if you are not prudent
6 Yes, think of trees and gardens
7 Yes, if you rely on yourself
8 Yes, if you co-operate
9 Yes, if you seek only the best
10 No, if you make difficulties
11 Chance it
12 If you are sincere
13 Only if you distrust words
14 Of course, but make sure to conquer
15 Only if you insist
16 If you are yourself
17 Of course
18 If you work hard
19 Await a message
20 Only if you are very discreet
21 Not if you refuse to take risks
22 Certainly, but change your habits
23 In an unlikely place or an unlikely way
24 No, unless you are charitable

would be the sacrifice; the other concerned the sins of the people and the goat upon whom it fell would be the scapegoat and be driven out into the wilderness as an atonement. We are not told how these lots were marked nor exactly how they were thrown. And in Proverbs it is made clear that it was the Lord who guided this method of choice: 'The lot is cast into the lap; but the decision is wholly from the Lord' (Proverbs 16.33).

In the New Testament, the Roman soldiers standing at the foot of the cross parted the garments of Jesus among them by casting lots, thus fulfilling the words of the prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots' (John 19.24). When the place of Judas as an apostle had to be filled by another, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias seemed the most likely candidates and lots were cast as to which of the two was the one chosen by God the lot fell to Matthias, who was from then on numbered among the apostles (Acts 1.16).

In the *Nihongi*, the Japanese cosmological 'bible', it is recounted how certain discontented princes in the year 658 AD sought to divine the future of their treasonous plans by drawing slips of paper that had been magically inscribed. Such a proceeding followed intoned incantations and the making of offerings to the appropriate spirits. That most ancient of mysterious books, the I Ching, shows what an important place divination by lots played – and still plays – in China and all over the Far East. Taking this book as the foundation for his divinatory art, the celebrated medieval Japanese seer Taka Shima Kaemon made prognostications with far-reaching and astonishingly accurate results. In Japan he is still held in high esteem, and many a modern politician or business man there consults those sages who carry on the tradition said to be transmitted from him, through his successors, to this day. Originally the I Ching method consisted of drawing long and short yarrow stalks from a cylinder or other receptacle; this has largely been replaced by the throwing of coins, much as we toss pennies, calling 'heads or tails?'

Meaning of Coincidence

To seek to understand the supposed value of decisions or predictions arrived at by the casting of lots and kindred methods of divination, it is necessary to abandon the largely Western theory of causality and to embrace what C. G. Jung (see JUNG) spoke of as 'synchronicity'. Cause and effect express the evolutionary aspect of both physical and psychological phenomena, while synchronicity stresses the random, the variant, the unique. All quartz crystals are found to be hexagonal in form, but no two of these crystals are exactly alike. The hexagonal is the ideal form, but nevertheless in actuality there are variants, however minute. The leaves of an oak tree may be classified at a glance as oak leaves, yet no one is identical with another; and similarly with fingerprints.

Today physicists unveil the deviants in the scientifically generalized patteru while

Axel Poignant

Our ancestors believed that casting a 'lot', which might be any small object, could reveal the future and the will of the gods, but a lottery has become a mere game of chance: lottery ticket seller in Spain

the seer finds truth through chance happenings. Meditating upon the changing face of Nature, its devious behaviour, the seer finds seemingly nonsensical details significant. The flight of birds, the fall of a twig, a sudden movement upon the tranquil surface of a pool – such chance happenings hold profound intimations for the visionary. Their supposed messages need only to be interpreted and for this task there is an inborn gift as well as a discipline. So it is with the fall of dice or the shaking of yarrow stalks. The movement or change taking place in a particular moment of time has for the believer a lasting significance; it is the writing on the wall if we are able to read it. If the prophetic words come true the incredulous will speak of coincidence, but this very coincidence is a truth that exists outside time and space yet impinges upon the space-time continuum according to as yet hardly surmised laws. The dangerous rocks of superstition may be circumnavigated if such revelations are submitted to a thorough psychological analysis. For there is more than one meaning hidden in a prognostication; oracles speak with many tongues.

Synchronicity, as explained by many Jungians, is an attitude towards Nature diametrically opposed to that of causality, although a reconciliation along parallel lines is not impossible, as some advanced physicists will admit. Causality explains how events expand one from another, present facts being determined by those of the past as demonstrated by Freud's assertion that the psychoneuroses have their origins in the infant's situation within the family, or Darwin's theory concerning the evolution of the species.

The hypothesis of synchronicity makes use of the coincidences of the non-rational as defining the present as well as indicating future tendencies or rhythms; These are seen as flux or change and are popularly called chance, fate or destiny – the lot of the individual and the pattern of an unfolding and infolding Nature, the rhythmical heart-beat of life. Thus separate things occurring simultaneously in the present, if studied by a seer, can be used for predicting the future.

Wisdom of the Unconscious

The dangers of making deductions from synchronicity as the term is being used here, and acting accordingly, are obviously great. Man's mental growth in the direction of rational thought and behaviour is still far from reaching perfection and is constantly threatened by a break-through from the more powerful irrational impulses. It is hard to believe that the wisest and noblest men of every civilization have allowed for, and often relied on, the lottery of synchronitic analogies and simultaneous parallels. Perhaps it is in the realms of unconscious or superconscious mind potentials that some explanation must be sought. Should this be true, the submerged areas of the mind must be supposed to extend beyond the normal conscious range of the individual, having the power of an 'oversoul' or group mind with a psychic vision greater than the normal, and being able to operate with the mechanism of association which utilizes random occurrences, such as the fall of dice, as a kind of alphabet spelling out symbolically directions of which the unconscious is already aware, that is to say the direction in which the life pattern is flowing. Those born or trained to catch intuitively such symbol-messages should therefore be able to make us cognizant of solutions to problems, the answers to questions and future trends. After all, dream interpretation, that time-honoured divinatory and therapeutic method, is now held to be the royal road to the unconscious as well as its safety valve. The dream has been reinstated medically and treated with respect by mental specialists. Who knows but that divination by casting lots is not another method for unveiling the deeper wisdom concealed in the extraordinary complexities of the human unconscious?

(See also DIVINATION; FATE; LUCK.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

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LOTUS

RICHEST IN SYMBOLISM of all the flowers of the orient, the lotus has a vast range and subtle variety of meanings in religion, philosophy, mythology and art, particularly in India, China and Egypt. In essence it signifies the female principle of life, from which stems fertility, prosperity, creation itself; and also enlightenment, immortality and resurrection.

The sacred lotus which occurs in mythology is the great white water-lily, *Nymphaea lotus*, native to Africa. This is a fragrant, night-flowering species with blooms up to 10 inches in diameter. A variety with much smaller flowers extends the range across India as far as Australia. There is also a blue-flowered African species, *Nymphaea caerulea*, which appears particularly in Egyptian representations.

The so-called Indian lotus, *Nelumbium speciosum*, is a very handsome plant having platter-like leaves each with a central stalk, and a large, globular pink flower held well out of the water, to be followed by a fascinating cone-shaped seed vessel. Although now regarded in India as a holy plant, it is evident from carvings and paintings that the original sacred lotus there was also the white water-lily.

The association of the water-lily with the life-giving Nile made it one of Egypt's many sacred objects, standing for fertility and resurrection. It was used in funeral rites and was among the commonest votive offerings, many tomb paintings showing it tied to the pillars of a shrine or house. It became part of social ceremony: at any gathering each guest would be presented with a lotus flower; special guests might have a necklace of the blooms, and stems were fixed to head-dresses in such a way that the flower hung down in the centre of the forehead. Lotuses also played an important part in the general decorations.

The white water-lily of Africa was the sacred lotus of ancient Egypt, a symbol of fertility and resurrection because of its connection with the life-giving river Nile. It was used in funeral rites and offered to the gods, here to the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet

British Museum

Osiris, god of the underworld, is usually represented as wearing a crown of lotus blooms, while Horus, in his aspect of god of silence, sits on a flower, Buddha-like, his fingers to his lips. In Egyptian mythology the water-lily represented the newly-created earth, seen in the form of the flower floating on the water, enshrining the mysterious secrets of the gods.

The flower was equally sacred to the sun: an association due partly to its ray-like petals. Statues of divinities sometimes carry a lotus sceptre in each hand, and the flower was often placed on the mummies of women, where it ensured their purification and re-birth. With other flowers, those of water-lilies were often placed in sarcophagi; the mummy of Rameses II, for instance, was associated with the blue lotus.

The Cosmic Flower

Conventionalized, the water-lily produced in architecture the well-known lotus bud and flower capitals of Egyptian pillars and formed the basis of many stylized patterns. These were transmuted by the Assyrians and other Near Eastern peoples, and it has been suggested that the lotus is the basis of the Assyrian sacred tree. From Egyptian capitals the lotus theme was taken up by the Phoenicians and became part of the Greek Ionic style. In Greece a multitude of patterns were developed from it, which are found also in India and in Etruscan and Roman art, the latter handing on themes into Byzantine, Romanesque and indeed all later decorative art; truly a remarkable example of the water-lily's symbolic regenerative powers.

In Hindu mythology the lotus represents the female life principle, and is the symbol of the *yoni* or female generative organs. When the lingam or sacred phallus is depicted, it is often shown resting on or surrounded by lotus petals. The earliest representation of the lotus in art is found among the flowers adorning the head of a statue of an Earth Mother figure (c 3000 BC) discovered at Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus valley. Such a fertility goddess appears later as Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, who emerged out of a lotus which sprang from his forehead: she is known also as Padma (lotus). In the form of Kali, she holds the lotus symbol of regeneration in one hand.

In Hindu creation mythology the spirit of the Supreme Being was personified by a golden lotus on a great sea. From Vishnu, the 'lotus-navelled', issued a lotus on which sat Brahma, the 'lotus-born' Creator. The lotus expanded into the universe, and from its petals arose the mountains and rivers. Buddha was associated with this flower at his birth, and it was his symbol, topped by a trident representing the sun. From this mythology of creation is obtained the familiar prayer and incantation, inscribed millions of times upon prayer-flags and prayer-wheels, 'O, the Jewel in the Lotus'.

Chinese Buddhists believed in a 'western heaven' where, in a sacred lake of lotuses, the souls of the dead await admittance to paradise in lotus buds. Each soul rests in its bud until the time appointed for its opening; the plant flourishes or wilts in accordance with the piety of the individual soul during its earthly existence. A pure soul, belonging to a truly devout man, will be released from the bud immediately into the divine presence. In China, the lotus was more especially the emblem of purity, because it is not of the earth but rises spotless and immaculate from the waters.

The Lotus-Eaters

The lotus which brought forgetfulness to the Lotus-eaters of Greek legend is a small tree of the buckthorn family, *Zizyphus lotus*, found all round the Mediterranean. The fruits of this tree were, and still are, used for food and can be made into a kind of bread. It was once an important item in the diet of the poor and the word *lotophagi*, lotus-eaters, became synonymous with poverty – a reality considerably less attractive than the myth.

In the richly significant gestures of the Hindu dance, the lotus is a recurring symbol, and in yoga the *chakras* or centres of super-physical energy are known as the six lotuses, the seventh or supreme chakra, the *sahasrara*, being the thousand-petalled lotus. The flower is linked with the heraldic rose of England in the collar of the Order of the Star of India, where it alternates with the rose and palm. In the language of flowers the lotus represents eloquence; the flower alone, estranged love, and the leaf, recantation.

Loudun Nuns

Nuns of an Ursuline convent at Loudun in France, scene of the most famous case of alleged demonic possession in European history: a priest named Urbain Grandier was accused of bewitching the Mother Superior and other nuns, was found guilty and after appalling torture was burned alive in 1634.

See GRANDIER.

Mary Evans

Loup-Garou

French word for a werewolf, a person who turns into a wolf at night and terrorizes the surrounding district, killing people and devouring their flesh: he can be cured if three drops of blood are taken from him or if he is made to bleed while in his wolf form.

See WEREWOLF.

Mansell

The home of Bernadette Soubirous, the young French girl who experienced visions in which she spoke with a 'Lady' who revealed to her a miraculous spring, is now the greatest centre of pilgrimage in the Roman Catholic world

LOURDES

PILGRIMS SEEKING to pay devotion to our Lady of Lourdes and suppliants hoping for relief from their ailments are among the two million annual visitors to this city. Lourdes, in the department of Hautes Pyrenées in the old French province of Bigorre, has a population of 16,000, 414 hotels and 450 souvenir shops. Industry apart from tourism is represented by slate and marble quarries. The greatest centre of pilgrimage in the Catholic world, Lourdes owes its celebrity to the apparitions seen in the Grotto of Massabielle in 1858 by Marie-Bernarde Soubirous (1844–1879) who was canonized as St Bernadette in 1933. The principal pilgrimages are on 11 February (Feast of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes), 25 March (Feast of the Annunciation), 18 to 25 August (the National Pilgrimage) and 8 December (Feast of the Immaculate Conception), when huge crowds take part in the ceremonial processions by day and night.

The curative powers of the mineral and thermal springs of the Pyrenees have been famed since Roman times, and the healing Madonnas of various towns in Bigorre have enjoyed local repute. But in 1858 Lourdes (population then about 4000) possessed neither healing shrines nor waters. The town was confined to the area east of the River Gave de Pau and south of a smaller stream, the Lapaca, which joins the Gave from the east. At the junction of the Gave and the Lapaca (the present Bridge of

St Bernadette's visions of the Virgin Mary transformed the small town of Lourdes into the greatest centre of pilgrimage in the Roman Catholic world: the spring which miraculously appeared in the barren floor of the grotto is believed to be healing water, capable of curing even the hopelessly crippled *Above right* and *right* Pilgrims at Lourdes

Sonia Halliday

Camera Press London

Sonia Halliday

***The Vision* at Lourdes: Bernadette first saw 'the Lady' in 1858. 'She was wearing a white dress and a blue sash and a yellow rose on each foot . . .'**

the Grotto) the Gave abruptly changes its north-to-south course. Turning sharply to the left it flows from east to west between the Ribère meadows to the south and a hill to the north which is now called the Mont du Calvaire and is surmounted by a Calvary (a representation of the Crucifixion). In 1858 a millstream known as the Savy cut off a triangle (the Ile du Chalet) from the bend in the Gave, which it rejoined just beyond a spur of the Calvaire Hill. The spur is called Massabielle (*masse vieille*, old rock). The Grotto of Massabielle was then a rather shallow and boulder-strewn cavern with a floor of sand and earth accessible by wading across the Savy or by a rough steep path winding over the Massabielle and reaching the cavern from the west.

The Savy is now underground and the Gave diverted to allow the construction of the Esplanade of the Grotto, a broad promenade capable of accommodating hundreds of visitors on foot or in wheelchairs. Communion may be taken at the altar in the Grotto. The spring discovered by Bernadette is piped to the Baths further along the Esplanade, where the pilgrim can be immersed in hope of a cure or merely as a form of devotion.

'I Saw a Lady'

Bernadette, the eldest child of François Soubirous of Boly Mill on the Laca, suffered from indifferent health and was asthmatical from the age of six. The family had been reduced to living in the worst accommodation in Lourdes, the so-called Cachot, a part of the old prison in the Rue des Petits Fosses. In 1858 Bernadette returned to Lourdes from a stay of some months at the village of Bartres. At that time she was illiterate and spoke not French but Bigourdian, the dialect of Bigorre. Her character appears to have had an earnest side which was masked by the gaiety of her outward disposition. According to the Curé of Bartres, although she found it hard to learn her catechism by rote she was very attentive, devout and unassuming. It is difficult to

assess how much she knew about the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary which had been proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854 after a referendum of the higher clergy, or whether she had heard of the apparition of the Virgin to two children at La Salette near Grenoble in 1846.

On 11 February 1858 Bernadette, her sister 'Toinette' and a friend were gathering firewood when they came to the bank of the Savy opposite to the grotto. Her companions ran through the stream but Bernadette stopped to take off her shoes, and at that moment occurred the first of her mystical experiences at Massabielle. Only in 1861 did she become literate enough to put it in writing, but throughout the affair she had never changed or elaborated her story; one of the facts which generated complete confidence in her honesty. Bernadette wrote: 'I heard a noise . . . I saw the trees were not moving at all, I . . . looked at the grotto. I saw a lady . . . she was wearing a white dress and a blue sash and a yellow Rose on each (bare) foot the colour of the chain of her rosary; when I saw that I rubbed my eyes, I thought I was seeing things, I put my hand in my pocket, I found my rosary in it, I wanted to get my hand up to my forehead, it fell back, the vision made the sign of the cross, then my hand shook. . . . when I had finished my rosary, the vision disappeared all of a sudden.'

Though Bernadette's first feelings were of surprise and awe, she keenly desired to see the Lady again. In the course of 18 subsequent visits the apparition appeared to her on all occasions save one. As the news spread, Bernadette was accompanied by increasing numbers of spectators amounting at the end to several thousands. The great majority of the spectators saw only Bernadette in prayer or apparently conversing with an invisible companion. A few claimed to have seen the Virgin themselves but even those Catholic scholars and scientists who accepted the supernatural origin of Bernadette's visions tended to reject these other visionaries as fraudulent or self-deluding.

The Miraculous Spring

Throughout the affair Bernadette treated the matter as essentially a private one. She sought for no publicity and gave matter-of-fact and down-to-earth replies to the numerous interrogations she had to undergo. Within a few days a number of respectable citizens were convinced of her honesty and tended to believe that the apparition was perhaps supernatural. Great interest attached therefore to the 'Lady's' identity. At first Bernadette referred to her merely as 'Acquerò' – she, 'that', or 'that one'. Later she called her 'the Lady'. From Bernadette's descriptions the Lady resembled a girl of Bernadette's own age, 14, with a manner that was happy and gay. Simply attired, this apparition differed in style from the regal and splendidly dressed Madonnas of earlier French visionaries. On the third visit, acting on instructions, Bernadette asked Acquerò to write down her name, and received the spoken reply, 'That isn't necessary. Will you be kind enough to come here for a fortnight.' When Bernadette assented she was told, 'I don't promise to make you happy in this world but in the next.' As usual in 19th century France, matters stood delicately between Church and State, and to visit the grotto Bernadette ignored an order by the police to keep away; the only instance of disobedience in her entire life. At the seventh appearance the Lady revealed three secrets to Bernadette with the words 'I forbid you to repeat this to anyone'. The secrets, doubtless personal to Bernadette, were never revealed.

On later visits Acquerò enjoined penitence and prayer on behalf of sinners and told Bernadette to 'Go and drink at the spring and wash in it.' The observers were mystified when Bernadette began to scratch at the floor of the grotto. But water seeped into the hole she had made. Such was the advent of the miraculous spring which now yields good quality drinking water, neither thermal nor mineral, to the quantity of some 9000 gallons a day. Pilgrims began collecting it in bottles within a few days and soon the first cures were being claimed. 'Go and tell the priests that people are to come here in procession . . . and have a chapel built here,' said Acquerò. When Bernadette reported this to the Curé of Lourdes, who was suspicious and uneasy, he gruffly demanded that the Lady give her name if she wanted a chapel. On the next visit, Acquerò, after twice failing to answer, said in the Bigourdian dialect: '*Que soy er Immaculate Conceptiou*' (I am the Immaculate Conception), the words now inscribed beneath her statue in the grotto.

The Seventeenth Apparition

April 7, Wednesday. Bernardette, under pressure of inner prompting since noon the previous day, arrived at the Grotto at 5 a.m. The news that she would be going had travelled the town the night before, and several hundred people were already present, and possibly as many as 1,000 by the time the apparition was over. She had brought with her a thick votive candle. . . . With this candle burning before her, steadied by her hands and with its butt resting on the ground, Bernardette began reciting the rosary. The arrival of Dr. Dozous . . . caused a disturbance. He pushed his way close to the visionary, but refused to remove his hat. To the objections of the devotees, he retorted that he had no intention of catching a cold in the head. Bernardette fell into ecstasy. After about half an hour, people noticed that something very queer was happening to the candle. Bernardette was still supporting it between her palms and sheltering the guttering flame with her fingers against the draughts. The flame appeared to be licking her fingers, licking between them, scorching them. . . The crowd acclaimed a miracle then fell silent. Bernardette, undisturbed by the commotion, moved into the Grotto to conclude her conversation with Acquerò. The ecstasy in all lasted nearly an hour. As soon as it was over, Dozous grabbed Bernardette's hands, scrutinized them for burns, found nothing the matter with them, and proclaimed himself converted.

Alan Neame *The Happening at Lourdes*

The Curé was startled by this somewhat abstract description and puzzled by the fact that Bernadette clearly had no conscious notion of the meaning of the phrase.

Officially Sanctioned

At the end of the fortnight Bernadette said farewell to Acquerò in the belief that she would not see her again in this life. The police banned the grotto to the public but the interdict was withdrawn on orders from Paris after a visit by the celebrated Catholic journalist Louis Veuillot and the governess of the Prince Imperial. The Curé vetoed a suggestion by the civil authorities that Bernadette be detained for treatment at a sanatorium. After an episcopal enquiry the devotion already instituted by the faithful was approved and in 1862 a Commission judged that 'Mary the Immaculate Mother of God did truly appear to Bernadette Soubirous.'

Whether the Virgin Mary did converse with Bernadette at Massabielle is a question that evades logical or scientific decision and will continue to do so. Although we need not accept, neither can we positively deny the possibility that Bernadette's visions were only elaborate hallucinations conjured unintentionally from the depths of her own soul. It may be that Acquerò was only a 'psychological projection', an involuntary attempt to find a heart in a heartless world. Even so there is an affecting and poetic simplicity about Acquerò, and perhaps 'That one' represents some profound and true intuition of reality revealed to babes but hidden from the wise and prudent.

After Acquerò's leave-taking Bernadette attended, first as a day-scholar and then as a boarder, the school which now bears her name, the Hospice of the Sisters of Charity. In 1866 after two serious illnesses she sought of her own volition to become a nun. The conventual authorities had their misgivings about her both as a 'visionary' and as a potential physical invalid. But she was accepted at the mother-house of the Hospice, the Convent of Saint Gildard at Nevers, 300 miles away on the Loire. Here, in 1879, she died after an exemplary life and prolonged physical suffering, without ever visiting Lourdes again. She had wept bitterly when in 1866 she saw the grotto for the last time and spoke of it as her heaven on earth. Whether on her deathbed she saw Acquerò again is unknown. Saint Gildard is now itself a notable place of pilgrimage and cures are achieved at the sepulchre of Bernadette, who was exhumed incorrupt in 1925. The cures, whether at Saint Gildard or at Lourdes, fall into the general pattern of 'faith healing' and there is nothing to suggest that they are any more or less miraculous than the general run of faith cures.

(See also FAITH HEALING.)

A. R. G. OWEN

FURTHER READING: Alan Neame, *The Happening at Lourdes* (Simon and Schuster, 1968); Francis Trochu, *Saint Bernadette Soubirous* (Pantheon Books, 1958).

Near the grotto where Bernadette saw 'the Lady', there now stand life-sized figures depicting the taking of Christ's body from the cross

Victoria and Albert Museum

LOVE MAGIC

In the same spirit that our forefathers ate periwinkles mixed with earthworms, there are still people today who eat oysters hoping that it will improve their love-making; from the desire to bind the loved one ever more closely, men and women have resorted to bizarre and often dangerous magical practices

OF THE TWO distinct types of love magic, the first is the collective or general charm or medicine which allegedly 'works' on anyone, and which is selected because of its distinctive appearance, shape or taste, or easily recognizable symbolism. This type, composed of various ingredients, may be provocative of heat or shaped in the likeness of the male or female sexual organs. The second type is the specially adapted and individual charm, the use of which is based upon the assumption that a state of love can be transmitted by magic from one individual to another. This second type incorporates the exchange of locks of hair, nail-parings and blood, but more often some personal object which has been endowed with magical qualities by a witch or wizard. The personal charm has always been considered to be far more effective than the more general type, since it is supposed to exert a direct influence upon the one who is to be charmed.

The choice of the symbols or objects used in love magic has varied according to culture or individual circumstances. In ancient India, for example, human beings were believed to be the offspring of trees, the sap of which was in consequence thought to assist procreation. The testicles of humans and animals have been in high demand as love stimulants at various times, as have vegetables whose shapes have suggested the male or female genitals, two examples being beans and cress. Bartolomeo, personal cook to His Holiness Pope Pius V, achieved immense fame among European gastronomes with his speciality, a pie of bulls' testicles, and the French nobility of the 18th century gorged huge helpings of bean soup and truffle soup, and sipped delicate liqueurs in the vain hope of renewing their spent sexual energies.

Fish, because of their fecundity, have always been held to be an aphrodisiac food, and in particular the oyster. The flesh of the partridge was favoured by the impotent because this particular bird was notorious for its lascivious disposition and its supposed power to impregnate its mate by the sound of its voice. The lizard, because of its imagined likeness to the phallus, was also considered an aphrodisiac food. Certain Australian tribes actually forbade the eating of lizards by boys for fear that the resultant craze for sexual intercourse would be damaging to their healths.

To the casual eye it would seem that all the resources of Nature must at one time or another have been utilized as ingredients in love magic. Even fruit in the shape of the golden apple of Aphrodite compelled the frigid Atalanta to submit to the commands of love. The symbolism of the apple in the magic of sex has been commemorated for all time in popular legends of the temptation of Adam, although the account in Genesis does not specify this fruit (see APPLE). The song of the Sirens falls into the category of love magic because of the compulsion it exercised over the luckless mariners whom it lured to their destruction.

The love potion, a magical aphrodisiac which makes the drinker fall in love with the next person he or she sees, has a long history in popular belief and in legends like the tale of Tristan and Isolde: 'How Sir Tristram Drank of the Love Drink', by Aubrey Beardsley

The Potent Mandrake

The best known of all the aphrodisiacs of the ancient world was the mandrake or mandragora, a purple-flowered tuber with roots which often resemble the human body. Known also as 'Circe's Plant', it has been used in the form of a love potion from very early times. Pliny the Elder declared that, 'When a mandrake root in the shape of a male genital organ was found, it secured genital love'. This plant, which was said to emit a terrifying scream when dragged from the earth, was used not only for aphrodisiac purposes but also in medicine (see MANDRAKE). Satyricon, a smooth-leaved plant with a twofold root, when dissolved in goats' milk, was supposed to endow a person with the power to effect 70 successive acts of copulation.

In the British Isles the lovelorn could always draw upon the bounty of the countryside for the power to perform the nuptial act. The marigold, which was called 'husbandman's dial' by the Anglo Saxons, was used as an ingredient in love charms and also used in wedding garlands. St John's wort, a midsummer plant renowned for the power of expelling demons, witches and fairies (see ST JOHN'S WORT), was also used as a cure for barrenness, for a childless wife had only to pick this flower while walking naked in her garden and she could expect to be a mother before next Midsummer Day. The poppy, however, was a love-killer and was commonly used in love magic as an anaphrodisiac. The periwinkle was supposed to induce love between a man and a woman if powdered with earthworms and eaten with meat.

Among other plants and vegetables which have been resorted to by man for the restoration of his flagging energies have been artichokes, asparagus, leeks, parsnips, turnips and truffles, together with the humble lettuce and cabbage. A really single-minded lecher who was prepared to eat his way into a maiden's affections could call upon a wide variety of the most exotic stimulants.

The philtre or love potion was the principal method by which the aphrodisiac was administered. Both the philtre and the potion were produced as articles of commerce and belong therefore as much to the lore of medical quackery as to magic. The philtre might be a concoction of narcotic perfumes, the testes of animals, onions, ginger or cinnamon, the choice of a particular ingredient being based upon an imagined relationship between the symbol and the sexual objective. The mixture, which was usually taken in liquid form, could be extremely unpleasant, doubtless in deference to some mystical principle of primitive shock therapy. Human brains, hearts, livers, urine and skin were commonplace ingredients, but a really potent compound might require the marrow and spleen of a boy who had been murdered at the very moment of feasting his eyes upon some illicit scene of lust. To be completely effective the love potion required a magical spell to be muttered over it by a witch at the time of its preparation.

Lethal Potions

A closely allied department of love magic was the anaphrodisiac or lust-killer, which ranged from relatively innocent 'rings of oblivion' supplied by medieval magicians to women who desired to get the old love out of their systems before proceeding with the new, to such drastic measures for

Musée Guimet/Darka

British Museum

The Romans prepared for love-making by feasting on red mullet, octopus, cuttlefish, oysters and the electric ray

So irresistible are the forces of love that different mythologies personify it as a god whose magic arrows of desire overwhelm mortals. The Greek Eros (*above left*) was at first a great primal force: he later became prettified into a mischievous child (*right*). The Hindu god Kama (*above*) rides a parrot and bears a bow of sugar-cane with a quiver of arrows tipped with flowers

dampening the fires of lust as lizards soused in urine or a liniment of mouse dung.

In the application of magic to love-making the objects utilized have ranged from the sexual organs of the stag to the horn of the rhinoceros with its obvious phallic implications. Oriental love, however, for its successful consummation demanded honey compounded with pepper, and the liquorice-tasting root of the plant ginseng, which is considered by some to be a true aphrodisiac.

The Western world has made its own peculiar contribution to the lore of love magic in the shape of a number of curious recipes, most of them handed down in its folklore. The Greek physician Dioscorides of the 1st century AD, lists a number of amatory lures including a paste made from the tuber of orchids and goats' milk, and a species of turnip succinctly described as 'provocative to venerie'.

The Greeks, who were uninhibited in love matters, were inclined not only to have their cake but to eat it in the form of phallic-shaped loaves. The Romans prepared for love-making by feasting on red mullet, octopus, cuttlefish, oysters and the electric ray, but if these measures proved ineffective they were plied with pepper and myrrh.

The history of love magic had its darker side, however, for many of the aphrodisiacs which were peddled to the public were poisonous. The Roman poet Lucretius is said to have committed suicide during a bout of sexual frenzy brought on by a love potion. The magicians of Thessaly, who were the principal specialists in this line in Southern Europe, used drugs which were capable of driving a man insane, according to Juvenal.

Less harmful, if ineffective as love stimulants, were certain unfamiliar foods which acquired an aphrodisiac reputation.

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

At the beginning of the present century a resinous compound called 'dragon's blood' was still being burned by estranged wives

Even the potato when first introduced into Europe became a delicacy for the well-to-do, arising from the erroneous belief that it cured impotence, and in 16th-century Spain this vegetable was highly prized for its supposed virtues. The tomato, under the name of 'love apple', became much sought after as an aphrodisiac – so much so that the Puritans declared it to be poisonous. As a result the tomato went into eclipse as an article of diet, only regaining its good name in the 19th century.

Cannibalism for Love

In other forms of love magic lovers could be bound together in an unbreakable union by the mutual exchange of charms, locks of hair, nail-parings and occasionally human blood. This type of rite in all probability represented an early form of the marriage ceremony. In 17th-century England there was a popular custom in which a silver coin known as a 'commendation ninepence' was broken into two pieces, each lover taking a part, the giver saying at the same time 'To my love', and the receiver 'From my love'.

Included in the strange arts practised by the love magician was 'knot-tying', a device for rendering a man impotent by remote control. This involved the ritual knotting of a piece of cord, after which the frustrated lover could only recover his lost powers by paying the price demanded for untying of the knot (see also STRING).

The amatory arts provided a means of livelihood for a large number of magicians and charlatans, who prescribed not only the better known love recipes but certain dubious compounds of their own. Among these practitioners was the witch, with her undoubted skill in resolving emotional disturbances by words of power and whose stock-in-trade consisted largely of handed-down vestiges of ancient herbal and magical lore. Only the foolhardy would be likely to call upon the services of a witch as a marriage counsellor for the repellence of their philtres was proverbial, including such delicacies as toads' venom, ox bile, thieves' flesh, asses' lungs, and corpses exhumed from graveyards. The once-popular superstition that the eating of human flesh reinvigorated the lover is said to have made it necessary to place guards over Thessalian cemeteries to protect the graves from marauding witches. Among other ingredients of a witch's brew was hippomanes, a substance found in the heads of newly-born foals, and also small stones taken from the head of the perch.

Partly owing to its association with witches, love magic was declared illegal in England in the 16th century. A curious clause was included in the Witchcraft Statute of 1542, making it a felony to 'practise or cause to be used . . . any invocation of spirites, witchcrafts, enchantments or sorcerers to . . . provoke any person to unlawful love.' A similar clause occurs in the later Witchcraft Act of 1563; and in the Act of King James I in 1604 there is a further clause prohibiting the taking up of any human body 'from the grave where it resteth' for use in 'any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment.' The procurement of 'unlawful love' by magic was one of the slanders against Anne Boleyn which was circulating before her fall from favour; it was suggested that she had lured King Henry into matrimony by means of witchcraft. According to another story Henry's son, King Edward VI, became in turn a victim of love magic, inflicted upon him by Lady Jane Grey.

The decline in magic as a specialized art does not appear to have had any immediate effect upon the beliefs and practice of the population in general. Love magic descended to the successors of the witch, the village wise man and the itinerant quack. The victim of unrequited love could go to the local apothecary who would be able to supply an instant remedy in the form of an aphrodisiac known as Spanish fly. In the poet Gay's *Shepherd's Walk* occur the lines:

> Straight to the 'pothecary shop I went
> And in love powder all my money spent.
> Behap what will, next Sunday, after prayers,
> When to the alehouse Lubbukin repairs
> These golden flies intn his mug I'll throw
> And soon the swain with fervent love shall glow.

The 'golden flies' refer to the dried blister-beetle or Spanish fly which when applied to the sexual organs arouses desire at the risk of causing vomiting, and other unpleasant and dangerous effects. Cantharides, another name for this aphrodisiac, was among the remedies peddled by Count Cagliostro (see CAGLIOSTRO) in the 18th century and was the drug administered to prostitutes in the form of bonbons by the Marquis de Sade, several of whose victims afterwards died.

Modern Mythology

Despite the gradual decline in ancient magical beliefs generally, love magic survived in one form or another. At the beginning of the present century a resinous compound called 'dragon's blood' was still being burned by estranged wives. At Hallowe'en a young girl would stand combing her hair before her mirror, an apple in one hand, in the hope of compelling the image of her future husband to materialize in the glass over her left shoulder. In another type of Hallowe'en divination a snail would be placed in a flat dish overnight and from the tracings of its slime in the morning the girl was supposed to be able to deduce the initials of her husband-to-be. Even today it is not uncommon for a gypsy girl to wear an ivy leaf close

The Love Potion

Now when the maid and the man, Isolde and Tristan, had drunk the draught, in an instant that arch-disturber of tranquillity was there, Love, waylayer of all hearts, and she had stolen in! Before they were aware of it she had planted her victorious standard in their two hearts and bowed them beneath her yoke. They who were two and divided now became one and united. No longer were they at variance: Isolde's hatred was gone. Love, the reconciler, had purged their hearts of enmity, and so joined them in affection that each was to the other as limpid as a mirror. They shared a single heart. Her anguish was his pain: his pain her anguish. The two were one both in joy and sorrow, yet they hid their feelings from each other. This was from doubt and shame. She was ashamed, as he was. She went in doubt of him, as he of her. However blindly the craving in their hearts was centred on one desire, their anxiety was how to begin. This masked their desire from each other.

Gottfried von Strassburg *Tristan*

Roger Wood

The angel of love, bearing the bow and arrows of desire which were attributes of the Greek Eros, appears to the lover in a garden: 15th century French illustration to a famous medieval poem, the *Roman de la Rose*

to her heart when embarking on a lover's tryst to ensure that all goes well; while schoolgirls still chant:

> Ivy, Ivy, I love you
> In my bosom I put you.
> The first young man who speaks to me
> My future husband he shall be.

Possibly one of the very last relics of this type of love divination is the pretty custom of pulling petals from the daisy, to the rhythm of the familiar litany, 'He loves me, he loves me not' in the manner of young lovers of long ago.

The older mythology of love magic makes its appearance in a number of sexual myths which are still current. One example is the supposed power of spiced foodstuffs and shell-fish to lure virgins from the path of rectitude; while an equally mystical principle lies behind the custom which is still often observed of placing the nuptial bed on a north-south position in alignment with the magnetic poles. Modern magical aids which range from hypnotic suggestion to vitamin pills, all point to a continuing demand for artificial boosters for the rites of love. This is particularly true in the United States where a preparation known as 'Long Tong's Syrup of Joy' is still widely sold; the equally famous 'Come Back Oil' is used by the neglected Louisiana wife to anoint the body of her sleeping husband.

A lingering belief in anaphrodisiacs, preparations intended to lower rather than heighten desire, exists in the more cloistered corners of society. Serving soldiers the world over are victims of the illusion that the military hierarchy arranges for a sedative to be secretly added to the regimental tea, while the virtue of work as a sexual deterrent is reiterated by elderly nuns in the form of the maxim that the best antidote to lecherous thoughts is to set to and scrub the convent floor.

(See also HERBS; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM; SEX.)

ERIC MAPLE

LUCIFER

'SATAN, so call him now,' says Milton in *Paradise Lost*, 'his former name is heard no more in Heaven.' The former name is Lucifer (light-bearer), which the Romans gave to the morning star. The Devil acquired it when early Christian theologians, including Tertullian and St Augustine, identified him with the falling star of Isaiah's celebrated diatribe against the ruler of Babylon: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!' This star had tried to exalt himself above the others, had said to himself, 'I will be like God', and had been hurled down from heaven in punishment. The passage was the foundation of the doctrine that the Devil was a great archangel who rebelled against God from pride. Christians connected it with the words of Jesus in Luke (10.18), 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven', and with the description of the war in heaven, in Revelation, in which the Devil and his angels rebelled against God and were defeated.

'Lucifer, son of the morning' translates the Hebrew *helel ben shahar*, 'day-star, son of the dawn'. There is another reference to this obscure figure in Ezekiel's prediction of the coming downfall of the king of Tyre (chapter 28). Here he is an angel, blazing with brilliant jewels, who was in Eden, the garden of God, walking up and down among the 'stones of fire' (the stars). He may have been the hero of an earlier story in which the morning star tried to steal the role of the sun but was defeated, this myth itself stemming from the observation that the morning star is the last star proudly to defy the sunrise, but as the sun's rays strengthen, his light fades. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the story is another version of the fall of Adam and his expulsion from Eden, the divine spirit who tried to rival God being the First Man himself.

In Germany in the early 13th century a few Satanist heretics, who were called Luciferans, were discovered and persecuted. They worshipped the Devil, who they said was the brother of the Christian God. They believed that he had created the world, that he was the provider of all good things on earth, and that he had been wrongfully and

Lucifer, 'light bearer', the Latin name of the morning star, became one of the names of the Devil when a passage from the book of Isaiah was taken to refer to the archangel who had tried to make himself the equal of God *Left* The Devil manifesting himself, from *Dictionnaire Infernal* by Collin de Plancy *Right* Lucifer, from a 15th century manuscript

treacherously ousted from heaven. One day he would defeat God and regain heaven, and they expected an eternal future of happy immortality with him there. Meanwhile, they took care to do everything which would offend God and nothing which would please him, and every Easter they received the sacred host at Mass, and kept it in their mouths until they could spit it into a cesspool to show their contempt for Christ. Or so they confessed, though as their admissions were extorted from them on pain of death if they refused to confess, it is uncertain how much truth there is in them.

The persecutors gave an interesting description of the initiation ceremony of the Luciferans. The new member went to a meeting, at which he was greeted by a toad and kissed it on the backside or the mouth. If he kissed it on the mouth, it deposited something in his mouth. Sometimes it looked like a goose or a duck, and sometimes it was as big as an oven. Next there appeared a man who was skeletally thin and very pale, with black eyes. The new member kissed him, finding him icy cold, and with that kiss all remembrance of his Catholic faith left him.

Then all the members sat down to a feast, in the presence of a statue, and afterwards a huge black cat came down from the statue and they kissed its backside. The leader of the group asked the man next to him, 'What does this teach?' He answered, 'The highest peace', and another added, 'And that we must obey.' Then the lights were put out and there was an indiscriminate sexual orgy.

Later, the candles were lighted again and a man appeared from a dark corner. From his hips down he was as black as the cat but the upper half of his body shone like the sun and his radiance illuminated the whole room. The leader of the group took a piece of the new member's clothing and gave it to the shining man, saying 'Master, I give this to you which has been given to me'. The shining man returned it to him with the words, 'You have served me well, you will serve me more and better. I leave what you have given me to your care.' Then he disappeared.

This ceremony may be nothing but a fantasy, of course, but it could have been stage-managed without undue difficulty. If the name of the Luciferans means anything, they may have identified Lucifer, the light-bearer who was also the lord of life on earth, with the sun. The upper part of the shining man's body may have represented the sun of the daytime and the black lower part the night sun or black sun, which passes through the darkness under the earth during the night. The black sun is the leader of the stars, which follow him towards the western horizon and disappear beyond it – the stars fallen from heaven, the angels who fought with Lucifer.

(See also DEVIL; SATANISM.)

Son of the Morning

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Isaiah, chapter 14 (Authorized Version)

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of the God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold . . . thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee . . . therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God.

Ezekiel, chapter 28 (Authorized Version)

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Why is one man extraordinarily lucky in all he does, while another is dogged by misfortune? Is luck the gift of the gods or the product of one's own temperament, the individual's response to events?

LUCK

WE SUFFER FROM LUCK, enjoy it, envy it in others, and then we seek to divine the factors which condition our situation of being lucky or unlucky. This is all part of the happy inconsequence of the human mind. There are factors in all our thoughts which are not either rational or truly conscious. We have presentiments for no obvious reason, and when we find we have ignored them we say, 'It's just my luck'.

All nations have the idea of luck, and in the classical civilizations the idea was formulated as a personal spirit which helped or hindered the individual's purposeful actions. This quality could also attach to things. Something lucky for one person might not help another; a charm to bring love to a man who needed rest would not be particularly helpful.

Many charms were made and blessed by soothsayers to aid the good luck of their clients and there are innumerable examples of such things as magic rings and talismans. One tries hard to find the lucky number which will be a sign of coming fortune. Three may bring you luck if you believe that it was on 3 March you met your soul mate, or 333 won the raffle for you. Three is the number for you, while other numbers bring luck to other people. Such things are not true luck-bringers, but signs that luck accompanies their appearance. If you could compel good luck it would not be luck any more, but science.

The essence of luck is its lack of any obvious rationale. One person is usually lucky, and another is accident prone. To the ordinary person this remains inexplicable. In recent years psychologists have made studies of human behaviour and have shown that many things accepted as chance are due to our individual response to events. There is usually a history of worry behind the accident, or of confidence behind the success. The scientist is proving what we have always suspected, that we ourselves are closely linked with what presents itself to us as luck or misfortune. There is reason behind that ancient idea that the spirit of good fortune links itself with particular individuals, but most of us seek to bring luck our way; to condition chance to our needs.

Shape of Things to Come

From time to time people experiment with all kinds of rituals for establishing good fortune, some of them being extremely simple methods such as tossing a coin. In practice such a method may be misleading. A personal experience of the author's was of tossing a coin to find whether to turn right or left on the roads when hitch-hiking home from camp during the Second World War. Sometimes the luck of the road gave pleasant results in an easy lift, at other times it also gave pleasant results in interesting detours; but it was never possible to suggest that tossing the coin had any more realistic function than of acting as a spur to decisions which were not reached rationally. The decision by coin was neither rational nor effective magic, it was purely luck.

There are many other fascinating methods of trying to see the outcome of future events. Counting the number of birds in a field is of very ancient origin, certainly going back to pre-Roman times, when the birds concerned were the owl, the wren or the jackdaw. The 'four-and-twenty blackbirds' that were 'baked in the pie' of the familiar nursery rhyme are the flock of blackbirds which some families claim appears near their house at the time of death of an important member of the family. In ancient tradition these were the birds of Rhiannon the lady of the underworld, and were symbolic escorts of the soul on its way to the happy islands of the dead in Avalon. Similarly people consulted the state of their luck by the movements of animals. The appearance of hares crossing one's path is a symbol which goes back to very ancient times, but the passage of a black cat across the path portending luck or otherwise seems to have been of medieval origin. According to popular legend the introduction of cats through the more civilized parts of the world was due to Dick Whittington, Lord Mayor of London in the 14th century.

There are also methods of telling the weather by looking at the wind and rain, methods known to every peasant farmer in the old days and to shepherds everywhere. On investigation most of these prove to have a reasonable and sound scientific basis and therefore our prophecies for a short period in the future are based on observation of current phenomena: 'Red sky at night, shepherd's delight', indicates that the end of a cloud sheet is away to the west and the sun has penetrated underneath and illuminated the clouds – consequently one may expect a fine morning to follow, at least in the northern hemisphere. Here luck for the farmer is seen a little way ahead by a primitive scientific method.

Dreams of the Future

The luck of the future, too, is estimated by seers of various qualifications. There is usually a definite stimulus needed, some symbol which the seer contemplates and in which he sees more than is apparent in the mere form of the object. This applies to the reading of palms by the seaside fortune teller as well as to the experience of visions through crystal-gazing or looking at a blot of black ink.

In these matters the personality seems to travel into a kind of picture world where symbolic visions arise and are retained by the memory in a more or less complete form so as to give visual images of the future event. This would seem to be a method of circumventing luck, but of course it was just foreseeing how luck would fall.

Further groups of ideas of the future are sought out by methods resembling the ancient system of drawing lots (see LOTS).

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These include picking cards from a pack or laying them out in a regular order, face downwards, and then turning them up so that the skilled interpreter can read the story that they tell (see CARDS). This is more commonly done with the Tarot cards than with ordinary playing cards. These methods produce very good results in the hands of experts, the majority of whom find that a great deal of energy has gone out when making predictions from the cards. This suggests that the process is not just reading 'according to the book', as one might do at a tea-party among friends, but implies some extra strain by which some part of the personality becomes cognizant of events in a totally different way than by just reading the cards. We are dealing again with a specialized kind of clairvoyance. Even the deeper interpretation of dreams (see DREAMS) by the trained psychologist depends on taking the dreams as an index of the person's own situation. Some dreams however do accurately record future events but how these are stimulated and how they relate to the normal structure of the unconscious portion of the psyche is by no means clear. However, they are in a class by themselves and they are usually recognized by the dreamer because of a certain strangeness of lighting or of content which makes them quite remarkable among dreams, and leaves a deep impression which is immediately remembered when the event previously dreamt about takes place.

Fate or Free Will

There is no time limit to this kind of dream. The event prognosticated may appear a day or several years after the dream, so that as an index of prognostication of the future these dreams are not easily brought into any scientific order. What is more they most frequently refer to trivial events which only concern the individual dreamer.

Dreams of this kind are rather startling phenomena which remain vividly in the memory and raise again the whole question of predestination, of the dependence of man upon a code which determines everything to be done. How free will and choice can function in a universe where every decision even of minor matters can be dreamed about before the event is not clear. Does the dreamer simply see the luck of an event in a future time, or is it a study of an inexorable fate in which luck plays no part?

This mysterious field where one is faced by the problem of free will or predestination is immensely confusing. There are historical examples of peoples who have accepted events as the will of the gods and have made no progress in either material or political culture for centuries, merely carrying on a reasonably satisfactory traditional life. Other people have thought they could determine events by action according to their own will; and although their actions have sometimes resulted in terrible international disasters, at other times they have followed their belief in their luck or inspiration and have contributed to the advance of human culture and the enjoyment of a fuller life by millions of people. Whether these advances were fated or not simple cannot be proved; the individual must make personal choice of an explanation of the working of the universe.

Even so, the reaction of the individual to what he assumes to be fate is of considerable importance. It may be that in a universe subject to determinism one has to follow certain general streams of development, but nevertheless the reaction of the individual to events is apparently of extreme importance to personal development. This seems to have been the opinion of many of the world's greatest religions. A person is exhorted to act according to the will of God, and this presupposes that he seeks this greater mind controlling the universe. In this lies the whole basis of behaviour for those who are not of a totally materialist opinion. We are back to the ancient view that luck is the gift of the gods.

Forecasting Future Inventions

Throughout history, men have sought to obtain knowledge of the future and to explore the facts of the past by means of all manner of magical devices. The controlled method of the ceremonial magician, working with symbols and protective garments and using chants which are especially designed to stir the very depths of the personality, seeks to evoke images which will provide him with knowledge of past and future events in a reliable way.

There is much evidence that these methods have produced information not obtainable by normal means. There are also the few natural seers, such as the famous Nostradamus (see NOSTRADAMUS), whose prophecies have spanned vast regions of time and given accounts of future events which are later seen to be basically true though clouded by the problems of description of unknown things. For instance it was not possible in the Middle Ages to look into the future and describe accurately a modern household: how would an Elizabethan philosopher react to seeing somebody touch a button on a wall and produce a shining light as bright as a thousand candles? The human mind of the seer must experience immense difficulty in describing things which in the future would be commonplace, but which in the present are totally unknown. For most of us the experience of looking into the future is the occasional personal event. Do these things reveal luck or fate? There is the continuing problem.

(See also DIVINATION; FATE; OMENS.)

C. A. BURLAND

Left **The Daruma or Tumbling Doll is one of the oldest and most common toys in Japan and is also a good luck charm. Usually painted red all over, except for the face, its base is weighted so that it always swings back to an upright position and this ability to 'come out on top' in all circumstances accounts for its value as a lucky charm. These dolls are bought on the first day of the New Year to insure good fortune for the whole year to come**

Below **'The essence of luck is its lack of any obvious rationale': picking winners with a pin is a simple method that appeals to many people**

Chris Barker

RAYMOND LULL

THE CATALAN mystical philosopher and missionary Raymond Lull (or Lully) was born in Palma about 1235. The son of the governor of Majorca, as a boy he was over-indulged and his early life was one of dissipation and excess. There are several disreputable anecdotes of Lull's youth; on one occasion he pursued a girl on horseback right into Palma cathedral. He married early and his wife Blanca bore him two children.

At the age of about 30, in 1266, he experienced a vision of Christ which profoundly disturbed him and led to his conversion. He determined to dedicate his life to the apostolic mission of preaching to the heathen. To this end he devoted the next nine years to the study of Arabic, theology and philosophy, neglecting his ordinary affairs to such an extent that his estates were taken out of his charge, at the request of his family. In 1275 he withdrew to write his first important book, *Ars magna*. This work, although it dealt with 'the art of finding truth' in general, more specifically set out to extol the merits of the Christian faith and to denigrate the value of Judaism and Islam. The revolutionary element of the *Ars magna* was Lull's use of a system of letters to represent ideas and of geometrical diagrams to explain the overlapping and logical alternatives of these ideas. This 'logical algebra' is an attempt to uncover first principles and thereby to reduce all knowledge to a meaningful whole.

At Miramar, where Lull had persuaded the king of Majorca to build a Franciscan monastery, he acted as professor of Arabic and philosophy and produced many unorthodox treatises. He travelled untiringly back and forth over the greater part of Western Europe, preaching, lecturing and attempting to enlist the support of popes and kings for his missionary activities. In his own words, he was 'mad with God' or 'God's own madman'.

In 1291, blaming himself for his timidity and indecision since his conversion 25 years earlier, Lull set out for Tunis, where he preached openly to the Moslems for a year before his imprisonment and expulsion. Over a period of years, he made unsuccessful efforts to gain papal support for the setting up of missionary colleges, and continued his travels, campaigning as he went. His second mission to the Moslems at Bougie (in modern Algeria) ended in the same way as the first,with a six-months' prison sentence. On his release he travelled again to Paris and Vienna, where in 1311 he witnessed the nominal adoption of his long-advocated proposals, which included the teaching of oriental languages in universities and monasteries. He continued his campaigning until 1314, when, at about the age of 80, he returned once more to Bougie. His preaching inflamed the Moslem inhabitants of the city and he was set on and stoned outside the walls, dying of his wounds shortly afterwards. In Majorca Lull is venerated as a saint and martyr, and in Spain he is honoured also as a thinker and poet; his beatification was confirmed in 1847. His body is buried in

Inspired by a vision of Christ and describing himself as 'God's own madman', Raymond Lull dedicated himself to mystical philosophy and to the preaching of Christianity to the heathen: he died after being stoned by Moslems whom he had attempted to convert

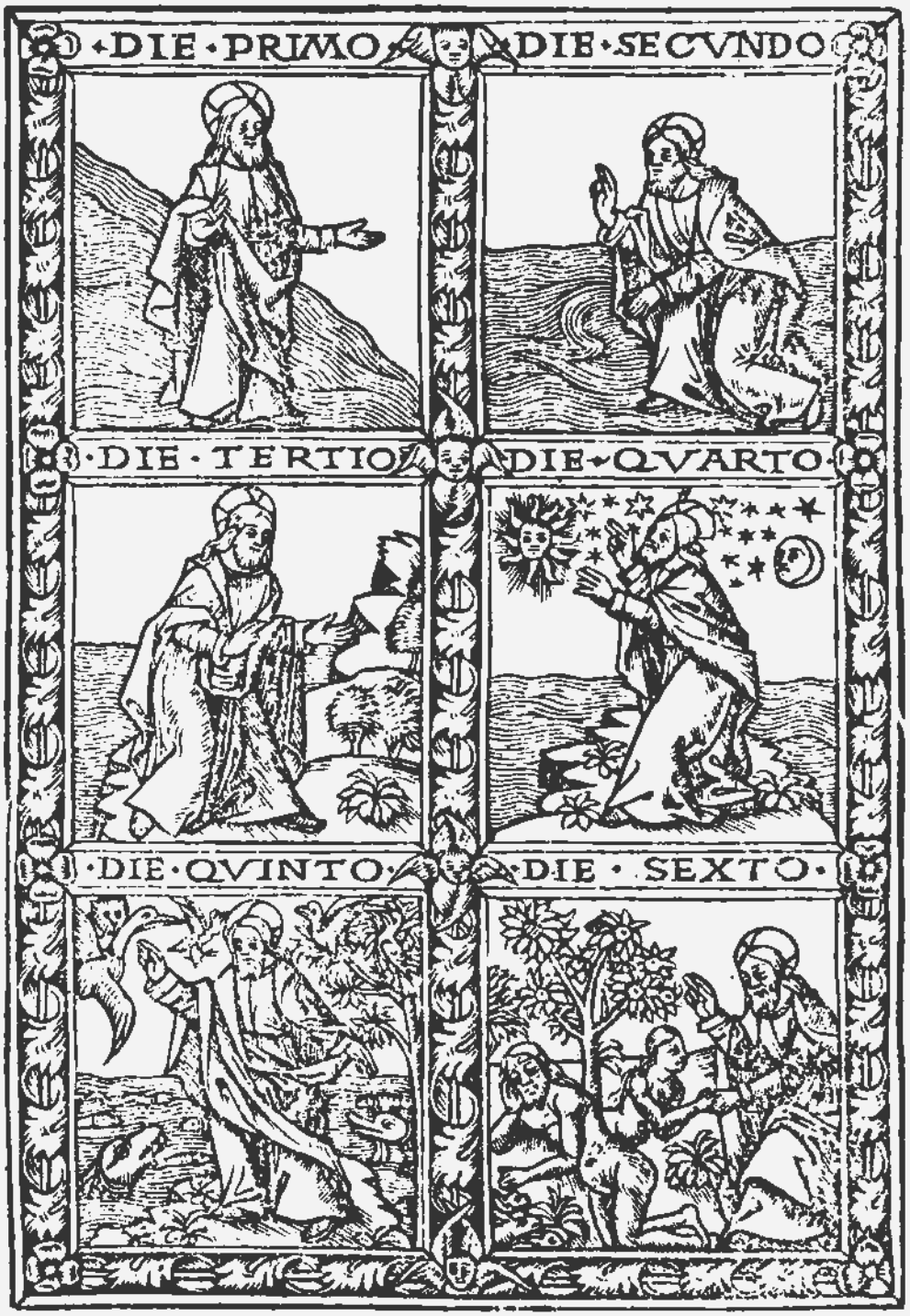
Below **Portrait of Lull: the words coming out of his mouth mean 'My light is the Lord himself'**

Right **Lull's use of symbolic letters and diagrams stemmed ultimately from the Cabala and he was attacked as a practitioner of alchemy and magic: diagram of the universe, from *Practica Compendiosa Artis Raymond Lull* (1523), showing the four elements of earth, water, air and fire surrounded by the seven spheres of the planets and the sphere of the zodiac signs**

Far right **Illustration from the same work, showing God's creation of the universe in six days**

Roman Picture Library

Roman Picture Library



Ramon Picture Library

Palma cathedral beneath a fine mausoleum, and miracles are said to take place there.

The written works of this great scholar and mystic blend the intellectual with the sublime. His *Arbre de Sciencia* (Tree of Science) is full of dialectic keys, truths intertwining like the roots, trunk, branches and leaves of the same tree of science. Lull himself had studied zoology, botany and mineralogy, and published treatises on these subjects. Fascinated by chemistry, he carried out many experiments, including the preparation of nitric acid. His didactic novel *Blanquerna* (1283), which describes a new Utopia, traces the development of his mysticism and philosophy. Its fictional framework is a vehicle for presenting the ideals of medieval religion, and a section of it, published separately as *Llibre d'amic e amat* (The Book of the Lover and the Beloved), and also his *Llibre de contemplacio* (Book of Contemplation) celebrates the union of man with God with an intense spirituality.

In his lifetime, Lull's ideas and activities met with both respect and suspicion. Jean I, son of the king of Aragon, praised his exceptional virtues in 1288, but the Church was becoming increasingly concerned about his teachings, and denounced his strange doctrines. The Inquisition saw his prolific writing as flagrant heresy and viewed his ecstasies with mistrust. He was criticized for his orientalism and his affinity for Islam, but most suspect of all was the influence of the Jewish Cabala on his philosophy.

Lull's use of symbolic letters, his flexible geometric diagrams, and his 'first principles' all derived ultimately from the esoteric language of the Cabala. The theologians of Salamanca proclaimed authoritatively that Lull's contemplative philosophy was descended from magic. Even as a scholar he was viewed in some quarters with alarm, and he was believed to practise alchemy. It was said that he had studied with Arnold of Villanova (1493–1541) at Montpellier and that this famous magician had introduced him to dangerous mysteries. While in Paris, he had moved in circles that were alarmingly close to occultism.

It was also believed that Lull possessed the Elixir of Life, the Philosophers' Stone, since he knew the signs, the words and mysterious letters. Indeed, his *Ars magna* was interpreted by some as being the great secret work of the alchemists and the legend grew up that its symbols had been revealed to him as he sat beneath a tree: sensing an indefinable presence he looked up and beheld hieroglyphs and numbers marked upon its leaves. In fact, there is little or no evidence to support the opinion that Lull was an alchemist, and alchemical works once attributed to him are apocryphal.

Despite doubts concerning Lull's orthodoxy, the Church admired this great mystic who had been granted a vision of the world beyond. He was also a martyr. But the Church could not forgive Lull for his reputed alchemical activities. In response to public opinion, Rome bestowed on him the title of 'blessed' but not of 'holy'.

FURTHER READING: E. A. Peers, *Ramon Lull* (Franklin, Chicago, 1969).

A Prodigious Author

Yet the prodigious literary activity of Lully left behind him a mass of writings destined to exercise no little influence on succeeding generations. He was perhaps the most voluminous author on record. Juan Llobet, who in the middle of the fifteenth century taught the Art of Lully in the University of Palma, had read five hundred of his books; some authors assert that their total number reached a thousand, others three thousand. Many have been lost, many spurious ones have been attributed to him, and the bibliography of his works is hopelessly confused; but Nicolas Antonio, after careful sifting, gives the titles of three hundred and twenty-one which may safely be ascribed to him. Of these there are sixty-one on the art of learning and general subjects, four on grammar and rhetoric, fifteen on logic, twenty-one on philosophy, five on metaphysics, thirteen on various sciences – astrology, geometry, politics, war, the quadrature of the circle, and the art of knowing God through grace – seven on medicine, four on law, sixty-two on spiritual contemplation and other religious subjects, six on homiletics, thirteen on Antichrist, the acquisition of the Holy Land, and other miscellaneous subjects, forty-six controversial works against Saracens, Jews, Greeks, and Averrhoists, and sixty-four on theology . . .

H. C. Lea *A History of the Inquisition*

According to the cabalistic teachings of Isaac Luria, sparks from the divine light of creation fell into the grasp of the forces of evil: man's task is to assist God in the task of restoring cosmic harmony.

ISAAC LURIA

JEWISH MYSTIC and Cabalist, Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (1534–72) spent the last years of his short life in Safed in Upper Galilee, a major centre of cabalistic activity and of ascetic and devotional life at that time, where he soon acquired a great reputation as an inspired and holy man of God. Luria was much younger than the other leading scholars and saints in Safed, and did not leave any written works. His reputation was based on his magnetic personality and the veneration in which he was held by the small group of his elect disciples, to whom he imparted his teachings orally.

Even after the death of the *Ari* (the holy 'lion' of Safed), as Luria came to be called, when some of his disciples committed his teachings to writing, these manuscripts were jealously guarded and not allowed to circulate. Towards the end of the 16th century, manuscripts of the 'Lurianic teaching' began to circulate (at first in pirated copies) – partly in the version propagated by Israel Sarug in Italy, and partly in the 'canonical' version of Luria's chief disciple Hayyim Vital Calabrese. After 1630 his teachings also began to appear in print and by the middle of the century Lurianism had established itself as the major dominant form not only of Cabala (see CABALA) but of Jewish theology and devotional practice.

Unlike the highly speculative Cabala of his contemporaries, Luria's teaching exhibits not only striking originality but also a powerful mythological character. In fact, the Lurianic myth, developed undoubtedly in the course of intense meditations and visions, has some markedly 'gnostic' features. Although Lurianic Cabala is original and novel in many respects, cabalistic orthodoxy claims that it is merely the revelation or rediscovery of the true meaning of the ancient texts.

The main features of Lurianism are the doctrines of retraction *(tsimtsum)*, the 'breaking of the vessels' *(shevirath ha-kelim)* and restoration *(tikkun)*. The doctrine of tsimtsum seeks to account for the possibility of the existence of a created world: if God is all in all, how can anything else exist? According to the Lurianic myth the Infinite Light of the Godhead 'retracted' itself so as to create a vacuum (the *tehiru*) in which creation could take place. Into this empty space – an infinitesimal point with respect to the Godhead but infinite space in respect of potential non-divine being – God began to infuse some of his creative light. In order that creation-in-the-making should not be annihilated by the intensity of the divine light, the latter had to be carefully channelled and structured in the form of the Adam Kadmon (or more correctly, Qadmon), the 'Primeval Man' and archetype of the cosmos. However, some of the lights bursting out of the Adam Kadmon were too powerful: they broke the 'vessels' or 'pipes' that should have contained them. Whilst some of these Divine light sparks returned to their divine source, others 'fell' together with fragments of the shattered vessels, into the primordial space where they became held in the grip of the power of chaos, that is, ultimately the demonic forces of evil.

The Fortunate Fall

According to Luria, there is thus a catastrophic event in the very heart of the divine and at the root of the cosmos. Catastrophe did not come with Adam's fall, or with the fall of the angels. It is something far more basic, for the whole history of the 'creation' of the world and of Adam is an attempt by God to heal the results of the primordial 'breaking of the vessels' and to restore everything, including the fallen divine sparks, to their proper place. In fact, Adam was created because God needed a helper in the difficult task of 'restoration', but Adam failed in his task and through his failure made things worse. Since then the crucial task of bringing about the tikkun has devolved upon Israel who, through a life of ascetic piety, strict observance of the commandments and cabalistic meditation, must lift up the fallen sparks and help to bring about that state of redemption and cosmic harmony of which God and man are equally in need. Until then, both God and man are, as it were, equally 'unredeemed', or at least 'in exile', since not only is Israel exiled but the divine sparks too, after the breaking of the vessels, are 'fallen' into the wrong spheres of being.

Why the original catastrophe of the 'breaking of the vessels' should have occurred at all is an obscure point and the Lurianic texts, aware of the audacious and near-heretical character of their speculations, are reticent and at times contradictory on this point. Luria's original doctrine seems to have been that the 'retraction' and subsequent 'breaking of the vessels' were a catalytic process in which the Godhead purged itself of its own diffuse potential of evil. It was, therefore, a necessary process and a kind of 'fortunate fall'. After the breaking, this evil became objectified in the *qelippah*, the demonic realm of evil and the 'shells', and redemption depends on all sparks of the divine being extricated from the power of the shells. The latter would thereupon collapse, evil would cease, the cosmic exile come to an end, and the unity of the Creator with his creation be established.

According to Scholem (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*) it is the intensely dramatic character of the Lurianic mythology which accounts for its success in cabalistic history. The pivot of the Lurianic system is the mystery of exile and redemption. This was an existential and spiritual dimension which was especially meaningful to the Jew. Its strong messianic orientation was essentially activist: man (that is, Israel) should not wait for redemption to be wrought by God (since God himself needed the help of man), but should actively strive to bring about the state of 'restoration' and 'redemption' by mystical actions and meditations as detailed in the cabalistic manuals. The messiah is not a redeemer, but will appear after the tikkun has been accomplished as a symbol of the redeemed order. Lurianic cabalism was one of the major influences in precipitating the great messianic movement associated with the name of Sabbatai Zevi and also provided some of the background and the vocabulary of the later mystical revival movement known as Hasidism (see HASIDISM). Lurianism also came to the knowledge of Christian Cabalists, mainly through Latin translations and especially Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbalá Denudata*. (For Adam Kadmon, see also MACROCOSM: MAN.)

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

Lycanthropy

From Greek words meaning 'wolf' and 'man', the transformation of a human being into some other carnivorous animal, especially a wolf but alternatively a bear, tiger, leopard or, in South America, a jaguar; form of insanity in which the sufferer believes he is the animal and behaves accordingly.

See SHAPE-SHIFTING; WEREWOLF

LYTTON

This English novelist and politician is today best known for his novels dealing with the occult: his concept of a subterranean race with 'superhuman powers is said to have inspired one of the secret societies that sprang up in Nazi Germany

BULWER LYTTON

IN HIS LIFETIME (1803–1873), Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton (created Baron Lytton of Knebworth in 1866) was known as the author of a number of historical romances and novels of society and of the occult, as a successful playwright and as a politician who rose to be Secretary for the Colonies. At his death, his novels dealing with the supernatural were patronizingly dismissed in his obituaries as foolish aberrations that would soon be forgotten. As it has turned out, the exact opposite has taken place. Today his occult stories, such as *Zanoni*, are better known than all the rest, apart from *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

In *Zanoni*, Bulwer Lytton describes the hero, Glyndon, as having been fascinated by the portrait of an ancestor who was reputed to have achieved strange powers by secret studies and to have lived far beyond the normal span of life. In fact, Edward Bulwer had an interesting 17th century forbear, Dr John Bulwer, who devoted much energy to alchemy and Platonic mysticism, and to the study of communicating with the deaf and dumb. He published *Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand* in 1644.

Such a background perhaps throws light on a story which Edward Bulwer himself tells of his boyhood. At the age of eight he said to his mother one day: 'Pray, mamma, are you not sometimes overcome by the sense of your own identity?' 'My mother looked at me in amazed alarm', he says, and said, "It is high time you should go to school, Teddy."'

After being privately educated he went to Cambridge where he made friends with Chauncey Hare Townshend, who became a great student of mesmerism, a subject Bulwer himself studied attentively.

He first visited the Continent in 1825, spending some time in Paris. He took part in the social life there, but had a curious second life in solitude at Versailles, writing and studying, and fighting with a feeling of melancholy. To sleep soundly he had to go out riding for hours every day. 'All my life through,' he said, 'I have found the necessity of intervals of complete solitude for the cure of the morbid symptoms which half-solitude engenders.'

He married Rosina Wheeler in 1827, much against the wishes of his mother, who thereafter withheld the financial assistance the young couple badly needed. Bulwer worked hard at articles and books to bring in some money. A daughter was born and, three years later, a son, but their relationship deteriorated. Rosina was selfish and extravagant and she developed an increasing hatred for her husband which she later vented in libellous and obscene letters which she sent to his friends and to clubs and hotels where he might be. There is no doubt that eventually she became deranged. They separated in 1836. Two years later Bulwer was created a baronet, adding his mother's name, Lytton, to his surname.

Lytton's letters confirm that he studied all the medieval writers on divination and magic, and the content of his novels of the occult shows that he had mastered these subjects and believed that there was a solid basis of truth underlying them. His favourite method of divination was geomancy, using four rows of random ticks on a sheet of paper, and combining this method with astrology. He wrote a long prediction of the career of Disraeli which proved to be an accurate summing-up, and various personal friends received 'horoscopes' from him.

Elementals in Oxford Street

From a letter he sent to Hargrave Jennings, author of a two-volume work on the Rosicrucians, it is apparent that Lytton himself was a Rosicrucian belonging to an organization with occult knowledge. He organized a club for the practice and investigation of ceremonial magic, to which he recruited Eliphas Levi (see LEVI) among others. Members are said to have attempted to evoke elemental spirits on the roof of a building in Oxford Street in London, in 1853.

The occultist Mme. Blavatsky (see BLAVATSKY) said that the Eastern Brotherhood of Adepts claimed Lytton as a member. Andrew Lang in his *Historical Mysteries* (1904) suggests that Lytton met the Count of St-Germain, who was said to have discovered the Philosophers' Stone and to be more than 2000 years old, in Paris in 1860.

He frequently put his own beliefs into the mouths of characters in his novels; for instance Margrave, in *A Strange Story*, says: 'The pentacle itself has an intelligible meaning, it belongs to the only universal language, the language of symbol, in which all races that think – around, and above and below us – can establish communion of thought. If in the external universe any one constructive principle can be detected, it is the geometrical: and in every part of the world in which magic pretends to a written character, I find that its hieroglyphics are geometrical.'

According to one writer, Lytton had the power of telekinesis, and was able to influence objects from a distance; he had seen him cause a letter to fall on the floor from a table, and flutter along to his hand. He also took part in psychical observations on the medium D. D. Home and witnessed a number of his feats (see HOME).

Lytton had a number of traits bordering on the eccentric. His astrological birth-map shows the planet Venus in mid-heaven and the moon exactly rising in the east in the sign of Cancer. One of the peculiarities of the Cancer temperament is said to be a fondness for change of residence, and certainly Lytton rented or owned no less than 38 homes. He would take a fancy to a place, rent it, and live there, writing busily.

Another odd trait was his fear of being buried prematurely in a state of trance or coma, and he left specific instructions in his will to make this impossible. He had a curious way of notifying his manservant when he wished to sleep an hour or two longer in the morning after having worked late into the night. A set number of cigars was always left on his bedside table, and his manservant was able to tell from the number that had been smoked whether he should call him or not. In the daytime he was noted for smoking a very long Turkish pipe.

Occasionally his power of intense concentration could have amusing results. He had taken two young lady visitors to Knebworth, his family home, to the private lake in the park, and had been talking very earnestly to them. 'He became so absorbed in his subjects – spiritualism and theology – that when we got back into the boat he forgot to haul up the anchor, and rowed and rowed without observing no way was made!' And the same lady who reports this records that 'he had a slender hand like an Eastern's. This I remarked when he was showing the lines of marriage on it. "Look," he said, "they are all broken."'

The Luminous Lodge

It is a strange circumstance that in the curious atmosphere of superstition and neo-paganism in which the Nazi movement grew, one of Bulwer Lytton's novels had a strong influence. In Berlin in the early 1930s a group calling itself 'The Vril Society' or 'The Luminous Lodge' came into being. The scientist Dr Willy Ley says that this secret society drew its inspiration from Lytton's *The Coming Race* and that its members firmly believed in the existence of a race of men and women of superhuman powers who inhabited great caverns below the surface of the earth (see SUBTERRANEAN RACE). These people were said to use the Vril power of the human body to do all kinds of wonders. This Vril resembles the oriental tradition of the spinal fire, the serpent-fire or Kundalini (see KUNDALINI).

Members of 'The Luminous Lodge' firmly believed that the Vril people would one day emerge to take control of the earth, and they determined to develop the Vril power in themselves so as to be the equals, not slaves, of the Vril people. They concentrated on practices similar to yoga for this purpose.

In 1870, Lytton himself wrote of his concept: 'I did not mean Vril for mesmerism, but for electricity, developed into uses as yet only dimly guessed, and including whatever there may be genuine in mesmerism, which I hold to be a mere branch current of the one great fluid pervading all nature.' In this letter written a century ago, Bulwer Lytton seems almost to have had an intuitive foresight of the very modern 'laser beam'.

C. NELSON STEWART

FURTHER READING: Earl of Lytton, *The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton*, 2 vols (Macmillan, 1913); C. N. Stewart, *Bulwer Lytton as Occultist* (Theosophical Publishing House, 1927).

Previous page **Bulwer Lytton organized a club for the practice and investigation of ceremonial magic and, together with other members, is said to have tried to evoke elemental spirits on the roof of an Oxford Street building: portrait by P. F. Poole in the National Portrait Gallery, London**

C. M. Dixon

Maat
Egyptian goddess of truth, justice and order, whose symbol was a feather; according to ancient Egyptian belief, in the judgement of the dead the heart of the deceased was weighed against the feather-symbol of Maat and if declared *maa kheru* (true of voice) the deceased was granted entrance into the kingdom of Osiris.
See BREATH; JUDGEMENT.

The *Mabinogion* contains a wealth of Celtic lore and legend, and some of the earliest surviving material of the Arthurian legends: 'Kynon comes to the castle' by Norman Ault; this and subsequent illustrations are from the 1910 edition of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the work

Much that belongs to the old half-forgotten world of Celtic Britain and the pagan past is enshrined in the stories of the Mabinogion, *medieval Welsh tales that have had a profound effect on European literoture*

MABINOGION

THE MABINOGION is a collection of 11 medieval Welsh tales. The stories, especially the earliest (those known as the 'Four Branches') appear as the result of a sudden blossoming of Welsh prose in the 11th century AD. They were to spark off literary flames throughout Europe, and to exercise a profound influence on medieval secular writings both on the Continent and in the British Isles. This descriptive passage from the story of Culhwch and Olwen, probably the oldest of the tales, is completely illustrative, even in translation, of the elegance and the evocative power of these stories.

> She was sent for. And she came, with a robe of flame-red silk about her, and around the maiden's neck a torc of red gold, and precious pearls thereon and rubies. Yellower was her head than the flower of the broom; whiter was her flesh than the foam of the wave; whiter were her palms and her fingers than the shoots of the marsh trefoil from amidst the fine gravel of a swelling spring. Neither the eye of the mewed hawk, nor the eye of the thrice-mewed falcon, not an eye was there that was fairer than hers. Whiter were her breasts than the breast of the white swan, redder were her cheeks than the reddest foxgloves.

The later stories show strong Norman-French influence, but the Four Branches *(Pedeir Keinc)* of the *Mabinogion* – in spite of the elegance of the language and the veneer of sophistication in the descriptions of the society portrayed – reveals an underlying stratum of mythology and barbarity. It demonstrates that the origin of many of the elements of which these tales are composed was not in the aristocratic courts of medieval Wales, but in pagan Britain. The various motifs must at one time have formed part of the cult legends and the folktales that circulated orally in the Celtic world in pre-Christian times, to be welded together much later by the skill of Welsh writers.

Magic abounds in them. Ancient gods and goddesses masquerade as brocade-draped kings and queens. The crude Iron Age fortress becomes the medieval castle. Individual cults such as the cult of the human head (see HEAD), animal cults, shape-shifting and taboo can all be discerned in the wealth of literary invention and the presence of numerous international folklore motifs, which do much to alter and obscure old traditions.

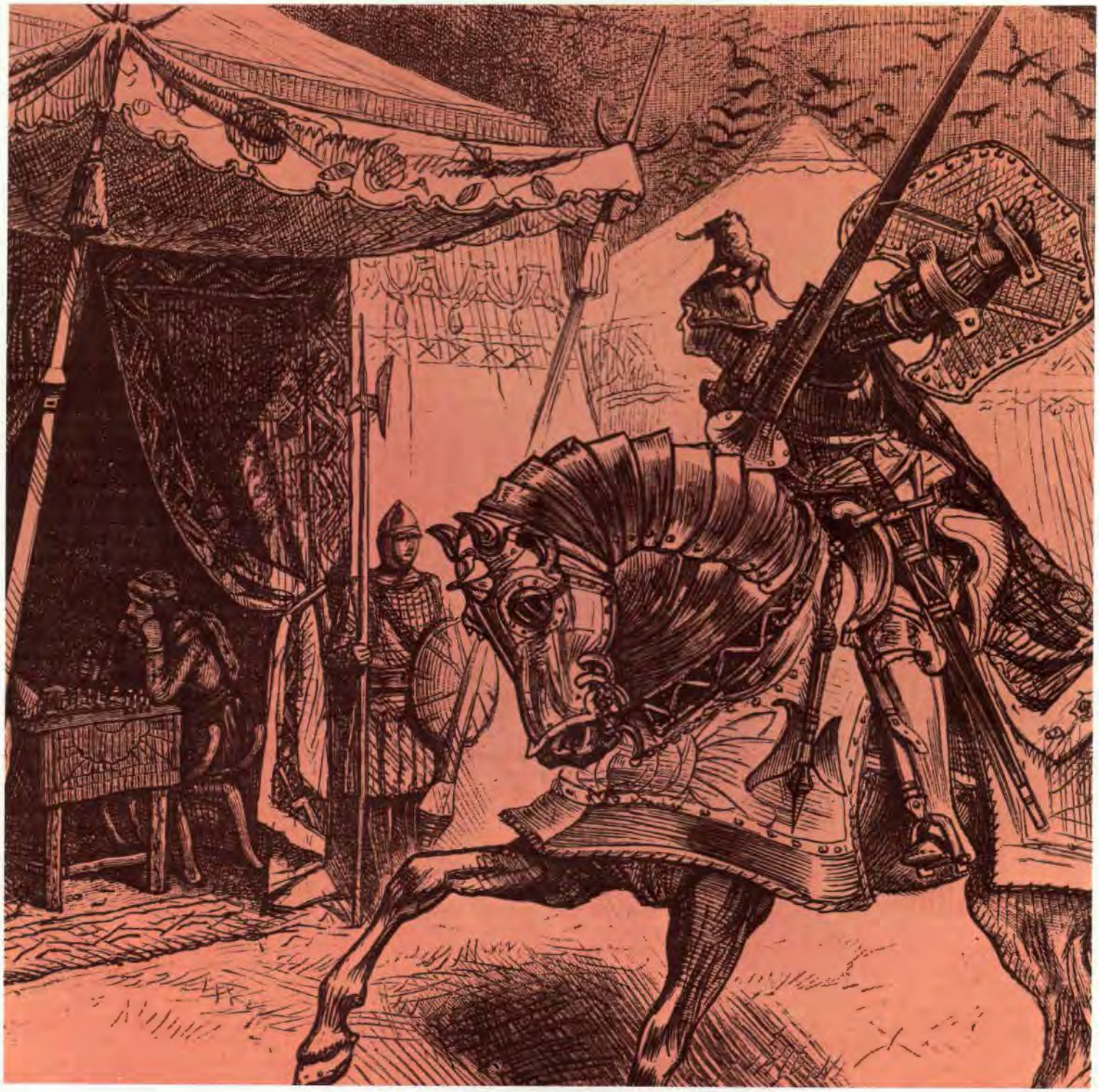
The title *Mabinogion* is in itself erroneous; it was given to this group of tales by Lady Charlotte Guest, who translated them in the 19th century. Her achievement was remarkable, and no matter how incorrect or improbable some of her conclusions, which were based upon the information then available, may now seem to be, one can only accord her the highest praise and respect for what she set out to do, and actually achieved, within the limitations of her time. Lady Guest took the word *Mabinogion* for a plural form of *mabinogi*, but the word 'mabinogi' (whatever its meaning) could only apply to the Four Branches, those of Pwyll, Branwen, Manawydan and Math.

These magnificent compositions are preserved in two Welsh collections, the White

Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest. Some of the stories clearly predate the actual manuscripts by a considerable period of time. The probable date of the manuscript of the Four Branches, for example, would seem to be somewhere round about the second half of the 11th century AD; and the written form of the story of Culhwch and Olwen goes back at least another 100 years. But the subject matter of the tales reaches right back into the pagan past; in the same way as new and vital growth derives from the gnarled roots of an ancient tree, seemingly independent of them but, in fact, ultimately utterly dependent, springing directly from them although coming into being so much later in time. As Gwyn and Thomas Jones say of the antiquity of these tales: 'No one doubts that much of the subject matter of these stories is very old indeed, coeval maybe with the dawn of the Celtic world.'

The stories that comprise the *Mabinogion* are very diverse. There are the Four Branches; two short pieces called The Dream of Macsen Wledig and Lludd and Llefelys; Culhwch and Olwen, the earliest Arthurian tale in Welsh; The Dream of Rhonabwy, a romantic tale; and the later Arthurian romances, The Lady of the Fountain, Peredur, and Gereint son of Erbin. Although these last show strong Norman-French influence, there is a basic unity between all these tales, in spite of their manifold differences. The subject matter is primarily ancient, and is composed of a blend of mythology and folklore. The Welsh storytellers must have had many hundreds of tales in their repertoire, and therefore their supply of ready material for entertainment was considerable. Tales were known orally, and centuries passed before they were written down in some form or another.

There can be no doubt that the Four Branches are the finest tales in the *Mabinogion*. Originally mabinogi meant 'tale of a young man or hero'; later it came to mean simply 'tale, story'. The first of the Four Branches, a splendid, moving tale, is concerned with Pwyll, prince of Dyfed, and his exploits; with his heroic defeat of Arawn, king of the Celtic otherworld; with his marriage to the goddess Rhiannon (Great Queen), and with the birth of his son Pryderi.



John Freeman

Like other Celtic bards, the Welsh story-tellers must have had many hundreds of tales in their repertoire and were held in great esteem. The *Mabinogion* stories are distinguished for their elegance and evocative power, and also for the treasure of mythology, legend, folklore and magic which they contain *Left* An army of ravens appears in the tale of the Dream of Rhonabwy *Above* A group of Arthur's warriors confront a giant at the castle of the Giant Gwrnach

The birth of the heir brings about a tragic situation; the infant is stolen from his mother's side on the night of his birth and the mother is accused of infanticide, of slaying her son whilst still unbalanced by the pangs of birth, and is punished accordingly.

It is her extraordinary punishment that constitutes one of the vital clues to the mythological elements in this tale. Rhiannon is the insular equivalent of Epona, 'Great Mare', the Celtic fertility goddess venerated far and wide in the Roman Empire. Rhiannon, on account of her supposed crime, is made to act as a horse. She has to wait beside the horse-block in her husband's court every day, and carry on her back all such as seek to interview the household.

> With that Pwyll, Head of Annwn, arose, and the war-band and the hosts. And that hap could not be concealed. The story went forth throughout the land, and the chief men came together to make representation to Pwyll, to request him that he should put away his wife for a crime so outrageous as that she had wrought. The answer Pwyll gave was: 'No cause had they to request me that I put away my wife, save her having no offspring. But offspring I know her to have, and I will not put her away. But if she has done wrong, let her do penance for it.'
>
> So Rhiannon summoned her teachers and her wise men. And as she preferred doing penance to wrangling with the women she took on her penance. The penance imposed on her was to remain in that court at Arberth till the end of seven years, and to sit every day near the horse-block that was outside the gate, and to relate the whole story to every one who should come there whom she might suppose not to know it: and to those who would permit her to carry them, to offer guest and stranger to carry him on her back to the court. But it was chance that anyone would permit himself to be carried.

It was not chance, however, that caused her to be linked with horses and horse cults in the first place, and there is clear evidence that she was indeed an insular horse goddess, equivalent to and ultimately identical with, the Epona of the Celtic tribes in Europe.

The second of the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion*, Branwen, Daughter of Llyr deals with the marriage of Branwen, sister of Bran the Blessed, King of Britain (see BRAN), to Matholwch, King of Ireland, and the tragedies that resulted from this union. Through the evil influence of Effnyissen, Bran's sinister and enigmatic brother, the marriage is a failure from the start, and the Irish king avenges insults brought about by Effnyissen on the innocent Branwen. He tries to conceal from Bran what is in fact happening to his sister for as long as possible, but ultimately the truth is known and Bran is incensed beyond words, and grieves for his innocent sister's suffering.

Bran sets out for Ireland with his retinue. His followers go by boat but he himself, because of his huge size, has to wade across. One of the finest and most typical passages in early Celtic literature now follows.

> And the swineherds of Matholwch were upon the sea-shore one day, busied with their swine. And because of the sight they saw upon the sea they came to Matholwch. 'Lord,' said they, 'greeting.' 'God prosper you,' said he, 'and have you any news?' 'Lord,' they said, 'we have wondrous news. A forest we have seen upon the deep, in a place where we never saw a single tree.' 'That is a strange thing,' said he, 'could you see aught but that?' 'We could, Lord', said they, 'a big mountain close to the forest, and that moving, and a lofty ridge on the mountain, and a lake on each side of the ridge, and the forest and the mountain and all those things moving.' 'Why,' said he, 'there is no one here will know anything of that, except Branwen knows. Do you ask her.'
>
> Messengers went to Branwen. 'Lady,' said they, 'what thinkest thou that is?' 'Though Lady I am not,' said she, 'I know what that is: the men of the Island of the Mighty on their way over, having heard of my woes and of my humiliation.' 'What is the forest that was seen upon the sea?' they asked. 'The masts of ships and their yards,' said she. 'Alas,' said they, 'what was the mountain that could be seen alongside the ships?' 'Bendigeidfran, my brother, that was,' said she, 'coming by wading. There was never a ship in which he might be contained.' 'What was the lofty ridge, and the lake on each side of the ridge?' 'He,' said she, 'looking towards this island; he is angered. The two lakes on each side of the ridge are his two eyes, one on each side of his nose.'

All the basic ingredients of mythology are present here. The outcome of this invasion is death all round. The boy whom Branwen has borne to Matholwch is murdered. Effnyissen bursts the sacred cauldron of rejuvenation and bursts his own heart at the same time. Bran is mortally wounded and Branwen dies of grief for her son, her brother, and the general awfulness and tragedy of the situation. The story ends: 'and that is how this branch of the mabinogi ends, concerning the blow to Branwen which was one of the Three Unhappy Blows in this island; and concerning the Assembly of Bran, when the hosts of sevenscore districts and fourteen went over to Ireland to avenge the blow to Br. en: and concerning the feasting in Harddlech seven years; and the singing of the birds of Rhiannon, and the Assembly of the Head for fourscore years.'

The third branch, Manawydan son of Llyr, deals with the marriage of the god Manawydan, the equivalent of the Irish Mannanan mac Lir, the god of the sea, to the goddess Rhiannon after the death of Pwyll, her first husband. It contains the motif of the magical spell which causes

Rhiannon and her son Pryderi to disappear, leaving Manawydan alone with Pryderi's young wife Cigfa. Manawydan earns their living by making shoes. The story then describes the return of Rhiannon and her son. Manawydan has caught the wife of the enchanter who cast the spell, in the form of a mouse. The enchanter begs of Manawydan: 'Now set my wife free for me.' 'I will not set her free, between me and God, until I see Pryderi and Rhiannon with me free.' 'See, here they come,' he answered. With that, behold, Pryderi and Rhiannon. He rose up to meet them, and greeted them, and they sat down together. Manawydan asks the sorcerer then, 'In what servitude have Pryderi and Rhiannon been?' 'Pryderi would have the gate-hammers of my court about his neck, and Rhiannon would have the collars of the asses, after they had been carrying hay, about her neck.'

It is interesting that Rhiannon's latent identity with the Celtic horse goddess Epona is revealed in this tale by the fact that her equine associations take the form of punishment. She is forced to behave like a horse in order that she may be degraded. This is perhaps a Christian slant on the old pagan cult.

The Hue of Heaven's Lightning

The fourth branch of the *Mabinogion*, that of Math and Mathonwy, is concerned with the theme of the king and his prophesied death. In this tale many mythological motifs are apparent in the various episodes described. Shape-shifting, both the metamorphosis into another human form and the change to an animal shape, is commonplace. The death of Pryderi, Pwyll's son, takes place in this tale, as a result of the machinations of the sorcerer Gwydion and his brother Gilfaethwy. Pryderi dies after his pigs, which had been given to him by the lord of the otherworld, have been stolen by the two men. The main figure in the tale is the god Lleu, and his birth, his naming, his equipping with arms and his marriage are the chief events around which the story revolves. A magical wife is created for him from flowers by his magician uncle. Her subsequent infidelity and its dramatic consequences lead us to the end of the tale (see GWYDION; LLEU).

Culhwch and Olwen, probably the earliest of the 11 stories, is a most dramatic and beautifully constructed tale, with a strong mythological and magical undercurrent. It also abounds with international folklore motifs.

The god Maponus (known from north British dedications) figures in Welsh literature as Mabon son of Modron, literally 'Son, son of Mother'. In this tale he plays an important role in the hunting of the magical, transformed boar Twrch Trwyth, with which much of the tale is concerned. The story is full of colour and vivacity and fine description. A splendid passage describing the young hero-elect's appearance as he sets out for his cousin Arthur's court is typical:

> Off went the boy on a steed with light-grey head, four winters old, with well-knit fork, shell-hoofed, and a gold tubular bridle-bit in its mouth. And under him a precious gold saddle . . . A gold-hilted sword on his thigh, and the blade of it gold, and a gold-chased buckler upon him with the hue of heaven's lightning therein, and an ivory boss therein. And two greyhounds, white-breasted, brindled in front of him, with a collar of red gold about the neck of either, from shoulder swell to ear. The one that was on the left side would be on the right, and the one that was on the right side would be on the left, like two sea-swallows sporting around him. Four clods the four hoofs of his steed would cut, like four swallows in the air over his head, now before him now behind him. A four-cornered mantle of purple upon him, and an apple of red gold in each of its corners: a hundred kine was the worth of each apple. The worth of three hundred kine in precious gold was there in his foot-gear and his stirrups, from the top of his thigh to the tip of his toe. Never a hair-tip stirred upon him, so exceeding light his steed's canter under him, on his way to the gate of Arthur's court.

Culhwch and Olwen is a document of the first importance for any study of the sources of the Arthurian legend. Arthur figures here in a guise quite different from the civilized, elegant emperor of later tradition. He is portrayed as a British king, without any veneer of sophistication. He typifies all that one finds in the Celtic tribal god, whether or not his own origin lay in ancient Celtic mythology (see ARTHUR).

The Dream of Rhonabwy, for all its sophisticated and complex structure, also stems from the old heroic traditions of the pagan Celtic world. But a fundamental change occurs in the three latest tales of the *Mabinogion*: The Lady of the Fountain, Peredur, and Gereint, son of Erbin. The influence of Norman-French life and letters in these stories is powerful, and stands out clearly in all the descriptions of personal appearance and the material background. Landscape is vague, not detailed as in the earlier group. Place-names sink into an anonymous world. It is singular that the best passages in these Arthurian romances are those that stem from the ancient native tradition.

The *Mabinogion* has been translated into English three times, Lady Charlotte Guest's version, which appeared between 1838 and 1849, being perhaps the best-known. A rare collection of medieval tales, written in Welsh, the *Mabinogion* enshrines much that belongs to the old, half-forgotten world of Celtic Britain and the pagan past. Its very richness, and the hints it contains of other stories, indicates what a vast and varied repertoire the early story-tellers must have had. An Irish *ollamh*, 'professor', was required to know 350 prose tales by heart and there is no reason to suppose that the repertoire of the Welsh *cyfarwydd*, 'story-teller' was on a lesser scale.

The story-teller was held in high esteem throughout Celtic history; he played a vital role in the entertainment of the aristocracy and in the preservation of tradition. In the story of Math, after Gwydion and his companions have come to Pryderi's court, Pryderi asks one of the men to tell a tale. 'Why,' said Pryderi, 'gladly would we have a tale from some of the young men yonder.' 'Lord,' said Gwydion, 'it is a custom with us that the first night after one comes to a great man, the chief bard shall have the say. I will tell a tale gladly.' Gwydion was the best teller of tales in the world, and in a society where the competition was great and the standards formidable, this is high praise indeed.

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: K. H. Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 1961); Gwyn and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion* (Biblio Distributors, 1976).

MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

'KNOW,' said the 3rd century Christian theologian Origen, 'that you are another world in miniature and that in you there is a sun, a moon and stars too.' The theory of macrocosm and microcosm is a spectacular development of anthropomorphism, the universal tendency of man to picture God or the gods, and the whole world around him, in his own image. The universe, the macrocosm (from Greek *makros kosmos*, 'great world') is regarded as a human organism on a gigantic scale and man, the microcosm (from *mikros kosmos*, 'little world') as a miniature copy. He is made of the same materials and he contains a soul, which is the human equivalent of the world-soul that animates all Nature. Everything in man, his ideas and emotions, his instincts and cravings, his confusions and contradictions, has its counterpart in the universe.

But man is also made in the image of God, as the book of Genesis says, and so, in effect, God is the sum total of the universe and man is a tiny replica of both the universe and God (though this is over-simplified, for many who think in these terms have maintained that although God is present in everything that exists, he is more than the sum total of everything in the universe). The theory is of great importance in magic, since if man contains God and the universe in himself, then with his own resources he can wield supreme power over all things.

Agrippa, Paracelsus and other occult philosophers of the Renaissance adopted the theory of macrocosm and microcosm enthusiastically but the theory itself was much older. It was well known in medieval Europe which had inherited it from the late classical world, where again the universe was believed to be a living and divine organism.

Though discarded by modern science, the theory has retained its value for occultists and magicians, who believe that science's picture of the universe accounts for only a small part of reality. It has the great attraction and advantage of satisfying

and reconciling two powerful opposite feelings that human beings have about themselves and their place in the world. On the one hand, man is insignificant, a toy copy of a vast original, at the mercy of forces incomparably greater than himself. On the other, he is crucially significant, 'the measure of all things', the potential godhead and master of Fate.

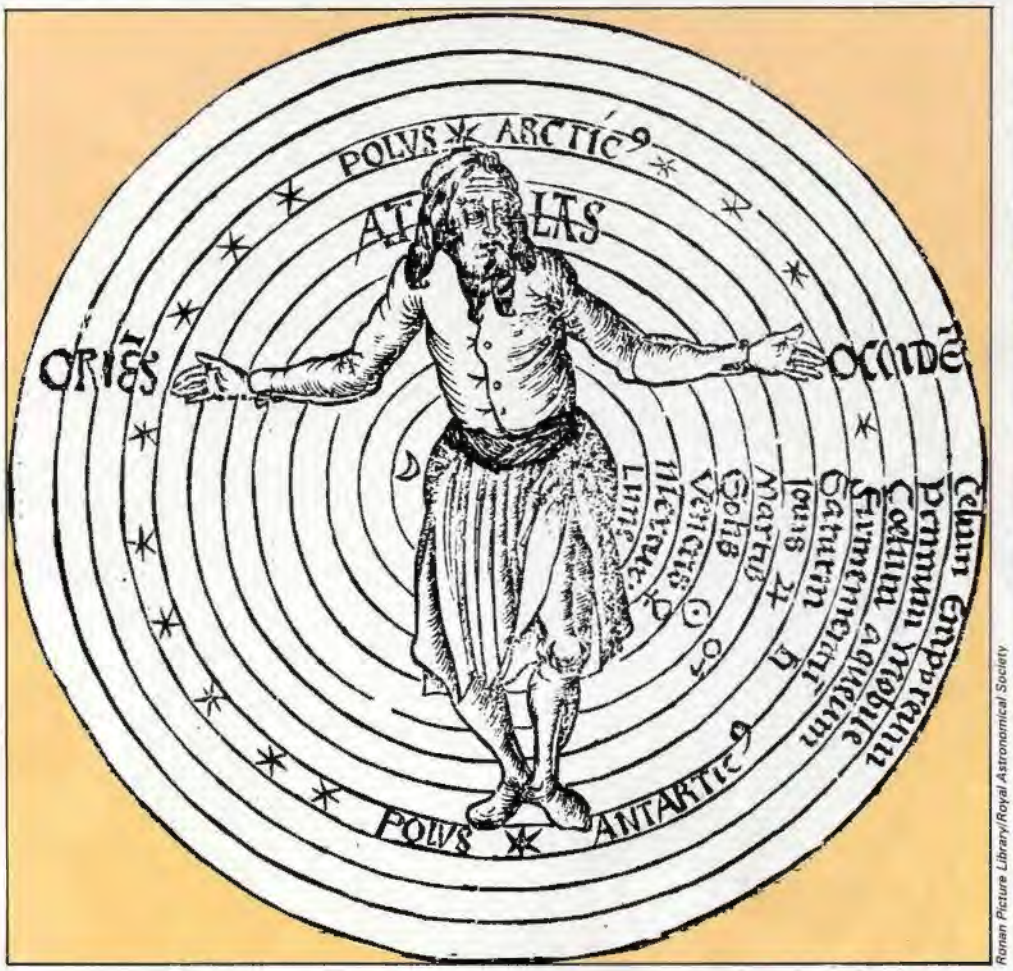
In the 17th century, Robert Fludd, following numerous earlier precedents, constructed cosmic diagrams to illustrate and classify the connections and parallels between the 'great world' and man (see CABALA; FLUDD). He originally drew the theory of macrocosm and microcosm from classical philosophers but, like other theorists of his period, he found the same ideas in the Cabala. Here ordinary human man is a small-scale replica of Adam Kadmon, the heavenly or primordial man, man as he was originally created by God. Adam Kadmon is the vast human organism that is the universe and, if not God, he is at least very close to being God. His body is the Tree of Life, which is the underlying structure of the universe and the structure of God as he reveals himself.

It is this relationship between man and God which made it possible for Cabalists to say that it is the duty of man to promote the wholeness of God. It is the relationship between man and the universe which encouraged the construction of systems of correspondences between different factors or forces in the universe and their equivalents in man (not only in the Cabala, of course, but outside it as well).

The theory of macrocosm and microcosm was one of the pillars of alchemy. The universe was alive and just as man's body contained a soul, so all matter contained the universal spirit or world-soul. As Jung observed: 'In order to explain the mystery of matter he (the alchemist) projected yet another mystery – namely his own psychic background – into what was to be explained.' Alchemy combined chemistry with mysticism because the universe outside the alchemist was built on the same model as the universe inside him. The metals were 'begotten' in the earth in a way which paralleled human reproduction, and 'grew' like human children. To concentrate the universal spirit in the Philosophers' Stone was also to achieve spiritual perfection and completeness (see ALCHEMY).

The theory is also a bastion of traditional astrology (though not all astrologers would now accept it). The four elements and four qualities are the basic constituents of everything in the universe and they are the basic constituents of man, not only of his body but of his character, the four 'humours' determining each individual's personality-type (see ELEMENTS). Many astrologers still classify the zodiac signs in a horoscope in terms of the four elements.

From the 11th century on, diagrams of the human body showing how its organs and members correspond to the zodiac become increasingly frequent in manuscripts, accompanied apparently by a growing tendency to fatalism, to the feeling that man's life is dictated to him from his birth. Each man carries the starry heaven and its influences within himself ('in you there is a sun, a moon and stars too') and as the planets move along their courses in the sky, so will human beings follow the appointed pathways of their lives. It was this link between the universe and man which enabled the calculable and predictable movements of the heavenly bodies to be used as an index to the otherwise incalculable behaviour of human beings. On the other hand, the same link encouraged the attempt to use the power of the planets in magic.
(See also AGRIPPA; MAGIC; MAN.)



16th century diagram from *Margarita Philosophica* by Gregor Reisch illustrating the relationship between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm

Ronan Picture Library/Royal Astronomical Society

MADNESS

THE WORD 'MADNESS' has no place in the scientific terminology of psychologists but it has long been used in everyday speech for deviations from 'sane' behaviour. What in fact constitutes sane behaviour is a matter of dispute. If it implies adjustment to the cultural milieu of one's environment, then it would appear to be only a relative term.

Some aberration from so-called normal standards seems to be almost a prerequisite for certain careers. The lives of the great musicians, poets, painters and writers often fall markedly short of the accepted norms of sanity and sobriety. How often evidence of a morbid turn of mind is found in the lives of the famous. The lover and the poet were bracketed together with the lunatic long before Shakespeare's time.

The history of the religious and arcane traditions suggests that spiritual activity, both orthodox and unorthodox, inclines the human personality very strongly towards odd or eccentric behaviour that may often border on madness. It is almost axiomatic that the gods and spirits never speak to the perfectly sane or the perfectly sober. The wonder-worker, prophet, medicine-man and magician, all have more than a touch of abnormality.

The shaman or sorcerer-priest of the tribes living in the northern and Arctic latitudes of Finland, Siberia and America is frequently classed as a psychopath. In spirit he flies up to heaven, descends to hell, and dives to the nethermost regions of the sea. He receives messages from the dead, communes with spirits. But his mental balance is insecure and he is easily 'unhinged'. If suddenly angered or startled he loses his self-control completely. His eyes redden and bulge out, his face goes through the most hideous contortions, and unless restrained he will not hesitate to maim or murder the person who provoked him. If frustrated from working off his rage, he will roll about on the ground screaming and foaming at the mouth until he loses consciousness. When he regains it, he is himself again. In the eyes of his people such a man is naturally believed to be possessed, and very susceptible to the

Previous page **The belief that there is a connection between the moon and madness is widespread, and the word 'lunatic' itself is derived from *luna*, 'the moon': 17th century French engraving showing the rays of the moon affecting women's minds *Above* Painting by Goya of a scene in a lunatic asylum; in a different society the inmates could have been revered for their supranormal powers *Above right* In primitive societies dancing always had a religious or cultic basis, and was one of the methods used to induce a state of ecstasy: North American Indians performing a scalp dance in celebration of victory; from Catlin's *North American Portfolio* (1844)**

influences of inspiration or divine suggestion (see also SHAMAN).

Many of the symptoms mentioned above are akin to those of epilepsy, a peculiar nervous affliction during which the victim similarly loses consciousness, falls to the ground and undergoes convulsions. From earliest times 'the falling sickness' was regarded as divine in origin, and those who suffered from it were described as the 'blessed ones'.

Ecstasy is another curiosity of religious experience. The Greek term *ekstasis* means 'standing aside', and originally signified bewilderment or insanity. It may range in degree from the deep, intense exhilaration of physical or mental fulfilment to the sudden mystic rapture of the saint or prophet. The experience of the saint in ecstasy transcends anything known in everyday life. Like the madman the saint is 'beside himself'. The priestess of the ancient Greek oracle of Delphi attained a state of ecstasy as she sat on the sacred tripod placed over a fissure in the ground, breathing the toxic fumes that emanated from it. She would go into a trance and deliver prophecies supposedly inspired by the god Apollo. Since most of her utterances were unintelligible ravings, a special class of priests was assigned to interpret and make sense of them.

There was once a widespread belief that it was possible for a demon to enter a person and take 'possession' of him, causing him to behave in an unnatural and violent manner. In such cases the possessed exhibits all the characteristics of another personality; he speaks in a different voice and behaves in a manner quite unlike his normal self. The state of possession can become epidemic. So shocking is the sight of some forms of possession that an onlooker may succumb to an attack himself.

This contagious possession usually takes a religious form and can assume alarming proportions. This history of medieval monasticism records periodical epidemics of possession that raged in religious institutions. Nuns were particularly susceptible to possession by 'demons'. They suffered convulsions, had erotic visions which they described in lurid detail, used obscene language, spoke in strange voices. Often the possession lasted for many months and the convents where the nuns lived remained in a state of permanent uproar.

The prescribed method for expelling the invading spirit was exorcism, a ritual that was performed by a priest during which the spirit was solemnly commanded to leave, and the adjuration was supported by threats, admonitions and abuse (see EXORCISM). Very often the 'demon' replied in kind. A curious feature of these exchanges between exorcist and spirit is that it sometimes resembles the dialogue between psychoanalyst and schizophrenic patient.

The lives of saints and ascetics have always been of interest to students of psychopathology, because abnormality is often present to a remarkable degree in their behaviour. Some, no doubt, nowadays would qualify for admission to a mental hospital. The patron deity of many strange sects in Hinduism is the god Shiva, whose 1008 names include one that means 'mad'. Likewise, the *sadhus* or ascetics of India are sometimes spoken of as *pagal*, 'mad', a description that does not in any way detract from the reverence in which they are held. In the words of Ramakrishna, the founder of a world-wide cult, 'the true saint behaves as though he were mad.'

Some Christian ascetics in Egypt and Syria between the 3rd and 7th centuries were incredibly crazy, yet they aroused the admiration of religious people and set an example that aspirants to the holy life tried to emulate for centuries after. They lived in solitude and silence, kept long fasts and vigils, and meditated in complete darkness for months at a stretch. Some, the Browsers, lived only on leaves, herbs and roots, the Dendrites lived on the tops of trees and the Stylites lived on the tops of pillars. One of

Su Gooders

the most famous of the last group was St Simeon Stylites in the 5th century AD. He built a pillar 16 feet high surmounted by a platform, 4 feet square, with a low balustrade around it. He never came down from this edifice, except to build and occupy another 30 feet high. He went on to a third pillar 45 feet high, and ended his days on a pillar 80 feet in height. In all he spent a total of 36 years on the tops of pillars. Ethiopians, Jews, Persians, Armenians, Medians and Saracens travelled to the outskirts of Antioch to gaze at him. Great virtue was said to accrue from the pilgrimage and those who saw the wonder retailed the legend of his saintliness when they returned to their homes and villages (see SIMEON STYLITES).

'Slain of the Lord'

Asceticism is but one method of inducing the state of 'dissociation'. Now largely obsolescent in psychological literature, this term is still used to describe the mental phenomena that occur when normal perception seems to shift, either wholly or in part, to another level of awareness and activity. Such dissociation may be intentionally induced and has been used in magic and religious ceremonial from earliest days.

Dancing, singing, whirling, howling, fasting, flagellation, mediumistic trances, illness, fevers, meditation, prayer, intoxicants, hypnosis, drugs, all these can precipitate one beyond the confines of the everyday world into a condition of trance, euphoria, mania, clairvoyance.

Wilhelm Wundt (d 1920), the German psychologist, called dreaming a state of 'normal temporary insanity'. Some authorities find a close connection between Spiritualism and schizophrenia. Flagellation and other sadistic and masochistic rituals were common in many religious cults. In times past dancing always had a religious or cultic basis; even if warriors danced to prepare for war or to celebrate a victory, it was still essentially a religious rite. Ecstasy was implicit in the dance. The Roman writer Cicero (d 43 BC) said, 'No one dances when he is sober, unless he happens to be a lunatic'.

Perhaps the most extraordinary exhibition of the alliance between madness and the religious dance is found in the dancing mania of the Middle Ages (see DANCING MANIA). Europe knew several epidemics of this type, starting in the 11th century, but the most widespread was one that began in 1374 at Aix-la-Chapelle, when men, women and children joined hands and danced through the streets. They were in a state bordering on delirium, calling out to the saints, shouting of their visions of heaven and hell, all the while dancing, until they fell exhausted to the ground. This frenzy was accompanied by convulsions, foaming at the mouth and blackouts. The mania spread to Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. At one time the dancers on the streets of Metz numbered 11,000 persons. Attempts were made to exorcize the mania, but to no avail, and it eventually died out.

In modern times the best example of religious mania is seen in the tumultuous upsurge of religious enthusiasm in revivalist movements. A veritable madness seems to grip the congregations who get carried away on the crest of a powerful wave of feeling that seems beyond control.

The most extraordinary example of revivalism was in Kentucky at the turn of the 18th century (see HOLY ROLLERS), but there were other well-known revivals in Ireland and Wales. The preachers who precipitated the mania delivered sermons about everlasting hellfire for lost souls, and their terrifying prophecies of doom for the unredeemed caused a fierce blaze of religious emotion. A member of the congregation would suddenly utter a moan, which would be echoed here and there by others. Then there would be a shriek, and a dozen throats would respond with piercing screams. Someone would suddenly jerk about and fall to the floor, and his collapse would be followed by wholesale convulsions and fits. The crowd would stamp and chant, and the more sober among the faithful would start removing the 'slain of the Lord', carrying them away like so many logs of wood.

Individuals dedicated to things spiritual were traditionally divided into two classes; the dichotomy between them is seen in the rational, level-headed member of the 'establishment' on the one hand, and on the other the unorthodox prophet and rebel sitting at the outer gate of cities. One is versed in the law, the other is in tune with the Infinite. In Judaism one is the Pharisee conscious of his righteousness, the other a Jeremiah foretelling doom. In Hinduism

one is the pandit weighed down with book-learning, the other is the yogi steeped in the mysteries of another dimension. And so it is in all religions. The archbishop and the saint of Christianity; the mullah and the Sufi of Islam; the noble Apollonian and the drunken Dionysiac of the ancient Greeks (see DIONYSUS).

To the common people, those who fell into the second category were not so much dangerous as blessed. In the East the madman had inviolable privileges. Even if feared, he was revered. He was the divine one, and his incoherencies were pondered over for symbolic messages and hidden meanings. The ranting shaman, the prophet with his outlandish garb and fearsome visage, the paranoiac witch-doctor, were psychopathic by modern standards, but in their own societies were believed to be able to commune with the spirit world and the shades of the dead.

The rational part of man's brain insists on putting the question, 'How can man commune with the spirit world?' but there is an ancient, irrational, instinctual area which is aware of a hidden dimension which it does not attempt to understand. A shifting of consciousness, a displacement of the mental faculties is probably essential if this hidden dimension is to be revealed. Crazy persons are 'cracked', 'unhinged', 'screwy'. The eccentric is 'off-centre', his mind not quite even in its functioning. Some imbalance seems necessary to make the personality more receptive to material from 'out there', and to enable an individual to have visions of 'things that never were on sea or land'.

The mental patient who sees the skull beneath the living face, and the prophet or medicine-man to whom the hidden realities of the spirit world are revealed, both experience a shifting of consciousness, a displacement of the mental faculties: *The World of Madness*

Camera Press London

The Validity of Nonsense

There was a time when religious faith had the reputation of being absurd, and sometimes gloried in it. In the 3rd century Tertullian, one of the great Fathers of the Church, declared *Credo quia absurdum* ('I believe because it is absurd') and today an echo of this is often heard in scientific circles. Mathematics and physics are creating a new mysticism of their own, and it is rash to say that anything is absurd. The eminent Danish scientist, Niels Bohr (d 1962) in summing up a discussion following a lecture by another physicist said, 'We are all agreed that the theory is crazy. The question which divides us is whether it is crazy enough to have a chance of being correct. My own feeling is that it is not crazy enough.'

Today we are verging on an irrational concept of the universe. We are almost certain that Nature is not rational and it is doubtful if man's senses get him any closer to ultimate truth. Voltaire conceived of beings with a thousand senses who were no nearer to an understanding of reality than creatures with only five. Growing acceptance of the validity of nonsense ar ' irrationality in literature, art and even science, confirms the wisdom that makes religion respect the lunacy of the saint. Who can tell whether the meagre data that trickles in through the senses can give a clearer inkling of what it is really like 'out there' than the dream, the delirium, the fantasy or the vision? Perhaps the absurd and irrational experiences of mysticism, prophecy, poetry, magic and the supernatural provide one crystal pane in the dome of many-coloured glass through which man may catch a glimpse, however fleeting, of things true and eternal.

(See also ECSTASY; ENTHUSIASM; HYSTERICAL POSSESSION; POSSESSION.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

Maenads

Or Bacchae, frenzied women devotees of the Greek god Dionysus; armed with ivy-twined staffs tipped with a pine cone, and clothed in animal skins, they roamed the mountains celebrating the cult of Dionysus with ecstatic dance and song: they tore live beasts apart and devoured the flesh, probably as a rite of communion with the god.

See DIONYSUS.

Michael Holford

Magi

Or magians, 'wise men', plural of magus, a great adept of the occult arts; from a Persian word from which our 'magic' is derived: learned Persian priests, revered as sages, magicians and diviners: three magi, or wise men or kings, brought the infant Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, an event commemorated in the festival of the Epiphany; according to tradition, their names were Kaspar, Melchior and Balthasar, and their bones were buried in Cologne Cathedral.

Archives Photographiques

MAGIC

Saturday ♄ Cassiel. Ruler.
I conjuro & confirmo super vos Cassiel. Macolore
& Araquell Angeli fortes & potentes & per nomen
Adonai! Adonai. Adonai. Adonai. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.
Elohim. Cados. Cados. Ima vel Ima, Saday Ja. Jar
Domini formatoris Seculorum qui Septimo die
requievit & per illum qui in bene placito suo
filio Israel in hereditatem observandum dedit ut
eum firmeter custodirent & Sanctificarent, ad hac-
dendum inde bonam in alio seculo remunera-
tionem & per nomina Angelorum servientium ei
exercitu Septimo Booel Angel magne & per
potenti principi & per nomen stellum quae
est saturnus & per sanctum sigillum ejus
& per nomina predicta &c. &c.
See the Conjuration of Saturday in magic ceremonial
Cassiel.

The ultimate aim of magic, in the European tradition, is to achieve total domination of the universe, 'the all encompassing divine power which religion reserves for God but which magic reserves for man'

THE QUESTION 'what is magic?' has many answers and magic is not easy to define, even within the Western tradition and putting aside the magic of other peoples. A magician is an obvious person to look to for an answer and the most notorious of modern magicians, Aleister Crowley, supplied one in his book *Magick in Theory and Practice*: 'The question of magick is a question of discovering and employing hitherto unknown forces in Nature.'

This suggests that the common view of magic as something intended to work miracles, to set aside the order of Nature, is wrong-headed. Magicians are concerned with forces in Nature, even if they are peculiar, generally unrecognized or even, to a sceptic's eye, non-existent forces (though it takes a determined sceptic now to dismiss all of them as non-existent). The feats claimed by or attributed to magicians – influencing someone at a distance, for example, or being in two places at once, or mind-reading, or knowing what is going to happen in the future – may be 'supernatural' in that they seem to break natural laws, as these laws are understood at any given time. But either the feats are unreal and impossible or, if real, they are within the order of Nature as all reality must be.

Previous page **Magicians invoke intelligences to help them control cosmic forces: invocation to Cassiel, 'chief of the spirits', from the *Book of the Spirits*, a magical textbook *Above* For a magical operation to be successful driving forces deep within the practitioner's being must be liberated; the paraphernalia of magic is part of the attempt to break the constraints of reason and convention: witches' kitchen, Witches' Museum, Bourton on the Water**

Magicians are convinced, partly because of their basic cast of mind and partly as a result of their experiences, that the account of the universe given by science describes only part of the reality, and not the most important part: that there are far more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt

Michael Busselle

of in a rationalist and materialist philosophy. As Eliphas Levi said, in *Transcendental Magic*: 'It is in like manner with all the miracles of magic; a law exists which is ignored by the vulgar and made use of by the initiate.'

The 'scientific' background of magic itself is in a curious way both out of date and up to date. The theory of macrocosm and microcosm, on which European magic is based, was discarded by scientists long ago and the astronomy of traditional astrology is pre-Copernican. For 300 years or so in the West, the accepted picture of the way in which the universe works has largely excluded the forces with which magicians deal. It is only comparatively recently that experiments in psychical research have begun to suggest that some of these forces – extra-sensory perception, precoguition, psychokinesis – may well be realities.

But a magician is not a scientist or psychical researcher who has gone off along an odd track. He does theorise about his secret forces but he is much more interested in employing them. Magic is concerned above all else with the acquisition and exercise of power. 'Magic,' Levi said, 'is the traditional science of the secrets of Nature which has been transmitted to us from the magi. By means of this science the adept becomes invested with a species of relative omnipotence and can operate superhumanly – that is, after a manner which transcends the normal possibility of men.' A magician with less respect for Christianity, or less anxious to avoid the unfavourable notice of the Church, would leave out the word 'relative'. Omnipotence unqualified, supreme power over all things, is the ultimate goal of magic, though it is expected that it may take many reincarnations and lifetimes to achieve it.

A magician, unlike a scientist, is not concerned to explain his secrets. On the contrary, he wants to preserve them as mysteries. Magicians revel in what is secret, obscure, concealed and mysterious. This is one of the reasons for the obscurity of so much occult writing. If you are cherishing a great secret, it spoils it if you tell it to other people. But it also spoils it if you do not reveal at least a little bit of it, hence the occultist's love of hints, allusions,

'Magic has power to experience and fathom things which are inaccessible to human reason. For magic is a great secret wisdom, just as reason is a great public folly'

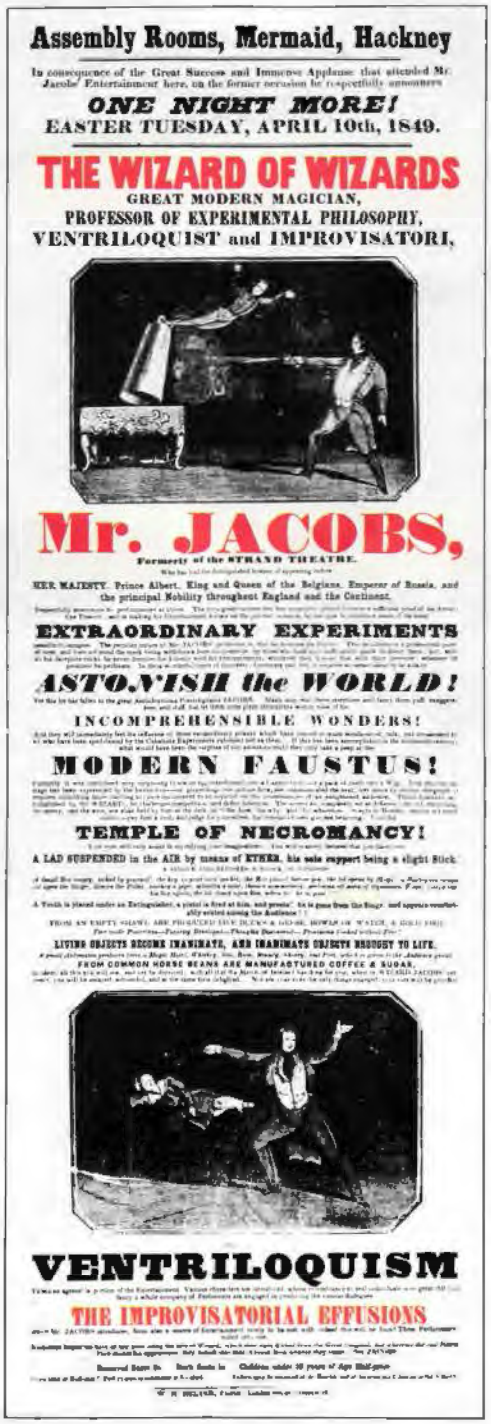
symbols and veiled language. Levi's famous four rules for the adept were 'TO KNOW, TO DARE, TO WILL, TO KEEP SILENCE.' Characteristically, this instruction to keep silent occurs in one of the longest and most revealing books about magic ever written.

Another reason for obscurity is that magic tends to be highly elitist, as a glance at much of the occult literature about Atlantis or Lemuria will show, and as Levi's distinction between 'the vulgar' and 'the initiate' suggests. Magicians are the adepts, the select few who have plumbed mysteries that are too deep and too dangerous for the common herd.

But there is another and better reason for silence and mystification. Magic is essentially an art and, like other arts, it can be learned but it cannot be taught. This statement has instantly to be qualified by asserting its opposite (appropriately, since it is a fundamental law of magic that all things are arranged in opposites, and it is the magician's business to reconcile them). Magical groups and orders usually have a hierarchy of degrees, or grades – frequently ten of them, corresponding to the ten sefiroth of the cabalistic Tree of Life (see CABALA) – and an initiate works his way up the ladder of the grades, receiving instruction in ever-deepening mysteries on the way. Traditionally, he must be taught and initiated by someone to whom authentic doctrine has been revealed, and one of the duties of the higher grades is to help the novices. All the same, the secrets cannot simply be explained to the learner. They must be contemplated, experienced and mastered by each person for himself afresh. At the climax of the Eleusinian Mysteries the initiates were not given a lecture, they were *shown* something (see ELEUSIS). It was for each of them to sense for himself what this revelation meant.

And finally, explaining anything involves rational analysis and reasoned exposition but deeply embedded in the European occult tradition is an intense distrust of reason. The powerful gnostic strain in Western magic, which Levi and Crowley did much to resuscitate, values as the paths to the truth behind the outward appearance of things, not reason, but insight, intuition, imagination, inspiration. You cannot find the one great underlying reality by thinking about it. 'Magic,' Paracelsus said, 'has power to experience and fathom things which are inaccessible to human reason. For magic is a great secret wisdom, just as reason is a great public folly.'

Victorian poster advertising the appearance of 'The Wizard of Wizards' in London in 1849

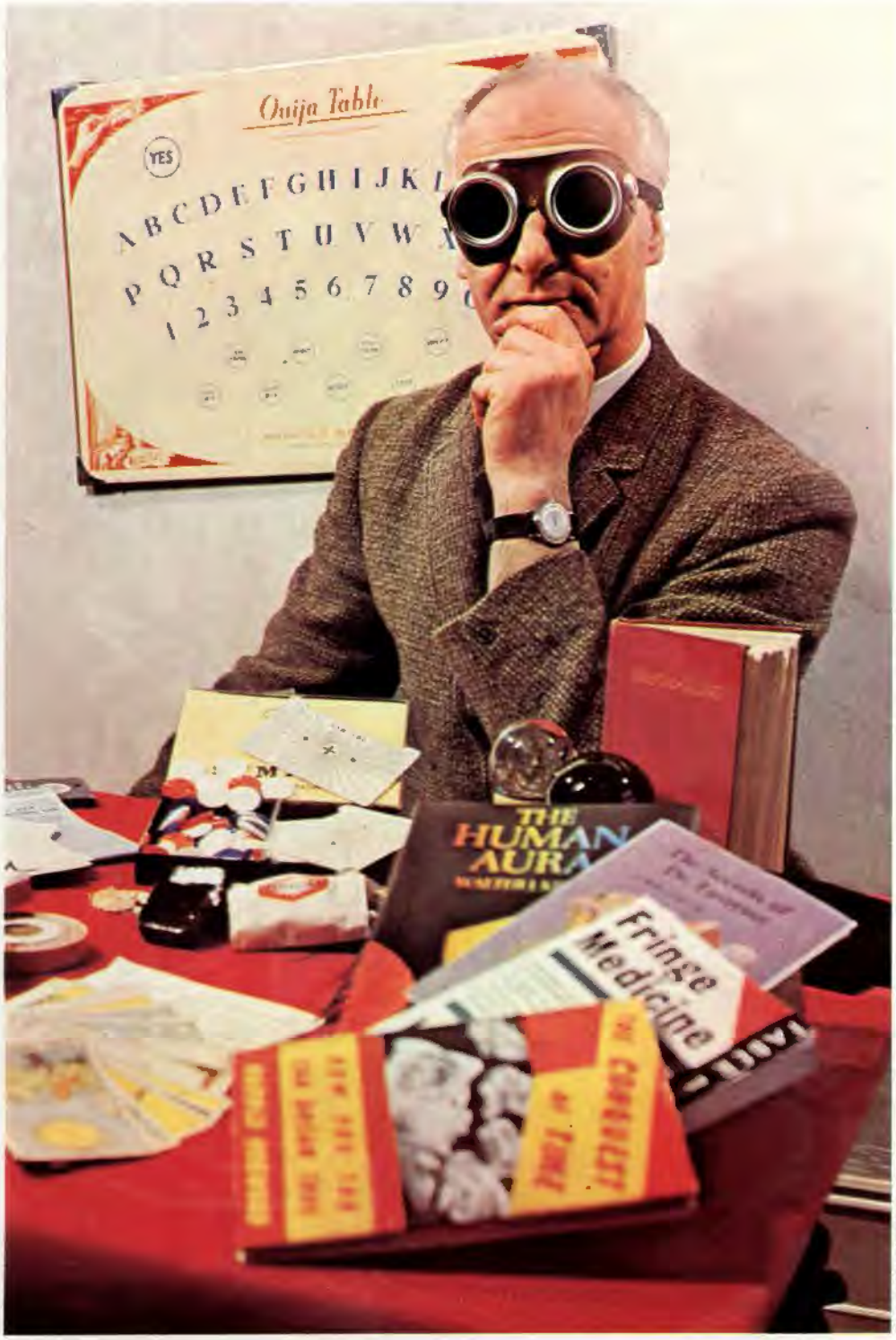


It is not on order but on disorder of the mind that the magician relies for power and the vision of truth. A magical operation of any difficulty cannot be performed successfully in a normal condition of mind. This is one of the factors behind the use of chanting, robes and evocative paraphernalia, sex, sadism, drugs, passionate and ferocious imaginings, and the acting out of emotion in magical rituals. These techniques or 'weapons' (not all of which are used by all magicians) are designed to break the constraints of reason and convention, to liberate the driving forces from the depths of the magician's being.

But again the opposite is also true, since it is essential that the magician remain the master of the forces which he has unleashed, and not be swept away by them. And although they distrust order and reason, magicians have paradoxically constructed a rigidly orderly classification of everything in the universe, sorting all phenomena into a limited number of pigeonholes – the number itself being predetermined: seven if the traditional planets are taken as the index, ten if the sefiroth are, 22 if the Tarot trumps and the 'paths' of the Tree of Life are. These systems are not reached at random but depend on a certain logic (see ALPHABET; CORRESPONDENCES; FORCES; PATHS).

The Power of Infinity

Systems of correspondences stem from the magician's view of the universe, which is based on the old classical and medieval picture of it. The universe is regarded as a human organism on a colossal scale and man as a copy of it in miniature (see MACROCOSM). Man is also a miniature replica of God and so, by a process of mystically expanding himself, a man can become the sum total of all things and the wielder of supreme power. One of the Hermetic texts says that a man can transcend all limits of time and space, can become higher than all height, lower than all depth, can take to himself the qualities of all creatures, can be everywhere at once, can be both living and dead. 'By such an expansion of the range of his consciousness, man may rise into oneness with God, who is Himself the Whole'.



Camera Press London

A modern dealer in magic and spells, John G. Williamson displays his wares which include a psychic trumpet, Tarot cards and a ouija board; he himself is wearing goggles which he designed to pick up the 'psychic aura'

Hundreds of years later, Agrippa spoke of the master magician as the man 'who has cohabited with the elements, vanquished Nature, mounted higher than the heavens, elevating himself to the archetype itself with whom he then becomes co-operator and can do all things.' Hundreds of years later still, Crowley defined God as 'the Ideal Identity of a man's inmost nature' and the ultimate goal of magic, the Great Work, as 'the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity.'

If man is the universe in miniature, then all factors in man are duplicated on a greater scale in the universe. Man is vibrantly alive and clings to life with intense tenacity, therefore there is in the universe a life-force, a power or vibration or tendency, call it what you will, that makes for the continuance of life. Man has in himself forces of love and desire, therefore there is in the universe a greater force of love (called, for convenience, Venus). Man has feelings of hatred, aggression and destructiveness, paralleled in the universe by a fierce current of destructive energy (Mars). The viruses, impurities and waste products of the human body have their counterparts in the universe as demonic intelligences (in the Cabala the 'shells' or 'husks', the worthless rubbish of creation).

All drives and forces which are powerful in man will also be powerful in the universe at large, hence the magical importance of sex. Similarly, the fact that human beings are swayed by signs and symbols, by gestures and above all by words, means that these weapons will be effective in swaying and controlling the forces of the universe (see INCANTATION). But all other things in Nature, colours, jewels, animals, herbs, everything, must also have counterparts in man. How do we know which factors in man reproduce the colour red or the number eight, iron or the diamond? The answers are given in the correspondences, which classify everything in terms of the great driving forces that are common to man and the universe outside him. Man is alive and his mind and body contain energy, and correspondingly the universe as a whole and each individual piece of it contain energy, which the magician who knows the hidden links and connections can use in his operations.

The correspondences are arranged partly in terms of the planets and partly in terms of the Tree of Life. This method is the descendant of the medieval picture of the universe as a system of concentric circles or 'spheres'. Before a child is born, so the theory went, his soul descends from God in the outermost sphere to the sphere of the zodiac signs and fixed stars. Then it descends to the sphere of Saturn and through the spheres of the remaining planets. From the innermost sphere, of the moon, the soul descends to earth, which is at the centre of the system, and is born in a human body.

At death, the soul sheds its physical body and tries to find its way back to God through the spheres, shedding characteristics on the way. But it will meet many dangers and difficulties in this ascent and one of the springs of European magic was the attempt to discover the correct passwords and procedures which the soul would need to pass the guardians of the spheres, spiritual beings which would bar its passage.

This idea of the soul's ascent after death has brought into Western magic the whole notion of 'rising through the spheres', not after death but in this life. The magician attempts to explore the mysterious layers of existence that surround the plane of our normal, everyday life, gaining increasing knowledge and power with each further exploration until at last the supreme goal is reached. The spheres, the sefiroth of the Cabala, are stages in the process by which the godhead revealed itself, the major driving forces of the universe and the steps of the magician's stairway to the godhead

Mansell Collection

Left **The attempt to become a god is the 'great work' of both alchemy and magic; the alchemist's efforts to transmute base metals into gold paralleled the magician's attempts to attain the divine while still in the body: alchemist at work in his laboratory *Right* Astrology has always been important in magic and magicians attempt to use the influence of the planets for their magical operations: chart from a 17th century version of the *Key of Solomon* the most influential textbook of European magic *Right below* The magic circle of Agrippa: the six-pointed Seal of Solomon is contained within concentric circles in which names of power are written; standing inside this circle the magician and his assistants are protected against the forces conjured up during a magical rite**

(and correspond to the degrees or ranks of the occult hierarchy).

The picture of the soul's descent through the spheres before birth, acquiring characteristics from each planet, is one of the foundations of traditional astrology, which is also based on another fundamental magical doctrine, the law of 'as above, so below'. This law is again part of the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, the doctrine that as God is in the world 'above', so man is in the world here below. It states the old belief that events on earth parallel the doings of the gods in heaven.

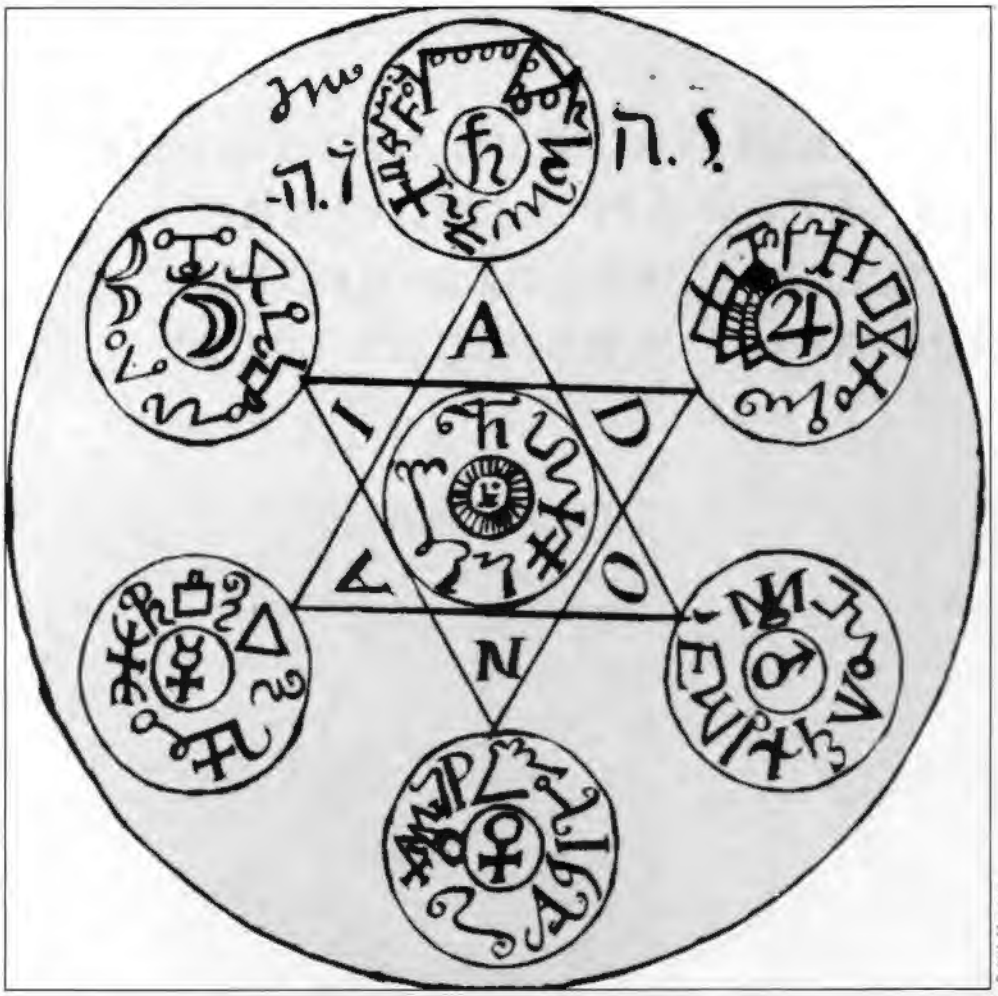
In ancient Mesopotamia where each city-state had its own god, changing relationships between the city-states and the temporary supremacy of one over others, were thought to reflect changing relationships between the gods. The Babylonians and Assyrians connected their gods with the planets and in the later classical world the universe as a whole was generally believed to be alive and divine, and the sun, moon and planets were regarded as deities. If man is a microcosm, then these gods have their counterparts in human beings and their movements in the sky influence human character and behaviour.

If 'as above, so below', then conversely, 'as below, so above'. The planetary forces influence man's behaviour but man's behaviour can influence planetary forces. This gives point to the magician's attempt to use the starry influences for his own purposes, by timing an operation for a planet's day and hour, by choosing an operation suitable to the planet's nature, and by using colours, numbers and metals which correspond to it (see DAYS). A dramatic example of 'as below, so above' magic occurred at Rome in 1628, when Pope Urban VIII employed a magician to ward off an eclipse which he feared meant his death. The magician arranged two lamps, standing for the sun and moon, and five torches for the planets in a sealed room, and assembled colours, jewels and planets corresponding to the beneficent planets Jupiter, Venus and the sun. He was trying to create a favourable 'sky' in place of the hostile real sky outside, either to prevent the eclipse from occurring or at least to guard Urban VIII, who was in the sealed room, against its effects.

An Accidental Werewolf

In magical theory, since the magician is the cosmos in miniature, he can control cosmic forces by manipulating his own inner ideas and drives. He can reach out into the universe, as it were, and call down or 'invoke' into himself a force or intelligence which he must be able to master, unless he is to be forever obsessed by it. Alternatively, he can summon up or 'evoke' from within himself a force or intelligence which he then projects into the universe outside him, which can influence the behaviour of others and which may even become visible to them. In either case, his principal weapons are the limitless force of his will, an imagination so concentrated and vivid that it affects or creates reality, and the paraphernalia of robes, colours, wands, swords and symbols, which are used to focus his will and imagination, and which are also intimately linked with the force he hopes to use.

The crucial role of the imagination follows from the belief that because man is a microcosm, his thoughts must have a parallel reality in the universe outside. In modern parlance, each idea or imagining of the human mind makes an impression upon the astral light (see ASTRAL BODY; LIGHT). If a magician can create a sufficiently vivid image in his mind, he creates a reality in the astral light which he can project at others. Franz Hartmann said, in *Magic White and Black*, that if the image is held in the mind with sufficient clarity, 'it will become comparatively dense, and can be



British Museum

Mansell Collection

projected upon the mental spheres of others, so that they may actively see objectively that which exists subjectively as an image within our own mind.'

It is in this way that artificial elementals are said to be formed, poisonous animal or grotesque entities, possessed of a temporary lease of life and sent to prey on a victim's mind. Dion Fortune said that the process involves 'forming a clear-cut image in the imagination of the creature it is intended to create, ensouling it with something of the corresponding aspect of one's own being and then invoking into it the appropriate natural force.' She herself once accidentally created a werewolf in this fashion.

The Blindfold

Some magicians accept the distinction between 'invocation' and 'evocation', and that 'spirits' or intelligences exist outside the human mind. Others are more doubtful but say that for practical purposes it is convenient to assume that they do. J. W. Brodie-Innes, a member of the Golden Dawn, remarked that, 'Whether the Gods, the Qliphothic forces or even the Secret Chiefs really exist is comparatively unimportant; the point is that the universe behaves as though they do.' (The Qliphothic forces are the 'husks' of the Cabala and the Secret Chiefs were the hidden leadership of the Golden Dawn.)

Whatever may be true of entities outside himself, 'the hitherto unknown forces' which the magician tries to exploit exist inside himself, and one of the great objects of magic is the discovery of the 'true self'. Our real, inner selves, magicians tell us, are buried under layers of restraint, convention, rationalism, materialism, standards and viewpoints which have been impressed on us in our upbringing and education, a whole number of constricting influences. We all go about wearing a thick psychological and spiritual blindfold which prevents us from seeing who we really are. The blindfold has to be removed, the lumber cleared away, to liberate the limitless power of the true self. For it is each man's true self (or divine spark or inner light) which is the potential godhead. When Crowley said, 'Do what thou wilt', as he tirelessly reiterated to the annoyance of almost everyone who knew him, he did not mean 'do whatever you like' but 'do what your true, inner self

In magical theory good and evil ultimately do not exist at all. They are among the opposites which are aspects of a greater reality that unites and transcends them

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

'As above, so below' is a fundamental magical doctrine, based on the belief that as God is in the world 'above', so is man here below; the magician attempted to use this concept to attain his objectives, while the astrologer based his art on the theory that the movements of the planets influence events on earth: frontispiece to a 13th century English book on fortune telling, showing Socrates with Plato

impels you to do.' Though his own life is a discouraging example of the consequences of his medicine, the prescription itself may not be valueless.

The problem, which all occult groups recognize and many of them attempt to guard against, is that magic makes an intense appeal to human hunger for power. Both the theory of magic and its practice vitiate the customary moral distinction between black (evil) magic and white (good) magic. In magical theory good and evil ultimately do not exist at all. They are among the opposites which are aspects of a greater reality that unites and transcends them. And in magical practice all methods and all experiences tend to be grist to the magician's mill, for if the supreme goal is to become and master everything, then the magician must experience and reconcile every aspect of 'the All' in himself – evil as well as good, hate as well as love, cruelty as well as affection, tears as well as laughter. Magic has kept its long hold on the human mind because of the promise of power, which it holds out, however delusively, to each one of us, the prospect of spiritual mastery in the shape of the all-encompassing divine power which religion reserves for God but which magic reserves for man.

(See also numerous other articles including IMITATIVE MAGIC; MAN; NAMES; OPPOSITES; PSYCHIC ATTACK; RITUAL MAGIC; TREASURE MAGIC; WHITE MAGIC.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: C. A. Burland, *The Magical Arts* (Barker, London, 1966); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968); F. King, *Ritual Magic in England* (Spearman, 1970). See also Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Dover, 1976); Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic* (Weiser, 1980); Franz Hartmann, *Magic White and Black* (Borgo Press, 1980).

MAGICAL PAPYRI

MAGIC AND RELIGION always walked hand-in-hand in ancient Egypt, and are often hard to separate: even in the early hymns and prayers there is evidence of a strong magical element with the underlying purpose of gaining power over the deity for the furtherance of personal ends. Love potions, wax images, talismans and curses were all extremely popular, and it was natural that the Greeks who settled in Egypt in large numbers from the 4th century BC onwards should come under the spell of the ancient traditions of Egypt, and under Egyptian influence in their own approach to religion and magic. The magical papyri are a rich source of material for illustrating the ways in which the Greeks (and later the Romans) in Egypt attempted to combine existing magical practices with elements of their own religion and that of other cultures.

A merchant travelling in Egypt in 1778 was offered a jar, containing 40 or 50 papyri, which was said to have been discovered near ancient Memphis. He bought one of the rolls for a small sum and subsequently took it back to Italy where he presented it to Cardinal Stefano Borgia as a curio. The Danish archeologist Schow has told how he found the papyrus in the Cardinal's museum at Velitri ten years later. Details of the story, including the postscript that the rest of the jar's contents were burned for their pleasant aroma, have been questioned, but the fact remains that the surviving fragment, which became known as the Charta Borgiana, whetted the appetite of scholars, though it contained only a list of workers at Ptolemais Harbour in 192–193 AD.

It was well known that for centuries papyrus had been the staple writing material in Egypt. There were examples in the hieratic script (the simplified cursive form of hieroglyphic) which had survived from earliest times, and the elder Pliny had devoted several chapters of his *Natural History* to a description of the manufacture of papyrus in the Roman period; but, apart from a few references in the works of medieval scholars and humanists to surviving fragments, these were the first discoveries of actual papyri written in Greek.

It was Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt that laid the foundations for more systematic investigations in the 19th century, as a result of which so many Greek papyri were found that the work of deciphering and editing them became sufficiently important to justify the formation of a special branch of classical scholarship known as papyrology (a term first mentioned in 1898). Naturally scholars have paid most attention to the literary discoveries, but a large number of the texts are non-literary, amongst them many magical papyri which cannot fail to be of interest to students of magic, ancient and modern.

In 1928 the first volume of Karl Preisendanz's work *Papyri graecae magicae* appeared, followed by the second volume in 1931 and the third, of which the stock was destroyed by an air raid over Berlin, in 1941. Other special collections of magical papyri are those of Th. Hopfner and S. Eitrem, but many isolated texts have also appeared in the last 20 years or so, which add interesting details to the general picture without invalidating the conclusions that may be drawn from a study of the more comprehensive collections.

The range covered by these texts is a very wide one, extending from the long hymns in verse contained in Preisendanz's first volume (the 'Great Paris Magical Papyrus' has 3274 lines), to brief recipes and imprecations, many of them accompanied by elaborate, if sometimes crude, illustrations. The substantial magical books date from the late 3rd and 5th centuries AD but some of the smaller texts have been placed as early as the 2nd century.

A. D. Nock, in his article on 'Greek Magical Papyri' in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1929), expressed the opinion that the longer papyri were actual working-copies used by practising magicians 'like the books burnt by St Paul's Ephesian converts . . . or the magical books handed down in Germany from generation to generation.' It is even probable that many of them belonged to the same library. The shorter texts appear to have been extracts from such magical books, supplied on demand to meet specific needs and occasions.

This view is supported by the existence of alternative versions of the same recipes containing variations of method and names, and often described as 'another copy'. For example, in the same text, the 'Great Paris Papyrus', there are two versions of the correct procedure for slandering one's rival to the moon, within 150 lines of each other. The general impression is of professional magicians compiling their handbooks from existing models without worrying too much about coherence or consistency, and selling the required extracts to their customers.

The longer magical papyri were probably textbooks compiled by professional magicians, and the shorter texts may well have been extracts taken from these books and sold to individual clients: part of the *Papyri Osloensis*

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In language and style, as in content, the texts vary greatly, from the poetic to the semi-illiterate. For example, an invocation of Helios, the sun, in the Louvre Papyrus (in Preisendanz's first volume) reads:

> Hither to me, greatest in heaven, for whom the heaven became a dancing-place (magical words followed by a Coptic word), do such and such (magical words), you who are the friend of oracles, golden of countenance, golden-gleaming, shining with fire in the night, mighty mighty lord of the universe, shining forth early in the day, setting in the west of heaven, rising from the east, in form like a circle, running towards midday and passing the time in Arabia (magical words), harbinger of the holy light, circle in fiery form (magical words), brilliant Sun, sending light over the whole world, covering the Ocean (magical words), I pray you by the egg. I am Adam the first born, my name is Adam. . .

Contrast the lucidity and rhythmical symmetry of this calm invocation with the staccato incoherence of the following extract from a fragment published by A. S. Hunt as 'A Greek Cryptogram' in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1929:

> Adonai (magical word or words), accomplish for (name) what I have written hereon for you, and I will leave the east and west as it was formerly established and will save the flesh of Osiris for ever and will not break through the bonds wherewith you made Typhon fast, and I will not call those who have died violent deaths but let them be, I will not pour out the cedar-oil but will let it be, I will preserve Ammon and will not slay him, I will not scatter the limbs of Osiris, and I will hide you from the giants . . . Eieieieieieieiei choin (followed by several magical words of which only Aoth and Jacob are intelligible). Declare the secrets of Isis . . .

But even this cryptogram retains certain elements of formal style, however crude, when compared with many other texts like, for example, this *agoge* or spell for a lover from Eitrem's *Papyri Osloenses*.

> Write with a bronze stilus on an unbaked potsherd: 'Hecate, you, Hecate, of three shapes, all the magical signs of every one having been completed, I adjure you by the great name of Ablathana and the power of Agramari, for I adjure you, you, who control the fire of the Hawk and those in it, that (feminine name) be consumed, and to pursue (her) to me (masculine name), because I hold in my right hand the two serpents and the victory of Iao Sabaoth, and by the great name Bilkatrimopheche, shaking the fire, Stoutoukatoutou, for her enflamed to love me, in fire for me, yes, tortured. Sunkoutouel am I.' Write 8 magical signs, so; give me the favour of all things, Adonai.

Even this translation conceals the grammatical errors and peculiarities of spelling

which, together with the accumulation of epithets and the use of what are to us meaningless combinations of words and vowels, are the main features of the language and style of popular magical texts on papyrus.

Two further examples from the same papyrus are also worth quoting. A 'remedy to break spells' runs as follows:

> You take (a piece of) lead, and you engrave upon it the figure Mononthoun (?), holding in his right hand a torch, in his left a dagger, and on his head three hawks, and under his feet a scarab, under the scarab a serpent biting its tail. That which is written round the figure is this. (Magical letters and sign follow.)

A curse combines in a most unusual manner all the features that have been mentioned as being typical of these papyri, with universal elements and an invocation of angels:

> You take a plate of lead and write on it with a bronze stilus the following names and the figure. You anoint the plate with the blood of a hat and roll it up in the usual way; you open a frog (toad), and put it (the plate) into its stomach, sew up the frog with Anubis-thread and a bronze needle and suspend it on a reed taken from the spot with hairs from the tail of a black ox with its hind-legs (tied to the reed) in the eastern part of the place near tu the rising sun.
>
> Ousirisesengenbarpharanges. (This complex is written in the shape of a heart by cutting off the letters successively from each end.) Erikisephearararacharaephthisikera. Rikisephthearararacharaephthisiker. Ikisephthearararacharaephthisike. Base. Lord angels, as this frog vanishes away and dries up, so may also the body of (masculine name), born of (feminine name), because I adjure you who are placed to command the fire, Maskelli, Maskello, and the rest . . .

Above all else, the magical papyri, the numerous amulets collected in one volume by C. Bonner, and the charms on lead tablets testify that the syncretism or fusion of different elements characteristic of popular religion from the Hellenistic period onwards, has a prominent place in magical practice. Apart from the traditional Greek deities, of whom Hermes, Hecate-Selen, Apollo-Helios, Aphrodite and Eros are predictably to be found most often (though the last two are not as important for the love charms as one might have expected) there are Egyptian deities like Isis, Osiris, Horus, Anubis and Seth-Typhon, side by side with very strong Semitic, especially Jewish, and other oriental ingredients as well.

Threatening the Gods

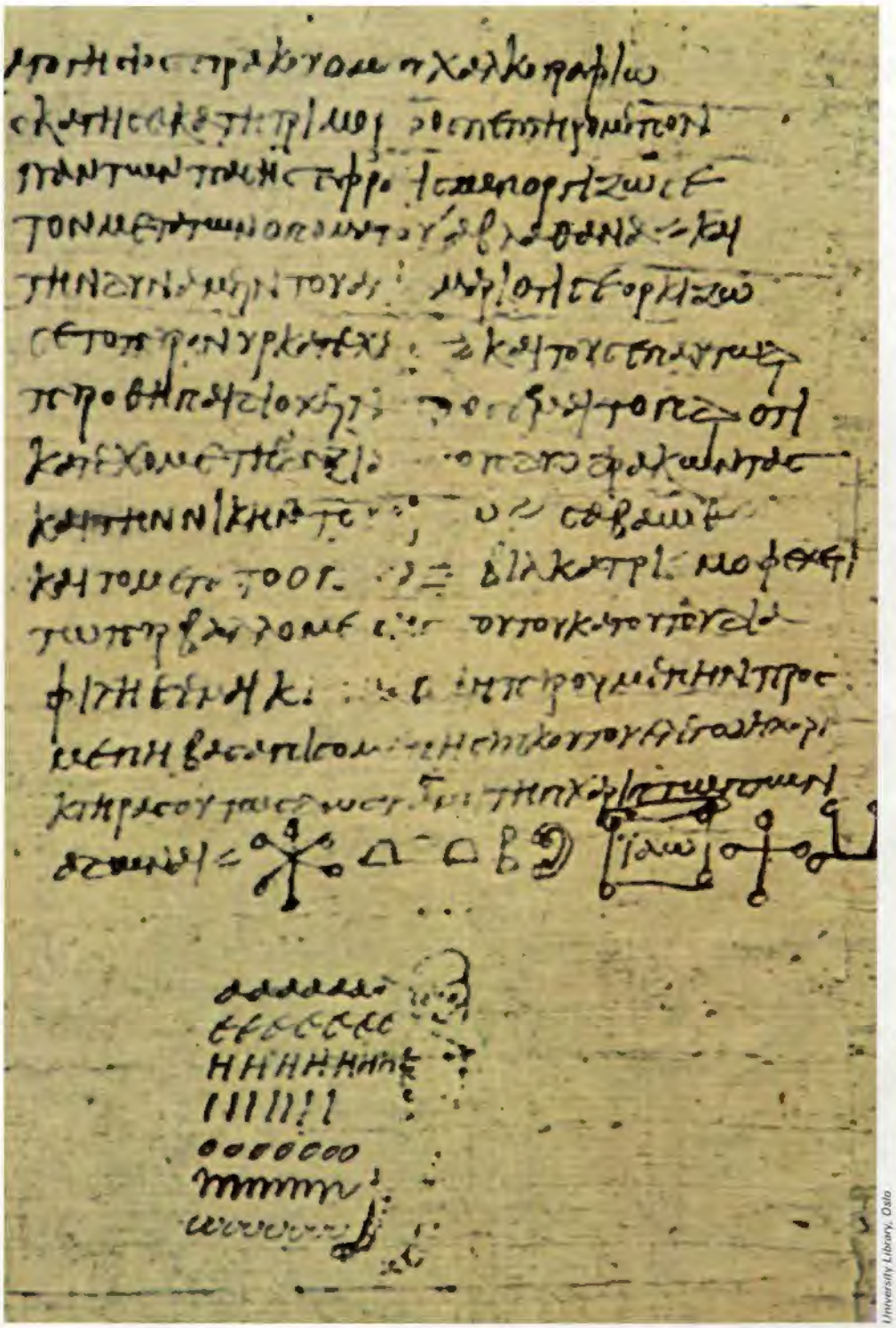
One papyrus, the large Berlin text which opens Preisendanz's work, illustrates the typical mixture with its association within a relatively narrow compass of the names Apollo, Paieon, Iao, Michael, Gabriel, Abrasax, Adonai, Pakenbeth (for Seth-Typhon), Aion, Physis, Adonaios, Eloaios (for Elohim). As H. I. Bell wrote in his *Cults and Creeds:* 'All was fish that came to the magician's net; the more deities he could include in his spells the more likely these were to be effective.'

It is not surprising therefore to find

Christian references too, as in this early 4th century Coptic exorcism quoted by Preisendanz: 'Hail, God of Abraham, hail, God of Isaac, hail, God of Jacob, Jesus Christ, Holy Ghost, Son of the Father, who is among the Seven and in the Seven.' Angels, saints, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost, Moses, all appear cheek by jowl, reinforced by citations from psalms, the Lord's Prayer, St Matthew's gospel and the book of Proverbs, to quote a few examples.

But M. P. Nilsson has rightly stressed that the Christian elements were relatively few if one considers that Christianity was the predominant religion of the period. He has explained this paradox as being the result of the natural hostility of Christians to magicians: to the latter Christ was merely one among many powers, to the former he was the most powerful of all mediators, the son of the only true God.

The attitude revealed by the magical papyri is essentially utilitarian. As Nock has picturesquely put it: 'the Gnostics were passionately eager to know how the wheels went round' but 'the authors and readers of the magic papyri desired simply to be able to make them turn'. Their objects were to acquire power and through it to achieve success in love, beauty, popularity, health, wealth, and victory over, or revenge on, an enemy. The means to gain these objects were to hand, if men could but discover the secret of the right approach; and it is a characteristic of these magical papyri, as of Egyptian magic in general, that they threaten deities



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The magical papyri illustrate how the Greeks and later the Romans in Egypt attempted to combine current magical practice with elements of their own religion and those of other cultures; by their adaptation of existing religious ideas and forms they claim a place of honour among sources of knowledge of the religion of Graeco-Roman antiquity *Left* and *Far left* Extracts from the *Papyri Osloensis*

almost as often as they implore them, confronting them with others who may be even more powerful.

Underlying all else, however, there was a deeper concern, also typical of the period, to break the power of destiny, fate or necessity, and this preoccupation led the magicians to use astrology as a means to achieve their ends. There are often signs too of an approach which is closer to that of contemporary mysticism: as the 'Berlin Papyrus' puts it, 'If you have the god for a friend, you will be reverenced as a god yourself.' This mystical piety is best seen in the process called 'introduction to the sun god', which involved winning over the deity as a familiar spirit, a guide and companion to a new spiritual state and the acquisition of new and greater powers of magic.

The magical papyri are full of evidence, if evidence is needed, that religion is a house of many storeys and that, even if magic is the 'disreputable basement', it is not difficult to pass on to higher levels, and back again. Scholars have rightly emphasized the fundamental opposition of magic to true religion in its attitude to the gods but, by their adaptation of current religious ideas and forms, the magical papyri claim a place of honour among our sources of knowledge of the religion of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

B. R. REES

FURTHER READING: H. I. Bell, *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Ares, 1975); C. Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* (University of Michigan Press, 1950); E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (University of California Press, 1951) and *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Norton, 1970); M. P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (Columbia University Press, 1940); A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford University Press, reprint 1961); B. R. Rees, *The Use of Greek* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1960).

MAGIC SQUARES

'NOW THIS TABLE being with a fortunate Saturn, engraven on a plate of lead, helps childbirth; and to make any man safe or powerful; and to cause success of petitions with princes and powers; but if it be done, Saturn being unfortunate, it hinders buildings, planting and the like, and casts a man from honours and dignities, causes discord, quarrelling, and disperses an army.' This comes from Francis Barrett's *The Magus* and the 'table' is the magic square of Saturn.

Numbers and letters are containers of power in magic (see ALPHABET; NUMEROLOGY) and if arranged in a square, and following certain rules, they are believed to make powerful talismans. Barrett's *Magus* and Eliphas Levi's *Transcendental Magic* reproduce the squares of the planets given in Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*. The squares of Saturn and Jupiter are:

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

In a number square, each number from 1 to the highest number used must appear once, and only once. The vertical and horizontal rows of numbers and the two long diagonals across the square must each add to the same total (15 in the Saturn square, 34 in the Jupiter square). It is the fact that the squares meet these complicated requirements that gives them their magical force.

The Saturn square has 3 rows of 3 figures, and Saturn corresponds to the third sefirah of the Tree of Life, the Jupiter square has 4 rows of 4 figures, and Jupiter corresponds to the fourth sefirah, and similarly with the squares of the remaining planets. Mars has 5 rows (each adding to 65), Venus has 7 (adding to 175), Mercury has 8 (adding to 260) and the moon 9 (adding to 369).

The square of the sun has 6 rows of 6 figures, each row adding to 111, and the total of all the numbers used in the square is 666, the celebrated 'number of the Beast'

Numbers arranged in a square according to certain rules are thought to make powerful talismans; the magic square in *Melancolia,* an engraving by Dürer, was believed to have curative properties and was used to treat various diseases

(see GREAT BEAST). The deduction which can be drawn from this is that the Beast of Revelation is an aspect of the sun or life-force, the fierce drive that impels living creatures to survive and procreate. Barrett seems to have had Christ and the Antichrist in mind when he wrote of this square that, engraved on gold when the sun is well-aspected, 'it renders him that wears it renowned, amiable, acceptable, potent in all his works, and equals him to a king, elevating his fortunes, and enabling him to do whatever he will. But with an unfortunate Sun, it makes one a tyrant, proud, ambitious, insatiable . . . to come to an ill-ending.'

Magic squares have been used since very early times in China and India, where they are still inscribed on stone or metal and worn for good luck and protection against evil. The Saturn square is the oldest one of its type known, and appears in the I Ching Cabalistic magicians were particularly interested in it because its row-total of 15 equals the first and last letters of the Tetragammaton, the name of God (see NAMES), so that it could be considered an encapsulation of the godhead.

Magic squares can also be made with letters:

S	A	T	O	R
A	R	E	P	O
T	E	N	E	T
O	P	E	R	A
R	O	T	A	S

S	A	L	O	M
A	R	E	P	O
L	E	M	E	L
O	P	E	R	A
M	O	L	A	S

The square should read the same from the left, from the right, downwards or upwards. The Sator formula is the most famous of all magic squares, found inscribed on old bibles and drinking vessels, and scrawled on fragments from a Roman villa near Cirencester. The *Egyptian Secrets*, a curious hotchpotch of spells and charms falsely attributed to Albertus Magnus, says that a witch cannot stay in the same room with the Sator square, and also recommends it as a cure for colic and as a general protection against plague and sorcery. If written on a wooden plate and thrown into a fire, it was believed to have the power of putting the fire out, and in Saxony in 1742 it was ordered that plates inscribed with the Sator square be kept handy as fire-extinguishers.

Many attempts have been made to translate the Sator square but it is now generally accepted that it is a Christian charm which uses the letters of *Pater noster* and the letters A and O, so that it combines the first two words of the Lord's Prayer with Alpha and Omega, Christ as the first and the last.

The Salom square has the power of causing a girl to fall in love with you, if you touch her bare skin with it. It comes from *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, an 18th century French manuscript edited and translated by MacGregor Mathers (see SACRED MAGIC).

Mathers explained that the words on Abra-Melin's squares 'represent generally the effect to be produced or in other words are simply the Hebrew or other appellations of the result to which the square is to be applied.' But he had little success in translating them and many of them seem to be meaningless. Not all of them even meet the requirement of reading the same in all directions. Other recommended squares are:

K	I	T	T	I	K
I	S	I	A	D	I
T	I	N	N	A	T
T	A	N	N	I	T
I	D	A	I	S	I
K	I	T	T	I	K

A	T	S	A	R	A	H
T	O	A	L	I	S	A
S	A	D	O	R	I	R
A	L	O	T	O	L	A
R	I	R	O	D	A	S
A	S	I	L	A	O	T
H	A	R	A	S	T	A

The Kittik square causes spirits to bring timber for you if you are constructing a mine. The Atsarah square will make you see visions of lakes and rivers.

M	I	L	O	N
I	R	A	G	O
L	A	M	A	L
O	G	A	R	I
N	O	L	I	M

C	A	S	E	D
A	Z	O	T	E
B	O	R	O	S
E	T	O	S	A
D	E	B	A	C

If you write the Milon square on parchment and put it on top of your head, under your hat or cap, the spirits will secretly reveal to you all things past and future. The Cased square is so sinister that we are told, 'This symbol should never be made use of', followed by the instruction to hide it somewhere where the person you wish to harm will pass by. Mathers translated it as: 'overflowing of unrestrained lust' (Cased), 'enduring' (Azote), 'devouring, gluttonous (Boros), 'idle, useless' (Etosa), 'to overtake and stick close' (Debac).

MAGNETISM

THE TERM 'animal magnetism' was coined in c 1766 by F. A. Mesmer (see MESMER) to denote a supposed fluid or force, pervading the universe, but especially concentrated in animal nervous systems and magnets. It was not identical with electromagnetism but possessed certain analogies to it.

The general idea was not new, but Mesmer gave it some distinctive twists. He was led to postulate the existence of this fluid by observing that the movements of the planets and other heaveuly bodies produced fluctuations in the course of diseases, and that magnets or the hand of a vigorous person might exercise a striking therapeutic effect when applied to the body of someone who was ill. He thought that the fluid had properties resembling those of electromagnetism because it could apparently be stored in objects submitted to 'magnetization' and transmitted from these to other objects or to the bodies of patients; and because it apparently possessed polarity, some parts of the body, and certain people and objects, exerting a counteractive influence upon positively magnetized persons and things.

From Mesmer's arrival in Paris in 1778 until about the year 1850 the 'mesmeric' movement grew and flourished enormously on the Continent and, towards the end of the period, in the United States and Britain. Most of its practitioners and supporters adhered to theories resembling Mesmer's, but there were many variations. One of the most important of these resulted from a discovery, first made in 1784 by Mesmer's pupil the Marquis de Puységur, that by touching or stroking with the hand or a magnet it was possible to place susceptible persons in a 'somnambulic' trance in which, though showing some of the signs of being asleep, they were unusually responsive to the commands and wishes of the operator.

Puységur accepted, at least to begin with, Mesmer's theory of a universal fluid, and he compared a healthy man to a vase in contact with an inexhaustible reservoir of fluid. A sick man is someone whose contact with this reservoir has become obstructed, and the magnetist is able to transmit a fresh supply of fluid to him with beneficial results. The responsiveness of the somnambulic subject to the operator's wishes shows that the operator must be able to direct the fluid by his will.

Later in his career Puységur showed much less interest in the supposed universal fluid, and a leading mesmerist of that time, J. P. F. Deleuze, wrote in 1813 that the important question was not 'whether there is a fluid spread throughout the whole of nature, but whether there exists a modification of that fluid, or a special fluid, of which man can make himself master for the purpose of directing it in accordance with his wish.' Deleuze himself was convinced of the fluid's existence, but not of its universality.

Some writers, especially in Germany where a new period of literary romanticism was beginning, took a very exalted view of the supposed fluid. Dr J. H. Jung-Stilling, whose *Theory of the Science of Spirits* was first published in 1808, regarded it as a half-way house between spirit and matter, to be equated with the ether of physicists. He believed that it was especially concentrated in the human organism, and was the medium through which the rational element in man, his 'spirit', could control the body. Disturbances of this ether, such as those produced by a mesmerist, could affect the spirit, perhaps partially freeing it from the body, and so releasing its inherent clairvoyant faculties. Jung-Stilling called the union of a rational element, or spirit, with a particular portion of etheric fluid the 'soul', and it is the soul, not just the spirit, that survives death. Similar doctrines have been propounded by many modern Spiritualists.

It is worth inquiring in a little more detail into the facts, or alleged facts, that convinced not a few intelligent persons of the existence of the magnetic fluid. In addition to the points already touched upon – the alleged cures, the fluid's apparent capacity for storage and transmission, and its supposed tendency to bipolar distribution – five classes of phenomena especially struck the mesmerists.

Firstly, the sensations of warmth, pricking, and so on, which were frequently said to follow the application of the operator's

hand, or a magnet, to the skins of subjects; secondly, the way in which the bodies and limbs of certain entranced subjects could sometimes be attracted towards, or repelled from, those of their mesmerists in a quasi-magnetic manner; thirdly, the supposed fact that if a mesmerist directed a jet of 'magnetic fluid' at the region of his subject's head that was linked by phrenological theory with a certain psychological quality, the subject would respond appropriately (for instance, if the fluid was aimed at the area associated with a sense of humour, he would laugh); fourthly, the taste that could supposedly be detected in magnetized water; and fifthly the luminous appearances that entranced, and presumably clairvoyant or hypersensitive, subjects claimed to see around magnets, magnetists and magnetized persons and things, and passing between magnetists and the objects of their endeavours.

Many people were particularly impressed by these last phenomena and in the late 1840s the whole subject of animal magnetism received a boost from the apparently related findings of a noted Austrian chemist, Baron K. von Reichenbach (1788–1869), whose *Physico-Physiological Researches* was translated into English in 1850.

He believed he had shown that certain sensitive persons, especially spontaneous cataleptics and somnambules, could, if kept in the dark for upwards of an hour, perceive characteristic lights emanating from magnets, crystals, metals, the human body, stars, planets and other objects; and could also feel sensations of heat or cold in connection with the lights. To account for these phenomena, Reichenbach postulated a quasi-magnetic emanation or fluid, which he called 'Odyle' or 'Od Force'. He conceived it to radiate outwards, but in very different degrees, from all objects and also to be generated by heat, light, electricity, friction and all kinds of chemical change. Odyle exhibits polarity. The negative pole of a magnet appears blue, and induces a feeling of coldness, whilst the positive pole appears red and causes a feeling of warmth. The right hand is odylically negative and the left positive, the sun negative and the moon positive. Uncharged bodies can be charged by being brought into contact with a charged body. (See also DOUBLE.)

Reichenbach used no mesmeric subjects, and his experiments were conducted over five years with more than 100 persons. His contemporaries were impressed. The obvious similarity of his doctrines to those of the animal magnetists delighted the latter, and induced some sceptics to change their opinions. In his *Letters on Animal Magnetism* (1851), W. Gregory, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh, made an extended attempt to marry the two sets of doctrines, which indeed Reichenbach himself had done up to a point.

Gregory remarks on the similarity of the lights seen by people who had been magnetized, around magnets and the hands and persons of their mesmerists, to the lights reported by Reichenbach's subjects. He relates the somnambulic state to Reichenbach's claim that the odyle of a sleeping person is redistributed away from the head. Perhaps in the somnambule a similar redistribution takes place, the effect of which is to cut off the external senses from their brain centres, whilst leaving the intellect active. In this state, the somnambule's brain may be sensitive to faint odic radiations from distant objects, radiations which would otherwise be drowned by the influx of ordinary stimulation. Mesmeric clairvoyance may perhaps be explained in this way.

The opponents of animal magnetism had, for the most part, confined themselves to accusing the magnetizers and their subjects of charlatanry, an explanation which was in many cases preposterous. There had, however, always been persons who, while accepting the alleged phenomena, at least in a sense, had sought to explain them in terms of such concepts as imagination and suggestion. A French Royal Commission, appointed in 1784 to investigate Mesmer's claims, reported experiments suggesting that the efficacy of magnetization depended entirely upon whether or

According to the magnetists, a sick person was someone whose contact with the magnetic fluid that fills the universe had been obstructed, and he could be cured if he obtained a fresh supply *Below left* and *Below* Woodcuts showing a mesmeric session in about 1840; it was thought that the operator could transmit the fluid to the subject by using his will *Right* Patients undergoing treatment at a 'magnetic dispensary': 18th century etching

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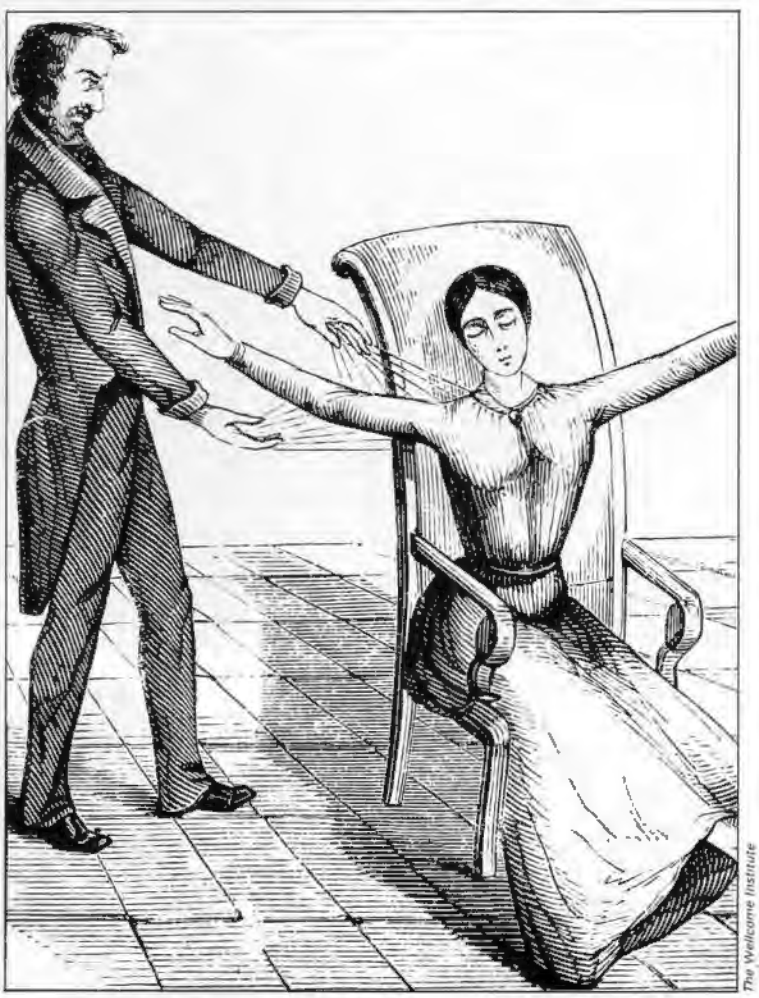

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not the subject believed that an attempt at magnetization was being made, and not at all upon whether this was in fact the case.

In France in the early 1800s the Abbé Faria gave public demonstrations very like those of modern stage hypnotists. He seems to have avoided the mesmeric paraphernalia, and to have attributed his results to self-suggestion on the part of his subjects. In the 1820s, a Paris physician named A. Bertrand arrived, after an extensive review of the literature, at an essentially modern view of the matter. F. Podmore says of him, 'the whole machinery on which the early writers relied as demonstrating the existence of a fluid – celestial, magnetic or electric – he sweeps away in a word by showing that the results were due to the imagination of the subject, preternormally alive to the least suggestion, by word, look, gesture, or even unexpressed thought by the operator.'

In 1838, Thomas Wakley, editor of the *Lancet*, was able to demonstrate, as the French Commissioners had done before him, that magnetized objects produced their effect only when the subjects suspected they had been magnetized. An unmagnetized gold sovereign induced a cataleptic state when it was merely warmed as though it had been held in a hand. Wakley believed that the subjects were simple frauds but a few years later the more temperate James Braid, a Manchester surgeon, was led, as a result of similar observations, to a view resembling Bertrand's.

For the magnetists Braid's repetition of some of Reichenbach's experiments was particularly unfortunate. He found that in response to suggestions subjects would not merely see flames round magnets but continue to report them when the magnets had, unknown to them, been removed. Once a subject had grasped what was expected of him, further suggestions were unnecessary and the character of the hallucinations could be changed by adroit leading questions.

Healing by Touch

The magnetic movement in Britain and the United States subsided rapidly after the 1850s, perhaps not so much because of the findings of Braid and others as because its impetus and personnel were absorbed into the newly founded Spiritualist movement (see SPIRITUALISM). In France, however, during the later 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of people continued to believe that there was a residue of phenomena not explicable in terms of suggestion, and indicating some kind of emanation from the human organism. However, experiments upon photographic plates, upon straws and paper cylinders made to rotate by the approach of the hand, and so forth, show complete ignorance of proper scientific method. Little evidence has come to hand of emanations having properties at all like those of the alleged magnetic fluid or Od Force.

In the 1880s two prominent members of the newly-founded Society for Psychical Research, Edmund Gurney and F. W. H. Myers, found hints of the magnetic effluence in experiments in which a subject's hands were screened from him and one of his fingers would be made immobile and insensitive by the hypnotist's merely pointing at it. Somewhat comparable results were reported by S. Alrutz in 1922. It is, however, difficult to feel confident that the subjects could not have picked up small sensory clues. A number of persons (for example, A. de Rochas in 1891 and Sir William Barrett in 1882 and 1922) have presented evidence that some sensitive subjects can tell through visual sensations whether an electro-magnet, whose switch is out of range, is on or off; but the precautions in these experiments were hardly exhaustive.

All in all, the only modern experiments which might in any way be used to support the views of the animal magnetists are some quite recent ones by G. H. Elgnin and others, in which human agents have produced beneficial results on lesions in animals without actually touching them. In these experiments there were of course untreated 'control' groups; and animals are presumably immune to suggestion. B. Grad and others have reported somewhat comparable findings in experiments on the growth of seedlings. But it is hardly necessary to remark that experiments such as these must be assessed with extreme caution.

ALAN GAULD

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MAGPIE AND ROOK

ONE OF BRITAIN'S larger birds, the magpie has a loud and raucous voice; it is exceptional in building a large covered nest, from sticks, and its long tail and black-and-white plumage attract attention. It is wary but also bold, and where it is not persecuted the magpie will frequent houses and even nest in cities. There is some evidence that it moved into parts of Europe in comparatively recent times. The European folklore of the magpie is therefore not of very great antiquity.

The magpie's contrasting plumage contributed to its being regarded as a mysterious, sinister and oracular bird. According to a North of England legend, it was a hybrid between the raven and the dove, the two birds released by Noah from the ark, and therefore had not been baptized in the waters of the Flood. In Germany witches were said to ride on magpies or to appear as these birds, and in Sweden there was a saying that in August the magpies go off to draw the Devil's waggons of hay, hence their neck feathers can be seen to have been rubbed by the yoke. In north-east Scotland the magpie was 'the De'il's bird' and was believed to have a drop of Satan's blood on its tongue. It could acquire human speech if its tongue were scratched and a drop of blood from a human tongue inserted.

Such beliefs probably arose from the calls uttered by a party of magpies which sounded, to the imaginative, like human chatter; and from the fact that it had been observed that magpies in captivity are able to imitate words. In Brittany it was said to have seven of the Devil's hairs on its head. Because of the bird's sinister and Satanic associations in many areas, it was considered unlucky to kill a magpie, or thought advisable to do so only during certain periods of the year.

Significant Numbers

These associations gave rise to legends in which the bird was represented as anti-Christian. It was said that unlike other birds it did not go into full mourning after the Crucifixion, hence its black-and-white appearance. In France another legend related that the magpies pricked Christ's feet with thorns while he was on the Cross, but the swallows tried to pull them out, acquiring their blood-red breasts as a result. From this time on the magpies were condemned to nest in tall trees whereas the swallows found shelter under the eaves of houses.

As with many creatures and objects which raise doubts in men's minds because of their behaviour and appearance, the magpie is regarded ambivalently in folklore. It may bring good or bad luck according to circumstances, and in a number of country rhymes one may expect propitious or unfortunate events according to the number of birds seen. One of these rhymes, well known and widespread, is:

> One for sorrow, two for mirth,
> Three for a wedding, four for a birth.

In South Germany a magpie calling near a house was said to portend disaster, but if it merely chattered the arrival of a guest was expected. English folk also regarded the chattering of magpies as predicting the arrival of strangers.

In Norway a pair of magpies nesting close at hand was believed to bring good luck and Shropshire folk would express a wish when a magpie was seen. A Welsh informant tells me that his father, a distinguished physician, would take off his hat on encountering one of these birds.

Because the magpie makes a massive nest with the entrance at the side, it acquired some of the folklore associated with the woodpecker, as this bird also enters its nest in a tree trunk from the side. In France it was believed that the magpie knew a magical herb which she would apply to any barrier placed across the nest entrance, so causing it to spring away.

The magpie is generally regarded as being mysterious and sinister, partly because of its black-and-white plumage, and in many areas it is thought to have Satanic associations

Mansell Collection

Rooks for a Rainy Day

The rook is so common in Britain and rookeries so obvious in the countryside that it is not surprising that considerable lore should be associated with the bird. The traditions and sayings mainly concern inferences to be drawn, and predictions which can be made concerning the weather and human affairs.

In Yorkshire it was believed that when rooks congregated on dead branches there would be rain before night but that if they perched on live branches the day would be fine. In Devonshire it is said that if rooks stay at the rookery or return in the middle of the day there will be rain, and similar beliefs are held elsewhere. There is a basis for these ideas to the extent that rooks cover their chicks when it rains. In the Cambridgeshire fens it is also assumed that if rooks fly far away from their nests in the morning there will be no rain. It is said in this area, and indeed elsewhere, that when they make aerial dives and twists bad weather is on the way.

In Shropshire it was believed that rooks never carry sticks to their nests on Ascension Day but perch quietly without doing any work. There was also a saying that if you did not wear something new on Easter Day the rooks would let fall droppings on your clothes. The association of these birds with religious festivals seems to have been an extension of the idea that because their congregations were so vocal, rooks must have some affinity with human beings.

There was a widespread belief that the desertion of a rookery betokens ill for those on whose land they were established, and another that the birds leave before the downfall of the family owning the estate. It was a fenland tradition that rooks always knew when a gamekeeper had died. They would form into a line and fly over his coffin as it was carried to the church for the funeral.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Popperfoto

A popular Hindu statuette shows Gandhi being crowned by Ganapati, or Ganesha, the god of good fortune. Gandhi's championship of India's downtrodden masses brought him reverence as a Mahatma, a man who embodies the universal spirit in a specially noble form

Best known for its application to Gandhi, the Hindu title of reverence 'Mahatma' was also used in a particular sense by the founders of the Theosophical Society

MAHATMAS

MAHATMA is a word of Sanskrit derivation, commonly translated 'Great Soul' and used as a title of reverence. But *atman* is not a precise equivalent of 'soul', since it goes outside the individual. In Hinduism the self is usually thought of as a particular manifestation of the universal being, the indwelling spirit of all things, which is one and the same in all, though perceived as many. The atman in a person has this metaphysical reference. It is 'the self as manifesting the Supreme Self' (see BRAHMAN).

A Mahatma is a man whom the Eternal Reality shines through. He embodies the universal spirit in a specially noble and lucid form. He has risen above the mass of humanity but still belongs to it. Holy himself, he is a beacon of hope for his fellow-mortals, a proof that they too can rise higher, in this life or in future lives. His greatness of soul radiates beyond himself.

Mahatmaship is connected with the Hindu idea of *darshan*. The sight or presence of a great man is good in itself, a blessing, a spiritual tonic. This belief is one reason for the tumultuous crowds that press round Indian public heroes, and not only religious heroes. The blessing of darshan can be obtained by coming close to an adored leader such as Jawaharlal Nehru, without his being a saint or even a believer. A Mahatma, however, is the kind of person pre-eminently qualified to dispense it.

In one way or another, the conception transcends normal experience. For the superstitious the true Mahatma is a wonder-worker. Hindus who deny him this superhuman power nevertheless admit that his

special quality cannot be pinned down by everyday definitions. A Mahatma is not simply very wise or very philanthropic. He is not necessarily a priest, a monk or a hermit, though lonely asceticism is Hinduism's hallowed path to spiritual heights. Nor need he be a Brahmin. Several of the Great Souls of Hindu tradition are Kshatriyas, members of the warrior caste. Gandhi himself belonged to the merchant caste, a degree lower. Before his own designation as a Mahatma he applied the title to the politician G. K. Gokhale, as a mark of esteem. Hinduism never formally canonizes either the living or the dead. The status of a Mahatma is a matter of acclaim.

Mme Blavatsky's 'Masters'

The Western public was introduced to the word Mahatma by popularizers and interpreters of Asian thought who began to attract notice during the 1870s. Sir Edwin Arnold used it in his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. But the special meaning which it acquired in the West, and retained for some decades, was due to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91). With Colonel Olcott, she founded the Theosophical Society, and herself supplied most of its doctrines (see BLAVATSKY).

Mme Blavatsky went to India and enjoyed cordial relations, for a time, with Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, a leader of the reform movement in Hinduism. She was not, however, in any genuine sense his disciple. Instead she claimed to be under the telepathic guidance of certain Mahatmas whose present country of residence was not India. These were adepts or initiates, masters of occult wisdom, who had attained spiritual liberation from the world but stayed below to help mankind. They lived in Tibet, where secret caves housed enormous libraries, and here Mme Blavatsky had met some of them during a mysterious visit.

Her own chief Master was Koot Hoomi, and she had another named Morya. She substantiated their existence with portraits. They appeared to some of her followers and answered letters which she accepted for transmission to them; the answer was in writing and sometimes arrived by 'precipitation', seeming to fall from the air.

Two of the most notable early Theosophists were A. P. Sinnett, editor of the Indian newspaper *The Pioneer*, and A. O. Hume, founder of the Indian National Congress, which later became the party of independence under Gandhi's leadership. Both were prepared to believe but they grew doubtful, and Sinnett tried vainly to reach Koot Hoomi without going through Mme Blavatsky.

The published letters of Koot Hoomi contain nothing to support such an extraordinary authorship. The handwriting, the stationery and some quirks of phrasing and spelling are alleged to point to Mme Blavatsky herself, as the amanuensis if nothing more. There is some evidence, hotly disputed, that she employed pious frauds to buttress her claims in other ways. The 'precipitation' of the letters turned out under scrutiny to be a very dubious process.

Mahatmas in the Theosophical sense were never proved to exist. Mme Blavatsky's ex-mentor Swami Dayananda, who was certainly one of the most authoritative of Hindu spokesmen, declared flatly that they did not.

The Gandhi Cult

Like several other leaders of Indian nationalism, M. K. Gandhi (1869–1948) had links with Theosophy. As a student in London he met Mme Blavatsky shortly before her death in 1891, read her *Key to Theosophy*, and became an associate member of her Society. He went no farther, and his later opinions of Theosophy varied. At one time he called it 'humbug'. At another he praised it for its presentation of the best in Hinduism. But several Theosophists influenced him, and Indian politics brought him into a somewhat stormy relationship with Annie Besant (see BESANT), who presided over Theosophy after the foundress's passing. It does not appear that he took any interest in Mahatmas, of whatever sort. His own application of the title to Gokhale was hardly more than a sincere compliment.

He is said to have been first saluted as a Mahatma himself by Indian admirers during his civil rights campaign in South Africa, which ended in 1914. But the real bestower of the accolade was the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was his host on his triumphant return to India. Tagore was referring to him as 'Mahatma Gandhi' early in 1915 and wrote of him in a poem as 'the Great Soul in beggar's garb', an allusion to his simplicity of dress. Swami Vivekananda, another leader of Hindu reform, had given currency to the idea that a true Mahatma in 20th century India would be one who championed the downtrodden masses. Gandhi did this a great deal more evidently than other Congress figures. His religious ardour and strict personal morals reinforced the cult which grew round him.

The masses turned to him as a Mahatma long before they knew him as a politician. A campaign in 1917 for the redress of peasant grievances proved his unique, messianic power over them. This made him the irreplaceable leader of the national movement, a position he held for about 15 years. His first bid for Indian self-rule, in 1921, acquired much of its force from the personal mystique. Rumours spread that he would expel the English by magic, and that they could not arrest him because he would simply fly away. When they did arrest him, one of the reasons for the cheerfulness he expressed was that the myth had been exploded. Indians would henceforth be more ready to work out their own salvation, instead of relying on him.

After his release from prison, however, Gandhi still had to endure the importunities of hordes of darshan seekers whenever he travelled. Many literally climbed over him, yelling, jostling and clawing. He was often in need of first aid for scratches on his legs. The superstitious credited him with performing miracles, which he could sometimes refute but not always.

An English observer noticed his dislike of the cult. Gandhi seldom looked sterner than he did when confronting his worshippers. He tried again and again to replace the popular slogan 'Mahatma Gandhi ki-jai' ('Victory to Mahatma Gandhi') with others of a less personal kind. But his attempts to get rid of his unwanted and, in his own view, undeserved title were doomed to failure. Finally he surrendered with a wry humour and a classic comment: 'The woes of Mahatmas are known only to Mahatmas.'

(See also MASTERS.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

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Mahayana

Buddhist movement which arose in about the 10th century AD and became the dominant type of Buddhism in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam; the name means 'great course' or 'great vehicle', as distinct from the Hinayana (lesser course or vehicle) of Sri Lanka and most of Southeast Asia.

See BUDDHISM; JAPAN.

Robert Skelton

Gordon School

General Gordon meets his end as Khartoum falls to the followers of Mohammed Ahmad al-Sayyid, one of many Messianic leaders to claim the title of Mahdi

In all periods of Moslem history rebels and reformers have claimed to be the Mahdi, the righteous deliverer and descendant of the Prophet who will cleanse the world of wickedness

MAHDI

A SHIITE TRADITION quotes Mohammed as saying, 'I am the Prophet and Ali is my heir, and from us will descend al-Mahdi, the seal (the last) of the imams, who will conquer all religions and take revenge on the wicked.' The idea of the Mahdi, 'he who is rightly guided' (that is, guided by God), first developed among the Shiites, a minority group in Islam, political in origin; they supported the claims of the descendants of Ali, who was the prophet's cousin and was married to his daughter Fatima. Ali, according to Shiite belief, was the first of 12 imams, sinless leaders of the faithful possessed of a divine light. The 12th imam, called the Expected One, was held to have disappeared in about the year 878, but still to be living in hiding, waiting to reveal himself before the Last Day when he would make Islam supreme and abolish wickedness. (See also ISLAM.)

The expectation of the Mahdi, the one who is to appear before the end of the age, has also been prevalent among Sunnites, who constitute the main body of Moslems. In times of trouble the idea of a deliverer to set things right and inaugurate prosperity appealed to the common people. But it is noteworthy that al-Bukhari and Muslim, considered the most reliable compilers of Sunnite tradition, do not mention the Mahdi. They record traditions about Jesus returning and defeating Antichrist. Other compilers relate traditions that Mohammed foretold that the Mahdi, who would bear the same name as his, would make an end of oppression and tyranny, fill the earth with equity and justice, and rule for seven or nine years, during which period he would give anyone who asked as much wealth as he could carry. Jesus is said by them either to descend after the Mahdi and kill Antichrist, or to descend with him and help him to do so.

Numerous Claimants

There have been many claimants to the office of Mahdi, but although Mahdis have risen and passed away, the expectation still remains. Mahdis have appeared in different parts of the Moslem world. For example, there was a claimant in the Yemen in the 12th century who was overthrown by Saladin's brother. In the 17th century in Indonesia a man called Iskandar collected a fleet, proclaimed himself as Mahdi and took to piracy. A few claimants deserve special mention.

In the 1st century of Islam, Mukhtar raised rebellion against the Umayyads, who had monopolized the caliphate, asserting his support of al-Mahdi Mohammed Ibn al-Hanafiyya, a son of Ali by another wife than Fatima. This short-lived rising ended with Mukhtar's death in Kufa in 687. Though this was a Shiite rising, the so-called Mahdi was not a lineal descendant of Mohammed. It is also doubtful whether Ibn al-Hanafiyya really claimed to be the Mahdi.

Ubaydallah, a Shiite claimant of the Ismailite section, who had come from the East to Morocco where he won over the Berber tribe Kitama, began to establish himself as Mahdi in 909. He claimed descent from the Prophet through Ali and Fatima, a claim strongly rejected by his opponents. His career was mainly one of conquest. In Tunisia he founded his capital al-Mahdiyya, and by the time of his death in 933, there had begun a caliphate, known as the Fatimid caliphate, which conquered Egypt and ruled there and in Syria till overthrown by Saladin in 1171.

Ibn Tumart (c 1078–c 1130) appeared as Mahdi in Morocco, claiming descent from Fatima. After studying in the East he returned determined to introduce reformation. His bases were the Koran and Tradition. He taught a strict monotheism, denying that God has attributes. Having won over the Berber tribe Masmuda and announced himself as Mahdi, he had their support in the sacred war *(jihad)* against pagans and against Moslems who rejected his teaching and strict manner of life. The dynasty of the Almohads was established and rnled in Morocco and Spain for over a century.

Mohammed Ali al-Sanusi, who had founded a brotherhood of Sufis (mystics

and ascetics – see SUFIS), began in 1840 to spread his propaganda in Libya. After his death in 1859 his son Mohammed al-Mahdi ruled in Libya till his death in 1902, a period of prosperity based on oases and control of caravan routes. He was expected to be the one who would expel foreigners and renew Islam, and some people after 1902 felt that he had not really died.

Holy War in the Sudan

Mohammed Ahmad al-Sayyid (d 1885) arose as Mahdi in the Sudan, founded a Sufi brotherhood and gained great influence by his asceticism, persuasive teaching and sympathy with the sufferings of the poor. In 1881 he announced his divine appointment as Mahdi and defeated various British forces, eventually taking Khartoum in 1885, when General Gordon was killed. Five months later he died in Omdurman. His followers carried on his religious teachings, combining, as is natural in Islam, religion with politics. The Mahdi is still honoured. In 1898 Kitchener ordered his body and tomb to be destroyed, but the tomb was rebuilt and opened in 1947.

In India Ghulam Ahmad declared in 1890 that he was the Mahdi. Other claimants had considered fighting for the faith necessary, but he argued that jihad is a spiritual warfare. This movement has been actively missionary.

There is an expectation among Moslems that God will send a reformer at the beginning of every century; this belief is not necessarily connected with the idea of the Mahdi, but is occasionally associated with it. Ghulam Ahmad, for instance, was welcomed by his followers not merely as Mahdi, but also as coming, according to his claim, in the spirit and power of Jesus, and as the reformer for the beginning of the 14th Moslem century.

(See also MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS.)

JAMES ROBSON

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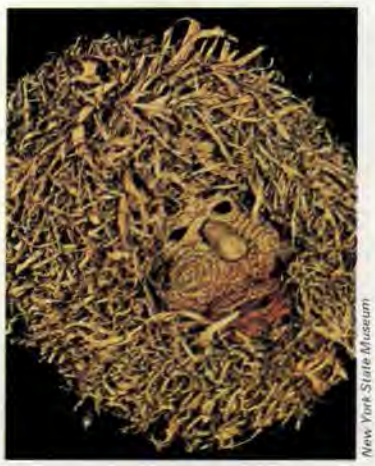
Maize

Or corn, staple food plant of many American Indian peoples, and so an important focus of lore and ritual; often personified as Corn Mother or Corn Maiden, with a myth about her seasonal disappearance and return: the Aztecs had several corn deities for whom rites were performed: corn dances were part of the magic and religion of many North American Indian peoples.



New York State Museum

Malleus Maleficarum

'The Hammer of Witches', written by two German Dominican friars, Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer; first printed in 1486 and frequently republished in the 16th and 17th centuries, it was generally accepted as the most authoritative work on the behaviour of witches and demons, and on the methods of interrogating, torturing and convicting witches; it has been described as 'a perfect armoury of judicial murder'; there is a modern English translation by Montague Summers.

MALLEVS
MALEFICARVM.
MALEFICAS ET EARVM
haereſim framcâ conterens,
EX VARIIS AVCTORIBVS COMPILATVS,
& in quatuor Tomos iuſtè diſtributus,
TOMVS PRIMVS.

The great prehistoric temples of Malto, extraordinary feats of engineering, were constructed long before the pyramids of Egypt: their use and purpose is still uncertain

MALTA

RELIGION BELONGS to the world of ideas, but it is difficult to reconstruct past ideas without the help of the written word. There are long periods of human history before the invention of writing which are rich in material remains, yet our interpretations of the religious beliefs behind them cannot be anything more than reasoned, but necessarily unprovable, guesses.

Malta provides a perfect example of this. Through the third millenium BC it supported a rich culture which devoted a great part of its efforts to religion, and of which the remains have survived in great quantity and variety. The temples of Malta were an extraordinary achievement in their art, their architecture and their engineering, at a period well before the pyramids of Egypt. They are built of great blocks of stone, up to 20 tons in weight, but inside were faced with carefully dressed slabs, often tastefully decorated. They are mostly constructed to a standard plan, which was altered slightly with time. First there is a great oval forecourt, sometimes built up from the sloping hillside by means of an impressive terrace. Above the court rises a concave façade consisting of a course of block set on end with their faces exposed, topped by horizontal courses. At the centre is the entrance.

Through this, one enters the long side of a large oval chamber, walled in the same way but much more carefully. The apse formed on either side is usually partly screened off, either by a wall with a restricted doorway or by a row of decorated blocks. Against the walls are often block or slab altars. In the earlier temples, a third apse in the centre opens opposite the entrance, giving a trefoil plan.

Subterranean Mysteries

In a separate category is the Hypogeum of Hal Saflieni. This is a labyrinthine complex of artificially cut caves extending to a depth of 40 feet below the rock surface. The entrance area and the oldest part of the site appears to be a series of burial caves. Beyond and below this is what we can only regard as another temple. Many of its details are meticulous copies of the architectural features of the temples above ground. Others, like the carved ceilings and painted wall decoration, show what has been lost in the surface ruins. One chamber, the Oracle Room, has a deep booming echo. The innermost and deepest parts of the site are great store-rooms. But the site's main purpose was for burial, since the mortal remains of upwards of 6000 individuals were found in the side chambers.

So far, this tells us nothing of the rituals which were performed in these temples. Indeed, we are anticipating in calling them temples at all, though we can immediately add that there was no trace of contemporary domestic occupation found in any of them, nor of human burial except in the Hypogeum. A temple is a building designed for religious rites. What rites?

Clearest is that of animal sacrifice. Large rectangular blocks and three-slab tables can only be altars. Rows of sheep are represented in relief on some of the blocks. Perforations at ground level look like tethering places. Caches of animal bones would seem to be examples of actual offerings. And in one famous altar at Tarxien is a small cupboard which held a long flint knife-blade and the horn of a goat. Other evidence of offerings may, but need not, be associated. Pottery offering bowls, found in their hundreds, always broken, would be more appropriate for fruits or grain than for meat. Holes pierced through the stone paving probably took libations, but whether the offerings were of blood, milk, wine or some other liquid cannot now be determined. Large stone bowls with fire-scorched interiors occupy prominent positions on some sites. The great forecourts suggest ceremonials or processions in front of the temples.

More intriguing is the evidence for some sort of priesthood. The screens and barholes are on the inside of the doors, so someone had to remain inside to close them against the general public outside. Then there are the 'oracle holes', apertures up to a foot or so across, connecting the main

chambers with the small, and one is tempted to say secret, rooms within the walls. Though we can only guess at what passed through them – confessions and absolutions, offerings and alms, are as likely as oracles – they also imply a public on one side and a restricted, perhaps privileged, group on the other.

Black or White Magic?

To whom were the temples dedicated? Of the many surviving figures, only one unarguably represents a deity. This is the great stone statue at Tarxien, once about 9 feet high but now destroyed to waist level. It shows an obese standing figure in a pleated skirt, with extraordinary hip measurements, near-spherical calves and tiny feet. There are many smaller statues and figurines in stone and clay of apparently the same divinity, standing or seated. All are oddly sexless. In contrast there are a few obviously female ones, the finest being a beautifully and naturalistically modelled terracotta from the Hagar Qim temple, the so-called Venus of Malta. Only one is considered male, the 'priest' from Tarxien, but there is nothing to prove either his sex or his profession.

A few of the smallest figurines are different yet again, gross and deformed distortions of the human body. Some could be votive offerings, models of pathological conditions from which a sufferer had recovered or wished to recover. One looks suspiciously like black magic – it is jabbed all over with sharp flint splinters which remain in the wounds.

A famous terracotta figurine from the depths of the Hypogeum sums up our difficulties. It shows a woman of generous proportions lying on her side on an elegant couch. A cloth or rug is draped closely over her from the navel down. Her hands are beneath her head as if in sleep. Everyone is agreed that this is a highly significant figure, but unfortunately the significance escapes us. We have no way of knowing if she is a worshipper, a priestess or the goddess

The temple at Mnajdra, one of the finest of the 30-odd megalithic temples to be found on Malta. All are similar in plan and construction, consisting of intercommunicating oval chambers built of blocks of stone up to 20 tons in weight

Michael Dixon

National Museum (Hagar Qim)

herself. Even more problematical is what she is doing. Is she seeking a cure, for sterility perhaps, by sleeping in a sacred site? Or hoping for a dream in which the future will be revealed to her, or the will of the goddess made known? Or even just sleeping? She may, of course, be sleeping the sleep of death.

We are a little better off when we turn to the nature of this religion. Tentatively we regard the deity as a goddess, the Maltese variant of the Mediterranean Great Mother, but in view of the sexless figures, even this cannot be regarded as anything like certain. Fertility was clearly an important aspect of the religion. The obesity of the figures implies it, and the associated symbolism goes far to prove it. At Tarxien once more, one of the blocks bears relief carvings of a bull and a sow with 14 piglets at suck. Unmistakable carved stone phalli have been found in some numbers.

There also appear to have been close associations with death and the underworld. The snake decorating a block from the Ggantija in Gozo, Malta's sister island, would be entirely appropriate. The libation holes lead down into the earth. A recent suggestion is that the above-ground temples, though not themselves used for burials, were built copies of the rock-cut tombs which took the islands' dead. The Hypogeum offers the strongest argument for this link with the underworld.

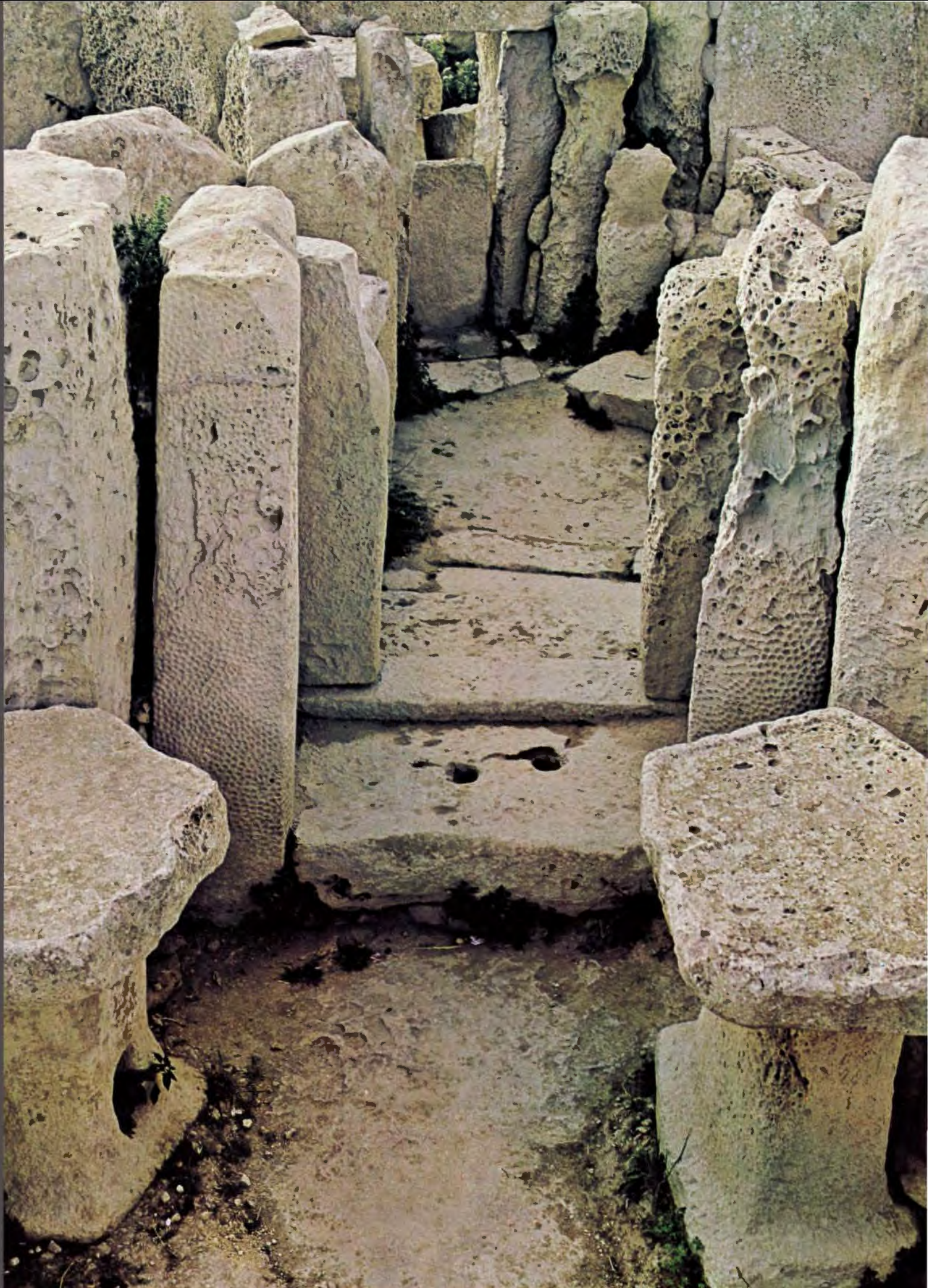
There are hints of other sides to the goddess's powers, such as healing and foretelling the future, and one must not forget that dark suspicion of black magic. Nor can one even guess what others may have left no mark in the material record.

Above **The so-called Venus of Malta from the temple at Hagar Qim, one of the few statues in female form to be found on the island** ***Right*** **Mushroom-shaped altars, probably used for animal sacrifice, stand before the entrance to inner rooms: part of the temple at Hagar Qim**

DAVID TRUMP

FURTHER READING: J. D. Evans, *Malta* (Thames & Hudson, 1959); S. Rossiter, *Blue Guide to Malta* (Ernest Benn, 1968) contains a prefatory essay by Evans including evidence which has come to light since the publication of his book.

Michael Dixon



MAN

'We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again': religious, mystical and magical ideas about man's role in the world supply an invaluable insight into the hopes and fears of the human condition

ALL THE MAJOR RELIGIONS are based upon distinctive evaluations of human nature and destiny. In some religions, such as Christianity, this evaluation is consciously formulated into a doctrine of Man; in others it finds expression in ideas and terminologies that are never precisely defined, but clearly incorporate basic assumptions about life. Indeed, on the final analysis, religion itself stems from mankind's endeavour to understand its own reason for existence relative to the universe in which it finds itself placed.

That man, from the very dawn of culture, was able to abstract himself from the business of living and ponder the enigma of human destiny is attested by his burial customs. For the very fact that man has so concerned himself about his dead symbolizes the difference of his attitude to death from that of the other animals, which show no care for their dead (see BURIAL; CULT OF THE DEAD). The earliest known writings certainly show that men must have reflected on human nature and destiny long before they could record their opinions in writing. For these writings, of Egyptian and Sumerian origin and dating from the third millennium BC, reveal a maturity of expression indicative of long established traditions of belief. They also show that the two peoples concerned held very different views about human life in this world and the next.

The Egyptian view of man's nature and destiny, despite its great antiquity, is one of the most complex ever recorded (see EGYPT). One of its most notable characteristics is the preoccupation with death that seems to characterize ancient Egyptian civilization.

Below **To the Egyptians man was a complex mixture of physical and spiritual: the soul, shown as a human-headed bird, hovers above the body *Right* Vishvarupa, the manifestation of Vishnu in which the Hindu god embodies the whole universe. The conception of the universe, or macrocosm, as a gigantic man also appears in Manicheism, Gnosticism and the Cabala**

British Museum

What is Man?

O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is thy name in all the earth! . . .
When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy
fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast
established;
what is man that thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?
Yet thou hast made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honour.
Thou hast given him dominion over the works
of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet . . .

Psalm 8

Hamlet . . . indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me.

Shakespeare *Hamlet*

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

This preoccupation was indeed a fact; yet it was not inspired by any innate morbidity of temperament. On the contrary, the Egyptians had a fierce love of life, and it was this love that made them so concerned about death. They were basically optimistic, for despite their profound abhorrence of death, they believed that they had the means, if properly employed, to secure resurrection from death and a happy afterlife (see OSIRIS).

The Egyptians planned for the life after death in a practical manner, as they did for their life in this world. They had a lively apprehension of the perils that faced them after death, particularly of the judgement before Osiris, but these were really incidental, and the wise and prudent would so arrange their affairs that they might safely surmount all obstacles. However, despite this great concern about their eternal destiny, the ancient Egyptians remained curiously unconcerned about the purpose of their existence. Their creation myths almost completely ignore the creation of mankind. In contrast to their Mesopotamian neighbours, they never seem to have asked why their creator gods had made men and women like themselves (see CREATION MYTHS).

The Plague of the Living

The peoples of ancient Mesopotamia took a very different view of human nature and destiny. In one way it was a more thoughtful view, in that they were interested in the purpose of mankind's existence. The explanation given in their mythology was that the gods originally had to labour to provide their own food. Tiring of this obligation, they had created mankind to serve them by building temples and providing sacrifices. However, although the Mesopotamians were concerned to find a divine purpose for the human race, they came to form a most pessimistic estimate of human destiny.

They believed that the gods had intentionally made mankind mortal, so that when they ceased to have any further use for an individual, he died. Death effected an awful change in those who died. For while living, a human being was a kind of psycho-physical organism, being compounded of a material body and an animating principle, called in Akkadian *napistu*. At death this organic whole was irrevocably shattered. What survived, known as the *edim* or *etimmu*, was a horrible daemonic entity that could terribly plague the living, especially if its body were not properly buried. Its everlasting abode was *kur-nu-gi-a*, 'the land of no-return', located far below the earth, where all the dead dwelt, in dust and darkness, with no differentiation between the good and the wicked. There they were ruled by the terrible god Nergal and his grim wife Ereshkigal.

The pessimism of this Mesopotamian view of man's destiny calls for explanation and its likely cause has a great significance for the study of religion. It would seem, on the one hand, to have been based on a realistic estimate of the phenomenon of death as the complete disintegration of the living person. On the other hand, it was inspired by the inability of the unsophisticated mind to conceive of complete personal extinction. Hence the grim belief that something did survive of the former living person, though horribly transformed and so doomed to an existence of unending misery. (See also MESOPOTAMIA.)

This Mesopotamian view of man was not unique in the ancient world; parallels to it are found in ancient Israel and in Greece. The Hebrew estimate is graphically presented in the story of the Fall of Adam. Yahweh, the god of Israel, makes Adam out of clay, and then animates him by breathing 'the breath of life' into his nostrils. Adam thus becomes 'a living soul' (*nephesh*, which is akin to the Babylonian *napistu*). The animals are also described as 'living souls', and are similarly fashioned from clay. After Adam commits his fatal act of disobedience, Yahweh pronounces his doom: 'clay thou art, and unto clay shalt thou return.' Since Adam was the progenitor of mankind, this fate was inherited by all his descendants.

The official Hebrew doctrine of Man was, accordingly, very similar to the Mesopotamian view. The living person was regarded as a psycho-physical organism, compounded of material body and an animating principle, *nephesh*. Death irretrievably shattered this composite entity, and the consequences are vividly described in 2 Samuel (14.14): 'We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.' What survived this disintegration departed to Sheol, an awful subterranean deep, like the Mesopotamian 'land of no-return'.

This pessimistic view of human destiny was changed in the 2nd century BC by the acceptance of the idea of a resurrection and judgement of the dead. What caused the change is not clear but it had significant repercussions for the Hebrew doctrine of Man. Human destiny was now extended with positive significance beyond death. However, because the traditional conception of human nature, as a compound of physical and psychical elements, was retained a resurrected life meant a reconstitution of the physical body. On this point, Hebrew eschatology became similar to that of Egypt, for both were based on the conviction that a body was essential to personal existence. But where the Egyptians sought to preserve the body by mummification, the Jews looked to its miraculous reconstitution by Yahweh.

The Urns of Fate

What may be described as the classical Greek evaluation of human nature and destiny was as pessimistic as the Mesopotamian and early Hebrew views. It first finds expression in the Homeric poems. The most dramatic presentation occurs in the *Odyssey* (book 11), which describes how Odysseus descended into Hades to learn the cause of the misfortunes that prevented his return home after the fall of Troy. In Hades he meets the shade of his dead mother. He tries vainly to embrace her shadowy image, and cries out in frustration and grief. His mother's shade replies: 'this is the way decreed for mortals when they die. The sinews cease to hold the flesh and bones together; for they are destroyed by the power of the blazing fire, as soon as the (conscious) life (*thymos*) leaves the white bones, and the shade (*psyche*), hovers about and then flits away.'

This passage mentions the three constituents of human nature, according to Homer: the body, which was cremated at death; the *thymos*, which was the conscious or rational self; the *psyche*, the life-principle. Death disintegrated the union of these constituent elements: the body was destroyed, the *thymos* ceased to exist, and the *psyche* descended to Hades. The *psyche* was imagined as a shadowy replica (called an *eidolon*) of the living person, but it had no consciousness. In Hades the shades of the dead are portrayed as being capable only of making chirping noises like birds. However, as this episode in the *Odyssey* shows, they could acquire a momentary consciousness by tasting the

Far left **'We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again': in the Old Testament death and the other ills of the human condition are the consequences of man's disobedience; Adam and Eve with the Tree of Knowledge, from a 13th century MS *Left* The Tree of Life, equated in this 18th century drawing with the cross on which Christ died to rescue human nature from the predicament to which the sin of Eden had condemned it. In the foreground 'this present evil world' is contrasted with the heavenly New Jerusalem in the background**

blood of a sacrificed animal – an idea derived from the primitive belief that blood is the 'life-substance'.

Several attempts are made in the *Iliad* to account for human fate. In one place Zeus is pictured as arbitrarily handing out mixtures of good and bad lots to individuals from two urns that stood on the floor of Olympus. Other imagery is used elsewhere: that the gods 'bind' men's fates upon them; that 'mighty Fate' spins 'her thread' of destiny at a person's birth; that Zeus weighs the fates of heroes in his golden scales. The fluidity of this imagery suggests that, at this early stage in Greek thought, the problem was gradually emerging of relating human destiny to the divine government of the universe. But it was a problem that was never satisfactorily solved, for the Greek concept of deity was essentially based on experience of cosmic power, which is indifferent to human aspirations and values. This is clearly evident in Stoicism, which represented the most sustained effort made in the Graeco-Roman world to produce a philosophy of life in terms of a realistic appraisal of the human situation.

According to Stoic doctrine, the superiority of man over the animals lay in his possession of a rational mind *(nous)*, which enabled him to grasp the scheme of the universe. This implied that man could consciously will 'to live according to Nature', which in practice meant conforming one's desires and conduct to the limitations of human existence imposed by the physics of the universe. It was an austere creed, which offered the individual no hope beyond the personal satisfaction of having the strength of steeling himself to accept ultimate personal extinction. For death, as the Stoic philosopher Epictetus explains, is necessary, 'so that the revolution of the universe may be accomplished; for it has a need of the things that are now coming into being, and the things that shall be, and the things that have been accomplished.'

Stoicism was a product of the innate rationalism of the Greek mind, which could assess life objectively, uninfluenced by a religious tradition that claimed the authority of divine revelation. As such it appealed to minds sufficiently educated to appreciate its logic and resolute enough to live according to its austere counsel. But there is an abundance of evidence that, apart from professed Stoics, many ordinary people also resigned themselves to the fate that Homer first describes, and which finds expression in subsequent literature of all kinds. The many surviving funerary monuments, carved with scenes of the last farewell of the deceased, express a quiet but infinitely sad acceptance of the inevitable. Occasionally a note of defiance is heard, as in the following epitaph: 'I was not; I became; I am not; I care not.'

The Body, A Tomb

This pessimistic estimate of man's nature and destiny, which can be traced throughout classical culture, from Homeric Greece to Graeco-Roman society, was not accepted by all. Despite its obvious realism, many sought for a more comforting creed. The ancient Eleusinian Mysteries and Orphism promised their respective initiates deliverance from death and a blessed afterlife. Orphism was the more sophisticated cult and it involved the idea of the transmigration of souls, an idea which implied a very different conception of human nature from that of the classical tradition. It presupposed that in each person an immortal ethereal soul *(psyche)* was imprisoned in a material body. Orphic mythology explained that this situation was due to an ancient crime, and that the soul's true destiny was to return to its original divine source. This destiny could be achieved only by the soul's realization of its true nature, and by following a discipline designed to emancipate it from attachment to the world of material things. A favourite

The Calamity of Original Sin

To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken, of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truth, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion . . . all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from His presence . . . And so I argue about the world; – *if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator.

John Henry Newman *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*

Anthropomorphism, the tendency to picture the divine in human form, is extremely widespread, as is the tendency to believe that man himself is potentially divine *Right* Manjusri, the Buddhist personification of wisdom *Centre* Apollo, the Greek god of the arts and prophecy *Far right* Spirits in human form, an aboriginal bark painting from Australia

Orphic saying was *soma, sema*, 'the body, a tomb'. (See ELEUSIS; ORPHEUS AND ORPHISM.)

Orphic ideas seem to have influenced the philosophy of Plato, in which the immortality of the soul is a major theme. He represents his master Socrates as exhorting his fellow-countrymen 'to take care of the soul'. He accepts the idea of the transmigration of the soul through many incarnations in both human and animal bodies, from contact with which it is contaminated and must make atonement. He proclaims it to be the task of the philosopher, through his superior knowledge, to free his soul from bondage to the body and assist it to regain its original state of blessedness.

This dualistic conception of human nature, of an immortal soul dwelling in a mortal body, became a firmly established tradition in the Graeco-Roman world. It was the basic concept of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neoplatonism. These religio-philosophical cults were concerned to explain how the ethereal soul came to be incarcerated in a physical body, living in a world of material things. Each offered a way, usually involving esoteric knowledge and discipline, by which the soul might be delivered from its bondage and return to the divine source from which it had fallen. These ideas profoundly affected the Christian doctrine of Man.

Raised Incorruptible

Since Christianity originated in Judaea and the first Christians were Jews, Jewish ideas about human nature and destiny inevitably formed the basis of the primitive Christian view. As the New Testament shows, belief in the resurrection and judgement of the dead were fundamental tenets of the new faith. The conception of the resurrection reflected the Jewish view of human nature as a psycho-physical organism in a very literal sense. This is most notably seen in the description of the resurrected Jesus. According to St Luke (chapter 24), when the disciples saw Jesus in his resurrected state, they were terrified, supposing 'that they saw a spirit'. But Jesus assured them of his physical reality: 'See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.' When some disciples still remained doubtful, he proposed a further test: 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of a broiled fish, which he proceeded to eat before them.

This amazing emphasis upon the concrete reality of the resurrected body of Jesus reflects the belief of the early Christians about the essentiality of the physical body. But as the writings of St Paul show, when this Jewish idea was presented to Gentiles who held the dualistic view of human nature that derived from Plato and Orphism, offence was given. In consequence, adjustments were made to accommodate belief that the soul was immortal by nature and able to exist independently of the body However, the Jewish concept of a physical resurrection was too integral a part of the original Christian message to be abandoned. It was retained, together with the idea of a Last Judgement.

The Christian doctrine of Man thus taught that God created human souls to be immortal, but placed them in physical bodies with which they became essentially connected. At death, the soul left the body and was immediately judged. For the majority of mankind this judgement resulted in the soul's consignment to purgatory, to expiate its sins. At the Second Coming of Christ, the decomposed bodies of the dead would be reconstituted and their souls would re-enter them for the Final Judgement.

The Christian doctrine of Man involved the doctrine of original sin. It was taught that Adam had implicated all his descendants in his original act of disobedience to his Creator. Consequently, all subsequent generations were deserving of God's wrath from the moment of birth, quite apart from the guilt they later acquired by their own actual sins. Being thus a Fallen Race, mankind was predisposed to evil. This meant, according to Christian theologians, that man was not only unable to save himself from the state of perdition into which he was born, but he could not even desire to repent without God's grace. The means by which God provided salvation for mankind is expounded in the doctrine of the Atonement, and constitutes an essential part of the foundational teaching of Christianity (see ATONEMENT). Those who repented of their sins and accepted Christ as their Saviour could hope that, after enduring the cleansing fires of purgatory, they would be reunited with their bodies, and, justified at the Last Judgement, would pass on to the eternal bliss of the Beatific Vision of God.

The doctrine of Man in Islam has some affinity to those of Judaism and Christianity; the fact constitutes part of the problem of the relation of the Arabian religion to Judaism and Christianity, which predated it. The affinity is especially marked in the eschatology of the Koran. Mohammed regarded himself as sent by Allah to warn his countrymen of the coming of divine judgement. This 'Last Judgement' would involve the resurrection of the dead, and would result in the vindication of the faithful and their reward in paradise, and the eternal damnation of the wicked to the torments of hell.

Souls Beneath the Throne

Man was, by implication, created to serve Allah and repudiate all other gods. According to the Koran, man is made of fire-clay which was transformed into flesh. Within the body was a vital principle or soul *(nafs)*, and the two united to form the living person – hence the stress laid on a physical resurrection at the Last Day. The theme of human predestination figures much in Islam, owing to the supreme emphasis put on the omnipotence and omniscience of Allah. It leads to such uncompromising statements as that of sura 25 of the Koran: 'Allah leadeth astray whom He willeth and guideth whom He willeth.' However, the very word 'Islam' is derived from an Arabic verb signifying the idea of submission to a supreme will. As such, it presupposes that the individual has the freedom of will to submit himself absolutely to the commands of Allah.

The meagre references in the Koran to the nature of man led to much later speculation about the soul. The belief became generally established that human souls were created by Allah and kept in a shrine beneath his throne until required for their respective incarnations. The immortality of the soul was also accepted. The Sufi mystics held that the soul was of divine origin and craved for reunion with its Creator, and that this reunion could be achieved by mystical trance. However, despite these developments, Islam has remained essentially a simple faith founded on the revelation, made to Mohammed, of Allah's purpose for man, and formulated in a few practical precepts of conduct (see ISLAM; SUFIS).

Victoria and Albert Museum

Michael Holford

Axel Poignant

The Way of Deliverance

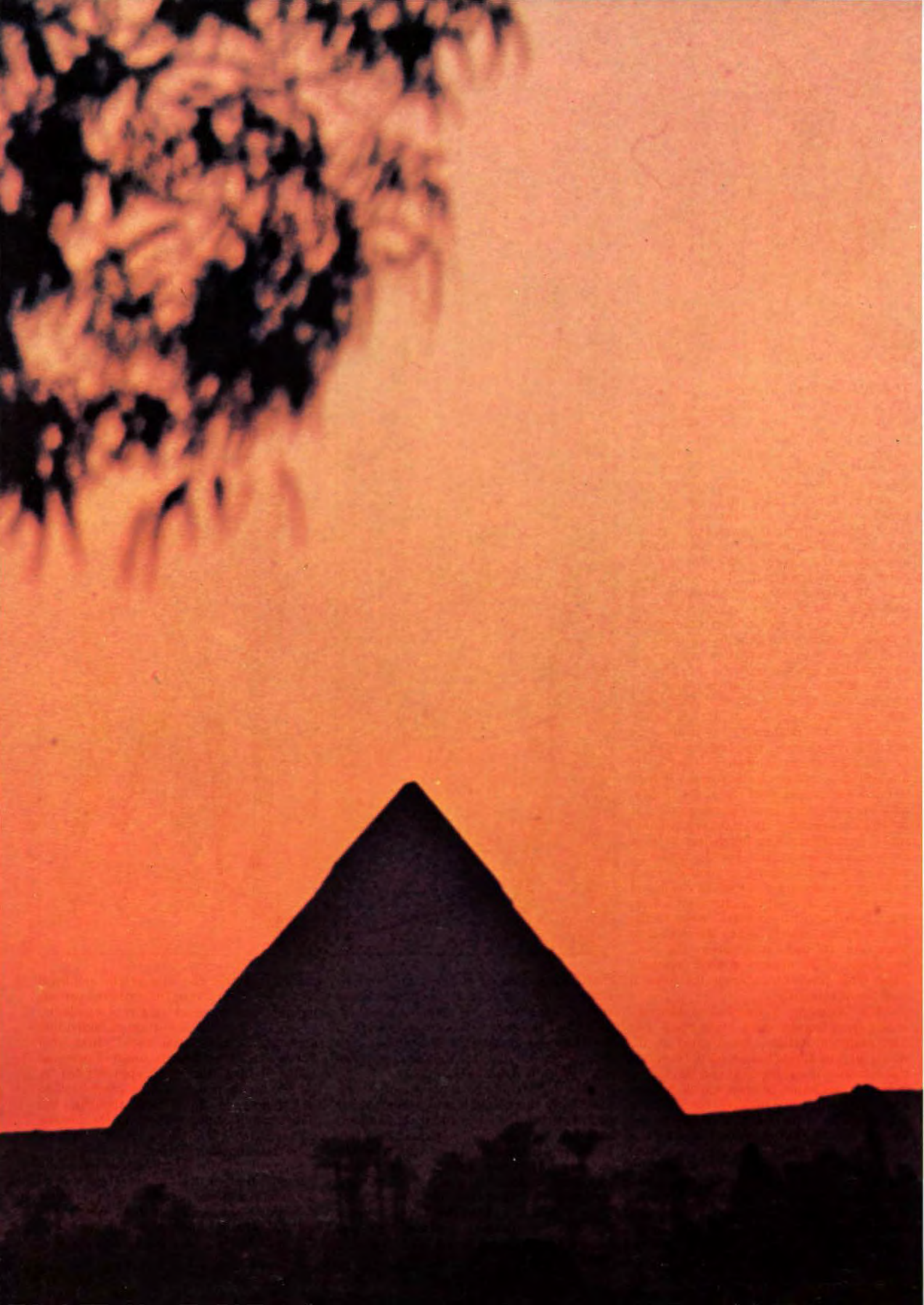
While these various evaluations of human nature and destiny were being worked out in the ancient Near East and Europe, in India another estimate was gradually established which was destined to affect most of the peoples of eastern Asia. This estimate was similar to that of Orphism in as far as it was based on the idea of the transmigration of souls. But the Indian interpretation dates from about 600 BC, and is undoubtedly older than the Orphic view. Whether the latter derived from India has been much debated, without any agreed conclusion. The idea of the rebirth or transmigration of souls is not necessarily a sophisticated concept, and it occurs among many primitive peoples, so that the Indian and the Orphic views might well have had separate origins.

The Indian view of Man is certainly a sophisticated estimate. It maintains that the individual self, or *atman*, is really identical with Brahman, the source or principle of existence. But owing to *avidya*, or ignorance, the atman believes itself to be an individual self-conscious person. In turn it takes the phenomenal world for reality, and involves itself in it. Consequently, it becomes subject to the process of Time, which is manifested in unceasing cycles of creation and destruction. For the atman or self this means *samsara*, or rebirth, which is likewise a ceaseless process of dying and being reborn, with all the attendant suffering. Together with samsara operates the law of karma, which causes the atman to work out in each incarnation the consequences of its actions in past incarnate lives. This process conditions the form of each period of rebirth.

Thus, according to this Indian doctrine, at any given moment every living being is in that state of fortune, be it good or ill, which his past karma has entailed. However, this situation is not hopeless and Hinduism, in its various forms, offers a way of deliverance. Basically this involves the effective apprehension of its own true nature by the atman. Such apprehension implies the recognition, as the *Chandogya Upanishad* tersely puts it, that 'the self of mine within the heart, this is Brahman'. But this recognition is not just a mental act; if it is to be effective, it involves an effort to abstract the self from its fatal attachment to existence in this world, which it has taken for reality. Such abstraction is difficult and can be achieved only by a hard discipline. When *moksa*, 'salvation', is finally achieved, individual existence in this world ceases, and the atman is absorbed into Brahman as a drop of rain merges into the sea (see BRAHMAN; HINDUISM; KARMA).

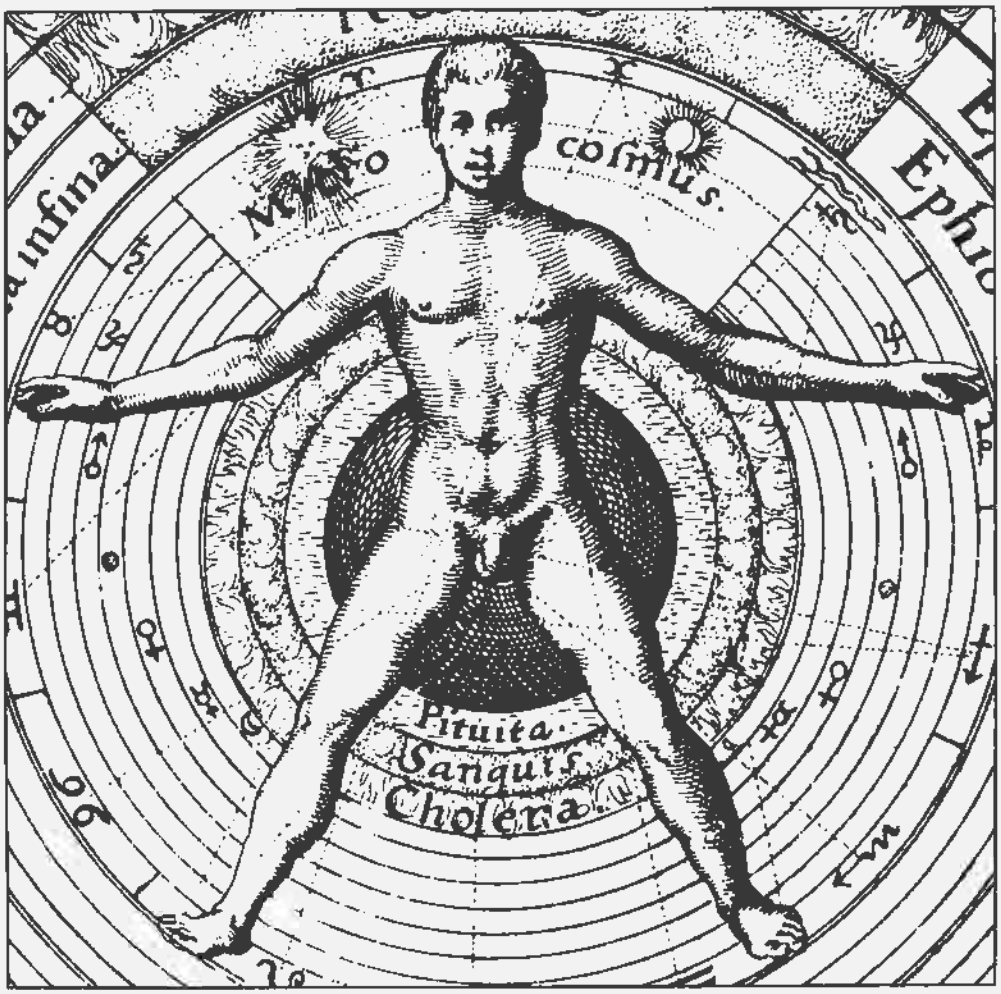
This Indian interpretation of existence, in its early Upanishadic form, seems to have provided both the basis and point of departure for the Buddhist doctrine of Man. Buddhism concentrated particularly on the miseries of human existence by way of introduction to its own gospel of salvation. It accepted the doctrines of samsara and karma; but it rejected the Hindu concept of a self (atman) that was continuously reborn to new forms of incarnated life. Instead, it maintained that the idea of the empirical self stems from a conglomeration of various mental and physical factors *(skandhas)*, which produce the sensation of individual existence in a material world. Since this illusory self cherishes its sense of personal being, it takes the world apprehended by its senses for reality and attaches itself to it. Hence, as in Hindu thought, the individual becomes subject to the process of continuous death and rebirth, with all their concomitant suffering.

According to the Buddhist analysis of the human situation, this universal illusion of personal existence is due to a kind of primordial ignorance (avidya), which it is the task of the Buddhist teacher to expose. To gain deliverance from samsara and



Titanic monuments to man's concern with his destiny after death: the pyramids of Egypt

Roger Wood Studio



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Man as microcosm, illustrating the theory that man is the universe in miniature, that he contains 'in himself all that is contained in the greater world': drawing from *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*, a work by the 17th century mystical philosopher Robert Fludd

karma, the disciple has to pursue an austere discipline of mind and body. The final suppression of all desire for personal existence achieves Nirvana. Owing to the essential subtlety of Buddhist metaphysics, it is very difficult to be certain what this term means. Literally it implies personal extinction; but as used in Buddhist texts it seems to denote a positive state of being, yet one that is so wholly other from empirical existence that it negates all known forms of being (see BUDDHISM: NIRVANA).

Yin and Yang

The spread of Buddhism throughout eastern and south-eastern Asia has meant that the Buddhist view of human nature and destiny has influenced a large part of mankind. It was accepted into China, where it tended to intermingle with or affect the native faiths of Confucianism and Taoism. The native Chinese evaluation of man, however, had certain distinctive features.

The interpretations of man so far described, although they have varied much in their estimates, have had one feature in common. They all set mankind, as a unique species, over against the rest of creation. Instinctively they assume that man should have a special destiny in the scheme of things. The Chinese estimate has notably lacked this assumption. On the contrary, it has stressed man's integration with his natural environment. This approach finds characteristic expression in the idea of Yin and Yang. The terms denote two alternating principles which the Chinese, from at least the 5th century BC, discerned as operative in all forms of being throughout the universe. Man was not excepted from their operation, and a Yin-Yang anthropology was elaborated which explained human nature in these terms. The following passage from the *Lu-shih Ch'un Ch'ui* succinctly states this view: 'Heaven, Earth and all things are like the body of one man, and this is what is called the Great Unity *(ta t'ung)*.' And it goes on to define the duty of the Sage as that of showing 'how the *yin* and *yang* form the essence of things, and how people, birds and beasts are in a state of peace'. (See also CHINA.)

The original teaching of Zoroaster on the subject of Man is obscure. He uses two terms, *urvan* and *daena*, signifying the non-physical components of human nature that survive death. The urvan seems to approximate to the 'soul', and the daena to denote something akin to 'conscience'. In later Zoroastrianism five constituents of human nature were distinguished and the idea of the daena was also curiously elaborated. The dead were described as meeting their daena after death: to the righteous it appeared as a beauteous maiden; to the wicked as a hideous hag. Zoroastrian eschatology involved a corporeal resurrection, with adults restored to a physical state of 40 years of age, and those who had died as children to the form of 15 years. There was also an Immediate and a Final Judgement of the dead. (See also ZOROASTRIANISM.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Universal Man

'What is man that thou art mindful of him? . . . Yet thou hast made him little less than God' (Psalm 8). These opposite feelings, of man's humble insignificance and yet of his overwhelming importance, were expressed for hundreds of years in the West, in the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, that man is the universe, and perhaps God, in miniature, a toy copy of a great original. 'Man,' Agrippa said, 'hath in himself all that is contained in the greater world, so that there remaineth nothing which is not found even really and truly in man himself,' and man 'also doth receive and contain even God himself . . . Therefore man is the most express Image of God, seeing man containeth in himself all things which are in God' (see AGRIPPA).

Since the universe, or macrocosm, is conceived of as a gigantic human organism it has naturally sometimes been pictured as the body of man, the universal or primal or heavenly man. In the Cabala this is Adam Kadmon, whose body is formed by the sefiroth of the Tree of Life. In the Lurianic Cabala, when the divine light of the godhead flowed out into space, the first being which came into existence, the first and highest manifestation of the godhead, was Adam Kadmon. It was from his eyes, ears, nose and mouth that the splendid lights of the sefiroth shone forth (see CABALA; LURIA).

Adam Kadmon is not the same as the godhead, which is beyond human comprehending, but he is God the Creator, God manifested in the universe, and he is the God who can be known by man, for earthly man is a miniature image of him. Adam Kadmon is the whole universe as we know it, the sum total of all the possibilities open to man, and it has been pointed out that his mind, which is the 'universal mind', resembles Jung's collective unconscious.

In Manicheism, the primal man was a manifestation of God, clothed in the armour of light and sent out to do battle with the invading forces of darkness. It was his defeat which allowed particles of divine light to be captured by the evil powers and imprisoned in matter. In the Lurianic Cabala, the divine light emanating from Adam Kadmon broke the vessels which should have contained it, and so particles of light were scattered, a catastrophe paralleled by the Fall of Adam in Eden. The biblical Adam, according to

this theory, was at first a spiritual man, not a physical one, a 'great soul' whose body was made not of matter but of light. He was created to restore the fallen sparks of light to their proper place but he failed. His 'great soul', in which the entire soul-stuff of humanity was concentrated, shattered and its divine sparks became exiled in the world of human matter and earthly human nature.

In Gnosticism, again, man contains the divine spark, the inner seed of heavenly light imprisoned in the darkness of the material world and the physical body, a spark which can escape from its prison to be reunited with its source in the godhead. The liberation comes when it realizes its identity (paralleled in Hinduism by the self's 'effective apprehension of its own true nature' – see above). 'The Gnostic is a Gnostic because he knows, by revelation, who his true self is.' Similarly, the Manicheans believed that their doctrines 'revealed to them their real identity', and so freed them from the grip of evil and matter (see GNOSTICISM; MANICHEANS).

Gnosticism and Manicheism seem to have been based originally on a religious experience, the discovery of the true and divine self in a man's innermost being, described as the higher Self, the twin or familiar, or the guardian angel. The discovery and liberation of the true self remains the great aim of Western occultism and magic. It is this divine element in his nature which in magical theory gives man his potentially limitless power. 'The proper study of mankind is man', with a vengeance, for man is both the measure and the master of all things.

(See also numerous articles, including BODY; FATE; FIRST MAN; HELL; IMMORTALITY; JUDGEMENT; LIGHT; MACROCOSM; MAGIC; MYSTICISM; PARADISE; REINCARNATION; RELIGION.)

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Man and his Destiny in the Great Religions* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1962) with extensive bibliographies; S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju ed, *The Concept of Man: a Study of Comparative Religion* (Allen & Unwin, 1960). For Adam Kadmon, see G. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (Routledge, 1965).

The idea of a power underlying all magic, residing in the king, the priest and the shaman, and even in objects and places, is common to many religions; a power which may be dangerous or beneficial, according to the way in which it is directed

MANA

ORIGINALLY A POLYNESIAN concept of spiritual power, mana is invisible, imponderable and yet powerful. Mana derives from the divine ancestors and enters to some degree into all beings and things descended from them. The nearer the descendant is to the source, the more powerful the content of mana: a Polynesian chief who was chosen because of his close kinship with the gods was the vessel of a greater degree of mana than a commoner.

Such beliefs are widespread in human communities, and so the use of the word has been extended to cover similar concepts in many cultures often far removed from Polynesia. It is the mysterious power by which English kings cured scrofula, the King's Evil, by touching the victim. It is the force which fills objects used by famous shamans, so that no one else dare use them. R. H. Codrington, who defined the term as he found it in use among the Melanesians, tells us that mana was the power underlying all magic, and the means by which men were able to cause and cure sickness, control the forces of matter, and to bless and curse others.

In some ways the concept of mana reminds us of the now defunct theory that all motion in space, including that of light, was transmitted through a medium known as the circumambient ether. Mana is thought of as being the means by which telepathy works across space. The reason is that people need to think of a medium of some kind through which the idea, or the power, is projected.

Mana was lost through contact with lesser containers. It flowed from the more powerful to the less powerful and sometimes caused destruction. This applied not only to material objects but to human beings as well. The fear that harm might come from contact between humans was very important socially. It conditioned the relation between the sexes at times of crisis, since women were universally regarded as the powers of earth and fertility, and therefore absorbed mana. At times of war, and during hunting festivals, women were kept separate from men. A warrior who had intercourse before setting out on an expedition might bring had luck to the whole venture. This superstition was found in many parts of the world, and was based on the belief that with the emission of a man's semen he was losing mana to the powers of earth. He would either have to go through a series of rituals to regain power, or else leave the expedition. Among the ancient Chibcha of Colombia, a boy captured for sacrifice to the sun god when he reached puberty was set free if a girl took him as her mate. The power he contained had been taken by earth and moon forces and so would be of no avail to the sun.

Among the Maori of New Zealand there were times when a chief, as the head of a line descended from the gods, became so full of mana that no one dared touch him. In particular his head was a centre of force, and was never touched by others of lesser rank. The most critical period was when he was being decorated with his *moko* tattoo. Then he could not touch anything without a risk of setting off a rush of dangerous power, and had to be fed by noblemen with gruel poured into his mouth through a wooden spout. The tattoo artist was magically protected, but as he worked with mallet and tiny shell-pointed comb, he had to make sure that he never actually handled the flesh of his subject. All women were kept away from the house where the great magic was pulsating. At this stage anyone accidentally touching the chief or his more important belongings would drop dead, probably from sheer horror at the consequences.

Mana was the power which guarded the objects placed under a tapu (taboo) restriction. If the rules were broken the power would flow into the offender and destroy him. It would take elaborate ceremonies and heavy payments to bring about a cure, if it were possible at all. The power of mana was quite impersonal. It was not the vengeful action of a ghostly ancestor, but an inherent sanction: if the rules were broken the penalty would follow. Yet it was possible for a properly skilled *tohunga* or priest to lay a taboo on anything he wished, and thereby activate the power of mana.

Contagious Sanctity

A Maori chief would not blow a fire with his mouth; for his sacred breath would communicate its sanctity to the fire, which would pass it on to the pot on the fire, which would pass it on to the meat in the pot, which would pass it on to the man who ate the meat, which was in the pot, which stood on the fire, which was breathed on by the chief; so that the eater, infected by the chief's breath conveyed through these intermediaries, would surely die.

J. G. Frazer *The Golden Bough*

Power in Holy Places

A development of the idea of the protective power of mana was the common religious belief that some places were so inherently holy that only a few specialist individuals might approach them. An example was the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Jerusalem, where once a year the High Priest alone might enter and stand humbly before the Ark.

There are still places where mysterious power can be felt. Mostly they are anciently sacred places, chosen perhaps because of some natural force which could be sensed by visitors. They play their part in ceremonial activity, especially among modern witch covens, because of the possibility of concentrating and directing whatever energy has remained within them. Scientifically this is not a reasonable activity, but the traditions behind such holy places are so ancient that they compel respect, even if it is only some kind of telepathic contact which is made with the ceremonies of old.

It is impossible to give a satisfactory definition of mana, because the concept is diffuse. However, the Polynesians used the word to describe something which was perfectly understandable to them. It did not need any exact scientific definition because from their point of view its existence was an undisputed fact.

(See also MAORI; POLYNESIA.)

The psychologist C. G. Jung recognized in the mandala, the mystic circle used in Eastern magic and meditative practice, an archetypal image from the deeps of the mind expressing the soul itself

MANDALA

THE WORD MANDALA is Sanskrit, meaning 'circle'; it is used in Hindu and Buddhist ritualism to denote a mystical diagram, usually circular in outline, although it may occasionally be drawn in some other symmetrical figure, such as a polygon, square or geometrical pattern with the outer border 'concentred' about a fixed point. In all cases the circumscribing circle is there, even if invisibly, enclosing the pattern.

A mandala is generally represented physically, and may be engraved on metal, inscribed on ground specially cleared to receive the tracing, or marked on the floor of a room. It may be painted on cloth, or made by sprinkling coloured sand or pigment on a board. It may be used over and over again, or erased, washed off or burned after its temporary use.

But the mandala does not have to be drawn in actual fact. It may be memorized and traced mentally either on the ground, or better still in the air, and held in the mind's eye by meditative methods. It may even be danced, as the Bon priests of Tibet do in certain secret rites, hopping about this way and that as they demarcate the outlines and add the inner traceries of the pattern required in their particular rite.

The design of a mandala, whether simple or intricate, varies as its object and purpose vary. In certain magical rites the mandala

The mandala or circle is one of the most widespread of all symbols, found in religious art in all parts of the world. In the East its consecrated space may be regarded as charged with the presence of deities who have been housed within it *Above* The central figure of this Hindu mandala is Vishnu, seated upon the coils of the snake Shesha and surrounded by protective deities *Right* Nepalese mandala of the 16th century: the central figure is Vasudhara, the earth goddess of Buddhist mythology

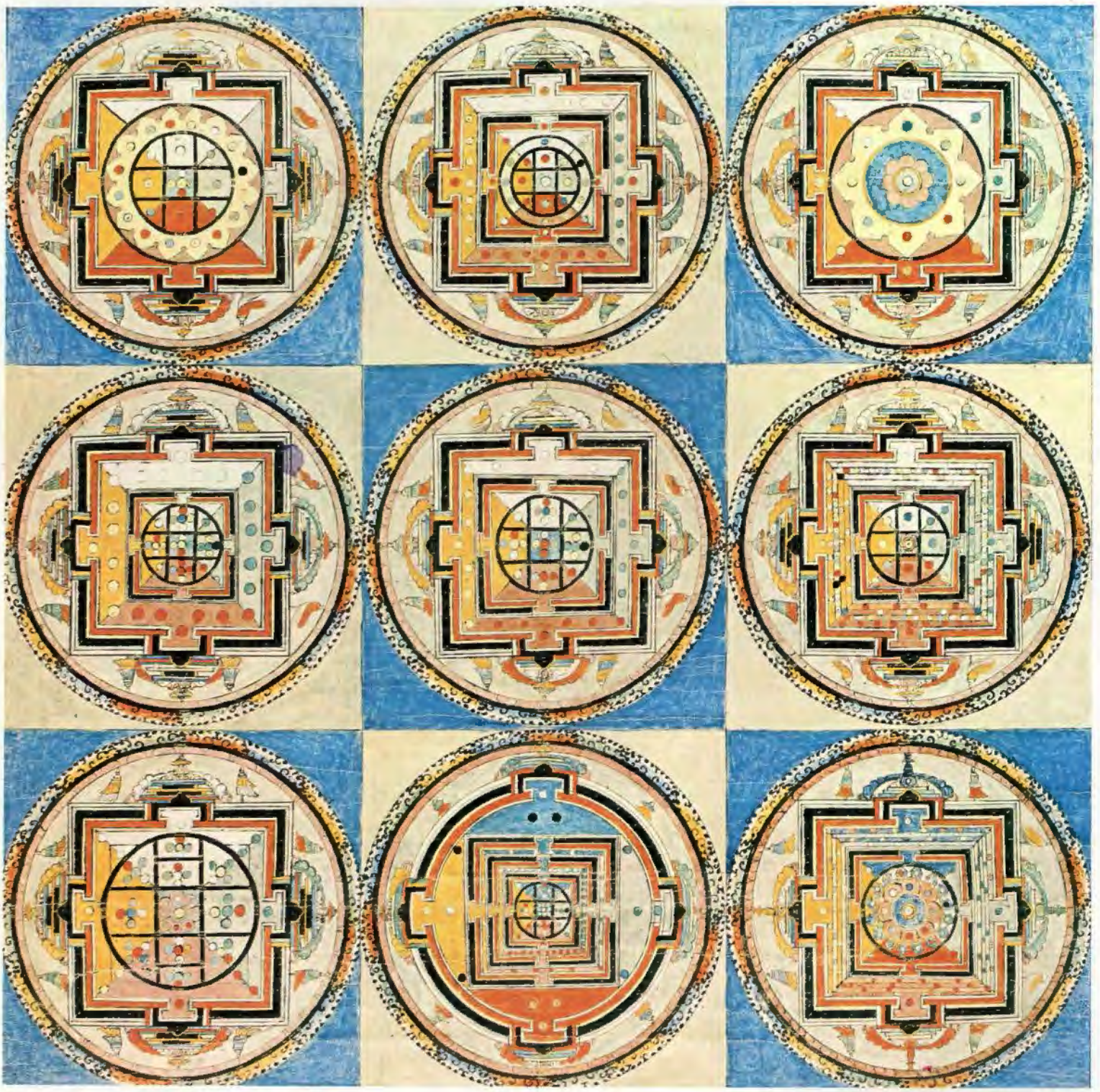
serves to circumscribe the territory in which the adept operates. The magician of the Western tradition draws such a protective magic circle before he invokes spirits or demons to appear before him. As long as he is within the circle they can do him no harm, and with this safeguard he commands them to do his will.

Engine of Power

In Eastern magical practice the mandala is employed to draw down and house the deities or, in the case of black magical rites, the demons. By means of spells, offerings and invocations the practitioner calls down spiritual beings to occupy a place assigned to them in the diagram and charge it with their presence. It now becomes a *yantra*, an 'engine' of power; every yantra differs according to the power of the occupying entities and the uses made of them.

In some cases the divisions of a mandala are given numerological significance and a mathematical pattern is worked out on this basis. In Tantric meditation (see TANTRISM) the yantra takes on a sexual character and is believed to represent the female organs of generation. Some yantras are thought to have talismanic properties and almost a life of their own, radiating a power that projects the qualities traditionally associated with them and for which they have been constructed. These qualities may be beneficent, healing, tranquillity-bestowing or on the other hand malicious, evil and destructive. Students of the subject say that drawing a mandala correctly and giving it vitality, so as to connect it with the unseen world, is a matter not to be undertaken lightly in a spirit of curiosity or dilettantism.

The mandala or circle is one of the most widespread of all symbols and is rich in meaning. We find it in a hundred familiar variations, but also in the more profound manifestations of religion and art. It represents the Infinite. The 17th century French theologian Blaise Pascal said that God is a circle of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. But



Series of 19th century Tibetan mandalas from a temple wall: their elaborate designs, charged with occult significance, were used as aids to Tantric meditation

the circle also symbolizes the finite. It is both the boundless and the bounded; the divine and the human. Its symbolism overflows in many directions. Rayed, it is an emblem of the sun; spoked, it represents the wheel (see WHEEL). Divided by an S-shaped diameter it is the well-known Yang-Yin symbol of Chinese mysticism (see I CHING).

The circle pattern is found in the ground plans of great architectural creations ancient and modern, and appears in the traceries of magical designs in all parts of the world. It can be seen in the sand paintings of the Navaho Indians of New Mexico, in the stupas (dome-shaped temples) of India, in the calendar stone of the Aztecs, in the Paleolithic rock engravings of Rhodesia. It figures in the symbolical designs of the Voodoo cult, in ancient Chinese bronze shields and in the visions described by the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel.

An Expression of the Psyche

Sometimes the mandala is regarded as a map of hidden dimensions, and is then drawn in the form of a maze. Or it may serve as a means of activating a mental reflex and reproducing in the conscious mind the symbolism of our hidden selves. It has fascinated psychologists as an expression of the deeps of the mind, and C. G. Jung found in the mandala one of the great primordial images of mankind.

Often terrifying aspects are revealed in the figure. As a clock face it has a certain panic element in it, of man caught in the toils of time and space and unable to free himself from its limitations. Tibetan and Tantric forms of meditation on the mandala can evoke gruesome images, of skulls brimful of blood, decaying human entrails, human bones that do a *danse macabre* of their own. All such are regarded as phantom shapes emanating from our own minds and partial reflections of our inner natures. For in considering the mandala we are analysing the self.

(See also CIRCLE.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

FURTHER READING: C. G. Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Routledge, 1959); G. Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* (Rider, 1961).

Uprooting a mandrake was, according to popular belief, a dangerous business, for as the plant was pulled out of the earth it gave a shriek so fearful that anyone hearing it would die. The roots of this strangely humon plant became lucky mannikins, which were regularly washed, dressed and asked for advice

MANDRAKE

British Museum

Most of the superstitions about the mandrake had their origin in the supposed resemblance of the forked roots to the human body. If dug up, the plant was believed to utter a shriek fatal to the hearer; it was therefore recommended that it should be pulled up by a dog

FEW PLANTS have been credited with more fictitious attributes than the mandrake. It is difficult to suggest why this plant should have become so notorious: although it is an unusual one it is no odder than many others, and the forking or multiple root which is responsible for most of its associations with magic is to be found in such homely vegetables as the parsnip. Quite early in the British herbal record, writers may be found explaining how nonsensical the beliefs about the mandrake must be. For instance, in John Gerard's *Herball* of 1597 we find this denial of the plant's supposed attributes; it is perhaps worth quoting his description of the plant as well as his comments.

> The male Mandrake hath great broad long smooth leaves of a dark green colour, flat spread upon the ground: among which come up the flowers of a pale whitish colour, standing every one upon a single small and weak foot-stalk of a whitish green colour: in their places grow round Apples of a yellowish colour, smooth, soft and glittering, of a strong smell: in which are contained flat and smooth seeds in fashion of a little kidney, like those of the Thorn-apple. The root is long, thick, whitish, divided many times into two or three parts resembling the legs of a man, as it hath been reported; whereas in truth it is no otherwise than in the roots of carrots, parsnips, and such like, forked or divided into two or more parts, which Nature taketh no account of. There hath been many ridiculous tales brought up of this plant, whether of old wives, or some runagate Surgeons or Physic-mongers I know not, (a title bad enough for them) but sure some one or more that sought to make themselves famous and skilful above others, were the first broachers of that error I speak of.

Botanically the mandrake is *Mandragora officinarum*, and it belongs to the Solanaceae in company with henbane, belladonna, thorn-apple and tobacco. Its flowers are brighter than Gerard suggests, varying from pale to rich mauve-blue, sometimes in scores, sometimes only a handful. There are autumn and spring flowering forms, and the blooms are followed by odorous orange fruits looking like a nestful of eggs.

Like so many of its relations, mandrake is narcotic, the root containing an alkaloid similar to atropine. In ancient times it was used as a pain-killer and sleep-inducer; Pliny reports patients under operation chewing a piece of the root to anaesthetize themselves. A medieval English writer described its use in medicine: 'When the sick man is in anguish, this potion boiled from the mandrake his root will still the pain – nor will he suffer aught should the Leech probe his wounds, or e'en saw through his leg or arm, syn his nerves are dead while this potion lasteth.' According to William Turner, the 16th century herbalist, even the 'apples of mandrake, if a man smell of them they will make him sleep and also if they be eaten. But they that smell too much of the apples become dumb . . .'

Mandrake was administered to lunatics to quell their violence; other uses were to relieve convulsions, dull rheumatic aches and toothache, and against melancholia. It was known that large doses provoked delirium and eventual madness.

Other medico-magical powers are attributed to mandrake in early herbals; in company with periwinkle, it was useful 'for witlessness, that is devil sickness or maniacal possession', according to Apuleius Barberus, writing in about 1481. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish chronicler (1st century AD) had averred that mandrake's prime virtue was the expulsion of demons from sick people, because they could not abide its smell.

Plant in Human Form

The main mythology of mandrake concerned its forking roots, which were supposed to resemble the human body in form. The Greeks and Romans had noticed this, calling the plant *Anthropomorphon* and *Semi-homo* respectively. In the old herbals the plant is typically pictured with leaves, flowers and fruits emerging from the head of a bearded man or a long-haired woman; for there were supposed to be both male and female forms, depending on the plant's colouring and girth, sometimes called mandrake and woman-drake. Even the later, more accurate botanical drawings, such as those of Pierandrea Mattioli, drew attention to the two forms, and although not literally depicting a human body, made the roots of the plant resemble the trunk and legs of a man or woman.

This resemblance to the human body

naturally had sexual connotations. The earliest reflection of the belief in the value of mandrake as an aphrodisiac and an aid to conception is in the biblical passage (Genesis, chapter 30) where 'in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Give me, I pray, some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and said "You must come in to me; for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. And God hearkened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.'

The Arabs refer to mandrake's supposed aphrodisiac properties by calling it 'apples of jan' or 'devil's apples' because of its supposed power to excite voluptuousness, and they also believe it to help the infertile. In England, it was known as 'love-apple', a name later transferred to the tomato.

It is clear that by Shakespeare's day mandrake's aphrodisiac attributes had brought the plant into some disrepute. Falstaff refers to Justice Shallow in *Henry IV* Part 2 as 'lecherous as a monkey, and the whores call'd him mandrake'.

Even in Pliny's time, when the root's valuable properties were already known, the collecting of mandrake was accompanied by special ceremony. The herbalist had to stand with his back to the wind, draw three concentric circles around the plant with his sword, pour a libation and then, turning to the west, dig it up with his sword. The plant would otherwise flee away.

Wellcome Institute

Deadly Shrieks

At some stage the mandrake became one of the Devil's plants, and to dig it up with the correct invocation meant having Satan at one's bidding. It was Josephus, apparently describing contemporary Jewish belief, who started the most notable superstition about mandrake (which incidentally it shares with the peony), which was that the root shrieked if dug up. This cry was fatal to its hearer, and the only satisfactory way of extracting the root was, after loosening the soil, to tie a cord around it, attach this to a dog, retire out of earshot and incite the dog to pull, so that the luckless animal would perish. In Bartholomew's herbal it is added that the digger should beware of contrary winds. Many accounts suggested that mandrake grew only under the gallows, where it sprang from the decaying flesh or even the dripping semen of hanged murderers.

Gerard, like Dr Turner, pours scorn upon all these tales, especially that of shrieking: 'All which dreams and old wives' tales you shall from henceforth cast out of your books and memory; knowing this, that they are all and every one of them false and most untrue; for I myself and my servants also have digged up, planted, and replanted very many . . .'

Mandrake was always a favourite ingredient of witches' potions, being specially valuable in clairvoyance and image-magic. The latter involved, to quote Coles in his *Art of Simpling*, making from a mandrake's root 'an ugly image, by which they represent the person on whom they intend to exercise their witchcraft'. A common procedure was to shoot missiles at the image, which was supposed to result in corresponding damage to the subject's anatomy.

Elf, Mannikin or Monster

In Germany the word *alruna* referred, in the time of the Goths, to both witch and mandrake, and it was the Germans who probably started the practice of making amulets or mannikins of the roots with millet grains as eyes, called alrunes and also puppets or mammets. These were carefully tended, being regularly bathed, dressed and undressed, and were consulted as oracles. Sometimes they were kept in a coffin or a secret cupboard. French peasants believed these amulet figures to be the home of an elf, called *main-de-gloire* or *magloire*. In other countries the spirit had a more

The mandrake was depicted in both male and female forms, with the long, broad leaves emerging from the head *Left* A kneeling figure holds his hands to his ears, as a female mandrake is pulled up by a dog tied to the feet: from a 15th century herbal *Right* Male and female mandrekes from a 16th century herbal: the horn is being sounded to attract the dog

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monstrous form, such as half chick and half man. If the elf or monster was fed and respected, it gave advice, multiplied riches and so on, but if it were neglected its owner would surely die.

In Italy a mannikin might be worth 30 golden ducats. Mandrake amulets were certainly imported into Britain in large numbers in the reign of Henry VIII. It was probably then that the practice began, only discontinued perhaps a century ago, of cutting fake mandrakes from the massive roots of white bryony, an English plant (see HERBS). Dr Turner mentions the practice: 'they are so trimmed of crafty thieves to mock the poor people withal and to rob them both of their wit and their money.' Lord Bacon also had something to say: 'Some plants there are . . . that have a mossy or downy root, and likewise that have a number of threads, like beards; as the Mandrakes, whereof witches and impostors do make ugly images, giving it the form of a face at the top of the root, and leave those strings to make a broad beard down to the foot.'

In some quarters to possess mandrake brought suspicion of witchcraft, and in 1630 three women of Hamburg were put to death for this reason. In 1603 the wife of a Moor was hanged at Orleans for having kept and fed a 'mandrake-fiend', said to be in the form of a female monkey.

Mandrake was one of the plants reputed to be able to open locks. Another myth about it, recorded by Josephus, is that the plant's leaves shine in the dark and, if one then tries to pick them, they fly away. To this day Arabs call the plant 'devil's candles', and Thomas Moore, in *Lalla Rookh*, wrote:

> Such rank and deadly lustre dwells
> As in the hellish fires that light
> The Mandrake's charnel leaves at night.

In the language of flowers, mandrake not surprisingly represents horror – but where would a nice Victorian maiden get one? (See also LOVE MAGIC.)

A. J. HUXLEY

Egyptian faience model of mandrake fruits in a basket: they were known as love-apples because of the plant's supposed aphrodisiac qualities, a belief reflected in Genesis

Michael Holford/British Museum

Manes

In Roman religion, the spirits of the dead; the name may be euphemistically derived from the Latin for 'good'; it came to be used for the spirit of an individual dead person but had earlier meant the dead as a collective group of divine beings, *Di Manes*; the dead had a festival in February, when they returned from the underworld to haunt the world of the living.

The Manicheans thought of themselves as 'living in the darkness of unconsciousness and matter, until the saving message of the doctrine appealed to them, revealed to them their real identity and so enabled them to return to the realm of light'

MANICHEANS

MANICHEISM was a gnostic, dualistic religion, founded by a Babylonian prince of Persian origin named Mani, who was born in 216 AD. According to the *Fihrist* of the Arabic author An Nadim, when Mani was 12 years old God sent an angel called at-Taum (twin) to him, ordering him to leave the ascetic sect to which his father belonged. When Mani was 24, this same angel appeared to him and told him that now the time had come to appear in public and proclaim his own doctrine. From Manichean sources, partly written by Mani himself, we hear more about this twin or familiar. He is said to accompany Mani and protect him. Even at the hour of death, Mani was gazing at this familiar, the one who waited for him always and opened before him the gate unto the height.

So Manicheism is based upon a special revelation, a personal experience of the founder. The 'higher Self' of Mani revealed himself to him, inspired him with the doctrine he had to proclaim to the world, protected him during his missionary journeys and awaited him at his death to bring him to the eternal realm of Light. Sometimes this Self is described in Christian terms: then it is designated Christ or the Holy Spirit. This is the case in Western sources, especially in the Coptic Psalms discovered at Medinet-Madi in Egypt, in 1931. The problem is whether we should interpret the experience of Mani in a Christian or in an Iranian perspective (as is supposed by G. Widengren and L. J. R. Ort).

The concept that man has a spiritual double or twin appears in the Greek author Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* (2nd century AD); according to him the 'shadow' *(eidolon)* of Heracles was his exact image and counterpart, his twin. In other sources it is stated that the 'daimon' or attendant spirit of a man is his image. This influenced the Jewish religion of the time, according to which the guardian angel was the *iqonin*, the image of the man to whom he belonged. (See also DOUBLE; GUARDIAN SPIRITS.)

Through Judaism the concept was integrated into Christianity, where we find it at a very early date, allegedly already in the community of Jerusalem (Acts 12.15). From there it seems to have spread in many directions, especially to the Syriac Christianity of Edessa in Mesopotamia. In the *Gospel of Thomas*, written there about 140 AD, the guardian angel is called ikon, image, the eternal counterpart of man. In the *Song of the Pearl*, contained in the *Acts of Thomas*, also originating from Edessa (c 225 AD), the encounter with the Self is described as the encounter with the eternal Garment, which is the mirror of its owner: 'for we were two in distinction, and yet again one in one likeness.' In the same *Acts of Thomas* the apostle Thomas is called the twin of Christ.

Mani seems to have known Christianity mainly in its Syriac form. He knew the *Gospel of Thomas* and he may very well have known the *Acts of Thomas*. From Syriac Christianity, which was strongly encratitic (prohibiting marriage, wine and meat) he may have taken his severe asceticism, according to which the fall of Adam was his intercourse with Eve, and marriage as such is sinful. So Mani's religious experience, the revelation of the twin, which is the Holy Spirit, can be understood in a Christian perspective.

Christianity in Edessa, however, was not exclusively encratitic. Before the sect of Encratites, Jewish Christianity had come to the city, possibly from Jerusalem (see EBIONITES). These Jewish Christians called themselves Nazorees or Nazarenes, as the Syrian Christians did later on. The Manichean *Kephalaia* preserves a debate of Mani with a Nazoree about the problem of whether God, as judge, is not necessarily bound to use evil when he punishes. The implication seems to be that, according to this Nazoree, God was the origin of both good and evil.

Mani's abhorrence of the doctrine that God creates evil was one of the sources, and possibly the main source, of his absolute dualism. According to Mani, evil was Satan or Matter, not a god, as in Persian religion (see AHRIMAN). This did not prevent Mani from taking over certain views of the Jewish Christians. During his trial, which ended with his death, he proclaimed solemnly that he had received his doctrine from God through the intermediary of an angel. So according to him, his twin and familiar, the Paraclete ('Counsellor') or Holy Spirit, was an angel. This of course is in disagreement with orthodox Christianity, but can be found in the very archaic *Ascension of Isaiah*. Similarly, in the *Manual of Discipline*, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Angel of Light (possibly Michael) is called Holy Spirit and Spirit of Truth. On the other hand, Mani called Christ 'the right hand': this he must have taken from Jewish Christians, who used the same terminology. Of course, Mani took the designation Paraclete from St John's gospel (14.16) but the fact that he considers this Paraclete to be an angel seems to hint at familiarity with Jewish Christians in Mesopotamia.

Mani in India

Mani considered Buddha, Zoroaster and Jesus as his predecessors. He visited north-western India and during his missionary trips in the Persian Empire, favoured by King Shapur I, he must have become thoroughly familiar with the Iranian religion. If he died in prison (possibly in 274 AD) owing to the hostility of the official magians (fire-priests) who influenced King Bahram I, this does not mean that he did not integrate Iranian religious concepts into his system.

It is not quite clear which elements in Mani's religion are Iranian or Buddhist, mainly because it is not clear what these religions taught at that period. Later Buddhism of north-western India, mother of Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, had very little in common with original Buddhism and may have been influenced by western Gnosticism. But Mani was probably inspired by Buddhism to respect the suffering life of the particles of light mixed up with matter (see below), and perhaps drew the idea of reincarnation from this source. From Iranian religion he may have taken his absolute dualism, the opposition of light and darkness; this he combined with the gnostic dualism of spirit and matter, and equated with the opposition of God and Satan.

Yet all these influences do not explain the unmistakably gnostic character of Manicheism. It has been established that Mani was familiar with the views of the Mandeans, a baptist sect still existing in Iraq, most probably originating from Palestine and possibly already then living in southern Babylonia. It seems plausible that the sect of the Mughtasila (Baptists), to which Mani's father belonged, was a sort of Mandean or Proto-Mandean sect.

The difficulty is that the Mughtasila are said to have been strongly encratitic, whereas the Mandeans are not, and never seem to have been. Moreover it is not certain that the Mandeans, now a gnostic sect, were already then gnostic to the same extent as they are now. And Manicheism has certain gnostic elements which seem to be absent from Mandeism. The god of this world, the demiurge, is called in Manichean sources Saklon or Saklas. This goes back to Saklas (Aramaic for 'fool'), which is the name for the Jewish god and creator of the world in the gnostic Apocryphon of John (early 2nd century), but has no parallel in Mandean sources.

Man the Work of Darkness

This Saklas, the ruler of darkness, together with his subjects, creates Adam after the image of the primal man, created by God. In the same way, in the Apocryphon of John, Saklas and his powers fashion Adam after the idea of God, his image, also called first man, who revealed his reflected image in the water of chaos. It is even said, in Manichean sources and in the Apocryphon of John, that Saklas made Adam after the image of God and after the image of himself and his fellows, so that man is a microcosm of everything: 'Come! Let us make a man according to the image of God and according to our likeness.' This, of course, ultimately goes back to the *Timaeus* of Plato, where God contributes only the divine part of man, the soul, and leaves it to lower gods to fashion the mortal part of man. But the concept must have reached Mani through gnostic channels. (See also FIRST MAN.)

There must be some relationship between Mani and the various gnostic schools and currents of the 2nd century, quite apart from Mandeism. But at the moment we cannot be more specific, because the history of these sects in eastern Syria and Mesopotamia is almost completely obscure. This problem may come nearer to a solution when all the gnostic manuscripts found at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt have been published.

There is no doubt that Manicheism is a gnostic religion. It has a gnostic conception of man (as a divine spark), of the world (as

British Museum

Left **Though the Manicheans regarded all sexual relations as inherently sinful, women were not discriminated against but were eligible to join the highest ranks of the movement. Mani appears on the left of this 18th century Persian miniature** ***Right*** **Another miniature illustrates an incident in the life of Mani, a Babylonian prince of Persian origin and the founder of Manicheism. The glass cover over a water-tank was continually being broken by the women who came to draw water, so Mani drew attention to the glass by painting a picture of a dead dog on it**

a product of failure) and of God (as the suffering God), which is expressed in a systematic and consistent myth. Because this myth is so extremely complicated, even in the abridged form which we offer here, it is perhaps right to remember that according to Franz Cumont and Henri-Charles Puech the myth reflects and expresses the 'Self-experience' of Mani himself.

The Suffering God

From the very beginning, so the myth says, before heaven and earth and everything contained therein came into being, there were two principles, a good one and an evil one, the realm of light and the realm of darkness. In the realm of light dwells God, 'the father of greatness'. In Eastern sources he is called the 'four-faced God', because with his light, his power and his wisdom he forms a sort of quaternity.

In the realm of the dark dwells the king of the dark. He arose from his domain to invade the realm of light. Then God decided to go out and fight the battle against the invading forces. Thereupon 'the father of greatness evoked the mother of life and the mother of life evoked the primal man.' When God sends out the primal man, he is really going himself. The primal man and all the other light-figures of Manicheism are qualifications and manifestations of God himself. When the lost part of primal man, called Jesus patibilis (suffering Jesus), is said to hang on every tree, we should understand that it is God himself who is crucified in the world of darkness.

We have here a conception of God akin to, but not identical with, that of Christian theology. It is essentially gnostic. In the recently discovered *Gospel of Philip* it is said that the heavenly Christ saved his own soul, which he had lost since the beginning of the world. The idea of this Valentinian author is that the fall of divine wisdom (Sophia), through which this world came into being, is essentially a split within the godhead itself. The divine element is dispersed in matter and God, when saving man, is saving himself. This astonishing conception of the suffering God is not to be found in India, Iran or Israel. It seems to have its prototype in the Greek myth of Zagreus-Dionysus, who was torn in pieces by the Titans (see DIONYSUS; ORPHEUS).

It is this gnostic and ultimately hellenistic concept of God suffering in the world and in man which the Manichean myth tries to expound, in the following way. The primal man, in his glorious armour of the 'five bright elements', went forth to repel the forces of darkness. But this fight ended in defeat and the primal man was left in the darkness in a state of unconsciousness. On the other hand, it was a sort of divine sacrifice, for in this way the primal man could also serve as bait to catch the forces of darkness, so as to assuage them and to prevent their attack upon the realm of light. When the primal man recovered from his swoon, he entreated the father of greatness to come to his support. From above he received 'the call', conceived as a spiritual being. To this he gave 'the answer', also a spiritual being. Thereupon the primal man returned to the realm of light, but had to leave his armour behind.

The adventures of the primal man are described in great detail in the Coptic Manichean Psalms, which show us how this myth reflected the situation of every Manichean. They too were living in the darkness of unconsciousness and matter, until the saving message of the doctrine appealed to them, revealed to them their real identity and so enabled them to return to the realm of light. A similar conception of salvation, and a similar myth, is found in 2nd century Gnosticism, especially in the documents from the school of Valentinus.

Here, the perfect man is Jesus. He leaves his 'members' behind in the world, to be formed by their life in history and to discover their own identity. The end of the world-process is achieved when all spiritual elements have returned to their origin above. In the same way, the Manichean primal man

British Museum

British Museum

Mani expounding his theories: he considered Buddha, Zoroaster and Jesus as his predecessors, calling himself 'the apostle of Jesus Christ' and 'seal of the prophets'; gnostic influence is also evident in his teachings

returns to the realm of light, but leaves behind his armour, also called his members or his soul.

This shows that scholars (including G. Widengren and R. Bultmann) who interpreted Manicheism as a myth of 'the saved saviour' were right. They were wrong when they supposed that Mani took this idea directly from Iranian religion. Before him the Valentinian Gnostic had a similar conception, which seems inspired by St Paul's view that the Church is the body of Christ, and by a Jewish myth that Adam regained Paradise.

Seal of the Prophets

The elements of light which had been absorbed by darkness had still to be delivered. To this end, the world was created as a mixture of spirit and matter. The myth here becomes very obscure and obscene. By a strange mixture of generation and cannibalism Adam and Eve were brought forth by Saklon (the Jewish god). 'Jesus Splendour' aroused Adam from his sleep, so that Adam became conscious of himself.

This process was continued during the whole history of mankind. Ever and again, messengers were sent to remind men of the divine spark in them. Such apostles were Sethel (Seth, the son of Adam), Enosh, Enoch, Shem, the son of Noah; Buddha in the East, Zoroaster in Persia, Jesus in the West. But their doctrines were not complete and soon after their death were corrupted by their pupils.

Mani admitted that Jesus revealed himself in Palestine at the beginning of our era to reveal the gnosis to man, though the body of Jesus was not held to be material. He admired St Paul but he held the Church to have disappeared completely ('a tree without fruits') in his own lifetime. Therefore the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth promised by Jesus, had been sent to Mani, who was called to reveal the definite and consummate gnosis. For that reason Mani styled himself 'the apostle of Jesus Christ' and 'the seal of the prophets'. He must have thought that he lived in the last generation of mankind, before the final separation of light and darkness. Then the 'earth of light', the abode of God and all the saved, would be healed of the wound inflicted upon it by the attack of darkness. The earth would be destroyed by fire, the powers of evil would be confined within their original domain, and unrepentant sinners would be compacted together in a great round clod, the *globus*. At last the realm of light would enjoy an eternal peace, no longer endangered by any attack of darkness. Dualism in the end will be permanent.

In order to realize the duality of man and his higher Self, Mani had to postulate a highly dualistic philosophy. And this is understandable, because the unity of the innermost man with his heavenly Self, according to Mani, is only possible when man is ready to reject everything material.

Manicheism spread in the West, where the young St Augustine was attracted to the sect, until it was completely suppressed by the combined forces of Church and State in c 600 AD. In the East, especially outside the Roman Empire, it flourished in spite of persecutions and remained for a thousand years one of the main religions of Asia. The medieval sects of the Bogomils and Cathars had much in common with Manicheism (see BOGOMILS; CATHARS). The Cathars owed much to the Bogomils of Bulgaria, who in turn originated from the Armenian Paulicians and perhaps the Syrian Messalians. Neither Paulicians nor Messalians were Manichees and we have no evidence that Manichees were active in the Byzantine Empire at the time the Bogomils entered history. But the 'medieval Manichees' were so similar to the 'classic Manichees', that perhaps in the future some missing link will be discovered.

(See also DUALISM; GNOSTICISM.)

(Since this article was written a Greek papyrus has been discovered, which tells us explicitly that to the age of 25 Mani was a member of the Jewish Christian sect of the Elchesaites in the south of Babylonia.)

G. QUISPEL

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MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 7

Mani - Nirv

Cinema Center Films

An Indian invokes the manitous: scene from the film *A Man Called Horse*

MANITOU

MANITOU was the term used by North American Indians of the Algonquin group for spirit beings and for the supernatural and magical power contained in all the phenomena of Nature, 'the secret life of every created thing'. It was the business of shamans, or medicine-men, to make contact with the world of the manitous, and the Midewiwin, the secret society of shamans, was believed to have been founded by manitous (see ALGONQUIN INDIANS).

All sorts of beings, objects or forces could be classed as manitou. Among the Fox tribe, for instance, the term has been applied to spirits and heroes, snakes and plants, cars and trains, to the turtle dove because its calls resemble the voices of manitous, and to the dog, which is ceremonially eaten in order to get in touch with manitous. A manitou might also be the guardian spirit of a person, taking the form of an animal and revealing itself in a dream.

Perhaps as a result of Christian influence, there was also a belief in a Great Manitou or supreme spirit. He generally had little contact with men and, though always present in the background, was of less immediate concern than the lesser spirits who were involved in everyday life. The Delaware said that the Great Manitou founded the ritual of smoking the pipe of peace.

A conspiracy of the rich was the root of all evil and prevented humanity from living in material and spiritual abundance. This was the ideology of Mankind United, a Californian sect that flourished in the 1930s especially among those disenchanted with established religion

MANKIND UNITED

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS movement called Mankind United was the creation of Arthur L. Bell, an American businessman. Although little is known of his earlier career, Bell claimed to have been born in New Hampshire in 1900, to have grown up in poverty and to have completed only four years of school. Emigrating to California in his teens, he sold real estate and insurance during the booming '20s and became a Christian Science practitioner and a devotee of various theological and Utopian writings. He was badly hit by the economic crash of 1929, and subsequently divorced his first wife and married, at the age of 34, a fellow Christian Scientist – a wealthy woman in her early 60s.

Evil of Mad Ambition

Financially supported by his wife, Bell conceived the movement and at his own expense published its text, *Mankind United*, (1934). In its 313 repetitious pages, Bell sought to answer the ancient questions of why the world is dominated by war, poverty, greed and hate, when so many long for it to be otherwise; and how it might be changed so that everyone could live in economic abundance and happiness under the Golden Rule of Christ: 'Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them' (Matthew 7. 12).

According to the text, on Christmas Day 1875, a small group of wealthy and humane persons had assembled to ask themselves these same questions. In their opinion, poverty, war and other evils were totally unnecessary since technology was capable of producing more than enough for all. These evils continued only because 'a worldwide organization composed of a small group of families in possession of fabulous wealth' was stifling the economic and moral well-being of mankind in order to bring it to total enslavement. In their mad ambition to control all wealth and power, these 'World's Hidden Rulers' or 'Money Changers' were the root of all evil.

Wanting to save mankind, this group pledged their fortunes and lives to overcoming the Money Changers and to instituting a world economy of equality and abundance. They called their organization The International Institute of Universal Research and Administration. Bell referred to them, more simply, as 'the Sponsors'.

In the following years, the Sponsors gradually expanded their numbers, spied upon the Money Changers and engaged in the development of fantastically advanced techniques of economic production. Since the World's Hidden Rulers would destroy the Sponsors if they knew of them, the latter had to work in secrecy.

By 1919, the Sponsors' research department had assembled exhaustive proof of the Money Changers' existence and nefarious aims, and had worked out a plan for a world-wide economy in which, working only four hours a day, four days a week, eight months a year, everyone could live in astonishing prosperity. Since then they had been waiting for the most propitious moment to make their discoveries and plans known, and to prepare for this 'unveiling' the Sponsors had formed a group called the International Legion of Vigilantes. Bell claimed that he was recruited to this organization when it was set up in 1919 and that by 1934 he had been working as a secret agent for 15 years.

30 Days of Proof

Recognizing that their claims might seem incredible to the public at large, the Sponsors planned a rapid 30-day programme 'during which time the Institute's well-guarded sixty years of discoveries and carefully prepared recommendations will be freely offered to the human race.' In two-hour programmes repeated day and night, 12 times each 24 hours, five days a week, irrefutable and exhaustive proof would be offered as to how the Money Changers worked and how Utopia was possible.

The book *Mankind United* was merely a 'bulletin' announcing the imminence of the 30 days of proof. It did not in itself offer

proof of anything, but was intended as an 'invitation' to those who saw it to take part in the 30 days, and at the end to vote on 100 recommendations. However, the Sponsors had determined that if the enormous power of the Money Changers was to be overcome, it would be necessary to have at least 200 million people listening and voting. Until that number had agreed to participate, the 30 days of proof could not begin. It was in order to register the requisite millions that a part of the Sponsors' secret organization had become public. Once the 200 million had voted for the Sponsors' programme, the Universal Service Corporation would be formed and would thereafter conduct all economic production and distribution. Membership in the corporation would increase rapidly and within a few years, the World's Hidden Rulers would be completely out of business.

Arthur L. Bell, the argument of the text continued, was selected by the Sponsors to be the first 'public' vigilante, and California was to be the first area in which registration was to occur. In his role as a mere functionary of a large and powerful secret organization, Bell disclaimed authorship of *Mankind United*, and the title page proclaimed that the book was 'published by the International Registration Bureau (Pacific Coast Division of North America)'.

Equipped with his wife's money, an ideology and an attractive physical presence Bell set out to build a movement. It was to have an active history of only 17 years (1934–51), but it provides an intriguing study in the ingenious responses of a leader to changing and adverse circumstances.

Promise of Utopia

From the middle to the late '30s California, deep in the depression, was overrun with salvationist schemes. Into this highly competitive but permissive market, Bell introduced Mankind United. Membership involved merely the purchase of the book, a promise to pass it on to friends, and a willingness to listen and vote during the forthcoming 30-day programme. In return for this minimal effort, members were promised a fantastic future gain. At the height of the movement's popularity, in 1938–39, frequent mass meetings were held throughout California and it is estimated that upwards of a quarter of a million West Coast citizens read the book, registered themselves, and attended at least a few meetings. Bell encouraged the formation of local clubs dedicated to promoting the book, and while this was not obligatory such clubs nonetheless flourished. As they grew in numbers, Bell organized them into an elaborate bureaucracy of dedicated workers. As many as 30,000 were actively engaged in the goal of registering 200 million 'educated and religious people' – precisely the people, Bell said, whom the Money Changers most urgently wanted to annihilate.

The bulk of the membership was drawn from the working and lower 'white-collar' classes, was primarily between the ages of 40 and 60 and had completed some secondary education. Females slightly outnumbered males. By and large, the members came from those worst hit by the depression – groups who were neither poor in 1929 nor sufficiently wealthy to weather the decade in reasonable comfort. More specifically, Bell sponsored his movement among those portions of such groups that were religiously inclined but disenchanted with established religion. His doctrines were as much economic as religious but his scheme to make 'do as you would be done by' a reality on earth was promoted among persons who were more religious than they were economically or politically sophisticated. For this reason Bell's economic claims encountered minimal resistance.

Levy of Half Their Income

When speculation about America's entry into the Second World War flourished in 1939, and again when war came to the United States in 1941, Bell condemned it as another of the Money Changers' plots to worsen mankind's situation. Communist, Fascist and capitalist leaders alike were merely puppets of the Money Changers, and the latter were pulling the strings to further their plan for world dictatorship. Already by 1939 the Federal Government had infiltrated the movement and Bell had begun to retrench by discontinuing sale of the book and by calling for the close screening of members of Mankind United.

As support for the policies of the American government increased, membership declined, and in response Bell instituted a series of measures designed to commit the remaining followers. A programme to train 'instructors' and 'election supervisors' to conduct affairs during the imminent 30-day programme was instituted. Initially this involved a payment of only $20 per member, but a variety of other monetary requests followed. These culminated in a requirement made in 1943 that members become part of the '50-50 fund' by giving 50% of their gross earnings to the movement. The successive demands were made in the context of extreme secrecy and urgency: the 30-day programme would begin at any moment, if only the latest monetary goal could be reached. But each time, Bell announced, the members failed and each time he sent them headlong toward a new financial goal which they had to achieve if the War was to be prevented (in 1940–41) or stopped (1942–43), and Utopia begun.

Urgent Mission

In pursuit of these elusive monetary goals and in scurrying about on a variety of additional and inexplicable 'missions' at Bell's bidding, the members lived with an inflated sense of self-importance and with a vivid sense of the urgency of their tasks. The extent of this 'urgency' was made clear in December 1942 when Bell and 16 leaders were arrested on charges of sedition. They were found guilty in May 1943 but, as a result of an appeal, the decision was reversed on procedural grounds four years later. None of them actually every served any time in prison.

The best defence being offence, in the face of declining membership and government prosecution, Bell adopted a bold but logical strategy to save and consolidate his movement. Late in 1943, he announced to the membership the 'literally unheard-of-opportunity' to become 'student ministers' in 'training schools' for those who would form the foundation of the forthcoming Universal Service Corporation. Incorporating a new organization, Christ's Church of the Golden Rule, Bell pressed his followers to give over all their wordly goods to the Church and to begin work in one of the large number of businesses he was in the process of acquiring.

Under two years later, by the summer of 1945, he had assembled more than 3½ million dollars worth of property in California, including a number of office buildings, hotels, ranches, laundries, garages and the like. Bell's following, however, was now down to about 850 persons, so that only part of these vast new holdings were run by members as Utopian 'Laboratories of Abundant living'. Bell gradually faded from public view. Members grew few and old, operating a few remaining businesses, among which was a laundry and a motel. By 1956, less than a hundred members remained faithful and the end of Mankind United was reached.

JOHN LOFLAND

MANNING, MATTHEW

THIS WELL KNOWN BRITISH PSYCHIC first became aware of having special powers at the age of eleven. He was at boarding school, and was the centre of such severe poltergeist (see POLTERGEISTS) disturbance that he caused quite heavy pieces of furniture to move about. On two occasions he narrowly missed being expelled.

At 16 years he found that he could write and draw automatically (see AUTOMATIC ART). He even wrote in languages he could not understand, such as Greek and Arabic. His automatic paintings were 'transmitted' to him in the style of Dürer, Goya, Picasso and Beardsley to name just a few, but at school he had never shown any aptitude for drawing and painting.

In 1974 he saw the famous Israeli Uri Geller (see URI GELLER) bending metal spoons on television. In common with other viewers, he tried the same feat himself, and succeeded. Manning has been very intensively tested by parapsychologists. In 1974 a group of 21 scientists examined him. When Dr George Owen measured his brainwaves on an E.E.G. machine, while Matthew was trying to bend a key, he saw that the machine registered a high level of theta activity. This is associated with deep sleep and extreme frustration and aggression.

The author Colin Wilson met Manning in 1976. He felt that in a similar way to Uri Geller, Manning derived his power from a kind of controlled poltergeist activity. The theta wave level would accord very well with that of an adolescent, around whom most poltergeist activity is centred. Wilson felt that as Matthew matured, he had instinctively learned how to channel and redirect the activity to more creative ends.

The essence of a spell or mantra lies in its sound; the vibrations that can penetrate into the inner layer of the mind and have power to 'create, sustain and destroy'

MANTRA

THE WORD 'SPELL' is perhaps the nearest approach to the meaning of the Sanskrit word *mantra*. It is a form of words or sounds which are believed to have a magical effect when uttered with intent. The term is related to an Iranian word which signifies a formula whose repetition dispels disease and brings blessings.

Essentially, the mantra is a sound. A sound is a vibration, and when we consider that the family of vibrations includes not only the things we hear but all material objects seen (which may be said to be patterns of vibrations), we can appreciate why the magician has always laid great emphasis on words of power. Sound is the foundation of all magic, and an armoury of mantras forms part of the equipment of the magician in all countries.

Mantras can create, sustain and destroy. The ancients believed that miracles could be performed by means of magical formulas, and they made extravagant claims for the powers of such formulas. The Latin writer Apuleius said that by properly intoning spells rapid streams could be made to flow backwards, the surface of the sea could be congealed, and the winds robbed of breath. An ancient legend tells us that the priests of the sacred city of On (Heliopolis, in Egypt) raised up the stones to build their temples with the aid of sound. Hindu manuals speak of mantras that can cause prepared sacrificial fuel to burst into flame or compel wild beasts to stop in their tracks.

Certain mantras have a long history. Some are traditionally held to be revealed by the deities themselves, whose name vibrations are latent within them, so that a god can be summoned, or at any rate his power drawn down, by uttering his particular mantra. The mantra in this case represents more than a sound, it is the vibration of the divine emanation; the deity is identified with it, and like the deity it remains eternal. A number of other Sanskrit mantras are said to be 'recovered' from the ether through the meditation of *rishis* (or sages). These are the vibrations governing the processes of Nature, and a knowledge of them gives one ascendancy over natural phenomena. Whenever such a mantra is uttered a Nature force is set in motion, vibrant with efficacy, and the mantra in this case is regarded as an entity in its own right.

Another class of mantras fall into the self-illuminating category and play an important role in initiation ceremonies, for they impart wisdom as soon as they are communicated. One legend relates that a pupil after long study was given such a mantra of initiation by his guru, to provide the final illumination to the teachings he had received. When the guru uttered the mantra a workman who happened to be busy in the next room overheard it. Unlettered and ignorant though he was, the workman was enlightened with the full understanding of the doctrine, just as though he had undergone the full discipline of the pupil.

Some Hindu and Buddhist mantras are regarded as extremely dangerous if uttered incorrectly or with misplaced intent. They are thought to create repercussions not only in the present life but in the future incarnations of the individual as well. Such mantras require a very precise knowledge of their pronunciation, intonation and timing, and frequently several days' preparation and purificatory rituals before they can be uttered.

In India there is a belief that every sorcerer is in possession of a mantra of terrible malignancy which is the source and focus of his success and power. Such a mantra can be known to only one person at a time, and it is this last bearer of the knowledge who possesses the power of the mantra. As the time of his death approaches it begins to build up a terrifying tension and becomes an unbearable burden on the mind of the magician, causing him untold anguish. It is said that the magician cannot die until he has passed on the mantra to someone else. Stories are told of magicians of great

R. Skelton

Jain painting from a manuscript of 1460 shows the mystic symbol of the mantra 'Hrim', surrounded by the disciples of the teacher Mahavira; repeated often enough, a mantra 'can penetrate the dense barrier of the material sphere and draw power from the occult plane'

repute dragging out their end in excruciating torment in a state of living death because they could not unburden themselves of the mantra, since they were unable to find anyone willing to accept the secret from them, even though it bestowed material benefits.

Mantras often appear to be no more than meaningless gibberish, which of course may only point to the fact that they are relics of an earlier language whose meaning is lost to the present users of the spell. Since the value of a spell lies in its antiquity, a meaningless mantra will be handed down in succession from master to pupil for generations as a treasured inheritance, and will never be altered. The Babylonians inherited certain magical formulas in Akkadian from earlier inhabitants of Mesopotamia. These formulas were couched in a 'dead' language, unintelligible to them, but were still handed down unchanged for centuries. Such 'barbarous names of evocation' as they have been called, are known even in the West. Abracadabra is one example (see ABRACADABRA). Indeed, the very word 'mantra' in colloquial Sinhalese means something very much like gibberish or hocus-pocus. It has long been believed that unintelligible or half-intelligible words in meditation help in creating a 'numinous' or transcendental mood, which makes its appeal to a hidden layer of our minds directly connected with some unknown force within ourselves that is tuned to another dimension. The real power of the mantra resides in its effect on the invisible world. A mantra repeated often enough can penetrate the dense barrier of the material sphere and draw power from the occult planes.

The most potent mantras are those embodied in a 'seed', or in monosyllabic form, and such seed mantras are held to be the quintessence of complex teachings. For instance, an elaborate doctrine of occult knowledge set forth in a work of 100,000 verses can be reduced by a rishi to a single short chapter; this may be further condensed into a single verse; and the verse finally concentrated into a single syllable. This syllable if correctly transmitted to a pupil can, it is thought, communicate to him the substance of the entire doctrine contained in the 100,000 verses.

Basically a seed mantra must be one that can be prolonged indefinitely when voiced, and because of this requirement such mantras are generally built around the vowel sounds or the humming sounds, such as 'm' or 'n', all of which can be sustained when uttered, unlike most consonants which can only be voiced in a single burst of sound. Vowel sounds seem to have been used in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the seven vowel sounds of their alphabet were used by the Greeks as a magic invocation.

Humming mantras are said to derive their potency from the cerebral intoxication induced by the vibrations of the sound. The constant resonances in the head chambers in this form of intonation lead to a kind of intoxication which results in trance. Such mantras are ideal for magical purposes. They are easy to remember, and when correctly intoned can set up reverberations in the cranium which continue long after the audible recitation of the sound has ceased. Those proficient in the art need utter a mantra only a few times for it to continue its overtones independently for hours thereafter.

Supreme among the seed mantras is of course the well-known monosyllable 'Om'. But its secret is so securely and tightly knit that it might take an aspirant more than a single lifetime of disciplined training to unravel and secure it for himself. Assiduous application, solitary meditation and superhuman concentration are prerequisites for its acquisition. It is said to contain the ultimate formula for universal knowledge and universal power.

(See also INCANTATION; VIBRATION.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

The Power of Repetition

Unlimited powers are said to reside in the shorter mantras, especially the mystic syllables known as *bijakshara* (monosyllabic) mantras, and great benefits accrue from their repetition. . . . The most powerful of all is the sound *Om*. There are, however, many other classes of short mantras. Many of the exclamations and ejaculations used during the sacrificial ceremonies have passed into the mantra class, such as: *svasti*, 'fortune'; *svadha*, 'oblation'; *svaha*, 'offering'; *vashat*, 'bravo'; *sam yoh*, 'all hail' or 'blessings'. The mantra *phat*, 'crack', is used by Buddhists as a weapon for driving off obstructing spirits . . .

Benjamin Walker *Hindu World*

Popperphoto

C. M. Dixon

A Maori chief used to be fed by an attendant to prevent cooked food, which was considered profane, threatening his sanctity; today only a few such practices survive to be followed in times of crisis, relics of an elaborate religious system

MAORI

THE MAORIS are a Polynesian people whose ancestors arrived in New Zealand from eastern Polynesia, possibly in the 9th century AD. These population movements were not planned, rather they were accidental voyages made by adventurous seamen, defeated warriors or wind-blown fishermen. It is known that by the 11th century they had explored much of the east coasts of both main islands of New Zealand, which stretch over 1000 miles from the subtropical North Cape to the temperate southern tip of the South Island.

These early settlers ingeniously adapted their tropically derived culture to the colder and more varied New Zealand environment.

Left **Carved wooden panel at the entrance of a Maori assembly house; legend tells that the first carving of a three-fingered motif was brought from the home of Tangaroa, god of fishermen, on the bed of the ocean** ***Right*** **Detail from the beautiful carved lintel of a Maori house; the three-fingered motif is again present, while the protruding tongue is a sign of defiance against the incursion of evil**

Of their familiar plants, only the *kumara* (sweet potato) grew really successfully. The settlers brought with them the dog and the rat. They made their clothing from flax and their more durable tools from suitable local rocks, especially basalt, argillite, nephrite and obsidian. They were expert fishermen and cleverly exploited certain local plants for food, notably fern root, which became a staple ingredient of their diet. By the time Captain Cook first visited New Zealand in 1769, the tribes had evolved a sophisticated seasonal economy within the limited productive areas.

Traditional Maori religion can be seen as the means whereby the people perceived and came to terms with the varied environment of sea coast, forest, swamp, tussock flat and mountain that they encountered in New Zealand. They believed in a pantheon of numerous gods, which some scholars have divided into four groups. It is still sometimes claimed that at the head was a Supreme Being, Io, but the evidence is not very convincing. On the other hand, there

Auckland City Art Gallery

Left **The Hauhau, a resistance group against the European occupation of Maori land, believed that through faith and war they could regain their heritage: Te Ua, the first Hauhau prophet, with raised open hand *Below* Tapu, the Maori word meaning sacred power could be transmitted by touch; it was both revered and feared for infringement could bring misfortune, even death; painting of a tapu priest being fed by an attendant to avoid contact with profane food**

Auckland City Art Gallery

were a number of less esoteric gods, the children of Rangi (sky) and Papa (earth), the original parents. These were the gods of the forest, peace and agriculture, war, the ocean, wind and storm, uncultivated food, earthquakes, and also the god of evil. Through myth they provided the ultimate sanctions for human behaviour and attitudes. There were also lesser gods known only within a limited area, and usually restricted to one tribe, such as Maru, a war god. Finally there were tribal ancestral spirits, who were believed to have great influence over the affairs of their living descendants. The ordinary Maori commoner usually felt closest to the members of the last two groups.

Gods were approached by means of ritual offerings and incantations (*karakia*, which is also a generic word for magic). Here, for example, is a translation of part of a karakia used at the kumara harvest:

> This is the spade that descends,
> This is the spade that reverberates,
> This is the spade that resounds,
> Penu, Penu, the spade Penu.

This extract is typical in its reiteration of a particular phrase and in its reference to a phenomenon, in this case the spade, Penu, sacred in tribal tradition.

The major gods were consulted only on more important occasions, such as before war or in the preparations for building a canoe. These rituals were mostly left to priests (*tohunga*), who underwent intensive education during their youth in a *whare wananga* (school of learning). One meaning of the word tohunga is 'skilled', and the influence of the priest was often due as much to his practical as his esoteric knowledge. A tohunga of Tangaroa (god of fishermen) for example, often possessed much information about fishing techniques. As well as obtaining the favour of the god through ritual, he could advise the commoner on the best methods and places for catching different varieties of fish.

Because of his influence over supernatural forces, the priest was considered sacred or *tapu* (taboo). His sanctity was proportionate to his knowledge and to the relative importance of his particular god. When, as was often the case, the tohunga was also of high birth, his power and prestige could become enormous. He might also be skilled in sorcery (*makutu*).

Power Derived from the Gods

The significance of Maori religion and magic lies in its social context. Kinship was the most important organizing force in prehistoric Maori society. It was the basis for the family group (*whanau*), whose members, ranging through three or four generations, formed a residential unit. A number of whanau, with common ancestry, comprised a *hapu*, which controlled a definite stretch of tribal territory, with its own fishing and forest rights, and owning such valuable objects as canoes. Finally, each individual was a member of one out of about 50 tribes, all of whose members acknowledged descent from a common ancestor, sometimes a mythical hero with supernatural powers. In this way, kinship bound the individual to a series of groups interconnected both socially and symbolically.

Hapu chiefs (*rangatira*) were descended in a direct line from the founding ancestors and were thus tapu. They were believed to possess special inherited powers which endowed them with a strong influence over supernatural forces through ritual.

The concept of tapu was thus extremely important. The word can be translated as 'holy' or 'sacred', since the power of tapu was derived from the gods. All free men had such power, to varying degrees, the amount depending on status. Women, unless of high status, were only tapu during menstruation or childbirth. Tapu was regarded with reverence but also with fear, since infringement would resnlt in misfortune, even death, from outraged spirits. It could be transmitted by contact and so, for example, everything a chief touched shared his sacred qualities. It was dangerous, even disastrous, for anyone else to have contact with these things, unless he was equally tapu. A high-born Maori was surrounded by restrictions, lest he should endanger both his own holiness and that of others. The activities of the chief were particularly circumscribed. Contact with cooked food, which was regarded as profane, would make the food vessels unfit for general use. Any such contact would also threaten the chief's sanctity, since cooked food was often used in tapu-removal ceremonies. The chief was therefore fed by an attendant.

An interesting case is recorded of a high-born and powerful priest who could not travel by the public paths, in case he rendered the route unfit for others to use. There are also accounts by reliable European observers of death following accidental infringement. For instance, it has been reported that on one occasion a Maori ate some food which, unknown to him, was the remainder of a chief's meal. As soon as the man learnt what he had done, he was seized by violent convulsions and cramps, and died before sundown. This episode illustrates an interesting difference between Maori and Christian attitudes towards the wrongdoer. The Christian believes in the existence of hell. The Maori, although believing in an afterlife, had no such concept. Supernatural punishment was direct and often immediate.

Tapu customs imposed many difficulties on the Maori commoner. Not only did he live in physical danger of accidentally breaking certain forms of tapu, but he could also suffer quite considerable material loss. For example, the visit of a high-born chief to a settlement would be dreaded and his movements within it anxiously watched, in case his shadow happened to fall on a food storehouse. If this occurred, the house and its contents would have to be destroyed.

The practice of cannibalism is best understood in terms of the Maori belief that

University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge

Carved godstick of Maru, a Maori war god: godsticks were used to request the help of a god; the image attached to a string was thrust into the ground while the priest, intoning a prayer, tugged at the string to attract the god's attention to the needs of the worshipper

Axel Poignant

Maori chieftain's grave at Awakino: tradition says that the anchor stone belonged to the canoe which brought a Maori tribe to New Zealand from Polynesia

spiritual powers could be transmitted by physical contact. In war, many of the defeated – men, women and children – would be killed and eaten. Normally death and the attendant funeral ceremonies (*tangi*) involved much tapu observance. But this attitude did not apply outside one's kindred. Thus, imbued with tapu, the successful warrior acquired further status by overcoming enemies of equal or higher status. Their tapu was reduced to nothing by the act of cooking their bodies as food. Usually, a corpse 'contaminated' its surroundings by its great tapu. By dismembering and eating the war dead the victors enhanced their own victory.

'The Land is our Father'

The tapu concept operated not only within society, but also directly in its environment. Most objects could be sacred. For example, the forests were protected. Birds were 'the children of Tane', the god of forests, and the fowler invariably observed numerous magical practices. Before hunting, he carried out a ritual at a special sacred post, and throughout the day he was careful not to use certain words connected with fowling, lest the birds be warned of his intentions. Neither feathers nor dead birds were left lying around, nor was cooked food taken into the forest, for these could pollute its resources. Similarly, trees were felled carefully and ceremoniously, for to cut or even chip a living tree without due ritual precaution was to invite misfortune. Similarly, when fishing, both men and their equipment were sacred, unable to be touched or even approached by unauthorized people, especially women and slaves.

The more elaborate items of equipment, such as canoes, storehouses and fishing nets, were treated with special care and reverence. Nothing, however, was more valuable to the Maoris than land. This was not only the main source of livelihood and prestige, but was also a tangible link between past, present and future generations, held in trust by the living with the consent of their ancestors for their mutual descendants. A chief who attended the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, at the time of British annexation in 1840, expressed this view well: 'We are not willing to give up our land; it is from the earth we obtain all things; the land is our father; the land is our nobility; we will not give it up.'

The tapu rituals which accompanied cultivation, notably of the sweet potato, reflected this deep-seated attitude. From planting time to harvest, the kumara was surrounded by ceremony. Neither women nor cooked food were allowed on the plantations, and those working there were careful to observe stringent precautions to maintain the integrity of their sanctity. It is also interesting to notice that the Maoris invoked tapu restrictions to prevent over-exploitation of their food resources. If a patch of forest, a stretch of river or a fishing area showed signs of depredation, a chief would indicate that it was temporarily declared tapu by leaving some of his possessions, usually old clothes, in a prominent position nearby.

Tapu must not be regarded as an irrational superstition. It was a comprehensive expression of religious belief with a highly practical significance for prehistoric Maori society. It gave sanction to the leadership of the chiefs. It did much to ensure the proper use of food resources. In these respects, therefore, it contributed to the maintenance of law within the tribe. More broadly, it helped to 'place' the Maori securely within a physical and mental environment which had many interrelated points of contact with his numerous gods.

Conversion and Destruction

Christianity destroyed these traditional Maori beliefs, though this did not occur quickly. The first Christian sermon was preached by Samuel Marsden on Christmas Day 1814, in the Bay of Islands, North Auckland; an area more influenced by European contact at that time than any other part of the country. But progress was slow. As the historian Keith Sinclair says in his *History of New Zealand* (1969): 'It was nine years before the first Maori was baptized – a girl about to marry a European; eleven before the next and death-bed conversion. No substantial progress was made until the eighteen-thirties.'

After that, Maori attitudes changed relatively quickly. The traditional social order was destroyed, and with it the complex and all-embracing nature of Maori religion. After the British annexation of 1840, conversion was very rapid. The new world of the European trader, settler and administrator called for different attitudes. The previous changes in Maori society, following initial European contact, had been contained within its traditional framework. With the subsequent rapid growth of European settlement and its insatiable demand for land, the Maoris became defensive. While many adopted Christian standards of behaviour, local deviations began to occur. As early as the 1830s, a millennial cult, *Papahurihia*, emerged in the Bay of Islands, which rejected Christianity as such, but contained elements of the Old and New Testament.

Rather similar reactions to Christianity also occurred later in the 19th century, during and after the Maori Wars (1856–70), when the profound Maori-European antagonism over land took a particularly bitter form. In 1862 a resistance movement began to develop which was also a new religion, compounded of Christian, Jewish and Maori elements. Called the *Hauhau* after their rallying cry, they regarded themselves as chosen people, who through faith, and pitiless war on the settlers, would regain their traditional heritage. The main fighting died down by 1870 although guerilla warfare lasted until 1872, with much savagery on both sides. During this time Te Kooti, a notable rebel leader, founded the Ringatu Christian Church, which contained certain Hauhau features.

The Ringatu Church is not the only

specifically Maori Church existing today. In 1918 a faith healer called Ratana established a Church bearing his name, which particularly appealed to the rural and urban poor. It is interesting to note that he was opposed to belief in tapu. Both Churches have provided considerable moral encouragement to a people who took many years to recover from the effects of the Maori Wars in the context of a rapidly urbanizing society.

It is not surprising that so much Maori traditional ideology is now consigned to history. As J. E. Ritchie said in *The Making of a Maori* (1963): 'Only sickness and death, violence, and serious accident, waken responses from that past world of supernatural completeness, and then only for a few.' These 'responses' are most evident among the older people in rural areas where, for example, certain tapu practices in relation to eating and washing persist. But tapu observances remain strict at funeral ceremonies and probably the great majority of Maoris, even among town dwellers, still wish to be buried at their ancestral homes.

Like many other non-Western peoples, the Maori has had to live in two worlds at once. The strains induced by this conflict have resulted in cases of psychological disorder which have been interpreted, somewhat ambivalently, in terms of sorcery or as 'Maori sickness'. Sometimes treatment by a modern tohunga can be more effective than that offered by an orthodox medical practitioner. Therefore, although traditional Maori religion has been destroyed as a comprehensive system of belief, its vestiges affect the present character of Maori psychology, and contribute to the make-up of the specifically Maori urbanized culture now evolving with its European counterpart in New Zealand.

(See also MANA; POLYNESIA; TABOO.)

P. GATHERCOLE

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Märchen

German word used by some folklorists, usually in roughly the sense of the English 'folktale', a story handed down from generation to generation of the common people; *Märchen* or folktale, a fictitious story, is often broadly distinguished from *Sage* or folk legend, a story about events believed to have actually happened.

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Mardi Gras

Or Shrove Tuesday, the last day of carnival, the season of merrymaking which precedes the abstinence of Lent; sometimes the name of the whole carnival season; celebrated especially in Roman Catholic countries and in some southern states of the U.S.A.; the Paris butchers used to parade an immense ox, festooned with flowers, through the streets; in New Orleans there are spectacular parades and festivities organized by secret societies, the Mystic Krewes.

See SPRING.

The fortunes of Babylon were for many hundreds of years entwined with those of Marduk, the High God. At the Creation, Marduk brought order out of anarchy and in return he was rewarded with supreme power

MARDUK

MARDUK BECAME the high god and patron saint of the city of Babylon, and eventually secured for himself an international prestige which went far beyond the natural confines of the Babylonian Empire.

The name first appears in about 2000 BC, at which time it was of little importance, but it seems possible that originally Marduk was a solar god, for later he was remembered under a Sumerian title, meaning 'the bull-calf of the sun', and indeed throughout his career Marduk was one of the gods of light. His ascent to fame, however, was first achieved under the Amorite Dynasty of Babylon which reached its peak in the reign of King Hammurabi, c 1792–1750 BC. On the famous diorite monument discovered at Susa, and inscribed with the text of the Babylonian 'code' of laws, Marduk is twice mentioned in the introduction. He had been allotted 'the divine worship of the multitude of the people', and thus before the end of Hammurabi's reign had become the Babylonian national god and patron, though perhaps not yet supreme. As administrator of justice Marduk was represented on the contemporary cylinder seals with the toothed saw that cuts decisions.

From that time onwards until the Seleucid era, beginning in 312 BC, the fortunes of Babylon were inextricably bound with those of Marduk, who, however, attained his greatest authority during the renaissance of the Babylonian Empire between the end of the 7th and 6th centuries BC. It is indeed apparent that when Marduk was down, Babylon's fortunes were at their lowest ebb and three historic events illustrate the point.

First, an inscription of the Kassite king, Agum II, recalls that he brought back the statues of Marduk and his wife, Sarpanitum, after they had been in exile in Khana for 30 years. This banishment had followed the sack of Babylon by the Hittite king, Murshilish I, in 1595 BC. Only with the triumphant restoration of these divinities did Babylon begin to rise again, but it took many centuries for Marduk to recover his prestige.

The renaissance appears to have occurred shortly before 1100 BC when the god's statue was once again recovered, this time from Elam, to the east of Babylon. The reign of Nebuchadrezzar I, who was responsible for the victory over Elam, thus marked a turning point in Mesopotamian religion. This was indeed a signal triumph, for Elam which had been a deadly menace to Babylonia, was thereafter quiescent for nearly three centuries and, doubtless, the credit went to Marduk.

A third historic event which marks once again a low ebb in the god's fortunes was the devastation of Babylon in the time of Sargon, King of Assyria, and the neglect of the god's sanctuary by Sargon's son, Sennacherib, in the years 705–703 BC. The New Year ceremonies were at that period several times suspended. But Babylon, which had suffered so much devastation under the early Sargonids, was restored to favour again by the superstitious Assyrian King Esarhaddon. Even after the conquest of Babylon in the 6th century BC by the Persian monarch Cyrus, the fortunes of Marduk waxed strong, though heresies in the form of worship were alleged to have been perpetrated by his predecessor, Nabonidus. Thus, Marduk's fortunes may be followed from historical records and are also attested by his fluctuating popularity as a component of personal names.

Victory over Chaos

Information about the character of the god comes to us from religious and magical texts. First comes the famous epic of Creation which was a long poem recited in the god's honour on the fourth night of the Neo-Babylonian New Year's Festival. It was known in antiquity as the *Enuma elish* from the first line which runs, 'when on high the heavens were not named'. There were seven tablets in all which varied in length between about 115–140 lines. They tell us about the creation of the universe, and proclaim the Babylonian belief that in the beginning the

first gods were generated out of the mingling of waters which had preceded the formation of the earliest Mesopotamian slime.

As the gods multiplied there was a schism in the course of which the respectable High Gods such as Anu, Ansar and Ea became divided against the detestable aboriginal dragon Tiamat representing chaos and supported by her evil myrmidons. The good gods, threatened with destruction, were saved from annihilation by the birth of Marduk, son of the magical god Ea, and destined to restore order to the universe. In agreeing to fight Tiamat, Marduk struck a bargain with his superiors and was promised the power to declare fates and work miracles. The magical 'appearing and disappearing' act of Marduk's garment is a notable forerunner of the conjurors Maskelyne and Devant. The saviour's destruction of Tiamat with the aid of the Seven Winds is a theme frequently illustrated on Babylonian seals, but we cannot recognize in iconography his creation of man out of the blood of Kingu.

Marduk's victory was celebrated by his reorganization of the heavens, by a drunken thank-offering banquet of the gods and by the decision to build Babylon, the shrines of Esagila and the ziggurrat, the great temple tower.

Ritual Humiliation

It is fortunate that a few tablets written in Babylon and elsewhere have survived to give us a fragmentary account of some of the ritual acts performed during the eleven days devoted to the New Year Festival.

The proceedings may be thought of as a Passion Play in which a ritual marriage between the king and the goddess (see ISHTAR) probably took place as well as many other symbolic performances; for example, the king had to give an account of himself before the god through a negative confession, or recitation of uncommitted sins. Most striking was the ceremony in which the king, standing before Marduk, was stripped of his regalia and had his face slapped by the high priest: it boded ill if the king did not shed tears.

Banquet of the Gods

At the end of the festival, Marduk led the great procession of gods which passed along the sacred way, flanked by enamelled brick reliefs of lions, and his personal symbol, the Musrussu dragon, to emerge at the *Akitu* temple where he entertained the divine assembly to a banquet.

The belief that in the course of this festival Marduk was entombed and resurrected is based on a misinterpretation of an Assyrian text and has no foundation. It has been shown that in two late texts the resurrected god was Nergal, king of the underworld, and that this emergence probably represented the victory of the sun after the winter solstice.

The cult of Marduk flourished in Assyria from the 14th century BC onwards, but in the 7th century he was displaced by the national god Assur: a late Assyrian text describing the capture of Marduk and his committal to the ordeal by water is a political tract designed to discredit the god. However, Marduk's popularity was due to his reputation as assistant magician to his father Ea in the rituals for alleviating sickness and misfortune, and as an exorcist. In a literary work named the *Ludlul Bel Nimeqi* Marduk appeared as the saviour of the righteous sufferer, who was a kind of Babylonian Job.

The power of the priesthood of Babylon over a dynasty of successful soldiers and notables, not of royal blood, ensured the glorification of Babylon and the rich endowment of the temples. However, the god's fame throughout the ancient world and for posterity derives from the imperial victories of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadrezzar II who rebuilt the city on a magnificent scale.

(See CREATION MYTHS; MESOPOTAMIA.)

M. E. L. MALLOWAN

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The Musrussu dragon, the personal symbol of Marduk, the high god of Babylon. Brick reliefs of the dragon flanked the sacred way along which Marduk and the gods passed after the New Year Festival: from a boundary stone.

British Museum/Michael Holford

MARRIAGE & BETROTHAL

In England 150 years ago, a dissatisfied husband was popularly considered free to sell his wife, while in a certain Dutch village even today a courting couple will marry only if the girl becomes pregnant; along with the fertility magic and superstitions found in European marriage customs is a strong strain of earthy prudence

WHEN MARRIAGES were arranged for practical reasons, rather than for love, child brides were quite usual. St Elizabeth of Hungary, betrothed at the age of four to an 11-year-old bridegroom in 1211, was carried to his home in a silver cradle, and Mary Villiers, a ward of Charles I, was already widowed by the time she was nine years old; soon after her husband's death she was seen climbing trees in her black dress, pretending to be a bird.

Since the purpose of such marriages was to ensure the union of prominent families, children were sometimes betrothed soon after birth. Although betrothal, the binding promise of marriage, has little significance for us today, it was at one time an occasion for considerable ceremony. In Greek Macedonia, for example, it was conducted with prayers and exchange of rings, in the presence of a matchmaker, the priest, family and friends. The bride offered her married relatives the traditional formal refreshments – jam, coffee, alcohol – and presented the groom's parents and the matchmaker with socks she had knitted herself. They thanked her with the customary greeting: 'Mayest thou enjoy the kerchief in good health.' During Cheese Week, which immediately preceded Lent, the young man sent his betrothed sweet cakes, and on the eve of Easter she received gifts of a coloured candle and Easter eggs.

The nomadic Vlachs, a people scattered through the Balkans, arranged for a group of friends and relations, acting on behalf of the groom, to call at the home of the bride. There they found a low table covered with fine cloth and laid with three soup plates.

Jürgen Bisch

The Western concept of romantic love is not universal, and child marriage is still practised in cultures where marriages are arranged for economic and social reasons *Right* After the wedding of this Burmese child bride, the girl will be expected to go and live in her husband's house although she is too young for the marriage to be consummated

Axel Poignant

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Mansell Collection

Marriage means the transfer of one of the couple from one kin-group to another, and many marriage and betrothal customs are connected with this. In New Guinea (*top*) women of the bride's group stage a mock fight to prevent her from leaving. Elsewhere, the bride may be led to her wedding in brand new clothes and in ceremonial procession, as at this village in Cyprus (*centre*) *Below* At Dunmow, in Essex, a side of bacon is awarded to a married couple who can swear that they have not regretted their marriage for a year and a day

Two of these contained sweets. The third, which was empty, had to be filled with gold, sometimes made into a necklace. It is still a common Balkan custom for a woman to wear her betrothal gift in this fashion. When the groom's party returned, they threw flour over him, wishing him a long life with the words: 'May you grow white like this flour.' Meanwhile, the same custom was performed for the bride, by her family.

In 17th century Holland the betrothed couple were required to sit together on a bed and kiss each other in the presence of both families; the ceremony was ratified by exchange of rings. These were very big, sometimes engraved with suitable pictures, and sometimes, like the English gemmel ring, formed of two parallel circles. The halves, separated between the partners at the betrothal, were joined together as a wedding ring for the marriage ceremony. To pledge fidelity, the couple would cut themselves and drink each other's blood; or they might use the blood to make a written declaration. In England, halving a coin was a popular custom. A character in a play called *The Country Wake* (1696) says: 'I ask't her the question last Lammas, and at Allhallow's-tide we broke a piece of money.' The straw true-lover's knot was another token of fidelity, in use within living memory. A young man prepared two, one for himself and one for his sweetheart. If she pinned hers over her heart, this meant she had chosen him, and the couple wore the knots until their wedding day. The girl might also be presented with a sprig of the plant Lad's Love; if she threw it away, her lover had been rejected, but to smell it was a sign of acceptance.

A young man from the fens would present a fur tippet to his sweetheart. This was a narrow fur stole, prepared by the lover from animal skins, which he had obtained and cured himself. The couple stitched the hide to a silk lining, stuffed it with sheep's wool, and inside each end placed a sachet containing a little pubic hair: the man's on the right, the woman's on the left. When worn, the criss-crossed ends covered the woman's heart, and the little packets inside ensured a happy married life.

In many countries marriage is a social obligation, and anyone remaining single is frowned upon. The ancient Jews had no word in their vocabulary for bachelor, and

In the Calvinist village of Staphorst in Holland, trial marriage is still practised and custom decrees that a couple marry only when there is evidence of a pregnancy

the Poles used to ridicule anyone unmarried beyond the proper age. Nonetheless, it was not always so easy to obtain a wife, and a young man might have to earn her by working for his prospective parents-in-law: 'So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days because of the love he had for her' (Genesis 29.20).

This ancient custom persists today. Among the Eskimos of St Lawrence Island, Alaska, the boy works one year for his sweetheart's family, carrying water, gathering driftwood, chopping ice, assisting with hunting, and generally proving his willingness to work for them and his ability to provide for a family. But if the girl is already pregnant, the couple are usually married as quickly as possible.

Bundling and Handfasting

Anticipation of the intimacies of marriage was not so frowned upon in the past as one might suppose, since betrothal was often considered to be nearly as binding as marriage. The early 17th century Puritan settlers of New England practised bundling, a custom known variously in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, as well as Holland, Norway and probably elsewhere. The parents of a New England girl who was courting permitted the couple to spend the night together in her bedroom. The pair who were expected to behave with reasonable propriety, wore all their clothes and were occasionally separated by additional layers of bedding. This custom, which seems to have begun dying out in America during the 18th century, was still common within living memory in England in Cambridgeshire, where it was introduced by Irish labourers.

In 17th century Holland bundling was known as *queesten*. Suitors on Texel Island traditionally arrived through the window and, since this necessitated smashing the pane, few houses had all their windows unbroken. Although couples met in the girl's bed, it was again intended that propriety should be observed. The girl lay on the sheet, the boy between sheet and cover. Nearby an iron vessel and a pair of fire tongs were ready for her to sound the alarm if the young man became too bold. Parents usually approved of the custom since it was thought an honour for their daughter to receive these visits. The call might last all night, and if a pregnancy resulted the baby was taken along to its parents' wedding, concealed beneath the mother's cloak, though clearly visible for everyone to see. Today, in the Calvinist village of Staphorst, trial marriage is still practised and custom decrees that a couple marry only when there is evidence of a pregnancy.

The Scottish custom of 'handfasting' also provided a testing period. Young men and women chose a companion at a fair held annually in Dumfriesshire, and lived together as man and wife until the following year. If the experiment was a success, they married; if not, they were free to take another partner. A priest nicknamed Book-in-the-Bosom, perhaps because he carried a marriage register, arrived periodically to solemnize these weddings.

There is usually no difficulty about arranging marriage for an attractive girl or man, but it may be a problem in cases of deformity or physical defect. In Poland such a man was betrothed to a relative and the banns read out in church, not with any real intention of marriage, but simply to make it known that he was eligible.

Calling the banns is an important preliminary to marriage and the English language is full of dialect expressions for this custom. In Lincolnshire it was known as 'spurring'. If the banns had been read once, people said: 'Why thoo's gotten one spur on thee!', and two banns were 'A pair of spurs'. Sometimes a peal of bells, the spur peal, was rung on the day that the first hann had been called. 'Breaking a rib' was another usual phrase. 'He's gotten one rib broke', meant that the banns had been called once; 'fallen plump out of the pulpit last Sunday', was a Wiltshire expression. Generally speaking it was unlucky to hear one's own banns called: it meant that children of the marriage would be deaf and dumb. Similarly in Poland, should a girl hear her first banns, her pots will break after she is married.

Gifts are always an important part of any wedding, because of the exceptional expense involved, not only in setting up the newly married couple, but in the occasion itself. If a Manx couple were badly off, it was usual to place a sieve in the kitchen so that guests could drop in a coin to help with the cost of entertainment. This custom, known as a Penny Wedding, exists elsewhere in various forms. Bride-ale was for the same purpose; the bride sold home-brewed ale to the wedding guests, who paid her lavishly.

In Scotland and the North of England a 'Bride-wain' was arranged. This meant that carts and horses were taken round the houses of friends and relatives, who gave sacks of corn, meal, wool, and anything else they could spare. Sometimes there was a ceremonial procession from the bride's old home to the new one. A waggon, loaded with household articles and furniture, set out and, as it passed by, friends threw gifts upon the load. In Lancashire, among the very poor, everyone gathered together on the day of the wedding and built the young couple a house of clay and wood, which was known as the 'clay bigging'.

If a husband was wealthy, but nonetheless did not wish to inherit any earlier debts from his wife, there was a traditional remedy. Until about 100 years ago in England, it was commonly believed that if a bride arrived at her wedding dressed in nothing but a shift, her husband would be freed from any such obligation. Again, if the bride walked stark naked from her house to her future husband's, the same purpose would be served. During the last century a woman tried to do this at Kirton-in-Lindsey in Lincolnshire. She had intended starting out down a ladder from her bedroom window, but her courage failed her; she partially dressed while still standing at the top.

The idea of approaching one's wedding in a state of nakedness is echoed in the custom of removing old clothes and putting on a completely new set. A Vlach bridegroom would stand in a flat metal dish and strip, preparatory to donning his pristine wedding clothes. English brides too were freshly dressed from head to foot, though the requirements of the old rhyme: 'Something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue' were carefully observed. Today the luckiest colours for a bridal dress are white, pink and blue. Green is thought to be especially unlucky and in parts of Scotland even green table decorations and vegetables were omitted from the bridal meal.

Food is an important feature of any wedding celebration, and certain items are essentially symbolic. Formerly in the Netherlands the bridal couple were offered salted cream sprinkled with sugar, a confection representative of the bitter and the sweet sides of

Camera Press, London

married life. English wedding-cake with its icing sugar and bitter almonds is said to possess the same significance. The rich mixture traditionally used in its preparation stands for fertility and abundance. Every guest must eat some and unmarried girls are supposed to sleep with a slice beneath their pillow in order to dream of their husbands-to-be. Yorkshire folk called this 'dreaming bread'. A sliver of cake used formerly to be passed nine times through a wedding ring to achieve the same result. This form of wedding divination has always been popular. Indeed as early as 1279 the Church in Poland was obliged to issue a decree forbidding its practice.

Baking and Breaking

Polish bridal couples wear pieces of cake tucked inside their blouses throughout the marriage ceremony; they must also share the first and last pieces together. Hence the ceremony of baking the bridal cake is very important. Women known to be happily married are invited to prepare the mixture, and the bride's mother receives them with vodka, sausage, ham, pickles and cake. Only women may be present, apart from the official matchmaker, and the cake is made without salt to signify that the young couple should live together without sorrow. If the cake rises well, it is a good omen. In Macedonia three maidens sift the flour, and three married women prepare the dough. They may put a hook and eye into the mixture, representing the male and female elements. Sometimes the bride wears two great ring-shaped cakes on her arms as she makes her way to the bridegroom's house. She breaks one when she is halfway there, and the other is broken on arrival. Women eagerly seize the pieces, which they believe will assist them in childbirth.

In parts of England it was usual to break a piece of cake over the head of the bride when she returned from church; in Ireland they used an oatmeal cake, in Scotland shortbread. This was generally done by the groom. Sometimes it was thrown over the head

In many societies to this day, a woman may be severely punished for infidelity, desertion or breaking up a marriage *Far left* This Yemeni woman claimed that an iron ring had been driven through her forearm as a punishment for deserting her husband *Left* Spiral brass collars worn by adult women of the Padaung people in Northern Burma, are removed, perhaps causing serious injury, if a married woman complains of her husband

University Films

of the bride, plate and all, and if the plate broke into many pieces, it was a good omen foretelling many children; if it failed to smash, someone quickly stepped on it to avert the unlucky sign.

When people were very poor, as in Ireland during the last century, the food for a wedding simply consisted of what was available; in this case, bruised potatoes, flour, oatbread and butter. More often it was representative of fertility and abundance. For this reason, on entering her new home, a Greek bride crushed a pomegranate – a popular symbol of fruitfulness in the East – and marked the doorpost with a butter cross. The couple ascended the stairs beneath a shower of sweets, coins, barley, chick-peas and rice. These ideas are present in our own wedding ceremonies. Confetti has largely replaced rice, which was thrown to ensure the fruitfulness of the marriage.

The symbolism of the cereals in wedding ceremonies arises from the fact that they are basic foods in the countries where they are used. At a Polish wedding feast a flat, plaited wheaten loaf called *kolacze*, which has been blessed in church, represents all bread. Good solid food is served: a traditional mixture of lentils and barley called *kasha*, peas, gravy, a bird, and *borscht*, soup made from beetroot or cabbage. Everyone cries 'The soup is bitter' until bride and groom have kissed each other. Since the wedding feast is said to represent the couple's future married life, there is always plenty of food. For the same reason, the fiddlers are fed by the bridesmaids so that they will not stop playing.

In Lowland Scotland it was the custom to serve a fowl. Afterwards, so that she and her husband would be happy together, the bride was given the small side-bone called 'hug me close'. In Sunderland, as elsewhere, the bridal pair were presented with hot pots after leaving the church; these were mugs of ale which were brought by local women as a compliment to the newly weds. A stranger to the district, taken by surprise at his wedding more than a hundred years ago, remarked: 'The composition in these mugs was mostly, I am sorry to say, simply horrible.'

On reaching the churchyard gate the bride might be required to jump, or be lifted over, what was known as the petting stone; on Holy Island the petting stone is all that

Axel Poignant

remains of a lost Saxon cross. Sometimes a decorated rope might be stretched across the road, and the groom had to pay a fine to obtain free passage.

Today when the ceremony and reception are over, bride and groom set off on a journey together. But this is a modern custom. Three centuries ago, in parts of Western Europe, the whole wedding party danced along with the couple to the bridal chamber, where the bride's mother was waiting to say goodbye. An English marriage, before the honeymoon came in vogue, concluded with the ceremony of 'throwing the stocking'. Bride and groom were expected to sit up in bed, fully dressed, while the bridesmaids took it in turn to stand at the foot of the bedstead and throw the bridegroom's stocking over their shoulder. The aim was to hit him on the face. The groom's men then aimed at the bride using her stocking. This was a form of divination: whoever succeeded would soon be married.

A post-marital custom recorded in 1792 in Ayrshire, was known as creeling. Two days after the wedding the married couple gathered together with their friends and filled a small basket, or creel, with stones. The young men were obliged to carry this in turns until released by a kiss from one of the girls. When the groom's turn came he was expected to carry the basket for a much longer period, until his bride had pity and kissed him, as a sign of her satisfaction with the marriage. Two days however is scarcely a fair trial period, and the real question was whether the marriage would stand the test of a longer time. At Dunmow in Essex the ancient custom survives of presenting annually a flitch of bacon to a married couple who can swear, kneeling on two sharp stones, that they have not regretted their marriage for a year and a day.

Infidelity, like marital harmony, used to be considered a community affair and the punishment inflicted on the offender was by no means good natured. A practice called 'rough music', known by a variety of names according to the district, consisted of a procession, generally at night, with the local men banging any suitable metal object they could lay their hands on, such as saucepans and kettles, and blowing improvised musical instruments. Verses were recited and life-size effigies of the offenders were publicly paraded. Rough music could be played for a variety of reasons, the most usual being some offence against the marital code, particularly adultery or incest. The punishment was effective; as a rule the persecuted couple had to leave the district.

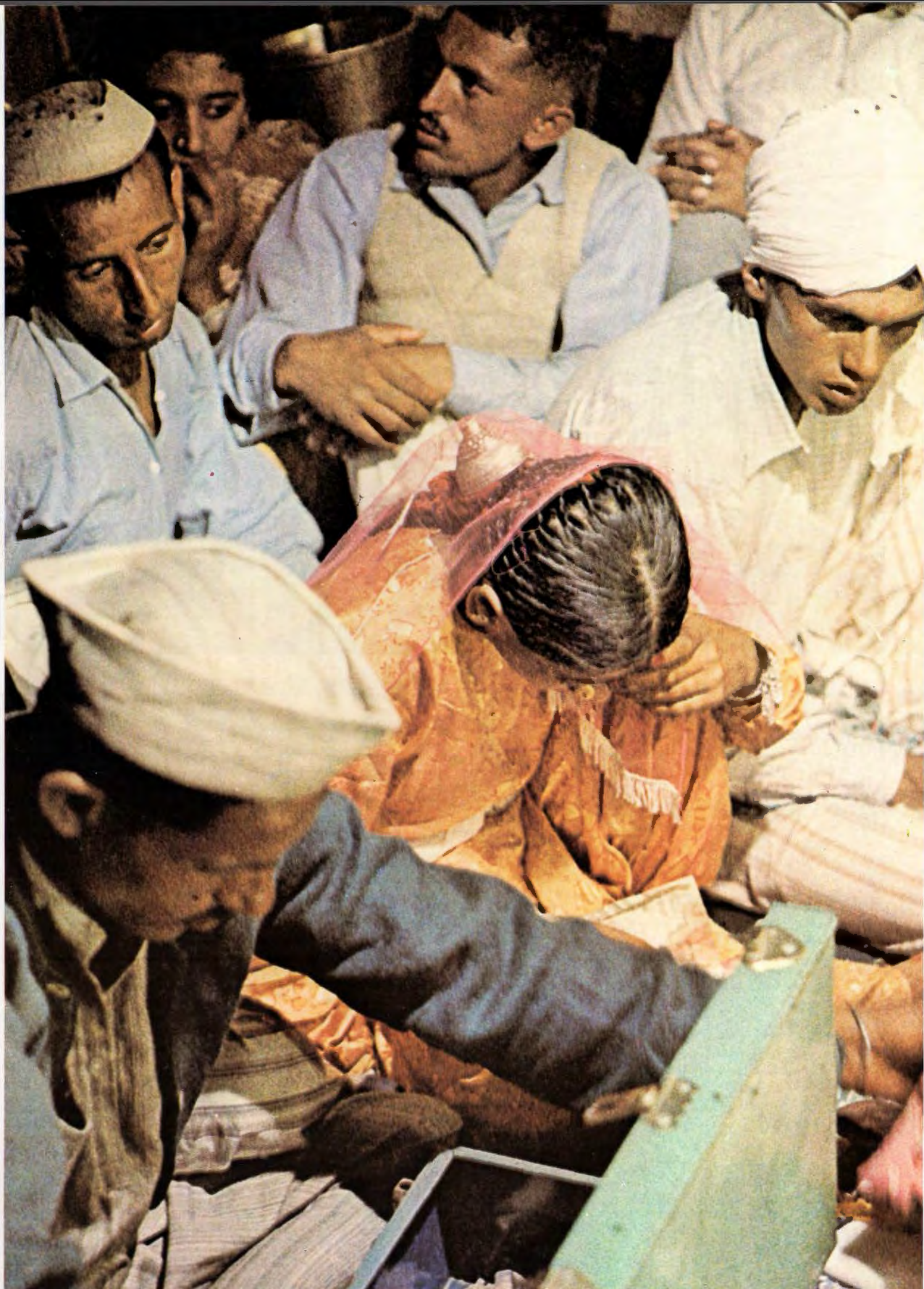
Cost of a Secondhand Wife

In the event of a marriage being unsuccessful, it was once a common belief that if a man disliked his wife he could get rid of her by the simple expedient of selling her. With a halter placed round her neck, the wife would be publicly exhibited for sale for a sum not less than a shilling; the man who bought her would then become her husband. It was considered that he had done so, simply by virtue of the purchase. There are many recorded cases during the last couple of centuries. Some of these cases strike us today as bizarre. For example on 7 April 1832 at Carlisle, a farmer named Joseph Thomson put his wife up for sale after three years of marriage, complete with a straw halter. After waiting for almost an hour, he succeeded in getting 20 shillings and a Newfoundland dog for her. According to popular custom, this rough-and-ready form of folk divorce was legally binding.

It was commonly believed that the success of a marriage would depend upon the time at which it was celebrated. We know that the ancient Romans avoided May weddings because the month was a time of purification. The *Lemuria*, or Feast of the Unhappy Dead, was celebrated on the 9th, 11th and 13th of that month, and the poet Ovid says those who married in May would soon die.

There is a curious association of death and marriage in Jewish custom, perhaps explained by the tragedies of their history. The couple must be reminded of sorrow in the midst of joy and hence a glass is broken. The pieces used sometimes to be carefully saved and used to weigh down their eyelids in death. Numerous examples from different cultures of the ceremonial smashing of

A bridegroom or his kin may give presents to the bride's family to compensate them for the loss of her services. Conversely, a bride may be given a dowry which she brings to her husband *Above* Brideprice of feathers and money in New Guinea *Right* Inspecting the dowry at a polyandrous Indian wedding



Axel Poignant

Syndication International

Food is an important feature of weddings, for various reasons, including symbolic connections with fertility and the idea of cementing an alliance by sharing a meal *Left* In New Guinea bride and groom share a pig *Right* Cutting the cake at a wedding reception in Northern Ireland: the rich mixture traditionally used in preparing the cake stands for fertility

objects at weddings are cited by E. Westermarck in his *History of Human Marriage*. Among the southern Serbs, for instance, it was the custom, after the bride and groom had returned, to throw a wine glass at their door, symbolizing the approaching loss of virginity. The guests, with a great deal of noise, were meanwhile busy smashing glasses, crockery and an egg in a sack. It seems likely, as Westermarck suggests, that the shattering of fragile objects was intended to ensure the consummation of the marriage, which might otherwise have been prevented by malevolent influences.

The Ashkenazim, the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, used to carry a hen and a rooster in procession with the bride and groom as symbols of fertility. For the same purpose was the custom among Spanish and Portuguese Jews of causing the bride to perform the Fish Dance. Russian and Polish Jews fed the couple on fish, and the woman might also jump over a bowl containing live ones.

Certain Jewish wedding customs, particularly among the Ashkenazim, were not dissimilar from those known elsewhere. Bride and groom were escorted separately to the synagogue in a gay procession, and on arrival were showered with wheat or barley. To make the significance of this ritual quite clear, the celebrants called out three times to the bridal pair: 'Be fruitful and multiply', while a wedding canopy, the *chuppah*, set out of doors, signified God's promise to Abraham: 'Thus shall thy children be, like the stars of heaven.'

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: R.B. Outhwaite, *Marriage and Society: Studies in the History of Marriage* (St. Martin's, 1982); Edward Westermarck, *Short History of Marriage* (Humanities, 1969); Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (Gale rev. enl. ed., 1971); Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*.

Chanting hymns and beating the ground, the Salian priests prayed to Mars to promote fertility; the god's concern for the welfare of the community and of all animals and crops is as old as his better-known role as god of war. But it is in this virile, aggressive aspect that Mars appears in astrology

MARS

AMONG THE ANCIENT ITALIANS there was no greater god than Mars, after Jupiter. He was known by an unusual variety of cult names: Mars, Mavors, Maurs, Mamers, Marmar, Marmor, Mamurius, and the honorific compound Marspiter. Many Latin and neighbouring communities named a month after him, and our month of March preserves the memory of his veneration. The Roman month *Martius* embraced the spring equinox and by its season reinforced the god's oldest functions in agriculture. March marked the first month of the oldest-known liturgical year at Rome. Certain state priests promoted the growth of crops at the onset of the year, prepared for the new year by cleansings and otherwise marked what we today keep as the New Year. For a time 15 March opened the official year but later yielded to 1 January, which acquired from 1 March such customs as decoration with evergreens. However, March retained many ceremonies of the new year as well as the constant cult of Mars which was mainly entrusted to the Salians, priests whose title seems to be derived from *salire* 'to dance, leap'.

On fixed days in March the Salians proceeded along an established route where they would stop at certain points and perform rites that included the chanting of some of the oldest hymns in the Latin language, beating time on the ground according to the ritual three-step, and carrying outmoded spears in which Mars lurked, and shields, one of which was sent from heaven. Their dancing and beating of spear on shield was probably thought to advance the growth of the crops. However, the priests' military accoutrements and the regular resumption

of warfare in March always underlined the god's martial aspects. The surviving scraps of the Salian Hymns mention many Roman gods, and Mars himself in the form *Mamurius Veturius*, evidently the Mars of the old year. The hymns certify the Salians' concern for agricultural growth and the welfare of the infantry (armed with spears of a kind different from those which the priests themselves carried). Much of the Salians' intervention with their god was directed toward cleansing the community and its utensils.

Peculiar to Mars in Roman religion is the use of the horse. On 14 March a racing festival, *Equirria*, was kept for Mars on the Campus Martius, 'Field of Mars'. On the same ground every 15 October another race was run, after which a horse of the winning chariot team was sacrificed to Mars. The blood of its tail was dripped onto the hearth in the king's former residence, the Regia. The ashes were later compounded with the cremated remains of unborn calves sacrificed on 15 April and applied in the cleansing held on 21 April, Rome's birthday. The horse's blood may have been intended to ward off barrenness, while the cremated calves were sacrificed to invite fertility into the community.

A third race came in late February and presumably marked the end of the old year. The last month of the liturgical year was crammed with cleansing rites. The *Quirinalia* in February honoured Quirinus, an epithet sometimes applied to Mars. Both Mars and Quirinus had Salian priesthoods as well as their own *flamen*, a Roman priest peculiarly bound by religious restrictions (see JUPITER). Quirinus as a distinct god was an offshoot of Mars who acquired considerable prestige of his own. As a promoter of peace, Quirinus represents the willingness of Mars to cease warring and to accept terms from the enemy.

Leaping the Boundary

At the end of May another priesthood, the Arval Brothers, annually kept their agricultural cult by invoking the name of Mars thrice in three different forms, by thrice repeating the petitions and by dancing the ritual three-step (*tripudium*). No older prayer than the Arval Hymn fully survives to us. After asking help of the Lares (see LARES) and before and after inviting the seed gods, the Brothers begged Mars to prevent the invasion of blight and the collapse of growing grain, to leap the boundary and to remain on the land. This prayer was sung five miles from Rome, apparently at the border. The god's arrival by avoiding contact with the boundary itself demonstrates an irrational fear which still survives: brides are carried over the threshold lest their stumbling bring barrenness. Mars was expected to remain on the land, but not to import barrenness. His protection of Roman ploughland (*arvum*) is paralleled by old evidence from one Umbrian town where, like the Campus Martius, two fields belonged to the Martial woodpecker, where Martial Growth (*Cerfus Martius*) was hailed for cleansing the community and for damning foreigners, and where this Martial Growth controlled two divine powers, Protection and Fright.

The Umbrian ceremonies are attested earlier than an elaborate ritual for cleansing Roman farmland by circling it with a suckling pig, lamb and calf (*suovetaurilia*), with prayers and sacrifices to Father Mars who would defend and increase the land, its human and animal occupants, and all the vegetation. In another Roman ritual of the same era, Mars Silvanus, Mars of the Woodland, received sacrifice within the woods for the good health of the cattle. From its oldest survivals the cult of Mars shows a primary concern for the health and welfare of all living animals and crops.

The Avenger

Just as old but less clear at the outset is the Mars who was the god of war. The Salian priests certainly observed in part a cult of war. After it became a formal republican assembly of all citizens, the Roman infantry always met on the Campus Martius and never within the city's sacred boundary (*pomerium*). The Field of Mars held the oldest known altar to Roman Mars. At the only archaic temple to Mars, which stood over one mile from the city on the Appian Way, the cavalry formed for its annual parade into the town, and the infantry

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Detail from an Arabian manuscript shows a red-robed Mars displaying the head of his victim; in astrology Mars is the 'rogue male' of the planets, both violent and brave

rallied at the outset of a campaign. Consequently it is often asserted that Mars was purposely kept from the city because he was bellicose. Indeed he was worshipped outside where the Romans expected him to promote growth. However, the Salians worshipped him only in the city and there, too, kept their shields and spears, which they addressed 'Mars, awake!' The early lack of urban temples does not prove that Mars was solely a war god in origin.

Some of the Martial temples may be of relatively late construction on sites where he did the greatest good, on the land. The Emperor Augustus greatly enhanced the god's material condition at the end of the last century before Christ. In 53 BC, the political and financial magnate Licinius Crassus had gone to Parthia (modern Iran) to seek military glory. Instead, Crassus was slain, his army routed and massacred, and his standards captured. Julius Caesar and Mark Antony vainly hoped to recover the first standards lost to an enemy within memory, but the former succumbed to death and the latter to Cleopatra. It was left to Augustus to recover the standards by diplomacy. Not only did he represent his success as a military victory by depicting a kneeling Parthia and a triumphal arch on his coins, but he also lodged the standards in one of the two urban temples he built for Mars Ultor, 'the Avenger'. Thus Augustus made Mars responsible for a real military victory over Caesar's murderers at Philippi, as well as for a revenge upon the invincible Parthians. The Avenger's temple in Augustus's forum attained such importance that the grand plaza gradually exchanged the Emperor's name for the god's. Until some 40 years ago the street of Christian Rome which ran above the Forum Augustum was still called Via Marforio.

The early equation of Italic Mars with the Greek Ares lent great emphasis to the literary role of Mars as war god. Ares appears in Greek poetry mainly as a divine personification of war and violence. Some argue that *Ares* means 'destroyer', which if true would explain his relative lack of cult. Ares enjoyed prestigious family connections in mythology, where he is represented as a most unpleasant god. In terms of divinity Ares cannot compare with Mars, but most of the mythology of Mars was borrowed from Greek poets. Two peculiarly Roman tales show the difference.

One explains why the month of Mars comes at the year's beginning. The god sought Minerva in marriage. The withered hag of a matchmaker, Anna Perenna, pretended to have gained Minerva's consent, but herself wed Mars. The festival of Anna Perenna (which means little more than the 'everlasting year') fell on 15 March when a riotous and promiscuous mob kept her holiday. The marriage of Mars marks the cycle of the year at the return of spring.

In another Roman legend Mars figures in the foundation of Rome, whose story abounds in Martial religion. Mars fathered the founder of the city on an unwitting virgin. The Romans believed this paternity foreordained Rome's unsurpassed glory in arms. However, many elements of the foundation legend remain obscure to us (see FOUNDING OF ROME).

British Museum/Michael Halford

Mars was concerned with both agriculture and war, and the Roman infantry always met on the 'Field of Mars'. He was equated with the brutal Greek war god, Ares, from whom most of his mythology was borrowed, including the story of his liaison with the love goddess ***Above*** **Mars on a Roman coin of the 2nd century AD** ***Right*** **Paolo Veronese's painting of** ***Mars and Venus United by Love***

Veiled Emigrants

Mars and Jupiter are the best known of the few oracular deities of the Italians. Through his special bird, the woodpecker (*picus Martius*), Mars could indicate future events. To be born in the month of Mars clearly distinguished a child and thus promoted the names Marcus and Mamercus. The Marsi of central Italy and the Mamertini of southern Italy are two peoples named after the god. The origin of the latter illustrates the double function of Mars. In prehistoric times a community troubled by want of food or by the scourge of a human enemy would vow all that was produced in a given spring to Mars and Jupiter. Jupiter received the animals born in that season. Upon reaching adulthood men born at that time were sent veiled (perhaps so that they could see no ill omen) from the boundaries of the dedicating community to found a new community. Such consecrated men were dedicated to Mars. Thus, we are told, the Mamertini earned their name.

An animal often led the consecrated emigrants. The Italic Hirpini were named after the wolf in these circumstances. The Picentes may have taken their name from the woodpecker. Although without any linguistic merit, the most famous of such names is Italus and its derivatives from *vitulus*, 'calf'. This belief originated among Greeks who remembered one band consecrated to Mars that was led by a calf. Accordingly, when her Italian allies broke with Rome in the late '90s BC, the Marsi had coins for paying troops of the Italian confederacy marked with the Italian calf trampling the Roman wolf, the Martial beast which had given fresh life to the infant Romulus and Remus.

(See also JANUS.)

R. E. A. PALMER

Mars in Astrology

The 'Rogue Male' of the planets, Mars is considered rather dangerous, and likely to be involved in any act of violence. The colour attributed to him is red, the colour of anger, appropriately enough, for the closer he comes to the earth, the more obvious is the planet's reddish colour. Although Mars is said to be baleful and can be harmful to either sex, to women he is the natural significator of men in general, and husbands in particular; he also signifies the active callings of soldiers, policemen, athletes, sportsmen and metal-workers. Even a scholar, if young or a husband, can be signified by Mars.

His character is impatient, tireless, excitable, easily moved to wrath but also readily appeased. He is neither subtle nor profound; if one assumes that a Martian is bluffing, one soon finds out one's mistake. In manner, the Martian is generally held to be rough and crude, lacking in refinement and uninterested in the arts. Learned men, however, need to have a good deal of Mars in their composition to persist in their often unrewarding and even tedious studies. Religious persons are frequently strongly influenced by Mars, for the religious need courage and tenacity.

The Gift of Energy

The greatest advantage of Mars is that he is never easily fatigued. He represents energy, and in consequence is never too tired to go on, and never too lazy to bother. He always insists on doing his work thoroughly. The man who does enough but no more is not a Martian, for a Martian enjoys labour and regards it with understanding, rather than as an imposition for which one is justified in exploiting one's employer. His pugnacious temperament will enable the Martian to fight his way through life, especially in the years of adulthood.

If Mars is the only dominant planet, there is a tendency for the rough and brusque manner identified with Martians to emerge; but there are four quarters of the horoscope in which planets can dominate, so there must be many Martian people in whom the wish to use their energy is not their sole and prevailing drive.

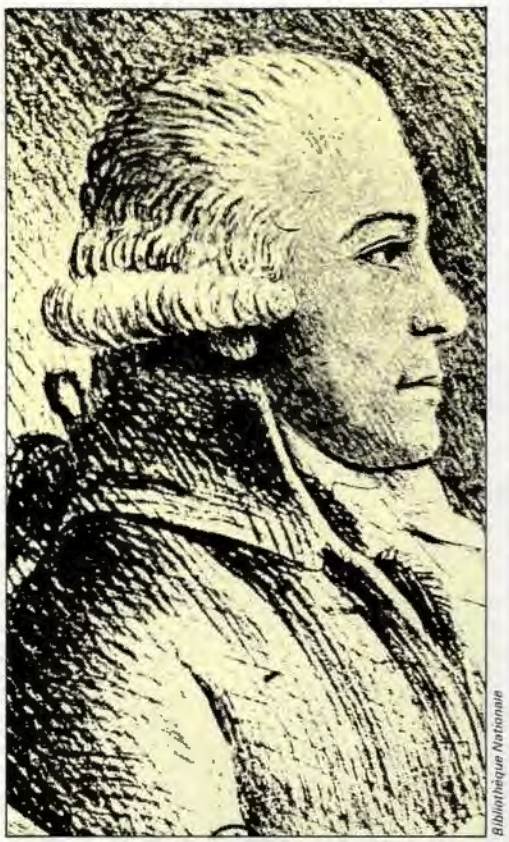
One very common personality defect of Martians is that, although they have plenty of energy, they may be content to use it in whatever way is familiar to them, and lack the imagination and vision to launch out in a different direction. Another defect of which Martians should beware is that often they cannot accept things as they are and feel they must change them at all costs. A Martian schoolmaster would be likely to administer punishment to give vent to his own feelings, rather than because he considered it for the good of the offender. But Mars is as courageous as he is hasty; although he does not deliberately take chances, he is never afraid to run risks and seems to be utterly fearless.

FURTHER READING: For the god Mars, see R. E. A. Palmer, *The Archaic Community of the Romans* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kennedy Fund 1910

PAVLVS VERONENSIS F

MARTINISTS



Bibliothèque Nationale

'The Unknown Philosopher' Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, secretary to Martinez de Pasqually, was responsible for classifying and interpreting his master's occult theories; he established his own personal school leading to the founding of a Russian Martinist order

MARTINEZ DE PASQUALLY, founder of the occult school known as Martinism, was born at Grenoble in 1710 and died in Santo Domingo (now Haiti) in 1774. His teachings were written down in manuscripts, most of which were never printed. He stated his general doctrine in his *Traité de la Réintégration des Etres* (Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings), several copies of which were written out by hand by his close friends, including his secretary Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), who called himself 'the Unknown Philosopher'. Saint-Martin interpreted and clarified his master's theories in a celebrated work, *Tableau Naturel des Rapports qui unissent Dieu, l'Homme et l'Univers* (Table of Correspondences between God, Man and the Universe), but it is Martinez de Pasqually's own book which must be referred to for an understanding of genuine Martinism.

Martinez de Pasqually drew his ideas from Gnosticism, the Cabala, the Hermetica and the early Christian theologian Origen. His central teaching was that there are two essentials for human salvation (thought of in terms of the soul's ascent towards its original source in the Divine – see MACROCOSM; MAGIC). First, there must be a revelation which brings the knowledge of the soul's origins, of its descent into the lower spheres of the universe, and of the need to liberate itself. Second, in a magical ceremony the initiate must evoke and unite himself with his 'guardian angel', the 'higher self' which is a small fragment of the Divine Intelligence itself.

Before the beginning of the universe, so Martinez de Pasqually taught, God emanated or sent forth from himself certain beings, who came from the divine essence and who contained part of the divine power. They constitute four 'orders' or classes of spirits, infinitely higher and more powerful than the cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels, which were created later.

These beings strongly resemble the 'aeons' (or patterns of thought) of Gnosticism. They existed originally only in the plane of Non-being, where God had left them free to act in accordance with their own impulses but where there was no danger of their producing the evil which some of them embodied. But they rebelled, left the plane of Non-being and entered the plane of Being, bringing into objective existence the evil which was part of their nature. It was this transfer to a plane which had been forbidden to them that constituted the initial revolt of these entities. Having rebelled, they tried to make themselves equal to God by sending forth spiritual beings dependent on themselves.

Fall of the Jailer

To prevent this threatened proliferation of evil, God created the world of matter, by a kind of condensation or 'densification' of the corrupted and rebellious beings, so that the world could be the stage on which these entities might act freely, exercising their own will-power and evil impulses. But this stage was also their prison, in which they were deprived of any form of communication with God himself.

To provide a jailer, as it were, for the prison-universe which he had created, God sent forth as an emanation from himself the primal or universal man, Adam, whose task was to oppose the evil entities now confined within the material world, to fight against them and keep them in check. Although he had emanated after them, he was their superior in power and glory. The angels and other secondary spiritual creatures were made helpers in the struggle.

The leader of the evil beings plunged the primal man into a kind of rapture, in which he tempted him. Adam contained within himself all human souls and he had the power to provide each of them with a 'glorious form', a garment which it would wear when it emanated from the totality. The Creator himself, however, had to provide the divine spark which would complete each human soul when it came into being. The Tempter persuaded Adam to carry out this creation by himself, making himself, in his turn, the 'first cause'. And Adam did so, breaking the spiritual bond which linked him with God.

As a result, Adam became spiritually degraded, as the evil entities themselves had, and he disappeared. Like a pearl necklace when the string has broken and the pearls roll about in all directions, so human souls roll haphazardly from one form to another, from one life to another, until a messenger from God, called the Mender, comes to receive them and lift them up in to the hands of a new Master of the World, who will remould them into a complete unit, identical with the first one.

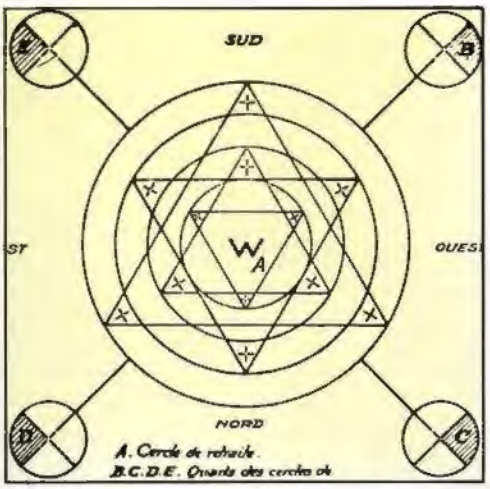
With the primal man, the whole of Nature fell and was overrun by evil. The angels and secondary spiritual powers were also affected, having lost their master, leader and protector. Martinez de Pasqually's 'universal reintegration' applies not only to the reconstitution of the universal man and the repentance of the evil spirits but to the re-establishment of the 'planetary and stellar spirits', the beings which animate the most distant galaxies. For this purpose, the Creator raised up ten Human Guides or 'Chosen Minors': Abel, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Zerubbabel and Jesus. These beings remind men of the truths which, under Satanic influence, they tend to forget.

Magical Operations

The Christianity of the Martinists is decidedly unorthodox and their 'saviour', Jehoshua, the last of the Guides, is not necessarily the same as the Jesus of Nazareth of the Christians. After him come lesser and temporary Guides, or 'Regenerated Minors'. These are the adepts, the masters of spiritual doctrine, and this was the stage which could be reached by those who attained the highest degree, or rank, in the Martinist *Ordre des Chevalier-Maçons, Elus-Cohens de l'Univers* (Order of Knights-Masons, Chosen Priests of the Universe): the degree of *Réaux-Croix*, a term allegedly derived from Hebrew words meaning 'seeing' and 'messenger' or 'herald'. Lower than these are the 'Reconciled Minors', or initiates who have not yet attained the highest rank, and finally the 'Deprived Minors' or 'men of the Flood', the ungodly who are caught in the snare of gross desire, without spirituality.

The Order of the Elus-Cohen had three main divisions, in ascending order the Porch, the Temple and the Shrine, each consisting of three degrees. These were, in the Porch, the Apprentice Cohen, Fellow Cohen and Master Cohen; in the Temple, the Master Elus-Cohen, the Grand Architect and the Grand-Elus of Zerubbabel; and in the Shrine, the Apprentice Réau-Croix, Fellow Réau-Croix and Master Réau-Croix. (Apprentice, Fellow and Master are the three grades of Freemasonry. Cohen is the Hebrew for 'priest' and Elus means 'the elect' or 'the chosen'.)

It was only in the highest degree of the Shrine that evocation of entities belonging to the Divine Plane was carried out. The chief evocation was that of the Mender, Jehoshua, and the basic methods were those of the *Key of Solomon* (see GRIMOIRE), including the use of circles, names of angels, planetary hours and symbols. The magical operations of the lower degrees were intended to establish contact between the operator and the Invisible World. Lofty and beautiful prayers recalled the goal which the Order tried to attain. There were also exorcisms intended to strangle demonic influence in the universe and thwart its



The Martinist hope of 'universal reintegration' applied not only to man but also to the 'planetary and stellar spirits' which animate the galaxies: Martinist diagram, from the collection of M. Robert Ambelain

powers over men, and to combat black magic.

The principal initiation of the Order was the evocation and incorporation of an angelic entity which became permanently linked with the initiate. It acted as his 'guardian angel' and he was its 'vehicle' or 'agent'. From then on, the angel and the man strode forth along the path of 'reintegration'.

The Order's chief centres were its 'chapters' at Foix (established in 1760), Bordeaux (1761), Paris (1767), Lyons (1768) and other French cities, and those on Santo Domingo, including Port-au-Prince (1772); and 'temples' which ranked lower, founded at Amboise, Tours, Blois and Poitiers in 1767. After the death of Martinez de Pasqually the Order declined and in 1781 was allowed to lapse by the Order's then Grand Master, Sebastian de las Casas.

Jean-Baptiste Willermoz tried to perpetuate Martinist teaching in the secret degrees of the Order of the Holy City, founded at Lyons in 1778. Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin is said to have established a small personal school of his own in 1779. The Martinist Order which the French occultist Papus (see PAPUS) took over in the 1890s lacked any genuine initiatory connections with the original Order.

ROBERT AMBELAIN

Sonia Halliday

Martyrs

Those who suffer for a cause, especially early Christians who died rather than renounce their faith; the first Christian martyr was St Stephen, who died by stoning (Acts, chapter 7); from at least the 2nd century there were festivals in honour of martyrs; parents named children for them and pictures of them (St Laurence and the gridiron, St Catherine and the spiked wheel, St Sebastian riddled with arrows, and many others) became objects of popular devotion.

See SAINTS.

No special honour was accorded to the mother of Christ in early times, yet her exaltation to supernatural status increased steadily; later the cult of the Virgin Mary almost seemed to eclipse that of Christ himself

MARY

THE DEVELOPMENT of the cult of the Virgin Mary forms an interesting and significant aspect of Christianity. It reveals the interaction of theological speculation and the demands of popular faith. The latter factor is of special interest for both the comparative study and the psychology of religion. It demonstrates the importance of the female in the thought and feelings of ordinary people when expressed in religious faith and practice. Christianity in its original form, like the Judaism from which it derived, was masculine in character. It conceived of God in terms of 'Father', and Christ as 'Son'; there was no divine 'Mother'. The Virgin Mary came to fill this need.

The earliest records of Christianity reveal an interesting situation concerning the status of the mother of Jesus. The Epistles of St Paul, which were written about 20 years after the Crucifixion, contain no mention of Mary. This omission is the more remarkable in view of the later accounts of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. For Paul laid great stress on virginity, and it would surely have greatly strengthened his case to have cited the Virgin Birth, if he had known of it. The evidence of the next Christian writing, the gospel of Mark, is equally curious. It is silent about the Virgin Birth, and it represents Jesus as rejecting a suggestion that his mother had a special status (Mark 3.31–5); the later gospel of Luke (11.27–28) records an even more precise rejection. These passages would seem to indicate a kind of official discouragement of a tendency to accord special honour to Mary.

However, the gospel of Matthew (1.18–25) and also that of Luke (1.26–38), contributed powerfully to the presentation of Mary as a unique personage through their accounts of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. Luke, in particular, endows Mary with supernatural honour by recording the angel Gabriel's salutation: 'Hail, favoured one, the Lord is with thee', and Elizabeth's reference to Mary as 'the mother of my Lord' (1.28,43), as well as by the words of the Magnificat (1.46–55).

These two accounts of the Virgin Birth constitute a crux of New Testament research. They date from c 80–90 AD, and appear to be variants of a tradition that the birth of Jesus had not been a normal human birth. Since the Virgin Birth is not recorded by the gospel of Mark, which was written about 71 AD, it would seem that the notion had not by that date become an established tradition. How it did originate remains a mystery. Jewish rabbinical tradition apparently knew Jesus as 'Jesus ben Pandera', insinuating that he was the illegitimate son of Mary and a Roman soldier named Pandera, or Pantere. It is generally thought that this name was a corruption of the Greek word *Parthenos*, virgin, and that it derived from an early Jewish attempt to calumniate Jesus, by misrepresenting the Christian tradition.

Whatever the origin of the story of the Virgin Birth, it is certain that the idea was primarily intended to attest to the divine nature of Jesus, and not to exalt the status of his mother. So far as the New Testament evidence goes, Mary had no special position in the original Christian community at Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles only mentions the fact of her membership of that community (1.14), and the gospel of John records that the dying Jesus commended his mother to his favourite disciple.

The New Testament writings clearly indicate that Mary had other children; mention of Jesus being her first-born son occurs in Luke 2.7; Mark 3.32, 6.3; Acts 1.14. James, the brother of Jesus, became leader of the Church of Jerusalem (Galatians 1.19, 2.9; Acts 15.13, 21.18) doubtless because he was the chief male relative. It would seem that Joseph, Mary's husband, had died at an earlier date.

Emphasis on Purity

The evidence of the New Testament suggests, then, rather surprisingly, that Mary was accorded no particular prestige or status among the 1st century Christians, despite the marvellous story of the Virgin Birth. This situation continued in the Church until the 4th century, although

William Macquitty

Devotion to the mother of Jesus as the Queen of Heaven 'demonstrated the importance of the female in the thought and feelings of ordinary people when expressed in religious faith and practice', and veneration of Mary continues in Roman Catholic countries *Above* Late 15th century German wood carving of the death of the Virgin *Left* Figure of the Madonna in the Easter Procession at Trapani, Sicily

there were signs of a new interest in Mary that presaged her future exaltation.

In the 2nd century an apocryphal writing known as the Book of James or the Protoevangelium was produced. Its purpose was to supply an account of Mary from her birth until she bore Jesus. It was doubtless composed in response to a popular demand for more knowledge about Mary than the meagre statements in the New Testament gave. The Protoevangelium tells how the parents of Mary, Joachim and Anna, were divinely informed of her coming birth. Then, at the age of three, Mary is taken to the Temple, where she lived until she was 12 years old. The divine selection of Joseph, a widower, to be her guardian is next described, followed by a circumstantial account of the events that led up to the birth of Jesus. Throughout the work, supreme emphasis is laid upon the purity and virginity of Mary, thus anticipating that aspect of Mary which becomes a major theme of her later cult.

The great controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries concerning the divinity of Christ and the constitution of his nature increased the theological importance of Mary. The champion of orthodoxy, St Athanasius, designated Mary *theotokos*, 'God-bearer', because 'from the flesh of holy Mary the Son of God by essence and nature did proceed'. Thus, in order to refute the suggestion that Jesus was a man raised to divinity, the significance of the Virgin Birth was stressed, and Mary as the Mother of God was consequently exalted. The title Theotokos became the test-word of orthodoxy in the later struggle with Nestorianism, which maintained that in the Incarnate Christ there were two persons, one divine and the other human. The title was formally incorporated in the definition of the orthodox faith proclaimed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

The development of the doctrine of original sin, the taint of which was transmitted to each newly-conceived child through the sex act, led to increasing emphasis upon the Virgin Birth of Christ. St Augustine of Hippo, the great exponent of the doctrine, wrote of the Virgin Mary, 'her body transmits it not to the Body of Christ, which she did not conceive through concupiscence'. It was inevitable from the stress laid upon Mary's virginity when she conceived Christ, that the idea of her perpetual virginity (*aeiparthenos*) should emerge. The brothers and sisters of Jesus, to whom reference is made in the New Testament writings, were in consequence held to be the children of Joseph by an earlier wife. Jerome, the great 5th century protagonist of virginity as the superior form of the Christian life, wrote

Our Lady of Flowers

The association between divinity and plants is very ancient, and very early in mythological evolution plants, as well as birds and beasts, became attributes of divinities. One aspect of the primordial Great Mother, the primal originating force, is that of Our Lady of the Plants. The names of innumerable wild flowers reveal that they are proper to a Lady whose earlier names mostly are lost, but who is now called Mary. Lady's-bedstraw, lady's slipper, and so on, are Our Lady's. . . . Implicitly the Marian symbols include the whole world of plants, but her attributes are especially, besides the ear of corn that is also the attribute of the zodiacal *Virgo*, the lily of virginity, the violet of humility and the rose. Both in literature and in painting they are constant mediaeval references, as in St Bernard's exclamation: 'O Mary, thou art the violet of humility, the lily of purity, the rose of love.'

. . . The Virgin Mary's diadem of twelve stars derives from representations of Venus crowned with stars. And the ear of corn, which is the symbol of life springing up out of death, belongs also to the Great Mother Demeter (whom, as Cybele, the ancients garlanded with roses) and was shown, during the Greater Mysteries of Eleusis, at the sacred birth, when the immense proclamation was made: 'Our Lady has borne the Divine Child!'

Eithne Wilkins *The Rose-Garden Game*

Axel Poignant

triumphantly: 'Therefore the virgin Christ and the Virgin Mary have dedicated in themselves the first-fruits of the virginity of both sexes.'

Despite this increasing exaltation of Mary, no official sanction or encouragement was given to her cult. But popular enthusiasm could not be controlled, and for many ordinary Christians Mary took the place of the great goddesses of the Graeco-Roman world such as Isis or Cybele. It is in this context that Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (c 315–403), makes significant reference to 'certain women in Thrace, Scythia and Arabia' who worshipped Mary, offering to her a certain kind of cake, as was customary to pagan goddesses. Epiphanius condemned the practice, commenting, 'Let Mary be had in honour, but let the Lord be worshipped.'

The practice of invoking Mary's aid began to develop about this time. The earliest mention of the practice is made in the 4th century by Gregory Nazianzen, who commends the 'imploring of Mary the Virgin to come to the aid of a virgin in peril'. Such intercession quickly became established, and the Emperor Justinian (483–565) sought her help to govern and preserve the Roman Empire, while his general Narses turned to her for guidance in battle. Reference to the intercession of the Virgin also became an established feature of the liturgies of the Eastern Church and the Roman Mass. Festivals in honour of the Virgin were likewise instituted: those of her Purification (2 February) and the Annunciation (25 March) were originally feasts of the presentation of Christ in the Temple and of his conception; but Christian devotion changed their designations by concentrating on Mary's part in the incidents concerned. These festivals date respectively from the 6th and 7th centuries; festivals of Mary's Nativity (8 September) and *Dormitio* or 'Falling Asleep' (15 August) also began to be celebrated.

The last mentioned festival is of peculiar significance for the cult of Mary. It is more generally known as the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and commemorates the belief that at her death she was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. The belief seems to have originated in Christian Gnostic circles in the 4th century; but it soon commended itself to orthodox devotion. In the Western Church it was formulated as a doctrine by Gregory of Tours (d 594). In the Eastern Church, the great theologian St John Damascene (c 675–749), endorsed its supporting legend that all the Apostles witnessed the death of the Virgin, but when her tomb was opened later it was found to be empty. St John Damascene designated Mary *mesitis* (mediatrix), a title significant for her future cult.

This exaltation and veneration of the Virgin Mary steadily increased during the Middle Ages until it became a veritable cult, at times seeming to eclipse that of Christ in popular devotion. Stories multiplied of the efficacy of Mary's intercession and of her miraculous intervention to save those specially devoted to her. The Venerable Bede tells how St Wilfrid of Ripon (634–709) at the crisis of what seemed to be a mortal illness, saw a vision of the Archangel Michael, who told him that he was sent by Christ to call him back from death, because of 'the intercession of His blessed and ever virgin mother Mary'.

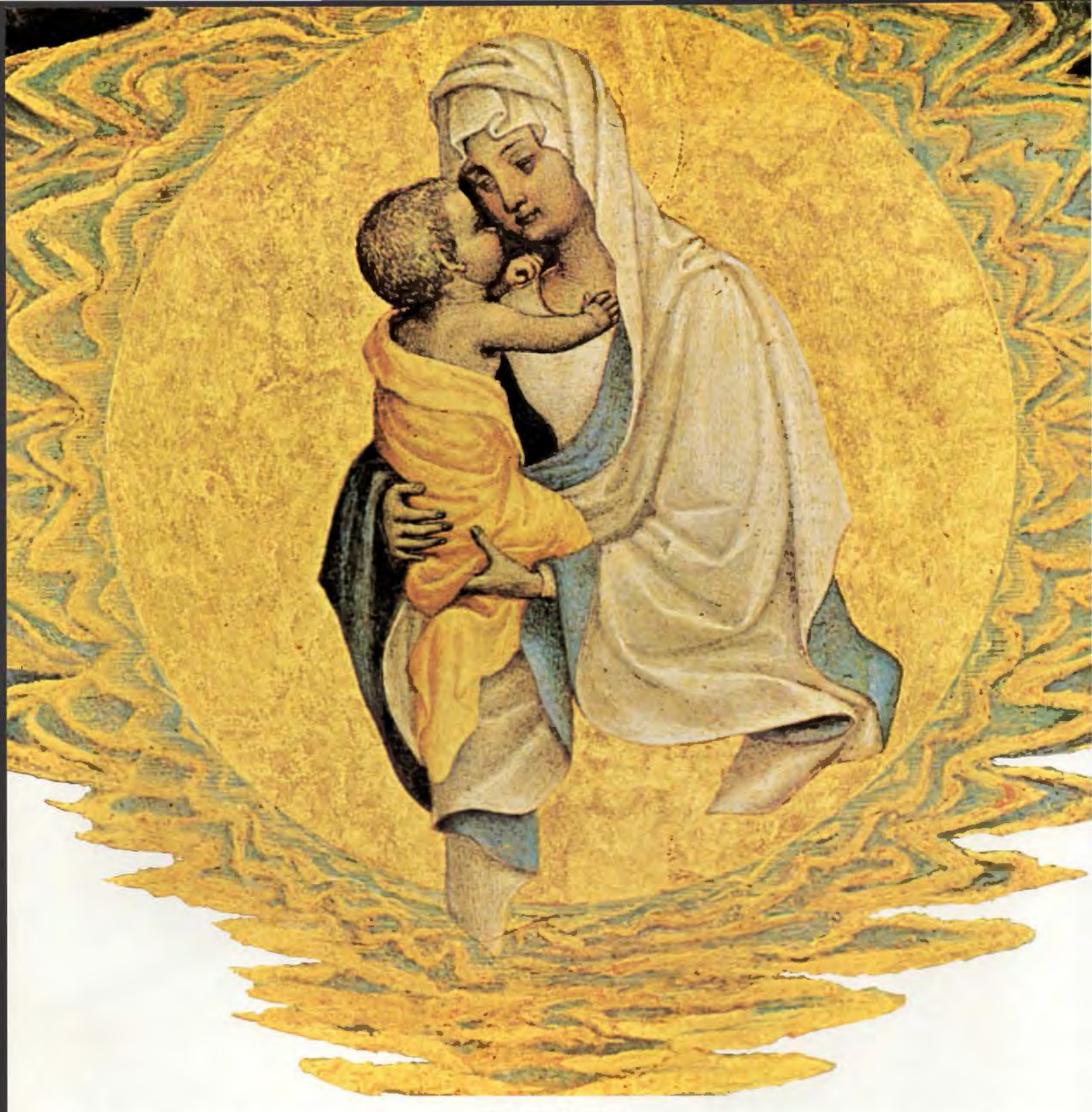
Queen of Heaven

Medieval cult of the Virgin embodied two major themes: her divinization and her role as mediatrix or reconciler. The theologian Peter Damian (1007–72) referred to Mary as *deificata* (deified), and described how Christ and his heavenly court had received her at her Assumption. Her coronation by Christ as Queen of Heaven was one of the major scenes sculptured over the portals of cathedrals and churches, many of which were dedicated to her. In contrast to the simple human portraits of the Virgin in the early Christian art of the catacombs, she was now presented in regal attire, enthroned and crowned like a Byzantine empress, as for example in the famous window in the great Cathedral of Chartres known as 'Notre-Dame de la belle verrière', (Our Lady of the beautiful stained glass window). She was even represented in some pictures with the Trinity revealed in her womb; sometimes she was shown seated side by side with God the Father and God the Son thus forming with them a divine Trinity of Father, Son and Virgin Mother. Theologians were careful, however, to distinguish between the worship due to the Father and the Son, and the veneration that might be accorded to Mary. They defined three orders of service: *latria* or worship, due only to God; *dulia*, the honour given to the saints; and *hyperdulia*, the veneration reserved to Mary. But this careful distinction could not be maintained in popular devotion, and Mary was often worshipped as though she were a goddess.

Mary's role as the mediatrix is significantly stated by St Bernard (1090–1153): 'If you fear the Father there is Christ the Mediator. If you fear Him, Who, though Man, is also God, there is His Mother, pure humanity. She will listen to thee. The Son will listen to her, the Father to Him.' It was at the Last Judgement that Mary's mediation was especially sought, and it became of an established theme of the medieval Doom (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). In what is known as the *Deisis*, Mary is shown, sometimes with St John, kneeling and supplicating the stern Christ, as he sits in final judgement on mankind, to have mercy on human frailty. A particularly interesting version of the theme occurs on the famous *Mappa Mundi* Picture (c1300) in Hereford Cathedral. The Virgin is there represented as exposing her maternal breasts and invoking her Son to spare sinful humanity.

The New Testament contains accounts of the Virgin Birth of Jesus but suggests that Mary enjoyed no particular prestige or status in 1st century Christianity. But later, 'for many ordinary Christians Mary took the place of the great goddesses of the Graeco-Roman world' ***Right*** **Virgin and Child: Italian, 15th century** ***Below*** **Our Lady of the Pines, a regal and bejewelled Madonna of the Canary Islands**

William Macquitty



National Gallery/Michael Holford

Mary was seen as the ideal of womanhood, beautiful, virtuous and merciful, who interceded for sinners. Theologians distinguished between the worship due only to God and the veneration to be accorded to Mary. The distinction was blurred in popular devotion: detail from *St Anthony and St George*, by Pisanello

The cult of the Virgin during the Middle Ages had many far-reaching effects. Its influence can be traced in the ideals of chivalry and in the poetry of the troubadours. She represented the ideal woman, both in beauty and virtue, and she inspired some of the finest creations of medieval art. An immense devotional and hagiographical literature grew up around her. In many places her alleged relics attracted crowds of pilgrims; in England, Walsingham was a notable shrine of her cult.

Mariolatry (worship of the Virgin) inevitably incurred the condemnation of the Reformers, and in Protestant countries the veneration of Mary abruptly ceased. In Catholic countries her cult has continued to flourish, with the foundation of famous new cult centres at Lourdes (1858 – see LOURDES) and Fatima (1917), in response to visions seen in these places. Papal authority has also erected two long established beliefs about Mary into dogmas of the Roman Catholic faith. In 1854 Pope Pius IX promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which was a kind of logical corollary to the Virgin Birth of Christ. It maintained that, from the very moment of conception, Mary had been kept free, by divine grace, from all stain of original sin. The dogma of her Assumption, which had been a popular belief from the 4th century, was finally promulgated by Pope Pius XII in 1950, thus officially completing the supernatural cycle of the career of Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Fresh blood is one of the regular items of the Masai diet – appropriately, since the entire training of a boy of this tribe is geared to turning him into a fighter

MASAI

A NOMADIC PEOPLE occupying most of Central Kenya and Tanzania, the Masai once roamed freely all over the plains of East Africa with their cattle. Because they had to keep moving to find enough fodder for their herds, they had no sophisticated agriculture and no permanent settlements. They have never recognized any authority but that of their own leaders. According to their legends, there was nobody else who mattered except the Masai and their cows.

In appearance, they are a tall, well-built people, dark of skin but non-Negro in racial origin. They are easily recognizable as the men go practically naked, the heads of the women are shaved, the middle teeth of the lower jaw are pulled out, and their characteristic 'at ease' posture is standing on one leg.

The Masai's entire social structure, religion, tradition and myth, which are now threatened by the encroachment of civilization, are based on war and cattle-herding. The men do the fighting; the women everything else that needs to be done. Work is beneath a man's dignity, since all adult males are either serving or retired warriors. The young men spend all their time in the bush, looking for fights or gorging themselves on meat; the middle-aged men occupy themselves with animal husbandry; and the older men do nothing at all. Women and very young children keep the simple economy of the tribe working.

Two Masai women singing at a gathering: their shaven heads are marks of the 'crude masculine contempt' for women in a warlike, male-oriented society

At about the age of 13, the boys are taken from their homes and put into separate villages where they are schooled to become warriors. They are now subject to the strictest discipline. Smoking and drinking (the Masai are great drinkers of beer) are forbidden. Their diet consists only of meat,

the fresh blood of cows, and milk. The climax of months of severe training is the circumcision ceremony performed by the medicine-man with a stone knife. A boy who cries out or winces during this painful operation is deemed unworthy of becoming a warrior. Girls who undergo circumcision (clitoridectomy) are allowed to express their feelings.

After the circumcision ceremony, the boys are officially proclaimed Junior Warriors, and all those admitted to the ranks at the same time are said to belong to the same 'Age', or clan. They will be known collectively by a distinctive name which they choose for themselves, like 'White Swords', or 'The Invincibles'.

The Junior Warriors plait their hair into a pigtail and, except for a small skin thrown over their shoulders, go absolutely naked. They live in separate *kraals* with the unmarried girls of their own 'Age', with whom they are allowed to cohabit freely. These are girls who have not yet been circumcised, though once they have undergone this mutilation, they are expected to settle down as wives and mothers.

It is this clan of Junior Warriors that makes up the standing army of the Masai, a cadre of young, virile men who attack the enemy, conquer new territory for the wandering herds, and amuse themselves by going on lion hunts, allowing the rest of the community to live in peace and security.

At about the age of 25, the Junior Warriors move up into the class of Senior Warriors. These are the older fighters who now become the reserve troops in case of a serious war. But, in general, the Senior Warriors accept the fact that their period of active service is ended and they are now free to marry and devote their time to the management of their cattle. Senior Warriors as they grow older move up into the class of Junior Elders, a group which like the middle-aged in any other society begins to take life more easily and to think more of family affairs.

Masai women, on the other hand, have no rights and no status in this all-male military society and are regarded merely as the bearers of children and cattle-herders. In fact, the crude masculine contempt of the Masai for women may be measured by the barbarous practice of female circumcision, the shaven head, and the iron neck and leg bands which symbolize feminine serfdom.

Junior Elders in the course of time become Seniors who, by reason of their age and experience, become the counsellors of the community. But in the kind of pastoral society typical of the Masai, every man is king in his own domain, and there are few political or social problems to solve. A Masai proverb has it that 'Happiness is to lie on your back surrounded by many sons'.

Below **Masai woman: 'the men do the fighting, the women everything else that needs to be done. Work is beneath a man's dignity, since all adult males are either serving or retired warriors'** ***Right*** **Young boys take part in a tribal dance: after months of severe training, they will be circumcised and accepted as Junior Warriors**

Federico e Aldo Patellani

Medicine-Man and Surgeon

The nearest approach to a central authority is the *laibon*, or medicine-man, whose influence and importance derive from his powers of divination, prophecy and healing. He is responsible for the religious well-being of the tribe and their cattle, but it does not appear that the laibon enjoys any special relationship with the deity, since the Masai have no definite idea of God. They recognize a Supreme Being they call *Eng-ai* and two lesser gods, one Black and the other Red. The former is beneficent; the latter maleficent. The former sends rain; the latter droughts.

These gods, as in nearly all African religions, are so remote from ordinary humans that religion cannot be said to be a dynamic force in the life of the Masai. The medicine-man, therefore, acts as an intermediary, but relies on his own magical powers to deal with current problems and to forecast the future. He dispenses charms to the warriors when they go on raids; acts as high priest at tribal ceremonies; interprets dreams; makes rain; and serves as physician and surgeon.

His practices and procedures may strike the Western observer as the usual mixture of hocus-pocus and mumbo-jumbo associated with the witch-doctor of Victorian African travellers. On the other hand, he has a variety of herbal and magical (psychiatric) cures based on empirical remedies handed down by his predecessors over hundreds of years. His principal task is to attend to wounds in view of the many casualties among the warriors.

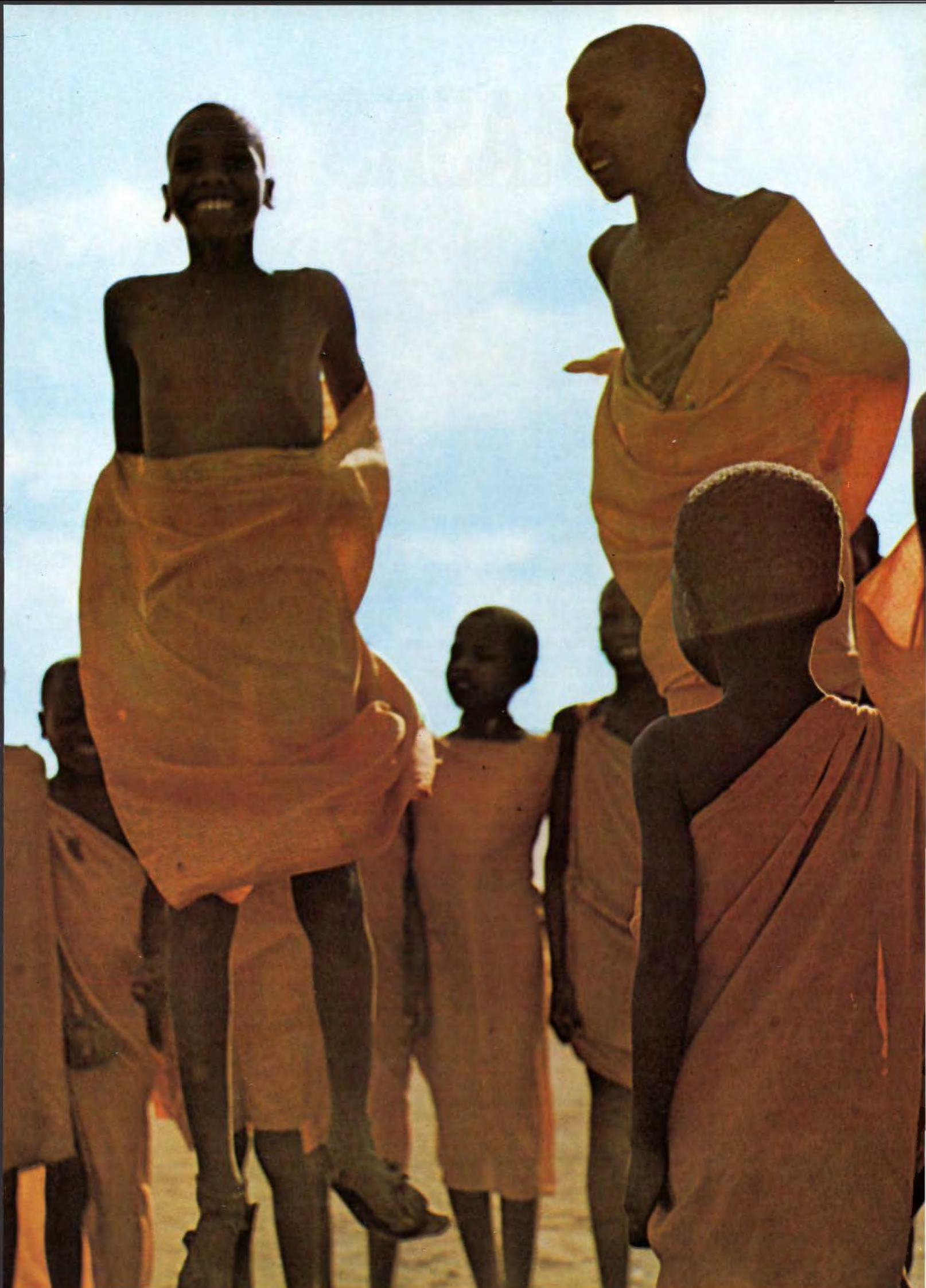
Another important function of the medicine-man is to supervise the trials by ordeal, the basis of the judicial system throughout pagan Africa. Trial by ordeal is practised whenever black magic is suspected and it usually consists of administering poison to those who may be guilty, the theory being that the innocent will be spared. But the Masai variety of this dreaded ordeal is relatively humane, since a suspect has only to say the formula 'If I have done this deed, may God forgive me', drink the fresh blood of a cow, and await the results. If he is guilty, it is firmly believed that he will drop dead. If he is not, no harm will befall him.

Because their animals need large tracts of land, the Masai have become a warrior race, with nothing else mattering to them but the protection of their herds. They neither engage in agriculture nor even in hunting, except for lions and beasts of prey which are a danger to their livestock. The warriors refuse to eat vegetables, fruit, and even game. Their staple diet is meat and the blood they draw off from the jugular veins of their cows.

Even during the British colonial period, the Masai managed to remain aloof and independent, despite the efforts of administrators, missionaries, schoolmasters, tax-collectors, and all those who sought to change their way of life. Today, their problems are the inroads of civilization, the shrinkage of available pasturage, and the determination of the new states to abolish the old tribal patterns of African society.

JAMES WELLARD

John Moss



MASKS

Means to a Change of Identity

Put on a mask and you become a different person. In many primitive societies a mask is more than a means of changing your appearance; it is a link with the world of the spirits, a channel by which men can tap the force possessed by supernatural beings

SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES masks or 'false faces' have been used for a variety of purposes, both religious and profane. Their distribution ranges widely over time and space. Whereas in some civilizations masks play an important part in ritual activities, there are regions of the world where the use of masks has never been known.

The earliest pictorial representations of human beings wearing masks occur in the cave paintings and rock engravings of the Old Stone Age of France and Spain (c 20,000 BC) where dancers wearing animal masks are depicted next to animals of the same species (see CAVE ART; ICONOGRAPHY). Comparisons with similar masked dances among present-day primitive peoples suggest that the dances performed by Paleolithic hunters were intended to bring bison and other game under their influence by magical means. There are also representations of masked men whose attire combines parts of several different animals. Disguise in animal shape may also have had a practical purpose. Dressed in the skin of an animal a hunter can creep unsuspected near to his prey, and this device is still used by such primitive tribes as the African Bushmen and was at one time common practice among many Indian tribes of North America.

Hidden Identity

In primitive societies of today, masks are used mainly for ritual purposes. The donning of a mask is believed to change a man's identity and faculties, for the assumed appearance is held to affect the wearer's inner nature and to assimilate it to that of the being represented by the mask. Thus a masked person is not simply a man or woman whose real identity is hidden, but he is an enigmatic entity standing outside the sphere of ordinary conduct and enjoying a freedom of movement and expression denied to ordinary men. As he has submerged his own identity by the wearing of a mask, other beings, such as an ancestor, a spirit or a totem-animal, are enabled to manifest themselves in his body and voice.

The material shapes of masks are of infinite variety. A moulded or carved surface representing the anterior half of the head and usually worn over the face of a person may be made of wood, metal, cloth, leather, clay or, in rare cases, even stone. A special type of mask, occurring in Melanesia, consists of part of a human skull combined with other materials to form a complete covering for the wearer's head and face. The transforming effect of a mask may also be achieved by applying thick layers of paste or paint to the face of a person, to which feathers and similar materials are then attached. Such mask-like disguises, usually combined with the painting of the entire body, occurred among Australian aboriginals and among the Fuegians of South America. In a highly-developed artistic form the practice of building up a mask on a human face, is used by the Katha-Kali dancers of south-west India.

The mask in the narrow sense, which covers the face of the wearer, usually forms only part of the disguise. Elaborate costumes, often of fantastic type, complete the attire disguising a person's normal appearance. Where masks represent supernatural beings, such as gods or ancestor spirits, the illusion of superhuman height is achieved by a structure supporting an artificial head and face, which surmounts the real head of the dancer or actor. A similar effect is achieved by fitting the wearer with stilts, which are often covered by long flowing garments. The great dance masks of Melanesia are enormous structures made of bark cloth stretched over bamboo and cane frames, which are carried by one or more dancers. Such masks are intended to impress and fill with awe the uninitiated who are made to believe that divinities and ancestor spirits manifest themselves in these gigantic structures. To achieve this deception it is essential that the human wearers of the masks are completely hidden and unrecognizable.

Repository of Sacred Power

According to their function masks can be divided into two categories, the religious and the profane; the former category, comprising a large number of sub-types, predominates in pre-literate societies as well as in several historic civilizations. Among the most striking and spectacular masks are those worn by dancers in the ritual performances of various West African tribes. The Dogon of the western Sudan commemorate the death of their first tribal ancestor by ceremonies which involve the use of a series of masks of different degrees of sanctity and of varying appearance. The vertical wooden rectangle of these helmet-type masks, surmounted by upright carved animal ears, represents the main form and by its crude shape and the painting in white, black and red creates a dramatic effect; such masks are used in connection with initiation rites, burial and other ceremonies.

The task of carving these masks, which attract great magical powers, was considered highly dangerous and the wood-carvers protected themselves by observing many taboos and performing a series of propitiatory rites. They first offered a sacrifice to the greatest of all Dogon masks, which represents the deified original tribal ancestor. The making of the masks was a common enterprise of all the dancers, who assembled for the purpose outside the village. Only the fully initiated members of a secret society could with impunity approach the mask and vessel of the divine ancestor. Every 60 years they arranged for a solemn rite in the course of which the supreme ancestral mask was renewed. It is from this central mask, representing the tribal ancestor, that all the other masks derive the power to retain in themselves the imperishable life-force of the animal or departed person whom they symbolize. The transmission of this force is produced by sacred rites laid down by tradition.

Among other West African tribes, such as the Kono of Guinea, the carving of masks is equally surrounded by elaborate ceremonial. The grand master of the tribal initiation rites is the supreme guardian of all the masks. His function is hereditary, and he controls the wearers of the individual masks. Each of these receives special instructions as to how to minister to the needs of the mask of which he is in charge. He is thought of as the host of the mask and the spiritual essence dwelling in its shape.

Although the masks are fashioned by human hand, they are believed to have an individual existence, independent of the craftsmen who gave them their material

shape and the dancers through whom they ultimately come to life. The myths never speak of the manufacture of masks but always of their discovery, and they are believed to have existed long before they came into the possession of men. In the mask resides the subtle spirit-substance which invests them with their latent power. The task of the sculptor thus consists in providing the mask – or rather the spirit of the mask – with a new vehicle when the old one has deteriorated and become unusable. The masks are the property and cult objects of the secret societies, which play so important a role in the tribal initiation rites.

Personifying the Supernatural

In Melanesia, another area where ritual masks have been widely used, the masks were mainly associated with the cult of ancestors. In the islands of New Ireland, New Britain, the Solomons and most of the New Hebrides, this cult has largely succumbed to contact with European civilization, but in some parts of New Guinea it has retained its importance. In all these regions the masks, carved of wood or constructed of bark cloth, and sometimes more than 15 feet tall, were produced and guarded by the members of secret societies or men's organizations. Among the Papuans of south-west New Guinea masks are employed in the ritual of death. This ritual aims at expelling from the village the spirits of the dead who might endanger the living, in particular the spirits of those who fall victims to headhunters. These spirits are personified in masked dancers, who should be kinsmen of the deceased. The manufacture of the masks very frequently extends over four to five months, and is surrounded by great mystery.

When the masks are completed they are stored in the ceremonial men's house until the day of the final rites. At that time the kinsmen of the recently deceased take the

C. M. Dixon

Masks are sometimes marks of distinction: 'the human guardian and wearer of the mask partakes of the power of the spirit or divinity which the mask symbolizes and is thereby elevated above the common mass of the uninitiated', 16th century mask worn at the waist by the Oba or ruler of the West African kingdom of Benin; now in the British Museum

Camera Press London

Homer Sykes

In the Sepik region of New Guinea, masks combining human with bird or animal elements, give them an especially demonic and terrifying character

Wearing a mask, frequently with an elaborate costume as well, is a way of concealing and submerging your own personality and identifying yourself with a spirit or other supernatural character in dance or drama *Above left* This Nigerian dancer wears a mask of anonymity *Above* A masked figure named Gulliver appears in May Day celebrations at Minehead in Somerset *Right* Singhalese dance mask with grotesque figures

newly-made masks to the forest, and attach fresh green leaves to them and to their own bodies. Thus attired they emerge from the forest at dusk, and then dance for the whole night, imitating the movements of the cassowary, the bird associated with the sun. In the moment of sunrise, when the sun is believed to emerge from the land of the dead, the remaining men of the village attack the dancers and defeat them in a sham fight. Their victory symbolizes the successful struggle of the living over the dead. The dancers seek refuge in the house of ceremonies, and discard their masks. These are henceforth devoid of sanctity and ritual value.

In the Sepik region of New Guinea, masks carved with stone tools combined human with bird or animal elements. Their elongation and ambiguous animal forms give them an especially demonic and terrifying character. Some of these masks served in public harvest and initiation rites, others depicted the semi-supernatural founders of clans in ceremonies of a more secret nature. The uninitiated – women, children and strangers – were rigidly excluded from participating in these rites.

Masks representing supernatural beings, half-human and half-animal, occur also in other parts of the world, notably among the Indians of the north-west coast of America. Like many primitive peoples, these Indians believe that animals as well as humans are animated by souls and that the barrier between them is slight. Their sculptured masks depict strange creatures with human faces and animal horns, or beings combining the elements of men and birds. In the ceremonies of these Indians masks with moving parts played an important role. The carved and painted flaps of such masks were hinged; when closed they represented ravens

Michael Holford

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Above **Masked dancers perform before a temple in Nepal during the festival of Indra Jatra. The yellow figure represents the goddess Kali and the red figure is an evil spirit who is killed by Kali at the end of the dance *Right* Mask representing the 'spirit of wealth', made by miners in Bolivia in the mid-1960s in celebration of the wealth yielded by the mine: now in the Horniman Museum**

and concealed the image of a human face. At an appropriate moment in the recounting of a legend the performer pulled open the flaps to reveal a transformation from animal to man.

The Eskimo carve wooden masks in the likeness of fish and various sea animals. These masks are not intended to represent the animals themselves, but to symbolize the numerous spirits associated with animals. Of a different order are the masks of shamans – priests and spirit-media – who establish contact between man and the world of supernatural beings (see SHAMAN). The shamans of the Eskimo have masks representing their guardian spirits, and they believe that by wearing these masks they establish a mystic link with the spirit concerned and induce a state of trance and possession. Other Eskimo masks depict a face which is half-human and half-animal, and they are used in rites and dances designed to propitiate the spirits of certain animals in order to prevent them from shunning man and depriving him of the animals necessary for his subsistence.

Different in function and shape are the death-masks used to cover the face of the dead before or after burial. Such masks made of gold, silver, bronze, terracotta or stone occurred in many ancient civilizations including those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, the Crimea, the Danube valley and parts of ancient France and Britain. Death-masks of precious metal covered the faces of the embalmed pharaohs, and from Egypt the custom spread to Syria and Mycene. The ancient Etruscans also buried their dead with masks of thin bronze. In Southeast Asia gold masks were regularly placed on the faces of dead kings of Cambodia and Siam, and the Shans of Burma used a metal mask to cover the face of a dead chief. In ancient Mexico masks,

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Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum Innsbruck

William MacQuitty

Museum of the American Indian

In Tibet it was usual for the spectators to prostrate themselves before the masked figures of gods, and to solicit their blessing

Some masks are surrounded by taboos and, though made by human beings, are believed to have their own individual existence, independent of the craftsmen who shaped them and the dancers who wear them: sometimes it is said that these masks are not 'made' but 'discovered'. Hideous, grotesque and terrifying masks, often combining human characteristics with animal or bird forms, may represent evil spirits, or the semi-human ancestors of clans or kin-groups, or ferocious guardian spirits which keep evil forces at bay; they appear in many different types of ritual ***Facing page*** **Devil mask from the Tyrol** ***(above)*****: Tibetan mask of a fierce protective spirit** ***(below)*** ***Above left*** **Horned mask from Bolivia, used in the performance of a devil dance** ***Above right*** **Beaked mask from Indonesia**

some made of jade and other semi-precious stones, were placed on the faces of prominent dead when the corpse was laid out in a grave chamber. They are without openings for mouth and eyes and represent faces of a great calm and beauty.

The Face of a God

In advanced civilizations masks have been mainly used in dramatic performances, both ritual and theatrical. One of the most notable examples of striking and elaborate masks are those worn by lama-dancers in Tibetan temple festivals. These masks, mainly of superhuman size, represent divinities, demons, spirits, historical personages and allegoric figures. They are usually carved of wood and painted in vivid colours. The masked dances are accompanied by the recitation of prayers and sacred texts.

The laymen see in the masked figures not so much lamas enacting gods and demons, but rather the mystic presence of the divinities and demons represented by the masks. In Tibet it was usual for the spectators to prostrate themselves before the masked figures of gods, and to solicit their blessing. The mystery play here assumes the character of an immediate interaction between man and supernatural powers.

Masked dances on the Indonesian island of Bali are also of ritual nature, but in other Asian countries, such as Ceylon, masks originally having religious importance are used in dramatic performances which are

The warrior wearing a mask symbolizing a superior power identifies himself with this force and is thereby fortified in spirit

given for entertainment by professional dancers. Yet, masks are used there also in rites of exorcism and curing, and in these cases masks represent the disease spirits from which the patient is to be freed.

Where the mask has lost its religious significance it can still survive in a secular role. Typical of this development was the role it assumed in the theatre of ancient Greece (see DRAMA). Originally animal masks had been used in the cult of Dionysus and Demeter, the Earth Mother. Later the mask found its way into both the comedies and the tragedies of the classical theatre, where it played an important role. The use of masks enabled actors to double and triple the number of parts they could play during any one performance, and male actors could convincingly play female roles.

Another example of the transference of the mask's function from the religious to the secular sphere occurs in Japan. There masks were originally widely used in religious ritual, and in the 8th century AD dancers in four-eyed masks were charged with the task of warding off demons from the royal palace. Later there developed the institution of court dancers, and out of this grew the classical drama of the *Noh* theatre, in which all actors appear in painted masks.

In Europe the use of ritual masks persists only in some folk customs observed in some remote valleys of Austria and Switzerland, where pagan practices have coexisted with Christianity in a reinterpreted form. The Carnival, celebrated widely in Europe and Latin America, provides an opportunity for the wearing of masks (see FOOL), but the fact that it is a survival of a pagan spring festival is forgotten.

Purpose Behind the Mask

Protection against supernatural dangers is a function of masks worn in certain ritual situations, such as at funerals to avoid recognition by the souls of the dead. Conversely masks are sometimes worn to enhance a warrior's image and to terrify opponents, and this idea underlies the war-masks and use of war-paint among many primitive peoples. The warrior wearing a mask symbolizing a superior power identifies himself with this force and is thereby fortified in spirit. This identification is part

Peter Boyce

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Living Solid Face

Of all the masked gods the strangest and most engaging is that kindly, grotesque creation of the Delaware Indians which goes by the name of Misinghalikun – the Living Solid Face. When Egyptian priests appeared, as Apuleius pictured them, masked as Isis or Horus, they represented a deity that had his proper human form as well as his disguise as an animal. But the Living Solid Face is what it says it is – a mask, a living mask. When the Indians first saw Misinghalikun riding a buck, and herding the deer, it was simply a fir-clad figure with a wooden face, the right half red, the left black. Following a disaster, the Living Solid Face taught the Delawares to make a mask like his, and promised that when they wore it his spirit would go into it. Every year Misinghalikun appears at the ceremonies of the tribe, and on the third day sees them off upon a hunt, the twelfth night he dances in the Big House, where his face is carved upon twelve pillars. His mask, his black bearskin clothes, his turtle rattle, and his stick are kept by a family that burns tobacco before it now and then. The Living Solid Face is a bit of a moralist at the Big House meeting, and, when a parent finds his child weak, sick or disobedient, Misinghalikun is ready to attend. But his main function is general beneficent guidance over the tribe and the hunt.

K. MacGowan and H. Rosse
Masks and Demons

of the nature of masks, and it assumes enormous importance where people wear masks representing gods and other supernatural beings.

.Masks serve also as signs of distinction and classification. Thus all the ritual masks of men's societies have the function of emphasizing the position of the fully initiated members and in some societies distinctive masks are reserved for those who have achieved specific grades in the organization.

The masks of such societies have also the function of concentrating power in the hands of those who are in charge of the sacred objects. Thus they are linked not only with the representation of power, but also with its exercise. The human guardian and wearer of the mask partakes of the power of the divinity or spirit which the mask symbolizes and is thereby elevated above the common mass of the uninitiated. The mask is thus a link with the supernatural world and a channel by which men can tap the force possessed by supernatural beings. Thus masks are and always were primarily means of transformation and identification with the entities of a non-material sphere to which man has access only if he sheds his own identity and enters that of beings existing on a superior plane.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

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Facing page **Ugly masks are still worn by children at parties or on occasions like Hallowe'en in Europe and North America *(left)*: hunchbacked leader of the 'Dance of the Old Men' *(right)* performed at a remote village on the shore of Lake Patzcuaro in Mexico; it is believed that beating the eight 'old men' will bring rain for the crops *Below left* Eskimo mask representing the Watchman of the Sky: Eskimo masks represent the spirits of fish and sea animals, or the guardian spirits of shamans, who wear them to establish a link with the spirits *Below right* Masks may be worn to avoid recognition or to frighten enemies: e simple mask combining both principles is the stocking over the head *Following page* Singhalese mask of a disease spirit, used in healing rituals**

Museum of the American Indian

Peter Boyce

Michael Holford

MASS

THE HEART of Christian worship, the most important ceremony of the Christian Churches, is the Eucharist (from Greek, usually translated 'thanksgiving'), Lord's Supper, Holy Communion or Mass. Almost all Christians celebrate it (though the Quakers, for instance, do not) but its meaning for different denominations has varied considerably. The difficulty and delicacy of recent attempts to find common ground indicate both the importance of the Eucharist and its complexity, the richness of ideas which it contains.

The earliest written reference to the Lord's Supper comes from St Paul in c 55 AD: 'the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it, and said: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (I Corinthians, chapter 11).

The ceremony was evidently already important to Christians, who were following the instructions of Jesus at the Last Supper, the final meal which he ate with his disciples at Passover and which is described, with variations, in three of the gospels (Matthew, chapter 26; Mark, chapter 14; Luke, chapter 22). The Jewish Passover meal celebrated the liberation of God's people from bondage in Egypt. The Christian service celebrated the new 'covenant' or agreement between man and God, established through Christ, and the liberation from the bondage of sin and death made possible by Christ's death and resurrection.

The Eucharist was at first part of the *agape* or 'love feast', the meal which the Christians ate together, presumably as a way of keeping in close touch with each other, as a continuation of Christ's meals with his disciples, and as a mark of their faith, to 'proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.' But at an early stage the Eucharist became a separate ceremony.

A ritual meal is an important element of religions other than Christianity (and in the ancient world formal covenants were often ratified by a sacrifice and a meal). Bitterly contested attempts have been made to show that the Christians borrowed their communion meal from the mystery cults of the Roman world but what is more likely is that similar ideas flourished in a similar climate. Nor is it any discredit to Christianity if other faiths have shared some of its most powerful ideas and emotions (see also FOOD AND DRINK; MYSTERY RELIGIONS).

Bread of Life

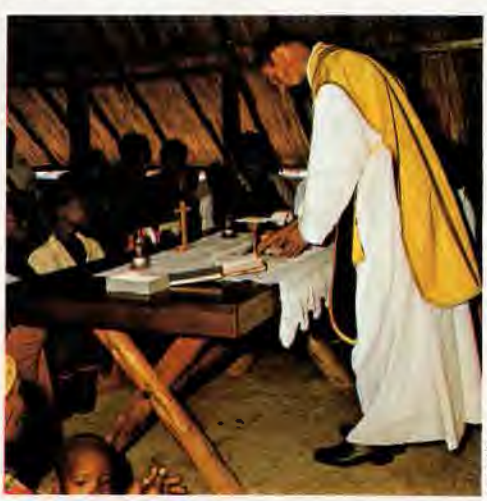
References to the Eucharist in early Christian writers are remarkably rare, presumably because of reluctance to unveil a central mystery of the faith to unbelievers. By at least the 2nd century, those who had not been baptized or who were otherwise regarded as unfit to share the communion were excluded from it. This secrecy prompted accusations of cannibalism from pagans who had heard that the Christians feasted on someone's body and blood.

That there was a mystery, that the eating of bread and drinking of wine were not performed simply 'in remembrance', is clear from St Paul. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation (or communion) in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation (or communion) in the body of Christ?' (I Corinthians 10.16). And St John's gospel (chapter 6) quotes Jesus as saying: 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst . . . He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats of me will live because of me.'

The precise nature of the mystery, however, is in dispute. Most Christians would agree that Christ is in some way present in the Communion, that the ceremony is a channel of God's grace to the believer (the word Eucharist contains the Greek *charis*, 'grace'), and that through it the communicant gains at least a sense of closeness to Christ and to other Christians. Beyond this, the Communion may be thought of as primarily a commemoration of the Last Supper, or as a re-enactment of it, in which Christ is present with 'the two or three who are gathered together', as he was originally present with his disciples. Similarly, it may be seen as a commemoration of the sacrifice on the Cross, the breaking of Christ's body and outpouring of his blood which atoned for human sin, or as a re-enactment of it, a fresh offering of that sacrifice to God. The consumption of the elements (the bread and wine) may be regarded as symbolic, or as a spiritual feeding upon the Saviour, or as a physical consumption of the body and blood through which the communicant becomes one with Christ. And again, the sacrament may be the 'bread of life' or 'medicine of immortality' in a symbolic, a spiritual or a literal and physical sense.

The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation was officially adopted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper, repeated by the priest assuming the person of Christ, change the 'substance' (the underlying reality) of the elements into Christ's body and blood, though the outward appearance (the 'species' or 'accidents') of the bread and wine remains unaltered. Many Protestants have denied this doctrine, often interpreting the 'real presence' of Christ in the sacrament in a spiritual or symbolic sense, and many have distrusted what they regard as superstitious adoration of the consecrated elements, including the practice of reserving the sacrament – placing the consecrated elements on the altar to be adored by the faithful. Protestants have also quarrelled with the Roman Catholic doctrine that in the Mass the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is re-presented to God.

The Mass, Holy Communion or Lord's Supper is the most important ceremony of almost all Christian denominations



G. Cubitt

Broadly speaking, the Eastern Churches have interpreted the Eucharist in basically the same way as the Roman Catholic Church, though their forms of service differ from the Mass in various ways. Most Protestant Communion services are based on the Mass, though with important differences.

Not surprisingly, the Mass came to be regarded as a powerful magical ceremony. Already in the 2nd century, St Irenaeus accused the Gnostic teacher Marcus of perverting the Eucharist to the worship of a female divinity called Charis (Grace), pretending to turn cups of wine into her blood so that those who drank believed that Charis flowed into them. In 694 the Council of Toledo condemned the practice of saying Mass for the dead in the name of a living man, with the intention of striking him dead (see also BLACK MASS).

From the early Middle Ages, the sacramental bread was made in the form of flat unleavened wafers called 'hosts' (from Latin *hostia*, 'victim') and the consecrated host, as the body of Christ and so the container of divine power, was thought to be a powerful weapon of sorcery. Witches were accused of stealing consecrated hosts for magical and Satanic purposes, and in fact all through Christian history churches have been troubled by thefts of hosts.

An important element of belief in the magical efficacy of the Mass was the fact that the Church itself put the ceremony to many uses. Masses were said for the souls of the dead, for the sick, for rain, for good weather, for the protection of travellers, over cattle or farm tools or fishing boats to bless them and bring a good yield. The doctrine that a priest could say Mass effectively even if he was in a state of sin (because he said it in the person of Christ, not in his own person) heightened the impression of the Mass as a ceremony containing magical power regardless of the motives and purposes for which it was used.

(See also SACRAMENTS.)

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MASTERS

THE MASTERS of occult belief are adepts who have achieved the summit of perfection but who have chosen to remain on earth, usually unknown to the majority of mankind but guiding humanity in wisdom by inspiring gifted individuals. They include the founders of the great religions and they have a variety of honorific titles – Mahatmas, the Hierarchy, the Great Ones, the Secret Brotherhood, the Inner Government of the World, the Great White Lodge of Masters of the Wisdom.

'Although they have physical bodies (as a sort of fulcrum for exertion of energy),' Anna Kennedy Winner explains, 'most of the work of the Masters is said to be done at mental levels, sometimes while they are awake, but often also with their bodies in deep repose or trance. (This habit, combined with purity of life, enables them to use the same physical body for a longer than average number of years.) At any moment, a Master can focus his consciousness upon any spot of the globe, and enter into the inner consciousness of any living being, if he so desires. He can read the thoughts of any man, and if that man be sufficiently sensitive to impressions from his own higher self, the Master can impress certain ideas upon him. It is in this way that the great leaders of mankind . . . receive so-called "inspiration".'

H. P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant were both inspired by the Secret Brothers who lived in the Himalayas and Tibet (see BESANT; BLAVATSKY), and one of them, Master Koot Hoomi, inspired Alice Bailey, the celebrated occult author. Many of her books were dictated to her by another Master, Djwal Khul, and when he was dismissed as a figment of her imagination, she replied that he was the only imaginary person she knew who sent her parcels from India. She sometimes went to the annual meetings of the Masters in May, in a valley of the Himalayas, where Christ and Buddha presided and disciples came from all over the world – some in their physical bodies, some while their physical bodies were elsewhere.

The idea of the deathless adept and inspirer is not confined to the Eastern tradition, with its Mahatmas, Bodhisattvas and reincarnated Lamas (see BUDDHISM; LAMAS; MAHATMAS), nor are all the Masters believed to live in the Himalayas. The Hungarian Master, who lives in Europe, was the famous Count of St-Germain in the 18th century and had earlier been Sir Francis Bacon, and earlier still the philosopher Proclus (see ST-GERMAIN). The Master once known as Jesus is said to live in the Lebanon, and the Spiritualist movement is watched over by a Master of Crete who was formerly St Paul.

It is an old belief in the West that the great sage conquers death: Pythagoras and Apollonius of Tyana are examples. The alchemists sought the Philosophers' Stone which was also the Elixir of Life, supreme wisdom, perfection and immortality, and some of them were believed to have achieved it. The body of Christian Rosenkreutz, the legendary founder of the Rosicrucians, was said to have been found uncorrupted a hundred years after his 'death'. He had been initiated by certain Wise Men during a visit to the East, and in the 17th century the belief that there existed a secret group of adepts, the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, created great excitement. The tradition grew up that an occult Order should receive its ultimate inspiration from 'unknown superiors'. The Martinists believed in hidden chiefs of this sort. In England the visible head of the Order of the Golden Dawn was MacGregor Mathers but he claimed to receive his authority from Hidden and Secret Chiefs, who dictated part of the Order's rituals. He met them on occasion, and said that they were 'human and living upon this earth; but possessing terrible superhuman powers' (see GOLDEN DAWN). The great superhuman inspirers of more recent groups, including the Aetherius Society and Mankind United (see FLYING SAUCERS; MANKIND UNITED), fall into the same general category.

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National Portrait Gallery

Sir Francis Bacon, the 17th century philosopher, politician and lawyer, is regarded by many occultists as one of the Masters, the great adepts who secretly guide humanity

Mathers, S. L.

Head of the Order of the Golden Dawn in the 1890s, editor of magical texts and for a time the mentor of Aleister Crowley; born Samuel Liddell Mathers, he called himself MacGregor Mathers and adopted the title of Comte de Glenstrae; in the Golden Dawn he claimed that his authority came from certain 'Hidden and Secret Chiefs' but other members resented his autocratic pretensions and deposed him.

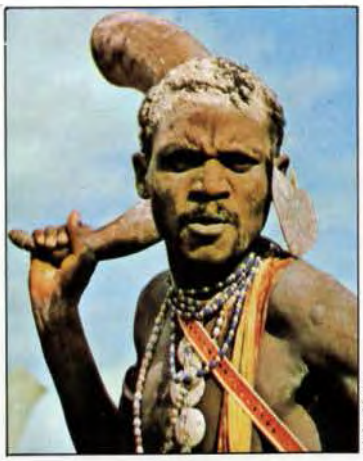
See CROWLEY; GOLDEN DAWN.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Mau Mau

Secret nationalist and terrorist society among the Kikuyu in Kenya; led by prophets in its early days; blood-curdling oaths, based on traditional Kikuyu practice, were administered to members to ensure total loyalty to the society; after much bloodshed, Mau Mau was suppressed in the late 1950s.

See KIKUYU.



John Moss

Living in an orderly, predetermined universe, the Maya believed that all events were tied to a rhythm of fate and must recur, whenever the calendrical factors were the same

MAYA

AMERICAN INDIANS speaking dialects of the Maya languages form the greater part of the Mexican states of Yucatan and Chiapas. They are also an important part of the population of British Honduras, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. They are a short, thick set, brown-skinned people with the straight black hair of the American Indians. There is some mystery about them because so little is known about their existence before the early centuries of the Christian era, when they first began to erect stone buildings.

In all probability the Maya had settled in their homeland as groups of small farmers, cultivating maize, peppers, manioc, pumpkins, vanilla, cocoa and cochineal. They collected rubber in the forests, hunted jaguars, peccaries (wild pig) and alligators. Their domestic animals were dogs, pigs and turkeys. A thousand years earlier, about 900 BC, their neighbours, the Olmecs, had erected stone monuments and used a form of writing. For two or three centuries a Mexican colony at Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala had also carried a higher civilization with stone sculpture and another form of writing. Then suddenly, in the 2nd century AD, the Maya set out on the adventure of civilization.

They may have carved on wooden monuments before, but now their gods were made in stone, and finely carved stelae recorded dates in a complex astronomical calendar. The sacred courtyards within which these monuments stood, were surrounded by pyramids of stone on top of which fine houses were built in honour of the gods. These holy places of the Maya were not only carved but painted in brilliant mineral colours. Most of the 'cities' so far discovered seem to have been religious centres which served the people of surrounding farms and villages, but at Tikal in Guatemala remains have been found of mounds upon which wooden buildings once stood.

Archeologists think that the persistence of local art styles and small differences in the writing of calendrical dates show that the early Maya cities were mostly independent city states. Their level of civilization was high, since they had great artists, mathematicians and astronomers. Carvings show us that they could produce beautiful woven cloth, and dressed magnificently in garments and head-dresses which showed many grades of social rank. They invented a kind of paper on which they painted books inscribed in a syllabic script which included some 650 symbols. Yet this magnificent civilization was without the use of metals. Gold was sometimes imported in small quantities from Panama; copper and bronze remained unknown. Maya culture was supported by a simple Neolithic type of agriculture brought up to the limits of its efficiency.

The civilization was based on religion. The high priest of a city ranked equally with the *Halach Uinic* (ruler of men), who in his turn had been previously educated as an adept in religious magic. They worshipped a Creator who lived beyond the sky and who was both male and female. There was Mother Earth, usually depicted as a gigantic monster – alligator, toad and turtle combined – who swam around in the waters of the reedy marsh of Creation. Above her was the sky, with a layer for each of the planets, and spheres of movement for the sun and moon. Below her were the underworlds where the heavenly bodies passed when out of sight. All around her were the spirits of rain and thunder. She was attended by the deities of the food plants and animals. To the Maya all Nature was alive, constantly dying and being born.

The Five Temples

In general the Maya gods are rather colourless; we have little detailed information on their functions. The Spanish chronicler Lizana tells us that the city of Izamal in northern Yucatán possessed five temple pyramids, dedicated severally to the sun god, the rain god, the war god, and two separate manifestations of Itzamná. In the south temple Itzamna was honoured as a wise king of primeval times who had invented writing and who was consulted as an oracle; the west temple, where he was venerated as the healer of the sick and the waker of the dead, was a place of pilgrimage. The sun god in the north temple was called Kinich Kak Mo ('sunface fire macaw') because he was visualized in the shape of a macaw swooping down out of the heavens at noon to kindle the sacrificial flame. This is also the probable interpretation of the image of a descending winged being found in the temples of Tulúm. The east temple was dedicated to Chac in his capacity as god of lightning and patron of the priests who lived in the temple itself. The temple of the war god Hun Pic Tok, who was named after the 'eight thousand stone knives' which formed the points of the spears of his countless warriors, lay in the middle of the town and was 'the most important of all'.

Walter Krickeberg and others
Pre-Columbian American Religions

Poetry of Numbers

It was an orderly, fatalistic universe. The movements of the heaveuly bodies in their regular courses prognosticated the movements of fate. Each day had its fortune, each period of 20 days had an overriding influence. Each year had its agricultural magics. However, when counting long periods of time the Maya used a period they called a *tun* of 360 days. They multiplied the tun by powers of 20 (to 20 tuns, 400, 8000, 160,000 tuns and so on) in order to deal with astronomical calculations which in some way reflected the history of the gods both past and future. When they had to put these long calculations into practical terms of the agricultural year they had to use elaborate 'distance numbers' to find the exact day and season that they were writing about. Venturing into this complicated field it soon becomes clear that the Maya loved numbers and could express ideas through them almost as if they were making computerized poetry. They proved their accuracy by predicting eclipses, transits of Venus, and running a moon calendar.

A Maya priest, holding his ceremonial staff, stands over a man who is mutilating his own tongue by passing through it a cord set with thorns: stone relief of the early 8th century AD. The Mayans also offered human sacrifices to their gods, especially to the rain gods in an annual ceremony

Within such a framework of conditioned time, people find themselves in need of information from soothsayers. These specialists in times and numbers gave information of lucky days for any event, divined the causes of misfortunes, and acted as advisers in family affairs. The soothsayers used magic books painted with figures and dates like pictorial almanacs for their work. It was something like casting a horoscope, since one's fate on any day varied according to the correspondences between that day and the day of one's birth.

The Maya writings which have survived to the present day seem to be concerned simply with the passage of time and the changes of fate. So far nothing has been found which is clearly historical in nature. From the calendrical glyphs which are well known, and the phonetic glyphs which are partially deciphered, it seems that the Maya language has altered but not very greatly. The ancient civilization has, however, been entirely swept away.

Abandoned Cities

The first phase of high culture broke up suddenly and catastrophically about 900 AD. Archeologists are seeking a reason but not enough is known; maybe there was a terrible civil war, maybe a climatic change led to the rapid spread of the forests, or maybe a prophecy was followed and the people abandoned their homes at some predetermined date. There is little trace of physical damage to the abandoned cities. In some there were poor rooms of rough stone walling built a generation after the abandonment. But Maya culture in the highlands broke up and did not recover.

Meanwhile smaller Maya towns in the almost waterless limestone peninsula of Yucatan survived, and in the late 10th century, when underground streams were fully exploited the Yucatec Maya achieved a new importance. They were greatly influenced by an invasion of Toltec nobles from central Mexico at the end of the century. These refugees from the terrible war which had destroyed their old capital at Tula in Hidalgo settled down to build a new and even more glorious city in the Maya lands with the help of the local craftsmen. Although their city of Chichen Itza was very Mexican in style they quite soon abandoned their simpler picture writing for the more useful Maya system. Eventually the Toltec chieftains were involved in civil wars and the city was destroyed about 1200 AD. A new centre was founded at Mayapan, though it was far less magnificent than Chichen Itza.

Meanwhile the Maya cities continued on their way, developing in size and power. Unlike the older phase of Maya culture, these Yucatec cities placed the palace of the civil ruler in a position of equal importance to the temples of the gods. Each city was an independent state often at war with its neighbours, but they all gave respect if not obedience to the chief who ruled at Uxmal, the *Tutul Xiuh*. They preserved the old calendar in part, but were unable or unwilling to use the ancient counts covering vast distances of time. They reckoned in a series of periods known as *Katuns*, each of a little less than 20 years, which were numbered from zero to 12. These 13 Katuns, their longest time-cycle, covered about 260 years, which was sufficient for most practical purposes.

Apart from the architecture of their temples and palaces the later Maya were not very successful as artists; they were more historically minded than their ancestors, however, and each of the main cities held a Book of Chilam Balam (the Book of the Jaguar Priest). This gave very short accounts of the major events which occurred in each Katun of their time count, and projected the events into the future. They still believed that all events were tied to a rhythm of fate and must recur whenever the calendrical factors were the same.

While we have no historical record from the more ancient Maya cities, the books tell a little about the political struggles between Maya cities, of the development of Mayapan and the fall of Chichen Itza. This event was due to the oppression exercised by a tricky individual named Hunnac Ceel who concealed himself in the sacred 'well' at Chichen Itza and pretended to have received information from the rain gods. He used it to gain power; but later he was overthrown and the city declined.

The Maya offered human sacrifices, and the offering of victims to the rain gods was an annual ceremony at Chichen Itza. In the present century two expeditions have searched the great 'well' in the limestone rock. They have recovered bones of the victims together with a great treasure of gold, jade, images of rubber and carvings in bone which had been cast into the well each year, as an entreaty for the spring rains which would make the vital maize crop prosper. However although the Maya offered human sacrifices on other occasions they more frequently offered animals and plants to their gods.

Carved shell depicting a Maya priest: the Maya survive in large numbers in Central America and their ancient gods have been absorbed into the modern world as kind-hearted saints

Museum of the American Indian

Smoke Signal to the God

Most of the Yucatec temples were decorated with complex representations of Chac, the Lord of the Rains. His mask is easily recognizable with its projecting curled snout. He is often shown carrying his thunder-axe in the paintings on the books. A popular method of calling his attention was to burn 'Pom' incense, balls of raw rubber. The thick smoke rose up like storm clouds, and the god was supposed to see the signal and send his messengers with magical jars of water which they poured through the storm clouds.

People enjoyed the religious festivals which occurred once every 20 days. They came to witness the ceremonies which were mostly dramatic representations of the legends of the gods. It was all very glorious to watch the masked priests dancing in their feathered garments, to sing the chants, and to be present at the sacrificial ceremonies. Of course some of the occasions of human sacrifice were both fearful and exciting, and there were those mysterious moments when the ordinary people were not allowed to witness what the priests were doing in the dark houses on top of the temple platforms. There was an air of gaiety at festivals; people wore their best clothes, and often enough they became drunk on great quantities of fermented honey.

In these later days of the Maya there was a good deal of trade. Merchants accompanied by trains of carriers travelled from town to town by roads. They had maps painted on bark paper to help them. Many other merchants sailed from one coastal town to another in great canoes cut from the trunks of the enormous mahogany trees of the Maya country. They carried their trade far south to exchange fine cloth and precious stones for the gold of Panama, and northwards into Mexico from which they brought turquoise and silver, together with great quantities of small bronze bells. There was little love lost between Mexicans and Maya. The Mexicans thought the Maya were too fond of amusements and strong drink, the Maya thought the Mexicans were without elegance or any real culture.

Conquest of an Empty City

The arrival of Spanish ships in the beginning of the 16th century hardly disturbed the Maya cities. Some traded, some fought and were defeated; but the Spaniards passed on to the conquest of Mexico. After this the Maya chiefs must have waited in some trepidation. It was not until 1526 that the de Montejos, father and son, made two successive assaults on the Maya cities. The Yucatan peninsula was not easily conquered, but in 1537 the Tutul Xiuh surrendered and the Spaniards became the new rulers of Yucatan. However, there was still a Maya stronghold in the town of Peten Itza on the shores of Lake Tayasal, founded by the refugees from Chichen Itza. Here in the ancient homeland of the Maya they remained undisturbed for over a century.

Eventually in the 17th century occasional parties of Spanish soldiers, sent on exploring missions, and sometimes small groups of missionary friars came into contact with this last independent Maya city. Sometimes they were welcomed, sometimes they were killed. Finally the Governor of Yucatan decided that there must be an expedition to subdue the last Maya town. At first he was received with courtesy, but a later visit was met with a show of violent hostility. Apparently the Itza people were determined to hold out because of a magic prophecy in one of the Books of Chilan Balam. In 1702 the Spanish set out to destroy the city. They came around the side of the lake on foot, with some sailing boats armed with cannon on the lake itself. Suddenly a fleet of canoes set out from Peten Itza, passing through the Spanish lines peacefully so that few shots were fired, the Itza landed and vanished into the jungles. Unknown to the Spaniards this was the first day of a new Katun in which it was prophesied that misfortunes should once more lead the Itza to abandon their homes. When the Spanish army came to the city there was no one left. Fires still warmed cooking pots, cloth was abandoned on the looms, but not a human being had stayed behind. It took the Spaniards a whole day to break the idols in the houses and temples.

Nowadays the Maya survive in large numbers as citizens of Mexico, Guatemala, and other Central American countries. They still speak dialects of their ancient language, and are hard-working citizens who are all Catholic by religion, though traces of their ancient ceremonies survive. The ancient gods have become absorbed as kind-hearted saints in the modern world. In the forests of the Peten a few very primitive families of Lacandon Maya still survive. However the Katun wheel of fate suggests that in the near future their wanderings will end. It is to be hoped that they will be absorbed into the modern world in happiness. (See also MEXICO.)

C. A. BURLAND

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MAY DAY

THE GREAT FESTIVAL of rebirth and renewal, May Day, the first day of May, was an occasion of great joy in the past among the common people of Europe. As a ceremonial day it was superimposed upon the ancient festival of Beltane, the inauguration of the second half of the Celtic year. But in the form in which it was observed by our forefathers it was a dramatized presentation of the union of spring and summer.

Very early on May morning, in the past, the young people of the community would rise from their beds and make their way to the woods. Here they would gather garlands of flowers with branches from the trees and, it is said, indulge in 'wanton dalliances'. As a symbol of rebirth, the greenery would be brought back to the villages and used as decoration for the doors and windows of the houses. This ancient rite of 'bringing home the May' was in effect a method of ritually conveying the fertilizing powers of fully awakened Nature into the human community.

The central figure of the celebration was the maypole or May tree; in England this was the white hawthorn, which possessed supernatural powers and symbolized the transition from spring to summer, while in America it was the evergreen arbutus. Like so many other magical objects the hawthorn was dualistic in character, being a force both for good and evil. As long ago as the 12th century its sinister aspect was recorded in Ireland, and in England the once beneficent May has become a flower of evil that must never be brought into the home (see HAWTHORN).

The election of a Queen of the May, one of the great May Day ceremonies, was no doubt connected with the ancient Scandinavian custom in which a mock contest was staged between two individuals, the one representing summer and the other winter, from which the former always emerged the victor. This ceremony which continued in the Isle of Man until early in the 19th century was described in the *Universal Magazine* in 1786 as a ritual contest between the Queen of Winter (a man dressed in woman's clothes) and a female Queen of the May. The same basic idea was also represented in the better-known ritual marriage between the May bridegroom and the May bride, which has been supposed to symbolize the union of spring and vegetation. A King of the May was also elected in former times.

The crowning of the May Queen, however, is integral in the surviving rite in the British Isles. This is accompanied by merrymaking and ceremonial dancing around the decorated tree or maypole.

On May Day it was once the custom for groups of young people to visit all the houses in the village bearing garlands of flowers and soliciting donations, in return for which they received the 'blessing of May' to bring them good luck for the coming year.

All the characters in the May Day rites embodied the power to endow crops and women with fertility and good luck. The maypole or May bush, originally a tree brought in from the woods, was only in later times set up as a permanent fixture on the village green. The famous maypole in London's Strand, which was 134 feet tall, was later transferred to Wanstead in Essex, where it was used to support the largest telescope then known.

One feature of the English ceremony

One of the great spring festivals, May Day was celebrated in Britain with the crowning of a May Queen with garlands of flowers: drawing by Randolph Caldecott

was the dance of the Morris men, the main characters being Robin Hood, Maid Marion, Will Scarlet, Little John, the Fool in cap and bells, Tom the Piper, and the hobby-horse, all symbolical of primitive ceremonial magic. The hobby-horses still play a prominent role in the May Day ceremonies at Padstow and Minehead in the West Country where they attract visitors from all over the world, but the other characters in the play have long since made their exit (see HOBBY-HORSE).

It was perhaps inevitable that the Puritans should have taken deep offence at the May Day ceremonies, detecting in the maypole obvious fertility connotations and also a close affinity with the Roman games dedicated to the goddess Flora, held on 28 April. To the English and American Puritan the sight of rustics capering about an upright pole was all too reminiscent of pagan worship.

The Puritans' hostility to the superstitions of May Day apparently did not extend to the prohibition of washing the face in May dew, the traditional recipe for a good complexion as well as for health and strength; presumably they were unaware of the custom in some parts of Europe for young girls to roll stark naked in the magical dew on May morning. It is on record that even the great Oliver Cromwell himself was not above making use of May dew on medical advice.

Inevitably the May Day celebrations, like many Christmas customs, were suppressed during Puritan rule, to re-emerge at the Restoration. Later they became part of that gradual decline to which all the elements of 'Merry England' were now subject. The May Day rites continued throughout the 18th century and into the 19th with May games on the village green, and with dancing chimney sweeps and garlanded milkmaids a common sight in the London streets. As the drab century of industrialism drew to its end May Day underwent a temporary metamorphosis as the festival of international labour, the hobby-horse and Morris men being replaced by processions of trade unionists marching behind banners. Today remnants of May Day celebrations survive only in rural areas.

MAZE

Centaur at the heart of a maze: the labyrinth has a long history as a ritual centre and symbol, possibly originating in the cult of the divine kings of ancient Egypt

THE SYMBOL OF THE MAZE or labyrinth is one of the oldest known to man; yet despite its appearance in widely differing places it is a symbol that has finally kept its secret. It occurs in two forms, both originally of magical significance, and both familiar today as an art convention; the 'spiral', with one uninterrupted path sweeping in to the centre; and the Greek 'meander' pattern, which is simply a rectilinear spiral cluttered with false turns, dead ends and multiple ways – the labyrinth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Both designs became popular in the eastern Mediterranean area when a pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty built a sprawling temple in Egypt, and a Cretan prince a similarly labyrinthine palace at Cnossus.

Few things can be stated with certainty about the labyrinth. That it was a ritual centre of paramount importance is not in doubt. That it was a place where a living king-god renewed his virility, where he 'died' and was 'resurrected' for the welfare of his people, is usually accepted. That as a symbol it linked the world with the afterworld, life with death, and death with resurrection is hardly questioned, any more than the fact that from its origin it was associated with the gods of the dead and the underworld. In Egypt, which most authorities see as the main source and cradle of the labyrinth, the god Osiris (see OSIRIS) was murdered, resurrected and then abandoned this world to become supreme god of the dead.

The labyrinth was a vital and bewildering compound of place, drama and dance, combined with the elements of sacred marriage, ritual death and ritual resurrection. In Egypt it was a complex of tomb and temple. The pharaohs of Egypt were king-gods, who ruled, lived, died and were buried as gods. On the well-being of the pharaoh's sacred person, alive or dead, depended the welfare of the nation. To secure this, a mortuary temple was attached to every pyramid or royal tomb, which was served by priests whose duty it was to ensure that all things were done to guarantee the dead pharaoh perpetual felicity.

The Egyptian temple was not only a religious centre, but an administrative one as well: a place of ritual, council and assembly, transcendentally and bureaucratically responsible for the welfare of the nation. Temple and tomb then, though not physically attached, were adjacent and this proximity is a key factor in the confused matter of the labyrinth. The internal plan of the pyramid was complex and it is presumed that the labyrinthine complexity of the tomb became attached, through proximity, to the temple, which in time was known by the name of labyrinth.

Some scholars consider that ritual rather than practical reasons account for the interior complexity of the pyramids, believing it to spring from the need to conceal the sacred body of the king-god from the malice of the powers of evil, rather than to preserve his treasure from tomb-robbers.

Plan of the Infernal Court

Coins, mortuary seals and plaques, scattered from beyond the Tigris to the Mediterranean, bear witness to the labyrinth in all its moods: from Sumerian seals featuring the killing of the king-god to others representing the sacred marriage. Frequently the labyrinth is shown circling the head of gods and goddesses, cult objects or animals – an association which endowed it with magical and protective value. Some of the most ancient, and curious, 'documents' concerning the labyrinth relate it to the underworld: tablets of Babylonian provenance, which are the presumed archives of priests and augurs famous for their practice of divination by the entrails of animals. Engraved with drawings of intestines accompanied by a series of spirals, the tablets are inscribed 'the Palace of the Intestines': in other words, the infernal regions deep in the bowels of the earth beyond the abyss. For the Babylonian augurs the underworld was reflected in the intestines, as heaven was in the liver, and the labyrinthine spiral was its symbol.

The great Egyptian labyrinth mentioned by Herodotus and other classical writers stood in the Fayyum; it was the vast tomb, mortuary temple and administrative centre of Amenemhet III (c 1850–1800 BC). According to Pliny, 'It was divided into districts and prefectures called nomes . . . It contained moreover temples to all the gods of Egypt . . . Some of the temples are so devised that those who approach the doors are greeted by terrific thunders from within . . .' Speaking again of Amenemhet's funerary complex, Pliny observes: 'There is no doubt that Daedalus took from this the pattern of his labyrinth, which he made in Crete. Although he copied only the hundredth part of it, since it contained . . . many entrances designed to produce misleading goings and comings . . .'

The story of the building of the Cretan labyrinth by King Minos to conceal the Minotaur, who was eventually slain by Theseus, is one of the most ancient of Greek legends (see BULL; THESEUS). It contains many 'labyrinthine' elements: a bull cult; a king-god slain in the form of a bull; a sacred marriage and fertility rites, and another wholly typical labyrinthine characteristic – Ariadne's thread which enabled Theseus to find his way out of the maze.

Excavations revealed no labyrinth at Cnossus, and it is now usually agreed that the word 'labyrinth', in Crete, derives not from the complexity of the palace, but from *labrys* (double-axe), the weapon with which the bulls were slaughtered for the sacrifice (see AXE; CRETE). Indeed R. W. Hutchinson (*Prehistoric Crete*) suggests that the word 'labyrinth' might never have acquired its modern significance of 'maze' but for the fact that the earliest palace at Cnossus and Amenemhet's funerary temple were more or less contemporary, and so invited comparisons between the two. The

Cretan palace was destroyed round about 1400 BC, the Egyptian labyrinth survived until Roman times and it is perfectly possible, as Hutchinson points out, that its maze-like intricacies 'confirmed and crystallized' the enduring folklore memories about the Minotaur and 'the maze-like building he lived in'.

Dance of Ariadne's Thread

No activity has proved more faithfully representative of the labyrinth and its ritual content than the dance (see DANCE). As a dance it has survived in many places, with nothing more substantial to express it than a slender cord held in the hands of the dancers – a cord which some identify with Ariadne's thread. Often, the labyrinth is symbolized by a spiral drawing on the ground – a magic hierogram – along which the dancers wind inward, left to centre in the direction of death, and out again right, in the direction of life. Cord and drawing alike link the world with the afterworld, life with death, and death with resurrection. The dance indeed expressed the labyrinth in all its ritual aspects: circling dances of lamentation, protective dances and vigorous fertility dances, all held to be magically effective, and the circling ones the most potent because of their protective value.

The city of Troy had a close relationship with the labyrinth, for it was consecrated to Hippolytus, son of Theseus, according to Pausanias. To this day Troy's name is associated with those enigmatic stone circles and maze-like earthworks strewn across Europe and far north into Iceland, which have been called 'Neolithic labyrinths'. Their origin and purpose remains hotly debated but frequently they are assumed to have been places of ritual practice and assembly. Debatable too is the question of how the name of Troy came to be attached to many of them – Walls of Troy; Troy Towns; Trogin; Trogenburg. It may have been brought by traders, or on the other hand it may have no connection with the city at all. One suggestion is that the name is derived from the root *truare*, a circular movement around a stable object.

Whatever the original meaning of the symbol of the labyrinth, it was sufficiently popular for the Church to Christianize it. Cryptic mosaics in the naves of medieval churches bear witness to the fact. In place of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land penitents used to make bruising progress on their knees along the swirling paths to gain indulgences by reaching the 'Supreme Centre' or the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' as it was sometimes called. The presence of a labyrinth in a church frequently coincides with the presence of megaliths outside it, they too often traced with spirals.

The 'labyrinth' today is a mere 'maze' – a decorative swirl of greenery, with no particular purpose apart from pleasure. The meanings of its multiple ways are forgotten, together with the Crusaders who brought the fashion for mazes back with them from the East. The leisured gentry who reanimated the fashion by furnishing their 17th and 18th century gardens with mazes did so purely for entertainment, to bewilder and astonish their guests: in short, to 'amaze' them – a word whose source some hold to be the maze itself.

JUNE GRIMBLE

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C. M. Dixon

Ruins of the palace of Cnossus in Crete, where a great labyrinth was built to conceal the Minotaur. The hero Theseus killed the Minotaur, taking with him a thread, with which he found his way out of the maze again

MECCA AND MEDINA

THE CITY to which all Moslems are bidden to come and all others forbidden, Mecca is the birth-place of the founder of Islam, Mohammed (570–632 AD). The Mohammedan era dates from his flight from Mecca to Medina, about 280 miles to the north-east, in 622; this event is known as the Hegira.

Before Mohammed's time, Mecca was known mainly as a station on the 'incense route' between the Orient and the Mediterranean. The town had grown up in a winding valley in the chain of the Sarat, round the well of the Zem-Zem and the ancient sanctuary of the Kaaba. According to a Moslem legend, the walls of the Kaaba echoed to Adam's prayers after he and Eve had been expelled from Paradise. In the Koran, Abraham is named as the founder of the sanctuary. What is certain is that like other holy places on earth it served more than one cult in turn.

There was an annual pilgrimage to Mecca before Mohammed, and he did not institute the pilgrimage so much as to give it a new form and new significance. The *tawaf* – the walking round the Kaaba seven times – was one of the rituals for which Mohammed set the example when he made his own pilgrimage from Medina to Mecca in 630, but as no details have survived of the pre-Moslem pagan ceremonies performed at the Kaaba, it is impossible to say exactly how much of the Moslem practice is due solely to Mohammed. The spiritual significance of Mecca as the sacred city of Islam to which all Moslems turn when they pray is, of course, entirely the result of Mohammed's life and preaching.

The first of the principal rituals of the *hajj* or pilgrimage which all Moslems must make once in their lifetime, provided they have the means and the health, is the donning of the two white seamless sheets of the *ihram*, the state of the sacred taboo. While in the state of ihram the pilgrim must abstain from hunting, killing or any form of violence; from the use of scent or jewellery or any kind of luxurious gratification of the senses; and from sexual intercourse. These taboos, and the identical white robes worn by all serve to remind pilgrims that in the

eyes of God all men are created equal, and all will be accountable on Judgement Day.

The garments of ihram must be worn during the pilgrim's arrival in Mecca for the first tawaf, and while he performs the *sai*, or ritual running seven times between the hills of al-Safa and al-Marwa, which are also obligatory rites for the pilgrim. They must also be worn during the *waqfa*, or 'standing' before God in front of the stone mountain Arafat on the ninth day of *Dhul-Hijja*, the pilgrimage month, and early on the following day during the stoning of Satan at the place in Mina, near Mecca, where the Devil appeared to Ishmael, son of Abraham. Blood sacrifice is also offered at Mina, during the state of ihram.

Moslems are warned that Mecca is a city of this earth, peopled by men; that the water of Zem-Zem is simply water and not in itself divine; and that the sacred Kaaba is made of mountain stone and mortar, and that the large embroidered cloth, the *kiswa*, which covers it, and is changed every year at the time of the pilgrimage, is woven and decorated by mortal hands. Yet, as the British explorer Sir Richard Burton (1821–1890) – perhaps the only non-Moslem to make the pilgrimage – wrote: 'Few Muslims contemplate for the first time the Ka'ba without fear and awe'; and he describes how the Moslem pilgrims during his own visit clung weeping to the kiswa or pressed their beating hearts to the stone. The stone is the Black Stone built into the masonry in the eastern corner of the Kaaba which must be kissed, or at least touched by most pilgrims. It is said that Mohammed himself used to weep when he touched the Black Stone, and he declared that it was the place for the pouring forth of tears.

Every year thousands of Moslems make the pilgrimage to the shrine of the Kaaba in the holy city of Mecca: miniature in the Topkapi Museum, showing the Kaaba

Sonia Halliday

City of the Prophet

Medina – the Prophet's city – was known as Yathrib before Mohammed took up residence there. The dominant merchants in Mohammed's time were Jews, though he himself had distant cousins there of the Aus and the Khazraj tribes. The Jews were driven out soon after the Hegira and Medina became the administrative capital of the Islamic Empire, until 661, when it was superseded by Damascus. It is now the second sacred place of Islam, after Mecca, and like Mecca banned to non-Moslems, the limits beyond which only Moslems may set foot being marked by stone monuments. Mohammed's tomb is at Medina, and the Prophet's Mosque, which he himself helped to build, is also situated there.

In recent years, the number of Moslems making the pilgrimage has risen to over 300,000, and over one-third of these arrive in Jeddah, the port for Mecca by air. Other signs of the times are that the government of Saudi Arabia has built three model cities for pilgrims, with five concrete sunshades in pilgrim centres to accommodate from 3000 to 5000 pilgrims each. The present government has also built new mosques in Mecca and rebuilt old ones. The Holy Mosque, which can now accommodate 300,000 worshippers, is said to have parking areas for 4000 vehicles. But the bare-footed, white-robed crowds are much the same as they were in Burton's day, and their religious fervour and meticulous observance of ritual has not changed since the days of the Prophet. (See also ISLAM; MOHAMMED.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

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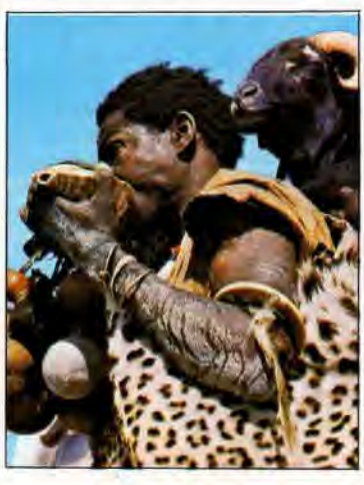
Medea

In Greek mythology, a witch who fell in love with Jason and nsed magic to enable him to steal the Golden Fleece; she escaped with him and murdered her young brother to delay the pursuers; when Jason deserted her she killed the children she had borne him; her name means 'the cnnning one' and she was the niece of Circe, another famous witch.

Medicine-Man

Popular term for a priest, shaman, magician or witch-doctor in primitive societies; he is responsible for the community's religious affairs, for communicating with the supernatural, for divination, for healing the sick, and for protecting the community against witchcraft, sorcery and supernatural attack. See PRIESTS; SHAMANS.



Camera Press London

In the East meditation has been seen as a means to union with the Absolute, while in the West it is the mystic's path to God; both routes are beset with perils which can only be countered by use of proven disciplines

MEDITATION

Spectrum Colour Library

'The next step is to empty the mind, slowly to eliminate from the consciousness every thought of a practical nature, domestic or business problem as it intrudes': bronze head of Buddha, 15th century, now in the Museo Nationale di Arte, Rome

ONCE REGARDED almost exclusively as a preoccupation of mystics, saints and hermits, meditation is today an established method of achieving concentration and calmness. Many sportsmen incorporate the technique into their training programmes – e.g. the tennis player Bjorn Borg, Wimbledon Champion from 1977–1980.

Though common to Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, meditation has not played a particularly prominent role in the Christian tradition. Now, as a result of an unprecedented upsurge of interest in achieving states of mind in which the consciousness is expanded by various means, meditation is being rediscovered.

But why meditate? In a busy world is the time spent pondering on abstractions worth anything at all? Is it not just a futile pursuit, at best another 'opiate' with no practical benefit to recommend it? For the majority, the occasional periods of introspection are of little help. Men only become more confused by what emerges from their deeper reflections. Instead of the restorative relief they seek from the muddled complexity of their lives, they find themselves thinking about their problems more than ever.

Those who advocate meditation, however, say that if it is approached correctly, the exercise can be rewarding. For one thing, a short time devoted each day to the cultivation of a tranquil mind cannot be without its psychological benefits. Confusion only comes with wrongful methods. Meditation does not imply an escape from reality, nor a loss of consciousness; after all, there is little purpose in having experiences which one cannot recall having had.

The first requirement is a 'sanctuary', a room where one can perform the daily ritual in peace and quiet. A trained practitioner can meditate on top of a bus in the midst of the city's hubbub, but such surroundings are hardly conducive to meditation for the average person. Any room will do where one can sit undisturbed for at least 15 minutes at a stretch.

Relax and Empty the Mind

The best position is one of complete repose. One can meditate even while lying in bed, but there is a danger of falling asleep. Sitting in an easy position is therefore recommended in most Eastern systems. Having assumed a comfortable position, one should let the whole body relax. All the muscles must be loosened; all tension let go. Among the many aids used for inducing relaxation are rhythmic breathing; a gentle humming; a slight swaying of the torso while seated. Easiest of all perhaps, is mentally going over the parts of the body in which tension is likely to occur, starting from the feet; then the toes, knees, stomach, neck, hands, shoulders, face, jaws, forehead, eyes, the back of the head, the scalp; ensuring that each part in turn is free from strain. With the body relaxed, it becomes easier to achieve tranquillity.

The next step is to empty the mind, slowly to eliminate from the consciousness every thought of a practical nature, domestic or business problem as it intrudes. This, it might be objected, is easier said than done. But meditation requires patience and practice, and it is surprising how soon one can successfully fall into the routine.

One of the main problems confronting the beginner is to decide on a subject for meditation. Having put aside his worldly cares, what does he fill the vacuum with? Stray thoughts and day-dreams keep drifting in. It is precisely in order to prevent such aimless drifting that another factor is introduced at this stage: an objective device, a psycho-symbolic nucleus around which the thoughts are built up, or from which they are reflected or rebound. But the Mohammedan aspirant may not like to think in terms of Hindu symbols, nor the Christian of Buddhist. For that matter the agnostic or free-thinker may disdain any of the formulations of the theistic practitioner. The choice of a symbol to meditate upon therefore becomes of great importance. Just any symbol will not do, because the ramifications of every symbol can be traced by sub-conscious processes along lines traditionally inherited, or rationally accepted, by the practitioner. So each religion and each school prescribes its own meditative material. The following is a brief outline of some of the major disciplines and methods used in meditation.

Union With the Absolute

Perhaps the most detailed and systematic presentation of meditative techniques can be found in Hindu writings, as exemplified in yoga. The aim of yoga is 'union' with the Absolute, achieved by progression through eight stages of development The first two pertain to external and internal 'ethics', with stress on non-injury and the elimination of negative emotions like anger, acquisitiveness, lust, greed, and the practice of equanimity and peace of mind. After these two ethical prerequisites we come to the third stage, namely, bodily postures, to inure the physical frame to the various positions assumed during meditation, some of which are extremely difficult. Next comes breath control, control of the *prana* (see BREATH), which is held to be one of the basic potencies of the universe. The air we breathe contains it, and the yogi practitioner subtilizes the air for its prana content and sends it streaming through his subtle body. This is followed by control of the senses, that is, withdrawing attention from all external distractions, or, as it is called, 'silencing the traffic of the senses'. By the time this stage is reached the body should be properly conditioned, the emotions under control, and all the mental faculties ready to be directed to a single goal.

The sixth stage is devoted to concentration *(dhorana)* or holding the mind firm and steady. Here the student concentrates on a spot on a blank surface such as a wall; a point of light; the flame of a candle; a flower; the picture of a deity such as Krishna or Shiva; a letter of the alphabet. Yogis sometimes begin their meditation by concentrating with closed eyes on some part of their body: the top of the head; the space between the eyebrows; the tip of the nose. The picture of the yogi wrapt in meditation while contemplating his navel is not entirely fanciful. The navel can also serve as a focal point of concentration, for an important *chakra* (plexus, or centre of psychic energy) is situated near it.

Concentration itself must not be confused with meditation. The former implies an exercise of the will: the mind centres its powers on an object or idea till it yields its essence. Concentration brings mental energy to bear on a certain point so that with its conquest further doors are opened to the mind. Meditation on the other hand does not require any forcible harnessing of the will. It is not a smash-and-grab raid on the storehouse of the Infinite; it is something that emerges from the cessation of thought.

The seventh stage of yoga concerns contemplation *(dhyana)*, a turning within of the consciousness, a focusing of the mental faculties inwards. The eighth and last stage, called *samadhi*, is a state of super-consciousness, which is the supreme goal of yogic meditation.

Because of its stringency yoga can be a disheartening course for the average practitioner. The most that is generally attempted are elementary postures like the head-stand and simple exercises in breath control. Recent exponents have evolved their own variations on the theme, such as Transcendental Meditation, tailored to

the needs of an age which demands instant results. Most of these variations entirely bypass ascetic doctrines and world-abnegation, and permit and indeed encourage a two-way movement between spirituality and worldly life.

The ancient Chinese system of meditation is best exemplified in the Taoist teachings. Taoism seems to go direct to the heart of meditation by the paradoxical method of not even trying to get there. 'The movement of the Tao (Way) is an easy return to within oneself.' Any anxious pursuit of the Tao will cause an impenetrable veil to fall across the aspirant's path and make him lose his bearings. He must cease from aspiring and reduce all striving, study, discourse, discipline, ceremonial and concentration, attenuating them till he arrives at the state of *wu-wei*, 'non-striving'. 'Doing spoils it', says the Tao Master. 'Grabbing misses it'. 'Reaching out on tiptoe you are unsteady'. 'The mighty Way is easy but people still choose the difficult little paths'. There is, in other words, no attempt to stir up consciousness by exhausting techniques, but a natural quiet process of allowing the mental sediment to 'settle down', resulting in a spontaneous revelation of the clear depths within.

The Zen method, again, presents a middle way between the stern practices of yoga and the methodlessness of Tao. Meditation here is largely a matter of 'Shut up' and 'Keep still'. But it also provides by means of question, parable, short poem, paradox, riddle, silence, or even a clout over the ear, a means of sudden illumination called *satori*.

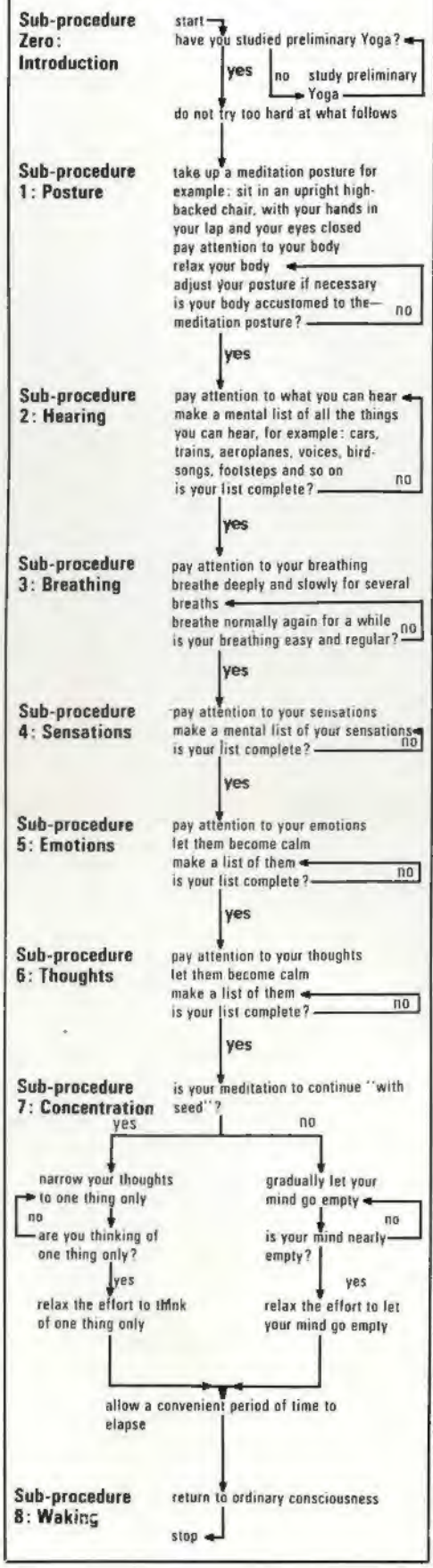
The Sufis, or mystics of Islam, also adapted their meditative techniques to suit their religious temperament. In Sufism there are several stages divided into two main groups: *maqam*, or man's effort, and *hal*, God's grace. It is said, 'Maqam is earned; hal is gifted'. Man's effort calls for all the rituals of religious observance, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimages, prayers. It presupposes dedicated intention and demands effort. In due time external rituals are abandoned and one devotes oneself to the contemplation of higher things. 'When the mirror of the heart is polished by contemplation, the difference between the transient wealth of this world and the infinite treasure of heaven become manifest. It is then easy to reject the transitory and cling to that which abides.'

Repetition of the name of God plays an important part in Sufi mysticism. The Sufi sits in solitude and repeats without ceasing the name of Allah, letting his mind dwell on the mercy and glory of God. He must persevere until his heart takes up the refrain, and mind, heart and soul are suffused with the idea of God in the fullness of his mercy and power. Some Sufi teachers advocate progressive meditation during a period of retreat, every day of which is devoted to removing one 'veil' of the forty-fold veil covering the Face of God. The raising of the veils comprises graduated exercises in meditation, leading ultimately to ecstasy. The first step is 'watching the Watcher'; when one reaches the final stage of ecstasy, 'Everything perishes except his Face'.

Apart from these 'religious' methods,

THE FLOW OF MEDITATION

Instructions in the 'Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali' (2nd century BC) have been formalized by Dr John H. Clark of Manchester University in a flow diagram of the type prepared for computers: adapted from Dr Clark's article in *New Society* magazine (23 July 1970).



By kind permission of Dr J. H. Clark and New Society

there exist a number of what might be called magical meditative techniques. Most of them involve recourse to a symbolic diagram. A common device employed by both Hindus and Buddhists is the *mandala* (see MANDALA), an elaborate symmetrical, usually circular design, representing the abode of certain occult potencies who manifest as deities. The latter are invoked by special ritual acts and the intonation of magic versicles or *mantras* (see MANTRA) and are believed to come forth to occupy the places assigned to them in the diagram.

Cosmic Crossroads

The mandala is regarded as a cosmic crossroads where the physical and spiritual worlds intersect. The procedure requires deep concentration on the mandala pattern, as a result of which its configuration is imprinted on the psyche of the practitioner and he can clearly see, with his mind's eye, the whole maze depicted outside. For those who might find this difficult an easier way is used. They may look at the mandala, then shut the eyes, and continue this a hundred or a thousand times, until the pattern is clearly visualized with the eyes closed.

The mandala is spoken of as a psychocosmogram, a picture of the universe conceived in diagrammatic form and projected on the screen of the psyche. The experiences undergone in this manner become intuitive visualizations of the meditator's own psychodynamic process. Without a long period of correct training there is every likelihood of the imagination running amuck. Even under controlled guidance the apparitions that he encounters in the journey through the intricate pathways of the mandala can be frightening enough. The demon-guardians and the fearful monstrosities that lurk in the dark recesses are ever ready to block his path and hack him to pieces.

Another system of meditation, often resorted to in the West is that of the Cabala (see CABALA), a Jewish mystical teaching evolved in the Middle Ages, although a much longer history has been claimed for it. Quite early in the course of its development this system was taken over by Christian scholars of the 16th century, and it is not always easy to distinguish the Jewish elements from the later accretions.

There are ten centres, called *sefiroth*, in the meditative device used by the Cabalists, arranged roughly like a tree. When inscribed on paper, the tree is depicted as if on a single plane, but in reality it is believed to be operative on four separate levels or 'worlds'. In the cabalistic technique the aspirant performs a series of meditative exercises, sometimes known as 'rising on the planes', in which he carries consciousness along a predetermined path that links the centres of the sefirotic tree. Each point is a gateway to a new world which has its guardians and its terrorizing demons. The pupil advances under proper tutelage from the simple to the more complex levels. He is conscious throughout his experience. This system is still practised but has achieved a certain notoriety as a result of its utilization by practitioners of the 'black arts'.

Meditation on the mandala and on the sefirotic tree represent the Eastern and Western systems which involve what occultists call the projection of the astral body (see ASTRAL BODY). In both the same general goal is sought: an attempt to make a journey into another dimension and to retain full conscious awareness of it on return. Whether we believe in the actual existence of the entities that are alleged to guard the zones or not, the fact remains that occultists of both schools, and practitioners of magic, black and white, have brought back vivid descriptions of their experiences while on such astral adventures. We may attribute them to the power of the imagination and the workings of a heightened faith, or dismiss them as hallucinations induced by some alchemy of the brain resulting from deep concentration on evocative archetypal symbols. But whatever the interpretation of such occult experiences might be, there can be no doubt that they are hazardous and can be injurious. The paths opened to the aspirant by encounters in a mandala trance, or on a limb of the sefirotic tree, are not to be ventured on lightly (see also PATHS).

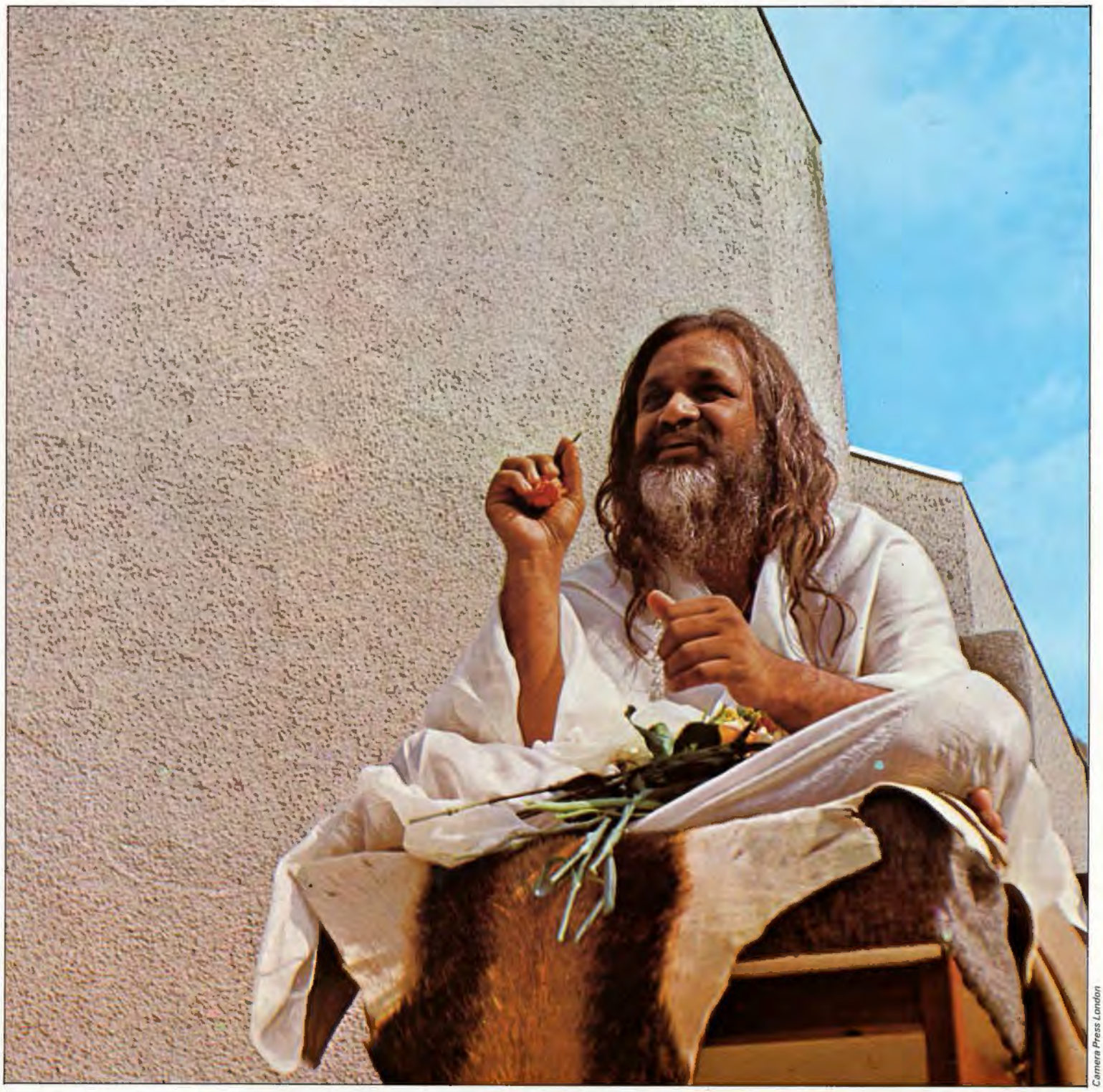
Buddhists, who practise meditation intensively, have been especially careful to emphasize the need not so much for meditation as for right meditation. This was thought to be of sufficient importance to be included as one of the eight fundamental principles of their religion. Misdirected or wrongful meditation can be worse than futile, it can be dangerous.

Meditation is being rediscovered in the West 'as a result of an unprecedented upsurge of interest in achieving states of mind in which the consciousness is expanded by various means': Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, one of many missionaries from East to West

Perils on the Christian Path

Against the background of all these methods that men have employed in their effort to attain enlightenment, beatitude or unity with the Absolute, it might be felt that the absence of a meditative regime in Christianity for the common man is a drawback to the contemplative life.

In fact, Christianity does not lack a



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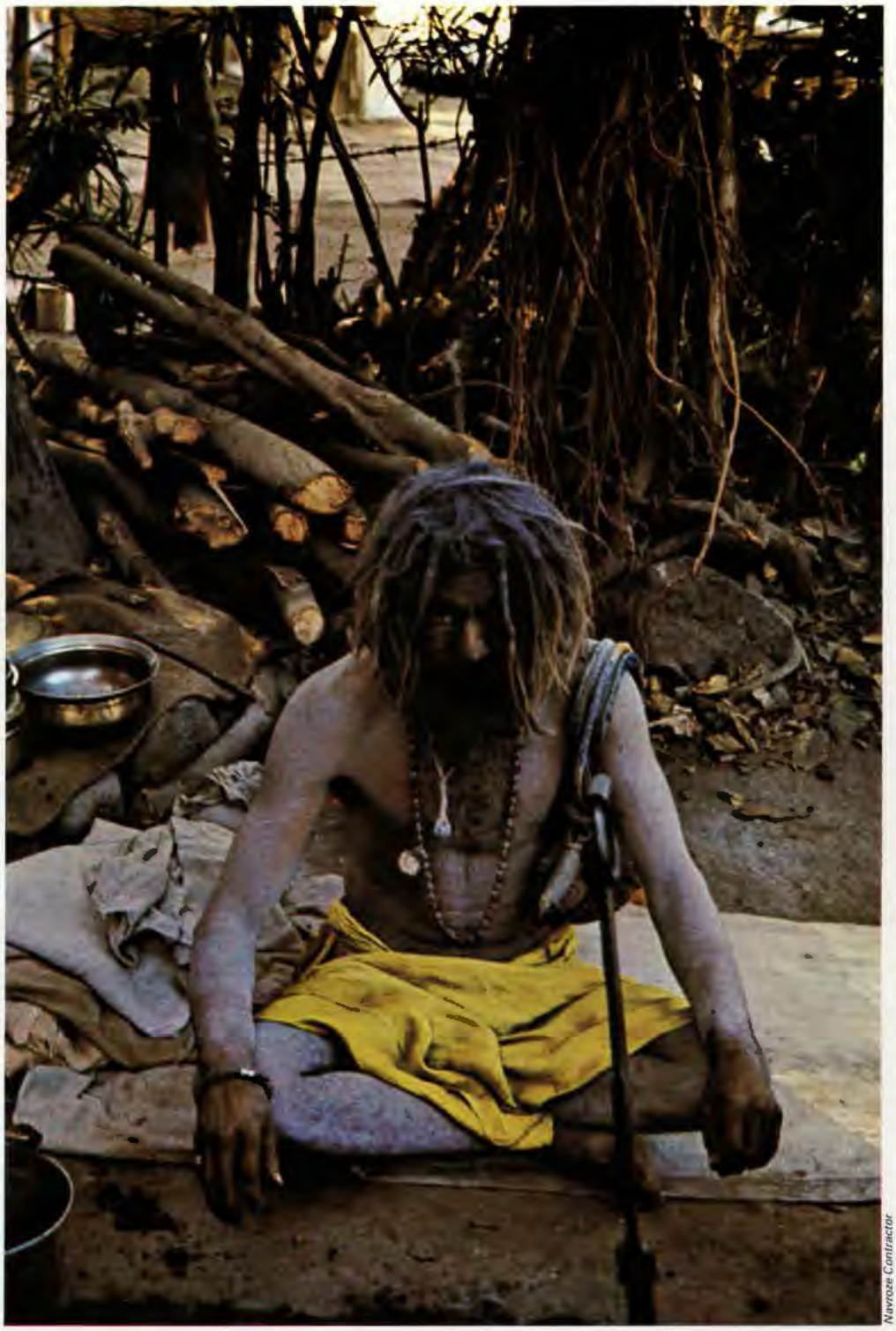


Navroze Contractor

Indian saddhu, or holy man, in deep meditation, supported by a crutch. In yoga, meditation involves numerous highly disciplined techniques, including breath control, bodily postures, control of the senses, concentration and contemplation, 'a focusing of the mental faculties inwards'

tradition of the kind found in many other religions. First derived from ancient Greek and Jewish sources, this tradition developed along its own lines. Meditation was practised by the early monks who dwelt in the desert regions of Egypt and Syria from the 3rd century AD. Their disciplines were at times so severe as to be scarcely credible today, and their experience with 'temptations' by the Devil and elemental creatures are as vivid as any brought back by occultists from the astral planes. A system somewhat akin to yoga, with emphasis on breathing and concentration on the plexuses, was followed in Greece by the Hesychast monks in the Middle Ages. Many of the saints of the Roman Catholic Church, among them St Francis of Assisi and St Teresa evolved their own meditative disciplines. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola outlines a stringent procedure in a contemplative process that has led many to spiritual exaltation. Countless Christian mystics have experienced the sudden transports that betoken the touch of the Divine Breath, and their written works are replete with meditative aids.

But all such methods are meant primarily for the recluse. The Church, it would seem, does not normally advocate meditation for the layman, apart from the periods of retreat set aside for the purpose in the religious calendar, such as the days between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Perhaps it is considered desirable to withdraw from general sanction the use of any 'device' that might bring one inadvertently into contact with what St Paul refers to as the 'Principalities and Powers, and the rulers of darkness in this world'.

For even the orthodox method can be a staggering experience for the untrained soul. Among mystics, one persistent phase in the more advanced stages is a period of spiritual privation that afflicts even the highest aspirants. St John of the Cross described it as the 'Dark Night of the Soul', St Teresa called it 'the great dereliction', and Mme Guyon 'the mystic death', while others referred to it as 'the descent into Hell'. These perils on the way are not easily borne, and the passage of meditation often lies through some such stage of black despair. When the untried student meditates he is cautioned to do so only on the acceptable patterns provided by long experience.

Some Christian denominations, among them several Quietist sects (see QUIETISM), practise various kinds of group meditation, where a number of persons gather together during service and sit in silence. In some cases a verse is read out from the Bible and the assembly simply bow their heads and meditate independently on its meaning. Something may or may not emerge from the group silence, but those who have attended such meetings have spoken of its beneficent influence in recharging the mind and spirit with dynamic power.

The Christian equivalent of finding God by 'paths many and devious' and by 'vain repetition' of his name, is through faith, homage and prayer. The real discipline is the one expressed in Christian conduct in daily life; what one mystic has spoken of as 'the practice of the Presence of God'. God does not have to be sought by difficult techniques, but is there for all who care to find him. Such at any rate is the mystical view. The psychologist C. G. Jung in his old age had a strange inscription carved over the door of his house. It was his final confession of faith: 'Called or Not Called, God is Present'.

The posture of meditation for the Christian is not face to face, implying equality with the Creator, but on bended knees with head bowed in humility. For the ordinary Christian meditation is almost synonymous with prayer: in the words of the psalmist: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer'.

(See also SUFIS; YOGA; ZEN.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

FURTHER READING: W. Johnston, *Silent Music* (Harper & Row, 1979); B. Khantipalo, *Calm and Insight* (Humanities, 1981); L. LeShan, *How to Meditate* (Little, Brown, 1974); D. Shapiro, *Meditation* (Aldine, 1980); B. Smith, *Meditation: The Inward Act* (McClelland, 1963).

MEDIUMS

John Freeman

In controlled conditions, mediums have produced phenomena for which no orthodox scientific explanation has yet been found; the author of the first article, on mental mediumship, suggests that at the least it merits study for the sidelights which it throws on the subconscious levels of the mind; physical manifestations are discussed in the second article

MEDIUM IS THE NAME given by Spiritualists to a person whom they believe is able to act as a medium of communication between the living and the dead. Modern Spiritualism arose in 1848 among more or less unsophisticated people in the United States, when the relatives of the Fox sisters claimed that these two young girls could communicate with the spirits of the dead by means of raps. Successors to the girls multiplied exceedingly on both sides of the Atlantic, which was hardly surprising at a time when the Darwinian theory of evolution was undermining the traditional religious view of man as an immortal spirit. Apparent demonstrations by mediums that the dead were not only still in existence but could actually communicate with the living were welcomed by many people with natural, if somewhat uncritical, joy. It must be remembered that some mediums did produce very apt messages purporting to come from beyond the grave, and the idea that a nearer source for those messages might be a subconscious level of the medium's own personality was not an easy one to envisage in the days before Freud had forced on our attention the fact that such levels existed.

This situation provided a delectable opportunity for the crooks who are always on the alert to exploit human credulity. Fraudulent mediums sprang up right and left, and even today they have many successors whose activities cast an unjustified slur on honest people who genuinely believe in their own mediumistic gifts, and who do on occasion produce phenomena in controlled conditions for which no scientifically orthodox explanation has yet been found. As fraudulent mediumship does not differ in essence from other forms of deception, it will not be discussed here.

Mediumship divides roughly into two types, physical and mental. A mental medium is a person who claims to be able, in certain states of consciousness, to see and talk with the dead, to transmit messages from them to the living and even, at times, to hand over his own body to discarnate (or disembodied) persons who can then communicate directly with the living. From the evidential angle this claim provokes two main questions: firstly, what alternative mundane sources can be found for statements purporting to come from the dead? And secondly, are there any occasions on record where all such alternative sources appear to be ruled out and a discarnate source for a particular statement seems overwhelmingly likely?

Looking at mediumship simply as a psychological phenomenon, the questions it calls for are different: for instance, what is the psychological process involved in such experiences? What brings them about? Why does a person become a medium? How does mediumship relate to other psychological states? It should perhaps be said that some persons who are mediumistically gifted do not always believe that the communications they receive necessarily come from the dead, and a more neutral name for mediums which includes such people, and is often used, is 'sensitive'. In our culture more women than men are mediums, so from now on they will be referred to here as feminine.

Increasing Dissociation

The first impression gained by a neutral observer when watching an honest medium at work is likely to be that the verbal or written utterances she makes to her sitters (a sitter is the name usually given to a person who visits mediums) are welling up from subconscious levels of her own psyche. Very often these utterances show

Previous page **Experiment with a ouija board at the Benson Herbert Paraphysical Laboratory in Wiltshire; it is likely that the 'messages' received in this way arise in the subconscious minds of the people concerned but, as with the utterances of a medium, the information appears to come from an external source. In both cases it is possible that contact is made with the subconscious level of the psyche**

Above **Participants in a seance in the 19th century: physical phenomena sometimes take the form of telekinesis when objects, in this case a chair, move through the air apparently without any force being applied**

A good medium appears to make meaningful contact in some unknown way with remote events and personalities, and, on the face of it, even at times with the dead

every sign of having originated within her psyche, but not always; on occasion a good medium will impart relevant and specific information to an unknown sitter which she apparently could not have obtained by normal means, and which is too detailed to be reasonably attributed to a series of lucky guesses. In fact it gives the impression that at the least she has made subconscious contact with events distant in time or space, or time and space, in some unknown and possibly extra-sensory fashion.

There are many stages of mediumship and each successive stage seems to imply an increasing degree of dissociation, in which communication with the subconscious gets progressively easier. When dissociation is slight and a medium not far from her normal waking state, she usually behaves as if fleetingly aware of various discarnate presences whom she describes as friends or relatives of persons present to whom they wish messages to be given. As a rule these messages are vague and they could apply to any one of a number of people. Some mediums can induce a state of dissociation so deep that it reaches trance level and at this point their normal personality is replaced by quite a different one, whom Spiritualists accept as a discarnate human being who has taken over the medium's body and whom they call a 'control'. Variants of this phenomenon have, of course, been known throughout history, but the control is not always looked on as human. For the Witch of Endor it was a familiar spirit, for the Cumaean Sybil it was the god Apollo, for Neoplatonists a beneficent daemon, for the early Christians, as a rule, a devil, and in Voodoo today it is thought to be a god.

On the whole modern psychologists tend to look on 'controls' as split-off facets of the medium's own personality and point out that similar 'splits' can occur apart from mediumship and may be hysterical symptoms or dramatizations of repressed tendencies. But one should perhaps bear in mind that the dissociation of mediumship does not seem very different in kind from that experienced by the rest of us. We all go into daydreams in which the outer world is forgotten. We all find that a forgotten name or tune, or even the solution to a problem which consciously we have failed to find, will float into our minds unexpectedly from 'nowhere'. And reports by creative persons of unexpected 'upwellings' of material from the subconscious are legion.

Many such creative upwellings take the form of images and symbols, in much the same way as mediums often claim to receive their information. Sometimes, for instance, new ideas emerge in visual symbols, as on the occasion when the chemist, Friedrich August Kekule, while dozing by the fire, had a vision of a snake eating its own tail which led him to envisage the circular form of the benzene molecule. Or new ideas may come in the form of automatic speech. Dante declared that as he was pondering how to begin a poem, 'my tongue spoke as though by its own impulse'. Other poets and writers may feel as if a work were directly dictated to them. Blake claimed this of a major poem and said that he could praise it because 'I dare not pretend to be other than the secretary'.

But it is not necessary to be a genius or a medium to bring up material from the subconscious, independently of the conscious mind. A number of people can do it by automatic writing, but what they write is usually, though not always, fragmentary, incoherent and of little interest. Others, from medicine-men to palmists, do it by some such technique as 'reading' cards, hands, bones, tea-leaves and so on; others again by the use of dowsing twig or pendulum. Subconscious material can also emerge through collective action, such as spelling out words on a ouija board or making a table tilt when a group of people place their fingers on them.

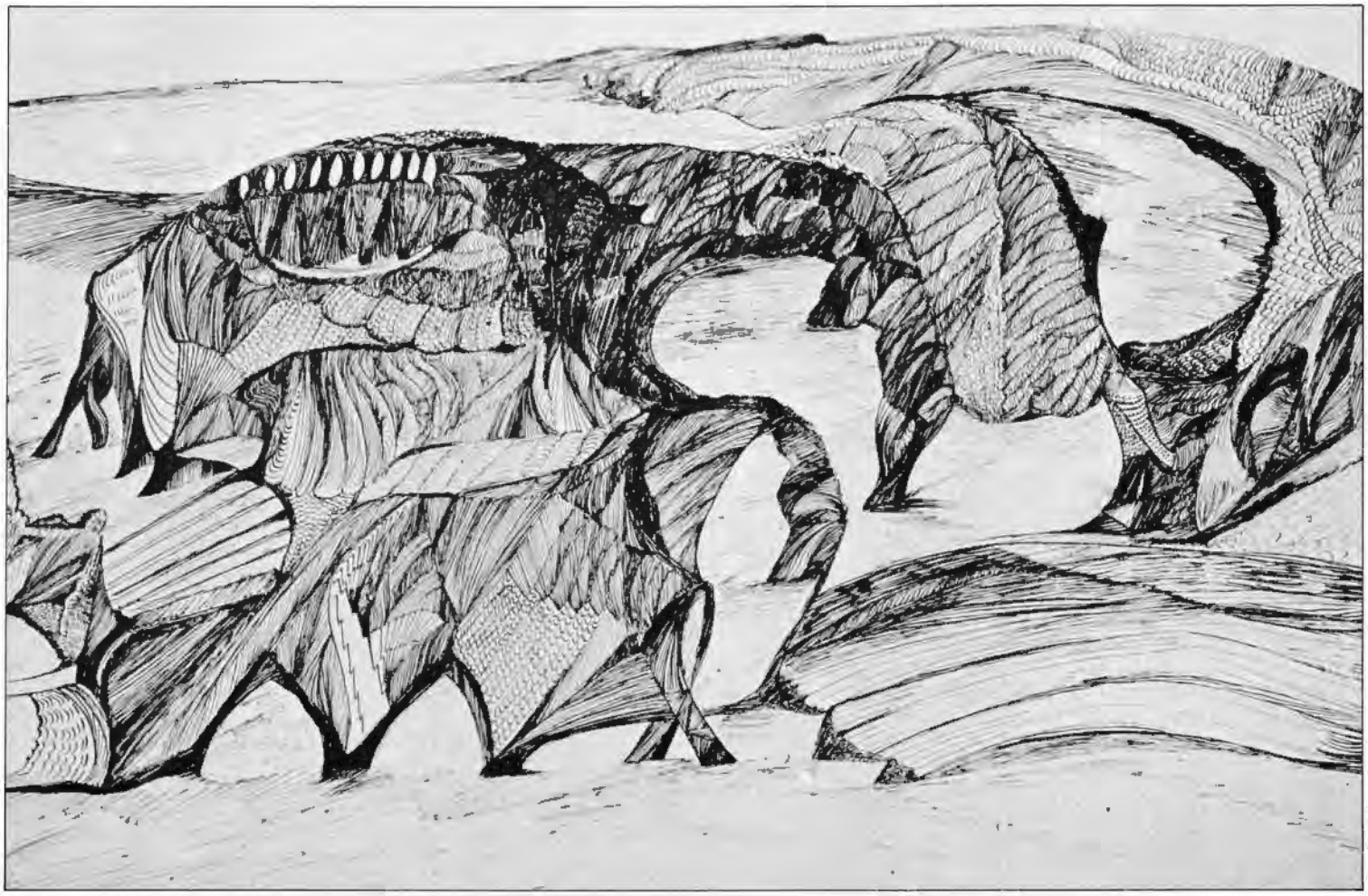
It will be noticed that all these procedures have one thing in common with control mediumship; any information given appears to the performer to come from a source exterior to himself. He 'sees' it in the cards or the bones or the hand. The pendulum or the dowsing twig moves independently of his conscious will. Each owner of the fingers which rest on a ouija board or table can assume that if any pushing, conscious or unconscious, is being done, it is by one of his co-performers, not himself. All such exteriorizations, however foolish they seem, may in fact serve a useful purpose by releasing the conscious mind of the performer from a sense of responsibility for what is said. This would reduce tension and in this way, perhaps, facilitate contact with the subconscious level of the psyche which appears to be able to receive what, for want of a better term, may be called extra-sensory 'signals'.

The quality of mediumistic utterances varies enormously, and to some extent in relation to the intellectual level of the medium. They are usually banal and fragmentary and in most cases seem almost like the product of a kind of dream state; nor need they be true to fact. One well-meaning trance medium implored me repeatedly on behalf of my dead husband to cease my excessive mourning for his loss, and she was not deterred by my assurances that he was alive and well. To her trance personality all grey-haired women must, so it seemed, be sorrowing widows. But although mediocre and even dishonest mediums exist, this does not alter the fact that on occasion a good one appears to make meaningful contact in some unknown way with remote events and personalities, and, on the face of it, even at times with the dead.

'Like Diving into Dark Fog'

Before seeking to discover what in fact happens on such occasions, one must be clear as to what appears to happen. Take for example a sitting with a trance medium. It usually opens with the medium remaining quietly seated in a chair for a short time with her eyes closed. Then, as a rule, she begins to breathe heavily, perhaps gives a groan or two and falls into a deep though restless sleep. Shortly afterwards she wakes up as the control, whose voice, mannerisms and whole personality seem quite different from her normal one. Controls range from childish characters of either sex to 'Red Indian' chiefs, Arabian physicians and Chinese sages – but they are all liable to make childish mistakes about the countries in which they claim to have lived on earth. Most mediums have only one control, but others have two or even three. One of the regular controls turns up at every sitting, the claim being that its task is to safeguard the medium's welfare and to regulate the many attempts made by discarnate spirits to communicate through her. Even so, a purported intruding 'spirit' sometimes manages to break in, and occasionally makes unexpected statements which are found to relate to a sitter not present at the time.

As a rule the control begins by reporting the presence of discarnate 'communicators' who wish him to transmit messages from them. Sometimes sitters say that they recognize these communicators and sometimes they do not. The communicators are usually



Peter Goodliffe

given a name such as John or Mary, though occasionally a good medium will get hold of an improbable name which is correct. Sometimes, with a familiar sitter, the control will allow a communicator, as he puts it, to take over the medium's body directly, and when this happens a second marked change may come about in her voice, speech and vocabulary; there have even been occasions when reliable and intelligent sitters felt that the personality who purported to talk through a medium's lips had mannerisms resembling those of the deceased friend or relative it claimed to be.

These communicators often complain that the process of making contact with mundane conditions through an unfamiliar body is hard, painful and depressing – one compared it to diving into a dark fog – and they account for the triviality of many commuuications by saying that to get through more than distorted fragments is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, and in spite of the mass of inapposite and dream-like material which even the best mediums are liable to produce, at times a communicator's performance is too lifelike and convincing for a dispassionate inquirer to feel comfortable about rejecting its authenticity out of hand. Something which is not cheating and appears inexplicable on any known hypothesis is certainly going on. Even so, it is obvious that all thinkable alternative explanations to communication with the discarnate must be envisaged.

It has often been observed that an entranced medium will serve up, as coming from the discarnate, snippets of information which could, unconsciously as well as consciously, have been guessed or inferred from a sitter's behaviour, age, sex, wedding ring or unwisely revealing remarks – but no more. Many, but not all controls, will fish or grope for information from the sitter, which is natural enough, but inexperienced sitters are liable to give away more than they realize and then take it as coming from the discarnate when it is returned to them later. It should also, in fairness, be said that some sceptical sitters are so determined to give away nothing that they create an atmosphere as cold and silent as a winter's night at the North Pole, and this is unlikely to encourage any type of skill or sensitivity. The conscious self of an honest medium should not be blamed for the deception or evasiveness of the trance personality, for even if she realizes what has been said, which she usually does not, she may have no idea that its source was her own subconscious observation or inference. Mediums do not know the actual source of what floats into their minds, however much they believe their own interpretation of it.

A medium's ignorance of the source of her information is shown by another possible alternative to certain apparent contacts with the dead – unconscious memory. A well-known member of the Society for Psychical Research, Mrs K. M. Goldney, went to a public demonstration of purported spirit communication at which the medium said that two spirits, Alec and Bessie White, had come for her. Two years earlier Mrs Goldney had had a private sitting with that medium, who while in trance had given her the same names. Although they had meant nothing to her at that time she had pretended to recognize them, in order to see whether they would again be given to her later on. By the time of the public demonstration she had forgotten this incident and was only reminded of it when she subsequently found the names in her notebook. It looks here as if her presence at the public demonstration had stimulated a latent memory in the medium.

Latent memories can also emerge in non-mediums, through a ouija board or in automatic writing, for instance. There are in fact many hints that the subconscious never forgets. If so, a medium's statements can never provide watertight evidence, even of mundane ESP, unless it is certain that she could not have had normal access to the information she imparts.

Subconscious Histrionics

When trying to assess the authenticity of a purported communicator, a further complication is that in all human beings, not mediums alone, the subconscious is a great dramatizer. Dreams make that clear enough. Professor H. H. Price once pointed out in a broadcast that the more one is inclined to reject the survivalist explanation of mediumistic phenomena, the more one is bound to emphasize this power of subconscious dramatization. In a good sitting, as he says, one can have a real conversation with a communicator, who may make suitable replies, agree or disagree, answer questions . . . 'If all this is just subconscious dramatisation

John Webb

Mediums and automatic artists believe that they are the instruments of some unseen force ***Facing page*** **and** ***Above right*** **Automatic drawings created by Helen Weir while in a trance; she claimed to be guided by an Egyptian control** ***Above*** **One of many designs drawn automatically by Emily Tallmadge of New York, she believed her drawings were inspired by spirit guides: by permission of Mrs Harold Hunt**

on the medium's part,' said Professor Price, 'it is comparable to Ruth Draper at her best.'

But whatever the real nature of controls or communicators and however much a medium may subconsciously dramatize, the fact still remains that on occasion she appears to obtain information by some unknown and apparently extra-sensory means. What alternatives are there to the belief that this information has been given her by the discarnate? Single 'hits' can in theory be attributed to a lucky coincidence, but when a complicated series of similar apt statements are repeated by several mediums independently, as in the Vandy case to be quoted later, this explanation appears fanciful. Excluding, then, chance coincidence and knowledge obtained by recognized sensory means, the simplest paranormal explanation would seem to be telepathy from somebody present at the sitting; the next, telepathy from some distant living person. A further paranormal, but still mundane, alternative is that the medium could have perceived clairvoyantly some document of which the existence was not known at the time, such as a letter written by a dead person, which was only found after the sitting (as in Mrs Leonard's book tests). That telepathy and precognition do occur has been experimentally demonstrated to the satisfaction of a number of eminent scientists, and the indignant denial of others.

Here is a first-hand example of apparent telepathy from the sitter which led the medium to believe she was in genuine communication with the dead. I had been asked to test a medium I had never seen. I went under an assumed name, looking like a very unworldly country cousin, but in my bag, which I kept tightly clutched under my arm, I carried a recent letter from a well-known actor. When the medium was in full flight, describing quite aptly my personal problems, I slipped my hand into the bag, which was out of her sight, took hold of the letter and thought of the actor. Immediately she paused, looked at me in a puzzled way and said in a tone which I felt did credit to my country-cousin outfit, 'Have *you* anything to do with the theatre?'; she then described the actor and in no time was producing messages for him from the lately deceased Ivor Novello. These, rightly or wrongly, I ascribed to a natural association of ideas since the two were not particular friends.

Now take a much quoted case of apparent precognition which on the face of it looked like communication with the dead. It was reported to the Society for Psychical Research by Dr S. G. Soal, a lecturer in mathematics at London University, and well known for his pioneering work on experimental ESP. Gordon Davis, a childhood friend whom Dr Soal thought had been killed, purported to communicate through a medium whom he was testing. 'Davis' reminded Dr Soal of many childhood incidents and then gave a detailed description of a house, and some of its contents, in which, so he said, he had lived before his death. Dr Soal thought little of this description, but he did note it down at the time and had his notes witnessed. That was fortunate for three years later he heard by chance that Davis had not been killed but was living in Southend. On visiting him Dr Soal found to his great surprise that the house was just as the medium had described it, including a number of ornaments which Davis had not possessed until he had moved into the house about a year after Dr Soal's sitting with the medium.

Continuing Sense of Purpose

But mediumship can produce greater puzzles than this, including some which actually suggest continuing intention on the part of individuals who have survived bodily death. In some of these cases, the only alternative explanation, apart from collective cheating or a fantastic series of chance coincidences, seems to be that several mediums have performed the extraordinary feat of collecting snippets of information telepathically from various living persons whom they did not know, and then combining and dramatizing them into wishes expressed by a discarnate spirit.

It will be obvious that it must be very rare for such cases to occur in apparently watertight conditions, because most sittings with mediums are not undertaken by investigators

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who have taken precautions against all sources of leakage, but by bereaved persons who are usually ready to jump at the slightest hint that they can communicate with those they have loved and lost. Fortunately a few exceptionally gifted mediums, particularly Mrs Piper, Mrs Leonard, and Mrs Willett, have provided a number of such cases, since they allowed themselves to be studied over long periods by expert investigators. To the neutral observer their work makes it clear that there is something, produced in all honesty, to be explained.

A good example of complex mediumship is the case of Edgar Vandy which has been exhaustively analysed by Professor C. D. Broad. Vandy was a clever engineer, who was in process of designing a new type of machine to reproduce lettering and so on by electro-mechanical means, when he was drowned at the early age of 38. One Sunday morning a friend of his, N.J., had taken him by car to visit an estate in Sussex, where N.J's sister was secretary to the owner who was away at the time. The day was hot, and the two men decided to bathe in the swimming pool which, being fed from a stream, was somewhat cloudy and slippery. Edgar was a poor swimmer and could not dive. He and N.J. undressed behind some bushes, and N.J. stated later that Edgar was ready about three minutes before him, and went off to the pool which was out of N.J.'s sight. Edgar was later found dead in the pool.

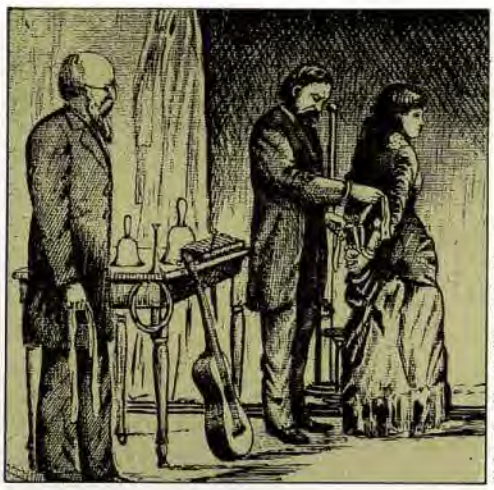
At the inquest the essence of N.J.'s evidence was that on reaching the pool he had seen Edgar lying face downwards on the water, splashing and fluttering his hands. N.J. jumped in, but Edgar was sinking by the time he reached him and he could not keep a grip on him. He went for help when Edgar finally sank. The doctor's view of the medical evidence was that Edgar had dived in, struck his jaw, lost consciousness and so drowned.

But Edgar's two brothers, George and Harold, were not satisfied. Edgar could not dive and they could not understand why attempts to help him should have been so unsuccessful. Although George did not believe in survival, he was a member of the S.P.R. and he thought it possible that by some form of mundane ESP, trance mediums might throw light on the manner of Edgar's death. To this end he arranged for a series of six strictly anonymous sittings with four different mediums. One of these was to be a proxy sitting, taken by a Methodist minister, Mr Drayton Thomas, with the famous medium, Mrs Leonard. A proxy sitting is one in which a stranger, who knows no details about the deceased, represents the person interested. In this case Mr Thomas was told no more than Edgar's name and that the relatives were in some doubt as to the cause of his death. The other five sittings with three other mediums were taken by George and Harold separately, under assumed names. George sat with all three of them, Harold with two.

Two main topics were mentioned by all four mediums: Edgar's death and the machine he was working on. As regards the death, Professor Broad points out the remarkable fact that two themes were common to all six sittings: first, that Edgar fell and his head was hit and injured, and second, that one or more persons were present, that it might be thought that they had failed to save his life through cowardice or incompetence and that he wished to shield them from blame. In five of the sittings there were references to water and drowning, and to Edgar's death being a strangely unlucky event which could easily have been avoided. In four, the mediums said that it was not due to suicide or culpable carelessness and that there was a feeling of dizziness connected with the accident. In three, there were references to a large scar which Edgar had said would always identify him.

In three of the six sittings and also at a later one taken by Harold Vandy there were a number of references to a machine, to something that Edgar had invented. Some of these were inaccurate, others correct and even specific to an extent surprising in women who knew nothing about engineering.

To demonstrate the improbability of chance coincidence being an explanation for the many 'hits' made by the four mediums, Professor Broad asks three questions: firstly, what proportion of the male population of England are drowned each year in open-air swimming pools, after falling mysteriously and getting a crack on the head; secondly, what proportion of them are skilled technicians devoting themselves to inventions in general and to the type of machine being designed by Edgar in particular; and thirdly, what proportion of them fall into both these categories? Professor Broad appears to think



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The American stage performer Annie Eva Faye was suspected of producing fraudulent physical phenomena, but there were occasions when it was impossible to prove that she was guilty *Far left* and *left* Pictures of Annie Eva Faye with her equipment *Right* An observer holds her while she produces manifestations and (*far right*) her hands are tied by a member of the investigating committee

fraudulent collusion between the experimenter, George Vandy, and the mediums equally improbable – and indeed, all their successes did not convince Mr Vandy of survival.

In this case, then, it seems hard to avoid some kind of paranormal hypothesis. Professor Broad thinks that the minimal one to fit the facts would he that the mediums acquired the various items of information by telepathy from a number of living persons, and dramatized them subconsciously as coming from the dead. In that case, he asks, why did certain very relevant items which would presumably have been in N.J.'s mind fail to appear? The maximal paranormal hypothesis, he suggests, would be that Edgar Vandy's personality had survived the death of his body and was deliberately communicating some of its thoughts and feelings telepathically to the various mediums. (In these sittings the mediums' bodies were not taken over by any control.) Professor Broad does not pass judgement either way.

Supernatural Crosswords

All four mediums in this case spoke as if it were the intention of a surviving Edgar Vandy to shield his friends from undeserved criticism. Signs of intention and even of planning on the part of the dead seem to be the best evidence for survival at present available.

A long-term instance of both can be found in a complicated series of mediumistic utterances known as the Society for Psychical Research cross-correspondences (see CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES). As more of these were written than spoken, for convenience they are usually all referred to as scripts. They were produced over a period of about 30 years by some educated amateur English sensitives and one professional American medium, Mrs Piper – about 12 in all. Some of the sensitives were widely separated (Mrs Fleming, for instance, Rudyard Kipling's sister, lived in India) and some of them never met each other; yet their scripts, which ran into thousands, showed every sign of being interrelated. The story is long and complicated, and without details loses much of its impressiveness, but no description of mediumship would be complete without some indication of its elaborate interrelationships.

The first cross-correspondence scripts were automatically written in 1901 by Mrs Verrall, a Cambridge Lecturer in Classics, shortly after the death of the last of three distinguished Cambridge scholars, Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney and Frederic Myers, who had all been founder members of the S.P.R. and who were all deeply concerned to establish whether or not some component of a human being could survive the death of his body (see GURNEY; MYERS). Mrs Verall's scripts were followed by others, mainly written by women who were not classical scholars, yet many of them referred to abstruse classical subjects about which few people except erudite scholars would ever have heard. The scripts were usually signed 'Myers' or 'Gurney'.

They were fragmentary and apparently meaningless when taken separately, and it was only after it occurred to an investigator at the Society's headquarters to try to fit them together that it was found that the fragments were apparently complementary and that when they were fitted together coherent meanings emerged. Sometimes a clue as to what such a meaning would be was given in one script in advance. Eventually a group of expert scholars, in particular the second Lord Balfour, who studied the scripts over many years, were driven to the conclusion that the elaborate verbal puzzles they contained showed every sign of having been designed by somebody. The question was, by whom?

An intriguing aspect of this story is that the scripts took an enthusiastic part in investigating themselves. For one thing they insisted that the various automatists must not see each other's work, for they claimed that the verbal puzzles the scripts contained had been designed by the surviving Myers and his friends as evidence of their continued existence and power to plan. There was in fact an excellent reason for such a circuitous procedure. During their lives the founders of the S.P.R. had learnt the hard way that to demonstrate survival by means of mediumship – or indeed by any other means – is extremely difficult. For a purported communicator merely to announce his identity is obviously no proof at all. To remind the sitter of past events is little better, for even when the medium could not have heard of them by sensory means, she could, in theory, have discovered them telepathically from any living person to whom they were known. But here, claimed the scripts, was evidence of many complicated designs which were not known to any living person. So where could they have come from except the dead?

The alternatives to this claim seem just about as startling as the claim itself. One is that all the elaborate patterns and interrelationships came about by chance. A second is that investigators such as Lord Balfour, and sensitives such as Mrs Verrall, Dame Edith Lyttelton, Mrs Coombe-Tennant ('Mrs Willett'), and other equally well known and respected figures had got together to perpetrate a long-term fraud, which took a lot of time and trouble and brought them no gain but rather, mockery. A third alternative is that the whole plan might have originated in the subconscious mind of that sternly upright scholar Mrs Verrall, and that over many years she had led a *subconscious* telepathic class of other equally upright women, some of whom she had never met, to make fools, not only of their friends and the public, but also of their own conscious selves. One weakness in this explanation is that the script puzzles went on after her death, when no one seemed to be left with her knowledge of the classics, personal contact with the dead scholars, and interest in the subject of survival, to carry on such an elaborate hoax.

The present position regarding the evidence for survival provided by mediumship appears to be something like this: it is extremely hard to ascribe the best material provided by the best mediums to chance, or fraud, or to information obtained by sensory means and subconsciously remembered. If these explanations are excluded there seem to be two alternatives: either mediums can obtain information from the discarnate, as they themselves believe, or they get it by means of ESP of mundane events, which is more efficient and widely ranging than has ever been observed in other situations and which they then dramatize subconsciously to fit a particular case.

Some aspects of the psychology of mediumship may have been glimpsed in the foregoing sketch of the evidence it claims to provide for survival, but one further aspect should be mentioned as it gives an interesting clue to the oddities and limitations of both mediumistic utterances and certain spontaneous ESP-type experiences. In both cases, information which has not come through one of the known senses appears to have been received at a subconscious level,

The phenomena produced by physical mediums often took the form of materializations, figures which ranged from scarcely visible wisps to fully formed and clothed bodies that apparently grew out of ectoplasm *Above left* The face of Raymond Lodge (actual photograph inset) son of Sir Oliver Lodge, a pioneer of psychical research, appears in the ectoplasm issuing from a medium's nose *Centre* Katie King was a feminine spirit allegedly materialized by the medium Florence Cook *Right* Photograph of ectoplasm exuding from a medium's ear

and it has often been noticed that subconscious material, whether it has originated in an individual's own psyche or has penetrated it from outside, sometimes has difficulty in rising to the surface in a straightforward manner. It seems as if some kind of censorship has to be evaded. A similar impression is often given by dreams. Hence, information which appears to have reached the subconscious in some paranormal fashion from an exterior source, whether mundane or not, is liable to emerge disguised or distorted, or obliquely by means of an associated idea or a symbol. Then it will have to be interpreted, and here both medium and sitter can make mistakes.

Thinking in Pictures

A few examples may clarify the pattern. Take the following case of associated ideas leading towards an item which helped to identify a purported communicator. Topsy, the control of a well-known medium, Mrs Warren Elliot, who allowed her work to be studied by serious investigators, seemed to be groping for the identifying fact that in life a certain communicator had much enjoyed rice pudding. She spoke of India, then of some hot place with dark people, then of palms, then bananas, and finally she said, 'He laughs and shows Topsy a lot of rice. There must be a joke about rice – lots and lots of rice – more rice, never tired.'

Conversely, associated ideas in a sitter's mind may lead a medium along a trail towards no particular goal. After a small dinner, at which three scientists were my fellow guests, a medium who was known to none of us was brought in to demonstrate his gift of ESP. On this occasion he made no claim to communicate with the dead, but merely to perceive images which he left to us to interpret. His first image was of me hastily putting in order a mass of sheets of typescript. This was a bull's eye, for, unknown to anyone present, the day before I had been hurriedly putting together the untidy scattered sheets of the carbon copy of the manuscript of a book, because my publisher had unexpectedly telephoned for a second copy to be sent urgently. From this impression the medium passed on to two incidents mentioned in the book, an old manor house connected with one of them, three pictures in that house, including a Romney, in which I had delighted as a child, and so on. None of these linked items were in my conscious thoughts, but all were correct and there appeared no point in mentioning any of them.

A medium's impressions frequently emerge by means of symbols and these often take the form of visual images, which is natural enough as the subconscious, like primitive man, seems to think in images rather than in the verbalizations of the highly educated. Topsy once deduced, for instance, that a couple had been 'nearly married and then not married', because a communicator had shown her a wedding dress and then let it fall. Similarly one of the cross-correspondence sensitives, Dame Edith Lyttelton, told me that she had become aware of her pianist grandson's death in action by 'seeing' his grand piano covered with a Union Jack.

Mrs Leonard's control, Feda, whose personality, like Topsy's, was that of an artless young girl, said that she got her information in several different ways. She might seem to herself to hear words or other sounds, or to see written words or imitative or symbolic pictures. She said that impressions came more easily in the form of symbolic visual images than in words but, partaking of Mrs Leonard's extreme honesty, she admitted that she often found it difficult to interpret them. She sometimes claimed to have feelings of, say, roughness or coldness. Incidentally, some mediums seem to pick up the type of pain a purported communicator had suffered from in life, and actually experience the pain themselves.

Both the cross-correspondence communicators and Feda's insisted that from their point of view communication with the living was very difficult. Professor Broad has summarized the description by Feda's communicators of the various methods they could use to convey information to her. One was by actually speaking to her, the other by telepathy, and of this, they said, there were several modes. Suppose, for instance, that they wanted telepathically to convey the idea 'horse'. The simplest way was to create an auditory or visual image of the word in Feda's mind; or an image of the horse itself; or a symbolic image of, say, a jockey with a whip. Or they might convey the idea without an image of any kind. One

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William Davies

Voices speaking from 'nowhere' and raps and bangs on floors and tables are other phenomena that have occurred during physical seances *Above left* Ectoplasmic hand produced by Margery Crandon, a famous medium during the 1920s; the controversy that developed around the physical phenomena she produced deeply divided the SPR in the United States *Centre* Mme Eugene Picquart, a French medium, impersonating Mephistopheles *Right* Medium tied to a chair; trumpets and various musical instruments are part of the physical medium's stock-in-trade

of them drew an interesting distinction between himself projecting an idea or image into Feda's mind and her playing the active role and reading his. In that case she might take up some quite unimportant thought which had nothing to do with what he was trying to communicate.

An important factor in mediumship is the relation between individual mediums and sitters. Some sitters evoke interesting material from a medium, others by their chilling attitude will reduce her to a state of numbed inhibition. But even with good sitters, one will stimulate one medium more than another, and another sitter will do the reverse. A third, however open-minded and sympathetic at a conscious level, will never get any results at all. It is as if there were some subconscious interaction between medium and sitter of which, so far, nothing is understood.

Mediumship has received less psychological study than might have been expected, seeing that it is a phenomenon which arises in all cultures. This may be due in part to distaste for the credulity with which much of it is surrounded and to the prevalence of fraudulent and mediocre mediums, and in part to the widespread acceptance today that survival after death is out of the question. Yet, even if that were so, good mediumship would merit study for the interesting sidelights it appears to throw, not only on subconscious levels of human personality, but on subconscious interaction between the living.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

Physical Phenomena

Throughout history physical events have been reported that do not accord with current scientific notions of what is possible. These events may be classified under two heads: firstly, those that arise spontaneously, appearing to be associated with some definable place, time and circumstances; secondly, those that appear to centre around a person, who is then observed under more or less controlled conditions with a view to inducing further manifestations of a similar character. When the inducement is reputedly successful, the person will be known to psychical researchers as a physical medium, and the effects produced will be described as physical phenomena, usually taking the form of materialization or telekinesis.

Materialization is the term applied to figures, ranging from barely visible wisps to fully-formed and clothed bodies, that are said to grow, sometimes before the observer's eyes, out of a substance known as teleplasm or ectoplasm that allegedly issues from the orifices of the medium; it must be said that it often bears an unfortunate resemblance to muslin or cheesecloth. Telekinesis is the projection of objects through the air without any known force being applied, and the levitation upwards of objects, and sometimes people, sometimes with contact but without upward pressure, and sometimes without any contact at all (see also PSYCHOKINESIS).

Other typical phenomena are raps and bangs on floors and walls, touches from invisible hands, voices speaking from nowhere, writing or objects appearing without explanation (so-called 'apports'), the playing of musical instruments by 'no one', and gusts of cold air. In some cases these manifestations have been combined with other phenomena more typical of spiritualistic seances, as where an allegedly materialized figure purports to embody someone who has died, or where voices appear to speak to sitters through a large metal cone that floats in space, and is known as a 'trumpet'.

Although one of the by-products of the Spiritualist movement has been a massive history of fraudulent mediumship, the second half of the 19th century being studded with materialized figures of dubious authenticity, there have been many cases in which it has been impossible to prove that the medium concerned was guilty of fraud. This would be true of at least some of the effects produced by mediums such as Herne, Williams, Florence Cook, and even the suspect American stage performer, Annie Eva Fay, who was tied to her chair 'with a current of electricity' in the presence of Sir William Crookes (see CROOKES), Sir Francis Galton and Sir William Huggins, all Fellows of the Royal Society. While in this condition, she apparently caused a disembodied hand to rove round Crookes' library handing out suitably chosen books to the sitters in the adjoining room.

Until comparatively recently the question of fraudulent *experimenters* was not canvassed as a possibility, and in the 1920s,

'Return of Charles Dickens'

Spiritualists believe that dead authors have sometimes returned and dictated posthumous works through mediums. One such case concerned Charles Dickens, who died suddenly leaving unfinished his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Four years later there was published a completion of the story, supposedly written automatically by the medium T. P. James, an uneducated mechanic of Brattlehoro, Vermont. The style was in many ways an excellent parody of Charles Dickens, and though there were passages that were flat and uninspired, there were others that were successful. Spiritualists hailed the 'return of Dickens' with enthusiasm. If true, it was certainly remarkable that an uneducated man could produce such a good parody of the great author's style . . . It so happens that there is some direct evidence to show that the Spiritualist interpretation is unsound. Many years after Dickens's death, a manuscript was discovered containing a later portion of the story of Edwin Drood. This portion does not feature at all in the James version. Moreover, Dickens's intentions as to the end of his story were very definite and well known to his son, Charles Dickens the Younger, and to his illustrator, Sir Luke Fildes. There are many indications in the completed portion of the novel that he was sticking closely to his declared plan. In the James version the plot is rather clumsily changed, and no use is made of various pointers to the solution of the mystery that Dickens had incorporated in the first half of the book.

D. J. West, *Psychical Research Today*

the heyday of vigorous controversy over the reality of physical phenomena, it was only the competence of the researcher that was attacked. If poor observation and inaccuracy in reporting were the only charges laid against the evidence it would be difficult to resist the conclusion that physical mediumship is a fully proven reality, and it is not surprising that the possibility that the experimenter is not a fool but a knave has become entrenched in the modern mind.

It may be remarked that the men impaled on these unattractive twin horns have in many cases been of excellent reputation and sometimes of outstanding quality in their field. Professor Morselli, after his own investigation of the medium Eusapia Palladino, reproached 'scientists who have remained deaf and blind before all the affirmation, not of credulous sectarians, but of serious and worthy observers such as Crookes, Lodge and Richet.' (Sir Oliver Lodge was a Fellow of the Royal Society and Professor Charles Richet was a physician, physiologist and Nobel prize-winner.) It must be fair to say that in no other field of study has the unequivocal testimony of so many witnesses of the highest calibre been discounted and written off as crass stupidity, or worse.

Ghostly Accordion

Rev. W. Stainton Moses, a man of irreproachable character, must be accounted one of the more extraordinary figures in a field where extraurdinary figures abound. He was primarily, in his own estimation, a mental medium; initially he was inclined to speak sceptically about physical phenomena, so he may well have been surprised, after some months of investigation, to find himself levitated onto a table, according to his own report.

He always took the view that physical effects emanated from rather 'low' spirits, but his own experiences, recorded in private notebooks presumably for his own reading, relate a series of miraculous events including direct writing and the passage of objects through closed doors. It seems impossible to believe that his entire life was permeated by a continuous series of deliberate frauds, and a limited form of insanity (not perceived by any of his contemporaries) seems a more acceptable explanation. But if insanity is to be imputed to Moses, then it must also be imputed to Edward Cox, a shrewd and wealthy Serjeant-at-law who was one of the principal witnesses to Moses' mediumship and who seems from his writings and career to have been entirely normal but for the nature of the events he attests.

There exist independent accounts by Moses and Cox (both published in full in *Light*, Spring, 1967) describing a table levitation that took place in the most unlikely circumstances. There are minor discrepancies, pointing to non-collaboration rather than to common invention, but both agree that the two of them were sitting on the evening of 2 June 1873, in Cox's dining room; Cox was opening or reading his letters, and Moses was reading a paper. Suddeuly loud raps came from the heavy mahogany table, which presently quivered, swayed violently, and moved forward. Cox records: 'I then suggested that it would be an invaluable opportunity, with so great a power in action, to make a trial of *motion without contact*, the daylight, the place, the size and weight of the table, making the experiment a crucial one. Accordingly we stood upright, he on one side of the table, I on the other side of it. We stood two feet from it, and held our hands eight inches above it. In one minute it rocked violently. Then it moved over the carpet . . . seven inches. Then it rose three inches from the floor on the side on which my friend was standing. Then it rose equally on my side . . .'

If Moses suffered from delusions, then so obviously did Cox. And so, by the same hypothesis, did Crookes and his wife, for three independent accounts exist, one by Crookes and one by Lady Crookes, of a D. D. Home sitting at which Cox was also present, when a phantom glided across the floor playing an accordion, and deposited it on the floor as it sank into the boards up to the armpits and vanished. When faced with the choice of multiple delusions and accordion-playing phantoms it is tempting to affirm that the phantom is the more improbable. It is worth pausing here to check a fallacy; for whereas the likelihood of apparently sane and competent scientists, lawyers and clergymen having shared delusions can be assessed by reference to normal experience, the likelihood of a phantom materializing (whether musically gifted or not) cannot be assessed in this way. We are here dealing not with the improbable, but with the impossible, and it is notions of the possible that stand to be corrected if there is sufficient evidence.

Returning to matters that can be properly assessed, such as the all-important creditability of the witnesses, the older testimony is at a disadvantage in that it becomes more and more difficult for us to think ourselves back into the state of mind of a person born, like Stainton Moses, in 1839. In more recent times another medium, Kathleen Goligher, who was born in 1898, was investigated extensively during the years 1913 to 1921 by Dr W. J. Crawford, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at Belfast University. It must be said at once that Crawford's methods were entirely unsatisfactory, since he worked alone most of the time with a circle composed of the medium and six other members of her family, and in very dim light. In his three books on the Golighers he described the most amazing events in the most phlegmatic style, and resolutely applied plain mechanical principles to the caprices of table levitation. After weighing the medium, and finding that the weight of the levitated table had transferred itself to her, Crawford concluded that 'psychic structures' must emanate from the body of the medium, raising the table by a cantilever effect. At a later stage he photographed something strongly resembling shreds of cloth tied to the legs of the table or the medium. E. E. Fourner d'Albe, a researcher who went to Belfast after Crawford's death to continue work with the circle, put in an adverse report.

The testimony of two witnesses of Crawford's work who later identified themselves, however, is very striking. A letter dated 31 December 1913 from Sir William Barrett, a former President of the Society for Psychical Research, to Sir Oliver Lodge records: 'I have just returned from Belfast and had one remarkable sitting with Dr Crawford and his young medium, a girl of 17 . . . The physical phenomena were amazing, in sufficient red light to see all the sitters with clasped hands sitting round, and some 2 feet distant from a small table, I saw the table rise about 18 inches and made all the sitters hold up their hands which were clearly visible whilst the table remained suspended. Then I was allowed to

South American Press Photo

The belief that a medium's normal personality is replaced by quite a different one when he or she is in a state of trance has been known throughout history. Spiritualists call this a control, and accept it as a discarnate human being who has taken over the medium's body, but in other cultures the control has been regarded as a familiar spirit or a god; a Brazilian medium dressed in the clothes supposedly worn by his control during his lifetime as an Indian chief

go within the circle and try to force the table down which was impossible, I sat on the table and could not force it down. The table then of its own accord turned upside down and I was allowed to try and lift it but it was impossible the top seemed riveted to the floor . . .' Barrett was a difficult man, and was quite unable to punctuate, but it has never been suggested that he was the sort of person to be deluded into thinking he was wrestling with a suspended table.

The other witness, W. Whately Smith (later Carington) was said to be a heavy drinker in later life, and if it seems plausible for him to have had an alcoholic hallucination on the same lines as Barrett's sober report, this may be grasped at as the explanation of his report in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research (Volume 30), describing experiences very similar to Barrett's at a sitting on 9 December 1916. It is difficult to see how Barrett and Carington could have been deceived, but Carington himself sounds a proper note of caution by saying 'I am well aware that a single sitting, however satisfactory, is not sufficient evidence for the formation of *final* judgments, especially on so precarious a subject'.

Another amateur medium operating in Europe at the same time as Kathleen Goligher was Marthe Béraud, also known as 'Eva C'. Eva's usual practice was to sit in a 'cabinet' with a curtain in front of it; when she claimed to have created a hand, or face, or other materialization, from her ectoplasm, she would draw the curtain aside and display her product. This type of mediumship is always open to the gravest suspicions, and it should be mentioned here that the fraudulent medium Laslo, who produced similar phenomena, later confessed that before the sitting he had drawn his faces on gauze rolled in goose fat, rolled it into a small pellet, placed it in the pocket of Professor von Schrenck-Notzing, a leading psychical researcher, and had extracted it in the dark after he had been searched.

Eva's creations gave rise to furious controversy, and there is no denying that they appear fraudulent. Nevertheless, when investigated under fairly rigorous conditions by a somewhat hostile committee set up by the Society for Psychical Research in 1920 (she was stripped, searched, sewn into a catsuit, and had her hands held or continuously watched throughout), she produced phenomena that if not genuine could have been due only to regurgitation of fabric and other materials, combined with a certain amount of skilled conjuring with the teeth.

A white strip a few inches long, which proceeded from one of Eva's thumbs that was under close observation and held by a member of the English investigating committee, tends to lend some weight to the following description by Professor Charles Richet of the materializing process observed in this medium. 'I have also . . . been able to see the first lineaments of materializations as they were formed. A kind of liquid or pasty jelly emerges from the mouth or breast of Marthe which organises itself by degrees, acquiring the shape of a face or a limb. Under very good conditions of visibility, I have seen this paste spread on my knees, and slowly take form so as to show the rudiment of the radius, the cuvitus, or metacarpal bone whose increasing pressure I could feel on my knee.' Richet was a physiologist, and a man of robust mental constitution, whose normality and general common sense can be confirmed by an inspection of his almost life-long correspondence with Sir Oliver Lodge. It is also worth remarking that, like Richet, two other observers of Eva's materializations, Geley and Schrenck-Notzing, were physicians, men trained in observing the processes of the body.

At the same time it must be said that the medical and academic background has not always resulted in meticulously presented reports of flawless procedures. In their account given in the *Revue Métapsychique* (in 1921 and subsequent issues) of sittings with the medium Franek Kluski, Geley and Richet contented themselves with asserting that the medium was controlled from start to finish, and that all possibility of fraud was utterly excluded; but experience shows that whatever the reputation of the informant a mere assertion that he was satisfied by the conditions should not satisfy anyone else.

Drop in Temperature

Some of the most carefully described and well-instrumented experiments were carried out not by scientists but by Mr Harry Price in 1923, and reported in his book *Stella C.*, published two years later.

A number of these sittings were attended by council members of the Society for Psychical Research; and while lying on the floor gazing through the legs of the medium, the Society's research officer, E. J. Dingwall was fortunate enough to see 'a white egg-shaped body beginning to draw towards the centre of the floor under the table . . . To the end nearest the medium was attached a thin white neck like a piece of macaroni. It advanced towards the centre and then rapidly withdrew to the shadow.' The reported phenomena included raps, bangs, flashes, playing of musical instruments, table levitations, and the movement of objects enclosed in a cage or imprisoned under a large chemical bubble, the surface of which remained unbroken.

Abnormal psychology and mediumship are inextricably linked, and there is reason to suggest that there may be a connection between physical mediumship and thwarted sex

Another interesting feature of these sittings is careful reporting on the subject of cold breezes. These are commonly reported at sittings, and have sometimes been thought to be merely subjective sensations. In the Stella C. sittings drops in temperature were recorded on thermometers, and it was found that 'when telekinetic action was particularly strong, the mercury fell many degrees below that recorded at commencement of sittings'.

The sittings took place by the light of 'a 60-watt lamp in an ordinary photographic ruby well-glass,' and Price says that it was possible to see plainly the limbs and features of the sitters. No vestige of fraud has ever been imputed to the medium, who received no payment beyond a rate appropriate to her profession as a hospital nurse and dispenser. The work of Price in other connections has been heavily attacked and, more recently, strongly defended in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research; whatever his merits as a ghost-hunter, his work on Stella C. is an important document, and his correlation of temperature drop with telekinetic activity was confirmed a year later by Dr Christian Winther, the Danish researcher, in his experiments with another medium, Anna Rasmussen.

In a series of sittings in strong light, starting in 1922, Anna Rasmussen caused one of a pair of pendulums suspended from hooks and enclosed in glass to move, change direction, accelerate or slow down, independently of the other. In 1924 Winther found, like Price, that there was a paranormal drop of temperature correlating with the telekinetic movements.

The last medium of this 'golden age' is Stanislawa Tomzcyk (the Hon. Mrs Everard Feilding) a Polish medium whose phenomena somewhat resemble those of Nina Kulagina, the only contemporary physical medium known today to have put herself at the disposal of researchers, now being studied by certain Russian and Czech investigators. Mme Tomzcyk caused small objects, such as matchboxes, to rise up into the air between her two hands held some few inches away from the object on either side. Four professors of different nationality were entirely satisfied that this was not done with wires, cotton or hair. On the contrary, they asserted that between her two hands ectoplasmic threads (which were photographed) would materialize, and that these 'rigid rays' supported the levitated objects.

It is, of course, possible for four professors to be not so reliable as they seem. Professor J. C. F. Zoellner, of Leipzig University, published a report in 1887 on sittings with the 'slate-writing' medium Henry Slade, in which he pronounced that he, and three other named professors, were all 'perfectly convinced of the reality of the observed facts, altogether excluding imposture or prestidigitation.' In a report on Spiritualism published later that year, however, it emerged that 'Zoellner was of unsound mind at the time, and anxious for experimental verification of an already accepted hypothesis; another, Fechner, was partly blind, and believed because of Zoellner's observations; a third, Scheibner, was also afflicted with defective vision, and not entirely satisfied in his own mind as to the phenomena; and a fourth, Weber, was advanced in age, and did not even recognize the disabilities of his associates. None of these men had ever had experiences of this sort before, nor was any one of them acquainted with the ordinary possibilities of deception.'

Link with Repressed Sex

Enough is known at least about Moses, Crookes, Cox, Barrett, Carington, Richet, Schrenck-Notzing and Harry Price, to name a few, to know that they were not senile, blind or apparently insane at the time when their reports were made. There is never any answer to the assumption that all psychical researchers are fraudulent, except to point out that up to the moment of death, every important researcher in this field has maintained his belief in the reality of the phenomena reported by him.

Before rejecting the more fantastic reports out of hand, it is worth pausing to consider why researchers, generally anxious to be accepted as sane, careful investigators, put their reputations in jeopardy by issuing reports that are almost bound to be disbelieved. In describing a little materialized woman who danced naked on the palm of her hand before shrinking to nothing, Madame Bisson (the researcher associated with Eva C) apologetically stated that she reported this astonishing thing because it happened.

The question that is prone to stick in the mind is why physical mediumship appears virtually to have died out in the last 30 years, at least in Europe and the United States. The answer given by Spiritualists is that the powers 'out there' have turned their attention to healing, a sphere in which it is almost impossible to be satisfied that any result is unequivocally paranormal.

It may not be too fanciful to postulate that physical mediumship arises as a result of a psychological state common among middle-class persons who passed their adolescence in the early part of the century, but is not commonly found among later generations. Abnormal psychology and mediumship are inextricably linked, and there is some reason to suggest that there may be a connection between physical mediumship and sex. In days when it was quite possible for an adolescent to be ignorant of sexual matters that today would be common knowledge among primary schoolchildren, the young may have suffered unexpressed terrors, anxieties and feelings of guilt that had to find expression in some abnormal manner. If this is a well-founded speculation, it might account for the rarity of this form of abnormal expression in these days when the young are encouraged to bring out into the open problems that might have been thrust down into the darkest corners of the mind earlier in the century.

(See also AUTOMATIC ART; HOME; LEONARD; OBJECT READING; OUIJA BOARDS; PALLADINO; PIPER; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH; SCHNEIDER; SPIRITUALISM; WILLETT.)

R. G. MEDHURST, M. R. BARRINGTON

FURTHER READING: For a valuable and detailed study of mental mediumship with many examples see W. H. Salter, *Zoar: The Evidence of Psychical Research concerning Survival* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1961); for an authoritative study of the psychology and procedures of various trance mediums, including examples of their utterances which seem to involve paranormal cognition, see C. D. Broad *Lectures on Psychical Research* (International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962); see also Gardner Murphy, *The Challenge of Psychical Research* (Harpers, New York, 1961); H. Hart, *The Enigma of Survival* (Rider, 1959; D. J. West, *Psychical Research Today* (Pelican, 1962); R. Heywood, *The Sixth Sense* (Pan Books, 1966).

Psychic News

University of London/Harry Price Library

University of London/Harry Price Library

Camera Press London

Psychic News

University of London/Harry Price Library

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Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Mediums have occasionally produced phenomena, under controlled conditions, for which there is no scientifically orthodox explanation ***Top row, left to right*** **Rudi Schneider: he was able to produce various physical phenomena under stringent control conditions; Eusapia Palladino: although she was detected in fraud on a number of occasions, she was also capable of producing seemingly inexplicable physical phenomena; Anna Rasmussen: intensively investigated in Copenhagen, she was able to influence the movements of pendulums made from a variety of materials; Douglas Johnson, a much-tested London medium** ***Centre, left to right*** **Mrs Leonora Piper, an American mental medium who was active at the turn of the 20th century; Kathleen Goligher: she was said to have caused a small table to rise 18 inches in the air during one of her sittings; Pasquale Erto, a Neapolitan physical medium** ***Left*** **D. D. Home, one of the most famous of physical mediums** ***Right*** **Henry Slade: 'spirit' writing appeared on slates during his seances**

MEDMENHAM MONKS

THE NOTORIOUS SOCIETY commonly known as the 'Hell-Fire Club' which met at Medmenham Abbey in Buckinghamshire, and perhaps afterwards in the High Wycombe caves, resulted from the meeting of several eccentric minds; but it was also very much a creature of its century. If Satanism was indeed practised by members of the club this was not unique in 18th century Europe. The Age of Reason was also the age of shadows: beside the logical discourses of the philosophers babbled less reputable speculators on man and the universe.

The 'friars' who gathered in the judiciously ruined abbey erected beside the Thames by Sir Francis Dashwood came from the highest reaches of society, and were in one sense merely carrying on the traditions of the early 18th century Hell-Fire clubs of London, with which they have been confused. Such clubs had specialized in the choicer aspects of blasphemy: Philip, Lord Wharton, who was President of one of these societies in 1720 was known to call in London taverns for a 'Holy Ghost pie'. But at Medmenham the debauch was more tasteful, ordered in the Italian fashion then in vogue, and spiced with Devil-worship. The prime movers in the Medmenham brotherhood were all rakes, aesthetes, and politicians; their Satanism was conducted in the most elegant surroundings. Inspired by fashionable visions of gloom, decay, bats and ivy-covered walls, Dashwood had leased Medmenham Abbey and made such alterations – cloisters and a ruined tower among others – as would turn it into his personal palace of delights.

Dashwood found one half of his inspiration in his debauches with a friend of his, Lord Sandwich; the other came from the notably odd personage of George Bubb Dodington. Born plain George Bubb, this gentleman had inherited a large fortune and an ambition to rise in the world. His capacity to fawn and ingratiate himself was matched only by his talent for appearing ridiculous – most notably when he burst his breeches kissing the hand of Queen Charlotte. In the Jacobean house at Hammersmith in London which he named 'La Trappe' after the great Cistercian abbey at Soligny la Trappe in France, Bubb held court: his guests were known as 'monks' and would sometimes dress up in monastic habits.

To this house came Dashwood, who was obviously inspired by the surroundings and atmosphere; here also came others who were to foregather at Medmenham: Paul Whitehead, who had escaped a life of debt by marrying a rich and ugly half-wit; Thomas Potter, the rich son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose debaucheries quickly reduced him to a scurvy-ridden, gouty and palsied wreck, whilst leaving his considerable intelligence unharmed; and Potter's friend, George Selwyn, who had a habit of attending executions disguised as an old lady. Bubb, Dashwood, Sandwich, and Whitehead were all connected with the Opposition party in the House of Commons, as was another member of the Medmenham group, the Marquis of Bute.

From 1750 until 1762 these public figures gathered in Sir Francis Dashwood's ruined abbey for a fortnight each June. With several of the local gentry, they formed a 'Superior Order' of 12, each with an adopted name; Dashwood was 'St Francis'. There was also an 'Inferior Order' of 12, composed of guests and neighbours who were not allowed to take part in the special festivities of the brotherhood.

Only members of the Superior Order were allowed to enter the chapel of Medmenham, where pornographic pictures and parodies of conventional church furniture provided the setting for a rather rudimentary form of Satanic ritual. A new member of the brotherhood might indeed be baptized to Lucifer, and the orthodox liturgy mocked; but how far the ceremonies went in their 'Satanic' practices cannot be discovered.

'Divine Milk-Punch'

The escapade lasted for 12 years until the notorious John Wilkes decided to expose the whole apparatus of secrecy surrounding Medmenham. Wilkes, famous for his championship of the mob, had perhaps been less acquiescent than most in the Satanic ritual of 'St Francis'. One day, into the middle of the Satanic ceremony bounded a devil in very truth, and fastened on to Sandwich, who fell to the ground screaming for mercy. It proved to be an ape, which Wilkes had concealed in a box whose gate he could open with a string; the beast had been equipped with horns and a long black cloak.

Whether or not this encouraged enmity between Sandwich and Wilkes, by 1762 the majority of the Medmenham monks were in political power, with Wilkes and his friend Charles Churchill, also a member of the brotherhood, on the other side of the fence. Bute was Prime Minister, the impossible Bubb Dodington was in the Cabinet, and Dashwood was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Wilkes and Churchill exposed the Medmenham proceedings in an issue of the *North Briton*. Medmenham was now an object of curiosity and could no longer be used; and the brotherhood was in any case dispersing. Dashwood tried to resurrect the festivities in the caves under Wycombe Hill, on top of which he built a most secular church, complete with wine bins and surmounted by a golden ball in which he would sit with a bottle of his 'divine milk-punch' and roar parodies of the Psalms.

But age wearied the appetite of the company for diversion; death pruned their numbers. Bubb Dodington died falling down his own stairs. The ghost of Paul Whitehead, former steward to the brotherhood, appeared at West Wycombe Park to presage Dashwood's own death. 'St Francis' was no doubt unconcerned: one of his last acts before he died in 1781 was to publish an abbreviated edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* in collaboration with Benjamin Franklin the American statesman and scientist. His Satanism was in any case more a matter for the sexual pathologist than for the priest.

JAMES WEBB

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The leading members of the Medmenham brotherhood were rakes, aesthetes and politicians *Left* John Wilkes, a famous figure in 18th century politics, was at one time a member of the club *Above* Sir Francis Dashwood, founder of the brotherhood: painting by Hogarth showing him wearing a monk's habit and kneeling before a figure of Venus

Behind the old Melanesian way of life, with its headhunting, cannibalism and human sacrifice, was belief in the supernatural power known as mana; even today, magical ways of thinking have survived the islanders' contact with 'civilization'

MELANESIA

A GROUP of Pacific islands lying south of the equator, Melanesia includes New Guinea and Fiji, and the Admiralty, Solomon, Santa Cruz, New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Loyalty islands. In this area it is possible to pass, in not much more than an hour's flying time, from a centre where most traditional beliefs have been discarded for a generation or more to an outpost among people whose life has been only superficially influenced by contact with Europeans. In discussing the Melanesians, therefore, it should be remembered that the use of either the past or the present tense can be misleading: what is true of one section of a tribe may no longer be true of another.

When first seen by Europeans the Melanesians were at a cultural level equivalent to the Neolithic period of Europe. They used tools of stone or shell, finished by grinding, and most of them still live by gardening, growing mainly tropical root crops. Social and political units are usually small and democratic, hereditary chieftainship being unusual, and warfare was endemic. This general cultural uniformity accompanies an extraordinary diversity in language and considerable physical variation, reflecting a complex ethnic history.

Afterlife Inside a Shark

Their world is thickly populated by spirits, which are everywhere, in trees, river pools, in the sea, in animals, and which affect human life at every turn. They are of two kinds: the ghosts of the dead, and spirits that have never inhabited human bodies. There is no concept of great gods in charge of activities such as fishing, craftsmanship or war, still less of an ultimate Creator. Religion is a strictly practical matter and consists basically in making contact with a spirit who will befriend and help a human. The two sorts of spirits exist side by side, but their relative importance varies. Ancestral ghosts are always venerated, though in some parts it is the spirits of non-human origin that have the real importance. But spirits can move from one group to the other, for after a time the human origin of a powerful ghost may be forgotten.

In the central and southern Solomon Islands important ghosts, called *tindalo*, often enter an animal, and the place associated with the creature becomes sacred. A man may announce during his life what creature he will enter, sharks being especially favoured. A notorious man-eating shark may become associated with a famous ancestor, and a man who escapes from it will be thrown back out of fear and respect for the spirit. Sea spirits are believed to shoot the living with magical arrows in the form of flying fish, and a man struck by a fish as it skims above the surface will therefore be likely to die. On the other hand sea spirits send shoals of bonito (a fish which is an important item of diet) and help the living in other ways. For this reason, in the Solomon and Santa Cruz groups figures of ancestral spirits often have some attributes of fish or are depicted holding them.

Spirits are much concerned with the observance of custom, any breach of which angers them and brings misfortune to the people. The fear of such consequences forms the sanction which upholds native morality and the delicate balance of society, and its breakdown has been one of the most unfortunate results of European contact.

At the basis of Melanesian religion and magic is the concept of *mana* (see MANA), supernatural power which has been compared to a charge of electricity; although it can be controlled and directed to human ends it is always dangerous. Inanimate objects can have it, possession of it being indicated in many cases by an unusual appearance or quality. Men too have mana: outstanding success or exceptional force of personality prove that it is present. This power, however, always derives ultimately from a spirit, at least in eastern Melanesia; it seems to do so less clearly in New Guinea.

The belief that mana can be transferred helps to explain three practices which occurred widely though sporadically in Melanesia: headhunting, cannibalism and human sacrifice. Headhunting often seems to be connected with the notion of acquiring mana from an enemy group. The Marind-anim of southern West Irian (Indonesian New Guinea) believe the capture of a head to be necessary before a boy can be given his adult name, though on the other hand the peoples living near the estuary of the River Fly, not far away in Papua, state that the head is regarded merely as a trophy (see also HEAD). Cannibalism seems to have a similar ritual basis, not always acknowledged; but the fact that peoples as far apart as the Kukukuku of New Guinea and the Fijians believe that it is dangerous to handle human flesh, and used special implements when eating it, shows that it is not regarded merely as another sort of meat.

Human sacrifice was less general. Where it occurred, as in the Solomons and the New Hebrides, it was usually connected with an occasion on which mana was required, such as the launching of a war canoe or the performance of the culminating ceremony in a great cycle.

An object which is dangerous because it has mana is taboo. The place associated with a spirit is therefore taboo, or a chief, by virtue of his mana, can impose a taboo on the produce of a garden or the use of a certain path.

Except in Fiji there are no orders of priests. A man who has a special relationship with a powerful spirit may profit considerably from the demand for his services, but he continues to lead a normal life as a gardener, fisherman or craftsman. An important element in his expertise is often a knowledge of the correct form of words to use in invocation of the spirit; and in connection with the invocation small sacrifices or offerings are frequently made.

Masked Spirits

In most parts of Melanesia there are, in addition to such personal approaches to individual spirits, ceremonies in which the whole community participates. These are often to honour a group or class of spirits. Among the Elema at the head of the Papuan Gulf such ceremonies formed a cycle which took years to complete. Masks of painted bark cloth represented the spirits, and the celebrations included feasting, drumming and dancing. The people of northern New Ireland periodically perform

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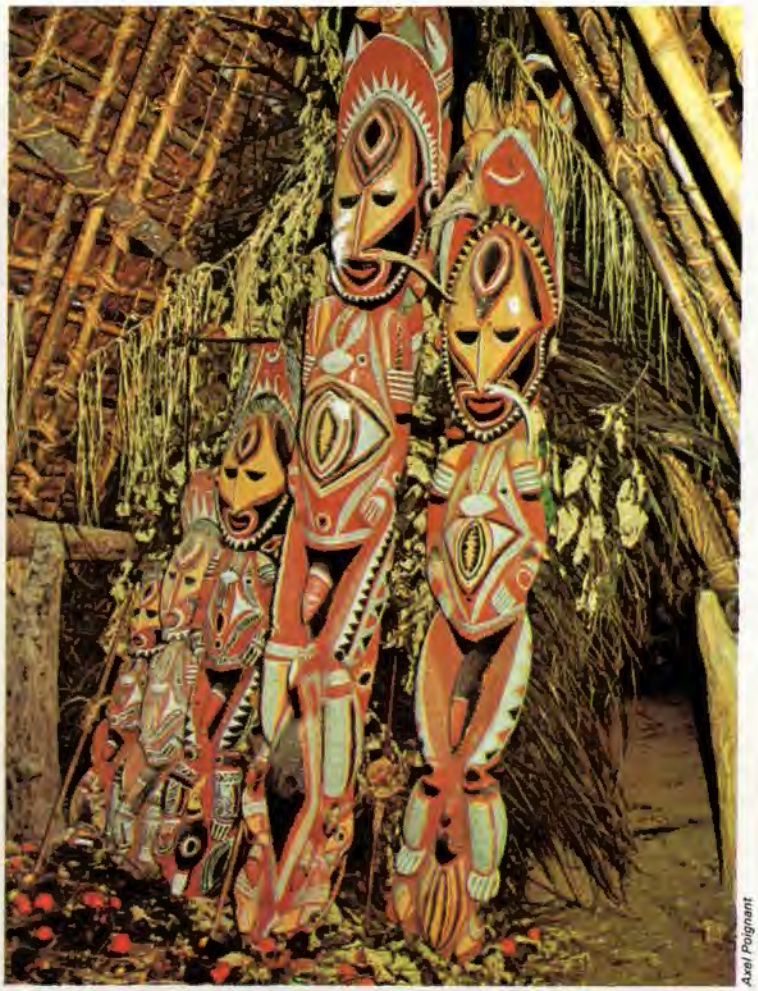

Axel Poignant

Melanesian religion consists basically of making contact with spirits who will help and befriend humans; the approach may be a personal one made by an individual, or ceremonies may be held in which whole communities participate ***Facing page, left to right*** **Ancestral tablet or board found in a men's cult house in the Papuan Gulf region: ghosts of the ancestors are always venerated; New Guinea cult figure: ceremonial dancers hold these in their hands; ornament for a canoe prow, representing a guardian spirit: malanggan, an elaborate carving used in ceremonies held in honour of the recently dead** ***Above*** **Chimbu man wearing a feather headdress takes part in a ritual dance before visiting a pig-killing ceremony** ***Above right*** **Carved and painted figures representing clan spirits, in a men's ceremonial house in New Guinea**

ceremonies in honour of the recently dead, for which elaborate masks and carvings known as *malanggan* are prepared.

Masks representing spirits are made in many parts of Melanesia. Their significance, like their style, varies from place to place. Often they are worn only by initiates and may not be seen by others. Women and uninitiated boys sometimes believe (ostensibly, at least) that the masked figures are in fact spirits, or that the sounds of special instruments such as bamboo flutes are their voices. The men, though conscious of the deception, yet feel a mystical identification with the spirits which they represent.

Initiation rites are widespread. In some places initiation is undergone by all boys at a certain age, usually about that of puberty. In others there is a series of ceremonies. The rites admit boys into the responsibilities and privileges of manhood. The secrets of the cults and of the cult objects are revealed to them, the myths are recounted, food taboos may be lifted, and where the men's house is an institution boys move to it and leave the company of women; for there is often a feeling that femaleness is dangerous to men. The rites often include physical ordeals, such as circumcision, the piercing of the nasal septum (the cartilaginous division of the nose) and beating with stinging or thorny plants. In parts of eastern Melanesia initiation is not automatic. It may be by purchase, and then confers privileges. Sometimes the initiate is regarded as being ritually reborn, and his rebirth may be enacted.

Though in principle the distinction between religion and magic may be clear, in practice it is apt to become blurred. The Rev. R. H. Codrington, a missionary in eastern Melanesia a century ago and a very acute and accurate observer, has discussed the way in which a prayer, the outcome of which is uncertain, merges into a spell (a magical procedure) when it is believed that the words automatically produce the result. Magic permeates Melanesian life, and belief in it is very persistent, surviving conversion to Christianity and even a high degree of sophistication.

Magic is white or black – good magic or sorcery – but here too the distinction is not always clear. Harmful magic directed against a fellow-clansman is bad, but directed against a man of a hostile tribe it is wholly admirable. Sorcerers are greatly feared. Their methods vary in different parts of Melanesia. As a generalization it is probably true to say that the sort of magic which depends on obtaining some substance closely connected with the victim – nail parings, excreta, a morsel of food – is more typical of eastern Melanesia. A form widely feared in the northern parts of Australian New Guinea is called, in pidgin, *sangguma*. It is believed that the sorcerer has the power to introduce a sharp object into the victim's body without leaving a visible wound. The Tifalmin, near the source of the Sepik River, believe that the sangguma men – always from another tribe – shoot their victims with magical arrows. If the arrows are not removed by an expert, who works by manipulation and massage, the victim dies. In the Banks Islands a length of bamboo was filled with magical ingredients, including a relic of a dead man, and directed at an enemy, the end being covered with a thumb until he came into view. Codrington relates instances when the wrong person crossed the line of fire.

White magic can serve many purposes: healing, promoting success in important activities, averting or bringing rain. Healing procedures can be, from a European viewpoint, both medical and magical. The Tifalmin massage a painful place with the flat bone of a river turtle which is found only at lower altitudes. The bone is a magical object, and the treatment is accompanied by

Left **White magic in Melanesia can serve many purposes, such as promoting success in important activities, bringing rain, or healing the sick; from a European point of view healing procedures can combine both medical and magical elements: witch-doctor treating a patient** ***Right*** **Cult house decorated with magical objects including chains, tassels and the figures of birds**

muttered spells, but clearly the massage itself may be beneficial. Every Tifalmin man possesses charms which bring luck in his activities. Nearly all are obtained by trade with peoples who live in the foothills. These charms are of kinds which do not occur in the Tifalmin valley: fossils are in great demand, and also bones of animals not found in the mountains. The power of the dead is illustrated by the practice of temporarily burying in a garden, to ensure a good crop, the jaw bone of an ancestor who was a famous gardener.

First Men Resembled Pigs

The differences in belief and in social and political structure between Melanesia and Polynesia are reflected in their mythologies. Some resemblances to the Polynesian system can be traced in eastern Melanesia, but Melanesian myths contain nothing similar to the creative activities of the Polynesian pantheon (see POLYNESIA). It is true that certain heroes of the Banks Islands and the New Hebrides – Qat and Tagaro – stand head and shoulders above the minor spirits.

According to one account Qat at first made men and pigs in the same form, but later made pigs go on all fours and men upright to distinguish between them. In another he made men and women of wood and brought them to life by dancing in front of them. But Qat himself had a mother and companions. Tagaro resembles Qat in many ways. He is probably the Polynesian god Tangaroa adapted to a Melanesian cosmogony.

There are some resemblances between Melanesian and Australian views of the origin of things, but their significance should not be over-estimated. Like the Australian aborigines, many Melanesians believe in a time before men existed when supernatural beings were active, often forming the natural features seen today (see AUSTRALIA). Totemism, so highly developed in Australia, is more vaguely conceived in Melanesia, but there are many traces of it.

Many stories concern the origin of men. In some New Guinea myths the first people came out of a tree or from the ground. Sometimes the 'first man' finds women on earth, or stories of the 'first people' refer to other people apparently already existing – an inconsistency which does not worry the tellers, for the myths really explain the origin of a clan or a tribe rather than of all mankind, a reflection of the fragmentation and isolation of many Melanesian groups. Peoples living as far apart as central New Guinea and the Solomon Islands have stories of descent from snake-ancestors, or from women who married snakes.

Myths concerning the release of the sea from the ground and the separation of the lands are widely-spread. Often the sea burst out as the result of the foolishness, curiosity or greed of someone who failed to do as instructed.

A number of stories centre round the origin of death, for it is widely believed that at one time people lived for ever. A common group of tales, current as far apart as New Britain and the New Hebrides, tells that once people sloughed their skins when they grew old, and appeared young again. For various reasons a woman re-assumed her old skin, in one version because her child did not recognize her and cried; since then people have died.

It is believed everywhere that the soul or spirit survives after death, though it may be only for a time. Usually there is a land of the dead, on a distant island or mountain or under the ground, and there is often a prescribed route which the dead must follow. Commonly they have to pass a spirit guardian who tests them in various ways. If they fail to satisfy him or outwit him they may be destroyed and cease to exist.

The destination of the dead does not depend on their moral conduct during life. There is no equivalent to heaven and hell. What matters is the performance of rituals by surviving relatives, the observance of custom, the status of the dead man. If he was a great warrior, an orator, a leader, people will remember him and will call on him for help, and he will survive in the spirit world. If he was a nonentity in life he will be a nonentity after death and will

Axel Poignant

Axel Poignant

soon disappear. In Malaita the ghosts of such people turn into ants' nests which are eaten by the great ghosts, but when those latter are finally forgotten they too turn into ants' nests and are eaten.

Consumer Goods from Spirits

No account of Melanesian religion would be complete without some mention of 'cargo cults' (see CARGO CULTS). Such cults have arisen all over the world but they have been more fully recorded, and perhaps more common, in Melanesia than elsewhere. They seem to arise when contact between a higher culture and a simple one has been too sudden, and the influence of the former too powerful, for the latter to assimilate and adapt to changed patterns. The cargo cult is in the nature of a counter-attack, an assertion of native pride and values against the intruder, but incorporating acquired knowledge and ideas.

The wealth and power of Europeans proved that the Christian god was a more powerful spirit than any native one, and many Melanesians were converted because they believed that they would then share the good things which Europeans had in such abundance. They were disappointed. Few consumer goods are manufactured in the islands. Europeans, as Melanesians saw them, did no work but received inexhaustible supplies of goods which came by ship or later by aircraft (hence the term 'cargo'). It seemed obvious that these goods were sent by the spirits. But why were they sent only to Europeans? Because Europeans had by some means obtained control of goods which were meant to be shared by all. Old myths adapted, or new myths based on old beliefs, sometimes provided explanations of how this could have happened.

So prophets arose, preaching that the people should have their fair share of the riches provided by the spirits or the ancestors, and telling what they should do to obtain them. Many have been men with some mission education, or who have served as policemen or plantation labourers. Many cults owe much, at least superficially, to Christianity. They have taken various forms. Sometimes customary law has been deliberately set aside. Property has been declared common, sexual restrictions abolished, traditional leaders ignored, sacred objects destroyed. Pigs have been killed and gardens laid waste in expeetation of the imminent arrival of a 'cargo'. Ecstatic possession, speaking with tongues, and visions have been common features. There has been some violence, but little loss of life. Undoubtedly mass hysteria has been a major factor, and undoubtedly certain men have manipulated the movements for their own ends, but the sincerity of most of the adherents cannot be doubted.

'Marching Rule'

Inevitably some cults have had a political content. The 'Marching Rule' of the Solomon Islands, which arose after the war as a direct result of wartime disruption (though it has its origins in earlier cults), became a nationalist and revolutionary movement which nevertheless retained millenarian elements. For a time it controlled large areas.

Taking a long view, these cults can be regarded as the growing pains of a new form of Melanesian society. From a shorter view, they reflect an unfortunate insensitivity on the part of some Europeans to the feelings of peoples whose world has collapsed around them. Perhaps the fact that there has not been more violence speaks well for both parties. (See also NEW GUINEA.)

B. A. L. CRANSTONE

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Mendicants

Holy beggars: from the Latin verb *mendicare* 'to beg': in Christianity, certain orders of Friars who live solely on alms; they are sometimes known as Begging Friars, and include such orders as the Franciscans, Augustines, Carmelites and Dominicans; they take a vow of absolute poverty, renouncing all possessions and refusing to handle money.

Samuel H. Kress Collection/Portland Art Museum

Mennonites

A Protestant sect, originating in German-speaking parts of Europe in the early 16th century; named after its founder Menno Simons; many of its followers were forced by persecution to seek refuge in Russia, and later in the United States, Canada and South America; a pacifist sect, they follow the simple principles of the Bible and practise adult baptism; the Old Amish, a branch of the Mennonites, still retain many 17th century customs and mannerisms.

Dr H. Hack

MENSTRUATION

BELIEFS in the harmful potency of a menstruating woman are common in one form or another all over the globe. In country parts of Europe to this day, girls are taught by their mothers not to attempt to make mayonnaise or jam during menstruation, for it is thought that the eggs will certainly curdle and the jam refuse to set. In the Kasai, a part of the Congo, a woman believes that if she were to enter the forest during her monthly period, the men's hunting would fail. Even more widespread in Africa is the idea that at such times a woman must not stir the cooking pot or poke the fire, lest any one eating the food cooked on it fall ill. These are straightforward magical ideas, and should be interpreted like other magical ideas which suppose that normal bodily states are dangerously contagious.

When dangerous magical powers are supposed to inhere in the body, it is usually not difficult to recognize the deep concerns which the beliefs underline. If contagious magic is associated with the reproductive functions, it is very likely that sexual relationships are the object of concern. Since there are very few societies in which there is no attempt to regularize sexual behaviour, so there are very few in which menstruation is not surrounded with magical beliefs. The onset of puberty opens the period of sexual maturity. Menstruation is the sign that a girl has reached the age of child-bearing. Wherever people attach importance to having children, their interest is naturally focused on physical maturity. We may like to think that the treatment we give to physiological puberty is entirely scientific and objective, but much of it is purely ceremonial, intended to teach the child her adult role and to impress her responsibilities on her mind. In the same way the female puberty rituals of tribal society, together with their magical ideas, are all part of the local feminine mystique.

Women who read this may remember the secrecy and embarrassment with which this particular fact of life was revealed to

them. They may even have wished that they could have grown up in the carefree innocence of a primitive society where bodily functions are taken naturally. In practice, they would have to pick their tribe carefully. There are some which make no celebration of a girl's coming to womanhood. Others have very uncomfortable arrangements, some stressing the dangers to the girl, others turning the event into a long and difficult session of lessons and examinations. The private instruction of European mothers might come somewhere near the middle of a scale we might draw of tribal reactions which can vary from joyful congratulation, through solemn teaching to intense preoccupation with danger.

People's ideas about menstruation are part and parcel of their general ideas about how the relations between the sexes should be governed. If they take a very relaxed attitude to premarital sex and to family size, they are not likely to think of menstruation as dangerous. For if no one minds one way or the other whether the girl is going to bear her husband a male heir, have many children or none, or have them in or out of wedlock, why should they bother to make first menstruation into a chance for sex education? These people are not going to hedge menstruation around with magical rules to underline the solemnity of the event. But tribes whose laws of property and status turn rigidly on the well-defined married state treat the puberty of girls as being a very serious matter.

When menstruation is celebrated as a big public event it is usual to make an initiation ceremony for several girls together. It is impossible to fix a date for the initiation of several girls at once which coincides with the actual time of first menstruation. So collective puberty rites for girls tend to be before or after their physiological puberty,

Menstrual blood is widely believed to be extremely powerful, and in many primitive societies the blood from a girl's first menstruation is thought to be able to ensure fertility in barren women. The first menstruation is an important social event as it marks the emergence from puberty into womanhood. Here, young girls among the Amaaiura Indians of Brazil celebrate their puberty in formal dances.

University Films

and if the rite is not held every year then big girls who were not ready last time and much smaller girls who are holding it in advance will all go through the rite together. Very often the ceremony includes a mock marriage with a ceremonial bridegroom who is not necessarily the future husband of the girl.

Through large parts of Central Africa puberty ceremonies are held in this way for the training of girls. Audrey Richards, in *Chisungu,* describes how older women of the Bemba tribe enjoy the authority and respect of being instructresses. They put the girls through a series of tests which read like Victorian parlour games. The girls must be still without moving, or crawl through hoops or hop over logs, or drink beer from a hole in the ground. They make clay models of proverbs about the lazy wife, the good cook, the early riser, and so on. The girls learn about the dangers of adultery, especially the magical risk to small children who have eaten food cooked on a fire contacted by either an adulteress or a menstruating woman. The fiancé of each girl stands by, and receives congratulations on her performance. This tribe has a system of matrilineal succession. Women and their daughters and daughter's daughters are expected to be the steady core of the village population. The existence of the village depends on their being able to attract and hold their husbands. A public initiation both teaches and advertises the new generation of women in the village and gives everyone a chance to praise and flatter the young husbands who will be its mainstay.

Among the Nayars of Malabar in south India, girls' initiation and ritual marriage before puberty were part of the high caste Hindu tradition of early marriage. Each Nayar lineage had partner lineages which helped with each others' girls' puberty rites, providing 'husbands' for the girls. The ceremony expressed the partnership of the lineages by tying the girl and boy together in a marriage bond which was ended with the end of the ceremony. After this the little girl counted as a mature married woman. None of the magical dangers or social disgrace of premarital sex could fall now on her kin through any subsequent sexual liaisons (so long as her lovers were of suitably high-caste birth). The Nayars were a powerful, rich warrior caste and men spent much of their manhood on military service. The Nayar girls never married again so formally as on the day of their puberty rite. They were free to take lovers (or husbands, depending on how you define their relation) and to dismiss them, to keep one or several at a time. All their children traced descent through their mother and the social role of father was almost non-existent. At any given time, the home contained these women, their female children, and young boys in training for military service. As to men, there would also be soldiers on leave, and old men retired from fighting were in charge of political, financial and other affairs. In a system so well-adapted to specialized military functions, the puberty of girls was made the occasion of cementing alliances between Nayar lineages and paying tribute to Hindu ideals of female chastity.

These two examples show what a wide net we should cast to understand attitudes to first menstruation. The social structure sets the pattern of dominant concerns. If these relate to sex and marriage, we can be sure that they will be given some expression in current beliefs about human reproduction. We must examine the social structure minutely before we can interpret people's beliefs about menstruation.

A Symbolic Language

Reproductive disorders have their physical causes. They also can have psychosomatic causes. That is to say, with humans at least, the reproductive system is very sensitive to psychological states. Menstrual disorders (such as excessive loss of blood, continuous menstruation, or a total stop in menstruation) are often a response to emotional shock or tension. Tribal societies which publicly celebrate a girl's coming of age have refined for themselves a set of symbols for thinking about women's personal attitudes to their role. Among the Ndembu, as Turner relates, there is no shyness about bodily secretions. When they celebrate a girl's first show of blood they contrast menstruation with the blood of childbirth: the first is barren, the second fruitful. Female loss of blood is again contrasted with male blood-shedding, the dangerous deed of homicide, the noble act of killing game animals in the hunt.

With these four kinds of red blood and their different associations, the Ndembu philosophers develop a complex pattern of good and bad symbols in which red blood can be variously combined with white milk and semen, or black bile. Starting from the body and its juices they spin out a theory of the universe according to the three colours, white, red, black. In the inanimate world there are red clays, white clays and black earth. In vegetation there are trees which have red gums, milky saps and charred black wood.

From these symbols they develop a medical dictionary, as it were, which enables them to make a very expressive ritual for almost any personal event. Everyone witnesses these ceremonies, everyone knows the dictionary meanings. Then if a woman is barren and they think she needs to change her whole attitude to her marriage, the symbolic language is there to hand. The ritual for curing barrenness consists in making red and white signs over the patient.

John Moss

Left **Much of the ritual surrounding a girl's first menstruation is purely ceremonial, and is intended to teach the child her adult status and to impress on her the responsibilities of womanhood; puberty rites vary from ceremonies that emphasize the potential dangers of the girl's new status through occasions for solemn instruction to joyful celebrations: dancers in the Aruana puberty dance in Brazil wear masks expressive of fertility** ***Right*** **Menstrual blood is sometimes regarded as useless and even sinister in contrast to the blood of an animal killed in hunting or as a sacrifice: goats sacrificed by the Bhil tribe of India**

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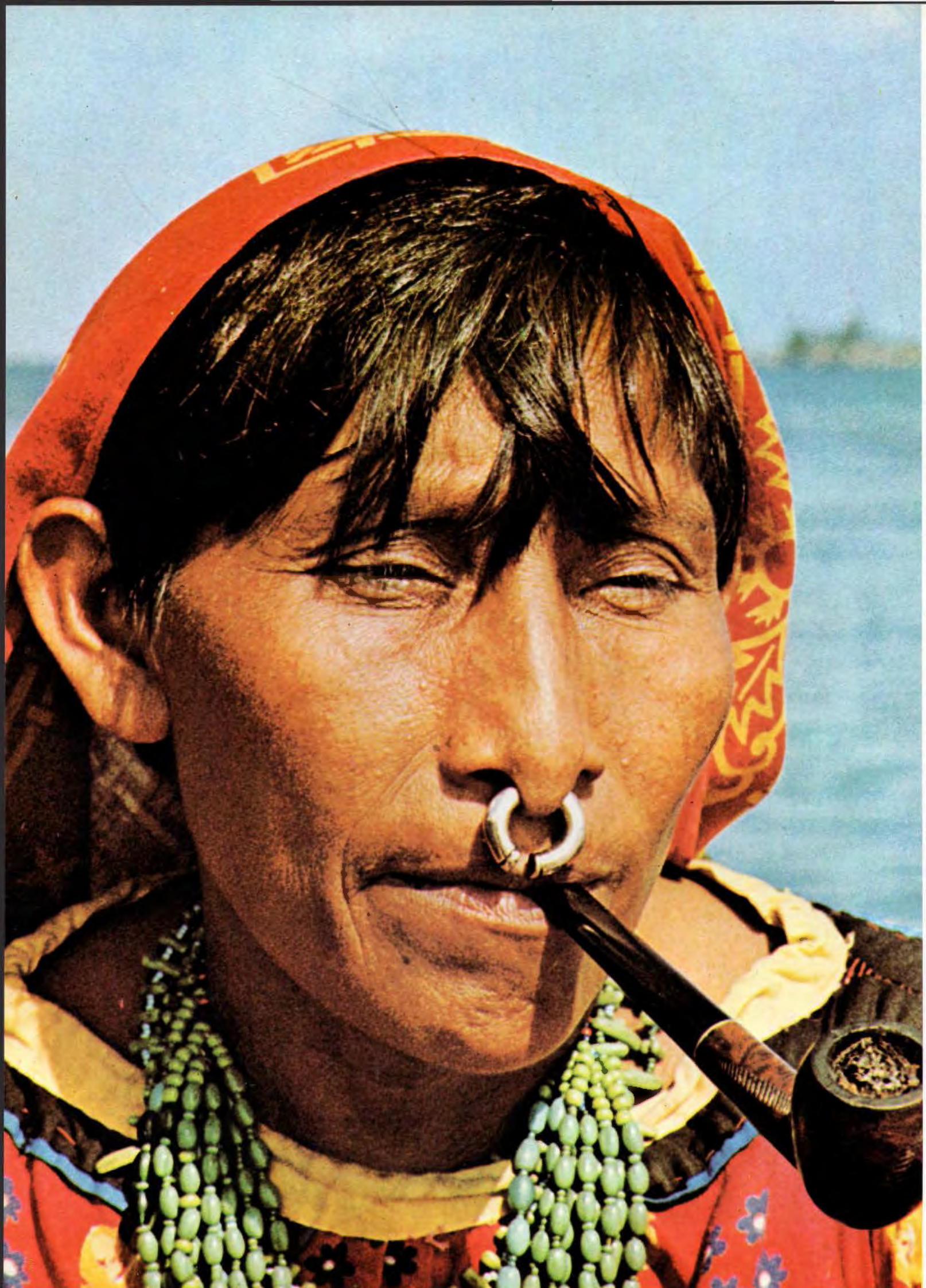

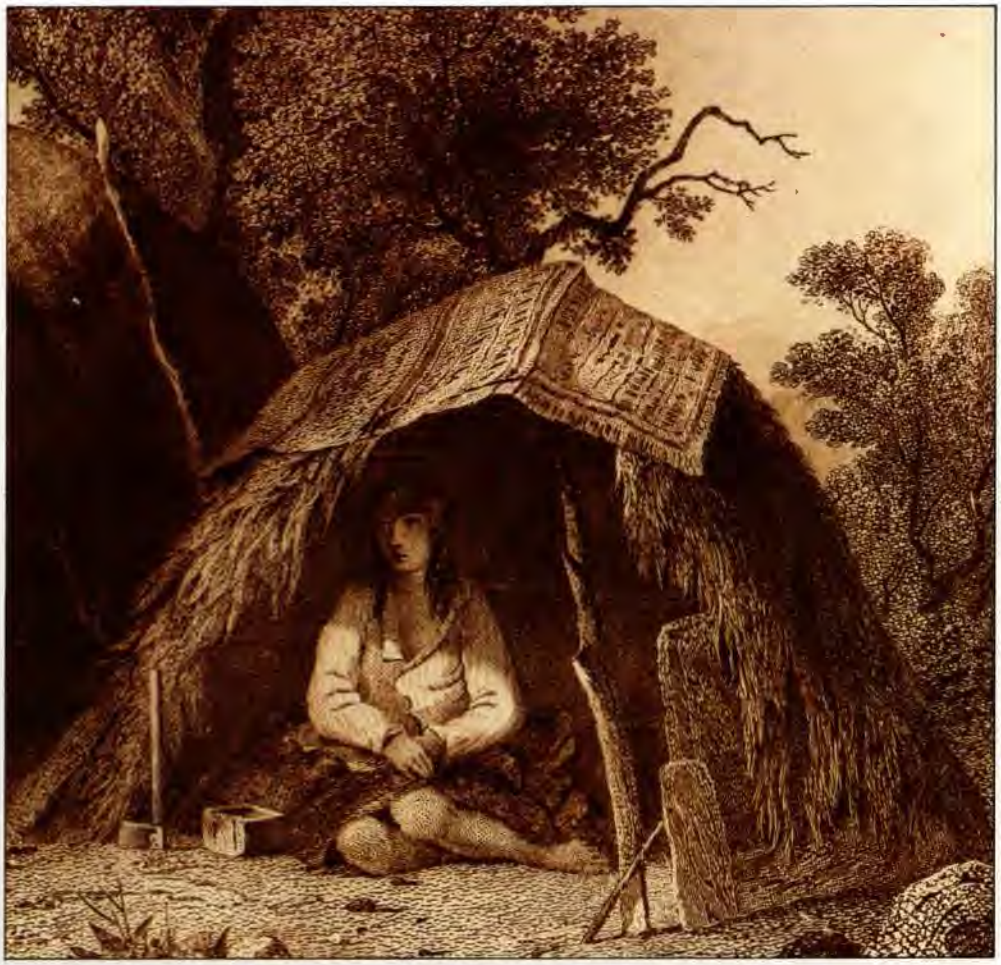

Left The onset of menstruation means that a girl has reached the age of child-bearing, and in parts of the world this important development is marked by a change in costume and appearance; among the Cuna of the Republic of Panama girls have their hair cut short and wear a gold ring in their nose after their first menstruation *Right* American Indian women were isolated in special huts during menstruation and men were forbidden to have contact with them: illustration from *The Redman of America* (1856)

She is dressed as a man, given the red feather of a chief, made to dance the hunter's or homicide's dance. The wrong kind of red blood tells her that deep inside herself she is rejecting her female role. The right kind of red blood, the blood of childbirth is needed, not menstrual blood month after month. Such a ceremony, when the patient fully understands the symbols used, and knows how to relate them to her problems, is likely to be effective in certain menstrual disorders, where our own doctors are at a loss to prescribe.

MARY DOUGLAS

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Mephistopheles

Or Mephostophiles, the name of the demon to whom Faust sold his soul; the name may come from the Greek words meaning 'he who does not like light': in Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, he conjures up Helen of Troy for Faust, and in Goethe's *Faust*, he changes himself into a dog, summons up magnificent delights and consorts with witches.

See FAUST.

Mansell Collection

Roman businessmen formed societies in honour of their patron, Mercury, which were not unlike the Rotary Clubs of today; in astrology, those born under this planet often display the quick-wittedness and glib plausibility which are the salesman's stock-in-trade

MERCURY

THE NAME of the Roman god of trade derives from the Latin words for 'goods' and 'payment'. His worship thrived at the meanest level among tradesmen and shopkeepers. Unlike many Roman deities, he enjoyed no great state cult and priesthood. From first to last Mercury quickened business and fostered general prosperity. The Roman god of commerce was likened to the Greek Hermes who made him a literary gift of many attributes unknown to the Mercury of the true cult.

Rome's only temple for Mercury was dedicated in 495 BC on the Aventine Hill; its foundation accords with the major religious event at the beginning of the Roman republic. The Aventine region and its cults were especially important to plebeian politics. A famine in 496 was followed by the dedication of a temple on the Aventine to Ceres, Liber and Libera in 493. Although the trinity bear Latin names, they are in fact the Greek Demeter, Dionysus and Kore (see DEMETER; DIONYSUS; PERSEPHONE), honoured with a temple built by Greeks and paid for with Roman money at the instance of the Sibylline Books of Destiny which contained the ecstatic utterances of the Sibyl, and which were a constant source and inspiration of Greek and Etruscan religion to the Romans.

Sometimes it is assumed, perhaps correctly, that Mercury's temple belongs to the influx of Greek religion and that it rose before the others in hopes that trade rather than growth itself, Ceres, might have alleviated the dearth of grain. Whereas the temple to the trinity was destined to become an important religious and political centre for plebeian political aspirations in the face of patrician exclusion, Mercury's solitary temple never acquired great glamour despite its obvious popularity.

Every May, on the anniversary of its

R. Cundy

founding, the temple became a meeting place for Roman merchants. Like many another club this guild met the businessmen's need for a religious association and for an expression of solidarity. (Craftsmen met under the protection of Minerva and had their own guilds.) The month of the dedication and the annual meeting seem purposely chosen to honour the Greek Hermes' mother, Maia. Since the Roman Mercury had no such mother, the Roman state and its merchants were apparently influenced in worship by Greeks, even down to mythological details.

The temple and its cult were entrusted to a board of *Mercuriales* who were drawn from the second rank of society, in contrast with the social eminence of other Roman priests. In two cases membership on this board was combined with membership on the board of *Capitolini*, who were in charge of the Capitoline Games held in honour of Jupiter (see JUPITER). One man boasted that he was the elected leader of the Capitolini, Mercuriales, and the residents of the Aventine district; this priest had made his career first in the Roman army and later in the lower rungs of the civil administration under Augustus.

Clubs of Mercury sprang up wherever Latin-speakers went. These businessmen's associations sometimes styled Mercury *Felix* and thus retained the older sense of the word, 'productive, prosperous'. Despite the paucity of temples, Mercury was frequently honoured in Rome and other business centres with altars, statues, murals and even small roofed shrines set especially at urban intersections.

The neighbourhoods worshipped him beside their ubiquitous Lares, guardian spirits (see LARES). Augustus took a keen interest in fostering his lowly cult; accordingly, Mercury assumed the epithet Augustus which recalled not merely the Emperor's devotion and benefaction but equally that title's derivation from the verb *augere*, 'to increase'. Before the time of Augustus neighbourhood Mercuries acquired such peculiar titles as *Malevolus*, 'Ill-willing', in the case of one who faced no shop, and *Sobrius* where he was honoured by a milk libation in a district without a tavern. In contrast to the latter is a guild of wine merchants who were incorporated as the Club of Father Liber and Mercury. Liber was the Roman god of vine and wine.

In poetry Mercury always reflects the Greek Hermes. In one Roman poem he is made to sire the Roman Lares, who earned this prestigious parent through the humble association of neighbourhood religion.

R. E. A. PALMER

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

The smallest of the planets, in astrology Mercury is inevitably associated with children and their qualities. Despite this, simplicity was never a characteristic of the planet which is also thought to influence trade and the whole field of learning: illustration from a 15th century English manuscript; Mercury holds a purse in one hand and his staff in the other and around him are shown some of the occupations that are traditionally connected with this planet

Mercury in Astrology

The planet Mercury is seldom seen with the naked eye, for it is never more than 28° from the sun, and therefore does not often emerge from the golden glow of dusk or dawn. Because it is the smallest of the planets, and closely dependent on its parent, it is inevitably associated with children. Childish vices – lying, fraud and thieving, for instance – as well as childlike virtues such as ingenuous charm, are also attributed to Mercury. It is possible that masochists, using the word in a general sense to describe people who enjoy being treated severely as if by a stern parent, may be under the planet's influence.

Despite its childish qualities, simplicity was never a characteristic of this planet, for it was thought to influence the entire field of education, including all types of learning. Intellectual brilliance, quick-wittedness and scholastic ability are therefore typical of people born strongly under Mercury.

Mercury rules trade and commerce and those born under this planet are always intrigued by technical skills, and are often knowledgeable about trades such as carpentry and engineering. A Mercurian will always have an answer for any question; and although it may not always be correct, it will at least be glib and convincing. Although not all Mercurians are plausible rogues, the plausible rogue will almost always be a Mercurian.

The shy, timid and tongue-tied people of

The Roman god of commerce, Mercury was the patron of businessmen, and was frequently honoured in the trade centres of the Roman world *Right* Pottery urn in the shape of a face, with a dedication to the god around the base, 1st century AD *Far right* Bronze statue of Mercury holding a purse

this world need the Mercurians to speak up for them, and a discussion about whether or not the time is ripe for wages to be raised often turns out to be an argument between two Mercurians. It is likely that neither of them will become heated, for Mercury often appears to be rather cold and aloof, even in sexual affairs; unlike many people, Mercurians think of these as just a part of the glorious game of life. When they marry, many of them do not really take their partners 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer . . . till death do us part' as they think that if necessary the game can be played with a different partner.

Among typically Mercurian professions is that of the journalist, for instead of being directly involved in life he is mainly concerned with viewing it objectively. A person born under Mercury may succeed in any learned profession, or as a schoolmaster who may have a wide general knowledge without being an authority on any one subject, or as a doctor. When a Mercurian is connected with the arts, it is often possible to discern a lack of the heavy, thorough-going seriousness which some artists seem to feel is the least that life deserves.

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

This elusive liquid metal was once considered to be of primary importance, for it was believed to be present in all substances; for the alchemist, mercury stood for the fugitive qualities of matter, without which Nature would remain static

MERCURY ☿

SINCE THE RENAISSANCE there has been one fundamental teaching in alchemical books: that matter is composed of the three 'philosophical elements' of mercury, sulphur and salt. This theory had a very considerable influence.

The idea of what constitutes an 'element' has undergone various changes since the days of early science. The universe was at one time conceived of as a composite of tiny particles which had specific qualities. According to the teachings of Greek philosophers including Aristotle (384–322 BC), and also the early alchemical writings, the primary qualities are those of fire, water, earth and air (see ELEMENTS). These four 'essences' found their completion in the 'quintessence', the spiritual.

Many systems of correspondences (see CORRESPONDENCES) were constructed on this basis. For instance, certain elements had an affinity for certain colours, planets, tastes and 'humours' (the four liquids present in the body, differing combinations of which determined one's temperament and physique). This kind of systematizing was very important at a time when empirical science was considered to be less important than the cultivation and refinement of the old tradition; but in this form it dealt only with what we would call physical states of matter. It soon became clear that there were differences in Nature which could not be totally explained simply by taking into account the differing combinations of physical particles; that there were also chemical differences in the modern sense.

Following the philosophical dogma that the multitude of phenomena must be reduced to fundamental and simple elements, the early alchemists taught that all matter finally consisted of two different kinds of components: 'mercury' and 'sulphur'.

The alchemists began by dealing with the theory of metallic transformation. They thought that metals such as lead could be reduced to 'mercuric' and 'sulphuric' components when treated in the right way. The differences in weight, appearance and so on, were explained by a different composition of these two elements. The principal theory of alchemy was that the natural maturation of metals, from 'immature' or base substances to 'noble' and precious metals like silver and gold, could be artificially set in motion. They therefore experimented with methods that seemed likely to change the proportion of the combined elements. However, with the growth of scientific knowledge in the Middle Ages it soon became apparent that this simple theory did not really work.

Paracelsus, the great Swiss scholar, enriched the old theory by introducing a third 'philosophical element' – that of salt. The wealth of natural phenomena could now be explained more satisfactorily. According to this theory, salt is the element of palpability, tactility, tangibility; it represents uninflammability and fixity. It is because it contains salt that matter has weight.

Mercury, or quicksilver, stands for the fugitive qualities of matter, for its spiritual element, for mobility, and for the property of some material things to become liquid, so enabling the elements to influence each other. So without the spirit of mercury Nature would remain motionless and unchangeable. We can easily understand the great importance the concept of mercury had in the teachings of alchemy, whose basis is the artificial induction of evolution from the 'impure' to the 'noble'. It was said that the nearer a metal came to the ideal of 'golden nobility', the more mercury it contained. In many alchemical treatises, therefore, 'mercury' also stands for the *materia prima*, the First Matter of the Philosophers' Stone, and sometimes also for the Stone itself. Care must therefore be taken when reading alchemical texts not to confuse these various meanings of 'mercury'.

Sulphur is the element which gives natural things the quality of combustibility. No matter, according to the alchemists, could ever burn without containing a certain percentage of sulphur. One example, often cited in the writings of the Paracelsists, is a good illustration of what is meant by this

theory of three elements: if wood is burnt, the flames are nourished by its content of sulphur. That which flies up into the air as smoke and smell is the fugitive mercury. Salt is what remains in the ashes.

Such an all-embracing concept could also be extended to the philosophical sphere, giving alchemy its two aspects, the 'chemical' and the 'spiritual'. Man, being a microcosm himself, a miniature reflection of external Nature, was also composed of three elements: body, soul and spirit, corresponding to the three elements in the rest of Nature.

SAL salt	CORPUS body
SULPHUR	ANIMA soul
MERCURIUS mercury	SPIRITUS spirit

When the alchemists wrote of transforming material things by rearranging their proportions of salt, sulphur and mercury, a real chemical change could be meant, but the text could also have a hidden meaning; it could really deal with human transformation, thus misleading those who were greedy only for material wealth.

Of the three Paracelsian elements mercury is the one which is mentioned most often; it corresponded to everything that was regarded as belonging to the sphere of spirit. But again, 'mercury' could designate different things. *Mercurium nostrum*, 'Our Mercury' is often described as being different from ordinary mercury or quicksilver, which has the property, unique among metals, of remaining in a liquid state at normal temperatures. If this metal is dropped it forms into tiny elusive silver balls. The ancient scientists did not know whether quicksilver should be regarded as a metal or as a liquid. The German encyclopedist Johann Heinrich Zedler (1732–1754) describes it as:

> A mineralic or metallic sap or humour *(liquor)* which is very heavy, liquid and volatile and looks like a silvery fusion. It is a liquid which does not moisten, forming compounds with all metals, especially accepting gold eagerly, mixing and amalgamating with it; and it can be separated from it by a hot fire, but at moderate heat forms a compound again that never can be separated. Mercury is so piercing that – as Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665) says – 'if you put it on the great toe of your foot and take a ducat in the mouth, it will get a whitish surface' . . . It is regarded as the mother of all other metals which, depending on their different mixture with metallic salt and with sulphur, and depending also on the different influences of the celestial forces, are said to grow in their different ways.

In the early part of the 18th century the doctrine of Paracelsus was evidently still very much alive.

'Our mercury' is what is otherwise referred to as the First Matter (that is, the original matter) of the substance which is to become the Philosophers' Stone. George Starkey, an English alchemist writing at the turn of the 16th century, in his book *The Stone of the Philosophers: Embracing the First Matter and the Dual Process for the Vegetable and Metallic Tinctures* says:

Roger Picture Library/E. P. Goldschmidt & Co. Ltd.

In alchemical treatises the term 'mercury' may stand for the First Matter which is to become the Philosophers' Stone; but it may also describe matter undergoing transmutation and even the product itself: symbolic representation of the origin of the Philosophers' Stone, from Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* published in 1652

> All true philosophers agree that the first matter of all metals is a moist vapour, raised by the action of the central fires in the bowels of the earth, which – circulating through its pores – meets with the crude air and is coagulated by it into an unctuous water, adhering to the earth, which serves it for a receptacle . . . If it is sublimed leisurely through places which are hot and pure, where the fatness of sulphur adheres to it, this vapour (which the Philosophers call 'their Mercury') is joined to that fatness and becomes an unctuous matter, which . . . where the earth is subtle, pure and moist, fills the pores of it – and so gold is made.

The term mercury may stand for the First Matter, but in the paradoxical language of the alchemical treatises it may also designate the matter undergoing transmutation, and finally the product itself, the mysterious Philosophers' Stone. C. G. Jung the great Swiss psychologist, showed that it may also designate water, fire, the spirit of the air, spirit in general, or the soul.

Because of the medieval doctrine that postulated the existence of two elements, mercury and sulphur (before Paracelsus added salt), only two components of matter are mentioned as being important for 'the great work' in most of the old texts: something red and something white, or – in the language of poetical allusions – a red and white rose, which are to be combined in the 'alchemical marriage' to form the supreme unity of the Philosophers' Stone. Alternatively, alchemists speak of a male element, the red lion, and of a female element, the white eagle or the lily, which find their bridal bed in the retort in order to bring forth something new and potent.

Modern chemists have often tried to follow the alchemical prescriptions literally and have for instance, said that the red lion must be antimony trisulphite, the lily silver chloride, and so on – but one can hardly believe that the mysterious Stone would not be something more important and powerful. So we have to be content with thinking of 'sulphur' and 'mercury' or of soul and spirit, in whatever sense, as being combined mysteriously in order to bring forth the final stage which makes it possible to transform impure metals to gold, and to heal all diseases by making the elixir of life (see ELIXIR OF LIFE).

The assumption of an original dualism of the two elements leads us back to the days of Alexandrian alchemy in Hellenistic times, when the gnostic systems exerted a powerful influence. Secret doctrines of all kinds and ages often speak of the two opposing principles which must be united in order to form again the divine integral unity as it must have existed before the Creation tore it asunder (see OPPOSITES).

Dualism means tension, opposition, multitude – and so a dynamic universe is created; but the two halves, despite their different qualities, tend to be re-united in varying proportions of the components. In the language of alchemy, the element of sulphur and the element of mercury are found in different proportions in all natural things, and in order to stimulate their evolution it is necessary to separate them, to lead them back to their original simplicity, and then to unite them in the perfect way. This union of the two pure elements is the 'alchemical marriage' of 'spiritual sulphur' with 'spiritual mercury'.

The idea of this marriage was conveyed in a variety of allegorical forms in alchemical manuscripts; such allegories expressed the necessity of combining the opposites, normally referred to as sulphur and mercury, in order to take part in the creative plan. The important thing was to know the right degree and proportion.

In a psychological sense we could assume this to mean leading the spirit (mercury) along the right path so that it is able to accept the soul (sulphur), and also the 'burning' sphere of instincts and desires, in a creative embrace which would bring forth a unified whole, a mature personality. But this view would be too incomplete and theoretical if we were to forget the third principle, the bodily element of 'salt', which makes it possible to shape a system able to reflect the wholeness of human nature, into which the material process is involuntarily projected. Only by this means could the 'great work' of the alchemist become the perfect mirror of what the 'philosophers' wanted to see when beholding their furnaces and alembics.

(See also ALCHEMY; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE).

HANS BIEDERMANN

MERLIN THE MAGICIAN

MERLIN

ONE of the special features of the Arthurian legend is its peculiar blending of Christianity with non-Christian motifs. Its orthodox medieval chivalry has an alien context. A haunting strangeness overhangs the Round Table and the Holy Grail. Behind both, and behind King Arthur himself, stand shadowy presences. The elements of magic and myth are not downright evil, as such things tend to be in Christian romances; yet neither are they baptised into a fully Christian condition. Merlin, Arthur's court wizard and prophet, is the character who chiefly embodies them.

He first takes literary shape in the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth (see ARTHUR). Toward 1135 Geoffrey published some alleged prophecies, dealing in a riddling style with English and Welsh affairs over several centuries. He ascribed them to a British prophet whom he called Merlin, and soon afterwards inserted them in his *History of the Kings of Britain*. This famous and influential book supplies Merlin with a sketchy career, in the setting of the same largely bogus history that enshrines King Arthur. About 1150 Geoffrey wrote a Latin poem entitled *Vita Merlini* (Life of Merlin), adding further particulars.

As formed by Geoffrey of Monmouth, the character combines two old Welsh traditions, which originally concerned two different men. The real Merlin, so far as such a person ever existed, was a bard and seer named Myrddin. He flourished late in the 6th century AD, in what was then still a Cymric borderland near the Solway Firth. Fragments of obscure Welsh poetry by him and about him survive, and a certain Lailoken, who figures in Scottish legend, may be the same man. A piece of trouble-making by Myrddin among the British chieftains is said to have caused the battle of Arderydd near Carlisle, fought in the 570s. As a supernatural punishment, it is further said, a vision in the sky unbalanced his reason, and sent him wandering and raving through the forest of Celidon in the Scottish Lowlands.

If Myrddin ever met Arthur at all, he can only have done so as a youth in Arthur's old age. For literary reasons, however, Geoffrey of Monmouth wanted a Myrddin who was older than Arthur instead of younger. Also there was an awkwardness about his name. In the Latin used by Geoffrey it would have become Merdinus, suggesting *merde* (dung). Geoffrey therefore altered the name a little; and to plant the prophet in the period where he wanted him, he adapted a separate legend preserved by Nennius (the monk of Bangor, who gives the oldest account of Arthur). Nennius's legend was about magical serpents and a mysterious 'boy without a father'. The boy was originally Ambrosius, who grew up to be a British leader of the 5th century. But Geoffrey retold the story making 'Merlin' its hero instead, thereby shifting his birth back to somewhere about 450.

In spite of the prestige which Geoffrey's *History* acquired, medieval experts on Welsh matters did notice the difficulty over dates. One was the writer Giraldus Cambrensis. Rather than accuse Geoffrey of outright fiction at this point, Giraldus argued that there must have been two Merlins, Merlin Ambrosius in the 5th century and Merlin Sylvester or Celidonius in the 6th. For the purposes of romance, however, the composite character held the field, and few cared to analyse him.

It will be clear that Merlin, from his very beginning under that name, is a product of imaginative synthesis. There would be little point in looking for a single 'historical Merlin' to go with the 'historical Arthur' who emerges dimly to view around the year 500. Merlin's interest lies in the themes which various authors develop through him, either in pseudo-history or in stories with no serious factual pretensions.

Merlin and Stonehenge

In Geoffrey's *History* Merlin makes his entry as a boy in Carmarthen, with a cryptic birth-story about the impregnation of his mother by an invisible demon, and a long prophetic outpouring. Some years later, at the request of King Aurelius, he uses magic to help transport Stonehenge from its supposed original site in Ireland to Salisbury Plain. At his last appearance, he enables King Uther to achieve access to the lady Igerna, and father Arthur on her, by giving him a magical likeness to her husband.

The first and third of these exploits show Merlin as a prophet and wizard. The second is more remarkable. It connects the character with a remote British past, and not merely fancifully. Professor R. J. C. Atkinson has shown that behind the invented marvels, Geoffrey may well have tapped authentic traditions about Stonehenge and the transport of megaliths from the west, which had survived orally. If so, Merlin is in some degree a projection of a Britain older than Christianity – older, indeed, than the Celtic population which produced Arthur and the mythology surrounding him.

After presiding over Arthur's conception, Merlin fades out of the *History*. In the *Vita Merlini* Geoffrey draws on material about the actual bard Myrddin. He hints at a fate which becomes explicit in later romance, Merlin's seduction by the enchantress Vivien or Nimue (sometimes identified with the Lady of the Lake – see LANCELOT), who traps him in a magic prison.

Geoffrey's Arthurian work was developed along romantic lines by Wace and Layamon. Both of these poets reduced Merlin's importance. But he proved too fascinating to stay reduced. He took root in folklore, becoming associated, like Arthur himself, with places and stones and even trees. His prophecies were taken seriously. They are said to have been quoted by angry Welsh against Henry II. Studious commentators tried to make sense of them. In some medieval legends Merlin appears outside the Arthurian cycle, becoming more sinister.

Within the cycle he recovered from his early setback and rose to new prominence. Romancers gave him a major role in the education of Arthur, in the foundation of the Round Table, in the mysteries of the Grail. His curious birth was enlarged upon: it was told how the powers of hell had tried to bring about the conception of a Satanic child to serve their ends, but the scheme miscarried, and the chosen mother bore an ambiguous being who went his own way.

The 'real Merlin' was a Celtic bard, some of whose poetry survives: the legendary Merlin was said to have transported Stonehenge to Salisbury Plain by magic *Previous page* Illustration from a French history of Merlin, 13th century *Right* Merlin at Stonehenge, from a 14th century manuscript

The French Vulgate series of Arthurian tales, completed toward 1230, includes a *Story of Merlin* later adapted into English in *Arthour and Merlin*, a long metrical narrative. Sir Thomas Malory puts Merlin's importance on a firm basis. The seer arranges Arthur's birth, gets the sword Excalibur for him, aids him in war and foretells events. But Malory's habit of pruning away excessive magic prevents Merlin from dominating the scene quite as much as he does in the earlier accounts.

Fairly soon, in fact, he drops out. His foreknowledge of woes to come depresses his spirits. He falls disastrously in love with Nimue (or Nyneve, as Malory calls her). She goes with him on a journey through Cornwall, hoping to learn his arts, but never accepts him as her lover. Finally she grows tired of him, and turns one of his own spells against him to imprison him in a cave. Like the Arthur of folklore, he remains in the cave and goes on living indefinitely. Unlike Arthur, he is not destined to return.

Remembering the Future

Romance of the kind written by Malory petered out during the Renaissance. Its themes lingered on to inspire poets, such as Ariosto and, partly through him, Spenser. The latter's *Faerie Queene* presents the Arthurian world in a new guise. He introduces Merlin, but as a rather colourless sage, more or less rationalized.

Attempts to rationalize Merlin continue in more recent authors. Tennyson's notes for the work which became the *Idylls of the King* show that he meant at first to turn the magician into a symbol of Science. He did not actually go so far. The Merlin of the *Idylls* remains pre-eminently a Wise Man, very august and very cryptic, with superhuman powers. He utters oracular verses and is believed to know unrevealed secrets about Arthur's origin. The partly rationalized sage reappears in Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem *Merlin* (1917).

The fully-fledged magician has been revived, in violently contrasting ways, by two other modern authors. T. H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1938) takes up the neglected topic of the boyhood of Arthur and Merlin's role as his tutor. The treatment is a very personal mixture of high comedy and high seriousness. Merlin's prophetic gift takes the form of remembering the future and forgetting the past. In *The Sword in the Stone* itself, his non-consecutive time is largely a joke. In the sequels, making up the tetralogy *The Once and Future King*,

British Museum

it becomes thematic. Arthurian England is a country of the imagination where the whole of the Middle Ages is happening simultaneously. Merlin's own break with conventional, chronological history is pervasive and final.

C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (1945) is a fantasy influenced by the poetry of Charles Williams. Its setting is in the 'near future' of science fiction. An organization which purports to be scientific, but is in fact diabolic, plans to unleash genocide in the name of progress. Normal human ideals – including the Christian ones of the author himself – prove incapable of inspiring effective resistance. The menace is defeated through a resurrection of Merlin. He has the power, as no modern man has, to open the door to spiritual forces from a lost antiquity, and enlist their aid on the side of life.

Lewis's serious point – which could be supported from the records of Dark-Age Christianity in Britain and Ireland – is that the figure of Merlin corresponds to a 'both-at-once' state of mind, Christian-and-pagan. Such a state was possible in the days of Arthur, but gradually ceased to be possible as distinctions hardened. The Merlin of *That Hideous Strength* is a Druid, with roots still farther back in the lore of Atlantis. Yet he is also a helper to the Christians, a guardian of the Grail, and in no sense a sorcerer. Lewis links him with 'neutral' spirits, neither angel nor devil.

Though presented through fiction, Lewis's insight into the character may well be sound. Particularly in the Stonehenge chapters of Geoffrey of Monmouth, with their marks of a genuine tradition, Merlin may put us briefly in contact with remote and formative phases of the human spirit which we can no longer think ourselves back into. Before the traditions came to focus in him, most of the keys had been lost and only rumours survived.

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: R. W. Barber, *Arthurian Legends* (State Mutual Bk., 1981); H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1932); R. S. Loomis ed., *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1959).

'In her going down they saw her tail which was like the tail of a porpoise, speckled like a mackerel . . . from the navel upwards her back and breasts were like a woman's': this 17th century description has been paralleled in many other accounts of mermaids

MERMAIDS AND MERMEN

THE MERMAID, a beautiful girl to her waist but a fish from the waist down, and her male counterpart, the merman, are still among the most popular of legendary creatures, and mermaid lore is part of the living world of the romantic child. In 1961 the Manx Tourist Board, promoting an angling week in the Isle of Man, offered a prize for the capture of a live mermaid.

The mermaid of tradition is a seductive and dangerous enchantress, who personifies the beauty and treachery of the sea, and especially of the shoals and rocks of the coastline. She is also closely associated with the moon (the ruler of the tides), which is represented by the mirror she holds in her hand. Her long hair is said to be composed of green seaweed, or perhaps of the rays of the sun as they fall upon the water. In European folklore the menacing green-haired water spirit appears constantly in strange legends of lake, river and sea. For a sailor to see a mermaid is almost always a portent of danger and disaster.

Some gods and goddesses of the ancient world were associated with fish, and some appeared in the form of fish (see FISH). The Mesopotamian god Oannes, who showed himself on earth each day and disappeared into the sea each night, was evidently connected with the sun and was sometimes depicted with the tail of a fish. There was also the fish-tailed Philistine god Dagon, of whom Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost*: 'Dagon his name, sea monster, upward man and downward fish.' Fishes were sacred to Aphrodite, who was born from the sea, and to other love goddesses, one of whom, Atargatis or Derceto, had a fish-tail. Among the predecessors of the medieval and modern mermaid are the Sirens, who lured sailors to destruction, though exactly when and why they changed from bird-women to fish-women is uncertain (see SIRENS).

A Victim a Year

The mer-people were supposed to dwell in an underwater world of great splendour, to which the mermaids lured their victims and where they kept their souls close prisoner in their kingdom beneath the waves. This theme occurs again and again in the lore of the sea, with a constant emphasis on the presence of a mermaid as foreshadowing some calamity – storm, shipwreck, drowning.

On the other hand, you could always obtain power over a mermaid if you could get possession of her cap or her belt. There are many tales in which a human being brings a mermaid on shore to be his wife. In 'The Little Mermaid' by Hans Christian Andersen, a mermaid takes human shape so as to acquire a soul, which will allow her to be near the man she loves for all eternity. There are also many stories of marriages between mermen and human women.

In the Gironde, in France, mermaids had two tails. In Brittany, the Morgans or sea women were extremely dangerous to men. The fisherfolk of the Channel Islands believed in a strange sea creature called the King of the Auxcrinier, whose presence was feared as the forerunner of storm. In Norse folklore the Havemand is a merman who has a black beard and green hair. The Estonian Nakk is someone who has drowned, and may appear as man, woman, child or animal.

Below left **The Little Mermaid of Hans Andersen's story changed her tail for legs in order to follow the mortal man she loved. Her statue now overlooks the approach to Copenhagen *Below right* Among the marvels reported by seamen and explorers of the 16th and 17th centuries were men and women with the tails of fish. Occasional sightings have continued up to the present century**

His lovely singing entrances people and he swallows them in his giant mouth. A Nakk maiden is very pretty, combs her long locks with a golden comb and sometimes has the tail of a fish. The Nakki of Finland are very similar, and their women have gleaming white bodies and breasts so long that they can throw them over their shoulders.

The nixes or nixies of Germanic lore are spirits of fresh water. Green-haired and lovely, they can transform themselves into old women, in which form they venture on land on market days. They lure their human victims to drowning in treacherous waters, and must have at least one victim each year.

In 1403, it is said, a mermaid was found becalmed in shallow water at Edam in Holland. She became accustomed to life on land but never learned to speak. She lived for some 15 years after her capture, and was given Christian burial.

The Sea-Maid's Music

In 1560 several supposed mermaids were caught by fishermen in Ceylon. They were dissected, and it was reported that they possessed organs like those of human beings. An early 17th century tale from America reported an attack on a canoe by a fierce merman whose arm had to be severed with a hatchet because he would not release his grip. The famous explorer Henry Hudson reported a sighting of mermaids in 1608, near Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic Ocean, north of Russia. He described one of them as being 'as big as one of us, her skin very white and long hair hanging down behind, of colour black. In her going down they saw her tail which was like the tail of a porpoise, speckled like a mackerel . . .' and 'from the navel upwards her back and breasts were like a woman's.'

Among many curious legends once current in the British Isles is the tale of the mermaid who swam up a subterranean channel from the River Mersey at sunrise, seated herself on a church bell and began to sing. In Cornwall, the mermaid of Zennor lured a lovelorn youth into the sea by the charm of her voice, and for years afterwards his voice could be heard singing from deep beneath the waves.

According to John Shaw, author of *Speculum Mundi*, published in 1635, the song of the mermaid was not as tuneful as

Danish Tourist Board

John R. Freeman

Axel Poignant

Maori carving of an eel-shaped creature with the head of a man. Apart from the coastal waters of Europe, with which they are mainly associated, supernatural sea creatures are said to inhabit many other parts of the globe, including the New World and the Far East

was popularly supposed. 'But above all the Mermaids and Men-fish seem to me the most strange fish in the waters. Some have supposed them to be devils or spirits in regard to their whooping noise that they make.' But this contradicts the older tradition, expressed by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream:*

> Since once I sat upon a promontory,
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the sea-maid's music.

There is a tradition that the people of Machaire in Ireland are the descendants of mermaids. The Irish thought that mermaids were originally pagan women, transformed into mermaids by St Patrick and then banished from the Emerald Isle forever.

If Ireland managed to dispose of its mermaids, as well as its snakes, Scotland did not. Till the close of the 18th century it was a common belief in Aberdeenshire that mermaids inhabited the caves of the rocky coastline. As late as the 1890s a mermaid was said to have appeared on two occasions in the Orkneys.

The Scots also populated their inland waters with spirits. It was a certain portent of drowning to see a kelpie, a mischievous and evil creature which lived in a stream or a lake and appeared in the form of a horse. He would lure people to climb on his back, and then drown them in the water. The Welsh equivalent is the ceffyl, or water horse. In northern England many lakes and ponds were tenanted by a sinister siren known as Jenny Green Teeth, a green-haired monster with a taste for drowning young children who ventured too close to her domain.

The Mermaid of Morwenstow

With the passing of the age of magic, dedicated rationalists attempted to discover in natural history the true source of the mermaid legend. Manatees and dugongs have been considered likely candidates. Both are sea mammals (of the order Sirenia, found in coastal waters of the Atlantic and Indian oceans) and they suckle their young, holding them with their flippers in the manner of a woman with a baby. The walrus and the seal are other candidates. One naturalist commented: 'I have seen many plain women but never yet one quite so plain as the face of a dugong.'

The Roman writer Pliny, the first naturalist to discuss mermaids at length, would have been intrigued by the amount of evidence for the existence of mermaids which came to light in Europe from the 16th century onwards, in the shape of fish-tailed sub-humans, most of whom found their way into fairground booths or were exhibited at inns. In 1830 a mermaid was on show at the Egyptian Hall in London, and in the 1870s Phineas Barnum's 'Greatest Show on Earth' included a mermaid. Until the Royal College of Surgeons was bombed in the Second World War, two stuffed mermaids were kept in a showcase there.

The great upholders of the mermaid myth were the Japanese, who during the last century became adept in the manufacture of synthetic mermen and mermaids, using stuffed monkey skins sewn onto fish-tails. They exploited the fears of seamen, who wanted to secure a specimen but were afraid that the purchase would bring calamity, by selling each of their customers a photograph of a mermaid as a lucky charm giving protection against mermaid magic.

A fierce blow against belief in mermaids was struck by the Reverend Robert Hawker of Morwenstow, a celebrated practical joker. About the year 1825 he decided to test the power of the mermaid myth by swimming to an offshore rock near Bude, on the north coast of Cornwall. Naked to the waist and with a shining tail of oilskin wrapped about his legs, he combed his tresses of seaweed, preened himself in a mirror and began to sing, all in the light of the full moon. Large and awestruck crowds gathered to watch this remarkable phenomenon, which continued for several successive nights until finally, wearying of his performance and discovering that he had a sore throat, the Mermaid of Morwenstow suddenly burst into the strains of 'God Save the King' and, plunging from the rock, disappeared into the sea.

Comb and Glass

In heraldry the mermaid is a symbol of eloquence. She also appears in churches. At Lincoln Cathedral, for instance, there is a carved mermaid with plaited hair, and the prevalence of carved mermen and mermaids in Cornish churches has been ascribed to the strong belief in the mer-people of Cornish fishermen.

The motif also appears in the theatre, in opera, ballet and poetry. Laurie Lee's poem 'Song of the Sea' returns to the theme of disaster in the tale of the lover who rushes into the mermaid's embrace:

> Oh suck me down to your weeds and fates,
> Green horizontal girl.

The mermaid is a well-known character in popular ballads, and in the days of sail seamen sang:

> Twas Friday morn when we set sail,
> And we were not far from the land,
> When the Captain he spied a lovely mermaid
> With a comb and a glass in her hand.

Sightings of mermaids, of one sort or another, have still not ceased. In June 1857 the Shipping Gazette reported the appearance off Britain of a mermaid with 'full breast, dark complexion, and comely face.' In 1937 a mermaid was reported in the Far East. In 1956 at Accra an African bank cashier was persuaded to hand over more than £500 from his till to a confidence trickster disguised as a mermaid, who offered to double his money for him.

ERIC MAPLE

Our understanding of hypnosis still remains negligible but increasing knowledge of it is likely to shed light on such matters as hallucination, ecstatic states, faith healing, hysterical possession and the mediumistic trance

MESMER

Caricature of 'animal magnetism', the influence through which Mesmer believed he achieved his startling cures

THE ORIGINATOR of 'mesmerism' and, indirectly, of much else, Friedrich (sometimes Franz) Anton Mesmer, seems to have been born in Austria, in 1734. He graduated in medicine at Vienna some 30 years later. A believer in astrology, he conceived the idea that the planets affect human beings through an influence resembling magnetism, and he began to treat patients by applying magnets to their bodies. However, before long he decided that the magnets were unnecessary, since the curative influence (he claimed some striking cures) emanated strongly from the hand and nervous system of the operator. To this curative influence he gave the name 'animal magnetism', because of certain supposed analogies with electromagnetism (see MAGNETISM). Mesmer believed that the influence could be transmitted to objects held in or stroked by the hand, and could then be discharged through a suitable conductor.

In 1778 Mesmer came to Paris, where his fame or perhaps notoriety had preceded him. He speedily attracted a number of pupils and a great many would-be patients. In order to cope with the throng of patients, he devised the celebrated *baquet*, a wooden tub, filled with water and iron filings, and containing a large number of bottles of 'magnetized' water. From it protruded iron rods which could be applied to diseased or damaged parts of patients. Mesmer himself, clothed like a magician, moved among the company to a background of soft music and mysterious lighting. Many cures of various kinds of diseases were reported, often precipitated by a 'crisis' of convulsive movements, and although in 1784 Royal Commissions from the Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society of Medicine reported that the 'magnetic fluid' was a myth and the cures due to 'imagination', the faithful were not dismayed. A grateful patient exclaimed: 'If it is to illusion that I owe the health I believe myself to enjoy, I humbly beg the learned gentlemen, who see so clearly, not to destroy it.' Mesmer remained in France until 1789, when he fled from the Revolution. He died in 1815.

The most influential of Mesmer's pupils was the Marquis de Puységur (1751–1825). Puységur, who disliked the convulsive crises which accompanied Mesmer's cures, discovered that patients could be put by 'magnetization' into a sleep-like or 'somnambulic' state in which cures could equally well be effected. Patients in this state showed themselves unusually responsive to the commands of the mesmerist, and could be made not merely to perform actions suggested by him, but to feel prescribed emotions or entertain delusory beliefs. Ordinary faculties might be heightened, and quite novel faculties seemingly be induced. For example, in the somnambulic state patients would often diagnose and prescribe for their own ailments, and sometimes they would do the same for other people by means of alleged clairvoyance. Upon awakening, the patients commonly showed no recollection of what had passed.

Puységur's explanation of the phenomena which he observed was, at any rate to begin with, similar to Mesmer's. He was impressed by the fact that 'magnetized' objects could send subjects into the 'magnetic sleep', and thought in terms of an effluence capable of collection and storage. But he emphasized, as Mesmer did not, that the magnetic fluid or therapeutic energy might be directed by the will of the operator upon the body and nervous system of the subject. A receptive subject might be swayed by the operator's changing wishes and commands, much as a magnetic needle is influenced by variations in the magnetic flux playing upon it.

Puységur's ideas were, in many ways, more influential than Mesmer's. Thus it was the somnambulic state or 'magnetic trance', often with accompanying 'clairvoyant' diagnoses, and not the baquet and the crisis, which figured most prominently in the rapid spread of the mesmeric movement across Europe. By the time of the French Revolution there were mesmeric societies throughout France, and in Germany serious studies were being undertaken by reputable physicians. The Revolutionary Wars interrupted progress, but it was resumed after 1815, and there was hardly a country on the continent of Europe where some interest in the subject was not shown. By the end of the 1820s most of the phenomena subsequently thought characteristic of hypnosis – including the induction of hallucinations and of anaesthesia, and the responsiveness of normally awake subjects to commands given them in a previous somnambulic state – had been observed, and the first surgical operation upon a subject in trance had been performed. In the 1830s and 1840s the movement spread more extensively to Great Britain and the United States. In Britain the hostility of orthodox medicine was extreme, and the leading mesmerist, John Elliotson (1791–1868), was forced to resign his teaching position at a London hospital. In the United States orthodoxy was less entrenched, mesmeric treatment became common, and a large corps of itinerant demonstrators and quacks grew up.

The Hypnotic State

In most countries the great majority of interested persons could at this period be divided into two camps, those who believed in the phenomena and accepted some version or other of the fluidic theory, and those who thought that all the phenomena could be set down to fraud by the operators and shamming by the subjects. Of those who adopted an intermediate position, the most noteworthy was perhaps James Braid (1795–1860), a Manchester surgeon of Scottish descent. Braid became interested in mesmerism (or 'hypnotism' as he called it, from the Greek *hypnos*, 'sleep'), and from 1842 employed it in his own practice with successful results, especially in disorders which were functional rather than organic. Braid was able to demonstrate that the mesmeric efficacy of magnetized objects depended not at all on whether or not the objects concerned had in fact been 'magnetized', but solely upon whether or not the subjects believed that they had. He reached the conclusion that the hypnotic state is simply a state in which subjects are abnormally responsive to suggestions made by the operator, including ones not directly addressed to them and ones which are merely implicit.

Braid encountered considerable hostility both from orthodox physicians and from believers in the mesmeric fluid, but gradually his views came to command attention and respect, and it was from their adoption and enlargement in France after 1860, especially by the 'Nancy School', A. A. Liébault, H. Bernheim and their followers, that the modern approach to hypnotism is derived. The hypnotic state is looked upon as an abnormal, but not pathological, condition whose leading feature is the increased suggestibility of the subject. The 'hypnotic trance', which is readily brought on in many persons by repeated suggestions or commands combined with monotonous sensory stimulation, seems to be both a symptom of this suggestibility and a tool for further heightening it. How far the trance can be regarded as a phenomenon possessing its own unique characteristics not directly or indirectly dependent upon the subject's beliefs and expectations is perhaps not altogether clear. But it does seem well-established that in suitable subjects (who are by no means rare), there may be induced

a state of heightened suggestibility, often preceded or accompanied by trance, in which the commands of the hypnotist may produce a variety of remarkable effects.

These effects may occur immediately, or at some subsequent time specified by the hypnotist ('post-hypnotic suggestion'), and they include: the production of sensory hallucinations and of heightened sensory acuity (or at least heightened powers of observation and attention); anaesthesia sufficient for major operations; the performance of complicated and even ridiculous actions; impersonation with outstanding dramatic flair of some character named by the hypnotist; the acceptance of totally delusive beliefs; remembering of events not normally accessible to recall; the induction of laughter, tears, and groundless emotional states; the stopping of bad habits, such as smoking; the cure or alleviation of neurotic or obsessional states; heightened muscular power; the improvement of skin complaints, such as eczema and even warts; and the production of blisters and other marks upon the surface of the skin.

Many of the more startling phenomena were for the most part reported by practising psychiatrists, and were sometimes regarded with a certain suspicion by laboratory psychologists (such as C. L. Hull, whose *Hypnosis and Suggestibility: an Experimental Approach* was published in 1933). However, many of these phenomena have now been confirmed by laboratory investigation, and few of the earlier findings are more striking than S. Black's recent experiments showing the total obviation by hypnosis of normal allergic responses, or E. R. Hilgard's demonstrations of the hypnotic suppression, not just of intense pain but of its usual physiological accompaniments.

Mesmerist and patient: the mesmeric movement spread rapidly and by 1830 most of the phenomena now thought characteristic of hypnosis had been observed

Faith Healing and Possession

In addition to the numerous clinical and laboratory observations of hypnotic phenomena, there are on record many instances of persons not deliberately hypnotized falling spontaneously, or under

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the influence of emotional excitement, implicit or self-administered suggestions, or a perfervid imagination, into states closely resembling hypnosis. The best-known of these states is of course ordinary somnambulism or sleep-walking, in which responsiveness to suggestion has occasionally been observed. The ecstasies into which profoundly religious persons have sometimes fallen as a result of intensive meditation and prayer may be characterized by insensitivity to pain, hallucinations, muscular spasms, and the production of organic changes such as stigmatization, for all of which hypnosis can provide analogies.

In some cultures monotonous ritual drumming, dancing and chanting seem to be used to produce rather similar effects (see DANCE). Responsiveness to suggestion (whether the suggestion be explicit or implicit) is, as every stage hypnotist knows, enhanced by the sight of other people capitulating, for that sight itself constitutes a powerful implicit suggestion that resistance will be in vain. Thus if one person, swayed by a belief current in his culture, writhes and dances, sees angelic beings, imagines himself possessed by a god or demon, or 'speaks with tongues', the chances will be increased that other persons in the immediate vicinity and holding similar convictions will be likewise afflicted. In these terms we may perhaps understand the affinities between hypnosis and certain extreme manifestations of religious enthusiasm or of superstition (see ECSTASY; ENTHUSIASM; POSSESSION). Similarities between the techniques of stage hypnotists and those of revivalist preachers have often been commented upon, and many of the problems of faith healing, cures by 'laying on of hands', and so on, also belong here (see FAITH HEALING; LOURDES).

Theories of Hypnosis

To relate the various phenomena just described to hypnosis is not in any way to explain them, for our theoretical understanding of hypnosis itself is negligible. The old notion of a magnetic fluid has been abandoned by all but a tiny residue of supporters. Psychoanalytic explanations invoke entities and mechanisms scarcely more plausible or better evidenced than the magnetic fluid. The theories that hypnosis consists in either heightened suggestibility, or heightened powers of attentiveness, or dissociation of part of the stream of consciousness, amount to no more than redescriptions of some of the phenomena to be explained. The view put forward in the last century by Heidenhain, and refurbished in this by the school of Pavlov, is that hypnosis results from an inhibition of the higher brain centres caused by monotonous sensory stimulation. This has at any rate the advantage that its recent protagonists have felt able to advance simple experiments on animals, rendered cataleptic by nembutal or even by decerebration, as throwing a possible light on the subject. All in all it seems most unlikely that our understanding of hypnotic phenomena, involving as they do an infinitely subtle interplay of the verbal commands of the hypnotist, the suggestions that are perhaps merely implicit in his demeanour, and the background beliefs of the subject, can possibly improve until the psychology of language, thought and concept-formation has enormously progressed.

One of the great obstacles to the testing and even formulation of any theory of hypnosis is that what does and what does not take place as a result of hypnotic suggestion may be profoundly influenced by the subject's own beliefs about the nature and limitations of hypnosis. For example we cannot even say with complete certainty whether the so-called hypnotic rapport – the tendency of a hypnotized person to act only upon the commands of the hypnotist, ignoring suggestions made by others – is or is not a special feature of the hypnotic state. It is widely reported to this day, but it can readily be countermanded by the hypnotist, and its occurrence very probably reflects no more than the fact that it is widely believed in by hypnotic subjects.

The Mind-Cure Cults

Two major religions, or rather groups of religions, have their roots in the mesmeric movement of the 19th century. The first is constituted by the various 'mind-cure' cults, especially Christian Science, and the second by modern Spiritualism in all its forms and phases (see CHRISTIAN SCIENCE; SPIRITUALISM). The link between the mesmeric movement and Christian Science is the American mesmerist and healer, P. P. Quimby (1802–1866). A clock-maker by trade, Quimby lived most of his life in Maine. About the year 1838 he became interested in mesmerism, which was then becoming widely known in the United States, and found that he was himself a capable operator. In a youth named Lucius Burkmar he discovered an excellent somnambulic subject, and for some years they gave popular demonstrations, and diagnosed and treated disease. Quimby's usual method was to throw Burkmar into rapport with the patients, and obtain from him clairvoyant diagnoses and prescriptions. Later Quimby discovered that he had himself the gift not only of clairvoyant diagnosis, but of directly apprehending the contents of a patient's mind. As a result he came to see that the physical ailments from which the patients suffered were a direct consequence of the erroneous ideas which they entertained. In order to correct the physical conditions it was therefore only necessary to correct the erroneous ideas and ways of thought. These doctrines Quimby called 'The Science of Health' or sometimes 'Christian Science'.

Quimby's most famous patient was Mary Patterson, later Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science (see EDDY). She came to him in 1862, when his thought along the lines just indicated was well advanced. That Mrs Eddy was indebted to Quimby for some of her leading ideas is undeniable, though in later life she was reluctant to acknowledge the fact.

Links with Spiritualism

The link between the mesmeric movement and modern Spiritualism is more complex but not less strong. Quite early in the development of the mesmeric movement stories were heard of mesmerized persons exhibiting clairvoyance and other paranormal powers. Subjects in the somnambulic state would frequently proffer clairvoyant diagnoses of other peoples' ailments, and cases were not infrequent in which they allegedly saw when blindfolded, read the contents of sealed packages, and correctly visualized distant scenes as if from an appropriate vantage point ('travelling clairvoyance').

Now if it is indeed the case that in the mesmeric trance certain gifted clairvoyants can correctly perceive distant scenes, presumably without the aid of the physical senses, one might well ask to what other regions this eccentric sensitivity can reach. It was not long before somnambules began to retail accounts of the next world and of personages from it. A number of such accounts were received quite early in the history of the mesmeric movement; the first case to become famous was that of Frederica Hauffe, the 'Seeress of Prevorst', whose physician, Justinus Kerner, published a book about her in 1829. In the somnambulic state Frau Hauffe saw and held conversations with the spirits of deceased persons, some of whom apparently gave her verifiable information about their alleged earthly careers.

In France A. Cahagnet published as *Arcanes de la vie future devoilés* (1847–8) various somnambulic revelations as to the next world and its inhabitants, and a similar work, Dr J. Haddock's *Somnolism and Psycheism*, was published in England in 1849. Both Cahagnet and Haddock were interested in the teachings of Swedenborg, which were in many ways similar to those later characteristic of modern Spiritualism, and the revelations of their subjects have a pronouncedly Swedenborgian cast (see SWEDENBORG). It must, however, be added that both Cahagnet's and Haddock's subjects showed remarkable instances of apparent clairvoyance. Also tinged with Swedenborgianism were the doctrines of the American seer, Andrew Jackson Davis, whose *Principles of Nature* was published in 1847 and quickly became famous.

Thus when, in 1848, the modern Spiritualist movement started its career, its likely public had had time to become accustomed to the idea that certain gifted persons might, when in an unusual psychological state, be able to make contact with the spirits of the departed, and bring back information about the next world. The 'mediumistic trance' evolved out of the 'mesmeric trance', and the doctrine of a mesmeric fluid directed by the operator into his subject so as to control the latter's movements was soon extended to include 'control' exercised by the spirits. The mesmeric movement in every way set the stage for the Spiritualist movement, and was to some considerable extent absorbed by it.

ALAN GAULD

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MESOPOTAMIA

The Sumerians initiated a cultural revolution which gave the world writing, cities, and a corpus of religious practices and concepts

The Sumerians and their successors in Mesopotamia developed both a complex pantheon of deities and a complex system of demonology and magic

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD religion was not a distinct or optional activity but the attitude to life which gave it cohesion, meaning and pattern. Mesopotamian religion, like Hinduism, had its roots in prehistory and was not attributed to a specific founder. Despite the three thousand years over which the evidence extends, and the several distinct groups of peoples concerned, there is a sufficient continuum to justify treatment of the whole of the evidence as belonging to one cultural stream, and to speak of Mesopotamian 'religion' rather than 'religions'. Some distinction can be seen between the systematized theology of the scribes, which provides the bulk of the evidence, and the popular religion, but since evidence of the popular religion appears only incidentally and allusively, little specific can be said of it.

Mesopotamia here means the pre-Christian cultural area approximating geographically to the modern state of Iraq. In the context of ancient times the southern part of this region is known as Babylonia, the northern as Assyria.

The earliest evidence of the occupation of southernmost Mesopotamia comes from c 5000 BC. By 3500 BC this region was settled by the Sumerians. This ethnic group, of unknown origin, initiated a cultural revolution which gave the world writing, cities, and a corpus of religious practices and concepts. From their original area of settlement in southern Babylonia, where their city states flourished during the third millennium, Sumerian cultural influence permeated as far north as the area later known as Assyria, but was less marked there than in the south.

The period 2750 to 2500 BC saw considerable immigration into Babylonia of peoples from the Arabian desert, speaking the Semitic language Akkadian, who in the course of their assimilation to the higher Sumerian culture profoundly modified it, not least in religion. Further Semitic immigration brought about, by c 2000 BC, the disappearance of the Sumerians as an ethnic or cultural entity, and in the north overlaid the aboriginal inhabitants of Assyria with a mainly Semitic culture.

The beginning of the second millennium was marked by the rise of a number of Akkadian-speaking city states, of which Babylon under Hammurabi ultimately achieved supremacy. Before 1000 BC political supremacy had passed to Assyria, which with brief intermissions remained predominant until shortly before the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC.

The Sumerians and their successors employed as their principal writing material tablets of clay, inscribed by impression with a stylus. Such tablets, virtually indestructible, have been found in hundreds of thousands. Many of them contain texts directly or indirectly related to religion, myth or magic, one of the principal sources being libraries collected by Assyrian kings, particularly Ashurbanipal (668–629 BC) at Nineveh.

Ancient man saw the universe in the form of conscious forces, which were conceived of in some specific shape. Such personification was originally not necessarily in human shape, since some of the most primitive concepts of divine powers invested them with animal aspects. Some aspects of the forces active in the world, certainly those thought of as universal gods, must have been personified by the Sumerians before their settlement in Mesopotamia. In addition, each early Sumerian settlement had its own local deity (sometimes identified with a universal deity), with attributed characteristics depending on the dominant features of the locality and community. As society developed, the deities of different settlements were brought into relationship, whilst additionally specific aspects of agriculture and technology (for example, corn or brickmaking) became personified in a deity. Thus arose a considerable pantheon, the names of its members being compiled in god lists before the middle of the third millennium. Genealogies of the gods (theogonies) were developed to explain the relationship between deities.

The Great Gods

In one group of theogonies Enlil is the first god, deriving from several generations of vaguely defined primeval beings. In other theogonies, this role falls to An (Akkadian Anum), with Enki (Akkadian Ea) as his son. These two concepts were theologically combined, so that heading the pantheon in its

The stele of Naram-Sin, c 2300 BC, shows the Akkadian king facing a stylized mountain, his foot resting upon the bodies of his enemies; behind him soldiers climb a mountain path. The gradual infiltration of Babylonia by Semites in the 3rd millennium BC led to modification of the ancient Sumerian religion

developed form there stood a triad of universal gods: Anum, the sky god and king of the gods; Enlil, 'Lord Wind', originally a wind and mountain god; and Enki (Ea), god of wisdom, originally 'Lord Earth'. Though Anum was nominally king of the gods, executive power was in the hands of Enlil, who often in practice usurped the supremacy. In the mythology of historical times the sphere of Ea's activity was the cosmic sweet waters (Apsu) beneath the earth, probably as a result of the Sumerian Enki absorbing the attributes of a divinity of an earlier stage of religion.

A second group of deities comprised the moon god Nannar (Sin); the sun god Utu (Shamash); Venus, known in Sumerian as Innin or Inanna, 'Lady of Heaven', and in Akkadian as Ishtar; and the weather god, who was of less importance in a purely Sumerian context than to the Semites, amongst whom he was called Adad. These four gods, manifestly related to the diurnal period, are specifically described as sleeping during part of the day. Since in the latitude of Babylonia the crescent of the new moon is seen on a level axis like a boat, Sin was said to ride across the sky in a holy ship. Though, like the other great gods, thought of also anthropomorphically, he bore the epithet 'Brilliant Young Bull', and in a myth took that form to impregnate a cow.

The sun god rode across the heavens in a chariot drawn by mules. It was to him that prayers were addressed by those who lived by the ancient pre-agricultural pursuits of hunting and fishing, although all civilized

Giraudon

Praise to Ishtar

From an Akkadian hymn to Ishtar, translated by Ferris J. Stephens

She is clothed with pleasure and love.
She is laden with vitality, charm,
and voluptuousness.
Ishtar is clothed with pleasure and love.
She is laden with vitality, charm,
and voluptuousness.

In lips she is sweet; life is in her mouth.
At her appearance rejoicing becomes full.
She is glorious; veils are thrown over her head.
Her figure is beautiful; her eyes are brilliant.

The goddess – with her there is counsel.
The fate of everything she holds in her hand.
At her glance there is created joy,
Power, magnificence, the protecting deity and
guardian spirit.

She dwells in, she pays heed to compassion and
friendliness.
Besides, agreeableness she truly possesses.
Be it slave, unattached girl, or mother, she
preserves (her).
One calls on her; among women one names her name.

Who – to her greatness who can be equal?
Strong, exalted, splendid are her decrees.
Ishtar – to her greatness who can be equal?
Strong, exalted, splendid are her decrees.

She is sought after among the gods;
extraordinary is her station.
Respected is her word; it is *supreme* over them.
Ishtar among the gods, extraordinary is her station.
Respected is her word; it is *supreme* over them.

James B. Pritchard ed. *The Ancient Near East*

British Museum

Imdugud, the sacred lion-headed eagle, spreads his wings protectively over two stags. This large copper relief probably ornamented the entrance to a Sumerian temple

men bowed to him at his rising. Seeing all that happened on earth, he became god of justice and the divine lawgiver, and also controlled omens. He was sometimes thought to pass through the underworld at night.

The importance of Adad, the weather god, increased as one left Babylonia, a region watered almost wholly by irrigation, and moved north-westwards into areas dependent upon rain. Because of the sound of his voice in thunder, Adad was associated with the bull: he was also represented by the lightning symbol.

Inanna-Ishtar, a very complex figure, Queen of Heaven and Earth, the only prominent goddess of historical times, seems to have personified the vital forces of the crises of life. She could be felt as the loving mother who had suckled the king, or as the goddess controlling sexual powers, or as goddess of battle. She was also associated in myth and popular religion with a consort Dumuzi (Tammuz), a fertility deity who was annually lamented when absent in the underworld (see ISHTAR; TAMMUZ).

Other deities of major significance included Marduk, originally an aspect of the sun god. As god of Babylon, he ultimately achieved supremacy in the Babylonian pantheon, assimilating the characteristics of Enlil; he was also equated with a god Asallukhi, in which context he was god of magic (see MARDUK). Nabu, god of Borsippa, the nearest city to Babylon, was (probably for this geographical reason) regarded as Marduk's son; he was also patron of the scribal profession. The latter function had earlier been attributed to a Sumerian goddess Nisaba, and the conflict between the two concepts was resolved by Nisaba being (by the first millennium) regarded as Nabu's wife. In Assyria it was Ashur, originally the Assyrian tribal god, who ultimately usurped leadership in the pantheon, bearing the title 'the Assyrian Enlil'. Another god who became of particular significance in Assyria was the warrior god Ninurta, son of Enlil.

Though there are indications in mythology that a number of female deities originally held a significant place in Sumerian religion, from the beginning of the second millennium the only goddess of independent significance other than Inanna (Ishtar) was Ereshkigal, Queen of the Underworld, and even in her case a myth describes how she gained a dominant spouse, Nergal. Each of the male deities had a nominal consort, sometimes a pale reflection bearing the feminine form of his own name, sometimes an old Sumerian goddess who originally served an independent function in the pantheon or even existed before the developed pantheon.

The great gods, whilst regarded as being concerned with the life of Babylonia and Assyria as a whole, might at the same time be thought of as having their abode particularly in a certain city or cities. Anum lived in Erech or Der, for instance, and Shamash in Sippar or Larsa. The deities were in no sense tied to these places but if the proper rites were performed, an aspect of the deity might take up residence in an image, which then represented the god's presence and became a focus of the cult, although the god was not theologically thought of as bounded by the visible statue. A considerable

The deities, in the form of statues, might make journeys from one shrine to another; their accidental movements on such occasions were of great significance as omens

wardrobe of clothing, insignia and jewellery would be available to dress and adorn the god's image. Daily food offerings were made, and privileged persons, including the king, might be permitted to eat the food remaining from the god's meal table. The deities, in the form of the statues, might upon appropriate occasions make journeys from one shrine to another, either by ship or upon the shoulders of bearers. Their accidental movements on such occasions were of great significance as omens to bystanders.

There is some ambiguity about the relationship felt to exist between Mesopotamian man and the great gods. On the one hand, the great gods were concerned not with the individual but with the maintenance of cosmic and political order and the course of Nature. On the other hand, there are indications that the relationship between a worshipper and a god might be felt as a very intimate one. In the third millennium Gudea, a city ruler, says to his god: 'You are my father, you are my mother.'

In general, the gulf between the worshipper and the great gods was bridged by the concept of the 'personal god', a minor deity rather like a guardian angel, who could bring the supplication of the ordinary man before the major deities. It seems probable that only a king would have a major deity as his personal god.

Defeated Gods

Behind the deities prominent in historical times there are traces of an earlier stage of religion, hinted at in the genealogies of the gods, and represented in myths and incantations which mention divine beings thought of as slain, defeated or suppressed. Whilst the deities of historical times are primarily anthropomorphic, some of the divine powers of the earlier stage were conceived in animal form. Anzu (or Zu), a divine being who once challenged the great gods, had the form of a bird, whilst Tiamat, the primeval being from whom in one myth the gods originated, was sometimes represented as a dragon, and another proto-deity whose attributes were absorbed by Ea may have been thought of as an ibex. The supersession of the earlier stage of religion is reflected not only in the various combat myths, but also in the fact that the victor gods bear the characteristics, and sometimes the names or titles, of those they overcome. Thus Ea not only overcame Apsu, the primeval waters, but bore the title 'the Ibex of the Apsu' and is even identified with Apsu. Ninurta not only defeated Anzu, but had applied to him the name Imdugud, elsewhere used of Anzu. Marduk not only subdued Tiamat's marshal Kingu, but could actually be called Kingu.

The number of deities in the pantheon was ultimately much reduced by identifying one deity with another or with aspects of another. For example, one hymn specifically states that a number of great deities are incorporated in the god Ninurta. Such a process would logically have concluded in monotheism. The claim has been made that this was actually achieved in Babylonia, but this remains questionable.

Like a Thrusting Bull

Myths, either as long literary productions or embedded in fragmentary form in incantations, ritual texts or hymns, are known in both Sumerian and Akkadian. The value of myths for the understanding of Mesopotamian religion has been variously estimated, one extreme view being that they primarily reflect primitive stories from the remote past rather than anything in the religious experience of Mesopotamian man of the second or first millennium. Against this, whilst their origin was certainly (in most instances) very ancient, their use until a late period in incantations indicates that they were still felt to have some relevance to the supernatural forces affecting mankind.

The main themes of myths concern (with variations between Sumerian and Akkadian examples) the creation and organization of the physical universe, the creation of the gods and their functions, the creation of man, the origin and prehistory of the existing order, the origin of disease and healing, and stories of the Flood and the underworld.

A Sumerian myth of creation offers an insight into the concept of the relationship between the gods and mankind. The composition begins with an account of the difficulties confronting the gods in obtaining their food. Their complaint is brought before Enki, god of wisdom, who describes to his mother how to make servants by moulding clay in the image of the gods. Theologically, this reflects the view that mankind exists primarily to serve the gods. When the creation of man has been successfully achieved, Enki and his mother, having become intoxicated in celebration, proceed to make seven abnormal beings, this part of the story being an attempt to explain the occurrence of malformed humans.

The myth of 'Enki and the World Order' described how Enki produced the features of the world as known to the Sumerians. He it was who had given cattle to the nomad 'who builds no city, who builds no house', and he it was who had decreed for the various lands their characteristic products, and who had instituted the various aspects of agriculture. A typical passage described how in the manner of a bull he impregnated the Tigris, giving it fertility, and making its water available for irrigation.

> Like a thrusting bull he stood proudly,
> He produced an erection, he ejaculated,
> He filled the Tigris with clear water . . .
> The water he produced is clear water . . .
> The grain he produced . . . the people eat it.

Some Sumerian myths reflect very early cultural advances or changes. The earliest Sumerian settlements were in the extreme south around Eridu, but the cultural centre subsequently moved north to Erech; this situation is reflected in the following myth. Inanna, goddess of Erech, visited Eridu, whose patron Enki, god of wisdom, had in his charge a collection of objects basic to civilization, called in Sumerian *me*, and representing features of civilization which in modern terms would mainly be thought of as abstract concepts, but which the Sumerians, conceiving them as embodied in their symbols, could regard as physical entities. They included such aspects of Sumerian life as kingship and royal insignia, various priestly offices, sexual relations and prostitution, musical instruments, truth and falsehood, various crafts, peace and victory. A feast ensued at which Enki, generous in his wine, made these functions over to Inanna. Subsequently repenting of his generosity, Enki dispatched monsters to intercept Inanna on her voyage home, but failed in his attempt.

One of the most striking myths, centred on Inanna (Ishtar) and extant, with variations, in both Sumerian and Akkadian versions, describes the visit of the goddess to the underworld, for reasons which are not made explicit but which some scholars have suggested (on little evidence) was to gain possession from her older sister Ereshkigal. Inanna's descent took her through seven

By 1000 BC political supremacy had shifted from Babylonia to Assyria and northern gods, such as the warlike Ashur, consequently achieved greater prominence: relief from the palace of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, showing a pile of heads of defeated enemies

gates, at each of which the gatekeeper removed part of her garments and insignia. Emerging through the final gate naked, she encountered the deathly glance of Ereshkigal and the judges of the underworld, and became a corpse.

Anticipating disaster, Inanna had left her vizier, Ninshubur, with instructions to seek help from various other deities, if she did not return within three days. After unsuccessfully visiting Enlil in Nippur, and the moon god in Ur, Ninshubur went to Enki in Eridu. Enki created two sexless creatures (possibly a reflection of the occurrence of eunuchs in the cult of Inanna) and sent them to Ereshkigal, from whom after they had ingratiated themselves, they were to beg the corpse of Inanna as a gift. The creatures then restored Inanna to life, but the rules of the underworld permitted her to leave only if she provided a substitute. Her return to the earth was therefore in the company of ghouls, serving as wardens. At the first two cities Inanna visited, she found the city god in mourning for her, and in gratification exempted them from being taken as substitute. At the third town, a suburb of her own city Erech, she found the god Dumuzi, her own spouse, rejoicing instead of lamenting. In chagrin she handed him over to the representatives of the underworld who, despite desperate attempts by Dumuzi to escape, finally took him prisoner, to Inanna's ultimate grief.

Amongst myths preserved only or primarily in Akkadian the best known is the relatively sophisticated Creation myth *Enuma elish* ('When above'). Recited at Babylon during the New Year festival, this began with a description of the origin of the universal deities Anum and Ea from a chain of beings descended from the primeval Tiamat and Apsu, the cosmic ocean and sweet waters. Eventually the bustling activities of the younger gods disturbed the primeval beings, and conflict ensued. After Ea had overcome Apsu, Tiamat herself entered into hostilities.

The other gods proving powerless to challenge her, Ea's virile son Marduk appeared as champion on condition that he should receive supreme power in the pantheon. With this granted, he fought and defeated Tiamat, splitting her body like a shellfish, and spreading it out as heaven and earth. From the blood of Kingu, leader of

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the host of Tiamat, Marduk created man, and imposed on him the service of the gods. In gratitude to Marduk the other gods built him a shrine in Babylon.

This myth reflects theological ideas concerning the origin of man (created to serve the gods but yet containing a divine element), and also concerning the reason for the political supremacy of Babylon.

The myth of 'Adapa', the ending of which is missing, concerns the limitations of human beings in the face of the gods. A fisherman, Adapa, was summoned to heaven for breaking the wing of the south wind. After Anum had forgiven him, he had immortality within his grasp when the supreme god offered him the bread and water of life but – falsely advised by Ea – Adapa rejected these gifts.

In the relatively late myth of the pestilence god Erra, datable in origin to the end of the second millennium, Erra is represented as offended by mankind's neglect of his cult. He therefore came to Marduk, god of Babylon, to pick a quarrel. By this period Marduk had acquired attributes originally belonging to Anum, and was called 'king of the gods'. For reasons which are not clear, Marduk had to leave his city to go to the underworld, and conciliated Erra by allowing him to take charge during his absence. Breaking trust, Erra proceeded to devastate Babylonia, including the capital itself. Finally Erra's anger was calmed by his vizier, and he confessed himself at fault. This may represent a mythological explanation of an outbreak of plague in Babylon, possibly during the New Year festival, when on the human level the city was dangerously crowded, and on the mythic level Marduk was, for part of the period, absent. The epilogue states that the presence of this myth in a house will give protection against plague, and it is known that extracts from this myth served as amulets.

The Prowling Dogs

The great gods were probably of less immediate concern to the ordinary man than the demonic powers with which his imagination peopled the world. Spirits were of many kinds, including both ghosts of humans who had come to a violent or tragic end – 'a man lying dead in the open country, uncovered with earth', 'a weeping nursing mother' – and non-human devils, amongst others the

Left **Commemorative stele set up in honour of Adad-etir by his son: father and son stand below the symbols of the gods Shamash, Sin and Nergal** *Centre* **A boundary stone recording a gift of land in southern Babylonia also bears symbols of the gods, invoked to protect the deed** *Right* **The sun god Shamash receives homage from three smaller figures; the sun god's emblem, the solar disc, appears on the altar. The tablet was dedicated by a Babylonian king of the 9th century who restored the temple of Shamash in Sippar, a city thought of as a main abode of the sun god**

'Croucher', the 'Seizer', the 'Ghoul', Lilith and Lamashtu, a female spirit which preyed upon women in childbirth and upon infants. Such spirits lurked in corners, in graveyards and in the desert. They were likened to prowling dogs, and their motion could be so rapid that they were said to flit past like shooting stars. They could get into houses by many means:

> A door cannot exclude them,
> A bolt cannot turn them back;
> They slither through the door like a snake,
> They blow in by the hinge like the wind;
> They bear off the wife from a man's embrace,
> They snatch the son from a man's knee.

A vast corpus of magical incantations and rituals grew up to deal with them, some collected into series which developed a standard form. Amongst these the principal are *Utukku limnutu*, 'Evil Spirits', and *Asakku limnutu*, 'Evil Disease-demons'. Typically these contain incantations and ritual instructions represented as derived from Enki (Ea) and his son Marduk, god of magic. These were used by the exorcist, who spoke in the name of Enki:

> I am the man of Enki! . . .
> The great Lord Enki (Ea) has sent me;
> He has put his pure spell to my spell;
> He has put his pure mouth to my mouth;
> He has put his pure spittle to my spittle;
> He has put his pure prayer to my prayer . . .
> By the magic of the word of Enki (Ea),
> Those evil ones will be taken away.

Some of the incantations in these series contain fragments of ancient myths. Others were strictly limited to a ritual and an incantation. For example: 'If dead men keep appearing, it is "Hand of Ishtar". To drive the dead men away, you shall mix vinegar with river water, well water, *mundu* water (uncertain meaning) and ditch water. You shall fill an ox horn, and you shall raise the horn in your right hand and a torch in your left hand and say thus: "My (personal) god, turn to me! My (personal) goddess, look on me! Let your angry hearts be calm; let your ire be appeased; set forth well-being for me."'

Magic, which in the hands of the exorcist could protect Mesopotamian man from the attack of demons, in the hands of sorcerers (male or female) could be directed against humans. Such anti-social use of magic is widely attested from the beginning of the second millennium, being legislated against by the Laws of Hammurabi. The typical technique in witchcraft was making an image of the victim which was then destroyed, often by burning, but anything closely connected with the intended victim could be used to gain magical power over him.

Evil persons might also make use of the magical properties of spittle. When one spat, the decent thing to do was to rub it out with the foot, but a worker of black magic might deliberately omit this, in order to gain power over the person walking over it. Sorcerers themselves could be counter-attacked by magical means. Thus we find a cylinder-seal employed against a witch. The seal was twirled to the accompaniment of a suitable incantation – 'O witch, like the twirling of this seal (of green stone), may your face spin and turn green' – whereupon the witch was herself 'put into a spin'. The principal incantations and rituals against witches and sorcerers were collected in a series known as *Maqlu* ('Burnings'), so called because the typical rituals involved burning images of the sorcerer or witch or related demonic powers, to the accompaniment of an incantation to the fire god.

Extraction of Curses

Not only the deliberate activities of witches and sorcerers but also the commission, even accidentally and unwittingly, of certain tabooed acts, could bring evil supernatural influences upon a man. Curses (not necessarily spoken words) were regarded as physical things which could enter a man's body and by suitable means could be extracted again.

Troubles of this kind were dealt with by another series of incantations, called *Shurpu* (a term also meaning 'Burnings', but in a

British Museum

The patient was handed an onion, a date, a piece of matting, and tufts of wool: each of these he had to pull apart and throw into the fire

different sense from *Maqlu*). The victim was diagnosed as suffering from one of an undifferentiated list of offences, including both deeds which would in terms of modern thought be taken as ethical offences and those which were simply accidental breaches of a taboo. Thus the sufferer might have:

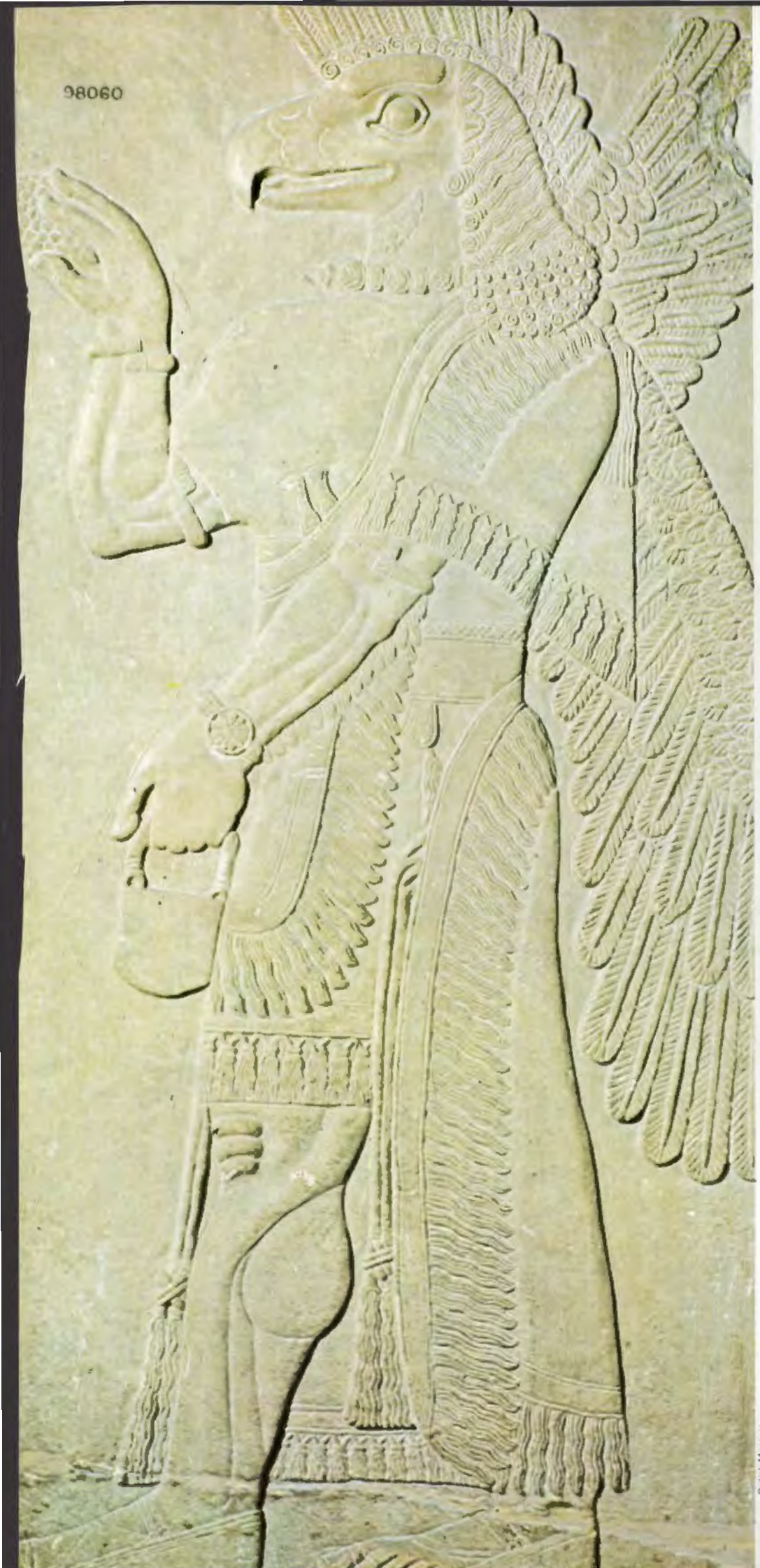
> Eaten what is taboo to his god,
> Estranged son from father, father from son,
> Despised his parents, offended the elder sister,
> Said 'There is' when there was not,
> Had intercourse with his neighbour's wife,
> Shed his neighbour's blood,
> Slept in the bed of a person under a curse.
> Drunk from the cup of a person under a curse.

The remedy for all these was of the same kind. Incantations were recited by the exorcist and the patient was then handed an onion, a date, a piece of matting, and tufts of wool. Each of these he had to pull apart and throw into the fire. Accompanying the destruction of each was an incantation of the following type: 'Like this onion which he peels and throws into the fire . . . so may oath, curse . . . pain, weariness, guilt, sin, wickedness, transgression, the pain which is in my body, my flesh, my sinews, be peeled off like this onion.'

Another procedure used to dispose of evil influences was to absorb them into some substance or animal. The following simple example describes the method of calming a feverish child by transferring the evil contagion to a dog: 'You shall place a loaf on the child's head; you shall recite a (previously specified) incantation three times; you shall wipe (with the loaf) from the (child's) head to his feet, you shall throw that loaf to a dog. That child will be calm.'

The threat of evil powers, in the form of demons, witchcraft, and other forces released by breach of taboo, came to a climax in relation to the king himself. Many rituals and incantations and a vast corpus of taboo were designed to protect him, and the land whose wellbeing resided in him, from such perils. He might even resign his throne temporarily to a substitute to escape the dire consequences when particularly grave evils were foretold (see KING).

The gods were thought to determine in advance the details of a man's life, or



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The practical affairs of the Mesopotamians were thought to be controlled by minor deities: these were of two kinds – benevolent guardian spirits and evil demons. One of the former, a winged eagle-headed genie bearing offerings, appears on this alabaster bas-relief of the 9th century from the palace of Assurnasirpal

events relating to the future of a city or nation. By using proper means, men could obtain a glimpse of these 'destinies'. Many forms of divination developed to this end, some available to the common man, others restricted to the king and matters of statecraft. Amongst the principal techniques were exstispicy, observation of animal behaviour, interpretation of dreams, and astrology.

Exstispicy involved the slaughtering of a lamb and the examination of its internal organs. A question having been previously put to the sun god, his answer could be read by the experts in the configurations and markings of the organs, particularly the lungs and liver.

Omens could be obtained in simpler manner from random events, in particular the behaviour of animals, and there arose large compilations listing these. If ants were seen fighting, this foretold 'approach of the enemy; there will be the downfall of a great army.' If a white dog cocked its leg against a man, hard times would follow, though if it were a brown dog, the man would receive happiness.

For the interpretation of dreams, to which much importance was attached in later Assyria, a 'Dream Book' existed, giving the interpretation of some hundreds of dream incidents. Astrology, also important in imperial Assyria, used meteorological or celestial phenomena to predict matters relating to the king or the state. For example: 'During the night Saturn came near the moon. Saturn is the "star" of the sun. This is the solution: it is favourable to the king, (because) the sun is the king's star.' This divination technique was used many centuries before the development of horoscopic astrology, applicable to a particular individual, which, although it also had its origin in Mesopotamian civilization, did not arise until the latest stage, at about 400 BC.

(See also CREATION MYTHS; FLOOD; GILGAMESH; MAN.)

H. W. F. SAGGS

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Douglas Allen

The Abode of Love, at Spraxton near Bridgwater, was the headquarters of two self-styled messiahs, Henry James Prince and John Hugh Smyth-Pigott: after Prince's death in 1899, Smyth-Pigott inherited both title and position

Many men have claimed to be, or have been hailed as, divine saviours: messianic movements of the modern world include the Dutch Loumensen, the Abode of Love in England, the followers of Father Divine in the United States, the Nazareth Baptist Church in South Africa, and the Ras Tafarians in Jamaica

MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS

THE DISTINCTION between a messiah, or saviour, and a prophet who foretells doom and offers ways of escaping it, is not always easy to draw, but in the strict sense the term 'messianic' is confined to movements whose leader claims to be God or a representation of God, or which arise in firm anticipation of such a god-man's appearance. The term is often used loosely for religious movements which expect the end of the world and the establishment (usually for believers only) of a new dispensation of peace, plenty and pleasure. These are more accurately called millennial movements but some movements, of course, are both messianic and millennialist, when the messiah's role is to lead the faithful into the millennium. Early Christianity, and all movements expecting the Second Coming of Christ (see SECOND COMING), can properly be called messianic but current usage tends to restrict the term to groups whose messianic beliefs are outside the Bible.

Claimants to messiahship were common in Jewish history before Christ, and were by no means uncommon in the Middle Ages among Jews, Christians and Moslems. In modern times, the messianic figures who have commanded the greatest following have appeared in non-Christian countries or among underdeveloped peoples. An example is Hung Hsui-chuan, the son of a Chinese peasant household who emerged as a visionary, after repeatedly failing the Civil Service examinations, and inspired the Taiping rebellion which began in southern China in 1851 and lasted until 1864, with Nanking as its capital for most of this period.

Younger Brother of Christ

Hsui-chuan had been influenced by an American missionary and the content of his visions was in many respects Christian, but he became convinced that his destiny was to restore the true faith to China, and that this would be achieved only with the overthrow of the Manchu imperial dynasty. Thereafter Ta'i-p'ing t'ien kuo, the heavenly kingdom of great peace, would be established. The name *ta'i-p'ing* had been used to describe an era of peace in the Chinese past, but the rest of the title was coined to express the Christian concept of a heavenly kingdom. Hung Hsiu-chuan did not make outright claim to be God, but rather to be the younger brother of Jesus; however, some scholars believe that he produced, in place of a trinitarian system, a fourfold concept of the deity. His followers were seen as a Chinese version of the children of Israel seeking the Promised Land.

As the movement grew and drew around it more conventional rebellious elements, Hung Hsiu-chuan's role was overshadowed by more militant and political leaders. He had been the early focus of attention for many who were discontented in southern China, where the peasantry had been reduced to the status of tenants, where population growth had produced new pressure on arable land and where, in Hunan province in particular, famines and catastrophes had been frequent. Hung Hsiu-chuan's ideas were alien to Chinese thought, and this has been seen as a factor which may have limited the support that he commanded. His message combined the unreconciled elements of Christian eschatology, promising both a new kingdom on earth with resurrection of the dead, as well as the prospect of salvation in the otherworld. He is reputed to have dwelt very much on sin and to have made men anxious about its consequences, demanding regular prayer for forgiveness, and obedience to the Ten Commandments. In the early days of his activity some of his followers had ecstatic and convulsive experiences. In spite of the unfamiliarity of these things, the new ideology mobilized an effective following who rose in armed rebellion on an impressive scale, until the movement suffered defeat largely through the agency of General Gordon.

Gordon's role in life seemed destined to be that of opponent of messianic claimants,

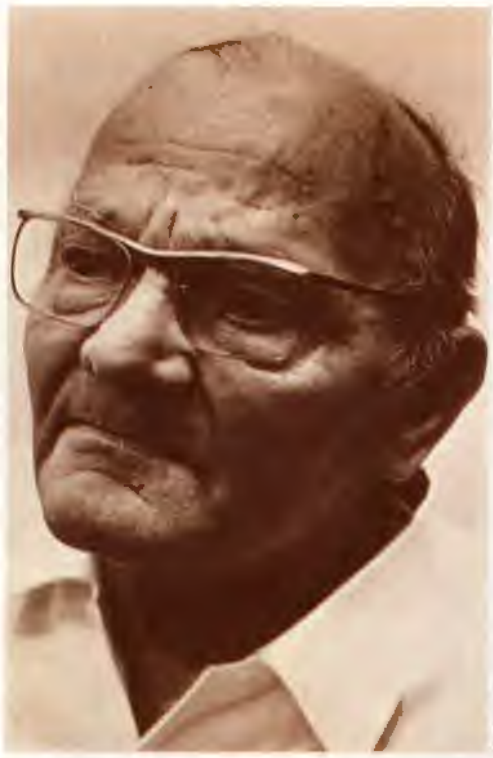

Foto Anefo

Above **Louwrens van Voorthuizen declared himself to be God in 1950; the Bible was superseded, and salvation was to be attained only through him. Despite his claim to immortality, the former fisherman died in 1968**

Below **Drawing of a Ras Tafarian (Rastafarian). Jamaican extremists, who reject Christian ideas, they originally believed that Haile Selassie, former Emperor of Ethiopia, who died in 1975, would lead black men to the final victory, and to their rightful heritage – the ownership of the African continent**

Sheila Kitzinger

for he is linked more intimately in the public mind with the struggle against another modern messiah – Mohammed Ahmad, the Mahdi who inflamed the Sudan in the 1880s. Despite the rigorous monotheism of Moslems, messianism has played a powerful role in Islam. Ahmad proclaimed himself the Imam, successor of the Apostle of God, the expected saviour, the chosen one who would reconquer the Moslem world and restore the community that Mohammed the prophet had brought into being. He took the title Mahdi, the 'guided one', although, since the Sudan was of the Sunnite division of Islam, he did not claim to be the Hidden Imam, long awaited by Shiite Moslems. Ahmad was widely accepted, and his personal piety and high reputation made plausible his claim to be the Mahdi. He quickly built up a new state which was a theocratic despotism, the success of which lasted for more than a decade after his own death in 1885, even though there were strong tensions between the different groups among his followers. (See also MAHDI.)

'Why Shouldn't God Smoke?'

No other messianic figure of the last century can equal the Mahdi in terms of worldly success, but there have been many men who have claimed to be God both in underdeveloped countries, where they have been more successful, and among more advanced peoples. In modern society, where rational bureaucratic systems regulate life, and where there is heavy reliance on technical skills and well-defined roles, claims to superhuman competence are far less credible than in the more personal world of simpler societies. Miracles are not believed in by people who are used to explanations of a scientific and strictly causal kind, and successful modern religious figures, in America and Europe, tend increasingly to claim to be 'scientific' rather than to be workers of miracles that defy the laws of Nature. Where technology is less advanced, where rational principles of organization are less understood and, above all, where abstract concepts and empirical inquiry are less developed, the messianic claimant can still gain a hearing among those who dream of personal saviours who will solve men's problems. But messiahs have arisen from time to time in advanced countries, not only among underprivileged ethnic groups, in culturally retarded areas or among severely isolated and unworldly groups, but among much less easily identified groups of the population including well-to-do and educated members of society.

One of the most colourful of these was Lou, who was born Louwrens van Voorthuizen in north Holland, and who spent the middle years of his life as a fisherman. Lou, as he preferred to be called, declared himself to be God in 1950, and drew around him a small and somewhat contentious body of followers, *Lou-mensen*, who were united essentially by their complete devotion to him. Lou maintained that his role was the equivalent of that of Christ, but whereas Christ had won a spiritual victory over the Devil, he, Lou, would defeat the Devil in the body.

Lou rejected conventional moral obligations, as having no relevance for salvation. (He made much of his liking for cigars: 'Why shouldn't God smoke?' he asked.) Salvation was to be attained only through him. His followers were to regard themselves as the sons and daughters of God, and needed no wills of their own. They should surrender themselves gratefully to Lou, God. The Bible was entirely superseded now that God was on earth again incarnate, and in the pamphlets which some of his middle-aged women votaries sold on the streets of Amsterdam, Lou derided both the Bible and the clergy who preached it. He preached that the time of the end was at hand, when all his followers would triumph over death. Despite the claim to immortality, Lou died in 1968. For a time his followers continued as a group, but recent inquiries at their address have not been answered.

A figure about whom even less is generally known is Georges Roux, the Christ of Montfavet, near Avignon in France. Roux was a postmaster who had practised as a faith healer for some time when, in the early 1950s, he announced that he was Christ. To read his works in simplicity of heart, it is claimed, is to accept his mission as the reappearing Christ. Roux's followers, whose churches take the name *L'Eglise chrétienne universelle*, are reputed to number more than 5,000, principally in Paris and southern France.

The Abode of Love

The 19th century produced the most spectacular recent claimants to messiahship in Britain. Among these were two men, one of whom 'inherited' this claim from the other. Such a transfer of a status as unique as that of messiah must be unprecedented (short of a belief in the transmigration of souls) and yet the group known as Agapemonites, brought into being in the 1840s by an Anglican priest, Henry James Prince, accepted after his death a new immortal messiah in the person of John Hugh Smyth-Pigott. Prince had been renowned at St David's, Lampeter, where he had studied for the Anglican priesthood, as a particularly pious student, and soon after taking up his first curacy at Charlinch in Somerset, he gained a reputation for powerful sermons and strong personal magnetism, particularly for women. Believing himself to be possessed of the Holy Spirit his sermons became increasingly heretical, and after some time his relations with the Church of England became strained, and he opened his own chapel in Brighton. With donations from his supporters, among whom were a number of wealthy women, he bought a large house and grounds and a farm at Spraxton in Somerset, and there established his community, the Abode of Love. He had set forth his teachings in a number of tracts, and styled himself 'the Beloved One' and 'the Messiah'.

At Spraxton Prince assumed complete control of his followers, making it clear that his will was the will of God which none

Ceremonies in which traditional dancing plays an important part link the Nazareth Baptist Church with the tribal past. The founder of the movement was in his lifetime deified by his Zulu followers and his son, John Galilee Shembe, has inherited his claim to messiahship

must question. Some of the women who joined the community bestowed all their property on Prince, and well-wishers in Brighton, Weymouth and elsewhere contributed to its support. From the beginning a luxurious style of life was adopted, with emphasis on recreation (the chapel itself was furnished with a billiard table). Prince drove a carriage with footmen, and was later remembered as having driven through the neighbouring town of Bridgwater with his footman sounding a trumpet and announcing him as the messiah. The most distinctive feature of Agapemonite life was Prince's teaching of 'spiritual wivery'. Surrounded by 'sisters', he took a bride of the Lamb from among his following, declaring that 'in me you see Christ in the flesh, in my flesh'. The successive sexual adventures of Prince, undertaken in the name of the highest spirituality, caused some of his followers to withdraw, but those who stayed at Spraxton, other than his own paramours, led chaste and upright lives. The teaching which allowed Prince to affirm that he was above sin, no matter what he did, was a teaching for the leader not for the following.

Messianic Succession

Prince fathered several children and also found himself involved in a number of lawsuits when female adherents sought to recover their surrendered property. Although his practices were exposed in these proceedings, and although Prince was unfrocked as an Anglican priest, the community continued; undoubtedly most of its members had implicit faith in their messiah. Prince preached that he and his followers were immortal and deaths within the community were explained as the consequence of lapses into sin. His own death, in 1899, might have been expected to see the collapse of the Agapemonites: instead it produced a new messianic claimant.

Shortly before his death, Prince had sponsored the building of a church in Clapton, London, known as the Church of the Ark of the Covenant. This development was all the more surprising since in Prince's later years the Agapemonites had done little in the way of evangelization. It is uncertain whether the founding of this church, at which non-resident sympathizers of the Spraxton community occasionally met, had any direct connection with the choice of Prince's successor, or whether Prince had any interest in the continuance of his sect after his death. But it was at this church that, in 1902, John Hugh Smyth-Pigott declared himself to be the messiah.

Smyth-Pigott had been ordained an Anglican clergyman in 1882 and for a time had been curate at St Jude's Church, Mildmay Park, not far away from Clapton. In the period following Prince's death he was leading a mission in Dublin. By some means he came, or had come, into contact with the Agapemonites, and after his pronouncement at the Church of the Ark of the Covenant was accepted by them as their new leader. Some among them came to believe that he had been specifically designated as such by Prince himself – improbable, in the nature of messianic claims, as that must seem. At Spraxton, Smyth-Pigott quickly established himself over the community, continuing many features of Prince's regime. He retained the division of the community into three classes: the lowest comprised those who were the domestic servants of the rest, and the highest were the most spiritual group from among whom he would choose his soul brides.

Young women were still recruited to the community, and in 1904 Smyth-Pigott brought in a 'chief soul bride', a Miss Ruth Preece. He had three children by Ruth. His wife, who had borne him no children, appears to have accepted the situation with equanimity as indeed did most members of the community. The local Anglican bishop, however, eventually felt constrained to have the Spraxton messiah unfrocked. Producing illegitimate children, rather than the well publicized claim to messiahship, was what finally brought the Bishop of Bath and Wells to have Smyth-Pigott's case brought before a Consistory Court. In later years, the messiah took other brides and Ruth was displaced at an elaborate ceremony, for disobeying the messiah's will.

The numbers at Spraxton, sometimes reinforced by visitors from a Norwegian sister house which Smyth-Pigott frequently visited, steadily declined, and the messiah's death in 1927 reduced the numbers further. Without a leader the community slowly dwindled, until in the 1950s Sister Ruth also died and within a short time the community disappeared (see also PRINCE).

Movements that arise around a self-styled messiah are, in the modern age, unlikely to be revolutionary movements in any militant sense. The legal monopoly of coercive force in the modern state virtually precludes the possibility of a messiah actively fulfilling the implications of his claims to supernatural and omniscient power. In effect, therefore, the messianic leader operates more as if he were simply a wonder-worker. His miracles tend to be small miracles, tokens of power rather than manifestations of power in anything like the dimensions in which it is claimed. The reputation for small miracles is often enough for the faithful, and on such miracles rested a great deal of the reputation of one of the best-known of modern messiahs.

Father Divine

Like many other claimants to messiahship, Father Divine had behind him a career of active religious evangelism before he accepted the title of God. As George Baker, he had been a missionary among Negroes in various parts of the United States, but in 1930 at Sayville on Long Island, New York, Baker took the suggestive title, Father Divine. It was one among a number of such names assumed by Negro revivalists ('Daddy Grace' was a contemporary rival of Baker's). At Sayville he established the first of his Peace Missions, communities which became known as 'heavens' for those who lived in them. They were organized along co-operative lines, and to them were attached members who were non-resident but who joined the residents for religious services. Father Divine conceived the idea of

Keystone

Keystone

Left **'Father Divine', formerly George Baker, had behind him a career of active evangelism before he accepted the title of God. He taught his many thousands of followers to accept his will as their supreme good: he himself could work all the miracles that they needed**
Above **Beneath a placard proclaiming him as God, Father Divine addresses a meeting in a Harlem Peace Mission or 'heaven'**

a well-organized social service for his adherents. He found jobs for the unemployed and cared for the poor, and since many of those who joined the sect were incapable of much organization on their own part, there was a very real sense in which Father Divine was their saviour, in this world if not in the next. Like most messianic leaders, Divine had no developed eschatology: salvation was indeed here and now, since God was here and now. In common with other messiahs, he taught that his members should not and would not die, and death was a shameful thing within the movement and not to be spoken about. Nor had Father Divine much use for the Bible, which was clearly a superseded book. Since God was available to speak for himself, the written record of his acts long ago and for a remote people was of little specific interest.

The Peace Mission espoused a rigorous ethical code and this may in itself have been part of its formula for success. Members were weaned away from those habits which caused debility and degeneracy among large sections of the population. Smoking and drinking were prohibited. Honesty was a strict requirement. Sexual continence, even between those who were married, was rigorously enjoined and the ill consequences of a large progeny were in this way avoided. Father Divine taught his followers to accept his will as their supreme good, and he forbade them to accept government welfare or to take out insurance policies. He himself could work all the miracles that they needed. He gave lavish banquets on a scale and in a style far beyond the previous experience of his adherents, and since they did not pay for these directly, his provision appeared as a miracle. He could pour innumerable cups of coffee from one small coffee pot, so it was frequently affirmed of him. His followers believed that anyone who spoke or acted against him would surely suffer, and took this as certain evidence of his divine power.

It is not easy to assess the numbers who believed in Father Divine when he was on the tide of success in the late 1930s, but there were perhaps hundreds of thousands, almost all Negroes. After the Second World War the movement seemed to have passed its peak, as more militant forms of Negro religion, in particular the Black Muslim movement (see BLACK MUSLIMS), displaced the essentially peaceful Father Divine cult. The movement may have suffered after Divine took a white second wife towards the end of his life, and because he was gradually less and less disposed to appear in public. He died in 1965, but the movement continued, although at a less impressive level than formerly.

Black Christs

Much more propitious circumstances for claimants to deity exist in Africa than exist even among the least educated and poorest groups in advanced societies, and it is there that the most dramatic among modern messianic movements are to be found. Belief in a personal and visible God is much more acceptable to illiterate natives, lost between tribal and urban styles of life, than in any other community. Black Christs have emerged from time to time, most notably in the Congo, but in South Africa, too, there has been no shortage of claimants to the role. Edward Lekganyane is a contemporary self-styled messiah who commands the devotion of between 40,000 and 80,000 followers from his headquarters at Zion City, Moria in the northern Transvaal.

Lekganyane was one of two sons of the leader of a religious movement known as the Zion Christian Church. Although the brothers quarrelled after their father's death in 1949 or 1950, a large proportion of the movement followed Edward. His capital is a village of about 300 persons in which strangers are not welcomed; from here he rules the movement, which has churches as far away as Johannesburg and Pretoria. Lekganyane's precise claims are difficult to discover, but his followers believe that he has power to prevent or create unemployment, to work miracles of healing, to destroy his enemies, and that he will soon have nations bowing down before him. His power is thought to destroy witchcraft, and in part he acts as the traditional witch-purger. But he

is also the focus for intense hatred of white men, and it may be in the anticipated victory of Zion over the world that his messianic quality is most significant.

As with other African religious movements, a mixture of traditional and Christian ideas prevail in Zion City, together with some innovations of unknown origin. Followers must not take medicines, since that would be to accept rival claims to power. They are to abstain from alcohol and tobacco. They are forbidden to eat pork, a taboo which may stem from the Old Testament influence of the Protestant 'Zionist' sects which formed missions among South African natives at the end of the last century. Paper which Lekganyane has blessed is burned as a way of liberating its potent virtue against witchcraft and illness. The ceremonial adopted at Zion City is like that connected with an African chief, and part of the appeal of the movement may be its function as a substitute for tribal identity among peoples who have become detribalized. Since chiefs have little power, messianic claimants who behave like chiefs but who, from the point of view of the authorities, do not pose an overt political threat, are the most powerful native figures in South Africa, exercising authority in the one sphere in which Africans are permitted considerable freedom – religion. Lekganyane combines the appeal of the traditional chief, presiding over ceremonies in which dancing, drumming and processions are all significant, with that of the modern tycoon, living in a modern house, dressing like an army officer and maintaining two Cadillacs and other cars.

In some ways a not dissimilar movement is that of John Galilee Shembe, whose organization is known as the Nazareth Baptist Church. This Church, too, was founded by the father of the present messiah, and the father was in his own lifetime also deified by his Zulu followers. The present messiah is in some respects a reluctant messiah. He is a man who has had a university education, who maintains in the name of his Church active business interests, and who finds himself not wholly at home in the role he has inherited. Some of his followers see J. G. Shembe as the god of the blacks, just as Jesus was the god of the whites, and others regard him as the incarnation of the Trinity. Shembe himself tends to refer messianic claims to his father. The ethical and ritual code of the movement is based largely on Old Testament precepts: pork is tabooed; circumcision is practised. Before the great festivals of the sect's year, sexual abstinence is to be practised between spouses. Beards are worn by men, and women are forbidden to cut their hair. All medicine is to be avoided, since illness is attributed to witchcraft, from which Shembe alone can rid his followers. Healing is in many ways a central concern of the movement, but Shembe is an undramatic person and his 'laying on of hands' tends to be undertaken in a perfunctory fashion, whilst he attends to other business.

The final defeat in 1898 of the followers of Mohammed Ahmad, the Mahdi: the theocratic state which he had established in the Sudan had lasted more than a decade after his death

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

He holds mass healing sessions when the Holy Ghost is enjoined to effect healing.

In many respects the Nazareth Baptist Church resuscitates the richness of Zulu tribal and ceremonial life. Shembe is often referred to as a chief, and has in the modern world more prestige than any of the actual Zulu chiefs, some among whom worship in his Church. Ceremonies are extremely complex, and traditional dancing in elaborate costume is practised. Like a chief, Shembe receives tribute from his followers, who are largely uneducated people. They have good reputations as workers and as orderly and law-abiding people. For them the movement provides community, offers possibilities of healing and fertility (a strong preoccupation among African women), and provides some type of security for individuals who feel endangered by life in the towns. It gives them a sense of belonging to a powerful deity who can protect them, and maintains strong links with the dignified tribal life of the past. A tract of land is maintained at which principal festivities are enacted and this serves, at least symbolically, as a type of tribal homeland for the Shembe-ites.

Lion of Judah

Not every messianic movement arises round a self-styled messiah. Some are anticipatory, and others select as their god an individual who makes no such claims on his own behalf. One of the most extraordinary movements of the latter sort is the Rastafarian movement of Jamaica. Like some other movements in less-developed societies, the Rastafarians are not a distinct sect with a coherent organization, but a collection of groups of greater or lesser degrees of permanence, centred around a number of spasmodically emerging leaders, who proclaim a broadly similar set of beliefs. These leaders have often been rivals, and there have been sharp differences between them, but their central ideas, and in particular their faith in an unwitting messiah, are common ground. Their common candidate for messiahship was the former Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie. Their central theme is hatred of the white men who have dominated, first politically and still economically, the life of the West Indies. In Haile Selassie they acclaimed a saviour who would bring black men into their rightful heritage – the ownership of the African continent – and who would help to win black supremacy.

The reason for such faith in Haile Selassie is a curious one. Many Jamaicans were impressed, during the period following the First World War, by the pronouncements of Marcus Garvey, a militant pro-Negro Jamaican who was active in the United States. Garvey declared himself an avowed racist and fascist and he wanted to be the political saviour of all black people. He openly avowed his preference for organizations like the Ku Klux Klan to Negroes who collaborated with whites. His brilliant but abortive attempts to establish American Negroes as a power independent of their white compatriots included a pronouncement that Negroes should 'look to Africa when a black king shall be crowned, for deliverance is near'. Not long afterwards, in

Mansell Collection

The Mahdi, caricatured in a British cartoon, was to his followers the expected saviour, a messiah who would reconquer the Moslem world

1930, Ras Tafari, as the Crown Prince of Ethiopia was known, became Emperor, and West Indian Negroes, recalling Garvey's prophecy, became excited about the future.

The Italian attack on Ethiopia in 1935 inflamed the enthusiasm of the Rastafarians in Kingston, for this clearly represented a struggle of black men versus white, the worshippers of a living God against the worshippers of a dead God. Christian ideas were now completely abandoned by the various groups of supporters of Ras Tafari, and the movement became a semi-political religious belief in the power of a black saviour, Haile Selassie. Different local leaders elaborated their variants on this theme in different ways. Some were more avowedly religious and maintained services of worship. Others were more explicitly political. Some, the most extreme groups, withdrew to the plantations, grew 'ganja' (marijuana) and established a colony of militant anti-whites. Later a number of leaders arose who traded on the bizarre fantasies of some of the believers, promising that airplanes would arrive on specified dates to take them all to Africa and making a great deal of money by the sale of worthless 'passports'.

Long-Haired Niyamen

Despite such trickery, belief in Ras Tafari persisted. Some groups rejected European titles and some came to reject food cooked by anyone but a true believer. They became distrustful of hospitals, and in particular of birth control propaganda which was seen as an attempt by white men to destroy the black people. For similar reasons they condemned blood transfusions. The most extreme group of Rastafarians usually called themselves Niyamen, used ganja and grew their hair into long spiky locks, which were known as 'dreadlocks'. The intention was to imitate African warriors. The name Niyamen appears to have been adopted during the Italian-Ethiopian war, when a newspaper article appearing in Jamaica described a secret organization, said to be led by Haile Selassie, the aim of which was the total destruction of all white men in Africa. A movement had existed in Rwanda and Uganda some years earlier, known as Nyabingi, which had had something like this aim, but the imputation to Haile Selassie of leadership of such a movement (which had no connection with Ethiopia and which had been extinct for years before the Italian-Ethiopian war) was no doubt an embellishment of Italian propaganda agencies. Nonetheless the article had a powerful effect on the Rastafarians, who were well disposed to believe it. The Niyamen swore an oath promising death to the white oppressors and to all those Negroes who collaborated with them. It is this group of extremist Rastafarians that have come most to public notice, although the periodic craze for a ship or a plane to take Jamaicans to Africa has also brought the cult into the public eye.

Towards the end of British rule in Jamaica, there was an incident which made it evident that some Rastafarian leaders were using the movement to foster political revolution on the island and, in a skirmish with one of these leaders, two British soldiers were murdered in the late 1950s. There was evidence that this particular Rastafarian, the Rev. Henry, had been in communication with the government of Fidel Castro in Cuba. It may well have been that the religious aspects of Rastafarian practice were, in this instance, a front organization for a political group. Other groups of cultists have remained quite explicitly religious however. Some settled on the rubbish dumps outside Kingston and rejected white ways by deliberately being dirty, scavenging, periodically insulting tourists, and coming into riotous conflict with the police. Others are described by their fellow cultists as those who 'go tidy', who lead orderly peaceable lives and observe traditional dietetic taboos (the rules of the Old Testament for the Jews again apply, and there is conscious identification with the children of Israel in bondage). Some of these sectarians are described as good craftsmen and model citizens, who wait patiently for the airlift to Africa, which is the Utopia to which their messiah will deliver them.

A government inquiry into the activities of the Rastafarians in the late 1950s, led the newly independent government of Jamaica (to which the Rastafarians were as much opposed as to the whites) to permit a delegation of Rastafarians to visit Africa. They visited Liberia, Nigeria and Ethiopia, and were received by Haile Selassie, who gave them a token plot of land in his country. The Rastafarians were, however, disappointed by the possibilities of migrating to Africa

John Hillelson Collection

and seem to have received no positive encouragement from any of the governments they visited. In 1965 Haile Selassie paid a state visit to Jamaica and this very much excited the Rastafarians. He received some of them at a formal garden party, where they mixed with official guests, despite their dirty conditions. Although the messiah of their choosing gave medals to these would-be subjects, it appears that little or nothing could be done to satisfy the Rastafarian dream of settling in Ethiopia.

Haile Selassie's reign in Ethiopia ended in 1974, when he was overthrown by a military coup. He died in 1975. By this time the cult was well-established both in Jamaican society, and amongst the Jamaican immigrant population of Great Britain. New cult heroes emerged such as musician Bob Marley, a prominent and devoted Rastafarian, who died in 1981, and was famous for his distinctive 'reggae' sound.

The militant and ecstatic type of messianic movement is probably a waning phenomenon in the modern world. Whilst in countries undergoing dramatic social change from primitive to modern technological conditions, such outbreaks may still occur, in advanced societies social disorder is likely to arise differently.

(See also BAHAIS; DIVINE PRINCIPLES; NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.)

BRYAN WILSON

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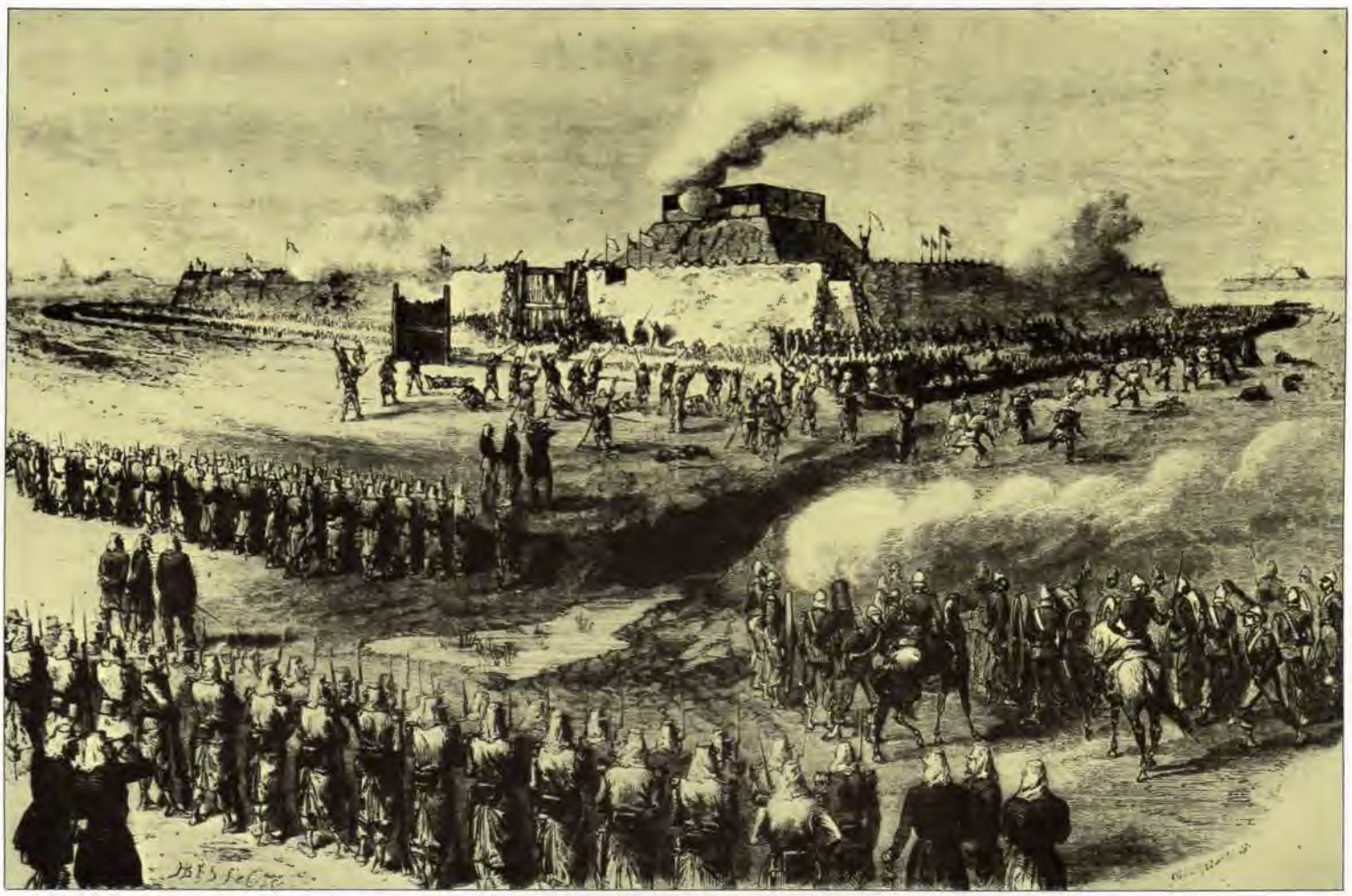
Below left **Hung Hsui-chuan, whose visions inspired the Taiping rebellion which began in southern China in 1851: he preached the foundation of a heavenly kingdom and claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus, though not God himself *Below* The storming of the Pai-how forts by the French in 1860; the Taiping rebellion was not finally put down until 1864**



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Photo Meyer

Metals

Seven metals are traditionally linked with the seven planets known in antiquity, and each metal was long thought to develop in the earth under the influence of its planet: alchemy was the art of 'perfecting' metals and was partly based on ancient metallurgical techniques: smiths, dwarfs and other real or legendary metal-workers were thought to possess powerful magic.

See ALCHEMY; CORRESPONDENCES; DWARFS; GOLD; IRON; LEAD; MERCURY; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE; SMITH.

Metamorphosis

Change of form or shape, a common occurrence in myths, legends and folktales; the gods may adopt temporary human or animal forms; witches turn their victims into loathsome forms; Lot's wife was punished by being turned into a pillar of salt, and Actaeon by being transformed into a stag; werewolves are human beings who turn into wolves at night; there are many stories in which rival magicians in combat change rapidly from one shape to another.

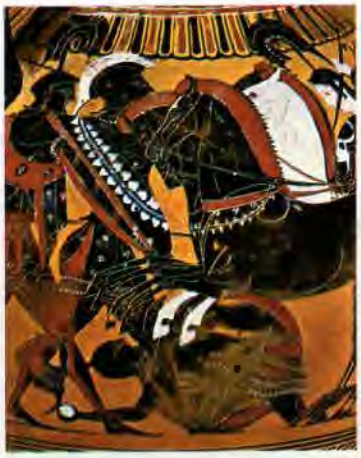
See SHAPE-SHIFTING; WEREWOLVES.

Axel Poignant

Metempsychosis

Or transmigration, the passage of a human or animal soul into a new body after death; the new body may be of the same species or a different one; in India and Greece the belief developed that souls pass from one form of life to a higher or lower one as a result of their conduct in each life; in many other parts of the world, the human soul may be reborn into the same kin-group or may become an animal, bird, insect or vegetable.

See REINCARNATION.



Michael Holford/British Museum

METEORS

Mansell Collection

A meteoric stone found at Ovifak in Greenland. Now preserved as curiosities, in the past such stones often became cult objects: meteorites were revered at Delphi and at Rome, while the famous Black Stone at Mecca, which was worshipped long before the time of Mohammed, is almost certainly a meteorite

The words meteor and meteorite both come from the Greek *meteora* (literally, 'things up in the air'), a term used by Aristotle in the belief that meteors were what we would call atmospheric or, using the word in another way, meteorological phenomena. Indeed, we do see these objects only when they enter our upper air. They are lumps of wandering interplanetary matter, varying in size from a mass of many tons to less than a grain of sand, which blaze by atmospheric friction just as do the ablation shields of returning space vehicles. A *meteor* is such an object, seen as a shooting star, that is burned up as it falls; a *meteorite* is one that survives its plunge and actually hits the earth. Shooting stars are often seen in showers at regular times of the year. This is thought to be because they are the debris of a disintegrated comet, scattered along its orbit round the sun which the earth crosses annually. These showers can present a remarkable sight and must have seemed especially portentous in former times.

In ancient Japan, meteorites were given to the temple of the goddess Shokujo, the patroness of household skills, since it was believed that they were the stones used by the divinity to steady her loom. Eskimos and the inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands have worn them as lucky charms. There are also several known or recorded cases of individual meteorites that came to be regarded as cult objects. The most famous is the Black Stone – almost certainly a meteorite – in the Kaaba, the sacred shrine of Mecca (see MECCA). One was kept in the temple of Apollo at Delphi and, in ancient Rome, a piece of iron from the sky was guarded by a special order of priests. According to legend, this object fell during the reign of Numa Pompilius, the philosopher who reluctantly agreed to succeed Romulus, the founder of Rome. Numa declared that it was a heavenly shield, upon whose safekeeping the security of the state depended. But the most intriguing of all (partly because an object now in the Liverpool City Museum may actually be it) is the *diopet*, the 'Zeus-fallen thing', that lay in the head-dress of the statue of Diana at Ephesus. Many believe the diopet to be not a meteorite but a neolithic implement. However, the Ephesians honoured it as a stone from heaven (see DIANA).

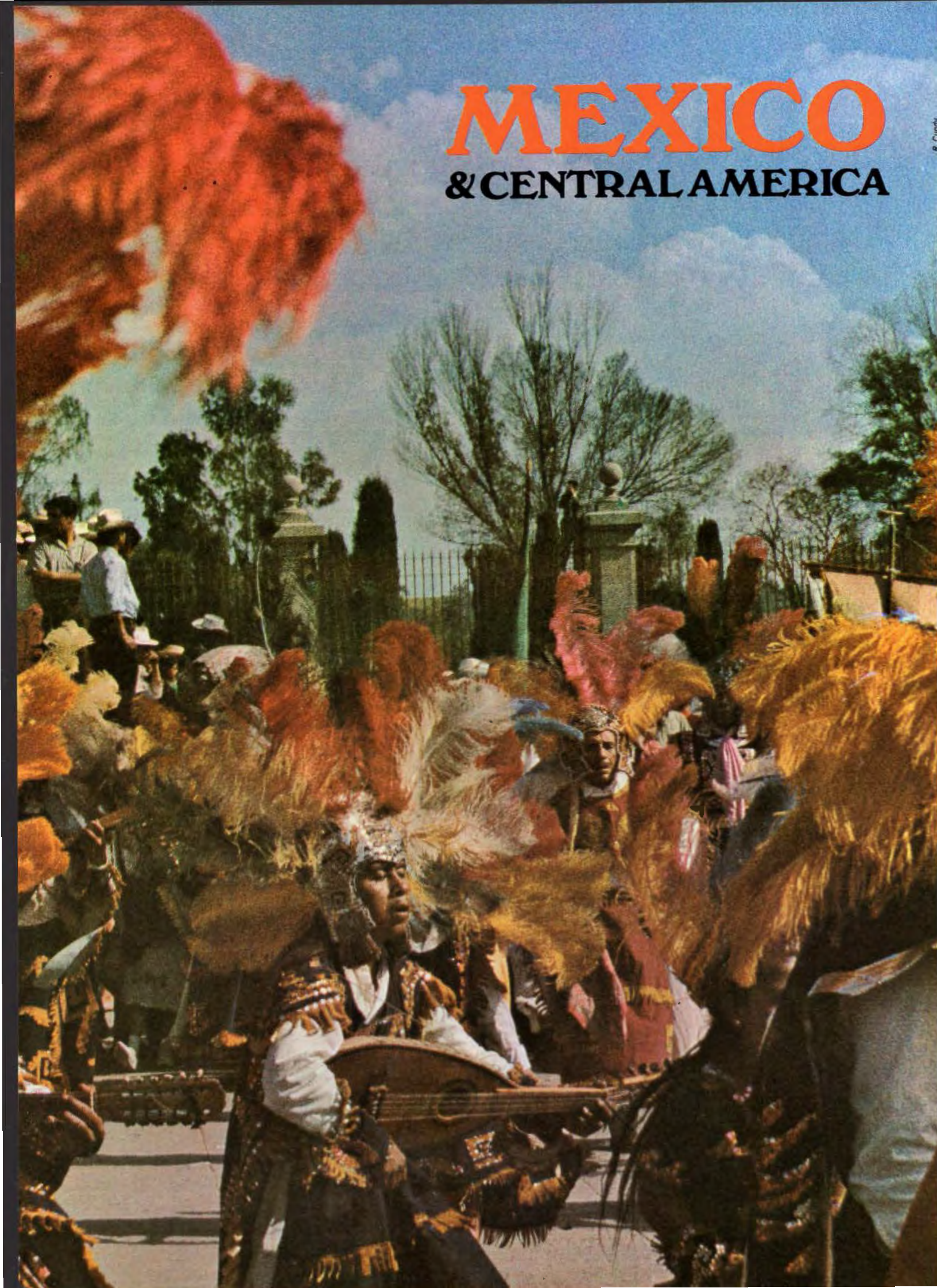
While meteorites seem usually to have been venerated for themselves, rather than as signs, meteors ('falling stars') have always been interpreted as portents or else as actual spiritual beings, very often malevolent or unlucky in either case. Among the tribes from Central Asia, some of whom turned north to settle in Finland and along the Baltic, and others south to Hungary, meteors were called 'fire serpents' and were believed to be the souls of the living or the dead, or spirits bearing a load of treasure. If you unloosed your clothing when you saw one, the spirit would crash to earth and yield you its riches. The Votiaks of Western Siberia also thought that 'fire worms' could be shot down by this strange procedure. But according to their ideas, the shooting star was a terrible species of celestial vampire, a dead soul or a living magician that fed on the blood of the sleeping. Other Siberian peoples saw the sky as a huge tent-roof made of hides sewn together. Occasionally the gods would peer through to see what was happening on earth. Then, through this crack in the sky, you might see a meteor, a flash of the heavenly radiance. If you did and quickly made a wish, whatever you asked for was certain to be granted.

In the fourth volume of *The Golden Bough*, Frazer has a famous chapter on kingship, in the course of which he recalls a custom in ancient Sparta. After a king had reigned for eight years, the ephors (the five annually elected supreme magistrates) would watch for one clear moonless night. If they saw a meteor, it was taken that the king had failed in his office and he would be suspended from his duties until he had been cleared by the Delphic or Olympian oracle, or even summarily deposed. This prompts Frazer into a fascinating review of beliefs about falling stars, most of them connected with ill-luck of one form or another and many, not unexpectedly, with fire. Thus, for the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, meteors were blazing torches wielded by malicious spirits of the forest out hunting men. For many aborigines of Australia, they were the fire-sticks of sorcerers or dead enemies, still seeking to do harm. They might also show where there was a man who had killed another by a magic pointing-stick or bone. If one of a band had died in this fashion, his comrades would watch for a meteor, seek the murderer in that direction and slay him in vengeance. In some Islamic stories, falling stars are demons who attempt to reach heaven but are hurled flaming to their doom by the angels.

Other legends link meteors with the moon. Californian Indians called them the 'children of the moon'. If a young girl saw one she would cover her head lest her face become pitted and scarred like the moon's surface. The people of the Laughlan Islands (near New Guinea) thought a meteor was the old woman in the moon trying to capture someone to take her place, so she could leave her dreary exile and find a happier home among the spirits.

All over the world and for many centuries, it seems, shooting stars have been associated with the souls of the dead. Frazer records one particularly imaginative belief from Queensland. There it was said that when you died you climbed a rope to heaven. When you reached your place among the stars, the rope fell away and was consumed in fire, telling your family and friends that your journey was safely accomplished. There has also been the idea – in Europe, Africa and Asia – that every human being has his own star in the sky, that shines brightly or dimly according to his fortune and falls when he dies.

MEXICO
& CENTRAL AMERICA



The effect of the Spanish invasion was surprisingly small. In the spirit of the American Indian there was an urge for peaceful continuity

The Earth Goddess of the Otomi Indians has become a fashionable lady wearing Spanish shoes, and in neighbouring villages people may equally call on Christian saints and angels or consult the shaman; in areas of Mexico there are clear relics of pre-Columbian religious ritual

THE REGION from Mexico to the border of Colombia, known as Central or Middle America, in ancient times had no unity apart from the Aztec Empire and Maya region; south of Mexico the area had no real unity at all. It had been used as a corridor of migration for centuries, and nowhere was there any great cultural unity. Archeological evidence covering two millennia shows constant cultural change, with stability only in limited areas. A similar story can be deduced from the linguistic surveys of the area. When the Spanish invaders arrived, the native peoples were each speaking a local language. On the whole the northerly languages had affinities with Mexican tongues, the southerly with the Chibcha languages of Colombia. But even groups speaking related languages were usually separated by wide areas in which totally different tongues were spoken.

The level of culture before the invasion varied immensely. All the peoples were agriculturalists subsisting mainly on maize, complemented with the many other plants available in the rich tropical conditions. They all made pottery, but with widely differing styles in form and decoration. To the south the peoples of Costa Rica and

Many old Indian beliefs and rituals have survived in Central America, being altered and adjusted in response to Christianity, which was brought by the Spanish conquest. 'The representations of the ancient powers have moved gently into contact with modern life to precisely the same degree as the people who make their images' *Previous page* 'Feather Dancers' at the celebration of Guadaloupe Day in Mexico City: this festival is held in honour of the Black Virgin of Guadaloupe, who miraculously appeared to an Indian named Juan Diego in 1530 *Below left* Figure of the priestess of the Tree of Life, dating c 1900 AD, from Jaina Island, Mexico *Below right* Zapotec funerary urn, representing the rain god wearing a jaguar mask *Right* Offerings are still made to the old gods but they are now Christian saints

Ferdinand Anton

Museum of the American Indian

K. F. Stampfl

Panama were capable metallurgists, having a knowledge of casting and plating techniques. Their golden ornaments were traded widely. They were skilled in working hard green stones, similar to jade in appearance, which were widely dispersed by barter.

However, even in the rich Chiriqui province of Panama, there seems to have been no centralized power. No stone buildings were made, but there is evidence of large towns built in wood on earthen mounds. There are signs of organized religion, the symbols of which are to be found in golden figurines and on pottery vessels. The difficult rain forest terrain of the mountainous and volcanic region restricted inland contact, but on the coasts there was a regular canoe-borne trade. Fishing was an important source of food, and from the Pacific coast pearls were exported from Panama northwards as far as Mexico. Archeological evidence shows that a period of great cultural richness occurred in the 12th century, and then declined. Almost certainly the decline took place due to the passage of other people who brought war as they fled from one enemy to engage another.

The effect of the Spanish invasion was surprisingly small. True, the gold and pearls were taken over by the strangers, and the harbours of Panama and Colon became the great centres through which the riches of Peru reached Europe; but the inland tribes and some of the coastal peoples remained isolated. In the spirit of the American Indian there was an urge for peaceful continuity. Almost everywhere there was a tendency to withdraw and not to fight. Luckily the terrain of Central America provided places which held no attractions for the white settlers.

The general pattern of the Spanish colonial period was for commercial development, exploitation of known mineral resources and the establishment of the *encomienda* system, whereby the native Indians were given in trust to the local landowners. Sometimes this worked well but in general it led to the breakdown of local cultures and the establishment of a state of near slavery. However the agricultural estates growing sugar and vanilla were not very large, and not so very important. The local populations were not

Robert Cundy/Robin Bath

big enough to encourage developments on the scale seen in Mexico and Peru. Thus in the 17th century it was possible for Surgeon Wafer, left behind in central Panama by the buccaneer and governor of Jamaica, Captain Morgan, to live and recover his health amid a well-governed tribe who, two centuries after the conquest, preserved all the characteristics of pre-Columbian life.

An important feature of the period was the body painting which represented certain sacred animals, such as the jaguar, serpent and eagle. Nearly three centuries later the descendants of the same people have a considerable degree of freedom, live in towns and villages under their own administrative officials, speak their ancient language, and consult pictorial history and religious books. They wear most marvellous appliqué shirts with patterns similar to those which the ancestors painted on themselves, and to those which have been found painted on ancient pots.

This one example of the persistence of native culture among the Cuna Indians of Panama, can be paralleled in many areas of Central America. People who lived in poor and inaccessible areas were neglected by the colonists and visited only by missioners from the religious orders. Therefore the change has been gentle and gradual. However, since the Spanish conquest there have been bitter struggles for freedom. The Maya rising known as the War of the Castes was anti-European, and for a long period the Mosquito Indians in the Republic of

Robert Cundy

Above Carvings from a Franciscan chapel at Tlalmanalco, near Mexico City: the friars employed Indian craftsmen whose work strongly resembles Aztec depictions of warriors _Left_ The head of a cockerel fastened to a wooden cross, a startling combination of paganism and Christianity, from southern Mexico, where the Chamula Indians have given Christian crosses the names of Maya gods and carve pagan fertility symbols on them _Right_ One of the few remaining Lacandon Indians of southern Mexico burning copal, an incense used by the Maya.

Honduras kept up a guerilla war. Mainly one may say that native Indian cultures of Central America were not totally overwhelmed, and there has been a considerable survival of ancient custom and language.

The degree of change has varied for each aspect of life. For instance, the Huichol Indians of northern Mexico wear a costume now truly native, but which was the normal dress of Mexican Indians in the most civilized areas at the early part of the 19th century. But Huichol religious rituals have retained much of the pre-Columbian custom of their ancestors. They still make symbolic religious pictures which illustrate by formal patterns the influences of the four directions of the world, and predict the falling of fate for the individual family.

The local shaman is a well-liked person who has much practical knowledge of illness and its cure, and to this adds ability as a consultant psychiatrist. The advantage of this continuing relationship between

Robert Cundy

Ferdinand Anton

Right **The painted books of Mexico are important sources of information about the lives of pre-Columbian cultures: an assembly of Miztec chiefs, lieutenants of the great chief, 8 deer ocelot claws, from the Codex Zouche-Nuttall** ***Far right*** **Miztec ceremonial dancers in traditional dress; the withdrawal of the Indians into isolated areas to escape Spanish exploitation safeguarded the old customs**

members of the community is that confidence is maintained; every member of the village knows that within the group of neighbours there will be ready help in almost any difficulty. The mayor and councillors are also Indians, and the healer is a natural doctor, and comforter of souls as well as bodies.

Goddess in Spanish Shoes

Among the Otomi Indians of central Mexico a great deal of ancient custom survives, and is strongest in the more remote villages in the highland areas of the Mizteca Alta. Here the people are all good Christians, and in their healing and divining ceremonies they call on the saints and angels and fear the demon powers. But the shamans, most often women, still use figures made from the ancient *amatl* paper which represent the powers of the five directions of the universe. Prayers, incense, and deep concentration are the ingredients of ritual. Each action is repeated many times and arrangements of symbols are made around a grouping of the paper figures. They give their answers to the shaman because each is linked with a group of meanings which have been transmitted by word of mouth from the past. It is no accident that the Earth Goddess has become a lady of means who wears Spanish shoes, or that the Tree of Life has become a charming plant with monkeys in its branches. The representations of the ancient powers have moved gently into contact with modern life to precisely the same degree as the people who make their images.

This underlines the point that the shaman and the spirits which appear in his visionary world are a unity. The performance of the ritual induces an expected state of mind in which reality and vision are linked. The visionary aspects are conditioned by two forces: the experience of the current facts of life in the everyday world, and the expected traditional qualities of the revelations of the otherworld beings. Thus the perfectly genuine visions are given a more or less rational interpretation in the process of divination.

The Otomi figures in amatl paper are seen today as modern manifestations of the spirit world. They assume the current ideologies about saints, angels and demons. They are shown in modern dress, and yet the symbols associated with them retain so much of the past that an archeologist is able to interpret them immediately in terms of pre-Columbian mythology.

The same kind of adaptation is to be found in the curative rituals of some of the Miztec villages in the mountains of Oaxaca. The most important of these includes the use of hallucination-inducing drugs, which are used not to provide random colourful experiences, but as a means of giving release to pre-conditioned concepts. The process is strictly within the realms of applied psychology of ancient origins. The home of the *curandera* (native 'wise woman') is little different from other houses except perhaps that the lady has accumulated rather more pictures of her favourite saints. The gathering is a simple prayer-meeting. Prayers to the saints, and hymns are a preliminary. Incense may be burnt to help give the right atmosphere. Then the participants who have previously fasted on bread and water for three days take the drug, which may well include the 'magic' mushrooms carefully sliced as in ancient times. Then more prayers and intense non-action until the individual suppliant becomes sick. Typically an American Indian idea, the wish is to clear out everything from the stomach in order to cleanse the personality and promote receptivity for the visions to come. After this, the period of meditation varies but the visions, usually of a dead relative or a protective saint, occur. Advice is given, sometimes by symbolic action, sometimes in words heard within the mind. This advice is often quite unexpected and it is practical and effective in easing the suppliant's problems.

In such a ceremony the preliminary fasting, the use of prayer, and hymns all condition the person to accept the probability of an experience which will give an answer to besetting problems. The hallucinogens will stimulate the projection of visionary forms and symbols from the deep unconscious. But the mind will interpret them in terms of the problem given and the saints invoked. The good result is most likely due to the release of the unconscious mind so that it can sum up the whole of experienced events in a way that the limited conscious mind is unable to understand. In this case the ceremony is a practical process, and the use of hallucinogens is effective and not random.

These considerations explain the survival of the ritual from pre-Columbian ceremonies into the modern world. Whether it will survive for much longer is questionable. As 20th century culture gains a foothold in Central America, more and more Indians will come into contact with the latest theories of the conscious mind as expounded by scientists. The emotional depths of the uncertificated and uneducated *curanderas* will for some time yet be beyond the reach of scientific classification, but not beyond the opposition of those qualified in the new rational sciences.

Further south in the highlands of Guatemala there are also survivals of Maya Indian rituals among the Quiché-speaking peoples. As is common throughout the Americas the Indian population prefers to withdraw and remain silent when confronted by the

Ferdinand Anton

pressures toward commercialism. Their attitude of group solidarity is totally foreign to the drives of individualistic *laissez-faire* economics. Thus within the framework of the modern state there remain enclaves of Indian villagers who can develop their own way of life in isolation, albeit in poverty. Among themselves there is some echo of past magic. The Christian religion answered the philosophic hopes of the ancient priests. As usual the gods who were integrated within the agricultural calendar have been fused with the saints whose festivals fell at the same time of year. The people around Lake Atitlan follow an ancient ritual before Mass by burning balls of sweet scented 'Pom' incense on the church steps, and replace it by burning rubber when rain is desired. Ceremonies are held in the hills in which those who know the secret make offerings before stone statues of old deities. Many of these massive figures seem to have survived from very early times before the forms of Maya gods had crystallized into a national art form; nevertheless, they are now addressed by the names of Christian saints, and their old names, such as Chac, giver of rain, have become epithets for the new quality of the ancient powers.

In 1968 the International Congress of Americanists in Stuttgart was shown a film of a Quiché Maya town official performing his duties as a priest, foretelling the growth of the plantations, and even the fate of the individuals who consulted him. The ritual consisted of a great deal of muttered lists of days and their protective spirits, the constant repetition of numbers in the old dialect in which numerals for counting time are different from those used for counting things or people, and a scattering of beans in regular rows of 13 until either 18 or 20 rows were completed. At the conclusion of each count selected symbolic objects, which gave the information on which the prognostication was based, were placed in position. The whole ritual, fascinating but monotonous to watch, would have taken several hours of repetitive work on the part of the shaman. He was in a state of mild dissociation during the periods of counting, mostly because he had chosen to be more sensitive to spiritual influences at the time. Thus the final result was partly due to the repeated patterns of events throughout the ancient Maya ceremonial calendar, and partly to the subjective interpretations of these events on the part of the shaman. His work was so successful that he had a large clientele extending beyond the village where he worked.

Following the isthmus southwards, the general character of Indian survivals changes. The major factor has been the different basic level of culture inherited from ancient times. On the whole the fragmented tribal structures could not develop a high culture, neither was it possible for a unified religious system to develop as it had done in the Mexican area. There had been no basic common inheritance for the peoples of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama to build upon. The structure of the village, with its houses of poles and cane, and the techniques of food preparation and of manufacture of wooden and ceramic utensils

Altar of Blood

The Spaniards visit the temple of the Mexican King, Montezuma

On each altar was a giant figure, very tall and very fat. They said that the one on the right was Huichilobos, their war-god. He had a very broad face and huge and terrible eyes. And there were so many precious stones, so much gold, so many pearls and seed-pearls stuck to him with a paste which the natives made from a sort of root, that his whole body and head were covered with them. He was girdled with huge snakes made of gold and precious stones, and in one hand he held a bow, in the other some arrows. Another smaller idol beside him, which they said was his page, carried a short lance and a very rich shield of gold and precious stones. Around Huichilobos' neck hung some Indian faces and other objects in the shape of hearts, the former made of gold and the latter of silver, with many precious blue stones.

At the very top of the *cue* (temple) there was another alcove, the woodwork of which was very finely carved, and here there was another image, half man and half lizard, encrusted with precious stones, with half its body covered in a cloak. They said that the body of this creature contained all the seeds in the world, and that he was the god of seed-time and harvest. I do not remember his name. Here too all was covered with blood, both walls and altar, and the stench was such that we could hardly wait to get out. They kept a very large drum there, and when they beat it the sound was most dismal . . .

Bernard Diaz *The Conquest of New Spain*

Ferdinand Anton

In a custom which combines European pre-Christian and Christian practices with traditional Indian beliefs, skulls are offered to the dead each year on 31 October, the eve of the Christian festival of All Hallows

continued. But in the absence of the old organization of the tribe the more advanced arts of decorative pottery, weaving and gold-working fell into abeyance and reverted to greater simplicity. This was partly due to the occupation of the richer areas by the Spanish settlers, and the change of culture which swept over the Indian peoples who had been absorbed as labourers and craftsmen. It was only in the less populated and inaccessible areas that old traditions survived. Elsewhere the oldest traditions, such as the masked dances representing the battle of the Moors and Christians, which are often assumed to be Indian, are derived from 17th century Spanish culture.

In the villages the old customs survived, but in a diluted form. The shaman and healer, together with the village leader who usually became known by the Spanish title of Alcalde, remained. The last intrusions into their more remote homes came at the turn of the 20th century when a world demand for sisal, tropical fruits and orchids brought new settlers and farmers into the hills. The general relationship with the Indians was paternalistic exploitation under which the Indians gained some material benefits; however, they rapidly became interested in social advancement which might eventually lead to political emancipation.

The Cuna Indians of the Atlantic coasts of Panama and neighbouring Colombia, on the other hand, had developed a higher level of culture than most, and guarded their independence remarkably well. Among them there was a willingness to progress, but in their own way, which would preserve much of their past. Among their most precious possessions was a book of religion, magic and history, the *Mu Igala*, which in pictorial symbols told the story of the gods and peoples of the past. It was consulted by the local chiefs and shamans as the repository of past wisdom. Its symbols are radically different from those of Mexico, and bear little resemblance to the decorative arts of either modern or archeological times. It may well be that the book was drawn up by shamans who had seen the books used by Spanish missionaries. However that may be, the *Mu Igala* in all known copies uses pictorial material of a comparatively modern style. Its interpretation rested with local elders who had learnt its meaning from relatives who had handed down their knowledge. It was a volume of tradition which could be used both for divination and healing. There is no record of such books being seen at the time of the Spanish conquest, but the early conquerors only had eyes for gold and pearls. Perhaps something of the tradition was inherited from the old Tairona people a little further to the east, in Colombia.

Thus in a sporadic way the Indian traditions of ancient Central America have survived, altered and adjusted, thus proving that they are sufficiently alive to be worth such affectionate remembrance.

(See also AZTECS; DRUGS; MAYA.)

C. A. BURLAND

Mezuzah

Jewish talisman, a scroll of parchment containing verses from Deuteronomy, chapters 6 and 11 ('Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one God . . .'), which is placed in a metal or wooden case and hung on the doorpost of a house to remind the faithful of God's law; the pious touch their fingers to it and then to their lips when entering or leaving the house.

See JUDAISM.

St Michael

First of the seven archangels in Christian tradition and, in the book of Revelation, the leader of God's host against the Devil and his angels in the 'war in heaven'; in the Old Testament, the guardian angel of Israel: churches dedicated to him are frequently associated with a legend of his defeat of a local dragon or giant: his feast day, Michaelmas, is celebrated on 29 September.

See ANGELS.

Sonia Halliday

Ronan Picture Library

Microcosm

From Greek words meaning 'little world'; term for man regarded as a miniature replica of the universe (the macrocosm, or 'great world'), which is conceived of as a human organism on a colossal scale.

See MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM; MAN.

John Webb

Micronesia

Group of small islands in the Pacific, including the Marianas, Marshalls, Carolines and Gilberts: the islands were said to have been drawn up from the sea by semi-divine fishermen.

See POLYNESIA AND MICRONESIA.

MIDSUMMER EVE

SINCE OUR ANCESTORS relied upon the sun for warmth and light, the arrival of Midsummer, which marks the passing of its seasonal apex, inevitably brought a reminder of approaching darkness and cold. It was a time of uncertainty when, so it was once believed, poisonous dragons thronged the air. Excited by the heat of summer, they copulated, and their emission fell upon the earth, polluting the drinking water: 'There was soo greate hete the which causid that dragons to go togyther in tokenynge that Johan dyed in brennynge love and charyte to God and man.'

This curious reconciliation of early myth and Christian tradition explains the transfer of pagan usage from the solstice, 21 June, to a celebration three days later. This was the Nativity of John the Baptist; but some churchmen voiced their objections. An entry in the Register of the Synod of Caithness and Orkney for 21 June 1708 reads: 'Johnmas fires which are commonly observed sometimes in this month are very common in many paroches. Therefor recommends to the several ministers where this or the like superstitious custome is to deall with persons and to bring them to a sense of yr sin and that they continue to rebuke the same from yr pulpits.'

Bonfires, supposedly honouring St John, are still lit in Cornwall; at one time they blazed all over Europe, to strengthen the weakening sun and keep evil creatures at bay. The vigour and extent of the crops were believed to be governed by the distance from which the fires were visible, and the height which people reached by jumping over them. Leaping of this kind was once a common folk custom, intended to stimulate the crops by sympathy. Burning torches were carried through the fields to guard against mishaps, and fires were lit to the windward so that their smoke would blow over the grain. A piece of blazing turf was thrown in the growing corn or carried round the cattle, and wheels covered with burning straw were rolled downhill to imitate the sun's descending course.

The bonfires were often a social occasion. An old account records: 'For making the king's bonefuyr, 10s'. One was lit at Augsburg in 1497 in the presence of Emperor Maximilian, and Philip the Handsome led the first ring dance around it. Louis XIV, crowned with roses, is known to have kindled the flames himself, and he also joined in the dancing. The custom still survived of burning live animals in the fire; usually foxes or cats, probably because witches were thought to assume these forms.

Keystone Press

Druids at Stonehenge on Midsummer Day, one of the principal stages in the 'life-cycle' of the sun, and so of life on earth

Night of the Witches

Midsummer, when the sun's power began to diminish, was traditionally a dangerous time, during which malevolent beings were unusually active. Witches were said to hold their sabbath on Midsummer Eve, riding on toasting forks or a black three-legged horse. In parts of Yugoslavia, armed with tree stumps, they attacked baptized Christians on this particular night so, as a precaution, people disposed of these natural weapons in advance. The 17th century antiquary John Aubrey wrote: 'Tis Midsommer-Night, or Midsommer-eve (St. Jo: Baptist) is counted or called the Witches night . . . of the breaking of Hen-egges this night, in which they may see what their fortune will be'. Anyone brave enough to sit in the church porch at midnight saw a procession of apparitions pass into the church; those who did not reappear were doomed to die in the course of the year. And young girls would busy themselves in

various activities in order to conjure up or dream of their future husbands.

Alternatively, plants were often used for a similar purpose. Yarrow, gathered from a young man's grave and laid under the pillow on Midsummer Eve, produced the shade of one's husband-to-be; or slips of orpine, a purple-flowered stonecrop, popularly known as Midsummer Men, were stuck in a convenient crack. If they leant together, the marriage omen was good.

St John's Wort, a yellow plant blooming at this time, which resembles a miniature sun, was also known as *Fuga Daemonum* ('flight of demons') because, so people said, it repelled evil spirits. In the Middle Ages it was applied to the mouths of accused witches in order to make them confess (see ST JOHN'S WORT).

Midsummer Eve fern seed was supposed to make men invisible. Shakespeare referred to this property in *Henry IV*, Part 1: 'We have the receipt of fern seed. We walk invisible.' Also a protective plant, it possessed the property of revealing treasure, glowing deep in the earth with bluish flames.

A branch of hazel, cut on Midsummer Eve, also guided the user to hidden treasure. It had to be obtained at night – by walking backwards, then cutting it with both hands between one's legs. A test was to hold it near water and, if all this had been properly done, it would squeak like a pig. This was a German idea; belief in the mystical powers of vegetation at Midsummer Eve used to be common throughout Europe and the Middle East. The historian John Stow, in his *Survey* (1598), describes the magic plants which at one time were hung up in London on St John's Eve: 'On the eve of this saint . . . every man's door was shaded with green birch, long fennel, Saint John's Wort, orpin, white lilies, and the like, ornamented with garlands of beautiful flowers. They . . . had also lamps of glass with oil burning in them all night; and some of then hung out branches of iron, curiously wrought, containing hundreds of lamps lighted at once, which made a very splendid appearance.'

VENETIA NEWALL

The romantic conception of Satan as the doomed hero who sets himself up against God was drawn largely from Milton's epic poem; the Middle Eastern gods who throng the infernal council chamber reflect the poet's abiding interest in pagan mythology

MILTON

THE IDEA of a personal Devil has drifted out of most forms of theology and Christian belief in Britain, as in many other countries. Yet during the 17th century Satan was very much alive in the creeds of the Puritans and the superstitions of the people.

The majestic power of Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* has won a primary place in poetic imagery for God's defiant foe. Rebellious and defeated, this fallen angel was flung into the fires of hell and a lake of flame. Unflinching and defiant, he continued to plot against the Almighty and, by turning himself into a serpent and penetrating the garden of Eden, he tempted and corrupted Eve and Adam. With 'man's first disobedience' came his Fall and the fiend's temporary triumph.

In the book of Genesis there is no mention of Satan. He does not appear in the Old Testament until the much later book of Job in which he is 'going to and fro on the earth'. There is no suggestion in the early legend that the Devil has sneaked his way into Paradise inside the reptile; the snake is sufficiently evil in itself (see DEVIL).

Milton's 'Arch Fiend' is so powerfully drawn in his pride, courage, eloquence and refusal to accept defeat that he has gained sympathy as well as detestation. Beside him the Almighty and the loyal, obedient angels seem to be almost pallid figures. It is a commonplace that vice is usually more exciting to read about than virtue, and for the average reader, Satan, as the sovereign of sin, starts with that advantage which is increased by the picturesque nature of his undaunted villainy. This has prompted the theory that he is really the hero of *Paradise Lost*. That cannot have been Milton's intention, but the error is easily understood. Satan is outrageously wicked but he is undeniably exciting. It has often happened in fiction that the worse the rogue the greater his magnetism.

We might expect Milton, who became a pillar of the anti-Royalist and Republican party and a superb spokesman for the Puritan faith, to be horrified by the personification of sin. But he was not one of the square-toed fanatics of the 'Praise-God Barebones' type who resented all the pleasures and graces of life. His grandfather had been a Roman Catholic and his father had composed secular music. Though his parents intended him to be a clergyman of the Church of England he refused to take holy orders. With his parents' approval he was determined to be a poet and a great one; he succeeded beyond expectation. But in his writing there is as much appreciation as rejection of worldly pleasures; the reader of his secular poems is quickly made aware of this. He had an eye for beauty and a feeling for things generally enjoyed by any civilized and sensitive man.

A Full and Worldly Life

His classical education at St Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge, introduced him to a supernatural world of romantic myths and tales about the strange and often scandalous doings of the anthropomorphic deities of Olympus and of the impish, rustic gods like Pan. Their appeal to the poet was as powerful as was the Christian doctrine of salvation to the theologian.

In his private life, Milton was no recluse; he had social contacts with the nobility and wrote the masque *Comus* for the Earl of Bridgwater. His nephew related that he frequented elegant company and dressed as stylishly as any of them. A man who was three times married – he was twice widowed – cannot have been of a cold nature, or as we would now say, under-sexed. He was the champion of chastity and of marital constancy yet to understand his portraiture of Satan it is essential to realize that Milton's attitude to life was not that of the ascetic.

His great epic is based on supernatural happenings as it sweeps from heaven to hell. But Nature itself was seen as part of the divine scheme. Milton in his best-known poems, most notably in *L'Allegro*, shows his delight in what Shakespeare called 'foison', the rich fertility of the earth and the lushness of vegetation. The seasons work their miracles for him. The old gods are not forgotten; the fruits of the earth are there to be tasted. The revelling Comus is given a remarkable defence of good feeding and good living:

> If all the world
> Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on pulse,
> Drink the clear stream and nothing wear
> but frieze,
> The All-Giver would be unthank'd, would be
> unpraised,
> Nor half his riches known.

Ascetic man, he adds 'would live like Nature's bastards, not her sons'. No severe and sour enemy of the common indulgences could have put such conviction into that rebuke of pious self-denial. Again one can see why the poet, confronted with the concept of a fallen angel, gave the Devil his due.

Satan as a person has died away. But the name Satanism is still given to the practices of the decadents who delight in blasphemies, obscenities, and the Black Mass. There is a striking description of such a macabre and malignant character in Somerset Maugham's early novel *The Magician* which the author said was based on a real person of his time.

In Tudor and Jacobean Britain the Devil was thought (and by hysterical and fanciful people was seen) to be very much at work in private and public places. He possessed women and turned them into witches. It was not only ignorant rustics who were scared. Queen Elizabeth revived the anti-witchcraft law which had been repealed in the reign of Edward II. King James I, though well-educated, was morbidly obsessed by the study of demonology. He had no sooner succeeded to the English throne than a new Act of Parliament was passed at his demand, against 'dealing with evil and wicked spirits'. Scotland, he thought, was in special danger of becoming Satan's chosen country. The Devil was busy in Edinburgh and among the covens of witches along the coast at North Berwick.

On both sides of the border there was a frantic witch-hunt. The victims, convicted on flimsy evidence, were killed without mercy. In London the translation of a German book, *The Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr Faustus* was widely read and a popular ballad was sung in the street about the Doctor's sale of his soul. Marlowe's play on the Faustus legend was his most successful, and was continually revived (see FAUST). It was said that the Devil himself had several

Tate Gallery

The Fallen Angels Entering Pandemonium **by the 19th century English painter John Martin: inspired by *Paradise Lost*, in which Pandemonium (literally, 'all the devils') is the capital of hell, the 'city and proud seat of Lucifer'**

times entered into the actor who played Mephistophilis and that once the whole audience ran out in terror. The extreme Puritans continually denounced the theatre as 'Satan's Workshop' and raged at the players as 'limbs of the devil'.

Speaking of Devils

The Israelites of the Old Testament had their single God Jehovah confronted by his Adversary. While these two concepts were personified they also stood for the rival powers of light and darkness. It is likely that the Jewish religion was influenced by a similar rivalry in the Persian creed later preached by Zoroaster in which the good Ahura Mazdah fought with the evil Ahriman for Day against Night (see AHRIMAN: ZOROASTRIANISM). After the Jews had been driven into exile their theology was further bedevilled by contact with other faiths and other fiends. New diabolic names appeared in their scriptures: Azazel in the book of Leviticus and Asmodeus in the apocryphal book of Tobit. The warfare in Heaven described by Milton in *Paradise Lost* is thus embroidered and enriched by a company of false gods and is much more complicated than the story of the Fall in the book of Genesis.

The neighbours and enemies of Israel had a number of strange deities in whom Milton saw the old allies of his outcast Satan. They were taken to be incarnations of the fallen angels. Beelzebub, god of flies, was one of them. They made a strong appeal to the poet because he was fascinated by the music and the mystery of old and strange names. In the first book of his epic there is a sonorous cascade of geographical names, sometimes Italian such as Vallombrosa, sometimes drawn from the Near and Middle East. The heathen gods in Satan's army contribute their own menacing sound to the verbal harmony. Phoenicia gave him Astoreth or Astarte, the moon goddess, and Lebanon Tammuz, the fertility god. In Sodom was Belial with his insolent and

drunken sons and in Gath Dagon, half-human and half-fish. For a poet with a rich vocabulary there were fine opportunities to build a memorable line by listing the deities of the Philistines and other polytheistic tribes, 'idolatrous, uncircumcised, obscene'. To Moloch, the Canaanites offered human sacrifice. So it has happened that *Paradise Lost*, a poem piously devoted to the victory of the Christian Almighty and the temptation, punishment and redemption of his human creation, became also a record of the myths and superstitions of the Middle East.

Samson's miraculous discovery of strength renewed provided Milton with a splendid chance to mingle a biblical legend with the dramatic form of Greek tragedy. In *Samson Agonistes* there is magnificent material for recitation; it is more a feat of rhetoric than a composition for the theatre. Blind himself, the poet has deep compassion for the blind hero. Satan is not a character in the play, but since he is the symbol of sensual passion he is manifest in the bewitching person of Delilah. In *Paradise Lost* Satan has incestuous leanings towards his own daughter, Sin. In *Samson Agonistes* Delilah is the embodiment of the lust that destroys the sensual man. Milton did not hesitate to make her a fascinating temptress; there is a rapturous description of her entry, 'bedeckt, ornate, and gay' like a stately ship, 'with all her bravery on and tackle trim'. Samson, fearing another surrender to her beauty, cries in vain, 'My wife, my traitress, let her not come near'. Yet he withstands her lovely presence and her appeals for reconciliation since he can now oppose and defeat the Satanic dominion of 'ladies whose bright eyes vain influence'.

National Portrait Gallery

John Milton, by an unknown painter c 1629. It is ironic that this great Puritan spokesman should have created, in *Paradise Lost*, a Devil 'so powerfully drawn in his pride, courage, eloquence and refusal to accept defeat that he has gained sympathy as well as detestation'; Satan has been considered the real hero, but this can hardly have been Milton's intention

Satan is abroad in Gath at the great feast of the Philistine god Dagon and is completely defeated when the debauched worshippers are annihilated by Samson's upheaval of their 'spacious theatre' and slaughter of the revelling host. It is a savage myth in which there is no mention of the Son of God or of redemption. Death settles all. The righteous man dies with the wicked and all accounts are paid. In Gath, symbolic of the sensual world, suffering brings peace, consolation, and 'calm of mind all passion spent'.

Nobody could suggest that Satan is here presented in heroic form. But there is a sense of awe in the presence of God which was missing in *Paradise Lost*. Satanic sin has lost the size and dignity which was first bestowed on it. The false gods, like their debased devotees, are overwhelmed in the catastrophe. They live on, however, in the imagination and Satan's courage, no longer evident in the Samson legend, survives because in the earlier epic it was given vivid and compulsive portrayal in poetry of such dynamic quality. *Paradise Lost* includes the myths and superstitions of many credulous tribes. There is worship of the sun god whom Satan hates. There is the battle of light and darkness and the cosmic contest is enhanced by the wonderful orchestration of the barbaric names to be met in the diabolic palace of Pandemonium.

IVOR BROWN

C. M. Dixon

Minerva
Roman goddess, identified with the Greek Athene; patron of arts and crafts, and the inspirer of wit and resource, she was a protector of cities among the Etruscans.
See ATHENE.

Minotaur
In Greek mythology, the monster with a human body and a bull's head who was the offspring of Queen Pasiphae of Crete by a bull; he was kept in the labyrinth at Cnossus and, every nine years, seven young men and seven maidens were sent from Athens to be his prey; he was killed by the hero Theseus.
See BULL; MAZE; THESEUS.

Tate Gallery/John Webb

To define a miracle generally as a visible sign of God's power transcending the natural order brings us no nearer to identifying one specifically; we can say with certainty what a miracle is, but not which event is a miracle. Today it seems that many of those related in the Bible may be explained within the framework of what we know of man and his environment

MIRACLES

THE WORD 'MIRACLE' comes from the Latin *miraculum* which was used originally to denote an occurrence which excited wonder. Although it is still employed loosely to describe an unlikely but natural event, as in 'It was a miracle that I escaped unhurt', even in ancient times the word tended to imply a supernatural interference with Nature. A belief in the supernatural only had meaning if contrasted with the belief that Nature, left to itself, operated in a regular and constant fashion. This latter assumption had become well established, at least for the educated classes, by the time of Christ. Pagans and Christians alike tended therefore to regard some of the events that were difficult to explain scientifically as due to the operation of beings in a realm separate from and superior to Nature.

The earliest Christians were less concerned to deny the validity of pagan miracles than to stress the Old Testament and gospel miracles as evidence, not of God's existence, but of his moral superiority over all supernatural beings and of his providence for mankind. But from the 2nd century AD Christian writers attacked pagan miracles as the products either of priestly trickery or of diabolical agency. The works of Satan and his minions were admittedly supernatural but occurred only by permission of God who allowed some licence to the fallen angels to use their powers before their final binding at the Last Judgement. In modern times belief in infernal miracles has faded. The Church has always dwelt more on the positive miracles of God, which proceed from the divine power even when operating through agents such as saints, prophets or relics.

In traditional theology a miracle is defined as any event perceptible to human senses which transcends the powers of Nature and which is caused by divine intervention. A miracle may involve the temporary suspension of natural forces as well as the operation of a supernatural power, but this is possible in Christian theology because the laws of Nature continue to operate only as a result of the divine will.

A miracle, as officially defined, is restricted to visible marvels and so does not include all supposed instances of God's miraculous power, such as the acts of the Holy Spirit in promoting conscience, bestowing inspiration or conferring grace. Nor is a miracle an act of special providence, such as the calm sea at the time of the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 could be supposed to have been; weather is very unstable, a characteristic which would enable the Almighty to manipulate it easily without the fact being overtly known. Theology does not attempt to limit God's secret acts, but at the same time it does not class them as miracles in the technical sense. A miracle, strictly speaking, is a marvel which is also an outward and visible sign of God's presence. It has a purpose over and above what it actually effects. Divine intervention is always for spiritual ends and in the interests of salvation. God parted the Red Sea not merely to allow the Children of Israel to cross, but also to show that he would never abandon them.

Similarly, theology says that God does not need to resort to miracles to remedy defects in the natural world due to his own lack of foresight. Admittedly, he might act to remedy those deficiencies which result from the sin of men or angels; but this is the work of salvation. God does not improvise. His existence is timeless and eternal; his omniscience sees past and future as ever-present. A miracle occurs not because of a sudden decision by God, but through the proceeding of an eternal decree. Theology disapproves the suggestion made by Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) that the Deity might occasionally intervene to make small adjustments to preserve the stability of the solar system – as if it were a car being serviced.

Impact of the New Science

Newton's views on the universe represented a curious transitional stage between theism on the one hand and deism and atheism on the other. As a result of the intellectual upheavals of the Renaissance, the Reformation and the growth of science, the 17th and 18th centuries were racked by controversies concerning the relation between God and Nature. Theism is the belief common to many religions that God is an active force in the world: miracles therefore do not present a fundamental difficulty. For atheists, of course, miracles are impossible. The essence of deism, an outlook which began to emerge in the 17th century, was that God, having created the world, tended not to interfere with it. The soul, admittedly, was supernatural and God might act spiritually; but he was sparing with miracles and, sufficient revelation having been made in biblical times, few miracles were now to be expected. The philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) declared that since miracles had ceased, revelation was now conveyed entirely by holy scripture. Contemporary inexplicable happenings, he hinted, were due to obscure natural causes. Benedict Spinoza (1632–77) who regarded God and Nature as two harmoniously related modes of existence of a single Being, denied all miracles past or present. But Spinoza was ahead of his time and not until the next century were deists and free-thinkers openly antagonistic to miracles.

Victoria & Albert Museum/Michael Holford

Medieval stained glass window, showing the prophet Elijah praying to God to restore a widow's dead son to life (I Kings, chapter 17): the fact that so many reported marvels are healings has concentrated attention on possible psychological factors in 'miracles'

The way for deism was opened by the failure of a group of Cartesian philosophies, so called because they received their impetus from René Descartes (1596–1650). He aimed at a philosophy in which traditional religious beliefs could be united with the new scientific view of Nature. His method was to reason from certain 'clear and distinct ideas' innate in the human mind. Since, as Descartes claimed, we can form clear ideas of mind, God and matter, these three entities exist but are of totally different kinds. Being essentially different, mind and matter cannot influence one another. Each is subordinate to God who in a miraculous way recreates the universe anew at each instant of time. God was needed also in Cartesian philosophy to keep our minds and bodies in step. So Nicholas de Malebranche (1638–1715) suggested that God continuously regulated both. Gottfried Leibnitz (1646–1716) propounded a similar theory of 'pre-arranged harmony'. Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753) resorted to a far-reaching supernaturalism, maintaining that matter could not act of itself and was moved by spirit. Somewhat earlier Newton, neither a philosopher nor a Cartesian, continued to occupy his half-way house, saying that in the beginning God created atoms (of matter) and the void (space), but that matter could act of itself and that the force of gravitation was therefore perpetually operated by God's miraculous power.

Nature's Random Element

The Cartesian systems were hopelessly artificial. Their death-knell was sounded by John Locke (1632–1704) the first of the 'empirical' philosophers, who pointed out that innate ideas, however 'clear and distinct' they might seem, could not be relied on without testing their accuracy. This can only be assessed empirically, by observing Nature and analysing how ideas arise. Locke's influence consolidated the trend to deism on the Continent, particularly in France, where its arch-representative was Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778).

But it is to David Hume of Edinburgh (1711–1776) philosopher and historian, that the bitterness of theological controversy has principally adhered in respect of the

15th century Flemish illustration of Christ feeding the 5000: the two miracles of feeding the 4000 and 5000 (Mark, chapters 6 and 8) are increasingly interpreted in terms of 'spiritual feeding'. Jesus himself is described in the gospels as despising mere wonder-working to impress, and his numerous healing miracles are said to have accompanied the cure of patients' spiritual illnesses through faith

chapter 'On Miracles' in his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748). He argued that the uniformity of Nature had been shown by general experience to be true with a very high degree of probability. A miracle is therefore so extremely unlikely that it can only be accepted as genuinely a miracle if the evidence that it actually occurred is exceptionally strong. Hume added that for his part he could envisage no evidence that would be sufficiently compelling to convince him. He has frequently been taken to task for the illogicality of this latter remark, which has been felt to be unworthy of a confessed empiricist; it was also inconsistent with his own principles, for he pointed out that the uniformity of Nature is only a hypothesis based on experience.

In our own day Hume's denial of causality as being necessarily true has, unexpectedly, been vindicated in the sub-microscopic realm of atomic events where there appears to be a marked degree of randomness and inconsequentiality. For instance, it is impossible to predict that an atom of radium will disintegrate at any particular time. An atomic disintegration has to be regarded as an uncaused event. But the objects of everyday experience contain so many atoms that the law of averages applies. The chance of a 'miracle' such as a table rising off the floor because all its molecules in their random motion chance to move upwards is totally negligible. But events happening at random to individual molecules in the brain or in a gene (the unit of biological inheritance) could conceivably have consequences out of all proportion to the magnitude of the events themselves. Thus modern physics suggests the possibility of further secret acts of God by imposing direction on these random events. Such an occurrence would be scientifically undetectable. Some theists feel however that clandestine intervention would detract from the dignity of God.

Hume's special contribution to the problem of the supernatural was to emphasize the need to evaluate testimony. At the close of the 17th century, reaction against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination led to an examination of the scriptures as documents assembled by human authors. But the 18th century was dominated by attempts to reconcile the Bible with deism, and the miracles were explained away in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. This led to a counter-reaction in which miracles assumed a new significance as evidence for theism.

But, during the last 150 years genuine scholarship has put both the Old and New Testaments into proper perspective as a varied group of works written at different times and with somewhat varying aims. The Old Testament is partly history and partly imaginative epic or saga of the prehistory of

British Museum

the Jewish people. It contains both real history and history transmuted in oral tradition. Composed from a primarily religious point of view it is also a 'mythology of God', with an evolving concept of the Deity. The God who drowns mankind in the Flood is not quite the same as the God of Isaiah or the God who rebukes Jonah for desiring the destruction of Nineveh. Indeed the books of Job and Jonah illustrate the Bible's varied contents, for these are not histories but imaginative dramas which debate deep religious problems.

Fact and Fiction

The Hexateuch, which comprises the books from Genesis to Joshua, was constructed from documents written between the time of King David (c 1000 BC) and the return from the exile in Babylon (c 500 BC). These documents were assembled from oral tradition and songs, and from inscriptions and earlier documents now lost. The literal truth of all that is said about the patriarchs, Abraham to Joshua (perhaps 1750 to 1400 BC), cannot be insisted on. But archeology and comparative studies of ancient folklore, myth and literature have confirmed a substratum of historical fact and furnished clues to the natural sources of some of the miraculous elements in the Hexateuch. The Euphrates valley was flooded about 4000 BC and Noah's story is the legend of Utnapishtim, his Babylonian counterpart in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (see FLOOD). The mark of Cain was a clan-mark denoting blood-vengeance for slaying. The destruction of Sodom relates to volcanic activity and subsidence of the Dead Sea bed, while the story of Lot's wife being turned to salt was suggested by the salt slopes of the Dead Sea's banks. The birth-story of Moses is that of King Sargon of Akkad (c 2300 BC). The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is the Egyptian Tale of the Two Brothers (see FOLKTALES).

But the Hexateuch is not all legend. Reference to the tribe of Benjamin has been found during archeological research at Mari which is not so far from Harran where, according to the book of Genesis, Abraham settled. The Semites dominated Egypt in the Hyksos period, and an inscription contains the name of Jacob. The bond-cities of Pithom and Raamses, places of forced labour, have been identified in Goshen. The Red Sea can be forded or bypassed through the Reed Sea (now altered by the construction of the Suez Canal). Mount Sinai could have suggested a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. The reference to the Israelites catching quails by hand, in the book of Numbers, is probable enough, for these birds can be caught in this way when exhausted; similarly manna, the food that sustained the people in the desert, can be collected from the tamarisk bush. The Sinai region had the earliest alphabet and was a mining and smelting district and tradition might well have believed it an appropriate place to inscribe tablets of stone and fabricate brazen serpents and calves of gold. In brief we cannot reject the Hexateuch as fiction but must admit that many natural events have been heightened in the telling or recollection. Thus, except in fundamentalist sects, there is nowadays a marked tendency among churchmen to use Old Testament miracles in a symbolic or metaphorical way to illustrate stages in the development of religious consciousness.

In the historical books of the Bible from Samuel to Chronicles, and some of the later ones, miracles are rare except in the accounts of Elijah and Elisha, which appear to have been based on more slender historical records; as a result, there was a tendency to fill out with legendary material, probably promoted by the 'Sons of the Prophets', a group with whom Elisha was connected. Folklore themes may be recognized, as well as hagiographic tales. We must suppose that in ancient hagiography the same tendencies worked as in the Christian era; writing in an innocent spirit with the best of intentions, biographers of holy men tended to ascribe marvels retrospectively to saints or to their sacred relics.

The Attitude of Jesus

For most modern Christians the gospel miracles alone are the real focus of discussion, while less importance is attached to those in the Acts of the Apostles or mentioned in the epistles. There is almost no direct historical evidence to corroborate Jesus's existence (see JESUS). One extreme view proposes therefore that his life is completely mythical, and that the belief in the advent of a religious Messiah had engendered the belief that he had actually come. This view requires no interpretation of the gospel miracles. However, even free-thinkers will be struck by certain peculiarities of the gospels which suggest that there was a historical Jesus. From the content and manner of the four gospels it can be inferred that Matthew, Luke and John derive from more than one source, but one of these sources is the same source as that on which the gospel of Mark is based. The Marcan gospel is therefore the fulcrum of criticism.

Notably, Mark does not relate the childhood of Jesus or the Virgin Birth, a miracle that has been much debated (see MARY). Discussion has often been at a low level: an ancient slander made Jesus the son of 'Panthera', a 'Roman legionary', but the name is simply a corruption of the Greek *parthenos*, a virgin. In modern times the biological term parthenogenesis is used to denote the reproduction without sexual union found in some insects; if it occurred in humans, a mother would produce a daughter almost a twin of herself.

Mark relates the Transfiguration, possibly a hagiographic addition or a visionary experience. He tells of darkness at the Crucifixion and the rending of the veil of the Temple, but his account of the empty tomb is indecisive as to the significance of the Resurrection. Mark's own conclusion to the gospel is lost and the brief account of the resurrected Jesus was added by another writer. It is notable that the other miracles are all of healing, exorcism or revival of persons doubtfully dead. The exceptions are the feeding of the 4000 and the 5000, which is now largely accepted as 'spiritual feeding'; the walking on the sea, which many respectable theologians accept as visionary; and the blasting of the fig tree. This last miracle, in which Jesus causes the tree to become barren, shocks modern religious sensibility, which plausibly supposes the report to be based on an illustrative metaphor used by Jesus. The content of the remaining miracles shows that the Marcan gospel is not a tale of 'wonder-working' which Jesus consistently despised, and in this respect it differs strikingly from apocryphal gospels and pagan romances like *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (see APOLLONIUS). However, a third of Mark is devoted to miracles and Jesus's own attitude to them. Though the gospel is based on oral tradition, innocently condensed and modified, it leaves the impression that it records a historical and highly individual Jesus. The meaning of healing miracles becomes decisive for interpretation.

The Healing Dream

The ancient Greek world ascribed healing functions to no less than 38 gods or heroes (see HEALING GODS). The hero Amphiaraus, regarded as a great man whose benign spirit survived death, had a temple by a sacred spring at Oropus in Boeotia, in central Greece. Patients underwent purification and fasting, and then slept in the temple: the practice called incubation (see DREAMS). Cures resulted if the patient had a favourable dream. At length the healing cult of the hero Asclepios surpassed all others; he was revered as a god and his shrines appeared throughout the Mediterranean region. As with Amphiaraus, Asclepios's patients undertook incubation after elaborate preparations. A patient often dreamt that the god examined him, made a diagnosis and prescribed a treatment. Sometimes in the dream the god would heal then and there, perhaps by surgery.

Inscribed on the stonework of the temples were accounts of many cures, some so remarkable as to be indeed miraculous, if true, but their veracity is suspect. However many cures were perfectly genuine according to the testimony of great physicians like Galen (c 130–200 AD). The priests may have edited or heightened some of the descriptions but there is no real evidence that they employed systematic fraud, such as appearing disguised as Asclepios. The genuine cures can be explained in normal ways. Some patients would have recovered in the ordinary course of events. Belief in the god and expectancy can account for the regularity of the dreams. But the most interesting and significant cures were those of ailments with a strong psychological component, which today are called hysterical or psychosomatic. For example, a man with paralysed fingers, very sceptical of the inscriptions, dreamt that Asclepios stepped on his hand and straightened it. On awaking he found himself cured of his ailment.

The Miracle of St Damian and St Cosmas, **a painting in the Prado, Madrid. A man with a diseased leg went to sleep in their church and dreamed that the two saints cut off his leg and gave him a new one: when he woke up, his leg was healed. Similar dream-cures are reported from pagan shrines in antiquity**

Releasing the Unconscious

In a pamphlet called *The Faith that Heals*, the great French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot (1825–1893) drew comparisons between the cures of Asclepios and modern healings, as for example at Lourdes (see LOURDES). The idea of a pilgrimage is mooted, followed by discussion and preparation, a lengthy journey, prayers, fasting, ceremonies and processions, and in this way hope and expectancy are built up. Anecdotes of cures, and votive offerings on display tend also to heighten confidence. Finally incubation, immersion in the sacred waters or contact with the holy relics, as the case may be, may sometimes, but not always, complete a psychological process so that the ailment spontaneously heals. It is to be expected therefore that healing at shrines at all times and places will have been most successful with ailments that are psychologically determined at an unconscious level (see FAITH HEALING).

Healing at Christian churches may have followed with continuity from pagan days, the shrines often being converted to churches. In early days incubation was still practised, but gave way to the cult of relics, not necessarily those of official saints. The tomb of the Jansenist Deacon François de Pâris at Saint Médard in Paris in the 18th century yielded cures of great scientific interest because the symptoms before and after cure were carefully recorded by a lawyer, Carré de Montgeron; his descriptions suggest that hysterical ailments comprised the majority of cures. Moreover the cures were not instantaneous but progressed by stages in accordance with well-known physiological laws (see CONVULSIONARIES).

Hysteria can take the form of 'the Hystericks' as known to our ancestors, or other types of hysterical fit, but can also manifest a bewildering range of other symptoms: deafness, mutism, partial or complete blindness, anaesthetic patches on the skin, paralysis of hand, arm or leg, permanent contraction of muscles, wry-neck, ill-defined aches and pains and, strangest of all, astasia in which the patient has his full strength when lying down, but falls as soon as he tries to stand. There is no physical cause for hysteria but the patient is not shamming. He is genuinely ill and ignorant of the cause of his illness, which is psychological, locked away without access in the unconscious part of his mind.

In the 19th century much was learned about the cure of hysteria. Sometimes the patients responded to shock, like one of Charcot's patients whose symptoms vanished forthwith when he had occasion to scold her. Another patient was persuaded that she would undergo a marked improvement on her saint's day, and this duly happened. Other patients responded to exercise and persuasion. But relapses were common, this being all too often a typical feature of hysterical cures.

Suggestion and Faith

Modern treatment employs psychological means to enable the patient to discover the subconscious origin of his condition, and also tries to relieve those pressures of everyday life which contribute to his illness. Hypnotism is often efficacious, because it is a condition in which the patient may be susceptible to remedial suggestion. 'Suggestion' is a difficult term to define precisely or completely understand. Sometimes suggestion received consciously is effective but generally it works in ways as yet unknown. To be successful in healing it must stimulate some unconscious layer of the mind.

The history of hypnotism and suggestion is complicated because a suggestion need not be conveyed in words. Moses set up a brazen serpent to heal the people of serpent bites. Here we have a hint of sympathetic magic ('a hair of the dog that bit one'), but also the old trust in the power of metals, which has recurred in more recent times. In the 18th century metal plates were attached to patients by Perkins in the United States and by the Abbé Lenoble in France. Magnetism and electricity had their vogue also. In James Graham's Temple of Health in 18th century London, the patient, at a fee of £50, received 'magnetic vapours' overnight. From 1860 to 1880 'metallotherapy' was seriously studied by reputable physicians. The interesting point is that it too had its genuine successes in curing hysterical patients.

The Three Saints of Trecastagni in Sicily are believed to heal the sick and to prevent Mount Etna from erupting. Successful cures at religious shrines are now generally explained as resulting from factors in the patients' minds rather than as 'miracles'

Axel Poignant

The Austrian physician Anton Mesmer (1734–1815) brought his theory of 'animal magnetism' from Vienna to Paris in 1778 (see MESMER). He believed that magnetism was a cosmic force or 'fluid' which also resided in the body, and that illnesses were due to this fluid being badly distributed. By stroking the patient he claimed to adjust the fluid. Mesmer also achieved cures.

By Faith Alone

During the 19th century, when extensive researches were made into methods of inducing hypnosis and employing it for cure, 'magnetic passes' were found to be unnecessary because hypnosis could be induced by verbal suggestion. Belief in the 'magnetic fluid' waned; hypnotism came to be regarded as a psychological state induced by suggestion alone, as were the cures effected under hypnosis. It was recognized that the curable ailments were either hysterical, or purely psychological (hypochondria), or psychosomatic (effects of emotion on circulation, respiration and other internal processes). In about 1880, a French country doctor named Liébeault carried out an interesting experiment. Instead of showing his patients a bottle of 'magnetical water', (water which had been 'activated' by mesmeric passes), he obtained equally good cures with a bottle of untreated water provided that the patients believed it to be magnetized. When magnets were used in the Paris hospitals the results depended as much on the personality of the doctor as on the magnet. Patients would often react favourably to an electro-magnet provided they believed it to be switched on.

Thus 'faith' can cure certain ailments. It can be activated by a device such as a magnet, or by a relic, or a person or even by a situation. In 1849 a country child, Louise Requin, was healed of a general paralysis merely by being brought from her home to the famous Hôtel Dieu hospital in Paris. Clearly anything that strikes the imagination can be effective, but there is no guarantee that a cure will be achieved; to be effective 'suggestion' must reach the hidden layers of the mind and this depends on the whole situation. Nothing can be laid down as to what kind of personality constitutes a good faith healer or spirit healer. French and English kings in the past could cure some skin conditions by touch (see KING'S EVIL), but exalted rank alone is insufficient. Only a few ancient rulers such as Pyrrhus, King of Macedonia (318–272 BC), are reported to have had curative powers. It was said of the celebrated healer Prince Alexander Hohenlohe - Waldenburg - Schillingfürst, Archbishop and Grand Provost, that his name and titles had much to do with it, but he was also a saintly personality.

Psychological Cures

What of Jesus? The evangelists did not write as biographers telling us of Jesus's physical presence, voice or manner. Mark's aim, writing perhaps within 20 years of the Crucifixion, was to record those stories of Jesus which were in use in the Church to illustrate the essential nature of his mission, as conceived by Jesus himself. Though there is no consensus between scholars, many believe that Jesus regarded himself as the messenger of an imminent apocalypse in which the *dynamis* or power of God would break through and heal the spiritual sickness of Israel. He deplored 'signs and wonders'. The coming of the Kingdom of God must be perceived by Faith alone. But in those in whom this Faith was awakened, cures of their bodily sicknesses would follow in accordance with the curing of their spiritual illness. For Jesus and the evangelists the healing miracles were not the cause of Faith but the result of Faith. This view is not essentially different from the modern view of cure by suggestion or faith. In the gospel context it is convenient to write Faith with a capital letter, because many scholars draw the line at equating the Faith demonstrated in the gospels with ordinary everyday faith. For them the Faith of Jesus's audience is the true and central gospel miracle.

This point of view must be respected and there is no logical ground for disallowing it. In fairness, however, it must be said that the view is equally tenable that the gospel Faith differed at most in degree, but not in kind from ordinary faith. Looking at the Marcan miracles of individual healing, and bearing in mind that a condensed oral tradition is not a set of doctor's case notes, it appears that they are all capable of being interpreted as psychological cures: exorcisms, cures of paralyses, haemorrhage, or skin disease (the term 'leper' was not a specific medical description) or catalepsy (the affliction of Jairus's daughter). Even the 'absent healing' fits into the picture. In Catholic countries intercessors sometimes make the pilgrimage that the patient is too weak to undertake on his own behalf. Interestingly enough Mark said that in his own country (where 'the prophet is not honoured') Jesus 'could work no miracle there'.

Studies of the miracles at Lourdes show that where sufficient data are available, the cures appear to fall into the regular pattern of healings by suggestion. About one case a year, admittedly, remains puzzling. But medicine is an incomplete science and even hospital physicians are sometimes puzzled by spontaneous remissions. There may be true miracles of healing, but as yet they cannot be proved.

Nowadays the patient who wanders into 'fringe medicine' has an ample choice of 'gimmicks'. Magnets may be out of fashion but bee-stings, acupuncture and so on have come in. Spirit healers perform surgery after the manner of Asclepios. Healing temples will perform absent healing. No doubt every method has its proportion of cures and also of relapses.

Other forms of faith healing such as church circles for prayer, laying on of hands, and group therapy are financially safe and perhaps more healthy because they involve a social milieu and elements of genuine spiritual value and psychotherapeutic efficiency. But, whatever one's symptoms, and whichever form of faith healing one resorts to, it is essential to persist in orthodox medical investigation at the same time, in case there is an obscure but physical cause which it might be dangerous to neglect or which is rectifiable through the resources of modern medicine.

A. R. G. OWEN

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A still lake or woodland pool reflecting the human face was the first mirror; despite fears that the reflection was his soul which might be stolen by evil spirits, man has used the 'looking-glass' in one form or another for divination throughout the centuries

MIRROR

THE MAGIC OF THE MIRROR, whether the reflecting surface of a looking-glass or the image seen in the woodland pool, can still stimulate the imagination today as profoundly as in ancient times. Mythology and superstition alike bear testimony to the powerful influence of mirror magic upon human thought as recounted in the story of Vulcan's mirror which revealed past, present and future; the magic mirror of Merlin which gave warning of treason; the mirror of Cambuscan in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* which told of misfortunes to come; or Lao's mirror in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* which reflected thought itself. And in the magical world of the *Arabian Nights*, there is the all-seeing mirror of Al-Asnam which indicated by the lightening or darkening of its surface the chastity or otherwise of the girl whose image it reflected.

The earliest looking-glasses known were the still waters of lakes and pools. Primitive people generally seem to have regarded the human reflection in water as the soul, for it was widely believed that the soul could exist separately from the body without involving death. The people of the Andaman Islands believed the soul to be the human image they saw reflected in rivers, and significantly in mirrors. Yet the rivers and lakes which offered man his first vision of himself were supposed also to have been the haunts of water spirits, some kindly but others hostile, to whom sacrifices had to be made and who on occasion snatched at the human reflection and captured the soul.

It is understandable, therefore, that the ancient Greeks should have considered it an omen of death to dream of seeing one's reflection in water, for the water spirits might drag the soul into the dark depths below, leaving its owner to perish. Despite

Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon

Previous page **The first mirrors were pools and lakes: *The Mirror of Venus*, by Burne-Jones *Right* The mirror-image world of *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* where left is right and time runs backwards: by Tenniel *Below* The magic mirror in the story of Snow White, from the Walt Disney film *Far Right* 'Scrying', or divining from a crystal or the surface of a liquid is related to mirror-magic; from *La Très Sainte Trinosophie*, attributed to a famous 18th century occultist, the Count of St-Germain**

Mansell Collection

Walt Disney Films

these dangers, men and women have always peered at their reflections to discover what the fates hold in store. If the image was broken or disturbed it was taken as a sign of disintegration, of trouble to come and even death itself, but if it remained clear and unruffled it was a clear indication of future serenity and therefore of hope. The broken reflection of the human image seems always to have been interpreted as a symbol of disaster. In course of time the man-made mirror inherited these superstitions, firstly the bronze or silver type used by the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and later the glass mirrors which first appeared in Venice at the beginning of the 13th century. In classical times the art of catoptromancy, as mirror divination was called, was practised by seers or 'scryers'. They dipped a metal mirror into water and, according to whether the reflection of the sick person who looked into it was disfigured or clearly defined, decided whether he would live or die. This type of divination took a number of highly specialized forms, using tools such as plates of silver, beryls, water in a bowl, and even the polished finger nail.

The Devil's Looking-Glass

As in so many other types of divination, this art demanded for its effectiveness the immaculate purity of the officiating seer and for this reason a virgin girl or boy was usually selected as scryer. For many centuries the scryer had an important social role, being consulted by statesmen anxious about the future and by the ordinary citizen beset by domestic problems. As he peered into the liquid depths of his magic mirror the scryer foresaw the fate of kings and the whereabouts of stolen property, missing people and buried treasure. During the great witch-hunts of the Elizabethan era scrying was frequently used to discover the identity of witches whose faces were conjured into the mirror. By far the best known of mirror diviners was the magician Dr John Dee (1527–1608), known as Queen Elizabeth's Merlin, who with his confederate Edward Kelley penetrated the future by means of a black polished stone (see DEE). At one time credit for the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 was ascribed to Dee, to whom the secret was said to have been revealed in the magic mirror. This incident is supposed to have led to the fashion of wearing an ornamental mirror in one's hat in the early years of the 17th century, but it is far more likely that these mirrors were intended to protect the wearer against the Evil Eye.

The use of a mirror to deflect the rays of the Evil Eye was once a very common

Michel Vuillemin

European practice. In Italy a looking-glass was once found smeared with poison after it had been glared at by a particularly malevolent witch. Among the Chinese, small mirrors were hung up in the house to scare away evil spirits since these were capable of being utterly shocked at the sight of their own reflections.

Mirror magic of one kind or another has been practised all down the ages and in England has continued almost into our own times. As recently as the latter half of the 19th century, the Cunning Men (the name by which the last surviving representatives of the medieval magicians were known) eked out a meagre existence from the rapidly declining industry of rustic divination, by then reduced to little more than scrying for lost watches or nightshirts purloined from washing-lines.

The basic principles of mirror magic can be clearly recognized in our surviving popular superstitions, the best known being the fear that breaking a mirror will be followed by some kind of disaster, varying from death and sickness to seven years' bad luck. This is particularly interesting in view of the old anatomical myth that the human body underwent a complete physical renewal every seven years. Presumably it was only at the end of this period that bad luck could be eradicated from the system. There are several antidotes to the misfortunes resulting from breaking a mirror, one being to bury the shattered pieces in the earth and another to cast them into a stream flowing south, so that the waters will wash the curse away.

A relic of the ancient concept of the presence of an evil spirit in a pool of water is represented by another superstition, according to which the mirror is the abode of a presence who takes revenge upon anyone who damages his home by breaking the glass. It was also a common belief that if anyone looked long enough in a mirror the face of the Devil would materialize.

The danger involved in projecting the soul out of the body is responsible for the superstition that a sickroom mirror must never be left uncovered; it was once a common fear that the weakened soul, if allowed to leave the body, might not have the strength to return and that death would inevitably result. Even today, a mother may still refuse to let her baby see its reflection in a mirror until it is a year old and therefore of sufficient strength to survive the temporary separation from its soul. The old custom of covering up a mirror in a room where someone has died originated in the fear that the ghost of the deceased might snatch at the soul of a living person reflected in the glass, to accompany it to the underworld.

An interesting relic of mirror magic was the custom in which a girl looked at the moon's reflection in a looking-glass to discover how many years must pass before her wedding day. A similar Hallowe'en rite was supposed to produce the reflection of her husband-to-be looking over her shoulder in the mirror. Of all the superstitions and myths associated with mirror magic none is perhaps so intriguing as Lewis Carroll's creation *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. In that contradictory world where left is right and time and space run counter to reality. Alice must walk backwards to meet the Red Queen, while the Queen screams with pain even before her finger has been pricked.

The mirror has been described as a door through which the soul may find freedom, but the Greek legend of Narcissus is the perfect allegory: grasping at his reflected image in the fountain, the youth was absorbed, and then embraced by death, to remain the undying symbol of self-love.

(See also SCRYING.)

ERIC MAPLE

The wood of Christ's cross, the 'burning bush' of Moses and the dart which killed the Norse god Balder were all, according to legend, members of the mistletoe family, while to be kissed under its boughs was a magical insurance of fertility

MISTLETOE

THE GOLDEN BOUGH, which was the title of Sir James Frazer's classic work on magic and religion, is also a name for the mistletoe. Frazer refers to a belief that this magical plant at certain times 'blazed out into a supernatural golden glory', a belief on which Virgil based his description of Aeneas being led by two doves to the 'leafy gold' of mistletoe, shining where it grew on a holm-oak in the dark forest. It is a curious fact that when it becomes dry, the plant does indeed take on a golden tinge.

The many species of mistletoe are objects of veneration all over the world, but there is little doubt that the main myths, and certainly those which Frazer studied, concern the familiar native species *Viscum album*. Mistletoe is a parasite, springing from seeds which have been deposited by birds on the bark of trees. The plant inserts its woody 'sinkers' into the host plant from which it derives almost its entire sustenance. The most magical mistletoe grows on oaks, but its commonest host is probably the apple, although it also grows on many kinds of deciduous tree, and very occasionally on evergreens, including conifers.

The magic of mistletoe derives largely from its striking appearance, different from the host yet apparently part of it; from the fact that it is evergreen when the host is bare; that it does not grow in the soil but above it, and that it seems to have a mysterious vitality despite its apparent rootlessness. If cut for magical purposes a knife or sickle of sacred gold had to be used. According to Pliny the Druids did this, taking the utmost care to prevent it touching the ground, which not only destroyed the plant's god-given virtues but brought calamity. The white-robed priest would cut the mistletoe on the sixth day of the moon, letting it fall onto a white cloak. Two white

bulls were then sacrificed. After this, the efficacy of the plant was assured. It was placed in water, and this water was distributed as a talisman against evil. Pliny also describes the cutting of mistletoe by others than Druids for its magico-medicinal powers which, he explained, were strongest if the plant was gathered on the first night of the new moon without using iron. The warning to avoid iron was a frequent injunction in the gathering of such herbs.

The importance of the mistletoe to Frazer's theme was based on the Norse legend of Balder, as recorded in the *Prose Edda*. Balder was the son of Odin, wise, gentle and much loved. He told his fellow gods of dreams which seemed to foretell his death. They gathered together and agreed that the goddess Frigg should extract an oath from every conceivable creature, plant and substance, promising not to harm Balder. This was done and the oaths were tested by striking the god and throwing at him everything possible, and he remained unscathed. However, the resentful god Loki was jealous of Balder. Disguised as an old woman, he contrived to trick Frigg into admitting that she had not troubled to gain an assurance from the mistletoe, because it seemed too young to take an oath. Loki went away, gathered mistletoe, and rejoined the gods, who were still amusing themselves proving Balder's invulnerability. He spoke to blind Hoder and asked if he would not like to join in and, in effect, do honour to Balder. He gave Hoder the mistletoe branch and directed his aim: the branch struck home and Balder fell dead. The god was ceremonially cremated at sea, amid universal mourning.

Frazer wrote that the tale 'suggests that it belongs to that class of myths that have been dramatized in ritual'. He sets out to illustrate that the main incidents – the cutting of the mistletoe, followed by the death and burning of the god – had many counterparts in primitive rites. In parts of Scandinavia, mistletoe was until very recently, and perhaps still is, gathered for the Midsummer festival, when bonfires called *Balder's Balar* (Balder's balefires) are lit. Almost certainly an effigy of Balder was burned on these fires in former times.

It seems likely that burning an effigy was a more civilized version of an older custom of burning a human representative of the god, the end – according to Frazer – of 'the sacred drama which was acted year by year as a magical rite to cause the sun to shine, trees to grow, crops to thrive, and to guard man and beast from the baleful arts of fairies and trolls, of witches and warlocks.' The victims died 'as living embodiments of tree-spirits or deities of vegetation'. Such a sacrifice was, the historian Strabo recounted, carried out in remote ages in Italy at a Midsummer fire festival in the Arician Grove or Glade of Diana, where the one-year King of the Wood was burned on a perpetual fire doubtless fed with oak-wood.

Frazer argued that Balder must have been a tree deity, the personation of the oak. And the sacred oak had to be burned, just as the god had to die, for the good of man. The evergreen mistletoe represented the life-spring of the oak-tree, so before burning the tree the mistletoe had to be ceremonially removed to preserve its virtues; in any case if the mistletoe were not cut off, the oak would remain invulnerable. In any reference to Frazer's theory of a connection between the plant mistletoe and the god Balder, however, it must be emphasized that many scholars today consider that this is problematical (see BALDER).

There is an interesting additional reason for oak-mistletoe being especially sacred; oaks seem to be much more prone to being struck by lightning than many other trees; and no doubt mistletoe-bearing oaks were often struck. Our ancestors could readily believe, to paraphrase Frazer, that the sky god, after calling in his awful thunder-voice, had sent down his sacred plant-token in a lightning flash.

Freedom to Take Liberties

The commonest present-day association of mistletoe is the custom of kissing under the mistletoe bough at Christmas. There are two reasons for this practice. The first is the fertility symbolism of the plant, which the modern writer Geoffrey Grigson considers partly due to the way the berries are carried. Thus for a woman to be kissed under the mistletoe was originally a magical way to ensure she would bear children, while the plant itself could be used as an aphrodisiac. The mistletoe endows man with the freedom to kiss any woman; this derives from the general amnesty and 'universal liberty' allowed as long as this plant lay on the altar of the local church or cathedral – a practice recorded at York as recently as the 18th century.

The second reason is connected with the general all-healing, protective, good-luck reputation of mistletoe. In pagan times, as Pliny recounts, the plant's medico-magical properties were recognized to include not only the magic of encouraging fertility, but the power of reducing epileptic spasms as well. It was also given to sheep and cows after they had given birth. It was well known as a protection against witchcraft, the Devil and other kinds of evil; it could enable one to see ghosts and to make them speak, could open locks and lead to treasure. In the northern countries, appropriate to its link with Balder, it was a plant of peace.

Because of its healing virtues, in many primitive societies mistletoe was regarded as sacred. This was recorded, for instance, of the Ainu of Japan who favoured the mistletoe that grew on willows. Similarly, in 1827 Baron Roger wrote concerning the Walas of Senegambia in West Africa that they 'have much veneration for a sort of mistletoe which they call *tob*; they carry leaves of it on their persons when they go to war as a preservative against wounds.'

Exactly why mistletoe should be associated with Christmas in Britain, rather than with Midsummer as in Scandinavia, is not entirely clear; the most likely reason is its association with other evergreens, notably holly and ivy (see HOLLY AND IVY), whose red and black berries were a contrast to the white of the mistletoe. But this association is certainly deeply engrained in British country customs. The mistletoe might be hung up on Christmas Day or on New Year's Eve. In most cases it was left a twelvemonth and then burnt – the cremation ritual once more, geared perhaps to the Celts' anxiety about the ever-shortening days of winter, and certainly, like other bush-burnings, to ensure successful crops next year. In Worcestershire the bough, decorated with nuts, apples and ribbons, might be fixed on a cord and pulley so that the woman who was kissed could pull down a berry which she would then throw over her left shoulder.

Victorian modesty under the mistletoe; but the ancient symbolism of this custom was that to be kissed under the mistletoe ensured fertility

Mansell Collection

These local customs together with the romantic interest in the Druids of the 18th and early 19th centuries (see DRUIDS) encouraged the commercialization of the mistletoe, according to Grigson. It was during this Druid 'craze' that imitation Stonehenges were erected beside a mistletoe-infested apple tree and artificial mistletoe-oaks were made. It was then that churchmen began to distrust mistletoe as a 'pagan' plant, and would not have it in the church. This is curious because there are ancient legends that mistletoe was *sanctae crucis lignum*, the wood of the holy cross, or in France *l'herbe de la croix*; it had once been a strong tree but since its sad use degraded to a parasite.

There is another biblical but pre-Christian association with mistletoe: it seems probable that the scarlet-flowered *Loranthus acaciae*, a member of the mistletoe family which grows on acacia bushes, was the origin of the flame of fire from the burning bush, from which the Lord spoke to Moses.

In the Victorian language of flowers, the message of the mistletoe was 'I surmount difficulties'.

(See also OAK.)

A. J. HUXLEY

Louvre/C. M. Dixon

MITHRAS

'If Christianity had been arrested in its growth . . . the world would have been Mithraist', said the French philosopher Ernest Renan, and there is no doubt that this austere, soldierly cult, with its rigorous ordeals undertaken in subterranean chambers, gained an immensely powerful hold in the Roman Empire: there are five temples to Mithras in Britain alone. The Mithraic mysteries made their appeal to soldiers and to officials in the service of the Roman emperors. But exactly how an ancient Persian god found his way to Rome, to be adopted by high-ranking army officers, is still not fully known

Roman relief of the 3rd century AD, from one of the Mithraic sanctuaries, which were constructed underground, showing the god sacrificing the bull. It was this act which created the world, for all living things on earth arose from the body, blood and seed of the bull

DURING THE PERIOD between 1400 BC and 400 AD Persians, Indians, Romans and Greeks worshipped the god Mithras. The god was particularly important in the old polytheistic religion of the Persians between the 8th and 6th centuries BC and again in the Roman Empire in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. No direct evidence remains of Persian paganism, and if we wish to get an idea of this polytheistic religion we must fall back on reconstruction from texts of a later period. Plenty of material is available, however, and many points can be discovered which are very probably accurate.

There are four important sources for Mithraism. The first is a cuneiform script tablet from Boghazköi in Turkey which contains a contract between the Hittites and the Mitanni, an Iranian-speaking tribe in Mesopotamia c 1400 BC. In this contract, Mithras is invoked as a god before whom an oath may be sworn. Secondly, there are some Indian texts in which the god Mitra appears as a 'friend' and as a 'contract', and has connections with the sun. Unwillingly, he participates in the sacrifice of the god Soma, who frequently appears in the form of a bull or as the moon. Thirdly, great hymns of praise (*yashts*) were written, probably in

the 5th century, in honour of Mithra and the goddess Anahita. The Mithraic yasht extolled the god as the Lord of Contract, who in war grants victory and in peace prosperity. Finally, the Roman monuments reveal some important aspects of Mithraic mysteries that spread to far-flung areas of the Empire.

By comparing these sources we may infer that in Persian paganism Mithras was a god of friendship and of contract and had close connections with the sun. These three points are interrelated, as contracts are the basis of friendship among people; as a witness to contracts the sun has often been called upon, as he is all-seeing. The sacrifice of bulls was also part of the Mithraic cult. It is closely connected with Mithras as god of contracts, as in ancient times contracts were sanctioned through common sacrifice and a common feast. According to Plutarch, Mithras was the 'mediator'. This corresponds to what we know about the old Persian Mithras. The contract as a bond between humans, friendship and feasting after the sacrifice which was a unifying force, and the sacrifice itself linking men with the gods are all examples of Mithras's role as a mediator. Mithras, the sun, was in old Persian times also closely connected with kingship. People swore oaths by the king and by the sun. Kingship also incorporated above all else the idea of law and order at a time when the abstract concept of the state was still unknown and there were no written laws. Order was visibly present in the person of the king; the king was the law, and when he died chaos erupted, as law and order were gone (see KING).

The Persian social system was feudal, in the sense that there were no abstract legal rights and duties but only reciprocal personal obligations between man and woman, parents and children, lord and peasant, and so on. Mithras, who represented law and order, was the divine exponent of the Persian system as god of contracts and of all reciprocal relationships.

Eclipsed by Zoroaster

The Persian religion was completely changed by Zoroaster (see ZOROASTRIANISM). The exact period of the prophet's life is uncertain; at the latest it was about 550 BC, perhaps considerably earlier. Zoroaster taught that there was a single god, Ahura Mazdah (see OHRMAZD) and he rejected the other gods of the old Persians. The Persian word *daivas*, which originally meant 'gods', has since Zoroaster signified 'evil demons'. Zoroaster fought passionately against polytheism and against Mithras. He protested against the bull sacrifice, the principal festival of the Mithraic religion. In later generations, the doctrinal teaching of Zoroaster was gradually interspersed with elements of the older polytheism, and the wide gap between the two religions was bridged by compromise. After Darius, who died in 486 BC, the Persian kings were Zoroastrians. But the aristocracy probably continued to be attached to Mithras and the old gods. Despite this difference of opinion, the Persian kings seem to have made allowance for those social groups who did not want to replace the old cults entirely by Zoroastrianism. Indeed, the kings were practical politicians, and considerate of the feelings of their subjects. In the 4th century BC the Kings Artaxerxes II and III mentioned Mithra and the goddess Anahita in their inscriptions. But by this time, Zoroastrianism was the dominant factor in the blending of the two religions and we hear no more of the Mithraic bull sacrifice.

A Song to Mithras

Mithras, God of the Morning, our trumpets waken the Wall!
'Rome is above the Nations, but Thou art over all!'
Now as the names are answered, and the guards are marched away,
Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength for the day!

Mithras, God of the Midnight, here where the great Bull dies,
Look on Thy Children in darkness. Oh, take our sacrifice!
Many roads Thou hast fashioned – all of them lead to the Light!
Mithras, also a soldier, teach us to die aright!

Rudyard Kipling

After the destruction of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great nothing more is heard about the Persian worship of Mithras. Yet over three centuries later Mithras was worshipped in the states between the Parthian Empire and the Graeco-Roman world, for example in Armenia, where Mithras was again god of kings and feudalism. In a Mithraic ceremony, King Tiridates I submitted to the Roman Emperor Nero in the 1st century AD and made his kingdom a fief under Nero's control. Mithras was also the god of the kings of Commagene, to the south of Armenia. It is likely that Mithridates of Pontus (1st century BC), the great enemy of the Romans, worshipped Mithras; his kingdom included the northern coast of modern Turkey, and the Crimea. Finally, we know from Plutarch that the pirates of Cilicia, the south coast of Turkey, also worshipped Mithras during this period. On the other hand, Mithras was of no importance in the Greek-populated areas of Asia Minor. The Persians were the national enemies of the Greeks and consequently their god Mithras had no chance of success with the Greeks.

Powerful Roman Following

It is an open question whether the Roman Mithras mysteries were the same religion as the Persian Mithraic cult. The Persian religion changed to accommodate the different conditions of the Roman Empire. Certainly, many elements of the old religion were retained, but at the same time the Roman theology contained elements unknown to the Persians. For example, the Romans took their doctrine of the fate of the soul from Plato's philosophy. One could say that the Roman mysteries were a completely new religion. It may be that there were one or more founders of the new cult, dating from perhaps c 100 AD. The dated Roman Mithras monuments start from c 140 AD.

It is puzzling how this religion came to Rome. It is unwise to postulate that its spread can be compared to the spread of the Christian mission, for the Mithras mysteries were addressed to entirely different social strata, to the soldiers and officials in the imperial service, and only men were initiated into the cult. It has been suggested that the Mithraic cult spread slowly, by way of Syria and Asia Minor, and then came to Rome by sea. However, this theory is contradicted by the hostility of the Greeks in Asia Minor towards the god. It has also been suggested that the Roman legions became acquainted with the cult of Mithras on the Persian frontier and that when troops were moved from the eastern front to Europe they brought Mithras with them to the west. It should be remembered, however, that a religion would only have been able to spread in the army of the Roman emperors if it were regarded favourably by those at the top. It is therefore probable that the founder, or founders, of the Roman Mithraic mysteries must have been active in Rome itself, and that he or they must have enjoyed the benevolent encouragement of higher generals, perhaps even of the *praefectus praetorio*, the commander of the Praetorian Guard. The Mithras cult was probably introduced into the legions from above, by officers who were posted from their headquarters in Rome to legions on the frontiers of the empire.

The geographical distribution of archeological finds supports this hypothesis. Many Mithraic remains have been excavated in Rome and in areas of military conflict on the frontiers, such as the Euphrates, Danube, Rhine and in Britain; but almost none have been found in the pacified provinces such as Gaul or Spain, apart from the Mithraeum or temple in Mérida, Spain, the seat of the Roman governor.

There are numerous Mithras initiation inscriptions that do not originate from soldiers but from officials in the imperial service, particularly from freedmen who were able to obtain very influential positions in finance and customs administration if they proved their worth. Such men worshipped one god only if it did not prejudice their career. It is characteristic of the Mithraic cult that it was a religion of loyalty, of respect for the social system, unlike Christianity which was a religion of rebellious aloofness from the state, and of revolutionary hope in the Last Judgement.

Initiation Underground

The Mithraic sanctuaries in the Roman world were underground grottoes. The ceiling symbolized the heavens, and the cavern the world. The chambers were never very large, with space for barely 100 men. Around the central chamber there were sometimes labyrinthine systems of artificial passages, as beneath the church of St Clemente in Rome. There was always a spring in the cavern. The Mithraic monuments were certainly not built secretly below ground, but a hole was dug in the same way as when a cellar is constructed, perhaps behind a high fence.

There were seven grades of initiation into the Mithraic mysteries, each with a symbolic name: *corax* (raven), *nymphus* (bridegroom), *miles* (soldier), *leo* (lion),

Roger Wood

The gods Ohrmazd and Mithras, flanking the Persian King Ardeshir II: the Persian Mithras was a god of contract, a mediator between gods and men, and was closely connected with both the sun and the kingship, the principle of law and order in society

Perses (Persian), *heliodromus* (courier to the sun), *pater* (father). The raven wore a raven's mask, the lion a lion's mask, the Persian a Persian cap, and so on. Literary records state that the initiate into the Mithraic mysteries had to submit to corporal punishment, that he was bound and then released. The initiation signified a ritually symbolic regeneration. The person being initiated as a 'soldier' had to undergo a test of courage. He had to force his way, apparently by means of a duel, to a wreath. This done, an officiant came up to him and put the wreath on his head, but the candidate had to reject the wreath and say that Mithras was his wreath. For the rest of his life he was not permitted to wear a wreath, as this honour was due only to the god.

There were various initiation ceremonies, such as baptism, the common meal, obligation through shaking hands (in this ceremony we can recognize the old Persian god of contract). Those being initiated wandered through the underground passages; at some points passwords were demanded. On one fresco at Ostia, in Italy, the mystic is dressed as a 'bridegroom'. In Rome beneath St Prisca the fresco depicts a procession of 'lions'. At Capua, Italy, the initiate is being led towards the initiation point with his eyes bound. He then kneels down before the mystagogue (teacher or leader) who wears a Persian cap, and finally lies stretched out, humbly on the ground.

On some occasions lighting effects were used: there were reliefs which could be illuminated from the rear revealing a crescent or the head of Mithras or Sol (the sun) surrounded by a halo. There were also statues of Chronos, the god of time who swallows everything, which were hollow at the back and able to spit fire. At some shrines the relief showing the sacrifice of the bull, at the end of the grotto, could be turned round, revealing on the other side, for example, the common repast of Mithras and Helios. Either side could be shown, according to the demands of the liturgy.

Some verses from hymns of the Mithraic mysteries have been found as wall inscriptions under the church of St Prisca in Rome. There are also frescoes testifying to a syncretism of the Persian with old Roman ceremonies. The Mithraic sacrifice of the bull is connected with the old Roman feast of *Suovetourilia* (the sacrifice of a boar, a ram and a bull); this sacrifice was offered up on the day of *Palilia*, another old Roman festival, when the founding of the city of Rome was celebrated. *Suovetaurilia* and *Palilia* were Roman national festivals, which were celebrated under the patronage and with the participation of the emperor. The Mithraeum under St Prisca, where these representations may be seen, lay in a large complex of buildings which were imperial property. The Persian religion was thus set completely into an 'old Roman' framework, with the approval and even the encouragement of the emperor; in particular the Emperors Commodus, Septimius Severus and Caracalla probably favoured the Mithraic mysteries, for an exceptionally large number of dated Mithraic inscriptions originate from their period. Also characteristic of the blend of Persian and Roman ideas is a representation found in a Mithraeum at Ostia of the Roman god Silvanus, and instead of *pater* in the inscriptions we sometimes read *Pater patratus*. This is an old Roman title for a priest whose task it was to form alliances. Thus, in the service of the Persian god of contract, there was the renewal of a priest's title which had been in use in ancient Rome for the negotiation of contracts.

From Death to Cosmic Birth

The sacrifice of the bull had been the great holy deed of Mithraism. The sun god, through his messenger, the raven, had commanded Mithras to sacrifice the bull; on some reliefs the raven flies to Mithras on a sunbeam. The god carried out the sacrifice with great reluctance: in many representations he is sadly averting his gaze, he is innocent of the animal's suffering. But when the bull died, a great miracle occurred – the world began: the cloak of Mithras was changed into a celestial globe on which planets, the zodiac and fixed stars were shining; the white bull, now a crescent, was moved into the heavens. (Luna, the moon

G. Drury/Guildhall Museum

Roman statue of Mithras: the god's cult was converted into a mystery religion, under the influence of ideas drawn from Plato. He made a powerful appeal to soldiers and imperial officials and was probably introduced into the legions by high-ranking officers from Rome

goddess, is seen in the reliefs frequently averting her eyes from the sacrifice). From the tail and from the blood of the bull arose ears of corn and the vine. Then came all the trees and plants, the four elements, the winds and the seasons; from the seed which issued from the bull there arose the good animals and all living things. This Mithraic deed was a blessing: 'Thou hast saved us also by pouring out the blood eternal', according to one of the few verses we have obtained from a Mithraic hymn. The power of evil wanted to prevent the creation; the scorpion, snake and lion try to drink the seed of the bull. Evil will not be destroyed until the end of time; as long as he is on earth man must always struggle for good and against evil.

Particularly instructive is a relief in London on which Mithras is sacrificing the bull not in the cavern but in the celestial sphere, which is indicated by the zodiac: the heavens arose following the sacrifice of the bull. Each sunrise signifies a repetition of this cosmogony. The stars began to revolve in the sky, and this was the birth of time. The sun circling around the earth caused the day, the orbit of the moon the months, and the path of the sun through the zodiac (the ecliptic) the years.

There are numerous other Mithraic myths to be seen in the reliefs, often in the small pictures near the main scene: the birth of Mithras from a tree; Mithras shooting at the cloud with an arrow (bringing the rain), or at the rock (causing a spring to gush forth); cutting the corn; taming the bull; his contract with the sun god; the holy meal; the ascent to heaven on the chariot of the sun god. The myth of the birth of Mithras from the rock has the same significance as the sun rising over the mountains on the horizon and the cosmogony in the sacrifice of the bull. The birth of Mithras from an egg depicted on the relief at Newcastle-upon-Tyne shows the egg turning into a celestial globe, represented by the zodiac; here Mithras is equated with the Orphic primeval god Phanes (Eros) who arose out of the egg.

The beautiful Mithraic statues of Venus, Mercury and Jupiter show that, as well as Mithras and Chronos, the god of time, the gods of the planets were worshipped.

The Mithraic myths have been interpreted into a complete theology, in accordance with the Platonic myths. The cavern of the mysteries was the world, as in the cave allegory of the Platonic state. The mystic had to try to free himself from the shackles of materialism and ascend to the true sun, like Mithras on the chariot of the sun god. The way up led through the spheres of the seven planets, a progress already anticipated on earth in the Mithraic initiations, when the mystics ascended through the seven grades of initiation, each of which was related to a planet. This ascent was symbolized by the seven-runged ladder at Ostia; at each initiation the mystic passed through a new gate. On the reliefs at Capua and Rome there is the Platonic Eros, or the Orphic Phanes (Mithras), guiding the psyche of the mystic. The ascent of Mithras has been compared with the ascent of the soul to the firmament in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

The cosmogony of the mysteries was interpreted from the cosmogony in Plato's *Timaeus*. Mithras was named 'father and creator of the universe', in words reminiscent of the *Timaeus* and the attack by the evil animals, shown on the reliefs, corresponds with the attack of the elements on the newborn babe in the *Timaeus*. Above all, however, the dualistic outlook of Persian religion found its philosophical interpretation in the two rotations of the heavens seen on the Mithraic reliefs: the constant rotation of the vault of heaven with the fixed stars to the right and the variable orbit of the planets through the zodiac to the left. From the combination of these revolutions arose inconstant time. But man must strive for the eternal and, by-passing the gods of the planets, ascend to the one true eternal.

This Platonizing interpretation of the Mithraic myths is secondary in relation to the old Persian religion; but the Roman mysteries were probably first established on the basis of this allegorical interpretation. The founder or founders of the religion must have been Platonists. They rendered the philosophical teachings into the myths and rites of the Persian god and thus created an entirely new religion.

The Mithraic mysteries were therefore completely Hellenized and Romanized. The Persian god could be accepted as a traditional god of the Romans. There is a characteristic inscription from Carnuntum, near Vienna, from the year 307: the old Emperor Diocletian had consulted with the reigning emperors in order to settle disputes; together they restored a Mithraic sanctuary and dedicated it 'to the patrons of their empire'. The cult was to thrive as long as the emperors supported it.

Under Constantine the Great the Mithraic cult lost imperial favour. He publicly supported Christianity and while there are several dated Mithraic monuments up to 312 AD, after that there is only one from the military frontiers of the empire.

A collection of inscriptions from Rome, in which Mithras is mentioned, are dated from 357 to 387 and originate from the group of pagan Roman senators who had rebelled against the new Christian Empire in Constantinople. They were connected with the Emperor Julian the Apostate, who had wanted to reintroduce paganism into the whole empire. These cults of the Roman opposition are no longer characteristic of the Mithraic mysteries, as at that time in Rome a fierce syncretism was being practised; the inscriptions mention Mithras only as one of many pagan gods. The genuine Mithraic mysteries ceased under Constantine, and the triumphant Christian Church erected its basilicas above the underground Mithraic caverns in Rome.

R. MERKELBACH

MODERN WITCHCRAFT

Wicca has worship as its main object, but the additional element of magic lends the cult an illicit and undoubtedly attractive aura

Until the early '50s, most people assumed that witchcraft had flown out of the window when the industrial revolution came in at the door; is the modern revival of interest in magic a deliberately trumped-up anachronism with decadent undertones, or is it a belated recognition of a religion which is older than Christianity?

IN RECENT YEARS increasing publicity has been given to the activities of people claiming to be 'witches'. With a few notable exceptions these people dress in a normal fashion, earn a living in ordinary jobs, are married and have children and, in fact, show few outward signs of their strange beliefs. Yet they firmly maintain that witchcraft is as relevant to the 20th century as to any time previously.

Modern witches refer to their religion as 'Wicca', the feminine form of an Old English word, *wicce*, meaning a witch, possibly a derivative of the verb *wiccian*, to practise witchcraft. Wicca is a largely urban cult drawing principally upon a membership of lower middle and middle class people between the ages of 30 and 50. In common with more orthodox religions, Wicca has worship as its main object, but the additional element of magic lends the cult an illicit and undoubtedly attractive aura.

Both male and female members of Wicca are known as witches, although the cult is mainly matriarchal, the high priestess being looked upon as the personification, and in some ceremonies the incarnation, of the mother goddess who is the principal deity of witchlore. In some respects she is not dissimilar to the Virgin Mary of Roman Catholicism; she is Queen of Heaven, and her symbols are the moon and stars. She is light, love and above all fertility and is sometimes referred to by the names of old pagan goddesses – the Celtic Arianrhod, the Roman Diana, the Egyptian Isis. Her consort, personified by the high priest, is the horned god – Cernunnos, Pan, Osiris – the dark, male factor. Out of the union of the god and goddess came the universe, and between them they control the turning of the seasons, bring fertility to crops and animals, bestow magical powers upon their faithful followers, and generally operate the clockwork of the cosmos.

Wicca is basically a fertility cult and its great festivals are geared to the seasons. They are the spring equinox, on 21 March; May Eve or Beltane, on 30 April; the summer solstice, mid-summer on 22 June; August Eve, or Lammastide, on 1 August; the autumn equinox on 21 September; Hallowe'en on 31 October; the winter solstice, or Yule, on 21 December; and Candlemas on 2 February. The witch meetings on these dates are known as sabbats, and additional sabbats are also held on the nights of the full moon, in honour of the goddess. Weekly or monthly meetings, less formal affairs at which cult business is attended to and new members initiated, are known as esbats.

Garter and Knife

The basic working unit is the 'coven'. This may consist of between four to 14 or sometimes 20 members, although 13 is considered the ideal number, partly because of tradition and partly because a nine-foot circle, in which the group operate during their ceremonies, nicely accommodates 13 people. The late Dr Margaret Murray is among those who have put forward certain theories concerning the coven. Many witches point out that Christ, with his twelve apostles, had an ideal coven with the Virgin Mary as 'high priestess'. Some maintain that the semi-mythical Robin Hood, Maid Marion, and 12 'merry men' were in fact a group of witches, and a similar theory is applied to King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and the knights of the Round Table. According to a fanciful theory, even the British monarch, taken in conjunction with the 25 knights of the Order of the Garter – two 13s – has been associated with witchcraft. Tradition has it that the Order of the Garter came into being around the year 1348, when Joan, Countess of Salisbury, dropped her garter during a court ball. Edward III saw the incident and, to relieve the lady's embarrassment, picked it up and tied it to his own leg, saying, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense': 'Evil (or shame) to him who thinks evil of it.'

According to modern witches, the garter has always been the badge of office of the high priestess of a coven (though there is little textual evidence to support this), and the countess could have therefore been a witch. In the relatively permissive days of Edward III few ladies at court would feel shame at merely losing a garter, and Edward donned the garter himself to show that he too was a witch; he subsequently founded the 'double coven' of the Order of the Garter in the witches' honour.

Witches worship powerful cosmic forces which are personified as the mother goddess and the horned god, from whose union came the universe ***Previous page*** **The high priest of this coven holds the sword of power and wears a horned helmet which connects him with the god**

In any case, the modern high priestess in some covens wears a single garter to show her rank; a priestess who is head of more than one coven may have a silver buckle on her garter for each of her covens, displaying them with pride. On her head, the priestess wears a crescent head-dress, symbol of the moon, and around her waist is tied a girdle consisting of three cords, each cord commemorating the degree of her initiation, and symbolizing her bondage to the service of the mother goddess and her coven. The priestess, like the priest, also carries a sword as a mark of office; on his head the priest often wears the horned helmet of the god.

The girdle is common to all members of a coven, as is the 'athame' or black-handled knife. This weapon, inscribed with magic symbols, is presented to each witch on initiation, although ideally it should be made by the witch himself. It is used to mark out the magic circle and, held point upwards, to draw down magical power into the circle. Often, the 'circle' is no more than an invisible boundary drawn around the coven by the high priestess. Sometimes, however, it may be an elaborately drawn affair, with symbols and 'names of power' marked on the floor of the coven room.

In the centre of the circle stands a small altar, upon which are placed the 'Book of Shadows', the liturgy of Wicca, containers for salt and water, a censer, a scourge, a wand, the pentacle or plate, and a chalice: fewer or more items of equipment are used depending on the practice of each coven, and on the nature of the ceremony.

Ceremonial, within the broad outline of Wicca, differs from coven to coven. At the average esbat, usually held indoors on a Saturday night, the circle is marked out and four candles are lit, one at each point of the compass. The naked witches stand just

inside the circle, with the high priestess at the centre, kneeling at the altar, and the high priest standing with his back to the north, his arms crossed on his breast. Using the point of her athame, the high priestess mingles the salt and water together in a small bowl and then sprinkles the mixture around the perimeter of the circle and upon the heads of the witches present. The water symbolizes purity, the salt life and freedom from corruption. She herself is sprinkled with the mixture by the high priest. Thus purified, the high priestess takes her sword in her right hand and, arms outstretched, stands at each of the four points of the compass in turn, invoking the 'Mighty Ones' of Air, Fire, Water and Earth, the traditional elements from which the god and goddess created the universe. Air is attributed to the east, fire to the south, water to the west and earth to the north.

Drawing Down the Moon

On the nights of the full moon, and at certain of the major festivals, the high priest performs a short ceremony known as 'drawing down the moon' on the high priestess, during which, her followers believe, she becomes the goddess incarnate. The 'power' is generally achieved by a process of dancing and chanting. Witches believe that the build-up of power is achieved much more readily when the participants are naked and when a certain sexual tension is present; some claim to have 'seen' this power as a golden conical aura, its base resting upon the heads of the dancers. In this charged atmosphere the witches begin to cast their spells. Only three pieces of magic can be performed at each meeting, they claim, and the spells should always be for good; an evil spell rebounds threefold upon the head of its creator. Sometimes the spell is cast telepathically; for instance, in the case of a spell cast to cure a person of a bad leg the witches would stand silently and 'will' the leg to heal. On other occasions they might use a doll, or 'fith-fath' to represent the sick person – and bathe the doll's leg with a healing potion, or the high priestess might 'bind' the spell, wrapping her girdle around the blade of her athame in a special way.

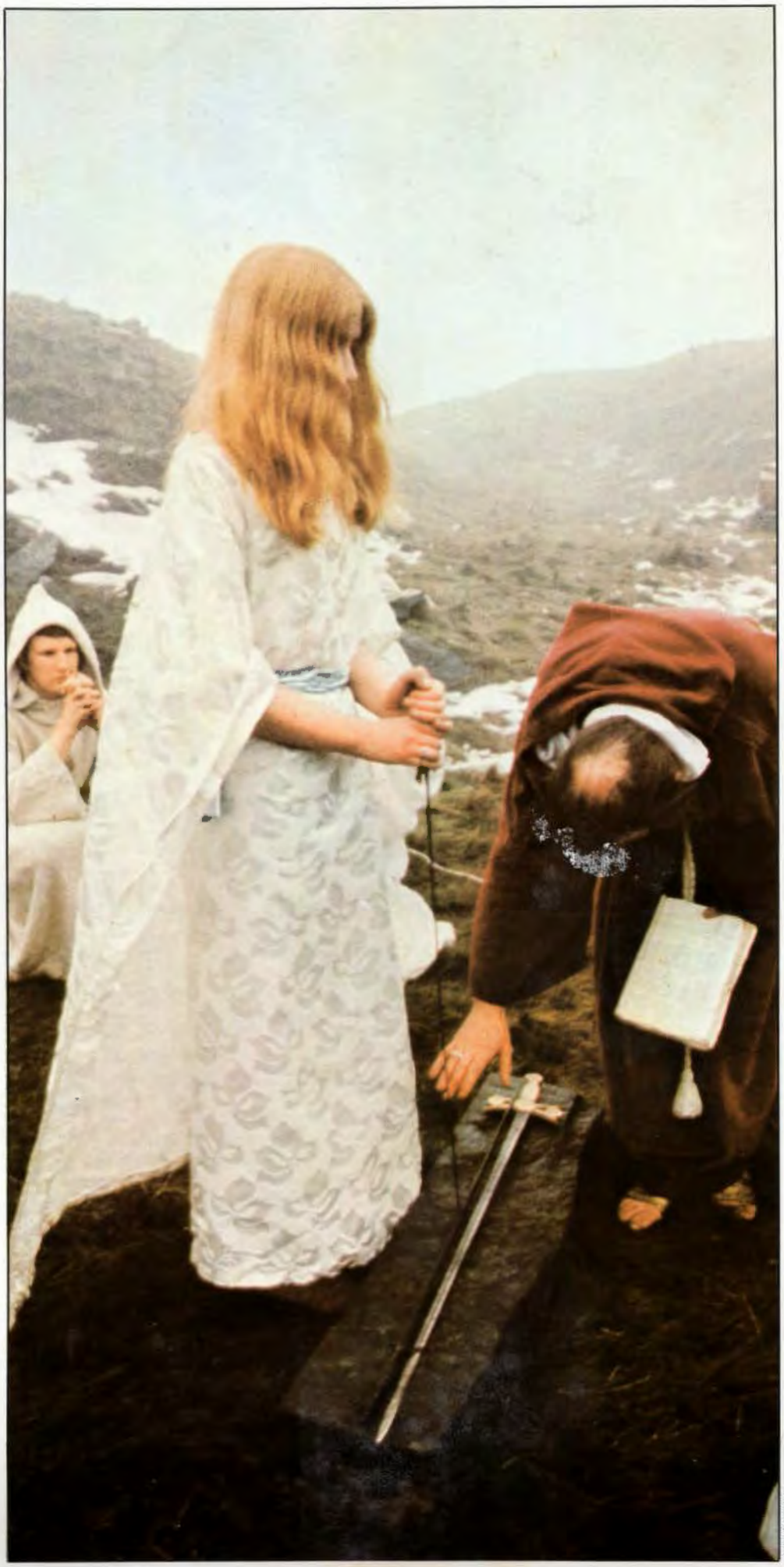
The spells suitably cast, the circle is closed, the Mighty Ones are dismissed, and the witches settle down to a ceremony with cakes and wine. The wine is consecrated by the high priest and priestess together, the latter dipping her athame into the wine which the priest holds up to her in the chalice – an obvious piece of sexual symbolism. The cakes are then consecrated by having the athame passed over them in the form of a pentagram, and cakes and chalice are passed around to each witch in turn. Despite protests to the contrary, witches claim that the cakes and wine ceremony is not a travesty of the Mass; it is, they say, simply a form of thanksgiving for the grape and the grain.

The motives of modern witches are often thought to be questionable, and certainly a considerable element of sexuality is present at many meetings, although charges that Wicca is an excuse for sexual orgies are hotly denied. The nudity of the coven, the frantic dancing, the incense and the slightly illicit atmosphere contribute to this, as do certain ceremonial acts. The binding and whipping of a new initiate for 'purification' purposes, for instance, is highly titillating for those with sado-masochistic tendencies (though the 'whip' is usually of embroidery silk) while the 'five-fold kiss' bestowed by the high priest or priestess on the feet, knees, genitals, breasts and lips of new members speaks for itself. The 'Great Rite', performed at certain ceremonies and consisting of token or actual sexual intercourse between the high priest and priestess, is justified by the witches on the grounds that Wicca is, after all, a fertility cult. Only the high priest may initiate a female member, while the the high priestess initiates the males.

The Revival

In the eyes of Wicca members the cult is of vast antiquity, predating Christianity by thousands of years. In fact, as a modern cult, Wicca has been in operation for less than 20 years; it was only with the passing of the Fraudulent Mediums Act of 1951 that it was able legally to present itself to society at all. This Act, which restricted prosecution only to those who obtained money from the public under the pretext of possessing supernatural power, enabled spirit mediums and astrologers, as well as witches, to practise their arts legally in the open for the first time in hundreds of years.

After the witch-hunting fury of the 17th century, witchcraft declined in England.



John Drysdale

'Wicca', as witches call the cult, is primarily a fertility religion, strongly influenced by the theory of the late Margaret Murray that medieval witchcraft was a survival of the pagan fertility religion of pre-Christian Europe. 'Witches believe that the build-up of power is achieved more readily when the participants are naked and when a certain sexual tension is present'; they also work naked because they believe that clothes hinder the flowing out of power from their bodies

John Drysdale

Margaret Murray argued that witchcraft had not been an anti-Christian perversion but the survival of pre-Christian paganism

Some 300 years after the Witch-Finder General, Matthew Hopkins, had terrorized the eastern counties, a series of books appeared which set the scene for the modern reappearance of the ancient craft. Margaret Murray's *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921) argued that witchcraft had not been an anti-Christian perversion but the survival of pre-Christian paganism. In 1949 Gerald Gardner published a novel *High Magic's Aid*, which purported to give authentic details of witchcraft practice; this was followed five years later by a non-fiction book, *Witchcraft Today*. In this he claimed to be a witch and maintained that his fellows in the New Forest coven to which he belonged had appointed him their 'publicity officer'. Gardner proselytized for the witches in a further book, *The Meaning of Witchcraft* published in 1959, and attracted a great deal of largely hostile publicity from the newspapers before his death in 1964.

In the absence of any evidence except hearsay, there is a strong case in favour of the suggestion that Gardner invented the cult of Wicca to satisfy his own sense of the esoteric, drawing upon magical texts – he was a great admirer of Aleister Crowley – Margaret Murray's theories, and a smattering of witch lore and assorted mythology. His rituals were far more heavily based on sex than the ones most commonly practised today, so that it is reasonable to suppose that Gardner's sexual whims were gratified by the 'religion' he had created.

Gardner's followers in the '50s were often referred to as Gardnerian witches; for the last few years they have been increasingly superseded by the 'Alexandrian' variety, whose leader is a Manchester-born man named Alex Sanders, who refers to himself as 'King of the Witches' and claims to be descended, through his maternal grandmother, from Owen Glendower, the legendary Welsh chieftain said to have been given the same title by his followers. Alexandrian witches differ from the Gardnerian variety principally in that they lean far more strongly towards ceremonial magic although, like the Gardnerians, they worship the god and goddess and carry out the same fertility rituals.

It is through the witchcraft of Alex Sanders that Wicca in the long run seems

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

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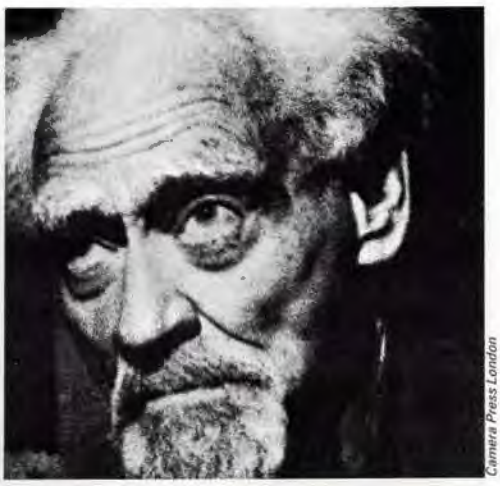

Camera Press London

The writings of Aleister Crowley *(top left)*, the most famous or infamous magician of the century, influenced both Alex Sanders (*centre*, seen here invoking the sun) and Gerald Gardner *(right)*, principal propagandist of the modern witchcraft revival *Above* A 'dance of the wheel' performed on Beltane, the old Celtic festival which marked the opening of the second half of the turning wheel of the year

most likely to establish itself, if at all. The Alexandrians seem to have a far greater percentage of young people in their ranks, than had the Gardnerians, and most of them are of a high educational standard. Sanders loses no opportunity of explaining the beliefs of his followers and himself, using any modern medium available. He has made numerous radio and television appearances, has appeared in several films in Britain, the Continent, and Canada, and is the subject of a book by June Johns, *King of the Witches*. He has made a long-playing record of his rituals, and his engagements and contracts are handled as professionally as those of a 'pop star'. But Alex Sanders is firmly at the helm of his enterprise; if he appears ambitious, he also has the future of Wicca at heart, expounding the principles and beliefs of the cult with all the sincerity of any missionary.

To some, modern witchcraft is a smutty, underground cult whose sole objective is sexual licentiousness carried out in the name of religion; to others it is healthy and rational, the nudity being a symbol of the stripping away of material things, and the idea of worshipping the creative forces of the universe being the most logical and simple method of worship. Whatever the truth of its claims to ancient roots, its basic aims seem harmless enough, and give a certain spiritual satisfaction to many people whose faith in established religion has flagged.
(See also SABBATH.)

FRANK SMYTH

FURTHER READING: M. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon; Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers and Other Pagans in America Today* (Viking, 1979); Gerald Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (Citadel Press, 1970); Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Peter Smith); C.A. Hoyt, *Witchcraft* (S. Ill. Univ. Press, 1981).

At first derided and persecuted, Mohammed became leader of a large community, which grew into one of the world's major religions

MOHAMMED

BORN IN MECCA about 570 AD, Mohammed (more correctly Muhammad) was a citizen of an important commercial city, for Meccan caravans travelled annually to south Arabia, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Mecca was also a religious centre, with the Kaaba to which pilgrimage was made from many regions. Other sacred sites in the neighbourhood were also visited by pilgrims. So Mecca derived profit from both its commerce and its sanctity.

Tradition says that Mohammed belonged to an influential family, but though he had some influential connections, he lived in obscurity and even poverty in his early days. The Koran (sura 93) says, 'Did he (God) not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did he not find you erring and guide you? Did he not find you poor and enrich you?' Before Mohammed's birth his father died, and when he was five his mother died. He came under the care of his grandfather Abd al-Muttalib and, when he died, of his uncle Abu Talib. Mohammed is said to have been employed as a shepherd and he is also said to have travelled with traders into Syria. Such a journey would bring him in contact with Jews and Christians, whose religions had made little impression on Arabs, though Arabia had Jewish and Christian communities. Yet there was an indirect effect, for some Arabs, called haneefs, had abandoned idolatry for the worship of one God.

When Mohammed was about 25, a prosperous Meccan widow named Khadeeja, employed him as her agent in a caravan to Syria, and was so pleased with his success that they married. While Mohammed probably continued to conduct business, he now had time for leisure, part of which he occupied visiting a cave on Mount Hira, near Mecca, for meditation.

Divine Inspiration

Eventually, at about the age of 40, he had a vision. Tradition says that an apparition appeared before him and commanded him to read (or recite) in God's name. He protested that he could not do so, and the command was repeated twice more. Then he recited the words at the beginning of sura 96 of the Koran, 'Read (recite) in the name of your Lord who created, created man from congealed blood . . .' Mohammed doubted the divine origin of the message, fearing that some devil had taken possession of him, but due to Khadeeja's encouragement he became convinced that he was divinely inspired.

Sura 3 speaks of two visitations. In the first the visitant is said to have given his servant (Mohammed) the inspiration he conveyed. Sura 81 says, 'Your comrade is not jinn-possessed; he saw him on the plain horizon, nor does he grudge to communicate the unseen.' Dr Bell has argued (in his *Introduction to the Qu'ran*) that Mohammed first thought he had seen God, but later interpreted the visitant as Gabriel. But whatever development Mohammed required in understanding, once he was assured that the message had a divine source he no longer doubted that he was called by God to be a prophet.

A period of depression followed, without inspiration, but messages later began to come regularly. Mohammed started to preach publicly and was ridiculed. But when the Meccans began to fear that his denunciation of idols might deprive them of the income from pilgrims, persecution followed. Mohammed had the protection of Abu Talib's clan, but most of his followers were poor, some being slaves, so he advised those without protectors to go to Abyssinia where they could live in safety under its Christian king.

The Koran depicts a lively controversy with the Meccans. The salient points of Mohammed's teaching were that there is only one God, who has appointed him as his prophet, that the rich must treat the poor justly and be honest in their business dealings, and that judgement follows death, when mankind will be rewarded or punished. Though the Meccans acknowledged a supreme God, Allah (from *al-ilah* 'the god'), local objects of worship meant more to them,

An angel reveals the Koran, the sacred book of Islam. Shiite doctrine speaks of the light of Mohammed which was created in time immemorial and passed on to his successors from generation to generation.

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul

and they refused to abandon polytheism or to accept Mohammed as a prophet. Some called him jinn-possessed and a poet, an accusation he vehemently rejected, because poets were believed to be inspired by a familiar spirit.

Mohammed insisted that he was inspired by God. He recounted stories of former prophets who had been rejected, ending with an account of the terrible fate of the unbelievers. The Meccans replied that he rehashed stories at second-hand. They also ridiculed his teaching about a bodily resurrection, arguing that everyone knew the body decayed after burial. To this Mohammed had the reply that God who had created the body in the first place surely had power to bring it back to life.

Flight to Medina

Mohammed lost both his encourager and his protector when Khadeeja died in December 619 and Abu Talib died the following month. At the pilgrimage season, he met 12 people from Yathrib (later Medina), a town about 180 miles north of Mecca, who were willing to accept his teaching, and he sent back a missionary with them. The following year, 70 people from Yathrib met Mohammed and agreed to protect him if he came to Yathrib. With this assurance he decided on emigration.

This emigration (the Hegira) in 622 AD was a turning-point in Mohammed's career. Many difficulties remained, but the change improved his fortunes and Islam became established as a separate religion. The earlier preaching suggests that Mohammed considered himself in the line of the prophets, proclaiming the monotheism of Abraham; but circumstances made him realize that Jews and Christians did not accept all his teaching. The importance of the emigration was early recognized, for when the calendar was fixed in the time of the second caliph, 622 became the year 1 of the Hegira.

Times were still hard, and not all the people of Yathrib welcomed Mohammed. Those who did were called Helpers and those who did not declare themselves were called Hypocrites. The phrase 'the Emigrants and the Helpers' became a technical term for the Medina Moslem community.

Hostility towards the Meccans led to fighting. Meccan caravans passing to the west of Medina were sometimes raided by men who owed allegiance to Mohammed, and in the second year of the Hegira he himself led out a number of followers to attack a rich caravan. The caravan escaped, but Mohammed with 305 men met a Meccan supporting force three times as large and defeated it. The booty brought some relief but the knowledge that they could win gave the battle even greater significance. Mohammed declared that squadrons of angels had come to assist the Moslems, marking the victory with God's approval.

Mohammed gradually strengthened his position, engaging in many expeditions against Arab tribes, resulting in an oath of allegiance being sworn to him by tribes which recognized his strength. At the beginning of 630, in a practically bloodless victory, he conquered Mecca, clearing it of its idols and sacred stones, leaving only the Black Stone in the Kaaba, which is venerated, but not worshipped, by Moslems to the present day. Henceforth Mecca was the most sacred town to Moslems, but Mohammed returned to stay in Medina.

He had early drawn up a constitution recognizing him as leader in all matters and making provision for peaceful relations with the Jews. But he soon realized that the Jews were unwilling to welcome him, for they disputed his prophetic claims and questioned the accuracy of his knowledge of earlier revelation. He first showed his disapproval by changing the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca, and substituting the fast of Ramadan for the Atonement previously observed, and the summons to prayer by the human voice for the Jewish trumpet and the Christian bell. Soon Mohammed had reason to suspect the Jews of dealings with his enemies and he expelled them, a tribe at a time, from Medina. Some rich Jewish settlements to the north were also conquered.

God's Messenger

Mohammed was so sure of his position as God's messenger that he could brook no ridicule, opposition, or discrediting of his inspiration. The phrase 'God and his messenger' occurs in Medina sections of the Koran concerning decisions made, or regulations formulated. This is not self-magnification but rather an expression of

Sonia Halliday

Topkapi Museum, Istanbul

Exquisite paintings from the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul depict scenes from the history of Islam. The faith was established on the basis of revelations from God around 610 AD.

Mohammed's being God's mouthpiece, for the laws were God's.

The Medina suras of the Koran differ in style from the Meccan. In his early teaching Mohammed was merely a preacher, not responsible for the reception of his message; in Medina he exhorted his followers to fight in God's path, at times using force and at others winning followers by presents. Such methods seemed justifiable, for the orders came as divine inspiration, and Mohammed must obey. In the Medina suras there are laws to guide the community but though much of the material is not so inspiring as the Meccan, Mohammed remained a prophet with a message still sounding forth in the Medina suras. Indeed, they contain some of the finest verses in the Koran.

Mohammed died in 632 AD. Starting as a prophet with an unpopular message, he ended as leader of a large community. From beginning to end his driving motive was to bring men to belief in God's unity, and to abandonment of idolatry. Something of the nature of a totalitarian state resulted, and was implicit in his doctrine, for if God is universal king, every sphere of life is subject to his control.

Mohammed taught that he was no more than one of a line of prophets; but his message is God's final word. He therefore has a high position. The Koran (sura 33) says, 'God and his angels bless the Prophet. Invoke blessings on him, believers, and give him a salutation'; so the usual practice when Mohammed's name is mentioned is to add, 'God bless him and grant peace.' The observance of his birthday, condemned unavailingly by theologians, is widespread. Customs vary but processions, recitation of the Koran, eulogies on Mohammed and the amusements of a fair are common.

Sonia Halliday

'The enemies of the Prophet had elephants, camels and horses, but he had none': the flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD, which became the year 1 of the Islamic calendar, was the turning-point in Mohammed's career; in Mecca he had met fierce hostility but from Medina he strengthened his position by raiding Meccan caravans and subduing neighbouring Arab tribes. In 630 AD he conquered Mecca, which became the most sacred city of Islam

Tradition speaks of Mohammed as intercessor for his people at the last judgement. He will have an exalted place over all prophets, and through his intercession will deliver his people from hell. Shiite doctrine speaks of the light of Mohammed which was created in time immemorial and passed from Mohammed to the imams. Sunnites reject this doctrine, which seems to approach an idea of superhuman status. They insist that Mohammed was no more than a man whom God used. But they can look on him as a model for mankind, as he combined all the qualities most admired. He lived a normal human life, being married, engaging in various occupations, and showing characteristics of resolution and compassion. It is argued that by his experiences and fine qualities he is the one to be imitated. He must clearly have been a man of attractive character, if one may judge from the manner in which he made and held close friends.

(See also ISLAM; MECCA AND MEDINA.)

JAMES RORSON

FURTHER READING: W. Montgomery Watt's *Mohammed at Mecca* (1953) and *Mohammed at Medina* (1956) were published as *Muhammad, Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford University Press, 1961); B. K. Narayan, *Mohammed* (Verry, 1980).

MOHARRAM

MOHARRAM, meaning 'forbidden', 'declared sacred', is the name of the first month of the Moslem lunar year. In pre-Islamic times it was one of four sacred months when tribes generally refrained from fighting. The last two months of the year, Dhul Nada and Dhul Hijja, formed with it a peaceful quarter of the year, when markets could be held and pilgrimage observed. The fourth was Rajab, the seventh month.

The tenth day of Moharram was for a time observed by Mohammed as a 24-hour fast, following the Jewish practice on the Day of Atonement; but when he became displeased with the Medina Jews, he substituted the fast of Ramadan, the ninth month, when fasting is observed daily from first morning light till after sunset. The 10th of Moharram was, however, retained as a voluntary fast day, and is still observed as such by some Sunnites, the main body of Moslems.

But the chief observation of the 10th of Moharram takes place among the Shiites in Persia, Iraq, India, Pakistan and elsewhere. It is held in commemoration of the death of Ali's son al-Husayn at Karbala in 680 AD.

The Shiites hold that Ali, Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, should have become caliph after Mohammed's death, and that the Caliphate should have been continued in his line. Ali became fourth caliph, succeeded by his son al-Hasan, who very soon abdicated in favour of the Umayyad Mu'awiya. Husayn, a finer character than his brother, but too trustful of unreliable followers, later laid claim to the Caliphate. Those who encouraged him proved faithless, and he had to face the dominant Umayyad power with a comparatively small band of followers. He was called upon to surrender, but refused and after severe privation, including being cut off from water, he and his followers were eliminated. He was beheaded and his head was sent to the Caliph Yazid in Damascus. Later it was said to be buried in Cairo, the mosque of the Hasanayn being its reputed burial place, but it was returned by Yazid and buried beside the body at Karbala.

The Twelvers

The Shiite imam differed from the Sunnite caliph in his inheritance from the Prophet of not only his temporal sovereignty but his spiritual authority as well. In that capacity he was an infallible leader, exacting unquestionable obedience and possessing the divine gift of impeccability . . . The founder of Islam imposed a revelation, the Koran, as the intermediary between God and man; all Shiites made a man, Ali, the intermediary. From Ali the imamship passed to his son al-Hasan and then to his other son al-Husayn. The succession was continued in nine descendants of al-Husayn. The bulk of the Shiah owe allegiance to these twelve imams, whence they are called Twelvers.

Philip K. Hitti *The Near East in History*

This event at Karbala has great significance to Shiites who invest it with sacrificial value. The Shiites use the term imam (leader) instead of caliph. They believe that a divine light was granted to Mohammed, from whom it was transmitted successively to the imams. Love of the imams is essential for salvation, especial honour being paid to Husayn because of his martyrdom.

Tears and Flagellation

The early part of the month of Moharram, up to the 10th, is a period of mourning, when people gather to hear the story of Husayn recited, and indulge in violent weeping. In some places processions are held during this period; in others they are reserved for the 10th. These processions rouse great religious fervour. Among those who take part are groups who beat themselves front and back with chains, causing blood to flow. The present writer has watched Moharram processions in Lahore, in Pakistan, during which the flagellants kept shouting 'Hasan, Husayn'. The flagellation continued, for it was a mark of distinction to pull on a shirt after a while and walk about, showing it covered with blood. Some may go to the extent of cutting their heads.

A horse is led in the procession decked with trappings covered with red to represent Husayn's blood, and with arrows fixed in its harness to represent the arrows shot at him. Replicas of Husayn's tomb at Karbala are carried in the procession. In some regions they are called *toziya* (literally

'consolation'), and it was the custom after the Lahore procession to commit them to the Ravi. This is not a practice in all countries, and it may preserve a relic of some Hindu rites. In many districts these ornamental replicas are preserved and brought out annually.

In many regions the same word, taziya, is used for the passion play which is presented. This play varies in its setting and quality according to the circumstances, for cities naturally can present a more elaborate production than smaller communities. In the more developed forms of the play the fighting is represented very realistically, with the result that there have been casualties. A lengthy form of Moharram play was published by Sir Lewis Pelly, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husayn* (1879). This represents a developed form of doctrine regarding the effect of Husayn's death. Not content with dealing with the events at Karbala, it goes on to the Day of Resurrection. Husayn is made intercessor, and is the means of delivering from the pains of hell all who have in any way mourned for him. He is also represented as having died for his people's sins. His death is treated as a vicarious sacrifice which avails for all who mourn because of his suffering.

Moharram is particularly important to Shiite Moslems, who commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn, a 7th century claimant to the Caliphate, with mourning processions, flagellation and the performance of passion plays

The practices vary in detail in different countries, but all relate to a historical event and its significance. Ancient details of ritual may have been adapted here and there, but it should be remembered that, however one may attempt to trace the history of certain ritual practices, Shiites themselves are interested in a historical figure whose sufferings are the source of their salvation.

It is customary to meet again 40 days after the 10th of Moharram, when readings of the story are heard and copious tears are shed. At Karbala it has been customary at this time to have a continuation of the play; known as the 'Return of the Head', this records the sending home of Husayn's head to his sister and son by the Caliph Yazid.

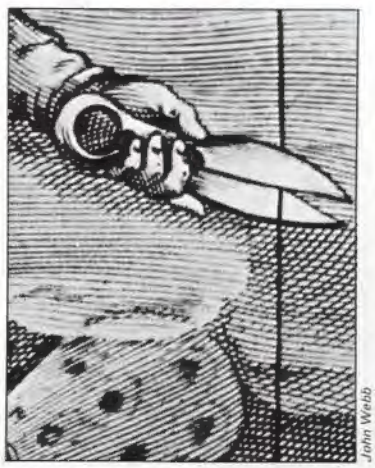
JAMES ROBSON

M. E. B. Banks

Moirae

The three Fates of Greek mythology, Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, first named in Hesiod's *Theogony*; *moira* originally meant a person's 'lot' or 'rightful portion' in life: the Fates were sometimes said to be present at birth because that is when an individual's lot is decided; in modern Greek folklore they appear on the third night of a child's life and fix the course of his life.

See FATE.



John Webb

Moly

In Greek mythology, a magic herb given by Hermes to Odysseus to protect him against the enchantments of Circe (*Odyssey*, book 10); it is described as having a black root, a flower like milk, and being hard to uproot; it has not been convincingly identified with any real herb, though mandrake, garlic and rue have been suggested.

Chris Barker

Monkey
A sacred animal in India, probably because of its resemblance to man; there are several famous monkey chieftains of Indian legend, including Hanuman: there is an Africau belief that apes can speak but refrain from doing so because they would be made to work: in Egypt the baboon was sacred to the god Thoth.

Bodleian Library

Monotheism
Belief that there is only one God, distinguished from polytheism, belief in several gods who preside over different departments of life; this distinction cannot be drawn as clearly as was formerly thought, and the old theory that religion evolved from polytheism to monotheism has been discredited.

See CHRISTIANITY; HIGH GODS; HINDUISM; ISLAM; JUDAISM; RELIGION.

MONTANISTS

THIS CHRISTIAN SECT of followers of the prophet Montanus originated in Asia Minor and spread to other parts of the Roman Empire. The Montanists are known only from the writings of their opponents, the Catholic Christians, and from a few funerary inscriptions. The movement seems to have begun in Phrygia c 156 AD, when Montanus as a convert to Christianity practised and encouraged ecstatic prophecy. He was soon joined by two prophetesses named Prisca and Maximilla. Together they endeavoured to promote what they called 'the new prophecy', reviving the prophetic enthusiasm they regarded as essential to the life of the primitive Church. St Paul had said (1 Corinthians, chapter 14):

> Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

They also laid emphasis on rather rigorous asceticism and on voluntary martyrdom. Most important they believed that the heavenly Jerusalem was about to come down to earth in Phrygia. Because of this apocalyptic expectation they found themselves in conflict with the leaders of the Christian Church in Asia Minor, where accommodation with Graeco-Roman culture and the Roman state was being sought. In c 172 synods of bishops in Asia condemned them, while individual bishops tried to drive out the demons they believed were possessing the Montanist prophets. One of the leaders opposed to the movement is known to have welcomed Christian service in the Roman legions, and there were therefore probably political overtones to the condemnation of Montanism.

The movement has sometimes been traced to pagan sources, but if these played any part it was insignificant. Montanism was a self-conscious revival of primitive Christianity, and it originated in the traditional Jewish Christianity of Phrygia. A generation before Montanus, Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, had made lavish use of oral traditions and Jewish apocalypses, and had collected traditions derived from the early Christian prophetesses who were daughters of Philip the evangelist (Acts, chapter 21). The attitude of Papias, which lost influence as Christianity became established in Graeco-Roman Asia, was expressed anew by Montanus and his followers. Indeed, the details of his prediction of the descent of the new Jerusalem are paralleled in the Jewish apocalyptic book known as 2 Esdras, used by other Christians in his time. If we look for the specific occasion which prompted Montanus's initial proclamation, it is probably to be found in the martyrdom of the aged Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in 156. This event shocked Christians throughout the Roman Empire and must have suggested that accommodation to the life of the Empire was impossible.

Prophets with Dyed Hair

As time passed and Jerusalem did not come, the Montanists lost much of their original enthusiasm and, as their critics observed, came to be more at home in the world. Montanism became a more rigorous form of Christianity, and the rigour was not always maintained. The Montanists were said to employ agents to collect funds and to pay their officers regular salaries; the prophets were accused of dyeing their hair, painting their eyelids, gambling, and lending money at interest. Church leaders at Antioch and Rome joined in attacking the sect. The Montanists might claim to have the tomb of the apostle John; the orthodox argued that there were two tombs of John at Ephesus, one for the apostle and one for someone else. In addition, the Roman Church possessed the tombs of both Peter and Paul. As for the Montanist claim to rely on the book of Revelation (the heavenly Jerusalem) and the gospel of John (Montanus was said to be the promised Paraclete of John 14.16), a Roman Christian writer went so far as to deny that either book was canonical, though few of his allies agreed with him.

By the early 3rd century the Montanists outside Phrygia no longer looked for the descent of Jerusalem there; instead, they expected it to come to Palestine. Such was the view of their most important leader, the Carthaginian layman Tertullian. This brilliant and fanatical Christian, in the course of conflicts with the state, the Church and (one must add) himself, gradually turned toward Montanism, laying emphasis on the truth of Montanist prophecy and on the value of ascetical rigour. The sequence of his writings suggests that he began turning to the movement in about the year 203 and broke with the Church of Carthage in about 207. A decade later, his last writings, *On Fasting* and *On Chastity*, contain militant and bitter defences of Montanist severity as contrasted with Catholic laxity.

Mass Suicide

The conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine and the rise of the Christian Empire resulted in edicts that made Montanism illegal, though tombstones from Asia Minor show that there were adherents of the movement in the 4th century. Christian writers against heresies still discussed the Montanists and occasionally described their cult practices, including sacred dances by virgins. As late as 550 a bishop of Ephesus dug up the corpses of Montanus and the prophetesses, and burned them. Under Justinian, a large group of Montanists committed suicide.

By the 6th century the movement had obviously outlived its original purpose, the preparation of the Christian community for life in the heavenly Jerusalem which was to appear immediately. It lived on, however, as a movement of protest against the worldliness of the Byzantine Church. In this regard it resembled many other millenarian movements that have arisen within the Christian Church. Its importance lies in the fact that, as far as can be determined, it was the first of them. In doctrine it differed only slightly from the Christianity traditional in Phrygia when it arose; it was not heretical and, in intention, it was not schismatic. It led to schism only when it was condemned by the bishops of Asia Minor. We cannot tell what would have happened had it been accepted. Obviously the Christian Church would have been different from what it was; conceivably it would not have survived.

ROBERT M. GRANT

FURTHER READING: See F. C. Burkitt's article in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol 12 (Macmillan, 1939).

MOON

Scala

'It is the very error of the moon', said Othello, 'she comes more nearer earth than she was wont, and makes men mad'; the idea that among the moon's many powers was that of influencing the minds of men was implied in the Lunacy Act of 1842, which referred directly to its phases

IF THE SUN is the most important of all the celestial bodies for the inhabitants of the earth, the moon is still, despite recent events, undoubtedly the most mysterious. As opposed to the life-giving properties and warmth of the sun, the moon is said to give out an occult power, and to rule over growth, the hidden processes of Nature, the hollow spaces of the earth, and the movements of all the fluidic elements within and upon the earth's surface

The Babylonians, the greatest astronomers of antiquity, worshipped the moon as the queen of the night, and hailed her as the ancestor of the sun which she exceeded in power. The earth was thought of as the child of the moon, whose rays cast a strange influence over our planet. Curious notions such as these are by no means extinct. Mme Blavatsky, founder of modern Theosophy, declared: 'The moon is far older than the earth, which owes its being to the moon.'

There is a magical power in the moon, for it is supposed to draw to itself the hidden potencies of the stars and constellations. It used to be called the 'funnel of the earth' because it was said to receive and concentrate the radiant emanations from the other celestial bodies and filter and transmute them before pouring their bounty upon the earth. If the moon were to vanish, it was believed, all mental activity would come to a standstill.

Marking Time by the Moon

The lunar month extends for approximately 28 days and this period became a convenient unit for reckoning, especially among nomadic peoples who depended on the moon during their wanderings, since they often travelled in the cool of the evening, night and early dawn, in order to avoid the glare and heat of the day. The number 28 therefore assumed some significance in their calculations, and lies at the basis of the sacred number seven, which was a shorter division of the 28 day lunar month. This seven day

There is a magical power in the moon, for it is supposed to draw to itself the hidden potencies of the stars and constellations

The Sleeping Endymion **by Cima da Conegliano: Endymion was loved by the Greek moon goddess Selene and, according to one story, fathered on her 50 children, evidently the 50 months or 'moons' between each celebration of the Olympic Games. The lunar month was the unit of reckoning in many early calendars**

week is now generally observed, a relic of the lunar calendar permanently embedded in the system of solar reckoning (see also SEVEN).

The earliest calendars marked the passage of time not by the sun and seasons but by 'moons', and the day started with the evening, when nomadic life stirred into wakefulness. A relic of this again survives in the custom of celebrating the eve of the previous day on many festive occasions, such as Christmas and New Year's Day.

Lunar reckoning still exists, among the Mohammedans for instance, and in many parts of the world the lunar and solar calendars are both used. The festivals of several religions are still lunar, including some of the greatest Christian celebrations. Easter is determined by the moon, and so are the various Church celebrations whose date depends on this great religious occasion.

The period of the moon's rotation around the earth is the same as the period of its rotation on its own axis, so that it always presents the same face to the earth. This face consists of vast plains, 'seas', pits and craters, some of which have star-like ridges and crests radiating from them. Seen with the naked eye from the earth these configurations and the resultant shadows they throw assume strange shapes, as of a man, a woman or an animal, and various legendary origins have been ascribed to them.

In Rumanian myth the sun had an incestuous passion for his sister the moon, so the moon in order to avoid meeting her brother, went about only at night when he was not in sight. She also took the precaution of making ugly marks on her face to discourage him. In an Eskimo legend the sun is a woman and the moon is her lover who visits her by night. Curious to find out who he really is, she smears his face with ashes and the marks thus left outline the shadows visible on the moon. In yet another legend a peasant is found gathering sticks in the forest on Sunday, and on being questioned why he is working on the day of rest replies casually that it makes no difference whether he works on the day of the sun or of the moon, whereupon he is gathered up and taken to the moon, there to continue his labour till Doomsday.

Another curious legend gave rise to the familiar nursery rhyme of Jack and Jill. The roots of this legend have been traced back to a Scandinavian story about a boy and girl named Hjuki and Bila. One day as they were drawing water from a well, the moon, who wished them to serve her, carried them off to heaven in a bucket. To this day the two children may be seen with their bucket, and as they make the ascent up a hill the moon waxes, and as they descend the moon wanes. The names of the two children signify 'increasing' and 'dissolving', and are thus devised to fit the phases of the moon. Since the moon was believed to influence the waters of the earth and to control rainfall, the 'pail of water' forms part of the nursery rhyme.

Moon-Begotten Monsters

In a number of legends the moon is regarded as male, and the 'Man in the Moon' is said to have a lustful attraction for all females. Every month the belly (phallus) of the moon swells and this incites a corresponding increase in the womb of women. A disturbance takes place in the womb which becomes responsive to the vibrations from the lunar sphere and ripens to receive the mysterious influence of creative energy. There existed a curious belief, in England among other places, that every month each woman is fecundated by the moon and conceives a child which is fed by emanations of the lunar radiance. But this child is imperfectly developed and is aborted as a 'moon-calf', a misshapen foetus that passes into limbo.

Among certain tribal communities the moon is also regarded as a lecherous male who roams the earth, especially during the bright nights of the full moon, seeking whom he may deflower. He succeeds in ravishing every single maiden on earth, and the token of his success is the phenomenon of menstruation. One of the most primitive tribes, the Uaupe Indians of the Upper Amazon, believe that the first menstruation of a girl is, in fact, 'defloration by the moon'. In other places, because of the moon's ability to impregnate women, girls were warned not to stare at the moon or lie in the moonlight without a covering in case they conceived and gave birth to a monster.

In most mythologies the ruler of the moon was a female deity of some kind. The Canaanite moon goddess Jerah gave her name to the city of Jericho, one of the most ancient historical cities of the world. The Egyptian goddesses Isis (see ISIS) and Hathor were associated with the moon, the latter represented as a cow and a milk-giving mother, with the head surmounted by golden horns within whose cusp lay the moon. The Babylonian god Sin ruled the moon, but the more important moon deity in their pantheon was the goddess Ishtar (see ASTARTE; ISHTAR). The Greek Artemis and Latin Diana were both connected with the moon; later, in medieval Europe Diana became the patroness of witches (see DIANA). The moon is thus seen to be generally regarded as female in nature, and its influence is essentially feminine, reproductive, watery and emotional. In Chinese belief the moon is the force behind all that is Yin (female) as the sun is behind all that is Yang (male).

There prevails an almost universal belief that the physiological life of women is linked with the moon. Those who have studied the subject believe that there is statistical evidence to confirm that the cycle of human ovulation approximates to the lunar month, a fact which is preserved in the term 'menstruation' which signifies 'monthly', occurring every lunar month.

Besides these popular beliefs about the influence of the moon on human beings, there are numerous lesser superstitions which are fairly widespread in one form or another. It is unlucky to look at the new moon for the first time through the branches of a tree, or through glass (fortunately this superstition does not include spectacles). It is unlucky to point at the moon at any time; one should always bow to the new moon, especially to the first new moon of the year, as a sign of respect. At first sight of the new moon a silver coin should be turned in the purse or pocket, for silver is the metal of the moon. A wish should be made at the same time.

Various omens are also read from the state of the moon. If two moons occur in a single calendar month (especially May) there will be floods and other calamities. Rings around the moon presage storms, the

'The Hare and the King of the Elephants at the Well of the Moon', from a 14th century MS, probably Syrian. The elephant is a beast of the moon, possibly because of its crescent-shaped tusks, and in India the first of all elephants was said to have emerged from the Churning of the Ocean: the moon is connected with water, and with wells or depths, because of its link with the tides and the menstrual flow. The hare is also a creature of the moon, partly because of its fertility, and is also involved in many stories of shape-changing: the fact that the moon changes shape in the sky is one of the principal bases of its symbolism

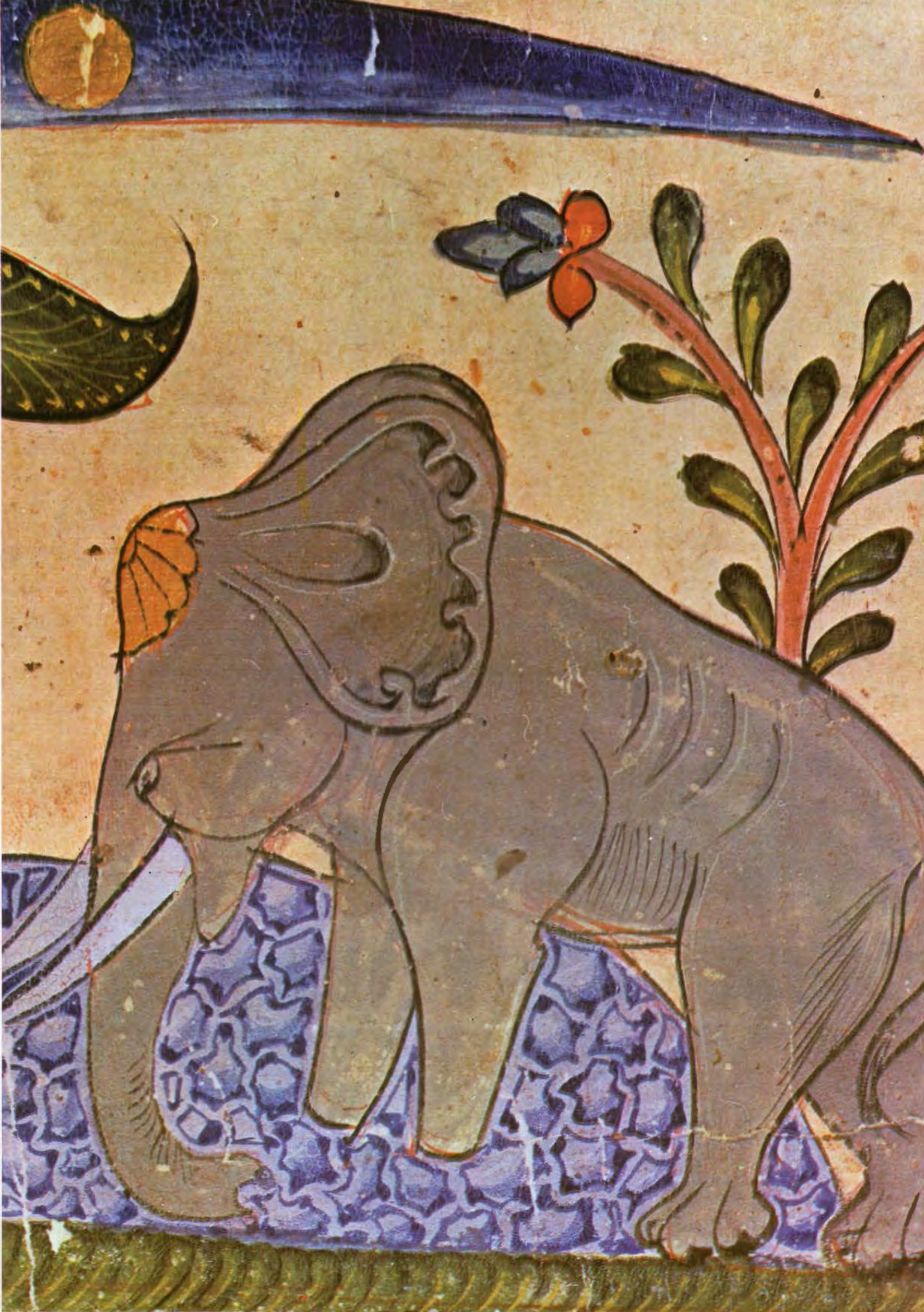
more rings the worse the storm. Heavy rains occur most frequently in the days immediately following the new and full moon. Dew falls richest on moonlit nights. A full moon at Christmas presages a poor harvest in the coming year. A new moon on Saturday brings foul weather, and a full moon on Sunday brings bad luck. If the new moon is first spied on your right or straight ahead it is lucky. But it is unlucky to see the new moon on your left, or behind you. Particularly among people living on the sea coasts, there is a belief that an unusually large number of births occur at the time of high tide when the moon is full over the local meridian, because the moon affects uterine contractions.

The moon's periodicity is of greater concern to men on earth even than that of the sun. The sun is constant throughout the year, and variations in its warmth and intensity follow a seasonal gradation of slow change, but its size and shape remain the same through the course of the year. The moon, on the other hand, is a prime example of perpetual change. It starts like a slender crescent, goes through a period of development till it reaches a state of fullness, and thereafter follows a decline. Then for three nights it vanishes completely. It seems to epitomize the cyclic rhythms we find in the cosmos, in the physical world around us, in plants, animals and in our own lives. Small wonder then that it has become so intimately linked with the inner processes of man. Some scholars think that this cycle of the moon's phases may be the probable origin of death and resurrection myths throughout the world. The moon is regarded as a realm of the dead, and as the first station of the soul on its journey after death through the celestial regions.

Influence Over All Nature

Almost a quarter of a million miles away from us, the moon has an immense attractive power, which affects even the land masses of our planet. But the moon's influence on the sea is especially strong; the whole watery surface is moved by the magnetism of our satellite, and it is responsible for the tides of the sea. This tremendous magnetic quality was well known to the ancients, and in the 1st century AD the natural historian Pliny wrote, 'The moon draws the sea after her with a powerful suction.'

Bodleian Library



Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

French Tarot trump, 'the Moon': the dividers are a sign of the moon's role in the calendar. The waxing, waning, vanishing and reappearing of the moon has caused it to be linked with all the cyclical rhythms of Nature, and its connection with the tides has reinforced its occult links with the 'deeps' of human nature. The Tarot card is often interpreted as a symbol of the unconscious mind

The obvious inference is that our bodies, and the bodies of all living things, constituted as they are largely of liquid elements, may be similarly affected by the power of the moon. Might not the human brain, a mass of semi-liquid pulp, be stirred in some strange way by the suction impulses from the moon? Such is the occult view.

In folklore and mythology the moon is said to have a profound influence on all living things. The waxing moon sends powerful impulses of 'growth' energy to the earth, and this affects all things that grow, causing them to increase in size and strength. As the moon wanes or declines in size, growing things similarly decrease in energy. This belief can be found among all peoples, primitive and advanced, all over the world.

On the basis of this theory, it is thought that the best time for picking flowers and herbs, and for felling trees for fuel and timber, is when the moon is on the decline. Trees are weaker and yield more easily to the axe during the moon's wane. Similarly, trees will bear good fruit if pruned during the moon's increase. Plants are said to grow best if sown two days before the full moon, so that they gather strength as the moon grows. Peasants in many ancient communities used to sow by the moon, and there are many gardeners and farmers even today who will plant according to the moon. Many people believe that seed sown with the waning moon will not prosper. The fact that experiments do not always support these beliefs in no way diminishes faith in them.

The various species of the animal kingdom are likewise affected by the moon. A 'lunar periodicity' is observed in the movement of fish in the sea, in the spawning of various marine animals like mussels, crabs, oysters and sea-urchins. The mating urge of large animals also seems to be heightened during the waxing of the moon. In the past farm stock was managed on the lunar analogy. It was thought that if pigs were killed when the moon was waxing the bacon would be richer and fatter, but if the slaughter took place during the wane the bacon would be shrunken and lean. The sheep's wool grew thick and rich with the waxing moon, so sheep were sheared at this time. Animals were never gelded during the moon's wane lest they sickened and died. Farmers said that stock born when the moon was on the wane would not thrive.

The moon, from a 14th century Flemish MS. Though not invariably female – the moon deities of some societies have been male – the moon is frequently associated with a goddess, and there is an almost universal belief that the physiological life of women is linked with the moon: the word menstruation means 'monthly', occurring every lunar month

Lunatic Behaviour

Men too respond to the fluctuations of the moon. In the past mothers used to show their children to the growing moon to increase their stature and strength, and people would avoid cutting hair and nails in the moon's decline. In times when bloodletting was a regular part of medical practice, it was done when the moon was waning to reduce the risk of haemorrhage.

The peculiar effect of the moon on the minds of men and women has been noted from ancient times. The fuller the moon the more turbulent, excitable and impressionable the mind becomes. It is a commonplace observation among those who have to deal with people en masse that there occurs a noticeable increase in unusual, eecentric behaviour during the time of the full moon. Fire brigades have to deal with more fires and false alarms, policemen on the beat report more cases of drunkenness, more thefts, more wife-beatings; the frequency of rash driving and accidents is heightened; nurses in mental hospitals have to cope with increased restiveness among patients; surgeons record more post-operative haemorrhages. These facts do not, of course, amount to scientific proof of a connection with 'disturbing' radiations from the moon.

Nevertheless, there has always been a widespread belief in a direct connection between the moon and lunacy, and the notion of 'moon madness' has in some cases been privately subscribed to even by psyehiatrists. The moon is popularly held to have a definitely disturbing effect on the minds of idiots and the insane, and all those who are afflicted with nervous disorders. The word 'lunatic' itself is derived from the Latin word *luna*, 'moon', thus preserving the basis of the age-old theory. Paracelsus, the famous medieval physician, regarded the brain as a 'microcosmic moon', and observed that lunacy grows worse at the time of the full and new moon. Until about the middle of the last century the connection between the moon and madness was almost everywhere taken for granted. The Lunacy Act of 1842 defined a lunatic as a demented person enjoying lucid intervals during the first two phases of the moon, and 'afflicted with a period of fatuity in the period following after the full moon'.

Another belief common to many peoples relates to the maleficent character of the moon's influence, which is said to manifest as an actual baleful emanation that can be materialized and precipitated to earth by those who have occult knowledge of such matters. The ancient Greeks spoke of the power that the witches of Thessaly had of drawing down the moon itself, by which they meant that these witches were able to make use of the subtle and malignant influence of the moon for their rites. In other parts of the world the magician is believed to be able to cause the moon to drip its poison into a dish of water which foams and bubbles for a time and is then ready for the evil purposes of the sorcerer.

The actual power of moonlight was said to reside in the rays themselves, and was transmitted from the moon through them. A very common superstition was that since the moon caused a disturbance in the distribution of the bodily fluids, if a person slept without covering in the direct light of the moon his face would become twisted. The absence of a moon was also regarded as having a special bearing on human affairs. The Babylonians spoke of the black nights of the moon's total disappearance from the sky as fraught with great peril that could only be neutralized and overcome by fasting and religious observances.

Many Moons Ago

Perhaps even to a greater extent than the sun, the moon figures in occult cosmology, or the study of the origin of the universe. Theories of the beginnings of the solar

Far right Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt and equivalent of the Greek Artemis, was connected with the moon, and was later the patroness of witches who were believed to 'draw down the moon' or the moon's influence *Right* The waning moon, depicted as Selene on horseback: detail from a Greek vase. In magic and folklore growing things increase and decrease in energy as the moon waxes and wanes

British Museum

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

system give curious accounts of how the moon came into existence, and the significance of the moon in its relation to the earth's history. According to a theory put forward in comparatively recent times, the earth in the course of its long history has had a succession of satellites before our present moon: Each of these satellites in turn was drawn into the earth's orbit, revolved around the earth for several thousand years, before crashing into its surface. Our present moon is only the last of at least four moons.

The capture of these earlier moons by the earth, their slow encroachment into the earth's sphere of influence and their final collision with the earth has each in turn brought about cataclysmic changes, and was each responsible for the great geological eras and the great biological transmutations that have occurred on our planet in the past. The increasing pull of the approaching moon resulted in sudden genetic mutations, in the gigantic growth of creatures in bygone ages, and in the evolution of species as a whole.

The hypothetical satellite before our present moon is called the tertiary satellite. It was smaller than the present moon and was captured about 30,000 years ago. This capture was responsible for floods, earthquakes and storms around the globe. Legends of a great flood and other catastrophes are preserved by most of the early races of mankind. Those who uphold the theory of the earth's many moons believe that the book of Revelation also records what had already taken place when the tertiary moon plunged down to earth and buried itself in the terrestrial surface.

After the tertiary satellite crashed into the earth there came a long period when the earth remained without a satellite. Ancient writings from various parts of the world tell of the time when the earth was without a moon. Arab and Hindu writings speak of those who lived before there was a moon in the sky. Even the Greeks have a tradition of the Proselene (pre-moon) people who once dwelt in Arcadia.

The present (quaternary) moon was originally a small planet revolving around the sun on an irregular orbit between Mars and the earth, and in the course of its journeys was deflected from its path, possibly by a passing comet, and began to circle the earth between 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Even now it is thought to be spiralling closer and closer to us, although it will still be several thousand years before the final catastrophe.

BENJAMIN WALKER

The Moon in Astrology

In astrology the moon is today considered secondary to the sun. Yet the ancient Romans would probably have thought the moon the more important of the two, for they classified a man as belonging to that sign in which his moon (which goes into a different sign approximately every two and a half days) was placed, rather than his sun, which changes its sign only 12 times during the year.

FURTHER READING: For the 'many moons' theory, see H.S. Bellamy, *Moons, Myths and Man* (Faber, London, 2nd rev. ed., 1950); T. Harley, *Moon Lore* (E.P. Publishing, 1973, c1885); A. Manning, *Moon Lore and Moon Magic* (Pan Ishtar, 1980); A. Rush, *Moon, Moon*. (Random, 1976).

MOONIES

THIS IS THE POPULAR NAME for a cult religion founded by the Korean Sun M. Moon (see DIVINE PRINCIPLES). As early as the 1950s, parents in Korea and Japan were worried by the robotizing effect the cult had on their children. As the cult grew in the West, right through to the 1980s, young devotees were subjected to skilled brainwashing procedures to make sure of their complete dedication. Several American parents, aided by the controversial Ted Patrick arranged to have their children literally kidnapped from the Moonies. They were then 'deprogrammed' by Patrick, with backup support from psychiatrists and the family. Several books written by ex-Moonies have vividly described the experience.

FURTHER READING: Christopher Edwards, *Crazy For God* (Prentice-Hall, 1979).

Critical self-examination and public confession, and the solicitation of daily orders from God were practised by the Oxford Group, as the MRA movement was known in its early days; despite a creed which had much in common with the Quakers, it has been accused of snobbishness and a dangerous degree of political naivety

MORAL REARMAMENT

FURTHER READING: Christopher Edwards, *Crazy For God* (Prentice-Hall, 1979); J. Bjornstad, *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church* (Bethany House, 1984); W. Lewis, *Moon* (Beacon Press, 1984).

1878 at Pennsburg, a small town in Pennsylvania, in the United States.

The present name of the movement was coined by Buchman in Germany in 1938, when he stressed the need for 'moral rearmament'. Previously it had been known as the Oxford Group or Oxford Group Movement. This name excited disapproval in some quarters at Oxford University and among Anglo-Catholics who feared that it might cause confusion with the Oxford Movement of the Tractarians, the Catholic revival in the Church of England which had begun in 1833. A. P. Herbert, too, denounced the Oxford Group in Parliament and the press, alleging that it had no right to suggest an official association with the University. The Group retorted that it had, in effect, been formed in an undergraduate's rooms at Oxford in 1921; but that the words 'Oxford Group' had been attached to it in 1929, almost by accident, a South African railway porter having scribbled the phrase on their luggage.

Until then, Buchman having had a 'conversion experience' at Keswick, the movement had been known as 'A First-Century Christian Fellowship' or, by outsiders, as Buchmanism or the Buchmanites. The later names – particularly the non-denominational Moral Rearmament – have proved more convenient in commending the movement to non-Christians in Asia and Africa. In this later

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Left **Dr Frank Buchman, the Lutheran pastor from Pennsylvania who founded MRA: the movement offers 'an ideology for democracy', intended to 'overarch' both Communism and anti-Communism** ***Right*** **Scene from an MRA play,** ***The Vanishing Island,*** **written by Peter Howard, who succeeded Dr Buchman on the latter's death in 1961**

manifestation the movement has offered 'an ideology for democracy' which is said to 'overarch' both Communism and anti-Communism; but throughout its history its propaganda has been far from neutral and has chiefly been directed against Communism; while its supporters have rarely been of the Left politically and have included many leading industrialists.

Orders From God

Despite this ideological preoccupation, the movement remains also a religious one. As in some other post-Reformation cults and sects, its central doctrine is similar to that of the Quakers – the doctrine of the Inner Light. This is the belief that the individual believer can communicate direct with God and thus receive infallible guidance. 'Guidance', indeed, became a keyword of the movement, in practice as well as theory; those who had been 'changed' (Buchman's word for 'converted') were expected to lie on their beds every morning, pencil and paper to hand, and receive 'the orders of the day' direct from God. To guard against mistakes – against attributing divine inspiration to stray thoughts or desires – one person's guidance could be checked against others' and, if necessary, cross-checked by that of the leader of the group. In recent years there has been a relaxation of this somewhat mechanical process; but the theory remains constant. As Buchman, who had a penchant for slogans and acrostics, put it: 'P-R-A-Y equals Powerful Radiograms Always Yoors!'

Rule of Life

Asia, and especially India, must have seemed to MRA and its Washington advisers a key sector of the global struggle: MRA must, therefore, be so projected in India that it would not seem to the most devout Hindu or Moslem to be just another Christian mission. So we find that in MRA propaganda designed for the oriental market there is practically no mention of Christianity: Christ, if named at all, is sandwiched unobtrusively between Gautama the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi; the suggestion is that, whatever your faith, you will be the better – a better Hindu or Buddhist or Moslem – for accepting MRA's rule of life; and this rule of life, so far as it is theistic at all, is consistent . . . with a relatively undogmatic pantheism.

Tom Driberg
The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament

Another keyword of the movement is 'sharing'. This means total and, if necessary, confessional confidence between the members of the group. It would seem natural to one of them to say to another, 'I want to share my guidance with you' – and then to proffer advice on the other person's conduct which had been obtained from the unquestionable source of guidance. Here again, after embarrassing disclosures and even scandal, practice has been to some extent modified.

The movement's creed, or summary of its ideals, is contained in its 'Four Absolutes' – Absolute Honesty, Absolute Purity, Absolute Unselfishness, and Absolute Love. Some critics have found, in the actual practice of MRA and its adherents, a disproportionate emphasis on Absolute Purity and an abnormal obsession with sexual matters: in particular, over-indulgence in sexual intercourse, even between married couples, is condemned, along with masturbation and the 'flow of filth' broadcast by the B.B.C. With this unbalanced prudishness, these critics allege, goes a frequent failure by MRA to practise the other Absolutes: in their newspaper advertisements, for instance, they are lacking in Absolute Honesty. MRA's reply is logical and unanswerable: the Absolutes are a code of standards which they try to live up to; they may often (like other believers) fall short of their professions, but it is important to keep the standards high – indeed, Absolute – and constantly to test individual behaviour against them.

Buchman himself was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of

Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, and remained one, 'in good standing', all his life, despite repeated attacks on him by influential fellow-pastors. These were often occasioned by his absence from the annual meeting, attendance at which was, normally, obligatory. Buchman's world-wide mission was the excuse for his absence, and his letters explaining this were accepted.

There was talk also of a 'risk of schism' and even of heresy; but he was never convicted on any such charge. Yet his extreme formulation of the doctrine of the Inner Light was almost as far from orthodox Lutheranism and the other main Protestant sects as it was from Catholicism. It is possible that Buchman was first attracted by this idea in his childhood; for he was sent to a private school run by a small sect, the Schwenkfelders, who were the descendants of a breakaway from early Lutheranism led by Caspar von Schwenkfeld in the 16th century. Some of the Schwenkfelders emigrated to America, where they were highly regarded; and they continued to preach von Schwenkfeld's distinctive doctrine – that God communicates himself directly to every individual believer. It may well be that this boyhood lesson was the source of Buchman's insistence on the reality of daily and hourly guidance.

Another of his watchwords was 'God-control'. A few God-controlled men in key positions, he declared, could change a nation so that it, too, became God-controlled: that is, though he did not use this more controversial word, a theocracy. His belief in this possibility led to some of the most damaging criticisms that he and his movement had to suffer.

'If Hitler Surrendered'

Because he believed, or seemed to believe, in first 'changing' 'key' people, he was accused of snobbery, of 'hob-nobbing with nabobs', and of 'name-dropping'. Yet his association with the powerful and influential was a logical outcome of his theory of God-control; and so was an incident which has reverberated in anti-MRA propaganda down the years – an interview in a New York newspaper after a visit to Germany in 1936. The most frequently-quoted sentence in this interview was Buchman's statement: 'I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a front line of defence against the anti-Christ of Communism.' But the explanation of what was, perhaps, an indiscretion is contained in the same interview: 'Think what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to the control of God. . . Through such a man God could control a nation overnight and solve every last, bewildering problem.' The critics were on firm ground when they observed that the use of such a word as 'overnight' suggested a degree of over-simplification too great to be credible. It is not surprising that MRA has reacted hypersensitively to reminders of this unfortunate interview and has stressed that, so far from being Nazi or Fascist in sympathy, many of its supporters fought against Hitler.

Buchman died in 1961. Notable admirers from all over the world, including a grandson of Gandhi and many Christian prelates, attended his funeral at Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he had been ordained nearly 60 years before. His successor as leader of MRA was Peter Howard, a gifted British journalist and propagandist, and an eloquent speaker. In 1965 MRA suffered a severe blow in Howard's unexpected death, at the age of 56. In the last few years the movement, though still active in Asia (especially in Japan), at its European headquarters at Caux, Switzerland, and through plays conveying its message to (largely) invited audiences at the Westminster Theatre, London, has been less heard of in Britain and America.

Britons known to be prominent supporters of the movement include Mrs Mary Whitehouse, the tireless campaigner against B.B.C. programmes of which she disapproves, who alleges that the B.B.C. is Communist-influenced. She has denied that her 'National Viewers' and Listeners' Association' is backed by, or is a front for, MRA; but many of her utterances are almost identical with the late Peter Howard's denunciations of the B.B.C.

FURTHER READING: Tom Driberg, *The Mystery of Moral Re-Armament* (Secker & Warburg, 1954); H. Henson, *Group Movement* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1933); P. Howard, *Frank Buchman's Secret* (Heinemann, 1961).

MORGAN LE FAY

AMONG the weirder figures in Arthurian legend is Arthur's sister Morgan le Fay. Her English name comes from the French Morgain la Fée, the 'fay' or fairy. In Italian she is Fata Morgana.

Her family background, in her earliest literary guise, is quite different. She is a daughter of Avallach, king of the enchanted island best known as Avalon. Morgan is thus placed in an otherworldly setting, derived from pagan mythology. Besides Avallach, tradition mentions a second lord of the island. The romancer Chrétien de Troyes calls him Guingamor and says Morgan was his mistress. But both male rulers fade out. In Arthurian lore generally, Morgan is lady of Avalon in her own right, with another parentage.

As a literary character, she seems to have taken shape during the early 12th century in the Arthurian lays of Breton minstrels, racially akin to the Welsh. When they adopted her she was a water nymph of Breton folklore. But Welsh legend furnished a similar figure called Modron, said to have been Avallach's daughter, and her attributes were annexed to Morgan.

Can we say what Morgan was originally? Giraldus Cambrensis, writing about 1216, scoffs at Breton fantasies of an 'imaginary goddess' of Avalon. He is almost certainly right. The Morgan whom the legend-makers adopted was an ancient Celtic deity, cut down by Christian belief to a nymph or fay. The Welsh lady Modron, whose attributes she acquired, is known to have been the river goddess Matrona. Morgan herself may have been the Breton form of a goddess whom the Irish called Morrigan.

This composite being, neither divine nor strictly human, is first linked with Arthur by his voyage to her island domain after his final battle, 'for the healing of his wounds'. Geoffrey of Monmouth describes it in a poem composed about 1250, in which he sketches Avalon as a Fortunate Isle in the Atlantic. Morgan, who lived there with her eight sisters, set the hero on a gold bed, examined his wounds, and promised that he would recover if he remained on the island and made use of her healing arts.

Here, Morgan is essentially a 'good fairy'. Later stories in the same vein portray her, with attendant fairies, befriending Arthur during his mortal career. At his birth, for instance, they bestow the gifts of strength, dominion and long life. But the pressure of Christianity drove romancers to make the ex-goddess more human and also, because of her pagan associations, more sinister.

In 1190, when the Glastonbury monks unearthed Arthur's supposed grave, Avalon was transferred to Somerset, and Arthur's sojourn was explained as a fancy based on his burial at Glastonbury. Morgan's detractor Giraldus reduced her to 'a noblewoman who was ruler of that region and closely related to Arthur', and who brought him to Glastonbury after the fatal battle, in the vain hope of nursing him back to health. Her relationship to the King, which other writers also assumed, was said to have been sisterly or half-sisterly: she was the daughter of Arthur's mother Igraine, perhaps by a different father, the Duke of Cornwall.

Because of her fairy origins, the Morgan le Fay of courtly romance is an enchantress, a pupil of Merlin (despite a convent education). She always has touches of evil, and they grow darker, because medieval Catholicism had no clear place – as Celtic Christianity had – for benign or neutral magic. As Arthur's equivocal sister, Morgan presides over a 'castle of maidens' near Edinburgh, and has obscure links with places farther afield.

Her pleasanter aspects are survivals from her Celtic nature. She is a healer, and can turn herself into a bird to give help which she cannot give in human shape (the Irish goddess Morrigan also had a bird form). She still ends, sometimes, as Arthur's kindly hostess in an overseas Avalon. In the French *Mort Artu*, after the King falls on the battlefield, Morgan approaches over the waves in a barge with her ladies in attendance, and bears him away. Even Malory, who makes her a witch, adopts this gentle close.

La Faula, a tale by Guillem Torrella of Majorca, describes a journey to Avalon by a later hero. The island lies far eastward

In Arthurian romance Morgan le Fay ruled a 'castle of maidens' near Edinburgh. She was also a queen of the enchanted land of Avalon and took Arthur there when he was mortally wounded. The castle of Morgan le Fay, from a 15th century French manuscript

near India. Morgan looks no more than 16 years old. Her palace is decorated with pictures of Arthurian scenes. At her best, here and elsewhere, she carries an atmosphere of art and culture.

But even her artistic aspect becomes involved with the mischief-making and plotting which are ever more freely ascribed to her. She is blamed for the fatal disclosure of Guinevere's affair with Sir Lancelot. In one version she brings Lancelot under her own roof, tries unsuccessfully to seduce him, and allows him to paint a mural which betrays the secret of his amour to subsequent visitors. In another version she exposes Guinevere's guilt by sending a chastity-testing drinking horn to the court. Her plots are also directed against others besides the King and Queen. She makes trouble for Sir Tristram.

Morgan is sometimes given a lover or husband. Yet there is a recurrent suggestion that her malice is due to frustrated passion. Like other fairy-women, she wants to keep a mortal man in a sensual paradise of her own. She creates a 'Valley without Return' to entrap her victim.

Outside the Arthurian cycle, Morgan appears in the romance *Ogier the Dane* as the lady of Avalon, and in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* as the enchantress Morgana, living under a lake. She gives her name to the *Fata Morgana*, a mirage seen in the Straits of Messina, once attributed to her magic.

Morgan le Fay occasionally appears in two aspects, an older and a younger. When she fails to seduce Lancelot she sends one of her damsels, who is, in effect, her second self. The same motif occurs in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It was often part of the feminine divine nature to have habitual guises as a younger woman and as an older one. These incidents may take us as far back toward Morgan's origins as any.

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (Faber, 1952); R.S. Loomis ed, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1959).

'The possibility of men building the city of God on earth and finding there a type of salvation' was the driving force behind the fervour and discipline of the Latter-Day Saints

MORMONS

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST of Latter-Day Saints, whose members are commonly known as Mormons, came into being shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, in New York State. Today there are about two and a half million Mormons, the great majority of whom live in the mountain states of the United States, particularly in Utah, where the Church has its headquarters at Salt Lake City. In the revelations that led to the establishment of the new faith, in its structure, organization and ethic, Mormonism is a thoroughly American religion which still bears the imprint of the social ideas that were current at the time of its foundation. In the opening up of the American West in the middle of the 19th century the Latter-Day Saints were of considerable social, economic and political importance, both in their internal migrations in America, and in drawing to Utah thousands of converts from Britain and Scandinavia.

Meeting God Face to Face

The founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith (1805–1844), was the third son of an impoverished New England family that had settled in New York. In adolescence Smith was known locally as a romantic who professed on several occasions to know the whereabouts of buried treasure, revealed to him through a luminous peep-stone (a kind of crystal), and once he was brought before the courts because of these activities. Treasure seeking was a not uncommon

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Above **A British Mormon family: temples have been built in many countries and foreign converts need no longer emigrate to America** ***Right*** **Frontispiece of** ***Mormonism Unveiled*****: John D. Lee was shot by a firing squad for his part in the Mountain Meadows massacre. He claimed to have been sacrificed by the Mormon Church, but said, as he stood by his coffin, 'I believe in the Gospel that was taught in its purity by Joseph Smith in former days'**

From Darkness into Light

Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you. . . And I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord; the plates thereof are of no worth, because of the commandment of the Lord. For he truly saith that no one shall have them to get gain; but the record thereof is of great worth; and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless. For none can have power to bring it to light save it be given him of God; for God wills that it shall be done with an eye single to his glory, or the welfare of the ancient and long dispersed covenant people of the Lord. And blessed be he that shall bring this thing to light; for it shall be brought out of darkness unto light, according to the word of God; yea, it shall be brought out of the earth, and it shall shine forth out of darkness, and come unto the knowledge of the people; and it shall be done by the power of God.

The Book of Mormon

Chris Barker

MORMONISM UNVEILED

OR

LIFE & CONFESSION

OF

JOHN D. LEE.

AND

BRIGHAM YOUNG

Above **One of the Kinderhook plates: the founder of Mormonism, Joseph Smith, claimed to have discovered, hidden in a hill, golden plates on which was recorded in mysterious characters the history of tribes of Israel who had migrated to America centuries before the time of Christ. Later, in 1843, it was announced that six similar plates, bell-shaped and made of brass, had been discovered at Kinderhook, Illinois. Smith translated them and said they were a history of a descendant of Ham**
Right **Mormons baptizing American Indians, an engraving of 1882**

enthusiasm in this part of America in that period, and Smith, who was a fluent talker and a young man of considerable charm, certainly convinced some people of his exceptional talents. In later life he claimed to have had revelations in which he encountered God face to face at the age of 14, but of greater importance for Mormonism were the visitations to him of the angel Moroni, during the years 1823 to 1827. Smith claimed that Moroni had revealed to him the existence of a record engraved upon gold plates which was hidden in a hill not far from Smith's home. Inscribed in mysterious characters on the plates was the Book of Mormon. With magic spectacles supplied by the angel, Smith transcribed this work, with the assistance of his wife and of his first converts.

'The golden Bible', as the Book of Mormon was locally called, recounted the story of tribes of Israel who by divine command had migrated to America centuries before Christ. Constant warfare between their descendants, the Nephites, and the renegade red-skinned tribe of Lamanites continued for about a thousand years, interrupted briefly by the appearance of Christ to the Nephites after his resurrection, and their conversion to Christianity. Finally the Nephites were overwhelmed, but Moroni succeeded in hiding the book written by his father, Mormon. The descendants of the Lamanites were the American Indians, and Smith's exposition sought to explain the mounds and forts that were commonplace features of the New York State countryside as the work of these warring tribes. Other contemporary influences have been noted in the work, particularly the similarity of a group called the Gadianton band in the Book of Mormon to the Freemasons, who were at that time the subject of vigorous political opposition in New York State.

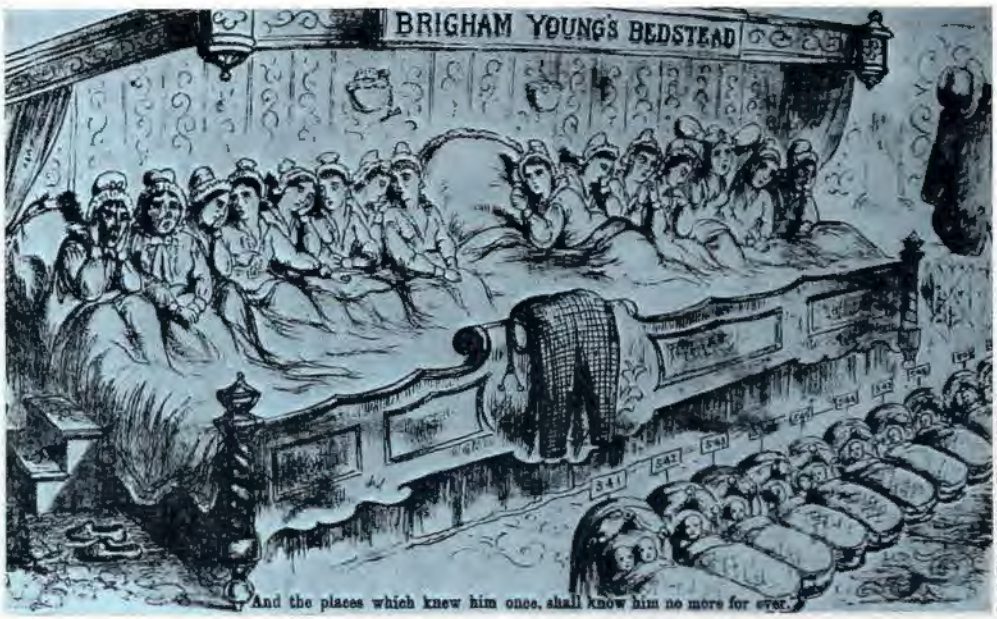
The style of the book is reminiscent of the Old Testament; the names of its characters are borrowed from, or similar to, those of the Bible, and some chapters of the Bible are incorporated in it or are closely paraphrased. The return of Christ to earth is an explicit and recurrent theme. The Mormons were avowed Adventists, but so many other elements were fused in the Mormon faith that they did not, even at that time, when millennial enthusiasm was sweeping the area with the preaching of William Miller and his associates, indulge in the extreme adventual excitement that occurred in other movements.

Threats of Extermination

Smith and his converts soon migrated westwards, first to Ohio where, at Kirtland, Smith became strongly influenced by a former revivalist preacher, Sidney Rigdon, who had embraced Mormonism. Acting on revelation, Smith established the United Order of Enoch, which instituted collective ownership among Mormons under the direction of the Church. But in Kirtland, where Smith opened a private bank to finance land purchase, the new Church fell into difficulties, particularly when his bank collapsed. Smith took his followers to Missouri, where other Mormons were already engaged in intermittent conflict with their neighbours. Mormon property was burned and innocent women and children were killed before the Saints rose in their own defence. Armed encounters occurred and a group of Mormon avengers, the Danites, came into being in this period. But in the face of the threat of extermination by the Governor of Missouri, in 1838 the Mormons finally fled to Illinois.

There for a few years they were allowed to plan and build a new city, Nauvoo, until the growing power of the Saints provoked their neighbours. Internal dissension occurred partly from suspicion that Smith furthered his private interests in buying and selling land, and partly because he, and to some extent other leading Mormons, were now practising plural marriage which Smith sanctioned, though only among a limited elect, as a revealed ordinance for the Church. A serious dispute with the Governor of Illinois led to Smith's flight, voluntary return, arrest and imprisonment, and finally to his murder in Carthage jail by a disorderly mob in June, 1844.

Smith's martyrdom divided but did not diminish the Mormons. The majority elected to follow Brigham Young, the President of the Council of Twelve Apostles, one of Smith's right-hand men, and he elaborated plans that Smith had already entertained of taking the Mormons out into the west to settle a new territory. A smaller party chose to follow a recent convert, James J. Strang, who set up a polygamous community on Beaver



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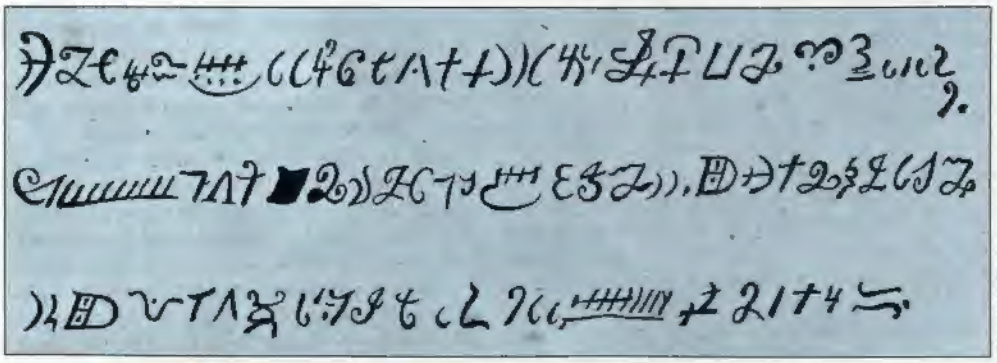

Mansell Collection

Top left 'Brigham Young's Bedstead', a cruel comment on Mormon polygamy, which had been sanctioned by Joseph Smith but was later abandoned. The polygamy of the Latter-Day Saints, openly declared by Brigham Young in 1852, was bitterly attacked by non-Mormons *Left* Characters from the golden plates containing the Book of Mormon, whose whereabouts was revealed to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni *Above* Portrait of Brigham Young (1801–77), the great Mormon leader who became one of the Twelve Apostles of the Church in 1835 and President in 1844

Island, proclaimed himself 'King in Zion' and became an influential force in Michigan politics. Others remained in Illinois and Iowa, and formed in 1860 the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints under the patronage of Emma Smith, Joseph's (first) wife, and under the presidency of his son, also Joseph. This Church never accepted the doctrine of plural marriage, and Emma Smith always denied that her husband had ever had any other wife, although there is evidence that he was married to at least 27 other women, and perhaps to 21 more. The splinter sects are known by the names of their leaders, as Strangites, Cutlerites, Hedrickites and so on.

The Building of Zion

The main body of the Mormons left Nauvoo in some haste in 1846 and after an epic trek across the prairies finally reached the Great Salt Lake in 1847. There, under Young's dynamic leadership they irrigated the land, settled in villages built on the distinctive Mormon plan, built up the spacious Salt Lake City, and established an elaborate system for the transportation of converts from Europe to Utah. In many respects, Utah had become the veritable Zion, and to the millennialism of the Book of Mormon was added the possibility of men building the city of God on earth and finding there a type of salvation. Mormon activism was stimulated by this goal. The appeal of gathering in Zion was enhanced by the importance in the Mormon faith of temple ritual: for a long time the only temples were in Utah.

European missionary work had already borne good fruit for the Mormons before the move to Utah, and at certain periods in the later 1840s and early 1850s there were more Mormons in Europe than in America. Steadily these converts were transported to their new homeland. Mormon emigration became a model of organization, and their ships and discipline were frequently the subject of favourable comment. Transportation across the American continent was not always so successful, even though order and control were always evident. In 1856, Brigham Young put into operation a scheme for immigrants to walk from Iowa City to Salt Lake pushing their belongings on a handcart. In its first year the handcart scheme led to the deaths of more than 200 Mormons, caught in the blizzards of an early winter.

Young announced the previously secret teaching of polygamy in 1852 and leading Mormons took several wives, convinced that thereby they ensured a blissful afterlife. Plural marriage was a fertile cause of dissension with the United States government, who displaced Young as governor of the territory. Other disputes led to the dramatic conflict known as the Mormon War in 1857, and to the brutal Mountain Meadows massacre when Mormons and their Indian allies fell upon a 'gentile' wagon train. After years of stubborn defence of plural marriage, in 1890 a later Church President issued a manifesto discontinuing the practice, although some Mormons continued to live polygamously and such families (now disowned by the Church) have been periodically prosecuted even in recent years.

Baptism for the Dead

Mormon belief changed considerably in course of time, not only in respect of polygamy (which is explicitly condemned in the Book of Mormon) but also in theological matters.

Smith's ideas have been summarized by Mormon theologians in the phrase, 'As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.' God had evolved, and a stage of his evolution was as a man: he was one among many gods, and godhood was a prospect for every faithful Mormon who obeyed the ordinances of the Church.

Of particular importance in attaining this most complete salvation, to occur after the second resurrection at the end of the millennium, is baptism. Smith declared that even the dead who had had no knowledge of the truth might, through the meritorious intercession of their descendants, attain eternal life. Baptism for the dead is undertaken by a proxy in a secret temple ceremony; the millennium, it is maintained, will be a period in which temple rituals of this kind will be extensively undertaken.

Other rituals of importance are endowment and sealing, which may also be performed vicariously for the dead. Sealing is the establishment of a marriage bond 'for time and eternity' and was of special importance in the days when plural marriage was

practised. Endowment is a ceremony of bathing and anointing with oil in which all parts of the body are treated (a process that has given rise to unfounded rumours of sexual license). The individual is given temple garments, and good Mormons continue to wear this underwear all their lives as a special protection against evil. Mormon ritual shows many similarities to that of the Freemasons and was instituted at very much the time when Joseph Smith was inducted into Masonry. He explained the similarity by declaring that Masonic ritual was a corrupt form of original Hebrew ritual which was now properly restored in Mormonism. It is a paradox that the Book of Mormon contains a thinly veiled condemnation of secret fraternities of which Masonry is the prototype, whilst Mormon ritual bears striking resemblance to Masonic ceremonial.

Mormonism carries little of the concern with sin that characterized much of the fundamentalist Christianity of the period of its emergence, even though the prophet frequently demanded that men repent. The mood of the later revelations to Smith is a mood of promise and optimism, and this is associated with the mood of expanding American society. Men are seen as inherently good with immense potential in this life and the hereafter. The warnings of hell-fire, found in the Book of Mormon, disappear in the prospects of universal, though somewhat differential, salvation in the later revelations. Smith was himself a joyful man, and one of the prophets of the Book of Mormon declares that men are intended to have joy. Contemporary Mormonism reflects this orientation. Sport is highly valued and Mormon missionary work often uses sport as an aid to proselytizing. Dancing is encouraged, and education and health are both given due emphasis. Mormons do not drink, smoke or take tea or coffee, but there is little of the ascetic in their way of life. They are active in both business and politics, and for a time in the early development of Utah the Church leaders were often state politicians. The Church itself also has considerable business interests.

An element of the expansiveness of Mormonism may be seen in the structure of its priesthood. Priestly status has normally been a distinction reserved for the few and deeply respected in traditional Christianity: in Mormonism this status is widely diffused. All good Mormons are priests. Boys enter the Aaronic (lesser) priesthood at 12, and through a series of stages qualify for the office of priest before they reach full manhood, when they also become elders in the greater, Melchizedek priesthood. This element of democracy does not, of course, prevent the Church being governed by full-time officials, a president, 12 apostles, a presiding bishop, councillors and a patriarch. Responsibility is, however, distributed to local level, to the stakes (units of several thousand Mormons) and wards (further subdivisions that are under the control of a bishop). Through these units the religious, regulatory and welfare activities of the Church are organized, and the system of tithing (giving one tenth of one's interest) is instituted.

Mormons are vigorous proselytizers, and many young men go out into other parts of the world at their own expense for a two-year missionary period. They are, to Mormons, priests, although they are unlikely to become full-time ministers in the Church. In the early years Mormon missionaries induced their converts to go to Utah: later this policy changed and the Mormons began to build temples (essential for the indispensable rituals necessary for the fullest salvation) in other parts of the world. Apart from those built in other American states, temples have been constructed in Hawaii, New Zealand, Canada, Switzerland, Austria and London, England. The need for these temples becomes evident when it is realized that over three and a half million temple rites for the dead may be performed within one year. Unlike the temples, Mormon chapels, which act as religious meeting houses, are open to non-Mormons.

BRYAN WILSON

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MORRIS DANCES

THE OBSCURE TITLES Morris-men or Morrice dancers, as they have been known for centuries in England, convey little or nothing of the significance of these luck-bringers, life-dispensers or medicine-men. Their dance is a ritual ceremony, performed by a group of young men at a seasonal fertility festival, which has parallels in the tribal life of primitive societies and which is still discernible in the folk custom of today. These companies of dancers, which under different names have survived in many parts of Europe, inherit a pagan tradition, which has persisted, especially among country people, in spite of much discouragement from Christian authority.

The name Morris or Morrice seems to be a corruption of *Morisco* or Moorish, probably in the sense of strange or outlandish. The word may also signify blackness, for it is a common practice among these dancing companies to blacken the face as a form of disguise. In Rumania such dancing companies are known as *Calusari*, 'calus' meaning a little horse. In Macedonia one such group is known as the *Rusalia*, or fairies. Whatever name is used locally, it serves to indicate that while they are taking part in the ritual, the young men are not of this world; they are superhumans rather than humans. If not fairies, then they are the ghosts of ancestors or attendants on strange gods, disguised against recognition simply as village lads. In England, faith in the

G. L. Carlisle

magical powers of the ritual folk dances has weakened with time so that they are now regarded as vaguely lucky; today the Morris Dancers are welcomed more for their vigorous, athletic skill than for their healing powers. But the ancient belief in this medicine still persists in eastern Europe and an idea of what the Morris must once have meant in rural England can be formed by following a day in the comparable Calusari dance ceremony, as it was recorded and filmed in Rumania on the eve of the Second World War.

A typical Calusar group is composed of seven or more dancers, two or three musicians with fiddle and cobsa (portable dulcimer), two 'clowns' wearing masks made of a rabbit or hare skin and each carrying a club with a handle carved to represent a phallus in erection. The performers all wear white clothes, which are plain for the musician but decorated with ribbons, braid and bells for the dancers. The clowns have the exposed parts of the head and hands blackened with soot. They are forbidden to speak throughout the festival season, although they may be spoken to, and they must not enter a church. Otherwise they are free to behave and fool with the utmost licence. The group carry a short maypole which is tipped with a piece of wild garlic and round which at times the dancers perform circular figures. Each dancer carries a stout staff which he can use as a walking stick or as a vaulting pole or simply to brandish and clash. They wear soft-soled shoes with bells, pulled over a thickness of rags wound round the feet for protection.

The ceremony starts with the initiation of the entire group, to the continuous accompaniment of the musicians who themselves go through the several stages of initiation. First they pass through an arch made by the leader or 'captain' placing the point of his staff against the tip of the maypole, round which the dancers are circling. Then the initiates take it in turn to lie flat on their faces, side by side, to form a bridge which the others cross over, the mute clowns taking every chance to stamp on or slap the posteriors thus exposed. Throughout these proceedings and, indeed, at any moment throughout the dance performance the 'mutes' behave badly, mocking the celebrants and teasing the spectators and occasionally thrusting their clubs between their own legs and acting the fertility god rampant.

Infusion of New Life

In the final stage of initiation, each man comes forward for a ceremonial beating, beginning with the captain. He lies on his back and his raised feet are clamped between two sticks held by two of the dancers, while a third with a bundle of staves firmly belabours the upturned soles, giving the victim a final crack on his posterior before he is released. The mutes struggle fiercely to escape this ordeal and often succeed in breaking loose before the purging is complete.

Once initiated, the behaviour of the troupe changes dramatically. The musicians strike up a regular march measure, the captain brandishes his staff and leads his dancers in a single file round the maypole, shouting at regular intervals, their cry 'Calu-Sar', which goes echoing across country to be heard over a wide area. The march round is succeeded by a straight line of dancers facing front, the march rhythm giving way to a rapid vibrating sound to which the dancers shout and 'step' and jump and caper, using the staff to press their leaping bodies up in the air. With a final high spring the captain signals the musicians, who revert to the march motif, and he leads off the single file procession to the call of Calu-Sar.

Each part of this medicine dance arouses its particular brand of excitement and the alternating rhythms produce a cathartic effect on any spectator exposed to the medicine which is now being constantly distilled and dispensed. For the inhabitants of the community, the visitation of the Calusari would seem to be an annual infusion of new life, dispensed generally by the perambulations of the group from point to point round the village.

At one point in the day's ritual, the mothers of sick and ailing babies seek out the dancing doctors for individual treatment. The captain invites one mother to step forward with her babe, which he dandles in his arms while he dances a few gentle steps. Then he places the rolled bundle, by now hypnotized into a watchful silence, on a soft piece of ground and carefully hops and springs over the small body before gathering it up to hand back 'revived', to its grateful mother. Later in the day, another group of candidates for special treatment gather round the 'life savers'. These are the unmarried maids who pin their faith in this kind of medicine to promote fertility. At first the dancers seem unaware of the slowly circling group of girls closing in on them, but soon they are all linked up in one large circle, the men suiting their steps to their new partners, who have probably performed them since early childhood. After this dance dispensation, they can expect to be married within the year.

While the life-giving function of the Calusari is made evident in their annual ritual, the comparable men's dances in England and other parts of Europe are not so explicit. Without the Rumanian and other eastern European examples for comparison, these would be, and were for long, difficult to interpret. The western European examples, including the English Morris, are incomplete and fragmentary as rituals, their local names and local explanations being often misleading. Before the material for comparative study became more readily available, a good deal of guesswork was inevitable and in England, the name of 'Morris' was widely used for several different folk or near-folk customs, ranging

Homer W. Sykes

Far left **The hobby-horse, the fool and other figures who accompany the dancers suggest that 'the dances were part of a fertility rite and that somewhere behind these shadows there lurked a pagan god' *Left* Britannia Coconut Dancers from Yorkshire: the name 'Morris' may come from the frequent practice of blackening the face for disguise**

from Christmastide mummers to carnival drum majorettes.

The rather shadowy figures of clown, hobby-horse, Maid Marian, and the other characters who accompanied the Morris dancers suggest that the dances were part of a fertility rite and that somewhere behind these shadows there lurked a pagan god. But with the eastern European analogues and other apparently isolated or disconnected customs, the picture has been and is still being filled in. Christian influences seem to have been most effective in western Europe in 'playing down' the pagan trappings and fertility aspects of the May games, where the Morris Dance had a place and where the maypole or 'tree' was a focal point (see MAY DAY). The various animal-men, in the guise of goats, horses, sheep and even dragons who appear in this widespread ritual may possibly be shadowy representations of the old god.

God Gives Way to Men

There are a number of cases of the Maytime folk customs in which the god is still a fairly dominant figure, while the band of young 'medicine-men' merely attend on the god. This is the position of the Mayers of Padstow in Cornwall, who on May Day 'work' the 'Hoss' or Horse, providing also the groom or teaser and the musical accompaniment of drums and voices (see HOBBY-HORSE). So it is with the 'cadets' who man and drive the complicated mechanical dragon of Tarascon, in the south of France, the *Taresque*, which once needed to consume so many young maidens in order to perform its annual perambulation, breathing fire and smoke and at the same time bringing new life to Tarascon. But in the majority of the surviving men's dance customs, this central figure has declined in importance and interest, and attention has long shifted to the young men themselves. A survey of the ceremonial dances in Great Britain, published in 1960, indicates that there were more than 600 localities where some type of Morris Dance was or had been until recently in existence. (See also DANCE; FOOL.)

DOUGLAS KENNEDY

The Kennet Morris Men: a survey found over 600 places in Great Britain where there is, or has recently been, some type of Morris dance

G. L. Carlisle

Moses

Great Jewish leader and law-giver, probably of the 13th century BC, who led the Israelites out of Egypt but died before they entered the 'promised land' of Palestine; traditionally, the author of the first five books of the Bible; God made the covenant with Israel through Moses and delivered to him the Ten Commandments: in the Middle Ages he had a reputation as a powerful magician.

See YAHWEH.

Michael Holford

Mosque

Moslem place of worship, from an Arabic word meaning 'place of prostration'; it contains an area for prayers, led by the imam, a recess in one wall indicating the direction of Mecca, and a pulpit; the most characteristic external feature is the minaret, from which the faithful are called to prayer.

See ISLAM; RELIGION.

Sonia Halliday

MOTHER GODDESS

Michael Holford

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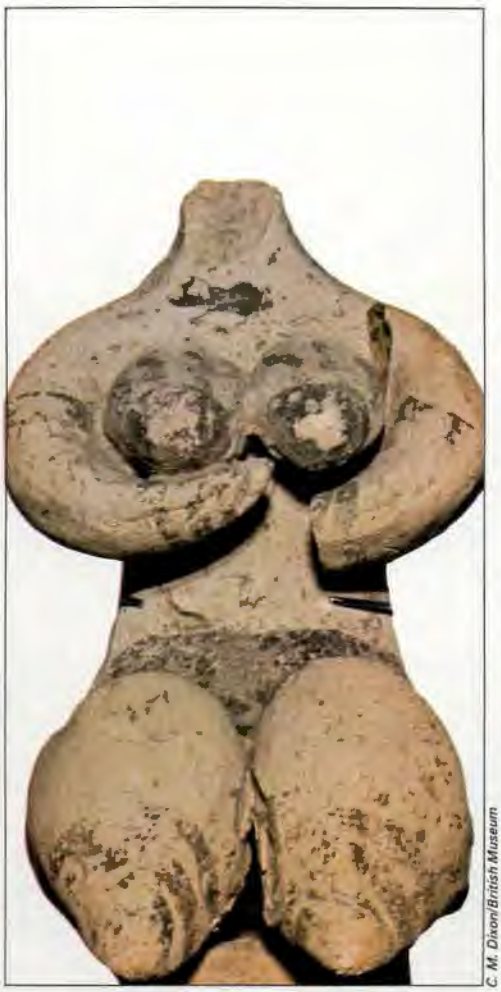

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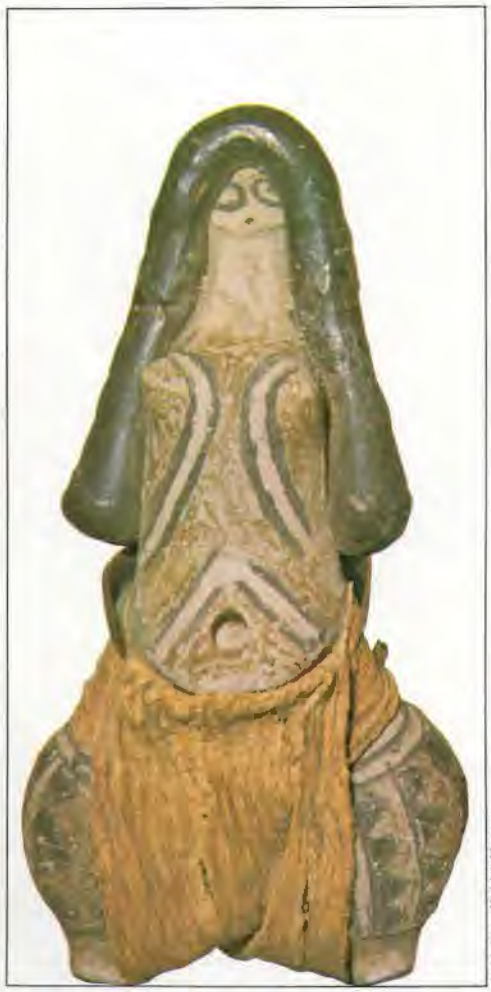

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MOTHER GODDESS

Figure of Love and Fear

The mother goddess is a being in whom opposites combine; human love is one of her areas of influence, but so is the urge that leads men into war; the giver of life, she is also the deity who takes it away

'CONCERNING EARTH, the mother of all, shall I sing; firm earth, eldest of gods, that nourishes all things in the world. . . Thine it is to give or to take life from mortal men.' These words from the Homeric Hymn to Earth typify a religious belief that is as old as history.

From time immemorial man has reflected in wonder and amazement on the earth upon which he lives, and which nourishes himself, his family, his tribe and his animals. As long as man has felt himself dependent on the earth, he has personified it and worshipped or at least reverenced it, in the most potent of all images, the image of the mother.

Today in a Western society which has to a very great extent lost its hold on the realities of agricultural existence, it is said that the earth has become desacralized. Reverence has given way to ruthless exploitation. The mystery has fled, to be replaced by concrete carpets and factory farming. Nevertheless, it is still possible to see shadows and hear distant echoes of what was once an unquestioned item of faith.

Not long ago the suggestion was made that a certain bestseller in the field of religious literature would be a book entitled 'God is a Woman'. The suggestion may have been partly frivolous, but bearing in mind that it is only very recently in the history of mankind that deity has been credited with exclusively masculine attributes, the possibility of depicting supernatural power in feminine terms is far from unreasonable. In the West, God is generally spoken of as 'Our Father which art in heaven', but the naive question 'If God is Father, then who is Mother?' still deserves to be asked. Historically the answer would be: 'The earth on which we live'.

The history of religion reveals a panorama of gods and goddesses, higher and lower spiritual beings, among whom personifications of the earth occupy a prominent place. As a rule these personifications bear all the attributes of female sexuality and motherhood. Sometimes they are

Previous page **Known by many names, the mother goddess in India is a deity of many aspects, some of which are beneficent and others terrible. Worshipped as Parvati, the consort of Shiva and daughter of the Himalayas, as Sati 'the good wife', and as Bhairavi 'the terrible', she is also Ambika, the source of all life: statue of Ambika, 11th century AD** ***Facing page*** **Crude figurines of women with prominent breasts and grotesquely enlarged hips are among man's earliest artefacts and have been found all over the world; it is possible that these represent the fertility that is essential if man is to survive. Figure of a standing woman** ***(far left)*** **c 6000 BC: from Catal Huyuk in Anatolia** ***Centre*** **Clay figurine from Assyria** ***Left*** **Brazilian figurine made from clay, representing a pregnant woman**

Mistress of All the Elements

Lucius prays to Isis:

Blessed Queen of Heaven, whether you are pleased to be known as Ceres, the original harvest mother who in joy at the finding of your lost daughter Proserpine abolished the rude acorn diet of our forefathers and gave them bread raised from the fertile soil of Eleusis; or whether as celestial Venus, now adored at sea-girt Paphos, who at the time of the first Creation coupled the sexes in mutual love and so contrived that man should continue to propagate his kind for ever; or whether as Artemis . . . or whether as dread Proserpine . . . I beseech you, by whatever name, in whatever aspect, with whatever ceremonies you deign to be invoked, have mercy on me . . .

To which the goddess replies:

I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses that are. My nod governs the shining heights of Heaven, the wholesome sea-breezes, the lamentable silences of the world below. Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names, and propitiated with all manner of different rites, yet the whole round earth venerates me.

Apuleius *The Golden Ass*
(trans. Robert Graves)

paradoxically believed to be virginal. Often, still more paradoxically, they combine within themselves attributes of generosity and grace and also those of horror and destruction. If human love is one of their areas of influence, the senseless urge which leads men into war is another.

Their icons and images may be of the order of the Venus de Milo, an idealized form of female beauty; or, equally, they may suggest a mind diseased – skinny, skull-festooned hags, their fangs dripping with the blood of generations of men. Clearly the mother goddess of human history is no romantic figure, but rather one in which opposites combine, in which the giver of life is clearly seen as the being who also takes it away, and in which promises are hollow and temporary, and hope a mockery.

The tension and paradox appear to have been almost universal. From Scandinavia to Melanesia, goddesses in which precisely these characteristics predominate have been worshipped, feared and propitiated. This universality has led some scholars to suggest that what we are in fact seeing is the reflection of a human psychological trait which is always and everywhere the same, though clothed in slightly different images and symbols. This psychological interpretation is not without its risks, however. The Paleolithic 'Venuses' for instance cannot simply be equated with medieval figures of the Virgin Mary. The figure of the mother goddess in India is not the same as the Great Mother of the Mediterranean world, however much they may appear to have in common. The hypotheses of Freud and Jung must not be made to carry more weight than they can bear. As well as similarities, there are significant differences.

Among man's earliest artefacts, dating from the late Paleolithic period, are coarse and crude figurines of pregnant women, their breasts and hips grotesquely enlarged. These, it has been supposed, represent in human form that concern with human reproduction that was a pattern of man's condition of survival on the face of the earth (see FERTILITY). It is not known whether these in any sense represent mother goddesses and there is no way of finding out. The possibility is there, but it is only a possibility.

It is interesting, though, that these figurines are seldom more than approximately human. Apart from their lack of proportion, their faces and other personal characteristics are hardly even hinted at. This same characteristic is found in female figurines from Bronze Age peasant cultures and many of the earliest urban cultures, for instance those of north-west India. Excavations made on Indus Valley sites have revealed many such artefacts, often smoke-stained in such a way as to suggest some form of household worship. If this is a continuous line of development, it would seem to suggest something more than merely 'good-luck charms' or magical amulets. The pattern is consistent, at all events: a female figure with rudimentary features, but with prominent breasts and hips, often dressed in a girdle and necklaces, and wearing a head-dress.

Even today the visitor to an Indian village may be surprised to find that the temples of the great gods, Shiva and Vishnu, are regarded by the people as being of less importance than the little shrine of the local goddess, or Grami Devi. She may have many names, most of which are not found in the standard textbooks on Hinduism. But she is 'of the earth', and directly responsible for the fertility of the fields surrounding the village. She may be linked mythologically with the consorts of the great gods, Parvati, a consort of Shiva, Kali his wife, or Lakshmi who was Vishnu's wife, but to all intents and purposes she is the guardian of the village and the one to whom the people turn for everyday purposes. She has her festivals and her particular responsibilities, and it is probable that her nature and function have not changed for more than 5000 years.

However, the most authoritative evidence concerning the worship of mother goddesses comes from the Mediterranean area, from Iran in the east to Rome in the west, and covering Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. Indeed, in this area, the names and functions of the great goddesses were so interchangeable as to make comparative study a highly complex undertaking. The primary identification of the goddess with the fruitful earth is unquestionable, but starting from Mesopotamia there is an involved pattern, in which celestial elements combine with those of the underworld in such a way as to suggest that the Great Mother may be a composite figure, as complex as the human mind.

The Semitic names for the greatest mother goddess were Inanna in Sumeria, Ishtar in Babylon and Astarte or Anat among the Canaanites. Commonly identified with the planet Venus, her most typical title is 'queen of heaven', though she is also known as 'mistress of all the gods' and 'the lady of the world'. In time, she gathered to herself the attributes of a host of other goddesses, so that in Mesopotamia the word *ishtar* came to mean simply 'goddess'.

She was believed to be the giver of vegetation; a hymn contains the words: 'In the heavens I take my place and send rain, in the earth I take my place and cause the green to spring forth.' She was the creator of animals, and the goddess of sexual love, marriage and maternity. In another hymn it was said: 'I turn the male to the female, I turn the female to the male; I am she who adorneth the male for the female, I am she who adorneth the female for the male.' Her worship was frequently connected with the practice of sacred prostitution (see PROSTITUTION).

Two other characteristics of the Semitic mother goddess are worth mentioning in this context. The first concerned her connection with a male figure who could be described as son, brother or husband. The best known of these figures was Tammuz (Sumerian Dumu-zi), a god of vegetation and in particular of the growing corn. Every year a festival was held at which his 'death' and 'resurrection' was celebrated (see DYING GOD; TAMMUZ).

Naked Before the God

The vegetation god was believed to die and rise again annually, and in the myths of the descent of the mother goddess into the land of the dead there is a dramatic image of the search of the mother for her lost son and lover, the search of the earth for the temporarily lost fertility which the new spring restores. A Sumerian version of this myth, *Inanna's Descent to the Nether World*, is one of the earliest examples.

Inanna descends, perhaps in order to free Dumu-zi; she approaches the subterranean temple of Ereshkigal, god of the dead, through seven gates, at each one of which she has to remove part of her clothing, until she finally stands before him naked. An interesting feature of this myth is that on her return, she brings with her all manner of evil and malevolent beings: 'They who

The personification of generosity and grace, the mother goddess also has the power to destroy *Left* Primitive Indian figurine of a fertility goddess; her staring eyes show that she expects sacrifice *Right* Durga, one of the aspects of the female side of the great god Shiva, was born to kill demons

Hamlyn Group/Musée Guimet

William MacQuitty

preceded her, they who preceded Inanna, were beings who knew not food, who knew not water, who eat not sprinkled flour, who drink not libated wine, who take away the wife from the loins of man, who take away the child from the breast of the nursing mother.' Similar myths were current all over the Semitic world, for instance in Canaan, where the mother goddess Anat attacks and conquers Mot (death) in order to free the fertility god Baal.

The cult of the mother goddess moved westward, perhaps through Cyprus and Crete, into Anatolia and Greece. Significantly, the most popular image of Venus, the Greek Aphrodite, depicts her emerging from the sea on the coast of Cyprus, while her consort, Adonis, is a Semitic figure, with a Semitic name. In her purely Greek form, as Aphrodite, the goddess's cult was fairly decorous, but on the borders of the Greek world, in Corinth, sacred prostitution was practised.

However, on entering the Greek culture, the cult of the mother goddess encountered another similar cult deriving from the Indo-European culture. In Iran, Anahita the goddess who 'purifies the seed of males and the womb and milk of females', described in sculptural terms as 'a beautiful maiden, powerful and tall', was worshipped. Her cult spread through the Persian Empire, and she gradually coalesced in various ways with Athene, Aphrodite, and the Anatolian Cybele. It was Cybele who eventually came to be honoured in the Roman Empire as the Great Mother of the gods, a temple being erected to her honour on the Palatine Hill in Rome in 204 BC.

The cult of Cybele remained, even after its adoption in Rome by the Romans, the responsibility of native Phrygians, who wore their hair long, dressed in female clothes, and celebrated the goddess in wild orgiastic dances to the point of exhaustion. It is believed their consecration to the goddess sometimes involved self-emasculation.

Although this type of worship was not unknown in Greece, particularly in connection with Dionysus, worship of the mother goddess took more decorous forms. The Mysteries of Eleusis (see ELEUSIS) incorporated most of the elements already mentioned: a dying and rising pattern linked with the corn, with fertility and with the rhythm of the seasons. The rites of Eleusis were celebrated in honour of the mother goddess Demeter and in honour of her daughter Persephone.

Originally pure fertility rites, they gradually came to be an acted parable of the relationship of man to his surroundings, assuring initiates of the protection of Persephone in the world beyond the grave. The myth is outlined in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.

'Demeter's People'

Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Zeus (earth mother and sky father) was out gathering flowers. The earth opened and out leaped Pluto, god of the underworld: 'He caught her up reluctant in his golden car and bore her away lamenting.' For nine days Demeter sought her; on the tenth day she learned the secret from Helios, the sun. Angry, she closed the womb of earth until her daughter was restored to her; however, Pluto made Persephone eat pomegranate seeds, in this way keeping some hold on her. Demeter accepted the arrangement, and before leaving for Olympus, showed the people her mysteries, '. . . awful mysteries which no one may in any way transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice'. The secret was well kept, and many details of the Eleusinian Mysteries are unknown, save that the cult became established in Athens.

Another popular form of the worship of the mother goddess in the Roman Empire was that of the Egyptian goddess Isis. Originally the wife of Osiris, identified with the dead

Michael Holford Library

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Left **The epitome of feminine charm, Venus influenced the fertility of plants and animals: mosaic showing the goddess at her toilet** ***Above*** **Many of the attributes of the Great Mother of the Mediterranean countries were transferred to the Virgin Mary**

pharaoh, she was the mother of Horus, the living pharaoh, who gave birth to her son after having conceived magically on the body of her dead husband. One common representation of Isis is as a mother suckling the infant Horus, thought by some to be a prototype of later Christian images of mother and child.

Indeed, the queen of heaven, the universal mother, was known by many names in the ancient world. For example there is Artemis or Diana, the huntress and mistress of animals: in Acts, chapter 19, there is recorded a celebrated encounter between Paul and devotees of 'Artemis of the Ephesians', a local, many-breasted form of what may have originally been a moon goddess. There was the Anatolian goddess Ma, whose priests were known as *fanatici* (servants of the *fanum* or temple) and from whose wild excesses comes the word 'fanatic'. Farther north, there were Celtic and Teutonic tribal goddesses.

Among the latter, the goddess Freya was said to have had sexual relations with all the male members of the pantheon, and as goddess of the dead shared with Odin the custody of warriors slain on the field of battle. This is the same kind of ambivalence that is to be observed in most mother goddesses; because the earth receives the dead in corruption and also gives birth and sustenance to crops, men and animals, the connection between the mother goddess and the kingdom of the dead is common. In Greece, for instance, the dead were sometimes called 'Demeter's people'.

The coming of Christianity to the Mediterranean countries and Europe had the effect, on one level, of devaluing the indigenous cults by demoting the ancient deities to the rank of demons. In the case of the Great Mother, however, popular belief reasserted itself by transferring many of her attributes to the Virgin Mary (see MARY). In the same way, local deities often came to be identified with the saints. This interesting development can be paralleled in many parts of the world. Its roots are certainly psychological: the hold of the Great Mother on the mind of an agricultural people was too strong to be broken overnight. Legends and attributes came to be attached to the name of Mary, in her role as the Mother of God, which lack all scriptural support, but which clearly correspond to needs in the popular mind.

At Bethlehem for instance there is, or used to be, a cave known locally as the 'milk grotto'. Legend has it that the Holy Family once took refuge in the cave, and that as Mary nursed the infant Jesus, a drop of her milk fell on the floor. Because of this, it was believed that to enter the cave would cure barrenness in women, and increase their milk and even the milk of animals. It seems clear that this particular cave was once the shrine of a local form of mother goddess, and that the legend is merely a Christianization of the site.

It is worth emphasizing that doctrines and dogmas concerning the Virgin Mary have always been formulated as a result of popular religious practices. On the theological level, as long as God and Christ were thought of in terms of the dispensation of justice, both appeared remote and, the nature of man being what it is, frightening. The Virgin, on the other hand, was unquestionably human, although elevated to near-divine rank and crowned Queen of Heaven. Who better to intercede for sinful mankind at the judgement seat? In this, she was in effect doing what the mother goddess, whatever her name, had always done from time immemorial.

Mankind's worship of, and reverence for, the divine figure of the mother, is a religious phenomenon far deeper than creeds, councils and dogmas. It reflects man's profound need for security in a frequently unfriendly world, his own inadequacies and his own fears. In it can be seen the tension between good things and evil, between the gift of life and the fear of death, personified in the goddess who gives and takes away, who creates and destroys, but who is never as aloof and unconcerned as her consort, the sky god. As long as man retains any of his roots in the earth, reverence for the earth – whether personified or not – will remain, and the Great Mother will still have human children.

(See also EARTH; ICONOGRAPHY; RELIGION; and articles on individual goddesses.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

FURTHER READING: E. Neumann, *The Great Mother* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1964); J. Preston, ed., *Mother Worship* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1983).

Mountains have been seen as symbols of pride, created as a punishment for human sin, but they are also widely regarded as being the source of inspiration and strength

MOUNTAIN

ACCORDING to an old Navaho legend, at one stage in the creation of the world the First Man and the First Woman raised up seven sacred mountains with the help of the two gods Black Body and Blue Body. The mountains were arranged in a pattern, with one at each point of the compass, and three in the middle. The mountain at the eastern point was fastened to the earth with a bolt of lightning, and its creators put two pigeon eggs on the summit to make wings for it. The western mountain was riveted to the earth with a sunbeam, the northern with a rainbow, and the mountain in the south was pinned down with a great stone knife.

How much of this myth the Navaho invented for themselves, and how much they derived from alien traditions, it is impossible to say. But several elements in it are paralleled in other parts of the world. The association of the number seven with sacred heights, for example, is found in the Iranian myth of the seven gods that dwell on the heavenly mountain, and in the ancient Hindu legend of the seven-sided world-mountain.

Another Asiatic people, the Kalmuks of Astrakhan, also associate the holy mountain of their cosmogony with the four cardinal points. Their mountain has four sides, each facing a different point of the compass, and each glowing with a different colour reflected from the precious metals covering its surface.

This idea of colours is echoed perhaps in the Navaho's black and blue gods, and in the rainbow that binds the northern mountain. The Hindu world-mountain's seven sides are also coloured, each one with a different colour of the rainbow. In an ancient Egyptian myth there is a sacred mountain in the east, and another in the west. The sun god rises at dawn from the eastern mountain, and retires into the western mountain in the evening.

It is natural enough that mountains, as conspicuous landmarks, should be associated with the cardinal points and, as vast natural objects, with other dominant phenomena in Nature. But one point of detail in the Navaho myth is unique and puzzling, the item about the pigeon eggs. The idea here is that mountains aspire towards the sky, that they strain to take off from the earth's surface. The myth echoes a legend in the Vedic sagas of India, according to which the mountains once had wings. It seems rather cruel of the Navaho to have provided their eastern mountain with wings at the same time as they fastened it to earth with a bolt.

Beautiful and uplifting to the spirit, or barren, rocky and sinister, mountains have been regarded as sacred throughout the world: Mount Olympus, the awesome dwelling-place of the Greek gods

Creations of the Devil

Although the Navaho distributed their sacred mountains impartially round the compass, and the Egyptians put theirs in the east and west, in central Asiatic myths, probably all ultimately derived from India, the sacred world-mountain is set in the north. This mountain, worshipped by peoples in places as far apart as Mongolia and the western shores of the Caspian, was the dwelling-place of the gods. Its peak rose to the sky at the Pole Star. In one version of this myth, there was a temple on the summit, and the Pole Star was the golden spire of the temple's tower. The king of the gods had his golden throne in the temple.

The fame of this cosmic mountain spread far and wide in the ancient world, and in the Old Testament it seems to be equated with Mount Zion. God's 'holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of the whole earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King' (Psalm 48); and Isaiah (chapter 14) has an even more striking reference to this myth, when, addressing Lucifer, he says: 'You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven, above the stars of God I will set my throne on high: I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the most High.'

The Hebrews had more than one sacred mountain – Mount Sinai, the place where, on the initiative of Moses, the sacred covenant was enacted between the Israelites and Yahweh, Mount Tabor, south-west of the

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Sea of Galilee, and Mount Zion, the holy hill of ancient Jerusalem. In Christian tradition, mountains play a more equivocal role. The disciples of Jesus remembered the words of Isaiah: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings,' and the Messiah preached his greatest sermon on a mountain. But Isaiah had also prophesied that 'every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low', and mountains came to be seen as symbols of pride and worldly exaltation.

The idea grew up that God originally created a smooth, egg-shaped world, and that the mountains came later (as a punishment for human sin, it was sometimes said). The legend is echoed in many English authors from Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Burnet onwards. A similar belief flourished among peoples influenced by Asiatic dualistic conceptions of the universe. In Siberia and Mongolia myths are recorded in which God creates the smooth, round earth, and the Devil creates mountains and swamps, either by kicking up the earth's surface, or by chewing up lumps of earth in his mouth, and spitting them out.

These dualistic, and the later Christian, beliefs about mountains take us a long way from the Psalmist's: 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.' But the belief that mountains are the source of strength and inspiration is widespread outside Christendom. In Scandinavia, this idea is linked with the equally prevalent belief that mountains are the abodes of dead souls. The Finnish Lapps believed that these spirits protected them, and they hoped to join their particular set of mountain guardians after death. An ancient Finnish magic song contains a curious echo of the Psalm just quoted: 'I call for help from the hill, I seek for folk from the hill.' Obeying the same instinct that made the ancient Greeks place their gods on Mount Olympus, the Lapps of Finland placed strange stone idols on their holy mountains of the dead, and it is said that even today their descendants cannot pass by these mysterious mountain gods without feelings of awe.

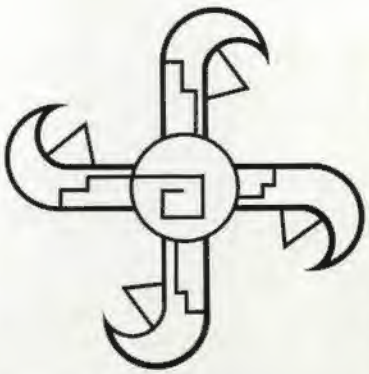
(See also LANDSCAPE.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

Mu

Or Lemuria, a hypothetical lost continent in the Pacific; inhabited, according to Mme Blavatsky, by the third of five vanished races of mankind; in the 19th century Colonel James Churchward claimed to have deciphered ancient stone tablets containing a history of Mu.

See LEMURIA AND MU.



Mummers

Actors in folkplays, especially the winter and Christmastide plays; from a word meaning 'mask'; many old mumming plays and dances, preserving pagan and fertility themes and symbolism, survive or have been revived in Europe.

See DANCE; FOLKPLAYS; FOOL; HOBBY-HORSE; HORNS; MORRIS DANCES; SWORD DANCES.

Mansell Collection

The embalming of the dead was a religious ritual to the Egyptians, who believed that the physical body was an essential constituent of the human personality, and that without it an afterlife was impossible

MUMMIFICATION

EGYPTIAN MUMMIES are always objects of curious and somewhat awed attention when exhibited in museums. Most people feel a strange fascination in gazing at the bodies of persons who lived thousands of years ago. In a special room of the great Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, it is possible to look upon the very faces of the pharaohs; some, such as Seti I, who reigned between 1312–1300 BC, are still remarkably well preserved.

The ancient Egyptians have been unique in their concern to preserve the bodies of their dead. For their practice of embalming dead bodies was not just an exercise of the mortician's craft; it was a religious ritual, inspired by a distinctive conception of human nature and destiny. The custom was already well established when the Pyramid Texts were composed (c2400 BC), and it was still being followed in the 4th century AD, when Christian influence led finally to its abandonment. Throughout that immense period, despite great vicissitudes of political fortune, the people of Egypt continued patiently to mummify not only their human dead but sacred animals also. The practice was both costly and gruesome, and its long continuance attests to the strength of the belief that inspired it.

The explanation lies in the Egyptian idea of man. The physical body was regarded as an essential constituent of human personality, and an afterlife could not be imagined as being possible without it. As the Egyptian funerary texts show (see BOOK OF THE DEAD), the decomposition of the body consequent on death was profoundly feared. Action was taken to prevent it from a very early period, as the following passages from the Pyramid Texts show. In the first, Tait, the personification of the linen bandages used for wrapping the corpse (in this case of King Teti) is being invoked: 'Hail Tait . . . protect the head of Teti, so that it becomes not detached. Bind together the bones of Teti, so that they do not fall apart'. The purpose of embalming is realistically stated in this assurance given to King Pepi: 'they (the goddesses Isis and Nephthys) prevent thy putrefaction from flowing on the earth . . . they prevent the odour of thy corpse from being evil for thee . . .'

Beautiful Memory Picture

Alas, poor Yorick! How *very* surprised he would be to see how his counterpart of today is whisked off to a funeral parlour and is in short order sprayed, sliced, pierced, pickled, trussed, trimmed, creamed, waxed, painted, rouged and neatly dressed – transformed from a common corpse into a Beautiful Memory Picture. This process is known in the trade as embalming and restorative art, and is so universally employed in the United States and Canada that the funeral director does it routinely, without consulting corpse or kin. He regards as eccentric those few who are hardy enough to suggest that it might be dispensed with.

Jessica Mitford *The American Way of Death*

Magical Amulets

These passages in the Pyramid Texts refer to the process of embalming and they show that it was essentially a ritual transaction that was based upon the legend of Osiris (see OSIRIS). The Egyptians believed that the ritual re-enactment, on behalf of a dead person, of the acts that were supposed once to have raised Osiris from death would ensure to the person concerned a similar resurrection.

But this ritual magic was reinforced by practical action, taken in the light of contemporary knowledge and experience, to preserve the corpse from physical disintegration. As the first of the passages quoted shows, the corpse was wrapped in linen bandages to hold it together; the other passage suggests some action to arrest its putrefaction. This early literary evidence is supported by specimens that have been found of mummies dating from the Thinite Period (3200–2780 BC). Already attempts appear to have been made to preserve the body by the application of salt or natron, a form of soda, while the bandages were impregnated with a resinous substance and moulded to the shape of the body. In these

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earliest examples the body is contracted, with the arms, legs and fingers separately bandaged.

The contracted position was also used in pre-dynastic burials, when the body was not embalmed but often preserved by direct contact with the dry desert sand. The extended position later became invariable.

The technique of embalming gradually improved, though all its various stages cannot now be discerned from the available archeological material. Obviously experiments were made, with varying success. During the Middle Kingdom (2052–1567 BC) the embalmers had learned how to remove or reduce the flesh, while leaving the skin and bones intact. Mummies of this period are dark-coloured, and the skin is dry and brittle. Amulets of various kinds, giving magical protection, were placed on the body or in the wrappings; the heart-scarab (see SCARAB) was already in use, being set sometimes in the breast-cavity.

Artificial Eyes

During the New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC), the art of mummification reached its highest point of achievement. This was probably due not only to increasing experience but also to Egypt's political power, which enabled the embalmers to obtain costly spices and medicaments from a wide area of Africa and the Middle East. Such notable mummies as those of Thothmes IV and Seti I attest to the ability of the embalmers of this period to preserve the facial features of the dead; artificial eyes were sometimes inserted and the contours of the face filled out by packing mud beneath the skin.

A detailed account of the process of mummification was given by the Greek historian Herodotus, who had visited Egypt in the 5th century BC. Although he wrote

The Egyptians, more than any other nation, persistently attempted to stop or reverse the consequences of death. For thousands of years they mummified not only their human dead, but also their sacred animals, the ibis-bird, crocodiles and snakes; to please the cat-headed goddess Bast, who protected men against contagion and evil spirits, her worshippers buried the mummies of cats, her sacred animal, near her sanctuaries *Left* and *Below* Mummified cats, now in the British Museum

C. M. Dixon

Roger Wood

long after the zenith of Egyptian civilization and was often fanciful, or misinformed, in his descriptions, his account of mummification is generally confirmed by examination of mummies. After describing the lamentation that follows a death and the taking of the body to the embalmers, he writes: 'There are a set of men in Egypt who practise the art of embalming . . . These persons when a body is brought to them, show the bearers various models of corpses, made in wood, and painted so as to resemble nature. The most perfect is said to be after the manner of him whom I do not think it religious to name (Herodotus means Osiris) in connection with such a matter; the second sort is inferior to the first, and less costly; the third is the cheapest of all. All this the embalmers explain, and then ask in which way it is wished that the corpse should be prepared.'

Herodotus then proceeds to describe the first process: 'They take first a crooked piece of iron, and with it draw the brain through the nostrils, thus getting rid of a portion, while the skull is cleared of the rest by rinsing with drugs; next they make a cut along the flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone, and take out the whole contents of the abdomen, which they then cleanse, washing it thoroughly with palm wine, and again frequently with an infusion of pounded aromatics. After this they fill the cavity with the purest bruised myrrh, with cassia, and every sort of spicery except frankincense, and sew up the opening. Then the body is placed in natron for seventy days, and covered entirely over. After the expiration of that space of time, which must not be exceeded, the body is washed, and wrapped round, from head to foot, with bandages of fine linen cloth, smeared over with gum, which is used generally by the Egyptians in the place of glue, and in this state it is given back to the relations who enclose it in a wooden case which they have made for the purpose, shaped into the figure of a man.'

Herodotus then describes the other two methods, the first of which consisted of injecting cedar-oil by syringes, which, according to the historian, dissolved the stomach and intestines and was drained out through the anus. The body was also steeped in natron, which dissolved the flesh, leaving only the skin and bones. In the third method,

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

William MacQuitty

The desire to achieve physical immortality spans many thousands of years ***Facing page*** **The Egyptians profoundly feared bodily decomposition after death, believing that without the body there could be no afterlife; mummification was in fact a ritual re-enactment, on behalf of a person who had died, of the acts that were supposed to have raised Osiris from the dead, in the belief that this would ensure a similar resurrection for the person concerned: relief showing a mummy being sprinkled with water** ***Top*** **Mummy of a young boy who lived during the 3rd century AD; he is wrapped in a shroud on which his full-length portrait has been painted and is shown holding a bunch of laurel leaves, symbols of immortality** ***Below*** **Mummified monks, preserved by a drying process, in a monastery at Palermo**

used by the poorer classes, the intestines were removed by clyster, a process involving the injection of a liquid, and the body soaked in natron for 70 days.

This account by Herodotus omits to mention the frequent use of bitumen for packing the cavities from which the organs had been removed. This substance had the effect of making the body black and heavy, but rendered it almost indestructible except by burning. The word 'mummy' derived, incidentally, through Byzantine Greek and Latin, from an Arabic word meaning bitumen.

The organs that were removed from the body, namely, the heart and lungs and the viscera, were separately embalmed in bitumen and wrapped in bandages. They were then placed in what are traditionally known as 'Canopic' jars, of which four were used for each person. The covers of the jars were shaped, respectively, as the heads of the four sons of the god Horus, under whose protection their contents were placed. These jars were put into a special chest and interred with the mummified body.

For burial the mummy was enclosed in a coffin. From the Middle Kingdom period onwards this coffin was usually anthropoid, in the shape of a human body with the facial features carefully moulded and depicted. It was also brightly painted both inside and outside with images of protective deities, particularly of Nut, the sky goddess, and magical symbols and hieroglyphic texts taken from the Book of the Dead. The bodies

of royal persons and nobles were often placed in a number of anthropoid coffins; Tutankhamen (c1354–1345 BC) was enclosed in three, the inner one being of pure gold. These coffins were usually placed in a massive stone sarcophagus, as if to ensure the utmost security to the dead.

The tomb in which the embalmed and coffined body was finally laid was furnished with a variety of goods, according to the status of the deceased, and it became his 'eternal house', at which food offerings were regularly made. Among this funerary equipment were 'ushabtis', little mummiform figures on which a magical text was inscribed commanding the ushabti to answer in the next world for its owner, if he were called upon to labour there.

'Opening the Mouth'

Despite their many strange ideas and fantastic customs, the ancient Egyptians were essentially a practical people. They faced up to the fact that mummification, though it preserved the body from decay, left it immobile. Consequently, they made provision to restore to the body its ability to see, hear, eat and speak by a magical ceremony known as the 'Opening of the Mouth', which was performed just before the body was lowered into the sepulchre chamber. A similar ceremony was also performed to animate statues of the gods.

Mummification was not confined to humans. The Egyptians embalmed their sacred animals, from the great Apis bulls to creatures such as the ibis-bird, crocodiles and snakes. No other nation has ever sought so carefully and persistently to stop or reverse the consequences of death. The people of Egypt did in fact try to achieve immortality by a combination of magic, the chemical means of embalming, and by massive stone tombs.

The multitude of their mummies which can be seen in the museums of the world are the pathetic memorials of their frustrated hopes; yet even more ironic perhaps is the fact that during the Middle Ages, and even later, their embalmed bodies were often pounded up and sold as a drug.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: J. Hamilton-Paterson and C. Andrews, *Mummies* (Viking, 1979).

JAMES MURRELL

Cunning Murrell claimed to be 'the Devil's Master' and to have the power of invoking elementals and evil spirits; he was also said to be a skilled astrologer: illustration of Murrell studying the stars, from *The Strand Magazine* (1900)

BETTER KNOWN as Cunning Murrell, James Murrell of Hadleigh in Essex was possibly the last representative of a class of witch-doctor who had practised in English rural areas for many hundreds of years. Born at Rochford in Essex in 1780, the seventh son of a seventh son, he was apprenticed for a time to a surveyor and later worked for some years as a chemist's stillman; but by 1812 he had established himself as a shoemaker at Hadleigh. He soon abandoned this occupation for the more lucrative profession of herbalist, cattle-doctor and seer. He claimed, in his own words, to be 'the Devil's Master' for, in addition to exorcizing evil spirits from haunted houses, he claimed the power to overcome witchcraft.

As a seer, Murrell was adept at discovering the whereabouts of lost and stolen property by gazing into a small glass, described as being somewhat 'like a bird-cage mirror'. At other times he would spread a black liquid on the surface of a bowl of water and those who consulted him insisted that within this they had seen events that took place many miles away. As an astrologer his predictions were said to be uncommonly accurate.

The principal weapon in Murrell's armoury against witches was the witch bottle, a receptacle containing specimens of the blood, hair and nail parings of the victim of witchcraft, and nails from a horseshoe. Those used by Murrell were made of iron especially forged for him by the village blacksmith, whose descendants still live in the village.

Murrell's reputation as a witch-doctor is mainly preserved in a number of curious legends which were in circulation in the area until recently. A typical example was the story of the girl who barked like a dog after having been cursed by a gypsy woman. Half-mad from fear, and still hysterical, she was brought to Murrell for treatment. He immediately diagnosed witchcraft and prepared one of his witch bottles which he heated up on a cottage stove at midnight. The object was to cause by counter-magic a corresponding sense of burning in the body of the witch which would force her to remove the spell. In this case the bottle exploded and, oddly enough, the half-burned body of a woman was found in a lane on the following day.

Belief in the power of witchcraft survived for many years in Hadleigh itself, no doubt because of the presence of an active witch-doctor in the village. Typical of the prevailing state of mind is that of the villager who, at Murrell's direction, plunged a pen-knife into the footprints made by a reputed witch in the dust of the road. The suspect was later discovered to be limping from an injured foot.

Murrell made great capital from the presence in the village of a Mrs Eves, who was supposed to be the local witch. Although she was treated with studious politeness by her neighbours, she was held responsible for every local calamity, from epidemics among children to sickness in cows. All who were forced to pass her in the street averted their eyes and crossed their fingers at the same time, as a defence against 'overlooking' by the Evil Eye. The legend that arose after her death, to the effect that animal familiars had been discovered in a box in her cottage, was no doubt the direct result of Murrell's calumnies.

Advised by Angels

Murrell claimed to have the power to invoke elementals, and charged his clients anything from sixpence to half-a-crown for the service: but there was always some dispute in the community as to whether these spirits were angels, as he claimed, or fiends from hell, as many thought.

A number of handwritten manuals of conjuration and geomancy were found among Murrell's effects after his death, among which was a volume in which the names of his spiritual mentors were given as the good angels 'Adonay, Elohim, Raphael and Tetra strong and powerful'.

In spite of his deep interest in magic, Murrell was an extremely religious man, 'knowing his Bible backwards'. There were many arguments between the wizard and the local vicar with whom Murrell's relations were far from cordial; like the white witches of old, he regarded clergymen and doctors as trespassers upon his territory.

In December 1860 Cunning Murrell, feeling death coming upon him, called for pencil and paper and calculated the time of his passing, 'to the minute' it is said. He died on 16 December 1860, and was buried in Hadleigh churchyard. On his death certificate his profession is given as 'quack doctor'.

MUSES

IN THE EARLIEST Greek traditions the Muses were goddesses who inspired poetry and song; gradually they came to be thought of as presiding not only over different kinds of poetry but also over the arts and sciences in general. As a result, Greek education in historical times was thought of as a combination of 'music' (roughly, any art over which the Muses presided) and gymnastic (or physical education). A museum (*mouseion*) was first a shrine, seat or haunt of the Muses, a home of music or poetry, and later a philosophical school and library, such as that of Plato at Athens, or the Museum ('temple of the Muses') at Alexandria.

The latter is described by Strabo, the geographer, who paid a visit to Alexandria in 24 BC, as being in the royal quarter of the city. It included a covered walk, an arcade with recesses and seats, and a large building with a common hall where the scholar-members of the Museum went for meals. This scholarly association had a common fund. Its president, who was a royal nominee, was known as 'the priest of the Muses' shrine'. It is probable that members of the Museum were given an annual salary, but it is not known what detailed branches of scholarship were pursued. Certainly schools of medicine and mathematics were formed, lectures were delivered, and there was organized scientific research. There were two libraries, the chief librarian's post normally going to a man of letters who was also tutor to the royal household.

A Company of Nine

Apparently the Muses were once three in number, but were later thought of as a company of nine. They were: Calliope or Calliopeia, 'the beautiful voiced', the epic Muse, who was represented with a tablet and stylus and sometimes with a roll of paper or a book; Clio, the Muse of history, who was depicted either sitting or standing, with an open roll of paper or chest of books; Erato, 'the lovely', Muse of erotic poetry and of mime, who was sometimes shown with the lyre; Euterpe, 'the well-pleasing', Muse of lyric poetry, was represented with a flute; Melpomene, 'the singer', was portrayed with a tragic mask, the club of Hercules, or a sword; Polyhymnia or Polymnia, 'Muse of the many hymns', was depicted in attitudes of meditation, normally without any characteristic symbol or object; Terpsichore, 'delighting in dance', was shown with lyre and plectrum, an instrument used for plucking stringed instruments, as Muse of choral dance and song; Thalia, or Thaleia, 'the festive one', Muse of comedy, of playful and idyllic poetry, was portrayed with a comic mask, shepherd's staff or ivy wreath; Urania, the heavenly Muse of astronomy, was represented with a staff pointing at a globe. These neat distinctions were developed in later antiquity, however, and names and functions differ according to the sources.

The traditional association of Apollo (see APOLLO) and the Muses is as familiar in Greek mythology as is their joint patronage of poetry, dancing and music. This association appears to derive from prehistoric times and is comparable with actual choral performances by a female chorus under a male leader. The poet Pindar (5th century BC), in one of his odes, describes how the Muses danced in a chorus led by Apollo with his seven-stringed lyre at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, the parents of Achilles.

In Homer's *Iliad*, after the Olympian deities have feasted, Apollo plays his lyre as the wine goes round and the Muses sing, 'answering one another'. In one of the Homeric Hymns the Muses sing, again antiphonally, of the immortal gifts of gods and the trials of mankind, while the *Horai* (Hours) and *Charites* (Graces) dance hand-in-hand to Apollo's music, and the god himself actually takes part in the dancing.

Originally goddesses who inspired poetry and song, the Muses eventually came to be thought of as presiding over the arts and sciences generally: Terpsichore, the Muse of choral dance and song; Greek vase, 440 BC

Michael Holford

The old bards derived their inspiration and usually their real knowledge of things from the Muses who were, for the epic poet Hesiod, 'the daughters of Memory'. The epics begin with invocations to the Muses. Odysseus, for instance, in Homer's *Odyssey*, compliments a minstrel by saying he must be inspired by Apollo or the Muses.

Although Apollo's association with these goddesses is clearly attested in the early epics, and can reasonably be assumed to have derived from prehistoric times, the Greek traditions also suggest that the Muse goddesses and the god Apollo were brought by different routes to form their association on the Greek mainland, perhaps in Boeotia in central Greece. For the Muses were originally mountain goddesses from the north, from Pieria and Olympus, whose later cult extended southwards to Helicon and Parnassus. In historical times in antiquity their main centre was at Thespiae, an ancient town in Boeotia, where they were worshipped by a society named after Hesiod.

The origin of Apollo is more controversial, some scholars favouring a northern, and some an eastern origin, while others suggest a compromise twofold origin from north and east. However that may be, those who argue for the more primitive and separate role of the Muses, before their association with Apollo, emphasize that the god was absent at the funeral of Achilles, as Homer describes it. For the poet says that the Nereids stood around the body, weeping bitterly as they wrapped it in the winding-sheet, while the nine Muses, answering one another, sang the dirge. A male would have had no part in an old traditional dirge such as this, performed exclusively by women.

The Muses have exercised great influence on the European cultural tradition. This is natural, as they were deeply embedded, from the earliest times, in the most basic cultural impulses of social life.

R. F. WILLETTS

What exactly was ambrosia, which drove Dionysus' followers into frenzy? Robert Graves suggests that many puzzling references in literature can be explained if taken to imply the use of certain hallucinogenic mushrooms

MUSHROOM

THE PROFOUND importance of mushrooms in primitive religion had remained undetected until some 20 years ago, when Mr R. Gordon Wasson, an American banker, and his Russian-born wife Valentina first called attention to it. The new science of ethnomycology, meaning the attitudes of different races to mushrooms, began with the Wassons puzzling over the division of Europe into two distinct camps: mycophobes (nations traditionally afraid of mushrooms) and mycophages (nations addicted to eating them). The mycophages of Europe are found in Spain, southern France, the Balearics, Bavaria, the Balkans and Russia. Russians are the greediest mushroom-eaters and recognize over 90 varieties of edible ones.

Until recently the English ate only the white field mushroom *Psalliotis campestris*, except in the Midlands where blewits, lilac-stemmed mushrooms, were sold in the markets.

Mushrooms had been regarded by the Hebrews as holy and reserved for priests, kings and other privileged people; and to prevent the unprivileged from eating a sacred mushroom, a general *syeg* or taboo was put on mushroom-eating and reinforced by treating all mushrooms as poisonous. However, an unexplained relaxation of the taboo in England allowed the eating of white field mushrooms, though the most deadly European mushroom of all, the *Amanita phalloides* with which Nero's step-father the Emperor Claudius had been poisoned, was equally white and has often been mistaken for it. It is therefore reasonable to guess that the sacred mushroom originally protected by these taboos grew in forests, not fields, and was scarlet (a colour which in the context of food was taboo among the ancient Greeks); and that the taboo explains the diabolic or disgusting names given even to the highly edible other mushrooms.

But why was the scarlet mushroom (which can easily be identified with the white-spotted one now favoured by red-coated gnomes in suburban gardens) held sacred? This spectacular mushroom grows by the million all over the British Isles, but only in birch forests.

A simple answer is that this was the magical mushroom, on which sat the caterpillar smoking his hookah, that Alice found growing in Wonderland. Lewis Carroll had read about its properties not long before he published his book; they included the same hallucinations about height – 'curiouser and curiouser' – from which Alice suffered after nibbling it.

This mushroom is named *A. muscaria* – popularly 'Fly agaric' – and has now been proved by Gordon Wasson's detailed examination of the Vedic hymns to have been the food of the gods. It is there named 'soma'. That it is also 'ambrosia' and 'nectar' (both these words mean 'immortal'), famous as food and drink of the Greek Olympian gods, I had myself shown some 12 years previously. Two early Greek poets, Sappho and Alcman, had preserved the ancient tradition of ambrosia as a drink, not a food. This was because the juice of the mushroom – which lost its virtue when cooked – was squeezed out of it between boards, then mixed with milk or curds, and the pulp was thrown away. According to the Vedic hymns, Agni the Hindu god of mystic illumination and holy fire, who was also expressly identified with the sacred drink soma, had been created when the father god Indra threw a lightning bolt at the earth.

Dionysus, the Greek god of mystic illumination (see DIONYSUS), was similarly born when his father the god Zeus threw a lightning bolt at the earth goddess Semele; the bolt killed Semele but her child was saved and sewn up in his father's thigh, whence he was later granted a second birth. Dionysus is said to have eventually conducted his mother to heaven where she changed her name to Thyone, meaning 'queen of the maenads' (or raging women) and presided over Dionysus' ecstatic October festival, called 'the Ambrosia'. October was the mushroom season. The effect of the *A. muscaria* taken without other intoxicants is to give the taker the most delightful hallucinations, if he is in a state of grace, but horrible nightmares otherwise. Fortified, however, with beer and the juice of yellow ivy it would send Greek men and women mad.

The pre-classical priests of Dionysus, a god now known to have been active in Mycenean times, seem to have claimed sole rights in this scarlet mushroom, the memory of which they had brought from their original homes in central Asia and which is not found growing further south towards the Equator, except at a great height and always in birch groves. The Vedic priests of Agni seem to have imported their supply from the groves of the high Himalayas. Throughout the world mushrooms were believed to be begotten only by lightning.

That Dionysus was ambrosia, as his Indian counterpart Agni was soma, is proved by the legend of his birth from Zeus's thigh. The Vedic hymns make it clear that the priests of Indra and Agni used the two different ways of taking soma still found among the paleo-Siberians called Koryaks, and also in a small Mongol enclave of Afghanistan. The first was a simple drinking of the juice pressed from the mushroom between boards and mixed with milk or curds. The hallucinogenic substances it contained entered the stomach; but a great many more entered the kidneys and were later discharged with the urine. Clean-minded classical scholars have until now shut their eyes to the possibility that the Vedic hymn-writer may have meant exactly what he said with 'the great gods piss out together the lovely Soma'. Yet it has been known for at least two centuries that the Koryaks do so after drinking the mushroom juice, and that their friends strain the urine through wool and, after drinking it, enjoy the same ecstasies.

And this, of course, explains Dionysus' second birth from the thigh of his father Zeus and his subsequent release to worshippers in a stream of hallucinogenic urine. Yet Dionysus' source of intoxication has always been politely attributed by Greek scholars to wine, and ambrosia is identified in the Oxford English Dictionary with *asclepias* (milk weed); and by various encyclopedias with almost every sort of plant except mushrooms.

The Norse berserkers were magicians and sages, and seem to have used the scarlet *A. muscaria*, as did the Koryaks, for inducing prophecies. They were called 'berserkers' because they worshipped the bear goddess, and wore bear skins in her honour. Their cult was suppressed in the 11th century AD by Christian converts, not only in Scandinavia but in Iceland, where dwarf birches in the centre of the island provided the berserkers with their *Amanita*.

The proverb quoted by the Emperor Nero 'mushrooms are the food of the Gods' was true in the sense that they provided the passport to a paradise from which the mushroom-eater was permitted to return, like a god, after his celestial visions. Yet Nero who, having been excluded from the Eleusinian Mysteries for murdering his mother Agrippina, had not himself visited paradise, quoted the proverb only in a mocking sense: for his step-father Claudius, after dying from *A. phalloides* poisoning administered by Agrippina, had afterwards been deified.

I have eaten the Mexican hallucinogenic

National Museum, Guatemala

Hodder & Stoughton/Colourcel

To ensure that the sacred mushroom was eaten only by priests, kings and other privileged people the Hebrews put a taboo on fungi-eating generally, and reinforced this by treating all mushrooms as poisonous *Previous page* The sacred mushroom has been identified as the toadstool traditionally associated with fairies: elfin dance by the 19th century artist Richard Doyle *Right* Sculptural representation of the hallucinogenic mushroom of the Mexicans *Far right* The juice of 'Fly agaric', *Amanita muscaria*, may have been the principal ingredient in soma, the drink of the ancient Indian gods, and in the ambrosia of the Greeks

mushroom *Psilocybe Heimsii* myself in Gordon Wasson's company, with the intention of visiting the Mexican paradise called Tlalocan to which it gives access. The god Tlaloc, who was toad-headed, corresponded exactly with Agni and Dionysus. I also wanted to know whether I had been right in supposing that all religious paradises except the Christian (which is based on a 1st century Eastern potentate's court) such as the Hebrew, the Sumerian, the Indian, the Mexican, the Polynesian and the Greek (known as the 'garden of the Hesperides') were not only very much alike but corresponded also with individual paradises seen by such mystics as the Welsh religious poet Henry Vaughan. The word *paradise* means 'orchard' in the Semitic languages: an orchard garden of fruit trees, flowers and running water.

Paradise of Jewels

I found that I had guessed right though there are, I believe, certain dissimilarities: for instance elephants appear in the Indian paradise and in others the inevitable serpent, familiar to readers of the paradise chapter in Genesis (chapter 3), may appear, as it did for me, as an intricately patterned gold chain. A bright snake-like formation is, by the way, a common symptom of a cerebral de-oxygenization induced by hallucinogenic drugs; and seeing snakes is a common occurrence among alcoholics, saints who starve themselves, drowning sailors and sufferers from meningitis. My experiences included not only an orchard paradise where one can see sound and hear colours and watch trees growing leaf by leaf, but a paradise of jewels like that described in the book of Ezekiel (chapter 28, 13–14).

The *Psilocybe* mushroom used in the Mexican rites is small, brown in colour, slender-stalked and bitter, but sculptural evidence from Central America suggests that it had supplanted *A. muscaria* in ritual use, probably because it was easier to obtain and because the hangover did not last so long. The same change seems to have occurred in Greece: the discovery of a new hallucinogenic mushroom (a Stropharia or a Panaeolus) which, unlike the *A. muscaria*, could be ground up and baked in sacrificial cakes for religious use in the Mysteries without losing its powers.

When, according to the Greek myth, the corn goddess Demeter (see DEMETER) visited Eleusis, the Attic city where the Mysteries were to be celebrated for another 2000 years (see ELEUSIS), she is said to have ordered Triptolemus, son of the local king, to drive around the civilized world in a chariot drawn by snakes, spreading the arts of agriculture as he went. This myth is clearly deceptive. Corn had been sown and harvested in Palestine for several thousands of years before Demeter's arrival at Eleusis. What may have happened is that the local priestess sent a message about the newly-discovered mushroom to priests and priestesses throughout the civilized world – hence the snakes in Triptolemus's chariot.

A fox-coloured variety of the *A. muscaria* has the pine as its host-tree; it is equally hallucinogenic. That it was ritually used in biblical times is suggested by an unwritten Hebrew taboo on mushrooms, broken only by the non-Orthodox. (Arabs, by the way, are mycophagous which perhaps accounts for mushroom-eating in those parts of southern Europe occupied by the Saracens during the early Middle Ages.)

A concealed reference to their use appears in the book of Judges (chapter 15): the unlikely story of how Samson collected 300 foxes and sent them into the Philistine's cornfields with torches tied between each pair of tails. The Palestinian fox is not gregarious and the task of capturing 300 of them, at the rate of one or two a day, and feeding them all until he had collected the full number would have been a senselessly exhausting one. Besides, how could he make sure that the foxes would run into the cornfields and keep the torches alight? The truth seems to be that Samson organized a battalion of raiders – 300 was the conventional Hebrew battalion strength – and sent them out with torches to burn the Philistine's corn. Indeed, in the 1948 Jewish 'War of Liberation' a raiding battalion was named 'Samson's Foxes'.

Chris Barker

'One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter,' the caterpillar told Alice: effects of eating *A. Muscaria* include the hallucinations about height which Alice suffered after nibbling at the magical mushroom on which the caterpillar sat: illustration to *Alice in Wonderland* by Arthur Rackham; Victoria & Albert Museum

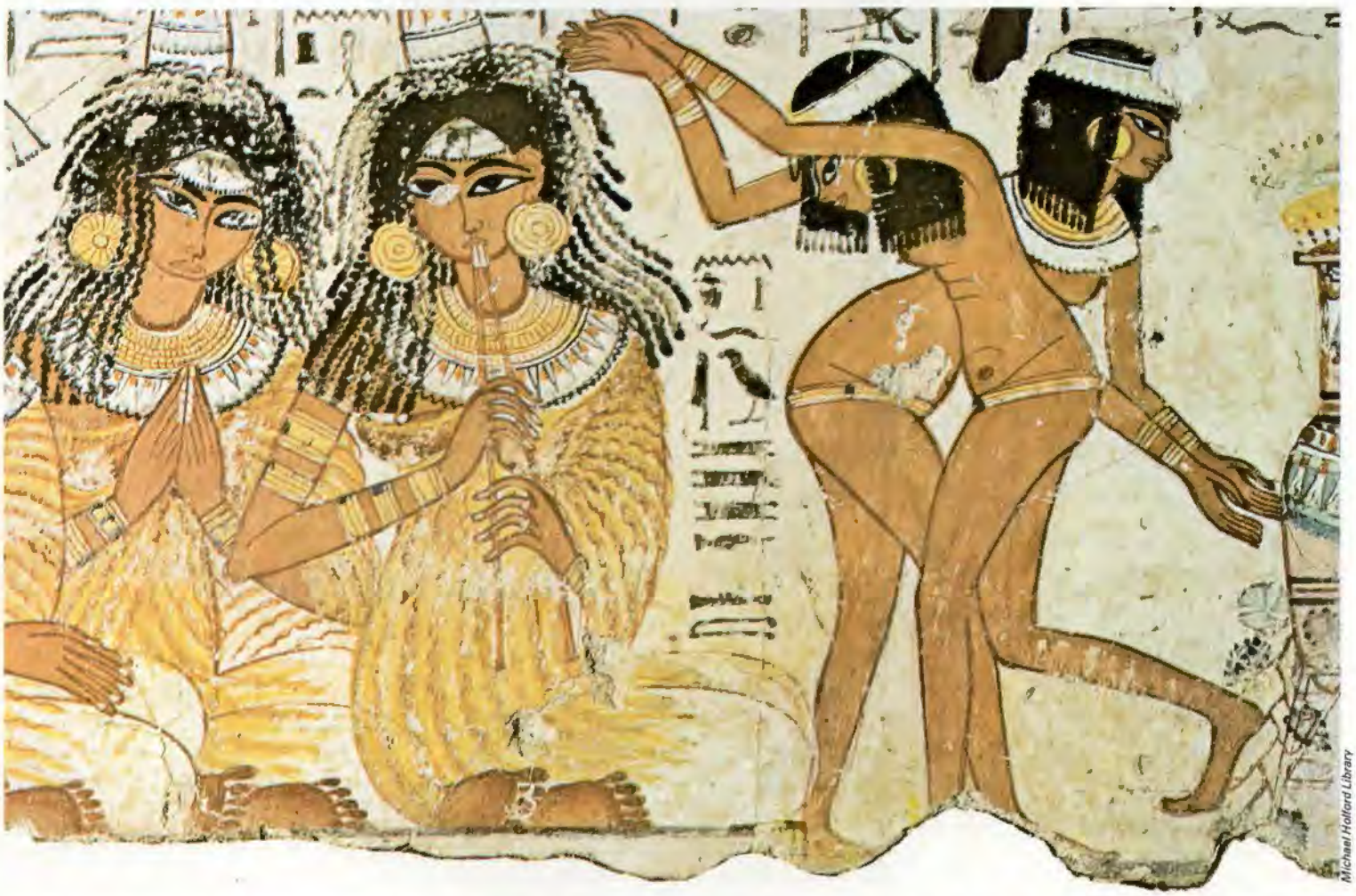
But why foxes? Because the juice of the *A. muscaria* mushrooms (which still grow under pines on Mount Tabor) could be laced with ivy juice or wine to make the raiders completely fearless, and because this variety is fox-coloured. So are other mushrooms, such as the popular *chanterelle* which the Russians call *lychenko* 'little fox'. In the Song of Solomon (2.15) the Shulammite bride about to take part in a sacred marriage, urges her lover to catch her 'the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom'. She means that Solomon must fortify his manhood with mushroom juice laced with wine, the better to enjoy her young beauty.

Why mushrooms were called 'toad's bread' or 'toadstools' by mycophobes can readily be explained. When the toad is attacked or scared the warts on its back exude *bufonenin*, the same poison that is secreted in the white hallucinogenic warts of the *A. muscaria*. In ancient Greece the toad was the emblem of Argolis, the leading state of the Peloponnese. The capital city was Mycene ('mushroom city') said to have been built by the legendary king Phoroneus's successor Perseus ('the destroyer') who had found a mushroom growing on the site beside a spring of water. The toad was also the emblem of Tlaloc, the Mexican god of inspiration, and appears surrounded by mushrooms in an Aztec mural painting of Tlalocan, his paradise.

The Slavs are not mycophobic probably because their remote ancestors were nomads on the treeless steppes and unacquainted with the *A. muscaria*. Their fermented mare's milk satisfied their need for occasional intoxication. Like the Arabs in their desert poverty they had learned to eat any growing plant or living animal that was not poisonous. (See also DRUGS; PEYOTE CULTS.)

ROBERT GRAVES

Note: Certain fungi which are widespread are poisonous, and some people have an allergic reaction to others which are in general harmful. It is very unwise therefore for anyone lacking specialized knowledge to experiment with them



Michael Holford Library

'At its best music can heighten holy word and ritual action alike, and can point beyond itself'; the drumbeats of primitive societies and the chanting of Gregorian plainsong are aspects of music's essential role in religious rituals

Music is an important and emotive element in religious ritual, accentuating the symbolic actions of ceremonial dancers: girls dance to the sound of pipes and the rhythmic beat of hands being clapped; wall painting from an Egyptian tomb, c 1400 BC

MUSIC

THERE ARE FEW religions in which music has played no part at all. On the surface, there is all the difference in the world between the music of an African tribal ritual, for instance, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, but beneath the differences there is the fundamental resemblance that music is being used to help express and heighten the content of ritual action of some kind. Music is part of the universal language of ritual, and without it ritual must always be impoverished. Remove the musical content from the average Christian act of worship and most members of the congregation would feel deprived of something essential.

Even in those cases where music has no immediate connection with the ritual act, it is common to find people claiming to derive 'spiritual sustenance' from music of all kinds – from pop to Pergolesi, from Bach to beat. Music, then, can become an emotional substitute for ritual. But for the most part it follows the ceremonial of religion in this world, and life beyond it. The angels in Christian mythology are consummate musicians, and musical performance is believed to be a suitable occupation for the timeless life of heaven; while in this life, the words of Scripture may be sung as well as spoken; temple, church and synagogue musicians, choirs and cantors, psalms and hymns, rhythms and Hindu *ragas*, all are part of that vast and complex phenomenon called religion.

Music is one of several elements in cult or ritual, for it is in the context of ritual that 'religious music' has found, and still

finds, its main area of expression. First there is purely physical movement and action, with the dance as its most important aspect (see DANCE). Probably imitative in its earliest forms, the dance came to include a vast range of symbolical actions, no doubt partly magical in intention. For instance, by dancing in such a way as to imitate the movements of an animal which was to be hunted, the dancer 'became' for magical purposes the animal in question; the symbolical hunt culminated in the 'killing' of the individual. The action itself was such as to remove the participants from the limitations of the everyday world, and to establish them temporarily on the 'other side' among the powerful supernaturals.

The second element begins with the rhythmical movement of the dance. The rhythm of the dance, which in primitive societies often has directly sexual connotations, particularly where fertility rites are involved, is 'accompanied' at first by means of hand-clapping, stamping and the beating of improvised percussion instruments. Improvisation passes into more deliberate accompaniment, usually by the drum, probably the most widespread of all ritual instruments. Examples of 'sacred' drums are found all over the primitive world. Among the best-known are those of the shamans of northern Europe, Asia and North America, indispensable items of equipment, for by them the spirits were called, and in them they were gathered.

Link with the Spirit World

A further stage is reached when the voice is brought into play. The participant may strain his or her voice to imitate animal noises, or to pass outside the normal range of vocal expression. This, too, could be thought of as a potentially or actually sacred act, forming a link with the all-powerful spirit world. A particularly gifted performer would assume the role of leader, and the remainder would respond, usually by simply repeating the short phrases first announced by him. The dance, then, leads naturally into a simple form of music, with heavily accentuated rhythms but little or no harmony, and very simple and short melodies. Both together combine to provide a setting for a magically effective ritual which breaks the bounds of the everyday and normal.

Dance and rhythmical music together are, of course, highly emotive, a phenomenon which can be observed in all types of culture. Today they may serve as no more than a safety-valve, a release from the pressures of 'civilized' society; but the chanting of, for instance, 'Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare!' as practised by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has more than a purely therapeutic aim. It is a sophisticated application, brought to the West from India, of a ritual action as old as mankind. In some cases, the apparently monotonous repetition of short musical phrases in the context of the dance can lead to trance and catalepsy, and it is quite clear that in primitive societies the object of the exercise was to make contact with the spirit world. Cataleptic trance was the clearest sign of this contact. The Plains Indians of the North American continent believed that a man was immature until he had achieved contact with a personal guardian spirit; this was held to have been accomplished when the spirit revealed itself and taught the seeker a 'spirit song', which no other man might ever know, and which the individual might use whenever the spirit was to be summoned.

Dance and rhythmical melody are two aspects of religious music. The third is verbal and conceptual; to dance and music is added the holy word. As man began to live in more permanent settlements, music tended to become less spontaneous and more elaborate. This was largely because of its use in connection with sacred texts such as hymns and prayers which were used in temples and other holy places. The development of writing rendered these more permanent. It is a curious fact, incidentally, that many of the holy scriptures of the ancient world were composed in verse forms rather than in prose, and it is known that these were originally chanted in order to heighten their sacred quality. In ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and elsewhere, holy places were commonly provided with a complement of musicians and dancers, whose task was to praise and give pleasure to the gods, and to enrich the various daily and seasonal cycles of worship.

In ancient times, therefore, there seem to have been two potentially distinct ways in which music was used in the context of religion. The first of these was emotive and magical, and is seen most clearly in the link between music and the dance. The second was more conceptual and intellectual (though the emotive element was never far distant), and depended on the link between music and the holy word. At times there could be a degree of tension between the two. In the Old Testament, for example, music and dance were known to be part of the stock in trade of the cultic 'prophets' of Canaan, and were regarded with suspicion by the more orthodox Yahwists.

In Greece, certain instruments were condemned in some quarters on the grounds of their capacity for arousing the baser passions, largely because they had traditionally been used in the ecstatic cults of Dionysus, Cybele and other deities (see CYBELE; DIONYSUS). It would not be too far-fetched to see the present-day tension in Christian circles between advocates of 'serious' church music and those who make use of 'revivalist' techniques in music as being substantially the same quarrel.

Aesthetic criteria for the judgement of musical quality were introduced in the West from the 17th and 18th centuries onwards. Whereas music had previously been either a matter for personal involvement as a performer, or a medium for the transmission of the content of the religious tradition, it now became possible for music to be ritual no longer, but to remain 'religious'; it could escape from its ceremonial setting and become a purely subjective experience for the listener. But while certain types of music could easily be accepted as religious (or appreciated as edifying), other types were regarded with the gravest suspicion, usually because of their associations with otherwise suspect activities.

Just as some Greek philosophers had once condemned the *aulos* (a sort of crude oboe) because of its links with the ecstatic cults, some Christians have tended to associate the violin with Satan, and to depict devils playing bagpipes. It did not seem unreasonable to suppose that the Devil had taught Tartini one of his violin sonatas, or to accuse Paganini of being in league with Satan. Churches of the Puritan tradition refused for many years to allow their hymn-singing (or more strictly, psalm-singing) to be led other than vocally, and schisms were caused over the introduction of the organ.

As Christianity spread into Africa and the East, Western musical standards were introduced. In Africa, for instance, the drum was held to be part of the 'pagan' religious background, and was therefore excluded from Christian worship. Recent attempts to encourage an indigenous character in African church music have met with a somewhat mixed reception; enthusiasm in some quarters, shock in others, as it has seemed to some Africans that to return to the use of the drum is to return to a rejected past.

Emotional Appeal

The recent history of religious music in the West is a chequered one. On the Lutheran wing of the Reformation, the degree of emotional response which music has always been able to arouse was never underestimated. Luther himself was a musician, and gave music a prominent role in worship. He recognized, as did John and Charles Wesley in Britain, that congregational singing of 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' is, or can be, a powerful means of affirming belief as well as a profoundly satisfying emotional experience. A similar technique can be observed in more modern revivalist movements, from Sankey and Moody, the 19th century American evangelists, to Billy Graham; here the object is to create an atmosphere of receptivity by means of simple, direct music which makes an emotional appeal to the people.

In other Christian circles, music need be neither simple nor direct. Aesthetic considerations may he as important as evangelical ones, and the performance, instead of being a matter for the congregation as a whole, will often be left to skilled professionals or semi-professionals. But perhaps the distance between the individual listening to Handel's *Messiah* and the individual singing 'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine' is less than might be supposed.

An important contrast of principle is seen if the general practice in Lutheran churches of placing organ and choir as far away from the altar as possible, in a gallery at the west end of the church, is compared with the Anglican practice of placing the choir and organ in the chancel, and of entrusting them with the greater part of the liturgy, and not merely with comment upon it. In the long perspective of the history of religion, the Anglican practice is the more easily justified, even though it may have a deadening effect on congregational participation. Music in religion began in the context of ritual: so

John Moss

Above **Musicians beating drums, probably the most widely used of all ritual instruments: 13th century Ethiopian wall painting *Right* Mary ascends to heaven to the accompaniment of music played by angels, traditionally consummate musicians: *Assumption of the Virgin***

much is certain. And in Christian terms, ritual centres on the altar. In so far as music is an integral part of ritual, then singers, too, are servants of the altar, singing not in order to produce a satisfying emotional experience in themselves or others, but to the 'greater glory of God'.

Religious music may perhaps be summed up, in broad terms, as having a subjective or an objective character. Subjective music may aim at intensive participation or aesthetic appreciation, the latter being a particularly Western development. Objective music may engage man's feelings, but it is not aimed at them; it seeks to be a means by which the Real and Eternal may be pursued, whether in Gregorian plainsong, an Indian *raga*, or in the organ music of the French composer Oliver Messiaen. Frequently it derives its meaning from the holy word with which it is associated. Subjective music will always be popular; objective music will always be serious, and seldom popular.

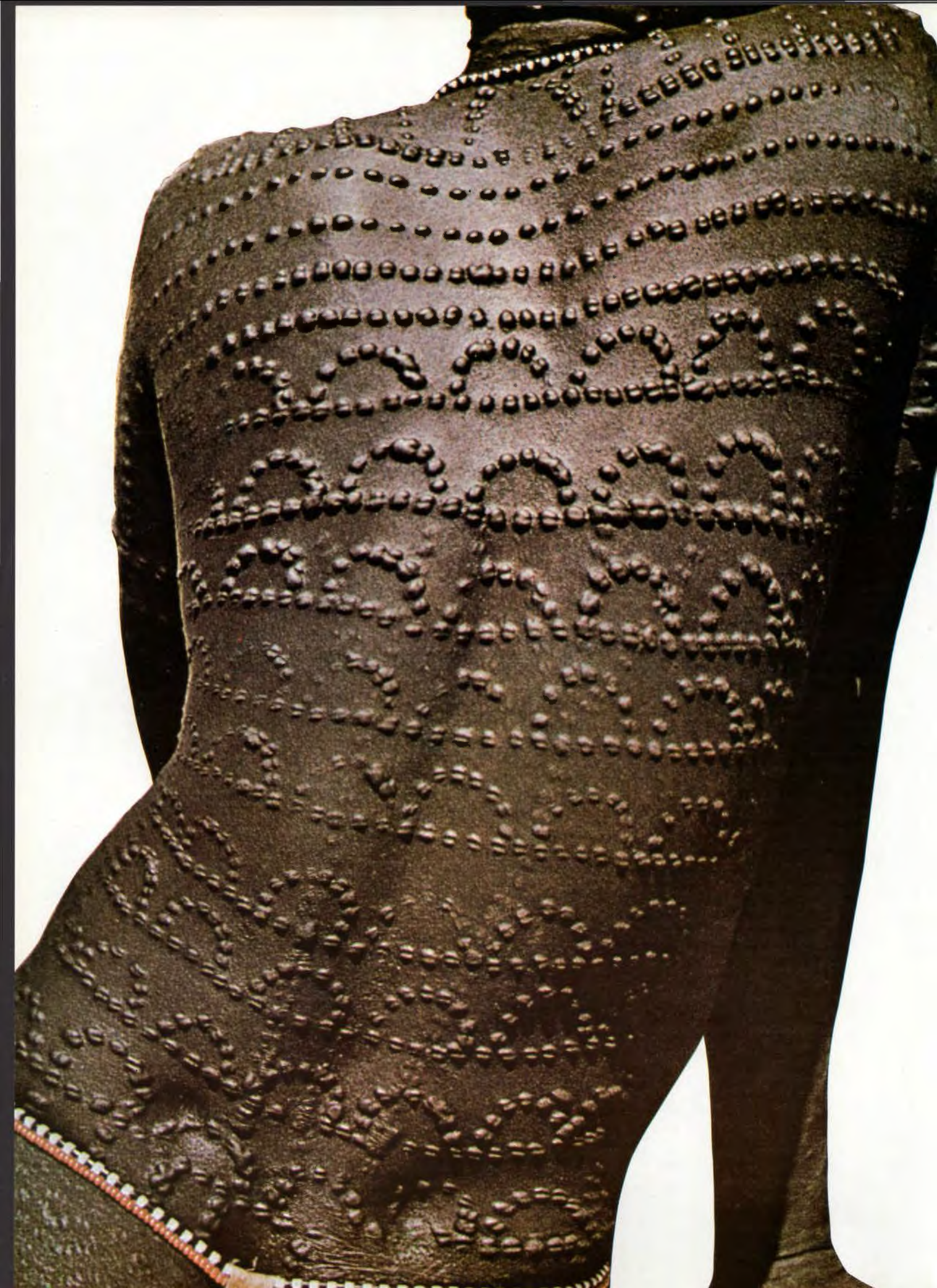
Music, then, is simultaneously a medium, a language and an independent form of expression in which subjective and objective intertwine. At its best music can heighten holy word and ritual action alike, and can point beyond itself. In G. van der Leeuw's words: 'Music represents the great struggle of reaching the wholly other, which it can never express.' And in so far as religion also embodies man's efforts to reach, or to respond to, that same 'wholly other', then music has its given place; without it, man's quest would be immeasurably harder, and his pilgrimage immeasurably poorer.

(See also DRUM; TRUMPET.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

FURTHER READING: D. Scott Rogo, *Nad*, vol. 2: *A Psychic Study of the 'Music of the Spheres'* (University Books, 1973); E. Routley, *Church Music & the Christian Faith* (Hope, 1979); G. Van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty* (Abingdon, 1963).

National Gallery



MUTILATION

'Man is the only animal who deliberately mutilates himself': circumcision, scarification and other mutilations and deformations are inflicted for religious and magical reasons, and some of the early Christians castrated themselves in religious fervour

MEN AND WOMEN have mutilated themselves for religious or aesthetic purposes from the very beginning, and we can still see examples of this behaviour in civilized societies today. The wearing of ear-rings, plucking the eyebrows, and various forms of plastic surgery are, in a sense, relics of ancient tribal customs. Circumcision, for instance, began as a religious or fetishistic mutilation, while tattooing and piercing the ears belong to the same class of ornamental deformations as knocking out the front teeth and elongating the lips with wooden plugs.

It would seem that as man became aware of vast natural forces over which he had no control, he assumed that storms, winds, earthquakes and the rest were animated by spirits who had to be constantly appeased if he and his family were to escape death and destruction. Hence the idea of suffering as a means of placating a 'jealous god', and religious rites involving the spilling of blood, by human sacrifice, or by cutting or piercing the victim's face or body. An example of this religio-magical rite is the intended sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham; and while this holy murder, if carried out, would not have been precisely a case of mutilation, the principle involved is the same: the appeasement of the god by infliction of pain on some innocent victim (see SACRIFICE).

Eunuch Priests

The magico-religious origins of castration are seen in the ancient laws of certain Germanic tribes who made this mutilation the punishment for robbing temples, while in India it was inflicted on a man who urinated on a person of a higher caste. There were a number of Graeco-Roman cults in which the priests were man-made eunuchs. At Ephesus, the chief priests of the goddess Artemis, the virgin goddess and protector of women, were at one time required to be castrated; so were the servants of the goddess Hecate at Lagina, and the priests of Cybele and Astarte. Astarte, a mother goddess in origin and later the deity of sexual activity, fertility and maternity, was particularly partial to the mutilation of her priests. Her temples were served by sacred prostitutes and eunuchs, and we are told that the priests of Astarte used to run through the streets carrying their severed organs which they tossed into some house as a promise of fertility to a barren woman (see ASTARTE; CYBELE).

Even in the early Christian period, castration was considered desirable in view of the apparent commendation of eunuchs by Christ in the New Testament. According to Matthew (19.12), Jesus said: 'For there are some eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.' The original Greek can, in fact, be more literally translated as, 'He who is capable of performing the act, let him do so.'

Origen, one of the most learned and respected of the early Fathers of the Church, castrated himself when a young man 'to quench the ardour of his youth'. Many other Christian priests between the 2nd and 5th centuries were also eunuchized 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven' and self-castration apparently continued even after 325 AD when the Council of Nicaea explicitly forbade it. In 489 AD a bishop proved his innocence of charges of fornication brought against him at a Church conference by visually demonstrating to his accusers his inability to perform the sexual act because he was a eunuch.

But the Christian Church continued to condemn the practice severely, though it lingered on in the special case of the *castrati* who sang falsetto in the cathedral choirs. This mutilation of singers, however, was expressly forbidden by Pope Benedict XIV in 1752, though it is said that the castration of male singers for the opera stage in Italy continued as late as the second half of the 19th century.

Otherwise castration had been officially forbidden throughout the Western world during the late Roman Empire, when the merchants who bought and sold eunuchs were punished by fines and long periods in the mines. But the operation seems to have been performed despite the opposition of the religious and civil courts, for we read that eunuchs were used to gratify Roman matrons in the 5th and 6th centuries. This suggests, as does other evidence collected by anthropologists and medical men, that castration does not necessarily destroy desire in eunuchs, many of whom were married, though unable to have children. Women, too, have been subjected to castration for religio-magical reasons in an operation called oophorectomy, the excision of the uterus and the ovaries, performed among certain Australian aboriginal tribes in order, it is believed, to prevent their conceiving by men of a hostile group.

The last vestiges of this ritual mutilation in the Western world are found among a Russian religious sect known as the Skoptsy (or 'self-castrators'). The Skoptsy appeared on the scene during the 18th century, when a certain Kondrati Selivanov declared himself to be Tsar Peter III and a son of God. Selivanov was at one time banished to Siberia as insane and then given quasi-divine honours in St Petersburg. He based his creed on the statement in St Matthew, quoted above, calling complete castration the 'royal seal' and partial castration the 'second purity'. Skoptsy women achieved the latter condition by having their breasts or nipples amputated. (See also SKOPTSY.)

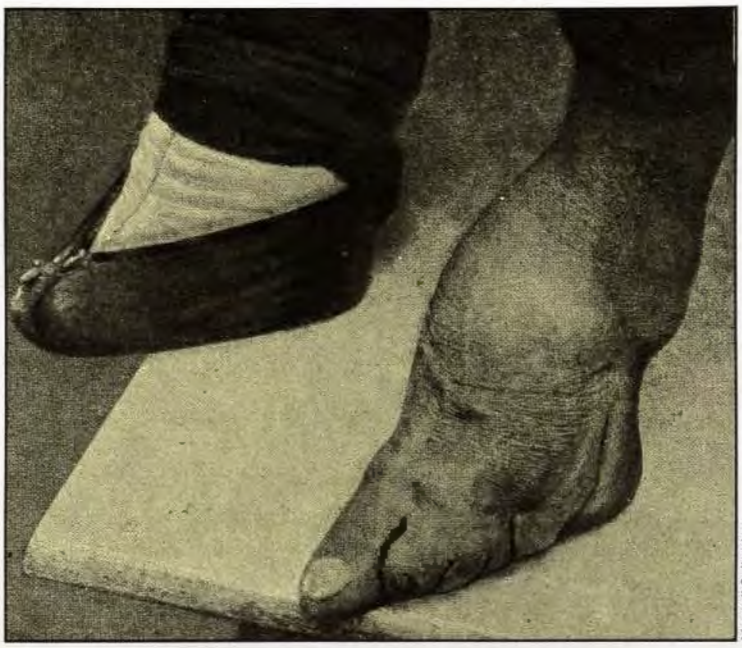
Pepper for Pain

Closely related in the religio-magical sphere is the ritual of circumcision, which may have originated as a substitute for total emasculation. The operation appears to be as old as man himself, for it is practised all over the world among widely different primitive tribes. Interestingly, the Australian aborigines perform the operation with a flint knife, exactly as it is described in the Old Testament where Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin (Exodus 4.25). Some anthropologists see in this rite a desire for rebirth, as the foreskin is sometimes buried and sometimes eaten.

The religious connotations of this type of mutilation are clearly emphasized in the deliberate infliction of pain in primitive societies. Where circumcision is part of the initiation ceremony, for instance – as it is with the Bantu – pepper is shaken over the

In many societies deformations have become a mark of tribal belonging; as well as being regarded as an aid to beauty, cicatrization may also have an underlying social purpose: the scarring on this Sudanese girl's back indicates that she is married, and also shows how many times she has been pregnant

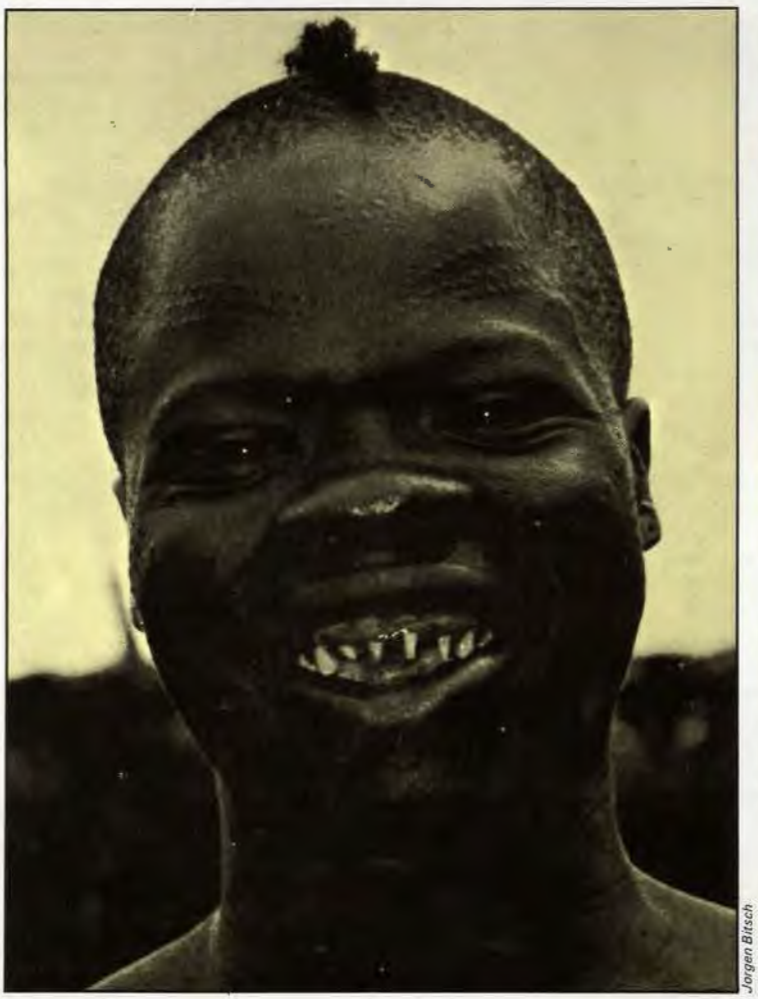
Eric Cross University Films



Mansell Collection

Jorgen Bitsch

Human beings have always been willing to suffer bodily pain, either in the interests of fashion, as in the case of Chinese girls who for centuries bound their feet in order to restrict their growth *(above)* or for religio-magical reasons *Right* Young fakir in south India, his tongue pierced with a skewer in celebration of one of the many Hindu religious festivals *Below* African youth: his teeth are filed to sharp points and his face is scarred; these deformations were probably intended to intimidate enemies *Below right* Women of the Ubangi tribe in central Africa have their lips split and then distended with wooden plugs, as part of their initiation ritual *Facing page* The need to placate a 'jealous god' underlies many mutilations; a man who had blasphemed for instance, might cut off his tongue: Ethiopian wall painting



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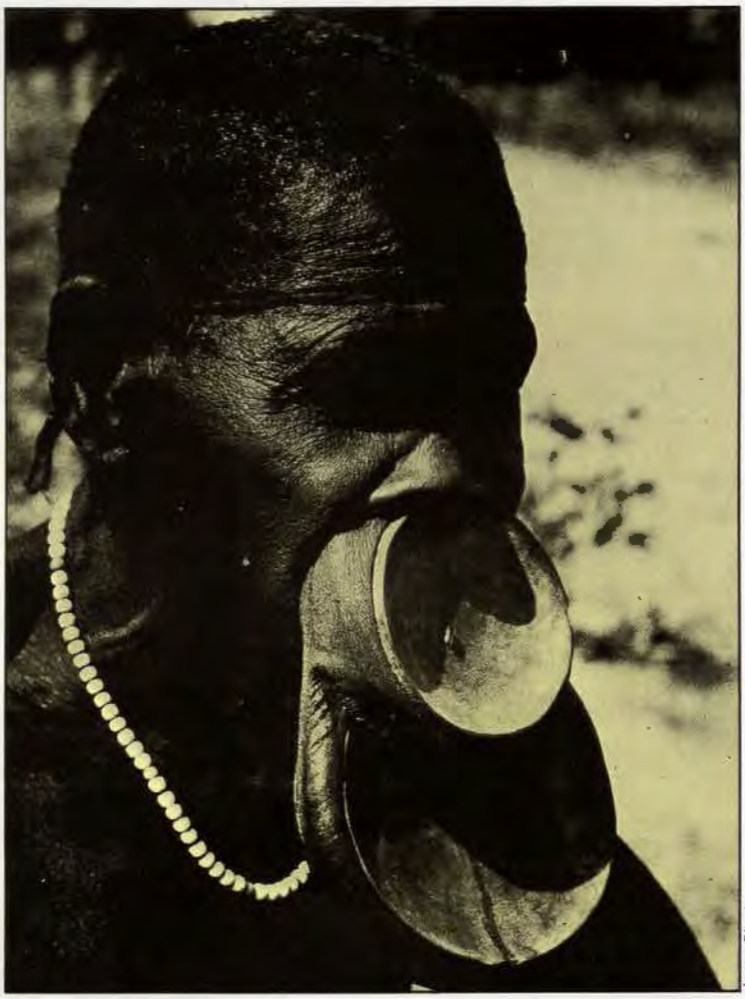


Jorgen Bitsch

John Moss

wound to ensure that the young man is inured to the dangers and sufferings that lie ahead of him. His pain is supposed to appease the gods and spirits. Some tribes go so far as to practise sub-incision, or slitting open the underside of the urethra.

The full religious connotations of circumcision are best seen, of course, in the ancient Jewish custom, for it is impossible to be an orthodox Jew unless this operation has been performed, with all the accompanying rites and prayers. When the Romans tried to suppress the practice during their occupation of Palestine, they met with a fanatical resistance. The Jews were quite adamant that any attempt to prevent them circumcising their male children was an interference with their basic beliefs.

Circumcision of males is often justified today on prophylactic grounds, and it is no longer regarded as a mutilation. But all civilized people denounce the circumcision of females, or clitoridectomy, as an inhuman practice. Yet many African tribes regard it as an essential part of the initiation of girls into adult society. Early explorers in both Egypt and South Africa noted the prevalence of clitoridectomy and associated it with what was known as the 'Hottentot Apron', an extension of the *labia minora*, which was snipped off by old women who supervised the upbringing of young girls.

A comparable mutilation of the sexual organs is infibulation, the partial closing off of the penis with a button and of the vagina with a clasp. Infibulation, like partial castration (circumcision) and total emasculation (eunuchism), has its origin in old religious beliefs – beliefs or taboos which have survived, though in more sophisticated forms, to this day. The underlying attitudes are much the same: a consciousness of guilt on the one hand and the need to inflict pain to atone for the guilt on the other. Consequently deformation became a mark of tribal belonging and of personal adornment, common to all periods of history and all types of society, sophisticated as well as primitive.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this is tattooing, which was reintroduced into the Western world from the South Seas, though the ancient European tribes, the British among them, had also disfigured their bodies

Carl Fuchs

One of the most ancient forms of mutilation, circumcision is part of the initiation rites of primitive societies all over the world; the deliberate infliction of pain is thought to appease the gods and spirits, and to inure young men to the dangers that lie ahead of them: youth of the Omar tribe in the Sudan undergoes circumcision during his initiation

in this way. The 'magical' effect, or implications, of tattooing are as apparent when found on an Englishman's chest or arm as on the body of a Polynesian. In the latter case, however, the process is much more painful, for the staining of the skin is usually accompanied by scarification caused by scratching with thorns, fish spines, shells or bones.

The Magic of Scars

It is often difficult to know where mutilations for religio-magical purposes end and those for aesthetic or ornamental reasons begin. Deformations in the form of scars and welts, extremely common among African tribes, are often regarded as aids to beauty, as the application of cosmetics is with us. But we have a clue to the origin of some of these mutilations in the custom of scarifying the bellies of Kikuyu women, the purpose being to cause 'sickness' in illicit lovers.

The scarred and disfigured faces of African warriors, on the other hand, have the obvious object of intimidating their enemies and conversely, of attracting the opposite sex. By the same token, the scarification of African women represents a complementary 'magic', whence Bantu girls, for instance, are judged for their beauty by the number of scars and welts on their faces and bodies. They achieve these mutilations by fastening ridges of flesh on their foreheads and stomachs with hooks, and rubbing dust into the wounds.

Teeth have always come in for their share of deformations, with some primitive people knocking out one or more of their incisors for reasons whose origin is now obscure. Such painful practices, however, are usually connected with initiation ceremonies, a fundamental part of which is the sacrifice of some part of the body as an offering to the gods or spirits. The same is true of such practices as making holes or slits in various parts of the face in order to insert rings in the ears or pegs in the nose. A bizarre example of this deformation is found among the Ubangi of central Africa, whose women have their upper and lower lips slit and then distended with saucer-shaped wooden plugs. Cases have been reported of women with their lips stretched in this fashion to a diameter of four inches for the upper and seven inches for the lower lip. Brass rings are used by Burmese women to elongate the neck to a point where the head cannot be bent at all. At the other extremity of the body, Chinese women once had their feet deformed by having them bound in childhood.

We see remnants of many of these mutilations in our own Western fashions, particularly where personal adornment is concerned. A study of human behaviour through the ages proves that men have always been willing to suffer bodily pain, either as a concession to religion or to current fashion. Man is the only animal who deliberately mutilates his body, which some observers argue is proof that he alone has a soul.

(See also SELF-DENIAL; TATTOOING.)

JAMES WELLARD

F. W. H. MYERS

BORN AT Keswick in Cumberland on 6 February 1843, Frederic William Henry Myers was the eldest of the three sons of Rev. Frederic Myers by the latter's second wife, Susan Harriet Marshall. The Myers were an old Yorkshire family, and his mother was the youngest daughter of John Marshall, founder of the famous flax-spinning factory at Leeds, and prominent in the Lake District.

Myers's father died in 1851. His mother then settled at Cheltenham, and sent her son to school at Cheltenham College. He showed outstanding classical and literary ability there, and later at Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered as a scholar in 1860. After a brilliant academic career, he graduated in October 1864. Immediately afterwards he travelled in Italy and in Greece, and in the summer of 1865 he toured Canada and parts of the United States; in the course of this tour he one night swam the Niagara River below the Falls. Later in the same year he was offered, and accepted, a Fellowship and college lectureship in Classics at Trinity. He held this until 1869, when he resigned in order to devote himself to the higher education of women. In 1873 he became a school inspector, a career which he followed until shortly before his death in 1901.

Myers wrote, and had privately printed in July 1893 for six of his most intimate friends, a pamphlet of about 40 pages, mainly of prose but partly of verse, entitled 'Fragments of Inner Life'. It throws much light on his personality and on certain phases of his emotional life. According to his own statement, he had very strong sexual inclinations, which he indulged. These would seem to have been mainly homosexual in his youth, but in later life he was wholly heterosexual. Behind all this was his unusually intense love of life, his horror at the thought of extinction for himself or for others, and his semi-mystical feeling that the diversity of this world concealed a higher unity with which he might hope to make personal contact.

Brought up as an Anglican, he had become a kind of neo-classical pagan by the time of his Greek tour. But in 1865,

influenced by the social reformer Josephine Butler, he entered on a phase of highly emotional Christianity. During this he wrote two religious poems, *St Paul* (1867) and *St John the Baptist* (1868). The first of these, at any rate, won a good deal of admiration. By the beginning of 1869, however, Myers realized that he was no longer a Christian. He never reverted to Christianity nor came to accept any other form of allegedly revealed religion, and he passed through a period of (for him) severe depression and spiritual deadness. This was terminated by an emotional interlude, with a tragic ending, which occurred in the 1870s, and had a profound effect on the whole of his later life. The essential facts, so far as they can be ascertained, are these.

Walter James Marshall, a maternal first cousin of Myers, was married to Annie Eliza Hill, one of the daughters of a Yorkshire clergyman. Walter was liable to what appear to have been manic-depressive alternations of mood, which were a constant source of worry to his wife. She early confided her troubles to her aunt by marriage, Myers's mother. Myers came to admire more and more Annie's courage and good temper under the extremely trying conditions of her married life. By the summer of 1873 this admiration had passed into love, which she returned. In chapter 4 of 'Fragments of Inner Life' this is described as 'love that never found its close'. From this, and from a poem in chapter 5 entitled *Honour*, it seems pretty certain that, after an intense struggle at any rate on his part, they resolved to refrain from physical intercourse, and kept their resolution.

At the beginning of May 1876 Walter Marshall entered into an acute manic phase, and was for a time confined under medical supervision, first in an asylum and then as a private patient in the house of a specialist in mental disease. (He eventually recovered sufficiently to become a Deputy Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace in the Lake District.) In September of that year Annie drove with Myers's mother from Keswick to her home at Old Church nearby. They parted at about seven in the evening. Next morning Annie's body was found in Lake Ullswater. She had first tried to cut her throat with a pair of scissors and, failing in that, had then drowned herself in the lake.

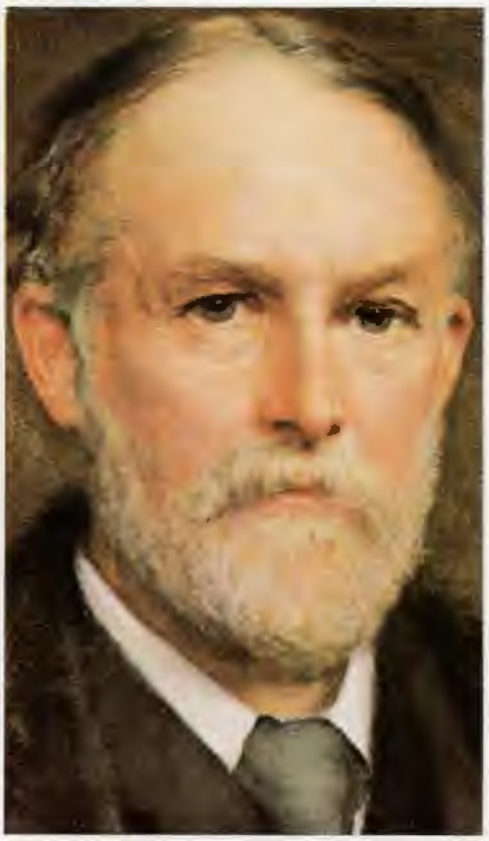
Myers was out of England at the time, on a trip to Scandinavia with his youngest brother Dr A. T. Myers. He describes in 'Fragments of Inner Life' his first reactions to this shattering blow. Naturally, he does not refer to the details of Annie's life or of her death, and does not mention that she committed suicide. And he refers to her, not by her real name, but as 'Phyllis'. It is plain that he believed or half-believed that they had already known and loved each other in a previous non-incarnate state of existence. And he came to hope (with increasing confidence as he thought that relevant empirical evidence accumulated) that they would be reunited in a similar state, after the death of his present body.

On 13 March 1880, however, some three and a half years after Annie's death, he had recovered sufficiently to marry Miss Eveleen Tennant, then 22. She was a wealthy and fashionable young woman, the head of whose family was her brother, Charles Coombe Tennant of Cadoxton, whose wife became the celebrated non-professional medium known as 'Mrs Willett' (see WILLETT). The Myers made their home on what was then the outskirts of Cambridge. They had three children.

Early in 1900 Myers became seriously ill, and developed the 'Cheyne-Stokes symptom' of difficult and painful breathing on falling asleep. He bore his sufferings with great fortitude, in the full expectation of being reunited after death with 'Phyllis'. He died in Rome, where he had gone for unorthodox medical treatment, on 17 January 1901, and is buried beside his parents in Keswick churchyard.

Myers first came into close contact with the two men who became, with him, the chief founders of the Society for Psychical Research, in the 1870s. Both Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, they were his senior, and sometime teacher, Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900), and his junior, and sometime pupil, Edmund Gurney (1847-1888, see GURNEY). The S.P.R. was founded in February 1882 at the instigation of Sir William Barrett (1844–1925), and as a result of his efforts and those of Myers and Gurney. Sidgwick was President and Gurney was honorary Secretary. It may fairly be said that from that time onwards the society formed the focus of Myers's vigorous activities.

Myers became joint Honorary Secretary to the S.P.R. in 1888, after Gurney's untimely death, and President in 1900. He had helped Gurney in the immense labour of preparing *Phantasms of the Living* (1886), and had contributed the elaborate Introduction and an important section entitled 'Note on a suggested Mode of Psychical Interaction'.



One of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, F. W. H. Myers believed that the human psyche almost certainly survives bodily death: portrait by C. W. Wontner, in the National Portrait Gallery, London

Doctrine of the Subliminal

During this period almost all important work on such topics as hypnosis, hysteria, multiple personality, and what may be called in general 'abnormal psychology', had been done on the Continent, particularly in France. English psychologists and philosophers had contributed almost nothing, and had largely ignored the work which was being done by others. Myers, who made a thorough study of the material published abroad, was almost the only Englishman at the time who had attempted to do so. He had met many of the leading authorities, and had witnessed and participated in some of their experiments. He combined tact and *savoir faire* with a quite extraordinary gift of absorbing and accurately summarizing a wide range of complex literature. His numerous reviews in the S.P.R. *Proceedings* of works by Continental authors on abnormal psychology are masterpieces of exposition, and were at the time almost the only source of information available in English.

Myers's characteristic views on the nature of human personality, and his grounds for holding that it survives the death of the body, are most fully stated in his posthumously published two-volume work *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903). The first volume is concerned mainly with phenomena which are normal (like sleep and dreaming), or at most abnormal (like dissociations of the personality) but which are generally not even ostensibly para-normal.

The second volume, on the other hand, is concerned with phenomena which are at first sight paranormal (ostensible apparitions of the dead, communications through mediums, which purport to come from the surviving spirits of the deceased, and so on). The last chapter of volume I, entitled 'Sensory Automatism', constitutes a connecting link, for it deals with cases similar to those treated in *Phantasms of the Living*, which seem to involve paranormal awareness by one embodied person of the roughly contemporary state and surroundings (involvement in a street accident, for instance) of another.

Underlying the details of the book is one basic principle of arrangement and unification. Each particular species of alleged fact is viewed, not in isolation, but in relation to many others which may at first sight seem to have little analogy to it. The contents range from phenomena recognized by everyone (like ordinary sleep and dreaming) through those which are accepted by persons who have had opportunities and the interest to look into them, but which are generally regarded as isolated oddities (the 'inspirations' of literary genius, for instance), to those viewed askance by most sensible and educated contemporaries

(alleged cases of 'haunting', and mediumistic 'messages', for example). When viewed in this way, many of these phenomena are seen to fall naturally into series. There remain certain gaps, and Myers proposes hypotheses, illustrated by highly ingenious analogies, to bridge these. And he tries to unify the whole into a single coherent system by his doctrine of the 'subliminal'. This attempt to take a broad view of a vast range of normal, abnormal, and ostensibly paranormal phenomena, is a unique merit of the book.

According to Myers's theories each human being is composed of two intimately and uniquely interconnected substances, the body, which is purely physical and the psyche, which is purely immaterial. Experiences are events in, or states of, the psyche; an essential part of a person's character and dispositions (including the traces left by experiences) reside in the psyche.

Myers took very seriously the evidence for each of the following interconnected ostensibly paranormal phenomena: 'out-of-the-body experiences', 'travelling clairvoyance', and veridical (coinciding with realities) collective and/or reciprocal hallucinatory quasi-perceptions (apparent perceptions).

These suggested to him that a human being's psyche, though not material, is 'spatial' in at least the following respects. It is capable of having quasi-visual experiences; as of seeing things and persons as being in its immediate neighbourhood, from various positions remote from the one occupied at the time by the body of the human being whose psyche it is. And it is capable of occasionally causing, in certain other human beings, consistent quasi-visual hallucinatory perceptions as of seeing a shadowy likeness of its body, as if it were in a certain place in their neighbourhood.

Myers's doctrine of the 'subliminal' may now be stated as follows. Corresponding to each human being there is one and only one psyche, associated with his body in a uniquely intimate way in which it is not associated with any other body. In the case of the vast majority of human beings, each has a single personal stream of consciousness. But there are exceptional human beings who habitually have two or more personal streams of consciousness. These alternate with each other in 'controlling' the common body, in the sense in which the single personal stream of consciousness of a normal human being may be said to 'control' his body when, and only when, he is awake and fully responsive to his environment. Whether a human being has a single personal stream of consciousness or has several, all the experiences in it, or in them, are states of the *one* psyche that is associated with his body.

The Next Life

The effort to prove that there is a life beyond the grave is sometimes spoken of as *selfish*, by the very men who declare themselves most eager to promote the terrestrial welfare of their fellows . . . In reality, this confusion of mind has a deeper source; it is a vestige of the old monkish belief that man's welfare in the next world was something in itself idle and personal, and was to be attained by means inconsistent with man's welfare in *this*. Whether Christianity ever authorised such a notion I do not now inquire. It is certain, at any rate, that Science will never authorise it. We are making as safe a deduction from world-wide analogy as man can ever make regarding things thus unknown when we assume that spiritual evolution will follow the same laws as physical evolution; that there will be no discontinuity between terrene and post-terrene bliss or virtue, and that the next life, like this, will "resemble wrestling rather than dancing," and will find its best delight in the possibility of progress, not attainable without effort so strenuous as may well resemble pain.

F. W. H. Myers *Science and a Future Life*

Any experience which occurs as an item in a personal stream of experience of a human being, at a time when he is awake and in control of his body, may be described as 'supraliminal'. But even in the most normal human being, and even when he is fully awake and alert, events which are states of his psyche but are not items in any personal stream of experience are constantly occurring. And when he is asleep, or unconscious through illness, and so on, such events are going on in his psyche. Such experiences are presumably not in general items in any personal stream of experience but, in the case of a human being who has several personalities which alternate with each other in controlling the common body, the following may happen. When the 'second' personality is in control, experiences may occur which belong to the personal stream of experience of the 'first' personality, which is not then in control.

Any event of the nature of an experience which occurs in a human psyche, but which is *not* an item in the personal stream of experience at that time in control of the body, may be described as 'subliminal'; and the collection of all the events in a human being's psyche which are subliminal in the sense just defined may be described as his 'subliminal'.

Myers elaborated his doctrine of the subliminal against a background of ostensibly paranormal phenomena, such as alleged hauntings, communications by mediums, and so on. He held that the supraliminal level of a human psyche is a highly specialized and rather superficial level of it, developed in the course of evolution to respond to influences from the material environment acting on the body through the sense organs. The subliminal level is much more extensive and more varied. In its more superficial levels it contains a good deal of rubbish, described by Myers as 'dissolutive material'. But it is also the seat of telepathic and clairvoyant, and possibly of telekinetic, powers. It is only when such an occurrence in the subliminal levels of the psyche produces a noticeable change in the supraliminal stream of experience that telepathy or clairvoyance is recognized as having taken place.

Basing his opinion on the curative effects of hypnotic suggestion, of correct diagnoses and prognoses by patients of their own diseases, and so on, Myers held that there is, at some subliminal level of a person's psyche, a detailed knowledge of his own internal bodily organs, and the power to control their functions in various ways.

He came to accept, as practically certain, that the psyche of a human being continues to exist and to have experiences after the death of the body. He held that communication between unembodied psyches is through something analogous to telepathy and that their awareness of their environment is by something analogous to clairvoyance; and he believed that examples of human beings showing these powers are but feeble shadows of what may be attained by unembodied psyches.

(See also PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.)

C. D. BROAD

Myrrh

Gum resin used in perfumery and medicine; the three magi or kings brought gold, frankincense and myrrh as gifts to the infant Jesns; used in ancient Egypt for embalming corpses; consequently connected in magic with Saturn, the planet of death, and, as a preservative, with the sun.

See PERFUME.

C. M. Dixon/Victoria & Albert Museum

Myrtle

As an evergreen, connected with death and resurrection; Greek emigrants carried myrtle boughs to the founding of a new colony as a symbol of the end of one life and the beginning of another; said to have been the principal scented tree of Eden; sacred to love goddesses in the Mediterranean area, and generally considered lucky in Europe and connected with fertility, love and marriage.

Pious in intention but containing elements of broad farce, the medieval mystery plays enacted the Bible stories; presented and performed by local craftsmen for the benefit of their fellow townsfolk, they were true community drama

MYSTERY PLAYS

THE PRODUCTS of English play-making in the Middle Ages have been variously known as miracle and mystery plays. The historians of drama have disagreed in their definition of the two kinds. Some maintain that the title of miracle play is properly applied only to a religious performance in which a miracle occurs, in particular one dealing with the lives of the saints. The date in that case is irrelevant, and it could be said that Bernard Shaw's *St Joan* is a modern miracle play.

The title of mystery play is applied particularly to pieces exclusively based on the Old and New Testaments. These contained miraculous events but the subjects were limited to the Bible. The dispute over classification is, however, an academic one. The various groups of dramatized biblical happenings have been generally known and are still sometimes revived as mystery plays, and it is these whose origin and nature are now to be described.

The English mystery plays were essentially public, being civic performances given in the streets of a town or outside a church. The players were the members of the craft guilds; they sometimes had small rewards but were essentially amateurs. Their make-believe was watched by their relatives, friends and neighbours, who may have been critical as well as appreciative when they saw figures familiar in the market and the workshop masquerading as biblical characters.

The result could be comic by intention as well as by accident. There were no Puritans then to insist that a religious exercise should be limited to the solemn and the sombre.

A modern version of the morality play *Everyman* is performed each year at Schwäbisch Hall in Germany. With their allegorical content and more formal construction, the moralities lacked the spontaneity of the earlier mystery plays

Fremdenverkehrsamt, Schwäbisch Hall

German Kulturinstitut

Homer Sykes

When belief in a creed is universal and unquestioned there is no offence in finding humour amid holiness, and in the Middle Ages religion could still be regarded by the pious as partly a laughing matter. The drunken bout of old Noah was the subject of a comic episode and the friends of the man who played the part could remind him without offence that he had set the street on a roar. But the principal purpose was devotional. The players celebrated the holidays, or holy days, of the Church, especially at Whitsuntide and on the Feast of Corpus Christi in the following week. At that time there was a better chance of fine weather for the parade to the churchyard.

Mounted on Wagons

The word mystery was used with no reference to secrecy, deriving from the Latin word *ministerium*, meaning service. Shortened to 'mistery' or spelled mystery it meant something done in God's honour by reverent men who did not believe that to mix entertainment with edification was in any way sacrilegious. They acted the biblical stories, whose truth none then doubted, in order to keep the faith alive and meaningful. The Church approved the principle and the laity approved the result. At least a general welcome for the players can be assumed since we hear of no opposition till the time of the Reformation and of no hostile accusation that the sacred books were coarsely or profanely abused by the actors.

The short plays, grouped in what were known as cycles, presented episodes which were called pageants. The members of the craft guilds who produced them frequently chose subjects related to their daily occupations. The word pageant had a double meaning: it signified both the play acted and the scene mounted on the wagon in which it was performed. An account of the proceedings in Chester stated: 'The pageant or carriage was a high place made like a house with two rooms, being open on the top. In the lower room the players apparelled themselves and in the higher room they played.' In this case the pageants were carried on a six-wheeled vehicle. Elsewhere they managed with smaller conveyances, but the larger the cart the better the chance of a sumptuous spectacle, and the players were ambitious showmen. The use of a moveable stage reaches back into prehistory: the legendary founder of Greek drama, Thespis, worked on a wagon like the mystery players.

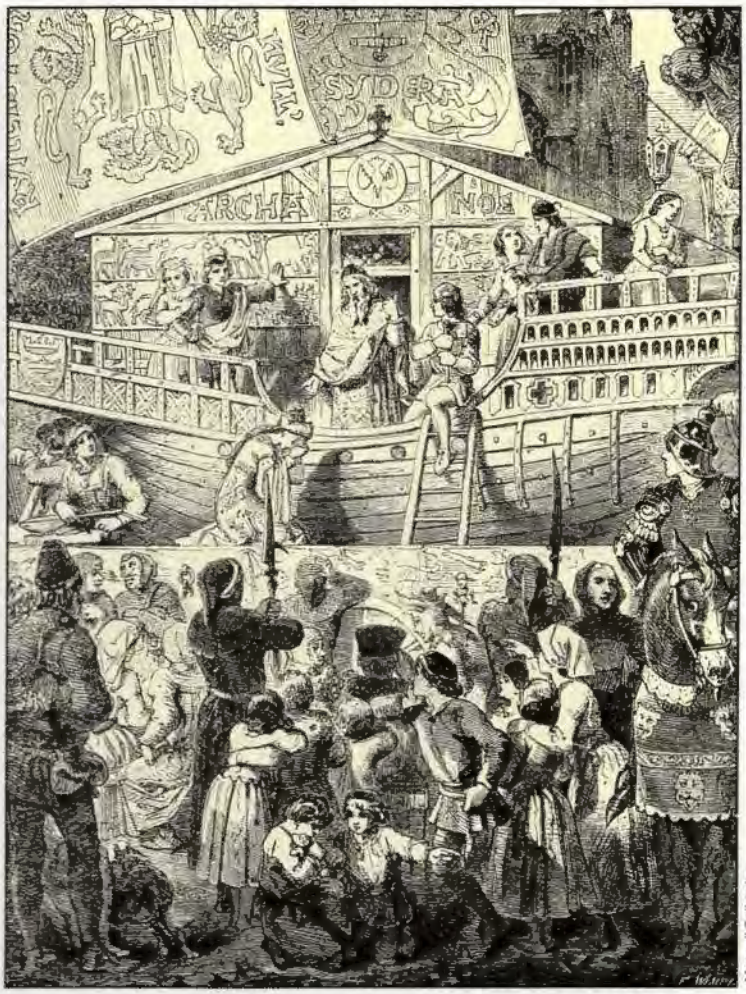
Before the mystery plays reached their culmination in the 14th and 15th centuries, there had been a variety of earlier revels in which myth and mummery were combined. The Midwinter festival was derived from the ancient Roman Saturnalia, in which slaves were temporarily free to mock their masters and law and order were overturned. Its place was taken by the semi-Christian, semi-pagan Feast of Fools in which a Lord of Misrule was appointed (see CHRISTMAS). The Church objected to such frivolous and possibly subversive fun but public opinion was strongly in favour of it.

Unable to prevent these seasonal rites the Church naturally welcomed the transition to the performance of the mystery plays since in them, while mirth was included, there were no sacrilegious incidents. The crude elements of the ancient paganism were now submerged in the dramatic and devout presentation of the prevailing faith. The Bible stories, beginning with the Creation and ending with the Day of Judgement, were enacted by the people for the people in the vernacular tongue; it was emphasized that the divine purpose, inherent in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, was made manifest in the Messianic incarnation and suffering described in the gospels. It was not considered blasphemy to impersonate God, the Virgin Mary and Christ.

The four principal surviving cycles are those of York, Chester, Wakefield and Coventry, all in the north of England or Midlands; but biblical pageants of various kinds were known in Scotland and Ireland as well as in other prosperous English towns

Left **Christ carrying the cross on the way to Golgotha, a scene from the passion play performed every ten years at Oberammergau. As in the medieval mystery plays, the parts are taken by local people, not by professional actors** ***Right*** **A survival of the early folkplays, which also combined religion and drama, the 'soul caking play' performed at Antrobus in Cheshire: the Black Prince, slain by King George, is mourned by his mother Mary before being brought to life again. The medieval Church disapproved of such drama and promoted mystery plays, which taught the faith and contained no pagan or sacrilegious elements**

Morris Newcombe



Mansell Collection

Left **The mystery plays contained a large element of buffoonery: two comic characters from a Young Vic staging of a play from the Wakefield cycle** ***Right*** **The pageant of the Flood: each episode was mounted on a wagon and presented with suitable scenic effects**

where the trade guilds had talents to display in this form of divine service. In Cornwall too, there were mystery plays whose texts, in the old Cornish language, have survived. The site of their performances can still be seen in circular amphitheatres now called rounds, such as the one at St Just.

The performance of the York cycle required 48 pageants, whose text survives in a 15th century manuscript. The vocabulary used by the authors was simple. The writing was the work of unknown men, some of them perhaps priests, and was begun in the middle and latter half of the 14th century and continued here and there till the Reformation.

The Latinity of the Renaissance, which so enriched the eloquence and word-music of the Elizabethan dramatists, had not infiltrated the language. Yet there is true poetry in the Chester play in which Joseph, convinced that Mary has been made pregnant by a divine miracle, humbly withdraws from his conjugal rights.

> And soothly, if it so befall
> God's son that she be withall,
> If such grace might betide,
> I wot well that I am not he
> Which that is worthy to be
> That blessed body beside,
> Nor yet to be in company;
> To wilderness I will for this
> Enforce me for to fare;
> And never longer with her deal;
> But stilly shall I from her steal,
> That meet shall we no more.

In contrast stands the naive rhetoric of the villainous and blustering Chester Herod, who assumes omnipotence:

> I am the greatest above degree
> That is or was or ever shall be:
> The sun it dare not shine on me
> If I bid him go down;
> No rain to fall shall none be free,
> Nor no lord have that liberty
> That dare abide, and I bid flee,
> But I shall crack his crown.

In the huge variety of episodes everything is included, from the hushed voice of reverent piety to the rustic humours of shepherds and the ranting of a scoundrel.

Comedy and Devotion

A text with a glossary is helpful to readers, since some of the old words have disappeared or changed their meaning. The actors of today, usually amateurs, who revive some portions of the mysteries can substitute a few modern words if the original seems baffling. One portion often attempted is *The Second Shepherds' Play* of the Wakefield cycle. In a scene of pastoral comedy the shivering Judaean shepherds watch their flocks by night. They unwittingly shelter from the cold a character named Mak, a crafty sheep-stealer. He abuses their kindness by purloining one of their flock and takes it to his home. His wife pretends it is her newly-born baby and conceals it in her cradle. When the search-party breaks in, one of the shepherds says he must kiss the child and then cries 'What the devil is this? He has a long snout.' There is turmoil.

Advice to Adam

Stage directions for an early Norman-French play

A Paradise is to be made in a raised spot, with curtains and cloths of silk hung round it at such a height that persons in the Paradise may be visible from the shoulders upwards. Fragrant flowers and leaves are to be set round about, and divers trees put therein with hanging fruit, so as to give the likeness of a most delicate spot. Then must come the Saviour clothed in a dalmatic, and Adam and Eve be brought before him. Adam is to wear a red tunic and Eve a woman's robe of white, with a white silk cloak; and they are both to stand before the Figure, Adam the nearer with composed countenance, while Eve appears somewhat more modest. And the Adam must be well trained when to reply and to be neither too quick nor too slow in his replies. And not only he, but all the personages must be trained to speak composedly, and to fit convenient gesture to the matter of their speech. Nor must they foist in a syllable or clip one of the verse, but must enounce firmly and repeat what is set down for them in due order. Whosoever names Paradise is to look and point towards it.

quoted by E. K. Chambers *The Medieval Stage*

Barnaby's

The Lord Mayor's Show, presented by the City of London: the medieval mystery plays provided similar opportunities for civic display, as elaborately decorated wagons were taken through the streets in procession

Then the action moves very suddenly and with striking contrast to the stable in Bethlehem where the shepherds greet the Virgin Mary and bring cherries, a tennis ball, some flowers and a bird as their offerings to the Christ-Child. The final scene of devotion is as exquisitely simple as the deceit and exposure of Mak has been broadly and robustly comical. Thus the spirit of the mysteries is doubly exemplified at its best.

W. Bridges-Adams, in his excellent chapters on the mystery plays in *The Irresistible Theatre*, described the players as enjoying 'a magic of their own, the age-old enchantment of let's pretend, the liberation of the spirit which follows when, by the practice of the immemorial art, we shed for a little our troublesome selves and become somebody else.' But there was nothing pretentious in their scripts which had the clarity, vigour, and sometimes naivety of the plain man's conversation lifted to a higher plane by the devotion of those who were writing and acting what they happily and unaffectedly believed. Sincerity does not need elaboration of style and may be all the more impressive without it.

The procession of pageants was prepared for the appointed holy day by the members of the craft guilds. Very early – York ordered a call at four in the morning – the wagons were assembled with the various sections known as 'houses' built on them. It was not necessary for the players to restrict themselves to this area. They could jump down and use a space among the crowd. The Chester Herod was directed to 'rage in the street'.

Immense trouble was taken with the costumes and properties. Skilled craftsmen were available and eager to show their appropriate skills. The shipwrights fancied the Ark, the goldsmiths had their opportunity with the Adoration of the Kings, the vintners specialized in the Marriage Feast at Cana and the bakers prepared the spectacle of the Last Supper. The cavalcade moved forward in procession, enabling the families of spectators to appreciate this picturesque service of the holy day without leaving their upper windows. No doubt the younger members of the audience were anxious to be out and about in the street and to see the raging Herod face to face. The phrase 'community drama' has lately become fashionable. Here it actively existed.

For Playing God, Sixpence

Accounts were very carefully kept and made known to the public. Some have survived in detail, for the reckoning went into the town's archives. A pageant-master was in charge of expenditure as well as of performance. The guilds contributed their own share of 'pageant-silver'; visitors to the town had to contribute. The players were given expense money for bread and ale at rehearsals. Reading of the pence allotted, it must be remembered that at Coventry in 1480 a joint of beef cost threepence and a pint of beer a farthing. Payments to the actors were made according to the size of the part rather than to its status, human or divine. At Coventry the impersonator of God had two shillings while Caiaphas and Herod had three shillings and threepence. At Hull the master mariners and pilots staged a Noah pageant in 1483. The costs included sixpence each for the minstrels, ninepence each for Noah and his wife, and 'to Robert Brown, for playing God, sixpence'.

Elaborate and even sensational scenic effects were somehow achieved within the small space of a pageant-wagon and with the transference of some action into the street. Winches were used for raising characters to the heights or dropping them to their doom. At Coventry in 1534 there was 'Hell-mouth, a fire kept at it. A windlass and three fathoms of cord.' Arrangements were made for an earthquake and 'paintings of three worlds'. Also there was a torch 'to set the world on fire'. The entrance to hell was suggested by a dragon's mouth; heaven could be entered on a balcony. At one Coventry festival the accountant stated that 'the sum of all costs, workmanship, and colour' amounted to 15 shillings. The artificers did their work with enthusiasm and economy. It was their 'ministerium' or service and their crafts were their 'mysteries'. While regarding the dramatic themes presented as truths not myths they had the relish of achieving magical effects.

In the late medieval period a new kind of play, the morality, was in the making. Of these *Everyman* is the most famous. The author is unknown, the date uncertain; but it has been frequently revived. The characters include, along with the title part, abstract qualities – Fellowship, Knowledge, Confession, Beauty, Strength, Discretion and so on. That kind of drama had dignity and its admonitory counsel was impressive.

> Be you never so gay!
> Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
> Which in the end causeth the soul to weep,
> When the body lieth in clay.
> Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity,
> Both Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty,
> Will fade from thee as flower in May;
> For ye shall hear how our Heaven King
> Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning.

Commendable doctrine, one must admit, but the warm heart of the medieval 'let's pretend' has been chilled. The allegory has replaced the sympathetically personal story presenting the ways of God with man, his lively, fallible creation.

IVOR BROWN

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Striking similarities have been noted between Christianity and the Mystery religions, cults which catered essentially for the needs of the individual and which developed in the same period, under Roman Imperial rule

MYSTERY RELIGIONS

ALL RACES and nations in the primitive and early periods of their culture had initiation ceremonies which possessed a certain similarity with the Mysteries of the ancient world, and which could be called 'Mysteries'. In this article, however, the term 'Mysteries' will refer purely to the type of religion developed in the culture of the Greeks and the Romans, a religion which postulated that a man was free to make his own decisions and that he was permitted to join a particular religious group in preference to another. These Mysteries therefore presuppose an already differentiated society, in which there was no longer a primitive initiation ceremony which all members of the group had to go through. This new type of religion becomes evident in the time of Imperial Rome, although it had its beginnings as far back as the 6th or 5th century BC.

Religious individualism makes its first appearance in the Orphic groups (see ORPHEUS AND ORPHISM). The Orphics wished to lead a life of purity and without sin; many of them refrained from meat dishes, wine and sex. This 'Orphic way of life' was not one followed by many people and it was therefore individualistic from the beginning. One of the roots of Orphism was certainly shamanism, a primitive cult which centred round the practices of religious and particularly sensitive individual clairvoyants and medicine-men. The Orphic circles in Greece never won any extensive influence over the population, but they established the principle of the individual who goes his own way, apart from the crowd.

The Cult of Demeter

Of far greater significance were the Eleusinian Mysteries. In the small town of Eleusis, between Athens and Megara, ceremonies were held as part of the cult of Demeter (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS). Originally these ceremonies were only for the inhabitants of the town and served to initiate members into the community: a person who had been initiated became a burgess of the town. When Eleusis was annexed by Athens about 600 BC, the nature of the ceremony changed. The person being initiated no longer acquired political rights; the ceremony was now purely religious. All Athenians were now entitled to become initiated into Eleusis if they wished to do so; many of them did, and Greeks from other towns began to be initiated into the Mysteries shortly afterwards. The Eleusinian Mysteries in this way acquired an 'international' character. A person who went to Eleusis to be initiated did so of his own free will and from purely religious motives. The complete development of the Mysteries was only possible because in the city of Athens a rich and highly differentiated culture had evolved which afforded the individual wide latitude for his specific way of life and religious beliefs.

When the East became Hellenized following the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies – the Graeco-Macedonian kings of Egypt – expanded their capital Alexandria into a new, bigger and more beautiful Athens. One of the suburbs of Alexandria they called Eleusis and there they founded a cult of Demeter with initiation ceremonies which had been copied from the Eleusinian rites; the cult was established by Timotheus, one of the Eleusinian caste of priests. As the Greek goddess Demeter was always regarded as the equivalent of the Egyptian goddess Isis (see ISIS), a starting point was provided for the later Graeco-Eastern mysteries.

There had been Dionysiac initiations in all Greek towns since very early times (see DIONYSUS). Originally they were of the same type as race initiations. However, when a new and personal devoutness arose in Orphic circles, particularly in Eleusis, this affected the Dionysiac initiations, which gradually also took on individualistic

Michael Holford

Late Egyptian head of Isis: the cult of the Egyptian goddess became Hellenized after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, and in Imperial times developed into a Mystery religion offering the believer salvation and regeneration after death

tendencies. During the Imperial period the Dionysiac Mysteries were a religion of the same type as the other Mystery religions. There were Dionysiac mystics in all towns, but Eleusinian initiations were held only in Eleusis and Alexandria.

During the Hellenistic period (3rd-1st centuries BC) very little is heard about Mysteries. But at the time of the Roman Empire several such religions suddenly sprang up. The best-known are the Mysteries of Isis and Mithras (see MITHRAS). However, there were also groups which worshipped Attis and the Great Mother (see CYBELE), Men, the moon god of Asia Minor, the Syrian gods Adonis, Jupiter Dolichenus and Helios of Emesa. The fire cult of the theurgists had a Mystery character (see THEURGY) and Judaism and Christianity were partly assimilated to the new type of religion.

These religions have common features. Firstly, they are almost always the successors of cults which had originally been restricted locally or nationally. However, the old nationalities had been incorporated into the Roman Empire, and the cults had ceased to have any political dimensions. The destruction of the Persian Empire by Alexander was a precondition for the spread of the Mithraic Mysteries as far as Rome, and the conquest of Egypt by Augustus a prerequisite for the mission of the Mysteries of Isis. Likewise, the destruction of Jerusalem encouraged the spread of Judaism and Christianity.

Secondly, these religions carried on missionary work, although not to the same extent as Christianity. As the political boundaries within the Roman Empire fell away, there was complete freedom of movement: Egyptians could take up residence in Greece, Syrians in Rome, inhabitants of Asia Minor could settle in Gaul, those of Africa in Spain, and so on. They got together with other immigrants from their native land and collectively worshipped their old local gods. In this way the old primitive gods became cosmopolitan, as the immigrants naturally absorbed the civilization of their new homeland and transferred this to their cult; they also married into established families and gained proselytes for their religion.

Love Tales Hid Sacred Code

Thirdly, by living together with the more highly civilized Greeks and Romans the worshippers of the Oriental gods naturally absorbed, in particular, the regular custom of writing and the ideas of Greek philosophy. In the Eastern countries – Persia, Syria, Asia Minor – reading and writing had been a science restricted to the priesthood; very few people could read hieroglyphics, and the writing of consonants without vowels, as in the language of the Phoenicians and the Israelites, was also very difficult. But now reading became a matter for everybody, and books made their appearance, to be read by the individual in addition to following the traditional cult and the many rites. There arose a type of religion in which books played a central part, as exemplified by the Israelites. Probably in all temples of Isis there was one and the same text containing a self-revelation of the goddess; there were books of the Mithraic Mysteries; theurgists had a sacred book, the *Chaldean Oracles*. According to a fairly recent theory most of the ancient love stories which have been discovered were code forms of religious texts of the Mystery congregations; the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius quite openly preaches the Isiac Mysteries. More particularly, the Oriental cult religions now became considerably spiritualized. Almost everywhere in the Mysteries a psychology was being developed based on older Greek conceptions – the systems of Pythagoras, the Stoics and especially Plato.

If a Roman or a Greek now decided to accept the Oriental Mysteries, on the one hand the rather exotic nature of the Mysteries aroused the impression in him that he would be granted special, unusual and individual grace; on the other hand all these cults were so deeply impregnated with Greek thought that Greeks and Romans were completely at home with their fundamental philosophical and theological concepts. In a religion which at first seemed quite strange, they discovered something long familiar and intimate.

The various Mysteries appealed to sociologically different strata of society. The Dionysiac Mysteries were often a cult of the upper bourgeoisie; followers of Mithras were chiefly in the army and among the Imperial officials; the cult of Isis attracted the middle classes, wealthy freedmen and courtesans; theurgy was accessible only to a few philosophically educated people, being something quite exclusive. In principle, social classes were abolished within the communities of the mystics, all were equal in the sight of God, and even slaves were 'free' on festival days (as in many older cults).

The old nations of the East had always had a king as head of state. People were unable to think of a state in the abstract but only as an entity personified by a ruler in the flesh. For this reason the king had always been a central figure of religion in the Eastern countries. After the fall of the individual states in the East, the Roman emperor filled the vacuum. The Isiac and Mithraic mystics always included the emperor in their prayers. There were even ceremonies which must be called Imperial Mysteries. In Asia Minor especially, people were so grateful for the blessings of the Roman Empire – peace, prosperity and legal

The Dionysiac Mysteries spread from Greece to Italy, where the cult was for a time proscribed by the Senate because of its orgiastic elements ***Previous page*** **Section of a mural from the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii, which appears to have been a centre for the worship of Dionysus: on the left is Silenus, the fat, elderly drunkard who nevertheless had wisdom and prophetic gifts, and was a constant companion of the god** ***Below*** **A marble relief of Dionysus, shown as a youth with a panther-skin over his arm** ***Below right*** **Women lead a hooded youth to Silenus in a rite of initiation: Roman stucco of the 1st century BC**

Scala

security – that they expressed this feeling of esteem for the *Imperium Romanum* by ceremonies in honour of the emperor; he was the manifest personification of the Empire, in the same way as the Oriental king had been the visible embodiment of the old Eastern state. It is evident that in this respect there was a big difference between the Mysteries on the one hand and Judaism and Christianity on the other.

Links with Christianity

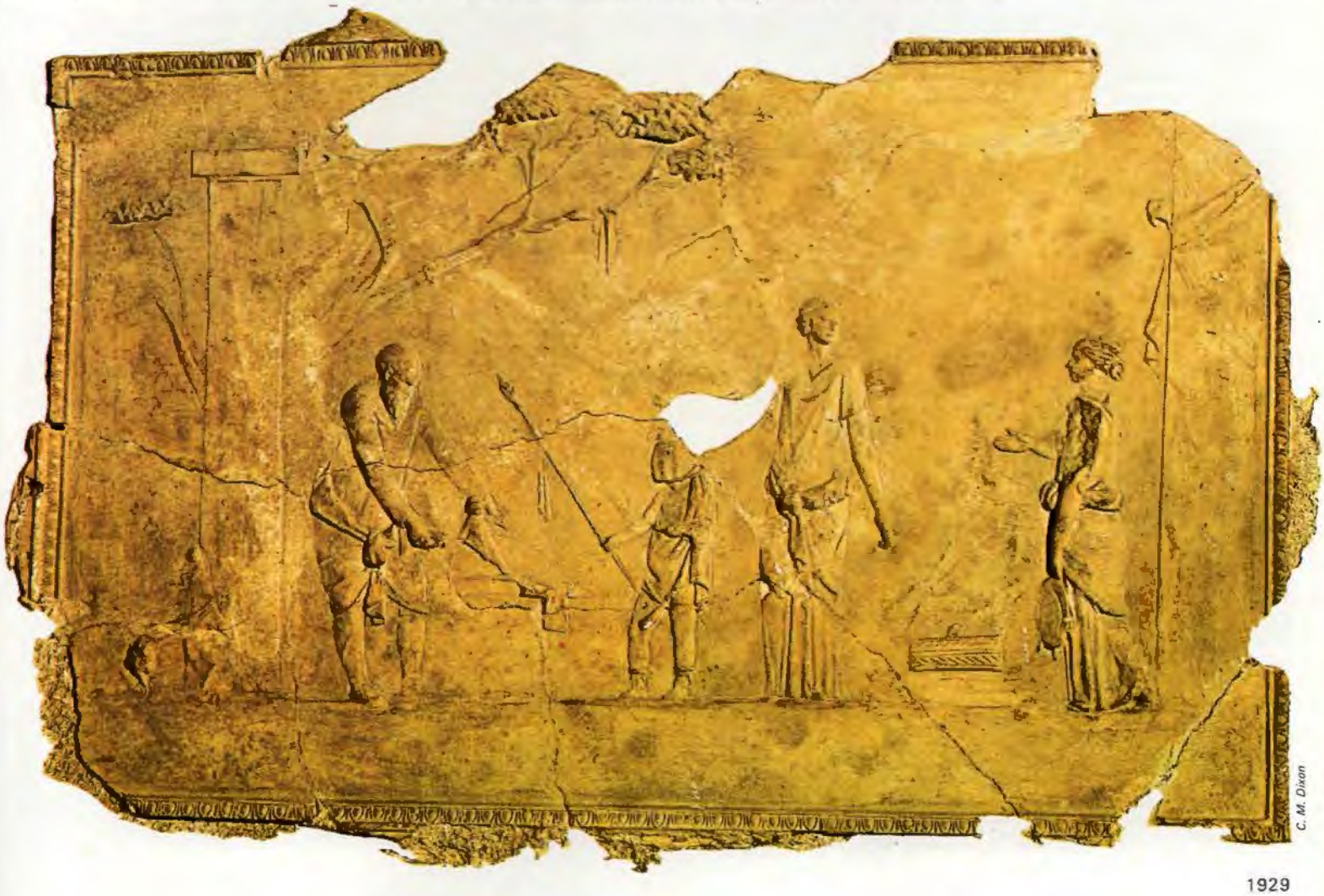
Christianity too arose under the first Roman emperors. Origen, the great theologian of the 3rd century AD, in his work *Contra Celsum* attributed to a divine plan of salvation the fact that Jesus was born during the reign of Augustus, who had unified the whole of the Mediterranean area under the rule of the Romans. It has always been clear that the Mystery religions and Christianity developed at the same time, but it was not certain how this could be explained. It was first thought that the emergence of the one must have been dependent on the other. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Dependence of the Mysteries on Christianity would be conceivable in the case of Mithras, theurgy or the cult of Helios, but it is out of the question as far as the Mysteries of Isis are concerned, since characteristic elements of this cult are evident in the poems of Tibullus between 30 and 20 BC in Rome. To assume the dependence of Christianity on the Mysteries seems a more hopeful thesis; but if this assumption is pursued point by point, it is impossible to produce detailed proof. The similarities in question are based on the fact that in both cases a very ritualistic national religion, under the new conditions of the Roman Empire, was re-fashioned into new forms, in the case of Christianity far more powerfully.

We may therefore say that the general resemblance of these cults and Christianity can be attributed to the fact that the various national cults all contained the same possibilities of development and came to fruition under the new conditions, common to them all, of Roman rule, just like plants which, in the same spring weather, grow out of the earth in which they have previously lain dormant as seeds. Entirely new conditions were present. A single empire comprised the civilized world, the old political units had dissolved, there was one ruler; there was complete freedom of movement, but society was truly differentiated; the people were cosmopolitans, the ideas of the Greek philosophers reached everywhere. It followed that in both types of religion, the Mystery religions and Christianity, there were many similar religious ideas and rites: communion, baptism, belief in regeneration. On the other hand, there were also distinct differences, such as the sexual rites of the Dionysiac and Isiac initiations and the military set-up of the Mithraic Mysteries.

One of the most profound reasons for the success of the Mystery religions must have been that the majority of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire had no opportunity of participating in the government of the state or of exercising any influence on it, as had been possible in the Attic democracy and the Roman Republic. Consequently, everybody's energy was directed towards an individual striving after happiness, either economic success in this world or religious bliss after death. In the large towns and cities of the entire Mediterranean area the individual was submerged in the great mass; he felt himself lost, a nameless nothing in the standardized multitude. If he wished to find a foothold or acquire an identity, then he needed a more intimate environment in which he counted as a real person and in which he had a voice; it is quite characteristic that in all Mystery religions (and also in Christianity) the same vocabulary of the old democratic autonomy keeps recurring, expressing the feeling that the believers were an individual 'people' of a new kind. In the festivals of these communities man could escape from the monotony of daily life, and their teachings promised him rebirth and bliss in the life to come; this was why Oriental Mystery religions achieved success not only among the immigrants from the Eastern countries but also among the Greeks and Romans.

R. MERKELBACH

FURTHER READING: Franz Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Constable, 1958 reprint); A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background* (Harper Torchbook, New York, 1964).



C. M. Dixon

MYSTICISM

The view that mysticism and the mystical experience are essentially the same in all religians is mistaken; on the contrary, there are important differences between, and within, the eastern and western traditions

MYSTICISM is a term that tends to be very loosely used; and so it will be as well to state at the beginning what it is not. In ordinary speech it is often associated with the occult and with paranormal phenomena such as thought-reading, telepathy or levitation. It is true that many authentic mystics have had such powers, but they are in no way essential to the mystical experience itself and often merely prove an embarrassment.

Etymologically the word mysticism derives from the Greek *mueo*, meaning to 'initiate' into a secret cult – into a 'mystery'. Among Christians, however, the word has come to mean a direct experience of God; and since, in theory at least, Christianity is the religion of love, the 'mystical' experience is spoken of as union with God or as a 'spiritual marriage'. During the Middle Ages and after, 'mystical theology' was recognized as a legitimate branch of theology beside 'speculative theology'. The difference between the two is clearly brought out by the 17th century French saint, Francis of Sales. What, he asks, do we talk about in prayer? What is our topic of conversation? God: nothing else. After all what does a lover talk about but his beloved? Prayer and mystical theology, therefore, are identical. Prayer is called theology, because it deals with God as speculative theology does; only there are three differences. First of all, speculative theology deals with God as the supreme Being – the divinity of supreme goodness; mystical theology deals with him as supremely lovable – the supreme goodness of the divinity. Secondly, speculative

Right **The story of St Catherine's vision of her betrothal to Christ is typical of the Christian view of the mystical experience as a 'spiritual marriage': *The Marriage of St Catherine* by Veronese *Below* This type of mystical experience is also recorded in certain forms of Hinduism: the loves of Krishna and the *gopis* could be allegorized to represent the love between God and the soul**

Robert Skelton

Chester Beatty Library

theology is concerned with God and man, mystical theology with God alone. Thirdly, speculative theology leads to knowledge of God – turning its pupils into learned scholars and theologians; mystical theology leads to love of God – turning out intensely affectionate lovers. This is the traditional Christian point of view: mystical experience is the immediate experience of the love of God, and any experience in which neither God nor love were felt to be present would scarcely be taken seriously as mystical.

In the course of the last century or so, however, the word has taken on a wider meaning. There seem to be two reasons for this: the rise of the secular 'science' of psychology; and the dissemination of knowledge of the religions of India and China, in both of which the mystical element is prominent. And yet in neither Buddhism nor in Taoism does love, or indeed God, play a significant part. In what sense, then, are they mystical? Let us turn to the Oxford Dictionary for guidance. On 'mystic' it says: 'one who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain union with or absorption into the Deity, or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths inaccessible to the understanding.' And for 'mysticism' it gives a similar entry: 'belief in the possibility of union with the divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation; reliance on spiritual intuition as the means of acquiring knowledge of mysteries inaccessible to the understanding.' In neither entry is there any mention of love; and in both 'deity' has come to replace the more personal 'God'.

Cosmic Consciousness

But these definitions are still perhaps not broad enough, if we are to include in the category 'mystical' the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, considered by many non-Christian writers on this subject to be the mystical experience above all others. At the risk of over-simplifying I should define 'mysticism' as 'a direct apperception of eternal being', whether this eternal being is conceived of in personal terms or simply as a state of consciousness. This may take many forms, but perhaps the characteristic lowest common denominator is the loss of the sense of personality or ego-consciousness in a greater whole. Tennyson seems to have put it very well when he said: 'All at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the sure, utterly beyond words – where death was an almost laughable impossibility – the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life.' Again, not a word about either love or God.

This kind of experience is usually called 'Nature mysticism'. It is as if one's everyday personality – one's ego – were dissolved and merged into the 'All'; and through this merging into the totality of existence the mystic now feels that he lives with the life of the All and therefore cannot die. This experience is perhaps not so uncommon as is often supposed: it comes unheralded, lasts only for a short time, but brings with it an absolute conviction of its reality. Examples of it turn up in the mystical traditions of Christians and Moslems but on the whole it is not central to them. On the other hand, it seems to constitute the core of the experience which the Zen Buddhists call *satori*, though it is quite different from what the early Buddhists called *nirvana*.

This Nature mysticism which R. W. Bucke, a Canadian doctor who wrote at the turn of the century, called 'cosmic consciousness' and which Freud called the 'oceanic feeling', can strike anyone at any time; and it can also be induced by yoga techniques and by drugs. It is not necessarily associated with religion of any kind but is liable to infiltrate the mystical tradition of any religion. Its most disturbing characteristic is that through it the mystic feels that he has transcended all the 'opposites' and contradictions of life, including good and evil. Bucke himself had such an experience and (as is the custom of most Nature mystics) he drew from it the most unwarrantable conclusions. According to him, cosmic consciousness 'shows the cosmos not to consist of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid, and unintending law; it shows it on the contrary as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity, that everyone and everything has eternal life; it shows that the universe is God and that God is the universe, and that no evil ever did or ever will enter into it; a great deal of this is, of course, from the point of view of self-consciousness, absurd; it is nevertheless undoubtedly true.'

R. K. Singh

William MacQuitty

Left **Drugs are sometimes used as aids to mystical illumination: an 18th century painting shows dervishes meditating while they smoke *ganja*, the dried leaves of the hemp plant, and drink *bhang*, also made from hemp *Above* A devotee of Vishnu, one of the many thousands of Hindu mystics in India *Right* A Zen monk contemplates a garden made of raked sand; the spiritual exercises of Zen, a form of Buddhism, are directed towards attaining *satori*, 'enlightenment'**

This is typical of the attitude of the Nature mystics. Their experience is usually momentary, but it is overwhelming in its impact: they simply cannot doubt that they have entered into a totally new and different form of consciousness which represents a truth of which they had never dreamt before and which they find it almost impossible to describe. Their attitude is that they have seen the truth and that they therefore know. They are, however, the amateurs at this very hazardous game and unfortunately they rarely think it necessary to consult the professionals. The professionals are, of course, the religious mystics; and of them the Indians are without doubt the most important. They are important because (unlike believers in Judaism, Christianity and Islam) they are not bound by dogma. Hence they feel no obligation to express their experience in terms of any given religious framework. Thus if love does not form part of their experience, they will not speak of love, the idea of love being only peripheral in their sacred texts.

It is a common error to suppose that 'mysticism is essentially one and the same, whatever may be the religion professed by the individual mystic', for any study of the Hindu and Buddhist mystical texts will very soon convince us that this is not true. There are varieties here which it is simply not possible to overlook: it is not a question of interpretation but of the experience itself. And it would seem that there are three recognizable types of mystical experience, all of which are to be found in the Hindu and Buddhist classics. The first is 'cosmic consciousness'; the second is the realization of eternity and 'deathlessness' within oneself from which the whole universe of change and time and space is excluded; and the third is the experience of the union of the soul with the Absolute or God in a supreme act of love. The first is typical of the *Upanishads*, the sacred mystical texts of the Hindus; the second is typical of early Buddhism; and the third is characteristic of Christianity, Islam and later Hinduism.

The Spokes and the Wheel

The classic formulation of 'cosmic consciousness' occurs in a very ancient Hindu text which says that, 'The whole universe is Brahman' who is also 'my Self within my heart', smaller than a grain of rice yet also 'greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than all these worlds . . . This my Self within the heart is that Brahman' (see also BRAHMAN).

This means that the inmost self of man is identical with the Absolute, with the unchanging power over against which the whole changing universe must be seen. One lives not with one's own life but with the life of the whole universe, which is founded in a changeless Being which is at the same time one's own eternity. It was this experience which made it possible for Tennyson to say that death was 'an almost laughable impossibility'. As Hugh of St Victor said in the 12th century: 'This one is all, and this all is one.' This is the experience of cosmic consciousness.

The Absolute is also commonly called the One, and you and I are in some sense that One: 'This finest essence – the whole universe has it as its Self: that is the Real: that is the Self: that you are.' The manifold universe is unified in the One, and so far as each conscious soul is aware of the One behind the many, he feels himself to be that One and through it interconnected with all the manifold existences that formerly had seemed to be separate from it. All things cohere in the One as spokes 'cohere' in the hub and felly of a wheel: there is identity of Being but not of function or of power.

There is identity in Being but at the same time diversity in function, power and relationship; and the identity does not exclude the relationship. This is, of course, a paradox. So be it, but paradox is of the very stuff of mysticism, particularly where cosmic consciousness is concerned. Thus though I may realize myself as the Infinite and the universal Self, this does not prevent me from having a passionate love-affair with that universal Self. This comes out clearly in

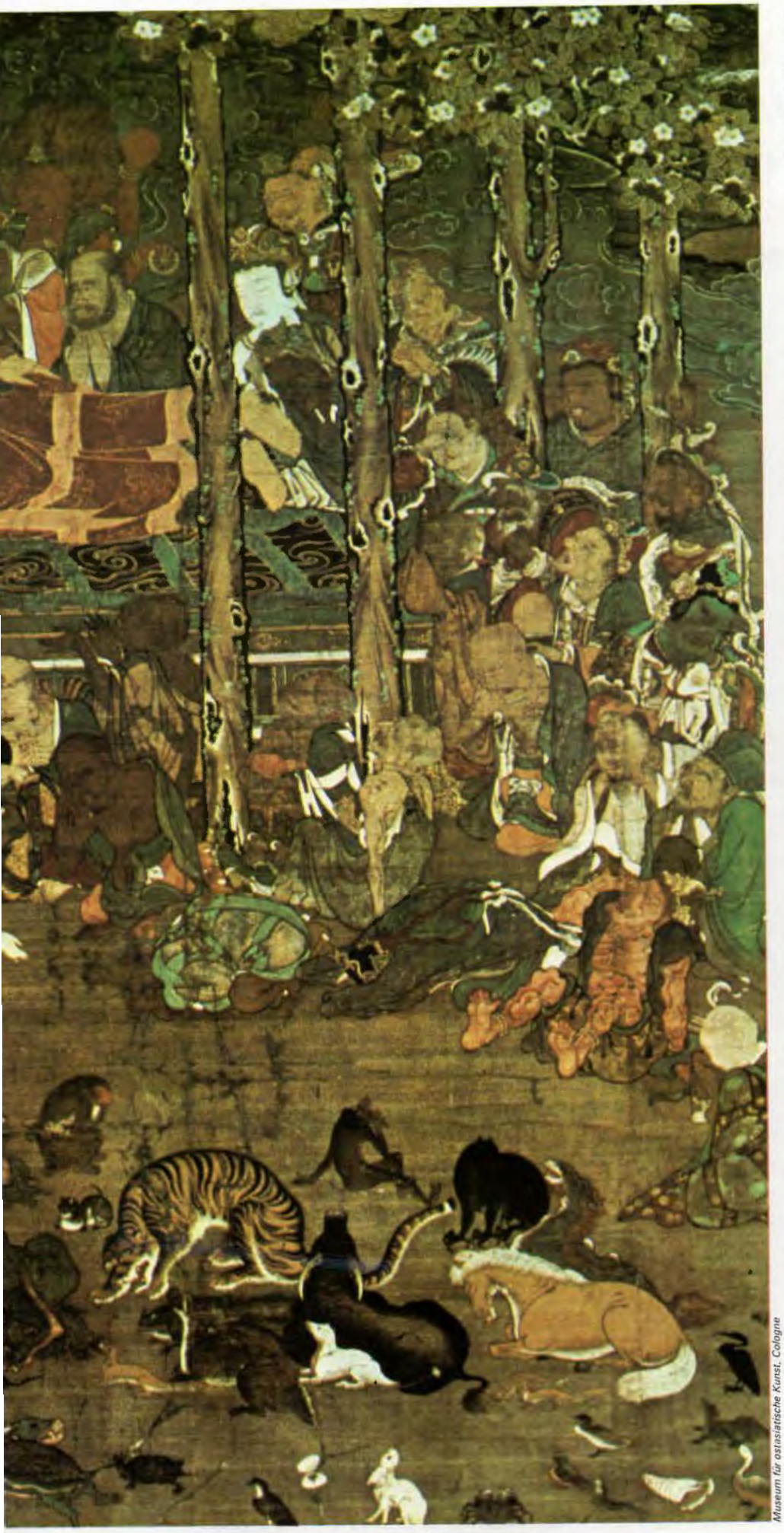
another passage taken from the *Upanishads:*

> The Infinite is below, it is above, it is to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly it is this whole universe.
>
> Next the teaching concerning the ego.
>
> I am below, I am above, I am to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly I am this whole universe.
>
> Next the teaching concerning the Self.
>
> The Self is below, the Self is above, the Self is to the west, to the east, to the south, to the north. Truly the Self is this whole universe.
>
> The man who truly sees and thinks and understands in this way has pleasure in the Self, plays with the Self, copulates with the Self, and has joy with the Self: he becomes an independent sovereign. In all the worlds freedom of movement is his.

Here cosmic consciousness merges into the mysticism of love – and frankly sexual love at that. The essence of cosmic consciousness, however, is the realization of oneness in and through diversity, 'that kind of knowledge,' as the *Bhagavad Gita* says, 'by which one sees one mode of being, changeless, undivided in all contingent beings, divided though they be.' It is to see the eternal in and through the transitory, and to see the transitory as itself eternal: no clear distinction can be made between the two. Clearly this is very different from our second type of mysticism, 'the realization of eternity and "deathlessness" within oneself from which the whole universe of change and time and space is excluded'.

Unconscious Reality

Unlike the *Upanishads*, early Buddhism draws the sharpest distinction between the world in which we live and eternity. Our world is in a state of continual flux. Nothing in it is permanent, nothing remains the same for two moments on end, and this applies just as much to mind as it does to matter. The man I am today is different from the man I was yesterday, and this means that I have no self, no permanent substratum which I can legitimately call 'I'. This applies to everything. Everything lacks substance, and because it lacks substance it is in a permanent state of unease. Hence no one can truthfully say 'I am', or 'this is mine', or 'there is a self', or 'this belongs to a self'. There is no means of deliverance from the unease of this world except by



Museum für ostasiatische Kunst, Cologne

A Japanese scroll of the 14th century shows Shakyamuni's entrance into Nirvana: the Buddha, Shakyamuni, dies surrounded by a mourning creation ranging from gods and human beings to animals, birds and insects. Nirvana, the Buddhists' ultimate goal, was a deathless state of perfect peace, wisdom and enlightenment

realizing that we have no individual and personal existence; and since we consider that we belong to the world of flux we have to detach ourselves completely from that world and everything which attaches us to it.

Only so can we realize Nirvana, which is a deathless state of being, totally separate and distinct from this world of flux, utterly at peace, not born, not become, not made or compounded, the cessation of phenomenal existence, the extinction of becoming, craving and pain, perfect peace, wisdom and enlightenment. In Christian terminology, it is *requies aeterna*, 'eternal rest', the peace of death. This would appear to be literally true, for life is flux, and it is therefore life as such that the early Buddhists would put an end to. This is not surprising, given their premises; for the Buddhist idea of salvation is conditioned by their unshakable belief in transmigration – what they call *samsara*, an endless process of birth and death, re-birth and re-death, in a form of existence which is forever impermanent, unreal and fraught with suffering. To put an end to this is very heaven – it is Nirvana. It is, as one of the Moslem mystics puts it, 'to isolate the eternal from the originated', perfect, static, timeless peace.

The guarantee that such a state of timeless peace exists and can be found is the Buddha's own Enlightenment. Once he had found it, however, he did not consider it expedient to define it in concrete terms. One thing only would he assert, and that is that Nirvana puts a stop to all becoming. In cosmic consciousness, eternal Being is seen as the cement that holds the whole world of becoming together: in early Buddhism, Being and becoming are forever separate.

Neither the Hindus nor the later Buddhist schools (the so-called Mahayana), however, were prepared to leave things so uncomfortably vague. On the Hindu side one of the late *Upanishads* defines what seems obviously to be the same as the Buddhist Nirvana in these terms: 'Conscious of neither within nor without, nor of both together, not a mass of wisdom, neither wise nor unwise, one with whom there is no commerce, impalpable, devoid of distinguishing mark, unthinkable, indescribable, its essence the firm conviction of the oneness of itself, bringing all development to an end, tranquil and mild, devoid of duality, such do they deem this fourth (and ultimate state

There is a state in which the bonds of the personal nature of life seem to have fallen away from us and we experience an undivided unity

of consciousness) to be. That is the Self: that is what should be known.'

This 'fourth' state of consciousness is beyond the other three states of dreamless sleep, dream, and our ordinary waking state. What is strange is that this fourth state which is really total unconsciousness is regarded as being the one Reality – the Absolute which is beyond the personal God himself; for in man, the microcosm, it is dreamless sleep, not the 'fourth state', which corresponds to the creator God in the macrocosm. It is considered that just as dream emerges from dreamless sleep, so does the phenomenal world emerge from God: but beyond God and beyond dreamless sleep there is the totally static One which is beyond change of any kind. In this 'fourth state', then, the mystic realizes himself as the Absnlute. Plainly, if this is really so, this is the one Reality beyond which one caunot go. Insofar as the mystic realizes himself as this One, he is superior to God, so far as God is operative in the material world. This, of course, makes nonsense of all religion.

But this is not the only way in which this experience of 'isolation' can he interpreted. According to another Hindu school of philosophy, this oneness which the mystic experiences is not the Absolute hut only the incommunicable essence of one individual soul. These 'souls' or spiritual monads are innumerable, each one being exactly like the others, each being a unit of pure consciousness, eternal, beyond space and time, isolated from all other spiritual monads and from matter. It is the misfortune of these monads, however, that they 'fall' into matter and are there imprisoned until, after countless more or less miserable incarnations, they are finally released by the evolutionary processes at work in matter itself. The experience again is the same – the Buddhist Nirvana, the final and definitive isolation of spirit from matter. Thus what the Buddha had refused to define in positive terms – the isolation of spirit from matter – is interpreted by the 'monist' Hindus as meaning that the mystic realizes himself as the sole Reality, as the Absolute 'One without a second', but by the 'pluralistic' Hindus as meaning the realization by one out of countless spiritual monads of its own timeless essence. The experience is the same, and it is the very reverse of cosmic consciousness, for the 'cosmos', the phenomenal world of change and life and self-consciousness, is totally excluded and transcended.

In the mysticism of 'isolation' there can by definition be no question of love. In that of cosmic consciousness a feeling of love may or may not be present. In the passage from the *Upanishads* quoted above the mystic feels himself to be present everywhere throughout the whole wide universe. There is no difference between him and the infinite 'Self' of all things, and yet he is able to 'have pleasure in the Self, play with the Self, copulate with the Self, and have joy with the Self'. The 'Self', then, is both an all-pervasive Absolute and a personal God with whom the mystic experiences the spiritual equivalent of sexual union.

The Spiritual Marriage

Christianity is, in theory, the religion of love, and its mysticism therefore naturally expresses itself in terms of love. But Christianity also exalts virginity as one of the greatest virtues, and virginity is not compatible with human love as it expresses itself in wedlock. This is rather awkward for Christians, the more so in that their mystics *experienced* the love ot God as a spiritual marriage, the consummation of which bore an uncomfortable resemblance to the sexual act in the physical world. Origen, who had castrated himself for the love of God, was painfully aware of this, but it did not prevent him from writing a commentary on the frankly erotic Song of Solomon. He knew very well that the spiritual espousals of which he wrote would be misinterpreted by the profane, and so he wrote:

> If any man who lives after the flesh should approach this subject, to such a one the reading of this scripture will be the occasion of no small hazard and danger. For he, not knowing how to hear love's language in purity and with chaste ears, will twist the whole manner of his hearing of it away from the inner spiritual man and on to the outward and carnal; and he will be turned away from the spirit to the flesh, and will foster carnal desires in himself, and it will seem to be the divine scriptures that are thus urging and egging him on to fleshly lust.

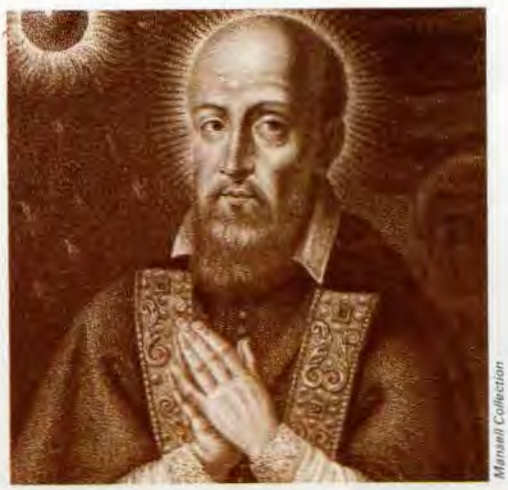
Love and marriage, of course, are only possible between two *persons*. The God of the pantheists – of cosmic consciousness – must therefore also have his personal side. In the *Upanishads* this is only occasionally recognized. In one of the later *Upanishads*, however, the existence of God as creator and sustainer not only of the physical universe but also of the timeless eternity called Brahman, is admitted.

> In the imperishable, infinite city of Brahman
> Two things there are –
> Wisdom and unwisdom, hidden, established there:
> Perishable is unwisdom, but wisdom is immortal:
> Who over wisdom and unwisdom rules, he is another.

This distinction between the personal God and the impersonal Brahman and the relationship between the two becomes even more apparent in the *Bhagavad Gita* (see BHAGAVAD GITA). The *Gita* is a dialogue between Krishna, who is God incarnate, and his friend Arjuna. It is, then, in the eyes of the Hindus the spoken word of God. The *Gita* starts where the *Upanishads* leave off, but it also takes for granted the Buddhist Nirvana, which it sometimes also calls Brahma-nirvana. Salvation or rather 'liberation', that is, the escape from matter, time and space, into a condition of timeless eternity, is taken for granted. This the *Gita* calls either 'to become Brahman' or 'to enter Nirvana'; but this is no longer the end of the affair, for Krishna, the personal God, is beyond and above both Brahman and Nirvana. Nirvana 'subsists' in him, and he is 'the base supporting Brahman – immortal Brahman which knows no change – supporting the eternal law of righteous and absolute beatitude.' This, then, is a personal God with whom it is possible to have personal relations and whom it is possible to love.

And then comes the final revelation which is, in essence, the Christian revelation too. Not only is man required to love God but God on his side loves man in return: 'And now again listen to this my highest word, the most mysterious of all: I love you well. Therefore will I tell you your salvation. Bear Me in mind, love Me and worship Me, sacrifice, prostrate yourself to Me . . . Give up all things of law, turn to Me, your only refuge, for I will deliver you from all evils; have no care.'

The development of mysticism is illustrated in Hinduism as it is nowhere else,



Mansell Collection

The 17th century French saint Francis of Sales described in his treatise *On the Love of God* the effects of divine love on the hearts of men: in the Christian religion mystical experience is equated with the immediate experience of the love of God

largely because Hinduism has no fixed dogmas. First comes cosmic consciousness, then the experience of the 'isolation' of man's innermost spiritual essence which is beyond time and space, and finally the union of this essence with God who is the essence of all essences.

Much the same happens in Buddhism, for with the development of the Mahayana, the 'Great Vehicle', some 500 years after the Buddha's death, the ideal of Nirvana is denounced as being only a stage on the road to absolute beatitude. The goal is now to realize the 'Buddha-nature' in oneself, and the Buddha-nature is not just perfect peace and infinite wisdom but also boundless compassion, which makes the salvation of all mankind the primary concern of all who have experienced the bliss of enlightenment.

Two Kinds of Unity

In all traditions, however, even in those which start from the love of God, there is a tendency to mistake the stage of 'isolation' for identity with the Absolute and therefore beyond all relationships of any kind including the consummation of the spiritual marriage. This tendency becomes the official teaching of the non-dualist Vedanta in India (see VEDANTA). But as the *Gita* makes plain, what is taken to be identity with the godhead turns out to be only the experience of the oneness and eternity of one's own soul. The modern Jewish mystic Martin Buber discerned this and warned against it in words that reflect the teaching of the Gita: 'Now from my own unforgettable experience, I know well that there is a state in which the bonds of the personal nature of life seem to have fallen away from us and we experience an undivided unity. But I do not know – what the soul willingly imagines and indeed is bound to imagine (mine too once did it) – that in this I had attained to a union with the primal being or the godhead. That is an exaggeration no longer permitted to the responsible understanding. Responsibly . . . I can elicit from these experiences only that in them I reached an undifferentiable unity of myself without form or content. I may call this an original pre-biographical unity and suppose that it is hidden unchanged beneath all biographical change, all development and complication of soul. Nevertheless, in the honest and sober account of the responsible understanding, this unity is nothing but the unity of this soul of mine, whose "ground" I have reached, so much so that . . . my spirit has no choice but to understand it as the groundless. But this basic unity of my own soul is certainly beyond the reach of all the multiplicity it has hitherto received from life, though not in the least beyond individuation, or the multiplicity of all the souls in the world of which it is one – existing but once, single, unique, irreducible, this creaturely one: one of the human souls and not the "soul of the All"; a defined and particular being and not "Being"; the creaturely basic unity of a creature.'

There is, then, a mysticism of the soul as it is in itself and a mysticism of the love of that soul for God. In the Christian tradition the two are rarely distinguished, for love is God, and God is timeless eternity. The exceptions are, among others, Ruysbroeck and Richard of St Victor. The case of Richard is particularly interesting, for he reads almost like a Christian *Bhagavad Gita*.

His predecessor, Hugh of St Victor, too was perhaps the most 'Buddhist' of the Christian mystics. Little concerned with love, he had a positive terror of time and regarded absolute changelessness as the ultimate goal of the mystic. 'The more a man gathers himself together in spirit, the more . . . is he raised in thought and desire; until, at last, when he comes to that supreme changelessness, he is altogether unchangeable.' This is to 'become Brahman' and to enter Nirvana. Richard, however, like the *Gita* goes further than this. This changelessness he calls self-knowledge, as does the *Gita*. Self-knowledge, however, is only the first step on the way to the knowledge of God. And so he says:

> The soul which is attempting to rise to the height of knowledge must make self-knowledge his first and chief concern. The high peak of knowledge is perfect self-knowledge. The full understanding of a rational spirit is as it were a high and great mountain. This mountain rises far above the top of all earthly learning and looks down from on high upon all philosophy and all the learning of the world . . . By as much as you make daily progress in self-knowledge, by so much you will be reaching out to higher things, for he who attains perfect self-knowledge has reached the top of the mountain.

What Christian mystics call the apex of the soul is the top of the mountain; and standing here the soul looks down and contemplates all the transitoriness of the world, realizing its own changelessness. Men, however, are not angels: they do not have wings. Hence it is impossible for the soul to rise higher than the top of the mountain. If it is to go further, then it must receive wings, and this can only come about by the grace of God. And so Richard goes on to say:

> Let a man rise up by himself above himself, and from self-knowledge to the knowledge of God. Let a man first learn from the image of God, let him learn from the likeness of God what he ought to think about God . . . A mind which does not raise itself to consideration of its own nature, how can it fly away on the wings of contemplation to that which is above itself? . . . If the mind has not yet been able to gather itself into a unity, and does not yet know how to enter into itself, when will it be able to ascend by contemplation to those things which are above itself?

It must, however, beware of resting content on the mountain-peak under the delusion that this is the journey's end, for this may lead to complacency and spiritual pride, as the Mahayana Buddhists had also seen. On this too the 14th century Flemish mystic, Ruysbroeck, is most emphatic:

> All those men are deceived whose intention it is to sink themselves in natural rest, and who do not seek God with desire nor find him in delectable love. For the rest which they possess consists in an emptying of themselves, to which they are inclined by nature and by habit . . . In this emptiness rest is sufficient and great, and it is in itself no sin, if they know how to make themselves empty. But when they wish to exercise and possess this rest without the works of virtue, then they fall into spiritual pride, and into a self-complacency from which they seldom recover. And at such times they believe themselves to have and to be that which they never achieve.

This was directed against the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who were almost certainly Nature-mystics and held, like some early passages in the *Upanishads*, that their spiritual experiences exempted them from both the religious and the moral code. This antinomianism we meet with in all the mystical traditions, and it is also true that mystics are on the whole not conspicuous

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Krishna, who is God incarnate as the charioteer of Arjuna, delivers the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This work, one of the later developments of Hindu mysticism, presents a personal God with whom it is possible to have personal relations: 'And now again listen to this my highest word, the most mysterious of all: I love you well'

for love of their neighbour. There are exceptions, of course, and Richard of St Victor was one of these. For him there are four stages in the mystical ascent – knowledge of self as changeless (and this would include cosmic consciousness as well as spiritual 'isolation'), ascent to God, absorption in God, and finally going forth from God – the infinite compassion of the Mahayana Buddhists. This is how he sums up the mystical quest: 'In the first degree God enters into the soul and she turns inward into herself. In the second she ascends above herself and is lifted up to God. In the third the soul, lifted up to God passes altogether into him. In the fourth the soul goes forth on God's behalf and descends below herself. In the first she enters into herself, in the second she goes forth from herself. In the first she reaches her own life, in the third she reaches God. In the first she goes forth on her own behalf, in the fourth she goes forth because of her neighbour. In the first she enters in by meditation, in the second she ascends by contemplation, in the third she is led into jubilation, in the fourth she goes out by compassion.'

(See also BUDDHISM; HINDUISM; NIRVANA; STIGMATA; SUFIS; ZEN; and articles on individual mystics.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

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NAGAS

THE MOUNTAINOUS border country between India and Burma is inhabited by a group of tribes known as the Nagas. They are of Mongoloid race and speak a variety of Tibeto-Burman languages. The total number of Nagas within the frontiers of India is about half a million, and although divided into a number of tribes, with different languages and customs, they are clearly distinguished from all surrounding populations.

Until the middle of the 19th century the Nagas lived in almost complete isolation from the inhabitants of the plains and the higher civilizations developed in India and Burma. Neither Hinduism nor Buddhism has influenced the Nagas and their religious and social practices, but the Nagas have close cultural as well as racial affinities with the hill tribes of the eastern Himalayas and in some respects resemble even such distant ethnic groups as the hill tribes of the Philippines and Borneo. All these hill people are characterized by an agricultural economy which, despite considerable efficiency in the cultivation of rice, has never made use of draught animals.

All Nagas live in substantial villages usually situated on hilltops or ridges; in the days of headhunting these villages were fortified with palisades and ditches. Houses are large and well built, often decorated with elaborate carvings indicating the social achievements of the owner. Most Naga tribes also build great community houses which serve as clubs, ritual centres and dormitories for bachelors. War used to be accepted as an essential element of life, and there prevailed the belief that the occasional capture of a human head was necessary for maintaining the fertility of the crops and the well-being of the community. As a result, to the Naga mankind appears divided between the small circle of his fellow villagers and clansmen, on whose loyalty he depends, and the entire outside world, which consists of village communities potentially and often actively hostile.

Naga villages are traditionally autonomous political units ruled either by a chief or, more frequently, by a village council. This council adjudicates disputes and punishes offences and breaches of taboos. The village council also decides matters of ritual and ceremony and enforces the observance of the many taboos which Nagas consider necessary precautions against magical dangers. If there has been an earthquake or an eclipse of the moon, for instance, the whole community must abstain for one or even two days from all activities outside the confines of the village and above all from work on the fields.

While the social system of most Naga tribes is egalitarian and democratic, others divide society into aristocratic clans and commoners. The aristocratic clans furnish the chiefs, who have many privileges and wield the arbitrary power of true autocrats.

C. von Fürer-Haimendorf

To ensure the continued prosperity of the tribe, the Nagas captured human heads; the skulls were kept and periodically fed

High rank involves obligations and to maintain their eminent position Naga chiefs have to preserve the purity of their noble blood by marrying within their own class. Chiefs of pure aristocratic blood are credited with radiating dangerous magical powers. It is believed that contact with such chiefs can cause illness, and commoners are afraid to look into a chief's eyes or to oppose him in any way (see MANA).

Among those Naga societies which lack hereditary chiefs, social eminence may be achieved by giving so-called feasts of merit: the social status of a man is measured by the number and lavishness of the feasts he has given. There is a recognized sequence of feasts of merit, and a wealthy man in quest of high social status must begin with the simplest feast and gradually work his way through one feast after the other, each more elaborate and costly than the one before. A man who has given certain feasts of merit is entitled to decorate his house with carvings symbolizing wealth and fertility. The passion for marking personal achievements with tallies extends even to the grave, and among some Nagas it is customary to place on a man's grave a large stone for every enemy head he has taken and a smaller stone for every woman he has sexually possessed.

Spirit in the Skull

According to Naga ideas man splits at death into several distinct invisible entities. The 'soul', to which a large portion of the individual's personality is attached, sets out on a long journey to the Land of the Dead. The approach is guarded by a spirit who questions the soul before allowing it entrance. There is a belief that everything on this earth has an exact counterpart in the Land of the Dead.

Another part of the personality remains attached to the skull and is capable of benefiting the living in various ways. The skulls of the dead, both those of kinsmen and those of slain enemies, are periodically fed; this reflects a belief in the power of a spiritual element which remains on this earth while the 'soul' settles down to a new life in the next world (see also HEAD).

The religious beliefs of the various Naga tribes are not uniform, but there is throughout a belief in numerous spirits, partly friendly and partly hostile to man, but

controllable by the performance of the appropriate rites. Above the host of earthbound spirits stands the figure of a supreme deity, whose name means literally 'Sky-earth', a term which reflects the idea of a universal deity comprising or dominating both spheres. Some Nagas imagine this supreme god as dwelling in the sky and as having existed before all other beings. They attribute to him the creation of the firmament and believe that he causes the thunder to roll and the lightning to flash. He is imagined in the likeness of a human being of immense size. At most important events in the life of a Naga the sky god is invoked, and in innumerable prayers and incantations he is asked to bestow blessings and success on individuals or on the whole community. The sky god is regarded as the guardian of the moral order. Nagas believe that he can see and hear everything human beings do, and that he is angered by offences against the ethical code. He is thought to punish wrongdoers by an early death or by misfortunes in this life.

Compared to the sky god, the spirits of the earth, the forests and the rivers are not very important in Naga religion, though at times they are placated with offerings of chickens and pigs. Nagas spend a comparatively large part of their time and resources on ritual activities, but do not seem to be open to religious experiences of great emotional impact. Their world view leaves little scope for mysticism, though there are Naga seers and mediums believed to be capable of entering the spirit world while in a state of trance. Some of these seers claim that when their body sleeps, their soul can enter the body of a tiger, and that in the shape of were-tigers they have experiences which they remember in their waking state. According to Naga belief, the bond between such a man and his tiger familiar is very close, and the death of the tiger is invariably followed by that of his human double. In recent decades large numbers of Nagas have been converted to Christianity, and the practice of the old tribal religion is on the wane.

C. VON FURER-HAIMENDORF

The name of the God of the Old Testament was so holy that it was only rarely pronounced, and the goddess Isis took the power of the sun god by discovering his real name. Survivals of the old belief in the magic of names still affect our behaviour today.

NAMES

WHEN WE HESITATE to use a word like 'cancer', or pronounce it only in a hushed voice with a wary look round first, or when we say that someone who has died has 'departed' or 'passed away', we demonstrate the continuing hold on mankind of the magical feeling that to speak the name of something dreaded risks summoning it. The magic of names is part of the magic of language in general, the belief that words encapsulate reality. Presumably, as language developed long ago, the use of words and the naming of things seemed to bring reality itself more closely within a man's grasp. From the magical point of view, to call a creature a 'frog' is not to attach a mere label to it but to state the essential nature of the animal. The name contains the essence of its being in distinguishing it from other animals, for if it had some other name, 'toad' perhaps, it would not be what it is but something different.

If the name of a thing *is* the thing, then the name can be used to capture it, to control it, and even to create it. A wax image made to harm an enemy may be formally given the victim's name, to convey into it his full identity. Writing the name of an enemy on a piece of lead and burying it magically 'buries' him (see CURSE).

Children, as Iona and Peter Opie have pointed out (in *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*), have retained the magical attitude to names. 'Children attach an almost primitive significance to people's names, always wanting to find out a stranger's name, yet being correspondingly reluctant to reveal their own. They have ways of avoiding telling their name. They answer, "Haven't got a name, only got a number." They say, "Same name as me Dad." "What's your Dad's then?" "Same as mine."'

It is not only children who preserve this feeling. The questions 'What is his name?' and 'Who is he?' generally mean the same thing and if you are asked 'Who are you?', you usually reply simply by stating your name: with the buried implication that the name and the identity are the same thing. There is still sometimes a feeling of resentment when an acquaintance uses your first name too soon, an uneasy sense that he is invading your privacy and claiming to know the real you when he does not.

People take far more trouble about choosing names for their children than would seem to be needed, because of the deep belief that the name chosen will affect the child's character. Few parents go so far in selecting names to mould a child's personality as Aleister Crowley, who named his first daughter Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith (the little girl died young, 'of acute nomenclature', it was unkindly said) but names of saints and churchmen, statesmen, film stars and other heroes and heroines are bestowed on babies by parents who feel that the name will carry its owner's admired characteristics with it. The custom of naming a child for a well-loved relative used to be based on the same principle and, at a buried level, perhaps still often is.

Seamen tend to be particularly superstitious about names. Death, the Devil, witches and drowning are among the things which should never be named at sea. It is unlucky to change the name of a ship, and ships whose names end in 'a' are ill-omened, a belief confirmed for some by the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915.

The Secret Name

The fact that the naming of a person is so often done with solemn ceremony is an indication of its importance. Sometimes a child is not felt to be a person at all until it has been formally named. In some primitive societies the name is not given until quite some time after birth. Some other designation is used meanwhile but this is not the 'real' name. Very often, the 'real' name has to be kept secret because an enemy who knew it would gain power over its owner, and sometimes it is so secret that even its owner does not know it – it was whispered into his ear by his mother when he was a baby. It used to be quite common in Europe for a child's name to be kept secret until he was christened. In extreme cases, even the mother would not know the name in advance: the father would choose it and whisper it to the godparents at the last moment.

The concept of the 'real' name is needed because if anyone's ordinary everyday name could be used to work magic against him, the situation would be intolerably dangerous. So people, animals, gods, spirits, sacred places and objects, have secret 'real' names which, if discovered, put them in the power of the discoverer. Plutarch (d 120 AD) remarked that nobody knew the real name of the guardian deity of Rome and that it was forbidden to ask anything about it, even whether it was male or female, because it was feared that enemies might charm it away. The rider on a white horse of the book of Revelation (chapter 19) was called Faithful and True but he had another, secret name: 'he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself.' Pseudonyms and titles were used for the gods of antiquity and even these were chanted in incantations, to snare a god in the net of his own nature and subject him to the will of priest or magician.

Another custom of many simpler societies which has partially survived in more sophisticated ones is the change of name which marks a change of status. When a boy is initiated as a man, he takes a new name, when a man becomes a king or a priest or a magician, he is given a new name, which is frequently conferred in a ritual and which makes him a new and different person. Similarly, a modern monarch may use an official name as king which differs from the name he uses in his family circle. Those who join religious orders take a new name, and so do those who join magical societies. A woman takes a new name on marriage, using her husband's surname because she has left her family and joined his. The American custom of continuing to use the maiden name as well as the husband's surname is a sign of the greater emancipation of American women. In European folk belief it would not be regarded as a good omen for the success of the marriage.

A Good Name

The use of 'theophoric' names, which contain the name of a god to attract his beneficent influence, is known from many societies. The Assyrian name Ashurbanipal means 'Ashur is creating a son', the Egyptian Ptahmiri means 'the beloved of Ptah', the Indian name Devadatta means 'God-given',

European magic, whether white or black, makes great use of the names of gods and spirits in order to tap their inherent power *Left* Various names of God are inscribed within the rim of a magic circle, in order to keep evil forces from breaking into it *Right* A figure from *The Key of Solomon*, a book of magic rituals, containing the names of a number of demons: in magical theory to know the name of a spirit is to have power over it

British Museum

Christopher means 'Christ-bearing'. Jewish names ending in -el or -iah are theophoric: Nathaniel means 'God has given', Obadiah means 'servant of Yah (weh)'.

Early Christians, born into a pagan environment, often bore pagan theophoric names. Origen means 'born of Horus' and the roll of early martyrs includes such names as Aphrodisius, Apollonius, Ares, Bacchus, Ceres, Hermes, Mercuria. But the names Peter and Paul soon became popular with Christian parents and an author of the 4th century said that Christians often named their children for martyrs, 'thus securing protection and guardian care for them.'

In the 17th century an English Puritan named William Jenkyn wrote that, 'A good name is as a thread tied about the finger, to make us mindful of the errand we came into the world to do for our Master.' Some Puritan enthusiasts adopted curious names of this uplifting sort: Fly-Fornication Andrews, for instance, God-Reward Smart, Hope-for Bending, Kill-Sin Pimple.

Names of Power

European magic frequently makes use of 'words of power' which are the names of gods and spirits (although some of them are gibberish words whose original meaning has been lost). The power of a supernatural being is tapped by the use of his name as automatically as an electric light is turned on by pressing the switch. But it is not enough merely to say a name of power. It must be correctly pronounced, and chanted or declaimed in such a way as to create the vibrations of sound which carry the energy of the being whose name is used. 'Correct' pronunciation means the one which causes the incantation to work, and a magician may experiment with different names and pronunciations until he hits on those which work best for him, though reverence is also paid to traditional formulas.

This practice stems largely from ancient Egyptian magic, in which words of power, properly pronounced and declaimed, were believed to coerce gods and spirits, to kill the living or revivify the dead, to cure or inflict diseases, and to master all the forces of Nature. One of the best-known examples of the belief in the secret 'real' name of a god is the story that the goddess Isis stole the power of the sun god Re by discovering his real name. She bullied him into agreeing 'that Isis shall search into me and that my name shall pass from me into her' (for he evidently did not consciously know the name himself). In taking Re's name, Isis took his identity and so assumed his power.

An Egyptian creation myth says that when nothing existed except the Creator, he felt a desire to make the universe, which he did by pronouncing his own name and immediately everything came into being. In effect, he contained the potential existence of all things, and when he spoke his name he and all things with him came into objective existence.

There are other ancient traditions of the supreme magical name which controls the entire universe. According to an Assyrian inscription, the god Ea alone knew this name: 'When it is uttered everything bows down in heaven, on earth and in the infernal regions . . . The gods themselves are bound by this name and obey it.' A Greek magical papyrus calls upon an almighty god, 'whose hidden name is unspeakable, which when the daimones (spirits) hear they cower, which when the sun and the earth hear they turn about, which when Hades hears he is troubled, rivers, the sea, lakes and springs when they hear it are frozen, rocks when they hear it are broken.'

In the Cabala the creation of the universe was regarded as the unfolding of God's name (see CABALA). The *Sefer Yetsirah* says that what God did in making the universe was to 'engrave his name' and the *Zohar* says that the ten sefiroth, being aspects of God's identity, 'constitute the sacred name of God'. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in all their combinations and permutations, came to be regarded as supremely powerful objects of meditation and magical instruments, 'through which the whole universe had been created and which contained the secret of the structure of all things' (see ALPHABET), and the great divine name became a major preoccupation of Jewish mysticism and cabalistic magic. Writing about the mystical system of Abraham Abulafia, a Spanish Jew of the 13th century, G. G. Scholem says (in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*): 'For this is the real and, if I may say so, the peculiarly Jewish object of mystical contemplation: the Name of God, which is something absolute, because it reflects the hidden meaning and

totality of existence; the Name through which everything else acquires its meaning and which yet to the human mind has no concrete particular meaning of its own. In short, Abulafia believes that whoever succeeds in making this great Name of God, the least concrete and perceptible thing in the world, the object of his meditation, is on the way to true mystical ecstasy.' Meditation on the divine name also plays an important role in Mohammedan mysticism (see MEDITATION).

The Tetragrammaton

To tap divine power, magicians used various biblical names and titles of God in their incantations, including El, Elohim and Eloa ('the god'), Adonai ('the Lord'), Sabaoth ('Lord of Hosts') and Shaddai ('the Almighty'). But the name which is closer to the inner reality of the god of the Old Testament is the Tetragrammaton, or name of four letters (transliterated YHWH or JHVH), which means 'he is' and which used to be rendered Jehovah and is now usually spelled Yahweh. Yah or Jah, and Ehyeh ('I am'), are variants of it.

The Tetragrammaton was held in such profound awe that it was rarely pronounced, to avoid profaning it and possibly for fear of the magic of enemies. By the time of Christ it was spoken aloud only once a year, by the High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies, the home of God in the Temple at Jerusalem, on the Day of Atonement. It was not pronounced in the ordinary services in the synagogue, Adonai or Elohim being substituted for it in readings from the Bible. As a result, the true pronunciation was lost.

In the centuries after Christ longer names of God were discovered, including names of 12, 22, 42, 60 and 72 letters or syllables. The name of 22 letters, which first appears in the 13th century *Sefer Raziel*, may have been read as Anaktam Pastam Paspasim Dionsim and is probably a permutation of letters from the Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6.24-27). It has no known meaning, nor does the name of 42 letters, which is probably a permutation of the first 42 letters of Genesis.

The name of 72 syllables is the Ineffable Name or *Shem Hameforash* (originally a title of the Tetragrammaton), said by some to be the most powerful of all the divine names, revealed to Moses at the burning bush and used by him to part the waters of the Red Sea and allow the Israelites to escape from the pursuing Egyptians. In fact, it is constructed of three verses in Exodus (14.19-21) describing this episode. The first syllable contains the first letter of verse 19, the last letter of verse 20 and the first letter of verse 21, the second syllable contains the second letter of verse 19, the penultimate letter of verse 20 and the second letter of verse 21, and so on. According to the *Sefer Raziel*: 'Whoever pronounces this name against a demon, it will vanish; at a conflagration, it will be quenched; over an invalid, he will be healed; against impure thoughts, they will be expelled; if it is directed against an enemy, he will die, and if it is uttered before a ruler, his favour will be won.' A caution is added, however: 'But whoever pronounces this name while he is in a state of uncleanliness and impurity will surely be struck dead.'

Jewish teachers were confronted by the problem that if God can be coerced by using his name, he can scarcely be considered omnipotent. In resolving this difficulty the *Sefer Hasidim* gives an interestingly magical explanation of the automatic working of a name of power. 'One may not say that the invocation of God's name obliges him to do the will of the invoker, that God himself is coerced by the recital of his name; but the name itself is invested with the power to fulfill the desire of the man who utters it.'

John Reuchlin (d 1522), one of the first Christian Cabalists, maintained that the name of Jesus (the Pentagrammaton) exceeds the Tetragrammaton in power by adding the letter S to it (JHVH becomes JHSVH). The letter S is particularly powerful because the number values of the Hebrew letters in *Ruach Elohim*, 'the Spirit of God', total 300, and the Hebrew letter *shin* (S) also has the number value 300, so that S encapsulates the Holy Spirit.

A Great Amen

Since names of power were believed to work automatically, they could be used regardless of the magician's motives. The golem was brought to life, or reduced to clay again, through the power of words (see GOLEM). *The Sword of Moses*, a 13th or 14th century copy of a much older text, contains a vast battery of names for all sorts of magical uses: to cure diseases, to unite a woman with a man, to grow hair on a bald head, to summon up spirits, to free prisoners, to know whether a journey will be lucky, to send dreams to your neighbours, to speak with the dead (in this case the names of power must be whispered), to catch a lion by the ear, to walk on water without wetting the feet, to kill a man, and many more.

Nature in Bondage

From the religious books of ancient Egypt we learn that the power possessed by a priest or man who was skilled in the knowledge and working of magic was believed to be almost boundless. By pronouncing certain words or names of power in the proper manner and in the proper tone of voice he could heal the sick, and cast out the evil spirits which caused pain and suffering in those who were diseased, and restore the dead to life, and bestow upon the dead man the power to transform the corruptible into an incorruptible body, wherein the soul might live to all eternity. His words enabled human beings to assume divers forms at will, and to project their souls into animals and other creatures; and in obedience to his commands, inanimate figures and pictures became living beings and things which hastened to perform his behests. The powers of nature acknowledged his might, and wind and rain, storm and tempest, river and sea, and disease and death worked evil and ruin upon his foes, and upon the enemies of those who were provided with the knowledge of the words which he had wrested from the gods of heaven, and earth, and the underworld. Inanimate nature likewise obeyed such words of power, and even the world itself came into existence through the utterance of a word by Thoth . . .

E. A. W. Budge *Egyptian Magic*

The heroine of the German folktale *Rumpelstiltskin* could only escape from the power of the deformed dwarf by discovering his name: by chance the dwarf was overheard chanting the name as he danced gleefully round his fire: illustration by Arthur Rackham

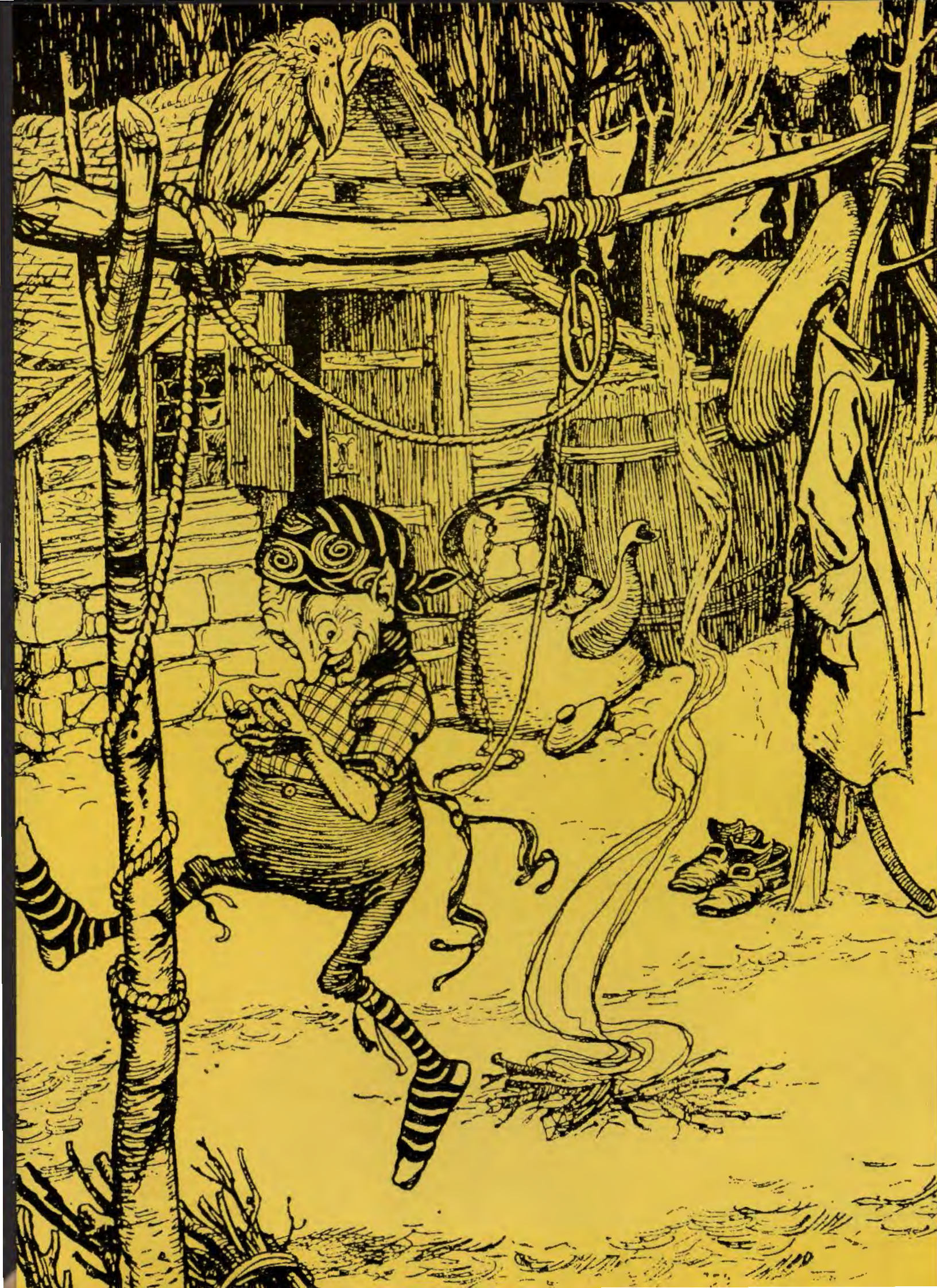
Similarly, in later magical textbooks names of power are used for every conceivable purpose, from something as trivial as keeping evil influences away from the magician's inkwell to the conjuring up of powerful demons. The *Grimorium Verum* says that the Tetragrammaton should be inscribed on the inkwell, and also the names Metatron (the angel who guided the Israelites through the wilderness), Yod (the first letter of the Tetragrammaton), Cados (Hebrew *Kadosh*, 'Holy One'), Elohim and Sabaoth.

An incantation in the *Lemegeton* employs a formidable armoury of names of power to force a demon to appear, including Joth, which Jacob learned from the angel with whom he wrestled; Agla, which Lot heard and was saved from the destruction of Sodom; Emmanuel, which Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego cried out in the burning fiery furnace; Alpha and Omega; Sabaoth with which Moses brought the plague of frogs upon the Egyptians; Escerchie Ariston, with which he turned the rivers of Egypt into blood; Elion, which brought the plague of hail; Hagios, Jetros and Paracletus; and the three holy and secret names Agla, On and Tetragrammaton.

Joth is a variant of Yod, and Agla consists of the initial letters of a Hebrew phrase meaning 'Thou art mighty for ever, O Lord'. Emmanuel, 'God with us', was a title applied to Christ. Alpha and Omega, as the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, mean 'everything' and 'God' because they contain the whole alphabet between them. Escerchie Ariston is from Greek words meaning 'mighty' and 'noblest'. Elion comes from a Hebrew title of God, 'Most High'. Hagios and Jetros are from the Greek for 'holy' and 'the healer', and Paracletus is the Holy Ghost (John 14.16). On is another name of Heliopolis, the Egyptian city of the sun, whose priests claimed it stood at the centre of the earth.

Many magical incantations end with Amen ('so be it'), which is a name of power in itself, because its Hebrew letters add to 91, which is also the total of Yahweh Adonai. In Greek letters Amen adds to 99 and in some early Christian manuscripts 99 is put at the end of prayers.

Not only do the names of power contain superhuman energy, in theory at least, but declaiming them helps the magician to put himself into the abnormal state of mind which is needed for successful operations of magic. He works himself into a state of ecstatic frenzy by chanting words which swell and beat and reverberate. This applies just as much to the gibberish words which appear in spells and incantations, and which have no known meaning. Some of these may have been altered out of all recognition in transmission from one



magician to another, others may be the result of experiments with different pronunciations, but many of them probably never had a meaning and were created simply for the sake of rhythm, rhyme or assonance, to produce the impressive and poetic sound which is an essential ingredient of magical incantation. Many of the mantras or 'mystic syllables' of the East also appear to be meaningless gibberish but chanting or meditating on unintelligible words helps to remove the mystic or magician from his normal frame of reference, his ordinary daily world, and to convey him into a supernormal one (see MANTRA).

Modern magicians have frequently looked back to the magical texts of the eastern Mediterranean area in the early centuries after Christ, which inherited the traditions of ancient Egyptian magic and some of which were concerned with the passwords that the soul would need for protection against the terrors to be faced after death. A gnostic work called *Pistis Sophia*, for instance, referring to the supremely powerful name which contains 'all Names and all Lights and all Powers', says: 'If anyone knows that Name when he goes out of the material body, neither smoke nor darkness, neither Archon, angel or archangel, would be able to hurt the soul which knows that Name.' If it is spoken by the soul after death to the fire, it will be extinguished, to the darkness, it will disappear, to the demons and the lords of darkness, they will perish, to the judges of the wicked, they will be destroyed.

The Graeco-Egyptian magical texts (see MAGICAL PAPYRI) contain extraordinary, tongue-twisting jumbles of words and letters, and the names or titles of gods and spirits from Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, Christian, gnostic and other sources.

Iao, a variant of the Tetragrammaton, was applied to the Graeco-Egyptian god Harpocrates (Horus the Child – see HORUS). Aleister Crowley's comments on it (in *Magick in Theory and Practice*) provide a good example of the modern magical theory of names of power as keys to, and containers of, the central processes of the universe (though in his opinion this particular formula is incomplete). He takes the letters as the initials of the names of Egyptian deities: 'I is Isis, Nature ruined by A, Apophis the Destroyer, and restored to life by the Redeemer Osiris.' In meditation, he says, there is first, 'a quiet pleasure, a gentle natural growth', which is the stage of Isis. This is followed by a stage of depression, impotence, weariness and loathing which is Apophis, and then by a 'new and superior' condition created by the uprising of Osiris (all this has a sexual connotation for Crowley, as almost everything did). The formula is that of life-death-rebirth, and he sees in it a summary of the Great Work of alchemy: first the operations on some natural material, then the black stage of *nigredo* or spiritual death, and finally the achievement of pure gold (see ALCHEMY). 'The magician who employs it is conscious of himself as a man liable to suffering, and anxious to transcend that state by becoming one with God.' (See also ABRACADABRA; INCANTATION; MAGIC SQUARES; NUMEROLOGY; RITUAL MAGIC; VIBRATION.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

A door is unsealed by repeating the words 'Open Sesame' in a story from the *Arabian Nights*

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NATIONAL SOCIALISM

WHEN HITLER became Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933 there was no easily identifiable German occultist movement. There were, however, countless different groups concerned with esoteric traditions and theories, some of them large, such as the Theosophical and Anthroposophical Societies, and a great many small or even very small ones. It is evident that there were many more such groups in Germany than elsewhere in Europe.

Hitler himself, in spite of many rumours to the contrary, had no use for occultists in general or for astrologers in particular. Rudolf Hess, at that time Deputy Fuehrer, was inclined to be interested in 'fringe' subjects and especially in neo-Paracelsian medical theories. Unlike Hitler he was not completely sceptical as far as astrology was concerned. Heinrich Himmler had not yet begun to rely upon astrological advice, but had at least a superficial interest in Germanic or 'Nordic' occult subjects, such as the *Edda* sagas and rune symbolism. Finally, since the Nazi Party by now included a wide cross-section of the German population, most occultist groups must have included some Party members.

The Germans now encountered the new phenomenon of *Gleichschaltung*, meaning the purposeful integration of every conceivable organized activity according to the National Socialist philosophy of life. In some cases this meant no more than the immediate exclusion of Jews or individuals who were thought to be unsympathetic to National Socialist ideology. In the case of other organizations, where recognition by the authorities was thought desirable, the situation could become complicated.

Harassment of Occultists

The Freemasons were immediate candidates for official harassment. There had always been the supposition that Masonry was in some way a department of occultism, but the major reason for its suppression was the belief that it represented a Jewish-dominated international conspiracy. Previous membership of a Masonic Lodge now prevented any former Mason from holding rank

in the Party. This also applied to former members of the pseudo-masonic and violently antisemitic Germanen Order, founded in 1912, some of whom had been among Hitler's earliest supporters in 1920–1 (see GERMANEN ORDER).

The astrologers were the first to have trouble with the authorities, who equated their art of science with vulgar fortune telling. During the months before January 1933 there had been a spate of ill-informed and inaccurate political speculation and prognostication in the popular astrological weeklies, and a lot of incredible nonsense had been printed about Hitler and his astral prospects. The leaders of the two most important astrological associations, both of which had large memberships, were soon actively taking steps to find a suitable Party umbrella. The astrologers' representatives supposed, and probably not without reason, that without protection the whole astrological movement might be in jeopardy, because an unrecognized science of this kind could soon find itself in an anomalous position in a totalitarian state. It is indicative that very few references to Hitler's horoscope were published after the summer of 1933 and none at all after the spring of 1934. Public speculations of this kind had become altogether too dangerous.

Astrology's Nordic Origins

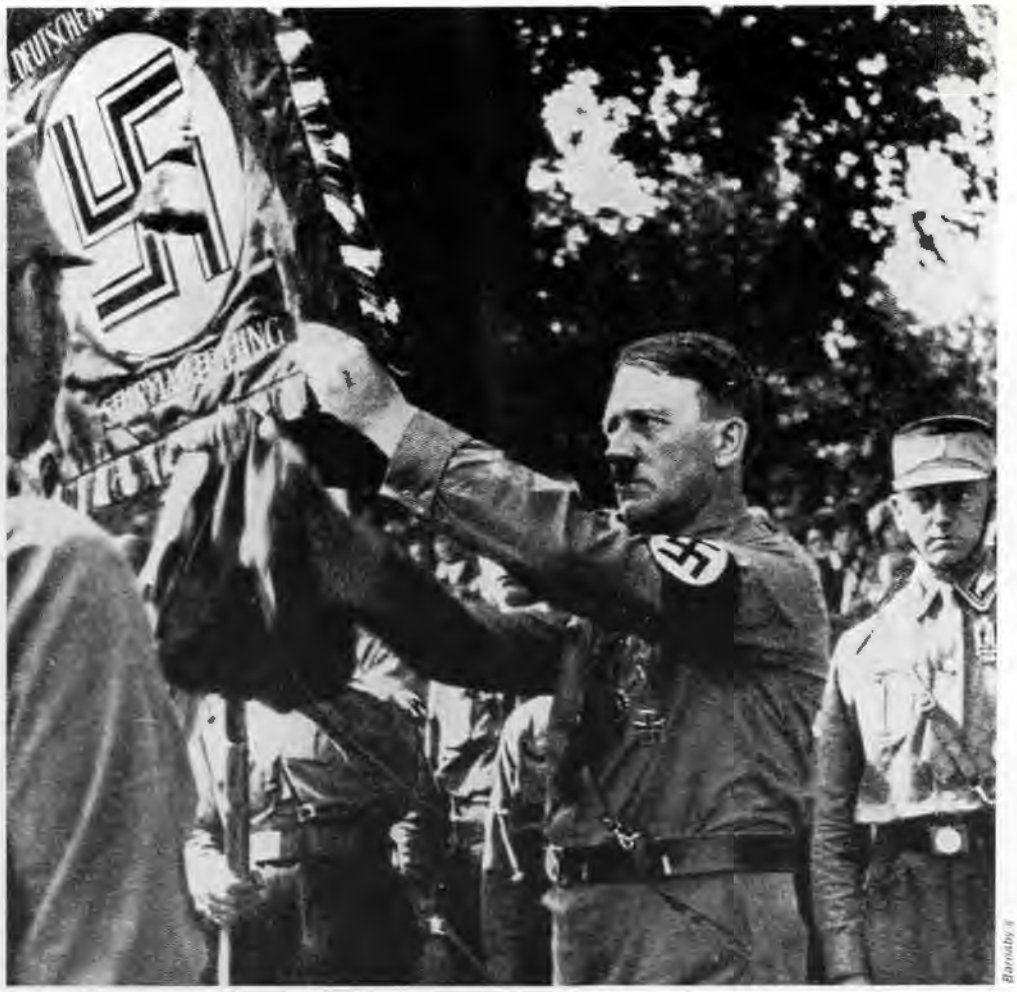
Rival claims to represent the astrological movement led to an immediate and unseemly quarrel. The principal contenders were the Astrological Society in Germany, whose headquarters were at Leipzig, and the Central Astrological Office at Düsseldorf. The Leipzig group was controlled, more or less, by Hugo Vollrath, a bogus commercial occultist who owned the Theosophical Publishing House. Vollrath had been making a living out of occult literature since about 1908 and had a vested interest in astrological books. He quickly joined the Party and with the help of a few members who were Nazis reconstituted the Society on approved National Socialist lines. Dr Hubert Korsch, the President of the Central Astrological Office at Düsseldorf, hastily joined the Party as a protective measure. During the summer of 1933 both groups were busy lobbying Party offices such as the League for Protection of German Culture in order to obtain official Nazi patronage, but without success.

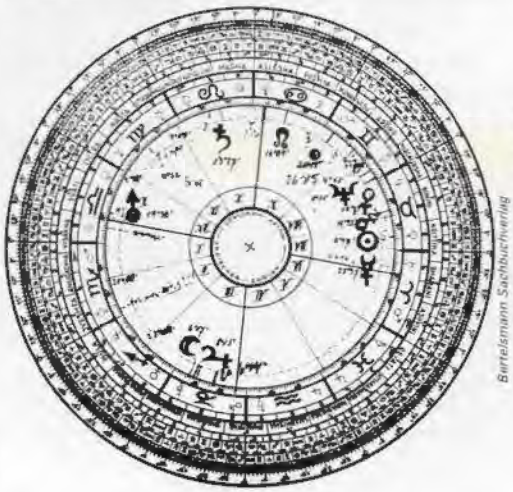
In the meantime Vollrath's monthly *Astrologische Rundschau* began to publish articles that refuted astrology's Babylonian and hence Semitic origins and asserted that it was an ancient Nordic science. Furthermore, *Mensch im All* (Man in the Universe), an independent astrological monthly, as a matter of political expedience effected a temporary merger with 'Professor' Ernst Issberner-Haldane's *Die Chiromantie* (Cheiromancy). Issberner-Haldane (1886–1966) was a well-known Berlin palmist. He was, too, a pathological antisemite and a prominent member of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels' racialist and occult Ariosophical movement and his highly esoteric Order of New Templars (see NEW TEMPLARS).

In the autumn of 1933 the police presidents at Berlin, Hanover and Cologne instructed the local newspapers to refuse all advertisements from professional astrologers and during the spring of 1934 the Berlin police president banned all forms of professional fortune telling. Even the most cautious professional was now equated with any vulgar charlatan.

At Berlin and elsewhere the police began to confiscate booksellers' stocks of occult and astrological literature, although on an uninformed and haphazard basis. These measures affected the economic well-being of a number of specialist publishers and it was they, rather than the disorganized astrologers, who persuaded the Reich Chamber for Authors and Publishers to appoint an official censor for astrological books. Serious textbooks could still be published but the trash disappeared.

At the end of 1938 *Zenit* and *Astrologische Rundschau*, the two leading serious astrological monthlies, ceased publication. No explanation was offered to their readers. Furthermore the Theosophical Society, with which the *Astrologische Rundschau* was linked, was banned. After the annexation of Austria in 1938 Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, the racial occultist and founder of the Ariosophical movement, was forbidden to write for publication. Lanz considered himself to be one of National Socialism's spiritual fathers. When the Second World War began on 1 September 1939 the German occultist movement had already been driven more or less underground.





Bertelsmann Sachbuchverlag

Above In a ceremony performed at Nuremberg, Hitler touches a bloodstained flag in commemoration of the death of a dozen National Socialists shot during a protest rally. Though the Nazi mystique was in part the creation of the occultists, they were subject to official harassment once the Nazis assumed control *Left* One of the many horoscopes cast for Hitler; after the summer of 1933 the publication of such speculation about the Fuehrer's astral prospects became too dangerous

Wiener Library

Ellic Howe

Assassination Predicted

During the autumn of 1939 Dr Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry was keeping a close watch on the two surviving astrological periodicals, *Stern und Mensch* and *Mensch im All*, since it was suspected that they might be the source of undesirable rumours. On 10 November Dr Goebbels ordered that the few surviving astrological almanacs be carefully scrutinized for anything that could be construed as a prediction of the mysterious attempt to assassinate Hitler at the Munich Bürgerbräu beer cellar on 8 November.

An astonishing prophecy in this connection made by Karl Ernst Krafft, a Swiss astrologer who was living in south Germany, had aroused considerable interest in exalted circles in Berlin. Krafft had written on 2 November to his friend Dr Heinrich Fesel, who was employed in Himmler's department, to suggest that Hitler's life would be in danger between 7–10 November. Dr Fesel, unwilling to become personally involved, filed the letter and kept quiet. When on 9 November the newspapers and radio reported the assassination attempt, Krafft despatched a telegram to Rudolf Hess at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin and drew attention to his prediction. Fesel was now obliged to produce the letter. Krafft was immediately arrested at Urberg, a remote Black Forest village, and brought to Berlin for cross-examination. He was released a few days later. In the meantime the credulous Heinrich Himmler was unsuccessfully trying to establish the identity of the would-be assassin by consulting a Viennese trance medium, who had been summoned to his Berlin headquarters.

Krafft's involuntary visit to Berlin coincided with Goebbels' new interest in the 16th century prophetic verse quatrains of Nostradamus (see NOSTRADAMUS) as a source for psychological warfare purposes. It was necessary to find a Nostradamus expert who could supply the Propaganda Ministry with appropriate material for processing. Krafft's name was first mentioned in this connection early in December 1939 and this led to an invitation to move to Berlin. He began work there during the first week of January 1940.

Prophecy as Propaganda

Although Krafft ostensibly worked for the Propaganda Ministry, his pay came from Hitler's department. Dr Goebbels and his people were completely cynical as far as Nostradamus was concerned. Not so Krafft, who sincerely believed that prophecies concerning Germany's victory over all enemies, present and future, could be decoded from Nostradamus's obscure quatrains. Tens of thousands of pamphlets based upon Krafft's 'discoveries' were circulated in French, Dutch, Italian, Serbo-Croat, Rumanian, Swedish and English by the middle of 1940.

A letter of Krafft's, written and mailed at Berlin in February 1940, was sent by order of Himmler's department to M. Virgil Tilea, the Rumanian Minister in London. Rumania was still neutral but M. Tilea's anti-German sentiments were well known in Berlin. The letter itself was nothing less than a crass exercise in psychological warfare. In that respect it failed to influence M. Tilea, but it nevertheless had one unexpected result. M. Tilea, who already had a slight acquaintance with Krafft and somewhat grudgingly respected his prophetic abilities, concluded that since Krafft now, unexpectedly, wrote from Berlin, he must be advising Hitler or other highly placed Nazis.

M. Tilea showed Krafft's letter to a number of eminent gentlemen in London and suggested that since Hitler was undoubtedly employing Krafft, it would be reasonable to engage a highly skilled astrologer whose task would be to deduce, from astrological evidence, the nature of the advice that Krafft was presumably giving to the Fuehrer. Various departments of British Intelligence became involved and this led to the appointment, around September 1940, of Louis de Wohl as the British 'Secret Service' astrologer. In London it was soon realized that this was a waste of time and de Wohl was quietly dropped. He was, however, later employed on a casual basis in London and the United States on psychological warfare projects that involved faked astrological predictions and bogus Nostradamus prophecies.

Krafft's own employment in Berlin did not last much beyond the spring of 1940, although he subsequently wrote on a freelance basis a Nostradamus book that was published in French, Portuguese and Danish. Its purpose was to demonstrate that Nostradamus had predicted an inevitable

victory for Germany and the consolidation of Hitler's 'New Order' in Europe.

Rudolf Hess's sudden flight to Scotland on 10 May 1941 had disastrous results for hundreds of Germans who were known to be identified with one or other department of occultism, and with astrology in particular. Hess's disappearance greatly embarrassed the Nazi bosses, the more so since it had somehow to be explained to the German general public. A solution was quickly found. It was proclaimed that Hess had been in poor health for many years and had latterly had increasing resource to hypnotists and astrologers. The decision to involve the occultists and astrologers was undoubtedly made by Martin Bormann and it was warmly supported by Reinhard Heydrich, who was Himmler's deputy. Their reason was that these people could never be regarded as ideologically sound.

'Aktion Hess'

Time was required to plan the 'Aktion Hess', which led to the arrest on 9 June 1941 of hundreds of occultists, with the astrologers at the top of the list. There were reasons for suspecting that the date of Hess's flight had been fixed on the basis of astrological considerations. Ernst Schulte-Strathaus, who was a member of Hess's personal staff at Munich, was an enthusiastic amateur astrologer and was his local expert on occult subjects. Schulte-Strathaus was arrested immediately but denied that he was aware of Hess's plans or that he had given Hess any advice, astrological or otherwise.

Far left Guido von List, founder of the occult German nationalist sect of the Armanen *Left* Delegates at an astrological congress held at Leipzig in 1923; second from the right is Hugo Volrath *Above left* Karl Krafft, shown as a youth, was later to produce Nazi propaganda based on Nostradamus prophecies *Above right* Louis de Wohl was employed by the British to deduce what astrological advice Krafft was giving to Hitler *Below* A magazine of bogus astrological predictions prepared by de Wohl

The 'Aktion Hess' was organized on a nation-wide basis and practically all the arrests were made early on 9 June 1941. The victims included many Party members. Apart from the astrologers the Gestapo arrested a wide range of occultists: alleged clairvoyants, radiesthetic (pendulum) practitioners, faith healers and Nature cure pundits, Ariosophists of the Lanz von Liebenfels school, members of the Christian Community (an Anthroposophical sect), antisemite Ariosophical Cabalists, and so on. The Gestapo's main attention was focused upon the astrologers, to identify whoever might have been in touch with Hess. It is unlikely that the 'missing astrologer' was ever found, if only because he or she probably never existed.

In the majority of cases those arrested were released within a few days or weeks, although there were a few important exceptions. Before being set free all were required to sign a declaration that they would neither practise astrology or any other occult science, nor discuss the subject with anyone. All publishers' and booksellers' stocks of astrological and occult literature were seized and many private collections were confiscated. Any public identification with the occult now became extremely dangerous.

Among those arrested and never released were Dr Hubert Korsch and Karl Krafft. Although the two men were acquainted there was no connection between their respective cases. The Gestapo suspected Dr Korsch on account of some anonymous articles that he had published about Hitler's horoscope

long before the latter came to power, and their main concern was to discover who had written them. The author's identity was never revealed and Dr Korsch was probably murdered at the Oranienberg concentration camp near Berlin on 24 April 1942.

Tracking Convoys by Pendulum

However, even after the 'Aktion Hess', the Nazis were apt to use astrology and other occult procedures when it suited them. There was, for instance, the organization of the 'Pendulum Institute' at Berlin during the spring of 1942. It was directed by Captain Hans Roeder, of the German navy. The British had begun to destroy an increasing number of U-boats, and it was supposed that they must be using a completely new detection technique. Roeder had proposed that the British were identifying the positions of U-boats by employing pendulum experts. The pendulum operator, it was suggested, sat with a chart of the Atlantic ocean in front of him. He would then 'search' the map with his pendulum. When the position of a German submarine had been located the pendulum would begin to swing in the prescribed manner.

Captain Roeder hoped to counter this by employing German naval personnel in the same way. The purpose of the Institute was to discover the correct techniques so that naval pendulum swingers could be trained to locate British convoys. A number of German radiesthetic practitioners and some alleged 'sensitives' with no previous pendulum experience were recruited under conditions of the strictest secrecy. For days on end they untiringly swung their pendulums but apparently to no very useful purpose. With few exceptions they had previously been arrested in the course of the 'Aktion Hess' and had been released. Some had nervous breakdowns and others managed to make their escape upon one pretext or another. The experiment was a complete failure.

The assistance of the occultists was again recruited after Mussolini was arrested by the Badoglio government on 25 July 1943. Hitler had peremptorily demanded that the Duce should be found and brought back to Germany. The problem was, however, that the Germans did not know where Mussolini was and when their military intelligence service failed to produce any useful information the occultists were again called in to help – not by the military but by Himmler personally.

Once again previous victims of the 'Aktion Hess' were assembled; their number included Herr Wilhelm Wulff, a Hamburg astrologer, who had spent a brief and disagreeable period at the 'Pendulum Institute'. According to Walter Schellenberg, the sceptical head of Himmler's foreign intelligence department, a pendulum expert correctly suggested that Mussolini would be found on an island to the west of Naples. The Duce had, in fact, first been taken to one of the small Ponza islands that he indicated. A little later he was transferred to the mainland and a small airborne force eventually abducted him from a mountain eyrie.

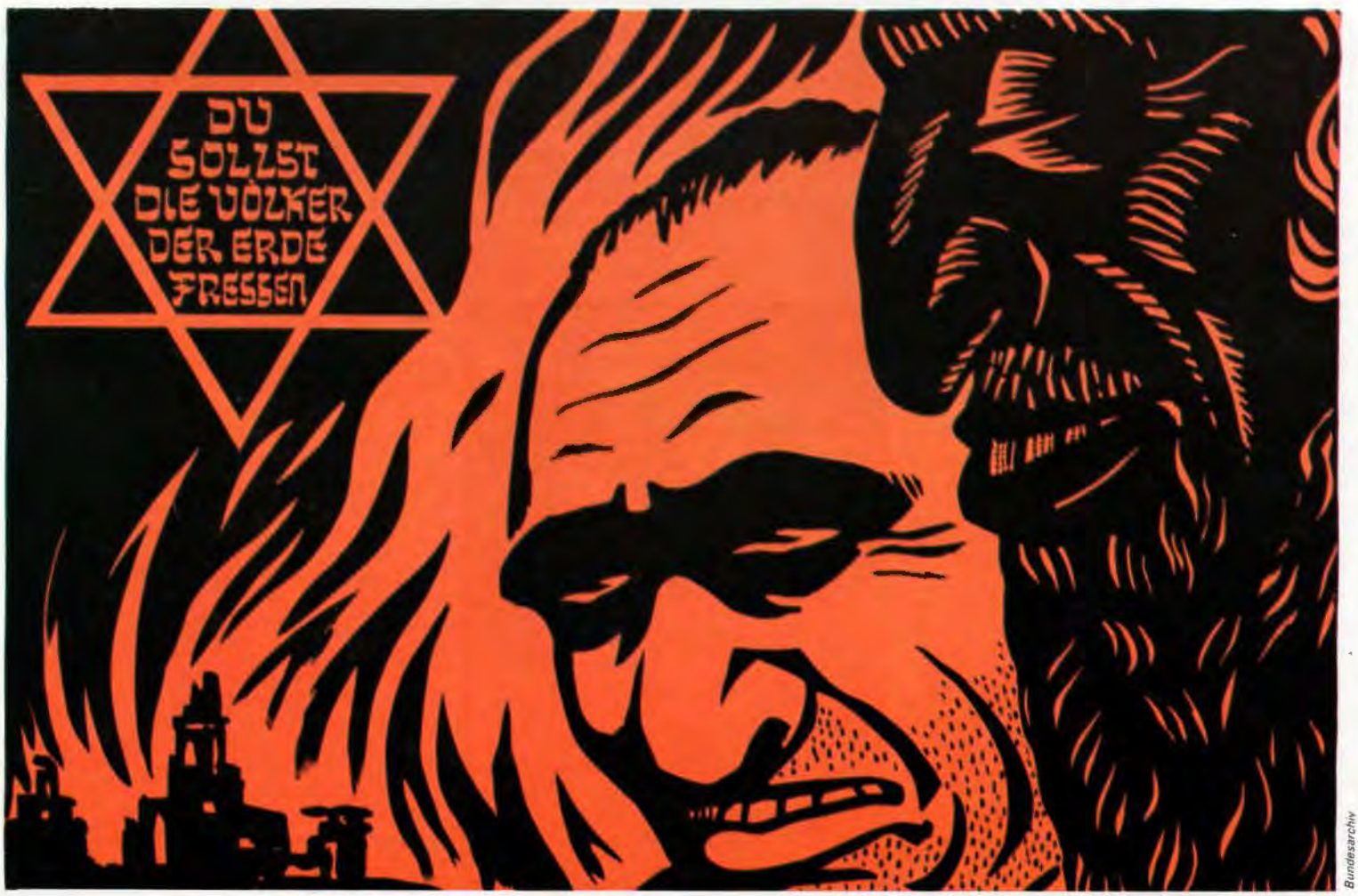
Himmler's major personal involvement with astrology began in 1943 when the renowned Felix Kersten, who gave him remedial massage for stomach cramps and other ailments, steered Wilhelm Wulff in his direction. Herr Wulff, who had enjoyed an extensive private astrological practice at Hamburg in the old days, had already suffered at the hands of the Gestapo and had no desire to become involved with Himmler. But during 1944–5 Herr Wulff had frequent meetings with the Reichsfuehrer and was still being consulted by him when the Third Reich was on the verge of defeat in April 1945. Herr Wulff's reminiscences of this period will be found in his book *Zodiac and Swastika*.

After 1945 the German astrological movement slowly revived and many of the pre-war occult groups were in evidence again. However, with the new feeling of security engendered by the German 'economic miracle' after 1948, there has been a considerable diminution of interest in the stars and other occult territories.

(See also LIST; NEO-PAGAN GERMAN CULTS; RACE MYTHS; RUNE OCCULTISM; SWASTIKA.)

ELLIC HOWE

FURTHER READING: E. Howe, *Urania's Children: The Strange World of the Astrologers* (Kimber, 1967); W. Wulff, *Zodiac and Swastika* (Arthur Barker, 1973).



Antisemitic German poster: the racialism of the National Socialists derived in part from occultists such as Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, founder of the Ariosophical movement

Bundesarchiv

Every routine activity undertaken by the Navaho Indians is accompanied by some ritual or magical element. The magnificent curing ceremonies, preceded by purification, songs and exorcism, culminate in inteasive concentration to bring the power of the gods to bear

NAVAHO

AMERICA'S LARGEST Indian tribe today, the Navaho live on a sizeable reservation that sprawls across the Arizona-New Mexico border. It is poor, eroded, infertile land but like so much of the south-west of the United States it is an area of spectacular natural beauty – magnificently coloured sand and stone, wind-sculpted rock formations, towering hills and high rocky tableland. This visual splendour might be economically useless to an agricultural people but it is fundamentally important to the Navaho. Their religion and their ordinary way of life, which are in any case interrelated, are remarkably attuned to Nature, to the environment. It is hardly surprising that their religious belief and practice should contain much that is extremely beautiful: the poetry and music of the great ritual chants, the glorious 'sand paintings', the eternal, renewable beauty of Changing Woman, their chief deity.

Changing Woman is an Earth Mother figure, aging with the seasons, who is restored to girlhood each spring. From her union with the sun, also a major deity, sprang the Twins, hero figures and models of virile warriors. Changing Woman was the Creator who gave life to First Man and First Woman, and taught them all their wisdom and lore, including magic; they in turn created the universe and the Earth Surface People who are mankind.

Apart from these major figures, who have wide-ranging powers that involve them in the most important myths, the Navaho

Navaho sand paintings play a central role in the great curing ceremonies during which the supernatural powers who feature in the myths are summoned to the aid of the petitioner; the patient, a young girl, is seated within the painting, while the chanting medicine-man waves eagles' feathers to drive illness away

Allen C. Reed/Aldus Books

mythology includes an immense array of supernatural beings. Some of these, like Changing Woman and the sun, are included among the 'Holy People'. Others are personalized natural forces – Thunder People, Wind People and so on. Several are supernatural helpers, teachers and intermediaries between men and the Holy People.

All the Navaho gods, except Changing Woman, exhibit a share of unpredictability: they are highly humanized, containing elements of both good and evil, although there are a few demonic figures who are almost wholly evil. Hence the gods are accessible to human propitiation and prayer, capable of kindly and protective acts but at other times capable of wilful destruction.

In a sense it is almost wrong to describe these figures as gods. More accurately, they are supernatural beings and powers who exist quite separately from human existence except when summoned by prayer and magic. The myths in which they appear are immensely rich, highly sophisticated in their symbolism and complex interrelationships. But the beings tend generally to be left in the myths, except when called upon to exert their powers for some special purpose, either curative or protective. Moreover, the Navaho have no concept of a life after death in which the dead join the gods in a happy hunting ground. Their afterworld has nothing to do with the Holy People: it is a vaguely defined semi-limbo, far from pleasant. Little attention is given to death in Navaho belief: theirs is a religion of life.

Yet they have some firm beliefs concerning ghosts, who are invariably malefic. Those who have died in great old age or early infancy have no ghosts but any and every other kind of death breeds ghosts. They return in human or animal form, in weird supernatural shapes, or merely as the sound of a whistling from the darkness. They attack people, send illness; and to see a ghost is an omen of death.

Equally evil are the Navaho witches, who have magical and shape-changing powers, and are devoted to harming other Indians, mainly by sending disease. Most diseases, according to the Navaho, come from supernatural causes. If the cause is witchcraft, the old remedy used to be simply killing the suspected witch. Otherwise, only ceremonial

Taylor Museum/Colorado Springs Fine Art Center

counter-magic could possibly work a cure.

Navaho ritual is a complicated and colourful world. The tribe's life seems saturated with ceremony, but of such grace and delicacy that it elevates rather than restricts everyday existence. Clearly the Navaho religion is centred much more on ritual than on the man-to-god relationship of active worship. The gods are persuaded or coerced through the ceremonies to expend some of their power for human benefit; but in the rites, no one god is necessarily more important than another, and certainly nothing is more important than the actual ritual.

Every routine activity is accompanied by some ritual element, if only a goodluck song, a chant to ensure good hunting or a specially-placed amulet to protect the craftsmanship of weaver or potter. So travellers perform ceremonies before setting out; and the farmers work ceremonial magic to ward off drought, insects, plant disease and other threats to agriculture. The Navaho have a lengthy and beautiful initiation ceremony, without any of the terror and pain so often involved in such rites, to bring young men and women into full adulthood. There is also a potent ceremony before war, usually called 'Enemy Way', which protects warriors against harm in battle and also against the vengeful ghosts of slain enemies.

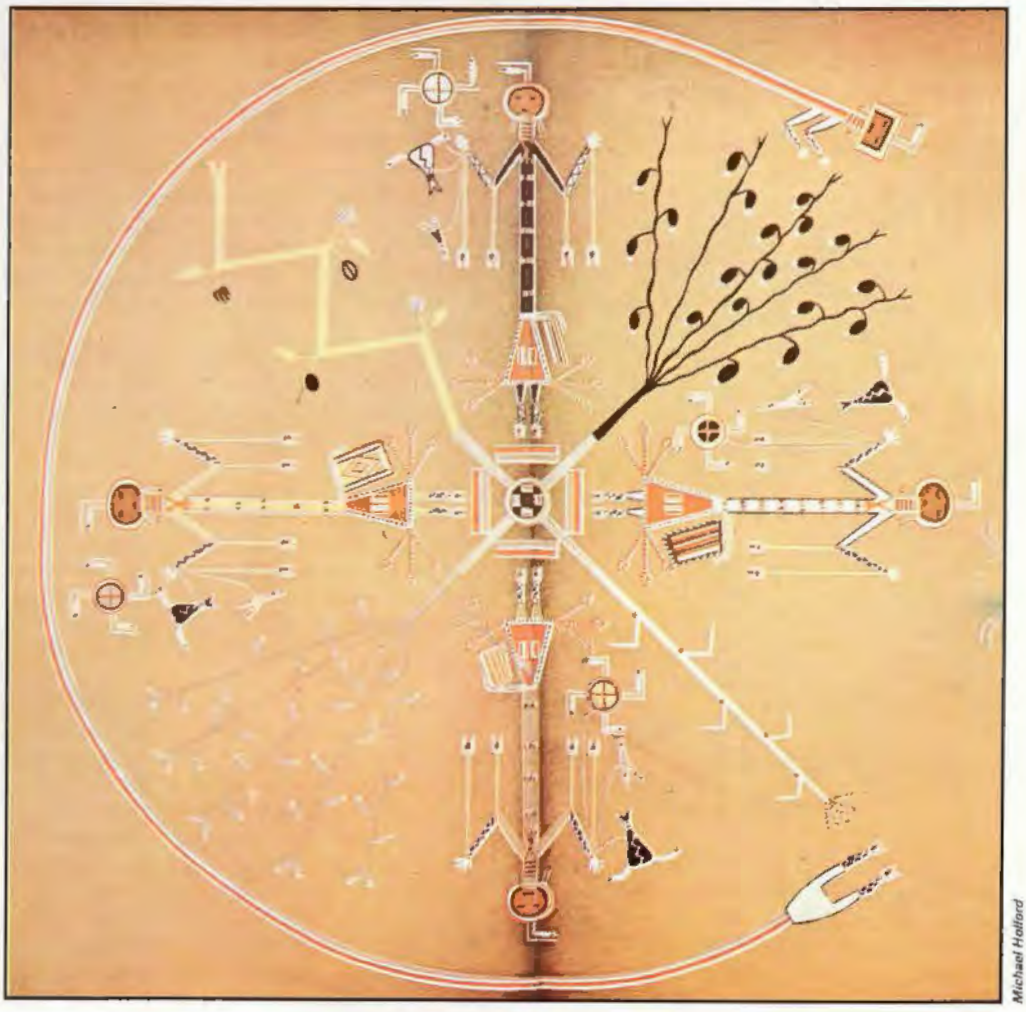
Curing by Conjuration

But by far the bulk of the Navaho's ceremonial life is tied up in magnificent curing ceremonies. Illness and injury are usually ascribed to supernatural causes, perhaps a taboo has been infringed angering one of the Holy People or some spirit of Nature, but more often ill-fortune is ascribed to witchcraft. Often the whole tribe assemble for the cure, to partake of the general blessing, as they also do for the 'good-fortune' ceremony called 'Blessing Way'.

In all these rites, the medicine-man who officiates seems more like a priest, in Western terms, than a true primitive shaman, for he does not become possessed but merely serves as the authority on ceremonial knowledge and the director of the proceedings. His knowledge earns him immense prestige, and rightly so: as one writer has put it, knowing and directing one of the major curing ceremonies requires an effort equivalent to memorizing an entire Wagnerian opera, music, words, sets, costumes, lighting and all.

The ceremonies differ in many ways. Some are short, lasting only one or two nights, while others extend up to nine nights. Different songs and paraphernalia are used but they all share some general characteristics. All the main participants must undergo extensive purification—sexual abstinence, sweat baths and soap baths,

Michael Holford



Michael Holford

Navaho myths are illustrated by their sand-paintings; the paintings are done to the accompaniment of sacred chants which express the relationship between the spirits and medicine-men *Left* Spirits from the 'Shooting Chant' holding sacred objects *Right* From the 'Mountain Chant' group (*above*) Dsilyi Neyani visits the home of the snakes and (*below*) visits the 'Lodge of Dew'

special times and places for eating and sleeping and excreting. During the early stages of the ceremony the medicine-man and assistants prepare herbal medicines, magical objects and amulets, musical instruments, rattles and 'bull-roarers'. Above all, the medicine-man must oversee the creation of one or more of the gorgeous sand paintings (properly called 'dry paintings'), often elaborate enough to keep 20 or more people at work for many hours.

Prayer-sticks, vital to the ceremony, are made from special wood, with feathers, shells and similar sacred or magical objects attached according to the ritual prescription. The sticks are placed around the site of the ceremony, to serve as invitations to the Holy People or other beings. The power of the sticks, and of the magical objects placed on an altar before the house where the ceremony will take place, is then reinforced with special songs and prayers. If everything is done according to custom the gods have no choice but to come: it is not so much a request as a conjuration.

The preparation of sticks, paintings and the rest, along with the special songs, purifications and exorcism of evil presences, may fill the first two or three nights of one of the major ceremonies. Then the patient is taken to sit within the main sand painting, and some of the sand is applied to his body to direct the gods' attention to his illness. Purification and singing or chanting continues throughout the ceremony; the chants are long, ornate symbolic poems which must be rendered faultlessly from memory. On the final night the medicine-man sings from late evening until dawn without stopping. During this process, all the power gathered during the previous stages is concentrated onto the patient, and some of it 'overflows' onto the onlookers and other participants.

Such concentration makes it hardly surprising that the ceremonies so often work. The purifications and herbal remedies may have some therapeutic effect on some ailments. But most effective is the absolute faith that still today tends to keep a sick Navaho away from the white man's hospital.

Magic in a Trembling Hand

Confidence and the strong Navaho respect for tradition has kept the everyday magic very much alive. This magic is not wholly separate from the ceremonies, for much of it finds its way into specific rituals as secondary ways of tapping spirit power or purifying the patient; but it can be separated out of the ceremonial context and used on its own. So, while the dreams of the patient during a curing ceremony are vastly important, ordinary dreams are also considered significant for divination.

One of the most unusual divination techniques is called 'hand-trembling'. It is a complex ceremony in its own right, requiring the magic use of pollen on the diviner's hand which, with the use of requisite songs, induces a semi-trance state that causes the hand to temble violently. The hand then operates independently to point out a wrongdoer, to dowse for water or lost property, or to indicate some future event.

Amulets, protective magic and taboos are highly important to the Navaho. 'Gall medicine' (from animal gall) protects the wearer against witchcraft, as does a wide variety of herbs, shells, carved images of animals and the ever-present pollen, always very powerful to the Navaho. A white shell bead protects the work of a tanner from going wrong; a squirrel's tail tied to a cradle protects a baby.

Finally, there are the taboos which are usually intended to prevent offences against supernatural beings. The Navaho never intentionally kill coyotes, snakes, bears or certain other animals; special rituals must be performed to cleanse someone who has killed one of these creatures by accident. A Navaho will never comb his hair at night, or step over someone sleeping, or go near a tree that has been struck by lightning.

These beliefs and the many other Navaho taboos seem to parallel closely our own society's ancient taboos, which we call superstitions. But for the Navaho, with his all-pervasive religious awareness, they are closely connected with the 'proper way of doing things' – respect for the Holy People, the ceremonies, the natural environment and the rest of the tribe. The Navaho's religious life and worldly life are one and the same. At its best, this unity brings with it an impressive serenity and stability. Perhaps this quality above all has enabled these Indians to grow, expand, to come in some ways to terms with modern America, and yet lose little of their tribal identity.

DOUGLAS HILL

Many cities and shrines have been believed to stand at the navel of the world, the place where different levels of existence – the worlds of men and gods, the living and the dead – connect

NAVEL

G. L. Carlisle

The most famous of the navel-shaped stones worshipped throughout the Mediterranean was the white marble Omphalos from the temple of Apollo at Delphi, which marked the centre of the earth

THERE IS a Turkish story that when Allah created the first man, the Devil saw him and in disgust spat on his stomach. Allah promptly ripped out the polluted spot, which is why human beings have navels. The navel-string and the afterbirth are widely believed to retain a connection with their owner all through life. In Bavaria, for instance, the navel-string of a newly-born girl used to be pricked, in order to give her skill with the needle.

The principal symbolism of the navel, resulting from its central position in the human body and the fact that the umbilical cord is connected to it, is as an emblem of 'the centre', the place where there is a connection between different spheres or levels of existence, between men and the gods, the living and the dead, the unborn and the born. (The notion that babies are born through the navel is common among children.)

The Sacred Stone

Navel-shaped stones were reverenced from very early times in Greece, the most famous being the *omphalos* (Greek for 'navel') which stood in the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Apollo is sometimes depicted sitting on it. In the 2nd century AD the traveller Pausanias saw an omphalos at Delphi, made of white marble and claimed to be the centre of the earth. If the Delphic oracle had belonged to the earth goddess before Apollo made it his own, there could scarcely have been a more suitable place at which she communicated with mortal beings than her own centre.

Later writers said that the omphalos was the tomb of Dionysus or of Python, the giant snake or dragon which Apollo killed at Delphi (see APOLLO). The omphaloi which have been found there are apparently copies of the true, original one. Bands of wool were wound round it, represented in the copies by a carved network. The figures of two golden eagles were placed beside the omphalos, because of the story that when Zeus wanted to discover where the centre of the earth was, he caused two eagles to fly towards each other at equal speed from the eastern and western rims of the earth, and they met at Delphi.

An omphalos looks like half an egg standing on a low quadrangular base. Its phallic shape has been remarked on, and it also resembles a mountain and recalls the primeval hill of the Egyptian creation myth of Heliopolis (see CREATION MYTHS). The Heliopolitan priests claimed that their temple of Atum stood on the site of this hill and was at the centre of the world. Many other shrines and cities besides Delphi and Heliopolis have been believed to stand at the navel or centre of the world, including Delhi, Peking and the Inca city of Cuzco (see INCAS). The earth's navel is also sometimes connected with the holy mountain, on which the gods live and which reaches from the centre of the earth to the centre of the sky.

(For 'the centre', see also SYMBOLISM.)

To protect themselves from the anger of disturbed spirits, sorcerers used to enact elaborate rituals before summoning the dead. This black art was suppressed by the Witchcraft Act of 1735 but churchyard desecrations still occur

NECROMANCY

THE BLACKEST of all the black arts is undoubtedly necromancy (from Greek words meaning 'dead' and 'divination'), the ancient method of communication with the dead. Necromancy, a word corrupted by medieval Latin writers into *nigromantia*, can be divided into two main branches: divination by means of ghosts, and divination from corpses, both of which represent related forms of forbidden knowledge. The second method led to the disinterment of corpses and rifling of graves for the grisly charms which magicians and witches considered necessary for the effective performance of the magical arts.

It is not possible to understand the mysteries of necromancy without some knowledge of an attitude towards the souls of the dead which prevailed until comparatively modern times. It was taken for granted that under normal circumstances the dead did not return as ghosts, and that if they did so it must have been for some special reason. It follows that if a living person desired to establish communication with the dead on his own terms – in other words, to summon the spirits from their last resting places in defiance of their wishes – it would be necessary to institute the most elaborate precautions that magic could provide as insurance against becoming the victims of their righteous anger.

The motives of those who sought communication with the dead were largely of a mercenary character. Because of the prevailing assumption that the dead, unrestricted by human limitations, were all-knowing and all-seeing, they were usually consulted by magicians or their clients wanting to know the whereabouts of buried treasure. These enquiries were generally restricted to the 12 months following death that folklore had decreed to be the statutory period during which the shade lingered in the vicinity of its grave.

The subordination of the will of the dead to the whims of the living demanded a specialized technique known only to the most highly-skilled magicians. The annals of sorcery in the British Isles include innumerable references to 'nigramauncers', as they were called, 'who by figures and markings upon the dead body of beast or man operate to get knowledge'. In 1371 a wizard of Southwark in London was caught in

According to the famous story of Saul and the 'witch' of Endor, the king failed to obtain an omen of the future from God by dreams or by lots or by prophets, and consulted a medium who summoned up for him the shade of the prophet Samuel. The ghost appeared as an old man dressed in a robe, and foretold Saul's imminent death and the defeat of Israel (1 Samuel, chapter 28)

possession of 'the head and face of a dead man', and these grim tokens of necromancy, together with his book of magic, were consigned to the flames.

Evidence suggests that there was some confusion between the spirit of the dead, or ghost, and the elemental spirit or familiar which was one of the lesser demons. It was perhaps for this reason that the Statute of 1542 against witchcraft covered the situation with a blanket condemnation of those 'divers and sundry persons (who) unlawfully have devised and practised invocations and conjurations of spirits pretending by such means to get knowledge for their own lucre in what places treasure of gold or silver should or might be found.'

In actual practice the punishment administered by the courts was comparatively light. In 1598 a Cunning Man named Robert Browning was merely placed in the pillory after being found guilty of fraudulently persuading the 'King's subjects' that by conjuration of 'evil spirits they might discover hidden hoards of gold and silver and regain lost goods.'

To evoke the dead the magician needed to obtain the help of powerful spirits, both for his own protection and to compel the corpse or ghost to submit to his will. A spell from ancient Greece calls upon the powers of the mighty Kore, Persephone, Ereshkigal, Adonis, Hermes and Thoth, to bind the dead. According to a ritual described by Seneca, the Roman dramatist, the summoning of the dead involved not only a burnt sacrifice but a blood-drenched altar.

Powerful Circles

In European necromancy, the methods employed for the raising of the dead, whether in body or spirit, demanded rigid compliance with the accepted laws of magic. The site for the operation had to be chosen with care, the most favourable being some lonely crossroads, a vault, a ruin, an unfrequented forest, or a blasted heath. Once a time had been decided upon for the seance, a series of concentric circles of power would be drawn on the ground within which were inscribed crosses and other symbols, together with holy names of God. The circle would be blessed and consecrated, with the magician and his assistant standing at its centre, protected by the holy names from all danger. Then, wand in hand, the magician summoned the dead to rise.

Eliphas Levi (see LEVI) and other magicians have suggested the need for some attempt at identification between the living and the dead, as for example the presence of a portrait, and a portion of bread which the ghost would be invited to consume. In his evocation, the magician summoned the dead by name and, if he were successful, he would then have to face the frightening ordeal of a phantom screaming and gibbering with rage at having been compelled against its will to return to the realms of the living. Sometimes the dead were known to appear in the shapes of furious beasts raging about the circle and threatening to tear the sorcerer to pieces. When the dead finally decided to submit to the magician's will they would often become transformed into one or more naked men who would then be willing to answer the questions put to them.

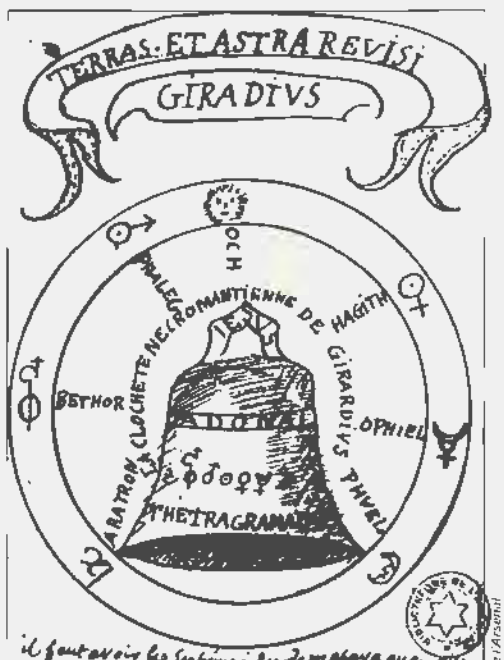
After the seance it was necessary to dismiss the dead, who usually vanished amid clouds of sulphur. Under no circumstances was the magician to leave the protection of the magic circle before this, and even so he might not leave until he had performed certain prescribed rituals. He also had to remove all flowers from the place and after burning them, to bury the ashes deeply in the earth.

The whole operation was fraught with terrible dangers, for the slightest departure from the rites could involve the destruction of the operator and even inflict injuries upon his soul. In the 17th century a popular Egyptian fortune teller named Chiancungi, who quitted the magic circle too hurriedly, was crushed to death by an enraged ghost.

Summoned from the Tomb

Churchyard necromancy, a specialized branch of the art, required a rather different technique. As the hour of midnight struck, the magician, having undertaken the preliminary rites, would intone in a sepulchral voice: 'The dead rise and come to me', and then he advanced into the churchyard scattering graveyard earth about him. In summoning the dead from the tomb he cried: '*Ego sum te peto et videre queo*'. To dismiss the dead he commanded: 'Return to the Kingdom of the Chosen'.

There is an old print depicting Dr John Dee's assistant, Edward Kelley, standing in a churchyard, holding a magic wand and reading from a book of spells, while his assistant illuminates the macabre midnight scene with a flaming torch (see DEE). In the light can be seen a newly-resurrected corpse rigid in its shroud. The two sorcerers have taken the precaution of placing themselves at the centre of a magic circle inscribed with the names of certain protective angels, 'Raphael, Rael, Miraton, Tarmiel and Rex'.



Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal

Above **Drawing of the necromantic bell of Giradius: in order to summon up the dead with ease, the bell, made from a mixture of special metals, should be buried in a churchyard grave for seven days** ***Right*** **17th century German engraving of the 'witch' of Endor summoning Samuel; holding a vervain twig, the emaciated hag and Saul are shielded by a magic circle**

The use of corpses as ingredients of charms and philtres was closely associated with necromancy, and is one of the best known techniques of witchcraft. Death by violence, or any premature termination of life, enhanced the magical value of human flesh, since it could then be assumed to contain some element of unconsumed vitality within it. The old Norse wizards were said to know spells that could compel even a corpse on a gallows to speak. As Paolus Grillandus, a judge in witch trials at Rome in the early 16th century, wrote: 'Some take a small piece of buried corpse, especially the corpse of anyone who has been hanged or otherwise suffered a shameful death . . . the nails or teeth . . . the hair, ears or eyes . . . sinews, bones or flesh.' The demand for similar ghoulish remains, particularly the flesh of unbaptized babies, was responsible for many graves being rifled. Among the best-known cases involving human flesh in magic was that of the Irish witch, Alice Kyteler (see KYTELER), who was accused of using the hair of a corpse and the skull of a thief in one of her formulas. A moss that grew on the skull of a hanged man was always in considerable demand.

The attitude of the Church towards all forms of communication with the dead was, in the past at least, one of unremitting hostility. Such practices are prohibited in the Bible and this condemnation is further emphasized in the story of Saul who consulted the dead Samuel through the agency of the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel, chapter 28). In the 3rd century Tertullian, the theologian, condemned those magicians who defiled the graves of the dead and counterfeited oracles, but witch-fearing clerics of the 16th and 17th centuries went further and refused to admit the possibility of a ghost being anything other than a demon in disguise. In his *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* William Perkins, writing in 1608, observed: 'The Devil being sought unto by witches appears to them in the likeness of a dead body.' John Cotta ventured further still in his *Trial of Witchcraft* (1616) by declaring clairvoyance to be no more than one of the forms of diabolic possession. It is not surprising then that Shakespeare's Hamlet, when confronted with the ghost of his father, should have asked: 'Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned? Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell?'

The complete separation of the concept of the ghost from that of the demon did not take place until much later, not until the problem of witchcraft had largely disappeared from the theological concern. The confusion between ghost and devil is apparent in an account of a seance conducted by Parson Rudall in Cornwall in 1665, when the clergyman, having drawn

the customary magic circle into which he conjured the ghost, demanded a sign from the shade 'that it was a true spirit and not a false fiend'.

It was some years after this, at the close of the 17th century, that ancient necromancy began gradually to develop into modern spiritism. There is no record of prosecution for necromancy in the whole of the 17th century, and with the decline in the practice of utilizing the bodies of the dead for magical purposes greater emphasis was put upon what was later known as mediumship. For example, Joseph Glanvill (1636–80) who has been called the Father of Psychical Research, with Dr Francis van Helmont, Dr Henry More, and Robert Boyle, conducted seances at Ragley Castle at which early mediums demonstrated the art of communication with the world of spirits.

Later still the curious incident of the Cock Lane ghost, even if it served no other purpose, did at least indicate the growth of the belief that the dead and living could communicate by means of a series of knocks. This ghost, which haunted a London house in Cock Lane, Smithfields, was that of a woman who had lived there with her dead sister's husband. Her hauntings provoked two people to hold a seance to discover the reason for her return.

Illustration from Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*, showing witches exhuming a corpse while others feast on the body of a baby: witches were often accused of cannibalism and of using the organs of dead bodies in their spells

True and False Spirits

The whole question of raising the dead, even when it ceased to concern the guardians of the public conscience, was too deeply rooted in folk culture to be legislated out of existence. Nevertheless the revised Witchcraft Act of 1735, in imposing imprisonment and pillory for all pretence at communication with spirits, must have successfully suppressed most aspiring witches and necromancers, for after that date there is no evidence of any prosecution under this Act until the present century, when several fraudulent mediums were charged with counterfeiting spirit manifestations. In 1944 two women, Jane Yorke and Helen Duncan, both Spiritualists, were brought before the courts under the terms of this Act, although the latter maintained that her spirits were good ones and not evil. As the result of these prosecutions and the subsequent struggle of the English Spiritualists to remove from their activities any suggestion of necromancy, in 1951 Parliament replaced the old Witchcraft Act with the Fraudulent Mediums Act.

To declare that necromancy of the old type is quite dead would perhaps be premature. Innumerable churchyard desecrations still take place, some of which involve the actual disturbance of the corpse. The most famous case of this character in recent times was the exhumation of a woman's skeleton at Clophill in Bedfordshire in 1963 and its subsequent use in the rites of black magic (see CLOPHILL). Even more macabre was the disinterment of a man's body in a North London cemetery in the autumn of 1968, when the corpse was discovered pierced with a wooden stake close to a huge circle of flowers taken from nearby graves.

Among the most cherished anecdotes of the more sophisticated type of magician is the amazing 19th century seance conducted by Eliphas Levi the French occultist who attempted to raise the shade of the pagan magician Apollonius of Tyana in London in 1854. The room in which the seance was conducted contained mirrors, a pentagram and, for the protection of the wizard, a magic circle of magnetized iron. The materialization of a shrouded spectre, 'lean, melancholy and beardless', robbed the magician, temporarily at least, of his powers of speech.

Current occult theory indicates that the departing soul, in ascending to a higher plane, leaves behind it a secondary human body, known as the astral corpse, which contains some vestiges of life and which, because of its intense desire to live again, can sometimes be lured back to the physical world by the power of magic. It has even been suggested that the astral corpse has the power to absorb life from human beings rather in the manner of a psychic vampire. Some occultists are of the opinion that the medium, in calling upon the spirits of the dead, in reality summons not the ghost but the astral corpse, and if this is so it could perhaps be said that necromancy has never truly died.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Routledge, 1967).

Nectar

The sweet liquid produced by plants: in Greek mythology, the drink of the gods which with ambrosia, their food, kept them immortal; it may originally have been a drink made of honey, possibly mead, though it has alternatively been connected with mushrooms; more generally, used for any supremely delicious drink.

See ELIXIR OF LIFE; MUSHROOM.

Accademia Nazionale

NEGROES

David Redfern

'Soul' music has developed from the old spirituals, themselves a characteristic expression of the Christianity of slaves in the American South: one of the 'Stars of Faith' group

The Negroes have been described as 'the world's most religious people'. But the black man's way of worship is alien to that of the West; the frenzy of a revivalist meeting in the Southern states of America has more in common with an African ceremony than with the controlled sobriety of most Western church services

THE NEGROES' contribution to religion and magic comes from two different cultural backgrounds, from Africa and from the Americas. But from a closer examination of Negro attitudes and ideas, we see how ancient tribal beliefs and customs, born in the forests of Central Africa, have influenced the development of religion in both continents. Many Christian converts in both Africa and the Americas are still attached to some of the old pagan concepts of the supernatural, most notably in the cult of Voodoo, originally the specific religion of Dahomey (see DAHOMEY; VOODOO).

White Christians have never really been able to understand the traditional pagan religions of Africa, for a number of reasons. Firstly, Africans have kept their rites secret from invaders and occupiers; secondly, there are literally hundreds of cults which vary from country to country and even from village to village; and thirdly, these cults have never been institutionalized or written down like Christian and Islamic theologies.

The first European explorers, the Portuguese, in search of trade and riches rather than scientific knowledge of the black man's social and religious institutions, mistook the simple paraphernalia of the African cults – little statues of wood and stone – as idols or fetishes. They dismissed the Negroes as ignorant heathens. an attitude which still survives.

From the 16th century onwards, European missionaries sought to destroy these idols, to discredit the local gods and their priests, and to substitute the worship of the Christian Jehovah. What the missionaries overlooked in their ignorance of African psychology was the fact that all the

Jeffrey Blankfort/Transworld Features

Jack Kaufman/Transworld Features

inhabitants of the 'Dark Continent', from the Mediterranean to the Cape, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, recognized a supreme deity who was the creator of the world and the lord of the universe.

Destroying Pagan Gods

In order to convert the Africans to Christianity, the missionaries had to discredit nearly all the local beliefs, especially in minor deities, spirits and supernatural forces of one sort or another. Deeply entrenched in all African cults was reverence for ancestors who after death remained in the vicinity of their homes and villages to watch over their descendants. The ancestors, and the godlings and spirits to whom the Negroes sacrificed, were important because although there was a Supreme God, he was far too powerful and remote to have any interest in a particular person. A dead father, on the other hand, who had taken up his residence in a tree, was much more likely to take an interest in his family's fortunes (see CULT OF THE DEAD).

The missionaries were also determined to suppress other myths and superstitions, especially what was called totemism, or the cult of animal worship. All primitive people have a special relationship with animals which urbanized people cannot begin to understand (see ANIMALS). African tribes invariably had one or several animals with whom they had a special alliance, probably because at some time in their history, their lives had been saved through the assistance of an animal at a moment of danger or deprivation. Then, the animal would become the tribal 'mascot', venerated more and more as time went by.

But the chief enemies of the Christian missionaries were undoubtedly the priests of the African religions: in other words, the witch-doctors who have often been figures of fun or derision in the West. Yet the witch-doctors were, in actual fact, the pastors of the tribe, with many social as well as religious functions, all designed for the well-being of the people. Indeed, without the witch-doctor and his various skills, including his psychiatric and medical methods, life would have been intolerable among primitive African communities.

This is important in the context of the fundamental differences between the black and the white man's religious concepts and attitudes. First of all, Negro religion is basically a social affair, whether it is pagan or Christian. The only comparable example in the Christian world is the total integration of the spiritual and social life found during the first three or four centuries AD and then primarily among small semi-monastic communities. As soon as the Church became institutionalized, attitudes changed, and religion either became a strictly formalized type of worship, or a purely personal belief.

Negroes, by contrast, have never lost their sense of clan involvement in whatever faith they hold, an involvement which in primitive groups controls almost every act of their lives. A French anthropologist sums up African paganism like this: 'No institution exists, whether social or political or even economic, which does not stand on a religious concept. The Negroes of whom it has been said that they have no spiritual awareness are, in fact, the most religious people in the world.'

This religiosity, then, influences the African's whole life, with rituals and ceremonies from the cradle to the grave. Many Christian Negroes of the Americas are similarly influenced. The effect is seen in the wholehearted participation of the congregation in singing and shouting and sometimes dancing during the service.

Unfortunately for the Negro 'image', these manifestations of fervour are among the very things that white people tend to frown upon as childish or uncivilized. The first Christian missionaries certainly condemned in no uncertain terms the African's clothing or lack of it, his ornaments, dances, music, marriage customs and initiation rites, nearly all of which were none the less an integral part of the alien religion. The natives were exhorted to cover up their bodies and tone down their fervour in deference to the new cult.

An even graver example of interference in traditional society was the Christian prohibition of polygamy, even though this system had worked satisfactorily for thousands of years and had become in many areas one of the corner-stones of African culture. This system worked because it meant in practice that no woman lacked a male provider; no wife had trouble in finding a baby-sitter; and no spouse was without a proper status with a home of

Black Star/Transworld Features

Africans exported to the New World were both Christianized and enslaved (*near left* and *centre, above*). In the days of slavery, the church or chapel was 'the one place where the Negro was outside the control or observation of his white masters'. One result was a type of religious expression blending Christian doctrine with pagan African feeling and characterized by emotional involvement. Another was that a black church could be a centre of political activity, and black ministers have played leading roles in the freedom movement. More recently, with the decline of membership in the Churches and impatience with all things white, black political activity (*far left* and *centre, below*) has moved away from its earlier religious background

her own. At the same time, all the women belonged to a large family unit which gave them entertainment in their youth and security in their old age. The alternative is liable to be prostitution, which in Africa is already a result of progress towards a European life-style.

White interference in the original African cults may well have done more harm than good, especially since it is now recognized that the Negro had a positive spiritual awareness of his own long before the arrival of Christian missionaries. Certainly, he had an intense and exuberant sense of participation in his religious ceremonies, which contrasts most strikingly with the polite form of worship favoured by most white people. Even in a Negro church, the old pagan beliefs and behaviour are obviously not very far below the surface. The preacher, if he is a genuine product of his own racial group and not a sophisticated product of white theological colleges, is, in a sense, as much a witch-doctor as is his colleague in the forests of the Congo.

Echoes of Jungle Drums

The preacher in a Negro church is the leader, orator, politician and father-confessor of his flock, particularly in the Southern states of the United States. The church or Baptist chapel was the one place where the Negro was outside the control or observation of his white masters, and under the guise of religion it could become a meeting place for various kinds of secret societies, as well as for women's groups, Sunday school classes and more orthodox religious activities. It was, and is, a vital social institution.

So, too, the music produced in Negro chapels has very little in common with *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. No one who has heard it can fail to detect in the rhythms, hand clapping and foot stamping the jungle drums and incantations of tribal ceremonies. It is music, incidentally, that represents one of the Negroes' great contributions to world culture, for from this singing, first in the old plantations of Virginia, then in the Negro chapels, came a whole new style of musical invention – the 'spirituals', minstrel songs, and jazz in its multifarious varieties.

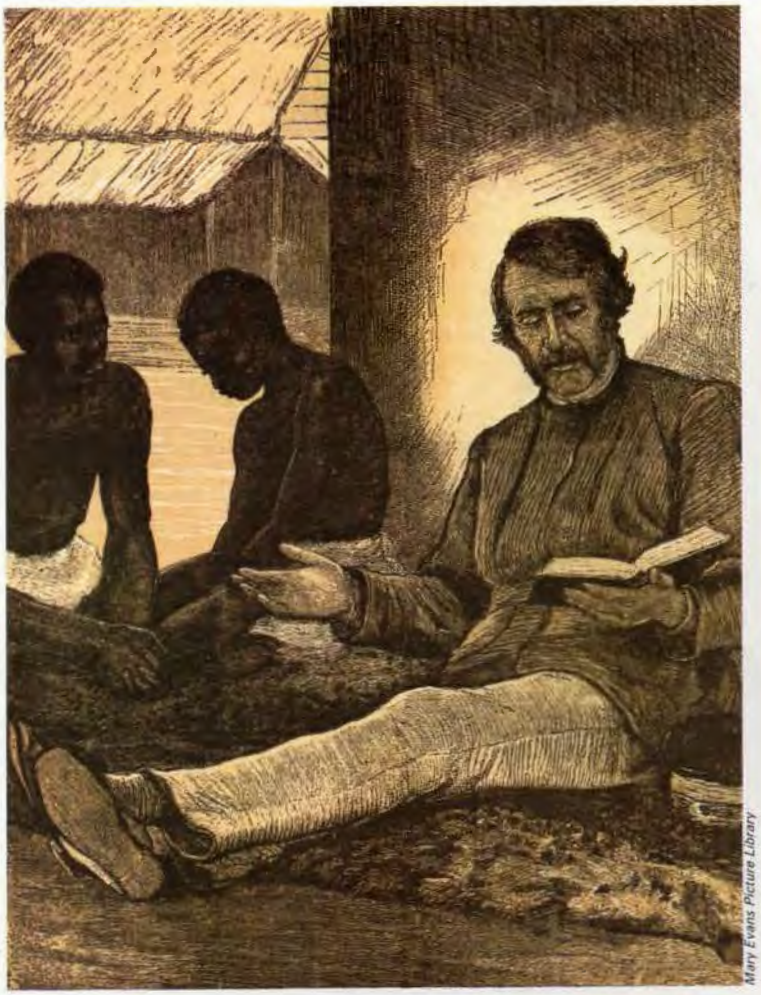
The Negro historian W. E. B. Du Bois has called the spirituals – or 'sorrow songs' as he terms them – 'the greatest gift of the Negro people to the world'. Nobody can say to what extent these deeply religious folk hymns have influenced modern music, both classical and popular. Certainly such spirituals as *Nobody knows the trouble I've seen* and *Swing low, sweet chariot* are corner-stones in the development of modern music, as was the first jazz heard in New Orleans and Memphis, Tennessee.

The third striking characteristic of Negro religion, whether pagan or Christian, is the frenzy, that uncontrolled and uncontrollable fervour which seizes some or all of a congregation 'when the spirit moves'. Observers who describe the frenzy of a black revivalist meeting in the Southern states of America are, in effect, describing a ceremony presided over by a witch-doctor in the heart of Africa. In both cases the common elements are stamping, shrieking, rushing to and fro, waving the arms, weeping, laughing, dancing, and finally falling into a trance.

This method of worship is no tame or formalized expression of faith. It contrasts strikingly with the service favoured by the majority of white Christians who have come to associate religion with an established Church which they visit once a week for a solemn and rather grave ceremony. The Negro is not attuned to this method of worship, either historically or temperamentally. He is conscious of the supernatural in one form or another every hour of the day, on rising in the morning, going out to the fields, crossing a river, and watching the movement of animals and the flight of birds.

In other words, the Negro feels surrounded by spirits and ghosts, and it would seem that no matter how Christianized or sophisticated he becomes, he is still conscious in some atavistic fashion of both the good and the evil forces outside the visible world. Hence many superstitions, particularly those concerned with the magical properties of certain animals, are taken much more seriously by black than by white men – or by those white men, at least, who have lost touch with the world of the wild beasts.

The basis of many of these superstitions, folktales and beliefs lies in the African's conviction that a man does not die as we believe he dies, but that he is 'done away with' by some malign power or person. And even though he appears to be 'dead', he survives not just as a 'soul', but as a real



Mary Evans Picture Library

National Film Archive

Camera Press, London

Above left David Livingstone (1813–73), the Scots missionary, explorer and opponent of the slave trade, whose exploits in Africa made him one of the great heroes of Victorian Britain. Christianity was taken to Africa by white missionaries, many of whom were men of courage and dedication, but their tendency to regard white religion and culture as superior and African paganism, which they often failed to understand, as inferior contributed to the myth of the African as a childish savage which has influenced white views of the Negro ever since

Above Scene from *The Green Pastures,* with Rex Ingram as 'De Lawd': in this film God is a benign elderly Negro and the black faithful are good-hearted and simple-minded, a picture of the Negro and his spirituality which has long been a cherished white myth

Left In modern America, the Black Muslim movement has rejected the white man's God altogether, and teaches that God is black and that the white man is by nature inherently evil

Below From the sublime to the contemptuous: two attitudes to Negroes contrasted in the window of a souvenir shop in Rio de Janeiro, where a carving of a black Christ stands next to a golliwog

William Macquitty

Voodooism satisfies the black man's need for an intensely personal relationship with the otherworld, through the medium of the saints or the sainted dead

person, even if invisible; for no living thing dies of itself, it is always killed. Consequently, there is no such thing as extinction: there is, rather, the withdrawal of the living form into another element, or what the oriental philosophers call transmigration.

Placating Death

This belief that the cessation of life can only be the result of a malign force explains why, in general, it is the vengeful gods or spirits who receive most attention from Africans. If death has been cause by one of these forces – storms, lightning, floods – the spirit must be placated by some sort of sacrifice. Alternatively, if it has been caused by another human being – in other words, a wizard or witch – the guilty party must be smelt out (see FINDING OF WITCHES). This is one of the functions of the witch-doctor or medicine-man who is on the side of good and whose magic is therefore 'white'. It is for this reason that the witch-doctor is the most valued member of the community. Yet within the context of paganism, he is just as much a medium between God and man as a priest of the Christian religion.

Sensational and biased reports have tended to discredit the witch-doctor and, even more, the cult known as Voodoo. Voodoo originated in Dahomey, West Africa, whence it was brought by slaves to the New World during the 18th and 19th centuries. The term *vudu* means the worship of a group of gods who govern the universe, each with his own special function.

This pantheistic concept of the other world, so characteristic of Black Africa, has never been wholly eradicated by Negro acceptance of alien religions such as Christianity and Mohammedanism. Voodooism is found wherever the descendants of West African slaves live in close communities. American journalists, however, have sensationalized Voodoo out of all proportion to its actual significance. Human sacrifice, the raising of the dead, the appearance of zombies and so forth, are figments of the popular press and have very little to do with the essence of Voodoo, even as it is practised in Haiti, the principal centre of the cult.

The essence of Voodooism (or Hoodooism as it is sometimes called in the United States) is the personalization of the worshippers' relationship with the supernatural. This is achieved by means of communication with a variety of demigods and spirits, as well as the ghosts of the dead. The medium is the trance or frenzy in which the worshipper becomes the instrument (called in Haitian Voodoo *le cheval*, 'the horse') of a god who mounts and rides him. The resultant gyrations of the 'horse' are naturally of the weirdest type and are characterized by the critics of Voodoo as pure hysteria. On the other hand, the possession of a subject by a spirit is a phenomenon found in all religions and is certainly not unique to Voodooism.

Voodooism satisfies the black man's need for an intensely personal relationship with the otherworld: hence the Haitian emphasis on the saints whom they refer to as the *anges* or the *mystères*. The idea is to make contact with the supernatural through the medium of the saints or the sainted dead. And though basically pagan, Caribbean and South American Voodooism includes in its pantheon a great many Christian saints, notably St Patrick, St Anthony and St Michael. It is not known how 'Baron Samedi' got into the Voodoo calendar, but he is a powerful spirit since he presides over death and graveyards.

A Western Delusion

The influence of Voodoo has been profound throughout the West Indies, South America and the United States – in fact, wherever Negroes live in isolated or semi-segregated colonies. It has its own priests called *hungans*, priestesses or *mambos*, witches, wizards and saints, all somehow interconnected with Christian doctrines and ritual. Its detractors claim that it is the breeding-ground of secret societies and of tricksters who extract money from poor and ignorant people in order to perpetuate the superstitions of West African pagans. Other observers, including some Catholic priests with an inside knowledge of the cult, state that Voodoo is a truly social form of Christianity adapted to the needs and psychology of Negroes and providing them with the songs, dances and feasts which are as vital to them as their faith in a happier place after death.

Perhaps the nearest the white man can get to a genuine picture of Voodooism (as opposed to the reports of journalists who neither speak the patois of Haiti nor obtain the confidence of the Voodoo leaders) is the description given by the Haitian sociologist Dr Arthur C. Holly who writes about it as follows:

> A patient study of Voodoo shows that its origin was the result, as in other religions, of the personification of supernatural beings or spiritual forces which control and direct our lives here on earth.
>
> All such religions carry with them certain rites, ceremonies, appropriate symbols, and pageantry calculated to captivate the imagination of the greatest number of worshippers.
>
> I can assert that the Negro initiated into the real Voodoo cult in conformity with the pure tradition entertains no relations with Satan. The devils to whom he is accused of sacrificing are not spirits of darkness, that is to say, the malevolent. They are *daimons*, similar to the Greek conception, 'luminous spirits'. Criminal sorcery, black magic, are incompatible with the spirit of Voodoo as a ritual religion.

Despite these assertions by a specialist on the subject, the conviction remains among white people that Voodoo and the other Negro religions consist of mumbo-jumbo, fetishism and black magic. To Western man, magic is delusion and trickery to be relegated to the music hall and not to be taken seriously.

This is not so in the world of tropical forests. Here magic is the most important factor in the black man's life, for it underlies all the manifold terrors and disasters which beset him. Consequently magic is never practised for entertainment or effect. It is purposeful, and is studied in precisely the same way that a theology student studies divinity or the graduate of a business school prepares for a career in commerce. Amateurs and dilettantes are not encouraged. Nor are wicked or anti-social people, for they become the practitioners of black magic.

As anthropologists study the Negroes' religions in greater depth, the conclusion is that white men can learn a great deal from them. African paganism, for instance, is by no means an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile man to the invisible world around him. Negro Christianity, on the other hand, is a truly dynamic faith which deeply involves the individual in the act of worship and allows him to express his spiritual longings without inhibitions.

JAMES WELLARD

Camera Press, London

Above **A Sudanese woman whitens her hands to protect her child from the evil effects of a spell** ***Below*** **A Johannesburg witch-doctor stands before her medicine cupboard filled with potions to aid her 'parishioners' against the harm of malign forces**

Camera Press, London

Camera Press, London

Camera Press, London

Left For Africans like this family in the Sudan the skills of the witch-doctor make life less intolerable *Above* The witch-doctor insists on cleanliness *Below* Voodoo 'queen' and 'goddess' of Haiti

Popperfoto, London

Tate Gallery

Nemi
Site of a sacred grove of Diana in the Alban Hills, south of Rome, whose priest was Rex Nemorensis, 'the King of the Wood'; no one could hold the priesthood except a runaway slave who, having broken off a bough from the sacred tree, would engage the reigning priest in mortal combat, kill him and succeed to his office; the custom was the starting point of Frazer's *Golden Bough*.
See DIANA; KING.

Born out of obsessive nationalism and German Romanticism, the neo-pagan sects looked back to old Germanic religious beliefs; all that was Aryan was sanctified in ceremony and worship

NEO-PAGAN GERMAN CULTS

THE FIRST NEO-PAGAN German religious sects emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. All of them were by-products of the German *völkisch* movement, a confused and complicated ideological phenomenon, stemming from the ideas of the late Romantic movement and German nationalism. As a social group, the *Völkischen* were mainly middle class, and identified with a passionate and, indeed, irrational belief in the sanctity of everything that was specifically German or 'Germanic'; they reflected the most extreme and chauvinistic form of German nationalism. The Völkischen, with their countless leagues and associations, were politically ineffective but nevertheless constituted an active and often vociferous pressure group.

The Völkischen were universally antisemitic. They believed that the Jews, whether of German or any other nationality, represented dishonest, decadent and racially inferior qualities. In contrast, the Germanic race was noble, heroic, honest and possessed of all the attributes proper to a *Herrenvolk* or master race.

Germany was ostensibly a Christian country, predominantly Protestant in the north and largely Catholic in the Rhineland and south. Only a small proportion of the population can have been identified with neo-pagan beliefs, but the phenomenon is of historical and sociological interest because of the Nazis' ambivalent attitude to Christianity after their rise to power in 1933. Their antisemitism was directly inherited from the pre-1914 generation of Völkischen.

Many members of the various völkisch groups were opposed to conventional Christian beliefs. A major reason for their hostility to Christianity was that Jesus himself was a Jew; so they put forward the hypothesis that since he was a great spiritual teacher he *must* have been an Aryan. The Old Testament was dismissed out of hand as Jewish folklore and therefore contemptible nonsense. And so, there were people who wanted to create a Germanic form of Christianity, from which all Jewish elements were eliminated, and others who completely rejected Christianity in favour of a wholly Germanic religion.

A number of widely-read 19th century German writers had paved the way for the first German neo-pagan sects. The philosopher Schopenhauer, who was sympathetic to Buddhism, had protested against Christianity's 'optimistic Jewish tendencies'. The philosopher Nietzsche had asked why 'the strong races in northern Europe had not rejected the Jewish god and created a new one.' Felix Dahn, a popular historical novelist of the 1870s, proclaimed that 'whatever is Christian is not Germanic, and whatever is Germanic is not Christian . . . there is also an ethical ideal in the old pagan morality; rough and manly, but by no means barbaric.' Dahn's enthusiasm for his Germanic ancestors and their virtues led the Roman Catholic Church to accuse him of fostering the revival of a Wotan cult. In his book *The Jewish Question* (1880) a well-known sociologist, Eugen Dühring, suggested that the ancient Nordic gods were still alive, and had remained so during the long period when they had been driven underground by Christianity.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1926), British by birth but German by choice and Wagner's son-in-law, was without any doubt the most influential of the anti-Christian publicists. In *Foundations of the 19th Century* (1899) he categorically stated that Christ could not have been a Jew. He suggested that the Germans would only find salvation in a religion corresponding to their essential nature. And the latter could only be Germanic.

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Passionate belief in the sanctity of everything Germanic was the basic ideology of German neo-paganism *Left* Swedish rock-carving from O. S. Reuter's book *The Mystery of the Edda*: Reuter founded a rural settlement named for the Germanic god of thunder *Right* Book cover by Ludwig Fahrenkrog, founder of the Community for Germanic Beliefs: the swastika was exalted as an 'Aryan' symbol

Hence the ancient Germans represented something closer to the roots of what was morally and ethically desirable than did their early 20th century successors. Old Germanic religious beliefs, in so far as they could be identified, reflected a source of primeval strength. It followed, then, that ancient symbolism, such as the runes and swastika (see RUNE OCCULTISM; SWASTIKA), and old legends, such as the one surrounding Mittgart, said to be the home of the original Nordic gods, had an immediate significance. The *Edda*, a collection of 9th–11th century Scandinavian sagas, became the equivalent of Holy Writ for the völkisch neo-pagans.

Splits and Schisms

The internal history of the German neo-pagan sects is extremely complicated because of their continual fissions and regroupings. Membership statistics were almost invariably for private circulation only. It is possible, however, to distinguish three main groups.

The first was the loosely-organized *Germanische Glaubensgemeinschaft* (Community for Germanic Beliefs), which was founded in 1907 by Professor Ludwig Fahrenkrog (1867–1952) of Barmen. In 1911 Fahrenkrog and his followers joined forces with O. S. Reuter (b 1876), the author of *The Mystery of the Edda*, and his German Religious Fellowship. Dr Ernst Wachler, a well-known figure in völkisch circles, and his Wotan Society also became affiliated with the Fahrenkrog group in 1913. At about this time Fahrenkrog's sect changed its title and became the Germanic Belief Fellowship. Meanwhile, Reuter and his followers broke

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away, and founded yet another sect. This group became the esoteric 'inner circle' of Reuter's *Deutsche Orden*, the German Order, which later organized a völkisch rural settlement called 'Donnershag', after the Germanic god Donar.

A third group, the *Volkschaft der Nordungen*, or 'Nordungen Fraternity', originated in German youth movement circles, c 1913. Here again there was an eventual affiliation with the *Deutsche Orden*. The emphasis was on the revival of the values supposed to be inherent in the ancient Germanic civilization. 'The aim and significance of our every action is Nordland' (the North-land or Nordic-land). Apart from these three major groups there were a fair number of very small ones, none of them well documented.

Neo-pagan 'Christening'

Candidates for admission to Fahrenkrog's sect had to attest that they had no non-Aryan blood in their veins: 'In marriage I will keep my blood pure and educate my children in this sense.' In the household, the father was to assume the role of priest and to officiate at 'Germanic' christenings, confirmations, marriages and funerals. Local groups met annually to celebrate the summer solstice (which was always an important festivity in völkisch circles). The sect had no religious system; there was merely a mystical identification with a whole series of very hazy concepts – blood, race, Germanic virtues, and so on. All this applied equally to Reuter's 'Fellowship', whose members were required to 'strive for the Völkisch and moral rebirth of the German *volk* (race) in a Germanic spirit, namely on the basis of German godliness.'

These people did not merely study the *Edda*. Their literary canon included the writings of Meister Eckhart (see ECKHART), one of the profoundest speculative thinkers among the German mystics, Paracelsus and Jacob Boehme (see BOEHME; PARACELSUS), and also Johann Fichte (1762–1814) and Paul de Lagarde (1827–81), whose intellectual influence on the Völkischen was profound. Readings from these and other acceptable, that is Germanic, authors were common to the meetings of all the sects.

The same 'festivals' were celebrated by the various neo-pagan fellowships. The principal ones were the *Oster* (Easter) feast, named after the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, followed by High May (observed at Whitsun), the feast of the May Queen or May Bride and her partner. The *Jul* (Yule) feast was held at Christmas. The Christian Good Friday was observed as a day of remembrance for the 4500 Saxons said to have been slaughtered by Charlemagne at Verden an der Aller in 772. The Christian Feast of the Ascension was replaced with one associated with the myth of Thor's hammer.

The völkisch periodical *Rig* contains an account of a 'christening' ceremony held in the Forstenrieder Park near Munich. 'In the centre of five old oak trees we made a table from boulders. On the table is placed a bronze hammer and a bowl of water from the pond close to the beech trees. A tune played on a Waldhorn forms a prelude to our modest celebration . . . The mother lays the child at

March of the Atlantic People

It may still be uncertain where the original home of the *Nordic* race lies . . . many details are still doubtful . . . but whatever may be the result of further investigations *one* great fact cannot be challenged: the fact that the race which provides the 'meaning of world history' is found to originate in the North and has spread from the North over the whole earth; that it was a blue-eyed fair-haired race which in several great waves formed the spiritual features of the world – even where the race itself was bound to perish. These migration periods we call: the march of the Atlantic people – round which so many legends sprang up – through North Africa; the migration of the Aryans to Persia and India; followed by Dorics, Macedonians, Latins; the migration of the Germanic peoples; the colonisation of the world by the West under dominant Germanic influence.

A. Rosenberg *The Myth of the 20th Century*

Although the neo-pagan sects were antisemitic, Hitler discouraged their activities for they were politically ineffective; this cartoon of a Jew attempting to seduce the ideal Germanic woman is dated 1936, some years after the rise of Hitler and the decline of the 'völkisch' sects

the father's feet. The father bows and takes the child in his arms, saying: "I recognize you as my own, take you into our kindred and give you a name. I sprinkle you with the pure water of the German spring. May all that is un-German be alien to you". . .'

Fahrenkrog's plan to build a cathedral for neo-pagan services was never fulfilled. There were to be three aisles and where they met an altar of stone; behind it a table on which were to be placed a copy of the *Edda*, Thor's hammer and a ring upon which solemn oaths were to be sworn. The walls were to be decorated with murals depicting scenes from the *Edda*. The sermon was to be based upon a suitable text from the same work. At the end of the service a small pile of wood, previously placed upon the altar, was to be ignited with a tinder and flint.

In 1931–32 these major groups united as the Nordic Religious Working Community. They do not appear to have been either encouraged or attacked by the Nazis after 1933.

While there were undoubtedly some Germans who actually indulged in a form of Wotan worship, most authorities are inclined to believe that the groups in question were both few and small. A lengthy search by the present writer has failed to produce any documents. There are stray allusions to a Germanic Sun Religion sect that existed during the early 1900s, but once again it cannot be adequately documented.

Fahrenkrog revived his sect, although on a very small scale, after 1945, but it must be remembered that the old pre-1914 völkisch movement was already in a state of decline by 1933, when the Nazis came to power. Hitler himself despised these sects because they were politically ineffective; and of the major Nazi leaders, only Himmler appears to have been vaguely influenced by the völkisch tradition. Fahrenkrog died in 1952 and his sect with him; and there is no evidence that there are any neo-pagan religious sects in Western Germany today. (See also LIST; NATIONAL SOCIALISM; NEW TEMPLARS.)

ELLIC HOWE

For Plotinus, 'the only way to God is through philosophy', the only way to reach union with the divine is 'by living the philosophical life and thinking philosophy through to the end'

NEOPLATONISM

THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY which modern scholars call Neoplatonism is the final stage in the long development of the revived Platonism of the Roman Imperial period. It was a very long development. After a period of scepticism, Antiochus of Ascalon revived dogmatic, positive philosophical teaching in Plato's school at Athens, the Academy, in the 1st century BC. Later Platonism continued as a distinct philosophy, taught by its own pagan professors, till well after the official closing of the pagan schools at Athens by Justinian in 529 AD and therefore had a history of over 600 years, a period as long as that which separates philosophers of our own time from 14th century scholastics.

In the 3rd century AD, perhaps the most decisive phase in the transition from the classical to the Byzantine and medieval world, later Platonism was re-thought and given a new coherence, strength and vitality by a great philosophical and religious genius, Plotinus (205–270 AD). It is the philosophy of Plotinus and his successors which is nowadays called Neoplatonism. But no one at the time was conscious of any break in the development of Platonic philosophy, and Plotinus was by no means regarded as a second founder of the school. Nor would he, or any of the philosophers who came after him, have been at all pleased to be called Neoplatonists. They claimed to be expounding the authentic teaching of Plato, and to say that their philosophy was in any sense 'new' would have seemed to them an insult. The more ancient a doctrine was, to men of that period, the more likely it was to be true.

The Platonism which Plotinus took over and transformed was already a strongly religious philosophy. Most Greek philosophers (though not all, for there were sceptics, agnostics and materialists of quite a modern

type among them) were much concerned with religion and morality. An essential task of philosophy was to lead and help men to live as well as possible on the basis of a knowledge of the truth about the gods, the universe and their own natures. And this is particularly true of the great majority of philosophers of the Roman Imperial period, Stoics, Epicureans and Platonists alike. A strong religious and moral concern is already apparent in the works of Plato. But the Platonism of the Roman Empire, when its main outlines begin to become clear to us in the 1st century AD, is more obviously and exclusively a religious and moral philosophy, and its religious concepts are closer to those we have ourselves inherited, and less ambiguous and baffling to our minds than those of Plato himself. There is now unmistakeably one God at the head of the system (as there is not in Plato), a divine Intelligence of perfect wisdom and goodness. The Platonic Ideas or Forms (the eternal objects of true knowledge and patterns according to which material things are made) are generally held by the later Platonists to be the thoughts of this supreme God, existing eternally in his mind. He makes the material world (directly or through an intermediary) on their pattern, generally from an eternally pre-existing matter. Sometimes this is thought of as evil and the cause of evil, sometimes there is an evil, disorderly soul which opposes and tries to thwart the efforts of the Maker to keep the universe in order. A hierarchy of gods and spirits depends on the supreme God.

In some systems the distinction between the First God or intelligence and a second God or intelligence, the active cause of the universe, becomes important and is linked with a stressing of the absolute transcendence and mysteriousness of the supreme God, and sometimes with the assertion that he is unknowable because he is infinite: he is not a 'this' or 'that' and has no definable nature which we can comprehend. This is something new in Greek philosophy. The idea of God as infinite and so unknowable is already to be found in Philo the Jew of Alexandria, an older contemporary of St Paul who was the first to use Greek philosophy in an attempt to give a reasonable account of a revealed religion: it appears in the Gnosticism of Basileides in the 2nd century AD. But its presence in later Platonism is unlikely to be simply due to the influence of Philo or the Gnostics. There are reasons in earlier Greek philosophy which could have led to this development.

An important feature of later Platonic religion, as of most religion in later antiquity, is that the physical universe as a whole is alive and divine (as it was for Plato) and so are its most important parts, the earth, and above all the sun, moon and stars, the visible, embodied divinities in the visible heaven. Man's soul too is divine in a very subordinate degree, a being quite distinct from and greatly superior to the body which it temporarily inhabits, and the object of the good and wise man is to escape, by the study of philosophy and the practice of an austere morality, from incarnation in an earthly body and either to become a star or to leave the visible universe altogether.

The Higher Self

This 'Middle' Platonism, as it is generally called by modern scholars, was developed into what we call Neoplatonism, as far as we know, by Plotinus. He had been the pupil in Alexandria of a mysterious, self-taught and entirely unofficial philosopher called Ammonius, who also taught the great Christian thinker Origen. But Ammonius wrote nothing, and we really know next to nothing about his thought, so his contribution to the development of Neoplatonism must remain problematical. The first and greatest collection of Neoplatonic writings is the set of treatises written by Plotinus in his later life when he was teaching at Rome. These were arranged by his pupil and editor Porphyry (died c 305) into six volumes, each containing nine treatises, the *Enneads*. It is impossible here to give more than the barest outline of the rich, profound and many-sided philosophy which is expressed in them in very difficult, but sometimes magnificent Greek. The first thing which it is necessary to understand is that philosophy is for Plotinus, even more than for the Middle Platonists, a religious way of life demanding total commitment and the most intense effort not only to think well but to live well. It is not the detached observation, dispassionately and from outside, of a reality distinct from ourselves, or the construction of a coherent theory, but a process of waking ourselves up and discovering who we really are. What we discover is that we are souls who have an eternal existence, different from and higher than that of which we are aware in ordinary experience, in a divine world of living intelligence. If we are prepared to make the tremendous effort required we can be aware of that world and live our lives in it even when we are still in the body and necessarily to some extent preoccupied with its affairs. Our higher soul never 'comes down', is not really united with body nor integrated into the life of the sensible world. Animation of the body, sense-perception, desire and emotion belong to lower phases of soul.

When we have become aware of the higher self and are living its life on the level of divine intellect, we can share, occasionally, in the eternal mystical union by which this divine intellect is united to its source, the One or Good. Plotinus distinguishes much more sharply than any of his predecessors (as far as we know) between the first real being, the divine intellect which is also the Platonic World of Forms, and its transcendent and mysterious source. The One or Good is beyond being; it or he (Plotinus generally uses neuter substantives and masculine pronouns in speaking of this supreme origin of all things – occasionally he calls it God) is not any one definite particular thing which can be named or described. We cannot really talk about him except in an inadequate way, pointing towards him, not saying that he is anything. He is beyond intelligence: he is so perfectly one, so utterly himself that he does not need to take possession of himself in thought. And he does not need anything below himself: he is in his infinite goodness sufficient for himself and everything else. He eternally brings into being, spontaneously but also inevitably, without deliberation or desire to do so, by a free giving which cannot be otherwise and leaves him unchanged and undiminished, the Divine Intellect. This is the world of the Platonic Forms, which in Plotinus is a world in which each of the Forms is a living intelligence, which knows and so in a sense is the whole; all are transparent to each other and interpenetrate, and so form the most perfect unity possible below the One.

Divine Intellect in its turn produces, with the same inevitable spontaneity, the great world of Soul, extending down from the universal soul which inhabits the world of Intellect, and forms and orders the material world on the model of the Forms (without planning or choosing to do so or sinking into it and becoming involved) to the life-principle in the earth and in plants. The material world, as the work of divine Soul, is good in its degree; but the matter which underlies it is evil, though inevitably produced by Soul, a principle of negation and corruption.

We are souls, and can live on any level of Soul we choose, and the whole object of the philosophical religion of Plotinus is to bring us to live on the highest, in the world of Intellect in which we can return to union with the One. This for Plotinus is not a matter of theoretical aspiration but of experience. He seems to have had not only the experience of mystical union with the One but the other experience, an indispensable preliminary to it in his way of thinking, of finding himself a part of the divine All, the world of Intellect which he describes in some wonderful passages of the *Enneads* as a world eternal but 'boiling with life', full of movement, light and colour, in which everything is one with everything else. Of the ultimate union with the One he says little, but he seems to have experienced it as more like a union of lovers than as realization of a pre-existing identity or as absorption into something blank and impersonal.

Porphyry's Trinity

An important, and very unusual, feature of the religion of Plotinus is that the only way to God is through philosophy. The only way to reach our goal of union is by living the philosophical life and thinking philosophy through to the end, and then, and only then, passing beyond it. This, he knows, is a way which very few can or will follow. It is, from a conventional point of view, a very irreligious religion. Prayer was not important for Plotinus: his attitude to the religious beliefs and practices of his time was detached (except for a healthy hatred of Gnosticism). He was not deeply interested in or influenced by the Mystery religions, and external rites and sacraments did not play any part in his religious life. True religion for him was inward, spiritual, solitary and intensely intellectual.

The later developments of Neoplatonism in some ways began in the thought of Porphyry, though in other ways Porphyry remains very close to his master, and even develops his thought in ways opposed to the mainstream of later Platonism. Porphyry was much more

scholarly than Plotinus, a man of immense learning, who studied deeply. He was an enthusiastic vegetarian (Plotinus had practised vegetarianism without apparently being very interested in it) and, like his master, was concerned to defend the true Greek tradition of philosophical religion against barbarian religious innovations. This led him to write what seems to have been the most powerful and intelligent of all ancient pagan attacks on Christianity. A way in which his influence on later Neoplatonism was unfortunate was that he was the first philosopher to pay any serious attention to the Chaldaean Oracles. These were published, probably in the later 2nd century AD, by two persons called Julian, father and son, who claimed that they were divine revelations. The fragments which survive show them to have been a theosophical hotch-potch of ideas taken from contemporary popular philosophy, in obscure and pretentious verse. Porphyry was still rather dubious about their philosophical and religious value, but for the later Neoplatonists they were inspired scripture, a primary source of religious knowledge.

The most distinctive feature of Porphyry's thought seems to have been its ultra-spiritual and monistic tendency. He tends to 'telescope' together the three levels of being in Plotinus, the One, Intellect and Soul. Soul is in its true nature practically identical with Intellect (this is already true in some of the writings of Plotinus), and Intellect is much more on a level with the One than it is in the thought of Plotinus. For Porphyry, the One is unknowable, infinite pure Being from which springs a Life which determines itself as Intellect. This triad of Being, Life and Intellect, which has its origins in the thought of Plotinus, played a very important part in the systems of the later Neoplatonists. So we find in this fiercely pagan philosopher both the idea of God as pure and absolute Being and the horizontal trinitarian structuring of the divinity which were so important for contemporary and later Christian thought. There are, of course, important differences between Porphyry's trinity and the Christian one, though a good deal of Porphyry's philosophy was taken over by some Christian theologians in the effort to explain their doctrine. Porphyry stresses the divinity of our souls even more than Plotinus, and is still more insistent than his master on the absolute necessity of transcending the body and the senses, and escaping from all contact with the physical.

Lonely, Pious Pagans

The originator of the type of Neoplatonism which came to dominate the Platonic schools in the 5th and 6th centuries AD was the Syrian Iamblichus (c 250–326). We know it best from the works of Proclus (410–485), who became head of the school of Athens, and of Damascius, who was head of the school when it was closed by Justinian in 529. These latest Neoplatonists were pious and determined pagans in a world which had become officially Christian. This is equally true of the school of Alexandria, where later Neoplatonism was introduced in the 5th century, though at Alexandria the attitude to Christianity was less outspokenly hostile than at Athens. The teaching of philosophy at Alexandria eventually passed into Christian hands in the late 6th century and it was as a result of this that Greek philosophy continued to be studied in the Byzantine world throughout the Middle Ages, and the ancient texts survived.

The successors of Iamblichus formed a closed group, often closely related by intermarriage, of serious and intelligent men, intensely devout, sometimes in rather odd ways, but no more superstitious or credulous than their Christian neighbours. Their defence of paganism was not very effective. Their great moment came under their one notable convert, the Emperor Julian (332–363), but his attempted revival of pagan Greek religion was not a success. After him they had nothing to do but to cling to, elaborate and discuss within their own circle, a religion from which the rest of the world had turned away, which they did with an admirable and pathetic loyalty for another two centuries.

There is a story told of Proclus which gives something of the atmosphere of their piety: it might have been told of some Catholic in England when the great shrines of Our Lady were being destroyed during the Reformation. When the Christians removed the statue of Athene from the Parthenon, the goddess appeared in a vision to him and told him that she was coming to live in his house. Proclus was an expert in the most secret rites of theurgy (see THEURGY), a diviner and a rain maker. An enthusiastic hearer once saw a halo round his head when he was lecturing.

All this sort of thing was very much in the tradition of Iamblichus but these oddly devout men were also in their own way learned, acute and precise philosophers. They were attempting both to produce a completely coherent philosophy, which was intended to be the fully authoritative and exhaustive exposition of what Plato really meant, and to give a complete and coherent interpretation of all the revelations which they accepted, the Chaldaean Oracles and the Orphic poems, and of all the myths and rites of the paganism of the later Roman Empire. Their theological concerns were obviously very much in the forefront of their minds. But they did try to solve philosophical questions in a philosophical way and to argue logically and consistently. They were in fact much more concerned with logical validity, clarity, precision and consistency than Plotinus: it is largely this, on a basis of extreme philosophical realism (there must be a distinct intelligible reality corresponding to every distinction which can be made in thought) which makes their system so complicated.

Their version of Platonism is based on Plotinus, but freely corrected and much elaborated, with elements taken over from Porphyry and through him from earlier Platonism, though they criticize Porphyry severely for 'telescoping' the levels of being and confusing Intellect and Soul. The ineffable first principle was removed to a still greater height of transcendence, and the possibility of knowledge of it more strenuously denied than by Plotinus. Below it is a second One, of which we at least know that it is One. There is a whole class of forms of the One in which things below them participate, divine unities called 'henads' which are identified with the gods of paganism. These are rather mysteriously present directly to everything, even to matter. They are accessible immediately at all levels of the hierarchy of being, a regular skyscraper of triads with their members interrelated horizontally and vertically in a very complex way, which extends from the top of the intelligible world down into the physical universe.

Philosophy and Magic

The object of human life, for these philosophers as for Plotinus, is to return to the divine. But they did not think, as Plotinus thought, that the return could be accomplished by philosophy alone, through the natural love and intelligence which we receive in our origin from the One as rightful inhabitants of the intelligible world. Iamblichus and his successors take a humbler view of man, as a soul of low rank which has descended altogether into the material world. But the gods and even, through them, the One itself, are intimately and immediately present to us here below, and return to and union with the divine is possible, to those who turn to the gods in prayer, through the gracious operation of a divine *eros*, by means of the secret magical rites revealed by the gods and handed down through a succession of initiates; rites which are based on the magical sympathies and correspondences with the divine which the gods have caused to exist in the material world. Theurgy was taken very seriously indeed by men like Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus. But they did not confuse it with philosophy, though they regarded the two as fully compatible and complementary. And there always seem to have been some Neoplatonist philosophers who were not very interested in theurgy. Even in the 6th century we can still find men among them whose prayer and mysticism were purely inward and spiritual, like that of Plotinus.

The influence of later Platonic philosophy in its successive phases was very wide and lasting. It influenced both Christian and Moslem thought, the latter through the medium of Syriac and Arabic translations, and had a considerable influence on the Jewish mysticism of the Cabala through the great 11th century Jewish thinker Ibn Gebirol. Its influence on Christian thought in both East and West down to our own times has been so great that one of the most distinguished of modern English theologians, Austin Farrer, has spoken of 'the overwhelming commitment of Christian orthodoxy to Neoplatonic metaphysics.' But Neoplatonism has also inspired a good deal of unorthodox and independent religious thinking in the Christian world. Even in our own time poets, mystics and thinkers sometimes turn to it for inspiration, in spite of (or perhaps because of) its unfashionable preoccupation with immaterial good.

(See also PLOTINUS; PROCLUS.)

A. H. ARMSTRONG

NEPTUNE

AT FIRST Neptune had no connection with the sea. His origins remain in doubt because the equivocal evidence points to both an Indo-European derivation like Jupiter's and to a purely Italian derivation like Mars'. Some would relate his name to that of an ancient Vedic water god and a shared linguistic root for 'moisture', while others draw attention to the Italian commonness of such compound names in *-nus* and to a possible equation with *nethunsl*, an incomprehensible word found in a single Etruscan liturgical text.

In Rome's oldest civil calendar the feast of Neptune was observed on 23 July in the interval between two distinct festivals of sacred groves. The *Neptunalia* may be linked to the grove observances because the single known detail of the ceremony is the construction of shacks from tree boughs that were ritually called 'shades'. Often, Neptune's summer veneration is explained by a desire to increase the water supply. Indeed, his only really old shrine was situated by the Tiber River. When his altar sweated water in 206 BC, the occurrence was duly recorded in the priestly chronicles. Such sweating, by no means unusual in the annals of Roman religion, conforms to the god's power. The Romans had regularly prayed to Neptune for his *salacia*, which later they believed to be the name of his wife. The word refers to the water's power to leap or spring (*salire*) from a fresh source. Thus it seems that Neptune caused fresh water to flow.

In 399 BC the Romans first introduced the Greek ceremony of a banquet (*lectisternium*) for the Twelve Gods of Olympus. Then Neptune was paired with Mercury, whereas in 217 BC Minerva was his partner at the feast. Presumably the first occasion saw Neptune as master of maritime trade and the second in relation to the importation of foreign crafts (see MERCURY). However the banquets may be interpreted, Neptune never fully became a sea god. At

Originally Neptune was the Roman god of fresh water with a shrine near the Tiber River; it was only in historical times that, identified with the Greek god Poseidon, he became a sea god

Roger Wood Studio

Rome his cult partners were sometimes the freshwater sprites called Nymphs. At Comum on Lake Como where a local Neptunalia was celebrated, Neptune was joined by the anonymous Gods of the Water (*Di Aquatiles*) who must have belonged to the great lake. Elsewhere in Italy a ferryman would make an offering to Neptune. On the Danube he was coupled with the deity of that great river. There were also maritime shrines to the god. For instance, a few miles north of Rome at Anzio a row of matched altars was dedicated to the Winds, to Calm and to Neptune. A final example may illustrate the adaptation of the Latin Neptune to a great variety of circumstances. In 209 BC Cornelius Scipio successfully assaulted New Carthage by taking advantage of his knowledge of tidal ponds and marching from the coast. This prompted one historian to make Scipio invoke Neptune 'leader of the march'.

The decline of Neptune's actual Roman cult cannot he easily explained because fresh water was always needed in ancient Rome and was venerated in the popular form of many nameless deities called *Fontes*, 'springs'. The state cult may have shrunk into insignificance with the vast water supply, made available by the aqueducts.

In historical times Neptune possessed almost no personality of his own because the Romans had long since made him over in the image of the Greek Poseidon (see POSEIDON), chiefly a maritime god.

Neptune commanding a quadriga rises up out of the ocean: in astrology, Neptune has been called the planet of 'exaggeration'

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Neptune in Astrology

Discovered in 1846, the planet Neptune was named after the Roman god. Astrologers once supposed that events strongly influenced by Neptune would have something to do with the sea, but this is now thought to be untrue.

Although the influence of Saturn is supposed to be the most unpleasant of any of the planets, that of Neptune can be equally bad or even worse, in an entirely different way. Saturn's unfortunate influence only demands infinite patience until it passes away; on the other hand, Neptune's influence causes violent emotional storms and disturbances, perhaps harder to bear. In marriage, if Neptune is strongly influenced by one of the malefic planets – Mars or Saturn – the couple will be unable to continue living together.

Yet the general influence of Neptune is not necessarily bad, provided one enjoys uncertainty: for instance, Neptune combined with Venus would provoke perpetual excitement about love affairs, with constant vulnerability to the attractions of novelty. Neptune with Jupiter would provoke worries about financial or other success.

If Neptune is in conjunction with the Sun, there is a danger of excessive self-interest or narcissism; the same may be true if Neptune is in close aspect to the ascendant or midheaven. If Neptune, in close aspect to Jupiter, is conspicuous in the horoscope, imprudent or exaggerated optimism may result; but with Saturn the opposite – exaggerated pessimism – may occur. When Neptune dominates the horoscope, everything, whether good or bad, becomes exaggerated; in fact Neptune may be called the 'planet of exaggeration'.

Neptune in conjunction with Mercury would make a good but sensational journalist, quick to see opportunities for exaggeration. Neptune with the Moon, however, is easily alarmed by 'scare' stories. The most famous Neptunian was Horatio Bottomley the financier, who rarely drank anything humbler than champagne, and who ruined thousands of small investors after the First World War by wasting their savings on a fraudulent get-rich-quick scheme.

Net

Symbol of a snare or trap, of entanglement and involvement; Aphrodite and Ares were caught in guilty passion in the net of Hephaestus; in the Old Testament, frequently a symbol of difficulties in which man is canght; the kingdom of heaven is likened to a net in which men are gathered in like fish and the good separated from the bad (Matthew, chapter 13); there are many allusions to nets and fishing in connection with Christ and his disciples, the 'fishers of men'.

See APHRODITE; SYMBOLISM.

Scala

Were the stigmata of Teresa Neumann the true preternatural experiences of a modern mystic or the visible symptoms of a hysterical personality? Athough many received her phenomena uncritically, the Church and the medical profession have remained doubtful

TERESA NEUMANN

A VISIONARY and bearer of the stigmata, Teresa Neumann was born in 1898 and lived all her life at her birth-place, Konnersreuth, a village in Bavaria not far from the Czechoslovakian border. After leaving school she worked at the local inn and during the First World War helped on a farm. On 10 March 1918 during a fire at a neighbouring farm she injured her back; this was the prelude to a complicated medical history. After her return from hospital, uncured, there was a progressive deterioration in her health and she became bedridden, suffering from temporary blindness and deafness, appendicitis, convulsions, paralysis of the legs and purulent sores on the back and feet. In 1923 she regained her sight on praying to St Teresa of Lisieux (whose beatification occurred on the same day that year). In 1925 she renewed her prayers to the saint on the day of her canonization, and recovered the use of her legs; her other ailments also disappeared. She now enjoyed some semblance of health, though the original medical diagnosis, made before there was any question of preternatural phenomena, suggested that the illness was largely hysterical; this introduces a doubt into the whole affair.

Wounds of the Passion

In mid-Lent, 1926, she began to exhibit the phenomenon of stigmatization: the reproduction on the body of the wounds of the Passion of Christ, particularly (but not exclusively) the wounds on hands, feet and side (see STIGMATA). In Teresa Neumann's case, as with others in the past, it was accompanied by other manifestations, including abstinence from food, precognition and visions of the Passion.

On her bed, in her peasant home in Konnersreuth, she appeared to witness and to some extent to re-enact the various scenes of the passion of Christ. For some years this was a weekly occurrence when, beginning on Thursday night, her stigmata would start to bleed, she would pass into a state of trance, and utter cries as if suffering pain or witnessing distressing events. The bleeding appeared to be profuse and occurred not only from hands, feet, and side, but also from her forehead, as if from a crown of thorns. She seemed to exist on a spoonful of water daily; after September 1927 she gave this up also, and her only sustenance was the daily reception of Holy Communion.

In the late '20s and '30s, despite the reserved attitude of the Church authorities, Konnersreuth became a place of pilgrimage; crowds flocked there at all seasons of the year, and especially at Eastertide. Immediately after the Second World War many American soldiers found their way there. The phenomena were received quite uncritically and to question their supernatural origin was to surely invite obloquy from the very active 'Friends of Konnersreuth' who bitterly opposed those who, in their view, wrote against Teresa Neumann. Towards the end of her life Teresa's phenomena seem to have diminished – certainly in 1951 some who made the journey to Konnersreuth were disappointed on at least one occasion – and in the last five years of her life little was heard of her. She died in 1962.

She was not of course by any means the only example of such phenomena. There are upwards of 300 recorded cases of stigmatization, beginning with Francis of Assisi in the 13th century (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI), and continuing in every century since then down to Padre Pio who died in 1968. By far the greater majority of them have been women, and the only two cases of complete stigmatization in men are the two just mentioned, St Francis and Padre Pio. Father Herbert Thurston, who made a lifelong study of these phenomena, wrote:

> The impression left upon me has been that the subjects who were so favoured or afflicted were all suffering from pronounced and often hysterical neuroses. Many of them were intensely devout (of course it is only in the case of people whose thoughts were concentrated on religious motives that one would expect to find this type of manifestation) but in others piety was combined with eccentricities and with apparent dissociations of personality which were very strange and not exactly edifying. I find it difficult to believe that God could have worked miracles to accredit such people as his chosen friends and representatives.

How are we to judge Teresa Neumann and account for her strange phenomena? When Louise Lateau, the stigmatist of Bois d' Haine, in Belgium, died in 1883, the prevailing opinion among her co-religionists was that the extraordinary phenomena in her case were marks of divine favour, and that to doubt their preternatural character was to display a lack of faith. Nowadays with the greater resources of modern medicine and, perhaps, with a clearer notion of all the implications, a more cautious attitude is commoner.

Analysis of Blood

In the case of Teresa Neumann, there were too many unanswered questions for a categorical assertion that all the phenomena really occurred as they were usually reported. Teresa's fast was never rigorously controlled to the satisfaction of the Church authorities or the medical men that they called in to advise on the case; too many of the allied phenomena resembled too closely those that have been observed to occur in other paranormal but non-religious contexts; the blood observed on the stigmata by one expert witness was never seen to flow from them but appeared on the wounds after Teresa had escaped observation beneath the bedclothes, or when the witnesses had been sent out of the room (it was the same observer, Dr Martin, who alleged that some of the blood proved when subjected to analysis to be of menstrual origin).

University of London/Harry Price Library

The validity of the stigmata of Teresa Neumann has never been established; but for some 20 years she appeared to witness and to some extent re-enact the passion of Christ

Whatever the truth of these matters, it seems certain that, to the Church authorities, to postulate a supernatural origin for these phenomena, when the possibilities of a natural explanation have not been exhausted, is to go far beyond the available evidence. What matters is the life of the subject under examination.

In Gemma Galgani's case (she died in 1903), the Roman Catholic Congregation of Rites, which deals with canonizations, declaring her to be a saint, explicitly refrained from giving any verdict on the preternatural character of her stigmata and allied phenomena, saying that it was a matter 'upon which no decision is ever given'. In other words, the stigmata and allied phenomena are unimportant and we should look to the teaching and lives of the mystics and leave on one side what on a last analysis is their occupational disease or at least their occupational hazard.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

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NEW GUINEA

Keeping the Balance of Creation

The spirits of New Guinea delight in ostentation of every sort, and the men stage extravagant and beautiful ceremonies to please them

NEW GUINEA and the Amazon basin have been the last regions of the world in which societies of very simple technology have remained intact. New Guinea is an immense island, exceeded in size only by Greenland, which on the map of Europe would stretch from London to Moscow. The spine of high mountains running down its length rises to 15,000 feet in places, and on each side of the spine are broad, densely populated valleys. This highland area was first explored in the 1930s and has only been brought under administrative control since the Second World War. Throughout the island the terrain is very difficult, being either mountainous broken country devoid of roads, or great river flood plains consisting mainly of swamp. Even the coast is in many places very difficult and dangerous for small craft. It is not surprising that although the rest of the huge Pacific region became known in the 18th and early 19th centuries, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that any serious attempts at exploration, let alone administration, of New Guinea occurred.

The same geographical features that protected New Guinea from the outside world were responsible for the vast number of very small, relatively isolated communities into which the population is divided. The small villages are the political groups, each a tiny republic, making war on its neighbours and often unaware of anything more than about ten miles from its boundaries. Just as there was no political authority that stretched further than a village, so within the village, except in a handful of cases, there were no chiefs, priests or men of inherited rank of any sort. Leadership was exercised by men who could influence others by their personalities and achievements. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that New Guinea societies show enormous diversity in culture and religion. Indeed more than 800 different languages have been reported from various parts of the island, and even within the larger language groups, customs and dialect frequently vary from village to village.

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The principle leisure activities of New Guinea were warfare and the performance of religious and magical ceremonies *Left* Men in masks made of mud on cane frames mime the story of ancestors who disguised themselves as evil spirits *Above* Women mourners coat themselves with mud for protection against ghosts: relatives who have recently died may return with unfriendly intentions

The traditional tools and means of subsistence were of the simplest; no metals were known, and polished stone axes, bamboo knives, chisels of animal teeth, digging sticks, spears and bows and arrows of palm or other hard wood formed the basic equipment. Except in the swampy areas where sago and fish were the basis of the diet, roots, yams, taro and sweet potato were cultivated in gardens cut from the bush and abandoned after a year to regenerate. Pigs were also kept throughout the island. These very simple and easily understandable technological processes provided an ample subsistence and a good deal of leisure, except when extraordinary weather or other natural disasters ruined the crops and produced real famine. This leisure was mainly taken up by two related activities: war and other forms of aggressive competition, and the performance of various forms of ceremonial in which the elements of competitive display and demonstrations of wealth and magnificence always formed parts.

With such great diversity of culture and language few common religious features are to be found and they are mainly negative. It is indeed very difficult to say what is religious in New Guinea. Transcendental elements are completely missing; the aim of rituals, communal or individual, is to obtain prosperity for oneself and the opposite for one's enemies. Most societies have some sort of belief in an afterlife but it is usually conceived of as being the same as life on earth with the absence of death. Even those groups which believe in what might be called gods or 'sky people', believe that they live lives essentially the same as that of man. In egalitarian societies such as New Guinea, where influence over one's fellows can only be obtained through personal prestige, competition with rivals dominates every activity of the ambitious man and he looks to the supernatural to help him. Similarly the villages and their component segments compete not just in war, but in the magnificence of their rituals and in giving gifts which must be exactly reciprocated. Here, too, magic and religion are expected to serve the materialistic aims of the competitors. Black magic in the form of sorcery and witchcraft is also found in much of the island although it has rarely been reported from the populations of the highlands. As well as expressing personal malevolence, these techniques are used in the never-ending struggles for prestige between individuals and groups.

Revenge Before Peace

Despite the very obvious political element in New Guinea religion, each society has its own deeply-held system of beliefs which were never questioned before the arrival of Europeans and Christian missionaries. Most New Guineans are master story-tellers, and complex mythologies explaining not only the creation of Nature and man but also the social system as it now exists are common. These cosmologies not only account for what is, they often indicate how the system is to be maintained. In general, everyone believes that ritual is essential for success and that to keep Nature and the cosmos as they are and should be, to preserve the stability of creation, important ritual must be regularly performed. The idea of balance is usually a feature of such cosmologies and indeed is a concept that suffuses every aspect of life. This comes out very clearly in warfare. Only in a very few parts of the island where the population density was very high was warfare waged to obtain any material end, that is extra land. Elsewhere it was pursued basically for its own sake and was closely bound in with religious beliefs. The killing of an enemy of the village was in itself good, as well as giving prestige to the killer. But the shedding of blood was dangerous and the often very elaborate triumph ceremonies that centred on successful killings usually included rituals of purification.

But although each individual killing was good for the victor, it imposed a duty of revenge on the victim's group, who remained in a state of impurity until they had obtained it. Since both sides believed that balance was inevitable and certainly necessary before peace could be made, revenge was usually obtained, sometimes even by a

Cannibalism in New Guinea was not simply a matter of eating enemies; many cultures... eat only their own dead and leave enemies where they have fallen

specifically engineered betrayal of a member of one's own group, so that vengeance could be achieved. On days of battle between whole villages, more like sporting occasions than war as we know it, everyone wore their most magnificent decorations, and although skirmishing took place, deaths were rare; the occasion serving more as an expression of hostility than its consummation. In many areas at such 'battles', when a man had been wounded on one side, the fight would continue until a man on the other had received a similar wound and then stop, both sides being satisfied and balance being preserved.

Most deaths by violence occurred not in pitched battle but through raids and ambushes undertaken by much smaller parties, whose members had often undergone elaborate strengthening rituals before setting out. Trophies were frequently taken, often the head of the victim, and in the lowlands where every village had at least one men's cult house, skull racks and similar displays were a common part of its decoration. In some areas the whole body of the victim was brought back and eaten under ceremonial conditions, or the victim might be simply killed at a ceremonial site to do honour to spirits and ancestors. But cannibalism in New Guinea was not simply a matter of eating enemies; many cultures, particularly in the highlands, eat only their own dead and leave enemies where they have fallen. In such cases it is a pious duty for all the relatives and friends of the deceased solemnly to eat the sometimes already decomposing body at the funeral.

In both sorts of cannibalism, ideas of incorporation and benefit to the living by the absorption of the dead are common. If warfare and cannibalism, where it occurred, were pleasing to the spirits, they were also expected to aid by promoting fierceness in their adherents and terror in their enemies; but again, not to an unlimited extent, for only if the balance of kills was and remained obstinately uneven was supernatural disfavour thought to be the cause.

The dead are everywhere of some importance but their role varies. The recently dead are usually considered reluctant to leave their earthly homes and may as ghosts watch the doings of their survivors, sometimes with an unfriendly eye. In some areas attack by the ghosts of recently dead kinsmen is a frequent explanation of misfortune, in others ghosts frighten people in the night but are otherwise harmless. The more distant dead, the ancestors, are usually friendly but so remote that they can only exercise the most vague beneficence. The creating spirits exhibit a similar variability; in some areas they may still be approachable and honoured in ritual, in others they have no powers for good or ill and are ignored. Nevertheless, whenever a harvest is displayed or a pig presented to a rival or received and slaughtered, its spirit will be offered to the relevant ancestors or spirits; such a sacrifice costs nothing and serves to keep the spirit world happy.

Spirit intervention is sought in a wide range of activities, food production, pig raising, curing sickness and fertility in general. Not that technical skills are disregarded; it is the combination of practical skill with knowledge of the right spells and invocations that are considered the basis of success in most activities. With the notable exception of Manus, a small island in the Bismarck Archipelago, where the ancestral spirits were believed to enforce a commercial and sexual morality strikingly similar to that of Victorian England, spirits are not concerned with morality. They both help and are attracted by success, no matter how obtained, and most highly successful men are believed not only to be blessed by spirits but to have special access to supernatural ways of harming their rivals.

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Luxury-loving Spirits

The natural differences between the sexes are culturally emphasized throughout New Guinea; even the way men and women carry burdens or paddle canoes are usually sharply opposed. This distinction is carried over into religion which is the exclusive property of men. Women are often believed to be intrinsically powerful and to have their own innate ways of helping and harming others, whereas men can only acquire this sort of mystical power through the spirits. The spirits are pleased by the same things that please men, plenty of food, especially meat, large audiences filled with admiration at parades of beautifully decorated men or of masks, great displays of wealth, or of carvings and paintings. Indeed spirits are pleased by ostentation of every sort.

The over-emphasized segregation of the sexes is achieved by various forms of male cult, into which boys are introduced by successive initiations. These cults are the occasions for parade and decoration and their ceremonies are the most impressive manifestations of the various New Guinea cultures. Such cults centre on the men's ceremonial houses in the lowlands; these huge and beautifully decorated structures can be seen for miles around and form a constant focus of the men's values. In the highlands where such houses are absent or small, special dancing grounds are set aside for ceremonial purposes. These ceremonials have two strands, the initiation of the boys and young men and the display of wealth and magnificence by the men of the group holding the ceremony. In many regions the latter dominates the former and such

A competitive display of wealth and magnificence is an important element of ceremonies, costumes and cult objects *Left* Carving of a hornbill, the circular pattern symbolizing the moon, from a men's cult house *Right* Boar's skull decorated with paint, shells and cassowary feathers *Below right* A warrior wearing his mother's skull and vertebra for protection against spirits: he has a dagger of human bone in his armband and a pig-tusk armlet for each head he has taken *Far right* Warrior ornamented with pig-tusks

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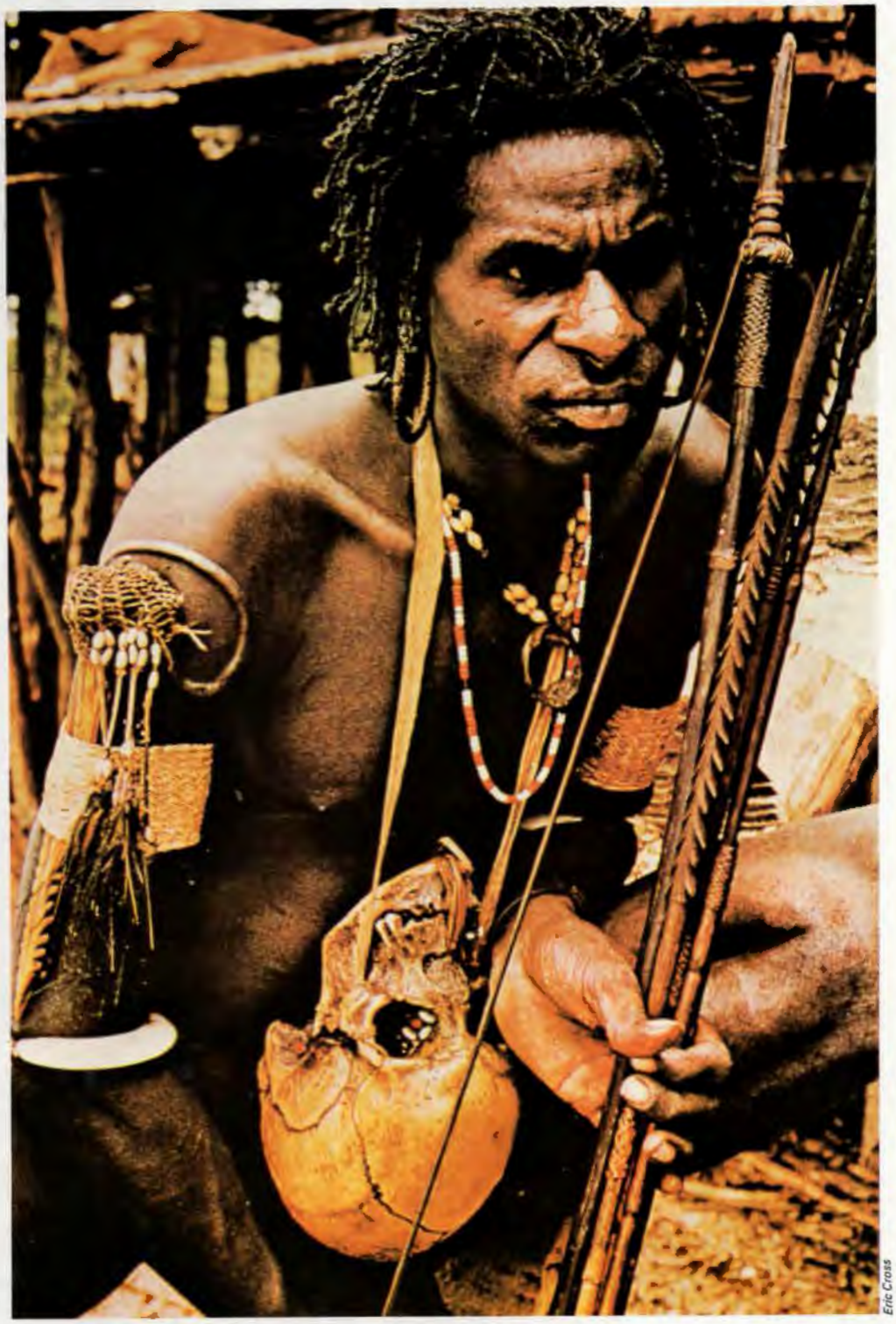
Eric Cross

ceremonies become moves in the game of inter-village prestige, with presentations of wealth and food given to spectators as a complement to the ritual performances.

Inititations of young men, especially those that take place at puberty, often involve violence. The change of status from that of child, associated with the woman, to that of man, separate from woman, is often symbolized by the letting of blood from genitals or nose, or by the cutting of extensive scarifications on the body. Periods of isolation and rigorous taboo are also usual. The removal of the boys and their return as men is often regarded as death and rebirth. The return of the young men to the village, gorgeously decorated, is often hailed by the women as the entry of handsome strangers to whom they show the greatest honour. These ritual re-entries are often spectacular, but it is usually the preceding ceremonies, which form the subject of the initiation, that are the most important and magnificent.

Re-enacting the Creation

Despite their somewhat precarious existence, the simple communities of New Guinea (or, at any rate, their male members) seem able to take months off normal productive work to stage ceremonial; and the peace imposed by colonial administrations has released even more time for such activities. These great festivals may take months of preparation, and extra gardens must be made so that there is plenty of food for the guests. Huge head-dresses, often of feathers, are prepared, masks, carvings and paintings made, great quantities of pigs and valuables of all sorts made ready. These great spectacular cults, which are at their most complete only in the lowlands, are called by the pidgin English name of *tambaran*.

The tambaran is a class of spirit, neither a creator nor an ancestor, whom the men call to the village and who lives there while the ceremony lasts; in fact the men impersonate the tambaran, playing music which is said to be its voice and appearing in masks or with beautifully painted faces and head-dresses, either as the tambaran itself or as associated spirits. The women loyally pretend to believe, and provide food for the spirit, although in fact they know that it is the men who eat it. These ceremonies are exciting and happy times, with plenty of the finest food, dancing all

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night and great parades of decorated men watched by visitors from the whole neighbourhood. For such ceremonies truces are arranged with all enemies and indeed in some areas, enemies must participate since they have an essential role in the ceremonial. These ceremonials have all the appearance of a great secular occasion, and specifically religious elements are often hard to discern. Yet the whole thing is pleasing to the spirits, and the more spectacular, the more visitors who come, the better the spirits are pleased. Further, the whole form of the ceremonial, the decorations, the style of the works of art, indeed every detail, are all believed to have been laid down by the spirits themselves and it is by re-creating their original creation that their beneficence is assured and with it prosperity and success for the performers.

The withdrawal of men into their ceremonial houses and their fear of female contamination, particularly of menstrual blood, provides the basic division in the egalitarian New Guinea societies that are otherwise undivided by differences of class, rank or occupation. In many parts of the island the sex division is accepted as being complementary, but in others real sexual antagonism is aroused; parts of the ritual may give expression to this conflict in attacks by the women on the men at certain stages of the preparations for initiation. Women, too, often have their own rituals, from which men are excluded, particularly at first menstruation, although these are very modest and unspectacular compared to those of the men.

The old beliefs and the new: a painted cult figure (*below*) and worshippers at a Roman Catholic church (*above*). Serious attempts at exploration and administration of New Guinea did not occur until the 20th century

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The men sometimes go to extraordinary lengths in their withdrawal to their ceremonial houses. The Marind-Anim tribe, for instance, obsessed with male purity, used to take the boys into the men's house where they served as wives in a sort of homosexual re-creation of human society without women. The attempt to exclude women was never totally successful, and children went on being born, while the men continued to parade in their masks, some of the most beautiful and fantastic of all New Guinea. Nor did such behaviour inhibit other masculine qualities, for the Marind-Anim were among the fiercest fighters in the area and their raids deep into the British-controlled territory from the Dutch side of the border caused a diplomatic incident at the turn of the century.

Religion in New Guinea is essentially practical and its interests mundane; the spirits are certainly no better than men, only more powerful and sometimes more capricious, but if they play their part in competition, war and sorcery, they are also responsible for some of the most beautiful and magnificent works of art and architecture, and some of the most gorgeous spectacles of the primitive world.

ANTHONY FORGE

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Camera Press London

The robes of these priests are black because that is the colour their black god prefers: new religions in underdeveloped countries tend to combine Christian and pagan elements, and illustrate 'the problems of people dramatically strung between two cultures'

As the old order changes in emergent countries, men need a fresh orientation of religious attitude to incorporate new elements which are foreign to traditional culture; but at the same time new religious movements must satisfy emotional needs which remain relatively unchanged

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

AN ALMOST INVARIABLE accompaniment of processes of rapid and intense social change is the emergence of new religious movements. They are particularly conspicuous in periods of urbanization and industrialization in advancing countries, but are perhaps most spectacular and prolific at times of sudden and disruptive cultural contact between advanced and primitive societies. In such circumstances the clash of cultures gives rise to profound disorientation of the lives, customs and comprehension of simpler peoples. Since it is usually a principal function of religion to interpret the world, in both the cosmological and moral sense, for its followers it is understandable, when a particular view of the world is disrupted, that new attempts to make sense of things should occur.

It is sometimes the existing religious specialists in a society who offer these new religious orientations, but more usually it comes from new prophets. Inevitably what they offer is not entirely new. It tends to be an amalgam of many old ideas and some new ones, a syncretic system of myths, procedures and rituals. Because the disruptions of social life often produce intense anxiety, particularly when they are sudden, new movements frequently manifest patterns of behaviour that approximate to anxiety symptoms. Delusions, institutionalized obsessions, fantasy and escape from reality into a dream world of wish-fulfillments, are frequently found in new movements, particularly at their beginnings. Visions, shaking, hysteria and orgies of sexual indulgence sometimes occur. In some cases they have arisen in close association with military activity against the colonial settlers or the colonial government, and sometimes against the governments of newly independent nation-states in underdeveloped territories. In such circumstances they have often been short lived or sporadically recrudescent. In other cases, we find movements that offer new prescriptions for purely personal anxieties, and sometimes there is a succession of such movements, each of which differs in specific cultural content and in intrinsic myth and ritual, but the goals of which are precisely the same.

Broadly two types of response to disturbed social conditions can be discerned among these movements. Some are militant and revolutionist, providing religious justification for resistance to the intruders who bring a new culture. Others, and there is some reason to suppose that these tend to arise earlier in the process of cultural contact, are basically concerned with providing better magical means to meet the needs of their followers. These latter movements are usually more emotionally and expressively oriented: they are less explicitly concerned with the preservation of the tribe or its culture. Movements also differ in the direction of their concern. Some arise in the name of the preservation or restoration of traditional ways of life. They resist the attrition of native values, and often the ancestors are invoked as the guardians of past culture. Whatever is new, whatever the white man has introduced, are rejected. Other new religions promise their adherents exactly the opposite: the full benefits of modern civilization, the power of the white man's knowledge, and enjoyment of his luxuries, and sometimes they envisage a reversal of roles – a millennial society in which black men are clever and commanding, and white men are ignorant workers. These movements sometimes avowedly reject the culture of the native past, and their leaders promote the imitation of European practices.

New religious movements necessarily exhibit the cultural preoccupations of the particular societies in which they arise. Thus African movements are frequently concerned with the elimination of witches: whilst movements in Melanesia, on the other hand, reveal the preoccupation of tribal

cultures in that part of the world with the acquisition of trade goods. Some movements function particularly as agencies of cultural identification for groups whose traditional way of life is in decay, and whose position is acutely uncertain in a rapidly changing social situation, and this has been very much the case with the peyote cult among North American Indians (see PEYOTE CULTS) and some Maori religious movements in New Zealand.

Similar cultural continuities are to be observed in the new religious movements in contexts other than purely tribal societies. The cults that flourish among Negroes in Haiti and Brazil bear very evident traces of their antique African origin. The Negro populations of the Brazilian coastal cities such as Recife, Bahia and Rio, maintain shrines in which the deities who are worshipped are, despite the Christianization of their names, readily identifiable as gods worshipped by their ancestors in Nigeria and Dahomey (see DAHOMEY). Even in movements that have developed considerable sophistication, such as the new Christian denominations in West Africa, traditional cultural concerns are recognizable behind the organizational forms that have been acquired from Western Christianity and modern styles of denominational structure.

Some of the most dramatic new religious movements have arisen in the Congo, where prophetism had flourished from the very early days of European contact. Most outbursts have been of limited duration until recent times. The prophet whose name is associated with the most important group of movements is Simon Kimbangu, who had been a catechist (trainee member) with a Baptist mission, later claiming to have been called to prophesy, and in particular to undertake healing work. In the prevailing conditions of a society disrupted by the collapse of markets following the end of the First World War, there were many who were ready for some new dramatic development. People travelled long distances to listen to Kimbangu preaching, and although there is no reliable evidence that healings actually occurred, his reputation spread rapidly. Hospitals were deserted, and although he preached against *minkisi* (spirits) and fetishes, and as a consequence of his exhortations the demand for Bibles grew, nonetheless Kimbangu quickly fell foul of the Belgian colonial authorities and of the Roman Catholic missionaries. Natives were leaving their work and journeying to see him, and this excitement was enough to convince the authorities that Kimbangu was a threat to public order. To the natives he was a powerful destroyer of witches: among those who set out to hear him some died on the way, and this was taken as sure evidence that these people were involuntary witches who had died as they approached the counter-witchcraft influence of Kimbangu.

As the authorities became more alarmed, Kimbangu was arrested, but escaped and thereby established even more prestige with his fellow natives. The movement now acquired a strong anti-white impulse which had not been part of its original character. His village was plundered and Kimbangu preached in the bush. The idea of this new folk-hero as a ruler now took root, and what had been an essentially magic, miracle-working movement became a millennialist and revolutionist one. Some of his followers were arrested and in a dramatic gesture, Kimbangu returned to his own village in the fashion of Christ entering Jerusalem, to face arrest, trial and condemnation to death. The death penalty was commuted to life imprisonment, and Kimbangu remained in prison until his death in 1950.

The movement to which he gave his name had only just begun at the time of his arrest, however. Thereafter it thrived on recurrent rumours and expectations of the return of Kimbangu, which was now awaited, much as second adventists await the return of Christ. Indeed Simon Kimbangu became identified with Christ and was regarded by many as the third member of the Trinity. Periodic outbreaks of enthusiasm occurred. Kimbanguists began to celebrate the third day of the week as their special day of religious observance. In some places the movement remained avowedly anti-white and adventist: in other places sympathetic Lutheran missionaries directed it into a more conventional type of revivalism. But periodic government repression and the influence of local prophets in many districts led the more extreme groups to take refuge in the bush where some of them engaged in new and bizarre rites directed towards the eradication of witchcraft. Missionaries reported that at some of these ceremonies, shaking, frenzied dancing and ordeals of lying down in the fire occurred. In response to government action against them, the various local groups tended to become more anti-Christian and pagan. Attempts were made to resuscitate the dead and some of the dances were lecherous and orgiastic. Such practices reverted to traditional preoccupations – healing and the purging of witches and concern with the ancestors – and represent an alternative response to the millennialist expectations of other branches or phases of the movement.

Two prominent prophets arose in the 1930s claiming to have inherited the mantle of Kimbangu. They were Andrew Matswa, who was active in the (then French) Congo, and Simon Mpadi. Matswa served in the French army in Morocco and later lived in Paris where he moved in left-wing circles. There he was successful in getting a government subsidy for a welfare organization to help Africans in Paris, and through this association, Matswa sent agents to collect funds in the Boko district of French Equatorial Africa, although those who contributed had widely divergent ideas of the purpose of their donations. Matswa may have been a crook, a political agitator or even a religious leader. He was prosecuted and this was enough to make him a martyr, and his movement, variously known as 'the religion of the candle' and 'the religion of the sacred wood' flourished after his death after a few years of imprisonment. It remained a potent force in the French Congo, and the Matswaists were an important group in the period leading to independence in the late 1950s.

Mpadi rose into prominence largely

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Many new sects in Africa link Christian doctrines with African beliefs in witchcraft, magical healing and direct contact with a god through spirit-possession. The wife (*above*) and the chief acolyte (*below*) of the Rhodesian prophet Muchetera, who becomes possessed by the spirit of the god Chaminuka and transmits through his acolytes the words of the god to the worshippers *Right* Alice Lenshina, who was originally a member of a Church of Scotland mission in Rhodesia: people flocked to her to be baptized after she claimed to have met Jesus during a period of three deys and three nights when she was 'dead', and she founded her own Lumpa Church

Associated Press

through his association with the Salvation Army. The Salvationists arrived in the Congo in 1934–5 and had immediate success with the natives. Unfortunately, what the Salvationists took to be Christ touching the hearts of savages, was an experience with quite a different interpretation for the natives. The Salvation Army taught religion in a context of emotional freedom and joyousness; they wore a uniform; and they were prepared to shake hands with natives. They offered them a new flag. Above all, on the lapels of their coats they wore the significant letter 'S' for 'salvation', which the half-literate natives took to be a symbol for the sacred name, Simon. To the natives, the Salvationists were the new whites, the army which would lead to salvation and the return of Simon Kimbangu.

Once the natives were disillusioned about the Army, a separatist movement grew up from among those who had joined it. It now provided the model for a new style of religious movement. Simon Mpadi had been a regular Salvationist sergeant for about a year, and the movement which he founded during the intervals between periods of imprisonment, was known as the Khakists, from the uniform it adopted. Later other leaders took over, but not before, in his own area, Mpadi had established a reputation as a prophet whose return, during his imprisonment, was awaited like the advent of a new age.

In 1951 the Belgian authorities granted greater freedom to natives to establish religious organizations, and in 1956 one of Kimbangu's sons established the *Eglise de Jesus Christ sur la terre par le prophète Simon Kimbangou* (the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu). The movement has many Protestant elements, including baptism by immersion, use of the Bible, public confession and a Protestant type hymnology. A few years later Simon Mpadi was released from prison and returned to lead what continued as a more exotic adaptation of Christianity to African conditions.

Clash with Authority

More recent religious movements, whilst continuing to manifest concern with witchcraft, have tended to espouse the organizational forms of the Christian missions and churches. They have thus persisted better, and have been more immediately visible than were the older cults that centred on the self-claimed power over witchcraft of one prophet. Among the most dramatic of anti-witchcraft movements has been the Lumpa Church of Alice Lenshina in Zambia.

Alice Lenshina was a simple tribeswoman who belonged to the Church of Scotland Lubwa Mission in (then) Northern Rhodesia. In 1953, Lenshina claimed to have received visions, to have entertained angels, and to have met Jesus during a period of three nights and three days when she was 'dead'. Initially she remained in the mission where a wise missionary sought to use, rather than to suppress, her religious impulses. She testified against hatred, stealing, swearing, lying, adultery and other sins, and she soon acquired a name as a prophetess among the natives. After a little time she began to baptize people, and called them to surrender to her their horns, charms and other implements of witchcraft. Her fame spread, and pilgrims came from as far away as Lake Tanganyika and Nyasaland. She taught the pilgrims songs, and after a time began to authorize teachers. Up to this point her message was by no means out of harmony with Christian teachings – despite her dramatic visionary claims.

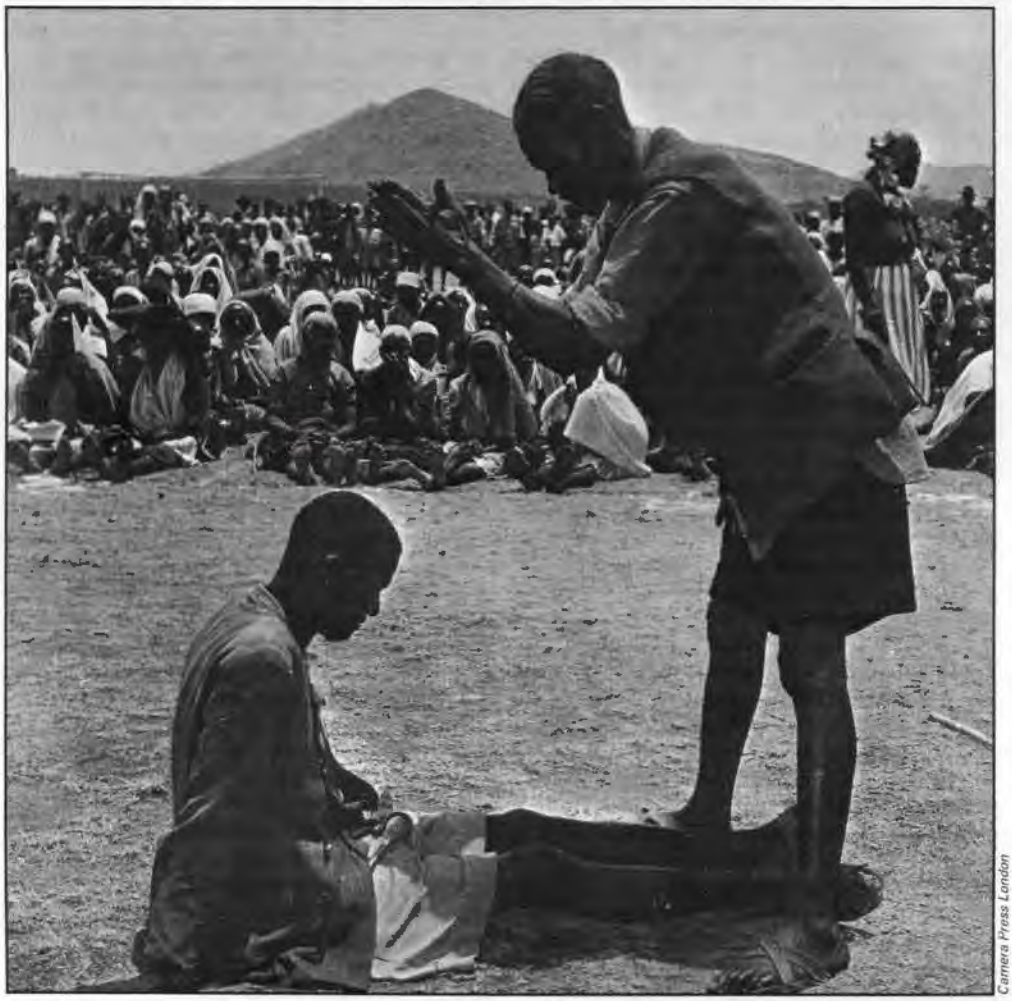
But the accommodation of such a powerful teacher to mission Christianity proved difficult. In particular, the Roman Catholic missions in the area were denuded of their following and Lenshina began to incur the hostility of the missionaries. Some declared that she had been given to spirit-possession when young, and others asserted that the new movement was an African nationalist and racist organization. There is, however, no evidence that Lenshina taught anything about an impending cataclysm which would overtake the government or the whites, even though – in common with Christian Churches – she had some teachings about the millennium. The central concern of the Lumpa Church was the elimination of witchcraft, but even this was misrepresented. Press reports by journalists, who understood little of African cultures, mistook witchcraft-elimination for witchcraft itself.

Inevitably, a quickly-growing movement of this kind met antagonism; her popular strength was great, and this emboldened her followers to defy the government on certain issues. She held court rather in the traditional style of a chief; thus prophetism here, as elsewhere in Africa, was an avenue of social mobility. Nonetheless, district officers conceded that in the Chinsali district where the Lumpa Church was strongest, morality had greatly improved. In 1963 the followers of Lenshina became involved in politics, despite her exhortations, and in the last days before complete independence a clash occurred between Lumpa churchmen and the authorities in which some hundreds of her followers were killed. Alice Lenshina, although perhaps not responsible for this conflict, was arrested and for some years the government prohibited the movement.

Cult of the Tigari

One of the most celebrated of anti-witchcraft movements was the Tigari cult which spread throughout Ghana and neighbouring territories in the 1940s, and which was directed to the elimination of witches, the procuring of health, fortune and children. Tigari ceremonial was enacted for 'clients' who had particular requests to make at the shrine, and Tigari priests manipulated their equipment to bring the semi-magical forces that they claimed to command into operation. To the accompaniment of drums, sacrifices were performed by which the priest claimed to exorcize witches or the effect of witchcraft. Malefactors were condemned and fines were levied against them: the system worked because those condemned feared the power of the Tigari priest and his medicine, and so yielded up whatever was demanded of them.

Salvation Army Information Services



Camera Press London

Above **The Salvation Army's S symbol aroused enthusiasm among Africans who mistook it for an emblem of the prophet Simon Kimbangu** ***Left*** **Mock magical rite performed before an audience of 'witches' in Kenya**

As long as the cult was popular, Tigari provided a swifter avenue of social mobility than had the older religious system. In a society where men were just beginning to recognize the possibilities of 'getting on in the world', of leaving tribal and village associations and traditionally ascribed roles, it is not surprising that religion should become a field of endeavour both for those seeking wealth and success and those attempting to exercise power.

A decline in the Tigari cult occurred in the 1950s, because changing circumstances demand new magical responses. What followed Tigari was an interesting development which illustrated a continuance of traditional preoccupations, the intensification of demand for reassurance from the insecurities with which Tigari had sought to cope, and the growing capacity to adopt Western forms of organization. The new movements resembled very much more the mission churches and, increasingly, the more modern among the denominational organizations in Western countries that supported missions. They also incorporated, along with these forms of organization, an explicit commitment to Christianity. The origin of these movements was the Christian missions, and their leaders were all men trained in, and often occupying minor ecclesiastical

roles within, the mission churches.

Characteristic were the group of revivalistic movements that sprang up in Nigeria just after the First World War. In some respects the leaders of these movements were looking for a more emphatic, more compelling and more powerful religion than the missions offered, and they became the native equivalents of fundamentalist revivalists in 19th century America. African movements necessarily embraced concerns and preoccupations that were of distinctly African provenance and they wanted a religion that could deal with the magical and evil power which Africans almost all believed in. The Churches that were spawned by these revivals were avowedly committed to faith-healing, to a generally Christian standard of morals, but also to the reassurance of individuals about their most compelling concerns – health, fertility and worldly success. The ecstatic character of services, with drumming, dancing, revelations and the outbreak of inspired utterance, reflects the intensity of concern.

Aladura and the Cherubim

Typical of these movements is the Aladura Church of the Lord, founded by J. A. Ositelu, a disappointed Nigerian catechist in an Anglican mission, who in 1926 received divine inspiration to set up his own Church in Western Nigeria. Today that Church has branches in various West African countries, working under an elaborate written constitution, with a well-regulated hierarchy of officials from its Primate down to local 'Captains' and ministers. The insistence on prophecy is underlined by the institution of the office of 'Prophet' and 'Assistant Prophet'. The thousands who attend Aladura services regard themselves as Christians, but emphasize that they belong to 'spiritual Churches'. The term spiritual refers to the belief in the continued operation of spiritual power in the Church, and the expectation of revelations to the congregation at large through its inspired agents. Among bodies which prefer to be collectively known by this term is the Church of the Lord, the Cherubim and Seraphim movement, which is also found in other West African countries besides Nigeria, where it originated.

The spiritual Churches draw in large numbers of West Africans, mainly from the new lower middle classes in rapidly growing cities such as Lagos, Accra and Freetown. The services have the form of Christian worship, with hymns and choruses borrowed from the missions. In the Church of the Lord, hymnology is evangelical, liturgy is closer to that of the Roman Church, whilst the central preoccupations are emphatically African. Drumming, dancing and repetitive choruses continue for three or more hours at Sunday and week-night 'watch services'. Members of the congregations are exhorted to dress in white. Like Moslems they are barefoot, and for their prayer exercises they also adopt the Moslem practice of kneeling and bowing to the ground. Occasionally an individual becomes possessed during the dancing, or is afflicted by strong pangs of conscience; in writhing agony he is taken out to the 'mercy ground' – a sandy enclosure – outside the church to wrestle in the Spirit, shouting and rolling in the sand, until, calm again, he rejoins the congregation.

During the principal services individuals will sometimes announce visions they have seen during the period of collective prayer, and these are usually interpreted by the officiating minister. Even more important, however, are the institutionalized revelatory interviews between (in the Church of the Lord) the lay officials known as 'the Army of Jesus' and congregational participants. The officials move about among the crowd, halting in front of an individual who then goes down on his knees whilst the official intones. 'Oh Brother, the Lord has revealed unto me . . .' and then continues to indicate what is likely to befall the particular member and how he might ward off evil, induce goodwill from God and protect himself and his family from illness and witches.

New religious movements in Africa illustrate the problems of people dramatically strung between two cultures and two sets of assumptions about the world and its religious interpretation. The same is true, in even stronger measure, of the less developed tribal peoples of Melanesia. But such movements there reflect distinctive cultural concerns which differ significantly from those to be found in Africa. The common element is the demand for prosperity, but in Melanesia there is a much more emphatic demand for power which will bring the benefits of white technology and white material equipment to natives (see CARGO CULTS).

Brazilian Movements

Even among peoples much more used to the facilities of modern life than the Melanesians, as for example in Brazil, the problem of interpreting social experience persists. Insecurity in the cities and ignorance in rural areas give rise to strong desires to manipulate spiritual forces and wrest some good from a recalcitrant world. Brazil is a country of dramatic religious expression and a wide variety of movements exist side-by-side there, representing completely unreconciled conceptions of the supernatural. There has been, for example, a rapid growth in Brazil of modern Pentecostal movements, both in consequence of the work of the missionaries of such sects flourishing in the United States (see PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT), and as a local spontaneous development among some groups of Brazilians, particularly Italian immigrants. Apart from growing branches of other American sects, such as Jehovah's Witnesses (see JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES), who are active in many parts of the world and particularly in underdeveloped countries, there is also a stronger body of Spiritualists in Brazil than anywhere else in the world. There have been several vigorous millennial movements.

Brazilian Spiritualists are of two principal kinds, those known as Kardecists, so called because their religious views derive from the writings of Alain Kardec, a French 19th century Spiritualist who acquired a significant following in Brazil; and those known as Umbandists. The Umbandists represent a more primitive type of Spiritualism, the inspiration for which is originally African, and which in some respects is rather closer as a religious phenomenon to the beliefs and practices of the *candomblés* of Bahía and Recife than to the more sophisticated, metaphysical system espoused by the Kardecists. The Kardecists believe in reincarnation, the remoteness of God and therefore the necessity of appealing to lesser spirits for assistance in one's worldly concerns. There is some emphasis among them on general ethical principles and they have also steadily developed a programme of social service. Some of the more intellectual among the Kardecists are openly contemptuous of the crude performances, spirit-possession and the search for spectacular manifestations among the Umbandists.

The candomblés are in themselves not an organized religious movement, but rather a collection of independent shrines presided over by a priest or priestess, upon whom wait a group of acolytes, usually women. At services in the candomblés the young women, most of whom are dedicated to a particular god, dance until they become possessed by the deity, in whose special robes they are then dressed. They then dance and behave entirely according to the character of the deity to whom they are dedicated. They may act quite licentiously and impertinently to those who come seeking their aid, but they also provide advice, inspiration and evoke faith among the crowds of believers who flock into the candomblés every night. The clientele is largely Negro, but in recent years the spectacular performances of some priestesses whilst possessed have begun to command the attendance of more sophisticated Brazilians, and perhaps also their belief. The deities, although taking Christian names, are the gods of West African religions, or, in some cases, combine attributes of the gods of the indigenous Indian population of Brazil.

Many hundreds of new religious movements, some of very brief duration, have been recorded in underdeveloped countries. As the peoples of such countries acquire greater organizing ability, learn to imitate the forms and systems of white men, and benefit from education, so their indigenous religious movements can acquire, as among the Aladura Churches of West Africa, the necessary structure for more permanent operation. Inevitably, as this process of learning occurs, so too the intrinsic religious conceptions of a people steadily undergoes transformation and increasingly such new movements as persist come to show closer approximations to the religious forms common in the Western world.

BRYAN WILSON

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Photo Mrabet/Pen on Tour

Among the lunatic fringe of German racial theorists was the founder of this esoteric Order; although Hitler despised him and those like him as 'politically ineffective', many of von Liebenfels's theories were later put into practice by the Nazis

NEW TEMPLARS

VIENNESE OCCULTIST, racial theorist and founder of the Order of New Templars, Dr Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels was a representative member of what has aptly been described as the European 'intellectual underground'. The son of middle class but apparently well-to-do parents, he was born at Vienna on 19 July 1874 as Adolf Lanz. Nevertheless, he claimed that his father was Baron Johannes Lancz de Liebenfels and that he was born at Messina, Italy, on 1 May 1872. The incorrect birth date was intended to mislead astrologers who might be interested in his horoscope. His doctorate, however, existed only in his own imagination.

In 1893, at the age of 19, he became a novice at a Cistercian monastery at Heiligenkreuz (on the present Austro-Hungarian border) but was expelled six years later for 'worldly and carnal desires'. Shortly afterwards he founded his Order of New Templars, which had a strongly 'racial-religious' emphasis. In 1934, a year after Hitler came to power, he wrote that the Order was 'the first manifestation of the Movement (i.e. Hitler's) which now, in accordance with the law of God, is most powerful in history and unrestrainedly sweeping over the world.' Lanz was not the only founder of a Central European sect to claim that he had anticipated Hitler's racial and other theories.

Montage combining a Nazi flag – the swastika was an important 'Ario-heroic' symbol – with a statue which was a favourite with Lanz von Liebenfels because it expressed his fears of the degradation of the 'superior' races by the inferior. Lanz suggested the establishment of special colonies for the breeding of 'Germanic' children, and many of his racial theories anticipated the later beliefs and policies of the Nazis

The Master Race

The largest and the most persistent bee in Lanz's muddled bonnet was the necessity to defend the purity of the 'Ario-heroic' white master race. This could only be achieved by the maintenance of strict eugenic standards. Lanz was not exclusively antisemitic and was equally apprehensive about the supposedly baneful effects of 'Germanic' intermarriage with people of Slav or non-white descent. Thus candidates for admission to his Order ideally had golden hair, blue or grey-blue eyes, a rosy complexion, a narrow skull and face, a high-bridged and narrow nose, and slim hands and feet.

Since this was the racial type that Lanz wished to perpetuate, it was necessary to breed such people. Hence his advocacy of the establishment of breeding colonies where one man might, if necessary, inseminate several women. Since he was eternally a theorist rather than a man of action he never personally implemented this design, but one or two somewhat similar experiments were made in Germany before 1933, although not under Lanz's auspices. Heinrich Himmler later proposed something of the kind for his S.S.

At least theoretically, Lanz anticipated all or most of the Nazis' repressive racial measures, such as the eradication of 'unsatisfactory' racial types or groups by castration or sterilization, starvation, forced labour and other means. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that he would have countenanced the 'gas chamber' solution if he had been in a position to implement it. Lanz and his followers belonged to the absolutely lunatic fringe sector of the pre-Nazi Pan German movement.

The Order of New Templars represented the most esoteric of Lanz's multifarious activities as a racial publicist and 'authority', and membership of its inner circle was limited to carefully selected initiates. The Order acquired its first Temple in 1907 when Lanz purchased and equipped Burg Werfenstein, a romantic ruin high above the River Danube. It is recorded that he hoisted a flag incorporating a swastika there in that year, when Hitler himself was only 18 years old. Lanz was an early user of the swastika symbol, which was soon to become associated with a score or more of *völkisch* or German nationalist groups in both Austria and the Reich (see NATIONAL SOCIALISM). Other Temples were consecrated later at Marienkamp, close to the Plattensee, at Staufen near Ulm, and at Rügen on the Baltic coast. The Order also had cells at Salzburg and in Hungary.

Secret Bible

The New Templars never represented a mass movement and its existence probably remained unknown to all except an enthusiastic minority. With the exception of the dramatist August Strindberg, with whom Lanz was on friendly terms, no widely-known personalities were members.

The Order's initiates held 'Grail Celebrations' at Burg Werfenstein and elsewhere, and in duly impressive surroundings, garbed in white robes, practised the

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Above **Back page from an issue of *Ostara*, 'Library of the Blondes', in 1922: this grotesquely racialist magazine was run by Lanz von Liebenfels, founder of the New Templars** ***Below*** **As a young man, Lanz was for a time a novice at a Cistercian monastery**

British Museum

Order's rituals, all of which were written by Lanz.

He himself created a vast ceremonial and pseudo-liturgical literature. This included *The Psalms in German, The New Templars' Breviary* in 2 volumes (1915–16) and selections of historical, moral and mystical readings for members of the Order, all taken from the literature of 'Ario-heroic' peoples of all eras. The *Hebdomadarium*, a collection of week-day prayers, was intended for use with the readings. Finally there was Lanz's *Bibliomystikon*, or 'secret bible for the initiated' in 10 volumes. It has been estimated that Lanz's published works, largely forgotten today, amount to more than 15,000 printed pages.

Lanz was also the creator of an esoteric system known as Ariosophie, to which almost everything could be referred, particularly racial hygiene. There were a fair number of Ariosophists in Germany and Austria after 1918 and some of them were also members of the New Templars. An Ariosophical monthly published in Germany by Herbert Reichstein, one of Lanz's most devoted supporters, reflects the sect's interest in most branches of occultism or pseudo-science: astrology, phrenology, the Cabala, fringe medicine, diet reform and so on. Lanz himself wrote untiringly on all these subjects although 'race' was always his major preoccupation. By this he meant the superiority of the 'blond' race and its eternal battle with inferior races, which represented the powers of evil.

'The World Will Tremble'

In 1958 W. Daim, a Viennese psychologist, published a study of Lanz with the intriguing title *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab* (The man who gave Hitler the ideas). Daim tried to establish that Lanz's influence on Hitler was a substantial one. Hitler had one brief meeting with Lanz at Vienna in 1909, when he called at his office to collect some back numbers of the latter's periodical *Ostara*. Hitler was then about 20 years old. In a letter written to a member of the New Templars in February 1932 Lanz proposed that 'Hitler is one of our pupils . . . you will one day experience that he, and through him we, will one day be victorious and develop a movement that makes the world tremble.'

However, when the Nazis finally came to power in 1933, Lanz supposed that his work as a pioneer racial eugenist and early protagonist of National Socialist ideology would be acclaimed in Germany, but this never happened. He was forbidden to write for publication when the Germans invaded Austria in 1938 and the Order went underground.

Hitler had realized as early as 1924, when he was writing the first volume of *Mein Kampf*, that men like Lanz were politically ineffective. In *Mein Kampf* he summarily dismissed them as *völkisch* wandering scholars, absurd figures without any positive influence, who had fought for 40 years for a so-called idea without achieving the slightest success.

It would therefore be a mistake to overestimate Lanz's influence on Hitler or, indeed, his later genocidal policies. Lanz was but one of scores of Austrian and German writers and publicists who concerned themselves with the concept of 'race'. But none of them, not even Heinrich Himmler, could match Lanz's obsessional identification with crackpot eugenic theories and racial mysticism.

Lanz died at Vienna on 22 April 1954. His wish to be buried at the monastery at Heiligenkreuz was refused. However, a rumour was current in New Templar circles that the monks were so anxious to have the mortal remains of their 'greatest son' that they secretly disinterred the body and removed it to the monastery at Heiligenkreuz for reburial.

ELLIC HOWE

British Museum

NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

1984

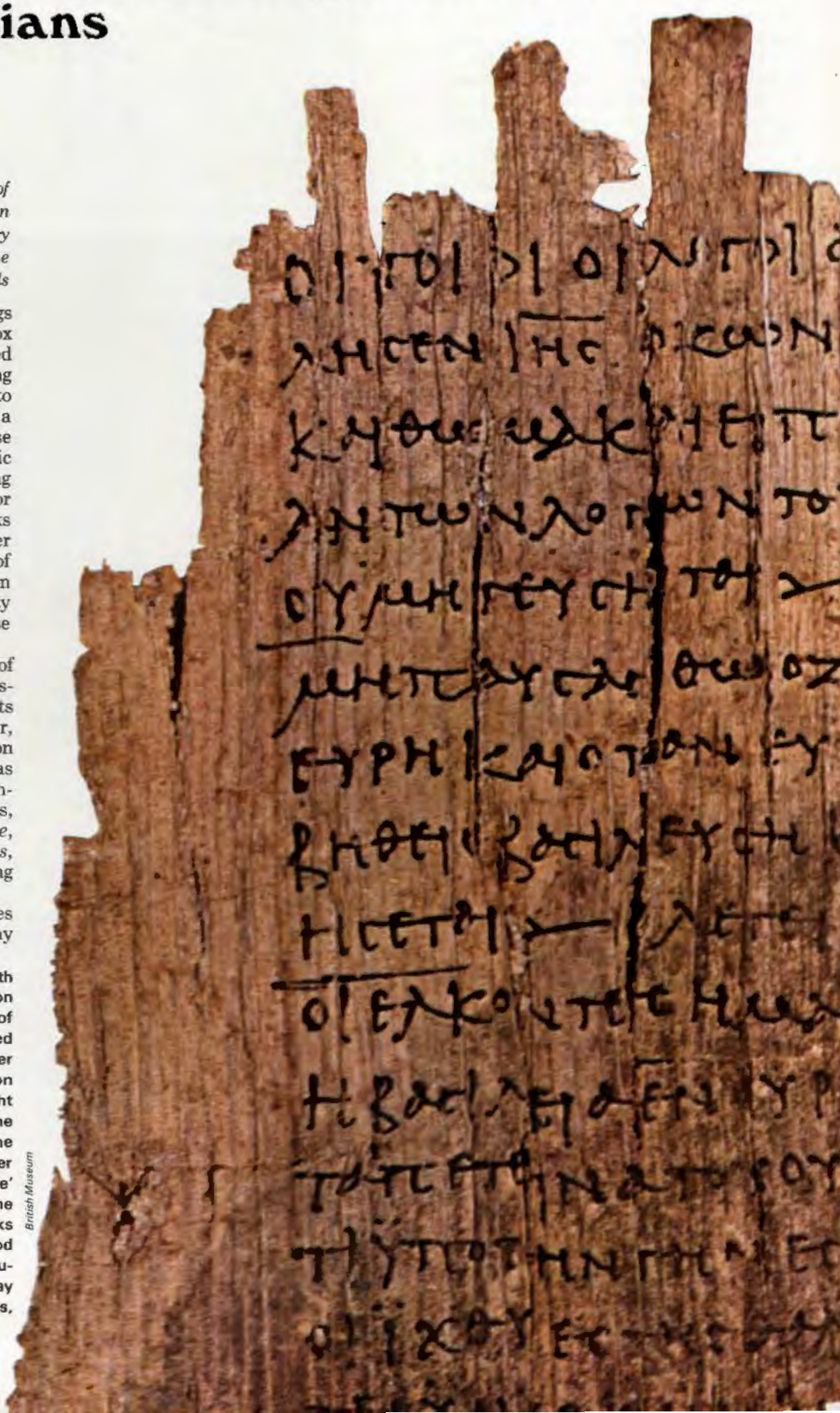
These writings are of the greatest importance for understanding the thought and outlook of early Christians

Touching and curious stories of the boyhood of Jesus are to be found in these little-known works, written partly to satisfy the ordinary Christian's need for more information about the holy family than is given in the canonical gospels

A NUMBER of ancient Christian writings that were not included in the orthodox canon of the New Testament are designated 'apocryphal', a word originally meaning 'hidden' or 'secret', which was applied to books written specially for the initiates of a distinctive sect or cult. Since many of these writings belonged to Christian Gnostic sects, the term gradually assumed among orthodox Churchmen the sense of 'false' or 'spurious'. The fact that most of the books are fictitiously ascribed to apostles and other notable characters of the first years of Christianity does not, however, render them 'spurious'; for the authorship of the majority of the orthodox scriptures is likewise suppositious.

The writings grouped under the title of New Testament Apocrypha are to be distinguished from another set of documents entitled the 'Apostolic Fathers'. The latter, although they were excluded from the canon of the New Testament, are regarded as orthodox and greatly esteemed. They comprise the epistles of Clement, Barnabas, Ignatius and Polycarp, the *Didache*, writings of Papias, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Epistle to Diognetus*, all dating from the 2nd century AD.

The Apocryphal New Testament includes many different kinds of writings; they may



Left The Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus, 16th century: the Virgin wears a crown and stands on a crescent moon in front of a circle of rays of light, to identify her with 'the woman clothed with the sun' of the book of Revelation (chapter 11), who had 'the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars . . . she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron 'but, menaced by the Devil in the form of a great red dragon, 'her child was caught up to God and to his throne' *Right* Fragment of a Greek version of the Gospel of Thomas, one of the apocryphal works which contained stories about the childhood of Jesus, including what became a very popular legend that he made 12 sparrows of clay and brought them to life by clapping his hands, when they flew away, chirping merrily

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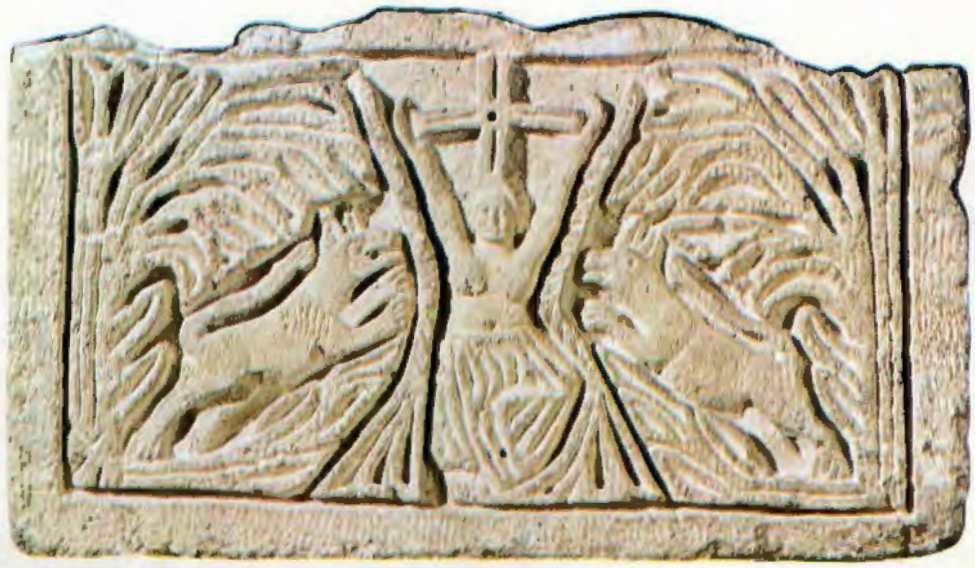
In the early Christian centuries, apocryphal writings fed the appetite to know more about the lives of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the apostles than the New Testament itself provided, and many of these writings contained stories which became popular themes of art and literature

Right **Limestone relief of the martyrdom of St Thecla, a leading character in the apocryphal Acts of Paul. She was a virgin who was fascinated by St Paul's preaching and disguised herself as a man to follow him** ***Below*** **The martyrdom of St Andrew, on the X-shaped cross traditionally associated with him; by Mattia Preti** ***Far right*** **Caravaggio's painting of the crucifixion of St Peter: an apocryphal gospel supposedly written by St Peter was produced in the 2nd century**



Brooklyn Museum

Scala

be conveniently grouped in four categories: gospels, acts, apocalypses and epistles. The motives that prompted the creation of this apocryphal literature were various. In some instances a particular doctrinal interest can be discerned, usually of a heretical kind; the writing concerned was evidently designed to promote this interest by representing its endorsement by Christ or an apostle. The Gospel of Thomas, discovered together with other ancient apocryphal documents in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, in Upper Egypt, is a notable example of this tendency.

Another very evident motive was the popular desire to know more about Jesus, the Virgin Mary and other gospel figures than the New Testament writings record; in particular the 'hidden years' of Jesus's boyhood naturally provoked curiosity. Apocryphal writings met this need with vivid detailed narratives, replete with notable miracles. Whether such writings were of heretical origin or not, their intrinsic interest made them widely popular among orthodox Christians. Thus, despite their lack of authority as canonical books, they are of the greatest importance for understanding the thought and outlook of ordinary Christians during the early centuries of Christianity. Moreover, they were a source of inspiration to Christian artists, and the interpretation of much medieval art depends upon a knowledge of them.

Among the apocryphal gospels mention must first be made of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. This writing, which is known only by quotations and references of other writers, was originally composed in Hebrew or Aramaic and incorporated early Jewish Christian tradition. One of its most interesting passages, quoted by Jerome (c 340–420), records an incident not related in the canonical gospels. James, the brother of Jesus, vowed that he would not eat until he had seen Jesus risen from the dead. The risen Jesus brought bread to James, saying: 'My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from them that sleep.' There is reason for thinking that the recently diseovered Coptic Gospel of Thomas, already mentioned, preserves sayings of Jesus that were originally recorded in the gospel according to the Hebrews.

Fragments survive of a Gospel of Peter, which was probably written about 150 AD. It purports to give a detailed account of the

Scala

resurrection of Jesus as reported by the Roman guard at his tomb. It tells how the soldiers heard a great sound and saw the heavens open and two men, resplendent in light, descend and draw near to the sepulchre. At their approach, the stone that sealed the entrance rolled back of its own accord, and the men entered. When they emerged, they were sustaining a third man, and a cross followed them. The heads of the two reached to heaven, and that of the third was even higher. The soldiers then heard a voice coming out of the heavens, saying: 'Hast thou preached unto them that sleep?' And answer came from the cross: 'Yea'. After this, another man descended from heaven and entered the tomb and remained there. When they had witnessed these marvels, the soldiers went to Pilate and reported what they had seen, being convinced thereby that Jesus was the son of God. Pilate ordered them to keep silent about the matter.

Jesus's Childhood Miracles

Of the so-called infancy gospels, that known as the Book of James or Protoevangelium concerns the infancy and early life of the Virgin Mary until the birth of Jesus (see MARY). The childhood of Jesus was described in a number of writings, of which the oldest is the Gospel of Thomas (which is to be differentiated from the recently found Coptic gospel of the same name). Greek, Latin and Syriac versions of its text exist. The Greek version announces itself as: 'The stories of Thomas the Israelite, the Philosopher, concerning the works of the childhood of the Lord'. The narrative that follows recounts a number of miracles performed by Jesus as a child, attesting his divine character and power.

It relates, for example, how at the age of five years, Jesus made twelve clay sparrows, when playing with other children on the sabbath. A passing Jew informed Joseph that his son had profaned the sabbath. When reprimanded, Jesus clapped his hands and the clay sparrows took flight, chirping together, to the amazement of the Jews, who are characteristically represented as the enemies of Jesus. On another occasion a child, running through the village, collided with Jesus, who angrily exclaimed: 'Thou shalt not finish thy course'. Immediately the offending child fell to the ground dead. Its parents, who complained to Joseph, were then struck blind by Jesus. When Joseph saw what his son had done, he 'arose and took hold upon his ear and wrung it sore'. After this unedifying episode, the young Jesus displays his miraculous powers in more congenial ways: he raises a child, killed by falling from a roof; he heals the severed foot of a young man who had been cleaving wood. When six years old, sent to draw water for his mother, he accidentally breaks his pitcher and brings back the water in his garment. He helps his carpenter father by miraculously extending a beam that was too short for its purpose. And so the marvels continue throughout the 'hidden years', until the visit of Jesus and his parents, Mary and Joseph, to Jerusalem, as recorded in the gospel of Luke (2.41–52).

Speculation on the home life of Jesus, before his public ministry, also provided another topic of great interest to Christians. The gospels tacitly suggest that Joseph, the father or foster-father of Jesus, had died sometime during those 'hidden years' in the home at Nazareth. To the pious imagination it was accordingly apparent that Joseph died an 'ideal death'; for both Jesus and Mary were present to ease his last moments. The theme found dramatic expression in a 4th century writing, which was composed in Egypt, and exists now in Coptic and Arabic versions. It is known as the History of Joseph the Carpenter or the Death of Joseph. Its introductory statement announces that the account had been given by Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, to his apostles, who recorded it in writing, and deposited the document in the library at Jerusalem. Joseph is reported to have been 111 years old at his death, which occurred on the 26th day of the month Epep.

The description of Joseph's last moments deserves mention, both for the curious personification of death and for the imagery of the soul's departure. Jesus is represented as telling how, as the fatal hour drew nigh, he saw Death, with a demonic company, approaching the house to torment the dying Joseph as they did all men. Jesus puts these grisly beings to flight. But Death has a necessary office to perform; frightened by Jesus, it hides behind the door. When the last moment comes, Jesus summons the awful being from its refuge and bids it

The lives of the Virgin Mary and St Joseph, the father or foster-father of Jesus, early attracted apocryphal treatment and in the 2nd century the Book of James gave an account of Mary's early life. Her parents, Joachim and Anna, were divinely informed of her coming birth; at the age of three she was taken to the Temple at Jerusalem, where she spent her girlhood; Joseph, a widower, was selected by God to be her husband. Great emphasis was already being placed on her stainless purity
Left **The birth of the Virgin, by the Master of the Life of Mary** ***Right*** **Mary is taken to the Temple by her parents; by Giotto** ***Below*** **The wedding of Mary and Joseph, by Giotto: Joseph holds a rod flowering as a lily, an emblem of purity, on which the white dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, is descending**

Scala

separate Joseph's soul gently from his body. The angels Michael and Gabriel then receive the soul in a costly silken napkin and bear it away to heaven, amid songs of praise. After watching the safe ascent of Joseph's soul, which was unseen by the others at the death-bed, Jesus then turns to perform the last offices for the body of Joseph, and to comfort Mary and his brothers and sisters.

Obedient Insects

The canonical Acts of the Apostles whetted the appetite of later generations of Christians for more information about the apostles. The need was met by the production in the 2nd century of the Acts of John and the Acts of Paul. Other apocryphal Acts of Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Philip and other apostles duly followed. A collection of five of these acts was used by the Manicheans in place of the canonical Acts of the Apostles. The apocryphal acts included many fantastic stories; but they had a wide appeal and provided many dramatic subjects for medieval Christian art.

The Acts of John relates this quaint incident as proof of the efficacy of the apostle's prayers. Journeying from Laodicea to Ephesus, John and his companions rest for the night at a deserted inn, but sleep becomes impossible owing to the activity of bugs. John eventually commands the tormentors to leave the place and no longer disturb the servants of God. The next morning the bugs are found waiting obediently at the door of the inn until John gives them permission to return to their home in the bed. The episode closes with a pious reflection by John on the ready obedience of the insects to the voice of a man, contrasted with human heedlessness of the voice of God.

A case of necrophilia, which throws interesting light on the sexual asceticism of the early Christians is also described in the Acts of John. Drusiana, a devout Christian whose piety caused her to abstain from cohabiting with her husband Andronicus, also a Christian, involuntarily excites the passions of Callimachus, a young pagan. Profoundly grieved by the situation, Drusiana dies. But Callimachus, though repulsed by the living woman, seeks to satisfy himself on her dead body. He bribes her husband's steward to give him access to her tomb. But while Callimachus is carrying

Scala

Scala

With mounting veneration of the Virgin, it came to be accepted that at her death she had been taken up bodily into heaven, a belief which apparently originated in heretical circles in the 4th century but was later adopted by orthodox Christians

Previous page **Death of the Virgin Mary, by the great Sienese master Duccio de Buoninsegna**

Left **The Madonna in Glory, by the 16th century painter Dosso Dossi: the two saints are John the Baptist and John the Divine, the snake in the chalice referring to the miraculous harmlessness of the poison which the latter was forced to drink by the Emperor Domitian**

out his intention, a huge snake emerges, which kills the steward and coils itself about the young man. On the third day after Drusiana's death, the apostle John, with Andronicus and other brethren, visit the tomb 'to break bread'. On learning what had happened, John raises Drusiana and Callimachus from the dead; the latter repents of his wickedness and becomes a Christian. The perfidious steward is also raised, but does not repent and dies horribly a second time.

The Acts of Paul is particularly notable for its account of Paul and Thecla, a betrothed virgin of Iconium. Paul's preaching and personality fascinate Thecla, and despite persecution, she repudiates marriage and follows Paul, cutting her hair and wearing man's attire. She endures further persecution, including being thrown to wild animals which refuse to molest her. Paul eventually sends her back to preach the faith in Iconium, which she does effectively there and in Seleucia. The Acts of Paul also includes a description of the physical appearance of Paul. Paul is described as short of stature, with bow legs; his hair was thin, eyebrows joining and nose hooked – this unflattering portrait suggests that it may be derived from some actual reminiscence of the apostle.

The popular desire to know more about heaven and hell than could be learned from the canonical scriptures led to the production of apocryphal apocalypses, which were attributed to various apostles. They generally have the form of detailed revelations, made to the apostle concerned, of the joys of heaven and the torments of hell. The descriptions of the latter are, significantly, the fuller and more vivid – a similar difference is found in the medieval depictions of heaven and hell. It is likely that some of the accounts of the sufferings of the damned were derived from ancient Orphic eschatologies (see ORPHEUS); the account of the infernal city of Dis in Virgil's *Aeneid* doubtless also had its influence. These apocryphal apocalypses are characterized by their attempts to make the punishment fit the crime. Thus, in the Apocalypse of Peter: 'And over against these were yet others, men and women, gnawing their tongues and having flaming fire in their mouths. And these were the false witnesses'. The oldest of these writings, the Apocalypse of Peter, dates from the 2nd century. The very popular Apocalypse of Paul was a 4th century composition: it claims to be an actual revelation that Paul had recorded, and which was found centuries later hidden in his house at Tarsus.

The oldest of the apocryphal epistles (probably 3rd century) purports to be letters exchanged between Christ and Abgarus, ruler of the district of Edessa. The Letter of Lentulus, a 13th century fabrication, is presented as a report addressed to the Roman Senate by an official, Lentulus, who had seen Jesus. It gives a patently idealized description of his physical appearance, and was doubtless calculated to appeal to Christian devotion. From the 4th century comes a collection of letters allegedly exchanged between St Paul and the famous Roman philosopher, Seneca.

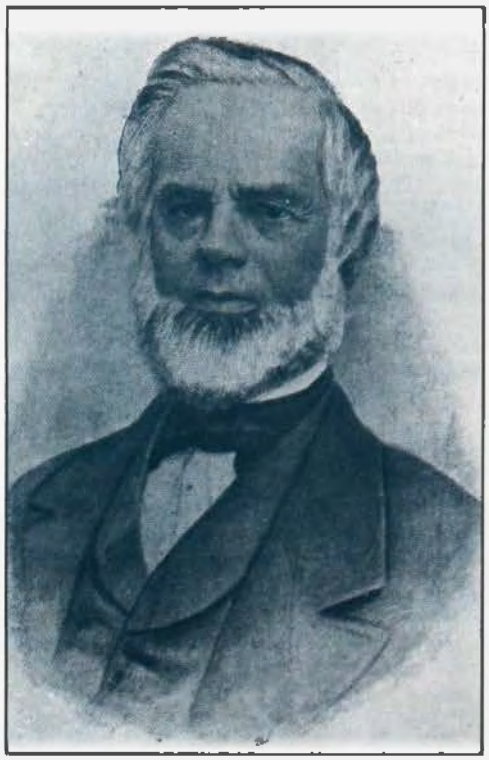
Much of this apocryphal literature is too obviously fanciful, and much of it is very tedious to read. For this reason it has been comparatively neglected by scholars. However, its careful investigation would probably throw much light on aspects of early Christian folklore that are ignored in the writings of the Church Fathers.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: R. Cameron, ed., *The Other Gospels* (Westminster, 1982); *The Lost Books of the Bible* (Bell Pub./Crown, 1979, c1926); J. Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (AMS Press reprint); E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols. (Westminster Press, 1963-6).

'As a man thinks, so is he': movements belonging to the New Thought school believe in the tremendous potentialities of thought for constructive or destructive ends, particularly in relation to healing

NEW THOUGHT



Culver Pictures Inc.

Phineas P. Quimby, who is generally regarded as the founder of New Thought, and whose principle of healing by suggestion also influenced the Christian Science movement

THE TERM New Thought, over the course of a hundred years or so, has come to describe a world-wide alliance of groups with similar ideas about man and his relation to an ultimate universal power. It is necessarily a loose association, for New Thought is neither Church, cult, nor sect, has no creed or dugma, is non-racial, requires no commitment and sets forth no rules of convention.

It is, rather, an attempt to identify a change of belief that began to take shape around the middle of the 19th century in the New England states of America, a belief that broke away from the traditional concept of a deity who sat in judgement, above or outside man, to the idea that God dwelled in man, that man was a spiritual being who could apply the divinity within him to discover and use its infallible laws, generally for good and enlightenment, and specifically for the healing of the sick, in the manner of Jesus.

Not in essence new at all, New Thought was really a gradually evolving compound of mesmerism and hypnosis, as they were currently revealing man's susceptibility to suggestion (see MESMER); idealistic philosophy, with its heavy accent on oriental thought now infiltrating the West; emergent science and psychology, and many of the major ideas of Christianity and other world religions. Even its identifying singularity, mental healing by means of changing the sick person's belief about himself and thus curing the sickness, was but the rediscovery of techniques used earlier by Jesus.

Initially New Thought was, probably, an American phenomenon, for this was a land where all was change and growth, where all old orders, no matter how historical or sacred, could be and were questioned.

One long-entrenched target of dissent was the religion of the majority, orthodox Christianity in its Calvinistic interpretation: a strong reaction to its authoritarian rigidity had been in progress from about the beginning of the 19th century. Another was the Congregational Church, which had already split, with a more liberal concept of its Protestantism having emerged as the new Unitarian Church, appealing to intellectuals and attracting exceptional preachers.

Yet another rebellion was afoot. Though the Unitarians had resisted unreasoning acceptance of the Bible in all its parts, they yet remained fundamentally Protestant. This did not satisfy a third group, which came to be known as the Transcendentalists.

The nature of this group's protest was that they did not hold at all with the precept of revelation by sense, but were convinced that true revelation was by intuition. Within his own mind man had the ability to unfold 'an order of truths', and these absolutes of goodness, wisdom, justice, brotherhood and love were thus available to any and every man who would foster them in himself, in his perceptions. Because this philosophy gathered such eminent and articulate devotees, the most influential of whom was Ralph Waldo Emerson, the New England philosopher and poet, it had an impact far outreaching its numbers. The simplified leading tenet of the Transcendentalists, 'the supremacy of mind over matter', came to be, consciously or unconsciously, the root from which New Thought developed.

What New Thought did with the basic idea was to extend it from mere alert receptivity to the revelations of man's indwelling divinity, which brought about tranquillity but seldom wrought healing, and to put it to work as a practical, logical means of cleansing the mind of error and leading it to the truth, which in turn freed and cured.

Cured by a Bolting Horse

Such was the practice, in particular, of the man who is regarded as the founder of New Thought, Phineas P. Quimby. Born in Lebanon, New Hampshire, in 1802, he spent the greater part of his life in Belfast, Maine, from where, as his ideas evolved, he went forth to lecture and demonstrate in surrounding towns. Eventually he opened an office in Portland, Maine, cured many hundreds of people of varied ailments and diseases, and gained a wide reputation as 'the Portland healer'.

In his early 30s Quimby fell ill, was diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis, and was treated by a physician with great quantities of calomel, a purgative which weakened him so severely that he gave up his business and prepared to die.

Instead, an unusual event set up a train of thought that not only led to his being cured but provided a life's commitment. One day, the horse pulling the carriage in which he was riding, suddenly bolted. By now but a frail shadow of a man, he yet managed to leap into action, control the horse and drive it home. Astonishingly, when he stepped out of the carriage, he felt restored to his former health.

After this experience, he resumed work, but questions continued to nag at him. How, why, had he been able to do this 'impossible' thing? His thoughts turned to 'the supremacy of mind over matter', and thence to the subject of mesmerism. By chance, a demonstration was given in Belfast, and Quimby attended. Deeply impressed, he began experiments of his own with an assistant who was said to be clairvoyant. Although Quimby himself was soon an able mesmerist and hypnotist, and effected many healings by the power of suggestion, it was when his own kidney disease was cured, after it had been pronounced incurable, that he began to speculate further. Had there really been a kidney condition, he asked himself. Was it possible the physician had been guessing, and that his own lively imagination had obliged with the appropriate symptoms? Was it actually necessary to use hypnotic techniques to persuade patients they were well? It occurred to him to wonder whether it could be done by simply talking with them until the trouble was uncovered, then helping them to believe they were healed.

Quimby had not read a great deal, but now he studied the Bible and paid close attention to the words and methods used by Jesus to heal the sick. He began to link the mechanism of suggestion to a system of faith.

Spiritual Science

Dedicated as he had always been, he was now satisfied that he had arrived at an understanding of what he was doing, of the nature of the power he was using: 'it is done unto you as you believe . . .' meant that the same power of belief that made a person sick, could make him well. Quimby, putting into practice teachings that seemed to have lain dormant through the ages, kept on attempting to clarify verbally what he saw as a spiritual science, but did not have the time to spare for much writing. In 1866, at the age of 64, he died of what amounted to overwork.

His ideas were not lost, however, for a number of his pupils and patients carried on his work. Among these was Mary Baker Patterson, who had been healed of a crippling ailment; as Mary Baker Eddy she founded her own Church, though later she broke away from the flexible base of Quimby's thought by compelling total allegiance to her own Christian Science as the ultimate revelation of truth (see CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: EDDY).

In 1921, the few definitions of P. P. Quimby's beliefs that he had put on paper were set in order by Horatio W. Dresser, and were published as *The Quimby Manuscripts*. The long controversy as to whether

or not Mrs Eddy's Christian Science was based on Quimby's (he had even applied the same term to it), while settling the issue of his initial influence on her thinking, did not disprove that she had developed it along different lines.

Many groups have since grown up and proliferated throughout America, as well as Great Britain, Germany, France, Japan, Africa and elsewhere, some short-lived, some permanent and flourishing, which are based on a common philosophical core. Alike as they appear to the uninitiated, the metaphysical variations between, for instance, Divine Science, the Unity School of Christianity, Religious Science (to name a few of the main groups), elude superficial definition and require careful study.

One of the primary reasons why New Thought, as a movement, can well form an alliance (and in fact does so, as the International New Thought Alliance) but cannot so easily become an organization, is that its interpretations around a central theme are apt to be as individual as individuality itself. Groups form ceaselessly around the preferred ideas of a particular leader, and leaders constantly emerge, and probably always will, for the very character of New Thought is that it is always new, advancing as man's mind, science and enlightenment move closer together.

There have been many attempts to define New Thought in its essential points. Charles Brodie Patterson, in his book, *What is New Thought?*, says that it 'has for its foundation Eternal Law – the One-ness of Life-God-Universal Life-Love-Intelligence in all, through all, and above all . . . The truth regarding life and its laws is to be found in man's inner consciousness rather than in the study of phenomena . . . Man's real search is the discovery of his own soul.' Elmer Gifford, a New Thought minister, defined it as 'a theory and a method of mental life with special reference to healing . . .' He asserts that all defect and disorder is of the spirit, and that we are spiritual beings. New Thought does not deny the body but regards it as an instrument of the spirit

Thought is God in Action

A statement included in the original Constitution and By-Laws of the International New Thought Alliance summarizes its aims as: 'To teach the Infinitude of the Supreme One; the Divinity of man and his infinite possibilities through the creative power of constructive thinking and obedience to the voice of the indwelling Presence, which is our source of Inspiration, Power, Health and Prosperity.' 'It practises in the twentieth century what Jesus taught in the first,' says an article published in the Alliance's *Bulletin* in 1916.

Such statements of belief tend to be generalized and in the various constituent bodies far more explicit descriptions are to be found of how man actually goes about achieving these results by means of a universal law of Cause and Effect. Each leading exponent contributes a share of clarification, new aspects of the way it works and how to apply it exactly and specifically. Since 'as a man thinks, so is he' is the substance of New Thought prayer (often called 'Treatment'), the main objective is to 'pray scientifically'; this is performed by consciously directing thought to create experience, to change belief, to heal, to release love, joy, harmony or peace.

In New Thought, the thinking process is the Creator in action. It is creating even if it is not directed, therefore to avoid negative experience, negativity manifested as bodily or other disorder, it is necessary to eliminate negative or destructive thoughts and replace them with positive constructive ones. Thoughts not desired as experience, old or mistaken beliefs about the self, are dissolved by 'denial'.

As well as meetings, lectures and classes, New Thought depends heavily on reading material to lead questioning minds to conviction. For this reason the literature, books and periodicals are abundant. Reading and practice, until a follower is extremely advanced in its methods, are synonymous. Repetition is essential until there is no further sense of separation between the idea and its use, until 'my yoke is light – the Father in me doeth the work – I, and my Father are one', are Reality.

NONA COXHEAD

FURTHER READING: Charles S. Braden, *Spirits in Rebellion* (Southern Methodist Univ. Press, 1980); Horatio W. Dresser, ed., *The Quimby Manuscripts* (Citadel Press, 1976).

A paradoxical day, the first day of the year combines sorrow for the passing of the old year and joy at the birth of the new. Because beginnings are always significant, the actions performed on New Year's Day are a portent of fortune to come

NEW YEAR

Mary Evans Picture Library

RITES IN CELEBRATION of the New Year take place the world over, irrespective of differing systems of computing time. Among many nomadic and agricultural communities it was customary to calculate the year on a lunar basis and most modern calendars continue to show this influence. Sometimes, as in the case of the Jews, New Year is a moveable feast. In ancient Babylon it was celebrated in what is now March and April, and in Egypt it was linked with the annual flooding of the Nile. In Europe the New Year was celebrated at different times varying from Christmas to March, and its official celebration on 1 January is a comparatively modern innovation. Until the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in 1752 the official New Year in the British Isles began in March, but as far as the common people were concerned, it has always been celebrated on 1 January.

Many of the ceremonies associated with this turning point combine the elements of a funeral ceremony and a birth, of death and sorrow on the one hand, and on the other hope and joy. The first is represented by an old man often depicted with a scythe, and the second by a male child, the symbol of the infant year. The completion of one phase of existence and its re-emergence into another has always been an occasion of ceremonial importance in human affairs, and in many ways the rites of the New Year correspond to the rites of passage of individual life. The sense of continuity is still further emphasized in the role of the Roman god Janus (see JANUS) guardian of the gateway of the year, who faces both ways, looking backwards into the past and forwards into the future.

In keeping with the mourning element which underlies many of the rituals, obsequies for the dying year were once celebrated by English mummers who went from house to house, collecting tribute. The custom of tolling bells to mark its passing was quite literally a funeral dirge for the death of the old year. Originally, muffled bells were rung till just before midnight, and as the clock struck twelve the wrappings were removed to permit a loud clear chime. This was to indicate that, although the old year might be weak and feeble, the new one was strong and powerful in full voice.

Time of Joy and Rebirth

The occasional appearance of a headless spectre in many places in Europe at the New Year suggests another funereal association, although whether this points to some long-forgotten sacrificial custom carried out in furtherance of the rites of seasonal death and resurrection is uncertain. It is interesting to note in this context that during Babylonian New Year ceremonies it was customary for heads to be severed from statues and that in England there is a winter solstice superstition that if the shadow of any individual sitting by the Yule fire appears without a head, it means that he or she will die before the year is out.

Left **In the English countryside it is the custom to toll a muffled peal of funeral bells until midnight on New Year's Eve, for New Year is a turning point which combines the death of the old year, often represented by an old man with a scythe, and the birth of the new, symbolized by a child: advertisement for Roland's Macassar Oil, 'the best known promoter of the human hair', 1881** ***Right*** **Mexican New Year dancers**

It is the happier and more hopeful aspects, however, which predominate throughout the world. Everywhere, East or West, the New Year is the occasion for greater rejoicing. In China the house windows are decorated with texts in honour of the most important annual festival in the Chinese calendar, a time when the gods of wealth and procreation are encouraged to visit the home, while at the same time the devils of bad luck are warned to stay away. The Japanese celebrate the day with specially baked cakes which they offer to the sun and moon. In India it is customary for new foods to be eaten and in some places for new clothes to be worn; cattle are gaily decked with flowers, and in Bengal the River Ganges is worshipped. The modern Mexican ends his five days of ritual lamentation with wild rejoicings. North American Indians at New Year extinguish the tribal fires, scatter the ashes, and then ceremoniously relight them. There are also sacrifices and offerings to the gods and sometimes water is sprinkled on the passer-by.

In Northern Europe boar-shaped cakes were baked, and in France pancakes tossed on a griddle to bring good fortune. The European festival reveals little influence of the Christian heritage, for the introduction of the Julian Calendar in 46 BC placed the New Year in close proximity to the licentious Roman feast of Saturnalia (see CHRISTMAS). This gave grave offence to the Fathers of the Church who condemned it as diabolical, an attitude that received further emphasis in a decree of the Council of Auxerre.

The superstitious aspects of the New Year festival have maintained their long hold on the imaginations of people in Europe, despite religious strictures and social change. In Wales today children still maintain the quaint old custom of going from door to door asking for New Year's water to scatter on the houses. A song sung by children in South Wales on New Year's morning many years ago began:

Here we bring new water
From the well so clear
For to worship God with
This happy New Year.

The superstition that water drawn from the

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Homer Sykes

British Tourist Authority

well on New Year's Eve turned into wine long survived in this part of the British Isles. In some places such water was drunk in the New Year as a charm against the attacks of evil spirits.

In Scotland the last day of the year is known as Hogmanay and is traditionally celebrated with cakes and ale. Fires are lit and in Galloway, Wigtownshire, there is a ceremony known as 'taking the cream off the water'. Good fortune is believed to be the lot of anyone who drinks the water on that day.

The chief feature of New Year celebrations in Scotland, however, is the custom known as 'first footing' (see FIRST), which is based on the principle that whatever happens in the first moments of the New Year will have a profound influence upon the events of the 12 months ahead. For this reason the first person to step over the threshold must represent good fortune and it is most dangerous should there be anything ominous about him. 'First Foot' must be male, tall and dark-haired, hair of this colour being equated with good fortune. Red-haired men are for some reason unlucky, while women threaten the New Year prospects to an alarming degree, possibly because of the age-old fear of letting a witch into the home. In Montgomeryshire in the last century, if a woman happened to gain entry into the house on that day, boys were immediately paraded through the rooms in a special purificatory ceremony called 'breaking the witch'.

First Foot, when admitted to the house, brings with him special presents which symbolize the basic needs of the household during the ensuing year, and consist of coal, bread and money. In parts of Wales, where a similar custom prevails, even the initials of the one selected to play the part of First Foot were considered significant. Those whose names began with an H, a J or an R were always welcome since these initials represented health, joy and riches; on the other hand, individuals whose initials were T, W or S were considered dangerous since they represented trouble, worry and sorrow.

Begin As You Mean To Go On

The same type of reasoning which lies behind first footing can be detected in many other superstitions associated with the New Year: whatever one did on this day, the most critical day of all the days in the year, continued to influence events for the whole of the succeeding 12 months. For this reason New Year is considered to be a most auspicious time for making good resolutions, since any seriously intended effort on an occasion so highly charged with magic offers the greatest hope of success. Wishes are infinitely more potent at New Year than at the beginning of any ordinary month.

Because of the tradition that actions taken on the first day of the year determined the character of the ones that followed, the Roman tradesman of old was careful to perform a little token work on that day, since this ensured sufficient work throughout the year. The same principle appears in the old English superstition that it was extremely ominous to be unemployed on New Year's Day. Some people still believe that you must be careful to keep a piece of money in pocket or purse at this time if you hope to be assured of funds for the rest of the year. Similarly, you should always try to dine well on this day if you look forward to eating well in the months ahead.

Because of its magical character, New Year was peculiarly favourable for divinations, sometimes by picking a verse in the Bible at random, with the eyes lightly closed.

A very ancient custom, now almost extinct, involved the giving and receiving of New Year presents which were intended to insure that the year started on an auspicious footing. Some have ascribed this to a practice current among the Druids of distributing mistletoe to the people on this day, and gift-giving at this time was common in ancient Rome. English royalty were among the principal beneficiaries of this rite for they received presents of gold from the nobility; among the most valuable of these gifts was a gold cup presented by Cardinal Wolsey to Henry VIII. Queen Elizabeth I received a present not only from the Archbishop of Canterbury but from Mr Smyth, the royal dustman. The most historically important of these presents, however, must have been the gift of a pair of silk stockings from Mrs Montague, her silk-woman, said to have been the first pair to be worn in England. The Puritans were inclined to regard New Year gifts with a particularly jaundiced eye since to their eyes the custom reeked of paganism, even the innocent phrase 'Happy New Year' being frowned upon.

The one gift that nobody in his right mind would have made in the past would have been a flame for a household fire, or even a light from a candle, since this symbolized giving away the household luck, and it was supposed also to bring about a death in the family. There was even a prohibition against washing clothes on that day since, according to superstition, this was likely to wash away a life, and it was equally dangerous to part with any iron object. In the United States nothing whatsoever might be taken out of the house on New Year's Day and the chimneys had to be swept clean if the luck of the home was to be maintained, since it was taken for granted that good luck always entered the house by way of the flue.

Among the New Year customs which have survived into modern times, the most interesting is that known as 'Burning the Clavie', which takes place at the village of Burghead at Moray Firth in Scotland, on 12 January. The 'clavie' is a bonfire made of split casks, one of which is split into two parts of different sizes, probably symbolizing the unequal parts of the old and new year. An important part of the ceremony is to join the two parts together with a huge nail made for this purpose. The ceremony takes its name from the Latin word for a nail, *clavus*.

More recent is the ceremony at Queen's College, Oxford, when a needle and thread is presented to the Fellows with the injunction, 'Take it and be thrifty', no doubt a very salutary method of introducing a New Year resolution. 1 January is also one of the 30 or so 'Collar' days when the knights of the various orders of chivalry put on their ceremonial collars.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: T. Gaster, *New Year* (Abelard-Schumann, N.Y., 1955).

Top left Celebrating Chinese New Year in Singapore: monstrous dragons are paraded through the streets and fire-crackers let off to frighten evil spirits away _Top right_ In India thousands of people make a pilgrimage to the Ganges at New Year _Below left_ Flaming tar barrels in a midwinter festival intended to revive the heat and light of the sun _Below right_ Another midwinter fire festival, the Shetlands Up-Helly Aa

NIBELUNGENLIED

A LONG AND SAVAGE epic poem, the *Nibelungenlied* was written for an unidentified courtly patron, by an unknown poet around the year 1200, the period of a truly remarkable flowering of Middle High German literature. Before the story begins, Siegfried, the heroic son of Siegmund and Sieglinde, king and queen of the Netherlands, has had many adventures. He has slain a dragon, mastered the Nibelungs, a mountain folk with a vast hoard of treasure, acquired a magic invulnerability except for a small area between the shoulders, and owns a cloak which makes him invisible.

With the intention of gaining the beautiful Kriemhild for his wife, Siegfried travels to Worms, the capital of the three kings of Burgundy, her brothers Gunther, Gernot and Giselher. He succeeds in gaining Gunther's gratitude by impersonating him by means of his magic cloak, in order to win Brunhild, the amazon princess of Iceland, on Gunther's behalf. Deceiving Brunhild a second time, when Gunther is unable to subdue her, Siegfried takes Gunther's place in the marriage bed, quells the rebellious princess and hands her over to her husband. In return Gunther finally gives Siegfried his sister Kriemhild.

Siegfried returns home, assumes the Netherlands crown from his aged father and lives happily with Kriemhild who bears him a son. After some years, the Netherlands royal family are invited to Worms for a festival and it is here that the trouble begins. Brunhild is (and always has been) puzzled by her husband's obvious dependence on Siegfried, who, she has been told, is Gunther's vassal and, although he is king of the Netherlands, not his equal. In a very remarkable chapter ('How the queens railed at each other'), Kriemhild and Brunhild quarrel in public over matters of courtly precedence; and when they have both lost their tempers Kriemhild blurts out that it was Siegfried, her husband, who first lay with Brunhild. This scene, which occurs on the steps of the cathedral, naturally causes a

great scandal. Hagen, the Burgundian kings' kinsman and chief officer of state, declares that Brunhild's honour can be saved only by the death of Siegfried, whom he has always distrusted, and he persuades Gunther and his brothers that this must be done. Hagen cunningly discovers from Kriemhild the site of Siegfried's vulnerable spot and during an arranged hunt plunges a spear between the shoulders of the hitherto invincible hero as he is drinking from a stream. He flings the corpse against the door of Kriemhild's bedroom as she rises before dawn to go to church. Kriemhild breaks out in a paroxysm of rage and woe. Hagen's responsibility for Siegfried's death becomes public knowledge but, for political reasons, it is given out that the hero was slain by robbers.

Costly Vengeance

Siegmund and Sieglinde sadly go home, taking with them their grandson, Kriemhild's little boy. But Kriemhild decides to stay at her brothers' court, slowly nursing plots of revenge against her kin and especially Hagen, her arch-enemy. For years she does nothing but mourn in solitude until she at length consents to go to Hungary to marry Etzel, king of the Huns. Again after some years and after she has born Etzel a son, she persuades the Hun to invite her brothers and kinsmen to a festivity – with the intention, now implacably resolved, of wreaking vengeance upon them. Hagen suspects a trap from the start and advises the Burgundians to refuse. He is overruled and, despite grim portents on the way, the entire Burgundian court and army complete the long journey to Hungary

The dramatic and poignant final part of the poem describes the fighting that breaks out between the two sides. Neither really wishes to harm the other but the killing begins when Etzel's brother, urged and bribed by Kriemhild, slaughters the young Burgundian squires. From then on the catastrophe is inevitable. In a series of fierce encounters, all the warriors perish save Gunther and Hagen and, on the Hunnish side, Dietrich (an exiled king at Etzel's court) and his older companion Hildebrand. Etzel himself plays no part in the fray. Dietrich succeeds in subduing the exhausted Gunther and Hagen and leads them in bonds to Kriemhild. She commands that Gunther's head be struck off and carries it to her last encounter with Hagen. Then she herself, drawing Siegfried's own great sword which Hagen had taken so many years before, decapitates Hagen. Her vengeance is complete but at a terrible cost – the entire ruin of the chivalry of both Burgundy and Hungary. But that is not the end. Etzel and Dietrich are appalled at the slaughter and, moreover, scandalized that a mere woman should slay, in bonds, such a great and noble warrior as Hagen. Hildebrand leaps at Kriemhild and kills her with a fearful blow. As the poet says: 'The king's high festival had ended in sorrow, as joy must ever turn to sorrow in the end.'

The *Nibelungenlied* appeals because it is a story of high adventure and passionate and destructive love very dramatically told. But it also fascinates because it is set in the unfamiliar world of the graces and violence of medieval chivalry. Yet this world is quite different from the Middle Ages as we often think of them, influenced as we still are by the romantic distortions of the 19th century. In both these poems there is, for instance, little or no reference to religion or the Church, except as simple events such as attending Mass. When Kriemhild marries Etzel, the poet approvingly remarks on the tolerance of the times when Christian and heathen could live in peace and intermarry. There are also countless examples of what may surprise the reader as a very zestful attitude towards material things and the pleasures of the flesh. So it is that as well as enjoying an exciting story we are continually astonished by attitudes that are sometimes very alien and sometimes very similar to our own. Above all, the strong and psychologically complex characterization of the protagonists (and not infrequently that of the minor players) involves the reader in the hectic course of events to a truly remarkable degree. It is this 'real life' quality, this psychological insight into human motivations and actions, that makes the nearly 800 years old epic

The *Nibelungenlied* is the story of the murder of the great hero Siegfried and the terrible revenge that was exacted for it: Siegmund and Sieglinde (*left*); Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens (*right*), by Fantin Latour

poem the work of genius it is.

Like the *Iliad* of Homer and many other epics, the *Nibelungenlied* is the culmination of a long tradition of earlier poems. These were of Norse as well as German origin and were concerned with two themes: the exploits of Siegfried, his marriage and his murder; and the massacre of the Burgundians and their vassals by the Huns. The link between these two themes is provided by Kriemhild's slow but implacable resolve to avenge her beloved Siegfried, even though by doing so she must shed the blood of her brothers and her people.

The chief contrast between the two strands of the story is that the first, to do with Siegfried, dragon-slayer and master of the Nibelungs, derives from myth and fairytale, whereas the second, which concerns the destruction of the Burgundians by the Huns of Etzel (who is none other than the real Attila), is based on historical fact.

The world of the *Nibelungenlied*, it must be stressed, is totally unlike that created by Wagner in his opera cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelungs*. Wagner, like our poet, was concerned with people and his own psychological insight was perhaps equal to his musical and dramatic genius.' But his attitude and purpose in dealing with the same material was quite different. Wagner wove a vast tapestry of events involving gods and men, and propounded a fundamentally 'optimistic' philosophy of life couched in the romantic terms of his age. Our poet had simpler goals: to retell old stories in an entertaining way and explore the motives of ordinary, though exalted, human beings. There is little or no philosophy in his treatment, except perhaps (as Professor Hatto suggests) the moral that pride is the root of all evil. At any rate, in contrast to Wagner, he is a 'pessimist'. The difference between these two works, six centuries apart, has been mentioned because if people have heard of the *Nibelungenlied*, they often think of Wagner. If they do, they will have a totally erroneous impression of the original.

(See also ATTILA; HERO).

C. DE HOGHTON

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NIGHT

FEAR OF THE DARK is one of the universal human terrors. Night is 'the witching time', 'the black bat', and its alien realms are infested by horrors and evil dreams, by spectres and goblins, by uncanny sounds in the house and unearthly things that stalk the darkness and gather at crossroads. Day is the time when all God's creations are up and doing, and things which are active at night reverse the normal and proper order of things, like witches and demons, or the owl and the nightjar, sinister birds with uncanny cries. At sunrise the cock crows and the power of the creatures of night fades.

There is a famous passage in Bede's *History of the English Church and People* (written in the 8th century) in which a pagan Northumbrian thane likens the life of man to the flight of a sparrow across a banqueting hall in the gloom of a winter's day. Inside the hall there is warmth and firelight, outside darkness and storm. 'This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another. While he is inside he is safe from the winter storms; but after a few moments of comfort, he vanishes from sight into the wintry world from which he came. Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows we know nothing.' The contrast between the warm, firelit hall and the threatening darkness which hems it round is powerfully drawn in the great Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* which has been described as in part 'an expression of the fear of the dark'. It is at night that the monster Grendel, 'a black shadow of death', prowls the misty moors and steals in to attack the Danes in the King's hall (see BEOWULF).

Night is darkness, and darkness is linked with death, the valley of the shadow, the sleep of death, the suffocating blackness of the grave, the pall which drops when the sun 'dies' in the west in the evening. Most people do not think of darkness as the mere absence of light but as something positive and almost palpable. In Homer, when a man dies we are told that 'black darkness veiled his eyes' or that 'night descended on his eyes' or that he has been 'engulfed by the unlovely dark'. The Anglo-Saxons spoke of a 'death-mist'. The idea of the darkness of death covering a man's head seems to account for the dogskin head-dress of the Greek god of death, Hades, which made anyone on whom it was placed invisible.

Like death, night is inescapable. In the *Iliad* she 'dictates to gods and men alike'. Michelangelo said of his famous statue of Night (in the Medici Chapel, Florence) that she was mourning the work of Time, the destroyer, and lamenting her own part in it. In Hesiod's *Theogony* Erebos (darkness) and Night are among the earliest cosmic powers to come into existence, and it was they who gave birth to Day. Night is also the mother of a litter of horrors – Fate, Death, the Furies, Pain, Nemesis, Deceit, Old Age, Strife – as well as of Sleep, the tribe of Dreams, and Pleasure of Love. Her home is deep in the underworld, wrapped in dark clouds, and with her there are her twin children, Sleep who roams peacefully over land and sea, and is kindly to men, and Death, the iron-hearted, whose spirit is pitiless as bronze and who is hated even by the undying gods. Visiting Olympia in the 2nd century AD, Pausanias saw in the temple of Hera a chest decorated with scenes. One of them showed 'a woman holding on her right arm a child asleep, and on her left she has a black child like one who is asleep... the figures are Death and Sleep, with Night the nurse of both.'

Terror in the darkness of night: *The Nightmare*, by Fuseli

Aldus Books

In many mythologies, in the beginning all was dark and chaotic, and light and order were created out of this primeval night. In Genesis there was darkness until God created light. In an Orphic creation myth (see ORPHEUS AND ORPHISM) Chaos, Night and Erebos existed in the beginning. Night laid an egg from which Eros hatched, and from him came the later generations of gods. Pico della Mirandola, the 15th century Italian philosopher, identified the Night of this myth with the En Sof of the Cabala (see CABALA) as 'the solitary cloud of the Father', the first cause of the universe.

For although night is mysterious and ominous, it is also the time of love-making in which children are conceived and so it has symbolic connotations of potential fruitfulness, the darkness of earth in which the seeds ripen, the darkness of the womb in which the foetus grows. Night is the time of both death and conception. It is the name of a state of spiritual blindness and desolation, 'the Dark Night of the Soul', regarded by some mystics as an essential stage in the progress of the soul towards God. This is a condition of inner darkness, weariness, lethargy, indecision and misery, a condition of being far from the saving light of God which may last for months or even years. But on the other hand, the night of love can be an image of the soul's union with God, as in one of the poems of St John of the Cross, where it is the 'night that joined the lover to the beloved bride', transfiguring each of them into the other. Again, initiation is sometimes described in terms of a journey through the terrors of the dark, at the end of which the initiate reaches the sublime light (see INITIATION).

Terror and love-making are combined in a different way in the nightmare, a word which used to be applied particularly to dreams which were erotic as well as frightening, and to the demon that caused them. The 'mare' is not a female horse but an incubus, a spirit which makes fierce love to sleepers at night, 'riding' them, weighing heavily on them and causing them feelings of suffocation and evil dreams.

(See also INCUBUS; LIGHT.)

NIGHTINGALE

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

THE SONG of the nightingale has been more generally admired and praised than the song of any other European bird. The male sings by night as well as by day, so that even those with little interest in birds cannot fail to notice and appreciate its characteristic song.

Among Greek and Roman writers who commented on the bird's song were Aristophanes, who tried to reproduce the sound verbally in his play *The Birds*, and Phiny, who departed from his usual matter-of-fact style to describe it enthusiastically. It was the Greek myth of Philomela, however, which was responsible for the prominence of the bird in Latin literature and eventually in our own. According to the story, Procne, the wife of Tereus, king of Thrace, asked him to bring her sister Philomela to stay with her but when Tereus laid eyes on his sister-in-law, he fell violently in love with her. On the journey home, he ravished her and cut out her tongue so that his crime might not be known. He kept her hidden but Philomela was able to inform her sister by weaving an account of what had happened into a cloak which she sent to her. Procne took terrible revenge on Tereus, killing their son Itys, and serving him to her husband for dinner. The sisters fled from the tyrant king, and when he pursued them, Zeus turned Procne into a nightingale, Philomela into a swallow and Tereus into a hoopoe. Latin poets misread the story and made Philomela the nightingale, so that English poets, following them, wrote of Philomel as the nightingale.

This tragic myth was mainly responsible for the bird's song being interpreted by many poets as melancholy. In Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* he wrote:

> Come Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment
> Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair.

Keats, in the most famous tribute of all, *To a Nightingale*, refers to its 'plaintive anthem', and suggests that it is the 'self-same song that found a path through the sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home'. Chaucer, however, had referred to the 'merry nightingale' and Coleridge denied in verse that the song was melancholy.

According to a belief which can be traced back to the 16th century the nightingale sings with its breast pressed against a thorn. Shakespeare, again in *Lucrece*, wrote:

> And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part
> To keep thy sharp woes waking.

It is said that the thorn was a protection against the snake and served to keep the bird awake and alert.

Singing Praise to God

The nightingale's song has not always been admired. A hermit in a Sussex forest was so disturbed by their singing that, so it was said, he laid a curse upon them so that they never again appeared in the neighbourhood. St Francis, on the other hand, is said to have competed with a nightingale in singing praise to God – and to have admitted himself defeated.

A nightingale in full song can indeed sing around the clock with a few intermissions. Country people, noticing this, associated the bird with insomnia and drew the conclusion that organs of the nightingale could be used to produce sleeplessness, on the magical principle of 'like producing like'. The eyes and heart, if placed close to a person in bed, would keep him awake – and if they were dissolved surreptitiously in his drink he would certainly die of insomnia.

In England rustic rhymes commented on the date of the bird's arrival in spring and it was believed to be a good omen if the nightingale's song was heard before the cuckoo called.

The marked preoccupation with sky gods and river spirits among the peoples of the Upper Nile reflects the dominating features of the environment on which their well-being depends

NILOTES

THE NILOTES or Nilotic peoples of Africa consist of several culturally related tribes and nations. They live south of the Sahara, stretching from the Nile valley of the southern Sudan and Ethiopia, down to Uganda, where some extend west into the Congo, and eastwards into Kenya. The best-known are the Nuer (see NUER), Dinka, Shillnk, and the Anuak of the Sudan, most of whom, however, are in Ethiopia; the Acholi and Lango of Uganda, the Alur of Uganda and the Congo, and the Luo of Kenya. They speak closely related languages and name similar religious and magical conceptions by variants of conspicuously similar words. A broad cultural and linguistic division may be made between the Dinka and Nuer, on the one hand, who are primarily pastoralists, and the rest who live for the most part by settled agriculture. It is clear, though, from linguistic and other evidence that originally all these peoples had a powerful and even obsessive interest in cattle, whose praises are still sung and which are widely regarded as the perfect sacrificial offering.

In general, and as compared with many non-Nilotic African peoples, beliefs in magic and witchcraft have a very secondary place in their interpretation of the world. Their pervading beliefs are markedly spiritual and theistic, Nuer and Dinka in particular giving a central position to a High God associated with the sky and heaveuly phenomena, to which ultimately the conditions and vicissitudes of their lives are attributed. There is virtually no religious art among them, and the absence of material representations of spiritual or magical forces contrasts strikingly with the wealth and variety of religious art and physical vehicles of magical forces found among some West African peoples. The iunumerable sculptures of divine forces which earlier travellers in Africa regarded as African

'idolatry' are more foreign to the Nilotic imagination than to the European.

Among the Shilluk, Anuak and Alur variants of a type of divine kingship (see KING) are found. Others follow the religious lead of priests of various kinds, the Nuer and Dinka especially having a well-developed sacrificial priesthood. The roles of both kings and priests are validated by myths which have a profound imaginative appeal to the people, and which serve as the best introduction to their other religious and magical ideas. The widespread association of spiritual forces with the river and the sky, features which dominated the river-plain environment with which all the Nilotes had some original connection, should be noted.

Cult of Kingship

The kings of the Shilluk, who stand in an intermediate position between men and God, are believed to be descended from a culture hero and first leader Nyikango, whose spirit descends on every successor. This first king is represented as descended on the father's side from the sky, and on the mother's side from the crocodile, thus combining in his person the imaginative connotations of the sky and the river upon which Shilluk well-being profoundly depends. Nyikango did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind, according to one widely-received tradition, and can thus in a sense live on in every subsequent king. Shrines to the kings, and priests to serve at them, are distributed over Shillukland. The Shilluk thus have a national cult of the kingship which connects them with a transcendent divinity. A comparable kingship, though in a less-centralized form, is found among the Anuak, whose first king is represented as having been the son of a spirit from the river born of the daughter of a local village ruler. Like the Shilluk royal clan, his descendants have spread themselves and their influence through the land. In these cases the association of the kingship with the sky or the river, or both, suggests that although the kings take part in human society they are also outside and above it.

An Investiture Ritual

The new king has married a girl, traditionally provided by a certain clan, and this girl has an important rôle in the ceremonies of investiture. After the king's enthronement Nyikang seizes the girl and refuses to surrender her to the king on the ground that she was married with cattle from the royal herd, which is Nyikang's herd, and is therefore Nyikang's wife. On this issue Nyikang and the king summon their supporters to a second mock battle, in which the king captures the girl. Nyikang thereupon pays the king a visit to make his peace with him.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard
Essays in Social Anthropology

The pastoral Dinka, who have no centralized kingship, also explain the spiritual primacy of their priestly leaders by a myth which relates them to the river. The first Dinka priest, Ayuel Longar, is represented as having been born of a childless widow who was grieving over her fate on the bank of the river. A spirit of the river told her to wade into the water, raise her skin skirt (the symbol of a married woman) and draw the ripples towards her. She conceived a miraculous child, born with teeth, who as a tiny baby helped himself to gourds of milk, and later during a period of drought found water for the cattle by pulling up by the roots a type of grass which still has sacred connotations. Yet at first the people refused to accept his authority and he left them. They pursued him to a river which he crossed and then, standing on the opposite bank, Ayuel Longar speared them when they in turn tried to cross, as the Dinka themselves spear fish. Eventually by trickery their leaders overpowered him, and wrested his blessing from him. In this way it came about that his descendants and theirs now form clans of priests, whose task it is to pray and offer sacrifice on behalf of the people, and whose symbols of office are sacred fishing spears, which they flourish as they consecrate their sacrificial oxen.

These particular myths are not found among all Nilotes, but it is true to say that their tone and structure are characteristically Nilotic. Priests and kings, and sometimes relatively minor religious functionaries, are held to be intermediaries between gods

The sky and the river are linked with important spiritual forces: the Shilluk kings are descended from the sky and a crocodile, the Dinka priests from the river itself

Godfrey Lienhardt

and men, sometimes to partake of the nature of the gods, and to have an influence beyond that of ordinary people over the natural phenomena – especially the sky and the clouds – upon which their well-being depends. Hence what have been called 'rainmakers', though not by any means confined to the Nilotes, are widely characteristic of their religious culture. The sense of rightful power in this respect which some rainmakers have is vividly conveyed by an account given by Aidan W. Southall:

> When I was sitting in the open air with the celebrated ex-chief . . . we saw a heavy shower coming towards us across the valley . . . The ex-chief rose . . . facing the oncoming rain . . . and shouted at it to take another direction. By this time I was expecting to get a thorough wetting . . . bnt . . . the shower . . . passed by to one side.

Similar incidents associating religious leadership with unusual effects in the heavens, not only with rain but with thunder, lightning, comets and so on, are widely recorded in Nilotic tradition.

Greedy Spirits

But although a sky god and other spiritual forces associated with the firmament are for many Nilotes the most important manifestations of divinity, there are many others which are highly respected in particular localities. There are spirits associated with particular places, often on the banks of streams, with hillocks, and very commonly with large trees. All these may receive their small offerings, frequently with the intention of warding off any evil they might intend to travellers who neglect them.

The Nilotic gods are not on the whole regarded as morally virtuous forces. When the gods produce effects conducive to human welfare – when they are held to bring fertility and abundance – they are considered 'good', but when they withhold the help they could give, and are associated therefore with death and misfortune, they are 'bad'. The division of the spiritual world into forces which are in themselves good or evil, such as is envisaged in the Christian dichotomy of God and the Devil, is foreign to Nilotic thought, though there is a tendency to appeal more to the benevolence of the higher and more powerful spiritual forces, and to attempt merely to propitiate the lower with offerings. Such lower powers are hence often referred to as 'greedy'. Most serious sicknesses are attributed to one or another spirit, and among the Nilotes, as amongst many other people, diviners are employed to decide, often through possession by spirits, which spirit is the source of a particular illness, why it is afflicting a man, and what it wants from him and his relatives.

There are also traces among several of the Nilotes of a kind of totemic belief, which is by far the most strongly developed among the Dinka. The members of each clan venerate and make offerings to one or another animal or vegetable species, or in some cases to other features of the natural environment, such as clouds, or to a particular type of human artefact. Here the chosen symbol – the totem – represents the whole spirit of clanship and the moral relationship between members of the same clan. The totem should therefore not be injured, its blood must not be shed, it should be 'respected' by gentle and amiable behaviour, and is regarded as the source of the vitality of the clan to which it belongs. It symbolizes the relationship between all clansmen living and dead, and when sacrifice and prayer are offered to it, the ancestors are called upon in association with it. Each clan has its own traditions of origin, and where totemic affiliations are pronounced these traditions include accounts of how the clan acquired its totem – perhaps better called its divinity. For example if a clan respects giraffe, it will have a tradition of some service performed by the giraffe to an ancestor, or it may be held that the animal totem was born as a twin with the founding ancestor of the clan. The extent to which the Nilotes could be said to worship ancestors varies from one authority to another, and from one Nilotic people to another. Perhaps the divinization of the ancestors occurs fully only with those of the Shilluk king, but all Nilotes may express strong feelings of piety toward their ancestors, making offerings to them at commemorative shrines which are in many cases at the place of burial, and attributing some misfortunes to their displeasure.

John Moss

Luo dancer in Kenya: beliefs in magic and witchcraft generally loom less large in the outlook of Nilotic peoples than in that of many other African groups

It is deeply and generally believed that the living can prosper only if they strive to maintain harmonious relations between themselves, the dead and the gods. Consequently all Nilotes seem to have a firm conviction that a man, and in some cases an animal, that has been wronged and has died without forgiving the injustice done to him will haunt those responsible for it. In all Nilotic languages this haunting is represented by some variant of the word *cyen* (pronounced chi-yen), and among many Nilotes it is regarded as a common cause of sickness and death in the living. Among the Anuak in particular, haunting by the dead who have died with bitterness in their hearts is regarded almost as a physical affliction, and seances are held to remove it, in which spiritual doctors act out a struggle to pluck the haunting spirit from the sufferer's body and cast it into the fire. Conversely, a belief in the power of other peoples' blessings to produce well-being, common to all Nilotic peoples, is very strongly marked among the Anuak; the nobles in particular often wear strings of amulets around their necks, each representing a particular blessing they have received. A belief in the force of human intentions as a source of good or evil is apparent here, as in the powers attributed to priests and rainmakers. But the theism of the Nilotes again appears here insofar as it is assumed that the power of human beings to influence either the natural world, or one another's fortunes, is contingent upon divine approval and permissiveness; whether or not in any particular case God or the gods are directly referred to as the prime cause of misfortune and suffering.

Personification of Malice

Beliefs in witchcraft, very subsidiary to the religious themes outlined above, represent a somewhat different aspect of human experience. The gods are associated with conditions of health and sickness, prosperity and misfortune, which potentially affect many individuals. Although smallpox or drought, for example, do cause individual suffering, they are not unique to any individual and evoke the idea of divine forces acting potentially on all human beings. Witchcraft on the other hand is suspected where misfortunes are felt by the sufferer to be directed quite specifically to himself, even though they may also rationally be recognized as part of the common lot. Thus for example many babies die young, but if a hitherto healthy baby suddenly wastes away and dies, the likelihood is that its parent will suspect someone of killing it by casting an evil eye upon it. If a young person considered handsome rapidly loses his health, perhaps contracting a skin disease which impairs his appearance, again the activity of a witch with the Evil Eye will be suspected. Where human envy and jealousy are suspected, in short, they are personified in the figure of the witch. Each individual therefore may on occasion try mentally to identify his own witch, whose attitude to him may be held to explain his particular misfortune at a particular time, while the gods and spirits act from outside the human personality and upon whole social groups. The witch can thus be seen as typifying the malicious intentions of individuals towards one another and in Nilotic fantasy there are still more malevolent 'night-witches', who work secretly and nocturnally against their victims and indeed deliberately subvert the moral code upon which harmonious social relations depend.

The strength of conviction behind these and other Nilotic beliefs naturally varies from individual to individual. The emphasis upon the Supreme Being of the sky, as distinct from his manifestations, may vary from tribe to tribe as well as from person to person. That central conception would seem to be far more dominant among the pastoral Nilotes, the Nuer and the Dinka, than among the rest, who while recognizing a transcendent divinity pay more attention in their rites to its more local and specialized manifestations. Nevertheless the Nilotes as a whole have a markedly spiritualized interpretation of the universe as being an outer expression of unseen and non-material powers.

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NINE

A HUMAN CHILD is normally conceived, formed and born in nine months, a fact which has a good deal to do with the role of 9 in numerology. If your name adds to 9 (see ALPHABET), numerologists will tell you that you are a person of great gifts, with a strong bent towards serving your fellow men. You may well be a fighter for social causes, for the poor and unfortunate. Nine is the number of high mental and spiritual achievement, of inspired and inspiring people who have broad interests and wide sympathies. Generous and compassionate, they may often be imposed upon. People of narrower outlook will tend to condemn them as wild, unorthodox, impractical, rebellious, careless with money.

The 9s are passionate, romantic and emotional, attractive and affectionate. They love the limelight, loathe obscurity and resent criticism. They need to be loved and admired, and are easily flattered. Though genuinely concerned for people in the mass, they may be egotistical and conceited in dealing with individuals. High-minded and idealistic, they are not at all austere, far from it: they fall in and out of love with ease and frequency, they enjoy the good things of life, they relish beauty in the arts and in scenery. They hate ugliness, old age and poverty, for themselves and everyone else. They frequently have a difficult time in early life but succeed through determination and resourcefulness. Impressionable and intuitive, independent and quick-tempered, they are easily hurt and need to cultivate emotional stability. But the note which the numerologists sound most consistently is that of 9 as the number of the humanitarian.

This characteristic and many of the others follow from the human gestation period, with the roles of mother and child intermingled. Nine stands for love of mankind, the flesh and the world because it is the number of the child made flesh and born into the world. Early struggles and a dislike of obscurity come from the foetus in the womb. The characteristics of needing love and admiration, rebelliousness, lack of care for money, hasty temper, determination, being easily hurt, are drawn from small babies. Service to others, affection, compassion, are qualities drawn from mothers.

Another influence is the fact that 9 is the last and highest of the numbers from 1 to 9, and so it has the 'highest' characteristics. From this point of view, 10 is merely one repeated on a higher level, but medieval numerologists tended to call 9 the number which is 'all but perfect' or 'all but complete' because it falls short of 10: pointing out that Troy was besieged for nine years and fell in the tenth, that Odysseus wandered for nine years and reached home in the tenth.

Nine can also be seen as marking the transition from one scale (the numbers from 1 to 9) to a higher scale (starting with 10), and so it is the number of initiation, which again parallels the birth of a baby after nine months. This reinforces its character of being easily hurt and liable to injury, because initiations commonly involve ordeals and mutilations.

Generally, 9 is a number of completeness. It marks the end of gestation and the end of each series of numbers, 1 to 9, 10 to 19, and so on. A complete circle has 360 degrees, and $3 + 6 + 0 = 9$. Christ completed his life on earth and died at the ninth hour. Nine categories of people are called 'blessed' in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, chapter 5). It is again a circular and complete number because, if multiplied by any other number, it always reproduces itself ($3 \times 9 = 27$ and $2 + 7 = 9$, or $6 \times 9 = 54$ and $5 + 4 = 9$, and so on). This strengthens the egotism attributed to the number.

Like other numbers of completeness (notably 3 and 7), 9 is particularly powerful in magic. A magic circle should be nine feet in diameter. A way of bringing sorrow and misfortune to an enemy is to measure a corpse with a piece of rope, first from the elbow to the end of the longest finger, then from the shoulder to the same point, then from head to toe. Do this three times, making nine measurements altogether, and then measure the victim in the same way.

Why a cat has nine lives, nobody knows. A curious remedy for the itch is for a left-handed man to whirl a black cat round his head three times and then make an ointment from nine roasted barleycorns and nine drops of blood from the cat's tail. He must walk three times round the patient, invoking the Trinity, while the ointment is applied with a gold wedding ring.

NIRVANA

IN POPULAR USAGE the word nirvana means a state of blissful existence, a condition of agreeable inactivity. In this sense, a person living in a wonderful tropical paradise who obtains his food merely by stretching forth his hand and helping himself from the fruit-laden trees, or the opium addict in a state of heatific trance, might be said to be living in a state of nirvana. In the same way, the word is also sometimes used for a state of exaltation and ecstasy.

More correctly, nirvana is the term used to express one of the basic philosophical concepts of Buddhism and remains the chief goal of the Buddhist religion. Yet its precise meaning has not been acceptably defined, so that interpretations vary with the different schools of Buddhism.

Nirvana is also used, though less frequently, in Hinduism, usually in the sense of salvation or deliverance from the cycle of *samsara*, or birth-death-rebirth (see HINDUISM). Nirvana must therefore be distinguished from samsara, man's continuous reincarnations on earth in order to expiate and neutralize the effects of his evil deeds. The ultimate goal of those who strive for liberation is to achieve complete freedom from samsara, so that they might never have to return to earth (see KARMA).

But although nirvana and samsara are thus apparently diametrically opposed, there exists an enigmatic formula that states that nirvana *is* samsara, that liberation is involved in the process of rebirth. Reality, we are told, is the ever-becoming, and salvation can be obtained only by the mature interpretation of one's experience of bondage. It is the living within the fierce maelstrom of the human environment and yet rising above its turbulence. The secret of nirvana lies in this world and we must move within the changing to find the Changeless.

Nirvana is concerned principally with the problem of individuality and the final destiny of the personal human entity. Buddha himself was silent on the issue of what happens to the fully liberated soul when the body dies. The word nirvana literally means 'blowing out', or 'extinction', and in this context signifies the complete cessation of the individual personality after death, or the annihilation of self. If man does possess a soul it vanishes entirely, leaving not a trace behind. It is a condition of absolute nothingness, with no residue of life or consciousness hereafter.

This bleak concept, however, is denied by many Buddhists, who hold that nirvana does not imply a total extinction of self, nor the obliteration of consciousness, but rather a consciousness extended to infinity, or merged into the Supreme Consciousness without being completely lost in it.

In an earthly sense nirvana is the extinction of personality, the loss of all personal awareness. By continually eliminating wrong thinking and harmful desires a man withdraws the fuel on which the ego feeds, till its fierce flame is extinguished. Nirvana is here conceived as the state of non-existence of the 'I'. The ego dissolves, the mind dwells without thought, the senses without activity, the soul without knowledge.

William MacQuitty

Figure of Buddha as an ascetic, his body emaciated by the austerities of his search for enlightenment. Buddha never clearly defined the concept of Nirvana, which is the final goal of the Buddhist religion and has been interpreted in many different ways: the word literally means 'extinction' or 'blowing out'

The core of our troubled condition on earth lies in our individuality, and we nurture a yearning not only to assert ourselves, leading to a self-centred preoccupation with our personal welfare but, paradoxically, also to a deep yearning to obliterate this obsessive self. And the concept of nirvana provides one answer to our quest. When the flame of self is 'blown out', we pass into a state where, all passion spent, we merge with the passionless and transcendent ocean of *Tathata*, or 'Thatness', existence divorced from desire.

This craving for self-extinction may be found in other mystical systems besides Buddhism, for the painful and impermanent nature of 'character', 'personality', and the 'ego' are recognized by many religions as diminishing the value of the eternal inner spirit which is nothing but the Supreme Spirit immanent within us. Thus, nirvana may be likened to the experience of Christian saints known as the *unio mystica*, the final stage of an aspirant's progress when he joins in mystical union with God. But in the Christian experience it means an immersion in the totality of the divine spirit without loss of identity. In the spiritual progress of the Moslem Sufi, the final stage, called *fana*, is that of the passing away of the personality and the death of self, followed by a total absorption in God, or merging with God, where the mystic loses his identity in the divine essence (see SUFIS).

Nirvana again may be interpreted as a form of the privative, or the philosophical negative, the absence of what is ultimately present. It is the doctrine of emptiness or the void, in which all things are present. In its practical application it is expressed in the notions of silence, inactivity, passivity, in a rearranging of our priorities so as to put the illusive self in its proper place. The Chinese sage Lao Tzu taught the doctrine of *wu wei* or non-activity, which was an extension of the same idea. As an example he spoke of the clay bowl which, however beautifully moulded, depends for its usefulness only on that part of the bowl that is empty. 'By letting go', said Lao Tzu, 'all gets done. The world is won by those who let it go.'

A further stage in the gradual mellowing of the concept of nirvana is found in Japanese forms of Buddhism such as the Jodo (Pure Land) School, whose supreme deity is Amitabha, the Buddha of Boundless Light. As opposed to other schools who hold that gods are not necessary for man's redemptive progress, Jodo says that Amitabha's grace is sufficient for salvation; as opposed to the doctrine of annihilation it teaches the continuance of personal identity after death; as opposed to salvation through strenuous effort it preaches salvation through simple faith; and in place of the doctrine of salvation for the elect few, it preaches salvation for all (see AMIDA).

According to yet another school, nirvana is not a post-mortem condition but a state that can be experienced by the living soul while still on earth. It is the fruit of the traditional Buddhist way of life, the result of meditation or calm contemplation on the panorama of the world and a true understanding of its impermanence. The passions are all overcome, not by a face to face encounter but simply by ignoring their existence. It means the end of physical pain, mental anguish, and even spiritual yearning for the individual. In the words of the *Dhammapada*: 'Tranquil indeed is the mind, tranquil indeed the words and deeds of him who is thus tranquillised.'

(See also BUDDHISM; MYSTICISM.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

FURTHER READING: L. de la Vallee Pousin, *The Way to Nirvana* (AMS Press reprint); R.L. Slater, *Paradox and Nirvana* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1951); T. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana* (Weiser).

Farewell the World

Once, when I was sitting in a Soho Chinese restaurant, bombs began to crash down so close at hand that the whole building trembled. At that critical moment, my one prayer was: 'Heaven grant that the bomb doesn't strike until *after* the meal!' What a thought for a man probably about to die! There, if ever, was the time for putting into practice the instructions of my Tibetan Master: 'During the moments preceding death, concentrate with all your strength upon the Inner Light. Visualize the world as a sad, weary place full of hollow pleasures and real sorrows, a place you never desire to see again. Do this that the bonds of attachment may be sundered and a state nearer to *Nirvana* won.

John Blofeld *The Wheel of Life*

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NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS

The heroic 'Red Indian' has become the subject of a whole mythology in American and European literature

'The world of the American Indians was once a rather lonely but free place where humans were close to Nature and followed a natural system of belief'; the spirits of ancestors, and personifications of the forces of Nature were the basic units of their religion, and every natural object might have a spirit which could be contacted

THERE HAS BEEN so much of a romantic aura surrounding our conceptions of the heroic 'Red Indian' that he has become the subject of a whole mythology in European and American literature. So many of our dreams of the free wild life were projected on the American Indians that they have in a sense become part of our unconscious mind; and so deep was the impression that many of the famous 'guides' of Spiritualist seances have taken on the semblance of monosyllabic warriors of the Great Plains. This is not altogether surprising since our ancestors of the later Paleolithic period nearly 40,000 years ago were living a life very much like that of the earliest Red Indians. Yet we are not directly connected, it appears, for these ancestral groups, who entered North America in ancient times, appear to have been 'mongoloids', and not unlike their modern descendants.

Recent discoveries in the United States suggest that there were humans in North America in the last inter-glacial period. A few hearths and rough stone tools have been found, but no definitely associated human remains were present, so we are still unaware of their appearance in those early days.

Masks with moving parts, representing half-human, half-animal beings, were featured in the ceremonies of the Indians of the north-west coast, who believed that both animals and men had souls and that there was only a slight barrier between them: hinged masks of the Kwakiutl tribe; closed they represent a serpent *(top)* and a bird *(below)*, and when the flaps are opened a human face is revealed

They were probably few in number in any case. Later there came many journeys from Siberia into America. Geologists have shown that in the last glaciation there was an ice-free area just to the east of the Rocky Mountains. A few families hunting deer, bear, and so on, could have trekked from Siberia over the Bering Strait, then a strip

The Ghost Dance Ceremony

The dance commonly begins about the middle of the afternoon or later, after sundown . . . the leaders walk out to the dance place, and facing inward, join hands so as to form a small circle. Then, without moving from their places they sing the opening song . . . in a soft undertone. Having sung it through once they raise their voices to their full strength and repeat it, this time slowly circling around in the dance. . . . As the song rises and swells the people come singly and in groups from several tipis, and one after another joins the circle until any number from fifty to five hundred men, women, and children are in the dance . . . At intervals between the songs, more especially after the trances have begun, the dancers unclasp hands and sit down to smoke or talk for a few minutes. At such times the leaders sometimes deliver short addresses or sermons, or relate the recent trance experience of the dancer . . . Old people hobbling along with sticks, and little children hardly past the toddling period sometimes form a part of the circle, the more vigorous dancers accommodating the movement to their weakness. Frequently a woman will be seen to join the circle with an infant upon her back and dance with the others, but should she show the least sign of approaching excitement watchful friends lead her away that no harm may come to the child. Dogs are driven off from the neighbourhood of the circle lest they should run against any of those who have fallen into a trance and thus awaken them. The dancers themselves are careful not to disturb the trance subjects while their souls are in the spirit world. Full Indian dress is worn, with buckskin, paint and feathers . . .

James Mooney *The Ghost-Dance Religion* (1896)

of dry land about 156 miles wide.

Their route would have been simply that of the migrating animals going further southward over the dry, windy and intensely cold lands towards the pastures south of Canada, which was then just a frozen wilderness. There was no general migration of peoples, just a few families passing from time to time. They must have had good skin clothing and stone-bladed spears and darts with which to kill their game.

From those ancient times there appear to be no remaining legends. Yet from two parts of the Far North folktales have been recorded which describe mammoth-like creatures. A number of tales have been collected from Alaskan Eskimo sources in which a great tusked land animal is described. From Labrador come other tales of enormous tusked creatures which destroyed trees by leaning against them. It is quite possible that the Indians of Labrador had heard such tales from the Norse sailors who visited their coast seeking for timber from the 11th to the 15th centuries, and there is plenty of archeological evidence to show that the Norsemen were acquainted with the Indian elephant. However, the Alaskan Eskimo tales suggest that there is a possibility that ancient tales, retold through the generations, actually included memories of long-extinct mammoths.

However that may be, there came a period in which North America became isolated from the Old World, when the warming of the climate released vast quantities of water from melting ice and so flooded the plain which is now the Bering Strait. After that there may have been a few migrations of people by canoe, although the voyage from the Old World to America by sea was generally impossible until comparatively late times.

The nature of American Indian life was largely conditioned by the terrain occupied by each of the many hundreds of tribes which had developed from the early migrants. The way of life of primitive hunters of the Stone Age persisted into recent times in the wild lands around Tierra del Fuego, and in the immense forests of Brazil where even stone was scarce. Among the poor tribes of the Californian desert life also remained primitive, and they subsisted on whatever animals and plants they could find in their hunting grounds.

North American Indian religion was largely based on personifications of the sun, moon, wind, rain and other forces of Nature; of all these the sun was the most important and was regarded as the supreme deity by many tribes: Kiowa drawing illustrating the legend of a woman who climbed to the sky in an attempt to catch a porcupine that turned out to be the son of the sun. The lower half of the picture shows her falling to earth again

The whole way of life of American Indians was changed by the discovery of maize in northern Mexico in about 5000 BC. The grain took a long time to develop to the point where it became a staple food, but gradually the idea of agriculture spread from Mexico, as far south as the pampas of South America and as far north as the St Lawrence basin. Even the brave hunting peoples of the prairie grew crops of maize, beans and squash in the river valleys; and before they acquired the horse they lived more on the products of their fields than by hunting.

Weather Moons

The growth of agriculture brought with it a new development of science and religion. The farmer knows well enough when the crop is ripe for harvest, but the day for planting the seed has to be calculated with precision. The clue is to be found in the sky, in the passage of the sun through the stars of the zodiac which mark the passage of the year. The moon also is important, and the passage of the moons was noted by all American Indian peoples with great care. The moons were named according to the weather expected in the part of the year during which each was visible.

Aggression is characteristic of human beings, and there is a persistent tendency to make profit by seizing the valuable assets of other groups. The development of civilization in North America was continually hampered by the open nature of much of the country which permitted inter-tribal raiding and warfare to take place. The most peaceful regions were the desolate sea-hunting grounds of the Eskimo, the vast lonely forests in the north, and the mountains and deserts where the more primitive groups found some shelter from their more advanced predatory neighbours.

Every advance towards civilization was dependent upon the development of agriculture and the ability of the tribespeople to defend their livelihood. The greater centres of culture at the beginning of the Christian era, and perhaps a century or two earlier, lay in the middle Mississippi and Ohio river valleys. Here people made themselves towns of wooden and bark cabins around enormous earthen mounds which seem to have supported temples. The mound cultures of the Adena and Hopewell groups show a form of pottery and art which is roughly equivalent to that developed in European Neolithic settlements. Here for the first time are portraits of American Indians carved on tobacco pipes, and engraved on shells and copper plaques. The copper came from great boulders of natural pure metal found in the region of Lake Superior, and must have been obtained through trade with the tribes who lived near the deposits. There is no evidence of ability in smelting and casting metals, a process which seems to have been discovered far to the south in Panama.

What happened to these civilized Indian towns is not known. Maybe they were later disrupted by raids from the more primitive peoples of the plains. However, in the Pueblo area of the American south-west towns were built and survived. They started as agricultural villages in the river valleys but increasing drought made a concentration of people in the most fertile regions a necessity. The same cause brought several prairie tribes raiding the cultivated areas, so the local people built their stone and mud-block houses in caves and on the tops of the *mesas*, the high, rocky tableland of this region.

The most successful political organization of American Indians north of Mexico was that of the Iroquois who, in the 15th century formed a confederation of Six Nations. Their civilization was Neolithic and they lived in villages surrounded by fields and orchards, where they were organized well enough to fight off all other peoples until the white men came. Other civilized tribes, living in organized towns with a hierarchy of chiefs and officials, were found in the southern Alleghanies, and from northern Florida to the delta of the Mississippi.

They were all cultivators, living in wooden villages, and were usually at war with one another. There were so few natural boundaries in this area that it was not possible for any one tribe to remain unmolested and

To the American Indians the stars were lights in a world above the earth; some wise men said they were the camp fires of the tribes in the sky

advance in the arts of civilized life.

The development of a true civilization, though with the use of only stone tools, and no knowledge of wheels, occurred in Mexico. It began in the first millennium BC and after going through a series of periods of decline and revival it finally flourished under the military dictatorship of the Aztecs, whose capital city of Mexico housed nearly a million people at the beginning of the 16th century (see AZTECS; MEXICO).

A study of American Indian religion shows that its complexity developed in line with the development of civilization. The basic units were the spirits of ancestors and personifications of forces of Nature such as wind, rain, thunder, and sun and moon. Every natural object might have a spirit which could be contacted. There were greater powers of creation and destruction worshipped among such people as the Eskimo, who regarded a Great Mother who lived under the sea as a giver of life in addition to sun and moon.

With the Eskimo, as with all other tribes, there was the need for day-to-day aid from the spirits. The nature of coming events was revealed through ecstatic visionaries, generally known as medicine-men because of their special functions as faith-healers. The main worship of the great natural forces usually took the form of a tribal ceremony at the appropriate season of the year. There was a great deal of self-torture by young men seeking to ensure success in war through pain. Most of the ceremonies lasted for four or five days, and everywhere the tribes had sets of carefully prescribed dances and chants to dramatize the occasion.

All American Indian religions were deeply influenced by the passage of the seasons. It was a necessity for the hunting tribes to be aware of the migrations of the animals, buffalo or salmon; and if at least the moon in which the migration could be expected was known, there would be time to prepare traps and snares, and gather supplies of arrows and spears. As a result, the successful medicine-man was likely to be a good astronomer.

The stars were lights in a world above the earth. Some wise men said they were the camp fires of the tribes in the sky. The sky land was a wonderful place, it was always summer there, and the souls of men and animals lived together without need to hunt and kill one another. There the sun had his house and the moon, who was often thought to be the younger brother of the sun, went on his regular journeys. Some of the stars were identified with deities, and the planets were thought to be great divine beings who wandered through the heavenly fields eternally acting out the drama of their lives. In particular, Venus usually had a dual character, being evil as the evening star and a power for good as the morning star.

The Pawnee a century ago still remembered the last occasion on which they had sacrificed a girl to the morning star. It was an ancient ceremony performed infrequently in times of trouble when the aid of this star was required. Being a cultured people, they would not sacrifice one of their own tribe but sent out a special expedition to kidnap a girl from one of the surrounding tribes. Once the captive had been taken she was treated with every consideration, given fine clothes and good food, and was never told the fate which awaited her. When the time came she was led out to a frame in the open air. Stripped

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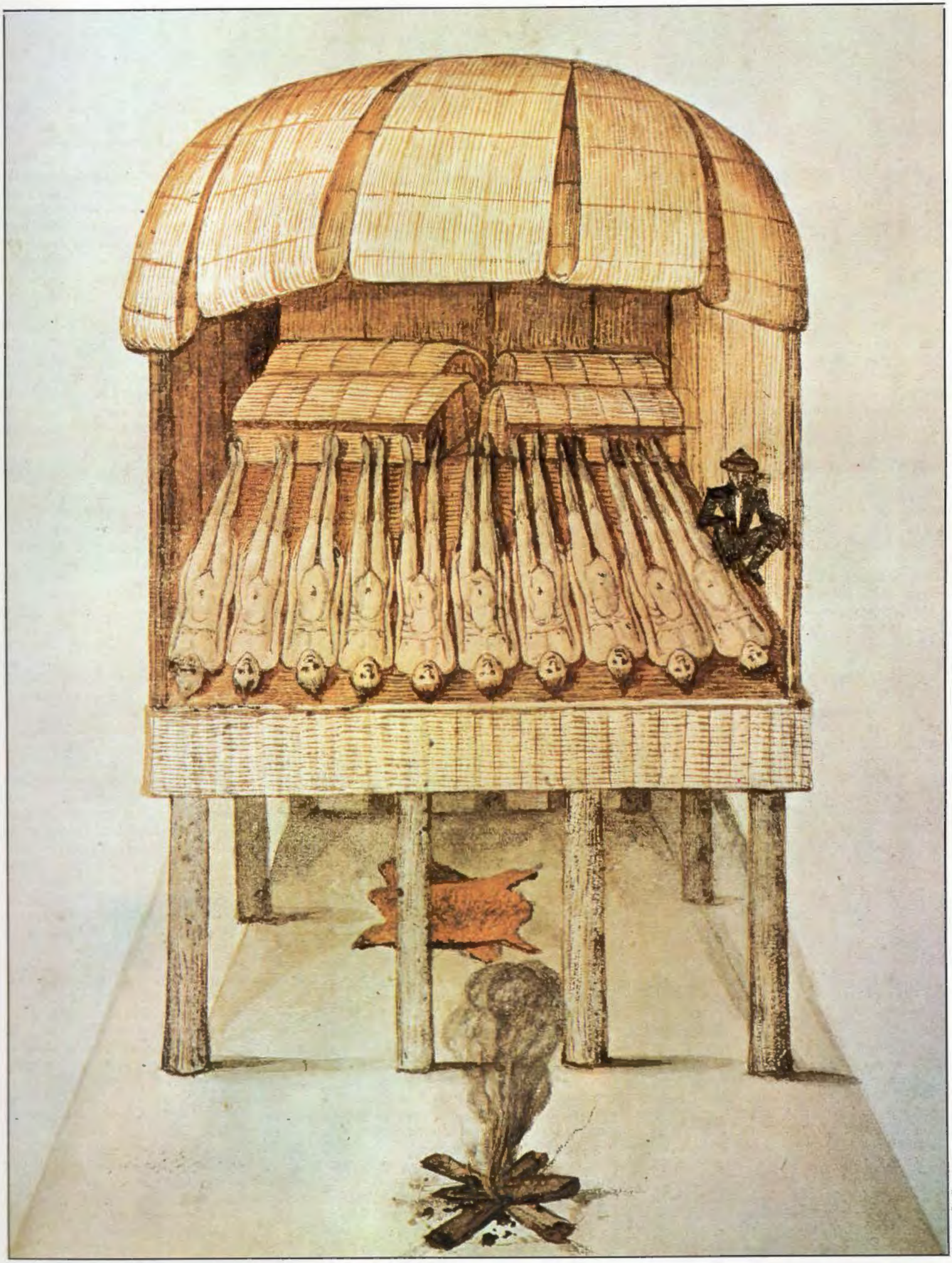
Clothing was not regarded as a necessity by the Indians, who thought of garments primarily as indicating social status and personal importance: warrior *(left)* and a woman of Florida *(right)*; they both wear body paint, applied in formal designs

Facing page **Sacred building of the Natchez Indians; the bodies of their dead were dried and kept on frames. 16th century watercolours by John White, now in the British Museum**



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C. M. Dixon/British Museum

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

Far left **Animal spirits are important figures in American Indian belief: water jug in the form of an owl, a bird that plays a prominent role in the mythology of the Zuni tribe *Left* Mask worn by the Indians of the north-west coast *Right* The Chippewa of the north believed in a Great Spirit who presided over the forces of Nature; the snowshoe dance was performed to thank this being for sending the first snow of winter, which enabled men to hunt game more easily as they were able to skim over the snow wearing snowshoes**

naked, and painted half black and half red, she was tied to the framework. Then the young men danced and shot arrows at her. She was killed quite quickly and it was thought that her spirit would go to the morning star and intercede for the people. It was because they needed her help in this way that they had treated her well during the days of captivity.

Almost every tribe paid reverence to the morning star because this brilliant planet which heralded the sunrise was thought to have something miraculous and fortunate about it.

Old Woman's Grandson

From the Dakota come many star legends, and here the red star Aldebaran, one of the brightest in the heavens, took on a heroic aspect. This young star was the child of the sun and the lady Blue Star. One day he saw approaching him a white buffalo calf (the Pleiades) and wanted to hunt it. He looked around to find a sapling to make a spear, and pulled one up. He opened a hole in the sky world and looked down on the prairies and saw the Indians hunting game. The buffalo calf came near and charged so that he tumbled through the hole in the sky and fell to earth. There he was found by a poor old woman who was gathering firewood. She took him back to her home where she treated him well. People called him Old Woman's Grandson.

On earth he killed many strange monsters which had been troubling the Indians. He stopped the clashing rocks which killed everyone who travelled along the trail which led between them, by sending his dog to dash through the opening, after a huge bonfire had been lit on top of one of the peaks. The stone began to melt, and as the rocks tried to crush the dog they stuck together; they are now a natural rock arch through which people can pass in safety.

Then there was a terrible drought, and Old Woman's Grandson discovered that a great serpent had come up onto the land and was drinking all the rivers. He took his firesticks with him in a canoe, and was duly swallowed by the monster. He then made a fire and burned up its heart. When it was dead he cut his way out through the carcass, and released a great stream of water which became the Mississippi.

He saw the white buffalo calf again and knew that he must hunt it once more and follow his destiny. So they ran across the prairie and came to the edge of the sky where they chased onwards and at last returned home in peace. Old Woman's Grandson was once more in his starry home and was greatly honoured because he had helped the Indians to live without fear.

The earth itself was thought to be a great turtle floating in the endless ocean. Some tribes believed it had been brought to the surface directly by the gods, others thought that diving ducks had brought earth from beneath the sea and piled it on the back of the great turtle, until a mountain was made from which earth spread to make the plains and valleys.

Special animals and birds were reared as sacrificial offerings and messengers to the gods. The Pueblo sacrifice of tame eagles once a year is a case in point. All tribes south of the Great Lakes cultivated tobacco, and it was regarded as a way of making contact with the Power Above, who white men call the Great Spirit. The smoke of the tobacco went upwards bearing prayers and wishes from people on earth, but the American Indian developed no tobacco habit. It was used at conferences to bring about a state of peaceful intent so that discussions could be started without anger. Thus it was used in the pipe-of-peace to symbolize the quiet friendship which would replace war.

In the south-eastern United States there was a charming legend of the origin of tobacco. A young man and his beloved were walking one summer, naked except for their moccasins as was usual in warm weather. They found a patch of scented grass and lay down together. Each was beautiful, and admiring each other they joined together in sexual partnership. It was so beautiful an experience that they remembered it and at the same time the following year they returned to seek the place where such happiness was found. There they found a strange plant growing with beautiful scented flowers. It was the first tobacco plant, the bringer of peaceful happiness. Hence for all future people tobacco was to be a holy plant and the bringer of peace.

Hallucinatory drugs were but rarely used among the North American Indians. Only in the 19th century was the mild narcotic, peyote (see PEYOTE CULTS), introduced from Mexico. It became an important source of visions in the Ghost Dance cult (see GHOST DANCE) but it seems that the expectation of the dreams was more important than any narcotic contained in the peyote. Much more important in rituals were the emetics which cleared the stomachs of those seeking visions, before which the whole person had to be emptied and cleansed. Many quite ordinary people participated in the great ceremonies, at least at the beginning of the year, and danced and took the magical drinks. They chose to take part because of a personal need of enlightenment from the powers above.

Women might occasionally come as assistants to the religious ceremonies, but they usually did not take part actively in the ritual. It was not for them, they thought, to participate in the sky ceremonies. Within themselves they held the powers of the Earth Mother who gave them the blessing of motherhood, and the magic which brought peace to their menfolk. When they painted themselves it was more for beauty, than for the symbolism in which their more brilliantly painted husbands gloried.

Because of the wide differences in cultural needs, a considerable variation in religious beliefs may be observed among the pre-Columbian groups of Indians. On the whole this is most closely represented in the creation myths. The more primitive groups generally regarded the first ancestors as having been created by the Power Above, sometimes by direct bringing into being; but in other myths they were thought of as having been carved or modelled by divine powers and given life by a special god who might be an adversary of the Great Creator.

Among some peoples several different explanations were given of the origins of the ancestors. In general the more advanced agricultural peoples developed a religion which saw their forefathers as emerging from a prehuman animal condition. These legends usually tell of an emergence in stages from one land beneath the earth to another, ever ascending towards more perfect humanity and the light of the sun. The Pueblo and Navaho Indians believed their homeland to have been the first created place, where they had always existed.

Most of the tribes had a belief that mankind had once been threatened by a terrible flood. Whether this is a folk-tradition from

Hamlyn Group Library/British Museum

the days when the ice sheets were melting is not clear, but it seems to have been current among many tribes before they came into contact with Europeans, though later the legend was slightly altered to suit the book of Genesis and the story of Noah. The Mandan of the upper Missouri preserved a ring of planks which they believed to be relics of the Great Canoe in which their ancestors gathered on a hill top, just before the encroaching waters were stayed and then began to recede.

Sacred Houses

All American Indians had faith in charms and amulets, which were revealed in visions. The dreamer would find a similar object in his waking life and keep it in his personal medicine bag. Some objects were so sacred that they were kept in tribal medicine bundles which were passed from hand to hand over the centuries. It was the spirit and the symbol, not the object, which had power for the Indians.

After the 16th century the Plains tribes, who became dependent more on their hunting ability than on the gardens tended by their womenfolk, were obsessed with rituals of hunting and war. The young men were organized into religious confraternities which, by means of prayer, self-torture and dramatic representational dance, encouraged the guardian spirits to bring the tribe abundance of food, and victory in adversity. The leaders were elderly chiefs who knew the proper ritual for every occasion in all its complex detail. The young initiates wandered naked and alone in the prairie, fasting until they were given visions in which they saw their future spirit protectors. These directed them into ways of life which, in effect, determined which magic society they should join.

The rituals of these hunting tribes were more public, and more of a mass festival, than those of the agricultural people who tended to hold their principal ceremonies within a sacred house where they were visible to initiates only. Among the Pueblos the rituals were performed in circular underground chambers called *kivas*, which were decorated with paintings of the gods concerned in the ceremonies. Among the Iroquois the meetings were held in long houses of elm bark which were reserved for the tribal elders.

Such segregation of ritual from the mass of the tribe was bound to lead eventually to the growth of religious orders, in which a priesthood of men dedicated to certain deities was developed. The temple with its subsidiary buildings and priest-houses, which was the end product of this development, was only fully developed in Mexico. Among the northern Indians, such people as the Natchez of the lower Mississippi valley developed a structured society in which the highest class was of chiefs and priests who were called 'suns'. They led the nation in war and directed all tribal activities. The priests were specialists within the upper social group, and tended the temples, performed ceremonies including sacrificial offerings to the gods, and made deities in wood and clay.

Somewhat similar but less highly organized cultures flourished among the Creek, Cherokee and Choctaw Indians of the hill country of the south-eastern United States. They lived in villages built along trackways which joined one town with another. These tribes were advanced in a Neolithic phase of culture, having well-organized plantations of maize, beans, pepper and squash. There were sufficient deer and wild pigs to give some meat in their diet, and fishing was abundant in the many rivers of their country. They had to resist forays from their neighbours and even from the more distant tribes of the prairies, some of whom, like the Pawnee, were related to them. They built temples on mounds, and their gods were served by specialist priests. The passage of the year was marked by a regular series of ceremonies which were expected to bring blessings from the powers of sky and earth.

Everywhere the sun was the most important visible entity, and the moon a changeable secondary power. The earth and her fruits were holy and offerings were made. On the whole, rituals for the sun and sky spirits involved self-inflicted pain, and earth ceremonials involved sexual rituals which included public intercourse by chosen young people. In such ceremonies there was no idea of decency or indecency; the action was holy and part of the world of Nature through which came all the gifts from the gods to their human supporters.

A quite distinct culture in North America was centred on the North Pacific coast where

Most tribes believed that spirit protectors in the form of animals could be acquired by young men through fasting and self-torture

Hanman Museum

Carved kachina doll, painted to resemble one of the supernatural beings impersonated by masked dancers in Pueblo tribal ceremonies; these symbolic dolls are given to children to enable them to recognize the gods depicted

a high degree of comfortable village life was achieved without the practice of agriculture. The reason for this unusual state of affairs was that abundant supplies of sea food and wild berries made it possible for people to settle in permanent villages. They carved wooden utensils, built houses and dug canoes out of the great trunks of Douglas fir trees. There was a strong belief in the relationship between human and animal relatives, and tales concerning these were told in the form of ceremonial plays during the winter nights. The idea of the totem (see TOTEM) was more important in this region than in any other part of North America.

Most tribes believed that spirit protectors in the form of animals could be acquired by young men through fasting and self-torture. Such animal-souls occasionally took possession of a skin carried by the owner, and acted as oracles ever ready to help with advice and even a little magic. In some ways they may be compared to the familiars that were said to help European witches.

There was much variation in language and costume in the widely scattered tribes. There were some 700 languages, which were divided into slightly more than 20 linguistic groups, some of them as different in type as are Latin and Mandarin Chinese. Communication between tribes was often conducted in sign language which became a regular inter-tribal code of signals in areas like the Great Plains. Some peoples used picture writing and sometimes symbolic objects such as strings of wampum beads to convey history and information. But it was not until the early 19th century, under European influence, that the first truly American Indian alphabet was invented, adapted to suit the Cherokee language.

Clothing was also influenced by the European settlers, and pictures of the 19th century show that the skin gowns of the squaws on the prairie reflected something of European fashion. But none of the American Indians felt clothing to be a necessity. Rather it was a way of marking social status, and a means of proclaiming individual importance.

Among the Eskimo, clothing was tailored from warm skins, but indoors they generally stripped naked. The women of the prairie had wrap-around skirts and sometimes long gowns held at the sides by a girdle, while men wore a loin cloth. Both sexes had skin blankets to keep them warm when sitting down in the colder weather. In warm weather men and women might go naked in the camp without any comment. Among the Pueblo Indians there was a somewhat similar situation, though girls were presented with a blanket woven by their husbands when they married, and continued to wear such a garment from then on. They went naked before marriage. In early times all tribes wore sandals, but moccasins and short boots were evolved later.

The American Indians of today, although often treated with grave injustice, have tended to become assimilated into the surrounding way of life, although on ceremonial occasions many of them don what they consider to be traditional costumes, and perform dances of ancient origin. Even the Eskimo have adopted framed wooden double-walled houses and motor boats as standard tools of living.

In the reservations Indians try to combine modern necessity with old custom, and many have become indistinguishable from poor whites. They are probably as numerous as they were in ancient times, though many tribes became totally extinct as a result of the bitter wars of the 17th to the late 19th centuries. Even the old locations of the tribes have been disrupted because of the wholesale deportations which characterized the occupation of the prairies by farming communities. But in ancient times the population of North America was small and scattered, and even the Iroquois who occupied nearly all of what is now New York State numbered only about 20,000 persons.

The world of the American Indians was once a rather lonely but free place where humans were close to Nature and followed a natural system of belief. The wars and raids, which became so terrible when horses and arms were obtained from the European settlers, were on a fairly small scale in earlier days, and it is possible that the toll of human sacrifice was almost equal to that of war. But it must be remembered that the primitive life of even the civilized tribes was hard and often unhealthy. Their condition must be equated with that of the various tribes of western Europe from 10,000 to 1,000 BC.

(See also ALGONQUIN INDIANS; ESKIMO; GREAT PLAINS INDIANS; IROQUOIS; NAVAHO; PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS; PUEBLO INDIANS.)

C. A. BURLAND

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The Earl of Bothwell, cousin of James VI of Scotland, has been suspected of using witchcraft in his attempts to gain the Scottish throne; certainly the witches accused in the North Berwick trials confessed to attempting to kill the King by magic at the behest of the 'Devil'

NORTH BERWICK WITCHES

THE CELEBRATED CASE of the North Berwick witches, with its mixture of politics, high treason, and sorcery, is one of the most interesting in the annals of Scottish witchcraft. According to *News from Scotland*, a contemporary pamphlet published in 1591, the existence of these witches was discovered when David Seaton, the Deputy Bailiff of the town of Trenent, noticed that his maidservant, Gilly (or Geillis) Duncan, was behaving rather oddly.

She had taken to absenting herself from his house at night without permission asked or explanation given, and she had, quite suddenly, acquired a local reputation for healing the sick. When Seaton questioned her about these alleged cures, she refused to answer, and he, suspecting witchcraft, resorted to torture. The author of *News from Scotland* says that, with the help of some others, he used 'the pilliwinks upon her fingers, which is a grievous torture; and binding and wrenching her head with a cord, or rope, which is a most cruel torment also; yet would she not confess anything.' It was not until she had been searched for the Devil's Mark, and something supposed to be that mark had been found upon her throat, that she broke down and acknowledged that she was a witch, and that all her cures were the result of diabolically-inspired magic.

After she had made this confession, Gilly Duncan was committed to prison, and there she named and accused a number of other people. David Seaton must surely have been astonished and horrified by the results of his more or less private examination of a maidservant in his own home, as slowly there came to light, not only the practice of dark magic by bands of local witches, but, more serious still, a murderous plot against the life of James VI.

The instigator of this plot was said to be Francis Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, who was the King's cousin and had some claim to the throne of Scotland should James die without an heir. He was also suspected of being the 'Devil' of the covens concerned, and of having been present, in ritual disguise, at their meetings.

It is quite possible that both these accusations were true. He and the King were at constant enmity with each other. James's early death, while he was still childless, might have put supreme power within Bothwell's grasp, and he was reputed to be deeply interested in occultism and magic. He may in fact have attempted to clear his way to the throne with the help of the North Berwick witches, as some of the evidence given in the trials that followed suggests. If he did, he escaped the worst consequences of his guilt, although he was eventually forced to fly from Scotland and take refuge in Italy, from which country he never returned. While he lived there, he seems to have continued to dabble in various forms of sorcery. In his *Relation of a Journey* (1623), George Sandys makes the interesting statement that when he was travelling in Calabria in 1610, a man whom he met 'would needs persuade me that I had insight in magic; for that Earl Bothel was my countryman, who lives at Naples, and is in these parts famous for suspected necromancy.'

Of those named by Gilly Duncan, only four were brought to trial. They were Dr John Fian (or Conningham), a young schoolmaster in Saltpans; Euphemia Maclean, Lord Cliftonhall's daughter; Barbara Napier, the only one of the four whose life was spared; and Agnes Sampson, a midwife of Keith, well known in her own district as a wisewoman and healer of the sick.

John Fian appears to have been one of the officers of the North Berwick organization, being, as he acknowledged in his confession, 'clerk to all those that were in subjection to the Devil's service.' He kept a list of their names, took their oaths, and 'wrote for them such matters as the Devil still pleased to command him.' It was stated in evidence that he was always present at the meetings and stood nearest to the Devil, 'at his left elbow'; at the great gathering on All Hallows Eve, 1590, he was the leader of the dance, for which Gilly Duncan provided the music, playing upon a Jew's harp.

When Fian was first examined, he denied all the charges brought against him, but after being horribly tortured, he confessed, and signed his confession in the presence of King James. He is said to have implicated Bothwell directly in some of his admissions, and afterwards to have bitterly regretted having done so, but this cannot now be proved because the original document has been lost. That night he was left alone in his cell to recover from the effects of the torture. According to *News from Scotland*, he had sincerely repented of his past evil life and was anxious to make his peace with God. Next morning, he told his jailers that the Devil had come to him during the hours of darkness, dressed all in black and carrying a white wand in his hand, and had demanded that he should renew his former vows of service. Fian refused, declaring that he had listened to him too much already, and was now utterly undone in consequence. The Devil replied, 'Once ere thou die, thou shalt be mine', and so saying, he broke his white wand, and vanished.

This is an odd tale, of which, at first sight, the most likely explanation seems to be a nightmare, or delirium caused by the dreadful treatment he had received. Dr

The deeds of the North Berwick witches, from *News from Scotland*, a contemporary pamphlet published in 1591: Dr John Fian, clerk of the coven, takes down the words of the 'Devil', possibly the Earl of Bothwell in disguise, who is preaching from a pulpit; the illustration also shows a boat sunk in a storm called up by the witches, and members of the coven drinking wine in a cellar

Margaret Murray, however, in *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), suggests that the visitor was real and human, either Bothwell himself, or one of his messengers, and that he came to make arrangements for Fian's escape. It is a fact that, after another day of solitary confinement, he did escape, but instead of going into hiding, he went quietly back to his house at Saltpans, and there remained until, inevitably, he was recaptured.

But by then he was a changed man. Somehow, in that brief interval, he had gained a new and unshakable courage. He denied all that he had confessed before, declaring that his first confession was altogether false, and had been wrung from him only by the fear of pain. He was tortured again most brutally in the hope of breaking down his resistance, but in spite of this he refused to answer any further questions, or to say anything more.

The King, amazed, like everyone else who saw it, at this sudden stiffening of one who had so recently been utterly broken and defeated, came to the conclusion that Fian had seen and been strengthened by the Devil while he was at Saltpans; and perhaps he had, if Bothwell was really the 'Devil' of the North Berwick witches. Whatever the cause, Fian's resolution held, and he died, still silent, in January 1591, being first strangled and then burnt on the Castle Hill in Edinburgh.

Calling Up a Storm

Agnes Sampson was a witness of a totally different kind. It is true that, like Fian, she confessed nothing until she had been brought low by torture, but then she spoke freely, being, as we are told in one account, 'grave and settled in her answers, which were all to some purpose.' She acknowledged that she and certain named companions had conspired against the King's life on more than one occasion. When he was in Denmark and about to return from there with his newly-made wife, she was present at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of raising a great storm at sea, whereby the royal ships might be destroyed. The method employed for this was to christen a cat, pass it three times through the links of the chimney-crook and three times under the chimney, and then bind on to its four feet 'the chiefest part of a dead man and several joints of his body.' When this horrible ceremony had been duly performed, the poor creature was carried to the pier at Leith, and hurled into the sea, as far as the witches could throw it. A storm sprang up immediately, and a boat then coming from Kinghorne to Leith was sunk; but the spell was apparently not strong enough to sink the King's ship which, though much troubled by contrary winds and bad weather, came safely back to Scotland.

The venom of a toad, mixed with other poisons, was tried also. A black toad was hung up by its feet for three days, and its venom carefully collected as it dropped into an oyster shell. Poisons being added, the concoction was kept until a piece of old linen which had once been worn or used by the King could be obtained. Upon this it was proposed to smear the venom and so poison the victim through the medium of the cloth that had once been in contact with his body. The plan failed because John Kers, one of James's servants, of whom Agnes had begged such a fragment, wisely refused to give it. Had he done so, she said, she could have killed the King with extraordinary pains, 'as if he had been lying upon sharp thorns and ends of needles.'

The witches then resorted to the age-old practice of image-magic. Agnes Sampson told her examiners in Holyrood Palace that she had been instructed by the Devil to make a wax image of the King. This she did, and brought it, wrapped in a linen cloth, to a secret meeting held by night at Prestonpans. This was a gathering of the chosen few, those nearest to the core of the conspiracy; only nine other witches were present beside herself, and 'the Devil, their master . . . standing in the midst of them.' She offered him the image for his inspection, and when he had approved it, he returned it to her. It was then passed from hand to hand round the company, each person saying in turn: 'This is King James the Sixth, ordained to be consumed, at the instance of a noble man, Francis Earl Bothwell.' If John Fian had been deeply troubled by the fear that he might have implicated his master in his confession, it seems evident that Agnes Sampson had no such scruples.

From her, and later from Euphemia Maclean and Barbara Napier, the interrogators heard accounts of the great assembly at North Berwick Church on All Hallows Eve. Witches commonly met in the open air, often by standing-stones or on some other traditional site, but in winter they sometimes met in houses or, if the gathering was a large one, in the local church. Their enemies regarded this use of a sacred building as a form of deliberate blasphemy, but it is quite possible that one reason for the choice was simple convenience, since churches are large, not infrequently some way from the houses of the village, and empty at night.

A considerable number of witches were present at this meeting, seven score according to Barbara Napier, 200 according to Agnes Sampson. They came by sea, making merry on the way with flagons of wine. They danced round the churchyard to Gilly Duncan's music, singing as they went:

> Cummer, go ye before; Cummer, go ye;
> If ye will not go before, cummer, let me.

When King James heard this, he sent for Gilly Duncan, and made her play the dance tune for him upon a trump similar to the one she had used at North Berwick.

Under God's Protection

The Devil presided over the gathering in the form of a man wearing a black gown and a black hat. He may have worn a mask also, for his face is said to have been terrible, with great burning eyes and a nose like the beak of an eagle. His hands were hairy and had claws on them, and his feet were like those of a griffin, all of which suggests that he was ritually disguised. Barbara Napier said that he was bearded like a goat, and had a long tail. All made their homage to him, coming and going, saluting him on departure with the posterior kiss. Inside the church, he stood in the pulpit, with black candles burning round him, and called the roll, each person answering to his or her name with 'Here, master!'.

He preached to his followers concerning the obedience they owed him and the evil they ought constantly to do; more particularly, he urged them to work evil upon King James, who was the greatest enemy he had in the world. He enquired what success had been achieved by the melting of the waxen image Agnes Sampson had made, and when an old ploughman named Gray-Meill tactlessly remarked that 'Nothing ailed the King yet, God be thanked', he struck him a fierce blow with his clawed hand. When some of the

witches asked how it was that all their magic had so far failed against the King, though it had not against others, the Devil rather curiously replied that it was because James was a man of God.

To all this, and much else that was marvellous and improbable, the King listened until, suddenly losing patience, he declared that the confessing witches were 'all extreme liars'. Then followed one of the most extraordinary incidents in this very odd case. Agnes Sampson said she did not wish him to think that her words were false, and to convince him of their truth, she would tell him something that he could not doubt. And drawing him a little aside, she whispered to him the words that had passed between him and his bride, Anne of Denmark, when they were alone together on their wedding-night in Oslo.

No one knows why she did this. His incredulity must have seemed like a door opening on the hope of pardon and release, and that door she deliberately closed upon herself and her fellow-prisoners. She was, as far as we know, quite sane, nor does she appear to have been one of those hysterical individuals who will confess to anything, however dangerous, rather than lose importance. The startled King acknowledged that what she told him was quite true, and that she could not have known it by any normal means. 'All the devils in Hell,' he said, 'could not have discovered the same'; nor is it clear, even now, how she came by her secret knowledge.

The effect of the disclosure was, of course, fatal. James, forced to accept one part of her confession, was now ready to accept the rest. She was convicted and, in due course, executed on Castle Hill, and so, some time later, was Euphemia Maclean. Barbara Napier was condemned also, but was eventually released. With the subsequent flight of Lord Bothwell, the North Berwick case ended, for though many others were involved, and their names were known to the authorities, none was brought to trial thereafter.

CHRISTINA HOLE

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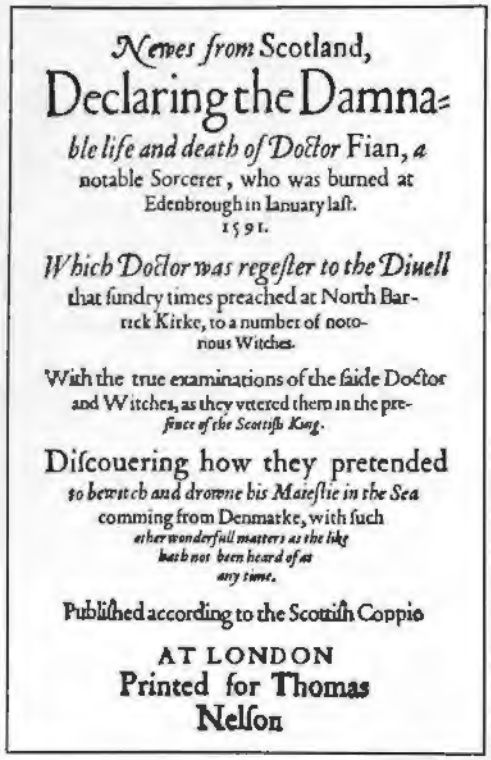
John Freeman



Newes from Scotland,
Declaring the Damna-
ble life and death of Doctor Fian, a
notable Sorcerer, who was burned at
Edenbrough in January last.
1591.

Which Doctor was regester to the Diuell
that sundry times preached at North Bar-
rick Kirke, to a number of noto-
rious Witches.

With the true examinations of the saide Doctor
and Witches, as they vttered them in the pre-
sence of the Scottish King.

Discouering how they pretended
to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the Sea
comming from Denmarke, with such
other wonderfull matters as the like
hath not been heard of at
any time.

Published according to the Scottish Coppie

AT LONDON
Printed for Thomas
Nelson

John Freeman

Above, left to right One of the witches uses his magical powers to heal a sick cow; North Berwick church, one of the meeting-places of the coven; Dr Fian riding a horse which has the Devil's candles between its ears ***Left*** King James VI questions the accused at their trial ***Below*** Frontispiece of ***Newes of Scotland,*** from which all illustrations are taken

Nose

Because of its role in breathing, and the essential connection with breath and life, the nose may be guarded by an amulet or ring, to prevent evil spirits from entering the body; unpleasant smells assailing the nose are widely thought of as evil spirits: sneezing, as an expulsion of the life-breath, has frequently been regarded as dangerous and ominous.

See SNEEZING.

NOSTRADAMUS

ASTROLOGER AND PHYSICIAN, Nostradamus (Michel de Nostradame) was born at St Remy in Provence in 1503. Although he achieved renown during his lifetime – he became the adviser and confidant of Catherine de Medicis, who had a weakness for the occult – his perennial fame is due to the extraordinary collection of rhymed prophecies that are associated with his name.

The first of countless editions was published in 1555. A more complete version consisting of 1000 quatrains, or four-line verses, divided into ten *Centuries* (books) appeared in 1558 two years after his death.

Every Nostradamus quatrain represents an individual prophecy. They are not presented in any obvious chronological order and each must be interpreted individually. The Nostradamus enthusiast can try to identify prophecies that have already been fulfilled, or he can attempt to formulate a clear, as opposed to a veiled, prophetic statement on the basis of any given quatrain. Every successive generation discovers something that appears to be significant, and surprising coincidences have been recorded.

A fascinating interpretation, published in 1921 by C. Loog, a Berlin postal official, appears to have predicted the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. This example illustrates a completely typical interpretative phenomenon. Loog was obviously familiar with two well-known Nostradamus manuals: Le Pelletier's *Les Oracles de Michel de Nostradamus* (Paris, 1867) and the Abbé Charles Nicoullaud's *Nostradamus, ses prophéties* (Paris, 1914). The quatrain in question is No 57 in the 3rd book. Translated into English, it reads:

> Seven times you shall see the English to change,
> Dyed in blood, in two hundred ninety year,
> Not France, by the German support,
> Aries doubteth his Bastarnan pole.

To 'interpret' most of the quatrains it is necessary to identify the period or, even

Nostradamus enthusiasts believe that each of his four-line verses contains an individual prophecy, and he is credited with foretelling the outbreak of the Second World War: imaginary portrait of Nostradamus

Bibliothèque Nationale/Stark International

better, the year to which they might conceivably refer. Nicoullaud proposed that the first two lines implied that during a period of 290 years Britain would experience seven changes of dynasty. But 290 years from when? Nicoullaud thought of 1603, when James I came to the throne, making the year in question 1893. But nothing of any importance happened in that year. So he began again with 1649, when Charles I was executed. This gave him 1939, the date of the start of the Second World War, as the year that would be 'dyed (or tinged) in blood'; the expression was certainly an appropriate one.

Loog, following Nicoullaud's example, based his calculations on the year 1649, and interpreted the quatrain as follows: 'In 1939 there will be the last noteworthy change of dynasty in Britain. "Aries (zodiacal sign) will clearly have doubts about his protectorate Bastarnien." In the era of Tacitus the German tribe of the Bastarnae was on the other side of the River Vistula, hence in "Poland". Aries, the first sign of the zodiac, rules the East. Nostradamus therefore clearly indicates that in 1939 there will be a critical state of affairs in the revived State of Poland hand in hand with Britain's last and greatest crisis.'

Nicoullaud did not equate *Bastarnan* with Poland but with something completely different. Indeed, it was Le Pelletier who provided the Polish indication, but in a completely different context. Loog took his interpretative elements from both Le Pelletier and Nicoullaud and arrived at speculative, although eventually strangely accurate, conclusions that owed something to each of these two writers.

Loog's interpretation was published in 1921. In the autumn of 1939, 18 years later, a number of people more or less simultaneously told Dr Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister, about it. This led to the German interest in faked Nostradamus prophecies for psychological warfare during the Second World War. It also led to the employment in Berlin of Karl Ernst Krafft (1900–45), a Swiss astrologer who was a great Nostradamus enthusiast and who had studied his works for years on end. Krafft himself never consciously tampered with the quatrains, and all the 'dirty work' was done by the Propaganda Ministry.

There are a number of well-known prophecies that appear to refer to Napoleon. For instance, there is quatrain No 60 in the 1st book:

> An emperor shall be born near Italy,
> Who shall cost dear to the Empire,
> They shall say, with what people he keepeth company!
> He shall be found less a prince than a butcher.

Another quatrain begins: 'From (being) a simple soldier he will come to (achieve or rule) an Empire'. Before 1933 most contemporary Nostradamus pundits supposed that the 'simple soldier' must mean Napoleon, but there were soon some who thought it could equally well be Hitler, who was a mere corporal in 1918 and less than 20 years later was the virtual 'ruler' of Germany.

During the spring of 1940 Krafft delivered a short course of lectures on Nostradamus in Berlin. His rendering of the following quatrain, No 100 in the 2nd book, shows how a prevailing mood or hopes can colour an interpretation:

> In the islands shall be so horrid tumults,
> That nothing shall be heard but a warlike surprise,
> So great shall be the insult of the robbers,
> That every one shall shelter himself under the great league.

For Krafft 'the islands' meant the British Isles, and 'robbers' were the dastardly British who rob and pillage. The 'tumult' in Britain would be horrible, worse than anyone could imagine. The reference to war was construed to mean total war, involving the whole population. The last two lines were supposed to explain that the injuries that the British robbers inflicted upon other nations would be so great that Europe would range herself against Britain to put an end to her predatory acts.

Generation after generation of Nostradamus enthusiasts have supposed that the quatrains, no matter how obscure their contents, must be regarded as genuine prophetic messages.

It is conceivable, however, that Nostradamus composed them with tongue in cheek, and that he was well aware that there is an enduring market for prophecies and particularly for veiled ones.

ELLIC HOWE

NUDITY

THERE IS NOTHING outrageous or shocking about naked bodies seen dimly through the mists of a Turkish bath, precisely because this is where one expects to see them. In the theatre, on the other hand, where nudity is a reversal of the customary or conventional order of things, the incongruity of a naked cast on a normal theatre stage can still create a sensation. The same basic idea of incongruity underlies the use of nudity in myth and magic.

In the Trichinopoly district of southern India, wrote an English observer in 1912, 'when the tanks and rivers threaten to breach their banks, men stand naked on the embankment and beat their drums; and if too much rain falls, naked men point firebrands at the sky. Their nudity is supposed to shock the powers that bring rain, and arrest their further progress.' Another investigator of Indian customs, writing in 1919, reports that 'high caste women or girls in times of drought are in the habit of divesting themselves of clothing at night

Staatsbibliothek, Berlin

A group of German Adamites, heretics who went naked in an attempt to recapture the lost perfection of humanity in the garden of Eden, before the Fall and before Adam and Eve had felt shame at being naked. Adamites have been discovered and persecuted at various times in Christian history and some are reputed to have survived into this century in Russia

and dragging a plough through the fields.' The men are excluded altogether from this ritual, which is performed in the hope that Indra, or some other rain god, will be moved to pity by such an unusual performance.

The harnessing of naked women to the plough is probably linked with the sexual connotations of ploughing, though this may have been forgotten in the Indian ritual. That this is a very primitive rite is shown by the fact that the same custom is found far away from India, in different contexts. As late as July 1905, a case was recorded of peasant girls in Russia, clothed only in their shifts, warding off cholera from their village by dragging a plough round it at midnight. It is also reported that Russian peasants used at one time to punish adulteresses by yoking them naked to the plough.

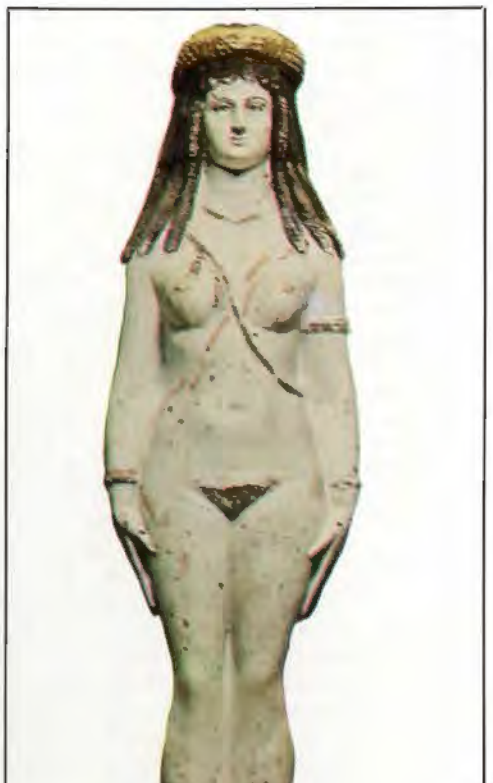
Nudity confers magic powers over the forces of Nature, not only through its incongruity but through the supposed power of the sexual organs to ward off evil. This power is derived from the reproductive functions of these organs, which cause them to be widely regarded as enemies of sterility, death and disease. The remedy against cholera was probably applied at an earlier epoch by completely naked girls.

Considering that the efficacy of nudity in magic comes from the contrast it provides to convention, it is not surprising that in the matter of disease there is the complementary idea of associating nudity with its causation. When the plague broke out in the German town of Schassburg in the early 18th century, it was believed that the signal of the arrival of the disease in quarters of the town hitherto unaffected would be the appearance of a naked maiden. This contrasts with an ancient Roman cure for abscesses recorded by Pliny, in which a naked maiden administered a salve made of seven ingredients with the magic words: 'Apollo says the contagion will not spread where a naked virgin has wiped it out.'

One of the earliest ritual uses of nudity, which may also be linked with its frequent association with rain-making, is in cures for sterility. In Bombay, women desiring to have children go to the temple of Hanuman, the monkey god, strip naked and embrace the god's image. Elsewhere in India, women who suppose themselves sterile walk 108 times round a sacred fig-tree in the nude, winding a cotton thread round the trunk.

Naked at Divine Service

With the passage of time, however, the original significance of nudity in a particular ritual may be forgotten, or confused with some other belief or custom. This seems to have happened with the English legend of Lady Godiva (see GODIVA). The earliest version of this is to be found in Roger of Wendover's *Flowers of History*, written at the beginning of the 13th century. According to Roger, the Countess Godiva rode naked from one end of the town of Coventry to the other, in order to satisfy the conditions laid down by her husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who had promised to free the people of Coventry from the oppression of a heavy toll if she did this.



Michael Holford/British Museum

Nicosea Museum/Sonia Halliday/F.H.C. Birch

Michael Holford

Stories with the same basic motif of a royal, divine or magic favour granted to a princess who makes a public appearance in the nude are told in India, Mongolia and Persia. In many of these, as in later versions of the legend of Lady Godiva, a male witness appears (Peeping Tom in the Coventry story), with disastrous consequences either to himself or to others. That his crime is a serious one is shown by its punishment – blinding – which is symbolic of castration, and reserved for serious sexual offences.

We are here moving away from the strictly magical uses of nudity to its significance in sacred rites. Naked priests, priestesses and prophets feature in the ritual of religions widely separated both in time and space. The Greek author Aelian (3rd century AD) reports that in Epirus the priestess of Apollo, a naked virgin, appears alone before the temple and feeds the serpents. The priest of Shiva, the Vedic god of reproduction, who had to be celibate, appeared in the nude to believers in the *lingam* or phallus.

Here again, the contrary idea, that nudity is sacrilegious, is not far to seek. The ancient Roman *flamen dialis*, the priest of Jupiter, was not allowed to leave so much as his head bare under the sky, which was of course the god himself. If his conical white leather hat fell off during a sacrifice, he was obliged to resign (see JUPITER).

In the history of Christianity sacrilegious nudity has appeared as a feature of heresy, notably in the case of the Adamites, a Russian sect reputed to have survived into this century who sought to get rid of modesty as a relic of the Fall of Man, and who accordingly went naked at divine service and in their houses. That this is a recurring heresy is shown by the fact that there is a record of Pope Honorius IV ordering the persecution of a group of German heretics who professed similar beliefs at the end of the 13th century. And as late as 1925, there was a sect in California that held naked orgies and whose priestess, Anna Rhodes, believed that she and her husband were Eve and Adam, and their home the Garden of Eden.

At other times, nudity has featured in Christian ritual without even being rationalized as a heresy. Father Pierre David, chaplain of a convent in Normandy in the 17th century, commanded the nuns to attend Mass stripped to the skin 'as a sign of humility and poverty'. Not an altogether convincing rationale, though the lascivious chaplain could quote plenty of biblical references to nakedness as a symbol of humiliation and shame. Once again, it is the essential incongruity of the nudity of the Egyptian prisoners in Isaiah 20.4, for instance, 'with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt' that creates the humiliation.

It is the unconventionality of nudity, perhaps, that recommends it to witches, who work many of their magic spells naked. But there is a typical piece of rationalization to be observed here, for witches frequently say that they work naked so as not to impede the release of magical force which their ceremonies generate in their bodies. A candidate for witchhood in the Ozark hill country in the United States is said to offer herself body and soul to the Devil in initiation rites during which she strips naked and copulates with the man who is responsible for teaching her.

In a society where nudity was the rule, witches would no doubt put on magical clothing. The point of their behaviour is the contrast it makes with conventionally accepted norms, and this is the reason for modern uses of nudity in advertising, for example, or on the stage. This is not to say that nudity has lost its essentially magic function. It is not an accident that in the '30s nudism became fashionable in Nazi Germany, the home of a strikingly irrational cult at the time; or that the present day, with its loss of belief in traditional magic but its unprecedented burden of irrational (and rationally based) fear, has found new and widely acclaimed uses for nudity.

DAVID PHILLIPS

Nudity has many religious and magical uses. It may imply sexuality, and the mother goddesses of the ancient world were sometimes depicted naked to emphasize their power over fertility; or it may be intended to shock, whether those to be shocked are the gods who send too much rain, as in some areas of India, or modern theatre-goers; or, as in modern nudism, it may express a feeling that to be naked is to be natural and in harmony with Nature *Left* Egyptian statuette of a deity combining the roles of Isis and Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of desire *Below, left to right* Statue of Aphrodite; marble torso of a Roman figure; German nudists on the island of Sylt; Miss Nude America

Syndication International

Transworld Feature

George Rodger/Magnum

Nuer warrior in ceremonial costume: the Nuer believe in an omnipotent God who is responsible for good fortune and for bad, who is in the sky but is also on earth with man. Man is God's opposite, the created as against the creator, but his 'breath' or 'life' comes from God and returns to God again after death

What small black ants are to man, so is man to God, according to the Nuer people of the Upper Nile, whose beliefs are among the best examples of the intelligence and sensitivity of 'primitive' religions

NUER

IT IS NOT EASY to make a clear and rigid distinction between magic and religion, but most peoples make their own, and in describing the beliefs and practices of any particular people it is convenient to accept their categories and evaluations. If this is done in the case of the Nuer it would be necessary to state right away that except for what may be called fetishes, a recent introduction into their country, and a few charms, they have little of what they call *wal*, a word we might translate as 'medicine' or 'magic'. On the other hand, the notion of *kwoth*, 'spirit', which most people would regard as a religious concept, has a very large part in their thought.

The Nuer are a Nilotic people of some 200,000 souls who live in the swampy and savannah country on both sides of the Nile, in the region where that river is fed by its two tributaries, the Sobat from the east and the Bahr al-Ghazal from the west. Most of the country is waterlogged during the rains when the rivers top their banks, and is baked and fissured clay during the dry season. This would render an agricultural economy precarious, and the Nuer are primarily a pastoral people dependent on their flocks and herds, though some agriculture is practised and fishing provides an important part of their diet. Cattle are their predominant interest, not only because of their economic value but also because they are symbols of prestige, provide the wherewithal for marriage and payment of debts, and are the nexus or link between man and the spiritual world.

Their mode of livelihood in the environment in which they live imposes on the Nuer a trans-humant distribution: they move their livestock according to the seasons, living in villages on ground which rises from the waterlogged plains during the rains, and moving to camps for permanent water and green pasturage and for fishing when the rest of the country is parched. These conditions and the way of life their country imposes determine the spread of villages and camps, and consequently influence political attachments and cleavages.

The Nuer tribe is a political community, all the members of which acknowledge their obligation to combine in warfare against outsiders, and the rights of their members to compensation for injury inflicted by one of them. Each tribe is divided into sections which are structurally opposed to those of like size though, as indicated, they may combine in certain situations. The smallest of these are composed of villages which in their turn are composed of domestic groups.

There can scarcely be said to be any political authority or office in any of the tribes which form the Nuer people. What provides a loose framework of cohesion, and is also the idiom in which political loyalties and enmities are expressed, is the system of clans and their lineages; each tribe has a clan which is regarded as owner of the territory of the tribe, and the genealogical divisions or lineages within the clan are regarded as owners of the sections of the territory. Those Nuer who live in the territory but are not members of that clan, and persons of foreign, mainly Dinka, origin who also live there, identify themselves politically with it, though retaining their distinctness as descent groups.

The adult male population of each tribe falls into stratified sets, each consisting of all those who were initiated into manhood by undergoing a very painful operation during the same period of time. A gap of four years intervenes between the closing of one set and the commencement of another.

Upper and Lower Spirits

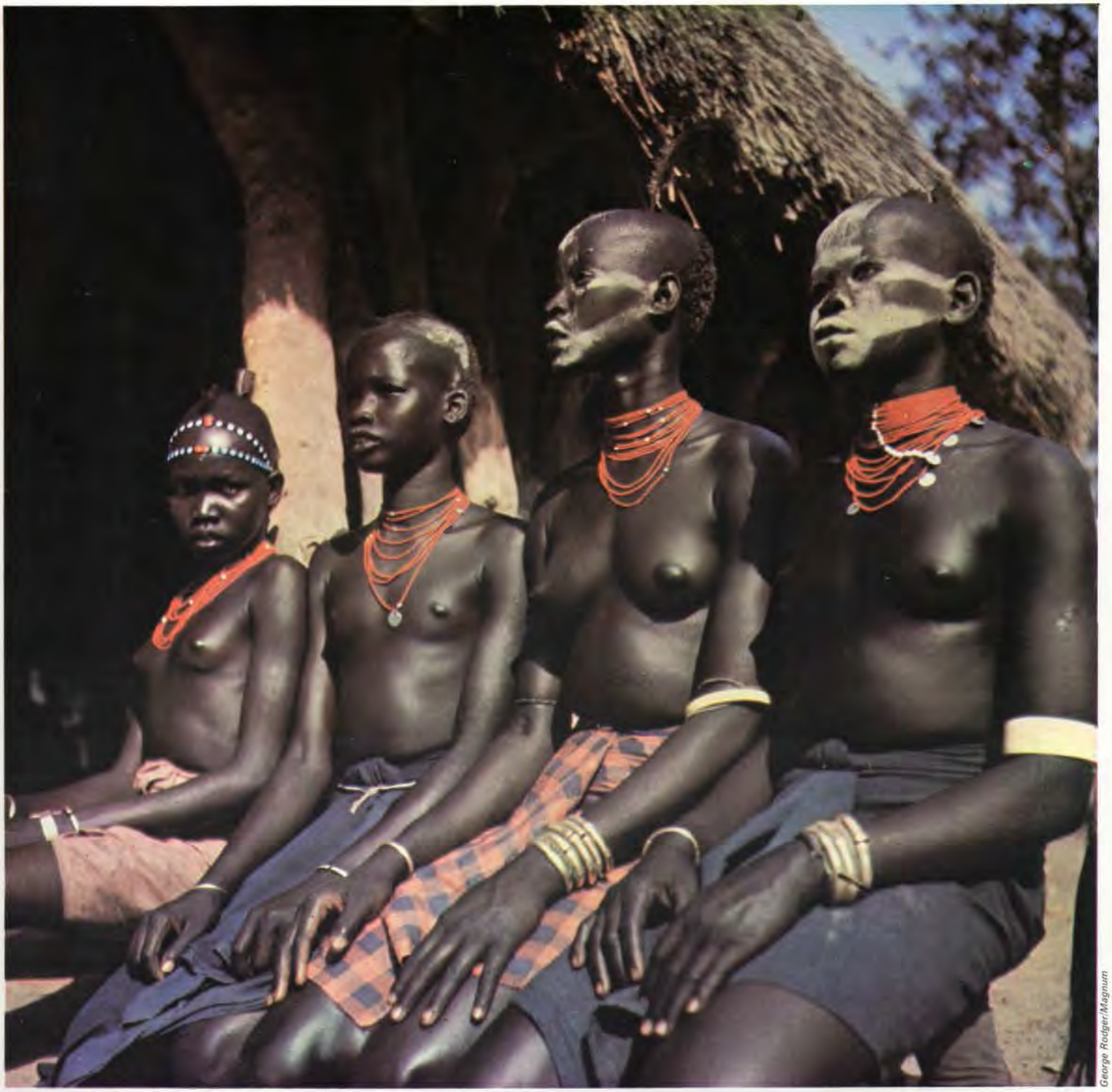
The people who live in the same neighbourhood are closely linked, for a man can always claim relationship of one sort or another with the people he meets. The link may be one of common descent or it may be one of affinity, the Nuer having several forms of marital union. Though monogamous marriage is usual, polygamous unions are frequent.

The Nuer are an intensely religious people, though this has not always been appreciated as they lack formulated dogma, organized cult, liturgy, sacraments, and elaborate mythology. Their religion may be said to be highly spiritual, its central notion being that of kwoth, a word which in its verbal form has the meaning of violent breathing out of air, and which can be translated in its religious sense as spirit. It is near enough to our conception of God to be so translated.

God is thought to be in the sky but he is also thought to be everywhere and is said to be like the wind and like the air; he has no prophets or sanctuaries or earthly forms. So he is both far from man, as sky is from earth, but is also here on earth with man – a common paradox in religion. He created the world and everything in it out of nothing, by thinking or imagining it, as one creates a poem. He is regarded and spoken to as a person and as a father, in a spiritual sense, and as such he is friend to man. At the same time he punishes faults, whether these are deliberate or the result of inadvertence.

Nuer are logical in this matter. God being, to their way of thinking, omnipotent they attribute to him not only fortune but misfortune too. They also recognize that one cannot rationally understand God's nature, and in speaking about him they use what we could call metaphorical and allegorical expressions. They say that they are simple and that what small black ants are to man, so is man to God. Therefore whatever happens, whether good or ill, must be accepted. If it is ill, prayer and sacrifice may bring relief, and if they do not one must be resigned. It is the will of God and he is the owner and disposer of all things. What they ask for in their prayers and invocations are peace of mind and deliverance from troubles.

There are other spiritual beings. Nuer call them 'spirits of the above' and 'spirits of the below', and they are also called *kuth*, the plural of kwuth, 'spirits'. Those of the



George Rodger/Magnum

The Nuer have several different forms of marriage, and although monogamy is usual, polygamous unions are also frequent; if a man has died without sons, a wife will be married to his name so that she may bear sons to it and ensure that the name survives among the living: Nuer girls

'above' are of two kinds: spirits of the air or of breezes, and the souls of those killed by lightning (a frequent happening in Nuerland). Nuer say that God has taken the latter for himself and that they are in celestial union with him. They become patron spirits of their families and also of their descendants so long as they are remembered.

The spirits of the air are associated with various natural phenomena and social activities; they cause sickness and may possess people, who then may become their prophets. Cattle are dedicated and sacrificed to these spirits and hymns are sung to them, hymns full of poetic imagery. The evidence seems clearly to show that though these spirits are conceived of as separate beings they are also regarded as derived from, as manifestations of, God, under various names; that if they are many they are also, all being spirit, one, different yet the same, divided yet whole; hence they have been described as 'refractions of God'. Shrines, cattle and drums are dedicated to them, and they may become attached not only to persons but also to families, lineages, and tribal segments.

None of the spirits of the 'below' are held in high esteem, but the most important are what are generally called totemic ones. The members of a descent group or lineage respect one or other natural species; lions, lizards or snakes, for instance. They will not harm these creatures and they will not eat them even though they may be edible. However it is clear from what Nuer say that what they have in mind is not so much the creature, as the spirit which is concretely manifested in it. The creature is regarded as a sort of emblem or representation of spirit. Spirit is even more immanent in various other earthly manifestations, what might be called effulgent Nature sprites and fetishes, to which, as with the totemic spirits, prayer and sacrifice may be offered.

So whereas God is conceived of as transcendental, lower down the scale spirit is

George Rodger/Magnum

All the members of a Nuer tribe acknowledge their obligation to support each other in war, and the right of members to be compensated for injuries inflicted by one of them: the men of a tribe are divided into stratified sets, each consisting of all those who were initiated into manhood during the same period of time: Nuer chieftain addressing his warriors

more and more embedded in the psychical and material; but in all its forms, though separate, it is still one. Its distribution in diverse forms is to be attributed to the relation of the spirit to a variety of social groups and activities. In relation to all men, and what affects all men, spirit is thought of as one, as God, whereas in relation to any particular social group or any particular person or event, it is thought of in one of the other forms I have mentioned.

The Great Camp of the Dead

Religion is a reciprocal relationship between God and man. A brief account has been given of the Nuer conception of God or spirit. What is their conception of man? They are pre-eminently dualists in their religious thought. God and man, creator and created, are opposites symbolized by sky and earth. Their ideas about the nature of man are perhaps best understood by what they say happens at death. Then what is buried is the *ring*, the 'flesh'. The *yiegh*, 'breath' or 'life', returns to God from whence it came. The *tie*, 'soul' or 'intellect', becomes a ghost; and it is this which in lifetime can curse, and in its ghostly form haunt, should the man have been wronged. It is symbolized for Nuer by the shadow.

Nuer do not pretend to know where what they call 'the great camp' of the dead is, nor what they do there, and they are more interested in the survival of their name among the living, that it be not blotted out. That is why a wife must be married to the name of a dead man if he has no sons, that she may bear sons to his name. Unless ghosts are troublesome Nuer pay little attention to them. In thought they play a secondary role to spirit. Sacrifices may be made for them, but scarcely to them. There is no ancestor cult. Their graves are not remembered. Their monuments are in their descendants.

Spirit in one or other of its manifestations may enter into the affairs of men, and in the case of the minor spirits, the lesser refractions of God, their interference may seem capricious. In the case of spirit conceived of as God, the sickness or other trouble that its entry is thought to cause is generally believed to be due to the breach of some prohibition, or what we may call sin. But it must be recognized that from our point of view the moral content of the prohibitions is highly variable. We can readily understand that they think incest or adultery should be punished; but not that it is a serious fault for a man to milk a cow or eat out of the same vessel from which another man has eaten, with whose kin the first man's kin have a blood feud. This is especially so considering that such faults (*dueri*) are often unwitting ones.

We might say that the fault, manifested in the sickness it brings about, lies less in the act itself than in the breach of the prohibition. What makes it more serious in Nuer eyes is that the pollution may spread (*dop*) and injure others besides the man responsible for it. Sometimes a danger may threaten when there is no question of fault, as when God manifests himself in the birth of twins. Whatever the reason, it is thought that what has happened can be wiped out (*wol*) by sacrifice.

Sacrificial Drama

Sacrifice is the most typical and expressive act of Nuer religion. The officiant may be a priest (a traditional and hereditary office) or a prophet (a personal and charismatic endowment) or a representative of a social group, or any senior man, according to the requirements of the situation. There are two kinds of sacrifice. The collective ones are made on behalf of social groups on occasions of changes in social status, as at initiation, marriage and death, their function being to confirm such changes by calling in God to witness them. The expiatory kind of sacrifice is made on behalf of persons in situations of sickness or danger. In the first kind Nuer wish to bring in spirit, in the second to get rid of it.

Ideally what is sacrificed is an ox, but sheep, goats, and even wild cucumbers may be used in their place. In all sacrifices the

drama is enacted in four acts: the victim is presented to spirit, it is consecrated, it is invoked, it is immolated. In the consecration, by placing the hand on its back, it may be supposed that man is identifying himself with the victim, the ox being a substitute for the man. In that sacrificial sense there is an equation between man and ox. In the invocation the intention of the sacrifice is stated as the officiant walks up and down past the tethered ox, gesticulating with his spear as he makes his speech.

The meaning sacrifice has for the Nuer is complex and variable, as the different words they use to refer to it indicate. We may say that sometimes the sense of gift is uppermost, that often there is in it a touch of the idea of bargain, or it may have more the meaning of redemption, of abnegation, or of absolution. Always it is a substitution. Whichever particular sense is emphasized in any particular sacrifice, it must be borne in mind that Nuer are very conscious of the fact that God gets nothing except the life of the victim (man gets the meat), and that the life, like everything, is his already.

It might be argued that what God gets is man's resignation to his will; from the way the Nuer talk about the matter, it appears that they would accept that in sacrifice they are, in intention, giving themselves and that there is no other kind of giving.

It is not the case, as is often supposed, even by anthropological writers, that the religious thought of primitive peoples – and the Nuer are certainly primitive in the usual sense of the word – is always crude and irrational and hardly worth recording. From this article it will be seen that it is complex, and also intelligent and sensitive. (See also NILOTES.)

E. E. EVANS-PRITCHARD

FURTHER READING: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer; Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer and Nuer Religion* (Oxford Univ. Press 1940, 1951 and 1956 respectively); P. P. Howell, *A Manual of Nuer Law* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1954); R. Huffman, *Nuer Customs and Folklore* (Biblio Distributors, 1970).

NUMEROLOGY

MODERN NUMEROLOGY is based on two extremely old principles. The first is that numbers are clues to the real, underlying structure of the universe. The second is that the name of a thing contains the essence of its being (see NAMES), so that the name of a person, properly analysed and understood, will reveal the truth about that person's character and course through life. When a simple method of turning names into numbers is added, the basic framework of numerology is complete.

The method is taken from the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, in which each letter also stood for a number, so that any word could be turned into numbers and vice versa. On this basis, the name William Shakespeare, for instance, can be made to yield the number 5 (for the details of how this works, see ALPHABET). Over the centuries, a considerable body of symbolism has attached itself to the number 5 and Shakespeare's character and achievements can be interpreted in terms of it.

Any name can be turned into one of the numbers from 1 to 9 (sometimes with 11 and 22 added), which means that the numerologist has a manageable quantity of categories, or broad personality-types, to work on. But he does not maintain, of course, that if your name adds to 5, you must have exactly the same character as Shakespeare and the innumerable other human beings, past and present, whose names yield 5. The number of your full name indicates your general personality-type. Within it, you can find out more about yourself by considering the total of the vowels in your name (the Heart Number, which reveals your inner self, the person you are at heart) and the total of the consonants (the Personality Number, which reveals your outer self and how other people see you). You can consider the numbers given by each letter of your name: the letters of William Shakespeare, for example, do not include a 7 at all (suggesting the absence of introspection and withdrawal from the world) but contain the number 1 five times over (suggesting massive creativity and originality, driving force and egotism).

Again, you can consider nicknames and other variants of your full name, which are supposed to reveal yourself as you are in your relationships with those who use them. A married woman's maiden name should indicate her character before she was married, and her married name should show how marriage has changed her.

Yet another important number is the Birth Number, found by adding up your day, month and year of birth (for instance, if you were born on 12 August 1930, $12 + 8 + 1 + 9 + 3 + 0 = 33$, and $3 + 3 = 6$). This number is believed to reveal the mould in which the mysterious workings of fate cast you at your birth, what you were meant to be or destined to be. If your Birth Number does not harmonize with the number of your name, then you are probably prone to fierce inner conflicts.

The Great Spiral

Whether it is taken seriously or merely treated as an amusing pastime, one of the problems about analysing yourself numerologically is the fact that your name and birthdate may yield so many different numbers. It is difficult to know how to weigh and combine the varying results and how to exclude the elements of wishful thinking or, with historical figures, of hindsight. And the language of numerologists, like that of astrologers (or other, more academically respectable personality analysts, for that matter) is generally vague and woolly, so that with ingenuity almost anyone's character can be fitted into any given number.

Another obvious and powerful objection to numerology is that your name is unlikely to be an index to your character and career, because you acquired it by chance: you just happened to be born into a family named Shakespeare, or whatever it may be. But numerology, like other forms of divination, does not believe in chance. It sees the world as a pattern, a design, in which your name has its allotted place. An American numerologist, Florence Campbell, explains that: 'The soul has taken many journeys in the past and *knows* its present needs. The Soul wants progress upwards on the Great Spiral and *chooses* for the incarnating ego the vowels whose total shall accomplish this purpose . . . there is a long "Dark Cycle" before the child is born, and during this Dark Cycle the vibrations that are to label the new life are so impressed upon the subconscious minds of the parents that they are compelled to carry out the plan.'

Time, of course, runs numerologically. The present century adds to 1, which suggests a period of new theories, discoveries and inventions, and new and aggressive power groupings. The upsurge of popular interest in mysticism, occultism and the supernatural generally in the 1960s is attributed by numerologists to the fact that it was a 7-decade. Within the centuries and decades, each year brings the influence of a new number into play, and within each year so does each month and day. Numerologically, the coming of the year 2000 can hardly be looked forward to with enthusiasm, since it will carry the influence of the evil and ominous number 2. But the year 2001 will usher in the more fortunate number 3.

In addition, each of us has his own personal time-cycle. To find this, add your day and month of birth to the current year. The result is called the Personal Year Number. For example, if you were born on 8 December, then 1972 will be a 3-year for you – a time for making money and achieving success, making new friends, enjoying yourself. But 1973 will be a 4-year for you, suggesting hard work for little reward, difficulties, disappointments and unhappiness, but also some consolidation of ground gained in the 3-year.

Not only can numerology be used to assess your character but also, in theory at least, to make your path through life easier and more successful. If your number is 6, you should try to deal with important matters or decisions only on days which add to 6. You should also live in a house whose number is 6 and a street whose name adds to 6. In considering a city, the vowels which indicate its inner characteristics yield the important number. London's vowels add to 5 – resilience, many-sidedness, sensuality. New York's add to 3 – brilliance, liveliness, glamour. Those of Chicago and Los Angeles add to 9 – the number of high mental and spiritual achievement – and those of San Francisco to 1 – originality, creativity, pioneering. The vowels of Paris, famed for women and wickedness, suitably add to 2, the number of both woman and the Devil.

All sorts of other matters, including taste and diet, can be considered numerologically. People whose names add to 1, 3 or 9 are said to like martial, full-blooded music, 2 and 7 like string and wind instruments, 6 enjoys

sweet, romantic airs, 5 prefers original and unusual compositions, and 4 and 8 like choral and organ music, especially if it is plaintive and gloomy. People whose number is 3 will find wheat, sage and apples beneficial to their health, because they all add to 3 (though not a single apple, which adds to 7).

If your life seems seriously out of joint, some numerologists recommend you to change your number by changing your name: 'Such a change in the majority of cases will produce most fortunate results and set up entirely new vibrations, which will change a lonely, unlucky life into one of happiness or success.' But others deny that you can evade your destiny so easily.

Music of the Spheres

Perhaps the most startling thing about numerology is its assumption that people and traits of character, periods of time, places, items of food, and everything that exists can be described in numerical terms or, to state it at its simplest and flattest, that everything *is* a number. The idea was bequeathed to Western numerology by the Pythagorean philosophers.

Very little is known for certain about Pythagoras himself, but Aristotle, an opponent of the Pythagoreans, gave his version of their views in his *Metaphysics*. He said that they believed that all things are numbers, 'such and such a modification of numbers being justice, another being soul and reason, another being opportunity – and similarly almost all other things being numerically expressible.' The notion is hard to grasp but, to borrow Christopher Butler's analogy, to understand how 'opportunity' could be thought of as a number, it is helpful to remember that although we behave as if a table is what it appears to be, we can also think of it as being 'really' something quite different, a conglomeration of atoms or molecules.

One reason why numbers attracted philosophical speculation of this sort is that they provide a principle of order in a seemingly chaotic universe. Numbers obey rigid laws but they also extend to infinity and have infinite possibilities of combination with each other. These characteristics recommend them to people who are in search of a basic pattern to the universe which will combine orderliness with infinite variety.

It may have been Pythagoras himself who discovered that the musical intervals known in his time – the octave, the fifth and the fourth – can be expressed in terms of simple ratios between the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. The discovery had a profound effect on Pythagorean thinking. Aristotle says that, 'since, again, they saw that the modifications and ratios of the numerical scales were expressible in numbers; since, then, all other things in their whole nature seemed to be modelled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of Nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number.' This was the origin of the concept of the 'music of the spheres', the harmony of sound made by the heavenly bodies as they travel their rounds in the sky, which is the

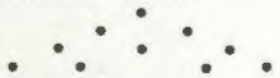
Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

basis of the modern numerologist's 'vibrations', or cosmic rhythms which govern the universe (see VIBRATION).

The Pythagoreans were also impressed by the fact that the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, added together, make 10. In other words, they create the decad, the first ten numbers which from this point of view are the essential numbers, the others merely repeating them at higher levels. That the first ten numbers are the essential ones is a conclusion naturally drawn from the worldwide practice of counting on the fingers.

The fact that ten is produced by 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 suggested that these four numbers were the origin and basis of all numbers, and therefore the basis of everything in the universe. This was confirmed by finding the basis of construction of all solid objects in the same four numbers: 1 is the point, 2 is the line, 3 is the triangle, and 4 is the tetrahedron or pyramid, the simplest solid (see FOUR).

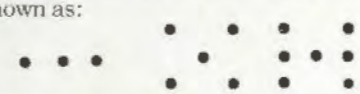
The Pythagoreans venerated a figure called the Tetractys, which is a simple demonstration that 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10, and which looked like this:



This early way of representing numbers, by pebbles or dots, suggested or supported the distinction between male and female numbers which has influenced numerology ever since. Like other Greek philosophers, the Pythagoreans regarded the existence of pairs of opposites as an important characteristic of the universe's construction. Among these pairs were good and evil, male and female, and odd and even. Good and male were associated with odd numbers, evil and female with even numbers.

The principal meanings of the numbers in modern numerology still fit neatly into a table of opposites. Briefly 1 is active and positive, where 2 is passive and receptive; 3 is lucky and spiritual, 4 is unlucky and earthly; 5 is many-sided and adventurous, 6 is plain and domestic; 7 means withdrawal from the world, 8 means involvement in the world; and 9 is left over at the end.

When numbers are represented by dots, it is immediately obvious why the odd numbers are male and the even numbers female. The numbers 3, 5 and 7, for example are shown as:



The even numbers 2, 4 and 6 are shown as:

The odd numbers each have what Plutarch called 'a generative middle part', while in each even number there is 'a certain receptive opening'.

Later philosophers followed the example

One of the 'numbers of completeness', seven of a thing often makes a set, as in the 7 deadly sins; 13th century illustrations showing punishments for 6 of the sins *Far left, top to bottom* Envy, wrath, sloth and *(left, top to bottom)* lechery, gluttony and avarice

of the Pythagoreans in seeing numbers as divine concepts, ideas in the mind of the god who had fashioned the world. God was a great mathematician, who had created a universe of infinite variety and satisfying order to a numerical pattern. The same principle appears in the Cabala, where the *Sefer Yetsirah* describes the making of the world by means of numbers and letters.

In the Middle Ages numerology continued to flourish as a key to the nature of the universe and to the mysteries of the Bible. One was the number of God the Father, 2 of his arch-opponent, the Devil, 3 of the Trinity, 4 of the earth and solidity, 5 of the senses and the flesh, and so on. But it should not be supposed that medieval numerologists, any more than modern ones, were always consistent and invariably interpreted each number in the same way. On the contrary, the number would have several different meanings and the one which best fitted a given set of circumstances would be applied to that particular context. For example, 13 could be the number of sin (because it goes beyond the 12 apostles of Jesus) or it might be a sacred number, combining the Ten Commandments and the Trinity.

Some numbers, especially 3, 7, 9, 12, 22 and 40 are 'numbers of completeness' and have played a particularly important role in number mysticism and magic. Seven of a thing, for instance, frequently makes a complete set – the 7 planets of antiquity, the 7 days of the week, 7 colours of the spectrum, 7 notes of the musical scale, the 7 deadly sins and 7 corresponding virtues. As a result, 7 is powerful in magic, for to repeat an action 7 times is to repeat it 'all possible' times or to do it 'completely'.

(See also GEMATRIA; PATHS; PYTHAGORAS; and articles on the numbers from ONE to NINE, and ELEVEN; TWELVE; THIRTEEN; FORTY.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: K. Avery, *The Numbers of Life* (Dolphin Books, 1977); C. Butler, *Number Symbolism* (Routledge & Kegan, 1970); V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism* (Cooper Sq. Pubs., 1969); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn 1968); G. Moore, *Numbers Will Tell* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1973).

Numinous

Term coined by the German theologian Rudolf Otto for the state of mind aroused by the mysterious, uncanny and supernatural, the state of religious awe or dread, the sense of the presence of the *mysterium tremendum*, 'the overpowering mystery'; he regarded this state of mind as the starting point of the development of religion; derived from *numen*, the Roman word for awe-inspiring supernormal power; the concept of 'the numinous' is very close to the Polynesian concept of *mana*.

The persistence down the centuries of the innocent jingles of childhood may well be due to many nursery rhymes containing references to mythology, folklore and witchcraft: Four and Twenty Blackbirds, *for instance, signifies resurrection while* The House that Jack built *has undertones of ritual sacrifice*

NURSERY RHYMES

AT THE BEGINNING of *The Golden Bough* Sir James Frazer tells of the priest-king of Diana of the Wood, 'who slew the slayer and shall himself be slain'; and the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac in which Abraham, about to offer his son as a sacrifice, is stopped from doing so by God, is well known. It is a little more difficult to associate these examples of human sacrifice with the killing of the wren, the king of the birds, which used to take place in many villages on St Stephen's Day, in memory of the saint's martyrdom, and to recognize that this may be a substitute for the death of a human being. In Ireland the rhyme that accompanied this rite ran:

> The Wren, the wren, the King of all birds,
> Was caught St Stephen's day in the furze . . .

The wren was caught, killed, and his body hung on a pole, with great ceremony, and he was finally buried in the churchyard.

In the Scottish version, where the characters are Fozie Mozie, Johnie Rednosie, Fozlin Ben and others, the wren's body is cut up and shared out. This happens also in other versions, and Frazer suggests that this may symbolize eating the body and drinking the blood of the god. In Brittany, the bird is a thrush or blackbird, and it goes on singing after it is dead, a phoenix-like resurrection which occurs in much folklore and many religions including Christianity.

This resurrection of the blackbird in France leads us back again to England, to a very familiar nursery rhyme beginning:

> Sing a song of sixpence, a pocketful of rye.
> Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.
> And when the pie was opened the birds
> began to sing . . .

In parts of France it was Robin Redbreast who was sacrificially eaten.

The House that Jack built is one of the best-known English nursery rhymes. In one version the last verse, which is a summary of the whole rhyme, starts with the knife that killed the cock; sacrificing a cock on a wedding day is a pagan religious custom. This cumulative nursery rhyme is very like an old Hebrew chant of 1590 or earlier:

> A kid, a kid my father bought
> For two pieces of money
> A kid, a kid.
> Then came the cat that ate the kid,
> That my father bought for two pieces
> of money
> A kid, a kid.

The rhyme has been explained as a parable of the persecution of the Israelites.

A skipping rhyme, recorded in Dundee in 1949 in a school playground, which is the nursery of most working class children, is:

> I am a poor, poor orphan, my mother she
> is dead;
> My father he's a drunkard, and won't
> buy me no bread.
> I see it at the window and hear the
> organ play;
> It plays to bless my mother, for she is
> far away.
> Ding, dong, fashion bells, farewell my
> mother; . . .
> My coffin shall be white, six little
> angels by my side,
> Two to stay, and two to pray, and two
> to carry my soul away.

Now the last two lines are 'the White Paternoster', a form of words said as a charm, which was known in Babylon as an incantation. 'Shamash before me, behind me Sin, Nergel at my right, Nonib at my left,' corresponding to the angels at the 'four

The phoenix-like resurrection of birds who continue to sing after they are dead is a recurrent theme in much folklore: in England there are the four-and-twenty blackbirds in *Sing a Song of Sixpence*; the maid whose nose was pecked off by one of the resurrected birds while she was hanging out clothes in the garden is shown in this 19th century illustration by Edmund Dulac of various nursery rhymes. The king in his counting house, the old woman who lived in a shoe, and the three blind mice are also depicted

British Museum/John Freeman

COUNTING HOUSE

Victoria & Albert Museum/Chris Barker

Far left **Rich in mythology and folklore, many nursery rhymes contain hints of supernatural power; the cow jumps over the moon in the jingle that starts 'Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle . . .': illustration by Arthur Rackham** ***Left*** **Mother Goose: one of the earliest collections of nursery rhymes was published in the 18th century as *Mother Goose's Melody***

corners of my bed' in the modern rhyme.

In the 14th century, the carpenter in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* quotes the White Paternoster in a rhyme intended to protect his house at all four compass points against fairies and other creatures.

A rhyme from Dundee, printed as written down by a child, is:

My mither killed me,
My father ated me,
My sister pickit my banes,
And laid me atween twa marble stanes –
And noo I've grown intae a little white dove
To fly ower the fields o Airlie.

This rhyme from the folktale of *Pippety Pew* still lingers in folk memory in Buchan. Goethe adapted a German version of the same rhyme, as a song sung by Margarete in the prison scene in *Faust*. One interesting point is that, as in some of the ballads which describe a talking bird, the little white dove of the rhyme is the soul of a dead child.

In the year 1660, a man named Douglas and eight female companions were strangled and burned for, among other sins, having merry meetings with Satan, with music and dancing. The two favourite airs of his Majesty were:

Kilt thy coat, Maggie,
And come thy way with me.

and the tune of the following rhyme:

Hoolie, the bed'll fa!
Wha'll fa wi't?
Twa een, twa hands,
And twa bonnie feet.
Hoolie, the bed 'll no fa!
Wha'll no fa wi't?
Wee Robin Redbreast
Sound asleep.

It is elsewhere recorded that the favourite tune played by Satan at the witches' meetings was the tune to the following rhyme:

The silly bit chicken,
Gar cast her a pickle,
And she'll grow mickle,
And she'll grow mickle.
And she'll grow mickle,
And she'll dae good,
And lay an egg
To my little brood.

Without any alteration they are typical nursery rhymes.

A Border rhyme of Holy Week contains the lines:

Hey for Sunday
At twal o'clock,
When a' the plum puddins
Jump out o the pot.

Sunday midday is, of course, the time of Christ's resurrection, and this is symbolized in the last two lines.

Adult Code of Joviality

It can safely be stated that the overwhelming majority of nursery rhymes were not in the first place composed for children; in fact many are survivals of an adult code of joviality, and in their original wording were, by present standards, strikingly unsuitable for those of tender years. They are fragments of ballads or of folk songs ('One misty moisty morning' and 'Old woman, old woman, shall we go a-shearing?'). They are remnants of ancient custom and ritual ('Ladybird, ladybird', and 'We'll go to the wood'), and may hold the last echoes of long-forgotten evil ('Where have you been all day?' and 'London Bridge'). Some are memories of street cry and mummers' play ('Young lambs to sell! young lambs to sell!' and 'On Christmas night I turned the spit'). . . . One ('Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John') is a prayer of Popish days, another ('Go to bed, Tom') was a barrack room refrain. They have come out of taverns and mug houses. ('Nose, nose, jolly red nose' still flaunts the nature of its early environment.)

Iona and Peter Opie ed
The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes

Victoria & Albert Museum/Michael Holford

Brian Netscner

The killing of animals in nursery rhymes has associations with human sacrifice; in *Who Killed Cock Robin?* the robin was killed by the sparrow, traditionally associated with evil in parts of Europe: the funeral of Cock Robin, from Potter's Museum at Bramber, Sussex

The Berwick rhyme of *Pearlin Jean* has authentic folk simplicity:

O, Pearlin Jean!
O, Pearlin Jean!
She haunts the house,
She haunts the green,
And glowers on me
Wi her wul-cat een.

Whether the ghost had been a lace-maker, or was dressed in lace (pearlin), or looked like lace, has a fascinating uncertainty, but her wild-cat eyes are a folk poet's image, from a time when people really did believe in ghosts.

Some rhymes are borderline. If you believe in witches they can be charms; if not, they can be looked upon as verses inherited by children, like this churning charm:

Come, butter, come,
Come, butter, come!
Peter stands at the gate,
Waiting for a buttered cake.
Come, butter, come!

The following verse from the old fishing village of Auchmithie is a children's rhyme, based on the fact that the boats must on no account be counted when at sea, and no gathering of men or women or children must be numbered.

Ane! Twa! Three!
Ane! Twa! Three!
Sic a lot o fisher-wifies
I do see!

Fisherwomen would be very angry if children pointed at them and shouted this rhyme, as if counting them.

WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE

FURTHER READING: Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1951); Norah and William Montgomerie, *The Hogarth Book of Scottish Nursery Rhymes* (Hogarth Press, 1964).

NYMPHS

GENERALLY REGARDED as goddesses of subordinate status, nymphs are personifications of human feminine youth, invested with magical charm, beauty and dread, and often, of course, with superhuman power. They belong to the oldest and deepest layers of Greek popular religion, mythology and folklore, populating seas, rivers and springs, caves, trees and mountains, in fact Nature in all its aspects. In Greek 'nymph' means simply a young girl, a bride (and, in a secondary sense, a nurse).

The Oceanides, nymphs of the ocean, were looked upon as daughters of Ocean himself. A band of them forms the chorus of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*. After he has been chained to the rock, Prometheus invokes all the forces of Nature. He hears strange sounds in the distance:

> A faint sound, a fragrance, is floating about me.
> Is it god or man? Who is it that seeks me out,
> Visiting this desolate edge of earth,
> Spectator of my agony? It must be so.
> Then see imprisoned here an ill-starred god –
> The detested of Zeus, the rejected of all who walk in
> The heavenly courtyards, one that held mankind too dear! Ah!
> Yet again that murmur! The air is astir with
> The whisper of hurrying wings. How fearful is all that approaches!

The chorus of ocean nymphs then enters, performing a dance as if riding sea-horses. They address the tormented Prometheus:

> You need not fear us, we are friends. Our father said no, but
> We pleaded, then in haste took to the air,
> Breathlessly beating long wings,
> And on and on raced with the wind,
> Riding the crests of the mountain breezes.
> We heard the dull strokes of a hammer through the sea-caves,
> And we leapt a horse without time to remember manners,
> Each foot in the stirrup without a sandal.

They are still with him, impulsively sympathetic and loyal, at the end of the play, when Prometheus, refusing to disclose his secret, is caught up in the earthquake of Zeus. 'No, no, we refuse to desert him, we stay at his side to the end; for of all vile things in the world the worst is a traitor.' The young nymphs as it were counterpoise the most generous and tender impulses of Nature against anger and violence directed against the weak and vulnerable.

The Nereids were the daughters of Nereus, the wise old man of the sea. Traditionally, there were 50 of these marine nymphs of the Mediterranean, dwelling with their father in the depths of the sea, lovely young goddesses, kindly to sailors. One of their number was Thetis, the mother of Achilles, who also befriended both Dionysus and Hephaestus. Brought up by Hera, she was obliged by Zeus and Hera to marry Peleus, a mortal. The story of the marriage illustrates a common folktale motif of the fairy or nymph won through guile and struggle, at least for a period of time. Thetis, like other sea creatures, had the power of self-transformation, but Peleus, instructed by Chiron, the wise old centaur, held her fast until she promised to marry him.

After the birth of Achilles, Thetis returned to the sea, but emerged again from time to time to give him comfort and succour. At the end of the *Odyssey*, the ghost of Agamemnon tells how Thetis came up from the sea with the other Nereids to join in the mourning at the funeral of Achilles, and brought a golden urn for his bones, a gift from Dionysus, made by the smith god, Hephaestus.

Different from the nymphs of the broad ocean and the sea were the Naiads, the nymphs of running water, of rivers and springs. These are the divine counterparts of the human girls who regularly purified themselves at such places before religious ceremonies or who, as brides, bathed before their weddings in rivers or in water brought from them. There were also the Oreads or Orestiads, special mountain nymphs, and the Dryads and Hamadryads, who were closely involved with trees and tree cults.

As M. P. Nilsson pointed out (in *Greek Popular Religion*), Artemis is a great goddess very similar to the nymphs and is traditionally accompanied by nymphs. She haunts mountains and meadows, and is connected with the tree cult, with springs and rivers. She protects women in childbirth and watches over little children. She was leader of the nymphs; small wonder that she was a popular goddess, nymph incarnate. She took the young of all creatures under her care and a choral passage in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus portrays her anger at the sight of two eagles tearing a hare with her unborn litter in the womb.

Artemis was known as a bear goddess in various parts of the ancient world in a ritual associated with initiation and marriage. In Arcadia, the mother of Arcas, after whom the district was named, was changed into a bear shortly before he was born. The mother's name was that of the nymph Callisto, properly an epithet of Artemis. Artemis Brauronia had her temple at Brauron in Attica. Here girls, dressed in saffron, performed a bear dance before they were married (see BEAR; DIANA).

It has been reasonably argued that the bear goddess belonged to the ancient Pelasgians, who brought her to Arcadia from Attica, to Attica from Lemnos, and ultimately from the shores of the Black Sea, reaching the Aegean by way of the Propontis, now known as the Sea of Marmara, which connects the Black Sea with the Aegean. It has been argued that she was identified with Artemis because of the influence of the Ephesian fertility goddess.

Evidence which has come to light in recent years has further suggested the possibility that the Cretans perpetuated a similar

Personifications of feminine youth, charm and beauty, the nymphs come from the oldest and deepest layers of Greek popular religion and stand for 'the most generous and tender impulses of Nature': fresco of Pan with nymphs

association in the neighbourhood of the peninsula of Akrotiri, north-east of Canea, now the island's capital city. A local myth implies a ritual involving a sacred bear, a cult of a divine nursing-mother in a cave, whose worshippers were pre-Dorian. The myth and the ritual could be associated with the cave on Akrotiri called Arkoudia, 'Cave of the She-bear', described under that name by travellers for several centuries.

Some nymphs were connected with the sea, others with mountains or trees. The nymphs of rivers and springs were divine counterparts of human girls who purified themselves there. As spirits of the pulsing life of Nature, the nymphs were the companions of the lustful satyrs: medallion of a sleeping nymph with satyrs

The old traditional sphere of the nymphs was to look after mortals in the days of their youth. They were mothers and nurses of heroes and they were also said to look after infant gods. As Homer says in his Hymn to Dionysus:

> I will begin my song about Dionysus, the ivy-crowned,
> Loudly-clamouring god, the glorious son of Zeus and of
> Far-famed Semele, who was received in their arms by long-haired
> Nymphs from his father, their lord, and they fostered and cherished him tenderly
> In the valleys of Nysa . . .

The infant Zeus was also tenderly nurtured and legends of his childhood show the close relationship between nymphs and wild creatures. After his birth in a Cretan cave, it was said, the baby Zeus was fed by a pig or by doves or by bees or a goat. Two nymphs, Melissa and Amalthea, supposedly the daughters of Melisseus, King of Crete, reared the infant on the milk of a goat. Amalthea made him a golden ball and put him to sleep in a golden cradle.

Tradition said that in Crete there was a cave sacred to bees, where Rhea gave birth to Zeus, which neither god nor man might enter. The cave was occupied by sacred bees, nurses of Zeus, and the god fed on honey. It is possible to argue that this story was replaced later by the legend of the nymphs, who retained the title *melissai*, bees.

R. F. WILLETTS

C. M. Dixon Victoria & Albert Museum

Stephen Dalton/N.H.P.A.

In Germany anyone found damaging an oak was put to death: the long-standing belief that it was unlucky to cut an oak stemmed from the awe in which this tree was held all over Europe

Strong and imposing, the oak tree has been worshipped from very ancient times

OAK

FROM PRIMITIVE TIMES to those of the Druids the oak, strong, durable and very long lived, was undoubtedly the chief sacred tree all over Europe and Scandinavia. The oak was associated with the myth of Balder because the sacred mistletoe, the mysterious 'golden bough' by which the Scandinavian god was slain, grew on its branches (see BALDER; MISTLETOE). Balder was perhaps a later version of a primitive tree deity, who had to be sacrificed in order to ensure fertility of crops and men. In later times this ritual was worked into a kind of mummers' play associated with May Day, in which the tree spirit, enveloped in leafy oak boughs, was executed.

Several references in the Bible indicate that oaks were important to the earliest worshippers of Yahweh, as when Jacob buries the 'foreign gods' and the ear-rings of his household under the oak of Shechem (Genesis 35.4). The followers of Baal sacrificed below an oak tree or in an oak grove – 'under every leafy oak, wherever they offered pleasing odour to all their idols' (Ezekiel 6.13).

One of the most famous oracles of ancient Greece, that of Zeus at Dodona in the north-east, was in an oak wood, and the priestess had her temple under an enormous oak, the rustling of whose leaves she interpreted in answer to questions. The Argonauts' ship Argo was built of oaks from this grove, and one timber could speak and advise the voyagers. Socrates swore by the oak, as the sacred oracle tree; Homer describes how people made solemn agreements under an oak because it was a place of security; and oak wreaths were worn by those taking part in the Mysteries of Eleusis (see ELEUSIS) at the temple of Demeter.

A possible parallel with the Balder myth

may be seen in ancient Italy, where in the Arician Grove there lived the King of the Wood (see KING). The same grove was also the home of the water nymph Egeria, described by Plutarch as one of the oak nymphs who lived in every oak grove. Egeria married King Numa in the sacred grove. J. G. Frazer considered this 'a reminiscence of a sacred marriage which the old Roman kings regularly contracted with a goddess of vegetation and water for the purpose of enabling him to discharge his divine or magical functions', and pointed out 'how very often in early society the king is held responsible for the fall of rain and the fruitfulness of the earth'. In Roman times oak boughs were carried at weddings to ensure a fruitful marriage.

Later on, the oak became the sacred tree of the Romans, and Jupiter was reputedly sheltered by an oak at his birth. Acorns were widely held to have been the first of man's foods and legend tells how Ceres – the Roman goddess of agriculture (see DEMETER) – replaced them with corn; to recognize man's debt to the acorn, oak was worn at festivals in honour of Ceres and by reapers as they harvested. Romans who had saved the life of a fellow citizen were granted an oak leaf crown, which gave them many privileges.

Pliny describes how sacred the oak was to the Gauls and their Druid priests (see DRUIDS); so deep went its power that in the 8th century the missionary St Boniface had to destroy a sacred oak at Hesse in Germany. However, St Columcille, when destroying the worldly town of Derry, saved its oak wood from fire. In Ireland the oak was one of the Seven Noble Trees, which could not be destroyed without payment of a fine.

In ancient Germany anyone discovered damaging an oak was punished in a horrible way, as Frazer tells us: his navel was cut out and nailed to the wound in the tree, and the offender was then driven round the tree till his intestines were wound round the trunk – a wound for a wound, man's death for the tree's life.

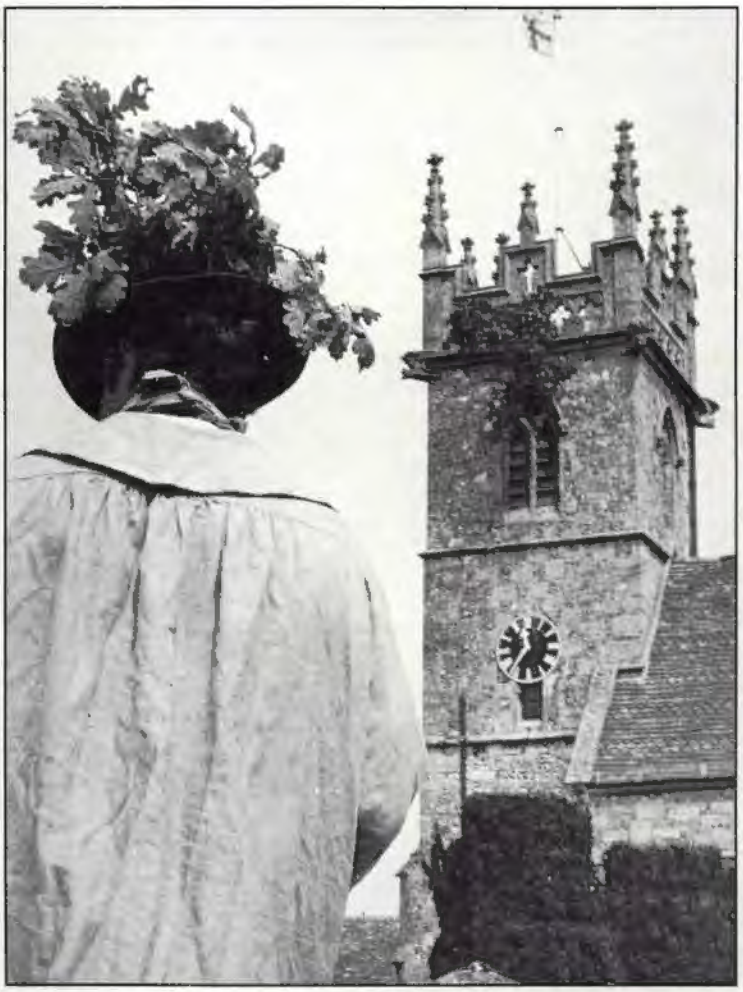
In later centuries the ancient sacredness of the oak left a deep-seated fear of damaging or cutting them down. John Aubrey (1626–97) mentions how 'When an oak is felling, it gives a kind of shriek or groans, that may be heard a mile off, as if it were the genius of the oak lamenting.' He adds, in a circumstantial aside, 'E. Wyld, Esq., hath heard it several times.'

Protection Against Lightning

In Scandinavia the oak was sacred to Thor, and for this reason was known as the 'thunder tree'. In many places the oak is thought to ensure safety from lightning, although it is in fact more prone to being struck than most trees (perhaps because it lives longer), and a Sussex rhyme has the line: 'Beware the oak: it draws the stroke.' But superstition dies hard, and oak branches

Keystone Press Agency

Oak leaves play their part in the ritual observed by Druids at Stonehenge on Midsummer Day; the reverence of the ancient Druids for the oak is mentioned by the Roman author Pliny



British Tourist Authority

Horner Sykes

Traditions connected with Oak-Apple Day, the anniversary of the restoration of Charles II, are thought to derive from much older ceremonies *Left* Villagers of Wishfort in Wiltshire still wear a garland of oak leaves round their hats on Oak-Apple Day *Right* At Castleton, Derbyshire, the day is marked by a procession led by a 'king' bearing a flower-covered frame; eventually the frame is hoisted onto a pinnacle of the church tower, the other pinnacles being decorated with branches of oak

were formerly kept in houses to protect them from lightning. Later these were replaced by acorns, and the acorn-shape of the bobbin on pull-down blinds was in the same way originally intended to be protective. If an oak did happen to be struck by lightning, pieces of its timber became especially protective as a result.

Not surprisingly, oaks or their leaves protected from witchcraft. The Venerable Bede recorded how the heathen King Ethelbert made St Augustine preach to him under an oak, rather than indoors, so that the king would be safe from any spell the unfamiliar Christians might try to cast on him.

The marriage oak is often mentioned in folklore: newly married couples would dance round such a tree for luck. This was a relic of pagan wedding ceremonies under the sacred oak. Another relic of the past is the gospel oak, a single tree at a point on a parish boundary. The numerous places with this name make it clear that when, on Rogation Day, processions went round 'beating the bounds' of the parish, a short service in which verses from the gospels were read took place under each of these boundary trees. There were other Christianized oaks, such as one in Leicestershire which has left the name Holy Oakes, and one in Shropshire at a place now called Cressage: in Domesday Book this appears as Cristesache, that is, Christ's oak. There were also cross oaks, planted at crossroads, which had the reputation of curing certain illnesses.

By the 17th century little was left of oak worship but superstition. Veneration of the oak seems to have been revived indirectly by Charles II, by way of the Boscobel oak, which saved him when he hid in its branches after his defeat at the battle of Worcester. In 1664, after Charles's restoration to the throne, 29 May became known as Shick-shack Day, Royal Oak Day or Oak-Apple Day. On this day, the date of Charles's birthday and of his return to England, it was necessary to wear a 'shick-shack', an oak twig, if possible bearing an oak-apple. Anyone without this token was liable to be beaten with nettles. In the afternoon the oak twig was replaced by a bunch of ash leaves. This is with very little doubt a relic of a much older ceremony, like the mummers' plays previously mentioned: it may be the termination of the May rituals, which had begun on May Day with the 'Green Man', the 'Man in the Oak', 'Jack in the Green' or 'King of May' – destined to be sacrificed under whatever name (see GREEN). It will be noted that the leaves usually carved around those curious heads to be seen in many churches, which represent the Green Man, are usually oak leaves.

It is interesting to see the association of oak with ash in the 'shick-shack' custom. It is more familiar in the old weather rhyme:

> If the oak comes before the ash,
> We shall only have a splash.
> If the ash comes before the oak,
> We are sure to have a soak.

Oak was the material used for starting the need fire, whose usual purpose was to curb an outbreak of disease among men or farm animals. All other fires in the district had to be put out, and the need fire was lit by rubbing together pieces of oak wood or a piece each of oak and fir (see FIRE).

The burning of a Yule-log is almost certainly a survival of the fire festival of the winter solstice; the log was often of oak. This festival was concerned with ensuring luck, protection and fertility to farm and household in the coming year, and the charred wood and ashes left after the burning acquired special qualities.

The oak is an important symbol in dream interpretation, and normally a favourable one. To dream of a leafy oak means a long and happy life; of one bearing acorns, wealth; of many young oaks, several courageous sons. But a dream of a withered oak foretells poverty in old age, and of a blasted oak, sudden death. In the language of flowers an oak tree signifies hospitality (a sentiment transmitted pictorially, one imagines) and oak leaves indicate bravery.

A. J. HUXLEY

Though they now have degenerated for the most part to meaningless profanities, oaths were once regarded as full of occult power: the supernatural sanction invoked in the ooth acted as a guarantee of good faith

OATH

THE IDEA THAT TRUTH – or for that matter, virtue – can be its own reward is a relatively modern principle of morality. In the past it was taken almost for granted that no individual in his right senses would be likely to act in a manner contrary to his own interests, and for this reason a man's solemn word was not considered an acceptable token of his intentions unless it had been reinforced by supernatural sanctions. An oath consisted of a form of words capable of invoking punishment from the supernatural powers, should the obligation contained in them not be carried out. The oath has been described as 'essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which a person calls down upon himself some evil in the event of what he says not being true.' In its original form the oath was a magical formula, arising from the power inherent in the cursing words.

Oaths take a wide variety of forms. They involve calling upon a god or gods, or upon the psychic force contained in some ritual object or symbol of power, but they can also be self-imprecatory as in the familiar children's declaration: 'Cross my heart and hope to die.'

The oath which is sworn by or on some sacred, divine or even dangerous authority is intended to establish contact with its power, which can then be turned against the one who violates his given word. Developments of this are the oaths sworn upon Yahweh or Allah, or that in which the Comanche Indian calls upon the Great Spirit as witness to the truth. Similarly in New Guinea the tribal gods are commissioned to take immediate vengeance upon any oath-breaker.

In other cases it is not so much the god who is invoked as the sacred object with which he is associated, and this is reverently touched at the time that it is sworn upon. The particular object varies in accordance with whatever happens to be considered of psychic importance in a particular community. The early Hebrews, for example, swore upon their genitalia, the symbols of procreative power, while in the modern courtroom the witness takes the oath upon the Bible. Despite the identification of this principle with the higher forms of religion, it represents a clear relic of the older system of magic by touch, the punishment arising not so much from the outraged god as from the inherent power of the object itself.

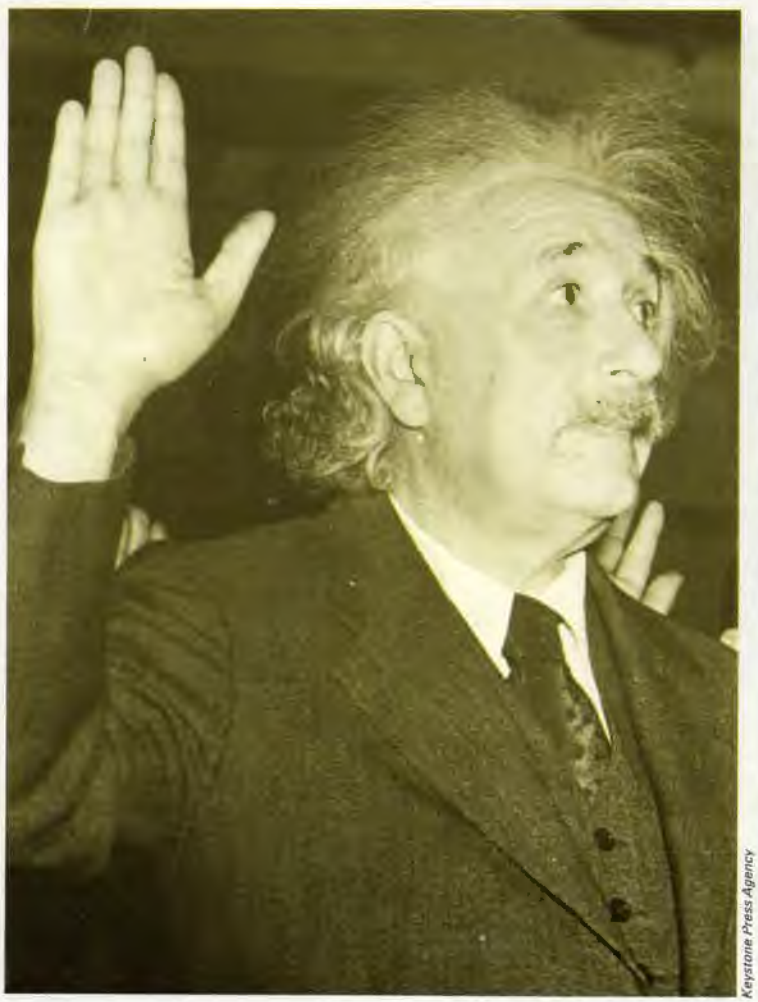
One example of this type of oath is the Gold Coast ordeal in which the accused is given an article of food which 'in some way appertains to a deity, who is then invoked to visit a breach of faith with punishment'.

The same principle underlay the medieval custom in which an accused person would eat the host, praying at the same time that it might choke him if he were not telling the truth. In one medieval form of ordeal a piece of consecrated bread made from unleavened barley was swallowed by the suspect and any violation of the truth was supposed to choke the perjurer or to rack his body with convulsions.

This form of oath depended upon the transmission of a curse into the body of the bread so that it would work upon the perjurer. A well-known English example of the practice was that involving the witch Joan Flower, who strove to defend herself from hanging by calling for the ordeal of bread and butter, wishing that 'it might never go through her if she were guilty'. In the event she 'fell down and died as she was carried to Lincoln Jail'.

Trial by Ordeal

The Emperor Charlemagne was strongly in favour of the Judgement of the Cross, a ceremony in which the accused, having declared his innocence upon oath, took up one of two sticks wrapped in fine wool from the altar, one bearing the concealed mark of a cross while the other was unmarked. If he picked up the stick marked with the cross his innocence was established beyond all doubt in the sight of God and man, but if he took



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Left **Albert Einstein takes the oath of allegiance on becoming an American citizen**
Right **An accused witch, tried by ordeal in Kenya: if the frog refuses to slip down the man's throat, he is proved innocent, but if it is swallowed, he is judged guilty**

By courtesy: the Treasurer and Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple

An accused man takes his oath at the court of King's Bench; various forms of trial by ordeal, to test the truth of a prisoner's oath, were accepted features of medieval law

the other he was judged guilty and punished accordingly.

The legal theorists of medieval Europe made a clear distinction between the spoken and the written oath and that which had been ratified by contact with a sacred object, such as a holy relic. To use the words of one historian: 'So little respect was felt for the simple oath that the adjuncts came to be looked upon as the essential features and the imprecation itself to be divested of binding force without them.'

The older magical principles continued to manifest themselves in medieval jurisprudence. A well-known example was the judgement of trial by ordeal, in which the accused was made to immerse his arm up to the elbow in boiling water to supplement the oath of innocence, in the expectation that God would protect him from the injury if he really was innocent. At an earlier period the accused would be blindfolded and compelled to walk barefooted over nine red-hot ploughshares; if unhurt he would be adjudged as having told the truth. A further expression of the same principle was trial by combat or wager by battle, in which the accused, having taken his oath of innocence, fought out the issue fully armed in the lists and if triumphant was regarded as completely vindicated. On the other hand, to be defeated was evidence of guilt.

Blood Covenant

The covenant is another form of oath-taking, consisting of a mutual oath or a mutual conditional curse: each party conveys the curse to the other should he violate the conditions of the engagement. The binding effect of the covenanting oath is familiar in the rites of secret societies, the best known modern example being that of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya (see KIKUYU). This type of oath-taking is often reinforced by the most fearful ceremonies and includes the blood covenant, which demands either the drinking or sharing of blood. According to Herodotus (c 485–425 BC) the Medes and the Lydians, when taking an oath, made flesh wounds in their arms, following which they drank each other's blood. The signed contract is the modern equivalent of the ancient oath-bound compact or covenant between the parties.

At all times and among most peoples the oath has played an immense part in binding communities together for the achievement of a common purpose. Sometimes an oath involves the allegiance of the subject to his monarch, while the coronation oath, on the other hand, compels the monarch to honour certain obligations towards the state.

The binding effect of an oath was never more apparent than in Nazi Germany, when it secured the allegiance of the officer caste to the Nazi regime. Its power is also demonstrated in the solemn pact sworn by the desperate English naval mutineers at the Nore in 1797, which was so seriously regarded that the same year a repressive

law made it an offence punishable by transportation to administer an unlawful oath. This later resulted in the trial and conviction of the Tolpuddle martyrs, who in 1834 were found guilty of swearing men into a trade union lodge at a time when trade unionism was in itself perfectly legal.

So frightening were the imagined consequences of violating an oath that had been made upon some sacred or magical object, that in the past certain individuals were denied the privilege of oath-taking, since any perjury on their part could have severe repercussions upon the community. Among those exempted in Roman society were the priest of Jupiter and the Vestal Virgins.

An example of a primitive legal oath is that of the Samoan who, when accused of theft, solemnly swears: 'In the presence of the chiefs now assembled I lay my hands on the stone. If I stole the thing may I speedily die.' Such a device has often been quite sufficient to bring a culprit to light. Where this technique fails, however, the unknown thief may well become the target of that ancillary to the oath, the solemn curse, of which the following is an example: 'May fire burn the eyes of the one who stole my bananas. May fire burn his eyes and the eyes of his god also.'

Opposition to oath-taking played a not inconsiderable part in the development of legal and social practices. Certain religious groups, like the Quakers, have always contended that the word of truth requires no reinforcement, submitting also that the taking of an oath weakens rather than strengthens any declaration or promise. For support the religious man could turn to the precept of Christ: 'Do not swear at all.' At the other end of the ethical scale the free-thinking Charles Bradlaugh was prepared to stand his ground in the House of Commons and even to be ejected from the House by force rather than take an oath in the name of a deity in which he had no belief. The right to affirm instead of swearing upon the Bible has now been established.

Within the legal system the oath now exists as an appeal to God as witness to the truth of the evidence given, for it must be declared on oath that what is to be said shall be 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. Cross-examination of the witness has now taken the place of the primitive ordeal, while the pains of imprisonment have replaced the divine punishment once meted out by an enraged deity.

There is no difference in essence between the oath of the old-time Khond who stood upon his tiger skin and demanded death if he failed to speak the truth, and that of the medieval Englishman with his 'By God!', 'By Jesus!' and 'By the saints above!' Each called upon the supernatural powers as witness to the truth of a declared intention or statement, demanding to be punished if his word were broken. The extent to which the once reverent oath has degenerated into sheer profanity is a reflection of the debasement of old spiritual values as much as of the misuse of words.

(See also CURSE.)

ERIC MAPLE

Signed in Blood

'Now look-a-here, Tom, less take and swear to one another – that's what we got to do – swear to keep mum.'

'I'm agreed, Huck. It's the best thing. Would you just hold hands and swear that we –'

'Oh, no, that wouldn't do for this. That's good enough for little rubbishy common things – specially with gals, cuz they go back on you any way, and blab if they get into a huff – but there orter be writing 'bout a big thing like this. And blood.'

Tom's whole being applauded this idea. It was deep, and dark, and awful; the hour, the circumstances, the surroundings, were in keeping with it. He picked up a clean pine shingle that lay in the moonlight, took a little fragment of 'red keel' out of his pocket, got the moon on his work, and painfully scrawled these lines . . .: "Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer swears they will keep mum about this and they wish they may Drop down dead in their Tracks if they ever tell and Rot."

. . . Tom unwound the thread from one of his needles, and each boy pricked the ball of his thumb and squeezed out a drop of blood.

In time, after many squeezes, Tom managed to sign his initials, using the ball of his little finger for a pen. Then he showed Huckleberry how to make an H and an F, and the oath was complete.

Mark Twain *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

A medieval king takes the coronation oath: 14th century manuscript in the British Museum

Mansell Collection

Mansell

Obeah
General term in Jamaica and other parts of the West Indies for supernatural power; also applied to evil magic involving the use of objects as containers of occult force, especially balls of earth mixed with feathers, hair or rags, tied up with string and sometimes studded with beads or parts of the bodies of human beings, cats and dogs; soil from graves, eggshells, rum, blood and broken glass are also used in spells; practised by specialist magicians called obeah-men or women.
See VOODOO AND OBEAH.

C. M. Dixon

Obelisk
Four-sided pillar, usually of stone, tapering to a pyramid at the top, frequently associated with graves and temples in Egypt, where it was a symbol of the sun, and also known in Syria; possibly a representation of a ray of the sun, possibly phallic, but its significance is nut fully understuod: also the name of a symbol formerly used in printing to mark a passage in a book as 'spurious or indelicate'.

By doing no more than hold some object – a cap, a photograph – psychometrists may be able to give the most amazing, detailed information concerning the person, and the circumstances, with which the object is connected

OBJECT READING

THE USE OF AN ARTICLE, called an 'inductor', as a means of receiving extra-sensory impressions is known as object reading, or psychoscopy; the term more usually employed in this country is psychometry. Extra-sensory perception (paragnosis) is a broad term covering various concepts, of which the most important are telepathy and clairvoyance. Clairvoyance, the ability to see objects not actually present, may be in time – seeing into the past, present or future – or in space (telaesthesia), in which case it should be considered as synonymous with clairvoyance in the present.

The following experiment will serve as an example of a psychometric test of which the results depend upon telepathy. It concerns Mrs L.M., whom the present writer tested in a series of experiments. On one of these occasions, I handed her an envelope containing a photograph that I had received from Mr K., whom I knew personally. She put her right hand briefly into the partially open envelope without looking at the photograph, which served as an inductor but contained no clues for practical purposes. Mrs M. commented as follows: 'Someone who reads and writes a lot. He is at home in any field. He performs journalistic work. He is quickly stimulated. He leads a hurried and irregular life. I see him writing while seated in a train. He picks up every scrap of news. This is not just curiosity – he has to keep abreast of everything that happens. He can be curt at times. Stacks of papers lie on his desk in a complete jumble. He has a good sense of humour. He speaks foreign languages. Machines form part of his environment. I hear a regular thumping sound. The air reeks. I smell a peculiar, vile scent. The uproar is awful. He himself does not work among the machines, but he walks between them. He sits at a desk. He has a feeling for poetry. He gets a lot of books sent to him.'

It was totally unknown to Mrs M. that Mr K. was in those days the managing editor of a provincial newspaper. This case was therefore a direct paragnostic (or 'psi') 'hit'. I was in frequent touch with Mr K. in those days, had visited his office several times and there was usually a 'complete jumble' on his desk. From time to time during our talks, he would stroll into the composing room to give various instructions. The room smelled of printer's ink, and there were the familiar noises of a printing plant. As a journalist, Mr K. was always in search of news, and travelled a lot by train. He possessed a good sense of humour, was a lover of poetry, and was accustomed to receiving books for review. From this it appears that Mrs M. was able to pick up in her mind the thoughts that crossed mine when I saw Mr K.'s passport photograph. In other words, when touching the portrait, she had the power to bring to mind what I was able to remember when seeing his picture.

The nature of telepathy now becomes apparent. It is the reception in one's mind of thoughts that emanate from another person's mind. It must be pointed out that the picture was no more than a prerequisite for my remembering all sorts of things about Mr K. The same can be said regarding the picture as an inductor to the psychometrist's 'upwelling' of thoughts that rise from within the mind, coming, as we might say, 'out of the blue'.

When we observe psychometrists during experiments and ask them about their ways of working, it appears that they usually get their impressions in the form of images coming to them or being 'forced' upon them: this is how the various thoughts connected with the object handed to them are experienced. These 'enforced' thoughts may be regarded as the forerunners of the 'veridical hallucinations' (hallucinations bearing a correspondence with reality, with actual fact) which occur to sensitives. The 'enforced' thoughts underlie the veridical hallucinations and in certain circumstances they will turn up in them. Here a parallel can be drawn between what is observed in sensitives and what are known as the laws of memory. Research has shown that invariably, along with a clear graphic memory such as is found in people who are able to experience eidetic images (that is, to visualize objects and events), a non-graphic memory can also be discerned. There exists in sensitives a gradual transition from non-graphic ideation to graphic 'knowing', just as one can in general depict a gradual transition from non-graphic to graphic memorization.

The self-observations of our subjects show us that their 'hallucinations', just like eidetic images, can sometimes be exceptionally sharp and detailed. The veridical hallucinations of sensitives seem not only to be limited to sight, and the same is true for the hallucinations of people with eidetic abilities.

Seeing Bits and Pieces

Psychometrists often show an inclination to compare themselves with those who have difficulty trying to recollect a forgotten word or name. If anyone tries to bring to mind such a 'missing' word he will often observe that, at first, names or words which have some kind of associative connection with the forgotten word seem to be 'thrust' upon him.

The same thing happens in psychometry, as is obvious from the following example, pertaining to the well-known sensitive Gerard Croiset. One day he asked a student about his Oedipus complex: 'Have you an Oedipus complex or are you interested in it?' When the student denied his involvement, Croiset continued: 'And yet you have something to do with it.' The student again denied this. Then there was a moment of silence, during which Croiset seemed to wait for complementary impressions. Then he said: 'Now I see other pictures. Did you see a person this morning in a flood of tears that could not be stanched?' The student answered that he had seen that morning a patient in the eye hospital who had an excessive flow of tears. When we ask ourselves how Croiset came to talk about an Oedipus complex, it is not difficult to give an answer. Croiset's brother Max is a famous actor, who has many times played the principal character in *Oedipus Rex*. At the very moment that Oedipus plucks out both his eyes, pieces of red beet are put over the actor's eyes, causing a flood of tears. So, for Gerard Croiset, a flood of tears is associated with Oedipus and whatever is connected with this drama.

When we try to remember a name heard in the past, or an event which happened a long time ago, it can happen that this name or event suddenly 'stands before our

eyes'. But it also can happen that such a name or event will return to us in bits and pieces. Every event is built up of a number of various elements. The same difficulty in getting a complete 'picture' can be observed in psychometrists. Often they will get only a few letters of a first or last name 'thrust onto' them in a paranormal way, or they very often 'see' only a few elements of the totality of events occurring in the past of people with whom they are in telepathic rapport. In one psi experiment the subject, on being introduced to a lady unknown to him, suddenly 'saw' the image of a pair of long white gloves and long ear-rings. The sensitive told the lady that both images went together and had something to do with her, but he did not know what the connection was. She then explained that as a member of a theatrical group she had recently played a part in which she had to wear long white gloves and long ear-rings. For the second act she had to change costumes, and one evening one of the gloves got caught in an ear-ring. This agitated her a great deal especially since she had so little time before going on stage again.

Alternatively, events are thrust onto the subject complete, rather than in bits and pieces. If, for instance, I am asked in which year the Society for Psychical Research was founded, I will answer immediately 'in 1882', and at the same time recall a number of other facts connected with the Society. How do I know that this date is correct? G. E. Muller, who contributed a great deal to the development of the psychology of memory, has pointed out certain signs which he called 'exactitude criteria' – standards by which the accuracy of memory may be gauged – and which together form the 'total exactitude-consciousness' or certainty about the thing remembered (in this case, the date). These criteria include the exclusiveness and the persistency with which the reproduced fact or name is forced upon us. A very important exactitude-criterion is the 'fullness of ideas', by which is meant the fact that we are aware that these ideas which are forced upon us are connected with others. In the chosen example, for instance, not only was the year forced onto me but also the names of the founding members and the titles of works written by those pioneers.

In experiments with psychometrists it is very often found that the impressions they receive are coupled with a firm exactitude-consciousness. When we question them about how their minds work, and especially about this exactitude-consciousness, we find that we are dealing with the same criteria as the ones found in memory research.

A Lowered Consciousness

A lowered state of consciousness, that causes the person to be less inhibited, is evidently favourable to psychometry. In observing psychometrists, their level of consciousness during the experiments is seen to be lowered totally or in part. In most cases this lower level is so slight that it can only be detected with special instruments. With a few subjects this lowering of the level of consciousness goes so far, however, that one may speak of trance and auto-hypnosis. The state of lessening of inhibition resulting from the auto-hypnosis enhances the flow of telepathically received impressions.

Experiments with psychometrists have shown that not only are they not affected in their functioning by distance between experimenter and subject but that they can also break through the time barrier. Some of their experiences show that they are able to get impressions from persons they will meet – by chance – in the future.

In 1946 I developed a test which is known now as the chair experiment. This test consists of two steps. First the subject (Gerard Croiset) gives a description of the characteristics and certain outstanding experiences of a person whom he expects to occupy a certain chair in a lecture hall. Next, often some weeks later, the person who by chance occupies this chair is questioned, to see to what degree Croiset's description fits or deviates from the personality and experiences of this individual. These chair experiments have now been going on for over 20 years and they have taken place in many parts of Europe.

Extensive experiments in the Parapsychological Institute of the State University of Utrecht have proved that some sensitives are able under certain circumstances to furnish data about lost persons, thefts and murders; the Institute has now initiated extensive research into this subject. This discovery raises the question of how far sensitives might use their gifts for practical purposes. However, it must be emphasized that to the science of parapsychology the question of whether ESP can have a practical application is only secondary. There are parapsychological 'hits' of tremendous theoretical value but with little practical implication.

Reasons for Blind Spots

The man in the street tends to think, incorrectly, that sensitives are able to see anything and everything. Nothing is further from the truth. Continual research has taught us that in nearly all such persons we find a more or less specialized interest determined in part by their own experiences. A psychoanalytical approach should, then, provide a knowledge of the urges which motivate them towards the direction of their interest. In my book on the use of sensitives *(Beschouwingen over het gebruik van paragnosten)* I reported the case of a sensitive who regarded it as almost his holy mission to detect thieves and succeeded repeatedly in doing so. Talks with this man showed that, when he was about 17, his father wrongly suspected him of having stolen some money. This suspicion caused quite a lot of difficulties for him which only stopped when his father received proof that his brother, who was always supposed to set an example, was guilty of the theft. The urge which this sensitive showed to solve thefts was clearly related to the psychical trauma which this suspicion had caused.

In contradistinction to the urge to see certain things, there exists also the urge *not* to see certain things. It is self-evident that this negative urge ought to interest the researcher just as much as the positive one:

Chris Barker

The brooch (*above*) is said to have belonged to the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots (*right*). A 'sensitive' may provide accurate information about the owner of an object (an 'inductor') and experiments suggest that in some cases the explanation is telepathy from the mind of an investigator who knows the object's history

the more so because many of the blind spots that are considered to be shortcomings of the sensitives are closely linked to such negative urges.

The following case is a starting point. In October 1958, a Mrs A.B., who has often given evidence of psi abilities, was visited by a woman. In the course of the visit, Mrs A.B. spontaneously asked her visitor whether her father was possibly interested in the play *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*, as she got the impression that in some way or other he had something to do with this tragedy. On receiving a negative answer, Mrs A.B. did not pursue the matter further.

On 17 January 1960 the visitor's father died. The family inserted the announcement of his death in the newspaper *Tubantia* the following day and Mrs A.B.'s visitor also signed the announcement. Under this insertion, at a distance of about 6 inches, there was an advertisement of a forthcoming performance of the tragedy *Gijsbrecht van Amstel*. Because both announcements were coincidentally associated in space as well as in time, and both were read by the visitor, we may accept that we have here a case of a so-called 'displacement' or substitution based on 'defence' mechanism which certainly originated in a repression.

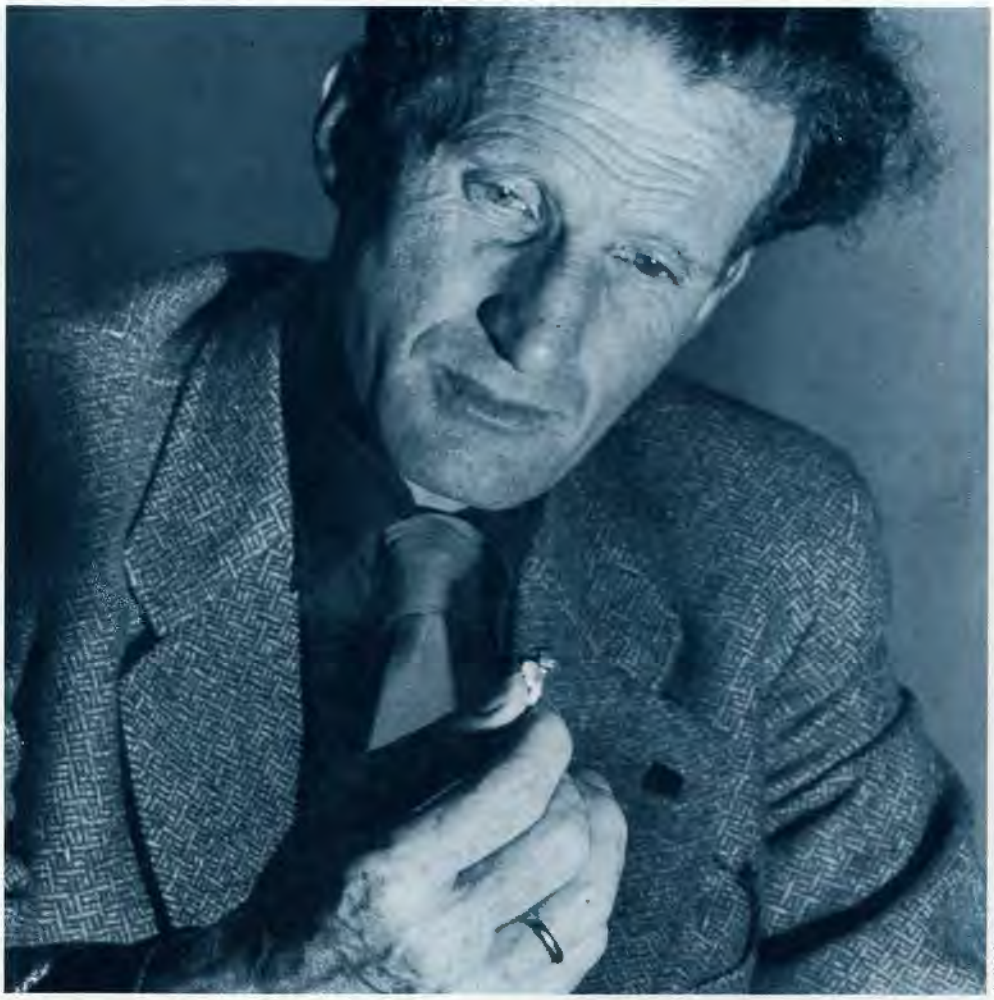
Some years ago I came into contact with a 23-year-old student who was gifted with psi abilities to some degree. A series of psychometric experiments followed which on the whole produced satisfying results. One day, when I handed him a cap to be used as an inductor, the subject told me that this object gave him a very unpleasant feeling. The cap, which had been made available by the police, belonged to a man sought in connection with the murder of the new-born child of his unmarried daughter. The student told me that he felt terrified. Suddenly he threw the inductor away, stating that he did not get any impressions.

Some days later, though I had not given him any information about the origin of this object, the test subject asked me whether it

had something to do with the murder of a new-born child. When I asked him why he put this question, he told me that he had had a dream about a man who had put a new-born child under a heap of pillows. At that point I could only reply that this 'picture' was correct. Afterwards a conversation followed about 'displacements' in time as observed by Whately Carington, S. G. Soal and others. Suddenly the subject exclaimed: 'Now I know why I did not get any impressions a few days ago.' He began to talk in detail about an event in his childhood. His mother gave birth to a second child and gave so much care and attention to the new baby that it aroused feelings of hate and repugnance in him. One day, an aunt who happened to visit them saw him deliberately throwing bricks into the cradle: his aunt consequently gave him a sound spanking.

When I asked him if he could find any connection between this experience of his youth and his not being able to tell anything about the inductor (that is, the cap) given to him a few days previously, the subject answered: 'It's quite clear. Unwittingly I identified myself with the murderer of the child. Something within me told me: "You might have done the same thing: you are capable of doing something like that." Therefore I did not want to see it.' When he was asked if he could account for his anxiety when he took the inductor in his hand, the subject answered without hesitation that this anxiety must have resulted from a deep repression. 'Evidently, I knew at once when you handed me the inductor that this had to do with the murderer of a child. Because I identified myself with the murderer, however, I must immediately have repressed these impressions, which caused anxiety. During my sleep, when censorship was weakened, the story loomed up in me.'

The famous Dutch 'sensitive' Gerard Croiset holds a ring during an object reading session. He has often helped to trace missing objects and persons, and has assisted police investigations of thefts and murders



Leif Geiges

Condensing Space and Time

In the dreams and hallucinations of sensitives the phenomenon of condensation or compression has also frequently been noticed. The following is an interesting case of such condensation. It concerns a sensitive, W. Tholen, who, like Gerard Croiset, has succeeded innumerable times in supplying details by telephone about missing persons, animals and objects. On August 1964 he was consulted on the telephone by a doctor, unknown to him, whose wife had mislaid three trinkets. Mr Tholen gave a description of an antique cupboard which was supposedly in the consultant's home. He 'saw' the missing objects in this cupboard. Since the doctor did not possess such a cupboard he paid no further attention to the sensitive's words. One day he did find the three trinkets, but in three different cupboards. He then realized that the sensitive had amalgamated parts of these three cupboards into a new piece of furniture.

Similar compressions and condensations appear to exist in connection with both the past and the future. Many descriptions by sensitives have been recorded in which situations both from the past and the future blend with situations from the present into a new and at first unrecognizable whole. Croiset, for instance, when asked to indicate where a missing person might be found, described a stretch of river where ships were moored. The ships were at that time no longer there but had been moored there some days previously. It was the place where the missing person had drowned, and Croiset had wanted to indicate where to look.

W. H. C. TENHAEFF

FURTHER READING: J. H. Pollack, *Croiset, the Clairvoyant* (Doubleday, 1964).

Obsidian

Natural glass of volcanic origin, used by American Indians and other primitive peoples for weapons, tools and ornaments, and for mirrors and scrying: a black scrying mirror of obsidian, which seemed to smoke when diviners looked into it, was the symbol of the black Tezcatlipoca in Aztec religion: among California Indians boys and girls undergoing initiation were cut with obsidian knives and priests mimicking bears slashed people with obsidian 'claws'. See AZTECS.

C. A. Burland

Occult

Secret, mysterious, hidden behind surface appearances and veiled from the common view, from Latin *occulere*, 'to conceal'; vague general term for things magical or mystical, beliefs shrouded in mystery and known only to the initiated few.

ODIN

GRIM LORD OF VALHALLA

An old man with one eye, dressed in a cloak and broad-brimmed hat; this was the god Odin, whose other eye had been sacrificed in return for wisdom and was kept hidden in the underworld – a story connected with his role as bestower of the arts and learning, and god of the dead

THE GOD Odin stands out as a dominant figure in Scandinavian myth and legend, and scenes and symbols associated with him abound in the pre-Christian art of the Viking Age. He has a double heritage from the Germanic past, taking over from the war god and sky god Tiwaz on the one hand and from Wodan, ruler of the underworld and ancestor of kings, on the other. The wealth of traditions concerning him may be partly due to new influences from Eastern Europe in the Viking Age, imparting fresh vigour to his cult at a time when contacts between Sweden and the East were well established. It is noteworthy that the figure of the god on his eight-legged horse Sleipnir first appears in Scandinavian art on memorial stones of Viking Age date on the Baltic island of Gotland, on the direct route to Russia.

Certainly the cult of Odin as reflected in literature and art is a rich and many-sided one. Odin is the god of the dead, the guide who conducts them to the otherworld, either in his own form or represented by his messengers, the Valkyries. He is also the god of inspiration and ecstasy, who brought mankind the gifts of poetry, oratory and learning. He is the god of battle, inspiring his worshippers, the warrior princes and leaders, with fanatic loyalty. Sometimes, in spite of his association with the dead, he is seen as All-Father, the leader of the gods, and he possesses some of the powers and symbols of the god of the sky. He is a shape-shifter and expert on magic, and he is a travelling god, moving up and down the world and taking an active interest in the affairs of men, while he also journeys beyond

This statue of Odin emphasizes the god's majestic aspect as All-Father and leader of the Norse gods. At his shoulders are the two ravens which every day flew round the world and reported to Odin what they had seen. The two wolves which accompanied the god symbolized, like the ravens, Odin's association with the battlefield, for these creatures fed on the corpses of the slain

National Museum, Copenhagen

Royal Library, Copenhagen

Royal Library, Copenhagen

Far left **Odin was a travelling god, an observer of the affairs of men who also visited the realm of the dead; here the one-eyed god is shown on his eight-legged horse Sleipnir, on which he journeyed faster than the wind**

Left **Baugi drills a hole in the stone mountain within which his brother giant had hidden the mead of inspiration. Odin was then able to enter the mountain in the form of a snake and steal the precious liquid, which gave him the gift of poetic inspiration and oratory**

it and visits the realm of the dead in order to learn hidden secrets.

Men and animals were sacrificed to Odin, and he himself claimed to have been sacrificed by his own special rites, pierced by a spear as he hung from a tree, that he might win knowledge for gods and men. He moved among the heroes as an old man with one eye, dressed in a cloak and a broad-brimmed hat. It was said that he had given up his other eye in return for wisdom and that it was hidden in the well of Mimir, the ancient guardian of the underworld.

Bodies Hung from Trees

Sacrifice indeed formed an integral part of Odin's cult. In one legendary tale of a certain King Vikar, the king had promised a sacrifice to the god in return for a favourable wind, but when lots were drawn to find the victim, he was the chosen man. He decided to stage a mock sacrifice, standing upon a tree trunk with a rope of calf's intestines round his neck, fastened to a tree which was held down beside him. The warrior conducting the sacrifice touched the king with a rod, dedicating him to Odin, and immediately the intestines became a strong cord and the rod a spear, so that the king was pierced through and the tree sprang back into position, carrying the body of the slain man high among the branches. Just such a sacrificial scene as this is carved on one of the Gotland stones, with the eagle, symbol of Odin, hovering above; the twisted knot, Odin's symbol, is shown above the scene. In the 11th century history of Adam of Bremen the writer quotes the testimony of an old man of 70 who could remember in his youth seeing the bodies of men and animals hanging from trees in the sacred grove at Old Uppsala, the sacred place of the Swedes, after one of the great festivals of the gods.

There also exists a dramatic account by an eyewitness of the sacrifice of a young woman at the funeral of a chief of the Rus, the Scandinavian settlers in Russia, about 922 AD on the middle Volga. The chief was given temporary burial while preparations went on for the funeral ceremony, when he was to be burned on his ship in the river, and one of his slave-women volunteered to die with him. She was feted and pampered until the day of the funeral, but her end was a grim one. After an elaborate ceremony in which the entry to the otherworld was enacted, when she described her relatives and her dead husband awaiting her there and sang a long farewell to her companions on earth, she was stabbed by an old woman called the Angel of Death, while at the same time a cord was drawn tight around her neck until she died. Her body was placed on the ship beside her master, together with various animals sacrificed with her.

This picture of a splendid and barbaric funeral among the Eastern Vikings is fully in keeping with what appears in Scandinavian literature concerning the cult of Odin, whose followers were said to be burned with their choicest possessions that they might pass rapidly to the realm of the god. There is also a persistent literary tradition of suttee, implying that not only warriors who died in battle but also women who were courageous enough to be slain with their husbands might be welcomed in Odin's kingdom. Several archeological finds from the pre-Christian Viking Age suggest that a woman has been sacrificed at the funeral of a chieftain, in particular one in the Isle of Man and one in Orkney.

Rage of the Berserkers

The fierce joy with which devotees of Odin met their end is characteristic of the madness and ecstasy with which he inspired his followers. The tradition of the berserkers, who fought in the skins of animals instead of armour, howled like wolves in the combat and were impervious to wounds while the battle fury possessed them, goes back before the Viking Age, but it was still vividly remembered in the later literature. It is said that there were berserkers in the royal bodyguard of Harald Fairhair of Norway in the 9th century, with a special place on the king's warship. Legends of shape-shifting are probably associated with the berserker tradition: there is the story of Sigmund the Volsung, for instance, who lived out in the woods with his son while he planned vengeance against the man who slew his father and brothers, when it is said that the two wore wolf-skins and spoke the speech of wolves; or of the great champion Bodvar, who lay sleeping in his tent while a huge

Men sacrificed to Odin were hung from trees: the lolling tongue of this carved head from a Norwegian church, together with the single eye, links it with the Norse god of the dead

H. R. Ellis Davidson

bear fought in his place in the king's army and wreaked havoc among the enemy. The Icelandic sagas have instances of old warriors on the farms who were sometimes overcome with fits of berserk fury which they could not control, when they would destroy anyone who came in their way and were left drained of energy when the rage had spent itself.

Odin sometimes behaves like a shaman of the steppe, the man who in a state of trance can send his spirit to the otherworld and act as emissary between gods and men (see SHAMAN). His voluntary sacrifice on the World Tree suggests the initiation ceremony of such a shaman, while his eight-legged horse resembles the steed which carries the spirit of the shaman to the heavens while his body remains on earth. It is indeed said of Odin that while he lay asleep his spirit could travel in animal form, and he sometimes took on the shape of serpent or eagle to achieve his end.

The Mead of Inspiration

One of the myths tells how Odin won the mead of inspiration for gods and men by his magic powers. This mead had been brewed from the blood of the all-wise giant Kvasir, mixed with honey. The dwarfs who slew him filled three vessels with the magic drink, but it was taken from them by a giant, Suttung, and he shut it within his stone mountain. Odin set off to achieve it by cunning, and in disguise he went among the men of Suttung's brother Baugi as they cut hay. He sharpened their scythes with a wonderful whetstone, so effectively that they began to quarrel over it and ended by cutting each other's throats. Odin took the place of all nine of them, asking no wages except a drink of the magic mead. Baugi agreed but his brother was unwilling, so with Baugi's help Odin bored a hole in the mountain wall, crawled in in the form of a serpent and slept three nights with the giant's daughter, who agreed to give him three drinks of the precious liquid. In three draughts Odin emptied the vessels and then flew away in eagle form to Asgard, where the gods were waiting with a row of vessels to receive it; he spat it into them, and from that time the gift of poetic inspiration and oratory has been his to give to men. Knowledge of the runes, which were bound up with magic spells, was also due to Odin, since he won

King Hakon of Norway, entering Valhalla after death in battle, refused to lay down his weapons since no trust could be placed in Odin

them by his endurance on the World Tree.

Odin, like Wodan before him, was the ancestor of kings, and he would appear to young warrior princes, encouraging them by gifts of special weapons, horses or armour, and instructing them in battle magic and the art of warfare. One of his treasures was the great spear Gungnir, the flight of which decided victory when armies met. There was a tradition that it was a lucky omen to be the first to hurl a spear over the advancing enemy, for this dedicated them to Odin and so ensured victory. But though the god gave aid to his warriors, he was bound to play them false in the end when their time came to fall in battle. The splendid sword given by Odin to the young hero Sigmund the Volsung was shattered by the spear of the god on the battlefield in the end, and Odin himself hurled down Harald War-tooth of Denmark from his chariot, when he had withdrawn his favour and given it to Harald's opponent. Thus the capricious nature of Odin's generosity and his treachery to those who have served him faithfully is stressed in both poetry and prose. The god Loki taunted him with giving victory to cowards who did not merit it, while in a 10th century Norwegian poem King Hakon of Norway, entering Valhalla after death in battle, refused to lay down his weapons since no trust could be placed in Odin. The reason given in the poetry for his faithlessness is his need for great champions in his own realm, against the day when he must lead out his army to do battle with monsters and the enemies of the gods.

The Hall of the Slain

Those who died in sacrifice to Odin, either in battle or by some terrible end like that of the old hero Ragnar Lodbrok, who perished in a snakepit with a song of triumph to Odin on his lips, were said to be welcomed in the hall of Valhalla after death. The Valkyries, the fierce battle-maids of the god who rode to do his will on the battlefield and conduct dead princes back to his realm, welcomed them there with horns of mead, and this scene is pictured many times over on the Gotland memorial stones. It is said in the poems that in Valhalla, the hall of the slain, men fought all day and those who fell were restored again in the evening, when all feasted sumptuously on pork and mead. To a large extent Valhalla appears to be a symbol of death and the grave, in which an everlasting battle is said to take place, rather than any bright palace in the heavens, and it must not be taken to indicate a literal belief in a special kind of immortality. But the idea of kings and high-born warriors joining their ancestors after death and being welcomed by the god they had served is a tradition deeply established in the lore associated with Odin's cult.

Odin was the great magician, the god with the power to bind and loose by means of spells which he laid upon the minds of men. Such spells could cause panic and paralysis at a moment of crisis, or could free the mind from fear and hesitation so that Odin's men emerged triumphant at the time of testing. His symbols are in keeping with his many-sided reputation: the spear, the raven and the wolf because of his connections with battle; the horse and the eagle because of his power to travel between the worlds and over the sky; the three-way knot to signify his power to bind, no doubt associated also with the sinister knot which dispatched his victims; the maiden with a horn or cup in her hand to welcome the dead because of the joyous entry into Odin's realm – a link also with the mead of inspiration.

His cult was primarily an aristocratic one, not a religion of the common people or of the community as a whole like those of Thor and the Vanir. The works of art and the literature which it inspired are such as would emerge from the courts of kings and leaders, and could have been used for the education of young warriors of noble families, proud to remember the exploits of ancient heroes counted among their own ancestors. So it comes about that the sinister figure of the one-eyed god, feared and suspected rather than loved, but followed with wild enthusiasm by those who despised a straw death and sought the wild excitement which he offered, has left an indelible mark on the northern world of myth.

(See also FREYR; GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY; SCANDINAVIA.)

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Odysseus

Or Ulysses (from the Latin form of his name), King of Ithaca who was one of the Greek leaders at the siege of Troy; prominent in the *Iliad* and the central character of the *Odyssey*, which describes his adventures on his ten years' journey home after Troy had fallen; later writers tended to depict him as a crafty rogue; he may well have been a real chieftain around whom legends gathered.

See CIRCE; TROY.

National Film Archive

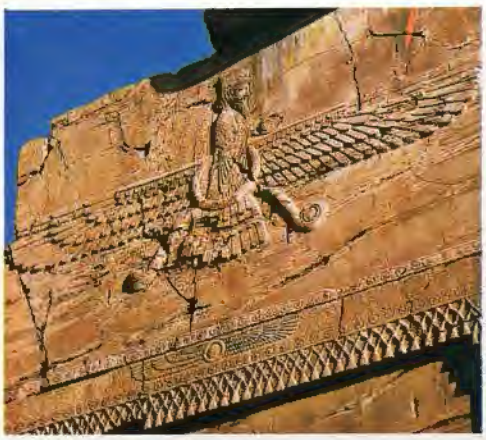
Oedipus

In Greek mythology, a king of Thebes who was fated to kill his father and commit incest with his mother; to prevent this, as a baby he was abandoned in the hills with a spike driven through his feet, hence his name, 'swell-foot'; he grew up unaware of his true parentage, killed his father, Laius, solved the riddle of the Sphinx, and married his mother, Jocasta; when the truth was discovered, he blinded himself, and went into exile; Freud named the 'Oedipus complex' after him.

See INCEST.

In later Zoroastrianism, Ohrmazd takes over the mantle of Ahura Mazdah, creator of heaven and earth; he is the eternal adversary of the Destructive Spirit, over whom he eventually triumphs

OHRMAZD



Roger Wood Studio, London

Relief of the god Ahura Mazdah from a temple at Persepolis, ancient capital of the Achaemenid kings of Persia: Ahura Mazdah was at first distinguished from his Holy Spirit, but in the course of centuries the two merged to produce the new figure of Ohrmazd

OHRMAZD is the Middle Persian (c 200–700 AD) form for the Zoroastrian God who first appears in the *Avesta* (the sacred book of the Zoroastrians) as Ahura Mazdah, the 'Wise Lord' or the 'Lord Wisdom'. It is not known whether such a god existed before the appearance of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster, who probably flourished in the 6th century BC. It seems, however, most probable that he assumed overriding importance only with Zoroaster himself, who regarded himself as Ahura Mazdah's prophet and believed himself to be in direct communication with the god (see ZOROASTRIANISM).

The oldest part of the *Avesta*, the *Gathas*, is usually considered to be, if not Zoroaster's own words, then at least directly inspired by him; and the centre of this 'revelation' is the god Ahura Mazdah, creator and sustainer of the universe. There are other divine beings beside Ahura Mazdah himself, but these are always subordinated to him and he is sometimes called their 'father'. These divine beings were later formed into a group of seven, who constituted God's 'court'. Originally, however, they seem to have been aspects of God: they are the Holy Spirit, Truth, the Good Mind, the Kingdom, Right-Mindedness, Wholeness and Immortality. Collectively they would later be known as the Bounteous Immortals.

Ahura Mazdah, however, stands above and beyond them in the *Gathas*: he is their 'father' and their creator. By 'father' Zoroaster did not understand anything physical (since his God was pure spirit) but simply the origin of all things. Ahura Mazdah creates Truth, for instance, by his will or wisdom and he maintains it by the Good Mind. So too at the beginning of existence Ahura Mazdah *thinks*: 'Let the wide space be filled with lights', and it is so. And it is 'by his mind' that he 'fashioned forth corporeal things, consciences and wills', that 'he created bodily life, and deeds and doctrines among which men could freely make their choices'.

Ahura Mazdah is holy: and by 'holiness' the Zoroastrians understood creativity and fruitfulness. He is the creator of all good things, both spiritual and material. He thinks creation into existence and there does not seem to be any pre-existent matter from which he creates: he creates out of nothing. He is omnipotent and 'rules at will'; he is judge and in the last days will judge all men according to their good and evil deeds.

There is one thing, however, that Ahura Mazdah did not create, and that is death. His Holy Spirit is the spirit of life, and death was the work of another spirit, Angra Mainyu or the 'Destructive Spirit', who was later to be called Ahriman (see AHRIMAN). In the *Gathas* this Destructive Spirit is the eternal adversary of God's Holy Spirit but not of God – of Ahura Mazdah – himself. The Holy Spirit is the author of life and holiness, while the Destructive Spirit is the author of death and diminution. And so we read: 'Of these two Spirits he who was of the Lie chose to do the worst things: but the Most Holy Spirit, clothed in rugged heaven, (chose) Truth . . .'

There is, then, an evil spirit beside the life-giving Holy Spirit of God, who brings death and destruction into the world. The evil spirit is not particularly prominent in the *Gathas* but was later to become an independent principle and the antagonist of God himself.

In the later *Avesta* the ancient 'pagan' gods re-appear as helpers of Ahura Mazdah and his role is seriously impoverished. This process can also be discerned in the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, in the later of which the old god Mithra and the goddess Anahita appear alongside Ahura Mazdah. Yet Ahura Mazdah remains essentially the creator of heaven and earth and of 'what is excellent on earth'. He is the source of increase and fertility, of good order in general and of the particular 'good order' among men established and assured by the Achaemenids, the royal house of the first Persian Empire (546–330 BC).

Adversary of Evil

With the sack of Persepolis by Alexander the Great in 330 BC, Zoroastrianism, of which Ahura Mazdah was the Supreme God, ceased to have any privileged position; and it was only with the foundation of the second Persian Empire by the Sassanians in 226 AD that Zoroastrianism not only rose out of obscurity, but became the official religion of the Empire. Ahura Mazdah re-emerged as Ohrmazd but, though still the same God, he was yet not quite the same.

In the course of the centuries Ohrmazd (as he was now called) had been identified with the Holy Spirit of the *Gathas*; and this identification caused a quite new picture to appear. The Holy Spirit had been the eternal adversary of the Destructive Spirit (Angra Mainyu, now called Ahriman), but this role now fell to Ohrmazd himself. This meant that God and the Devil were independent powers – the first wholly good and the second wholly evil, the first dwelling in eternal light, the second in eternal darkness.

'Ohrmazd was on high in omniscience and goodness; for infinite time he was ever in the light. That light is the space and place of Ohrmazd . . . omniscience and goodness are his totality . . . Ahriman, slow in knowledge, whose will is to smite, was deep down in the darkness: (he was) and is, yet will not be. The will to smite is his all, and darkness is his place.'

Such was the state of affairs in the beginning, and so it would have remained if Ahriman had left well alone, but seeing 'valour and supremacy superior to his own', he was jealous of it and longed to possess it. He was not strong enough, and so he created other devils to assist him. Ohrmazd in self-defence first created the Bounteous Immortals and other kindly spirits and then the material creation – the sky, water, the earth, plants, cattle and finally man. Strictly speaking Ahriman cannot create material things, he can only destroy or corrupt them. His first attack on Ohrmazd's spiritual creation failed, for Ohrmazd repulsed him by the power of the holy Word. His second attack on the material creation was only too successful, however. 'Like a serpent he darted forward, trampled on as much of the sky as was beneath the earth, and rended it . . . Then he fell upon the waters . . . which are below the earth; and he bored a hole in the middle of the earth and entered it thereby. He fell upon the plants . . . and upon the (primal) Bull and Gayomart (primal man); and he slew them both.' Thus the second battle ended in a complete defeat for Ohrmazd, or so it seemed.

Even so, Ohrmazd's spiritual creation remained untouched; and once Ahriman had entered the sky he found himself imprisoned within it. Moreover, the seed of Gayomart, the primal man, and of the Bull had fallen into the ground; and from there human life and the life of man's friends in the animal creation were to grow up and to carry on the good fight against Ahriman and his demonic hordes. For 3000 years the two spiritual armies are locked in indecisive battle but in the last 3000 years allotted to this world Ohrmazd's victory becomes every day more apparent, until in the last days Ahriman is defeated by a war of attrition; and the whole demonic creation, seeing Ohrmazd's creation elude it, falls upon itself in a suicidal civil war. Finally Ohrmazd smites Ahriman and he is expelled into the eternal darkness in which he will remain forever unconscious, never to rise again: and all Ohrmazd's creation will be reunited with him in the eternal light and in unceasing joy for ever and ever.

(See also DUALISM; PARSEES; ZURVAN.)

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A great source of prestige to the kings of France was their claim to be anointed with oil of divine origin, incorporating the famous oil of Clovis: at the ceremony of consecration its special sanctity would be passed on to the monarch

OIL

THE SUBSTANCES that have been employed for anointing have been very various: they include vegetable oils, often perfumed and containing gums and balsams, animal fats, blood, saliva, honey and mud. Their use in ritual is both ancient and widespread. They might be employed in the worship of a god, as a means of consecration, for the unction of the sick or the burial of the dead, or to impart special powers. A magical factor is present in all these forms of anointing.

The cosmetic use of oils and unguents in religion was obviously patterned on their employment in secular life as aids to the toilet. The Egyptians, for example, made much use of perfumed ointments as pleasing emollients: the celebrated golden throne found in the tomb of Tutankhamen depicts, on its back panel, the queen anointing the young king; on festal occasions the Egyptians wore cones of perfumed ointment on their heads, which gradually melted in the heat and anointed their bodies. Consequently, in the daily toilet-ritual performed in temples for the pleasure of the gods, their cult images, as representatives of themselves, were solemnly anointed. Similar toilet ceremonies are performed in Hindu temples where the devotees of Shiva anoint the *lingam* symbol of their god. Greek mythology also reveals that the gods were thought to delight in fragrant unguents as mortals did. The goddess Hera, seeking to win the favour of Zeus, carefully prepares herself by bathing in ambrosia and anointing herself with perfumed oil (*Iliad*, book 14).

Pleasing to God

A particularly notable instance of the cosmetic use of oil in the service of a god is recorded in the book of Genesis. The patriarch Jacob, after his marvellous dream at Bethel, 'rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it' (Genesis 28.18). This stone pillar was a cult object, denoting the presence of deity. The sequel to Jacob's act is significant. God announces himself to Jacob in a dream: 'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me' (Genesis 31.13). God was evidently understood to have appreciated the cultic service rendered to him by the anointing of the pillar.

Ancient Hebrew religion provides some of the best evidence of the use of oil as a means of consecration. Chapter 30 of the book of Exodus gives elaborate directions for the making of holy oil. 'Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much . . . and of aromatic cane two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred . . . and of olive oil a hin; and you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; a holy anointing oil it shall be.' Then follow instructions about anointing sacred objects, the 'tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony' and all their cultic furniture and vessels. The purpose of doing so is clearly stated: 'you shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy. And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.'

British Museum

The woman anoints Christ's head with ointment as he sits at supper: 15th century manuscript. Her action was interpreted by Jesus as an anointing preparatory to his burial

The virtue which this anointing imparted to the objects and persons concerned involves an important religious concept. The oil was regarded as being impregnated by a divine power or virtue; and its application to suitable objects or persons had the effect of endowing them with the character of holiness.

The Lord's Anointed

The consecration of Aaron and his sons by holy unction to serve as priests of Yahweh is paralleled in Hebrew records by the anointing of kings. The classic case is that of the consecration of Saul by the prophet Samuel: 'Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you to be

University Films

A lingam, symbol of the god Shiva, is worshipped after being anointed and garlanded with flowers. The ritual of anointing cult images and symbols of the gods was based on the cosmetic use of oils in secular life

prince over his people Israel?"' (1 Samuel, chapter 10). This sacring conferred on Saul an indelible distinction which was still respected even when he had fallen from divine favour. Thus David, his young rival, refused to take the opportunity of slaying Saul, saying 'who can put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?'

There is evidence of the anointing of kings in ancient Egypt, in Hinduism and among the Aztecs; but it was the Christians, following Jewish precedents, who made anointing an essential part of the coronation ceremony. The French kings claimed to be anointed with oil of divine origin. A legend told how at the baptism of Clovis (c 465–511), the reputed founder of the French monarchy, a crystal phial descended from heaven with the chrism (consecrated oil) for the anointing of the king. Every French king, down to the ill-fated Louis XVI, was anointed at his coronation with chrism that contained a tiny fragment of the solidified oil of Clovis. The claim of the medieval French kings that their regal status was conferred by this divine oil was a source of envy to their English rivals. Eventually English kings were enabled to claim a like prestige. During the reign of Richard II, a phial of oil was miraculously found in the Tower of London. It was identified as one alleged to have been given to St Thomas of Canterbury by the Virgin Mary for the anointing of the kings of England. Before Richard could avail himself of the divine gift, he was deposed. To his supplanter Henry IV the oil was truly a godsend, for his consecration by it endowed him with a prestige that Richard lacked.

The sacring of the monarch remains a crucial part of the English coronation service. A rubric directs: 'on the morning of the Coronation early, care is to be taken that the Ampulla be filled with oil, and together with the spoon, laid ready upon the Altar of the Abbey Church.' The ceremony of anointing is prefaced by a short consecratory prayer, 'to bless and sanctify thy chosen servant who is to be anointed with this oil and consecrated King'. The Archbishop of Canterbury anoints the monarch, in the form of a cross upon the head, breast and hands. A compound oil is used, which is consecrated by a bishop of the chapter of Westminster on the morning of the coronation.

In Catholic Christianity the consecratory aspect of anointing is a feature of its use in baptism, confirmation and the ordination of priests. The chrism that is used is a mixture of olive oil and balsam. It is employed also in the consecration of churches, altars, sacred vessels and baptismal water. In the Roman Catholic Church, chrism is consecrated by bishops on Maundy Thursday; in the Orthodox Church the privilege is reserved to patriarchs only.

It is to be noted, in this connection, that the title 'Christ' comes from the Greek *Christos*, meaning 'the Anointed One', which in turn translated the Hebrew *mashiah* (Messiah). The Hebrew title had become the designation for Yahweh's chosen or 'anointed' representative, who would ultimately effect the salvation and restoration of Israel. Jesus of Nazareth was identified by his followers as the expected Messiah; the title *Christos* was soon added to his personal name, and from it the word 'Christian' derived.

Extreme Unction

The ritual anointing of the sick, known as the Unction of the Sick, is a sacrament of Catholic Christianity. The scriptural authority for the rite is given in the epistle of James, chapter 5. 'Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.' As this passage indicates, and as was the custom in the Early Church and still is in the Greek Church, this Unction was primarily considered as a divinely instituted means to recovery from sickness. In the Roman Catholic Church, however, the rite has come increasingly to be known as Extreme Unction, being administered as a preparation for death to those near their end.

The use of oil and other unguents in burial rites is ancient, and it has been practised by many peoples. Among the Egyptians it figures prominently in the ritual of embalmment (see MUMMIFICATION). The Greeks placed vessels of oil known as *lekythoi* in tombs for the use of the dead, and the Romans poured perfumed oil over the ashes of the dead. The Christian gospels contain two notable passages concerning the mortuary use of oil. Jesus interprets the action of the woman who anointed him at Bethany with the words: 'She has done what she could: she has anointed my body beforehand for burying' (Mark 14.8). And female followers of Jesus bring spices to his sepulchre to anoint his body on Easter morning (Mark 16.1).

Unguents that confer supernatural powers on those anointed with them figure in the folktales of many peoples, particularly in tales connected with witches. One of the earliest examples occurs in the famous *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, written in the 2nd century AD. A colourful narrative relates how the witch Pamphile, by the application of a special ointment, changed herself into an owl and flew away (see also FLYING OINTMENT). Although such instances may be classed as 'black' magic, the religious use of holy oils and other unguents equally involved the principle of contagious magic – that supernatural power or grace can be obtained by contact with a substance that is charged with it.

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OLD AGE & WITCHCRAFT

Behind the figure of the witch as a bent old hag is the landscape of the society that created her; mental illness among lonely old women was construed as witchcraft by the people of their time, partly to satisfy psychological needs of their own.

ALL GENERALIZATIONS are subject to exception, but Reginald Scot's verbal cartoon of the 16th century English witch as 'lame, blear-eyed, pale, foul and full of wrinkles' seems to have had wide European currency. In his examination of Spanish witchcraft materials, J.-C. Baroja noted that the Evil Eye was more particularly found in elderly spinsters. Perpetuated by German and Scandinavian folklorists, the stereotype of the witch as a malign old woman has found contemporary reaffirmation in Disney films.

But the bent old hag, whilst she may indeed have typified the European witch, is not a universal symbol. Anthropologists would admit that those arraigned for witchcraft in Africa, although they are usually women, are by no means typically elderly. In fact in most African communities the old are revered rather than rejected. If one accepts the idea of the witch as a special personality, it would be logical in terms of modern sociological theory to interpret her as a function of the society or culture that produced her. With this concept in mind, the differences between African and European witchcraft beliefs may be instructive.

African society is organized around the 'extended family', which consists of several generations and a number of kinsfolk living together. In the extended family, which tends to be found in rural and agricultural communities, the position of each member is defined with some clarity and the elderly retain both status and respect. Contrasted with this type of family organization is that typical of the Western world, the nuclear family, which consists of mother, father and their children. Members of the older generation tend to be found both intrusive and disruptive in the nuclear family, and for these reasons often to be excluded.

Since even in modern Europe examples of the extended family still survive, it is not

An old woman is examined by a monk for the 'witch's mark', sign of her allegiance to the Devil: scene from *Witchcraft Through the Ages*

National Film Archive

Many of the characteristics of the witch can also be identified in the schizophrenia of old age

an unreasonable supposition that earlier European society very closely resembled the social organization found today in Africa and Asia. Furthermore, one might suggest that in the evolution of the European nuclear family from its original form as an extended family, outbreaks of witchcraft accusation could be expected to coincide to a large extent with those periods of social change when elderly women in particular had become a burden that the emerging social structure was unable to support.

Even allowing for the fact that feudalism as a social system had shown earlier signs of disintegration, there can be little doubt that the Black Death in the 14th century accelerated economic, and hence social, changes which disrupted the extended family and made the economically non-productive old a considerable burden on such families as were spared. In addition, freed from the age-old restraints of feudalism, people began to offer their skills in a more competitive market which demanded their physical mobility. If they left behind them forever much that had become irksome, they also renounced a web of personal relationships which had once helped to give meaning to their lives, as well as those side-benefits which had largely guaranteed some degree of security to the old.

After the Black Death there must have been increasing numbers of old people who were turned out of their houses because their families had either been wiped out by the plague or had seized the opportunity to bargain for more remunerative work elsewhere. The 'generation gap' could reach sordid proportions on occasion: children not only charged their elders rent after they had succeeded to the family property but in many cases went to law against them. Something of the human misery of the changing order was noted by Robert Cowley, whose main complaint was the hardship caused to labouring families by the system of enclosures. Speaking of the bailiffs who, as administrative officers for the great landlords, came in for much resentment, he says: 'These idle bailiffs will devour all that we shall get by our sore labour in our youth, and when we shall be old and impotent, then shall we be driven to beg and crave of them that will not give us so much as the crumbs that fall from their tables. . . . Better it were therefore for us to die like men than after so great misery of youth to die more miserably in age . . .'

Since Europe at the end of the Middle Ages lacked adequate welfare mechanisms to cope with the widespread plight of the aged, it looks as though unconscious forces first isolated the old and then destroyed them by fire for witchcraft. Later generations were to use the gas chamber with a different set of rationalizations.

Witch Behaviour

One of the problems encountered in the study of medieval European witchcraft is that the research worker has to rely on people living centuries ago to supply him with materials. And of course, these people perceived their world in ways often very different from ourselves. There is always the danger therefore, in reinterpreting observations made in past centuries, that one may lose valuable significances. Nevertheless, as one examines the bizarre evidence of the witchcraft trials, one is struck by the psychotic flavour not only of many of the accusations but also of the confessions. One wonders to what extent many of those found guilty of witchcraft were, in fact, elderly people whose minds had degenerated into some form of schizophrenia. Edmund Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* noted – and misunderstood – the typical schizoid withdrawal of the witch:

> So choosing solitary to abide
> Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds
> And hellish arts from people she might hide,
> And hurt far off, unknown, whom she envied.

Whilst one must be careful to discount many of the confessions, which were extracted under the most callous torture, there nevertheless remains a catalogue of delusion that calls for re-examination. The stress on sexuality, the claim to be directed by voices and the alleged ability, after stripping, to be able to fly, all provide a pattern which modern research may help us to interpret.

As a recent Anglo-Scandinavian study was able to demonstrate, many of the characteristics of the witch can also be identified in the schizophrenia of old age. It is interesting to notice that of the sample studied, more than half were unmarried women and over 40 per cent were living alone. Almost without exception these were women who until comparatively recently had regular employment and who, now in retirement, had been reduced to straitened circumstances. Of interest to the analysis of the medieval situation is the medical comment on this sample: 'Although such social circumstances are no doubt the lot of many aged, we believe that these consequences and the general decline in health and vigour associated with senescence fell with special severity on this group of paraphrenics, as it consisted predominantly of women, unmarried people and people without close family or personal attachments.'

Modern studies of the mental condition

MOTHER DAMNABLE, *the remarkable* SHREW, *of* KENTISH TOWN, *the person who gave rise to the Sign of* Mother Red Cap, *on the Hampstead Road, near London. An Dom 1676.*

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Above **'Mother Damneble, the remarkable shrew of Kentish Town': 17th century print. An ugly, bad-tempered old woman who lived alone, rejected by the community, easily acquired the reputation for being a witch**
Left **Etching by Goya of two naked hags locked in combat: the woman no longer young has become a symbol of horror and depravity**

Anti-Feminism and the Witch

When the witch proper first appeared she was still outwardly beautiful, though inwardly rotten and treacherous – the snake-witch or *lamia* of antiquity. This concept was in some ways reinforced by Christian anti-feminism; for example, in the Middle Ages Jane Shore, the mistress of Edward III, was accused equally of immorality and witchcraft as if the two charges were interdependent. At that time, as we have seen, the witch in the mind could well be young and beautiful – like the witch in the fifteenth-century painting preparing a love filtre. Gradually, however, she became repulsive in an obvious, sexual sense as well as a secret one. In Goya's pictures of witches at work, for instance, the women are for the most part fairly young, but it is hard to describe in words the sense of utter physical repulsion they arouse. There is a vulgarity and brutality in the painting of them which betrays, to my mind, a strong resentment of the female. More commonly, however, this resentment expressed itself in the simple projection of the witch as an *old* woman, since age is the nemesis that overtakes female sexuality far more than it does that of the male.

The typical Gothic witch of fable, in fact, is quite *un*typical of the type of person who actually seems to have practised witchcraft in the early days of the Inquisition. Initially, it was communities that were investigated, mixed bodies of men, women and children; and their links with one another and confessions of joint activities were an important part of the charge. But the witch of fable is essentially a lonely figure. Old, repulsive, she is a pariah, living outside normal society . . .

I suggest that this sexual antagonism is one reason that persecution fell more, as time went on, upon *old* women. The old woman is at last vulnerable. With her shaky, withered body and toothless gums she represents a cruel travesty of female allure. She has been unsexed, and the resentful male may at last attack with impunity.

Gillian Tindall *A Handbook on Witches*

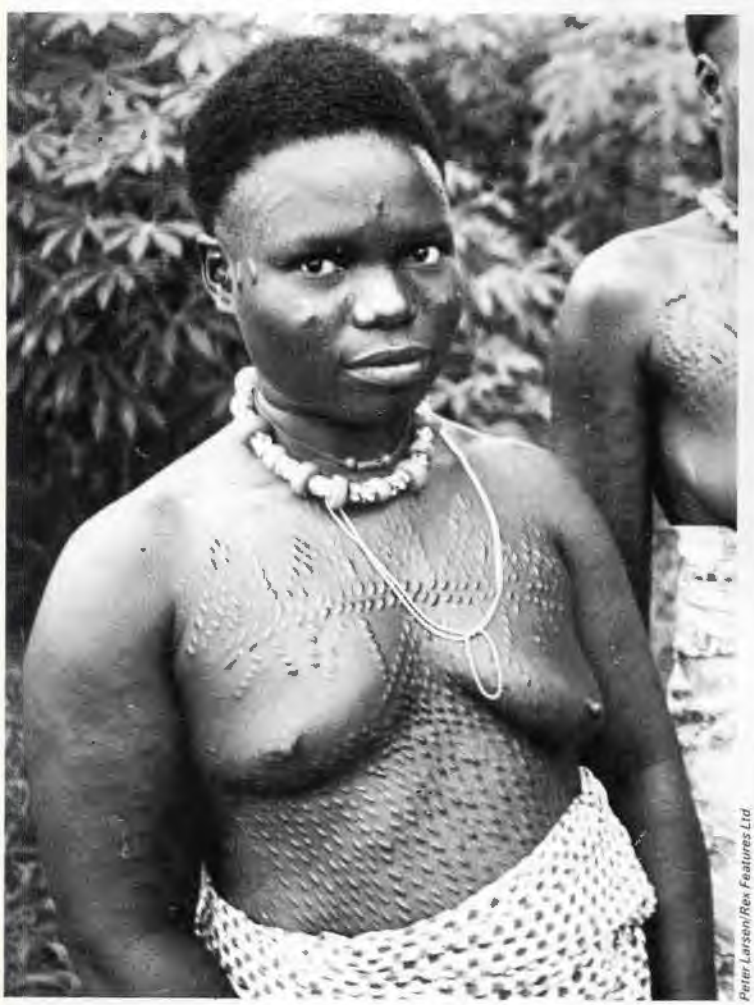
of some of the aged not only confirm the findings of this particular research project but closely resemble surviving accounts of witch behaviour. Discussing the onset of paraphrenia (a type of schizophrenia found in the aged) the authors comment: 'The first signs are manifested in an increasing quarrelsomeness or unprovoked abuse of those living near. Oddities in speech, appearance or other aspects of behaviour are noticed. The patient may seclude himself, refuse callers, break off contact with tradesmen, and wander outside or move about the house at night, talking, laughing or crying out.' Modern society considers that such people need medical attention rather than the stake. But one hesitates to think what England's 17th century Witch-Finder General, Matthew Hopkins, would have decided. It is by no means unheard of in medical case histories to find elderly women complaining that men, who have hitherto shown not the least interest in them, have sexually molested them – an allegation not without parallels in the strange erotica of European witchcraft.

The Role of the Outcast

The danger of so much anthropological analysis is that it merely permits the substitution of one system of labelling for another. Undoubtedly many witches were insane. But if the value of modern research lies in the insight that it may give into historical events, so too the value of past events such as the massive witch hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries, lies in the light they can shed on our contemporary life. The fact that old people today are committed to hospital rather than burnt, does not really remove the underlying social pressures which continue to produce aged outcasts.

It is generally accepted by psychiatrists that an emotionally disturbed person is to some extent satisfying unconscious needs of

Below left **A Dahomey girl who is receiving instruction in the craft of magic and (*below right*) her elderly tutor. In Africa, where old people tend to retain greater status and respect than in the West, witchcraft is not considered the monopoly of the old *Right* An old witch arrives at the sabbath bringing a young apprentice with her: drawing by Hans Baldung Grien**



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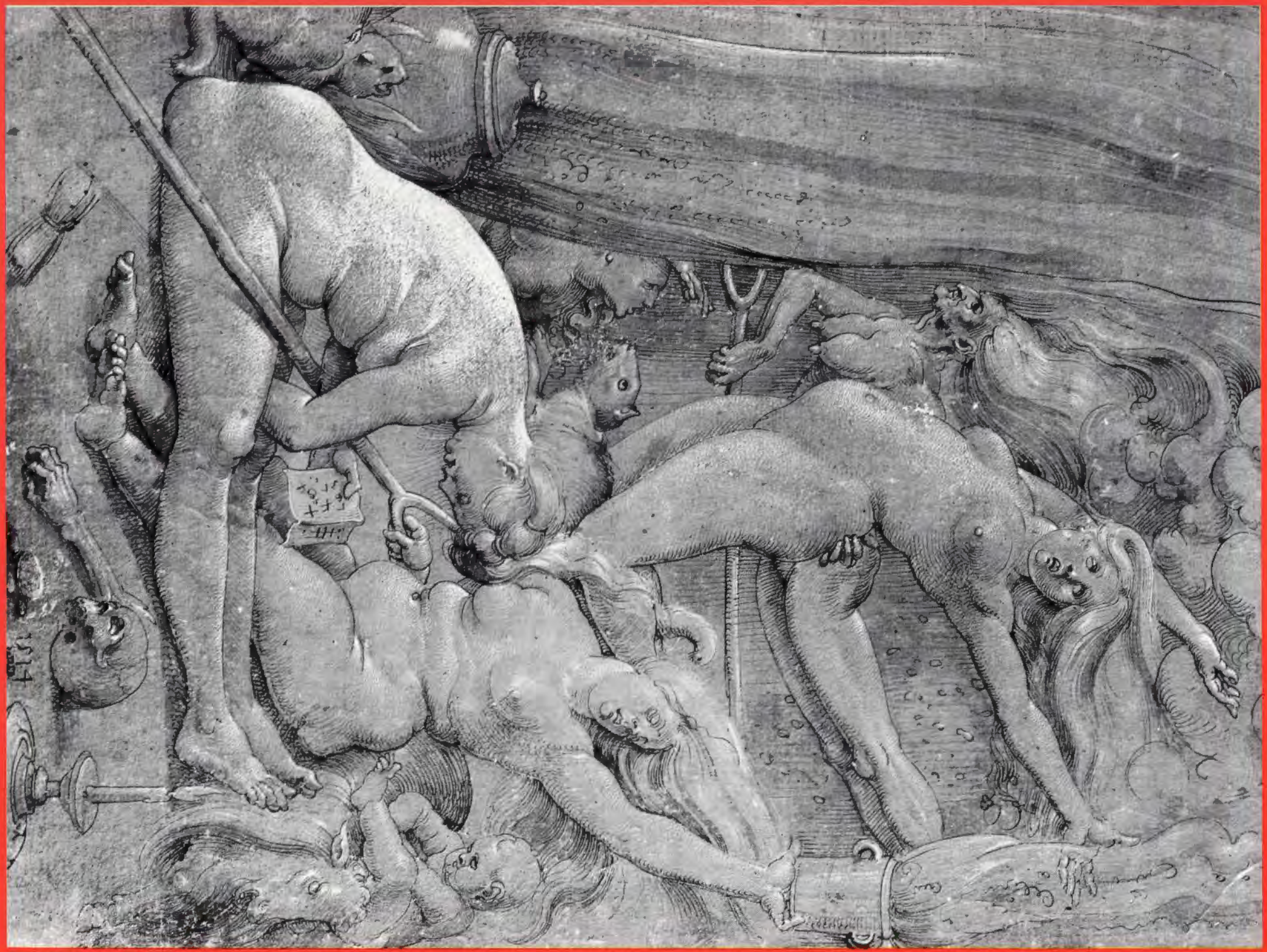
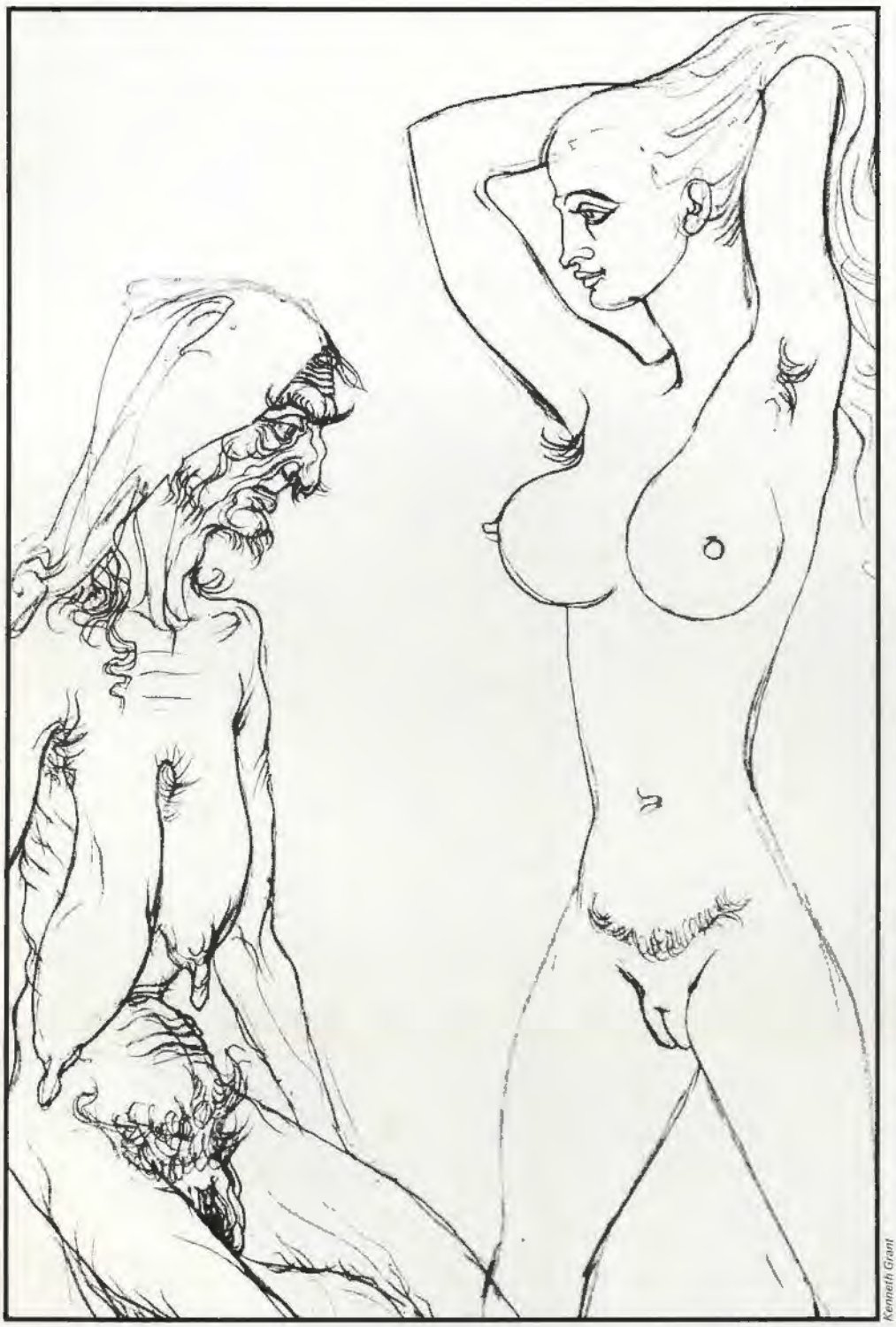


Albertina, Vienna



Kenneth Grant

Kenneth Grant

The 'confessions' of old women accused of witchcraft had a pronounced sexual element: the same delusions have been noted by psychiatrists in elderly women whose minds have degenerated into schizophrenia *Left* Drawing by Austin Spare of a repulsive old witch and her 'exteriorization', the alluring form which she assumed in order to seduce her victims *Above* An elderly witch strikes an inviting pose: 16th century drawing by Niklaus Manuel Deutsch *Right* The excitements of the witches' sabbath, described by numerous victims of the Inquisition, are illustrated in this painting by F. Francken

his immediate family or its equivalent. In fact, the family is itself in part responsible for unconsciously demanding and unconsciously rewarding the sort of behaviour now labelled as psychotic. And this implies that the family, although it is not consciously aware of the fact, has an emotional investment in the abnormal behaviour which, if maintained, must militate against the patient's recovery. In this interpretation of insanity as to some extent an expression of the needs of others, lies the reason why many modern psychiatrists like to include the whole family in the therapeutic strategy.

Whilst this particular theory does not exclude hereditary factors, it does assert that the particular form (and possibly the depth and duration) in which insanity will manifest itself is determined by social conditions. Scattered studies of schizophrenia in Africa, and particularly of *Ukuthwasa*, or witch-doctor's disease, support these contentions. Ukuthwasa is a type of schizoid condition regarded as an essential characteristic of a would-be witch-doctor, which, because of differences in social attitude, has usually quite a different course and outcome from that of schizophrenia in a white European community.

The problem under consideration is the extent to which witchcraft can be seen as a role that satisfied unconscious group expectations – just as contemporary expressions of insanity may be seen as responses to unconscious group needs.

The extraordinarily complex interaction of the individual with those with whom he is associated helps us to see abnormal behaviour as at least partially determined socially. Hollingshead and Redlich, examining the social origins of psychotics, found that most schizophrenics came from families who were semi-skilled, partially educated people, suspicious, individualistic, self-centred and hostile to formal educational controls. These are traits that lead to further isolation and discrimination. 'Such people in our society,' Hollingshead comments, 'tend to be dropped by their families as injured limbs are cast off by some organisms.'

The gradual reduction in sharpness of sight and hearing in old age may well have the effect of further emphasizing an isolation already partly produced by social forces.

Socially rejected, with failing sight and hearing, the medieval old woman must have suffered to a pitiful degree: it is no wonder that she responded with bemused and antisocial reactions

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Changes in behaviour due to a reduction of communication are likely to follow. Modern studies of conditions of sensory deprivation show that strange and sometimes irreversible changes can be induced in the personalities of people subject to solitary confinement.

Naked to the Sabbath

Artificially created sensory deprivation has been used as one of the main techniques in 'brainwashing' political prisoners, and similar experiences have been noted in people exploring the polar regions or lost in great deserts. Admiral Richard Byrd, for example, isolated in Antarctica for several months, noticed that after the 12th week he was in a state of deep depression, which was succeeded by a loss of identity during which he felt that he was floating like a disembodied spirit; this would have been evidence enough to convince the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, that they had another case of witchcraft on their hands. Christine Ritter subjected herself to periods of up to 16 days of isolation in the polar wastes and recorded an almost overwhelming désire to run naked into the snow. If this calls to mind witchcraft evidence concerning women who stripped and went naked to some sabbath, the monsters which the hallucinated Christine Ritter saw seem to rival the bestiary of witch annals.

Alone, socially rejected, with failing sight and hearing, the medieval old woman must have suffered to a pitiful degree. If in addition her faculties were frequently weakened by hunger and cold, it is no small wonder that she responded to rejection with bemused and antisocial reactions.

The study of witchcraft raises far more than an image of a bumbling old hag; for behind her is the society that created her. Eventually one is left wondering who are the more pitiful, those condemned for witchcraft or those who accuse of witchcraft. After considering the monstrous legal and religious armoury of the Middle Ages piled up against the frail, short-sighted old woman, one is inclined to wonder how much of our modern legislation will not come to be regarded as a monument to our own less reputable desires.

LRIAN W. ROSE

Having survived the severest persecution, first under the Tsars and then under the Communists, the Old Believers still preserve the traditions of the ancient Russian Church

OLD BELIEVERS

ANYONE LUCKY ENOUGH to locate the Old Believer community at Erie, Pennsylvania, and to attend their church near the lake front very early on a Sunday morning will find young, middle-aged and old people, all in peasant costume, immersing themselves in the atmosphere of traditional Russia. It is not an atmosphere artificially created or fed by any sort of zealotry, but one sustained as an expression of an isolated though living culture, which is nurtured by devotion to its intrinsic richness. The children are sent to the crowded Sunday school, where they learn Russian and sing the old chants, and the young people may go on to study Russian and other subjects at university. All come together regularly for worship and other communal pursuits, led by their head. Such a community (one of four similar in the United States), though it obviously faces problems of maintaining its identity, enriches the religious life of the country.

The original Old Believers (or Old Ritualists) came into being as a result of the Great Schism in Russia in the 17th century. Patriarch Nikon wanted to introduce into the Orthodox Church, the established Church of the country, certain ritual and liturgical reforms on a Greek model. He was resisted by the compelling personality and total commitment to the traditional faith of Archpriest Avvakum (1620–82), who suspected the Church at Constantinople of being, among other things, tainted by Western influence.

To this day, Avvakum is revered by the Old Believers as a saint and by historians as one of the greatest writers of old Russia. He lost his cause, but carried with him a very large number of people. They eventually divided into two main streams: those having priests, the *Popovtsy*, and those without them, the *Bespopovtsy*. The Erie community is an example of the latter.

As with the Roman Catholic Church at the Reformation, once the great religious monolith of the Russian Orthodox Church had been shattered there seemed to be a compulsion to splinter further. The personality of a local leader or the geographical isolation of a community was often a decisive enough factor to produce a new subdivision. The 'priestless' communities were naturally more inclined to fragment than those which retained or regained a hierarchical system. One Soviet researcher, F. I. Fedorenko, lists no less than 46 'denominations' among the Bespopovtsy.

Avvakum was not himself a fanatic but his uncompromising stand easily inspired fanaticism in others. It led millions into exile; many who did not die at the hands of Tsarist oppressors believed they could keep the purity of the old faith and ritual by taking premature leave of the corruptions of this world, so they died together under the compulsion of a mass hysteria (as happens at the end of Mussorgsky's opera *Khovanshchina*).

Both main streams have now abjured fanaticism. Not only at Erie, Pennsylvania, but in thousands of towns and villages of the Soviet Union, the Old Believers are respected for their peaceable disposition and their positive contributions to local life. The more extreme elements which survived into recent times should not properly be classified as Old Believers at all (see SKOPTSY).

Despite their past suffering, the atheistic Soviet State has not spared the Old Believers any more than other religious bodies. However, those hardened by long experience of Tsarist persecution have not found it as difficult as some others to endure similar treatment from the Communists.

Russia's 'Lost Tribes'

In this, geography has been their friend. An initial desire to flee from population centres, simply in order to avoid the attentions of Tsarist officials, was soon replaced by a positive compulsion to seek the 'land of white water' which they believed was situated somewhere in the East. Starting from the populous areas of European Russia, the Old Believers found plenty of space for their wanderings. They not only tamed the land. They found themselves havens which lay undisturbed for centuries.

Walter Kolarz, in his book *Religion in the Soviet Union*, has told the impressive story of the discovery of a 'lost tribe' of Old Believers which was found by a Soviet expedition to the Bukhtarma valley in north-east Kazakhstan in 1927. Another group was located in 1931 on the Sino-Soviet border, 250 miles from the nearest railway and in the middle of a tiger-infested jungle.

A more recent journey of discovery to a 'lost' community, whose traditional way of life is still intact, has also been recorded. In the summer of 1965 an expedition was sponsored jointly by the Soviet atheist monthly, *Science and Religion*, and the Institute of Scientific Atheism. It was to seek out 'priestless' Old Believer communities on the right bank of the River Ob, miles out in the *taiga* (an area of marsh and coniferous forest) north of Tomsk. One of its members, A. Shamaro, kept a diary, from which the following extracts are taken.

'The cell of a *Pustynnik* (member of the "hermit" sect) in the taiga is a simple, old-fashioned Russian hut, dark, cramped, low and roofed with birch-bark or branches used like slates. It usually stands on the edge of a clearing in the forest which has been converted into a kitchen garden. Outhouses and awnings lean against the hut.

'They build the cells with their front windows aligned accurately towards the east – or more precisely, towards the "east of the Annunciation". This is the name given by the Old Believers of these parts to that point on the horizon where the sun rises on the Festival of the Annunciation – 25 March, old style. The hermit has his chapel in the front corner of the hut – each one is both church and dwelling, just as each hermit is both priest and congregation. This applies all the more if he lives alone.

'The icons are hung behind curtains, the blackened faces of their figures being painted in the "pre-Nikon" style and with copper reproductions of those images which are especially esteemed among the Old Believers. In front of the iconostasis (screen on which icons are placed) there is a shelf with thick volumes on it – service books, sermons and prayer manuals. These books are so bulky and old that thick embroidered cushions are placed under the cover for support when they are opened for reading, so that the binding does not disintegrate. Larger cushions hang on the wall by the iconostasis. They are called "arm-cushions" and the hermits put them under their elbows, so that their old bones are not overstrained by their countless prostrations . . .

'The hermits call themselves *Prostetsy* – that is, monks who are not priests. Though they have no clergy, all their days and nights are tightly packed with services. The day of worship begins in the second or third hour after midnight with a vigil . . . This is followed by matins, "the first hour", "the hours" (the hermits' mass), vespers and compline. Then follows the vigil again. In addition, they recite offices "for the repose of souls". There can be up to ten services in a period of twenty-four hours. On the great church festivals, of course, there is even more worship. Those clocks which work are set to "Jerusalem time" – six hours out from local time.'

Present-Day Revival

If there is any popular notion at all of what the Russian Old Believers generally represent today, it is that they are effete, fanatical and no longer a factor of any importance in the religious life of the Soviet Union. This view may be based on the evidence of visits which tourists have paid to the picturesque Old Believer churches in the outskirts of Moscow, where undoubtedly the congregation does seem to be chiefly comprised of old women practising their ancient rituals. Nevertheless, as we have seen, there are still places where all the old traditions are preserved in their purity and there are vigorous communities with a proportion of young people in their membership, both inside and outside the Soviet Union; furthermore, some of the Moscow Old Believers have joined the religious wing of the mounting pressure group for the establishment of human rights in their country. Recent evidence from the Soviet Union is decisive in proving that the Old Believers are very far from being moribund and that militant Soviet atheists are faced with much more than the persistence of an obsolete faith in backward areas.

Even during the height of Stalin's purges, there were Old Believers who had the temerity to try and avail themselves of their legal right (categorically established in 1929) to petition for the opening of a church when there were 20 believers of the same faith in the same place who desired it. Fifty of them were arrested in 1937 at Tiraspol as 'counter-revolutionaries' merely for making such a request. During this period, the vast

Novosti Press Agency

A Moscow church of the Old Believers, who keep to the original forms of worship practised by the Orthodox Church before the Great Schism of the 17th century

majority of places of worship in accessible areas were forcibly closed; the Old Believers were affected, in common with all other religious faiths. However, with the general relaxation of attitude by the State towards religion during the Second World War, there occurred what present-day Soviet researchers term a 'reactivation' of the Old Believer faith. As the author of the latest Soviet book on the subject, V. F. Milovidov, puts it: 'In many areas of the country communities of Old Believers were reborn which, it seemed, had once and for all disintegrated and discontinued their existence; large numbers of petitions were received from Old Believers requesting the opening of churches and prayer-houses.'

There have never been any accurate statistics on the Old Believers, but it is quite commonly held by Soviet commentators today that there were not less than 20 million of them by 1917. They hasten to add that this number has now fallen to a maximum of one million but this, at best, with 'lost' communities still being discovered, can be no more than a guess; at worst, it is a figure devised for purely propagandistic purposes. It is not only the nationwide renewal of the movement after the Second World War which makes this figure suspect. Whole new communities in Poland and Latvia were enveloped by the pushing westward of Soviet frontiers just before and towards the end of the war – and these were more active and better organized than their counterparts who had endured the purges.

In addition, the central organizations of the chief denominations of the Old Believers became active again and seem to have been more successful than the Russian Orthodox Church in securing permission to hold representative assemblies. One group, the Church of the Belo-Krinitsa Concord, was able to appoint three new bishops and 50 new priests and deacons in the six years from 1942.

Reliable statistics on the number of young people active among the Old Believer communities are naturally even more difficult to come by than figures for the nationwide membership of the movement. Yevgeny Bobkov was a brilliant law student at Moscow University, but also carried the standards in processions at an Old Believer church in the city. For this he was expelled from the university in 1959. If this could happen in the capital, it could occur much more easily in the provinces – and more recent anti-religious propaganda suggests that this was very far from being a unique instance.

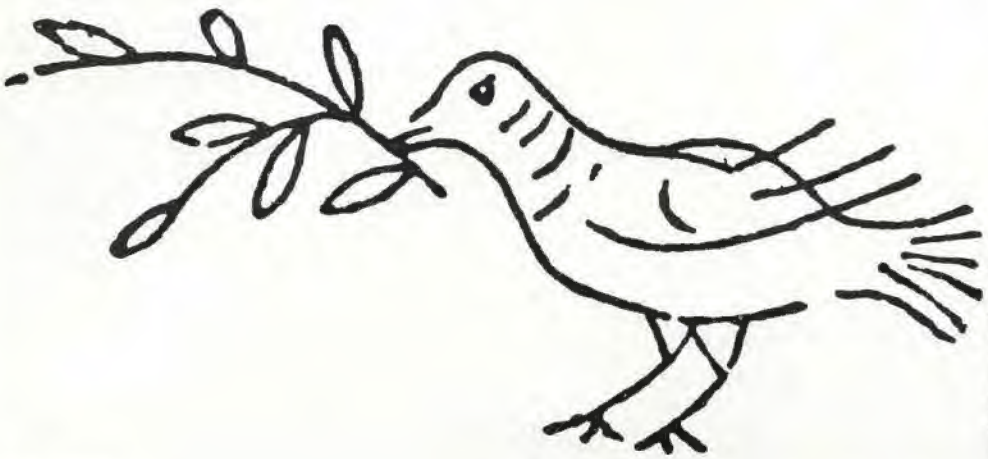
At the beginning of 1969 there occurred something totally unexpected. A short document reached the West, claiming to represent the 'voice of the Old Believers from the U.S.S.R.' From its wealth of hard fact it appears genuine. It complains, for example, of serious state interference in the internal life of the Church, which is against the law:

> The secret police have penetrated into the very heart of the Archiepiscopate . . . and put into it their own important agent, Protodeacon Georgy Alexandrovich Ustinov, as secretary . . . All incoming and outgoing mail passes through his hands: correspondence with the parishes, priests and believers, petitions, complaints of believers about persecution by the local Soviet authorities, and so on, and the answers of the Archbishop and his officials – all this immediately becomes known to the secret police.

With this appeal for justice, the Old Believers join those Baptists, Orthodox and Catholics who have been petitioning the Soviet authorities during the 1960s to allow them their basic human rights. Whatever their image has been in the past, this puts their future into a new perspective. Soviet atheists who have been expecting them to be among the first religious groups to die out will have to reconsider their opinions. The Old Believers are demonstrating that persecution may frighten away the half-hearted, but it toughens the fibre of those who remain. They are not alone among Soviet Christians in this, but their troubled history has given them a longer chance to prove it than any other group in Russia.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

FURTHER READING: Michael Bourdeaux, *Opium of the People* (Bobbs, Merrill, 1966); Walter Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (St. Martin, 1962).



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

As an emblem of peace and reconciliation, the olive was adopted as a Christian symbol: early Christian sign of a bird with an olive branch in its beak, from a Roman catacomb

OLIVE

THE TREES once went forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.' But the olive tree said to them, 'Shall I leave my fatness, by which gods and men are honoured . . . ?' The innumerable references to olive and olive oil in the Bible testify both to the importance of the olive and its oil as food and to the great symbolic significance of anointment with the oil, both factors which appear in this quotation (from Judges, chapter 9).

Exactly when and where the olive was first cultivated is a mystery, but it seems probable that it was known to the ancient Egyptians. It is the tree most closely associated with the development of civilization, and its importance today throughout Mediterranean lands is unabated.

The first Bible reference to the olive is in Genesis, in the story of the Flood. To find whether the waters had subsided, Noah released a dove from the ark: 'And the dove came back to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf' (Genesis 8.11). So well known was the olive even in those distant times that the single leaf sufficed for identification, showing that it was safe to come out of the ship. Ever since, the tree and the bird have both symbolized peace and friendship. The olive also represents prosperity, beauty, strength and divine blessings.

The garden of Gethsemane was an olive grove. Whether the few trees in it today date from the time of Christ cannot be ascertained, but it is certainly possible, for the olive is among the longest lived of trees. Its trunk may decay within but the outer shell continues to thrive; and even if the top is entirely cut down or burnt away the root will sprout again. When a garden is mentioned in the Bible or in old travellers' tales, an olive orchard is usually meant.

Gift of Athene

In Greek legend Athene (Minerva to the Romans and Etruscans) was responsible for having made the olive bear fruit. Virgil referred to her as *Oleae inventrix*. When she and Poseidon were disputing for the possession of Attica, Poseidon caused a salt-water spring to gush from the rock of the Acropolis on striking it with his trident (another legend suggests that he created a horse). Athene, however, caused an olive tree to appear, and this was considered by the gods to be the more valuable gift. So the city of Athens got its name, and the Athenians adopted Athene as their particular goddess. An olive branch is portrayed on early Attic coins. Goats were the special sacrifice to Athene because of the harm they did to olives (as to most vegetation).

The olive on the Acropolis was burnt by Xerxes when he sacked Athens in 480 BC but it reappeared as if by magic. There is still an olive on the Acropolis. Herodotus tells how Xerxes, before his Greek expedition, dreamt that he was crowned with an olive wreath which instantly vanished, and indeed his was a hollow victory. The Athenians revered the sacred olive and severely punished anyone who damaged it. Olive was used for victors' crowns at the Olympic Games, and was equal to the laurel in importance.

Olive was also one of the symbols of the Greek harvest festival, represented in more recent times by a symbolic tree branch known as the Harvest-May. The *eiresione*, a branch of olive or laurel decorated with fruits of the earth and bedecked with ribbons, was carried in procession and finally fixed over the farm door. Here it was left for a year, guaranteeing the successful growth of further crops. The Yule-log, symbolic winter sacrifice for fruitfulness, was sometimes of olive.

Medieval Christians had many legends about the olive. One of the basic – if very variable – ones was that when Adam died the angel guarding the garden of Eden – the first orchard – gave Seth a seed each of olive, cedar and cypress. These were placed in Adam's mouth and eventually sprouted from his grave, forming a single triple-trunked tree. It was from this tree that Noah's dove plucked the symbolic leaf, beneath this tree that David wept, and it was this tree that Solomon cut down. Too hard to be formed into timber, it was used as a bridge on which the Queen of Sheba crossed a bog. Eventually it formed the basis of the cross. A comparable, simpler legend suggests that the cross was formed from four separate trees – olive, palm, cedar and cypress.

In its capacity as emblem of peace and reconciliation, olive is shown on martyrs' tombs; it was thought to be carried by the angel Gabriel and certain saints, and was in some quarters regarded as the symbol of the Virgin Mary.

In medieval and later centuries olive was regarded as a safeguard against lightning, witchcraft and evil in general; a branch in the house was insurance against such disaster. To dream of olives was lucky, though to dream of plucking the fruit meant trouble. In the language of flowers the olive, naturally enough, represented peace.

A. J. HUXLEY

Olympic Games

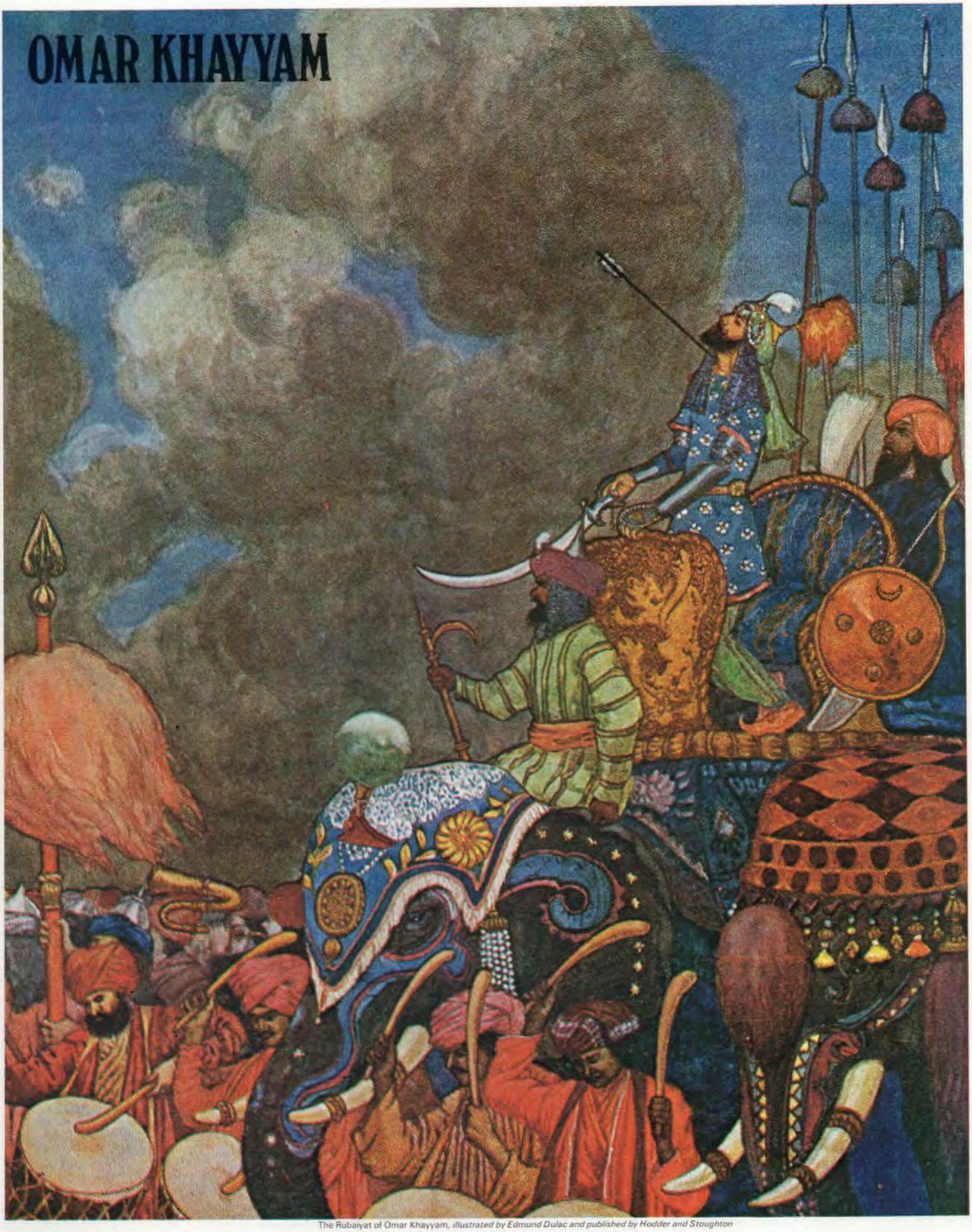
Athletic contests in honour of Olympian Zeus, founded in 776 BC and held every four years at Olympia, the principal sanctuary of the god in Greece; the games were abolished in the 4th century AD and re-founded in the 19th century; the first in the modern series of games was held at Athens in 1896. See GAMES.

National Film Archive

Olympus

Mountain on the borders of Thessaly and Macedonia, close to 10,000 feet in height, the highest peak in the Greek peninsula and the home of the Greek gods; also the name of several other mountains in Greece and Asia Minor.

C. M. Dixon



The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, *illustrated by Edmund Dulac and published by Hodder and Stoughton*

'How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp, Abode his Hour or two, and went his way': illustration of a characteristic passage in Edward FitzGerald's version of the *Rubaiyat*

It is no longer believed that the Persian scientist Omar Khayyam wrote the whole poem known to the West as the Rubaiyat; *it is more likely that it is a compendium of impromptu verse which was later written down and added to by various hands*

OMAR KHAYYAM

MORE FAMILIARLY KNOWN as Omar Khayyam, the Persian astronomer, mathematician and epigrammatist Ghiyas-al-Din Abul-Fath Umar ibn Ibraham al-Khayyami, was born in Nishapur c 1048, and died in the same city in 1123. Little is known of his early life, but it seems clear that he received a broad education in the learning of his day, particularly in the sciences of geometry and astronomy (which at that time included astrology). In his own writings he claims the great Arabic philosopher Avicenna as his master, by which he probably meant that he followed the same rationalist and speculative outlook as his great forebear, and to a certain extent this is borne out in his few rather non-committal philosophical and scientific writings. In Khayyam's day the spirit of orthodoxy and conformity was beginning to predominate, and free thought and speculation were actively discouraged. To a man of his rather cautious and taciturn nature, it would seem wise and discreet to conceal his true beliefs, if they were the sceptical ideas to be expected from a trained medieval scientist.

Khayyam entered the service of Nizam al-Mulk, the famous vizier of the Seljuk ruler Malik-Shah, and in 1074 was put in charge of the observatory at Isfahan, with the special task of reforming the calendar. This employment seems to have lasted about 20 years, until the deaths of his patron and his sovereign and the consequent political changes suggested the desirability of an extended journey abroad. During his latter years he enjoyed a secure reputation and the patronage of a number of princes and rulers, by whom he was often consulted for astrological prognostications – a science in which, there is some reason to think, he was not a wholehearted believer. He was evidently a respected and admired teacher of the sciences of his day, though he also had the reputation of being distant and even irritable in his relations with his students.

Afraid of his Discoveries

Among the dozen scientific and philosophical works of his that have survived are a pioneering work on algebra, a thesis dealing with some of the difficulties encountered in Euclid's theorems, a short tract on chemistry, and a number of philosophical and metaphysical essays on the problems of existence, good and evil, free will and predestination. All are dealt with rather briefly and throw little light on their author's personality. Most of these are in Arabic, some translated from Greek.

Piecing together the scraps of biographical information available to us, we gradually build up the picture of a somewhat humourless, taciturn and unambitious man, moderate and conservative in his tastes, a man of

simple pleasures, and at the same time a widely-read scholar with a restless and probing mind. He was a recognized master of the learning of his time who wrote little and was uncommunicative even in his lectures. He constantly sought to extend the boundaries of knowledge yet was fearful of what he might find, reluctant to accept the discipline of orthodoxy but not willing to commit himself publicly to a dangerously heterodox position.

Riddle of the Rubaiyat

The clarity of this portrait is blurred by two incongruities. If tradition is to be accepted, this morose, uncommunicative man was also the author of a considerable body of caustic, satirical and even ribald verse. In this connection there are certain points which need to be made clear.

In the first place the poem by Edward FitzGerald published in 1859 and known to the Western world as the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* bears only a distant relationship to the Persian originals. Whereas FitzGerald's work is a single and complete poem, the *rubaiyat* (the word means simply 'quatrains') on which it was based are a collection of separate and unrelated verses of an epigrammatic nature, written in a special metre and form, and bearing a slight resemblance to the Greek epigram or the Japanese *haiku*. Secondly, of the 1500 or so rubaiyat attributed to Khayyam in one place or another, not one can be said with certainty to have come from his pen, and many are obviously – on grounds of language, vocabulary, and so on – not of his period, and are also found in the works of other poets. Even those that could be assigned to the 11th or 12th centuries display so many contradictions of style, outlook and belief that it is inconceivable that they could all have emanated from one mind. We also have to account for the fact that Omar Khayyam's poetical gifts, if they existed, were unknown to contemporary writers. Only 50 years after his death is there any mention of his poetry, and the first quotation of a Persian quatrain attributed to Khayyam comes in a work written some 30 years after that. Even if we add together all the rubaiyat contained in historical and biographical works and anthologies up to the middle of the 14th century, we still cannot muster more than 50 or 60. It is not until the 15th century that we find substantial collections, and from then on the numbers and variety steadily increase.

It is perhaps possible to account for some aspects of this mystery by supposing that Omar Khayyam the poet was not the same person as Omar Khayyam the astronomer. But perhaps there is no need for such a hypothesis. The most probable explanation is that Omar Khayyam was in the habit throughout his life, like may other educated Persians past and present, of dashing off impromptu verses at parties and social gatherings of his friends, which were not written down at the time but memorized by his hearers and transcribed later, probably in several different versions. Indeed the older and therefore possibly more authentic rubaiyat sound very much like the thoughts that a scholar of Khayyam's type might have thrown off in his lighter moments:

> A drop of water fell into the sea,
> A speck of dust came floating down to earth.
> What signifies your passage through this world?
> A tiny gnat appears – and disappears.

But whichever theory is the correct one, his name eventually came to be associated with the quatrain form to such effect that later minor poets and anthologists saw nothing wrong in giving an unknown verse (or even a known one) a cachet by ascribing it to Omar Khayyam. It would probably be correct then to think of the rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam not as the work of a single individual, but as a compendium of traditional wisdom and proverbial lore stemming from many different sources and expressing many different thoughts and ideas.

The other incongruity that confuses our picture of Khayyam the scientist is the legend that he practised as a Sufi teacher. This belief is to be found mainly in the teachings of certain later Sufi sects, who for obscure reasons adopted Khayyam as a kind of patron saint, and were no doubt responsible for the addition of those verses that have a more obviously Sufi content. There is no trace of the legend in the main stream of the Sufi movement and certain well-known Sufis attacked him as an atheist and blasphemer. Nor is there any contemporary evidence whatever for this story, which is not mentioned in the accounts given by those, like his pupil Nezami Aruzi, who knew him personally. Above all, while his philosophical writings show that, like all educated men of his time, he was familiar with Sufi teachings, there is not a hint of adherence to them; while those early rubaiyat that seem most likely on external evidence to be genuinely from his pen are diametrically opposed in theme and spirit to the outlook of the Sufis:

> Here we are, trapped beneath this ancient vault,
> Scurrying like ants in search of some escape;
> We're lost, and yet feel neither hope nor fear,
> Confused and blindfold, like the miller's ox.

Whereas the mystics saw the material world as mere emanation of the Divine Spirit, and looked forward confidently and longingly to union with God in the next world, Khayyam had no hope of life after death and saw man even in this world as an insignificant figure in a hostile universe.

L. P. ELWELL-SUTTON

FURTHER READING: **A. J. Arberry, trans, *Rubai'yat of Omar Khayyam* (Biblio Dist.); *Omar Khayyam* (Yale Univ. Press, 1952).**

Although Khayyam did not write the whole *Rubaiyat*, his belief that man is 'an insignificant figure in a hostile universe' is reflected in the mood of the poem *Left* 'Nor Heaven with those eternal Signs reveal'd and hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn': illustration by Edmund Dulac *Right* Eastern courts gave their patronage to scholars, scientists and poets, such as Omar Khayyam

When William the Conqueror first trod on English soil, he stumbled: minor accidents like this were not thought of as meaningless coincidences but often as important indications of the shape of things to come

OMENS

C. M. Dixon

In the ancient world, the examination of an animal's liver was a way of taking omens; not only the shape and condition of the liver but also its veins and colourings were believed significant: clay model of a sheep's liver divided into 55 zones, from Babylon, dated between the 19th–16th centuries BC

'WE SUFFER as much from trifling incidents as from real evils,' wrote the famous 18th century essayist Joseph Addison. 'I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest . . . A screech owl at midnight has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the voice of a cricket has struck more terror than the roar of a lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to an imagination that is filled with omens.'

That coming events cast their shadows before them is a deeply entrenched belief and an omen has been defined as 'some phenomenon or unusual event taken as a prognostication either of good or evil.' The rigorously fatalistic view that the future is determined in advance and cannot change has rarely been fully accepted in practice. Men have taken omens not so much as pointers to a predetermined future but as warnings of dangers to be avoided or as signals of opportunities to be seized.

When the world of Nature is seen as an orderly system with a definite rhythmic pattern, any variation or disturbance of the established pattern tends to cause anxiety and to be interpreted as a sign of trouble ahead. The sky, the scene of the orderly and regular procession of the stars, has been a fruitful source of omens of what is to come. The meteor, the eclipse and the comet have perhaps created the greatest dread of all, the appearance of a comet being taken as a portent of the coming of the end of the world. Even in 19th century England, as Robert Hunt points out in his *Popular Romances of the West of England*, the lowering of tempest clouds could arouse great alarm among country folk. There is a surviving folk tradition in the British Isles that a mighty storm usually heralds the death of a king. Known as 'the Royal Storm', it paradoxically burst upon Republican England on the night when Oliver Cromwell died.

In the Bible, Noah sees in the rainbow a sign that there will be no more flood, and God says: 'I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth' (Genesis 9.13). In the book of Isaiah we read: 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' In the Middle Ages considerable disturbance was created not infrequently by signs and portents which were taken to show that the Last Judgement was imminent.

It was this sense of apprehension, of impending disaster, which gave the word ominous its present meaning as a sign of future evil. In the realm of Nature this sombre aspect predominates, a flower or plant blooming out of season portending trouble, or death.

Signs from the Animals

Among wild life, birds especially have been considered to have significance as omens (see BIRDS). The cuckoo, as the embodiment of spring, indicated by its call what the future held. If the first call heard came from the right, the omen was good; if from the left, disaster was at hand. Birds have always been regarded as messengers of the gods, the agents of communication between Fate and ourselves.

Like the birds, wild and domestic animals have made an immense contribution to omen lore, partly arising from the old belief that animals could be ancestral spirits animated by the desire to protect their descendants. Among communities as far apart as Africa and Lapland it is unlucky for a hare to cross one's path. The ill-repute of the hare (see HARE) in the British Isles is derived from the tradition that this animal was one of the forms that was assumed by the shape-shifting witch.

Both the dog and the cat figure very largely in the folklore omens of Northern Europe. Among schoolchildren the appearance of a spotted dog is a portent of good luck, while three white dogs provide an even happier omen. It is also extremely fortunate if a strange dog should follow you home and fawn on you. In China dog omens were drawn from the animal's physical characteristics and an official who happened to breed a white puppy with tiger stripes could look forward to speedy promotion. For a cat to cross one's path is a token of good luck but only if it proceeds from the right hand side; an approach from the left can have the most sinister implications. It is also lucky if a strange cat enters the house of its own accord.

Modern animal omens rarely relate to horses, now that the horse plays a lesser role in the social economy. A host of other animal omens have survived, however, representing an old but far from extinct mode of thought. A swarm of bees, the traditional bearers of the goodwill of the gods, which alights in one's garden portends prosperity. For a ship at sea to be followed by a shark continues to have the most ominous implications for sailors.

Messages from Home

Within the self-created environment of man's home a special class of omens exists. The accidental falling of a picture or breaking of a mirror are ominous occurrences. In Devonshire it is still believed that if a rasher of bacon begins to curl up while frying, a new lover is on his way. It is a widespread belief that to discover nine perfect peas in a pod promises a fruitful marriage. The hearth, once the shrine of the domestic god, remains the centre of a whole class of omens, one of the best known of which is that a spluttering coal indicates a forthcoming quarrel. Some country folk hold any change in the rhythm of a clock to be a sign of death because it symbolizes a corresponding disturbance in the rhythm of the life cycle.

The human body itself involuntarily provides omens, in the form of shivering, sneezing, tingling, itching and stumbling. Because of its association with the sensation of fear a shiver running down the spine is immediately interpreted as a sign that 'someone is walking over my grave'. Sneezing was once supposed to indicate that the soul (which was equated with the breath) had been violently ejected from the body, hence the polite salutation of everyone in the vicinity of the sneeze, 'God bless you' (see also SNEEZING).

Itching and tingling are happy or unhappy auspices, dependent upon whether they are experienced on the right side of the body or the left. If the itching is felt in the sole of the foot, it means that you will soon tread on strange ground. The most common of all bodily omens, however, is provided by stumbling. To totter, to take a wrong step, or to fall indicates unhappy prospects for the project in hand and this is reinforced by the proverb: 'He who hesitates is lost'. William the Conquerer is said to have tripped and fallen on landing on English soil, causing consternation among his followers.

An ominous interpretation can be put upon the chance encounter with certain ill-favoured individuals. If your first experience of the day is to come upon a man or woman whose eyebrows are drawn together, meeting across the nose, it portends some misfortune. In the past it would have meant that you had passed close to a vampire or a werewolf. Cross-eyed people are still regarded with apprehension by gamblers and schoolboys for the now forgotten reason that those so afflicted were once supposed to be cursed with the power of the Evil Eye.

Mankind has always been unnerved by any disturbance of the normal pattern of sexual relations which, to the superstitious mind, represents unknown dangers. The great crises of life from birth to death are occasions when omens are looked for and discovered in the world about us. If a child is born with the incoming tide the omen is good, but if at the ebb tide the portent is bad. In a recent article in the magazine *Prediction* it was said that some astrologers ascribe deformities in babies to eclipses taking place at conception. To the housewife it is ominous if her wedding ring is accidentally broken, for this foreshadows the destruction of her marriage.

In sickness it is a sign of forthcoming

sorrow if a bird of dark plumage settles upon the roof. Certain psychic manifestations belong to the category of death omens, as for example the banshee, the Jack o'Lantern and the phantom coach. The fetch, or psychic double of a person who is shortly to die, which manifests itself to someone near and dear to him, comes within the category of the omen since it represents a forewarning of death (see DOUBLE). Among those who are unknowingly near to death there is sometimes an unconscious awareness of their condition. They make their wills, settle their affairs, and make preparations for the end. As Jung pointed out: 'Dying has its onset long before actual death.' Premonitions of death in the elderly are as much justifiable states of mind as they are omens. This kind of omen has an affinity with the prophetic powers that are so often associated with the dying.

The anxiety which mankind seems destined to suffer when contemplating the future was responsible for the system of omen interpretation known as augury (see AUGURY). In ancient Rome a college of priestly augurs interpreted the indications of approval or disapproval signified by the gods in relation to coming events. These signs might take the form of the flashing of lightning or the flight of birds. The augur stood facing south, with the east or lucky quarter, associated with the sun's rising, to his left and with the unlucky west to his right, and attempted to determine the meaning of the phenomenon from its angle of approach.

The augur did no more than stage a situation within which the laws of chance could operate freely, leaving the sign itself to be presented spontaneously by Nature. In an extreme example of this class of divination, called alectromancy, a circle representing the letters of the alphabet was prepared and upon each of the letters a grain of wheat was placed. A cockerel representing the non-human agency was introduced and began to eat the grains. The letters corresponding to the grains thus eaten were built into a word which supplied answers to the questions asked.

More directly associated with the natural

Illustration from John Keat's poem *The Eve of St Agnes* part of which is quoted below

Victoria and Albert Museum

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by – she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

type of omen however was extispicium, a system of divination based upon the examination of entrails (see LIVER), and oneiromancy, the interpretation of the symbolism of dreams (see DREAMS). Another curious method, based upon the movement of the wind, was capnomancy, or divination by means of smoke arising from the burnt sacrifice. If the smoke ascended perpendicularly the omen was good, but if on the contrary it spread out in some other direction it was unfavourable.

Yet another system of omen divination involved placing a finger at random upon the open page of a Bible and deciding from the text thus marked out what the fates had in store. In this example we see a reversal of roles, the human becoming the active agent while the omen represented by the text is passive.

The overlapping of the magical arts into the area of signs and portents can be clearly observed in apotropaic actions (intended to avert evil) like the ejection of spittle or making the sign of the cross, or 'touching wood'. The magical principle of 'like curing like' can be called upon in some cases to annul an evil omen. This process was described by Sir James Frazer as an attempt 'to circumvent destiny by accomplishing it in mimicry . . . substituting a mock calamity for a real one.' A very common subterfuge of this type occurs when the housewife defers to the superstition that casualties always occur in threes by snapping two matchsticks after breaking a piece of crockery, which is an expedient for making the omen run its course.

Public Portents

Belief in the power of omens has had a considerable influence on the course of history. Llodowick Lloyd in 1602 described in his *Stratagems of Jerusalem* how 'The First King of Rome builded his Kingdom by the flying of birds and soothsaying.' It is also recorded that the Emperor Constantine, while locked in battle with the barbarians, saw in the sky a shining cross with the words *In hoc signo vinces* (By this sign, conquer), which he then inscribed upon his banner and went forward to victory. The warriors led into battle by St Joan of Arc found encouragement from the vision of St Michael in the sky beckoning them onwards, and from the white dove of the Holy Spirit which by alighting on Joan's standard provided a favourable omen.

In the reign of Henry II (1133–1189), Peter of Blois gave solemn warning to one of his followers: 'Do not entangle yourself in the false opinion of those who fear to meet a hare, or a woman with flowing tresses, or a blind man or a lame man . . . or if a wolf meets them, or a martin flies from left to right, or if on setting forth they hear distant thunder or meet a hunchback or a leper.'

The revolutionary years of the 17th century were filled with ominous portents, among which were phantom armies marching through the clouds as if to announce the approach of civil war. When the Civil War finally shattered the English calm, it produced some very ominous portents, as at the trial of King Charles I when the head of his staff fell off. Before Cromwell's death, it is said, a terrible storm broke over the country and 'a great whale came to Greenwich'. King James II was apparently foredoomed to the loss of his kingdom by the omen noted by John Aubrey who recorded 'the tottering of the crown upon his head, the broken canopy over it, and the rent flag hanging from the White Tower when I came home from the Coronation'.

By 1832 science had begun to intrude into the folklore of omens. By a reversal of the usual process the comet prophesied for that year was regarded as the cause, rather than the sign of forthcoming disaster. Vast numbers of panic-stricken citizens, particularly in Germany, at once refrained from all commercial activities until finally convinced that a collision between the earth and the comet was not inevitable. Perhaps the last of the truly great omens of the modern age was the burning of the Crystal Palace in South London in 1936, a disaster considered by many people to he a sign of the coming of the Second World War.

(See also DIVINATION; LUCK.)

Birmingham Art Gallery

Unusual events in the sky are especially likely to be taken as omens of the future because they suggest a disturbance of the pattern of Nature *Left* It is lucky to see a rainbow, God's signal to Noah of the end of the Flood: detail from *The Blind Girl,* by Millais *Right* Comets and eclipses have frequently been believed to herald the end of the world: illustration to *The Star,* a novel by H. G. Wells

Mansell Collection/Hamlyn Group

In a world of baffling diversity and variety, men look for unity and singleness, for the One which transcends all multiplicity

ONE

THAT ALL THINGS are essentially one thing, that underlying and unifying all the phenomena of existence there is a One which is also the Whole, is a belief found in many religious and mystical traditions. The human longing for unity and singleness, the tendency to regard oneness as good, multiplicity and diversity as evil, is deep and widespread. Many mystics have longed to become 'one' with God. People search anxiously to find out 'who they really are', which means a quest for an inner self which is a unity. In Judaism and Islam God is One, in Christianity he is Three but also One. Even the surface polytheism of the Hindus conceals monotheism, for 'the gods are only manifestations of an immanent and unitary principle which is the ground of the universe – a principle that is at first regarded as being an impassive Absolute but which may also appear as a personal God' (see HINDUISM).

One is good and many bad, which is why 2, the first number to break away from 1, is traditionally the number of evil and in Christian numerology belongs to the Devil. Numerologically, the many are divisible, reducible to units of 1, since 2 = 1 + 1, 3 = 1 + 1 + 1, and so on, but 1 is not divisible (fractions having no place in number symbolism), the indivisible unity of the divine in the multifarious universe.

As a result, 1 has been reverenced by number mystics from the Pythagoreans onwards as the Infinite God, the First Cause, the One which transcends all multiplicity. Whether 1 could properly be called a number at all was long in doubt and until comparatively modern times it was generally thought of, not as a number but as the essence or underlying principle of number, all other numbers being made of it. It was said to be neither odd nor even but both, because if added to an odd number it makes it even, and vice versa. So it combined the opposites of odd and even, and all the other opposites in the universe.

From this point of view, the number 10 is 'completion' and 'perfection', because it completes the series of the essential numbers and brings them back to unity (1 + 0 = 1). Influenced by Pythagorean ideas and by the Cabala, in which the 10 sefiroth emanate from God, the occult tradition has grown up that the succession of numbers from 1 to 10 symbolizes, or is actually identical with, the coming into existence of the universe. For example, Leonard Bosman says (in *The Meaning and Philosophy of Numbers*): 'Thus the 1 is in the All, the 0 or Circle Potential, and acts with it to produce the Universe . . . Thus arise all numbers, the simple numbers, 1–9, emanating from the 1 in the 0 . . . Hence in the beginning, the 1 and the 0 are potentially 10, i.e. complete and perfect, but have to become unfolded, as symbolized by the figures 1–10, before the Perfection innate within them can be manifested.'

Tarot card designed by Aleister Crowley to symbolize the doctrine that 'Change is the support of stability': the mingling of opposites in the One is shown in the Yin and Yang symbols and in the snake eating its tail

Gerald Yorke Collection/Warburg Institute

If your name adds to 1 (see ALPHABET), you will be described by modern numerologists as a person of exceptionally powerful and dominating personality. Individualistic and self-centred, you are intensely original and creative, an inspiring leader and a born pioneer. You are unlikely to find deep happiness in love or friendship, as you tend to look on other people rather as potential supporters or opponents than as possible partners. Generous to those who support you, you make a ruthless enemy when opposed.

People whose number is 1 are daring and self-reliant, stubborn and contrary. They stand on their own feet. They resent anyone else's authority, rarely seek advice or follow it, and take their own initiatives. They generally dislike detail and prefer to be concerned with broad lines of policy. Aggressive and forceful, vain, boastful, efficient and determined, they are good at setting things in motion, conceiving and executing new projects, and should flourish as organizers, inventors, designers, planners, engineers and technicians. Decisive and ambitious, forceful and far-seeing, 1-people are single-minded, wilful, impatient and hasty-tempered. They hold strong and positive opinions, and are quite likely to take an obstinate pride in being difficult to deal with.

Most of this follows from the fact that in Christian number symbolism 1 is the number of God the Father. The creativity, originality and bent for organization and technology of 1 are derived from the God who created the world and many of the other characteristics, including dominance, initiative, leadership, loneliness, impatience of rivals and intolerance of opposition, self-reliance, generosity to supporters, are drawn from the God of the Old Testament. This is reinforced by 1's position as the first of the numbers, so that a year which adds to 1 is said by numerologists to be a time of fresh beginnings and discoveries, new ventures, an outburst of creative activity. The fact that the figure 1 resembles an erect phallus has not escaped the notice of numerologists and contributes to their view of the number's creativity but also of its solitariness and independence.

(See also MYSTICISM; OPPOSITES).

OPPOSITES

'LOOKING BACK on my own experiences,' wrote the great American psychologist William James, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 'they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some kind of metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. Not only do they, as contrasted species, belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species*, the nobler and better one, *is itself the genus and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself*. This is a dark saying, I know, when thus expressed in terms of common logic, but I cannot wholly escape from its authority.'

It is a common observation that man is torn between opposite tendencies, between love and indifference, dependence and independence, extraversion and introversion, intellect and instinct, and innumerable others. Similarly, the phenomena of the world outside can be classified in terms of opposites – life and death, light and darkness, good and evil, active and passive, positive and negative, matter and spirit, and many more. The course of Nature seems to swing from one opposite to the other and back again, like the pendulum of a clock. Night follows day, winter follows summer, decline follows growth, the crops are born and die and are born again. The tides flow in and out upon the shore, and the same rhythm seems to swell and ebb all through the universe.

This way of looking at things has been of great importance in religion and magic, and religious dualism is the tendency to see two powerful opposite principles at work throughout all existence (see DUALISM). But few people who see the world in this light are so simple-minded as to leave it at that, and few systems are uncompromisingly dualistic. They look behind the opposites for something greater, in which the opposites are contained and unified as the tides are in the sea, for the unity into which William James's opposites 'melted', for the One in which duality disappears (see ONE).

In China the interplay of the opposites of Yang and Yin was thought to underlie everything that existed, but they were united in something greater, the Tao. The lingam and the yoni, the male and female symbols, are united in Hindu temples. The central pillar of the Tree of Life in the Cabala reconciles and harmonizes the right and left pillars. The symbol of the cross unites two pairs of opposite directions with the centre. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c 500 BC) said that God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, and all the opposites. In the New Testament St Paul says, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3.28), and in the Old Testament Isaiah (chapters 11 and 40) says that the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard lie down with the kid, and every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain made low, when all opposites and contradictions disappear in the unity of the perfected world.

The Bisexual Ideal

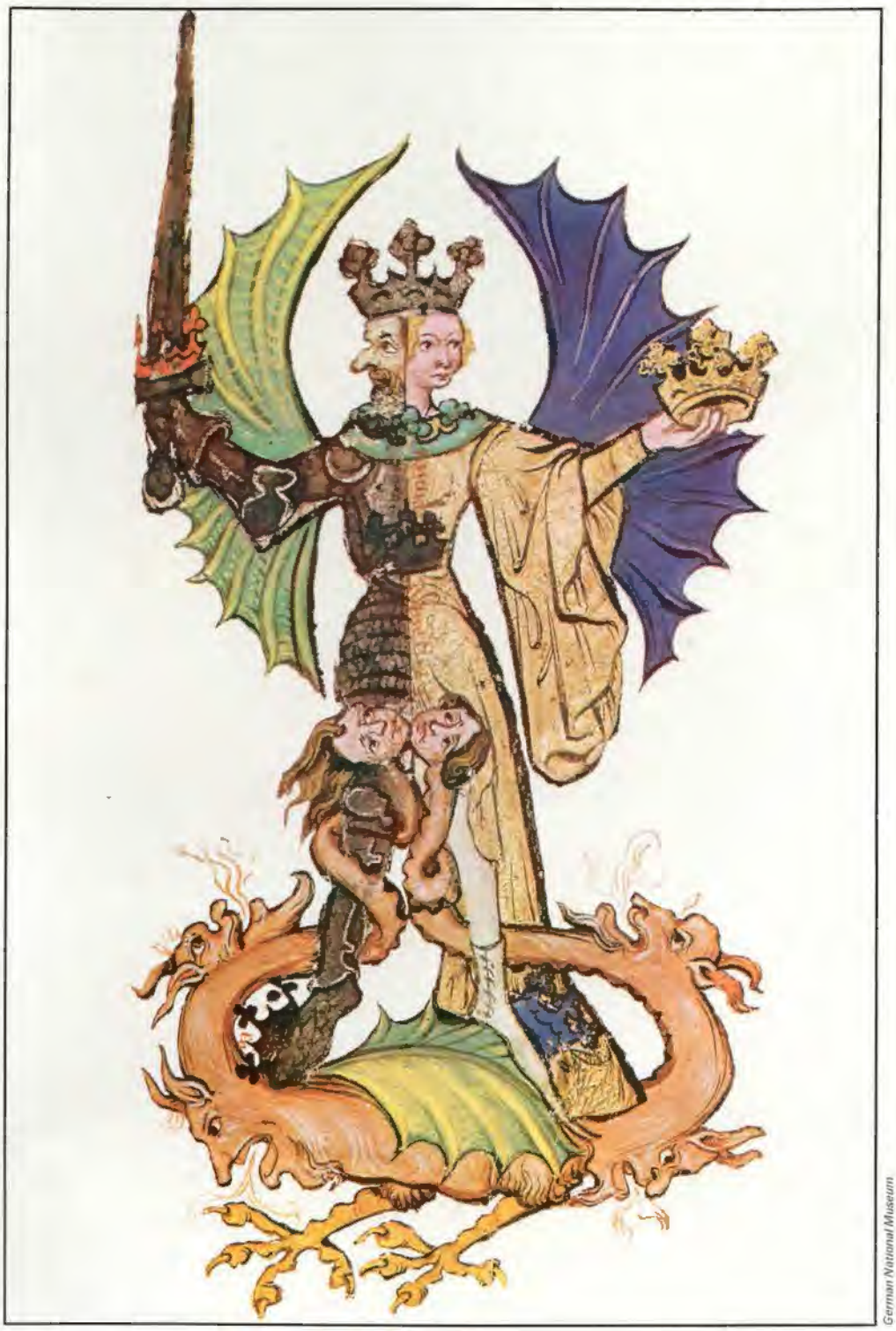
For hundreds of years in Europe everything was believed to be made of four elements which combined two pairs of opposites – hot and cold, wet and dry. Aristotle said that the Pythagoreans saw ten fundamental pairs of opposites in the universe, and this has affected numerology ever since (see NUMEROLOGY). Astrologers say that opposites attract each other, so that you are likely to be drawn to people born under the sign opposite your own in the zodiac circle. One of the theories of animal magnetism (see MAGNETISM) was that the positive and negative poles of a magnet could be used to correct an imbalance of opposite forces in the body, and there is the same idea in acupuncture (see ACUPUNCTURE).

In some creation myths the making of the world begins with the separating out of opposites (light and darkness, for instance, or sky and earth) from a preceding totality. C. G. Jung saw in this a reflection of the human mind. He says (in *Psychology and Alchemy*): 'The essence of the conscious mind is discrimination; it must, if it is to be aware of things, separate the opposites, and it does this *contra naturam* (against nature). In nature the opposites seek one another . . . and so it is in the unconscious, and particularly in the archetype of unity, the self. Here, as in deity, the opposites cancel out. But as soon as the unconscious begins to manifest itself they split asunder, as at the Creation; for every act of dawning consciousness is a creative act, and it is from this psychological experience that all our cosmogonic symbols are derived.'

What Jung called 'individuation' was the reconciliation of the opposites of human nature in a complete self ('the archetype of unity') and he was impressed by the emphasis which the alchemists placed on the union of opposites. The Philosophers' Stone itself is often described as a mysterious reconciliation of contradictions – it is made of fire and water, it is a stone but at the same time it is not a stone, it comes from God and yet it does not come from God. One reason for the importance of mercury in alchemy, and for its occasional identification with the Stone, is that it seems to combine opposites, in being a metal and also a liquid, and in being liquid but not wet. It was called 'the masculine-feminine' and was frequently depicted as a hermaphrodite.

The 'conjunction' or union of opposites in alchemy was symbolized by the marriage of king and queen, of sun and moon, of the red man and the white woman. Or it might be shown as incest between brother and sister, or mother and son, or as the re-entry of the son or the king or the dragon into the womb of the mother, to indicate the mingling of opposites which had separated out from an original unity.

There is the same symbolism in the ideal of the androgyne or hermaphrodite as the perfect human being, who has unified all the opposites. In *The Two and the One* Mircea Eliade quotes one of the German Romantics on the ideal human of the future: 'Eve was engendered by man without the aid of woman; Christ was engendered by woman without the aid of man; the androgyne will be born of the two. But the husband and wife will be fused together in a single flash.' And the poet and scholar Friedrich von



The 'conjunction' or union of opposites, from a German alchemical MS: a hermaphrodite is frequently a symbol of the ideal being who has reconciled all opposite forces and factors in unity, and this is one of the purposes underlying the magical use of sex

German National Museum

Schlegel (died 1829) believed that 'the goal towards which the human race should strive is a progressive reintegration of the sexes which should end in androgyny.' The tradition that Adam was originally bisexual probably stems from the idea that God, and man as made in the image of God, must combine all opposites to be perfect (see also FIRST MAN; HERMAPHRODITE).

The union of the sexes is the stock European occultist's example of a reconciliation of opposites which is physically fruitful (in the conception of a child) and also spiritually and magically fruitful. The magical ideal is 'the whole man', the man who unites all human characteristics and potentialities in harmony, the man who is all that a human being could possibly be, and so, in effect, the man who has become the One, or God. To do this, he must bring all the opposite forces of his nature into balance.

This is one reason for the importance of sex in magic. Richard Cavendish says (in *The Black Arts*): 'Many magical ceremonies are deliberately designed to summon up and unleash the animal driving forces from the deeps of human nature. The *whole* man is to be raised to the power of infinity, not man as civilized thinker or man as ravening beast, but man as a combination of both.' It follows that although the magician may use sex in a magical operation as a powerful source of energy, he must not allow himself to be carried away on the floodtide of desire. He must master it and subordinate it to his purposes.

One result is the importance of 'balance' in magical ceremonies, of maintaining an equilibrium between opposite forces so that they can be equally blended in a greater whole. The principle is by no means confined to the West. 'Yoga is a harmony,' says the *Bhagavad Gita*. 'Not for him who eats too much or for him who eats too little; not for him who sleeps too little, or for him who sleeps too much' (see BHAGAVAD GITA). And the *Gita* teaches the lesson that God is not only perfect peace but also its opposite, irresistible power, for it ends with a vision of 'Deity in all its blazing fury'.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Yahweh ordered 'a girdle embroidered with needlework' to be made for the high priest, and the Bible abounds with similar references to the cultic use of embroidery; in the Middle Ages religious embroidery was England's unique contribution to European art

OPUS ANGLICANUM

THE FAMOUS EMBROIDERY executed in England in the Middle Ages, which was in great demand throughout Europe, was known as *opus anglicanum*, meaning 'English work'. It was used chiefly for ecclesiastical vestments and furnishings.

This medieval use of embroidery in the service of religion has a long and fascinating history. The Latin phrase for to embroider was *acu pingere*, that is 'to paint with a needle', and the art can be traced back to ancient Babylonia where it was used to decorate the ceremonial robes of kings. A notable example of such work in ancient Egypt appears on a statue of Queen Tiye, the wife of the Pharaoh Amenhotep III (c 1405–1367 BC). The Queen wears a dress embroidered with a bird's-wing design signifying her association with the vulture mother goddess Mut.

The Hebrew scriptures abound with references to the cultic use of embroidery. According to Exodus 26.31, the God of Israel instructs Moses on the furnishings of the Tabernacle, in which the Ark of the Testimony was to be set as the place of Yahweh's presence: 'And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen: in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim; and you shall hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold . . . and the veil shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy'. Later, directions are given for a screen at the entrance of the Tabernacle, 'embroidered with needlework'. Yahweh also orders that there should be made for the high priest 'a girdle embroidered with needlework'. The reference to the figures of cherubim is especially interesting, for these were mysterious winged beings who guarded the throne of Yahweh. The purpose of their embroidered images on the veil

hiding the Holy of Holies was either symbolic or prophylactic. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing in the 1st century AD, describes the veil in the sanctuary of the Temple at Jerusalem as it was in his day: 'of Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvellous skill'. Its pattern had a mystic meaning, typifying the universe but with the signs of the zodiac omitted.

Inspired by these biblical examples of the cultic use of embroidery, Christians soon began to use both tapestry and embroidery for the furnishing of churches and the vestments of the ministers. Early examples of both survive from Coptic Egypt. In early Byzantine churches the altar and choir were closed off by veils which were later supplanted by the solid screen known as the *iconostasis*. They were decorated with appropriate biblical scenes (such as the wise and foolish virgins, or Christ and the apostles). A notable form of Byzantine embroidery from the 13th century was the *epitaphion*, used on Good Friday, on which the body of Christ, laid in the tomb, was portrayed.

The later achievements of English medieval embroidery are foreshadowed in the famous St Cuthbert vestments at Durham. They were given about 934 by King Athelstan to St Cuthbert's shrine at Chester-le-Street, County Durham. Embroidered on these stoles or maniples are figures of saints or prophets. The celebrated Bayeux Tapestry may also be mentioned here, although the subject is secular, namely the Norman conquest of Britain. This long band of embroidered figures was ordered by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and hung in Bayeux Cathedral; but it was most probably made in England in the 11th century. The work significantly illustrates contemporary religious belief and superstition: for example, the hand of God is shown stretching down from heaven to bless the newly-built Westminster Abbey, and the English are represented as appalled by the appearance of a comet, portending disaster for Anglo-Saxon England.

Treasury of Medieval Faith

The embroidery of England began to be internationally famous and sought after from the time of Henry III (1207–72), and it developed into a professional undertaking in which both men and women were employed, after serving an apprenticeship of seven years. Some indication of its fame is given by the fact that the great Vatican inventory of 1295 includes more pieces of *opus anglicanum* than any other type of embroidery. It did indeed constitute England's unique contribution to the great achievement of medieval art.

Although it had its secular use in heraldic embroidery, it was to the service of religion that the resources of *opus anglicanum* were mainly devoted. Medieval religious art had two chief aims: to dedicate human skills and riches to the glory of God, and to proclaim graphically to the faithful the great truths of Catholic Christianity. The art of embroidery was pre-eminently suited to performing both these functions. It could combine human artistry with the richest of materials – silk, silver-gilt thread, pearls and precious stones – in the service of the Church. And the vestments and furnishings, on which this art and wealth were expended, provided means of portraying the doctrines of the faith and instructing the people. Accordingly, altar hangings and vestments were embroidered with scenes of the life of Christ, of the Virgin, and the martyrdom of the saints.

A superb example of *opus anglicanum*, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is the Syon Cope (dated 1300–20), which shows among its surviving 20 subjects the coronation of the Virgin, Christ crucified, the archangel Michael slaying the Dragon, the funeral and assumption of the Virgin, and St Bartholomew with a flaying-knife. Indeed, the remaining examples of *opus anglicanum* form a rich treasury of medieval faith and legend, as well as attesting to the technical skill and artistry demonstrated by the English embroiderers.

In England most of this work was destroyed at the Reformation; but some of its finest products are still to be seen in Continental cathedrals and museums.

I. A. BRANDON

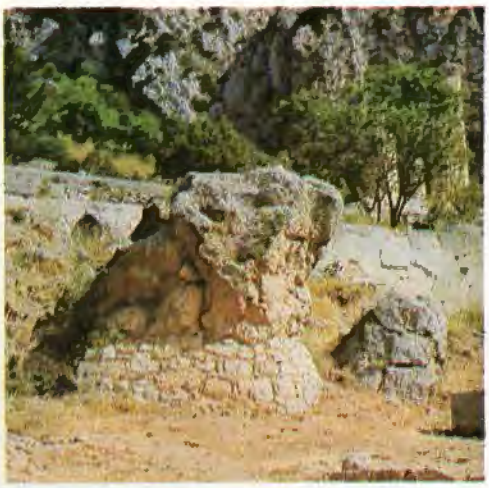
Victoria and Albert Museum

In the service of religion the celebrated embroidery of medieval England combined great artistry with a graphic portrayal of Christian teachings *Right* Inscription from a remaining fragment of embroidery requests the reader to pray for the souls of the departed *Left* The famous Syon Cope portrays a rich selection of medieval faith and legend

ORACLES

GUIDANCE FROM THE GODS

Sonia Halliday



Sonia Halliday

Left The most influential oracle of the classical world was that of Apollo at Delphi, on the slopes of Mount Parnassus *Above* The 'rock of the sibyl' at Delphi: the sibyl, or medium, went into trance to deliver oracles which were often ambiguous and enigmatic *Far left* The booming echo of the Oracle Room of the Hypogeum in Malta suggests that this room was used to consult oracles through a priestly elite *Following page* Temple of Apollo at Didyma in Asia Minor; when the future of the pagan oracles was threatened by Christianity the priests of Didyma supported the Emperor Diocletian in his persecution of the early Christians

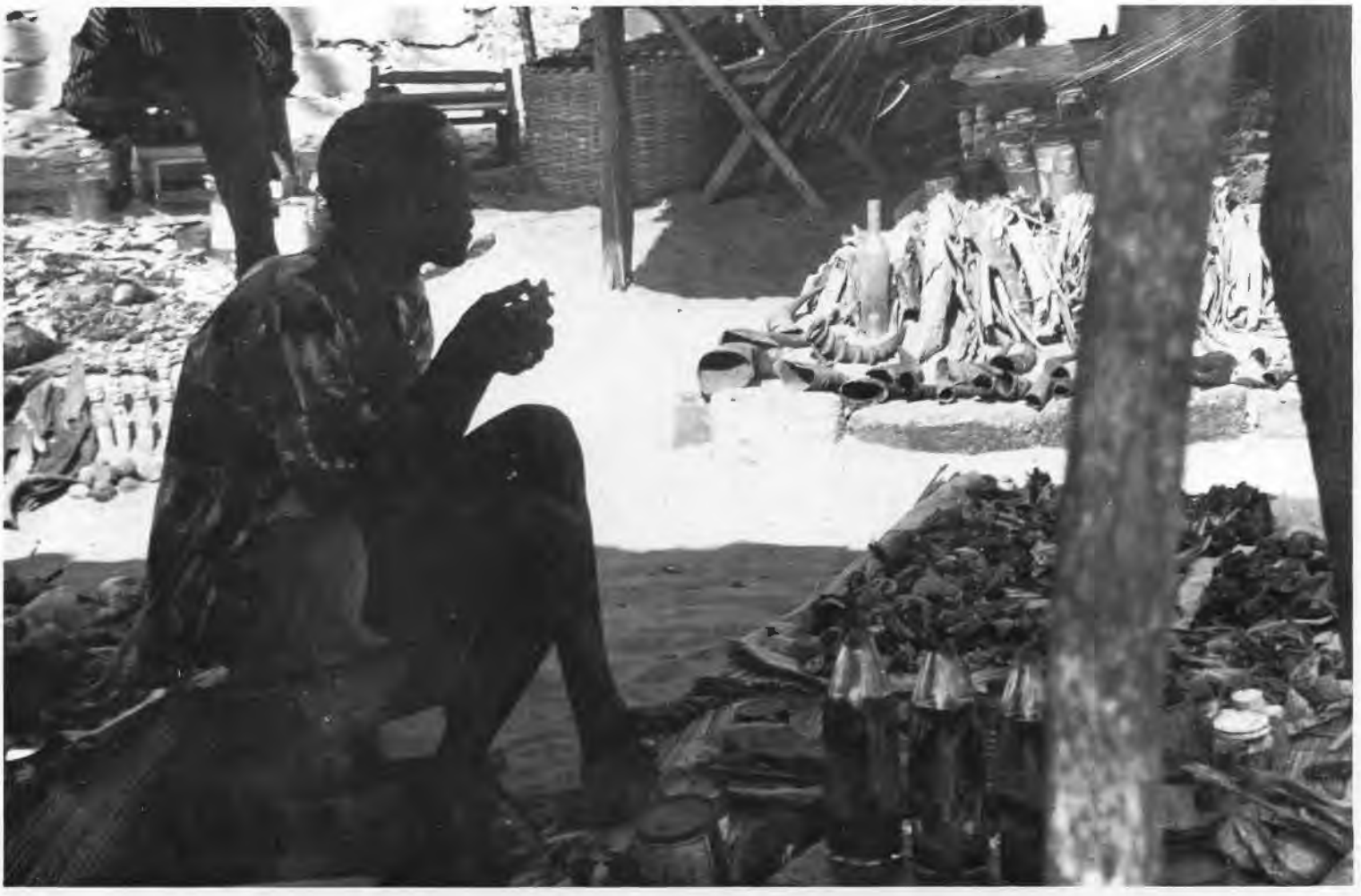
Questions about settling a workmen's strike, or solving a problem of paternity, were among those put to the ancient oracles, while in primitive societies the witch-doctor must combine the qualities of a psychologist with those of a professional detective

THE ANCIENT GREEKS felt a deep need for guidance in the problems of life, but, unlike believers in the modern world who are guided by the Bible, the Koran or the holy books of Eastern religions, the Greeks had no such sacred writings. Greek poets were often thought to be inspired by the Muses, but this did not make their poetry the word of God. Even their priests were of little help. Their function was to perform public worship, mostly by offering sacrifices to particular gods, but they delivered no sermons and heard no confessions. At best they could decide technical questions of religious law – whether a certain act had made the inquirer impure and how he could be cleansed. But at a number of temples throughout the Greek world there were oracles to which the inquirer, whether a private individual or a state, could bring a question and receive an answer which was supposed to express the will of the gods. These temples were mostly dedicated to Apollo, whose cult had spread from Asia Minor to Greece (see APOLLO).

The chief feature of the oracles was that the replies were delivered by a man or a woman who had been put into a trance and who would answer from the subconscious. In the trance the medium would speak with a changed voice and personality, understood to be Apollo himself speaking through his instrument; this was apparently confirmed when the medium on returning to normal consciousness could not recollect what had been said. The modern psychologist finds no difficulty in explaining that such a trance is produced by suggestions. If a simple worshipper of Apollo were brought up to believe that on entering the innermost shrine of the god, after various elaborate ceremonies had been performed, he or she would be inspired, then by carrying through the appropriate ritual that effect would actually be produced. The priests who conducted the ceremonies need not consciously apply hypnotism to the medium. The suggestion implanted years before by the traditional practices would operate of itself.

Costly Consultations

The answers of the medium when in a trance might often be confused. This was satisfactorily explained to the ancient Greeks by the belief that the gods, and particularly Apollo, did not answer man's questions candidly, but could be expected to bewilder and even mislead the rash inquirer by ambiguous and enigmatic answers. Actually the inquirer did not usually receive the medium's utterance direct. He was allowed to listen when the question was put and then after the medium had spoken; but a priestly functionary would convey the official version of the answer, often in verse. One is inclined to suspect that this was the point at which human intelligence in the person of the priests took a part in the framing of the oracle. Particularly when the inquirer had



Peter Larsen

Blood for Blood

Orestes has been instructed by Apollo through the oracle at Delphi to kill his mother and thereby avenge the death of his father

ORESTES: The word of Apollo is of great power
and cannot fail.
His voice, urgent, insistent, drives me to
dare this peril,
Chilling my heart's hot blood with recital of
threatened terrors,
If I should fail to exact fit vengeance, like
for like,
From those who killed my father. This was the
god's command:
'Shed blood for blood, your face set like a
flint. The price
They owe no wealth can weigh.' My very life,
he said,
Would pay, in endless torment, for disobedience . . .
But when, he said,
A father's blood lies unavenged, and time
grows ripe,
The neglectful son sees yet more fearful
visitations,
As, towards eyes that strain and peer in dark-
ness, come
The attacking Furies, roused by inherited
blood-guilt,
Armed with arrows of the dark, with madness,
false night-terrors,
To harass, plague, torment – to scourge him
forth from his city
With the brazen lash, in loathed and abject
filthiness.
Banquet and wine, grace of libation, he may
not share –
This was the oracle's word; his father's anger,
unseen,
Bars him from every altar; no man may receive him
Or share his lodging; scorned, friendless and
alone, at length
He lies a shrivelled husk, horribly embalmed
by death.

Aeschylus *The Choephori*
(trans. Philip Vellacott.)

not been a private individual, but an embassy from a state presenting a political question – such as the advisability of a given alliance or the outcome of a prospective war – the priests might very well have wished for reasons of policy to favour one particular line. Then the confused words of the medium were shaped by the priest to express the official view.

It is not surprising that this rather elaborate ritual of inquiry was expensive for the private individual and could only be used rather infrequently. At Delphi, for instance, in the 5th and 4th centuries BC the minimum charge was the equivalent of two days' wages for an Athenian, and he would have to pay additional sums in free-will offerings, as well as his travelling expenses. States were charged by the priests at ten times the rate for private persons. This full-scale form of consultation was only available on one day a month – the seventh, which was traditionally Apollo's birthday – and the oracle was closed for the three months during the winter when Delphi was difficult to reach by sea or by the mountain roads.

On the actual day consultations went on from morning to night. Two women with a third in reserve acted as mediums on a shift system for it must have been exhausting work even if the mediums were accustomed to it. If there were many inquirers or if the ceremonies did not go smoothly, some applicants would be left disappointed at the end of the day before their turn had arrived. Because of this, the Delphians used to confer on some states or individuals an honorary precedence which evidently guaranteed them a high place in the queue. Otherwise positions were determined by a ballot.

Simpler and cheaper forms of oracle were available more frequently. The commonest was by a process of drawing lots. This was also practised at Delphi, but little is known of it there. Its favourite oracle centre was in the far west of Greece at Dodona, in a mountainous region near the modern town of Jannina. There an oracle of Zeus had existed from the second millennium BC. Originally it was associated with a sacred oak which was said to utter prophecies itself, which were interpreted by its priests, the Selloi, who observed the curious taboos of sleeping on the bare

Peter Larsen

At the great Greek oracle of Zeus at Dodona the god's answers to questions were obtained by drawing lots, probably black and white beans. In Africa oracles may be obtained from the relative positions of objects in a witch-doctor's bag, after it has been shaken up ***Left*** **Tools of the witch-doctor's trade at a market in Dahomey** ***Above*** **Drumming to summon spirits in Dahomey: it is a widespread belief that oracles can be drawn from the dead, who can see the future because they are no longer bound to the human time-scale**

ground and not washing their feet. All this strange ritual is not typical of Greece as a whole. In fact its nearest analogies come from pagan Prussia where there were also sacred oaks and priests with these curious taboos (see OAK).

Advice on Personal Problems

Consultation at Dodona was by drawing lots: inquirers were given thin strips of lead on which they wrote their questions. These were usually expected to be framed so that they could be answered 'yes' or 'no'. The strip was then rolled up so that the questions could not be read, and the name of the inquirer or a number was scratched on the back. Thus the secrecy of the question could be guaranteed. The questions were put into a jar, and the priestess drew them out, one by one, while at the same time drawing a lot for each, probably a bean coloured black or white to show whether the god's answer was 'yes' or 'no'.

It is fortunate that this simple method was used at Dodona, for some hundreds of these strips of lead have been found: some of them still folded, others showing signs of having been smoothed out after one inquiry and then used again for another. They illustrate the rich variety of questions posed to the oracle. A few are from cities: Corfu asked about goodwill among its citizens; a town in Thessaly whether it might invest the funds of its goddess; the people of Dodona itself 'whether it is on account of the impurity of some human being that the god is sending the bad weather'. But most of the questions were from private individuals, pouring out their own personal troubles: 'Gerioton asks Zeus concerning a wife whether it is better for him to take one.' 'Lysanias asks Zeus whether the child is not from him with which Annyla is pregnant.' 'Leontios consults concerning his son Leon whether there will be recovery from the disease on his breast which seizes him.' 'Cleotas asks Zeus if it is better and more profitable for him to keep sheep.' All the practical problems of life show up, and the confusions and anxieties of inquirers are revealed in their clumsy expressions and individual handwriting. The would-be sheep farmer, for instance, was visibly unused to writing.

For some centuries the oracles at Dodona and Delphi engaged in professional rivalry and competition. Dodona claimed to be the sanctuary of the 'father of gods and men', and the oldest oracle in Greece. Delphi asserted that Apollo who spoke through its medium was the chosen mouthpiece of Zeus. Both priesthoods claimed a share in Greece's legendary past. But under the rule of the Roman Empire, Dodona was destroyed and Delphi continued but mainly only as a tourist centre.

By this time, the centre of population and wealth had shifted to Asia Minor. In what is now the thinly-populated coast of western Turkey there were huge new temples dedicated to Apollo and equipped with oracles within easy reach of crowded commercial cities. The temples have recently been excavated, and some of their history revealed. At Didyma, for example, a colossal temple had been begun about 300 BC but over four centuries later it was still not quite completed. It contained a magnificent ceremonial staircase, obviously designed for religious processions, and a huge window in the facade of the temple from which the prophet could announce the god's oracles. Some of the questions which Apollo answered are curiously modern. One was the settlement of a strike of workmen building the theatre at Miletus.

Guidance from a Fountain

Didyma's chief rival was Claros, about 100 miles north. The old Greek colonies favoured Didyma, but the new towns consulted Claros. Corresponding to this division, the oracle of Didyma spoke in classical verse while that of Claros went in for all sorts of lively metres in a new style. The cities that consulted Claros often did it annually, and this civic outing included a choir who sang a hymn to Apollo specially composed by one of the citizens. The

Like all oracles, ancient and modern, the witch-doctor must be a shrewd psychologist familiar with his clients' personality and background

consultation itself must have been an exciting occasion. The inquirer was brought by night to a passage in the temple leading to the subterranean vaults. There was only room to walk in single file guided by torchlight, and the maze-like corridor led by six right-angled turns to a hall where the consultants could sit while the prophetic medium continued to an underground fountain whose water was supposed to convey the inspiration. The experience must have been awe-inspiring. But sometimes it may have been conducted rather hypocritically. The medium was supposed to get a list of inquirers' names and then, without knowing their questions, to give the appropriate answers in verse. But a Cynic philosopher who received an ambiguous reply, apparently promising him rewards after toil, found on investigation that the same verses had been uttered to a number of other consultants who, as he grimly remarks, had all experienced the toil, but none of them the promised blessings.

At last, in the 3rd century AD, the work of the various oracles seems to have petered out. It was a time of economic and political collapse in the Roman Empire. Individuals were abandoning official religion and seeking refuge in private cults and magic. Christianity was gaining ground and was the chief critic of the oracles, which it regarded as the personal utterances of devils. In reply, the priests of Didyma tried to organize a combined front of all pagan beliefs and supported the Roman Emperor Diocletian in his persecution of the Christians. But Christianity triumphed, and devastations in the inner sanctuaries at Delphi and Dodona bear witness to the vengeance of the new religion.

The oracles had fulfilled a human need which was thereafter to be satisfied by other methods. Our evidence from ancient times is not sufficient to prove whether in any instance they had really used supernormal or supernatural powers. No doubt the trances of the prophetic mediums were genuine enough. The answers which they gave, or were said to have given, for centuries convinced the majority of inquirers. This belief was chiefly produced by the oracles conveying the assurance that the gods were guiding the human questioner in the problem which he had laid before them.

H. W. PARKE

The Primitive Oracle

The oracle is an essential element in all primitive religions. It is consulted wherever men wish to know the cause of their present misfortunes or the shape of things to come, for the oracle is the medium between gods and mortals.

In truly primitive races, the profound belief in spirits, ghosts, witches, and unseen forces leads to a deep-seated reliance on the visionary powers of the oracle. And the principal difference between the oracles of African pagans, for instance, and those of more sophisticated cultures is that the former are just as much concerned with what has happened as with what is to come.

Both the Australian aborigines and the African tribes consult their soothsayers to explain the cause of death, the presence of danger, the reason for droughts, and so on. In all such cases, the malevolence of some evil person or spirit is suspected so that it becomes essential for the safety of the community that a specialist in the occult is available to give guidance.

Many methods of discovering the secrets of the unknown are employed by primitive people. Necromancy, or communication with the spirits of the dead, is probably the oldest of the diviner's arts, since primitives do not accept death as a 'natural' phenomenon but believe that a 'dead' person continues to take part in the communal life and can be asked for help through the medium of an oracle.

Among Voodoo exponents in the West Indies (see VOODOO) it is still believed that dead men in the form of zombies can be summoned from the grave to intervene in human affairs. The Western version is seen in the cult of Spiritualism (see SPIRITUALISM) whereby the medium acts as the oracle and, like the witch-doctor or the Delphic priestesses, enters into a state of trance in order to act as a mediator between the known and the unknown world.

Oneiromancy, or divination by dreams, is also a very ancient form of the oracular process (see DREAMS). Hydromancy (water or crystal-gazing), pyromancy (fire-watching) and astrology are all practised among primitive people, but the high priest of divination is always the witch-doctor, a student of magical arts, a specialist in the occult, and a respected member of society.

The typical witch-doctor wears a headdress of gaudy feathers, daubs his face with red and white clay, and wears a cloak dangling with the claws, heads and tails of animals. The paraphernalia of his art is kept in his basket, which might be filled perhaps with the following objects: some skin or bone from the forehead of a dead chief; a piece of the nerve from inside an elephant's tusk; the hair of an albino; the wing-case of a big beetle; the feather of a grey parrot; a piece of charcoal from the site where a witch was burnt; part of the burnt heart or liver of a witch; charcoal from the camp fire where novices were circumcised; a root dug up from under such a fire; the horn of an antelope; the shell of a small tortoise filled with 'medicine'.

When the witch-doctor has made his preparations and is ready to consult the oracle, either on the cause of some disaster or the outcome of a future event, he shakes up the basket and proceeds to examine the relative position of each item. The secret of his art consists in knowing the significance of his various ju-jus. Thus, the relics of a dead chief signify renown or fame. The prominent appearance of the elephant tusk nerve means impotence or infertility. The beetle's wing-case suggests the presence of a witch, a lump of charcoal from the camp fire where novices have been circumcised means a big gathering of the tribe.

If a witch or some other evil-doer is suspected, the witch-doctor may produce his 'magic' tortoise to pronounce the oracle. This animal usually has the feather of a guinea fowl inserted into its anus, the theory being that both tortoise and guinea fowl are always looking for their prey. The person towards whom the medium waves the feather is held responsible for the crime or misfortune which the diviner has been called in to solve. To those who might object to the haphazard results of this form of magic, the reply would be that God will protect the innocent.

Shrewd Psychologist

Why do people, both primitive and civilized, accept the pronouncements of oracles which their reason tells them are illogical? The answer in the case of African pagans is that the witch-doctor does not rely solely on mumbo-jumbo to practise his art. Like all oracles, ancient and modern, he must be a shrewd psychologist, familiar with his clients' personality and background. The

A modern Western oracle, the wheel of fortune; like many other oracles, it is based on the belief that things do not occur by chance, so that signs of the future can be drawn from apparently random occurrences

primitive diviner has a great advantage in that he knows many facts about the members of his community and so is able to make his predictions on the basis of his observations.

To this extent his 'magic' is comparable with the scientific aids used every day by civilized people to predict coming events. For example, the height in a column of mercury in a barometer foretells a change in the weather. To the pygmy or bushman the flight of birds or the behaviour of animals is a similar means of divination. Where he differs from the less-superstitious Westerner is that he does not admit that there is any such thing as the laws of chance.

The divining rod is still used almost everywhere in the world to find water or metal. In the hands of a witch-doctor, the wand is relied upon to discover evil-doers exactly as it was in medieval Europe to track down witches, criminals and heretics.

It is easy to see, therefore, why the primitive oracle has always been an integral part of paganism, the 'natural' religion of people who have no other means of foretelling the future. The oracle is a specialist in the occult, and when the witch-doctor enters into a trance-like state, he is believed to be in communication with unseen powers.

On the other hand, observers who have watched him at work point out that he always begins his seance by staring each member of his audience in the face. He takes care to ask them, 'Why have you come to me?' From that question he proceeds to others which gradually bring out the facts he needs to know. And it is very likely that under his stern cross-examination, the guilty person will give himself away, or the individual who has come for a glimpse of what the future holds will hint at what it is that he wants.

The diviner can then proceed with the magical part of his 'act', shaking up his basket and carefully studying the relative positions of its contents. And like a good fortune teller anywhere, he is able to put two and two together and using a little psychology, make his predictions.

Such, at any rate, is the rational explanation of the art of divination. But psychologists themselves admit that not all occult manifestations can be explained away so easily, particularly in the case of primitive oracles. For there are many examples of mystical phenomena which baffle the realists, phenomena which are accepted by primitive races as evidence of the existence of unseen forces. For this reason they have implicit faith in their oracles who speak to them through the medium of the witch-doctor, who holds an important and as respected a position in pagan communities as the psychiatrist does in civilized societies. (See also AZANDE.)

JAMES WELLARD

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The British Tourist Authority

Ordeal

Trial of courage, strength and endurance, frequently imposed on candidates for initiation who are tortured, mutilated, bullied, humiliated, frightened, and may undergo a symbolic 'death': the medieval trial by ordeal was a method of proving guilt or innocence by subjecting the accused to a test, in the belief that God would preserve the innocent from harm.

See INITIATION; OATH.

Ronald Sheridan

Orgy

Sexual revel, usually assisted by dancing, drink or drugs, in which conventional restraints are thrown aside: in religious and magical contexts, based on the belief that release of the animal and irrational impulses of human nature brings an ecstasy in which man is raised to the level of the divine; the word is derived from *orgia*, the rites of worship of the Greek god Dionysus.

See DIONYSUS; ECSTASY; SEX.

Jewish Observer

Chinese Jews worshipped in temples built in the Chinese style and lived by Confucian principles; Indian Jews did not eat beef and were assimilated into the caste system. Unlike the Jews of Europe who became tightly-knit as a result of persecution, the oriental groups were largely tolerated and lost much of their religious exclusiveness

ORIENTAL JEWISH COMMUNITIES

THE FIRST JEWISH settlers in China were probably silk merchants for the Roman Empire who came by the caravan route over Asia in the first millennium AD. In the 16th century the Turks blocked the overland trade routes, and the Jews living in the middle of China were isolated, both from the West and from other Jewish communities. Jews from India, who probably travelled to China by sea in the 16th and later centuries, established communities on the Chinese coastline, but we are concerned here with the older and more isolated community in central China which was concentrated in Kaifeng, the capital of the Chinese Empire during the Sung Dynasty (960–1280).

A Jewish place of worship or temple was built in Kaifeng in 1163 AD. An inscription, written at the time, tells us that there were 70 Jewish clans in China. At the beginning of the 17th century, when Portuguese Jesuit missionaries discovered that Jews were living in China, there were 10 or 12 clans or between one and two thousand individuals, and by the middle of the 19th century there were only two or three hundred Jews left in China. A register of the Jewish congregation compiled at the end of the 17th century shows that many Jewish men took Chinese Mohammedans and other Chinese as their wives. By the 20th century the Chinese Jewish community had been almost completely assimilated.

In addition to their social absorption through intermarriage, the Chinese Jews were also religiously and culturally assimilated. The Jesuit missionaries and other visitors to the Chinese Jews in the 17th and 18th centuries described a religion which combined Jewish beliefs and practices with those from the surrounding Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian religious cultures. The Jewish temple was similar to other Chinese temples. On two sides, there were wells and baths which the Jews used in their ablutions in the same way as the Moslems. In addition, the Jewish worshippers took off their shoes before entering the temple. Both the Moslems and Jews in China faced west, towards the 'holy places', when they prayed, but by the 17th century the Chinese Jews had lost all historic knowledge of Israel and Jerusalem; they believed that their religion originated in India.

An important place in the Chinese Jewish temple was given to the Emperor's Tablet which was required in all Chinese temples until 1911, and in the front hall of the synagogue there was a long table bearing

Learning a forgotten language: 'Black Cochin' Jews learn Hebrew in Israel; isolated from other Jewish groups, the Indian Jews adopted Hindu beliefs and customs

five ceremonial objects common to all authorized temples since the Ming Dynasty, an incense tripod with a candlestick and a flower vase on each side. In front of the Emperor's Tablet there was a large chair called the 'Chair of Moses' where the Pentateuch was read, and in the extreme western part of the temple, which was the most sacred area, there was a highly decorated ark containing 13 rolls of the Pentateuch. In the 17th and 18th centuries the Chinese Jews still practised many traditional Jewish rites. The Sabbath was kept on Saturday and some Jewish festivals and fasts were kept. The Kaifeng Jews practised circumcision and they also kept some of the dietary laws; they were known as the *Tiao Chin Chiao* or 'the Religion that plucks out the Sinews'.

The influence of the religious surroundings on the Chinese Jews was evident, however, in their ancestral worship and in their use of inscriptions, written on stone tablets, to transmit religious beliefs. The inscriptions, which were written in Chinese, include many quotations from Confucian writings but none from the Pentateuch. The Chinese Jews never appeared to have translated their Hebrew texts into Chinese. The earliest existing stone tablet of the Chinese Jews, set up in 1489, shows the influence of Buddhism with its lotus-curved base stone. The writers of both this stone inscription and another,

set up in 1512, maintained that the principles of Confucianism and Judaism were the same. Inscriptions on archways and tablets in the temple also included references to Chinese classics and quotations from Confucian writings. Since many Jews were men of letters and filled important official posts, they must have been required to perform Confucian ceremonial practices. Thus, although little is known of the religious and social life of the Chinese Jews, it is well established that they adopted many non-Jewish beliefs and symbols and practised many non-Jewish rituals.

By the middle of the 19th century Chinese Judaism had almost disappeared; the temple no longer stood, no one could read Hebrew, services were no longer held and religious observances had ceased. Of the once prosperous large community, there remained only a few poor families who could not afford to rebuild their place of worship. By 1866 the synagogue buildings had entirely disappeared; in 1914 the temple site was sold to a Christian mission.

Indian Jews

The Jews in India may be divided into four groups: the Bene Israel (Sons of Israel), the Cochin Jews, the Baghdadi Jews, and a few hundred Jewish emigrants from Europe. The Baghdadi, who live in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Poona, emigrated from Baghdad and other Middle Eastern areas in the 19th century.

As in the case of the Chinese Jews, there is some uncertainty over the origin and date of arrival of both the Cochin Jews, who live on the south-west or Malabar coast of India, and the Bene Israel, who in the past were dispersed in the villages of Konkan but who now live mainly in Bombay. The Bene Israel maintain that they are descendents of the ten lost tribes (see LOST TRIBES) and that they left Israel about 175 BC, but it appears certain that they came from Arabia in the first millennium AD. The Cochin Jews claim that their ancestors came to India after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD, but although Israelites may even have reached India in pre-Christian times, the only certainty is that Jews had settled on the Malabar coast before the end of the first millennium AD.

Today the Indian Jews are comparatively orthodox, but during their isolation from other Jewish communities, their Judaism declined, they adopted many Hindu customs, and they were assimilated into the caste system. The Indian Jews became separate castes and they were also divided into a number of sub-castes. The Cochin Jews are divided into three castes: the White Jews, the Black Jews and the Meshuararim. The Black Jews, whose skin is dark in colour, are the descendants of the original Jewish settlers who converted a number of their native slaves and servants and then, over a period of time, intermarried with them. In the early centuries of the second millennium AD, the Cochin Jews were wealthy and occupied a high position in the local raja's kingdom. It is evident from 13th century tombstones that they had an imperfect knowledge of Hebrew and the Bible. However, in the 17th and 18th centuries Dutch Jews emigrated to India and reinstated an orthodox form of Judaism. The Dutch Jews probably intermarried with the wealthiest families of the established Jewish community, but they came to form the White Jewish caste and completely distinguished themselves from the Black Jews who they claimed were not of 'pure' Jewish descent. The skin colour of the White Jews ranges from white to medium brown. The third caste, the Meshuararim, is made up of the slave and servant converts of white Jews.

The Bene Israel appear to have had very few contacts with Jews from other communities before the 19th century. In their comparative isolation, they forgot how to read Hebrew, but they remembered the Shema, an important Hebrew prayer, and observed the Sabbath, some of the holy days, some dietary regulations and the practice of circumcision. They adopted a number of religious beliefs and practices from their Hindu neighbours. For example, they did not eat beef, they objected to the re-marriage of widows, and they were assimilated into the caste system. The Bene Israel were known as Saturday Oilmen; a caste of oil pressers who did not work on Saturday. They were also divided into two sub-castes: the *Gora* or White Bene Israel, who claimed they were pure descendants of the first Jewish settlers in India, and the lower caste *Kalu* or Black Bene Israel. From the 18th century the Bene Israel migrated from their villages to Bombay where they became a more tightly-knit group, entered a wider range of occupations and, helped by other Jewish groups, strengthened their Judaism.

Tolerated and Assimilated

Neither the Chinese nor the Indian Jews were coerced into accepting the religious beliefs and values of their non-Jewish neighbours. The sociologist Max Weber wrote that Asia was 'the land of the free competition of religions, "tolerant" somewhat in the sense of late antiquity. That is to say, tolerant except for restrictions for reasons of state.' In China, apart from the state's emphasis on the ancestor cult and the recognition of the religious status of the Chinese Emperor (see CHINA), there was little or no formal constraint on the Chinese Jews to conform to non-Jewish beliefs and practices. In India, the Hindus tolerated other religions which did not threaten the caste system (see CASTE) and the supremacy of the Brahmins, but although the dominant Hindu groups did not actively attempt to enforce a Hindu monopoly, the assimilative character of the caste system and the syncretism of the Hindu religion resulted in a virtual monopoly of Hinduism over much of India. Although the Bene Israel who were oil pressers had only acquired the status of an impure caste, it had been to their advantage to accept voluntarily certain Hindu rituals and the caste system, because it was difficult for an alien and therefore impure group, which was not economically self-sufficient, to exist outside the Hindu community. The strong syncretistic character of Hinduism allowed the Jews to be accepted into the Hindu community. Once the Jews had adopted the caste system and the principal rituals of Hinduism, their own distinctive beliefs and rituals were tolerated within the Hindu community itself. We may tentatively conclude that Judaism lost much of its religious distinctiveness and exclusiveness in environments where, for long periods, the Jewish communities had little or no contact with other Jewish communities, and where the surrounding non-Jewish religious groups were strongly disposed to tolerate other religions.

STEPHEN SHAROT

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Original Sin

In Christian theology, a taint of sinfulness and predisposition to evil, with which all human beings are infected from birth, apart from and in addition to the sins which they actually commit during their lives; traditionally, this taint stems from Adam's disobedience in Eden and has been inherited by mankind, his descendants.

See EVIL; FIRST MAN; MAN.

Mansell Collection

Orion

Constellation which resembles a man with belt and sword; named for a gigantic and beautiful hunter of Greek mythology who was killed by the goddess Artemis and despatched to the sky; revered by the Egyptians, who saw in it the figure of the god Osiris.

ORPHEUS & ORPHISM

THERE IS really no such thing as Orphism. There is Orpheus, the legendary singer, about whom various stories are told; and there is Orphic literature, that is, a mass of poems, mainly now lost, composed in different places at different periods for different purposes, and for the most part having nothing in common except that Orpheus was claimed as their author. Until not very long ago, it was taken for granted that these poems collectively represented the teaching of a body of people called The Orphics, and a great religious movement called Orphism was constructed and extensively written about.

The truth is that no prophet or sect had a monopoly of Orpheus' name. The 'Orphic' poems fit into no overall scheme. The most that can be said is that under the Roman Empire one poem of a somewhat encyclopedic nature achieved a sort of canonical authority: new Orphic poems took account of it, and academic theologians accepted it as the authentic revelation of Orpheus. Its vogue is one thing that might be called Orphism.

Orpheus, like several other legendary singers was held to come from Thrace, the semi-barbarous, semi-mythical country to the north of Greece; or from Mount Olympus, where the Muses themselves were born. And according to an alternative account of his parentage, Orpheus was born from the Muse Calliope and the most musical of gods, Apollo. But he was a mortal, with mortal descendants. Genealogies were constructed which made him the ancestor of other famous minstrels, including Homer. The number of generations inserted in these genealogies implies a belief that Orpheus belonged to a period well before the Trojan War (13th century BC, on our reckoning). That is a period well covered by a network of Greek legends and genealogies which may preserve some genuine memories of the Mycenean age. But Orpheus, as a Thracian, stands outside the Mycenean world, and is only very loosely connected with the main body of heroic mythology.

Legends of Orpheus

Probably the best known of the stories about him is that he sang so beautifully with his lyre that not only the creatures of the wild came and stood entranced around him, but even the rivers stayed in their courses, and the rocks and trees came sidling down from the mountain. This eccentric miracle has no context, it is not associated with any particular occasion. It is true that a similar effect is produced when Orpheus sings for the Argonauts, but that was at sea, and the typical trees and rocks are absent. The story was that Orpheus took part in Jason's famous expedition to get the Golden Fleece. Though not a stalwart fellow, he came in very useful, for among the dangers that had to be overcome on the voyage were the Sirens, who lured sailors to their shore with their beautiful singing, to sit and listen till they wasted away. Orpheus saved the Argonauts by striking up in competition. The tale belongs to the type common in folk literature, in which a group of companions undertake a difficult task and are able to survive a series of dangers because each of them has some special skill. It is older than the *Odyssey*, in which the Sirens are one of several motifs transferred from the Argonauts to Odysseus. But the identity of the Argonautic minstrel is not fixed in the tradition, and Orpheus himself need not be so ancient. We cannot trace him definitely earlier than the 6th century BC.

His other famous exploit was his descent to Hades to recover his wife – usually called Eurydice – after she had been fatally bitten by a snake. Again it was his singing that was important, enabling him to prevail upon Pluto and Persephone to make an exception and release their visitor. But (the story usually proceeds) he failed to bring her safely back: he looked back at her before they reached home, and the poor dear was at once compelled to return. This was a piece of magic, like others in myth and ritual, that could only be accomplished with averted eyes. But Orpheus remained one of the few, like Theseus, Hercules and Odysseus, who penetrated to the land of the dead and returned to tell the tale.

As for his eventual death, one story was that Zeus struck him with lightning: an ambiguous fate, often the wages of sin, but sometimes the means of translation to a higher existence in Elysium or even heaven. The more widespread version, however, was that for one reason or another he was

set upon by the Thracian Bacchants and torn limb from limb. Again, this is a typical theme. Orpheus is only one of a number of people (normally either young children, or men who interfere with the service of Dionysus) who are torn apart by Bacchants. But in his case there was a surprising sequel. His head, thrown into the River Hebrus, continued to sing. It was carried out to sea and across to Lesbos, where it was found on the shore still carolling away. It was installed in a chasm on the island, where it issued oracles to inquirers. Once more, a folktale element is involved, for there are several stories about murder victims whose severed heads retain the power of speech (see HEAD). We may say generally that the myths about Orpheus are of this sort, folktales that have attached themselves to a convenient hero. There seems to be no residue of historical memory, and in answer to the questions who Orpheus really was and when he lived, if he lived at all, we must confess that we have no notion.

Orphic Poems

The practice of foisting theological poems on Orpheus begins, so far as we can see, with Pythagoras and his early followers, about 500 BC. Pythagoras was an intellectual priest-prophet who claimed to be an incarnation of Apollo. His teaching combined a superstitious insistence on old religious precepts and taboos with the novel doctrine of transmigration of souls through different animal bodies and different regions of the universe; probably also a mystical reverence for numbers (see PYTHAGORAS). Writers in the 5th century speak of his 'making a selection' of certain writings, or specifically of his publishing under the name of Orpheus. We hear of rites which are 'called Orphic and Bacchic but are really Egyptian and Pythagorean'. We know the titles of several poems of metaphysical content, nominally by Orpheus but remembered as the work of early Pythagoreans called Brontinus, Zopyrus and Cercops, and we can see reflections of Pythagorean thought in their subject matter. The *Robe* may have developed a myth of Pherecydes (540 BC), for whom the earth's surface was a robe worn by the earth goddess after her marriage to Zeus the sky god. For Brontinus the weaving of the robe may have been more than a metaphor – an insight into the physical process by which vegetation spreads across the earth in spring.

The *Net* must have been a rather similar poem. The knitting of the net illustrated the formation of a living creature, with its tissue built up loop by loop, its soul being the air captured in the interstices. Then there was the *Mixing Bowl*; the mixing process played an important part in cosmological theory of the time and the cosmic mixing bowl reappears in Plato. Apart from these metaphysical expositions, there was a *Descent to Hades*, probably a straightforward apocalypse in which Orpheus gave an account of his quest for Eurydice, and revealed to mankind the fate of souls in the other world.

In the second half of the 5th century we find Orpheus mentioned as an inventor of spells and incantations. But his principal gifts to mankind, according to Aristophanes, are 'sacraments, and abstention from bloodshed'. This implies a religious vegetarianism, a typically but by no means exclusively Pythagorean discipline. The sacraments referred to may include those of the Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS), for it is not much later that we find Orpheus named as their founder. The hero of Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC) has been to the Eleusinian Mysteries, he follows a vegetarian diet in his desire for purity and holiness, and he 'has Orpheus for his master, paying service to the vapourings of many writings'. A little later, Plato tells of people who persuade both private individuals and the greatest cities (surely a reference to Eleusis) to take sacraments that bring purification and release from sin, personal or inherited; they offer 'a throng of books, of Orpheus and Musaeus' (another mythical singer). The purified, it is said, feast with the gods for ever, while the rest lie in mud. In the next generation, Theophrastus notes it as a mark of the superstitious man that he takes his family every month to the 'Orpheus-ministers', who no doubt charged him a suitable fee for his salvation.

One of the favourite stories about Orpheus, the legendary Thracian singer, was that he made such beautiful music on his lyre that the creatures of the wild came and stood enraptured about him: by the Flemish painter Savéry, 17th century

Scala

It was such a man, perhaps, who took with him to the funeral pyre an allegorical commentary on an Orphic theogony, not far from Salonica: the scroll was only charred, and a few years ago it came to light, the oldest surviving Greek papyrus and the only one found in Greece itself. Full publication of the text is impatiently awaited. To the same period, the late 4th century, belongs the oldest of the famous gold tablets, which turn up in tombs in widely separate places (Thessaly, Crete, Italy) down to the 2nd century AD. Although they say nothing of Orpheus, they throw light on that desire for personal salvation which often did take Orpheus for its evangelist. They are reminders to the soul of what to do and say in the other world; they are mainly in verse. The longest reads: 'Now you will find to the left of the halls of Hades a spring, and beside it a white cypress standing. Do not approach this spring. You will find on the other side cool water flowing from the Lake of Recollection; but there are guards before it. Say "I am a child of Earth and Sky, of heavenly race, you know it well: but I am parched with thirst, I perish. Give me, quickly, the cool water from the Lake of Recollection." And they shall give you to drink from the holy spring, and after that you shall enter the kingdom of the Heroes.' There are similarities to the *Book of the Dead* here, and many scholars admit an Egyptian influence.

But we must return to Plato, for only one side of his Orpheus has been described. He mentions Orpheus more often than any earlier writer, and this may not be unconnected with the fact that he was much influenced by Pythagoreanism. A Pythagorean origin should perhaps be posited for the Orphic theogony that he and presently Aristotle mention. (It is not yet clear whether it was the same as the theogony of the Salonica papyrus.) Like the old theogony of Hesiod, it gave a genealogy of the gods, interspersed with narrative episodes. Its content seems not to have been startlingly different from Hesiod. But we cannot tell how it ended; and the ending will have been the important part, containing a religious message to which the genealogy merely served as a background. If it was Pythagorean, it may have set out the

doctrine of transmigration, which Plato knows as an 'ancient account' told by 'godly' poets. He also mentions 'ancient sacred accounts' which tell of penalties imposed on souls by judges; and the imprisonment of the soul in a body as a punishment is linked with the name of Orpheus.

The Apparition

The theogony had a long and varied career. First, it was chosen as the opening poem of the Epic Cycle, an artificial chain of epic poems spanning the whole of legendary history, and this involved certain alterations and omissions. Secondly, at least one rival Orphic theogony appeared, totally different in content. It features Unaging Time, portrayed as a winged serpent, with extra heads of a bull, lion and god, coiled with a female counterpart, Destiny. Time produces Light, Darkness and Chaos, and in the middle a shining egg. From it a splendid creature hatches, with golden wings, four eyes and horns, various animal heads, and the organs of both sexes. He has many names: Zeus, Pan, Dionysus, Eros, Firstborn, Phanes ('Apparition'), and more obscurely Erikepaios. The world is filled with radiance at his appearance, but he himself is invisible except to Night. He mates with her as well as with his own female parts, producing heaven and earth, and other gods, and so our world takes shape. This extraordinary poem is thoroughly oriental in inspiration, having its closest parallels in Iranian theology, and was probably composed in the East in the 3rd century BC.

There were now two or three theogonies by Orpheus in circulation, telling very different stories. The conflict was resolved soon after 100 BC, when a redactor forcibly conflated them, together with whatever other 'Orphic' material came to hand. There was a tale that Homer's poems had had to be reconstructed after his death from 'rhapsodies' (the Greek word means recitations) which he had left behind in different towns. So it was pretended that the new epic had been constituted from Rhapsodies of Orpheus, 24 of them as in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Instead of being the permanent ruler of the world, Phanes was now the first of six divine kings. He was no longer Zeus and Dionysus: they were the fifth and sixth kings, born long after him. Yet Zeus remained the creator of the world, for he swallowed Phanes and the universe with him, and then produced it all over again. The climax of the complicated narrative came when Dionysus was set on the throne at the age of six. The Titans (see CRONUS), diverting him with a curious assortment of ritual objects, cut him into seven pieces, which they boiled and tasted. But Apollo, by burying the pieces, was able to restore the child to health; the Titans were blasted with thunderbolts, and from the dirty smoke that this produced, man was created. His soul is immortal: after death it is judged, spends 300 years in pleasant or nasty surroundings, and is then reborn in a new body. But men aim to achieve release from this round of ills, and Dionysus and Persephone are appointed to help them, if they perform the correct sacrifices and purification rites.

The dissection and cooking of Dionysus must be compared with the myths of Bacchants tearing people apart, and seems to be a mythical reflection of a procedure of animal sacrifice. We first hear of the death of the god as a local legend from Delphi in the early 3rd century BC. It is presupposed in a broken papyrus of about 220 BC which contains notes for a sacrificial ritual and prayers for personal salvation addressed to Demeter, Persephone and Erikepaios (here probably a name of Dionysus). This reveals a cult in Greek Egypt very like what we would have to postulate, besides the rival theogonies described, to account for the contents of the Rhapsodies. It is noteworthy that Ptolemy IV, who ruled Egypt from 222 to 205, was a great devotee of Dionysus and claimed descent from him. He issued an edict that all who held Dionysiac sacraments must register in Alexandria, state who they had learnt their ceremonies from, and deliver a signed copy of their holy story. Various 'Orphic' poems must have been collected as a result.

British Museum/Michael Holford

British Museum

Left **Animals entranced by Orpheus: mosaic from a Roman villa at Tarsus** ***Right*** **The dying Orpheus, from a Greek vase: according to one story, Zeus struck him with lightning** ***Above right*** **Amulet case and chain with one of the famous gold tablets, this one found in southern Italy. These tablets were placed in tombs and gave the soul instructions about what to do in the other world: though they do not mention Orpheus, 'they throw light on that desire for personal salvation which often did take Orpheus for its evangelist'**

'Orphic' Cults

The Pythagoreans still had shares in the name of Orpheus. As their interests spread, in the last centuries before Christ, to subjects like medicine, astrology and divination, their Orpheus modified his poetic output accordingly. Varro (116–27 BC) knew a poem called the *Lyre*, said to be about summoning up souls, and perhaps based on an analogy between the seven strings of Orpheus' lyre and the seven planetary spheres through which, in post-Platonic speculation, the soul ascended to heaven. The elder Pliny (23–79 AD) more than once cites Orpheus as an authority on herbs, a topic which Pythagorean writers were investigating by 50 BC at the latest.

The fact that Orpheus was adopted as the founder of the Eleusinian Mysteries should mean that he composed the sacred poetry, and a chronicle of 264 BC probably named him as the author of a cult poem on the rape of Persephone. In fact we possess such a poem, among the hymns ascribed to Homer, and parts of it are quoted as 'Orpheus' in a papyrus of the 1st century BC. The practice of attributing to Orpheus poems composed for local cults became increasingly prevalent in the Hellenistic period and under the Roman Empire. As early as 320 BC he is the founder of Dionysus-mysteries. Later we find him linked with cults in Aegina, Sparta and Phrygia. We hear of a *Corybanticum* and of *Enthronements for the Divine Mother*, both belonging to rites in which initiates in the service of the Great Mother (see CORYBANTES; CYBELE) were set on a throne and danced round by the others. We hear of a *Girding Song* (in some cults, the initiate put on a special girdle); *Verses for sacred investiture*; *Verses for founding a shrine*; *Verses for naming*; *Cosmic invocations*; *For Salvation*; *Oaths*. There must have been much more. One specimen of 'Orphic' cult poetry has come down to us intact: a collection of 87 hymns, very homogeneous in style and probably the work of a single author in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. He refers to himself as Orpheus, and alludes to the Rhapsodies. The hymns were apparently used by members of a private religious society who met at night in a house somewhere in west Asia Minor and prayed to all the gods they could think of, to the light of torches and the fragrance of eight varieties of incense. Occasionally their ceremonial extended to a libation of milk. Dionysus is prominent, being the recipient, under different titles, of eight hymns. We get a picture of cheerful and inexpensive dabbling in religion by a literary-minded circle.

The tradition of sub-scientific Orphica continued concurrently. There is record of a *Book of Eighty Gems* (on the magic properties of stones), various astrological poems, and directions for divination from birds, dreams, eggs, entrails and earthquakes. Two compositions that stand apart from the rest are the *Testament*, possibly a

Jewish effort, in which Orpheus repudiated his earlier teachings and acknowledged a single God, and the *Argonautica*, a short and derivative epic in which Orpheus described his participation in Jason's expedition. The poem is hardly earlier and perhaps later than the 4th century AD. It was consciously designed as an addition to an already bulky corpus of Orphic literature, for Orpheus begins by reviewing his previous compositions. He summarizes part of the Rhapsodies, and mentions among other things Corybantic rites, Demeter's search for Persephone, cults of Lemnos, Samothrace, Cyprus, and of Osiris in Egypt; poems on astrology, divination, purification, propitiation of gods and departed spirits, and an eye-witness account of the underworld.

Such was Orphic literature at the time: a vast hotch-potch. But pride of place is given to the Rhapsodies; and Dionysus is the god with whom Orpheus is most firmly associated in cult. The reason is perhaps simply that the Dionysiac mysteries were more popular than any other. If it had fallen to a Greek god to conquer Europe, it would have been Dionysus; and the Orphic Rhapsodies would have been our Bible. Among our Apocrypha might have been the *Bacchica*, a late poem which reidentified Dionysus with Zeus and Phanes, holding all these names to be titles of the divine Sun. But for the Neoplatonist philosophers of the 5th and 6th centuries, 'Orpheus' meant primarily the Rhapsodies. They discussed the poem in seminars and written commentaries, quoted it constantly, and misunderstood it completely, finding in it an allegorical exposition of their own vapid metaphysics. In antiquity as in modern times, Orpheus was all things to all men.

M. L. WEST

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For the Egyptians Osiris was both saviour and judge; murdered by Seth he was raised to life again and became god of the underworld. His royal character was designed to effect the resurrection of the dead pharaoh who was ritually assimilated to Osiris

OSIRIS

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN god Osiris is one of the most interesting and significant deities known to historians of religions. He is also one of the oldest gods of whom records survive; and he may rightly claim to have been worshipped longer than any other god – his cult was already well established by 2400 BC, and it continued until the forcible suppression of paganism, in favour of Christianity, in the 4th century AD.

Because Osiris was so important to them and they were so familiar with his myth or legend, the Egyptians never seem to have written a formal account of their beliefs about him. Their literature, both sacred and secular, is replete with references and allusions to him, and he is one of the figures most abundantly portrayed in their art. Yet it was left to the Greek writers Diodorus Siculus, in the 1st century BC, and Plutarch, in the following century, to provide posterity with descriptive accounts of this ancient Egyptian god, who was still a potent figure in their day. Their accounts must, inevitably, be treated with much caution; for it is unlikely that they had any direct access to Egyptian records, and they were concerned to rationalize and philosophize what they had learned from their Egyptian guides and interpreters. However, there is reason to think that they did preserve some authentic traditions, and their accounts are significant as evidence of what Osiris had come to mean to Graeco-Roman society more than 2000 years after he first appears in Egyptian records.

In the Pyramid Texts (see BOOK OF THE DEAD), which are concerned with the afterlife of the pharaohs of the 5th and 6th Dynasties, Osiris plays a strange but vital role in the mortuary ritual. Among its rubrics and spells, reference is made to his murder and the finding of his body: 'Isis comes and Nephthys . . . They find Osiris, as his brother Set laid him low in Nedjet.' Nedjet in historical times was located near Abydos, in Upper Egypt, which was the chief sanctuary of Osiris. In another text of about the same period (2400 BC) there is reference to the drowning of Osiris in the River Nile at Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt. There are references also in other texts to the casting of Osiris's body into the Nile or to finding it upon its banks. The two traditions are not mutually exclusive; but what is consistently attested throughout all Egyptian records is that Seth murdered Osiris.

Raised by Magical Chants

The Egyptian evidence is also agreed that the corpse of Osiris was found by Isis (see ISIS) and Nephthys, who either prevented its decomposition or restored it when decomposed by various acts of embalmment. After effecting the preservation of his body, the dead Osiris was then raised to life again. Various deities are associated in the texts and iconography with this resurrection, namely, Isis and Nephthys, Atum-Re, Anubis and Horus (see EGYPT). The means by which it was effected varies. Generally it would seem that magical incantation was envisaged to resurrect the god. Sometimes a more practical way was imagined, as in depictions showing Isis and Nephthys fanning air into the inanimate Osiris with the falcon wings attached to their arms.

Although he was thus raised to life again, Osiris did not resume his earthly life in Egypt where, as the texts indicate, he had been a king. Instead, his cause against his murderer Seth was tried before a tribunal of the gods of Heliopolis. The verdict was concise 'Guilty is Set: Osiris is just.' Osiris then became 'the lord of the West', the underworld or realm of the dead.

The legend of Osiris also involves a number of other divine figures. Isis is both the wife and sister of Osiris. Nephthys, her sister, is the consort of Seth, who is represented as both the brother and murderer of Osiris. Horus was regarded as the posthumously begotten son of Osiris (see HORUS). Grown to man's estate, he is represented as fighting with Seth to avenge his father and secure his patrimony. He is also described, inconsistently with his posthumous birth, as performing various mortuary offices for his father, including the ceremony of 'Opening the Mouth' (see MUMMIFICATION).

Such, then, is the story of Osiris as it can be reconstructed from Egyptian texts. The versions of Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch are fuller narrative accounts, composed according to contemporary Graeco-Roman taste; but they preserve some outline of the basic pattern of the Egyptian original. Diodorus presents Osiris as an ancient king who taught the Egyptians the arts of civilized living, including agriculture – Isis had discovered the use of wheat and barley, which had hitherto grown wild. He is murdered by his brother Typhon (Seth is here identified with an evil monster of Greek mythology), who divided his body into 26 pieces, which he gave to his followers in order to implicate them in his crime. The death of Osiris is avenged by Isis and Horus, who slay Typhon. Isis recovers the parts of her husband's body, except the phallus, and buries them secretly. In order to promote the worship of Osiris, she then made exact replicas of his body and entrusted them severally to colleges of priests to bury in their local centres – this is obviously an attempt to explain the fact that several places in Egypt claimed to have the tomb or some relic of Osiris. After reigning for many years, Isis died and was deified. Memphis claimed to have her tomb; but many believed that both Osiris and Isis were buried in the island of Philae in Upper Egypt. This account by Diodorus shows no insight into the real nature of the deity or his place in Egyptian religion.

Treachery at a Banquet

According to Plutarch, Osiris was also a king who civilized both the Egyptians and the rest of mankind; he was identified by the Greeks with their god Dionysus (see DIONYSUS). After the return of Osiris from his world travel, Seth planned his death with the help of 72 fellow-conspirators. Having secretly measured the body of Osiris, Seth made a beautiful chest, richly decorated, exactly to its dimensions. Then, at a banquet to which Osiris was invited, he offered to give the chest to any guest whom it fitted. When Osiris laid himself within it, Seth slammed the lid, and secured it fast. The chest was thrown into the River Nile, carried to the sea, and drifted to Byblos, on the Phoenician coast. It came to rest on the shore, and a lovely tree grew up and enclosed it. The tree's size and beauty caused the King of

Michael Holford Library

Osiris 'may rightly claim to have been worshipped longer than any other god': this statue shows him wearing the white crown of Egypt and holding the royal symbols of crook and flail

Byblos to cut it down and use it as a pillar of his palace.

The sorrowing Isis, who had long been seeking her husband's body, eventually located it, and by a display of magical power, obtained it from the King of Byblos and brought it back to Egypt. There it was discovered by Seth, who cut it into 14 pieces and scattered the parts throughout the land. Isis patiently searched for the parts, burying each where it was found – another explanation of the many burial places of Osiris in Egypt. The phallus was not found; it had been devoured by a fish that became tabu to the Egyptians. Osiris then emerged from the underworld, to train and equip his son Horus to punish Seth. Horus conquered Seth after a hard struggle, and his legitimacy, questioned by Seth, was vindicated by the gods. Isis conceived a son called Harpocrates by her dead husband – Plutarch here mistakes one of the Greek names ('Harpocrates', derived from the Egyptian 'Horus the child') of Horus for another deity. Plutarch also regarded Osiris and Isis as demigods who, because of their virtue, were translated into gods.

These Greek versions are evidence of the fascination that Osiris had for Graeco-Roman society. But although Egyptologists today are better placed to evaluate the ancient god than the Greek men of learning, many problems still remain unsolved.

The Mighty One

The Pyramid Texts show that the kings of Egypt were associated with Osiris in death. This association was clearly not a novel one, and it must have extended far back into the past, possibly into the pre-dynastic period. The name 'Osiris' has been the subject of much study, in the hope that it might provide a clue to the deity's origin, but none of the many interpretations that have been offered has yet been generally accepted. The most recent suggestion, which has much to commend it, is that the name meant originally 'the Mighty One'. Equally obscure is the problem of the original location of the cult of Osiris. Busiris (from an Egyptian word meaning 'House of Osiris') in the eastern Delta of the Nile was an ancient cult centre of Osiris, but the local deity there was Anzeti. However, since Osiris is invariably depicted wearing the tall white crown of Upper Egypt, it would seem that he had originated from that province.

The royal aspect or character of the god is presented in his traditional iconography: besides the white crown, he holds the symbols of Egyptian royalty – the crook and flail. The image, however, is a curious compromise between a living and a dead king. For the body of Osiris is represented in the form of a mummy, yet the face and head are free of mummy wrappings and the hands protrude from the wrappings and firmly grasp the royal insignia.

The association of the pharaoh with

Osiris in death, which constitutes one of the most notable themes of the Pyramid Texts, was designed to effect the resurrection of the dead king. It was based on the principle of imitative magic, the dead king being ritually assimilated to Osiris. The whole drama of the mortuary ritual was, in fact, modelled on that of the legend of the death and resurrection of Osiris. In the Pyramid Texts the subject was the dead king; but gradually the royal mortuary ritual was democratized, so that by the New Kingdom all persons who could afford the expense could hope for revivification through ritual assimilation to Osiris.

Because of his connection with the fundamental mysteries of death and the afterlife, Osiris became the most significant of the gods for the Egyptians. At Abydos, the chief centre of his cult, a dramatic presentation of his death and resurrection was periodically performed. Osiris was also connected with the cult of the Apis bull, from which was derived his transformation into Serapis, the great deity of Hellenized Egypt, whose worship was promoted by King Ptolemy I (304–282 BC) as part of his policy to unite his Greek and Egyptian subjects. In the form of a Mystery religion, the cult of Isis and Osiris spread far into the Roman Empire; and the famous *Golden Ass* of Apuleius (2nd century AD) attests to the power of its appeal – although Isis, as the great compassionate goddess of the universe, tended to dominate the attention of the devotees, leaving Osiris a somewhat background figure invested in deep mystery.

The ever-increasing importance of Osiris to the Egyptians resulted in his association with natural phenomena, especially with the growth of corn and the fructifying waters of the Nile. This has led to his identification as a vegetation deity of the dying-rising type by many scholars, pre-eminently by Sir James G. Frazer (see DYING GOD; VEGETATION SPIRITS). The identification appears to be strikingly confirmed by the custom of placing in tombs moist earth shaped in the form of Osiris: the seed sown in it quickly sprouted in the dark warmth, thus symbolizing new life rising from the dead Osiris, and perhaps facilitating the resurrection of the dead person buried in the tomb. However, although a fertility role was certainly assigned to him, Osiris's character of a vegetation god was later and subordinate to his mortuary significance.

Judge and Redeemer

Another role which Osiris acquired was that of judge of the dead; but it was not until the New Kingdom that he appears in this guise, and it is not clear how he came to acquire it. In the Book of the Dead Osiris is presented as exercising his fateful office in two different ways: the dead are directed to make their first 'Declaration of Innocence' to him; and he presides at the weighing of the soul (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). The role of judge of the dead logically contradicted that of saviour of the dead which Osiris had in the mortuary ritual. This discrepancy is extremely interesting, because a similar one occurs in Christianity, where Christ is both saviour and judge. The cause, however, is not the same in each case: Osiris probably came to be regarded as the judge of the dead because he ruled the land of the dead; the diverse roles of Christ derived from the Pauline and Jerusalem traditions that were eventually fused together in orthodox Christology (see PAUL).

It is difficult for us today to appreciate what the ancient Egyptians felt when they looked on the image of Osiris. But some insight is perhaps given, if we bear in mind that the image was that of a divine hero who had suffered and died, and then rose from the dead. Thus Osiris was not some remote transcendent deity such as Re, the sun god, but one who had endured the grim ordeal that awaited all men. In his image, moreover, the Egyptian devotees saw also the promise of their own resurrection from death and eternal life in the realm of Osiris. Phenomenologically, if not historically, Osiris was thus a prototype of Christ.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: E. A. W. Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* 2 vols. (Dover, 1973); S. G. F. Brandon ed., *The Saviour God* (Greenwood Press, 1980); J. G. Griffiths, *The Origins of Osiris* (Argonaut); E. Otto, *Egyptian Art and the Cults of Osiris and Amon* (Abrams, 1967).

OSTRICH

IT WAS PROBABLY as a source of food that the ostrich first aroused man's interest, for its eggs have been eaten since very early times. A North African rock engraving of the Stone Age depicts a hunter aiming an arrow at an ostrich, while frescoes in Egyptian tombs show the bird's plumes being used for personal decoration. Greek and Roman writers refer to the ostrich, but in Europe traditional lore concerning it mainly sprang from the biblical allusions which credited it with being forgetful, stupid and cruel (Job 39.13–17; Lamentations 4.3). As few Europeans until recent times had opportunities to observe the behaviour of the bird in the wild, there was ample opportunities for the little that was recorded to be misunderstood.

Biblical writers incorrectly inferred that the ostrich neglected its young, partly from the bird's habit of retreating when approached, and also because ostriches in the Near East sometimes left their eggs covered with sand to be kept warm by the sun's heat. The notion that the bird did not brood, which dates from at least as far back as the 2nd century, led to the belief that it hatched its eggs by gazing at them intently. This belief was repeated by writers down the centuries, including Vincent of Beauvais and Montaigne, and the ostrich egg thus became a symbol of single-minded devotion. In present-day Greek churches an ostrich egg suspended in a conspicuous position is a reminder to the worshipper to focus his thoughts and prayers. The moral was drawn that as the ostrich leaves the eggs so the hermit retires from worldly involvements.

Sonia Halliday

The ostrich became a symbol of single-minded devotion because it was believed that it hatched its eggs by gazing at them: mosaic from the Roman site of Thurburbo Majus in Tunisia

The belief that the bird consumes hard, inedible objects is also of long standing. Pliny said the ostrich could digest anything, but Aelian, who was better informed, stated that it kept pebbles in its gizzard. Rabbinic writers commented that it ate glass. An early Christian document (*Physiologus*) remarks that the ostrich eats glowing iron because 'his nature is very cold', and the poet John Skelton (c 1460–1529) mentions that the bird will eat a horseshoe. In *Henry VI*, Part 2, Jack Cade blusters: 'I'll make thee eat iron like an ostrich.' Living in unnatural conditions ostriches will indeed swallow incongruous objects; thus observed fact was exaggerated into fantasy.

Among the fanciful ideas about ostriches given currency by writers of the 15th and 16th centuries were that these birds terrified horses by flapping their wings, and that underneath the wings there was a small bone with which they pricked themselves when provoked to anger. Such ideas may have arisen from observations of these strange birds flapping their short wings as they ran away.

For some reason the idea arose that the ostrich is deaf as well as silly. In Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* (1602), we read: 'But the veriest fools they be of all others; – for as high as the rest of their body is, yet if they thrust their head and neck once into any shrub or bush, and get it hidden, they think then they are safe enough, and that no man seeth them.' Hence the proverbial ostrich, symbolical of stupidity and an inability to face realities. No doubt the belief arose from ostriches being seen with heads down feeding before they became alarmed.

The belief, mentioned by Aristotle, that ostriches lay more eggs than any other bird was based on the finding of large clutches. As many as 60 have been recorded but the ostrich is polygamous and several may lay in one nest.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Interest in the messages produced by table tilting, ouija boards or planchette, and the tendency to believe that they come from the spirit world, are not confined to the West: in this Japanese print fox spirits are communicating with human beings by tilting a table

Although the messages that 'come through' the ouija board can often be traced to the performers' subconscious, there are cases when they appear to emanate from some source which is not so far recognized by orthodox science

OUIJA BOARDS

THE NAME OUIJA derives from the French and German words for 'yes', *oui* and *ja*. A ouija board is a flat polished sheet of wood, about 18 inches by 12, which has the alphabet written in a wide half moon along its longer side. On top of this board is placed a much smaller one, heart-shaped and mounted on tiny castors which enable it to slide about. If one or more persons place their finger tips lightly on the smaller board, in many cases it will slide, without being consciously pushed, so that the apex of the heart points from letter to letter, making words or even sentences which are not expected by the performers. Sometimes, though not often, information comes to them which is not at the time known to their conscious minds, though it may have been known to one or more of them in the past and then forgotten. Very occasionally it seems not to have been known to any of them at all.

One variant of the ouija board is called a planchette. In this case a pencil is attached to the apex of the heart-shaped pointer and a blank sheet of paper is placed on the larger board. Again, this sometimes but not always results in the pencil moving about without being consciously pushed, and what it writes may range from aimless marks to whole sentences and even long stories. But as a rule its productions do not make much sense. A second variant of a ouija board may be made by cutting out the letters of the alphabet and setting them in a circle on a polished table. If a wine glass or smooth rimmed tumbler is then placed

Chris Barker

The simplest form of ouija board, an upturned glass in the centre of a circle of letters (*left*), and a planchette (*right*): both devices seem to open up 'shortcuts from subconscious to conscious' and can be upsetting, embarrassing or frightening if 'censored' material comes through

upside down within the circle and the fingers of one or more persons lightly rested upon it (preferably one finger, per hand, per person) it will sometimes slide from letter to letter forming words in the same manner as the heart-shaped pointer. Why such devices can be made to function by some people and not by others is not known. It may be a matter of the psychological attitude of the performers, or – a wild speculation – the cause might even be an electrical one.

Shortcut to the Surface

Table tilting – or tipping, or turning, as it is sometimes called – works on the same general principle as a ouija board although it is slower and more laborious. If one or more persons place their fingers on a table, preferably a small circular one on a three-footed pedestal, on some occasions, which cannot be predicted in advance, it will tip up and tap a foot without being consciously pushed by any of the performers. As a rule Spiritualists make use of a code by which it can answer questions – one tap for 'yes', two for 'uncertain' and three for 'no'. Or letters of the alphabet may be recited and responded to by taps – and so on. Such activities are still popular in Spiritualistic circles, and they were extremely so, even among the sophisticated, in the 19th century. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are on record as having once tilted a table. In those days the entities which purported to communicate through the board or table were widely assumed to be what they claimed to be, discarnate spirits, but nowadays modern psychology has produced a rival source nearer at hand – the subconscious of one or more of the performers.

It is now for the most part accepted that much mental and emotional activity in the human psyche takes place beyond the threshold of consciousness. Glimpses of it can be seen in dreams and its results may also come to the surface unexpectedly, 'out of the blue', and can range from idealistic and creative ideas at one end to apparently motiveless destructive impulses at the other. It seems, in fact, as if those hidden areas contain all kinds of material, some of it 'higher' in quality than the conscious self, some of it 'lower'. Psychoanalysis has also emphasized that memories of distressing events can be repressed into those areas because they are too painful to be faced by the conscious self, and that goes too for desires which do not fit into the pattern of life ordained by that self. A natural conclusion from this is that the highway from subconscious to conscious may sometimes be blocked, that there may be some sort of psychological censorship. The symbolic nature of many dreams hints at such censorship.

There are certain procedures which seem to open up what may be called shortcuts from subconscious to conscious, and by means of these censored material is sometimes able to get through. Such procedures have been given the blanket name of automatisms, since what they produce has not been consciously willed or even known in advance and they often seem to involve some degree of dissociation, however slight. One form of automatism is trance mediumship; another is automatic writing and even automatic speech uttered in a less than trance state – for occasionally an individual will make statements or, say, preach a sermon, without the motivation coming from his conscious self, but still without that self being entirely in abeyance (see AUTOMATIC ART; MEDIUMS). Ouija board conversations, planchette writing and table-tipping are usually practised by several persons at a time and may then be called collective automatisms; these have the advantage that each participant can assume that the motive force comes from, or through, one of the others and that he himself is free from responsibility for what is said. In this context it is of interest that in most traditional attempts to provide information acquired through ESP even the individual sensitive uses some kind of procedure which implies that the information is being mediated to him through some outside source such, for instance, as a medium's control, a possessing god, a crystal, tea-leaves, hands, bones, a pendulum, a divining rod or automatically written messages which claim to come from a discarnate entity. To believe in any such procedure may be of

'All the world is much interested – not to say excited – with the newly-developed force as manifested in table moving': illustration to an article in *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, 1854, implying that even the children's weight will not prevent the table from moving

genuine help to the performer for several reasons: it frees him from responsibility for what is said – he is only the transmitter; it reduces the analytical conscious mind to a passive role, hence its activity is less likely to blur faint intimations that may well up from beyond the threshold; and it may also tend to encourage slight dissociation which appears to facilitate the emergence of subconscious material.

The following examples may help to indicate various sources from which material obtained through the ouija board and table-tipping type of automatism seems to come. The first case is one in which conscious and subconscious wishes apparently corresponded, but even so, the material was produced in an intriguingly oblique manner, one which almost suggested that the subconscious of one or both performers was entertaining itself at the expense of their conscious selves. Theodora Bosanquet, at that time literary editor of *Time and Tide*, and I were trying to get some first-hand knowledge of automatisms by working a ouija board together once a week. We could trust each other not to cheat by pushing the pointer consciously and we assumed that what it wrote came from her subconscious or mine, though we did not rule out subconscious telepathic collaboration. We did not take very seriously the Spiritualist idea that the board's remarks came from a discarnate entity as they purported to do, although if the conversation was to flow at all naturally it was essential to dramatize that one was talking to a person rather than to a piece of wood. Miss Bosanquet came in for a session on the morning of 8 May 1945 (the date of the end of the Second World War in Europe) and as usual we asked the board what it wished to talk about; it is seldom of any use to force the subconscious to talk about subjects it has not chosen. 'The sixth noun in Hamlet', was the immediate reply. We had neither of us read or seen Hamlet for some years, nor had we the slightest recollection of what that noun might be. We found it half way down the page, a good deal further down than we expected, and it was the word 'relief' in the sentence, 'For this relief much thanks!' – an apt enough subject for V.E. Day. A trivial incident, but it raises a number of questions; for instance, did one or both of us subconsciously know Hamlet by heart? And if we did, why count up the nouns and bring up the word relief in that circuitous way?

'Victorian Uplift'

The next case illustrates the emergence of material which has been repressed. (This quite often happens; I have known of three occasions, for instance, when a concealed love affair of one of the performers was revealed by the board, to the great distress and embarrassment of the person concerned.) On this occasion, at his own request, a psychiatrist came to observe the board in action, and I asked him if he would like to add his fingers to ours. He did so and the board at once began to pour forth a stream of religious sentiment, which, being Freudian-trained, he declared indignantly was nothing but 'Victorian uplift'. The temptation to remark that the uplift only began when he put his fingers on the board was too great for me to resist. After some thought, his outlook being that of a true scientist, he admitted generously, 'You are right, I was unduly angry. It must have been me.' Ten years later he became a Christian. I have seen the same type of 'upwelling' occur with a religiously inclined young man who had married an attractive, ardently left-wing humanist wife and to please her had repressed his religious leanings. Conversely, hidden resentments, frustrations and jealousies can also emerge; in fact, the use of ouija boards and other such devices by persons ignorant of the psychology involved can lead to tricky and painful situations, especially as many people are more impressed by statements – and predictions – which come from a mysterious source than they are by those from one which is familiar.

But still, there are hints which cannot be ignored that the material which emerges by means of this type of device does not always originate in the subconscious of any of the performers; occasionally it seems to be due to some unknown kind of contact with distant events or the thoughts of distant persons. An example of this possibility

occurred just after four o'clock on a wet Sunday afternoon shortly after the Second World War. Staying with me was Miss Gertrude Johnson, a talented sensitive who had achieved remarkable results in many controlled experiments in ESP done by the scientist and psychical researcher, G. N. M. Tyrrell. In those days a programme called the Brain's Trust, in which experts answered questions sent in by listeners, went out on the radio every Sunday afternoon. Having nothing else to do and there being no radio in the house, it occurred to me that we might try to obtain a piece of information, which we could not have known already, from a ouija board, by asking it to tell us one of the questions being asked on the current programme. I knew I could check the result from the repeat of the programme the following Thursday. The board replied to our inquiry, 'Something about the difference between two kinds of language', and I heard on the Thursday repeat broadcast that one of the questions asked that Sunday afternoon had been about the relative usefulness of studying classical or modern languages.

Automatic Poetry

Incidents as simple as this, of course, could easily be dismissed as accidental coincidences, were it not for the existence of others similar but so much more complicated that to ascribe the many resemblances in them to chance is very difficult. Take the following case investigated by the Society for Psychical Research. A group of six Spiritualists used to meet regularly at Flushing in Holland with the idea of getting into communication with the dead. On the evening of 23 July 1922, they began by table tilting but had no success. Then they turned to a device similar in principle to a ouija board in which a moveable pointer was held over the alphabet. This time things went better: they spelt out that an Englishman was communicating and that he was prepared to write them a song. (Four of them knew no English; the other two had once learnt it but had not kept it up.) A poem was then spelt out (see C in box) as from the Englishman who was, presumably, in view of the following facts, a subconscious dramatization resulting from their Spiritualist beliefs.

Opposite the house where the meetings took place lived a 15-year-old boy, who, scenting a mystery, very much wanted to attend the gatherings, but was not allowed to. On that July evening he watched the visitors go into the house for the meeting and ardently longed to join them. Then, disconsolately, having nothing to do, he got out an old school book which contained an English poem (see A in box) he had once had to learn, and drowsed over it during the course of the meeting across the road. The next day one of the participants at the meeting heard what he had been doing during the meeting and asked him to type out the poem from memory (see B in box).

A	B
Original Poem	***Boy's Version***
Evening Song	***Evening Song***
The sun has set	The sun has set,
And now anew	and now a new
With fallen dew	With fallen dew
The grass is wet.	The grass is wet
Each little bird	And little burd
Has sunk to rest	is sing to rest
Within its nest	Within his nest
No song is heard.	No song is heard

C

Automatists' Version

THE SUN HAS SET
AND NOW A new
WITH FALL END EW
THE GRASS IS WET
First part F
each little bird
Has sunk sto rest
with Its nets tn
o sng is hear

However intriguing, suggestive and complicated such material may be, so far nearly all of it is anecdotal; hence the sceptic can always dismiss each instance of it separately as due to fraud; it most, he insists, be produced in controlled conditions to order. This is a tough challenge for neither investigator nor performer has any idea of the psychological processes involved since these are entirely unconscious – how unconscious is neatly demonstrated in some ingenious experiments carried out by the eminent French psychologist, Professor Charles Richet, in the early days of psychical research. Another psychologist, Dr Alan Gauld, has recently summarized them as follows in *The Founders of Psychical Research* (1968):

> The set-up was complex. At a small table sat two persons, A and B, with the alphabet laid out in front of them. A passed a pointer continually over the alphabet. B noted down the letter over which the pointer was each time he heard a bell ring. The bell was rung automatically whenever another table in the room, at which sat three other persons, C, D and E, was tilted. C, D and E had their hands on the table in ordinary 'table-tilting' fashion: they were so seated that they could not see the activities of A and B. A sixth person, F (usually Richet), sat apart from both groups, concentrating on a name (obtained randomly from a reference book). The letters spelled out in many cases closely followed the letters of the name on which F was concentrating. It was easy to show that the coincidences between them greatly exceeded chance. Yet C, D and E did not know what they were spelling out, and A and B, who did know it, did not know the target.

Such scattered hints of unconscious interlinkage between the living are not uncommon, but for the most part scientists are inclined to look on them with a jaundiced eye. This is natural enough, for to them the process implied is a heresy; it does not fit into the pattern of the physical world as they envisage it. Worse, many of the people who provide the material containing such hints want to believe that their material comes from the dead, and to orthodox materialist science that is a primitive superstition. There is a further reason for regret, that the questions of survival and of unconscious interlinkage between the living are so often entangled: at present there seems no way to prove – or disprove – survival, which therefore becomes a remote problem, whereas experimental research into ESP suggests that the interlinkage hinted at by ouija board and similar activities may one day be recognized as a constantly occurring natural phenomenon.

ROSALIND HEYWOOD

Ouspensky was already deeply committed to an attempt to reconcile Western logical thought with Eastern mysticism when he met Gurdjieff, and discovered that many of his teachings complemented his own. From then on he devoted his life to the development of Gurdjieff's ideas

OUSPENSKY

RUSSIAN AUTHOR, mathematician and mystic, Peter Demianovich Ouspensky was born in Moscow in 1878. His philosophic and speculative writings *Tertium Organum* and *A New Model of the Universe* were bestsellers in the United States in the 1920s, but he is chiefly known for his lucid account of the teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff (see GURDJIEFF), published posthumously with the subject's consent under the title *In Search of the Miraculous*.

A short, stocky man with grey-blue eyes and pince-nez spectacles, Ouspensky was an outstanding lecturer on account of his penetrating thought and challenging approach. His father, Demian Petrovich Ouspensky, was an army officer and his mother was a painter. Of precocious intelligence, after reading Lermontov and Turgenev, at the age of six he became interested in poetry and painting; at 13 his interest turned to dreams and consequently to psychology; by 18 he had begun to travel and write. He continued studying intensively biology, mathematics and psychology. He relates: 'I was very anarchistically inclined at that time. I particularly distrusted all forms of academic science and took a firm decision never to pass any examinations and never to take any degrees.'

Ouspensky's first book was *Kinemadrama*, a novel on the theme of eternal recurrence. In 1907 he discovered theosophical literature, then prohibited in Russia, and 'found a possible angle for the study of religion and mysticism and received a new impulse for the study of "higher dimensions".' The publication in 1909 of *The Fourth Dimension* placed him in the front rank of writers on abstract mathematical theory.

The same year, at the age of 31, he moved from Moscow to St Petersburg (Leningrad)

where he published several books including *Superman*, *What is Yoga?* and, in 1912, *Tertium Organum*. This book deeply questioned the whole philosophic foundation of the scientific thinking of the day concerning space, time and relativity; it endeavoured to reconcile Western logical thought with Eastern mysticism. A year later, in 1913, a short work on *The Symbolism of the Tarot* was published.

Ouspensky then began to travel extensively in search of a contact with Eastern traditional and esoteric schools. In 1913–14 he went to Egypt and continued to Ceylon and India, returning to England shortly after the outbreak of the First World War. A notable series of lectures on his travels and 'search for the miraculous', given in 1915 in St Petersburg, attracted large audiences and a rapidly growing following in Russian intellectual circles. Among this audience was Sophia Grigorievna Maximenko, whom he married two years later.

Meeting with Gurdjieff

In 1915 Ouspensky met George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, an event which marked a turning point in his life. Gurdjieff's ideas profoundly impressed him, he recognized that Gurdjieff had discovered in the East many things for which he himself had searched. 'I realized,' he wrote, 'that I had met with a completely new system of thought surpassing all I knew before. This system threw quite a new light on psychology and explained what I could not understand before in esoteric ideas.' Ouspensky began to form special study groups in St Petersburg which Gurdjieff visited regularly. From that moment until Ouspensky's death the study and practical development of Gurdjieff's ideas constituted his principal aim.

These activities were interrupted at the end of 1916 when Ouspensky obtained a commission in the army but he was honourably discharged after only four months on account of poor eyesight, two weeks before the Revolution broke out. Seeing then no hope of continuing his work in Russia, he decided to emigrate to London.

Ouspensky rejoined Gurdjieff, who had already left Moscow, in Alexandropol in June 1917; in July with several friends from the Moscow and St Petersburg groups they moved to Essentuki and then to Tuapse on the Black Sea. In the autumn of 1917 Ouspensky paid a last visit to St Petersburg to rescue what he could of notes and manuscripts, leaving a bare week before the Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government.

Interested from a very early age in the study of dreams and psychology, Ouspensky became a disciple of the remarkable Russian teacher Gurdjieff, whose ideas prompted him to write: 'I realized that I had met with a completely new system of thought surpassing all I knew before.' Ouspensky devoted his life to exploring and expounding these ideas

The year 1918 was spent in the company of Gurdjieff on the Black Sea; but that winter Ouspensky returned to Essentuki. He only succeeded in reaching Constantinople (Istanbul), crowded with Russians, in January 1920. There he wrote and lectured on psychology and his travels. That summer he again met Gurdjieff, arrived by way of Tiflis in company with some of their friends. In 1921, still without the means to reach England, Ouspensky unexpectedly received an invitation to visit London from Viscountess Rothermere, who wished to meet the author of *Tertium Organum*, which had aroused considerable interest on its publication in English.

Reaching London in August, Ouspensky found himself in contact with influential people who became interested in his work. In 1924 he broke with Gurdjieff and decided to continue his work in England, independently.

From 1924 until 1940 Ouspensky wrote and lectured in London, and held study groups to investigate Gurdjieff's ideas which were attended by many well-known people. He completed *A New Model of the Universe* incorporating revisions of several previous works and wrote a detailed account of his years with Gurdjieff, *In Search of the Miraculous*.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Ouspensky moved to New York to continue lectures, discussions and work on Gurdjieff's ideas and on his own last book. Publication of *Kinemadrama* in English, entitled *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, was arranged. Early in 1947 Ouspensky, accompanied by a few pupils, returned to England; he died there later in the same year.

CHRISTOPHER FREMANTLE

FURTHER READING: P. D. Ouspensky: *Tertium Organum* (Random, 1970), *A New Model of the Universe* (Knopf, 1934), *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* (Random, 1973), *The Fourth Way* (Knopf, 1957); and *In Search of the Miraculous* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947).

OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES

AN OUT-OF-THE-BODY experience is one in which the subject appears to view the external world from some position other than that of his physical body. The following is an example:

> . . . It was summer time, the day bright and sunny and I wore a dress and blazer. I was walking along Brentwood High Street in Essex and there were people shopping and walking near me. As far as I can remember I was thinking of nothing in particular when suddenly I was about 15 ft. above myself and I watched myself walking towards a cinema called the Palace which was a short distance ahead of me. I noticed the people walking round me. I supposed I watched myself walk about 30 or 40 steps and then I was back 'inside' myself again. I felt in no way different and just went on walking along the High St. The whole incident must only have taken a few seconds . . .

Experiences of this kind seem to be relatively common. When the Institute of Psychophysical Research appealed by means of the Press and sound radio for first-hand accounts of experiences of this kind, cases were received from some 400 subjects, and it was clear that with further publicity more cases could have been obtained. The accounts exhibited many common characteristics, some of which are discussed in this article.

Out-of-the-body experiences may be of two kinds, firstly, 'parasomatic', in which the subject appears to be located in a duplicate body more or less resembling his physical body, and secondly, 'asomatic', in which the subject, at his new point of view, does not appear to be associated with a body at all – in other words, he feels he is just a disembodied consciousness or 'a pin-point of presence', as one subject puts it.

The following is an example of a parasomatic case in which the subject's duplicate body appeared to resemble her normal physical body very closely, even to the

extent of duplicating the kind of clothes that the subject normally wore.

> I looked down at my second self and found myself to be a complete replica of my material self. I touched my clothes, and looked at myself and was astounded to see that I was wearing the same black skirt white blouse with small red spots on it same shoes etc. . . I can remember touching myself and feeling the texture of my clothing this all felt quite solid . . .

In the asomatic case, on the other hand, the subject may describe himself as 'looking at himself from nothing'.

The circumstauces under which out-of-the-body experiences may occur are extremely various. Some subjects, such as the one first quoted, may be walking at the time of the experience, or carrying out such everyday activities as gardening or housework.

Many of the cases collected by the Institute occurred when the subject was involved in an accident or suffering from physical illness of some kind, but some seem to have occurred when the subject was simply in an 'everyday' frame of mind, or even feeling particularly happy or relaxed. One person writes, 'I had just become engaged and I cannot remember any other time of feeling such pure happiness.'

If the subject is engaged in some kind of physical activity at the time of his experience his body may continue to function in an apparently normal way while he appears merely to observe it from outside. In one case reported to the Institute, a dentist extracted a tooth while 'standing some three feet behind myself and to the left'. Other subjects describe watching themselves from above as they drove cars or motorcycles, or hearing their own singing performances or lecture from the back of the hall.

More Real than Reality

Cases such as this clearly raise the question, how can someone continue functioning in an apparently normal way while his 'consciousness' is concerned only in watching his movements from an external point? In some cases the subject may be performing an action which is so habitual that it is completely 'automatic' anyway, but in others some degree of conscious skill appears involved. Skill does not seem to be impaired while the subject 'watches' himself – though one woman who was 'settled firmly on the roof' of the car watched herself 'making every sort of fool of herself' in a driving test.

The emotions felt by the subject during an out-of-the-body experience are nearly always positive ones. Subjects appear to feel completely normal or natural in the out-of-the-body state, and may comment on how 'solid' or 'real' they felt, despite the fact that they were apparently disembodied. Some even described the out-of-the-body state as feeling more real than the normal state. As one subject put it: 'I had no further interest in my physical body, or indeed my physical life. I only wanted to pursue and prolong this happy state of being where everything was more bright, vivid and real than anything I had previously known.' As the following case illustrates, the subject may feel perfectly

British Museum

calm and detached despite the seemingly desperate condition of his physical body.

> I was in a farmhouse, in the line, in Italy in the summer of 1944 when the house was hit by a shell. I was thrown through the air and, as it transpired, hit in the forehead and arm.
>
> As I landed on my back, my injured arm fell across my forehead. Unable to feel anything in either part, I assumed that my head had been half blown off and I lay, waiting to die.
>
> During this period, the length of which I have no idea, although subsequent events proved it must have been seconds only, I was completely calm, in fact disinterested. Also during this period, I became aware that I, or my seat of consciousness, seemed to be hovering above my body at a height of perhaps 8–10 feet, which would have meant that my normal body would have been halfway through the roof.
>
> Unfortunately this state was of extremely short duration and my objective view seemed to be limited to my normal body below, which I could see in some detail.
>
> Again, my reaction was one of serenity and disinterest. My body could have been any body or any object, come to that, such was my state of disinterest.
>
> This state must have lasted microseconds and I returned to a normal state, where I decided that I wasn't dying and that I had better get to my feet and see what was happening.

Often the subject feels in an extremely happy or joyful state, and feelings of excitement, elation, and exhilaration may be reported. He may also claim to have felt extremely well during his experience, even if his body was ill at the time. 'The escaped me felt absolutely wonderful, very light and full of the most wonderful vitality, in fact more well than I have ever felt before or since.' One subject sums up: 'The whole experience was absolutely wonderful, and I wish I could experience a similar one again . . .'

If unpleasant emotions such as anxiety do arise, these usually seem to be connected with attempts to end the state. For example the subject may become anxious if he feels that the experience is not entirely under control; he may be afraid of being unable to end it, or of 'not being able to get back into the body'.

The subject is quite clear that he is in an out-of-the-body state, once he has seen his physical body from outside. In addition, subjects describe their intellectual processes and reasoning powers as being quite normal or even superior to normal. As regards 'the way things look' in an out-of-the-body experience, it seems that they look just as they do in the normal state – for example, normally coloured and with the same amount of visual definition. One subject wrote that he could see the room in great detail, even the specks of dust. Another describes experimenting on her hearing: 'I wondered, as I saw my physical body in the bed "Is my hearing acute, without ears?" and I approached a patient who was asleep, and listened to her breathing. I could hear it extremely clearly. I thought "My sight is acutely clear too".' Sometimes subjects report that their perceptions were enhanced and some comment on the brightness of the colours seen.

Leaving the Body At Will

Although many out-of-the-body experiences occur involontarily and, more often than not, only once in a lifetime, there are people who claim to be able to induce the out-of-the-body state more or less at will. Three methods of inducing or encouraging these states are predominant among those mentioned by people who have made a practice of doing so. These are firstly, physical relaxation exercises, secondly, various kinds of concentration and meditation, and thirdly, the cultivation of lucid dreams, those in which the subject is aware that he is dreaming. Oliver Fox, a subject who trained himself to have out-of-the-body experiences, claimed to be able to enter them directly from the lucid dream state. This method is discussed in my book *Lucid Dreams*.

A number of other subjects have found that the systematic practice of relaxation exercises favoured the occurrence of out-of-the-body experiences. The following is one such subject's account of the result of his relaxation procedures:

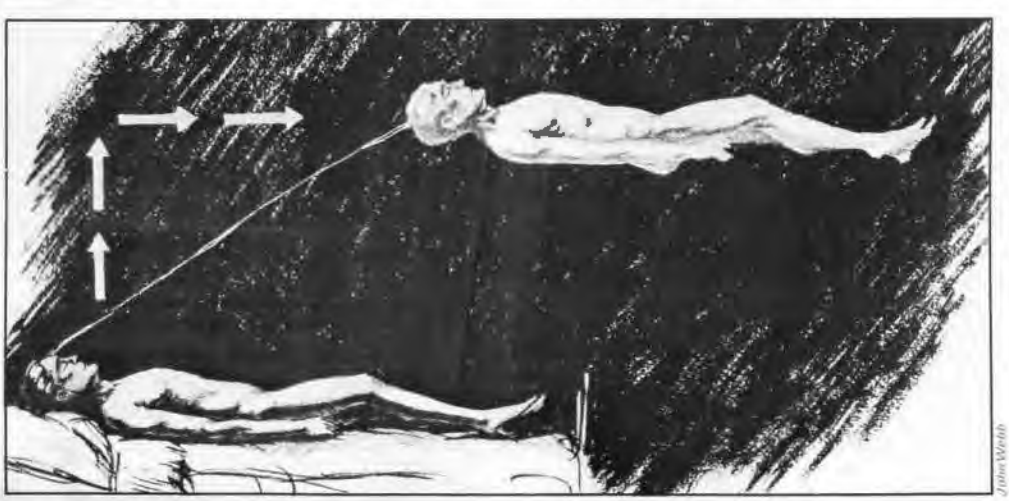
> I went through all the usual proceedings of relaxation on each occasion, but sometimes when I was completely relaxed and numb all over I used to feel this very pleasant rising feeling whereupon I became conscious of something very close to my face. This happened three or four times during my experiments.
>
> Of course I didn't realise what was happening at that age . . . As for my recent experiences . . . after a few false starts I felt this familiar rising feeling and low and behold I could 'see' the ceiling right in front of my face. . . Upon realising where I was and my apparent success I was literally pulled back into my flesh body.

Once out of his body the subject may attempt various kinds of experiment. For example, he may move about or 'travel' to a distant place to 'see' what is going on there. Sometimes he appears to obtain information in this way that he could not have obtained in the normal state or from the position occupied by his physical body. The following case will illustrate this possibility:

> Floated over Cheltenham – to friend's . . . Room. could not find – went searching – deeply perturbed. found her asleep – in a Divan, in partly furnished room. spoke to her but did not disturb. Met her for lunch three days later – jokingly asked her where she was on the Sunday night, I described room and Divan, she looked very shocked, said yes, I was there . . .
>
> . . . she did (take) me there one week later and asked if we might see the room in which I had found her on that Sunday night. NOTE: It was absolutely as I had described it – even to the unfinished white blouse on sewing machine.

The room in question was a sewing-room; the subject and the friend whom she 'visited' there agree that the subject had never entered this room. The subject's friend was sleeping in this room on this particular night, and not in her own house, as a result of a sudden domestic crisis. The friend confirms her part in the incident as follows:

> Mrs. A. was a friend whom I saw from time to time, and one day she got in touch with me, and related that she had in her sleep been trying to find me, and said had seen herself looking into the house where I lived and could not see me. Actually I was staying with a friend about seven minutes walk away and it seems she saw me lying there. Her description of the room was accurate, it was really a sewing room with a divan in the corner, all of which she described to me. I then took her along and Mrs. A. said 'Yes this is the room – We both used to visit here, myself very very often, but Mrs. A. only I should say three times and I am sure had never been to the top of the house, where this room was.



The experience of getting out of one's body has naturally interested occultists *Left* 'The World', a Tarot card often interpreted as a symbol of release from the everyday physical plane and entry into the astral: Italian, early 19th century *Right* Illustration from the *Projection of the Astral Body* by Sylvan Muldoon and H. C. Carrington (Rider, 1929), showing the astral body leaving the physical body: the experience can be deliberately induced, though the connecting 'cord', on which Muldoon placed great emphasis, does not appear in many people's descriptions of their experiences

Out-of-the-body experiences raise important questions for philosophers and psychologists. When someone perceives his surroundings in an apparently normal way but from a position which is different from that of his physical body, what part do his visual and other sense organs play in producing the experience? Indeed what part do his sense organs play in his normal mode of perception if he can apparently do without them in the out-of-the-body state? We must remember that in about one third of the cases the subject's physical body is unconscious at the time of the experience, so that his eyes are shut throughout, and cannot therefore be helping him to construct a picture of the world as it would look from the new point of view. Nevertheless, some subjects have described what was going on around them while unconscious, and those present have subsequently confirmed their accounts.

One also wants to know what is the electrical activity of the brain (as measured by the electroencephalogram, or 'EEG') during an out-of-the-body experience. In many cases the subject appears to be deeply unconscious. Now if the electrical record of the brain in such cases shows the patterns appropriate to the subject's physiological state (for example the slow *delta* rhythms observed during sleep as opposed to the faster waves which are dominant in waking states) we have to reconcile this with the fact that the subject is apparently having a conscious experience at the time. Alternatively, if the subject's EEG shows the rhythms appropriate to conscious experience, we have to reconcile this with the fact that his physical body is apparently inert and unresponsive to physical stimuli. At all events, out-of-the-body experiences present science with a challenging phenomenon of which no satisfactory explanation exists.

(See also ASTRAL BODY.)

CELIA GREEN

FURTHER READING: Celia Green, *Out-of-the-Body Experiences*; *Lucid Dreams*, both published by the Institute of Psychophysical Research in 1980. See also Oliver Fox, *Astral Projection* (Citadel Press, 1974); Charles McCreery, *Science, Philosophy and ESP* (Shoe String Press, 1967); J. H. M. Whiteman, *The Mystical Life* (Humanities, 1961).

C. M. Dixon

Because it is a creature which is active in the dark and because its face, with staring eyes, is uncannily human, the owl (*right*) has gained a sinister reputation, being often associated with death, mourning and evil *Above* Owl painted on the inner wall of a coffin from El Bersha in Egypt, c 2000 BC

OWL

ALMOST EVERYWHERE owls have been associated with strange powers, especially the forces of evil and misfortune. The lore concerning owls has such basic similarities throughout most of the world that it would seem to have arisen from a deep-seated and disquieting emotional response, evoked by a creature having characteristics interpreted as partly human. Thus, an owl with large eyes set in a flattish 'face' stares like a human being. Moreover, many species utter hoots, halloos or screams which sound like human calls. To hear a screeching at night in a tropical forest as of a woman in agony is a spine-chilling experience – until it is realized that the call is being uttered by an owl. The nocturnal habits of owls contribute to their sinister reputation, especially as their silent flight enables them to appear with alarming unexpectedness from the darkness. Furthermore, as owls often roost by day in holes and crevices in abandoned, dilapidated buildings, they are often regarded as embodiments of spirits or evil presences.

As early as the Old Stone Age we have evidence of the interest aroused by this bird, for a pair of nesting snowy owls with their chick is engraved on a rock face in a cave in southern France. On a Sumerian tablet dating from 2300–2000 BC a nude goddess is depicted flanked on either side by an owl. She is believed to be the goddess of death. A number of biblical references associate the owl with misery and desolation, and the bird is mentioned in connection with 'dragons' and wild beasts and also with mourning. Greek and Latin writers refer to the owl as a bird of ill omen. Ovid, Pliny and other authors associate the birds with death and their calls are mentioned as sinister. When an owl appeared in the Capitol at Rome it occasioned such alarm that the place was cleansed with water and sulphur to expel

Eric Lindgren/Arden Photographics

Museum of the American Indian

Although it often has strongly evil associations, by contrast the owl is sometimes regarded as a wise and benevolent bird *Left* The demon Andras, who stirs up quarrels, shown with wings and an owl's head, riding a black wolf and carrying the sword of faction: from *Dictionnaire Infernal* by Collin de Plancy *Above* North American Indian effigy jar in the shape of an owl

any evil influences it might have brought.

As is not uncommon with creatures or objects regarded as mysterious and arousing a strong emotional response, owls may sometimes be regarded as having properties contrary to those generally attributed to them. Something which is apt to frighten people may come to be considered effective as a deterrent against that which they fear; the evil thing may be enlisted as an ally. In ancient China, where owl sacrifices were offered, ornaments called 'owl corners' were placed on buildings in the belief that they protected them from fire. In Semitic countries the owl is usually regarded as ominous and in Persia is spoken of as 'the angel of death', yet in Israel little grey owls are considered good omens when they appear near the crops. Perhaps the belief originated from the observation that these birds prey on birds and mammals which damage crops. In ancient Athens the little owl was associated with Athene, probably as goddess of night, but being a common bird it was regarded in a friendly way and became the emblem of the city. 'There goes an owl' was the Athenian saying indicating signs of victory.

Latin writers early in our era alluded to the custom of hanging up owls in order to deflect storms and it was believed that an owl nailed up with wings outspread would avert hail and lightning. The custom of nailing owls to barn doors persisted into the 19th century in England. The Romans used representations of owls to combat the Evil Eye. Among the tribes of northern Asia owls were regarded as able to counteract evil powers. An owl might be placed over a child's cot to frighten away evil spirits. In India owl feathers were placed under the pillow of a restless child in order to induce sleep. The Ainu people of Japan made wooden images of owls and nailed them to their houses at times of famine or pestilence.

In Great Britain, as in most of Europe, the owl has been, and to some extent still is, regarded as ominous. Chaucer wrote of the owl as the bringer of death, and Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar* (Act I, Sc. 3) mentioned it among other evil omens:

> Yesterday the bird of night did sit
> Even at noon-day upon the market-place
> Hooting and shrieking . . .

In Africa owls are commonly associated with sorcery. When an owl perched on a dwelling in Bechuanaland the witch-doctor was called in to perform purificatory rites. The souls of sorcerers were called 'owls' in Madagascar. The Yoruba of Nigeria believe that wizards send out owls as their emissaries to kill people. In certain regions of Nigeria the natives avoid naming the owl, referring to it as 'the bird that makes you afraid'.

Owl-Egg Soup

In North America notions concerning owls varied. While the Pawnees thought of them as giving protection, the Ojibwas believed in an evil spirit which appeared in the guise of an owl. In California the white owl was thought to be an evil spirit and its feathers were worn as a counter-charm.

Since owls were regarded as embodying weird powers they were associated in Germany and elsewhere with witchcraft. The witches in *Macbeth* (Act IV Sc. 1) included in their brew 'Lizard's leg and howlet's wing': Pliny stated that an owl's heart placed on a woman's breast would force her to divulge secrets. This was repeated by Albertus Magnus and reappeared as recently as 1863 in a book published in Pennsylvania. Among the Greeks magical and medicinal virtues were attributed to owls' eggs. Given to a child they would ensure his life-long temperance. Owl-egg soup was a remedy for epilepsy and treatment of grey hair with the contents of an owl's egg would darken it. As the egg had to be one from which a male chick would have emerged, any failures could be easily explained.

The owl figures in a number of fables and legends. The story of 'The War of the Owls and Crows' may have symbolized the opposition between the moon and the sun. It came into Greek literature from India. According to a legend from Normandy the owl is disliked and mobbed by other birds because when the wren burnt its feathers in trying to fetch fire from heaven the owl refused to help by contributing some of its own to clothe the wren (see WREN). The owl's reputation as a bird of wisdom may have arisen through its association with Athene, the goddess of counsel.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: E. A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Collins, 1958).

Janet Kerr

The old folk culture of the Ozarks still thrives in local legends and songs, containing elements of British and European tradition, brought by emigrants and developing in its own way in the isolation of the hills: hill-billy music at the 'Fiddlers' Convention'

Famous for their 'feudin', fightin'' ways, the hill-billies of the Ozark mountains love to tell tall stories of fabulous monsters, such as the chaw-green, a bear with a candy-striped rump and a fondness for chewing tobacco

OZARKS

THE OZARK HILLS have been called 'a splendid and sequestered laboratory' for folklorists. They sprawl across the Arkansas-Missouri border, a region about 300 miles long and 150 wide, notable for peaks and knobs often reaching 2500 feet and made rugged by forest and razor-back ridges. In the valleys and on the hillsides live an isolated and inbred people known in the American popular idiom as 'hill-billies', famous in song, story, comic strip and film – and to some extent in reality – for their uncouth, illiterate, poverty-stricken, 'feudin' and fightin'' ways.

The isolation of the Ozark people, their semi-hidden existence deep in the backwoods, has allowed them to retain intact much of the old folk culture, the traditional pioneer American folklore, long lost in more civilized areas. So out of the Ozarks has come one of the 'richest regional folk cultures' in the United States, in the words of the American folklorist Richard M. Dorson. It contains elements of old British and European traditions, brought by the colonists, altered in certain ways over the generations but still traceable to its roots. At the same time, the Ozark regional culture also includes many regional specialities: 'local events flowering into legend, village ways hardening into custom'. Whatever the origins of the traditions, the lore remains a vital part of backwoods life for those who still live it today. Our knowledge of Ozark lore comes mainly from Vance Randolph, who lived among the hill folk for decades, accumulating a hoard of Ozark

Hill Country Tales

The creative genius of Ozark folk expression lies in the short anecdotal legend. For all their abundance, folksongs in the Ozarks fail to reveal much of a regional imprint. . . The rich Ozark idiom of folk speech that flavors the tales little affects the balladry, and surprisingly few native ballads originate in the Ozarks. But the repertoire of tales is fresh and distinctively regional, even though one constant form refashions all the varieties of narrative. Märchen, legends, jokes, supernatural experiences, stories of local characters, neighborhood events, all emerge as actual incidents that transpired somewhere in the next holler or on the other side of the mountain. "One time there was. . ." the Ozark storytellers begin, and launch into a brief true narration, localized like an anecdote, believed like a legend, but structured, with opening and closing formulas and action in the middle, like a formal folktale. The word of the hillman comes into focus in these narratives, which served him in lieu of newspapers and radio. Gossip of the hills, sensational matters, pranks and antics and tomfoolery, circulate as local stories. The European wonder tale that wanders in from the southern Appalachians is cut down to size and given an Ozark setting; the abbreviated jest from the city is expanded and tied into an appropriate personality; the Negro story from the Mississippi Delta takes on a hill country hue. Because the tales are so splashed with local color, only the comparative folklorist discovers that the great majority are widely traveled.

Richard M. Dorson *American Folklore*

doings and sayings, and collecting their songs, their tales, their myths and their magical beliefs.

Many of the region's favourite myths concern legendary folk heroes who reflect the more masculine Ozarkian virtues – heroic drinking, fighting, hunting, feats of strength and daring. Davy Crockett, the famous backwoodsman, who became legendary, spent some time in Arkansas, and the hill folk enthusiastically claimed some of the heroic tales about him for their own. Colonel Davy, it is said, came to the hills riding a catamount (a mountain lion or puma) with a bear under each arm. On a hunting trip, he travelled so far that he jumped on the sun for a ride home, but had to circle the whole world because he got his directions reversed. He had a 'snaggle-toothed grin' that could frighten animals into unconsciousness; he fought bears with a knife to save bullets, ate bearskins for breakfast, and once started a fire by striking his 'important member' (the euphemism is Vance Randolph's) against a rock to make sparks.

When Crockett left for Texas there was no shortage of heroes. The sharp-shooting gambler Ab Yancey claimed to have gone hunting with one bullet and, in a series of 'tall story' coincidences, to have bagged eight turkeys, two squirrels, two rabbits, 41 quails and a deer. Gib (or Kemp) Morgan was an oil driller who built pipelines so big that when the wells ran dry farmers could drive their cattle to market along the line; sometimes cows would wander off into the threads, at the junction of the pipes, and be lost for days. Tree-top Johnson was a woodsman so tall that he could never tell whether his feet were freezing or whether he had stepped into a forest fire; when thirsty, Johnson would squeeze out a cloud like a sponge. A giant blacksmith named Bib Tarkey once helped some harvesters by making a 24-foot scythe from metal wrenched off a railway bridge; he used an oak tree for a handle, and mowed 80 acres in half an hour.

The Big Black Booger

These heroes fit into that branch of folktale which the Ozarkians call 'windys' – exaggerated lies, a favourite form of American folk entertainment. Another hero, vaguely called 'Jack' and perhaps not always intended to be the same man, can be found in a few tales dealing more explicitly with the supernatural. (He is related to the beanstalk Jack and the giant-killer Jack, both of which grisly nursery tales have made their way, only slightly altered, into the Ozark repertoire.) Jack comes along at a crucial moment to use some homespun magic and defeat the Devil or one of his witches. In one story, he becomes a St George character: a monster called the 'gower', lizard-like and 40 feet long, is raiding livestock and taking a maiden each year – until Jack kills it with two silver darts tipped with steel from a thunderbolt. The gower is only one of the Ozarkians' list of fabulous monsters; but it is clearly demonic and Jack's weapons evidently those of a sorcerer.

Apart from the tale of the gower and similar individualities, the Devil and witch lore of the Ozarkians closely resembles the old European tales from which it derives. So the Devil wanders the hills looking for sinners to snap up; he may appear as 'a big black booger' or bogeyman, or a headless giant with a cloven hoof, or an ordinary man who leaves no shadow or footprints – apart from his more usual horned and leather-winged guise. A heartfelt invocation of Christ, rather than magical means, is usually sufficient to thwart him, except in the case of really hardened sinners.

Somewhat more effort was needed to deal with the witches who, according to the tales, infested the hills in swarms. Some Ozarkians were recognized 'witch-masters', experienced in detecting and destroying these minions of Satan. Their detection involved scratching a cross on the suspect's chair, or placing a Bible under her bed; if the suspect was a witch, the Christian object would make her ill. Alternatively, salt placed under a suspect's chair would melt if she was a witch, and cause her dress to stick to it.

Once the witch-master had pinpointed his witch (sometimes literally, for like the medieval witch-hunters the Ozarkians believed that witches feel no pain from pin-pricks) he obeyed the old biblical maxim 'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'. He might either load his squirrel rifle with a silver bullet and shoot the old woman straightaway, or paint a picture of her and shoot that. Again, he might drive a nail through the heart of a picture of her drawn on the north side of a black oak; or cut her silhouette out of paper and tear it slowly to bits; or make a wax image of her and shoot, knife or burn it.

The ordinary folk kept their houses free from witches by driving three nails into their doors in the shape of a triangle, or fastening crossed hazel twigs to the doors, or the entrails of a horned owl, or indeed the traditional horseshoe, open end up for the horns motif. Others might drive a three-pronged cedar peg into their pathway to form the Trinity motif, regularly used in protective amulets and talismans; or they created that Ozarkian oddity called an 'egg tree' – a dead and trimmed shrub on which were carefully placed the blown shells of eggs.

All these punishments and precautions seemed justified, in terms of what a witch could do. They can cast spells on animals and crops, especially frequent with regard to cows, whose milk they steal by magical means or dry up. (Modern Ozark witches can put spells on cars, as they once did on horses or mules.) They make people ill, using the old technique of a doll or image containing some of the victim's hair or finger-nail clippings, and they can even kill. A gruesome recipe for murder requires the witch to scrape dirt from a grave with her left forefinger at midnight; mix it with the blood of a black bird, preferably a raven; tie the mess in a rag that has touched a corpse; and bury the thing under the victim's doorstep, or hide it under the seat of his wagon or car. When he steps over it, or sits above it, he will die within days.

Hen-Pecked by a Ghost

Witches often roam the countryside invisibly, or in the shapes of cats, wolves, even rabbits, to carry out their evil work. When not plaguing honest Christians, they are flying up the chimney or through the keyhole to attend an orgiastic sabbath at which the Devil usually presides. Just as familiar to the student of European witchcraft is the careful Ozarkian distinction between witches, the Devil's handmaidens, and various non-evil workers of magic. The latter are generically called 'power doctors', and may include the village herbalist or 'yarb' doctor, the dowser or 'water-witcher', and the healer who cures illness by different combinations of laying on of hands and quasi-biblical incantations.

Ghost stories seem to occur fairly abundantly in the hills, and like the witch tales

are often clearly reminiscent of their European origins. Many concern old Ozarkians returning to right some wrong, to haunt the scene of some injustice, to reveal the whereabouts of buried treasure. Characteristically, some Ozarkians come back out of sheer 'cussedness' such as the nagging shrewish wife of one tale, whose ghost continued its marital pattern well after the husband had become a widower. One day some neighbours showed alarm when they heard the dead wife's spectral voice screaming and cursing at the husband from inside the cabin; but the long-suffering man, sitting quietly on his verandah, said in a typical Ozark understatement, 'Don't get excited, she ain't mad at nobody but me.'

The Side-Hill Hoofer

Those weird tales of the Ozarkians which are neither demonic nor ghostly reveal some interesting preoccupations of the hill folk, including a prevalence of bestial sexual unions and their monstrous offspring. Naked wild men or women have been said to run with wolf packs, in the old days, and to sire or bear children who were half-human, half-wolf. Some traditional Indian lore creeps in here through the influence of Cherokee legend, often containing the motif of the female animal in human form who marries a man but returns to the wild when her son is born. One such tale concerns a man whose human wife finds he has another partner – a giant female blacksnake, on whom he has fathered offspring. The human wife left him, remarking that she could have put up with a cow or a ewe but a snake was going too far.

A number of tales concern some superbly fabulous monsters that are said to lurk in the deep wilderness. Among these the gower, already mentioned, has a cousin (or an alter ego) called the 'gowrow'. This too is reptilian, 20 feet long, with horns on its back and webbed feet, an eater of livestock and sometimes of people. Another huge lizard, the 'jimplicute', ambushes travellers by night and sucks their blood. The 'kingdoodle' or 'whangdoodle' is a lizard 14 hands high, but mild-mannered and not carnivorous. But the reptilian 'high-behind', which has back legs ten times longer than its forelegs, is said to lap up people 'like a toad-frog ketchin' flies'.

The 'snawfus' is an albino deer sometimes said to be winged, sometimes wingless but able to jump higher than the treetops; sighting it is an omen of death. The 'bingbuffer' is shaped like a giant hippopotamus, but with a 40-foot hinged tail which it uses as a sling to hurl stones at its prey. The 'gally-wampus' is a huge cat-like or mink-like monster, at home in the water and a great killer of livestock; also cat-like is the 'whistling wampus', who kills people after luring them with its whistle into the forest.

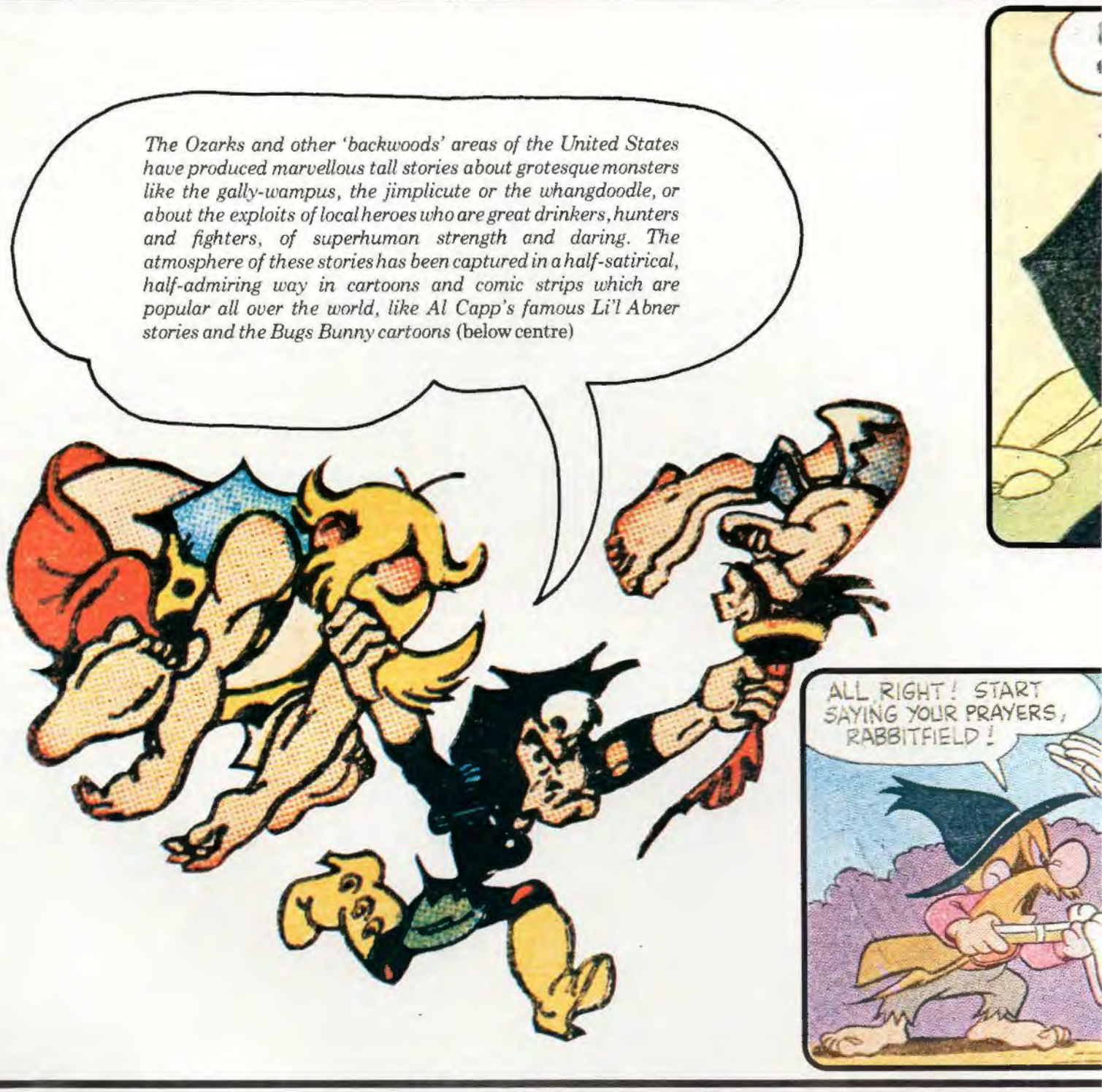
The 'chaw-green' is bear-like, but with a candy-striped rump and a fondness for chewing tobacco. The 'fish hound', having fur on its belly and feathers on its back, may be a cross between an otter and a waterbird: it eats all the fish to thwart fishermen. The 'side-hill hoofer' looks like a beaver but is as big as a yearling calf; its legs are shorter on one side so that it can run upright on the sides of mountains – but only in one direction. Equally unbalanced is the 'baldknob buzzard', a vulture with one rudimentary wing: it must fly always in circles, round mountains. The 'whiffle-bird' always flies backwards, either to keep the dust out of its eyes or because it is more interested in where it has been than where it is going. The 'fillyloo' or 'gillygoo' bird manages to fly both backwards and upside down. 'Old Walleyes' is a creature with a huge mouth and revolving eyes who can run faster than a horse and who has a prodigious appetite; the more he eats of animal or human flesh, the bigger his mouth gets and the faster his eyes spin round.

These glorious inventions of Ozark 'windy' spinners are filled out by tales of frogs as big as steers, vast turtles that gobble up mules, and hordes of water monsters very like that of Loch Ness. The creatures' names alone make it obvious that they are not to be taken seriously: they spring from the Ozarkians' love of tale-spinning, not from hill-billy credulity. Credulity occurs, however, when visiting folklorists or anthropologists confuse tall stories with folk belief. Still, even if the legendary monsters and

Fess Parker (*right*) as Davy Crockett in a Walt Disney film, *Davy Crockett and the River Pirates*: tall tales gathered round this backwoodsman, who lived in Arkansas for a time and whose 'snaggle-toothed' grin was said to frighten animals into unconsciousness

Walt Disney Productions Ltd

The Ozarks and other 'backwoods' areas of the United States have produced marvellous tall stories about grotesque monsters like the gally-wampus, the jimplicute or the whangdoodle, or about the exploits of local heroes who are great drinkers, hunters and fighters, of superhuman strength and daring. The atmosphere of these stories has been captured in a half-satirical, half-admiring way in cartoons and comic strips which are popular all over the world, like Al Capp's famous Li'l Abner stories and the Bugs Bunny cartoons (below centre)



heroes are proffered as entertaining lies, the vast range of supernatural beliefs including those of ghosts and witches are (or once were) held to be true.

Never Sleep on a Rifle

Among the enormous range of beliefs still more or less current in the backwoods are some familiar motifs, with local details added. Sympathetic magic is often evident in the hill folk's superstitions, as in their practices connected with healing or the prevention of disease. Ozarkians would wear buzzard feathers in their hatbands to ward off rheumatism, and carry hogs' teeth in the right-hand trouser pocket to prevent toothache. The principle of magical transference underlies such practices as curing warts by pricking them with pins and thrusting the pins into the earth while blindfolded, and then ensuring that the pins are never disturbed.

In the category of omens, weather prediction takes precedence. Snake tracks foretell rain, as do dogs eating grass and cats sneezing. The number of fogs in August equals the number of snowfalls to come in winter; the number of thunderclaps heard in February indicates the number of frosts to come in May. Omens directed elsewhere include the belief that a cobweb over the door means a girl's lover will never call again; a dream that occurs during one's first sleep under a new coverlet must always come true; bad luck on one's birthday means bad luck all the year round; general good luck is indicated by a dead crow on the road, or a butterfly in the house.

There are certain specific taboos among the beliefs of the Ozarkians. Girls must not comb their hair after dark or they will lose their lovers; pregnant women must not cross running water or they will die in childbirth; housewives must not run out of salt, or they face a year's poverty. Farming taboos are especially numerous: you must not laugh while planting corn, or the grains will grow too far apart; you must never pull a hog's tail, or he will not fatten; killing toads makes the cows' milk bloody; changing a horse's name may cause its death; slaughtering pigs while the moon is waning ruins the pork. Above all, never transplant a cedar tree or burn a peach tree, for fear

of terrible disaster. To avoid bad luck in general, you should not lend or borrow salt, go back into a house for something forgotten when you have just left it, put rifles under beds, sing before breakfast or in bed, or whistle in the privy; women should never be allowed to whistle at any time.

A number of superstitions take the form of explicit ritual, active magic either to forestall bad luck or to bring good. Farmers should get angry when planting peppers, and should cause cucumbers to grow to a good size by ensuring that they are planted by a virile, well-endowed man. Bees must be told verbally of a death in the family, or they will leave the hives. A feather from each of your chickens, buried under the henhouse, will protect them from animal or human marauders. Salt and pepper must be the first objects taken into a new house. Girls can increase their sex appeal by eating raw chicken hearts, while men can improve their virility with wild ginseng root; girls can win a man's love by slipping a bit of their fingernails or a drop of menstrual blood into his drink; a boy can hide the dried tongue of a dove in the girl's house, and she can then deny him nothing.

If a woman shakes her skirts at the new moon, she will get a new dress; if she catches a butterfly and bites off its head, she will get a dress the colour of the butterfly. Windows and doors should be kept open on New Year's Eve, for good luck all year. You should kill the first snake seen in spring, or you will be ruined by autumn.

In a way, the hills have acted like a game reserve for the folk beliefs of the Ozarkians. But it would be incorrect to infer that they have remained wholly static in their primitive beliefs, for the 20th century has made inroads into the traditional way of life. The fact remains, however, that more of the old ways have been preserved longer in the Ozark backwoods than most other regions of the Western world; if they are not always practised or believed in today, they are nevertheless freshly remembered.

DOUGLAS HILL

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PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS

Given to fun and feasting in the winter months, before the serious business of the year, the Indians of the North-West Pacific coastline marked their most important occasions with a ceremony known as the potlatch, which might take months or even years to prepare

'IN THE BEGINNING there was nothing but water. The Raven was flying over the surface of the water, but could not perch anywhere because there was neither land nor tree. He decided to create the world. He picked up some small pebbles and flew over the sea. Now and then he dropped a pebble into the water and an island came into existence. Thus the dry land appeared in the midst of the water of the ocean. After that the Raven started to create all things. He created trees and grass, fish in the water, and birds in the air, and every kind of beast in the forest. There were now all living creatures except man. He wanted to create man also but could not do it for a long period of time, because he did not know the suitable material to use. He tried to use stone, water, air and many other materials, but in vain. At last he took some clay and wood and created a man and woman.'

So says one of the many creation myths of the Kwakiutl tribes. A supreme god is not recognizable in North-West Coast religion and mythology, although there are a number of dominant characters drawn from the sky, earth, sea and underworld who are credited with, or identified with discoveries and aspects of the way of life.

In effect the legend was a lesson from

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

Raven as the creator was a supreme trickster; whilst bestowing gifts on man he could at the same time make a fool of man

which man learned and developed a pattern of behaviour based on that of the birds, animals and fish upon which he depended for food and, therefore, for life itself. Man in fact identified with a particular beast and was that beast in human form, having at some point shed the human form for that of the beast, and returned at a later point in time as a human endowed with the secrets, wisdom and powers of the beast. It was these beasts in addition to the human form that appeared usually in traditional stylized forms in the graphic arts and carvings.

Raven as the creator was a supreme trickster (see TRICKSTER); whilst bestowing gifts on man he could at the same time make a fool of man and other mythological characters alike. A Haida myth of the origin of light tells how Raven, seeing the world in darkness and feeling sorry for man hunting for food, set off one day to the Chief of the Sky who kept the ball of daylight hidden to punish the people. To get into the house of the Chief of the Sky, he changed into a spruce needle that fell into the spring, and was swallowed by the Chief's daughter who had come to drink. Soon she became pregnant and a son was born who was Raven in disguise. The Chief was pleased and himself tended the child, who soon learned to crawl, moving from room to room in search of the ball of light. This he found, and began to cry 'Ball, Ball' until eventually the Chief reluctantly and on the insistence of his advisers gave him the ball to play with. Each day he was given the ball, until the Chief and his advisers eventually gave up watching him. At this he rolled it to the door, turned himself back into Raven and flew back to the people, breaking open the ball and allowing the bright light to spread so that the people could see to hunt.

At the time of European contact and in the early fur trading period, the population of the seven major tribes – Kwakiutl, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, Bella Coola, Nootka and Salish – was variously estimated at around

Bone pendant ornament inlaid with haliotis shell and shaped like a soul-trap, a box which the shamans of the Pacific North-West used for recovering souls that had escaped from their owners' bodies, causing them physical and mental illness

Abbey Museum/Michael Holford

70,000 people. Although linguistically each tribe was quite different, contact between them for trade, warfare, intermarriage and slave-taking resulted in an interchange of ideas and material culture along the rugged, forested Pacific coastline from south Alaska to northern California, which produced a culture that was similar.

The seasons governed the activities of the people, with spring and summer being the time for outdoor activities, particularly food gathering with the long winter months in mind. Autumn was a time for travel and feasts, and winter confined the people to their villages when the social life was the dominant feature. From the sea and rivers they took fish, mostly salmon, for food. Wood for their houses, utensils and other goods came from the forests, together with animals for their clothing. From the same sources they also developed beliefs and customs which characterized the culture of the area.

They lived in small villages mostly on the rivers and coastline, in large timber houses adorned with beautifully carved and painted decorative motifs that compare favourably with other primitive and developed societies throughout the world. Their artistic ability was well developed and encompassed all aspects of the material culture; canoes, furniture, clothing, tools, weapons and utensils were usually carved and painted with traditional designs that blended into the form. Many objects produced for religious, mythological or political

Animals played an important part in Indian beliefs, for man modelled his patterns of behaviour on animals, birds and fish, on which he depended for food and so for life itself *Above* Haida rattle in the form of a raven, bearing on its back a man, a frog and a thunderbird, a mythical creature which caused thunder by flapping its wings. Raven was a great trickster and, in a Haida myth, stole the ball of daylight from the Chief of the Sky and brought it to the people to relieve them from darkness and give them light to hunt by. He did this by getting himself born as the Chief of the Sky's grandson and demanding the ball of daylight to play with *Below* Shaman's charm in the form of a killer whale, a motif which appears again in a copper mask (*right*) and a blanket (*far right*). The hunting of whales involved special ceremonies

Museum of the American Indian

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

purposes used designs originating from legendary and mythological beliefs which in turn originated from the environment.

In every society there was a mythical beginning, and on the North-West Coast all living things were thought to be equal and in balance, differing only in their appearance. They were the same in thought, word and deed and taking human form. Man was Salmon, Bear or Raven for example, and conversely Salmon, Bear or Raven was Man. Clan names were claimed through descent from these creatures. The front of the house would be painted with the crest of the ancestral creature, as would be the articles of daily and ceremonial use.

Season of Fun and Feasts

The cold, wet winter months confined the people to their own villages and houses, and were a time for ceremony, singing, dancing, initiation of the young, feasting, speeches and ritual. There were many dance societies, involving the use of ceremonial costumes and fantastic masks combined with a sense of theatre that demanded elaborate timing, staging and direction.

The prelude to this ceremonial season was marked with a gay carnival of feasting and fun, a period in which the people unwound and relaxed after a season of toil. It began with a memorial service for those who had died since the last season, and finished several days later when the festivities were interrupted by a masked orator who announced that a new season would begin tomorrow and that life would again be a serious business. This heralded the beginning of the ceremonial season in earnest and the arrival of the spirits to prepare the novices for initiation.

The next day each novice would allegedly be taken away by a spirit, but was in fact confined to the dancing society house, from which all non-initiates were barred. There he was prepared and rehearsed for his entrance into the society with a short apprenticeship, on the completion of which all the village and visitors from surrounding villages were invited to witness his return from the spirit world to become human again.

The ceremony was dramatic, and often lasted several days. The novice entered, cried, danced and performed acts of magic, thus showing that he was possessed by the spirit. He was attended by assistants who helped him throughout and eventually quietened and calmed him until he had returned to human society. At the end of each day's performance a feast was held, and gifts were distributed.

The various dance societies performed throughout the winter months and a long pageant of drama, comedy and illusion ensued both inside and outside the houses. Houses were set up as theatres, with the use of curtains, the light of the central fire that created effects, tunnels under the floor and speaking tubes. Props such as a false-bottomed box, or a carved figure which was substituted for an initiate allegedly killed, then magically restored to life, were used.

Illusion and trickery were employed extensively. Beheadings, disappearances, voices from the air, sudden appearance of spirits or reappearances of the dead, walking on or handling fire; all were planned and rehearsed. At the public performance speakers, musicians, heralds and other specialists, along with the performers and dancers, played out their parts to convince the audience of the real presence of spirits and the supernatural, culminating in their final departure and the return to the normal order.

By the end of the season, when all who had applied for membership to the societies had been initiated and food supplies had become low, final gifts and payments were distributed. Then the last songs and dances were performed and the orator warned that a new season would soon begin – the season of work, food gathering and travel.

The Potlatch Ceremony

A major ceremony and the most important social event was the potlatch. Invariably associated with status, either of an individual, a clan or a village, it was an occasion for the distribution or re-distribution of the wealth upon which the economy was based.

The occasions for such a ceremony were many; the raising of a totem pole for a deceased chief, the introduction of a new chief, the coming of age of a close relative, a marriage, the giving of a new rank or name, the use of a new crest or the raising of a new house. But it was not uncommon for the planning and preparation to take many months or even years, for guests might amount to several hundreds and might stay

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The shaman, who generally inherited his office, was mainly concerned with healing illnesses which he diagnosed through visions or dreams *Right* This Haida wood carving represents a shaman who fell in the forest, broke both his legs and starved to death *Far right* Haida ancestor figure

***Facing page left* Carved wooden figure of a man, used as a grave marker *Right* Detail from a totem pole, from Bella Bella in British Columbia, showing a man clutched in the teeth of a monstrous beast. The totem posts were carved with scenes from myths and illustrate the close connection seen between men and animals. Different clans were believed to be descended from different animal ancestors. 'Man in fact identified with a particular beast and was that beast in human form'**

for some weeks, requiring an abundance of food and gifts. The glory and prestige of the hosts depended upon the success of the occasion.

The rank of the guests governed the importance of the gifts; carved and painted chests, dishes, baskets, clothing, jewellery and even slaves were distributed in correct precedence. A rival chief might receive a canoe, whilst someone of low rank would receive a token gift of a strip of cloth.

The gifts were acquired for the potlatch in two ways, either by manufacture by the household members specifically for the occasion, or by redemption of loans, often with accrued interest as high as 100 per cent. The distribution of the gifts and the loans created a credit system, and careful accounts were kept. In this way the potlatch became the basis of the economy.

Guests were invited by agents of the chief, who acted as guides for the visitors at the appointed time; they were greeted by the host's family singing and dancing on the beach as they approached. After the speaker had announced them the feasting began, with the dishes being passed round in a prescribed traditional way. The speaker meanwhile gave a commentary on the food and urged all to enjoy themselves.

Each day, events would be featured varying in importance, so that a potlatch might include both a major event such as the raising of a totem pole, and a minor event such as the naming of a child. There would be dancing, singing, dramas and speeches, all the participants wearing their finest robes, head-dresses and jewellery, and some gifts would be distributed each day. On the final day, which was the grand climax of the occasion, the most valuable gifts would be given strictly in accordance with degrees of rank.

As a symbol of wealth, the copper also changed hands at the potlatch, but usually as a result of pre-arranged bargaining. The more a copper changed hands the greater its bargaining value, and on occasion a chief might deliberately shatter his wealth by breaking the copper and giving it to a rival chief, who in turn was expected to destroy wealth or lose face. A broken copper could be riveted together and re-used, but lost its original bargaining power which had to be re-established.

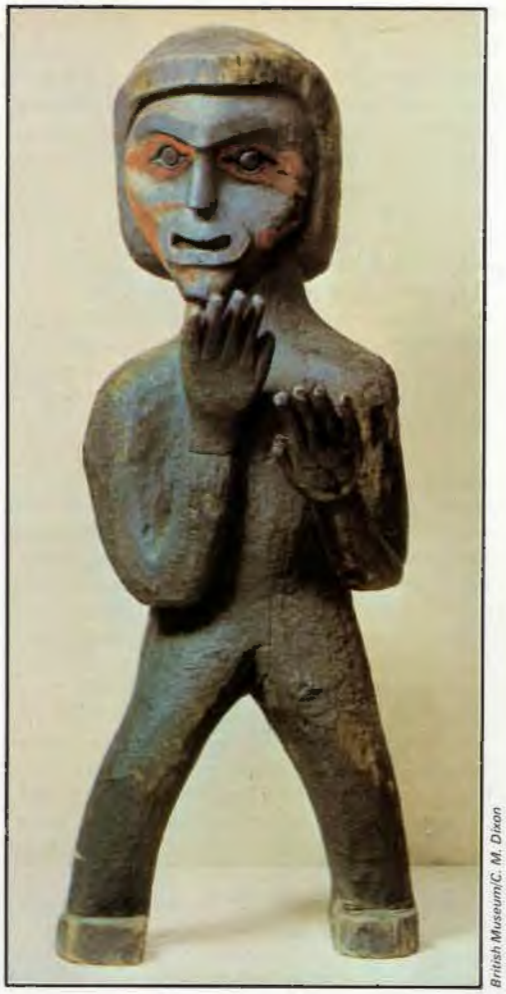
In 1921 the potlatch was prohibited by law although in remote areas the practice was continued secretly; by the time this law was repealed in 1951 much of the Indian way of life had been destroyed. The potlatch was subsequently revived with some ardour, and a fine pole carved by Robert Davidson, a young Haida artist, was raised at a ceremony at Masset in the Queen Charlotte Islands as recently as June 1969.

Shaman with Magic Box

The shaman or medicine-man played an important part in the life of the village. He was the healer, the contact and interpreter of the spirits. The position of shaman was generally acquired by heredity, an uncle revealing his spirit to a nephew before he died; or by a supernatural being possessing a man or occasionally a woman, and revealing itself to the human world through that person. To become a successful shaman took time in which to build a reputation and demanded cleansing of the soul by fasting, abstaining from sexual intercourse, washing in the sea, drinking warm salt water to empty the stomach and drinking fresh water afterwards.

Fasting and visions, followed by chanting and the shaking of the rattles and beating of drums, were regular parts of a shamanistic ceremony, in which the shaman dressed according to the spirit speaking through him. He would probably wear a blanket woven of mountain goat's hair and cedar bark twine or a Hudson's Bay decorated trade blanket with leggings to match, a skin apron painted and hung with puffin beaks or deer hoofs that rattled in the dance; a crown and necklace of bear claws or carved horns. Accoutrements for the occasion would consist of a rattle, usually round; a staff carved with the symbols of his visions and supernatural spirits; carved bone and ivory charms, carried or worn as a pendant; a soul-catcher, similar to the charms but actually a box, also in wood, often inlaid with abalone shell and with a removable stopper, and a drum often painted with a symbol.

Primarily concerned with healing, the shaman would visit the patient accompanied by an attendant or two. Whilst the shaman sang over the patient, the attendants and people of the house would beat the drums and boards, until a vision or dream occurred



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to the shaman which would tell him the cause of illness. He usually attributed it to a supernatural object or a natural object disorganized supernaturally. The shaman at this stage would be a supernatural being able to see what ordinary man could not and would set about capturing the offending object, still accompanied by drums, rattles and chants. This would be done either by drawing it out of the body, or if it was the soul of the patient he would pursue it with his soul-catcher with the stopper removed until he could pop it into the magic box, replace the stopper and return it to the patient. For this service the shaman would be paid, but if the patient died the payment would be returned.

Today the Indians of the North-West Coast are predominantly Christian. Old practices and beliefs still persist in some places, with a growing awareness and revival, but not as part of their religion so much as a revival of tradition. It will be many generations before they integrate into modern society; environment, cultural heritage and racial background will prevent a rapid transition. It is to be hoped that the emergence will be gentle and allow them to retain their own identity.

(See also TOTEM.)

D. B. ALSFORD

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Horniman Museum/C. M. Dixon

'And in the end this Exominate was contented to give him her soid Soul'; a formal agreement, renouncing one's soul to the Devil in return for his services, is an important element of the Faust legend and of European witchcraft

PACT

THE PACT with the Devil bulks large in the history of witchcraft and also in Western literature, especially in connection with Faust. It is based on the belief that the Evil One hungers for human souls and that every Christian on whom he can fasten his talons is the spoil of a triumphant campaign in the war which he has waged against God and man ever since he was expelled from his high seat in heaven. He therefore offers his services to greedy magicians and grovelling witches in return for their souls and bodies. The formal agreement with him may be made verbally or in writing and, if in writing, may be signed in the sorcerer's blood, the blood which carries his life-energy and so conveys his life into the Devil's hands. The pact may last for the whole of the signer's natural life or for a limited number of years, at the end of which the Devil will come to claim his victim.

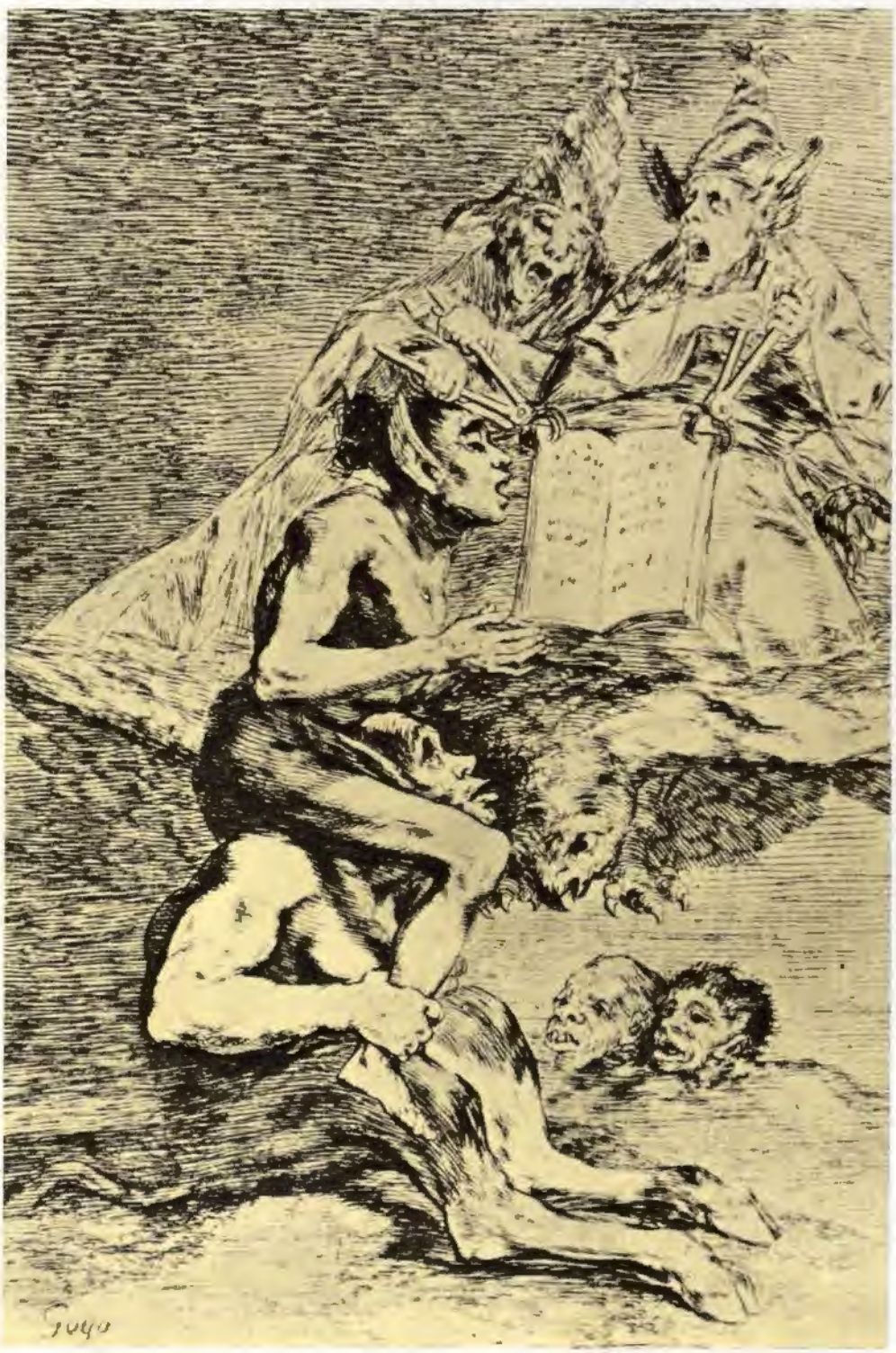
Scriptural authority for the possibility of a pact with the Prince of Darkness was found in Isaiah 28.15. This verse originally had nothing to do with any bargain with the Devil but the Vulgate translation suggested that it had: *percurrimus foedus cum morte et cum inferno fecimus pactum*, 'we have signed a treaty with death and with hell we have made a pact'. The early Christians tended to believe that magicians and diviners obtained their effects through the assistance of demons and the main impetus to later belief in the Satanic pact came from St Augustine who (in *De Doctrina Christiana*) condemned sorcery, astrology and other occult arts, 'arising from the pestiferous association of men with demons, as if formed by a pact of faithless and dishonourable friendship.' This passage was quoted by later authorities and became part of the Church's law.

Stories began to circulate about people who had sold themselves to the Devil. An early one is the tale of Proterius, a servant who fell hopelessly in love with his master's daughter. To win her, he appealed to the Devil and signed a paper renouncing his baptism and his faith in Christ and promising to share the horrors of hell with his new master. The Devil kept his part of the bargain by causing the girl to fall in love with Proterius but the latter was saved from hellfire by St Basil (bishop of Caesarea in Asia Minor, in the 4th century), who forced the Devil to return the signed paper. This story already has the element of having your cake and eating it which is typical of many pact tales. The Devil demands a formal contract to make sure that the bargain cannot be broken but, although he keeps his part in it, the contract is broken through the intercession of some high spiritual authority and the signatory gets the best of both worlds.

The same thing happens in the story of Theophilus of Adana, which has been traced back as far as the 6th century and was included in *The Golden Legend*, a 13th century collection of legendary lives of saints which was extremely popular in the Middle Ages. Theophilus was a Christian who was persecuted by his bishop, and resented it. He consulted a wicked Jew, who took him in the middle of the night to a place where they saw a crowd of creatures in white robes. They carried candles and seated among them was their prince, the Devil, who demanded that Theophilus 'deny the son of Mary and those things which are offensive to me, and let him set down in writing that he denieth absolutely.' Theophilus did so, sealing the writing with wax (though by at least the 13th century he was said to have signed the statement in his own blood).

The fortunes of Theophilus spectacularly improved after this but he began to be depressed by the terrible prospect of an eternity in hell. He wailed and bemoaned himself so noisily that the Virgin Mary heard him. She took pity on him, obtained divine forgiveness for him and recovered the written pact. It was publicly burned after Theophilus had made an open confession.

In some stories the human signer of the



Left Sorcerer making a diabolic pact, a drawing by Goya *Right* The most famous pact-signer of legend was Faust, who bargained his soul away to the Devil in return for superhuman power: Faust and Mephistopheles, an illustration to Goethe's *Faust* by A. von Kreling

Chris Barker

pact intends trickery from the beginning. An example is the case of Roger Bacon, the 13th century scientist and philosopher, who was said to have promised the Devil his soul unless he died neither in the Church nor out of it. The Devil readily agreed but lost his prey because Bacon constructed a cell in the wall of a church, neither inside nor outside it, and took care to die there.

But the Devil is not always cheated and, psychologically, if you believe in him, perhaps, once summoned, he is not so easily got rid of. There was a well-known medieval legend that the brilliant Gerbert of Aurillac, who became Pope Sylvester II in 999, was a sorcerer who had signed a pact with Satan. A speaking brazen head, which he had made with the Devil's assistance, told him that he would not die before he celebrated Mass in Jerusalem. Gerbert naturally decided to go nowhere near the Holy Land but one day, in the year 1003, he was saying Mass in a church when he felt his strength draining away from him and sensed the presence of an army of gloating demons. He discovered that the church was dedicated to the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, and just had time to confess before he died.

Damnation of Faust

The most famous pact-signer of legend was Faust, who was said to have started the rumour that he was in league with the Devil, so as to gain prestige (see FAUST). There was a story that a friar begged Faust to mend his evil ways but that Faust refused to break the blood-pact he had signed: 'The Devil has honestly kept the promise that he made to me, therefore I will honestly keep the pledge that I made and contracted with him.' As the term of the pact drew near, Faust despaired and lamented and on his last night on earth, soon after midnight, a great storm blew up and there was heard a whistling and a hissing like the sound of legions of snakes. Faust cried feebly for help but no one dared go to him. What was left of his body was found next morning in the yard, near the manure heap. His room was swimming in blood, brains and teeth, and his eyeballs were stuck to one wall.

The pact was important in prosecutions for witchcraft because it was evidence of heresy, of the repudiation of Christ and deliberate enlistment in the ranks of the Enemy. According to the *Dialogus Miraculorum* of Caesarius of Heisterbach (13th century), about the year 1200 two heretics came to Besançon, in eastern France, and worked all sorts of marvels and miracles. It was discovered that they carried written pacts with the Devil concealed under the skin of their armpits. The documents were removed and the heretics were burned to death.

In 1320 an inquisitor in Carcassonne, in southern France, was instructed to proceed against people who worshipped demons and gave them writings and made pacts with them. *Errores Gazariorum*, written in Savoy c1450, says that becoming a witch involved swearing an oath of fidelity to the Devil, who then drew blood from the neophyte's left hand and wrote with it on paper and kept the paper. One of the Arras witches, in 1460, confessed to signing a pact in his own blood and Antoine Rose, tried in 1477, said she had kissed the Devil's foot in homage and renounced the Christian faith, and then the Devil put his mark on her (see FRENCH WITCHCRAFT).

The *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) says that when a new witch joins the cult, the Devil asks her 'whether she will abjure the Faith, and forsake the holy Christian religion and the worship of the Anomalous Woman (for so they call the Most Blessed Virgin Mary), and never venerate the sacraments.' The new witch duly swears this with upraised hand but then the Devil tells her that this is not enough, for she must give herself to him, body and soul, for ever. The *Malleus* also quotes from an earlier work, John Nider's *Formicarius* (c1435), which says that the new recruit swore 'to deny the Christian religion, never to adore the Eucharist, and to tread the Cross underfoot whenever she could do so secretly.' From the same source the *Malleus* quotes a Swiss witch as saying that the neophyte entered a church on a Sunday with the leaders of the group and in their presence denied Christ and the Church: 'and then he must pay homage to the Little Master, for so and not otherwise do they call the Devil'.

Evidently, a written pact signed in blood was not always necessary, though a Basque witch burned in 1619 showed Pierre de Lancre the pact she had made with the Devil, scrawled in menstrual blood. A written pact which is still preserved is the one allegedly signed by Urbain Grandier (see GRANDIER) and produced against him in evidence at his trial in 1634, together with a reply signed by the chief princes of hell. The pact reads:

> My lord and master Lucifer, I acknowledge you as my god and prince, and promise to serve and obey you while I live. And I renounce the other god aud Jesus Christ, the saints, the Roman Church and all its sacraments, and all prayers by which the faithful might intercede for me; and I promise to do as much evil as I can and to draw all others to evil; and I renounce chrism and baptism, and all the merits of Jesus Christ and his saints; and if I fail to serve and adore you, paying you homage three times a day, I give you my life as your own.

In reply the lords of darkness promised him a happy life full of carnal delights for 20 years, after which he would join them in hell.

In England, Anne Chattox (see LANCASHIRE WITCHES) said that 'a thing like a Christian man, for four years together, did sundry times come to this Examinate, and requested this Examinate to give him her Soul; and in the end this Examinate was contented to give him her said Soul, she being then in her own house, in the Forest of Pendle.' The phrasing of this confession suggests another source of the firm belief in the pact, the tendency of lawyers to rejoice in set forms and due process, and their assumption that the Father of Lies must do so too.

The pact has little importance in the text-books of ceremonial magic. The *Grand Grimoire* does include an unimpressive ritual for making a pact with a subordinate demon named Lucifuge Rofocale in order to borrow money from him, but the grimoires are mainly concerned to dominate evil spirits, to quell them and reduce them to obedience, and the mentality of the sorcerer who bargains his soul away to obtain the Devil's services is foreign to their view of the overwhelming power of the master magician.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Pagan

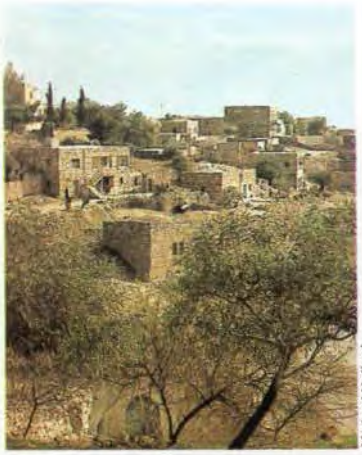
Derived from Latin *paganus*, 'countryman', implying belief in a variety of Nature gods and spirits, and sometimes implying delight in Nature, the senses, the things of this world; generally refers to a believer in the polytheism of the ancient world, especially of Greece and Rome, but has been used in many ways, sometimes meaning one who is not a Christian, sometimes one who is not a Christian, Jew or Moslem, sometimes one who has no religion at all.

Ronald Sheridan

Pagoda

Buddhist sacred building, especially a tower, which may be connected with a temple or may stand by itself; usually rising in a series of tiers to a spire at the top, though in Ceylon it is bell-shaped and is said to represent the female breast; it frequently contains a statue of Buddha and enshrines holy relics.

Michael Holford


Michael Holford

Palestine
Small country at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, comprising parts of what are now the states of Israel and Jordan; the name comes from the Philistines, who occupied the southern coast; the Promised Land to which Moses and Joshua led the Hebrews, and the Holy Land of Christianity.
See ASTARTE; BAAL; JERUSALEM; JUDAISM; PHOENICIANS; SYRIA AND PALESTINE; YAHWEH.

Palindrome
Word which reads the same forwards as backwards ('eye', for example, or 'noon'); some magic squares were arranged to read the same in all directions, which was thought to give them additional power.
See MAGIC SQUARES.

Few, if any, physical mediums have been so thoroughly investigated as this peasant girl, whose extraordinary paranormal powers many eminent investigators endorsed but many others challenged as fraudulent

EUSAPIA PALLADINO

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BORN IN 1854 at Minervo-Murge, near Bari in Italy, Eusapia Palladino was the daughter of Italian peasants. Her mother died at her birth and when she was 12 years old her father was murdered by brigands. Taken into the household of a Neapolitan family, who were interested in Spiritualism, as a nursery-maid, she soon showed signs of abnormal gifts. From then on her career led from one scientific investigation to another, almost up to her death.

Her phenomena consisted of the occurrences common to physical mediums. While she was said to be securely held or fastened, there would occur raps and bangs on the furniture and walls of the room; touches on the bodies of the investigators and telekinetic movements (movements without contact – see PSYCHOKINESIS) of various objects both inside and outside the cabinet. (A cabinet in this sense means simply a space enclosed within drawn curtains near the medium in which, it is alleged, the medium's 'power' is accumulated.) The cabinet curtains would sometimes bulge out and materializations appear, looking like the outline of 'hands' and 'heads' (known as pseudopods), together with other ectoplasmic forms. There were also isolated reports of fully-formed hands and even fully-formed phantoms.

Hereward Carrington, the American investigator, records an occasion when 'Eusapia asked me to enter the cabinet and hold the small table within it. It was light enough for me to *see* that nothing was opposite me, even though the curtains were more or less closed; yet some invisible being or force was strong enough to throw both the table and myself out of the cabinet completely – landing on the floor outside.'

The most notorious feature of Eusapia's strange personality was her incessant resort to trickery. Nevertheless, one of her most outstanding investigators, the French physiologist Professor Richet, stated that, in spite of her many frauds 'all the men of science, without exception, who experimented with her were in the end convinced that she produced genuine phenomena'. No other medium so well illustrates the difficulties and complexities of physical mediumship, and the history of her relations with the Society for Psychical Research can best demonstrate this.

The S.P.R.'s connection with Eusapia began through Professor Richet, who maintained a materialistic outlook in spite of his belief in the validity of paranormal phenomena. A great deal about his experiments with Eusapia will be found in his book *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*. In it Richet records that he had close on 200 seances with Eusapia. 'Even if there were no other medium than Eusapia in the world,' he wrote, 'her manifestations would suffice to establish scientifically the reality of telekinesis and ectoplasmic forms.' 'When I recall the precautions that all of us have taken, not once but twenty, a hundred, or even a thousand times, it is inconceivable that we should have been deceived on all these occasions.'

'Deliberate Fraud'

In 1894 Richet invited two S.P.R. members, F. W. H. Myers (see MYERS) and Sir Oliver Lodge, to take part in experiments with Eusapia at his villa on the Ile de Roubaud, a tiny island off the Mediterranean coast. On their return to England Lodge and Myers reported their complete acceptance of Eusapia's paranormal powers.

There was a disturbing sequel, however. Dr Richard Hodgson, who had established himself as the leading S.P.R. expert on fraudulent practices, had gone to America some seven years earlier to become Secretary to the American S.P.R. and to take control there of the work with the famous mental medium, Mrs Piper (see PIPER). While in Boston he had read Lodge's report on Eusapia and wrote back to the *Journal* challenging the testimony offered by Richet, Lodge and Myers, and stating that the experimental conditions described were inadequate to prevent fraud. Indeed, he indicated exactly how he thought such fraud would have been possible – by Eusapia freeing a hand or foot without detection by the investigators holding her.

Shaken by the criticism of the redoubtable Dr Hodgson, the Council of the S.P.R. invited Eusapia to visit England for renewed experiments, which Hodgson came from America to attend. The result of 20 seances held in Cambridge established Eusapia's fraud in the unanimous opinion of the participants, by means of exactly such a method of evading control of a hand or foot as Hodgson had postulated. Even Myers, who had been so completely convinced a short while before, stated that he could not now doubt that they had observed 'conscious and deliberate fraud of a kind which must have needed long practice to bring it to its present level of skill'. Lodge, however, remained unshaken and, in spite of Eusapia's admitted fraud at Cambridge, stuck to his insistence on the genuineness of the phenomena he had witnessed on the Ile de Roubaud.

Anxious to preserve the Society's reputation and to keep clear of the many frauds only too common among physical mediums, Professor Sidgwick, leader of the S.P.R., issued a pronouncement. It had been 'placed beyond reasonable doubt that the frauds discovered by Dr Hodgson at Cambridge had been systematically practised by Eusapia for years. In accordance, therefore, with our established custom, I propose to ignore her performances for the future as I ignore those of other persons engaged in the same mischievous trade.'

How had her fraud been detected? The answer was: by Hodgson freeing one of Eusapia's hands in order to observe just exactly how she eluded control. The adverse report which followed caused considerable

dissatisfaction among European investigators. It was argued that it had always been recognized, by all investigators, that Eusapia would cheat, given the opportunity, and that Hodgson by his deliberate avoidance of proper control had virtually encouraged her trickery.

Supernormal Force

In 1908, 13 years later, the S.P.R. unbent and a committee was appointed to investigate Eusapia anew. By this time Sidgwick, Myers and Hodgson had all died. Mrs Sidgwick, the then President of the Society, explained the change of front on the grounds that in view of the very thorough investigation of the medium abroad, the Council wished to collect further material in order to form an independent judgement.

The 'Naples Committee' consisted of the three most critical men, the most experienced in the investigation of physical mediums, in methods of conjuring and in detection of fraud, that the S.P.R. could muster. They were the Hon. Everard Feilding, Hon. Secretary of the Society; W. W. Baggally, an S.P.R. Council member, and Hereward Carrington, Research Investigator of the American S.P.R. for some years. They proceeded to Naples in what they described as a thoroughly sceptical if not hostile frame of mind, resulting from years of detecting fraud. But all three were converted to an emphatic belief in Eusapia's phenomena, brought about by the stringent conditions in which the phenomena had been observed. Their subsequent report records 'Eusapia was not detected in fraud in any one of the 470 phenomena that took place at the eleven seances.' They were 'compelled to ascribe Eusapia's phenomena to some supernormal cause . . . Our general opinion of these phenomena is that they were due to some supernormal force resident in the organism of Eusapia, though some few of them would appear to point to the action of an independent energy.'

Eusapia Palladino apparently levitating a table, while two investigators hold her hands and knees: it was recognized that she would resort to trickery whenever she was allowed to, but three experienced and critical researchers were driven to the conclusion that she could also produce 'supernormal' phenomena

Harry Price Library

But the vicissitudes of Eusapia's life were by no means over. In 1909 the converted Carrington arranged to take the medium to America and there occurred the most disastrous episodes of her entire career. In a series of seances, in far from satisfactory conditions, including an investigation by professors at Columbia University, she was caught resorting to her old tricks. Denunciations ensued, the Press took it up and turned it into a sensation, and challenges and wagers were handied back and forth. Carrington, however, maintained to the end his own conviction of the genuine character of Eusapia's phenomena in the *right* conditions.

In a disastrous setting of untrained and ill-assorted sitters and Press publicity, Eusapia's career was virtually at an end. In the eight remaining years before her death in 1918 she gave some recorded seances, but they were mostly negative and could not compare with her earlier powers.

The vast literature on Eusapia is full of interesting comments on her strange psychology. Certainly no more intriguing and illuminating example can be found for studying the problems of physical mediumship.

(See also MEDIUMS; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.)

K. M. GOLDNEY

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Spectrum Colour Library

PALM

THERE IS an Arab saying that the palm has as many uses as there are days in the year, and certainly anyone who has been to North Africa will know how important the date palm, *Phoenix dactylifera*, is to those who dwell in desert regions. Its fruits are eaten and remain edible for a long time; oil can be produced from the kernels, which also provide food for livestock; an intoxicating drink can be made from the sap; the leaves are used for thatching, walling and fencing, for matting and baskets; rope is made from the stringy material surrounding the crown; and when the tree dies its trunk provides timber.

It is also a very distinctive tree and became a stylistic pattern for columns in ancient Egypt, and relief embellishment further north, as on the temple of Solomon: 'He carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees' (I Kings 6.29).

The word Phoenicia used by the Greeks and Romans meant 'land of palms', and some coins of ancient Tyre and Sidon show this tree. Many Jewish coins do the same, the first being that issued in 175 BC, in the

Left **Palms strewn on the ground in a Corpus Christi procession at Malaga in Spain** ***Right*** **The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when the people strewed his path with palms, which became a symbol of martyrdom: wall painting from a church in Cyprus**

Sonia Halliday photographs

British Museum

Christ's entry into Jerusalem, from a 14th century manuscript: the palm was also traditionally one of the four woods from which the cross was made, and was said to have formed the piece to which Christ's hands were nailed

time of Judas Maccabeus. Later, after the conquest of the Jews and the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD, the Emperor Vespasian struck a coin which showed a woman weeping beneath a palm, so much was the tree the emblem of Palestine. Now, however, palms are scarce in the Levant and Palestine.

The Bible relates how 'branches of palm trees' (the huge individual branch-like fronds) were carried on special occasions, as in Revelation 7.9, where they become a symbol of martyrdom: 'And after this I looked, and behold, a great multitude . . . standing before the throne . . . clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands'. It was in the time of Judas Maccabeus, when the Temple was restored, that it first became customary to carry palm fronds in procession. The fronds – known as 'lulab' or 'lulav' – would be interlaced with myrtle on the right side and citron on the left, and after being carried at the Feast of the Tabernacles were preserved at home where they brought luck and protection in the coming year. In an earlier palm festival the Jews had made cabins of the fronds outside their townships, in which they passed a holiday week notable for family reunions, in memory of the 40 years of camp life in the wilderness, before they reached the Promised Land. Among Christians the carrying of fronds – and the English 'palm', which is the pussy willow – on Palm Sunday is a recollection of that day when Jesus entered Jerusalem and the people waved palms and strewed his path with them. Today in many Christian Mediterranean countries the palm frond is represented by a cross of palm pieces carried in the hand or stuck into one's hat.

Early Christian martyrs believed that angels brought palm fronds to carry their souls up to heaven. It later became the custom to make a fire of palm fronds on All Souls' Day; the smoke was supposed to assist souls released from purgatory to reach heaven.

Emblem of Victory

Pilgrims would often carry a staff of palm and were consequently known as palmers. This explains Helena's question in Shakespeare's *All's Well That End's Well* (Act III, Sc. 5) 'Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?' The palm was also a symbol of victory, as is apparent in a number of other Shakespearean quotations. In *Coriolanus* (Act V, Sc. 3) Volumnia says in scorn:

> And bear the palm for having bravely shed
> Thy wife and children's blood . . .

There is a Christian myth linking the palm with St Christopher. Originally named Offero, this giant of a man was told by a hermit that if he wished to see Christ, he should assist the weak. Offero made himself responsible for carrying people over a dangerous river, using a palm staff as a support. One stormy night a child asked to be carried over. Offero found his small burden becoming heavier and heavier but managed to stagger across. Then the child bid him thrust his staff into the ground; and when he had done so, it put out leaves and fruits. At this, Offero, realizing whom he had carried, became converted; he changed his name to Christ-ofero, or Christopher, meaning 'Christ-bearer'.

The palm figures in another legend of the life of Christ, for it was supposed to be one of the four trees from which the cross was made as specified in an old verse:

> Nailed were His feet to Cedar, to Palm
> His hands,
> Cypress His body bore, title on Olive
> stands.

In countries where it was not a native the palm became valuable as a talisman: a piece of its wood or leaf would subdue evil spirits; a cross made of its leaves kept off lightning; fever would abate if the leaf was chewed.

Palm was said to keep mice from grain stores, and even to be a specific for fleas. To do this one had to place a palm leaf behind the portrait of the Virgin Mary on Easter Sunday at the first stroke of the resurrection bell, and say: 'Depart, all animals without bones'. This kept off fleas (and presumably lice) for a year – a great boon in former times. To dream of a palm tree means luck and success, especially if the tree is in flower. In the language of flowers, palm stood for victory.

PALMISTRY

The palmist stresses the importance of the markings and formation of the hands as indications of character, and believes that in these the past and future may be read

The belief that man's destiny is imprinted on his hands has a long history; prophets of the Old Testament believed that God 'set his seal' on men in this way, and even today it is argued that an accurate interpretation of the configurations of the hand can enable a man to recognize, and change, his fate

HANDS HAVE FASCINATED man since prehistoric times. Able to shape tools, make impressions in clay and trace signs in the dust, they must have seemed magically endowed, possessions that gave him a power over Nature that was denied to animals.

Later, man came to regard his hands not only as instruments of power, but also as mirrors of his destiny, a prehistoric book of fate in which he could discern, through an intuitive sensibility, more than his reason could make known to him. The first steps had been taken in the art of palmistry or chiromancy, a method of divination through studying the lines, mounts, valleys and other configurations on the palms, together with the shape, size and texture of the hands themselves.

A highly developed subject in India, which was perhaps its birthplace, palmistry was known in China, Tibet, Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt, and flowered, more or less in its present form, in Greece. The Athenian philosopher Anaxagoras (500–428 BC) is said to have practised the art, saying, 'The superiority of man is owing to his hands.' Aristotle (384–322 BC) added that 'The hand is the organ of organs, the active agent of the passive powers of the whole system.'

The art still continues to flourish throughout the East. The Arabs, Chinese and many gypsies add solistry, or foot reading, to the more usual hand reading while onychomancy, simply studying the finger-nails (see FINGERS), is held to be enough by some people. It is probable that graphology, assessing character by studying handwriting, was an offshoot of palmistry. During the Renaissance these skills were considered a legitimate part of natural science, even when condemned by the Church. Nor did ecclesiastical prohibitions prevent many dignitaries of the Church from making use of all occult methods, black or white.

Previous page An 18th century painting by Jean-Baptiste Le Prince: the belief that the hands are 'mirrors of destiny', in which a person's character and future are reflected, has flourished for centuries

Mind and Body

The tradition that every line, star, point, cross, square, island and triangle in the hand is significant has therefore been perpetuated for countless generations, and the modern palmist, like other practitioners of the art before him, believes that there is a relationship between these physical features and man's nature. The claim by the 20th century German psychologist Ernst Kretschmer that there is a connection between physique and psychotic illness, and the increasing conviction among medical men of the psychosomatic nature of many diseases, supports the view that there is an interaction between body and mind.

The occultist goes further and says that there is a constant interplay, not only between the physical and the mental, but also between these and the spiritual. The palmist stresses the importance of the apparently haphazard markings and formations of the hands as indications of character, but believes in addition that, in these, the past and the future may be read.

There are those who regard palmistry as a rational science, and others who believe that clairvoyance must be brought to bear when an interpretation is made. A number of ancient books concerning this art exist, and many modern ones, both profound and popular. There are also societies which instruct students in palmistry.

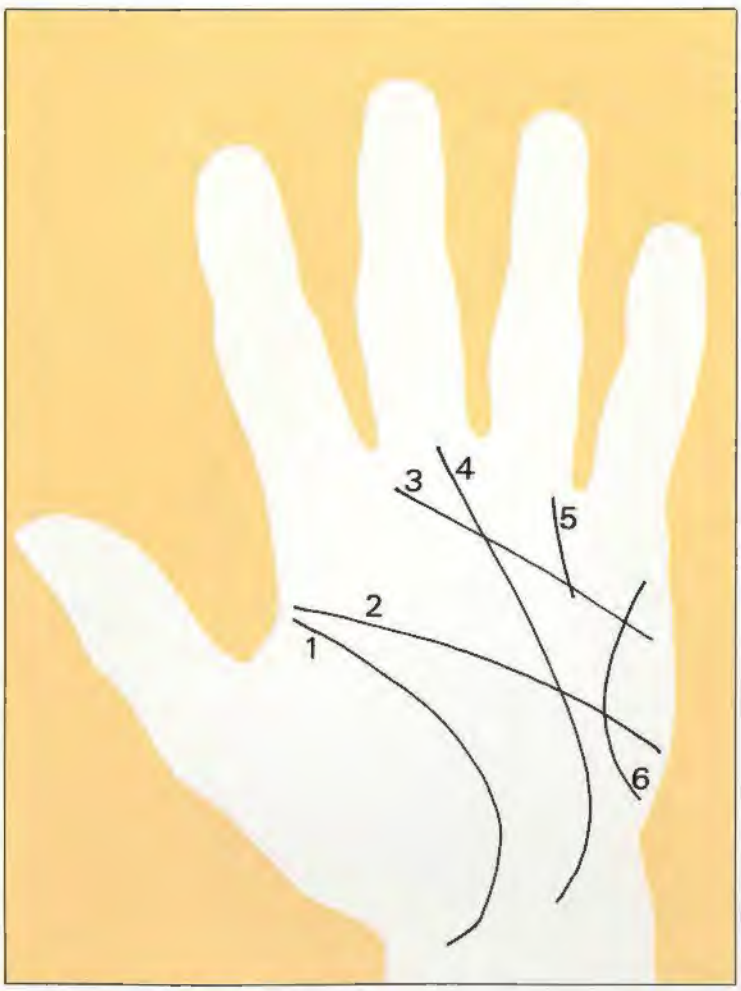
The superficial reader of hands is content to flatter the person who consults him by stressing such virtues as courage, straightforwardness and warmth of heart; he speaks of sadnesses experienced only in the past, and paints a picture of a successful and happy future. This is generally all that is obtained from the gypsy woman who reads palms while begging for a silver coin. But every now and then, a passing gypsy will suddenly be visited with the gift of seeing into the future, and will be impelled to give a quick reading that may prove startlingly true. She will refuse to take a penny for it. Materialists will dismiss the matter as a hoax, but it is unlikely that such an old and trusted art is without some foundation in truth. It is interesting that today, when serious palmists take impressions of the hands they read, and the findings are typewritten and kept for verification, striking accuracy of both character-reading and prediction is sometimes obtained.

Palmistry may be studied under three headings. Firstly, correlation between the hands and physical or mental states might be called medical or therapeutic chiromancy, and some palmists are extremely good at diagnosing the nature of an illness. Secondly, correlation between the hands and character could be called psychotherapeutic chiromancy. The palmist will describe the consultant's character in detail, praise the good qualities and point out the weak ones. Thirdly, there is correlation between the hands and the past, the present and the future. This is divinatory chiromancy. What the palmist has to say about the past may be verified, the present is of course clear, but that which is predicted for the future may well be taken with several grains of salt.

The danger so far as prediction is concerned is that the consultant may accept that a tragedy is inevitable and may allow this to prey on his mind. Some people are so suggestible that they themselves may unconsciously bring about a predicted disaster. Therefore a high-minded palmist will never foretell misfortune or death without very carefully qualifying the reading and showing how the tragedy may be averted.

When preparing to read a hand it is necessary to be analytical, and each line, mount and so on should be described separately; but in the actual reading it is essential to interrelate all these features. Each line should be studied in conjunction with all other markings on the hand, or the reading will be out of focus. In addition, both hands must be brought into relation with each other, for the left represents a person's inherited disposition, while the right reflects what he makes of himself; that is, his positive or negative reactions to his fate.

The titles and placing of the lines, bracelets, mounts, valleys or plains, of stars, points, squares, triangles and islands, must be mastered by the student of palmistry. The diagrams opposite and on the following page give only a brief indication of their significance; a detailed study of palmistry is necessary to appreciate the vast amount of information that may be obtained from reading hands.



THE PRINCIPAL LINES

1. ***The Life Line:*** *General picture of the subject's destiny and the dates of outstanding events.*
2. ***The Head Line:*** *Intellectual capacities.*
3. ***The Heart Line:*** *All that concerns the sentiments.*
4. ***The Fate or Destiny Line:*** *This should be checked carefully with the 'life line' as it indicates the subject's pattern of life.*
5. ***The Apollo or Sun Line:*** *Artistic trends, chances of success.*
6. ***The Intuition Line:*** *Insight.*

THE SECONDARY LINES

1. ***The Girdle of Venus:*** *The passions.*
2. ***The Cross Line:*** *Power to govern.*
3. ***The Lines of Union:*** *Marriage, children, divorce.*
4. ***The Martian Lines:*** *Military glory, personal triumph.*
5. ***The Travel Lines:*** *Journeys, discoveries.*
6. ***The Mercury or Health Line:*** *Bodily, mental and spiritual well-being.*
7. ***The Three Bracelets of Health, Wealth and Happiness***

Because a person's inherited character and disposition are reflected in the shape of his hands and fingers, the texture of the skin and the shape of the finger-nails, chirognomy, the study of hand formation, is an essential part of palmistry.

Large, straight and well-shaped hand: *Expansive personality, lively and possibly aggressive.*
Long and slender hand: *Fastidious and gentle personality.*
Pudgy hand: *The 'priest's hand' – mystical and unctuous.*
Thin and dry hand: *Nervous, intellectual, ascetic, touchy, tenacious.*
Hard and firm hand: *Energetic, sporting, good memory, tending to violence.*
Damp hand: *Lazy, unstable but kindly.*
Hot hand: *Vivacious, bountiful, but lacking in depth and sincerity.*
Cold hand: *Taciturn, secretly generous.*

The size, formation and flexibility of the thumb, the shape of the individual fingers, and their length in relation to the palm of the hand, are all significant.

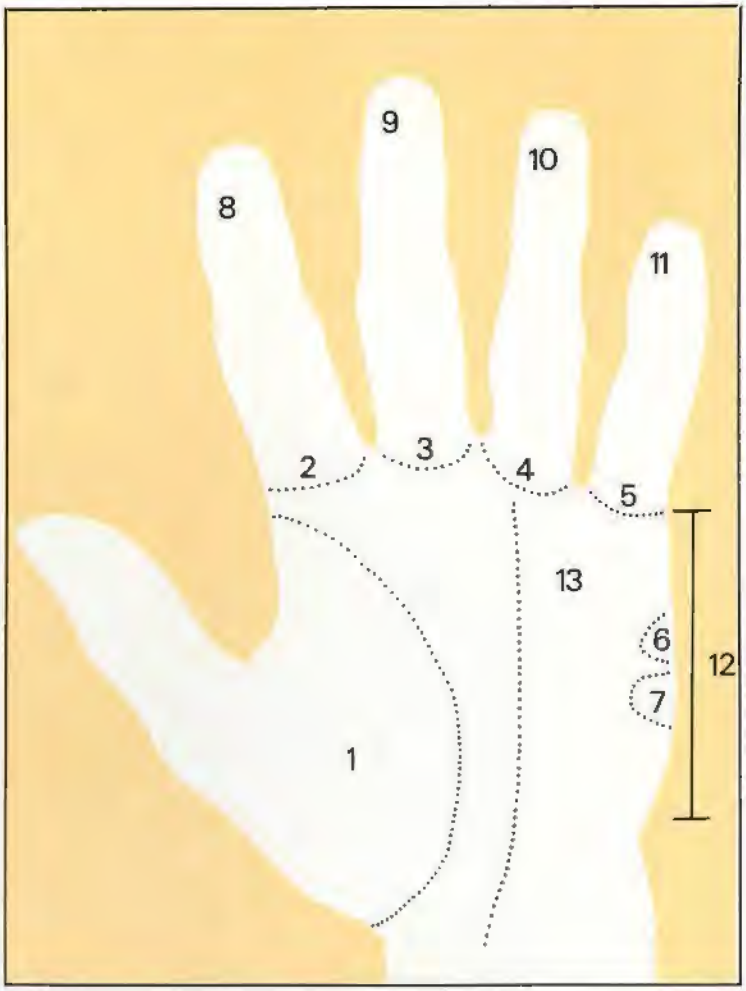
Large thumb: *Strong-minded, energetic, given to command, liking work, self-controlled.*
Thumb bent well in towards the palm: *Moderate, tending to be mean.*
Thumb bent outwards: *Open-natured and generous.*
Thumb bent out and backwards: *The 'killer's thumb', danger of brutality.*
Long fingers: *Polite, excitable, anxious, delicate, aesthetic.*
Short fingers: *Impatient, sensuous, creative, good-hearted.*
Pointed fingers: *Impatient, sensuous, creative, illogical.*

Finger-nails vary widely in shape and are said to reflect a number of different character traits. The care of the nails does not affect their basic type in any way; whether they are carefully manicured or broken by work, their significance remains the same.

Long: *Gentle and kind, discreet, keeper of secrets.*
Almond-shaped: *Idealistic, tactful, serene and courteous.*
Long and thin: *Visionary, irritable, delicate in health.*
Rectangular: *Practical, sensible.*
Long and large: *Timid.*
Short: *Critical, scientific.*
Very short: *Lacking self-control, fanatical.*
Short and large: *Morbid, sad.*
Short and straight: *Rigid, jealous.*
Short and rounded: *Envious, covetous.*

THE REGIONS OF THE HAND

1. ***The Mount of Venus:*** *Love, instincts, vitality, sensuality, fecundity, bounty.*
2. ***The Mount of Jupiter:*** *Religion, philosophy, ambition, leadership.*
3. ***The Mount of Saturn:*** *Stolidity, resignation, scepticism.*
4. ***The Mount of Apollo:*** *Artistry, exhibitionism, success, fantasy.*
5. ***The Mount of Mercury:*** *Finance, travel, inheritances, mental agility.*
6. ***The Mount of Mars:*** *Aggression, courage, fidelity, physical strength.*
7. ***The Mount of Luna:*** *Imagination, instability, clairvoyance.*
8. ***The Finger of Jupiter:*** *Domination, leadership.*
9. ***The Finger of Saturn:*** *Stability, conservatism, jealousy.*
10. ***The Finger of Apollo:*** *Artistic genius, musical, theatrical, cheerfulness.*
11. ***The Finger of Mercury:*** *Egotism, avarice, dissimulation, astuteness.*
12. ***Range of Percussion:*** *Signs concerning marriage, children, divorce.*
13. ***Quadrangle of Heart and Head:*** *Equilibrium, harmony, peace.*



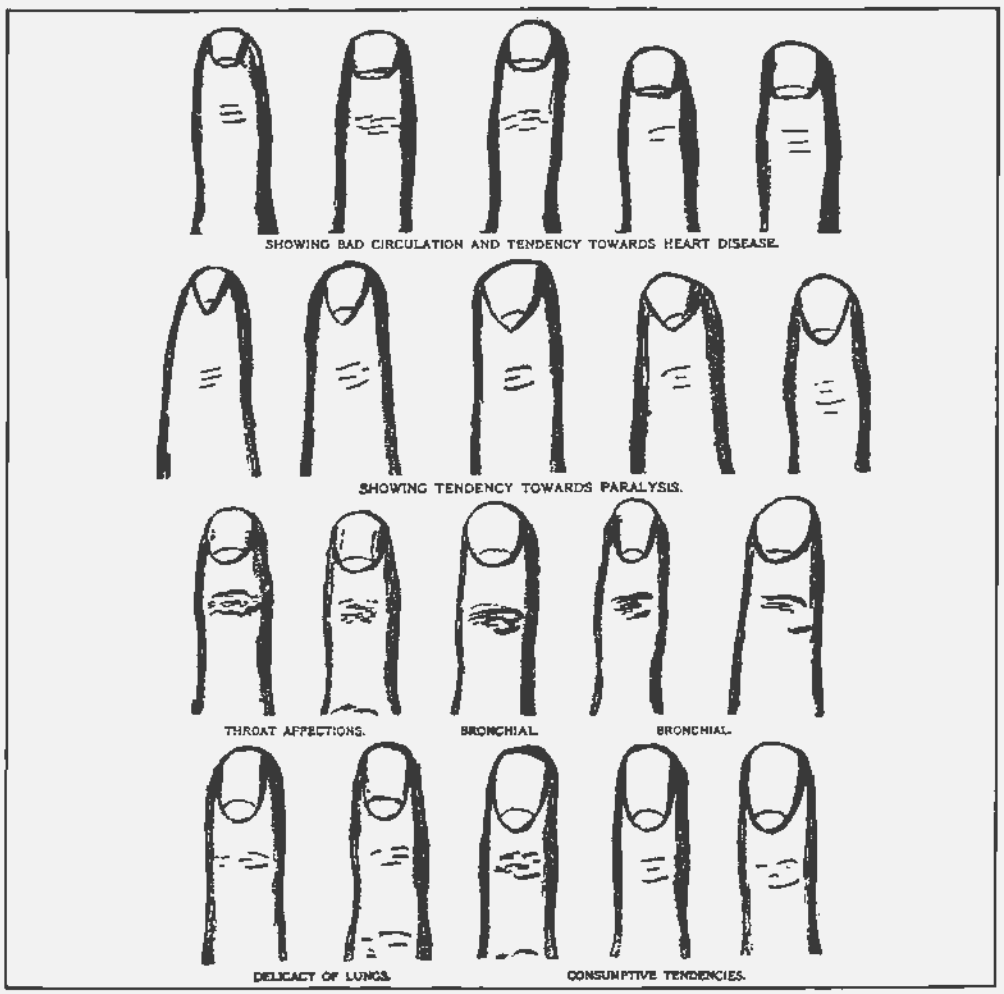
A doctor may be able to tell, from a patient's physique, the type of illness he is likely to suffer, and in the same way the palmist claims that he can detect tendencies towards cancer, tuberculosis, asthma, heart trouble and so on, by studying the physical characteristics of the hand. The validity of such a claim is debatable, although much supporting evidence is offered by palmists who specialize in diagnosis. They also claim to substantiate or complement the findings of modern psychologists, and certainly, if specific physical characteristics indicate a proneness to specific physical illnesses, they may well do the same where psychoneuroses are concerned.

The occult theory that the physical body is extruded or solidified from an etheric pattern-body called the astral (see ASTRAL BODY) suggests that the hands express in their form and configurations the subtle mental and spiritual essence, or core, of an individual. The driving power of the unconscious may be said to determine the outer or bodily appearance, and the palmist sees this force making itself apparent in the hands, as the phrenologist sees it in the configurations of the skull.

A neurotic or nervous temperament is generally reflected in a small dry hand, either long and triangular in shape or with distorted contours. The palm will be very lined, as will the thin, pointed fingers, and the Heart Line will be fragmented. A person with this temperament will tend to change occupations frequently, and to be emotionally clinging, but capricious in love relationships. He or she is likely to encounter tragedy of some kind, and to terminate marriage by divorce.

A person with a bilious temperament generally possesses a rectangular or square hand that is thin, firm, muscular and warm, with yellowish skin. The lines are clearly marked and brown in tint, the fingers are long and spatulate and the thumb big. The Head Line will be straight. The individual concerned will have a tendency to gastric

The overall shape of the hands is believed to indicate the basic disposition of the person concerned ***Below, left to right*** **An intuitive hand; an intellectual hand; a practical hand; a sensitive hand**



Besides the lines on the hands, the fingers and nails can be analysed, and the nails are thought particularly significant for physical health *Right* Diagrams from Cheiro's *Language of the Hand*, showing types of illness associated with various types of finger-nail

troubles. Intelligent and enterprising, he will probably be successful although he is likely to encounter setbacks. Audacious, he will be impetuous or crude in love relationships. He will dislike discipline, and is likely to marry for money rather than love. Nevertheless, this temperament is associated with a reasonable and just nature.

A hand that is large and short, 'sticky', red and hairy with a firm Mount of Venus, indicates a sanguine temperament. The thumb will be short and the hand will show not very numerous deep red lines. A person with this type of hand will be impulsive, unreflecting and active in many ways, but will tend to be superficial in all undertakings. Optimistic and happy-go-lucky, he will enjoy life. Although someone of this disposition may frequently lose his temper with his marriage partner and children, he is very forgiving. Vain and easily taken in by flatterers, he enjoys public acclaim. He may suffer from circulatory and cardiac illnesses.

Knowing the Future

An individual with a lymphatic temperament will have long, soft white hands with short fingers, the joints of which are somewhat dislocated, and large nails. There will be few lines, but those that there are will be well marked if pale. There may be red spots on the back of the hand. Cold, calm, patient and persevering, this kind of person has a gift for organization and will make steady progress in life. He will face difficulty and danger calmly, although he dislikes fighting and quarrels, preferring the good things of life. Dogmatic so far as religion is concerned, he rarely seeks divorce.

The hands of a young person will reveal the direction his life is likely to take, and will also indicate future choices and difficulties. Generally the left hand is thought to indicate an individual's hereditary disposition, while the right hand is said to show what choices will be made, and what defeats and successes lie ahead, although some palmists do not admit this division of information between the two hands.

By studying his hands, a young person may be guided to choose a suitable profession. As a result of learning about his character traits, his predilections, propensities and strong and weak points, he is able to orientate himself in a positive way towards family, partners and society; such knowledge gained from the hands is invaluable. Understanding the nature, force and durability of his passions can help him in choosing a wife, and foreknowledge of financial success or poverty enables him to face the future thankfully or bravely as the case may be.

For the mature man or woman the past can be reviewed by means of the hands, and errors investigated, understood and forgiven. The present can be illuminated, and if it is found to be unsatisfactory changes may be indicated that will lay the foundations for a more promising future. The opportunity to profit by past mistakes, and to perfect the character, is always there.

In old age studying the hands can recall past memories; thanks can be offered for dangers past, hurdles overcome and successes gained. The hand should reveal depths, serenity and an ever-expanding vision of the wholeness of life, of that which is the Eternal.

In France in the 19th century, Mme Adèle Moreau translated the wisdom of palmistry onto a set of decorative and instructive cards. Such a debased method of telling the future was frankly called a game and was not intended to rival the art of chiromancy. The game can still be bought from many tobacconists in Paris, and the book that is sold with Mme Moreau's cards is a worthwhile addition to the large body of literature on palmistry, as it contains many hints on the correspondences between the configurations of the hand and other occult systems.

Significant Handshake

A palmist will start interpreting the characteristics of a client's hand almost from the moment that they first meet. To start with, he notices what kind of hand he, or more usually she, possesses, and what kind of handshake they exchange. Is the hand firm and friendly, or is it weak or flabby? The first key to the client's personality is there, indicating that she is strong or weak, nervous or assured, pampered or hardworking.

Having made these observations, the palmist holds the consultant's hands in his, and studies their shape. If they are long, a gift for detail and deliberation is indicated, while if they are small she is likely to be

1st June 96

Facing page Diagrams from Cheiro's *Language of the Hand* showing (*top left*) the hand of a suicide; the steeply sloping head line is said to indicate a person who might kill himself on impulse *Top right* The palm of a convicted murderer has a head line that 'takes possession' of the heart line, masking all generous impulses or kind thoughts *Below left* People with 'psychic' hands are said to be visionary and idealistic: impression of Annie Besant's hand; *Below right:* Sarah Bernhardt's hand; the star on the mount of the sun, connected with the line of the sun, denotes fame and celebrity *Centre* Lines are deeply marked at birth: impression of a baby's hand, taken 24 hours after he was born *Right* 16th century palmistry consultation

intuitive and impetuous. But if the client constantly withdraws her hands and gesticulates gracefully, it means that she will be successful at social gatherings; but if her gestures are violent she is likely to be aggressive and highly strung.

A woman who clenches her hands is a restless, frustrated but self-reliant and dynamic person. If she has a way of extending her little finger elegantly, this is a sign that she is moody. If she flutters her hands she is most probably feather-brained and anxious; if she twists and wrings them she is quick to make decisions, but always nervous. If her hands remain relaxed she is a confident and practical person with many interests, but she may be a little childlike or over-trusting.

The woman who unconsciously tries to conceal her hands, or the man who plunges his deep into his pockets, both have secrets to conceal; they may be extremely shrewd about money matters and are likely to change their views on life frequently.

Sign of Strength

The way the client holds her fingers is another key to her character. Close together suggests a leader or a career woman, while someone who holds them slightly apart is primarily a good friend, and has a trusting nature. Unconventional or extravagant people spread their fingers wide, while those whose hands are held in a claw-like position are avaricious and untrustworthy.

The basic character is revealed in the left hand, on which the inherited pattern is shown. (Although palmists have debated whether the order of inspection should be reversed if the client is left-handed, no final decision has been reached.) A series of small lines and chains on the Life Line tells of physical weakness, but may also indicate a varied, nomadic or unstable background. A double line gives added strength to the one that is duplicated. Triple lines are rare, but when they occur they can indicate genius, passion, fame and riches; but if surrounding lines or marks show counter-indications, deceitfulness or obsessional sexuality is likely. A meandering line suggests that the client lacks a clear goal in life, or that she may be the victim of troublesome minor illnesses or worries.

The way in which the Life Line terminates is significant. A forked terminal may mean feebleness in old age, which is to be expected, but it may also indicate lack of security because of improvidence in earlier years. If it ends with many tiny lines, financial loss or some other kind of tragedy may be forecast.

However the depressing future foretold by these indications may be mitigated if the client deliberately strengthens herself both physically and mentally. Her success in doing this will be reflected in the ever-changing configurations on her right hand. Regular inspection will show that once practical steps have been taken towards improvement, harmful lines and marks, or distorted mounts, will disappear completely or be modified.

Once the palmist has interpreted the innate qualities and tendencies shown in his client's left hand, he will read the right one, making comparisons with the other from time to time. He will see whether the right hand shows modifications for better or worse, and give advice as to what kind of action his client should take.

The Seal of God

Plain hands showing scarcely any marks are rare, but do occur occasionally. What can be a strange and alarming blankness to the person concerned does not indicate death, life in a mental hospital, or an isolated existence. Nor does it mean that she is without significance. I have in fact seen a hand like this, and know that the owner led a long and fruitful life although she was physically handicapped from birth.

The Bible contains many references to hands. God is said to have shaped man from the dust of the earth with his hands. Adam put forth his hand to take the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and Cain turned his hand against every man. It is said that God 'seals up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work' (Job 37.7) and of wisdom that 'Long life is in her right hand; and in her left hand are riches and honour' (Proverbs 3.16). David cried to Saul: '. . . why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What guilt is on my hands?' (I Samuel 26.18). The third angel of the Apocalypse cried: '. . . If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand . . .' (Revelation 14.9).

The prophets ascribed the signs on hands to the imprint of God, placed there so that men could learn to understand themselves and recognize their destiny as God's instruments for establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth. This could mean that the powers of destruction, atomic or otherwise, will not prevail. God has set his seal upon men's hands and because they have been marked or destined by him good must triumph in the end.

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

FURTHER READING: The classic work on palmistry is *Cheiro's Language of the Hand* (Arco Books, 1968 reprint). See also M. Anderson's *Palmistry* (Weiser, 1980).

The goat-footed deity of the Arcadians, Pan was said to wander through woodland glades accompanied by dancing nymphs; a shepherd god, he was also credited with the ability to cause sudden terror among both herds and men

PAN

PERHAPS the most appealing introduction to the worship of Pan, the strange deity of the Greek countryside, is the Homeric Hymn to the god. It is imbued with an idyllic charm, a joyful salute to the folklore god of flocks and herds, whose old home was in remote Peloponnesian Arcadia, surrounded by mountains.

The poet begins by appealing to the Muse to tell him about Pan, son of Hermes, with his goat's feet and his two horns, a lover of noise. This strikes a traditional note at once for, although genealogies vary, Hermes and Pan were both shepherd gods of Arcadia. The god, continues the poem, wanders through the woodland glades with dancing nymphs who tread the sheer hill crests, invoking Pan, the long-haired and shaggy deity whose haunts are the snowy ridges, mountain peaks and rocky ways. He goes through dense thickets, now drawn to gentle streams, now climbing up to the topmost peak from which the flocks can be watched. Often too he darts across the mountain slopes as a keen-eyed hunter.

The Arcadians themselves were famous as hunters and it was natural for their goat-footed god to represent an occupation that was so familiar to his worshippers. It was also natural for them to describe the herdsman god as playing his pipes in the evening when the sport was over, vying with bird songs. At times the clear-toned mountain nymphs are with the god, moving nimbly, and singing their songs, that echo around the mountain top, by a spring of dark water, while Pan joins in the dancing. He wears a lynx-pelt on his back as he delights in the songs in a soft meadow, where the crocus and the fragrant hyacinth are mingled with the grass.

This passage is reminiscent of a choral ode from the *Helen* of Euripides (translated by Richmond Lattimore):

> I was down by the shining blue
> water, and on the curl of the grass
> there in the golden glare of the sun
> laid out the coloured wash
> in the bed of the young rushes
> to dry. There I heard my lady
> and the pitiful sound as she cried out,
> the voice of sorrow, lament without lyres,
> a sharp voice of pain, of mourning
> as cries aloud for grief some nymph,
> a naiad, caught
> in the hills for all her flight, gives voice
> to pain, as under the rock hollows
> she cries out
> on Pan and his captured marriage.

The next part of the Homeric Hymn goes on to describe how the nymphs sing of the birth of Pan, of how Hermes, the swift messenger of all the gods, came to Arcadia, land of many springs and mother of flocks, to the land where his sacred place is as god of Cyllene. There he fell in love with Dryope, the daughter of Dryops, son of Arcas. Dryope bore him a son, a son who was a marvel to look upon from the time of his birth, with his goat's feet and his two horns and his noisy, merry laughter. But when the nursing

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

Originally the god of shepherds and hunters in Arcadia, Pan haunted woodland glades and thickets, and was the lover of nymphs: according to the Homeric Hymn in his honour, he was dear to Dionysus, the god of orgiastic release ***Above*** **Roman relief showing the return of Dionysus from the East; Pan is near the centre: Pashley sarcophagus, 2nd century AD** ***Left*** **Shepherds listen to Pan playing his pipes: 16th century dish from Siena**

mother looked upon his uncouth, bearded face she sprang up and fled in fear, abandoning her child.

Then Hermes took his son in his arms and there was boundless joy in his heart. Carrying him closely wrapped up in the skins of mountain hares, he went swiftly to the abodes of the immortal gods. (The hare, by the way, is a symbol of Pan on some ancient coins.) He set the child down beside Zeus and showed him to the other gods. They were delighted, Dionysus especially; and because the child gave them all such pleasure, they called him Pan which, according to the Homeric Hymn, is derived from the Greek word for 'all', *pas*. This derivation is also given by Plato; and it has further been suggested that the Orphic identification of Pan with the cosmos, 'the all', must have been caused by this particular piece of etymology.

'Panic' Terror

Pan had no part in the old traditional Olympian pantheon, and in the 5th century BC Herodotus spoke of him as one of the more recent Hellenic deities. No doubt he had been revered in the fastnesses of his native Arcadia long before his name and cult spread to other parts of Greece.

Pan was certainly a late arrival in Athens, where he was worshipped in a cave under the Acropolis, perhaps because he was supposed to have helped the Athenians at Marathon by casting 'panic' terror into the Persian ranks. Certainly Pan could cause sudden panic among herds, when the animals, seized inexplicably by fright, would rush away; and panic among armies was also thought to be clearly the work of Pan, as the name bears witness.

Herodotus tells how the fast runner, Pheidippides, was sent off to Sparta before the battle of Marathon. On the way he was accosted by Pan, who addressed him by name and bade him ask the Athenians why they neglected him when he was so kindly disposed towards them, had often helped them in the past and would do so again in the future. As soon as they could turn their minds to such matters the Athenians therefore set up a shrine to Pan under the Acropolis and established in his honour yearly sacrifices and a torch race.

Creation

Pandora

In Greek mythology, the first woman, created by Zeus to punish men after Prometheus had brought them the gift of fire; she opened the great jar or box in which all evils had been confined, so letting them loose to plague the world; her name, which means 'All-giving', suggests that she was originally an earth goddess. See PROMETHEUS; WOMAN.

Pantheism

From Greek *pan*, 'all', and *theos*, 'god', the belief that all is God and God is All, the sum total of everything that exists; it implies that the apparent diversity of the universe conceals a unity, which is God, the Absolute, or the One; it also implies that evil, suffering, change, limit, are as much parts or aspects of God or the One as good, immutability, infinity, eternity.

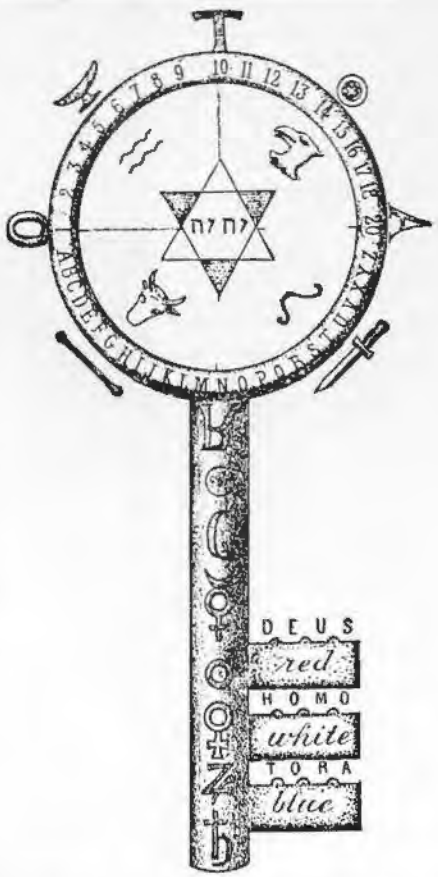
A French doctor with a passion for occultism, 'Papus' was the influential author of a number of books on the Cabala, the Tarot and astrology

PAPUS

DR GÉRARD ENCAUSSE, better known as 'Papus', was the virtual creator of the widespread popular interest in occultism that emerged in France during the late 1880s. It is noteworthy that this coincided with the period, roughly between 1884 and 1891, when Mme Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society were attracting a large and enthusiastic following in Britain (see BLAVATSKY; THEOSOPHY). The Theosophical movement had its devoted supporters in France, but never on the same scale as in English-speaking territories. The Society was organized on an international scale, while the new occultist movement in France was specifically French.

In the past the French, like the British and to a lesser extent the Germans, had interested themselves in mesmerism, phrenology and above all Spiritualism. Papus and his followers gave occultism a broader dimension by providing a literature that dealt with such subjects as the Cabala, the Tarot and astrology.

Encausse, who wrote under the pseudonym Papus – his actual identity was never a secret – was a prolific author, a tireless lecturer, and a publicist and popularizer rather than a mystic in the traditional sense. He was not a 'commercial' occultist, although his books may have produced a fair income. He was a successful physician, although his preoccupation with occultism, which almost amounted to a mania, may have been to his financial detriment.



Frontispiece to Papus's *The Tarot of the Bohemians*: published in 1889, this book influenced many subsequent writers on the Tarot

Gérard Encausse was born in Spain in 1865 of a Spanish mother and a French father, a chemist. The family returned to Paris in 1869 and the boy was educated there. He started his medical studies in 1882 but long before he qualified was spending much of his time at the Bibliothèque Nationale where he studied magical and alchemical literature.

He was an early member of the French section of the Theosophical Society, which was founded when Mme Blavatsky visited Paris in 1884–5, but he soon resigned because he disliked the emphasis on Eastern occult teachings. Very few of the new generation of French occultists who appeared on the scene a decade after the death of Eliphas Levi (see LEVI) in 1875 ever did more than flirt with Theosophy. These young men, led by Encausse and his friend Stanislas de Guaita (1861–97) were above all students of the Cabala and posthumous disciples of Levi. Because Levi claimed to have discovered a cabalistic correspondence between the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 22 Major Trumps in the Tarot pack, the supposed esoteric significance of the Tarot fascinated them (see PATHS; TAROT).

The year 1888 is not without its importance in modern occultism. As 'Papus', Encausse published the first edition of his *Traité élémentaire de science occulte*, a work of popularization which had an enormous success in France and was subsequently translated into English, German, Spanish, Russian and Czech. In October 1888 he founded the monthly journal *L'Initiation* in collaboration with Stanislas de Guaita and well-known literary figures such as Joséphin Péladan, Catulle Mendès and Villiers de l'Isle Adam. All this coincided with the establishment in the same year of de Guaita's Cabalistic Rosicrucian Order with a Supreme Council of Twelve.

Oswald Wirth, later a well-known writer on esoteric Freemasonry and the Tarot, recalled that 'having nothing to govern, the Supreme Council remained in a state of expectant inertia'. Papus founded the Independent Group for Esoteric Studies, which soon attracted a membership of several hundreds, and became the main source of recruitment for de Guaita's Order.

Whatever Papus and his contemporaries knew about the Tarot was derived from stray hints in Eliphas Levi's books. However, Levi had never published a Tarot manual, and Papus filled the gap in 1889 with his famous *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, which was to influence dozens of subsequent writers on the subject. His monumental *Traité méthodique de science occulte* (1891) contains an excellent review of contemporary ideas about occultism in France.

In about 1891 he took over the direction of the Martinist Order, which had been founded in 1887 by Henri Delaage, an obscure occultist. Its title refers to Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803), the 'Unknown Philosopher', who is still revered as an esoteric teacher by French occultists (see MARTINISTS).

Gave Away Masonic Secrets

The Order, which rapidly recruited a very large membership under Encausse's energetic leadership, became pseudo-Masonic. His efforts to establish an official connection with regular French Freemasonry were frustrated. He then contrived a link with the spurious Masonic Order of Memphis and Misraim and converted his Martinist Lodges into unofficial bodies for the indiscriminate communication of Masonic secrets to members of both sexes, and for the study of Masonic rituals, symholism and history.

By about 1912 the Order had close ties with Theodor Reuss's Ordo Templi Orientis (Order of the Temple of the Orient). Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) was head of the British section.

Encausse took longer than usual to qualify as a doctor because of his many other interests. However, when he finally presented his thesis for the degree of doctor of medicine in the University of Paris in 1894 the examining professor said to him: 'Monsieur Encausse, you are no ordinary student. You have written books, under your own name or under a pseudonym, which have made you famous.'

Encausse was a successful, although by orthodox standards, unconventional physician. There are well-attested stories about his uncanny diagnostic powers, which appear to have owed more to clairvoyance than to normal medical knowledge. It was typical of him that he should have been a loyal friend and supporter of the famous Nizier Philippe, the Lyons 'healer' and miracle-worker. The latter undoubtedly possessed extraordinary abilities but was nevertheless prosecuted upon a number of occasions for illegal medical practice.

Encausse's fame, both as an occultist and a physician, reached Russia, which he visited three times between 1900 and 1906. He was on terms of intimate friendship with the Tsar and Tsarina, both of whom had a penchant for occultism. There were rumours that he had a malignant influence upon the Tsar and his wife but these do not appear to have any foundation.

Encausse served with distinction in the French army medical corps during the First World War and died at the age of 51, of a pulmonary infection, on 25 October 1916. During his comparatively short career, which spanned a period of only 30 years, he helped hundreds and thousands of Frenchmen to acquire at least a superficial knowledge of various aspects of occultism. In relation to the contemporary intellectual scene Encausse was essentially an 'underground' figure. Nevertheless, in relation to the social history of modern occultism, which has yet to be investigated by academic historians, he is of major importance.

ELLIC HOWE

The eternal outsider, detested by the orthodox physicians of his time, Paracelsus has since been recognized as the 'first modern medical scientist'; he was also a mystic whose writings and personality have fascinated generations of occultists

PARACELSUS

Portrait of Paracelsus: his unorthodox views and his egotistical and tetchy personality infuriated the medical establishment of his time

PHYSICIAN AND PHILOSOPHER, and traditionally an initiate and magus, Paracelsus is one of the most controversial figures of the first half of the 16th century. Born at Einsiedeln, Switzerland, in 1493, his full name was Phillipus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. The extent to which his enigmatic personality has intrigued medical and cultural historians is reflected by the vast literature about him that has been published during the past 40 years. However, there are two contrasting views of Paracelsus, those of scholars, and those of recent generations of occultists.

His father, Wilhelm Bombast von Hohenheim, studied medicine at Tübingen in Germany, and then moved from Einsiedeln, where he practised medicine, to Villach in Carinthia, Austria. It was there that Paracelsus spent his boyhood.

Nothing definite is known about Paracelsus's early medical training, but he may have received his doctorate at the famous medical school at Ferrara in northern Italy in about 1515. The young physician then began the extraordinary journey that lasted, almost without interruption, until his death at the age of 48. His early wanderings, which continued for about ten years, took him successively to Rome, Naples, Sicily, southern Spain and Portugal, Paris and London, which he is supposed to have visited briefly in 1519. He then travelled to Stockholm, Moscow and Greece. Paracelsus eventually arrived at Salzburg in 1524, was for a short time at Strasbourg, and then accepted an appointment as town physician and Professor of Medicine at Basle in 1526.

His connection with this city was fortuitous. There had been talk of his unusual skill as a physician, and he was summoned there to treat the famous scholar-printer Johannes Frobenius, whose right leg was gangrenous. The local doctors could only suggest amputation but Paracelsus was able to save the limb.

He arrived at Basle with a reputation for great medical ability, unorthodox views and a tetchy personality. He at once met with opposition from the local apothecaries, whose scientific knowledge was at best primitive, and from the town's medical establishment, whose members were as conservative as Paracelsus was unorthodox. The atmosphere was not improved when Paracelsus circulated a printed leaflet in which he announced that he would lecture for two hours daily – not, he advertised, on the basis of out-of-date authorities, but on that of his own experience.

Medicine from the Stars

He promised yet another innovation, namely lectures on surgery. Until then this had been the exclusive province of self-taught barber-surgeons who had no proper medical training. The fact that he lectured in German instead of Latin was yet another novelty that infuriated conservative opinion. Paracelsus was giving a new and revolutionary dimension to medical teaching and vested interests were united in their

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

Paracelsus regarded medicine as an art based on four foundations: a philosophical approach, medical astrology, alchemy, and the moral and personal purity of the physician. 16th century German medal

dislike of both the man and his methods. To make matters worse he never hesitated to show his contempt for his opponents.

After only 11 months at Basle, he was obliged to leave in a hurry and went to Alsace. This was the beginning of the second stage of his strange career as an itinerant physician. Indeed, during the following 13 years until his death in 1541 he settled briefly in at least 62 different places in Germany and Austria.

He wrote incessantly, although few of his major works were published during his lifetime. Of the 24 publications printed between 1529 and 1541 no fewer than 16 were astrological 'prognostications'. However, he was not an astrological prophet in the usual sense, since he was concerned mainly with astrological medicine and the possible relationships between weather and climate and human illnesses.

A well-known passage from his *Paragranum*, written after he left Basle, illustrates his contempt for his fellow-practitioners and their archaic methods: 'Avicenna, Galen, Rhasis, Montagnana, and all the rest of you, after me and not I after you! You people from Paris, Montpellier, Swabia, Meissen,' and half a dozen other places, 'after me and not I after you! Even in the most distant corner there will not be one of you on whom the dogs will not piss. But I will be the king and mine the kingdom . . .'

Jolande Jacobi remarked with good reason in her *Paracelsus: Selected Writings* (1951) that he 'is today celebrated as the first modern medical scientist, as the precursor of microchemistry, antisepsis, modern wound surgery, homoeopathy, and a number of other ultra-modern achievements.'

Paracelsus was above all a physician; he had trained in many schools and his opinions were formed through experience in many countries. He regarded medicine as an art based on four important foundations: a philosophical approach, astronomy (meaning medical astrology), alchemy (as a servant

of medicine rather than in the sense of the attempt to change base metals into gold) and the personal and moral purity of the physician himself. Furthermore, he believed that a man should study medicine and become a physician only if he felt a genuine vocation for the work and its demands.

Practical Mystic

Most important of all was his view that Nature heals and that the physician can only assist the course of Nature. Therefore he must know the correct ways of helping and be able to avoid the wrong ones.

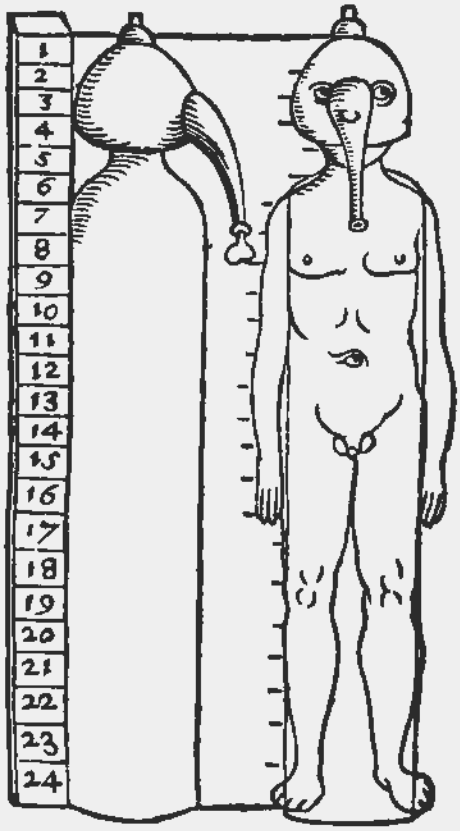
Although there is an enormous amount of information in Paracelsus's books his style is often so involved and obscure as to be almost incomprehensible. This applies particularly to his non-medical works such as *De Occulta Philosophia* and *Archidoxis Magica*, hermetic writings to which, as Jolande Jacobi remarks, we have lost the key. There were two sides to Paracelsus's character: the practical physician who was a highly-trained observer, and the mystic who trod paths that are excessively difficult for most people to follow.

Paracelsus wrote the first comprehensive work on the causes, symptoms, diagnosis and therapy of syphilis. He proposed that epileptics should be considered as sick persons and not lunatics possessed by demons. He studied bronchial illnesses in mining districts and was one of the first people to recognize the connection between an industrial environment and certain types of disease. His range of interests was impressively wide. He concerned himself with such subjects as the curative effects of natural baths, pharmacy, the beneficial effects of plenty of light and fresh air in the sick room, and the necessity for physicians to learn surgical techniques and replace the unskilled barber-surgeons. Curiously enough he had little interest in anatomy; this involved the dissection of corpses while he himself was primarily concerned with living human beings.

During his lifetime Paracelsus was the eternal outsider, a stormy petrel who was detested or ignored by the conservative. Nevertheless, he must already have been to some extent a legendary personality when he died in poverty at Salzburg on 24 September 1541; nothing else would explain the fact that his manuscripts were still being printed long after his death, some as late as 1618.

There is a recent tradition in occultist circles, and particularly in German-speaking countries, that there is still a place for 'Paracelsian' medicine. This takes the form of certain homoeopathic concoctions which probably owe little or nothing to Paracelsus.

ELLIC HOWE



Paracelsus has been described as 'the first modern medical scientist . . . the precursor of microchemistry, antisepsis, modern wound surgery, homoeopathy and a number of other ultra-modern achievements' *Above* The 'Anatomical Furnace' for the distillation of urine, from a treatise based on Paracelsus's principle of examining urine chemically to diagnose diseases *Below* Woodcut showing a hospital scene; Paracelsus is on the left of a group of surgeons

FURTHER READING: Paracelsus, *Selected Writings* (Routledge, 1951).

PARADISE

A good place, blessed and happy, heaven is the final beatitude, the ultimate goal

The Avalon of Arthurian legend, the Greek Elysian Fields and the Norse Valhalla are all concepts of paradise; in Christianity heaven is 'the eternal, blissful abode of all those among the dead whose lives have earned such reward . . .'

HAPPINESS was associated with enclosures rather than open spaces in the ancient Middle East, for deserts and hills, the wind and the sun, were generally too harsh to man. When he thought of a pleasant place, he thought of an oasis or garden, where he could relax in the shade with ample water and fruit. Given the resources, he might create such a place for himself.

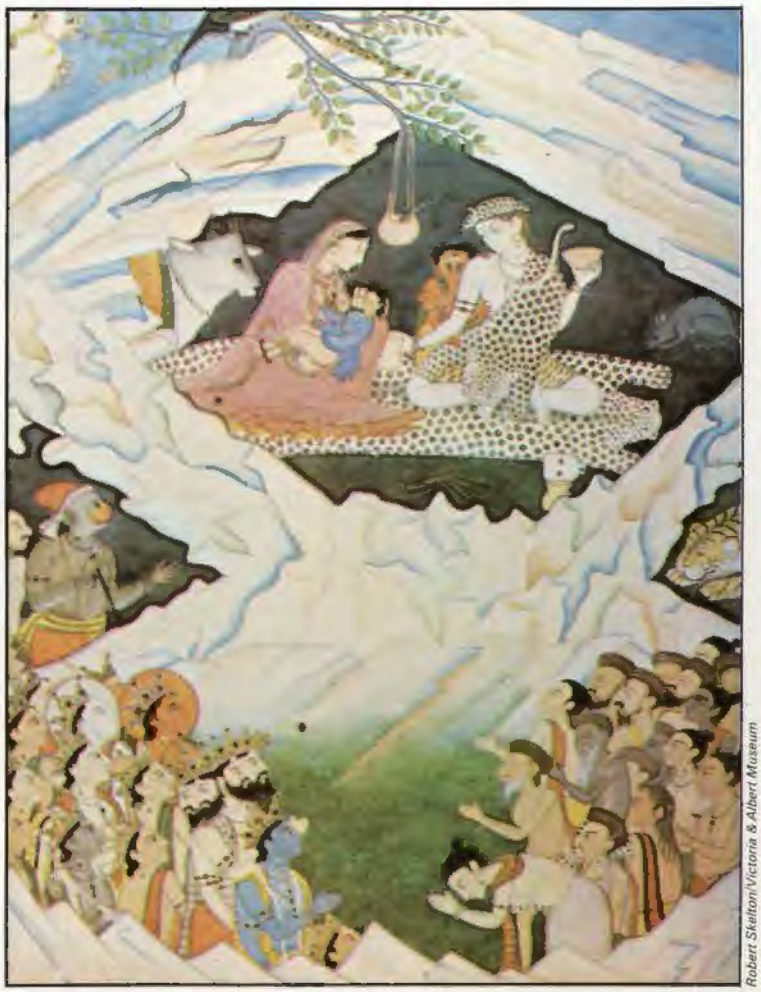
The word 'paradise' is of Old Persian origin. It means an enclosure, and especially a royal park or hunting ground, a piece of land made more agreeable than its surroundings by cultivation. The Greek translators of the Old Testament, about the middle of the 3rd century BC, employed the word once or twice in that sense, for example in Ecclesiastes 2.5: 'I made myself gardens and parks, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.' But their most momentous use of it was in referring to the garden of Eden, the divinely appointed home of Adam.

This appears in Genesis, chapter 2. After creating the world, God plants the garden 'in Eden, in the east'. He places Adam in it and creates the first woman, Eve. The name 'Eden' may be Babylonian. Among the luscious vegetation, God's garden contains the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. A river flows through it and splits up into four streams.

Michael Holford/Victoria & Albert Museum

Right **In its Mahayana form Buddhism has a graded series of paradises though, because man's ultimate achievement is release from the bondage of personality, existence in these heavens is not regarded as an ultimate goal: the exception, in Chinese and Japenese Buddhism, is the 'Pure Land' or paradise established by the Buddha Amida, where existence is devoid of pain, sadness, hunger or anxiety. 18th century miniature**

Following page **The garden of Eden, the earthly paradise of Adam and Eve, is partly paralleled in non-Hebrew mythologies; the belief in some kind of definite 'otherwhere' or 'otherworld', and legends of a time when human beings were carefree and innocent both connect other paradises with this one: garden of Eden, by Jan Breughel; in the Victoria & Albert Museum**



Robert Skelton/Victoria & Albert Museum

Robert Skelton/Victoria & Albert Museum

Life in this earthly paradise is instinctively innocent, with the Lord as a close companion. It is no lazy idyll: Adam must till and keep the garden, with Eve's aid. God forbids them to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. When they disobey, they are expelled. The reason given (Genesis, chapter 3) is that if they stayed, they might eat the fruit of the Tree of Life also, and live for ever. This would have been permissible before; now it is not. Henceforth men must drudge to live. Women must be subject to male dominance and bear children in pain. Meanwhile the garden goes on existing but an armed angel at the gate keeps fallen humanity out.

While the Judaeo-Christian Fall of Man (see FIRST MAN) is in some ways unique, the garden has partial parallels in non-Hebrew mythologies. Two motifs, in particular, connect other 'paradises' with this one. First, Genesis gives the Hebrew version of a widespread idea – the idea of a definite place, an 'otherwhere' or even an 'otherworld', which is part of the universe we know, yet different in quality from the part we live in: a good place, blessed and happy.

Second, Genesis directs attention to the many legends of a lost Golden Age. Long ago, human beings were carefree and guiltless. They were immortal, or at any rate felt no reason to fear death. They lived without sickness in a kindly climate, and never had to work hard. Gods dwelt familiarly among them. For whatever reason, the Golden Age is no more. The gods have withdrawn. Death and disease and wickedness have poisoned life.

But in some mythologies the two themes converge; the paradisal good place not only exists, it is a fragment of the golden world that remains inviolate. If we could reach it we could still find there the delights and divine companionship of the Golden Age.

In classical myth, the Golden Age was the epoch when the Titan Cronus, or Saturn, was supreme god (see CRONUS; TIME). After his son Zeus ousted him, the world declined. But Cronus went on reigning in exile, in the regions of sunset. There, for the Greeks, was the 'good place', out over the Atlantic behind a barrier of water. There lay the Isles of the Blest where, in Hesiod's words, 'the bounteous earth beareth honey-sweet fruit fresh thrice a year'. There lay the plain of Elysium 'at the world's end' where, according to Homer, 'living is made easiest for mankind, no snow falls, no strong winds blow and there is never any rain'.

Celtic myth looked in the same direction. The Isle of Avalon (before its re-location at Glastonbury) was a warm western Elysium, sometimes described in language borrowed from classical literature. Irish seafaring romances, such as *The Voyage of Bran* tell of an enchanted archipelago beyond the horizon, including an Island of the Blest which is larger in extent than Erin itself, a place 'without grief, without sorrow, without death'.

Medieval Irish legend drew the pagan and Christian paradises together. The usual Christian belief was that the earthly paradise of Genesis was in a remote part of Asia. Some Irish Christians, however, located it in one of their own legendary lands beyond the Atlantic, and gave it a Celtic atmosphere. The greatest of all their voyage-romances tells how St Brendan sailed in quest of it, and finally arrived on its borders. The author of *St Brendan's Voyage* probably knew that the world is round, and he may have harmonized his fancies with orthodoxy by imagining that Brendan reached Asia by sailing west (see BRENDAN).

Paradise and Heaven

Adam's lost abode remains, humanly speaking, empty. Other paradises are variously peopled. The Golden Age dream of freedom from the curse of death is recurrent. The citizens of paradise are, as a rule, immortals. In the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the hero, grief-stricken at human evanescence, goes to an island-otherworld expressly for the secret of immortality. He meets Utnapishtim, the chief survivor of the flood, who is indeed exempt from death. But Gilgamesh achieves nothing by his visit.

In more familiar mythologies, such places as Elysium are likely to be the homes of gods, demigods or fairy-folk, all undying. When human beings do enter, we hear (in the oldest stories) of only a chosen few transported there while alive, and endowed with immortality as a special gift. Homer names Menelaus, husband of Helen of Troy. A better known instance is King Arthur who is said to have gone to Avalon after his last battle, and to be still living there (see ARTHUR; GLASTONBURY).

Classical Greece carried the idea a step

Life in the earthly paradise of the garden of Eden was instinctively innocent, with the Lord as a close companion

Facing page Regions above the clouds are allotted to the various gods of Hinduism; gained by a combination of correct morality and correct ritual, these celestial realms are 'consolation prizes' not the ultimate reward, and although a soul may dwell in them for aeons it must leave eventually to continue its pilgrimage in this world; Mt Kailasa (*far left*) one of the mountains of paradise, is Shiva's heaven, and Vaikuntha (*left*) is the paradise of Vishnu *Right* According to Islam, every Moslem will eventually reach a heaven, and no infidel will: the Koran promises the faithful a paradise of gardens, rivers and shady trees; men who go there will enjoy unlimited food and wine, and virtually unlimited harems: 15th century painting depicting the prophet Mohammed's ascension to heaven

Hamlyn Group Library/British Museum

farther. Pindar describes the Isles of the Blest as inhabited by a select few of the noble dead, with Cronus as their king. Here the Blest have actually died; the Golden Age motif, though still present in the person of Cronus, has receded somewhat; the Elysian realm is becoming a sort of heaven.

Within the mainstream of Greek religion, this idea remained tentative. But farther afield, similar beliefs are asserted with more conviction. Sometimes the good place, the 'otherwhere', has little or no explicit Golden Age aura and is more essentially a home of the dead. Where admission is a reward of virtue we approach the concept of heaven in its full Judaeo-Christian meaning: the eternal, blissful abode of all those among the dead whose lives have earned such a reward and of no others; the final beatitude; the ultimate goal.

The approach, however, is by degrees. At the more naive mythical levels, the good place may be simply the place of the dead in general. Everybody goes there, to an improved version of earthly life. The spirit realm of the Tumbuka, in Malawi, is an underworld where the departed are always young and never hungry or sad. Such beliefs occur also in New Guinea and New Caledonia. Some American Indians, the Ojibways and Choctaws for example, have kindred hopes about the region of sunset, or a happy hunting-ground in some secret country. These places are paradises and the homes of the dead, but scarcely heavens, because they are not selective. The goodness of the good place is not a reward.

When selectivity does come in, it may still not take an ethical form. Admission may depend upon social rank. In the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean, aristocratic spirits go to 'sweet-scented Rohutu' and commoners go to 'foul-scented Rohutu'. In Peru, the mansions of the sun were reserved for the Incas and their nobles. Even when conduct is a passport, and the good place has to be earned, the demands are not always moral. Entry may depend on having performed a ritual, or gone through an initiation.

The motif of achieving the good place for one's afterlife through merit appears crudely in the Norse Valhalla, which was reached by martial prowess. Further refinement of selectivity accompanies the development of imaginative power, which tends to locate the good place in the sky rather than on earth. Celestial dwellings for the dead are nearly always selective; the wicked and ignoble seldom go upward. In Egypt during the 3rd millennium BC, the pharaohs hoped to join the sun god and attend him on his journeys through space. While this is another instance of privilege through rank, early texts show that the god's attitude to a deceased ruler could depend partly on his virtues. Later, when similar hopes were extended to lesser men, this idea of judgement became more prominent (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

In the ancient Vedic religion of India the monarch of the dead was called Yama, and he reigned in the outer sky, a realm of light, over all the worthy departed. Their life was an enhancement of earthly life (as in most paradises of myth) with music, sexual fulfilment, and many more pleasures of the same type, and with no pain or care.

Hinduism allots regions above the clouds to Indra, Shiva and other deities. Each is a place of beauty and sensual joy, to be gained by a combination of correct ritual and correct morality. Buddhism inherited such schemes from Hinduism. In its advanced Mahayana form it has a graded series of paradises in a vague, non-astronomical sky. Ecstasies become more spiritual as earth is left farther below. The ascent is by way of virtue and holy meditation.

Salvation in the Sky

It is important to grasp that these quasi-heavens of Hinduism and Buddhism still belong to a mythological order of ideas. They are not ultimate, nor are they central to the philosophy of either religion. The goal of the highest quest is not personal happiness, but total release from the bondage of personality — Nirvana (see NIRVANA). The celestial realms, therefore, are mere consolation prizes. They appeal to those whose minds are not ready to transcend personal desire and descriptions of them are poetic, not doctrinal. They are also temporary. The soul may dwell in them for aeons, but if it goes there at all, it has not completed its pilgrimage and must eventually leave. The sole exception is in a popular form of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, the Pure Land sect (see AMIDA; JAPAN).

Only in the Mediterranean world does the good place acquire dogmatic status as the final reward of all mankind's spiritual strivings, with salvation consisting in its attainment, damnation in its loss. Heaven in this full sense is associated with Hebrew monotheism and ethical seriousness; with Hellenic firmness of outline and appetite for truth.

As long as Greece had no positive doctrine of immortality, and dismissed the dead as shades, Elysium could survive as a fantasy without raising major issues. But from the 6th century BC onward, the mystics of the Orphic cult (see ORPHEUS) were asserting such a doctrine and for those who accepted it, the island-paradise would no longer serve. An abode for the blest on the familiar earth was out of keeping with Orphic ideas, which proclaimed salvation as a release from matter as we know it, and from earthly bondage.

A more exotic home was offered to the right-living initiate. The Orphics adopted the word Elysium and altered its meaning, speaking of 'Elysian Fields' in an underworld of strange brightness, a happy resting-place for pure spirits. But besides this – in Orphism apparently and in later Mystery cults undoubtedly – there was also a disposition to look upward. Gradually the good place was transferred to the sky, as in Asia.

The 'heavens' which the teachers of mystical doctrines drew into their systems were at first simply the upper regions. The prevailing astronomy made them concentric spheres, the spheres of the sun, moon, planets and fixed stars, rotating around the earth. Now, by becoming involved with

Left Elysian Fields of classical Greek mythology as a paradise, a relief by the Renaissance artist Andrea Riccio *Right* The motifs of celestial city and paradise-garden are combined in this painting from a Bulgarian monastery, illustrating Jesus's saying that many will join Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in heaven (Matthew 8.11): St Peter unlocks the gate with a golden key

Sonia Halliday

notions about the soul's ascent, 'heaven' acquired a paradisal and more-than-paradisal sense as well as an astronomical one. The Mysteries (with Egyptian influence from the cult of Osiris) and the gnostic schools of the early Christian era envisaged purified souls as rising. Instructed in the right passwords, the adept eluded the planetary demons of middle space. He soared (by grace of his chosen saviour, such as Mithras) to a superior heaven outside the visible system. Here he lived blissfully with the gods and fellow-initiates, for ever.

Heaven on Earth

Meanwhile, in the contemporary Hebrew world of ideas, two trends had emerged. When most of the Old Testament was composed, Israel's religion had no clear notion of personal immortality. Its only paradise was the lost garden. Heaven, as elsewhere, meant the sky, with the added concept of a pre-eminent heaven beyond, where God sat enthroned among his angels.

Judaism, as it grew after the exile in Babylon, slowly came to adopt a more cheerful outlook. Probably under Zoroastrian influence, it spoke of a future resurrection of the dead, a last judgement, a world to come. No unanimity on these matters was reached, not has it ever been. Rabbinic tradition, however, has usually resisted world-spurning metaphysical speculations. It has its own place, Gan Eden, where the righteous will dwell after the resurrection. Gan Eden is, in effect, Adam's paradise restored. It will be revealed and opened on earth. Its citizens will go there as living people, not shades.

The Greek doctrine of a disembodied existence for souls, between now and the resurrection, never fitted entirely easily into Judaism, which is vague about any celestial heaven; though its teachers and mystics have sometimes spoken of heaven as a vast celestial extension of Gan Eden already in existence. The uncanonical book of Enoch includes a vision of 'resting-places of the righteous' in a realm of angels above the sky. Judaism, today, does teach the soul's immortality. But it has always shown a tendency to keep its feet on the ground, and hope for a future paradise on earth.

In the time of Jesus, such hopes were bound up with apocalyptic and Messianic dreams. The Lord's Anointed would appear, life would be transfigured, the dead would be raised, the earthly Kingdom of God would bring paradise regained . . . for the righteous. Jesus employed apocalyptic language himself, but to convey a message of spiritual revolution: the kingdom, he declared, is 'within you'. This teaching opened the way to a fusion of Hebrew and Hellenic motifs.

For the first Christians, the resurrection of Christ was proof of the coming resurrection of all the dead. When that happened, the Last Judgement would allot them their destinies according to their deserts. The book of Revelation looks ahead not only to the Judgement, but to a material New Jerusalem for the resurrected saints. This, like the Jewish Gan Eden, will be the second paradise; Christ is the second Adam.

But when the resurrection and judgement did not come quickly, a question arose as to what was happening to the dead meanwhile. Christ himself had promised the penitent thief, one of the two criminals who were put to death with him, an immediate paradise (Luke, chapter 23), which must therefore be in existence. In the Christian apocalypse there is already a heaven apart from earth. It is, as ever, the celestial dwelling place of God. The New Jerusalem, when it comes, will come 'down out of heaven'. Until then the souls of the blessed have their heavenly places near God, where, a perfect society, they await final reunion with their bodies.

Christianity compiled its heaven from both Hebraic and Hellenic sources. From Judaism it adopted the region of the sky where God and his angels dwelt. From Greece the Christians took the celestial machinery, the spheres outside one another, the spiritual journeyings. The idea of seven heavens, with the seventh as proverbially the most exalted, is also Greek. Dante's *Paradiso* portrays the souls of the saved appearing in the spheres appropriate to them – those of the sun, moon, planets and stars. The true home of them all, however, is heaven proper, above the cosmic system.

The Place Where God Is

While it carried the concept of heaven to its loftiest heights, Christianity never resolved certain queries. If the souls of the saved went to heaven at once, what would be the point of the future Last Judgement? It could only confirm a destiny already fixed. St Augustine maintained that until the end of the world, spiritual life in heaven was an interim state, a foretaste, an answer which may have owed a debt to a tradition inherited via Judaism from Zoroastrianism.

Nor have Christians agreed about the qualifications for entry. Even baptism is not universally insisted upon, despite the words of Jesus that: '. . . unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (John 3.5). Luther dismissed salvation by works in favour of salvation by faith. Calvin (with a curious reversion to the pagan Elysium) taught salvation by arbitrary divine choice. Islam, in its own version of the Judaeo-Christian scheme, distinguished seven heavens and various hells, temporary or permanent; and it made everything depend on faith. Every

C. M. Dixon/Victoria & Albert Museum

In Chinese belief, if the souls of the just were not sent back immediately to a new life on earth they might go to the dwelling place of the Immortals: 18th century porcelain dish showing Shou-Lao, god of long-life, Fu-Hsing, god of happiness and Lu-Hsing, god of salaries, crossing the seas to their Palace of Immortality; originally human beings, they were deified as a result of merit or good fortune

Moslem, however wicked, would get to a paradise of some kind sooner or later, and no infidel would.

What happens in heaven? The paradises of mythology offer ardent, fairly civilized sensual delights, but Islam is the only major religion which does so. The Koran promises the faithful a reward suited to male Arab tastes. Their home will be a sort of splendid oasis – a true 'paradise' in the ancient sense – with gardens, rivers and trees. Men will wear silken robes and lie on couches, with unlimited fruit and wine, and virtually unlimited harems.

With increasing culture, however, Moslem thinkers have joined Jews and Christians in a more abstract opinion. Heaven is the place where God is; so the final happiness is the beatific vision of God, the source of all good, and therefore completely satisfying.

There is no logical flaw in this conception of a Supreme Good from which the soul would never willingly turn away. But in practice it is hard to imagine a convincing heaven, because any perfection that we can specifically think of would pall. The German philosopher Schopenhauer observed that imaginative authors are more successful with hells than with heavens, because their own lives furnish materials for the former, but not the latter.

Copernican astronomy also raised difficulties. Heaven could no longer be simply a good place above the sky. However, its removal from the visible cosmos – from space and time as known to humans – turned out to bring certain advantages. Disengagement from time meant that such problems as tedium were less forbidding. Life in heaven need not be a monotonous going-on-for-ever. It might be something else, beyond present comprehension, but different.

Abstraction had already gone far in the time of William Blake, who denounced as barren the 'allegoric heaven' of the Churches. Progressive thought in and after the 19th century often dismissed it altogether ('pie in the sky' was the classic term of derision) and talked of building a heaven on earth. This, however, could only be figurative.

Aldous Huxley has suggested that paradisal ideas arose from heightened states of consciousness, which can be induced by drugs. On this showing, the religious apparatus is valid, but not literally so. It symbolizes a genuine, transcendent experience, which human beings can rightly pursue.

GEOFFREY ASHE

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Parapsychology

'Beyond' or 'additional to' conventional psychology, sometimes a synonym for psychical research but usually referring particularly to the experimental testing of extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK); in this connection it has been described by J. B. Rhine as the study of 'a two-way exchange with the environment that is not mediated by the senses and muscles'.

See ESP; MEDIUMS; OBJECT READING; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH; PSYCHOKINESIS; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES; and related articles.

G. Tomisch

Parchment

Writing material made from the skins of animals, usually sheep or goats; from roughly the 8th to the 14th centuries it replaced papyrus, until itself superseded by paper; recommended in the grimoires as the proper material on which to inscribe magical symbols and talismans; the parchment should be made by the magician himself.

See RITUAL MAGIC.

Fire, as the symbol of the deity, is sacred to the Parsees, whose religion is based on Zoroastrianism; believing that fire and earth should not he defiled, they expose the bodies of their dead to flesh-eating vultures in 'towers of silence'

PARSEES

CONCENTRATED mainly in several towns of western India, in the Bombay region, and also in Pakistan, where they settled in far fewer numbers, Parsees consider themselves to be descendants of small groups of people who emigrated from Persia in the 8th century AD in order to avoid forceful conversion to Islam, and to retain Zoroastrianism, their ancient religion (see ZOROASTRIANISM). The details of their escape from Persia and perilous sea voyage to India are largely legendary. It is believed that they first landed on the island of Diu off the south coast of Kathiawar, and that from there they sailed to Gujarat and obtained the local ruler's permission to settle at a place near Sanjan on the Gujarat coast. The first group of refugees was later joined by others who fled from the increasing oppression and religious intolerance of the first caliphs of the Abbasid family.

From Sanjan, Parsees spread subsequently as settlers and merchants both northwards to places such as Navsari, and southwards to the region of the present Bombay. Wherever they settled they established fire temples and by about 1300 AD there were Parsee colonies in various parts of western India. In the early 14th century Moslem invaders defeated the Hindu overlords of the Parsee of Sanjan, and the latter had to flee once more. After various vicissitudes they settled at Bansda.

Royal and Ancient

It is believed that in the 15th century the Parsee community in India was strengthened by further emigrants from Persia, and that these new arrivals brought about a revival of religious practices abandoned in the Indian environment. At that time there were also conversions of Hindus to the Zoroastrian faith, but in later times such proselytizing activities ceased and the Parsees did not admit any new converts tu their community. The first references to Parsees by Europeans are contained in accounts by Portuguese writers of the 16th century, who mention a class of merchants and shopkeepers of Persian origin living in the towns of western India.

A great opportunity for the Parsee traders came with the establishment of European business enterprises. Some of them entered the service of foreign companies, and others developed trade in Western goods on their own account. Parsees had begun to settle in Bombay under the Portuguese (1530–1666) and several Parsee families attained high positions in the town which ever since, and throughout the period of British rule, has been their main stronghold. The Parsees, more than any other community of Indian traders, were responsible for the development of the trade of Bombay, and particularly the trade connections with China, which Parsee merchants visited as early as 1756. Next to Bombay the port of Surat became an important Parsee centre, and early in the 18th century they also spread along the Malabar coast and some families established themselves in Madras. Less inhibited than Hindus by social and ritual restrictions, the Parsees found it comparatively easy to make contact with Europeans, and they were among the first to adopt a Western style of living without, however, abandoning their religious faith and their cohesion as a distinct community.

Popperfoto

Descendants of small groups of Persians who travelled to India in the 8th century AD to avoid conversion to Islam, the Parsees still retain their own traditions and religious customs, and their own family law which is distinct from that of Hindus and Moslems: a saffron mark symbolizing happiness and the goodwill of the household is placed on the brow of a visitor to a Parsee home

A minor threat to that cohesion had appeared in the 18th century over the matter of calculating the calendar. Because of the long separation between the Parsees of India and the small Zoroastrian community remaining in Persia, a discrepancy had developed in their calendars, and the Parsees were one month behind their co-religionists in Persia in commencing their New Year. For a long time little notice was taken of this fact, but in 1746 a Persian came to Surat and together with a group of Parsee priests introduced the calendar as observed by the Persian Zoroastrians. The members of this group called themselves *Kadmis*, 'ancient', whereas the bulk of the Parsees, who became known as *Shehenshais*, 'royal', stuck to their old dates. A division into two sects arose from this schism over the calendars and at times they engaged in angry disputes and discouraged intermarriage between their members. Later amicable relations were restored, but the main annual festivities are still observed on different dates. The Shehenshai sect greatly outnumbers the Kadmis, but some very prominent families belong to the latter.

When the ancestors of the Parsees first settled in India they spoke Persian, but being a small community they gradually adopted the language of their host country and became speakers of Gujarati. Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanian period of Persia (3rd to 6th centuries AD), was retained as a ritual language but the Pahlavi texts, which the priests had to learn by heart, were no longer fully understood. There are also Zoroastrian texts written in modern Persian and in Gujarati.

The influence of the Indian environment also affected the social organization of the Parsee community. Little is known of its internal government during the centuries following the arrival in India, but by the beginning of the 18th century it was – on the model of a Hindu caste – controlled by a *panchayat*, an assembly of a certain number of leading men. It is believed that a properly constituted panchayat was first formed in Bombay after the islands passed into British hands, when the number of Parsees had begun to increase greatly. The panchayat exercised considerable influence, not only in Bombay but also in several towns of Gujarat where Parsees had settled. As Bombay grew in importance under British rule this city became the Parsee headquarters, and whenever any dissensions or differences of opinion arose the advice of the panchayat was asked for and followed. In religious matters, however, the priests of the small town of Navsari held their own as the supreme authority.

Hindu Influence

Towards the end of the 18th century, the panchayat sought and received confirmation of its power from the British authorities, and in the course of the 19th century it initiated a number of reforms designed to eradicate practices which had grown up in imitation of Hindu and Moslem customs, but which were deemed to conflict with the purity of the Zoroastrian religion.

With the gradual extension of the British legal system to all aspects of Indian life the panchayat became obsolete as a legislative body. In order to codify Parsee customary law relating to marriage and succession, a Parsee Law Commission was instituted, and its findings were incorporated in a number of Acts which were passed by the Legislative Council of India in 1865. With this, the Parsees' status as a separate community with its own family law, distinct from that of Hindus and Moslems, was formally acknowledged.

Although the Parsees have adjusted themselves to some extent to Hindu ways of living, they retained until recent times certain items of dress which set them apart from other communities. Only those who were entirely Westernized abandoned their traditional style of clothing. They conformed to Hindu dietary habits in that they ate neither beef nor pork, but there was no prejudice against the drinking of alcoholic beverages. Like Hindus they regard eating as a religious act, during which the orthodox do not engage in conversation.

Each Man Must Take Sides

The original roots of Zoroastrianism lie in a cultural environment similar to that of Vedic Hinduism, but the character which it assumed in its formative period bears the imprint of its prophet and founder Zarathustra (whom the Greeks called Zoroaster), a priest who lived in eastern Iran sometime between 1000 BC and 600 BC. The Parsees refer to him as Zartusht. He was a reformer who attacked the old Indo-Iranian religion, particularly the practice of cruel animal sacrifices, and advocated a break with the worship of the old gods. Legend tells of his retreat into the mountain fastnesses of Iran, where he strove for enlightenment in a state of ecstatic trance, and saw in a vision Ahura Mazdah, the supreme spirit of good, who is diametrically opposed to Ahriman, the spirit of evil (see AHRIMAN).

A belief in the opposing powers of good and evil, who fight for domination over human beings, reflects the dualistic trend in Zoroastrianism, but already there were certain contradictions in Zarathustra's teaching, and Ahura Mazdah appeared standing in one sense above the contrast between good and evil. The modern Parsees refute the characterization of their religion as dualism and describe their faith as pure monotheism. They are certain of the final victory of good over evil, but each man has to decide where he stands in the struggle between Ahura Mazdah and Ahriman.

The sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians are known as the *Avesta*, parts of which stem from different times. The original texts were written in Avestan, an extinct language understood by only a few Parsee scholars, while the commentaries were written in Pahlavi. Belief in the existence of the one supreme deity Ahura Mazdah, now usually referred to as Ohrmazd (or Ormuzd) and credited with the creation of the spiritual and material worlds, is a basic element in Parsee doctrine (see OHRMAZD). He is the source of all blessings and good things and Parsees address themselves to him in all their prayers.

Ohrmazd stands at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of celestial beings which consists of seven *Amesha spentas*, 'holy immortals', and 30 *Yazatas*, 'adorable ones'. These divine beings have been compared to archangels and angels, but their status is higher and they are more independent than the angels of Christianity. They are the rulers, fashioners, protectors and preservers of the creation of Ohrmazd, and Parsees make offerings to them and invite them to visit their houses. The 30 Yazatas preside over natural objects and give their names to the days of the month; Zarathustra, alone among human beings, is now regarded as one of them. These celestial beings interact with mankind and it is through their aid that man learns to know Ohrmazd, to dispel demons and to prosper in this world.

The most prominent among them are Mihr (the ancient Iranian god Mithra – see MITHRAS), Srosh and Rashu. They are the judges of the dead, each with a specific function. Mihr administers justice at the heavenly court, and exposes those guilty of having broken a promise. He saves the souls of truthful persons when they come to the Bridge of Judgement, where he and Srosh await the departed. Rashu holds in his hand the golden balance on which he weighs the good and evil deeds of the souls.

Towers of Silence

Distinct from these prominent celestial figures are the hosts of unnamed *fravashis*, guardian spirits who have left the heavenly sphere and chosen to move to the world of humans where they assist men in the fight against evil. The Parsees believe that each man has a guardian spirit, who leaves him at death to return to the company of the fravashis; but he remains a link between living and dead, and is begged to convey offerings to the departed.

Parsees have often been referred to as 'fire worshippers', but they resent this description and point out that though fire is an important element in their cult, it is a symbol of the deity and not an object of worship. As among the Vedic Hindus, fire occupied a central position in all rituals of the ancient Zoroastrians, and it was not always easy to distinguish between the concepts of the fire as such and the divinity presiding over it.

Among the Parsees today fire is held to be sacred, and the so-called 'fire temples' are buildings for the preservation of the sacred fire. In Gujarat they do not differ greatly from the dwelling houses of the wealthier families. Inside they have an outer and an inner hall. In the centre of the latter is a solid stone stool and on this stands an urn of copper, brass or silver, in which burns the sacred fire fed with sandalwood and other kinds of wood.

There are three types of sacred fires. The lowest grade is consecrated fire in a dwelling house or small family temple; this is the hearth fire which a Parsee never allows to die. If he changes his place of residence he carries his fire with him to his new abode. Fires of greater sacredness burn in temples which should be built wherever numbers of Parsee families are living. They are made of fires taken from a priest's house and the houses of three families of other classes, a process of consecration accompanied by the recitation of sacred texts.

The fire of the highest grade burns only in the most important temples, of which there are less than a dozen. At least 16 different fires are needed to prepare this fire, and ceremonies and rites of consecration are complicated and expensive. A sword and maces hang on the wall of the temple, and there is a brass bell which the priest rings at each watch when he performs a ceremony near the sacred fire.

Only priests may enter the sanctuary where the fire is burning, but many devout laymen pay frequent visits to a fire temple, particularly on the four days in the month which are sacred to fire. The worshippers, both men and women, bring offerings of sandalwood and money. In return the priest gives them ashes from the sacred fire, and these they apply to their forehead and eyelashes. Many of the smaller Parsee communities have no temples, but assemble for prayers in the open.

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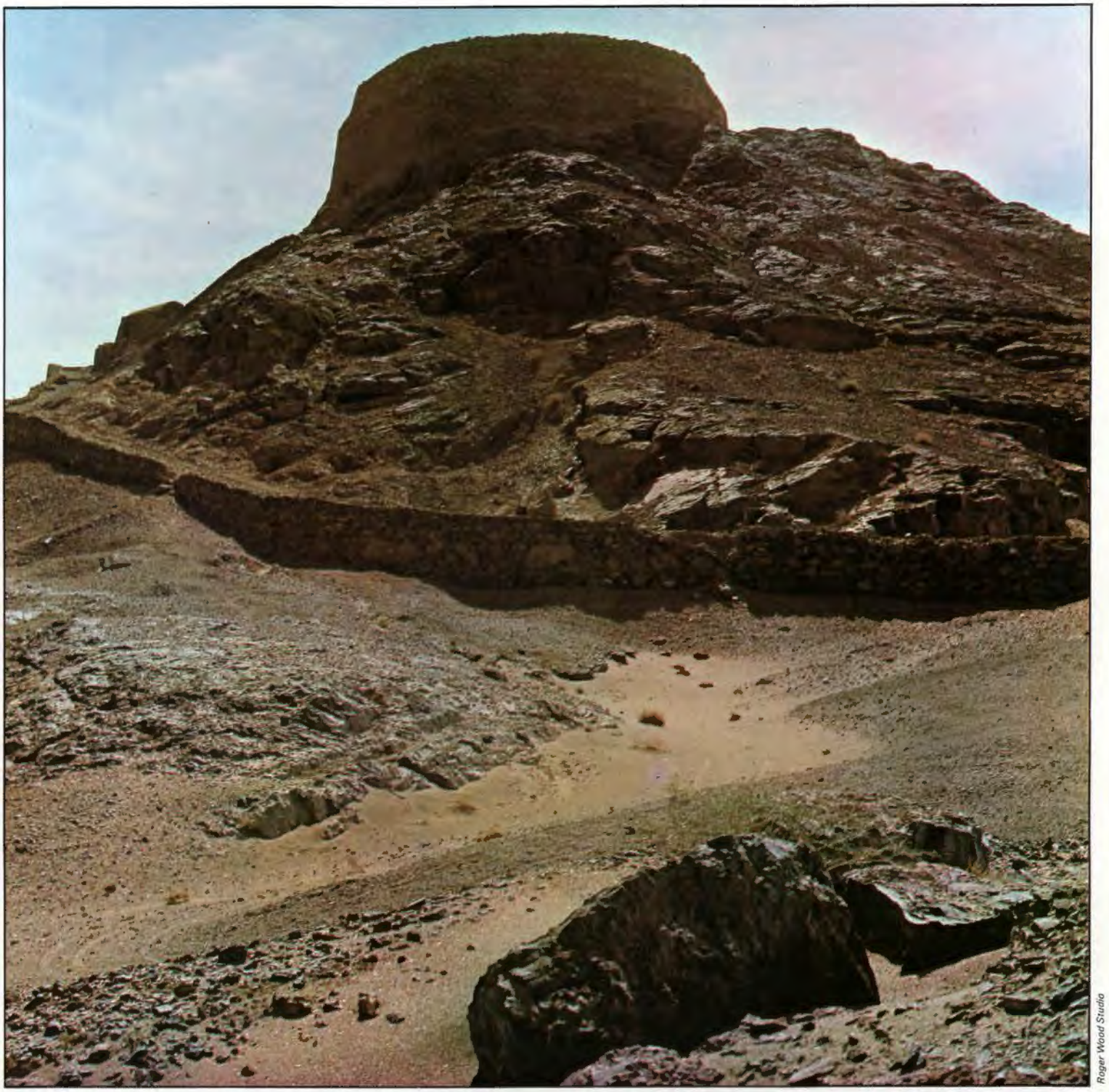
All the main phases in a Parsee's life are marked by rites and ceremonies *Left* A young girl initiate: she has been invested with a sacred shirt and a sacred cord woven from lamb's wool by women of the priestly class *Right* Parsee wedding: at least two priests officiate at the ceremony, and the blessings are pronounced in Old Persian and Sanskrit; grains of rice, symbols of abundance, are scattered over the couple



Roger Wood Studio

Towers of silence are the most famous sacred buildings of the Parsees; believing that corpses should not defile either earth or fire, they place the bodies of their dead in these structures, where they are exposed to the sun and to flesh-eating vultures

The most famous sacred buildings of the Parsees are the so-called 'towers of silence'; large structures of stone or brick situated on hills and usually surrounded by gardens. In these the bodies of the dead are exposed to the sun and to flesh-eating vultures, for according to Parsee belief corpses should not defile either earth or fire. These roofless towers consist of an outer wall some 300 feet in circumference and a deep pit lined with masonry. Dead bodies are laid on a stone platform which is divided into three rows, the outermost for men, the next for women, and the innermost for children. The construction of a tower of silence is accompanied by elaborate ceremonies, and after the first dead body has been deposited, the tower is closed to all, including Parsee priests, with the exception of the corpse-bearers who enter it through a high iron door. When a body has been placed on the appropriate stone slab, the bearers leave and the vultures soon descend upon the corpse and tear the flesh from the bones. Whatever remains is thrown into a central pit filled with sand and charcoal.

Parsees living in small rural communities which lack such funeral towers, and all those living in East Africa and other countries overseas, bury their dead in coffins. Wherever there are funeral towers a special ceremony in honour of the departed is performed on a day comparable to the All Souls' Day of Christianity. Parsees go there to offer prayers for dead relatives and friends, and those who have lost a relative during the year spread carpets and hold a feast in the yard or garden round the tower.

There are several festivals which are celebrated on specific dates. One of these is the Sun Festival, which is traceable to the Persian worship of the sun, now personified by Mihr. During another of these feasts, held in honour of the water spirit, Parsees go to the seashore or to a riverbank, and throw coconuts, sugar and flowers into the water. Women, who have made a vow to do

Postperfoto

The Parsee priesthood is hereditary, and all its members are said to be descended from a priest who was one of the original settlers in India; full-time priests are supposed to have beards and dress entirely in white: initiation of a Parsee youth

so if their affairs prosper, make sweet cakes, some of which they send to friends, and throw the rest into the sea or into a river. On a festival known as the Fire Feast Parsees go to a fire temple, with offerings of sandalwood, and pray before the fire. The rich distribute money to the priests and to poor Parsees who gather there. The so-called Animal Festival is the culmination of a month in which Parsees show special kindness to animals, feeding stray dogs with milk, and cattle with grass. During this time the very devout abstain altogether from animal food, while others observe this type of abstinence on four specific days. Besides these principal feasts there are six seasonal festivals, each of which lasts five days, during which all members of the local community meet on terms of equality and join in a common feast.

Purification Rites

Every religious rite has to be conducted by a priest, and there is a hereditary priesthood that is completely distinct from the laity. All Parsee priests in India are believed to be descended from a priest who is supposed to have been among the original settlers in Sanjan. Different branches of the original family have been allocated to districts in each of the Parsee settlements, in which members of one branch alone may serve as priests. In each of these districts there is a high priest whose office is hereditary and passes from father to eldest son. He does not leave his headquarters to visit the priests under his charge, but hears and settles any complaints against his priests that are brought before him.

While members of the class of priests may engage in secular business, no one born into a family of laymen can become a priest and officiate at religious rites. Until recently it was not customary for the daughters of priests to marry laymen, but the sons of priests were free to take wives of lay status. Members of the priestly class who are full-time priests are supposed to have beards and to dress entirely in white. Those who engage in secular work, shave their beards and wear colours, are disqualified from performing the higher priestly offices.

The functions of a priest include reciting prayers in the temples, and in the houses of laymen, performing the rites for the dead, and conducting ceremonies such as weddings and initiations. There are two orders of priests, known respectively as *Herbad* and *Mobed*. Among the modern Parsees these represent two stages in a ranking system, the Herbad being junior and inferior to the Mobed. But in the Sassanian period of Iran there was a distinction in kind and function between the two classes of priests. The Mobed were the magicians, who had specific functions at animal sacrifices, and the Herbad were the fire priests, found mainly in south-western Iran. In the 3rd century the two classes became fused, and the Parsees have no trace of the original distinction between Herbad and Mobed.

The son of any Parsee priest can become a Herbad if he has learnt by heart a large number of chapters of the *Avesta*, and various parts of other scriptures. He must then undergo a ceremony of purification. Two priests and several male friends and relatives take the novice to the purifying place, which is an open enclosure strewn with sand. A dog, cow's urine, holy ashes, pomegranate leaves, sticks of a special kind and some bathing vessels are required for the elaborate rite which is to be performed there. A confession of sins, and lengthy prayers for purity of mind and deeds are part of the ceremony. Afterwards the novice is taken to a fire temple where he spends nine days and nights in retreat. He then returns to his home, but after a short time undergoes a second purification. At the end of this he is clothed in pure white garments and presented with flowers. The final ordination, which must be conducted by a high priest, then follows.

When a youth has been a Herbad for two or three years, and has learnt additional parts of the scriptures, he may be ordained as a Mobed or full priest. This includes undergoing further purification rites as well as reciting sacred texts. When the ordination has been completed the new priest is fully qualified to perform all sacerdotal functions. From then on he must never be bareheaded and never shave his head or face. He is supposed to retain his state of purity and eat no food cooked by a person who is not of priestly class.

All the main phases in a Parsee's life are marked by rites and ceremonies. Between the ages of seven and nine boys and girls are initiated into the Zoroastrian faith. The ceremony consists of investing the child with a sacred shirt and a sacred cord, and this is followed by a ritual bath and offering of prayers by a priest. Both betrothal and marriage are the occasion of elaborate ceremonies. At least two priests are required for the wedding rite, and they pronounce the marriage blessings in Old Persian and in Sanskrit. The questions addressed to bride and bridegroom are in Persian and so are their answers. Parsees have not permitted polygamy since 1865, but a widowed or divorced person may remarry.

Bowing to the Dead

Parsee funeral rites are relatively simple. The basic principle is to dispose of the dead body with the least possible risk of harm to the living. As a precaution all deaths are held to be caused by infection, and care is taken that people should come into as little contact as possible with the dead bodies. When death is approaching, a prayer of repentance should be said by the dying person or, if he is unable to do so, by a priest or a relative on his behalf. A short time after death the corpse is washed, and dressed in a clean set of clothes which are destroyed afterwards.

The corpse is then given into the charge of two persons who place it on stone slabs, or the earthen floor, on the ground level of the house. Priests say the prayers for the dead before the corpse is taken out, and a dog is brought to look at the face of the deceased in order to drive away evil spirits, a custom that recalls the great respect paid to dogs in old Iranian religion. The two attendants then carry the corpse out of the house and hand it over to four bier-carriers, who must be Parsees. If the distance to the tower of silence is considerable a wheeled vehicle may be used for the transport of the corpse; where wooden bullock carts were used for this purpose they were afterwards broken up and the pieces buried.

The funeral procession is headed by the corpse-carriers; behind them walk the priests followed by the relatives. At the tower of silence, all bow to the dead, but only the

bier-carriers enter the tower, and deposit the body on the appropriate place. The clothes are torn off and the body is left to the vultures.

Three days after the funeral a ceremony of prayers is held in the house of mourning and the following morning white clothes, drinking vessels, fruit and wheatcakes are consecrated to the dead in the local fire temple. There is a belief that for three days after death the soul of the departed remains within the precincts of this world, and that at dawn after the third night following death it reaches the Bridge of Judgement which connects this earth with the unseen world. There the soul's fate is decided, and the relatives of the deceased try to influence this decision by the recitation of prayers addressed to the celestial judges. The righteous are believed to enter into a state of bliss in a heaven peopled by divine beings, and those whose deeds have been evil are confined to a place of darkness and suffering.

According to Zoroastrian belief punishment in hell does not last for all eternity; there will be a final renewing of the world, when evil will be overcome and the entire creation assume the quality of Ohrmazd, the source of all goodness and happiness. The dualism of good and evil is considered capable of ultimate resolution, and the world view of the Parsees is basically optimistic.

Unlike Hinduism, which extols asceticism and favours a pessimistic attitude to life, the ideology of the Parsees is basically life-affirming, and its dualistic trends do not imply a confrontation of mind against matter. The flesh is not regarded as evil, celibacy is abhorred, and there is more equality between men and women than in either Hinduism or Islam. The life-affirming element in Zoroastrianism is consistent with the role of the Parsees as the most progressive ethnic element, economically and materially, in the whole of India. Their contribution to the development of commerce and modern industry, scholarship and art is out of all proportion to their numbers.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

FURTHER READING: Sir R.P. Masani, *The Religion of the Good Life, Zoroastrianism* (Allen & Unwin, 1938); D. Karaka, *History of the Parsis* (AMS Press, 1977, c1884).

PARSIFAL

PARSIFAL is one of the leading characters of Arthurian romance. His name appears as variants of Perceval in French and English, Parzival in German. In the basic story Perceval's father has been killed about the time of his birth and his mother takes refuge with her son in the mountains of Wales. Perceval grows up to be strong and handsome but quite ignorant of the ways of the world and of the rank to which his parentage entitles him. One day he meets a band of Arthur's knights and goes off with them. At Arthur's court he astonishes everyone by both his personal beauty and his uncouth manners. After many perils, he learns all the skills and courtesies of chivalry.

In a bewildering variety of stories, not all of which are mentioned here, the rude and rustic youth becomes the hero of the quest for the Holy Grail. The earliest version is the *Conte del Graal*, a poem by Chrétien de Troyes written c 1180, which tells the story of Perceval's adventures at the castle of the Fisher King, his failure to ask the right question about the Grail, and his return to Arthur's court, where he is reproached by the Loathly Damsel (see GRAIL). Perceval swears the Quest: he will search till he finds the castle again, he will ask the question, he will not spend two nights in the same place till all is accomplished.

Chrétien then breaks off to recount the adventures of Gawain. When we next meet Perceval, five years later, he is in sorry state. He has done many deeds of prowess, has sent 60 knights as prisoners to Arthur; but he has failed in the quest and has forgotten God and never been to church. It is

Parsifal experiences many adventures in his search for the Grail before finally achieving spiritual maturity: in a vision he sees the New Law based on the teachings of Christ, represented by a young woman riding a lion, and the 'first Law that was put aside as soon as Jesus Christ had introduced the New', symbolized by an old woman riding on a serpent: illustration in a 14th century French manuscript

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Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

In a bewildering variety of stories Parsifal, who is a beautiful but uncouth young man when he first arrives at Arthur's court, becomes one of the chief figures in the legend of the quest for the Holy Grail: Illustrations from a 13th century manuscript show Parsifal with Hector (*above*) after the two knights have exhausted each other in combat and (*left*) praying with Galahad, the best knight in the world. In the French *Queste del Saint Graal* Galahad was the only one fully to penetrate the mystery of the Grail

Good Friday and he does not know it. A group of penitents chide him for being in arms on a holy day. On their advice, he goes to a hermit who lives nearby. Very repentant, he confesses he has done 'nothing but evil' for five years, and has done nothing to obtain pardon. The hermit, who turns out to be his uncle, tells Perceval his sin lies in his unwittingly having caused his mother to die of sadness. From this came his failure to ask the question and all the trouble thereafter. The hermit explains that the Fisher King's father is he who is served with the grail, sustained for 15 years on the sacred host alone carried in the vessel. He enjoins the good knightly life on Perceval who does penance and receives communion.

Here Chrétien's unfinished story ends. Various authors attempted 'continuations'. In one, Perceval comes a second time to the castle and succeeds in mending, save for one small crack, a broken sword. The Fisher King had wounded himself while trying to repair this sword, which had belonged to the evil Lord of the Red Tower, the slayer of the Fisher's brother. Perceval undertakes a mission of vengeance, finds a smith who repairs the remaining crack and kills the Lord of the Red Tower. On his return, the Fisher King is cured and reveals himself as Perceval's uncle. The young hero is crowned as his successor and when at length he dies the Grail is carried up to heaven.

The French prose romance *Perlesvaus* (c 1200) has a remarkable ending which tells of Perceval's visit to an enchanted island, a Christianized version of a pagan Welsh 'otherworld'. Here dwell men of incredible age, with hair and beard 'whiter than new fallen snow (and yet) young of face . . . they all seemed to be of the age of thirty-two years'. Astounding things occur in this monastery-like community: an armed knight lives in a cask of glass, a golden chain and crown descend from the ceiling, a pit opens in the floor and 'the greatest and most dolorous cries that anyone ever heard' issue from it. The two 'masters', who know all about Perceval and the Grail, tell him that he cannot leave unless he promises to return as soon as he sees a ship with a sail bearing a red cross. If he does, he will have the crown and be king of a nearby island, 'very abundant in all good things'; if he does not rule as well as the present king, who has been 'chosen to reign in a greater realm', he will be sent to the Island of Suffering, the cries from which he has just heard. Perceval agrees and – the Fisher King having died in the meantime – returns to the Grail castle where a voice tells him that 'the Holy Grail shall appear here no longer but within a short time you will know well where it will be'. One day the ship of the red cross appears and Perceval sets sail. In the words of the American scholar R. S. Loomis: 'The author declares that never did earthly man know what became of Perceval and that the history speaks of him no more. But, of course, he has already informed us of Perceval's destination, namely, the isle of the ageless elders, and has intimated clearly that there he will find the Grail.'

In the *Queste del Saint Graal*, a prose work probably written between 1215 and 1230, the hero is Galahad, the ascetic knight and perfect Christian who alone is pure enough to follow the quest to its ultimate and most sublime end. The *Queste* asserts the supremacy of the loftiest spiritual values over the worldly virtues of chivalry and courtly love. In it Perceval plays a secondary but still important and flattering role. Only he and Bors prove worthy to accompany Galahad to the Grail castle where a marvellous Mass is said: Christ himself administers the sacrament from the Grail and the Fisher King is cured by a drop of blood from the Holy Lance. Later, Galahad achieves the final ecstasy of gazing into the Grail and dies as Grail and Lance ascend to heaven. Perceval dies a year later and Bors returns home alone.

The Hatred of God

Of all the versions, the one to which readers today will most warmly respond is probably the monumental poem *Parzival*, written between 1200 and 1212 by Wolfram von Eschenbach, a poor Bavarian knight of very individual outlook and mode of expression. The work brings together a host of characters and themes illuminating Parsifal's own personality and progress.

In the first part of the poem, apart from the fact that Wolfram describes the deeds and fate of Parsifal's father, the outline broadly follows the sequence of events as told by Chrétien. But there are many important differences in detail and attitude.

Of these the most significant are Parsifal's marriage to Condwiramurs instead of a passing affair with a lady named Blanchefleur and his questioning of God, instead of mere forgetfulness and neglect. Throughout his adventures, Parsifal remains devotedly and passionately in love with his wife. The poet continually reminds us of this – there is, for instance, a remarkable passage in which drops of blood on the snow recall Condwiramurs' complexion to Parsifal's imagination – and the hero is reunited with his wife and sons when the quest is accomplished. And until he meets the hermit Trevrizent, his uncle, Parsifal again and again asks 'What is God?' He does so when his mother tells him the Almighty is lord of the little birds as well as of men; he does so, very differently, when his humiliation at failing to ask the right questions at the Grail castle plunges him into doubt and despair. To Gawain he says: 'Alas, what is God? Were He almighty, He would never have exposed you and me to such disgrace, could He rule with power. I have devoted myself to His service because I was hopeful of His grace. Now I will forswear His service: if He hates me, that hatred I will bear.' This strikes a very 'modern' note, as far from the mystifying enchantment of the romances as it is from the exalted otherworldliness of the Galahad *Quoste*.

Wolfram is a realist with a vivid imagination, almost, you could say, a Christian humanist. The core of the poem is Trevrizent's long discourse, the burden of which is that compassion is the heart of the good life and pride, thinking or unthinking, the greatest sin. Throughout the poem the characters develop. Cundrie, for instance, the Loathly Damsel, who in the earlier scenes is even fiercer in her reproaches than in Chrétien's verses, appears towards the end as a figure recalling Mary Magdalen. She kneels before Parsifal and foretells that he will be Lord of the Grail which, on finding the castle again and curing the King with his question, he truly becomes. Warm human relationships and the love of man and woman join with knightly perfection and the spiritual maturity of the love of God to achieve a sane and happy balance of the claims of this world and the next.

C. DE HOGHTON

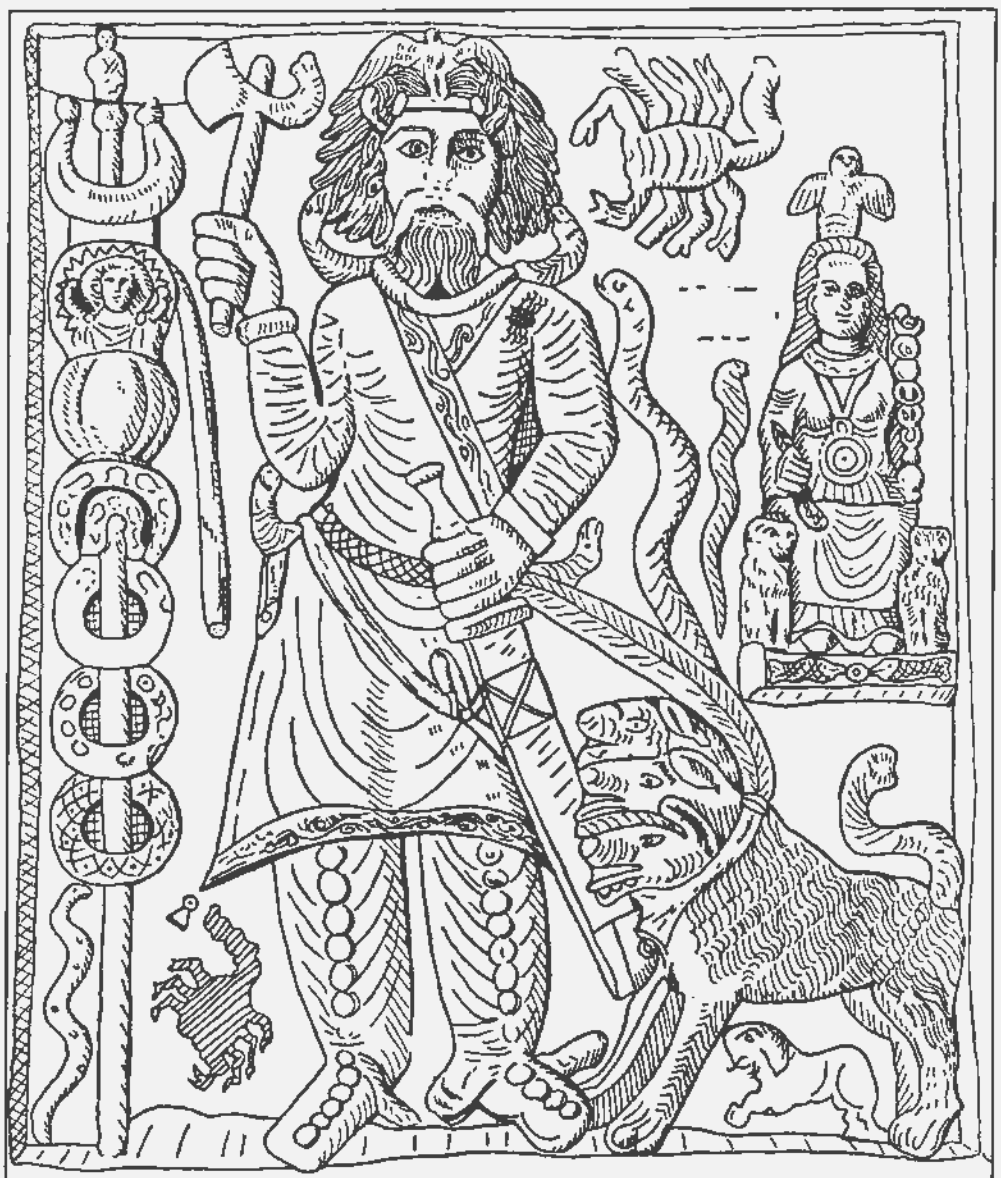
The expression 'a Parthian shot', meaning a remark which is made with deadly effect at the moment of departure, derives from a tactic used by the Parthian mounted archers, the Parthian Empire achieved an extraordinary fusion of religious beliefs drawn from Iranian, Semitic and Greek traditions

PARTHIANS

THE CRUSHING DEFEAT inflicted by the Parthians on the Roman army at Carrhae in 53 BC alerted the Roman Republic to the powerful enemy on the eastern frontier of their Empire. The mounted archers, with their 'Parthian shots', now became familiar figures in Western literature. In 40 BC the Parthians actually invaded the Roman provinces of Asia Minor and Syria, capturing Jerusalem among other places. Though forced to withdraw, for another two centuries they remained a constant threat to Rome's empire in the east.

The Parthians, although they established an empire that extended from the frontiers of Syria in the west to those of Bactria (northern Afghanistan) in the east, are a little-known people. This obscurity seems to have resulted largely from the policy of the Sassanians who, having overthrown the Parthians in c 227 AD, were concerned to damn or obliterate their memory. Modern research is gradually recovering information about the Parthians and their achievement in the synthesizing and dissemination of Eastern and Western cultural traditions, particularly in the matter of religion.

Originally a tribe of Iranian nomads known as the Parni, the Parthians acquired the latter designation with Greek and Roman writers by seizing the satrapy (district) of Parthava in c 247 BC. Their leader, named Arsaces, founded a dynasty of kings known as the Arsacids. Their new kingdom was wrested from the Seleucid government, which had inherited the Middle Eastern part of the empire of Alexander the Great. The Seleucid rulers continued Alexander's policy of Hellenizing the peoples he had conquered. This policy meant the establishment of Greek political and cultural institutions, including religious cults.



The fusion of different beliefs that characterized Parthian religion is reflected in this limestone relief; the chief figure is a god in Parthian dress holding an axe, a typical attribute of Semitic and Hittite weather gods. The three-headed dog on his left is reminiscent of Cerberus, guardian of the Greek underworld

A very important question concerning the Parthian attitude towards the many religions current in their empire is that of their policy towards Zoroastrianism. This native Iranian religion, which was to be vigorously supported by the Sassanians, had existed in Iran since the 6th century BC. It seems to have been accepted in a modified form by the Achaemenian rulers, whose imperial dynasty was overthrown by Alexander the Great. The defeat of this native dynasty and the Hellenizing policy of Alexander and the Seleucids seem likely to have imperilled Zoroastrianism, or at least hindered its progress. The rise to power, therefore, of an Iranian dynasty, such as the Parthian Arsacids, would appear to have been providential for Zoroastrianism.

The issue, unfortunately, remains obscure, for the original native religion of the Parthians is unknown, and the position of Zoroastrianism at this time is uncertain. There is a tradition that a Parthian king, Valakhsh or Vologases, collected together fragments of the 21 books attributed to Zoroaster, which had survived Alexander's destruction of the Iranian prophet's works. However that may be what evidence there is seems to indicate that the Parthians inherited and maintained what has been called 'a general Mazdayasnian religious predominance'.

This means, in fact, that they continued the religious situation that existed under the Achaemenians. For under these rulers, while Zoroaster's Ahura Mazdah (see OHRMAZD) was worshipped and Arta, the principle of cosmic good order, was exalted, the Iranian deities Mithra and Anahita were also acknowledged, contrary to the teaching of Zoroaster, and the Magi, the ancient Persian priestly caste, extended their influence. The Parthians were Mazdah worshippers and respected the Magi; several of their monarchs incorporated references to Arta and Mithra in their names. They were also fire worshippers and a royal fire burned continually before each Arsacid king.

In contrast to the Magian custom of exposing the bodies of the deceased on 'towers of silence' (see PARSEES), the established Parthian means of disposing of the dead was by burial. The bodies were usually placed in terracotta coffins, curiously shaped and somewhat resembling 'bath-tubs' or 'slippers', which has caused them to be so designated by modern archeologists. These clay coffins were often decorated with the figure of a soldier or a nude goddess, who is probably to be identified with Anahita. Funerary equipment of various kinds, including utensils, weapons, jewellery and figurines, were placed in the graves, possibly for the post-mortem needs of the deceased.

The Parthians evolved a remarkable kind of mortuary architecture. Tombs took the form of brick or stone rectangular buildings, within which were vaulted chambers containing series of *loculi*, narrow recesses that housed the sarcophagi. At Dura and Palmyra these multiple tombs were often built as towers, containing several storeys: the Palmyrenes called them 'houses of eternity'. The loculi were generally closed with a sculptured bust of the deceased.

The syncretism that characterized the religion of Parthia is strikingly presented in its iconography. An impressive memorial to this is the colossal tomb of Antiochus I of Commagene (69–34 BC). As the inscriptions on the giant statues show, the following identifications of Greek and Iranian gods were made: Zeus-Oromasdes (Ohrmazd, the later designation of Ahura Mazdah); Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes; Artagnes (Verethragna, god of war)-Heracles-Ares.

Silver dish, 2nd century AD, showing Dionysus with Ariadne and Hercules: the combination of Greek subject and style with central Asian motifs such as the chariot wheel in the form of a solar disc, is an example of the different cultural elements in Parthian art

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

Meeting Place of Many Faiths

The most amazing of all instances of Parthian religious syncretism, however, is a carved slab from Hatrah. It shows as its chief figure a bearded male deity in Parthian dress, armed with a heavy sword. Serpents entwine his body and neck, and a small eagle or falcon with outstretched wings surmounts his head. In his right hand he holds an axe, which was a typical attribute of Semitic and Hittite weather gods. To his right is the standard of Hatrah, bearing various symbols including the lunar crescent and the head of the sun god. To the left of the god is a three-headed dog, reminiscent of Cerberus who guarded the Greek underworld. Above, to the right, a small enthroned figure of a goddess, probably Atargatis, is shown, with accompanying bird, lion and fish symbols.

No inscription identifies the main figure. The axe and the three-headed dog associate him respectively with the sky and the underworld; the eagle might also signify celestial attributes. The figure seems to be a Parthian version of the lion-headed monster, whose image has been found in many Mithraic sanctuaries. The serpents and scorpions, in this context, would represent signs of the zodiac. This Mithraic figure was identified with Zurvan-Ahriman, a sinister Iranian deity personifying the destructive aspect of Time (see TIME; ZURVAN).

Besides such evidence of the syncretizing of Iranian, Semitic and Greek religious traditions in Parthia, there are also indications of even wider tolerance of foreign faiths. In eastern Parthia there were sympathetic contacts with Buddhism and Hindu cults, while in the western parts Jewish communities flourished, which were permitted to proselytize. Christianity also was established early in Parthian lands, and there are even legendary letters from Christ to Abgar V, ruler of Edessa.

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Life is a journey, the soul treads a 'way' to heaven which is both a route and a method, the strait and narrow path is the one which leads to salvation, and the dead travel the dangerous roads of the afterworld

PATH SYMBOLISM

HAPPY is the man who finds wisdom, says the book of Proverbs (chapter 3) for 'her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace'. The path or road or way is a frequently used symbol, appearing in several well-worn English phrases. There is 'the path of duty' for instance, or 'the primrose path of dalliance' which Shakespeare contrasts in *Hamlet* with 'the steep and thorny way to heaven'. Someone who is ill may be 'on the road to recovery', someone who has died has 'gone the way of all flesh'. You can 'fall by the wayside', be 'led up the garden path' or be 'on the right track'.

The image of 'the open road', running freely on across hill and dale, and so meaning adventure, release, freedom from the cramped confines of conventional society, appealed particularly to writers in the later 19th and 20th centuries. There is an example in one of Robert Louis Stevenson's poems – 'My mistress still the open road and the bright eyes of danger' – and another in G. K. Chesterton's rolling English road made by the rolling English drunkard. The hero of H. G. Wells's novel *The History of Mr Polly* escapes from the cage of his job and his marriage, and takes to the open road. In *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame, the Toad expands on the theme when he shows his new caravan to Rat and Mole. 'There's real life for you, embodied in that little cart. The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs! Camps, villages, towns, cities! Here to-day, up and off somewhere else to-morrow! Travel, change, interest, excitement! The whole world before you, and a horizon that's always changing!'

The course of human life is often pictured as a journey, as in Christina Rossetti's poem *Up-Hill*:

> Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
> Yes, to the very end.
> Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
> From morn to night, my friend.

The journey is usually a spiritual one, a pilgrimage, a quest for the soul's salvation, as in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian gains heaven, the Celestial City, after an arduous journey through a symbolic landscape in which it is dangerous to stray off the path or take the wrong turning. In the journey of the spirit the difficult road is the right one to take: 'For the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction . . . the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life' (Matthew, chapter 7). The same sentiment occurs in the famous tag from Virgil, *facilis descensus Averno*, 'easy is the descent to hell'.

Psalm 23 is probably the best-known example of journey symbolism in the Old Testament: 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want . . . he leads me beside still waters . . . he leads me in the paths of righteousness . . . Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil . . .'

The word 'way' means both a road and a method. Jesus said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me' (John, chapter 14), and the Christian way to heaven is to 'follow Christ', with a double imagery of both treading in his footsteps and accepting his message. In the Middle Ages the monastic life was sometimes called the *via regia* or 'royal road', the highway to salvation of constant contemplation of God, the spiritual road which runs straight and true, on which there are no detours.

The Paths of the Dead

The double meaning of 'way' as both a route and a method is not confined to western ways of thinking. In India the word *marga* means both a path and a means of reaching a goal. There are many different paths to salvation, suited to people in different stages of spiritual development. *Karma-marga*, for instance, is the path of doing good works,

Aboriginal bark painting from Australia, showing the path to be taken by the soul on its journey to the otherworld; the idea that after death the spirit must follow difficult and dangerous paths is very widespread

Axel Poignant

bhakti-marga is the method of love and devotion to the divine, *kriya-marga* is the way of ritual, of building temples and making images of the gods. Similarly, *yana* in Mahayana (great course) and Hinayana (lesser course) basically means 'path'.

The Milky Way owes its name to the old belief that it is a track in the heavens (though alternatively it was often thought of as a river), frequently regarded as the road along which the dead travel to the otherworld. That in the afterlife there are paths which the departed must tread is a widespread idea. For example, the Guarayo Indians of Bolivia said that after death the soul has the choice of two paths. One is broad and easy, the other narrow and difficult, and it is this second path which the soul should choose. It leads to a river, across which the soul must be ferried by a huge alligator, and to a second river, crossed on a tree trunk. Later the soul must negotiate a dark land by the light of a burning straw, it must pass between the clashing rocks which can be mastered only by a password, and eventually, if it survives all the perils of the journey, it will come to a lane of flowering trees and hear birds singing and live happily for all eternity.

On the other side of the world, in ancient Egypt, some coffins of c 2000 BC portray a map of the journey which the dead had to make by one of two routes, one by land and the other by water, to the mysterious country of Ro-Setau (see BOOK OF THE DEAD). In India, there is a Hindu theory that after death the soul of a man who is totally sinless rises along the *deva-yana*, 'god-path', through fire to day, from day to the lighted side of the moon, from there to the part of the year lighted up by the sun in its northward journey, and then by way of the year, the sun, the moon and lightning to paradise. A soul which is not entirely without sin but is still exceptionally virtuous takes the *pitri-yana* or 'father's path' through the moon, the atmosphere, wind, clouds and rain to a lesser paradise, from which it will eventually be reborn as a person of high rank.

The Strait and Narrow

I beheld, then, that they all went on till they came to the foot of the Hill Difficulty; at the bottom of which was a spring. There were also in the same place two other ways besides that which came straight from the gate; one turned to the left hand, and the other to the right, at the bottom of the hill; but the narrow way lay right up the hill, and the name of the going up the side of the hill is called Difficulty. Christian now went to the spring, and drank thereof, to refresh himself and then began to go up the hill . . . The other two also came to the foot of the hill; but when they saw that the hill was steep and high, and that there were two other ways to go; and supposing also that these two ways might meet again, with that up which Christian went, on the other side of the hill; therefore they were resolved to go in those ways. Now the name of one of those ways was Danger, and the name of the other Destruction.

Bunyan *The Pilgrim's Progress*

The paths which the soul must take after death have a parallel in the symbolic travels of the candidate for initiation, who experiences a 'death and rebirth'. 'At first one wanders and wearily hurries to and fro, and journeys with suspicion through the dark . . .' (see INITIATION).

The Twenty-Two Paths

There are also paths in the astral otherworld of modern western occultism, 22 of them, corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the 22 major trumps of the Tarot pack (see ALPHABET; TAROT). These paths are shown as lines running from one sefira to another on the diagram of the cabalistic Tree of Life (see CABALA). Since the Tree represents the emanations from the divine being which created the universe, the paths leading down from the sefira Kether at the top of the diagram are stages in the process through which the universe came into being. Conversely, if the paths are trodden in the reverse order, starting from the sefira Malkhuth and climbing upwards, they are the way of the soul's ascent to the divine and the steps of the magician's quest for power.

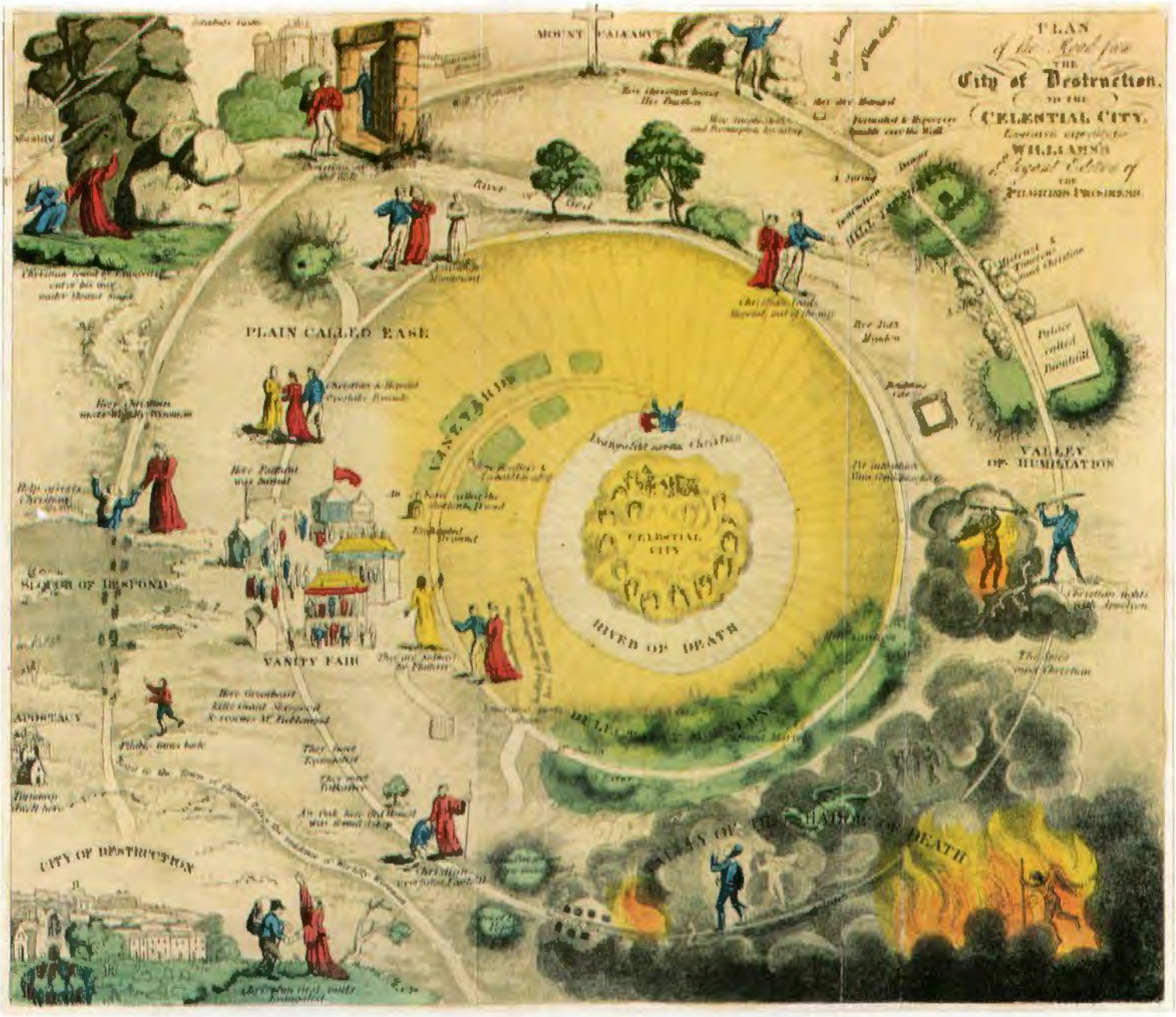
Each path belongs to one of the Tarot trumps, whose symbolism contains the key to the path's nature, but no two people are likely to interpret the symbolism of the Tarot cards in exactly the same way and, even in broad terms, there are rival systems of interpretation. Nor is there agreement about the positioning of the trumps on the Tree, partly because the correct placing of the Fool is in doubt.

No brief account can do justice to the richness of ideas which can be drawn from the Tarot but, following one system of interpretation, the aspiring occultist's ascent begins with the 22nd path, which corresponds to the card called the World. This path leads up from Malkhuth to the threshold of the astral plane in the sefira Yesod. The card shows a woman dancing and is a symbol of joyful release, the entry into a higher plane of being. The next path is that of the Day of Judgement, a symbol of aspiration, with the dead rising from their graves in the hope of ascending to the higher life of heaven. Next comes the path of the Sun, the shining light of true intelligence dispersing the darkness of conventional wisdom and received ideas. The process continues in the path of the Moon, the card of illumination in the night, light penetrating the dark underworld of the mind.

The card called the Stars shows a figure pouring water onto the earth and into a pool. The water is the water of life and the path is that of intuition, the wellspring of life in the depths of the mind. The Falling Tower

Below **Signs of sorcery uncovered at the crossroads: from a French 14th century manuscript. A place where two paths meet has always been regarded as sinister and uncanny, suitable for witches meetings and operations of black magic** ***Right*** **Map illustrating the stages of the spiritual journey described in Bunyan's** ***Pilgrim's Progress,*** **where Christian eventually reaches heaven, the Celestial City, after an arduous journey through a symbolic landscape**

British Museum



Mansell Collection

means the destruction of a false system of ideas, the discovery, as Paul Case puts it (in *The Tarot*), 'that the structure of knowledge built on the foundation of the fallacy of personal separateness is a tower of false science.' (There is a pun on 'fallacy' here, as the Tower is a phallic symbol.)

The trump called the Devil stands for power, egotism and unbridled lust. Temperance is another symbol of rising from a lower plane to a higher, the card showing liquid being poured from a silver cup into a golden one. Death, the skeleton reaping with his sickle, stands for death and new life, the 'killing' of the civilized, constricting influences on a man's mind and the burgeoning of the driving forces from the unconscious. The Hanged Man, the most famous card in the pack, is another phallic symbol and continues this process. Hanging limply upside down on his gibbet, he shows a reversal of values and the destruction of the false outer, conventional self. But he has released the 'sperm' from which new life will come with the conception of the true self.

Justice, the next card (though in other systems Strength is placed here), is a symbol of rest and equilibrium, the attaining of a balance between the warring opposites of human nature. The Wheel means time and fate, the remorseless ebb and flow of the tides of destiny. The true self, which has been a foetus in the womb of Justice, is here born, to become part of the revolving wheel of existence. The solitary Hermit, in sexual terms an emblem of masturbation, is a sign that the true self is approaching maturity, that the adept has discovered the Master in himself. Strength, according to Aleister Crowley, is the formula of 'the Beast conjoined with the woman', implying a perverse discipline of submission to the abnormal and the repellent.

The paths of the Chariot and the Lovers cross 'the abyss' which separates the three highest sefiroth from the rest, the gulf between man and God. The Chariot is a symbol of ecstasy and triumph, the Lovers of the reconciliation of opposites in a higher unity. The Pope or Hierophant represents the spiritual authority of the magus, the great adept, the Emperor is a symbol of temporal power and authority, and the Empress stands for the teeming world of Nature and the transition from finite to infinite, from multiplicity to the One.

The last three paths lead to the highest sefira, Kether. The Female Pope or High Priestess is the gateway to heaven, the knowledge of the divine, the destruction of all duality of thought. The Juggler or Magician stands for singleness of purpose, the destruction of all duality of action. And finally the Fool, the holy madman, is man as God.

(See also CROSSROADS; PILGRIMAGE; STEPS AND LADDERS.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Victoria and Albert Museum

ST PAUL

The Pilot of Christianity

Seeking to present a gospel acceptable to Graeco-Roman society, the great missionary figure of early Christianity transformed the original belief in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel into an esoteric doctrine of a divine-saviour

DURING THE PAST CENTURY St Paul has been transformed from the most important apostle to the most controversial figure of Primitive Christianity. There is a certain irony in this situation; for Paul, despite his high reputation in the Church, was originally a controversial figure and his authority as an apostle was seriously questioned by other Christians of the time. It is the paradox of this original uncertainty about Paul's status and his subsequent great renown that has caused scholars to look critically at the traditional view of the beginnings of the Christian religion.

In seeking to understand Paul and the part he played in the infant Christian movement, it is necessary first to evaluate our sources of information. The primary source is Paul's own writings. Of those attributed to him in the New Testament expert opinion is generally agreed in recognizing the following as genuine: the epistle to the Romans, the two epistles to the Corinthians, those to the Galatians, Philippians and Colossians, the first epistle to the Thessalonians and the little personal note addressed to Philemon. They were written in Greek during a period from about 48 to 60 AD. Since these writings take the form of letters and are often concerned with specific issues that had arisen in the communities to which they were addressed, they have a spontaneous character. In them Paul often throws out ideas on matters of belief and practice which he does not follow up. Many of these ideas are pregnant with theological suggestion; but sometimes, when set together, they appear to be mutually contradictory. However, it must be remembered that when Paul wrote, some 20 years only had passed since the crucifixion of Jesus, and as yet there was no Christian theology. Paul was, in fact, unconsciously laying the foundations upon which the theologians of the Church were later to build the great doctrines of the faith.

The other source is the Acts of the Apostles, which was written towards the end of the 1st century AD. It seeks to show how

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Two 12th century plaques showing episodes from St Paul's adventurous career: he escapes by night from Damascus, let down from the city walls in a basket *(left)*, and he disputes with Greeks and Jews *(above)*. A Jew by birth, Paul's first language was Greek, and he believed himself divinely chosen to preach Christ to the Gentiles: in doing so, he produced a version of Christianity which shocked the original Jewish Christians of Jerusalem

Christianity, guided by the Spirit, started from the small community of original disciples resident in Jerusalem, and spread throughout the Roman Empire until it was preached by Paul in Rome itself. The author of Acts was concerned to idealize the past, and he ignores or is evasive about the conflicts in which Paul was involved. His picture of the progress of Christianity has two phases: the first and shorter is the initial Jerusalem phase, of which St Peter is the leading figure; the scene of the second lies outside Palestine and has Paul as its hero. On a number of points the account of Paul in Acts differs from the evidence of Paul's own writings, of which it makes no apparent use. The most serious difference concerns Paul's initial contacts with Christianity.

According to Acts, Paul took a leading part in the persecution of the Christians of Judaea and Samaria following the martyrdom of Stephen (8. 1–3). Not content with venting his animosity against these members of the new movement, he obtained authority from the high priest to arrest Jewish Christians living in Damascus. But on the road to the Syrian city he experienced a devastating vision of Jesus which left him blind. Brought to Damascus, his sight was restored by a Christian named Ananias, and he embraced the Christian faith and was baptized. Returning to Jerusalem he was accepted, after some hesitation, by the Christians there and boldly preached the faith that he had previously persecuted. When the Jews tried to kill him, the Jerusalem Christians sent him to Tarsus in Cilicia, which was his native city – Paul was in fact a Jew of the Diaspora (scattering of the Jews) whose first language was Greek.

In his epistle to the Christians of Galatia, Paul gives a very different account of his conversion. The context in which he gave it is highly significant. He was writing with great urgency and concern to those in Galatia whom he had converted to Christianity, because he had learned that they were being won over to a different form of Christianity – Paul calls it 'a different gospel' – which was contrary to the one that he had preached to them. Since this other 'gospel' constituted a challenge to the authenticity of his own 'gospel', Paul felt obliged to explain the source of his, in order to vindicate its authority.

He asserts that his gospel or version of Christianity had no human source: 'For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ' (Galatians 1.12). This assertion leads Paul on to explain how he had been converted and entrusted with his mission – and in doing so he emphasizes, significantly, his absolute independence of the original apostles at Jerusalem:

> For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy" (1. 13–23).

This account of Paul's conversion contradicts that of Acts, and Paul's own statement must naturally be preferred. However, the true importance of the passage resides in Paul's interpretation of his conversion. For he declares that it was due to the direct intervention of God, for the specific purpose of revealing 'his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles'.

Spectrum Colour Library/G. Tomsich

A little further on in the same epistle (2. 7–8), Paul makes a similar claim, but this time with reference to the teaching of another Christian leader. He asserts that he 'had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised', while 'Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised'.

A Gospel for the Gentiles

These two passages show that Paul recognized that his version of Christianity was different from that of Jesus's leading disciple Peter. This difference lay in the fact that his version was designed for non-Jews, whereas Peter's was for the Jews. The implications of this distinction are very great. For Peter's gospel was obviously the original version of the Christian faith, yet it was regarded by Paul as not being suitable for Gentiles. His own gospel, which he admits was later and wholly independent of 'those who were apostles before me', he claims, by way of contrast, to be of divine origin and specifically intended for Gentiles.

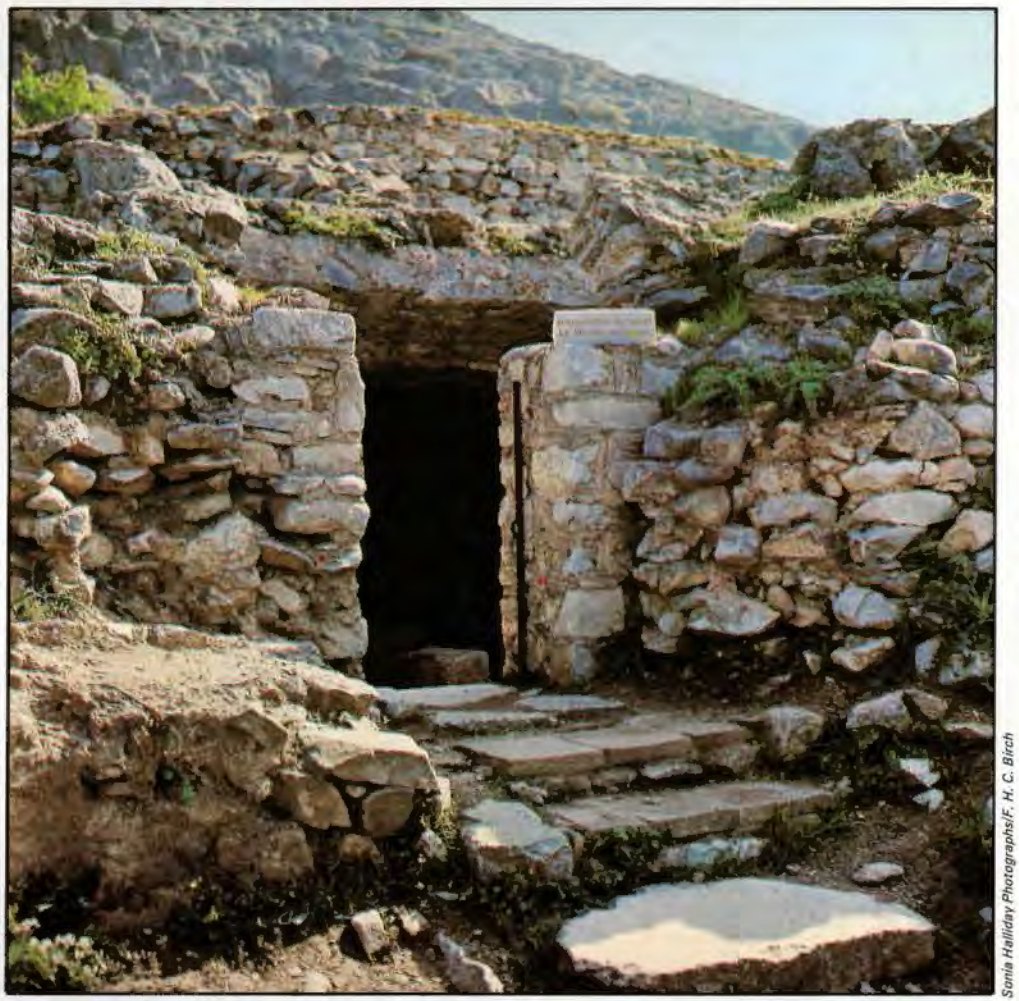
In other words, Paul reveals in this letter that already, within two decades of the Crucifixion, two interpretations of Jesus were current in the Church. The first was associated with Peter, and was doubtless based upon that disciple's memories of Jesus and his teaching. The other derived from Paul's own spiritual experience, which he believed constituted a personal revelation to him by God. The fact that Paul claims that his gospel was designed for the Gentiles must mean that it presented Jesus in such a way as would be appreciated by those educated in the ideas and modes of thought current in Graeco-Roman society.

An evaluation of the differences between these two versions of Jesus is essential to the understanding of the origins of Christianity. Unfortunately it is made exceedingly difficult both by the obliteration of the original Christian community and its records in the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, and by the nature of Paul's own writings. However, by a careful analysis of what evidence has survived it is possible to reconstruct the main outlines of both interpretations.

The original disciples recognized Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. They believed that he would shortly return with supernatural

Paul's missionary journeys established Christian communities in many parts of the eastern Mediterranean. When the Church in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, it was the Gentile Christians who re-established the faith on the basis of Paul's teaching *Left* Paul's last journey took him to Rome; on the way, his ship was severely storm-tossed and the cargo was thrown overboard in an attempt to save the vessel: 16th century, Italian *Top right* The ruins of Salamis in Cyprus; Paul preached here at the outset of his missionary campaign *Bottom right* The reputed prison of Paul at Philippi in Macedonia, from which he was released by 'a great earthquake'

Sonia Halliday Photographs/F. H. C. Birch



Sonia Halliday Photographs/F. H. C. Birch

power to earth, to complete his Messianic task which had been strangely interrupted by his martyr's death at the hands of the Romans. These disciples did not regard their faith in Jesus as constituting a new religion apart from Judaism, and they continued to live as zealous orthodox Jews. Although they exalted Jesus as the Messiah, they regarded him as human; for Judaism was strictly monotheistic and the Messiah was not held to be divine.

Gnostic View of Christ

Paul's version of Christianity was fundamentally different. It diverged from the Jerusalem 'gospel' on two basic issues: the nature of Jesus and the meaning of his death. To the original disciples Jesus was a human being chosen by God to be the Messiah of Israel; his execution by the Romans was a martyrdom for the cause of Israel's freedom. How different was Paul's conception is immediately evident in the following passage from his first epistle to the Corinthians (2. 6–9):

> Yet among the mature *(teleioi)* we do impart wisdom *(sophia)*, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age *(archontes tou aionos)*, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages *(aiones)* for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory *(ho Kyrios tes doxes)*.

On analysis, this passage, which contains Paul's most explicit statement about the purpose of the Crucifixion, reveals an amazing complex of esoteric and non-Judaic ideas. First, it is significant that, in addressing his Gentile converts in Corinth, Paul uses the Greek word *teleioi*, 'mature' or 'perfect', because it was a term current in the pagan Mystery religions for those fully initiated. The expression *archontes tou aiones* implies that Paul was thinking in terms of astral Gnosticism, a system of religio-philosophical thought current in Graeco-Roman society (see GNOSTICISM). It presupposed that the lives and destinies of mankind in this world were ruled by spiritual beings *(archontes)*, who inhabited the planets. Above this planetary sphere were others, rising to the zenith where dwelt the 'Supreme Mind' or 'Father of Light'.

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The people of Lystra in Asia Minor identified Barnabas with Zeus and Paul with Hermes, and attempted to offer sacrifice to the horrified apostles: cartoon by Raphael

The human situation envisaged by Paul in the above passage, and implied by many references elsewhere in his writings, was clearly of this kind. He imagines that before a series of world-ages *(aiones)*, of which the present is the last, God planned to save mankind from their subjection to the archontes. The plan took the form of deceiving the archontes by sending into the world a pre-existent divine being, designated the 'Lord of Glory', who was incarnated in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Not recognizing his true nature, the archontes crucified Jesus, and thereby forfeited their hold over mankind. The implications of Paul's brief but pregnant statements were worked out by later Christian theologians into what became the classic form of the doctrine of salvation.

Paul thus identified Jesus as the incarnation of the 'Lord of glory', and he interpreted his crucifixion as the climax of God's plan of salvation. He makes the archontes responsible for this crucifixion, without reference to the Roman and Jewish authorities who actually carried out the historical crucifixion. By so doing, Paul transformed the original belief in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel into an esoteric doctrine of a divine saviour, whose death had delivered mankind from their enslavement to the planetary powers. Such a presentation of Jesus was intelligible to Graeco-Roman society. And, in the same context, Paul taught a doctrine of baptism and holy communion that made Christianity akin structurally to the Mystery religions (see BAPTISM; MYSTERY RELIGIONS).

In thus interpreting Christianity Paul believed, as we have seen, that he was inspired by God for the salvation of the Gentiles, to whom the 'gospel to the circumcised' was both unintelligible and offensive. When, however, the original Jewish Christians at Jerusalem realized the nature of Paul's teaching, they were shocked and vigorously repudiated it. They refused to recognize Paul as an apostle (he had never been an original disciple of Jesus), and they sent out emissaries to Paul's converts to present their own 'gospel' as the authentic version of the faith.

Paul's position in this conflict was basically weak because he had to acknowledge the Jerusalem leaders as 'those who were apostles before him', whereas they could reject him as a late-comer to the faith. The situation became so difficult for Paul that finally he went to Jerusalem to try to secure some measure of agreement. The disastrous outcome is related in Acts (chapter 21). James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, imposed on Paul a test of his Jewish orthodoxy. While engaged in proving this, he was set upon by a Jewish crowd in the Temple and rescued by the Roman guard. A period of trials and imprisonment was followed by Paul's being sent to Rome to be tried by the Emperor. The outcome of the trial is unrecorded.

After his arrest, it seemed that Paul's version of Christianity was fated to disappear and that the Jerusalem Christians would keep the movement within the confines of Judaism. But the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 AD, which finally resulted in the overthrow of the Jewish nation and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, eliminated the Jerusalem Church. After 70 AD the Gentile Christians reestablished the faith on the basis of Paul's teaching. His letters were carefully sought out and preserved, and the Acts of the Apostles was written to commemorate his achievement. Although memories of the historical Jesus as the Jewish Messiah were preserved, it was Paul's presentation of Jesus as the Saviour God, who died and rose again, that became the foundation of orthodox Christianity.

(See also CHRISTIANITY; JESUS.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: For factual summaries of Paul's career and writings see J. Hastings ed, *Dictionary of the Bible* (T. & T. Clark, 2nd edn, 1963); F.F. Bruce in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (Nelson, 2nd edn, 1962); W. Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul* (Harper & Row, 1975); S.G.F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (S.P.C.K., 1968 reprint) and *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1967); W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (Yale Univ. Press, 1982); J. Stalker, *The Life of St. Paul* (Zondervan, 1984).

PEACOCK

THE PEACOCK is native to southern Asia and beliefs about it are widespread in that region, especially in India where, since 1963, it has been recognized as the national bird. As far back as the *Rig-Veda*, the Hindu collection of sacred writings dated c 1200 BC, it was recorded that the steeds of the god Indra possessed hair like peacock's feathers. The peacock has an important place in Hinduism and the national epic, the *Ramayana*, relates that when the gods transformed themselves into animal forms in order to escape the demon Ravana, Indra, the god of thunder, rains and war, became a peacock. In recompense the bird was endowed with a thousand eyes in its feathers, the capacity to rejoice when the rains came and the power to kill snakes; obviously it had been observed that the bird attacks serpents, and displays and calls noisily at the beginning of the rainy season.

Various names signify that the peacock dances joyfully on seeing clouds or hearing thunder. The term for one of the 108 postures of the classical Hindu dance signifies 'sportive like the peacock'. A number of divinities are portrayed mounted on the bird – in India Brahma and his wife Sarasvati, in Indo-China the warrior god Skanda and in Japan Kujaku-myoo (Mahamayuri), who protects from calamity and is besought to send rain.

The association of the peacock with rain also spread throughout Europe, where as far west as Ireland its calls are believed to forecast rain. The 15th century *Hortus Sanitatis* declares that it is a sign of rain when the peacock 'mounts on high' and Michael Drayton (1563–1631) wrote of 'the strutting peacock yawling 'gainst the rain'.

Protective Powers

From the knowledge that the peacock kills snakes there developed in India the belief that its bile and blood acted as an antidote against poison; smoke from its burning plumes was held to dispel venom and, in the Punjab, those bitten by snakes smoked its feathers. Travellers were recommended to carry a peacock to ward off snakes. In England during the 15th century the Eastern notion of the antipathy between the peacock and snakes became elaborated into the assumption that the bird's raucous call frightens away serpents and all venomous creatures.

Besides providing antidotes to poison, various parts of the bird were regarded as effective in curing many diseases and disabilities ranging from tuberculosis, forms of paralysis, asthma, catarrh and headaches to barrenness. Among Hindus and Moslems peacock feathers are believed to ward off evil, especially evil spirits. Umbrellas of the plumes were carried by persons associated with royalty and one is still held over the pope on important occasions. In India the mere sight of the bird is believed to bring good luck and to bestow peace of mind.

In Chinese and Japanese art the peacock has decorative and symbolical significance; it is often depicted together with the peony. A defeated Chinese general of the Chin dynasty who took refuge from his enemies in a forest is said to have been so grateful to the peacocks for not betraying him that he conferred peacock feathers on those showing special bravery in battle.

The Bird of Hera

The reference in the Old Testament to 'apes and peacocks' sent to Solomon (I Kings 10.22) cannot be taken seriously, as the translation is guesswork. However, peacocks are known to have been kept in Babylon. Aristotle mentions the peacock which, like the cock, was called 'the Persian bird', and a reference in a play by Aristophanes may imply that a Persian ambassador brought a gift of peacocks. Alexander the Great imposed heavy penalties on those who killed Indian peacocks.

The birds were depicted on Greek coins. They were sacred to Hera, and a myth relates how the goddess set the hundred-eyed giant Argus to guard her husband's mistress, Io; when Zeus sent Hermes to charm and kill Argus, Hera used the giant's eyes to ornament the peacock's tail.

Although through its connection with

Roman mosaic of a peacock from Ravenna: originally the sacred bird of Juno, and of her Greek equivalent the goddess Hera, the peacock was taken over from pagan art to become a common Christian subject, being used as a symbol of the Resurrection

C. M. Dixon

The peacock has an important place in Hinduism *Left* Nepalese statue of Sarasvati, wife of Brahma and goddess of music, speech and learning, seated upon a peacock, her traditional mount *Right* The peacock was a creature of good luck: its feathers warded off evil while other parts of the bird could dispel poison or cure disease. Moghul painting of a princess in a garden with two peacocks

rain, and hence fertility, the peacock was generally regarded as auspicious, there were exceptions to this view. In Java it was associated with the Devil and in Mosul in northern Iraq the Yezidis, who held that the Devil was not evil, called him the Peacock Angel. According to a Persian poet, the bird's 'hideous feet' remind it that it can never attain paradise. There is a somewhat similar anecdote in the *Physiologus*, which contains stories collected in Egypt in early Christian times. It states that the peacock, on seeing his feet and realizing how they contrast with his beautiful plumage, screams: so the Christian should avoid pride and lament his sins. In the medieval bestiaries this theme was elaborated: it was stated that as the peacock on awakening cries out because it has dreamed it has lost its beauty, so the Christian should fear lest he lose his virtues. These and other beliefs were included in Chester's *Love's Martyr*, where he mentions the admiration of Alexander the Great for the bird:

> The proud sun-bearing peacock with his feathers
> Walks all along, thinking himself a king,
> And with his voice prognosticates all weathers,
> Although God knows but badly he doth sing;
> But when he looks down to his base black feet,
> He droops and is ashamed of things unmeet.

The peacock was taken over from pagan into Christian art and appears very commonly in Christian iconography. It was early adopted as the symbol of the Resurrection, possibly because after moulting it was seen to become clothed again in splendour; there are examples in the Roman catacombs. St Augustine stated that its flesh was incorruptible. From this may have arisen the belief that peacock feathers preserved objects from decay if placed with them. In many medieval paintings angels' wings are composed of peacocks' plumes.

Thousands of animals and birds were said to have been slaughtered daily to supply the kitchens of Asoka, the great Indian emperor of the 3rd century BC, but he issued a decree that no more than two peacocks should be supplied – one of the earliest royal edicts in the interests of the conservation of wild life. In Latin literature there are many references to peacocks being included in the fare at banquets; they were bred on islands out of the reach of predators and the eggs were hatched under hens. Peacocks were also served at banquets in England and elsewhere in Europe. Indian medical works recommend the flesh as very wholesome but speak of it as astringent and saline; the present writer found it indistinguishable from chicken.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Michael Holford/Abbey Museum

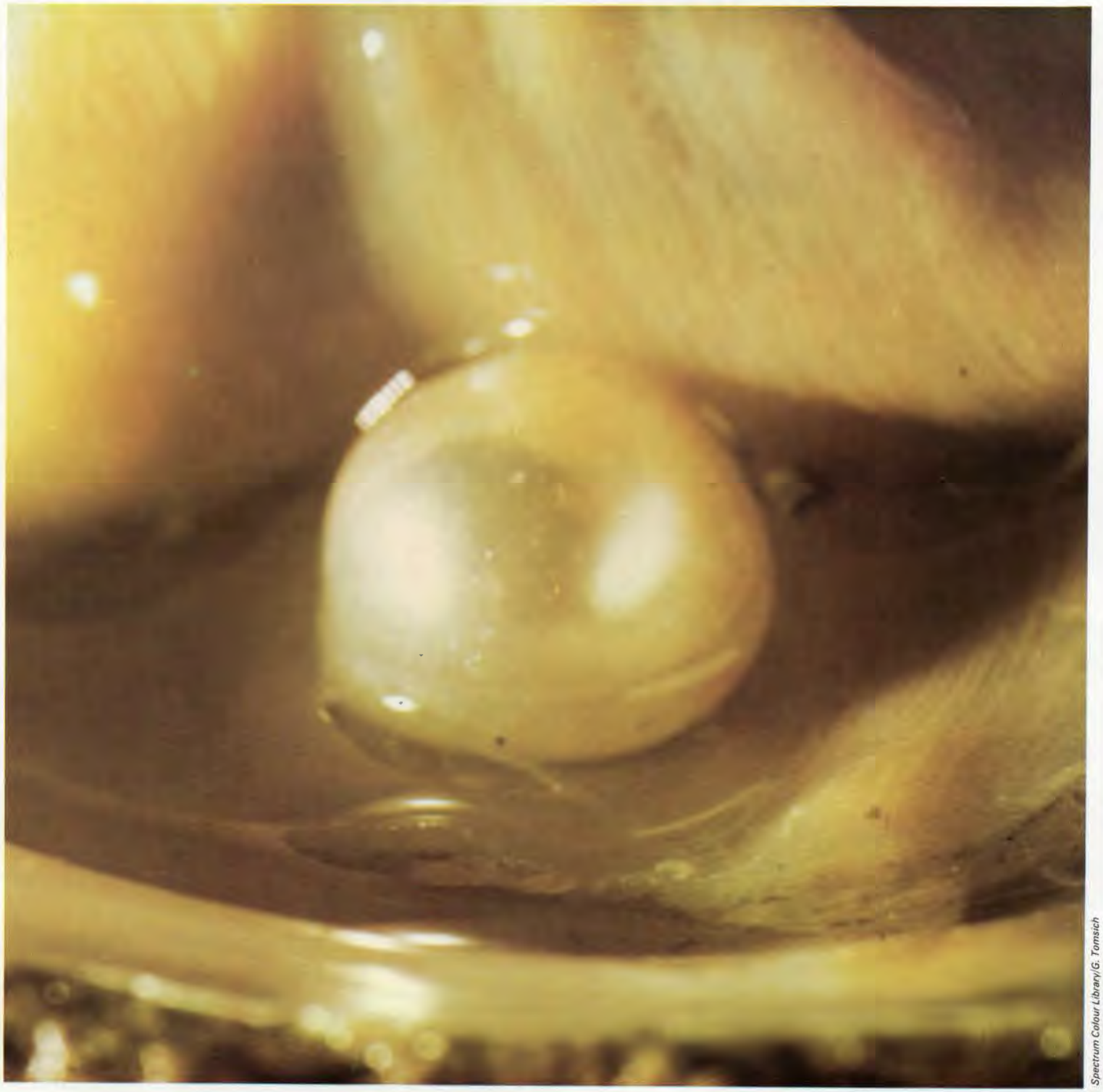
PEARL

THE MYSTERIOUS 'seed' of the oyster, the hidden treasure of the sea, the pearl is among the most beautiful and desirable of all Nature's creations. Throughout history pearls have been associated, by reason of their appearance, with the raindrop and the tear. In ancient China pearls were thought to be liquid globules expelled from the mouth of the sky dragon, the traditional rain god, and even in the West, as Pliny and Dioscorides indicated, they were believed to be the product of raindrops that had fallen from the sky into open oyster shells, where they became solidified. Alternatively, pearls were said to be found in the foreheads, brains and stomachs of elephants, and the Hindus valued such discoveries very highly as amulets. The pearl has long been associated with royalty and in the ancient East monarchs were powdered with gold-dust and seed pearls at their coronations. In England pearls encrusted the crowns of the early Anglo-Saxon kings.

Not until the Middle Ages did pearls find their way into Europe in large quantities, being brought home by the returning Crusaders as spoils of war. The wives of the nobility wore huge ropes of pearls and they were sewn onto the gowns of great ladies to form pretty patterns. In England the popularity of the pearl attained its highest peak in the Tudor period, when it adorned the gowns of nobleman and noblewoman alike. Queen Elizabeth I is known to have expended the then enormous sum of £3000 upon the pearls that had belonged to Mary Queen of Scots.

There is a long-standing belief that there exists an affinity between pearls and their wearers, the one reacting upon the other. It was once held, for example, that pearls would cloud if their owner fell sick, or would lose their lustre completely when he died. In the Orient there was a tradition that pearls lost a hundredth part of

The pearl hidden within the heart of the oyster became an emblem of the soul, the precious jewel within the rough outer casing of the body; because of its purity it was also associated with Christ and the Virgin Mary



Spectrum Colour Library/G. Tomsich

their lustre with every passing year.

In the past the pearl was believed to possess medicinal properties. Because it was 'hard like the heart' and existed in the heart of the oyster shell, it was recommended for heart disease, and it was administered to madmen in powdered form to clarify their minds. A solution of pearls dissolved in lemon juice was highly recommended for the treatment of epilepsy and hysteria. Pearls 'bruised and mixed with milk' were supposed to dissolve stomach ulcers, improve the quality of the voice and preserve chastity. Because it was supposed to possess properties that added lustre to the skin, powdered pearl was extremely popular among aristocratic ladies in 16th century France.

Cleopatra drank a toast to Antony consisting of a dissolved pearl, which was more costly by far than the immense banquet she had provided in his honour. Sir Thomas Gresham was inspired to toast his queen, Elizabeth I, in pearls at the City banquet after her famous visit to the Royal Exchange; this display of extravagance aroused these lines from Thomas Heywood:

> Here £15,000 in one clap goes.
> Instead of sugar, Gresham drinks the pearl
> Unto his queen and mistress.

The pearl was the favourite jewel of Venus, and the ancient Roman would bedeck his hair with these gems to ensure success in love. Pearls were a necessary ingredient of the love philtre, for which purpose they had previously to be dissolved in an acid.

Pearl Binder

A pearly queen's costume might contain over 60,000 pearl buttons, sewn on by hand to form traditional and symbolic designs. This style of dress was first introduced among London costermongers in the late 1880s

In the voluptuous Orient the pearl became a symbol of sensual delight. The Moslems believed that the faithful could look forward to an eternity of bliss in the arms of a beautiful houri, secreted within the heart of a pearl. The 'pearl among women', one of the seven royal treasures of the King of Kings of pre-Buddhist China, was a girl who had attained the beauty of a goddess.

Pearls for Tears

At the same time the pearl has religious associations. The concept of a precious gem enclosed within a rough outer shell made it an obvious emblem of the soul. Because of its purity it is also associated with Christ and the Virgin Mary, while heaven itself is guarded by pearly gates. A similar association of ideas can be seen in the concept of the pearl as symbolizing the mystic centre of the personality. The Third Eye of Buddha was a pearl and represented the highest essence of wisdom.

In terms of popular superstition the original idea of the pearl as a symbol of the tear has never been lost; as late as the end of the last century a widow's mourning ring was customarily set with pearls. In Europe, as in the far East, a gift of pearls continues to bring tears although the curse does not apply if the pearls form part of an ancestral inheritance. In the symbolism of dreams, pearls mean disillusionment and sorrow, and to dream of a broken necklace portends a broken life and disintegration.

As a birthstone the pearl has far happier associations, for it not only endows the wearer with the power to cure fevers and overcome irritations but it also inspires love. It can be worn by practically everyone not born under the signs of Aries or Virgo, but because it governs the zodiacal house Cancer the pearl is the specific birthstone for those who are born in the month of June.

(See also JEWELS.)

ERIC MAPLE

PECULIAR PEOPLE

THIS EVANGELICAL denomination derives its name from several texts in the Authorized Version of the Bible, notably from 1 Peter 2.9: 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . .' In this older usage, 'peculiar' means 'special', not 'odd'; the New English Bible translates the phrase as 'a people claimed by God for his own'. Also sometimes known at first as the 'Plumstead Peculiars', the sect was founded in 1838 by William Bridges. Its teachings were spread, especially in Essex, by John Banyard.

The Peculiar People held – and, to a limited extent, still hold – beliefs which distinguish them from most of the Protestant bodies. In particular, their unconditional acceptance of the divine inspiration of every word of the Bible (not in itself unique) led them to interpret literally the injunction in James 5. 14,15: 'Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man . . .' In this repect, the Peculiar People were nearer to Roman Catholic than to Protestant practice, but in other ways they resembled the 'enthusiastic' branches of evangelical Christianity (see ENTHUSIASM). The women members of the sect wore small black bonnets; the men wore dark clothes and, for some reason, did not grow moustaches. No musical instrument was used in their worship, but hymns were sung with great fervour; the elder conducting the service would give out each verse of the hymn in turn, and when he and the other worshippers felt moved to do so, they would sing the same verse again and again – some hymns being, in any case, many verses long.

The Peculiar People's Hymn Book is one of Christendom's most remarkable hymnals. It contains 1058 hymns (including a few doxologies and graces). Many of these would be familiar to worshippers in other denominations but some have, to modern ears, a special quaintness. One such starts with the line 'How prone are professors to rest on their lees', each verse of it ending with the phrase 'Remember Lot's wife'. Another, headed 'An affectionate hint respecting public worship', rebukes those who arrive after the service has begun:

> Shall chapel doors rattle and umbrellas move,
> To show how you the service disapprove? . . .
> A little less indulgence in the bed –
> A little more contrivance in the head –
> A little more devotion of the mind –
> Would quite prevent your being so behind!

This hymn is 20 verses long – perhaps so that late-comers may at least have arrived before the end.

One outstanding figure in the history of the Peculiar People was Bishop William Heddle, who was born in 1846 and went south to Essex, from his native Orkney, to earn his living. (The men of the Peculiar People have always been working men, occupied in ordinary trades and respected by their neighbours.) After some time as an employee in Maldon and Chelmsford, he set up as a credit draper and outfitter. He went on foot through Essex, with packs strapped on his back and chest, until he could afford to buy a horse and cart. During this period he worshipped at a Congregational church and taught in Sunday school; but he was constantly troubled by a lack of certainty of salvation. One day, travelling near Orsett, he had a conversion experience: he felt 'drop into his heart' the words of a text, 'He tasted death for me.' He repeated the words, cried 'Thank God!' and that night (as he told his son, who survives him) 'couldn't sleep for joy'.

William Heddle became so powerful and tireless a leader of the Peculiar People that eventually they elected him their bishop. At the age of 60 he was thought to be dying. In accordance with the principles of the sect, no doctor was sent for, but he was anointed and prayed over. He recovered, and lived until 1948, when he was almost 102.

Since Bishop Heddle's death, most of the Peculiar People have joined with other denominations in the Union of Evangelical Churches, and their distinctive practices, such as the refusal to consult doctors, have fallen out of use. Some of the original congregations, however, and some of the older members – numbering a few hundred in all – preserve, in remote Essex villages, the special character of the denomination.

PELICAN

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

In medieval times the pelican was believed to peck its own breast to supply its young with blood, and therefore became a symbol of parental affection and self-sacrifice: an illustration from a 13th century English bestiary incorporates this popular motif

THE LORE of the pelican has so little relevance to the actual behaviour of the bird that it might refer to a mythical species. Its chief interest is in illustrating the origin of an important symbol from confused ideas. The pelican was familiar in Egypt as a large bird opening its wide gape to enable the young to feed from the fish brought in its pouch; but the symbolical pelican's significance was mainly borrowed from the vulture. In the Bible vultures are not clearly distinguished from eagles. Thus in Exodus 19.4 we should read: 'I bore you on vultures' wings' rather than 'on eagles' wings' and in Deuteronomy 32.11: 'Like a vulture . . . that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings.' As the Hebrew words for 'vulture' and 'compassion' are very similar, an association was established between large birds and parental care which was apparently transferred to the pelican. The notion that the pelican feeds or revives its young with its own blood may perhaps be traced to vultures being seen to bring bloody morsels to their chicks.

The *Physiologus*, an early Christian compilation which wove together biblical ideas with Egyptian mythology concerning animals, contained two stories elaborated from these notions. One relates that the pelican loves its young very much but these, when they are large enough, strike at their parents. The old birds retaliate and kill the chicks; but soon they are overcome with compassion and the mother comes on the third day, opens her side and sheds blood on them, restoring them to life. It is also stated that in order to foil the snake the pelican makes its nest in a lofty situation and builds a hedge around it. The snake, representing the Devil, puffs his venom on the nest and kills the young. When the pelican returns she flaps her wings against her sides, drawing blood which rains down on the chicks and resuscitates them.

Christian writers used these stories to illustrate their teaching. St Jerome interpreted them as showing how those dead in sin were made alive through Christ's blood shed on the cross, and down the centuries emphasis was laid on the parental affection of the pelican. The representation in carved wood or stone and in stained glass windows of the bird pecking her breast to supply her young with blood became frequent in the Middle Ages as a symbol of Christ and the Eucharist. Such symbolism had special importance during centuries when few could read but the pelican also acquired considerable prominence in literature. In the 13th century St Thomas Aquinas wrote:

> Pelican of piety, Jesus, Lord and God,
> Cleanse thou me, unclean, in thy most precious blood.

John Skelton (c 1460–1529) also made use of the symbolic pelican in his verse:

> Then said the pelican,
> When my birds be slain,
> With my blood I them revive.
> Scripture doth record
> The same did our Lord,
> And rose from death to life.

Shakespeare could assume that his audiences would understand allusions to the symbolic pelican. King Lear, for instance, recalling the story of the bird's ungrateful young, refers to Regan and Goneril as 'pelican daughters'. But for centuries the 'pelican in her piety', as the heraldic representation of the bird was called, continued to be a symbol of the noble virtue of heroic self-sacrifice.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Penance

In Christian theology, contrition for sin and a punishment inflicted for it, imposed by the sinner himself or by a priest; the Church gradually developed a system in which a sinner confessed privately to a priest, who might impose a penance on him and grant him forgiveness; the penance may be to say certain prayers or perform certain devotions or acts of self-denial or self-mortification.

See SACRAMENTS.

Penates

In Roman religion, household spirits who were 'gods of the food cupboard', guardians of the family larder; they were worshipped in association with the Lares and the hearth; food was offered to them at mealtimes, and on special occasions, such as birthdays, they would be given cakes, honey, wine, incense or sometimes a pig.

See ROME.

British Museum

PENTAGRAM

THE STAR with five points is traditionally a weapon of power in magic. Its symbolism is based on that of the number 5, which stands, among other things, for the living world of Nature, the four elements and the quintessence or the four directions and the centre; for the senses and the union of the sexes; for man as microcosm, man as the ruler of Nature, as the miniature image and potential master of all things (see FIVE).

The pentagram with one of its points projecting upwards can be imagined as a man's body with arms and legs extended, and is a symbol of the dominance of the divine spirit (the one upward point) over matter (the other four points). A reversed pentagram, with two points projecting upwards, is a symbol of evil and attracts sinister forces because it overturns the proper order of things and demonstrates the triumph of matter over spirit. The two upper points suggest the horns of the Devil. 'It is the goat of lust attacking the heavens with its horns,' said Eliphas Levi, 'a sign execrated by initiates of a superior rank.' The rituals of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN) allowed it to be used 'if there may arise an absolute necessity for working or conversing with a Spirit of an evil nature.'

Pentagrams are recommended in the European magical textbooks for keeping evil spirits at bay, demons being naturally frightened of a symbol whose five points stand for the wounds of Christ on the cross. Pentagrams should be drawn in the rim of the magic circle and outside it. According to the *Lemegeton*, the magician should wear the Pentagram of Solomon embroidered on his robe, or should draw it on parchment and carry it in his hand during a magical ceremony. This pentagram, with one point upwards, is drawn inside a circle. The name Tetragrammaton, the supreme name of the God of the Old Testament (see NAMES), is written inside the circle and the names of power Hallya, Ballater, Soluzen, Bellony, Hally are written inside the star.

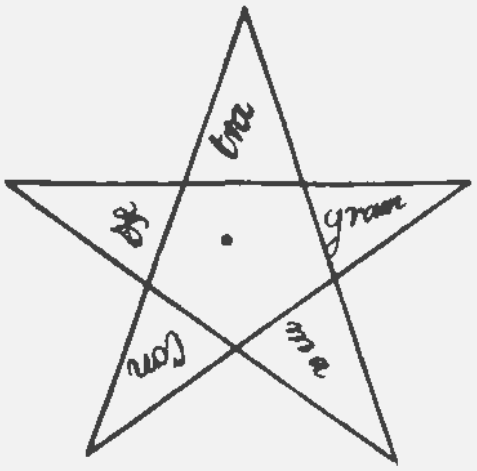
Modern magicians also make use of

pentagrams for invoking good influences or banishing evil ones. In *Transcendental Magic*, Eliphas Levi says: 'The pentagram, which in gnostic schools is called the blazing star, is the sign of intellectual omnipotence and autocracy. It is the star of the magi; it is the sign of the Word made flesh . . .' This is because it adds the 1 of godhead to the 4 of matter, and the name of Jesus or Pentagrammaton adds S, the letter of the Holy Spirit, to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. When Levi attempted to conjure up the ghost of Apollonius of Tyana (see LEVI), his altar had a pentagram carved on it, and when a shrouded figure appeared before him, he placed one hand on the pentagram for protection.

The Golden Dawn's 'Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram' involved taking a steel dagger in hand and facing east, and then drawing an imagined pentagram on one's body. The operator touched his forehead and said Ateh (thou art), touched his breast and said Malkuth (the kingdom), touched his right shoulder and said ve-Geburah (and the power), touched his left shoulder and said ve-Gedulah (and the glory), clasped his hands in front of him and said Le-olam (for ever), and then holding the dagger between his fingers, pointing up, said Amen. (He had now made the sign of the 'cabalistic cross', combining the four directions and the centre.)

Next, he brought the dagger to the centre of the pentagram and pronounced the Tetragrammaton, imagining his voice carrying out to the east of the universe. He repeated the ritual facing south, west and north in turn and pronouncing the names Adonai, Eheieh and Agla respectively. Then he returned to his starting point, completing the circle of the ritual by touching the dagger to the centre of the first pentagram. With arms outstretched he said: 'Before me Raphael, behind me Gabriel, at my right hand Michael, at my left hand Auriel; before me flames the pentagram, behind me shines the six-rayed star.' Finally, he repeated the rite of drawing the cabalistic cross.

When one point projects upwards the pentagram may be used for invoking good influences and banishing evil ones, but a reversed pentagram, with two points projecting upwards, is a symbol of evil



Here the pentagrams were used to invoke good influences. A banishing formula followed the same ritual except that the lines of the pentagrams were drawn in reverse order. The invoking formula could be used as a morning prayer and the banishing one as an evening prayer. The banishing formula was also considered effective 'against impure magnetism' and for getting rid of distracting or disturbing thoughts. Israel Regardie comments (in *The Tree of Life*) that: 'The blind performance of this ritual . . . is quite useless, and is a waste of both time and energy. The imagination, simultaneously, should be stimulated to create these Pentagrams about the Magician on the Astral Plane in glowing figures of fire, so that through the streaming lines of light and power, representative of the spiritual being, no lesser entity of any kind dare make its way . . . The blazing five-pointed star is like the flaming sword which debarred Adam from the Edenic paradise.'

The Golden Dawn also had a much more complicated 'Supreme Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram'. The rituals were adopted, with minor alterations, by members of the Golden Dawn who later founded their own occult societies, including Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune (see CROWLEY; FORTUNE).

The words pentagram and pentacle are sometimes confused. A pentacle (or pantacle) is not necessarily connected with the number 5. Pentacle probably comes from an old French word for 'to hang' and means a talisman or, by extension, any symbol used in magical operations.

The gifts of the Spirit described by St Paul, which included prophecy, healing and 'speaking in tongues', are sought by Pentecostalists as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; such dramatic demonstrations of Spirit power still characterize their meetings

PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT

MODERN PENTECOSTALISM began in a small Bible school, known as Bethel College, Topeka, Kansas, at the beginning of 1901, when Charles F. Parham, the head of the College, and a number of his students received the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it was signalized in some of them by their bursting forth into utterance in unknown tongues. It is the emphasized belief in the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, made manifest in some dramatic, ecstatic manner (usually by speaking in tongues), and in the continuing operation of the gifts of the Spirit, as described in the New Testament, which marks off Pentecostalism from other Protestant evangelical, fundamentalist groups.

Pentecostalists consider that all believers will experience the Spirit baptism, which is seen as endowment with power for God's service (as suggested in Acts 1, 4–8). This baptism is expected to take place after the believer has been 'born again', as Pentecostalists call the occasion of conversion, and is confirmation of his previous regeneration and sanctification. All the articles of their faith are supported by biblical proofs, for Pentecostalists accept the Bible literally, and believe it to be divinely inspired and incapable of error.

In the central points of their faith Pentecostalists share much with all evangelical Protestants. The immediate precursors of the Pentecostalists were the members of the various Holiness movements in the United States, many of whom had broken away from Methodism (see HOLINESS MOVEMENT). The Holiness groups emphasized the experience of sanctification as a second blessing following conversion. It was to this teaching that Pentecostalists added the teaching of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (and, subsequently, the gifts of the Spirit). The idea of Holy Spirit baptism existed before it was made explicit by the Pentecostalists, of course, and there is scriptural warrant for the teaching. It was in demanding manifested proofs of such baptism that the Pentecostalists added an element that Holiness groups had ignored or rejected.

A Message to Mankind

It is practically certain that Spirit baptism marked by speaking in unknown tongues was preached by Parham in 1900, before the onset of that experience among his students, the first of whom received this dramatic baptism on the first day of the new century, 1 January 1901. (Remembering that Pentecostalists live in the expectation of the coming of Christ, and that tongues came to be seen as a sign of his coming, this circumstance is not without significance.) As a considerable number of the students received the baptism, the group at Topeka now began to see itself as having not only a special mission but a special message for mankind. Some claimed to see visions of tongues of fire during the group meetings in which several people spoke in unknown tongues. They saw themselves as newly empowered to go out and preach the gospel; and although they were undoubtedly over-optimistic about the significance of their experiences and the nearness of the second advent of Christ, their evangelism in the Mid-West brought into being groups who espoused the new teaching even if they did not, as yet, think of themselves distinctively as Pentecostalists.

Members of small Holiness churches were among the first converts to Pentecostalism, but not all Holiness believers accepted the Pentecostal phenomena as authentic. It was among Holiness preachers, however, that Pentecostalism made its first significant impact; and when it was espoused by preachers in the Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles, Pentecostalism obtained a footing from which it was soon to develop as an international movement. Many of its early converts in the rapidly growing city were Negroes, and the first meeting room was a derelict former Methodist mission in

the Negro quarter in Azusa Street – a name still celebrated among Pentecostalists. Scenes of great enthusiasm occurred there, and crowds were drawn to the meetings at which the Holy Spirit was said to be acting so powerfully. From that time, 1906, Pentecostalism spread rapidly in Los Angeles and other groups met in Chicago, New York and Texas. Word of the new developments quickly spread through Holiness and other evangelical meetings throughout the country.

The Welsh Revival

An independent development in Wales, now known as the Welsh Revival of 1904–5, prepared the ground for the reception of Pentecostalism in Britain. During its course visions and miraculous healings were claimed, and speech in unknown tongues occurred. Many evangelicals, and particularly those who had been originally influenced by the preaching of Dwight Moody in his missions in Britain, and those associated with the Keswick Conference (founded in 1875) were aroused by the events reported from Wales. Although by no means all of the evangelicals in the denominations, nor even the independent Holiness meetings, were unsceptical about the claims of Pentecostalists, the Welsh Revival was seen as a distinct operation of the Holy Spirit – not least impressive because of the decline in criminal cases in areas affected by the revival. For some, however, the Welsh Revival stimulated interest in the news from America when this reached England some months later.

The principal disseminator of Pentecostal teachings in Europe was an Englishman, T. B. Barratt, who was pastor of the City Mission, a Methodist church in Oslo. Barratt was in the United States in 1906, attended Pentecostal meetings, became convinced of the truth of the teachings and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before the end of the year he had led some members of his congregation in Oslo into the same experience. News of Norwegian Pentecostalism spread rapidly, and in March 1907 Barratt was visited by the Rev. A. A. Boddy, the Rector of Monkwearmouth, near Sunderland. Boddy had seen the Welsh Revival at first hand and had been very much impressed. He now rapidly espoused Pentecostal teachings, and held long meetings in Monkwearmouth where his parishioners prayed for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Barratt visited England later in that year, and the news of Pentecostalism was now widely disseminated. Groups began in various places, and although many of those who sought Pentecostal experience remained in their own denominations (particularly in the Anglican Church), others began to meet separately for more enthusiastic forms of worship and spontaneous prayer and praise than could be readily accomodated in the established denominations. Although some prominent Holiness leaders opposed the new movement, it won a considerable number of converts from Holiness people and in the independent Bible schools of Holiness persuasion. In the rest of Europe, particularly as a result of Barratt's work – he was an indefatigable traveller in the cause he espoused – the movement gained sizeable groups of followers. It had its greatest successes in Sweden, Finland and Germany.

Store Front Churches

The most rapid expansion of the new movement, however, occurred in its country of origin, the United States. Here there was a climate of much greater religious tolerance, propitious conditions for new organizations to grow and a much more general receptivity to new ideas in religion. Because Pentecostalism arose as a spontaneous movement, without the continued guidance of any one leader but rather on the basis of devotional practices that were added to widely accepted Protestant evangelical ideas, it did not long remain as one movement. It lacked internal and organizational coherence, and was quickly taken over by local leaders and congregations who, whilst they had in common their belief in Holy Spirit baptism and the availability of the gifts of the Spirit, might easily differ on other doctrinal matters or ethical prescriptions, and most particularly on church organization.

Some of the churches that became Pentecostal were run, and even owned, by the preacher himself. Others were controlled by their lay congregations. Yet others evolved administrative organizations and central headquarters. Though it is appropriate to refer to the Pentecostal movement as one phenomenon, it must be remembered that the movement always consisted, even at the

Chris Barker

Chris Barker

Top left **Among some West Indian Pentecostalists the washing of each other's feet is an established rite. Pentecostalism has shown a special appeal to immigrants and in Britain the most vigorous sects among the West Indian immigrant population are Pentecostalist** ***Bottom left*** **Early Pentecostalist services were sometimes marked by sensationalism and highly emotional behaviour: Aimée Semple McPherson catered for this element in dramatic services held in Los Angeles. Pentecostal teachings concerning the descent of the Spirit upon believers were anticipated by 19th century Holiness preachers such as Dwight Moody** ***(above)*** **and his associate Ira David Sankey** ***(right)*****: their evangelizing missions prepared the way for the later development of Pentecostalism**

beginning, of many different groups, and eventually of separately organized and entirely independent denominational organizations. The largest of the movements that developed in the United States, and which established many branches overseas, was the Assemblies of God, which today has hundreds of thousands of members all over the United States, and which maintains a large printing press and a university of its own. In contrast there are uncounted tiny missions, many of them springing up suddenly in the back streets of large cities, and often disappearing again. Perhaps the majority of the 'store front' churches in the Negro and Puerto Rican districts of New York, Los Angeles and other large American cities are in practice Pentecostalist.

Stunts and Sex Appeal

Some colourful movements have emerged within Pentecostalism. One of these was the Holiness organization of A. J. Tomlinson, known as the Church of God (Tomlinson) – a designation necessary to distinguish it from the many organizations that call themselves simply 'Church of God'. This movement, arising in Tennessee and North Carolina, grew rapidly in the United States, and also acquired a large following among West Indians. The Church split on two occasions, the second time on A. J. Tomlinson's death in 1953 when his two sons, Milton and Homer, quarrelled. The majority followed Milton, but Homer Tomlinson also headed a Church of God, proclaimed himself bishop, and later declared himself king of the world and leader of the Theocratic Party. He travelled the world crowning himself king in over 100 nations.

Scarcely less startling was the career of Aimée Semple McPherson, a revivalist who settled in Los Angeles in 1918. There she built the Angelus Temple, in which she produced dramatic services: sex appeal and stunts were her methods of drawing in large crowds. She once drove onto the stage of her church on a motorcycle, braked to a sudden halt and shouted, 'Stop! You're driving straight to hell!' On another occasion she suddenly disappeared, reputedly kidnapped and held to ransom: a cynical Press believed that she had in fact run off for a short holiday with one of the radio technicians on the staff of her church. Her movement survived her death, and still claims tens of thousands of adherents in the United States and some in Europe.

It would be unfair to suggest that these bizarre organizations are characteristic of Pentecostalism, however. The vast majority of those who congregate in Pentecostal churches are devout, respectable and sincere believers, many of whom lead lives of exemplary probity. It is certainly the case that the movement is somewhat susceptible to emotionalism, and this was particularly so in its early days. At the long meetings scenes of intense excitement occurred, and before the movement acquired stable organization and evolved instruments of control, some of the gatherings of Pentecostalists were undoubtedly marked by excesses of one sort or another. This was particularly so in the backwoods areas of the Mid-West and South of the United States. Parham himself, the first Pentecostalist, was a man of very dubious sexual reputation – although it must be added that he quickly lost influence in the movement. Perhaps more important than emotional aberrances of this kind were the misunderstandings that arose in the early days

concerning the phenomenon of glossolalia or speaking in tongues.

There seems to be no doubt that at some meetings people simulated this inspired utterance given by the Holy Spirit, to sully the reputation of others or to get their own way in matters concerning the congregation. Business matters were sometimes settled, and marriages prompted, by supposed utterances of inspired character. Perhaps more commonly, individuals who felt that they had been given great power by the Holy Spirit in the matter of languages believed that they were summoned to undertake missionary work in foreign places. There are stories, although their absolute authenticity cannot be guaranteed, even though they are told by Pentecostal historians themselves, of people actually going out to foreign stations to preach, convinced that they had been given the necessary linguistic abilities by the Holy Spirit – only to find that they had deceived themselves.

Discipline Enforced

Episodes such as these were probably very rare in the history of Pentecostalism in Britain. Most of the early converts were already well grounded in the Bible, in Holiness meetings or in the orthodox Protestant denominations. Undoubtedly at the beginning the use of the gifts of the Spirit (particularly the gift of tongues) was much less adequately regulated than later became the case, but for many people the Pentecostal movement represented an inspiration to return to Christian belief and behaviour. The early leaders of British Pentecostalism – the Welsh brothers George and Stephen Jeffreys, Donald Gee, Howard and John Carter, Thomas Myerscough and J. Nelson Parr – were vigorous and respected Christians, and even though their meetings were marked by a fervour not seen in the older denominations, they firmly applied St Paul's prescription that all things should be done decently and in order. As the British Pentecostal denominations became established, the number of utterances in tongues at one meeting became restricted to two or three, and the interpretation of tongues (by the gift of interpretation given by the Holy Spirit) was demanded. It also became the established expectation of Pentecostalists that all Spirit utterance should conform to and confirm the word of the gospel. The ministers of these denominations, whilst emphasizing that the Holy Spirit should never be quenched (the sin of the orthodox Churches), stressed the affinity of the Spirit to standards of discipline and decorum.

The Pentecostal Churches have undoubtedly become increasingly similar to older denominations in their worship, even though it is still possible, particularly at prayer meetings, to see weeping, groaning worshippers and the occasional prostrate figure, in some Pentecostal meetings in Britain. Baptism of the Holy Spirit remains a dramatic occasion for observers, and an ecstatic one for the individual concerned. The gifts of the Spirit (described in Corinthians, chapter 12) are, with the baptism, the central, distinctive features of Pentecostal belief; Pentecostalists, therefore, necessarily believe in divine healing and miracles.

There has, however, been a tendency to imply that the 'discernment of spirits' – by which authentic gifts of the Holy Ghost are distinguishable from simulations – is a gift particularly possessed by ministers. There has also been a notable tendency to suggest that the gift of prophecy is more concerned with 'forth-telling' than with 'fore-telling'.

The Pentecostal movement drew most of its early converts from among the poorer sections of industrial nations. Apart from the United States, where it quickly gained followers in the rural areas of the Mid-West, the South and in California, its principal centres have been urban. Emotionally oriented movements normally have the widest appeal among the least educated and most socially and economically deprived sections of the population. Such people are characterized by a greater readiness to accept sanctioned circumstances of emotional release by responsiveness to a charged atmosphere, and willingness to believe in exceptional dispensations from the normal operation of cause and effect, by contrast with more sophisticated and materially better placed sections of the public. Pentecostal meetings also provide intense, emotional and reassuring situations for those for whom the wider society has little to offer: and these tend to be the less privileged groups.

Appeal to Immigrants

Pentecostalism appears to be particularly attractive to immigrants, both from the countryside to the cities and from one country to another. This appeal no doubt partly stems from the fact that it offers situations in which disturbed emotions are given sanctioned (and sanctified) expression, for immigrants frequently undergo problems of adjustment and experience feelings of inadequacy. The acting out of tensions and obsessions may be facilitated by permissive religious groups, more particularly of course in the less formally organized and more spontaneous Pentecostal assemblies. The promise of divine help and power – and in some respects its manifestation – in Pentecostal assemblies, may enhance the movement's appeal to the immigrant. As friendly groups with a powerful ethic of self-help and emphasis on highly idealized virtues, they may also materially help the immigrant to improve his position.

It may not be pressing matters too far to suggest that the very emphasis on speech – the gift of tongues – has a unique appeal for the immigrant. For a man who has imperfect command of the language of his new environment (whether it be merely the city for the countryman, or the new country for the foreigner) the idea of a higher power, and a more effective form of speech, has an obvious appeal. It symbolizes the felt needs of the immigrant. In the light of this it is not surprising that the most vigorous sects among West Indian immigrants to Britain have been Pentecostal, that very large numbers of Italian immigrants to America and Brazil, even though Roman Catholics, espoused Pentecostalism in those countries, and that considerable numbers of Chilean and Brazilian migrants from the countryside to the city have, in the last two decades, became Pentecostalists.

Growth in Catholic Countries

Pentecostalism has grown steadily rather than dramatically in the advanced countries of the world, but because so many separate sects practise Pentecostalism, definitive figures are impossible to obtain. Conservative assessments in 1979 suggested that there were around seven million members throughout the world. In Western Europe there are certainly several hundred thousand. In recent years there has been considerable growth in Italy, partly as a result of the conversion of the families of Italian immigrants who accepted Pentecostal teachings in the United States and Brazil. It is claimed that there are a great many Pentecostalists in Russia, but numbers are uncertain. The most rapid growth of Pentecostalism has been in Latin America. Some authorities consider that more than 14% of the population of Chile are now practising Pentecostalists, whilst the numbers in Brazil are estimated as between four and five millions. The extent to which many of these new adherents are firmly and exclusively Pentecostalist is uncertain, but the movement's influence has certainly grown phenomenally in these Catholic countries in recent years.

Although not part of the Pentecostal movement in the traditional sense, mention must be made of the new charismatic movement that has begun in the last decade in the orthodox Churches of Christendom. Groups meeting in Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches and sometimes inter-denominationally, have increasingly experienced the outbreak of tongues, and belief in the phenomenon of the baptism of the Holy Spirit has grown among people who differ in educational background and social position from the adherents of the older Pentecostal denominations. It is too early to say whether this 'renewal movement', as it is sometimes called, will be contained within the Churches, whether it will last or die away, or whether it may yet give rise to new independent groups; but certainly the orthodox Pentecostalists see the outbreak of speaking in tongues among established Catholics and Anglicans (including some members of the clergy) as a vindication of the position that they long ago espoused.

(See also ENTHUSIASM; SPEAKING IN TONGUES).

BRYAN WILSON

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PERFUME
Michael Holford

The power of perfume was once thought capable of keeping the plague at bay, and spirits were attracted or repelled by appropriate odours. Even now its ability to arouse emotion makes it a useful auxiliary to the art of love

THE SENSE of smell was used in the past far more than it is now, for it was an important tool of the hunter and, equally important, served to tell when danger threatened – the source of the common phrase 'to smell danger'. There is also some reason for the belief that human beings once had the ability to identify one another by scent; even now Europeans will often claim to detect an unpleasant odour among coloured people, while the latter may insist that the white man's body reeks of decay.

As a result, smells still carry strong emotional overtones; indeed St Hilarion, one of the desert fathers, claimed that he could detect a person's vices by the smell of his garments. Because of its compelling power, perfume has sometimes been considered a form of sorcery. It began its association with the supernatural powers as an adjunct to religion: its history in this connection can be traced back some 5000 years to the burnt sacrifices offered by ancient priests as food for their gods. The smoke arising from burning carcases is extremely repugnant and it was no doubt with the object of rendering the operation more pleasing to both man and god that the custom of perfuming the temples by the burning of incense was first introduced. This is affirmed by the word perfume itself, which comes from the Latin and means, literally, 'through the smoke', being originally applied to fumigation as well as to scent. As late as 1560 an English writer recorded a case of sickness in which a woman 'died of the plague and they perfumed the house with grains of juniper'.

Perfecting the Human Body

In early times offerings of incense were restricted to the temple priests, their use for secular purposes being prohibited. The main ingredients were then myrrh, cinnamon and other scented plants, and resinous gums.

Among the ancient Egyptians the religious and secular aspects of perfume were combined, for it was used in conjunction with

Because of its compelling power, perfume has sometimes been considered a form of sorcery

The burning of perfumes has been a feature of worship for some 5000 years: the sweet smell was thought to render the sacrifice more acceptable to the deity

Left **A Buddhist priest lights a candle in an incense-filled Japanese temple** ***Below*** **Highly wrought censer of the mid 14th century from Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire** ***Below right*** **Bronze incense burner of about the 2nd century AD from South Arabia**

Previous page **'Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.' Of the presents brought by the Magi to the infant Christ, frankincense and myrrh were costly ingredients of incense and were therefore a suitable offering to make to a deity:** ***The Adoration of the Magi*** **by Hieronymus Bosch**

the embalming of the dead; the soul in fact was thought to ascend to heaven upon a cloud of incense smoke. Because perfume was assumed to have the power of perfecting the human body, it became one of the aims of ancient perfumers to discover scents which seemed to be natural emanations from the body itself. In Egypt young gallants used as many as 15 different kinds of scent to lure the fair sex, and beautiful women concealed tiny globules of aromatic substances in their hair.

The Hebrews on their escape from captivity in Egypt took with them a knowledge of incense and perfumes, much of which centuries later found its way to Europe. Among the Greeks the cosmetic use of perfumes involved the application of specific types to the various parts of the body. The nobleman of Rome used mint for his armpits, palm oil for his jaws and marjoram for his hair.

Those who make gifts of perfume at Christmas no doubt forget that the very first Christmas present consisted of frankincense and myrrh (as well as gold) given to the infant Christ; both these precious aromatic gums are used in incense. It is a sad commentary upon Christian civilization that it was not until the conclusion of the Dark Ages, when the returning Crusaders reintroduced the sensual delights of the East to Europe, that perfume became re-established in the West.

During the Renaissance, Italy became the principal manufacturer of perfumes, later

Victoria and Albert Museum

Michael Holford/British Museum

forfeiting the initiative to France, which has maintained its supremacy in the trade ever since. Lack of sanitation and the absence of personal hygiene during the 16th and 17th centuries rendered the use of perfumes a necessity among those who attempted to maintain some semblance of a civilized existence. In Shakespeare's London the apothecaries of Bucklersbury were famous for their herbs and simples and aromatic spices, and the perfumed dandies of the court were said to smell like 'Bucklersbury in simple-time'.

Fumes had long formed an adjunct to medicine. Temple smoke was highly recommended by the Greeks for respiratory disorders, and before the introduction of chimneys in England in the 15th century, wheezing old gentlemen swore by the prophylactic qualities of hearth smoke, at the same time inveighing against the foul smelling fumes of the newly utilized sea coal, which made them choke. In 16th century Europe relics of this same attitude could still be observed in the lighting of seasonal bonfires at the onset of winter: the fumes were intended to clear the land of demons and witches and drive pestilence from the cattle.

Fumigation of Fiends

Disease was thought to strike through the medium of an evil vapour, and so during the recurrent attacks of plague the physician would tend his patients masked in a grotesque snout filled with sweet-smelling herbs and spices: bunches of aromatic herbs were burned on huge fires with the object of clearing the air and without the slightest consciousness of imitating an ancient sacrificial rite. It was customary to sprinkle perfumed water about sick rooms and upon clothing, and judges were presented with posies to sniff as a safeguard against contracting 'jail fever' from the prisoners brought before them. Domestic fumigation by smoke came under censure from Dr John Caius, who in 1552 vigorously attacked 'the foolish smokings of shirts, smocks and kerchiefs' which was then a popular hygienic safeguard.

Since pleasant smells were the attributes of holiness, foul ones were necessarily thought to belong to Satan, who reeked abominably, as might be expected of one whose abode lay deep within the bowels of the earth. The clouds of sulphurous fumes which lingered for hours in any house which had received a visit from the infernal regions necessitated the use of powerful deodorants before it could again become tenable; but in those cases in which a demon was said to have taken up occupation within the body of a human being, it was foul smells rather than pleasant ones which were introduced as a counter-measure. In 1586 when the exorcist Edmunds attempted to expel a devil from a hysteric, he first forced his patient to drink salad oil, 'his head afterwards held over a bowl of burning brimstone – and further dosed with asafoetida and other stinking gear'. Possibly it was under the inspiration of some primitive version of the doctrine that 'like cures like', that foul odours were considered efficacious for the expulsion of a foul fiend. In yet another case, in 1665, a possessed woman subjected to fumigation was made to inhale a fetid infusion of boiling herbs, the treatment being discontinued only after a mouse had leaped from her mouth. In obstinate cases a portrait of the Devil would be sprinkled with holy water and afterwards thoroughly fumigated.

Tobacco smoke, regarded by most smoking addicts as aromatic, came under withering attack from King James I of England in his *Counterblast to Tobacco*; this specialist in demonology suggested, however, that the fumes might be useful to 'chase out devils'. On the other hand there were many who were firmly of the opinion

John Webb/Tate Gallery

Left **Evil smells were formerly believed to be a direct source of infection: the doctor who attends to a plague victim therefore holds an impregnated sponge to his nose, while servants burn aromatics to clear the air** ***Above*** **A dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost carries a censer in its beak, in Rossetti's painting *The Damozel of the Sanct Grael***

Of the Virtue and Efficacy of Perfumes

Let no man wonder how great things suffumigations can do in the air; especially when they shall, with Pliny, consider that, by certain vapours exhaled from proper suffumigations, aerial spirits are raised; also thunder and lightnings, and the like: as the liver of a cameleon being burnt on the house top, will raise showers and lightnings; the same effect has the head and throat, if they are burnt with oaken wood. There are some suffumigations under the influences of the stars, that cause images of spirits to appear in the air, or elsewhere: for if coriander, smallage, henbane, and hemlock be made to fume, by invocations spirits will soon come together, being attracted by the vapours which are most congruous to their own natures; hence they are called the herbs of the spirits . . . Also, the lungs of an ass, being burnt, puts all poisonous things to flight; and the fume of the burnt hoof of a horse drives away mice; the same does the hoof of a mule; and with the hoof of the left foot flies are driven away. And if a house, or any place, be smoaked with the *gall* of a *cuttle-fish*, made into a confection with red storax, roses, and lignum aloes, and then there be some sea-water or blood cast into that place, the whole house will seem to be full of water or blood.

Francis Barrett *The Magus* (1801)

that tobacco smoke was more attractive than repellent, some fishermen even insisting that its smoke lured fish into their nets. On the east coast of Scotland the aroma of very old brandy was supposed to have a similar effect.

Fumes have always played a prominent part in the magical arts from the time of the priestess of the Delphic oracle, who is said to have breathed fumes before reaching a state of prophetic frenzy, to the priests of modern India who inhale the aromatic smoke arising from a burning sacred plant. Javanese mediums observe a similar rite and in Haiti perfumes are used in Voodoo ceremonies.

Perfumes and fumigants have a prominent role in European magic. During the preparation of a magic circle, herbs and other aromatic substances were cast upon a charcoal fire burning in a small brazier in order to attract spirits, who would then take on visible shapes by enveloping themselves in the smoke. When it was necessary to summon devils coriander, hemlock and sandalwood were used together with henbane, which was a powerful narcotic and helped to induce a state of temporary insanity.

Ghostly Odours

Perfumes have an established place in psychic realms, particularly in ghost lore. Who has not heard some old ghost story in which the returned dead have made known their presence by a waft of the well-loved scent with which they were intimately associated in life? John Aubrey, the antiquary, recorded the materialization of an apparition at Cirencester, 'which being demanded whether a good spirit or bad returned no answer but disappeared with a curious perfume and a most melodious twang'.

Perfume as an expression of mood and personality is a valuable auxiliary to the arts of love; in fact it belongs high up on the list of aphrodisiacs. By acting upon the olfactory nerves it stimulates the brain, arousing powerful emotions of sympathy and sensual attraction. In the South Seas today a garland of flowers is an expression of erotic desire and in the same way there exists no more powerful token of passion in the language of love than an expensive perfume.

Alternatively, odours have sometimes been used to achieve the reverse effect. During the Middle Ages monks and nuns when beset by lustful thoughts sought refuge from the Devil's wiles by sniffing camphor, a custom which inspired that favourite maxim of the Salerno medical school:

> Camphor if smelled
> A man will geld.

To the sensualist perfume opens the way to indescribable joys. It was one of the supreme delights of Mohammed, and the Islamic paradise was impregnated with exotic scents. In more recent times the male of the species has begun once again to make judicious use of toilet waters, scented shaving lotions and deodorant sprays, not merely with the object of offsetting the less pleasant odours of his two million sweat glands or even to add to his attractions as a sexual partner, but for highly laudable aesthetic considerations.

Cologne Before a Battle

Some people consider that perfume exerts an influence upon thought itself, equating, for example, pure mountain air with vigour, solitariness and the heroic. In the folklore of flowers, those with heavy scents are generally considered unlucky since they fill the mind with thoughts of death. That perfume clears the brain is suggested by the fact that Napoleon Bonaparte used to immerse his head in eau-de-Cologne before commencing a battle.

The whole world has been ransacked in its time to provide the ingredients of the perfumer's art. Animal life makes its contribution in the form of the secretions of civet cats and musk deer, the sperm whale has supplied its ambergris and the beaver has surrendered its castoreum. Aromatic barks and spices and oils from the crushed stems, petals and leaves of flowers have all supplied their distinctive odours. Rose petals provided not only the couches of the luxurious sybarites of Roman times but when distilled as rose-water bathed the hands and faces of courtesans and queens. Some 17,000 odours have now been distinguished, some good and some bad; and a system of classification has recently been evolved by a chemist, Dr Septimus Piesse, by which the acuteness of a particular scent is equated with a note on the musical scale. The perfumer can then more easily tell which perfume 'notes' will harmonize or clash.

In the symbolism of dreams perfume means romantic happiness, but it could with equal facility be named 'eternity'. The nostalgic power of scents is well known, and has even on occasion been exploited by psychiatrists to revive the buried memories of their patients.

(See also INCENSE.)

ERIC MAPLE

PERSEPHONE

IN THE LITERATURE of Greek mythology Persephone appears most often as the young daughter of Zeus and Demeter, who was carried off by Hades or Pluto to be his bride. Her name has various forms: Persephoneia, Phersephone, Persephassa, Phersephatta, Periphone according to literary or spoken dialect. No etymology has been found for it in Greek in any of the various forms. It is therefore likely that it was pre-Greek and was difficult for Greeks to pronounce. The classical Latin Proserpina seems to be a simple mispronunciation.

Homer calls her 'dread Persephone' and makes her the wife of the lord of the underworld, terrible herself and sender of terrifying ghosts and apparitions, like Hecate with whom she was sometimes identified. She controls the appearance of spectres, including that of Tiresias in the *Odyssey* (book 11) when Odysseus consults the oracle of the dead. In this book, indeed, she seems more truly ruler of the underworld than Hades himself. As such she perhaps descends from a pre-Greek goddess who would have been, like the Sumerian Ereshkigal, mistress of the underworld. Hesiod in the *Theogony* is the first to call her daughter of Demeter and alludes to her rape. But the superb myth of her abduction and of Demeter's angry grief appears for the first time in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter.

Persephone was playing as a maiden away from her mother on the Nysian plain in a meadow with the daughters of Ocean. As they were gathering flowers, she came upon the narcissus, a marvellous radiant flower, and reached for it with both hands. Then the earth suddenly opened and Aidoneus (Hades) sprang out with his golden chariot and immortal horses. He caught her up and carried her away across the world and down to the infernal regions while she lamented and cried shrilly upon her father Zeus. But no one heard her except Hecate in her cave and the sun god Helios, until Demeter too heard when it was too late. Demeter was led by Hecate to Helios, who alone had seen how her daughter had disappeared, and the sun god tried to comfort Demeter by saying that Aidoneus, brother of Zeus, was no unworthy husband.

A Pomegranate Seed

Demeter in her wanderings arrived at Eleusis, disguised as an old woman. There she nursed the king's child, warming him in the ashes of the fire to make him immortal, until she was discovered doing so by the queen. She then revealed herself as a goddess and a temple was built for her at Eleusis. There the goddess of crops sat mourning, making a dreadful year for mortals during which nothing grew. Finally Zeus sent Hermes to order Aidoneus to restore Persephone, so that the human race should not perish. Aidoneus obeyed but gave Persephone a pomegranate seed to eat. Hermes brought her back to Demeter in the chariot of Aidoneus. Demeter, as she held Persephone in her arms, felt a misgiving and asked her whether she had tasted any food down below. If she had done so, she must spend a third of every year among the dead (the idea of being bound to the underworld by having eaten food there is widespread). Zeus confirmed that she should spend this period of time in the underworld and the rest among the gods.

The Nysian plain has a name that is otherwise associated with Dionysus, whose sacred mountain was Nysa. But this is the name in cult and myth of any mountain sacred to Dionysus, not a geographical name. For this reason some scholars have argued that Aidoneus in the Hymn is another name for Dionysus, who had connections with the underworld. The place where Aidoneus's chariot vanished downward is variously given according to local cults of Persephone. In Attic cult it was Erineos, the place of the wild fig tree by the river Cephisus near Eleusis. This tree had a connection with the subterranean Dionysus. Though the Homeric Hymn has a special link with the cult of Demeter at Eleusis, Enna in the heart of Sicily became in later literature a favourite scene for the rape, for it had a native Sicilian cult of the infernal powers.

Less well known is the myth of Theseus

The queen of the underworld, Persephone *(right)*, was also the daughter of the corn goddess Demeter. She was abducted by her uncle, Hades, who carried her away to his infernal kingdom in his golden chariot: *(below)* *The Rape of Persephone* by C. Schwartz

The Syndics of Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Spectrum Colour Library/G. Tomsich

Michael Halford

Figured plate of the 5th century BC, showing Hades and Persephone banqueting; Persephone may have been descended from a pre-Greek goddess of the underworld

and Pirithous, who made an expedition to the underworld hoping to bring up Persephone as a substitute for the lost wife of Pirithous. Nonnus, an epic poet of the 5th century AD, retails, perhaps with some additions, an Orphic myth outside traditional lore. Persephone, kept at home by her mother but desired by all the gods, was conveyed to Sicily and there guarded by dragons, until Zeus himself, taking the form of a dragon, seduced her. She became the mother of Zagreus, the earlier form of Dionysus, whom the Titans tore to pieces.

Commentators have pointed out that the myth of Persephone is the sacred story that accompanies the ritual of sowing corn. Demeter is the corn mother, representing the seed corn that is stored underground during the deadening heat of summer, until it is brought out again in the autumn, is sown, and sprouts. The sprouting is the return of Persephone the Maiden. Demeter and Persephone are in a sense one, as the growing corn that vanishes and reappears.

(See also DEMETER; ELEUSIS; PLUTO.)

E. D. PHILLIPS

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Peru

South American country, conquered in the 16th century by Spanish invaders, led by Francisco Pizarro; in 1533 the Spaniards murdered the last of the ruling divine kings, the Incas, the children of the sun; the Incas had controlled the town of Cuzco, believed to be the navel or centre of the earth, from the early 12th century and had gradually built up an extensive empire.

See INCAS.

C. M. Dixon

Petrel

Sea bird, named for St Peter because it flutters across the waves with its feet touching them, as if it was trying to walk on the water; this may account for the belief that it is unlucky to kill a stormy petrel, from which the same belief may have spread to its larger relative, the albatross; the petrel is also related to the shearwater, sometimes called 'damned soul' because it flies to and fro over the sea, apparently never resting.

The Indians say that unless a man is morally upright he cannot use peyote; for the cactus which brings visions is regarded as a teacher, healer and saviour of their race

PEYOTE CULTS

TODAY the peyote religion is the principal cult among North American Indians in the United States, although it exists in many variants. It appears to have begun, at least in the form in which it now flourishes, about the year 1870, since when it has spread rapidly from Texas and the South-West among the Plains tribes and into Canada.

There is some evidence that a religious cult centring on the use of peyote, which is the button of a cactus plant native to Texas and northern Mexico, existed in pre-Columbian times, but whether the contemporary peyote religion is directly derived from those practices is disputed. What is certain is that hallucinatory substances were used in ritual practices by Indians observed by the Spanish invaders, and also that there was considerable non-ritual use of peyote. It was used as protector in war, perhaps to confer invulnerability, and it was carried in the 'war bundles' (collections of objects believed to have magical power) of tribes such as the Comanches and Shawnees. Among the Mescalero Apache rival shamans used peyote in their 'witching' practices, but there was no cultic use of the plant. But the peyote cult as it developed after 1870 includes many elements of which there is no earlier record, and this may be said without referring to the more explicitly Christian elements.

The term peyote has been used of a number of plants and sometimes peyote has been confused with mescal. But the mescal bean (*Sophora secundiflora*) is quite distinct from the peyote button (*Lophophora Williamsii Lemaire*), a small spineless cactus, of which the flowering tops are used in the peyote cult. The exact properties of the peyote button have been subject to dispute; some regard it as both a narcotic

and an intoxicant. It is non-habit forming. In some American states it has been prohibited, in others early prohibition has later been lifted. Some writers have maintained that peyote was a 'giver of visions', others have disputed this and suggested that peyote simply enhanced perception, particularly of colours. Nausea sometimes follows its use, but some users find that it gives a sense of exhilaration, mental ease and a feeling of greater mental capacity. The Indians themselves attribute great power to the button, and those who practise the cult regard it as a healer, and perhaps even as a saviour of the Indian peoples.

Religion of the Oppressed

Although it seems likely that the peyote cult in its modern form originated in the 1870s, its history is well-documented only from 1890. This was the year of the great Ghost Dance, a native movement which spread across the American plains from the west of Nevada. There Wovoka, an Indian messiah, had prophesied the return of the ancestors and the old way of life if Indians would but dance for several successive nights particular steps that had been revealed to him in a vision. The Ghost Dance had been carried from tribe to tribe by messengers, and the severely deprived Plains tribes, living in reservations and defeated in war against the whites, seized the new message of hope eagerly. The buffalo herds, on which they had lived and which had been of fundamental economic and religious importance to them, had been destroyed, and their way of life had collapsed. The messianic message was a call to action for thousands of hopeless tribesmen. Out of their common condition emerged a new sense of what it meant to be, not a tribesman, but an Indian. (See also GHOST DANCE.)

The fervour with which the Ghost Dance was performed led to trances and visions concerning the destruction of the whites. However, when the ancestors failed to return, despair and disillusionment followed. The way was now open for a less ecstatic cult that could build on the new inter-tribal sense of identity of the Indian peoples. Peyotism emerged as the new faith and many were quickly drawn to it. It did not promise an apocalypse, but was a more withdrawn response to distress.

Many elements of cult practice may already have been in existence before the coming of the Ghost Dance to the Wichita agency in Oklahoma in 1890; it was here that James Mooney, the government ethnologist, first saw the peyote cult in 1891. Certainly one of the prominent leaders of the Ghost Dance, Nishkuntu (Moon Head), also known as John Wilson, a part Delaware, part Caddo and part French Indian, became the individual who can be most specifically identified as a founder and disseminator of the new faith. Though peyotism did not originate with him, and its mythology goes back much further, the spread of the contemporary cult and some of its principal characteristics are connected with his name.

The Kiowa form of the peyote cult differs from the rite as disseminated by John Wilson, however, and may be more original. The central myth concerning peyote is usually recounted in the version accepted by the Kiowa. The story is of two lost warriors of the tribe who were sought by a relative, usually a sister. When she failed to find them and lay down exhausted on the ground, realizing that she too was now lost, she dreamed a dream that in the morning she would find help at hand. On waking she found the peyote plant. Severely hungry, she ate the peyote button and at once had a vision that enabled her to find her brothers. The myth of peyote as a saviour of the Indian is supported by stories of this kind.

All-Night Songs

Peyote cult ritual varies considerably from tribe to tribe, and perhaps from meeting to meeting. Despite the emergence of a church organization, uniformity has never been established. Particular practitioners have their own versions, and meetings are called for different purposes in different areas. Meetings are normally called by a sponsor who wishes to obtain healing, or to express gratitude for recovery from illness,

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The Ghost Dance, by developing a new inter-tribal sense of identity among the Indian peoples, opened the way for the peyote cult, a more passive response to oppression ***Above right*** **Arapaho 'ghost shirt' believed to render the wearer immune to bullets** ***Below right*** **Peyote plant: the cult is 'in many ways a religion of withdrawal and submission' which 'encourages resigned contemplation'**

or to celebrate a child's birthday, to obtain a prophecy or to manifest piety. In the tribes among whom peyotism was first established, women are often excluded from meetings. Among those who have acquired it more recently, and where it has a more Christian appearance, they are usually admitted, even though they do not always fully participate. Indians of all tribes are welcome at meetings, and visits from different tribes are common, since one of the features of peyotism that has continued since its early days is the eagerness of its practitioners to learn from others.

The sponsor of a meeting meets the expenses, and often supplies the peyote itself; he invites the Chief (or Roadman) who presides over the ceremony, and who may conduct it with variations according to some vision that he has received. An altar is prepared, traditionally in a tepee or tent, and objects of symbolic importance are placed upon it. Of particular importance are the drum, the staff and feathers. The all-night ceremony begins with smoking and praying to the earth-creator, and this is followed by a ritual of blessing around the ceremonial fire. The consumption of four (or sometimes more) peyote buttons by every participant is the most important act of the ceremony, but the night is taken up by the singing of songs. Each individual sings four, choosing a friend to drum for him, whilst he holds the staff. In some cases ritual songs are sung by the Roadman. Songs sung by individuals have, perhaps increasingly, some resemblance to Christian hymns. At midnight a special song is sung, and water is brought and drunk. The meeting then returns to singing until dawn, when water is brought again, by a woman, and four morning songs are sung by the leader.

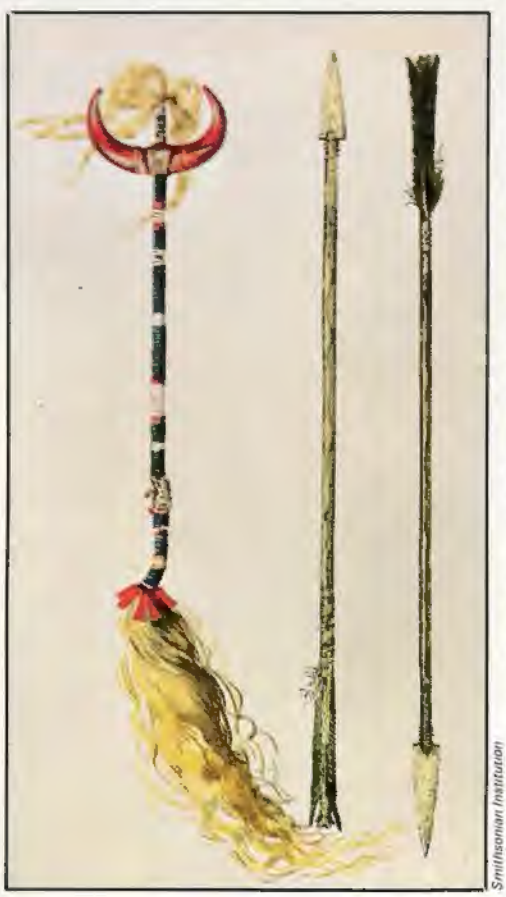
The principal object of meetings, however, is contemplation, and there is a strong ethical implication to the eating of peyote. It is frequently said that a man cannot use peyote unless he is 'straight'. Sometimes it is asserted that peyote causes vomiting and that this is a way in which men learn wisdom. Invariably, peyote is regarded as a teacher, and if the meaning of the ceremonies and the songs is difficult to articulate, it is said to be so because only by knowing the 'peyote road', by long experience of the cult, and by having a clean heart and living the life of a devoted man can an individual learn the peyote message. The peyote road can be a severe one: John Wilson, for example, exhorted his followers to abstain from alcohol, fighting, gambling, sexual excess, witchcraft and love magic. There is a strong sense in which peyotism provides a new ethic and offers social integration for a demoralized people.

The spread of the peyote religion among the tribes has been fairly fully traced. Like the Ghost Dance, its dissemination was facilitated by the American policy of collecting different tribes together on the reservations. The Kiowa and Comanches were early practitioners of the cult. John Wilson spread the cult among the Caddo, Wichita and Osage, and a more conservative variant of the cult was maintained (in strong opposition to John Wilson) among the Delaware. The Winnebago in Nebraska and the Iowa tribe were visited by peyote practitioners before the First World War, and the movement spread among the Ute. It made steady advance among the Taos Indians, and by the Second World War was spreading among the Crow and Blackfoot in Canada.

The Navaho for a long time remained relatively untouched by peyotism, although they certainly knew of it from quite an early date from their contact with the Ute shamans. The reason for their lack of interest appears to have been the relative comfort of this largest of all American Indian peoples. Unlike other tribes they had lost little of their traditional lands; they had never been forced onto the reservations; and as sheep farmers, they were unaffected by the disappearance of the buffalo. After the imposed programme of stock reduction (because of over-grazing) in the 1930s, some Navaho undoubtedly experienced a period of economic distress and hopelessness. It was after this time that peyotism first made a significant number of converts among them until, today, it has become a thriving cult with thousands of Navaho adherents.

Among the Navaho, as among many other tribes, peyotism was at first opposed by traditionalists who saw the peyote cult as a departure from true tribal culture. Today peyotism meets opposition both from conservative tribalists and from the small group of more educated Indians who have adapted more fully to white standards and see it as evidence of backwardness.

Sacred objects used by the Sioux in the performance of the Ghost Dance



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Peyote Christianized

Even though it cannot be claimed as a remnant of indigenous Indian culture, there is no doubt that peyotism is a native religious movement. Some of its advocates have said that the white man has the Bible (or Jesus) and the Indian has peyote. Others have attempted to assimilate peyotism to Christianity in various ways, and present it as a variant of the Christian faith.

It met the opposition of the Department of Indian Affairs at an early date, and the consumption of the drug was prohibited by a number of states (Oklahoma in 1899, California, Nevada and Utah in 1917, and several other states at later dates). In response to this pattern of persecution, the votaries of peyote saw the necessity of organizing themselves as a recognized Church, a pattern that had been successfully established by the Indian Shaker Church in Oregon some years before. A group of Oto registered the Firstborn Church of Christ in 1914 in Oklahoma.

A larger, inter-tribal movement was established in 1918 as the Native American Church. This organization, in contrast to the Firstborn Church, emphasized the use of peyote as its explicit purpose in an article which declared: 'The purpose for which this corporation is formed is to foster and promote the religious belief of the several tribes of Indians in the State of Oklahoma, in the Christian religion with the practice of the Peyote sacrament as commonly understood and used among the adherents of this religion . . . The organization became a national organization in 1944, and an international organization (to embrace Canada) in 1955.

The movement has accelerated the trend towards the Christianization of peyotism. Peyote is said to be used as a sacrament; the Trinity is invoked; the Bible is placed on the altar, and various scriptural references to a Comforter and the use of herbs and roots are invoked in defence of peyotism. Some apologists use Romans, chapter 14, verses 1–3, as a particular defence, implying that Indians are weak and cannot take the strong meat suitable for white Christians.

Certainly peyotism is in many ways a religion of withdrawal and submission. It encourages resigned contemplation, and the maintenance of an Indian tradition and an Indian way of life. By exhorting sobriety, high moral standards and personal decorum, it offers the Indian dignity in defeat, and simultaneously serves as an agency of adjustment to the dominant white culture. For people with little access to, or little faith in, white medical practice, it offers a system of curing which has at least continuity with traditional practice, much as it may differ in detail. The primary function of peyote itself is undoubtedly the provision of solace and the escape into dreams from the particular miseries of a demoralized people and a dying indigenous culture.

BRYAN WILSON

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In the curve of a hill, in the lofty rigidity of a tree, in fruit such as the many-seeded fig, symbols of sexual potency have been recognized, as indeed they may be seen in man's own handiwork; the main purpose of phallic symbolism is to inspire man or Nature to increase and multiply

PHALLIC SYMBOLISM

IT WAS ONCE widely believed that a magical power resided in the male and female organs of sex. The powers of reproduction were thought to be among the fundamental potencies of the universe. From earliest times men have been aware of the numinous mystery of sexual intercourse and have idealized the sexual apparatus as the seat of pleasurable experience, the fount of all creative activity, and the origin of all the manifold pageantry of the life around them. They made images of the sexual organs in realistic or symbolic forms, and treated them both as objects of reverence and the source of fecundity and increase, and as the power behind paternity, motherhood, fertility, food and seasonal cycles. Some authorities believe that these images may have been worshipped even before homage was paid to the gods themselves.

But these representations are not just material substitutes for the objects depicted. A distinction must be drawn between a symbol and a sign. The latter, such as the familiar traffic sign, is fixed and limited, and has no relevance beyond the purpose immediately intended. A symbol, on the other hand, is a sign with a profound meaning, which covers a much wider range of significance, and in many cases is believed to be occultly linked with what it represents. Symbols are products of the unconscious

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

The organs of generation, male and female, were often modelled in disproportionate size to stress their power and importance: Etruscan figure in bronze, 4th to 3rd centuries BC

mind and connect almost magically with various levels of reality.

Phallic symbols are close to what psychologists call archetypal forms; they relate not only to individual but to past racial experience. It is felt that many such phallic symbols arose spontaneously in varied guises in dreams and trances, and came to be embodied in folklore, mythology and religion.

From prehistoric times men have made clay idols, wooden figures and metal sculptures, depicting the primary sexual attributes of their chief deities. The walls of many old Egyptian temples have phallic carvings, and the Greek historian and traveller Herodotus described phallic statues of Osiris in Egyptian villages in his day, in the 5th century BC. In certain ancient Egyptian ceremonies the figure of the male deity was carried in procession with organ erect. Such ithyphallic statuettes were modelled on a smaller scale and popularly used in various rites as talismanic figurines to cure disease, obtain children, cure impotence or bring good luck.

Similar representations are found in the early centres of civilization in Central and South America. Phallicism is found in profusion in the religious life of India, notably in the stylized representations of the male and female principles known as the *lingam* and the *yoni*. China and Japan are no less prodigal in their portrayal of the sex organs, both separately and in union. Phallicism is also widespread among certain tribal religions in West Africa, and was prominent in the religious life of Arabia before Islam. The prophet Mohammed was said to have destroyed dozens of obscene idols when he conquered Mecca, in a determined campaign to obliterate all traces of the older religion.

Wherever phallic worship prevailed, ritual dances were enacted, hymns were sung, and the sacred symbol adored as the supreme deity of the pantheon. Temple prostitutes were in attendance to serve the devotees, and on certain occasions the act of intercourse was dramatized by the high priest and priestess, to imitate the principal divine function. At appointed times and seasons of the year phallic emblems were consumed at a ritual supper. Bread was baked in the shape of the male or female organ, or the female breast, or the two organs conjoined in union, and these were eaten by the worshippers or carried home to the family in order to increase or induce their power of fertility. Even the more civilized Greeks used phallus-shaped cakes at their sacred festivals, such as the *Thesmophoria*.

It was inevitable that where the power of the sexual element was uninhibitedly recognized, it should be raised to divine status and represented by gods and goddesses. Such divinities of sexuality are found in many religious systems: in Egypt there were Isis and Osiris; in Canaan, Baal and Ashtoreth; in India, Shiva and Shakti. Among the Greeks and Romans there were Aphrodite or Venus, Priapus, Pan and several others. These deities took under their special care the fertility of crops and cattle, and the fecundity of women. Temples dedicated to them contained the 'organs of generation', both male and female, often modelled in disproportionate size to emphasize their importance. Where male deities were depicted they were often shown with the phallus erect.

A Catalogue of Symbols

Evidence of phallic symbolism is found long before man became 'civilized'. Prehistoric man was surrounded by the unpredictable vagaries of Nature; and as he developed his knowledge of agriculture and animal husbandry, he became increasingly aware of the need to ensure the fertility of his fields and livestock. And so he began to evolve the earliest magical symbolism to achieve their increase.

The catalogue of symbols naturally grew with the development of his civilization. The phallus, being the direct instrument of increase, and the womb, being the receptacle wherein life was incubated, naturally became the two principal symbols.

Apart from these obvious emblems, many others were adopted, on an analogous association of ideas, from natural phenomena – from the sky, the life-giving rain, the pregnant earth, the rounded hills, from rivers and mountain cascades, from plants and fruit and flowers. Fruit-bearing trees that gave proof of their fertility, such as the fig with its myriad seeds, were almost universally upheld as representing sexual abundance. Again, the many-petalled lotus and the rose express a much more sophistical

Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Palermo

K. Cohen Collection/Werner Forman

Chris Barker

The feeling that the sex organs are dirty and disgusting has not been shared by most of the world's population. 'The powers of reproduction were thought to be among the fundamental potencies of the universe', and to represent them in images was to invoke them to activity. From prehistoric times men have made idols and figures depicting the primary sexual attributes of their chief deities
Left **Etruscan bronze, 4th century BC** ***Above*** **Stone carving from Anatolia, 4th millennium BC** ***Right*** **Witch's broomstick: stories of witches flying may be based on phallic dances in which the witches straddled sticks**

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

'It was inevitable that where the power of the sexual element was uninhibitedly recognized, it should be raised to divine status' *Above* In India the lingam and yoni were associated with great cosmic deities including Shiva and Shakti: lingam from Kashmir, 7th or 8th century AD *Left* Greek herm, c 520 BC: the god Hermes, originally connected with cairns and represented as an upright pillar, was given a human face and an erect phallus to promote fertility. A figure of him in this form frequently stood outside houses to guard them

stylization of such symbols; in Eastern and Western traditions respectively both have been elevated to the status of almost religious and mystical importance (see FIG; LOTUS; ROSE).

Biblical Euphemisms

The animal kingdom has also made its contribution. Because of their shape and smoothness the fish and the snake naturally brought to mind a phallic comparison (see FISH; SERPENT). The cowrie shell and the conch whose ridges, convolutions and pink interior suggested the vulva, were widely used to symbolize that feature of the female body. Among the birds, the dove and the sparrow with their frequent love-play, and among the domesticated animals horned beasts like the bull, the ram and the goat, because of their aggressive virility, became the special exemplars of fecundity (see BULL; DOVE; GOAT).

The Bible is replete with phallic symbolism, and with allusions to the male and female reproductive organs and the process of procreation. Like other ancient scriptures the Bible has suffered greatly at the hands of its editors who, with misplaced intent, bowdlerized the more suggestive passages and removed many references of direct sexual significance. But their revisions were not always able to conceal the original meaning.

Translators into the modern languages have further subjected the biblical texts to modification, in deference to the prevailing sentiments regarding the propriety of having the holy Scriptures contain references to the excesses of oriental libidinousness; for certain terms of dubious significance, they have preferred the more innocuous alternatives. It has been suggested that words like 'loins' and 'rock' are euphemisms, and refer to the phallus; 'groves' and 'high places' refer to places of cult prostitution; 'knowledge' often means sexual intercourse.

The pillar or pole had a phallic connotation, and there are several references in the Old Testament to such objects found in the sacred groves dedicated to phallic rites. Ceremonial worship in such groves included the insertion of a pole into a stone socket, to symbolize the union of the two sex principles. These rites were deplored by the prophets as a menace to the worship of Yahweh, and many attempts were made to root out such Canaanitish abominations.

Some authorities have held that the ark of the covenant, the wooden chest that was housed in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of King Solomon, contained a number of cult objects among which was a symbolic image of the masculine and feminine sexual organs in union. Such representations are found in several ancient religious sculptures. The ancient Greeks celebrated the Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS), of which not much is known. What seems clear is that there was a ritual ceremony in which certain things 'not to be mentioned' were born in sacred procession in a closed basket. Some said that the basket contained a model of the male organ locked in union with the female organ of the goddess Demeter.

A great deal of sexual symbolism has been ascribed to architecture, in particular to religious buildings, and phallic origins have been traced in the columns and capitals, the round towers, the spires and minarets, while the female organs have been seen as

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

the basis of the arch and the keystone. While it may be objected that such parallels are exaggerated, there does seem to be some justification for this view in the obvious shape of certain architectural features. Although it may be difficult to concede that every dome represents the female breast or every pillar the virile member, some structural components do strongly suggest phallic affinities. Besides these symbolizations, there are other details that are quite plainly sexual in character. In Ireland until comparatively recently there were carvings of females with very exaggerated sexual organs called *Sheila-na-gig*, and these frequently formed the keystone of the arches on church doors. Most of them were removed during the 19th century, and some have been placed in museums. Such figures are also known to have existed in various English churches.

A Freudian Interpretation

Phallic symbolism was also carried over into spheres of life where its character was not at once apparent. The shape of the organs was stylized in elongations and points, and in ovals and circles. Freudian psychology seemed to confirm the sexual connotation of such symbols, and in general sticks, crosses, poles, knives, fish and trees represented the penis; while pits, caves, wells and gardens represented the female genitals. Naturally, many such representations were dismissed as being based on fanciful resemblances, but the underlying motivation in most cases has been clear on closer examination.

Modern students find evidence of sexual symbolism not only in those resemblances found in Nature and in the visible and material artefacts made by man, but also in the behaviour of men and women, in their speech, in their social conduct, in their games and pastimes (the maypole is a conspicuous example), their hidden revelations, as in dreams, and in their intellectual and artistic activities such as art, music and even philosophy. There is hardly a facet of life to which a sexual meaning has not been attributed.

In the past the intention of all phallic images was largely magical in character. They were not made for amusement, or for sexual instruction or marital inspiration, like a pornographic device or a 'pin-up'. They were primarily meant to fulfil an occult function. In some cases the reason behind such reproductions was to inspire man or Nature to bring down upon the community abundance and increase for men, animals and plants. As such it was a form of imitative magic, to induce heaven to respond in the manner suggested by the symbol and invoke the supernatural powers so that they would bestow the blessings of fertility upon the earth.

These symbols, either the phallus or vulva, separately or in union, were likewise used as a means of averting the Evil Eye and the effects of envy and malice, or to ward off evil spirits whose presence might bring danger to the household, and in general any evil influences or ill-luck that might be around. Until recently shops in China had erotic prints hanging on the wall to prevent fires.

Ronald Sheridan

In India the male and female elements in the universe were personified as Shiva and Shakti, whose generative powers 'cross and recross to form the basic building bricks of the entire cosmos' *Left* Ithyphallic figure of Shiva in his creative aspect *Above* Wall painting from a Roman brothel in Pompeii

The Great Divide

In some esoteric religious cults the whole universe is thought to be ultimately resolved into two basic elements which are sexual in character. The Taoists of China, for example, speak of Yang, the male principle, and Yin, the female principle, which permeate everything, for without these two elements nothing can subsist.

In Indian religion the Tantrics (see TANTRISM) similarly postulate these two dual elements in divine form as Shiva and Shakti, the male and female deities whose generative powers, sent forth in the form of radiant energy, cross and recross to form the basic building bricks of the entire cosmos. Shiva and Shakti are inherent in all things, and nothing can exist without their presence (see SHIVA). Nothing was more exalted than the sexual function, and the act of union was woven into the creeds of many sects as part of the divine purpose underlying all creation. All existence was thought to be contingent on the act of sex, and some Cabalists, amongst others, held that the universe existed only so long as the sex act was being performed and that if at any time it was stopped, the whole panorama of the universe would come to a standstill and melt away.

It has also appeared to some people that there was a close internal correspondence between the sexual organs and the cosmos, and therefore a cosmic significance was read into the sexual act, making it a kind of mystery which could be symbolically enacted on earth to create a corresponding activity in the higher supraterrestrial planes. Since man was part of the cosmic pattern, and in fact the chief representative of the cosmos in its entirety, it was thought possible for him by means of certain actions to activate the cosmic forces. This is the basis of the curious phenomena of sexual mysticism wherever it is taught and practised.

(See also FERTILITY; LOVE MAGIC; SEX.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

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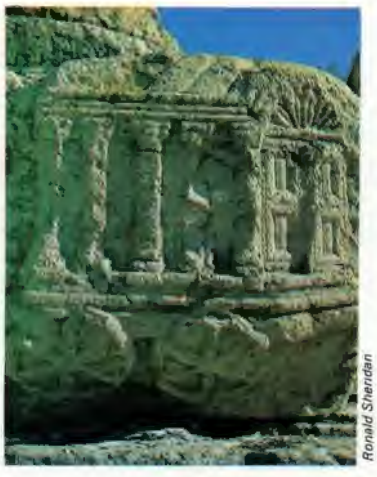
Philadelphia Experiment

The Philadelphia Experiment was alleged to have been conducted by the U.S. Office of Naval Research in 1943. At the heart of the tale lie the principles of Einstein's as yet unproved Unified Field Theory. The Experiment is said to have successfully applied these principles to the U.S.S. *Eldridge*, with the result that the ship became invisible, disappeared from Philadelphia and reappeared only minutes later in Norfolk, Virginia. In their 1979 book *The Philadelphia Experiment* authors William Moore and Charles Berlitz investigate the story.

Phantasms of the Living

Spectral appearances of people who are alive, distinguished from the ghosts of the dead; frequently reported appearing to close friends or relatives of the person seen at a time of crisis in that person's life (just before the moment of death, for instance) or to herald some disaster; to see your own 'double' is widely believed to be a sign that your death is imminent.

See ASTRAL BODY; DOUBLE; GHOSTS; MYERS; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.



Ronald Sheridan

Pharisees

Described by the historian Josephus as 'a body of Jews who profess to be more religious than the rest and to explain the law more precisely': they attached great importance to strict observance of the written law of Moses and the traditional law which had grown up around it; though attacked as pedants and hypocrites in the New Testament, they seem to have been admired by most Jews.

PHILOSOPHERS' STONE

ALCHEMY drew many of its basic ideas from late classical spirituality, as manifested, for example, in gnostic and Neoplatonic doctrines, and after the triumph of Christianity advocates of these ideas found it necessary to work 'underground'. To camouflage their ideas they resorted to an obscure symbolic language in committing their theories to writing which remains largely incomprehensible to us (see ALCHEMY).

Alchemical texts were not written to provide outsiders with information. Only those who had grasped the fundamental knowledge by the grace of God, and who had been instructed personally by the more experienced, could expect to find confirmation and additional instrnction in these books. Those not initiated had little chance of attaining the goal of the art. For them the process of transmutation, veiled in obscure symbolic imagery, remained a series of mysterious and virtually unworkable chemical operations which were supposed to make it possible to turn base metals into silver and gold. In fact only a few of the instructions, especially in the older treatises, relate to chemical operations. The bulk of them are spiritual processes of purging and purifying. But the alchemist was not merely talking in allegories. The true adept was not ashamed to work with chemicals in his laboratory, in order to see the concrete realization of his theory of the progressive spiritualization of matter. It is this parallel concept of both a spiritual and a material process, regarded as perfectly natural by the alchemists, which causes us to classify alchemy as one of the magical arts. For in alchemy no one asks how the spiritual perfection of the adept is supposed to bring about the purification of the substance he is treating. Our scientific logic simply does not apply to the alchemist's mode of thought.

In the older texts the Philosophers' Stone, *lapis philosophorum* or *lapis philosophicum*, is the final object of all the operations. By a curious paradox they also frequently use the same expression for the substance with which the work has to begin, the *prima materia*, the material to be worked on. The beginning and the ending of the process are firmly connected, and the primary substance is often referred to as 'our stone', *lapis noster*, as if its ability to germinate and develop into the final substance was its basic property.

The *prima materia* was the subject of much speculation. It is described as a substance which is common and easily obtained but only the initiated recognize it. A 17th century text says: 'I shall tell you of a stone which is not a stone . . . It is like thick curdling milk, but it is not milk, like mud, but not like any other mud. It resembles a green poisonous thing, because frogs crouch beneath it, but it is not a poison, it is a medicine. In sum, it is the earth from which Adam was fashioned.' The alchemist Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) referred to the primary substance as 'Adam's slimy earth'.

Hermann Kopp, a German historian of alchemy, says: 'Substances from the mineral kingdom, different plants and saps, the secretions and excretions of the animal world, even the most disgusting things were subjected to a thorough examination . . . They tried milk, but with little faith, and then saliva to see if that was the *materia prima*, and frequently made use of human faeces and urine in their operations.' It is not clear what was really involved but the authors of the old texts probably imagined it to be some form of primeval slime, from which all the phenomena of Nature had developed.

Making the Stone

Once the alchemist had chosen a substance on which to work, it had then to pass through various stages before it could be deemed to have all the qualities of the Stone. In describing the process the texts frequently differ in detail but roughly the same general pattern of operations was usually recommended. First, the substance must be reduced to a liquid, or dissolved in a liquid called 'mercurial water', for only in this state was it capable of change. This stage in the process was called solution or liquefaction.

Next, the material was embedded in 'the belly of the earth', in horse dung, whose gently fermenting heat caused it to darken in colour. This was the *nigredo*, sometimes symbolically represented by a raven, and the material underwent putrefaction in the same way as a buried corpse. The disintegration was followed by a process of reversal during which the material lost its dark hue and became lighter. This was the *albedo* or 'whitening', which might be symbolically expressed as the black raven turning into a white dove. The 'spirit', or matter dissipated by evaporation, must be returned to the transformed substance in the process called reduction. The white material was treated with 'philosophical milk' and turned yellow.

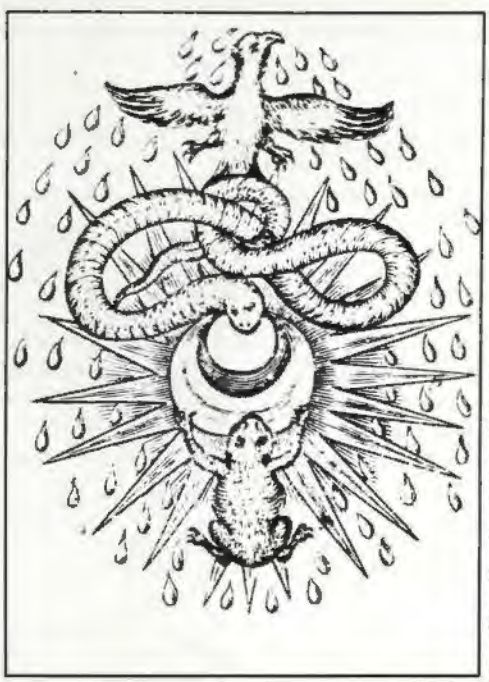
This was a critical stage in the operation for the process of reduction could easily go wrong, and all the previous efforts were wasted. However, if it was successfully achieved, the material in the alchemist's vessel turned red (*rubedo*) and was said to 'turn to blood', like 'a red dragon tearing itself to pieces'. The liquid material was now required to regain its former solid state, but at a much higher spiritual level, in a process known as fixation or coagulation. Many texts recommend the application of heat from the 'philosophical fire' and an additive of 'gold yeast' (a mixture of sulphur, gold and quicksilver) at this point.

The final stage, after all the other processes have been completed successfully, is the formation of the Philosophers' Stone itself. From it the elixir of life can be produced, and it can be used to turn lead into gold. Alchemical texts differ in the number of stages into which they divide the operation, some reckoning four essential steps, some seven, some 12, but the underlying procedure is usually roughly similar.

On the other hand, Johannes Isaac Hollandus, an alchemist active at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, recommended that the purified parts of the *prima materia* (which he calls 'vitriol') should be oxidized at a moderate temperature, preferably in a sealed vessel, until they turn red. The oxide is then dissolved in distilled vinegar and evaporated, this operation being repeated several times. The purified residue is treated in a retort: yellow vapours rise up and are condensed, followed by a red 'oil' and finally by white vapours. The pure white salt left at the bottom of the retort is impregnated with its own distillate, and this process is repeated until a mass emerges which is 'firm, but fluid like wax and as penetrating as oil'. This is the Stone which ennobles metals and as an elixir can cure all ills.

This description is clearly more concerned with genuine chemical processes and less with symbols of spiritual purification. It dates from the time when alchemy was about to split into speculative 'hermetic philosophy' on the one hand, and chemistry as we know it on the other. The important nigredo or 'blackening' stage has already disappeared, and it is precisely this stage which offers such interesting possibilities of interpretation in the light of Jungian psychology. Originally, the alchemist's material seems to have undergone a process which was regarded as a 'descent', followed by an 'ascent' to a degree of perfection higher than its initial state. The 'resurrection' is described in glowing symbolic terms in the older texts and the descent was evidently regarded as a necessary precondition for it. There seems to be a gnostic view here, of matter as basically anti-spiritual and needing to be destroyed to

Directions for making the Philosophers' Stone were frequently couched in a symbolic language so obscure that it has largely defied interpretation ever since ***Below*** **Illustration from Elias Ashmole's** ***Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*** **(1652), showing the fixed (toad) and volatile (serpent) elements in the process, with the eagle and the drops of water as symbols of distillation and purification** ***Right*** **Another 17th century illustration: the hybrid creatures show opposites which must be separated in the process to grow the tree of purification**



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release the divine spark, the captive spiritual principle hidden within it. In alchemical texts down to the 15th century no distinction is made between the spiritual and chemical processes intended to achieve this. The adept's efforts were directed towards discovering in the chemical transformation a reflection and confirmation of his own spiritual progress.

The Red Lion

It was only in later centuries that the idealistic side of alchemy grew less important and gave way to chemical operations intended to produce synthetic gold. Descriptions of the Philosophers' Stone now became clearer and more intelligible. It is said to have a powerful but pleasing smell. Descriptions of the colour vary. In a work attributed to the mysterious 'Basil Valentine', *On the great stone of the ancient magi*, it is described as follows: 'Its colour ranges from transparent red to dark brown, from the colour of a ruby to that of a garnet, and it is incredibly heavy.' In *De signatura rerum naturalium* Paracelsus describes the Philosophers' Stone as exceedingly heavy, like a brilliant ruby (hence the symbol of the red lion), and as transparent as crystal. It is not hard, however, but as supple as resin and it will shatter like glass. When pulverized, it looks like saffron.

Johannes Baptist van Helmont, a 17th century alchemist and scientist from Brabant, describes the Stone as a heavy powder of saffron hue, which sparkles like glass that has not been completely pulverized. *The Stone of the Philosophers*, a much quoted book by George Starkey, an English adept of the 16th and 17th centuries, says: 'Having thus completed the operation, let the vessel cool, and on opening it you will perceive your matter to be fixed into a ponderous mass, thoroughly of a scarlet colour, which is easily reducible by scraping, or otherwise, and in being heated in the fire flows like wax, without smoking, flaming, or loss of substance, returning when cold to its former fixity, heavier than gold bulk for bulk, yet easy to be dissolved in any liquid, in which a few grains being taken its operation most wonderfully pervades the human body, to the extirpation of all disorders, prolonging life by its cure to its utmost period.'

The similarity between so many descriptions of the Stone suggest that either the individual authors copied from each other, or that some substance with remarkable qualities really did exist and, because it was real, was described in the same way. It no longer seems to be a matter of symbols of spiritual purification but of actual chemical processes which gave results. In the 16th century and later alchemical instructions became increasingly practical and, in the process, lose some of the exciting fascination of the older symbolism. Perhaps there really was at that time some remarkable medicine now forgotten, but the other attribute claimed for the Stone, its ability to turn molten lead into gold, is entirely contrary to our modern way of thinking. It is possible that we are confronted here with a 'parachemical' phenomenon, in which the mind of the adept himself, in a state of ecstatic rapture, caused chemical changes which would otherwise be inconceivable.

If alchemy had been concerned only with the transmutation of base metals into gold, we might well dismiss it as an aberration. Untreated ores are often quite plain, powdery, amorphous substances which show their true brilliance only when they have been skilfully smelted. An error of judgement may have caused metallurgists long ago to try to 'improve' the metals even more, to give them an ever-increasing brilliance and resemblance to gold. But in the more important of the older sources the main concern of the alchemist is not to make synthetic gold. He was concerned with the spiritualization of both himself and his material, with a gradual and toilsome progression towards a great spiritual objective.

The alchemists employed what seem to us strange methods but they were guided by noble motives in their search for the Philosophers' Stone, which was thought to function as a tangible spark of divine creative power in the midst of unpurified matter. One cannot but respect the adept's aspiring labours and relentless application in a quest which demanded all his resources. *Ars totum requirit hominem* was a celebrated maxim: 'the art requires the whole man'.

(See also ELIXIR OF LIFE; MERCURY.)

HANS BIEDERMANN

PHOENICIANS & CARTHAGINIANS

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

A DEGREE OF MYSTERY invests both the name and origin of the Phoenicians. *Phoenix* was a Greek word meaning 'purple-red' and 'palm tree'. The Greeks seem originally to have applied the name 'Phoenician' to the inhabitants of the coastal lands of the eastern Mediterranean, between the Nahr-el-Kabir and Mount Carmel. It is not certain whether the name referred to the darker complexion of these people in contrast to the lighter colouring of the Greeks, or to the fact that palm trees were a distinctive feature of their land. Phoenicia was also the home of the celebrated purple dye, made from the murex mollusc, which was highly prized in the ancient world. The Roman form of the name was *Poeni*, which was also used to designate the Carthaginians who had originated from Phoenicia. The Phoenicians, however, called themselves 'Canaanites' and their land was 'Canaan', so well known from the Hebrew Bible.

According to Greek writers, the Phoenicians had originally lived in the Persian Gulf area, but had migrated westwards at a remote period and settled on the Mediterranean coast. This account of their origins has not been confirmed by modern archeology. There is, indeed, much evidence of migrations of Semitic peoples from Arabia and the Persian Gulf into Syria and Palestine during the third and second millennia BC. But it would appear also that Semites were living in this area from at least the third millennium, and they cannot be distinguished from any 'Canaanite invaders'. We have, therefore, to consider the Phoenicians as Canaanites, that is, as Semitic inhabitants of the coastal area of the eastern Mediterranean. The term may also be used in a special sense after about 1200 BC, for as a result of the settlement of the Israelites and Philistines about this time in the district later known as Palestine, the area of Canaanite political independence became limited approximately to the territory occupied by the four chief Phoenician cities of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Aradus.

The Father of Men

Since the Phoenicians were Canaanites, the earlier form of their religion can now be studied from the ritual and mythological texts discovered since 1928 by excavation of the Canaanite city of Ugarit, close to the modern Ras Shamra. The Ugaritic texts reveal that the Canaanites of the 15th and 14th centuries BC worshipped a number of gods. The presiding deity was El, described as 'the Father of Men', who was regarded as benevolent and merciful. He was 'the Creator of Created Things', and 'the Bull'; the latter title doubtless indicated strength and virility. He is depicted on a stele as a bearded man, seated on a throne, and shown

The Phoenicians were energetic traders and colonizers who readily adopted foreign gods and foreign art styles *Left* Ivory found at Nimrud, from furniture intended for export to Egypt where the lotus was a sacred plant: 8th century BC *Right* Stele from Carthage, the principal Phoenician colony, showing animal sacrifice and offerings at an altar

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

with a tall crown adorned by a pair of bull's horns. A worshipper, probably a king, stands before him, making an offering.

Although El was the supreme deity, the most active god of the Canaanite pantheon was Baal (see BAAL). He was represented as young and vigorous, armed with an axe and a spear, symbolizing lightning. These weapons indicate his original name and nature – he was Hadad, the weather god. 'Baal' was a title meaning 'lord', and signified ownership or sovereignty of the land. The use of this title denoted the deity's connection with the fertility cult of Canaan; as the weather god he brought the winter rains that fertilized the land. In the mythological texts Baal is described as 'the son of Dagon', the corn god, and at Ugarit their temples were adjacent.

Closely associated with Baal was the fertility goddess Anat, who in later forms of Canaanite-Phoenician religion was called Astarte (see ASTARTE). On a stele found at Bethshan, Anat is described in Egyptian hieroglyphs as 'Antit, Queen of Heaven and Mistress of all the gods'. She seems also to have been known as *Qodshu*, which could be interpreted as 'sacred prostitute' and refer to the licentious fertility rites which were practised in her sanctuaries. Anat or Astarte was generally depicted in art as nude, with the sexual attributes emphasized.

Among the texts recorded on the tablets found at Ugarit is a long mythological poem which tells of the conflict between Baal and Mot, the personification of drought and sterility. The theme was probably inspired by the annual struggle between vegetation and drought. Baal was apparently conceived of as the spirit of vegetation as well as a fertility god. In the poem, Baal is slain by Mot and descends into the underworld. His death is mourned by El; and Anat seeks for his corpse, which she finds and buries with lamentation and the appropriate funerary rites. There is doubtless some connection here between the actions of Anat and those of the Egyptian goddess Isis in her quest for Osiris (see ISIS; OSIRIS). Anat takes revenge on Mot by killing him and treating his body as grain, winnowing, parching and grinding it. Baal eventually returns from the underworld, and Anat announces that rain will come again and the

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

parched earth will revive. This mythological text was doubtless related to an annual ritual commemorating the death and resurrection of vegetation (see DYING GOD; VEGETATION SPIRITS).

Evidence found at Ugarit and other sites shows that the Canaanites were attracted to other religions. Ugarit itself was a cosmopolitan port, where many languages were spoken and where Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Hittite, Hurrian and Aegean-Mycenean influences were current. A notable memorial of Aegean-Mycenean religion is an ivory carving of the fertility goddess known as the *Potnia Theron* or 'Mistress of the Animals', which was found in a tomb. The stele unearthed at Bethshan, depicting Anat-Astarte, also shows on either side of the goddess the ithyphallic Egyptian god Min and the Canaanite god Reshef, who holds an ankh, the Egyptian symbol of life. In this connection, too, there are the Egyptian mummiform sarcophagi found at Sidon, one of which bears the funerary inscription in Phoenician of Eshmunazar, a king of Sidon probably in the 6th century BC. This readiness to accept foreign deities was also a feature of Carthaginian life. The acceptance, however, often took the form of identifying the foreign deity with a Canaanite, Phoenician or Carthaginian deity, which led to confusion of conception: thus the Baalat ('lady') of Byblos was identified with the Egyptian Isis or Hathor; and Melkart, the patron god of Tyre was assimilated with the Greek Hercules.

As the titles Baal ('lord') and Baalat ('lady') were used in conjunction with some other designations to denote the patron deity of some particular place, so other titles were used. A notable instance is the name Melkart, for the chief god of Tyre: it was composed of two words meaning 'ruler' or 'king', and 'city'. As Baal Melkart, this god became one of the leading deities of Carthage, the daughter city of Tyre. More difficult to explain is the name of Sidon's patron-god, Eshmun. It has been suggested that the name derives from *shem*, 'name', meaning 'the Name' above all others. Eshmun was assimilated to the Greek healing god Asclepios. He appears to have had chthonic (underworld) attributes, which would account for his close association with the fertility goddess Astarte.

Exporting Religion

Carthage, which was destined to become Rome's great rival in the Mediterranean world, was traditionally founded in 814 BC by colonists from Tyre; it was one of many Phoenician settlements on the western Mediterranean coasts. Its position, in command of the straits between North Africa

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

Left **Phoenician ivory plaque, 8th century BC, meant for export to Egypt and showing a lion in a lily grove, facing a sacred tree. The lion's head-dress resembles that of the Egyptian goddess Hathor. The Phoenicians themselves worshipped various fertility goddesses, as well as Baal, the weather god, and El, the father of man**
Above right **Terracotta mask found in Sardinia**
Below right **Part of a Phoenician neck-collar, found in a tomb in Sardinia, 4th century BC**

and Sicily, was one of great strategic opportunity, which it exploited to build up a commercial empire. Carthage steadily outgrew its mother city in size and importance, and even after its final destruction by Rome in 146 BC, Punic culture lived on and the old Punic gods continued to be worshipped under Roman names.

The Phoenician colonists took their native religion with them to North Africa, and it formed the fundamental pattern of Carthaginian religion. Some differences, however, did develop at Carthage, particularly with regard to the status or character of certain gods. Thus, although Melkart, the patron god of Tyre, was accorded a special position in the daughter city and an annual offering was sent to his temple at Tyre, two other deities had greater prominence at Carthage. They were Baal Hammon and Tanit Pene Baal. The origin of the former is obscure, though it has been suggested that 'Hammon' means 'altars of incense' or more plausibly, that it derives from 'Ammon', the name of the Libyan god of the Siwa oasis, whose oracle Alexander the Great once consulted. This Ammon was identified with the ancient Egyptian god Amun and the Greek Zeus.

The goddess Tanit, although her full title 'Pene Baal' meant '(Tanit) Face of Baal', seems to have had precedence over Baal Hammon, with whom she was often associated. Tanit was undoubtedly the Carthaginian counterpart of the Phoenician fertility goddess Astarte, for the latter does not appear independently of Tanit in the Carthaginian area. In Roman Carthage, Tanit was identified with Juno Caelestis, which indicates that she was also associated with the heavens. The crescent and the disc naturally suggest her connection with the moon. The emblem of the hand, with palm turned outwards, probably symbolizes protection and benediction, and anticipates the famous Islamic amulet of the 'Hand of Fatima'. But essentially mysterious is the 'sign of Tanit', which could be interpreted as a schematic figure of the goddess with arms raised in blessing, or as a Carthaginian transformation of the ankh, the Egyptian sign of life.

Centuries of Child Sacrifice

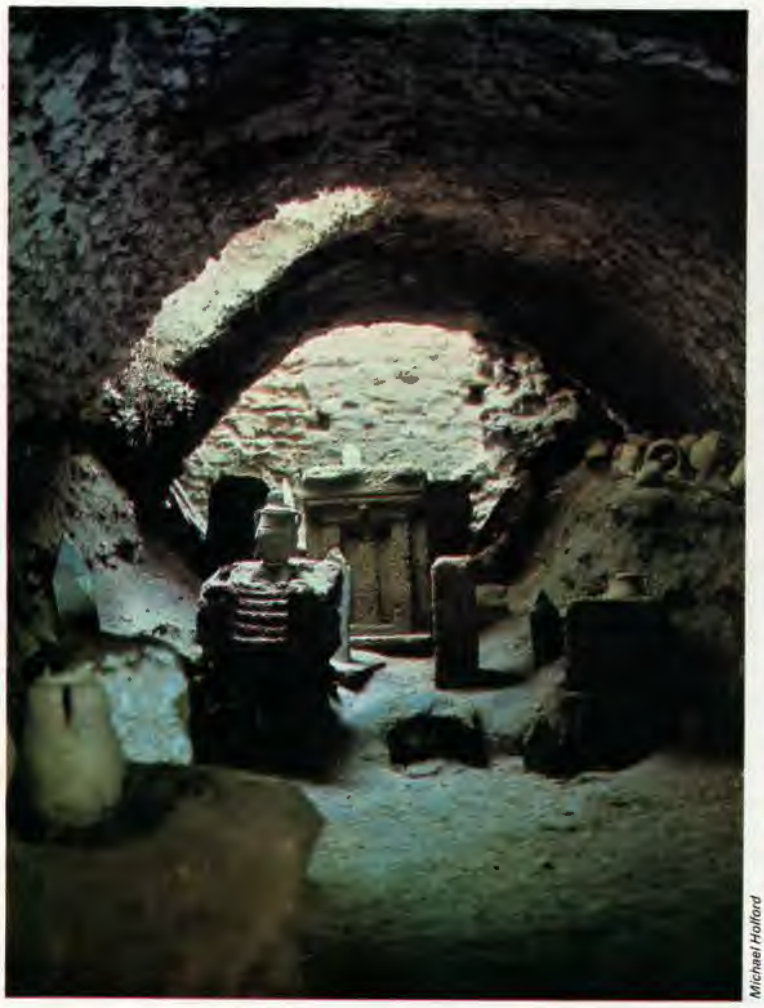
One of the most significant but sinister discoveries made on the site of Punic Carthage was that of the 'topheth' within the precinct of Tanit. The Hebrew word *topheth* occurs in an account of the reforms carried out by King Josiah at Jerusalem (2 Kings 23.10): 'And he defiled Topheth . . . that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech'. It used to be thought that 'Molech' was a Phoenician god, but recent research suggests that it was a term for child sacrifice practised in Canaanite-Phoenician religion. The topheth of Tanit has provided grim evidence of the longevity of the rite at Carthage, in fact from the 8th century BC to the Roman destruction of the city in 146 BC. Thousands of urns were found there containing the calcined bones of small children and birds and small animals – these latter were possibly substitute sacrifices. Small stelae, marking the burial places of the urns, mostly had dedications to Tanit Pene Baal and Baal Hammon. The purpose of these child sacrifices was probably either propitiatory or to promote fertility.

Among other Phoenician gods worshipped at Carthage were Eshmun of Sidon and Reshef. The cult of the Greek goddesses Demeter and Persephone was introduced in the 4th century BC, and after the Roman conquest the Punic deities were generally identified with the Roman deities deemed to be equivalent in character and status. The grim fanaticism that characterized both Phoenician and Carthaginian religion has been thought by some scholars to have left its impress upon ancient African Christianity.

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: M. Edey, *The Sea Traders* (Time-Life, 1974); J.C. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Attic Press, 1978); J. Gray, *The Canaanites* (Praeger, 1964); D. Harden, *The Phoenicians* (Praeger, 1962); S. Moscati, *The World of the Phoenicians* (Praeger, 1968).

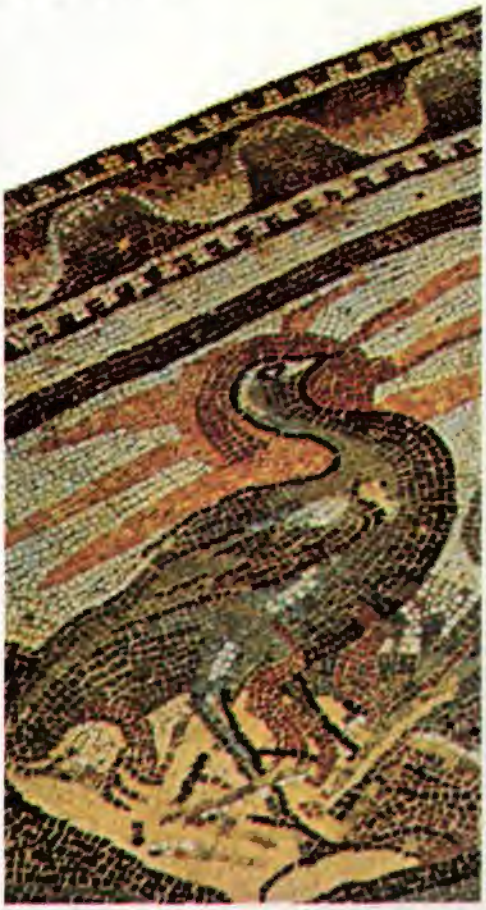
A significant and sinister discovery on the site of Punic Carthage was the 'topheth' in the precinct of the goddess Tanit (*left*), where small children had been sacrificed by burning, perhaps to appease the gods or for fertility. Their bones were placed in urns and small stelae mark the burying places of these urns in graveyards (*right*), frequently dedicated to Baal Hammon and Tanit Pene Baal, the chief Carthaginian deities



Michael Holford

Michael Holford

PHOENIX



Axel Poignant

The priests of Heliopolis maintained that the phoenix arrived from Arabia every 500 years, bearing its predecessor embalmed in a ball of myrrh: phoenix on a Sicilian mosaic

FOR A MYTHICAL CREATURE, the phoenix is familiar enough; it is used in everyday life as a trademark, it rises from stylized flames on heraldic bearings, it enriches the poet's language, and appears briefly in history. What its legend is and means, on the other hand, has largely been forgotten as the symbol gains wider and wider currency.

The phoenix, according to the most developed forms of the story, is a bird about the size of an eagle, brilliantly coloured in plumage; it is either purple with a golden collar, or a dazzling mixture of red, gold and blue. It is the only one of its kind, and lives in Arabia; at the end of an epoch, as it feels death drawing near, it builds a pyre of the sweetest spices, on which it then sits, singing a song of rare beauty. The rays of the sun ignite the nest, and both this and the bird are consumed to ashes. From the ashes there arises a worm, which eventually grows into a new phoenix. The bird's first task is to gather the remains of its parent and, accompanied by a throng of other birds, to fly to Heliopolis (the City of the Sun) on the Nile. Here the priests of the sun receive it with great ceremony; it buries its parent in the temple, and returns to Arabia.

The roots of this story first appear in ancient Greek literature, in Herodotus's account of Egypt (c 430 BC). When he was at Heliopolis, he was shown the bird in pictures; and its very name may be due to his confusing it with the date palm on which it is often depicted, which is also *phoenix* in Greek. It was a red-gold bird about the size of an eagle, and the priests said that it arrived there every 500 years bearing its predecessor embalmed in a ball of myrrh, which it buried in the temple of the sun. Later writers give other details, such as the bird's rebirth as a worm from its dead parent's body, and the accompanying flight of birds. There was, however, some doubt as to the length of the true interval between the arrival of two phoenixes: Aelian (c 170–235 AD) mocks the priests who do not know when it will arrive and 'have to confess that they devote their time "to putting the sun to rest with their talk", but do not know as much as birds'. Tacitus reports: 'Regarding the length of its life, accounts vary. The commonest view favours 500 years. But some estimate that it appears every 1461 years . . .' The particular phoenix which had come to his attention as a historian was that said to have arrived in the reign of Tiberius; but since the previous one had been welcomed at Heliopolis under Ptolemy III, and 'as between Ptolemy and Tiberius there were less than 250 years some have denied the authenticity of the Tiberian phoenix, which did not, they say, come from Arabia or perform the traditionally attested actions.' Pliny rejects it out of hand; although it was displayed in public, 'nobody would doubt that this phoenix is a fabrication'.

It is only in the 4th century AD that the idea of a fiery death is to be found, in two complete poems on the phoenix, by Claudian and Lactantius. This description of the bird's death is taken from Claudian, in Henry Vaughan's translation:

> He knows his time is out! and doth provide
> New principles of life; herbs he brings dried
> From the hot hills, and with rich spices frames
> A Pile shall burn, and Hatch him with his flames.
> On this the weakling sits; salutes the Sun
> With pleasant noise, and prays and begs for some
> Of his own fire, that quickly may restore
> The youth and vigour, which he had before.
> Whom soon as Phoebus spyes, stopping his rayns
> He makes a stand, and thus allayes his pains . . .
> He shakes his locks, and from his golden head,
> Shoots one bright beam, which smites with vital fire
> The willing bird: to burn is his desire,
> That he may live again; he's proud in death,
> And goes in haste to gain a better breath.
> The spicie heap fir'd with celestial rays
> Doth burn the aged Phoenix, when strait stays
> The Chariot of th'amazed Moon; the pole
> Resists the wheeling, swift Orbs, and the whole
> Fabric of Nature at a stand remains,
> Till the old bird a new, young being gains.

With this superb description of the traditional death of the phoenix, our picture of the legend is complete. Where did such a tale come from, and are its details part of the clues as to its origin or mere decoration? Herodotus's account of the phoenix as a sacred bird at Heliopolis sets us in the right direction: for in the Egyptian mythological texts, such as the Book of the Dead, which are concerned with the soul's safety in the otherworld and are often magical and obscure, the bird *bn.w* or bennu appears, with many of the attributes of the phoenix. This creature is one of the prime movers of the world: prototype of the individual soul, it arises from the Isle of Fire in the underworld and flies to Heliopolis to announce the new epoch, in which the sun itself is renewed. Because the sun, too, had been envisaged as a bird which made its daily journey from east to west, so the bennu came to be identified with Khepera (Khepri) himself, the rising sun.

Companion of the Sun

The texts on the bennu itself fall into three groups: those concerned with resurrection, those identifying it with Re-Osiris and the rites of the dead, and those identifying it with the planet Venus. The three groups are linked by the solar theme, and a new idea of the bennu appears, as a bird accompanying the sun on its daily journey. In the Apocalypse of Baruch (2nd century AD), Baruch is shown by an angel the sun as it sets out on its daily journey, accompanied by the phoenix, 'a bird as large as nine mountains'; and at twilight the same procession returns. The phoenix is weary, 'Because he holds back the rays of the sun, because of the fire and heat which last throughout the day . . . if his wings did not form a screen against the rays of the sun, no living being would survive.' This legend reappears in a slightly different form in the story of the bird called heliodromos or 'sun-runner', and other variations linger in the medieval descriptions of the phoenix.

In the Egyptian texts, the bennu is shown as a heron-like creature, which does not correspond to the eagle-like bird described by Herodotus; but it is possible that the original bennu was a falcon-like creature which was only later confused with the heron. Its colouring, gold, red, pink and blue, is that of the phoenix. Among the few details of its habits, we learn of the flight of birds which escort it at a respectful distance; perhaps a simile for the stars following Venus at eventide. A sarcophagus bears the inscription 'I am the bennu who begets himself and gives incense to Osiris.' The identification with Osiris, the god of resurrection, which is found elsewhere, strengthens the idea of the bennu as self-reviving. Finally, the bennu is associated with the new epoch or great year in the same way as the phoenix. The cycle of 1461 days (Tacitus's 'years' is an error) is exactly the length of four solar years including Leap Year day. All in all, there can be little doubt that the phoenix of Herodotus and classical tradition is indeed the same creature as the bennu of Egyptian myth.

Yet even the bennu's solar associations are not quite enough to account for the strange phenomenon of the phoenix's fiery end. Here a modern naturalist comes to our aid: Dr Maurice Burton, in his researches

into the habit of 'anting' has pointed out the parallel between this and the resurrection in flames of the phoenix. In 'anting', which is common among various species including rooks, the bird performs a series of almost ritual movements, often involving glowing cinders or actual flaming twigs, which give the impression that it is using fire and smoke to drive ants out of its feathers. Closer investigation shows that this is not the case, and the real reason for this behaviour is unknown. However, a bird emerging from the flames in this way might easily suggest revival by fire. The only weakness in this theory is that the habit has not so far been observed in any of the prototypes of the bennu and phoenix: eagle, heron and falcon.

Death in a Nest of Spice

The legend of the phoenix was widespread in the Middle Ages: but medieval curiosity about the natural world was limited. Accepted authority was preferred, and the authority on bird and animal lore was the work known as the *Physiologus* or Naturalist. This small collection of descriptions was steadily enlarged between the 6th and 13th centuries and became known as the bestiary or Book of Beasts. The most important change was that the original text was turned into a moral tract by the addition of an explanation in theological terms of the natural events. The entry for the phoenix, as expected, reminds us of the Resurrection. First the version by which it meets a fiery end is given, and is used as an argument for the truth of the scriptural account of the Passion: 'If the Phoenix has the power to die and rise again, why, silly man, are you scandalised at the word of God . . .?' The alternative version is then given (ignoring the contradiction), according to which the bird's body decays in a nest of spices and a worm emerges to grow into a new phoenix.

The bestiary was very popular, and many variations developed, both orthodox and unorthodox. In one version, the phoenix is confused with the eagle, but the most interesting is that of the bestiary of the heretical Waldensian sect that flourished in France and Italy in the 12th century. This revives an aspect of the legend which was rarely touched on: the phoenix's sweet song on its pyre, which was taken to symbolize man's duty to praise God. Although this fable is very like that of the swan that sang so beautifully before it died, it is a very old attribute of the phoenix, and found in Roman writers. In the most unusual of all the bestiaries, the 'Lovers' Book of Beasts', the phoenix masquerades as a salamander, and can only be identified by the illustration, which shows it as a bird.

From theology, the phoenix migrates to literature. The cold sceptical eye of the 17th century ejected it from the canon of natural history, but poets, seized on it as an exotic symbol of the unique – which quickly became debased to the merely rare – and phoenixes abound in their eulogies of

Victoria and Albert Museum/Michael Holford

Pair of phoenixes on a Chinese tapestry: renowned for its song, the Chinese phoenix is a heavenly emissary which appears when the land enjoys the gods' favour

monarchs and other great men of the world, and in the lines inspired by the great beauties of the day. In this century, W. B. Yeats, thinking of his love Maud Gonne, could revive the myth's magic as he scorned 'a score of duchesses surpassing womankind' for her sake, saying 'I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their day.' Florian, the 18th century French writer of fables, gave the myth a new charm by placing it in a homely setting. One day the phoenix appears in the forests of France, where all the birds are overcome with envy and admiration – all, that is, save the turtledove; she sighs as she gazes at the phoenix, and when her mate asks her the reason for this, answers: 'I can only pity him; he is the only one of his kind.' On a more complex and subtle plane are two symbolic recreations of the legend in poems by Sidney Keyes and Herbert Read. In Keyes' poem, the phoenix stands for corrupting pride, while in sharp contrast Read sees it as an archetype of life's continuation.

Outside this Western tradition there is the Chinese phoenix. As with the bennu bird, the equation between *feng-hwang* and phoenix is not absolute. The feng-hwang is not unique: feng is the male bird, hwang the female. But in other respects it resembles the Western phoenix. It is renowned for its sweet song and is accompanied by crowds of birds. It is a heavenly emissary which appears when the land enjoys the gods' favour, and is not seen in times of war, just as in Roman Egypt the phoenix was a good omen. The idea of the rarity of the bird is complicated by reports that if you play the flute, almost invariably the creature will appear to accompany you, and when friends gather in a garden in the cool of the evening to play music together, it will often join them. The feng-hwang, however, is really part of the otherworld, as one of the four spiritual creatures, symbol of the empress and of the element fire. It bears on its body the characters for virtue, righteousness, humanity, sincerity and integrity; it will eat no living thing, not even grass; and of all four spiritual creatures – tortoise, *ki-lin* (unicorn), dragon and feng-hwang – it is the feng-hwang which is the most exalted.

RICHARD BARBER

Two scholars were hounded from their own country for suggesting that man's physical constitution determined his character; the phrenologists limited their investigations to the head while physiognomists extended their study to the whole body

PHRENOLOGY & PHYSIOGNOMY

A MAN considered to have 'shifty eyes', 'a suspicious manner' or 'an arrogant walk' may on these counts be assessed and judged by others, for it seems natural to believe that from the outer we can tell the inner man. Even modern scientists contend that they can classify human beings according to physical type and that each physical category possesses a distinct set of behavioural characteristics. The forerunners of these more objective methods of assessing character by studying physique were phrenology and physiognomy.

Phrenology holds that a man's character is determined by the interaction of various organs of the brain, all of which have a specific physical location in the head. The size of these organs can be detected by a trained phrenologist from the shape of the skull: by feeling a certain area of the cranium the expert can tell, for example, how well developed is his subject's 'organ of combativeness'; in this way he can decide whether his is a passive or an aggressive personality. Physiognomy extends the principle of assessing human personality according to physical indices to the entire man – the formation of any part of the body might tell the physiognomist about the man beneath.

At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, when new 'sciences' like that of mesmerism (see MESMER) mushroomed overnight, such means of 'weighing' mankind attracted the attention of dedicated investigators. Both phrenology and physiognomy owed some part of their 19th century vogue to the publication of the *Physiognomical Fragments* of J. K. Lavater, a Swiss divine who saw in the human body the reflection of the soul within (see LAVATER). It was phrenology, however, which caught the popular imagination, and the founder of 'that science teeming with the amelioration of society and the happiness of the species' was a natural scientist, whose science was the centre of strenuous conflict, seeming as it did to overturn the accepted version of man's place in the universe.

Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828) and his disciple J. K. Spurzheim (1776–1832) demonstrated in themselves the conflict which took place between what appeared to be the claims of pure science and those of inherited belief. During the 1790s Gall was so fashionable a physician in Vienna that he could afford to turn down the post of doctor to the Emperor's court. At this period his mind – like that of Mesmer before him – turned to speculations of his student days. Gradually he evolved his personal theories of human nature, assisted after 1804 by Spurzheim. They linked their investigations into the construction of the brain to speculations about the springs of human conduct. Gradually, the various 'organs' of phrenology were discovered by more or less arbitrary means. For example, Gall located his 'organ of self-esteem' by examining the head of a beggar who blamed his pride for reducing him to poverty. In Gall's system, 33 organs were located in the head – Spurzheim was to add a further four – and all were given names and numbers. There were said to be three classes of organs: those controlling basic characteristics; those governing 'sentiments' like benevolence and mirthfulness; and a class of purely intellectual capacities, such as the ability to measure size or appreciate the sequence of cause and effect. The phrenologists' conclusions were summed up in a poem called *The Craniad*, published in 1817:

> In every human character 'there be'
> Organs and faculties full thirty-three
> Distinct in kinds, and differing in extent –
> But natural, constant, marked and permanent.
> Within some heads they're large, – in others small,
> But all possess them, and possess them all.
> They act in various ways, – alone, combined,
> And hence the varied character of *mind*.

Before Gall and Spurzheim there had been several attempts to localize the functions of the brain. Galen and his followers had

taught that the brain was the seat of the soul; and in the early 13th century Albertus Magnus had divided the skull into three segments, giving to the forehead the control of judgement, to the top of the skull that of imagination, and placing that of memory in the back of the head. But the more specific formulations of Gall and Spurzheim caused consternation: in 1802 Gall's lectures were banned, and three years later the pair were forced to leave Austria. They spent some time travelling round Europe expounding their theories, and eventually settled in Paris, where in 1808 they presented a memorandum to the French Institute and in 1810 began jointly to publish their *Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous System*. Soon after the publication of the first volume, Spurzheim broke with Gall, who remained in Paris, and began to concentrate his energies on the English-speaking world.

Undermining God's Role

Why were two respected men of learning hounded out of their home country and forced to become wandering scholars? The answer lies in the shattering implications of Gall's theories if applied consistently to human affairs. He argued without equivocation that a man's physical constitution determined his character. The view of human nature which this implied was both elitist and profoundly pessimistic. It was not an attitude calculated to endear him either to those interested in upholding the powers of God over man or to the Romantic panegyricists of human reason who flourished in Gall's lifetime. On the other hand, Spurzheim was responsible for popularizing the doctrines of his master, and in so doing presented a more rosy picture of human nature than did the austere Gall.

Their different approaches were noted by a follower of Spurzheim, who wrote that Gall 'visited the prisons, the hospitals, the schools and the churches of Vienna; and he found organs which he did not hesitate to name as the organs of *theft*, *murder* and *cunning*, *benevolence* and *religion*. He considered the actions of men, whether good or evil, as necessarily flowing from the organization they received from nature, without adverting to the primitive power their organs were designed to exercise in a healthy and unvitiated state . . . Spurzheim had the merit of pointing out the primitive powers of the different organs, and discriminating between the institutions of God and the *abuses* of those institutions.' In other words, for Spurzheim's followers, man was essentially a divine creation, and phrenology revealed the physical embodiment of God's laws which all must follow to earn divine approval. The fear that man might prove neither to be the arbiter of his own destiny nor the privileged creature of a Supreme Being was lifted. It was even argued that the cranial 'organs' would be improved by leading an exemplary life; phrenology was extolled as an infallible means of judging men and visions of phrenological Utopias, in which a man's suitability for high office could be scientifically assessed, passed into common currency.

This was a far cry from the original theories of Gall, whom Metternich thought the greatest mind he had ever known, and whose honesty was such that he left sections of his brain charts blank, because he had not yet discovered what faculties they controlled. Spurzheim's messianic version of phrenology found a ready-made place in the welter of mesmerism, Spiritualism and Utopian social theories which passed popularly for 'progressive thought' in the mid-19th century. The process of popularizing began in Scotland, where the hard-headed medical man employed by the *Edinburgh Review* to castigate Spurzheim's work was alarmed by the speedy appearance of the foreign savant in the Scottish capital. Spurzheim publicly dissected a brain and began to make converts. He also found time to record a phrenological assessment of the Scots (the words in italics denote phrenological 'organs'): 'Scotland contains several races of inhabitants. The genuine highlanders are *entire feelings*: accordingly, I would consider them as the warmest friends, or the most dangerous enemies, always acting by strong feelings. They have *adhesiveness*, *combativeness*, *destructiveness*, *secretiveness*, *self-esteem*, *approbation*, *firmness* and *individuality* strong: many have *cautiousness*. The upper part of the forehead is mostly narrow, *tune* is good – *order* is almost wanting . . .'

Mary Evans Picture Library

In the 16th century Jerome Cardan maintained that personality could be judged from the lines on the forehead *Facing page (left to right)* Heads of a peaceful and successful man, a quarrelsome and murderous man, an infirm man, and a man of prowess in war; from the *Metoposcope* by Cardan *Above* Phrenological diagram of the areas of the head in which character traits and mental abilities are located: for example, contrariness in section 12, benevolence in section 13

Through the efforts of Spurzheim's supporters, notably the Scottish advocate George Coombe, phrenological societies sprang up throughout the United Kingdom. By the 1830s there were at least a dozen British societies; over 60 books and pamphlets were in circulation, and the cause was attracting large financial bequests. George Coombe proved an active successor to Spurzheim after the latter's death in 1832 whilst on a visit to Harvard University. As one ardent phrenologist wrote at the time: 'Philosopher after Philosopher, Phrenologist after Phrenologist may die – but Phrenology *can never perish* – IT IS EVERLASTING, LIKE THE OTHER TRUTHS OF GOD.' Indeed Coombe's celebrity eclipsed that of Spurzheim: Victoria and Albert had him examine the heads of the royal children. But it was in America that Coombe's propaganda bore the most remarkable fruit.

In Europe phrenologists remained devoted to lecturing and exposition. But in America there arose a legion of 'practical' phrenologists, who functioned as psychiatrists and witch-doctors when they were not simple travelling showmen, combining phrenology with mesmerism and salesmanship. One practitioner exhibited a giant and a dwarf

as added attractions. Another was 'His Royal Highness Prince Luximon Ray, M.D.', who distributed the 'Grand Hindoo Poetical Chart'. On a slightly higher level, American phrenology was represented by the Fowler brothers, publishers of all manner of 'advanced' literature. An alliance with mesmerism begot 'phrenomagnetism', a method of healing in which the operator placed his hand on the particular phrenological organ he wished to influence and exerted his 'mesmeric' power. Certain vehement phrenologists claimed their speciality as the road to complete health.

Phrenology has left its mark in surprising places. Its supporters have included the poets Walt Whitman and Edgar Allan Poe and the biologist Alfred Russel Wallace; and when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species* he acknowledged a phrenological work published in 1845 called *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* as a source of inspiration. This apparently unlikely line of descent suggests that the underlying message of phrenology was contained in Gall's original insight, which was easily forgotten beneath the pile of later accretions but was the reason for the conflict between the phrenologists and their opponents. Gall believed that the mind of man himself could be studied through the newly-evolving techniques of rationalist science, and that objectivity must be attempted with regard to man's place in the cosmos as much as in the study of newts. In this way, Gall's stumblings in the dark have proved to be the forerunner of experimental psychology.

This 19th century cartoon reflects the widespread popularity of phrenology; Queen Victoria had the heads of the Royal children examined, and it was hoped that through phrenology a man's suitability for leadership and high position could be assessed

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Physiognomy has bequeathed a similar legacy. Unlike phrenology, physiognomy was never an organized movement, although the physiognomical works of Lavater enjoyed a wide public throughout the 19th century. But it was not until Mary Olmsted Stanton published her *System of Practical and Scientific Physiognomy* in 1890 that the aspiring physiognomist had anything resembling a system to follow. Mary Stanton's vast work – from which virtually all subsequent physiognomical systems are derived – betrays its debts to the phrenologists in its preoccupation with the structure of the head. Around 40 phrenological 'organs' are recognized, and a dozen more located. But Mary Stanton goes further than her predecessors; an 'organ' might be correctly identified, but this 'organ' is itself produced by the physical functioning of the body. Thus the kidney system evolves the 'organs' of conscientiousness, integrity and morality. The immense complications of such theorizing probably account for the relative lack of interest in 'Scientific Physiognomy', which constantly degenerates into the arbitrary application of adjectives to parts of the body.

The 20th century has seen a revival of serious scientific interest in the possible effects of physique on character. In 1921 the psychologist Ernst Kretschmer published a study of a group of mentally abnormal people in which he attempted to correlate their physical structure with the type of their mental disease. More recently William Sheldon has divided humanity into three broad categories of physical type – 'ectomorphs', 'mesomorphs' and 'endomorphs' – of which each group exhibits broadly similar traits of personality. It is interesting that this classification corresponds to that made made by some phrenologists into 'mental', 'motive' and 'vital' types. The verdict of present-day science on phrenology and physiognomy must remain a mixture of acclaim and criticism.

J. C. N. WEBB

PICATRIX

A FAMOUS 11th century Arabic magical compendium is commonly known by the corrupt title *Picatrix*. The Islamic magical tradition was largely based upon much earlier Hellenistic Greek sources. Thus when *Picatrix* and similar Arabic works reached the West, mainly by way of Latin translations made by Moorish scholars in Spain during the 10th and 11th centuries, elements of the ancient Hellenistic Greek civilization returned by an indirect route. *Picatrix* and other compilations of the same kind were avidly studied by the important hermetic scholars who flourished during the Renaissance era, including Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Trithemius and Cornelius Agrippa.

All this would be of merely antiquarian interest were it not for the fact that the innocent little books that are still being published about 'Your Lucky Birth Stone' owe something, although very remotely, to works such as *Picatrix*. Books of this kind and, in particular, popular astrological publications reflect the survival of beliefs current even before the Christian era.

Until the invention of printing in the 15th century works like *Picatrix* only survived in the form of a limited number of manuscript copies. The availability of printing led to the dissemination of countless works belonging to the near or distant past. However, the reputation of *Picatrix* was so black that it was never printed even in Latin, let alone in a vernacular tongue, in hermetism's heyday during the Renaissance. Indeed, the text of *Picatrix* has not been available in any modern language until its publication in Germany in 1962.

Picatrix certainly contains a vast lore relating to esoteric cosmology, astrology, the preparation of talismans and the necessary incantations to make them effective, also those prescribed for the worship of planetary spirits, but it is all expressed in a highly-obscure and jumbled manner. Hence the work is of greater interest to cultural historians than to modern occultists.

National Gallery/Michael Holford

Pieta
In Christian art, a representation of the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Christ after it had been taken down from the cross; portraying Mary's grief for her dead son and contrasting with the image of the Virgin and child.

Pietism
Generally, a religious attitude which stresses emotion and behaviour rather than intellect, a tendency to regard depth of feeling and personal devotion as more important than creeds and doctrines: specifically, a movement organized by Philipp Jakob Spener, a German Lutheran, from c1670, often derided for what was regarded as its excessive and affected piety.

PIG

SINCE IT PROVIDES the staple food of many peoples but is the tabooed flesh of others, the pig occupies the paradoxical position of being both loved and loathed at the same time, if not in the same place. It was first domesticated by the Chinese and later at an unknown date by the English and other European communities. The European variety is descended from the wild boar, modified by crossing with Asiatic breeds, and has inherited some of the occult qualities of its turbulent ancestor (see BOAR).

The domestic pig has never ranked very highly in popular esteem, for not only is it the Buddhist symbol of indolence and the European symbol of licence, but to the ordinary mind it represents gluttony and obstinacy. Yet the pig is undoubtedly a noble animal and was deservedly an object of worship in Crete, while in Greece it was sacrificed to the gods at the time of the planting of the corn.

In ancient Egypt the pig represented the spirit of Osiris at sowing time and the spirit of Seth at the harvest. It was regarded as unclean, and the swineherds who attended it were not allowed to enter a temple and not permitted to marry outside their own ranks. Pig meat was eaten by the Egyptians only at the Midwinter feast, and the pig could only be sacrificed at the full moon. As a possible relic of this tradition there are those who still believe that a pig must be slaughtered when the moon is waxing or otherwise it will shrink in the pot.

British Museum/Michael Holford

Egyptian green glazed model of a sow and her piglets: the pig is an uncanny animal and often the subject of taboos. In northern Europe pork was the food of kingly hospitality and the otherworld feast but Jews and Arabs consider it unclean meat, for reasons lost in the past

The eating of pig is taboo to both Jew and Arab and it was also long out of favour in Scotland and in parts of northern Ireland. One possible explanation for this custom is that the pig had originally been the symbol of a social group – its totem –and was regarded as the tribal ancestor: thus to eat a sacred pig could be fatal to the interests of the tribe. A further reason for the prohibition of certain kinds of food is the belief that one becomes what one eats. The fastidious individual who accepts the doctrine that one assimilates the habits of the pig by eating pork is naturally disinclined to adopt this type of diet.

In the past, both Hebrew and Arab have been prepared to accept martyrdom rather than eat pork and in 16th century Spain anyone with a distaste for this meat stood in permanent danger of arrest by the Spanish Inquisition as a secret adherent of Judaism. His Catholic Majesty Philip II of Spain gave signal proof of Christian orthodoxy during the period he lived in England by consuming vast quantities of

A Gift for the Beast

A group of boys stranded on an island sense an unknown menace and offer a pig's head to it

He paused and stood up, looking at the shadows under the trees. His voice was lower when he spoke again.

"But we'll leave part of the kill for . . ."

He knelt down again and was busy with his knife. The boys crowded round him. He spoke over his shoulder to Roger.

"Sharpen a stick at both ends."

Presently he stood up, holding the dripping sow's head in his hands.

"Where's that stick?"

"Here."

"Ram one end in the earth. Oh – it's rock. Jam it in that crack. There."

Jack held up the head and jammed the soft throat down on the pointed end of the stick which pierced through into the mouth. He stood back and the head hung there, a little blood dribbling down the stick.

Instinctively the boys drew back too; and the forest was very still. They listened, and the loudest noise was the buzzing of flies over the spilled guts.

Jack spoke in a whisper.

"Pick up the pig."

Maurice and Robert skewered the carcass, lifted the dead weight, and stood ready. In the silence, and standing over the dry blood, they looked suddenly furtive.

Jack spoke loudly.

"This head is for the beast. It's a gift."

The silence accepted the gift and awed them. The head remained there, dim-eyed, grinning faintly, blood blackening between the teeth. All at once they were running away, as fast as they could, through the forest towards the open beach.

William Golding *Lord of the Flies*

bacon, as a result of which he became ill.

To the Celts and Teutonic peoples pork was the food of kingly hospitality and otherworld feasts. Both the Anglo-Saxons and the conquering Norman aristocrats enjoyed pork; evidence of the popularity of the pig as food among all English classes in the past. But never has the pig had more eloquent a champion than the writer Charles Lamb who declared in his *Essays of Elia*: 'There is no flavour comparable I will contend to that of the crisp, tawny, well watched not overroasted crackling'. Pork was customarily served at Christmas time in England in the past. At Queen's College, Oxford, a boar's head with an orange in its mouth is traditionally brought to the table with great ceremony at the season of goodwill. A similar custom is observed in Scandinavia at Ynle, when a loaf made from the last sheaf of the harvest is baked in the shape of a boar.

Hunted and Tortured

Christian teaching has allocated a conflicting role for the pig, in that it represents the principles of both good and evil. St Anthony was the patron saint of swineherds: to him young pigs were sometimes dedicated, and even today the smallest pig of the litter is called a 'Tantony pig'. On the other hand the pig has become a token of evil largely due to the accounts in the New Testament of demons expelled by Christ from their human abode immediately entering the bodies of the Gadarene swine. The whole situation remains complex, because the pig could be either the personification of Satan or, alternatively, his victim. The Black Boar, one of the less familiar of the Devil's guises, occurs in the folklore of New England and Ireland.

Demon pigs were familiar to English peasant life; the two best-known examples being the Winwick and Burnley pigs of Lancashire, whose effigies may be seen carved on the walls of the respective parish churches. The pig was extremely vulnerable to the Evil Eye and it was as the victim of diabolical assault that it occupied a place in the annals of English witchcraft. Arising from some confusion of the old idea of torturing a witch by remote control through her victim, and the doctrine that by sacrificing a living animal it would be possible to save the others, a sick pig was actually burned alive in Huntingdon in 1833, and in Lincolnshire it was once the custom to score the back of a living pig with red-hot poker to preserve the remainder of the litter.

The pig fared equally badly at the hands of medieval lawyers. Inspired by the Law of Moses which decreed: 'When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten', a sow and her young pigs were condemned to death in 1457, the piglets receiving a last minute pardon 'due to their extreme youth'.

The pig also fell victim to the huntsman. Until disafforestation caused their extinction, wild boars were hunted for sport by the nobles. Among the English agricultural class pig-racing was long in vogue, and involved a wild chase through the countryside after a pig whose tail had been coated with soap.

Before the publication of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, it was only in the fairground that the intellectual superiority of the pig was recognized. A learned pig was exhibited at St Bartholomew's Fair in the early 18th century, advertised as 'The pig of knowledge, being the only one ever taught in England'.

In China and in Europe the pig is a good luck talisman, yet among many fishing communities the animal itself is regarded as extremely unlucky, and even the use of its name is taboo. There are occasional reports of fairy pigs emanating from the Isle of Man, and at Andover in Hampshire a spectral pig is said to be seen on New Year's Eve.

The long-standing association between the pig and the wind is confirmed by the countryman's superstition that a pig has the power either to see or smell the wind and is thus a useful weather prophet. In parts of the United States hogs are supposed to detect the approach of a tornado. It was long a custom in Ireland to drive a pig into the house on May morning for luck, yet oddly enough a pig that enters a house at any other time is an omen of poverty.

ERIC MAPLE

Picturepoint, London

Axel Poignant

Picturepoint, London

Though taboo in some parts of the world, pigs in New Guinea are used for food, sacrifice, decoration and protection *Below left* Tribesman with a pig token round his neck returns from the pig exchange *Below right* Chimbu man of some importance wears a necklet made of pigs' tails *Bottom* Man from the West Highlands wears a pig token head-dress

PILGRIMAGE

The Journey To Holiness

Bibliothèque Nationale

Detail from a 15th century French painting of the People's Crusade, a disastrous mass pilgrimage of 1076, led by Peter the Hermit, to help free the Holy Land from the Moslems

IN THE MOST FAMOUS lines of the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer refers to the restless religious longing which overcomes the devout man in spring:

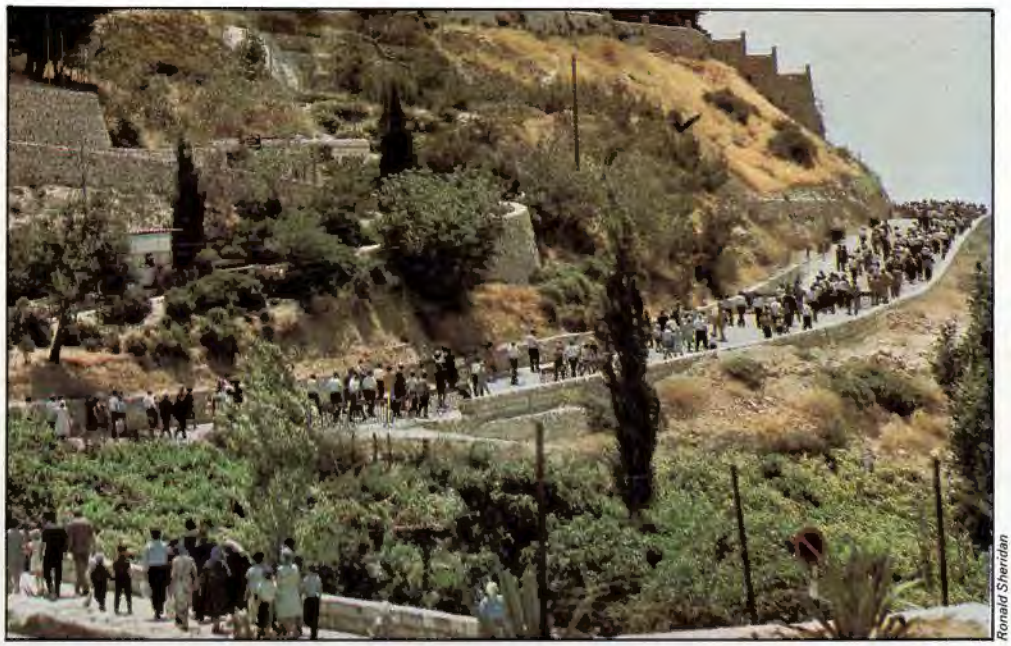
> When the sweet showers of April fall
> and shoot
> Down through the drought of March to
> pierce the root . . .
> Then people long to go on pilgrimages
> And palmers long to seek the stranger
> strands
> Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry
> lands . .

These words express succinctly a feature of the religious life of man in practically all ages and all parts of the world – the desire to go on a pilgrimage.

The word pilgrim itself is derived from the Latin *peregrinus*, and means simply a wanderer or stranger. Although 'pilgrimage' *(peregrinatio)*, means literally no more than 'wandering about', the word has come to mean wandering with a purpose, and a pilgrim is one who temporarily abandons his or her normal pursuits in order to seek the spiritual and moral benefits believed to he obtainable in some particularly holy place. A palmer, on the other hand, was one whose whole life was spent in wandering from place to place.

Wherever there have been holy persons or holy places, there have been pilgrims to visit them. Perhaps the first problem to consider is why some places and some people are regarded as more 'holy' than others. It seems that in the religious history of mankind, the world of men and the world of the supernaturals – gods, spirits, demons, ghosts – have been believed to exist for the most part in parallel. However, there are certain points at which the parallel worlds meet, points at which supernatural power comes, as it were, to a focus. Sometimes the original reason for such belief in the concentration of power is unclear. But certain places – for instance, mountains, caves, rivers and springs – were very early thought of as dwelling-places of the supernaturals,

There are certain places which are felt to be points of contact between the natural and supernatural worlds, places where supernatural power comes to a focus and can be most effectively felt by worshippers. One of them is Jerusalem, a holy city in three different religions *Right* Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem: 'the Bordeaux pilgrim' is known to have made the journey from France as early as the 4th century *Centre right* The Wailing Wall, which contains stones from the Temple *Bottom right* David's tomb



Ronald Sheridan

Picturepoint, London

Picturepoint, London

where power was intensified; and when early man worshipped, he did so in such places. Later, when temples were constructed, they too were thought of as the homes of the gods to which they were dedicated, consecrated by the presence of the deity within them. Holiness – supernatural power – is contagious, and anyone wholly dedicated to the service of a deity partakes of this same quality.

There were also sites at which a deity was believed to have revealed himself or herself. sites connected in some way with holy history, shrines of the great departed and places at which oracles were delivered and interpreted. Any of these might serve to mediate the power of the supernaturals to ordinary people: hence they were sought out, and became places of pilgrimage.

The reasons which prompted people to become pilgrims doubtless varied greatly. On the one hand, there was the subjective desire to acquire power, merit and those other benefits (the expiation of past sins, for instance, and the healing of present diseases) which might be held to derive from exposure to the focus of holiness. On the other hand, there was the desire to worship and do reverence to the supernaturals themselves. Yet there were other motives than such purely personal ones. In some religious traditions, pilgrimage might simply be part of one's accepted religious duty; and although merit might well accrue the motive was social, rather than personal. Chaucer's pilgrims, for instance, had a collective, as well as an individual motive for making the journey in spring to the shrine of St Thomas.

In the ancient world, pilgrimages were very often connected with seasonal festivals, and especially with the New Year Festival, or its equivalent, at which atonement was made for the sins of the past year and the world was symbolically renewed for another cycle (see ETERNAL RETURN; NEW YEAR). It is not known exactly who attended such festivals in the ancient Near East – in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel – but the later practices of Judaism and Islam make it clear that the custom of visiting holy places, and particularly the great temples, at certain seasons of the year has deep roots. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover ceremonies, for example, lasted until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

With the catacombs and the tombs of St Peter and St Paul, Rome became and remains a great centre of Christian pilgrimage *Left* Crowds flock to St Peter's Square to receive the Pope's blessing *Below left* In this 19th century illustration, the faithful prostrate themselves before a statue of St Peter

Possibly the longest unbroken tradition of pilgrimage to one particular place is seen in the Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca. In pre-Islamic times the tradition of visiting the Kaaba was already well established, but under Mohammed pilgrimage *(hajj)* was elevated into one of the five pillars of the faith, and it has always been the religious duty of every Moslem who is able to do so, to go on pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime (see ISLAM; MECCA).

Elsewhere in the ancient world, old places of pilgrimage now exist only as archeological sites – for instance, the hall in which the Mysteries of Eleusis were once celebrated, near Athens, and the sites of the oracles at Delphi and Dodona (see ELEUSIS; ORACLES). The function of some places of pilgrimage have been radically altered. The great pre-Christian temple at Old Uppsala in Sweden, for example, was once visited by great crowds of pilgrims at the seasonal festivals. In the 12th century the coming of Christianity led to the destruction of the temple with its images of Thor, Odin and Freyr, and the building of a church on its site; but the attraction had gone and, soon after, the capital of the Svea kingdom was moved elsewhere – an eloquent testimony to the secular significance of pilgrimage centres.

The Indian sub-continent has a vast number of sacred sites, which Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and others visit as often as circumstances permit. However, for the Hindu there is no qualitative difference between worship at the local shrine and the visit to a particularly important holy place. Worship, to the Hindu, is invariably a matter of individual concern, connected both with the reverence due to the gods or (more usually) the Supreme Being, and with the acquisition of individual merit. Pilgrimage raises both these concerns to a higher level, but does not really change them. To the Buddhist, although the motive of worship may in theory be unimportant (Buddhism denies the existence of a Supreme Being and classifies the gods as merely higher forms of universal life), the motive of the acquisition of merit is very much present. For Hindu and Buddhist alike, the gaining of merit leads to an improved status in the individual's next life, and thus ultimately to release from the wheel of rebirth.

Among the holiest of goals for Hindu pilgrimages are the seven great rivers, especially the Ganges (see GANGES); and of the cities on the rivers, probably the best-known is Benares (Varanasi), with its hundreds of temples, large and small, its ghats (places where the dead are burned), and its crowds of pilgrims at all times of the year. Every inch of the Ganges is sacred, but none more so than the holy places, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, at the sources of the river's three main branches, the Bhagirathi, the Mandakini and the Alaknanda. The great Ganges pilgrimage begins at Hardwar, 'Hari's gate', and passes through Rishikesh, the town of ascetics, to the three sanctuaries. The entire pilgrimage, performed in May, June and July, covers over 600 miles, and although transport is available for much of the way, there remains a good deal which has to be undertaken on foot, often in very difficult conditions. Recently a Western youth who attempted the journey barefoot had to have both feet amputated as a result of frostbite. Of course, where there are difficulties to be surmounted, this only adds to the merit acquired, as well as serving as a necessary mortification and disciplining of the body. The best-known (though now seldom practised) pilgrim austerity is that which requires the seeker after perfection to measure his length along the entire road.

Other celebrated pilgrim cities of India include Mathura and Vrindaban, connected in legend with the boyhood and youth of the god Krishna, and Dwaraka, where Krishna left the world. Often there is a pilgrim route round the city, the following of which in its entirety *(parikrama)* brings especial merit. At individual shrines, it is common to circle them, keeping the shrine on one's right *(pradaksina)* – a custom which can be paralleled in the Christian West. Pilgrimages usually take place at festival times, though they may be undertaken whenever the time is auspicious. Certain festivals at certain places, such as

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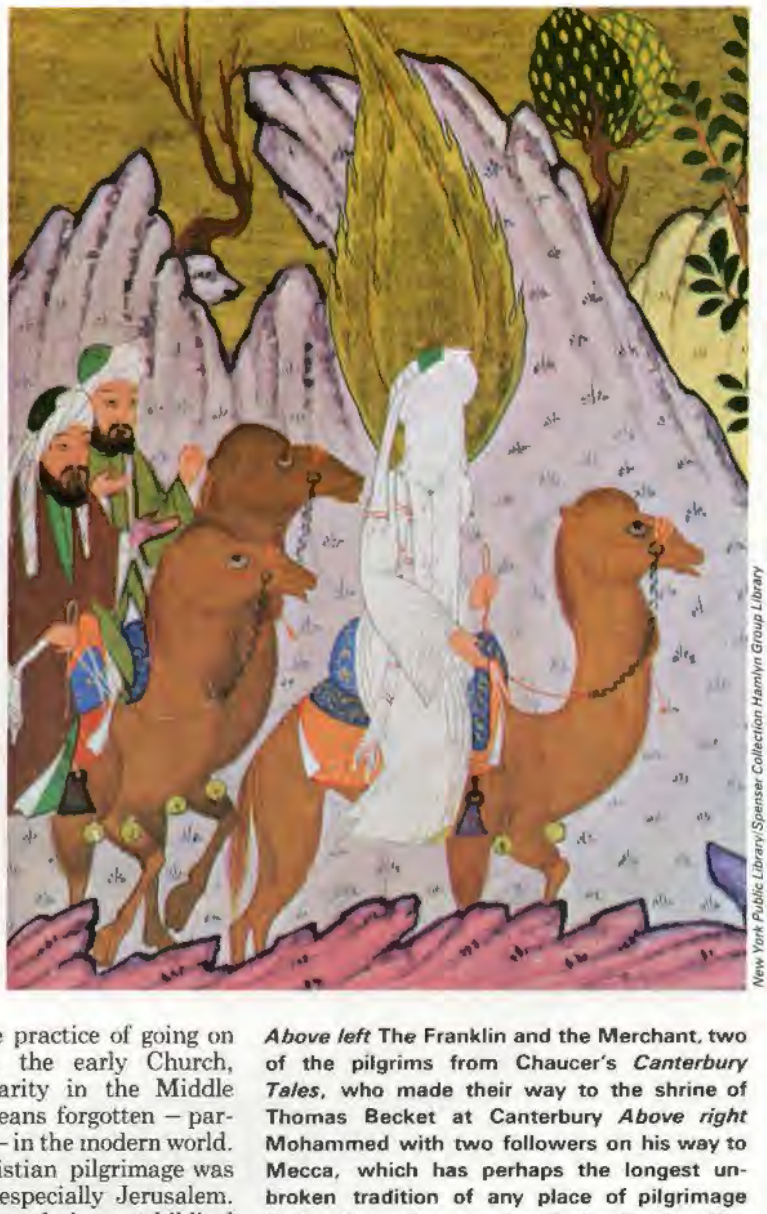

New York Public Library/Spencer Collection Hamlyn Group Library

Above left **The Franklin and the Merchant, two of the pilgrims from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, who made their way to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury *Above right* Mohammed with two followers on his way to Mecca, which has perhaps the longest unbroken tradition of any place of pilgrimage *Below* An early souvenir: pilgrims' badges like this one of the archangel Michael could be bought at holy shrines *Right* Papal cortège in Rome, the centre of Christian pilgrimage**

Hardwar, Allahabad, Ujjain, Nasik, draw vast crowds, and it has been claimed that the *Kumbh Mela*, held near Allahabad every 12 years, attracts larger crowds than are to be found at any other religious festival anywhere in the world. Another festival is the *Jaggantha* car festival at Puri, where the image of the god, mounted on an enormous car (whence our word 'juggernaut') is dragged through the streets by worshippers.

Compassion for the World

The Buddha himself neither recommended nor forbade the practice of pilgrimage, but shortly after his death, his relics were distributed and placed in monuments (*stupas*), which very soon became centres of pilgrimage. Indeed, the technical term for the first stage in Buddhist ordination (into the order of monks, or *bhikkhus*) is *pabbaja*, meaning 'going forth from the world' or, in a sense, becoming a pilgrim.

Today, the main centre of Buddhist pilgrimage in India is Buddh Gaya, the place at which the Buddha gained enlightenment. Outside India there are many Buddhist shrines, the best-known among them being the Temple of the Tooth – a relic of the Buddha preserved in an inner chamber on a golden lotus flower within nine caskets of gold – in Kandy, Ceylon. Also in Ceylon is perhaps the most universal of pilgrimage centres, Adam's Peak, with its sacred footprint, believed by Buddhists to be that of the Buddha, by Hindus to be that of Shiva, by Christians to be that of St Thomas, and by Moslems to be that of Adam.

In Christianity, the practice of going on pilgrimage began in the early Church, achieved great popularity in the Middle Ages, and is by no means forgotten – particularly by Catholics – in the modern world. The first goal of Christian pilgrimage was the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem. Among the earliest records in post-biblical times is that of 'the Bordeaux pilgrim', who went to Jerusalem in 333 AD. Despite political difficulties in gaining access to the holy places (a factor which was one of the causes of the Crusades), the practice has continued to this day, though the modern pilgrim visits all the actual or supposed sites of sacred history, and not just the Holy City.

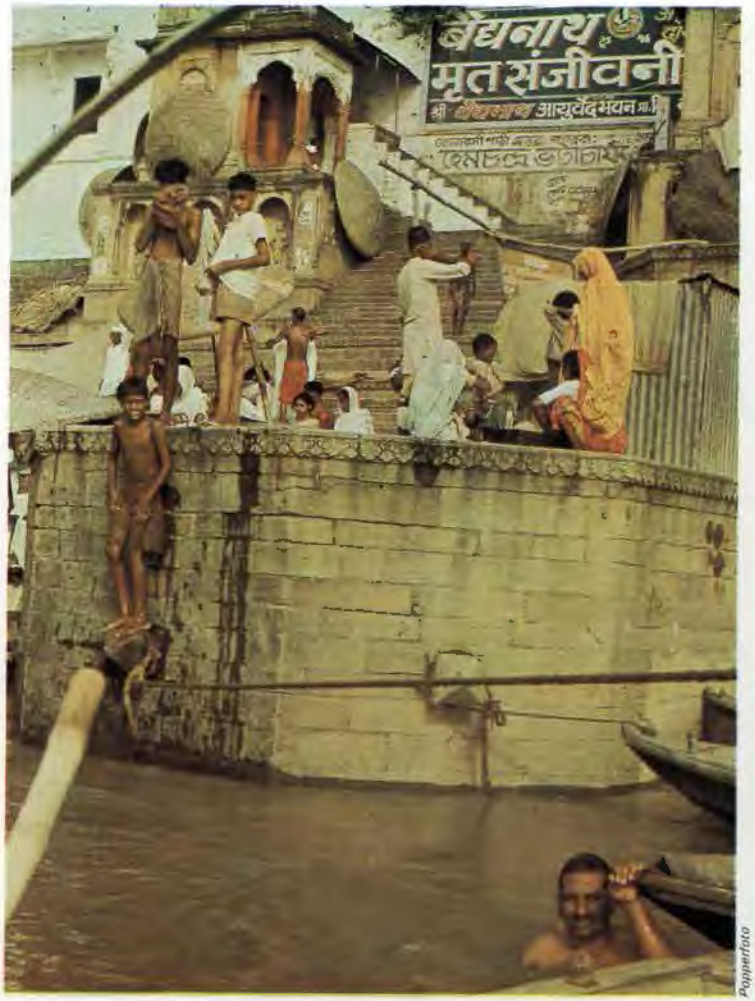
As the focus of Christendom shifted from Jerusalem to Rome, the presence in Rome of the tombs of Peter and Paul, and the

Michael Holford/Salisbury and Wiltshire Museum

catacombs, caused a corresponding shift in pilgrimage to these more specifically Christian sites. At the same time, the development of the doctrine of purgatory, and the belief that the individual's time in purgatory (or that of his relatives) could be lessened by acquiring merit, caused the growing practice of the granting of indulgences as a reward for faithful pilgrimage. Thus when the Papal Jubilee was celebrated in 1300, the indulgences offered on that occasion are said to have drawn more than 20,000 pilgrims to Rome. The early Christian Middle Ages also saw a vast – and frequently dishonourable – trade in sacred relics, theoretically repositories of divine power, but often in practice nothing more than, as the cynical Chaucer expressed it, 'bones and ragged bits of clout, relics they are, at least for such are known . . .'

Pilgrimage and the viewing, touching or kissing of such relics were closely connected, and the superior centres of pilgrimage gradually acquired vast stores of relics. In 1446 a German pilgrim to the shrine of Thomas

G. Tomsich/Spectrum



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The East abounds with sacred places: for both the Hindu and Buddhist the merit gained in the act of pilgrimage leads to an improved status in the next life and 'thus ultimately to release from the wheel of rebirth' *Above left* Pilgrims at Benares beside the Ganges – the holiest of Indian rivers *Above right* The Temple of the Tooth in Ceylon where a relic of the Buddha is reverently preserved on a golden lotus flower within nine cases of gold

Becket at Canterbury recorded that '. . . we were shown the sword with which his (Becket's) head had been struck off. Then they also showed a remarkable piece of the holy cross, and one of the nails, and the right arm of the honourable knight Saint George and a single thorn from the crown of thorns, mounted in a monstrance.' Elsewhere in England, for instance at the celebrated shrine of Glastonbury, which was almost certainly a Celtic cult centre before being Christianized, stores of relics were kept and miracles of healing were recorded as late as the 18th century, long after the Reformation. (See also RELICS.)

Healing and Disillusion

Pilgrimage for the purpose of healing was common in the Middle Ages. The Venerable Bede told of the place where Oswald, King of Northumbria, fell in battle against the Mercians: 'Many people took away earth from the place where his body fell, and put it in water, from which sick folk who drank it received great benefit. This practice became so popular that as the earth was gradually removed, a pit was left in which a man could stand . . .'

It has become a commonplace of Church history that the excesses of popular devotion to sacred places and the relics of holy persons were among the causes leading to the Reformation. In the 16th century a chorus of protest was raised by the reformers, with Martin Luther at their head. In 1510 Luther went to Rome, on Church business but entirely in the spirit of pilgrimage, intent on making the very best of whatever spiritual benefit the city could offer him. His sense of disillusion grew, largely as a result of the sheer levity of many of the sacred proceedings. He did not then doubt that merit was to be gained; what he did doubt was that it could be transferred to the dead. There is a story that he ascended Pilate's staircase on hands and knees in the approved manner, hoping thereby to extract his grandfather from purgatory. At the top he stood up, and said to himself, 'Who knows whether it is so?' On such doubt was the Reformation based.

But the doubt of the reformers led directly to the distress of the faithful. In England, the shrine of Walsingham, reputed to contain a few drops of Mary's milk, was suppressed at the Reformation. Although Protestantism has always looked with disfavour on the custom of pilgrimage and the religious views on which the practice was based, the Roman Catholic world has continued to believe in the efficacy of holy places. Many of the old shrines have disappeared beyond recall; but others have been reopened – Walsingham, for example – and new shrines have arisen. The most celebrated of these is certainly that at Lourdes, in the French Pyrenees, where in 1858 a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, saw visions of the Blessed Virgin (see LOURDES). All the classical features of the pilgrimage centre are there: manifestations of holy power, a sacred spring, and healing miracles. There are also similar centres of pilgrimage on the American continent, for instance at St Anne de Beaupré, near Quebec.

It seems that it is only the sceptical Western mind that is unable to accept the premises on which the case for pilgrimages rests. The intuitive religious mind believes implicity in the supernatural world, and in its manifestations in the world of time and space. Wherever those manifestations take place, man may profitably come to worship and pray and receive strength.

> There's no discouragement
> Shall make him once relent
> His first avowed intent
> To be a pilgrim.

To such a man or woman, the words of the great allegorizer of pilgrimage, John Bunyan, express part of the assured order of things.

ERIC J. SHARPE

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MRS PIPER

ONE OF THE MOST remarkable mental mediums of all time, Mrs Leonora E. Piper (1857–1950) of Boston, Massachusetts, discovered her mediumistic gifts almost by accident. In 1884, being in ill-health, she consulted a blind healing medium named J. R. Cocke. At her second visit she passed into a trance, and wrote down a message for one of the sitters which greatly impressed him. She then held sittings privately in her own home, and was favoured by 'communications' from various of the 'mighty dead'. However, the messages which less illustrious 'communicators' gave to their friends and relatives on earth were sometimes so remarkable that Mrs Piper began to enjoy local fame.

In 1885 communications from the 'mighty dead' were replaced by those of a French doctor, 'Phinuit', who vouchsafed a great many details about his career on earth; some were contradictory, and none were verifiable. At a sitting Mrs Piper would pass into a deep trance; after a few minutes she would begin to speak with the gruff, male voice of Phinuit. Phinuit would give sitters accounts of the doings of deceased (and sometimes of living) friends and relatives, and would transmit messages from them, often with appropriate gestures.

Mrs Piper's reputation reached William James, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University. James went to sit with her, and received a good deal of information about, and allegedly from, members of his own family. He was sufficiently impressed to send some 25 other people to her under pseudonyms.

Richard Hodgson, a leading member of the British Society for Psychical Research, assumed charge of the investigation in 1887. Hodgson arranged for the careful recording of all sittings, and took the most extreme precautions against trickery. Sitters were introduced anonymously. Mrs Piper was shadowed by detectives for some weeks, but no evidence was found that she made inquiries into the affairs of possible sitters. Finally Hodgson and William James arranged that Mrs Piper should spend the winter of 1889–90 in England, where she knew no one, and could have no established agents. During her stay all her sittings were arranged and supervised by leading members of the Society for Psychical Research – Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor and Mrs H. Sidgwick, F. W. H. Myers and Dr Walter Leaf.

Despite all the precautions taken in England and America, Mrs Piper continued to get results. It was true that her chief 'control', Dr Phinuit, was altogether a shady character. At times his behaviour towards the sitters was extremely suspicious. He would 'fish' for information in the most blatant manner, and if given any would reproduce it himself without acknowledgments. If he made a mistake he would cover up in a childish and absurd manner. But when Phinuit was on form, he would, with hardly any hesitation, relay copious and largely correct 'communications' from the deceased friends and relatives of sitters, messages which would turn out to be very accurate even in tiny details.

In and after 1892 Phinuit was gradually superseded by a communicator called 'George Pellew'. Pellew, who had been killed a few weeks previously, had been a young man of philosophical interests, who came from an aristocratic Anglo-American family. He was known to Hodgson, and five years before had sat once with Mrs Piper. He had been introduced under a pseudonym. The 'G.P.' communicator showed a most intimate knowledge of the concerns of the living Pellew. Out of 150 sitters who were introduced to him, G.P. recognized the 30 who had been known to Pellew, and only those. He conversed with each of them in an appropriate manner, and showed an intimate knowledge of their affairs; only rarely did he slip up badly.

Masked Investigator

G.P., like Phinuit, would purportedly relay messages from deceased persons; but it now seemed to become easier for the deceased persons to 'communicate' directly by speaking or writing through Mrs Piper's organism. Writing in trance now became much commoner than it had been before; and sometimes communication by voice and by hand would go on simultaneously.

G.P. remained the principal communicator until early in 1897. During this period Hodgson had almost complete control over Mrs Piper's sittings, and very full records were kept. She was paid on the average about £200 a year. This sum secured her services for the S.P.R. without laying her open to the charge of being rich enough to employ agents.

During the period 1897–1905 a group of communicators became predominant who used such pseudonyms as 'Imperator', 'Rector' and 'Doctor'. They claimed, but were unable to prove, identity with the group of 'mighty dead' who had purported to communicate under the same pseudonyms through another medium, the late W. S. Moses. Sittings had to be limited in number owing to the state of Mrs Piper's health. Many sittings were conducted for purely didactic purposes; opinions as to the worth of the teachings varied considerably. Hodgson himself died unexpectedly in 1905, and the notes which he left behind were in undecipherable shorthand. The most extended records of this period are those of Professor J. H. Hyslop of Columbia University. At his early sittings Hyslop went to the length of wearing a mask to preserve his anonymity. None the less he received ostensible communications from his father and other deceased relatives which completely convinced him that Mrs Piper possessed paranormal powers.

Not long after Hodgson's death a communicator calling himself 'Richard Hodgson'

Although the honesty of Mrs Piper's mediumship was never doubted, many felt that the alleged 'communicators' were aspects of her own personality, 'fed' with information gained telepathically from the living

Psychic News

began to manifest at Mrs Piper's sittings. The status of the Hodgson communicator was later analysed without definite conclusions in a long paper by William James. During 1906–7 Mrs Piper visited England again, and she played some part in the experiments which became known as the 'cross correspondences' (see CROSS CORRESPONDENCES). On her return to America she was studied on behalf of the American S.P.R. by George B. Dorr, and then in 1909 by the noted psychologist G. Stanley Hall. The latter's methods seem to have hastened the end of her trance mediumship, which took place in 1911 during another visit to England. She continued, however, to produce automatic writing (see AUTOMATIC ART), and was studied again in 1924–5 by a young Harvard psychologist, Dr Gardner Murphy.

It was agreed by almost everyone who had any extensive first-hand dealings with Mrs Piper and her phenomena that she was completely honest, and that the alleged deceased persons who 'communicated' through her would not infrequently retail correct information about themselves, going far beyond anything which she herself could ever have come across. But as to how the facts should be interpreted there was widespread disagreement. Richard Hodgson and F. W. H. Myers became in the end convinced that the 'communicators' really were the spirits of deceased persons. But others felt it more likely that the alleged 'communicators' were simply aspects of Mrs Piper's own personality, 'fed' with information gained telepathically from living people. Her personality showed through the 'communicators' in many ways – for instance in their ignorance of science and literature, their interest in clothes and hats, and the kinds of common associations which they all seemed to possess. Yet the information given by communicators was not infrequently quite unknown to any of the sitters, so that the hypothesis of telepathy with the living has its difficulties.

ALAN GAULD

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PISCES

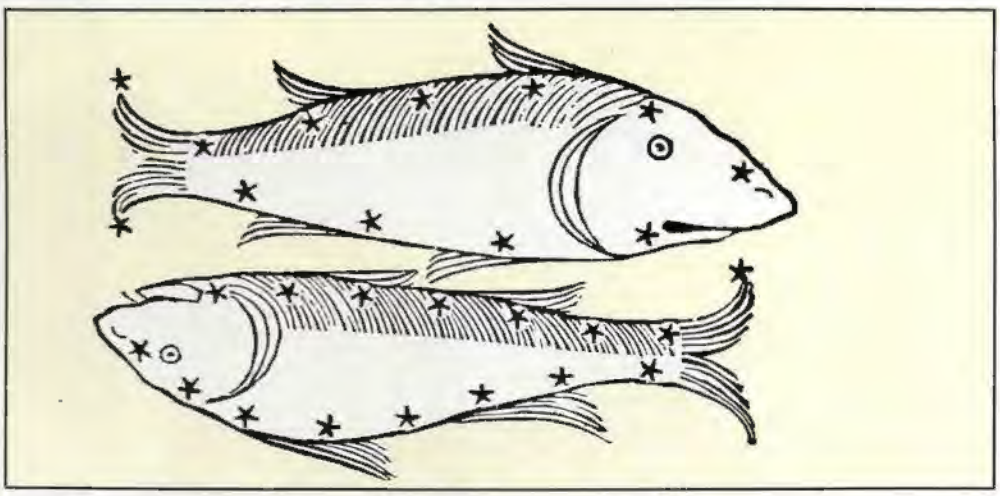
THOSE BORN between 19 February and 20 March fall under the sign of Pisces, the Two Fishes, the last sign of the zodiac. This sign may be of Egyptian origin, for there were two fishes among the Egyptian constellations, in the proximity of the Square of Pegasus, whereas the Babylonians described this part of the sky as either the Giant, the Tails, the Great Swallow, or by the name of a goddess. The ruling planet of the fishes was once said to be Jupiter, but from the 1840s onwards astrologers have become inclined to prefer Neptune as ruler of this sign. Pisceans, like Neptunians, do not mind being overcome by emotion, in fact, they enjoy it. They excel in any profession in which they have to act up to a situation.

Because of their genial, pleasure-loving temperament Pisceans will always make the best of any situation; and they more often find themselves in situations rather than deliberately contrive how things are to turn out. They often succeed as journalists, actors, or in any profession where it is an advantage not to keep too close to reality. They are kind, good-natured, generous, but often rather weak-willed.

Pisceans are attracted by strange and exotic places, and a few may even take the trouble to go there; a feeling for remoteness is thus the common element of the mystics, the travellers and the astronomers with whom this sign abounds. Typically they are not interested in having problems too clear-cut; they prefer to leave things vague and allow them to solve themselves. They are often and easily taken in by advertising rackets and other bogus 'opportunities'.

Versatility is another quality of Pisces; for though it is an advantage to have a family tradition, for example in music or architecture or acting, a Piscean often ignores pressures that urge him towards a particular career. Although he is most typically, 'the average sensual man', he is also more than that. Having decided that he will never 'set the Thames on fire', one may be astounded to find him suddenly doing something quite remarkable.

It is tempting to write off the Piscean as nothing more than a pleasant companion, only to discover later to one's surprise that he is quite capable of hard work and devoted service. He is normally too fond of gossip to be properly discreet in conversation, and with increasing age becomes too casual to dress with normal care. He gets on well with all kinds of people, however, and is therefore popular. He is supposed to err in the direction of Mr Micawber's weakness, always hoping that something will 'turn up', but perhaps the Piscean is not quite so casual as he is represented.



Pisceans, whose sign is the Two Fishes, are generally kindly people with a feeling for the mystical and the exotic

Planchette

Apparatns for receiving communications purportedly from the dead; variant of a ouija board, with a pencil attached to a board which moves on castors over a blank sheet of paper and writes 'messages', ranging from aimless marks to words, sentences or even long stories, without being consciously manipulated by the operator.

See OUIJA BOARDS.

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Planets

Heavenly bodies believed in astrology to influence events on earth and particularly the personalities and fortunes of human beings; a horoscope charts their positions in the sky at the moment of a person's birth, or at any other significant moment; named for Roman deities from whom their characteristic influences have been drawn; magicians frequently attempt to use planetary influences.

See ALCHEMY; ASTROLOGY; CORRESPONDENCES; DAYS; FORCES; JUPITER; MAGIC; MARS; MERCURY; RENAISSANCE; SATURN; VENUS.

If you step inside a fairy ring in Sweden, you risk becoming a prisoner of the little people, but in Germany these bare circles in the grass are said to be caused by a dragon resting there; centuries before botany became a scientific study, man endowed the plants around him with magical properties

PLANTS AND FLOWERS

OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS plucked and ate all kinds of plants, and came to realize how some had thorns or stings, while others appeared to soothe; some were good to eat, others unpleasant or deadly, and a few had curious effects if swallowed. And as man began to develop ideas about gods and spirits, about good luck and bad luck, he connected many of these ideas with plants – for if a plant could kill, intoxicate or soothe, it must have an inner power.

Doubtless the Neolithic people who lived in the early township at Catal Hüyük in Anatolia knew much about plants; certainly the Egyptians worshipped and enjoyed the Nile water lily or lotus before 3000 BC and the Sumerians knew a great deal about herbs by 2200 BC. In these early civilizations plants not only provided food but were almost the only known medicines and provided almost all cosmetics and dyes. Trees, outspanning human lives, were very early objects of veneration; indeed, like the oak, they might be the seat of deity itself, while evergreens such as fir were obvious symbols of immortality.

Curiously, many useful or beautiful plants have little or no links with myth and magic; while some insignificant plants such as vervain, for instance, are important. Few food plants are magical, although corn is the chief plant representing the annual return of summer, the defeat of winter, and the

Flowers are valued for their beauty and perfume, for real or supposed medical and magical properties, and as symbols which can be used to convey messages: this Chinese embroidery pattern, showing a heavenly spirit with flowers, has the meaning, 'May the owner receive the many good gifts of life'

Pearl Binder

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew/Michael Holford

successful production of food. It was used in the rites of Osiris and Adonis whose death was symbolized by the blood-red anemone.

Many herbs with real or supposed healing qualities inevitably have magical attributes and rituals attached to them to canalize their power. Apart from the genuine herbalists, those wishing for power encouraged the belief that they possessed it supernaturally, by working up rituals and giving an elaborate range of attributes to their materials of whatever origin.

Plant Protectors

Some plants were specially suitable for magic. The notorious mandrake, for example, the shape of whose root often resembled a human figure, was perfect for associative magic; it also possessed genuine anodyne qualities and, taken in excess, the ability to make people mad. Laurel was early discovered to produce frenzy if chewed, or its smoke inhaled, and hence became the chosen plant of many Greek oracles.

Actual utility or medicinal value, however, was not an essential attribute. The name *Potentilla* means 'little powerful one', yet *P. reptans*, the magically potent British creeping cinquefoil, is an insignificant and useless plant. But the five-fingered leaves of cinquefoils, noted since Egyptian times, made them powerful against evil spirits. Protection against sorcery and any manifestation of evil is one of the most important magical properties of plants. This is usually in general terms, as with garlic, which positively

Above **Some plants and flowers have been thought peculiarly sacred. Ivy (*left*) belonged to Dionysus and Bacchus, and is the plant of poetry, inspiration and ecstasy; as an evergreen, it is a symbol of life's continuance through the winter and, with holly, is connected with Christmas. The lotus (*centre*) is one of the great sacred plants of the East, associated with woman and fertility, and with immortality. Laurel (*right*) was the plant of Apollo, and poets, athletes and heroes were crowned with laurel wreaths *Below* Poisonous or narcotic plants are naturally connected with magic and witchcraft. Fumes from burning henbane (*left*) are recommended as an aid to summoning up demons. Hemlock (*centre*) is another poisonous plant and deadly nightshade (*right*) was taken by those who wished to foretell the future**

Ron Foord/NHPA

exudes magical propensities. Despite its reputed origin in the first left footprint made by Satan when he was thrown out of Paradise, garlic has many actual and supposed virtues as food and medicine. It is an example of a cure-all, or *theriac* as Galen called it. Protection is sometimes specific, like that offered to farm animals and their products by the lesser celandine – a piece of associative magic due to the teat-like shape of the tubers and the butter-colour of the flower.

One of the important protectors was hazel, used for wands and sceptres – symbols of magical and temporal power. In Scandinavia hazel was sacred to Thor, one of the plants sprung from lightning, and thus protective against it. Many plants were believed to keep off lightning: the humble houseleek, sacred to Jove, was at one time planted on cottage roofs throughout Europe. It also kept away fire and was reputedly a very positive protection against witches.

It was not always plants with medicinal qualities which served against witches. Herb Paris, *Paris quadrifolia*, is poisonous, bitter and emetic. Yet, doubtless because of its unusual regular cross-pattern – four leaves, a flower of four inner and four outer divisions, and in due course a shining black berry in the centre – it was specially effective against sorcery. It was the berries that were used for this purpose; no doubt to counter imperfections more readily, they were used in odd numbers from three to nine.

The slightly poisonous bitter-sweet or woody nightshade, *Solanum dulcamara*, was used in a similar way. Human beings and animals suspected of being 'overlooked' by the Evil Eye, or otherwise under a witch's influence, would have a garland of bittersweet hung round their necks. The herbalist Culpeper wrote how it was 'excellent good to remove Witchcrafts both in men and beasts: as also all sudden diseases whatsoever . . .'

Certain plants produce bad luck in some circumstances. The blackthorn and hawthorn are still widely considered unlucky if brought into the house – although in the proper place hawthorn is a lightning protector, a holy and healing tree. This further exemplifies the constant ambivalence of good and evil, because a solitary tree on a hillside would certainly be a 'fairy bush', and to do anything drastic to it, or even to sleep under it, would be fatal. Yarrow is another splendidly ambivalent plant, originally regarded as dedicated to the Devil, but with due care admirable for divination and keeping away evil, as well as having genuine herbal qualities. The elder tree was associated with bad luck, witches, and spirits who actually inhabited the tree; yet if properly handled, the elder was protective and indeed enabled one under certain circumstances to find out what witches were doing.

Flowers of Evil

Not surprisingly some of the really potent witch plants were poisonous or narcotic. Such was deadly nightshade, *Atropa belladonna*, one of the most poisonous of European wild plants. It was taken by those who

'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12. 24). Corn is the chief plant representing the defeat of winter and the return of summer, and hence the triumph of life over death: Christ in the cornfield, a painting on a plate by Jesse Austin, c 1840

Sonia Halliday

G. L. Carlisle

Victorian Valentine card, illustrating the 'language of flowers', each flower having its own hidden meaning: a posy had to speak volumes when a chaperone's presence prevented the open expression of romantic sentiments

wished to see spirits and foretell the future, made into potions to drive people mad or even to kill them, and was also believed to be one of the ingredients with which witches rubbed themselves when they wanted to fly (see FLYING OINTMENT). The name *Atropa* comes from Atropos, one of the Fates of classical mythology, who cut the thread of life. The name *belladonna*, meaning beautiful lady, was given to it because it dilated the pupil of the eye and so enhanced one's looks.

Henbane, *Hyoscyamus niger*, is a close relation of nightshade, almost equally poisonous but fortunately lacking the attractive berries. It not only looks very sinister but has a nauseating smell when crushed. It can cause convulsions and temporary madness, and so, like nightshade, was much used by witches. It has been a powerful plant for thousands of years: an Assyrian tablet records its value, if placed at the door, to keep sorcery from the house. Henbane had various magic uses. It was effective in love potions and could be used to assist the clairvoyant. The smoke that was given off when the plant was burnt enabled a witch to conjure up spirits. It was much used by physicians and herbalists from early times as a painkiller, especially for toothache, sometimes with serious consequences. The trance-inducing quality no doubt gave rise to the belief that if a child falls asleep near a plant of henbane he will not wake up. These poisonous, witch-favoured plants have now redeemed themselves, for some of them provide drugs which in the hands of modern doctors are of considerable value.

The old-fashioned broom used by witches for flying was a besom made from stalks of broom or birch, or heather twigs, tied to a stick. Another plant which was believed to be used by fairies and witches to ride on was ragwort or ragweed.

Some plants are associated with fairies and elves rather than witches, one being foxglove, or fairy weed. 'Fairy rings', too, were naturally the subject of widespread superstition. In England these bare rings of soil were considered the result of fairies dancing round. Such rings brought good luck to buildings in the same field, but it was usually unwise to step inside them: in Sweden anyone doing this fell in thrall to the fairies. It was most unlucky to tamper with a fairy ring. In Germany the bare earth was supposed to be the result of a red-hot dragon resting there, coiled in a curve; in Holland it was the Devil's churn that caused the ring. In France the peasants thought that enormous toads lived within these rings and there was a very widespread belief that treasures were buried inside the circles, to secure which the help of fairies or witches had to be enlisted.

Christianity naturally adopted certain plants, of which the minute weed pearlwort, *Sagina procumbens*, is an example. Especially in the Highlands, under the name *mothan* or *molus*, it was a very holy plant, and the first that Jesus Christ stepped on when he rose from the dead. Placed over the door, it stopped the fairies from entering; in the byre, it protected cows against fairies, while if a cow ate pearlwort the protection extended to the milk and any who drank it. It was placed below the right knee of a woman about to give birth, to keep the fairies from her and the child at a most vulnerable moment. Country girls would wet their lips with the juice to attract men, and place a piece in their mouths when they kissed, to ensure that their lover was always faithful.

On the whole, however, plants associated with magic or witchcraft were simply Christianized so as to channel beliefs around them in the right direction. A good example is the ragwort mentioned above, which became called *Herba Sancti Jacobi*, the herb of St James. It was no doubt linked with the saint because it is in full bloom on 25 July, St James's Day.

When St Patrick explained the Trinity to the Irish – three parts, one whole – he used the clover as example, and in doing so made use of a plant which had long been valued for protection against fairies and witchcraft. The rare four-leaved specimen is still regarded as very lucky but in older times it not only saved you from sorcery but enabled you actually to see fairies and pick out witches.

Some plants are now firmly associated with Christianity, whatever their antecedents; the Christmas holly and ivy are the chief examples. The lily is symbolic rather than magical, its whiteness and perfection representing purity and virginity and very suitably emblematic of the Virgin herself.

Several plants have a positive association with death, like the bean, thyme and foxglove, whose flowers were inhabited by the souls of the dead. Many plants betokened death, like a primrose blooming unseasonably in winter, or a single primrose or snowdrop brought indoors.

Marriage Magic

In the realm of domestic magic, plants play a considerable part. There were, for instance, a great many ways in which girls could find out who they were to marry and whether their lovers were faithful. One method was to place a four-leaved clover in a girl's right shoe. The man in her life would be the first she met – or, in an amusing twist, a man with the same name. John Aubrey records how, on St John's Day 1694, he was walking in a meadow when he saw two dozen well-dressed young women apparently weeding. He was told that they were looking 'for a coal under the root of a plantain, to put under their head that night, and they should dream who would be their husband'.

A sprig of myrtle placed in the prayer book at the page where the marriage service asks 'Wilt thou take this man . . . ?' would tell a girl if her lover would in fact marry her. The prayer book was put under the pillow on Midsummer Eve and slept upon. If the myrtle was not to be found in the morning, the marriage would take place; if it was still there, the young man was considered to be fickle.

Some of the rituals were supposed to conjure up a vision of one's husband-to-be, like the one in which the girl ran around her house three times with a willow branch in her hand, saying 'He that's to be my good man, come and grip the end of it'. At the end of the third circuit a spirit-form of the 'good man' would take hold of the branch.

To ensure that your lover or husband was faithful, you could dig earth from his footprints, place it in a pot and sow marigold seeds in it. Rosemary was woven into bridal wreaths as a token of fidelity; it was also believed to grow well for the righteous, and it is often said to flourish where the wife rules the household.

Fertility is of course one of the oldest and

most important of magical aims. In Roman times nuts were presented to newly married couples to ensure fruitfulness, and in France they were used to pelt the bride and groom as rice is still sometimes used today. The phrase 'going a-nutting' was a polite way to indicate love-making, and a good crop of hazel nuts is still linked with the expectancy of many births in the coming year.

In warmer climates the pomegranate is an ancient symbol of fertility, and so is the orange, which is why its flower is so often used in wedding bouquets. This fruit and its blossom also played a part in love charms, and one fascinating native recipe is recorded from Norfolk. A man who wanted to attract a girl had to prick an orange all over with a needle, and then sleep with it under his armpit. After this he would give it to the girl and make sure she ate it – apparently a sure way to guarantee her love.

The direct associations of a plant's appearance led to various beliefs. Due entirely to their testicle-like tubers, the orchid family were given a sexual symbolism, while the phallic 'lords and ladies' not surprisingly represented desire. The striped and speckled blue flowers of the eyebright endowed it with the power to cure the failing eyes which it supposedly resembled, according to the Doctrine of Signatures and the belief that 'like cures like'.

Some plants were associated with certain festivals, such as holly and ivy, the plant symbols of Christmas. The apple was a feature of many games played on Hallowe'en, mainly concerned with love divination. Candlemas, on the 2 February, was associated with the snowdrop. St John's wort and a great many other plants were ritually connected with St John's Eve and Day, which is also Midsummer Day. Flowers were frequently part of the decoration of early Valentines, the most popular flower in this connection being the rose.

The Language of Flowers

The rose is an important item in the 'language of flowers', where its basic meaning is 'love'. Meanings have been given to flowers since ancient times. By the 18th century the language of flowers was well developed, as this quotation from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1690–1762) demonstrates: 'There is no colour, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble or feather that has not a verse belonging to it; and you may quarrel, reproach, or send letters of passion, friendship or civility, or even of news, without even inking your fingers.'

The Victorians, in an age which Osbert Sitwell has described as 'repressed but always respectable', kept up the language of flowers: it was necessary for a posy to speak volumes at times when the presence of the inevitable chaperone prevented the expression of romantic thoughts. Victorian books have interminable lists of the hidden meanings of flowers – not by any means consistent with one another.

By choosing, for example, various kinds of rose the lover could indicate some 40 different sentiments, such as 'Thou art all that is lovely', 'If you love me you will find it out', 'I am worthy of you', and even 'Beauty is your only attraction'. Among the flowers which had specific meanings were anemone, for refusal; apricot, for timid love or doubt; azaleas, for ephemeral passion. Bramble conveyed envy, the foxglove, insincerity, the gardenia, secret love, while grass stood for submission and phlox for a proposal. Combinations of flowers added complexity to the language.

The shift in importance from the god in the oak to the magic of the mandrake, and eventually to the sentimental floral dictionary of the Victorians, is a clear index of man's changing values. The disappearance of plant lore and magic, except among country folk and the less educated, is an indication of the advance of scientific knowledge in the 19th century and its destruction of the credibility of earlier beliefs. What little is left is often almost subconscious and apparently irrational. Thus nurses will still try to prevent visitors from bringing a bunch of red and white flowers into a hospital ward, not so much because they are aware of the symbolism of red standing for blood and white for death, as from a vague feeling that 'it's unlucky'. Superstition is still with us but without any knowledge of the folklore behind it.

(See also HERBS; TREES; and articles on individual plants and flowers.)

A. J. HUXLEY

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PLATO'S MYTHS

ALL PLATO'S DIALOGUES are themselves stories. They are imaginary conversations, often with vividly drawn characters and settings so well presented that readers find them easy to imagine and remember. And they are full of stories of all sorts, and word-pictures which could sometimes be developed into stories which are designed to bring home to the reader the various points which Plato wants to make.

Plato knew that if you want people, not just to accept the conclusion of an argument as correct, but to believe something effectively and act on it, you must engage and convince every part and level of their psyche, including what we should call their imagination and feelings as well as their reason (and, for Plato, reason in its highest operation has in it a large element of what we should call imagination). It is not a matter of just assenting to the conclusion of an argument but of directly seeing or experiencing something, of a flash of imaginative intuition in which an eternal truth makes itself immediately present to the mind. These intuitions are rare and Plato seems to have thought that telling

G. Tomsich/SpectrumColour Library

Bust of Plato, in the Musei Capitolini, Rome: he included many 'myths' in his dialogues, including the story of Atlantis, as a way of engaging and convincing the imagination as well as the reason of his audience

stories would help, at least in the early stages of preparing the mind for them.

The stories he tells in the dialogues, which are usually referred to as Plato's 'myths', are of many different kinds and degrees of elaboration. Some of them are straight allegories, like the story of the birth of the love god, Eros, in the *Symposium*. At Aphrodite's birthday party in the heavenly palace of Zeus, the Spirit of Business Success having drunk too much, had a rest in the garden, and the Spirit of Poverty slipped in and induced him to make love to her, and so Eros was begotten; a strange intermediate being sharing the characteristics of both his ill-assorted parents.

A strange story which Plato uses in a subtle way is the myth told by Aristophanes, again in the *Symposium*. This tells how once upon a time human beings were spherical, with two faces, one on each side of the head, four arms and four legs. There were three sexes, male, female and hermaphrodite. They were strong and could move very fast by turning cartwheels, and they threatened to storm heaven in the arrogance of their strength. Zeus thereupon split each of them in two, and Apollo shaped and rearranged the halves into the sort of human beings we are today. Since then we have all been half-humans who go about looking for our other halves, and falling in love with them when we find them. Love (homosexual or heterosexual, according to the sex of the complete human one is really half of) is just the desire of wholeness, the desire to become a complete human being by reuniting the two halves.

In the *Statesman* there is a very odd cosmic parable, designed to show that there are two forces at work in the world, the divine reason and a sort of basic irrationality. It tells how in one cosmic period God spins the universe one way, and in the next it spins itself the other way and everything goes into reverse until God takes control again. Of course, none of it is intended to be taken literally, and the details cannot

Plato's Academy, a Roman mosaic: the philosopher is pointing to a globe. A myth in the *Statesman* tells how in one cosmic period God spins the universe one way and in the next it spins the other way, and everything reverses

be interpreted one by one allegorically – they are just part of the imaginary picture. This is also true of the greatest of Plato's myths, which are stories about the destiny of man and the origin of the world. There are four great stories, in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, which present imaginative pictures of man's life in the other world to which he rightfully belongs and where he returns when he is not incarnated in an earthly body. The story in the *Phaedrus* gives an imaginative explanation of why true philosophical lovers fall in love, and of how they should live and love in order to escape as quickly as possible from the wheel of reincarnation, and return finally to the divine world from which they came. In explaining this, Plato uses an image of immense power and great influence, that of the soul as a charioteer (the reason) driving two horses, a vicious one (the bodily passions) and a spirited but tractable one (the higher emotions).

The Divine Craftsman

The other three stories are all about the life of the individual soul between incarnations, when it is judged for its behaviour in this life, brought to a place of punishment or reward, where it remains for a very long time, and eventually is either reincarnated in another earthly body (human or animal) or escapes finally from reincarnation altogether.

In these stories Plato is concerned to get across imaginatively doctrines in which he certainly believed – that the soul is immortal (before birth as well as after death); that it rightfully belongs to a higher world, the world of pure intelligence and its eternal objects; and that we are morally responsible, and our fate after death will be determined by the way we choose to live here. But he does not commit himself to the details of his stories – they are just part of the imaginative picture. The basic ideas with which he operates, and many details of the geography of the other world, are taken from a sectarian religious tradition, probably not very ancient, the tradition of the religious groups called 'Orphic' (see ORPHEUS AND ORPHISM) and the Pythagorean philosophers.

Plato's myth about the origin of the world occupies nearly the whole of quite a long dialogue, the *Timaeus*. This is exceptional.

British Museum/John Freeman

One of Plato's most powerful and influential images is that of the soul as a charioteer (the reason), driving two horses (the bodily passions and the higher emotions). This Tarot card, the Chariot, is interpreted in a similar way by occultists, who take it as a symbol of the adept's conquest and yoking of the opposites in himself, through which he triumphantly rises towards the realm of the divine

Most of the myths are quite short, and the dialogues in which they occur are predominantly philosophical discussions. Plato seems to have put his account of how divine intelligence made the world (and he certainly believed that it did) into story form for two reasons; first, that one cannot give an absolutely certain and completely rational account of something like the physical universe, which is always changing. One can only tell a likely story about it. Purely rational discourse can only be about the unchanging realities known by pure intelligence. The other reason may be that divine intelligence is for Plato something mysterious. It is very difficult indeed for human beings to know what it really is; they can only make more or less inadequate comparisons to suggest what it is like. So in the *Timaeus* divine intelligence is compared to a perfectly good Craftsman who wants to share his goodness generously by making the best possible world according to the best possible model, the Real Living Thing, an organic unity or universe of immaterial eternal realities. The story tells how he set about making the physical world on this model, and how he coped as best he could with the built-in irrationality in all that is material.

The *Timaeus* was intended to be followed by another long story-dialogue, the *Critias*, of which we have only the beginning. This was to tell in full one of Plato's most famous stories, the story of Atlantis, which is summarized in the introduction to the *Timaeus*. The story relates how the great, rich, arrogant imperialist power of Atlantis invaded the civilized world from its island base in the Atlantic Ocean, and how it was defeated by prehistoric Athens, which Plato was going to represent as his ideal state of the *Republic* in action; the best possible human city, trained and led by philosopher kings, going out to defeat the forces of tyranny and set the whole world free. The story was to end with Atlantis sinking beneath the sea. Whether Plato knew (as he makes his speaker in the story say) some ancient tradition of a great disaster which set his imagination working can never be certain – some dim memory of the volcanic eruption which destroyed Thera (Santorin), and may have had more far-reaching consequences, might have survived, and he might have heard some tale about it; but he was quite capable of making the whole thing up himself. What is certain is that it would not have been a story mainly about Atlantis, but about an idealized ancient Athens which was also Plato's Republic, and that Atlantis itself would not have been any sort of ideal state, but an evil and aggressive power. (See also ATLANTIS.)

A. H. ARMSTRONG

'There have been few great philosophers whose life was as completely integrated with their thought as was that of Plotinus', who believed that only the perfectly good and wise man who lives on the level of Intellect can attain unity with the One or Good

PLOTINUS

PLOTINUS (205–270 AD) was the real originator of that last and most influential phase in the revived Platonism of the Roman Empire which we call Neoplatonism. It was he who gave the somewhat incoherent Platonism which he inherited enough shape, depth and vigour, not only to supersede all other still surviving forms of Greek philosophy and dominate unchallenged till the end of Greek intellectual paganism some three centuries later, but to have a deep and lasting influence on the thought of Christians, Moslems and Jews.

A good deal more is known about the life of Plotinus than about that of most ancient philosophers, because his disciple and editor, Porphyry, wrote a biography of his master which he prefixed to his edition (the *Enneads*) of the writings of Plotinus. Porphyry, naturally enough, concentrates on the period when he himself was with Plotinus, about six years nearly at the end of the master's life, and tells us next to nothing about Plotinus's family, childhood and education. It has generally been assumed that he came from Egypt, but even this is not absolutely certain; the one thing that seems to be certain, from his own writings and from what Porphyry tells us about him, is that he was Greek-speaking and completely Greek in education and outlook. He went to Alexandria to study philosophy in his 28th year, but could find no teacher to satisfy him till someone took him to the mysterious Ammonius. Ammonius was a self-taught philosopher whose pupils included the great Christian thinker Origen and his pagan namesake. Plotinus remained with Ammonius for 11 years. Then, because he wished to learn something about the

philosophy of the Persians and Indians, he joined the expedition of Gordian III against the Persians. But he never made any contact with Eastern sages: Gordian was murdered by his soldiers and Plotinus got away with difficulty to Antioch; then he went to Rome, and settled there permanently.

At Rome he became a much venerated philosophical teacher, with a circle of friends and admirers, some of whom came from the highest Roman society. After ten years' teaching, at the age of 50, he began to write the treatises which Porphyry after his death collected and arranged as the *Enneads*. He continued to write till his death. After Plotinus had been 19 years in Rome, Porphyry joined him and remained for six years.

In his last years Plotinus suffered from a painful and disgusting illness, which may have been a kind of leprosy. Eventually he gave up teaching and withdrew from the company of his friends and went to live in Campania, in the country house of an old friend of his who had died. It was there that he himself died, alone except for his doctor, Eustochius, a close friend and disciple. His last words were either 'Try to bring back the god in you to the divine in the All' or 'I am trying to bring back the divine in us to the divine in the All'. When he died his circle of friends had already broken up; it had never been a formal, organized society. So after his death there was no 'school of Plotinus', presided over by philosophers who claimed to be his successors.

Practising What He Preached

The description which Porphyry gives of his master in the last years of his life is very helpful to the understanding of the real spirit and intention of his philosophy. There have been few great philosophers whose life was as completely integrated with their thought as was that of Plotinus, at any rate in his later years. Even allowing for a certain amount of pious exaggeration on Porphyry's part, Plotinus seems to have lived up to his philosophical convictions (which were also, as for most philosophers of his time, religious and ethical convictions) to a quite unusual degree.

For Plotinus, philosophy was a process of waking ourselves up and discovering who we really are. The account which Porphyry gives of Plotinus in his 60's is of a man who has discovered himself as a soul existing eternally on a level higher than that of which we are aware in ordinary experience, conscious of belonging to and living its true life in the world of the Divine Intellect. This is the true reality on which the quasi-reality of our world of sense-experience depends. It is at once a living organism of which the parts are the Platonic Forms or Ideas and a living mind which is also a multiplicity of minds, each of which thinks, and so is, the whole. Plotinus, in one of his characteristic images, describes it as 'a thing all faces, shining with living faces' – and equally characteristically corrects the image immediately afterwards by saying that it is inadequate because it is looking at Divine Intellect 'from outside', instead of becoming it oneself and so seeing it. Because Divine Intellect is not in space or time it is eternally present and available to anyone who will make the effort required to turn to it and find his place in it, thereby discovering his true self.

But for Plotinus return to Intellect was only the indispensable preliminary to a higher stage. In his Platonism the world of Platonic Ideas which is Intellect is indeed the highest reality which we can think and know. We can think and know it because it is a definite, structured whole of parts, a one-in-many. But just for this reason, it cannot be the ultimate source of reality. It is only the first spontaneous but necessary expression, on a definitely lower level, of an infinite and absolute goodness and unity which, because it is infinite and absolute, cannot be thought or spoken about adequately at all. The goal of all human life is to reach unification, beyond thought of speech, with this One or Good which is the ultimate source of all things and to which all things in their way aspire, impelled by the love of it which it gave them in their creation. But only the perfectly good and wise man who lives on the level of Intellect can attain that goal, by sharing for a moment the mystical union, beyond its ordinary life of knowing, which Intellect eternally has with the One. The mystical union lies beyond philosophy, but one must go through philosophy to the end to get to it. Porphyry tells us that while he was with Plotinus his master attained to union with the One four times – he himself claims to have done so once.

In the Platonism of Plotinus, soul has many other functions to perform besides contemplating, though they should not hinder contemplation; and Plotinus did not allow his concentration on the higher world to distract his attention from other people and their needs in the lower one. 'He was gentle and at the disposal of all who had any sort of acquaintance with him,' Porphyry tells us. Soul for any Platonist is not only the contemplator of eternal reality but the principle of movement, life and growth, and of structure and order to the physical universe. It animates the material world, and everlastingly forms and governs it in accordance with the eternal realities which it contemplates. Apart from soul, bodies have no realities at all. Their 'matter' is a dark negativity, an absolute non-existence which is the source of evil in the lower world. But all bodies, and the material world as a whole, in so far as they are given life, form and ordered movement in time by soul, have a reflection of the glory of the intelligible world in them. The physical universe as a whole is the best possible image on its level of the eternally living world of Intellect. Soul, divine and human, cannot reject it but must operate in it on every level, down to the life and growth in plants and the formation of apparently inanimate bodies.

Plotinus never stopped teaching and writing, trying to bring others to see what he saw and understand themselves as he understood. But beyond that, without apparently any disturbance of his inner detachment and concentration, he had time for everybody and was ready to help his friends even in their most this-worldly concerns and needs. He made no fuss about religion, and was generally indifferent to external observances. Nor did he as a rule make much fuss about morality, though his personal principles were austere enough. He preached contempt for the body, and lived ascetically, but he was no inhuman ascetic or withdrawn solitary. To his circle he was not only a philosophical teacher but a spiritual and moral guide and a kindly and practical friend.

(See also NEOPLATONISM.)

A. H. ARMSTRONG

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PLUTO

THE GOD commonly known as Pluto in Roman times, and later, was also and more often in earlier times called Hades (*Aides*), though that name has come to be used in modern languages for the underworld where he lived as lord of the dead. In Greek there is also the form Aidoneus, used by Homer in the *Iliad* and in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter; in Latin he is called Dis, a translation of the Greek Plouton which means 'wealthy', and Orcus, commouly derived from the Greek *horkos*, 'oath', because his name was used in oaths. He is also called the subterranean Zeus (Zeus *katachthonios*) as in the *Iliad* (book 9). Among the gods he is the most hated by men, who rarely honour him with cult, and the most separate from other gods. He remains nearly always in his own realm, the House of Hades. The name Hades is generally agreed to mean 'the unseen one'. Hades is the son of Cronus along with Poseidon and Zeus, but he is very little active in Greek myth.

According to Homer, when Zeus and the other Olympians had overthrown Cronus and his Titans (see CRONUS), Zeus divided the world between himself, Poseidon and Hades: Zeus had the sky, Poseidon the sea and Hades the misty darkness, while the earth and Olympus were common to all (*Iliad*, book 15). In the *Odyssey* Hades as a person is mentioned in Book 11 but always along with Persephone, and he does not appear. In the *Theogony* of Hesiod the underworld, including Tartarus is described. It is a vast abyss and the prison of the overthrown Titans. Its entrance in the far west is reached by Day and Night in turn as they travel across the sky to 'the awful home of murky Night' which never holds both at once. Somewhere near the entrance, 'there in front', stand the echoing halls of Hades, god of the lower world, where he dwells with Persephone. A fearful hound guards the house. Fawning with his tail and ears on all who enter, he never lets them go out again; he devours whoever he catches attempting to leave. He is evidently Cerberus.

C. M. Dixon

The one celebrated action of Hades, or Pluto, in classical mythology was the rape of Persephone, whom he carried off in his chariot to his grim underworld kingdom, the home of the dead and common destination of mankind

The Cap of Invisibility

There is only one famous action of Hades or Aidoneus in Greek myth: his breaking through the earth with chariot and horses to carry off Persephone (see DEMETER; PERSEPHONE). The narcissus, which Persephone tried to pluck, had special links with the underworld. Horses, too, had a connection with it in its most alarming aspects, and Hades is often called *klytopolos*, 'owner of renowned horses' – an attribute which calls to mind the word 'nightmare'.

Hades is active once more in a curious myth told in the *Iliad* (book 5). Hercules wounded him with an arrow 'at Pylos among the dead' and caused him so much pain that he went up to Olympus to have the arrow drawn out of his shoulder by the healer god Paieon and the wound treated with pain-killing drugs. The commentator Eustathius explains that Pylos here is not the town mentioned in Homer but the gate of the underworld. This passage again suggests that Hades was often believed to have his dwelling near the entrance of the underworld as a warden of the dead, which would suit one of his titles, *pylartes*, 'fastener of the gates'. But this pitiless guardian of the dead was simply strict and rigorous; he was not any kind of devil, and his realm, except for some places where notorious offenders were punished, was not a hell, but the common destination of mankind.

A mythical object which by its name was connected with Hades was the helm or cap of Hades, *Aidos kynee*. The name has the general sense of 'cap of darkness' or 'cap of invisibility'. The cap is worn by Athene in battle against Ares in the *Iliad* (book 5), by Hermes in battle against the giants and by Perseus in his attack on the Gorgons. In myth it is not worn by Hades, nor in Greek art is it shown on his head, nor is it certain that he really owned it or lent it. The connection of the cap with Hades remains obscure.

Hades or Pluto as one of the chthonic or underground powers has not simply the gloomy aspect which he wears in the epic tradition. He is not solely the lord of the underworld. This is obvious from the name Pluto, connected with *ploutos*, 'wealth', a word which originally meant particularly the wealth of crops which grow out of the ground and of precious minerals which lie beneath it. In this aspect he is thought worthy of cult by Hesiod: 'pray to Zeus beneath the ground', that is to Hades, as well as to Demeter. It was in this aspect again that Hades was associated in cult with Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis. Hades is called 'another Zeus' by Aeschylus in his *Suppliants* and as Zeus *katachthonios* he is mentioned in Homer with Persephone as enforcer of a father's curse. He is in this sense a power supporting life and the family. He has also a title Euboulos or Eubouleus, 'giver of good counsel'.

The entrance to the realm of Hades was seen in many caves and clefts to be found about Greece and also in parts of Italy settled by Greeks. The most famous in Greece were the cave of Taenarum in southern Laconia and a whole region of Thesprotia in the north-west. Thesprotia had rivers called Acheron and Cocytus and a lake called Acherusian, all of them names belonging to the mythical Hades, and also an oracle of the dead which in some traditions Ulysses visited when he had come to Ithaca and had to travel further on the Greek mainland. Pausanias remarks that Theseus and Pirithous invaded Thesprotia to carry off the king's wife. This looks like a version of their descent into Hades to carry off Persephone. The suspicion is confirmed by Plutarch, who says that the heroes went to Epirus to steal the daughter of Aidoneus, king of the Molossians, who had a wife called Phersephone and a dog called Cerberus.

The Greek colonists carried these stories with them when they reached the volcanic region of Campania. They discovered another mouth of the underworld in Lake Avernus, and applied the names of the infernal rivers to various streams. Aeneas, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, is shown entering the underworld from Italian Cumae under the guidance of the Sibyl, which he could not have been made to do without this new location for the Greek lore. Pluto, however, does not appear himself in the *Aeneid*, nor indeed in the story of Orpheus in the Fourth *Georgic*, though he is mentioned as terrifying and unyielding in taking back Eurydice, once Orpheus had looked back at her as he led her out of the underworld.

E. D. PHILLIPS

Pluto in Astrology

The most distant known planet from the sun – it takes almost 250 years to make the tour of the zodiac – Pluto was discovered only in 1930. Though it was named after the Greek and Roman god of the underworld, the name does not seem specially appropriate. Astrologers have suggested that Pluto ought to be the real ruler of Scorpio, or some say of Aries; but no rulership has been generally attributed to him.

The most common event signified by a transit or aspect of Pluto is that the Plutonian leaves home, goes out into the world, or sets up in business on his own account. Pluto's outstanding characteristic is emphasis, so that whatever is happening, for whatever reason, it will be the more striking on account of the aspect of Pluto; if it is a pleasant event signified by Jupiter, it will be made more notable, but if an unpleasant event brought about by Saturn, it will be the more grievous on account of the presence of Pluto. When Pluto dominates the horoscope, the subject is likely to be a striking personality, and if Pluto and Sun are both prominent he will always make his presence felt.

FURTHER READING: T. George, *Uranus-Neptune-Pluto* (Arthur Publications, 1980); L. Lowell, *Pluto* (Llewellyn, 1973); A. Robertson, *The Complete Book on the Power of Pluto* (Seek-It Publications, 1979).

Plymouth Brethren

Fundamentalist sect which established its first congregation in Plymouth c 1830, to promote a return to the beliefs and ideals of the earliest Christians: in the 1840s disagreements led to a split between the followers of John Nelson Darby (1800–82), the Exclusive Brethren, and his opponents, generally called Open Brethren.

See EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN.

Pneuma

Greek word for air, breath and spirit, the subject of elaborate physiological and philosophical speculation in the ancient world: the identity of, or close connection between, air and breath, without which men cannot live, and the soul or spirit or vital spark which animates the body, is a very widespread idea.

See BREATH; GNOSTICISM; SOUL.

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C. Nelson Stewart

The combination of the functions of poet and magician is characteristic of early civilizations, and Celtic bards were particularly renowned for their powers: 'poetic' thinking underlies many human approaches to the supernatural

POETS

IT IS generally recognized that verse preceded prose as a form of expression in the literatures of the world. At a time when magic played a very important part in the life of early peoples and when they had constant recourse to spells and incantations to accomplish supernatural ends, these took the form of verse rather than prose. Poetry is more easily memorized than prose, and verse-spells, handed down from generation to generation, were in regular use.

While some of these early verse incantations were of a maledictory nature, most of the later ones (known in the Irish language as *orthai*) were apocryphal folk-prayers, with a blend of pagan and Christian beliefs. Their main purpose was to alleviate or cure human ailments.

Irish poetry, especially in the period from 600 to 1100 AD, is one of the most interesting literary phenomena that Western Europe has to offer, and was produced by a literary class that had practised its art for centuries in the bardic schools. These bards (poets) were the shadows, as it were, or successors of high-ranking pagan priests, or Druids (see DRUIDS), and it was natural that at least some of the bardic compositions had the flavour of the magical operations of the Druids.

In the Irish society of early times, continuing down to the 17th century, it was usual for a king or chieftain to have among his retinue a poet, whose duty it was to act as intermediary between the mysterious powers of Nature and his patron.

In Celtic societies poets were not clearly separable from Druids or magicians and often combined the functions of all three *Left* Scenes from the Eisteddfod or 'session' of Welsh bards in 1925: the herald sounds a summons (*above*); the bards touch the great sword of peace gripped by the Archdruid (*below*) *Right* The poet Virgil had a medieval reputation as a powerful magician: 3rd century mosaic

The main function of such poets was to sing the praises of their patrons, and much of their poetry has survived in manuscript. These laudatory compositions were often of a genealogical character, and had no magical connotation.

If, however, as sometimes happened, the poet was offended by lack of gratitude and fitting reward for his compositions, he was at liberty to write satires, according to ancient custom, upon the king or chief in whose service he was retained. It is clear that satires of this nature were not of the type which the word *aer* (satire) now connotes (largely ridicule and mockery), but were intended both to damage the patron's honour and to cause him physical harm. As James Carney has said: 'If an ollave (poet) satirizes a prince he is in effect telling him that the forces of Nature, with which he, the ollave, is in communion, are not satisfied: the result of the satire is an injury to the king's honour (which may show physically as blisters on his face) and possibly a blight on the land.'

Osborn Bergin states that at an early period 'the *file* (poet) or bard had been regarded as a dealer in magic, a weaver of spells and incantations, who could blast his enemies by the venom of his verse'. The early Celtic poets were not clearly separable from Druids and medicine-men, but often combined in one person the functions of all three, so they freely mingled natural and supernatural processes in the practice of their arts.

Rhymed to Death

There is an interesting account from an early Irish manuscript of the method by which a poet satirized a king who had refused him a proper reward. 'The poet himself with six others, on whom the six degrees of poets had been conferred, had to go at sunrise to a hilltop on the boundary of seven lands; and the face of each degree of them towards his own land, and the face of the ollave there toward the land of the king whom he would satirize, and the backs of them all towards a hawthorn which should be on top of the hill, and the wind from the north, and a slingstone and a thorn of the hawthorn in every man's hand, and each of them to sing a stave in a prescribed metre into the slingstone and the

Sonia Halliday

thorn; the ollave sings his stave before the others, and they afterwards singing their staves at once; and each was then to put his stone and his thorn at the butt of the hawthorn. And if it were that they were in the wrong, the earth of the hill would swallow them up. But if it were the king that was in the wrong, the earth would swallow up him and his wife and his son and his horse and his arms and his dress and his hound, a separate curse falling on each.'

The results of the maledictions of Irish poets were varied, according to different accounts in early literature. Pimples, blisters and blotches were raised on the offending patron's face, causing bodily disfigurement. There was no growth of grass, corn or leaves in Leinster after a poet's curse. In other cases, lakes and streams went dry, no fish were caught in river-mouths and plains were barren of produce.

Bo Almqvist, in his study of Old Norse verse magic, tells of some 200 Icelandic poets (16th to 19th century period), who were credited with supernatural powers. They could influence the elements by dispersing drift ice and stopping volcanic eruptions and storms; they could kill destructive animals, such as foxes, and procure seals, whales and fish; they could also force ghosts to disappear into the ground. Their verses were mainly directed against certain categories of people who had attracted special wrath and disgust, such as pirates, Danish merchants and iniquitous officials. As a result of the forceful abuse and violent satire, these people were believed to be struck by life-long misfortunes, strange diseases and sudden death. There are also references to the maledictory powers of early poets among the pre-classical Greeks and Romans, the Arabs, the Eskimos and the Ashanti.

Plague in Your Hearts

Two Irish cursing poems against rats:

Ye rats that have come down from the mountain
And have grown fat among the people,
May your jaws be weak when winter comes,
And strong, wise cats make havoc among you!
Since ye have gone out of control,
Hard may your sufferings be in the fire of pain!
Swim through the tide to Carricklare,
An island devoid of shelter;
There ye may find barnacles and fish –
Leave me, or I shall plant plague in your hearts!

Go, ye brood, across Carrickughtane,
And by short-cut to Milleenamona;
Spend the night at the house of Dan Lane,
A churl of ill-repute;
Tear his cap and rend his blanket;
Eat his shoes and take away his breeches
To make a winter bed in the outhouse;
He has corn stored since last year in his haggard;
So eat it during the autumn;
And if ye run short of food, take up your abode in his neighbour's house!

Poetry, song and music were widely believed to have power over animals and the forces of Nature, as well as men *Below* Orpheus charms birds and beasts with the sweetness of his singing *Right* The Pied Piper of Hamelin leading the town's rats to a watery death, from a 19th century German children's book. Cursing poems against rats are a feature of Irish folk poetry

Scala

Bane of Rats

The best-known early instance in Irish literature of the belief that poets could banish mice is to be found in a Middle Irish tale, *Imtheacht ne Tromdhaimhe*, which tells how mice had eaten an egg which had been saved up for the 7th century poet Senchan. 'That was not proper for them,' said Senchan; 'nevertheless there is not a king or chief, be he ever so great, but these mice would wish to leave the traces of their teeth in his food; and in that they err, for food should not be used by any person after their teeth; and I will satirize them.' Then follow stanzas in which Senchan threatens the mice with death, and they beg him to accept compensation instead. As a result of his verses, ten mice fall dead in his presence. The poet then said to them: 'It is not you that I ought to have satirized, but the party whose duty it is to suppress you, namely the tribe of cats.' He then pronounced a satire on the lord of all the cats. The intended victim, however, took revenge by carrying off on his back the poet, who was saved from death only through the intervention of St Kieran.

Poets in many other lands too, including Scotland, Greece and Rome, ancient Germany, Arabia, Finland and Iceland, were said to be able to banish harmful animals, especially rats, by means of magic verse. Many examples of this type of verse are to be found in modern Irish folk poetry, down to the present time. Some accounts tell how the poet who was summoned for the task wrote his extempore verse of banishment on a piece of paper, which he then laid at the mouth of the hole in which the rats lived. The poet would name the person (often someone whom he disliked) and place to which the rats had to go. The route was often across water and the designated destination was occasionally promised to be more suitable than their former abode. Stories have been told of how the rats were later seen emerging from the hole, led by a veteran, who carried in his mouth the paper on which the verse had been written. They then made their way across the countryside to the place mentioned in the verse. A further touch of detail is added when it is said that the blind rats among the company were led along by their comrades by means of a wisp of straw which they held in their mouths. The verse was sometimes referred to as *Salm na Mallacht* (the Cursing Psalm), and such rhyming maledictory verses were always in the Irish language and do not seem to have gone over into English.

The belief that poets could also banish creatures other than rats was current in Ireland. In olden times a king named O'Brien was afflicted by a maggot which had settled on his brow; whenever the king attempted to eat some food, the maggot descended and ate it all. A poet was finally summoned and, by the power of the

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following verse, forced the maggot to emerge, and it was burned in the fire:

> You maggot on O'Brien's brow,
> Eat not the food in his hand;
> You black creature of the beetle's colour,
> Come down from the brow of the king of
> Ireland's princes!

Poets could show their magical power in other spheres also. A poet, who was making his way home over a rough road on a dark night, struck his shinbone against a stone which had fallen from a cairn. The poet stopped and angrily cursed the stone in the following terms:

> The dark moon, alas, has caused my foot to be cut;
> You jagged, sharp-edged rock, full of evil,
> May God's curse rend you and make you mend your ways!
> You have not let me pass you by late at night.

Next morning, every stone in the cairn had disappeared.

Finally, a story is related in Ireland of a poet who was badly received in a miserly house. When he had left, he composed a verse and wrote it on a piece of paper which he secreted over the lintel of the door. The result was that the churlish woman of the house and others who entered it during the day were forced to dance continuously, until the poet himself was summoned and removed the magic spell.

SEÁN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

The Poetry of Magic

Magic is related to poetry not merely by its feeling for the power of words but because it depends on what might be called poetic logic, as distinct from rational logic. The magician looks at the world through eyes which see all sorts of links and connections between things which, outwardly and rationally, are not connected at all. Magic relies heavily, as poetry does, on similes, analogies and symbols.

A minor but characteristic example is the presence of bat's blood as an ingredient in some recipes for witch's flying ointment. Why bat's blood, rather than some other sort of blood? Because witches wanted to fly about at night without bumping into things, which is one of the most obvious abilities of the bat. Similar parallels and links lie behind magical rituals, behind the use of the circle and the pentagram, behind the magical systems of correspondences and the symbolism of colours and directions. And the whole magical picture of the world, in the European tradition, is based on poetic analogies between man and the universe, and man and God.

The arts of divination rely on the same kind of logic. A simple case in point is the folk belief that if a candle is guttering, it means that the life of someone in the house is flickering to its close. In popular astrology, if at your birth the majority of planets were

'A Book of Verses underneath the Bough, a jug of Wine, a loaf of Bread – and Thou beside me singing in the Wilderness – oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!': Edward FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* on the life-giving beauties of poetry

Sonia Halliday

in zodiac signs associated with the element of fire, you are likely to be credited with 'fiery' characteristics – warmth, brightness, cheerfulness, aspiration, excitability. The author of a well-respected astrological textbook says that people who have a preponderance of planets in water signs are likely to be 'wet', 'sloppy' or 'drips'. This is not regarded as mere wordplay by traditional astrologers because they have inherited the magical belief, not infrequently shared by poets, that a link between two things in the human mind means that there is a real connection between them in the universe. In all forms of divination the world is regarded as a whole, a pattern, so intricately enlaced that the lines on a hand, the fall of lots and other outwardly random events can provide clues to the nature of the pattern.

This way of looking at things is not confined to magic and divination but has powerfully influenced religious attitudes to the supernatural as well. The concept of man as made in the image of God, or the belief that the virility of the bull influences not only the fertility of herds but also the growth of crops, or the parallel between the crops resurrected in spring, the dying and rising deity of vegetation, and the dead buried in earth to find a new life beyond the grave – these are only a few among many examples of 'poetic logic' applied to the major religious concerns of mankind. The principle of mimicry, on which so much magical and religious ritual is based (see IMITATIVE MAGIC), rests on a poetic analogy between the simulated and the real, between man's activities and those of the universe.

Religion and magic also share with poetry a sense of the profound importance of inspiration, of the glow of illumination in the mind, the sudden grasp, whole, of something previously perceived in fragments or not perceived at all: and this is not with a feeling that inspiration is merely an interesting psychological phenomenon but in the firm conviction that inspiration reveals the truth. The Nuer people of Africa believe that 'God created the world and everything in it out of nothing, by thinking or imagining it, as one creates a poem' (see NUER) and this view of creation is found in many other parts of the world. Sacred scriptures are generally claimed to be divinely inspired, with the implication that only through a revelation from God could their human authors have grasped truths which must always be beyond the reach of reason. Poets and seers, oracles, priests, shamans and holy men have been, and still often are, believed to have access through inspiration to truth not available to the less gifted and less fortunate, to levels of reality deeper and far more significant than the surface world of appearances can reveal.

(See also ARTHUR; INCANTATION; MABINOGION; MERLIN; SONG.)

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POISONING

In an age when little was known about the properties of dangerous drugs, the witches with their brewing of love potions and abortifacients were often blamed for deaths; in many cases the supposed victims of witchcraft probably died purely from a poisoned mind

TWO OPPOSING PRINCIPLES, the force of life and the force of death, are embodied in the images of the healer and the witch. In the Christian era, when all forms of magical healing were stigmatized as heresy, the two images became merged. It is doubtless for this reason that the virtues of the wise-woman of the past have been forgotten, and that today she is remembered more for her poisons than for her love potions, as an abortionist rather than as a nurse.

The rise of the witch mania in Europe was to some extent a by-product of the revolutionary urge to sweep away all the outmoded relics of the superstitious past. On the one hand, the physicians, newly freed from ecclesiastical restraint, demanded the authority to regulate their own affairs and furthermore to impose an embargo upon all lay medical practitioners, while on the other the Church was beginning to see a threat to its supremacy in the survival of magical practice.

The combination of the two pressures led to the imposition of laws against witchcraft which condemned the village healers, herbalists and midwives to constant harassment as poisoners, abortionists and witches. Their situation was always precarious, despite the fact that due to the deficiencies of the medical profession they were in constant demand for the treatment of the sick and the poor. Their knowledge of botanical medicines was probably far superior to that of the physicians, among whom the subject was not studied scientifically until the close of the 16th century. The wise-woman's potions, accompanied by the appropriate incantations, were directed to the cure of the impotent and the barren, while in her capacity as midwife she was able to assist or terminate pregnancy.

All medical practitioners walk the tightrope of power, at the same time the object of reverence and hatred. The wise-woman who was equipped with the means of killing as well as curing was extremely vulnerable

In 1630 the Commissioner of Health of Milan, who had been observed wiping his ink-stained hands on a wall, was immediately denounced for spreading plague poison

to the charge of infanticide or abortion, and to accusations in the event of a death occurring under mysterious circumstances.

With the advance of chemistry in the 16th century, toxic mineral drugs such as antimony, arsenic and mercury were coming into vogue and deaths from poisoning were now included among the normal hazards of medical treatment. Due to his strongly entrenched position the orthodox medical man stood in little danger of condemnation as a poisoner, unlike the lay healer.

There is some evidence to suggest that the medical profession had a vested interest in branding their non-established rivals, the magician healers, as witches and poisoners, and that by so doing they hoped to drive out their more firmly established competitors. Under the common law of England medicine was then open to all who chose to practise it, but quacks were often prosecuted as witches and poisoners. Thomas Gale, Queen Elizabeth's Sergeant Surgeon, asserted that at two London hospitals, St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's, large numbers of the sick had been 'brought to their mischief by witches, by women, and by counterfeit worthless fellows that take upon themselves the use of art, not only robbing them of their money, but of their limbs and perpetual health.'

Roman Catholics as well as Protestants joined in the attack. In 1554 Bishop Bonner began to take an interest in the activities of certain midwives who were said to be exercising 'witchcrafts, charms and sorcery'. Even the ecclesiastically licensed midwives openly practised magical arts, and were described by their critics as closer to paganism than to Christianity.

The prevailing doctrine of witchcraft branded the magician healer as the Devil's agent, and declared it to be her mission to destroy life, not only by magic but by poisonous substances, by infanticide and abortion. The eminent demonologist John Nider was convinced that midwives, in attempting to secure abortions, administered dangerous drugs to the mother, and when these failed stabbed long needles into the brain of a new-born child. The supposed object of child murder by witches was twofold: to obtain bodies for the manufacture of poisons and unguents which could then be used to destroy their fellow human beings, and to a lesser extent, to procure offerings

Poisoning has always had a close connection with witchcraft and the powers of darkness ***Facing page*** **'Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, with Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected': the play scene from** ***Hamlet,*** **by a noted Victorian painter, Daniel Maclise** ***Above*** **Simon Forman, an astrologer and wizard of the 17th century, who was employed by the Countess of Essex to supply potions: he may have been involved in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury (*below*)**

for Satan. It is doubtful, in fact, whether such horrors ever took place outside the morbid imagination of prosecutors. Nevertheless, spurred on by the need to save the unbaptized child from the fiery hell to which theology had consigned it, the interrogations of the witch-hunter, combined with torture, produced what was then considered satisfactory evidence of such a conspiracy.

The Doctors' Scapegoats

The pharmacopoeia of witchcraft incorporated the common run of botanical recipes from woodland and hedgerow which were readily available to anyone with murder or abortion in mind. Deadly drugs were obtainable which could be dispensed to a client, the most notorious poisons being hemlock, hemp and henbane. In unskilful hands an aphrodisiac like cantharides could cause an agonizing death. Among the more general types of abortifacients were the potentially poisonous pennyroyal, rye ergot and oil of tansy. The function of these remedies for an unwanted pregnancy was to reduce the health of the mother to such an extent that the foetus would be expelled from her body. Should the mother die, however, as was often the case, the midwife was extremely vulnerable to a charge of murder or witchcraft, or both.

Renaissance physicians, not unnaturally, took every opportunity to cast the blame for their failures upon their unprofessional rivals, the witches; a policy for which there was ecclesiastical sanction, for the Inquisitor Bernard de Como had laid down the doctrine that all diseases beyond the curative power of medicine must be due to sorcery.

In view of the undeveloped state of medical knowledge in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, it was beyond the capacity of most physicians to determine what was or was not a poisonous substance. Mercury, arsenic and antimony were recognizably poisonous, but so it appears was air pollution; the demonologist William Perkins included in his category of witch crime that of attempting to murder the human race by poisoning the air. Plague-spreading was also classed as poisonous activity, the most notorious case of this kind occurring in Milan in 1630, when the Commissioner of Health of that city, who had been observed wiping his ink-stained hands on a wall, was

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immediately denounced for spreading plague poison. Skilled questioning, reinforced by torture, secured a complete confession of guilt, together with the names of accomplices, and those responsible were torn with red hot pincers and burned at the stake.

Despite the declaration of the French magistrate and witch-finder, Pierre de Lancre, that there were in existence two types of witches (the poisoner belonging to a separate branch of the black art), there is little to indicate that poisoning and witchcraft were practised by different types of magicians. The principal target of the poisoner's arts has always been the husband or wife who has outlived his or her desirability and usefulness, or the heir who stands between the poisoner and an inheritance. Women were the main offenders, as Reginald Scot makes clear in his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), in which he declared 'women to have been the first inventors and practitioners of poisoning and more naturally addicted thereunto than men'. Elizabeth Francis, one of the first women to be tried under the English Witchcraft Act of 1541, admitted to the ownership of a diabolical cat-imp called Satan which had prescribed a drug to procure an abortion.

Mass Murder and Black Magic

The English witch trials produced several instances of poisoning, or at least suggestions of this crime, usually at the expense of an unwanted spouse. A woman found guilty of murdering her husband was liable to suffer death at the stake for the crime of petit-treason. In 1652 the diarist John Evelyn witnessed the burning alive of a woman, sentenced for husband murder, on a blazing tar barrel at Smithfield before a vast crowd.

A remarkable outbreak of mass poisoning associated with witchcraft, known as the Chambre Ardente case after the court which was set up by Louis XIV to investigate it, occurred in France towards the end of the 17th century. Poisons, love philtres and black magic rituals involving child sacrifice were resorted to by those who wished to be rid of an unwanted marriage partner or to secure the affections of a fickle lover. The facts came to light after a fortune teller named Marie Bosse had been overheard by a police agent to say: 'What a lovely occupation is mine. Nothing lower than duchesses, marquesses, princes and lords. Three more poisonings and I'll retire. My fortune is made.' The ensuing investigation, which was accompanied by savage torture, uncovered a vast conspiracy involving the greatest in the land, notably the King's former mistress, Mme de Montespan (see also BLACK MASS).

A ring of poisoners had apparently supplied lethal potions to a network of witches and abortionists all over France, resulting in the murder of an unknown number of unwanted husbands, children and babies; some 2500 babies were said to have been disposed of, the bodies being secretly buried in a garden at Villencouve-sur-Gravois. In a typical case a wife who wanted to be rid of her elderly husband soaked his shirt in a preparation containing arsenic, which

Of Witches' Poisons

The poisons used by witches are compounded and mixed from many sorts of poisons, such as the leaves and stalks and roots of plants; from animals, fishes, and venomous reptiles, stones and metals; sometimes these are reduced to powder and sometimes to an ointment. It must also be known that witches administer such poisons either by causing them to be swallowed, or by external application. In the first instance they usually mix some poisonous powder with the food or drink: in the second they bewitch their victim, whether man or woman, while he is sleeping by anointing him with their lotions, waters, oils and unguents which contain many and various poisons. They anoint the thighs, or belly, or head, throat, breast, ribs, or some other part of the body of the person to be bewitched, who being asleep feels nothing; but such is the potency of that unguent that, as it is slowly absorbed by the heat of the sleeper's body, it enters his flesh and penetrates his vitals, causing him the greatest bodily pain . . . They have also a third method of administering poison, namely, by inhalation: and this is the worst of all kinds of poison, for by reason of its tenuity it is readily drawn in through the mouth and so quickly reaches the heart.

Guazzo *Compendium Maleficarum*

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Facing page Among the poisons known in antiquity was hemlock, which Socrates drank after he had been found guilty of neglecting the officially accepted gods and inventing new ones: detail from a drawing by the French painter David *Above* A victim of poisoning could be cured by the application of the wondrous bezoar stone, which was found in the intestines of a snake or a goat: from a 15th century German work *Right* Another antidote against poison was the flesh of an egg-eating snake *Below right* The explosion of a witch bottle, a device for turning the poison or spell of a witch against her by boiling the urine of a victim in a bottle

brought the skin up in blotches resembling syphilis. Affecting concern, she then dutifully treated these with salves which instead of allaying the inflammation introduced a slow poison.

The full investigation of the scandal revealed much that was criminal but even more which, in the light of what is now known about the role of torture in witchcraft interrogations, seems highly dubious. The confessions of the principal witch and abortionist Catherine Deshayes, known as La Voisin, and her confederates in Devil worship, child sacrifice and the performance of a Black Mass were extracted only under barbaric torture. The nobles involved in the affair predictably escaped torture and execution, but La Voisin, together with a considerable number of minor abortionists, poisoners and innocent people, suffered death at the stake. The Chambre Ardente investigation was summarily brought to an end by the intervention of the King in 1680 and was followed by the outlawing of fortune tellers in France and the introduction of legal controls over poisons.

Death From a Poisoned Mind

All advances in the art and mystery of the apothecary tended to place in the hands of the unscrupulous charlatan lethal substances which could be turned to good account if he was prepared to take the risk of setting himself up as a poisoner. Simon Forman, a medical man of dubious reputation who retailed aphrodisiacs and lethal potions from his consulting rooms at Lambeth in London in the early years of the 17th century, was employed by Lady Essex for the [illegible] purposes of rendering her

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That poison was one of the chief weapons of the witch became an established part of popular lore, partly as a result of the attitude of ecclesiastical and medical authorities to the activities of local wise-women and healers, who were branded as agents of the Devil
Previous page **Witches in a hayloft, concocting a potion, with a snake adding its venom: an early 19th century cartoon by Rowlandson**
Left **The witch offers the poisoned apple to Snow White: from the Walt Disney film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs***

husband sterile and her lover even more amorously inclined. Finding a certain Sir Thomas Overbury in the way of her intrigues, she conspired to poison him, with arsenic and cantharides, using as go-between a Mrs Turner who was afterwards hanged for the crime. Despite the exposure of the scandal, Lady Essex was too highly placed to be executed and after a period in the Tower received a pardon from the King.

In Harris's *Life of James I* there is a curious anecdote suggesting that the death of the King might have been due to poisoning by arsenic, supplied by the fashionable London wizard Dr Lamb, a close associate of the Duke of Buckingham and known as the Duke's Devil. Lamb met his end at the hands of a ferocious London street mob who pursued him down Cheapside, howling, 'The poisoner, the poisoner', and stoned him to death as a wizard. Lamb's assistant, Anne Bodenham, was later charged with witchcraft and supplying of arsenical poisons, and suffered death on the scaffold.

In considering the role of toxic medicines in the pre-scientific era, one must take into account a point made by Christina Hole in her *Witchcraft in England*, that a poisonous thought can have as lethal an effect upon the mind as a poisonous substance; and that it is possible that the mere fear of poisoning might sometimes have been sufficient to bring about the death of a guilt-ridden husband.

In discussing instances of modern African witchcraft, the missionary Mary Kingsley referred to the importance of the state of mind of the victim: 'That all witches act by means of poison alone would be too hasty a thing to say. I think we need hardly doubt that the African is almost as likely to die from a poisonous idea put into his mind as a poisonous herb into his food.'

Village wise-men and women continued to supply herbal abortifacients as late as the middle of the 19th century. Cunning Murrell, the famous white wizard of Hadleigh, Essex, lay under strong suspicion locally of this crime, although there was no suggestion that he ever became a poisoner (see MURRELL). Works of medical jurisprudence published at this time indicate a continuing resort to mercury, cantharides, emetics and herbal potions in attempted abortions, measures which often resulted in the death of the mother. During the early years of the present century there were herbalists still to be found who were prepared to administer dubious abortifacients at a price.

Although the herbalist witch was traditionally blamed for supplying the means to wives who wished to make away with their husbands, even after she disappeared from the social scene, women continued to solve their marriage problems without the help of witchcraft. In 1851 Charles Mackay asserted in his *Extraordinary Popular Delusions* that 'women of the lowest classes' were once again resorting to poisons, for the double purpose of ridding themselves of their husbands and obtaining the burial money.

ERIC MAPLE

Pollution

Defilement, impurity, uncleanness, the spiritual parallel to physical dirtiness; frequently the result of some sin or breach of taboo or ritual; contact with a corpse is often regarded as dangerously polluting, as is contact with a pregnant woman; ceremonial washing, as in baptism, cleans away pollution. See BAPTISM; BIRTH; TABOO; WATER.

One of the oddest features about poltergeist outbreaks is not so much why they start as why, apparently inexplicably, they stop; in considering the possible psychological origin, the author suggests that these freakish occurrences should be regarded less as a disease than as an unconscious attempt on the part of the 'victim' at a cure

POLTERGEISTS

THE WORD POLTERGEIST was originally a German folklore term compounded from *polter* (a noise or racket) and *geist* (a spirit or sprite), indicating a Nature spirit of like status to elf or goblin or 'things that go bump in the night'. Subsequently the term acquired a wider sense. Phenomena ascribed to poltergeists included a remarkable variety of alleged happenings: movements of domestic objects, flinging of mud and stones, teleportation (the mysterious conveyance of articles into closed rooms), as well as the production of noises such as raps, bangs or scratchings, and sounds imitating the human voice whistling, singing or talking.

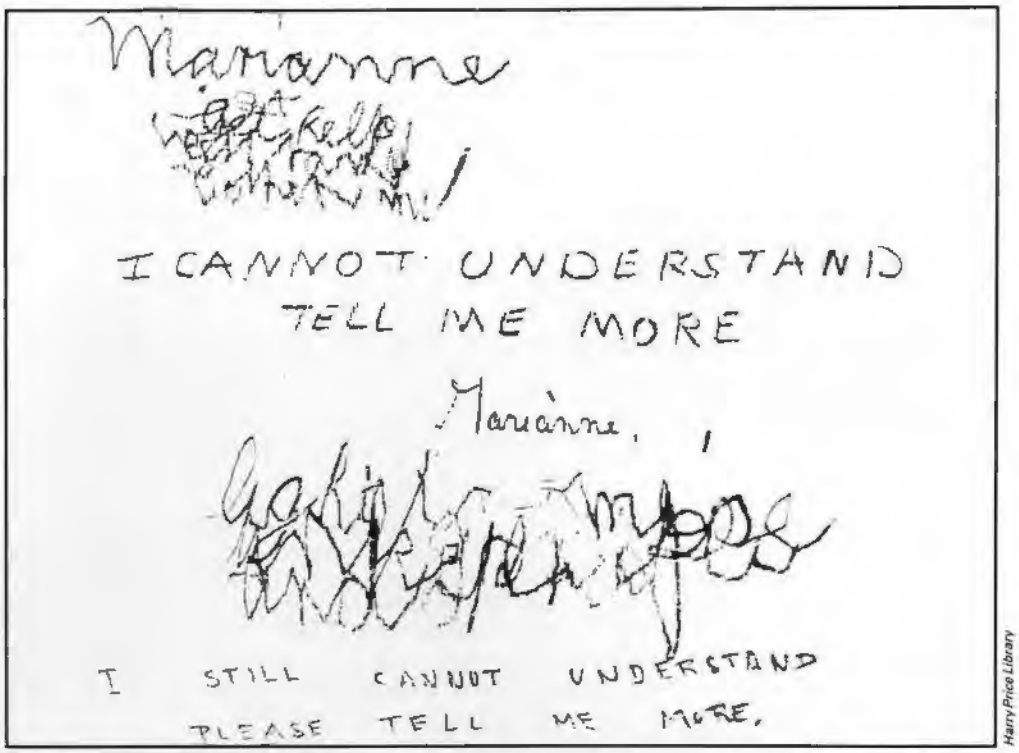
Despite the fantastic nature of the alleged phenomena serious investigators in psychical research during the late 19th century such as Frederick Myers, Frank Podmore, Andrew Lang and the criminologist Cesare Lombroso thought them worthy of unbiased study. But in order not to prejudge the issue they tended to use the term poltergeist in an adjectival sense as descriptive merely of the type of happenings reported, which were said to constitute a 'poltergeist disturbance' or outbreak. This purely descriptive approach leaves open the question as to whether poltergeists exist as 'spirits' or discarnate entities, so that to begin with we are concerned only with poltergeist phenomena or 'poltergeistery', real or alleged.

Natural Causes

Early writers on poltergeist outbreaks naturally offered many theories as to why they happened. The poltergeist was usually described vaguely as an evil spirit without necessarily implying that it was one of Satan's own imps. Gerald of Wales (1147–1223) refers to cases where mud was flung, holes cut in garments and a 'spirit' conversed with men in a somewhat aggressive and derisory fashion. Gerald's curiosity was aroused by the fact that rites of exorcism were ineffective, the priests themselves being subjected to insult. He concluded that sacraments are effective against true demons but not with merely mischievous ones, such as Nature spirits. During the Reformation period, for theological reasons writers tended to prefer either the demonic interpretation or explanation in terms of natural causes, ranging from death-watch beetles to the pranks of children or the trickery of adults.

Modern Spiritualism gained its first impetus in 1848 from an outbreak of rapping noises in the home of John Fox at Hydesville, a village in New York State. Subsequently there has been a tendency among Spiritualists to interpret poltergeist outbreaks as attempts at communication by the spirits of the dead. Some Spiritualists, however, regard poltergeistery as caused by elementals.

In view of the fantastic happenings alleged in poltergeist cases and their speculative interpretations, there is naturally also a strong tendency to regard them as merely tall stories, or due to badly observed natural causes. Mr G. W. Lambert, the distinguished psychical investigator, has demonstrated that a large proportion of 'haunted houses' and certain types of poltergeist case should be attributed to causes such as the shrinking of timbers, underground water, and so on. Frank Podmore, who inclined to the view that poltergeistery was the result of tricks by mischievous or maladjusted persons, laid down important criteria for assessing the evidential value of testimony in alleged poltergeist cases. Written statements from literate and intelligent observers providing circumstantial and mutually corroborative detail should be obtained as soon as possible after the occurrences. Nowadays the investigator likes also, if possible, to have films and tape-recordings, bearing in mind that such things can be faked and remembering that the reliability of a mechanical record is not, in the final analysis, greatly superior to that of the person who offers it in evidence. While mechanical records can be very informative (for example, in disposing of the possibility that the events are hallucinatory), in the end the



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Mansell

Above **Scribblings by a 'poltergeist' on a wall at Borley Rectory: the questions were written by Marianne Foyster, who lived there in the 1930s** ***Below left*** **Eleonore Zugrun, a Rumanian medium, whose face was scratched by a 'spirit' which attacked her** ***Below right*** **The Curé of Ars, a victim of poltergeist phenomena**

The Offensive Perriwig

An account of the Daemon of Spraiton in the County of Devon, Anno. 1682.

One time the young mans head was thrust into a very strait place, betwixt a Beds head, and a Wall, and forced by the strength of divers men to be removed thence, and that not without being much hurt, and bruised, so that much blood appeared about it: upon this, it was advised he should be bleeded, to prevent any ill accident that might come of the bruise; after bleeding, the ligature, or binder of his Arm was removed from thence, and conveyed about his middle, where it was strained with such violence, that the girding had almost stopp'd his breath, and kill'd him, and being cut asunder, it made a *strange and dismal noise*, so that the standers by were affrighted at it. At divers other times he hath been in danger to be strangled with Cravats, and Handkerchiefs, that he hath worn about his Neck, which have been drawn so close, that with the sudden violence he hath near been choaked, and hardly escaped death.

The Spectre hath shewed great offence at the Perriwigs which the young man used to wear, for they are often torn from his head after a very strange manner, one, that he esteemed above the rest, he put in a small box, and that box he placed in another, which he set against the wall of his Chamber, placing a Joint-stool, with other weight, a top of it; but in short time the boxes were broken in sunder, and the Perriwig rended into many small parts and tatters: Another time, lying in his Masters Chamber, with his Perriwig on his Head, to secure it from danger, within a little time it was torn from him, and reduced into very small fragments. At another time one of his Shoe-strings was observed (without the assistance of any hand) to come of its own accord out of his shoe, and fling itself to the other side of the Room; the other was crawling after it, but a Maid espying that, with her hand drew it out, and it strangely *clasp'd*, and *curl'd* about her hand like a living *Eel* . . .

Richard Bovet *Pandaemonium*

investigator has to depend on the integrity of the witnesses.

It is a typical and very puzzling feature of poltergeist outbreaks that they do not continue indefinitely. They last only a few days or weeks. It is difficult therefore to get conclusive evidence; by the time an outbreak becomes known outside the immediate vicinity, it is likely to be over or on the decline. When the investigator arrives on the scene things may be quiet again and he has to depend on the testimony of others. Very often the witnesses are persons of intelligence and integrity but the investigator may hesitate to accept what they say at its face value if they are members of the disturbed household, because he may feel that they are inclined to 'back one another up' or are trying to shield a member of the family whom they suspect of trickery.

The Drummer of Tidworth

However, the investigator does not always arrive too late. Since the 17th century there have been eye-witness accounts by men of education independent of the family affected by the disturbance. In 1666 the Rev Joseph Glanvill, a scholar and philosopher of some distinction, published an account of the famous 'Drummer of Tidworth' (or Tedworth) case and included his own first-hand experiences in the house which then stood on the site of the present Zouche Manor at Tidworth in Wiltshire. Mr Glanvill went upstairs and found 'two modest little girls in bed between seven and eleven years old'. A strange scratching sound seemed to come from behind the bolster. Glanvill exonerated the girls, whose hands were outside the bedclothes and, he says, 'made all the search that possible I could to find if there was any trick, contrivance or common cause of it, like did my friend but we could discover nothing . . .' Later, says Glanvill, 'I chanced to see as it had been something (what I thought was a rat or mouse) moving in a linen bag, that hung up against another bed . . . I stepped and caught it by the upper end with one hand, with which I held it, and drew it through the other, but found nothing at all in it. There was nobody near to shake the bag, or if there had, no-one could make such a motion which seemed to be from within, as if a living creature had moved in it.'

Glanvill's narrative seems eminently sensible, objective and matter of fact. It was written in an era when superstition was still rife although it was giving place to scepticism. Interestingly enough, reports of poltergeist cases were no more numerous than they are today. Out of 470 witchcraft trials in England only about five involved poltergeist phenomena; and since Glanvill's time one or two poltergeist cases have been reported annually in Britain. This suggests strongly that assertions of poltergeist activity are independent of the current climate of opinion. Outbreaks sufficiently dramatic or prolonged to become widely known are clearly rather rare, and both the rarity and the short duration of poltergeist disturbances are hindrances to scientific investigation. Nonetheless there is an appreciable number of cases where it is very difficult to find a good reason for setting aside eye-witness testimony, or to refuse to accept that the observers correctly described what they thought they saw and in fact did see what they thought they saw.

If there are genuine poltergeist cases in which these strange movements of objects occur, it raises challenging problems. At the least we have proof that there are physical forces at present unknown to science. Even if these forces should prove to be operated by 'spirits' or 'elementals', nonetheless they are physical forces as defined by the engineer, because to lift even a weight of only an ounce requires a force of one ounce weight. The 'poltergeist force', if not generated 'supernaturally', may have a purely physiological origin. On the other hand psychological factors may play a part in the genesis of this mysterious force which may be to some extent under unconscious mental control.

Furniture Moving By Itself

Any modern case with good witnesses is very exciting as it can cast some light on the mode by which the poltergeist force comes into play. It was the writer's privilege in 1961 to visit the scene of a poltergeist happening and obtain from no less than five first-class eye-witnesses written testimony based on their diary notes made only a few days before. In addition the possibility of 'mass-hallucination' was ruled out, one of the witnesses having made a tape-recording of some of the poltergeist noises. As in so many poltergeist cases the phenomena were invariably associated with a particular person.

The centre of the disturbance was a pretty little girl of 11 years of age, named Virginia. In the autumn of 1960 she was staying with her elder brother and his wife in Sauchie, a suburb of the town of Alloa on the river Forth in central Scotland. Virginia was an entirely normal child, loved and cared for by her relatives, endowed with physical and mental health, and is now a normal healthy and sensible adult. At the time school tests showed her intelligence to be above average.

When Virginia went to bed on Tuesday 22 November 1960, a sound described as a 'thunking' noise, like a ball bouncing, sounded in her bedroom. When she came downstairs to complain, the sound followed her, sounding in the wall of the stairway, and then in the wall of the living room. As with all the subsequent manifestations it ceased entirely when Virginia eventually fell asleep. At tea time next day she was sitting in an armchair next to a sideboard. Her relatives saw the sideboard move out five inches from the wall and then return to its place. No one had touched it throughout.

Witnesses who had been brought into the case in their professional capacities, and on whom special reliance may be placed, include the Rev Lund (Minister of Sauchie), Dr W. H. Nisbet and Dr William Logan (medical practitioners), Mrs Sheila Logan (Dr Logan's wife, also a qualified physician), and Miss Margaret Stewart, Virginia's class teacher at Sauchie school. Their statements are detailed and where they overlap are mutually corroborative. None of these witnesses were at all connected with the family or knew them other than very slightly.

On Wednesday 23 November, when Virginia was in bed but still awake, the Rev Lund (called in about midnight) found that violent knocking sounds were coming from the bed-head in circumstances which proved that it was not being struck by Virginia or by anyone else. He gripped the bed-head and felt it vibrating as it sounded. He also noticed a linen chest raise itself slightly from the floor with an uneasy rocking motion, travel with a jerky kind of movement through a distance of about 18 inches along the floor and then go back to its starting point. Putting his hand on top of it, Mr Lund found the chest to be slightly vibrating.

Attending Virginia's bedside on the following evening, Dr Nisbet heard knocking and a 'sawing noise'. He saw a peculiar rippling or puckering motion pass in a wave over the surface of the pillow. Later that night Mr Lund saw the pillow swing horizontally to a large angle from its proper position. Virginia's head was on one end of it but he saw no way by which she herself could cause this movement, by twisting her head or otherwise.

Virginia was kept at home until the Friday afternoon, when she returned to school. During a period of silent reading, her class teacher Miss Stewart saw Virginia trying to hold down the lid of her desk which was forcing itself upward by turning on its hinge. It rose three times. Miss Stewart was able to see that Virginia was not pushing it up with her knees. A little later on, the boy sitting behind Virginia left his desk to fetch a book. Miss Stewart saw this empty desk rise bodily into the air. The motion was quite slow and the desk rose only an inch or so off the floor, and finally settled down gently a little out of its original position. Miss Stewart who had not yet heard of the doings at Virginia's home, could not believe her eyes, but went straight over to the spot and verified that no strings or mechanism had been in operation.

The Rippling Bedspread

Phenomena continued in Virginia's bedroom that night. Dr Nisbet heard spells of knocking even when Virginia was lying motionless with the bed-clothes off. He saw the linen chest (standing in isolation) move distances of about a foot. There were swingings of the pillow and ripples along the bedcover.

On Saturday night Dr Logan saw the puckerings of the coverlet and a rotary pillow movement. Sunday was peaceful but poltergeist activity recommenced at school on Monday morning. While the class was busily writing Virginia came out to Miss Stewart for help with a question, and was standing a little aside from Miss Stewart's desk with her hands clasped behind her back. A blackboard pointer lying on the desk started to vibrate, worked itself to the edge and fell off. Meanwhile the desk, a substantial object, vibrated and slewed itself round a foot or two.

That evening, in the hope that a change of air might be beneficial, Virginia was sent to stay with an aunt at the neighbouring town of Dollar. When Dr Nisbet visited he heard knockings audible from outside the front door. On the following Tuesday Dr and Mrs Logan searched diligently for the source of noises ranging from gentle tappings to violent agitated raps. Unsuccessful in finding any normal cause for the sounds, they found that at one stage the noises seemed to be emanating from a point in mid-air near Virginia's bed.

Virginia came back to Sauchie on the Wednesday, when all stayed quiet. But the next evening, 1 December, was an active one. Rigging up lights and cine-camera, Dr Nisbet and Dr Logan tried to record on film some of the ripplings of the bedspread. But this proved difficult as the movements were of short duration. However a tape-recorder was kept running and collected sounds ranging from barely perceptible taps to agitated knocks emanating from a variety of apparent points of origin in the walls, floor and at times in mid-air. A persistent harsh, rasping noise often occurred simultaneously with the knockings. Meanwhile a service of intercession (not an exorcism) consisting of prayers and reading was being held in the house, in the hope that it might do some good. As it happened, things did quieten down thereafter and the poltergeist phenomena became muted and infrequent, dying out altogether in a few weeks.

Phenomena attributed to poltergeists include movements of objects, flinging of mud and stones, and the production of mysterious noises. Experience of objects moving 'of their own accord' may have contributed to folktales about magic sticks or clubs which jump up and beat people: an illustration to 'The Three Tailors' one of the tales collected by the Brothers Grimm

To those unfamiliar with poltergeist cases the account given may seem fantastic and unbelievable. But there is no real ground for setting aside any of the testimony, which has been recorded in much greater detail elsewhere. Poltergeist phenomena are therefore a fact and a very interesting one, although one that is not easy to assimilate to existing scientific knowledge. The Sauchie case illustrates the sporadic, unpredictable yet repetitive occurrence of the poltergeist

phenomena. The repetition is very typical of many other published cases. As the testimony is both detailed and reliable the case happens to be a wonderfully 'diagnostic' one. It was clear that the happenings were connected only with Virginia and had nothing to do with the place where she might be. In brief, the Sauchie case is a particularly clear-cut example of a type of outbreak in which there is a complete correlation between the occurrence of poltergeist phenomena and a particular person whom we can describe as the 'poltergeist focus' or as a 'poltergeist individual'. This correlation has far-reaching logical implications. For instance, it rules out the possibility that the events are random breakdowns in the laws of Nature, or the result of random fluctuations of atoms, and so on (see MIRACLES).

When we ask if the phenomena are supernatural, we encounter the usual difficulties attaching to the terms supernatural and natural. Few nowadays believe that poltergeists are imps called up by witches to harass their enemies. But what of the supreme Adversary himself? Many Roman Catholic devout, including the Curé of Ars (see CURÉ OF ARS), seem to have suffered persecutions similar to poltergeist doings, and some Catholic writers have regarded these assaults as diabolical miracles. The people who, in secular poltergeist cases, function temporarily as 'poltergeist foci' tend to be amiable, decent and respectable but they can as a rule hardly be said to be so religious or devout as to invite the attention of his infernal Majesty.

In problems of natural as opposed to supernatural causation, assistance may be gained from a helpful principle first enunciated by Hippocrates (c 460–380 BC), which may be called the principle of correlation. Writing of epilepsy, a supposedly miraculous disease induced entirely at the will of the gods, he noted that it did not strike at random but was correlated with a certain type of person.

What kind of people are more likely to be the centre of a poltergeist upheaval? Only statistics can answer this question. The present writer listed 27 cases in which the testimony seemed reasonably reliable and the events appeared to be associated with a particular individual. The poltergeist focus was female in 17 cases and male in the remaining ten. It is commonly said that poltergeist outbreaks are usually associated with adolescent girls. And from our sample there would seem to be some truth in this, taken in a rather broad sense. But statistically speaking, the figures so far as they go are not inconsistent with the sexes being equally prone to poltergeistery, though they are equally consistent with the possibility that the poltergeist focus is twice as likely to be a girl as a boy. In 25 cases out of the 27 we have information as to the age of the poltergeist individual, and it shows that the presumed association with adolescence is again true in only a wide sense. Most of the 25 individuals were between ten and 20 years of age, with a few notable exceptions.

As the sample shows there is a strong age factor involved. Indeed adult cases are rather hard to come by. With some effort I found records of about 11 such cases, in eight of which a female figured and males in three only; which suggests that the ratio of female to male incidence is in fact about in the ratio of two to one. Considering a group of 79 cases (including some of the 27 already mentioned and others less critically chosen) we find in aggregate 53 females to 26 males which (doubtless by chance) is almost exactly two to one. Thus there is a sex-effect in 'poltergeist-proneness', but males are far from enjoying immunity. However, poltergeist outbreaks clearly do not occur at random but are correlated with juvenility and femininity. On the principle of correlation (non-random incidence), this suggests that obscure natural causes play some part in bringing poltergeistery into being.

The Naturalistic Theory

Even if we acknowledge the presence of obscure natural causes as factors in 'poltergeistery', we are still left with a serious logical choice to make, because the Spiritualistic type of explanation cannot be set aside without scientific reasons for so doing. The Spiritualistic explanation assumed that the poltergeist focus is really a 'medium', a link or intermediary enabling a disembodied spirit to manifest its presence. On this view two elements are required for poltergeist phenomena; a spirit and a living medium. The Spiritualistic explanation leaves many questions open. For instance, does the spirit itself move the objects, or merely endow the medium with the capacity to act at a distance (the faculty sometimes called psychokinesis)? An alternative explanation assumes that the poltergeist focus is herself, at least temporarily, capable of psychokinesis usually without conscious intent or awareness of the fact. On this view there is no 'poltergeist' or 'spirit' involved other than that of the living poltergeist girl.

It would, of course, be improper to prefer the naturalistic explanation if, in the type of poltergeist case under discussion, there were definite indications of attempted communication from another world or from beyond the grave. However, in only a small proportion of cases it is alleged that the noises appear to take the form of coded raps. And even in these cases such communications as are inferred do not seem to be readily identifiable with such as we might expect from spirits of the dead or even with coherent personalities.

Apparitions are rare in poltergeist cases. There are some moderately well-evidenced cases, though only a few, in which the poltergeist (it is said) has carried on long conversations in human speech. Since speech is merely a form of sound these allegations are not necessarily preposterous, even though we cannot as yet place much reliance on them being true. However, such talking poltergeists as have been reported bring no important messages from other worlds. They are usually cheeky, flippant, fanciful and scatter-brained, and appear to have no stock of notions in any way different from those of the historical period in which they are manifested. This, for what it is worth, supports the concept of the poltergeist as a functioning of an unconscious part of a living human mind rather than as a messenger from the dead.

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Poltergeist phenomena are frequently associated with one particular person, and often with a child or adolescent, as in the case at Sauchie in Scotland in 1960 (*top*), which involved peculiar noises and movements of objects: a linen chest raised itself a little off the floor and travelled across the floor with an uneasy rocking motion *Above* Douglas Drew, a boy who was the centre of poltergeist activities which were investigated by Harry Price, who also played an important role in the inquiries into phenomena at Borley Rectory *Right* Cartoon by 'Poy' in the London *Evening News*, based on the phenomena of Eleonore Zugrun

It needs to be stressed that the evidence against the Spiritualistic hypothesis is of a purely negative kind. Nor do I wish to insist that deceased persons never communicate; a question which remains open. However, I think that the naturalistic explanation is to be preferred for poltergeist cases of the type under consideration, where the happenings centre on a poltergeist focus. On this theory the poltergeist individual himself activates physical forces of obscure origin. Because of their selective mode of application these forces are not simply equivalent to electricity, magnetism or gravitation, but are of a new kind. Also the forces show no especial affinity with those supposed to be productive of physical phenomena at mediumistic seances. Ectoplasm is conspicuously absent in poltergeist cases. Poltergeist phenomena rarely require darkness and are almost

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invariably observed in full light. In the few poltergeist cases where anything resembling a trance is reported, the phenomena, oddly enough, do not seem to happen during the trance but at other times.

On the naturalistic theory, should poltergeist studies be regarded as falling in the field of psychical research – as opposed to physics and physiology? Is there anything psychic about them? The answer is, yes. Poltergeist phenomena never centre on animals: poltergeist cats and dogs are unknown. In addition, no poltergeistery occurs when the poltergeist individual is in normal sleep. Thus the higher brain centres are in some way involved, and the problem is psycho-biological as well as physico-physiological. This suggests that it is profitable to look for psychological factors in causation.

Pubertal Changes

Sometimes emphasis has been placed on purely biological factors. Thus the juvenility of poltergeist individuals encouraged Hereward Carrington (a distinguished parapsychologist), writing in 1930, to associate poltergeistery with puberty: 'An energy seems to be radiated from the body . . . when the sexual energies are blossoming into maturity . . . It would almost seem as if these energies instead of taking the normal course . . . find this curious means of externalization.' Now I perceive in this remark the germ of a correct theory but it will not do as it stands. Admittedly it is a curious fact that many poltergeist foci do enjoy good physical health and their intelligence is at least average. However, the amount of energy used in poltergeist manifestations is quite trivial in relation to the normal physical activities of youth. Also Carrington's theory can hardly apply to cases of adult poltergeist individuals. Despite the fact that many poltergeist foci are in the age range ten to 20, it is by no means clear that the poltergeist disturbances coincide at all precisely with pubertal changes. However, there may be something to be said for a modified form of Carrington's theory in which we think not of physiological energy but of emotional tension which can occur both before and after puberty.

It is an interesting fact that though poltergeist individuals are in the main healthy, a few of them have suffered from curious fits or turns. A careful examination of the case histories shows that these fits are not epileptic but something quite different – hysterical attacks. One of the most interesting examples was that of 'Karin N.' who lived in a house in the middle of a forest in southern Sweden, for the good reason that in 1897 she had married Mr N., an Inspector of Forests. In 1905 Karin, then aged 27, was investigated by Dr Hjalmar Wijk of Gothenburg and Dr Paul Bjerre. Karin was basically healthy and of strong physical constitution. The marriage was childless and from 1898 Karin exhibited various neurotic symptoms. These took the form of fainting fits, which sometimes occurred several times a day. A fit would be preceded by a violent and unconquerable feeling of anxiety which ceased when the fit commenced. In the fit Karin's arms would tremble and sometimes her whole body also. She would then lie in a paroxysm of tears and laughter with partially veiled consciousness and incapable of voluntary speech or motion. From May 1904 the villa which Karin and her husband had occupied in April was agitated by mysterious knockings, occurring (as is typical of many poltergeist cases) in the evenings when Karin was in bed but not asleep. Karin's illness was correctly diagnosed as hysteria, a condition in which the patient is truly ill but totally ignorant of the real cause of his illness, which is psychological and locked away in the unconscious part of his mind.

Hysterical 'Absences'

Karin is not the sole instance of a poltergeist person with a hysterical illness. Hysterical fits, faints and comas were characteristic of Floralina, a poltergeist girl in India in 1897, of Mary Langdon at Youghal near Cork in 1661, and of Germaine Maire at Nancy, France, in 1910, who suffered from transitory losses of full consciousness which could well have been hysterical 'absences'. Esther Cox, the heroine of the sensational poltergeist haunting at Amherst, Nova Scotia, in 1878, was said to swell visibly, signifying hysterical meteorism or aerophagy, in which air is sucked involuntarily into the stomach. About 1898 Mary Carrick, an Irish servant-girl in Boston, was pursued by raps on the walls of any room where she was working and quite heavy objects would move in her presence. Knockings occurred by her bedside during her sleep in apparent exception to the rule that a waking state is necessary for poltergeistery. But she would cry out and stir agitatedly in her sleep which was not normal on these occasions. In fact Mary was a somnambulist. She would get up in the night and do housework while sleep-walking. About 1840 Mary Jobson of Sunderland had pains in the head, abdominal swelling, convulsive fits and insensitivity in regions of the skin. Then she became blind, deaf and dumb. Poltergeistery ensued: throwings of water and violent knockings. The illness was not mortal. She had a sudden recovery which amply confirms a retrospective diagnosis of hysteria. Angélique Cottin, investigated by the French Academy of Science in 1846, had some symptoms also reconcilable with hysteria. Her left arm was at a raised temperature; it trembled and was easily put into a muscular spasm.

It would be wrong to suggest that all poltergeist people are or have been hysterical. Indeed the majority show no sign of this or any other psychological ailment. But the proportion of markedly hysterical persons is certainly high among poltergeist people as compared with a random sample of the general population. This suggests rather forcibly that poltergeist happenings like hysteria are psychologically triggered off. We must suppose also that the psychological mechanism which precipitates a poltergeist outbreak involves some of the same factors as are encountered in the production of a hysterical illness.

Hysteria and dissociative reactions constitute only one group of a class of ailments known as neuroses. Neuroses have no organic cause; they are psychological illnesses. A neurotic has no derangement of his mind or reason. It is basically a disturbance of the emotions in a person who is essentially normal and of good character, *not* a psychopath. One kind of neurosis is the anxiety attack, spells of 'free-floating' dread such as Karin had before her fits. Betsy Bell of Tennessee, the centre of elaborate poltergeistery in 1817, seems not to have been hysterical but to have suffered from the 'hyper-ventilation syndrome', in which an anxiety attack engenders 'over-breathing' so that the victim faints, from temporary oxygen-poisoning. It was *after* these fainting fits that the Bell poltergeistery would commence each evening. It is tempting to suppose that *in* some way the poltergeist phenomena relieved Betsy's anxiety. In Karin's case her anxiety was relieved by her hysterical fits. As we say: the anxiety was 'converted' into the hysterical symptoms. We can therefore hazard the guess that for Karin there were two forms of relief of anxiety, conversion into hysterical symptoms on the one hand and poltergeistery on the other. In each case the process would be an unconscious one.

Is poltergeistery therefore a conversion neurosis? Is anxiety converted into noises and flinging of objects? This temptingly simple theory is not quite adequate. Unless relieved suddenly by one of the 'miracle' cures so typical of this field, hysterical conversion symptoms tend to be durable. Looked at from this point of view the mystery of poltergeistery is not so much why it starts as why it usually stops. We could liken it to a mild infection such as chickenpox from which the victims invariably recover in a week or two. It runs its course like a fever. And fever is not so much the disease itself as the body's effort at cure. Pursuing this analogy, we might guess that poltergeistery starts but eventually terminates because it is not a disease but the cure.

'Blowing Off Steam'

In 1895 Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer published a series of papers entitled *Studies on Hysteria* in which they sought for a scientific theory of how hysteria comes about. Much of what they said is directly applicable to the poltergeist problem. In all human beings there is a natural tendency to keep emotional tension (or 'excitation' as Freud called it) down to a moderate level. A surplus of excitement is disturbing and the individual therefore has a variety of means for dissipating it. Sometimes this can be achieved in a direct way. Love or anger can be subdued by erotic activity or by taking revenge. Life is not always so simple but fortunately there is another mechanism which is usually effective. This is the 'wearing away' or erosion of the excitation, which takes place by a process of intellectual activity, 'cooling off' by thinking around the situation or 'talking it over', even if only with oneself.

In addition, Freud and Breuer drew attention to a third normal mechanism, 'working-off', for disposing of the charge of emotional tension. This mode of reducing tension employs physical activity and tends to occur in an automatic and instinctive fashion. When fearful or enraged or in mental or physical pain, we are apt to tense our muscles, pace the floor, utter lamentations or curses, or indulge in sobs and tears. These activities are often quite pointless as regards improving the objective situation but popular wisdom acknowledges their role in reducing tension by such proverbial phrases as 'blowing off steam' or 'crying oneself out'. These colloquialisms point the contrast between the method of 'working-off' and that of dissipating tension by 'wearing away', which is popularly described as 'talking it over' or 'thinking it out'.

The physical activity of 'working-off' is itself a substitute for direct fulfilment. According to Freud and Breuer, when Bismarck the German Chancellor had to suppress angry feelings in the King's presence he would subsequently resolve the tension created by smashing an expensive vase upon the floor. A similar delayed or surrogate reaction is sometimes observed in small but generally well-behaved children who occasionally astonish their elders by sudden and isolated acts of vandalism accompanied by no outward sign of temper or irritation.

This brings us close to the psychological meaning of poltergeistery. I believe that poltergeistery is a 'working-off' *à la* Bismarck of emotional tension. There is some reason to believe that it happens by an unconscious process, because the poltergeist person usually seems to have no conscious control over the happenings and only the dimmest awareness that she or he is responsible for the happenings. This suggests that poltergeistery occurs in those most liable to psychological repression; which squares with the fact that many actual hysterics are represented among poltergeist people. Of course, more elaborate features may be superimposed on the process and the form of the manifestation (like the symptoms of hysteria and other neuroses) may be capable of having a symbolic content reflecting the specific emotional issues involved. This theory, while explaining several of the curious features of poltergeistery, of course sheds no light on the physical nature of the poltergeist force and little light on the mysterious age factor.

A. R. G. OWEN

Harry Price Library

Cartoon of the Drummer of Tidworth, a famous 17th century case in which drumming noises were heard on the roof and pieces of furniture moved about of their own accord. An observer saw 'as it had been something (what I thought was a rat or mouse) moving in a linen bag, that hung up against another bed . . . I stepped and caught it . . . but found nothing at all in it.'

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The religious ideas of the Polynesians were sophisticated, complex and poetical; both they and the Micronesians believed that the islands on which they lived had been drawn up from the sea by semi-divine fishermen

POLYNESIA AND MICRONESIA

THE ORIGIN of the Polynesians and Micronesians, who people almost every speck of inhabitable land in the Pacific north and east of Melanesia, (see MELANESIA), has been argued since Captain Cook's voyage of discovery in the 18th century. The evidence shows that their ultimate links are with Asia, but recent research suggests that they became a distinct group in the area of eastern Melanesia and western Polynesia, and then spread eastwards to the central groups and north to Hawaii, south-east to Easter Island and south-west to New Zealand (see MAORI). The Micronesians, especially in the west, have been influenced by later immigrations from Asia.

The history of these peoples is very relevant in a religious context. When it was believed that they left Asia as a distinct ethnic group, it was natural to look for origins of their religion and mythology among the ancient Asiatic civilizations: their metaphysical ideas were compared with those of the Vedic Aryans, for instance. Now interest centres as much on the relationship of their ideas with those of the Melanesians, with whom they seem to share a common origin.

Like the Melanesians, the Polynesians when whites discovered them were at a 'Neolithic' cultural level, using ground stone or shell for their cutting tools. In most of the islands they subsisted mainly by gardening but, especially on the small atolls, they also depended heavily on the sea.

Their religious and metaphysical ideas

Head of one of the colossal stone images on Easter Island; these figures, weighing up to 50 tons, were cut from compressed ash quarried from the crater of an extinct volcano. They represent ancestors, and stood in burying-places P. Beighton

were, by comparison with their simple material culture, sophisticated, complex and poetical. All Polynesians had myths about the beginning of the world. Some feature a deity who is the Creator, others emphasize an evolutionary sequence. In Tonga and Samoa the Creator was Tangaloa (Tangaroa, Ta'aroa), who existed alone above a vast expanse of water. He threw down a stone, which became land, and gave his bird-messenger a vine to plant. The vine withered and rotted, and in the decomposing matter grew a swarm of maggots which became men and women.

Ta'aroa also seems to have been the Creator in the Society Islands. According to Tueira Henry, author of *Ancient Tahiti*, '. . . Ta'aroa sat in his shell in darkness from eternity. The shell was like an egg revolving in endless space, with no sky, no land, no sea, no moon, no sun, no stars. All was darkness, it was continuous thick darkness . . .' The notion of an original void, or chaos, in which there was nothing material or tangible, is common.

Whatever its origin, once created the world evolved. At first the sky father and the earth mother lay embraced, and their offspring, the gods, were born into the darkness between them. Finally one (often Tane) decided to separate them, and thrust the sky up into its present position, allowing light into the world. Evolution often proceeds by a series of procreative acts, pairs of personified abstractions producing offspring unlike themselves, but there is also an idea of continuous growth and development.

Most of the great gods are found throughout Polynesia, but their names and attributes differ in the various groups, and some islands had deities unknown elsewhere. The New Zealand Maori seem to have had a supreme Creator called Io. The name occurs again (as Ihoiho) in Tahiti. One has to distinguish between Io as a true Creator of all things, and the gods who bring order out of chaos. Tangaroa was especially the god of the sea, but in the outlying groups became of minor importance, sometimes as a forest god.

Tane was primarily a sky god, of special importance in the Society and Cook Islands and in Hawaii. He was also lord of the forest and, as a result, the patron of woodworkers. In Mangaia, one of the islands in the Cook archipelago, his symbol was a stone-bladed adze, into which he was believed to enter on ceremonial occasions. In some mythologies he created woman and was regarded as the life-giving force.

Tu (Ku in Hawaii) was a war god. In the Society Islands he was associated with Ta'aroa in the creation myths, but his function as war god was usurped by Oro, a son of Ta'aroa, who became the supreme deity. But in Hawaii Ku, in various forms, was supreme.

Rongo was widely known in central and eastern Polynesia, alternative forms of his name being Lono in Hawaii, and Ono in the Marquesas Islands. He was an agricultural god, in whose honour harvest festivals were celebrated; he was also patron of singing and music. In a Hawaiian legend he sailed away, overcome with grief at the death of his wife, but promised to return one day in a canoe laden with food. The Hawaiians took Captain Cook for the returning Lono, and their disillusion led to his death.

Goddesses were of less importance. Hina or Hine appears in many forms. According to the Maori tale, Tane created Hine from the sand of the sea-shore as a mate for himself, and took their daughter Hine-Titama, the dawn maiden, as his wife. When she discovered their dual relationship she fled to Po, the underworld, and so originated death. Hine in her different aspects was the goddess of death and the underworld and, as the first woman, a source of fertility. She was also associated with the moon and with women's crafts.

Keeping the Blood Pure

The great gods were too remote to take much interest in the daily affairs of ordinary people, which were the concern of numerous lesser deities: local or family gods, or those who watched over certain crafts or activities. Some were sons or descendants of the great gods, others were deified ancestors. The two classes merged, for chiefs were themselves descended from gods.

The Polynesians felt that all creation – gods, mortals and Nature – was one. Natural and supernatural were equally real, and equally significant, aspects of experience. The whole of creation was pervaded by a force, *mana* (see MANA), which showed itself in power, efficacy, success, skill, fruitfulness, prowess. It was beneficial if rightly directed, but always dangerous. Religion was concerned with controlling and directing mana, with increasing it where it was needed, with shielding man from its dangers. The moral content in Polynesian religion was slight. What mattered was not probity or standards of conduct but the correct performance of ritual. Breaches of custom might offend the gods and be punished, but punishment could be averted by offerings. There is no clear distinction between religion and magic, since both aim to control and make use of mana, though in general religion works for social ends whereas the aims of magic would often be considered antisocial.

Chiefs were directly descended from the gods, and were therefore charged with mana. A chief who was descended from a god through an unbroken line of oldest sons was not only the senior in a political or social sense; he also possessed the most potent mana. The mana of a chief was the mana of his people, as he was the main link between his tribe and the gods and the non-physical world. Because any diminution of this force was a matter of general concern, it was essential that the blood be kept pure. A Hawaiian chief of the senior line therefore married his sister.

The chief had obligations to his people as well as autocratic power over them. He had to ensure that his mana was not diminished and that commoners did not come to harm by accidental contact with it. The consequent restrictions could be extremely onerous.

One of the means by which mana was manipulated, and danger from it avoided,

C. M. Dixon

Figures representing gods or spirits are common in Polynesia: this wooden image from the Austral Islands shows Tangaroa, a Creator and sea god, in the act of creating gods and men

was the institution called taboo (see TABOO). The word covers a number of related concepts. A chief and anything connected with him were taboo, because contact was dangerous (often fatal) to his inferiors and because at the same time it diminished his mana and therefore that of his people. This kind of taboo was automatic and unavoidable; but a chief could use his mana positively to impose a taboo, on a place, an activity, the consumption of a certain food.

These taboos derived from sacredness. Another type derived from pollution. Women, especially, were charged with this kind of power; their reproductive organs and functions were the greatest danger to sacredness. Death, sickness and women (especially at childbirth and menstruation), were contaminating; all who came into contact with them were in peril. At childbirth and periodically, therefore, women retired to special huts in the bush.

A mao contaminated in this way, or by contact with excessive mana, could be restored to a state of *noa*, or normality, by ritual and by means of the cleansing agents, fire and water. In the same way a crop which had been under taboo, or a new canoe or house which acquired mana during the making, had to be made noa before they became free for general use.

The Polynesian sense of the unity of all creation probably explains the licence which characterized certain harvest festivals, and the performances of societies of entertainers such as the Arioi of Tahiti.

Axel Poignant

Two-headed figure from Tahiti; images representing ancestral spirits or minor deities were frequently the familiars of sorcerers, who derived their powers from the spirits

C. M. Dixon

Dances celebrating the unity of all creation were a feature of certain Polynesian harvest festivals; wooden figure, from Hawaii, depicting a dancer passing into a trance

These were religious in nature and consisted of recounting creation myths, singing, drumming, miming and dancing. As they proceeded they became more and more erotic, the tempo accelerated, and finally all present (or in some accounts, only the lower grades) succumbed to a frenzy of sexual abandon. The gods were believed to be present enjoying these performances, and as the people copulated so did the gods, and all Nature was fructified.

Unlike the Melanesians, the Polynesians had specialist priests who varied in grade and function, though on great occasions the chief himself often officiated. The temple priests, often of noble rank, were in charge of ritual. They presented sacrifices to the gods, conducted ceremonies, released from taboo those who had come into contact with divinity. They were the repositories of sacred learning, and some groups ran schools in which chiefs' sons were instructed in the sacred lore. The second kind were the inspirational priests, subject to possession by their god who spoke through them. They were consulted before all important enterprises. Others, considered inferior, were mediums who were able to contact spirits, and who were consulted in case of sickness, to detect thieves and on similar occasions.

The presence in most of Polynesia of temples or sacred enclosures is another point of difference from Melanesia. In Tonga and Samoa the graves of chiefs served the purpose, but in the eastern groups temples were more elaborate. The Society Islands had family, district and royal temples, and temples associated with occupations such as canoe-building and fishing. They often had stone platforms, superimposed and stepped back at each level, and a walled forecourt. A stepped platform in Tahiti was 44 feet in height. Some temples in Hawaii and Tahiti provided sanctuary for criminals, or refugees in time of war.

Fickle Gods

Figures representing gods or spirits, many of them important deities, are found widely in Polynesia. In the Marquesas and on Easter Island they represent ancestors, and the figures in human form from Tahiti also seem to be of ancestral spirits or perhaps minor deities, in many cases the familiars of sorcerers. In this island the great gods were represented by blocks of wood covered with closely-plaited coconut-fibre cord set with red feathers, red being the sacred colour. These figures were not in themselves sacred, but became so when the god or spirit descended into them. Nor did they necessarily represent the deity's actual appearance. In some islands gods were symbolized by paddles, clubs or intricately-carved batons.

In ritual, forms of words were all-important. Exactness was essential; any error not only made the ceremony ineffective but could endanger the life of the priest. This was especially so when, as sometimes happened, the ritual consisted of repeating the precise words of the god.

Ritual was almost always accompanied by sacrifice. First-fruits – from the gardens, or of fish when a new season began – were offered to the god whose creatures they were, as an act of conciliation. Pigs were commonly sacrificed on important occasions, but at a family meal the offering would be merely a few morsels of food.

In Tahiti and the Marquesas human sacrifices were made before a war, and in Hawaii when an image of Ku or a new war canoe was made. The Hawaiians also placed a victim at the foundation of a sacred building. It seems that the soul, tied to the site by ritual and by the presence of the body, became a guardian spirit.

The fickleness of Polynesian gods is illustrated by the Tahitian practice of making offerings near a besieged enemy to lure his gods away. A deity's followers were equally fickle: a god who failed his people would be abused, insulted and abandoned. This perhaps explains the changes in function and status of deities, and the willingness with which most Polynesians adopted Christianity.

The Sorcerer and the Soul

The Polynesians believed that the soul could leave the body without causing immediate death, and that dreams were the experiences of the wandering soul. In sickness it could be caught and restored by experts, but it might also be trapped by enemies. In Pukapuka, an atoll of the Cook group, a priest whose god had been offended would make a trap consisting of a series of coconut-fibre rings and suspend it from a tree over the offender's house. If a bird or insect flew through one of the rings the offender's soul was captured.

Sorcerers had other means of destroying people by attacking their souls. Hair, nail-parings, or fragments of food left by the victim could be burnt or buried with magical objects, and his soul would then be extinguished. The sorcerer could also send an evil spirit to attack his soul.

Sickness could be sent by a god to punish a transgression, or by discontented spirits of the dead who had not been accorded the usual ceremonies. In either case a propitiatory rite and an offering might bring about a cure. Since the progress of the soul to the next world, and its status and survival there, depended on rites performed by the living, it was justifiably annoyed by neglect.

Sorcerers derived their power from spirits or used them as their agents. In Hawaii a sorcerer could create his own powerful familiar. The body of a dead person was obtained, the bones and hair preserved, and regular offerings made to the spirit to build up its power. Such a familiar might destroy its creator if it was not regularly sustained by offerings.

After death the ghost soon began its journey to the land of the dead. Usually this was to the west, and most islands had a place at the western end from which souls were thought to leave. In western Polynesia the afterworld was called Pulotu, but in the eastern groups it was often Hawaiki, the homeland. The souls of commoners, or those for whom the rites had been omitted, often failed to overcome the dangers of the journey or to survive for long in the afterworld, but chiefs and eminent people could expect immortality.

Axel Poignant

Carved figures in the courtyard of the temple of Honaunau in Hawaii; the deified bones of the chiefs were at one time buried there, and it was a sanctuary for criminals and for refugees at times of war

The less fortunate souls might go to Po, which sometimes meant extinction and sometimes an underworld, ruled by Miru. In the Cook Islands Miru was an ogress who cooked and ate the souls of ordinary men. The Marquesas had three underworlds, ranging from pleasant to wretched, and the soul's destination depended on the rites and offerings made on its behalf, and also, no doubt, on rank and prowess.

Apart from cosmogonic myths, and legends concerning the wanderings and origin of the peoples of the different islands – many of which undoubtedly have historical foundation – there are numerous tales about the adventures of heroes and heroines, about the pranks of tricksters, about ogres and demons. A favourite hero, often regarded as a demigod, is Tahaki. He is the epitome of the great chief: brave, resourceful, handsome, full of mana, gracious and at ease, proud but patient. His adventures do not show him as perfect. That would be dull. He has his faults, he is occasionally foolish, his numerous love affairs do not always go easily.

Tahaki's grandson Rata is a hero of a different kind, a great seaman and adventurer, headstrong, quick-tempered, determined. His mother, Tahiti Tokerau, was abducted by one Puna, who plucked out her eyes to serve as lights and buried her head downwards in the sand so that her feet could be supports for the baskets of Puna's wife. When Rata grew up he determined to rescue his mother. He built a great canoe with the aid of wood spirits, who had at first been angered by his action in cutting down a tree but relented when they heard of his project. Finally, after numerous adventures, overcoming monstrous guardians and other dangers, he slew Puna and released Tahiti Tokerau. Several chiefly lines claimed descent from Rata.

Probably the most popular hero was Maui. Born prematurely and discarded by his mother, he was rescued and reared by the gods. After learning everything they could teach him he rejoined his mortal family. The stories of his adventures are innumerable. He feared no one and respected no one. No institution or taboo was sacred to him. In a society as rigidly hierarchical and strictly governed by etiquette as the Polynesian, the Maui stories must have provided a welcome safety-valve.

Many of his escapades are simply tricks or jokes, in which he makes the pompous or the great appear ridiculous, or outwits the clever. But some of his greatest feats were of benefit to man. He lassoed the sun, which used to race across the sky, and so gave people the day as we know it, with time to work and cook meals. He stole fire, which man had lacked. He fished up islands from the depths of the ocean, according to some accounts with a hook made from his grandmother's jaw-bone (and therefore possessing great mana).

His last adventure, though it led to his death, was his greatest: he tried to save humanity from having to die. Accompanied by his friends the birds he sought out Hina, the goddess of death. He found her asleep. Warning his companions to keep silent so as not to wake her, he attempted to kill her by crawling between her thighs into her body and emerging from her mouth. When only his legs were still visible the ridiculous sight was too much for the wagtail, which let out an uncontrollable chuckle. Hina awoke, closed her legs together, and Maui was crushed.

Micronesian Religion

The mythology and the religious and magical ideas of Micronesia form a less cohesive and clear-cut pattern than those of Polynesia. Cosmogonic myths are relatively unimportant. Certain groups had a Creator being, and the concept of an original chaos or void is present, but many Micronesians seem to have regarded the world as always existing: the task of the Creators was to make it habitable. Stories of the separation of earth and sky are fairly common. As in Polynesia, islands were drawn up from the sea by semi-divine fishermen, whose names are sometimes variants of Maui. There are stories about the snaring of the sun, the obtaining of fire, and other themes popular in Polynesia and other regions.

Many tales concern man-eating monsters or ogres, ferocious but stupid, who are often overcome by children: a theme common in Melanesia. Another group explains the

origins of food taboos: for example, there is the story of the porpoise girl who came ashore at night to watch men dancing, removing and hiding her tail. A man found it, thereby preventing her return to the sea, and married her. After a while she found its hiding place and went back to the sea, warning her children that they must never eat porpoise meat.

Ancestor worship seems to have been a more conspicuous element in religion than it was in Polynesia. Supernatural beings who were not of human origin were less prominent in cult, and their spheres were less clearly defined. Among the most important families of gods were those concerned with canoe-building and seafaring.

Everywhere sacrifices and offerings were made, but human sacrifice was apparently absent. Ritual, and the priesthood, were less highly developed; and possession by a god was unusual, though there were mediums who communicated with the spirits of the dead or with lesser deities. Representations of gods or spirits were rather rare.

In general chiefs were not considered sacred and though they were treated with great respect their powers were more limited than in Polynesia. As a result the belief that danger could be caused by contact with a chief's mana was not strongly held, though a chief could impose taboos. Mana seems to derive more from a personal relationship with a spirit than from the universal power of gods and Nature, as in Polynesia.

B. A. L. CRANSTONE

FURTHER READING: For an account of Polynesian mythology see Katharine Luomala, *Voices on the Wind* (Bishop Museum Press, Honolulu, 1955); for a comprehensive account of Oceanic myths, including those of Polynesia and Micronesia, see Roslyn Poignant, *Oceanic Mythology* (Hamlyn, 1967); for a penetrating general analysis of taboo customs and beliefs, see F. Steiner, *Taboo* (Penguin, 1968); for discussion of the religious ideas of the central Polynesian groups, see R. W. Williamson, *Religion and Social Organization in Central Polynesia* (AMS Press reprint); the most useful work on the Polynesian view of the supernatural is E. S. C. Handy, *Polynesian Religion* (Kraus reprint).

Scala

Polytheism

From Greek words for 'many' and 'god', belief in many gods, who preside over different departments of Nature and aspects of life; distinguished from monotheism, belief that there is only one God, and from henotheism, devotion to a single god without asserting that he is the only one.

C. M. Dixon

Pomegranate

A symbol of fertility, because of its many seeds; in a Turkish custom, a bride throws one on the ground and the number of seeds scattered when it breaks shows how many children she will have; the mother of the god Attis conceived him by putting a pomegranate in her bosom; it was a pomegranate seed which Persephone ate in the underworld, committing her to spending a third of each year there: in Christian art, a symbol of hope.

PONTIUS PILATE

IF PONTIUS PILATE had not sentenced to crucifixion a Galilean Jew who became the Saviour God of Christianity, he would be known today only to a few students of ancient history. But that fateful sentence has caused his name to be remembered down the centuries.

To understand Pilate's curious fortune in legend, it is necessary first to know what history tells about him. Except for one broken inscription and a few coins, our knowledge of Pilate comes from three sources: Philo, a Jew of Alexandria who was a contemporary of Pilate's; Josephus, a Palestinian Jew who was born a year after Pilate left Judaea in 36 AD; and the four Christian gospels, which date respectively from about 71 to 100 AD.

But these sources, although they are close in time to the events they relate, are all strongly motivated by interests other than historical accuracy in their accounts of Pilate. Both Philo and Josephus were Jewish apologists, concerned to show the Roman government of their day that the Jews were

Sonia Halliday

According to St Matthew's gospel, Pontius Pilate washed his hands before the crowd at Jesus's trial, saying 'I am innocent of this man's blood . . .'; in fact, Pilate probably ordered his death because he was convinced that Jesus was politically dangerous: 15th century wall painting, Cyprus

a loyal and peaceable people, whom bad Roman governors had provoked. The authors of the gospels were moved by a very different interest. They sought to explain Pilate's condemnation of Jesus by making the Jewish leaders responsible for the charge of sedition on which he was executed (see JESUS).

From the tendentious evidence of Josephus, whose writings are our chief source of information, it can be ascertained that Pontius Pilate was appointed governor of Judaea in 26 AD and continued in office until 36. His title, as an inscription found in 1961 shows, was 'praefectus of Judaea'. As praefectus he was responsible for maintaining Roman rule in the region.

Both Philo and Josephus represent Pilate as inherently hostile to the Jews, and as deliberately seeking to violate Jewish religious law and institutions. But on critical analysis, these accounts reveal inconsistencies and improbabilities that render their testimony gravely suspect.

Assessment of the gospel presentation of Pilate is a very complicated task, and involves the consideration of many problematic factors. Briefly, the Christian writers, in seeking to explain the Roman execution of Jesus for sedition, represent Pilate as a witness to the innocence of Jesus, forced by the Jewish leaders and people to crucify him. However, critical investigation of the gospel accounts of the trial of Jesus reveals a more intelligible situation – that Pilate ordered his death because he was convinced by the evidence laid before him that Jesus was politically dangerous.

According to Josephus, in *Jewish Antiquities*, Pilate was relieved of his command in 36 and sent to Rome by Vitellius, the legate of Syria, because of his harsh suppression of an incipient revolt of the Samaritans. We are not informed of Pilate's eventual fate.

The impetus given by the gospels to presenting Pilate as a witness to the innocence of Jesus, was soon exploited by other Christian writers, who obviously drew upon their imagination. The apologist Tertullian (c 160–220), declared that Pilate, 'himself in his secret heart already a Christian', sent such a report about Christ to Tiberius that the latter was convinced of his divinity, and sought to persuade the Senate of it.

Persecuted by the Roman government as a subversive sect, it was natural that Christians should seek to rebut such an accusation by claiming that the Roman governor of Judaea had not only acknowledged the innocence of Jesus, but had recognized him as divine. However, the importance of Pilate to the Christian case was also appreciated by its enemies, and it resulted in a mysterious episode. In 311 the Emperor Maximin, a fierce persecutor of Christians, issued 'Memoirs of Pilate'. That they were harmful to Christianity is certain, but no copy has survived. Christians claimed that these 'memoirs' were forgeries and eventually had the offending documents rounded up and destroyed.

The consternation caused by Maximin's publication of the 'Memoirs of Pilate' seems to have led to the production of a Christian version. It takes a narrative form, and contains long tortuous dialogues between Pilate and the Jewish leaders, and Pilate and Jesus. The writing develops the gospel thesis that the Jews were responsible for the Crucifixion, exonerating Pilate. This theme was elaborated in other writings to such a degree that it was eventually claimed that Pilate died as a martyr for Christ.

This transformation of Pilate from the Roman governor who executed Jesus into a Christian saint who died for him, was arrested in the Catholic Church by its triumph under Constantine I. With its legal status now assured, it had no further need of the witness of Pontius Pilate. A change of attitude towards him soon set in. It is marked by the statement of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (260–340), that Pilate, overwhelmed by misfortune, committed suicide. A later Latin legend tells how Pilate anticipated execution by killing himself and how Tiberius had his corpse thrown into the Tiber; but its presence there attracted such swarms of demons that it was transported to Vienne, on the Rhône. After burial near Lausanne and consequent demonic disturbance, the unholy thing was finally deposited in a lake by Mount Pilatus, Switzerland, where its awful presence continued to provoke diabolical activity.

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Religion in Ancient History* (Scribner, 1970); *Jesus and the Zealots* (Scribner, 1968); and *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (Stein and Day, 1979).

Pope Joan

Mythical female pope of the 9th century; supposedly of English birth, she went to Rome disguised as a man, after a love affair with a Benedictine monk; she became a cardinal and was elected pope as John VIII on the death of Leo IV in 855; she died in childbirth during a papal procession; the legend was current by at least the 13th century; one of the Tarot trumps is named for her.

Poppy

Symbol of sleep, death and the soothing of pain, because it yields opium; it was connected with Ceres, the Roman corn goddess, because it grows in wheatfields, and wheat and poppies growing together stand for life and death; widely believed to spring from the blood of slaughtered warriors; since the First World War, the symbol of remembrance of those killed in battle.

POSEIDON

POSEIDON starts as the second greatest of the Greek gods. No other male deity ranks as the brother of Zeus, except for Hades, the ruler of the dead: the other important ones are sons of Zeus, and so more certainly subordinated to him. In the *Iliad*, Poseidon is the god whom Zeus has the greatest difficulty in bending to his will. Threatened with physical violence, he protests that his status is equivalent to Zeus': the universe has been shared out equally among the three sons of Cronus, and Poseidon has the sea, Hades the underworld, and Zeus the sky, the earth being common property.

For Homer, then, Poseidon is the god of the sea. He has a golden palace in the depths of the waters, the sea creatures dance at his passing by, and when he leads the Greeks to battle the waves surge up to their encampment. He causes storms at sea and sailors pray to him for a safe voyage. But he is also the god of the earthquake, and this appears to have been his primary role at the time when the formulaic epic language was taking shape, for his standard epithets all refer to it: *enosichthon* or *ennosigaios*, 'earth-shaker', *gaie(w)ochos*, 'earth-carrier', *eriktypos*, 'loud-booming'. Homer never calls him 'marine'.

To delve further into his past, we assess his importance in the cults and legends of different parts of Greece, and we discover a significant fact. We know that the Hellenes entered Greece in two main waves. The first came about 2000 BC, and during the following centuries was much affected by cultural influences from the subject people and the civilization of Minoan Crete. The second wave came about 1200 BC, flooding large areas with a dourer folk known to us as the Dorians. Now in these areas, Poseidon has his cults, but is noticeably less prominent in myths. In Sparta the dialect form in which his name appears shows that he was taken over from the pre-Dorian population. We infer, firstly, that his worship spread itself in Greece before the Dorian invasion, and was diminished by it; secondly, that it

Michael Holford

As god of the sea, Poseidon has a golden palace in the depths of the ocean, according to Homer, and the sea creatures dance when he passes by; but he was earlier the god of the earthquake and his standard epithets were 'earth-shaker', 'earth-carrier' or 'loud-booming': the head of Poseidon from a mosaic in North Africa

was not shared by the invaders, in other words, it was not brought by the Hellenes from an earlier home but was native to Greece. That is what we should expect. Greece was always a land shaken by earthquakes, and if the pre-Hellenic population feared any god, they must have feared the earth-shaker. Poseidon's name does not lend itself to explanation from Greek, and is probably indigenous. (An interpretation as 'Husband of the Earth', still maintained in some quarters, is better theology than philology.)

In Homer his only peer is Zeus, who certainly came with the Hellenes, and afterwards we see Zeus steadily growing in power and universality while Poseidon declines. Perhaps Poseidon had once been the greatest god in Greece. It is worth considering which of his aspects can be related to his management of earthquakes, and which are extraneous functions such as a supreme god might acquire. It is natural enough that the god who makes the earth heave and toss should be identified as the one who makes the sea heave and toss. It is also possible that the belief that the earth rested on the sea – the starting point of scientific speculation in the 6th century BC – goes back to much earlier times: the god of the sea might then indeed be the 'earth-carrier'. We can understand too why Poseidon should be a builder of walls. (He helped Apollo build the walls of Troy, and he made a prison for the Titans in Tartarus.) The mason would pray to him to uphold his wall; and a god prayed to by masons must soon become a master mason. It is no less natural that he should sometimes be associated with springs and rivers, which are frequently seen to change their courses in earthquakes. On the other hand, the simplest explanation of his special connection with horses is that he was the chief god of a people who depended on horses. And when he appears in genealogies as the first ancestor of a royal line, or in cult as 'Father', 'God of the clan' and so on, he is clearly exceeding the prerogatives of a seismic force. At Athens, 'Poseidon!' was a colloquial expostulation, like 'for heaven's sake!' These do look like survivals from a time when he was really great.

But he has passed his prime by the time literature comes into view. If he is primarily the god of the sea in Homer's eyes, he is no longer mighty in the land. He maintains his place in the ceremonial calendar, and one of the great national sports meetings, held every two years at the Isthmus of Corinth, was consecrated to him. But he is honoured like a great man in retirement. He is made to fit in with other arrangements. At Athens and elsewhere there were legends of how he competed for possession, unsuccessfully, with the city goddess, and was left with a subordinate position in cult. Other gods develop and take on new aspects in response to changing needs; Poseidon remains static. He is more and more confined to the sea. In Euripides' *Erechtheus* (423 BC) Athene commands *marine* Poseidon not to shake the earth. His title Asphalios 'god of security', originally of geophysical significance, came to be understood as 'saviour of ships'. By the 6th century BC, earthquakes were being explained from natural causes by the sophisticated. In another Euripidean play, air is called 'earth's carriage', virtually taking over Poseidon's old title. When the gods came to be allegorized, he was put down as the sea without further ado. In 373 BC an earthquake and tidal wave destroyed the town of Helice (along the coast from Patras), together with a notable shrine of Poseidon. Such an occurrence was not calculated to increase respect for the ancient gods, any more than when Zeus struck his own temples with lightning.

M. L. WEST

FURTHER READING: H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (Dutton, 1959) gives an excellent brief survey of gods and myths. For the early period, M. P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion* (Lund, Sweden, 1950) is the standard work. For the classical period there is much material in volume 1 of L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Caratzas Brothers, 1977), though the discussion of the gods' natures is outdated.

POSSESSION

'MY NAME is Legion; for we are many.' This was the reply of the madman who lived among the tombs, when Jesus asked him his name before driving the demons out of him and into a herd of swine (Mark, chapter 5). The number of gods, spirits or devils which have been believed to enter into and seize control of human personalities, all through history and all over the world, has indeed been legion. What is particularly interesting about so many accounts of possession and exorcism is their marked similarity to modern psychiatric case-histories and methods of treatment.

One of the techniques used successfully during the Second World War in treating men suffering from battle neuroses was to induce the patient, under drugs, to recreate in his mind the situation of terror and stress which had caused his breakdown, so that he could relive the situation and better deal with it. (Hypnosis had been used for the same purpose during the First World War.) Late in the war we began to discover that it was not so much this reliving of a particular situation of stress that helped recovery but the release of intense emotional excitement, and this remained true when the excitement was focused on some comparatively trivial occurrence or even on an incident which was entirely imaginary.

The emotions which seemed to be the essential ones to arouse were either those of fierce anger and aggressiveness or those of intense anxiety and fear. What happened, very briefly, was that the patient's state of excitement would rise to a crescendo, which might be followed by a temporary collapse, after which the patient felt that the abnormal fears and worries by which, in the age-old terminology, he had been 'possessed' had now left him. Various types of shock treatment, including electrical shock therapy, have been extensively used in the same way (though, of course, it should not be supposed that all patients or all varieties of mental illness will respond to treatment of this sort).

It was towards the end of the war that I came across a volume of John Wesley's *Journal* and was struck by the resemblance between his accounts of what happened at his revival meetings and the reactions which my colleagues and I were deliberately inducing in patients. Wesley was a preacher of formidable power who impressed on the minds of his hearers the horrors of hell which awaited them if they did not repent. Some of them reacted as the possessed of all times and places have done, groaning and shrieking, shaking and pouring with sweat, writhing on the ground and feeling 'pierced in the heart', and finally collapsing. When they recovered, they often felt soothed and 'changed', converted to a new outlook, and at peace with themselves, as our patients who had been through a similar ordeal felt that old terrors had lost their hold.

Wesley's entry for 23 October 1739 gives a vivid picture of the experience of possession. He went to see two women who were 'tormented'. One of them, aged 19 or 20, was being forcibly held down on a bed. 'It was a terrible sight. Anguish, horror and despair, above all description, appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. But her stony eyes could not weep. She screamed out, as soon as words could find their way, "I am damned, damned; lost for ever. Six days ago you might have helped me . . . I have (now) given myself to him. His I am. Him I must serve. With him I must go to hell. I will be his. I will serve him. I will go with him to hell. I cannot be saved. I will not be saved. I must, I will, I will be damned." She then began praying to the devil. . . . We continued in prayer till past eleven; when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul, first of the first tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praise to Him who had "stilled the enemy and the avenger".'

Satanic Laughter

Wesley had at first put the curious effects of his preaching down to the action of the Holy Spirit but he soon came to wonder whether the Devil had a hand in them. Very similar behaviour was reported of some of Mesmer's patients in the later 18th century (see MAGNETISM; MESMER). One of the Commissioners who investigated on behalf of the French Royal Society of Medicine reported that: 'Some patients remain calm, and experience nothing; others cough, spit, feel slight pain, a local or general heat, and fall into sweats; others are agitated and tormented by convulsions . . . characterized by involuntary, jerking movements in all the limbs, and in the whole body, by contraction of the throat, by twitchings . . . by dimness and rolling of the eyes, by piercing cries, hiccoughs, and immoderate laughter. They are preceded or followed by a state of languor or dreaminess, by a species of depression, and even by stupor.'

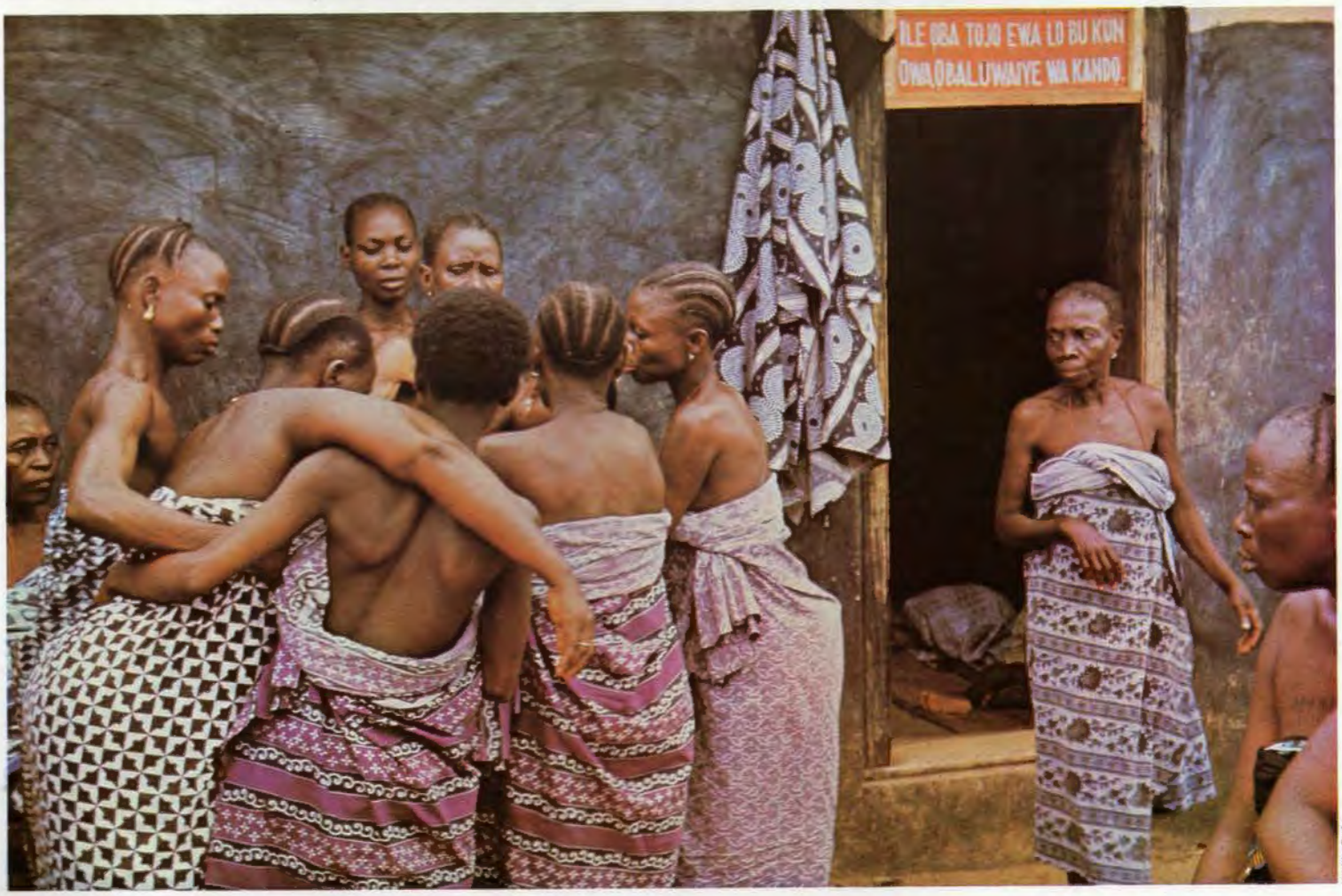
It was noticed that women were more likely to experience this 'crisis' than men, that the hysterical excitement was contagious and spread rapidly from one person in a group to others, that the patients became extremely suggestible and that this suggestibility played a vital role in both the crisis and the cure, and that in many cases the behaviour of women patients closely resembled what happens in female orgasm. All these points are highly relevant to the famous cases of so-called demonic possession in French convents in the 16th and 17th centuries. The possessed were mostly women, the contagion spread from one nun to another, the behaviour of the victims was orgasmic and they were also highly suggestible, pouring out torrents of horrific, detailed and imaginative filth in response to suggestions by their exorcists that they were witches, that they worshipped the Devil at sabbaths, that they had practised cannibalism, and so on (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS; AUXONNE NUNS; GRANDIER; RENATA). The parallel was observed by the Commissioners themselves, who commented in a private report to King Louis XV that Mesmeric treatment might

John Moss

Jurgen Schadeberg/Susan Griggs

In many parts of the world drumming and dancing help to induce a state of possession; during a Ghanaian festival held annually in a medicine-man's camp, a woman dances frenziedly *(above right)* until she finally falls into his arms *(above)*. Yoruba worshippers of Sopono, the god who inflicts smallpox, dance themselves into a possessed state *(below right)*, and *(below)* a Bushman in trance

John Moss



Philip Daly

cause epidemics of the behaviour which had occurred in the convents.

Not that women are the only victims of possession, far from it. One of the most famous modern cases is that of a French peasant named Achille. He was 33 when 'he fell into a complete lethargy, and remained motionless for two days. At the end of that period he awoke and burst into a fit of Satanic laughter, which presently changed into frightful shrieks and complaints that he was tortured by demons. This state lasted for many weeks. He would pour forth blasphemies and obscenities . . . He would describe the evil spirits which tormented him, their diabolic grimaces and the horns which adorned their heads.' He was treated by the celebrated psychologist Pierre Janet, who found that the root cause of the attack was Achille's intense guilt at having been unfaithful to his wife, which in his own mind had condemned him to damnation and to be the sport of devils. He showed all the signs of what in earlier centuries was considered diabolic possession.

Divine Combat

An account of the method of exorcizing 'the impure spirits of both sexes' which infest the bodies of living men, given by Zeno of Verona in the 4th century AD, emphasizes the frightening emotional excitement of the possessed state. 'But as soon as we enter into the field of divine combat and begin to drive them forth with the arrow of the holy name of Jesus, then thou mayest take pity on the other . . . His face is suddenly deprived of colour, his body rises up of itself, the eyes in madness roll in their sockets and squint horribly, the teeth, covered with a horrible foam, grind between blue-white lips; the limbs twisted in all directions are given over to trembling; he sighs, he weeps . . .' This is very reminiscent of the sort of symptoms observed in the drug abreactive treatment of cases of battle neurosis from the Normandy beachhead in 1944.

A case reported by a clergyman in Germany in 1714 describes an emotional 'crisis', with subsequent collapse and recovery. He first visited the possessed woman in a workhouse where, he says. 'Satan abruptly hurled this invective at me by her mouth: "Silly fool, what are you doing in this workhouse? You'll get lice here," etc.' He took the woman to church, read to her two of the accounts of demonic possession in the New Testament, and commanded Satan to come out of her. 'Satan tortured the poor creature horribly, howled through her mouth in a frightful manner and threw her to the ground so rigid, so insensible that she became as cold as ice and lay as dead, at which time we could not perceive the slightest breath until at last with God's help she came to herself . . .'

For thousands of years, all forms of madness, of grossly abnormal behaviour and, sometimes, of physical disease have been explained in terms of spirit possession. The spirit might be an evil one, a morally neutral one, a good spirit or a god. Various Christian groups have felt, as Wesley did at first, that 'enthusiastic' behaviour was a sign of

Roger Wood Studio

possession by the Holy Ghost. In other societies there has been the belief in 'holy madness' or the belief that a magician or shaman can become possessed by a god or a spirit, can convey the god's words to his worshippers and can heal the sick. Many of these cures work, probably because of the patients' heightened suggestibility.

In Ethiopia, for example, people are sometimes believed to be possessed by spirits called 'zars'. Patients are treated by a 'doctor' who is himself zar-possessed but who has 'come to terms' with his zar. He, or she, sometimes goes into a state of trance, in which his own zar takes control of him, and then tries to discover the identity of the patient's zar so as to negotiate with it. He speaks in the special language of zars, a jumbled tongue based on Amharic and recalling the phenomenon of 'speaking in tongues'. He persuades the zar, by promising it the gifts which it demands through the mouth of the patient, to turn itself into a kindly and helpful guardian spirit.

Madness, abnormal behaviour of various kinds, and the ability to fall into an ecstatic state have been attributed to spirit possession all over the world *Left* In West Pakistan a youth drinks the blood of a goat after becoming 'possessed of fairies', and eventually falls into a trance *Below* The symptoms of possession and exorcism, as described by Christian writers, strikingly resemble the reactions of some patients to modern psychiatric treatment: 13th century painting of St Dominic exorcizing a man possessed by demons

In Haiti the main purpose of Voodoo ceremonies is for one or more of the worshippers to become possessed by a *loa*, a god or spirit which 'rides' him as if he was a horse but which is also inside his head. As in many other parts of the world, drumming and dancing help to induce the experience. When the loa enters a man, he behaves in its characteristic manner and speaks with its voice, sometimes in the loa language, which is a jumble of muddled words (see also VOODOO).

Possession by a god or by the ghost of someone who has died is common in India. Two anthropologists who investigated a case at a village near Delhi commented that 'spirit possession, like hysteria, has two conditions: a basic condition due to the individual's intra-psychic tension and a precipitating condition due to an event or situation involving unusual stress or emotion.' The young woman who was possessed, shivered and complained of feeling cold. Presently she sat up and started to jerk violently. The ghost, which had now entered her, spoke through her mouth and her assembled relatives had a long conversation with it. They were mainly concerned to establish its identity, and the emphasis on discovering the name of the possessing spirit, so as to gain power over it, is a common feature of exorcism procedures all over the world.

Mircea Eliade has described how a Siberian shaman restores the soul of a sick patient, which has escaped from his body. After drumming for a long time, the shaman calls on various spirits to come and stand near him. After more drumming, he goes to the door and breathes deeply, to swallow the spirits he has summoned, who now speak through his mouth. Then he lies on the ground, face down and motionless, for he has left his body and is travelling in the spirit world. Eventually he returns, bringing with him the fugitive soul which he has rescued from the 'kingdom of shadows' and which he restores to the patient's body. (See also PRIESTS; SHAMAN.)

G. Tomsich Spectrum

Streaming in Like Light

Drugs and sex have both been used to induce the experience of possession and to gain personal contact with the divine. Here is John Addington Symonds, the 19th century art critic, describing his sensations under chloroform: 'I thought I was near death; when suddenly my soul became aware of God, who was manifestly dealing with me, handling me, so to speak in an intensely personal present reality. I felt him streaming in like light upon me . . . I cannot describe the ecstasy I felt.'

The magician Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) experimented liberally with both drugs and sex as gateways to communication with spirits. To take only one example from many, here is his account of the results of an operation of sex-magic with a woman named Mary d'Este Sturges in 1911. 'At about midnight she was in a state of excitement, exhaustion and hysteria . . . one little removed from an amorously infuriated lioness . . . suddenly and without warning (this) gave place to a profound calm hardly distinguishable from prophetic trance and she began to describe what she was seeing . . . (she) had seen in a dream the head of five White Brothers . . . The person now appeared again to her. He was an old man with a long white beard.'

The evidence increasingly suggests that cases like this have nothing to do with spirits of any kind but have their causes in the human brain, and particularly in greatly increased brain suggestibility in states of emotional excitement and upheaval. If this is true, the implications go far beyond the field of possession, and may throw much light on the phenomena of conversion and faith, the mystical experience of being 'one' with God, ecstatic and 'enthusiastic' behaviour, 'speaking in tongues', mediumistic communications with the dead, trance and semi-trance states, 'astral travel', spiritual healing and other supposedly supernatural manifestations. (See also CONVERSION; DRUGS; ECSTASY; ENTHUSIASM; EXORCISM; HYSTERICAL POSSESSION AND WITCHCRAFT; MADNESS; TRANCE.)

WILLIAM SARGANT

FURTHER READING: A. Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun* (Harper and Row, 1979); T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession* (R. R. Smith, 1930); W. Sargant, *Battle for the Mind* (Greenwood, 1975) and *The Unquiet Mind* (Little, Brown, 1967). See also R. Cavendish, *Visions of Heaven & Hell* (Orbis, 1977); J. Middleton ed., *Magic, Witchcraft and Curing* (University of Texas Press, 1976).

Prayer

Communication addressed to a god or supernatural power, asking for help or guidance or the granting of a wish, or expressing devotion, giving thanks or confessing faults and asking forgiveness, or sometimes conveying orders and threats; often expressed in a set formula and accompanied by prescribed postures and gestures, for example, kneeling and bowing the head; the prayer formula is sometimes magically expected to be effective by itself.
See INCANTATION; ROSARY.

Albertina, Vienna

Precognition

Knowledge of what is going to happen in the future; ways of gaining such knowledge, really or allegedly, have been legion and include astrology, palmistry and many other methods of fortune telling, prophecies, oracles and omens, summoning up spirits or ghosts, trance states, dreams, premonitions and 'intuitions'; much work has been done on precognition as a type of psi ability.
See DIVINATION; EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION: and related articles.

'At the beginning of the world God knew all men that would be born, and decreed in advance which ones would be saved': since the early days of Christianity theologians have attempted to reconcile doctrines of predestination with the belief in man's free will

PREDESTINATION

VARIOUS DOCTRINES have been elaborated within the Christian Church which seek to explain the manner in which God, it is supposed, calls some individuals to eternal life and condemns others to everlasting punishment. Theories of predestination encounter acute difficulties in reconciling man's freedom of will with the complete knowledge of the future which theologians ascribe to God, and which imperils our notion of time. Few laymen now have much interest in the minutiae of theology but the problem of free will is still a tantalizing one.

Problems of destiny, determinism and free will came under discussion in the ancient Greek and Roman world long before the Christian era (see FATE). The ideas of both determinism and providence derive from the orderliness of natural phenomena, such as the succession of the seasons, which suggest that physical and biological events progress according to invariable laws. Implicit in the notion of determinism is the idea of causality which is firmly rooted in the human mind as a result of very elementary experiences. A child pushes an object and it moves. The operator of any machine, however humble, is completely familiar with the concept of causality. But it can only be recognized if the nature of things does not change capriciously. The laws of Nature must be invariable. It was by recognition of natural law that the philosophers were led to a monotheistic form of theism. The uniformity and lawfulness of Nature must, they thought, result from a single Mind. This intelligence was often identified with Zeus, traditionally the chief of the gods, but just as often considered as a mere abstract kind of Being.

Views differed as to the relations between the deity and the world. Aristotle (384–322 BC) thought of the universe after its creation as running more or less under its own steam according to natural causality. A minority of thinkers such as Epicurus (341–270 BC) postulated an entirely self-sufficient uncreated universe lasting for all eternity and running on purely mechanical lines, a remarkable anticipation of modern scientific materialism. Such a scheme (except that it included an element of randomness or chance) represented a determinism of a mechanical kind without any additional determinism imposed by an overriding providence.

Mansell Collection

The tension between destiny and free will is an old philosophical problem *Above* Fortune wears a blindfold, indicating the random way she grants favours: painting by Giovanni Bellini *Right* The position of the planets was said to influence a man's life: illustration from a 16th century book on midwifery shows astrologers at work during a confinement

The teaching of the Stoics started with Zeno (336–264 BC). Their doctrines developed into a kind of materialistic pantheism. (Pantheistic theologies are those which regard the deity as permeating the world to a degree that makes it hard to distinguish between God and the world.) According to the Stoics the soul consists of a fine material. So also does the Soul of the World (God) who, or which, suffuses all other matter. Everything therefore happens in a purely mechanical way but also in accordance with the will of the World Soul which is the ultimate cause of all motion and change. The Stoics taught acceptance of the Will's decrees, and this is why the adjective stoical is used nowadays to describe fortitude and resignation. In Stoicism the ideas of mechanical determinism and overriding providence were curiously fused together. According to the Stoics everything was predetermined by the immanent or indwelling World Soul, and they gave credence to the arts of augury, divination and astrology.

In fact the ancient thinkers, while recognizing a considerable degree of determinism (either mechanical or providential) in the world, were uncertain as to whether all physical happenings are strictly determined and they puzzled over the meaning of free will. Epicurus claimed that atoms have a random motion which is completely uncaused. Similarly, operations of the will in man are uncaused, so that human choice is totally free. Carneades (c 214–c 129 BC), one of the Sceptics (philosophers who tended to probe into all assumptions and question all statements), argued that the wayward course of both the atom and the human soul was not uncaused, but resulted from their own inner natures. He admitted that the inner cause of action might well be unknowable, so that human actions were unpredictable. Carneades was perhaps the first thinker to make a clear distinction between determinism and predictability.

In Judaic tradition God created the angels, giving them freedom to obey or disobey him. Satan, Prince of the Angels, disobeyed, together with a considerable following of other ranks. Adam, though created in a state of sinless virtue, yielded to Satan's persuasion and also disobeyed, and having fallen into sin forfeited his immortality. According to St Paul and all the early Christians the sinfulness of Adam was 'inherited' by all his descendants (see EVIL: FIRST MAN; MAN).

According to this concept, all men owed a debt or penalty to God and were therefore

subject either to eternal death (a mere forfeiting of immortality) or, in the more traditional view, to everlasting punishment. However Christ's sacrifice of himself upon the cross was, so Paul believed, a complete and adequate discharge of the debt.

Some of the Pauline epistles can be read as if implying that it was God's will that everyone should be saved: '. . . God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved . . .' (1 Timothy 2.3). However other passages imply that, as was almost universally believed in the Church, the salvation of individuals was conditional on factors additional to the Incarnation and Crucifixion. For example, '. . . for those who are factious and do not obey the truth . . . there will be wrath and fury' (Romans 2.8). In fact Paul tells his readers they will be saved if they have in their hearts the faith that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Christians have always averred that the individual's faith in Christ is essential for salvation. Naturally there has been controversy as to what is meant by 'faith'. Clearly it ought to go deeper than superficial intellectual assent. According to Paul, in order to have saving faith the grace of God, that is, the power to have real faith which is bestowed on the believer as God's free gift, is necessary. The word 'grace' derives from Latin *gratia*, a gift. All the work of salvation is therefore God's and not man's. God paid the penalty of sacrifice, and also bestows the grace necessary for the faith that saves. In the epistles Paul was not writing a theological treatise and so does not set out a fully elaborated doctrine of predestination. But there are several texts which can be, and were, interpreted as meaning that God chooses those whom he will save. For instance, Paul says that 'For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son . . . and those whom he predestined he also called . . .' (Romans 8.29–30). Clearly, whether or not Paul intended it, a fully predestinarian doctrine can be extracted from this: at the beginning of the world God knew all men that would be born, and decreed in advance who would be saved.

The doctrine of predestination remained in the somewhat nebulous Pauline form until the Pelagian controversy of the 5th century. Pelagius (360–420), whose name means 'man of the sea', came from Britain. Like many provincial visitors to Rome before and since, he was scandalized by the decadent life of the city. The licentious Romans blandly pleaded human frailty as an extenuating circumstance. Pelagius was therefore prompted to stress the positive qualities in human nature, and maintained that, if need be, a man's salvation could be achieved by his own efforts unassisted by grace. He did not, of course, deny that if grace were given it would aid the process of salvation. Pelagianism, as the resulting doctrines were called, affirmed the freedom of the will, maintaining that it is at any time free to choose good or evil. This is also true at the moment of birth. Having no innate bias to evil, we lack original sin. According to Pelagianism, no individual was predestined to be saved or lost.

St Augustine (354–430) of Hippo, near Carthage in North Africa, one of the greatest of the Fathers of the Church, was provoked by Pelagianism into formulating a theory of predestination that was to have lasting influence. He maintained that man was free to do good or ill, to seek for God or reject him. Therefore men might differ in their natural merit. But a man was not saved by his natural merit, which was ineffective for salvation unless assisted by grace dispensed by the Holy Spirit. Merit assisted, or instilled, by grace was supernatural merit and only supernatural merits were able to save. The giving or withholding of grace, resulting in salvation or damnation, was God's free choice. Lest it seem that God might be unfair to the damned, Augustine was concerned to stress the totally undeserving condition of fallen man. Because of original sin we deserved eternal punishment; but God in his mercy raised some to blessedness by grace gratuitously given. The graceless therefore should not complain of injustice.

The Ineffable Vision

So far so good; God chooses those whom he will make his own. But why is it *pre*-destination? According to Augustine, because of God's perfect foreknowledge of all events. Christians traditionally set no limits to God's powers. His omniscience means that he has a complete knowledge of the future. God's foresight moreover differs from man's. He does not predict events as a super-computer might if fed with all possible information about the present and the past. God, according to Augustine and later theologians, knows everything *directly*, whether past, present or future, because his existence is outside of time. His knowledge consists of 'one eternal, immutable and ineffable vision'. According to Augustine, God foresees even the free acts of men and knows in advance how their free choices will turn out. He also foresees at the Creation all that he will himself bring to pass, including the dispensation of grace. Augustine was therefore able to say, 'Predestination is nothing else than the foreknowledge and fore-ordaining of those gratuitous gifts by which God makes certain the salvation of those who are saved.'

The status of free will remains somewhat ambiguous in St Augustine's system. The Roman statesman and philosopher Boethius (480–525) wrote that if from eternity God foreknows the wills of men, there can be no free will. Augustine clearly implied that God pre-destines the blessed to salvation, but left in obscurity the question whether God can be said to fore-ordain the graceless sinner to perdition. The question was particularly acute in respect of infants dying unbaptized. Baptism was generally considered adequate to confer saving grace and blessedness on children who died shortly after receiving the sacrament; but the unbaptized were in an unmitigated state of original sin. According to one solution, their fate was settled by God through his foreknowledge of whether, if they had lived, they would have received (from him) supernatural merit through grace. According to a milder solution unbaptized infants go to limbo, a region adjacent to hell and inhabited by virtuous pagans who had died before Christ's coming.

It was easy to move from Augustine's teaching to the doctrine of Predestinarianism. In the 5th century Lucidus, a Gallic priest, taught that Christ did not die for the non-elect who had been created expressly to go to hell. Similarly, in the 9th century in France, the monk Gottschalk of Orbais was condemned for saying the same, and maintaining that original sin had cancelled free will. The resulting controversy had to be settled by a synod of bishops in 860, which decided that God desires the salvation of all men. Despite original sin, the will is free and is aided by grace. The damnation of the lost results from their abuse of free will. St Bonaventure (1221–74) supported this formulation and held that while God offers saving grace to all, men are wholly free to reject it.

St Thomas Aquinas (1226–74) revived a formula originally developed by the Greek theologian St John of Damascus (676–754). A man is free to accept or reject the gratuitous gift of grace which God offers to all. God *antecedently* wills to save him, but in the very instant of the Creation foresees how he will respond and, in the light of this prevision, God *consequently* wills his salvation or reprobation. Of course the antecedent and consequent wills of God are not separated in time, and this solution will seem to many to be mere sophistry and logic-chopping. The Roman Catholic Church has never spoken authoritatively on the doctrine of predestination as a whole. At present Catholic theologians tend to favour a theory similar to that of St Thomas Aquinas, involving God's antecedent and consequent will.

Predestinarianism really came into its own among the Protestant reformers. Martin Luther, himself an Augustinian friar, was concerned to stress faith and grace as being superior to good works, and maintained that God absolutely predestines his elect to glory without regard to their human merits. Free will went out when original sin came in, and all human acts are subject to the overriding providence of God. It was Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), the Swiss reformer, who went to the extent of declaring that God fore-ordained some men to perdition in order that his justice be made manifest, though it is John Calvin (1509–64) who is usually associated with this doctrine.

Few modern Christian sects put much stress on predestination or related doctrines. Salvation is primarily the gift of God through grace. The ways to making oneself receptive of grace are the sacraments, prayer, moral effort and striving to love God and one's neighbour. None can be sure of salvation but all may hope.

A. R. G. OWEN

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PREHISTORIC RELIGION

WHAT PREHISTORIC MEN thought can never be known with certainty, because they did not write it down. The bits and pieces they left behind them – bones, tools, weapons, works of art and the rest – can be interpreted in many ways and are the fragmentary records of different groups of men in different circumstances over a period far longer than recorded history.

However, some deductions can perhaps be drawn from the burial practices and tools of the man-like creatures who preceded true man on the earth. Neanderthal men buried their dead with care, with food and equipment and often, it seems, with affection. This suggests belief in an afterworld of some kind, in which the dead were not entirely cut off from the living. It also implies the presence of one factor which distinguishes man from other animals, the knowledge of his own inevitable death, which in turn implies a sense of time.

The deliberate manufacture of tools also implies a sense of time, because it means planning for the future. A sense of time implies a feeling for order, for events following one another in succession, which may have carried with it the concept of a rough general pattern behind human existence. We are born, we live for a while and we die. The same is obviously true of the animals. The realization of order and the observation that 'all flesh is grass' may have pointed to the conclusion that whoever or whatever is responsible for the order of Nature is not human or animal but something superhuman and superanimal, though it (or they) may be given many human and animal characteristics.

Evidence of some sort of religio-magical cult, dating from c 100,000 BC, has been found in caves in the Alps where the skulls of bears had been placed on stone slabs in what looks like a ceremonious arrangement. It may be that a creature's head was already thought to contain the essence of its being, and the rituals of later bear-hunting peoples suggest that the intention was to appease some supernatural power for the killing of a bear, to make sure that there would be no decline in the supply of bears for hunting. Whether or not this is the right explanation, the finds indicate that certain places were being treated as special, set apart, holy. Later, there is plenty of evidence for the use of caves as sacred places (see CAVES).

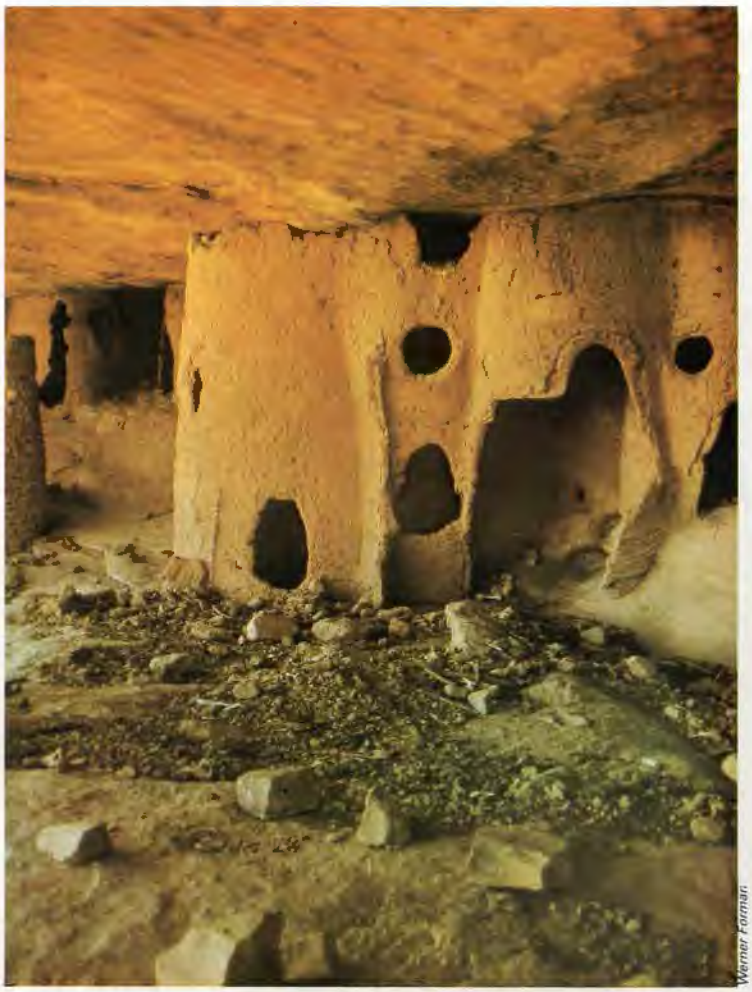
People whose control over their environment is limited are naturally likely to try to establish good relations with their own ancestors, from whom they have inherited such techniques as they possess, and with whatever powers control the order of Nature which provides food and children, or which sometimes disastrously fails to provide them. In the Upper Paleolithic period (c 30,000 to 10,000 BC), after the arrival on the scene of *homo sapiens* himself, burials became more elaborate and ceremonious, and there is strong evidence of concern for fertility in the 'Venuses', small figures of women, some highly stylized and others comparatively realistic, with the breasts, thighs and buttocks grotesquely emphasized. The swollen pregnant bellies of many of these figures and their blank, featureless heads suggest that they were not meant to portray women but 'woman' in general, and woman in her role of mother. They may have been worn by women as amulets to ensure fruitfulness and they may have represented a Great Mother, the source of all life.

The Upper Paleolithic is also the period of the magnificent cave art which may have been meant to promote fertility in human beings and animals, as well as to assist hunting (see CAVE ART). The art indicates belief in a supernatural order of reality which man must try to influence if he and his quarry are to eat, live and beget. It also implies a magical attitude to symbolism and mimicry, that the real can be influenced through the simulated.

Scenes in some of the caves show human figures dressed in animal skins and masks, and dancing. There is an example in the cave of the Trois Frères in France, where a man disguised as a bison is dancing and apparently playing a musical instrument. Ahead of him are two peculiar animals, a reindeer with what look like human arms, and a creature part-bison and part-reindeer which is looking back at him. Professor

Michael Holford/British Museum

That spirits inhabit all aspects of Nature, that every tree or hill or stream has a soul, is one of the oldest human beliefs: Indian tree spirit, c 2nd century BC



Werner Forman

C. M. Dixon

Maringer asks, 'What else can this odd scene be but a magic performance, wherein sorcerer and "animals" alike are human hunters in disguise? And what was the disguise for if not to compel animals to bow to the hunters' will?'

An alternative possibility is that the dancing figure in a bison's skin is a deity, a Lord of Beasts, and that the other two creatures mingle parts of different animals because they stand for 'beasts' in general, the whole world of animal life which the god controls. The Trois Frères cave is also the home of the famous Dancing Sorcerer (see ICONOGRAPHY), who again can be interpreted as perhaps a magician, perhaps a god, or perhaps both – a man acting the part of a god.

Neanderthal man did not wear ornaments, so far as is known, but the later Paleolithic peoples did. They made necklaces of animals' teeth or cowrie shells, for instance, and carved bracelets from mammoths' tusks. It seems likely that ornaments contained an ingredient of magic, as they have tended to do ever since. The teeth may have carried with them the qualities of the animals from which they came, and the cowrie shell has long been an emblem of woman and fertility because of its shape. The same principle may have applied to weapons. For example, the figure of a jumping horse was carved on the end of a spear-thrower found at Bruniquel in France, presumably to give it the propelling energy of the horse's leap.

The 'Neolithic revolution', as it is called, the gradual development of cultivating crops and breeding animals, instead of gathering and hunting, originated in Asia in the ninth millennium BC, or earlier, and had spread to most of Europe by c 3500 BC. The picture now becomes, if anything, even more obscure than before and the course of the transition from what is known of the Paleolithic to the religions of societies with written records is not at all clear.

It seems evident that as agriculture and stockbreeding are gradually established, the plants on which men and herds depend for food become crucially important. The annual cycle of Nature becomes a dominating factor in men's lives and a focus of religious and magical attention. Seedtime and harvest are the two great occasions of the year, and are likely to be celebrated with festivals and rites intended to ensure a good crop.

The sky also becomes important, because sun, rain and wind affect the growth of crops and because the calendar, which successful agriculture demands, is worked out by reference to events occurring in the sky. (Reverence for the sky and its forces may easily have existed long before, though there is no evidence of sky worship in the Paleolithic). Later on, we know that there were ideas of Sky Father copulating with Earth Mother, and of rain penetrating her, so that she would bring forth harvests for men and pasturage for beasts. These ideas must have begun to develop earlier, but how, where and when is uncertain.

Paradoxically, the Neolithic advance in control of the environment may have created a greater sense of dependence on supernatural powers than before, because the farmer's attitude is likely to be more passive than the hunter's. He relies more on the slow workings of forces which are still largely beyond his control, and less on his own resources of courage, quickness and skill, as in the chase. Hunting's perspectives are relatively short-term and farming's are relatively long. The sense of an order behind Nature, of man's dependence on it, and of the perils of disorder in the shape of drought, famine, destructive storms, pestilence, may have been strengthened by the longer perspective of farming communities.

Most Neolithic societies buried their dead with greater pomp and circumstance than before, especially those who had been powerful in life, and sometimes with extravagant toil, as in megalithic burials in Europe, implying a deep respect for the powers of the dead and probably the belief that they influenced the growth of crops from the earth in which they lay buried. Representations of the mother goddess are often found in burying places and she seems clearly connected with the earth.

As Earth Mother, the goddess would need to be impregnated, so that she would conceive and bear her annual yield. In some societies the masculine principle in fertility is represented by carved phalluses, and in some, apparently, by animals, especially the bull. At Catal Hüyük in Turkey, for instance, the shrine of a mother goddess, dating from c 6000 BC, was adorned with representations of bulls' heads, human heads and the

J. Allen Cash

William Macquitty

Facing page **The care with which prehistoric man buried his dead implies a belief in some kind of afterworld in which those who had died were not entirely cut off from the living: burial cave at Tellem Mali in the Sudan *(far left)* and *(left)* chamber tomb in County Meath, Eire, c 2000 BC; a formal linear pattern is carved on the lintel *Below* Skull, c 6000 BC, from Jericho: the facial features were modelled in plaster, possibly as an indication that the individual retained his personality after death *Above* Ruins of Mohenjo-daro and *(above right)* of Harappa: the chief cities of the Indus valley were established in about 2000 BC by an agricultural people who worshipped fertility gods; rituals to ensure fruitfulness, one of prehistoric man's basic concerns, were among the earliest religious ceremonies**

C. M. Dixon

breasts of women, and with human skulls. Farming communities in the Danube area made female figurines and effigies of bulls and other male animals. Later, the ancient world knew many great bull gods, responsible for the fertility of fields as well as herds and frequently connected with sky, storm or sun (see BULL).

Another pattern, presumably already developing in the Neolithic, was the tendency to personify the life of vegetation as a god who was both the son and the lover of the Great Mother and who died and rose again each year, as the plants did. This concept sprouted a rich harvest of mythology and ritual in the ancient world (see DYING GOD; VEGETATION SPIRITS).

As men began to master new techniques, inventions and discoveries were fitted into a religio-magical context. The discovery of yeast, for example, made it possible to bake bread and brew beer, both commodities which had a long history of symbolic connections with the gods and the otherworld. The rise of metallurgy with the development of working in copper, bronze and iron gave the smith the uncanny powers of one who was as much magician as craftsman (see SMITH). Writing was an invention of the gods and the preserve of priests. Improved control of the environment was still disrupted by what we call accidents, which less sophisticated people put down to supernatural interference. Greek potters in historical times, for instance, still fixed hideous masks on their kilns in order to frighten away the demon who liked to crack the pots while they were being fired.

In the East the development of towns, states and armies, of male dynasties and priesthoods, tended to diminish the Great Mother's status in favour of the great male gods of the sky who loom large in the civilizations of the ancient world, the gods who created the universe, who made man, who established order and put down disorder. In Europe the invasions and conquests of warrior peoples, whose deities were gods of the sky, had the same effect.

All these developments occurred over long stretches of time and their details are concealed from us, but there was evidently considerable continuity. The prehistoric Earth Mother, in her various local incarnations, was the ancestress of goddesses of historical societies. A striking example of continuity from prehistoric to historic was found at Eridu in Mesopotamia, which in the ancient world was the home of the great god Enki, lord of waters, to whom fish were sacred. When the prehistoric sanctuary there was excavated, an altar was found, covered six inches deep with the bones of fish.

(See also ALTAR; ANIMISM; AXE; BURIAL; CULT OF THE DEAD; EARTH; EYE; FERTILITY; HIGH GODS; INDIA; MALTA; MOTHER GODDESS; RELIGION; STONEHENGE; TIME.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Premonition

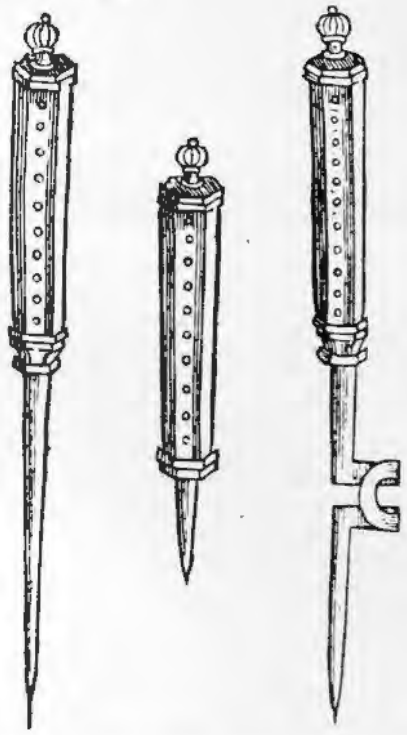
Awareness of a future event, usually of something unpleasant – death, disaster, danger, ill luck; it may be a clear precognition of a specific event in the future or a vague foreboding, a presentiment of some impending but unspecified evil; premonitions are common and can occur in dreams or when awake or when in the borderland between the two. See DREAMS; EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION.

Prester John

Literally 'Priest John', a mythical Christian priest-king believed in the Middle Ages to rule in a land of marvels in the mysterious East where there was no poverty or vice; in c 1165 a letter from him was fabricated, describing the fountain of youth, the sea of sand, the river of stones, the magic mirror and other wonders of his kingdom; European travellers in Asia looked for him in vain, and he was later placed in Ethiopia.

The search for the Devil's mark involved piercing the suspect's body with long needles; if any spot was insensitive to pain, or if it did not bleed, this was regarded as proof that he or she was a witch

PRICKING



In order to obtain 'proof' that a suspect had sealed a pact with Satan, false instruments with retractable blades that disappeared when they were pressed against the body of a suspected witch were sometimes used in the search for the Devil's mark; because the victim showed no sign of pain, he or she could then be presumed guilty: two false bodkins *(left)* and a genuine instrument

THE THEORY that a witch could be identified by a special mark, a bodily blemish representing the seal which Satan had set upon his followers, led to the practice of pricking the suspect's body in order to find this proof of her pact with the Devil. The 'Satanic compact' was held to be one of the vilest forms of heresy, since it committed the witch to a denial of God and the frustration of his angels and servants. The search for the Devil's mark became standard witch-hunting procedure, the suspects being subjected to ruthless inspection, often accompanied by torture.

The mark was supposed to be made by Satan's teeth, tongue or claw, and in some cases it was actually called the 'Devil's claw'. It might be in the shape of a spider, a dormouse, or 'the likeness of a hare', and according to some early medieval authorities it could be compared with the imprint of a cloven hoof.

Opinions varied as to where on the human body it was most likely to be found; on the Continent the left shoulder was regarded as the most usual spot, while in Britain it was the finger. One medieval wizard who was said to have sold his soul to the Devil was proved afterwards to have a black stain on his hand, which was thought to be the unmistakable mark of Satan's thumb.

The great majority of witch-hunters, however, looked for the mark near the pubic area of a female suspect, or the anus of a male. Michael Dalton, in his *Country Justice*, a guide to witch-hunting published in 1618, makes it clear that the 'marks be often in their secretest parts and therefore require diligent and careful search'.

Satan's Invisible Mark

The hunt for the Devil's marks was conducted by skilled witch-hunters who had acquired, as the result of long and careful study, an ability to distinguish between ordinary bodily blemishes like moles, warts, old scars and piles, and genuine Devil's marks which had the peculiar characteristic of being insensitive to pain and incapable of bleeding. It is difficult to determine how this theory could have arisen in the first place, but such an assumption might have been based upon cases of stigmatization which sometimes occur among hysterics. Bleeding can also be halted on occasion by shock or suggestion.

A suspect's naked body had to be completely shaved to ensure that no protective charm lay concealed among the hairs. With a woman this work was occasionally delegated to a committee of honest matrons, but in the vast majority of cases a highly skilled searcher, usually a man, was responsible for the whole operation because of the possibility that a demon might be lurking in the pubic regions. The entire body was then exhaustively inspected for possible Devil's marks, every wart, pile or mole being thoroughly prodded with a long bodkin which pierced the flesh right down to the bone. The effusion of blood and the screams of the prisoner generally bore testimony to a clean record so far as witchcraft was concerned, but the witch-hunter usually prodded on until some old scar that was insensitive to pain provided him with the evidence he needed.

There were occasions, of course, when even a comprehensive searching and pricking failed to produce proof of witchcraft, and the theory that the Devil's marks could be invisible began to find favour among witch-hunters. It seemed reasonable to suppose that the Devil would protect his slaves by imprinting upon their bodies a mark that could not be seen, and it therefore became necessary for the witch-hunter to prod every inch of the victim's body, even if it was completely free from blemishes. Even then the Devil's mark might still elude the searching bodkin, and the suspect would be handed over to the torturers.

In Switzerland in the 17th century Michelle Chaudron strenuously protested her innocence although she was searched for Devil's marks until her whole body gushed blood from the wounds she received; but when she was tortured she readily confessed her guilt. This kind of treatment was justified by a declaration made by the Jesuit Martin Del Rio, that a Devil's mark was not invariably insensitive to pain; it was recognized that even a true witch might occasionally experience agonies when pricked.

Paid By Results

In countries where torture was not commonly practised, or was forbidden by law as in England and Wales, the witch-finder sometimes had to cheat in order to ensure a conviction. A false bodkin, consisting of a hollow shaft with a retractable needle, would be pressed against the body of the prisoner who, since he or she betrayed no symptom of pain, could then be presumed guilty.

Throughout the 17th century, the witch-hunters continued their search for the Devil's marks. In the case of Father Louis Gaufridi, of the notorious Aix-en-Provence affair, no less than three such marks were discovered

National Film Archive

The Devil's mark was at first thought to be visible, and witch-hunters were credited with the ability to distinguish between ordinary bodily blemishes like moles, and genuine Devil's marks which were insensitive to pain and incapable of bleeding. Later the belief that marks could be invisible found favour with witch-hunters, and it became necessary to prod every inch of a suspect's body: a suspected witch is searched for signs of the mark in a scene from the film *Witchcraft Through the Ages*

upon his body (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS). Scotland at one time had a number of witch-prickers who were paid by results, one of whom was hired by the magistrates of Newcastle-on-Tyne at a fee of 20 shillings for every witch he brought to book, plus his travelling expenses. As a result of his activities 15 victims, all but one of them women, were sent to the gallows.

During a witch-hunt in 1649, one of the magistrates, a Lieutenant Colonel Hobson, challenged the authenticity of the tests. A woman, her clothes pulled over her head, was being examined by a witch-finder. He 'ran a pin into her thigh, and then suddenly let her coats fall, and then demanded whether she had nothing of his in her body, but did not bleed.' Because she had felt nothing, the woman would have been sent for trial had not the magistrate ordered the witch-finder to run his pin into the same place again. This time the wound gushed out blood, and the 'pricker' had no alternative but to release her.

'Like a Little Spot'

Closely allied in the popular mind with the Devil's mark were the 'biggs' or teats known as witches' marks, with which witches were supposed to feed their familiars with blood (see FAMILIARS). These naturally became objects of great interest to the witch-prickers. In a typical case which came to light during the time of Matthew Hopkins, the Witch-Finder General, Margaret Bayts, a housewife of Framlingham, Suffolk, was found guilty of feeding a familiar by means of two teats concealed in her 'secret parts'. Another English victim was Elizabeth Sawyer, a one-eyed and blasphemous witch of Edmonton. When searched by 'three grave matrons', she was discovered to have a 'thing like a teat', the size of her little finger, in the region of her buttocks.

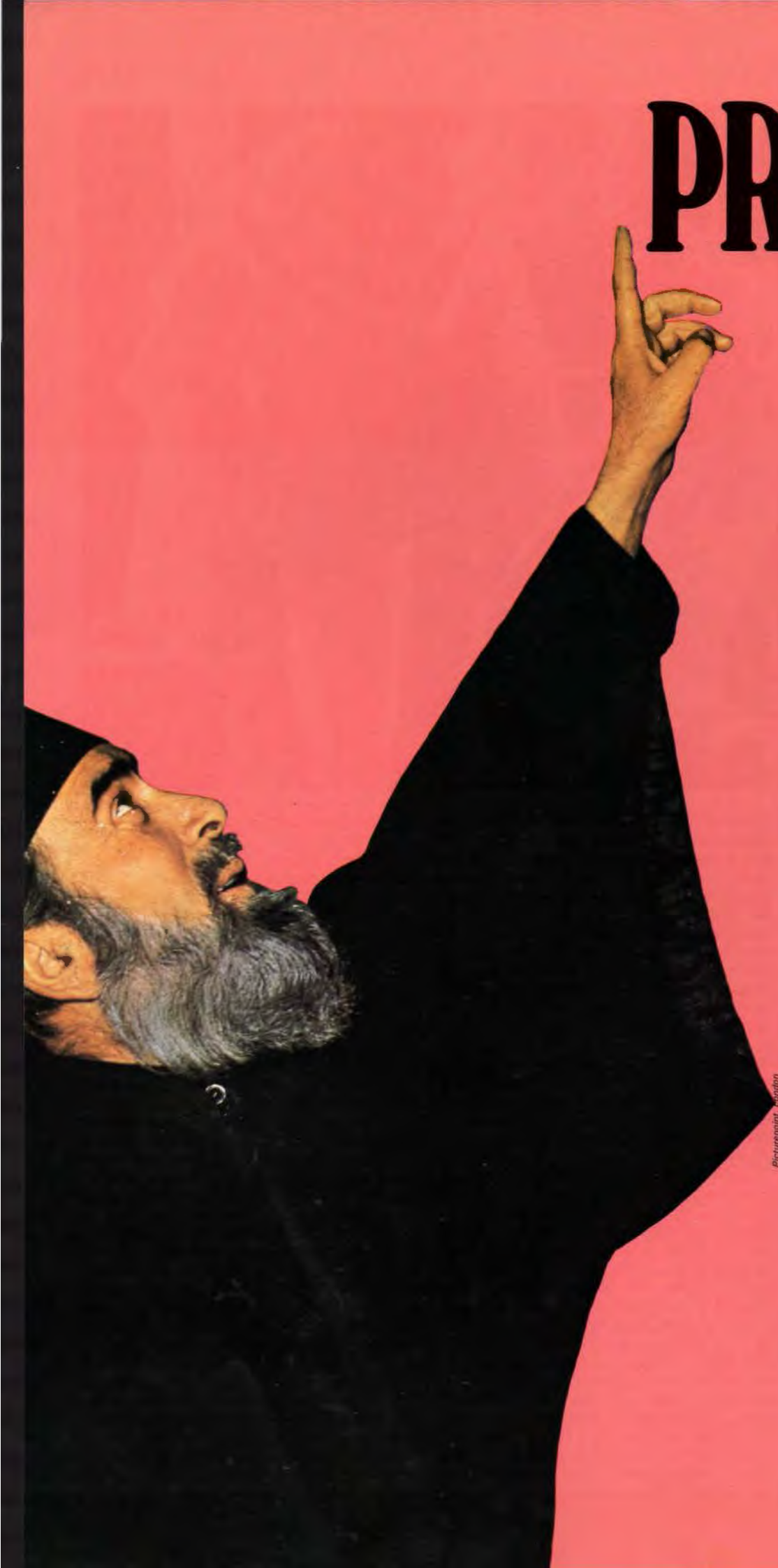
Matthew Hopkins was heavily criticized for regarding natural blemishes such as piles, warts and old scars as witch marks. But he defended himself by arguing that he found such marks to be insensitive to pain when pierced with a pin. It is apparent that witches' marks and the Devil's marks were one and the same so far as he was concerned.

It is obvious from the writings of John Bell, an 18th century Scottish clergyman, that this confusion was fairly general as he describes witches' marks as being 'sometimes like a little spot, or a little teat, or red spots like flea-biting, sometimes also the flesh is sunk into a hollow'. The problem of the witch's mark is doubtless connected with the fact that many people have supernumerary nipples which are frequently hereditary, as the powers of a witch were also frequently believed to be.

The examination of women for witches' marks seems to have continued into the 18th century, although the old belief in the Devil's marks disappeared. Jane Wenham, the last person to be brought to trial for witchcraft in England, was thoroughly searched for marks without success in 1712, and it was finally found necessary to indict her for 'conversing familiarly with the Devil in the shape of a cat'. She was found guilty of this offence, but later pardoned. During her interrogation Jane Wenham was subjected to the ordeal of witch-pricking, a pin being plunged into her arm six or seven times to start with, and then, when no blood came, 'a great many times more'.

The ill-treatment of suspects was eventually confined largely to 'scoring above the breath'. This involved tearing the forehead of the suspect with the fingernails, or pricking it with a pin, in the belief that once a witch's blood was seen to flow her familiar would leave the body of the person she had bewitched in order to feed upon it. Although the underlying reason for the practice has been largely forgotten, examples of pricking have occurred in the 20th century. In 1924 it was reported in *The Times* that a smallholder had tried to shoot an old woman after attempting to draw blood from her with a pin because he believed she had bewitched his pigs; and as recently as 1947 an army pensioner of East Dereham in Norfolk attacked his neighbour in an attempt to draw her blood, believing that she had placed him under a spell.

PRIESTS



Picturepoint, London

The priests, medicine-men or shamans of primitive societies are 'specialists in the supernatural', who provide a channel of communication between human beings and the divine: more sophisticated societies also have specialist priesthoods

AT MOST LEVELS of civilization priests act as the socially recognized mediators between men and supernatural beings. They are the experts in the performance of rituals, and in pre-literate societies it is they who preserve, by oral tradition, the myths and the body of religious concepts and ideas which constitute a people's intellectual heritage. The functions, selection, training and social position of priests differ widely even within simpler societies, and the designation 'priest' has been applied to a large variety of religious practitioners, who may have little in common except for their alleged ability to establish contact with gods and spirits, or to manipulate supernatural forces.

In some societies there is a distinction between priests, who are the official religious leaders and representatives of the community, and magicians, shamans and prophets whose power derives from individual supernatural experiences or what is presumed to be direct inspiration by deities or spirits. In practice, the functions of these two types of religious practitioners often overlap, and the distinction is not universal.

At the lowest level of economic development, there is little scope for the emergence of ritual experts or any other form of occupational specialization. Most societies of nomadic food gatherers and hunters lack religious specialists comparable to the priests of more advanced peoples. All adults

According to Christian doctrine, Christ gave priestly authority to the apostles, who passed their authority to the bishops who came after them. They in turn consecrated other bishops, and it is this authority, which stems from Christ himself, that is transmitted to priests of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches during the ceremony of ordination, the central rite of which is the laying on of hands by a bishop *Left* An Orthodox priest, in Cyprus *Facing page* Priests and monks have sometimes claimed to be more directly inspired by Christ: 13th century miniature showing an abbot receiving a manuscript from a monk who is shown with two faces, indicating that his work was divinely inspired

Members of different priesthoods may have little in common except for their alleged ability to establish contact with gods and spirits

are considered capable of invoking gods or spirits and of soliciting their favour by way of prayers and offerings. Cult acts involving all the members of a group may be conducted by old men experienced in the performance of ritual, but no training or hereditary qualification is required for such activity, nor do those engaging in the organization of religious rites enjoy any special privileges.

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

Priest and Magician

Where larger and more stable social groups have developed, increased economic efficiency enables man to divert some energies to the elaboration of religious practices. In most societies of some complexity the task of establishing contact with transcendental powers tends to be vested in individuals who act as the representatives of their clan or village. Such individuals need not possess outstanding intellectual gifts, but the ability and the right to perform priestly functions may be hereditary in certain families, lineages or clans. Another claim to priesthood is derived from psychological states interpreted as possession or selection by a divinity or spirit, who is supposed to invest the priest with powers and knowledge not accessible to other men. Priests who base their position on hereditary rights and priests called to their vocation by the gods may co-exist in the same society.

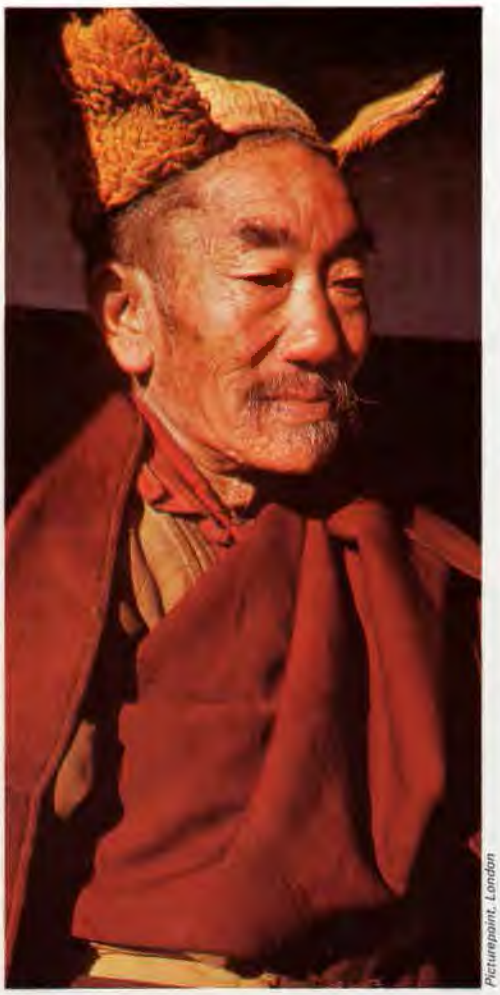
The Hill Reddis, an aboriginal tribe of southern India, for instance, depend on two classes of intermediaries in their relations with the supernatural world: the hereditary priest of the local group or village, and the magician who derives his powers from an intimate connection with a specific god or spirit. The hereditary priest is normally a descendant of the village-founder, and membership of the lineage of the man who first settled in the locality is sufficient qualification for his office. He is regarded as the head of the village, and as the appropriate mediator between man and the deities and spirits who dwell in the area.

As representative of the village he performs those rites and ceremonies that are believed to secure the prosperity of the community as a whole. And since this prosperity is intimately linked with the thriving of the crops, it is above all the agricultural rites that call for the intercession of the priest. He must inaugurate the sowing of the grain, propitiate the earth deity with sacrifices, and perform the rites at the great seasonal feasts. No special intuition or skill is required for these tasks.

Less simple are those that fall to the magician. While the hereditary spiritual head of the community follows the broad and well-trodden path of long established ritual, the magician must battle through the wilderness of the supernatural world to discover the cause of disease and threatening disaster, and must devise the means of placating the wrath of malignant spirits. The priest acts, so to speak, while all is well; his offerings are tendered to gods while their mood is benevolent, and his prayers are designed to solicit their favour for the welfare of the community, and their protection against dangers not yet arisen. It is only when misfortune is rife that the magician is called in to restore the disturbed relations with supernatural powers, to draw the sick from the jaws of death or to counteract the black magic of an enemy. This power, which he could not wield unless he himself possessed a thorough knowledge of magical practices, justifies his being called a 'magician'.

Every Reddi village must have a priest, but there may or may not be a magician in the community. Being a magician is an art, acquired by learning or bestowed by supernatural beings on an eager apprentice. It is an art and a power within reach only of those men and women who are predisposed towards it by particular mental qualities. Naturally these may occur in a priest as well

G. Cubitt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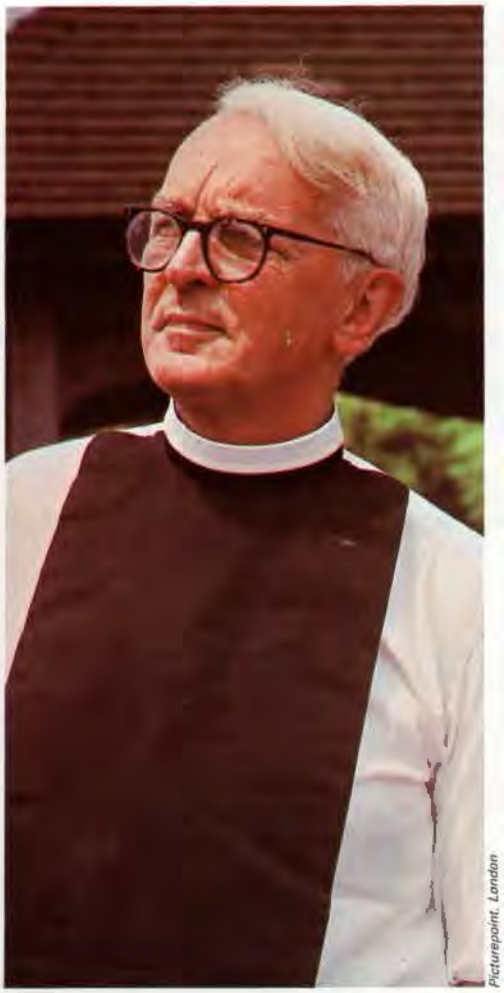
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as in any other man, and his frequent performance of ritual acts is bound to favour their development. Nothing debars a priest from learning the practices of a magician, and the combination of both functions is fairly common.

No Reddi is born a magician and aptitude for the work does not manifest itself in childhood. A magician frequently owes his knowledge to the instruction of his father or an older kinsman, but not every son of a famous magician has the talent or the desire to assimilate his parent's teaching. The co-operation of a deity is indispensable to the process of becoming a magician, and it is not only men who seek the gods; on occasion the gods themselves take the initiative. Reddi magicians agree that they receive their inspiration and knowledge from the gods, either while in a state of trance or through the medium of dreams. When a magician is called on to treat a sick person, it is usually his guardian deity who tells him what medicines to apply and what animals to sacrifice.

Married to a Spirit

While the roles of priest and magician are clearly distinguished in some of the simpler societies, they overlap in others and a distinction between the functions of priests and magicians is hardly perceptible. Both deal with the control of supernatural forces and priests are generally expected to influence the gods through prayer and ritual performances, while magicians exert their power through spells and the manipulation of certain material objects possessed of mysterious efficacy. But as the principal duty of priests is to mediate between mankind and the higher powers, the faculty of communicating with gods and spirits is a primary qualification for the priesthood in many societies. This ability may be proved in different ways. When a person falls into a state of trance or ecstasy, people think that he or she is under the influence of a supernatural power, and therefore suitable for the role of mediator between men and gods. Or the supposed connection between priests and the spirit world may be that they have one or more tutelary deities of their own who assist them when required.

A striking example of this type of link between priests and supernatural beings occurs among the Saora tribe of Orissa in India. Among these primitive hill-farmers, placating the vast otherworld of invisible and often hostile beings occupies the energy of a small band of dedicated men and women. Armed with a few fragile implements, and devoting themselves to supplication of spirits and the sacrifice of animals, these people strive bravely to protect mankind.

There are two types of religious practitioner among the Saoras, the village priest and the shaman or magician. The priest's special function is to maintain the cult of the local shrines and to guard the village lands from the interference of hostile spirits and sorcerers. When a new priest is to be appointed a shaman is called and, falling into a trance, he asks the gods and ancestors whether the proposed candidate is acceptable to them. If they agree that he is, the shaman summons the ghost of the last priest to hold office in the village. If he too approves, the shaman – possessed by, and representing, the dead man – puts his hands on the head of the new priest and tells him to do his work well. This selection and installation of a Saora village priest demonstrates the co-existence and friendly co-operation of two quite different types of ritual expert.

For practical purposes, however, the shaman, who may be male or female, is the most important religious figure in a Saora village. He has the power not only to diagnose the source of trouble or disease, but to cure it. He is doctor as well as priest, psychologist as well as magician, the repository of tradition, the source of sacred knowledge. His primary duty is that of divination; in case of sickness he seeks the cause in trance or dream. Every male shaman has a spirit-wife in the underworld and every female shaman has a spirit-husband, whom she visits in her dreams. These tutelary spouses are the strength and inspiration of Saora shamans. The marriages are absolutely real in their own minds, and they believe themselves to be chosen by the direct intervention of the guardian spirit, through whom they subsequently have immediate access to the world of spirits and deities. A female shaman may have to be wooed by a spirit for a long time before she consents to accept him as husband. Usually such calls from the spirit world

Although the basic function of the priest, to communicate between man and the divine, is the same at most levels of civilization, their selection and training differ widely in different societies; in the Christian Church, for instance, the priest's authority is bestowed on him at his ordination, while in more primitive cultures a shaman will be selected because of his ability to fall into a trance or ecstatic state which is thought to invest him with knowledge and powers inaccessible to ordinary men. The Brahmins of India inherited their ability to perform priestly functions, and have been worshipped as though they were gods themselves ***Left to right*** **A Coptic priest in Ethiopia; a lama in Nepal; a clergyman of the Church of England** ***Right*** **Medicine-man of the Turkana tribe in northern Kenya**

Picturepoint, London

come as hallucinations or dream-experiences, and a girl may appear to be deranged and ill until the 'marriage' to her suitor from the underworld has been performed.

After the marriage, the shaman's spirit-husband visits her regularly and lies with her till dawn. He may even take her away into the jungle for days at a time. In due course a spirit-child is born, and the ghostly father brings it every night to be nursed by the human wife. This imaginary marriage is no bar to marrying a human husband, but the dream-spouse seems as real to a Saora shaman as her husband of flesh and blood, and it is believed that she will become a spirit herself after death.

The Master of Ecstasy

The term 'shaman', now widely current in anthropological literature, was first applied to the religious practitioners of central and northern Asia, where the magico-religious life of most of the indigenous population traditionally centres on the shaman. He is the dominating figure, though in many tribes there are also priests concerned with the performance of animal sacrifices, and every head of a family is also the head of the domestic cult. The ecstatic state is considered to be the supreme religious experience, and the shaman is the great master of ecstasy. Unlike persons possessed by spirits and temporarily in their power, the shaman controls spirits. He is able to communicate with the dead, or with demons and Nature spirits, without becoming their instrument (see SHAMAN).

Medicine-men often receive their knowledge and inspiration from the gods, and exert their powers through spells and by manipulating objects that are believed to possess mysterious efficacy: dried monkeys' heads, an important ingredient in curing disease, for sale in a Nigerian market

Shamans are separated from the rest of society by the intensity of their religious experience, and in this sense they resemble the mystics of historic religions. The mental disposition which qualifies a person for the functions of a shaman points to an important feature of early priesthood. Among many peoples, priests must display a certain excitability of temperament, which in modern Western society might be considered as bordering on a psychopathic condition. The ability to fall into trance may be an essential prerequisite for the performance of certain rites, in which case only those capable of such psychological states are suitable as priests.

The importance attached to ecstasy as a visible means of divine inspiration is shown in the numerous instances of priests obtaining their initiation by inducing a state of delirium or trance through the use of narcotics or fasting. The convulsive movements and seemingly irrational utterances of the inspired person suggest that his own controlling will is in abeyance, and that an external force or being has taken possession of his body. In many cases a god or spirit is supposed to speak through his mouth and determine his actions.

Not all priests need to undergo a formal course of training, or be initiated into the mystery of relations with supernatural powers by a specific ritual. Those who succeed to the priesthood through inheritance, for example, are usually believed to have powers acquired by birth into a family or clan. On the other hand, there are many preliterate societies which require potential religious practitioners to be subjected to a rigorous training in self-control and in the sacred lore of the tribe. Among the Eskimo, for instance, the priests are trained in their profession from childhood.

Where priests receive formal instruction, their education often consists of two different phases. During the first period the

Most priests in primitive societies act simply as agents of their fellow-men, and are intent only on obtaining material benefits for them

novice is under the care of an experienced practitioner, who initiates him into the body of religious beliefs and teaches him how to perform various rites. A later phase is devoted mainly to self-training, in the course of which the novice seeks mystic experiences, and through them a direct relationship with supernatural powers. During this preparation for the priesthood he may have to live in seclusion or submit himself to austerities such as prolonged fasting or exposure to the elements.

In some primitive societies the period of instruction and training culminates in an elaborate initiation ceremony which confirms upon the candidate the full status of an ordained priest.

In many societies, however, priests are trained in a much more casual way. Among the Ifugao tribe of the Philippines, for instance, there is no institutionalized method of initiating priests into the labyrinth of an immensely rich and complicated mythology. There is no organized priesthood recruited from a special social class. Any Ifugao possessing intellectual ability and a good memory may attach himself to an experienced priest of his kin-group or locality as an apprentice; but in many cases sons follow in the footsteps of fathers enjoying a reputation as knowledgeable and successful priests. Ifugao priests also act as chroniclers and genealogists, for the frequently repeated incantations of ancestors give them an unrivalled knowledge of genealogies. The ministrations of priests form an essential part of all the innumerable rituals by which Ifugaos mark social as well as religious occasions.

Some of these rituals may extend over a whole day or even over several days, and the demands they make on the memory can be prodigious. The priests are of supreme importance to the Ifugao, for only they are thought to be capable of manipulating the gods and coaxing them to aid human endeavour. The relation between man and deities is looked upon as one of bargaining and of give and take, and the priests must exert all their skill to get favourable terms for their clients. Ifugao gods are regarded as morally neutral and unconcerned with the ethical conduct of men, and the priests do not take any stand on moral questions. They do not feel any need to behave in an exemplary way in their private lives, nor do they attempt to influence the moral conduct of their clients and fellow-villagers.

Unlike Christian priests or other holy men who regard themselves as representatives of a moral order that derives its sanction from a supreme deity, most priests in primitive societies act simply as the agents of their fellow-men, and are intent only on obtaining material benefits for them. They have no interest in giving them any guidance in moral matters. Priests of this kind do not preach to men, but address themselves solely to the deities they seek to influence.

In addition, whatever the circumstances in which a priest acts as an intermediary between men and gods, the quality which makes his mediation effective often resides in his office rather than in himself as an individual. Consequently it may not greatly matter what sort of person he is, socially, psychologically, or morally.

Government by the Supreme Power of Chinese religion was carried out through a bureaucracy, and the high gods were generally approached through honourable men, priests or monks: figure of a monk, Sung Dynasty (980–1279 AD)

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

A Sense of Awe

Because of his usefulness and power a priest may enjoy considerable prestige and authority, but his position is so precarious and easily damaged that he tends to be surrounded with taboos to protect him against harmful contacts with forces that might render him ineffective. The social position of priests varies greatly from one society to another. The ability to experience states of trance and spirit-possession is usually not combined with great economic efficiency or political acumen, and priests who on ritual occasions will act as the mouthpieces of gods may be withdrawn and comparatively ineffective personalities in ordinary life. On the other hand, someone who holds the position of clan-priest by hereditary right, and functions as the sole mediator between a powerful clan and its protective deities, may derive considerable prestige and material advantages from his office.

In some societies, as among certain West African tribes for instance, priests tend to increase the respect in which they are held by enveloping their proceedings in mystery. They often create a sense of awe and fear among the laity, in order to enhance their power. The special and sometimes fantastic attire donned by some priests is intended partly to distinguish them from the rest of the population, and partly to impress deities and spirits or avert malignant forces. Masks worn by priests have similar purposes, and occasionally signify a mystical connection between the priest and an ancestor spirit or deity whom he embodies.

In primitive societies priesthood is not exclusively a male occupation, and there are many instances of women functioning as priestesses and magicians. It is rare for them to be debarred from marriage, just as male priests are usually expected to marry and lead a life not basically different from that of other members of their society. Though their priestly status may provide them with certain privileges and material benefits, occupational specialization among primitive populations normally does not go far enough to free religious

There is frequently a close relationship between kingship and the priesthood, and in the ancient Near East the gods were served by official state priesthoods, with the implication that priestly authority was one aspect of the royal government. The king was himself the chief priest, though in practice he delegated most of his priestly functions to others *Left* Statue of an Egyptian priest: there was often rivalry between the priests of different gods *Right* In the Maya civilization of Central America, the high priest of a city ranked equally with the 'ruler of men', who was himself educated in religious magic: this relief shows a masked figure carrying a ceremonial sword

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

practitioners from the need to till the soil or herd cattle. At that level of material development priesthood is seldom an exclusive profession, and a priest does not diminish his spiritual status or prestige by engaging in normal secular occupations.

Restrictions on the sexual life of priests and priestesses are usually found in the more advanced civilizations. Primitive peoples rarely place any value on celibacy and chastity, and priests are expected to have normal family lives. They may be obliged to abstain from sexual activities during periods of training or at the time of major rituals, in the same way as fasting is regarded as a preparation for spiritual experiences; but in general primitive priests are not expected to lead a life basically different from that of laymen.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

Clergy and Laity

Specialist priesthoods also play an important role in more complex societies where, although priestly functions may be performed by people who are not priests – the head of the family may say grace at meals, for example – the community's dealings with God or the gods are mainly conducted by the 'clergy' who are distinguished from the 'laity', the non-specialists who are by implication incapable of, or at least less efficient at, communication with the divine. This implication has been resented on occasion, and some Protestant Christian groups insist that all believers are priests. Some refer to their functionaries as 'ministers' or 'elders' rather than 'priests' (the English word is derived from Greek *presbyteros*, 'elder') and deny them any unduly exalted status. At the other extreme, the members of some priesthoods have claimed to be gods themselves. This is true of the Brahmins in India, who belong to a hereditary caste, and some of the lamas of Tibet are regarded as divine (see BRAHMAN; CASTE; LAMAS).

In the ancient world the principal duty of priests was to offer sacrifices and conduct the major rituals of the gods. They also discerned the will of the gods: in Rome the augurs were priests, for example, and the classical oracles were staffed by priests (see AUGURY; ORACLES). Appealing to the gods for help, for individuals or for the community as a whole, curing the sick and battling

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

Lamas, the priests of Tibet, at one time made up about 20 per cent of the population; many lamas, and nuns, were regarded by Tibetans as being reincarnations of saintly predecessors: 17th century painting

against evil spirits were also priestly functions. A priest was usually attached to a particular holy place, the shrine or temple of his god (unlike Christian clergy, who are not tied to sacred sites in this way).

In the Near East the gods were served by official state priesthoods, with the implication that priestly authority was one aspect of the royal government. The king himself was a priest, the chief priest in fact, though in practice he delegated most of his sacerdotal duties to others (see KING). In Mesopotamia, for instance, there were various classes of priests, who performed the temple ceremonies, who took omens and interpreted dreams, who were called in to cure diseases and expel demons, and there were also priestesses, who acted as sacred prostitutes (see MESOPOTAMIA; PROSTITUTION). A priest usually inherited his office and he lived on the offerings made to the god, including the food which in theory the god himself ate. The god owned the land and an important task of the priests was to administer his estates for him.

In Greece and Rome where, in historical times at least, there were no kings, the political importance of priesthoods was minimal. Many priests served only for short periods and were not expected to put aside their ordinary secular activities. The most revered priest in Attica was the chief priest of Eleusis (see ELEUSIS), who was chosen from the priestly clan of the Eumolpidae. He served for life and because he revealed the secrets of the Mysteries to the initiates, it was important for him to have an impressive voice. On appointment he took the name of Hierophantes, and formally threw his old name into the sea.

In Rome the formal worship of the gods by the community as a whole and the rituals which it entailed, as distinct from the devotions of pious individuals, were conducted by various priests, presided over by the pontiffs (*pontifices*) who had originally been concerned with the rituals which accompanied bridge-building. Their chief was the Pontifex Maximus. Among other priests were the *flamines*, of whom the most important were the flamen Dialis, the flamen Martialis and the flamen Quirinalis. The flamen Dialis, the priest of Jupiter, and his wife were bound by all sorts of taboos and restrictions to protect them from pollution (see JUPITER; MARS).

In the Old Testament, patriarchs including Noah, Abraham and Jacob are recorded offering sacrifices to Yahweh but later legislation prohibited all sacrificial offerings except those made in the Temple by qualified priests. The priesthood has almost entirely disappeared from Judaism, and Islam 'allows no priest between man and God' (see ISLAM; JUDAISM).

In the New Testament, St Paul mentions various Christian officials – apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in tongues (I Corinthians 12.28). An organized Christian hierarchy gradually developed, founded on the doctrine that Christ had given priestly authority to the apostles, who in turn passed their authority to the bishops who succeeded them, who in their turn consecrated other bishops, so that through this 'apostolic succession' a properly ordained bishop has inherited, as it were, an authority originally stemming from Christ himself. In the Orthodox, Roman and Anglican Churches priests are ordained by a bishop in a ceremony whose central outward ritual is the laying on of hands, a sign of the transmission of apostolic authority and grace (see SACRAMENTS). The laying on of hands in the appointment of officials by the original apostles is mentioned in Acts (chapter 6).

FURTHER READING: E. O. James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood* (Thames & Hudson, 1955).

PRINCE - Abode of Love

With money from his wealthy admirers, the Rev. H. J. Prince, self-styled messiah, founded his Agapemone or Abode of Love, a place of luxury and pleasure where he lived surrounded by numerous 'soul brides'

H. J. PRINCE

THE REVEREND Henry James Prince has the distinction of having founded his own religious sect for his personal benefit and gratification; and seldom has it been done so brazenly or successfully. His successor, the Rev. J. H. Smyth-Pigott, was equally unscrupulous, and between the two of these rogues there was little difference, although there is no record that they ever met.

H. J. Prince was born in April 1811. He took holy orders in the Church of England, being ordained in 1840 to the curacy of the small parish of Charlinch, near Bridgwater, Somerset. The Rector was named Starkey and like Prince he was an excellent speaker. He soon recognized in his curate the voice of God, and within a year a great revival of religion had started at Charlinch, bringing squires, farmers, gentlemen and their ladies, farm workers and their wives, flocking to the church.

Prince possessed considerable fascination for women, and he did not withhold his powers. There were scandalous rumours about his behaviour and when these reached the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Prince was forbidden to preach.

There seems little doubt that from 1843 onwards, Brother Prince became subject to delusions. In May of that year he wrote a long letter to his brother-in-law, explaining how the Holy Ghost had come to be settled and fixed in the personality of H. J. Prince. Having been inhibited by his own Bishop, Prince fell foul of the Bishop of Salisbury, and when he tried to officiate as curate of Stoke by Clare, Suffolk, he was dismissed by the Bishop of Ely. Then, to use his own words, 'prevented from preaching *within* the pale of the established Church, Bro. Prince, after six months' waiting on God for guidance in faith and prayer, proceeded to preach without it'.

Prince now boldly denounced the Church, and he and Starkey started preaching in the open and in barns around Charlinch. One day, when addressing a meeting in a field, Prince suddenly announced that he was the prophet Elijah, yet few of his listeners appeared to find this revelation extraordinary. Prince then went to Brighton, where he took over the running of a chapel in Windsor Street. The town was a popular resort of wealthy people, and to attract their attention to his chapel he wrote and published several religious books. His masterpiece was *The Great Declaration*, in which he revealed that God had selected him to be the perfect man, incapable of sin. Brother Prince claimed to be immortal, and also said that those who had faith in him would never die: anyone who followed him was assured of immortality. Furthermore, if they were strong in the faith, the love act between the sexes would be entirely innocent. Fleshly pleasures could be enjoyed in a completely spiritual way, especially with Brother Prince.

Prince's first marriage, to a woman old enough to be his mother, had been – according to him – God's will. God was certainly on his side because the lady's income was enough to provide him at Charlinch with the luxuries usually denied a humble curate. When she died he was still at Charlinch, and within a few weeks of the funeral was courting the Rev. Starkey's daughter, whom he quickly married.

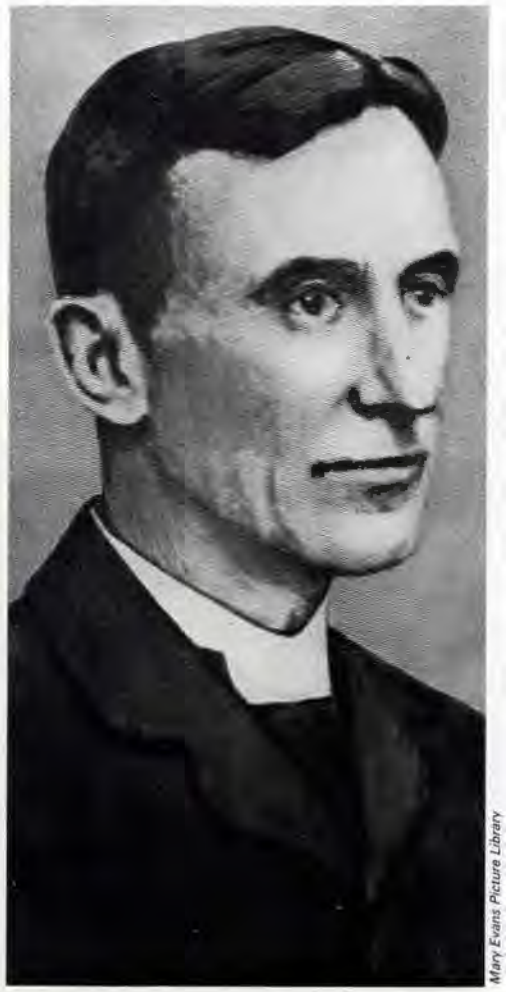
Billiards in Chapel

From Brighton, Prince returned to Somerset with £30,000 in his pockets, most of it contributed by his society admirers. He and his followers travelled in a long procession of carriages with liveried coachmen and postilions, and at Weymouth the entourage stayed at the Royal Hotel, where Prince held a reception and announced his plans for the setting up of an *Agapemone* or Abode of Love. Those who wished to be saved, he said, need only make gifts to help the new community. Some 200 local people of influence, invited especially for this purpose, crowded into the ballroom and agreed to give up all or part of their worldly possessions in order to be saved. With this money, a considerable sum, Prince in 1849 bought a plot of land on the outskirts of Spaxton. He began to style himself 'the Beloved', while Starkey and a brother of Prince's were 'the Two Anointed Ones'. There were also an 'Angel of the Last Trumpet', 'Seven Witnesses' and other divine officials.

The house at Spaxton was large, with an unfinished chapel, stables, outhouses and several cottages. Accommodation was allotted to the disciples according to the money they had subscribed. An even larger mansion was built on the adjoining land, and the chapel was converted into a kind of drawing-room with a high altar, easy chairs, sofas and a billiard table.

It took two years to complete the building of the Agapemone, large numbers of workmen being employed; when it was finished it was extremely luxurious. The estate was self-sufficient and consisted of about 200 acres. There were at first about 60 disciples in residence, with their servants. The Queen-Dowager's carriage was bought, and in this Brother Prince was driven in style along the country lanes behind four white horses. Visiting the Great Exhibition in London, he was preceded by outriders.

In 1927 an old villager in Spaxton stated that he remembered Brother Prince driving through Bridgwater in his carriage and pair with a footman sounding a horn and crying: 'All hail! All hail! The Messiah!' To his followers, Prince was God. Letters addressed to 'Our Lord God, Spaxton, Somerset' reached him safely. And because he claimed to be divine, Prince took to his bed those of his sister disciples whom he desired. Their children were born in comfort and secrecy at Bristol, and were later given quarters in the house, but were kept out of sight when visitors called. The women regarded it as an honour to be taken by the Beloved, who explained in his work



Mary Evans Picture Library

The Little Open Book (1856) that Christ had appointed him for these special tasks.

A wave of religious fanaticism swept across the Bridgwater district. Many otherwise intelligent people were convinced when Brother Prince rose and announced that he was the final revelation of the will of God.

The Disgrace of Death

With time, Prince took less interest in the theological aspects of religion, and there was considerable open debauchery in the Abode, without pretence of prayer or devotion. One of his followers, Miss Paterson, became Prince's 'soul bride', and when she became pregnant Brother Prince announced that there would be no birth, just as there was no death for his followers. But when Miss Paterson's newborn child could hardly be so lightly dismissed, Prince explained that it was Satan's final despairing act against God.

Several of the followers were upset by the open immorality and left the community, bringing lawsuits against Prince. One of these cases resulted in a complete exposure of the way the Beloved and his colleagues 'crept into houses, leading silly captive women' and 'turning the Grace of Lord Jesus Christ into licentiousness'. The suit was heard in the Court of Chancery in the summer of 1860. The Vice-Chancellor referred in the strongest terms to the disgraceful revelations, and a bill was filed to recover £5,728 from Prince, the property of three sisters.

After this, Prince led a retired life and

Syndication International

Previous page **At Spaxton in Somerset a complex of luxuriously appointed buildings provided accommodation for the members of the Agapemone *Far left* John Hugh Smyth-Pigott, a curate in the Church of England, declared that he was God in 1902, three years after Prince's death; shortly afterwards he moved down to Spaxton as the new messiah *Left* Ruth Preece, a wealthy young woman, became Smyth-Pigott's 'chief soul bride'; it was for fathering her illegitimate child that Smyth-Pigott was eventually inhibited by his bishop**

a cloak of silence fell over the Agapemone. The funds of the brotherhood fell low, for no work had ever been done in the Abode: every day and night had been spent in pleasure. But the Beloved's good fortune did not fail him. In the late 1880s a wealthy London merchant presented Prince with all his property, worth some £10,000, and moved into the Abode to serve the community as butler.

Finally, in January 1899, when he was almost 88, Brother Prince relinquished his claim to immortality. He was buried under the lawn, near the bodies of those of his followers who had also failed to prove that they possessed the secret of everlasting life. No headstones marked the graves of the departed, who were buried standing up. The remaining brothers and sisters concluded that by dying their companions had let them down. Death was a disgrace, an admission of sin.

This should be the end of the story of the Abode of Love, but it is not. In 1890 and for several years afterwards there had been a remarkable revival of interest in the Agapemone. Several prominent members of the Salvation Army had joined. At Clapton, London, the Children of the Resurrection, as they now called themselves, built in 1892 a magnificent church, the Ark of the Covenant, seating about 400 people, at a cost of some £16,000. The preacher at the opening ceremony in 1896 was the Rev. J. H. Smyth-Pigott, who was to be Brother Prince's successor at Spaxton.

The Beloved's Successor

After a varied career as a university man, sailor before the mast, curate in the Church of England, and evangelist in the Salvation Army, Smyth-Pigott was converted to the views of Brother Prince. In his opening sermon at Clapton he declared that he expected Christ to return that very day and descend upon the congregation.

It was on Sunday, 7 September 1902 that Smyth-Pigott stood before a crowded congregation in the Ark and publicly announced his divinity. According to one report, he revealed that he was going to walk across the water. Some of the believers fell on their knees and shouted for joy. On the next Sunday some 6000 people waited from dawn until the evening to see the new messiah arrive in his carriage. When he appeared he was greeted with loud hisses and catcalls; hundreds of people stormed over the railings to enter the church, but the doors were closed. The messiah at once drove back to his home, Cedar Lodge, followed by a shower of stones, bricks and umbrellas. Smyth-Pigott's declaration of divinity was greeted with scorn by General Booth of the Salvation Army, and the Plymouth Brethren regarded the claim as 'wicked and dishonourable'.

Smyth-Pigott moved down to Spaxton, where after some time an attractive girl named Ruth Preece went to live with him as his wife. Smyth-Pigott had been married since August 1886 but his wife accepted the newcomer, who was one of three wealthy sisters. In 1906 a male child was born to Miss Preece, the records at Somerset House showing that the father was John Hugh Smyth-Pigott, Clerk in Holy Orders. This led to his being inhibited by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the court finding him guilty of 'immorality, uncleanness, and wickedness of life'. But Smyth-Pigott was unconcerned. 'I am God,' he said. 'It does not matter what they do. There is no such thing as marriage at the Agapemone. We are all brothers and sisters in God.' Less than a year later a daughter was born to 'Sister Ruth'.

At this time there were nearly 100 women in the Abode, but few men. Sister Ruth was 'bride-in-chief', and Mrs Smyth-Pigott lived in her own apartments.

Smyth-Pigott died in March 1927, a tired old man of 75. It was reported that the servants were unpaid, working for love and receiving only a little pocket money. In 1955 60-year-old Miss Ruth Ranken of Barnet revealed that she had been brought up as a member of the sect, and was still one in spirit. Brother Prince had founded it, and had been known as 'the Messenger'. On his deathbed in 1899 he had handed to Smyth-Pigott a 'horn of power'. Thereafter, said Miss Ranken, the true personality of Smyth-Pigott became clear – he was the same person as Jesus Christ. Miss Ranken said she had stayed at Spaxton many times, and was present at the Ark in 1902 when Smyth-Pigott proclaimed himself not as the Messiah but as the Son of Man.

In 1962 the house at Spaxton was sold and the story of the Abode of Love came to an end.

(See also MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS.)

JOHN MONTGOMERY

The goddess Athene, it was said, came to live with Proclus, for this 5th century Neoplatonist combined his prolific output of philosophical treatises with a devout life of prayer and dutiful observance of pagan rites

PROCLUS

THE BEST KNOWN of the later Neoplatonists, Proclus (410–485 AD) was also the most influential of them in the Middle Ages. There are two sources for his life, a pious little biography written by Marinus, his disciple and successor in the headship of Plato's school at Athens, and the fragments of the *Life of Isidore* by Damascius, a rather rambling work which contained a great deal of information about a large number of later Platonic philosophers, written a little before 500 AD.

Proclus belonged to a legal family from Xanthus in Lycia, where he lived as a child. His father intended him to be a lawyer, but after beginning to study for this profession at Alexandria he decided to devote himself to philosophy and eventually went to join the Platonic school, the Academy, at Athens, at about the end of the year 430 AD. The *Diodochus*, or successor of Plato, who was head of the school at that time was Plutarch of Athens (not to be confused with the biographer and essayist Plutarch of Chaeronea, who lived about 300 years earlier). The 5th century Plutarch was a convinced late Neoplatonist (see NEOPLATONISM). At the time of the arrival of Proclus he was very old, and most of the teaching in the Academy was done by Syrianus, the successor of Plutarch in the headship who became Proclus's loved and venerated master.

These late Neoplatonists were a small closed group of devout pagans in an officially Christian world, often closely interrelated and living together on terms of considerable intimacy. Proclus lived in the house of Syrianus, and was initiated into the secret rites of theurgy (see THEURGY) by Plutarch's daughter, Asclepigeneia. Under Syrianus he went through the first two parts of the normal course of Neoplatonic philosophical studies, the study of Aristotle (conceived as

an indispensable preliminary intellectual exercise) and the study of Plato (regarded as a 'mystagogy' or initiation into divine wisdom). The third and final part of the course was the study of the 'theologians', that is to say the Orphic and Chaldean writings supposed to contain revelations from the gods themselves, to the understanding of which the study of Plato according to Neoplatonic principles of interpretation was thought to provide the key. But Syrianus died before embarking on this part of the course, and Proclus was left to complete the study of the 'theologians' by himself, with the help of the voluminous commentaries of his predecessors; this he did all too thoroughly, as his works show. He became himself the Platonic successor, probably inheriting the position from Syrianus in about 437, and was referred to by later generations as Proclus Diadochus.

Philosopher and Rain-Maker

Proclus never married, and lived an intensely austere and hard-working life, combining the activities of an exceptionally industrious professor with a monastic life of prayer and ritual observance. He lectured and wrote a great deal and held discussions with other philosophers, while he also spent much of the night in contemplative prayer and ceremoniously venerated the sun with triple prostrations at dawn, noon and sunset. He conscientiously evoked the gods according to the rites which he had learnt from Asclepigeneia, and practised rain magic for the good of the community. Eventually the goddess Athene herself, so it was said, came to live in his house when her statue was taken from the Parthenon to Constantinople. But none the less he lived for the most part on good terms with his Christian fellow citizens and with the officials of the Imperial government, which had already several times forbidden all forms of pagan cult, under heavy penalties, but rather ineffectively. (There was still a minority of high Imperial officials who had sympathies with Neoplatonic paganism, and their influence may have helped the Academy: it continued in possession of its large endowments until its closure by Justinian in 529, and perhaps even managed to retain some of them afterwards.) There was only one short period when Proclus had to leave Athens and spend a year in Asia Minor, apparently because of Christian hostility. He died peacefully of old age in 485.

In his long and industrious life Proclus wrote a very great deal, and a fair proportion of his works survives. He produced commentaries on Aristotle's logical works and on a number of dialogues of Plato; of these some of the most important survive, notably those on the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*. Of a number of short works on particular questions, three survive, mostly in medieval Latin translations. However, an elementary introduction to Plato, and possibly another to Aristotle, have not survived. He wrote a group of systematic expositions of Platonism, of which the *Elements of Theology*, a series of propositions modelled on the *Elements* of Euclid, is the best introduction to his thought. The greatest work of Proclus is the *Platonic Theology* and he also wrote works on mathematics and astronomy, of which three or four survive; works on theurgy, which have perished except for small fragments, no doubt owing to Christian hostility to their subject matter; and a number of hymns, of which seven survive.

Proclus is not easy or attractive to read. Except in the *Elements of Theology* he is excessively long-winded, and his style is pompous and heavily laden with the technical terms of late Greek philosophy. But his concern for clear and complete exposition and logical coherence makes him (when one has mastered the technicalities) often easier to understand than Plotinus (see PLOTINUS).

It is difficult to separate the thought of Proclus clearly from that of his predecessors, and especially from that of his master Syrianus. He is best considered as the representative of the distinctive kind of Neoplatonism which began with Iamblichus (c 250–326 AD) and reached its fullest philosophical development in the school of Athens in the 5th and 6th centuries AD. This did not claim to be in any way original. It purported to be the one true wisdom of the ancient masters, Pythagoras and Plato, correctly interpreted, with such modest help as Aristotle could give, according to the tradition of the Platonic school, and providing the only key to the understanding of the revelations which the gods had given to men through the 'theologians'. The Neoplatonic masters Plotinus and Porphyry, and above all Iamblichus and Syrianus, were not regarded, and would not have wished to be regarded, as original philosophers but as men who had, more or less, understood the true meaning of the Platonic writings and other sacred ancient texts. But this was no mere subordination of reason to authority. It was a matter of faith with the later Neoplatonists that the writings of Plato and the other ancient masters and the divine oracles contained a single, perfectly coherent and consistent system of thought, and that there could not really be anything in them which might seem to the late Neoplatonic mind to be illogical, irreligious or immoral. So the texts were very firmly interpreted, often by very odd methods, to produce a meaning which seemed to the philosophers rationally and religiously satisfactory.

The birth of Athene from the head of her father Zeus: detail from a cup of the 6th century BC. Proclus upheld the worship of the gods of ancient Greece at a time when Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire

Michael Holford/British Museum

Return to the Divine

Philosophy, for the later as for the earlier Neoplatonists, was primarily concerned with the truth about the Divine and the way by which man could return to it. Proclus presents the universe as an eternally existing, great and complex ordered structure. In it the ineffably transcendent First Principle, the ultimate One, expresses itself on all the levels of being: in the intelligible world and the realm of soul, and in the material world, whose matter is now no longer thought of as the principle of evil (as it was for Plotinus), but as wholly good and proceeding immediately from the One, so that material things have powers which can help to bring men back to the Divine. The return to God in later Neoplatonism is not brought about, as it was for Plotinus, through the discovery of the true, higher self which 'does not come down' but remains eternally in the divine realm. Man descends wholly to this world, and for his return to God needs the help of the divine powers. The One manifests itself on every level of being through the 'henads', unities and unifying principles which are identified with the gods of paganism; and men can return to it through unification each with his appropriate henad.

Theurgy is generally said to be superior to philosophy, and to be alone capable of bringing about the final stages of the return. But it is not entirely clear what theurgy meant to Proclus and other late Neoplatonists. It is the supreme expression of *pistis*, 'faith', one of the three great powers which unite and bring back all things to their divine source, the others being truth and love. It certainly included ritual magic which makes use of the occult powers implanted in material things by the gods, but it may sometimes have extended to include something like mystical prayer as well. In any case, preoccupation with theurgy was not for Proclus and his school any excuse for being vague, casual and incoherent in philosophy. They aimed at, and, granted their initial assumptions, very often achieved, the highest possible degree of logical rigour, consistency and completeness.

A. H. ARMSTRONG

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A Greek god notable for his efforts to improve man's lot, Prometheus first appears as a crafty trickster, but is more familiar in his later role of wise teacher of the arts of civilization and heroic opponent of tyranny

PROMETHEUS

THE OLDEST and fullest account of Prometheus comes from the poems of Hesiod (700 BC). Prometheus was a son of the Titan Iapetus. His brothers Atlas and Menoetius were both punished by Zeus for unruliness, and he too crossed the tyrannical ruler of heaven.

Gods and men were settling their affairs at Sicyon (not far from Corinth) prior to living apart. A bull was sacrificed, and Prometheus carved it up for eating. He served Zeus with a good meaty portion, but covered it in skin and paunch to make it look unattractive; while for mankind he set bones dressed up in juicy fat. Zeus complained at the unfair division, whereupon Prometheus, with a cunning smile, invited him to choose his own portion. Zeus promptly seized the better-looking one (the pious poet assures us that he was not really taken in), and ever since then men sacrificing animals have given the bones and other inedible parts to the gods, and divided the meat among themselves.

The Theft of Fire

As Karl Meuli has explained, the procedures of blood sacrifice go back to the hunting societies of Paleolithic times. The basic reason for killing the animal was to eat it. The remains were treated with care and arranged in a particular way, perhaps in the hope of restoring the animal alive to the herds. The Greeks, however, had come to think of it as a feast which men shared with the gods, and they consequently felt the need to justify the inequality of the division. The Prometheus story does so: it is an example of pure myth, a story designed to account for a feature of the world we live in, its details governed by present facts. The wrapping of the bones in fat corresponds to actual Greek sacrificial practice; the wrapping of the meat in the paunch may reflect a method of roasting.

Angered at the deception, Hesiod continues, Zeus withheld fire from men (perhaps with the idea of preventing them from cooking their meat); he 'would not give it to the ash-trees', the source from which men derive it. But Prometheus stole it in a fennel-stalk and delivered it to us.

The story belongs to a widespread type (see FIRE). Fire is a magical element that does not seem to belong on earth, and the myths commonly tell how it was stolen from heaven – often by a bird – and hidden in the trees. In Greece there was more than one local story. At Argos the bringer of fire was the hero Phoroneus, son of a tree nymph. Prometheus appears at Athens as one of the gods specially worshipped by potters and smiths. There was an annual torch-race from the altar he shared with Hephaestus, perhaps originally a ceremony for renewing the purity of another altar's fire. Prometheus's fennel-stalk was not a torch, it was an established means of transporting fire, which will live safely and inconspicuously on the white inner pith. But the external similarity of the torch-race in Prometheus's honour might have been responsible for his being identified as the

Mansell Collection

For thwarting the will of Zeus, Prometheus was bound to a rock; each day an eagle was sent to feast on his liver, which grew again during the night. In Aeschylus's play *Prometheus Bound* the hero is supported in his agony by a chorus of nymphs, a scene depicted by Fritz Zuber-Bühler in his painting *Prometheus and the Sea Nymphs*

The Defiance of Prometheus

Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair, – these are mine empire:–
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

. . .

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
– As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim –
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.

Shelley *Prometheus Unbound*

thief who loped off with the stalk of fennel.

Zeus's next move was to send mankind a pernicious commodity to counterbalance the desirable one that they had got. On his instructions the divine craftsman Hephaestus made a beautiful girl, various goddesses adorned her, and Hermes gave her a deceitful disposition. She was named Pandora, and sent to Prometheus's foolish brother Epimetheus. Although Prometheus had warned him not to accept a present from Zeus, he married her, and all mortal women are her descendants. It was she who took the lid off the great jar in which all evils had been confined, letting them loose among us: only Hope remains in storage.

Many peoples have myths of the origin of women, as a separate event secondary to the creation of man. Eve was made from Adam's rib. Epimetheus was probably invented by someone who wanted to link the origin of women with the Prometheus story, but considered Prometheus himself to be too clever to be taken in by Zeus's trick. Prometheus's name suggested something like 'Forethought', so he was given a brother 'Afterthought' (as a *pro*logue has for its opposite an *epi*logue); a pair of brothers, one clever and one stupid, or one good and one bad, is a common theme in folktales. Genealogists later brought Prometheus, Epimetheus and Pandora into connection with Deucalion and Pyrrha. These were the ancestors of mankind in the mythical tradition of north and central Greece. After a flood of which they were the sole survivors, they had to throw stones behind them, and those thrown by Deucalion turned into men, those thrown by Pyrrha into women. This legend was reconciled with the story that women were descended from Pandora by making Pyrrha the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora.

The jar of ills was an independent motif. Homer speaks of two such jars, in Zeus's keeping, one of ills and one of good things. Zeus dips in and dispenses to men as he thinks fit. Hesiod rather confusingly uses a single jar, primarily as a container of ills, but then also as a retainer of Hope. In daily life jars are used to store good things, but in myth they are useful for keeping evil spirits in bondage. It was much later, under the influence of the allegory of Cupid and Psyche, that Pandora's jar became a box.

Prometheus Bound

To prevent any further roguery, Zeus bound Prometheus in invincible bonds, and secured them by driving them through the thickness of a column. He then sent an eagle to feast on Prometheus's liver. Each night it grew again, and each day the eagle returned to its work, for constant repetition is proper to the torments of sinners. Later, however, Zeus's wrath abated, and he allowed his son Hercules to win glory by shooting the dutiful bird; yet Prometheus remains in bondage, for there is no thwarting the will of Zeus.

A late tradition identified Prometheus, the master craftsman, as the creator of mankind. He fashioned human shapes from clay, which were then animated by the goddess Athene: detail from a 3rd century sarcophagus

G. Tomsich/Spectrum Colour Library

Hesiod probably thought of Prometheus as being bound somewhere at the world's end, where his brother Atlas stands supporting the sky's weight. The column to which he is fastened may have a connection with the idea of pillars of heaven. This conception alternates in Eurasian folklore with that of a world tree or a world mountain which reaches up to the sky. In later versions of the Prometheus myth, the miscreant is shackled to a mountain – Caucasus, from the Greek viewpoint a remote eastern outpost of the earth. The story that the Argonauts saw Prometheus on their legendary Black Sea voyage might go back to a source of Hesiod's time.

There is some evidence that the Caucasus is in fact the original home of the myth. Throughout that region it is related that earthquakes are caused by the struggles of a fierce giant who tried to steal the water of life from the mountain heights, or was otherwise impious, and as a punishment was bound by God to a pillar or in a cavern in the mountain. In many versions a vulture pecks at his heart. He will have to stay there till the end of the world, but when he does break free his rage will destroy everything. Some accounts add that he once found a helper who nearly freed him; we think of Hercules.

Local variants are more reminiscent of the punishments of other Greek sinners. The water of life flows just out of the prisoner's reach: in the same way Tantalus was tormented ('tantalized', as we still say) by food and drink that kept eluding his grasp. Or beside the giant a great wheel turns, day and night; he never takes his eyes off it, for when it stops, he will become free. Ixion was bound on a revolving wheel. Tityus, like Prometheus, was fed on by birds of prey – two vultures.

In the Caucasus, then, we have a straight Nature myth with logical connections (the pecking bird accounts for the prisoner's intermittent wrath); in Greece, a loose group of curious stories. The myth can be traced back to about 400 AD in the Caucasus (a similar one was current in the Hindu Kush when Alexander the Great got there, 700 years earlier), and there is no reason why it should not be thousands of years older. It would not be the only myth to reach Greece from the heart of Asia.

Prometheus Unbound

Prometheus's punishment forms the subject of Aeschylus's play *Prometheus Bound* (second quarter of the 5th century BC). He is now represented as having given men a great deal more than fire; he is a dignified culture hero instead of a trickster. Formerly men lived in caves, ignorant of everything. Prometheus taught them to measure seasons by the stars, to reckon and write, to harness animals to their service, to sail the sea, to make medicines, to interpret dreams and omens, to mine metals. By Aeschylus's time the Greeks were speculating about the origins of civilization (see TIME), and while some saw it as a self-activated evolutionary process, others thought in terms of a divine or human instructor: Prometheus, or Palamedes, or

Indomitable under torture, the Titan continues his heroic defiance of the despotic ruler of heaven: *The Torture of Prometheus* by G. Moreau treats a subject which held great appeal for the Romantic imagination

the centaur Chiron, or Hephaestus and Athene, each nomination being based on some hint in traditional legend.

Aeschylus shows Prometheus as defiantly proud of his achievements in spite of the punishment they have brought him. Man's advancement is for the good, and Zeus must come to terms with it. In mythical language, he must come to terms with Prometheus, for if the craftsmen of Athens flourish, their god must flourish too: they will not have him a helpless prisoner at the world's edge. The story that Hercules relieved him of the eagle is accordingly developed into a full release. *Prometheus Bound* was followed in stage performance by *Prometheus Unbound*. The play is lost, but we know that after the lapse of 30,000 years Hercules freed Prometheus. Zeus only relented under pressure, however. It had been prophesied that a certain goddess would bear a son mightier than his father. As an insatiable wooer of goddesses, Zeus badly needed to know who it was, and only Prometheus could tell him. (It was Thetis. She was accordingly married off to a mortal, and bore Achilles.)

In the 5th century BC Greece's true classicism was already in decline. Certain analogies might be drawn with the Romanticism of the 19th century; and Aeschylus's treatment of Prometheus could be taken as an expression of one trend of thought which exalted man's indomitable nature and capacity for self-improvement. But events discredited this kind of enthusiasm, and dialectic discredited myths about the gods. The dramatists dropped Prometheus. A historian of the end of the century rationalized him: he was a Scythian king whose subjects incarcerated him because he could not stop the incursions of the Eagle river, until Hercules diverted it. Sophists and philosophers composed variations on the myth to suit their purposes, in particular developing the idea of Prometheus as a craftsman who fashioned mankind from clay, which presently became a cliché. From at least the late 4th century, allegorical interpretations were put forward. The fire that Prometheus brought represented philosophy, and he was accordingly the first philosopher. For the Stoics he was that divine Forethought which shaped man in the beginning, and then, lodging in him, apprehended the utility of fire. His punishment is heart-eating worry.

M. L. WEST

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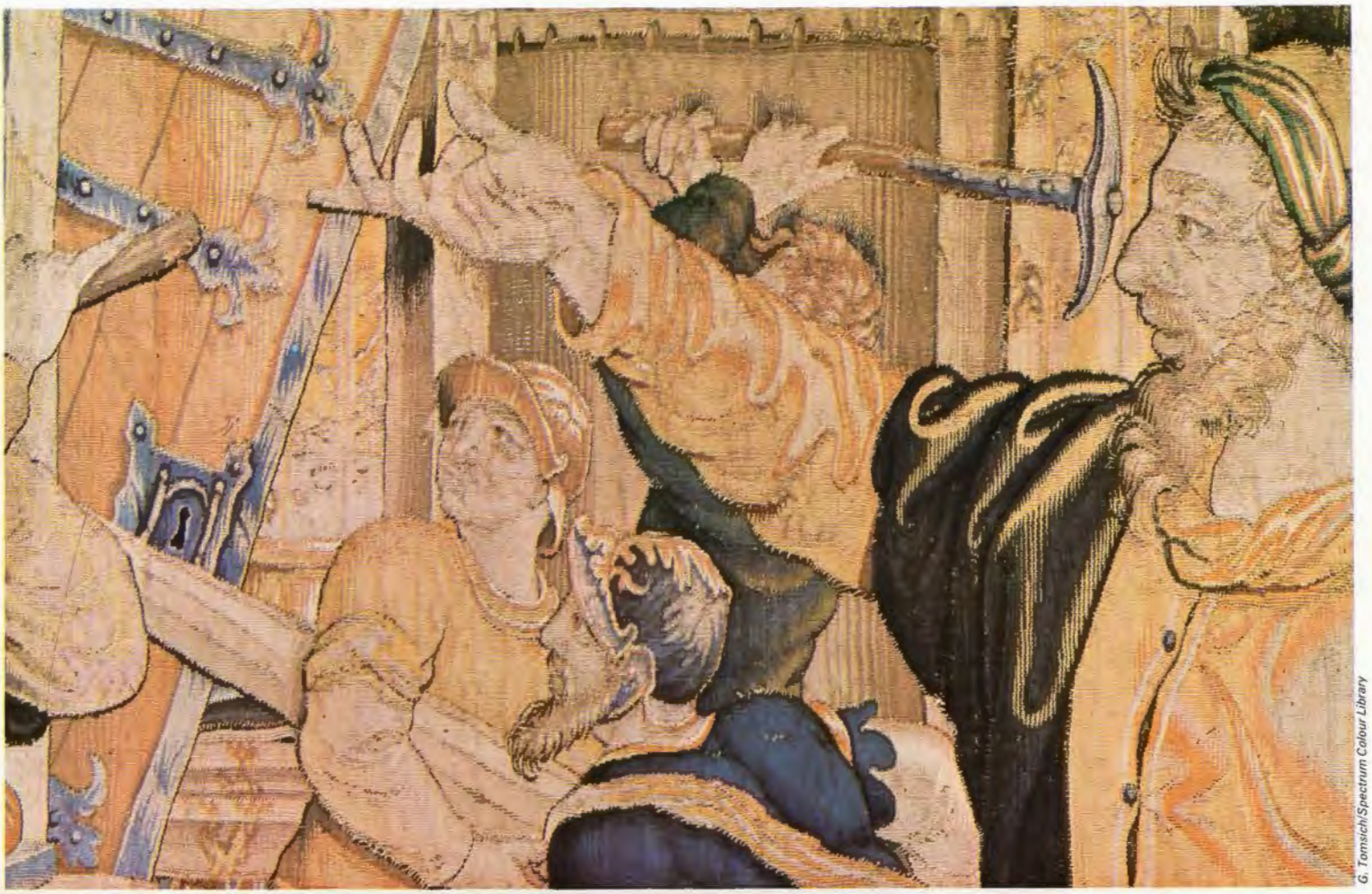


G. Tomsich/Spectrum Colour Library

PROPHECY

A prophet was the human spokesman of a god and this special relationship to the divine led to the association of miracles and supernormal abilities with prophecy, including the ability to see into the future *Above* Daniel's vision of the destruction of the Temple: detail from a 16th century Flemish tapestry *Right* Elijah is miraculously fed by ravens: illustration from a 15th century manuscript

The Hebrew prophets claimed inspiration by the divine will: but while their main object was to teach, warn and encourage, they might also foreshadow future events

A WORD of Greek derivation, prophecy means 'speaking before'. In modern English it usually implies foretelling the future. Originally, however, this was not a prophet's essential function. He was the human spokesman of a god (pre-eminently of Yahweh, the God of Israel) and therefore a transmitter of divine messages, which might concern the future or might not.

Even in English the idea of prediction has not always been present. When St Luke's gospel describes the beating and taunting of the blindfolded Christ, his assailants say, 'Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?' (Luke 22.64). What is demanded here is proof of such supernormal knowledge as a true messiah ought to possess.

The Old Testament sometimes employs the term 'prophet' very loosely. For instance, Abraham is a 'prophet' because he is the friend of God. Moses and his brother Aaron are called prophets, and their sister Miriam a prophetess, each for a different reason: Moses as the appointed mouthpiece of divine laws, Aaron as their translator into practice, Miriam as a leader of song and dance in God's praise. The common factor in these four instances is a special relationship with Yahweh.

Miriam's song of triumph over the Egyptians (Exodus 15.20–21) may be the oldest thing in the Bible, a kind of 'spiritual' made up on the spot. It proves the antiquity of 'prophecy' in some sense. However, the Hebrew prophesying that led up to the poetry of Isaiah and Jeremiah had a more specific character. It took place in a state of ecstasy. The prophet was a *nabhi*, a 'called' person. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh breathed upon him, and he leaped and sang and saw visions, and burst out into oracular sayings. Nabhi enthusiasm could be contagious, like the dancing mania of the Middle Ages (see DANCING MANIA), attacking people not normally subject to it. It appears first in chapter 11 of the book of Numbers, where 70 Israelite elders undergo a temporary collective seizure in the presence

British Museum

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

From the 8th century BC, the words of the Hebrew prophets began to be written down, and have come down to us in the Old Testament. Hosea *(left)* attacked religious corruption. Jeremiah *(centre)*, who was priest as well as prophet, envisaged a future when the religion of Israel would develop into something greater and nobler. Ezekiel *(right)* is 'the least spontaneous of the prophets'. Illustrations from a Byzantine manuscript, 13th or 14th century

of Moses. In 1 Samuel (chapter 19) the rapture engulfs its victims against their will.

Men or women could prophesy. But when prophets began to combine in guilds, membership was apparently confined to men. The full-time nabhi who had the gift was often a strolling player with a flute, harp or tambourine. He wore a skin mantle with a leather belt. In the early period when Samuel and Saul flourished (c 1050–1015 BC) the nabhi might appear to be hardly more than a fortune teller, offering 'inspired' messages in return for presents and hospitality. But a graver theme always underlay his vocation, even at its most debased. Ostensibly at least, he received the word of Yahweh.

A Vessel of the Spirit

When we search for parallels outside Israel, we should recognize a distinction. The nabhi might look like a soothsayer or medium, but in fact he was not. Saul knew the difference, and banished persons of the latter type while respecting prophets (1 Samuel 28.3). Soothsaying and mediumship in the ancient world were based on techniques. Diviners had their pseudo-sciences of dream interpretation and omen-reading. Even the priestesses of Delphi, who succumbed to possession by Apollo, put themselves into a drugged state which induced the prophetic process and brought the oracle (see ORACLES).

The Hebrew nabhi, if true to his calling, did not seek answers to questions by any similar art. He might make himself receptive by prayer or fasting, but he could not compel the Lord. It was the Holy Spirit that came, or did not come, with an imperiousness beyond the prophet's control. The prophet might deceive others, and himself, into thinking the Spirit was upon him when it was not – as in the remarkable story of Ahab and the battle of Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings, chapter 22) – but he never pretended that his message was extracted from God by some technique of his own.

The sounder parallels with the Israelite tradition are to be found in the realm of ecstatic religion. There is an account of a Canaanite fanatic becoming possessed by a god, about 1100 BC, chronologically between Moses and Saul. Closer still to the nabhi excitement, and better documented, is the frenzy accompanying the cult of Dionysus (see DIONYSUS). But while the outward symptoms may have been much the same everywhere, Hebrew prophecy had a unique capacity for growth and enrichment. Yahweh was more than Dionysus. To faithful Israelites he was not merely a god but supreme, the only higher power that mattered, at least to them; and his cult had an ethical content, both for the community and for the individual. The nabhi experience could and did mature, over the centuries, into a solemn disclosure of the divine will through inspired speakers.

Its Greek counterpart passed from the fiery Dionysiac phase into Orphic mysticism (see ORPHEUS). Hebrew prophecy went on growing as a phenomenon in its own right, even after it transcended its nabhi origins. In the end it transformed Israel's religion without losing its identity.

So profound were its effects that some scholars have claimed what is certainly too much. They have contended that the later, literary prophets – Isaiah and the rest – actually invented Israel's religion, and that Old Testament history is largely fiction, concocted to give a pedigree to their teachings. This theory is now out of favour for several reasons, but chiefly because of what the history says, and the tone which the prophets take.

We get a picture, first, of a priestly cult of Yahweh as the God who rescued his people from Egyptian bondage and settled them in the Promised Land. The nabhi prophets have only a subsidiary role. Then, after many years, come the literary prophets. They do not speak like innovators founding a new religion; they appeal to a pure ancestral faith, which they say has been corrupted by monarchy, material wealth, a court priesthood and flirtation with paganism. The priestly-political tradition and the prophetic tradition are two aspects of the same religion. It is incredible that either party would have invented the other in just this way. But having recognized the fact, we should also recognize that it was the prophets, rather than the priests, who gave Israel's faith its eventual grandeur and permanency.

The Prophetic Succession

Between the nabhi and the authors of the later Old Testament books stands the transitional figure of Elijah. He denounced paganism and tyranny in the northern Israelite kingdom under Ahab (875–853 BC). A memorable event in this prophet's career is a visit to Mount Horeb in Sinai, where Moses had received Yahweh's commandments. Elijah witnesses much the same portents – wind, earthquake, fire – but 'the Lord was not in' them. The Lord speaks to him in a 'still small voice'. Here Israel's religion is moving toward a new spiritual level.

Elijah left no writings, apart from a doubtful fragment preserved in 2 Chronicles 21.12–15. About 760 BC, however, literary prophets began to be active, in a succession that went on for centuries and has had no parallel in any other religion. Even these were speakers rather than authors: they harangued crowds, recited verses and told stories in public, underlining them with symbolic gestures, such as smashing a pot in token of a city's ruin. But some of their doings and utterances were set down on sheets of papyrus, either by themselves or by their disciples. The sheets were glued side by side to form a continuous roll; these rolls are the books of the prophets, as we have them in the Bible after many transcriptions.

The literary prophets were still men on whom the Spirit breathed as it had on the nabhi. Habakkuk seems to have regarded himself as a nabhi still, and to have made himself receptive with conscious purpose (Habakkuk 2.1). But in both respects he was unusual. Generally, ideas and images surged unbidden into the prophet's mind; visions forced themselves on him, in sleep or waking; and now, instead of pouring them out in a raw state, he reflected on them and gave them poetic form.

The most important literary prophets fall into two groups. The first quartet comprises Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. Amos was a shepherd and labourer. His

Ideas and images surged unbidden into the prophet's mind; visions forced themselves on him, in sleep or waking

book of divine messages is notable as the earliest known left-wing manifesto. It denounces the complacent nobles of Israel, and foretells a 'day of the Lord' which will bring retribution on an unjust society. Hosea attacks religious corruption. Isaiah and Micah scan a broader horizon, seeing the Lord as ruler over other nations besides Israel, and foreshadowing a world-wide peace when he will be worshipped by all mankind, if his chosen will only be faithful.

A second quartet of prophets arose in the late 7th century, after the northern Israelite kingdom had been destroyed by Assyria. These were Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Jeremiah. Jeremiah, the most important, was a priest; there was no inevitable clash between the two callings. He speaks darkly of the sins of Jerusalem and its impending fall. However, he looks farther ahead to a restoration and a 'new covenant', which the Lord will write upon the hearts of his people.

Jeremiah, in fact, envisaged a future when the purified religion of Israel would develop into something greater and nobler. So did the unknown author of the mistakenly attached portion of the book of Isaiah which begins at the 40th chapter. This 'Second Isaiah' prophesied in Babylon during the Jews' captivity. He hails their deliverer in the person of Cyrus the Great, who will conquer Babylon and let the captives go home. He calls Cyrus the Lord's Anointed, or Messiah. By launching that momentous theme, and predicting a universal reign of righteousness under the One God of all mankind, the Second Isaiah takes a further step toward the expansion of Israel's faith into a world religion. So, in another way, does the book of Jonah, which depicts that prophet bearing God's word to the Gentiles of Nineveh (see JONAH).

Ezekiel, like the Second Isaiah, belongs to the Babylonian exile. He is the least spontaneous of the prophets, the nearest to being a composer of planned essays. His book closes with a description of a Utopia (see EZEKIEL). Afterwards come a few post-exilic prophets who add little. Judaism regards prophecy as ending with the Old Testament canon.

Hints of the Future

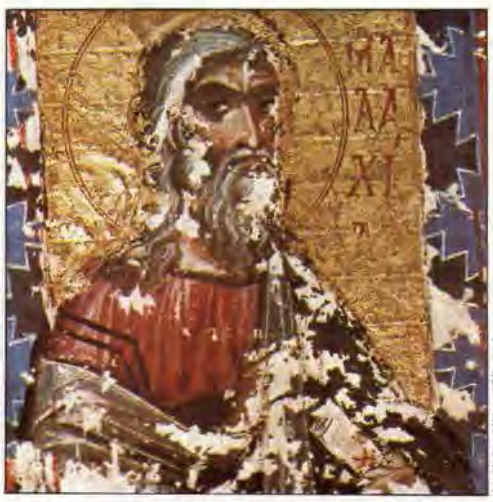
It will be noticed that while the prophets' main objects were to teach, warn and encourage, they did foreshadow future events: hence the notion of prophecy as prediction. But the divinely revealed hints at the future are never the whole message. Some, moreover, are conditional and not absolute: 'If you do this, such and such will happen,' not simply 'Such and such will happen.'

Yet with every allowance made, the predictions raise difficulties for their religious interpreters. If inspired, they must be right. But how should they be construed? On a literal reading, some have been fulfilled (the repeated promise of Israel's return to Palestine, very impressively indeed); but several of the more grandiose have not. There is, for instance, no sight of the prophets' Golden Age.

Here Christians and Jews part company. The orthodox Jewish view is that the Golden Age and similar consummations still lie ahead. They will come with the Messiah. Christians have sought to gather the prophetic loose ends together by applying them to Christ and the Church. Often the application is figurative, but not always. The gospel of Matthew insists on Jesus's literal fulfilment of various cryptic texts in the prophets, from his birth at Bethlehem onward.

Many of the Christian interpretations involve a species of hindsight. In the light of Christ the prophetic text may seem to make sense, and sometimes it manifestly does. Yet a person reading the text beforehand would seldom have been able to predict the fulfilment. The strongest argument for the Christian view is probably Isaiah, chapter 53, which describes a suffering 'servant of the Lord' in terms that fit no historical person but Jesus. An episode in the Acts of the Apostles (8.27–35) shows how strangely readers were driven to speculate about this passage in Jesus's time, and how quick the Christians were to apply it.

Christianity counts John the Baptist as



The book of Jonah reflects concern with the expansion of the Jewish faith, and depicts the prophet *(left)* carrying God's word to the Gentiles of Nineveh. Joel *(centre)*, one of the 'minor' prophets, wrote after the return from the Exile, as did Malachi *(right)*, the last of the Old Testament prophets

Bodleian Library, Filmstrip

Habakkuk receives the word of the Lord: from a 14th century manuscript. The Old Testament prophet was a man whom God inspired: he would keep himself in readiness to receive God's message, but did not attempt to obtain it by any art of divination

the last prophet of the old dispensation. Christ himself assumes the prophetic role when he foretells the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple. His words raise the same problem as the other unfulfilled prophecies, because they suggest that the world will end when the Temple falls, or soon after, and that some of his contemporaries will live to witness both events. The Temple fell in 70 AD, but the world did not end. One explanation is that Jesus was simply wrong. Another is that he spoke of the nearer event as a type or symbol of the more distant, and his sayings on the two topics have not been clearly enough distinguished. Another is that the prophecy was conditional like Jonah's, and the condition, whatever it was, has been left out of the gospels.

Christianity pursues the prophetic theme in the story of Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2), when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples. Official Christian prophecy ends with the Apocalypse, the last New Testament book.

Has valid prophecy occurred since? Jews deny this. Roman Catholicism asserts, as a matter of faith, that the Holy Spirit abides in the Church, preserving it from error but never adding to the content of revelation. The main Protestant bodies have taken the same stand, often more firmly.

Nevertheless, several extremists of the Reformation period claimed to be, in effect, prophets; and the term has since been applied occasionally to leaders of sects. The Mormon Church refers to its founder as 'the Prophet Joseph Smith', on the ground that he was a vessel of special revelations. Roman Catholic theologians have argued that such events as visions of the Blessed Virgin are Christian equivalents of the pre-Christian prophetic experience. Mary's appearances at Fatima in Portugal in 1917 are said to have been accompanied by predictions of future happenings.

The Prophet of Islam

Islam, the third great religion with Old Testament antecedents, places prophecy at the heart of its scheme. Mohammed (see MOHAMMED) was and is *the* Prophet. Rejecting both Jewish legalism and the divinity of Christ, he declared that prophets were the only true teachers. His mission was to restate and perfect the teachings transmitted from Allah by five predecessors – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus – all of whom had been misconstrued. The Koran, supposedly dictated to him by the angel Gabriel, is frequently spoken of as the Islamic Bible; in fact it is more like a single prophetic book of the Old Testament. While no Moslem can ever supersede Mohammed, Islam has allowed a kind of prophecy to continue, in such cults as Sufism (see SUFIS). The predictive element has always been less conspicuous than in Judaism and Christianity.

In other religious contexts it is doubtful whether the word 'prophecy' should ever be used. There are no close parallels to the Jewish literary genre. As for the more primitive excitements that are reminiscent of the nabhi, these are better discussed in terms of 'ecstasy' or 'possession'.

Can any safe conclusion be drawn about the prophetic experience? Visions, voices and so on can doubtless be explained away, but does the explanation dispose of the message? Bertrand Russell once alleged that we can draw no objective distinction between a man who eats too little and sees heaven, and a man who drinks too much and sees snakes. However, such dismissals cannot be final, because prophecy never took place in isolation. It was a factor in the life of Israel, or the Church, or the Moslem community. The depth and durability of the prophets' insights, the effects on history, are a matter of record. The alcoholic does nothing comparable with his delusions.

Nor does Russell refute the one modern genius who professed to be a prophet himself and, in some sense, demonstrably was: William Blake (see BLAKE). It is thought that Blake's visions and revelations may have come to him in a hypnagogic state, between sleeping and waking. But the prophetic books which he based on them are not mere 'automatic writing'. They are highly-wrought works of unique literary stature, profound and far ahead of their time. As with Blake, so with Isaiah or Ezekiel. Wherever the experience came from, the resulting work cannot be exorcised by pseudo-scientific incantations about mental unbalance or physical disorder. The prophet may have been subject to either or both. Even so, he still has a secret that escapes his critic.

Colloquial use of the word 'prophecy' to mean 'prediction' raises the question whether people who profess to foretell the future should ever be called prophets because of that alone. As in antiquity, so today, the practitioners of such arts as astrology and dream interpreting cannot normally qualify. Seeking knowledge through a technique is a different thing from being invaded by divine inspiration. Still less should the term 'prophet' be attached to racing tipsters, pollsters or forecasters of economic trends.

One query does persist. There are cases where a person who seems to be simply a fortune teller like other fortune tellers is strikingly more successful than most. The classic historical instance is the astrologer Nostradamus (see NOSTRADAMUS). When

Sonia Halliday

The angel Gabriel is said to have brought the text of the Koran, which is frequently spoken of as the Islamic Bible. In fact it is much more like a single, prophetic book of the Old Testament

all wild claims have been discounted, it remains true that a handful of his bizarre quatrains scored astonishing hits. The American crystal-gazer Jeane Dixon, whose forecasts are a regular feature in the United States press, is a modern counterpart. In such cases we may be tempted to feel that the technique is merely superficial, and the soothsayer has been touched by more mysterious influences.

The final judgement should turn, perhaps, on the nature of the messages. Where they carry a spiritual or moral charge, it should seriously be considered whether something like Hebrew prophecy is occurring again. With Nostradamus that element is slight. Jeane Dixon, on the other hand, has made predictions about the future of religion, including the rise of a new messianic figure born in February 1962. It is noteworthy that although she is a devout Catholic, she concurs with two other Catholic seers in expecting an early end to the papacy as we know it. Such a forecast, against the forecaster's presumed beliefs, certainly suggests an idea forcing its way in from outside the conscious self.

Multiple Time

Few attempts have been made to explain prophecy scientifically, except in the sense of explaining it away. The Holy Spirit's visitations are explained in psychological terms; the predictions are swept aside as guesswork, wishful thinking or, when correct, as forged after the event. Among rationalists who have admitted that knowledge, including knowledge of the future, may indeed come from 'beyond', the best known is J. W. Dunne, author of *An Experiment with Time* (1927).

Dunne had noticed that stray images entering his mind – either in dreams or in passive receptivity – fitted into experiences which he underwent later, yet could not have foreseen. He persuaded 22 experimental subjects to write down their dreams immediately on waking, and watch for fulfilments within a limited time. Several produced images and motifs, some highly unlikely, which figured later in their waking experience. None was associated with any important message or meaning. Still it might fairly be urged that some features of biblical prophecy were being reproduced.

Dunne proposed a theory of multiple time. The human mind stretches away back from ordinary consciousness into an inner self that can observe other temporal dimensions. This sometimes pushes through into the conscious ego with glimpses of what that ego may eventually see for itself, but has not seen yet, because it has not reached that point on its own time-track. The deeper self is immortal and might, one gathers, look indefinitely far ahead.

Possibly the main interest of Dunne is that while he sets up a kind of unconscious in place of God, he concedes that this unconscious must be more than psychoanalysts recognize. If it is to fill its ambitious role, it must have its own methods of cognition. Much the same view has been advanced, as the logical conclusion of Jung's system, by the Catholic psychologist Victor White. In any impartial study of prophecy, the most fruitful approach may well be to say: 'Yes, I agree with any Freudian or Jungian that these things come from the unconscious. But how did they get there in the first place?'

(See also DIVINATION; EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION; and related articles.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: D. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Eerdmans, 1983); J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Westminster, 1983); John Alden Williams ed, *Islam* (Prentice-Hall, N.J., 1961); Mona Wilson, *The Life of William Blake* (Oxford, 1950).

PROSTITUTION

THE GREEK author Herodotus, writing in the 5th century BC, says that there was in Babylon a great temple with a sumptuous couch, on which no one spent the night except one woman; she had been chosen by the god himself, who visited her there. Remarking on a similar practice in Egypt, he goes on to state that these women were forbidden intercourse with men. Even allowing for Herodotus's often uncritical reporting of local tradition, there is clear reference to such a practice in ancient Mesopotamia in documents dating from the second millennium BC. The passage in Herodotus refers to the voluntary self-dedication of women, who surrendered themselves in the sexual act to a representative of the god, either the king in his sacral function or a priest. This represented a dedication of the procreative powers in the community and its flocks and fields, in which its efforts were promoted by the engagement of the god in the same enterprise. To state it from another angle, the king, as the executive of the Divine King, was the channel of material blessings, of which his procreative powers were a guarantee; and opportunity was provided on a solemn occasion at the most important seasonal crisis of the agricultural year, when he ritually joined with a specially dedicated woman. This woman represented the mother goddess, and on that account held priestly office.

Such a woman was known among the Sumerians and Semites in Mesopotamia as *entu*, and she is known to have held office at Ur at least for the whole of her sexual life, conventionally 40 years. (This suggests an analogy with the 30 years during which the Vestal Virgins at Rome were not allowed to marry.) Texts from Mesopotamia imply that intercourse with any other man than the representative of the god was prohibited. This probably refers to the period of the entu's dedication, since legal texts from Hammurabi's time (c 1700 BC) show that marriage with an entu was possible. This might be desirable despite the age of the entu when she was free for marriage, since these women were of the highest class, including even kings' daughters. What happened to children of the 'sacred marriage' is uncertain. They may have been adopted. The great king Sargon of Akkad was the son of an entu and was exposed in the river like Moses, which may suggest that his mother had broken her vow by intercourse outside her strict temple duty.

A lower class of votaress in Mesopotamia was the *naditu*. She might be married, but since the texts do not mention children of such women, they either became celibate after marriage or married after completing their temple service, which may have lasted the length of their mature sexual life.

Herodotus also states that every woman in ancient Babylon had once in her life to

The goddess of love is shown at a window as a sacred prostitute, in this Phoenician ivory of the 8th century BC

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

offer herself to whatever male chose her in the temple of Ishtar, the goddess of love (see ISHTAR). The man who chose her threw into her lap a silver coin with an invocation to the goddess by her title 'Mylitta' (Herodotus's rendering of the Akkadian *mu'allitu*, 'she who brings to birth'). The piece of silver was made over to the temple as a consecrated offering, which recalls the prohibition in Deuteronomy 23.18 against bringing the hire of a prostitute into the sanctuary of God.

Goddess and Harlot

This passage is one of a number of protests in the Old Testament against prostitution, either secular or ritual, to which apparently women in Canaan subjected themselves by special vow. They would make themselves available for longer or shorter periods for sexual intercourse, not with the dedicated representatives of the gods, but with the worshippers. They are known from Mesopotamia and Canaan, and from the Old Testament where they are called *qedeshoth* (Deuteronomy 23.17).

This is ritual prostitution proper; and though the underlying principle was imitative magic, intended to promote fertility, it was capable of social abuse, as its condemnation by the Hebrew prophets and reformers clearly indicates. The practice is implied in a passage in a hymn to the goddess Ishtar, which describes her as a glorified temple prostitute whom 120 men could not exhaust. The fact that sacral prostitution was open to abuse, passing into secular prostitution, is indicated in the Gilgamesh legend of ancient Mesopotamia, where a *harimtu*, or sacred prostitute, is employed to decoy and subdue Enkidu, the wild man of the steppe. In condemning the Canaanite fertility cult as 'whoredom' the Hebrew prophets, notably Hosea and Ezekiel, inveigh against this aspect of the cult and its gross abuse.

It is uncertain whether prostitution in the cult was only practised as a rite of imitative magic, or whether the prostitutes were also considered to represent the Canaanite goddesses of fertility – Asherah, the mother goddess, Anat the sister and wife of Baal, and the goddess Astarte (see ASTARTE). The former significance of the rite might be suggested by the fact that male prostitutes (*qedeshim*) are mentioned in the Bible. On the other hand, pendants and plaques moulded in clay and metal of one or other of these goddesses in the nude, with breasts and pudenda emphasized, may indicate that the prostitutes were considered as representatives of the goddesses.

In view of the invective of the Hebrew prophets against this aspect of the Canaanite fertility cult, it is remarkable that there is no explicit evidence of the rite in the Ras Shamra texts (cuneiform texts from ancient Ugarit, which provide much of our information about Canaanite religion). However, the word *inst*, mentioned in the texts, may denote temple prostitutes as 'sociable ladies'.

Ritual prostitution on a wide scale, with its abuse, which made it practically licensed promiscuity, was practised in all Nature

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

Canaanite fertility goddess depicted as a sacred prostitute on an Egyptian stele: she holds a lotus and phallic serpents

cults throughout the Mediterranean, especially in the cult of Aphrodite in Cyprus and in that of Cybele, the Magna Mater of Asia Minor, which was introduced into Rome during the Punic Wars (see APHRODITE; CYBELE). In Cybele's cult and in the related cult of her consort Attis, male perverts and eunuchs played a conspicuous role, the former in rites of ritual prostitution and the latter as those who had in an ecstasy of devotion emasculated themselves in the service of the deity. Ritual prostitution was a feature also of the cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis, in its development as a Mystery religion in Ptolemaic Egypt and in Rome, where it was introduced at the end of the 3rd century BC (see ISIS).

J. GRAY

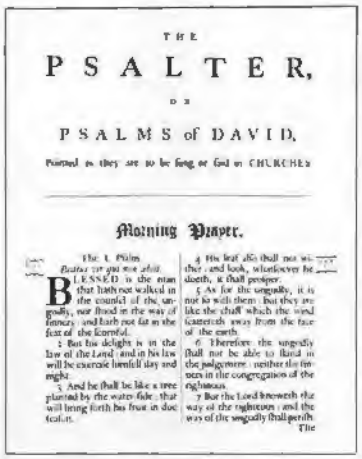
God's Slaves

Sacred prostitutes were common in India till the end of the 19th century, and Benjamin Walker comments, in *Hindu World*, that: 'The ancient temples were for centuries establishments of venery, and the early writers speak of the difficulty of honest pilgrims trying to perform their religious duties because of the shameless blandishments and solicitations of the temple girls. . . . The practice of temple prostitution is said, though on no reliable authority, to be current still. If it exists it is entirely clandestine. The persuasion of Christian missionaries, criticism from European observers, and agitation by Hindu reformers, have put a stop to it.'

The *devadasi*, or 'god's slave', usually began her career as a little girl of seven or eight. She was formally married to the god whose temple she was to serve, and was ritually deflowered by a priest, or by a favoured customer, or by the carved phallus of a god's image. Trained in the sensuous arts and in dancing, the girls were available to worshippers at the temple, their earnings going to the priests, and they and the children who were born to them also helped to clean the temple and assisted at ceremonies. They enjoyed high prestige and were in demand at weddings, where a devadasi's presence was a fortunate omen.

Providence

Power which determines the course of all events, distinguished from Fate because it is regarded as generally benevolent: in Christian theology, God's foreknowledge and beneficent ordering of events; the extent to which the concept of providence denies human free will is an old philosophical and theological problem; connected with Christian theories of predestination, concerned with God's willing the salvation or damnation of men. See PREDESTINATION.



THE

PSALTER,

OR

PSALMS of DAVID,

Pointed as they are to be Sung or Said in CHURCHES

Morning Prayer.

The I. Psalm.

Beatus vir qui non abiit.

BLESSED is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law will he exercise himself day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the water-side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season.

4 His leaf also shall not wither, and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

5 As for the ungodly, it is not so with them: but they are like the chaff which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.

6 Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgement, neither the sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

7 But the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The

Psalms

Religious songs, specifically those in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament; its Hebrew title, *Tehillim*, 'praises', was translated into Greek as *psalmoi*, literally 'songs sung to a stringed instrument'; traditionally ascribed to King David, a celebrated minstrel, the psalms in fact come from many different authors and periods.

Psi

Greek letter, used in parapsychology for 'psychic' abilities or phenomena; clairvoyance, precognition, telepathy and psychokinesis are generally regarded as effects of a single, unified ability, called 'psi'. See EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION; PSYCHOKINESIS; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

Mansell Collection

Psyche

Greek word for 'breath', used to mean life, soul, spirit or mind, as distinct from body; in classical mythology, a beautiful girl with whom Cupid, the love god, fell in love; she eventually became immortal herself and the lovers were united; the story, told in *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius, was taken as a parable of the union between the human soul and divine love. See EROS.

The modern history of psychical research is a story of the application of great resources of talent and energy to peculiarly puzzling phenomena, and of a gradual shift in educated opinion towards a more open-minded attitude to the 'paranormal'

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH is not easy to define. The stated purpose of the Society for Psychical Research (the S.P.R.) is 'to examine without prejudice or prepossession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis.' That psychical research is a 'science' in the sense that most psychical researchers attempt to investigate certain classes of phenomena, real or imaginary, 'without prejudice or prepossession' may indeed be granted; though it must be borne in mind that some of the groups which have called themselves societies for psychical research are in effect Spiritualist organizations.

Problems arise when one attempts to demarcate the alleged 'faculties of man' which constitute the special subject matter of psychical research. They cannot be just those faculties which are 'inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis', because most human faculties are far from properly understood, and psychologists diverge as to how they should be explained.

Are they then faculties whose existence rather than whose explanation is in doubt? Hardly. There are many alleged human faculties whose existence might very well be doubted, but which have hardly ever been considered to form part of the subject matter of psychical research. Obvious examples are the abilities to assume animal form, to work sympathetic magic, to control the weather, and to maintain a kind of existence after death by drinking the blood of the living. It might be replied that although in a sense such 'faculties' fall within the scope of psychical research, they are largely neglected by researchers because they are quite certainly fictitious. The fact is that although the literature of travel, folklore and anthropology is full of stories of these kinds of faculties, very few psychical researchers have so much as contemplated investigating them.

Mesmerists and Mediums

Could it be simply a historical accident that certain alleged 'faculties of man' are commonly held to constitute the subject matter of psychical research, whilst others are excluded? A case could be made out on these lines. The immediate ancestry of modern psychical research is to be found in certain aspects of the mesmeric and Spiritualist movements which spread across Europe and America during the early and middle 19th century (see MESMER; SPIRITUALISM). Some of the early mesmerists believed that mesmeric subjects might exhibit not merely heightened faculties and heightened responsiveness to the commands of the operator, but faculties which appeared to be almost unknown in unmesmerized persons. Accounts of thought transference, of clairvoyance and 'eyeless vision', of clairvoyant diagnosis and mesmeric cure of ailments, and of hypnosis at a distance, were in circulation quite early in the history of French and German mesmerism – in fact before the end of the 18th century. In the first part of the 19th century accounts of some of these kinds of phenomena became commoner on the Continent; and in the 1830s and 1840s the mesmeric movement, and with it alleged instances of such phenomena, spread to the United States and Great Britain.

The mesmeric movement paved the way for the Spiritualist movement of the second half of the 19th century. It accustomed the public to the idea that certain especially gifted persons might, when in a state of trance, exercise clairvoyant and other paranormal faculties, and even to the idea that some mesmeric subjects might become aware of, and perhaps communicate with, the spirits of departed persons. The mesmeric trance developed, by an easy and natural transition, into the mediumistic trance, in which the medium's 'interior vision' might have imposed upon it scenes and personalities from the next world; and the rapport which was thought to exist between mesmerist and subject provided an analogy for the process by which departed spirits were thought to control the hand or vocal apparatus of a medium. A public which had digested the leading ideas of mesmerism

J. Cutten

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The early members of the Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882, included many eminent men of academic distinction ***Above*** **Sir William Barrett, professor of physics at University College, Dublin, and one of the principal investigators of poltergeist phenomena** ***Right*** **Sir Oliver Lodge, professor of physics at Liverpool University, with his wife; he carried out experiments on the telepathic communication of drawings** ***Opposite page*** **Henry Sidgwick** ***(left)*** **was professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge; he and F. W. H. Myers** ***(centre)*** **supposedly sent messages from beyond the grave which were validated by a system of 'cross-correspondences'. The Australian Richard Hodgson** ***(right),*** **a pupil of Sidgwick, made a detailed study of the noted trance medium, Mrs Leonora Piper**

had little difficulty in assimilating the beliefs of Spiritualists.

There can be little doubt that the central body of material commonly studied by psychical researchers comprises those seemingly novel faculties which were apparently revealed by the experiments of mesmerists, plus the developments of, and superadditions to, those alleged faculties which took place in the context of the modern Spiritualist movement. The first 'psychical researchers' were in effect those persons who first attempted a dispassionate examination of these supposed faculties. One might mention, in Germany, Arnold Wienholt (1749–1804) whose *Heilkraft des Thierischen Magnetismus* contains accounts of a number of experiments on hypnosis at a distance; in France, J. H. Petetin (1774–1808), author of *Électricité Animale*, who conducted experiments on mesmeric clairvoyance; and in England John Elliotson (1791–1868), editor of *The Zoist*, a periodical which contained many accounts of the 'higher' phenomena of mesmerism, and Sir William Crookes (1832–1919), whose *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (1874) described his own experiments with D. D. Home and other noted physical mediums (see CROOKES; HOME).

Although it seems quite possible that the supposed paranormal faculties and phenomena which constitute the subject matter of psychical research have been grouped together largely for historical reasons, it could none the less be argued that whatever the historical reasons for associating the phenomena, many of them do in fact together form a unitary class – a class to which similar laws and similar kinds of explanation will ultimately be found to apply. Whether psychical research can be marked out as a distinct branch of inquiry, or as a distinct branch of psychology, on grounds such as these, only time and sustained investigation will show; and the time required is not likely to be short, or the investigation simple.

Founders of the S.P.R.

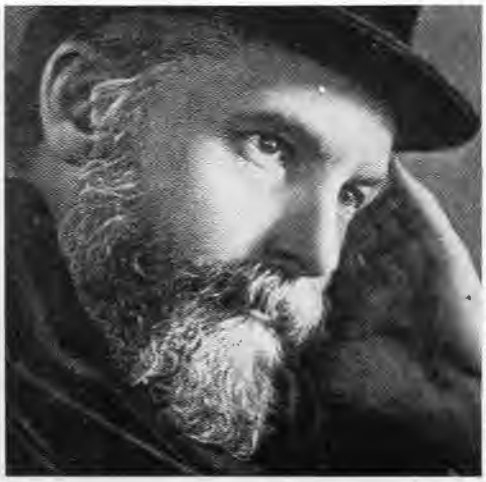
The history of modern psychical research can be roughly divided into three periods: from 1882 to 1914; from 1914 to 1945; and from 1945 to the present day. A great impetus was given to psychical research by the foundation, in 1882, of the Society for Psychical Research. Prominent amongst the founders and early members were Sir William Barrett (1844–1925), professor of physics at the University College of Dublin; Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900), professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge; his wife Eleanor (1845–1936), later principal of Newnham College, Cambridge; F. W. H. Myers (1843–1901), a noted poet, essayist and classical scholar (see MYERS); Edmund Gurney (1847–1888), a keen student of psychology and philosophy (see GURNEY); Richard Hodgson (1855–1905), an Australian by birth and one of Sidgwick's pupils; Walter Leaf (1852–1927), eminent both as a banker and a classical scholar; Frank Podmore (1856–1910), the historian of the Spiritualist movement, and a man of keenly sceptical mind; and Sir Oliver Lodge (1851–1940), a well-known physicist, professor of physics at Liverpool University.

A number of these people, and of their associates, most of them religious by upbringing, were of the opinion that recent scientific developments had not merely undermined orthodox religion, but were in danger of rendering any form of religious belief impossible. They felt there was just a chance that they could meet science with science, and by conducting strictly scientific inquiries into the more puzzling phenomena of mesmerism and Spiritualism, achieve not, perhaps, new religious insights, but at any rate the overthrow of the 'materialist synthesis' which had seemed imminent during the 1870s. To that end they gave unsparingly of their time and money and of their very considerable abilities; and within 20 years a great many data had been collected and the main outlines and the main problems of modern psychical research had become clear.

A comparable society was founded in the United States following a tour of that country in 1884 by Sir William Barrett. Its first president was Professor Simon Newcomb, the astronomer, and its leading early light was Professor William James, the philosopher and psychologist.

For the spectacular physical phenomena associated with Spiritualist mediumship (see MEDIUMS), the S.P.R. found at first little evidence; indeed, certain investigations whose results the S.P.R. published seemed,

J. Cutten


Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

J. Cutten

by revealing the extent to which even honest and intelligent persons could be misled by deliberate conjuring, to cast doubt on the reality of any of the alleged physical phenomena. In 1886 S. J. Davey, a member of the S.P.R. who was a skilled amateur conjuror, was introduced as a medium by Richard Hodgson, and succeeded in reproducing many of the feats of William Eglinton, one of the better-known physical mediums of the time. It was not until the year 1908 that the S.P.R. was able to obtain evidence for 'physical phenomena' under anything like satisfactory conditions. Three of its most experienced members, Hon Everard Feilding, Hereward Carrington and W. W. Baggally, had a series of sittings at Naples with a well-known Neapolitan medium, Eusapia Palladino (see PALLADINO). Eusapia had been detected in fraud by the three investigators; none the less, she many times produced for them seemingly inexplicable movements of objects, and materializations of hands, in fair light and under apparently satisfactory conditions of control.

Reports were also received, and investigations conducted, of a number of poltergeist cases (see POLTERGEISTS). The principal investigators of these cases were Sir William Barrett, who came to believe in the genuineness of some of the phenomena, and Frank Podmore, who concluded that fraud was probably always responsible.

The most striking experimental results published by the S.P.R. in its early years were probably those obtained in certain experiments on telepathy. The design of many of these experiments would not nowadays be considered satisfactory; none the less some of the results remain puzzling. Particularly curious were various experiments on the telepathic transmission of drawings conducted during the 1880s by Mr Malcolm Guthrie and Sir Oliver Lodge. In these experiments the transmission took place only over a short distance; but in the Miles-Ramsden experiments of 1906–8, the percipients were sometimes separated by many miles. Also curious were certain experiments on telepathy under hypnosis conducted in the 1880s and 1890s by Edmund Gurney, Mrs Sidgwick and Miss Alice Johnson. It will be remembered that in the early days of the mesmeric movement clairvoyance and thought-transference had often been regarded as phenomena peculiar to the mesmeric trance; this view has not really been borne out by later work. Indeed it has several times been suggested that the subjects in Gurney's and Mrs Sidgwick's experiments must have been in collusion with the person who acted as hypnotist in almost all of them, Mr G. A. Smith.

Case Histories on Ghosts

Soon after the foundation of the S.P.R. various of its members initiated a systematic and successful attempt to collect first-hand testimonies from persons who had seen apparitions. A considerable amount of testimony was obtained, and examples were found of 'haunting' apparitions, of collectively perceived apparitions and of apparitions of the dead. By far the largest body of testimony, however, concerned 'crisis' cases, that is, apparitions which coincided in time with some crisis in the affairs of the persons they resembled; and in 1886 a two-volume survey of crisis cases and related material was published by Gurney, Myers and Podmore under the title of *Phantasms of the Living*.

Gurney was the principal author, and he took the view that crisis apparitions are telepathically initiated hallucinations. In many instances the figures seen contained details which, Gurney felt, must have come from the mind of the percipient, strongly suggesting that the figures were in some sense 'constructed' by the percipients, that is, were hallucinations. The coincidences between the hallucinations and the deaths of the persons whom they represent may be accounted for by supposing that at some level of their personalities the percipients become aware of the crisis telepathically, and 'externalize' this knowledge in the form of a hallucination. Gurney held that this possibility was supported by the evidence for telepathy which had already been obtained both from actual experiments and from accounts of its spontaneous occurrence in everyday life (see SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES).

Edmund Gurney died in 1888, but his work on crisis apparitions was contained in the so-called 'Census of Hallucinations', the Report on which was published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for 1894. One of the principal aims of the census was to determine whether or not the coincidences between apparitions and deaths which marked the numerous recorded crisis cases could be set down to chance; whether, in other words, it might be that people who had hallucinations tended to forget or remain silent about their experiences except in those very rare cases where the hallucination chanced to coincide with the death of the person it resembled. Answers to a questionnaire on hallucinations put to 17,000 persons revealed that hallucinations are commoner among sane persons than might have been supposed (about one person in ten is likely to have had one), but also strongly suggested that the number of reported death coincidences could not be ascribed to chance.

The most interesting single case which was investigated in the early days of psychical research was undoubtedly that of the American trance medium, Mrs Leonora Piper (see PIPER). Mrs Piper came to the notice of psychical researchers in the year 1885 through the agency of William James, and she was intensively investigated for a good part of the next 30 years. Most of those who seriously investigated her mediumship became convinced that she possessed paranormal powers, and some (including Richard Hodgson, who had studied the case in great detail) that the 'communicators' who purported to speak or write through her organism were indeed the spirits of deceased human beings.

Messages from Dead Leaders

The most curious development in this, or perhaps any, period of the history of psychical research, however, was not the Piper case (though Mrs Piper played a part in it) but the series of automatic writings known as the 'cross-correspondences'. The early leaders of the S.P.R. all died relatively early – Gurney, aged 41 in 1888, Sidgwick, aged 61 in 1900, and Myers, aged 57 in 1901. Shortly after the death of Myers there began to emerge through various automatists a series of interlinked communications purportedly coming from Myers and various of his deceased friends. The cross-correspondences had ostensibly been constructed by these deceased persons as a means of proving their own survival (see CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES).

Before he died, F. W. H. Myers had

almost completed a large-scale survey of the whole field of psychical research. It was published in 1903, under the title *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*. In addition to presenting a mass of factual evidence, Myers developed a unifying theoretical framework which has had a good deal of influence. He suggested that a man's everyday stream of consciousness is only one of perhaps several streams of consciousness which may be connected with his organism. Many of the phenomena of ordinary life and of psychopathology – for instance, dreams, hypnosis, and hysterical tics and anaesthesias – are to be understood as manifestations of these submerged or 'subliminal' streams of consciousness. Telepathy and other supernormal faculties are commonly to be found exhibited in dreams and hypnosis and even in certain hysterical states; and in Myers's view this suggests that the subliminal consciousness possesses powers which the ordinary waking consciousness does not. Such phenomena as crisis apparitions or automatic writing embodying supernormal knowledge may then be understood as the means by which the subliminal consciousness may pass information in its possession to the ordinary, waking consciousness when the latter would otherwise remain ignorant of it.

Myers's studies in psychopathology brought him into contact with many leading psychologists, English, American and European; and by the first decade of the 20th century a number of them were seriously interested in psychical research. In the United States there was William James; in Austria, Freud; in France, Janet and Bernheim; in Switzerland, Jung and Flournoy; in England, G. F. Stout and William McDougall. The contemptuous hostility with which a large part of the academic and scientific worlds had greeted the inception of psychical research had to some extent been blunted by the persistence and the care and candour with which the early psychical researchers had set about their task. It seemed not altogether impossible that before long psychical research would become a generally accepted branch of scientific endeavour.

Between the Wars

The First World War did not bring about any sudden break or change of direction in psychical research. The most influential figure on the English scene remained Mrs E. M. Sidgwick, widow of Professor Henry Sidgwick. Together with her brother, G. W. Balfour, and her S.P.R. colleagues J. G. Piddington and Miss Alice Johnson, she devoted much time to supervising the collection and analysis of a growing mass of cross-correspondence scripts. She also studied certain aspects of the mediumship of Mrs Gladys Osborne Leonard (see LEONARD), perhaps the most remarkable mental medium of all time.

Mrs Leonard's mediumship possessed a number of unusual features, in addition to the sheer quantity of impressive material which it provided. There were the celebrated 'book tests', in which her 'control' Feda showed an apparent ability to read

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Above left **Sir William Crookes with Mrs Leonard, the famous medium; Crookes, a distinguished physicist, was one of the first to subject psychic phenomena to critical scientific investigation** ***Below left*** **C. E. M. Joad and Harry Price, founder of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research of London, check preparations for the reproduction of a supernatural scene on the Brocken, traditional site of witches' revels** ***Above*** **At the National Laboratory, Price prepares to undertake investigations with the American medium Frank Decker** ***Right*** **Ectoplasmic 'hand' produced during a seance by Mrs Margery Crandon, an American medium active in the 1920s** ***Below*** **Before a seance Pasquale Erto, an Italian medium, is fitted with boxing gloves as a control**

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designated pages and lines in books not ordinarily accessible to the medium; there were also her successful 'proxy' sittings, in which the sitter obtained messages on behalf of an absent third party of whose concerns he was himself largely ignorant; and there was her 'direct voice' – a voice apparently not emanating from her own vocal apparatus, which sometimes joined briefly in the conversation under circumstances which made imposture unlikely.

In the United States the central figure of the 1920s was Margery Crandon, wife of a Boston surgeon. Around the physical phenomena of her mediumship there grew up controversies which deeply divided the American S.P.R., and led to the establishment of a separate organization, the Boston S.P.R., under the leadership of Dr Walter Franklin Prince. Prince's own studies of the Doris Fischer case of multiple personality and of the automatic writings of Mrs J. H. Curran (*The Case of Patience Worth*, 1923) remain among the classics of psychical research.

A Telepathic Rationalist

Indeed, many of the investigations and controversies of the 1920s and the 1930s centred round alleged cases of physical mediumship. Serious investigations of these phenomena were more numerous then than at any other period before or since. Besides Margery Crandon, there was 'Eva C.', who had been investigated before the war by Charles Richet, the French physiologist, and was studied again by Dr Gustave Geley, by members of the S.P.R., and by a committee of the Sorbonne. Franek Kluski, a Polish professional man, was studied by Geley, who claimed startling results. Geley also studied another Pole, Jan Guzyk, who was many times detected in fraud. None of these mediums won anything like universal confidence from those who investigated them. Perhaps the most interesting physical mediums of the period were two Austrians, Willi and Rudi Schneider, and especially the latter (see SCHNEIDER BROTHERS). Rudi was studied in England by Harry Price, a controversial figure who ran the National Laboratory for Psychical Research in London, and by various members of the S.P.R., including Lord Rayleigh, the famous physicist. He was able to produce a variety of minor physical effects under seemingly stringent conditions of control – manual, electrical and infra-red.

In the study of apparitions, little progress was made, the two outstanding studies being Mrs Sidgwick's *Phantasms of the Living*, published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for 1923, and G. N. M. Tyrrell's *Apparitions* (1943), a theoretical discussion. Experiments on telepathy and clairvoyance were at first not numerous. The most interesting were perhaps those in which Professor Gilbert Murray, the noted Hellenist, acted as percipient; reports of them were published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for 1918 and 1924, and in the *Journal* for 1941. Although a lifelong rationalist Professor Murray showed a very curious ability to pick up impressions of scenes drawn either from fiction or from real life which

groups of his friends concentrated on; it was these experiments which finally convinced Freud of the reality of telepathy. Of note in a somewhat different way are the observations made by E. Osty on a number of 'sensitives' or clairvoyants and published in his *Supernormal Faculties in Man* (1923). Osty's clairvoyants were able to give their sitters correct information not merely about matters known to those sitters, but about matters which, although relevant, were quite unknown to them. Some writers have suggested that the existence of powers of extra-sensory perception so extraordinary as these would, if further confirmed, make it plausible to ascribe even the most 'evidential' mediumistic communications to telepathy and clairvoyance on the part of the medium, rather than to the influence of the spirits of deceased human beings.

Experiments at Duke

Later in the period work on the problem of extra-sensory perception increased greatly and assumed a form which has remained largely characteristic of it ever since (see EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION). In 1927 William McDougall, a British psychologist, went from Harvard to Duke University at Durham, North Carolina, to establish a department of psychology there. McDougall had been interested in psychical research for many years (he was a member of the S.P.R. Council), and to his laboratory there came a young Harvard biologist, J. B. Rhine, and his wife, Louisa. Rhine set out to apply the ordinary methods of statistical analysis and experimental design to the problems of extra-sensory perception (ESP). He and his collaborators devised the pack of cards, commonly called Zener cards, consisting of five of each of five different symbols – star, circle, cross, square and wavy lines. The order of these cards would be randomized, and an 'agent' would then turn them over one by one while a 'percipient' recorded guesses. Most of Rhine's subjects were university students or members of the university staff, and a number of them succeeded in scoring well above the level of chance even under strictly controlled conditions. Occasionally – as in the famous Pearce-Pratt experiments of 1933 in which agent and percipient were in separate buildings 100 yards apart – the odds against chance reached an astronomical level. Rhine's early results were summarized in his *Extra-sensory Perception* (1934).

As a result of these findings, the Parapsychology Laboratory of Duke University was formally constituted, and a few years later, in 1937, the *Journal of Parapsychology* began publication. Rhine and his associates weathered some heavy criticism from statisticians and academic psychologists, and continued to obtain striking results. They also attempted the first statistical investigations of 'physical phenomena'. Here again they made no use of professed mediums; yet above chance results were obtained. Ordinary persons were required to attempt to influence the fall of dice thrown at first by hand and later by mechanical means. To this effect the name of psychokinesis (PK) was given (see PSYCHOKINESIS).

In England Dr S. G. Soal, a mathematician from London University, began in 1934 an attempt to repeat Rhine's work. By 1939 he had tested 160 subjects under stringent conditions, and had obtained no success whatsoever. It was then suggested to him by an S.P.R. colleague, Whately Carington, who had been conducting experiments of his own, that he should re-examine his results for a 'displacement' effect; that is, for correct guesses of the cards before or after the target cards. Soal found that two subjects (Basil Shackleton and Mrs Gloria Stewart) had scored significantly above chance on the cards immediately following the target cards. In collaboration with Mrs K. M. Goldney, Soal re-tested these two subjects at considerable length, and in his report (1943) he announced results of outstanding significance. In 1978, however, a study by Betty Hardwick indicated that Soal had altered his figures to get results.

The insistence on laboratory techniques in psychical research between the wars may be seen as a reaction to the fact that academic psychology had become steadily more behaviouristic and more 'scientific', and therefore more hostile to the kind of psychical research which had been predominant during the first quarter of the century. Orthodox psychologists showed themselves if anything less tolerant of psychical researchers than scientists from other fields; no doubt they found it hard enough to win recognition of the scientific status of their own subject, without its being joined to so dubious a yoke-fellow.

A flashlight photograph taken during a seance reveals a dark mass of ectoplasm behind the test tubes. After analysis by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a medical school, its composition was reported as being 'sodium, potassium, water, chlorine, albumen, epithelial cells and fresh red blood corpuscles'

Harry Price Library London University

Shortage of Good Subjects

The promise which the statistical approach to the problems of extra-sensory perception seemed to hold out has not been altogether fulfilled. A great stumbling block has been the shortage of outstanding ESP subjects, without whom extended research projects cannot progress. Exceptions are the U.K. born Matthew Manning (see MATTHEW MANNING), Uri Geller from Israel (see URI GELLER), also Pavel Stepanek of Prague.

In the last two decades the centre of activity in psychical research has shifted away from Great Britain and Europe to the United States of America. By far the greatest percentage of practical work now being done is carried out in America, and two new and important parapsychological organizations have been established there, the Parapsychology Foundation of New York (1951) and the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man (1964), successor to the Duke University laboratories. Recently a Division of Parapsychology has been set up at the University of Virginia, and other institutions in the United States have provided facilities for research.

A somewhat surprising development has been an upsurge of interest in the Soviet Union in the study of extra-sensory perception. A landmark in Russian parapsychology was the publication of L. Vasiliev's *Experiments in Mental Suggestion*, which described experiments extending back over 40 years. Russian ESP experiments have often utilized hypnotic techniques; and in a number of ways they represent almost a throw-back to the experiments of 19th century hypnotists. Western psychical researchers have been somewhat suspicious of Russian claims and experimental designs, especially since they have often been linked with rather doubtful speculation about possible electromagnetic radiations.

In the absence of spectacularly gifted individual subjects, many attempts have been made to devise methods of obtaining results which, though not necessarily outstanding, are at any rate repeatable. A good deal of speculation and experimental endeavour has revolved around such problems as the possible physiological correlates of ESP, and the possible influence of psychedelic and other drugs upon ESP ability. So far the lines of work that have shown most promise are perhaps Gertrude Schmeidler's experiments on the relationship between positive or negative scoring in ESP tests and belief or disbelief in the possibility of ESP, and the experiments of Dr Montague Ullman and his collaborators on the occurrence of ESP during dreams.

Recently Dr Helmut Schmidt has reported some experiments in which subjects were required to guess which of four lamps would

light next. Which lamp in fact lit was determined by a purely random process. Dr Schmidt selected his subjects carefully, and took especial care that they should be in a cheerful frame of mind at the time of testing. The results were highly significant.

The hope that they may reveal some short cut to repeatable significant scoring in ESP and PK tests has helped to produce a renewed interest in spontaneous cases – apparitions, poltergeists and 'out-of-the-body' experiences (see OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCES) – and in mediumistic and related phenomena. Of particular note here have been Dr Louisa Rhine's analyses of spontaneous cases in the files at Duke University, Miss Celia Green's studies of out-of-the-body experiences, and Professor I. Stevenson's unique *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* (*Proceedings* of the American S.P.R. 1966).

Although it would not be true to say that the occurrence of ESP and of other paranormal phenomena is now widely accepted by scientists and by the general public, there is no doubt that general attitudes to the subject are much more tolerant than they once were. Should the elusive 'repeatable experiment' be hit upon within the next decade or so, psychical research might well win rapid and widespread recognition by scientists and others, and take a place as a legitimate part of orthodox psychology. If, on the other hand, experimental findings continue indefinitely in their present somewhat unsatisfactory state, psychical research will not disappear, but it may well pass more and more into the hands of cranks as its present relatively respectable supporters drop away.

ALAN GAULD

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National Film Archive

Evil spirits, in a still from the film *Witchcraft Through the Ages*: witches were feared for their ability to enlist evil to bring harm upon their victims

Methods of bewitching, enchanting or magically harming an enemy range from the distortion of Christian services to the withering stare of the Evil Eye: many old beliefs about psychic attack have their parallels in modern occult theories

PSYCHIC ATTACK

IN THE YEAR 1455 the nuns of a convent at Wennigsen, near Hanover, who were determined to resist all attempts to reform their order, were visited by a group of officials bent on enforcing reform. After some inconclusive argument, 'the nuns lay down forthwith with one accord flat upon the choir pavement, with arms and legs outstretched in the form of a cross, and chanted at the top of their voices, from beginning to end, the antiphon, *In the midst of life we are in death*.' This demonstration was a good deal more sinister than appears at first sight, for the purpose of the solemnly chanted words was to kill the objectionable visitors.

This method of cursing an enemy had been forbidden long before, by the Synod of Cologne in 1310, but without effect. Words sanctified by use in a Christian context were believed to have acquired an inherent magical force of their own, and an even more drastic way of harnessing pious ritual to the murder of a victim was the saying of Mass for the dead against a living man. Petrus Cantor, Rector of the Cathedral School at Paris in the 12th century, said in his *Verbum Abbreviatum* that the sacrament 'is turned by some to magic arts, men celebrating masses over images of wax as a curse upon others; nay even, for such a curse, they sing the Mass of the faithful (departed) ten times or more, that their enemy may die by the third day or at least within a brief while afterwards, and may be laid with the dead in the grave.'

Besides their activities of Devil-worship, storm-raising and the rest, witches were particularly feared for their power to kill or to inflict serious mental and physical

damage on human victims. Fear of a 'psychic attack' of this sort was well-grounded, at least in the sense that people who believe that hostile magic is being directed against them, and who believe that magic works, are likely to suffer mentally and physically as a result (see CURSE). A famous 17th century work on witchcraft, Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*, gives a list of the typical symptoms of bewitchment. They include loss of appetite, vomiting, pricking pains in the region of the heart, sexual impotence, breaking out in a light sweat at night even in cold weather, pains in the neck, kidneys or belly, and sensations which would nowadays be put down to indigestion. 'The sicknesses with which those who are bewitched suffer,' Guazzo says, 'are generally a wasting or emaciation of the whole body and a loss of strength, together with a deep languor, dullness of mind, various melancholy ravings, different kinds of fever . . . certain convulsive movements of an epileptic appearance; a sort of rigidity of the limbs giving the appearance of a fit; sometimes . . . such a weakness pervades the whole body that they can hardly move on any account at all.'

Also listed are unnatural pallor or yellowness of the skin, and an inability to look a priest in the eye (there was in fact a superstition, resented by Christian writers, that priests were uncanny and unlucky). 'If by chance the witch should come to see the sick man, the patient is at once affected with great uneasiness and seized with terror and trembling. If it is a child, it cries.'

Feathers and Blood

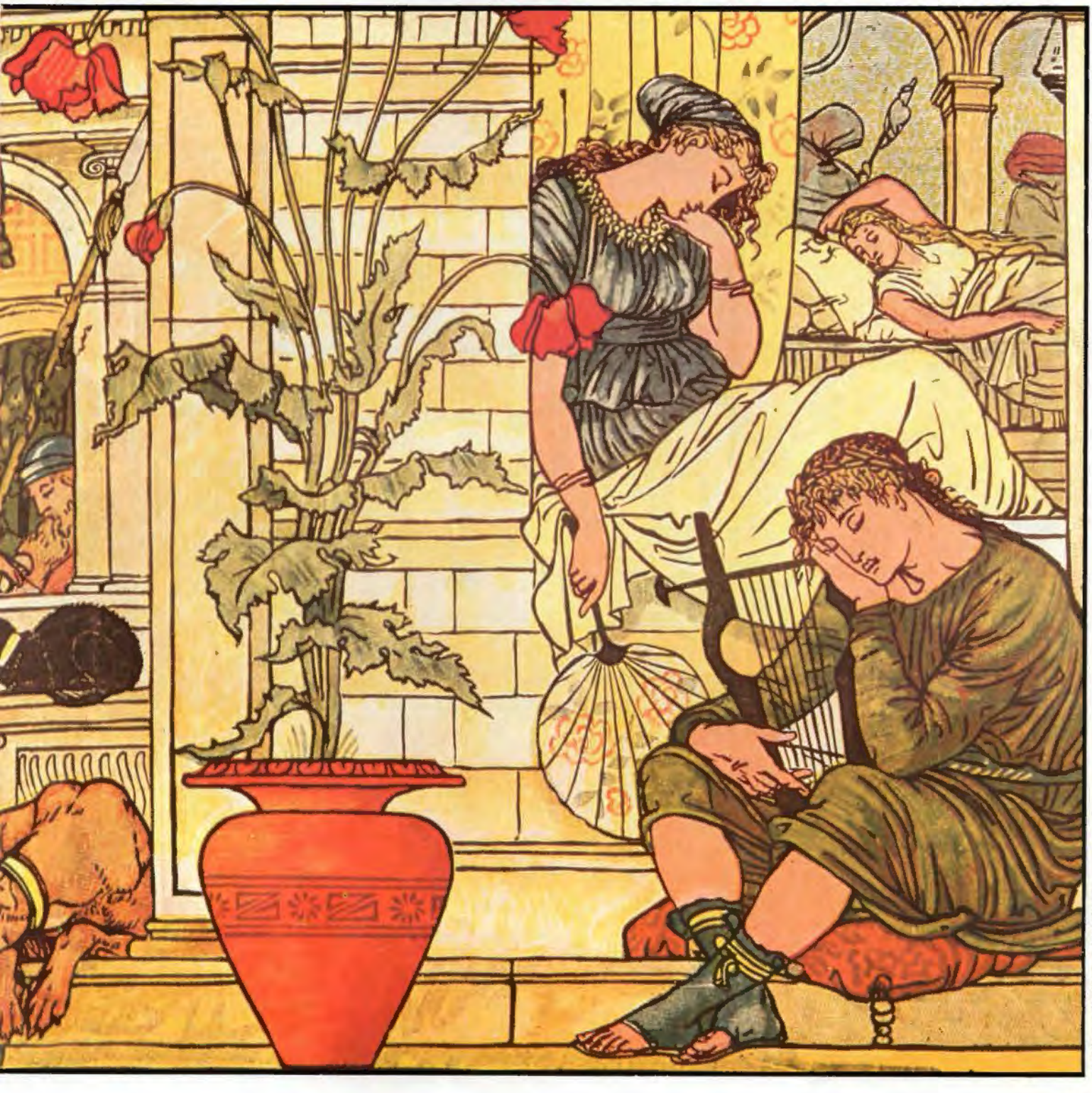
Some of the symptoms listed are those of depression and the emphasis on psychosomatic complaints is significant, for it is likely that hysterical reactions had much to do with the belief that one was bewitched (see HYSTERICAL POSSESSION). Reviewing the English evidence on the effects of spells cast by witches with the aid of demons, C. L'Estrange Ewen concluded that 'it appears that the infirmities and disorders supposed to be induced by the Devil and his angels, although sometimes described as of weird and unknown character, in general,

conformed to the bodily and mental manifestations exhibited in recognized derangements, such as insanity, seizures, sterility, paralysis, wasting diseases, or sensorial disorders.'

That diseases, physical and mental, are caused by demons or actually *are* demons is a very old and rooted belief. When witches were believed to be in league with the Devil, fear of them was heightened by the conviction that God allowed Satan and his minions considerable latitude to warp the minds and torment the bodies of men. The *Malleus Maleficarum* explains that the Devil can inflict diseases on the body and can take possession of it. He can chain up the reason and disorder the senses. He can create a frantic infatuation of love in the mind and equally a fierce obsession of hatred. He can create all manner of delusions which, though hallucinatory, are fully convincing to the unfortunate victim. A witch can even delude a man into thinking that his penis has been removed (see INVISIBILITY) and, discussing the well-known ability of witches to make people impotent, the *Malleus* characteristically observes that God permits bewitchment 'more in the case of the generative powers, because of their greater corruption, than in the case of other human actions'.

The methods of psychic attack credited to witches generally combine an element of mimicry with the use of an object or process as a focus for concentrating malice. The obvious example is image magic, in which a doll represented the enemy so that what was done to it was done to him (see IMITATIVE MAGIC). Something which had been in contact with the victim could be used in the same way, and would create the necessary link between the spell and its target.

A celebrated English witch named Joan Flower, tried at Lincoln in 1619, was accused of revenging herself on the Earl of Rutland for the dismissal of her daughter, a



The Sleeping Beauty was cast into a deep slumber for 100 years, together with all her court, until a king's son came to release her from her enchantment: illustration by Walter Crane of Perrault's fairytale, which is based on a widespread folk motif

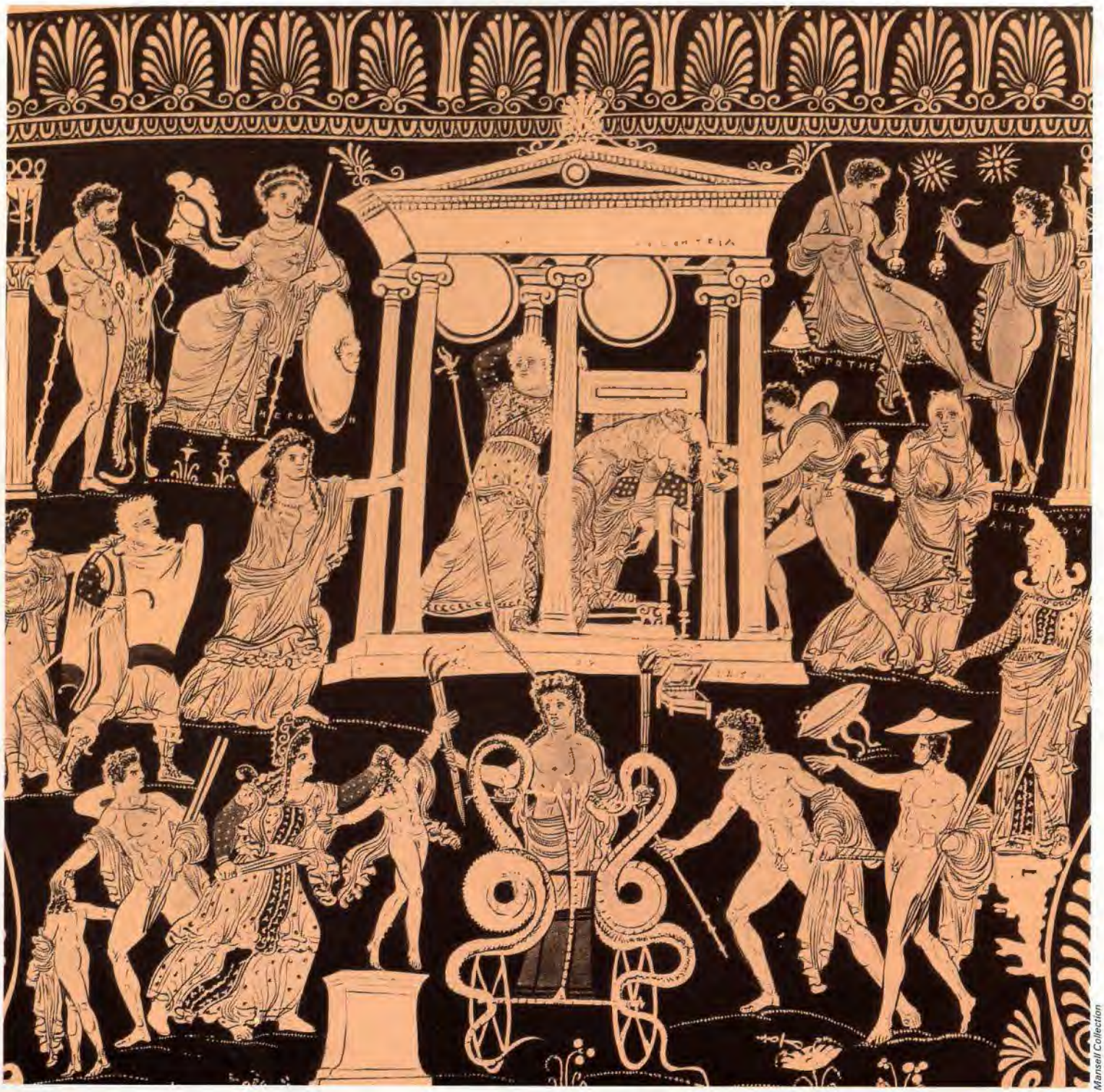
Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

servant in his household at Belvoir Castle. She obtained the right hand glove of one of the Earl's sons, Lord Henry Roos, rubbed it on the back of her familiar, a cat named Rutterkin, and then plunged it in boiling water, pricked it with a pin and buried it, meanwhile wishing that the glove's owner might never thrive. Within a week Lord Henry sickened, 'being much tormented', and eventually died. The witch also cursed the Earl and his wife, and 'boiled feathers and blood together, using devilish speeches and strange gestures'.

In Norfolk in 1583 Mother Gabley of King's Lynn was accused of 'boiling or rather labouring of certain eggs in a pail full of cold water', by which she caused the deaths of 13 men in a shipwreck. In 1682 Temperance Lloyd, a notorious witch of Bideford in Devon, was charged with sticking nine pins into a piece of leather, so causing Mrs Grace Thomas to suffer from pricking pains from head to foot, as if pins had been stuck into her body. Another method of attack, usually employed against a thief, was the Black Fast. This involved abstaining from meat, milk and all food prepared with milk, while mentally projecting a current of venom against the thief until he either returned what he had stolen or died. A woman named Mabel Brigge was executed at York in 1538 for 'fasting upon' King Henry VIII to cause his death. She admitted that she had previously used the Black Fast against a thief, who had broken his neck before the fast ended.

Fascination and Glamour

The simplest techniques of psychic attack are 'ill-wishing' and, in the case of someone unfortunate enough to possess the Evil Eye, 'overlooking' or 'fascinating' the victim with a glance (see EYE). It was long believed in Europe that when you look at something, a ray or beam or force of some kind flows out from your eyes to the thing seen, and that the ray or force which emanates from some people's eyes, voluntarily or involuntarily, is noxious and destructive. The belief is by no means dead and in 1952 in a village in West Germany a woman whose hens failed to lay blamed an elderly neighbour, who she said was a witch and possessed the Evil Eye. The owner of the hens attempted to break



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Far left **Exploits of Medea, the great enchantress of Greek legend, from a 4th century vase: when her lover, Jason, chose another bride, the witch sent her rival a poisoned robe which killed the girl and her aged father; then, after slaying her two sons by Jason, Medea escaped in a chariot drawn by dragons. Two 14th century woodcuts show *(above left)* a witch with her master the Devil in amorous mood and *(above right)* attacking a peasant, using a hazel wand to work her spell**

the power of the spell by burning two of them alive in an oven.

The word 'fascinating' originally meant controlling someone by looking at him and came, by extension, to mean charming or enchanting. The Scots word 'glamour', which came into English literature by way of Sir Walter Scott, meant the same thing the other way round, the effect of an enchantment cast on the eyes and causing hallucinations. Stories in which a hero becomes the helpless captive of a beautiful enchantress, who snares him by deluding his senses, are common in legend and folktale. The powerful sexual attraction of the great enchantress is reflected in the connotations of the words fascinating, glamorous, charmer, enchanting, entrancing, bewitching. The close connection between sex and the magic of sight also comes out in the belief that the Evil Eye was particularly likely to cause impotence.

An Evil Elemental

A witch could also injure an enemy by sending her familiar against him (see FAMILIARS). The idea has not entirely died out, and I was recently told by a witch that she had taught a gossiping neighbour a lesson by 'sending her cat to him', which made him impotent for a month. But in modern occultism generally, the equivalent of the familiar is an artificial elemental which frequently takes some grotesque and frightening animal shape (see MAGIC).

There is an occult theory that every human thought coalesces with one of the creatures of the astral plane, which temporarily embodies it. A mere passing impulse of annoyance with somebody will not last long in the astral world, any more than in this one, but a steady flow of malevolence will have more potentially dangerous results. C. W. Leadbeater, a friend and ally of Annie Besant in the early days of the Theosophical Society (see BESANT), explained in his book *The Astral Plane* that: 'A feeling of envious or jealous hatred towards another person sends an evil elemental to hover over him and seek for a weak point through which it can operate: and if the feeling be persistent, such a creature may be continually nourished by it and thereby be enabled to protract its undesirable activity for a long period. It can, however, produce no effect upon the person towards whom it is directed unless he has himself some tendency which it can foster – some fulcrum for its lever, as it were. From the aura of a man of pure thought and good life all such influences at once rebound, finding nothing upon which they can fasten, and in that case, by a curious law, they react in all their force upon their original creator. In him by the hypothesis they find a congenial sphere of action . . .'

When a magician, with deliberate intent, performs a ceremony of hatred and destruction sinister creatures of the astral plane may be attracted to, or created by, the operation and will join in the attack. But the essential ingredient of the ritual is the vivid concentration of violent rage which the magician conjures up in his own mind and

Psychic Recovery

There is a great deal that can be done upon the physical plane to help the person who is suffering from an occult attack . . . Sunlight is exceedingly valuable because it strengthens the aura and makes it much more resistant. People are often advised to go away into the country on this account, but for the victim of an occult attack to go into the depths of the country may not be the wisest thing, because elemental forces are much more potent away from towns, and if he is threatened by an uprush of atavistic forces, he had better cling to the haunts of men. The sea, too, is an elemental force that is best avoided, for water is an element intimately associated with psychism. Large bodies of water and high mountains should be avoided in choosing a health resort for a person suffering from psychic trouble. The best place is an inland spa. Games, physical training, massage, anything that improves the bodily condition, are invaluable, but long solitary walks should be avoided . . .

Dion Fortune *Psychic Self Defence*

which he projects at his victim, wrapping him in an atmosphere of poisoned malevolence like a man trapped in a thick and evil mist. According to Eliphas Levi (see LEVI), in *The Key of the Mysteries*, 'through a series of almost impossible exercises . . . our nervous system, having been habituated to all tensions and fatigues, has become a kind of living galvanic pile, capable of condensing and projecting powerfully that light which intoxicates or destroys', and in this way 'it is possible to destroy life by the sudden congestion or withdrawal of the Astral Light'.

Hysteria and Nightmares

Although a magician powerful enough to kill by ill-wishing in this way is, fortunately for the rest of us, a rarity, the effects of a psychic attack on someone of sensitive and nervous disposition can be drastic. The characteristic symptoms are said to be extreme fear, anxiety and distress of mind, and also bruises on the body – sometimes in the shape of a goat's hoof or an ace of clubs – disgusting smells, especially of rotting flesh (the belief that demons, as agents of corruption, stink of decomposition is an old one), smears of slime, perhaps with footprints in them, inexplicable outbreaks of fire, and the phenomena associated with poltergeists, which until comparatively recently were assumed to be evil spirits (see POLTERGEISTS).

In her book *Psychic Self-Defence* Dion Fortune (see FORTUNE) said that from the forces of positive evil in the world there have sprung evil intelligences that 'probably originated through the workings of Black Magic, which took the essential evil essence and organised it for purposes of its own'. When these creatures prey on human beings, they cause nightmares and terrifying hallucinations, and they also manifest themselves in sinister noises, slime and blood, balls of light and pungent stenches.

Beings of this sort may seize on the careless or unwary magician. Dion Fortune quotes the case of a man who tried to use a magic square but failed to perform the ritual correctly. He began to suffer from feelings of terror at night, and eventually saw the creature which was obsessing him. 'Its eyes were closed and it was bearded, with long flowing hair. It seemed a blind force slowly waking to activity.' One night he saw a red snake uncoiling itself from under his bed and was so frightened that he jumped out of the window to escape it. The next time he saw the bearded creature, its long locks of hair had turned into the beads of snakes.

One of the dangers of travelling on the astral plane is said to be that the experimenter may fail to bring his astral self back into his physical body (see ASTRAL BODY). The astral body may wander helplessly about and may be attacked by evil forces. The probable short-term results will be hysteria, nightmares, fainting fits, splitting headaches and possibly, in extreme cases, even insanity. The experience may leave permanent damage behind it in the form of lassitude, lack of persistence and inability to concentrate, which recalls some of the symptoms of bewitchment mentioned by Guazzo – weakness, a deep languor, dullness of mind. This helpless wandering of the astral self is the modern occult parallel to the widespread primitive belief that the soul can leave the body and travel about, especially during sleep. Dreams are frequently explained as the experiences of the wandering soul, while the body is asleep. This wandering is dangerous because the soul runs the risk of being ensnared by a sorcerer or by an evil spirit, the result of which will be illness and insanity, and death if the soul is not rescued and restored (see SOUL).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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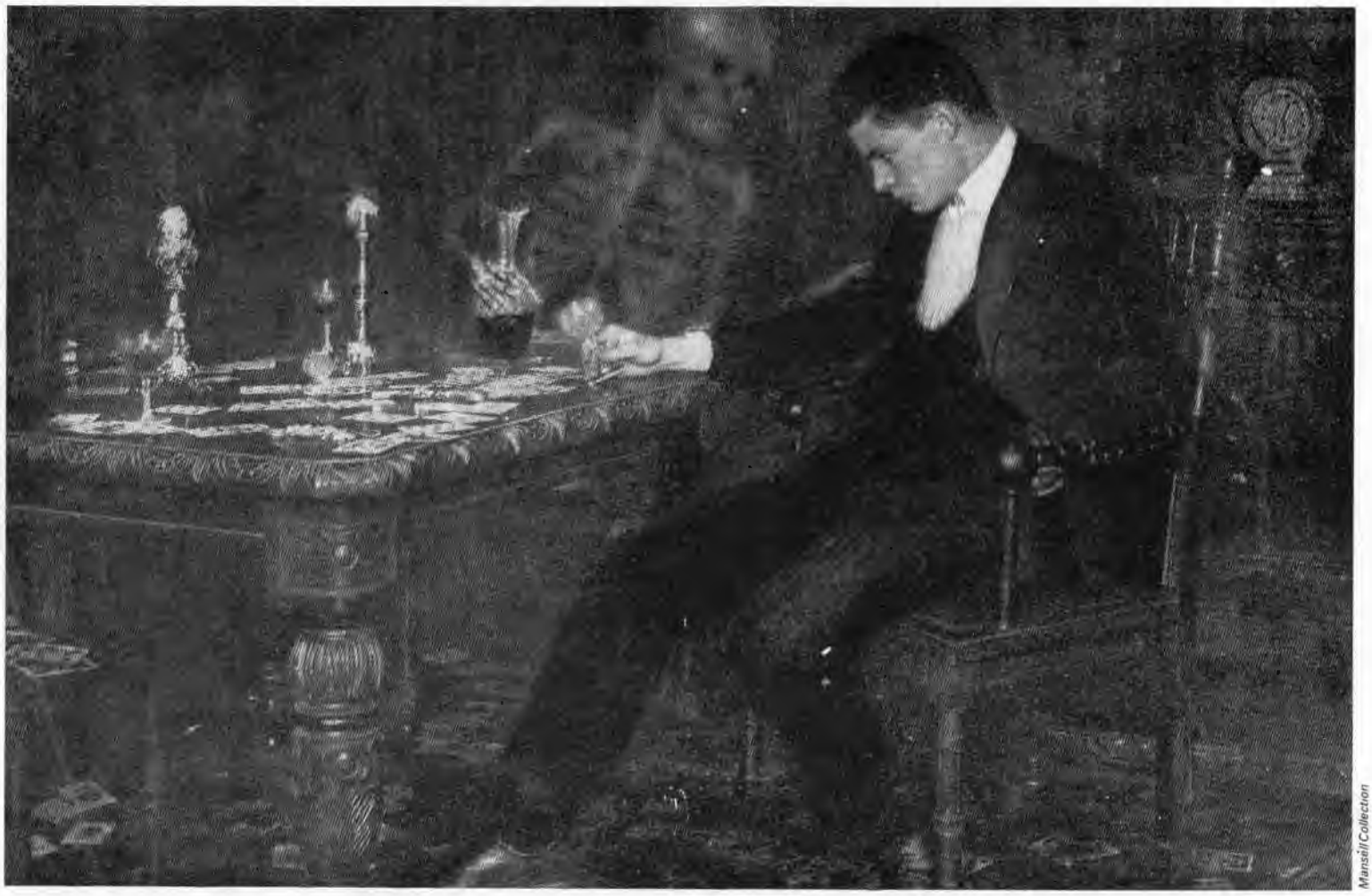

Candles gutter as the doomed man contemplates suicide: *Lost* by R. Velicogna. A sense of hopelessness, oppression and morbid imaginings are said to be symptomatic of psychic attack

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MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 9

Psyc – Shin

PSYCHOKINESIS

In 1936 E. M. Sturgess claimed that he had made a pendulum move without touching it. The claim was challenged, but since then experiments have produced evidence to suggest that the mind can influence matter

Harry Price Library

PSYCHOKINESIS or PK is what the layman calls 'mind over matter'. It is the ability to influence the objective environment without the use of the motor system of the body (the muscles and glands). PK is the counterpart of extra-sensory perception or ESP, which is the acquisition of knowledge without sensory aid (see EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION). These two abilities together make up the communication or exchange a person may have with his surroundings in the form of experiences that are familiarly called 'psychic'. Such communication is better known as parapsychical or psi behaviour, and its study is called parapsychology (or psychical research). PK ability is closely interrelated with ESP but it can well be handled as a separate topic – one that is today only beginning to command as much human and scientific interest as the ESP phase of psi behaviour.

Reports of PK happenings appear in the records of the past as far back as records go. Today of course it is impossible to check on the reliability of such older reports as are available, but at least men believed they were witnessing miraculous physical events that seemed to have their origin in superhuman agency.

Whether the production of these mysterious physical effects was associated with the prevailing religious doctrine or attributed to one of the many systems of magic, the individual who was believed to exercise control over them was likely to become an influential member of the community, whether priest or magician. He might be the tribal rain-maker or healer or the practitioner of some strange power to save or destroy. Belief in this ability to control the physical environment may still be found even today, and not only in less sophisticated cultures. There are actually many unorthodox practices of healing that suggest PK still going on within sight of some of the modern medical centres. For example, warts are reported to be removed from men and animals, at least without known physical intermediation.

Leif Geiges

Other 'magical' therapies are practised as well, such as the control of bleeding or the counteraction of injury from burns. Most of these healings are not expressly in the name of religion, although the practitioner may personally believe that it is God's work he is doing.

How valid these claims are no one can safely say. Certainly no practically dependable application of the alleged powers has emerged and persisted over the centuries as evidence of a reliable principle. Belief in supernatural physical effects has steadily declined with the advancement of the natural sciences, but this does not in itself prove that no PK function ever operated to produce the effects men believed were unexplainable by physics. At most it indicates that the evidence for the PK interpretation has not been good enough for the educated modern intellect.

Heritage from the Casino

The one magical practice that has persisted and even flourished right on down to the present day is gambling. In games of chance the belief in luck, good and bad, is an intuitive acceptance of the traditional magical interpretation. Consistent winning (or for that matter consistent losing) in an honest game of pure chance would seem to require an element of psi ability. While in some of the games the most likely type of ability that could bring luck would be ESP, in others such as the dice and roulette systems, PK would be the type needed.

The point is that the fair game of chance is basically a contest of psi abilities, whether it depends on the successful guessing of an opponent's card or the effective influencing of his dice. But the conditions of play do not permit a clear-cut measure of the psi element, and to a large extent they work against the consistent use of it. What was needed was the seclusion and protection of the laboratory and a proper test design instead of a complicated game.

Early in the 1880s Professor Charles Richet adapted a game-like card-guessing technique to the testing of his hypnotized subject Leonie for clairvoyant ability. He also applied the new probability mathematics to the results. Leonie was 'lucky' enough to guess many more cards correctly than mean chance expectation, and when the extra-chance odds of these results were calculated they were (in today's terms) highly significant. It was an important step, but it was little noticed at the time.

The Duke PK Experiments

A half century later and in quite a parallel way I introduced the technique of dice throwing at a climactic point in the ESP experiments that were going on in the department of psychology at Duke University. Following a tip from a young gambler, I undertook to test the belief that some men have had, that in certain states of mind, which they call 'hot', they can will dice to fall with desired faces turned up. The many volunteer student subjects who took part in these tests were stimulated to high motivation by the game-like contest with the challenge to beat chance, and a large body of results accumulated that for the most part favoured the PK hypothesis.

It was easy to apply the mathematics of probability which furnished us with the chance expectation for each test. The overall number of hits (as the dice were thrown for a designated face or combination of faces) was found in most of the series conducted to be statistically *significant* (that is, to exceed the chance rate of scoring by so large a deviation as could not reasonably be ascribed to chance alone). This success continued from experiment to experiment and from one research worker to another.

On the sober reflection possible after 35 years, it should not have been so surprising as it was to find these scores of people able to influence those dice. There had already been a strong case made for the clairvoyant ESP hypothesis, and it seemed logical to think that if the subject could communicate with a deck of cards completely cut off from sensory contact, the principle might be reversible – for every action in Nature there is a reaction. In other words, something might be happening to the deck of cards under the influence of the mind of the subject. If so, then it should be effective on the rolling dice where a subtle influence could be more delicately registered.

There was also the background of strange physical effects reported in the past, not only miracles and magical practices but spontaneous psychic experiences. Many of these last were purely physical effects, like the unaccountable stopping of a clock at the time

Picturepoint, London

Facing page **Psychokinesis (PK) became an important competing hypothesis to ESP, for it was suggested that significant scoring of hits in card-guessing tests might be due, not to precognition, but to the ability to influence the shuffle, so as to make the fall of cards match the 'predictions' made by the subject. It is now considered that ESP and PK are not separated or competing abilities but effects of a single ability, which parapsychologists call 'psi'. PK required ESP for any intelligent hypothesis of its operation and in most experiments the subject could not give intelligent guidance to PK without using ESP at the same time, for example to know where, how and when to apply the effort**

Above **Much of the evidence for PK has come from experiments with dice throwing, testing a subject's ability to will the dice to fall with specified faces showing. PK may account for what the gambler calls a winning, or losing, streak of luck, which may in fact be the product of psi ability**

Right **Sherpas playing dice in a village in Nepal: the belief that in certain states of mind one can psychologically control the fall of the dice is familiar to gamblers the world over**

of a death or the falling of a picture at the time of a crisis happening to the person represented. While these were not as numerous as the ESP type of spontaneous experiences, a substantial collection of cases of unusual physical phenomena had accumulated, especially at the psychical research societies (see SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES). Then too there had been a vast amount of reporting of the phenomena of physical mediumship, describing strange happenings that if correctly reported and honestly produced (large questions) would suggest that they had been produced by some kind of unknown mental agency (see MEDIUMS). Even though little credence was given to any of the claims of non-experimental physical happenings that suggested PK, they were puzzling enough to justify attention to the possibility.

Precautions and Reactions

It takes more than an open mind, of course, to set off on such a new project. There was the argument that since the ESP experiments had confirmed one type of spontaneous experiences, why should we not look at the others? Only a few months before the start of work on PK, in fact, a beginning had been made on precognition. Then too, coming as it did on top of the first major discoveries about the ESP types, the PK work seemed almost to follow those successes in logical relation. Clairvoyance was apparently a subject-object interaction in one direction. Why not expect a reaction in the other, as the spontaneous cases had suggested? Besides, the sensorimotor parallel suggested ESP and PK as an extra-sensorimotor analogue. So PK fitted into a niche in the developing rational picture.

Yet the work with the dice did not immediately receive full attention from the group at the Duke Laboratory, and for a time was a little overwhelmed. At that stage, with the first report on the ESP work about to appear, the new discovery was just too much to handle with sufficient reflection and comprehension for immediate publication. Even the reporting of the precognition results was delayed for nearly five years and, as it turned out, the findings on PK were held back for almost ten.

An important new consideration arose which nevertheless required that PK be taken quite seriously, even before publication, in connection with some of the ESP experiments. There came a point in the research in precognition at which PK became an important competing hypothesis. Some workers in parapsychology found precognition so hard to take seriously as a hypothesis that even PK was preferable if it could possibly explain the results of the precognition tests. One of these enthusiastic critics in the laboratory challenged the adequacy of the mechanical card shuffler used for a time in randomizing the order of target cards for precognition tests. He thought PK was a possible factor in favourably influencing the shuffling process so as to make the cards match the predictions made by the subject. This and other methods for preparing targets for precognition (for example, the rolling of dice) had therefore to be discontinued. (Later on, as will be seen, the tables were turned, and precognition gave PK experimenters a difficult time as a counter-hypothesis in their own research.)

The PK studies continued throughout the period of delayed publication, so that by 1943, when it was decided to release the first report, there were 24 completed projects, most of which would normally have been published over the waiting interval. But even so, the long lead given the ESP side of the field represents a comparative disadvantage to the PK branch and accounts for the appearance of retarded progress in this equally important section of the field since the first PK report appeared. There are signs today, however, that this imbalance is likely soon to be corrected.

The problems that needed handling in adapting dice throwing to PK testing were recognized from the start; they are much the same as those which have to be watched if an honest game is to be played in games with dice. Precautions have to be taken against skills in handling the cubes that might influence their fall, as well as in correcting for possible inequalities in the faces. In the laboratory it was possible to take the necessary steps, which the game situation would not always permit. The 'game' could be modified to suit the experimenter's needs. For instance, correction for imperfections in the dice was best achieved by equalizing the number of throws for all the faces as targets. If the faces are equally well represented in numbers of trials, any imperfections in one

Psi research has entered upon a new period, marked especially by the greater sophistication of testing devices

Belief in 'mind over matter' is very old, and there are many reports of the human mind influencing its physical environment in ways which were thought supernatural and miraculous. They include accounts of magical healing, rain-making and other types of weather control, and such peculiar powers as the ability to levitate *Above* Indian Brahmin practising levitation *Right* The disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, and St Peter tried to emulate him but began to sink. Interestingly, Jesus reproved him for lack of confidence

will be balanced off by the others. Similarly, the ways of throwing the dice progressed from hand and cup throwing to stages of completely mechanized gravity release or rotation in baffled cages, in which no human factor entered.

The Diagonal Decline

The most clinching evidence of PK was a psychological by-product of the research itself, the diagonal decline effect resulting from the quarter distribution (QD) analysis of the records. First of all, it is an independent valuation, and it is one that at a single stroke effectively answers all the major questions that the researcher attempts to cope with in a well-designed and well-controlled PK experiment.

The QD analysis developed as a result of examining in 1942 the earlier PK records to see whether declines in scoring rates, such as had occurred frequently in ESP experiments, were also to be found in the PK data. It was immediately evident that there was not only a decline from the top to the bottom of the record page but also from the left to the right half, so that on dividing the page into quarters the upper left showed the greatest number of hits and the lower right the fewest. This is the typical diagonal decline. The difference between those two quarters was statistically significant and it made a formidable and independent case in itself, whatever else the experiment showed or failed to show.

All that was necessary to meet the conditions for the analysis was that the page be made up of records of trials made under uniform conditions – as most of them were. All the considerations that normally had to be watched, such as dice bias, non-random throwing or recording errors, could not be supposed to decline as the QD analyses had shown the actual results did. One major point was that neither subjects nor experimenter could have had any anticipation that years later these analyses would be made. They were thus as objective as fingerprints.

It turned out that 18 out of the 24 series were recorded in such a way that the QD analysis could be applied. Of these, 16 showed the diagonal decline from upper left to lower right, and when the entire 18 were combined the significance of the difference between the upper left and lower right quarters gave astronomically high odds against a chance theory for the results.

This was not all of the QD evidence; there were still smaller blocks of data in the records which could be quartered and treated in the same way to see how general these position effects were. The same effect was found to be widely distributed in a similarly highly significant way. One virtue of these position effects is that they can be examined over and over again and thus have much the same firmness as rock strata to the geologist. It has been especially advantageous to have had this strong foundation laid under the PK work which has not been so well represented in the amount of research done as have the various types of ESP.

The conclusive QD evidence for PK came to a head in 1945. A quarter-century later psi research has entered upon a new period, marked especially by the greater sophistication of testing devices that is possible today. It might be called an electronic era, since much of the apparatus in use in facilitating psi testing is of that character. Dr Helmut Schmidt, Director of the Institute for Parapsychology, has designed a number of test devices adaptable to specific types of psi, all based upon the same essential mechanical principles.

The randomization of events on which the tests are based is dependent upon the emission of electrons in radioactive decay. This basic process can determine the order of targets for ESP tests or provide a random order of events for the subject to try to influence in PK tests. In these latter, the subject mentally concentrates on trying to make a designated one of two (or more) lamps light up, by influencing the selective action of the random generator. The subject has nothing to do but concentrate on the lamp assigned to him as target for a given run of trials. The experimenter is not necessary at all except to give the instructions to the subject. Mechanical recording and provision for mechanical analyses of the data are features of the system.

One wonders, of course, in this new stage and style of testing, just as in the ESP testing with the same types of machines, whether the central factor in the equipment, the electron, has any importance in itself. It is too early yet to say whether the size of particle has anything to do with the rate of success or whether other systems of generating random targets will do as well when they are developed. Such problems can now be handled and will surely not be kept waiting long for solution.

The Nature of PK

Enough is already known about PK, however, to allow some illuminating generalizations about its nature. Of these, first consideration should be given to the relation of PK to the physical world. Almost immediately in the early testing at Duke, it was noticed that none of the physical properties of the dice seemed to be important in relation to the scoring rate – that is unless they led to psychological preferences. For example, the subjects found that they could achieve a better scoring rate (a better rate per die) while throwing two dice at a time instead of one. Yet two dice certainly made the task more difficult from a purely physical viewpoint. Again, when two dice per throw were compared with six, the larger number gave the better rate of success per die. But the subjects recognized in all these comparisons that they *liked* to throw two dice better than one and preferred six to two. The larger number made a faster moving and more efficient procedure than the smaller.

Essentially the same type of effect was observed with respect to two different sizes of dice used in the test. Very small dice did not do well and exceptionally large ones were not as high in yield as medium sizes (from $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch). Again the rate of success seemed to be largely a matter of the size that could most easily he picked up, observed

British Museum

quickly and handled nicely. The actual size as a factor appeared to have nothing to do with the amount of success. The actual mass of the material from which dice were constructed seemed to make no difference either, so far as comparisons could be accurately determined. Dice of medium weight were the best liked by most subjects, for example, those made of plastic or lighter metals such as aluminium were popular and gave good results. Dice made of lead and those made of balsa wood were respectively too heavy or too light to be favoured by the subjects, and under the conditions of the early tests neither yielded scores comparable to the better-liked materials. A number of other comparative tests involving physical features further supported the point that the physical characteristics of the target objects in PK were not the determinative ones. The mental factor of preference was usually clearly the dominant one.

What was most needed was a type of test that would allow the physical differences to be tested without the subject's preference being allowed to influence him, at least consciously. Such an experiment has recently been carried out at the Institute for Parapsychology by William E. Cox. Lead and celluloid dice were painted alike and compared in PK tests without the subjects being aware that two different weights of dice were being used. They were also handled mechanically in the same apparatus and were made to roll at the same speed so as not to show differences indicating weight. Not even the observer who did the recording knew there were two different weights of dice; yet the amount of evidence of PK effect was almost identically the same for the light and the heavy ones. The ratio of mass was about one to seven and such a difference would of course be expected to have an effect upon the energy required to alter the fall of the cubes. Almost certainly this experiment, if conducted in the manner of the earlier ones mentioned, would have introduced a preferential difference in the amount of PK effect registered. As it is, the effect of density on psi capacity seems to be ruled out again.

In the Schmidt experiment with PK on the electron level of target magnitude, the selection of the lamp to be lighted depended on a single quantum of energy, yet the result did not show a different order of magnitude of scoring success over that of the various dice throwing tests, some of which involved incomparably larger target objects. This would appear to be strong evidence that physical differences in the targets as such do not affect the magnitude of PK scores. In the tests on extra-sensory perception results on that side of the psi field have not shown any physical relation either. Space-time conditions which are so limiting in sensorimotor exchange have not been found to show any well confirmed relation to the results of comparative ESP tests. Thus no physical theory of psi gets a leg to stand on from the evidence of either ESP or PK.

But while this draws a major distinction around psi it does not necessarily imply any discontinuity in Nature. To say that psi is superphysical is not to call it supernatural. Rather it is to indicate that some other natural basis of exchange will have to be inferred, and eventually found and confirmed if it is there. Since effective communication is involved (even though not often highly reliable) there should by definition have to be an energetic interaction, and this again raises interesting new questions not for speculation but for exploration.

At this point, of course, the concept of a psi energy is not much more than a working hypothesis. It is true that mental energy has from time to time been suggested by psychologists, but until the work in experimental parapsychology began they had no way of testing the hypothesis of an energy that is different from the recognized physical systems. PK research experiments with dice, conducted by Haakon Forwald, were found to produce effects that were measurable in terms of standard units of energy; yet under the test conditions no known physical energy could conceivably have been responsible for these effects. It is true that the only measurement possible was the physical differences in the results produced. These were the mean distances between dice released from the same point and allowed to roll by gravity, with one side of the table the designated target in one set of trials and the opposite side in another. Thus the cubes of known weight were caused by PK to roll to the side intended to a measurable average distance.

Forwald, of course, was not directly

'As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight' (Acts, chapter 1): the Ascension of Christ, a 15th century wall painting from Cyprus. One of the spurs to parapsychological research was 'the background of strange physical effects reported in the past'

Sonia Halliday

measuring the energy which influenced the dice but rather the resultant lateral displacement. However, at this point it is a question as to whether concepts such as quantity (associated primarily with the physical order) are indeed applicable to this psi function or for that matter to any process that is distinctly mental.

Targets in PK Tests

What kinds and states of matter can PK influence? First approaches have usually to be made at the easiest point of attack. Clairvoyance was the simplest starting point for assault on the ESP side. In PK it had to be something with moving targets (PK-MT) since matter in motion offers advantages; almost all the PK work done since the beginning of 1934 has been with targets in motion, mostly dice.

A certain amount of testing of PK with moving targets has involved the use of electrical equipment, such as electric clocks and pendulum devices adapted to the tests. The attempt has been made also to use the flow of liquids or sand as target matter. Tests have likewise been made on micro-physical targets, as in the emanation of electrons from radioactive substances.

On the whole, nothing in the PK testing has thus far consistently exceeded the rate of success with the dice throwing methods. It still remains to be seen how the new work with electronic targets will compare with dice tests. So far there is no indication of a new level of magnitude of PK performance to correspond to the microscopic size of the targets.

As stated, all these materials have been inanimate objects in motion. What about PK on living targets, or PK-LT? The idea has long prevailed in popular folklore that some individuals have the power to influence plant growth and others to affect animals, including man, physically in various ways. The plant specialists are said to possess what is known as a 'green thumb', and others are believed to be able to induce healing of the sick by unknown powers that suggest PK. In recent years efforts have been made to test these healing and growth-promoting powers in the laboratory. The PK tests most often tried were based on the attempt to influence the growth rate of seedlings and the best known of these efforts is the work of Dr Bernard Grad of McGill University Medical School. But there have been a few efforts to influence animal healing and other effects on the animal organism. It would be fair to say that altogether a good beginning has been made on PK tests with living targets; but a hard and fast valuation need not be forced at this stage. The research continues, but it should not be confused with fantastic and prematurely popularized claims of emotional reactions of plants and so-called plant perception.

The stiffest challenge facing the PK researcher today is the question, now being investigated, of whether static inanimate objects can demonstrably be influenced psychokinetically. This is a point at which to reflect on the fact that, one by one, the types of psi effect suggested by the spontaneous cases of psychic experience have been verified by experiment or, as in the sector of the PK of living targets, there is at least a fairly satisfactory case. One cannot of course argue that we may now therefore conclude that PK on static targets (PK-ST) will have to follow, but it does appear much more plausible as one thinks back over the progress in the past on the other target areas of psi.

The more favourable climate of today has led to increased attention being given to some of the claims for the PK-ST type of effect. There has been some attention to the claims for the darkroom seance, for example the reports of tables levitated by PK. Increased attention is also being given to reports of the so-called poltergeist and haunting cases in the attempt to verify claims of unexplainable movements of objects that support PK.

On the American scene the best known effort to achieve PK-ST has been in the attempts to project thought impressions onto a photographic film. While some psi workers such as Dr Jule Eisenbud are led to the conclusion that a genuine psi effect has been involved in these productions, such firm acceptance at this stage would abandon the criteria followed in the other sectors of psi investigation. If the results reported are indeed due to genuine PK, the capacity involved should be expected to respond, as efforts continue to devise better conditions, making conclusive demonstrations possible in due course.

The relation of PK to the ESP types of psi phenomena has become clearer as the different types have been studied. During the early investigations it seemed necessary to treat each phenomenon as though it was the result of a separate function. Difficulties result from these distinctions, especially in attempting to distinguish clairvoyance and telepathy from each other in the experimental situation. Another problem arose in trying to do a PK experiment that completely ruled out the possibility of precognition and conversely (as mentioned above) in trying to investigate precognition with the hypothesis of PK experimentally eliminated. Eventually, however, these conflicts were resolved and each type of psi was satisfactorily established as phenomenologically distinct.

But even though much time was expended

The exercise of psi abilities is still too slight and uncertain for them to be of serious practical use. When they become reliable the consequences will obviously be fantastic

in separating PK and ESP by independent demonstration there was frank recognition of the fact that PK required ESP for any intelligent hypothesis of its operation. In fact in most of the experiments it was impossible for the subject to give intelligent guidance to PK without using ESP at the same time (for example, to know where, how and when to apply the effort). Accordingly, even while the separation experiments were going on it was recognized that the distinction between types was a superficial one and that PK and ESP were aspects of the same function. Moreover, the similarity of conditions that affected both of them further confirmed the hypothesis of the unity of psi. Gradually workers in the field came to regard psi as fundamentally a single process of which the different types of phenomena were surface manifestations.

Some of the experimental studies came in due course to take this unitary character of psi for granted, especially those in which PK tests were carried out with the targets unknown to the subject at the time. In some of these the targets were enclosed in opaque envelopes until the end of the series for which they were intended. In others, as in the distance experiments by the English workers G. W. Fisk and D. J. West, the target was set up at a distance of 170 miles from the subject while she, a medical woman, threw the dice with significant success, depending upon ESP guidance as to the target face. Distance has been found to be no impediment to ESP.

Whether distance between the subject and target would have any effect upon success in an adequately controlled PK test would be difficult to say at present on the basis of the limited evidence. The distances in tests have been relatively short (30 feet) and subjective factors could easily enter in the way of preferences; but the results, such as they are, harmonize well with the other findings regarding the absence of any physical influence. But it is just at this point that the view of PK as being an aspect of the psi function is very important. Since psi is a unitary ability and the ESP tests have shown no limitation thus far due to space-time, it seems to follow logically that PK would not be limited either; it is the same ability with another form of expression. So there should not be any need to do PK experiments at longer distances.

One of the most important findings about PK, and one that was already known about the ESP types, is that it seems to be reversible in its effect. The easiest way to describe this is to go back to the example of luck in games of chance; this form of psi (as it seems likely to be) can be both good and bad, and thus, as everyone knows, lead to winning or losing. The discovery in parapsychology of this tendency to psi-missing as the opposite of psi-hitting has been probably the greatest single contribution thus far made to the understanding of the psi process. For some unknown reason psi-missing is much more prevalent in the ESP researches than in those of PK.

It happens, however, that the Cox experiment involving the comparison of lead and celluloid dice offers an instructive example of psi-missing. It will be recalled that the dice were indistinguishable to the subjects and that they gave equally significant results in spite of their large difference in weight. However, there was an important difference; while the celluloid gave the normally expected psi-hitting, the lead dice gave psi-missing results – that is, negative deviations. Both kinds of dice were activated together, and for the same target face, yet the heavy ones deviated as far below the chance mean as the light ones did above. The results were fairly uniform too among the different subjects and sessions, indicating that the participants were in some way cognizing the kinds of dice and reacted to both with equal measure but in opposite directions, even while they were unconscious of any difference. Some sort of discrimination was evidently involved in this 'psi differential effect' as it has been called, which shows up almost regularly when an experiment is conducted with two different kinds of methods or targets, or other circumstances. (Such a subtle unconscious differential in the operation of the mind could be an important principle of wider scope.)

Frontiers of PK Research

The years ahead may be expected to see the expansion of PK investigations into much territory still unexplored. Interest is growing in meeting the challenge of applying PK to static targets, but it is even more active at present in the use of living targets, with a wide range of plant and animal species and their functions being put to the test. New work with animals has independently confirmed and amplified the discovery of precognition in mice. With the promise this gives of providing parapsychology with a 'guinea pig' there should be accelerated interest in the animal branch of the field.

In 1972, Uri Geller (see URI GELLER) came into public awareness with his astonishing feats of metal bending. Geller had only to appear on television for reports of forks and spoons being bent out of shape in many thousands of homes to flood in. His powers led to psychokinetic metal bending (PKMB) becoming a field of study in itself.

In 1974, Matthew Manning (see MATTHEW MANNING) gave a display of PKMB to a group of 21 scientists; however the first scientist to study PKMB rigorously was Professor J. B. Hasted of Birkbeck College, London. He published his findings in a co-authored article in *Nature*, in April 1975. He took the view that PKMB was the product of the unconscious mind, and recommended that the person being tested should be relaxed. Other research programmes in PKMB are ongoing all over the world.

Is there a foreseeable limit to this PK power of the mind and its other aspect ESP? Nothing has yet been found that is beyond the range of the extra-sensory ability to apprehend knowledge, and the progress of PK research is approaching a similar generalization on its side. This is to say that man's range of communication has (or promises to have) in principle, no limitation. On the side of modesty, however, let it be recalled that the exercise of these psi abilities is still too slight and uncertain for them to be of serious practical use. When they become reliable the consequences will obviously be fantastic; but the work to be done is enormous too. Fortunately it is now possible to do it, and it will get done in time.

J. B. RHINE

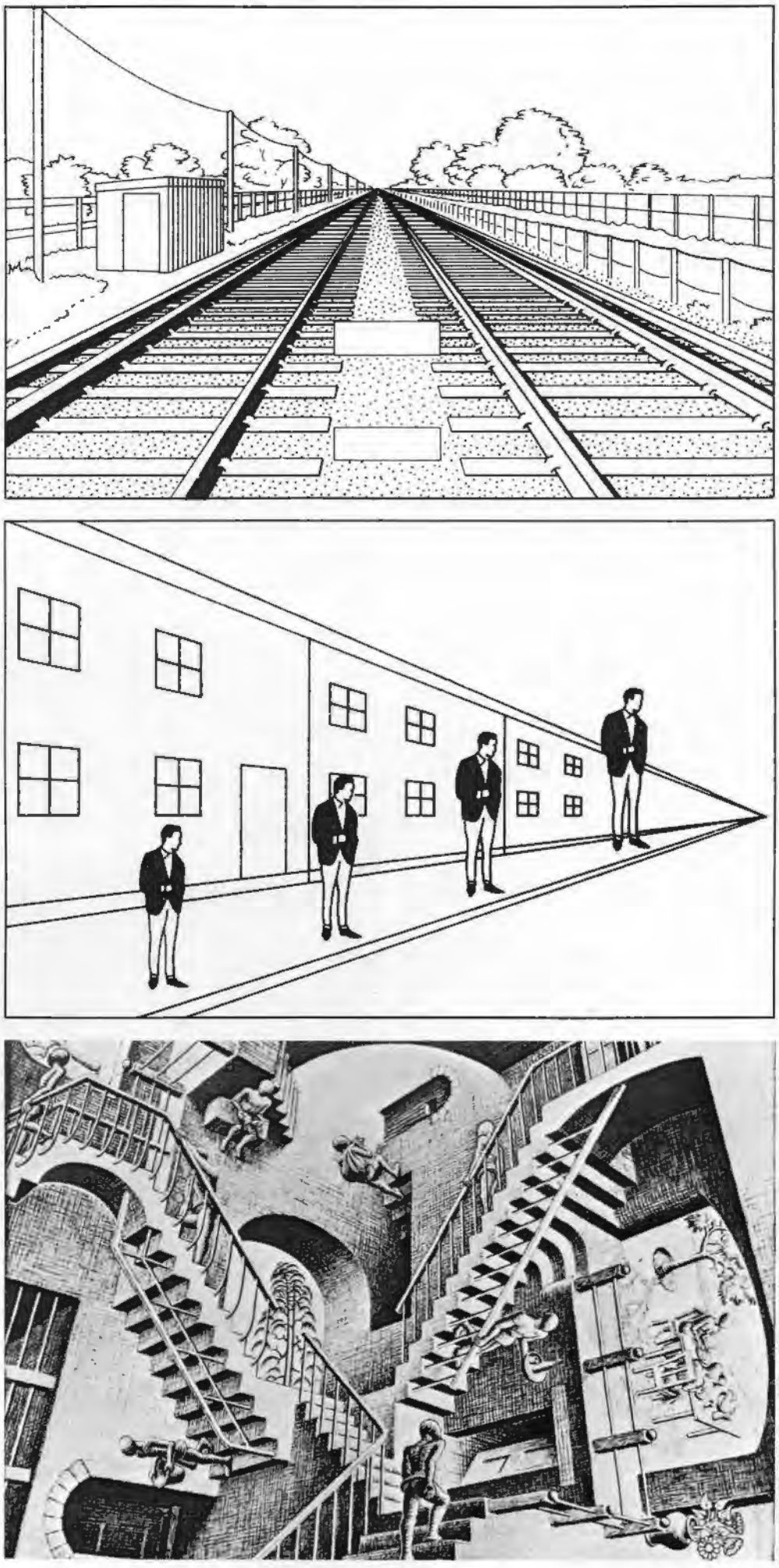
FURTHER READING: J. B. Rhine ed., *Progress in Parapsychology* (Para-psychology Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1971); J. B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt, *Para-psychology, Frontier Science of the Mind* (C. C. Thomas, 1974); D. Robinson, *To Stretch a Plank: a Survey of Psychokinesis* (Nelson-Hall, 1980); D. Scott Rogo, *Minds and Motion* (Taplinger, 1978); L. L. Vasiliev, *Experiments in Distant Influence* (Wildwood House, 1976).

PSYCHOLOGY

THE WORD 'PSYCHOLOGY', literally translated, means 'the study of the mind'; and by 'mind' we must understand the basis of consciousness, whether that basis turns out to be merely the material brain, or whether we prefer to identify it with some kind of immaterial entity interacting with the brain – what the sceptics derisively term 'a ghost in the machine'. As a scientist, the modern psychologist scrupulously refrains from postulating any novel entity, such as an immaterial mind or soul, which is not already recognized in other branches of science, unless the factual evidence practically forces him to do so. But this critical approach in no way entitles him to deny its existence outright if, on non-scientific grounds (those, for example, of philosophy or religious experience), any other thinker prefers to adopt this widespread belief.

The systematic study of the mind began with the ancient Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. The idea of an immaterial soul, capable of surviving the death of the body, was elaborately defended by Plato in the famous speech he puts into the mouth of Socrates just before drinking the hemlock (see IMMORTALITY). In its origin it was not a Christian doctrine. As the oldest of the creeds distinctly states, the early Christians believed in 'the resurrection of the body'. St Paul, however, seems to have held that the resurrected 'body' would be a 'spiritual' rather than a 'physical' body.

From the time of Plato and Aristotle until about 100 years ago, psychology remained essentially a philosophical study. But during the second half of the 19th century it gradually came to be regarded as a branch of natural science. On the Continent the tendency was to treat it as a subdivision of physiology – part of the general study of the brain and sense organs. In Britain, owing to the influence of the philosopher Herbert Spencer and the scientist Charles Darwin, it was regarded rather as a branch of biology. Biology is the science of life; and psychology was consequently defined as the study of mental life. Mental capacities were treated as the product of evolution; and special emphasis was laid on the influence of heredity. In America, following the teaching of Pavlov, the Russian neurologist, an influential group of writers insisted that the analysis of consciousness should be left to the philosophers, and preferred to redefine psychology as the objective study of behaviour.



Visual illusions pose a problem to an understanding of how we perceive the outside world, and suggest that what seem to be, according to the realist theory, direct perceptions of concrete objects are in fact 'interpretations automatically imposed on our own sensations by the mind itself' *Top* In perspective drawings, parallel lines converge with distance *Centre* This drawing wrongly suggests that the men are of varying height *Bottom* The complex arrangement of perspective makes this visually possible, although it could not exist objectively: lithograph by M. C. Escher, *Relativity*

Mickelson Gallery, Washington DC/Cornelius Van S. Roosevelt

The methods adopted by contemporary psychologists are essentially those of all other sciences – systematic observation, controlled experiment, measurement wherever possible, and up-to-date statistical techniques for checking the results so obtained. Every department of psychology now has a laboratory, with a dark-room for the study of vision, a sound-proof room for the study of hearing, clocks measuring to a thousandth of a second, electrical apparatus for recording brain-waves, and mechanical or electrical computers. Most British psychologists also adopt a mode of observation that is used in no other science, namely, self-observation or introspection. When a psychologist is trying out a new test – of reasoning, for example – he asks his human guinea-pigs how precisely they actually proceeded in their attempts to solve the various problems: many of them, so it often appears, rely not on reasoning, but on memory or even on sheer guess-work; some work out the answers in silent speech; others use imaginary diagrams or mental pictures. Unlike American behaviourists the British psychologist sees the analysis of consciousness as one of his most important tasks.

The Act of Sensing

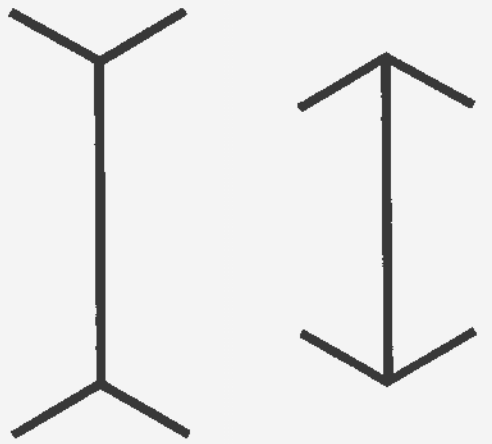
In ordinary parlance the word 'consciousness', and most of the terms used to describe its various forms, are highly ambiguous: they are used sometimes with an active meaning, sometimes with a passive. The term 'sensation', for example, is now commonly used to denote what is sensed, for example, the touch of pain that I feel; strictly speaking, it means the *act* of sensing: it implies that I (or whoever is the subject at the moment) am actually feeling this particular pain. It is therefore important to distinguish between what are technically called the 'contents' of consciousness and the 'processes' of consciousness. Earlier psychologists were interested chiefly in classifying the different contents of consciousness and analysing them into their basic elements; and all too often forgot that consciousness itself is a unique activity.

Of the various contents of consciousness the most conspicuous are the colours we see, the sounds we hear, the odours, flavours, touches, warmths, pains and so on, that we smell, taste, or feel. These, as I have just observed, are popularly described as sensations; but to avoid ambiguity the psychologist prefers to describe them as 'sense-data' or 'sensa'. This classification, be it noted, has a physiological basis, and corresponds to the various sense organs involved – the 'gateways to the mind'. There are, however, several other senses besides the traditional five. The ear contains, not only an organ for hearing, but also an organ for perceiving changes in the position of the body: if you pivot on your toes with your head bent on your chest or a shoulder, the sensation of giddiness – the 'world going round' – will vary with the way you held your head. There are also tiny sense organs in our muscles and joints which inform us as to the position of our limbs: when you wake up in the night, you do not need to switch on the light and look in the wardrobe mirror to see how your arms and legs are placed. And in the background of our consciousness there is always a mass of vague organic sensations coming from sense organs in the heart, lungs, stomach and intestines – sometimes highly intense, particularly when we are emotionally excited or out of sorts.

Every evening you lie down in a dark and silent bedroom and close your eyes; the more obvious of your sensations are thus cut off. Yet you do not immediately drop into an unconscious sleep. In your 'mind's eye' you see mental pictures – memories of the day's events, or imaginary visions of what will happen tomorrow; you may recall the actual voice of someone you have talked to, or start rehearsing what you will say next time. These ghost-like copies of actual sights and sounds are called 'mental images'. In dreams and in hallucinatory states they may become so vivid that you mistake them for genuine sensations.

Sensations and images were the sole elements which the older psychologists commonly recoguized. Like the atoms of the chemist, these 'psychical atoms' were supposed to combine and form 'psychical compounds', and so give rise to the more complex intellectual experiences, such as observing and thinking. As I came into the room just now, I noticed an orange on a side-table. What occurred, the earlier writers world have said, was that I happened to see a circular yellow patch, shaded on one side: this sensation of colour called up in my mind a memory image of certain tastes and smells, and they in turn suggested the word 'orange', which I heard echoing in my mind's ear. These various memories, it was held, are due to an acquired 'association of ideas', that is, to more or less habitual connections linking sensations with images and images with one another – the effects of past experience on my brain. Thus, the whole process, it was argued, could be explained in purely physiological terms. A globular object on the table reflects light rays of certain wavelengths. Impinging on the retina at the back of my eye, these rays cause nerve-currents to pass up the optic nerve, and stimulate certain cells at the back of the brain; and I see something yellow. From the visual centre nerve fibres lead to other nerve cells in the centres for taste, smell, and hearing. Eventually perhaps the nerve currents reach to the motor centres; and I reach for the orange and start to peel it.

This is the traditional account of sensory perception. It contains an important modicum of truth; but it is greatly oversimplified, as we shall see in a moment. In any case, it is quite wrong to suppose that sensations and images are the only



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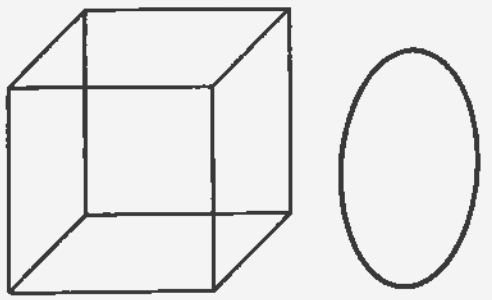

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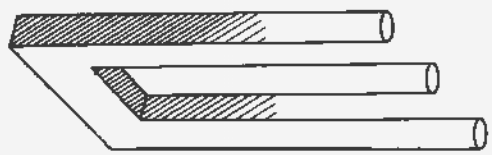

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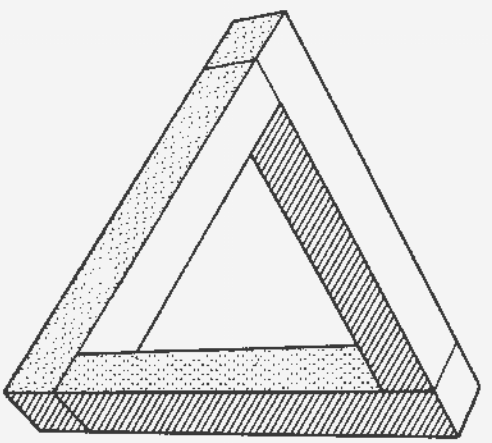

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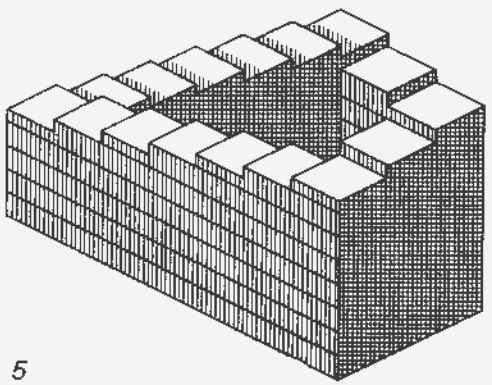

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Further examples of visual illusions ***Figure 1*** **A famous distortion-illusion in which one vertical line appears longer than the other, but is in fact the same length** ***Figure 2*** **There is no information as to which face is nearer and which is farther; the oval shape looks like an ellipse but it could be a circle** ***Figure 3*** **An impossible object which even visually is contradictory** ***Figures 4 & 5*** **Neither figure can be represented as a single object lying in space**

contents of consciousness. Looking again at the orange, I see to the right of it a large jug of water; above both, in the wall behind, there is a window between two pictures, with a view of a rose garden further away. Prepositions like 'above' or 'between', and phrases like 'to the right of' or 'further away', describe spatial *relations*; and relations are things we can directly perceive. There are other relations, still more elusive, which are usually described by conjunctions, notably logical or inferential relations, indicated by such words as 'because', 'since', 'therefore', or 'it follows that'. These too we directly perceive or apprehend. When you read the proofs of Euclid's theorems, your attention is almost wholly fixed on the relations – spatial or logical – which make up the argument.

If you glance at the diagrams that illustrate this article, what you notice are not the sensations of black and white, but the shapes or patterns – the right-angled triangle, the isosceles triangle, the square, the circle, and the still more complex little patterns that make up the letters; it is impossible to regard these as *mere* associations of sensations. When you recognize a familiar face, what you notice are not the sensations of colour, but the distinctive impression which the shapes and arrangement of the features make upon you at first glance: Alice in Wonderland even saw a grin when the cat had disappeared. It is the same with hearing: when the band strikes up with *Land of Hope and Glory*, what you listen to is the tune, not the separate sounds: with a change of key, every note could be altered, and yet, so long as the melodic pattern remains unchanged, you would probably detect no difference. What we call hunches, intuitions, impressions, are of much the same nature. They are conscious experiences, but are not themselves sensory. Thus, even in ordinary life, there are 'extrasensory perceptions'. Nor is there any sense organ for pleasure or its opposite; nevertheless these too are distinctive types of feeling.

Transitory though they usually are, all these experiences are unquestionably real. Yet they do not form part of the real world as the physicist understands it. His world consists of hypothetical entities, like atoms, or the protons, electrons, neutrons which make up the material atoms, and certain forces or forms of energy, existing in a three-dimensional space, and constantly changing with the passage of time or, as some would prefer to say, arranged in a four-dimensional relational scheme termed 'space-time'. In themselves these physical entities have neither colour, sound, taste, nor smell, though they are usually supposed to be capable of causing these experiences by their effects on a specific type of material structure, namely, the living body of a human being or another animal. An exclusively materialistic view of the universe would have to omit these conscious phenomena altogether, for, whatever else they may be, they are neither material entities nor material qualities.

So far we have considered consciousness purely in the passive sense. We have asked what precisely are we aware of. But the study of the mind must also include an investigation of consciousness in the active sense, that is, as a set of conscious processes. These are generally classified under three broad headings – knowing, feeling, and willing. In almost every concrete experience we can distinguish three main aspects – technically called the cognitive, the affective, and the conative.

Knowing, Feeling, Willing

The processes of seeing and recognizing an orange, and recollecting its taste and its name, are all cognitive processes: they are forms of knowing. But the knowledge of its existence may make me want to eat it; so I decide to put down my pen, and look for a knife to peel it; or, on second thoughts, I may decide to resist the temptation. In such a case I feel perfectly free to choose. These processes – desiring, striving, choosing, and willing – are called conative or purposive processes. If the orange tastes sweet and juicy, I shall approve of it; if it is sour and dry, I shall disapprove. Ordinarily we say we 'feel' pleased or displeased, satisfied or dissatisfied. But 'feeling' is also an ambiguous word, for we talk of feeling cold or warm, and cold and warmth are sensations. So the psychologist prefers to speak of the other modes of 'feeling' as affective or valuative processes. Purposive processes and valuative processes are of special importance because they provide the mainsprings of all motivation and of all our values. Each of these three main types of process may be further sub-classified; cognition, for example, includes not only perceiving things, but also learning things, remembering things, imagining things, inferring things, and so forth. These form distinct cognitive capacities, which in the laboratory can be tested and measured. And once again it is important to note that they are not in themselves material or physical capacities. They are capacities possessed only by those peculiar beings which possess what we call a mind.

Of all these conscious processes the one that is commonly regarded as most typical and most important is observation, that is, sense perception. Through observations carried out by the aid of our sense organs, it is maintained, all our knowledge, practical and scientific alike, is acquired. Consequently, sense perception was the earliest type of mental process to be studied experimentally; and it is the one about which we know most. The majority of the experiments have been concerned with the accuracy and limitations of the human senses. Many of them have given rise to tests in frequent practical use, as when your sight or your hearing is tested by specialists, or when engine-drivers and navigating officers are tested for colour-blindness. In the laboratory the psychologist now uses instruments of remarkable delicacy for his more precise measurements. He asks what exactly is the smallest object the average 'subject' can perceive by touch or sight, what is the faintest sound, or the smallest difference between two musical notes that he can hear, in short, what is the minimum amount of physical energy required to produce some discernible change of consciousness? One of the most striking limitations is the absence of any sense organ for perceiving electricity or magnetism. As a result few people appreciate the immense importance of the electrical and magnetic fields that surround us and are spread throughout the universe; and until quite recently the physicists themselves had not the faintest inkling of the still more powerful forces that bind elementary particles together to form an atom, and are released by the explosion of an atomic bomb. On the other hand, we are extremely sensitive to the influence of gravity and of various mechanical forces; and, from Galileo and Newton down to the middle of the 19th century, most scientists thought of the universe as simply one gigantic mechanical system.

To the evolutionary psychologist the reason for these strange limitations seems obvious. We inhabit a very unusual type of planet; most of the things which a mammal of our size, living on dry land encounters, including both food and foes, are more or less solid objects which obey the laws of gravitation and mechanics, but are almost devoid of any manifest electrical and magnetic properties. Accordingly, our senses have been evolved by natural selection to assist us in coping with this limited type of object and situation; they were not evolved to enable us to comprehend the universe as a whole. For many of the smaller mammals smell has proved to be the most useful sense; for the primates, including man, it is vision. Light, as we now know, is a form of electromagnetic radiation; but the human eye is sensitive only to an exceedingly narrow band of radiations somewhere between 10^{11} and 10^{12} kilocycles per second. Slightly slower radiations, the infra-red, may be perceived as warmth; but we have no direct knowledge whatever of the faster radiations which form 'X-rays' and 'cosmic rays', nor of the slower wireless waves now exploited by radio and television.

Is a Red Rose Really Red?

In ordinary everyday life, however, we seldom think about our actual sensations; our attention focuses on concrete things. From the construction of the eye we might imagine that what we saw was a mosaic of colours forming a complex pattern which was entirely flat, like a coloured photograph or print. But what in fact I see, or seem to see, are solid objects, existing 'out there' in three-dimensional space – a writing-desk, a table and dish with oranges, and through the window rose-trees in full bloom. Indeed, a certain school of psychologists – the so-called 'realists' – insist that the orange is really a coloured ball, that the roses are really red, and that in normal circumstances I directly perceive them as they actually are by a kind of clairvoyant insight. The physicist's account, which reduces everything to systems of atoms or elementary particles, is (so the 'realists' maintain) no more than an abstract model of the real world; and, if taken as a complete description, utterly misleading. This clairvoyance they assume to be a distinctive property of

the immaterial mind, and our physical sense organs and brain have the function, not of producing the colours we see, but of limiting our clairvoyant processes to those particular items or situations which at the moment are most likely to affect the body's welfare and survival. It would follow that the brain of the genius, who possesses rare gifts of intuition, or of the medium who claims an extra-sensory clairvoyance, is neither abnormal or paranormal, but simply a rather exceptional brain in a rather exceptional state.

The obvious difficulty which any realistic theory has to face arises from the frequency of perceptual errors and illusions. Such anomalies suggest that what seem to be direct perceptions of concrete objects are really no more than interpretations automatically imposed on our own sensations by the mind itself. Look at Figure 2 on page 2293. It is a flat hexagonal figure made up of a dozen straight lines. But you do not see it as a flat pattern; you see it as a three-dimensional cube; and oddly enough, while you watch it, it will, so to speak, abruptly turn inside out, and the point that looked nearest now seems furthest away. Here plainly the interpretation is furnished by the perceiver's mind. Or consider the four men in the centre diagram on page 2292. The one on the right looks taller than the one on the left. Yet, if you measure them, you will find they are of exactly the same height. Here the interpretation is due to the converging lines that represent the house-tops and the pavement: the illusion thus seems to result from an unconscious inference from the laws of perspective. Other illusions are due, not to unconscious logical processes, but to unconscious emotional tendencies: when over-eager or over-excited, we are apt to see or hear what we desire, expect, hope for, or dread. The effects of these unconscious influences have been noted by almost every psychologist in the past; but no one realized how frequent and how powerful they are, until Freud undertook a detailed and systematic study of their nature.

Capabilities of the Brain

For the contemporary psychologist one of the most baffling problems is to decide how far these various conscious and unconscious processes can be explained in terms of brain action. Is the brain itself capable of generating these strange phenomena, or must we after all postulate some elusive spiritual agency to account for the contents and activities of consciousness, so that the brain (in the phrase of one of the greatest brain physiologists of the 20th century) acts merely as 'an organ of liaison', linking the conscious self or mind with the physical world around us, much as a 'walkie-talkie' apparatus serves both to receive messages and to transmit replies.

Toward the end of the last century nearly every physiologist would have agreed with Huxley that consciousness is just an incidental by-product of the working of the brain, as powerless to affect his actions as the shadow of a steam-roller to guide its course or the ticking of a clock to quicken its speed. Man is no more than a complex automaton, and free will a complete illusion – a doctrine elaborated by Pavlov in his theory of 'conditioned reflexes', and later accepted by the influential school of American behaviourists: the notion of a 'ghost in the machine' they scornfully dismissed as an out-of-date superstition. It is a simple, attractive, yet highly paradoxical theory, difficult to carry over into practical life with complete consistency. In his unofficial moments no behaviourist ever treats his wife and children as mere automatic mechanisms, devoid of all responsibility for their actions.

In those early days very little was known of the detailed structure of the brain and its peculiar chemistry. It therefore seemed quite plausible to argue that the nerve cells of the brain might contain some unique chemical substance, capable of generating some equally unique type of energy, flowing up and down the nerve fibres and so producing the phenomena of consciousness. During the past 15 years or so, however, amazingly delicate techniques have become available for the investigation of the brain

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

Painting by a patient suffering from epilepsy; scientists can now excise the part of the brain responsible for producing an epileptic fit. Yet there is apparently no difference between the areas that yield consciousness and those that remain silent; it has been suggested that the brain is an apparatus 'for detecting and responding to the conscious activity of some immaterial agent', a ghost in the machine

and for the study of its chemical and electrical activities. The electron-microscope, the application of micro-electrodes and micro-pipettes, new methods of chemical analysis, and the practical skill of the anatomist and brain surgeon, have vastly increased our knowledge of the minute structure of the nervous system and of the nature of the electro-chemical processes involved. Contrary to all expectation, it now appears that the chemistry of the brain cell involves nothing that is really unique. It is just an ordinary gland-like cell with a rather high rate of synthesizing certain familiar chemical substances. Like the cells of other tissues, it is specialized for a particular purpose. Just as the function of a muscle is to contract, and thus move the jointed levers we call our bones, so the function of the nerve cell is to conduct energy: hence its peculiar elongated shape, drawn out into fibres which may be several feet long. In all living cells the electrical activity that accompanies every chemical change is intensified by any stimulus, excitation, or injury, and tends to spread throughout the cell. Thus the so-called 'nerve impulse' or 'nerve current' involves no new form of energy: it is an electrical change which travels rapidly down the membrane covering the nerve thread, and can readily be imitated by an artificial model constructed in the laboratory. The transmission of the impulse from one cell to another is effected by tiny squirts of chemical substance, similar to those secreted by certain glands. It therefore seems quite impossible to suppose that these very ordinary electrical and chemical processes could be directly responsible for producing anything so remarkable and so richly diversified as conscious experience.

Some unfortunate patients suffer from epileptic fits caused by obscure disturbances in a particular part of the brain. It is now possible to raise a portion of the skull and explore the surface of the patient's brain with an electrode until a mild fit is actually started: the part, thus found to be responsible, is then excised. The preliminary exploration can be carried out with only a local anaesthetic while the patient remains fully conscious. When certain areas of the brain are stimulated, he often reports some highly complex experience – hearing a snatch of a concert or seeing a vivid landscape; other areas never yield any conscious experience. Yet a microscopic post mortem study of human brains discloses no essential difference between those parts which do yield such experiences, the so-called 'sensory area', and those 'silent areas' which are never accompanied by consciousness. Sir John Eccles, our most eminent living brain physiologist, after years of research on the activity of the brain, considers that from its general structure it would seem to be an apparatus, not so much for generating conscious activity, but for detecting and responding to the conscious activity of some immaterial agent, which might reasonably be called a mind. It is, as he puts it, 'just such a machine as a ghost might operate'. And, taking up this cue, some biologists have argued that consciousness itself has been evolved to deal with situations too complex for a mere physiological mechanism.

What then would be the essential characteristics of such a mind? We can say little more than that it appears to be the basis of the permanent self or 'I', which serves as the subject of the verbs of knowing, feeling, and willing. Possibly during its terrestrial lifetime each individual ego or 'I' also acquires distinctive characteristics peculiar to itself – personal memories, ideals and purposes, specific types of skill, a certain temperament or character, and its own set of values. Only if that were so could we regard the abstract ego or mind as forming an individual personality. Whether or not such an individual mind or personality survives the death of its body remains a matter on which there is no decisive evidence one way or the other. The 'mind' might of course vanish completely with the dissolution of the brain, or it might be re-absorbed into some kind of universal mind. This is one of the main problems studied in psychical research. The evidence obtained seems just enough to keep the issue an open question. Certainly, no one can absolutely deny the possibility; and, in the present state of knowledge, each person's tentative opinion must depend chiefly on his philosophical or religious preconceptions. As with so many of our practical assumptions, the choice, whichever way it goes, will be a matter of faith, hope, or temperamental outlook.

(See also FREUD; JUNG.)

CYRIL BURT

Psychometry

Or object reading, the use of an object as a means of receiving extra-sensory impressions which convey information about the object and people and circumstances connected with it: its use in locating missing persons or property has attracted considerable publicity in recent years.

See OBJECT READING.

Leif Geiges

Puberty

In many societies, the occasion for rites of initiation into adult status, often following a symbolic pattern of death and rebirth; the candidates are usually isolated from the rest of the community while being taught the secrets and duties of their new life, and are subjected to painful ordeals; circumcision, clitoridectomy and other bodily mutilations are common features of these rites.

See INITIATION; MUTILATION; RITES OF PASSAGE.

Axel Poignant

Mansell

PUCK

SHAKESPEARE'S PUCK in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the best-known literary reference to this character from folklore. Shakespeare and his contemporaries were faithful to folk tradition in their treatment of Puck, and his double, Robin Goodfellow, but at the same time, the name has certainly a wider range and more various connotations. Shakespeare's Puck was a jester and personal attendant to King Oberon, in just the same way as the poet Drayton's Puck was in his fairy tale *Nymphidia*. This aspect of Puck may perhaps be a sideline to true folk tradition, but he had retained his tricksy character; he was a shape-shifter and misleader like any other hobgoblin. He could turn into a three-legged stool or a roasted crab-apple just as easily as into a filly foal or a Will-o'-the-Wisp. He laughed at mortals and teased them, but he was not incapable of compassion or kindness, and he had his own moral standards. If he delighted in mischief, he was not malevolent.

We hear of one brownie-like task performed by Shakespeare's Puck; he sometimes 'laboured in the quern', that is helped to grind malt and meal. On the other hand he played tricks with the churning. 'Puck' and 'Robin Goodfellow' seem to be names indifferently used for the same spirit, and it is difficult to differentiate between them, though on the whole rather more domestic tasks are ascribed to Robin Goodfellow.

Both are commonly used as personal names, though occasionally we have 'pucks' spoken of in the plural. The generic term is usually hobgoblin for a spirit more friendly than the sinister goblins.

Puck and Robin Goodfellow, like all of their kind, played Will-o'-the-Wisp tricks to mislead travellers. 'Pouk-ledden' is the Midland dialect term for going inexplicably astray, and we still occasionally hear personal anecdotes of puck-leading.

In a 17th century pamphlet, *The Life of Robin Goodfellow* (1628), Robin Goodfellow is described as half-human, the child of a mortal maidservant and a fairy king. His father acknowledged him, granted his wishes and gave him the power of shape-shifting. This power is characteristic of all hobgoblins, the Hedley Kow, the Picktree Brag, the Dunny, Shagfoal and so on (see FAIRIES).

The name Puck, however, has a broader base than a single person among the fairies. There are many variants of it: the Welsh pwca, the Irish Phouka, the West Country pixies, Pug, used for small devils, and closely related to it are the Scottish buckie, the Highland bucans, bug-a-boos, boggarts, bogies and bugs, many of them more frightening creatures than Puck. Robin Goodfellow has also a fair number of variants: Robin Roundcap, possibly Robin Hood, hobs, lobs, hobgoblins, Hobthrush.

The Puritans generally held Puck, Robin Goodfellow and all other hobgoblins to be plain devils, but the ordinary countryman, though he thought them mischievous and occasionally formidable, believed that they were kindly disposed to humans, and they were on the whole beloved. There seems evidence from scattered references in the drama that Robin Goodfellow was a popular character in the Mummers' Play. His costume was a calfskin, and he carried a broom, as Shakespeare's Puck did, to sweep the dust behind the door. The clearest evidence of this is in Ben Jonson's masque *Love Restored*, when Robin Goodfellow comes in with his broom and his candles and announces himself as part of the device. There are indications also in less well-known plays, such as *Fortunatus*, *Grim the Collier of Croydon* and *Wily Beguilde*. In the crude illustrations to the pamphlets both Puck and Robin Goodfellow are generally horned, with goats' feet and legs.

His part in these ceremonial plays, the widespread linguistic resemblances and the association he was held to have with the Devil, all suggest that he was a minor god or fertility spirit, who continued to hold his place in men's hearts when his origin had been forgotten.

K. M. BRIGGS

FURTHER READING: K. M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck* (Arno, 1977).

Mansell Collection

It is in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that Puck makes his most famous literary appearance ***Facing page*** **'Puck and the Fairies', by Richard Dadd** ***Right*** **Titania, under a spell cast by Puck, falls helplessly in love with Bottom the weaver, who has been partially transformed into an ass**

PUEBLO INDIANS

Pueblo life is rich in ceremonial that intrudes into almost every action of life. If the rites are performed correctly, no ill-fortune can penetrate their field of force, for ritual 'automatically sets the gods to work, automatically taps the animistic power of things'

PUEBLO INDIANS

OF ALL American Indians north of the Rio Grande, the Pueblo developed the most impressive civilization. Their culture had matured some time before the Spanish arrived to give them the name we now use (Pueblo means 'village'); and it remained at those heights in spite of later white incursions and ever-shrinking reservations. Indeed, much of the admirable culture of other south-western tribes – the Navaho especially – was borrowed from the Pueblo.

The conquistadors found the Pueblo to be agriculturally skilled, expert in crafts like pottery and weaving, and above all great builders in adobe mud and timber. They erected towering structures of many storeys – the first 'high-rise' apartment buildings in the New World. And so their houses, and the family units within them, came to be a main focal point for Pueblo life – if that sophisticated and highly intricate interweaving of activity can be said to have had a focal point.

All an outsider can do is sort out a few threads of that complex pattern, as it fans out from the centre of the individual home. For instance, Pueblo society is matrilineal, structured in terms of descent through the female line. Women hold an unusually important position in society: they own the houses, newlyweds move in with the bride's mother, and the men work in the fields – something unheard of among male-dominated Indian nations.

The unit of the village, a clutch of adobe houses, forms another pivot round which an individual's life revolves. Once there were hundreds of villages, now there are only 25 (in north-west New Mexico and north-east Arizona). The villages cluster together in accordance with tribal links – for there are five separate tribes of Pueblo Indians: Hopi, Zuni, Keres, Tiwa and Tewa.

Other social organizations cut across the family-village-tribe ties, and with these we approach the incredibly complex structure of Pueblo religion. As with many other comparatively simple societies, religious belief and practice infuses every detail of ordinary existence. When a tourist once asked a Pueblo man what his religion was, the Indian replied, 'Life'. He was not being grandiose: he merely saw no separation between religious activity and any other kind. So, while there are special religious groups cutting across the village or tribal boundaries, there are also groups with definite social functions which blend indivisibly with those of religion.

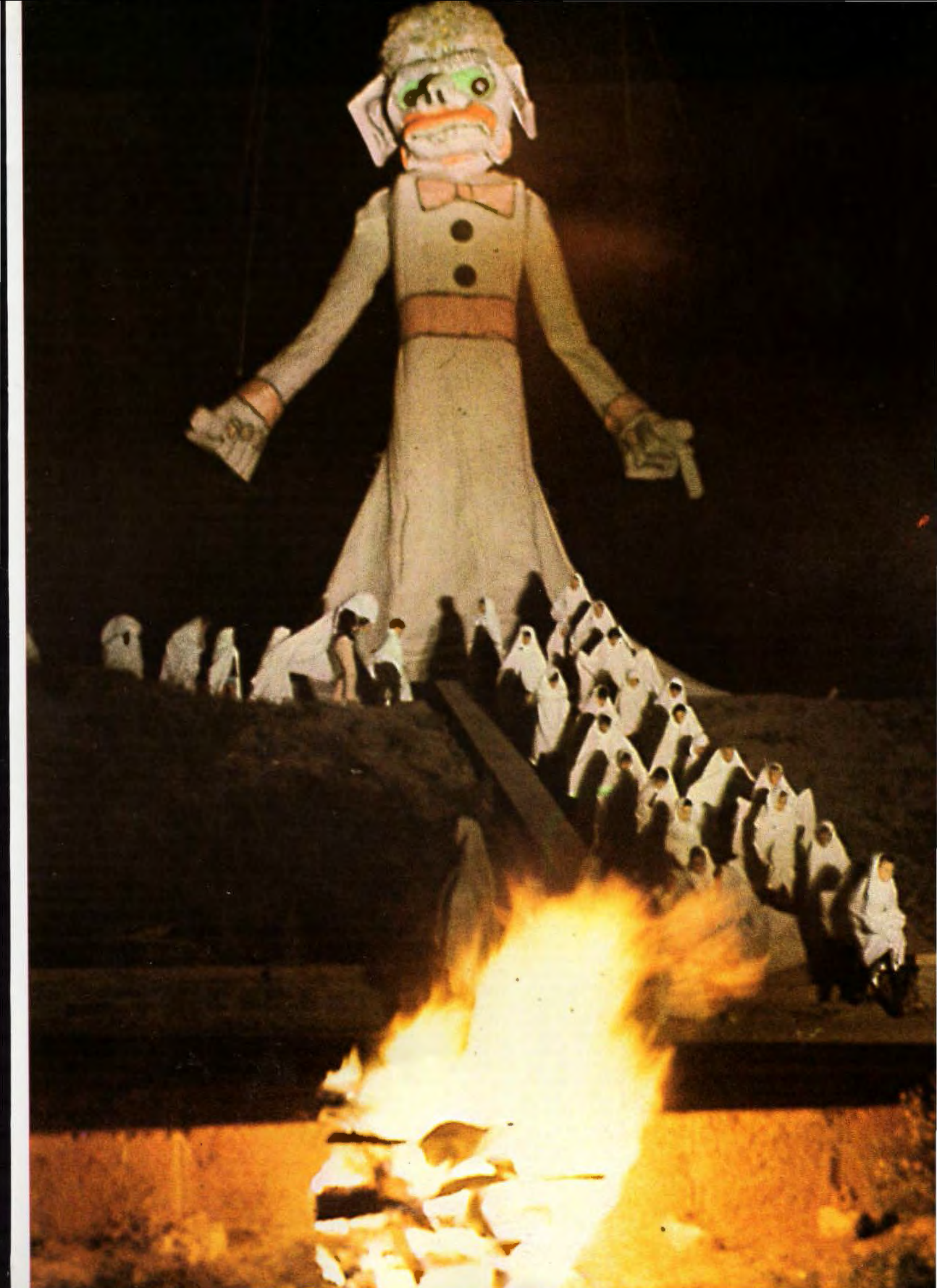
These social groups are the clans. Membership is supposedly determined by inheritance (that is, which clan one's parents belonged to) but, in fact, this common ancestry is largely symbolic: adoption is perfectly in order, even sometimes of non-Pueblo Indians. A clan will have a common name, special religious totems (animals or plants), special insignia and secret words, and specific tribal duties which mainly involve playing a traditional role in specific tribal ceremonies, separate from individual clan ceremonies.

Other rituals are looked after by several specialized religious cult groups, operating in connection with the village ceremonial centre, the *kiva* – a highly symbolic gathering place for ritual activity. Within the cults, again, there are often several 'medicine societies', smaller secret organizations even more highly specialized, with their own unique rituals, fetishes and kivas.

The cult of the *kachina* dancers comes in for much attention, probably because the gorgeous masks and symbolic kachina dolls have been more accessible to anthropologists and tourists than other more secret cult elements. The kachinas impersonate

Previous page **Plumed arms outstretched and bells jingling, the Eagle Dancers of Santa Clara perform at an annual ceremony in July; eagles were kept for a year by Pueblo families and then killed and sent to carry messages to the gods *Below* Acoma-Pueblo, 'Sky City': the Pueblo people developed the most impressive of American Indian civilizations and constructed the first 'high-rise' apartment buildings in the New World *Right* Burning the effigy of 'Old Mother Gloom' on the first night of Labour Day celebrations at Santa Fé**

Adam Woolfitt/Susan Griggs



Adam Wolfitt/Susan Griggs

Adam Wolfitt/Susan Griggs

Religious belief and practice infuses every aspect of Pueblo life; through ceremony and ritual the gods are summoned to exercise their powers on human behalf ***Above left*** **Ceremonial dress of a Pueblo at the Corn Dance Festival, at Taos, New Mexico** ***Above right*** **Children attending the Corn Dance Festival**

supernatural beings (and the impersonation can reach the level of full ritual possession); ritually disguised, they are important to many tribal ceremonies. Zuni cult members can 'dance kachina' to reinforce, say, the disease-curing cult; Hopi kachinas turn out to lead the worship at ceremonial times of year, such as at the solstices.

The Pueblo also have a delightful group of secret societies whose members are holy Fools. They perform clowning antics on ceremonial occasions, as a kind of parody of the kachinas, rich in blasphemy and violent farce. Their costumes are grotesque, their dances are involved ritual satires, they eat filth and bellow obscenities. And, it seems, they perform a much-needed function of providing comic relief from the emotional tensions that build up during a nerve-racking ceremony with all its meticulous attention to detail. They also help to purge the undeniable aggressions and tensions that must develop within the whole rigidly organized and tradition-bound Pueblo society (see FOOL).

Sun Father and Corn Mother

With all this concern for rich helpings of ceremonial, it would be expected that the ceremonies are performed almost for their own sake – not as empty rituals, certainly, yet not entirely as open-ended acts of devotion. That is, the gods and spirits do not rule, do not gaze down continually to ensure that religious and moral laws are observed. The supernatural beings seem to keep to themselves, until specifically summoned by a ceremony to exercise their power on human behalf. And if they are called properly, if the rites are performed correctly, the spirits cannot refuse to respond.

The spirits themselves occur in large quantities, often in vaguely defined and overlapping groups. The Cloud Beings are prominent, and have criss-crossing ties among various cults and societies, most obviously among the rain-makers. Other spirit groups include the Corn Maidens, the Star Spirits and Dawn Spirits, the rain-bringing Lightning (or Storm) gods who are related to the Cloud Beings.

Out of this welter of supernaturals crowded into the Pueblo environment, a few figures can be separated out as important single deities. Sun Father or Sun Old Man seems to be paramount among the Zuni; Moon and Morning Star are both High Gods (Moon is female to some Pueblo, but male to Hopi and Tewa); Corn Mother holds a dominant position among the Keres. The archetypal Twin Heroes appear among the Zuni as War Brothers, giving power to warrior societies and featuring in hero and trickster myths. Their grandmother, Spider Old Woman, is a powerful deity although she is identified with an actual creature; her power flows towards war, but in myth she is a benevolent healer and intercessor. The ubiquitous trickster Coyote also appears as an intercessor, aiding human development and, like Prometheus, bringing fire. Water Serpent, another individual animal god, is connected with flood and other watery disasters, and also in myth with fertility and sexuality.

The Indians have their share of animistic belief, attributing supernatural power to anything and everything. Stones, mountains, rivers and the like have power; they either have humanized spirits associated with them, or are 'containers' of magical power that can be tapped.

Ancestral worship, or something very like it, occurs as well: the deceased chiefs of cults and medicine societies join the Cloud People and take on supernatural aspects; enemy dead killed in war and scalped are transformed (by a scalp ceremony) into rain-making spirits; for the Hopi, just about all the tribe's dead become Cloud People. Sometimes it is said that wicked Indians will undergo punishment after death: dead witches become mere smoke, without substance, unable to join the Cloud People.

Both ghosts and witches are taken seriously by the Pueblo. Ghosts return if burial rituals are neglected, and their return (even in dreams) brings ill-fortune and omens of death. Sometimes a neglected ghost who has been sufficiently angered will attack the living; and witches too attack ordinary folk, bringing disease or death upon them. Then the curing societies

(or often the warrior societies, who police the Pueblo) go into action to counteract the malediction.

Many rituals are designed to prevent hauntings and witchery, or as curatives if the malefics get past the magical barriers. But again the intrinsic power of the ceremonial magic is apparent. If the rites are performed correctly, no kind of ill-fortune, natural or supernatural, can penetrate their force field. So we come back to the idea of ceremonial that automatically sets the gods to work, automatically taps the animistic power of things, automatically puts up the witch or ghost repellents.

Enormous numbers of ceremonies are attached to household affairs: building the house, acquiring new members of the family, receiving visitors. Whole villages turn out to perform rituals for collective activities – planting, harvesting, hunting, kiva building, road-making. Society chiefs are ceremonially installed and new members ceremonially initiated. Weather control of various kinds, and not only rain-making, demands ceremony; so do requests for better crops, more domestic animals, more babies, more prosperity. Kachina dances occur as parts of other ceremonies, or erupt on their own as special cult or clan rites.

Ritual magic is also projected into many everyday objects. Corn and corn meal, pollen, tobacco, stones and shells can be thus transformed, often as offerings to gods. Ashes protect against witchcraft, as do arrow-heads. Special beads and pigments have great power, and many of these things are used to enhance the power of the splendidly decorated prayer sticks that serve as offerings, or bearers of ritual addresses to the gods. Prayer feathers in particular may decorate the sticks, but can be used alone, perhaps worn in the hair. The sticks are carried by ritual dancers, by travellers, by cult chiefs, or are planted in sacred places.

The Shalako Festival

Pueblo ceremonial also employs powerful sticks of office, as rich in magic as a medieval monarch's sceptre. The dolls of the kachina dancers are images of someone's desire (like a figurine of a baby for a barren woman): the positive side of the black witch's wax image. Ears of corn with unusual shapes are highly-prized fetishes that accompany the dead, guard the newborn, protect cult initiates and more. Unusual stones or shells may be kept for generations as cult fetishes: petrified wood for a Keres warrior society, abalone shell for a Zuni kachina society. Complicated masks are vital in most grand ceremonials, especially for the kachina impersonation of spirits.

This is a small selection of the artefacts of Pueblo ceremonial. Still, all these objects and materials are merely, as it were, stage properties. Equally vital within a ceremony is the intricate stage management and

Kachina dancers impersonate supernatural beings in full ceremonial disguise; kachina dolls, which have been carved from cottonwood, are given to children in order to help them recognize their own tribal gods

C. M. Dixon

production of the various activities. One example is the fantastically complex and lengthy ceremonial festival of the Zuni, called 'Shalako'.

It is a hunt ceremony, relating to war, fertility and longevity as well. It also has something in common with the European All Souls ceremony for the dead. It begins soon after the winter solstice, when the paramount chiefs select the organizers and main participants (the impersonators). These people go immediately into rehearsal which, accompanied by regular ritual offerings and the like, goes on for months. The actors meet nightly, for arduous practice, throughout that period.

By early October the pace increases. Prayer sticks have been planted regularly during the intervening time, with accompanying song and ritual. Now the impersonators receive a string tied with 49 knots, one to be untied every morning. When the 40th knot is freed, the holy Fools (*koyemshi*) appear; masked, painted, joking; they pass through a ritual involving corn meal, then go into an eight-day purificatory retreat. More small-scale rituals, preparation of sacred objects and so on fill those days; fires are lit on the fourth day and lengthy prayer songs intoned. On the eighth day the masked Shalako impersonators and the local kachina dancers go into action, visiting specified houses (usually new ones, chosen for dedication) and 'blessing' them with ritual involving meal, seeds and prayer sticks.

The owners of the houses 'entertain' the kachina, and listen to a litany chant that lasts for about six hours; and the Shalako impersonators offer their own two-hour chant. A feast follows, and offerings to the dead, who are now believed to have returned, are made. The kachina then dance for the rest of the night (and sometimes the night's entertaining also includes heavy drinking and uninhibited sex). The koyemshi make the rounds of the houses, until at dawn the kachina are washed and fed and plied with gifts, and the last knot of the tally string is ceremonially untied – on a house roof, facing the sunrise.

Then the Shalako impersonators gather to race over the fields to a prepared place where they must gather up prayer sticks. They are pursued by other men: if a Shalako falls while running, ill-fortune accompanies the rite, and must later be driven out by an exorcizing flagellation. The pursuers try to strike the runners, symbolic of a hunter's kill, magically ensuring successful hunting all year. For the rest of that day, the Koyemshi move from roof to roof of the ceremonial houses, never touching the ground.

The four days that follow are filled with dancing: the kiva groups dance, the koyemshi cavort, the kachina exhaust themselves. On the last night of dancing, the koyemshi eat a ritual meal, then begin a sleepless fast (which, if broken, brings disaster to next year's crops). The next morning they play a central role in an involved ceremony where dancing interweaves with special sprinkling of meal and burial of sacred objects. At the end the Koyemshi, naked, are cleansed of their body paint by the women of the ceremonial houses, and are given gifts.

On the last day of the Shalako ceremony, all the dance groups perform exceedingly complex dances in strict accordance with tradition. Then many sacred objects including the ceremonial prayer sticks are taken (usually by the koyemshi) to the river, where they are consecrated for the dead.

In this brief space it has been possible only to give a generalized and simplified notion of the main constituents to be found in the social-ceremonial structure of the Pueblo Indians. Innumerable variations exist, from town to town and from tribe to tribe. This is not a full account, or anything like one, but more like an arch or two out of a Gothic cathedral, or a few patterned shapes from the Bayeux Tapestry. They can offer only an oblique glimmering of the richness, the density, the unimaginable intricacy, and the superbly harmonized unity of the whole. (See also TOTEM.)

DOUGLAS HILL.

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Stone tool rock-carving from New Mexico dated from between 900 to 1400 AD; only 25 Pueblo villages, clustered in tribal groups, remain from the hundreds that once existed

Adam Wolfitt/Susan Griggs

Keystone

Punch and Judy
Traditional puppet-show; Punch, with humped back, hooked nose and nightcap, is a mischievous bully who kills his baby, beats Judy, his wife, to death and tricks the policeman, the hangman, a dog, Death, the Devil and other characters; Punch is an abbreviation of Punchinello, a character in 17th century Italian comedy.

The ancient tombs of Westminster Abbey were originally placed there in the belief that the prayers of the living helped the dead to be purged of sin in purgatory

PURGATORY

THAT THE SANCTIONS for unjust and immoral conduct which can be imposed in this life are inadequate might occur to any thinking man. What form the penalties of another life might take would be a matter for guesswork, but that there should be some penalty seems reasonable to many who believe in the immortality of the soul (see IMMORTALITY) and who accept purgatory as a condition or place of spiritual cleansing for the dead. That there should be a restoration of the human soul to a lost integrity, where that is possible, also seems reasonable. In the *Aeneid* Virgil pictured a threefold purgation of souls that were too earthy, the elements of fire, water and air being called upon to do the work; some were seared with fire, others hung out as on a clothes-line to suffer the action of the air, and a third sort churned in a vast whirlpool. Virgil was governed by the Stoic idea that this process lasted for 1000 years and that then the life of the world began anew.

The Pythagoreans, with whose views Virgil was not unfamiliar, held that the soul at death passed upwards through the air, then through the waters above the air and finally through the atmosphere warmed by the sun, until it was deposited in the Isles of the Blest. This passage through air, water and solar radiation was looked upon as the purgation of the soul. Once in the Isles of the Blest it might be left for a time and then escorted to a still higher Elysium, or alternatively it might be sent down to join another body on earth (see REINCARNATION). The Isles of the Blest were located in the moon and disembarkation there was considered to be endangered by certain 'customs officers' who might rob the soul of its assets. Ritual acts

C. M. Dixon

There are traces in pre-Christian pagan belief of 'a condition or place of spiritual cleansing for the dead'; at the Roman Catholic Xaghra Shrine, Malta, a statue flanked by torches over the archway symbolizes purgatory

performed while on earth might be a guarantee that the soul would escape harm from these searchers.

Towards the end of Old Testament times, Jewish belief was centred on prayer and sacrifice for the dead in such cases where hope for the remission of their sins might be entertained. The famous incident of Judas Maccabeus set the pattern; after a victory he had found that some of his dead warriors had pagan amulets under their tunics. They had died nobly for the liberty of their Jewish faith, but they had also offended God by superstition or else by greed. Judas directed that sacrifice should be offered for them at Jerusalem that they might be set free from their sins (2 Maccabees, chapter 12). The book of Enoch (22.12) holds out a prospect that sinners who are themselves sinned against will not stay for ever in Gehenna with those sinners who have no such asset.

The coming of Christianity meant that the two books of Maccabees were taken over as part of the scriptures of the Church and the incident there reported was valued as precedent. Prayer for the dead (as distinct from prayer to those who had died by martyrdom) was a Christian practice from the beginning. The mention of 'the house of Onesiphorus' (2 Timothy, chapter 1) in a context where the past good works of its head are commemorated, implies that this Onesiphorus was already dead and is being commended to mercy. Inscriptions of the 2nd century ask the passer-by to intercede for the soul of the dead person who is named.

St Paul himself once indicated that he held the same belief. In 1 Corinthians (chapter 3) he speaks of the varying work of evangelists; some are good builders, others run up a shack with anything that is to hand. When a fire sweeps through the town, the good building of stone will stand, but the shack will burn, and its occupant may only just manage to get out, 'being saved as it were through the fire'. The careful evangelist is rewarded; the careless one is saved, but only just. This is an allegory of heaven and purgatory, though not a direct formal pronouncement of belief. The saying in the gospel of St Luke (12.59) about the officer of the law putting in ward the evil-doer and keeping him there till he pay the last farthing was likewise taken as an indirect way of describing the fate after death of the soul whose sin was not irremediable.

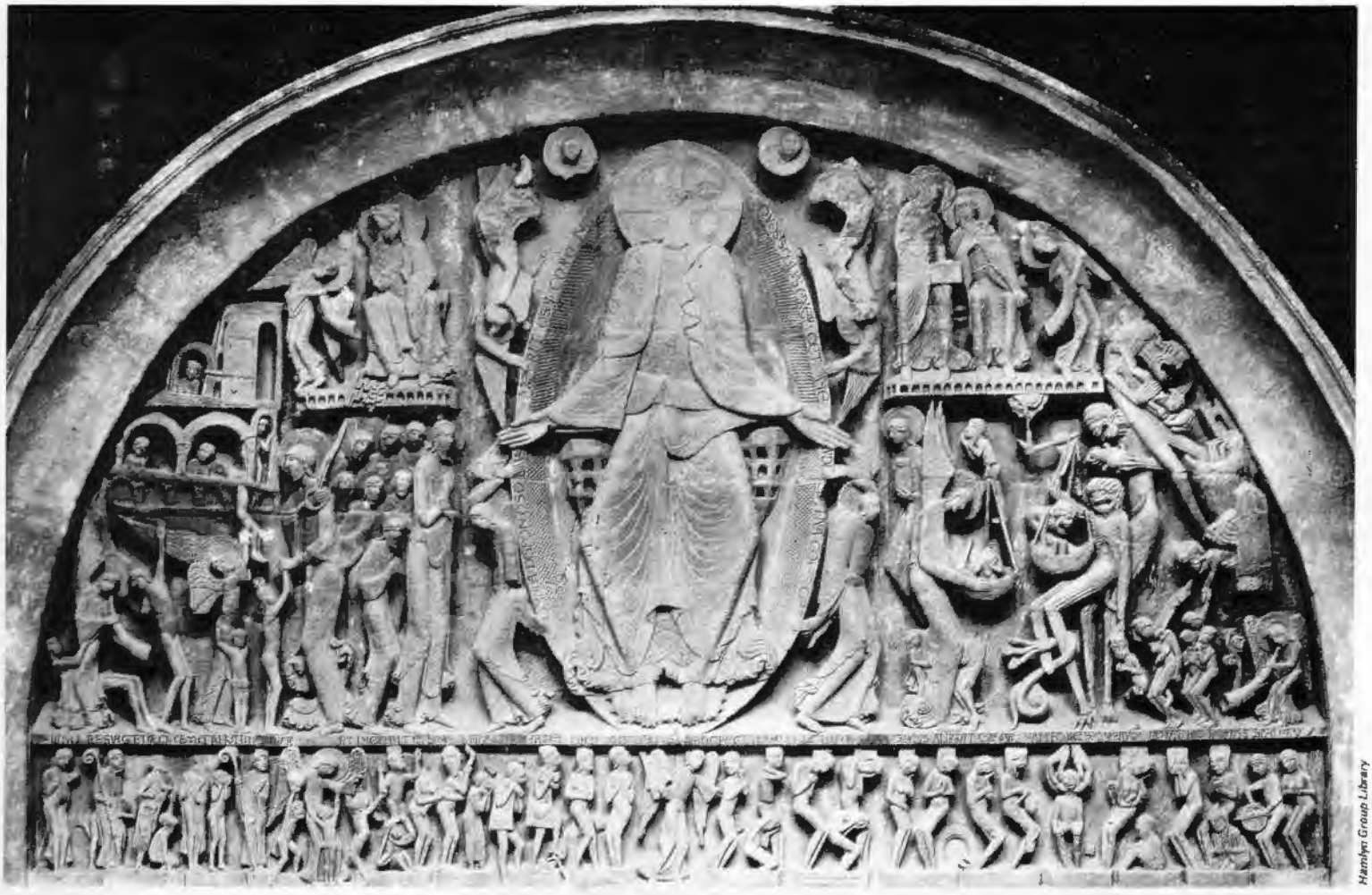
British Museum/Chris Barker

The Keys of Pardon

While urging prayer for the dead, the Church was also teaching that there were certain capital sins which, if they were not forgiven in this world, could never be pardoned. Thus the category of what came to be called venial sins (those which could be pardoned) was established, and the conclusion was reached that it was these which the living by their prayers could cause to be remitted for their dead friends. Not without a purpose did the Church at Rome substitute a feast of the *Cathedra* of St Peter for the pagan festival of the *cara cognatio* on 22 February. On that day pagan Roman families celebrated the memory of their departed relatives by setting out food for their spirits. Christians were reminded by the Petrine feast that the keys of pardon had been assumed by St Peter when he was set to guard the gates of heaven.

Infiltrations of pagan practice troubled the Christian Church from time to time, and a Gallican Church council at Tours in 567 had to forbid the practice of putting out food for the spirits of the dead on this feast. Origen included in his writings the figures of the evil 'customs officials' who wait on the boundary of the world to despoil the dead of their hard-won merits. Origen also pictured Christ as standing like another John the Baptist by the side of a river of fire, baptizing in fire those who came forward to cross the river. In a Christian poem by Commodian (c 250 AD) the myth is introduced of the lost tribes of Israel living in tranquillity across the river of Persia, with toil and death but with no disease and no sin, awaiting the end of the world.

One notable difference between Christian practice and other religions was that monarchs and other famous men sought to be buried within Christian churches, so that they might benefit after death from their being remembered by the priests praying at the altars. The Emperor Constantine set this fashion in 337, soon after the building of the first great basilicas; and the tombs in Westminster Abbey are originally due to the same motive. The



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prayers in the liturgy, as witnessed by the oldest of the Sacramentaries, correspond with this idea, asking for 'purgation after death' for the departed faithful. The nature of this purgation was much debated.

The institution of a system of public penance by the Church was more exactly carried out in the West, with its juridical background of Roman law, than in the East. The Western belief that a penitent who was admitted to Communion on his death-bed could work off the remainder of his public penance in purgatory was not so clearly understood in the East. At the Council of Florence (1439) the Greeks readily accepted the lawfulness of praying for the dead. After discussion they also agreed on a formulation of the expiatory character of purgatory for penitents who had not carried out their full penance. Soon after this the Western mystic St Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510) gave a new direction to theological thought by her account of her mystic experiences. She claimed that those in purgatory rejoiced at their growing awareness of the removal of all obstacles to their future union with God. Having passed beyond their period of free will they could no longer sin, and hence could not grudge the happiness of those who departed from purgatory before themselves; neither could they gloat over the thought of leaving before others, as in an earthly prison.

The *Purgatorio* of Dante (see DANTE) is a seven-storey mountain where the expiation goes on of what was due to the seven capital sins which a man may have repented

The souls of those who were not already damned beyond redemption went to purgatory; there expiation was made for past sins in the hope of acquittal at the Last Judgement *Above* 12th century relief of the Last Judgement from Autun Cathedral *Left* Illustration to Dante's *Purgatorio* by Gustave Doré: Dante bows before the angel who pilots dead souls to purgatory

Circle of Envy

My master said: 'This circle castigates
The sin of envy . . .'

I do not think that there exists on earth
Even at the present day, a man so hard
That he would not be moved by what I saw.
For when I had drawn near enough to them
So that their actions were made clear to me,
I grieved so, that the tears sprang from my eyes.
Their clothing seemed to be of coarsest
haircloth;
One leaned upon the shoulder of another,
And all of them were leaning on the bank.
Thus do the blind who beg their daily bread
Take station in the churches of indulgence . . .
And as the sun doth not avail the blind,
So to those spirits whom I have described,
The light of heaven hath here denied its
blessing:
For through their eyelids runs an iron wire,
Sewing them shut – as it is often done
To a wild falconet, to keep him quiet.
It seemed to me that I was doing wrong
To stare at others, while unseen myself . . .

Dante *Purgatorio* (trans. L. G. White)

of before death. Dante uses purgatory to read a lesson to those still alive who incline to the capital vices, very much as Chaucer's Wife of Bath said of her dead husband: 'On earth, I was his Purgatory'. St Patrick's Purgatory, the Irish penitential sanctuary on Lough Derg, became famous before Dante's time and indeed influenced him. The short and sharp penance done there was held to mitigate enormously what might await the sinner in the next life. The other great work of literature inspired by purgatory, Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, has through Elgar's music brought the idea of purgatory once more into the awareness of the English-speaking world from which it had so largely faded at the Reformation. The medieval painting of a weighing of souls, still to be seen in the church at Catherington in Hampshire, may owe its form to the classical picture of Hermes weighing Achilles against Memnon, but here the hand of the Virgin Mary has adjusted the arm of the balance to the advantage of the soul that is being weighed against his sins. There is a mildness about Christianity which paganism did not dare to envisage.

(See also HELL; JUDGEMENT.)

J. H. CREHAN

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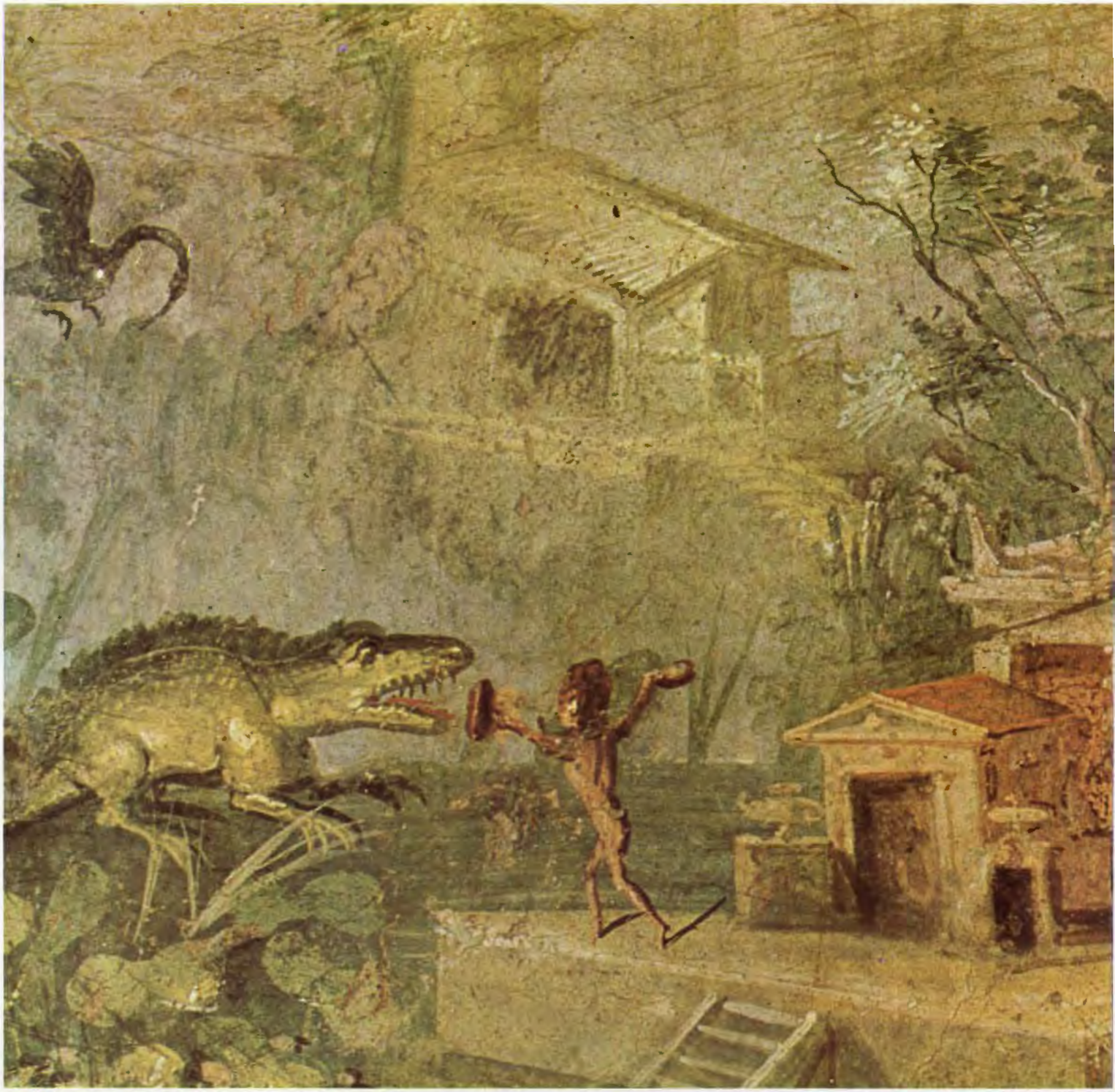


The pygmies have been described as 'the happiest people on earth'; untroubled by superstitious fears they live harmoniously, devoting their energies to the practical struggle for survival

PYGMIES

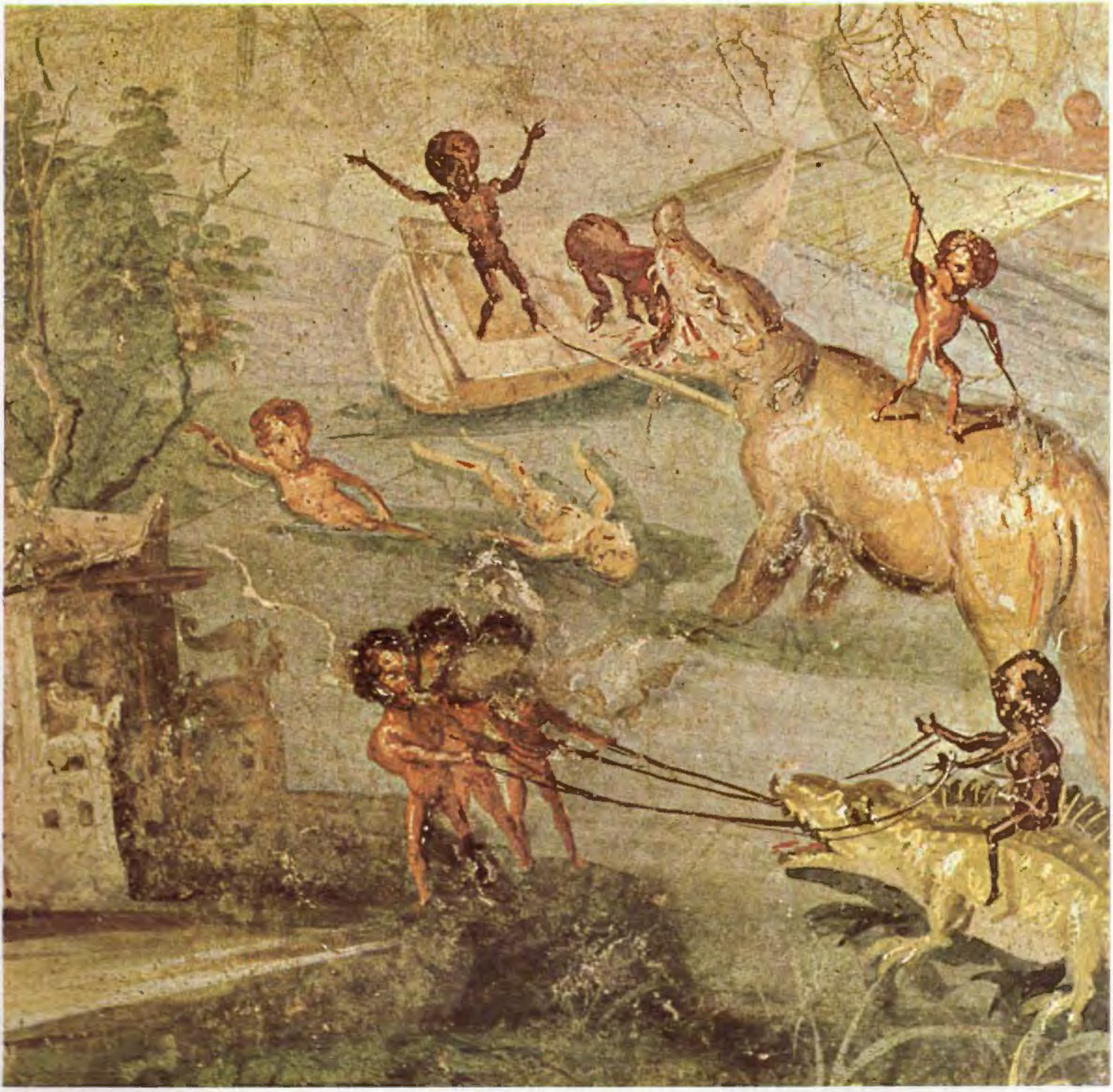
BELONGING to the smallest as well as one of the most primitive races of men, the pygmies are seldom taller than 4 feet 8 inches; they are primarily forest dwellers who survive by hunting and root-gathering. They have no settled communities, no agriculture, and cannot read or write.

The most typical of these little people are the Bambuti who inhabit the Ituri region of the eastern Congo. Here the trees grow to a height of 150 feet and are so densely packed together that they form a roof of leaves thick enough to prevent the tropical rains from reaching the forest floor. Such a forest knows only twilight by day and inky blackness by night. The silence is profound, for the animals that live in this primeval world move about stealthily, hunting and being hunted.

Deep within the Ituri forests live an estimated 35,000 pygmies in small family groups, setting up temporary shelters and always on the move in search of food. Survival, where there are none of the technical aids known to civilized men, depends on instinct. And because these African dwarfs have been so isolated from the outside world, they can truly be called 'dawn men'.

An integral part of their surroundings like other forest creatures, the pygmies have never 'invented' those gods who are supposed to control human destiny. They do not believe, for instance, in witches, evil spirits, or those taboos which are so characteristic of other African pagans.

They are not, however, devoid of some sense of the supernatural. They appear to recognize the existence of a supreme deity who is variously called Mungu and Nokunzi, although they can only describe him as another man, bigger and stronger than they are, but not particularly frightening since he is both good and bad, like any other man. He can, of course, make thunder



G. Tomsich/Spectrum

The pygmies are intrepid hunters and this early Italian mural showing pygmies hunting wild animals is not completely fanciful

and lightning, but pygmies are not alarmed by these phenomena any more than they are by the screaming of chimpanzees or the trumpeting of elephants.

The reason for these little men's absence of fear is their complete familiarity with their surroundings. They accept the dangers of the forest as they accept its protection. Living in the half-light of the almost silent world of giant trees, they have become accustomed to the mysterious, and rarely lose their nerve when something unexpected happens. To them, a sudden movement in the undergrowth does not mean the presence of a ghost, but perhaps a snake slithering across the forest floor, in which case a pygmy will dive into the leafy mould and try to catch the reptile for food.

His profound knowledge of even those creatures which civilized men regard as either dangerous or repulsive, leaves him with little time for fears or superstitions. If, while out hunting, a group of pygmies spot a python hanging from a tree, they do not beat a hasty retreat, but advance stealthily, drag the snake to the ground, drive one stake through its head, another through its body, and then beat it to death. The same evening the python will feed several families. And this snake, which is worshipped as sacred by certain West African tribes, is merely another source of food to the pygmies.

When left to themselves in the depths of the forests the pygmies are too busy staying alive to acquire anything resembling an organized religion. Even death for them is only another event in their day-to-day existence, and though they grieve for the loss of a loved one, they do not attach any spiritual significance to dying, and do not blame the gods or the malevolence of witches. They do not believe, that is, in an afterlife, but that death ends everything.

The pygmy's indifference to religious ideas undoubtedly arises from the simplicity as well as the rigours of a life which leaves him very little time for reflection. Everything about existence is, for him, a question of survival. And because women are his equals

John Moss

Patellani, Milan

The pygmy's hard struggle for survival leaves little time for religious activities *Above* A group of pygmies dence in a jungle clearing *Left* Pygmies armed with their principal weapon, the bow and arrow *Below* Pygmy hunter from the Central African Republic *Right* Attic vase in the form of a pygmy carrying e dead crane; classical legend tells of cranes making an annual attack on a dwarfish race of men

John Moss

in this endless struggle, men do not dominate women as in other primitive societies.

The pygmy is usually monogamous, not because there is a law against having several wives, but because in a balanced economy one wife is enough. In fact, the pygmy cannot get a wife at all unless he provides, in exchange, a woman from his own family to take the place of the girl he is taking away from her parents. Marriage is not a question of buying a wife, as in other Negro societies, but a bargain based on 'head for head'. The pygmy only gets a wife if he can offer a sister or near relative as compensation for depriving the parents of a food-gatherer and house-builder.

Nor are these little forest-dwellers troubled by complicated sexual taboos. Pygmy girls, when they come of age with their first menstruation, are not rigorously separated from the community, since blood is not regarded as an ill-omen. A girl's first period is merely thought to be the result of sexual intercourse, which is not considered reprehensible. On the contrary, this easy-going attitude gives unmarried girls the opportunity to name the boy they fancy as a prospective husband; and the coming of age is, therefore, a gay time for the girl herself, for her friends, and for the boys. The girls have considerable freedom in choosing their future husbands; and while they are permitted a certain promiscuity before marriage, they are expected to be faithful once they are wed. If a child is born out of wedlock, it belongs to the mother and her family group and will be accepted without complications. An anthropologist who admired a pygmy baby and asked who was the lucky father was told quite simply by a young man, 'We are all its father.'

One of the rare taboos pygmies tend to observe is for mothers-in-law and sons-in-law to avoid each other as much as possible. The same restriction applies to fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law. No doubt this custom is related to the universal abhorrence of incest among primitive people.

In Peace and Love

This absence of taboos, superstitions and complex tribal relationships adds up to one of the most simple and, at the same time, harmonious societies in the world. The pygmies do not have national, let alone racial, problems, since they live in small clans, or family groups, and live in peace and co-operation among each other. Serious quarrels and disorders are rare. The likeliest cause of dissension is between husband and wife if the former proves to be a poor provider. In such a case, the wife might refuse to cook for her spouse or sleep with him, and will even beat him.

Nobody, including the old and sick, needs go hungry, since all food is shared and, in general, all possessions, such as they are, are held in common. The clans exist as an integral unit, with each member of them equal to the other. There is not even a chief as in tribal societies.

Yet there are several serious crimes in the pygmy code. One is adultery, another theft, and a third violence on the part of children towards their parents. But there are no set punishments for misdemeanours, beyond the disapproval of the clan.

All these customs and practices, it should be noted, are characteristic of those pygmies who have managed to remain more or less isolated from the world beyond the frontiers of their forest homeland. But for hundreds of years now, groups of these little people have been in contact with the Negro tribes who inhabit the river valleys of the eastern Congo and Ruanda. Their contacts with white men, on the other hand, have been very infrequent, though missionaries have made some attempts to convert them to Christianity.

But where the pygmies have come into contact with Negroes, visiting the black men's villages for trading and sometimes staying long enough to become servants, they have adopted some of the Africans' traditional beliefs in magic, witchcraft and various forms of fetishism.

Typical is their acceptance of the ritual of circumcision, which is alien to the pygmy culture, but which these little people accept in order to prove that they are equal to their big black overlords. Circumcision among nearly all Negro tribes is a religious or magical cult practice, symbolic of a boy's coming of age, entitling him to be a warrior, to marry, set up house, and to have his say at tribal councils.

But, as we have seen, the pygmies are not really interested in any of these dominant male activities and only submit themselves to the operation out of pride. Their boys offer

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

Nilotic mosaic showing pygmies on the Nile; classical writers believed that pygmies were a race of dwarfs somewhere in Ethiopia

themselves for the ceremony under the same rigorous conditions as the young Negroes. They suffer the same physical and mental tortures which always accompany this ritual. They are separated from their families, placed in special camps, deprived of food, forced to dance in crouched positions, and even beaten by their elders. After the period of initiation, they are taken to a sacred grove where they are cut. The operation is performed by a witch-doctor, and the boy is required to limp towards a log on which his companions sit. The mutilated penis is wrapped in a leaf packed with salt for hygenic as well as psychological reasons.

Sometimes the boys are danced to by witch-doctors daubed in white clay and covered with bundles of raffia, and they are sometimes made to dance themselves. In all this, a pygmy boy will make a special effort to suppress his emotions so as to prove that his people are the equal of Negroes, for while these little people are unconscious of race, they are aware of the deep difference between themselves and the rest of the world.

To the extent that they have left their forest sanctuaries to trade with and work for the more advanced Negroes, they have acquired some of the beliefs and taboos of their masters and have become conscious of the power of magic, both black and white. Yet there are still no genuine witch-doctors among them, nor do they blame sudden deaths on witches.

They remain, in fact, extremely vague in their concept of God and all those divinities, good and bad, which more sophisticated people worship or fear. Dr Paul Schebesta, who lived with them, described them as 'the happiest people on earth', even though they have no organized religion and know nothing of the blessings of modern civilization.

JAMES WELLARD

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PYRAMIDOLOGY

PYRAMIDOLOGY means the attempt to prove a theory first proposed by John Taylor in 1859, and developed by the Astronomer Royal, Charles Piazzi Smyth, in 1864. This theory maintained that the Pyramid of Cheops (the 'Great Pyramid') was built to express a knowledge of the mathematical irrational Pi; secondly, that its measurements embodied a totality of geodesic and astronomic knowledge; and thirdly, that these measurements also embodied in cipher form prophesies relating to the events that would later form the body of the Old Testament, as well as the complete future history of Christendom up to and including the Second Coming of Christ. The fourth and final proposition was that the Great Pyramid was unique among the monuments of Egypt in that it was not constructed by the ancient Egyptians but, under divine inspiration, by a race of invaders, of whom the biblical Israelites and latter day Anglo-Saxons were the descendants.

Though the pyramids of Egypt had been a subject for speculation since the time of Herodotus in the 5th century BC, pyramidology proper was an essentially Victorian phenomenon and can only be understood in reference to its time. Buonaparte's expedition to Egypt had opened the eyes of the West to the magnitude of the civilization of ancient Egypt. The French archeologist Jean Champollion (1790–1832) succeeded in deciphering the Rosetta stone, giving access to the meanings of the hieroglyphs, and the new field of Egyptology was born.

The intellectual world at this time was split into two rough but distinct camps. On the one side the scientists and academicians; inheritors of the beliefs of the 'Enlightenment', violently anti-religious and atheistic, convinced that the secrets of the universe would shortly yield to a mechanistic Newtonian explanation, and firm in the belief that man had progressed

One of the arguments used to support the belief that the Great Pyramid was built with supernormal knowledge is that it stands on the line between the North Pole and the South which crosses the greatest amount of land

Peter Castle/Camera Press London

gradually but inexorably from savage or animal beginnings to a state of civilization.

The religious camp formed the opposition; equally violent in its belief, perhaps more numerous, but disorganized, and adhering to a form of fundamentalism, the belief in the literal truth of the Bible. A strong, specifically English and American subgroup of this movement were British Israelites (or Anglo-Israelites), believing that the Anglo-Saxon race was descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel (see LOST TRIBES), and that the specific Anglo-Saxon mission was to show the rest of the world the way into the New Kingdom upon the impending Second Coming of Christ.

In the face of accumulating geological, archeological and anthropological evidence, the fundamentalist belief in the divine creation of man in about the year 4000 BC was difficult to defend. On every front, the discoveries of science seemed to support a materialistic conception of the universe; and those that did not were ignored or, as with Darwin's theory of evolution, turned into apparent support by tacit, unanimous subterfuge.

The fundamentalists, in their way, were as materialistic as their opponents, and required some material 'scientific' proof in order to support their views. The Great Pyramid of Giza provided an admirable cornerstone upon which to build. The magnitude of this structure, its rigorous geometry, the fact that it was oriented precisely to the cardinal points of the compass, and sited to within minutes of the 30th degree of latitude; that double its height divided into the length of its perimeter gave a close approximation to the value of Pi, that amazing technical expertise had gone into the levelling of the plateau upon which it stood, and into the joining of its huge blocks of stone; all this seemed to the fundamentalists to be evidence that a mighty civilization had existed, possessed of advanced science and divine knowledge.

However, since they were reviled in the scriptures as representing all that was unholy, and shown by the new translations to have been worshippers of dog-headed gods and crocodiles, the builders of the Great Pyramid could not have been Egyptian. Charles Piazzi Smyth wrote, in *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid*: 'In speaking of anything in this book as simply *sacred*, I mean, to the best of my poor and limited ability, to distinguish such things as sacred to the God of Israel, i.e., to the one and only true God who liveth for ever and ever, and I have no respect of the same kind, nor similar comprehensive word, for anything attributed to the Gods of Egypt, Assyria or Babylon . . .'

It was in this climate that pyramidology was born. It was virtually complete at its inception in John Taylor's book, *The Great Pyramid; Why was it built? And Who Built it?* Among the many intrigued by this work was Charles Piazzi Smyth who, on Taylor's insistence, travelled to Egypt to take rigorously scientific measurements, no mean task at that time; and it was Smyth's book, *Life and Work at the Great Pyramid* which, with the apparent authority of science upon it, struck the public imagination.

The Pyramid Inch

Smyth's great contribution to pyramidology was the 'pyramid inch', corresponding to 1.001 English inches (the other .001 having been lost over the course of history), upon which all subsequent pyramidological prophecy was based. The subject of Egyptian weights and measures was in any event a complex one. The ancient Egyptians employed a variety of different cubits, spans, palms and digits which obeyed no discernible single standard. Thus it was in no way disturbing that no known Egyptian measure corresponded to Smyth's 'pyramid inch'; it was even used as necessary evidence to support the contention that the Great Pyramid, alone among the ruins of Egypt, had been constructed by a divinely-inspired non-Egyptian race. In 1865 another early pyramidologist, Robert Menzies, put forward the idea that prophecies and biblical history were inscribed into the Pyramid in the ratio of one pyramid inch per solar year, and pyramidology was complete.

By taking measurements of the perimeter, sides, outer courses of masonry, inner chambers, galleries and corridors, by dividing the result by certain numbers held to be significant in the construction of the pyramid, and by relating the results to biblical chronology and to the history of Christianity, exact correspondences were claimed to exist. By the same token, an understanding of the cipher was supposed to permit the making of prophecies up to the Second Coming which, following the pyramid-inch-per-year theory up the Grand Gallery, was clearly close at hand. Argument arose, however, over the method of dating; one faction maintained that the birth of Christ should stand at the starting point, so placing the Second Coming in 1911, while others decided that the starting point should correspond to the Resurrection, pushing the Second Coming back to 1936. Pyramidologists claimed that such events as the accession of the first Labour Government to power, and the Papal Bull inviting all Catholics to Rome to attend Holy Year (1924), were foretold by the divinely-inspired Pyramid builders and duly inscribed into the measurements of the Grand Gallery. Though a society of pyramidologists still exists, the movement appears to have lost most of its popular appeal.

Although orthodox authorities insist that there is nothing mysterious whatever about the pyramids, it remains possible to suggest that there is a mystery, and that it has not yet been solved. According to I. E. S. Edwards, Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum, 'The true pyramid was merely a representation in stone of the sun's rays shining to earth through a gap in the clouds, and by its possession the king could transport himself at will to the celestial kingdom of the sun god.' But set against the statement that 'Egypt lies in an almost rainless area, where the temperature is high by day and sinks quickly at night in consequence of rapid radiation under the cloudless sky' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*), this conclusion seems open to question. Since the celestial kingdom of the sun god was visible most of the time, to the non-specialist it may seem odd that the Egyptians should expend such considerable time and effort emulating a phenomenon they seldom, if ever, saw.

J. A. WEST

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Divine Plan of the Ages

Much and rapid travelling and unprecedented increase of knowledge are outstanding characteristics of our present day. We are therefore in 'the time of the end,' and since 1914 the Old Order is being broken up. Accordingly, the due time has come when God said He would reveal the future 'times and seasons' of His plan, hitherto concealed throughout all ages. Consequently, the major matters in the Book of Daniel and other prophetic Books of the Bible have been revealed right on time, and in addition, like any wise architect, God has disclosed where His drawings are. Moreover, these plans are portrayed on better material than paper, namely, in stone, within the largest and most substantial building in the World, the Great Pyramid of Giza – in what seems to be a most unlikely place, camouflaged and concealed, ostensibly in a pharaoh's pyramid so as to keep them a profound secret and unsuspected all down the ages till the present due time, divinely appointed . . .

It is not yet generally known that the Almighty arranged for His great and wonderful plan to be portrayed in symbols of stone long before the Bible was written. Modern discovery and research have revealed the fact that this, the World's most massive edifice, symbolically and by measurement, declares the great Divine Plan of the Ages from the beginning to the consummation.

As we can now demonstrate that the Great Pyramid was built under Divine inspiration, this fact in itself proves that God thought that it was necessary for us, therefore it does not matter what we think. It is not for puny man to begin debating with the Almighty as to whether the Pyramid is necessary or not if God Himself in His infinite wisdom sees that it is necessary. Had it not been necessary God would not have had it built. Therefore if we ignore or neglect the Pyramid in these perilous days at the close of this Age we will miss something valuable which God has specially provided for us in this day and generation. The Great Pyramid displays the Christian religion upon a scientific basis in response to the scientific appeal of our age.

Adam Rutherford *Pyramidology*

Camera Press London

Pyramids
Structures of stone or brick with a rectangular base and four triangular sides which slope inwards and meet at an apex: the most famous are those of ancient Egypt, which were royal tombs; the Great Pyramid at Giza has been described as 'perhaps the greatest single building ever erected by man' and has attracted the speculations of pyramidologists: there are also notable pyramids in Central America.
See PYRAMIDOLOGY; RELIGION.

Pyramid Texts
Texts containing myths, burial rituals, hymns, incantations, prayers and magic spells, inscribed on the interior walls of pyramids at Sakkara, near Memphis in Egypt; dating from c 2350 to 2175 BC, they are 'the earliest records we have of Egyptian thought' and 'the earliest body of religious writings we have of mankind as a whole'.
See BOOK OF THE DEAD.

The doctrine of Pythagoras placed a special emphasis upon the significance of numbers as symbols of cosmic principles, discerning a mathematical system in the apporently disorderly universe

PYTHAGORAS

G. Tomsich

THE DISCOVERIES attributed to Pythagoras, the Greek mystic, mathematician and philosopher, in the fields of geometry, music and astronomy have had a major influence in Western history, yet he left nothing of his own in writing. He was born c 580 BC and died c 500 BC. The details of his life and of his doctrine are known only through followers, detractors and commentators.

A native of Samos in Greece, son of Mnesarchus, an engraver or merchant, Pythagoras studied with various Greek masters. He won the heavy-weight boxing championship in the 48th Olympiad, and then set out upon long journeys, some of which are almost certainly fabrications of his followers. Although the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls and reincarnation bears much resemblance to Indian doctrines, the accounts of Pythagoras having spent years studying with the Brahmins in India are probably false. It is also extremely unlikely that he travelled to Britain and studied with the Druids. But it is highly probable that much of his time was spent travelling throughout the Near East, learning from the priests of the temples of Egypt and Babylon.

The extent of the knowledge he brought back from these travels has always been a controversial subject. It is usual to discount those ancient sources which claim that Pythagoras was principally a transmitter of ideas rather than their discoverer, not because there are facts to support this view, but largely because Western scholars prefer to believe that all pre-Greek civilization was primitive — although technically and artistically accomplished – and devoid of mathematical, scientific, philosophical or astronomical knowledge. Recent work, however, has shown that certain discoveries invariably attributed to Pythagoras – such as the 3,4,5 triangle – were known in Egypt and Babylon, which again raises the question of sources. It is no longer improbable that, as the philosophers Porphyry (c 233–308 AD) and Iamblichus (c 250–325 AD) maintained, Pythagoras learned his geometry and astronomy in Egypt, and his astrology and science of numbers in Babylon and Phoenicia.

Returning from his travels, Pythagoras set up a school or 'brotherhood' in the Italian city of Croton, dedicated to musical experimentation (he taught that all phenomena were fundamentally harmonic by nature, a view corroborated by 20th century physicists), and to the study of geometry, mathematics and astronomy, combined with a religio-ascetic discipline.

His teaching having met with enormous initial success, Pythagoras made the fatal error of attempting to carry his ideals into the practical world of politics. He succeeded in establishing a philosophical and ethical aristocracy in a number of Greek city states, but the hold was tenuous and foredoomed: the desire for external liberty and the incapacity to submit to the discipline essential to internal liberty that so commends the Greeks to the modern West asserted itself. Cyron, rejected by the brotherhood because of his violent nature, became its implacable enemy and succeeded in fomenting rebellion. In successive coups, the brotherhood lost all temporal power and ultimately, in a massacre, most of its advanced members. Thereafter, though never a secular or organized force, the Pythagorean doctrine was carried forward into Western culture by his followers. It is expounded almost unadulterated in Plato's *Timaeus*, seems to vanish for several centuries, reappears in the 1st century AD in the Neo-Pythagorean writings of Apollonius of Tyana (see APOLLONIUS), again vanishes, reappears with Plotinus, Proclus and the Alexandrine Neoplatonists (see NEOPLATONISM), and is injected into Christendom by Boethius in the 6th century AD, where its influence was strongly felt in the Middle Ages. But whereas in philosophy and literature the Pythagoreans are known, in art and architecture they are somewhat shadowy presences; their influence and knowledge is obvious but the names of those responsible for keeping the tradition alive and pure are unknown. Meanwhile, as is invariably the case, innumerable followers distorted and misused his teaching in numerology, black magic, astrology and so on.

'Number is All'

The Pythagorean doctrine resembles other mystical and religious teachings in that it held that the universe is a divine creation and that in the divine plan man was placed to fulfil a unique purpose: carrying a spark or germ of divinity within him, his role was to conquer and destroy his animal nature (the biblical Old Adam) and nurture and encourage the divine. The doctrine differed from other systems in the emphasis it placed upon number, and upon the essentially numerical disciplines of geometry, arithmetic and music. A much-quoted Pythagorean principle was 'Number is all'.

Until very recently, this aspect of the teaching was treated with little respect in the modern West. While giving Pythagoras full marks for his geometry, music and theory of the solar system, his so-called 'number mysticism' was believed to be an inherited residue of the superstitious past. It has been said that 'Numbers . . . were conceived at that early stage of thought, not as relations or qualities predicable of things, but as themselves constituting the substance or essence of the phenomena'. However,

since it is now clear that the qualitative distinctions we make between phenomena are fundamentally numerical, the Pythagorean doctrine reappears in modern dress. Our senses operate through the reception of vibrations of differing frequencies. Red is red because of its frequency or 'number', and so with every sense impression we receive without exception.

Creation was explained by the Pythagoreans as the division of the primordial unity into multiplicity and diversity. Other traditions expressed the same idea in terms of myth or legend, with deities representing the various universal principles of birth, love, strife, fertility, growth, maturity, death, renewal and so on, a mode of expression inescapably inviting embellishment and misrepresentation. Conceivably it was to avoid this danger that Pythagoras taught his disciples the numerical, geometric and harmonic bases underlying the myths. But if this was his objective, it failed: once the vows of secrecy were broken, all were free to make what they would of 'All is number'.

Numbers, to the Pythagoreans, were not abstractions as they are to us. They were symbols representing cosmic principles. Each number had a form or forms, made up of unity points, and from a study of these forms and the manner in which they generated sequences of numbers, an understanding of the underlying principles could be achieved. Thus numbers were held to be triangular, square, linear or rectangular by nature.

Though ultimately requiring complex considerations upon many levels, the whole of the philosophy of numbers flowed from distinctions originally created by the primordial division of the One into multiplicity. According to the Pythagoreans this act of genesis necessitated ten opposing categories: odd and even, limited and unlimited, one and many, right and left, male and female, rest and motion, straight and curved, light and darkness, good and evil, square and oblong.

Though at first glance a curious mixture of geometry, biology and ethics, and disparaged by scholars as based upon 'fanciful analogies', a brief geometrical demonstration can show how the Pythagoreans derived at least a few of their categories simultaneously. The number 2, the prototype 'oblong' number, was written ..

the next oblong number was 4

which generated the next, 6

Thus it may be seen at a glance that all oblong numbers necessarily generate rectangles which change shape with each step (tending toward the square but never reaching it). Oblong numbers may therefore be said to be in 'motion', 'unlimited', 'many' and by extension and application, and by analogies perhaps not altogether fanciful, 2 acquired its other properties as well.

Contrast it to 3, the first 'square' number. (Strictly speaking, 1 was not a number, but a symbol for the Absolute containing the possibilities for all numbers within it). The

number 3 generates 5

which generates 7

successive squares which, because constant in shape, may be said to be at 'rest', hence 'limited', hence partaking of the nature of 'one' as opposed to 'many'.

Upon such considerations, the Pythagoreans arrived at specific numbers and specific figures which, embodying certain principles held to be particularly important, were regarded as 'sacred'. The figure known as the Tetractys for example, representing 10 (see NUMEROLOGY), was holy because it summed up in triangular form the principles of 1, 2, 3 and 4; its internal relationships determine the musical octave, the trinity at its core is enshrined in the seven notes of the octave, the harmonic laws upon which all things come into being.

Study of the Tetractys revealed to the Pythagoreans an unfolding and rich world of meaning and significance, and bizarre as this approach may appear to us, it remains a fact that due to recent discoveries in quantum physics, wave mechanics and relativity theory, a number of eminent physicists and mathematicians have been obliged to take a position which they call 'Neo-Pythagorean'.

J. A. WEST

Quartz

Widely distributed mineral, of which rock crystal is a variety; used in scrying and believed to have the power to make the unseen visible and the seen invisible; among Australian aborigines quartz crystals are an important item of the equipment of a medicine-man, aud are used in rain-making ceremonies: iu the Shetland Islands, believed to cure barrenness when dropped into a pool in which women wash their feet.

See JEWELS.

QUEEN OF SHEBA

WHO ACTUALLY WAS the Queen of Sheba, that mysterious oriental princess who crossed the desert to visit King Solomon? Scholars have tried to solve the enigma of her nationality, and travellers have searched for her country. But no one has yet succeeded in identifying this royal lady who, the Bible tells us, came to Jerusalem 'with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones'.

The original story (1 Kings 10.1–13) states that the Queen came to see Solomon because she had heard so much about his wisdom; and after she had questioned him, departed, saying 'The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom'. It is also stated that the two monarchs exchanged gifts, Solomon receiving 120 talents of gold and a great quantity of spices; and the Queen 'all that she desired, whatever she asked'.

On the basis of these few facts, an extensive mythology has grown up around the shadowy figure of the Queen of Sheba, especially in Arabia and Ethiopia, both of which countries claim the princess as their own. For a royal lady who travelled in such style strongly appealed to the oriental imagination. And in addition, a king like Solomon who was rich, wise, generous, God-fearing, and the master of a splendid harem, was the ideal monarch. It was only right and proper that two such remarkable people should come together.

In the Arab legends, the Queen is called Belkis, and her kingdom was Saba, which was situated in south-west Arabia, in the region the Romans called Arabia Felix, known today as Yemen. Her capital city was Mariaba (Marib), and here French archeologists discovered the ruins of a great palace, which was traditionally, the royal residence of Queen Belkis.

The official Arab version of the Old Testament story is found in the Koran in those chapters of the Moslem bible (sura 27, 30–31, 45) which describe the Sabaean queen as 'ruling over a people who prostrate themselves to the sun'. In other words, she was a pagan and sun worshipper, though

Scala

The Queen of Sheba adoring a bridge made from the wood of the True Cross: detail from a fresco by Piero della Francesca

this does not explain why Solomon ordered her to come and visit him. At first she was afraid to do so and sent instead a present of 6000 boys and girls, all born on the same day at the same hour.

In a later version of the legend, Solomon, who understood the language of the birds, sent his message to Queen Belkis by means of the hoopoe, who carried the letter under his wing. The message summoned Belkis to the palace at Jerusalem, a journey which was said to take seven years. But so eager was the Queen to meet the King of the Jews that she set out immediately and arrived in the record time of three years. Then the famous interview took place at which she tested Solomon's wisdom by asking him a series of riddles. Jewish legends provide us with several examples, of which this is one: 'The Queen said, "Seven depart. Nine enter. Two pour. One drinks." Solomon replied, "Seven days represents the period of a woman's menstruation; nine months the period of her pregnancy; two pouring is a reference to her breasts; and one drinking, a reference to her baby."'

Woman of Fire

The Arab version of this famous confrontation has a happy ending, for even though Solomon accused Belkis of having hairy legs when he first met her, he did eventually marry her, presumably adding her to his collection of 300 wives, 700 concubines, and the 6000 boys and girls she had already sent him. However, he thought enough of her to bury her, when the time came, in a magnificent tomb in the city of Palmyra, which stood on the northern edge of the Syrian Desert.

The Ethiopians have an even more colourful legend than the Arabs, which explains, incidentally, their claim that their kings are descended from a union of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba. The story is told in an ancient Abyssinian book entitled the *Kebra-Nagasht*, 'The Glory of Kings', in which the Queen is called Makeda meaning 'woman of fire', an Ethiopian princess who first heard the story of Solomon's wisdom from the merchant Tamrinn, the owner of 73 ships and 580 camels.

This man had made a special trip to Jerusalem to see Solomon whose kindness to his servants and slaves impressed Tamrinn as much as his wisdom. Queen Makeda was also impressed, and decided to visit Solomon herself. After a long voyage, she arrived in Jerusalem, where the King assigned her a palace next to his own. They saw each other every day, after which Makeda returned to her palace 'full of delightful thoughts'. Each day the King sent her 45 sacks of flour, 10 fat barons of beef, 5 bulls, 50 sheep, an unspecified number of goats, deer, cows and chickens, a barrel of young wine, a half-barrel of old wine, honey and baskets of fried locusts. It is no wonder that Makeda said to her generous host, 'I would like to be one of your servants and to wash your feet, for I am overcome by your handsome appearance and by your charming conversation.'

In the meantime Solomon had said to himself, 'A beautiful princess has come from the ends of the earth to see me. Who knows if it is not God's will that she should have offspring by me?' Solomon accordingly gave Makeda a great banquet on the eve of her departure at which he plied her with highly-spiced foods – for a reason that will soon become apparent. Then he took her to her room and asked her to marry him. The princess agreed, provided he promised not to touch her. King Solomon accepted this curious condition and added one of his own: that he would not touch her, provided she did not touch anything of his, including the furnishings in the room. During the night Makeda, tormented by thirst, slipped out of bed, tip-toed across the room to the water jug, picked it up, and drank. Solomon, who was staying awake for this eventuality, immediately challenged the princess with breaking her vow. She admitted that she had done so and gracefully conceded that he was no longer bound by his oath.

The next day Queen Makeda left Jerusalem for her own capital, Aksum in northern Ethiopia, giving birth to a fine baby boy on the way. And it was this son of Solomon and Makeda who, as Prince Menelik, was the first of the royal line of Ethiopian kings, officially known from that day as the 'Elect of God' and the 'Lion of Judah'.

Quetzalcoatl

Feathered or plumed serpent god of Central America; god of the wind and the breath of life; also a culture hero and divine king, first ruler of the Toltecs, who taught men the calendar and arts and crafts; there was a legend that he would return and when Hernan Cortes, the conquistador, landed in Mexico in 1519, he was thought to be Quetzalcoatl.

See AZTECS.

Brooklyn Museum

Quicksilver

'Live silver', a name for mercury, referring to its mobility; the fact that mercury combines opposites, being a metal but also liquid, and a liquid but not wet, contributed to its particularly importaut role in alchemy.

See MERCURY.

Ronan Picture Library

'By doing nothing, the soul becomes nothing and returns to its original nature, which is God's own essence'

QUIETISM

QUIETISM in its specialized sense denotes a heretical Christian movement which came into full flower in the 17th century in Spain, Italy and especially France, although its roots stretched far back into the past. The word can also be more generally applied to any doctrine which denies the importance of the human will in the attainment of perfection, and Eastern mystical ideas, as well as Western, contain elements of Quietism.

The essence of Quietism is the belief that unity with God can only be achieved by inaction, through a state of passivity so extreme that the soul itself is annihilated; only so can it be reborn, and return to God. The Quietist's attitude to prayer, meditation and mystical exaltation is based on complete confidence in God's goodness; he adores his Creator, into whose hands he passively entrusts himself, for the best is whatever God decides.

A systematic exploration of one's conscience is the first step on the Quietist path, an often giddy descent into the self, to depths where the soul can rediscover its Creator. This is an essential feature of Quietism; the perception of God takes place beyond the realism of intellect, emotion and sense, in the depths of the self, in a vast region where the Ineffable reigns. The way there is arduous; and it is only by stripping away personality, accumulating suffering, undergoing repeated ordeals that man emerges from the chrysalis of self and is reunited with the Creator.

Descent into the Self

The first requirement of this spiritual discipline is ascetic solitude: pious habits, devout acts, prayer and even the sacraments cannot help to achieve this inner fire which is completely subjective, silent, secret. The consolations of religion cannot be offered. Prayer and confession can offer no effective relief. There is no place here for priests or spiritual mentors; the believer must proceed of his own accord to the descent into the self which will lead him to slough off the old spirit and be regenerated in the Absolute Beyond.

The second requirement is a spiritual stillness, engendering calm and bringing the joy of transcendental peace. By fusing with the divinity, the soul takes part in God's own perfection, finds pleasure there and remains as if in paradise.

'Pure love' constitutes the crowning glory of this extraordinary surge towards the vast light of divine radiance. It can be recognized by its ardour and total detachment. Step by step the Quietist comes to reject even the idea of reward. In the course of this spiritual shedding of the self, he renounces his place in heaven. Some even reach a state of exaltation in which they desire hell, since in accepting damnation their resignation is pleasing to God.

In the Middle Ages, the annihilation of the spirit as a way to enlightenment was recommended by such mystics as Johann Tauler (1300–61) and the great Rhenish intellectuals of the 15th century. The groups known as the Beguines and the Beghards, which grew up in Holland and Germany in the 13th century, not only rejected spiritual effort but sought to free themselves of the burden of all moral responsibility, on the grounds that what happens to the passive believer, including temptation and 'sin', must be what God wills.

A strong stand was taken by the Council of Vienna in 1311, which denounced teachings of this sort as attempts to establish that man represents God's work and is equal to him, without responsibility, without sin, and not subject to the Last Judgement. It considered that the doctrines would give rise to secular apathy, with grave consequences, and that to support them would bring about schism. The Council's decrees were carried out by the Inquisition and the heretical movements were persecuted. In 1329 certain ideas advanced by the great German mystic Meister Eckhart were condemned for their Quietist tendencies (see ECKHART).

Portrait of Miguel Molinos, 17th century Spanish theologian and leading exponent of Quietist doctrines, who was sentenced to life imprisonment for heresy. He believed that 'the violence of our temptations is a liberating force and Satan must be allowed to have his way with us as God wills' and at his trial he defended his sexual sins as acts of purification

Mary Evans Picture Library

The Void of the Will

Despite the Church's attitude, a vein of Quietism is to be found in the teaching of many saints, a number of whom fell under the Church's suspicion before they were canonized. Theologians have noted Quietist traits in St Anthony, St Clement, St Dionysius the Areopagite, St Augnstine, St Catherine of Genoa, St Catherine of Siena, St John of the Cross, St Teresa of Avila, St Francis de Sales and St Jeanne Françoise de Chantal. They are also to be found to a marked degree in the mystical breviary, *The Imitation of Christ*, attributed to Thomas à Kempis.

These great mystics declared themselves devotedly passive in their perception of the Divine. In her ecstatic incantations, St Catherine of Genoa extolled Pure Love, self-sufficient and self-destructive, and the need to return our Creator's love for us, as Pure Love springs from him. She declared: 'My being is God' and, what disturbed the authorities, 'My Self is God, and I recognize no other Self than my God.' Introspection thus reveals God within us; God becomes our self; self equals God.

St John of the Cross (see JOHN OF THE CROSS) went further in his rejection of mental activity. He extolled 'the void of

the will', and was nicknamed 'the Doctor of Nada' or 'nothingness'. He was imprisoned in Toledo, and there his visions were renewed to the point of ecstasy. During this time he described his soul as being 'alive with love' and moved by 'the love of God to the point of total self-contempt'.

St Francis de Sales (see FRANCIS DE SALES) preached that every believer should in his daily life give himself up to the fires of the religion of Pure Love, and extolled obedience, simplicity and self-denial through love of Christ, as the only virtues. 'One loves nothing if not out of love for God's will.' Thus it is God's will which inspires and directs us.

It is clear that this view reveals traces of Quietism. It was St Francis who launched the controversial doctrine of disregard of the self, taken to the point where hell is preferable, if such is God's will, to heaven, if he does not will it. True self-denial concentrates on renouncing heaven and scorning the rewards of virtue. The Christian should not be prey to any anguish; even the fear of sin should not exist for him. The achievement of self-perfection is better than the quest for salvation.

St Jeanne Françoise de Chantal, companion of St Francis de Sales and follower of St Teresa, taught that in order to be known by God, and God alone, complete submission to all that God wills must be cultivated, even if this means suffering, insult and humiliation. She said, 'I have often said to our Lord, in the midst of my labours, that if it pleases him to assign hell as my resting place, providing he ordains that my being there will not insult him and that my eternal torment will be to his everlasting glory, then I shall be content, and he will remain my God for ever.'

The Complete Surrender

In the 17th century, the Roman Catholic Church, caught between the Reformation and Jansenism, saw itself attacked for the barren formality of its rites, the cold-heartedness of its theologians, the spiritual impoverishment of its monks. Anxious to prevent schism, and firmly opposed to the belief that an individual could have direct contact with God without the intermediation of the Church, the authorities harassed the followers of the Quietist leaders Juan Falconi in Spain and Jean de Bernières and François Malaval in France. After Malaval had openly advocated the surrender of personality, abstention from good works, and the right to make one's own way to God, his books were burnt by the Inquisition and he was suspended from that time forward from pastoral duties.

Most eminent among Quietist leaders was the Spanish theologian Miguel Molinos (1627–96), who took Quietist doctrines with him to Rome, where they met with considerable popularity among bishops and cardinals, and even with the Pope himself. His success aroused the hostility of the Jesuits, who instigated his arrest and trial on charges of heresy; he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Molinos preached that the powers of the soul must be eliminated; the will to act offends God. One must surrender completely to him, like a lifeless body. Good works hinder the achievement of perfection; by doing nothing, the soul becomes nothing again, and returns to its original nature, which is God's own essence; this conversion makes it divine. The soul must not seek to find God, nor think of reward or punishment, death or eternal life. We must return to God our power of free choice and accept his divine will. Any request is a sign of imperfection.

Fénelon and Mme Guyon

There is only one path to mysticism, says Molinos, the inner path. Pious words are superfluous; prayer demands silence. Any deliberate act towards Christ, the Virgin or the saints is reprehensible. God and God alone should fill our hearts. The violence of our temptations is a liberating force and Satan must be allowed to have his way with us, as God wills. Church and bishops have no warrant to direct the soul's inner existence.

It was in France that Quietism entered its

The Quietist principle is that the believer must surrender completely to God, like a lifeless body: two symbolic pictures illustrating passages from the Bible, from *L'Âme amante de son Dieu* by Mme Guyon *Left* 'Lord, all my longing is known to thee, my sighing is not hidden from thee' (Psalm 38) *Right* 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (Romans 7.24)

final and most controversial period, in the second half of the 17th century. A French widow, Mme Guyon (see GUYON) wrote a number of influential mystical works of a Quietist nature, and devoted herself to travelling through Europe on an evangelical mission.

Among her converts, who included a number of highly-placed persons, was Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai. Fénelon was dazzled by her doctrines and believed her to be a saint and to have supernatural powers, but the Church considered her a dangerous and heretical nuisance. First arrested in 1688, Mme Guyon was again sentenced to imprisonment in 1695. Fénelon did his utmost to save her and himself undertook her defence. His principal opponent was the influential Bishop of Meaux, Jacques Bossuet.

Bossuet attacked the extravagances of Quietism, scorning Mme Guyon's visions, dreams, premonitions and fits of delirium and ecstasy. Fénelon answered by setting out his mystical principles in his *Maxims of the Saints*. Bossuet maintained that Fénelon's Quietist views were inconsistent with Christianity. The theological quarrel became a personal battle, full of acrimony, and the court at Versailles was gripped by this dispute between two men prominent in the Church.

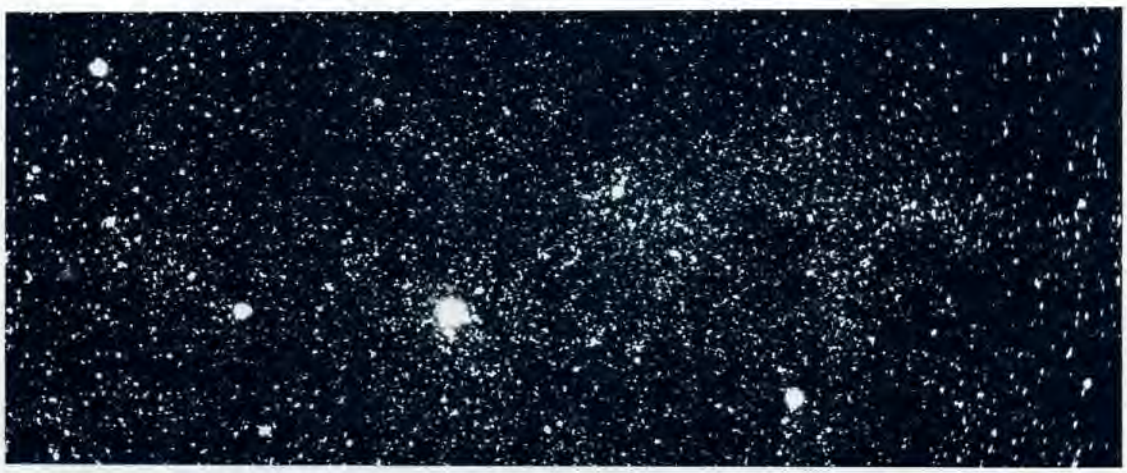
The joust continued for several years. Fénelon appealed to the Pope for a verdict, but at the same time a political intrigue developed, in the course of which he was ousted from the favour of both Louis XIV and Mme de Maintenon, secret wife of Louis and former follower of Mme Guyon.

The King demanded action from the Pope and insisted on a severe sentence on the grounds that law and order in France were threatened. The Pope delayed his decision, unable to conceal his sympathy for Fénelon, but in 1699 he reluctantly condemned *Maxims of the Saints*. A papal letter was issued, criticizing 23 chapters of Fénelon's work which were said to be redolent of Quietism. Fénelon bowed before this condemnation, withdrawing to his diocese and remaining there until his death in 1715. Mme Guyon was finally freed from imprisonment in 1702.

FRANÇOIS RIBADEAU DUMAS

Quintessence

'Fifth essence', a term used in alchemy and in ancient and medieval philosophy for a fifth element, additional to the normal four (see ELEMENTS); it was thought to be the material of which the heavenly bodies were made and to exist in latent form in all earthly things; hence the most characteristic part or quality of a thing.



Rabbi

'Master' or 'teacher', a title given to Jewish teachers and scholars; the rabbi officiates at services in the synagogue or temple and his chief function is to expound the Jewish religion, but he is not a priest and little remains in Judaism of the old hereditary priesthood; a rabbi should receive ordination, or formal authority to act as a rabbi, which traditionally may be conferred on him by any recognized scholar but in practice is normally granted by his theological training school.

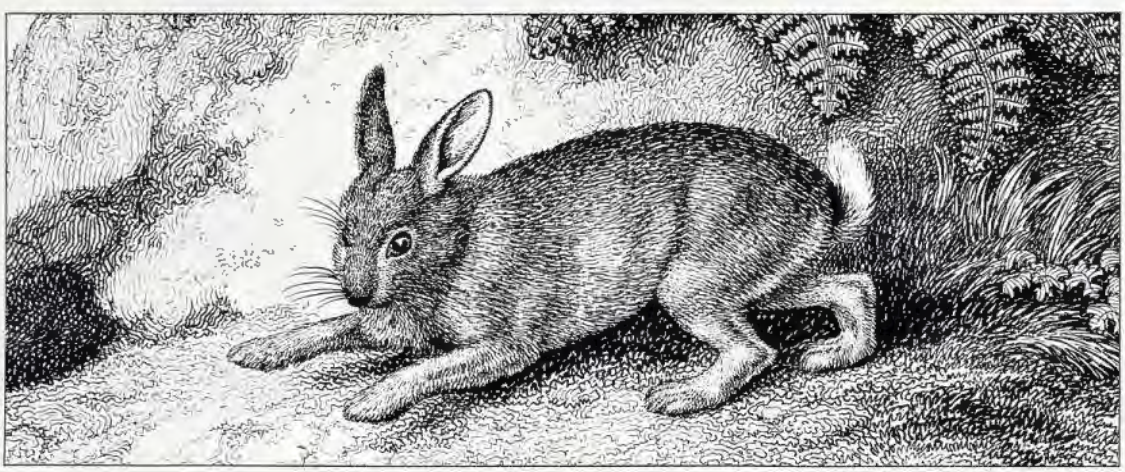
See JUDAISM.

Keystone

Rabbit

Animal to which many hare beliefs have been transferred; a rabbit's foot is a lucky charm; the first day of a uew moon should be greeted with a shout of 'Rabbits' or 'White Rabbits' first thing in the morning, before any other word has been spoken, and some consider it necessary to shout 'Black Rabbits' last thing the night before; in America the Easter Rabbit has replaced the Easter Hare of Europe as the producer of Easter eggs.

See EGG; HARE.



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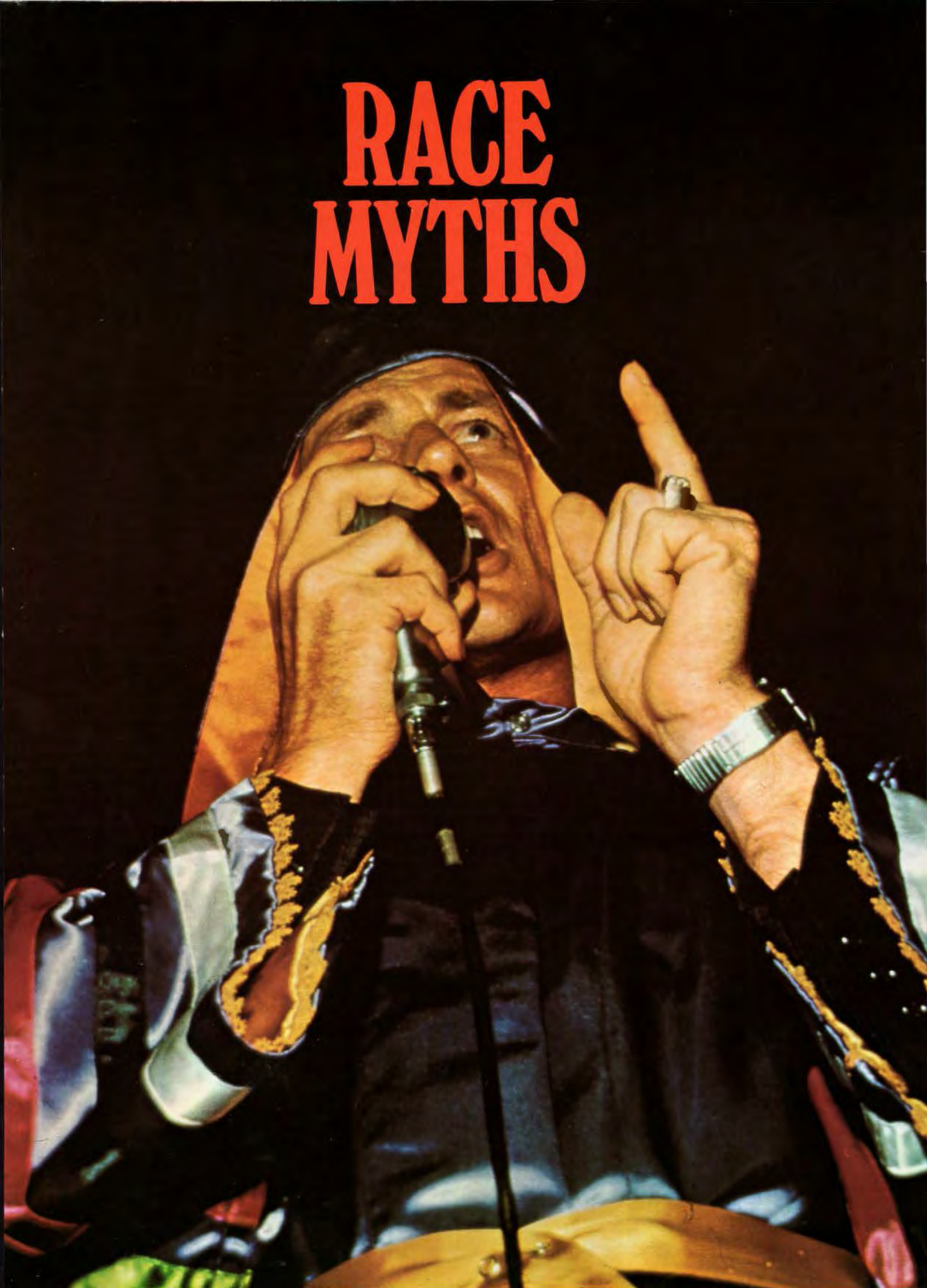
RACE MYTHS



Popperfoto

Race hatred has its origins in the irrational depths of the mind; the farrago of nonsensical myths which have grown up around the African and the Jew would be ludicrous, if they were not tragic

'PEOPLE WILL USE such a word as race in the loosest manner,' wrote H. G. Wells, 'and base the most preposterous generalizations upon it.' These generalizations are the misconceptions, fallacies and distortions of bigotry, the myths of race prejudice – myths in the sense of lies, not in the sense of illuminating containers of spiritual truths. In spite of all their contradictions and absurdities, they are attempts to rationalize the wholly irrational fear and loathing some people feel for members of other races.

In its colloquial uses, the word 'race' itself is often misconceived and distorted. It is useful as an abstract concept, when considering the broad history of mankind. It is less useful as a device for classifying modern man in terms of inheritable racial homogeneity.

Certainly it is wrong to speak (as many do who should know better) of a British or German or Scandinavian or Welsh *race*. These groupings and others like them are ethnic or national or linguistic; they have nothing to do with hereditary homogeneity. So, too, there never was an Aryan race, in spite of Nazi propaganda. 'Aryan' is a linguistic term describing a group of related ancient languages.

But the mythic idea of racial purity remains in our language, symbolically potent. So does the related idea that racial characteristics exist, like flotsam, in the *blood*. This notion recalls ancient beliefs in the magical qualities of blood; it predates genetics, and its hold on our imaginations and subliminal mental processes remains strong. 'Blood will tell,' we say – meaning that if a person has 'foreign blood' in his veins, that inheritance will eventually show up in his actions.

And so bigots insist that blood can be racially tainted. One drop of Negro blood, on this view, makes a person a Negro (or, in South Africa, a Coloured). Oddly, one drop of 'white blood' in a black man's veins does not have the reverse effect.

This line of thinking – which is not really thinking but subconscious reacting, to symbols of great power – goes back to a central myth about race. It began to be current in the 17th and 18th centuries, when men first thought of subdividing humanity racially; the early racists developed the idea that there had once been a Golden Age when all humanity's races were separate and 'pure'. The word 'pure' is emotionally loaded, as is its opposite in this context, for the myth adds that as time passed racial mingling occurred, leading to impurity.

From this myth grew the belief, still to be found in Europe and America, that racial intermarriage always means degeneration, which is to say pollution of the 'pure' strains. So, this belief says, the halfbreed is a poor specimen. And this in spite of the fact that the European, and the American more so, is the most complex mixture of racial heritages.

Previous page **A leader of the Ku Klux Klan addresses a meeting *Above* White women protesting against school integration in America *Right* Race is an extremely vague term and 'racial' antipathy may take as its target any foreign group, inside or outside a society, which is felt to pose a threat *Above* Segregated foot bridge in Capetown, South Africa, with signs indicating which side is for whites and which for non-whites *Below* The severed head of a Punjabi officer is displayed by Bengalis during the civil war in 1971, in which atrocities were committed by both sides**

In any case, the white racist is rarely concerned with his own racial background, as long as he can be sure that his ancestors in the recent past were all whites. He would deplore the mixing of races, the tainting of white blood with dark, because he believes the 'coloured races' to be inferior in every way – including genetically. For, from the white man's first encounter with the black man, the myth arose that the black man had reached a lower stage of evolution than the white.

The Negro tribesman met by the white empire builders was not thought merely to be culturally and technologically undeveloped. He was thought to be of another species, *homo* perhaps but not *sapiens*. Many books were written to prove this point, like one dated 1900 whose author, C. Carroll, offered 'Biblical and Scientific Proofs' that Negroes were not human but simian.

Some of these 'proofs' were probably physiological, for many supposed authorities have advanced the idea that Negroes'

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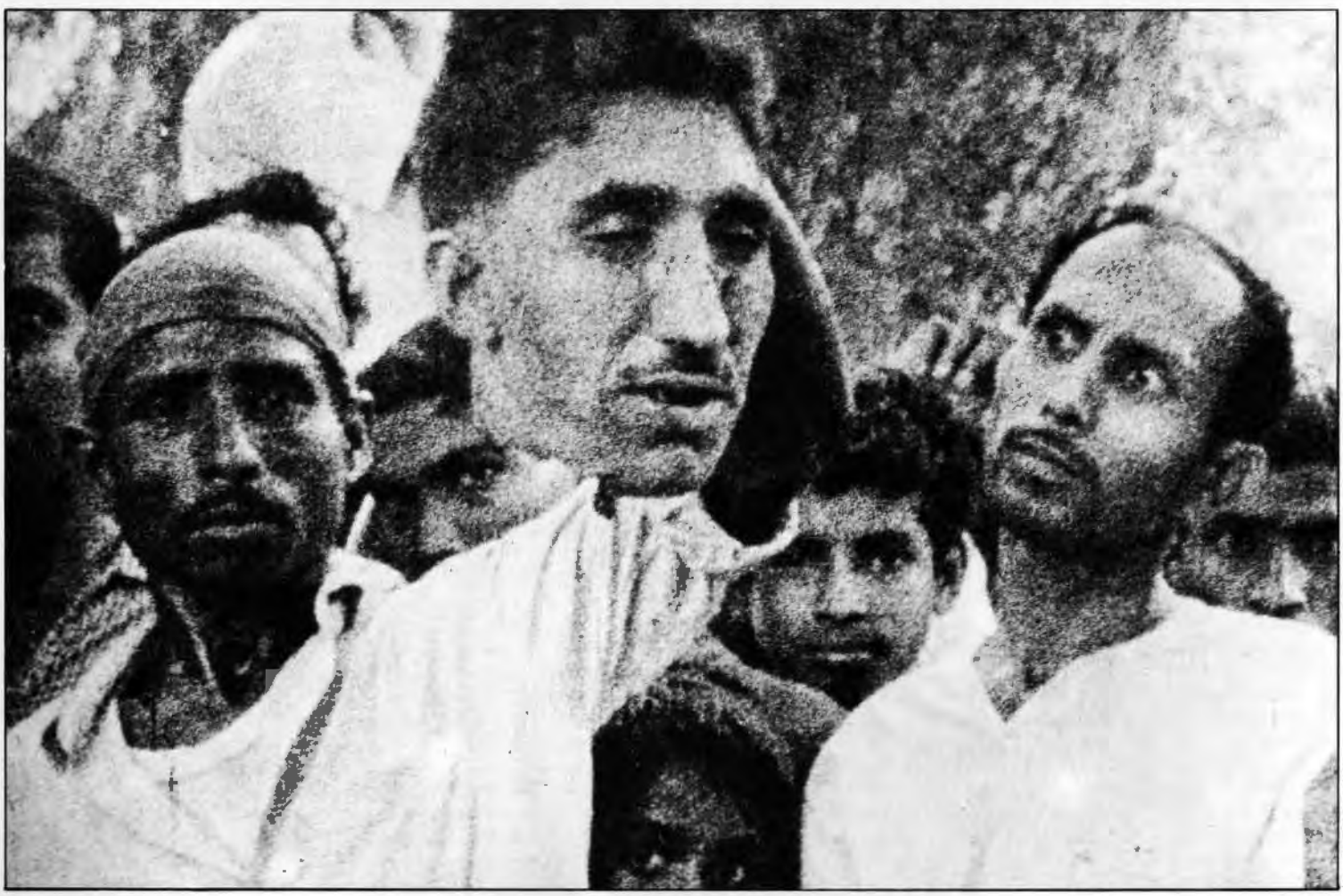

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Myths concerning the sexuality of the Negro stem from the basic belief that the black man is invariably far more sensual, less inhibited, than the white

cranial capacities are smaller than those of whites. Simple measurement disposed of that idea, but related myths persist: that Negroes are basically less intelligent, less educable.

So southern African whites assert that black Africans are incapable of learning to handle civilized benefits – such as democracy or the vote – and will be incapable for hundreds of years, or forever. In America and Britain, now and then, statistical studies purport to show that the Negro IQ is fundamentally and irrevocably lower than the white IQ. Such studies generally fail to note how social, economic and environmental differences might affect individual performances in the IQ tests.

'A Grinning, Dancing Creature'

Perhaps only the most rabid bigot today would insist that the 'coloured' peoples are literally sub-human. But some race myths or fallacies, still widespread in the 1970s, are the direct spawn of the 'sub-human' slander. Many Americans, for instance, firmly believe that all Negroes are shiftless and lazy – possibly because the idea first grew up during the days of slavery, a condition that rarely makes for cheerful and willing workers. American Indians, bitter and oppressed on their miserable reservations, come in for the same accusation – unless, like the steel-working Mohawks, they have gained fame for their labours in some specialized work. Then they are accused of trying to steal white men's jobs. That accusation is also common in Britain; indeed, English racists can often accuse black immigrants of arriving both to live off the dole and to take white jobs.

Also rooted in the 'sub-human' slander is the concept of Negroes as innately musical and rhythmic beings. The British writer Carlyle, in 1849, described the Negro as 'a merry-hearted, grinning, dancing, singing, affectionate kind of creature'. The simian implication, the Negro as performing monkey, is clear. For decades Hollywood perpetuated this myth, as it perpetuated the idea that all Negroes were incredibly superstitious. This notion grew mainly out of the Christian view of African 'heathen' religion as superstition, and was strengthened when the altered remnants of that religion were handed down through generations of slaves, far removed from Africa (see also AFRICA; NEGROES).

This view of Negro 'superstition' also grew from the general concept of the black man as not quite human, and so not the 'rational being' that the white man claimed to be. Again, being closer to the animal state and therefore more physically oriented, the Negro race – says another current myth – must be more athletic than the white. If Negroes take top honours in athletic competitions, the white man can assure himself that the black man has cheated – by being born athletic, while the white man must work at it.

The animalistic or sub-human myth comes out most clearly in the deeply rooted notion that Negroes smell. People who do not really think of themselves as prejudiced will mention – or complain of – this smell. And they will believe that it emanates from even the most obviously well-groomed Negro. The smell is described, often and revealingly, as 'musky' or 'an animal odour'.

In the history of race relations we might find scores of references to the offence given to Asian noses by the smell of Europeans. In the 18th or 19th centuries, European views of cleanliness and personal hygiene lagged far behind the fastidious traditions of, say, the Japanese, or high-caste Indians. Probably they still do. But no European would accept that he had a special smell, an animal odour that was ever-present however clean he was. He would call that a myth. Equally unlikely is the idea that all Negroes smell, all the time.

Sexual Jealousy

The myths concerning the sexuality of the Negro stem from the basic belief that the black man is invariably far more sensual, less inhibited, than the white. But no compliment is intended. Those who hold this belief are saying that Negroes are morally loose, degenerate, dirty – that they are animals in terms of sex as well as hygiene, physiology and the rest.

Clearly such ideas about both sex and Negroes are fed by the ugly psychological distortions, the warped puritanism, which characterize so much of the white man's thinking about sex. And people with any colour prejudices whatsoever, in this age, will share some common fallacies about black sexuality. The first of these is always that the black person is promiscuous and over-sexed.

Such sex myths have been attached, in the past, to a great many other oppressed minority groups. American pioneers believed the same thing to be true of the Indians. The British certainly believed it to be true of the real Indians, in India, failing to see the true meaning of Hindu religious eroticism. Europeans centuries ago imputed this sexual 'degeneracy' to the Jews.

If the Negro is loose and over-sexed, the myth says, then he must also be given to all kinds of unnatural practices – for the racist would not accept that the Negro could have the white man's sense of 'decency' or sexual taboos. Furthermore, these sexual race myths assert that the Negro man is himself unnatural physically – being invariably endowed with an uncommonly large sexual organ.

At this point the note of sexual jealousy creeps in. According to the myth, Negro men are highly sexed and highly virile (for a common sexual fallacy equates size of penis with potency). The Negro woman is similarly said to be compulsively sexual, and innately expert. If these ideas were invariably true, and if all Negroes did lack the inhibitions, guilts and frustrations that accompany sex in many white minds – why, then the Negro would seem to be quite fortunate. So the sex-obsessed white racist had to develop another myth, to impose a few frustrations on the Negro.

The belief grew that all Negroes yearned to make love to white women – so much so that rape was an ever-present danger. Thus the white man could believe that he had something, sexually, which the black man did not have but wanted to have – the white woman. At the same time, the white racist would spend a great deal of sexual energy in pursuit of the black woman – partly to assert his dominance over the black man, partly because of the myth of the near-nymphomania of every black woman.

It has all led to a situation that is literally insane – if insanity means patterning one's life in terms of unreal, irrational fantasies. South Africa's obsession with the myth of black sexuality has led to laws against miscegenation (the so-called Immorality Law), under which a great many white South African men have been embarrassingly tried, and many harmless interracial couples persecuted. In the United States, the same obsession has led to a

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May Day demonstration at Yale in 1970: in reaction against the stereotype white picture of the black man as a subhuman animal, black activists have built up their equally stereotyped picture of the wicked 'Whitey'

fearful history of lynchings, burnings and so on – during which the Negro victims were frequently emasculated, a clear sign of white sexual jealousy. If such violence occurs rarely today, there has been no lessening in the undercurrent of sexual-racist sickness to be found at every level of American society. Calvin C. Hernton makes the point clear when he writes that 'coloured men and women become the objects onto which all kinds of sexual derangements of the culture, as well as those of individual whites, are projected.'

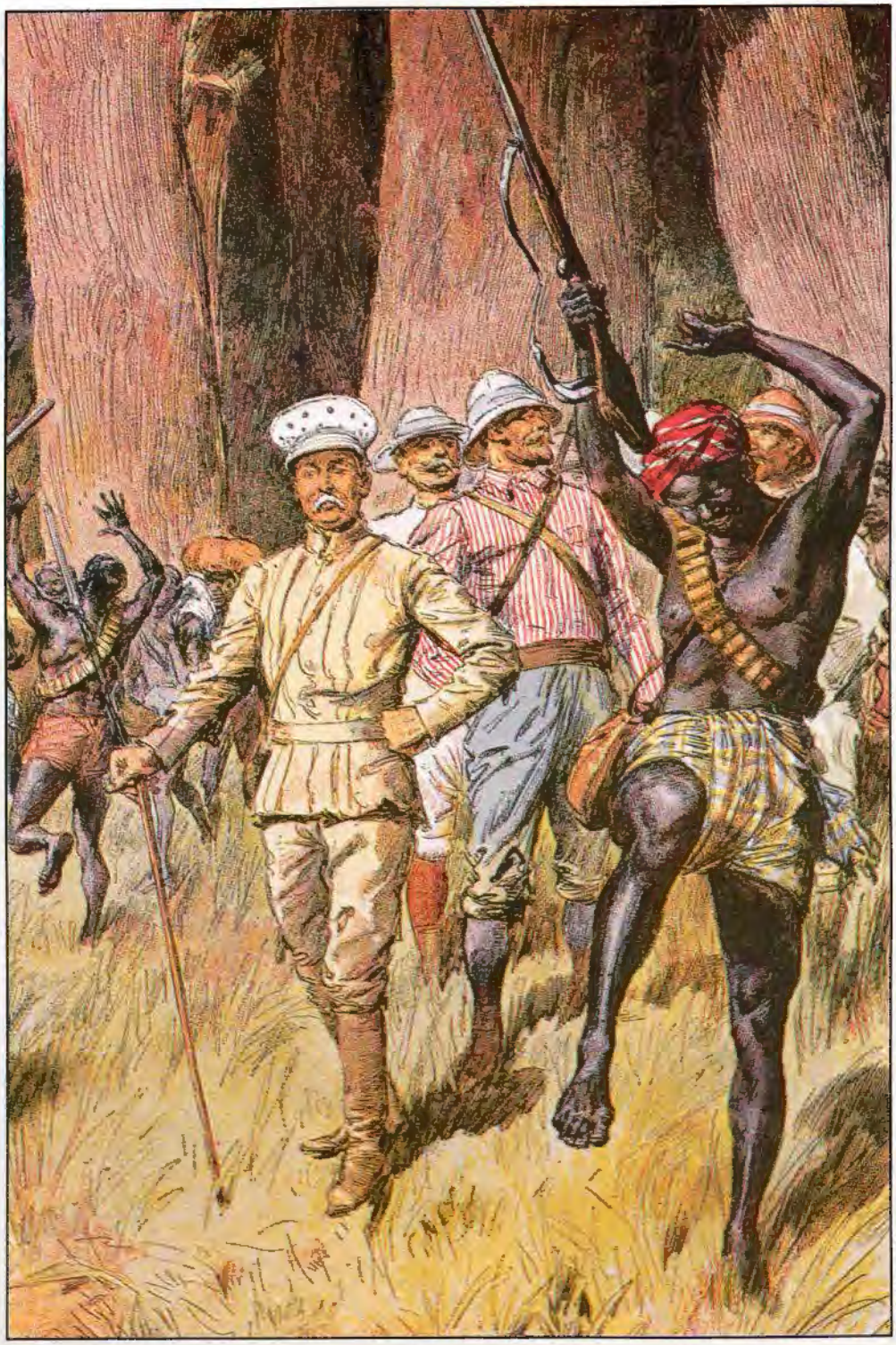
But there is another broad and basic view of the Negro: in the old Christian picture of the Devil, one of his most frequent guises when appearing to humans was as a black man. The European witch trials are full of such descriptions of the Devil who, according to the 'confessions', chose to preside over the sabbaths as a black goat or as a giant, jet-black man. Other witches spoke of being tempted in lonely places by the Satanic black man. But of course black has been the dominant colour of the supernatural in any of its evil guises – black magic, the Black Mass, and so on. And in the Middle Ages the word 'black' was used synonymously with ugly, dirty, foul: black was the colour of anything considered to be offensive or bad. So when the existence of black people, who were also unclothed and heathen primitives, became known, the connection seemed obvious.

In other words, white Europe had found in the African a living embodiment of the symbolic and psychic being which C. G. Jung calls the 'shadow'. In the Jungian view, the shadow is a container for all those sordid, evil and nefarious urges that the ego prefers to repress. It is, in short, the dark side of the ego. The white man projects onto the black man all the contents of his, the white's, shadow being – the repressed fantasies and wishes, predominantly sexual, that Western civilization has for so long equated with sin.

DOUGLAS HILL

Victoria and Albert Museum

Previous page **Scipio, the runaway black, is hunted down by white men with dogs, an illustration to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe, an immensely influential book which aroused violent feeling against the treatment of slaves in the American South but which also contributed its own set of well-meaning stereotypes to the cauldron of white-black racial feeling *Right* 'The men literally yelled and leaped for joy, and raced over the ground with their burdens': the African as happy, primitive child, needing the paternal care of civilized whites who shouldered the 'white man's burden', an illustration to one of the books of H.M. Stanley, the explorer**



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Antisemitism

Antisemitism is best defined as an attitude of hostility which is aimed specifically against all Jews, but at the same time does not discriminate between Jews. As such it was fostered on religious grounds by the Christian Church in the Middle Ages, and on political and social grounds by various movements in the 19th century. But it was not until the 1930s that antisemitism was made a mainspring of public policy in Germany under Hitler, with the result that millions of Jews were put to death in concentration camps.

In its most extreme and terrible form, antisemitism is a modern phenomenon, hut it is one which has very ancient roots. Although the fact that the Jews have always been a minority in Christendom has been the most important single factor in the history of antisemitism, antisemitic tendencies appeared before Christianity.

At the end of the 4th century BC, large numbers of Jews were settled forcibly in Alexandria, and it was in that city that the first antisemitic riots recorded in history took place. This pagan antisemitism seems to have been a reaction against Jewish exclusiveness, but as the Jews, who made up one-seventh of the population, were mostly engaged in trade and finance, there were probably economic motives as well behind it.

The Romans annexed Judaea in 63 BC, and outraged Jewish feelings from the start by their disregard of Jewish religious observances. But Roman antipathy towards the Jews dated from the century before, when in 139 BC they expelled the Jewish community from Rome, probably for trying to win converts to their religion, which was incomprehensible to the Greeks and Romans. The insular, self-sufficient nature of the Jewish community has allowed myths to build up around it throughout the centuries. Hazy ideas about Jewish religious practices gave rise to the myths that Jews killed little Christian baby boys so that they could drink their blood at the Sabbath, and that they poisoned wells that Christians used. This crude type of myth, along with fear of witchcraft, has largely disappeared, though other more insidious myths endure.

One, current today, especially in Soviet Russia, assumes a vast Jewish conspiracy to take over the world, master-minded by the Elders of Zion. Those that believe this myth insist that Jews are working, in apparently innocuous ways, towards this goal.

Tacitus, writing early in the 2nd century AD, ascribes depravity and meanness to the Jews: nowadays the latter attribute is something of a cliché. It gained strength at a time when Jews were debarred from all professions but money-lending, so that they became disliked in the community and the reputation for usury was established.

The Crucifiers of Christ

In early Christian times, Jews and Christians were both persecuted by the authorities, but antisemitic sentiments were rife among many converts to Christianity, who looked upon the Jews as the crucifiers of Jesus Christ, and accused them of misinterpreting the passages about the Messiah in the Old Testament. In 325 AD Christianity became, in effect, the official religion of the Roman Empire and a new period of oppression was ushered in for the Jews.

Although the position of the Jews improved in the early Middle Ages, when the secular authorities were inclined to tolerate, and even sometimes to protect them, the 8th to the 12th centuries were a period of increasing persecution, during which antisemitism owed most of its impetus to the teaching and example of certain Christian bishops.

Church Councils in 1179 and 1215 obliged the Jews to wear a distinctive badge, and forbade Christians to lodge among

Antisemitic sentiments were rife among many converts to Christianity, who looked upon the Jews as the crucifiers of Jesus Christ

Jews. Segregation of Jews into separate quarters seems to have been first enforced in Poland, where the Church Council of Breslau decreed in 1266 that the section inhabited by Jews in Gnesen (the oldest Polish diocese) should be 'separated from the general dwelling place of the Christians by a hedge, wall or ditch'. The same Council instituted a special Jewish dress, ordered Jews to hide indoors when Christian processions passed by in the streets, and threatened Christians who had any social dealings with Jews, or bought food from them, with excommunication. The institution of the ghetto – the exclusively Jewish quarter in a town – dates from the 13th century at least, although the word did not come into use until the 16th century.

A State Within the State

The medieval period saw frequent riots against Jews and massacres such as those in Germany in 1348–49, when the charge against them was that they spread the Black Death. It was also during this period that the Jews were restricted to certain trades, such as money-lending, which greatly increased the hatred with which they were regarded by the general populace. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290, from France in 1306, and from Spain (where they had also been the victims of massacres in 1391) in 1492.

Down to modern times, the religious motive was the primary one in antisemitism, although the peculiar economic role of the Jews, for which they themselves were not responsible, was also an important factor. But in the late 18th and 19th centuries, two new developments laid the foundations of the distinctively political and racial antisemitism which has been a conspicuous feature of modern history. The first was the political emancipation of the Jews. In England the right to sit in Parliament was granted to Jews in 1858, and from 1870 they were allowed to hold cabinet rank. Jews were emancipated in France in 1791,

Elderly Jews scrub a street in Vienna, watched by Nazi officials: antisemitism, which has a long history in Europe, became official state policy in Hitler's Germany, where it was founded on a pseudo-scientific theory of the superiority of the 'Aryan' races to the Jews

Keystone

Black into White

All folks was born black, an' dem what's turnt white, dey jest had more sense. Angel of de Lord come down an' told de ontire bunch to meet on de fo'th Friday at de dark o' de moon an' wash deyselves in Jordan. He oxplained to 'em dat dey'd all turn white an' straighten de kinks outen deir hair. Angel kept preachin' an' preachin', but dem fool niggers didn't pay him no mind. Angel can't teach a nigger nothin'. When de fo'th Friday come a mighty little sprinklin' of 'em went down to de river an' commenced to scrub. Water was mighty low. 'Twarn't like Old Missip' – 'scusin' de Lord's river – 'twarn't no more'n a creek. You jest oughter seed dat crowd o' niggers settin' on de fence snickerin' at dem what went in washin'. Snickerin' an' throwin' slams. More niggers dan you ever see in Vicksburg on circus day.

Dem what went in de river kept scrubbin' and washin', special deir hair to get de kinks out. Old Aunt Grinny Granny – great-grandmammy of all dem niggers – she sot on a log all day long, eatin' cheese and crackers and lowratin' dem what was washin'. When fust dark come, she jumped up and clapped her hands: 'Fore Gawd, dem niggers *is* gittin' white!' Grinny Granny jerked off her head handkercher an' went tumblin' down de bank to wash her hair, an' all dem fool niggers followed her. But de water was all used up, jest a tiny drap in de bottom, no more'n enough to moisten de palms o' deir hands and de soles o' deir feet. So dat's why a nigger is white in dem places.

Folktale quoted in Erik H. Erikson
Childhood and Society

and in other European countries during the next century, although in Russia they had to wait until 1917. The second factor behind modern antisemitism was the rise of nationalism, and with it the idea that the Jews represented a 'state within the state'.

In addition the 19th century saw the rise of large industrial cities, where Jews came into prominence in banking, finance and commerce. As some professions were still in effect closed to Jews, they tended to concentrate in others, such as the law, medicine, the theatre and the Press, where they became conspicuous either through their wealth or because they were directly involved in activities which by their very nature attracted publicity. Because the old restrictions and degradations under which the Jews had laboured in the past were associated with the conservative forces in society, Jews frequently supported radical movements in politics, and were often represented in the new political parties to an extent out of proportion to their numbers in the population.

It was against this background that new antisemitic movements appeared in Austria and Germany from the 1860s onwards. In 1867 there was a move in Austria to withdraw civil rights from people who had any Jewish forbears in the previous three generations, but it came to nothing. Then, during an economic crisis, latent antisemitic feelings were stirred up by the publication in 1873 of a book by a Hamburg journalist Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*. This purported to give a semi-scientific basis to certain nationalistic sentiments which were particularly strong in Germany after the defeat of France.

An antisemitic league was founded in Berlin and Dresden in 1879. This movement was supported by the political philosopher Treitschke, who appealed to his compatriots to repel 'everything which is foreign to the Germanic nature . . . Whenever he finds his life sullied by the filth of Judaism, the German must turn from it.' The movement gained considerable popular support, and bills were presented to the Reichstag calling for the expulsion of Jews from the schools and universities. Some of the more fervent antisemites included Christianity, as an offspring of Judaism, among the objects of their hostility.

In the 18th century, more than a million Polish Jews had become subjects of Russia. They were confined to the western provinces in the so-called Pale of Settlement, extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, near Odessa. The German antisemitism of the 19th century was echoed in Russia, where the Jews were caught between the nationalistic pro-Slav sentiments of the Russian ruling classes and the discontent of the oppressed masses. Riots and massacres of Jews followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander I in 1881, and repressive measures against the Jews were enacted in the 'May laws' of 1882, when the Jews were confined more strictly than ever to the urban ghettos.

Persecution of the Jews in Russia and eastern Europe caused many of them to emigrate, chiefly to England, France and the United States. The Jewish population of France more than doubled in the last decade of the 19th century, and this alone was a great stimulus to the antisemitic movement there, which had been launched in 1885 with the publication of a sensational book by the journalist Edouard Drumont, *La France juive*, which ran through many editions. Drumont founded an antisemitic league in France and started a newspaper to propagate his ideas. One of the earliest series in this paper was called 'The Jews in the Army', and Drumont helped to create the atmosphere for the notorious Dreyfus case, in which a Jewish officer was falsely accused of espionage and served four years solitary confinement on Devil's Island.

Nazi Germany

In spite of all the propaganda directed against them, and the activities of the antisemitic leagues and other dubious political movements, the legal rights of Jews were on the whole upheld by the authorities in France, Germany and Austria before the rise of National Socialism in Germany. It was not until Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the German Reich in 1933 that antisemitism became an official state doctrine and policy, founded on a pseudo-scientific theory of the superiority of the 'Aryan' races to other breeds, particularly the Jews.

The Nazis took their racial theories from 19th century writers such as the English-born Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who wrote a book in German of which it has been said that it first revealed the glory of Teutonism to Chamberlain's adopted people, the Germans. Under Hitler's 'Aryan Paragraph' full civil rights were granted only to Aryans – Nordic 'long-headed' citizens – and Jews were expelled at first from the German civil service, and later from all the learned professions.

As the Second World War approached, Jewish business was boycotted in Nazi Germany, and trades union officials of Jewish descent were removed from office. Many Jews fled from Germany, but millions were overtaken by the war and died in concentration camps.

Antisemitism did not disappear from the world with Hitler, however. Since the war, it has been revived in a new form in Soviet Russia, where Jews have been sentenced to savage terms of imprisonment for alleged currency offences, and where Jewish writers have been the chief victims of state censorship and persecution. In the Arab world too, a new form of antisemitism has appeared as a result of the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. In fact, in the world at the present time, antisemitism is probably strongest in the country in which it first arose, Egypt.

The Tangled Roots

There is no simple explanation to be had of a phenomenon so pervasive and so persistent as antisemitism. In recent years the psychological basis of antisemitism has been investigated, and it has been found that antisemitic reactions are closely related to a number of other social attitudes, among which are an excessive respect for authority, an exaggerated adherence to conventions, a preoccupation with the ideas of dominance and submission, and a tendency to project one's own internal conflicts onto the outside world. But we have no means of testing these findings for past ages, and the social and economic causes of antisemitism still deserve primary consideration in any investigation of the problem.

(See also NATIONAL SOCIALISM and related articles.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

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RADIESTHESIA

THIS TERM, which will not be found even in the Supplement (1933) to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, refers to a science dealing with divining or dowsing. The practice of water divining is well known and the skill of some who do it is accepted without question (see DOWSING). This is not the case with the application of so-called radiesthetic techniques for medical diagnosis and therapeutic procedures. By and large the medical Establishment turns its back on everything relating to radiesthesia and radionics, although a few physicians believe in and practise these techniques. Nevertheless, radiesthesia is still very much a department of 'fringe' medicine.

We are asked to consider two concepts: first, that all matter radiates on its own wavelengths; and second, that living organisms, meaning human beings, animals and even plants, emit electro-magnetic wave radiations which depend for their intensity and frequency upon general vitality and metabolism, and in the case of human beings, and perhaps even animals, on psycho-physical tone.

Thus given the identification of a 'wave length' that appears on the basis of past experience to reflect some kind of pathological or psychic imbalance, the radiesthetic practitioner will attempt to correct the imbalance. This may be done by prescribing the appropriate medicines and it is interesting to note that many specialists in this field use the homoeopathic *materia medica* (see HOMOEOPATHY) probably because of the appeal of Samuel Hahnemann's law of affinities between certain drugs and the complaints which they are said to cure. Alternatively, some use radionic instruments to 'broadcast' treatment to distant patients.

For the pre-history of radiesthetic theories one must look in the direction of Anton Mesmer's concept of 'animal magnetism' (see MAGNETISM; MESMER). He believed that there is a mutual influence, carried by an all-pervading but undefined fluid, between the celestial bodies, the earth and animated bodies. Baron Carl von Reichenbach (1788–1869), a distinguished chemist who was interested in Mesmer's work, discovered what he called the Odic Force, the manifestation of matter, alive or dead, which could be seen by sensitives.

From Reichenbach we proceed to the many theories about the existence and nature of the human aura (see DOUBLE). This may be considered, perhaps, as a field of magnetic force surrounding the individual human body. Another name for it is the 'etheric body'. According to Dr H. Tomlinson, a British physician who practises radiesthesia and at the same time has a highly-esoteric approach to the subject: 'The magnetic field of the etheric is not the soul or essence of the human body – it is simply a magnetic field of influence which is detectable by the pendulum.'

The great modern pioneer of radiesthesia, especially in relation to the application of instruments to measure human emanations,

Aura of 'the Developed Man', from C. W. Leadbeater's *Man Visible and Invisible*: radiesthesia depends on the theory that living organisms emit electro-magnetic wave radiations, which can be used in diagnosis and treatment of disease

was Dr Albert Abrams (1863–1924), Director of the Medical Department of Stanford University, California, who was certainly not esoterically minded. He was one of the first physicians to turn his attention to human 'wireless waves'.

Abrams became aware of the electromagnetic waves emitted by the human body when studying spinal reflexes by means of percussion. By chance he discovered that all tubercular patients gave a dull sound when percussed at certain spots on their backs, and that this dullness was evident in all cases of tuberculosis whether or not there was a tubercular lesion at that place or not. This only occurred when the patient was facing east or west, suggesting a relationship between the electro-magnetic field of the earth and that of the individual.

Next he found that if he held a tubercular specimen, a piece of tissue, for example, over the back of the neck of a healthy person, the same dull effect happened on percussion. The next stage in these experiments was to link a patient and a healthy person by a wire. One end of the wire was placed on the patient's lesion and the other end on the cervical vertebra of the healthy person. He found that when he

percussed the back and abdomen of the healthy person he obtained the same dullness as when percussing the ill person. Hence 'waves' from the patient passed along the wire and temporarily altered the electromagnetic condition of the healthy one, who was called the 'subject'.

What was missing was a method of measuring these wave-lengths, because theoretically every disease would manifest its own wavelength. Hence a scale relating 'disease x' to 'wavelength y' was needed for diagnostic purposes. Abrams then devised a coil wound with resistances marked in ohms on it. The coiled wire resistance was interposed between the patient or the specimen, a tube containing tubercular bacilli for instance, and the 'subject'.

The next stage was to establish the necessary tables. For instance, he discovered that in cases of malaria, dullness (when percussing) occurred with the rheostat set at 32 ohms, tubercular disease was equated with another 'rate', and so on for a variety of diseases. All radiesthetic procedures, no matter whether a simple pendulum or a more complicated instrument be used, require some table of 'rates' or measuring process.

The Black Box

Since diagnosis was logically followed by therapy, Abrams experimented with a number of different drugs but was not satisfied with the results experienced. This led to his invention of the Oscilloclast, often known as 'Abrams' Box' or simply 'The Black Box'. This was a relatively simple apparatus. It was supposed to destroy infections through the application of measured vibrations, provided by a battery or mains supply, to break down the disease in the patient.

The Abrams' 'Box' proved to be a dead end, but stimulated research on the part of others, notably Dr Guyon Richards, an English physician whose instrumentation and measurement techniques were far more sophisticated. He was interested in diagnosis and did not use any apparatus for therapeutic purposes. Instead he prescribed homoeopathic remedies.

L. E. Eeman, a lay researcher, found that if a number of people are linked in a certain way with copper wire, an energy is transmitted along the wire from one person to another and that if a drug is introduced into the circuit its expected effects are experienced by those thus linked.

A later development of the 'human emanation' principle was the theory that the physical presence of the patient was not necessary. The practitioner simply has a spot of the patient's blood, or perhaps a specimen of urine, on a piece of white blotting paper. It is proposed by some that even a handwritten letter or a photograph is sufficient. Again, as in 'map dowsing', a preliminary procedure used by dowsers searching for water, oil or minerals before the actual field work begins, a chart of the organs of the body can be used to find the location of the disease.

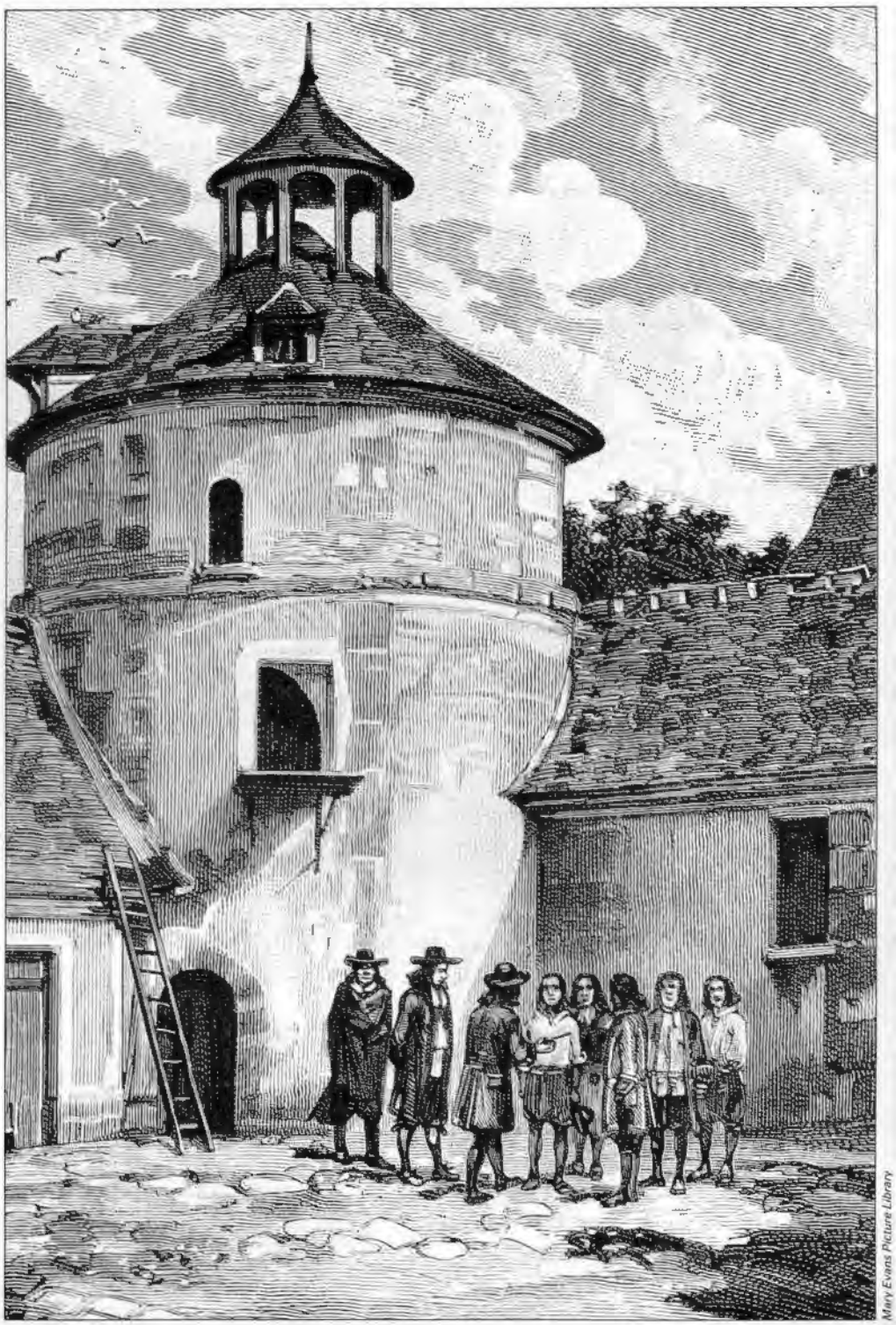
Radionics is the expression currently used for instrumented radiesthetic work. There are two kinds of instrument: those for diagnosis and those used for treatment. They are not automatic and it is said that human reaction and skill are needed for their employment.

The general principle is that the instrument is 'tuned' to the bloodspot or other sample provided by the patient and a diagnosis is then made. Specific radiations are broadcast through the ether by another instrument to the patient wherever he happens to be. Thus it is not necessary for the practitioner to see the patient, who can be thousands of miles away from him.

Among the best known radionic diagnostic instruments in current use are those devised by Dr Ruth Drown in the United States and by the late George de la Warr in England.

The de la Warr instrument resembles a fairly large old-fashioned portable radio receiver. It opens out like a suitcase. On the right above the tuning knobs, of which there are nine, there are two small cups in which blood or other samples are placed.

The diagnostic procedure is based upon finding the correct 'rate', by a process of 'tuning in' for any particular disease. Suppose, for example, that the patient is said to be suffering from a liver infection. The 'rate' in question is found in the appropriate printed table and the apparatus



Mary Evans Picture Library

Dowsing to find water is an old and well-established practice but rods, pendulums and other more complicated devices have been used to divine disease or crime, as in this picture of a thief revealed by a divining rod

is 'tuned' by setting nine different dials, accordingly. The diagnosis is confirmed or otherwise by stroking a thin rubber sheet, mounted at the base of the instrument, with the fingers of the right hand. The rubber will normally resist the movement of the fingers. The operator knows that he is on the track when he obtains what is known as a 'stick', when a crisper note or sound is obtained from the rubber strip.

The investigation is continued, using the dials in relation to more specific vibration rates and checking the results in terms of the 'sticks' obtained and the dial settings. It is claimed that a complete diagnostic picture can be achieved. No mains or battery supply of electricity is involved.

Then there are the radionic instruments used to 'broadcast' treatment to distant patients. The 'rates' are selected according to information provided by the bloodspot or other sample and the patient's progress is checked by using the diagnostic instrument. V. D. Wethered, a radiesthetic practitioner, suggests that different people appear to differ very considerably in susceptibility to radiations of this kind, some being impervious to them while others are definitely affected.

In c1938 Dr Brown invented a camera by means of which it was claimed that any part of the body could be photographed from a blood spot. Much later George de la Warr produced a camera for which similar claims were made. It is said that by photographing a homoeopathic potency of aconite, a picture of the aconite flower was revealed on the photographic plate – hence we have either a myth or 'magic' of a sensational kind. But as long as orthodox medicine refuses to investigate all the claims made on behalf of radiesthesia and radionics, the whole issue will remain doubtful.

ELLIC HOWE

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Engay Kusch

Ragnarok

The 'Doom of the Gods', or 'Twilight of the Gods' in Scandinavian mythology, the destruction of the gods and the world by evil monsters, the forces of chaos; afterwards a new heaven and a new earth will appear, ruled by Balder and the sons of the old gods; the myth is told in the medieval Icelandic poem *Völuspa*.

See END OF THE WORLD: SCANDINAVIA.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Rain

Essential for the continuance of life, and so rain gods and rain rituals are important in many parts of the world; in ancient and primitive mythology, often regarded as the emission of a sky god which penetrates and fertilizes the earth; rain-making or rain-averting magic ranges from the dropping of small images into the Tiber to bring rain at Rome, to the simple chant of 'rain, rain, go away'.

See EARTH: RAINBOW; SKY; WEATHER MAGIC.

RAINBOW

IN THE BOOK of Genesis (9.11–17), it is stated that when the waters of the Flood had abated, Yahweh made a covenant with Noah, and promised that never again would he send a flood to destroy the world. As a visible sign of that promise, which all men might see, he set a rainbow in the sky, and he said to Noah: 'I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.'

This is the tradition of the rainbow's origin that is known to Christians and Jews all over the world. Other men, in different regions and different ages, have accounted for its existence and its intermittent appearances in a number of ways. In some mythologies, the rainbow is a living spirit, either a divinity or a demon. In ancient Greece the rainbow goddess was Iris, the wife of Zephyrus the west wind, and sister of the dreaded Harpies. She was also the messenger of the gods. On the other side of the world, in central Australia, the men of the Kaitish tribe believed that the rainbow was the son of the rain, and that he was often the cause of drought because, as a dutiful son should be, he was always anxious to protect his father from falling down. Consequently, if a bow appeared in the sky at a time when rain was desired, it was necessary to drive it away. Sir J. G. Frazer describes in his *Magic Art* (1926) how this was done by means of an elaborate ritual. The rain-maker went to the sacred storehouse of the group and painted the holy stones there with red ochre, and poured water over them and himself. Then he painted three small rainbows, one on the ground, one on his own body, and a third upon a shield which was also marked with jagged white lines to represent lightning. The shield was carefully hidden in a safe place, so magically imprisoning the real rainbow and keeping it out of the sky, until after the life-giving rain had fallen.

Thirst of a Murderer

The Karens in Burma believed the rainbow to be a malignant and dangerous demon which could, and often did, destroy human beings by devouring their *ka-la*, or spirit. Any man who died by drowning, or through a fall, or who was killed by wild beasts, or came otherwise to a sudden and violent end, was thought to be one of its victims. When it had destroyed a person thus, it became thirsty, and was seen in the sky, drinking water. Its appearance was usually followed by another violent death, and children at play were hastily called home as soon as it was seen, lest they should be the next to fall into the demon's power.

Zulus also feared the rainbow, which they associated with snakes. It was said to live with a snake, or at least, one always appeared whenever the bow was visible. When it was seen with its end touching the earth, it was believed to be drinking from a pool. Sometimes it lived in a large pool, and men were afraid to bathe in such waters, for fear that the rainbow might seize and eat them. On dry land, it poisoned any man it met, or afflicted him with disease. If it actually rested upon anyone, that person was certain to suffer some misfortune of a serious kind.

Amongst some Polynesian peoples, the rainbow was believed to be a ladder up which heroes climbed to reach heaven. In Hindu mythology, the great god Indra, hurler of thunderbolts and lord of the storm, used it as a bow with which he shot his lightning-arrows. The same belief was held in Finland concerning Ukko, leader of the Finnish gods, who also controlled the thunder and brought rain, and shot fiery copper arrows of lightning with the rainbow.

Bridge in the Sky

Bifrost, the sacred bridge of Scandinavian myth, was a rainbow bridge which linked heaven and earth. It was made of fire and air and water, and the bright colours of these three elements were seen glowing in its high-springing arch. The gods rode along it when they visited Midgard, the world of men; and they passed over it every day on their way to hold council by the Well of Urd, a spring which lay at the foot of Yggdrasil, the World Ash-tree. All came to the meeting of the council on horseback except Thor, the god of thunder, slayer of

Sonia Halliday

The Ascension of Christ, from Cyprus, 12th century: the risen Lord is seated on a rainbow and has another at his feet; in the Old Testament the rainbow is the sign of God's covenant with man

giants and defender of Asgard, the home of the gods. He came on foot, wading through the deep rivers that Bifrost spanned, for fear that his great size might make him too heavy for the delicate bridge, or that the heat of his lightnings might injure it.

Only the gods could cross Bifrost, and the souls of certain warriors slain in battle, who had been chosen by the Valkyries and carried by them over the bridge to Valhalla, that splendid shield-roofed hall in Asgard, where the heroes spent their time in constant fighting and feasting. To defend the rainbow bridge from the frost giants and prevent them gaining access to Asgard across it, the god Heimdall lived beside it and kept constant watch and ward over it. He was a good guardian, for he could see what was happening 100 miles away, and his hearing was so keen that he could hear the grass growing on the ground and the wool growing on the backs of sheep. Moreover, when he sounded his horn Gjallar, its note could be heard through the whole universe. In his charge, Bifrost was safe, and would be so until the time of Ragnarok when, according to Norse belief, all things would be destroyed. On that day, Gjallar would sound for the last time to rouse the gods, against whom all the forces of evil would be unleashed. From Muspell, the region of fire, the giant Surt and his followers would come riding with drawn swords over Bifrost, and beneath their weight the rainbow bridge would at last be broken.

Traces of belief in the sacred nature of the rainbow survived in the folklore of many countries long after Christianity had replaced the old pagan mythologies. The ghost of Bifrost lingered almost to our own day in Germany and Austria – and perhaps does so still in some localities – in the tradition that the rainbow was a soul bridge, over which the dead who had died in a state of grace passed into heaven. Children were guided along the airy arch by their guardian angels; but

the souls of the wicked and the unrepentant could not overcome the perils of the way. They were consumed in the raging fire which is visible here below as the red band in the bow. Two modern superstitions which also associate the rainbow with death have been recorded by Wayland Hand in his *North Carolina Folklore* (1964). There it is said that if a rainbow spans a house, there will be a death in that house before long; and if any person walks through the end of a bow, some member of his or her family will die within the year.

A common tradition, found in many regions, is that it is extremely unlucky to point directly at a rainbow, as indeed it is to point at the sun, or the moon, or any star. Another is that a wish formed when the bow first appears in the sky will be granted. A faint memory of old dreads seems to linger in the ritual whereby children in the English northern counties try (at least until very recently) to drive the rainbow away by 'crossing it out'. As soon as it is seen, two sticks, or two straws, are laid crosswise on the ground, with a small stone in the centre, or sometimes with a stone at each end of the cross. In north-eastern Scotland, the children shout at the tops of their voices a banishing rhyme which runs:

> Rainbow, rainbow, brack and gang hame,
> The cow's wi' a calf, the yowe's wi' a lamb,
> And the cow wull be calvit or ye win hame.

A well-known magical method of charming the rain away is for the charmer to say 'Rain, rain, go away; come again another day', or some other variant of the rhyme, whilst looking steadily at a rainbow. Country people still read weather signs from the manner and time of the bow's appearances. If broken parts of it are seen in the clouds, these foretell stormy, blustery weather, and are sometimes known as wind-dogs, or weather-galls. Seen in the morning, it is a warning to shepherds or, along the coasts, to sailors; but 'a rainbow at night, the rain is gone quite'. These prophecies, however, are not rooted in ancient myth or magic, but are based on the practical experience of generation after generation of countrymen.

CHRISTINA HOLE

RAMAKRISHNA

ONE OF THE WORLD'S great mystics, Ramakrishna wrote little or nothing himself, but his sayings and parables are recorded in numerous collections. Far from scholarly, he was sought out by some of the best scholars of India. He did not set out to create a new religion, yet ended by reforming one of the oldest religions in the world. The missions founded in his name extend from Calcutta to San Francisco: there are twelve Ramakrishna Missions in the United States alone.

He was born in 1836 of orthodox Brahmin parents in an obscure village in Bengal, his father being the village priest. Later he was said to have been miraculously conceived and fabulous tales grew up concerning his birth, as indeed much of his life. He died in 1886.

Ramakrishna's first mystical experience came to him when he was seven. It happened just before a heavy downpour and black clouds were massed in the sky, when he suddenly saw a flight of snow-white cranes winging their way across the dark background. Dazed by the sight, he fell into a trance and lay unconscious for several hours. From then on throughout his life he remained precariously poised on the threshold between normal and trance states. At the age of nine, while appearing as the god Shiva in a village play, he was so carried away by his exalted role that he fell into an ecstatic condition and remained enraptured for three days.

When he was 20, Ramakrishna was appointed chief priest at the Dakshineshwar temple near Calcutta, dedicated chiefly to the goddess Kali (see KALI). In the Hindu pantheon this deity is one of the manifestations of Shakti, the great mother goddess, in whom are comprehended all the power and majesty of the cosmos. Her worship now became the focus of Ramakrishna's undivided attention and such was his ardour that he began to neglect his other temple duties.

Hoping that the responsibilities of married life might stabilize him emotionally, his parents arranged a marriage for him three years later. His bride was a girl of five. Ramakrishna and his child bride did not live together after their marriage: she went back to her parents and he resumed as best he could the work at the temple. He continued to abstain from sexual intimacy for the rest of his life. One of the great obstacles to the higher life, as he saw it, was the aggregate of lustful and voluptuous sensations inevitably associated with the sexual act, and he could not reconcile this all-consuming, though transient, passion with the decision he had taken to devote himself completely to the service of the goddess.

Ramakrishna believed that 'however God may be worshipped, he is still the same Supreme Being, just as water is called by various names in different climes': many of his sayings have been recorded and the missions founded in his name extend from Calcutta to San Francisco

The Wishing-Tree

A man sitting under the shade of the Kalpa-vriksha (wishing-tree) wished to be a king, and in an instant he was a king. The next moment he wished to have a charming damsel, and the damsel was instantly by his side. The man then thought within himself, if a tiger came and devoured him, and alas! in an instant he was in the jaws of a tiger! God is like that wishing-tree: whosoever in His presence thinks that he is destitute and poor, remains as such, but he who thinks and believes that the Lord fulfils all his wants, receives everything from Him.

F. Max Müller
Râmakrishna, His Life and Sayings

Ramakrishna had no illusions about human nature. Some of his parables in simple homespun language are wonderfully to the point. The following example aptly conveys the irony of the human situation. 'Two friends were walking past a place where the word of God was being preached. One said, "I must go and hear this sermon and join the pious congregation in the worship of God." But from across the road came the sounds of revelry and the second friend said, "I think I prefer to join the merrymakers and flirt with the dancing girls." The two friends parted company, one to enter the temple, the other to sport with the revellers. In a short while the one who had chosen the house of pleasure tired of his amusement and was struck by the folly of what was taking place around him. He said to himself, "What am I doing? Why have I come here when I could have joined my companion in hearkening to the word of God?" Across the road his companion, bored with the monotonous drone of the preacher, said to himself, "I wish I had joined my companion in his fun instead of listening to this rigmarole." Which of these two, the sage might well ask was the better man? Or were they not both the same person? Two beings that dwell in each one of us.'

Many Paths to One God

The conviction grew upon Ramakrishna that only through personal experience could man perceive the truth, otherwise truth was impossible to grasp since it was several removes from the phenomenal world we see around us. To illustrate this, he gave the tale of the blind man who wanted to know what milk looked like. 'White, like a crane,' he was told. 'What is a crane?'

he asked, and received the reply, 'Like a sickle'. And in response to further questioning he was told that a sickle resembled a bent arm. 'Ah!' he exclaimed, as though suddenly enlightened, 'milk is like a bent arm.'

While in service to the goddess Kali, Ramakrishna's ecstatic raptures increased and he remained for long periods wrapt in contemplation before her image. He came to believe that the idol breathed and was alive, and that it heard and understood him as he spoke and sang hymns to it. After some months his fervent devotion was apparently rewarded for, he declared, one day the goddess revealed herself to him face to face.

Desirous of seeing the god Krishna, he dressed like a woman and imagined himself to be Krishna's favourite milkmaid, Radha. While immersed in this role he had a vision of the god. Similarly, in order to induce a vision of Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, he took on the part of Rama's favourite general, the monkey god Hanuman, and lived on nuts and climbed trees.

Ramakrishna had little time for asceticism and the alleged powers it bestowed. He said, 'If twenty years of asceticism merely enables you to walk on water, better pay the boatman and save your time.' Nor had he any patience with 'theoretical' religion. He felt that religion was not a matter of creed and ritual but of inner experience, and was convinced that actual spiritual participation in other faiths was necessary for his own understanding of other people's beliefs and so ultimately of his own. He held that however God may be worshipped, he is still the same Supreme Being, just as water is called by various names in different climes, and may be drunk from silver goblets, from earthenware, or straight from the cupped hands, but it remains the same water and has the ability to quench man's thirst in whatever manner it is drunk.

After having personally experienced the presence of God in various faiths, Ramakrishna concluded that all religions were true and that fundamentally all were one, each tracing a different path to the same great goal.

(See also HINDUISM.)

RAMANA MAHARSHI

AT THE SOUTHERNMOST tip of India is a holy mountain named Arunachala; the very thought of it is said to liberate the soul from bondage. At its foot nestles the great temple of Arunachaleswara (Lord of Arunachala). From remote antiquity this hill has been reputed to be the earthly embodiment of Shiva the Auspicious One, the Lord of Perfect Knowledge and Supreme Bliss. Sometimes it attracts to itself a human form which it indwells as Shiva; such a form was Sri Ramana Maharshi, who heard and responded to the hill's compelling call.

Born in 1879, in the village of Tiruchuzhi in South India, as a boy Ramana showed no indication whatever of his future greatness. His father held a respected position in the village and Ramana's prospects were good in a worldly sense. But Shiva decreed otherwise.

Shortly before his 16th birthday, Ramana asked a relative where he had just come from. 'From Arunachala,' came the reply. This information affected the boy strangely. He knew that Arunachala was believed to be Shiva in the form of a hill, but he did not realize that it was an actual hill. When he found that Arunachala was merely the Sanskrit form of Tiruvannamalai – a district not far distant by rail – his interest evaporated. But from that time on, the name Arunachala began its work of transformation. A current of awareness began vibrating within him; it was not awareness of any 'thing' by any 'person', but a subtle sense of identity with something nameless and formless, something that was more himself than anything he had ever known. It was a foreshadowing of the Supreme Experience: total awareness of the *Atman* (Self), the eternal Self as distinct from the impermanent ego (see BRAHMAN). He became less keen on boyish pastimes and his interest in school-work vanished. Spells of prolonged introspection possessed him; he sat motionless for hours, oblivious of external things.

After the death of his father, in 1891, Ramana and his brothers went to live in an uncle's house in Madura, and it was here that he underwent a decisive spiritual experience. He was alone in his uncle's house when the dread of death assailed him. Characteristically, he did not think of getting help, but simply went into his room, lay down and awaited the end. Something made him slow down his breathing; then a power within him took charge of what followed. The violent shock had introverted his mind so intensely that it penetrated an entirely strange region of consciousness. He asked himself what it all meant; his breathing stopped completely and he sensed the imminence of death: 'All this was not a mere intellectual process,' he recalled, 'but flashed before me vividly as living truth; something which I perceived immediately, without any process of thought. "I" was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centred on it. The "I", or my "Self" held the focus of attention by a powerful fascination from that time forwards. Fear of death vanished at once and forever. Absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right up to the present.'

In 1896 he decided to leave home and go to Tiruvannamalai. When he entered the precincts they were empty, which was strange, for the temple normally hummed with activity. Stranger still, the doors of the inner sanctum lay wide open as if Ramana's coming was expected. He entered, and with tears of joy streaming down his face declared to the Holy of Holies that he had come in answer to an inner call.

Dispenser of Grace

Ramana began his life-long stay at Tiruvannamalai by meditating in the thousand-pillared *mantapam* (stone hall) in the temple grounds. At this period his youthfulness made him the butt of practical jokes and offensive attentions from ignorant people. An aged recluse named Seshadriswamy tried to ward off the hooligans, but it did not ease the situation for he was thought to be crazed. Ramana therefore left the mantapam for the dank cave hollowed out beneath it. Here again he steeped himself in meditation. He became emaciated, his hair grew long and his nails curled. Vermin attacked the flesh of his body and drank his blood. He ate only the little which the old recluse managed to force between his lips. This went on until a mendicant, horrified by his appearance, fetched a *sadhu* (holy man) to help him carry out the Buddha-like figure, which they reverently placed before a shrine of Shiva.

The uncanny silence of the youthful sage attracted attention and people flocked to receive his *darshan* (spiritual blessing). They sensed a tremendous concentration of divinity. Ramana then moved away to Pavalakunru, high up the hill, where, in 1900, his mother and elder brother found him after much searching, but failed to persuade him to return home.

Ramana was regarded as a *jivanmukta*, one who had realized identity with the Supreme whilst still in the body. By 1916 crowds of people assembled daily. He was called *Bhagavan* (Lord) and *Sri Maharshi* (Great Sage) by those who sought spiritual guidance. An *ashram* (spiritual colony) grew around him; visitors sat in a large hall where he gave darshan and answered questions about yoga and enlightenment. Sitting in the hall, or performing daily *pradaksinam* (ritual circumambulation) of Arunachala, Bhagavan gave peace, hope and happiness to all who approached him, regardless of sex, age, status, religious or political beliefs. His field was the whole of humanity; his teachings a unique interpretation of the age-old wisdom of the *Upanishads*.

In 1948 appeared the first signs of the cancer that was to deprive his devotees of the beloved presence that for more than 50 years had radiated happiness. Yet throughout his illness his spirit glowed even more serenely, more brilliantly, than ever before. Right up to the last day he insisted on giving darshan to the stream of visitors.

The end came in April, 1950, when Ramana was re-absorbed into Arunachala-Shiva – the Source of All. But people who visit Tiruvannamalai today declare that Bhagavan's presence is as potent as it was during his earthly life, and that his grace still flows swiftly into those who open their hearts and surrender to the spell of Ramana-Arunachala.

KENNETH GRANT

FURTHER READING: Arthur Osborne, *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* (Rider, 1959).

Popperfoto

Photograph of Rasputin with some of his admirers: he was regarded with reverence by the Empress Alexandra and her confidant, Anna Vyrubova. When he was murdered in 1916, the Empress had his body buried in a special chapel, to which she went for spiritual comfort

Half a century after the assassination of Rasputin, much remains enigmatic about the life of the 'Holy Devil' from Siberia who gained an extraordinary influence over the Russian Imperial court

RASPUTIN

GRIGORI RASPUTIN was born c 1871 in Siberia at Pokrovskoe on the post road to Tobolsk. His father, Yefim, and mother were peasants owning land and stables. In the winter the family slept on the stove; in the summer on a shelf below the roof. Pokrovskoe was pious and many pilgrims set off for Verkhoturie where the relics of St Simeon are preserved. There lived Makari, a *starets*, a holy man to whom pilgrims went for advice. Yefim picked up many roubles by driving passengers from the posting station and as Grigori grew up he often took this job off his father's hands. He picked up many stories from his fares and when he retold them he embellished them from his own imagination.

An accident which occurred when he was 12 years old profoundly moved him. He was bathing in the river Tura with his brother Misha when the latter got out of his depth. He tried to save him, and his cries attracted a peasant who dashed into the river and collected them; Misha died. But why should he be saved and his brother lost? He decided that he must have been preserved for a special purpose. Three years later he surprised his parents by deciding to make a pilgrimage to Verkhoturie. So with pack on back and staff in hand he set off secretly, but his father overtook him and beat him and brought him home.

When he was 18 he had to drive a monk to the monastery of Abalask. They talked of religion all the way, which stimulated the young man's interest in monastic life.

Abalask was celebrating a festival and was thronged with visitors, and there Grigori was presented to the Bishop of Barnaul, whose conversation reinforced Grigori's religiosity. At Abalask he met Praskovia, a peasant girl, and fell in love. The following year they were married and went to live in the family home. In due course Praskovia gave birth to a son who died prematurely. Grigori was prostrated with grief and went to consult the starets Makari in his forest hut.

He found Makari weighed down with chains which had worked deep grooves on his meagre body, but a benevolent face gazed out from the wilderness of hair. He was only 50 but he looked eternal. About Praskovia's lost child he said, 'Only six months old, he died without sin and will be gathered to the Lord of little children. Do not grieve my son, God has marked you out for one of his own.'

There was a bevy of cocks and hens outside the hut and when the starets came out one hen fluttered to his shoulder and began pecking at his mouth as if kissing him. The rest of the poultry followed him about, all clucking. 'My hens are talking about you,' said Makari, 'they say a man with your eyes is now going home but he will go far and further than far.' Grigori picked up a brown feather. 'This will remind me,' he said, 'I am going further than far, perhaps to Kiev.'

Among those listening when Grigori arrived home and recounted his adventures was his close friend Dimitri Pecherkin. He was deeply religious and was greatly moved by the reception Makari had given Grigori. Next day they went fishing but Dimitri was more interested in the starets than in fish. 'He said I was going to travel,' said Grigori. 'You can believe it,' replied Dimitri. 'He foresees, it has been proved.'

The Men of God

Some years passed. Praskovia bore him another son and two daughters. Grigori worked and fished and went to church and day-dreamed. One day, coming home from the fields, there was a flash from the sun and he saw the Holy Virgin. It was only for a moment and the vision was gone. He hurried home to tell his family, who did not know what to make of it. Grigori, greatly perplexed, discussed the vision with Pecherkin, who advised him to seek advice from Makari. So he set off once more for Verkhoturie and the forest hut, accompanied by his friend. Makari had no doubts about the matter. Such visions of the Holy Mother were not uncommon. 'It may mean you are to become a starets,' he said, 'you must go to Athos and pray for light on your way.'

Mount Athos was a long way off, in Greece, but Pecherkin was enthusiastic, and volunteered to make the pilgrimage with Rasputin. They set out, accepting lifts by river and waggon when these were offered, and when there was no other mode of transport, they walked. From Odessa they were deck passengers across the Black Sea, the cost being defrayed by a pilgrim society.

Eventually the ship came in sight of the Holy Mountain and they went ashore at the monastery of St Pantaleimon. As ordinary pilgrims, they were free to stay as long as they liked but, if intending to reside there, they had to work in the fields and workshops. For five days they fulfilled their religious duties with a joyous spirit but then Rasputin expressed a wish to return home. He had not received any special enlightenment.

It was two years before Rasputin returned home and during this period he joined a sect known as the Khlysty, or Men of God. Up to the time of his death, Rasputin's enemies were to denounce him as a Khlyst. It is curious that when the Tsar first met him he noted in his diary, 'Today I met a Man of God from Siberia.'

The Khlysty held that the Holy Spirit had power to inspire young virgins to become begetters of Christs. At their meetings there would be *Bogoroditsi* – Christ-bearers, Christs and candidates. The chief mass was a *radenie* or 'fervour', in which all danced round a jar of water heating by a stove in the centre. The participants were in white cotton and the virgins held wands of twigs rolled in towels with which they beat the dancers, urging them to go faster and faster until they fell in hysteria. It was alleged that the hysteria was followed by promiscuous copulation, but this has not been proved. The task of the Christ-bearers was to inculcate the gift of prophecy, to teach the technique of healing through prayer and to learn how to expel demons, in all of which Grigori Rasputin became proficient. He also accepted the heretical dogma that to repent one must first commit sin. On the other hand he grasped the power of the inward turning of the Spirit.

Soon after his homecoming Rasputin began to turn a barn into a temple, painting it white and covering the interior walls with icons, raising a circle of earth in the middle and making a place for the boiling pot. He taught the young folk of the village the practices of the Men of God, which so angered the local priest that he denounced him to the Bishop of Tobolsk as a Khlyst. The Bishop sent two police officers to the village but Rasputin foresaw the move and set off on a pilgrimage to Kiev. Rasputin then appears to have reverted to Orthodoxy, acknowledging to himself that he was a 'failed Christ' but retaining his miraculous powers.

Rasputin and the Tsarevich

It is strongly suspected that a decrease in emotional stress has a beneficial effect on bleeding. As calm and a sense of well-being return to a patient, his capillary blood flow will decline and the strength of his vascular walls increase. In this context, the question of whether Rasputin hypnotized the Tsarevich becomes a matter of degree. If, technically, it was not hypnosis that he practised, it was nevertheless a powerful suggestion – Prince Yussoupov's account gives an indication of its strength. When Rasputin used this power on Alexis, weaving his tales, filling a darkened room with his commanding voice, he did in effect cast a spell over a boy overwhelmed by pain. Then, as Rasputin assured him in tones which left no room for doubt, Alexis believed that the torment was receding, that soon he would be walking again, that perhaps they would go together to see the wonders of Siberia. The calm and sense of well-being produced by this powerful flow of reassuring language produced a dramatic emotional change in the Tsarevich. And as if by a miracle, the emotional change affected Alexis's body. The bleeding slowed, the exhausted child dropped off to sleep and eventually the bleeding stopped altogether. No one else could have done it, neither the anguished parents nor the terrified doctors. Only a man supreme in his own self-confidence could transmit this self-confidence to a child.

Robert K. Massie *Nicholas and Alexandra*

Introduction to the Tsar

As a *strannik*, or wandering pilgrim preacher, Rasputin with his long hair, piercing gaze and voice which compelled attention, attracted crowds, and many people went to church just to hear him discoursing afterwards at the church gates, or followed him to beer houses to discuss religion. His followers diverted him to markets, fairs and festivals off the main route to Kiev. The rumour of his coming, and with it the belief that he healed the sick, went ahead of him. When he neared Kazan many students from the seminary came out to meet him and led him to the hall of the theological college. He was an unqualified success and answered many questions concerning the true meaning of passages of the Bible.

After some months Bishop Michael of Kazan directed a monk to take Rasputin to St Petersburg and present him to Bishop Theophan. He also carried an effusive recommendation to the Seminary at St Petersburg. Rasputin decided that he must go to Kronstadt to meet Father John, a celebrated miracle-worker, who when he noticed Rasputin among the crowd in the cathedral called to him to come forward and receive Holy Communion before all others. Some days later Rasputin had an intimate conversation with him. Father John's introduction unlocked many doors in St Petersburg to Rasputin, and Bishop Theophan presented him to the Grand Duke Nicholas and Anastasia Nikolaevna. The Grand Duke was deeply interested in Rasputin and had a presentiment that he could be used politically. He decided to present Rasputin to the Tsar.

On 31 October 1905 the Grand Duchess Militsa Nikolaevna and her sister Anastasia Nikolaevna gave a dinner party for the Grand Duke Nicholas, at which the Tsar and the Tsaritsa were present. They talked much of the starets whom they had discovered. The party rose late and in the morning Militsa presented Rasputin to the Tsar. The Tsar noted in his diary for 1 November 1905: 'Today we came to know Grigori, the Man of God from the province of Tobolsk.' This was a grave turning point in the career of Rasputin, and of the Tsar himself.

In the previous year the Tsaritsa had prayed to the starets Serafim, at his shrine

in Sarov forest, that she might bring forth a son and heir. The prayer was answered and Alexis was born. The Tsar in his great joy decreed that Serafim be made a saint and, mustering the Grand Dukes, he went to Sarov to shoulder the ancient relics of the starets Serafim in the ceremony of canonization.

The Tsaritsa felt that she would have the protection of the old peasant saint for the infant Alexis, who suffered from haemophilia, so that whenever he bled, even from a scratch, no aid short of the miraculous could stanch the blood. The role of saintly protector was transferred from St Serafim to Rasputin, who was always summoned to pray when the doctors had failed.

Rasputin first saw the child when he was two years old, when he was present at tea at the palace one afternoon. He brought presents of icons for the children who seemed to like him. On Alexis's third birthday the boy injured his leg and Grigori was sent for. When Alexis saw the burly peasant entering his bedroom he laughed, and so did Rasputin, and when Rasputin touched the injured leg the bleeding stopped. Turning to their Majesties, he said: 'Do not be alarmed, your son will live and at last the disease will disappear.'

Although it was not officially announced that Rasputin had been called in to heal the Tsarevitch, it soon came out in court gossip. Nothing could repress the Grand Duchess Militsa who had made Rasputin her pet, clothed him, built him a new house at Pokrovskoe and was forever praising the starets and magnifying his deeds.

Rasputin now had the backing of the higher clergy and Bishop Theophan went to stay at the new house at Pokrovskoe; he reported a godly establishment, furnished with the utmost simplicity. Rasputin also began to take a hand in politics, checking the impulsive Tsar when he thought of going to war in 1912: he was against any war which boded ill for Russia.

Miracles of Second Sight

The monk Iliodor, the 'mad monk', having graduated from St Petersburg, set out to imitate Rasputin, preaching and healing, and obtained a large following in eastern Russia. He became jealous of Rasputin's success and stole an affectionate letter which Rasputin had received from the Empress. Iliodor had it copied and circulated to members of the Duma, the state council. He nursed a suspicion that most of Grigori's miracles were achieved through copulation. Matters came to a head when Iliodor took Rasputin by surprise by denouncing him to the pious Bishop Hermogen and others. A free fight ensued and Rasputin barely escaped with his life. He hastened to take the story to the Tsar and Iliodor and Bishop Hermogen were both exiled. The monk had his revenge by sending to Pokrovskoe a woman who stabbed Rasputin in the stomach, exclaiming, 'I have killed the Antichrist'.

The gift of second sight does not seem to have warned Rasputin of this attempt on his life, but in 1911 there was evidence of his possessing it. He was in Kiev when the carriage of the prominent politician Stolypin passed, and Rasputin shouted after him 'Death is for you. Death is approaching.' Next night Stolypin was shot and wounded by a revolutionary while at the theatre, dying a few days later.

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and his family, about 1905: Nicholas and Alexandra were haunted by constant anxiety for their son Alexis, the heir to the throne, who suffered from haemophilia, and Rasputin's influence with them stemmed from his mysterious ability to stop the bleeding

Later, hearing that his reputation was being destroyed by mounting scandal, Rasputin cut short a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and hurried back to the capital. The most damaging of the stories circulating about him was that a woman named Anna Vyrubova had become his mistress. Anna Vyrubova had a small house near the palace. She was poor and did not even possess a new dress, but she was the intimate companion of the Empress. The house was a 'home from home' for the Imperial family and Rasputin was a frequent guest.

In January 1915 Anna was involved in a railway accident; she was thrown onto the carriage floor, her skull was fractured and her legs crushed and broken. The Tsar and Tsaritsa hastened to the scene to find her unconscious. Anna was taken to hospital and then transferred to the palace, Rasputin being summoned by telegram. When he arrived at the palace it was to find that Anna had not regained consciousness and

the doctors despaired of saving her life. Avoiding the Tsar and Tsaritsa who were standing by the bed, he stared at Anna and whispered to her 'Annushka, open your eyes.' Astonished, the Emperor and Empress saw her obey. 'She will live,' Rasputin said, 'but will be a cripple for the rest of her life.' Staggering on his feet, his face covered in heavy sweat, he fell in a faint at the doorway.

Rasputin had temporarily fallen out of favour at court shortly before the First World War. The Tsar had not accepted his second sight about the impending war in Europe. Rasputin sent a letter to the Tsar warning him against becoming involved in the war, lest he plunge Russia into a 'sea of tears without shore'. This letter irritated the Tsar but things changed after the Vyrubova 'miracle' the following year.

Poisoned Cake at Midnight

From 1915 until his death in the following year Rasputin lived in an apartment on Gorokhovaya, paid for by the Tsar, with his wife and two daughters. For most of the day the samovar was hissing on the table and all were welcome to have tea with him. The house and stairs were crowded with beggars and petitioners, almost all of them strangers. On the wall were pinned scraps of paper bearing all manner of pleas: 'Your prayers are asked for my wife who is dangerously ill', 'My daughter is in prison for stealing bread, can you get her set free?'. There were also many requests from businessmen for contracts, which caused a widespread rumour that he was being used by German agents.

In 1915 a sharp reverse in the fortunes of war, in which Russia had ranged herself against Germany, led to an outbreak of spy mania. Somebody must be to blame, probably the Empress and her crony Rasputin who must be selling secrets to the enemy. The Grand Duke Nicholas, commander-in-chief of the army, had been betrayed. When in the early spring a well-trained German army appeared advancing over the hills, the vast but ill-trained forces of the Grand Duke took to headlong retreat. By August 1915 the Russian army was on the brink of total collapse and Russia herself on the eve of revolution. Rasputin and the Empress were strongly against the Grand Duke, and on 23 August the Tsar himself assumed the high command.

Mansell Collection

'A man with your eyes will go far': many who knew Rasputin commented on the hypnotic power of his eyes

The year 1916 was one of conspiracy and intrigue. Among the various factions was the 'English' party, who above all wished to make the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany impossible, and wanted to bring about the abdication of the Tsar, and a smaller group which plotted to contrive the murder of Rasputin, which would be a signal to the English party to go ahead with its plan for a palace revolution. Prince Felix Yusupov made himself responsible for the murder. Feigning friendship with Rasputin over several months, he eventually invited him to his palace at midnight, where he had prepared a dish of cakes impregnated with cyanide and a bottle of poisoned wine. He was also armed with a revolver. The meeting was on the ground floor, but there was a noisy party of conspirators upstairs.

After talking for an hour or so, Yusupov invited Rasputin to take some cakes; Rasputin ate two or three. To the astonishment of Yusupov, Rasputin then became merry and said 'Come on, get your guitar and sing to me, let's go to the gypsies.' Yusupov poured some wine into one of the glasses. 'Good,' said Rasputin, 'now let's go to the gypsies.' As he stood up, Yusupov pulled out the revolver and shot him in the neck. Leaving Rasputin flat on the floor, Yusupov in great excitement rushed upstairs and told the other conspirators. Some of them went down and saw Rasputin, far from dead, blundering from door to door, each of which was locked. Shots rang out. At length Rasputin hurled his weight at a door and burst it open. He was in full flight when one of the conspirators, Purishkeyevitch fired the fatal shot. They tied his wrists together, bundled him along to a waiting car, and drove to the Neva, where they broke a hole in the ice. But according to some accounts, Rasputin was still alive when they pushed him in: he had managed to get one hand free. When his body was discovered, his right hand was found frozen to his chest, with three fingers clutched together. He had apparently died making the sign of the Cross.

STEPHEN GRAHAM

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Raven

Large black bird of the crow family, possessed of a harsh croaking voice and an appetite for carrion, and generally of disturbing and sinister character in folk belief; frequently associated with battlefields, corpses and death; two ravens acted as the spies of the god Odin; Raven is an important figure in the mythology of American Indians of the North Pacific coast.

See CROW; ODIN; PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS.

Re

Or Ra, sun god and 'great god' of ancient Egypt, closely connected with the kingship of the pharaohs; as the sun at dawn, represented as a beetle or beetle-headed man; as the declining sun, he was Re-Atum, an old and wise man; linked with the god Amun at Thebes; frequently linked with the falcon-headed sky god Horus.

See EGYPT: SUN.

Red is the colour of war and conquest, of violent destructive energy, and of the triumph of the rising sun: the red flag of Turkey

Sonia Halliday

RED

FOR MOST PEOPLE red is a symbol of dominance and success. It represents the positive side of the personality, and is one of the favourite colours of men and women all over the world. A primary colour, red varies from bright scarlet or crimson to reddish yellow or brown. It is the colour of blood, fire, the poppy and the rose. As with other colours its symbolic meanings are very various. As the outward sign of health it is a happy colour; but because it is also the colour of blood it is a universal danger signal, the symbol of murder, anarchy and war, associated with the red planet Mars and with fierce energy and destruction.

The reddish brown of the harvest represents success and fulfilment and, in Nature, the end of life. In ancient Rome red-haired puppies were ritually sacrificed to influence the ripening of the corn. The ancient Egyptians buried red-headed men alive as an act of homage to the god Osiris.

It has been suggested that the choice of red by kings in ancient times was because of the rarity of Tyrian purple, but this is probably a rationalization as red is a universal symbol of power. Survivals of this belief are reflected in the naming of *The Red Book*, the old directory of the court and nobility, and in the red carpet which is unrolled for important people. In heraldry red signifies magnanimity and fortitude, extremely desirable qualities for any monarch and 'heraldically it representeth fire', according to an old writer. It is the colour of the vestments worn by popes when they hear Mass, and the hats of cardinals were traditionally scarlet. In the spiritual sense red symbolizes zeal for faith, charity and love; in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* the Red Cross Knight personifies St George of England who typifies Christian holiness.

The People's Flag

In church decoration, red is the colour of martyrdom and a martyr may be symbolically represented by a red rose. In an associated sense, the colour also stands for cruelty and blood-guilt. The term 'red-handed', for instance, implies that someone has been caught in the very act of committing a crime, like a murderer discovered with the blood of his victim still on his hands.

The blood-coloured fighting banner of revolutionaries, adopted from the Romans to whom red meant war and a call to arms, may be seen as a reaffirmation of blood brotherhood, the bond that unites the poor when they storm the citadels of power. The same symbolism is recognizable in the red caps worn by French Revolutionaries, the red shirts of Garibaldi's legions, and more recently in the Communist anthem *The Red Flag* with its stirring lines:

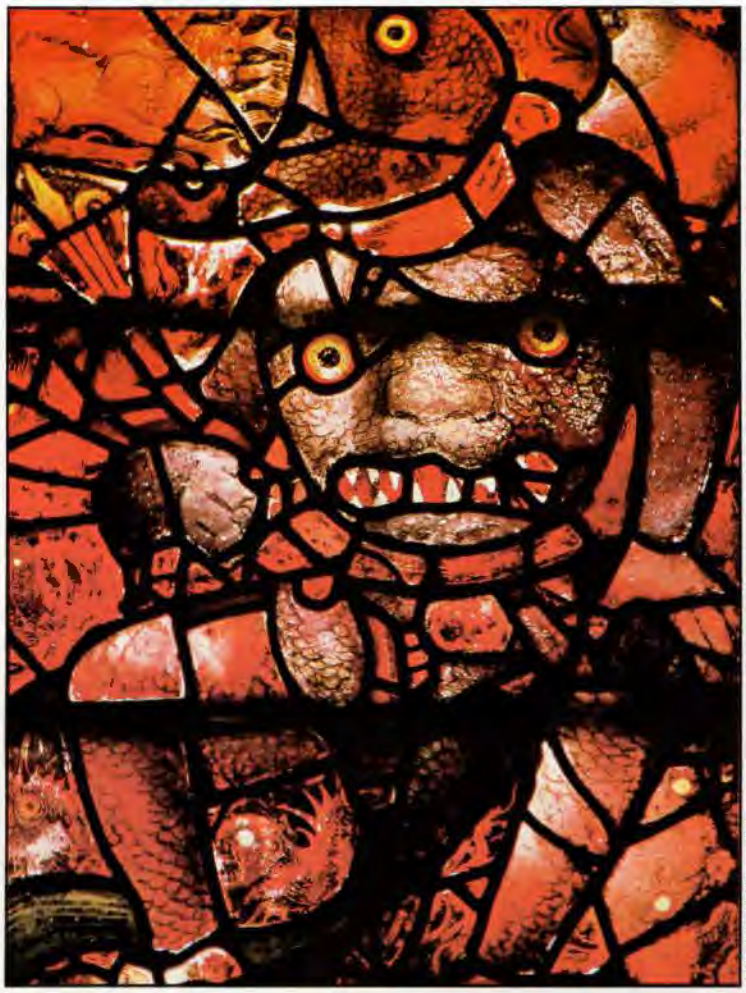
> The People's flag is deepest red.
> Within its shade our martyrs bled.
> And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
> Their life-blood dyed its every fold.

It is evident that the more dynamic aspects of red are derived directly from the powerful mystique of blood, the life essence. In order to endow people who had died with renewed life, primitive men sometimes painted the corpses red.

Many of the symbolic and magical qualities of red arise from its close association with the crimson tongues of fire which the alchemists linked with the idea of purification. They also called the purest gold 'red', and one of the names of the Philosophers' Stone, which was supposed to transmute base metals into gold, was 'the red tincture'. One of the five colours of Chinese symbolism, red is related to fire and corresponds to the south. A Chinese official of the highest rank wore a red button in his cap as a badge of honour.

An association of ideas arising from the protective role of the glowing red fire as a barrier against beasts of prey, may have led to the choice of red objects for defence against psychic attack (though conversely, because of its connection with Mars, red may also be used in mounting such an attack). Scarlet bedding was once in general use for smallpox patients, and a skein of red silk about the neck was supposed to prevent nose-bleeding. As late as the 1830s 'tongues' of scarlet cloth were on sale in London for sufferers from scarlet fever. Today, red flannel is still sometimes recommended for the treatment of rheumatism and is perhaps one of the few surviving examples of folk medicine based on the principle that 'like cures like' or, in this instance, that fire drives out fire.

Red was once thought to provide an effective defence against the Evil Eye, and red coral was used for this purpose



Adam Woolfitt/Susan Griggs

Adam Woolfitt/Susan Griggs

Left **Detail from a stained glass window in Fairford church, Gloucestershire, showing the Devil; sin is scarlet, according to the Bible, and evil spirits are traditionally associated with this colour** ***Right*** **Red is often used to symbolize lust, as in the Scarlet Woman of the book of Revelation: prostitute wearing a red dress, in a house in Amsterdam**

from Roman times onwards. In the 16th century Reginald Scot, author of *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, wrote that 'the coral preserveth such as bear it from fascination or bewitching, and in this respect they are hanged about children's necks'. In medieval Europe a piece of red rag was supposed to protect the wearer against fascination, and in 17th century Yorkshire a sick child might be treated by burying a heart-shaped piece of red cloth in the earth, together with nail clippings and tufts of hair, to offset the spell that had supposedly caused the illness.

Badge of Shame

Because of their ruddy hue, certain plants and trees, particularly the rowan (see ROWAN), were supposed to have the power to drive away evil spirits and were placed near houses for this reason. The fact that evil spirits themselves were frequently red-coloured may seem paradoxical but this was possibly because they were generally fire elementals, dwelling amid flames and sulphur deep in the bowels of the earth. Mephistopheles wore red, and the devil of the tempests on the stormy Breton coast, who was popularly supposed to have warned Napoleon Buonaparte of his downfall, was called the 'Red Man'.

According to the Bible sin is not only evil but scarlet: 'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow' (Isaiah 1.18). Nevertheless it was a sacred colour among the Jews and was used for the adornment of the tabernacle.

Red is the colour of witchcraft and, in the words of the poet W. B. Yeats, it was 'the colour of magic in every country and has been so since the very earliest times'. Irish witches wore little red caps which they placed upon their heads before flying to their coven meetings; and Granny Smith, a fearsome witch in Sussex, was nicknamed 'Old Mother Redcap'.

Psychologically, red both attracts and repels. Some people have an almost instinctive aversion to those with red hair, which in Europe may be connected with the tradition that the treacherous Judas had red or ginger hair. In India Brahmins at one time prohibited marriages between their men and red-haired girls.

Red is closely associated with the emotions of love and hate. A bright red symbolizes courage and self-confidence, deep crimson primitive animality, and scarlet anger. Red is often associated with lust, as in the Scarlet Woman of the book of Revelation. This was freely recognized in 17th century New England, where adulteresses were compelled to wear a scarlet letter 'A' as a badge of shame. Most brides continue to honour the old maxims: 'Marry in red, better be dead' and 'Green's forsaken, red's brazen'.

Red is the most positive of all colours. A red light is a clear warning of trouble ahead, and even at the most mundane levels the colour cannot be ignored. A red sky in the morning remains today, as in the past, the shepherd's warning.

(See also COLOURS.)

ERIC MAPLE

Red Horses of Death

Fantastically coloured horses are a regular feature of the happy Celtic otherworld, and one of the great pleasures to be anticipated were the horse-races to which the Celts were so attached. Red is the colour usually associated with death in the Celtic world, and as a result red horsemen are sometimes represented as constituting an omen of disaster. The three horsemen from the kingdom of Donn appear at a critical stage in the story of Dá Derga's Hostel. The doomed king sees the three Reds (*na trí Deirg*), men with red hair and red equipment, riding on three red horses. Like so many otherworld riders who come to interfere with the world of men, they cannot be overtaken. Again, in the story of the *Táin*, Cú Chulainn goes out in his chariot to attempt to locate a terrible cry which he has heard. He sees a chariot approaching, to which a single red horse is harnessed. The horse has only one leg . . . A red woman, the war goddess, is in the chariot, and she is accompanied by a man carrying a fork of hazel.

Anne Ross *Pagan Celtic Britain*

REDON

BORN AT BORDEAUX in 1840, the French painter and graphic artist Odilon Redon was an exceptional man of visions and dreams, who stands out as an artist apart in a realistic age. He came to maturity at a time when others were developing the science of Impressionism but he was entirely out of sympathy with this effort to translate the external aspects of Nature into terms of colour. Commenting in 1868 on the Salon of that year, he saw nothing more in the work of Manet, Renoir, Monet and Sisley than 'the direct reproduction of reality'. In a later reference to the Impressionists he went so far as to describe them as 'the parasites of the object'.

Unduly prejudiced as he may now seem against a movement that produced paintings of great beauty, Redon was true to his own aims. His way of thought is implicit in his remarks on what the Impressionists lacked. He sought for, as he himself put it, 'all that uplifts the spirit into the realm of the mysterious, the disturbance of the unresolved . . . all the suggestion that art may give of the unexpected, the undefined or undefinable'. Eschewing colour, he conveyed these sensations in shadowed drawings and lithographs, his 'Blacks', that mainly occupied him until late middle age.

Full of strange fancies, expressive of the lost and lonely feeling of humanity surrounded by the unknown, they were the products of an extreme sensibility that showed itself at an early period. He is portrayed as a melancholy youth, tall, thin, pale, taking refuge from the rough impact of everyday life in the peaceful solitude of the family country house, La Peyrelebade, welcoming the night as a relief from the harshness of day and its transformation into another world. It was a torture to him to study art for a while under the uncongenial auspices of the academic painter Gérôme. But he had other mentors who encouraged his individual bent.

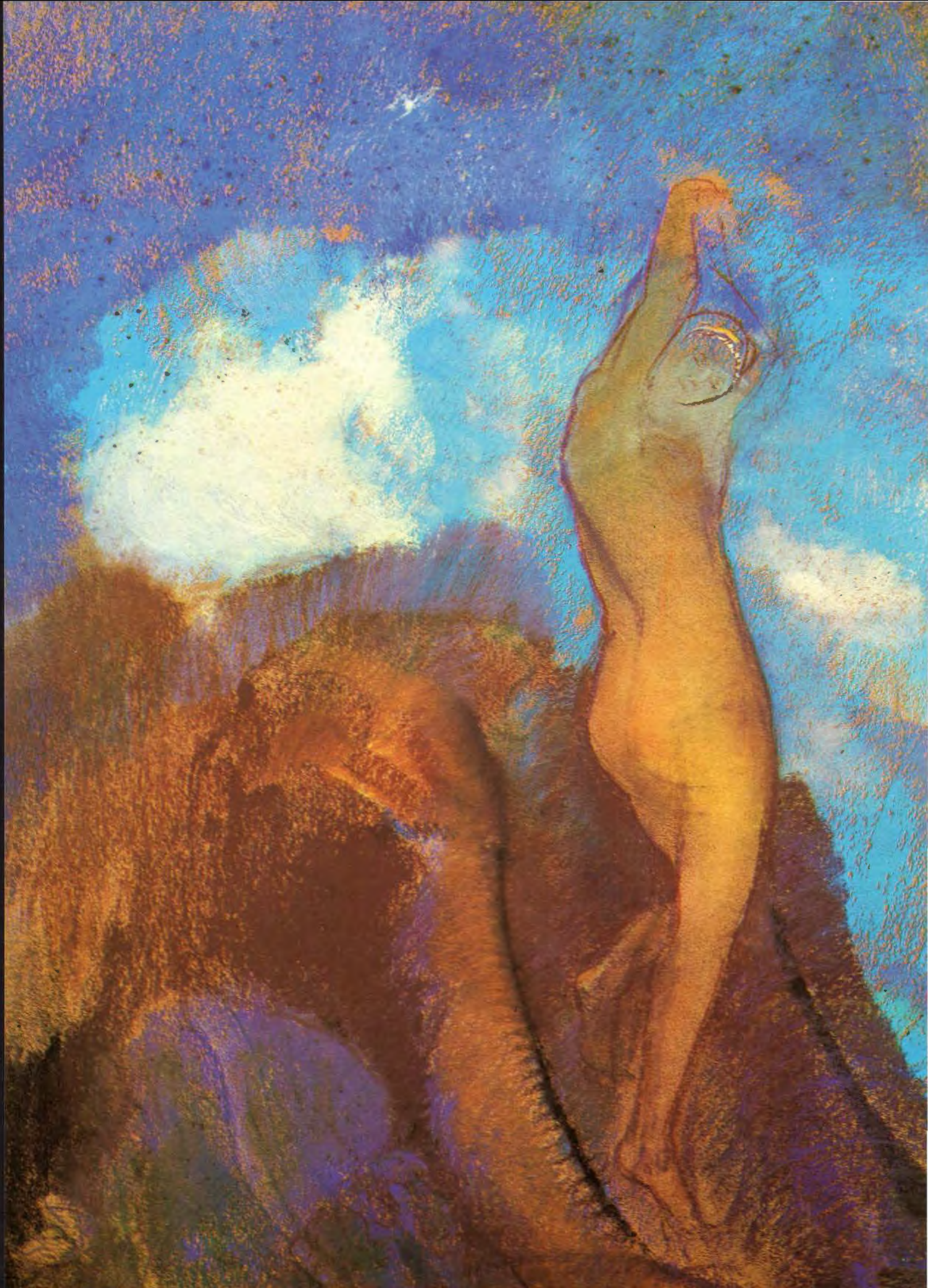
Stanislas Gorin, an artist in the Romantic tradition, aroused Redon's enthusiasm for Delacroix and for Gustave Moreau. The influence of the former is reflected in early etchings of warriors at single combat in a wild and empty landscape. Moreau's *Oedipus and the Sphinx* stirred his interest in myth. Friendship with the Bordeaux botanist, Armand Clavaud, who investigated the relation between plant and animal life, caused him to regard this indeterminate frontier from an imaginative viewpoint. He saw the botanist's scientific research turned into fantasy in the paintings of another acquaintance, Roger Bresdin, who would convert the tendrils of a creeper into snakes and give birds and flowers human faces. Hindu poets, German philosophers, the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, the *Fleurs du Mal* of Baudelaire, added esoteric literary influences.

Thus inspired, Redon produced the remarkable charcoal drawings and the lithographs published in albums at intervals in the 1870s and 1880s. They include such memorable conceptions as the spider with its wickedly alive compound of insect and human character that J. K. Huysmans described in his 'decadent' masterpiece *A Rebours* in 1884; the *Vision* (in the album *Dans le Rêve*) in which a huge eye floats balloon-like, upturned to the infinite; *The Masque of the Red Death*, a theme taken from Poe; and the symbolic and intensely mournful *Prisoner* (now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York), in which a figure taps feebly at the barred window of his cell. Long ignored and solitary, Redon gained three devoted admirers in the 1880s: the journalist Emile Hennequin, who wrote of him as deserving, like Baudelaire, 'the superb eulogy of having created a new thrill'; Huysmans, who somewhat distorted appreciation in picturing him as a poet of Satanism and delirious fancy; and the poet Stephane Mallarmé who probably best understood the artist's 'lucid despair'. As a result of growing interest Redon was encouraged to exhibit, and from 1890 onwards he abandoned the dusky monochrome which he had peopled with melancholy phantoms and turned to colour in oil painting and pastel.

There was a change also in the mood of the time as the end of the century approached. An impatience of the kind that Redon had shown with the realism of the Impressionists

Andre Held/Joseph P. Ziolo

Redon was described by one admirer as deserving 'the superb eulogy of having created a new thrill', and by another as a poet of Satanism and delirious fancy: 'The Buddha', c 1905



was felt by others. The isolated dreamer now became an inspiring force to those who sought for new and imaginative expression.

The English writer Arthur Symons, whose book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* influenced the spread of Symbolism in England, described Redon as 'the French Blake'. The painter Maurice Denis in his group portrait *Hommage à Cézanne* placed him foremost in the group proclaiming the spirit of a new age. Yet Redon, never a man of 'movements', still pursued an independent course. The feeling of suffering so strongly marked in the 'Blacks' remained for a time in works devoted to the mystical portrayal of Christ though it was now suffering to which spiritual force was superior. His happy marriage in 1880 to the young Camille Falte may have been one of the reasons for a growing optimism.

A new sense of emancipation and delight animates his work after the religious phase of the 1890s. He reverted to classical myth but not simply in order to illustrate its characters and episodes. His *Pegasus and the Dragon* is an energetic symbol of triumph over the powers of darkness. His *Chariot of Apollo* soars aloft in exultant movement and cascades of iridescent colour, towards the source of light.

In his later work Redon was also deliberately aiming to recover an equilibrium between the external and internal world. There are portraits and landscapes, delightful in themselves though without the imaginative quality that was his unique gift. But in his brilliant pastel flower-pieces he succeeded in bringing external Nature and the contemplative inner vision into harmony. More than flowers seen, they are scents made visible and sensations experienced. Living until 1916, a witness of the opening excitements of 20th century art, he retained to the end his singular independence of vision.

WILLIAM GAUNT

Redon described himself as seeking for 'all that uplifts the spirit into the realm of the mysterious, the disturbance of the unresolved . . . all the suggestion that art may give of the unexpected, the undefined or undefinable'; three of his later works are *(facing page)* 'The Birth of Venus' and *(below, left to right)* 'Dream' and 'Sphinx leaning on a rock'

Andre Held/Joseph P. Ziolo

Andre Held/Joseph P. Ziolo

REFRIGERIUM

A LATIN WORD meaning 'refreshment', *refrigerium* was adopted by early Latin-speaking Christians to describe the hoped-for bliss that would reward the faithful after death. The term implies a concept of the afterlife in which refreshing coolness was regarded as a most desirable thing. As used in Christian texts, a reference is often implied to the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man and the beggar (Luke, chapter 16). For after death the rich man implores Abraham to send Lazarus 'to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame'. Dives seeks this refreshment because he is in a fiery hell – a fate that he deserved for his former way of life. But the idea that the dead were in need of cool water is far older than Christianity.

As far back as the Pyramid Texts (c 2400 BC), the dead pharaohs were assured that libations of water would be made for them. In subsequent Egyptian tomb-paintings and in the vignettes of the Book of the Dead the deceased is frequently depicted receiving draughts of water, often from a goddess. And in the Hellenistic period inscriptions abound with formulas such as 'May Osiris give thee cool water'. But the most significant of all is doubtless this inscription, dating about 46 BC, in which a dead woman addresses her husband from the tomb: '. . . The living water of which the earth hath for its dwellers is stagnant water for me . . . I no longer know where I am, now that I have arrived in this valley (of the dead). Would that I had water to drink from a running stream and one to say to me, "Remove not thy pitcher from the stream!" O that my face were turned towards the north wind on the river bank that the coolness thereof might quiet the anguish of my heart!'

This belief that the dead crave for fresh water and cool breezes also found expression in ancient Mesopotamia. In the famous Epic of Gilgamesh (see GILGAMESH) it is said of the dead that 'dust is their food and clay their sustenance', and they long for offerings of water to be made to them by their surviving relatives. The evidence of tombs often reveals the provision made to convey liquid offerings to the dead: for example, in the ancient

Andre Held/Joseph P. Ziolo

The belief that the dead were parched and in need of cool water was natural in dry, hot lands: Egyptian coffin painting, c 200 BC, showing a soul in the form of a bird with a human head, receiving water from a tree goddess

Michael Holford/British Museum

Canaanite city of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) many graves were equipped with pipes leading down from ground level.

That the dead should be regarded as parched and in need of cool water is an idea that naturally occurred in the dry hot lands of the Near East. And the image of a celestial stream or fountain of refreshing, life-giving water, which appears in many of the ancient religions of this area, found dramatic expression in the culminating vision of John in the book of Revelation (chapter 22): 'Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb . . . The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come" . . . And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.'

The words *refrigerare* and *refrigerium* abound in early Christian funerary inscriptions and liturgical formulas, expressing the intuitions of a faith that had its roots in the hot Mediterranean lands. This southern aspiration for an eternal state of refreshing coolness contrasts notably with the view of the northern barbarians, who imagined Valhalla as a hall, brightly lighted and closed against cold and damp, where dead heroes warmed themselves by drinking the intoxicating liquor that flowed from the goat Heidrun.

'The Personality which animates each one of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires'; exponents of reincarnation believe that the soul must pass through a recurring cycle of birth-death-rebirth until ultimately achieving salvation

REINCARNATION

ONE OF THE MORE controversial religious beliefs, reincarnation has long been accepted by Hindus and Buddhists, and is today being increasingly adopted as an article of faith by a large number of people in other religious denominations. Reincarnation implies the state of being 'embodied anew'. That is, that the soul of a deceased person, after an interim period in the otherworld, is reborn in accordance with the merits acquired during its previous lifetime.

The human soul, it is believed, is a fragment of the divine, and will ultimately return to its divine source. But it is necessary for its own evolution that it should savour to the full the various experiences that life provides, and learn to distinguish the good from the bad, the eternal from the temporal. However, its ultimate destiny is far too great for this education to be completed in one brief sojourn on earth, and in the limited range of one lifetime and a single bodily form. For instance, the psycho-physical experience of a male is totally dissimilar to that of a female, and it is essential to have both if half of a fundamental experience is not to be missed. Obviously the soul must cover a wide range of knowledge and suffering in order to mature satisfactorily and only the soul that has been through tribulation can hope to be fit for the divine purpose for which it is intended.

Slowly, in the course of its successive rebirths the soul rids itself of its accumulated and inherited impurities, and evolves towards the goal of perfection. The novelist Sir Henry Rider Haggard, who was extremely interested in reincarnation, said: 'The Personality which animates each one of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires.'

Belief in reincarnation is very old, and is found in widely scattered primitive and preliterate communities. Its postulates are basic to Hinduism and most schools of Buddhism. Roman writers said it was prevalent among the Gauls and Druids. Several Greek schools of thought, notably the Orphics and Pythagoreans, subscribed to it, and Plato mentions it in the concluding part of his *Republic*. In later times the doctrine was adopted by the Essenes, Pharisees, Karaites and other Jewish and semi-Jewish religious groups. The Neoplatonists and Gnostics also held the theory, and it formed part of the cabalistic theology of medieval Jewry.

St Jerome (340–420) said that reincarnation in a special sense was taught among the early Christians and was given an esoteric interpretation that was communicated to a select few. Origen (186–253) thought that only in the light of reincarnation could certain scriptural passages be explained. But it was condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople, convened by the Emperor Justinian in 553, and became for a time a heretical doctrine. 'If anyone assert the fabulous pre-existence of souls,' decreed the Council, 'and shall submit to the monstrous doctrine that follows from it, let him be anathema.' Some scholars nonetheless believe that they can detect traces of the teaching in the writings of St Augustine, St Gregory and even St Francis of Assisi. Among its modern exponents are Theosophists, Anthroposophists and certain Spiritualists.

The Law of Destiny

Many people feel that the theory of reincarnation is in keeping with the idea of evolution and human progress and perfectibility. If man has shown a progressive advance from the lower animal forms to his present state of intellectual and moral development, it is clear that further progress is part of the plan for his future. The physical universe provides the environment for this advance to perfection, and it is here that he must work out his own destiny.

If the ultimate reasonableness of the cosmic purpose is accepted, a theory that can so logically account for the birth of congenital idiots, for those who die in childhood, and for others who have been given no chance to live out their lives, should clearly be given serious consideration.

The orthodox Christian finds it hard to explain the existence of a child who dies in infancy, bringing nothing but heartbreak to his parents. What is the purpose of the infant's transient passage through this world? What is his final destiny? Does he go to heaven?

If he does, it would seem to be unfair to the adult who must face the vicissitudes and temptations of a long life, and in the end perhaps find himself condemned to be punished for having succumbed to the temptations to which he was inevitably exposed. By a stroke of good luck the child, who has never encountered such pitfalls, goes straight to the happy lands reserved for the blessed.

According to reincarnationists, the stillborn baby, the mongol, the child who dies in infancy, are all merely adjusting the balance sheet of their own previous lives by these temporary shifts and accommodations. Some are receiving their reward, some their punishment, for what they have done before. It will all work out equitably in the end. There is a mathematical precision about the way the law of destiny operates. No one can escape its clauses. The fate of mortals must be worked out in accordance with strict principles and all the apparent inconsistencies, injustices and contradictions will be sorted out in future lifetimes.

The doctrine of reincarnation, say the believers, therefore absolves God from any charge of injustice, favouritism, cruelty or caprice. Each person is ultimately responsible for his own destiny. Much that seems inexplicable in the situations that confront man in this life can be reviewed against this background, for they are the result of events that occurred in a past incarnation. The pattern of our destiny is woven with the threads that we ourselves have spun.

In what form does the soul return to earth? Some schools of belief, particularly in Hinduism, hold that a man does not necessarily assume a human form in his next incarnation. Certain Hindu sects teach that the soul may be reborn as a plant, or an animal. Someone who has lived a life of vice or crime may be re-embodied as a cactus, a poison ivy, a lizard or a toad. According to the early Hindu law-giver Manu, the slayer of a Brahmin enters the womb of a sow or she-ass; a drunkard will be reborn as a bird that lives on dung; and other sinners and reprobates will become hyenas, rodents, insects and creatures of low and repulsive estate. Those who have done well will return as men and women.

Plant and animal transmigrations are not as a rule accepted by Western reincarnationists, who believe that once a soul

National Library of Scotland

Above **A modern writer, A. J. Stewart, who believes herself to be a reincarnation of James IV of Scotland described her life as the King in a book called *Falcon*: portrait of James IV** ***Right*** **Certain advanced beings return voluntarily to earth to help humanity, according to reincarnationists; one of these Masters is said to have lived as the philosopher Proclus in the 5th century AD, and as Francis Bacon, among other incarnations: portrait of Bacon, in the National Portrait Gallery**

has reached the human stage in its evolution it never returns to animal form. Human beings can only be reborn as men and women, and have the status and grade commensurate with their deserts, earned in their previous lives. One may be born a prince, a blind man or a leper.

Other questions are: how often does the soul return? Is the process indefinite? Considering that all men fall woefully short of the glory of God, what hope is there for anyone to attain the state of perfection required under the terms of this belief?

The number of chances each person has is said to range from three (once as a man, once as a woman, and once in the sex in which the soul fared better) to many thousands, some of which started at the beginning of Creation and may continue to the end of time. But it is generally believed that the cycle of birth-death-rebirth can be terminated by one or more of the various disciplines prescribed in the religious texts. Among them are renunciation, asceticism, good works, prayer, ritual and faith.

The Plain of Forgetfulness

The length of time for which the soul remains in the otherworld between incarnations is said to be determined by a number of factors. It seems to depend primarily on the condition of the soul concerned. In some cases it may return immediately, and in others after years, even centuries.

Certain advanced beings do not have to return at all, but do so voluntarily in order to assist the efforts of other men in their evolution towards perfection. In Buddhism such evolved beings are called Bodhisattvas, and it is believed that some of them have reincarnated again and again, and will continue to do so until all men are saved (see BUDDHISM).

The Tibetans believe that the Bodhisattva named Avalokitesvara became incarnate as their spiritual head, the Dalai Lama, and that each successive Dalai Lama is the embodiment of that august being. This idea determines the choice of successor to their deceased pontiff. When a Dalai Lama dies his soul does not wait in the otherworld as do the shades of lesser mortals, but immediately occupies the body of a child born at the precise moment of his death. It is the task of a special committee of senior lamas to find the child in question (see LAMAS).

What the soul does while it awaits reembodiment is again a matter of opinion among the various schools. Generally it is thought that in the next world it reaps its crop of rewards and punishments and learns its lessons before being despatched to earth again. Some dim vestige of memory survives this experience and is brought back to earth.

According to the Platonic theory the soul participates in the transcendental world of Ideas before it enters the earthly body at birth. These Ideas are Truth, Beauty and Goodness, of which the soul continues to receive intimations during its sojourn in bodily form. This recollection arouses in the individual a desire to regain the lost glory of his former estate. Man can, consequently, find true knowledge by remembering truths known to him before he took on a mortal frame. This idea is combined with another Platonic notion of what happens between incarnations. In his *Republic* Plato relates the legend of the warrior, Er the Pamphylian, son of Armenias, who was killed in battle and was found some days later, brought home for cremation, and suddenly came back to life. He described what occurred after death.

Each soul, he said, was given a chance to select the form of its next incarnation, but the choice was hampered by its own shortcomings, for whether it chose wisely or foolishly now depended on the insight and wisdom acquired during its past life. The responsibility was entirely its own. Heaven was guiltless. It was a wonderful sight, he said, at once melancholy and ludicrous, to watch how everyone made their choices. After their selection they had to drink of the river situated in the Plain of Forgetfulness, so that they lost all remembrance of the past. They were then sent earthwards this way and that, like shooting stars.

Chinese Buddhism speaks of Meng P'o, the presiding goddess of the underworld, who makes all souls assigned to her dread domain between incarnations partake of a drink of broth before they go back to earth to live out another life. This broth is both bitter and sweet and causes all that happened before to be forgotten. It is because they have quaffed the drink of forgetfulness in Meng P'o's kitchen that men do not remember the acts of their previous existence.

But there have been highly evolved souls who claimed to be able to recollect their past lives. The Greek philosopher Empedocles, who lived in the 5th century BC, is said to have remembered himself as a fish, a bird, a maid and a youth, and several other thinkers among the ancients made similar assertions.

Modern exponents of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls also claim to remember their past lives, some going back to Rome, Greece, ancient Egypt or prehistory. The Theosophist Annie Besant (see BESANT) believed that she had lived as the female Neoplatonist martyr Hypatia (d. 415 AD), and as the philosopher and martyr Giordano Bruno (d. 1600). Her colleague Colonel Olcott had been a prince in Atlantis, and then Odysseus, as well as other eminent people.

A fact that creates a certain suspicion in the minds of sceptics is that advocates of the rebirth philosophy generally claim to have been Egyptian pharaohs, Babylonian kings, Persian rulers, Chinese princesses and so on; few indeed believe that they lived humble lives as ordinary men and women. Among various explanations, this could be due to a subconscious wish in the minds of those bound down by the drudgery of the workaday world for the more spacious days of the past.

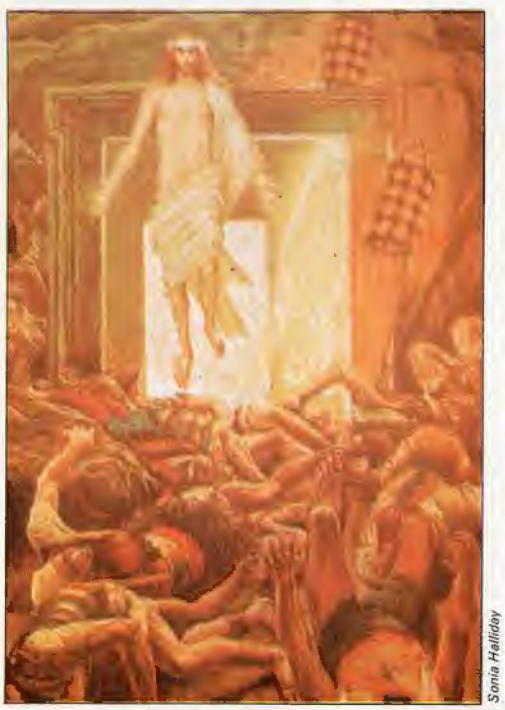
Critics of the theory of reincarnation also argue that if the soul is sent to earth in another body in order to progress in its spiritual evolution, it would seem reasonable that it should remember its past so that, knowing its shortcomings, it might benefit from its experience. However, they point out that, except for a handful of adepts, hardly anyone remembers what his past has been and where he has failed. How then do we know that we have had any previous identity, and what is there to link us with it?

Reincarnationists point out that forgetting a previous existence need not preclude the idea of one continuing personality, and the identifying of a man's present self with his earlier forgotten selves. Human beings spend about one-third of their lives in the mysterious phenomenon called sleep, about which they remember virtually nothing when they awake; yet no one can deny that he is the same person before and after sleeping.

The curious phenomenon of child prodigies may provide further evidence that people recapture flashes of their forgotten lives. In the 18th century, for instance, Jean Cardiac knew the alphabet when he was three months old, could converse in his mother tongue, French, when a year old, in Latin when three, in English when four, and in Greek and Hebrew at six, apart from various other languages. He also picked up a number of arts and skills before dying in 1726 at the age of seven. The famous 'Infant of Lubeck' in Germany, born in 1721, talked within a few hours of his birth, knew the chief events of the early parts of the Bible at the age of one, of the whole Bible at the age of two, and of world history at the age of three. At the same time he acquired a knowledge of Latin and French. He was sent for by the King of Denmark and astounded the monarch who had refused to believe in his powers. The child predicted his own death, which occurred when he was four.

Cases of mathematical prodigies of astonishing ability are also well attested.

Below **Jesus is believed to have appeared on earth after his death on the cross, and many Christians have awaited his Second Coming in the future: 19th century painting of the resurrection of Christ, by James Tissot** ***Right*** **In Hinduism gods are believed to appear in the world in bodily incarnations age after age: the god Vishnu, in his incarnation as the boar Varaha, raising the earth goddess from the primeval ocean; 12th century AD**



Sonia Halliday

C. M. Dixon/Victoria & Albert Museum

Many of these children answered in a matter of seconds intricate mathematical problems involving astronomical numbers, their minds apparently working like computers. Musical prodigies are also well known. Mozart, for instance, could compose at the age of five. Another famous prodigy was Pascal who discovered a new geometrical system when he was 11 and wrote a treatise on acoustics the following year. According to the reincarnationists, all these children brought with them knowledge remembered from their past lives; they picked up their talents where they had left off.

Returning to the Past

There is also the curious, and not uncommon, phenomenon of *déjà vu* (French for 'already seen'), in which people claim to have seen something, or known certain people, or had an encounter, not in this life but at some period that can only have been in another existence. A person brought up in England who has never travelled abroad before may pay a first visit to Norway, for instance, and while touring a remote village in the interior he may be suddenly gripped with the conviction that he has been there before. His surroundings lose their strangeness, and take on a semblance of familiarity. He is certain that he has been here before, although he is just as sure that he has never been anywhere near the place in his present life. People in similar situations have been able to describe what they would see when they turned the corner and what lay over the crest of a hill, or behind a certain street.

Although this kind of experience can be explained as being a recollection of scenes viewed in a travel book or film travelogue or, more rarely, during an astral journey, reincarnationists tend to accept such instances as evidence of the person concerned having been there in a past life.

There is at present at least one researcher doing practical work on the subject of reincarnation. He is Professor Hemendra Banerjee, director of the Department of Parapsychology in Rajasthan University, India, who has devoted over 12 years to the subject. He has investigated the claims made on behalf of rebirth, and tested girls and boys as they led him or members of his team to former homes where they recognized relatives and identified their belongings.

A well-known earlier case was that of a young girl named Shanti Devi who was born in Delhi in 1926. She insisted that she had lived before, and named the city of her former birth. On being taken there she pointed out correctly the secret places where she had hidden her toys, indicated her favourite haunts, and identified her relatives and her former husband.

In Europe practical work has been conducted in what is called age-regression which, according to some reincarnationists, has provided further reinforcement of their claims. Experiments involve putting a subject under hypnosis and making him go back, by suggestion, to his childhood and even his infancy, to re-live his early years. In certain cases this regression can ostensibly be carried back into what is claimed to have been a previous existence. Early in this century a French investigator, Colonel Eugene Rochas (d.1914), allegedly took hypnotized subjects back to their past lives.

One of the most celebrated of this sort of case was recorded in 1952. A young housewife called Ruth Simmons living in the U.S.A. was able to recall a past in Ireland as a woman called Bridie Murphy. It was alleged by those who challenged her story that although she had claimed to have had no contact with Irish people and culture, she had lived close to an Irish family as a child, and that there was a woman in the family known as Bridie Murphy. Despite such rebuttals, hypnotherapists still use the technique (see ARTHUR BLOXHAM). A 1976 book by Jeffrey Iveson called *More Lives Than One* describes Bloxham's work.

Camera Press London

Some souls are thought to spend many years in the otherworld between incarnations, while others return immediately to earth: Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama *(above)* to be an embodiment of Avalokitesvara, whose soul enters a child's body at the moment of a Dalai Lama's death. Aleister Crowley *(below)* believed he was a reincarnation of Eliphas Levi, who died the year that Crowley was born

Opponents of the doctrine of reincarnation have not been slow to point out its shortcomings as an acceptable philosophy of life. Flowing from its teachings is the corollary that victims of poverty, chronic ill-health, or inherited diseases are only suffering for their own past misdeeds, as retribution for the iniquities of their previous lives. If this idea is carried to its logical conclusion it would seem that attempting to relieve the distress and misery of others is almost meddling in the affairs of providence. If a person has been put into this world to redress the balance of his own wicked past, what business is it of ours to interfere and disturb the ordinances of God?

There is also the demoralizing effect that such a belief could have on a person's character. Why keep the faith and fight the good fight? What inducement is there to resist temptation? Would it not be an act of folly to spurn delights and pleasures if the chance to enjoy them is there? If destiny has put these glorious opportunities in a man's way, why should he not make the best of them? If his actions turn out to be sinful and are marked on the debit side of the ledger, there is always another chance.

The 18th century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (see SWEDENBORG) rejected reincarnation on principle. He held that every man is a new creation and has never existed before, and explained recollections of past lives as being the work of evil spirit-entities who projected these false histories on the minds of those susceptible to receive them. Belief in the doctrine naturally made the mind receptive to the false clues provided by the evil spirits.

Another note of caution was sounded by Dr Carl Wickland of Chicago who devoted his life to the subject of after-death experiences, so-called spirit possession, and other related matters. Dr Wickland, who published his findings in 1924, said that persons who die convinced that they will ultimately be reincarnated impede their own further evolution. Belief in the theory is not only false but harmful, for it acts as a psychic barrier against progress to the higher spiritual planes after death.

Reincarnation may not be universal. The intensity of a man's faith may ultimately determine what happens to his soul in the next world. To the Christian the cycle of birth-death-rebirth, if indeed there is any such cycle, is broken by Christ's atoning sacrifice. Faith in its redemptive power not only dissolves the bonds of Satan but also releases the soul from the wheel of eternal return. In other words for the Christian the belief is superfluous; he does not need it.

(See also IMMORTALITY; KARMA.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

FURTHER READING: J. H. Brennan, *Reincarnation*, 2nd ed., (Aquarian Press, 1981); C. J. Ducasse, *A Critical Examination of the Belief in Life After Death* (C. C. Thomas, 1974); J. Head and S. L. Cranston, comps., *Reincarnation, the Phoenix Fire Mystery* (Julian Press, 1977); I. Wilson, *Mind out of Time?* (Gollancz, 1981).

RELICS

A DEAD BODY does not decompose overnight. Years, even centuries later, identifiable bones or ashes may still exist, as well as garments and other possessions. Such mementoes have often been preserved with high honour and religious awe. They are then known as relics, from the Latin *reliquiae*, 'remains'.

In societies with a strong belief in magic, people may revere a corpse, and endow portions of it with special powers. The result is not always preservation; it may be the opposite. Some cannibals expect to absorb a dead man's qualities by eating a piece of him. But human remains can also become amulets, and this approaches more closely to the conception of a relic. In the Andaman Islands in the bay of Bengal, a necklace of bones is a charm to ward off evil, because the ghost is flattered and therefore friendly. Elsewhere, skulls are favoured. The ancient Celts attributed potency to heroes' heads and that of Bran buried on Tower Hill, protected Britain against invasion (see HEAD).

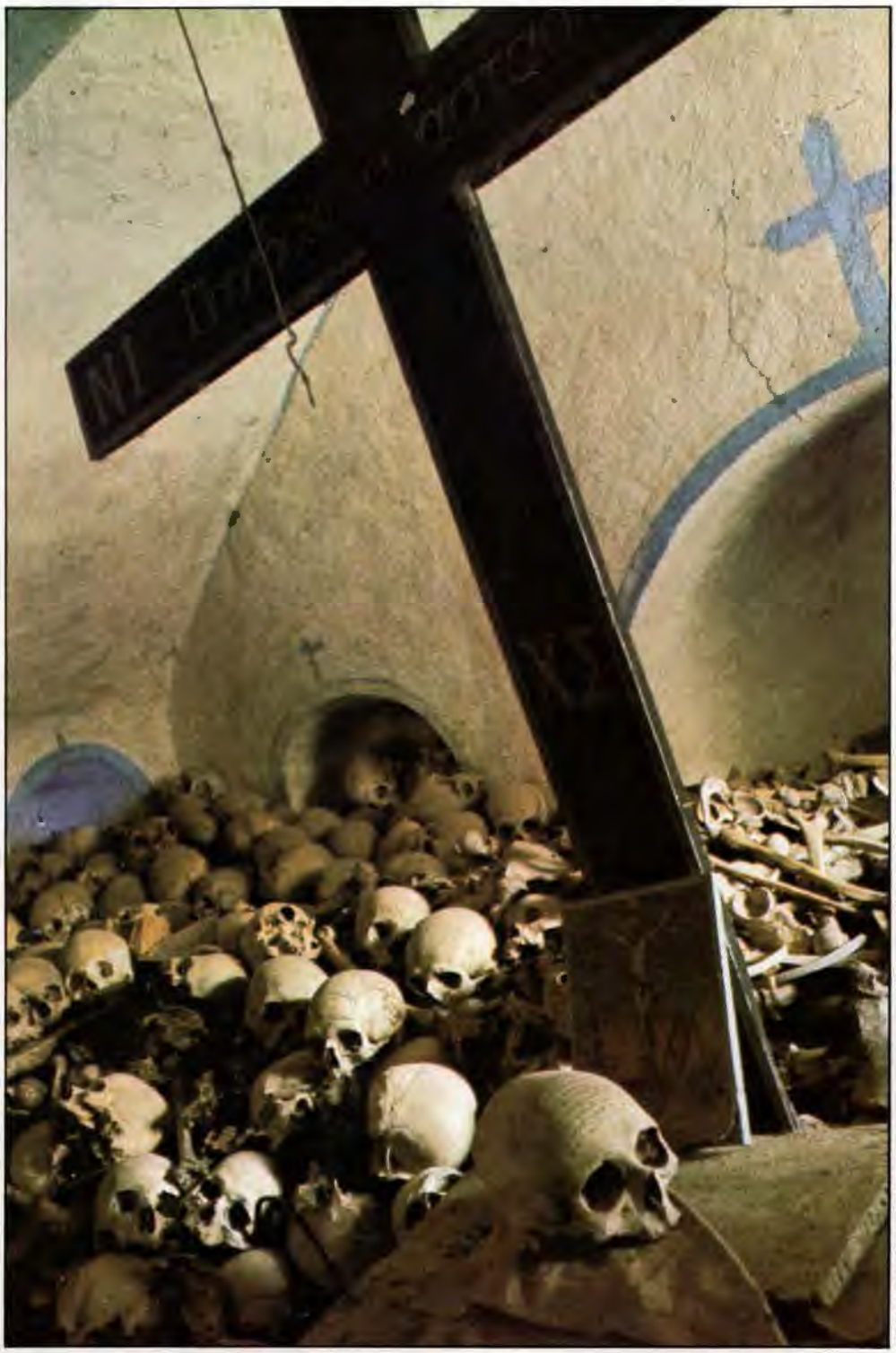
Things associated with the dead, but not actually part of them, are also treasured in several primitive cultures. The *churinga* of central Australia – magical objects handed down from totemic ancestors – are kept in shrines and credited with powers of healing.

Three major religions have attached importance to relics: Buddhism, Greek paganism, and Christianity. Buddhism began as a movement within Hinduism led by Gautama (see BUDDHISM; GAUTAMA). There was not much veneration of relics in India before him, probably because Hinduism lacked historical founders. Gautama's disciples, seeing him as the unique Enlightened One, gave him personal devotion of a new kind. The remains of his cremated body were divided among eight of them. Seven principal relics (real or alleged) came down to posterity – the four canine teeth, the frontal or forehead bone, and two pieces of collar-bone. These and smaller fragments have been kept for thousands of years. The most famous is a tooth in Kandy, Ceylon. Such souvenirs of Buddha and other saints are richly housed in *stupas* or shrines. Modern India supplies a Hindu parallel in the treatment of Mahatma Gandhi (see MAHATMAS). After his cremation in 1948, particles of ash were given to several associates. One is enshrined at Juhu near Bombay.

While Buddhism was taking shape, respect for relics was being carried at least as far in the contemporary cults of the Greek city states. Many temples had parts of the bodies of legendary heroes, or their supposed possessions. The relics were often kept in a chapel or *heroon* and were thought to protect the city. Athens possessed the remains of Theseus, brought there from the island of Scyros with a civic ritual which is described by Plutarch. Epidaurus had the bones of Asclepios, and in a bronze coffer in the temple of Zeus at Elis lay the shoulder-blade of Pelops. The city of Argos hoarded the bones of his father Tantalus in a similar vessel. Sometimes the sacred objects were hidden, with a taboo or spell attached. At Libethra there were relics of Orpheus, which had to be kept out of the sunlight. If it fell on them, the city would be destroyed.

Besides these bodily remains, Agamemnon's sceptre received daily homage at Chaeronea; the spear of Achilles, Helen's sandals, the shield of Pyrrhus, were all carefully preserved. Marsyas's flute was in the temple of Apollo at Sicyon; and Orpheus's lyre was in more temples than one. The more far-fetched items included some unused scraps of the clay from which Prometheus made men, and one of the eggs laid by Leda after her encounter with Zeus in the shape of a swan.

The mystical trend of later Greek religion brought with it a contempt for matter, and a corresponding decline of interest in relics. However, the cult was revived by the Christian Church, and taken much further. God had become man in Jesus Christ, therefore he had hallowed the body, and matter generally. Christ's resurrection, the pledge of the resurrection of all, meant that this hallowing was universal and everlasting. The bodies of saints were temples of the Holy Spirit, destined to be raised and glorified. Through them God bestowed



John Marmaras/Susan Griggs

The head of a saint or holy man has been regarded with particular awe in many cultures as it is thought to contain the essence of a person's life-energy and character: skulls of monks, in a monastery on Mt Athos, Greece

British Museum

benefits on mankind which did not cease at death. Furthermore, objects connected with the saints might carry a share of supernatural virtue.

In support of these doctrines, theologians quote Exodus 13.19 and Joshua 24.32, referring to the Israelites' care for the bones of Joseph; 2 Kings 13.21, where a corpse comes to life after contact with the remains of the prophet Elisha; and Acts 5.15 and 19.11–12, where the sick are healed by Peter's shadow and by cloths which Paul has handled.

In the Roman Catholic tradition it is held proper to 'adore' a relic as a means of communion with the saint on whom it fixes the mind, and as a channel of divine power and grace. A few Fathers of the Church, notably Cyril of Jerusalem, maintained that a relic could have power in itself. This semi-magical idea never received the Church's endorsement. If miracles happen when a relic is present, God is the worker. The relic is, so to speak, the occasion.

The oldest reliable Christian relic-story concerns St Polycarp. A letter issued by his disciples in Smyrna, in 156, describes how he was burnt at the stake. It goes on: 'We took up his bones, more precious than jewels and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, and celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom.'

By the 4th century the Christian cult of relics was far advanced. Special caskets called reliquaries were made to keep them in. Not only the remains of whole bodies, but chips of bone and parcels of dust, were prized. The whole concept was also being enlarged. When St Vincent was martyred in 304, bystanders dipped pieces of linen in his blood, which became heirlooms.

The first clearly-reported Christian relic that was not in any sense a part of a body is the True Cross, on which Jesus was crucified (see CROSS). After Constantine's conversion in 312, his mother Helena directed excavations in Jerusalem and announced its discovery. Soon slivers of the holy wood had been distributed to Christians throughout the Empire.

About the same time, there is an allusion to St James's chair; and some decades later Augustine wrote of miracles performed by soil from the Holy Land, oil from the lamps in a martyr's church, flowers fresh from contact with a reliquary.

There is no sign of any protest. The principal Fathers of the Church at this period – Augustine himself, Jerome, Ambrose – take relics for granted as part of the apparatus of religion. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the desire of Christians to be buried near the tombs of martyrs. The only disagreement is over certain proprieties. Eastern Christians had few scruples about breaking up a saint's body; Western Christians were averse to dismemberment. Pressed for relics to go into new churches, Rome tried an expedient. During the 6th century it was customary to lower a box containing pieces of fabric onto the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul. As soon as the box touched the tomb, these counted as relics. But the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787, decreed that every church must have a relic under its altar, and the demand finally overbore resistance: the saints, in the West as in the East, were dissected without limit.

It was now the West – Merovingian and Carolingian France, Anglo-Saxon England, Celtic Ireland – that ran to extremes of adoration. The faithful visited relics to kiss them, to be cured by them, to take oaths on them. In the high Middle Ages, reliquaries grew ever more gorgeous, the ritual of enshrinement ever more splendid.

Abuses were bound to occur. Even in Roman times Augustine complained of tricksters disguised as monks, selling holy fakes. Bishops tried to forbid the sale of any relics – in vain. The export of fragments of deceased martyrs from Rome became a regular trade. Relics were hotly denounced by the Reformers, especially Calvin. The attitude of Protestant Christianity has always been restrained.

During the ages of faith – or in this case, credulity – the limits to what might be alleged were purely doctrinal. With Christ and Mary dogma imposed vetoes. Since Christ himself had risen to heaven, few remains of his actual body could exist on earth, apart from congealed drops of blood (as at Fécamp in Normandy). Much the same restriction applied to Mary, whose son had taken her to himself after death, leaving an empty tomb. Apart from what was thus excluded, almost anything might be produced as a relic.

Relics multiplied during the Middle Ages, and devout Christians went on pilgrimages to worship them *Below* Reliquary containing the hand of St Attale, in Strasbourg *Facing page* Christ's features are said to have been miraculously imprinted on St Veronica's veil when he used it to wipe the sweat from his brow while on the way to Calvary: illustration from a 15th century German manuscript showing St Veronica holding the relic; the original veil is said to have been in Rome from the 8th century

Giraudon

This raises the whole question of authenticity. Many relics of recent saints are well attested; those of earlier dates are more doubtful, and often incredible. Rivalry among medieval shrines led to serio-comic disputes, with several claiming the same saint or the same object. Glastonbury Abbey in England professed to have the remains of St Patrick, St Dunstan, and many others, in defiance of competitors with far stronger claims. It also possessed a splinter from the table of the Last Supper, and one of the stones which Christ refused to turn into bread. Outside England, the more surprising relics included a feather from the wing of the angel Gabriel; a jar full of the darkness inflicted on Egypt by Moses; rays from the Star of Bethlehem; samples of the Virgin's milk; and a whole wardrobe of her chemises.

There are records of early attempts at verification. Most, however, consisted merely in seeing whether a relic worked miracles. The most famous case is that of the True Cross itself. When Helena searched for it, she unearthed the timbers of three crosses, and picked out Christ's by its ability to cure a sick man. Other relics were 'authenticated' by manuscripts and even labels, palpably forged. Objective scrutiny is a fairly modern development, and its conclusions are usually adverse. At best the results of study are seldom more than negative, in the sense of showing that a relic is not demonstrably bogus.

An interesting relic of Christ, from a non-devotional point of view, is the Holy Shroud of Turin. It bears the imprint of a body wounded in the correct places, which, if artificial, implies a knowledge of anatomy and the effects of crucifixion hard to account for in the Middle Ages. The Roman Catholic Church, however, does not pronounce on the authenticity of this or any other relic. After the Counter-Reformation, many of the more absurd ones were quietly got rid of. Yet caution rather than iconoclasm has remained the norm. The Jesuit Herbert Thurston, an erudite and sceptical historian, defended bishops who left matters alone, on the ground that in many places religion is so closely bound up with 'some ancient special devotion' that it would be hard to disentangle the false from the true.

From a Catholic point of view the genuineness of a relic is not as crucial as might appear. So long as the object is regarded not as having magical power of its own, but as orienting the worshipper toward a Presence behind, it can be highly suspect without invalidating the cult. It becomes scandalous only where the faithful are led to believe, literally, a flagrant falsehood.

GEOFFREY ASHE

RELIGION

Comparative religion is a modern discipline but interest in the origin and essential nature of religion is very old, and many conflicting theories have been advanced: despite Kipling's words, East and West have met in this field, and the interaction between Hinduism and Christianity is an interesting case-history of what happens when two religions meet: religious architecture is not only a delight to the eye but a symbolic expression of some of the profoundest beliefs of men

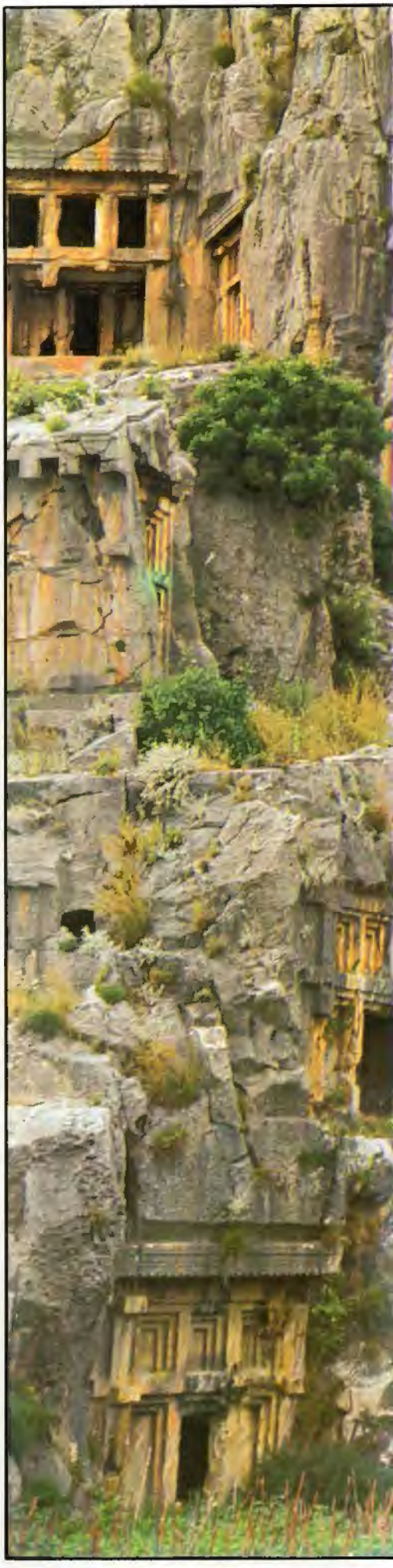
THE TERM 'comparative religion' has become the established designation for the discipline more correctly described as 'the comparative study of religion'. Among English-speaking scholars comparative religion generally includes what Continental scholars tend to regard as two separate subjects, the history of religions and the phenomenology of religions. But these subjects are essentially interrelated, for no serious comparative study of religion can be undertaken without both a sound knowledge of the history of the religions concerned and a wide acquaintance with the variety of forms in which religious faith and practice have found expression.

Religion, in two of its basic concerns at least, can be traced back to the very beginning of human society. The peoples of the Old Stone Age ritually buried their dead and practised fertility rituals (see PREHISTORIC RELIGION). At this remote period religion was doubtless largely the practical expression of deep-felt emotions awakened by the mysteries of birth and death. Some reasoning about these issues must certainly have informed the ritual action, but in the absence of written records we can know nothing of its nature or content. However, it would seem improbable that these remote ancestors of our race would have been mentally capable of looking critically at their religious customs and asking how they had originated.

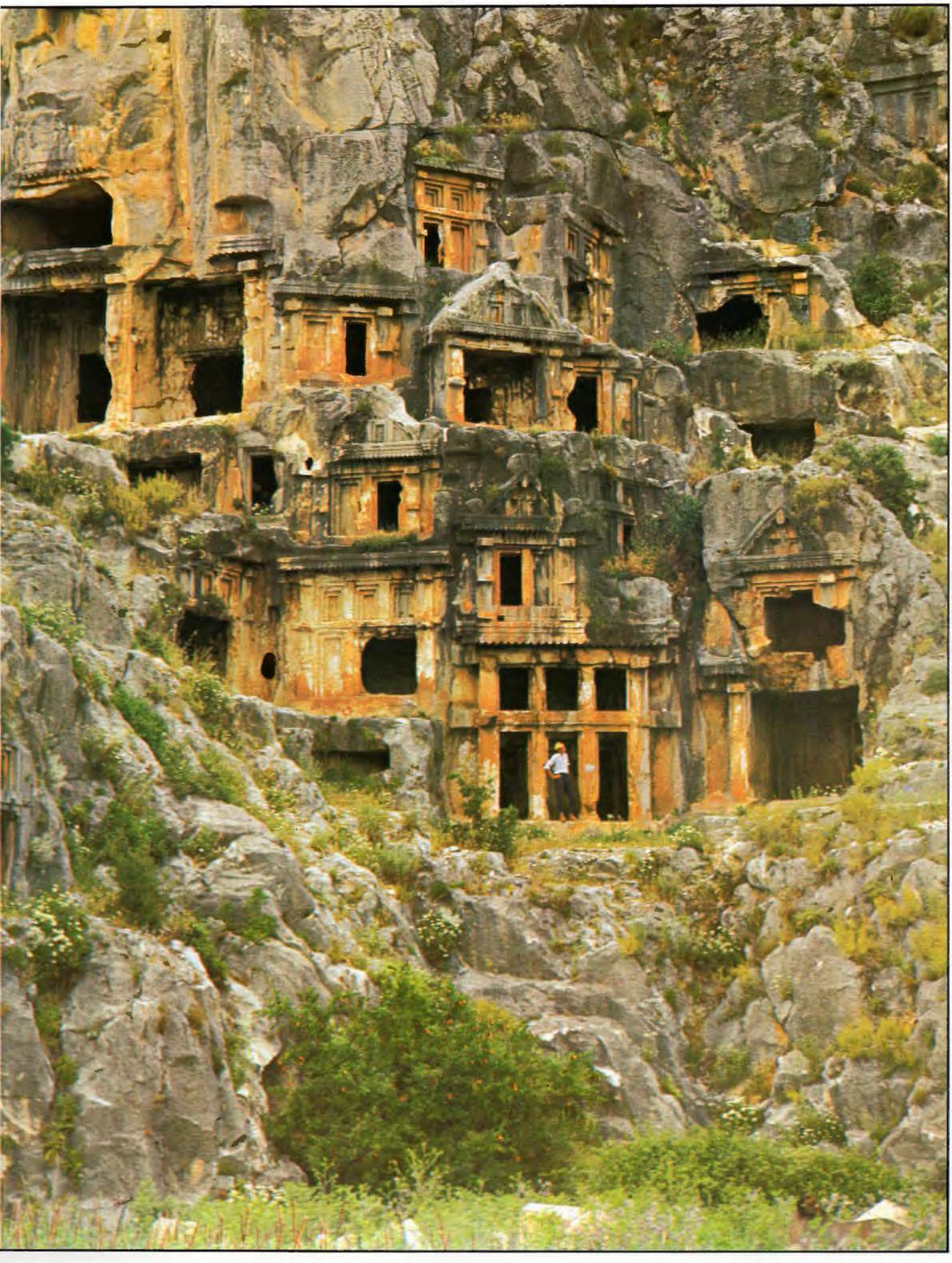
Evidence of such ability is clearly found in the earliest writings known to us, which date from the third millennium BC in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. On the so-called Shabaka Stone, now preserved in the British Museum, a text in honour of Ptah, the god of Memphis, the earliest capital of Egypt, briefly tells how religion started. Ptah, it claims, 'created the gods, he made the cities . . . he set the gods in their cult-places, he established their offerings, he founded their shrines'. The claim is a naive assertion by the priests of Ptah that their god was the creator of all the other Egyptian gods, and that he had arranged for their ritual service. However, despite its naivety, the claim has a great significance. It shows that already in Egypt people were interested in the origin of religion. A similar significance attaches to a Sumerian text of about the same period which tells how the gods had to labour to provide their food until the wise god Enki made men of clay, to be their servants. In other words, according to ancient Sumerian thought, the purpose of the human race was to feed the gods by sacrifices and house them in temples.

These primitive theories, if such they may be called, about the origin of religion were in no sense adversely critical of religion as an institution. Indeed, they obviously regarded it as being of divine origin, and constituting the reason for the existence of human society. It was, characteristically, in the world of Greek culture that a sceptical appraisal of religious origins first appeared. The philosopher Xenophanes of Colophon, writing in the 6th century BC, perceived that the conception of deity is essentially conditioned by ethnic factors, as well as being basically anthropomorphic. He pointed out that the Thracians thought of their gods as Thracians, with grey eyes and red hair, whereas the Ethiopians naturally conceived of theirs as having negroid features. And he cynically remarked that horses and oxen, if they could carve, would undoubtedly represent the gods in their own animal forms.

Xenophanes was followed by many other thinkers who could detach themselves from the religious beliefs and practices of their environment, and speculate freely on the nature and origin of religion as a human institution. One of the most notable of these thinkers was Euhemerus of Messene (c 300 BC). He hit upon a novel means of propounding his theory. In a fictitious travel-narrative, he described how he had found an inscription on an island in the Indian Ocean which revealed that the Greek gods had originally been great kings who were



Tombs built into the rocks at Myra in Turkey, a survival of the ancient belief that the mysterious nature of caves made them proper places for contact with the supernatural



Sonia Halliday

A. F. Kersting

The Renaissance artists began to depict the gods of Greece and Rome in splendid human form instead of as demons, as did the artists of medieval Christianity

subsequently deified. This theory, known as Euhemerism, is not entirely without foundation, although it is not a sound explanation of the origin of the chief gods of ancient Greece. A remarkable instance of its truth is the deification of Imhotep (see IMHOTEP); but it is unlikely that Euhemerus knew of this instance.

The religious syncretism of the Graeco-Roman world also prompted a comparison of deities. Already in the 5th century BC, the historian Herodotus had identified certain Egyptian and Greek deities; but the most notable example of this practice occurs in the beautiful description of the Egyptian goddess Isis by the Latin poet Apuleius (2nd century AD) in his famous romance *The Golden Ass*. Isis reveals herself as the Great Goddess, who is worshipped by many peoples under various names (Minerva, Venus, Ceres and many more) but under her true name of Isis by the Egyptians.

The famous saying of the Latin poet and philosopher Lucretius (1st century BC) epitomizes his evaluation of religion: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*, 'so great is the power of religion for evil'. According to Lucretius, religion arose out of the exploitation of man's fear of death and the unknown by unscrupulous priests and seers; and he laboured to free his fellow-men from this evil by arguing that death is personal extinction, beyond which there is nothing more to fear.

The great variety of religions that competed for allegiance in the Graeco-Roman world, and their tendency to mingle with each other, led other thinkers to find less sceptical explanations of religion's origin. For example, Maximus of Tyre (c 125–185 AD) argued that since God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is both ineffable and invisible, men have been obliged to worship him under whatever form has seemed intelligible to them: hence the Egyptians worshipped animals and the Greeks conceived of God in human form. Sallust (c 363 AD) rationalized many myths; for example, he explained that of Cybele and Attis in terms of her being a life-giving goddess and Attis the creator of 'things that come into being and perish'.

Such attempts to explain the origin of the complex mythology of Greek religion ceased

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Michael Holford

The temples of ancient religions reflect the beliefs of the people who worshipped in them *Far left* To the Egyptians a temple represented heaven, and rites performed inside it were believed to ensure security for the land and its people; worshippers moved gradually from the strong sunlight of the secular world through the deepening darkness of great halls into the intense blackness that shrouded the shrine that contained the god's image: one of the pylons at the entrance to the temple of Amun at Karnak *Left* The Acropolis in Athens, dominated by the Parthenon. This temple is a supreme example of the architectural perfection with which the Greeks honoured their gods; the cult image usually dominated the interior of each temple *Above* Roman temple at Dougga in North Africa

with the triumph of Christianity and the defeat of paganism. And since Christianity dominated the medieval society that followed the break-up of the ancient world, the origin of religion was no more a subject for speculation. For Christianity saw itself as the only true religion, and its origins were divinely revealed in the Bible. So far as the 'false religions' were concerned, it was enough to condemn Judaism as the miserable remnant of a faith that had failed to understand God's purpose, to account for Greek and Roman paganism as the invention of the Devil, and to denounce Islam as a damnable heresy. There were some attempts by individual Christians to study Islam for missionary and disputative purposes, a notable example being Raymond Lull (see LULL); the Crusades, however, represented the typical Christian reaction to the religion of Mohammed. Of the great religions further east, medieval Christians had scarcely any knowledge, owing to their geographical isolation – it is significant of the degree of their ignorance that the story of the Buddha filtered through in such a garbled form that the founder of Buddhism was believed to be two godly persons, Barlaam and Joasaph, who were duly canonized as saints in the Eastern Church.

The re-awakening of interest in the other religions of mankind had to await the humanism of the Renaissance and the development of maritime exploration. Thus the new passion for classical antiquity in the 15th and 16th centuries caused statues of pagan gods to be highly prized, and the Renaissance artists began to depict the gods of Greece and Rome in splendid human form instead of as demons, as did the artists of medieval Christendom. Through trade and missionary enterprise contact was gradually established with the great and ancient civilizations of India and China, and many European scholars came to admire the cultural achievements of these eastern peoples. Trade and colonization also made Europeans acquainted with the cultures of the primitive peoples of Africa, Australasia and the Americas.

Already by the 17th century the stimulus of all this new knowledge about other religions was bearing fruit. In 1724 a Jesuit scholar, Joseph Lafitau, who had served as a missionary in Canada, published a book entitled *Moeurs des savages amériquains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps*. The work constitutes a veritable landmark in the study of religion; for in it Lafitau noted similarities in the religion of the American savages, the ancient cults of Bacchus, Cybele and Isis and Osiris, and Catholic Christianity. These similarities seemed to him to point back to a common origin, to a single original revelation.

The 18th century saw other notable studies in comparative religion. In 1760 Charles De Brosses, in a work entitled *Du culte des dieux fétiches, ou parallèle de l'ancienne religion de l'Égypte avec la religion actuelle de Nigrite*, sought to explain the animal-headed gods of Egypt in the light of the religious practices of contemporary savages. Even more revolutionary perhaps was the attempt of Charles-François Dupuis, in 1795, in his *Origine de tous les cultes*, to discern behind the figures of Christ and Osiris, of Bacchus and Mithras, a common tendency to personify the sun in its annual course through the heavens.

These attempts to rationalize the complex phenomena of the religious ideas and practices of mankind prepared the way for the more scientific approach of later times. The commercial and political domination, which the leading European nations had gradually built up in Asia and Africa, was also producing a rich academic harvest. Art treasures and manuscripts brought home from the East provided the material for scholarly research, encouraging especially the study of oriental languages. Notable pioneers in this field were Anquetil-Duperron, who in 1771 produced the first translation of the *Zend-Avesta* into a Western language and thus provided the key to the study of Zoroastrianism, and Sir William Jones (1746–94), whnse Sanskrit studies opened the way to the sacred literature of India. Early in the 19th century the decipherment of the long-forgotten languages of Egypt and Mesopotamia was gradually achieved, so making possible for scholars the interpretation of the earliest religious texts of mankind.

This linguistic preparation for the scientific study of religion was accompanied by the accumulation of an increasing mass of data about the beliefs and ritual practices of the so-called primitive peoples of Asia, Australia, Africa and the New World. Much

Mysterium Tremendum

Let us consider the deepest and most fundamental element in all strong and sincerely felt religious emotion. Faith unto salvation, trust, love – all these are there. But over and above these is an element which may also on occasion, quite apart from them, profoundly affect us and occupy the mind with a wellnigh bewildering strength. Let us follow it up with every effort of sympathy and imaginative intuition wherever it is to be found, in the lives of those around us, in sudden, strong ebullitions of personal piety and the frames of mind such ebullitions evince, in the fixed and ordered solemnities of rites and liturgies, and again in the atmosphere that clings to old religious monuments and buildings, to temples and to churches. If we do so we shall find we are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, '*mysterium tremendum*'. The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane', non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. It has its crude, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious. It may become the hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of – whom or what? In the presence of that which is a *mystery* inexpressible and above all creatures.

Rudolf Otto *The Idea of the Holy*

of this information was first acquired incidentally by Christian missionaries who sought to convert the peoples concerned; but gradually special investigation was undertaken as the sciences of ethnology and anthropology were established and developed.

A Disease of Language

The comparative study of religion during the 19th and early 20th centuries was characterized by the rise and decline of various 'schools' of thought, which sought to explain the origin and essential nature of religion according to some preconceived principle of interpretation. This phase in the development of the discipline was doubtless inevitable, because theological interest in the subject was then predominant. Thus Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), who may justly be regarded as the pioneer of the scientific study of religion, attempted to explain the origin of religious myths through comparative philology. He argued that language-analysis will often provide the key to the origin of a deity. The following example shows his method: the Sanskrit word *dyaus*, which originally meant 'bright', came to denote the (bright) sky. Since thunder was heard from the sky, the Aryans, who spoke Sanskrit, would say the *dyaus* (the sky) thunders. This usage led to the personification of *dyaus* as the Power manifest in the sky, and so on to the concept of a sky god Dyaus, who announced his presence by thundering. Max Müller traced religion itself back ultimately to 'an ineradicable feeling of dependence' upon some higher power that was innate in the human mind. Its expression in mythology was essentially due to an inherent 'disease of language', in the manner described. Müller did much invaluable work for comparative religion, particularly in editing the *Sacred Books of the East*, a series of translations which made the literature of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Confucianism available to English-speaking students.

Anthropology soon concerned itself with the question of the origin of religion. For there was a tendency with the early anthropologists to assume that the beliefs and ritual practices of the so-called primitive peoples represented the earliest forms of religion. Out of this new science came one of the most notable theories of the origin of religion, 'animism' as propounded by Sir Edward Tylor (see ANIMISM).

The other great exponent of the anthropological approach to the study of religion at this early stage of its development was Sir James George Frazer. In *The Golden Bough* he defined religion as being 'a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life'. But he maintained that religion emerged after magic. At the earliest stage of human culture, according to Frazer, 'man essayed to bend nature to his wishes by the sheer force of spells and enchantments'. When experience taught him that magic did not work, man resorted to prayer and sacrifice to 'mollify a coy, capricious, or irascible deity'. Frazer also showed how agriculture had profoundly influenced man's religious ideas and practices. It inspired the two basic concepts of the fertility goddess and the vegetation spirit, who annually dies and rises to life again (see DYING GOD; MOTHER GODDESS; VEGETATION SPIRITS).

The early years of the 20th century saw a great proliferation of theories about the origin of religion. The dominance of anthropology led to emphasis being placed upon the communal aspect of primitive society and a diminution of the importance of the individual within it. Hence the origin of religion was sought in communal consciousness. The distinguished French sociologist Emil Durkheim interpreted totemism as a factor of basic import for understanding the social origins of religion. In the totem deity he saw the personification of the clan itself in the form of an animal or vegetable. Unconscious of themselves as individuals, its members were inspired with a sense of their integration with this deity during their worship and service of it (see TOTEM).

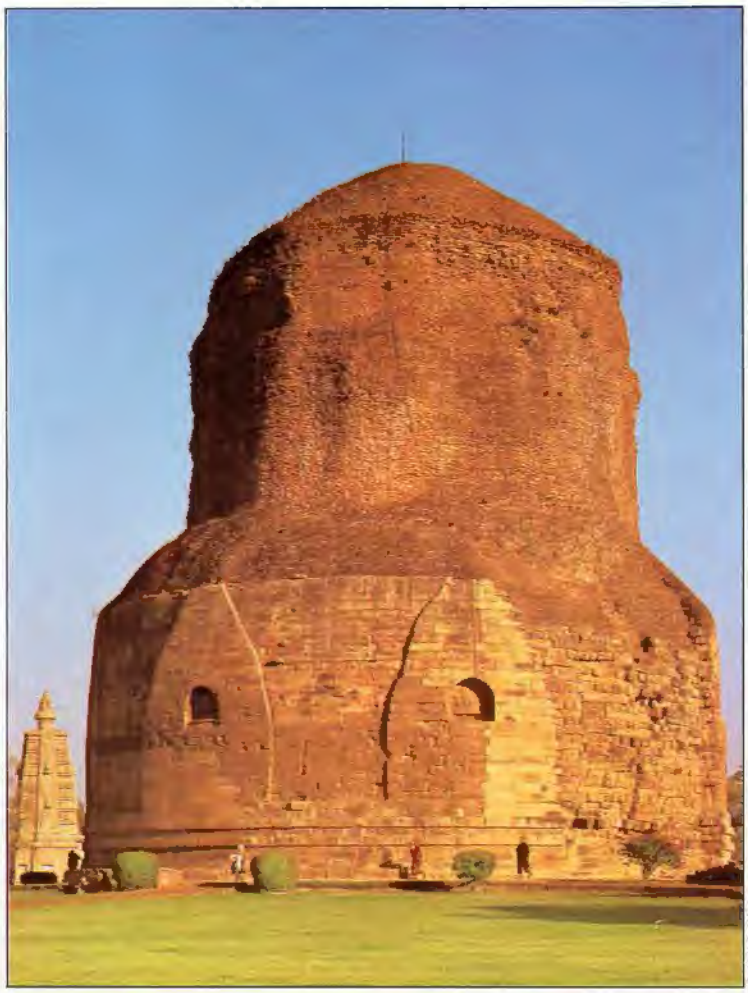
The emergent science of psychology also contributed to the speculation about the beginnings of religion. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) found the origin of religion, or its primordial form, in 'an infantile obsessional neurosis' which centred on the primal father-figure. He conceived of human society as originally comprising a 'primitive horde', ruled over and controlled by a father who kept all the females for himself and repelled his growing sons. The sons, who both hated and admired their father, finally united in killing and eating him, to absorb his strength and virility. Then, stricken with a sense of guilt, they invented rites of expiation, which involved totemism, taboo and all the other institutions of primitive society. This presentation of the Oedipus complex as the source or cause of religion had the support of no archeological or anthropological evidence, but it excited much interest and won great publicity.

Freud's distinguished successor C. G. Jung (1875–1961) greatly concerned himself with the psychological interpretation of religion, although he was more interested in its basic forms than its origin. The latter he traced to 'a peculiar attitude' of the human mind to its experience of environmental factors that are variously powerful, dangerous or helpful. He sought in myths, as evidence of the collective unconscious, for 'archetypes' or primordial images that have exercised a formative influence upon human thought and behaviour (see JUNG). Jung's influence in the field of religious studies is still immense.

From the fact, noticed by Andrew Lang (1844–1912), that many 'primitive' peoples believed in a supreme Creator god, designated as a 'High God' or 'All-Father', Wilhelm Schmidt (1868–1954) deduced that the earliest form of religion was monotheism. This belief resulted from early man's rationalization of his experience of the natural world. Schmidt set out this thesis in a 12-volume work entitled *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1926–55; there is an English epitome, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, 1931). He maintained further that polytheism was a degenerate form of the primeval monotheism. Schmidt's interpretation was congenial to Christian theology; but it is not borne out by the evidence of Paleolithic archeology.

The Numinous

Another interpretation of the origin of religion which has much commended itself to theologians is that presented by Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) in his book *Das Heilige* (1917), which was translated into English as *The Idea of the Holy* (1923). Otto was particularly concerned to show that religion did not originate from early man's rationalizing of his experience of his natural environment, as earlier scholars had


A. F. Kersting

Michael Holford

The most characteristic architectural structures of Buddhism, *stupas* were originally primitive burial mounds built to contain relics; later they were erected to commemorate important events, and even became objects of worship. Over the years each Buddhist country developed a style peculiar to itself *Left* The Dhamek stupa at Sernath in India marks the spot where Buddha preached his first sermon *Right* The Silver Pavilion at Kyoto, Japan

assumed. Instead, according to Otto, man is endowed with the ability to sense the 'numinous'. This term was derived from the Latin word *numen*, which meant a supernatural non-personalized entity. It constituted something that was in essence 'wholly other' from all normal objects of human experience. The presence of the numinous was sensed under two different forms of manifestation, the *mysterium tremendum* and the *mysterium fascinans*. The former induced the feeling of terror associated with the eerie and uncanny, and was essentially 'awe-ful'. As the *mysterium fascinans*, the numinous exercised a strangely compelling force, drawing those who experienced it on to a closer communion. Otto sought to show that the idea of 'the holy' stemmed from such experience. For that which was associated with the presence of the numinous had to be treated with circumspection; it became 'holy', and contact with it was carefully controlled by taboos. Otto accounted for the various forms of primitive religion, such as a belief in a multitude of spirits, totemism and the cult of the dead, as due to man's subsequent rationalization of his numinous experience.

Otto was certainly justified in emphasizing the importance of non-rational emotive factors in religious faith and practice; but his thesis rests upon assumptions about the experience of primitive man for which no possible means of verification exist. It is, moreover, difficult to conceive of human experience divorced from ratiocination.

Great insight into the fundamental springs of religion was shown by the philosopher A. N. Whitehead (1861–1947). In contradistinction to those who sought to find the origin of religion in the corporate consciousness of a community, Whitehead stressed the essentiality of personal experience. He wrote: 'Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness' (in *Religion in the Making*, 1927) and he saw it as a 'transaction from God the void to God the enemy, and from God the enemy to God the companion'. He distinguished four basic aspects or factors of religion: ritual, emotion, belief, rationalization, and he evaluated them as four successive stages in the evolution of religion.

In 1935 a series of essays entitled *Myth and Ritual*, edited by S. H. Hooke, initiated a new line of interpretation for the religions of the ancient Near East. The present writer has suggested (in *History, Time and Deity*, 1965) that religion stems from the time-consciousness of man (see TIME).

Such variety of interpretation can be perplexing for newcomers to comparative religion; but the histories of other subjects are equally strewn with the debris of rejected or outmoded theories, and conflict of opinion is generally evidence of vigorous critical thinking that makes for progress. Comparative religion, however, has also been subjected in the past to the pressure of non-scientific interests. Since religion concerns the fundamental issues of human life, many people have sought in its comparative study for the revelation of some desired truth. Such interests are understandable, and they are still felt; but they must not be allowed to obscure the fact that comparative religion is essentially a discipline concerned only with the scientific investigation of the religions of mankind.

The Beginnings

Speculation about the beginnings of religion long preceded the acquisition of archeological data concerning the earliest forms of human culture. Indeed, it has only been in the more recent decades of the present century that the study of prehistory has become established as a scientific discipline. We are better situated today for knowing something of the earliest forms of religion than were previous generations though we cannot, of course, penetrate back to the actual origin of religion, which could scarcely be documented by archeological data. But we can form some idea of the religious beliefs and practices already existent at the dawn of human culture, c 30,000 BC. Our knowledge can, inevitably, be only of an inferential kind from archeological material, since no written records then existed, or would exist

A. F. Kersting

Christian architecture was originally functional, and churches were designed primarily as places where the faithful could assemble for worship; contemporary architectural styles were usually followed, and there was no attempt to incorporate specifically Christian symbolism: Byzantine church at Daphni, Greece

until some 27 millennia had passed.

The fact that the Old Stone Age peoples not only buried their dead, but placed food and equipment of various kinds in the graves indicates that they envisaged some form of life after death. In other words, these burial customs show that, in contrast to all other animals, man was already concerned about death. This means that he was able to abstract himself from the business of living and ponder on the phenomena of its cessation. It means also that he did not accept the physical evidence of death as attesting the definitive end of a human person. For in some crude way he thought that the dead still needed the necessities of life, and that it was the duty of the living to provide them. A certain variety of burial customs suggests also some variation of ideas about the state of the dead. We can infer that, from the very appearance of man in the archeological record, the cult of the dead was already an established practice. How this practice started we cannot tell; but it is significant that the so-called Neanderthal Man, a sub-human precursor of true man, also buried his dead ritually.

On many Paleolithic sites carved figurines of women have been found. They exhibit two notable characteristics: the maternal features are grossly exaggerated while the faces are left blank. A clue to the significance of these figurines is provided by a similar, but larger, figure in bas-relief which was found as the central object of a Paleolithic rock-sanctuary at Laussel in the Dordogne area of France. Generally known as the 'Venus of Laussel', this figure has the same features as the figurines but holds a bison's horn in its right hand (see HORNS).

The emphasis upon the maternal attributes and the blank faces of these figures suggest that they were not intended to be portraits of individual women, but attempts to portray 'woman' as the source of life. Such an intention is intelligible, since the phenomenon of birth provided primitive man with visual evidence of the emergence of new life from the maternal womb. The importance of the production of new living beings to these Paleolithic peoples needs no stressing. And it is easy to understand their awe and respect for the mystery of maternity. There is reason for thinking that a figure such as the Venus of Laussel is an anticipation or prototype of the Great Mother Goddess of the later religions of the ancient world.

Such, on a brief analysis, are the indications that the evidence of Paleolithic culture gives of the sources of concern that inspired the earliest known religion. The mysteries of birth and death must naturally command human attention, and their influence is to be discerned in the most sophisticated religions, as in the most primitive.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Meeting of East and West

When two religions meet, problems are crystallized in a new way; beliefs and practices are called in question; changes take place. When the two religions in question are as distinct as Hinduism and Christianity, and when each is bound up with a culture and a way of life, the encounter becomes doubly interesting as an epitome of the meeting of East and West.

The beginnings of the encounter between Hinduism and Christianity are inaccessible to the historian. Tradition has it that the apostle Thomas preached the gospel in India, but it is impossible to know whether this is true. Certainly there has been a Christian community in India for at least 1500 years, and Hinduism may have been in a position to receive Christian impulses ever since the Apostolic Age. The reverse flow – from India to the West, following the campaigns of Alexander the Great – can probably be seen in some of the schools of Gnosticism (see GNOSTICISM) which gathered round the fringes of the Church during the early centuries of Christianity. But the serious encounter began with the start of what has been called the 'Vasco da Gama epoch' of Western colonialism at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries.

From the first, colonialism and Christian missions followed parallel paths, and shared similar attitudes toward India and Hinduism. The Portuguese colonists were accompanied by mainly Jesuit missionaries, with a view to reinforcing secular with

Early Christian missionaries to India took pains to acquaint themselves with the beliefs of Hinduism, but only as a general acquaints himself with enemy-occupied territory

spiritual conquest. Contempt for Hinduism was the rule, but a notable exception was Roberto de Nobili. Born in Rome of a noble family in 1577, he went to Malabar in 1606 as a newly-ordained priest. Observing that the Jesuits were ruining their chances of success by their utter contempt for the Indian way of life, he determined to become 'a Hindu to the Hindus'. He adopted the dress and customs of a Brahmin holy man, even avoiding contact with his fellow-Europeans as far as possible. He became fluent in both the vernacular and Sanskrit, and compiled manuals of theology and devotional books for the use of converts and for those who were being instructed in Christianity. His methods aroused considerable disapproval among his colleagues, and he was denounced to Rome, on charges of simulation, connivance at idolatry and schism. However, he defended himself successfully, and eventually won provisional recognition from the Pope. But it was virtually impossible for the majority of missionaries to go to the extreme lengths that he did in his self-identification with the Hindu. His work was not followed up, though the principle of 'accommodation' to the locality has since become standard Roman Catholic missionary practice.

An Old Pestilent Religion

The entry of Protestant Christian missions into India was effectively delayed until after 1813 by the attitude of the East India Company (earlier, small-scale efforts having been limited to non-British territory); 'John Company' was in principle tolerant towards Hinduism, but this tolerance was not shared by the growing band of missionaries in the 19th century. They were normally convinced that the 'heathen' in his darkness was doomed to perish in his sins; unless given the gospel, he was sure to be damned. Hinduism, in common with all other non-Christian religions, was the work of the Devil, a 'false religion', 'an old, pestilent religion', 'the grandest embodiment of Gentile error'. Many of them took pains to acquaint themselves with the beliefs and practices of Hinduism, but only as a general acquaints himself with enemy-occupied territory. They felt that Hinduism fell short of the Christian ethical ideal, and could even speak of 'the loathsome link between Indian piety and Indian impurity'; in the circumstances, the only thing to be done was to work for the utter destruction of everything that Hinduism stood for, either directly, by the preaching of the gospel and the removing of converts into Christian communities; or indirectly, by providing education on a Western pattern, which it was hoped would undermine the social and intellectual foundations of Hinduism. It is true that there were individual Christians who saw more in Hinduism than merely 'heathen darkness'; but these were the exceptions, at least until about the 1870s.

However, while this was happening in India, Hinduism was gradually becoming better known in the West. The earliest translations of Hindu scriptures began to appear in the late 18th century: for instance, that of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Sir Charles Wilkins in 1785; and in Europe and America scholars and men of letters began to realize that the spiritual tradition of India deserved their serious attention.

The latter half of the 19th century witnessed a number of developments that were to change entirely the pattern of Hindu-Christian encounter. In the West, the emergence of the doctrine of evolution, and its application to religious thought, had the effect of lending legitimacy to the scholarly study of religion as a factor in the development of mankind; and although scholarly and missionary concerns were far from identical, it was only a matter of time before the two were combined. Increasing knowledge of the beliefs of Hinduism (as opposed to its popular practices) was making it clear to many Christians in the West that Hinduism was by no means devoid of the good, the true and the beautiful.

Hinduism, too, was changing. Reform movements, such as the Brahma Samaj, founded in the 1820s by Ram Mohan Roy, were beginning to show a social concern similar to that of Christianity; the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society (see THEOSOPHY) followed similar paths from the 1870s on, though with greater insistence on the ancient treasures of the Hindu heritage; and most important of all, the growing movement of Indian nationalism was entering into an alliance with Hinduism as being the only appropriate religion for a patriotic Indian.

In 1893, in America, the stream of encounter began to flow in the opposite direction. Until then, contacts between Hinduism and Christianity had been made mainly on Indian soil. At the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, a Hindu monk, Vivekananda, made a profound impression with his preaching of the gospel of universal religious toleration. The Parliament as a whole was received coolly by the missionary agencies; but it cannot be denied that the Hindu 'mission' to the West dates from this occasion.

Vivekananda said, among other things, that he was proud 'to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions to be true.' The Parliament over, Vivekananda travelled widely in the West, laying foundations on which other Hindu 'missionaries' were later able to build; on his return to India, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission, its name indicating the source of its inspiration – Ramakrishna, the Bengali prophet who so energetically upheld the unity of all religions (see RAMAKRISHNA).

At the turn of the century, Christian missionaries in India began to be aware of the challenge of the new situation. The old attitude was coming to seem more and more untenable; and, in view of increasing nationalist sentiment, more and more dangerous. The 'new' Hinduism was gaining ground rapidly. One solution was to set forth Christianity as the 'fulfilment' of Hinduism; in this way, it was believed, ample justice could be done to the Indian religious and cultural heritage, while preserving the uniqueness of Christ.

Outstanding among those Christian missionaries who put forward this view was the Scotsman John Nicol Farquhar; his book *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913) set the tone for a whole generation. Farquhar was concerned to do justice to Hinduism without compromising his sincerely-held belief in Christianity. Although his book found wide acceptance among Christians, it left Hindus for the most part unmoved. But he did succeed, virtually single-handed, in impressing on Christians an attitude of genuine sympathy for Hinduism.

The question of Hindu-Christian relations has always been immeasurably complicated by the fact that what is to the Christian a theological problem of the first order, is

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Like early Christian churches, mosques are essentially functional in design *Left* The Blue Mosque in Istanbul, showing the six minarets from which the muezzin call the faithful to prayer *Right* The Virgin and Child, and the angels, look down beneficently upon the faithful from heaven, represented by the dome: from the former church of St Saviour in Constantinople, afterwards turned into a mosque

scarcely a problem at all to the average Hindu. For the most part, the Hindu does not need to be taught sympathy; he is happy to accept Christianity as an alternative way to God – but only one way among many. The Christian has always been made somewhat uneasy by the example of a Hindu leader such as Gandhi, for whom Jesus Christ was a constant example, and to whom the New Testament was a source of inspiration, but who never felt the need to join a Christian community. Similarly, the philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who became President of the Republic in 1962, was able, though himself a Hindu of the Hindus, to urge all people to practise the principles of Jesus, on the grounds that this 'will mean a society of all mankind, a society in which we bear one another's business and sympathize with each other in joy and sorrow'.

This emphasis on the ethical principles of Jesus is characteristic: for while the Christian looks on him as the unique Saviour, the Hindu sees him as a *guru*, a teacher – and, as such, is prepared to listen to what he has to say. At the same time he is prepared (not without reason) to criticize the Christian Church for not putting the principles of Jesus into practice. The Hindu may accept, in an ethical sense, 'Christianity'; he refuses to accept what he calls 'churchianity', and particularly the idea of conversion.

This is, however, far from being the whole story. There are still Hindus who look upon Hinduism as being the national religion of India, and who are opposed to Christian activities in India on political, as much as on religious, grounds. The 'anti-conversion laws' recently passed in certain north Indian states are the results of such attitudes as these.

From the Christian point of view, the situation is as complex, if not more so. On the one hand, conservative evangelical Christians are apt to think in terms of Hinduism as 'heathen darkness', and to act accordingly, an attitude that is becoming progressively less widely held. At the opposite extreme, there are Christian individuals who insist that to be a Christian in a Hindu setting necessitates the acceptance of Hindu practices and thought.

Since the Second Vatican Council in 1962–63, this attitude has come to be held by an influential section of Roman Catholic opinion. In these circles, the ideal is to engage in 'dialogue' with the Hindu on the level of religious experience, without preconceived notions of the goal to which the dialogue is expected to lead; mutual openness, it is stressed, is indispensable. On the theological level, attempts have also been made to classify the Hindu as an 'anonymous Christian', an attitude that finds its exact counterpart in the tolerant Hindu's statement that Christianity is Vaishnavism not yet come to full self-consciousness (Vaishnavism emphasizes the love and worship of God). These are, however, very recent developments, and it is as yet far too early to see what is likely to come of them.

(See also HINDUISM.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

Religious Architecture

Man's earliest religious sanctuaries were in caves, which were adapted in various ways for religio-magical rites. It is only possible to speculate on why the peoples of the Old Stone Age chose caves for this purpose; but their use of them did involve a factor of considerable significance. For it was the inner parts of the cave-systems that were utilized for their magical paintings and ritual ceremonies. This meant that the Paleolithic peoples had to face the awful experience of penetrating into the dark subterranean unknown, illuminated only by the light of primitive torches or lamps. The fact that they did so must surely imply some motive strong enough to overcome their natural dread; and it seems reasonable to suppose that the mysterious and terrifying nature of the caverns was felt to render them proper places for contact with the powers evoked by their magic. (See also CAVE ART; CAVES.)

The earliest constructed sanctuaries date from the seventh millennium BC, and have been found at Jericho and Catal Hüyük in Anatolia. The identification of those at Jericho is not certain; one seems to have contained a sacred stone pillar. The sanctuaries found at Catal Hüyük are of unique interest. Some 40 shrines distributed over nine building-levels were unearthed there. In plan and structure they were identical with the houses, and formed an integral part of the complex of buildings that constituted the urban settlement at Catal Hüyük at various stages. The shrines or sanctuaries were distinguished from domestic buildings by their lay-out and decoration. They served the cult of a goddess, conceived in the three aspects of maiden, mother, and old woman. Associated with the goddess was a deification of the male principle in the form of a bearded man or boy and a bull.

These sanctuaries were rich in symbolism. The walls were adorned with paintings and plaster reliefs, and rows of bulls' horns were set in benches on the floor. Among the paintings were illustrations of bulls and great black vultures with headless corpses (see HEADLESS SPIRITS). The goddess was represented pregnant, on the wall in plaster relief, and also by cult images. Another curious feature were rows of women's breasts, moulded of plaster fixed to the walls and containing the skulls of foxes, weasels or vultures, and the jaw-bones of wild boars. Such symbolism seems to indicate that the cult performed in these sanctuaries had a double theme: fertility and death.

Most of the temples of ancient Mesopotamia had a great square tower, consisting of several stages and known as a *ziggurat*. On the flat Mesopotamian plain they would have been the most notable features of the landscape, and their significance and purpose has excited much interest. The Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BC) records that the ziggurat of the temple of Marduk at Babylon had seven stages, and that there was a richly adorned couch in the shrine at the top. He was informed by the priests that each night a woman awaited there the descent of the god (see PROSTITUTION). This colourful story has been questioned by modern scholars; but as there is no explanation of the ziggurat in ancient Mesopotamian records, and none of the top storeys of the ziggurats excavated has survived, it is only possible to speculate on the function of these towers.

It has been suggested that the Sumerians, who founded Mesopotamian civilization, came originally from a land where they worshipped their gods on hilltops and that when they built their temples in flat Mesopotamia, they raised artificial hills. An alternative theory is that the ziggurat represented a 'cosmic mountain', which was the tomb of a dying and rising god (see VEGETATION SPIRITS). It has also been suggested that the ziggurat was the throne

Sonia Halliday

of the deity, or that it constituted an immense altar for sacrifices. The story of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11.3–5), which was based upon knowledge of the great Mesopotamian temple-towers, has been interpreted as indicating that the ziggurat was regarded as a means of descent and ascent for a sky-dwelling god. The fact that the shrine at the top of the ziggurat was called *Shakuru*, meaning 'waiting-room' or 'room of transit', has caused some scholars to think that the 'epiphany' or manifestation of the deity was expected there.

The religious symbolism of ancient Egyptian architecture found expression in two types of structure: the temple and the tomb. The temple was called the *het neter*, 'house of the god', and in its essential plan it was the habitation of the cult image of the god concerned. An Egyptian temple was dedicated specifically to a particular deity or a triad of deities. In the elaborately developed temples of the New Kingdom and Ptolemaic periods (see EGYPT) the cult image was housed in a shrine or *naos*, formed of a monolithic block of stone closed by doors. This naos derived from the primitive hut that constituted the temple in Predynastic times. The naos was situated in what formed the Holy of Holies of the later temples – a chamber, unlighted by windows, which lay at the end of a series of larger colonnaded halls, and a peristyled open court (a court surrounded by a row of columns). Entrance into the latter was made through a great stone portal, flanked on either side by massive pylons. Before the pylons stood two obelisks and giant statues of the pharaoh, while from the base of the pylons rose tall masts from which white, green, blue and red streamers hung. Leading away from the portal was a double row of couchant sphinxes. The outer and inner walls, and the pillars were decorated with carvings depicting ritual scenes and the victories of the pharaoh. Within the precincts of the great temples at Karnak were sacred lakes, and later temples often had a *mammisi* or 'birth-house', in which the birth of a divine child was ritually portrayed each year.

This complex of buildings was invested with a deep symbolism, for the temple, by virtue of its being the 'house of the god', was regarded as heaven. Each day when the

An element of architectural symbolism was sometimes introduced in early Christian churches by representing the hemispherical dome of the apse as the heavens

doors of the naos were opened the officiant announced: 'The Gates of Heaven are opened.' The ceiling of the temple was painted to represent the sky and the celestial phenomena. Plants were depicted at the base of the walls and columns, so that they appeared to grow out of the ground. The cult performed within the temple was believed to ensure the security and continuance of the land and people from hostile and threatening forces, and the whole imagery was designed to present the building as a symbol of the universe.

The pylons had their place in this symbolical scheme. Not only did their massive structure protect the entrance to the temple, but they were mystically identified with the goddesses Isis and Nephthys, who watched over Osiris and secured his resurrection from death (see OSIRIS). The approach to the Holy of Holies was also carefully contrived. It was a gradual transition from the secular world, bathed in the strong Egyptian sunlight, through the deepening darkness of the great halls, their roofs supported on pillars, into the intense blackness that enshrouded the naos of the god.

Another type of temple was erected in Egypt for the worship of the sun god Re. Of the first and most famous sun temple at Heliopolis nothing survives; but its plan was followed for those erected by the first three kings of the 5th Dynasty (c 2500 BC). The excavated ruins of one of these at Abu Gurob reveal the design. The sanctuary consisted of an open court, which was surrounded by a walled enclosure containing store rooms. This court was dominated by a great truncated obelisk, standing on a tall podium or pedestal, before which was a large altar. It was evidently felt that the sun god was to be worshipped in the open air. Outside the temple precinct a brick barque was built, symbolizing the solar barque in which Re, the sun god, was imagined as crossing the sky each day. The significance of the obelisk is unknown. In the Abu Gurob temple it may have represented the *ben-ben* stone in the sanctuary at Heliopolis, which marked the place of the 'primeval hill' where the sun god first appeared out of the watery abyss of Nun (see CREATION MYTHS).

The Egyptians' profound concern with death and the afterlife made the tomb an object of immense importance to them. Throughout the period of their civilization various kinds of tomb were used: there was the ancient mastaba, with sloping sides and flat roof, the pyramid, and the rock-hewn tomb. But whatever its form, the tomb had two basic components; the sepulchral chamber or pit, in which the embalmed body was placed, and an adjacent room or rooms where the funerary equipment of the deceased was deposited and where food was set for his nourishment. Sometimes this mortuary service was performed in a separate building. The pharaohs of the New Kingdom, who were buried in the remote Valley of the Kings, erected great mortuary temples for this service on the flat land bordering the western bank of the Nile.

The most famous form of Egyptian tomb is the pyramid. There has been much discussion about the origin and significance of the pyramidal shape. Some scholars have argued that the shape gradually evolved from the mastaba via the Step-Pyramid to the true pyramid, the most notable example of which is the Great Pyramid of Cheops. However, in view of the genius of its architect Imhotep (see IMHOTEP), there is reason for thinking that the Step-Pyramid embodied a new conception of the pharaoh's tomb. It symbolized the ladder, mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, by which the dead king ascended to heaven. The imagery of the pyramid proper would he a slight variant of this idea. The Pyramid Texts also describe the dead king as ascending to heaven by means of the ramp constituted by the sun's rays. The Egyptians pictured the rays as forming a pyramidal pattern.

The Ark of Yahweh

The Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem was originally built by Solomon primarily to house the Ark of Yahweh, which had been the portable shrine of the deity's presence during the Israelites' sojourn in the desert. The fact that the Temple faced towards the east has caused some scholars to think that the cult of Yahweh may have had a solar aspect. Like many other contemporary sanctuaries in the Near East, the Jerusalem Temple was basically divided into three parts: an open court and a building consisting of two chambers. The anterior chamber was called *bayith*, 'the house', and it led to the inner chamber, the Holy of Holies. At the centre of this holy place there stood two large figures of cherubim, whose wings overshadowed the Ark of Yahweh.

Among other cultic or symbolic objects in this first Temple was a brazen serpent, Nehushtan, which tradition connected with that set up by Moses for the curing of snakebite (Numbers 21.4–9). On either side of the porch stood twin pillars of bronze named Jachin and Boas. The purpose of these pillars and their mysterious names have never been satisfactorily explained. Stone or bronze pillars were a feature of many temples in Syria, Phoenicia and Cyprus, and seem to have had a cultic significance. Another unexplained object was 'the brazen sea', a circular basin, resting upon the backs of 12 bronze oxen, which were in four groups facing the cardinal points. Its significance has been variously interpreted as symbolizing the primeval abyss of the book of Genesis or 'the waters which were above the firmament' (Genesis 1.7).

The Greek temple has been described as a 'casket containing the image'. For this reason attention was concentrated on the architectural perfection and adornment of the exterior of the structure, of which the Parthenon of Athens is the supreme example. The cult image dominated the interior, which was well lighted in contrast to the Egyptian temples. Certain temples varied from the general pattern, most notably that of Demeter at Eleusis. This temple was also the Telesterion, in which the famous Eleusinian Mysteries were performed and so was structurally adapted for the purpose (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS). Circular temples were occasionally built in the classical world. Some were dedicated to Asclepios, the god of healing (see HEALING GODS). Some notable examples still survive in Rome: the famous Pantheon, which was dedicated to the seven planetary deities and symbolized the all-embracing cosmos, and the so-called Temple of Vesta, whose original dedication is unknown. The real Temple of Vesta was in the Forum, and has been partially restored. Its circular shape was proper to its function as the sacred hearth of the city, whose perpetual fire was tended by the Vestal Virgins.

Mention might also be made here of the cave-sanctuaries of Mithra, for it was in the Roman Empire that the cult of this Iranian deity achieved its greatest influence (see MITHRAS). The *mithraea* were located in natural caves or, where these were not

Russell Ash

G. Cubitt

Simplicity and splendour: churches of various denominations range from an ordinary house converted into a place of worship, like this Spiritualist church in London *(above)* to such magnificent architectural achievements as the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin, Moscow *(right)*. Both buildings prominently display the Cross, the supreme symbol of the Christian faith

available, in artificially constructed caves. The origin of celebrating the Mithraic rites in caves is not known; but an explanation offered by Euboulos probably represented the current belief. He wrote: 'the cave conveys an image of the cosmos, of which Mithra was the *demiourgos*, and the things at measured intervals within the cave convey symbols of the cosmic elements and climates.' The chief object, which was situated at the end of the Mithraic cave, was a sculptured representation of Mithra slaying the Cosmic Bull.

Christian architecture seems to have been functional in origin; it provided a place where the faithful could assemble for the celebration of the Eucharist and other rites. Indeed, the altar for the Eucharist, and the baptistery (often a separate building) constituted the two basic items that were needed for the ritual practice of Christianity. When it became legally possible in the 4th century for Christians to build churches, contemporary architectural styles were followed. The basilica, with a semicircular end or apse, became the general form of Christian churches. These early buildings incorporated no specific symbolism in their basic architectural plan. Depending on the resources of their communities, the interiors were richly decorated with coloured mosaics depicting sacred figures and biblical scenes.

Sometimes an element of architectural symbolism was introduced by representing the hemispherical dome of the apse as the heavens, against which Christ was portrayed as the Cosmocrator or 'Lord of the universe'. The great dome of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, the most splendid church of the medieval world, had figures of seraphs to symbolize the Heavenly Temple according to Isaiah's memorable vision: '. . . I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up . . . Above him stood the seraphim . . .' (Isaiah 6.1). The most notable instance of architectural symbolism that developed in Byzantine churches, and has become a feature of Eastern Orthodox churches, is the *iconostasis*. This is a screen, covered with icons, which cuts off the sanctuary from the congregation in the nave. Its doors are closed during the celebration of the Eucharist, symbolizing the holiness of the rites performed inside the sanctuary by the clergy.

The Gothic cathedral epitomized the ideals and aspirations of medieval Christianity in the West. In its structure and decoration it represented the Heavenly Jerusalem. It was designed as a setting for the drama of the Mass, in which was ritually re-enacted the divine mystery of man's salvation by Christ. The High Altar was therefore the focus of attention, and it was set in a harmony of structural lines, symbolizing the perfection of balance that characterized the medieval conception of the universe. This geometrical imagery was enhanced by the richness of colour provided by hangings and vestments, and by the light streaming through stained-glass windows.

In contrast to the Byzantine church, the Gothic cathedral was designed to enable the faithful to see the ritual presentation of the sacramental body and blood of Christ in circumstances of the utmost solemnity and beauty. But that was not all. The cathedral provided not only the setting appropriate to the divine mystery of the Mass, it also taught the faithful the great truths of their religion. Its sculptures, paintings and coloured glass depicted the incarnation, ascension and majesty of Christ, the coronation of the

C. M. Dixon

Peter Marsden/Sonia Halliday

Epitomizing the ideals and aspirations of Christianity in the West, the great cathedrals of Europe are designed as settings for the drama of the Mass; this symbolism is as apparent in the Church of the Holy Family, Barcelona *(right)* designed by Gaudi in the 19th century, as in Chartres Cathedral *(left)* built in the 12th and 13th centuries *Below left* Designed to reflect the harmony of the cosmos, the characteristic shape of the Hindu temple rising to a tapering peak, points to the abode of the gods and also represents Meru, the sacred world mountain: Madivai temple, India

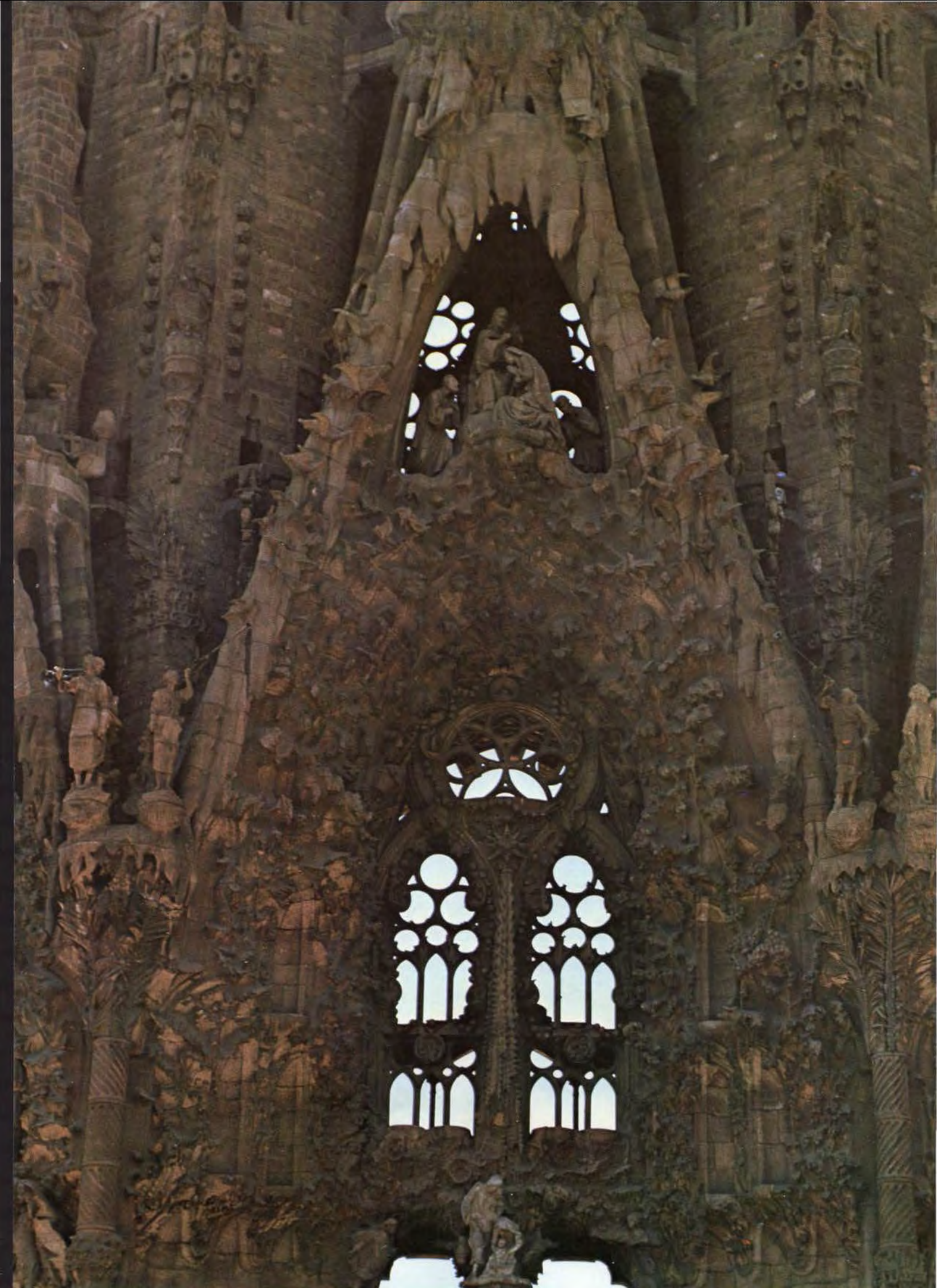
Virgin Mary, and the Last Judgement.

In Islam the mosque is essentially functional in design. Besides providing shelter for the worshippers, it contains a *mihrab*, usually a beautifully tiled recess in a wall that faces towards Mecca, which indicates the *qibla* or direction in which the faithful must turn in worship. The other important feature is the *minbar* or pulpit, for sermons and other pronouncements. The minaret, the most characteristic external feature of the mosque, is also functional. It provides a point of vantage for the muezzin to call the faithful to prayer. The number of minarets denotes the status of the mosque concerned. The great sanctuary of Islam is the Kaaba at Mecca, a cubic edifice draped with a rich cloth, which contains the mysterious Black Stone. This is the chief object of veneration for the Moslem faithful who make the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mohammed (see MECCA).

Not only does the Hindu temple house the image of the deity to whom it is dedicated, but it is also regarded as partaking in itself of the substance of the god. Elaborate rites are prescribed to ensure that the site chosen is auspicious. The plan is laid out in a square, conceived in terms of the imagined shape of the world, with Brahma located at its centre. Like the Gothic cathedral, it was designed to reflect the harmony of the cosmos. Its characteristic shape, rising to the tapering *sikhara*, 'mountain-peak', both points to the traditional abode of the gods and represents Meru, the sacred world mountain. The metaphysical laws governing the building of a temple were the first principles learned by apprentices to the builders' craft, which was organized in guilds on a hereditary basis.

Buddhist architecture also was inspired by cosmological symbolism. The *stupa*, which was originally a burial mound used to enshrine relics of the Buddha, became itself an object of worship. It was mystically conceived of as a kind of architectural body symbolizing the body which the Buddha had abandoned when he entered Nirvana. Wedded to this mystical conception was a complex cosmological imagery based upon the alternation of square and circle in the stupa's plan. Rising from the top of the mound was a series of circular umbrellas, as seen at the Great Stupa of Sanchi in India, which symbolized the *devalokas* or heavens

Spectrum



Alan Irvine

The development in Christianity of a closer liturgical relationship between clergy and congregation is reflected in modern church design with its emphasis on open interiors in which the altar is no longer set apart from the worshippers: Notre Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, by Le Corbusier, a masterpiece of contemporary religious architecture

of the gods, culminating with that of Brahma. The supreme example of Buddhist architectural symbolism is the great stupa of Barabudur in Java. It has been described as 'a magic replica of the universe', and as the pilgrim ascends its galleries human destiny is portrayed in a series of reliefs depicting the career of a Bodhisattva.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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RENAISSANCE

The art and culture of the Renaissance contained powerful strands of paganism and magic, drawn from the civilization of late antiquity to which scholars and artists longingly looked back

RENAISSANCE

'THERE IS this diversity between God and man, that God contains in himself all things because he is their source, and man contains all things because he is their centre.' This pronouncement by the Italian philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) is a statement of Renaissance 'humanism', a word which has many shades of meaning but which basically implies a firm confidence in the worth, dignity and abilities of man, a view of man as something very close to a god. In the Renaissance context, a humanist also means someone passionately addicted to the civilization of Greece and Rome, looking back to it for truth and beauty rather than to a medieval culture dismissed as dark and barbarous, Gothic in the bad sense. The term 'Middle Ages' itself contains this implication, stemming mainly from the Florentine historian Flavio Biondo, who used it for the 1000 years between the submergence of classical culture under the floodtides of barbarism in the 5th century and its rebirth in the 15th.

Renaissance humanists believed that the myths and legends of the ancient world, however unedifying they might seem on the surface, concealed profound truths which had been cloaked in fable to hide them from the common herd, 'showing only the crust of the mysteries to the vulgar,' as Pico said, 'while reserving the marrow of the true sense for higher and more perfect spirits.' If you were a higher and more perfect spirit, you might discern the same mysteries behind the Jewish tradition as well. Why had God taken 40 days to deliver the law and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus, chapter 24), a transaction which could have been more expeditiously dispatched? Because God had also communicated to Moses all sorts of secrets, not suitable for vulgar ears and passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation of the wise ever since. These were the secrets of the Cabala, and they were essentially the same as those concealed in the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt and the myths of Mesopotamia, in Plato and the Neoplatonists, in the Pythagorean tradition and the Orphic hymns and the Hermetica (see CABALA; HERMETICA; NEOPLATONISM; ORPHEUS; PYTHAGORAS).

This enticing conclusion was assisted by confusion about dates and influences. The belief that Hebrew was the earliest of tongues, the language of God himself (see ALPHABET), helped to suggest that, just as all other languages must be descended from it, so all other valid insights into truth must be descended from the revelation in Hebrew. Writings really or allegedly stemming from Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Plato, were all indiscriminately dated after Moses and the Old Testament writers and were believed to have been influenced by them. Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), Christian cabalist and notable promoter of Greek studies in Germany, thought that Pythagoras drew his doctrine from the Cabala and equated the Pythagorean Tetractys with the Jewish Tetragrammaton, the great mystic name of God (see NAMES; NUMEROLOGY). Plato was dated after the Hermetica, by which he was supposed to have been influenced, and when a more accurate date was established for the Hermetica, by Isaac Casaubon in 1614, writers like Robert Fludd (see FLUDD) ignored it.

Renaissance scholars were helped to find common threads of doctrine beneath the surface of different traditions by the fact that their sources were generally late and did in reality contain important ideas in common. Their Platonism was largely Neoplatonism and Professor Wind has remarked of one of the most influential of them, Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), that he read Plato with the eyes of Plotinus. The Cabala, the Hermetica and much Pythagorean, Orphic and gnostic lore came to them from the last centuries of antiquity or later. Typically, Ficino and his friends at the Academy founded at Florence in imitation of Plato's Academy at Athens (they kept Plato's supposed birthday as a holiday) drew their interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics from a late work, the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo Niliacus, an obscure Alexandrian author, not earlier than the 2nd century AD. The manuscript had been discovered on a Greek island in 1419 by a priest who brought it back to Florence.

In delving into all these mysteries the humanists were not in most cases seeking to attack Christianity, quite the contrary. They believed that the wisdom of antiquity had heralded and foreshadowed the sublime truths of Christian doctrine. Ficino said that Plato 'together with the Pythagorean and Socratic doctrines, followed the law of Moses and prophesied the Christian law.' And they could find a highly respectable warrant for this view in a passage of St Augustine: 'The thing itself, which is now called the Christian religion, was with the ancients, and it was with the human race from its beginning to the time when Christ appeared in the flesh: from when on the true religion, which already existed, began to be called the Christian.'

The humanist preoccupation was to reconcile paganism and Christianity by isolating 'the true religion' which had been 'with the human race from its beginning'. But in the process they revealed a God whose features were not as Christian as conservative churchmen would have preferred, and their relationships with the Church were uneasy. Popes and prelates who were themselves highly educated men, well-read in the classics and enthusiastic antiquarians, alive to the splendours and beauties of the pagan tradition, were half inclined to approve and half to condemn. Pico, for instance, framed his opinions in 900 theses, 13 of which were condemned by Pope Innocent VIII, but he was cleared of all imputation of heresy six years later by Alexander VI.

One of the themes which fascinated Renaissance artists and philosophers was the reconciliation of opposites in a higher unity *Previous page* Painting by Lorenzo Lotto, now in Alnwick Castle: a cherub crowns with an evergreen wreath a skull resting on a soft cushion, reconciling death and love, mortality and immortality *Below* Francis I of France as a hermaphrodite, uniting male and female

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Apollo Into Christ

The Renaissance was not a sudden break in the continuity of history. The pagan gods and heroes had survived all through the Middle Ages as demons, planetary powers or great mortals, rulers and sages of long ago, benefactors of humanity and bestowers of civilization. The Renaissance inherited the belief that peoples or ruling families were descended from these heroic ancestors. In the 15th century the Dukes of Burgundy prided themselves on their descent from Hercules. In the 1490s Alexander VI, the Borgia pope, whose heraldic animal was the bull, had his apartments in the Vatican decorated with scenes including the story of the Egyptian sacred bull Apis, with the implication that the Borgias were descended from Apis and had inherited from him the fierce vigour which had raised them to the summit of Christendom.

The gods remained alive in astrology, because of their connection with the planets through which, under God, they influenced the lives and fortunes of men. All through the Middle Ages and Renaissance churchmen, though frequently uneasy about astrology, generally tolerated it, and sometimes patronized it. Pope Julius II fixed the date of his coronation on astrological advice and Leo X founded a university chair in astrology.

The later pagan writers themselves had brought the old myths up to date by searching out hidden meanings. The Roman historian Sallust (1st century BC), for example, interpreted the savage tale of Attis and Cybele (see CYBELE) as an object

National Gallery, London

***The Judgement of Paris,* by Rubens: this episode from Greek mythology was interpreted as a case of the One revealing itself through its three component parts, the opposites and their common centre, the three goddesses standing for the goals of wisdom, power and pleasure, or for the contemplative, active and passive**

lesson on the trials which the soul must suffer in its search for God. Christian authors followed suit and also applied the technique to the Bible, seeing in the passionate lovers of the Song of Solomon the figures of Christ and his Bride, the Church. In the 12th century John of Salisbury anticipated the Renaissance attitude by thinking pagan religion worthy of study, 'not out of any respect for false deities but because under cover of words truths are hidden which may not be revealed to the vulgar.'

Reinterpretation of pagan literature could produce curious results. Ovid's *Art of Love* suffered a sea-change into a primer of spiritual devotion, and as such was piously studied by nuns in 13th century convents. In an anonymous poem of c 1300, *Ovide moralisé*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was transformed into a collection of fables anticipating Christianity, with Diana as the Trinity, Actaeon as Jesus, Phaethon who stole the sun's chariot as Lucifer, and Ceres searching for Proserpine as the Church seeking for souls strayed from the true path. In Alciati's *Emblematum liber* (1531) the handsome youth Ganymede, who in classical mythology was carried off by Zeus in homosexual mood, has turned into a symbol of the pure soul which finds joy in God, and a later commentator even applied Christ's command to 'Suffer little children to come unto me' to the story.

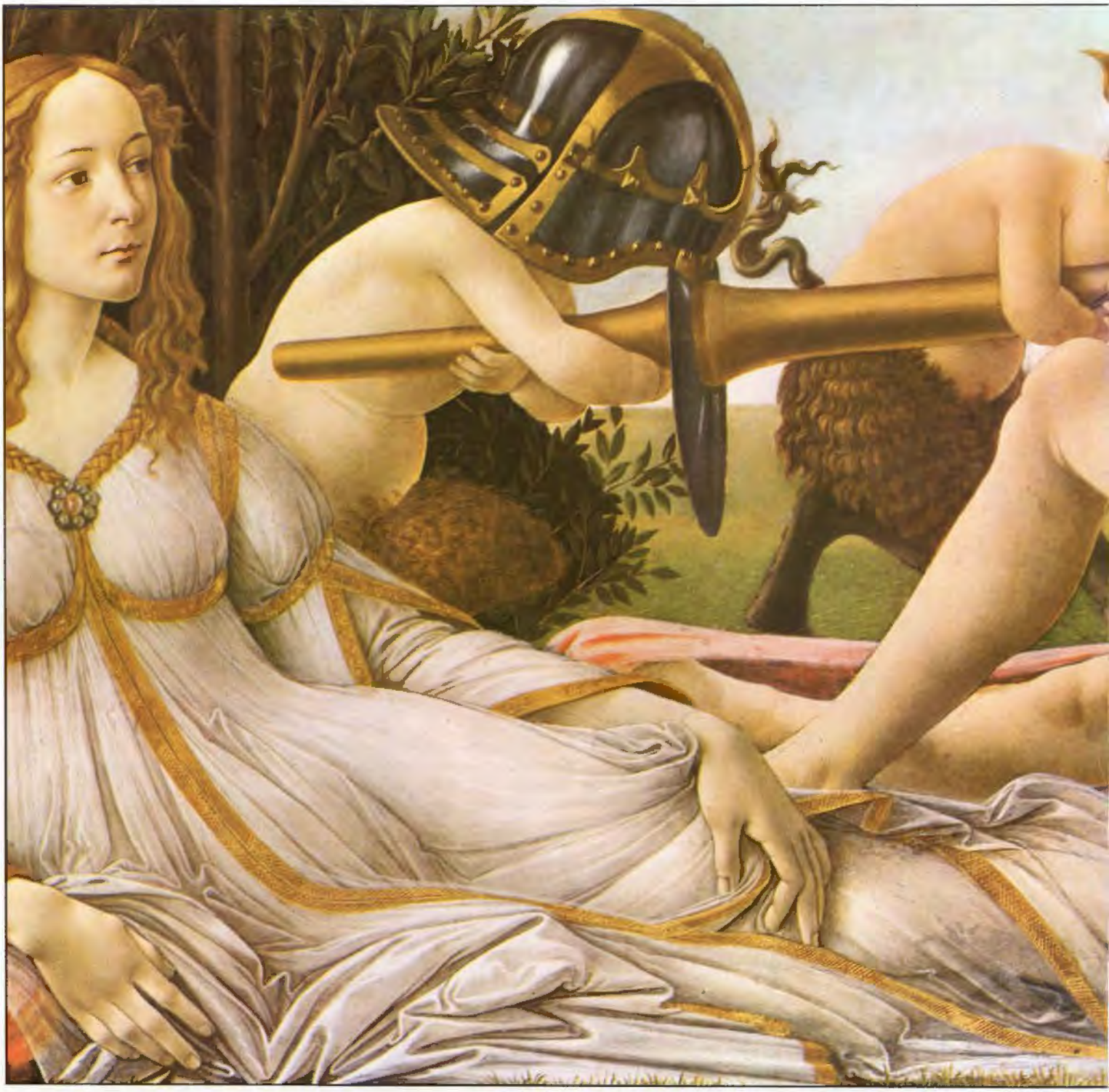
Some Christians objected. Martin Luther denounced those 'who turn Apollo into Christ and Daphne into the Virgin Mary'.

In the mid-15th century the church of San Francesco in Rimini was decorated with sculptures and bas-reliefs of the Virtues and Liberal Arts, the Prophets and Sibyls, the signs of the zodiac and the planetary gods, not assembled as in the Middle Ages to show all these elements in their place in the Christian scheme of things but to show them in worshipful and protective attendance on the lord of Rimini, Sigismondo Malatesta, a ruthless, learned and profligate soldier of fortune. The church had been turned into a temple to his glory and Pope Pius II accused him of having paganized it. 'The cult that actually is celebrated in these precincts,' says Professor Seznec, 'is not that of Christ. It resembles rather the worship which Rome once offered to her human idols – Augustus, Faustina, or Caesar.'

The Architecture of Man

Though Christian themes greatly outnumber pagan themes in Renaissance art and though pagan themes were frequently given a Christian interpretation – the Roman triumph as anticipating the triumph of Christ or the Church, or pagan sacrifices as foreshadowings of the sacrifice of Christ – it remains true that Renaissance artists rediscovered classical style and depicted pagan gods and myths with a powerful, sensuous realism which breathed into them new and vigorous life. The semi-pagan value given to the human body, to man as the centre of all things, also appears in Renaissance architecture, which again looked back to classical models and which has been described by Professor Wittkower (in *The New Cambridge Modern History*) as anthropomorphic and anthropometric. 'Anthropomorphic, because these architects, thinking in terms of a new organic conception of nature, claimed that the parts of a building must be related to each other and to the whole like the members of the human body; and anthropometric, because it was the metrical relationships of the human body on which their interest was focused. The Bible taught them that man was created by divine will in the image of God, and Neoplatonism that perfect proportions in man reflect something of the harmony of the universe. Man's proportions, therefore, should be the norm for man-made buildings.'

The only ancient work on architecture that had survived was that of Vitruvius (1st century AD), which showed that a man's body, with arms and legs extended, fitted into both a square and a circle. Since the circle could stand for God, because it has no beginning or end, and the four-sided square for solidity, the created world, the diagram was taken as a demonstration of the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, that man is a



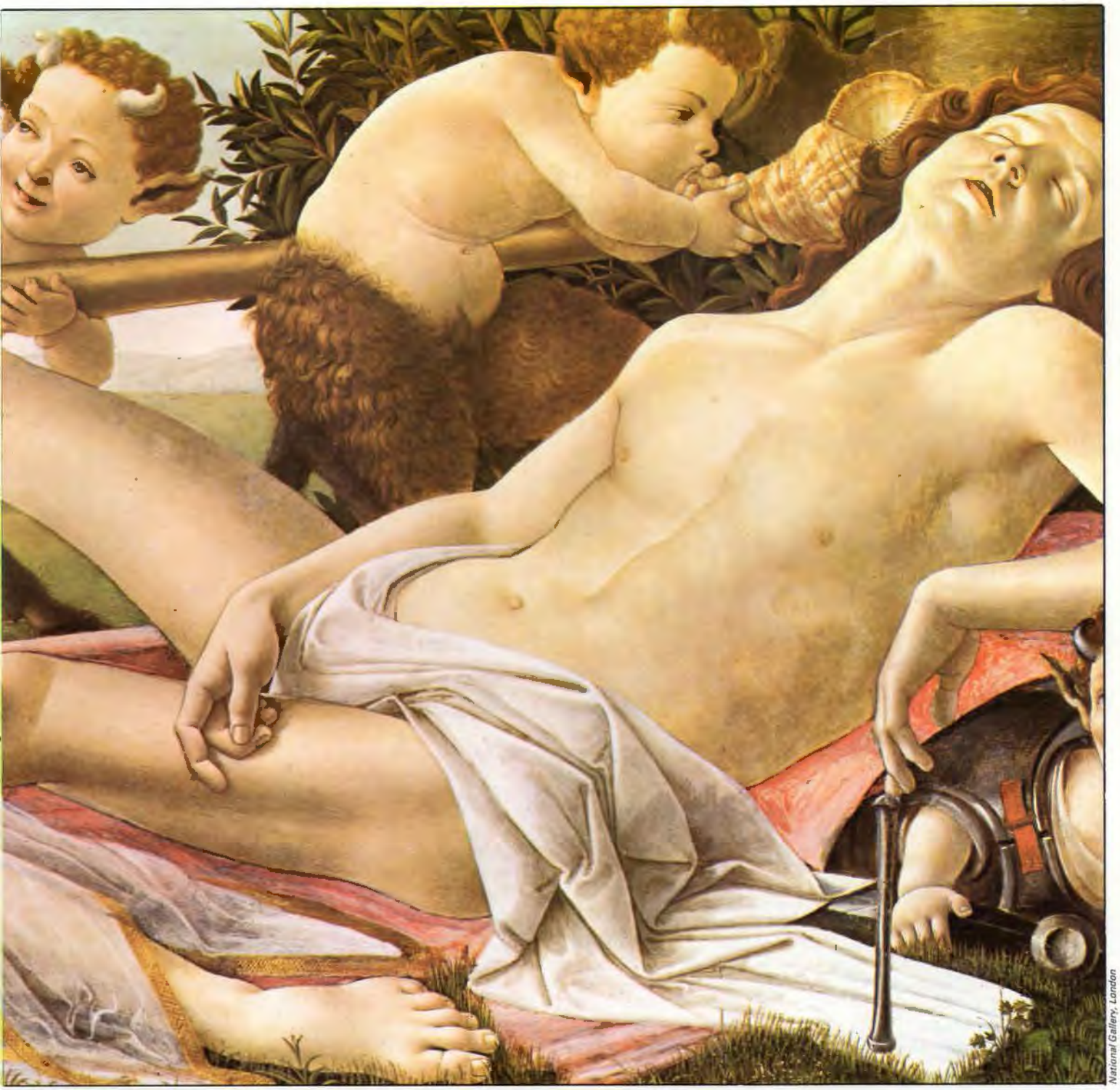
miniature replica of the universe and of God. This theory justified views of man as the container of all things and the measure of all things, and as potentially divine (see MACROCOSM).

As a symbol of both God and man the circle came into architecture in the centralized church. It was a rejection of the medieval longitudinal church, designed to lead the worshipper towards the high altar placed at one end, for the focal point was now in the middle, to demonstrate both the Oneness and the all-pervadingness of the infinite God and the cardinal importance of man standing at the centre. The great architect Bramante planned the new St Peter's, Rome, as basically an equal-armed cross with an apse at the end of each arm, so symmetrical that there is no way of telling from the plan which apse was to hold the high altar. The plan was approved by Pope Julius II, a remarkable example of ecclesiastical acceptance of the new ideas.

Renaissance architects looked back to Roman models in what Wittkower has called 'an almost magical act of identification through which they hoped to recapture something of the greatness of bygone days', and centrally planned buildings could carry uncomfortably non-Christian connotations. In 1444 Michelozzo di Bartolommeo began to add to the church of the Annunziata in Florence a circular east end which was a copy of a temple of Minerva in Rome. Of another centralized church, Alberti's San Sebastiano in Mantua, a cardinal wrote in 1473 that he could not see whether it was going to be a church, a mosque or a synagogue. Central planning could also be turned to the glorification of a 'human idol'. Antonio Filarete, a 15th century Florentine artist who worked for Francesco Sforza of Milan, another notable Renaissance strong man, planned an ideal town to be called Sforzinda. It was to have an entirely symmetrical plan in the form of an octagon, with the prince's palace and the cathedral on a square at the centre, from which the streets would radiate.

Concordant Discord

The fact that the God of Christianity is both One and Three excited humanist interest in pagan groupings of three and in the numerological theory of 3 as a pair of



National Gallery, London

Love and violence, two opposites united in *Mars and Venus*, by Botticelli: the love goddess has put the war god to sleep and baby satyrs use his weapons as toys, but the element of hostility remains present in the wasps round his head

opposites with the unity that reconciles and transcends them (see also THREE). A passion for opposites and their reconciliation is characteristic of Renaissance humanist thinking, and lies behind Pico's love of splendidly paradoxical utterance, as in 'Let us enter into the light of ignorance and, blinded by the darkness of the divine splendour, exclaim with the prophet: I fainted in thy halls, O Lord', or in his 'true definition of Beauty' as 'nothing else than an amicable enmity and a concordant discord'.

That classical paganism had grasped this essential truth about the nature of things was shown by the myth that the war god Mars and love goddess Venus had a daughter named Harmony, a higher unity created by a conjunction of opposites. Many Renaissance paintings are exercises on this theme, including *Veronese's Mars and Venus United By Love* (see MARS) and Botticelli's *Mars and Venus*, in which love has lulled the fierce war god to sleep and his weapons have become toys for infant satyrs. But wasps are buzzing angrily round his head, to keep the element of hostility present in the equation of 'amicable enmity'.

In Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (book 4) the goddess of Concord is escorted by Love and Hate, who are brothers, and the statue of Venus is hermaphroditic – 'she hath both kinds in one, both male and female, both under one name'. And alchemy with its conjunctions and sacred marriages, its processes of separating out and reuniting opposites, was flourishing in the Renaissance period.

Another example of the liking for opposites conjoined is the maxim *festina lente*, 'make haste slowly', which had the classical prestige of having been the motto of the Emperor Augustus. Many princely families adopted it as a badge and it was represented in contradictory images: a dolphin twined round an anchor for instance, a sail fastened to a column, a butterfly and a crab (as on coins of Augustus), an eagle and a lamb, a lynx blindfolded, a tortoise flying a sail.

If the One unites opposites, then conversely

Scala

Botticelli's *Primavera*, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence: the painting has been called a talisman of Venus, a magical device for capturing in the mind the influences of harmony, beauty and love associated with Venus as goddess and planet; on the right, the wind of spring, Zephyr, embraces the shy earth nymph, Chloris, and turns her into Flora, the blossoming flowers of spring

it reveals itself by manifesting its component parts, the opposites and their common centre. An example of this in classical mythology was taken to be the Judgement of Paris (see APPLE), with the three goddesses standing for three kinds of life – contemplative, active and passive – or for three human goals – wisdom, power and pleasure.

Another triad of this sort, much favoured by Renaissance artists, was the classical image of the three Graces, who appear in Botticelli's *Primavera*. It is impossible to do justice in brief to Professor Wind's fascinating analysis of this painting but its most obvious features are the triads on either side of Venus (who has very much the look of a Madonna). The Graces are interlaced in the knot of a maze-like dance and, at the other side, the wind of spring, Zephyr, touches the chaste earth nymph Chloris, who turns into Flora, the flowers of spring, an allusion to a story in Ovid's *Fasti* and a demonstration of the fruitful union of the opposites of maidenly purity and ardent love.

A Talisman of Venus

The *Primavera* has been described as a talisman of Venus, a magical device for capturing in the mind the influences of harmony, beauty and love associated with Venus as goddess and planet. Albrecht Dürer's *Melancolia* (see MAGIC SQUARES) represents the contemplative and scholarly life of those much influenced by the gloomy planet Saturn, with the magic square of Jupiter, planet of health and good spirits, added as a corrective. Dürer was influenced by Marsilio Ficino, who in turn was influenced by the *Picatrix*, an earlier magical textbook (see PICATRIX) which recommended the use of images symbolic of the planets to draw down and focus their forces.

Ficino was deeply conscious of Saturn's influence on his own personality. His medical work, *Libri de Vita* (1489) is described by Frances Yates as 'intended primarily for students who are liable through over-intense application to their studies to grow ill or melancholy. This is because the nature of their occupations brings them under the influence of Saturn, for contemplation and hard abstract study belong to Saturn who is also the planet of the melancholy temperament, and the star which is inimical to the vital forces of life and youth. Melancholy students who have used up their vital powers in their studies, and the old in whom these forces are in any case declining, are therefore advised to avoid as far as possible plants, herbs, animals, stones, and the like belonging to Saturn, and to use and surround themselves with plants, herbs, animals, stones, people, belonging to the more fortunate, cheerful, and life-giving planets, of which the chief are Sol (the sun), Jupiter, and Venus.' Ficino goes on, though with some hesitation, to recommend the use of symbolic pictures: to induce happiness and physical strength, for example, 'an image of a young Venus, holding apples and flowers, and dressed in white and yellow'.

Less hesitant was Giordano Bruno, burned alive at Rome in 1600 as a heretic and magician (see BRUNO), who recommended pictures of this sort for drawing planetary influences down into the mind by imagining them with vivid concentration. The *Occult Philosophy* of Cornelius Agrippa (see AGRIPPA) lists astrological images, derived from *Picatrix*, as suitable for engraving on talismans, and the 'Fourth Book' added to it describes the spirits of the planets in much the same way. Similarly, the grimoires, especially the *Lemegeton* (see GRIMOIRE), describe the appearance of spirits and demons, presumably as an aid to summoning each of them by concentrating on a mental picture of it.

Belief in 'natural magic', the occult powers concealed in animals, herbs, stones, numbers and all other phenomena of the world, could be justified from the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, the view of the universe as a gigantic human organism, alive in every part of its being and forming an orderly whole. Bruno said in his *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584) that: 'God as a whole (though not totally but in some more in some less excellently) is in all things. For Mars is more efficaciously in natural

vestiges and modes of substance, in a viper or a scorpion, nay even in an onion or garlic, than in any inanimate picture or statue. Thus one should think of Sol as being in a crocus, a daffodil, a sunflower, in the cock, in the lion . . . For as the divinity descends in a certain manner inasmuch as it communicates itself to nature, so there is an ascent made to the divinity through nature. Thus through the light which shines in natural things one mounts up to the life which presides over them.'

This mounting up to the divine could be a devoutly mystical ascent to union with the supreme One or it could be a magical assault on the heights of sopreme power, and the distinction might not be easy to draw. If God is man writ large, the spiritual way is open for man to lose himself within the godhead or masterfully to assert the godhead that is within him. Paul Ricci, who taught at Pavia University, said the lore of the Cabala teaches man how to attain to his god-like prerogatives on earth. Reuchlin said that the cabalist could force the angels to do his bidding. The grimoires show the magician mastering good and evil spirits alike, and Agrippa, not very surprisingly, was rumoured to be in league with the powers of evil. The Faust legend (see FAUST: PACT) was as much a product of the Renaissance as a Michelangelo or a Raphael, and Marlowe put in the mouth of his Faust a statement of the prospect which a humanist view of man could open up: 'A sound magician is a mighty god'.

(See also DEE; PARACELSUS; ROSICRUCIANS).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Following an outbreak of alleged demoniacal possession among the nuns of a German convent, the elderly sub-prioress, who had given her life to her order for half a century, was put on trial and condemned as a witch

SISTER MARIA RENATA

THE CASE of Sister Maria Renata Sanger von Mossau (1679–1749) follows the pattern of, and should be considered in conjunction with, similar cases in the convents of Loudun, Louviers and one or two other places. Some nuns in an enclosed convent are found to be possessed; more or less successful attempts are made at exorcism and in the end a scapegoat is found (generally the convent chaplain or spiritual director) who is charged with bewitching the nuns. The case ends with the execution of the sorcerer. (See also AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS; AUXONNE NUNS; GRANDIER.)

The case involving Sister Renata differs from that of Loudun in that here the spiritual director was one of the prosecutors and the sub-prioress of the convent was the victim. Since it occurred in the middle of the 18th century it is one of the last cases of its kind, though the barbaric cruelty which occurred and the credulity and religious fanaticism displayed are certainly no less than in the previous cases of a little over a century before.

Sister Renata was sub-prioress of the Premonstratensian convent of Unterzell near Wurzburg in Germany. She had entered the convent at the age of 19, so that by the time of her death, when she had been sub-prioress for some five years or more, she had given her life to the convent for half a century.

'Cramps and Contortions'

The trouble began with the entry of a certain Cecilia Pistorini as a novice. She belonged to an Italian family living in Hamburg. Sister Renata was by no means convinced of the girl's suitability for life in the convent, but in spite of this Cecilia became a nun in 1745. The real trouble was that Sister Cecilia was prone, as one authority puts it, to 'cramps and contortions and hallucinations'. In other words she writhed on the ground, foamed at the mouth, cried out during services in church, and in short gave every conventional sign of being possessed by the Devil. Other nuns became afflicted in the same way – or copied Sister Cecilia – and soon after 1745 it appeared that the convent was suffering from an epidemic of demoniacal possession.

Sister Renata had been opposed to Sister Cecilia's joining the community; she considered that the young woman was very hysterical and suffered from delusions. And it is very possible that Sister Renata also viewed somewhat sceptically the manifestations produced by the other nuns. At all events a conflict existed and Sister Renata was regarded unfavourably by some of the nuns. The climax came when one of the older nuns, on her deathbed, accused Sister Renata of having bewitched her. So public an accusation, made at so solemn a moment, could not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The prioress, the chaplain, and Loschert, the Abbot of Oberzell, under whose jurisdiction the nuns were, felt obliged to take action and Sister Renata was put on trial as a witch.

Meanwhile an attempt was being made to rid the afflicted nuns of the devils possessing them. Exorcisms and penitential exercises of various kinds were held, but without effect; it seemed that short of Sister Renata's confession, conviction and execution there was no chance of freeing the convent from the unpleasant visitations of the devils.

A Nun's Yellow Dress

The sub-prioress was imprisoned and her room at the convent searched. Ointments were found and collections of herbs, and a yellow dress. All these were held to be evidence against her. The herbs were said to be poisonous, the ointments salves used in witchcraft, and the yellow dress the robe used for her visits to the witches' sabbath.

Sister Renata's trial for witchcraft in 1749 came after several months in prison and a long series of interrogations which for the most part were conducted under torture. The full confession that was obtained can thus hardly be said to be voluntary or of any value.

Her confession went back to the age of eight when she had given herself to the Devil; in her teens she had led a life of debauchery and at 19, on Satan's orders, had entered the convent at Unterzell with the express purpose of bringing about its ruin. As a nun she had gone out frequently to the sabbath dressed in the yellow robe and riding on a broomstick. She had sexual intercourse with devils and had renounced God and the Church. Lastly, she had bewitched six nuns and had desecrated the host.

Sister Renata was condemned for sorcery, heresy and apostasy by a court composed of Abbot Loschert, the convent chaplain and two Jesuits. The bishop of Würzburg, in confirming the verdict, ordered her to be defrocked and to be burnt as a witch, but on account of her tender years when she first fell a victim to the Devil, she was allowed to be executed first before being burnt. The sentence was carried out in June 1749. After beheading her body was burnt, and during the burning a sermon was preached by a Jesuit, Father George Gaar, justifying the execution.

Unlike similar trials in the past, this one did not lead to an epidemic of witch-hunting in convents; in other respects the case is typical of what occurred when a convent was 'bewitched' or some members of it became 'possessed'. This could quite easily happen among young nuns of a hysterical nature, bound to a life forbidding any sexual outlet whatever, and steeped in a view of religion which was bound up with all sorts of superstition.

In the Loudun case it was a priest who suffered as a result, at Unterzell it was a nun who apparently was innocent of anything except endeavouring to prevent an undesirable candidate from entering the convent. This of course is surmise, but it seems difficult in the absence of evidence to find any other cause for the prosecution of Sister Renata who, despite her confession, for many years had led a life of religious regularity.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

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Walker Art Gallery

REVELATION

GOD'S WILL MADE PLAIN

In most religions it is claimed that supernatural knowledge has been revealed to man through divine intervention. A remorkable Christion work in this tradition is the book of Revelation: teeming with vivid imagery, it was for many centuries the most popular book of the Bible

RELIGION, in all its forms, implies a relationship between human beings and superhuman powers which are believed to affect human affairs. The history of religions shows that man has rarely been content to acknowledge the existence of such powers as remote entities with which he can have no kind of personal contact. He has invariably personified them, ascribing to them purposes, and likes and dislikes in regard to himself. In turn, he has sought to know what were these purposes and sentiments, and has devised means of discovering them.

Most religions, both primitive and sophisticated, have traditional ways of learning the divine will, whether it be of a supreme god or of deities believed to control such important matters as the fertility of the land, the weather or disease. Shamans and witch-doctors claim to communicate with supernatural forces; oracles have been consulted, like the famous one of Apollo at Delphi; various forms of divination have been contrived, such as the inspection of the entrails of sacrificial victims or the flight of birds; and Chaldean astrologers sought to interpret the movement of the stars as the 'writing of the heavens'. In all such ways of acquiring supernatural knowledge the initiative has been taken by man. He has sought by special faculties such as clairvoyance, or by ecstatic trance or magical skills to elicit from gods or spirits information concerning human affairs and fortune. In many religions, however, it is claimed that supernatural knowledge has also come through divine initiative: in other words, that the deity has itself revealed its purpose or will, or truths about its nature and operations.

Heavenly Handwriting

Such revelation has taken many forms. It may be claimed that the revelation was given without human mediation. An example of this occurs in the Egyptian Book of the Dead (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) in the form

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, **by G. F. Watts, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool: the first horseman rode a white horse and carried a bow, 'and he went out conquering and to conquer'; the second, on a red horse, carried a sword and brought war; the third rode a black horse and carried a balance; the fourth was Death, on a pale horse, 'and they were given power over a fourth of the earth'**

of a rubric attached to chapter 30, which concerns the witness of a man's heart at the judgement after death. It states that the text of this chapter was found at Hermopolis under a statue of the god Thoth, in the reign of Menkaure (c 2600 BC), and that it was inscribed on stone 'in the writing of the god himself'. A somewhat similar claim is made in chapter 22 of 2 Kings, which describes the discovery of 'the book of the law' during repair work in the temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem in the reign of King Josiah (7th century BC).

Claims to divine revelation have not generally assumed this automatic form, but have involved human agents. Thus the pharaoh Akhenaten, who tried to change the religion of Egypt (see IKHNATEN), claimed that his god, the Aten, had revealed his design to him. Gudea, the ruler of the Sumerian city state of Lagash c 2150 BC, records how in a dream three divine beings instructed him to build a temple, communicating to him what its ground plan should be. The book of Exodus (chapter 24) contains a graphic account of how Yahweh, the god of Israel, gave to Moses on Mount Sinai 'the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their (the Israelites') instruction'. The account goes on to describe how Yahweh also communicated on Mount Sinai long, detailed instructions for the making of the Ark and Tabernacle and their furnishings. A similar idea finds expression in the bas relief at the top of the stele on which the famous Code of King Hammurabi of Babylon is engraved: Hammurabi is depicted as receiving his commission to write the laws from the sun god Shamash, who was also the god of justice.

The theme of divine revelation permeates the whole of Hebrew religion. The idea is succinctly stated in the words of the prophet Amos: 'Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3.7). Unfortunately, both the origin and nature of prophecy in ancient Israel are very problematic. Some indication of this basic obscurity is given in the following statement in 1 Samuel 9.9: 'Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer (*ro'eh*)"; for he who is now called a prophet (*nabhi*) was formerly called a seer.' But the issue is even more complicated than this later editorial comment suggests. Generally it would seem that the seers were clairvoyants, attached to the cult of Yahweh, who were consulted about such things as the whereabouts of lost animals, as for example Samuel was; but Yahweh might also reveal his intentions to them about more important matters, as in 1 Samuel, chapter 9. Prophets, as 1 Samuel, chapter 10, shows, were originally regarded as persons subject to ecstatic trance, on whom 'the spirit of God came mightily', and who 'prophesied' in that state (see also PROPHECY).

The great Hebrew prophets, however, were essentially men who felt themselves inspired by Yahweh to proclaim publicly what was his will concerning matters of current political and social concern. The accounts given of the revelations made to Isaiah and Amos provide significant information about the mode and content of such revelation. In the post-Exilic period (after 538 BC), prophetic revelation became progressively preoccupied with eschatological themes, such as the End of the World and the Last Judgement. The book of Daniel is an early example of this new kind of revelation, and the Christian writing known as the Revelation to John represents the continuation of the tradition into the 1st century AD. But these writings were carefully contrived compositions, purporting to foretell the coming of divine vengeance on the enemies of Israel or the persecutors of Christians.

God Revealed in History

Christian theologians have maintained that the whole history of Israel as recorded in the Bible, the career of Jesus, including his death and resurrection, and the founding of the Church, reveal the purpose of God manifested in history (see HISTORY). Consequently they call this revelation *Heilsgeschichte*, a German term meaning 'Salvation-History', for in it God's plan for the spiritual salvation of mankind is

Most religions authenticate their claims by appeal to divine truths alleged to have been revealed to their founders

supposedly unveiled. The idea finds early expression in the opening verses of the epistle to the Hebrews: 'In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.'

Both Judaism and Christianity claim to teach truths about God and human destiny which are known only by divine revelation. But similar claims have also been advanced by other religions, most notably by Islam. Indeed, the whole Moslem faith is founded upon what are believed to be the revelations made by Allah to Mohammed, and preserved in the Koran. The following passage, for example, clearly asserts the divine origin of Mohammed's message: 'This is truly the word of a venerable messenger, it derived from one who has great influence with the Lord of the Throne, to whom man gives ear and trusts. Your countryman (Mohammed) is not one who is possessed (by a spirit). He hath indeed seen him in the clear horizon' (Surah 81.19). The reference in the last sentence is to the angel Gabriel, from whom Mohammed claimed that he received the revelations of Allah.

Indian authorities designate certain Hindu scriptures, such as the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, as *sruti*, or divine truth which has been revealed to certain sages. The doctrines of Buddhism, likewise, are presented as revelations made by the Buddha. Similarly the *Gathas* purport to record the revelations made to Zoroaster by Ahura Mazdah.

The list of writings claiming to contain revelations of supernatural truths could be greatly extended. Most religions, in fact, authenticate their claims by appeal to divine truths alleged to have been revealed to their founders. To prove the validity of such claims no objective test can be applied; each religion claims that its authenticating revelation is unique. However, the comparative study of religion can generally relate each specific revelation to its cultural environment, and the psychology of religion has much to say about the nature of paranormal experience.

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Book of Revelation

The term 'Apocalypse' comes from the Greek *apokalypsis*, which means an unveiling or disclosure. It is particularly applied to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation or Apocalypse of St John.

Apocalyptic writings are those which depict a conflict between the forces of good and evil, in which the good is threatened with extinction and is rescued from its opponents by supernatural intervention. The conflict is often expressed in symbolism, much of which seems unintelligible to modern readers. The intervention of God on behalf of the persecuted righteous minority is sudden and catastrophic, and inaugurates the victorious establishment of God's kingdom.

A large body of literature of this type was written in the period from 200 BC to 250 AD. Most of the later writings were the works of authors who used assumed names – the *Apocalypse of Peter*, for instance, was not written by St Peter. They are valuable evidence of the type of thinking that prevailed in the eras of oppression and persecution, when the Jews of Palestine were rebelling against their Syrian and Roman overlords, and when the Christian Church was beginning to feel the pressure of the hostile Roman Empire.

To the casual reader the Apocalypse may seem to be a disorganized mosaic of grotesque imagery that makes little sense, but in fact it has a logical and progressive structure. The key to the book lies in its theory of Christ and its opening sentence declares it to be 'the revelation of Jesus Christ'. It falls into six main sections:

1. Prologue	1.1–1.18
2. Christ and the Churches	1.19–3.22
3. Christ and the Universe	4.1–16.21
4. Christ in Conquest	17.1–21.8
5. Christ and the City of God	21.9–22.5
6. Epilogue	22.6–22.21

The prologue states the author, purpose and theme of the book, which centres on Christ as 'the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.' On the basis of this threefold character, Christ is presented as the key to the future.

In the second section, the letters to the churches offer warning and encouragement to the seven leading Christian

The New Jerusalem

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" . . . And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day – and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation, chapters 21 and 22

National Gallery of Art, Washington

The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun, **by William Blake: the Apocalypse was one of the most popular books of the Bible for hundreds of years and its magnificent and ferocious imagery took a firm hold on the imagination of generations of Christians. The woman clothed with the sun (chapter 12) has often been identified as the Church or as the Virgin Mary. She appears in heaven, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of 12 stars: she is with child and the Devil as a great red dragon waits to devour the child when it is born, but the child is saved by God**

congregations of Asia, which are representative of the Church at large. Their characteristics are typical of the virtues and flaws of the Church of all time, and the messages given to them are universally applicable.

A Throne in Heaven

The third section, on Christ and the universe, is the longest and most complicated. It contains the largest amount of imagery and has been the battleground of interpreters ever since it was written.

This section begins with the vision of a throne in heaven. 'And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.' Round the throne were the thrones of 24 elders; from it issued flashes of lightning, voices and peals of thunder; before it burned 'seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God' and in front of it was 'as it were a sea of glass, like crystal'.

The author goes on to describe the scroll sealed with seven seals, the four horsemen – the last of whom is Death on a pale horse – the seven angels who blow trumpets, at which appalling catastrophes rain down upon the earth, the woman 'clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars' (often taken as a symbol of the Church), the great red dragon which is the Devil, the two beasts which are his servants, and the seven golden bowls 'full of the wrath of God'.

Though no two commentators agree about this section, it is generally taken to be concerned with the sovereignty of God over a chaotic world; the importance of Christ as Saviour and Judge; the conflict between the forces of evil and the people of God; and the apparent triumph of evil.

Babylon, Mother of Harlots

The fourth section, on Christ in conquest, describes the victory of the forces of good; the fall of 'Babylon the great, mother of harlots', who rides on a scarlet beast; the coming of Christ to annihilate the powers of evil – he is the rider on a white horse; 'his eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems'; the binding of the Devil in the bottomless pit for a thousand years; the judgement of the dead before the great white throne of God; and 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God', where there shall be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

The fifth section, on Christ and the city of God, contains the description of the eternal state that awaits both the individual believer and the corporate body of the people of God. In it the purposes of God in both the Old Testament and the New are united; its gates and foundations memorialize both the tribes of Israel and the apostles of the Church. The paradise here described includes all that was lost when man left Eden: the presence of God, the river of life, the tree of life, the removal of the curse on Adam, and the joy of the eternal service of God.

Finally, the epilogue says that the book has shown 'what must soon take place' and gives a warning against tampering with the text.

What the Book Means

There have been almost as many different interpretations of the Apocalypse as interpreters. They can be classified generally into four broad divisions: preterist, historicist, futurist and idealist.

Preterist interpretations see the Apocalypse as solely a description of the author's own times. The churches, in section 2, are actual Christian congregations in seven cities of Asia. The conflict of good and evil is the real conflict which existed between a persecuting state and the suffering Church. Though the book's principles may be

generally valid for all ages, it does not specifically refer to the future.

By contrast, the historicist school of thought maintains that sections 3 and 4 predict succeeding periods of history. Various identifications have been advanced to connect the seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath with the barbarian invasions which destroyed the Roman Empire, the rise of Islam, the Turkish conquests, the rise of the papacy, the Reformation, and other historical events. The conflicting explanations of the symbols involved and the strained interpretations used by many writers of this school cast doubt on the validity of any one of these historicist systems.

The futurist interpretation, which is the most literal one, says that section 2, the letters to the seven churches, is a generalized picture of the Church in the present age. Section 3 predicts a future period of trial and suffering, beginning with the removal of the Church and ending seven years later with the coming of Christ in judgement. When he comes, he will overthrow the evil government of the earth, judge the living and the dead, and finally introduce the eternal city of God.

The idealist interpretation regards the entire book of Revelation as symbolic of the eternal conflict between good and evil, independent of any particular period in history or any series of historical events. This viewpoint says that the imagery of the Apocalypse teaches the ultimate victory of good over evil and the final bliss of God's people, but does not predict any particular process or events that can be identified in historic occurrences.

Readers of Revelation have always tended to apply its predictions to their own age and the immediate future. Probably, the first readers of the book and their successors in the first three centuries regarded it as a description of their own times and anticipated the end of the normal world in the near future. From the 4th century to the 16th the conflict of good and evil was generally interpreted as the struggle of the Church with paganism or with Islam, and the final end seemed remote. The Reformation shifted the interpretation to the conflict between the Protestants and the papacy; each side describing the other as Antichrist or the Scarlet Woman.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the futurist

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

Scenes from a 13th century MS, in the Bodleian Library, include angels blowing trumpets, which are the signal for plagues and devastations, an angel dropping a millstone into the sea, the escape of the woman clothed with the sun, and the angel with the key to the bottomless pit. Many have taken the Apocalypse as a prophecy of events which were in the future when it was written, and have connected the book's visions with historical events. Others believe that the book prophesies events yet to come, and others regard Revelation, not as a guide to the future, but as symbolic of the eternal conflict of good and evil

view gained ground among Protestants and became an integral part of powerful revivalist movements in Great Britain and America. Liberal theologians, however, have generally been more attracted by the idealist interpretation. But no one of the interpretations belongs solely to any one theological viewpoint; to some degree they are shared by all.

Who Wrote It?

From an early date the book of Revelation was accepted as part of the authoritative collection of Christian writings called the New Testament, though some early Christian writers doubted its value and – until about the 6th century – the churches of the East were almost all opposed to its acceptance.

One factor in the doubts about the book was the question of who wrote it, a problem which is disputed to this day. At the beginning of the book, its author says that his name is John, a 'servant' of Jesus Christ and a 'brother' of the people whom he is addressing, a companion who shares with them 'the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance.' He was evidently exiled to the island of Patmos, in the Sporades off the coast of Asia Minor, because of his leadership in the Christian movement, probably during the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian (reigned 81–96 AD). He was a familiar figure among the churches of Asia and was regarded as a prophet (see chapter 22, verses 6, 9 and 19).

The general testimony of early Christian writers identifies him as the St John who wrote the fourth gospel – the son of Zebedee and one of Christ's disciples. This identification seems to have been generally accepted by Christians in the West.

Objections to this view emanated chiefly from Dionysius of Alexandria in the 3rd century AD. He argued that the Apocalypse claimed a definite author, whereas the fourth gospel and the letters of St John in the New Testament were anonymous; that its vocabulary was quite different from that of the other works by St John; and that it was full of grammatical errors whereas the other works were generally grammatically correct.

These objections are still maintained by some scholars but they are not insuperable. For instance, the dissimilarity of

9em
plum
apet
aum
lat animal dedit
angelis septem septem

Through the Apocalypse were conveyed the hopes and protests of minorities who believed that God had a better destiny in store for them than the lives which they currently experienced

'And one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God . . . Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God"': Spanish MS

vocabulary can be explained by the different content and purpose of the works – the Apocalypse consisting of visions which came to the writer in prison, and the gospel containing reminiscences of his experiences, written to instruct disciples.

There are resemblances which suggest a common origin for both the Apocalypse and the fourth gospel: in both Jesus is called 'the Word of God', a title not found elsewhere, and he is 'the Lamb' and 'the Shepherd' in both. In both Satan is mentioned frequently, and in both the significance of Christ's death is emphasized. There is no conclusive evidence for deciding that Revelation was written by the author of the fourth gospel but the weight of early evidence points to it.

Background of Disaster

Several possible dates have been suggested for the writing of the Apocalypse. One theory is that it dates from Nero's persecution of the Christians after Rome had been devastated by fire in 64 AD. The reaction against the state by referring to it as 'Babylon' and to its head as 'the beast' may reflect the resentment of Christians who had previously regarded it as neutral in religion.

The reference to 'kings' in chapter 17 states that five 'have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.' If these are the Caesars, the five could be Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, with Nero as the reigning emperor. But the counting could as easily begin with Augustus, the first ruler of the reconstituted Roman state, in which case the reigning emperor would be Vespasian and the one yet to come would be Titus (reigned 79–81 AD). Tension between the state and the Church existed all through the period from Nero to Trajan, who died in 117.

The most satisfactory date is probably the traditional one, which assigns Revelation to the reign of Domitian, between 81 and 96. It allows time for the development of the churches in Asia, and the insistence of Domitian that he be worshipped as 'Lord and God' (*Dominus et Deus*) agrees with the description of the beast which demanded universal worship in Revelation, chapter 13.

If the Apocalypse was written in the time of Domitian, its background becomes more understandable. The destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, a disastrous fire that destroyed the centre of Rome soon afterwards, and an epidemic that ravaged the city, brought on a decade of calamity. Roman historians do not record a general persecution of Christians but one Christian historian does, and Domitian was widely hated for his egotism and tyranny.

The Apocalypse was written for Christians who feared imperial persecution. They needed both encouragement and admonition: encouragement to prevent collapse, and warning against laxity.

Though the style and content of Revelation may seem strange and fanciful, its substance is not thereby invalidated. Apocalyptic is as legitimate a means of expression as drama or poetry. Through it were conveyed the hopes and protests of minorities who believed that God had a better destiny in store for them than the lives which they currently experienced. They believed his promise and looked forward to the fulfilment of his purposes.

Though encased in apocalyptic form and language, Revelation presents a picture of the divine plan for the future. Certainly, the events of the 20th century make its symbolism seem less far-fetched than it did a century ago.

(See also END OF THE WORLD; GREAT BEAST.)

M. C. TENNEY

FURTHER READING: For revelation (general): A. Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1938). For the book of Revelation: the standard work is by R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John* (Clark, Edinburgh, 1920, 2 vols); See also W. Abraham, *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1982); A. Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Doubleday, 1983); Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (SCM Press, 1955); M. C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Eerdmans. Grand Rapids. U.S.A., 1957).

Revenant

One who returns from the dead, a ghost, from the French *revenir*, 'to return'; ghosts of the departed appear to the living for a variety of reasons: sometimes because they are the victims of murder and seek to wreak vengeance on those who have harmed them during life: often because they have died a premature or violent death; although there are kindly ghosts, others, like vampires, return solely for evil purposes. See GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; VAMPIRES.

British Museum

Rice

The staple diet of many oriental communities, its cultivation, from sowing to threshing, is often accompanied by elaborate ceremony; in Japan plays are performed and prayers are said, to propitiate the spirits and ensure a good harvest; and among certain tribes in Southeast Asia rice is said to have a soul to which sacrifices must be offered; in the West an ancient symbol of fertility, it is still thrown over newly married couples to bring them good luck and prosperity.

Axel Poignant

The telling of riddles was once far more than an amusement for children: a condemned man might sometimes riddle his way out of the noose, while certain African tribes used them in connection with rain-making and in the Celebes it was customary to tell them only in the presence of a corpse

RIDDLES

'THE ONLY LITERARY PURSUIT which engaged Harriet at present . . . was the collecting and transcribing all the riddles of every sort that she could meet with, into a thin quarto of hot pressed paper, made up by her friend and ornamented with cyphers and trophies.

'In this age of literature, such collections on a very grand scale are not uncommon. Miss Nash, head teacher at Mrs Goddard's, had written out at least three hundred; and Harriet, who had taken the first hint of it from her, hoped, with Miss Woodhouse's help, to get a great many more . . .'

In this passage from *Emma* (1816) Jane Austen describes a pleasant contemporary pastime. We know that our ancestors enjoyed amusing themselves with riddles, and in fact such collections figure among the earliest printed books. Robert Chambers, in *The Book of Days* (1860), offers the following carefully edited selection to his readers, 'the greater part of them being too strongly impregnated with indecency and profanity to be presentable here'.

> What is it that never was and never will be?
> A mouse's nest in a cat's ear.
>
> Why do men make an oven in a town?
> Because they cannot make a town in an oven.
>
> What is the worst bestowed charity that one can give?
> Alms to a blind man; for he would be glad to see the person hanged that gave it to him.

Chambers's source, *Demaundes Joyous*, was 'Enprynted at London in Fletestrete at the sygne of the sonne' by Wynkyn de Worde in 1511.

Sweeter than Honey

Riddles have been asked since ancient times. They appear in early oriental manuscripts, in ballads and other European folk literature, in the sagas of Iceland, in the story of Oedipus, and in such famous epics as the *Kalevala*. The second book of Chronicles records that 'when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions'.

The book of Judges (chapter 14) preserves a complete account of one of the oldest riddles which we possess: 'And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you; if you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments . . ." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." And he said to them, "Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet." . . . On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is . . ." And Samson's wife wept before him . . . and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her countrymen. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" And he said to them, "If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle."'

Today riddles are regarded as little more than an amusement for children, with minor educational value: a form of entertainment which develops a certain facile mental agility and strengthens the powers of observation. The idea that they merit serious study was pioneered in the English-speaking world by Professor Archer Taylor, who published his *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* in 1951. Classification of the most important riddle types owes much to Taylor's work.

Essentially a Metaphor

The main category is the 'true riddle'. This provides a deliberately obscure description of something, so that it even appears to be self-contradictory or absurd:

> Little Nancy Eddicote
> In a white petticoat
> And a red nose.
> The longer she stands
> The shorter she grows.

The answer is a candle.

> King am I none,
> Yet a crown I wear.
> Watch have I none,
> Yet the time I declare.

Here the answer is a cock. Both these illustrate Aristotle's definition of a riddle as essentially a metaphor. In the first of these riddles a comparison is implied between a little girl, as set out in the description, and a candle, which provides the answer.

Both examples are drawn from the world of everyday. In general true riddles relate to nature – to fruit and vegetables, the planets and the elements, to household objects and implements, and provide a wealth of information about material culture.

Other important categories are conundrums, based on punning or play on words:

Right **The most famous of all riddles was the one asked by the Sphinx: 'What has four feet in the morning, two at midday and three in the evening?' If you could not solve this riddle, the Sphinx strangled you on the spot. The answer was given by Oedipus and is 'man', because a baby goes on all fours, a man in the prime of life stands on two legs and an old man in the evening of his days leans on a stick. When the riddle was answered, the Sphinx jumped from the mountainside and killed herself:** ***Oedipus and the Sphinx,*** **by Ingres** ***Left*** **Rumpelstiltskin's fury when the riddle of his name is solved: illustration by Cruickshank**

Giraudon

Why is a widow compared to a turnip?
Because the better half is under the ground.

biblical riddles:

After Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit,
did he stand or sit down?
Neither – he fell.

witty questions:

Where was Moses when the light went out?
In the dark.

arithmetical riddles:

As I was going to St Ives, I met a man with seven wives. Every wife had seven sacks, and every sack held seven cats, and every cat had seven kittens: kittens, cats, sacks and wives, how many were going to St Ives? Answer, one.

and alphabet riddles:

The beginning of eternity, the end of time
and space.
The beginning of end, and end of every place.

The answer here is the letter E.

A particularly interesting type of riddle, called by Professor Taylor a 'neck riddle', is said to have been asked by a prisoner condemned to death. If the captors failed to answer, their prisoner was released. A Lincolnshire riddle of this type runs:

I sit on my love,
I stand on my love,
And my love casts me a light.

The answer is: 'A man murdered his wife or mistress, and then formed her bones into a chair, while he buried her flesh under the hearthstone, and made candles of her fat.'

A neck riddle collected in Herefordshire at the beginning of this century goes as follows: 'There was a man convicted of having stolen a sheep; he was sentenced to death, but the magistrates said he could go free if he could ask a riddle they could not answer, and he was liberated for three days so that he might invent one. As he went out of prison, he saw a horse's skull by the roadside. Returning to prison on the third day in despair, he noticed that in it was a bird's nest with six young ones, and he thought of the following riddle:

As I walked out,
As I walked out,
From the dead I saw the living spring.
Blessed may Christ Jesus be
For the six have set the seventh free.

The form of this riddle, the contrast of new matter emerging from a rotten carcass, is reminiscent of the ancient puzzle asked by Samson. The neck-saving riddle, *Halslösungsrätsel* in German, is based on a highly unusual or unique situation which only the riddler himself can possibly know, and Professor Taylor points out that its use as a means of escaping execution only appears in Germanic tradition.

Certain of Sir James Frazer's observations led him to conclude that the purpose of riddles might once have been to assist growth of the crops; that they functioned as life charms, possibly comparable with the Halslösungsrätsel. Certain African tribes, for example, used them in connection with rain-making, while others told them only at certain seasons. This is also the case in the Celebes where, among the Bolang Mongondo, it is customary only to tell riddles in the presence of a corpse. A death and rebirth ritual may be indicated here.

Sometimes riddles served as trials of wisdom, the loser forfeiting life or honour. In the *Edda* a giant challenges the god Odin:

Thou shalt ne'er come forth again from our
courts
If thou be not the wiser of twain

and Odin replies:

Riddle-reader I am called.

A comparable link between riddles and merit appears in the 'hard questions' sometimes associated with matrimonial tradition. Girls of Turkish tribes in Central Asia, for example, questioned their suitors, who were punished if they could not find an answer.

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Octagon Books, 1977); Archer Taylor and Vernam Hull, *A Collection of Irish Riddles* (Univ. of California Press, 1955); Alexander Nicolson, *Gaelic Riddles and Enigmas* (Folcroft, 1976).

Having neither beginning nor end, a ring stood for eternity and perfection and so was an ideal pledge of faith between two people

RING

QUEEN ELIZABETH, so it is said, presented the Earl of Essex with a precious ring. Should he ever give offence, he need only return it and all would be forgiven. When he eventually fell from favour and was under sentence of death, the Earl sent back the ring from prison. Unfortunately, it was intercepted by an ill-wisher and never reached the Queen, so the execution took place after she had waited vainly for it to arrive.

A ring was a sign of the wearer's authority. Used to seal letters and other important documents, it was also a token in itself: 'And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand . . . Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt' (Genesis, chapter 41). A monarch would entrust one to his messenger. In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* the king says:

If entreaties
Will render you no remedy, this ring
Deliver them, and your appeal to us
There make before them.

The authority which a monarch imparted to his ring was traditionally able to heal certain ailments: for at one time rulers were widely thought to possess miraculous powers. Touching for the King's Evil (scrofula) was practised until the time of Queen Anne (see KING'S EVIL) and the practice of bestowing cramp rings was not dissimilar. It was supposed to originate from a particular ring, long preserved and venerated in Westminster Abbey. According to legend Edward the Confessor had given it to a beggar who asked for alms in the name of St John the Evangelist; the beggar had then disappeared. Two English pilgrims in the Holy Land were later given the same ring by an old man, who said he was St John and told them to return it to the king. This ring was believed to cure cramp and falling sickness (epilepsy).

Cures from Coffin Nails

Cramp rings were offered by the monarch to the cross on Good Friday and blessed by him. An entry in the household accounts of Edward IV reads: 'Item. To the King's offerings to the cross on Good Friday, out from the counting house for medicinable rings of gold and silver, delivered to the jewel house, 25s.' Andrew Boorde, a contemporary of Henry VIII, says: 'Kings of England doth hallow every year cramp rings, which rings worn on one's finger doth help them which have the cramp.' The ceremony fell into disrepute with the Reformation, when offerings to the cross were discontinued; Queen Mary apparently performed it, but its later revival is questionable.

Cramp rings, with variations, have continued into modern times. Generally they were prepared from the metal attachments to a coffin – the handles, hinges, screws or nails. A popular cure for rheumatism, paralysis and other cramp-like disorders was for the sufferer to stand silently at the church entrance and collect a number of pennies from the parish bachelors. This being done, three circuits of the communion table had to be made. If the clergyman was obliging, he would then exchange the coins for a piece of silver from the offertory, from which a ring was made. Sometimes crooked sixpences were donated for the same purpose.

In his *Finger-Ring Lore* (1877), William Jones says: 'The use of galvanic rings for the cure of rheumatism belongs to our

Westminster Cathedral Library/David Robinson

Above **'Kings of England doth hallow every year cramp rings': Mary Tudor blessing the rings, in a custom which traditionally stemmed from a healing ring owned by Edward the Confessor and long preserved at Westminster Abbey** ***Left*** **Cramp stones discovered at a house in Essex**

own time, and is by no means extinct.' Nearly a hundred years later, his remark is not out of date. Expensive rheumatism rings are sold in London shops, apparently to a wide range of purchasers; even horses are claimed to respond to them.

Rings were used in still other ways to promote health. During an epidemic in the 16th century, Lord Chancellor Hatton wrote: 'I am likewise bold to commend my bumble duty to our dear mistress (Queen Elizabeth) by this letter and ring, which hath the virtue to expel infectious airs, and is (as it letteth me) to be worn between the sweet dugs.' The hoof of an ass's right foot, mounted in a ring, was said to be a cure for epilepsy; and a gold ring, especially if inscribed, would heal St Anthony's fire (erysipelas). A gold ring rubbed against a stye was also supposed to be effective.

Sometimes, because of its intimate connection with its owner, a ring was thought to indicate the circumstances of its former wearer. A so-called life token was a means of keeping in touch when people were parted, and as long as the token remained in good condition all was well; if it deteriorated, the omen was bad.

In the Middle Ages it was commonly supposed that rings possessed a variety of supernatural powers. Joan of Arc was said by her accusers to own magic rings which gave her victory on the battlefield. According to legend, the Emperor Charlemagne fell violently in love, and when his mistress died was quite unable to tear himself from her body. The Archbishop of Cologne intervened and succeeded in removing from her mouth a ring set with a beautiful stone. The king's grief immediately diminished for, so the story goes, the ring was a talisman which had cast a spell upon him. To prevent a recurrence, the Archbishop threw it into a lake near Aachen. Nevertheless the Emperor was so fascinated by the place that he often walked by the water, and eventually built a palace there, which became his capital.

Seven centuries later, Cardinal Wolsey was rumoured to possess a magic ring through which he had achieved power. 'He bewitched the king's mind, and made the king dote upon him more than ever he did on any lady,' wrote William Tyndale in *The Practice of Prelates*. And according to Sir William Neville, 'My Lord Cardinal had such a ring that whatsoever he asked of the King's Grace, that he had.'

Inscriptions were thought to increase the magic properties of a ring. Charm rings, bearing a word of power and made of suitable materials, were used against the Evil Eye. The plague was warded off with rings on which the names of the Holy Family were engraved, and rings bearing the names of the Magi – Melchior, Kaspar and Balthasar – were similarly used against cramp.

The Ideal Talisman

A continuous circle, with neither beginning nor end, a ring was the ideal talisman, standing for eternity, perfection and completeness (see CIRCLE). Wagner used the symbol in his famous opera cycle; in the early northern myths on which he draws, the sacred ring of Thor was a symbol of law and order. It was kept in his temples and oaths were sworn upon it.

Anglo-Saxon swords have been found with a ring attached to the hilt. It was upon the hilt of the sword that men swore allegiance to their ruler, and in this context the ring represented a pledge between two people. The same significance appears in the wedding ring. In medieval Germany a couple swore a mutual oath of faithfulness upon the hilt of a sword, and there was another contemporary custom of proferring the bride her wedding ring on a sword hilt.

Freudian psychoanalysis, which views human life in sexual terms, sees the finger as a male symbol joined to the female, the ring, in marriage, but a poem by Robert Herrick (1591–1674) expresses the more traditionally accepted view:

> And as this round is nowhere found
> To flaw or else to sever
> So let our love as endless prove,
> And pure as gold for ever.

An ancient version of the wedding service runs: 'Wyth thys rynge y the wedde . . . witb

Mary Evans Picture Library

Giving the wedding ring, from Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*: the ring's importance in marriage ceremonies is probably based on its circular shape, a symbol of perfection and eternity

my bodi y the worshippe, and with all my worldith catel y the honoure.'

Jewish brides generally wore a plain band, but a very elaborate ring, the property of the local congregation, was loaned for the synagogue ceremony, and some Jewish scholars maintain that it was also worn during the following week. These rings, which were already known in the Middle Ages, were generally made of gold and thickly ornamented with filigree and enamel. They were sometimes surmounted by a miniature replica of the synagogue building, the roof hinged so that some suitable item, for instance a sprig of myrtle, might be inserted.

Such rings were often inscribed *Mazel Tov*, meaning good luck. Christian betrothal and wedding rings were also at one time engraved with mottos called 'posies'. Jaques says to Orlando in *As You Like It:* 'You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?' The writing of these posies became in effect a literary exercise. Often rhymed, they were expressions of love:

> Remember him who died for thee
> And after him remember me.

Posy rings, a fashion which lasted into the 18th century, were a pleasure for the well-to-do. Poor people, unable to afford such luxuries, often hired a plain gold ring at the church. There are even a number of cases when the ring of the church key was used. One parish clerk, called upon to lend his key, preferred to borrow a curtain ring from a neighbouring house. In a letter dated 1752, Horace Walpole described a clergyman's refusal to marry the Duke of Hamilton without any kind of ring: 'The Duke swore he would send for the Archbishop; at last they were married with a ring of the bed-curtain, at half-an-hour past twelve at night, at May Fair chapel.'

Sometimes rings were presented to the wedding guests. When a maid in the household of a certain Edward Kelly married, her master gave away gold wire rings valued at £4000. This was in the time of Elizabeth I. A few weeks before the Virgin Queen died, the coronation ring, which had become ingrown, was filed away from her finger. It was an old idea that a wedding ring should not be removed, a custom which the Queen had observed for, as she put it, she was wedded to her kingdom. It was widely felt that this forcible removal of the coronation ring was ill omened, for a ring was supposed to remain intact upon the owner's finger. If it broke, this foretold disaster. In 1857 the widow of a murdered farmer said: 'Ah! I thought I should soon lose him, for I broke my ring the other day; and my sister too lost her husband after breaking her ring. It is a sure sign.'

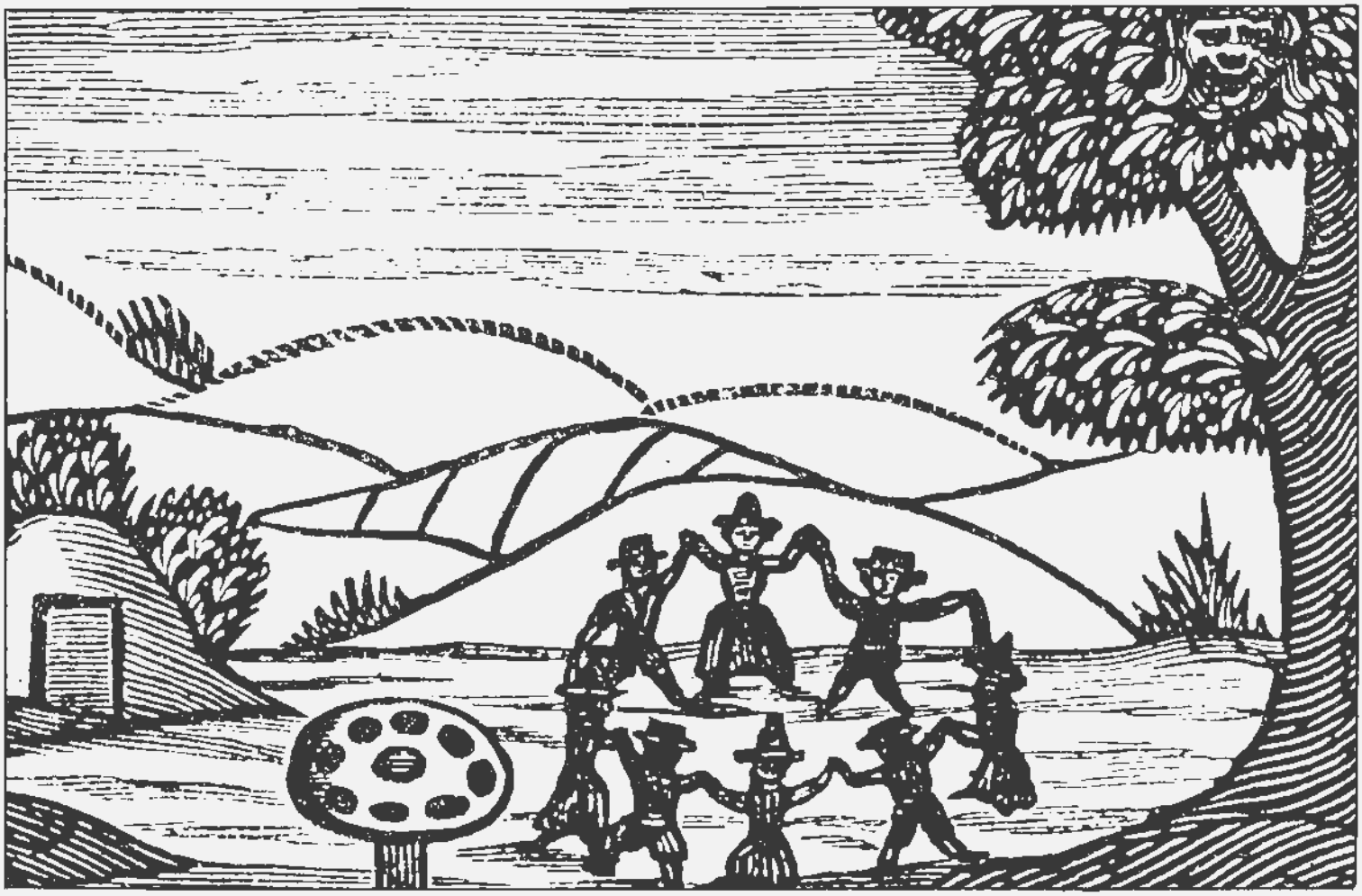
The old-fashioned gimmal, however, was specially made in such a way that it could be broken. It was a ring made of two hoops, divided between the couple at betrothal and united again at the wedding to form a single circle. Naturally a prearranged breakage of this kind was not ill-omened. Equally, since it so often figures in various rituals, the wedding ring cannot invariably have remained in position. Sometimes it was used for protective purposes. The Hutzuls, Ukrainian mountaineers, conducted milking through one to prevent witches stealing the milk.

The Heathen Wedding Ring

The divination of marriages was a more obvious use for the wedding ring. Sometimes this involved discovering it in a portion of food. The Irish say that whoever finds one in a piece of Michaelmas pie will soon get married. In Aberdeenshire at harvest there used to be a feast called *Clyack* – 'meal and ale'. A number of dishes were filled with ale, and treacle was added for sweetening. Next oatmeal was stirred in and a quantity of whisky added. A ring was put in every dish, each of which was shared by six or seven people. There was strong and often violent competition to find the ring, for this meant marriage within the year.

A widespread practice was to cut tiny fingers of bridal cake and pass them nine times through the wedding ring. The cake, itself an emblem of fertility because of the rich ingredients, was given to the bridesmaids to put under their pillows and dream of their husbands-to-be.

A northern English variant of this custom



Mary Evans Picture Library

Fairies dancing in a ring, a 17th century woodcut: dark green circles in the grass of fields are in folklore the sites of fairy dances

required three girls to bake a dumb-cake, that is, in complete silence, on 6 October – St Faith's Day. They made it with flour, spring water, sugar and salt, and each had to turn it three times. When the cake was ready, it was divided into three helpings and each girl cut her portion into nine pieces. These were drawn three times through the wedding ring of a woman married for seven years, and as the girls undressed for bed they ate their cake, saying:

O good St Faith be kind tonight
And bring to me my heart's delight:
Let me my future husband view
And be my vision chaste and true.

The three of them then got into one bed, with the ring suspended above it as a charm to bring the desired dream. With such practices current, it is hardly surprising that the Puritans disapproved of the 'heathenish' wedding ring and abolished it while Cromwell was in power.

The marvellous properties attributed to the wedding ring were reinforced by the custom of wearing it on the third finger of a woman's hand. Tradition held that this finger possessed healing powers. In folk belief, some or all of the other fingers were poisonous; but if a sore was stroked with the third finger, it would heal. The ancients supposed that a vein connected this finger directly with the heart, a notion which was refuted in Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* (1646): 'An opinion there is, which magnifies the fourth (that is, third) Finger of the left Hand; presuming therein a cordial relation, that a particular vessel, nerve, vein or artery is conferred thereto from the heart, and therefore that especially hath the honour to bear our rings.'

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: William Jones, *Finger-Ring Lore* (Gale, 1968); Joan Evans, *English Posies and Posy Rings* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1931).

The transition from one state of life to another, whether at birth, marriage, death or other critical period, is attended in many societies by rituals. Such rituals have been shown to follow a consistent pattern, meant to ensure the effective completion of the changeover

RITES OF PASSAGE

A FLEMISH ANTHROPOLOGIST working at the Sorbonne, A. van Gennep, was the first person to distinguish rites of passage as a distinct category of ritual, in his book *Les Rites de Passage*, published in 1909. His work immediately made a great impression on all scholars working on the interpretation of the rituals of what were then called primitive and are here called tribal societies, though many of the rituals considered by van Gennep were ancient Roman, Greek or Near Eastern, and Hebraic, Christian and Islamic. Van Gennep pointed out that many of these rituals showed a 'passage' in location or in time, and he showed conclusively that the rituals could be broken into three phases: first, a 'preliminal' phase in which the persons or groups who were the subjects of the ritual were *separated* from their previous social condition; secondly, a 'liminal' phase in which they were in a *marginal* situation; and finally a third 'postliminal' phase in which they were *reaggregated* to their previous social condition or *aggregated* to a new social condition, sometimes in the idea of resurrection. He stressed that these three phases, found in similar form in many societies, correspond to underlying necessities of social life: all social life involves movement in space, in time, and in social situation, and certain of these movements are marked by ritual transitions.

Van Gennep began his analysis by pointing to the high significance in many cultures of the threshold of a house, and the care with which this is built with ritual or magical accompaniments, or marked by religious protection, notably in the concept of the Roman god Janus, who looked both ways (see JANUS); while Orthodox Jews still fix to their doorways the *mezuzah*, a small case containing religious texts, sometimes even putting one on the doorway of each room.

John Moss

A young Kamaiura girl of Brazil emerges after months of seclusion at puberty, her long hair concealing her face as a sign of modesty and submission. Her seclusion marks her separation from her previous physical and social condition, and is the first stage in the rituals which mark her 'passage' from childhood to adult status

The doorway to a house marked a transition from one world of relationships to another: from this developed ritual which marked the crossing of the threshold (Latin *limen*, from which the word 'liminal' comes).

Van Gennep then proceeded to look at a whole series of characteristic rituals present in situations which involve changes in social conditions: erection of houses, commencement of agricultural activities, the gathering of first fruits and harvest, birth, marriage, funerals, ordination, and the initiation of youths or girls into manhood and womanhood. These are but a few examples from the multitude of occasions which van Gennep showed to be marked by separation, marginal and aggregatory rites.

It may easily be seen how the analysis of these rites was related to his starting point, the building of the house. From our own customs we know of the symbolic carrying of a bride by her husband across the threshold of their new home, a liminal rite which marks her movement after the wedding ceremony from her residence in her natal home to her residence in her conjugal home, with all which that movement marks in the alteration of her roles. Similarly, in some cultures a corpse cannot be carried out of a house over the sacred threshold but has to be taken out through a window, or through an opening broken in the wall.

Van Gennep's theory immediately made a profound impression on scholars studying ritual. In fact his phrase, *rites de passage*, passed in its French form into all anthropological literature. The subjects dealt with most commonly under this heading were rites of birth, puberty, initiation into manhood and womanhood (which van Gennep carefully pointed out did not necessarily correspond with puberty), and burial.

Cutting of Apron Strings

The nature of these rites can be briefly illustrated with examples: the rites, for example, surrounding the circumcision of boys of southern African tribes on their initiation into manhood. They first undergo separation rites, such as jumping over fire or water, which exhibit clearly the main purpose of the ritual – to separate them symbolically from the ignorance of boyhood and from the company of their mothers. These initial rites culminate in circumcision at a spot in the bush, on which no woman must look. The boys are then segregated during a marginal period, while the circumcision wounds heal, in a lodge of brushwood built out of sight of the women. There they learn special actions, songs and formulas, often meaningless (though said to be in an ancient language), and wear special costumes marked by special colours.

Early records stated that this symbolic cutting of the apron strings holding a boy to his mother was complete: more recent

research has shown that the boys' mothers must collaborate in some of the rites of this marginal period, because they have a duty to assist their husbands in altering the tie of sons with mothers, so that the sons can grow up to he independent men. Thus in some rites, men and boys sing songs through the cold of the winter night; and the women have to huddle in the open, on the edge of the village, around inadequate fires, ready to respond with ululations to the ending of each song. This response is said to be essential to help the boys to grow up.

When the circumcision wounds have healed, the boys are finely dressed and are allowed to appear to their mothers: these strain to get at their sons, but are driven off, often with real struggles, by the men. In some tribes the menfolk are assisted by masked and clothed figures who represent ancestral spirits. This temporary aggregation of the initiates, when their mothers can see them but not touch them, is succeeded by a less restricted marginal phase when they can be seen by the women at a distance, and even visited by their pre-nubile sisters. Finally in a great celebration the boys are brought, in smart new clothes, to dance in the village and to be surrounded by their mothers, who can now scoff at the previously feared masked figures. Whatever their actual age, the boys emerge socially as men, who may begin sexual relationships, are forbidden to sleep in a hut with their mothers, and are allowed to sit with the men.

Time in Limbo

A second example of a rite of passage is the funeral. This often consists of an elaborate complex of rites, broken into three distinct phases. After the burial, both the mourners and the dead person's spirit enter a marginal phase. The mourners' behaviour is marked by many taboos and special modes of behaviour, dress and adornment or lack of adornment. At this time, the spirit of the deceased may be believed to be making an arduous journey to the 'world of spirits', or else, in societies where there is a cult of ancestral worship, it may be conceived to be wandering loose, homeless and restless. Finally, after this marginal period, aggregation rites are held, either to mark the entry of the spirit to the world of spirits, or else to institute the spirit among the ancestors.

The 'passage' theme is evident in wedding rites, as it is in such ceremonies as initiation to special societies, or the ordination of a priest or consecration of a church, even though in our own culture such rites are often much attenuated. It appears also in seasonal festivals such as the celebration of the New Year, the gathering of first fruits and Harvest Festivals. At the festival of first fruits the whole of a classical or tribal society might perform rituals which marked the separation of the people – often represented by their leaders – from their normal way of life and their entry into a marginal period when they had to observe many taboos, such as not eating particular foods and not speaking loudly save in the performance of special rites. In this marginal phase normal rules might be suspended.

Great festivities, dancing and drinking, mark the aggregation into the New Year. Sometimes, in societies without well-organized government, these are the occasions when normally highly independent sections of society, potentially hostile to each other, show their unity in great festivals: during this period marriages, which are likely to occur between these different sections of the community and may cause strife, are prohibited.

Van Gennep was correct in pointing out that rites of this kind fall into disuse with the technical and economic development of society, though some remain. To refer this change to a decreasing interest in the sacred, and its separation from the profane, seems inadequate. The present writer has suggested an alternative explanation, that in tribal and other simple societies individuals perform their various roles (filial, parental, political, economic, religious, educational, and so on) in the same places with largely the same material belongings in relationships with largely the same set of other persons. These societies are marked by a high ceremoniousness or even ritualization of behaviour, which marks the special relationships in terms of which a person is acting, or the role he is performing, in a

Death of a Miser, **by Hieronymous Bosch: death is another rite of passage and the funeral formally separates the dead man from his previous condition. There may then be a marginal phase in which the spirit is thought to be wandering, and finally 'aggregation' rites to mark its entry to the spirit world**

National Gallery, Washington/Samuel E. Kress Foundation

Old Skins for New

When the Vugusu initiates have stayed in the circumcision hut for several months the elders of each lineage meet and agree to brew the *gamalua gexuxualuxa*, 'the beer of getting out', with which the elders celebrate the conclusion of the period of initiation . . . Early in the afternoon the initiates walk down to the nearest stream and wash off the white clay with which they were painted while they lived in the initiation hut. Then they exchange their old skins for new ones which their fathers have prepared for them . . . Washed, shaven, and clad in their new skins, the initiates are now called *vátembete*, the 'new and soft ones'. They are now ready to return to their fathers' homesteads where all their relatives and neighbours have gathered to drink the 'beer of getting ont'. When they arrive there they are served with large quantities of cooked bananas which are poured out for them on a wicker door . . . When the initiates have finished their meal their fathers or other elders hand them shields, spears, clubs, and other weapons. Holding these weapons like a warrior and standing straight and steady, one boy after the other moves to the centre of the yard of his 'old father' (his father's eldest brother) where, in the order of seniority, every initiate is given extensive rules of conduct by his father. When addressing his son the father stands in front of him and, before every sentence he utters, takes a draught of beer from a new gourd, swallowing some and spitting the remainder at his son's face and chest. He gives him the following rules: 'My son, you have left behind "the mother's cloth" (i.e. the prepuce), but now you are given the father's cloth . . . Now you are a man. No longer ride on a cow or an ox! Do not dance about standing on one leg, because this is childish and a disgrace for a man . . . Do not join the women when they sit together and talk about their own things. If you go there you will hear foolish things and become a fool yourself. Go where the old men are sitting and join them!'

G. Wagner *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*

Marriage ceremonies frequently follow the same basic pattern as other rites of passage: a young couple are purified from all evil influences by pouring the blood of a sacrificed chicken over their heads; part of a ceremony among the Land Dyaks of the Sadong River in Sarawak

Professor W. R. Geddes

particular place at a particular time. The ritualization is achieved by attaching occult power to the acting – directly, or invertedly, or symbolically – of specific secular roles. The ceremoniousness serves symbolically to segregate roles and relationships where this cannot be done materially. In an industrialized society, on the other hand, people commonly interact in their various activities with a wide range of individuals, in many different buildings using different material goods: roles and relationships are materially and not ceremoniously or ritually segregated, and for this reason there is no ritualization of secular roles.

(See also BIRTH; BURIAL; FIRST; HARVEST; INITIATION; MARRIAGE; THRESHOLD.)

MAX GLUCKMAN

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What is the underlying purpose of ritual? Analysis of the place of ritual within tribal groups suggests an answer to this complex question

RITUAL

MANY DIFFERENT kinds of phenomena have been described as ritual. The term has been applied, for example, to the mating habits of birds and animals, such as the dance on the water of the crested grebe; by psychoanalysts to the obsessive behaviour of neurotics, as when a man persistently checks whether he has turned off a tap, only to check anew after each check; and by anthropologists and sociologists to the established forms of behaviour of devotees of cults and religions. But while it is important to try to establish common explanations for the phenomena thus categorized, it is essential to grasp that there are fundamental differences between them and also between modes of interpreting them.

Freud himself argued that there were marked similarities between the obsessive 'rituals' of neurotics and psychotics, and the 'rituals' of what he called primitive society. Indeed, he postulated in *Totem and Tabu* (1913) from his theory of the development of the Oedipus complex (a theory derived from depth analyses of his patients), that the origin of sacrifice and religion in general was to be derived from a primordial killing and devouring of a patriarchal male, who dominated a group of females and their offspring, by the young males of the group. Overcome with guilt, they instituted a symbolic rekilling of the father-figure, now transformed into a god, and partaking of his being in a ritual of sacrifice and communion. If this be taken as what the anthropologist A. Kroeber called a 'Just-so Story' (that is, a story which explains the origin of some well-known phenomenon), then there is no evidence for it, and more recent studies of the social life of the apes make it highly improbable. On the other hand, Kroeber allowed that it might represent a psychological process which most human males undergo, in symbolical form, in the course of their development. Then it might well be one of the springs of emotion which feed into social rituals. Even so, sociologists and anthropologists would argue that Freud's theory cannot be used to explain the development, and the complexity, of the social and cultural relationships involved in rituals.

Variations in Response

Similarly, anthropologists would reject any claim by psychoanalysts that, for example, circumcision ceremonies of boys near puberty can be 'explained' by saying that they create castration-anxiety and fix the incest taboo firmly in the boys' minds. While the above is the standard psychoanalytical explanation of circumcision, one psychoanalyst, B. Bettelheim, has argued from a study of four schizoid children who developed their own initiation ceremonies, that the practice of circumcision arises among males through envy of the productive wombs of females.

Anthropologists would concede that particular persons, passing through circumcision ceremonies, may feel castration-anxiety or womb-envy; but that this would have to be demonstrated by appropriate methods of research, and that the structure of the personalities of the persons enforcing, or undergoing, such ceremonial operations should be taken into account. It may well be that in all men and women, at very deep levels of the psyche, similar syndromes of feeling are to be found; but psychoanalysis itself shows that people vary in their degree of adjustment to those syndromes, in their more conscious feelings and their actions. Thus there is a considerable degree of variation in both the type and the intensity of individuals' reaction to participation in the same ritual.

Examples of this were noted by the present writer at circumcision ceremonies held among certain African tribes. At the ritual circumcision each candidate (aged from seven to 15), while being operated on, should be supported by his father, who is supposed to hold his son's penis and help the circumciser, a ritual adept, turn back the foreskin. On one occasion, the hands of the first father shook so much that it was impossible for the circumciser to act; and the father was replaced by his brother-in-law, the boy's mother's brother, who strictly was

not appropriate. The hands of the second father were very steady, and he watched the operation steadily. The hands of the third father were steady, but he could not watch the operation and turned his head away to look over his shoulder. One must draw the conclusion that the circumcision of each boy meant something quite different to each father, in terms of present relationships, of what each had felt and suffered when he himself as a boy underwent the operation, of the psychological syndromes established in each during infancy, and so on. Hence it seems that psychological analysis can only be effective if it is applied to bring out the significance of a particular ritual, or part of a ritual, for particular individuals, each with his own history of psychological development and his own established personality. Thereafter psychological analysis may feed into sociological-anthropological analysis; and of course the reverse is also true.

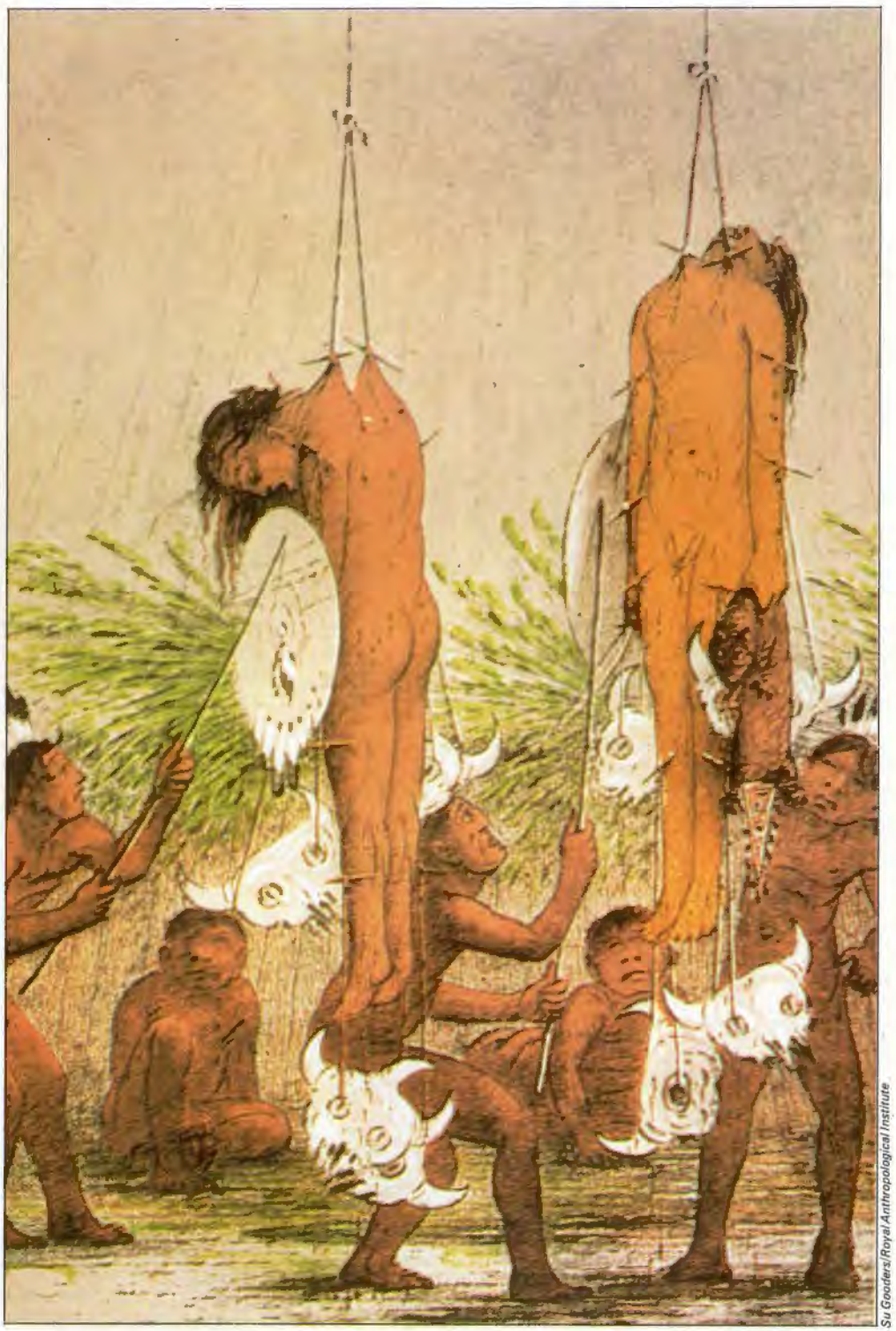
Swazi Songs of Hate

The Swazi of southern Africa, at the ripening of the first fruits, stage elaborate national ceremonies, at certain phases of which they are required to hurl insults at their king, who is the central figure of the rituals, and to sing sacred national songs stating how much the king is hated by his subjects. In social-anthropological analysis these rites have been successfully related to the low density of population as a result of the simple system of husbandry; the low variation in standards of living; and the delegation of authority from the king to subordinates ruling numbers of men who, because of the simplicity of weapons, are all warriors, constituting a private army which can help its leader in attempts to gain power. These leaders are of royal blood and may organize rebellions aimed at the kingship. There is therefore present in the national ceremony a symbolic representation of political processes built into the nation, which is riven by periodic armed civil wars.

The rites emphasize that while the kingship itself is sacred and is 'strengthened' in the rites, the king is beset by internal enemies on whose loyalty he cannot rely. But this does not mean that each warrior who insults the king or who sings the songs of hatred against him, must necessarily have sentiments of disloyalty awakened, or go through a severe crisis of loyalty. For one warrior, though he may feel the sacredness of the occasion, it may be in some ways like a fete, a kind of carnival when licence is allowed. At the other extreme, other warriors may go through an emotional turmoil in which strong resentments against authority are awakened, and perhaps a reliving of childhood difficulties in their relationships with their fathers. Again, analysis of individual, possibly variable, reactions to ritual is required.

One must similarly reject any simple direct explanation of ritual as the expression of tension, of despair, of anxiety or aggression, or as the transference of stifled feelings of aggression onto scapegoats, or as simply and directly strengthening social sentiments. In the Swazi ceremony summarily analysed above, it is justified to say that the rites are calculated to arouse the sentiments that support national solidarity. Since we know that acting an emotion is likely to produce feelings of that emotion, it is probable that occasions of group celebration will arouse the sentiments which are appropriate to group solidarity and which support adherence to certain group values and morals, in most participants at least.

But we know equally well that the most complex and intensive reaction to a religious ceremony may come from the sinners in the congregation: they may be most deeply moved by emotions evoked by ritual, particularly ritual in which they have participated as children and as adolescents, and they may then feel determined during the ritual to sin no more. Their intensive emotional reaction may well be provoked by strong feelings of guilt and unworthiness. On the other hand, the man who conforms in his daily life with the precepts of religion and morality is likely to worship with a much more restrained and consistent devotion, while those who are betwixt and between will respond in moderate degree. So in the Swazi ritual cited above, loyal men may have their sentiments of patriotism evoked less strongly than the potential traitors.



Su Gooders/Royal Anthropological Institute

Mandan braves of North America enduring voluntary torture at the conclusion of a buffalo dance, part of the great annual ceremony called the Okipa: the dances lasted for many days and the myths of the origins of things were retold; by George Catlin, 19th century

Milk Tree Society

A much more complicated theory to relate rituals to emotional predispositions is therefore required, and the best as yet advanced is that of Victor W. Turner, in a series of analyses of the significance of ritual symbols. His highly complex argument can be summarized as follows. Information on the meaning of ritual symbols can be collected from participants, who will give interpretations of various degrees of complexity, depending on whether they are ritual adepts or not. In general, explanations of this kind stress the harmonious, socially valuable attributes of the symbol. Thus, when the Ndembu of Zambia, whom Turner studied, are initiating a nubile girl into womanhood, the key symbol is a tree which exudes a white substance, like milk. The Ndembu specifically compare the white sap of the 'milk tree' with mother's milk, and state that it represents the tie between mother and child: it thus represents the tie between the girl being initiated and her own mother, and her future, nurturing tie with the children whom it is hoped she will produce.

Further, since the Ndembu are a matrilineal society (reckoning descent and succession and inheritance from brother to sister's son), they are organized in groups of kinsfolk related to one another by descent through females. The milk tree therefore represents these groups, technically called matrilineages. As the matrilineages are the persisting groups of Ndembu society, and villages are to some extent combinations of matrilineages, the matrilineal principle in the abstract is vertebral to Ndembu society, and the milk tree symbolizes this, and symbolizes both the continuity of the society and its whole culture, its customs and its laws. In a graphic comparison, one of the Ndembu compared it with the Union Jack flying over the administrative headquarters of the district, then under British rule. He described the milk tree as 'our flag'.

But Turner showed that if one examined actions around the milk tree, in the ritual itself, these were not altogether harmonious, and did not reflect a continual state of harmony in accordance with the values stressed in the Ndembu's own account of the ritual. In practice, there was considerable competition and 'strife' among the people

assembled around the milk tree. Women were separated from the men, and had to behave 'hostilely' towards them. Married women and unmarried girls, women of different matrilineages, and women of different villages, formed also competing pairs of contraposed groups. These alignments reflected the fact that while succession and inheritance passed through women, the women themselves dispersed, during their childbearing lives, to live at their husbands' villages – one example of the contradictory principles on which Ndembu society is built. These contradictory principles appear in the rituals and thus deny the very abstract harmony which is stated in the Ndembus' interpretation of them.

Duty Made Desirable

Turner shows that all the dominant ritual symbols of Ndembu society can be similarly analysed. His thesis is that two sharply different poles of reference for the symbols – the sensory and the ideological – must be distinguished. At the sensory pole are clustered meanings which refer to physiological facts and processes, such as mother's milk, blood, blood of menstruation and birth, semen, genitalia, copulation, excreta, death, and so on. While at the ideological pole are clustered social values and allegiances: conformity with law, morality and custom; motherhood as a nurturing relationship; the established relationships between women and men, married women and girls, membership of matrilineages and villages, and so on. Symbols cover these diverse meanings because they can condense many meanings, can unify disparate meanings and can polarize meanings.

Turner argues that in the course of ritual, marked by feasting, drinking, dancing and music – all physiologically stimulating – as well as by fellowship, strong and varied emotions are evoked in response both to the feasting, drinking and so on, and to the sensory associations of the rites and symbols. The energy thus aroused is then

Procession of penitents in Venice, a painting by Gentile Bellini: the rite is both a formal expression of repentance for sin and a way of arousing the emotion of repentance in the participants and spectators

Scala

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

The coronation of King Arthur, from a 15th century MS: one aspect of ritual is as a symbolic statement of status and, although the kingship itself never dies, a new ruler is not felt to be fully a king until the correct ritual of coronation has been performed

transferred to, and fixed upon, the values evoked at the ideological pole. Thus there occurs a process in which the obligatory is felt also to be desirable.

Clearly this theory involves a much more complex approach to the relation between emotions evoked and forms of ritual, than the notions briefly criticized above. We can appreciate why it is that singing songs of hate and hurling insults at the king may act to strengthen, at least temporarily, sentiments of loyalty to him. Moreover, it is a theory which is in accord with the psychoanalytic theory of the sublimation of instinctual drives and demands towards socially approved ends.

If the step from psychological interpretation of ritual to understanding of its sociological functioning is so complicated, it is even more mistaken to relate ritual directly to the behaviour of animals, in mating dances, display and the like.

Ritual from Relationships

Turner's theory was worked out on tribal rituals, but it seems that it could equally be applied to the ritual symbols of the great religions. These types of rituals, however, differ markedly from each other. Sociologists who have written on the general evolution of human society have all stressed that this development, associated with more complex technology and a greater division of labour, is marked by an increasing obsolescence of ritual and its replacement by what have been called universal religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, which any person can join as a convert, and in which any adherent can join any congregation assembled to worship. The examples above, of the Swazi first fruits rites and the Ndembu nuhility ritual, show that in tribal society rituals are constituted to specific social relationships according to the domestic, kinship, sexual, local or political affiliations of the members of the cult. Only persons occupying specific positions in those relationships can participate, and they do so in terms of the specific ways in which they are related to one another. Moreover, in the ritual, apart from using special symbols (in the form of things, words or actions), they act their specific roles in secular life, either directly, or sometimes invertedly (as in transvestism, by women dressing as men and men as women), or in some particular symbolic form. Hence an analysis of tribal rituals leads one into a detailed analysis of secular relationships because these are of the fabric of the ritual, and because it is believed that the symbolic representation of those relationships in some hidden, occult way creates and directs occult power so as to bless, purify, protect, strengthen, make fruitful and otherwise successful, the persons involved in those relationships.

This type of analysis has shown that in some of the rituals the enactment of secular relationships involves a statement, in an exaggerated form, not only of the harmonious and unifying aspects of the relationships, but also of the conflicts which reside in them. This is one of the main means by which emotion is aroused, which is then fixed on socially approved values: out of the very conflicts which exist in normal life, on special occasions the value of an ideal of life without conflict is emotionally and intellectually established.

It has therefore been argued that ritual, occult beliefs and practices will tend to occur in crisis situations in which the discrepant principles out of which social organization is formed, principles which are in conflict, produce actual or potential disputes which cannot be settled by judicial and other purely intellectual procedures. Ritual then may operate where there are fundamental disharmonies within the theoretical harmony of a social system.

This theory is based on the perception that in human, as against animal, society, there is a consistent tendency to exaggerate the differences between categories of persons. Thus belief in the occult contaminating effect of menstrual blood and its threat to things virile exaggerates the biological difference between women and men. There are other beliefs, and associated practices, of this kind, based on distinctions of age, the facts of locality, different kinds of relationship through birth and kinship, the relationship of ruler and subject, and so forth. This tendency is more marked in tribal society than in complex industrial societies where peoples' roles, the material things which they handle, the places they work and worship and play in, are more differentiated. This may explain why in tribal society we find a 'ritualization' of secular roles (see RITES OF PASSAGE), while as society develops a more complex technology on which is based a more complex division of labour, there is a movement towards universal religions.

E. R. Leach and other anthropologists have argued from studies of tribal rituals that ritual is only a symbolic statement of status. This is undoubtedly one of the aspects of ritual, as has been shown. Others assert that rituals mainly manifest competition for power. This too is present in tribal rituals, and is also to be found within the congregations of universal religions. But there is clearly much more to ritual than these two aspects.

Complex problems are involved in the question of when actions referring to beliefs in occult power occur, and how they operate. It therefore seems advisable to use a more complicated vocabulary in discussing these problems. The term *ceremonial* may be used to describe all actions which involve symbolic statements of social status (for instance, All Saints' Day and the October Revolution parade). As a further distinction, *ceremoniousness* could be used to describe ceremonial where the practitioners have no idea of occult powers being involved (such as standing when *God Save the Queen* is played). Ritual describes ceremonial where ideas of occult power are present. Within the field of ritual in this sense, there is in tribal society a *ritualization* of secular social roles, of domestic places, and so forth. As this ritualization decreases with advancing civilization, some religions will be austere, while others will be marked by a high *ritualism*, symbolic itself, drawing on the same complex of emotions maybe, but not involving the enacting of everyday roles.

MAX GLUCKMAN

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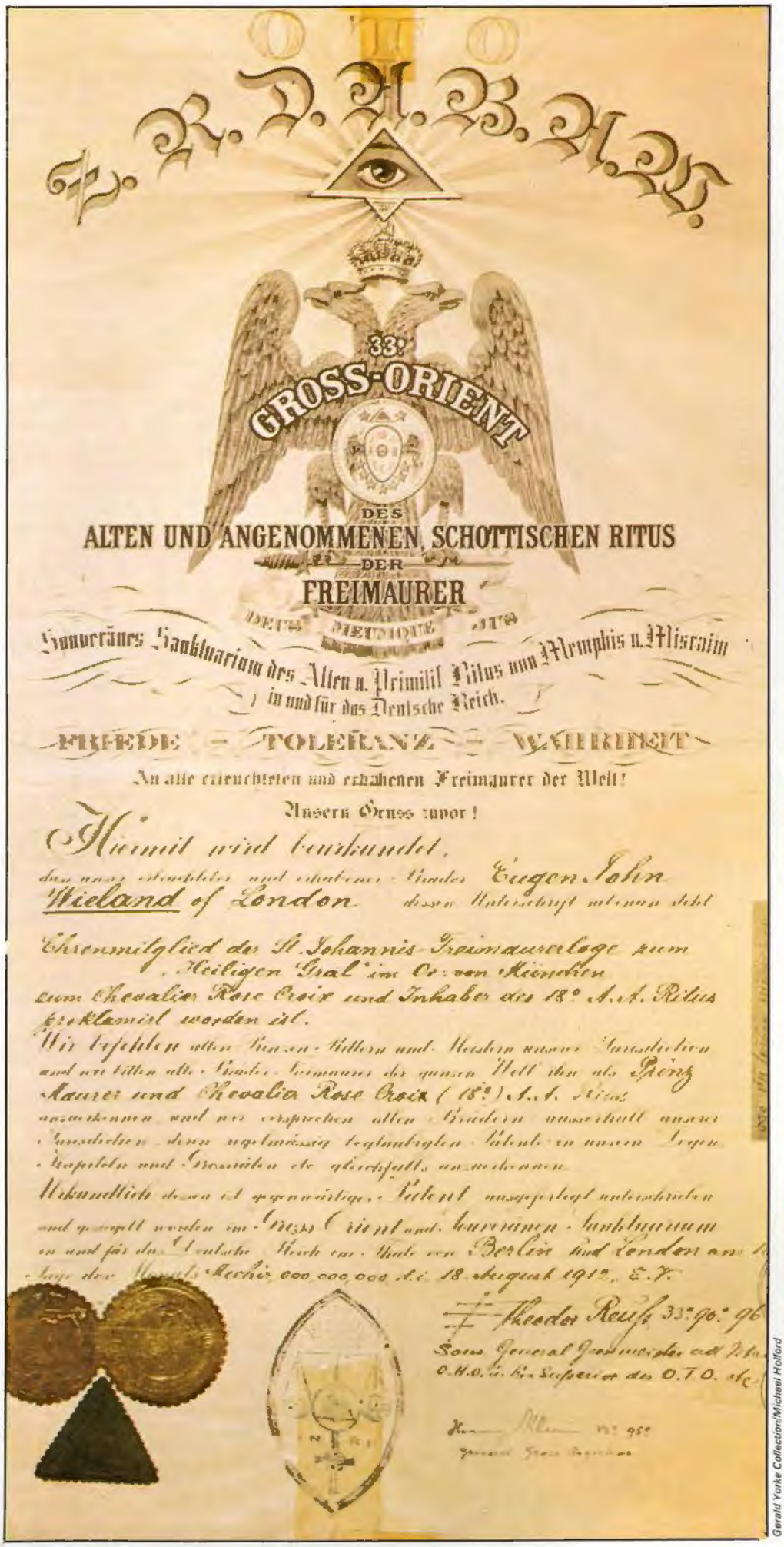


The summoning up of a 'spirit', a powerful supernatural entity or force, is the principle ceremony of European ritual magic

RITUAL MAGIC

THE EUROPEAN magical textbooks, or grimoires (see GRIMOIRE), contain all sorts of processes, including instructions for making love talismans or wax images, but they reserve their most impressive ceremonials for the attempt tu summon up a 'spirit', a supernatural force or entity of some kind, which can be subjugated by the magician and forced to carry out his orders or reveal what it knows. It is this type of operation to which, in the European context, the term 'ritual magic' particularly refers.

The ceremonies in the grimoires naturally vary in detail but there is a clear general pattern. The spirit is summoned and dominated in a series of commanding incantations, through which the magician brings all the resources of his will to bear on the operation. But before he can begin the ceremony itself, he must make the necessary preparations.

A magical operation of any difficulty cannot be performed in a normal condition of mind and body, and the magician must begin by 'consecrating' or dedicating himself to the work, in the sense of cutting himself off from his everyday surroundings and concerns, and excluding all distractions from his mind. The methods of doing this, recommended in all the grimoires, are continence and fasting, cleanliness and devout prayer to God. The *Heptameron* or *Magical Elements* (attributed to a 14th century authority on medicine, Peter of Abano, but probably dating from the 16th century) says that: 'The operator should be clean and purified for the space of nine days before beginning the work; he should be confessed also, and should receive the Holy Communion.' Abstinence must be positively reinforced by concentration on the work in hand. *True Black Magic* (an 18th century French derivative of the *Key of Solomon*) says that the magician must fast and be chaste, must 'abstain from every labour of soul and body', and must 'meditate on those things which he is about to put in practice for nine complete days before undertaking the work'.

The insistence on austerity and the presence of prayers and celebrations of Holy Communion in these rituals, are surprising at first sight but are the result of the principle that magical power works automatically and regardless of motives. God's power can be tapped by the use of his name and through forms of prayer to him. The Mass brings into the magician's body and soul the power of the consecrated host. Confession and abstinence rid him of impurities on which

Gerald Yorke Collection/Michael Holford

Certificate of membership in the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (Order of Templars of the East) a German magical society, founded early in this century, which concentrated on the use of sexual techniques in ritual magic: Aleister Crowley became its British head

Modern magicians have been influenced by Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian texts, and by Indian beliefs, as in this illustration of 'the mystery of universal equilibrium', by Eliphas Levi *(above)*. But the main line of the European tradition runs through textbooks like the *Grimoire of Honorius*: frontispiece of a French edition, probably of the 18th century *(below)*

the spirit that is to be summoned might seize, or from a modern point of view rid him of trivial distractions which would weaken his concentration.

Abstinence also helps build up the magician's own powers. By remaining chaste he creates a reservoir of sexual energy, by going short of food and sleep, he weakens his body and gives strange powers to his mind. Some modern magicians have tried to reach the same goal by the opposite route, using drink or drugs or sex, separately or in combination, to put themselves into a state of physical exhaustion combined with a heightened mental condition.

Washing is also recommended, again to banish impurities or distractions. In the *Key of Solomon*, which recommends nine days of austerity before the operation begins, the magician is instructed to immerse himself in water which has been blessed by a priest, saying a prayer in which he states his own divine potential as the earthly image of God and asks for God's grace. 'O Lord Adonai, who hast formed me, thy unworthy servant, in thine image, from plain earth: bless and sanctify this work, for the cleansing of my soul and body, and may no deceit or stupidity be here. O most powerful God, through whose power the people were able to walk through the Red Sea from Egypt: give me this grace, purified and cleansed by this water, pure in thy presence.'

If the novice magician has not been put off by the austerities recommended, he may quail at the list of magical 'weapons' or instruments which he requires. *True Black Magic*, for instance, says he will need a sword, a staff, a wand, a lancet, a hook, a sickle, a poniard, a white-handled knife and a black-handled knife, the last of these being used for drawing the magic circle. Aleister Crowley's list of magical weapons includes swastika, crown, wand, crook, sword, spear, scourge, lamp and girdle, apron, sandals, dagger, tripod, cup, cross and sickle.

These instruments should be made by the magician himself (or as a second-best he may buy them, provided they are brand new) and the directions for manufacturing them and 'consecrating' them to the work are of daunting complexity. A comparatively simple example is *True Black Magic's* sickle, which must be made of virgin steel and forged on the day and in the hour of Jupiter. It must be doused under moonlight with a mixture of mole's blood and pimpernel juice. A horn handle must be fitted to it in the hour of Jupiter and an incantation 'by the authority of God the Father Almighty' recited over it to infuse it with power. It must be kept until needed in a new wrapping of red silk.

Whether many magicians ever provided themselves with all the accessories or followed all the difficult and taxing directions seems doubtful. The main underlying purpose appears to be psychological. The magician must make his own instruments and follow complicated procedures as a way of totally involving himself and all his faculties in the work, of stretching to the limit his qualities of application and determination. The essential requirement is that his weapons must be 'virgin', not previously owned or used by anyone else. This is partly because a virgin weapon has its full potentiality intact, none of its energies having been dissipated, and partly because it is considered dangerous to use anything second-hand in magic. A previous owner or use may have linked the weapon with undesirable or positively dangerous influences.

The principal weapons of the grimoires are the wand, sword and knife. The wand should be made of hazel wood and, according to the 18th century French *Grand Grimoire* should be 19½ inches long, cut at sunrise with the magic knife and fitted with pointed steel caps at each end (see WAND). The sword and knife should be forged or bought on the day and in the hour of Jupiter, at a time when the moon is waxing. Incantations are recited over them to give them power.

Robes and Circle

A secluded place should be chosen for the ceremony, so as to avoid interruptions. Somewhere which has a strong atmosphere of its own is desirable, so long as the atmosphere suits the type of ceremony to be performed. Ruins, graveyards, dark woods or crossroads would all be suitable for operations of destruction or communings with evil spirits. If the ceremony is performed indoors, all the windows and doors should be fastened and the room should be hung with drapes of a colour appropriate to the ceremony. Similarly, an appropriate time should be chosen, performing the operation in the hour of the planet to which it

corresponds, and using accessories belonging to the planet (see CORRESPONDENCES; DAYS).

The grimoires recommend white robes, though in black magical operations trappings of black or red would be more suitable. The 'Fourth Book' added to Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* prescribes a robe of white linen, covering the body from the neck to the feet, fitting closely and tied with a girdle. The *Key of Solomon* recommends white shoes, with magical symbols drawn on them, and a crown of virgin white paper on which names of God are written with 'the pen of the art', one specially made and consecrated for the magician's purposes. So far as possible, buttons, buckles, knots and other fastenings should be avoided because any fastening tends to impede the flowing out of the magician's power.

The colour white represents the purity, from the magician's point of view at least, of his intentions, and in putting on his robes he is really putting on a suitable frame of mind. In the *Key*, while vesting himself in his robes, he repeats no less than seven psalms and then says, 'Amor, Amator, Amides, Ideodamiach, Amor, Plaior, Amitor. By the powers of those sacred angels I dress myself in these powerful robes. And through them I will bring to a successful conclusion the things that I burn to accomplish: through thee, O most holy Adonai, and thy kingdom and rule is everlasting. Amen.'

Once robed, the magician can proceed to draw the magic circle. This acts as a barrier against all forces outside it and, even more importantly, it focuses and concentrates the forces inside it, the magical energy generated in the ceremony (see CIRCLE). In the *Key* the circle is drawn with the magic knife, at the end of a rope nine feet long. Names of power, crosses, pentagrams, hexagrams, herbs and bowls of holy water are placed in the rim of the circle, to reinforce it. According to the *Lemegeton*, a triangle should be drawn outside the circle, two feet away from it, and it is into this triangle that the spirit is summoned. The name Michael is inscribed inside and the names of power Anexhexeton, Tetragrammaton, Primematum are written along its edges.

Israel Regardie comments (in *The Tree of Life*) that the triangle is required in evocation, when the magician summons up something from within himself and projects it into the universe outside him, but not in invocation, when the magician summons something from outside himself, which takes place entirely inside the circle. When Aleister Crowley and his pupil, the poet Victor Neuburg, conjured up the mighty demon Choronzon in a ritual based on the *Lemegeton* and the *Grimoire of Honorius*, Crowley placed himself in the triangle, into which the demon was summoned, so offering himself as the vehicle of its manifestation: according to some, he was possessed by the demon for the rest of his life.

The seven planets, with the sun at the centre: the planetary gods personify forces which ritual magicians attempt to use in their operations which should be performed in the hour and day of the appropriate planet

The Perfumes of Venus

Pentagrams and hexagrams, drawn on parchment or engraved on an appropriate metal, may be placed in the circle or outside it, or worn or carried by the magician and his assistants. They protect against evil and they may be used for banishing irrelevant or disruptive influences before the main ceremony begins (see HEXAGRAM; PENTAGRAM).

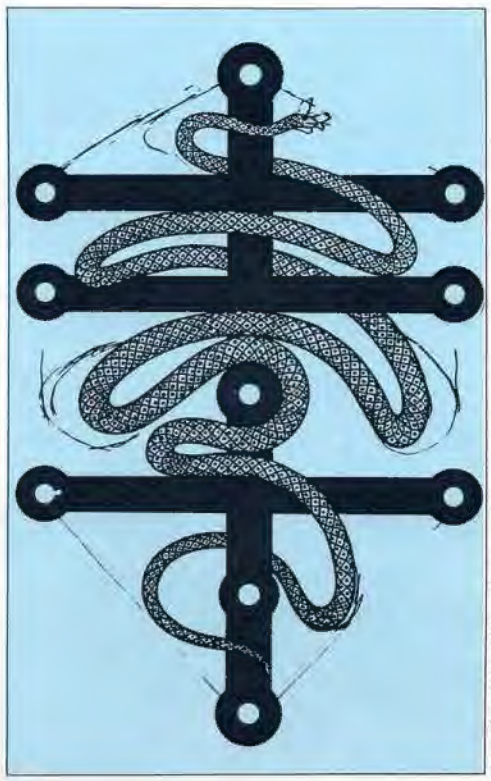
A small brazier is placed inside the circle (or sometimes outside it), on which a fire of charcoal is lit and various substances are burned. The choice of substance depends on the nature of the ceremony. For a work of Venus, for example, ambergris, aloes wood, musk, myrtle, rose, red sandalwood, pigeon's blood or sparrow's brain would create a suitable perfume. Like the colours, metals and other accessories, the perfume brings the appropriate planetary influence to bear on the operation. The fumes also provide material from which the spirit can make itself a visible body (see BREATH). It is likely that this is connected with the alchemical notion that when a substance is burned, the smoke given off is its 'spirit'.

But again the principal use of the fumigations is psychological. Like the whole apparatus of weapons, colours and symbols, the fumes help to intoxicate the magician's senses. It is worth noticing that some of the materials recommended for burning in black magical operations – henbane, for instance – give off fumes which may cause hallucinations and delirium.

It is important to have a clear mental picture of the spirit that is to be summoned. Its nature, attributes and appearance are formulated so as to build up a vivid image of it, on which the magician and his associates concentrate. The *Lemegeton* describes the appearance of 72 demons, presumably for this purpose. The spirit Orias, for example, who will teach the magician astrology and cause even his enemies to fear him, appears in the form of a lion riding on a great horse. He has a snake for a tail and in his hands he holds two more snakes. The 'Fourth Book' provides descriptions of spirits associated with the planets: a spirit of Mars may show itself as a king riding a wolf and holding a naked sword in his right hand and a severed human head in his left (see also RENAISSANCE).

In the modern magician's 'assumption of god-forms', a vivid picture of a deity's characteristic appearance, attributes, symbols and myths is built up and concentrated on while the god is invoked. The magician identifies himself with what he has pictured, a 'god' which is a great universal force or current, or 'aspect of cosmic life', which also has its existence in the human mind, and Crowley and other modern magicians have found the deities of ancient Egypt particularly suitable for this purpose.

In many of the processes in the grimoires an animal, usually a kid, is killed as part of the preliminaries and the magician uses its skin to make parchment, on which he inscribes pentagrams and other magical symbols. But sometimes the slaughtered animal is also a sacrifice. In the *Key* the magician decapitates the kid at one blow,



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Drawing by Aleister Crowley of the Serpent of Wisdom coiling round the cabalistic Tree of Life: the Tree is regarded as a diagram of the universe and to follow the serpent's path is to 'rise through the spheres' to supreme power, to command in one's own being all the forces of the world

naming the spirit he intends to summon and saying 'O high and powerful being, may this sacrifice be pleasing and acceptable to thee. Serve us faithfully and better sacrifices shall be given thee.'

In modern rituals the sacrifice, if performed at all, is much more closely linked with the main ceremony itself and may occur at the height of it. When the animal is killed, its vital energy is believed to be liberated, so increasing the supply of force inside the circle. The fumes of its blood provide an additional supply of energy on which the spirit can fasten to make itself manifest. And again the killing contributes to the magician's intoxicated but masterful state of consciousness.

A bird or small animal may be slaughtered, or the magician may gash himself or one of his assistants so that the blood runs. If this is combined with the achievement of orgasm, a still greater 'charge' of energy is released into the circle and it is this sexual 'sacrifice' that some modern magicians regard as peculiarly effective.

In the Lake of Fire

When all is ready, and the magician and his assistants are in their places in the circle, the summoning of the spirit begins. It is summoned through the magic of language, the use of compelling incantations and 'names of power', which are believed to contain inherent force (see INCANTATION; NAMES). There is no single correct formula of incantation, and finding those which work is a matter of trial and error. The incantations begin quietly and gently but as they continue the magician gradually works up his own inner forces until he is in a state of fervid but still controlled ecstasy in which with every fibre of his being he commands and compels the spirit to appear.

Of all the grimoires, the *Lemegeton* has perhaps the most formidable armoury of incantations. The magician conjures the spirit by a battery of names of power to 'appear forthwith and show thyself to me, here outside this circle in fair and human shape, without horror or deformity and without delay'. If the spirit does not appear, this opening incantation is repeated a second time and, if necessary, a third, with the magician gradually introducing a more urgent and commanding note into his voice.

If the spirit has still not appeared, a second and stronger incantation is chanted, which may again have to be repeated a second and third time. The spirit is summoned with a great array of names of power, and the incantation ends with: 'By the dreadful Day of Judgement, by the Sea of Glass which is before the face of the Divine Majesty, by the four Beasts before the Throne, having eyes before and behind, by the Fire which is about the Throne, by the Holy Angels of heaven and the Mighty Wisdom of God, by the Seal of Basdathea, by the name Primematum which Moses uttered and the earth opened and swallowed up Corah, Dathan and Abiram, answer all my demands and perform all that I desire. Come peaceably, visibly and without delay.'

The magician is now working himself up to a high pitch of intensity and using a more compelling and dominating tone. If the spirit still fails to appear, he proceeds to a third conjuration, again to be repeated up to three times, in which he commands the spirit by the seven secret names with which Solomon mastered all demons and threatens it with the torments of hell. 'I will bind thee in the depths of the bottomless pit, there to remain till the Day of the Last Judgement. I will chain thee in the Lake of Eternal Fire and Brimstone . . .'

This should certainly force the spirit to appear, and he must be kept firmly in subjection to the magician's will. Once the magician has finished with him, the spirit must be forced to go away with the 'licence to depart'. This final stage of the ceremony is extremely important because the magician and his assistants cannot safely leave the circle until the spirit has been banished. Even if the spirit has apparently refused to answer the magician's summons, the formal licence to depart must be pronounced in case he is invisibly present.

The spirits of the *Lemegeton* are summoned for a variety of purposes, including harming the magician's enemies, gaining money, status and influence for him, and assisting him to slake his lust, but the majority of them are teaching demons. They supply him with knowledge about a large range of subjects, even including ethics, and they reflect the tradition of the Watchers, the rebel angels who first brought knowledge to men (see DEVIL). When a modern magician 'holds conversation' with what

he has invoked (as distinct from evoking something from himself and objectifying it), he learns what it has to teach, so to speak, by identifying himself with it.

The Terrible and Invisible God

Modern magicians have taken much from the grimoires but they have also looked back beyond them to ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian rituals. The Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN) attached great importance to a Graeco-Egyptian magical text on which they based a ritual of invocation of the 'higher genius' or 'holy guardian angel', which is the magician's higher self. The 'angel' is invoked by incantations which declare its names and attributes and its supreme power. Then it is summoned. 'I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God Who Dwellest in the void place of the Spirit. . . . Hear me and make all Spirits subject unto me, so that every Spirit of the firmament and of the Ether, upon the Earth and under the Earth, on dry land and in the Water, of Whirling Air and of Rushing Fire, and every spell and scourge of God may be made obedient unto me.'

The ritual continues with rising fervour, the magician concentrating all his resources of will and imagination, until the angel itself is felt to be present. In a passion of ecstasy the magician unites himself with it, and cries out, 'I am He, the Truth.' And the command to 'make all Spirits subject unto me' is spoken again, but as if by the angel itself, for it and the magician are now one.

(See also IMITATIVE MAGIC; INVISIBILITY; MAGIC; MAGICAL PAPYRI; SEX.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: E. M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968); I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life* (Llewellyn Publications, 1970). For the grimoires, see Idries Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970); A. E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970).

Magical Obstacle-Race

The almost incredible complications and elaborations of these, initial rites and ceremonies . . . read like the worst sort of obstacle-race. They are certainly calculated to deal the death-blow to any notions harboured by intending practitioners that magic is a short cut to their desires. On the contrary it appears here in the light of a severe discipline both on the mystical and the practical side; and those who have ever attended Hindu rites and ceremonies will recognize the similarity of an outlook which transforms all the actions of everyday life into an act of worship. Would-be sorcerers might well pause before embarking on the path traced out for them by 'Solomon'; but could comfort themselves with the reflexion that the results would be in proportion to the effort expended. And when they failed, they would be unlikely to blame their mentor. For they could never be quite sure that they had not deviated at some point or other from his sometimes ambiguous instructions. They could try, try and try again until they died of senile decay without losing hope and without losing faith in 'Solomon'. But both the God-fearing and the graceless must have been in a state of great nervous tension and fatigue when they came at last to the actual rite of conjuration.

E. M. Butler *Ritual Magic*

Martin Weaver

Magicians and witches use 'weapons', robes, instruments, perfumes, jewels, which are believed to be occultly linked to natural forces and which also intoxicate the magicians' mind and heighten his powers

Popperfoto

Rivers

Rivers share in the general symbolism of water as the source of life and, like the Nile in Egypt, may be seen primarily as bringers of fertility: to cross a river is symbolically to pass from one spiritual condition to another; in hymns and spirituals to cross over Jordan is to pass the barrier of death: some rivers, like the Ganges, are regarded as themselves divine.

See GANGES; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; WATER.

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Robes

Ceremonial costume of priests, magicians and specialists in the supernatural; their colours and design frequently have symbolic significance; to put on the robe may be a sign of assuming a frame of mind suitable to the ceremony to be performed.

See COSTUME; RITUAL MAGIC.

The red breast of the robin has led to its being associated with bath blood and fire; an old belief of less obvious origin was that the robin would cover a corpse with a pall of moss

ROBIN

THE ROBIN enjoys greater popularity in the British Isles than in any other part of the world. Although it has ancient folklore associations, its fame rests largely on the importance it attained in English prose and poetry a few centuries ago. Every Christmas the robin appears on many Christmas cards and until recently it would have been difficult to find a child who could not answer the nursery rhyme query, 'Who killed Cock Robin?'

The bird owes its popularity to the bright colour of its breast and its confiding behaviour. In most European languages it is called by the equivalent of 'Redbreast' and its folklore owes much to this. Bright-eyed and alert it follows the gardener around, watching for worms and grubs uncovered by his spade, or perches singing on a twig close by.

The first mention of a tame robin is in the biography of the 6th century Scottish saint, Kentigern. His teacher had a pet robin which came daily to perch on his head or shoulder and feed from his hand. According to the legend, mischievous boys handled it so roughly that it died, but St Kentigern restored it to life. The biography was not written until the 12th century but used a much earlier source. St Kentigern's robin is depicted in the coat of arms of the City of Glasgow. Rather more than a century after this saint's biography appeared, the biographer of St Francis of Assisi, the most famous saint associated with compassion for animals, related how he fed and tamed a pair of robins and their brood which came to the brethren's table at mealtimes. In Italy, where robins have long been persecuted, such tameness could be regarded as almost miraculous.

The robin's red breast inspired associations with fire and blood. According to a Welsh legend, the robin flies to a land of woe and fire with a drop of water and tries to quench the flames, but gets its feathers scorched so that it is called Bronrhuddyn, 'scorched breast'. When it returns it feels the cold more than other birds and should be given crumbs. In France, where it is said that the wren fetched fire from heaven, the robin went too close to it when its feathers were in flames and so its own breast was singed. What appears to be a degraded version of these stories is told in Guernsey. The robin brought fire to the island but scorched its plumage on the way. According to a legend current in the Inner Hebrides, when the Christ child was born the fire in the stable almost went out but the robin fanned the embers into flame, burning its breast feathers. Mary blessed it and when the feathers grew again they were red instead of brown. In western France on Candlemas Day a peculiar ritual was performed. A robin's body was spitted on a hazel twig and set before the fire. As the hazel was a magical tree among the Celts, this hints at some pre-Christian belief. In Germany it was commonly held that the presence of a robin averted lightning.

A Drop of God's Blood

The similarity between the colour of the robin's breast and bloodstains linked the bird with death and religious beliefs. The old Scottish saying that the robin should not be killed because it has a drop of God's blood may be a reminiscence of strange, ancient ideas. According to a Breton legend, while Christ was hanging on the cross a robin plucked a thorn from his crown and in so doing pierced its own breast. As a reward it was given power to enrich one young girl every year.

In the 16th century the robin acquired a reputation for covering dead bodies with moss. It is an inquisitive bird and a person finding a robin near a corpse in a wood could suppose that it was about to perform this kindly office, especially if it held nesting material in its bill. The origin of the Babes in the Wood story is obscure but it may be ascribed to the 16th century, although the complete printed version dates from the late 17th century.

No burial this pretty pair
From any man receives,
Till robin redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

The most famous and beautiful allusion is Shakespeare's. In *Cymbeline*, Arviragus says:

With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,
With charitable bill, – O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument! – bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground they corse.

John Webster in *The White Devil* (c 1612) associated the wren with this ritual:

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Thus in the course of time, an incident such as seeing a robin carrying moss for its nest near a corpse became embellished by poets. Possibly, too, observations of robins perching near places where graves were being dug added to the bird's associations with funeral rites. But the tradition of birds taking part in church services goes back beyond the 13th century.

From such antecedents originated what has been styled the best known poem in the language, 'The Death and Burial of Cock Robin':

Who killed Cock Robin?
I said the Sparrow
With my bow and arrow
I killed Cock Robin.

Although the oldest printed example is in an 18th century chapbook, it evidently evolved from earlier ideas. Suggestions that it was originally a political satire or an allusion to the death of Balder are mere speculation. Late in the 18th century it was printed together with another set of verses, 'The Marriage of Cock Robin and Jenny Wren'. In it the birds act various roles:

Then on her finger fair
Cock Robin put the ring.
'You're married now,' says Parson Rook;
While the Lark amen did sing.

It is more likely that the notion of robin and wren being male and female of the same species arose because of associations created by the poets than that countryfolk made this mistake. The belief is not entirely extinct. There was a saying:

The robin redbreast and the wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

Sentiment, religious associations and tradition combined to create friendly feelings for the robin, sometimes resulting in beliefs

Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

The inquisitive robin acquired a reputation for covering dead bodies with moss and leaves; and in a 17th century version of the Babes in the Wood story the robin is credited with this kindly act

There are many legends explaining the origin of the robin's red breast: one Breton legend says that while plucking a thorn from Christ's crown, the robin pierced his own breast

Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

that various ills would befall those who injured it or disturbed the nest. In England, Scotland and Germany it was believed that the cows belonging to a man who killed a robin would yield bloody milk. In Suffolk and Bohemia you would suffer from trembling of your hands if you robbed a nest, and the belief is still current in Wales that a broken limb may be the penalty.

As we might expect, a bird around which so many associations have gathered has been regarded as having oracular powers. There is a Suffolk rhyme:

> If the robin sings in the bush,
> Then the weather will be coarse;
> But if the robin sings on the barn,
> Then the weather will be warm.

This may have arisen from the observation that in autumn the bird sings softly, perched fairly low in trees and bushes, whereas when the temperature is rising during the spring and the male is defending his territory he often sings from higher perches. In Germany it is considered a good omen when the bridal pair see a robin on their way from the church.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: David Lack, *Robin Redbreast* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1950); I. and P. Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1951).

Mansell Collection

Robin Goodfellow

Capricious but not always unfriendly hobgoblin, apparently Puck under another name; said to be the child of a fairy king and a mortal woman, and to have the power of changing shape; in origin probably a minor fertility god or spirit.

See PUCK.

Mansell Collection

'For he was a good outlaw, and did poor men much good': these words still convey the most familiar image of Robin Hood, the green-clad forest-dweller who stole from the rich to give to the poor: illustration from the *Lytell Geste*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde

ROBIN HOOD

ONE OF THE GREAT folk heroes of England and Scotland since at least as early as the 14th century, Robin Hood is still a living part of British tradition today. The first certain reference to him in English literature is that made by William Langland in his new version of *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (1377), where he makes a drunken chaplain say:

> 'I can not my pater nnster, as the prest hit saith,
> But I can rymes of Robyn Hoode and Randle Erle of Chester.'

We do not know what these 'rymes' were, for they have not survived; the oldest existing ballad is the *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode and his Meiny*, which was printed by Wynkyn de Worde at the end of the 15th century. It consists of four ballads of apparently much earlier date that have been strung together to make a continuous tale, and it may be that some of these, or parts of them, would have been known to Langland's chaplain. In

any case, it is evident that by 1377 the hero's fame was already widespread, and in the years that followed it was to travel all over Britain in song and ballad, folkplay, chronicle, and traditional tale.

Most people even now are more familiar with Robin Hood's legends than they are with those of any other British folk hero, except perhaps Arthur. He is still an admired figure in our traditional landscape, the 'proud outlaw' who became a symbol of freedom and independence and resistance to petty tyranny. Yet, in actual fact, we know very little about him. We do not know where he was born, or in what precise period he flourished. Some early accounts place him in the reigns of Richard I and John, and others in the time of Edward II. He is usually said to have been a yeoman, and quite probably he was, but from the 16th century onwards, tradition has tended to ennoble him by making him a possible claimant to the earldom of Huntingdon. The causes of his outlawry are likewise unsure, varying in different sources from debts incurred in a wild youth to taking part in the rebellion of Simon de Montfort or Thomas of Lancaster.

We cannot even be certain that he ever existed at all. Some scholars believe that he did not, and that he was, as Professor F. C. Child calls him, 'the pure creation of the ballad muse'. In other words, he was an ideal and not a historical figure, invented by the ballad-makers as an expression of the discontents and grievances of the medieval peasantry. Others think that he rightly belongs to the world of pagan or fairy belief, and that he and his green-clad followers were originally forest elves whose half-forgotten legend was later rationalized into tales of human outlawry. He has been associated with the Norse god, Hoder, with Robin Goodfellow (see PUCK), and with the horned god of the witches who had many names, one of which was Robin. A more mundane theory suggests that 'Robin Hood', a corruption of 'Robin of the Wood', was once a generic title for forest thieves, and that the stories we know may have grown from vague memories, not of a single heroic individual, but of several medieval bandits so nicknamed, whose real names and histories are now quite unknown.

On the other hand, some modern students of the legend believe it to be founded upon fact, and certainly, during many centuries, no one doubted that Robin Hood was a real person. He was essentially a hero of the people, though he never led them in any uprising or fought in any popular cause. He was the constant friend of the poor and oppressed, generous and open-handed in times of need, and quick to avenge the wrongs of the lowly. Because he was an outlaw, he was always in danger, but quick wits, daring, and the loyalty of his friends enabled him to reach old age in the end. He lived by theft, robbing the rich of their gold and the king of his forest game, and he led a merry and adventurous life in the greenwood as the acknowledged leader of a company of like-minded bandits. His chief enemies were those whom the poor also regarded as their enemies – the sheriffs who enforced harsh and detested laws, the forest rangers, the too-wealthy churchmen, the officers of the great land-owning monasteries, and others of the same kind. For all these he had a deadly hatred, and he attacked and robbed them without mercy whenever he had a chance.

Tricking the Rich

Tradition and ballad alike insist that he shared the fruits of his robberies with the humbler folk living near his haunts, and probably he did, since they were his natural allies, and there were many ways in which they could help him in their turn. The *Lytell Geste* says that when he drew up rules for the members of his band, he forbade them ever to harm any poor person, be he husbandman or yeoman, squire or knight. Only the rich and powerful needed to fear him, though with them he could be as brutal and violent as any other thief. He delighted also in tricking them and making them look ridiculous, and doubtless this endeared him still further to those who had suffered under their tyrrany. All the ballads stress his merry-mindedness, his impish sense of humour, his personal piety which was quite unaffected by his hatred of the greater clergy, and his marvellous skill as an archer. The last words in the *Lytell Geste* are, 'For he was a good outlawe, and dyd pore men moch good'; and this is the picture that has survived in most men's minds from the time these words were written until now.

Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire both claim him as their own. Among the Sloane manuscripts there is an anonymous life of Robin Hood, apparently written in the late 16th century, which says he was born about 1160 'in Lockesley in Yorkshire, or after others, in Nottinghamshire'. There is a legend, however, that connects him with Loxley in Staffordshire, according to which his father held land there. Joseph Hunter, in his *Great Hero of the Ancient Minstrelsy of England* (1852), says he was a Wakefield man, born at the end of the 13th century, who took part in Thomas of Lancaster's rebellion against Edward II in 1322, and was outlawed in consequence. The Wakefield Court Rolls show that a certain Robert Hood and his wife acquired a tenement on Bickhill in 1316, for the purpose of building a house, and that by 1358 they no longer had it. In the Contrarients' Roll – the list of properties confiscated after the failure of the rebellion – 'a building of new construction on Bickhill' is mentioned, and it has been suggested that these two tenements were the same. If this is so, there can be little doubt that Robert Hood of Wakefield was involved in the rising and suffered for it. Whether he can also be identified with the Robin Hood that we know is, perhaps, still a matter of some uncertainty.

Wherever his actual birthplace may have been, it seems evident that Robin was of North Country or north Midland stock. His traditional haunts were the two great forests of Sherwood in Nottinghamshire and Barnsdale in Yorkshire, and to a lesser extent, Plumpton Park in Cumberland. In Yorkshire also, he had a second territory on the coast. 'He had,' said Dr Fuller in *Worthies*

Illustrations from *The History of Robin Hood*, c 1840 *Above* Frontispiece with Robin Hood in cloak and plumed hat ***Below*** Robin sets off on horseback, his mother behind him, to visit his uncle ***Top right*** He meets a butcher on his way to Nottingham Fair, buys his mare, panniers and a set of clothes, and sells meat so cheaply at the fair that he outsells all the other butchers ***Above right*** Robin fools the Bishop of Hereford who seizes an old woman with whom Robin has exchanged clothes ***Right*** Little John finds a hoard of gold sewn into some clothes during a fight with beggars ***Below right*** Robin stops King Richard and his men disguised as monks, and demands money; the king reveals his true identity when Robin makes clear his support of the monarchy with the words: 'God save him, and confound his enemies'

of England (1662), 'another haunt (he is no fox that hath but one hole), near the sea in the North-riding of Yorkshire where Robin Hoods bay still retaineth his name; not that he was any pirat, but a land-thief, who retreated to these unsuspected parts for his security'. Here he is said to have kept boats in which he could put to sea in times of special danger. What remains of Sherwood Forest is still starred with place names that recall his many adventures there. The Sheriff of Nottingham ranked with rich clerics among his main enemies; when he instructed his followers not to harm poor people, he added:

> These bishoppes and these archebishoppes,
> Ye shall them bete and binde:
> The hye Sheriff of Nottingham,
> Hym holde in your mynde.

Hold him in mind they did. The ballads are full of bitter fights between the outlaw and the official, sometimes to the death. In one, Robin shoots the Sheriff and then cuts off his head, in another he hangs him upon his own gallows. Generally, however, the tales of their warfare have a less violent ending, but the Sheriff is nearly always the loser, as, in the minds of the ballad-makers, he deserved to be because he represented laws deemed to be cruel and unjust.

Meeting With a King

In the *Lytell Geste* it is related that, at one point in his career, Robin was persuaded to abandon his wild life, and enter the service of 'Edwarde our comly kynge'. The ballad does not make it clear which King Edward this was, but there are some outside indications that it may have been Edward II. The tale runs that the King came north, and was so enraged by the havoc wrought in his forests by the outlaws that he called for the immediate capture and execution of their leader. When all attempts to carry out this order had failed, he went himself to the greenwood disguised as an abbot. There he encountered Robin, who was at first deceived by his disguise, but afterwards recognized the supposed abbot as his sovereign lord. As soon as he had done so, he fell on his knees and asked for mercy, 'of thy goodnesse and thy grace, for my men and me'. Edward was so impressed by his loyalty that he pardoned all the band, and took Robin himself into his service.

History records that Edward II did go north in 1323, and that an inquisition concerning thefts of venison since Thomas of Lancaster's rebellion was held at Pickering in the August of that year. Robin Hood's name is not included in the list of culprits, but in the royal accounts for 1324, entries of payments to a valet of the King's Chamber called Robert or Robin Hood occur between April and November, and then cease. We hear no more of this Robert Hood in any historical document. The ballad, however, goes on to say that after a time spent in the King's service, Robin wearied of court life and yearned for the greenwood. He asked Edward's permission to return briefly to Barnsdale, and was granted leave for seven days only. He was never seen at court again. Once back in the forest, he reverted to his old ways, gathered his scattered band round him, and for 22 years thereafter enjoyed again the free and dangerous life that he loved.

Death of a Hero

He died at last through the treachery of the Prioress of Kirklees. He fell ill, and because she was noted for her medical skill and was also his kinswoman, he went to her, as the Sloane manuscript records, 'to be eased of his payne by letting of blood'. She betrayed him, very horribly, by letting him bleed to death. She is variously said to have done this in order to avenge the many churchmen he had injured in the past, or because she was persuaded to do so by Sir Roger de Doncaster, who was her paramour. Another version of the tale says it was not she who committed the actual murder, but an unnamed monk who was called in to attend the outlaw, and who may, perhaps, have acted without her knowledge.

However that may be, Robin died slowly and painfully from loss of blood. According to one account of the tragedy, he was locked in the room where the operation had been performed, and 'there did he bleed all the live-long day until the next day at noon'. When his strength was nearly gone, he managed to sound his horn, though only feebly, to summon Little John, his friend and lieutenant, who was waiting in the nearby woods. The latter, finding his master beyond help and dying, demanded the right to avenge him by burning down the priory, but was sternly forbidden to take any action against the Prioress or her nuns. 'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,' said Robin, 'nor at the end shall it be.' Then he asked for his bow, and with a last burst of energy, he shot an arrow through the window, saying that where it fell, there must he be buried.

Long tradition has placed Robin Hood's grave within bowshot of the nunnery, under an inscribed stone which, according to Grafton's *Chronicle* (1562), was laid there by the Prioress herself. The antiquary John Leland mentioned it in Henry VIII's reign, and two centuries later Thoresby recorded, in 1715, that 'Near Kirklees monastery, the noted Robin Hood lies buried under a gravestone that yet remains in the park, but the inscription scarce legible'. No other site for the grave has ever been suggested, although Gough, in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, says it was excavated in the early 18th century and was found to be empty. Little John, on the other hand, has had no less than three traditional burial-places – one, rather improbably, in Ireland, another at Pette in Morayshire, and a third at Hathersage in Derbyshire, to which village he is said to have retired after the death of his leader.

Celebrating his Memory

Long after these heroes, and all their merry companions, had vanished from this world, they lived on in the Robin Hood plays and games celebrated at Whitsuntide, or on May Day. At what precise period these 'sportes of Robyn Hood' were absorbed into the far older May games we do not know, but medieval records and churchwardens'

accounts show that they were flourishing in the 15th and 16th centuries, not only in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, but in places far removed from the outlaws' traditional haunts. Sir John Paston, in 1473, refers to plays acted in his Norfolk home. The same plays and sports, and the money gained thereby for church and parish, are mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, Kingston-on-Thames and Reading, Croscombe in Somerset, and even as far south as Stratton in Cornwall. In their heyday they were so popular that nothing was allowed to interfere with them. They were forbidden by Scottish law in 1555, but they still went on, and an attempt to stop one performance ended in a riot. Bishop Latimer complained bitterly in a sermon preached in 1549 that, coming once to a parish where he intended to preach, he found the church locked and everyone absent except one man, who said: 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you, it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you, let them not.' And so, in great anger, he was obliged to ride away with his message unspoken.

One final word must be said about Maid Marian, if only because most people today think of her an integral part of the Robin Hood legend. In fact, she is a late-comer to the tradition. The earlier ballads do not mention her at all, and her first appearance as the hero's true love is in a play written in 1601, *The Downfall of Robert, erle of Huntingdon* . . . She seems to have been borrowed from a French pastoral drama in which a shepherd and a shepherdess named Robin and Marian are the principal characters. Regrettable though it may be to the romantically minded, all the evidence goes to show that, whether Robin Hood and his fellows were real people or not, the Maid Marian of modern tradition was not one of their company.

CHRISTINA HOLE

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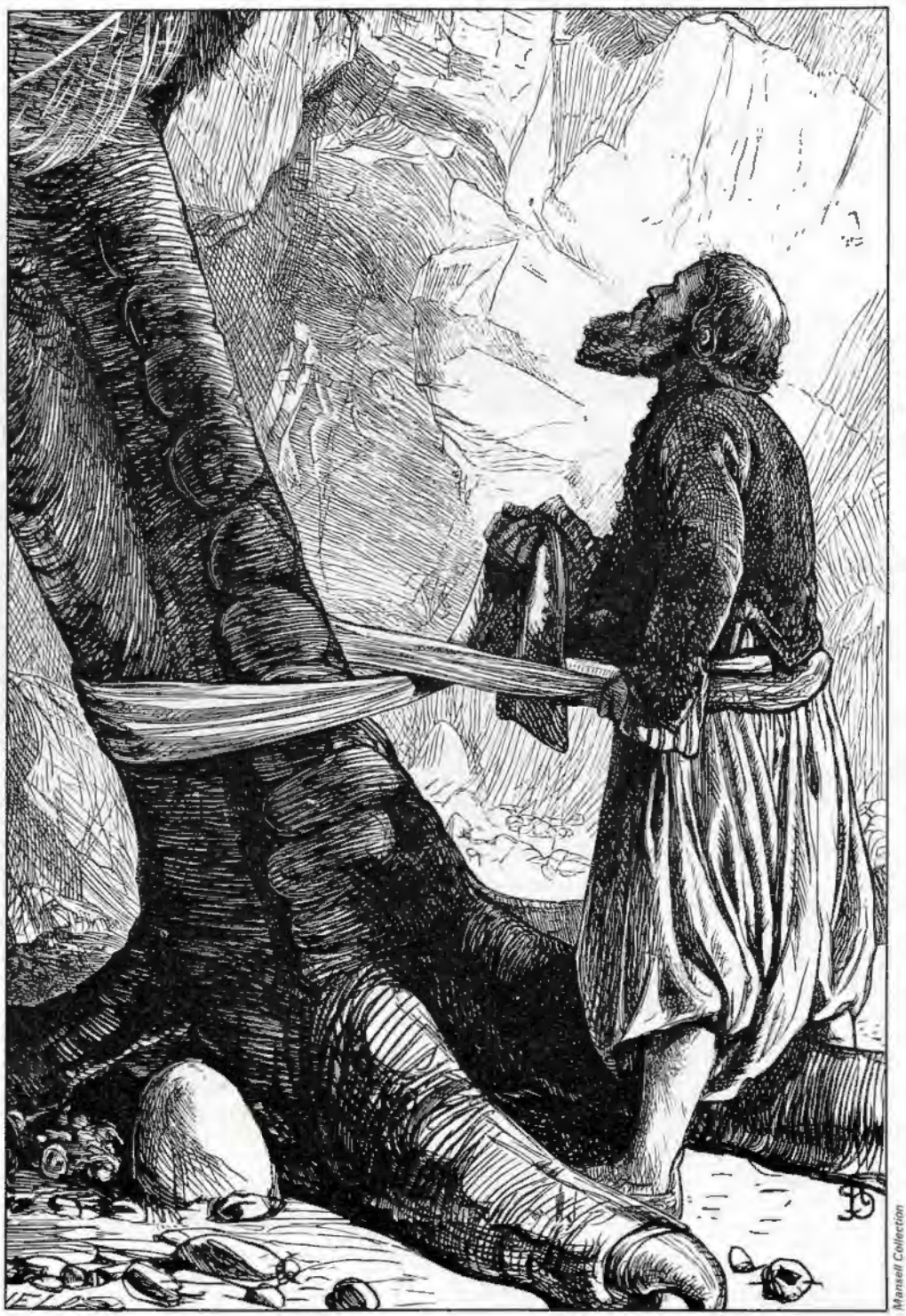
ROC

THE BEHAVIOUR of this mythical bird is described in the *Arabian Nights*. It dwells on an island and feeds on elephant calves. When it alights to brood on its egg, which is like a huge dome, it stretches out its legs behind it. Sinbad waited until it was sitting, crept up, unrolled his turban and used it to tie himself to the protruding legs. At dawn the monstrous bird soared away, carrying him with it, and when it alighted he freed himself. As he watched, he saw the Roc seize and carry off a gigantic serpent. He made his way into a ravine where the soil was strewn with diamonds but the snakes there, which issued forth at night, could swallow an elephant at one gulp. Sinbad was startled when the carcass of a horse thudded down. He discovered that merchants made a practice of hurling such carcasses into the ravine, so that when the eagles and vultures bore them up they could secure the diamonds adhering to them. He resorted to a stratagem, first collecting a quantity of diamonds, then fastening himself to a carcass and waiting till a giant bird carried him with it out of the ravine.

The story bears evidence of being composite, as it seems that several kinds of monstrous birds are involved. Facts have been exaggerated to fantastic lengths. Various species of birds of prey do feed to some extent on snakes and in eastern lands vultures devouring dead bodies are a familiar sight.

The enmity of the Great Bird and the Snake stands for the opposing powers of the sun and earth. Where such symbolism has weakened and the myths have become folktales and legends, as in the *Arabian Nights*, the deeper significance has been lost. Thus according to a folktale from the Caucasus, the hero kills a three-headed dragon which climbs up after him to an eagle's nest and the grateful bird, which is so big that its wings shake the mountains as it flies, carries the protector of its young on its back.

E. A. ARMSTRONG



Mansell Collection

Sinbad releases himself from the monstrous roc, and finds himself in the Valley of Diamonds: illustration from the *Arabian Nights*

It is only in comparatively recent years that the magnificent rock art of Africa has been systematically studied: there are rival theories about it, and its interpretation necessarily involves much guesswork

ROCK PAINTINGS

AFRICA is probably the richest continent in the world for rock drawings, even though its art galleries are not as well-known as the painted caves of south-western France and north-western Spain. But etchings and paintings are found in tens of thousands on the rocks of Africa, from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope; and thousands more of them, no doubt, still remain to be discovered and recorded.

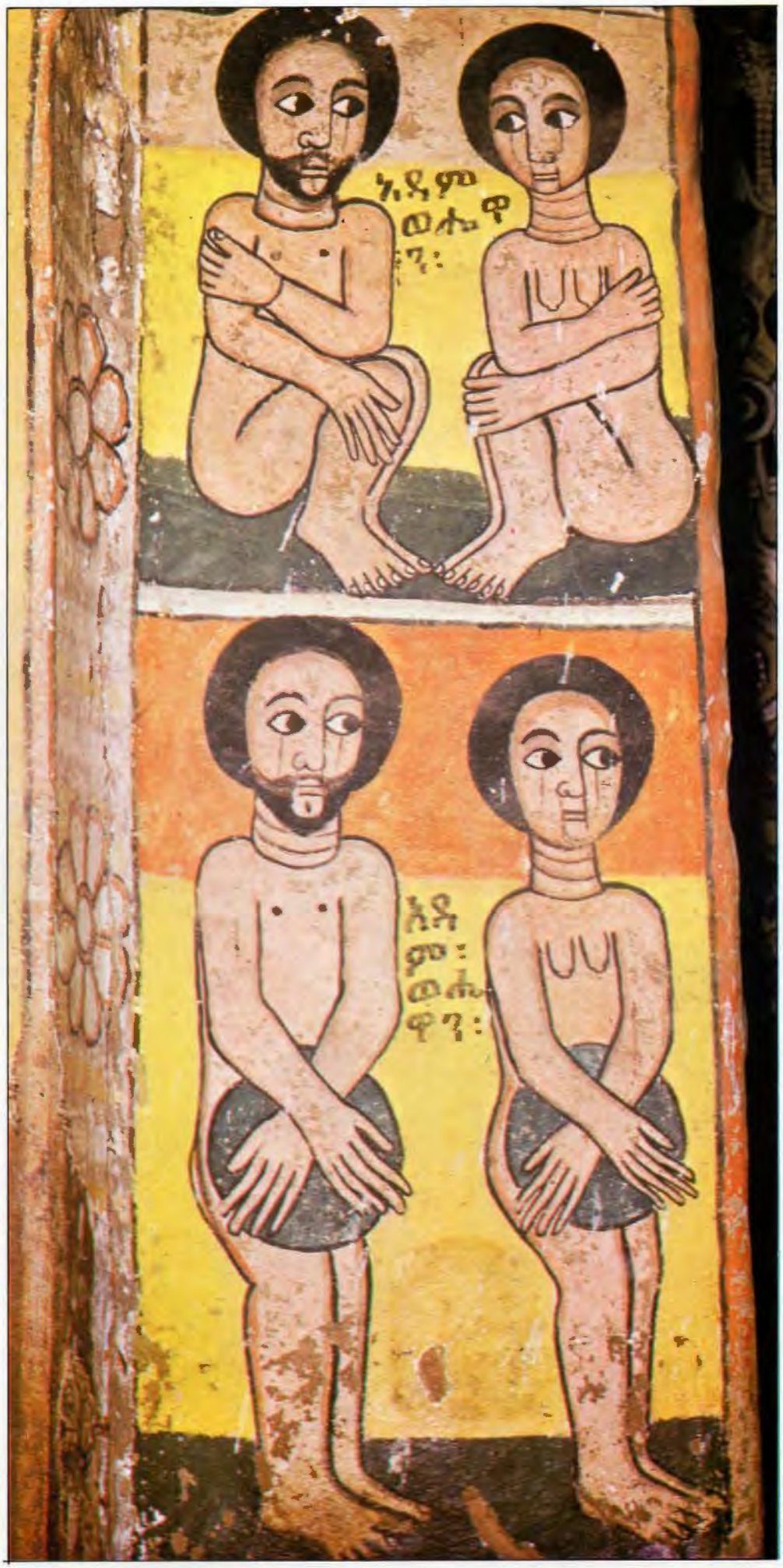
The African drawings differ from their European counterparts in that they are more often found outdoors than underground in caves, but they tell much the same story of primitive man and his world. The African pictures are bound up with magic and myths, and the oldest of them go back some 15,000 years into history.

African rock art is mainly located in Morocco and Algeria, the Fezzan province of Libya, the Upper Niles, the Hoggar and Air Mountains of the Central Sahara, East Africa, and throughout South Africa. And wherever we find these pictures, they have one thing in common: they portray a world in which animals were the most important thing in life. They were so important that the artists seem to have been able to draw them instinctively, often in a style which has seldom been surpassed even by the great masters of painting. Yet these prehistoric drawings were either scratched with flints on the sides of cliffs, or painted with crude brushes and pigments on the walls of the rock shelters where primitive man made his home.

The best and most representative of these drawings are found in the mountains of the Sahara and the deserts of South Africa. The former were executed by an unknown race of hunters, probably Negroes; the latter by Bushmen.

The story they tell begins with the depiction on the rock faces of the big game they hunted – elephants, lions, giraffe, wild sheep, boar, and even aquatic animals like hippopotamuses. They prove that the Sahara, 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, must have been forested and watered by rivers which have since dried up or gone underground.

It is, of course, exceedingly difficult for modern man to see the world with the eyes of his primitive ancestors. We can only look at the drawings and marvel at the meticulous attention to detail. When the artist engraved an elephant on a rock face, for instance, he emphasized the small, shrewd eyes, the huge, flapping ears, the sinuous trunk and



Mural from the interior of a 16th century rock church in Ethiopia, probably representing Adam and Eve: thousands of paintings and engravings have been discovered in Africa, and though interpretations are disputed much of this may be religious art

John Moss

H. C. Woodhouse

H. C. Woodhouse

Scholars are still inquiring into the function and nature of African rock art, an intriguing aspect of primitive culture that stretches back some 15,000 years. Many of these paintings illustrate scenes from everyday life, perhaps serving as one of primitive man's means of communication, in much the same way that a newspaper serves its readers today, while others seem to involve ritual and magic *Top left* Rock painting from Mashonaland, South Africa, depicting participants in a ritual, possibly a circumcision ceremony; the witch-doctor appears to be wearing a lion-headed mask *Top right* Seated figures wearing cloaks and masks: from Grootvlei, Orange Free State *Above* Detail of a rock painting from the Brandberg Mountains, South-West Africa, showing seven small buck *Left* Bushman painting from Natal, South Africa

Gerald Cubitt

the massive feet. The larger and fiercer animals are invariably the most realistically drawn, as if they presented the greatest threat to the hunter armed with his stone axe or tiny bow. The hippopotamuses, giraffes, lions and panthers are all caught in characteristic attitudes, lumbering along, or towering above us, or poised ready to spring. It is significant that where man himself is portrayed, he is shown as a small, crouching figure armed with throwing-stick, axe or bow, and, in one picture, dead at the feet of an elephant.

It has been suggested that prehistoric men made the engravings on the rocks outside, the women the paintings on the walls of the shelters. Thus the engravings are usually large and depict a typically masculine view of life as a continual warfare between the hunter and his prey, while the paintings illustrate more intimate social activities. This 'interior' world is more humanized and more familiar. Leisure and entertainment are now facets of existence, even at this level. Music, dancing, and perhaps even games were a feature of communal life as culture evolved from a hunting to a pastoral society. Women now appear in their primitive finery and are sometimes shown beautifying themselves, nursing their children, or engaged in domestic chores. They are also depicted as taking part in what seem to be religious rites, though the significance of these scenes is still a matter of conjecture. After all, it is little more than 100 years since the existence of prehistoric art has been known, and less than 50 years since systematic studies of it have been undertaken.

Scholastic Guesswork

The deep significance of prehistoric art, both that found in the European caves and that on the African cliff sites, was at first dismissed by scholars on the grounds that 'cavemen' were incapable of that degree of cultural awareness required to produce works of such a high aesthetic order. Then, later, when it was accepted that these extraordinary pictures were drawn by Stone Age men, a new school of experts began to interpret them by the psychological and moral standards of the 20th century. One result has been that the more prudish observers have condemned as obscene those pictures in which sex is represented either realistically or symbolically, while others have attempted to explain them by references to fertility rites and ritual magic.

An example of this subjective interpretation of African rock art will show the degree of guesswork that still characterizes this field of scholarship: a rock drawing found in the Tassili-n-Ajjer in south-eastern Algeria depicts a scene containing a total of 11 figures, some of them with enormous headpieces like a sultan's turban. The Abbé Breuil, who is regarded as the greatest authority on prehistoric art, explains this picture as follows: 'Scene of circumcision composed of eleven persons: on the left, two operators and the one to be operated upon; in the middle, with legs crossed and beating time with their arms, singers ordered to drown out the cries of the victim; and on the right, members of the family turning their back on the scene.'

Yet if one examines the picture oneself, one must admit that other interpretations are equally convincing. For instance, if the turbans represent Arabs, and the shock of crinkly hair over black faces represents captive Negroes, the gestures, knives and other details might depict a castration scene, particularly as there were places along the slave routes from Central Africa to the Mediterranean coast where black captives were emasculated before being sold for service in the harems. Or again, is what we see a quarrel between three men with a number of spectators arguing and gesticulating on the side lines? The honest answer is that we do not know. We can only guess.

We can only guess because the farther we get away in time from early man, the less we can understand his myths or his magic, his view of the world. One of the most famous rock paintings found in the Sahara was discovered by the French explorer Henri Lhote, again in the Tassili-n-Ajjer. Lhote called his discovery 'The Great God with Praying Women', and anthropologists assumed, on the basis of Lhote's interpretation, that such a picture proved that the primitive men who painted it worshipped a god or gods as we do. But what do we see if we regard this picture without preconceived theories of its religious or magical significance? The 'Great God' himself obviously has a symbolically exaggerated organ hanging down between his legs, together with what appear to be bulging muscles on his shoulders, presumably indicative of immense virility, while the surrounding women are depicted with grossly enlarged sex characteristics. The question therefore is, does this scene represent a religious ceremony or a fertility rite? Or is it simply primitive man's dream of sexual indulgence?

So there are two approaches and two theories about the meaning of prehistoric African art. The first, which has long been in favour with the academics, is that these pictures have a much deeper significance than they reveal to the modern observer, that the artists were also shamans, or medicine-men, who drew pictures of game for increase, and to ensure good omens for the hunt and the success of the hunters. The many rock drawings which openly depict the act of sexual intercourse are put down to fertility ritual.

A second theory, which is gaining ground among the younger school of anthropologists, is that what we see in the great art galleries of Africa are scenes and portraits drawn primarily for aesthetic and recreational motives – to give pleasure to the artists and their viewers. This theory is based on the argument that there are too many drawings of too many animals and too many purely domestic activities to interpret all of them as religio-magical. In fact, even the Abbé Breuil admits that a great many of the African drawings are comic both in execution and effect, provoking, he says, a gentle laugh in the manner of caricatures. So the humour of the African paintings is expressed in the slightly exaggerated figures of men and animals, a form of comic art familiar to us in Aesop's fables. Perhaps, then, we should not over-solemnize the function or meaning of these pictures, any more than we should the unsophisticated 'primitives' of children, or of those adults who paint with a child-like vision.

Pictorial 'Newspapers'

The more modern view of prehistoric African art presupposes that our ancestors were not the 'cavemen' of popular tradition – big hairy creatures who fought with clubs and dragged their women off to rock shelters. Rather, they needed, just as we do, the compensations of a social and intellectual life in addition to food and shelter. They enjoyed, no doubt, the pleasures of story-telling, which some excelled in verbally, others pictorially. The hundreds of thousands of rock pictures all over Africa suggest that the rock faces of the cliffs and the walls of the shelters served as 'newspapers' to their prehistoric 'readers', as they continue, for that matter, to do today. In short, the majority of the pictures seem to be straightforward illustrations of daily life; hence the impression that they were primitive man's principal means of communication.

An example of this is the highly controversial Bushman painting known as 'The White Lady of Brandberg'. This work of art was discovered by a German prospector in the Brandberg Mountains of South-West Africa in 1917, and it depicts a young woman striding along carrying what looks like a flower in her right hand, a bow and arrows in her left. She wears a dark red head-dress, or wig, a short-sleeved brown jerkin ornamented with beads, a red belt, pink tights, close-fitting trunks, leggings, and white mocassins edged with red.

The student can take his pick as to what this picture represents, for on the one hand the Abbé Breuil states that the 'White Lady' was wearing the costume of a Cretan bull-dancer, that she was painted somewhere around 1500 BC, and that she symbolizes the myth of Diana-Isis. On the other hand, South African specialists on Bushman art maintain that she was nothing other than the caricature of a white woman missionary, dating from around 1850 AD when Europeans were beginning to penetrate the interior of South Africa. So we have here not only a chronological difference of 3300 years, but two completely irreconcilable explanations of the picture itself.

But whatever the arguments concerning the significance of the rock drawings, no observer would deny the spiritual attributes of these old artists, if we define as spiritual the recognition of the beauty and terror of the world around. And this recognition is always expressed in primitive cultures in an integral system of myth and magic. In other words, with peoples at this early stage of development their entire existence in all its aspects – economic, social and religious – is dominated by the natural phenomena all around them all the time.

To this extent it is true that these old artists did not engrave or paint the rocks in a spirit of 'art for art's sake'. They drew their pictures as an expression of the needs of the

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Animals appear constantly in African rock art, perhaps as magic for their increase or as an aid to hunters *Above* A group of eland: rock painting from Orange Free State *Below* Eland reclining, from Lesotho *Right* Two rhebok from Cape Province

community. One such need, obviously, was to convey information, and many of the most vivid of the Saharan drawings are of this kind. Where a people has no written language at all and only a limited vocabulary (the Bushmen and Australian aborigines are living examples) pictures are the only effective way of communicating. The African art galleries are full of such 'communiqués', which makes the South African anthropologists' interpretation of the 'White Lady of Brandberg' credible. We find, too, drawings all over the Sahara of chariots drawn by four horses at the gallop. These paintings puzzled students of rock art until it was pointed out that the Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the 5th century BC that a Saharan people called the Garamantes 'chased the negroes in four-horse chariots'. Putting the clues together, we can solve the mystery: the men who first saw the chariots of these Garamantes had no way of describing such a vehicle except by drawing it.

The vital need to convey information, then, must have been one reason for the rock pictures; the need for relaxation and amusement another. What else was there to do for a group of hunters or herdsmen during the long summer evenings apart from discussing the size, ferocity, and vulnerability of wild animals, or the number and quality of the cattle? So, in the shelters under overhanging cliffs in the Sahara Desert and on the mountain sides in East and South Africa, families and tribes, once well supplied with food after the day's hunt, had many hours to while away; and what would be more natural than for a man to pick up a nearby flint and to amuse himself and his companions seeing if he could depict the animal he had stalked and perhaps killed that morning? In fact, judging from the mere size of some of the engravings – a rhinoceros found in a wadi south of the Mourzouk Sand Sea in the Libyan Fezzan measures over 14 feet in length – the artists may have worked as a group. There are, indeed, so many pictures of varying degrees of skill that obviously rock painting was a favourite pastime of prehistoric man, filling his leisure hours, satisfying his need for entertainment, and expressing his emergent religious feelings.

We should note, too, that this ancient

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These primitive artists drew their pictures 'as an expression of the needs of the community', to convey information and as relaxation and amusement *Above* Giraffe and quagga, a South African animal related to the ass and zebra *Below* Zebra, from Mashonaland

H. C. Woodhouse

custom of using the rocks as a kind of library of men's physical and spiritual experiences has continued right up to the present day. It flourished greatly during the long years of the trans-Saharan caravans when travellers used boulders to record their passing, either in pictures scratched on the smooth surfaces or in writing on fallen stones. Many a religious-minded Arab would spend the evening inscribing a *sura* or chapter from the Koran on the rock face against which he rested; or, if he had been to Mecca by sea, he might even attempt a sketch of a steamboat which his companions had never seen and could not imagine. So, too, the Bushmen in Southern Africa painted messages to each other on the walls of caves – details about the movement of game, the conditions of water holes, and the frontiers of their territory. They continued to do this until they came into contact with the white man. Since then they have completely lost the old art.

That art was, of course, 'inspired' by a whole body of myths and an unquestioning faith in magic which were characteristic of prehistoric man everywhere in the world. To this extent his pictures were an expression of what we can call his 'religion', for if he drew an animal, the portrait had a deep significance for him which it cannot possibly have for us. This has led some scholars to claim that the art galleries of Africa were the equivalent of sanctuaries, holy places which were constantly frequented because of their 'magic'. In this sense, they could be compared to the sacred pictures which hang in our churches.

But whether we subscribe to the theory that these galleries were the religious shrines of prehistoric men or not, we must recognize that their pictures are often great works of art and tell us what the world looked like in the morning of history.

(For cave and rock art in Europe, see CAVE ART.)

JAMES WELLARD

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ROME

An agrarian religion developed into an imperial religion, which borrowed gods and cults from many peoples, and Romans 'seldom questioned the efficacy of a religion which had grown outword from a bend on an Italian river to embrace the greater part of Europe, North Africa and the Near East'

ROMAN RELIGION has no equal in the ancient Mediterranean although its type of polytheism is shared throughout pre-classical and classical Europe, North Africa and the Near East. Polytheism was never a mode of theology as we understand it today. A formal body of dogma and an organized congregation or network of congregations have no place in a study of Roman paganism. Even the notion of religion remained outside the ancient cognizance.

The Latin word *religio*, whose original definition is obscure, meant 'awe', 'scruple' and also 'superstition', although the Romans sometimes acknowledged the last as a distinct and extreme attitude. One's devotion and sense of obligation to the divine could be expressed by the idea of *pietas*, which was by no means due merely to the gods. It was a bond of obligation which could be felt in accordance with blood-ties, ethnic solidarity or contractual agreement. Whereas pietas and similar notions reflect a personal recognition of a deity's existence, the worship (*cultus*) of a deity manifested itself in sacrifices, gifts and utensils (*sacra*) which shared with other sacrifices, gifts and utensils the common denomination of the *ritus* that was normally designated by its ethnic origin. Hence, such modern expressions as 'Greek rite' have a very long history.

The Roman Rite

Some Roman gods were worshipped in a non-Roman rite. For instance, a sacrifice to Saturn took place in the 'Greek rite'. In this case the Roman officiant did not cover his head with his toga but poured the wine while bare-headed. Normal Roman ceremonial practice dictated a covered head – evidently to avoid ominous sights. Constant flute music was also required – evidently to avoid ominous sounds. The 'Roman rite' of Italy implied a covered head, flute music and other practices which distinguish it from the rites of diverse communities and peoples. Theoretically rites were as numerous as there were clear ethnic divisions. The various rites are an integral part of Roman imperial religion.

Occidental religion tends to concentrate man's attentions upon one deity and to prescribe norms of behaviour that constitute morality, but little in the way of moral precept emerges from pagan religion. Further, a modern focus upon the single deity tends to narrow our attention on the breadth of Roman religion. While the importance, not to say power, of the Roman gods cannot be denied, the role of these gods can never approximate the omnipotence and unity of Western man's one god. Some Roman gods did not even begin as gods but as forces, activities and spheres of influence beyond man's ken and control. The one god acknowledged today has received superhuman attributes, that is attributes which are human though somehow better than human. Creating, knowing, loving and the like can be understood only in human terms. For the Romans a god enjoyed human shape, but religion involved much besides man-like gods. The history of Roman religion exhibits traces of non-gods becoming gods, so that we must admit the possible growth of a notion of deity. However, this growth derived its material from religious forces, powers and entities otherwise outside the nature of the world, if not outside knowledge or fear.

The majority of Roman gods rarely received cult as the simple god. Rather, the gods usually bore an epithet or surname which distinguished them from others whose realm of efficacy differed. Consequently the universality of one pagan god was never possible. From place to place his epithets evinced his peculiarity. The gods of the Romans may conveniently be divided into groups of natural forces and their phenomena, physical activity, single abstract conceptions, deities of a given place and, finally, divinities of unknown origins. Among the gods of Nature stand Jupiter, Mars and Ceres. Jupiter was once the sky and the day. So he might be worshipped as a god of the sky and be called Thunderer or the like after some heavenly appearance. Mars belongs to the forces of springtime, and so his cult was concentrated in March.

Ceres ruled the growth of crops and vegetation in general. Her origin leads naturally to the next group, the type of physical activity. At an earlier stage Ceres was no goddess. *Ceres* or *cerus* was a verbal noun from the root 'to make grow' (*creare*) or 'to grow' (*crescere*). It was Growth itself. By the classical period Ceres had acquired all the attributes of a fertile lady and had narrowed her attentions upon agriculture, with the notable exception of her invocation at a wedding. She was identified with the Greek grain goddess, Demeter, as early as the 5th century. Indeed her oldest Roman temple may have been totally the result of Greek influence. Be that as it may, Ceres in cult and in story rarely exhibits a purely Roman background.

Venus represents the same type of deity. She began as the physical activity of coaxing and luring, but was early assigned a role in keeping watch over vegetable gardens. In some parts of central Italy the same priestess served both Ceres and Venus. A third such deity was Juno, whose name must be related to the word 'youth', a period of animal life which she as a goddess preserved and prolonged. In many instances the Romans forgot the origin of such 'gods'.

These divine types differ in origin very little from the manifest abstraction which never, or only occasionally, assumed a human form that could overwhelm the deity's beginnings to such a degree that a Roman could not understand its principal function. In this category are Tellus, Dis, Fides and Salus. Tellus signifies the earth, which is anything but an abstraction. However, *tellus* was most certainly the state or essence of earth, 'earthness', rather than a natural power such as growth or physical activity such as coaxing. The sole major festival of Tellus was named for the slaughter of pregnant cows, which were cremated so that the bountiful ash might be employed in fertilization. Tellus was enriched and was not in itself a force or deity. However, under Greek influence the 'earth' became a mother goddess.

Dis shows affinities with Tellus and also influence from a Greek quarter. Dis belonged to the underworld. His name means 'rich', which was thought a suitable translation of the Greek Pluto. Whereas Tellus received annual sacrifices, the underworld's Dis received sacrifice every century (*saeculum*) at the splendid and gorgeous Secular Games. Tellus had one Roman temple which had been vowed in wartime on account of an

Cupid, the Roman god of love, identified with the Greek Eros, embraces the mortal Psyche. Roman religion is full of instances of borrowing, and sometimes modifying, the gods and cults of the many peoples within the Empire

earthquake. Her old cult was performed in the open away from temples. Dis had the one altar, buried except for a few hours every century. Evidently neither deity was represented by a man-like statue, although the Romans considered one a goddess and the other a god. Tellus remained quite Roman in cult in spite of learned attempts to equate her with the Earth of Greek mythology. Dis, on the other hand, was an integrated foreigner.

The many deities invoked at the Secular Games exhibit a miscellany of Roman, Italic and Greek gods, worshipped by prayers and with utensils emanating from equally diverse quarters. The core of the ritual went back to the middle of the 4th century BC. The Games were controlled by the Fifteen Men (formerly Ten Men) For Sacrificing, a powerful priesthood in charge of imported state cults. The cult of Tellus, however, was carried on by the chief pontiff and the Vestal Virgins, the oldest civil priests of Rome. Yet Tellus, 'Earth', and Dis, 'Rich', share similar beginnings and interest in the soil's goodness.

Of the same type are Fides Publica and Salus. The former, 'the People's Trust', had a very old cult and precinct. The latter, 'Welfare' or 'Safety', received a temple very late although the notion of the people's well-being dominated many areas of the civil religion. Both were acknowledged as gods to the extent that they were given temples, but neither had a human representation and, so far as we know, they were female only because of their grammatical gender. Ceres, Venus, and probably Tellus, originally, had a neuter grammatical gender and became 'feminine' in the process of becoming deities with functions seemingly appropriate to women.

Ops offers herself as an example. The grammatically feminine word means 'abundance', 'resource' and 'provender'. On 25 August she received worship from the Vestal Virgins at the King's House. On 19 December fell her oldest civil festival, which the Romans recognized as a ceremony for a deity generous in the bestowal of natural resources. Hence, she was honoured after the harvest and in the dead of winter. Yet this 'goddess' could not withstand the tendency to anthropomorphism and became in the popular mind the wife of Saturn, for no better reason than the

P. Schoder SJ

occurrence of his great festival on 17 December, two days before hers. The one temple Ops certainly had was probably not very old. Sacrifice at the King's House suggests that originally the cult was domestic and later raised to a public status.

Many gods and goddesses enjoyed temples, precincts, chapels or altars in Rome. However, such honours did not necessarily imply a conception of a man-like deity. Even statues sometimes did not blur the Romans' understanding of the god's primitive existence as a force or activity. It is frequently urged that Etruscans and Greeks lent the Romans their anthropomorphic conception of the divine. Considerable as this outside influence was, man's instinct to fancying man-like gods still prevails. Very early Romans applied 'Father' and 'Mother' as cult titles. What was akin to the Roman imagination was the myth-creating belief in marriages among gods and their offspring. Most divine marital and filial ties the Romans transferred from Greek to Latin poetry. So far as we can ascertain, the Roman gods passed celibate lives before Greek ideas were introduced.

A very different force is met in the divinity which the Roman community wished to ward off. On 25 April every year a civil priest offered sacrifice to the force of the rust blight, Robigus, which might strike the crops. The rites were held at places five miles from the city, apparently in order to keep the rust from crossing some archaic boundary. More unusual, indeed unique, was the altar dedicated on the edge of the city to Verminus, god of cattle worms. The rearing of this altar by a prominent patrician was prompted by a great plague in 175 BC, which wrought death among the cattle and the men such that corpses were heaped untended in the streets. The Romans explicitly speak of Robigus and the like as 'gods'. However, they clearly never saw them as beneficent deities. They sought their benevolence, and in this context there is much truth to the view of Roman religion as perpetual appeasement of natural forces.

Because the primitive religion, which the Romans conservatively kept, closely adhered to the agricultural economy of its decidedly unintellectual practitioners, most festivals, ceremonies and deities betray and reflect

R. Schoder SJ

In one of the frequent cases of literary borrowing from Greek mythology, the sea nymphs called Nereids are shown with a sea monster on this mosaic from the Roman camp of Lambaesis in Algeria

the lives of tillers and herders, within the cycle of the year. If the well-being of a people is not reckoned only in its battles, it is reckoned by its material resources. In this context Romans sought a right relation with their gods or, more specifically with natural forces and activities, in terms of their society. Hence the state religion took little account of deities of trade and manufacture, who did indeed exist and in some later cases thrived apart from the major civil cults.

A history of Roman religion would need to trace the development of an agrarian religion into an imperial religion that borrowed and modified gods and cults from many peoples within its vast empire and upon its fringes. Sometimes old deities changed and added to their own attributes those of other gods with whom they were identified. Sometimes the alien god was introduced with or without a slight Roman veneer. Later stages in Roman religion may reflect merely the Latin outcropping of some Etruscan, Greek or Near Eastern religion. Although inherently interesting and equally Roman phenomena, the borrowings remained just borrowings, unless we are to except Christianity.

Calendar and Cult

The civil calendar retains the oldest stratum of Roman religion. This calendar was an official almanac of religion which the state priests were bound to observe, even though the first serious Roman student of his religion (Varro, in the 1st century BC) tells us how knowledge of some cults had deteriorated till only the name was known. The basic features of the calendar's liturgy roughly parallel the farming year in central Italy. The planting, promotion of growth, harvesting, storing of crops fall at their appropriate moment. February is given over to cleansing and March to decorating as the year ends and begins. December and January betray some signs of festivals of lights, but generally the Romans seldom

Every manner of diversion imaginable to the ruling class, or later to the emperor, was offered to the people in the name of the gods

Hamlyn Group Library

took their eyes off the ground to gaze at the heavens. They left that task to others when they wanted it done.

The calendar comprised festivals for sacrifice and festivals for games. The simplicity of sacrifice also reflects the people's earliest economy, despite occasional attempts at modernization which show garish and wanton luxury. More recent and foreign were the sumptuous games that included athletic contests, chariot racing, theatrical drama, ballet, gladiatorial fights and wild animal hunts.

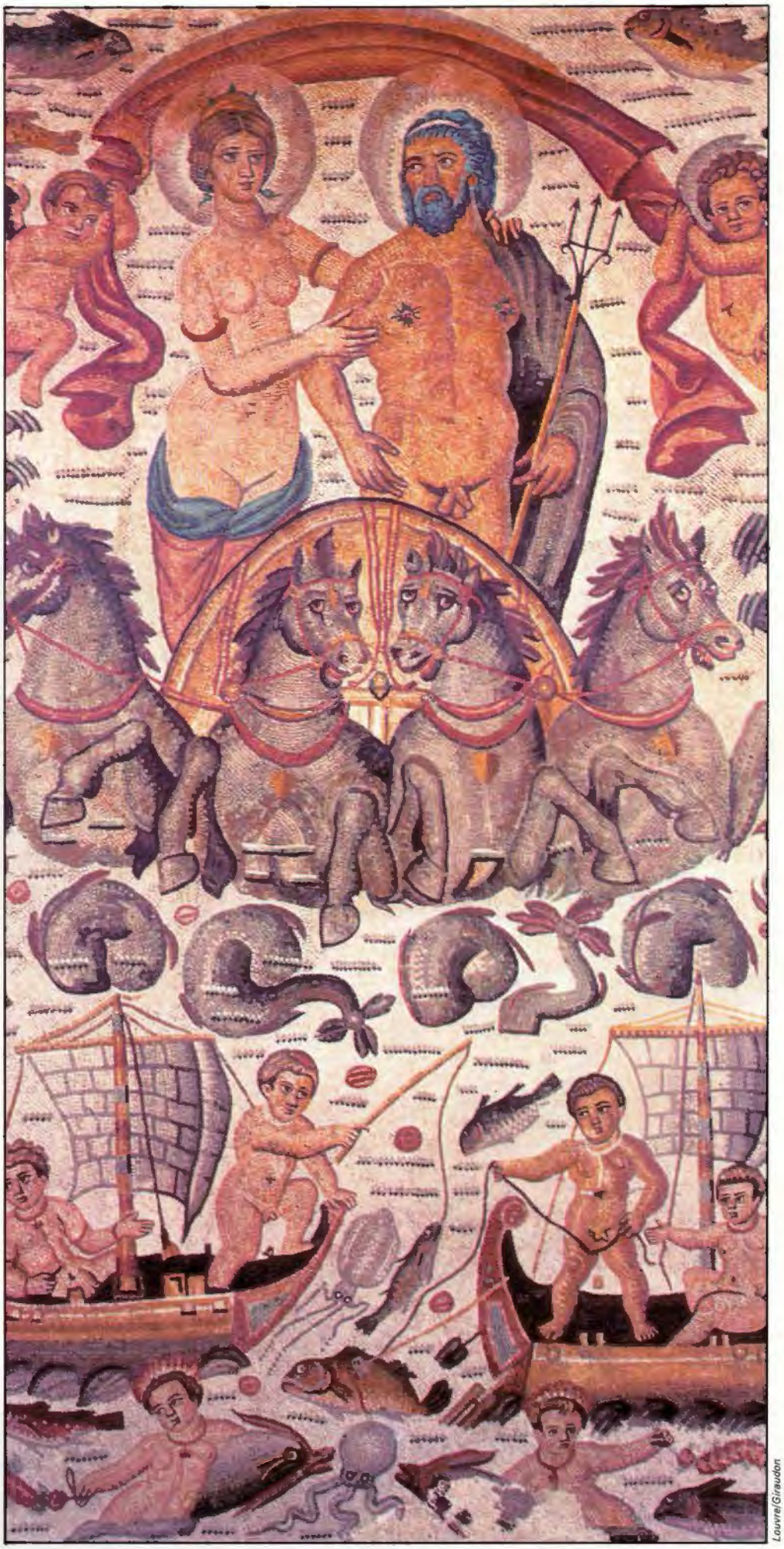
Every manner of diversion imaginable to the ruling class, or later to the emperor, was offered the people in the name of the gods. Such generous magnificence gave to the people what was otherwise lacking in their lives. Neither intellectual pagans nor fiery Christian preachers could bring an end to what was an agreed disgrace but also a lively and highly diverting spectacle.

Aristocratic Priests

Less glamorous and more common were the routine sacrifices in the hands of the state priests. Roman cult was rarely ever personal or congregational. Almost all civil sacrifice fell to the priests named for life or to annually elected officials. The priestly class at the top was identical with the ruling class. A priest came from the social elite and rarely felt his religious duties to be in conflict with his political ambitions. An official clergy as we understand it did not develop. This lack does not indicate the absence of priestly expertise. On the contrary, the normal expectation of priesthoods by members of the same clans presupposes traditional religion preserved by these clans.

Empty of moral content and gradually losing all semblance of relevance to the priests' prevailing social condition as an imperial elite, ancestral Roman religion lapsed into a formalism unusual in its consequences. Native scruple and aristocratic ambition made religious acts the object of bitter political quarrels so long as the aristocracy ruled. Temples, statues, altars and gifts came to the gods because of aristocratic munificence. Religious formalism promoted a religious legalism that ultimately converted the Roman mind into one of the keenest instruments of legislation

Much of Roman religion and ritual was concerned with appeasement of natural forces *Left* Three Etruscan musicians with pipes and zither on a tomb fresco in Tarquinia; Roman ceremonial practice required constant flute music to avoid ominous sounds *Right* Mosaic of Neptune with his consort Amphitrite, surrounded by his subjects; Neptune's festival was celebrated on 23 July when the god was invoked to increase the water supply of the Tiber during the dry summer



Louvre/Giraudon

and jurisprudence, if the soul were not imbued with lofty dreams. When Roman religion reached the stage of formalism, it had already lost its monopolizing hold on the Roman spirit. This does not mean that religious enthusiasm quit the Romans. Rather it was not to be found in the grand state cults.

The most important priesthoods were the panels of pontiffs, augurs and Ten Men For Sacrificing. The pontiffs oversaw many aspects of sacral law and jurisprudence. The chief pontiff served the state in the capacity of religious spokesman in the formal conduct of religion and frequently presided over meetings of the pontifical college which included the one priest-king, the flamens and the Vestal Virgins. The pontiffs, and more particularly the chief pontiff, regularly decided matters of law and sacrilege put to them.

The augurs were charged with constant surveillance of the well-being of the land and people from a religiously technical point of view. Their technical expertise also had political ramifications, for they could disrupt public assemblies and void elections by proclamation of some religious miscarriage or detection of an ill omen. Foreign cults and rites were entrusted to the Ten Men For Sacrificing.

Some deities, but by no means all, enjoyed the services of their own priest, called a flamen, and the flamens exhibit an early stage of Roman religion (see JUPITER). Another kind of priesthood was the sodality, the Luperci and the Salii being representative examples. The Luperci, divided into two bands, performed a purification of the Palatine Hill on 15 February. Garbed only in loincloths, they struck unclean objects with a strip of goatskin called 'Juno's cloak'. The Salii, also divided into two bands, performed throughout March on behalf of Mars, whose divinity was associated with the new year of growth and war.

Sacred Meals

Ordinary religious ceremonies included the dinner or the sacrifice. A sacral supper might be offered only to the god or gods, and every September Jupiter alone received a dinner of the harvest fruits. Extraordinary situations could demand a banquet for a group of deities. Equally efficacious were regular suppers of which men and a god partook.

Power at Work

The Romans, like the Melanesians (and Polynesians) of modern times, believed in 'a supernatural power or influence', which they called *numen*, plural *numina*. This word, which seems literally to signify a movement, perhaps especially a nod of the head (the verb *nuere*, with which it is connected, means to nod) would appear to have developed the sense of 'result of action, sign of a force or power at work'. Until the time of Augustus it never is used to mean any personal or individual god, and even then it is not often so misunderstood by good writers such as Vergil or Ovid. But it is something which gods possess. Juppiter the sky- and weather-god, in Horace, makes a crust of ice form over the snow *puro numine*, by his unmixed or unimpeded *numen*. In plain prose, it is a clear, frosty night . . . But *numen* is not confined to gods. A single man does not seem to have it until we come to Imperial times, when it was the proper and loyal thing to say, or at least imply, that an Emperor was something more than mortal, and we hear quite often of the *numen* of the reigning one. But even under the Republic, a body of men sometimes possess it, for the Roman Senate, the most powerful assembly of human beings that existed anywhere in the civilised world for several generations, is said occasionally to have it; it is true that the speaker is always using highly complimentary language when he talks in this strain, but clearly it is not felt that the compliment is out of all proportion to the facts and exceeds the limits of tasteful flattery. By the exercise of their authority, the senators collectively, though not individually, can do things 'beyond the ordinary power of men'. So can the sovran people of Rome, when they exercise the powers which are lawfully theirs, and therefore Cicero, addressing them in laudatory terms after they had decreed his recall from exile, tells them that he will reverence their *numen* no less than that of the gods themselves.

H. J. Rose *Ancient Roman Religion*

While in later times invitations to a sacral dinner might be limited to priests and magistrates, early universal custom respected inclusion of all worshippers. This kind of ceremony differs from the sacrifice, which was usually a total offering of one food to a god. However, some of the food might be distributed to worshippers after a sacrifice. The Romans gave their gods what they themselves ate. Animal victims were the pig, sheep or cow, rarely the goat and only in one known case the horse. The animal had to be ritually pure. Otherwise, some attention might be paid to the animal's selection according to sex and colour. Besides animals the Romans offered foodstuffs of grain and fruit or wine and milk. Incense was introduced very early and was presumably acquired locally long before the oriental frankincense was imported. Burnt sacrifice was made on an altar, which might be a stone hearth or turf specially cut and piled for the ceremony.

Cleansing ceremonies were many. A common type was the procession of a pig, sheep and bullock (*suovetaurilia*) around the area to be purified and their slaughter for the good of the soil. Borders and boundaries had such singular significance that some rituals presupposed the retention or expulsion of men and deities along some holy limit (see MARS). Like other ancient peoples, the Romans firmly believed in the divinity of a given place or some social unit. Sometimes the local god was called simply Genius of This Place or God Who Watches Over This Place. Otherwise the deity had the name of the place itself. Any sojourn in a place prompted sacrifice if not a more permanent gift. Also the full range of governmental offices and communities as well as the multitude of military units worshipped their several Genii or the like.

The Romans were keenly aware of the strength that the land imparted to its inhabitants. When they conquered and wholly absorbed another people, the Romans ritually summoned the chief local god (or gods) from the conquered land to Rome where the alien god was properly domiciled. Further, the vanquished town and its farmland might be placed under a perpetual curse by uprooting its boundary-markers, sowing salt in its furrows and consigning the town and land to gods of the underworld with prayer to Jupiter and Tellus, Heaven and Earth. This ceremony was called *devotio*, as was that personal act of self-dedication whereby a general would literally sacrifice himself to the enemy and thus gain a victory for his people. Devotio was but a particular kind of vow or promise which Romans were wont to make in a moment of stress or need. Many religious donations from high and low stemmed from the vow (*ex voto*). The customary form for keeping one's promise was to pay or loosen the vow (*votum solvere*). Romans seldom offered what was not due. The gods received according to their deserts and merits.

Augury not only acknowledged the necessity of keeping the land clean and productive but it also embraced the act of birdwatching, called the auspices, which figured prominently in Roman public and private life (see AUGURY). Distinct from augury was the skill of haruspicy which Romans borrowed from the Etruscans in whose families the semi-official skill was practised. Haruspicy was that form of divination whereby the gods' will was made known through scrutiny of an animal's innards.

The Gods at Home

Most Romans left the celebration of the civil gods to the state priests. At home and within the tradition-bound clans private worship continued unabated for centuries. Indeed, the extent, variety and tenacity of private cult demonstrates how gods were so deeply rooted in pagan hearts. The primitive centre of the household cult was the hearth. The name of the goddess Vesta means no more then the hearth-fire. Vesta's public cult of the City's fire kept by her virgins grew as her domestic cult declined.

Other domestic deities were the Penates, Lares and Genius. The Penates were gods of the food cupboard (*penus*). The Lares occupied the hearth but also functioned elsewhere (see LARES). The Genius typifies the house cult and the Roman mentality. The word signifies the procreative force of the male householder. It was honoured at least on every birthday by libations of wine. The Genius joined the Lares in a small shrine with an artificial hearth set in every dining-room and was often portrayed between the two Lares. He was a model householder, wearing a toga and holding in one hand a horn of plenty and in the other a wine-saucer.

Although some ancient authors give the impression that the domestic gods received little more than perfunctory attention, the physical remains, especially those of Pompeii, eloquently counter such an impression. Every household had its altar. Besides the painted or sculptured Lares and Genius are found a variety of statuettes of other gods, coins left in safekeeping, and ceremonial utensils, not the least important of which was the candelabrum or oil-lamp that reminds us of the candle which the electric bulb has replaced before the madonnas in Italian kitchens and on Italian street corners. The latter devotion also descends from ancient pagan practices.

The humble cults flourished on the streets and in the countryside. When the Emperor Augustus encouraged some form of worship of the ruler, he allowed the imperial Genius to join the neighbourhood Lares so that his family's pre-eminence came daily to the attention of the Roman lower classes. Another typical and widespread deity of the lower class was Spes, 'Hope'. Innumerable tablets, statues, reliefs, paintings, altars, shrines and chapels which have come to light in Italy and throughout the Roman Empire attest the religious depth and sincerity of untold thousands. Although the popular enthusiasm for the great state cults declined, no one can assert that religious apathy prevailed among the Romans. Indeed, Christianity's 'victory' was truly a victory, the often bloody finale to a long battle. The imperial cult, worship of the dead emperors as gods and the live one as a divine Genius or Divine Will (*numen*), was by no means so superficial as might be believed. The early Christian emperors of the 4th century allowed it to continue in some areas while they forbade the actual sacrifice.

Although Roman religion welcomed cults and gods from many foreign and conquered areas, it did not freely digest all ancient manifestations known elsewhere. For instance, magic and astrology never figure in Roman religion. Prophets and oracles might be heeded but they remained peculiar or alien. Visions were not uncommon, but divine epiphanies (appearances of the gods) were rare. The Romans sought knowledge of the future from either haruspicy or the lots. The latter were usually wooden tokens or strips inscribed with some ambiguous phrase which the divinity of a place issued. Although

Scala

The Romans borrowed from the Etruscans the practice of discovering the will of the gods by examining the innards of animals: a diviner examines entrails; from a design on the back of an Etruscan mirror

men hawking lots or fortunes could be found in Rome, the great centres of prediction by lots were at a little distance from Rome. Near Etruscan Caere, modern Cerveteri, the lots rose spontaneously from hot springs. The most famous of all such shrines was the magnificent temple complex set atop the citadel hill of Praeneste, modern Palestrina. The deity of this place, appropriately called Fortuna Primigenia, issued lots to the high and the low for centuries. We possess many records of thank-offerings made to Fortuna whose predictions had proved beneficent not only to individuals but also to guilds of skilled workers.

Romans and Italians reported to the pontiffs unnatural occurrences which, if they happened in grave times, might cause mass hysteria and required expiation – androgynous babies, animals with too many limbs or heads, rains of bloody meat, mice gnawing gold, bulls mounting brazen cows, and like phenomena. On rare occasions such prodigies could even prompt human sacrifice. Thus what was contrary to Nature could cause acts contrary to the norms of Roman religion.

The religious beliefs of the Roman people remained without the slightest moral tone. Spiritual communication and fulfilment do not enter our discussion. The Romans wanted to be in good standing with the forces of Nature. In most instances, the observances were left in the hands of well-born priests whom the state recognized. The Roman's attitude toward his gods somewhat resembles the situation in early Israel. Romans expected the deity to act generously on their behalf or not to act at all. If the deity acted in the manner expected, he was rewarded with a gift of an offering or a sacrifice. If he failed too often or acted too badly, he was abandoned for another. The Romans believed that certain deities watched over them and supposed that others took care of their neighbours. To this end, they felt it necessary to deprive their enemies of their gods, their sacred utensils and all means of worship. The modern mind may find this mode of religion criminally selfish but the Romans seldom questioned the efficacy of a religion which had grown outward from a bend on an Italian river to embrace the greater part of Europe, North Africa and the Near East. They sought only to improve it by admitting new gods to their worship. The Romans found it quite difficult to hold with a belief in one god when many gods had served them as long and as well as they had rewarded their gods.

(See also FOUNDING OF ROME; and articles on individual deities.)

R. E. A. PALMER

FURTHER READING: The following are useful general books: F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (Dutton, 1938); C. Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome* (Greenwood Press, 1972); A. K. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1967); R. M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and their Gods* (Norton, 1970); H. J. Rose, *Ancient Roman Religion* (Hutchinson: Hillary House, 1948 reprint); H. Wagenvoort, *Roman Dynamism* (Greenwood Press, 1976).

Mansell Collection

Rook

Associated with a number of folklore beliefs, especially concerning predictions about the weather and human affairs; in Yorkshire, rooks perching on dead branches were thought to signify rain before night, while if they gathered in live branches it would be a fine day; according to one tradition, rooks always knew when a gamekeeper had died and would accompany his coffin to the funeral.

See MAGPIE AND ROOK.

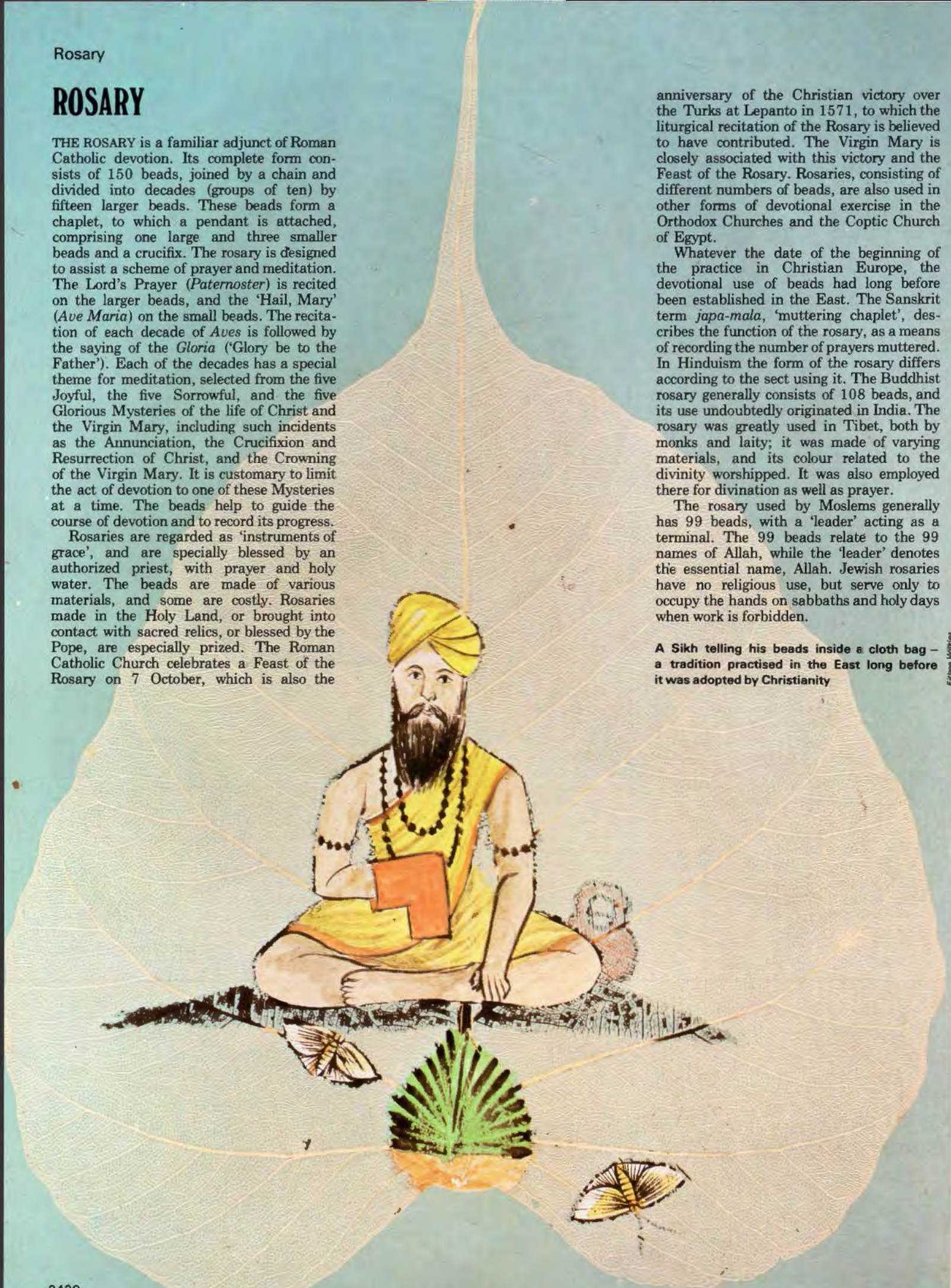
ROSARY

THE ROSARY is a familiar adjunct of Roman Catholic devotion. Its complete form consists of 150 beads, joined by a chain and divided into decades (groups of ten) by fifteen larger beads. These beads form a chaplet, to which a pendant is attached, comprising one large and three smaller beads and a crucifix. The rosary is designed to assist a scheme of prayer and meditation. The Lord's Prayer (*Paternoster*) is recited on the larger beads, and the 'Hail, Mary' (*Ave Maria*) on the small beads. The recitation of each decade of *Aves* is followed by the saying of the *Gloria* ('Glory be to the Father'). Each of the decades has a special theme for meditation, selected from the five Joyful, the five Sorrowful, and the five Glorious Mysteries of the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary, including such incidents as the Annunciation, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, and the Crowning of the Virgin Mary. It is customary to limit the act of devotion to one of these Mysteries at a time. The beads help to guide the course of devotion and to record its progress.

Rosaries are regarded as 'instruments of grace', and are specially blessed by an authorized priest, with prayer and holy water. The beads are made of various materials, and some are costly. Rosaries made in the Holy Land, or brought into contact with sacred relics, or blessed by the Pope, are especially prized. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates a Feast of the Rosary on 7 October, which is also the anniversary of the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, to which the liturgical recitation of the Rosary is believed to have contributed. The Virgin Mary is closely associated with this victory and the Feast of the Rosary. Rosaries, consisting of different numbers of beads, are also used in other forms of devotional exercise in the Orthodox Churches and the Coptic Church of Egypt.

Whatever the date of the beginning of the practice in Christian Europe, the devotional use of beads had long before been established in the East. The Sanskrit term *japa-mala*, 'muttering chaplet', describes the function of the rosary, as a means of recording the number of prayers muttered. In Hinduism the form of the rosary differs according to the sect using it. The Buddhist rosary generally consists of 108 beads, and its use undoubtedly originated in India. The rosary was greatly used in Tibet, both by monks and laity; it was made of varying materials, and its colour related to the divinity worshipped. It was also employed there for divination as well as prayer.

The rosary used by Moslems generally has 99 beads, with a 'leader' acting as a terminal. The 99 beads relate to the 99 names of Allah, while the 'leader' denotes the essential name, Allah. Jewish rosaries have no religious use, but serve only to occupy the hands on sabbaths and holy days when work is forbidden.



A Sikh telling his beads inside a cloth bag – a tradition practised in the East long before it was adopted by Christianity

Eirene Wilkins

Associated in life with celebrations, success, homecomings and above all love, paradoxically the rose is also associated with death: roses were often planted over graves and to drop red rose petals on the ground was a portent of death

ROSE

FEW FLOWERS can have so many allusions in myth and folklore as the rose in almost every country in the Northern hemisphere where they originally grew wild. As John Gerard the botanist wrote, the rose 'doth preserve the chiefest and most principal place among all floures whatsoever, being not only esteemed for his bountie, vertues and his fragrant smell, but also because it is the honour and ornament of our English sceptre.'

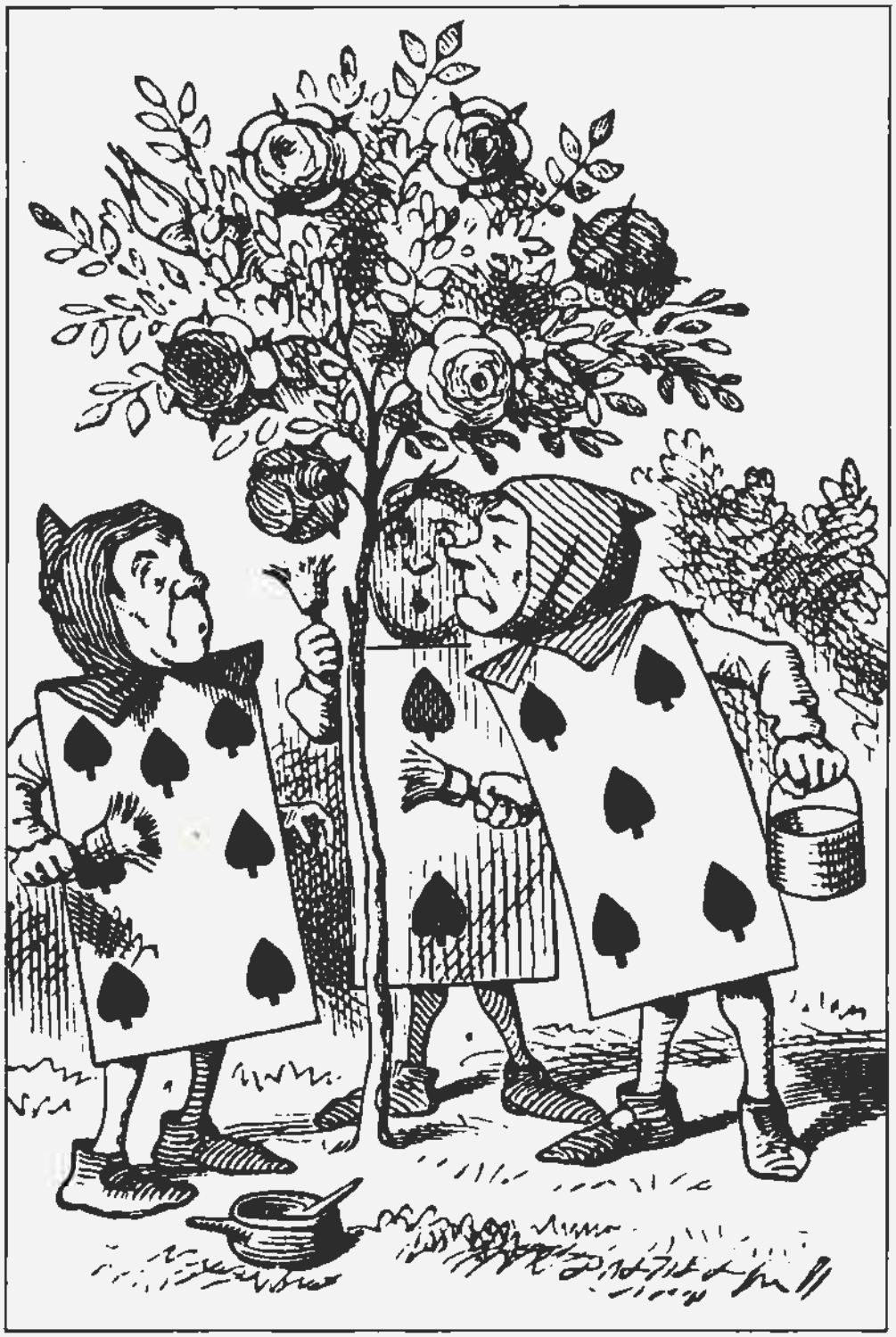
Many of the rose legends, unfortunately, are somehow both a little obvious and distinctly sentimental. Roses, especially red ones, almost inevitably stem from spilt blood – blood from the foot of Venus pursuing Adonis, from the dead Adonis himself, or on a more sombre level the blood of Christ, especially in connection with one belief, that the Crown of Thorns was made of rose briars. There are many tales about transformations of girls in danger into roses, and equally many of innocent girls about to be burnt alive whose funeral pyres become bowers of roses. Up on Olympus Cupid spills nectar and where it touches the ground, roses arise. The Islamic belief is more earthy: roses are supposed to spring from sweat dripping from Mohammed's brow. The Hindus have tales involving Vishnu and Brahma, and Lakshmi, who was born from a rose and became Vishnu's consort.

To the Scandinavians, the rose was under the protection of fairies and dwarfs and their king Laurin. It is a little odd that this Scandinavian rose garden is today immortalized in the jagged pinnacles known as the Rosengarten in the Dolomites.

Later the rose became symbolic of love and beauty, and was the special flower of Venus: portraits of the goddess often show her crowned with roses or carrying a rose-edged sceptre, while Cupid and Hymen were also typically represented with rose wreaths. The statue of Bacchus would be crowned with the flower on certain occasions, while white roses were thrown at Cybele's statue in the procession of the Corybantes.

The Romans took the rose seriously, cultivating it in enormous quantities, even in winter – partly for decoration, but mainly for its petals, which were used to carpet banqueting halls, strew couches, fill cushions, or to make wine or attar. Shrines of gods and monuments to famous men were garlanded with roses, as were triumphal arches and chariots on special occasions, while honoured persons wore rose wreaths at public games. Rose bushes were planted to celebrate homecomings, and soldiers planted them on returning from war. In keeping with the flower's link with Venus, the couple at a wedding wore chaplets of roses, the bride's including myrtle.

The curious phrase *sub rosa* is often quoted as deriving from this association with Venus. Henry Peacham, the essayist, paraphrasing an anonymous Roman poet in 1638, explained it as follows: 'The rose being sacred to Venus, whose amorous and stolen sports, that they might never be revealed, her sonne Cupid would neede dedicate it to Harpocrates, the God of Silence.' One authority, however, refers the origin of the phrase to a meeting between Greeks and Xerxes, the Persian king, held in a rose bower near a temple of Minerva. Anyhow, the rose became a symbol of silence, secrecy and confidences, and secret meetings were described as 'sub rosa'; a rose might be suspended from the ceiling as a symbol of secrecy, those who wished to speak without having their words repeated might wear chaplets of roses, while in the 16th and 17th centuries it was customary to paint or carve a rose on the ceilings of council chambers and banqueting halls for the same reason.



Traditionally, all roses were originally white. In *Alice in Wonderland* the gardeners paint white roses red to avoid the wrath of the formidable Queen of Hearts: illustration by Tenniel

The Golden Rose

With the Christians a whole new line of legend began. The wild rose with its five petals was associated with the five wounds of Christ, while red roses were symbolic of martyr's blood. Although it is an attribute of certain saints, notably St Rosa of Viterbo

Regimental Roses

The dinner table is decorated with roses. Officers wear one red and one yellow rose . . . After the loyal toast has been drunk and glasses refilled, the President, when required by the Commanding Officer rings his handbell, and the Commanding Officer rises and proposes the Minden Toast in the words "We will now rise and drink in solemn silence to those who fell at Minden."

Later, when the Bandmaster has been entertained, and the waiters have withdrawn, the President orders the Mess Sergeant to place, with the President's compliments, a rose in front of each officer who has not previously eaten one with a Minden Regiment. As soon as the roses are put before them, these officers rise and eat the roses. The roses are served in champagne . . . Officers eating roses stand on their chairs, but do not put a foot on the table; they remain standing on their chairs till they have eaten the rose and drunk the champagne. When there are only a few officers to eat roses, they are handed them in succession as each one finishes; but when there are several officers the roses are given them in quick succession before the previous one has finished. Custom does not require an officer to eat a rose at a Minden Dinner more than once during his service.

Customs and Practices of the Regiment, XX the Lancashire Fusiliers

and St Rosalia of Palermo, the rose became in particular a flower associated with the Virgin Mary. In the Middle Ages there was a festival called Rose Sunday, which perpetuated the belief that after her ascent to heaven the Virgin's tomb was found filled with roses and lilies. At a celebration in Rome, that of the Madonna of the Snows, white rose petals were dropped on the congregation from the chapel ceiling.

In the 12th century it became the custom for the Pope to bestow golden roses on foreign sovereigns to whom he wished to convey esteem, to some other particularly distinguished person who had assisted the Church, or perhaps to some specially worthy congregation. This golden rose was blessed on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and over the centuries it gradually became more costly and ostentatious, with jewelled ornamentation. Curiously enough, the presentation of the Pope's rose to women was so often apparently followed by misfortune that many were unwilling to receive it.

Roses were also associated in various ways with death. From Roman times onwards the flowers were often strewn on graves; cemeteries are still known as 'rose gardens' in parts of Switzerland, while in Turkey the flower is sometimes carved on the tombstones of women. Roman wills sometimes specified the planting of roses on the grave. Since the white rose is a symbol of virginity, a bush of this colour was often planted on the grave of a virgin; a red one might be used for people renowned for good works. John Aubrey, the diarist, records the planting of red roses on the graves of dead sweethearts; the surviving partner tended the rose, returfed the grave regularly, and was supposed not to remarry.

The Saxons believed that, on the death of a child, the ghostly figure of Death could be seen to leave the house and pick a rose outside. To drop red rose petals on the ground was a portent of death, especially if you were wearing or carrying the flower.

Of War and Royalty

What of the representations of the rose? The cathedral rose window is the largest – a style derived, according to some authorities, from mosques and brought back to Europe by crusaders. As the heraldic emblem of England – a rose under a crown – it can be seen in carvings and paintings; it has been a device on royal coats of arms and on coins since the time of Edward I.

The Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York were symbols of the terrible 30 years of the Wars of the Roses, and Shakespeare, in *Henry VI*, gives a graphic if possibly unhistorical account of how the leaders of the faction 'picked their colours'. It is probable that this York and Lancaster rose was what we now call *Rosa damascena versicolor*, whose colours Shakespeare describes in a sonnet:

> The Roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
> One blushing shame, another white despair;
> A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both . . .

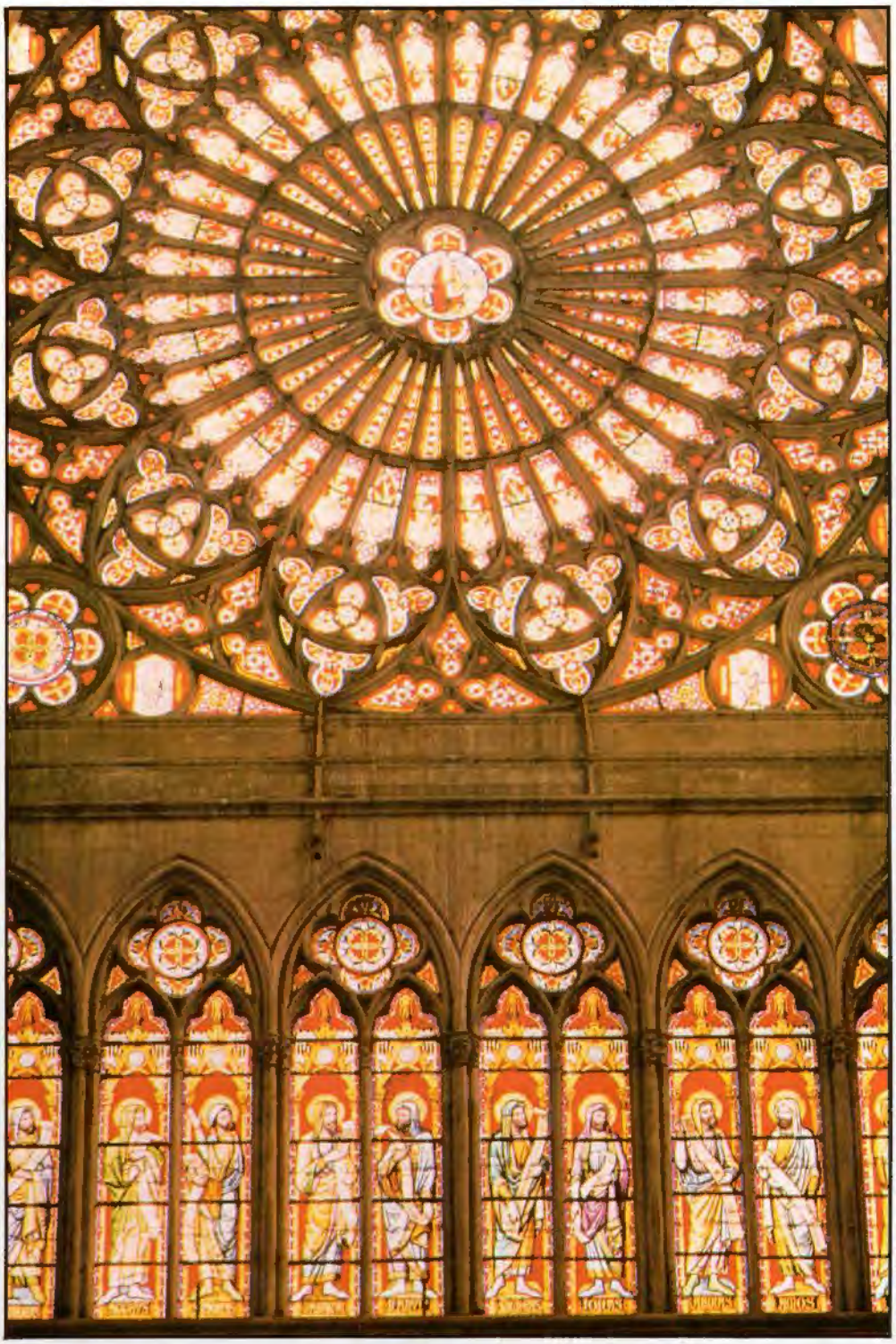
There is a very old tradition that all roses were originally white and became red only after blood had been spilt on them. There is an ancient Persian tale associating the bulbul or nightingale with the rose, which was turned from white to red by the bird pressing its breast on a thorn; modern legend still tells how, to keep awake at night and sing strongly, the nightingale continues to do this. Oscar Wilde retold this tale: in his version a nightingale, touched by a student's distress that he cannot find the red rose his sweetheart insists upon, sings all night against a thorn so that the bush may produce a red rose. Alas, the girl throws away the flower, exclaiming that she expected nothing less than jewels.

That favourite fairy tale 'Beauty and the Beast' centres on the rose which a merchant's daughter asks him to bring back from his travels. He plucks one in the garden of a castle which he thinks deserted; the Beast who in fact dwells there, however, threatens to kill the merchant for the theft unless he gives him his daughter. Beauty saves her father's life by agreeing to go; eventually the Beast persuades her to marry him and, as in all good fairy tales, this releases him from a spell and he is restored to his handsome, princely human form.

G. L. Carlisle

By Permission of the Rt. Hon. Mr Speaker, House of Commons/John Freeman

Left **A rose on a Valentine card stands for love, a meaning that stretches back into classical mythology when the rose was the flower of Venus** ***Right*** **19th century impression of Shakespeare's scene in** ***Henry VI*** **when York and Lancaster plucked the white and red rose to represent allegiance to each side in the Wars of the Roses**



Rose window in the transept of Troyes Cathedral, France: the style may have derived from Eastern mosques noticed by crusaders

A more recent rose tale is in *Alice in Wonderland*, where the gardeners have to paint white roses red at the whim of the Queen of Hearts; and there is the talking rose in *Through the Looking-Glass* who told Alice 'you're beginning to fade you know – and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy.'

An amusing modern tale about roses occurs in J. J. Granville's satire *Les Fleurs Animées*, published in 1848, in which he pictures Eglantine (Rose) as a blue-stocking literary hostess, so involved in literature, entertaining and patronage of handsome young writers that she cannot attend to the household chores, even to looking after the baby, which all devolve upon her wretched husband. Elsewhere in the book Granville has a charming picture of the rose as Queen of Flowers, receiving homage from green rose-chafers.

To dream of roses should mean success in love, unless it is of a white flower, which is unlucky. Marriage divination could be carried out by picking a rosebud on Midsummer Day, wrapping it in paper, and keeping it until Christmas Day. If the bud was still fresh, the girl wore it to church, when her husband-to-be would approach and take the bloom from her. If the girl found the rose-bud withered this was a bad omen.

A rather nerve-racking ritual could make a girl haunt her erring lover in dreams until in desperation he returned to her. For this three roses had to be picked on Midsummer Eve: one was buried under a yew tree, the second in a newly dug grave, and the third placed under the girl's pillow for three nights and subsequently burnt.

In the Victorian language of flowers it was possible, by choosing different colours and varieties of rose, to express over 40 sentiments: a red rose meant passion, a white spiritual love, and a yellow one infidelity; a rose-bud indicated an awakened heart and a full-blown rose beauty that will inevitably fade – perhaps the last spiteful message of the rejected lover?

A. J. HUXLEY

FURTHER READING: E. Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game* (Gollancz, 1969).

Rose Cross

Emblem of the Rosicrucians; both rose and cross have a rich symbolism and together can be interpreted in many ways, among them as female and male; the Virgin Mary and Christ; the unclean and the purified; the material and the spiritual; sensual love and spiritual love; love and the death which saved through love; God made flesh and vice versa.

See ROSICRUCIANS.

Rosemary

A holy and magical plant in folklore, protecting against evil spirits, fairies, witches and storms; symbol of remembrance, it used to be carried by mourners at a funeral and dropped on the coffin to show that the dead person would not be forgotten; sprigs of it were dropped in the wine at a wedding feast before the bride and groom drank, as a token of faithfulness in love.

Mansell Collection

ROSICRUCIANS
Rose
Croix
7 AVRIL

ROSICRUCIANS

'They opened the door and discovered a seven-sided vault . . . in the centre of which was a circular altar'; although the name Rosicrucian has been loosely applied to a variety of occult groups, the legend of Christian Rosenkreuz, founder of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, is largely forgotten

IT IS GENERALLY supposed that the Rosicrucians were members of a German mystical or occult order that suddenly became active during the second decade of the 17th century, but could nevertheless trace its origins back to the early part of the 15th century. It is widely thought, too, that the Rosicrucians possessed important and arcane wisdom that has been transmitted to their spiritual heirs and successors. Thus even today there are people who claim some form of Rosicrucian 'adeptship'.

One of the most interesting features of the Rosicrucian legend is the persistence with which it has survived, particularly in circles identified with occultism. The mythical Christian Rosenkreuz (literally 'Rosy Cross') represents a forerunner of the 'Secret Chiefs' who added lustre to Baron von Hund's Masonic Rite of the Strict Observance (Germany, late 18th century). They never existed but there were many who believed in them. Again, a century later there were Madame Blavatsky's invisible 'Mahatmas', whose letters to her arrived literally out of thin air. They were also representatives of the 'Secret Chiefs' tradition. There is, too, a parallel between the Rosicrucian legend, with its small community of secret but somehow occultly powerful brethren, and the Masters of a far more recent and equally unidentifiable 'Great White Lodge', who are also said to be the guardians of hidden knowledge (see BLAVATSKY; MAHATMAS; MASTERS).

Origins of the Legend

Archetypes of this kind, of which Christian Rosenkreuz is an important example, are of considerable psychological interest because they appear to fulfil a human necessity. Since the 1880s, for example, the concept of the 'Hidden Masters' has provided a substitute for the authority of the Church and its priests.

The Christian Rosenkreuz legend has now been in existence for more than 350 years. In the process of time, however, the main details of the legend, more especially its original form, have been largely forgotten and the word 'Rosicrucian' is associated with arcane or occult teachings.

The substance of the Rosicrucian legend originated in three short books that were published anonymously between 1614 and 1616. The first, which was no more than a slim pamphlet, was printed at Kassel in Germany in 1614. Its title in an abbreviated form was *Fama Fraternitatis* and it purported to come from a hitherto unknown Rosicrucian order or brotherhood. It contained no information whatever about the order's chiefs and where they might be found.

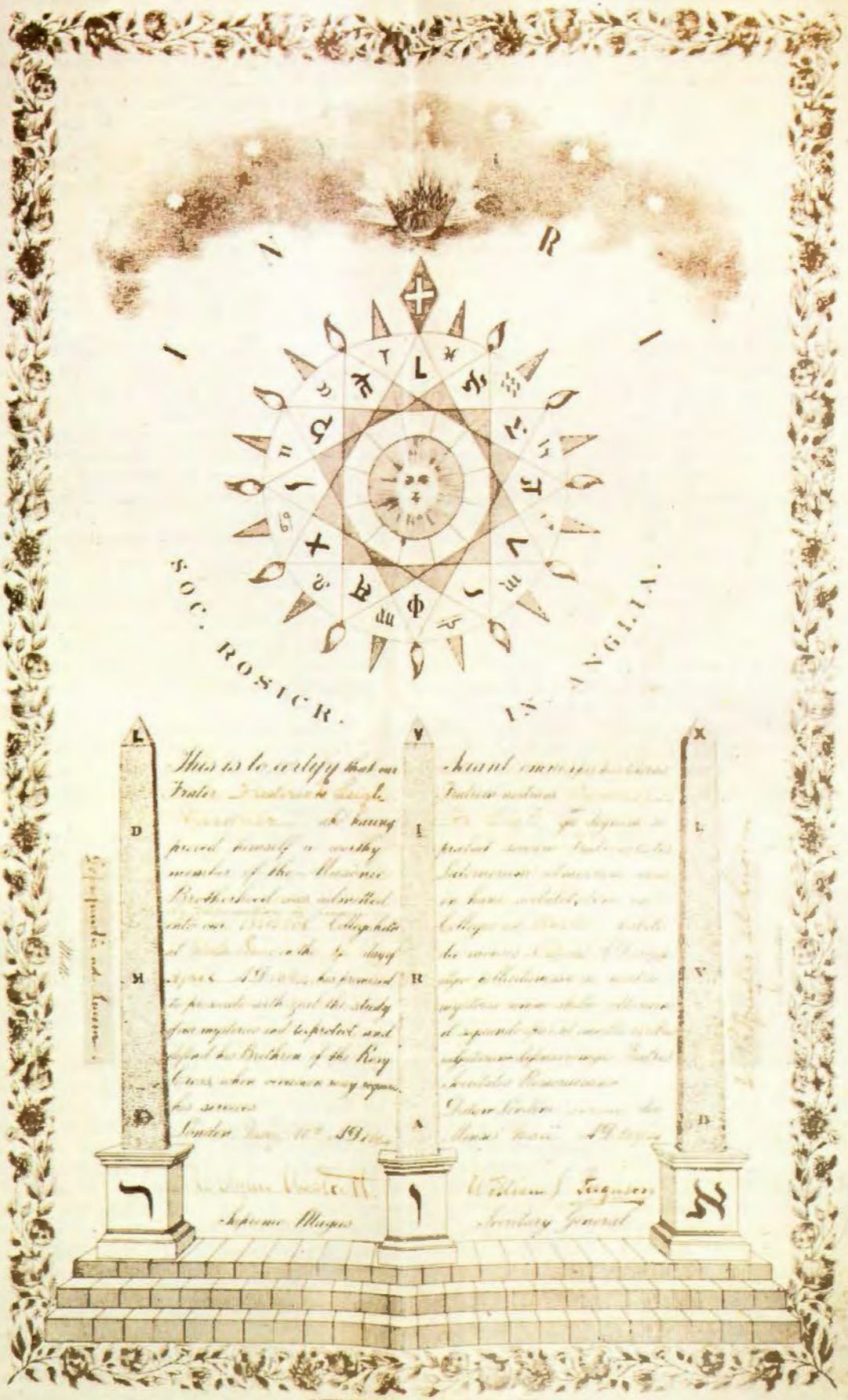
A brief introduction announced the

Previous page **Under the inspiration of Josephin Péladan, founder of his own Rosicrucian order, six Salons de la Rose Croix, or exhibitions of symbolic painting, were held in Paris between 1892 and 1897. This poster, by Albinet, for the Salon of 1894, shows Hugh de Payens, first Master of the Templars, represented as Dante, and Joseph of Arimathea, 'first Grand Master of the Grail', represented as Leonardo da Vinci**

Below **The symbol of the rose and cross has a great variety of possible meanings, among which are fleshly love and spiritual love, matter and spirit, the unclean and the purified: from *Summum Bonum*, by Robert Fludd *Right* A certificate of membership in the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, founded in 1866 by a group of Freemasons**

Sotheby's Mitchell Hollard

Gerald Yorke Collection Michael Holford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Robert Fludd and the Rosicrucians

Who were the representatives of this elect school in the days of Robert Fludd? They were the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, whom he proceeds to address at length: (1) As a result of close investigation, he has been led to the conclusion that they are illuminated truly by the Spirit and that to them are unfolded those things which the sacred texts have foreshewn mystically as preceding the end of the world. (2) They have been endowed with spiritual virtue and the higher Divine Grace. (3) If their deeds correspond to their words – and he can doubt no longer that they do – that which they prophesy on their own part must be accepted in faith, more especially as it is in perfect harmony with the sacred source of truth. (4) By an attentive study of their writings he has found that they act under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit. (5) They have knowledge of the true mystery and of that key which leads to the joy of Paradise. (6) They have therefore the freedom of Paradise, even as Elias of old. (7) To them it is no cause of pride that they are able to make gold, but they rejoice when the heavens open and at the sight of their names written in the Book of Life. (8) Transferring the appeal to those whose minds are obscured by a cloud of ignorance, Robert Fludd invites mankind at large to agree with him that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross are guided by the Spirit of God, that their asylum – the House of the Holy Spirit – is situated at the world's end, and is there encompassed by clouds, or that it is on the apex of a high mountain and that those who dwell therein breathe in the sweet and rarefied air of the Psyche, or the life of true wisdom.

A. E. Waite
The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

reason for the publication. Its unknown author hoped for a 'general reformation' of the world and mankind by means of a harmonious fusion of the two major achievements of the past century: the Reformation, and advances in scientific knowledge. The *Fama* was in some respects a Utopian tract, but its message was presented so obscurely that its meaning was very difficult to understand.

It begins with the story of Christian Rosenkreuz's travels in search of knowledge and true wisdom and ends with an account of the order that commemorated his name.

Christian Rosenkreuz, the son of noble but poor parents, was placed in a monastery at the age of five and there learned some Greek and Latin. When he was still a youth a certain monk, Frater P.A.L., took him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Frater P.A.L. died at Cyprus and hence never reached Jerusalem. Christian Rosenkreuz continued the journey alone and in due course arrived at Damascus. While it was still his intention to go to Jerusalem, he remained at Damascus for a while because his medical skill was so highly esteemed.

He now learned of the Wise Men at Damcar in Arabia and with difficulty made his way there; by this time he was 16 years old. He was given a warm welcome, as if he had long been expected. The Wise Men already knew his name and much to his surprise told him of secret matters relating to his old monastery. He learned Arabic and was able to translate the *Liber M*, a book which has not been identified, into Latin, and also greatly increased his knowledge of mathematics and the natural sciences.

Disciples and Helpers

After three years at Damcar he left and went to Egypt, but did not remain there for long. His friends at Damcar had told him about the learned scholars at Fez, which was his next destination. At Fez, once again, he acquired much secret and useful knowledge. Two years later he left for Spain. There he discoursed with eminent scholars but did not succeed in arousing their interest.

At this point in the narrative the anonymous author mentioned that while Paracelsus had not been a member of the Rosicrucian fraternity he had nevertheless assiduously read the *Liber M*. When the *Fama* was published, in 1614, more than 70 years after his death, Paracelsus was still widely regarded as a Magus.

Disappointed by his experiences in Spain, Christian Rosenkreuz returned at last to Germany, his native land, where he built himself a light and airy house and began to write an account of his travels and philosophy. He continued to study mathematics and constructed 'many beautiful instruments'.

Three monks from his old monastery joined him as disciples and helpers, the Fratres (Brothers) G.V., I.A. and I.O. They pledged themselves to keep secret all that they learned from him, but to record everything in a manuscript book for the benefit of their successors.

Thus the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross began with four members. They wrote on magic, also the first part of the *Liber M*. However, the work was onerous and its progress was constantly interrupted by the many sick people who came to them for medical treatment.

Eventually their new building, called the 'Sanctus Spiritus', was at last ready. So Father Christian Rosenkreuz decided to accept a few more in his fraternity. The new members were Frater R.C., who was his nephew, Frater B., an accomplished painter, the Fratres G.G. and P.D. who worked as secretarial helpers or scribes, and finally Frater I.A. There were now eight members in all, all of them unmarried and pledged to chastity.

Together they produced a whole library of books on every conceivable subject. One particular work, known as the *Axiomata*, was considered to be of special importance.

Their tasks completed, the brethren went their various ways, leaving Fratres B. and P.D. with Father Christian Rosenkreuz. Before they left a number of rules were formulated for the order. Firstly, none of the brethren was to exercise any profession except that of medicine, nor to accept any payment for his skill.

Secondly, no distinctive dress was to be worn; instead they were to adopt the sartorial customs of the country in which they happened to be living (note the parallel with 'worker priests'). Thirdly, there was to be an annual gathering of the fraternity at the 'Sanctus Spiritus' on the Day of C. (The anonymous author may have had the Feast of Corpus Christi in mind). Fourthly, each brother was to be on the look-out for a person worthy to succeed him when he died; fifthly, the initials R.C. were to be their seal, their password and their most cherished concern; and lastly, the identity of the fraternity was to remain a closely-guarded secret for 100 years.

The Seven-Sided Vault

The first of the brethren to die was I.O. and, as Father R.C. had predicted, his death took place in England. This Brother was very learned in the Cabala and many stories were told about him in England, for example that he had cured the young Duke of Norfolk of leprosy.

The date of Father R.C.'s death was unknown. All that a later generation of brethren knew about him was from whatever information was available in the library. Of the books there the *Axiomata*, the *Rotae Mundi* and the *Proteus* were regarded as the most important.

The day came, long after Father R.C.'s death, when Frater N., who was skilled in building and architecture, was about to go on a journey. Before he left he decided to make some alterations to the building. While the work was in progress he found a bronze tablet, which had previously been concealed, on which were inscribed the names of all who had been in the brotherhood in the distant past. A large nail protruded from the tablet. When the nail was pulled out and the tablet lifted away and with it a large piece of plaster, a door was discovered. On the door itself they saw an inscription: *Post Centum Viginti Annos Patebo*, meaning 'After 120 years I will reappear'. Beneath the inscription there was a date, but the latter was not given in the *Fama*.

The following morning they opened the door and discovered a seven-sided vault or tomb, each side being eight feet high by five feet across. Furthermore, although the sun could not possibly shine inside the vault, it was illuminated as if by sunlight from the middle of the ceiling. In the centre of the vault there was a circular altar.

Each of the seven walls was divided into ten rectangles and in each wall there was a door that concealed a chest containing various objects, including copies of all the order's books, a copy of the *Vocabularium*

Christian Rosenkreuz is supposed to have lived until the age of 106 and to have reappeared 120 years later

Chris Barker

The variety of ideas and traditions sometimes associated with the Rosicrucians is suggested by this advertisement for a book on *The Devil in the 19th century*, purporting to deal with modern Cabala, occult magnetism, theurgy and Satanism, as well as Rosicrucian magic

of Paracelsus, the manuscript journal containing the record of Father Christian Rosenkreuz's life and travels, mirrors with strange, perhaps magical qualities, small bells and burning lamps. Everything had been left so that were the order to disappear it could be reconstructed even centuries later.

They moved the circular altar, lifted a heavy bronze plate and to their surprise beheld the body of Father Christian Rosenkreuz, which was still in a perfect state of preservation. In his hand he held a manuscript copy of *Liber T.*, which was written with letters of gold on parchment. They then replaced the bronze plate on the coffin, closed the door of the vault and sealed it.

The Alchemical Wedding

So much for the legend as told in the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Its publication created a very lively curiosity. Indeed, so great was the demand for the book that it was reprinted three times in 1615 and again in 1617. There were also two Dutch editions in 1615. The first English translation was not published until 1652.

The *Fama* was soon followed by the *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C.* Indeed, its publication had already been announced in the *Fama*. It appeared to be by the same anonymous author and was printed at Kassel in Latin and German in 1615. It contained no expansion of the story of Father Christian Rosenkreuz but did mention that he had been born in 1378. Since he is supposed to have lived until the age of 106, and to have reappeared again 120 years later, it will be noted that the date of his expected return coincided with the publication of the *Fama*.

The *Confessio* contained 37 'reasons of our purpose and intention', meaning the brotherhood's policy, and invited its readers to join the Rosicrucian 'movement' but did not state how this could be achieved. The brotherhood's aims were stated vaguely rather than precisely, but the reader would have gathered that it was opposed to sectarianism and political strife. It proclaimed its antagonism to the papacy, Islam, and the pretensions of quack alchemists.

The third and last of the three original Rosicrucian books was the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz*, which was published at Strasburg in 1616 with three further editions during the same year. The first English version, *The Hermetick Romance: or the Chymical Wedding*, appeared in 1690. The word 'Chemical' should be construed in a vaguely alchemical sense.

This 'hermetic romance' presents a delightful fairy story, liberally packed with allegorical and symbolical detail. Its ultimate meaning is nowhere very clear and a detailed textual analysis presents considerable difficulties. However, the broad outlines of the story are as follows:

The principal character is an old man called Christian Rosenkreuz, apparently not the same person as the youngster who appears in the *Fama*. On the eve of Easter he was meditating when a messenger in the shape of a 'fair and glorious lady', wearing an azure blue robe adorned with golden stars, suddenly appeared and delivered a letter. It was sealed with a cross and the inscription *In hoc signo vinces* (see CROSS), and contained an invitation to the royal wedding.

The following morning he put on a white linen coat, girded his loins crosswise with a broad red band and put four red roses in his hat. He made his way to the castle after an adventurous and even perilous journey. Upon arriving there he was tested in various ways and during his stay there were further ordeals. He witnessed the royal marriage and was invested with the Order of the Golden Fleece.

His curiosity led him to penetrate a secret chamber where he found Venus asleep on a bed and the King's secret books of wisdom. His indiscretion was punished: he was made to remain when the others left and was given the task of guarding the entry to the castle. At this point the story ends, rather abruptly.

Apart from its highly imaginative story, one of the most interesting features of the 'Hermetick Romance' is its obscurity. The book's hidden author introduced countless elements from his own obviously wide knowledge of the old hermetic tradition, cosmological, alchemical, astrological and magical symbolism, mythology and so on. Indeed, the text is full of what might be called Jungian 'archetypes' and in any event the whole story rather resembles a dream.

Puzzling Purpose

The problem of the authorship of the three tracts described above did not begin to attract the attention of modern scholarship until about 50 years ago and then, as might be expected, in Germany.

It has been established that the author of the *Chymische Hochzeit* was Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), a young man when he published the book. Later he became a well-known Württemburg theologian whose pedagogic and pastoral

The dramatic moment in Mathers's initiation ritual came when the candidate discovered the body of Christian Rosenkreuz lying motionless in the coffin

writings were highly esteemed. Towards the end of his life he admitted that he had written *The Hermetick Romance* and, with evident embarrassment, tried to convey the impression that the book was a youthful folly. It is likely that he was also the author of the *Fama* and *Confessio*.

One thing is certain, that all three books originated in a small circle that was close to Christoph Besold (1577–1638), professor of law at the university of Tübingen. Andreae was both his pupil and his close friend. Besold's learning was immense: he had a detailed knowledge of Islamic culture and philosophy, could read Arabic and Hebrew, and at the same time knew the works of all the great humanists and Neoplatonists of the more recent Renaissance period. German scholars have pointed to Besold's influence in relation to the texts of the *Fama* and the *Chymische Hochzeit*.

While there is no quarrel about Andreae's literary and intellectual sources, there has been much argument about his intentions. Is he to be considered a satirist, a moralist, a social reformer or perhaps a Pansophist, that is, a white magician? The latter, for example, was the view held by the late W. E. Peuckert, the distinguished Göttingen historian who specialized in the byways of cultural history.

If a syntbesis of a variety of views be at all possible, then Andreae could perhaps be described as a Neoplatonist, hence preoccupied with the old hermetic tradition, but at the same time as a devout Lutheran. In any event the three 'Rosicrucian' books represent an attack on the false claims of the vulgar alchemists and their occult pretensions. Again, however obscurely Andreae's intentions are expressed, they appear to reflect the views of a social reformer and an attempt to reconcile ancient beliefs, for example, true or 'symbolical' alchemy, with pietistic Christianity.

In the circles that provided a reading public for these books during the period 1614–c1620 their effect was nothing less than sensational. There were, of course, many who wished to join the Rosicrucian brotherhood. Unable to identify a single person who belonged to it, let alone the slightest clue that would reveal where its 'headquarters' might be found, they printed pamphlets, mostly in the shape of letters, which, it was hoped, would eventually find their way to someone 'in authority'. Some of these announced that their respective writers were already members of the fraternity. This secondary Rosicrucian literature is very extensive.

Next there were those who did not claim any personal connection with the fraternity but nevertheless enthusiastically defended its aims, in so far as these were understood. Among them, for example, was the English alchemical writer Robert Fludd (see FLUDD). Descartes, the French philosopher, who was in Germany in 1619, did his best to find a genuine Rosicrucian but failed and hence adopted a sceptical attitude.

Link With Freemasonry

About 1620 interest in the Rosicrucian 'phenomenon' began to decline in Germany and the movement, if it can be described as such, began to go underground. If these strange stories were remembered at all, then it was only by those who were still preoccupied with alchemy. In German occult circles there was a lively concern with alchemy until the end of the 18th century.

In 1710 something came to life which vaguely depended upon the Rosicrucian legend. It was in fact pre-Masonic but its name was later inherited by a German Masonic group. This was the Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross, the invention of Sigmund Richter, who called himself Sincerus Renatus, and who published at Breslau a tract with the title *The Perfect and True Perfection of the Philosopher's Stone by the Brotherhood of the Gold and Rosy Cross*. The order was supposed to be divided into two branches, the Rosy Cross and the Golden Cross, with a total membership of 63 Adepti. It was essentially an alchemical fraternity. If it ever existed, except in Richter's imagination, it soon disappeared without trace.

From this time onwards all the groups, fraternities and associations that have incorporated such words as Rosicrucian, Rozenkreuz or Rosenkreuzer, Rose Cross, Rosy Cross, Rose-Croix and so on, in their titles have, with one exception, completely ignored the alleged erstwhile existence of Christian Rosenkreuz and his order. The story had been forgotten and the name alone survived.

The name but nothing of the legend appears in an interesting German Masonic rite that enjoyed a certain success during the 1770s. This was the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer Orden (Gold and Rosicrucian or Rose Cross Order), which attracted the support of alchemists and occultists. In many respects it was a racket and its founders were not untypical of the strange people who invented elaborate Masonic 'systems' during the last half of the 18th century.

An echo of something vaguely Rosicrucian has been a feature of Freemasonry's so-called High Degrees since the 1750s. The Rose Croix degree, now the 18th in the Ancient and Accepted Rite, made its first appearance in France c1754. However, the available information suggests that this degree has never included any feature derived from the original Rosicrucian legend.

Indeed, the only fraternity which actually revived and, indeed, 're-lived' the legend in its rituals was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the most renowned magical society of modern times. The Golden Dawn, however, was not Masonic, although its founders were enthusiastic Freemasons (see GOLDEN DAWN).

The Golden Dawn

Founded in 1887, this esoteric society was a by-product of the Rosicrucian Society in England, also known as the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (abbreviated as Soc. Ros.). It was established in 1866 by a group of Freemasons who were primarily interested in occultism, Spiritualism and to a lesser extent Masonic symbolism. By the early 1880s, however, its leading members were more concerned with the study of the Cabala, alchemical symbolism and traditional occultism. The Soc. Ros. was not a Masonic Lodge but merely a society in which membership was restricted to Freemasons. Its early *Transactions* indicate a complete lack of curiosity on the subject of 17th century Rosicrucianism.

Two of the Golden Dawn's initial three Chiefs (the order had a tripartite headship in those days) were Dr William Wynn Westcott, a London coroner, and S. L. MacGregor Mathers, reputedly a learned Cabalist and occultist.

The concept that the Golden Dawn was in some way 'Rosicrucian' was probably Westcott's. It took its grade system, via the Soc. Ros., from the 18th century German Gold-und Rosenkreuzer order. Hence the grade names were at the very best no more than pseudo-Rosicrucian.

Robert Walker Collection, Paris/Chris Barker

***La Vièrge aux Lilas,* 1897, by the Belgian painter Carlos Schwabe, who exhibited at the Salons de la Rose Croix. The Madonna and Child are shown in white robes, for purity, with white clouds and white lilies, which are traditional symbols of the purity of the Virgin Mary. The rose is another traditional emblem of Mary and rose and cross together can stand for the Mother and Christ, for the fount of earthly life and the fount of spiritual life. Péladan's aim was 'to restore the cult of the Ideal in all its splendour, with Tradition as its base and Beauty as its means': 'all humorous things' were banned from the Salons**

Westcott claimed – in fact there is every reason to believe that he faked – a connection between the Golden Dawn and a contemporary German occult order that called itself the Rose of Ruby and Cross of Gold (Ordo Roseae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis, abbreviated as R.R. et A.C.). However, this German order probably existed only in Westcott's imagination.

Discovering the Body

It was Mathers who brought a real echo of the old Rosicrucian legend into the Golden Dawn. He achieved this by assuming the headship of his own R.R. et A.C., for which the original Golden Dawn merely represented a probationary stage after about 1892. Mathers wrote a ritual for the initiation ceremony which incorporated one of the main features of the original legend, namely Christian Rosenkreuz's vault or tomb. This entailed the physical reconstruction of the vault itself. Where the details published in the *Fama* were not clear, Mathers used his own lively imagination.

The seven-sided vault, which was large enough to contain three people, not to mention a portable altar and a coffin, was decorated with an elaborate multi-colour 'occult' colour scheme. There was also a lot of complicated symbolical decoration, once again in colours having an occult significance. The amount of time and ingenuity expended on designing and building the Golden Dawn's first vault must indeed have been immense.

The dramatic moment in Mathers's ritual came when the candidate discovered the body of Christian Rosenkreuz – impersonated by Mathers or Westcott – lying motionless in the coffin. Now while much of what was sonorously declaimed in this ritual might appear to represent nothing more than inspired nonsense, the ritual's overall conception indicates a very good grasp of 'theatrical effect'. Hence any candidate who was in a sufficiently receptive state of mind would be deeply impressed. For members of the R.R. et A.C. this initiation ritual could be the prelude to an exacting course in theoretical and even practical magic.

For Mathers, I do not believe that Christian Rosenkreuz ever represented more than a convenient peg upon which to hang a complicated and certainly dramatic ritual. However, for Dr R. W. Felkin, head of the

1604

Allgemeine vnd General

REFORMATION,

der gantzen weiten Welt.

Beneben der

FAMA FRATERNITATIS,

Deß Löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes / an alle Gelehrte vnd Häupter Europæ geschrieben:

Auch einer kurtzen RESPONSION von dem Herrn Haselmeyer gestellet / welcher deßwegen von den Jesuiterh ist gefänglich eingezogen / vnd auff eine Galleren geschmiedet:

Jtzo öffentlich in Druck verfertiget vnd allen frewen Hertzen communiciret worden.

Gedruckt zu Cassel / durch Wilhelm Wessel /

ANNO M. DC. XIV.

Library C. Abbs Books

Left The tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz is shown as the Mountain of the Philosophers, a symbol of the alchemical process of self-perfection, in this 18th century illustration
Right Title page of the first edition of *Fama Fraternitatis*, 1614, purportedly issued by a secret brotherhood of adepts to promote a general reformation of the world and mankind: it was this book which first told the story of Christian Rosenkreuz
Above Symbol of A.M.O.R.C., a modern American Rosicrucian society, founded by H. Spencer Lewis, who 'passed through transition' (died) in 1939

Stella Matutina, one of the Golden Dawn's successor orders after the original order had more or less collapsed in 1903, 'Our Father Christian Rosenkreuz' appears to have assumed an almost divine status. Again, while the story of the discovery of the vault, as told in the *Fama*, was clearly a fairy story, Dr Felkin actually believed that the tomb still existed somewhere in southern Germany and was on his way to find it when war broke out in 1914.

Ripples From the Rosy Cross

Contemporaneous with the Golden Dawn in England there were a number of 'Rosicrucian' manifestations in France during the 1890s. They were Rosicrucian only in name, for example, Stanislas de Guaita's Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix and Josephin Péladan's schismatic Catholic Rose-Croix Order. These were mainly the 'inventions' of occultists.

There was also a pseudo-Rosicrucian revival in Germany at that time. Dr Franz Hartmann, a Theosophist who had been close to Madame Blavatsky, was head of an order that called itself Rosicrucian. Rather later Dr Rudolph Steiner (see STEINER), the General Secretary of the German section of the Theosophical Society and after 1912 the founder of the far more influential Anthroposophical Society, talked endlessly and always vaguely about Rosicrucianism, as if it were something that he had invented himself.

As might be expected, popular forms of pseudo-Rosicrucianism have flourished in the United States. I hesitate to discuss their recent ramifications because it is so difficult to separate fact from fiction. Any reader sufficiently interested is referred to the two enormous volumes of Dr R. Swinburne Clymer's *The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America: Authentic and Spurious Organizations*, which contain copious details of his feud with H. Spencer Lewis, the founder of the Ancient and Mystic Order Rosae Crucis (A.M.O.R.C.), the organization which bas advertised its esoteric wares for years on end.

The most surprising feature of all is the link, however tenuous, between Dr Clymer and others and the obscure young man called Johann Valentin Andreae who created the Rosicrucian legend at Tübingen more than three and a half centuries ago. Nobody except a few scholars, mostly in Germany, is now greatly interested in Andreae and his three books. So far as the survival of the legend is concerned they might never have been written. All that remains is the variety of speculative meanings attributed to two words: 'Rosy Cross'.

ELLIC HOWE

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Photo John Freeman, courtesy Warburg Institute

D. G. ROSSETTI

NO ARTIST has had a more singular capacity for living in a time and place of his own invention than Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Born in 1828 in London, a poet and painter in the Victorian age, he mentally dwelt in other worlds. He projected himself, in the imagination, into the Italy of the 13th and 14th centuries, the Florence of his great namesake, Dante Alighieri (see DANTE). It was perhaps an atavism, for he was three-quarters Italian by family descent and spoke Italian. When the critic John Ruskin described him as 'a great Italian lost in the Inferno of London', he implied that the times of Giotto and Fra Angelico were such as Rossetti should rightfully have lived in.

He had no urge to visit the Italy of his forebears and never willingly left the Inferno of London except in spirit. But he communed with the early Italian poets whom he translated. He identified himself so completely with the mind of Dante and the tale of his mystic love for Beatrice, unfolded in the *Vita Nuova*, that his own love for Elizabeth Siddal took on the same mystic character and had a like sadness of outcome.

In the nostalgia for a distant past, Rossetti may be thought of as the heir of the Romantic movement. Other artists, amid the drastic changes at the beginning of the 19th century, had looked back with longing to other days, had seen them as the more desirable because they no longer existed. Rossetti found another alternative world in the chivalrous court of Arthurian legend, a past as reconstructed by Sir Thomas Malory in the *Morte d'Arthur*, fabulously built on a farther and dimmer past. From it Rossetti invented a sumptuous and imaginary Middle Ages.

Yet his conception was not that of the Romantic painters of costume pieces and historical incident. Like William Blake (see BLAKE), whom he greatly admired, he rejected all that was merely imitative and material in art. He was an exception in a period when the trend of painting had become realistic. The poetic sense rather than craft was the vehicle of his experience; hence the puzzling cleavage he introduced into the Pre-Raphaelite movement in painting. The doctrine of 'truth to Nature' that inspired his co-founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Holman Hunt and John Millais, was to him quite alien. Rossetti might be said to stand rather for 'truth to dreamland'.

In his complex mind the fascination of the weird and the occult was interwoven with ideas of strangely fated romantic loves and psychological encounters. It is dramatically seen in the drawings, of which he made several versions, inspired by the legend of the Doppelgänger (see DOUBLE). In *How They Met Themselves*, his two lovers come face to face with their own likenesses in a wood, sinister reflections of impending calamity. After the death of his wife Rossetti saw her as Dante saw Beatrice, a mystic presence still, though removed to a celestial sphere.

It was thus he painted her in his *Beata Beatrix*, in the character of the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, on a balcony with the shadowy Ponte Vecchio of Florence in the background, with every melancholy accessory of symbol. The rosy-tinted bird, divine messenger, drops a white poppy, emblem of sleep and painless death, between her hands. A sun-dial points to the hour of her going. The robe she wears is green, colour of spring and hope, over purple, the colour of suffering. Dante is a mournful shadow behind her but there is an angel with a lighted lamp to give a message of hope. With all the picture's mystic import went a portrayal of Elizabeth Siddal so exact, said Rossetti's brother, 'that one might almost say she sat in spirit and to the mind's eye for the face'.

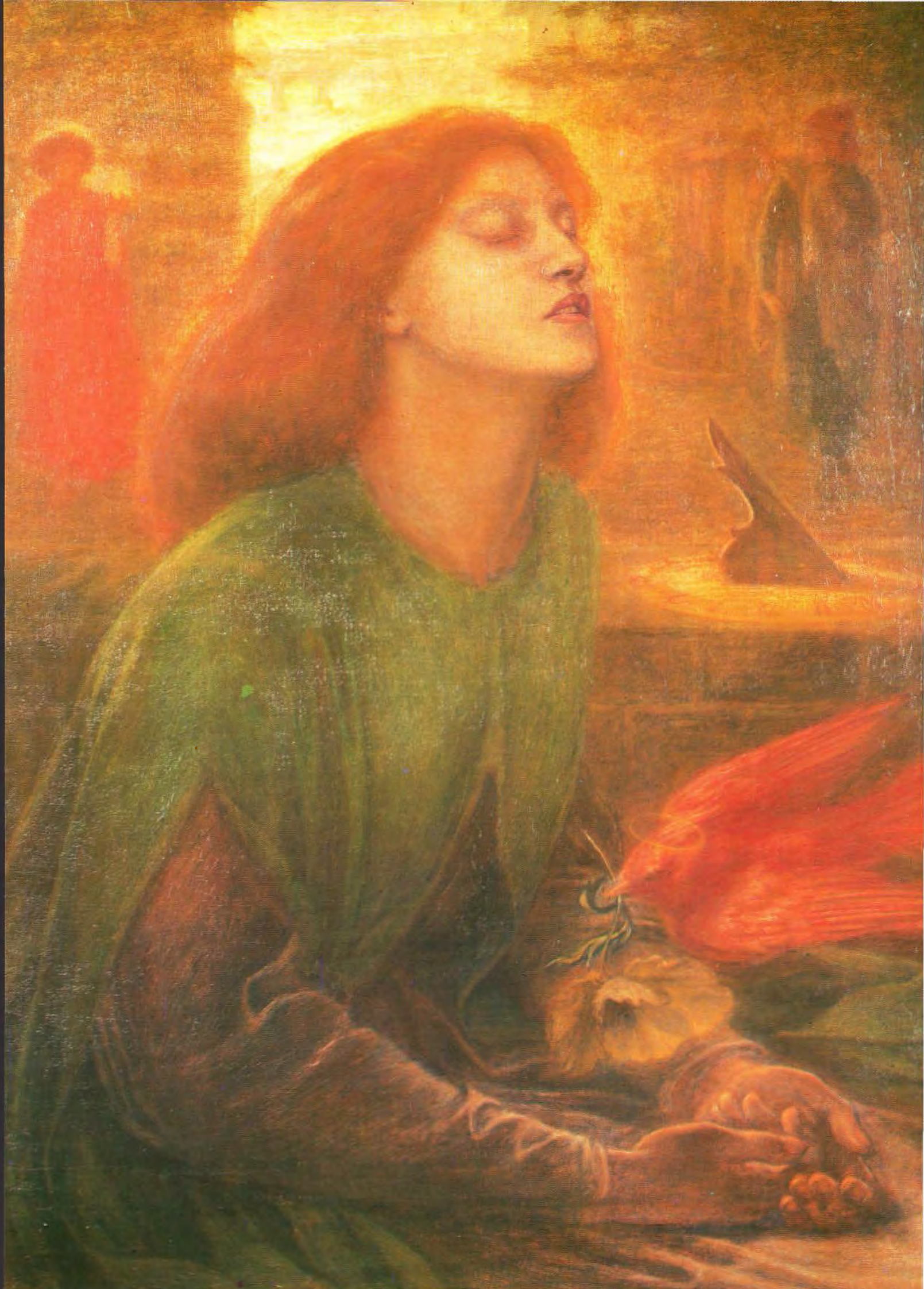
Poems From the Tomb

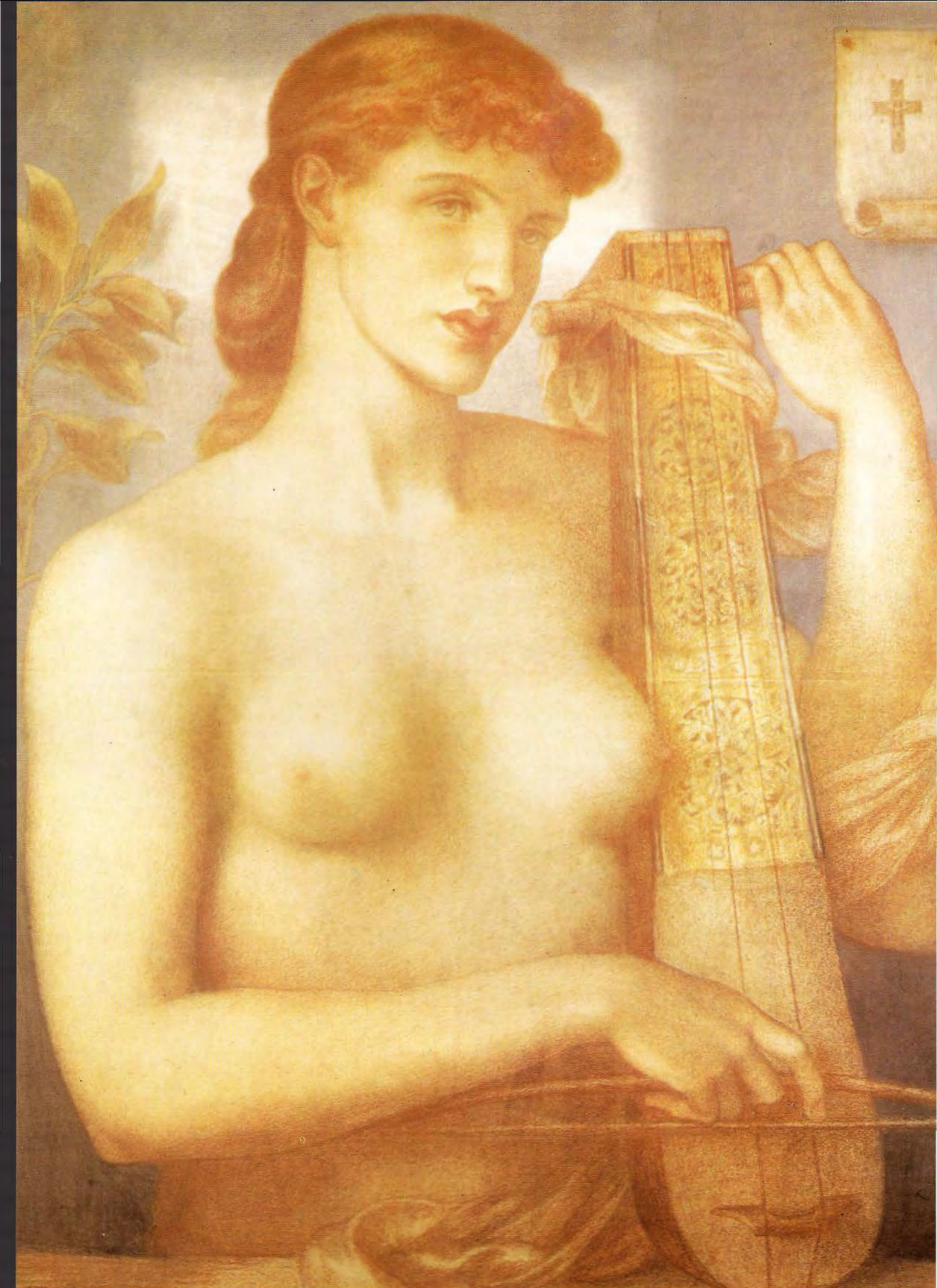
In one so strangely balanced between the real and the unreal, in whom there was both so much capacity for affection and so much deeply engrained superstition, it is the less surprising that he should later turn, in the hope of revelation, to the Spiritualist seance and seek for signs than he might yet meet with his wife again. A moving story is told by his friend, William Bell Scott, of Rossetti's

Rossetti identified himself so completely with Dante and the tale of his love for Beatrice that his own love for Elizabeth Siddal took on the same mystic character: his dead wife as *Beata Beatrix* (right) and *Dante drawing an Angel on the Anniversary of Beatrice's death* (below)

Tate Gallery, London/John Webb

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford





visit to Penkill Castle in Ayrshire and their finding, during a walk through the grounds, a small bird in the path which did not fly away, but allowed itself to be picked up. Rossetti, trembling with emotion, declared it to be the spirit of his wife, 'the soul of her has taken this shape'.

Scott was a sceptic who had always deplored Rossetti's professed belief in Spiritualist manifestations. Yet he was unable to give any rational explanation for the fact (as he records it) that he, Miss Boyd

***Violante* or *Forced Music*, probably based on a 'Rosicrucian' romance by Theodore Watts-Dunton, a close friend of Rossetti and Swinburne, both of whom in their different ways looked back longingly to an idealized past**

the owner of Penkill and others all heard the voice of Rossetti reading in his room, after he had left the castle, not on one occasion only but for several nights. The mesmeric force of personality that, combined with a singular charm, enabled him to inspire talent in others might seem to have gained extra intensity in his agitated condition, to the point of still vibrating in his absence round the stone walls of the ancient castle.

The drug chloral and unlimited whisky made for a phase of hallucination, another imagined world, this time of universal enmity towards him after he had retrieved from his wife's coffin in Highgate cemetery the manuscript book of his poems which in his grief he had buried with her. Guilt-haunted yet impelled to publish them, he was in a condition that made a stupid article by Robert Buchanan on 'The Fleshly School of Poetry' in the *Contemporary Review*, in which he was the main object of attack, seem a dreadful judgement, less on his poetry than on his action in plundering the grave. This fancied retribution brought him to the danger point of crisis and collapse.

Rossetti recovered from the breakdown of 1871 but remained an invalid and latterly a recluse, until his death in 1882. In his last years he returned to his evocation of a sad and otherworldly beauty in the paintings inspired by Jane Morris, the wife of the poet and craftsman William Morris. It is characteristic that his last big picture, over which he laboured long, was *Dante's Dream*.

WILLIAM GAUNT

ROWAN

THE MOUNTAIN ASH or rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*, is among the plants most positively protective against witchcraft and evil, especially in the temperate countries of the North, where it is most abundant. It is reputed to have been one of the sacred trees of the Druids, because it is so often found in and near ancient stone circles. It appears earliest in Scandinavian myth, where it was called Thor's Helper, since it once assisted him to cross a difficult river. The wood of this tree was used in the construction of Viking ships, to protect them from Ran, the enemy of seamen. A similar belief in the protective power of the rowan was held in Britain, and there is a reference in the ballad of 'The Laidley Worm of Spindleston Heughs' to the Child of Wynd's ship having a mast of rowan so that the evil queen's witch hags could not harm it:

> The hags came back, finding their charms
> Most powerfully withstood;
> For warlocks, witches, cannot work
> Where there is rowan-tree wood.

There was apparently no situation in which a piece of rowan was not efficacious in keeping away witches. In Scotland a twig was often carried in the pocket. If a person was suspected of being a witch, touching them with a rowan branch would ensure their being carried off by the Devil.

Many other protective measures against witches involved the use of rowan. Branches of the tree were placed by house doors, used as walking sticks, and often placed in cow byres and stables. Milking pails and churns might be decorated with, or even entirely made of, the wood. To prevent witches stealing milk without coming near the cow – as they were wont to do by making the appropriate actions in their own homes, or alternatively by taking the form of hares and sucking the milk direct from the cow in the field – a horsehair rope with a twig of rowan in it would be tied round the animal's feet.

A cross made of rowan twigs, a combination of pagan and Christian symbols, might be used over cow stalls and also placed over a cradle during the dangerous period between birth and baptism, when infants were most liable to enchantment. In some cases rowan and birch were used together to form a cross. It is recorded how a century ago such crosses were placed over every cottage door, every pig-sty, every seed-bed in Herefordshire, usually on May morning. Sometimes country people wore a necklace made of the red berries, the colour red being supposed to have protective powers against evil (see RED). Rowan berries might also be fed to mares in foal and cows in calf to ensure straightforward births. It was believed that pigs fed with the berries would fatten rapidly.

In Wales, it was believed that the mountain ash had furnished the Holy Cross, and for this reason it was widely planted in cemeteries. The 17th century diarist John Evelyn wrote, 'this tree is reputed so sacred that there is not a churchyard without one of them planted in it . . . on a certain day in the year, everyone religiously wears a cross of the wood'. Apart from restraining evil, rowan planted among the graves kept the dead from rising prematurely.

'This tree is reputed so sacred that there is not a churchyard without one of them planted in it': rowan, or mountain ash

Robert Walker Collection, Paris/Chris Barker

Royal Botanical Gardens

The Scots often used the timber for the crossbeam of the chimney, and it was equally used in the making of water-mills and farm implements. In Lincolnshire, rowan twigs pushed into thatch and into haystacks were supposed to prevent fire. Both hearths and wells might have rowan placed round them. In general, a rowan tree near a house was thought lucky and protective; to cut it down brought misfortune.

In some areas a day known as Rowan-Tree Day, or Rowan-Tree Witch Day was celebrated at the beginning of May, at the time of the old Beltane festival. On that day the branches of rowan needed for protective purposes were brought home. To be really effective, they had to be taken from a mountain ash which the person concerned had neither seen nor heard of previously, and had to be brought home by a different route from the outward one. It was worth the trouble, however, because the rowan so gathered afforded every building and its inmates protection for a year. After fastening the twigs in all the appropriate places, bonfires would be lit.

Rowan was often used instead of hazel for water divining and tracing hidden treasure. In folk medicine whooping cough and other ailments could be cured by pushing some of the sufferer's hair into a cut in a mountain ash trunk, and the berries were prized to ease childbirth.

Among the many alternative names of this tree are Quick Beam and Quicken, similar names occurring in some Germanic languages. 'Quick' is used in the sense of living, and we can therefore presume it was originally a tree deity. This is shown in Irish folklore, and in the story of Diarmuid and Grania the tree's fairy guardian is described – with crooked teeth, large nose, black face and one red eye. Although he has sought the guardian's permission to shelter in the wood, Diarmuid kills him in order to acquire the magic berries which had the power of restoring anyone who ate them to the age of 30.

Rowan also has such names as Witch-wood, Witch-Wicken, Witchen, Whitty and Wicken. Although probably originating from the Old English *wic*, meaning a tree with pliable branches, the 'witch' meaning seems to have taken over. In the Victorian language of flowers, rowan stands for prudence.

A. J. HUXLEY

Founder of the Mevlevi order of dervishes, with its characteristic whirling dance, the Persian mystical poet Rumi wrote of the return to God through love and the renunciation of worldly distractions

JALALU'D-DIN RUMI

ONE OF THE WORLD'S greatest mystical poems, called the *Masnavi* from the name of the type of rhyming couplets in the Persian language in which the poem is written, was composed by Jalalu'd-Din Rumi, who was born in 1207 and died in 1273. He also left posterity a large collection of exquisite lyrics – *ghazals* – whose burden is the expression of profound yearning for union with God, as the source of all being and centre of the only true perfection. This union is the goal of the Mohammedan mystic, known as a Sufi from the Arabic word *suf*, wool, the material of the Sufi's coarse distinguishing mantle (see SUFIS).

In the lyrical poems, the emphasis is on love and the sorrow of the lover separated from the beloved. This love must fill the heart of the seeker for God before the separated wanderer is in a condition to begin his quest for reunion with the Perfect Divine Truth, of which creation is but a refracted, imperfect reflection. According to Rumi's teaching, only through love can the heart become cleansed, to reflect the Divine Reality and so fulfil the purpose of creation. For according to Mohammedan tradition, God made the world because he was 'a hidden treasure' which desired to be known; he created creation that he might be known. In order that a man might become the vehicle of this perfect knowledge of God, he must purge himself of all worldly attachment and, essentially, of attachment to the self. Sufi teaching is, therefore, the ultimate exaltation, into the way of complete spirituality, complete renunciation of the shadows of material existence, of the central Mohammedan doctrine that God alone is to be adored as the One, no idols or images being in anywise associated with him. The self might become such an idolatrous object of worship if we were to give way to egotistical desires and preoccupations. The Sufi's first duty is to quell such selfish tendencies.

The Perfect Man

The core of Rumi's message is contained in the story in the *Masnavi* of the man who knocked at the Friend's door. The Friend asked who was there. He replied, 'I'. The Friend told him to go away – 'it is not the time yet: at such a feast as mine there is no place for the unprepared'. The unprepared one wandered a year in the sufferings of the wastes of separation. Then he returned, nervously, lest he should again say the wrong thing, to knock once more at the Friend's door. When the Friend called, 'Who is that at the door?,' he replied, 'At the door it is you, oh snatcher of hearts'. The Friend said, 'Now, since you are I, enter, oh myself: there is no room in this mansion for two I's'.

The seeker, he who strives to reach the

British Museum

'I was a devout man. You made me a singer of songs. You made me a wine-bibber . . . Illustration from a late 13th century manuscript of the *Masnavi* of Jalalu'd-Din Rumi

door of the mansion of God, is seen as a wayfarer, and one who needs a guide for the arduous road through worldly distractions and the rigours of self-conquest, towards the clarity of the radiance of the Truth. Rumi's first guide had, as was requisite, the attributes of the 'perfect man': one who has traversed each difficult stage of the Way, and who can return from the quest accomplished, to find among his fellow-men someone who possesses the readiness to be inspired by such a catalytic agency as the perfect man is in the Way of the Truth. Rumi possessed the readiness. A dervish (the mendicant's title which Sufi wayfarers assumed as expressive of their poverty and quest) named Shams of Tabrizi fired this readiness for the Path of Love. Previously, Rumi had been a professor of the religious sciences in the colleges of the city of Qonya in Anatolia. Shams told him to lay aside every science and prepare himself, through searching self-knowledge, for the loss of self in love: only the 'science of love' would serve.

Rumi's lyrics are addressed to Shams and uttered in his name. He was parted from him in a separation that symbolized for him the separation from God, when Shams was murdered, in 1247, probably by Rumi's former pupils, jealous of their master's new obsession. Thus Rumi could say of the fugitive, ever sought-after beloved, expressing the supreme quest in the most human terms:

> Go comrades, fetch our beloved. Bring me
> a moment the runaway idol,
> With sweet songs and on various pretexts
> fetch to the house the beautiful,
> comely face.
> If he makes excuses, saying, 'I'll come
> another time',
> All the promises are false: he'll be
> deceiving you . . .

Shams wrought a deep change in Rumi, the learned theologian. He made him a poet of love, and an ecstatic mystic who founded the order of Mevlevi dervishes, named after Rumi the Maulavi (Mevlevi) or 'master'; the dervishes who, following their master's example, performed a whirling dance, in order to achieve ecstasy, death to the self (see DERVISH). Rumi describes what Shams, the 'catalyst', did to him:

> I was a devout man. You made me a singer
> of songs.
> You made me a wine-bibber, a drunkard,
> a fool.
> I was a grave man of formal praying.
> You made me the sport of the children in the
> street.

These words are no reproach. Shams had humbled the grave theologian so that he could begin to realize the purpose of his existence in cleansing the mind and heart for their sole rightful occupant, the love of God, by which man's awful separation from the Divine can alone be bridged and the

world's beguilements shed. The *Masnavi* begins with this theme of separation (in Nicholson's translation):

> Listen to the reed how it tells a tale,
> complaining of separations –
> Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the
> reed bed, my lament has caused man and
> woman to moan . . .
> Everyone who is left far from his sonrce
> wishes back the time when he was united
> with it'.

Rumi wrote hundreds of love poems of extraordinary power, and a vast compendium of verse anecdotes which in the *Masnavi* illustrate every facet of the human condition and all the ways in which God mysteriously works through his creation and can be sought through its ramifications.

Rumi was born in Balkh, in what today is northern Afghanistan. His father, Baha'ud-Din Walad, was a preacher whose sermons remain extant, and whose offerings of spiritual consolation to the people stricken by the tyranny and extortion of a gross military regime brought him into conflict with the authorities. In 1209–10, Baha'ud-Din and his family emigrated to Mohammedan regions further west, in Anatolia.

Here Rumi, five at the time of the move, remained all his life, hence the name 'Rumi', which means 'westerner' or 'Roman', since Anatolia had been part of the Byzantine or East Roman Empire. His moment of enlightenment occurred one day in the street when he was returning from giving a lecture and was accosted suddenly by the strange dervish, Shams-i-Tabrizi, who asked him what was the point of much learning? Rumi answered that it was to know the traditions of orthodox religion and the canon law. Shams replied, quoting the poet Sana'i, 'Sheer ignorance is better than learning that will not snatch you out of yourself.' Until then, though he had been (as he himself says) a devout man and an exponent of religion, Rumi had not been a true mystic. Nevertheless, legend has it

Rumi was a poet of love and an ecstatic mystic who founded the order of Mevlevi dervishes: they followed his example in performing a whirling dance to achieve ecstasy, death to the self; 17th century Persian illustration

British Museum

that when the infant Rumi was being brought through Persia to Arabia and Anatolia, his father had taken him to visit the great Sufi poet and teacher, Attar of Nishapur. Attar, the story runs, gave the child his Book of Secrets, the *Asramama*.

Legends of this kind cannot be totally discounted. In the Mohammedan mystical tradition, a chain of descent is established for the heads of orders or fraternities of dervishes, and so the episode between Attar and the child who was to found the Mevlevi order is an unexceptional story in the Sufi context. In his verse Rumi acknowledges both Attar and Sana'i as his precursors in the composition of spiritual poetry. More immediately, after the death of Shams he was inspired by two of the latter's successors, a goldsmith's apprentice from Qonya named Salahu'd-Din Zarkub, and Chelebi Husamu'd-Din, who inspired the *Masnavi* and outlived the master. Rumi himself died in Qonya in 1273.

Rumi's own *tariqat*, way or rite, the Mevlevi order, survived in the Ottoman Empire, but was officially closed by the Turkish government in 1927. However, adherents of the aspirations and ritual of the order still exist. The tombs of Rumi and his companions and successors are grouped together at Qonya in a shrine annually visited by numbers of people and licensed once a year to be again the scene of a revival of the ritual dancing and music characteristic of the Mevlevis. The *tekye* or shrine is a sanctified place where the otherworldly atmosphere, engendered by centuries of the teaching of the return to God through love and renunciation of worldly distractions and desires, aided by certain special devotional exercises, can still be sensed as intact. For those who cannot visit this remarkable shrine and its adjacent museum, Rumi's message is available in translations of his poetry.

PETER AVERY

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RUNE OCCULTISM

Wiener Library

The Sig or 'S' rune became the symbol of Heinrich Himmler's SS: title page of a book by Reinhard Heydrich, 1935

ACCORDING TO THE *Germania* of Tacitus, the ancient Germans had the highest possible regard for divination and the casting of lots. For the latter their method was simple. A branch was broken from a fruit-bearing tree and sliced into strips. These were marked with signs (runic symbols) and then thrown at random onto a white cloth. The seer picked up three strips at a time and read their meaning according to the runes scratched upon them.

As R. W. V. Elliott remarked in *Runes: An Introduction* (1959): 'The word "rune" itself places the *futhark* (runic alphabet) at the very heart of Germanic religious cult; to this day the German *raunen* connotes "whisper" and "secret" and "mystery", associations coeval with the magic power of runic lore. Nor is evidence lacking to connect the secrets of the runes with the Germanic gods themselves.'

This article is concerned not with the investigations into the origins of rune magic by a long succession of German and Scandinavian scholars but with the unscientific preoccupations of the generation of Germanic occultists that flourished between the years 1900–33. Uninterested in the classical tradition of European hermetism, they were strongly identified with German nationalism, which in their case meant mystical theories about the superiority of the German master race (*Herrenvolk*) and a psychological fixation upon everything that was truly German, Germanic or Nordic (see NATIONAL SOCIALISM). Hence for them the runes had a special significance.

One of the first German occultists to attempt to explain the esoteric significance of the runes was Guido von List (see LIST), whose *The Secret of the Runes* (1908), reveals nothing except List's obsession with lunatic philological theories. Dr Bernhard Koerner, one of List's most devoted disciples, was convinced that old heraldic devices incorporated runic symbols, and wrote extensively on this theme. He was a member of the Prussian Heralds' Office, the counterpart of the British College of Heralds, and was not without distinction as a genealogist. Nevertheless, his more conventional colleagues laughed at his runic theories.

Dr Koerner was also a leading member of the Germanen Order, founded in 1912, which combined monomaniac antisemitism with most of the other bees that inhabited the bonnets of the contemporary Germanic lunatic fringe (see GERMANEN ORDER). The 'secret chiefs' of the Order, of whom Koerner was one, habitually signed their names with runic symbols.

Hermann Pohl of Magdeburg, the Order's first Chancellor (Secretary General), was yet another runic enthusiast. During the First World War he sold bronze finger-rings engraved with a runic inscription to such members of the Order as were willing to buy them. He claimed that the rings possessed certain magical qualities and would protect the wearer from harm and ill-health. At the end of 1915 Pohl was ejected from the Order and proceeded to found a rival and schismatic German Order Walvater of the Holy Grail, whose title alone represented a strange mixture of pagan and Christian allusion. This Order used runic symbols on its stationery and from January 1918 published a weekly periodical called *Runen*.

Siegfried Adolf Kummer of Dresden, the author of *Heilige Runenmacht* ('Holy Rune Power') (1932), was typical of the crazier German runic occultists. Kummer had invented a runic equivalent to yoga exercises, in which the postures were supposed to correspond to the shapes of runic letters. He recommended his pupils to yodel at the same time as they performed their exercises since this produced 'strong magical forces'. Another of his theories was that intense meditation upon an appropriate rune could heal a sick person at a distance. In the same way that the astrologers equate each of the 12 signs of the zodiac with an area of the human anatomy, Kummer claimed to have discovered the corresponding runic affinities. The 'Fa' rune, for instance, was associated with headaches and fevers, while for throat, liver and nervous afflictions concentration upon the 'Ur' rune was said to be efficacious.

Kummer was the President of the Association of Invisible Aryans, the members of which were admonished to 'strive for the blood interests of our aryan-Germanic race'. On the 13th day of every month at precisely 1 pm, Kummer 'struck the Hagal rune' and transmitted positive thoughts to his followers.

In 1927 Kummer founded the Rune School 'Runa', which provided instruction in Aryan wisdom, runic lore and astrology. A somewhat similar organization was currently conducted by Friedrich Bernhard Marby of Stuttgart, the President of the Association for Rune Research, who taught a system of 'runic gymnastics'.

It never occurred to von List, Koerner, Pohl, Kummer, Marby and all the other runic enthusiasts that one particular rune, the Sig or 'S' rune, would become both familiar and detested by many outside Germany. It was the emblem that signified Heinrich Himmler's 'Schutzstaffel' or SS.

Mary Evans Picture Library

While still a boy, this Irish poet, painter and writer, better known as 'A.E.', became aware of 'a mysterious life quickening within mine . . . a being stained with the dust of travel, having myriads of memories and a sacred wisdom'; throughout his involvement in diverse causes, such 'moments of illumination' remained with him to the end

G. W. RUSSELL

'I MOVED among men and places and in living I learned the truth at last. I know I am a spirit and that I went forth in old time from the Self-Ancestral to labours yet unaccomplished; but filled ever and again with homesickness I made these songs by the way.' In this excerpt from the preface to his first book, *Homeward Songs by the Way*, lies a clue to the man whom the world knew as 'A.E.' He had signed the book 'Aeon', a word that had come to him unbidden. When he later discovered its occult meaning – Aeon, a rebellious angel, or the divergence of the soul from God and its journey through successive incarnations back to its source – he found in it a confirmation of his own meaning. But since the printer had deciphered it as A.E., he accepted the letters as a name.

Born in 1867, in Northern Ireland, of evangelical parents who moved to Dublin when he was 11, he decided at an early age to think out Protestantism for himself and realized that he would have 'to defy a God who threatened me for doing things which I had never promised not to do'. He says in *The Candle of Vision*: 'I was about sixteen when I became aware of a mysterious life quickening within mine. It was no angelic thing but a being stained with the dust of travel, having myriads of memories and a sacred wisdom.' Thus he discovered in himself the visionary pilgrim, and it was as a pilgrim that he went through life, travelling light, indifferent to poverty, indifferent to fame except in so far as it meant the achievement of something he had set himself to do.

In a letter to James G. Pryse of the Theosophical Society, he sums up the major activities of his life with the self-mockery that was characteristic of him. 'Painting,' he wrote, 'is the only thing I have any real delight in doing. I was never taught.' This was not exactly true; A.E. attended the Dublin Art School for a short time, and there met the fellow-student who was to become a lifelong associate – W. B. Yeats. It is said that when his instructors discerned in him a great artist in the making, A.E. rejected further teaching as a 'besetting temptation'. He continued, however, to paint in his own way and many of his pictures hang in public galleries and private collections. 'I went into an office and wrote poetry. Then because I wrote good poetry I was sent out over the country to organise farmers.' (With Sir Horace Plunket he founded the Irish Agricultural Organization Society.) 'When I wrote articles about farmers I was taken from organising and put to editing an agricultural paper' (*The Irish Homestead*). 'And having learned to do this I was dragged into politics.' (When the new government was being shaped after the 'Troubles', he was invited, along with Yeats, who accepted, to become a senator. A.E. consulted his gods and refused; he would watch and admonish from the sidelines.) 'And now I edit a weekly review (*The Irish Statesman*) dealing with politics, literature and economics.'

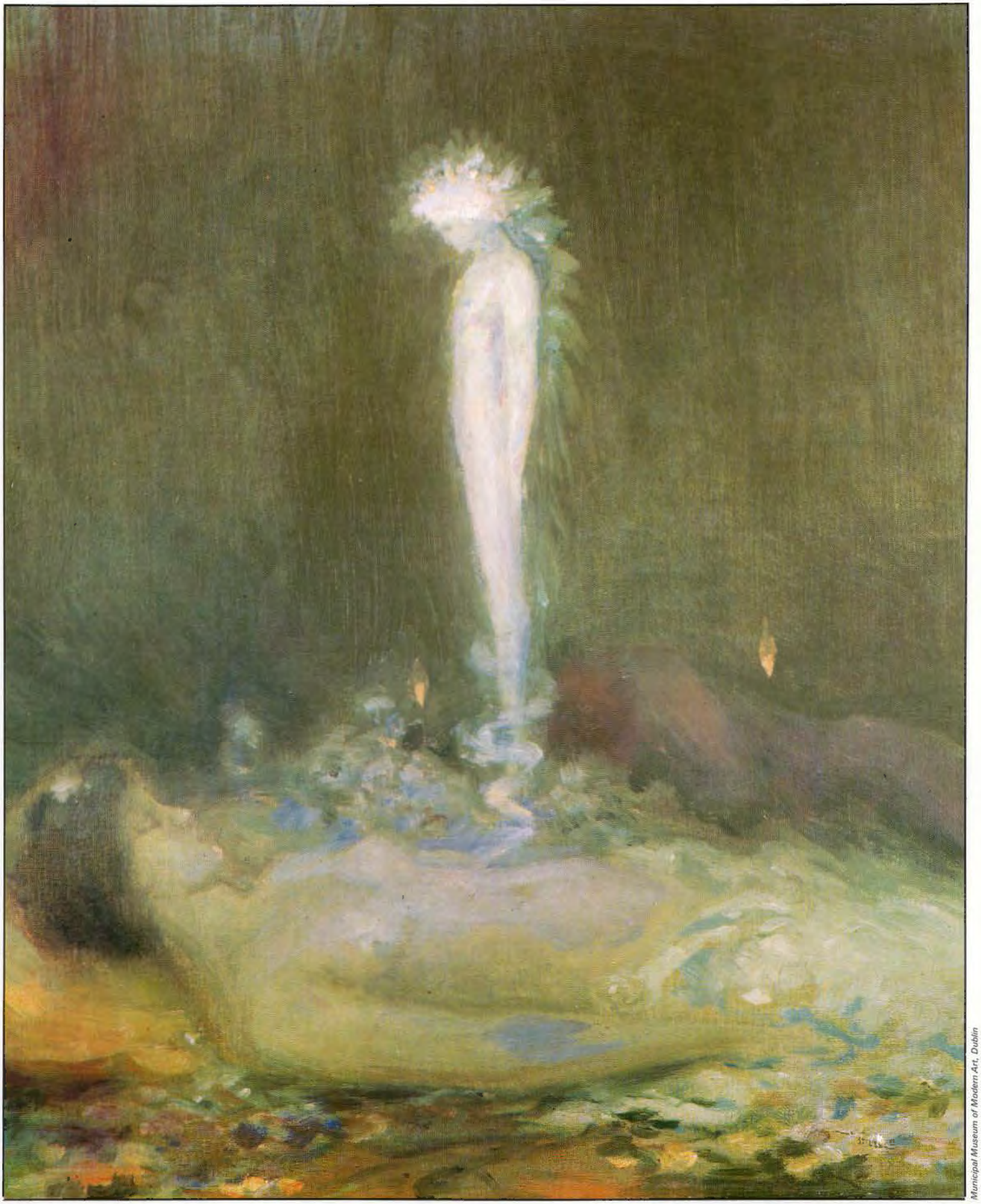
Midwife to Man's Own Wisdom

A.E.'s life, like his writing, can be roughly divided into three periods: the earliest predominantly mystical, when according to what he called 'the law of spiritual gravitation' lifelong friends began to appear; the middle, when he was at once the propagandist of co-operative farming, a pillar of the Irish Renaissance and an assistant with Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory, at the birth of the Abbey Theatre; and the third when his editing of *The Irish Statesman* effected a second literary revival in which A.E. was as much the central figure as Yeats had been of the first. He set himself to whip up the Irish conscience, clean out the political stables and discover to the world new writers such as Padraic Colum, James Stephens, Austin Clarke, Frank O'Connor and many others. George Moore, in his trilogy *Ave Salve Vale*, hunting for the adjective for A.E. at this period, called him 'maieutic' – bringing to birth, delivering – a term also applied to Socrates for his ability, shared by A.E., to deliver men of their own widsom.

It is not easy to assess just how much A.E. owed to Theosophy (see THEOSOPHY). John Eglinton in his *Memoir of A.E.* speaks of 'the ferment caused in a group of young men by the early activities of the Theosophical movement in Dublin. Yeats and Russell who were to be the principal leaders of the Literary Revival were closely associated with it. A.E.'s debt to Theosophy was, in fact, something like that of Blake to Swedenborg. From the first he understood it in a way of his own and in *The Candle of Vision* and *Song and its Fountains* seems at least as much concerned in making a contribution to literature as to Theosophic thought.' A.E. himself, in a late letter, said 'I had a natural mysticism of my own before I knew the Indian seers'. He never failed, however, to acknowledge his debt to those who had turned his attention to the classical Sanskrit writer Patanjali and the *Upanishads* and his copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* was always in his pocket, heavily underscored and annotated.

Ascent and Descent of the Soul

He left the Theosophical Society in 1898 to found the Hermetic Society, where, it has been said, he was careful to discourage students from dabbling in the occult but insisted on the paramount need for the practice of meditation. Throughout his life he constantly reverted to the ancient teaching that every ascent of the soul implies the necessity of a corresponding descent, and John Eglinton refers to 'his moments of illumination alternating with



Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

'He discovered in himself the visionary pilgrim, and it was as a pilgrim that he went through life, travelling light' *Above left* Portrait of A.E., by Kathleen Shackleton *Above* One of A.E.'s paintings, *Is this not Great Babylon that I have built?*

Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Dublin

'Painting is the only thing I have any real delight in doing': A.E. went to an art school for a while, but rejected any further teaching as a 'besetting temptation'; *The Winged Horse*

disconcerting avowals of doubt'. But A.E. was resilient. And his outer serenity, as private man and public figure, was the fruit of this inward struggle to reconcile the opposites in himself.

His last years were spent away from his own country. After the death of his wife and the cessation of *The Irish Statesman*, A.E. made two lecture tours to the United States, receiving honorary doctorates from Harvard and Yale, and from there returned to England to write what were to be his last poems and the prose work *The Avatars*. As far back as 1896, with Yeats, he had confidently expected the arrival of an Avatar, or incarnation of deity, who was to bring about a new development in human consciousness: A.E. had seen this in one of his visions. But by the time the book came to be written another Ireland had come into being; the heroic images were forgotten. A.E.'s Avatars, far from being welcomed, are driven away by the powers of civilization, back, one assumes, to their own source. This restatement of the theme of Aeon shows an A.E. sadder and wiser but still true to his lifelong myth, still the visionary.

When told by his doctor that the illness he had been suffering from was incurable, he let his myth sustain him and set about his death as deliberately as he had set about his life, dictating letters to his nearest friends, receiving one by one the many who flocked to take leave of him. It was clear to all who saw him then that the pilgrim, whatever his destination, was content to go towards it. He died in 1935.

P. TRAVERS

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The existence and nature of the witches' sabbath has been hotly disputed, and one celebrated theory regards it as the survival of a pagan cult. But who really was 'the god of the witches'?

SABBATH

IN GOETHE'S *Faust*, Mephistopheles takes Faust to the witches' sabbath on the Brocken, a peak of sinister reputation in the Harz Moutains which was traditionally the place where all the witches of Germany gathered to hold high revel on Walpurgis Night. The pair struggle up into the hills, with Mephistopheles suggesting that they would be better off equipped with a broomstick or a he-goat to fly on. The wind raves and hisses round the rocks and trees, through the clefts and chasms there gleams a dull red light, and they hear the cries of the witches hurrying through the storm-tossed air to the summit, where they dance to the point of madness in sensuous riot.

Goethe did not take the witches' sabbath very seriously, and on their way up the mountain Faust and Mephistopheles agree that they have entered a world of enchantment, of dream. There is, in fact, a dream-like air about some of the accounts of the sabbath which were extorted from accused witches and, in one of the earliest references to it, Catherine Delort of Toulouse said that she went to it in her sleep. Witch-hunters themselves were struck by this and Nicolas Remy, who hunted down hundreds of unfortunates in Lorraine in the 1580s, said that he was quite willing to agree with those who thought that the witches' meetings sometimes existed only in their dreams. He quoted a witch named Catherine Prevotte as saying that 'sometimes witches are fully awake and actually present at these assemblies; but that often they are merely visited in their sleep by an empty and vain imagination.' Though he went on to make it clear that in either case witches were equally the confederates of the demons.

Besides the Brocken, there were other places in Europe where witches were believed to gather like evil shapes in a nightmare, the Blocula in Sweden, a place in the mountain range of Amboto in the Basque country, or the famous walnut tree of Benevento in Italy. The picture of a huge gathering of hags and wizards where every animal passion was let loose by the light of black candles and smoking torches, with the great black goat looming darkly on his throne, obviously owes a good deal to human fantasy. The real sabbath, if it existed at all, must have been far smaller in scale and altogether less romantically sinister.

Whether there ever was such a thing as the witches' sabbath is crucial to the whole question of the existence of witchcraft as an organized movement or cult, as distinct from the activities of individual witches, charmers and magicians, acting alone. The evidence is unsatisfactory and incomplete but, putting it cautiously, it seems quite possible that groups of witches did exist, if only in small numbers, and met for organized ceremonies. At all events, it was certainly believed that they did.

Straws in the Wind

The name 'sabbath' seems to have been applied to the witches' meetings through association with another fiercely hated and persecuted group, the Jews, for in the early accounts the meeting is frequently called the 'synagogue'. (The word 'sabbat', which

Pat Crowther

Modern witch high priestess in a goat mask: the god who was worshipped at the witches' sabbath was said to appear in human and animal forms, especially as a goat

some modern writers insist on, is merely the French spelling of 'sabbath'.) Early references to the meeting bring out the sexual and animal elements in it. The witch submits her body to the Devil and to other witches, the Devil appears as a goat or in some other animal form – presumably he was represented by a man dressed up – and he is saluted with the 'obscene kiss' on his backside. The Devil is the ruler of the earth, rival and equal of the Christian God with whom he is engaged in a titanic struggle, which the witches confidently expect him to win (see FRENCH WITCHCRAFT).

Later accounts suggest that the meetings were usually, though not always, held at night and in the open air, with smaller gatherings sometimes held in a house or in a church. The atmosphere of dream and fantasy enters the picture at once with the question of how the witches went to the meeting. Very often they seem to have used perfectly normal means, walking or riding, but it was an old belief that among the uncanny powers of the witch was the ability to fly (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS). Once it was firmly established that being a witch meant being in league with the Devil, it was widely accepted that he enabled his servants to ride through the air to the sabbath on demonic animals, broomsticks, reeds or wisps of straw.

In 1664 in Somerset a woman named Julian Cox told how one evening, about a mile from her house, she saw three people riding towards her on broomsticks, four to five feet above the ground. Two of them she knew, a witch and a wizard, the third she did not: 'he came in the shape of a black man'. Two years earlier, in Scotland, Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE) said that she would make a 'horse' of a straw or a beanstalk, putting it between her legs and saying, 'Horse and hattock in the Devil's name', and then flying away wherever she liked, as straws blow along a road in the wind.

The ointment which the witches smeared on themselves may have caused delusions of flying (see FLYING OINTMENT), and some of the accounts may even have something to do with what we would now call 'astral' or 'out-of-the-body' experiences, but some suggest dancing, in the manner of 'ride a cock-horse to Banbury cross', rather than flight. Alice Kyteler, the famous Irish witch, was said to have greased a staff with ointment and then to have 'ambled and galloped through thick and thin' on it (see KYTELER), and in other accounts it is the staff which is smeared with ointment, not the witch.

A Foul and Horrid Fire

Whatever the truth may have been, most writers on witchcraft remained convinced that with the Devil's aid witches really flew through the air, and their lack of humour allowed them to accept even the most comically far-fetched tales. Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum* (1626) quotes with impassive solemnity and approbation a story about some soldiers at Calais who heard voices emanating from a black cloud in the sky. One of them fired a bullet at the cloud and from it there dropped at their feet a very fat, naked, drunken female of mature years, wounded in the thigh. When they questioned her, 'she pretended to be feeble minded'.

Descriptions of what happened at the sabbath, and in what order, vary from area to area and author to author, but it generally seems to have begun with the witches paying homage to the Devil. They acknowledged him as their god and gave him the obscene kiss as a mark of their utter subjection to his will. They reported the acts of magic and malice they had done since the previous meeting and received instructions and guidance: 'at what time,' says King James's *Demonology*, 'their master enquiring of them what they would be at, every one proposes unto him what wicked turn they would have done, either for obtaining of riches, or for revenging them upon any whom they have malice at, who granting their demands (as no doubt willingly he will, since it is to do evil) he teacheth them the means whereby they may do the same.'

Next, new recruits would be formally presented to the Devil to renounce Christianity and swear allegiance to him, and there might be weddings between members to be celebrated or baptisms to be performed. According to the French witch-hunter Pierre de Lancre (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT), 'witches were accustomed to have their children baptized more often at the sabbath than in church, and presented more often to the Devil than to God.'

In making obeisance to their master, the witches are reported to have adopted curious postures. Guazzo says: 'When these members of the devil have met together, they generally light a foul and horrid fire. The devil is president of the Assembly and sits on a throne in some horrid shape, as of a goat or a dog; and they approach him to adore him, but not always in the same manner. For sometimes they bend their knees as suppliants, and sometimes stand with their backs turned, and sometimes kick their legs high up so that their heads are bent back and their chins point to the sky . . . they turn their backs and, going backwards like crabs, put out their hands behind them to touch him in supplication. When they speak, they turn their faces to the ground; and they do all things in a manner foreign to the use of other men.'

Reversing the normal order of things is appropriate to the worship of the Devil as the great rebel against God and against Christian values, and approaching him backwards may have been an example of this, like the candles offered to him, which were black instead of white. The candles also fit his role as Lucifer, 'light-bearer', the star fallen from heaven, and he was sometimes said to have had a lighted candle on his head, between his horns, from which his worshippers lighted their own candles.

The obscene kiss is another example of the reversal of accepted values. According to de Lancre, one witch of south-western France said that the Devil had the form of a goat and beneath his tail he had a second face, which was black, and it was this which she kissed.

'I am Always Caressed'

The next part of the meeting seems to have been the feasting and dancing. Descriptions of the feast vary considerably. Sometimes the witches are said to enjoy a substantial meal, like the Lancashire witches who sat down to beef, bacon and roast mutton. The Somerset witches ate meat and cakes, and drank wine or beer. The 'man in black' sat at the head of the table with his favourite female witch beside him. Isabel Gowdie described the Devil presiding at the head of the table: 'and when we had ended eating, we looked steadfastly to the Devil, and bowing ourselves to him, we said to the Devil, We thank thee, our Lord, for this.' Madeleine de Demandolx (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS) followed popular tradition in saying that the witches feasted on bread and malmsey wine, and for meat chewed on the cooked flesh of young children. They took no salt with their meal, salt being a preservative and therefore hostile to the nature of demons, which are agents of corruption.

But many authorities believed that all things connected with the Evil One must necessarily be 'foul and horrid'. Remy says in his *Demonolatry* that all who have attended the Devil's table agree 'that his banquets are so foul either in appearance or smell that they would easily cause nausea in the hungriest and greediest stomach . . . And for drink he gives them in a dirty little cup wine like clots of black blood.'

Dancing was evidently a vital element in the sabbath, and Remy regarded this as a survival from pagan times. 'The dances which were in ancient days performed in the worship of demons (pagan deities) are still used today at their nocturnal assemblies.' He says that they danced in a ring, back to back, and one witch told him that they always moved to the left, widdershins, or contrary to the course of

The Fever of Pleasure

The times of holding the Sabbath differed in various districts; it was not infrequently held on, or almost on, certain feasts of the Church, but there was no general rule. It was held at night, sometimes in an open but secluded place, sometimes in a churchyard, occasionally in a house . . . the more covens that met together at one time, the more space and seclusion was desirable. The company were sometimes disguised in skins and the heads of animals, or with their faces covered with masks or veils. There was again no definite rule – so that it would seem the disguise was not so much for protection as for fantasy and excitement, the fever of pleasure provoked by all possible means. Even the President did not always, though he did generally, appear as a beast. The President was occasionally the local ruler, but usually he was more; and if he were not more, yet he was felt as more; the lesser ruler was attached to the greater, and the man in the skin, the mask and headdress, and the claws and tail, was identified with the pseudo-God. He was called the Devil; he was adored as the Devil; and metaphysically, he may have been the Devil.

Charles Williams *Witchcraft*

Romantically sinister picture of a witches' sabbath at the Blocula in Sweden in the 17th century, complete with owl, black candles, skull, snake, toad and imps: from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

the sun. They carried their dancing to a point 'little short of madness' and on returning home found themselves utterly exhausted.

Pierre de Lancre was told that the witches danced back to back and hand in hand, led by the black goat himself and usually moving to the left. Guazzo says that they formed 'a frenzied ring with hands joined and back to back; and so they dance, throwing their heads like frantic folk, sometimes holding in their hands the candles which they have before used in worshipping the devil.'

The main purpose of the dancing seems to have been to create a state of wild emotional intoxication that culminated in the frenzied sexual orgy in which the sabbath reached its peak. The Devil himself pleasured many of the witches and it was said that all restraints of sex, age and relationship were swept away in an ecstatically abandoned revel that included virtually every conceivable heterosexual and homosexual perversion.

Many writers insisted that far from being pleasurable, the Devil's attentions were frightening and painful. A French witch tried in 1594 was quoted as saying that when the goat copulated with her she found it painful, and that his semen was cold as ice. A girl named Jeannette d'Abbadie, aged 16, told de Lancre that she had been carnally known by Satan many times: 'she feared coupling with the Devil because his member was scaly and caused intense pain; and his semen was extremely cold, so much so that she had never been made pregnant by him, or by the other men at the sabbath.'

Accounts of the Devil's genital equipment and the coldness of his emission, as well as his remarkable powers of endurance, suggest the use of an artificial phallus. One of the rare notes of humour in the horrifying annals of the witch persecutions is in another confession reported by de Lancre, that of Marie de Marigrane of Biarritz, aged 15, who said that 'she had often seen

the Devil couple with a multitude of women, whom she knew by name and surname, and that it was the Devil's custom to have intercourse with the beautiful women from the front, and with the ugly from the rear.'

The experience was not always described as unpleasant. The Italian witch judge Paulos Grillandus said that several women told him that they enjoyed the Devil with 'the greatest voluptuousness'. A young French witch said, 'I will not be other than I am; I find too much content in my condition; I am always caressed.' And Isabel Gowdie expressed what may have been a perverse mixture of pleasure and pain in saying that the Devil was 'heavy like a malt-sack; a huge nature, very cold, as ice,' but also that 'he is abler for us that way than any man can be'.

Several witches, despite the pressure brought to bear on them to repent their ways, insisted that the sabbath was an occasion of joy and delight. One of them told de Lancre that 'the sabbath was the true paradise, where there was more joy than could be expressed. Those who went there found the time too short because of the pleasure and happiness they enjoyed, so that they left with infinite regret and longed for the time when they could go again.' Another, a very beautiful woman aged 28, said that 'she had more pleasure and happiness in going to the sabbath than to Mass, for the Devil made them believe him to be the true God, and that the joy which the witches had at the sabbath was but the prelude of much greater glory.' In England, Elinor Shaw and Mary Phillips were asked to say their prayers at their execution, but they laughed, 'calling for the Devil to come and help them in such a blasphemous manner, as is not fit to mention . . . and as they lived the Devil's true factors, so they resolutely died in his service.'

The Murray Theory

In *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), Margaret Murray advanced the theory that the witches had preserved the old pagan religion of pre-Christian Europe. 'The evidence proves that underlying the Christian religion was a cult practised by many classes of the community, chiefly, however, by the more ignorant or those in the less thickly inhabited parts of the country. It can be traced back to pre-Christian times and appears to be the ancient religion of western Europe.'

This brilliant and ingenious theory has persuaded a good many writers on witchcraft and has greatly influenced modern witches (and the theory's attraction for the modern mind is itself an interesting fact). But the evidence does not really support the view that through hundreds of years of Christianity a pagan cult survived in the assemblies nf witches, especially as none of the witches or their investigators ever said that it did. It looks as if the views of people at the time were nearer to the truth: that the real witches, as distinct from the many who were bullied or tortured into making false confessions, were worshipping, not the pagan god of a hypothetical 'old religion' but the Devil of Christianity as the opponent of the Christian God and the lord and master of all sensual pleasure and fleshly delight.

This gives point to the accusation that the culminating orgy of the sabbath came at the end of a religious ceremony which was a parody of the Mass, degrading and blaspheming the Christian ritual and turning it into an act of worship of the Devil. Paulus Grillandus said that, 'Those witches who have solemnly devoted themselves to the Devil's service, worship him in a particular manner with ceremonial sacrifices, which they offer to the Devil, imitating in all respects the worship of Almighty God, with vestments, lights, and every other ritual observance, so that they worship and praise him, just as we worship the true God.' In 1678 there was a meeting of the witches of Lothian in Scotland, at which a deposed Presbyterian minister took the part of the Devil and preached a sermon. 'Among other things, he told them that they were more happy in him than they could be in God; him they saw, but God they could not see; and in mockery of Christ and his holy ordinance of the sacrament of his supper, he gives the sacrament to them, bidding them eat it and to drink it in remembrance of himself.' Another account of the same meeting says that the Devil 'adventured to give them the communion or holy sacrament, the bread was like wafers, the drink was sometimes blood, sometimes black mosswater. He preached and most blasphemously mocked them, if they offered to trust in God who left them miserable in the world, and neither he nor his son Jesus Christ ever appeared to them when they called on them, as he had, who would not cheat them.' (See also BLACK MASS; FRENCH WITCHCRAFT).

There were certainly pagan survivals in witchcraft, as there were in Christianity itself, but this is not the same thing as the continuance of a pagan cult. That the god of the witches was Cernunnos, the Celtic horned god, or Pan, or Dionysus, are enticing but not finally convincing suggestions. What seems more likely than the survival of any particular pagan god is the survival of an idea. The witches were, after all, practitioners of magic and they seem to have shared the magical sense of the value of the animal in man. The frenzied dancing and the orgiastic worship of a god in animal form imply the letting loose of all the animal elements of human nature, which in magical theory is a step towards the achievement of wholeness, towards the liberation of the real inward self, and so towards achievement of the divine. The witches may have believed that they attained the divine in the sabbath, especially in the sexual union with the god.

This god was the master of life on earth, not a distant being in a far-off heaven. 'Him they saw, but God they could not see.' This was a god through whom they could achieve release, power and divinity in the flesh, and through the flesh, who had not gone away and left them behind, 'miserable in the world', and who, they thought, would not cheat them.

(See also SATANISM).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

John Webb

Witches and demons at the sabbath, from Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*: feasting was believed to be an important element of the rites, and it was said that witches took no salt with their meal, salt being hostile to the nature of demons

FURTHER READING: Remy's *Demonolatry* and Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum* have both been reprinted (Universal Books, 1975). See also M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1967 reprint) and *The God of the Witches* (Oxford University Press, 1970); R. H. Robbins, *Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Crown, 1959).

To the Christian a sacrament is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace', but the sacramental principle in the quest of supernatural benefits is found in many other religions, and is closely akin to magic

SACRAMENTS

IN SEEKING to possess himself of supernatural power or grace, man has instinctively felt the need to use forms of ritual action and manipulate material objects deemed appropriate to his purpose. There are some notable exceptions to this general tendency: for example, the mystic endeavours by mental or physical effort alone to achieve some desired spiritual state or virtue. However, since human nature is compounded of material and non-material elements, what has been called 'the sacramental principle' is both a necessary and intelligible pattern of behaviour. The sacramental principle is usefully and succinctly defined in the Catechism of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer as involving 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'. This definition naturally expresses a Christian evaluation of what constitutes a sacrament, and it is related to the important place that sacraments have in most forms of Christian faith and practice. But the sacramental principle is to be found in many other religions, and in its operation this principle is often closely akin to magic.

The ancient Egyptian ceremony of the 'Opening of the Mouth' provides a particularly graphic instance. The rite was carried out shortly before the embalmed body of a dead person was lowered into the sepulchral chamber of the tomb. The process of mummification (see MUMMIFICATION) had ensured the preservation of the corpse from decay; but if the deceased person was to live in his tomb, as the Egyptians fervently hoped, it was necessary to restore to his embalmed body the ability to see and breathe, and to take nourishment.

The ritual 'Opening of the Mouth' was a curious compound of symbolic and practical action. It was symbolic in so far as the action was performed on the corpse, which was completely swathed in bandages, with a mummy-mask over its head and face. In other words, in the ritual actions of touching the mouth and eyes, to restore the use of these organs, actual contact was not made with them; it was enough to touch the appropriate parts of the mummy-mask as an 'outward and visible sign'. However, the action was not just ritual miming; certain other factors were involved for the achievement of the desired result, as the Egyptians conceived it. A peculiarly shaped implement of bronze called a *mshtiw* had to be used for 'opening' the mouth and eyes. The ritual action had to be accompanied by the reading of a prescribed text which stated the intention of the act: to do for the deceased what had once been done by Horus for his dead father Osiris (see OSIRIS). Further, the rite had to be performed by a special *sem*-priest, while a lector-priest read the text. On analysis, therefore, to endow the dead person with supernatural power, the rite of the 'Opening of the Mouth' involved three elements: ritual action that required the use of a specified implement; a solemn statement of intent by an ordained minister; and the authority of a divine precedent.

Part of the ritual of the 'Opening of the Mouth', from an Egyptian tomb: a bronze implement was used to 'open' the mouth and eyes of a mummy, so as to restore the corpse's ability to see, breathe, eat and drink

In the celebrated Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS; MYSTERY RELIGIONS), the initiates, who had been fasting, partook of a special drink called the *kykeon*. It was made of meal mixed with water and flavoured with soft-mint. The initiates drank this potion in memory of what the goddess Demeter had done at Eleusis during her search for her daughter Persephone. In sorrow, she had fasted, but finally had assented to drink a potion concocted as the kykeon. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, the authenticating occasion is described: 'And Metaneira mixed the draught and gave it to the goddess as she bade. So the great queen Deo received it to observe the sacrament.'

There has been much discussion among scholars about the significance of this ritual drinking of the kykeon. That it was commemorative of what Demeter was believed to have done is clear, as was also the abstention from food by the initiates. But there is much reason for thinking that the act was invested with a deeper meaning. In terms of the principle of the ritual perpetuation of the past, which operates in most cultic acts, the solemn repetition of what Demeter had once done on a crucial occasion gave the initiates a sense of communion with the goddess.

These examples, selected from many, attest to the operation of the sacramental principle as a natural pattern of man's behaviour when in quest of supernatural power or grace. It is easy to describe the examples cited as magical transactions in a denigrating sense, but a more wisely sympathetic approach would evaluate them as significant expressions of the spiritual aspirations of mankind, of which the Christian sacraments are more sophisticated and refined examples.

Christian Sacraments

The word 'sacrament' has acquired its distinctive theological meaning from Christian usage. The Latin word *sacramentum* meant originally the pledge of security deposited in public keeping by the parties engaged in a lawsuit, or the oath taken by Roman soldiers to the emperor. In the Western Church, the term was adopted to translate the Greek *mysterion*, which had long been used as a designation for the secret rites of the Mystery religions.

Catholic Christianity, both Eastern and Western, recognizes seven sacraments, of which two are distinguished as the greater sacraments. These are baptism and the Lord's Supper, the institution and ordering of which are clearly recorded in the New

Testament. The origins of the five lesser sacraments are obscure, and their recognition throughout the Church was gradual. The interpretation of the sacraments has greatly occupied Christian theologians throughout the centuries, and many of their definitions, and the practices which have stemmed from them, have provoked great controversies. Rejection of certain medieval doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper or Mass characterized the Protestant reformers. Protestants generally recognize only baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments; but they disagree with aspects of the Catholic interpretation of them, and also differ from each other in their own interpretation and practice.

Catholic sacramental theology became very subtle in the terminology of its definitions, especially during the Middle Ages when it was influenced by Aristotelian metaphysics. A valid sacrament is defined as one having the proper 'matter' (for example, water in baptism); the proper 'form' (that is, the recitation of prescribed formulas: 'This is My Body; This is My Blood' in the Mass); and as being administered by a properly ordained priest or bishop, with the 'right intention' of doing what the Church ordains. If these requirements are satisfied, the faithful can confidently expect to receive the grace of the sacraments, irrespective of the worthiness of the minister. In other words, the grace is conveyed *ex opere operato*, by the enactment of the prescribed rite.

Body and Blood

The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church are: baptism (see BAPTISM); the Lord's Supper; confirmation; holy orders; penance; matrimony; and extreme unction (see OIL). The supreme sacrament is that variously described as the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Eucharist or Mass (see MASS). The institution of the rite is first recorded by St Paul, c 55 AD (1 Corinthians, chapter 11) and is described, with variations, in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The words of institution used by Christ gave the rite a twofold significance. The consumption by the faithful of bread and wine, specially consecrated as the body and blood of Christ, signified an act of communion with Christ effected by the taking into the body of the consecrated elements. The symbolism of the broken body and outpoured blood implied sacrifice, thus making the rite commemorative or representative of the crucifixion of Christ, interpreted theologically as the atoning sacrifice offered for the sins of mankind. These implications inspired the development of two of the most notable doctrines of medieval Christianity: transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass.

According to the doctrine of transubstantiation, the substance or essence of the bread and wine are transformed by the words of consecration into the body and blood of Christ, although they still retain their outward appearance of bread and wine. This doctrine led to the idea that, at Mass, Christ is present on the altar, and could be carried about in processions of the sacred

The seven sacraments of Catholic Christianity are the Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, holy orders, penance, marriage and extreme unction, the first two of these being regarded as 'greater sacraments'. The Latin word *sacramentum* was used in the Western Church to translate the Greek word for the secret rites of the Mystery

Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp

religions, and the Church of England has defined the sacramental principle as involving 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'

Above Roger van der Weyden's painting, *The Seven Sacraments*

Top right Nuns receiving Holy Communion

host (the consecrated bread). The doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass teaches that, at each celebration, Christ's sacrifice is represented to God the Father, often with some special intention. Thus at Requiem Masses, the sacrifice is offered for the repose of the souls of specified deceased persons.

The sacrament of confirmation was originally part of the rite of baptism. Its 'outward and visible sign' is the laying on of hands, administered by a bishop, on baptized candidates so that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, according to the authorizing precedent recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (8. 14–17).

The sacrament of holy orders is essentially connected with the doctrine of apostolic succession, according to which the Apostles passed on to their successors the priestly power and authority which they had received from Christ. The 'outward and visible sign' is the laying on of the bishop's hands as the means of transmitting apostolic grace and authority. In the consecration of a bishop, an archbishop and other bishops impose their hands; the ordination of priests is performed by a bishop. In the Roman Catholic Church, the solemn delivery of a chalice and paten, the instruments for celebrating Mass, to a candidate for the priesthood is part of the ordination rites.

The sacrament of penance finds its divine authority in the gospel of John (19. 21–23), where Jesus is recorded to have commissioned his Apostles to 'remit' or 'retain' sins. The evolution of this sacrament is obscure; it would appear that the Church gradually developed a system of the private confession of sins to a priest, who gives absolution and some form of penance. In 1215 the Lateran Council decreed that every Christian should make sacramental confession of his sins at least once a year.

The establishment of the sacramental character of matrimony originally encountered the hesitation of certain theologians, because it was difficult to discern how the rite was productive of spiritual grace. The epistle to the Ephesians (5. 22–23) was generally accepted as authorizing its status as a sacrament. But, although the status has been accorded in Catholic Christianity, it is recognized that matrimony differs from the other sacraments in that the parties themselves are the ministers of the sacrament; the officiating priest at the marriage

Michael Holford

Scene from the celebration of Mass in a Roman Catholic church: the Mass, Eucharist, Holy Communion or Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ himself, as first recorded in the epistles of St Paul

ceremony is only the Church's appointed witness, who pronounces the Church's blessing on the union.

In some of these sacraments the 'form' and 'matter' are difficult to discern, and their definition seems to be rather contrived. However, they have been integrated into the pattern of the Christian life, and interpreted theologically as an extension of the principle of the incarnation of Christ (see INCARNATION). Thus it is maintained that as God became incarnated for the salvation of man, so the sacraments are divinely ordained means whereby spiritual grace is mediated by material means to the human soul, indwelling a material body. But though legitimately evaluated thus in terms of Christian theology, the Christian sacraments are founded on a principle that has found expression in many other religions, both ancient and modern.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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SACRED MAGIC OF ABRA-MELIN

THIS MAGICAL TEXTBOOK influenced both MacGregor Mathers, a leading figure in the Order of the Golden Dawn, and his pupil and later enemy, Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY; GOLDEN DAWN). Mathers was told about this 18th century French manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, purporting to be a translation of a Hebrew original of 1458, by friends who thought it had been known to Eliphas Levi and Bulwer Lytton (see LEVI; LYTTON). He translated it into English as *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin, the Mage*.

Mathers explains in his introduction that the 'sacred magic' is based on the theory that the material world is the creation of evil spirits, the rebel angels who were expelled from heaven, working under the control of the good angels. Men stand midway between the angelic and the demonic, and each man is attended by a guardian angel and a malevolent demon, 'so that with him it rests to give the victory unto the which he will'. The demons can be mastered by initiates of the 'Magic of Light' in alliance with the angels, and the crucial process in the system of Abra-Melin is 'by purity and self-denial to obtain the knowledge of and conversation with one's Guardian Angel, so that thereby and thereafter we may obtain the right of using the Evil Spirits for our servants in all material matters'. Mathers and Crowley took the Holy Guardian Angel to be the higher self of the magician and the 'knowledge and conversation' of it to mean the liberation of the true self from the depth's of the magician's being and his conscious identification with it.

The book condemns the other European magical textbooks, with their paraphernalia of instruments and symbols and incantations, and their insistence on the importance of timing a magical operation in the day and hour of the appropriate planet (see RITUAL MAGIC). 'All the books which treat of Characters, Extravagant Figures, Circles, Convocations, Conjurations, Invocations, and other like matters, even although any one may see some effect thereby, should be rejected, being works full of Diabolical Inventions.' Mathers, in a footnote, deprecates this sweeping condemnation.

Enflamed with Prayer

Instead, for attaining the knowledge and conversation of the angel, Abra-Melin recommends a simpler but long-drawn and intense process of prayer and concentration. Some trappings and instruments are required, including an 'oratory' or private place in which to pray, a wooden altar, a robe of crimson or scarlet silk, a crown of silk and a wand of almond, but essentially the angel is summoned through dedicated concentration on it. 'Firstly: having carefully washed one's whole body and having put on fresh clothing: precisely a quarter of an hour before Sunrise ye shall enter into your Oratory, and place yourselves upon your knees before the Altar, turning your face towards the window; and devoutly and with boldness ye shall invoke the Name of the Lord.' The magician must give thanks for God's goodness, must confess his sins and ask forgiveness, and must pray to God to send the holy angel.

The process takes six 'moons' and the prayers must be continued day by day, with the magician concentrating on the task and austerely avoiding distractions. In the final stage, Abra-Melin recommends that a small child, clothed in white from head to foot, should be present in the oratory and the magician should enflame himself with prayer and call on the angel 'to appear and show himself unto this innocent being'.

Once the magician has achieved 'the Vision of the Angel', he can with the angel's aid summon and command the legions of evil, of whose names and offices a long list is provided. The book ends with a collection of magic squares (see MAGIC SQUARES). Each represents a wish in the magician's mind and touching it or handling it compels the spirits to give effect to it. The squares' uses range from knowing all things past and future, or having beautiful visions, or hindering all necromantic and magical operations from taking effect ('except those of the Cabala, or of this Sacred Magic'), to finding all kinds of treasures, walking on water, having armed men for one's defence, or exciting every description of hatred and enmity, discords, quarrels, contentions, combats, battles, loss and damage.

Silkeborg Museum, Denmark

The head of 'Tollund Man', with the rope with which he was strangled or hanged around his neck, discovered in a peatbog in Denmark; he was probably sacrificed to the goddess Nerthus, guardian of the fertility of the fields

An almost universal phenomenon in the history of religion, sacrifice is the main means by which man acknowledges his dependence on the unseen powers who control life and death

SACRIFICE

IN MAY 1950 a Danish archeologist, Peter Glob, was called from his classes at Aarhus University to view a body. It had been discovered at a depth of almost seven feet in a peatbog in central Jutland. 'As dusk fell,' he later wrote, 'we saw in the fading light a man take shape before us. He was curled up, with legs drawn under him and arms bent, resting on his side as if asleep. His eyes were peacefully shut; his brows were furrowed and his mouth showed a slightly irritated quirk as if he were not overpleased by this unexpected disturbance of his rest.' Naked except for a leather belt and leather cap, the rope with which he had been strangled (or perhaps hanged) 2000 years ago was still around his neck.

'Tollund Man', as this discovery became known, may have been an executed criminal, but it is more likely that he had been sacrificed to the goddess Nerthus, the guardian of the fertility of the fields. Today he rests in a Danish museum, where the tourist can join the scholar in seeing a tangible piece of evidence of the nature of ancient religion.

Not all sacrifices were of human beings. But religion in the ancient world, and in parts of the modern world, involved so many forms of sacrifice that a full account of the history of this rite would be almost indistinguishable from the history of religion as such. It is this that modern man finds so hard to understand. To be sure, the word 'sacrifice' is still used: but in such a loose way as to obscure any original meaning it may have possessed.

It is first of all necessary to recognize that for most of history man has believed

unquestioningly in the objective existence of a world parallel to his own, an unseen world peopled by gods, demons, ghosts, spirits, any one of which might influence his life in innumerable ways. Although for much of the time the workings of the unseen world were unpredictably mysterious, it was nevertheless believed that there were points of contact between the worlds, and that some degree of influence could be exerted at these points. In effect, the two worlds had to be kept in balance, and this involved man's acknowledgement of his proper position in the universe, and of his dependence on the unseen powers who controlled life, growth and death.

Sacrifice was the main means by which he sought to make this acknowledgement. A wellnigh universal phenomenon in the history of religion, it should always be understood as a mode of communication between man and the unseen powers, and an expression of his intentions in relation to those powers. The word comes from the Latin *sacrificium*, denoting a victim killed and consumed on the altar, that is, an object or animal which has been made *sacer* (holy) by being devoted wholly to one or other of the gods. A sacrifice is therefore something consecrated to a deity, either with a view to bringing about a certain result or reciprocal act from the deity's side, or with a view to establishing fellowship between man and the god.

A sacrifice may be offered as a gift, as an act of atonement or as an act of fellowship and communion, but it is not always possible to distinguish sharply between these aspects. In the ancient world, for instance, the giving of a gift was in itself a means of establishing fellowship between giver and recipient, of restoring a broken relationship and of influencing the recipient. A king or emperor could not be approached at all unless gifts appropriate to the standing of the person concerned were offered, and there is a close connection between sacrifice and prayer, where a deity is approached in a similar way.

Clearly, a good deal depends on the worshipper's prior image of the deity, and on the degree to which the god is thought to be accessible to human approach. In many primitive societies the High Gods of the sky are the most remote of the gods (see HIGH GODS), and it is interesting that in many cases no sacrifices are made to them. They may once have created the world, but are no longer concerned in its day-to-day running, which they have delegated to lesser entities; it is to these spiritual beings that the majority of sacrifices are offered. If they are believed to be dwelling in a celestial paradise, the offering will normally be made by fire, which acts as a mediator between the two worlds; in the case of gods and goddesses of the earth the sacrifice may be buried, poured upon the ground, hidden in a cave or – to return to Tollund Man – sunk in a peatbog. Offerings to spirits of the forest may be left on a tree trunk, offerings to household gods may be made on the doorstep or hearthstone. Whatever the means, the basic purpose of sacrifice remains constant: to acknowledge man's dependence on the supernaturals and so to ensure their continued benevolence.

The supernatural world, like the world of men, was believed to form a hierarchy, and it was therefore necessary for an individual to approach only those deities or spirits that occupied a position comparable to his own. In the ancient world, sacrifice to the greatest gods might be offered only by the king, acting on behalf of his people, and usually only once a year, as with the sacrifices offered by the Chinese emperors to Shang Ti (Imperial Heaven) at the Altar of Heaven in Peking. At other times, the king's prerogatives would be delegated to members of a college of priests, who would act as mediators between men and the gods, taking care that the sacrifices were performed correctly. The individual in his home might of course offer sacrifices to lesser deities without the need for mediation, just as he might approach the lesser officials of the secular state.

The blood shed by a sacrificial victim symbolized the offering of life to a deity; in some cultures it was also thought to communicate new life to the fields *Below* Illustration from *The Book of Life of the Ancient Mexicans*: the Aztecs sacrificed human beings to the sun to ensure fertility in the coming year *Right* The book of Genesis tells how God tested the strength of Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac: 16th century Italian painting showing an angel preventing Abraham from offering up his son

Musee de l'Homme, Paris

Giraudon

Sonia Halliday

Goats have been sacrificial animals in many cultures; the Greeks, for instance, sacrificed 500 in thanksgiving for their victory at Marathon *Left* Mosaic showing a goat being killed *Facing page* A goat is ritually killed in modern Nepal and its head is carried on a tray; during the October festival of Bassain the Nepalese army sacrifices more than 30 bullocks and many goats to Durga, the Hindu goddess of victory

The places in which sacrifices were offered varied greatly. In primitive cultures, they were natural sites of peculiar sanctity (caves, hills, groves and the like), or tombs of the powerful dead. Such sanctuaries as these could strictly speaking be anywhere, consecrated for the purpose by the repetition of the appropriate sacred texts. However, with the advent of urban civilization, the necessity for a focus of sacred presence in the midst of the city led to the construction of temples as dwelling-places of the gods; and it was here, on the temple altar or altars, that sacrifice was mainly offered. The temple was often conceived on the analogy of a royal court, with the temple staff as the god-king's servants. Sacrifice was made to the god as an adjunct of personal and communal requests, and also as a regular feature of the daily life of the divine court. Thus the god would be given regular nourishment as well as being honoured by the worshippers' gifts. Today the Hindu temple in India corresponds most closely to this once universal form of sacred symbolism.

Sacrifice in a Hindu temple takes very innocuous forms. Except in a very few cases, what is sacrificed is food, drink, flowers and coloured powders (although at some temples of Kali, blood sacrifices still occur). The sacrificial altar has disappeared, and the offering is simply placed before the image, before being, in many cases, distributed among the worshippers. However, it must be recognized that this is the end product of a long development. In Vedic times (beginning in perhaps 1200 BC and reaching down into the Middle Ages) the practice of blood sacrifice was common in India, and the earliest Indian holy scriptures, the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas*, form in effect a sacrificial manual of great complexity. The entire Vedic religion centred on sacrifice. It was sacrifice that regulated relations between men and gods, that maintained the order of the universe and provided the only conditions on which man's life was believed to be possible (see also HINDUISM).

An ancient Hindu text states that the gods exist by gifts from below, just as men exist by gifts from above. The idea may seem excessively naive, but there is evidence from a number of ancient religions that this was indeed believed to be the case. A well-known example is found in the ancient Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which contains a story of a great flood. The gods were utterly famished when the flood cut off their supply of sacrificial food; and when the waters finally abated and Utnapishtim emerged from his Ark and offered a sacrifice, they gathered round the smoke 'like flies'. An echo of this is found in Genesis, chapter 8: 'Then Noah built an altar to the Lord . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odour . . .'

Reddening with Blood

A similar illustration is found in the *Bhagavad Gita* (see BHAGAVAD GITA). The practice of cremating the dead had a great deal in common with the practice of offering sacrifice by fire: in each case the fire (the god Agni) acted as mediator between the two worlds, and the dead were transported to the heavenly regions, where they enjoyed the same conditions as the gods, and where the same kind of offerings could be made to them. At the opening of the *Gita*, Prince Arjuna is finding reasons why he ought not to engage in battle with his relatives in an opposing army, and observes that if one destroys a family (which he is about to do), then the rules of the family collapse; and since one of the rules has to do with the offering of sacrifices to the departed ancestors, the sacrifices will no longer be offered, and the ancestors will 'fall out of blessedness, cheated of their offerings of rice and water'.

The image of famished gods and ancestors toppling out of heaven is an intriguing one, but sacrifice was seldom conceived on this elementary level, or at least, the conception was soon outgrown. More important is the image of the temple as the court of the heavenly ruler, at which gifts were

offered as a means of establishing a relationship with the deity, and as a necessary concomitant of petitionary prayer. The rule was never to go empty-handed to one's Lord – earthly or heavenly. In ancient Iran the word *yaz* means both 'prayer' and 'sacrifice', while in the Old Testament there occurs the text: 'O Lord, in the morning thou dost hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for thee, and watch' (Psalms 5.3).

With very few exceptions, sacrifice was offered in accordance with larger or smaller cycles of time. Like prayer, it might follow a daily cycle, dictated to some extent by the 'needs' of the god or goddess to whom it was offered. But the greater sacrifices were annual, falling at various points on the calendar (which was usually lunar) or at the solstices.

Over and above the annual or seasonal cycle, there was in some cases a multi-annual cycle. For instance, at the pre-Christian temple of Old Uppsala in Sweden, the greatest sacrifices of men, horses and other animals were offered every ninth year. 'It is customary,' wrote the 11th century historian and geographer Adam of Bremen, 'to solemnise at Uppsala, at nine-year intervals, a general feast of all the provinces of Sweden . . . The sacrifice is of this nature: of every living thing that is male, they offer nine heads, with the blood of which it is customary to placate gods of this sort. The bodies they hang in the sacred grove that adjoins the temple . . . Even dogs and horses hang there with men.'

This association of blood with the sacrifice is important. Blood was once thought (not unreasonably) to be the bearer of life, and special measures were taken to consecrate to the deity the blood of a sacrificial animal or man. In the sacrifices of Viking times in the North, the main action was to take the blood and spread it on the altar and walls of the temple, and sprinkle it on the participants. One Old Norse expression meaning 'to offer sacrifice' is simply 'to redden with blood'. Similar practices are found in many other religions, including that of ancient Israel, where sprinkling blood on the altar was a preliminary to burning the sacrificial beast.

Apart from its significance as an offering of life to the deity, the blood-sacrifice also served in some cultures to communicate new life to the fields at the beginning of a new season of growth. A particularly grisly example is known from the Pawnee Indians. A 15-year-old girl was taken and for six months treated royally; then she was led from hut to hut by the chiefs and warriors, at each one being given a gift. Her body was painted, after which she was killed. Finally her body was cut up and distributed among the cornfields. The spring ritual of the Aztecs contained similar elements, while at the Toxcatl Festival a young man was sacrificed to the sun god after having spent a year as a quasi-king. In the Americas, the link between sun worship and blood sacrifice is particularly noteworthy.

However, the sacrificial practices best known in the West (at least by repute) are those of the Old Testament. These are

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not isolated phenomena: their elements can easily be paralleled from many other cultures. But for at least as long as the Jerusalem Temple stood (that is, down to 70 AD), the sacrificial system was central to Israel's worship. Jewish sacrifices were of many kinds, carefully classified and regulated by the prescriptions and prohibitions of Leviticus. There was the burnt offering, no part of which was available for human consumption, while in the peace offering, some parts of the animal were burned and others were consumed by priests and the worshippers.

The holiest of Jewish sacrifices were those known as sin offering and guilt offering (Leviticus 4.7), in which a broken relationship between man and God was symbolically restored. The entire action of these sacrifices was hedged about with the strictest taboos; for instance, the vessels in which any sacrificial offering had been contained had to be purified most carefully and even, in the case of earthenware vessels, broken.

This same theme – the restoration of the divine-human relationship – is also attested in one of the Jewish seasonal festivals, that of the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, which has been described as the summit of the Jewish sacrificial system. On this day, bullocks and goats were sacrificed, and their blood sprinkled within the Holy of Holies in the Temple – the only occasion in the year on which even the high priest was permitted to enter this innermost sanctuary. Subsequently the sins of the people were recited over a goat, the so-called 'scapegoat', which was then led away into the desert as an offering to a demon, Azazel (see SCAPEGOAT). In later Jewish practice the animal was thrown over a cliff. However, practices such as these passed out of use early in the Christian era, and today even the solemn Day of Atonement is observed penitentially, rather than sacrificially.

Blood of the Lamb

In the ancient world the practice of sacrifice would often be accompanied by a banquet at which the worshippers would share table fellowship with the god concerned. Meat was eaten; wine or some other intoxicant was drunk. The Canaanites, according to the book of Judges, '. . . went out into the field, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and ate and drank . . .' (9.27). 'Consider the practice of Israel,' wrote Paul, 'are not those who eat the sacrifice partners in the altar?' (1 Corinthians 10.18). He went on to stress that to partake of any type of sacrificial banquet was to establish a bond of fellowship with the deity concerned, even though it might be a demon: 'I do not want you to be partners with demons' (10.20).

In Scandinavia, the annual sacrifices to Thor, Odin and Freyr were accompanied by a banquet at which horns were drained to Odin on behalf of the king and to Freyr for a good year and for peace. Incidentally, drunkenness – the rule rather than the exception – might well have contributed to the sense of divinity which the worshippers undoubtedly felt on these occasions. In India, precisely this type of situation is reflected in the soma sacrifice. It is not known for certain from which plant soma was extracted, although it has been suggested that it was the mushroom *Amanita muscaria* (see MUSHROOM), but it is certain that it was the drink of the gods, that it was offered to the gods, and that it was at the same time shared by the worshippers.

Another type of table fellowship is seen in the Jewish celebration of the Passover, which is shared by the family in their home in remembrance of the release of the Israelites from Egypt. The Passover lamb was in later times sacrificed in the Temple, but the meal was an entirely separate concern; it is still the high point of the Jewish ritual year (see JUDAISM).

Early Christian teaching saw the Jewish sacrificial system (and particularly the sacrifices of purification and atonement) as having been summed up in the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the 'lamb without blemish or spot' (1 Peter 1.19) offered to take away the sin of the world. He fulfilled the role of the high priest on the Day of Atonement; 'he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood' (Hebrews 9.12). In the vision of John in the book of Revelation he was 'a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain' (5.6). In his death, therefore, the only possible offering for the sin of the world had been made, once and for all, and no further sacrifice need be made. Catholic teaching speaks of 'the Sacrifice of the Mass', and in this way incorporates much of the idea of table fellowship with the deity which accompanies sacrifice. However, there is no assertion that Christ is sacrificed afresh each time the Mass is celebrated: instead it is expressly stated that what is involved is a re-presentation, a continuation and a renewed application of Christ's death.

There have been, at least in the Indian and Western traditions, more or less elaborate protests from time to time against the view of deity which the sacrificial system implies. The Indian protest is made mainly in the interests of a metaphysical doctrine of God as pure Being, who cannot be adequately conceived in the form of an image before which sacrifices might be offered. In many areas of Hinduism, sacrifice is interpreted in a purely spiritual sense as meaning an attitude of faith and devotion.

The Western protest might be said to have its roots in the Old Testament, and to rest its case on the priority of the ethical over the ritual in man's relationship to God. Hosea may serve as the spokesman of those Israelite prophets who condemned sacrifice in one form or another (though it may be suspected that they were in fact condemning less the sacrificial system as such than either the Canaanite form of it or a purely mechanical view of its efficacy). Hosea wrote – or said – on behalf of God: 'I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings' (6.6).

Most people today would probably agree with him. The process of secularization has meant many changes in man's view of the world, not least in his conception of the supernatural, and sacrifice can have little place in a world from which the supernatural is so firmly excluded. It must remain an open question whether 'modern man' is right in this. It is certain, however, that the symbolical links with the spirit world, which sacrifice regulated and normalized, have been broken.

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Sadducees

Aristocratic and conservative religious party in Judaism at the time of Christ, frequently coudemned in the New Testament; they did not believe in life after death, the angels or spirits, or in the authority of the traditional law which had grown up round the written law of Moses; they cooperated with the Roman government which selected successive high priests from their ranks.

See ZEALOTS.

Sadhu

Indian holy man, an ascetic credited with supernatural powers: there are numerous sects and schools of sadhus; some remain in one spot for years, some live in communities, some wander about; many mutilate themselves or mortify their flesh in other ways to gain spiritual merit and power; suicide is often their preferred way of death.

See FAKIR; MADNESS; MEDITATION; SELF-DENIAL; YOGA.

Camera Press London

SAGITTARIUS

THE NINTH SIGN of the Zodiac, Sagittarius, the archer, influences those born between 22 November and 21 December; it is associated with flying and journeys to distant lands, and Sagittarians are generally enthusiastic travellers. Idealism is another of their traits, and this can range in degree from altruism to dangerous fanaticism.

'On the up and up' is a fitting motto for an individual born under this sign. A Sagittarian businessman, for instance, will never be content with a monotonous job, however well it may pay; he is always eager to progress to something bigger or, supposedly, better. England with its many honours whereby a man can be promoted in many different ways, either in recognition of services rendered, or simply in order to get him out of the way, is supposedly strongly influenced by Sagittarius.

Ambition in Sagittarians varies from the ruthless desire to amass a large fortune to the natural wish that any young person has to succeed in life. Hope is another quality which this sign exemplifies, for an individual under its influence will remain optimistic in spite of repeated disappointments. He has a strong sporting instinct, believing that it is more fun to take a chance than to be prudent, and gambling is one of the vices that the Sagittarian finds especially tempting.

The hard, slogging toil that has enabled many Capricornians, for instance, to excel does not appeal to the Sagittarian; he always feels that there must be a more amusing way of doing things rather than through sheer hard work.

People born under Sagittarius are usually interested in education, and they often enjoy teaching, particularly of games and sports. They are always pleased to see their pupils making the best of themselves.

The Sagittarian is extremely professional and knows how to succeed in life; perhaps not for nothing is there a faint touch of the royal about the sign. Women born under Sagittarius sometimes find it difficult to express affection. On the whole, however, generosity comes naturally to Sagittarians, for they believe that money and luck will never cease to flow towards them.

SAI BABA

Kenneth Grant

NOBODY EVER KNEW the real name of the Indian saint known as Sai Baba, which means 'Saintly Father', or his age or place of origin. Nor was it known whether he was of Mohammedan or Brahmin ancestry.

He appeared suddenly, in 1855 or thereabouts, in the small village of Shirdi in the Bombay Presidency. Shortly afterwards, he disappeared mysteriously for three years, and then returned to Shirdi where he remained until his death 60 years later. In that time he attracted thousands of souls by the magnetism of his presence; his followers believed him to be an avatar of the Absolute, God in human guise.

Sai Baba was one of the most eccentric and unpredictable saints known to history. He performed miracles openly; smoked foul clay pipes which seemed to play an important part in his scheme of spiritual culture; and abused and even beat his devotees, sometimes flying into rages in which he hurled imprecations at invisible presences.

He lived in a dilapidated mosque which he called *Dvaraka Mayi*, literally 'Mother of Dvaraka', the name of a heaven of Krishna. Because he believed that he embodied the spirit of Divine Motherhood, he gave this name to the mosque and said: 'Highly merciful is this Dvaraka Mayi. She is the Mother of those who place their entire faith in her.' It was in this mosque that he lived and died. He described it, aptly, as a Brahmin's mosque, for it contained an ever-burning fire, sacred to Hindus and Parsees, and a niche set in its western wall represented the Kaaba of Mecca, which made it equally holy to Mohammedans. The reconciling of Hindu and Moslem was one of the major features of Sai Baba's work, and Christians too felt at home with him.

One day, a devotee named Nanasaheb brought Baba a wooden plank to sleep on. Instead of keeping it on the floor, Baba suspended it from the rafters with old rags, and slept on it, hammock-wise. The rags were so worn that it was doubtful whether they would bear the weight of the plank, let alone Baba as well. However, he lighted a lamp at each of its four corners, then mounted it for his night's repose. Although many people watched closely to see just how he got up there, not one of them ever succeeded in doing so. One moment Baba was on the ground; the next, he appeared to be sleeping on the plank. This soon attracted great crowds, and relays of observers were posted to see if the mystery could be solved. These feats generated faith among people who were unable to accept divinity unaccompanied by 'miracles'.

Baba's devotees frequently sought permission to renovate the mosque but at first he adamantly refused to give it. One day, however, he declared that work could begin. But during the reconstruction he would often pull down what had been erected and hurl away the stones, together with building material. Such actions appeared insane to those unacquainted with his methods, but his intimate devotees understood that they had symbolic meaning, and that Baba was operating indirectly upon their spiritual natures. He was, in fact, moulding them according to a divine plan, using the stones as symbolic substitutes for themselves. When the work was finally accomplished, a great holy day was declared in Shirdi, and Sai Baba was carried in procession to the new mosque.

The sacred fire which he lit in about 1858, he tended throughout his life, and it burns to this day, having been maintained by those who survived him, and by the many newcomers who were drawn to his tomb. The ashes of the fire are said to have miraculous healing properties, and Dvaraka Mayi has become a place of pilgrimage.

Unlike many saints, Sai Baba encouraged people to ask for the fulfilment of earthly desires; in fact, he rebuked those who refrained from asking, knowing that they inwardly cherished such feelings. His idea was, no doubt, to make people realize the futility of earthly satisfaction. He gave them a surfeit, and they realized that happiness and peace did not accompany the acquisition of objects or the fulfilment of desires. He said: 'I give my devotees what they want so that they will come to want what I want to give them.' He wanted to give them true self-knowledge, but this he could not do uuless the yearning for it was stronger than for all else. To the few he taught the highest doctrine of *Advaita* (non-dualism, the doctrine that the Ultimate Principle alone has real existence), but people rarely came to him for purely spiritual guidance. He waited patiently, sometimes for years, sometimes altogether in vain, for people to want what he really wanted to give. This is not to say that he always and in all cases gave people what they asked for, or imagined they wanted – far from it; but he readily conferred the natural human blessings of children, and relief from suffering and poverty. His granting of these blessings, however, depended upon the will of the Lord, or the Great Fakir, as he called him.

Like other great spiritual luminaries, Sai Baba 'died' and was reborn into everlasting life while still in his earthly body. In 1886, when he was about 47 years of age, he said to a close devotee named Mahalsapathy, 'I am going to Allah. Take care of this body for three days. If I return I will look after it myself. If not, bury it in the open land . . .'

Shortly afterwards he was pronounced dead by the civil authorities, and Mahalsapathy was ordered to bury or cremate the body. This he refused to do, and on the third day breath returned to Baba's body, his eyes opened and he returned to life. From this time on his fame began to spread. From 1910 until his death, streams of visitors descended upon Shirdi, laden with gifts and money which Baba gave away as fast as he received it. He died in October 1918.

KENNETH GRANT

FURTHER READING: Arthur Osborne, *The Incredible Sai Baba* (Rider, 1958); A. Schulman, *Baba* (Viking Press, 1971).

Giraudon

Despite the numerous legends that surround the Comte de Saint-Germain, little is actually known about him; he achieved a position of influence in the French court of Louis XV, and is said to have appeared in Paris, after his death, prophesying the French Revolution

COMTE DE ST-GERMAIN

THE MYSTERY surrounding the Comte de Saint-Germain will probably never be resolved. It is known that he died at Eckenforde in Hesse, Germany, on 27 February 1784 – when it was reported that he seemed to be about 80 years old. But Charles of Hesse, his protector, burned all his papers for fear of their being misinterpreted; whilst the fire which broke out in the Hôtel de Ville in Paris in 1871 consumed the records of a commission set up by Napoleon III to investigate the enigmatic Count. One manuscript known to have been in the possession of Saint-Germain was entitled *Holy Magic Revealed*, but nothing is known of its contents. The secrets of the man some said was 2000 years old, and whose aliases were as many as there were jewels in his pockets, went with him to the grave. The sporadic intrusions of Saint-Germain into the realms of historical fact provide the only clues to his origin or nature.

In about 1740 Saint-Germain was brought back to France by the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who had been taken ill whilst campaigning in Germany and had found relief at the hands of Saint-Germain. He provided the self-styled Count – who admitted that the name was false – with a residence and a laboratory. Saint-Germain's reputation as a savant and a miracle-worker grew. He was not only an accomplished healer – in 1744 he cured a lady of the French court of mushroom poisoning – but a virtuoso on the violin, a notable performer on the clavichord, and a painter of very acceptable oils. These were distinguished by the extraordinary quality that his technique could give to the representation of jewellery, which glittered on the canvas as it did in real life. Saint-Germain soon ingratiated himself with Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV, who perhaps saw in this man of mystery a device to amuse the jaded king. For Louis, Saint-Germain repaired flawed diamonds, revived a girl who had poisoned herself rather than submit to her sovereign's demands, and solved a notorious murder case, apparently by clairvoyance.

The Count's influence proved unwelcome to the king's Foreign Minister, the Duc de Choiseul, who attempted to make capital out of his propensity for mystification. An impersonator named Gauve was employed to appear in the salons of Paris dressed in clothes stolen from Saint-Germain, and exaggerating the Count's known foibles. This imposter claimed to have known Christ personally – 'I always said he would come to a bad end' – and to have known others of the Holy Family, like St Anne, whose canonization he had forwarded at the Council of Nicaea. Once, when asked for information on a point of ancient history, the impersonator turned to his 'valet', who claimed ignorance of the subject: 'Perhaps the Count forgets that I have been in his service only 500 years.'

Although the Count himself sometimes claimed superhuman age, most of the more excessive claims attributed to Saint-Germain can be traced to the activities of Gauve. The disaster that cast down the Count from his position of favour was also the result of Choiseul's enmity. In 1760 the Count was sent to Holland as the king's personal emissary to organize a loan to cover the ruinous expense of the War of the Austrian Succession: whether or not it was part of his commission, he also busied himself with trying to arrange a separate peace with England. Choiseul chose to regard this as high treason, and applied for his extradition to France. Saint-Germain fled, leaving behind a sword-belt and two bottles containing an unidentifiable liquid.

The Count first tried England as a refuge, but was not made welcome. He passed through Prussia and seems to have appeared, using the name of Odart, at the side of Catherine the Great and the brothers Orlov in their successful revolt against the Tsar. After this fresh venture into politics, Saint-Germain's ambitions seem to have become less vaulting; he is reported to have been involved in establishing factories for developing colouring processes, presumably along the lines of his miraculous oil-paints. The first was in Tournai in Belgium,

Left The Comte de Saint-Germain was said to have been more than 2000 years old; a friend of the Holy Family, he was a wedding guest at Cana when Christ turned the water into wine: *The Marriage at Cana* by Veronese *Right* The aliases of the Comte de Saint-Germain were said to have been as numerous as the jewels in his pocket; a healer and miracle-worker, he was adopted by the Theosophical Society as one of their 'Masters', a band of perfected men who attempt to guide mankind

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whilst two were set up in Russia, and a further pair in Germany. Charles, the ruler of Hesse, who was the patron of every passing teacher of mystical doctrines, became Saint-Germain's enthusiastic supporter. On the Count's deathbed Charles tried to persuade him to abjure the heretical conviction that his spirit would be re-absorbed in the All.

Many speculations have been advanced as to who and what Saint-Germain was. He himself frequently claimed to be a Count Rakoczi, exiled from his native Transylvania; but of the three possible Rakoczis, all died at historically established dates. Romantic speculation made him the son of the promiscuous Queen of Spain and the tenor Mateucci.

One of the most ingenious theories connects the Count with the Stuarts. It is pointed out that the palace at which they held their court in exile was that of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in France. It is also true that in 1745 Saint-Germain was in London, and was compromised by being found in possession of a Jacobite letter. His unlikely defence – that he had been framed – was accepted. But even implication in Jacobite politics does not prove that Saint-Germain had any blood tie with the House of Stuart. It might merely have been yet another of the Count's shadowy excursions into the borderland of intrigue and diplomacy.

The 18th century was an age of traffickers in spiritual commodities, and it is as an occultist that Saint-Germain has been chiefly remembered. Heterodox and pantheistic in his religious opinions, the Count certainly possessed medical and chemical knowledge which was valued highly by his contemporaries. But although he was a Freemason, he did not interest himself unduly in the Craft. It is not unjustifiable to call him an alchemist, for he stands in the middle ground between religion and science which alchemy itself occupies.

After his death, the Count was supposedly seen in Paris prophesying the French Revolution, and in Vienna foretelling the advent of Napoleon. In the 19th century he was adopted by the Theosophical Society as one of their 'Masters', the select band of perfected men who were supposed to watch over humanity (see MASTERS). Despite all the legends which have gathered round his figure, all that can safely be said of him is inscribed on his tombstone: 'He who called himself the Count de Saint-Germain and Welldone of whom there is no other information, has been buried in this Church.'

JAMES WEBB

ST JOHN'S WORT

IN HIS *Herball* of 1525, Banckes wrote that if St John's wort was put in a house, no wicked spirit would be able to enter. *Hypericum perforatum* and its relations seem to have had this reputation for many centuries: *Fuga Daemonum* in medieval Latin, they are known as Devil's Bane in the West Country, and in France as *Chasse-diable* and also *tutsan*, from *toute-saine*, or 'all-heal'. Although the healing names seem to be partly the result of confusing the plant with another one, belief in the property of St John's wort to chase out devils is clearly ancient. It was also thought to give protection against enchantment, against 'second sight', the Evil Eye, and even death. Some people claimed to be able to see witches at their evil doings when armed with St John's wort. The plant was also said to prevent fire and divert thunderbolts.

Witches could of course use such plants, although there was the risk that the magic might recoil. Reginald Scot, writing in 1584, describes how the ghost of a hanged man was raised by using a hazel wand bound with St John's wort and with an owl's head fixed at the end.

The plant had to be treated with respect, and one tale tells how anyone stepping on St John's wort risked a fairy horse appearing beneath him and carrying him away. It would gallop all night long, and vanish at dawn leaving the rider stranded.

Perhaps because its shining golden flowers look as bright as the sun, the plant was chief among those regarded as effective against evil around Midsummer Day, when elves, fairies and spirits are likely to be especially active (see MIDSUMMER EVE). Some authorities believe that an ancient magic fire ceremony was held at the summer solstice. Although the dates do not coincide exactly, this ritual seems to have been celebrated on St John's Eve and Day (23 and 24 June) and bonfires were certainly lit on St John's Eve. The smoke was as important as the flames, for it purifies, and the magic of plants that are already powerful and protective is enhanced when they are passed through the smoke. St John's wort was chief among herbs smoked on that day. These include bracken, corn marigold, daisy, dwarf elder, fennel, ivy, male fern, mugwort, orpine, vervain and yarrow, many of which were credited with magical properties in their own right. Their only link with St John's wort was presumably that they flowered or matured around the solstice.

The herbs had to be picked before sunrise on 23 June, with the magical dew upon them. Once they had been smoked, they would be fixed to buildings, worn on the person, or made into medicine, as a protection against witchcraft and any form of evil.

The date of St John the Baptist's birth links him with the summer solstice, while Christ called him 'a burning and shining lamp'. The golden flowers of the *Hypericum* and its red juice – reminiscent of the blood shed at St John's beheading – fitted well. In Ireland the plant is often associated with St Columba, who modelled himself on the Baptist. One of its Irish names, *achlasan Chaluimchilee*, means literally 'armpit package of Columba', referring to the custom of carrying the plant, like an amulet, under the left armpit.

Red dots can be seen if the leaves are held up to the light – hence the description *perforatum* – and these are sometimes said to have been made by the Devil with a needle. They were supposed to appear on 27 August, the day St John was reputedly beheaded, and are in any case reminiscent of wounds. As a result the plant acquired the reputation of being of therapeutic value and was used in folk medicine. It was believed to cure depression, melancholy and delusions, as well as killing pain and healing wounds. A balm was made of the leaves steeped in olive oil, and a salve from the flowers, which were also said to keep illness from children and make women fertile. If a childless woman picked a flower while walking naked in her garden, she could expect a child before the next Midsummer.

St John's wort was also used in love charms. A flower picked before dawn on St John's Eve, and placed under a girl's pillow that night would make her dream of the man she would marry. In spite of all its old virtues, St John's wort represents superstition and animosity in the Victorian language of flowers.

SAINTS

THERE IS no single authoritative catalogue of saints. If one existed, it would include a remarkable diversity of men and women, rich and poor, theologians and mystics, scholars and men of action, missionaries and recluses, and some who may never have lived at all. There are saints who seem to have been figures of pagan myth originally, like Bride or Brigit of Ireland (see BRIGID) and an obscure St Hippolytus who was dragged to death by horses, as was his namesake, a son of the Greek hero Theseus. There are saints who are certainly Christian but largely legendary, like Joseph of Arimathea, who brought the Grail to Britain (see GLASTONBURY; GRAIL); saints whose real lives can be more clearly discerned behind the veils of legend, like Patrick (5th century), the missionary to Ireland, or Columba (6th century), who converted the Picts in Scotland and founded the monastery of Iona: and such fully real and formidable saints as Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), sometime Manichean heretic, theologian of immense influence and author of *The City of God*; Benedict, architect of Western monasticism in the 6th century; Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), the great philosopher, known as 'the Angelic Doctor'; 'the Seraphic Doctor', Bonaventura, Franciscan cardinal who died in the same year as Aquinas; Ignatius Loyola (d. 1556), Basque soldier and patron saint of soldiers, founder of the Society of Jesus and author of the famous *Spiritual Exercises*.

Among the ranks of the saints are the visionary St Bernadette, canonized in 1933 (see LOURDES), and a visionary of a rather different temper, St Joan of Arc (see JOAN OF ARC); the cheerful, laughter-loving St Philip Neri (d. 1595), who devoted himself to work among young people in Rome, and the French St Vincent de Paul (d. 1660), who worked among convicts and the poor; St Francis Xavier (d. 1552), Spanish Jesuit missionary in the Far East, and another Spanish Jesuit, St Peter Claver (d. 1654), missionary to Negro slaves in South America; St Mary Goretti, raped and murdered at the age of 12, in 1902, and canonized in 1950; and St Simeon Stylites (5th century), famous for living on top of a pillar (see SIMEON STYLITES).

The much-beloved St Francis of Assisi was the son of a rich Italian merchant (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI). St Teresa of Liseux (d. 1897) was the daughter of a French watchmaker and has been described as 'the most popular saint of modern times', who showed that 'sainthood is attainable by anybody, however obscure, lowly, untalented, "ordinary", by the doing of small things and the discharge of daily duties in a perfected spirit of love for God'.

The first saint of the New World to be canonized, in 1671, was St Rose of Lima (d. 1617), who cared for poor Indians and slaves. In North America, the first United States citizen to be canonized, in 1946, was St Frances Cabrini (d. 1917), an Italian nun who in 1950 was declared patroness of all emigrants by Pope Pius XII.

In the earliest use of the word, the saints were all those who followed Christ, and the use of the term to mean all faithful believers was revived long afterwards by the Puritans and later still by the Mormons. But 'saint' rapidly became a title for individual Christians who had particularly distinguished themselves by heroism, by the quality of their lives and, very importantly, by miracles. Belief in miracles is out of fashion now but through most of the centuries of Christianity a saint was someone whose close relationship with the divine order was demonstrated by the setting aside of the natural order. In theology, of course, a saint does not himself work miracles or himself answer prayers addressed to him. Miracles are the work of God and the saint intercedes with God to grant the petitions of the faithful. But at popular levels of belief saints have often been treated as minor deities in their own right, and Protestants criticize what they regard as exaggerated and superstitious reverence for them.

Many Christians have felt a strong spiritual attraction for a particular saint, to whom they have become especially devoted. Children, places, animals, plants and diseases are named for saints, and churches are dedicated to them. Each saint has a feast day once a year, on which his memory is honoured. He may be the 'patron' of a country, a city,

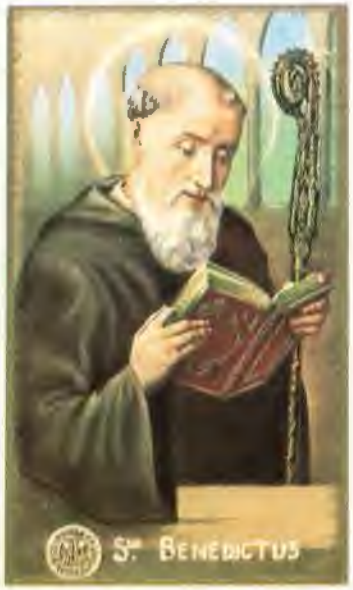
Holy men of all religions are credited with the ability to work miracles, a gift that was thought to demonstrate their close relationship with the divine order: Mogul miniature illustrating the legend of a dervish who, unable to pay the ferryman's fee, crossed a river on his praying mat

St Agnes

The parents of Agnes were rich Christians, much respected, with houses in Rome and in the country. When she was 13 years old a Roman officer, Sempronius, wished to marry her, but she refused him with the explanation that she was already betrothed to one greater than any earthly suitor. Her parents explained that refusal meant death, but Agnes repeated that she wished to give her life to Christ. Sempronius's father, a Prefect, sent soldiers to fetch Agnes and her parents. As she still refused to marry his son, he ordered her to burn incense and become a Vestal Virgin. Agnes made the sign of the cross and overthrew the image. The Prefect then ordered her to be turned naked into the street for everyone to mock at, but her hair fell round her like a cloak and an angel came and brought her a pure white robe, striking Sempronius when he tried to seize her. The onlookers then began to clamour: 'Burn the witch'. So Agnes was dragged to the market-place and a fire built round her, but, as the flames leapt up, she prayed, and as she did so the flames died down and the fire went out. Finally she was sent before a judge, who condemned her to be beheaded. Her parents buried her in the cemetery gallery on the Via Nomentana and a church in her honour has stood there since 354. This was built by Constantia, a daughter of the Emperor Constantine, after she had acquired the ground containing the tomb. This church has been constantly restored and embellished by Popes. A week after her death Agnes appeared, carrying a lamb, and told her parents how happy she was in Paradise. On her feast two white lambs are solemnly blessed in her church and sent to the Pope. They are sheared and their wool is used by nuns for weaving the pallia which are given to all Western Archbishops.

Mary Sharp *Saints in Europe*

Musee Guimet, Paris



Recognition of a person as a saint required convincing evidence of his holiness of life, and of miracles obtained through his intercession

a profession, a sport or almost any other activity, in the sense that he has a particular care for that place or activity. He may also have a sphere of influence in which he can be usefully 'invoked' or prayed to. A familiar example is the apostle St Jude, to whom people pray in situations of crisis and desperation. Another is St Anthony (d. 1231), a Portuguese Franciscan who was buried at Padua in Italy, where numerous miracles are attributed to his intercession. He is invoked to help find lost property. The other famous St Anthony, the 4th century desert hermit (see ANTHONY), became patron saint of swineherds and the smallest piglet in a litter was vowed to him (and was called an 'Anthony'): he also gave his name to an inflammation of the skin, erysipelas or St Anthony's Fire, of which many people were cured by his intercession in 1089.

A saint may have been canonized, or formally recognized as a saint by the Church after due investigation, or he may have been venerated as a saint long before the adoption of formal canonization procedures. All the earliest saints, the Virgin Mary (see MARY) and the apostles, and the martyrs who died in the persecutions during the first centuries of Christianity, naturally fall in the second category. St Peter, St Paul (see PAUL), St Mary Magdalen and many others are well known from the New Testament. About others very little is reliably known but legends about them, especially about their deaths, have attracted pious admiration and the attentions of artists. St Laurence, for example, was martyred at Rome in 258, possibly by beheading, but by the following century he was said to have been roasted on a gridiron: after a while he sardonically told his tormentors to turn him over, as he was cooked enough on one side, and he became the patron saint of cooks. Constantine the Great built a church over his grave, and Philip II of Spain dedicated to him the great palace-monastery of the Escurial, built in gratitude for a battle won on the saint's feast day.

St Sebastian became patron saint of archers and arrowsmiths because of the story that he was riddled with arrows and left for dead: he survived the ordeal only to be clubbed to death. In 826 his relics were moved from Italy to Soissons in France, where they attracted pilgrims. The martyred body of St Catherine of Alexandria, one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages, was carried by angels to the top of Mount Sinai, where the Emperor Justinian built a monastery dedicated to her. She had been condemned to be broken on a spiked wheel but it flew to pieces at her touch and she was beheaded: hence the Catherine wheel, her emblem of a wheel with projecting spikes, and also a kind of firework. She became the patron saint of wheelwrights.

Some martyrs are known for their curious or gruesome symbols. St Lucy, martyred at Syracuse in the early 4th century, was invoked against diseases of the eye and represented holding two eyes in a dish, probably because her name connected her with the Latin for 'light', *lux*. St Agatha of Catania, in Sicily, is shown bearing a pair of breasts on a dish, because one of the tortures to which she was subjected was the cutting off of her breasts. The breasts looked like bells and she became the patron of bell-founders.

Saints are distinguished by the quality of their lives, their heroism and their ability to perform miracles; those revered today include some legendary figures who may never have lived at all, as well as fully real men and women *Above, left to right* St Gemma Galgani, canonized because of the holiness of her life; St Francis de Paul, patron of Naples; St Benedict, founder of Western monasticism; St Apollonia: disfigured and martyred in the 3rd century, she is invoked against toothache, and her emblem is a forceps gripping a tooth *Right* One of the best-loved of all the saints is St Francis of Assisi; the son of a rich family, he gave away his inheritance to 'wed Lady Poverty': St Francis driving demons out of Arezzo, a fresco by Giotto in the Basilica Superiore, Assisi

Among the saints who were in some sense forerunners of Jesus are Joseph, the Virgin Mary's husband, her parents, Joachim and Anna, John the Baptist, and his parents, Zachary and Elizabeth. Another small category of saints consists of three archangels – Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. St Michael, who led the hosts of God against the rebel angels in the war in heaven, was invoked in battle or temptation and many churches were dedicated to him (see also ANGELS).

On the heels of the veneration of martyrs came the recognition of 'confessors', saints

G. Tomsich/Spectrum

who confronted life with equal heroism though not executed for their faith. Legends gathered about them too, and with the growth of Christianity there was a natural demand for biographies of the saints, with accounts of their teachings and the miracles and wonders associated with them. A very early surviving piece of hagiology, or hagiography, is the letter written by the Christians of Smyrna in Asia Minor, describing the martyrdom of their bishop, St Polycarp, who was burned alive in 155. Later, the monasteries produced lives of saints in massive profusion for the inspiration and edification of the faithful.

As the number of saints multiplied, attempts to prevent the paying of honours to unreal or unworthy or heretical Christians, and to stop the unscrupulous from making money out of their shrines and relics, eventually led to formal canonization procedures. In the Roman Catholic Church, by the 13th century the sole right to canonize was reserved to the papacy and it was accepted that recognition of a person as a saint required convincing evidence of his holiness of life and of miracles obtained through his intercession. The modern process of canonization takes the form of a law suit, in which the pope is the final judge. The case for the candidate is presented by the 'postulator' and it is the duty of the 'promoter of the faith', popularly known as 'the Devil's advocate', to draw attention to weak points in the case. Two lower ranks than saints have been instituted, those of 'venerable' and 'blessed'.

Saints and Animals

It has long been believed that certain individuals are endowed with power over animals or have a special rapport with them. In Eastern faiths as well as in Christianity there are traditions of close relationships between holy men and animals. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* enjoined avoidance of injury to other living beings, and belief in reincarnation led to the impulse not to hurt or kill an animal such as one might oneself become in another incarnation.

Throughout the centuries the desire to meditate in solitude induced men (and women, but to a lesser extent) to live in hermitages in wild places, where they came into close contact with birds and beasts. The tradition is represented in Judaism by

PROPOSI TOFIXO CRVCI

C. M. Dixon

'. . . the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised': in this description (Matthew 27.52) of the events that followed Jesus's death on the cross, the term 'saints' means those who believed in Christ: part of a 13th century enamelled casket from France, showing the saints rising from their graves. Victoria and Albert Museum

When a wild boar was discovered raiding gardens, William Firmat led it to his cell and released it in the morning, admonishing it to discontinue its destructive activities

Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

The martyrs who died in the persecutions during the first centuries of Christianity were venerated as saints *Above* St Cecilia was said to have taken three days to die after a soldier had failed to behead her properly: *Martyrdom of St Cecilia* by Naini *Facing page* St Maurice *(right)*, a Theban legion commander, was killed by the Romans because he refused to attend a sacrifice, and St Elmo *(left)* was put to death by having his bowels drawn out on a windlass: painting by Mathias Grunewald

the story of the ravens which fed Elijah (1 Kings, chapter 17).

When numbers of Christian hermits established themselves in the Egyptian desert, many stories of their friendly relationships with animals were recorded. These vary from perfectly credible accounts of lonely men making pets of wild creatures to exaggerated tales such as the fable of the two lions which helped St Anthony to bury his friend Paul the Hermit by digging a grave in the hard desert soil.

Such legends encouraged the growth of similar stories during the Middle Ages, some based on fact, others emphasizing the miraculous power of the saint more than his compassion. It is possible that, as stated in St Malo's biography, a wren nested in the habit which he had laid aside on a bush, but according to a later, exaggerated version of this theme, a blackbird nested in St Kevin's hand as he held it forth from his hermitage.

Medieval religious writers were not concerned with exact natural history but told animal stories because of their moral and edificatory value. Many of them may be regarded as parables. The legends concerning the relationships between saints and animals deal with such topics as the expulsion or taming of dangerous creatures, co-operation with them and compassion for them. Sometimes animals are represented as having an oracular function or acting as a saint's guide, protector or comforter.

A common theme is the expulsion of some dangerous or noxious animal by a saint. The creatures killed or banished vary from the dragons slain by St George and St Michael to the snakes driven from Ireland by St Patrick and birds, mice and locusts expelled by other saints. More often than not Christian saints banish, subdue or tame animals rather than slay them. St Columban did not kill the bear which had eaten an ox but harnessed it to a wagon in place of its victim. A wild boar which had been raiding gardens was kindly handled by William Firmat. He led it by the ear to his cell and released it in the morning, admonishing it to discontinue its destructive activities.

There are many legends of saints acting as benefactors by commanding predatory beasts to return their prey, such as calves and sheep. A number tell of wolves bringing back the children they had carried away.

The compassion of saints is emphasized in stories relating how hunted animals sought sanctuary with them. Another theme describes the saint's ministrations to and healing of a wounded beast. But among the legends are many telling of the compassion of animals for holy men and help given them. A buffalo cow provided milk for Cyriacus, a wolf tended the child Albeus when he was abandoned in the forest, an otter came to warn St Cuthbert after he had kept vigil in the sea, and wild beasts protected the monastery of Barking when it was attacked by the Danes. Not all such tales are fantastic. There is no reason to doubt the touching account of the old white horse on Iona which nuzzled St Columba affectionately shortly before he died.

The tradition of a happy relationship between men and animals is particularly prominent in Celtic areas, partly due to the actual experiences of hermits. Living on islands frequented by sea birds and in the woods, these men became accepted as part of the natural fauna and only a little imaginative exaggeration was necessary to make the contacts between man and animal into edifying and entertaining stories. We hear of St Ciaran of Clonmacnois living in the forest with a number of animals as in a kind of religious community, with Brother Fox, Brother Badger and others. St Colman enjoyed the friendship of a cock, a mouse and a fly. The cock acted as an alarm clock to proclaim that it was time to get up for services, the mouse nibbled his ear if the cock's summons proved insufficient, and the fly kept the saint's place in his book when he was called away from his reading. Such stories are not to be regarded as expressions of credulity but as indications of kindliness and a sense of humour.

The theme of men and animals, especially birds, praising God together constantly appears in Christian literature. Irish legends, as in the narrative of St Brendan's voyage (see BRENDAN), tell of flocks of birds singing like human choirs. St Francis of Assisi not only preached to the birds but sang duets with a nightingale and a cicada. Such stories indicate the joyousness of the saints and their sympathy with wild life but others are not as naive as they might appear to be. Although the tale of St Anthony of Padua's sermon to the fish at Rimini might seem merely a far-fetched version of St

John Moss

A saint may be especially concerned with a particular city or country, or with a specific activity, sport or profession *Left* **St George is the patron saint of England and of soldiers and boy scouts. Although he is probably one of the most famous of the early martyrs, no historical particulars of his life have survived, and the well-known story of his rescuing a maiden from a dragon is a late medieval addition to the legends that surround him: St George and the dragon, a mural in Ethiopia**

Francis preaching to the birds, its significance becomes apparent when we realize that it is a veiled rebuke to the people of that town for not paying attention to his preaching. Many stories of saints and animals told in barbarous times were parables setting forth the importance of Christian compassion for all Creation – men and animals. An outstanding example is the legend that a blind dragon crawled to the foot of the pillar on which St Simeon Stylites was perched, beseeching him to cure it. He did so. As the dragon symbolized evil, the fable's teaching is that Christians should have love and pity for evil-doers.

Symbolic animals have a prominent place in Christian literature and art. In times when few could read, such symbols could convey a message at a glance. Sometimes the animal emblem of a saint represents his outstanding virtue or his victory over temptation. St Anthony is shown with a pig to indicate his austere life and opposition to all greed and sensuality. Often the representation in visual art is a reminder of some story told of the saint. A lion lies beside St Jerome because, as in the story of Androcles, he is said to have befriended one of these beasts which came to him in pain. He extracted a thorn from its paw. St Gertrude, the patron saint of mouse and rat catchers, who is said to have banished hordes of mice, appears in art with mice running up and down her distaff.

In general, Christian legends record and inculcate a fellow-feeling for animals. Compassion for them is set forth as a natural extension of Gospel teaching concerning the importance of love. Only now is it being tardily recognized that the unwise exploitation of nature menaces the good life but the significance of the Christian tradition of saints and animals is that animals are entitled to compassion. Man degrades himself if he fails to realize their interest, beauty and claims on his sympathy.

(See also CATHERINE OF SIENA; CURÉ OF ARS; FRANCIS DE SALES; ICONOGRAPHY; JOHN OF THE CROSS; RELICS; STIGMATA; TERESA OF AVILA.)

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The hysterical accusations of two young girls triggered off a witch-hunt in a New England village which is one of the best documented and most famous of all such outbreaks

SALEM WITCHES

THE SALEM WITCH-HUNT of 1692 is perhaps the most famous of its kind, at least in the English-speaking world. It was the greatest in scale, continuance and numbers of people involved of any witch-hunt to take place in America, and therefore has naturally attracted much attention from Americans. By comparison with central European countries, however, the proportions of the outbreak were not remarkable, and the unique feature of the Salem scare is that it ended as suddenly as it began. There was a public revulsion of feeling during the later trials, none of the later suspects were punished, and a heated controversy broke out on whether there ever had been any witchcraft in the community at all, or whether the whole affair had been a tragic delusion.

Because of this controversy, the whole story is unusually well known. The easy accessibility of information about this particular scare can be a temptation to students of the subject who want to examine a typical case in detail; it has to be realized that more is known about Salem than about most such cases precisely because Salem was untypical.

The panic arose in Salem Village, Massachusetts, a rural community some distance out of Salem proper (and since renamed Danvers). It began among a group of eight girls, aged 11 to 20, who in the winter of 1691-2 used to meet in the back premises of the minister's house, in the company of the minister's slave, Tituba. Everybody has always assumed, reasonably, that Tituba stuffed their impressionable heads with tales of African magic (she came from Barbados and may have been born there, but this would make little difference). Unfortunately there is no trace of any specifically African, or West Indian, superstition in the stories the girls told later, or at least in those which came to be recorded.

These sessions ended by driving Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam, aged 11 and 12, into what was evidently a hysterical illness. Abigail, the youngest of the eight girls, was related to the minister, Mr Samuel Parris, and lived in the house, so she was more exposed to Tituba's influence than the others. The two girls moaned and shrieked for no apparent reason, grovelled and writhed on the ground and occasionally acted as if they believed that they had been transformed into animals.

These symptoms began to spread through the child population of the settlement. The adult community seem to have realized at once that the girls were bewitched, but Mr Parris (who was doubly involved, in his private and his religious capacity) was unable to discover who was bewitching them. He even called in a local Indian medicine-man to practise his arts and to reveal the culprit. Eventually, however, at the end of February 1692, Abigail and Ann were able to name three of their tormentors. These were Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne. The two last, like most of the people accused early on in the witch-hunt, seem to have been unpopular in the settlement and already distrusted by the Puritan leadership. Later on, the children seem to have cared less whether their accusations were plausible.

At this stage, everybody in authority was disposed to take them very seriously. The magistrates had the women arrested on 1 March, and examined them in the presence of their accusers at a special public session for which they borrowed the church. The two Sarahs denied everything, but Tituba produced an imaginative confession in which she named several more people as instruments of Satan. The afflicted girls duly went into paroxysms in the presence of the people named as witches.

Parody of Holy Communion

Tituba's confession probably saved her life. She was never brought to trial, though she was confiscated from Mr Parris and eventually sold to defray court costs. Sarah Osburne died awaiting trial. Meanwhile the list of suspects grew. Abigail and Ann were still the most active accusers, but other girls were joining in, and some of the accused followed Tituba's example. None of those who confessed, and implicated others, were executed. Those who protested that they were innocent included some whose innocence, in the ordinary way, would have been taken for granted. They included a minister of religion, Mr George Burroughs, Martha Corey who was a church member in good standing (not a particularly common distinction in early Massachusetts), and Rebecca Nurse, an invalid of unsullied reputation. Naturally there were a few old villagers who had always been suspected of witchcraft: Bridget Bishop and Susanna Martin had old suspicions brought up against them when they were tried.

The governor, Sir William Phips, appointed a special commission of judges to sit in the town of Salem (not the village) in June. Bridget Bishop was condemned and executed at once (she was one of those later rehabilitated), and then the court got down to its serious work of detecting the tormentors of Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam. The girls were apparently thrown into fits by the near neighbourhood of any witch, but could be temporarily relieved by a touch of her hand. The prominence given to this method of proof is one of the unusual features of this case. Obviously the judges had great faith in it. Early on, Rebecca Nurse against whom there was no evidence at all, was found not guilty; but the court went to the unheard-of length of over-ruling the jury. She was hanged, together with Sarah Good, Susanna Martin and three others, on 19 July.

Others besides the jury had misgivings, but those who expressed them were likely to draw accusations down on their own heads. This was probably the real offence committed by Martha Corey, Rebecca Nurse's sister May Easty, and the deputy-constable John Willard who refused, shortly after the beginning of the trials, to make any more arrests. All three were executed. Salem Village, that summer, was in the full grip of panic, and the fever was spreading. Abigail and Ann had taken to accusing people at a distance whom they knew only by name. One of these, a Mrs Cary of Charlestown, did not wait to be arrested but came to Salem with her husband and sat among the public in court. The children were quite unaffected by her presence until they casually learned who she was, when the usual fits followed. (She was arrested, but survived the panic and was released.) The authorities of the town of Andover deliberately invited some of the afflicted children to visit the place and see if any of the local inhabitants were witches. They found several.

The court naturally wanted to find out what witches did besides throwing children into fits. In this they were not very successful, presumably because their star witnesses were interested in little else. Part of the case against George Burroughs, however, was that he had performed an infernal parody of a Puritan Communion service – a faint, distant echo of the European tales of the sabbath and Black Mass. He was executed on 19 August along with John Willard and the first of the Andover crop. The General Court of Massachusetts passed a special Act of Attainder to deprive him of his clergy status – a procedure nearly, if not quite, unique on American soil.

Pressed to Death

Another incident, believed to be unique in American history, occurred in September when Giles Corey, Martha's husband who was then over 80, was pressed to death for refusing to plead to the indictment. Under common law, at that date, a prisoner could not be tried until he consented to plead 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. If necessary, he was induced to do this by being tied on his back on the floor of the cell while weights were piled on his chest. If he died under this treatment he died uncondemned; his goods were not forfeit to the state and his will could be executed.

Martha, with Mary Easty and six others, was hanged a few days later on 22 September. By this time the death roll was 20, and something like 200 people had been arrested. Boston jail as well as Salem was used, but even so the overcrowding must have been severe. This may explain the fact that a further large number of accused persons – estimated at another 200 – were never arrested despite the prejudice against them. The girls were still producing new names, but they had run out of people they knew and were reduced to accusing people they had merely heard of – including colonial notabilities such as the governor's wife and the president of Harvard.

Governor Phips had been away from the colony for much of the summer, and came upon this situation when he returned. In October he cancelled the special commission and the hearings came to an end, the remaining prisoners being remanded till December, when the ordinary courts acquitted the majority of the accused and the governor pardoned the rest. The revulsion of public

feeling was apparently complete. The General Court repealed the Act of Attainder on Burroughs. In Salem Village, the magistrates who had begun the inquiry made a public admission of error amid general tears and lamentations. Colonial America never again dared to carry out the death sentence for witchcraft.

Counterblast to Scepticism

There had been some bold doubters all along, and now there were many. Traditionally, Thomas Brattle, a merchant of Boston, has been remembered as the leading champion of reason. It should be realized that nobody, or hardly anybody, as yet disputed the reality of witchcraft. Brattle's main contention was that people under diabolic influence were unreliable witnesses. There had been argument before the court on the extent of Satan's powers and how they could be tested; theological reasoning had been brought to bear as well as mere folklore beliefs. There was argument back and forth on whether Satan could assume the form of a human being who was not in his service. At first it was held that he could not, and one John Proctor was convicted and hanged largely on the evidence that he had appeared to plague a child in her dreams. Later it was realized that such appearances proved too little, and this kind of evidence was ruled out before the end of the trials.

As soon as people were brave enough to say so, it also became clear that Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam could have been inventing their accusations and simulating their afflictions, and if this were so it would explain some of their blunders, such as their failure to identify Mrs Cary after accusing her by name. Scepticism was growing, even if by modern standards it was a very limited scepticism.

This alarmed the illustrious Cotton Mather, who in 1693 published *The Wonders of the Invisible World* as a counterblast. Mather was one of the outstanding figures of the New England religious scene, as his father Increase had been before him. He was a man of great influence and authority, and he believed in the Devil. He had written in denunciation of witchcraft before the Salem scare started, and had probably helped to form the opinions of the local preachers and magistrates. He took an active interest in the persecution, and after it was over he was concerned to defend it. He was prepared, eventually, to admit that there had been miscarriages of justice in individual cases; for instance, he agreed that the evidence of apparitions, which had hanged John Proctor, had been given too much weight. He insisted, however, that Satan had really been specially active in Salem Village that summer; that on the whole the afflicted were genuinely afflicted and the accused justly accused; and that the effect of the persecution was beneficial in purging the community of evil elements and winning for it the favour of God. Mather had started a literary debate on what really happened in Salem Village and why it happened, that has never completely ended.

Frontier Society

To many, the fascination of the Salem case lies in the fact that it arose in a Puritan colony that should have been exceptionally free both from witchcraft and from belief in it. This view is based on an initial assumption that Puritanism is intellectually more advanced than other forms of religion, coupled with the further assumption that the early settlers in Massachusetts were moved to settle there by religious zeal, so that both the mental and moral climate of the country should in fact have been unusually healthy.

There are various ways of reconciling this apparent paradox, the simplest being to say that it was, after all, quite a small witch-hunt by European standards, and soon over. Both assumptions can, moreover, be questioned, though where Massachusetts and its special brand of Puritanism is concerned the first will stand up better than the second. Englishmen emigrated for a wide variety of reasons and were not carefully screened for religious zeal, as the small, indeed the tiny, proportion of full church members shows.

During the Salem witch-hunt, more than 200 people were arrested as witches, and 19 were executed for practising witchcraft; although there were people who had misgivings, they found that they were likely to draw accusations down on their own heads if they expressed them: poster illustrating the events at Salem in 1692, for sale at the Witch House, a museum in Salem

Some have carried the argument to the opposite extreme, and maintained that there is something about Puritan communities which makes it particularly likely that they will suffer from witch scares. It has been said that Calvinists, taking the Devil more seriously than other Christians, were usually more afraid of witchcraft, and were at this time active in promoting witch-hunts in Switzerland and Scotland as well as New England. This certainly seems to be true up to a point, but the truth needs to be greatly exaggerated before it will prove the argument.

Some commentators have drawn attention to the fact that the colony was going through a trying time politically. King James II had tried to deprive the settlements in New England of their autonomy, which would have brought the Puritan experiment to an end. The Revolution of 1688 in England had removed him in the nick of time, but it was still uncertain what the colonial policy of the new government would be. This uncertainty, the argument runs, bred the kind of atmosphere in which hysteria could easily thrive, and the affair of the Salem witches just happened to be the hysteria that came along. This may well have been a factor, but it would surely have had more effect on the authorities in Church and State, on the judges and Cotton Mather, than on the children and farm-servants among whom actual hysteria first manifested itself.

A further question, which is unlikely ever to be finally resolved, is how far Abigail and Ann and the other girls were genuinely suffering from an illness of hysterical origin, or whether they were practising conscious deceit in some kind of vicious game. It must be accepted that despite the abundance of written material on the Salem witches we do not know the answers to these questions.

(See also HYSTERICAL POSSESSION.)

ELLIOT ROSE

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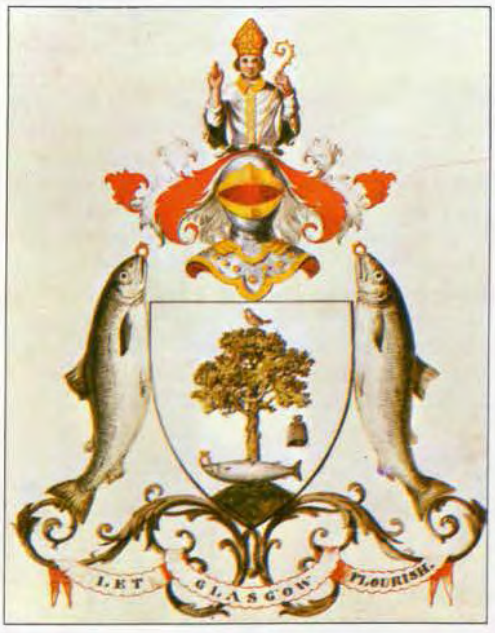
SALMON



St Kentigern, the patron saint of Glasgow, is said to have recovered a lady's lost ring from the belly of a salmon, and the arms of the city include the salmon with the ring in its mouth

IN BOTH its natural and supernatural aspects the salmon has always been a fish of mystery. Until comparatively recently all that was known about its habits was that it hatches out in rivers and makes its way to the sea; that it later returns to the river as a grilse and spawns there, after which it is known as a kelt. Salmon are found in the rivers and seas on either side of the Atlantic, and in parts of North America they inhabit certain land-locked lakes.

Salmon lore is essentially a part of the folklore of fish in general (see FISH) and, in common with all other fish, the salmon is symbolically speaking a 'psychic being'. Extremely prolific, it was a symbol of abundance; and it represented philosophical retirement because of its mysterious journeyings to the sea. It also symbolized prowess in battle, a result of its ability to overcome adversity in leaping up seemingly impassable rapids. But the salmon is primarily the 'fish of wisdom', and it crops up in this guise time and time again, in ancient and modern traditions.

All communities dependent upon salmon for their livelihood have created special ceremonies associated with the fish harvest, varying from individual acts such as spitting on the fish-hook to collective rites in which the sea is formally blessed. A number of extremely interesting customs, usually ecclesiastical in character, are connected with the first fish of the season, as with the first fruits on land. At Christchurch in Hampshire the Church retains the right to the first salmon, but the more interesting customs of this type are found further north, where salmon fishing continues to be a major industry. In Norham, on the river Tweed in Northumberland, the nets were blessed by the vicar, after which the first of the catch was handed over to him as rent. Tea parties, known as salmon kettles, are held at Tweedsmouth, the border town opposite Berwick-on-Tweed, a custom replacing the trade fair that was formerly held to celebrate the season's first fish. A Salmon Queen is now elected, instead of the ancient Master of Revels.

A salmon is incorporated in the arms of the city of Glasgow and in certain ecclesiastical seals. The fish's religious associations are also reflected in a legend of St Kentigern, patron saint of Glasgow, who recovered a lady's lost ring from the belly of a salmon. The fish and ring theme is widespread.

References to mystical salmon are found in Welsh mythology where it assumes its traditional role of fish of wisdom. According to one anecdote a salmon is said to have become notorious for winking at married women who gathered on the banks of the sacred stream Alum. The salmon of the Dwyfach and Dwyfer in Merionethshire voluntarily surrendered to the fishermen every Christmas morning, freely permitting themselves to be removed from the water.

The salmon was known as the food of kings among the ancient Irish and it was forbidden to those not of royal birth. The fish is prominent in Celtic lore as Eo Feasa, the fish of knowledge and it was said to confer prescience when even a thumb was laid upon it. As such it became the emblem of the Irish folk hero Finn (see FINN) who, after being presented with a specimen, ate its flesh and acquired not only foreknowledge but 'magic counsel'; and in allusion to the courage of the salmon, his physical powers were said to have been supernaturally strengthened.

The European fishing communities of the North American continent brought some of their native customs to the land of their adoption, but the more ancient forms of salmon legend are to be found in the traditions of the North American Indians. The Kwakiutl tribes of British Columbia believe that twins are transformed salmon and will never permit them to venture near the river in case they should become fish again. Like twins all over the world, they are credited with supernatural qualities, in this case the ability to summon salmon into the nets of the waiting fishermen by the power of their voices. This has much in common with the Indian custom of 'preaching to the fish', which was a form of magical incantation.

Welcoming the Salmon

The salmon harvest was of enormous importance to Indian tribal economy and was associated with elaborate ceremonies. The Karoks of California had their own special salmon dance to ensure a good catch, and in the north the Alaskan Indians engaged in magical practices in connection with the first fish of the season. In British Columbia, in the middle of the 19th century, crowds of Indians would assemble for a great festival in anticipation of the arrival of the first fish in the Columbia River in early June. At the sentries' cry of 'salmon' the community would abandon its merrymaking and hasten to the river banks to capture the fish, which were cured as fast as they were landed.

The Indians of this territory invented an intriguing 'fairy tale' to account for the presence of the huge rapids that the fish have to climb in order to attain the river's upper reaches. It relates how in the remote past an evil spirit, seeking to injure their people, caused an earthquake which obstructed the salmon by blocking the course of the river. The Indians, not to be outwitted, constructed a salmon ladder which the fish climbed in their ascent, resting on the ledges to recover from their exhaustion. These ledges were set with salmon traps by the Indians who were able to triumph over the wily evil spirit in this way.

The symbol of incorruptibility and therefore of eternity, salt is a powerful defensive weapon against the powers of evil

SALT

REGARDED AS an essential part of the diet, salt was bought and sold even in Neolithic times, and labourers and soldiers in ancient Rome were paid partly in salt. The modern word 'salary' is in fact derived from the Latin *salarium*, 'salt allowance'.

Necessary for the preservation of food, salt is the symbolic enemy of decay and because it represented life and incorruptibility it became, like blood brotherhood, a primary ingredient of social relationships, so that to eat another man's salt created a sacred bond with him. Yet, because it is sterile, salt could also be a symbol of barrenness. After the destruction of Carthage the victorious Romans sowed salt upon the site to symbolize its sterility. The biblical 'cities of the plain' lie buried under or near the salt and utterly Dead Sea. Lot's wife was transformed into a pillar of salt.

As with all other social essentials, such as iron, salt was supposed to be of supernatural origin. In a Finnish myth the sky god Ukko casts a spark of fire from the heavens into the sea which turns to salt. As a factor in communion with the divine, salt occurs fairly frequently in religion. The eternal bond between God and Israel was the covenant of salt (2 Chronicles 13.5), and the Aztecs worshipped a goddess of salt.

The universal sanctity which salt has acquired makes it a powerful defensive weapon against the powers of evil. The Christian symbol of perfect understanding and divine wisdom, salt is also an element of the holy water used in exorcism, and in baptism, which is itself a form of exorcism.

Salt's virginal quality, representing the principle of incorruptibility, was fully recognized by black magicians, and necromancers took particular care never to take salt with their bread before raising the dead, as this would have nullified their spells. The old alchemists regarded salt as representing the principle of body, the female and earth (see MERCURY). White salt was one of the ingredients they used in their attempts to manufacture gold.

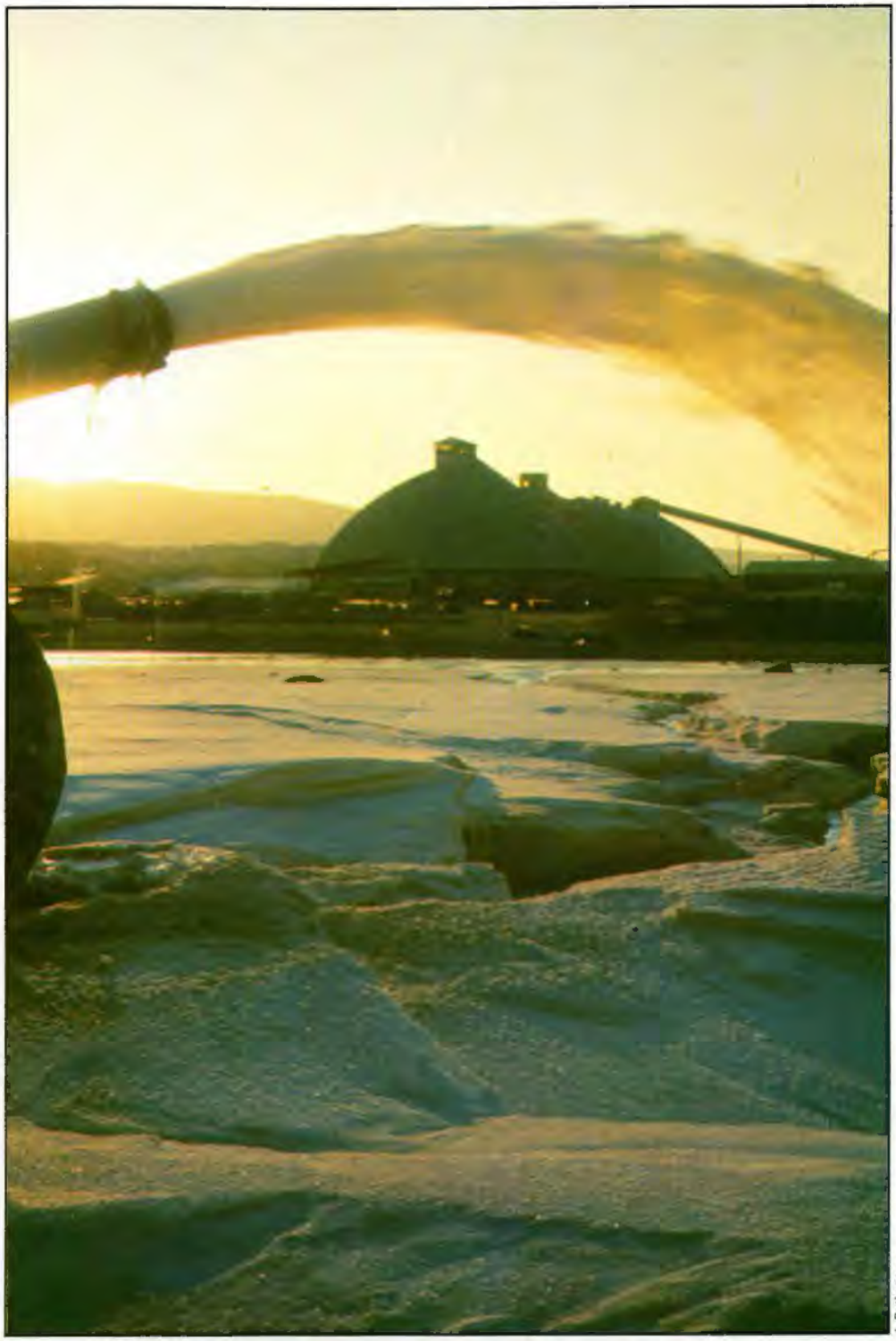
Salt has played an important role in customs associated with birth, marriage and death. A pinch of salt is still sometimes left in a baby's cradle to protect it against evil until it has received the protection of baptism. On its first visit to a new house salt was placed in the child's mouth, and parents sometimes immersed the child's first extracted tooth in salt before casting it into the fire.

Purging and Preserving

The sexual symbolism of salt was once of great importance, and the word was at one time in common use as a euphemism for copulation, amorousness and licentiousness. Iago refers to passion as being 'hot as monkeys, salt as wolves in pride' in *Othello*. At Irish weddings a plate of oatmeal and salt would often be presented to the bride and bridegroom, although this may well have been a device to ward off the Evil Eye.

Salt plays its part in the rites of death, protecting the newly departed from the evil spirits that are said to be particularly active when the soul hovers between earth, heaven and hell. The ancient Irish placed a plate of salt upon the corpse, and in the United States a variation of this same superstition required salt to be left in the room in which someone had died 'to purge the sins of the deceased'. Salt was frequently left in the coffin to symbolize the soul's survival. In these death rites salt is seen as the symbol of incorruptibility, and therefore of eternity.

It is used in the New Year custom of first footing when a dark man representing luck brings gifts, often of salt, to the householder, signifying prosperity during the coming year (see FIRST). In the United States householders brought bread and salt with them when they entered their new home for the first time, to ensure a happy tenancy. The spilling of salt, particularly at the meal table, was held to be an unlucky omen since this threatens the spirit of health and



I. Ruthven

Because salt is sterile, it was a symbol of barrenness; Sodom and Gomorrah, the biblical 'cities of the plain', are said to be buried under or near the salty Dead Sea, and Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she disobeyed the angels' command not to look back at Sodom: factory near the modern village of Sodom

renders one vulnerable to the forces of evil. In Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting *The Last Supper* Judas is shown accidentally upsetting the salt. To neutralize the ill-effects it is necessary to take a pinch of the spilled salt with the right, or good, hand and cast it over the left, or sinister, shoulder into the Devil's face.

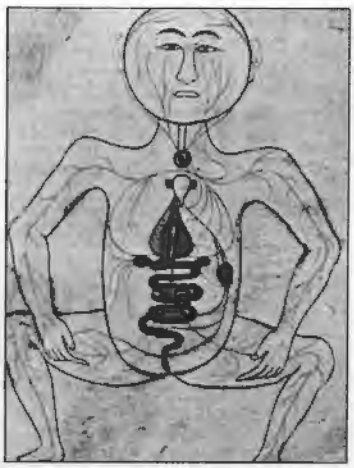
Salt played an active part in ancient agricultural rites in various parts of the world. In medieval England 'holy salt' was in common use as 'a remedy for fields that would not grow', being poured into a hole bored in the wood of the plough.

Total abstention from salt was obligatory among certain South American Indians during the planting of the maize crop, and also among primitive hunters before they embarked on the chase. Among fishermen the word salt was often tabooed, since it was the symbol of the sea. In the initiation rites of Scottish fishers a boy was made to eat a salt roll, beer then being flung into his face. Fishermen sprinkled their nets with salt, perhaps as an offering to the sea gods but certainly to ensure the safety of both boat and crew, and ships' carpenters often placed salt between the planks for the same purpose.

At one time the demarcation line between those within the family circle and their special guests, and menials and casual visitors was the salt cellar. People of distinction sat above it, while those of inferior rank were placed 'below the salt'.

Special people were employed to be custodians of salt and they shared to some extent in the mystical attributes of the commodity they handled. The salters of medieval times were of immense importance socially because of the custom of slaughtering all farm animals not required for stock at the onset of winter, and preserving the meat by salting. The salters were zealous in guarding the community's health. If they discovered that meat had been inadequately preserved, they made sure the offender received a thorough flogging, salt being rubbed into his wounds to teach him the efficacy of proper salting. In view of their protective role it is not surprising that the Company of Salters were described as 'especially blessed by God as preservers of the food of the poor'.

Samadhi
The eighth and last stage of yoga, 'a state of super-consciousness, which is the supreme goal of yogic meditation'; a condition of unqualified blessedness, of contemplation of and participation in the bliss of the Absolute, and apprehension of the oneness of the self and the Infinite.
See BREATH; KUNDALINI; MEDITATION; YOGA.



Samson
Old Testament hero, whose story is told in the book of Judges, chapters 13 to 16; famous for his gigantic strength, which was connected with his unshorn hair; betrayed by his wife, Delilah, to his enemies, the Philistines, and blinded by them, he killed himself and his tormentors when they made sport of him, by throwing down the pillars of the building.
See HAIR.

Sanctuary
A holy place; an area or building set aside for the worship of a god, or a particnlarly sacred area within it; in Christian churches, the area nearest the altar; a place of refuge, because by medieval Chnrch law fugitives from justice could not be arrested in a church.

SASQUATCH

THE YETI or 'abominable snowman' that haunts the Himalayas has a counterpart in the Rocky Mountains near Canada's Pacific coast. The mountain Indians call him the *sasquatch*, 'hairy man'.

Indian legends picture these creatures as giants, eight or nine feet tall, covered with thick hair, and with wide, flat noses and immensely long arms. They are said to live in remote mountain caves, and to gather especially in the region of Morris Mountain, 60 or so miles inland from Vancouver. The legends add that the sasquatch is aloof, fierce and dangerous.

Not many years ago an Indian from the Morris Mountain district told of being chased out of the forest and all the way home by a sasquatch, which even swam up-river after his canoe. And in the same region a young Indian woman created something of a sensation with a far-fetched tale of having been abducted by a sasquatch, and forced to live with it in a cave for a year.

Rather more credibly, in 1941 a mining engineer named Roy King reported seeing a sasquatch in the mountains. And more recently two Vancouver teenagers came face to face on a forest trail with a man-like monster that seemed huge and hairy.

So the sasquatch legend is still very much alive. And it is widespread; this Canadian cousin of the yeti has cousins of his own. Hairy, sub-human giants appear in the legends of a great many mountain Indians throughout both North and South America. In fact, the theme of the wild man, or wild half-man, is universal, and ranges from the satyrs and centaurs of ancient Greece to the Tarzans of modern fiction.

Several searches have been made for the sasquatch, but its mountain home is difficult terrain broken by impassable gorges and ravines. The searches have never lasted long, nor have they proved anything. Some caves were found near Morris Mountain that showed signs of past habitation, though whether by long-dead Indian or hairy hominid, no one can say. Nevertheless the locals say that the fires of the sasquatch can still be seen on Morris Mountain.
(See also ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN.)

SATANISM

'SATANISM advocates practising a modified form of the Golden Rule. Our interpretation of this rule is: "Do unto others as they do unto you".' This comment from *The Satanic Bible* by Anton Szandor La Vey, founder of the Church of Satan in San Francisco, neatly illustrates the principle on which Satanism is based. Things which are backwards, upside down, the wrong way round, are symbolically connected with the Devil as the power which seeks to overturn the order and worship of God, and the essence of Satanism is the reversal of Christian and conventional values. It is now the Christian God who is evil and the Enemy who is good. The Prince of Darkness is the true Lord of Light, Lucifer, 'light-bearer'.

Christian moral values are also stood on their heads. For the Christian virtues of compassion, loving-kindness, patience, self-restraint, the Satanist has nothing but contempt, as dreary, downtrodden, spiritless ideals. To Christian otherworldliness he opposes this-worldliness, the ruthless struggle for power and pleasure on earth, and in and through the flesh. The weak, the chaste and the merciful he disdains, and he devotes himself to dominance, cruelty, dirt, lust, and all fierce and passionate emotions.

Perhaps the two Christian virtues which most infuriate the Satanist are humility and purity. To humility he opposes pride for which, after all, his Master was expelled from heaven in the first place. To the Christian tendency to regard the body and its passions as sinful and unclean, he opposes an uninhibited delight in all pleasures of the senses – and the more perverse and disgusting to the conventional mind, the better. Not that Satanists are always consistent, any more than other people are. They can be found, for instance, insisting that all forms of sexual indulgence are good provided other people are not hurt, while in another context they are preaching the delights of brutality.

The Galilean Serpent

Satanists are few and far between, since not many people want to turn all of society's accustomed standards upside down. Modern Satanism has received much of its impetus from 19th century literature, from the 'decadent' enthusiasm for scarlet vices and unnameable sins, from the rebellion against Victorian bourgeois values, especially in relation to sex, from the fierce hatred of Christianity. Swinburne, for example, in a letter to William Rossetti, expressed his disgust at the Christian faith of the latter's poetess sister, Christina: 'Good Satan! what a fearful warning against the criminal lunacy of theolatry! It is horrible to think of such a woman – and of so many otherwise noble and beautiful natures – spiritually infected and envenomed by the infernal and putrefying virus of the Galilean serpent.' Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) grew up against this background and eagerly welcomed its hatred of Christianity, to which his own fundamentalist upbringing had in any case inclined him. Crowley appears as Althotas in an unfinished book by J. F. C. Fuller, the strategist and military historian who was a disciple of Crowley in his youth, where he says that he agrees with Shelley and Nietzche in defining Christianity as the religious expression of the slave-spirit in man: 'it is Christianity considered as slavishness, as fear of all sorts, as altruism – that exquisite refinement of fear which we call sympathy – that I evidence.'

Crowley carried his loathing of Christianity to the lengths of baptizing a toad as Jesus Christ and solemnly crucifying it, reviling it in its agonies. But though he identified himself with Satan and Antichrist, after his death a group of Satanists in Latin America conducted a ceremony of execration against his memory. They made an effigy of him in mud and wax, which they befouled and burned, bitterly reproaching the 'wickedest man in the world' with not having been wicked enough.

The root ideas of Satanism go far back beyond the 19th century to the Gnostic sects (see GNOSTICISM). They were not Satanists either, for far more people have been accused of worshipping the Devil than have ever actually done so, but they saw the world about them as profoundly evil, as the real hell, and life on earth as a sentence served in a prison. If the world is evil, then the power which made it and rules it must be evil too, and some of the Gnostics identified this evil power as the God of the Jews, who is described as creating the world in the book of Genesis and whose behaviour in the Old Testament they found impossible to reconcile with Christian principles. The good God, they said, lives far away in some distant heaven and we on earth are in bondage to the evil Yahweh.

The Black Mass is a sacrament of matter and the flesh, instead of spirit, and an adoration of the power opposed to Christianity: celebrating it on the body of a naked woman is a comparatively modern refinement

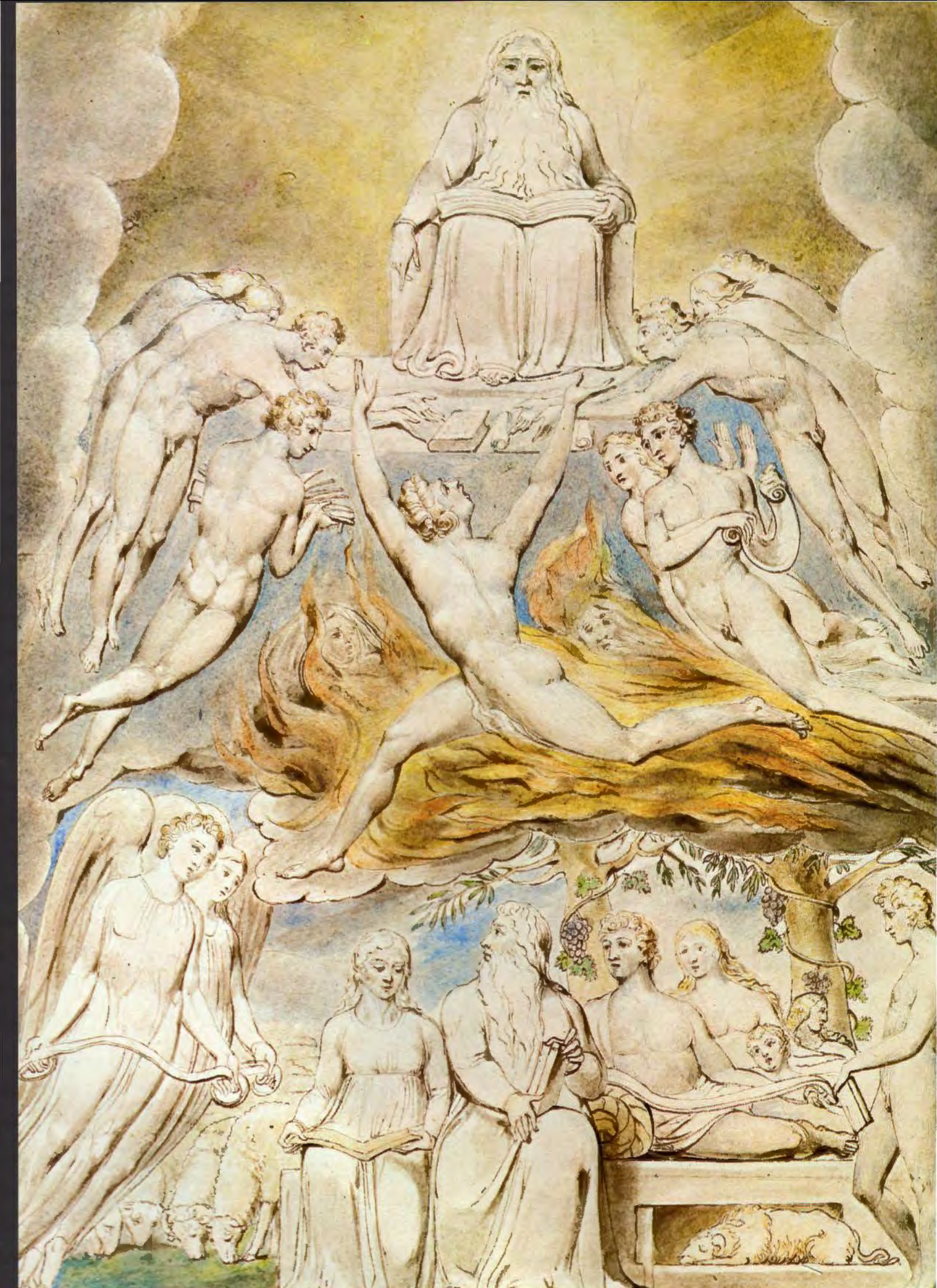
The God of this World

They could draw some support for this opinion from the New Testament. In the story of the temptation in the wilderness, the Devil offers Jesus 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them' (Matthew, chapter 4), with the clear implication that the gift is his to make. In St John's gospel (12.31) the Devil is called 'the ruler of this world', and St Paul calls him 'the god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4.4). And the belief that this evil god of the world was Yahweh could have been supported from another passage in St John (8.44), where Jesus tells the Jews that their Father is not God but the Devil.

Gnostics generally regarded Jesus as a Saviour sent by the good God to rescue men from enslavement to evil, but the identification of Yahweh as the evil power naturally turned the Old Testament upside down. Patriachs and prophets and servants of Yahweh turned into villains, and Cain, Esau, the Sodomites and other opponents of Yahweh became heroes. The serpent of Eden was now a messenger from the good God, sent to bring Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil so that their eyes would be opened to the evil nature of Yahweh's creation. Some Gnostics, or so their Christian antagonists said, attacked Jesus as the evil Son of the evil Father and glorified Judas Iscariot for betraying him.

If God the Father was an evil deity, then it could be deduced that the Ten Commandments, and the other moral rules laid down by him were also evil, intended to keep men in subjection to him. Some Gnostics led austere lives of self-denial to disentangle themselves from the wicked world, but others were accused of attempting to escape from bondage to evil by breaking all conventional moral rules. Some said that once a man had received the gnosis, had understood the true nature of things, he could indulge in all his lusts and desires without fear of corruption. Writing in the late 2nd century, St Irenaeus accused one group of Gnostics of maintaining that the soul could only free itself from the Devil's world by exhausting every possibility of human experience, by doing 'all those things which we dare not either speak or hear of, nay which we must not even conceive in our thoughts'.

Gnostic ideas were kept alive in the East by obscure sects and were eventually transmitted into western Europe by way of the Bogomils and Cathars (see BOGOMILS; CATHARS). The Cathars identified the God of the Old Testament as the Devil, the lord of this world which he had created, the master of the human body and of all material and temporal things. They attacked the Roman Catholic Church because it



To Satanists it is the Christian god who is evil and Satan, the Enemy, who is good: they believe that their Master will eventually triumph, and look to him for power and pleasure in this world, and a happy future in the next: *Satan Before the Throne of God* by William Blake, one of 22 illustrations to the book of Job

worshipped a being they regarded as Satan, and because they considered it stained with the worldliness and materialism inevitable in the service of the Evil One. But the Church reversed the accusation and branded the Cathars as Satanists.

Perhaps some of the Cathars did reach the conclusion that if the God of Catholics was really the Devil, then perhaps the Devil of the Catholics was the true God. Certainly, the Church maintained that they did. In the following centuries the same accusation was made against other heretical groups, including the Waldensians, the Luciferans in the 13th century, and the Knights Templar in the 14th (see KNIGHTS TEMPLAR; LUCIFER; WALDENSIANS). A pattern of 'Satanist' belief and behaviour was built up, whether or not any real Satanism was involved, its essential ingredients being worship of the Devil and the reversal of Christian values. A Satanist was one who renounced Christ and his Church, and blasphemously maltreated its sacred objects, symbols and ceremonies; who adored the Devil in the form of a man or a goat or some other animal; who sang and danced in the Devil's honour and obscenely kissed his person; and who revelled in child-slaughter and cannibalism, indiscriminate sexual orgies, perversion, homosexuality and every species of crime and abomination. This same pattern of accusations was brought against the witches.

The heart and centre of the persecution of witches was that they were Satanists, that they had rejected the rightful God and given their allegiance to his arch-opponent, and that in their 'sabbaths' or meetings they worshipped the ruler of evil, carnality and filth. Some of those accused as witches do seem to have taken the Devil for their god, worshipping him as an equal opponent of the Christian God, over whom he would eventually triumph. They looked to Satan for power and pleasure in this world and for a happy future in the next, and they vilified Christ as a traitor and a cheat, who had made promises which he did not keep, and who had gone away to live in heaven while Satan remained with his faithful on earth. The fierce hatred and contempt felt for Christianity comes out in many of the confessions extorted from witches and in accounts of the Black Mass, which they were accused of performing at the sabbath, in adoration of the Devil, as a blasphemous degradation of Christian ritual and as a celebration of the flesh and matter, as against the spirit. (See also BLACK MASS; FRENCH WITCHCRAFT; SABBATH.)

In modern times Satanism appears more often in print than in real life. There is a vivid account of the Black Mass in J. K. Huysmans's novel *Là-Bas*, probably drawn from life. In his *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* Montague Summers quoted from an Italian newspaper a description of a Satanic chapel discovered in the Palazzo Borghese in 1895. 'The walls were hung all round from ceiling to floor with heavy curtains of silk damask, scarlet and black, excluding the light: at the further end there stretched a large tapestry upon which was woven in more than life-size a figure of Lucifer, colossal, triumphant, dominating the whole. Exactly beneath an altar had been built, amply furnished for the liturgy of hell: candles, vessels, rituals, missal, nothing was lacking. Cushioned prie-dieus (kneeling desks) and luxurious chairs, crimson and gold, were set in order for the assistants; the chamber being lit by electricity . . . arrayed so as to glare from an enormous eye.'

A few Satanist groups still exist, here and there, and the survival of Gnostic ideas is illustrated by a set of questions and answers issued by one of them, styling itself Our Lady of Endor Coven, The Ophite Cultus Sathanas. 'Satanism,' it says, 'is the position opposed to the worship of the force that brought the cosmos into existence as mind and matter out of the realm of pure spirit', in other words, opposed to the worship of the Gnostic evil world-maker, the Christian God the Father. Cain 'celebrated the First Satanic Mass' and Satanism 'has no conception of sin, but rather puts ignorance (the lack of the Gnosis) in the place of sin'. Members of less unorthodox faiths may be relieved to hear that Satanists hold aloof from the world ecumenical movement.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

Closely connected with the Greek Cronus, the Titan who was deposed by his sons, Saturn is generally regarded as being a cruel and gloomy god, although his festival, the Saturnalia, was a time of revelry; his sinister aspects are perpetuated in the astrological significance of the planet Saturn

SATURN

IN LITERARY presentations of classical mythology from Roman times onward, the figure named Saturn has been filled with the content of the Greek Cronus, one of the Titans who were sons of Mother Earth and who ruled before the Olympians and were overthrown by them (see CRONUS). Scholars have therefore tried to discover what kind of deity the Roman Saturnus was in origin, and why and when he was selected to be a Roman Cronus. It is a matter of some importance that in classical times the Greek Cronus seems to have been confined to myth, and hardly to have received any cult. This would be natural for a figure driven from power by his son and therefore no longer important for human destinies.

The name of Saturnus was connected by such ancient writers as Festus and Varro with the sowing of crops (*Satus*) but this derivation is doubtful. It may be Etruscan, as F. Altheim has argued: he regards it as connected with the place-name Satrium and the Etruscan clan called *Satre*. This would mean that Saturnus was the god of this clan, but that fact alone would not show what kind of god he was. Festus mentions that Saturnus's name occurs in the very ancient song of the Salii, an archaic priesthood of Rome (see MARS). His festival the Saturnalia is recorded in the earliest form of the Roman calendar of festivals. He is connected with another deity – the goddess Lua, to whom captured weapons were dedicated.

On an Etruscan bronze from Piacenza, which is in the form of a liver used in divination, the name occurs on the left or ill-omened side. But even this Etruscan origin does not exclude a close and very early connection with the Greek Cronus. Greek influence in south Italian and Etruscan religion goes back nearly to the days of the earliest Greek settlements of the 8th century BC. Why an Etruscan clan should adopt Cronus from the Greeks and rename him after itself is a question hard to answer, given his faded and mostly sinister character in Greek myth. But Greek religion of earlier stages than the Olympian mythology of Homer continued to survive in many parts of the Greek world. Its divine figures are little known, but Cronus may have been important among them.

The temple of Saturn was on the slope of the Capitoline Hill in Rome. There is little evidence from inscriptions outside the city for his cult in Italy. The festival of the Saturnalia was famous for the temporary suspension of the authority of the higher classes over the lower and of masters over slaves. Saturn, who as an exile saw the world upside-down, was the natural patron of slaves on such an occasion.

Saturn was also, rather oddly, connected with weights and measures, and the minting of coins: he was even guardian of the treasury. The Saturnian metre of older Roman poetry was a rhythm originally Greek but apparently adapted to a language of stress rather than quantity, as Latin was in earlier times. The adjective *Saturnius* had sometimes a special quality. *Saturnia Juno* means simply Juno as daughter of Saturn, as Hera was daughter of Cronus in Greek myth. *Saturnio tellus* in Virgil means Italy as a rich land reserved for the finest breed of men. But in *Saturnia regna*, 'Saturn's reign', there is much more of the Greek content of 'life under Cronus' when human life had been easier and gentler, before Zeus made it hard (see TIME).

God of Chill and Gloom

This is the usual character of Saturn in classical Latin literature. But his sinister aspect never disappeared, and in later astrological belief it became predominant. This is the origin of the word 'saturnine'.

The cruelty and crimes of the reigning Cronus, his exile at the hands of Zeus, and the gloom and despair in which he spent the rest of his days were well-known features of Greek myth, which reappeared in stories told of Saturn under classical Greek influence. To Greek myth, by the date when

Pierpont Morgan Library

Bardo Museum, Tunis/Sonia Halliday

Although the phrase 'Saturn's reign' was used to describe a time when life was easy and gentle, Saturn's connection with the Greek Cronus also makes him a god of melancholy character, full of gloom and despair: statue of Saturn, 3rd century AD

classical Latin literature arose, there had been added another element, the Babylonian lore connecting various gods with various planets. The influence of these planets on human destiny was the influence of these gods transmitted by a particular channel, and portioned out according to their predictable movements in the heavens. The planet that the Romans came to call Saturnus had in Babylonian or Assyrian belief been linked to the god Ninurta, whose province was war and hunting as practised by the Assyrian kings. The cruelty of this background became attached to the planet and this character was attributed to the planet Saturn all through medieval times.

Saturn with his earlier savagery and later banishment, as taken over from Cronus, became a god of chill, gloom and cruelty. This character was liable to appear in children born when his planet was in the ascendant. A further addition to this lore was made from the theory of temperament developed in Greek medicine. In a combination of astrology with the medical theory of humours in one of its cruder forms, Saturn came to represent *melaina chole*, black bile or melancholia; a frame of mind, ferocious like the purely bilious temperament, but also gloomy to the point of madness. Those whose temperament was entirely Saturnine tended to be full of hidden malice, to be grumpy celibates and cruel to children, and to have a permanent feeling of bondage and captivity and a love of concealment. When they were mad or in their mad fits, such people would be like Shakespeare's King Lear after his deposition.

E. D. PHILLIPS

Planet of Limitation

Until recently the most distant of the known planets, Saturn was looked upon for centuries as being cold and slow. Astrologers have described him as the most evil and dangerous of all the heavenly bodies.

'Limitation' and 'control' are the keywords applied to Saturn; his influence brings caution. A person ruled by him is likely to succeed in life through a combination of hard work and forethought. He will make his plans for the future, and then keep rigorously to his timetable, looking cautiously ahead for unexpected events.

A person's power of self-control will depend to a large extent on Saturn's influence over him, but this control can be misused, and he may become emotionally cold. In fact, Saturnians have been described as people who are 'cold in charity'. The sense of limitation imposed by Saturn may cause someone ruled by him to be over-conscious of the narrowness of his existence, and to feel a sense of inadequacy.

On the other hand, the influence of this planet enables a person to endure with patience the difficulties he may encounter, even though he feels them keenly, and it also instils in him the urge to overcome these difficulties and the ability to bear any responsibilities that result from them.

Someone who is ruled by Saturn will be cautious in love, as in everything else, and will think long and hard before deciding to marry. Once married, however, a male Saturnian will be a good provider, while a woman influenced by this planet will prove to be a capable and economical housewife.

Saturn traditionally rules the later years of a person's life, the time when he accepts his responsibilities and settles down; people born under this planet are often late in developing their innate skills and talents.

Black is the favourite colour of people ruled by Saturn, and in appearance, too, they are often dark with serious and grave features. A 'saturnine' temperament is gloomy and melancholy, but it has its positive side: the saturnine humour has been described as the one that most influences intellectuals.

A Saturnian will be happiest doing routine work, or in an organization where he can look ahead and plan for the future, knowing that his advancement is likely to be steady and that there is a pension waiting for him at the end of his working life. For this reason he is best suited to a career in business, government or politics, or in the Church or the army.

FURTHER READING: L. Greene, *Saturn: a New Look at an Old Devil* (Weiser, 1976); D. Talbott, *The Saturn Myth* (Doubleday, 1980).

C. M. Dixon

The satyrs were minor spirits of Nature, partly human and partly animal, who became linked with the god Dionysus: head of a satyr, Etruscan, in the British Museum

The attendants of Dionysus, god of the rising sap, the satyrs were sensual, lecherous and pleasure-loving

SATYRS

PARTLY HUMAN, partly bestial, the satyrs were minor rustic gods or demons, traditional companions of the god Dionysus, lewd and lascivious by nature. Their ultimate origin is puzzling and it may be that their association with Dionysus (see DIONYSUS) began in Attica and Ionia. They were commonly represented with bristly hair, round and upturned noses, and pointed animal-like ears, with small horns growing from the tops of their foreheads and with tails like those of horses. Dressed in animal skins, wearing wreaths of ivy, vine or fir, bibulous, sensual and pleasure-loving, they lie sleeping, play musical instruments or join in wild dances with the nymphs.

Their chief prototype is Silenus himself, that ancient Falstaff, bald, jovial and rotund, carrying a wine bag, usually so tipsy that he rides around on an ass or has to be propped up by other satyrs. A dancer and flute player, he was also regarded as a prophet.

To make any sense of this odd jumble of characteristics we must bear in mind the nature of the god with whom the satyrs were closely associated. As E. R. Dodds has pointed out, in the introduction to his edition of the *Bacchae* of Euripides, to the Greeks of the classical age Dionysus was not solely, or even mainly, the god of wine. His cult titles identify him as the power in the tree, the blossom-bringer, the abundance of life, his domain the liquid fire in the grape, the sap thrusting in a young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of Nature. It may well be that his association with certain wild plants, such as the fir and ivy, and with certain animals, is in fact older than his association with the vine.

'It was the Alexandrines,' adds Dodds, 'and above all the Romans – with their tidy functionalism and their cheerful obtuseness in matters of the spirit – who departmentalized Dionysos as "jolly Bacchus" the wine-god with his riotous crew of nymphs and satyrs. As such he was taken over from the Romans by Renaissance painters and poets; and it was they in turn who shaped the image in which the modern world pictures him.'

Links with the Birth of Zeus

The Greeks in the time of Euripides were beginning to bring other Nature-spirits of other cults into association with the satyrs. Thus the chorus in the *Bacchae* tells the myth of the origin of the kettledrum; how it was invented in a Cretan cave by Curetes or Corybantes (see CORYBANTES) to drown the cries of the baby Zeus, then presented to Rhea, his mother; and how the satyrs obtained it and introduced it into Dionysiac ritual.

The Curetes of Crete were guardians of the infant god and attendants on the mother goddess. Hesiod tells us that they were lovers of sport and dancing; and they are compared by Strabo with similar bands, such as Corybantes, Cabiri, Dactyls and Telchines. It was sometimes considered likely that Curetes and Corybantes were the same, namely unmarried *Kouroi*, 'youths' chosen for the war dance connected with the rituals of the mother of the gods, known also as Corybantes because they walked with a butting of their heads, in dancing style.

To Strabo, Tityroi (a name connected with the satyrs) were like the Corybantes. They belonged to that cycle of Cretan-Phrygian tradition which was bound up with the sacred rites of the rearing of the child Zeus in Crete, which were held in honour of the mother of the gods in Phrygia and in the region of the Trojan Ida. In Crete, such rites were performed with orgiastic worship and with such ministers as served Dionysus – the satyrs. These the Cretans called Curetes, the armed young men who danced the story of the birth of Zeus.

A satyr with horns, pointed ears and the haunches of a goat plays his rustic pipe in what little the encroaching city has left of his woodland retreat: 16th century, Italian

C. M. Dixon

The Satyr-Play

Greek drama developed out of Dionysiac ritual. Competitors in the dramatic festival submitted four plays, consisting of three tragedies and a 'satyr' play. It seems that tragedy and 'satyr' had an independent growth out of the ritual, until it became the custom to add a satyr-play to the tragic trilogy as a conventional part of the whole performance. A satyr-play was similar to a tragedy in structure, but was shorter. It was a kind of burlesque and its chorus was always composed of a group of satyrs, who had a typical dance, called the *sikinnis*. Its themes were taken from the same sources as those of tragedy – epic and mythological.

The only two satyr-plays that have survived are the *Ichneutai* of Sophocles and the *Cyclops* of Euripides, which is a medley composed of the Polyphemus episode from the ninth book of the *Odyssey* and the legend of the capture of Dionysus by Lydian pirates. We know too that the satyr-play which accompanied the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus was called *Proteus*. Apparently this play, in lighter vein, counterbalanced the story of Agamemnon's homecoming with the adventure of Menelaus, his brother, on his return from the Trojan war.

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: E. R. Dodds ed., *The Bacchae* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2nd edn, 1960); William Arrowsmith ed., 'The Bacchae' in *Complete Greek Tragedies* (Chicago Univ. Press, vol. 4, 1958).

Scalping

Removing part of the skin and hair of an enemy's head as a sign of victory over him and evidence of prowess; related to headhunting (see HEAD); reported of the Scythians by Herodotus, and practised in North America by some Indian peoples and some whites; the scalp was dried and preserved, and would be carried in a victory dance; scalping was not always fatal to the victim.

Mansell Collection

Paganism survived late in Scandinavia and it is possible that the great myth of Ragnarok, in which heaven and earth and the gods themselves are destroyed, may have been influenced by Christian ideas about Doomsday

SCANDINAVIA

THE PAGAN FAITH of Scandinavia developed out of the religion of the Germanic peoples, but the sombre conditions in the northern mountains, the long dark winters and the stormy seas, as well as the influence of Lapps and Finns and other peoples across the Baltic, may have helped to give it a special character of its own. Paganism lasted until about 1000 AD in Denmark, Norway and Iceland, and even later in Sweden, and thus far more material has survived than in Anglo-Saxon England or Germany.

Most of the literary material was written down in Icelandic monasteries after the conversion, but there are short poems whose authors are known to have lived in the pre-Christian period, and a number of mythological poems preserved in the collection known as the *Elder Edda*. Some of the myths are found in a long Latin history of Denmark written by a learned monk, Saxo Grammaticus, in the 12th century; and many more in the *Prose Edda*, a handbook for poets written in Old Icelandic in the 13th century by a brilliant poet, historian and politician called Snorri Sturluson, who loved the old stories and wanted to keep them alive in men's minds. We have also a vast body of saga literature, prose stories composed in Iceland, which contain memories and traditions from earlier times.

Thus there is a rich literary heritage from the Scandinavian pagan past, and to this may be added the material provided by the outstanding work in archeology done in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. There are the funeral ships of Oseberg and Gokstad, pagan burials painstakingly restored and displayed in the Ship Museum at Oslo; the treasures of the Danish Bronze Age in the National Museum at Copenhagen and those in gold and silver from the Migration Period of Sweden in the National Museum at Stockholm, and the extensive collection of memorial stones from the island of Gotland with their vivid mythological pictures, originally painted in bright colours.

There are also sites like Gamle Uppsala in Sweden, where the burial mounds of the pagan kings still stand beside the little church which replaced an ancient sanctuary; or Jelling in Denmark, where the memorial stone of the first Christian king confronts the burial mounds of the old sanctuary; or Thingvellir in Iceland, the place where the Law Assembly met every year with much ancient ceremonial and sacrifice. These are indeed impressive reminders of a religion which once possessed a powerful hold on men's minds. In south Sweden can be seen hundreds of rock carvings from a still earlier time, recording rites and symbols; while at holy places like Thorsbjerg in north Germany or Skedemose on the island of Oland in the Baltic, offerings of men and animals, weapons, ornaments, ploughs and food were made over a period of centuries in the lakes and marshes, as careful excavation has now revealed.

Much therefore is known of the pagan religion of Scandinavia, although there is much that remains obscure. Since it lasted so long in the north, from the first settlements after the Ice Age up to the 11th century AD, many changes and developments took place as new ideas and customs came in from abroad; there must also have been considerable local variation. However, a general pattern is perceptible.

Gods of the North

The three main gods who stand out in the myths, and of whom we learn also from carved stones and figures and scenes in metalwork, are Odin, god of inspiration, magic and the dead; Thor, god of the hammer, who preserved gods and men from giants and monsters; and Freyr with his twin Freyja, the best known of the fertility deities, the Vanir (see ODIN; THOR; FREYR). Odin was the ancestor of Scandinavian kings, and was worshipped by those who lived by their weapons and went out to plunder and conquer in many lands in the Viking Age; war captives and animals might be sacrificed to him and their bodies hung from trees.

Thor was the sky god and the god of the community, who supported law and order; the Assembly opened on his day, Thursday, and men took oaths on his sacred ring. The fertility gods were worshipped by men and women of all ranks, for all wished for health and prosperity for their families, their animals and their crops, and humble offerings of locks of hair and neck rings and pots of butter made to them have been found in the holy places.

Other divinities appear in the literature: Heimdall, watchman of the gods, sometimes called the father of mankind; Tyr who bound the Fenris wolf; Loki, the mischief-maker (see LOKI); Balder, the fair son of Odin, who perished by his brother's hand (see BALDER); Njord, the god of ships; Bragi, god of poetry; Hoenir, the mysterious silent deity, and Mimir, the wisest one, whose head was kept and consulted by Odin. All these occur in the tales and were known to the poets. They have varied and controversial origins; some perhaps, like Tyr, were once powerful gods whose names were replaced by others until they faded into legend; some were variants of the fertility gods Freyr and Freyja, like Njord and Idun who kept the apples of youth; some, like Bragi, may have been created by literary men out of the titles of the great powers. In his *Prose Edda* Snorri strove to bring these varied figures together into some kind of harmony, but even he found many problems in the way.

Besides the gods, there was a host of

Scenes carved on the 10th century Gosforth Cross in Cumberland, including the binding of Loki and the horn of Heimdall which sounds the last alarm, are related to the doom of the Norse gods and associated with the Christian picture of Christ's victory over hell and chaos

C. M. Dixon

lesser supernatural beings who were said to inhabit mountains and rocks, forests, marshes and rivers, and who could both help men and do them harm. They might be called elves, land spirits, giants or trolls, and they were closely linked to special localities; they are probably as old as human habitation in Scandinavia, and after the conversion one of the fates of the old gods was to be relegated to this company.

It was once believed that heathen temples were raised for the worship of the main gods, for these are sometimes mentioned in the sagas, but the tendency now is to believe that most of the rites took place in the open in holy places, while feasts in honour of the gods were held in the hall of the chief man of the district. Sacrificial banquets, when cattle and horses were slaughtered, took place at certain points in the agricultural year, particularly midwinter, autumn and spring. On such occasions the gods seem to have been worshipped as a group, but individuals also had their own special deities, to whom they gave devoted worship.

There was much lore about the gods and their world. At the end of the Viking Age this was clearly pictured as Asgard, where the gods dwelt in their halls under the leadership of Odin. There were two other regions beside Asgard, Jotunheim, the abode of giants, and Hel, the realm of the dead, and these three kingdoms were said to lie under the three roots of the World Tree, Yggdrasill, which stood in the centre of the universe (see ASH). Middle Earth, the home of mankind, was joined to the realm of the gods by the rainbow bridge, Bifrost (see RAINBOW). This picture must not, however, be taken too literally; tremendous distances divided these worlds, as appears from the impressive descriptions of journeys made from one to another through darkness, cold and vast spaces.

The Twilight of the Gods

The creation of this universe is told in poems and stories. One tradition is that it was formed from the body of the giant Ymir, created in the beginning when heat and cold came together in the primeval abyss and life was brought into being (see GIANTS). There is mention of a primeval cow who nourished Ymir, and also of the sons of Bor who slew him and created the worlds from his flesh and bones, eyes and hair. The first men and giants are said to have sprung from his body, although there is also a tale of the gods creating man and woman from trees on the shore. As all things had a beginning, so also they were of necessity brought to an end, and the myth of Ragnarok, the end of the world and its recreation, is among the most justly famous of the northern myths.

The word Ragnarok in Old Norse means 'Doom of the Gods' or, by a very small alteration in spelling, 'Twilight of the Gods'. The idea of a final destruction of earth and heaven, and the overthrow of Asgard by evil monsters who have been continually striving to bring back chaos to the universe, is found in some of the earliest poetry and many of the myths of the north, but the detailed account of the catastrophe is given mainly in one poem, *Völuspá*. The implication in this account is that Ragnarok is the end of a cycle, when heaven and earth and the very gods themselves are destroyed, to be recreated again for the opening of another age. This is in accordance with the teaching of certain Eastern religions, and it is possible that ideas from the East influenced Scandinavian literature towards the close of the Viking Age and gave new inspiration to the older Germanic tradition of the creation and destruction of the world.

The account of Ragnarok in *Völuspá* is one of great vigour and imaginative power. Just as in the beginning life was created, according to a tradition recorded by Snorri in the *Prose Edda*, from the coming together of cold and heat, so these finally combine to destroy it, and the earth like a burning ship is consumed by fire as it sinks beneath the waves. The vividness of the description must owe something to the unique physical conditions in Iceland, subject to every type of volcanic eruption, where there has been recurring destruction up to the present day of fertile land by white-hot lava, and where

Right **'The wolf Fenris shatters the magic cord which holds him and advances against Asgard, his gaping jaws filling the whole heaven. He devours the sun, and darkness comes upon the world.' The god Odin, summoning his army of heroes, goes out against the wolf and is devoured: Norwegian choir stall, 13th century** ***Below*** **Viking bronze weather vane** ***(left)*****, and the cross and swastika combined** ***(right)***

Werner Foreman

erupting steam, pools of boiling water and bubbling sulphur contrast with the great white glaciers and the winter snows.

The terror begins with the coming of the Great Winter, which lasts three years on end with no summer to break it, and with much wickedness among men, the breaking of oaths, murders among kindred, incest and bitter warfare. Then come great earthquakes, when rocks are shattered and mountains crumble, as the monsters and hostile giants, imagined to dwell deep in the depths of earth, begin to work their will, and the World Tree itself quivers and shakes in the tumult. The wolf Fenris shatters the magic cord which holds him and advances against Asgard, his gaping jaws filling the whole heaven. He devours the sun, and darkness comes upon the world. The giants arrive in a ship, said by Snorri to be made from the uncut nails of the dead, which has been long in the making; Loki, traitor to the gods, is with them for he has now, like the wolf, broken loose from his chains. The sons of Muspell, the forces from the land of fire led by the giant Surt, advance across the rainbow bridge which links earth and heaven, and it breaks beneath their weight. The World Serpent emerges from the sea, and as he rises from the waves a flood begins to invade the earth. The forces of giants and monsters encounter the gods on the great plain Vigrid, where the last battle must be fought.

The gods are awakened to their peril by the horn of Heimdall, the watcher by the bridge, and by the crowing of the cock on the World Tree. Odin, who knew when Balder perished that the time of doom was approaching, rides swiftly to Mimir's pool to learn what is to come. Then he calls out his huge army of heroes through the many doors of Valhalla to advance against the enemy. He himself goes forward to meet the wolf, and is devoured. Thor meets his ancient adversary, the World Serpent, and strikes it down with his hammer, but is overcome by its poison and falls beside it. Tyr encounters the hound Garm, and each slays the other. Heimdall and Loki do battle together and both are destroyed. Freyr meets Surt, but has no sword to match the dazzling weapon of the fire giant. At the end Surt flings fire over the earth, and men perish with the gods as the land is engulfed by the encroaching sea.

A New Earth

Yet in this universal holocaust, some survive. The young sons of the gods do not perish; Odin's son Vidar slays the wolf by setting a foot on its lower jaw and tearing it apart; the sons of Thor inherit their father's hammer, which once more will defend the world from chaos. The mysterious power Hoenir survives, and Balder returns from the dead to live in peace beside his slayer Hoder. It would seem that these gods who are to rule the new universe have been sheltered in the World Tree, for from the Tree emerge the man and woman who are to repeople the world of men. Earth now rises anew from the sea, green and fresh and fair, and a new sun, fairer than her mother, journeys over the heavens.

There is much argument among scholars as to the origin of these traditions; the possibility of Eastern influences has been mentioned, while Christian teachings about Doomsday may also have played their part. But *Völuspá* is no mere scholarly exercise, but a great poem in its own right, and the vision of death and rebirth which it offers is the essence of all the great religions. Scattered evidence from other poems and carvings of scenes from Ragnarok on crosses of the Viking Age show that the conception was widespread over the Viking world. Part of the poem's power is that Ragnarok can be taken as a symbol of the dissolution by death or mental breakdown of the individual, and that it visualizes the overcoming of order by chaos, to be replaced, after the agony, by a new creation. It is one of the greatest achievements of the world of northern mythology.

(See also GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

FURTHER READING: B. Branston, *Gods and Heroes from Viking Mythology* (Schocken, 1982); H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Penguin, 1965), *Pagan Scandinavia* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1967); and *Scandinavian Mythology* (Hamlyn, London, 1969).

In the 9th century Viking armies occupied large areas of England: plaster cast of a Viking gravestone, found in St Paul's churchyard, London, and now in the Guildhall Museum

SCAPEGOAT

THE ANCIENT HEBREWS who invented the idea had no word for 'scapegoat'. The goat in question first makes its appearance in Leviticus, chapter 16. Its function, as part of the expiatory rites performed by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, is to have all the sins of the children of Israel put upon its head, and to carry them away into the wilderness. The goat, so to speak, escapes with a burden of alien sin – hence its name. But it is not a name that occurs in the original Hebrew of the Book of Leviticus. It is true that the Authorized Version speaks of the high priest Aaron taking two goats and casting lots upon them, 'one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat'. But in the Hebrew it says, 'one lot for Yahweh (Jehovah), and the other for Azazel'. To this day, no one is absolutely sure who or what Azazel was, but when William Tyndale (c 1495–1536) made his translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew text, he also had the Greek and Latin versions at his elbow, and he took a hint from them to translate the mysterious Azazel as 'scapegoat'. In subsequent verses of the same chapter of Leviticus, however, Tyndale had to twist both the English and the Hebrew syntax to make sense of the word Azazel, and he wrote of letting the goat go 'for a scapegoat', when he should have written 'to Azazel'.

The point is of more than linguistic interest. Most authorities on the subject take Azazel to have been a demon that lived in the desert. He is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, but the author of the apocryphal book of Enoch evidently took Azazel to be a demon from his reading of this chapter of Leviticus, and developed an elaborate legend about him, on which Milton drew when he made Azazel Satan's standard-bearer in *Paradise Lost*. If Azazel was a demon, then the ritual described in Leviticus was intended to symbolize the purging of the land and people of Israel from guilt and the transmission of their sins, on the goat's back, to the evil spirit to whom they were believed to belong, and whose abode was in the desert, cut off from human habitation. It is also possible that the goat was chosen for this task because goats were sacrificed to Azazel in illicit pagan rituals.

The meaning of the name Azazel is disputed, some scholars connecting it with an Arabic word meaning 'to place far apart'. But some early Jewish authorities interpreted Azazel as the name of a 'strong and difficult place', and this seems to be the interpretation followed by the translators of the New English Bible (1970). They translate *azazel* as 'precipice', and write of 'the goat on which the lot of the Precipice has fallen'. But this makes the marked antithesis between Yahweh and Azazel feeble, to say the least.

In view of the less well-defined meaning given to the term in modern usage, where anyone from the late Stephen Ward to Lieutenant William Calley can be hailed as a 'scapegoat', it is necessary to dwell on one or two features of the ritual described in Leviticus. In the first place, the goat chosen to be sent to Azazel may be assumed to be entirely innocent of the sins which he is transmitting. Secondly, it is significant that the goat is chosen from among two by lot, so that an element of chance or randomness is introduced deliberately into the ritual. Thirdly, and most importantly, the scapegoat is not sacrificed to Azazel (or anyone else): its blood is not shed. Indeed, it would have been sacrilegious in the extreme to have made a sacrifice of it to an evil spirit. The scapegoat is made to stand alive before Yahweh, but it is the other goat that is sacrificed to him.

This needs to be emphasized, because Jesus Christ is sometimes spoken of as a scapegoat. It is true that the scapegoat is also a vicarious 'carrier' of the sins of others, and that he figures in a rite of atonement.

Giraudon

The scourging of Christ, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*: Jesus has frequently been thought of as a scapegoat, in the sense that by his suffering and death he atoned for the sins of others

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ atones for the sins of humanity which he did not himself commit, but, unlike the scapegoat, he does suffer a sacrificial death. In his epistle to the Hebrews, Saint Paul writes of the blood of Christ being incomparably more efficacious to purge the Hebrews' consciences than the blood of bulls and goats offered in sacrifice. But as the scapegoat was never regarded as an offering to anyone, least of all to God, the notion of the scapegoat is not developed in the New Testament

and later Christian doctrines of atonement and salvation through Christ.

The Hebrew institution of the scapegoat is not without parallels in other cultures, and may have been derived from earlier Semitic or even Sumerian rituals. An ancient Babylonian text suggests that one way of curing a pain in the neck in the second millennium BC was to sacrifice the neck of a beast, and there is a reference to the 'horned animal which alleviates pain'. The meaning of these texts is often obscure, and keenly disputed by scholars, but a sacred poem enjoining a sick king to fire an arrow which will shoot his sickness away into a gazelle points to the idea of an animal carrying human disease away. In a well-known chapter of *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer cites examples from many places in the world of the demons or afflictions of whole communities being carried away by animals or in boats committed to the sea or a river.

The Substitute Victim

If the Hebrews did take over an ancient pagan custom, they characteristically gave it a spiritual content by making the goat take away not disease or physical affliction, but the sins and errors of the people themselves. But even this adaptation of the scapegoat idea is not confined to ancient Israel. Frazer quotes a Victorian missionary's account of the sacrifice of a 20-year-old girl in a village in Nigeria, who was dragged alive along the ground, face downwards, from the king's house to the river, a distance of two miles, as if carrying away the 'weight of all their wickedness'. Two human victims, it seems, were sacrificed annually, after they had been purchased from the interior of the country with money raised by public subscription. 'All persons,' writes Frazer, 'who during the past year had fallen into gross sins, such as incendiarism, theft, adultery, witchcraft, and so forth, were expected to contribute 28 *ngugas*, or a little over £2.'

Frazer was more interested in points of similarity between geographically widespread cultures than in their differences, so that his examples of 'scapegoats' only approximate to the scapegoat of Hebrew ritual. It will be noted that in the Nigerian example the notion of a substitute victim is present, and the evil which it is intended to drive away is spiritual rather than physical; the ritual is also, as the Hebrew ritual became eventually, if it was not so from the beginning, an annual one. But the Nigerian custom differs in the important point that the substitute victim actually was put to death, whereas in ancient Israel it was merely banished.

Nearer to the Hebrew conception in some respects is the custom reported in the 16th century from Halberstadt in Thüringen of turning a man 'believed to be stained with heinous sins' out into the city streets throughout Lent and, in particular, refusing him admittance to any church. The man in question (a new man was chosen each year) was finally readmitted to church and absolved from his sins on the day before Good Friday. But again this human scapegoat differs from the goat in Leviticus, in being himself a sinner. Another example of a human scapegoat cited by Frazer is based on a Byzantine account, derived in turn from the Greek poet Hipponax of Ephesus (6th century BC). It was the custom in the time of Hipponax, when a city was visited by plague or famine, to choose an ugly or deformed person to take upon himself all the evils afflicting the city. He was brought to a suitable place, where dried figs, a barley loaf, and cheese were put into his hand. When he had eaten these, he was beaten seven times on his genital organs with squills and wild fig tree branches (thought to avert evil influences, and so, in this instance, to guarantee the power of the sexual organs to ward off evil), and then sacrificed on a pyre, after which his ashes were cast into the sea.

These examples resemble the ancient Hebrew ritual only in their use of a substitute victim onto whom a whole community can project its ills. It may be that this answers to a universal human impulse, and that the Leviticus scapegoat in this respect typifies a universal element in human culture; but to the modern investigator, the unique features of the Hebrew ritual – the innocence of the victim, its selection by lot, and the fact that it was let loose and not killed in sacrifice – are no less interesting than the broader meaning of the ritual which has made the scapegoat a familiar notion throughout much of the inhabited world.

(See also ATONEMENT; SIN EATER.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

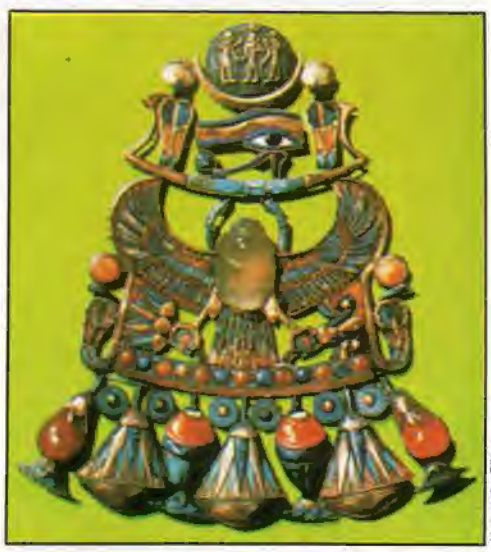
SCARAB

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS made numerous amulets, of which the most familiar is the scarab. Fashioned out of various materials, scarabs have been found in Egypt on habitation sites, in tombs and on mummies (see MUMMIFICATION). These amulets are usually oval in shape, one side being convex and the other flat. The convex side is carved or moulded to represent the back of a beetle; the flat side generally bears a hieroglyphic inscription.

The name 'scarab' has been given to amulets of this kind by Egyptologists, because they represent the *scarabaeus*, a beetle of the genus *Lamellicorn*. The reason why the Egyptians chose the image of this particular beetle for an amulet is twofold; its explanation affords a significant insight into their thought and imagery.

The Egyptian name for the scarab beetle was *kheprer(i)*. The verb *kheper* meant 'to believe', or 'to come into existence'; while *kheperu* signified 'forms', or 'stages of growth and development'. The Egyptians also called the sun god *Khepri*, because to them he was 'He who exists himself', that is, was self-existent. In turn, they believed that he was the creator of the world and the source or author of life. The similarity of the scarab beetle's name to that of the sun god therefore held a deep significance, which was reinforced by another curious fact.

It is the habit of the scarab beetle, which feeds on dung, to make a ball of dung and roll it into a hole which it has already prepared. The beetle enters the hole, closing the entrance, and lives there until it has consumed the ball. Certain ancient writers have recorded the significant analogy which the Egyptians drew from this remarkable habit. The Roman author Pliny explains: 'The people of a great part of Egypt worship these insects as divinities; an usage for which Apion gives a curious reason, asserting as he does, by way of justifying the rites of his nation, that the insect in its operations pictures the revolutions of the sun.' According to Horapollo, a late Egyptian writer, the scarab beetle 'rolls the ball from east to west, looking himself toward the east. Having dug a hole, he buries it for twenty-eight days; on the twenty-ninth day he opens the ball, and throws it into the water, and from it the scarabaei come forth.'



University Films

A jewel from the tomb of Tutankhamen: the body of the winged scarab is a translucent quartz, and above it is the eye of Horus

The curious idea which Horapollo expresses here, that the male scarab beetle thus produced the young, is more clearly stated by the Greek writer Plutarch: 'The Egyptians also honoured . . . the beetle, since they observed in them certain dim likenesses of the power of the gods, like images of the sun in drops of water . . . The race of beetles has no female, but all the males eject their sperm into a round pellet of material which they roll up by pushing it from the opposite side, just as the sun seems to turn the heavens in the direction opposite to its own course, which is from west to east.'

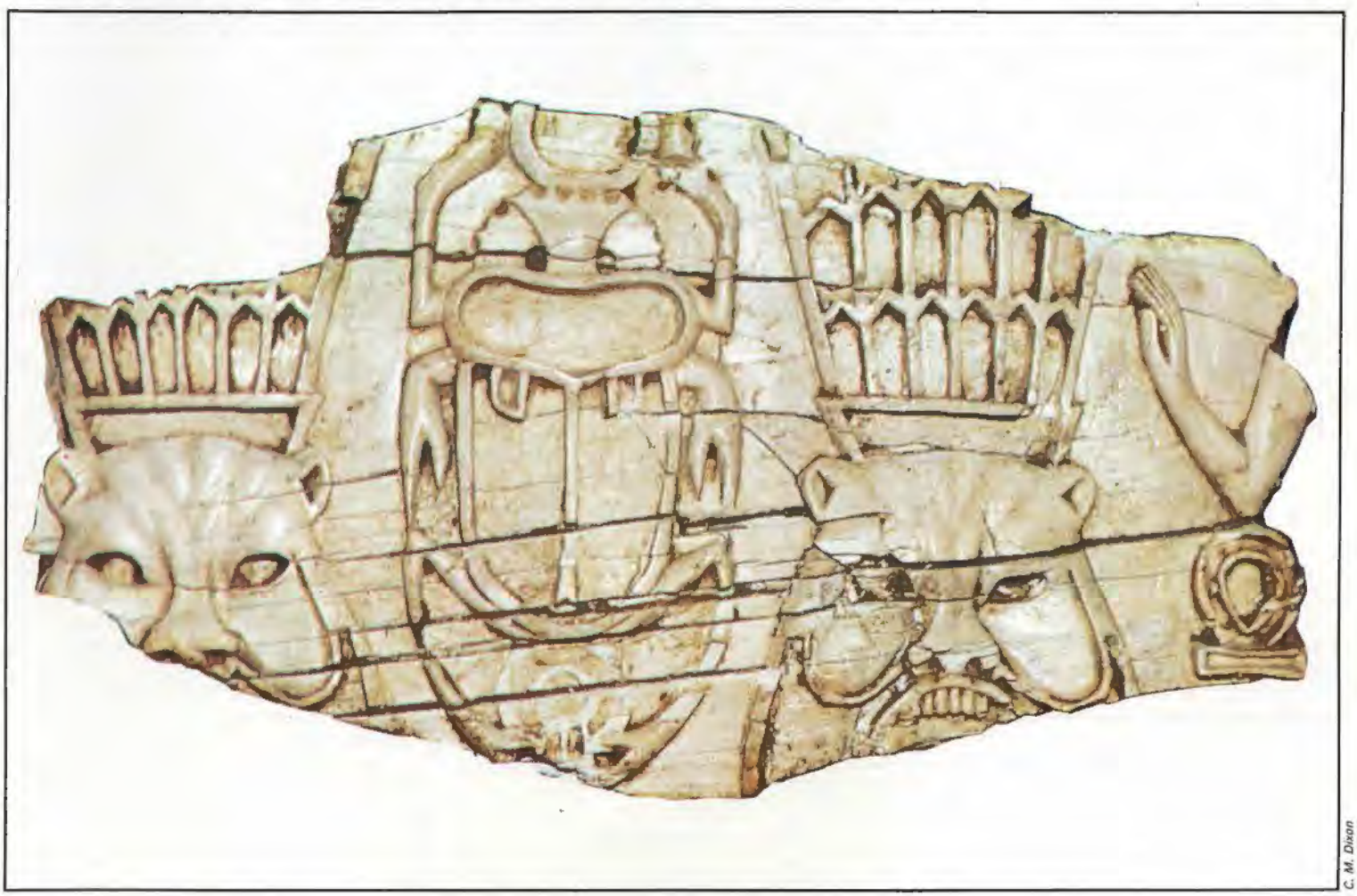
This quaint error that scarab beetles were of male sex only, together with their habit of rolling balls of dung and the suggestion contained in their name, all conspired to produce a strange piece of religious imagery. Since Re, the sun god, is called *Khepri*, the 'Self-Existent One', who of himself generated all forms of existence (see CREATION MYTHS), and since he rolls the ball of the sun daily across the sky, he must be the original divine Scarab. Thus,

in religious iconography Re is frequently represented as a large black scarab beetle, sitting in the solar boat and rolling the sun disc, or as a man whose human head is replaced by a scarab beetle. This strange imagery was already current by the middle of the third millennium BC, as the following passage from the Pyramid Texts shows. It concerns the union, or reunion, of the deceased pharaoh Unas with the sun god. 'This Unas flieth like a bird and alighteth like a beetle upon the throne which is empty in thy boat, O Re.' There are even more ancient indications of the currency of this evaluation of the scarab beetle; for jars of them have been found in graves dating from before 3500 BC.

The significance that the Egyptians saw in the scarab beetle rendered its image an amulet of supreme potency. For it represented Re, the sun god, as the source of all existence and thus was itself, in terms of sympathetic magic, endowed with vitalizing virtue. Hence its use as a life-giving amulet for the dead was obvious. But it was used also by the living as a talisman, conferring daily well-being and protection against evil. The inscriptions cut upon the flat side were very varied. Some give the names and titles of the owner, often with a pious or 'good luck' phrase; many have the names of pharaohs, since these were names of great magical power. The authentic 'royal scarabs' are of considerable historical value, especially those of the New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC), when the custom grew up of recording historical events on them.

The most notable scarab amulet was the 'heart scarab'. This was placed upon the breast of the mummy and inscribed with chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead. The text contained a petition addressed by the dead person to his heart, asking it not to witness against him when it was weighed against the symbol of truth at the awful judgement after death (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

S. G. F. BRANDON



Scarab on a Phoenician ivory of the 8th century BC, probably intended for export to Egypt, where the beetle was an emblem of the sun god and a life-giving and protective amulet

C. M. Dixon

SCHNEIDER BROTHERS

SONS of a printer of Braunau in Upper Austria, Willi and Rudi Schneider, born respectively in 1903 and 1908, were among the most famous physical mediums of the 20th century. Willi's mediumistic talent was discovered when he was 16, while the family were playing at 'table-turning' (see OUIJA BOARDS). It was reported that a little tripod, one of the legs of which was a pencil, wrote messages in answer to questions put by the Schneiders, and that when Willi's hand was hovering over it, the planchette wrote by itself.

In answer to the question 'Who is there?' the pencil wrote 'Olga', and continued to write that the person 'there' was Lola Montez, the celebrated mistress of King Ludwig of Bavaria. 'Olga' is not on record as having insisted on her identity with Lola after the first sitting. Nor was she, so far as we can tell, ever able to answer any questions about Lola; nor did she speak any English, which Lola spoke perfectly.

Other phenomena soon manifested themselves: objects were reported to move about and ectoplasmic formations were observed. Willi began to fall into trances during which he spoke as 'Olga'. Captain F. Kogelnik, a retired Austrian naval officer resident in Braunau, became convinced of Willi's genuineness and brought the medium to the attention of Dr Albert von Schrenck-Notzing. The latter conducted extensive experiments with Willi, including a protracted investigation in conjunction with the Psychological Institute of the University of Munich, which involved numerous independent scientists and doctors, most of whom became convinced that the phenomena were genuine.

In 1921 Dr E. J. Dingwall, then research officer of the Society for Psychical Research, and Harry Price attended a carefully controlled sitting at Schrenck-Notzing's laboratory in Munich. Dingwall was one of those who controlled the medium, and after the sitting Price and Dingwall searched the seance room. Strong phenomena were

observed: a table was moved, a handkerchief and bracelet were levitated and a hand-bell was rung, though no ectoplasm, claimed on other occasions, was observed. Most of the phenomena took place in a gauze cage, the open side of which faced away from the medium and was beyond his reach. Dingwall gave it as his opinion that the medium himself could not have produced the phenomena observed and that confederacy alone could have accounted *normally* for what happened but that this seemed 'inconceivable in the circumstances'.

After leaving Schrenck-Notzing, Willi was investigated in Vienna by Dr E. Holub, a psychiatrist, superintendent of the Steinhof mental hospital in Vienna, who became convinced of his authenticity and was a strong champion of the medium. He was subsequently investigated in England under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research in November and December 1924 by Woolley and Dingwall, and again movements of objects were observed, but no ectoplasm. The investigators were not willing at the time to postulate either fraud on the part of the medium or collusion of some sort.

'Olga' Demands Rudi

Willi's phenomena gradually diminished in frequency and intensity, and his sittings were increasingly blank. One day, when he was giving yet another negative sitting, 'Olga' announced that his little brother, Rudi, was a stronger medium than Willi and that 'she' wanted *him*. The boys' mother protested: Rudi was only 11 years old, she said, and far too young. But 'Olga' was adamant: 'she' wanted Rudi. At that point, it is said, the door opened and in walked Rudi, apparently deeply asleep, talking as 'Olga'. His trance was marked by the same characteristics which had accompanied Willi's when he 'was Olga', notably a typical phenomenally rapid breathing. Willi developed another trance personality, 'Mina', and 'Olga' confined herself to Rudi alone, with whom, so far as we know, 'she' remained for the rest of his life.

Rudi was one of the most exhaustively investigated and carefully controlled physical mediums of all time. Apart from giving hundreds of sittings under more or less informal conditions in and about his home town of Braunau, Rudi was investigated over a number of years and with increasingly strict controls by Schrenck-Notzing in Munich. He trained him from boyhood as a 'scientific medium', that is, one willing to accept any and every control and whatever test conditions the experimenters demanded. Rudi, according to the evidence of his investigators, never refused any condition imposed by researchers.

The phenomena were similar to those reported in connection with Willi: the most frequent and best attested were movements of objects, whilst among the earlier phenomena, not often subsequently observed, were visible materializations. Levitations of the whole body of the medium were also reported, principally in the home circle, but also by Schrenck-Notzing and some of his medical and scientific collaborators.

An Invisible Agency

Rudi was subjected to three investigations by Harry Price at the National Laboratory for Psychical Research in London, in 1929 and 1932. He was also investigated at great length and with elaborate apparatus by Dr Eugene Osty in Paris between October 1930 and December 1931. Perhaps the most important feature of Rudi's career from a scientific point of view is the fact that, during three separate investigations, instrumental recordings were obtained with infra-red radiation of interference by 'an invisible substance'. These observations were first made by Dr Osty, who had installed an infra-red network which surrounded the objects to be moved paranormally, as an anti-fraud precaution: if anything, such as a reaching device or a human arm, approached the experimental table it had first to cross the infra-red beams, and as soon as this happened a system of alarm bells and photographic flashlights would come into action.

It was found that the alarm system was indeed set in motion, but by no visible agency: the photographs taken at the time revealed that the infra-red rays had been interrupted by, ostensibly, nothing. These interruptions of the network coincided with 'Olga's' announcements to the effect that 'she was going into the ray'. Such occultations or blocking of the infra-red rays preceded actual paranormal movements of small objects, such as handkerchiefs. After this, the infra-red device was used for attempts to detect a paranormal 'force' or 'matter' rather than directly as an anti-fraud device.

Similar results were obtained in London by means of apparatus constructed at the University of London Observatory. Osty's experiments were first repeated at Harry Price's National Laboratory for Psychical Research with equipment not under Price's control. The observations were repeated again at an investigation directed by Lord Charles Hope and Lord Rayleigh in October to December 1932, under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research. However, the absorptions recorded in London were considerably weaker than those recorded in Paris.

The physicists principally concerned with the infra-red radiation research in London – Lord Rayleigh, Professor of Physics at Imperial College, London, C. C. L. Gregory, Wilson Observer in Astronomy and Director of the University of London Observatory, and C. V. C. Herbert, research officer of the Society for Psychical Research – all remained perfectly satisfied that no experimental error could account for the results obtained. If their findings are accepted, then the physical phenomena connected with Rudi Schneider were produced by, or closely related to, a substance invisible in white light but capable of affecting infra-red (and possibly ultra-violet, if Osty's view is taken into account) radiation in different degrees. Even when sittings were otherwise complete blanks, interference with infra-red beams was noted, and such interference followed closely on announcements by 'Olga' to the effect that 'she' was about to 'enter the ray'.

After the Hope-Rayleigh investigation Rudi's mediumship diminished more and more; movements of even the smallest objects were hardly ever reported and occultations of the infra-red rays increasingly failed to occur. A further investigation by the Society for Psychical Research, under the guidance of O. Gatty and T. Besterman

Harry Price Library, London University

Two photographs from the Harry Price Library *Left* A session with Willi Schneider in Munich: Willi's fame was later eclipsed by that of his brother *Right* The double exposure photograph, showing Rudi Schneider with his arm out behind him, which Harry Price used in an attempt to discredit the medium

between October 1933 and March 1934, was negative. Although C. V. C. Herbert, when research officer of the S.P.R. in 1935, attended some impressive seances in Weyer, Austria, where the medium had settled after his marriage, Rudi never again gave successful sittings abroad.

However, Professor Gustav Schwaiger conducted a lengthy series in Vienna, from April 1935 to May 1936, which he regarded as definitely providing evidence of paranormal movement of objects, though he failed to obtain any recording on his infra-red television apparatus. He did obtain photographs of a substance ostensibly composed of threads, which left its traces on carefully prepared bearing plates. Although ectoplasmic masses (which Schrenck-Notzing and others thought to be of thread-like texture) were hardly ever described in connection with Rudi in the later years of his mediumship, Professor Schwaiger's photographs do suggest the kind of threads described in connection with other mediums, including Willi.

Charged with Fraud

A number of accusations of fraud were levelled against Rudi, but a most careful examination reveals that not a single one of them would be acceptable as evidence in any context other than that of psychical research. Professor Meyer and Professor Przibram based their claims to have exposed the medium in March 1924 on the fact that the two physicists, one acting as 'medium', the other as 'controller', managed to convince a drawing-room audience who were specially picked and not allowed to interfere in any way, that the 'phenomena' produced were genuine. In fact the conditions, as well as the phenomena simulated during this hoax, were quite different from those obtaining at Rudi's seances. Moreover, Professor Stefan Meyer inserted a special testimony into Rudi's father's *Journal* to the effect that, on the crucial occasion when the professors subsequently claimed to have detected fraud, he had controlled the medium and that the control was free from objections. Meyer and Przibram in fact withdrew their allegation that they had caught the medium 'red-handed', under pressure from Schrenck-Notzing, contenting themselves with the claim that they had found 'a natural explanation'.

The detailed accusations of W. J. Vinton, Malcolm Bird and Dr W. F. Prince, who had sittings with Rudi in Austria, are on close examination a tissue of suppositions, not one of them being based on solid evidence beyond a general exploitation of the feeling of the inherent improbability of physical phenomena. Vinton's supposed suspicious findings (an ectoplasmic mass crouching in the cabinet) was in fact entered in the Schneider *Journal* ten days after the alleged event itself. Dr Prince's investigation took place largely in the house of Dr Rudolf Lambert at Stuttgart, and all conditions were fully under the experimenters' control. Prince's supposition that Rudi's father could have stage-managed the phenomena through the keyhole seems somewhat preposterous, given the accounts of what was supposed to have happened. Malcolm Bird's denunciation is based on a single visit to Braunau and again does not stand up to detailed investigation.

The most damaging attack ever made on Rudi was launched by Harry Price, who published a photograph purporting to show Rudi's arm freed from control whilst phenomena were allegedly occurring. Price had contrived a device whereby a handkerchief to be levitated paranormally by the medium was so balanced on a counterpoise table that, if the handkerchief was moved, a camera flash would be released, taking a photograph of the handkerchief in the air. Price claimed that he had accidentally obtained a double exposure whilst he was himself controlling the medium; he insisted that the first of these exposures showed Rudi's arm freed and stretched out towards the handkerchief, and the second showed Rudi's arm once more inserted into Price's hand. Price claimed that his failure to notice all this whilst acting as controller was due to a toothache.

Most of the experimenters who had worked with Rudi at the time interpreted this photograph as meaning that the first exposure showed Rudi's hand controlled, the second as free from control; in other words, that the handkerchief was levitated, and that the resulting flash made Rudi jerk his hand free. A very prolonged and heated controversy ensued. The photograph is highly unsatisfactory and ambiguous and there is clear evidence of retouching on the supporting plates, claimed to be stereograms taken on the same occasions, and on the enlargements. It has only become possible to examine the plate from which the photograph was prepared since Price's death, and this examination leaves open the possibility that it was a fabrication obtained by superimposition.

The documentary evidence leaves no possible doubt that Price acted with complete lack of scruple towards the medium and his fellow investigators. For months after he had, as he subsequently alleged, complete proof of fraud, he was still writing to assure, among others, the editor of *Nature* that Rudi was, and always had been, perfectly genuine.

At the same time as he was accusing Rudi of fraud, Price also published an old photograph of Willi as a boy, draped in dubious ectoplasmic configurations fastened by means of a safety pin. This photograph seems to have been supplied to Price many years previously by Captain Kogelnik, who was intent on impressing on Price how essential a careful control of Willi really was. However, both Kogelnik and, for that matter, Price were and remained convinced to the end of their days that Rudi at any rate had produced genuine physical phenomena. Price's last letter on record before his death contains a statement of his faith in Rudi's genuineness.

Eventually, Rudi's phenomena grew feebler and feebler, certainly when outsiders were present. Also he increasingly concentrated on the necessity of making a living. He died of a stroke on 28 April 1957.

(See also MEDIUMS; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.)

ANITA GREGORY

SCIENCE
FICTION

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It is tempting to see in the history of science fiction a direct reflection of the main technical and philosophical revolutions in social history

While apparently obsessed with the terrors launched by man's impious assumption of technical omnipotence in the 20th century, science fiction in fact has its roots in the fears and preoccupations of earlier centuries

CURIOSITY AND FEAR in about equal measure are the twin springs of science fiction. On one hand there is the need to discover what displaces the bath water, makes the apple fall, causes the sun to rise, or determines that the universe be shaped like a doughnut. On the other, there is the dread, securely founded on the sense of physical mortality, that natural laws may ultimately prove to have no intelligible purpose and that the limited conceits of man can in any case be relied upon to subvert those laws, eliminate them and supplant them with chaos.

Given these contradictory promptings, it is tempting to see in the history of science fiction a direct reflection of the main technical and philosophical revolutions in social history. The first significant examples come in the Renaissance, when discoveries in every field from the biological to the geographical flung back the medieval curtains with a resounding crash. In literature, transformed by Caxton in the 1480s, the arrival of new times was signalled by the translations of the utopian fantasies of Plato and the lunar ones of Lucian, and by the controversial revelations of Kepler and Galileo about the possible nature of the solar system. As a breakthrough, it was the most traumatic that the world is ever likely to experience. The written word, and the knowledge it bore, was no longer the exclusive property of clerics trained in the classical languages. The Church which had maintained a grip on the whole of Europe for centuries was successfully challenged, and all that the Church represented was consequently open to question. The result,

In science fiction advanced creatures from the far reaches of space are generally hostile to man, a reflection of our fear of technology, the machine and the progress of science itself. Two scenes from an adventure in which the heroic Dan Dare outwits the Mekon *(left)* and foils another of his schemes to destroy mankind *(above)*: from the *Eagle* comic

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inevitably, was a superstitious terror that oscillated wildly between bursts of heretical defiance and the placatory repressiveness of such pursuits as witch-hunting.

The science fiction of the time, making its first tentative appearance coincident with the growth of scientific speculation, was accordingly well laced with superstition. Johann Kepler's own imaginary account of life on the moon, *Somnium* (1634), made reasonable enough use of contemporary discoveries (allowances are made for the force of gravity, and lunar temperatures are extreme), but arranged for the astronaut hero to reach his destination by means of the bridge of darkness along which demons were reputed to travel during an eclipse – and the whole adventure turns out at the end to have been a dream. Wings of unusual size and power were the means of space travel suggested by, significantly enough, the Bishops Godwin (*The Man in the Moon*) and Wilkins (*The Discovery of a New World*) whose works both appeared in 1638; and a few years later Kirchner's *Itinerarium Exstaticum* solved the whole problem of motive force quite simply by the use of an angel.

Satanic Presumption

Such fantasies were packed with moral rhetoric, but they had, too, a menagerie of giants, monsters and unusually endowed animals, as well as chivalrous and romantic exploits, whose inspiration can be traced to the new availability of Chaucer, *Beowulf* (rediscovered by Sir Robert Cotton in the middle of the 17th century), and Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. And if Francis Bacon's depiction of an ideal state, *The New Atlantis*, can be seen as a hybrid of the 13th century ballad of 'The Land of Cockaygne' and the new utopian prospects of the Americas, there was little question about the dominant work of fantasy of the entire century – Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), which provided a timely and undoubtedly conscious warning that man,

Fear of man's attempts to raise himself to the level of the gods is an old and common theme, but this Chinese textile confidently salutes the successful launching of the Russian sputnik and shows the gods waiting to greet the space-craft in heaven: from the collection of Miss Pearl Binder

Pearl Binder

National Film Archive

like Satan, could insult the heavens only so far with his impudence before being cast into eternal torment.

That warning has never lost its force. The satires of the 18th century by such as Voltaire, Swift and Johnson are as much debates on the ungainly pretensions of mankind as analyses of his pathetic failings. When two giants from Sirius and Saturn take to task the shipload of philosophers they haul out of the Baltic in Voltaire's *Micromégas* (1752), it is not to drag them off as specimens for some unimaginable intergalactic zoo (which is how the idea would have been developed in the 1920s), but to discourse with them on the comparative merits of Locke, Leibnitz and Descartes. The announcement by one tiny scholar that the universe was unquestionably made for man brings the encounter to its conclusion: the celestial visitors are laughing too much to go on. The moral presented by Arthur Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* – in which the infernal (and the adjective is by no means inappropriate) persistence of human endeavour is balanced by the inescapable weaknesses of man's nature – up-dates in little more than technical jargon this Voltairean confrontation with incalculably superior forces.

The Infernal Machine

As the first great science fiction novel, *Frankenstein*, made its appearance at the beginning of the 19th century, coinciding with the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution, the malignant forces of the universe seemed poised to take over. 'The likest thing to a Faust's flight on the Devil's mantle,' was how Thomas Carlyle described his first railway trip in 1839, echoing Mary Shelley's preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, in which she pointed out the full implications of her story: 'supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world'. Stupendous mechanisms transformed the countryside despite her fears and have been the staple diet of science fiction ever since; there was hardly a writer of the time who did not refer uneasily to England's Satanic mills in terms that emphasized their seemingly diabolical properties.

The equation of the machine with destruction and with the ruin of 'natural' life prompted a perpetual uneasiness which was inherited with interest by the next century and upon which, in the long run, Isaac Asimov's robot stories were to be based. With its deceptive intimations of easy prosperity and its images of grime and toil, the machine appeared quite literally to rob man of his soul in return for paltry material reward. Several Dickens novels (*Dombey and Son, Hard Times, The Old Curiosity Shop*) concerned themselves with the contrast between the charm and the menace of industrialism, while the Black Country provided easy inspiration for depictions of Pandemonium in a new edition of *Paradise Lost*.

Milton and Dante were constant points of reference, but perhaps the most startling

'Curiosity and fear in about equal measure are the twin springs of science fiction', and the physical and mental transformation of human beings into creatures semi-human or superhuman links old magical ideas with modern advances in surgery and genetics *Above* The hero of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, shrunk to the height of a reel of thread, defends himself against a spider: scene from the film based on Richard Matheson's novel
Facing page above **Modern science fiction bears the indelible imprint of the terror-haunted fantasies of Edgar Allan Poe, who wrote of himself, 'I became insane, with intervals of horrible sanity': *The Haunted Palace***
Facing page below **Leonard Nimoy *(left)* in the television series *Star Trek*: Ray Milland *(right)* as *The Man with the X-Ray Eyes***

appearance of the Miltonic vision was in *Frankenstein* itself, in which the monster reads *Paradise Lost* and at once identifies itself with the 'fallen angel become a malignant devil'. Referred to throughout the book as 'the devil', 'the fiend', 'the demon' and the 'demoniacal enemy', Frankenstein's luckless experiment in creation is a complex and unavoidable metaphor of which the innumerable successors include robots, computers, telephones, cars, rockets, mutants and the atom bomb. Its attitude towards its 'father' is an Oedipal vengefulness finding its worst excesses, logically enough, on the parent's wedding night; at the same time, the monster can be interpreted as Frankenstein's *alter ego*, his second self, released by a quasi-scientific miracle (as Hyde was later

David Austen

BBC

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The monstrous offspring of an already monstrous heretic, Frankenstein's creation was both the Antichrist of the past and the man of the future

to be released from Jekyll in Stevenson's novel) in order to gratify the darkest perversions of his nature.

Exorcized only after Frankenstein's nightmarish pilgrimage, the creature finally floats away on a sterile ice-raft into the dark wastes of the Arctic, swearing that it will immolate itself on a funeral pyre – a subtle intermingling of elemental forces that reinforces the story's supernatural bias rather more than its attempt to come to terms with medical experiments of the period. The monstrous offspring of an already monstrous heretic, Frankenstein's creation was both the Antichrist of the past and the man of the future.

Man's Fatal Progression

As Mary Shelley's work began the century, so that of H. G. Wells marked its close. In Wells, what might be termed 'industrial demonology' found its most inventive chronicler: invisibility, time travel, man-eating plants, telekinesis, alternate universes, planetary collision and the end of the world, advertising run wild, a society dominated by the young – it is hard to find any subject in science fiction that Wells did not think of first. Where his perkily bourgeois heroes could survive most hazards in the 1890s, his confidence that the infinite power of the machine would in the end be constructively harnessed was ultimately undermined by the spectacle of two world wars. His 1945 epilogue, *Mind at the End of its Tether*, embodied all the fatalism of the scientific romances but with no trace of the redeemingly ironic humour that in the past had softened the scorn of such tales as *The Last Trump*, in which he had commented: 'Men will go on in their own ways though one rose from the dead to tell them that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, though the Kingdom itself and all its glory became visible, blinding their eyes.'

The ways of men, as Wells viewed them through the lens of Darwinism, maintained a steady evolutionary flow from the extremes of the past to those of the future. He wrote stories about both ends of the scale (and with *The Time Machine* travelled its length in a single tale) demonstrating in this way a subtler aspect of science fiction writing – that the influence of the present provides inescapable boundaries.

The invading Martians of *The War of the Worlds* provide an example of the Victorians' twin concerns. They are physically puny, almost caricatures of the future frame that will no longer be shaped by muscular exertion; on the other hand, their war machines are omnipotent, lethal manifestations of extra-planetary forces that by their very origin have a supernatural aura. They are brought low, comfortlessly, by forces other than human. The Satanic nature of technological progress could hardly be better symbolized – but Wells spelt it out even more directly in the early short story *Lord of the Dynamos*, in which the noble savage Azuma-zi comes to worship as a god the glowing machine that is his charge and offers as a sacrifice to it the blasphemous man who interrupts his devotions. The corruption of the susceptible industrial worker, viewed with both distaste and concern, is associated with the underworld by Wells in stories like *The Time Machine*, *The First Men in the Moon* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, all of which feature subterranean beings that threaten the idyllic peace of the surface. This is balanced by a Wellsian obsession with attempts to fly and a fondness for aerial viewpoints, as in *The Crystal Egg*, where the spyhole into another world is at the top of a mast, or *War in the Air*, with its amazing vistas of struggle and destruction rendered meaningless by being observed from the sky.

In Wells equivocal forces of evil, in fact, are just about kept at bay by an instinctive – if also indistinct – moral sense, which at times of crisis expresses itself either through remarkable achievements of scientific detachment (as with *The Plattner Story* or *The New Accelerator*), or through the frankly supernatural (*The Man Who Could Work Miracles*, *The Truth About Pyecraft*, *The Stolen Body*). The stories of one of the most prolific and influential of science fiction writers are significantly crowded with phantoms, dreams and the inexplicable;

With 'intricate and vaguely lustful drawings of princesses, naiads and witches, riding on or battling with a whole range of mythological beasts,' science fiction is often expected to attract its readership on a fairy tale level, and dragons have lasted particularly well: cover of *Planet Stories*

Clothed in Air

And among the descendants of this Mr. Morris was one almost as sensible and clear-headed as his ancestor. He had just the same stout, short frame as that ancient man of the nineteenth century, from whom his name of Morris – he spelt it Mwres – came; he had the same half-contemptuous expression of face. He was a prosperous person, too, as times went, and he disliked the "new-fangled," and bothers about the future and the lower classes, just as much as the ancestral Morris had done . . .

Of course his toilet differed very much from that of his ancestor. It is doubtful which would have been the more shocked and pained to find himself in the clothing of the other. Mwres would certainly have sooner gone forth to the world stark naked than in the silk hat, frock coat, grey trousers and watch-chain that had filled Mr. Morris with sombre self-respect in the past. For Mwres there was no shaving to do: a skilful operator had long ago removed every hair-root from his face. His legs he encased in pleasant pink and amber garments of an air-tight material, which with the help of an ingenious little pump he distended so as to suggest enormous muscles. Above this he also wore pneumatic garments beneath an amber silk tunic, so that he was clothed in air and admirably protected against sudden extremes of heat or cold. Over this he flung a scarlet cloak with its edge fantastically curved. On his head, which had been skilfully deprived of every scrap of hair, he adjusted a pleasant little cap of bright scarlet, held on by suction and inflated with hydrogen, and curiously like the comb of a cock. So his toilet was complete; and, conscious of being soberly and becomingly attired, he was ready to face his fellow beings with a tranquil eye.

H. G. Wells *A Story of the Days to Come*

PLANET
STORIES
STRANGE ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS
—THE UNIVERSE OF FUTURE CENTURIES
20c
THE DRAGON-QUEEN OF JUPITER
by LEIGH BRACKETT
MUTINY ABOARD THE "TERRA"
by ROSS ROCKLYNNE
INVADERS OF THE FORBIDDEN MOON
A NOVEL OF SPACE-ADVENTURE
by
RAYMOND Z. GALLUN
FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINES
Virgil Finlay

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Above **The stories of H. G. Wells, one of the most prolific and influential of all science fiction writers, 'are significantly crowded with phantoms, dreams and the inexplicable; they deal, to use his own terrifying phrase, with "the rational souls of men who are lost in madness on the earth".' It is hard to find any subject in science fiction which Wells did not think of first, including invisibility, time travel, man-eating plants, telekinesis, alternate universes, planetary collision and the end of the world, advertising run wild, a society dominated by the young. Scene from *Things to Come*, a film made in 1936 and based on a story by Wells**

Right **'The Clangers' are amicable characters in a popular television series for children: here they are launching their first sky-rocket; the dustbin lids cover the entrances to their burrows**

they deal, to use his own terrifying phrase, with 'the rational souls of men who are lost in madness on the earth'.

Struggle with the Tomb

If the writings of Wells can be seen to have continued and developed the technological implications of *Frankenstein* to the point at which the accelerating pace of the 20th century could relate them easily to its own, even more ferocious, nightmares, it is important to remember at the same time that the Gothic aspect of Mary Shelley's novel was part of a parallel form of writing that picked its way through the Victorian subconscious. The most famous, and certainly the most influential creator of new variations on the moods of Horace Walpole and Mrs Radcliffe was Edgar Allan Poe. That Poe enjoyed both fame and influence, albeit posthumously, was thanks to the French: Baudelaire and Mallarmé championed and translated him, Verlaine and Rimbaud imitated him, and Jules Verne glowingly acknowledged his influence. Later, praise came not only from Thomas Mann and Joseph Conrad but also from Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle; through them, and through the writers of the 1920s (such as Lovecraft, whose disciples included Ray Bradbury and Robert Bloch), science fiction was to bear his indelible imprint.

'Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.' The dying words of Ligeia, derived by Poe from the creed of the Cambridge Platonists (who laid emphasis on the ability of the soul to demonstrate its immortality through occult manifestations), are the keynote of his obsession. The battles with the tomb in Poe's stories counterpoint the Frankenstein concept that man might create life, with the suggestion that he might also cheat death. That this agonized form of blasphemy brings with it only terror and revulsion is gloomily illustrated by Poe in a number of ways, most hauntingly with the reappearance of Madeline Usher after a bloody struggle with her coffin, most repulsively with the disintegration of the unfortunate M. Valdemar, released from his trance state some seven months after his death. It is with *Valdemar* that

Although science fiction frequently concerns itself with the apocalypse, it is seldom indeed that it allows the human race, friendless and misguided, to be totally eradicated

Poe perhaps comes nearest to conventional science fiction – his fluent and clinical account of the experiment was accepted as fact when the story first appeared – but the ghosts and apparitions in much of his work, and the strong moral tone of, for instance, *William Wilson*, establish that his chief concern is with another world where unsullied beauty (the 'sole object' and 'inevitable test' of the imagination, as Poe saw it) would be eternal and without penalty.

Doomsday Survivors

Transferred to the screen in the 1950s, Poe's themes have been gently altered in a manner that usefully illustrates the mingling of present and past preoccupations by which science fiction thrives in the present century. Their expressions of terror at the process of uncovering the truth (that is, the truths of elementary psychoanalysis) are morality tales in their own right, the claustrophobic houses and castles have become womb-like, their labyrinthine corridors a symbol of the treacherous fascination of sex. On the borders of madness, fostered by incest and necrophilia, the hypersensitive aesthete attempts to shut out the normal world that might save him, summoning instead the spirits of the past, both Hebraic and Egyptian, to console him in his despair. The relevance turns out to be surprisingly nuclear, as the director of the Poe films, Roger Corman, has shown in his more overt science fiction and fantasy work (the latest example of which, *Gas*, actually features Poe, plus raven, plus his lost love Lenore, roving the poisoned countryside on a Harley-Davidson motor-cycle). In order to be saved, Corman states, the world must first be destroyed, and the flames in which each Poe recluse meets his fate support the point – a concept with at least one root firmly in the Christian tradition of salvation through martyrdom.

In *The Haunted Palace*, one of the most successful of the Poe films, the old world of necromancy confronts the results of the new black arts and is aghast at what man can do for himself, whether with supernatural assistance or not. It makes for an image straight out of the last years of Wells: 'Examine the pattern of events, and you will find yourself face to face with a new scheme of being, hitherto unimaginable by the human mind . . . The writer is convinced that there is no way out or round or through the impasse. It is the end.'

It can safely be claimed for science fiction, however, that the end always seems to be no more than temporary. The fusion of the horrific with the technical, the fantastic with the hypothetical, and the bizarre with the mundane, took place in the 1920s with the simultaneous circulation of *Weird Tales* and *Amazing Stories*, two of the first and most famous magazines, whose separate identities were at times by no means discernible. The stimulating result of keeping magic and science within the same covers was that each gave hope to the other – and man had a kind of instant survival kit no matter which got the upper hand. Although science fiction frequently concerns itself with the apocalypse, it is seldom indeed that it allows the human race, friendless and misguided, to be totally eradicated. Rather, the disaster novel draws a sense of wonder from the process of destruction themselves – the wind from nowhere, the melting icecaps, the approaching comet, the crystallization of the planet's molecular structure, the radioactive landscapes – and a sense of grim accomplishment from the Crusoe-like activities of the industrious survivors of the holocaust.

Menageries of the Supernatural

By contrast with the elaborate descriptions of future cities in its earlier days, science fiction has become increasingly featureless in its backgrounds, the sterile surface of the moon, the rubble of the battleground and the drifting sands of ecological disaster serving as a uniformly uncrowded canvas upon which the moods of the characters can be thrown into colourful relief. And as can be seen from the surviving covers of the extraordinary publications of the 1940s, their pages illuminated by intricate and vaguely lustful drawings of princesses, naiads and witches, riding on or battling with a whole range of mythological beasts, science fiction was expected to attract its readership on a fairy tale level. The sands were an infinite arena for one quest after another, whether in space suit or loin-cloth, and if the sword-and-sorcery themes (usually recognizable as a mixture of Superman and Arthurian legend) needed some variety, then more mundane situations could be introduced – like an encounter with an alien or a crisis of confidence among the members of an expeditionary force.

Ray Bradbury's tales of Mars established that Lewis Carroll was still with us – and, indeed, many other old friends, including Poe. In one Bradbury story, the House of Usher itself is recreated on the newly colonized planet, but there are many less blatant acknowledgements of the novelist's affections, inspired as much by nostalgia as an enthusiasm for the future: vampires, ghosts, werewolves, winged beings and creatures that can change their shape at will – these are the most frequent inhabitants of Bradbury's universe. So persistent are the menageries of the supernatural in current science fiction (recent titles from Clifford Simak include *The Werewolf Principle* and *The Goblin Reservation*, while John Christopher provides a far-fetched explanation for *The Little People*, and Anne McCaffrey wins the top science fiction writer's award for yet another novel about dragons), that even the 'mainstream' writings, experimenting a little more with the flexibility of time now that space travel has become so overcrowded, often seem to be nothing less than rationalized ghost stories.

The allegorized struggle between the forces of good and evil maintains its unsteady course in the pages of each new novel by possibly the most intriguing writer in the field, Philip K. Dick. And when James Blish's *Black Easter* reopens Pandora's box only to find it impossible to close once more, he is summarizing anew the predicament of mankind symbolized by the fall of Lucifer from grace.

(See also FILMS.)

PHILIP STRICK

FURTHER READING: In addition to the titles mentioned above, see K. Amis, *New Maps of Hell* (Arno, 1975); L. Carter, *Dragons, Elves and Heroes* and *The Young Magicians* (Ballantyne Books, 1971); *Science Fiction at Large*, edited by Peter Nicholls (Harper and Row, 1977); H. B. Franklin, *Future Perfect* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1966); C. S. Lewis, *Of Other Worlds* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966); P. Moore, *Science and Fiction* (Norwood Editions, 1980); M. Hope Nicholson, *Voyages to the Moon* (Collier Macmillan, 1960).

SCORPIO

THE SIGN of the scorpion, according to the traditional zodiac, rules those who are born between 23 October and 21 November. For many years it has been the custom to maintain that Scorpio is the most dangerous sign of the zodiac, with quite the most tricky character that one might have to deal with. It was accused of being the most dark, secretive, treacherous and generally vicious sign of any.

In fact, the genuine Scorpio person is governed by his energy, for this sign, like Aries, is ruled by Mars, the planet of courage, energy and activity. He wants to act, not brood, and hence he is frequently uninhibited and impatient. To the true Scorpian nothing is too much trouble. His aim is to do, he sees no point in boggling or hesitation, little in compromise and none at all in shirking. He is admirably thorough.

Work, to him, is a pleasurable pastime: to work for money, from the Martian point of view, is slightly dishonest. Work should be a natural expression of one's energy, as it is with animals, and as it is with creative artists and craftsmen. Any attempt to turn work into a burden is offensive to the Martian spirit.

Human relations are made far easier by the positive attitude of the Scorpian, who is not perpetually on the defensive, not grasping, not full of forethought for self, though he may cause offence through too little sympathy for the timidities of others.

There is something very satisfying in the thoroughness of the Scorpian. He does not merely play at doing things, but carries them through in a properly adult and professional manner, in contrast with those born under Gemini, Virgo and Pisces. Another characteristic of Scorpio is wit and humour, which may be a socially acceptable safety valve as much as an overflow of good nature.

Any quality that confers benefit on others is a virtue, and the benefit to be derived from Scorpians is that they take on themselves the dark, dangerous and risky tasks which others frequently do not dare to undertake. But by the same token, they would rather be active than do nothing and so may be tempted into impatience.

SCORPION

THE SCORPION is classified, not with the insects, but with the spiders. The virulence of its venom has been exaggerated, though there are a few records from the Near East of people dying after being stung. Species living in the Sahara and Mexico are more dangerous. No species is found in the British Isles, but it is familiar by name to most people because of references to it in European literature and the Bible.

The Judaean wilderness is mentioned as a place of scorpions, and throughout the Bible these creatures are regarded as malignant (Deuteronomy 8.15; Ezekiel 2.6; Revelation 9.5,10). They are associated with drought, wretchedness and pain. King Rehoboam is reported as saying: 'My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions' (1 Kings 12.11). The allusion may be to whips armed with spines. Such references contributed to the scorpion becoming symbolic of that which is hurtful and unpleasant.

Although these creatures were familiar to people living in southern Europe, medieval writers and illustrators depicted them in highly imaginative ways. The scorpion was said to have a face like a woman and in a 12th century manuscript in the British Museum it is shown with a human head and four legs, and with a body impaled on the spear-like sting. In the *Ancren Riwle*, a work of devotional instruction dating from about the same period, the scorpion is described as 'a kind of serpent that has a face like that of a woman and puts on a pleasant countenance'. The same notion appears in the works of Elizabethan writers.

Apollonius of Tyana (see APOLLONIUS) was reputed to have cleared Antioch of scorpions by burying a bronze image of one in the centre of the city. Pliny, in his *Natural History*, was responsible for a number of odd ideas about scorpions becoming current in later literature. He says that the scorpion provides a cure for its own poison: 'It is thought good . . . to lay to the sore the same scorpion that did the harm; or to eat him roasted, and last of all to drink it in two cups of pure wine of the grape.'

Scorpion lore illustrates both the extent to which Pliny's statements influenced successive writers for many centuries and the ingenuity with which these writers elaborated and embellished such notions without any attempt to find out the facts. The Jacobean dramatists Beaumont and Fletcher wrote in *Philaster*: 'Now your tongues like scorpions both heal and poison.' And in *Rosalynde* (1590) Thomas Lodge remarked: 'They that are stung by the scorpion cannot be recovered but by the scorpion.' Although these ideas are fantastic, ever since the discoveries of Edward Jenner it has been recognized that immunity from certain diseases may be attained by administering small doses of toxin.

Lupton, a writer of the 16th century, commented that eating basil counteracts a scorpion's sting (see also HERBS). He gave this recipe: 'One handful of basil with ten sea-crabs, stamped or beaten together, doth make all the scorpions to come to that place that are nigh to the same.' Presumably this was based on the magical concept that 'like attracts like', there being a vague similarity between crabs and scorpions. Topsell, in the 17th century, had equally fanciful notions: 'The sea-crab with basil in her mouth destroyeth the scorpion.' He describes vividly how scorpions, in order to reach a sleeping man, form a chain from the ceiling, each giving place to another after it has stung him.

C. M. Dixon

The scorpion's sting gives it a baleful character in folklore and astrology: the Scorpion and the Archer, from an Egyptian mummy case

The world of the supernatural lies very close to the world of men in the ballads, which preserve, in their many different versions, traditions older than Christianity

SCOTTISH AND BORDER BALLADS

BISHOP PERCY, in the 18th century, found a large notebook of written ballads, without music, rewrote a selection and published it as *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Sir Walter Scott, who could not sing though he had heard many ballads sung, printed the second collection of ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, at the beginning of the 19th century. Neither collection of these songs had any music, and this omission persisted for 100 years. At the end of the 19th century, Professor Child of Harvard University published his five-volume work *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Since that time the Child ballads, as traditional ballads are often called, have been numbered on his system.

Thanks to the work early in this century of Cecil Sharp in England and Gavin Greig in Scotland, who both collected ballads with their tunes, scholars woke up to the fact that ballads are sung. As Thomas Rhymer told the Fairy Queen, 'Harping keep I none, for tongue is chief of minstrelsy', which means that he sang his songs unaccompanied, as the traditional singers have always done, and the tinkers still do. The ballad-singer gets his story across to his audience in clear sung lines. His method makes it unnecessary to carry a musical instrument, so he is ready to sing at any time and in any place. His ballads are in his head.

This oral tradition has preserved wonderful ballads of the supernatural – of magic, of fairies, ghosts, witches and dragons. The tales are set in country or castle, very seldom in town. The country of the Border ballads is more pastoral than agricultural: there are horses and horse-thieves, cattle and cattle-rustlers, sheep and sheep-stealers. Thus, one Border ballad, *The Lads of Wamphray*, refers to 'the lads of Leverhay that drove the Crichton's gear away'. These Border thieves 'stealed the broked cow and the branded bull' and 'ne'er saw a horse but they made it their ain'.

The Road to Fair Elfland

Somewhere beyond the rolling, bare Border hills is Fairyland, or Elfland. Sometimes this country is approached through the greenwood. But when the imagination of the story-teller breaks through into the other-reality of the supernatural, his fancy does not move freely. It is controlled by ballad conventions, a collection of miscellaneous beliefs inherited by the ballad-makers from the past. They have the same patterns that occur in folktales, and would have been well known to the ballad-singer's audience.

Fairyland has its own social organization and supernatural laws. It is, for example, aristocratic: in the ballad of *Thomas Rhymer*, the Queen of Elfland, whose skirt is of the grass-green silk (an unlucky colour associated also with witches), shows True Thomas the winding road to fair Elfland. Though it has some resemblances to the Land of the Dead, Elfland is in the minds of the ballad-makers distinct from it. Because he has kissed her, the Queen claims Thomas's services for seven years. Behind the choice of the number seven lies numerology, knowledge of the significance of numbers, and in the ballads the most common numbers are seven and three, which have great occult significance (see SEVEN; THREE).

The Queen warns Thomas that he must not speak in Elfland, or he will never return to his own country – an example of a taboo. Another common taboo is that a human must not eat in Fairyland; however, the Queen gives Thomas an apple from a tree, so that when he eats it he will have a tongue that cannot lie. This tree has some resemblance to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden of Eden. The fact that Thomas cannot tell a lie is important, for many prophecies were ascribed to him which are still in existence. One of

'The Gordons good, in English blood they steep'd their hose and shoon': illustration to *The Battle of Otterburn* in a 1908 edition of Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, one of the earliest collections of the traditional ballads of the Border country

them, 'Atween Craik Cross and Eildon tree, is a' the safety that can be', may be interpreted as you wish. Like many of Thomas's rhymes it is as ambiguous as a sibyl's prophecy.

People vanish from the earth into Fairyland. One woman is taken to Elfland to nurse the Queen's child. Tam Lin is an interesting ballad character because of the method of his escape from Fairyland. The ballad begins by telling how the heroine, Janet, goes off to Carterhaugh, though warned that she may lose her rings, her mantle or her maidenhead to Tam Lin. By pulling two roses Janet brings Tam Lin to her side. He makes love to her and she becomes pregnant. She returns to Carterhaugh and asks Tam Lin, when he appears, if he has been baptized. Tam reassures her that he is human, that the Queen of Fairyland carried him off:

But at the end o' seven years,
They pay their teind to hell.

It is Hallowe'en, the date for the payment of their tithe to hell, and Tam is afraid that he may be the victim this time. He tells Janet that to win him, if she loves him, she must go to Miles Cross at evening and pull him off his horse. The fairies will change him into a number of dangerous and terrifying things, but when he eventually turns into a naked man she must baptize him in milk and water. She does all he asks and rescues him to be her husband. In one version, at his request, she names him – a very powerful form of magic.

Though Fairyland is so far away, as we know from *Thomas Rhymer*, the fairies are sometimes very close, so close that to name them or call them brings them immediately. The fairy knight in *The Elfin Knight* blows his horn and when the lady who hears it makes a wish that the horn was in her chest and the knight in her arms, 'She had no sooner these words said, than the knight came to her bed.'

The 'Griesly Ghost'

Though there are a few references in the ballads to heaven and purgatory, the ballads are almost entirely pagan. When ballad-makers refer to Christian life after death, they seem to refer less often to heaven than to hell and the Devil. This is natural if the ballads are more pagan than Christian, and the Devil is the pagan aspect of Christianity.

The False Knight upon the Road is an excellent little ballad in which the Devil, in disguise, questions a 'wee boy' on his way to school. It is a late successor to the early riddle ballads, where failure to answer the question or perform the impossible task puts the person questioned into the questioner's power. The 'wee boy' has an answer to each of the Devil's questions, and reveals in his last answer that he recognizes the questioner. The boy escapes because he has had the last word.

Whether *The Daemon Lover* tells the story of a returning ghost or of the Devil pretending to be the woman's husband, is as uncertain as the nature of the ghost of Hamlet's father. In the ballad he is an evil, destructive force. He has a cloven foot and the power to change his size. When he has persuaded the wife to go on board one of his ships and to forsake her children, she questions him about the grim land she sees ahead:

'O yon is the mountain of hell,' he cried,
'Where you and I will go.'
He struck the tap-mast wi' his hand,
The fore-mast wi' his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

Suddenly he has become superhuman in size. Abnormal size is one element of the supernatural in the ballads, shared by both fairy and witch ballads. There is *The Wee Wee Man*, whose diminutive size and superhuman strength are the two significant details. He may be an elf from Fairyland, for he is met by a lady, followed by two dozen ladies 'clad out in green'.

But in the twinkling of an eye,
My wee wee man was clean awa'.

In *King Henry*, on the other hand, the 'griesly ghost' who appears to the King is very tall: 'Her head hat the roof-tree o' the house'.

Return from the Grave

The most complete ghost ballad is *The Wife of Usher's Well*. The wife gets word that her three sons are drowned. She makes a wish, or works a spell – we are not sure which – and they return one dark Martinmas night, wearing hats of birch from the gates of paradise. Whether the wife knows that her sons are ghosts is not stated, but left to the listener's imagination. Following ghost convention, the red cock and the grey cock summon the three back to where the worm is fretting their bodies; it is also a world where they can be punished and suffer sore pain for being late in returning.

The ghosts of the children in the ballad of *The Cruel Mother* know what their mother's punishment is to be for murdering them: ghosts know the future. In one version, collected in 1906 by Gavin Greig, the children tell their mother that she will be seven years a fish, seven years a bell, and seven years in the deeps of hell. Hell is a Christian concept, but this kind of fish is not.

One of Margaret's seven brothers, in *Clerk Saunders*, kills her lover. After the burial, Clerk Saunders's ghost stands at Margaret's window asking her to give him back the faith and troth he gave her. Eventually she returns his troth in a silver wand, though at first she refuses to give it to him unless he kisses her. Saunders warns her that his kiss would be the kiss of death but she follows him back to his grave.

Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep.

But there is no room in his lowly bed among the hungry worms. The ghost seems in this story to have returned in his former shape, not as a disembodied spirit.

In another ballad, proud Lady Margaret's brother returns home to give her a warning but does not allow her to go away with him: 'For ye've unwashen hands, and ye've unwashen feet, to gae to clay wi' me.' It needs a clear, unaccompanied singer to drop this hint, which would have told the audience at once that the brother was dead, and that he referred to the washing of a corpse before burial.

Dead Marjorie's three brothers in *Young Benjie*, watch her corpse, knowing that at midnight she will tell them the name of her murderer.

About the middle o' the night,
The cocks began to craw;
And at the dead hour o' the night,
The corpse began to thraw (writhe).

They ask her who threw her over the falls. Young Benjie was her first love and her murderer, she tells them. Should they behead him, or hang him, or pick out his two grey eyes? Marjorie chooses the third. At the end of every seven years they must lead the blind man to the place where he drowned his sweetheart. This will be his penance.

A famous harper, in *Binnorie*, makes a harp of a dead woman's breastbone with strings of her yellow hair. When he comes to her father's hall, the harp begins to play and at the end of the passage concludes, 'Woe to my sister, false Helen!' which reveals her as a murderess.

Talking Animals

Speaking animals and birds appear frequently. Parrots carry on intelligent conversations. The knight in *The Broomfield Hill* is told by his milk-white steed and his gay goss-hawk that they had tried to waken him when his sweetheart was near. A bonny bird in *Lord William* speaks from a high tree, charging the lady with murder. The bird may be the soul of the dead man; it is intelligent enough to refuse to come down even for a golden cage.

Even inanimate objects are able to communicate messages. The ring in *Hynd Horn* is one example of this: 'When this ring grows pale and wan, you may know by it my love is gane.' In *Cospatrick*, the hero speaks to his bed on his bridal night:

Now speak to me blankets, and speak to me bed,
And speak thou sheet, enchanted web;
And speak up, my bonny brown sword, that winna lie,
Is this a true maiden that lies by me?

The bed tells him the real state of affairs.

The fire, in *Earl Richard* spares the maid, Catherine, who has been condemned to be burnt for murder, but eagerly burns the murderess when she is condemned instead. When the maid touches the corpse it does not bleed, but when her mistress touches it the blood makes the ground red. The spectators know by this who is guilty of the crime.

Then there are witches. When the knight goes off to his tryst with his lady among the broom in *The Broomfield Hill*, a witch woman gives the lady advice so that she will be able to keep her wager with her

Left In *The Douglas Tragedy* Lady Margaret's seven brothers are killed by her lover but he is mortally wounded in the fight and she dies of grief *Right* The ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens* tells the story of the drowning of 'the best sailor that ever sailed the sea' and the Scots lords who sailed with him: 'and lang, lang may the maidens sit wi' their gowd kames in their hair, a-waiting for their ain true loves! For them they'll see nae mair'

lover and yet 'come maiden home'. The witch *Allison Gross* promises various gifts to the man she wants for her lover. When he refuses, she turns round and round (probably widdershins, or counter-clockwise) and mutters certain words so that he falls down and becomes an 'ugly worm' – maybe a snake or a dragon. His sister Maisry combs his head on her knee with a silver comb. On Hallowe'en the Queen strokes him three times over her knee and turns him again to his own proper shape.

One of the most horrible and fascinating of the witch ballads is the tale of *Willie's Lady*. The lady cannot be delivered of her first child because Willie's mother, a witch, has put spells on her. The witch refuses all gifts: her daughter-in-law shall die and her son wed another maid. Then the Billy Blind (a friendly domestic spirit) tells Willie to shape a loaf of wax into a baby with two glass eyes, and to invite the witch to the christening. He does so, and the witch asks who has loosed the nine witch-knots in the lady's locks, taken out the combs of care, taken down the bush of woodbine, killed the master kid beneath the lady's bed and loosed her left shoe? Willie does all these things, the spells are broken and his wife bears a bonny son.

Mermaids also have supernatural powers in the ballads. In *Sir Patrick Spens* a mermaid who rises beside Sir Patrick's ship with 'the comb an' glass in her hand' warns him that he will never see dry land. The hero of *Clerk Colven* meets a mermaiden, takes her by the hand and green sleeve, and forgets his own lady. To cure his headache he cuts a piece from her garment to tie round his head. When the pain grows worse, he threatens her with a knife, but she becomes a fish and jumps into the water. He goes home to die. The mermaid's garment is reminiscent of the poisoned shirt that killed Hercules.

The Wicked Stepmother

A very strange character in the ballads is the stepmother. In *Kempion* it is the stepmother who changes the lady into a fiery beast, until Kempion kisses her three times and returns her to human shape. Here again is the idea of the power of a kiss, which can both kill and cure. The supernatural lady in *King Henry* has been changed by her stepmother into a ghost; King Henry gives her all her will and she becomes a beautiful woman, a version of the story told by Chaucer's Wife of Bath in the 14th century in *The Canterbury Tales*.

The supernatural in the ballads is best seen as an added dimension to reality. The Anglo-Saxons called our world *middangeard*, the middle dwelling-place. In it is the grave, through which all men pass to heaven or hell; a few go, or are enticed while still alive, into Fairyland. From these regions come, at times, some of their inhabitants – ghosts from the grave, demons from hell and mermaids from their land beneath the ocean. These beings are largely human in appearance but may betray themselves by a cloven foot, or by their other-worldly conventions and supernatural power over humans. There are ways of guarding against this power, such as knowing the power of a name, the nature of spells, making sure to have the last word or answering the last trick question.

At times animals and birds speak intelligently. Ordinary things demonstrate strange powers. Combs and mirrors may have magical qualities; rings brighten and fade in sympathy with the fortunes of their owners; fire has the power to distinguish between good and evil, which it shows by refusing to burn innocent victims; while musical instruments made from human bone and hair from a dead person retain the character of the person and supply necessary information, usually about a murder.

WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE

FURTHER READING: D. Buchan, ed., *Scottish Ballad Book* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973); Francis James Child ed, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Dover. N. Y., 1965 reprint); Lowry C. Wimberley, *Folklore of the English and Scottish Ballads* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1928).

As the scryer peers into the crystal ball, the globe becomes foggy or opaque from the inside; then, perhaps, the mists dissolve to reveal the hoped-for vision. Of all types of fortune teller, it is said, 'the crystal-gazer is the person most likely to have a genuine psychic ability'

Martin Weaver

SCRYING

THE WORD 'scrying' means seeing, as in the slightly old-fashioned 'descry', for which most people would now use 'discern'. But scrying refers to a seeing of the future, and that in a special way. Strictly speaking, scrying is the kind of divination which uses transparent materials – water, mirrors, crystals – in which are formed visions of the future.

Under the heading of scrying one might include a startling range of techniques. Scrying with water is properly called hydromancy: also using water are such secondary forms as cylicomancy (using cups of water) and leconomancy (using oil poured onto water in basins), not to mention all the forms that involve moving water, or indeed other liquids ranging from ink to treacle. Mirror scrying, or catoptromancy (see MIRRORS), also has its subsidiary forms, which include divination by the reflections in brass objects and on the backs of watches, and through magnifying glasses.

Today it is medicine rather than magic which suffers from over-specialization, and the seers have broadened their bases once again. The more obscure forms of scrying never had more than a limited application. Hydromancy and catoptromancy dominated the field, and instances of the use of cups of water, and variants, can be found in magical traditions from all over the world – ancient Egypt, Assyria, Persia, primitive Tahiti and primitive southern Africa, as well as from the Graeco-Roman world and among later European peoples. Mirrors, too, were beloved by the prophets of the old civilizations, including that of the Aztecs, who held them to be a sacred emblem of the dark god Tezcatlipoca.

These interrelated forms of scrying maintained their prestige into fairly recent centuries, but then slowly began to die away. There may be a few determined hydromancers left, in the backwaters (literally) of modern occultism. But in our time the form of scrying that has pride of place is that which uses the crystal – properly known as crystallomancy, but more often and familiarly called crystal-gazing.

This process displays quite an impressive heritage. Primitives are not unfamiliar with the crystal: tribes in north Borneo, New Guinea and Madagascar have such divination in their traditions, while the aborigines of Australia venerate pieces of crystal quartz which are apparently sometimes used to provide visions. An Inca legend mentions a chief who owned a magic crystal which revealed the future. The Maya of Central America, and other tribes of that region, believed firmly in divination from polished stones. And in what is now the United States, the Cherokee Indians once looked for foreknowledge in bits of polished crystal, while the Apache used such stones to scry the whereabouts of lost or stolen property.

In Europe the crystal apparently began to come into its own among the Franks and Saxons in the early centuries of the Christian era. Small crystal globes were found – by excavators centuries ago – in the tombs of barbarian leaders, and scholars eventually concluded that the objects were used for divination rather than as ornaments. Certainly many early Christians, including St Patrick in the 5th century, decried the practice strongly enough to indicate its spread.

Angelical Stone

Mirrors and water remained in common use for divination during the Middle Ages. Roger Bacon, Cornelius Agrippa and even Nostradamus (see AGRIPPA: NOSTRADAMUS) all had their names linked with catoptromancy. But the crystal ball was becoming a serious rival, and received the seal of approval of Dr John Dee, astrologer to the court of Elizabeth I (see DEE). Dee and his dubious associate Kelley peered into a crystal globe about the size of an egg, which the doctor called his 'shew-stone' or 'angelical stone', the latter name indicating its supposed origin. Dee's stone has been the object of much scholarly dispute. Different accounts give it different sizes or shapes, assert that it was solid black, and so on.

By the 17th century it had become the accepted thing for an occultist to have a crystal ball, and perhaps a sizeable clientele paying for predictions through it. The ball tended then to be called a 'speculum' – but the gazing was rarely termed speculation, though this would have well described the use of the crystal by such famous charlatans as William Lilly, the 17th century astrologer.

By the 19th century at the latest, crystallomancy had become firmly established as one of the most popular forms of fortune telling, ranking with astrology and palmistry, cards and tea leaves. The British astrologer and fortune teller who called himself Zadkiel (R. E. Morrison) also published almanacs, as did many after him who used the same pseudonym; the publication for 1851 purported to offer 'Wonderful Revelations from the World of Spirits, Which have been given through a Magic Crystal'.

In our own time, crystal-gazers can be found wherever back-street fortune tellers feel a living is to be made, while the crystal, if not the customary shoddy props, will be prominent among the possessions of higher-class astrologers and clairvoyants who do special readings for regular and often well-to-do clients. Apart from the professionals, amateur crystal-gazers are also apparently on the increase, judging from the evidence of advertisements for the sale of crystal balls in occult journals. The current price in Britain seems to be from £2 up for a globe made of glass, four inches in diameter.

Do-It-Yourself Scrying

Some of the explanation for crystal-gazing's popularity must lie in its simplicity. Sitting and staring into a glass ball is obviously a great deal less work than drawing up horoscopes or laying out Tarot cards. Nor is there any prerequisite jargon to be learned. And yet, in the history of scrying, men have gone to a great deal of trouble to impose complication upon this basic simplicity.

The ball itself might be merely a sphere of glass. But past authorities often insisted that it should be the more costly kind, a specially rounded and polished sphere of crystalline rock. Quartz was always a favourite, though the wealthier scryers put their faith in the stone called beryl, of which aquamarine and emerald are variants, and which has certain valuable mystic connections (see JEWELS). Beryl is usually green-tinted within its translucence, though John Aubrey in his *Miscellanies* (1696) suggests that for scrying it ought to have a tint of red.

No hard and fast rules exist for positioning the crystal. Most modern fortune tellers place it in a simple mount which holds it still on the table. In the past it has been pierced and hung from a string, or partly flattened so that it rested on a table by itself, or was simply held in the hand. But the paraphernalia sometimes associated with the practice could be varied and abundant. One crystal owned by a scryer known to William Lilly was said to be set in silver, with the angelic names of Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel engraved on the mount.

John Melville's account of scrying, first published in 1896, provides lists of much more involved trappings. The ball, says Melville, should be enclosed in a frame of polished ivory or wood and should stand on a crystal or glass pedestal. The frame should have 'mystic names' engraved on it, preferably in raised gold lettering – Tetragrammaton, Emmanuel, Agla, Adonai. The pedestal should have the name Saday inscribed on it.

Melville recommends the use of a special table called the 'Lamen', circular and bearing similar mystic engravings. Otherwise, the scryer can make do with a simple small table covered with a white cloth, and perhaps a black handkerchief round the base of the ball to shut out reflections. But in the scrying room there

should be a place for a fire, perhaps a brazier, to burn the 'usual perfumes' (probably incense, balsam and so on). Also on the table should be two candles set in gilt or brass candlesticks with the names Elohim and Elohe engraved upon them.

Ritual Purity

A considerable amount of ceremonial is apparently expected to precede successful scrying. The care of the crystal is crucial: it must be kept perfectly clean, and this cleanliness is without doubt a form of ritual purification. One washes the crystal with soap, rinses with alcohol or vinegar, and polishes with velvet or chamois. The table and the room must also be spotless. And the scryer himself comes in for a share of purifying, through careful washing, abstention, prayer and the like. Melville recommends the occasional herbal infusion, of mugwort or perhaps chicory, to keep the scryer properly attuned. This idea of essential purity is especially prominent in older traditions – Asian or Middle Eastern above all – which insist that virgins or young unsullied boys make the best seers. Many magicians kept such a person handy, on a retainer, to do all necessary scrying.

Preparations for scrying must be made while the moon is waxing; the process itself works best when the sun is in its farthest northern declination, and also at sunrise, midday or sunset. The zodiacal sign Libra is of crucial importance to scryers: Melville says that it rules the kidneys, which have connections with the eyes and with the intuitive faculties. Libra also governs the beryl, and the two herbs mugwort and chicory, mentioned for the infusions.

The sign Taurus, linked with the cerebellum, has some part to play as well. And the moon, as so often in the mystic realm, is said to be the dominant planetary influence, though it has no associations with either of the two signs of the zodiac mentioned.

Immediately before the scrying begins, the final preparations introduce more magical ceremony. Crystal-gazers are often described as making a few 'magic passes' over the globe, before getting down to business. John Melville asserts the efficacy of such passes, which he says help to 'magnetize' the crystal. But other kinds of pre-scrying magic involve much more elaborate procedures.

Many writers proffer lengthy, involved prayers or incantations as used by seers of the past. Melville tells the would-be scryer to follow the speaking of the prayer by putting a special ring on the little finger of his right hand, hanging a pentacle around his neck and drawing a magic circle with an ebony magic wand. Then, after more incantations, and the burning of the perfumes, the scryer can finally get down to some serious gazing.

In modern times, the crystal-gazer merely stares at the globe with a certain concentration. (Many writers believe that he enters, or must enter, a trance. Others disagree.) F. W. H. Myers, the psychical researcher (see MYERS), recommended a dim light and about 10 to 15 minutes of gazing. But various scryers have claimed to be able to function quite well in bright light or in darkness, and each seems to have his or her own idea about how long it takes to see anything.

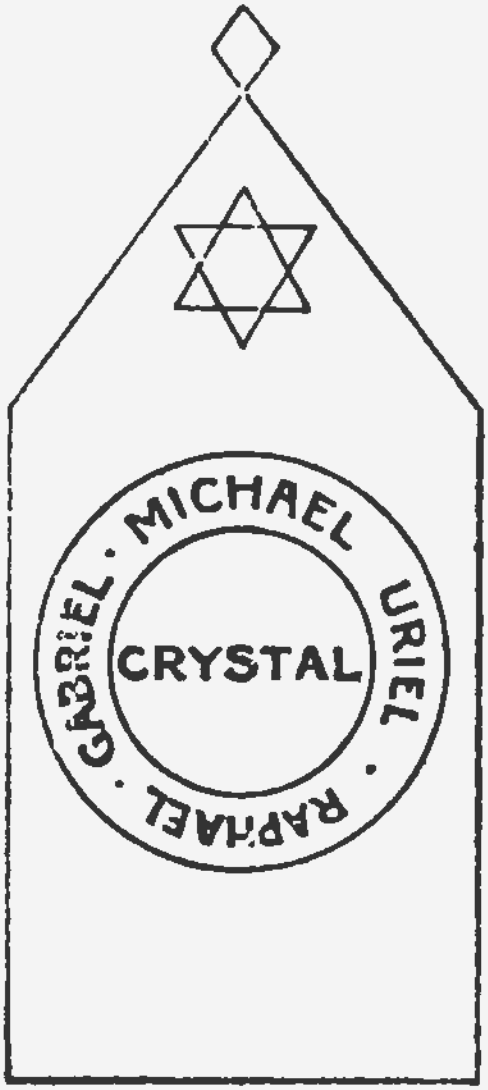
Visions in the Glass

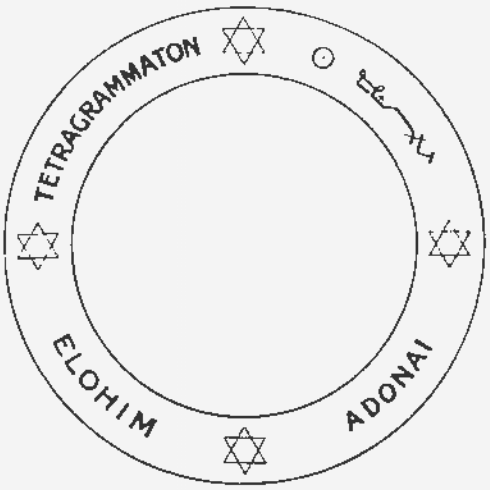
What, then, does one expect to see? Melville follows older magical handbooks when he says that the ceremonies will conjure up an angelic spirit in the glass, though medieval authorities were convinced that all scrying was demonic and that the spirit was either Satan or one of his devils. Modern Spiritualists sometimes use the crystal to get in touch with spirits, and there have been claims that visual contact has thus been made with 'the beyond'. In these cases, it seems, the prophesying or fortune telling was done verbally, by the visible spirit to the scryer.

But most crystal-gazers today claim to see visions, not supernatural beings. What they see may range from swirling, abstract shapes to sharp-edged, explicit scenes from reality. Most agree that before the vision appears, the crystal seems to become foggy and opaque from the inside. Then the

Most crystal-gazers say that the crystal seems to become foggy and opaque from the inside, and that the mists then clear away to reveal a vision which may range from swirling, abstract shapes to clearcut scenes from reality: 19th century woodcut from the Victoria and Albert Museum

Chris Barker





Diagrams from John Melville's *Crystal Gazing and Clairvoyance*, first published in 1896, which recommends involved trappings and procedures for success in scrying. The crystal ball should stand in the centre of the Lamen, or 'Holy Table' *(centre)*. A magic circle with hexagrams and names of power *(left)* should enclose the crystal and the gazer, and the top of the Lamen *(right)* should be similarly decorated

mists dissolve to reveal the vision. From various scryers questioned by the Society for Psychical Research in the 1880s, come examples of things seen: a favourite but long dead dog, a moving coloured light resembling an eye, beautiful landscapes from some unknown land – and, of course, scenes from the future. A Miss Goodrich-Freer, for instance, reported several striking precognitions concerning coming journeys and messages; a Mrs A. W. Bickford-Smith glanced idly into someone else's crystal and within a few minutes saw a vision of an old friend's death, a precognition that came true within days.

Evil Black Clouds

The traditions of scrying have been partly systematized, so that even if the amateur never gets past the foggy stage he can still find meaning in the mists. White cloudiness, predictably, is a good portent, but black is evil. Green or blue cloudiness indicates coming joy; red, yellow or orange clouds herald disaster. If the clouds ascend, the answer is 'yes' to any question you have asked; descending clouds mean the answer is 'no'. And in a recent book on fortune telling, Basil Ivan Rakoczi explains that the vision of a globe within the crystal indicates travel; a skull indicates death or wisdom; a star, success or a warning; an eye, good luck or impending evil; a bird, some message or potential rebirth.

There are those who will say that crystal-gazing on any level is fraud and fakery. Others, more kindly, will suggest that the scryers are self-deluded – that they are hallucinated, thanks to all the magical preparations and their own suggestibility. Because many scryers have claimed to go into trance, it has been said that the visions spring out of their own unconscious minds, and this explanation may often apply, especially to the more amateur scryers. But psychical researchers like Myers and Frank Podmore found that many scryers remained fully and normally conscious. Their own explanation made reference to the form of ESP called clairvoyance (see EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION).

Theodore Besterman, in his scholarly and objective account of crystal-gazing, proffers several accounts (authenticated enough to satisfy him) of clairvoyance through the crystal. There can be little doubt that many people are firmly convinced that it works, that the crystal is a valid way of activating and focusing the scryer's clairvoyance. Sybil Leek goes so far as to say that, of all types of fortune teller operating today, 'the crystal-gazer is the person most likely to have a genuine psychic ability'.

So in the end all the mumbo-jumbo of burning perfumes and mystic names can be swept aside; all that is necessary appears to be the simple crystal ball and the scryer's gift of clairvoyance. But for those who are about to buy a crystal and try it for themselves, a word of warning from John Melville. The crystal, he says (and Sybil Leek concurs), is a form of white magic. Use it with an evil purpose, and it will 'react upon the seer sooner or later with terrible effect'.

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: F. Achad, *Crystal Vision through Crystal Gazing* (Yoga Pubn. Soc., 1976, c1923); John Melville, *Crystal Gazing* (S. Weiser, N. Y., 1970 reprint); T. Besterman, *Crystal-Gazing* (Rider, 1924).

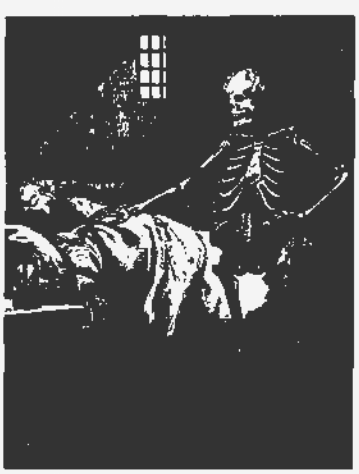
Scylla and Charybdis

In classical mythology, Scylla was a monster with six heads, 18 rows of teeth, 12 feet, and a voice like the yelping of dogs, who lived in a cave and snatched seamen from passing ships; nearby lurked Charybdis, a whirlpool; Odysseus sailed between the two, which were later located in the Straits of Messina between Italy and Sicily.

Scythe

Symbol of death, and of time when linked with death; death is frequently represented as a skeleton carrying the scythe with which he mows down the living; Father Time is an old man with a scythe, derived from the sickle of the Roman god Saturn.

See DEATH.



John Freeman

The cradle of mankind and the grave of countless seamen, the sea is also the Great Mother who must be propitiated; her trinkets, the seashells, are endowed with powerful symbolism in terms of sex and magic

FROM THE SEA came the first forms of life, and for this reason it is justly called the Great Mother; many of whose names, Maia, Mara, Mary, Miriam, Myrna, are associated with *mare*, the Latin word for the sea, the ultimate source of all things.

The movement of the tides is a theme which permeates our thought, our language and our literature. Life comes in with the tide, according to superstition, and recedes with the ebb. 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' says Shakespeare, 'which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.' The moon as supreme deity of the sea is mistress of the tides, and she is believed to exert her influence not merely upon these terrestrial fluids but upon the humoral fluids within the human body (see MOON).

Seamen once observed many moon superstitions. A new moon on a Saturday and a full moon on a Sunday were omens of misfortune. It was said that as many days as the moon is old at Michaelmas so many rainstorms may be expected before Christmas. The stars provided the first nautical chart, for they lit the way for the righteous while representing among them the goddess Venus who had arisen from the sea foam (see APHRODITE). To secure the aid of the sea goddess many seamen might have a star tatooed on one arm. In Roman belief a falling star was the sailor's storm warning.

Like the land gods, the sea elementals demanded and received tribute from those who used their resources; Japanese fishermen still pay tribute to the sea god with gifts of cloth and rice: *The Wave*, drawing by Hokusai

The sun, the god of day, was represented by the Egyptians as the god Re who sailed through an azure sea to the Western horizon, and during the night he voyaged under the world, through the region of the dead. The female deities of the sea symbolized sexual love, and their effigies in the form of figureheads graced the bows of sailing ships until about a century or so ago. Among sailors the naked body of a woman has always been

Sonia Halliday

Victoria and Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

In the mysterious depths of the ocean, or haunting islets and shoals, lived creatures part human and part fish, uncanny beings which were both hostile to men and dangerously seductive. The mermaid personifies the beauty, the lure and the treachery of the sea, and her appearance is a portent of danger *Left* Detail from a mosaic of the 3rd century AD *Below* Japanese carving of a mermaid on a clam shell, itself a symbol of the female genitals *Right* A horned merman carries off a woman in *Das Meerwunder*, an engraving by Albrecht Dürer

considered a luck-bringer, whether in effigy or reality. There was in fact a vulgar practice among 19th century seamen in which the female pudenda were 'touched for luck' before embarking upon a long voyage, a rite known as 'touching the bun'.

Human Tribute

Within the mysterious depths of the ocean, or haunting the islets and shoals, lived a host of minor elementals, the best known being the sea nymphs, or mermaids, the marine counterparts of the landsmen's water sprites, and their mermen (see MERMAIDS; NYMPHS). Like the gods of the land, the sea elementals demanded and received tribute from those who used their resources. Alexander the Great sacrificed a bull to Neptune on the brink of the ocean, and modern Mediterranean fishermen carve ships on harbour walls, these representing votive offerings to the mighty deities of the sea. The Romans sacrificed a bull before embarking on a voyage, and Japanese fishermen pay tribute to the sea god with gifts of cloth and rice.

Human tribute was also offered to the sea. It was long the custom in ancient Europe to hurl offenders over cliffs either to be dashed to pieces on the rocks below or drowned, a practice which was believed to propitiate the gods. A tradition survives that in pre-Norman times criminals were sacrificed in this barbaric manner over the white cliffs of Dover. An interesting relic of sea sacrifice is preserved in the ceremony known as 'crossing the line' in which Father Neptune initiates the luckless passenger into a nautical way of life by a baptism of cold sea water and a ritual shave with a wooden razor. In ancient times similar rites were performed when passing important headlands or river mouths, at which places temples were often erected in order to be clearly visible from the sea.

In its original form sea sacrifice usually involved bloodshed; the Vikings used to run the keels of their long-ships over the bodies of bound prisoners in order to redden the planks with blood. In the South Seas no chief's canoe would be launched without its accompanying tribute of a human life.

It was once taken for granted that if the sea should ever be denied her tribute of a human life she would take another in its place. Arising directly from this old belief is the superstition that it is unlucky to rescue a drowning person as the sea will claim a substitute, usually the rescuer. The emphasis placed upon sacrifice to the sea deities is reflected in Rudyard Kipling's *Song of the Dead:*

> We have fed our sea for a thousand years
> And she calls us still unfed.
> Though there's never a wave of all the waves
> But marks our English dead.

Today, sacrifice is confined to breaking a bottle of champagne on the bows of the ship at the launching; if the bottle fails to break the sign is ominous for the ship's future. Among some fishermen it is the custom to deck the mast of a new fishing boat with garlands of flowers.

Monsters of the Deep

Any domain of the gods must of necessity have its devils; the more powerful the former, the more horrific the latter. The demons of the sea are monstrous creatures, vast, obscene and destructive. The Old Man of the Sea, the terrifying 'thing' that leaped on the back of Sinbad, in *The Arabian Nights* story was a typical sea monster.

The marine monsters of mythology were conjured out of the nightmare visions of seamen who were confused by mirages and haunted by fear of death. But like bad dreams they could never have been invented and are obviously caricatures of real beasts, endowed with the qualities of evil spirits. Thus the Remora, which sucks at the keel of a ship and enchants away the sexual proficiency of men and women, corresponds to some extent to the incubus and the vampire of the landsman. Monster sharks three times the length of ships were in effect underwater giants, as was the mighty Kraken (see KRAKEN), which was huge as an island. To guard against monsters the seaman painted huge eyes on the bows of his ship; the Japanese fisherman paints similar eyes on his junk. Sea monsters could be overcome if shot with a silver bullet.

Charms and Luck-Bringers

The widespread assumption that every land creature had its opposite number in the sea found fanciful expression in the names given to marine creatures. An example is the sea-horse, which serves as Neptune's

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Berlin/Hamlyn Group Library

From classical times onwards, tales have been told of sea hags who lured seamen to sudden death upon the rocks or sank their ships by magic

steed. There is a sea-cow, a sea-elephant, a sea-hare and a sea-mouse, as well as the humble dogfish and the catfish. Among other sea creatures endowed with occult properties were sea-shells which served as amulets, the sea-anemone which transformed itself into the seagull, and seaweed which, besides providing hair for mermaids, kept evil spirits away and was useful for the guidance of weather prophets.

Sea coal, a symbol of sun worship, was often carried by the sailor as a lucky charm and the sea-onion when judiciously rubbed on his garden gate was supposed to have power to protect his home against devils. A piece of amber in the pocket was a magical aid to health and vitality. Fish, due to their shape and their fecundity, have attained high favour for their aphrodisiac properties. In Japan, where dried crab is hung over doorways to destroy evil, the lobster is the symbol of longevity. The whale's mouth was regarded as the gateway to the other world, while its immense belly represented the infernal regions.

Cradle and Grave

There is a tradition among the fishermen of the Ile de la Seine in France that the Ship of the Dead appears off that island blazing with infernal lights. On the wild Cornish coasts the living were summoned to enter the waters of death by hearing a dreadful voice howling from the deep. In his *Popular Romances of the West of England* Robert Hunt refers to the tradition that the drowned call out their own names within hearing of the living. A dark ship with black sails has been known to hug the Cornish coast when a Cornishman is about to die. For those drowned at sea there could be no rest, for popular superstition decreed that such lost souls were doomed to wander hopelessly a full 200 years whilst awaiting their last sepulchre. It was also believed that not until a sinless fisherman had been washed upon the shore could there be an end to a bad storm. Deep beneath the ocean were the domains of the Prince of Watery Death, Duffy or Duppy, the demon ghost of West Indian Negro lore, possibly corrupted by sailors into 'Jonah' or the more familiar 'Davy Jones' who stood guard over his locker of lost souls.

The sea is the fount of life, yet it is also a vast grave; it is therefore both womb and tomb, the cradle of mankind as well as the sepulchre of the seaman and his ship. Its demon-haunted depths are paralleled by its haunted surface where ghost ships once drifted along the trade routes used in the days of sail. In the British Isles, from Scotland to the Cornish coast, phantom barges have been seen hugging the coastline, and occasionally observed soaring above the beaches to drift slowly over the land. Off Ballachulish in Argyllshire a shipload of drowned crofters sometimes materializes, emitting the most dreadful howls. The Goodwin Sands are said to be haunted by endless generations of ships and men. On the high seas the famous *Flying Dutchman* must sail through the tempests until the end of time. Another doomed ship, captained by the German nobleman Falkenburg, races through Northern waters with tongues of fire licking at its masthead. On the oceans the terrors of natural hazards are perfectly balanced by the horrors of the supernatural.

Cursing from Pole to Pole

The lives of seamen were made still more wretched by the further hazard of witchcraft. From classical times onwards, tales have been told of sea hags who lured the seaman to sudden death upon the rocks or sank his ship by magic. Many of the world's greatest storms at sea have been ascribed to the black arts, like the one said to have been successfully conjured up by Sir Francis Drake in concert with Satan for the express purpose of wrecking the Spanish Armada. Devil's Point, near Plymouth, is still pointed out as the site of that transaction.

Land-based witches were known to pursue seamen who had given them offence, either in person or by means of long-range curses which could apparently traverse the oceans from pole to pole uninterrupted by wind and tide. Hence the cry of Shakespeare's hag:

> But in a sieve I'll thither sail
> And like a rat without a tail
> I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

Against the ever present menace of marine witchcraft the seaman could do little but consult his favourite white witch who, for a suitable fee, would tie a series of knots in a piece of string in order to bind the winds, and would also unknot them again if paid sufficiently to do so. Even more lowering to a sailor's morale than the attentions of evil witches was the presence of a Finn among a ship's crew. Although popular in fair weather, Finns were regarded as wizards and were liable to disappear overboard should there be an adverse change in the direction of the wind.

Perhaps out of respect for the cosmic forces represented by the ocean, the seafarer tattooed his arms and body with symbols of Tritons, sea serpents and sea nymphs. He avoided using the unlucky word 'pig' about his craft, and never swore at sea. If he ever lapsed from this strict code of conduct, he attempted to offset the resultant evil by sticking his knife into the ship's mast, thus subscribing to the belief in the protective properties of cold iron (see IRON). Furthermore he instructed his sweetheart ashore never under any circumstances to point her finger in the direction of his ship, since this doomed him to destruction.

The terrors of the sea were reinforced to a considerable extent by the seaman's child-like interpretation of every minor manifestation of man or Nature as a sign from the gods. Among these hazards was St Elmo's Fire, a ball of flame which attaches itself to a ship's mast during electrical storms. The name is supposed to be a corrupt form of St Erasmus, an early martyr who is patron saint of sailors. A single ball of fire is an infallible sign that the worst of a storm has yet to come; a double flame provides consolation that it will soon blow itself out.

Cities Under the Sea

The sudden appearance of islands, hallucinatory and otherwise, have made the sea even more mysterious. Frequently formed by volcanic action, they have emerged and later plunged beneath the waves. One of the best known mythical isles is St Brendan's Isle (see BRENDAN), supposedly in the Atlantic near the Azores.

Like mirages, frozen ships have been observed poised on ice floes in Arctic regions, as in 1851 when two such craft suddenly materialized off the coast of Newfoundland. The treasure-guarding ghost was another type of phantom conjured up by the sailor's imagination. The treasures were said to be pirate hoards under the protection of spirits.

Mankind, whether on land or sea, has an obsessional need to create phantom cities in unpopulated deserts, build castles in the

Dulwich College Picture Gallery

On Ascension Day each year the Doge of Venice symbolically married the sea, throwing a gold ring into the Adriatic and saying, 'We wed thee, O sea, in token of perpetual domination': the Doge's state galley, the Bucentaur ('ox-centaur') is returning to the mole on Ascension Day in this painting by Canaletto

air, or construct lost civilizations beneath the waves. The best known submarine civilization is Atlantis, which lies in the Atlantic somewhere beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Atlantean civilization, after reaching its highest peak, was finally overwhelmed by the sea (see ATLANTIS). Another famous legendary continent is Lemuria, supposedly submerged beneath the Indian Ocean (see LEMURIA).

Britain is said to have many cities and lands buried beneath the sea (see FLOOD). Lyonesse with its Arthurian associations lies perhaps somewhere between Lands End and the Scillies; the Seven Rocks which jut out of the waters are supposed to mark the site. From the lost world of Lyonesse a church bell has been heard tolling within the last half century. A church bell is the soul of a city in the same way that a ship's bell is the soul of a ship.

In the symbolism of dreams, a calm sea means attainment and a storm-wrecked one anger and disquiet. A sea voyage is a sexual voyage and undersea currents represent spiritual forces. In art the sea may be represented by the crescent moon, by the dolphin, the white horse or the sea-horse. For most of us the sea is not so much a symbol, however, as a shrine for the renewal of the tired spirit: all adults are transformed into children by the seaside, for the sea is the source of the rejuvenating power of the eternal mother.

Beach-combers have always been fascinated by sea-shells both for their beauty and for their curious shapes, while their association with that infinite well of creativity, the sea, has endowed them with a powerful symbolism in terms of ornament, magic and sex.

All shells represent a hard outer protective covering, providing for the gentle and retiring a place of refuge against the onslaughts of an inhospitable world. The sea-shell has become the symbol of inaccessibility and reserve; it is also a symbol of immortality, and was inscribed on Christian tombs as a sign that only the husk of man remained within, for the soul or essence had moved onwards This concept seems very ancient, for sea-shells were placed by primitive men in the graves of their dead.

The scallop is an emblem of Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love. Because of its ray-like flutings it is also a symbol of light, and as a symbol of safe travel it inherits a reputation acquired in the Middle Ages when it was worn as a badge by pilgrims who had made the journey to the shrine of St James of Compostela in Spain. Perhaps a last relic of this medieval pilgrimage was the celebration of Cockleshell Day, the feast of St James on 25 July: small urchins with home-made grottoes or piles of sea-shells sat in the gutters crying out plaintively to passers-by, 'Please remember the grotter.'

Used as amulets, sea-shells are said to be extremely effective against 'overlooking' by the Evil Eye, especially the cowrie which resembles the human eye. The conch confers oratory, learning and wealth, the clam restores life. Even modern city dwellers often preserve shells gathered at the seaside as mascots.

In Scotland large periwinkles are suspended over fishermen's hearths to bring luck. Along the Atlantic seaboard of France young children sometimes wear necklaces of limpet shells for protection, and in the St Malo area of Brittany sea-shells are left in the cradle to ward off ill luck. In this part of France the use of shells in the construction of crosses is not uncommon.

Sea-shells, especially cowries, have played their part as money in Melanesia: tiny shell rings were once common as currency in Eddystone Island. Shell money was sometimes used by primitive bridegrooms for personal adornment as well as for magical protection and as evidence of opulence.

The murex shell, the source of the purple dye associated with gods and kings, is regarded as the symbol of divinity and royalty; the white clam shell, cut into discs, provided the badge of authority for Polynesian chiefs.

The symbolic value of some variety of sea-shells ensured that they would be sometimes employed in magic and divination. At one time, in the Celebes, it was customary to place a shell called an 'Old Man' upside down at the threshold to make sure that whoever stepped over it would enjoy a long

Bodleian Library

Left The Old Man of the Sea, a terrifying monster, leaps onto Sinbad's back in an episode from the *Arabian Nights*: medieval manuscript *Right* Hong Kong fisherfolk worship at an ornate altar during the sea goddess festival; the participants bring offerings, such as roast duck, to the goddess asking her to bless their work and to protect them at sea

Camera Press, London

and prosperous life. In Liberia, before starting out on a long journey, one consulted a soothsayer who read the future from a calabash of coloured shells. The suggested similarity between the clam and oyster and the human sexual organs, the vagina and testicles, was responsible for the selection of such shells as symbols of love. In Japan clams and oysters are both known as 'phallic nourishers'. To Buddhists the sliced shell represents, if white, the lingam; if black, the yoni. Shell creatures generally represent the female principle in Nature. Mother-of-pearl, the smooth, shining, irridescent layer found in some bivalves, especially the pearl oyster, is both a symbol of longevity and a Chinese fairy food. Much favoured for ornamental purposes, mother-of-pearl buttons constitute the main features of the dress worn by Britain's Pearly kings and queens.

The significance of sea-shells in popular usage is illustrated by the sayings: 'as close as a Kentish oyster', a synonym for sealed lips; the stingy are 'as close as a clam'; the uncommunicative escape their garrulous fellows by 'retiring into their shells', from which they can only be 'winkled out' with difficulty; and creditors cling to debtors 'like limpets'. More to the point, the seaman who has become completely case-hardened to life afloat is known to the world as an 'old shellback'.

(See also FISH; NEPTUNE; POSEIDON; SHIP; SIRENS; WATER.)

ERIC MAPLE

SEAL

THE FOLKLORE of the seal owes much to the animal's resemblance, in some respects, to a human being. The round head with its large, staring eyes appearing suddenly out of the water near a boat or an observer on the rocks tends to arouse the sense of mystery associated with semi-human creatures. The curiosity of seals induces them to swim close to where there are sounds of talking or music, and some of their calls, especially when heard echoing in sea caves, have a weird human timbre. Even on shore, some of the movements made by a seal's flippers bear a grotesque resemblance to human gestures. It must also be remembered that people living near great rivers, lakes or the sea have commonly supposed the water to be inhabited by strange beings with partly human, partly animal, characteristics.

Beliefs and customs concerning seals have naturally been most detailed and numerous where acquaintance with these mammals is greatest – among those who depend on them for food, clothing and light. The Eskimo attitude to seals (see ESKIMO) is similar to that of other primitive hunting peoples to their quarry. In Baffin Land, and around Hudson Bay, a man who killed a seal was regarded as committing an offence for which he must make atonement. The taboos he had to observe after such a transgression were basically similar to those imposed for killing a man. He must not scrape frost from a window, clean drips from his lamp, shake his bed, scrape hair from skins or work in wood, stone or ivory. A woman was forbidden to comb her hair or wash her face. The scrupulous observation of these rules was essential; otherwise the goddess Sedna's fingers would give her pain, for seals were believed to have originated from her severed fingers. Thus, there was no clear distinction between men and animals, and divine beings were believed to have some affinity with both. Almost all observances were designed to retain Sedna's goodwill or appease her wrath. She was the mythical mother of the marine mammals which lived in the lower world and controlled the destinies of men. Human motherhood was also her concern. If a woman concealed the fact that she had

given birth prematurely, people who came near her would be adversely affected so that the seals would avoid them, and the offence would be attached to the souls of the animals who would carry information of it down to Sedna.

When a seal was killed, its soul had to wait three days before returning to her, so the men responsible rested for three days after the animal's death. Unless the taboos were scrupulously observed the seals would evade their hunters. These procedures helped to conserve the food supply by preventing ruthless exploitation. Greenlanders avoided breaking the skulls of seals but kept them intact by the door so that the souls of the animals might not be offended and frighten other seals away.

In Kamchatka, Siberia, mimetic ceremonies were performed before sealing expeditions in order to further their success. Packets of herbs were placed to represent seals and miniature replicas of boats were drawn along the sand. The Eskimo of Bering Strait preserved the swim bladders of seals as the repositories of the beasts' souls, offering them food. The bladders were suspended and made to dance by pulling a string while the people flopped around in a dance imitating the movements of the animals. The shaman, bearing a huge torch, ran to the ice, with the men following, carrying the bladders on their harpoons. The bladders were then thrust below the ice, so that the souls of the dead animals could be reborn, and then the participants purified themselves by leaping over a fire. In certain areas where the caribou were hunted, Sedna was believed to dislike these beasts and certain rules had to be observed lest she should be annoyed. Probably this indicated that when the Eskimo moved south and were able to augment their resources by hunting caribou as well as seals this new activity was not readily assimilated into their culture.

Maidens and Mermaids

The seal legends in the British Isles have such affinities with those of the Scandinavian countries that it is tempting to believe they were introduced by Norse invaders, though some elements seem to belong to earlier modes of thought. Similarities between stories of seal maidens and of mermaids, both of whom were credited with prophetic gifts, suggest that the traditions fused. The seal maiden tradition may have contributed to the northern mermaid legends (see MERMAIDS).

In the west of Ireland, the islands north of the Scottish mainland, and the Faroes, certain clans, families or persons are said to be descended from seals. The sept (division of a clan) of the Mackays in Sutherland are known as 'the descendants of the seal'. The laird of Borgie in Sutherland saw a mermaid seeking a place to land. He stole her cowl (or cap), which gave him power over her, and she became his wife. She told him her life was bound up with the cowl. The laird hid it in the middle of a haystack, but eventually his servants found it and showed it to the mermaid. She took it and, leaving her baby son in his cot, plunged into the sea. From time to time she came close inshore to see her son, weeping that she could not take him with her. He and his descendants became famous swimmers and it was said that they could not drown.

A similar story is told of the MacCodrums of North Uist. In Colonsay in Argyllshire, the McPhees were held to be descendants of a drowned maiden whose sealskin the clan chief had found by the shore. It is said that people belonging to such families must not kill seals. The Coneelys in the West of Ireland were said to have been seals – hence their name, which has that meaning. According to the tale it became changed to Connelly. Comparable stories were told of the O'Sullivans and O'Flahertys of Kerry, the Macnamaras of Clare, and the Achill Islanders. In them we have the vestiges of very ancient beliefs in which a clear distinction between men and animals was not recognized.

It is debatable whether these beliefs have been influenced by notions once prevalent in the Arctic and sub-Arctic where men, by means of mimetic performances and wearing or wielding skins or parts of animals, identified themselves with seals. They must be

Below **The seal's semi-human appearance, cries and gestures lie behind the numerous legends of families said to be descended from seal ancestors, and the stories of seal maidens who married humans but eventually returned to the sea** ***Right*** **18th century drawing of two seals from an account of Admiral Anson's voyage round the world**

H. M. Barnfather/Bruce Coleman

viewed in relation to the widespread swan maiden theme (see SWAN), according to which birds are seen to alight, doff their feather garments and reveal themselves as women to a watching man who, stealing a robe, makes one of the maidens his wife. The basic motif is similar and is certainly of great antiquity.

The earliest literary references to seal people are by Greek writers, Hesiod, Pindar and Apollodorus, but oral traditions may date from much earlier. The Phocians of Central Greece were said to be descended from seals. According to myth, Phocus (the name still used in the scientific classifications of seals) was a son of the nereid or sea nymph Psamathe, who had been pursued by Aeacus and in spite of transforming herself into a seal was forced to submit to his embraces. If, as has been suggested by Robert Graves, the dance of the 50 nereids on the shore at the wedding of Thetis and her return to the sea after the birth of Achilles, was a fragment of the same myth, this would increase the story's resemblance to northern versions.

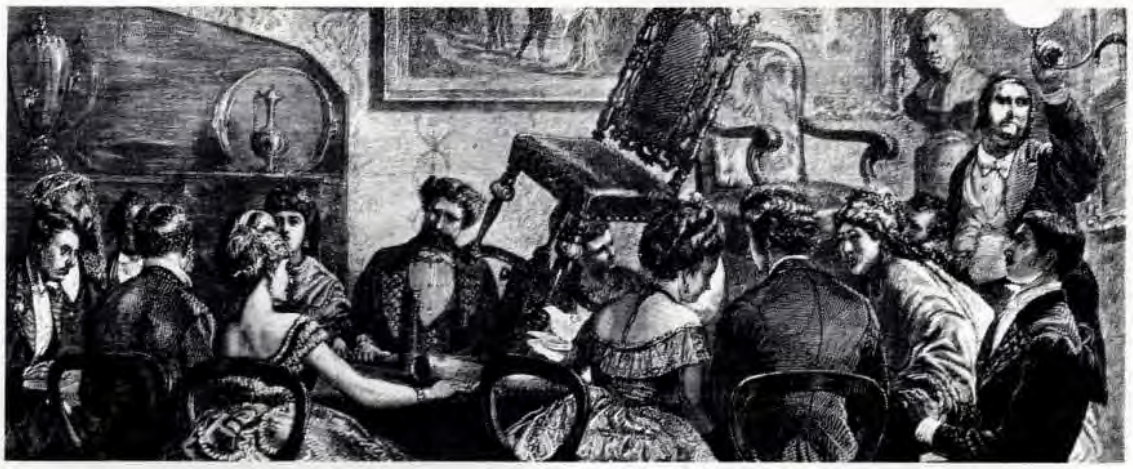
One such story told in the Faroes is about a young man who stole a seal maiden's skin while the seal people danced on the shore. This legend has a tragic ending as, in spite of the warning given by the seal maiden in a dream, men kill her seal husband and children and a curse comes upon the islanders so that many are killed on the cliffs or drowned at sea. The theme of kinship with man which underlies many of the seal traditions has not prevented their ruthless exploitation; five species are thought in danger of becoming extinct.

In 1616 a Scottish woman was brought before a court on a charge of offering a man's fingerbone to be used in order to cause butter to come more readily in the churn. She was convicted although she said that the bone came from a seal. It is doubtful, however, whether seals have ever been connected with witchcraft.

A story said to have been current in 19th century Greece seems to be a recent fabrication. A swimmer, venturing too far out to sea might be seized and strangled by a seal. The creature would then carry the corpse to the shore and weep over it. Thus arose a saying that when a woman wept false tears she 'cried like a seal'.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

National Maritime Museum/Michael Holford



Seance

French word for 'a sitting'; meeting of a group of people with a Spiritualist medium for the reception of messages from the dead; more generally, a meeting to experience and study mediumistic phenomena; communications, from whatever source, may be spoken by the medium or may come through automatic writing, a ouija board or planchette, table tilting or raps; sitters frequently form a circle and may hold hands.

See MEDIUMS; OUIJA BOARDS; SPIRITUALISM.

Enthusiastic belief in the imminence of the return of Christ to earth has not been extinguished, despite the tendency of orthodox Christianity to see the Second Coming more as a spiritual enlightenment than as a bodily return

SECOND COMING

EVER SINCE Jesus announced that he would come again to earth, Christians have looked for his return, the Second Advent or Second Coming. The internal evidence of the New Testament suggests that this was a lively expectation among many of the Christians of the 1st century, and St Paul, while clearly believing that Christ would return, had explicitly to counsel some early converts that this event might not occur quite as quickly as they desired. There is little doubt that the promised return of the Messiah was itself a very important element in the spread of Christianity, which had its earliest converts precisely among the urban working and slave classes who had most to hope for from a dramatic change in social organization.

The coming Messiah was, of course, a Christian inheritance from Judaism. The Jews had looked forward to a saviour (whom they had expected, naturally enough, to emerge from the royal line) during their captivity in Babylon, and in doing so showed a disposition that has since been found among many other oppressed and underprivileged peoples. In Christianity, belief was emphatically in a spiritual leader who would return again to save his self-selected voluntary adherents. Undoubtedly many of those who believed in the Second Coming of Christ believed that on his return he would come with an army of angels and in triumph, as much a military saviour as a disseminator of religious truths. His kingdom was, for many of them, to be earthly as much as heavenly, and he was to combine the guarantee of paradise for his followers on this earth with a prospect of eternal life hereafter. Even some of the Church Fathers, in their depiction of life in the millennium, the 1000 years of peace which Christ was to institute, entertained very material ideas of what this paradisial state would be like.

But ideas of a Second Coming were clearly potentially highly disruptive of any stable social order. As the Church itself became established and thoroughly integrated with political and civic institutions, it was itself threatened increasingly by the type of enthusiasm to which ideas of the return of Christ might give rise. The idea of the millennium was spiritualized, particularly by Origen and St Augustine, and the idea of Christ's return to earth was pushed back to at least the year 1000 AD.

As the Church discovered that more spiritualized and less material conceptions of salvation, and heavenly, rather than earthly, prospects of bliss were better guarantors of social order, an alternative strand in Christian eschatology became emphasized. Christians were increasingly taught to expect a new life in heaven to begin at some time after death, and after the penalty for sins had been paid, and provided that the individual had lived on earth in obedience to the Church, and had sought forgiveness of sins in confession. Whilst the much more Jewish conception of resurrection from the dead at some future time was never abandoned completely, the emphasis on a dramatic redemption on earth gave place to emphasis on heavenly reward for virtue in earthly life.

The Returning Emperor

Second adventism consequently never disappeared, and the appeal to the scriptures was enough to ensure it credibility. In the disturbed centuries of the Middle Ages a number of movements occurred in which the lively expectation of Christ's return, or sometimes of the return of surrogate or deputy Christs, produced severe social disorder. The votaries of these movements were largely the new landless urban classes who, being gathered in the growing towns, escaped traditional means of social control, and felt something of their own strength as a class. Among them messianic ideas quickly took root in periods of civil unrest or during catastrophes such as plague, famine, prolonged warfare or invasion. In north-eastern France, Belgium and the Rhine valley a series of millennial movements, and beliefs in the Second Coming of Christ or some other saviour, persisted from the 11th to the 14th centuries in one form or another. Sometimes these movements arose in anticipation of the returning saviour: more commonly, some self-styled hero proclaimed himself as Christ.

One of the most celebrated of such pretenders was Tanchelm, a man who had been a notary at the court of Robert II, Count of Flanders. Echoing popular sentiment and papal injunctions against the worldliness of the clergy, many of whom lived in open concubinage and some of whom had bought their appointments or owed them to nepotism, Tanchelm gathered a following of peasants. He dispensed them from paying tithes to the Church, and as his hold over his following grew he began to claim for himself first the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and then the attribute of deity. For several years, until he was finally killed by a priest, Tanchelm commanded a wide following throughout Brabant and the area of Utrecht, and in Antwerp. He was revered as God and is even reported to have distributed his bath-water to be used in place of the Eucharist.

The centuries of the Crusades provided a number of living warriors around whom legends accumulated: they were returned heroes, or were the nominees of Charlemagne who was also to arise to lead Christians against the Moslems. Emico, Count of Leiningen, claimed stigmata on his back which were supposed to represent the Cross, and which he took as a designation of his destiny as emperor in the Last Days. Popular legends ascribed a similar role to Louis VIII of France and, after the death of Frederick Barbarossa on the third crusade in 1190, his return was widely expected among the German peasantry; the legend of a returning warrior saviour was subsequently transferred to his grandson, Frederick II, especially after his conquest of Jerusalem. Whilst popular second adventism had always drawn in a very general way on Christian tradition, by the beginning of the 13th century it had been powerfully reinforced by the prophesies of Joachim of Fiore, an abbot who had drawn scriptural support in favour of a version of history that was itself to be regarded as the gospel for the Last Days. The year 1260

The promised return of the Messiah was an important element in the spread of Christianity but it was also highly disruptive of a stable social order, and the Church increasingly emphasized a future of heavenly bliss rather than of salvation on earth: *The Second Coming of Christ*, Spanish, completed 1109

One King Over All

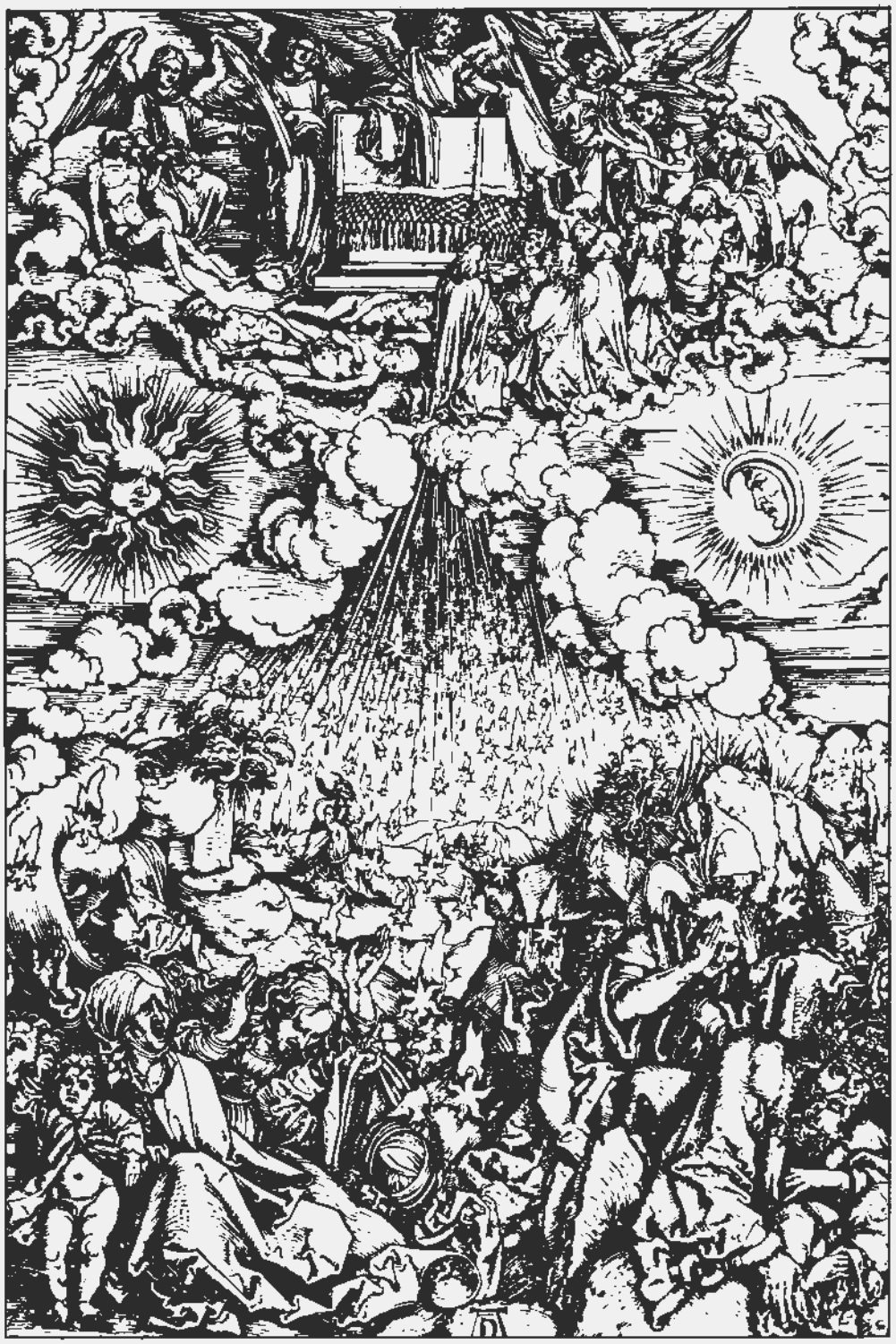
It was not as an ordinary king but as a Messiah of the Last Days that Bockelson (John of Leyden) imposed himself . . . The new king did everything possible to emphasize the unique significance of his accession. The streets and gates in the town were given new names; Sundays and feast-days were abolished and the days of the week were renamed on an alphabetical system; even the names of new-born children were chosen by the king according to a special system. Although money had no function in Münster a new, purely ornamental coinage was created. Gold and silver coins were minted, with inscriptions summarizing the whole millennial phantasy which gave the kingdom its meaning. 'The Word has become Flesh and dwells in us' – 'One King over all. One God, one Faith, one Baptism.' A special emblem was devised to symbolize Bockelson's claim to absolute spiritual and temporal dominion over the whole world: a globe, representing the world, pierced by the two swords (of which hitherto pope and emperor had each borne one) and surmounted by a cross inscribed with the words: 'One king of righteousness over all.' The king himself wore this emblem, modelled in gold, hanging by a gold chain from his neck. His attendants wore it as a badge on their sleeves; and it was accepted in Münster as the emblem of the new state.

The new king dressed in magnificent robes and wore rings, chains and spurs made from the finest metal by the most skilful craftsmen in the town. Gentlemen-at-arms and a whole train of officers of the court were appointed. Whenever the king appeared in public he was accompanied by his suite, also splendidly dressed. Divara, who as Bockelson's chief wife was proclaimed queen, also had her suite and held court like her husband.

Norman Cohn *The Pursuit of the Millennium*

was foretold as the end of the age, and was marked by the first outbreak in Italy, of the self-scourging of the Flagellants, who went in procession from town to town, where they beat themselves and cried for mercy before the wrath to come. The movement recrudesced at times of social and natural calamities – particularly at the time of the Black Death on the Continent (but not in England) – for several decades afterwards (see FLAGELLATION).

Perhaps the most powerful expression of faith in the Second Coming in pre-Reformation Europe was that of the Taborites, the extreme wing of the Bohemian Hussite movement, which was embattled against the Church in the second decade of the 15th century. They believed that it was emphatically Christ who was to return again and bring peace and equity to the world and, at first, February 1420 was to be the time of the apocalypse. Although the date passed, the Taborites, who instituted a communistic society of their own, took upon themselves the task of purging the world of evil in anticipation of the return and reign of Christ. In the new dispensation that was to come there would be neither sickness nor death, want or privation. The clergy would be swept away and taxes would be unknown. In anticipation of the Second Coming they set up their own communistic society, and continued to conduct their war against the Catholic armies until Christ should descend with his angelic host to lead them to victory. Under their able commander, John Zizka, the Taborites went into battle with a chalice raised up on a pole ahead of them, but were eventually defeated.



Battle of Armageddon

The radical sects that emerged during the Reformation, particularly the Anabaptist groups, different as they were one from one another, shared a common expectation of the Second Advent. In the Hutterites, this faith in Christ's eventual return reinforced their insistence on orderly life, their pacifism and the sharing of goods in common (see HUTTERIAN BRETHREN). Among the much more aberrant Anabaptist sect at Münster, Westphalia, who seized the town in 1534, faith in the personal intervention of Christ in man's affairs led to a series of events unparalleled in history (see ENTHUSIASM).

Although belief in the Second Coming has frequently given rise to false claims by would-be messiahs, the idea remains theologically orthodox, even though it has been increasingly spiritually interpreted. In the 17th century, however, second adventism gained new respectability from the writings of the theologian Joseph Mede (1586–1638), who made plain the full scriptural warrant for the belief. Only a century later was this inconvenient and potentially revolutionary teaching accommodated into a new theological framework, when Daniel Whitby (1638–1726) of Trinity College, Oxford, formulated an interpretation of the concept which has been generally accepted by the established and orthodox churches.

Most literal biblicists, following Mede, and most of the fundamentalist sects of the 19th and 20th centuries in particular, have interpreted scripture in the traditional way. They believe that at an undisclosed time Jesus will return on earth. That event will be associated with the battle of Armageddon, usually depicted as a struggle between the forces of good and evil. After the triumph of Christ, the earth will be granted a period of peace for 1000 years – the millennium. Whitby, however, suggested that the various scattered scriptural texts that are adduced as relating to these events, would happen in a different order. First there would be 1000 years of peace on earth, as men steadily accepted the Christian scriptures, and then at the end of this period Christ would reappear on earth. This second interpretation was readily accepted by increasingly optimistic 18th and 19th century clerics, many of whom saw the missionary work among the heathen as the process of establishment of this millennium. Similarly, some of the early social gospellers of the United States believed that a practical application of Christianity was a type of social salvation that would bring the millennium into being. The fundamentalist sects, however, have never accepted this reorganization of the texts and believe in a much more cataclysmic and earlier Second Advent.

The troubled events of the English Civil War gave rise to a number of extreme groups among the Puritans, some of whom were avowedly adventist. Some of these revolutionary groups, such as the Diggers led by Gerrard Winstanley, pinned their hopes much more to ethical precepts derived from

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Berlin/Hamlyn Group Library

Expectation of the Second Coming and the appearance of messianic leaders has been particularly marked in times of plague, famine or prolonged war *Left* Dürer's vision of *The Day of Wrath* that would precede the millennium or 1000 years of peace *Above* The Anabaptist leader John of Leyden with the orb and two swords symbolizing his claim to spiritual and secular power; in a short but fanatical rule, he was proclaimed king of the rebel town of Münster in expectation of the Second Coming

the scriptures than to Christ's intervention on earth. Others, however, had the strong sense that they lived at the end of time, and saw their role as being to prepare the public, and to persuade the government to prepare, for the early return of Christ.

Prominent among these groups were the Fifth Monarchy Men. It would be a mistake to describe as a sect this party, who believed that the fifth monarchy described in the scriptures was now to be set up following the overthrow of the man of blood, Charles I. It was not sufficiently organized or coherent to merit that title. Those who believed in the fifth monarchy were diligent readers of the scriptures, or those prepared to be persuaded by a small group of preachers, who actively canvassed this point of view. Chief among these was John Rogers, who vigorously counselled Cromwell about the parliamentary forms he should adopt. Undoubtedly most of the Fifth Monarchy believers were prepared to wait passively for the Advent to occur, but a small number twice lost patience and led riots in London. These supporters of the preacher Thomas Venner were scarcely a revolutionary force, however, and after suppression in the early years of Charles II, the Fifth Monarchy enthusiasts eventually became convinced that the Stuarts were, if not the legitimate, the only immediately likely monarchs.

Messianic hopes continued sporadically throughout the 18th century, and belief in the Second Advent is usual among most sectarian groups in this period. Joanna Southcott believed that she was about to give birth to the new Messiah when, rather late in life, she developed a dropsical condition which had some of the appearances of a pregnancy (see SOUTHCOTT). The Shakers came to believe that their leader, Mother Ann Lee, had been a type of second appearing of Christ (see SHAKERS). In the early 19th century, George Rapp, who led a group of pietists from Württemberg to Pennsylvania, taught a methodical and frugal way of life to his communistic followers as the proper preparation for the Second Coming, which he daily expected (see COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS). The Mormons, although a many-sided movement, with preoccupations besides the Advent, were an avowedly adventist movement (see MORMONS).

The Seventh Day Adventists

The most significant development of second adventism in modern times, however, was begun in the early 1830s by William Miller, a farmer and Baptist preacher of up-state New York. Miller had become convinced from the scriptures that Christ was to return on a specified date in 1843. After nursing this conviction silently for some years he was induced to begin preaching. His scriptural exposition immediately found a receptive audience among the congregations of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches of New York state, and in neighbouring states. A considerable number of ministers were convinced, and a campaign was launched by them to spread the news of the Advent throughout the area. When the designated date in March 1843 passed uneventfully, disappointment led to a belief that it had been wrongly calculated, and a date in October 1843, and then, later, a date in 1844 were predicted as the time of Christ's return.

When the last date passed, the second adventists, bewildered and disappointed, were nonetheless not entirely disillusioned. A period of re-assessment followed from which emerged the addition of several new articles of faith to the second adventist creed that some of the Millerites had espoused. In particular it was believed that the advent had not occurred because Christ had not finished his work as high priest in heaven – the work of blotting out sin. It was necessary for Christ to investigate the sins of men to determine who should be resurrected from the dead. Mankind had failed to recognize the biblical law set out in the Old Testament to which adherence was necessary if man was to be redeemed.

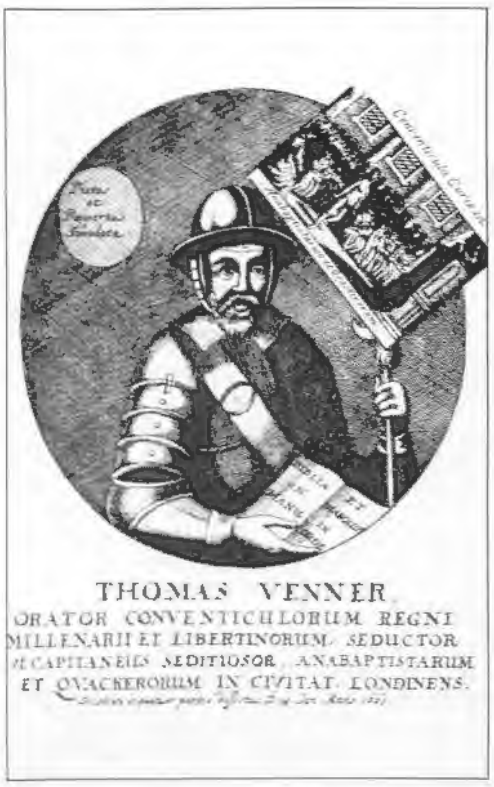
In particular, this group of believers came to accept that it was necessary to observe the seventh day as the sabbath, and to conform to the dietetic laws of the Old Testament. These prescriptions steadily became more and more accepted, and they were confirmed by further visions to one of the leaders, Ellen Harmon. The sect that eventually organized itself formally in 1860 took the name of the Seventh Day Adventist movement, to emphasize the two principal items of faith. From that time forward it became an active body for the evangelization of Christendom, particularly canvassing the adoption of the seventh day sabbath. Over the course of time the intense excitement concerning the Advent as such has inevitably dimmed, but the urgency of inducing men to keep the proper sabbath is prompted by the fact that only when the seventh day is kept holy will one essential condition for the Advent be fulfilled. The Seventh Day Adventists today claim more than a million members throughout the world.

Although its origins cannot be traced directly to the Millerite enthusiasms, another sect that emerged in the same decade was the Christadelphians. The founder of this movement, John Thomas, had been a doctor who devoted himself to biblical study. He came to the conclusion that orthodox Christianity erred in many respects and he preached the literal Second Advent of Christ and the need for men to be baptized only after they fully understood the truths of scripture. Thomas rejected Christian conceptions of heaven, hell, the soul and the doctrine of the Trinity. He believed that nothing of a man survived death, but that it was in the power of Christ to resurrect the body at the time of his Second Advent. Apart from this, death was annihilation. No one unbaptized into the truth had any prospect of this resurrection and salvation, hence those who were not Christadelphian, even the unbaptized children of those in the sect, had no hope of future life. Nor would all Christadelphians be saved, since much depended on their obedience to Christ's injunctions.

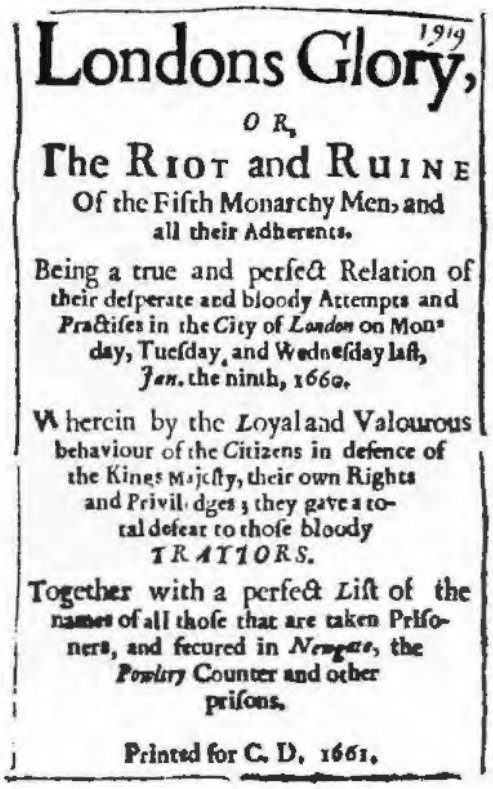
Thomas set no date for the Second Coming, although he clearly believed it to be soon and was disposed in the early years of his teaching to identify the existing principalities on the world scene with the various allegorical figures in the revelations of Daniel, Ezekiel and the book of Revelation, on which his prophetic exegesis was based. The movement that he called into being was more successful in Britain than in the United States, and from 1848 onwards little groups of believers sprang up in many British cities, most conspicuously in Birmingham. Although Christadelphians were periodically inclined to believe that particular years must see the coming of the Lord, they also stressed the text that the Lord would come as a thief in the night, and wherever the various reinterpretations of scriptural prophecy led, they refused to fix firm dates. The sect regards itself as in some way associated with the Jews, to whom God's Old Testament promises (which will surely not be disregarded) were made, and for some time they called their meeting houses 'synagogues'. Today, there are about 20,000 Christadelphians in Britain: and there are smaller followings in the United States, Australia and South Africa, and small groups of adherents elsewhere.

The Return of Moses

The largest adventist sect in Christendom is the Jehovah's Witnesses, which began under the preaching of Pastor Charles Russell in Pennsylvania in the 1870s (see JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES). Witness teaching has undergone many changes since Russell's death in 1916. He had preached that the



Left Contemporary engraving of Thomas Venner, the militant Fifth Monarchy leader: he and his followers believed they had a duty to prepare the public and the government for the early return of Christ as written in the scriptures *Right* Poster announces the defeat of an insurrection by the Fifth Monarchy Men in 1660; weary of waiting for the appearance of the Fifth Monarchy, they led riots in London against the government of Charles II


1919
Londons Glory,
OR,
The Riot and Ruine
Of the Fifth Monarchy Men, and all their Adherents.
Being a true and perfect Relation of their desperate and bloody Attempts and Practises in the City of London on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday last, Jan. the ninth, 1660.
Wherein by the Loyal and Valourous behaviour of the Citizens in defence of the Kings Majesty, their own Rights and Privileges; they gave a total defeat to those bloody TRAITORS.
Together with a perfect List of the names of all those that are taken Prisoners, and secured in Newgate, the Poultry Counter and other prisons.
Printed for C. D. 1661.

Advent had occurred in 1874, and expected the end of this dispensation in 1914. Subsequently these dates were revised under Judge Rutherford, Russell's successor, but the movement believes that Christ returned in 1914, and will manifest himself fully in the very near future (informally, 1975 is the chosen date).

The tendency of orthodox Christianity has been to see the promised return of Christ increasingly as a spirit-enlightenment of Christians rather than as a literal descent of God to earth. The idea has been less and less emphasized in recent times, and with the disappearance of the acceptance of the literal inspiration of scripture, many clergymen would today dismiss the literal belief in the Second Coming as misplaced. Faith in the return of a known saviour has, however, been common in new religions that have been affected by Christianity or that have arisen as local variants of it. In Africa in particular, the idea of particular leaders returning to lead their people – often to military victory – has gained currency on a number of occasions. Because of the appeal of the Old Testament with its stories of the oppression of the Jews under foreign conquest, and the obvious appeal of this idea for Africans, the returning Messiah has sometimes been seen more as Moses than as Jesus. The 'Israelites' who followed Enoch Mgijima at Bullhoek in South Africa in the 1920s, saw themselves as oppressed Jews, and their leader as a returned prophet who would protect them from the whites. Adopting the name Israelites and a number of Israelitish practices, this group settled in a prohibited area in defiance of the government, disrupted local village life and eventually set itself in open hostility to government orders. Mgijima encouraged his following to threaten the South African police and later the troops with armed conflict, and in the subsequent clash a large number of the sectarians were shot.

A case of second adventism more clearly based on Christian examples was that of Simon Kimbangu, a Baptist catechist of the lower Congo who was imprisoned by the Belgian authorities in 1921 after he had become the centre of a healing cult (see NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS). In Central Africa also, a number of local leaders arose who promised the coming of a black Christ, who would throw off the yoke of white oppression and institute a new dispensation. The most prominent of these were Mwana Lesa, a Jehovah's Witness who claimed to be God, and the Watchman movement of Elliot Kamwana, which derived its messianic ideas directly from the literature of the Jehovah's Witness movement.

The Second Coming is a recurrent theme in the history of less developed peoples, and particularly of those who have been exposed to Christian or Moslem influence, in each of which traditions the returning saviour is contained. It manifests a particular stage of cultural development in which men believe that their present woes and difficulties can be assuaged if only the right strong man, endowed with divine strength, can be found who will change things. It betokens a faith in the power of the exceptional individual which, whilst appropriate to a society in which social structural factors and the causes of natural calamities are misunderstood or unknown, becomes increasingly untenable in the highly rationalized and bureaucratic organization of modern society.

(See also MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS.)

BRYAN WILSON

FURTHER READING: Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Oxford University Press, 1970); A. A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Eerdmans, 1963); P. G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1966); Alan Rogerson, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (Constable, London, 1969); William J. Whalen, *Armageddon Round the Corner* (John Day, 1962); Bryan R. Wilson, *Sects and Society* (Greenwood Press, 1978) and *Religious Sects* (World University Library, London, 1970).

Second Sight

Ability to perceive things not visible to ordinary sight, in the future or at a distance; modern psychical research suggests that some people have this ability to a marked degree, and it may be latent in all human beings and possibly in other animals.

See EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

Selene

Greek moon goddess, of little importance in myth or cult; said to have been the sister or daughter of the sun; she fell in love with Endymion, who fathered on her 50 children, the 50 months between each celebration of the Olympic Games; other, more important goddesses connected with the moon were Hera, Artemis and Hecate.

See MOON.

Michael Halford

Renouncing other men's goals of pleasure, possessions and worldly ambition, the ascetic seeks spiritual strength through self-denial and even self-torture

SELF-DENIAL

WHEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT invaded India in 327 BC he was curious to see the famed Indian yogis, and he took the opportunity of visiting one of their retreats. He found them sitting motionless and silent, emaciated by long fasts and blackened by exposure to the elements. Through an interpreter the world conqueror asked them what they desired, and whether he could do anything for them. In answer, one of the naked sages, without deigning to look up, waved his hand to indicate that he just wanted Alexander and his entourage to get out of the way of the sun.

Such supreme contempt for worldly comforts was by no means confined to Hindu ascetics. Throughout recorded history men and women in all parts of the world have scorned contentment, luxury and fame, and have deliberately cultivated as virtues and adopted as part of their lives, practices that are by nature difficult, disagreeable and even painful. When it is within a man's power to enjoy what is pleasurable, it is strange to find that he often chooses the harsher alternative. Yet that, in the form of asceticism, has indeed been part of the religious ideal of many stalwart souls through the ages.

The term asceticism comes from a Greek word meaning training, discipline or self-denial, undertaken to acquire skill and stamina for victory in athletic games. The Roman philosophers known as the Stoics gave it a more austere significance. To them it implied a complete disregard for worldly success, for popular praise and physical pleasures. And they were not alone in recognizing the need for personal discipline and self-denial. The Spartans among the ancient Greeks, the Samurai warriors of medieval Japan, Tibetan monks sitting in solitude in icy Himalayan caves, are all representatives of this stern tradition.

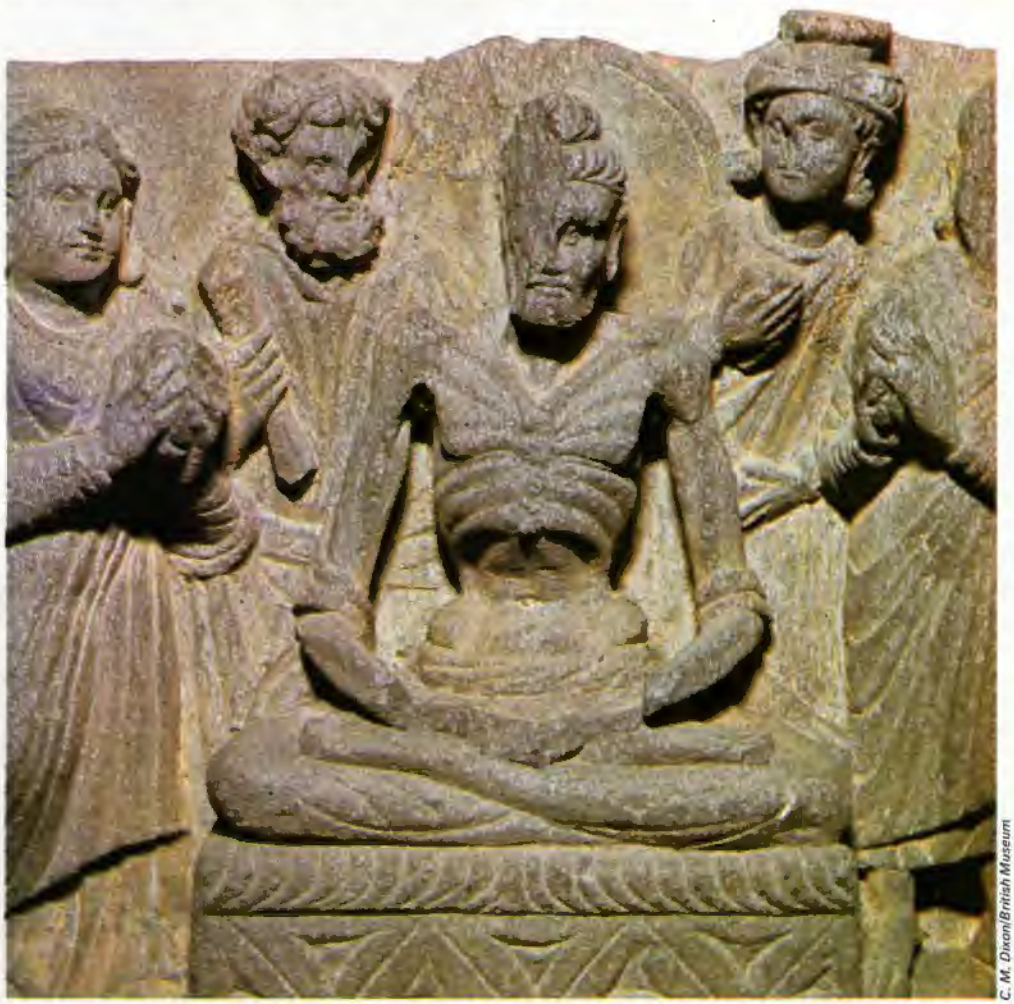
All forms of self-denial entail the development of the will which is the motive element in human beings. Mostly the will prompts a man along the line of least resistance, for people generally prefer not to exert themselves more than necessary. They do not will, but merely wish, and their wishes are vague pleasurable day-dreams that do not call for undue effort of any kind. But when controlled and directed the will can become the focus of tremendous power. A will that is fixed on its goal, and inflexible and unwearying in its purpose, must attain what it seeks, for obstacles appear to melt away before its impetus. In confrontation with others it exercises a masterful and almost hypnotic power, so that few can resist its impact. But to develop such a will demands long preparatory training in self-denial, asceticism and self-punishment.

There have always been men and women who have willingly accepted pain and sought punishment; some from a sense of personal guilt, some in an endeavour to purify their souls, but many as a deliberate discipline to strengthen the will. When rigorously and consistently maintained, such disciplines are thought to increase man's spiritual strength and open up a world of limitless possibilities. The body becomes infused with a dynamic force and an attractive energy that irresistibly draws others.

The extraordinary means that men have resorted to in order to punish themselves are among the curiosities of religious history. In early Christianity these were the celebrated ascetics of the Syrian and Egyptian deserts of the 4th and 5th centuries. One of them loaded himself with so many chains that he had to crawl about on all fours; another never lay down, even to sleep; yet another lived only on seeds like a bird. One lived in a dried-up well, and one on the top of a pillar 60 feet high (see SIMEON STYLITES). Yet another, having in a fit of temper killed a troublesome mosquito, expiated the sin of his anger by spending the remainder of his life near a mosquito-infested swamp so that his body was bitten all over by the insects and was covered with lumps and ulcers.

Hindu ascetics have aroused the curiosity of travellers from earliest times. The *sadhus* or holy men remain half-immersed in water for weeks at a time; lie on beds of thorns or nails; keep one arm lifted up till the muscles stiffen and the limb is permanently immobilized in an upraised position. Others gaze upwards or downwards until the neck muscles stiffen in the same way. Yet others keep the fist permanently closed so that the nails grow into the flesh of the palm.

There have been fanatical religious sects whose members have subjected themselves to bodily torture, to starvation, mutilation, burning, burial alive, crucifixion, in order to secure the salvation of their souls. Occasionally some special form of self-punishment caught the popular imagination and caused an 'epidemic', as in the case of the Flagellants (see FLAGELLATION). This Christian sect came into prominence in the 14th century and rapidly spread through Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Austria and Hungary. Large numbers of barely-clad people, young and old, men and women, nobles and serfs, rich and poor, used to go about in groups and lash their bodies with whips, rods and chains. They looked upon their self-punishment as a fresh baptism of blood. The sect died out in Western Europe but was revived in Russia among a group of people known as Khlysts, who danced ecstatic dances, beat themselves with whips, fell into trances and believed they were possessed by the Holy Ghost. A variant of this sect known as *Skoptsi* had a corps of elite leaders who even castrated themselves (see SKOPTSI). Both sects practised complete abstinence from sexual relations.



C. M. Dixon/British Museum

Buddha taught his followers that suffering ends when craving ceases as part of the Way to Enlightenment: the emaciated Buddha receives food from the daughters of Sana after undergoing extreme austerities

The Spiked Belt

In no part of man's life, it is thought, does self-restraint need greater vigilance than the sexual, for the sex instinct is the most pervasive, the most insistent, and the most difficult to control. In the Hindu tradition extraordinary virtues are claimed for *brahmacharya*, or continence. Great spiritual power is said to be raised by chastity. According to Hindu mythology nothing caused greater consternation in heaven than the knowledge that a *rishi* (sage) had started on a course of austerities involving abstinence from sex and sexual thoughts. The heavenly abodes were put into a state of turmoil, for the gods knew that with the power generated by the rishi vibrations were set up in the higher spheres that reverberated through the cosmos and disturbed the peace of the world order. The longer the rishi remained celibate, the more compelling became his power, and he could even bend the gods to his will. Vishvamitra, a famous yogi of Hindu mythology, once began creating universes of his own by means of the energy he had conjured up by sexual restraint. The usual counter to this manoeuvre was for the gods to send a heavenly nymph to tempt the ambitious celibate, which often proved successful and peace was restored again.

Among certain Christian denominations chastity has also been held up as an ideal and has often been made a prerequisite to the higher life, priests being forbidden to marry largely so that they might devote themselves wholly to their calling without the distractions and responsibilities of family life. Certain Puritan sects, while permitting marriage, advocated a strict control over the sexual act. The bond of marriage did not entitle a couple to indulgence in sex whenever they desired. In fact, excessive love for one's husband or wife, in their belief, constituted adultery.

Whenever any higher aspiration is sought, a tight reign on the sexual appetites is very frequently regarded as essential. The clamour for sexual expression can only be heeded, it is felt, at the expense of the spirit. The controlled sexual impulse, on the other hand, can be utilised for a variety of purposes and find expression in 'sublimated' form in religion, literature, art, science or philosophy. Gustave Flaubert, the French novelist, suggested that artists should subjugate their sexual instincts so as to lend a more intensive drive to the creative impulse in their work. Freud confirmed the view that people engaged in intellectual work would benefit by sexual abstinence.

Many men of high intellectual calibre have been driven to the same conclusion. Blaise Pascal, mathematician and philosopher, became convinced that carnal desires were pitfalls, the pleasures of the table a trap, and the joys of love-making a stratagem of Satan to lure people to destruction. So in order to develop the will-power to resist the temptations of physical pleasure, he actively sought pain and privation. He wore a belt with spikes, which were turned inwards, and if he found himself taking an undue interest or pleasure in food, in conversation or the company of others, he would secretly press the belt so that the spikes would prick his flesh. Pascal regarded wealth as one of the prime evils and poverty a blessed condition, since it limited the area of Satan's operations in his assaults on the body of man.

In religion the exercise of discipline over the bodily appetites is often found to arise from the belief that a twofold principle governs the universe (see DUALISM). A spiritual reality underlies the world, and this reality has a dual nature which is in constant opposition. The antagonism between these two principles is symbolized as a struggle between God and Satan, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, and the opposition between the ideals of self-denial and self-indulgence may be said to represent the battle of these dualistic principles being fought out on the material plane. Sensuality springing entirely from the physical body represents evil, because in the earthly conflict the base or physical self is the enemy of the soul, which must be subjugated and denied expression.

Countless men and women, believing in this philosophy, have given up status and wealth to embrace the life of self-denial and harsh abstinence once they have been convinced of the shortcomings and indeed the incipient dangers of a life of ease and luxury. Material comfort and the satisfactions of the flesh can breed increasing appetites that are never satisfied and in their wake bring moral sluggishness and spiritual degradation. To such persons physical self-fulfilment, for all its so-called benefits, has serious drawbacks. It pacifies, soothes, and above all softens and weakens the spirit in its struggle against the powers of evil. Mystics have said that one of the greatest obstacles to the evolution of the soul is the pursuit of pleasure. Nothing so effectively obscures the interior mirror in which we might 'witness the Higher Self' as worldly success and sensuality. Not self-expression but self-denial should therefore be the aim, for the self that seeks expression may be, and usually is, the lower self, and the ways in which it seeks expression are spiritually injurious.

Sonia Halliday

The Ideal of Indifference

Besides sex there are several other desires that crave satisfaction, and all these must be carefully watched. In most ascetic and mystical cults the pupil is warned to resist the desire for fame and popular esteem. All good deeds should be anonymous. He should conceal his virtuous acts as if they were evil deeds. The 4th century Christian saint, Macarius, who settled in the desert to practise austerities, was accused by the nearby villagers of making a girl pregnant and was almost killed by them. He did not say a word and made no effort to defend himself. Later, when the real culprit was found, the villagers came to Macarius to apologize, and praised him for his saintliness. Again he said nothing. He had made it a rule of his life not to care one way or the other what people thought of him. He remained quite unmoved by praise or blame.

In ancient Greece the ideal aimed at was called *ataraxia*, freedom from all violent and disturbing emotions, a passionless indifference that leads ultimately to imer harmony. The Roman Stoics too regarded it as one of the great virtues, and one that was sorely needed in their excitable age which sought satisfaction in vulgar appetites that were being progressively stimulated as Rome's wealth increased.

'He who is rid of desire,' says a Chinese classic, 'has an insight into the secret essence.' The ideal of the Hindu yogi was 'uncolouredness', the state of being untouched by the storms of passion and prejudice. The virtues he cultivated were patience, endurance, forbearance, and the

All forms of self-denial entail the development of the will, and by rejecting material and bodily pleasures the will can become the focus of tremendous power *Left* Abbot John of Rila who died in 946 AD spent 60 years of his life in the mountains of Bulgaria and founded the great monastery of Rila: 19th century mural *Right* Grünewald's *The Temptation of St Anthony*: as a young man he overcame great spiritual and physical temptations and went away into the desert where he was followed by those seeking his advice

Giraudon

acceptance of one's lot, and a total detachment unperturbed by pleasure or pain, fame or contempt, success or failure, poverty or plenty, sympathy or scorn, love or hate, praise or blame.

The Buddhists also regarded as sinful the encouragement of anything likely to excite envy, desire, anger, lust, greed, or even admiration. They sought to make no distinction between the world conqueror and the penniless beggar. They condemned any preoccupation with things that were beautiful or enjoyable. To take a literary example, a thesis presented in a beautifully-written style was suspect, for the manner of saying it might deceive one into believing that because it was well expressed it was also true, whereas in reality it might contain much falsehood. Again, the appreciation of beauty is largely a sensual matter and a concession to the lower self. Buddhist legend tells of the monk Chittagutta, who lived in a monastery adorned with beautiful murals of a religious nature, yet who never let his glance stray upward lest he be misled by the charm of the paintings and forget the message they were meant to convey. The Christian monk St Bernard shielded his eyes from the sight of the wonderful Swiss lakes and mountains lest he find too sensual a joy in their beauty.

Shedding Excess Baggage

The deceptive attraction of worldly success and power must also be avoided. Success can be degrading. Possessions can contaminate. Anthropologists have shown that when primitive peoples are suddenly brought into contact with an advanced culture they soon become demoralized. The cargo cults of the Melanesians (see CARGO CULTS) provide a good instance of the progressive phases of perplexity, reaction and revolt against the good things imported into their islands from the Western world. Sociologists have not been slow to point out that in a sense even civilized man finds the impact of worldly abundance and the growing complexity of his own culture becoming more and more alien to him and more difficult to bear, and he ultimately suffers the same phases of bewilderment and demoralization as his brother in the South Seas.

Most observers of contemporary society feel that there is a definite need to shed the excess baggage carried by the affluent, and not continually to strive for more and more. Probably no single book has expressed this idea with greater clarity than the *Tao Te Ching*, one of the great classics of Chinese philosophy (see TAOISM).

Self-denial means learning to do with less, to thin out and attenuate. Henry Thoreau, the American backwoods philosopher, once said that a man should so live that he could flee a burning city and be none the poorer. So many people have far more than they can cope with, and the real need is to jettison some of the unnecessarily heavy loads we carry about with us.

From Greece, Rome, China, Arabia, North and South America, and many other places, we have records of the deliberate sacrifice of valuable possessions as part of a rite of liberation from material bondage. For example, the Celtic tribe of the Cimbri after a great victory in 105 BC destroyed their victory booty. A strange form of orgiastic celebration found among the American Indians is known to anthropologists as a potlatch, in which huge quantities of stores, money and property are wantonly destroyed after a ceremonial feast (see PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS).

Perhaps the most vivid example comes from ancient Greece, when the people of Croton were having trouble with the neighbouring city of Sybaris, both in the Bay of Tarentum in Italy. The Sybarites were extremely wealthy and powerful. They had the distinction of being the first people to use chamber pots at banquets, and were responsible for introducing hot baths to the Western world. Luxury-loving in the extreme, they made a fetish of refined foods and titillating wines, and the exciting rhythms of the most sophisticated music. They decorated their cooks with crowns of gold and presented their sexual partners with bejewelled sceptres. The philosopher Pythagoras (see PYTHAGORAS) advised the people of Croton, who had hitherto tried to copy the refinements of the Sybarites, to surrender their luxuries if they wished to draw down from heaven the strength that would enable them to overcome their enemy. Costly urns full of jewels, beautifully wrought statues, priceless paintings and works of art, wonderful fabrics and carpets were brought from their homes and laid at the altar of Juno, and then systematically destroyed, burned, torn up, ground to powder, or sunk in the deep river. It was as though the people were purified from a feverish plague, relieved of an incubus that had settled its dragging load permanently on their shoulders. They went forth against the Sybarites, conquered them, razed Sybaris to the ground, and diverted the waters of a nearby river so that it submerged the hateful city.

Bonfire of Vanities

Two thousand years later, in May 1497, the Dominican monk Savonarola preached against the luxuries of the 'sybaritic' city of Florence. Like an Old Testament prophet he raised his voice against its decadence and its vices. As a result of his preaching the citizens carried to the marketplace of Florence hundreds of rare books of art, profane literature by the cartload, licentious poetry, precious manuscripts, ladies' ornaments and trinkets, costly pomades, lotions, eye salves and beautifiers of every kind, as well as musical instruments, chess boards, cards and hundreds upon hundreds of costly items of clothing. All this, forming the 'boils and sores' of Florence, was piled in a great heap. A trumpet was sounded and amid the acclamations of the mob, Savonarola applied a torch to this, perhaps the most expensive 'bonfire of vanities' ever.

In the view of the ascetic, men and women could always do with less. The barest minimum is the ideal possession, and poverty the ultimate aim. St Francis of Assisi (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI) was one of that noble band who embraced poverty. He gave up his patrimony, exchanged his rich clothes for the rags of a beggar and mortified himself by severe penances. He was only one of countless numbers who have preferred self-denial to self-indulgence. Suffering is basic to asceticism. We do not know why suffering exists or who is responsible for it. Mystics regard it as having its roots in the cosmic process. Thomas à Kempis (d 1471) called suffering 'the gymnastic of eternity'. The mystics say that it is a great delusion to imagine that man is born for happiness, or that pleasure is his birthright. The fact is that no human life can be free from suffering, and its value can only be seen in retrospect. Human life is meant to be enriched by suffering. So we find through the ages that men and women have not only passively accepted suffering when it came, but actively sought it out. Ascetics have inflicted punishments on themselves, mutilated their bodies in various ways, denied themselves the necessities, in order to test, train, strengthen or purify their souls.

(See also FAKIR; MUTILATION.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

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Camera Press, London

A Hindu holy man lies in a trance on a bed of thorns on a Jaipur pavement; the ideal of the Hindu yogi was 'uncolouredness', being untouched by passion and prejudice

National Gallery, London

Seraph

A type of angel; when Isaiah saw a vision of God on his throne, the seraphim hovered above him calling 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts'; each had six wings and, apparently, a human face, hands, feet and voice (Isaiah, chapter 6); because the name was thought to be derived from the word for 'to burn' the seraphim were believed to be consumed with the ardour of love and are often represented clothed in red.

SERAPIS

THE GOD of Alexandria and the chief deity of Ptolemaic Egypt was Serapis or Sarapis, about whose origin there was much speculation in the ancient world. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, writing in the 2nd century AD, Ptolemy I, the first Greek monarch of Egypt (305–283 BC), was instructed in a dream to send to Sinope, a city on the shores of the Black Sea, for the statue of the god of that place. Ptolemy consulted the Egyptian priests about his dream, but they could not interpret it. It was eventually interpreted by an Athenian named Timotheus who, significantly, was connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS). He identified the god of Ptolemy's dream as Pluto (see PLUTO), who was associated with the underworld goddess Persephone at Sinope. After some difficult negotiations, the statue was obtained and brought to Alexandria. Tacitus adds some further explanatory details about Serapis: 'The god, himself, on account of his healing art, is called by many Aesculapius; by others, Osiris, the most ancient deity of the country (Egypt); and many give him the name of Jupiter, as lord of the universe. But the most maintain that he is Pluto – either from tokens which are discernible in the deity himself, or by a circuitous process of probable reasoning.'

This account of the origin of Serapis is not accepted by scholars today. But it is recognized as probable that Ptolemy I did promote the cult of Serapis as a means of uniting his Greek and Egyptian subjects in the worship of a god whom both could appreciate. This god was a hybrid conception of Egyptian origin, venerated already by some Greeks resident in Egypt. The origin and development of the conception provide a curious example of religious syncretism. At Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, there had existed from a remote period the cult of the Apis bull as a symbol of divine procreativity. When one of these sacred animals died, it was identified with Osiris, the god of the dead (see OSIRIS), and named

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Head of the god Serapis, from Carthage: he was represented as a bearded Greek god, looking like Zeus, but his origins lay in the Egyptian cult of a divine bull

Oserapis, that is Osiris-Apis. The body of each Apis was mummified and buried, amid public lamentation, with the bodies of its predecessors in the Serapeum, a vast subterranean labyrinth at Sakkara.

The story which Tacitus tells of the dream-revealed image certainly relates to the form under which Serapis was presented in Alexandria, which was essentially a Greek city. The identification of the Egyptian Oserapis with the Greek god Pluto would have been easy; for both Osiris and Pluto were rulers of the underworld. In the magnificent temple, which was built in Alexandria for the new deity and known as the Serapeum, the cult statue showed Serapis as a bearded Greek god, similar in features to Zeus, seated on a throne. His underworld character was symbolized by an accompanying image of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Hades, and by the *kalathos*, 'hasket', upon his head, which was a symbol of fertility.

Serapis, through his derivation from Osiris, became associated with the great goddess Isis (see ISIS), and the prescribed oath in law-courts and for legal transactions in Ptolemaic Egypt was, 'by Serapis and Isis and all other gods and goddesses'. He also inherited from Osiris the character of a saviour god connected with the afterlife, and his cult, in some of its forms, constituted a Mystery religion. His association with Asclepios (see HEALING GODS), which Tacitus mentions, is interesting. But it was not from the Greek healer god that Serapis acquired his reputation as a divine healer, but from the ancient Egyptian deified sage Imhotep (see IMHOTEP), whose sanctuary, at Sakkara, was an Egyptian 'Lourdes', and called an Asklepieion by the Greeks.

From Alexandria the cult of Serapis spread into the Graeco-Roman world, and enjoyed a considerable popularity, doubtless through its combination of the religious traditions of Egypt and Greece. Serapis became identified also with both the time god Aion and the sun as Zeus Helios. The importance of his cult was such that the Christian destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria dramatically symbolized the victory of Christianity over paganism.

SERPENT

THERE IS probably no creature which is found more widely distributed in the mythologies of the world than the serpent. Snakes occur even in the myths of lands where there are no snakes – such as among the Eskimo of the far north, perhaps recalling long-past days in warmer regions. St Patrick may have driven the snakes out of Ireland but could not cleanse the isle of snake legends, including his own.

In the modern West most people, especially those who share the widespread abhorrence for this creature, might instantly think of the mythical serpent in its biblical role, as the tempter of Eve, and as the embodiment of evil whose head is to be forever bruised by mankind. But in the older mythologies the serpent is not always an evil being. It is, however, invariably one thing – an unswervingly, chthonic being, as C. G. Jung makes clear, a being of the primordial, dark, earthbound, underworld ways. As such, in the religions of man, it may pre-date even the primeval cults of the Earth Mother; certainly it has some connections with those cults, but with its own fertility and phallic implications.

At the dawn of history, or at least in its early morning, the age-old chthonic religions faced invasions by new cultures worshipping sky gods, gods of light. As the two groups of people met and fought, so their religions came into conflict as well. In India one outcome of such a conflict was that prehistoric snake cults were not entirely lost but were assimilated into the religion of the invading Aryans and survived in the later Hindu myths of semi-divine beings with serpent bodies, called the Nagas.

In many folktales the Nagas are not evil but act beneficently, and a female Naga or Nagini may often marry a mortal. But they are vengeful and terrible if harmed, and so exhibit a considerable share of demonic aspects. Hindu gods and heroes, including Krishna, often come into conflict with them; but elsewhere, Nagas play valuable parts in the mythic structure. Much outright snake worship remains in parts of India,

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Kaliya, the king of the serpents, is overcome by Krishna who dances on the serpent's head until his power is broken

including that of the snake goddess Manasa in Bengal, who is identified as a most high-ranking Nagini.

Ousted by Apollo

In Western myth, the clash between old chthonic gods and incoming sky gods appears, predictably, as a straightforward battle. It is especially so in Greek mythology where in two crucial instances the serpent motif appears on the side of the old gods. Apollo, the brilliant new sky god of the Hellenes, displaces a pre-Hellenic worship (probably a snake cult) in the myth of his combat with Python, a serpent monster (see APOLLO). The god killed the serpent on the slopes of Parnassus, in its lair at Delphi. There his temple was established; there the Delphic oracle under his patronage grew to its later position of considerable power in the Greek world (see ORACLES). And the priestess who delivered the oracles when possessed with the god was called the Pythia.

In Egypt the god Seth (see SETH) at a late stage of development took on the attributes of an evil god and was identified with another serpent monster of Greek myth, Typhon, who was defeated in a great battle by Zeus. This creature was the last of the fearsome old gods, children of Mother Earth, who resisted the incursion of the gods of Olympus. In some versions of the myth of Apollo's battle the consonants of his enemy's name are reversed, and Python is called Typhaon. The etymological similarities are clear. Typhon, in the Zeus myth, was formed of coiled serpents from the thighs down, with arms and hands composed of hundreds of snakes. Zeus, the supreme sky god, fought this chthonic horror and was finally victorious.

Superman Against Serpents

These battles against snake creatures are myths of central importance, signalling major religious upheavals and transitions. But they are also representatives of one of the most widespread hero myths. It seems that every hero in myth and legend must at some time confront a monster which is usually reptilian (though not always a snake – see DRAGON). Hercules, for example, strangled two serpents while he was still an infant, and later killed the hundred-headed water serpent Hydra (see HERCULES). Krishna also killed snakes in his infancy; Japan's hero Susanoo fought a multi-headed serpent. Perseus slew his share of serpents, including those on the head of Medusa (see GORGONS). Sigurd of Scandinavian myth fought the giant serpent Fafnir, and Maui of Polynesian legend did battle with a monster eel. And in Norse myth Thor was constantly fighting with the world-encircling Midgard serpent, though he could not defeat it, or be defeated by it, until the world's end (see SCANDINAVIA; THOR).

Thor's combat may be another instance of the displacement of an older, chthonic divinity, but it also overlaps with another mythological motif of great antiquity, that of the 'cosmic snake'. The Midgard serpent may be the best known, but there is also

Musée Guimet/Michael Holford

In Hindu mythology, Nagas were semi-divine beings with serpent bodies; sometimes they were beneficent but if they were harmed they were vengeful and terrible: 12th century bronze statuette of a Naga, Angkor Wat, Cambodia

the great Naga lord of Hindu myth, the many-headed serpent Sesha, who supports the world and on whom Vishnu sleeps during peaceful epochs.

None of these cosmic snakes is evil – not even the Midgard, in its world-girdling aspect, though it may be seen as malevolent in its role as offspring of Loki and adversary of Thor. Of course, no one would deny that in myth, the snake has been used often enough as a handy container for evil forces, the serpent of Eden being an example (see EVIL; FIRST MAN). But it is clear that world mythology does not regard the serpent motif as invariably a symbol of evil.

The younger cultures, like that of the Hellenes, with their bright new sky gods, seem to have justified their conquests by projecting an evil image onto the displaced gods. And because so many of the displaced were snakes, that creature acquired more than its share of evil. Perhaps the bluntest, most explicit image of this defeat occurs in the *Iliad* of Homer, when the combatants look up and see an eagle carrying in its claws a wounded snake – a terrible omen, symbolizing the victory of the Achaeans over the old earth-oriented Asian ways.

Union of Earth and Sky

The Nagas of India show that the confrontation of dark against light, earth against sky, need not always mean total war and the triumph of the latter. It can lead to a peaceful blending or assimilation, a reconciliation of opposites. And this notion even managed to creep into Greek mythology. There, as elsewhere, its usual symbolism makes use of a combination of the bird and snake motifs.

The combining of earth and sky motifs occurs in the myth of the Olympian god Hermes (see HERMES); with his winged sandals and snake-entwined caduceus, he was the intermediary between heaven and the underworld, and acted as guide to the souls of the dead. Similarly, in the myth of the Graeco-Roman god Asclepios (see HEALING GODS), founder of medicine; as the son of Apollo he shared the god's association with the sky, yet his symbol was the snake. The symbol may have come from another pre-Hellenic snake cult and oracle (a minor version of Delphi) taken over by the Asclepian cult. It would be reiuforced by the symbolism of renewal in the snake, which casts its skin each year. Of more importance, the priests of Asclepios performed diagnoses and cures by a technique that began with dreaming. The Greeks saw dreams as issuing from the underworld (a concept not unlike that of the unconscious mind) and so the snake, as inhabitant and symbol of that region, naturally became the symbol of the god who healed by dreams. And the snake still appears as the chief emblem of the medical profession today.

A more striking instance of the reconciliation between earth and sky can be found in a great mythological motif held in common by all the principal religions of Central America, Mexico and even the south-west of the United States. This is the concept of the plumed serpent, the androgynous combination of bird and snake. It can be seen in a major divinity of the Maya, the feathered serpent god Kukulcan. But it can best be seen in the glory of the Toltec deity Quetzalcoatl (see AZTECS). He was a sky god, sometimes identified with the wind and at other times with the morning star. But he rose to dominate the Toltec religion as a sun divinity, a major creator, a divine king. His rule, and his manifestation as the plumed serpent, spoke of reconciliation, harmony and peace.

This theme, the reconciliation between underworld and heaven, occurs also in the image of the rainbow (see RAINBOW), traditionally and obviously seen as a bridge between earth and sky. But in myth and symbol rainbows are also often considered to be snakes. The concept can be found in ancient Persian myth, in folktales of Brittany, in Australian aborigine myth, in West African myth, in North and South American Indian myth, and elsewhere. In Australia the rainbow snake is an especially important deity, a culture hero and creator with wide fertility implications.

One of the most remarkable of the world's serpent deities is the god Da or Dan of Dahomey in West Africa. He is usually seen as a snake with tail in mouth and therefore resembling a cosmic snake like that of Midgard, but also a rainbow and water snake with fertility associations; he has another role again in oracular divination. Da was exported with West African slaves and became gradually translated into Damballa, one of the principal deities of the New World's *vodun* or Voodoo religion (see VOODOO). Yet even there he retains the

Dahomean form of rainbow snake, intermediary between heaven and earth.

Similarly, the rainbow is a water serpent in Arawak myth in South America, and is an earth or underworld spirit gone to drink at the sky in Malayan and in Yoruba myth. In the arid south-west of the United States the water snake motif diminishes somewhat, but the earth-sky reconciliation remains: the Mohave of southern California tell of a giant rattlesnake who is a sky spirit. And an important Pueblo snake god (who is also sometimes a plumed serpent) figures in a major Hopi ritual that is a rain-making weather magic.

Snake-Handling Cults

The Hopi shamans underline their appeal to the rain by holding venomous snakes in their mouths while performing; again the underworld snake becomes a sky symbol. The performers are members of the Snake clan, and are confident that they will not be bitten. Similar dances occur among the Comanche; and most south-western Indians have some form of traditional magic that protects against snake-bite and that involves the handling of rattlesnakes by the medicine-men. Californian tribal shamans have been said to invite rattlers to bite them, during snake-handling rites, in order to prove their resistance or their curative powers.

The white man, too, has his versions of these ancient rites, such as the ecstatic snake-handling Christian sects of the United States, in Tennessee and elsewhere (see SNAKE-HANDLING CULTS). Faith, apparently, is supposed to protect these cultists from being bitten by the usually poisonous snakes which unwillingly join in the worship. Perhaps it could be said that the snakes, in turn, symbolize the handlers' achievement of a higher spiritual plane.

Other North American Indians include snake gods in their pantheons, but these are generally lesser Nature spirits, no more important than other animal gods. Even so, they will have their own celebrations, usually in mimetic dances – 'follow-my-leader' chain dances or open-ended round dances – which emulate the sinuous movement of a snake. The Iroquois and Cherokee, among others, had this form of snake dance; and indeed it was once traditional, and may still occasionally be encountered, among North American college students at football rallies and other open-air festivities.

Among lesser snake gods in the mythologies of the world are Urcaguay, the Inca snake god who guarded treasure just as dragons do in European folktale; the Icelandic Nidhug or Nidhoggr, predominant among the countless serpents who gnaw the roots of the world tree Yggdrasill; the snake-legged Celtic god Cernunnos, horned and carrying a ram-headed serpent.

The snake appears in magic as prominently as in myth. A major mystic symbol

The snake is closely linked with the dragon and the sea-serpent, and in hero legends the hero frequently does battle with a serpentine monster: the combat of Morbidus and the sea monster. French, 15th century

Sonia Halliday

is the ourobouros, the snake with its tail in its mouth like the cosmic snakes, strengthening the serpentine role in the 'reconciliation of opposites' by being half dark and half light, like the yin and yang symbol that has the same function in oriental belief. Alchemy has its share of encircling serpents; and it depicts the vital spirit-substance Mercury as a winged serpent, reflecting the Roman god of the same name, and the Greek Hermes, with winged sandals and snake-encircled caduceus. So the snake retains in magic and mysticism its symbolic role as an underground being who may nevertheless mediate with heaven. But then magic in Christian times also places the mantle of evil on the serpent – as when a 15th century cabalist named Joseph della Rayna conjured up two devils, who appeared as serpents. And Aleister Crowley wrote about a devil whom he summoned up, who appeared in various forms including that of a snake.

Snake-Skin for Rheumatism

Predictably, evil is also ascribed to snakes in the homelier magic of popular superstition; if a pregnant women is frightened by a snake her child is expected to have a snake-like constricted throat, and in Britain a live adder on the doorstep is a death omen. American superstition includes the delightful fantasy of the 'hoop snake', which takes its tail in its mouth like a kind of crazed ourobouros and rolls with great speed at its enemies. Folklore universally insists that all poisonous snakes can spit their venom, that all snakes have hypnotic powers, and that the poison is injected into a bite by the snake's tongue.

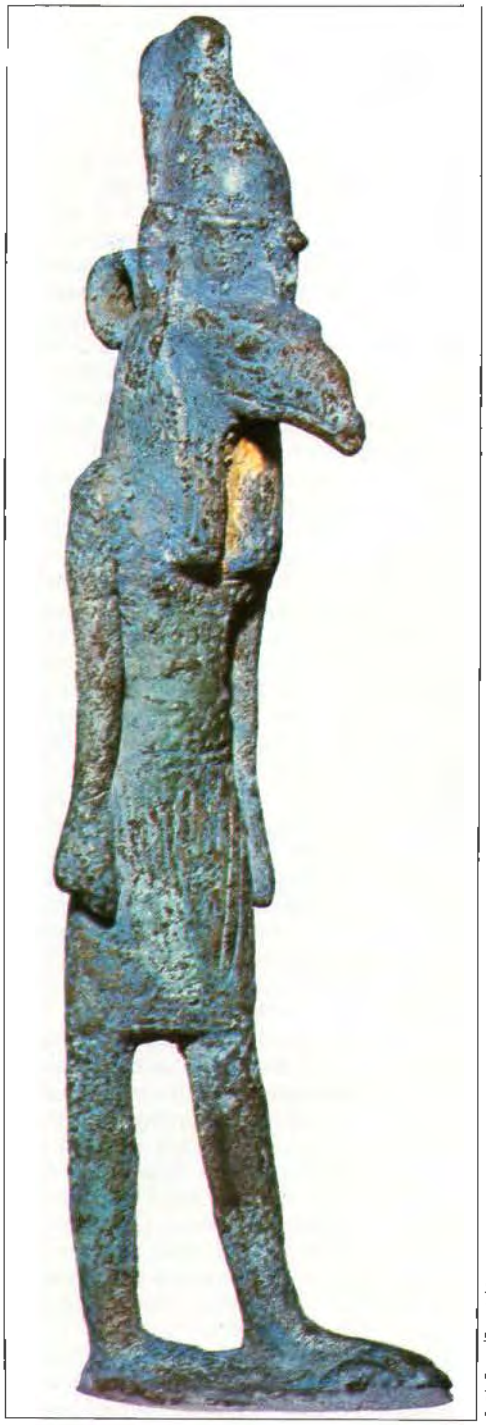
None of these beliefs have forestalled the wide use of snakes, or their parts, in folk medicine. The powdered rattles of a rattlesnake, in a drink, according to American backwoods belief, would assist a mother in a difficult birth. Kentuckians believed that the rattles worn as a hair ornament prevented headache, and rattlesnake skin worn round the affected part could cure rheumatism, as could adder skin in Britain. Even more positively, the dried skin of a snake hung over the hearth was said, in parts of Britain, to protect the house from fire and to bring good fortune to the family who lived there.

This bit of homespun magic parallels the more generous view of snakes held in places like Lithuania and Armenia, and among ancient Teutonic peoples, where a family might have its own 'house snake' as both a useful rat-catcher and a minor guardian house spirit. In this way European folklore bypasses the Christian projections of evil onto the serpent to retain the older, and somehow far more satisfying idea of it as a chthonic earth spirit, which is deserving of our veneration.

DOUGLAS HILL

The snake is generally an underworld being but by no means always an evil one, though in Christianity the serpent is associated with the Devil and the Fall of Adam and Eve in Eden: the damned writhe in the grip of serpents in this scene from a 14th century wall painting of the Last Judgement, from Cyprus

SETH



C. M. Dixon/British Museum

Seth had a chequered career in Egyptian mythology; once he was Lord of Upper Egypt, but was later made guilty of the murder of Osiris, and was identified with foreign invaders of Egypt: 19th Dynasty bronze statue of Seth

ONE OF THE MAJOR GODS of ancient Egypt, Seth was said to be the son of Geb and Nut and he is conspicuous on the monuments and in texts. In particular he is assigned a prominent role in representations of symbolic rites relating to the pharaonic state. The best known of these is the ceremony of 'Uniting the Two Lands', which is impressively portrayed on the limestone reliefs from Lisht near Memphis, now in the Cairo Museum. Seth is figured here facing the god Horus (see HORUS). Both are animal gods, but here their bodies have human shape; only their heads retain their original form – the falcon head of Horus and the canine head of Seth. The two deities are shown tying the symbolic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt to the sign which connotes unity. In these reliefs Seth is clearly the representative of Upper Egypt.

There is little doubt that the scene mirrors an enacted ritual in which priests impersonated the gods. Seth is depicted too in other related ceremonies, such as those connected with the purification and the coronation of the pharaoh. In an oft-recorded rite which has been called 'the Baptism of Pharaoh' he is shown, together with Horus, pouring water over the king's head.

Unidentified Animal

Seth's original cult centre was very probably Ombos, the modern Naqada, where a figure of the Seth animal has been found amid vestiges of Naqada's earliest predynastic culture, which derives from the middle of the fourth millennium BC. But what the Seth animal really was still constitutes a problem. Suggestions made include the ass, oryx antelope, the fennec (a small fox with huge pointed ears), jerhoa (a rodent), camel, okapi, long-snouted mouse, giraffe and various types of hogs or boars. Another view is that the animal is fabulous, like the griffin or dragon. The narrow snout and upraised ears and tail suggest a canine type; perhaps the species was already extinct in Egypt in early times. In later phases of his development Seth was associated with the ass, the pig and the hippopotamus, and in these cases the interpretation of his character was usually unfavourable.

Indeed a striking fact in the history of the cult of Seth is that after the New Kingdom, from about 1000 BC, the god is involved for the most part in a position of increasing degradation. One reason is that the roles he occupies in mythology are inauspicious. In the legend about his fierce fight with the falcon god Horus, Seth is said to have been deprived of his testicles, and although he in turn ripped out one of the eyes of Horus, the final victory, including justification in the divine tribunal, went to his opponent. In the myth of Osiris the role of Seth becomes still more sinister: he is the murderer who felled Osiris in Nedjet (see OSIRIS). The opposing gods in each case were incorporated in the concept of kingship, Horos being identified with the living pharaoh, Osiris with the deceased one, so that Seth was fated from the start to follow a difficult course.

In relation to the living pharaoh, Seth's place in the official theology was at first protected, as we have seen, by the concept of reconciliation. If Seth represents Upper Egypt in a rite celebrating the unity of Egypt, this means that an early stage of disunity is reflected, when Seth was the patron god of a part of the country, espousing its strife against another part. But the retrospect is now a happy one, and the dominance of Horus in the royal theology does not deny Seth an honoured second place. Later, however, Thoth replaces Seth in some of the symbolic rites, such as the 'Baptism of Pharaoh'. Seth is identified with the victim offered in sacrificial rites, and the slain offering is equated with the defeated enemy. The Book of Victory over Seth and the texts of the Temple of Edfu are virulently anti-Sethian, but they derive from sanctuaries of Osiris and Horus. It is true that even in the first millennium BC Seth was specially honoured by the Libyan Dynasty; and if the escalating popularity of Osiris told heavily against him, there were centres of Seth worship even in the Roman era.

In the legend which describes his conflict with Horus there are some clear pointers to a historical and political substratum. Cosmological explanations become prominent later, and one modern view would interpret the myth as being inherently of this type. Seth, however, is not easy to fit into such a scheme. As a god of heaven, Horus represents light, it may be argued; he is eventually equated with the sun god Re, and his eyes are the sun and moon. If so, what does Seth represent? He is not simply a god of darkness; sometimes he is a storm god, a thunderer, while at other times his name is linked with the desert. One recent writer H. te Velde, sees the polarity as that between light and sexuality. Seth is certainly endowed by the Egyptian texts with strong, if somewhat perverse, sexual powers. It is very doubtful, however, whether they are felt to be opposed to the cosmic concept of light. Nephthys, sister and partner of Isis, is usually named as his wife, but the union is not credited with offspring.

'A Kind of Satan'

Seth is himself sometimes equated astrally with the Great Bear, and in the texts and representations which portray the fight of Re against Apophis, the serpent demon of darkness, Seth is the champion-in-chief of the sun god. What contributed especially to his decline in status was the tendency to identify him with foreign invaders such as the Assyrians and Persians. In the magical papyri his position remains tremendously influential, even if he is often regarded now as a kind of Satan. By this time he has been identified with the Greek monster Typhon, likewise a challenger of the established divine order. Seth-Typhon is sometimes referred to as 'the headless demon', but this term is applied in the papyri to other gods too, including Osiris. Since the magician is anxious to deploy the powers of Seth-Typhon, his attitude to the god may be ambivalent. On the one hand he may address him with great respect and declare himself to be his partisan in the struggle against Osiris or Horus; on the other hand, he may call him 'the slayer of his own brother', just to remind him that the magician is acquainted with his crimes and will use his knowledge unfavourably unless the god is prepared to show sympathy in the matter which is the subject of his appeal.

One of the Gnostic sects (see GNOSTICISM) went by the name of Sethians, paying special honour to Seth, the biblical son of Adam and Eve. Suggestions concerning a second relationship involving the Egyptian god seem to be rather speculative.

J. GWYN GRIFFITHS

This uncanny and powerful number is linked with the moon, and so with the underlying cycles and rhythms of life in the universe

SEVEN

WHEN THE Israelites set siege to Jericho, they marched round the walls of the city once a day for six days, with 7 priests bearing 7 trumpets of rams' horns before them. And on the seventh day they marched round the city 7 times and at the seventh circuit the 7 priests blew a long blast on the 7 trumpets and the people raised a great shout: 'and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city' (Joshua, chapter 6).

This triumphant employment of the magic of 7 illustrates the number's reputation for mysterious and uncanny power. A glance at any concordance will reveal the frequency with which 7 appears in the Bible. The supreme example is God's creation of the world in 7 days, but there are many others. Pharaoh's dream, which Joseph interpreted, involved 7 fat cows and 7 lean cows, 7 plump ears of grain and 7 blighted ones (Genesis, chapter 41). Balaam offered 7 bulls and 7 rams on 7 altars to the Lord (Numbers, chapter 23). The leper Naaman washed 7 times in Jordan and was healed (2 Kings, chapter 5). The book of Proverbs (chapter 9) speaks of the 7 pillars of wisdom. In the New Testament the book of Revelation is packed with groups of 7 – stars, angels, trumpets, plagues, thunders, seals, vials of wrath. The lamb has 7 horns and 7 eyes, and the Great Beast has 7 heads.

The Jews kept the seventh day, on which God rested from his work, as the sabbath, the day of rest and worship, which Christians transferred to Sunday. Leviticus (chapter 25) says that every seventh year is to be specially observed as 'a sabbath of solemn rest for the land', and every fiftieth year, marking the end of 7 x 7 years, is to be celebrated as a jubilee, in which 'you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines . . . it shall be holy to you.'

The key to 7 is this connection with significant periods of time, which stems from its link with the moon. It is an old and widespread belief that the cycles of life and death, growth and decay, on earth are connected with the waxing and waning of the moon as it lives and dies and is born again in the sky (see MOON). Each of the four phases of the moon's cycle lasts roughly 7 days, and this is the origin of the month of four weeks of 7 days each. When it was

The number 7 has a reputation for uncanny and mysterious power *Left* A Roman winged goddess wears a turreted crown of 7 busts that represent the 7 days of the week; 7 is a powerful number as a period of time, for the phases of the moon's cycle last roughly 7 days *Right* 'I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads'; the book of Revelation is packed with groups of 7 – stars, angels, trumpets, plagues and thunders

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

Victoria and Albert Museum

discovered that if you add all the numbers from 1 to 7 itself, the total is 28, the number of days in the lunar month, the connection of 7 with the lunar cycle was reinforced, and occultists have long maintained that the rhythms of life on earth run in periods of 7, corresponding to the rhythms of the moon. They point out that menstruation in women, on which all human life depends, occurs in a cycle of 4 x 7 days and lasts some $3\frac{1}{2}$ (half of 7) days, that the human body renews itself every 7 years, that the traditional span of man's life is 10 x 7 years. They also believe that disease has a cycle of 7, with the crisis usually coming on the 7th, 14th or 21st day of an illness and lasting about $3\frac{1}{2}$ days.

Seven Deadly Sins

As the number of a significant period of time, 7 means completeness: 7 days make a whole week, the whole world was made in 7 days, 7 of anything makes a complete set. The planets known in antiquity, whose movements in the sky were thought to influence all events on earth, were 7, and they correspond to the days of the week and to 7 metals and the 7 colours of the rainbow or spectrum (see CORRESPONDENCES; DAYS). There are 7 notes in the musical scale, and the lyre which in Greek legend Apollo gave to Orpheus had 7 strings. The fact that there were 7 vowels in the Greek alphabet had an important numerological influence, since vowels are the containers of inner reality, as against consonants which indicate surface appearances.

All sorts of other things have been arranged in sets of 7. There are 7 petitions in the Lord's Prayer and 7 'gifts of the spirit' in the Old Testament – wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and piety, and the fear of God (Isaiah, chapter 11). Moslem pilgrims process 7 times round the Kaaba at Mecca. The Athenians sent 7 young men and 7 maidens to Crete every 7 years as an offering to the Minotaur.

Besides these there are the Seven Wonders of the World, the oldest surviving list of which dates from the 2nd century BC, Seven Wise Men of Greece, and in medieval tales the Seven Champions of Christendom – St George of England, St Andrew of Scotland, St Patrick of Ireland, St David of Wales, St Denis of France, St James of Spain and St Anthony of Italy.

When the power of the number 7 was invoked by the people of Israel in obedience to the Lord's commands, the Israelites took the city of Jericho, 'and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city'

There are 7 Christian sacraments (see SACRAMENTS) and the Seven Virtues of faith, hope, charity, temperance, prudence, fortitude and justice. The Seven Deadly Sins of pride, avarice, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy and sloth, can be combatted by recitation of the 7 penitential psalms (numbers 32, 102, 51, 6, 38, 130 and 143 respectively). There are two Roman Catholic feasts of the Seven Dolours of the Virgin Mary, instituted in 1413 and 1814: the dolours, or sorrows, are Simeon's prediction (Luke 2.35), the flight into Egypt, the loss of the child Jesus in Jerusalem, the sight of Jesus carrying the cross, the crucifixion, the removal of Jesus's body from the cross, and the entombment.

Seventh Son

As a number of completeness, connected with the inner rhythms of the universe, 7 is powerful in magic and frequently appears in spells and charms, often in association with the number 3 (see THREE). In folk belief a seventh child has magical and clairvoyant powers, and these are particularly marked in the seventh son of a seventh son, who has second sight and the ability to heal scrofula, goitre and ringworm by touch. The number turns up over and over again in folktales and ballads (see SCOTTISH AND BORDER BALLADS).

Besides being complete, 7 is also numerologically solitary. It is not made by multiplication of any other numbers in the first ten, nor does it, multiplied, produce any of the others. As a result it is regarded as a lonely number, isolated and virgin. This is one of the main reasons for the withdrawn and introspective nature, which you are supposed to have if your name adds to 7 (see ALPHABET; NUMEROLOGY). The other is that 7 is the number of the sabbath, the day of withdrawal from the busy, workaday world and of concentration on the things of God. And 7 is the number of reflection, because it is linked with the moon and moonlight is reflected sunlight.

The Mystic and the Introvert

So 7 is the number of the mystic, the scholar, the philosopher, the occultist, the recluse. It belongs to introverted, lonely, quiet, thoughtful people, who hold themselves aloof from the flurry and bustle of the world to meditate and reflect on deep and spiritual matters and who have an intuitive grasp of the underlying processes and rhythms of the universe to which 7 is the key. Secretive, proud, intensely reserved, stoical, sensitive, pessimistic, they have no time for foolish, frivolous and worldly things. A 7 will have a warmer heart than appears on the surface and he may have a highly emotional nature but be almost incapable of showing it. He is a law unto himself but he is bad at explaining himself and dislikes being questioned. The influence of the sabbath, the seventh day of rest, on this picture of 7 comes out clearly in an American numerologist's suggestion that on a day which adds to 7 'a diet free from fats and condiments is advised', because 'your metabolism may be sluggish.'

Seven Sleepers of Ephesus

Seven Christian youths who, according to legend, hid themselves in a cave in 250 AD to escape persecution for their faith; they fell asleep in the cave, their youthfulness was miraculously preserved, and they were discovered by accident some 200 years later.

See SLEEPERS.

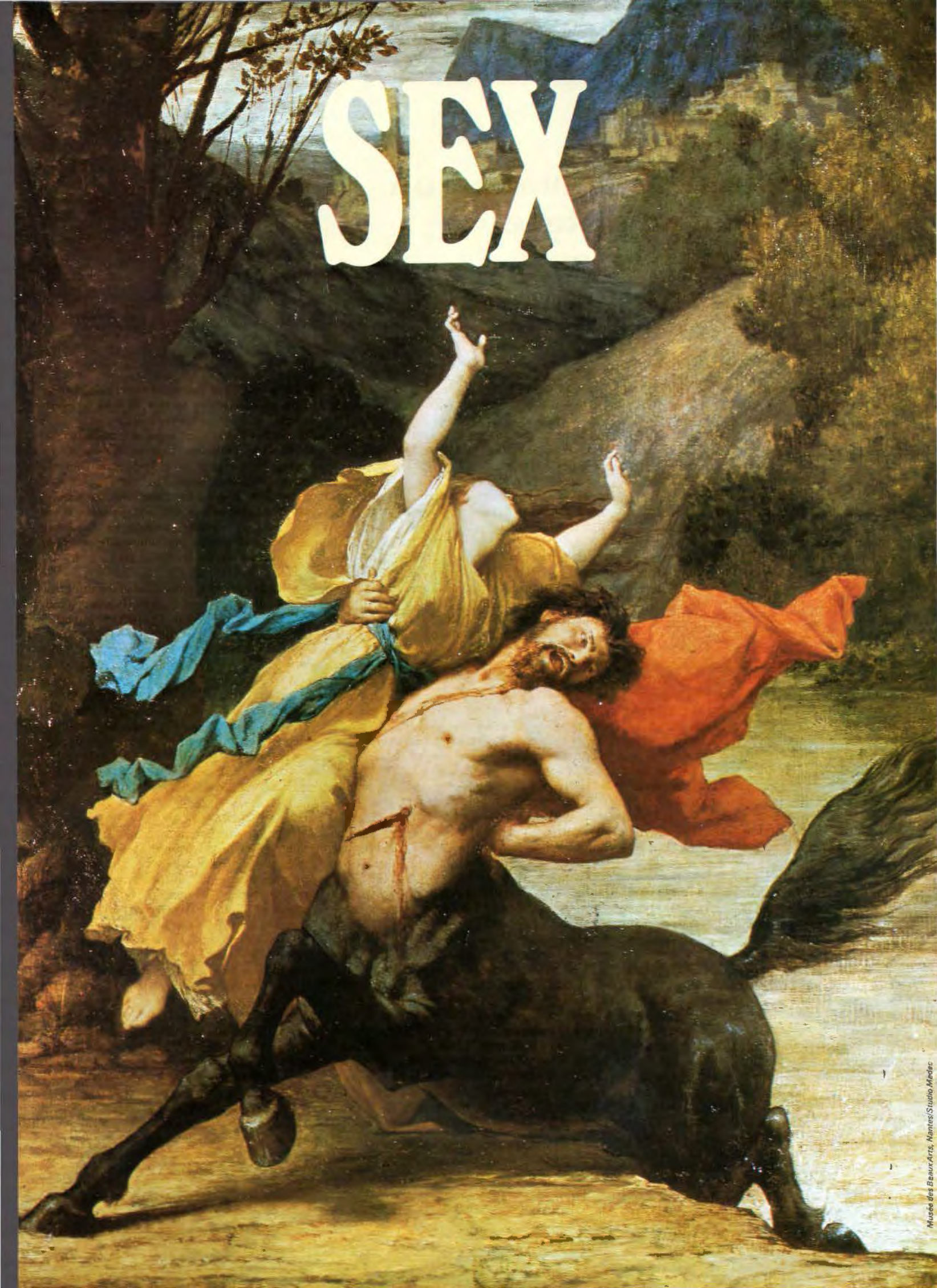
British Museum

Seventh Day Adventists

Christian sect, formally organized in the United States of America in 1860, expecting the Second Coming of Christ and laying much emphasis on keeping the seventh day of the week holy; the sect grew out of the Millerite expectation of the Second Coming in the 1840s.

See SECOND COMING.

SEX



Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes/Studio Médec

The ecstasy of sexual union can be seen as a state in which man rises to the supernatural level

The experience of desire, of being swept away in an overwhelming torrent of feeling which smashes through propriety and convention, lies behind the belief that there is a supernatural element in sexuality, that to love is to be caught in the grip of a force from outside oneself ***Previous page*** **The centaur Nessus, crazed with longing for Deianeira, the wife of Hercules, carried her off, and Hercules killed him with an arrow: painting by Delaunay** ***Above*** **Greek phallic protective amulet** ***Right*** **The 'Rokeby Venus' by Velasquez**

The overwhelming nature of sexual passion, in which people are swept away by a force in whose grip they seem helpless, has caused it to be worshipped as a deity or alternatively feared as evil and demonic

IT IS no accident that the words 'venerate' and 'venereal' are etymologically connected, both stemming from the name of the Roman love goddess, Venus, for sex has played a vital role in religion, magic, mysticism, occultism, symbolism and the whole range of human dealings with the supernatural. There are many myths which regard all life in the world, and indeed the world itself, as the product of sexual activity of the gods. According to an ancient Egyptian myth, for example, the god Atum began the creation of the world by masturbating (or, in a different version, by spitting) and so created a god and a goddess, who coupled together. From their union the earth and the sky were born, joined together in a close embrace from which they had to be separated to give the world its present shape.

In mythology, the process of creation does not end with the fashioning of the universe, for every year life is reborn from the ashes of winter. Every year Sky Father copulates with Earth Mother and impregnates her, and she bears her children. The mother goddesses of the ancient world, Ishtar, Isis, Cybele, Aphrodite, each had her lover who died and rose again in the form of the crops and plants of spring, and it is an old and rooted piece of phallic symbolism that the male 'dies' after orgasm and 'rises again' to renewed vigour and potency.

The need for a good harvest, for a plentiful supply of animals, whether to hunt or to breed, for an ample stock of children because so many died in infancy, these urgent human requirements lie behind the vast world-wide apparatus of religious and magical rites intended to secure fertility, including all the great seasonal rituals of seedtime and harvest, ploughing and reaping. For although fertility was in the gift of supernatural powers, these powers could be induced to create renewed life each year by human activity, at the simplest level by human sexual intercourse as an act of imitative magic. The Iroquois in North America used to celebrate a Naked Dance, during which a man and woman coupled to promote the fertility of the fields (see IROQUOIS). Down to the end of the 19th century in parts of Europe, peasants still copulated with their wives in the fields after sowing, to make sure of a good crop. (See also EARTH; FERTILITY; MOTHER GODDESS).

But sex is not merely the means of procreation, though the puritanically minded have sometimes tried to make it so. It is also the solvent of isolation, the experience through which a solitary human being, caged in the prison of himself, comes closest to escaping from his lonely cell through uniting himself with another. It is significant that among the longest-lasting of our innumerable terms for sexual intercourse have been 'knowing', 'possessing' and 'having', expressions which suggest that the real goal of sexual activity for most human beings is not procreation, or even erotic pleasure, but something more complicated and less physical, the discovery of and acquisition of another human entity which, if only momentarily and if only as an illusion, seems to become part of oneself.

If this is the major sexual goal, and if it can be gained only partially and fleetingly with a human partner, then it is quite natural to think of the lasting and blissful union of the soul with God in sexual terms, as many mystics have done. A passionate erotic poem in the Old Testament, the Song of Solomon, was interpreted by Jewish and Christian scholars as a commentary on the rapturous relationship of God as Lover and the soul as Bride. The Christian Church is 'the Bride of Christ', and there is the parallel Jewish concept of the Shekhinah (see CABALA). At the age of 18, St Catherine of Siena, who had vowed herself to lifelong virginity, experienced a vision in which she was betrothed to 'the only husband she could accept, Christ himself' (see CATHERINE). One of the poems of St John of the Cross (see JOHN OF THE CROSS) includes the following lines, spoken by 'the soul in rapture at having arrived at the height of perfection' (in Roy Campbell's translation):

> Oh night that was my guide!
> Oh darkness dearer than the morning's pride,
> Oh night that joined the lover
> To the beloved bride,
> Transfiguring them each into the other.

This concept of the soul's union with God as a sexual union is paralleled in the romantic ideal of love between human partners as an act of worship. In the Church of England marriage service the bridegroom says to the bride, 'with my body I thee worship'. The lover in poetry, and often in common speech, 'adores', 'idolizes' or 'worships' the object of his longing. The theme is startlingly pictured in an Italian painting of the 15th century, which shows Sir Lancelot and other great heroes of romantic love adoring Venus: she hovers naked in the sky above them and rays of light stream between them and her genitals (see LANCELOT).

Overwhelming Eros

The experience of desire itself, of being swept away in an overwhelming torrent of feeling which smashes through propriety and convention and all the recognized rules and niceties of everyday life, has always suggested to human beings that there is a powerful supernatural element in sexuality, that to love is to be caught in the grip of a force from outside oneself. A man in love behaves like a madman, another person traditionally regarded as possessed by a god or a spirit. Lovers in orgasm behave as if they were 'possessed' by some non-human agency, quivering and shuddering, groaning and crying out, momentarily deaf and blind to everything around them as if they had mounted to some unearthly plane.

As a result, desire has been regarded as a deity, or as a great supernatural power in the face of which even the gods themselves may be helpless. The original Eros of the Greeks was not a pretty, mischievous boy, shooting his toy bow and arrows at the grown-ups, but an awe-inspiring universal force which, Hesiod says, 'unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise

National Gallery, London

counsels of all gods and all men'. The love goddess Aphrodite, who in mythology became the mother of Eros, was said to have been born from the foam which boiled up when the severed genitals of the sky god Uranus were thrown into the sea, perhaps a poetic image linking the foam of orgasm with the overwhelming tides of desire (see APHRODITE; EROS).

If desire is a supernatural force, then again the ecstasy of sexual union can be seen as a state in which man rises to the supernatural level, in which he is possessed by a god and mingles with the divine. The *orgia* of Dionysus, from which our word 'orgy' is derived, sometimes involved men as well as women and were religious rites of this sort (see DIONYSUS). The frenzied orgy of the witches' sabbath, whether real or imaginary, appears to have been, or to have been thought of as, an ecstatic sexual communion with the witches' god (see SABBATH).

Sex has, in fact, frequently contributed to the implanting or confirmation of religious or magical belief. During the sexual act, especially if it ends in mutual orgasm, both parties achieve an intense, often uncontrolled state of temporary brain excitement, which continues on to a state of sudden temporary nervous collapse and transient brain inhibition. The same physiological process has been observed in cases of apparent 'demonic possession' and in many modern psychiatric case-histories (see POSSESSION). It can create states of greatly increased brain suggestibility, in which feelings of possession from outside, or mutual possession of each partner by the other, can become very strong. Relief from the accumulated tension of everyday life is also frequent in the phase of final sexual collapse, when the brain's slate is wiped clean, so to speak, and left blank for new impressions and influences to write on. New loves can readily spring up, or old hates be dissolved, in states of aroused sexual tension and in the final orgasm.

It is this which lies behind the use of sex as a means to possession by or union with a god, and behind some experiences of conversion. Fundamentalist revival movements in America, for example, have sometimes encouraged worshippers to 'come through' to Jesus, and have taken the occurrence of orgasm as the sign of the Holy Ghost entering a person's life. Erskine Caldwell's book *The Journey Man* describes this particular technique of revivalism in the American South very well.

Sexual Magic

The physiological act of sex and orgasm greatly increases suggestibility, which may then fire off further sexual excitement. Repeatedly induced orgasmic collapse can produce, and has been used to produce, states of deep hysterical trance. And conversion to, or bolstering of, religious faith by techniques of this sort is usually best achieved in groups, rather than by people working in pairs or alone, hence the sexual orgy as a religious rite.

In many traditions the world is thought to be made up of polarities or opposite forces, among which are male and female, active and passive, positive and negative, good and evil. In China, for instance, the two great principles Yin and Yang, which are respectively male and female, run through the whole universe and everything which exists depends on their interplay and their combinations with each other. In some forms of Hinduism the universe consists of the interplay of two great forces, personified as male and female deities, Shiva and Shakti. In European number mysticism, each number is classified as male or female and has characteristics accordingly.

But the two great forces in the universe are generally regarded as parts of something greater, of a sublime and mysterious One which unites and transcends them (see ONE). In human beings, the division into male and female is a mark of incompleteness, of inadequacy, and the real Fall of Man, in some mystical writers, is connected with the division into the two sexes (see FIRST MAN). The ideal human being would be bisexual, a hermaphrodite in whom this division had been healed (see HERMAPHRODITE; OPPOSITES). As Benjamin Walker states the view, in *Sex and the Supernatural*, 'As halves we seek to be made whole. The mutual attraction of the sexes is the craving of an incomplete being to be made complete . . . The sexual act restores the original oneness of the human being.'

The account of the creation of woman in the book of Genesis, with Eve being made from Adam's rib, was long taken as an indication that in the divine plan woman

Focus of the Will

Interestingly enough the phallus was thought, both by primitive and civilised peoples, to have a separate and independent existence, beyond the jurisdiction of the human will. An aboriginal tribe in East Africa believed that the phallus was the abode of a disobedient animal that directed its actions. A tribe of Indians in Brazil thought that a snake dwelt in the penis. And men of more exalted intellect have expressed the same conviction about the 'unruly member' in different terms. 'In man,' writes Plato, 'the nature of the genital organs is disobedient and self-willed, like a creature that is deaf to reason, and it attempts to dominate all because of its frenzied lusts.' In his Epistle to the Romans, St Paul said, 'I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind'. Schopenhauer felt that 'the genitals are the real focus of the Will and thus opposite to the brain which represents Idea' . . .

Medieval tradition regarded the male organs as being within the province of the Devil and there was a popular belief that Satan kept a store of such appurtenances which he dispensed to his followers for distribution to the faithful. One story has it that a young man wished to attend the sabbat and, feeling that he was insufficiently endowed by nature, went to a witch and asked for the loan of one from her store. She told him to climb a tree and help himself from the nest in which they lived and moved about and where she fed them on corn. Rather too ambitiously the youth picked up an outsize specimen but when the witch saw it she told him to put it back. He could take any one he liked, she said, except that one, because that was reserved for the parish priest.

Benjamin Walker *Sex and the Supernatural*

was meant to be subordinate to man. But alternatively it could be taken to mean something subtler, that the original Adam contained the potential female in himself. This is the interpretation which magicians tend to put on the story, for in magical theory the opposites which exist in the universe at large exist equally in man, who is a microcosm or miniature copy of the universe. Each human being contains all the opposites – male and female, good and evil, and the rest – and the road to perfection and power lies through the balancing and reconciliation of these opposites so as to achieve a higher unity. In practice, this means that acts of heterosexual magic are regarded as the reconciliation of the two opposites involved, the man and the woman, and acts of homosexual or autosexual magic are attempts to bring into balance the opposites within the magician's own being.

Peacock in a Mirror

In the West the strong strand of hostility to sex in Christianity led to the playing down or explaining away of the erotic language of mystics, and to the automatic association of orgies and deviant sex practices with heresy. And until very recently little was known in the West of the tantric cults of India, which are frowned on by many Hindus and Buddhists. Tantrism is concerned with far more than sex but among the activities regarded as essential to tantric worship are 'nudism, sexual freedom, group sexuality, adultery, incest and, on the higher planes, intercourse with elemental creatures, demonesses and goddesses', and the supreme goal of tantric sexual ritual is 'to apprehend the ultimate Unity' (see TANTRISM).

In his book on *The Tantric Tradition* Agehananda Bharati explains that tantric rites involve long and complicated procedures before the sexual climax of a ceremony is reached. Mantras (see MANTRA) are repeated over and over again, with a hypnotic effect on the worshippers, and hashish may be taken. In some rituals men and women sit in pairs, forming a circle, and intercourse is ritually performed by the group while special mantras are recited. One of the functions of the mantras is as an aid to breath control, which creates the 'euphoric effects accompanied by mild hallucinations' that Bharati describes. The sex rituals, he says, 'engender the intensive, euphoric, oftentime hallucinatory and perhaps psychopathological feelings which go with religious experience or which is religious experience . . . the immediate aim of the tantric is to achieve ecstasy.'

A female figure with a phallic design, from an Assyrian seal, c 3500 BC: in many traditions male and female are regarded as two great opposite forces which pervade the entire universe, and everything which exists depends on their interplay and their mingling with each other. Magical power is thought to reside in the male and female organs of sex, and to represent them in images is to invoke their beneficent power to create abundance or to ward off evil and ill-luck

Werner Forman

In this century tantric theory and practice has spread to some magical groups in the West. Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY), a persistent seeker after the means by which a man puts himself in contact with the inhabitants of the spirit world and commands gods and devils to do his bidding, made a close study of Indian mysticism and tantrism as a young man. He eventually developed a sexual trance technique, which he called 'eroto-comatose lucidity' and which helped him, he thought, to break down the barriers between himself and the supernatural world. Where medieval ritual magicians had recommended chastity and fasting as a way of introducing the abnormal condition of mind necessary for communing with spirits (see RITUAL MAGIC), Crowley prescribed the opposite methods. 'The candidate is made ready for the ordeal by general athletic training and by feasting. On the appointed day he is attended by one or more experienced attendants whose duty it is to exhaust him sexually by every known means. The candidate will sink into a sleep of utter exhaustion but he must be again sexually stimulated and then again allowed to fall asleep. This alternation is to continue indefinitely until the candidate is in a state which is neither sleep nor waking, and in which his spirit is set free by perfect exhaustion of the body . . . (and) communes with the most Highest and the Most Holy Lord God of its Being, Maker of Heaven and Earth.'

In view of the physiological effects of this process, it is not surprising that by means of this sort Crowley obtained visions and communications from 'gods' and 'spirits'. In Paris in 1914, for instance, he conducted a series of magical experiments, using homosexual techniques, with himself in the female role and the poet Victor Neuburg as his partner, and putting Neuburg repeatedly into states of trance and 'possession'. 'We invoked the gods Mercury and Jupiter; and obtained many astonishing results of many kinds, ranging from spiritual illumination to physical phenomena.' Crowley kept a record of these

Human Museum/Chris Barker

Werner Forman

Sex has frequently contributed to the implanting or confirmation of religious and magical beliefs, since the sexual act creates states of increased brain suggestibility, in which feelings of possession from outside can become very strong *Above* Pubic shield from Australia with phallic creatures, including e snake, a fish and a fish-headed human *Right* Australian aboriginal painting showing love-making and totemic animals

An increasing number of people consider sexual activity to be good, not just because it is pleasurable, but because it will somehow, magically and mystically, promote general peace and harmony

striking results, for example: 'The temple opened at 10: the Rite being done . . . We beheld the Universe of the most brilliant purple and Jupiter seated on his throne surrounded by the Four Beasts . . . Subsequently appeared a great Peacock . . . The peacock is now crowned, and regards himself in a mirror.'

By this time Crowley had become a high-ranking member of the O.T.O. (Order of Templars of the Orient), a German occult society founded at the beginning of the century. According to the *Oriflamme*, the society's journal: 'Our Order possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teaching of sexual magic . . .'

The magical view of sex as a way of apprehending and achieving unity, not only in human beings but in the world at large, is not confined to practising magicians. Writers like D. H. Lawrence have put sex on a high spiritual pedestal as an activity in which men and women link themselves with the great forces of Nature and the underlying rhythms of the universe. By an increasing number of people sexual activity is considered good, not just because it is pleasurable, but because it will somehow, magically and mystically, promote general peace and harmony, friendship, happiness and blessedness on earth, a view which brings up to date the old principle that by imitative magic human sexual acts promote the beneficent activities of the gods, bringing fertility and forestalling dearth, maintaining order and preventing chaos.

Besides these high aims, sex magic is also used for more down to earth purposes. The principle is that, by concentrating his will on the object of the operation, the magician can bring the powerful physical and psychological energy which he conjures up in himself through sex magic to bear on people and events around him. Among the aims of Crowley's sexual rituals were money, eloquence, success, wisdom, inspiration, youth, understanding and health.

In magical theory a sexual working has no hope of success if the magician allows himself to be swept away in the thundering surf of desire and orgasm. Unless he remains the master of the force he has aroused, he cannot direct it at his objective. In

Figure of Eros burning a butterfly, 1st century BC: a butterfly is frequently a symbol of the soul, and the original Eros of the Greeks was an awe-inspiring universal force of desire which 'unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind . . .'

general in religious and magical sexual rites the element of pleasure is secondary. It is the means to a goal, not the goal itself.

Few human beings, it seems, have been able to treat sex as a physical pleasure and nothing more. If from one point of view it is a way of escaping from the isolation of the self and sharing in a greater reality, from another it is something evil and dirty, which arouses feelings of intense shame and guilt. Powerful taboos surround sex outside marriage, perversion, menstruation, nudity, homosexuality, the taking of a woman's virginity, taboos which still exercise great influence even in the so-called permissive societies of the West. Mutilation of the sex organs is common in many societies, especially at puberty when a boy or girl comes of age sexually and is initiated as an adult (see INITIATION; MUTILATION).

The fact that the organs of sex are so close to those of excretion has helped to create a connection between sex and dirt. The belief that vital energy is lost in orgasm (implied in the term 'dissipation' for sensual indulgence) has contributed to fear of sex. The tendency of many Christians to distrust the body and its passions and to regard sexual pleasure as inherently sinful and demonic, and the high value which Christians have placed on virginity and celibacy, have left their mark on Western attitudes, but all over the world some men and women have strenuously denied their bodies for the good of their souls (see SELF-DENIAL). That the same physiological process should be able to raise a man to the height of spiritual exaltation or plunge him into the depths of guilt-ridden misery is another of the facts of human experience which have given sex a role of such enduring importance in religion and magic.

(See also BODY; BREATH; BULL; HORNS; INCEST; INCUBUS; KUNDALINI; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; LOVE MAGIC; NUDITY; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM; SYMBOLISM; WOMAN.)

WILLIAM SARGANT

FURTHER READING: Benjamin Walker, *Sex and the Supernatural* (Macdonald, 1970); G. Wellesley, *Sex and the Occult* (Souvenir).

A Chinese grave-digger would fasten his shadow to his body with pieces of cloth, to prevent it being buried with the coffin; this mysterious 'other self' was a peculiarly vulnerable possession, for if it was harmed or stolen, the owner himself would suffer

SHADOW

IN MANY PARTS of the world, a man's shadow was, and in some areas still is, believed to be his soul, or if not quite that, then at least an integral part of himself, so intimately bound up with his life and being that whatever happened to it was instantly felt by him as though it had happened to him in the body. A number of languages have only one word to express the ideas of 'shadow' and of 'soul'. The Zulus, for instance, use the wurd *tunzi* to describe both a man's spirit and his shadow; among the Algonquin Indians, *otahchuk* has the same double meaning, as *natub* has in the Quiché tongue. Even in English, the poetical expression 'shade' is occasionally applied to a ghost, or a spirit dwelling in the underworld.

Just as a reflection in a mirror or in water was often deemed to be the living soul of its original (see MIRROR), so also, and perhaps more generally, was the shadow, that strange and lively image which at certain times follows its owner everywhere and faithfully copies all his actions, and at other times is nowhere to be found. In both these forms, the soul was thought to be visible because, at that moment, it was out of the body and at large. It was an accepted belief of most primitive peoples that a man's spirit could leave him temporarily without causing his death. Most often when he was asleep, but occasionally at other times also, it escaped through the mouth, or the nostrils, and travelled abroad on its own mysterious errands. This could be dangerous, but it was not necessarily so. If all went well, the wandering soul, however far it roamed, came home in the end. So long as it remained unharmed, the man in whose body it normally dwelt was safe; but if it was injured in any way during its absence, he too was injured, and if it was somehow prevented from returning to him, he died.

Thus it was with the shadow-soul, both in its visible form, and when it was unseen. If it was lost for good, as it might be by accident or through the malice of sorcerers, its owner died. If it was damaged or ill-treated, he felt the effects immediately in his own person. Among the Northern Bantu, and in some parts of India, it is said that a man can be killed by driving a spear into his shadow. So too, one of the legends of ancient Ireland relates how the hero Finn slew an enemy in precisely the same way. He pursued him relentlessly until 'he saw before him Cuirrech's shadow, and through the shadow he hurled a spear, chanting a spell over its head, striking it into Cuirrech, who fell thereby'. Sir J. G. Frazer says in *The Golden Bough* that certain magicians on the island of Wetar (in the Moluccas of Indonesia) could cause their victims to fall ill simply by stabbing their shadows with pikes, or hacking at them with swords. A curious reflection of these primitive beliefs is seen in the modern superstition, still found in many parts of Great Britain, that to walk or trample on a person's shadow will bring him bad luck. In his *Book of Folk-Lore*, Sabine Baring-Gould remarks that he had known children to be seriously upset if another child struck or stamped on their shadows. They said that it hurt them, or that it was an insult.

Until at least as late as the end of the 19th century, and perhaps later, it was commonly believed in Greece and some other countries of south-eastern Europe that a man's shadow could be stolen from him without his knowledge, and be used in a form of foundation sacrifice to ensure the stability of a new building. Master builders, or their workmen, did this by persuading some unsuspecting individual, preferably a stranger to the village, to visit the building site on a bright sunny day, while the work was in progress. He was then induced to stand, all unknowingly, in such a position that his shadow was thrown by the strong sunlight on to the place where the foundation stone was to be laid. Or, if it was possible, that stone was laid directly on the shadow as it rested on the ground; or else the shadow was secretly measured, and the rod or cord used for the purpose was buried in the foundations. By any of these methods, the builders' object was achieved. The shadow-soul was captured, and with it, the victim's life. He felt nothing at the time and did not know what had happened to him, but he died within the year, or according to a Rumanian tradition, within 40 days. The safety of the building was thus secured, as in ancient times it had been secured by immuring a living person in the walls, or burying him alive under the foundation stone (see BUILDERS' RITES).

In China, it was considered dangerous for anyone attending a funeral to stand too close to the coffin at the moment when the lid was being fastened on it. His shadow might fall across it and be enclosed with the corpse. Similarly, it was better not to go too near the open grave as the coffin was lowered into it, for there too the shadow might be trapped. If this happened, the result was misfortune of some kind, usually ill-health. Hence, it was customary for all but the nearest relatives to withdraw a little way during these parts of the ceremony. The bearers and the grave-diggers could not, of course, do this, but they made their shadows fast to their persons by tying pieces of cloth tightly round their waists.

Peter Pan trying to attach a shadow to himself with soap: in folklore a man with no shadow is feared, because it may be a sign that he has sold his soul to the Devil

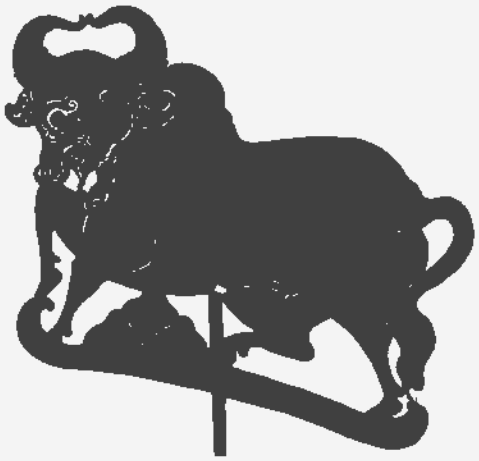
John Freeman

Summoning a Shadow

A widespread European folktale relates how a stranger comes to a village, and seems to be like other men until it is noticed that he casts no shadow in sunlight or lamplight. Somehow or other, he has lost that faithful companion, that soul manifestation, which everyone else has, and consequently he is feared and avoided. The shadow may have been stolen from him by some enemy or by witchcraft, but equally its absence may be due to the fact that he has sold his soul to the Devil, or forfeited it by some great sin. There are variants of the 'Devil take the hindmost' type in which Satan, having agreed to build a bridge or perform some other service in exchange for a fee of the last man in a race or flight, takes only the shadow, and lets its tardy owner live on without it. This is usually told as an example of the Devil's stupidity and the ease with which he can be cheated; but since the shadow was originally held to be the soul of the man concerned, it may be that he is not quite so stupid as he seems, and has good reason to be satisfied.

In S. O. Addy's *Household Tales* (1895), there is a story of a Lincolnshire wizard who was able to summon a man's shadow and make it appear on the wall of a room, though its owner was not in the house at the time. This wizard was consulted by a farmer who had been robbed, and wished to discover the identity of the thief. In fact, there were two men concerned in the robbery, both of them servants on the farm. By means of a spell, the first was forced to come in person to the house, and thus his guilt was proved; but in the case of the second, the wizard contented himself with calling his shadow. It came, and was clearly seen on the wall. The farmer instantly recognized its owner, and both thieves, we are told, were subsequently arrested.

Of the many forms of divination once practised at Christmas or New Year in order to see who would die in the following twelve months, a Welsh variant was by the observation of shadows. On Christmas night, when all were gathered round the fire, the shadows thrown by the firelight on to the wall were carefully noticed. If any appeared without heads, the individuals to whom they belonged would not live to see another



British Museum

Javanese puppet used in shadow plays: the flat figures are held between a translucent screen and a strong light

Christmas. A somewhat similar superstition in North Carolina, though less directly personal and not connected with any particular date, was that the shadow of a coffin seen on the ceiling was a death omen for someone in the house.

A shadow tradition of a quite different pattern is still remembered in Worcestershire. Near the southern end of the Malverns there is a hill called the Raggedstone. At certain times, not regularly nor often, but at what appear to be unpredictable intervals, the shadow of its rocky summit is thrown on to the valley below. If it falls directly upon anyone, that person will die before his time, or at least, he will suffer great misfortune during the course of his life. Local legend says that Cardinal Wolsey's unhappy end was thus literally foreshadowed many years before it happened, when he was living at Birtsmorton Court near Tewkesbury as a young man. A story sometimes told to account for this singular form of warning is that the hill was cursed by a monk in the Middle Ages. A more probable theory is that the long-lived tradition has its roots in confused folk memories of pre-Christian ritual and sacrifice connected with the hilltop.

CHRISTINA HOLE

Horrified by the 'evil propensities of a carnal nature', the Shakers forbade all sexual intercourse; looking forward to the Second Coming, they danced to the glory of God and shouted for the downfall of Satan

SHAKERS

TWO SHAKER VILLAGES still survive in America, one at Canterbury, New Hampshire, the other at Sabbath Lake, Maine; in 1979 the Society had fewer than 15 members in the villages. American Shakerism dates from the last quarter of the 18th century, flourished in the middle of the 19th century, and all but died out in this century. Surprisingly, in 1962 five Russians, described as Shakers, were gaoled after a six-day trial at Novosibirsk, Siberia, according to a report in *The Times*. In true Shaker style, they said that they had no fatherland on earth; that was why they had told their brethren who had been called up for military service, not to take the army oath of allegiance, a problem which did not arise in America, where the Shakers were exempt from doing military service.

To the Shakers, God was not three persons but four, the fourth being their foundress, Ann Lee (sometimes spelt Lees) or Mother Ann. With Ann's birth in Manchester, England, in 1736, Christ had returned to earth; the millennium, the long-predicted rule of Christ on earth for 1000 years, had therefore begun. The female component in this fourfold godhead helped to produce 'perfect equality of rights' between Shaker men and women, an equality which was not disturbed by sexual involvements because there were none. Sexual intercourse was 'the root and foundation of all human depravity'; it was the forbidden fruit which had driven our first parents from the garden of Eden. It followed that the Shakers had no children of their own; instead they adopted them from 'the world', in many cases foundlings; they also took in whole families. Men and women ceased to be husbands and wives, as soon as they put foot in the millennium.

The 'orders' of Shaker behaviour reveal this abhorrence of sex. All private union between the sexes was of course prohibited; a brother and sister must not be together, alone, at any time; must not have private talk together; must not work together, give each other presents, write to each other, pass each other on the stairs; they must not, of course, shake hands, nor must any brother or sister sit cross-legged. And, needless to say, no one might look at beasts when they copulated, or possess watches or umbrellas, or play with dogs or cats.

The Elders were always on the look-out for symptoms of 'the evil propensities of a carnal nature', and in spite of the strict orders, these were sometimes in evidence. At Niskayuna in New York State, now called Watervliet, in about 1793, three young Shaker women 'amused themselves by attending to the amour of two flies in the window'. Unfortunately for them, they were observed by Eldress Hannah Matterson who ordered them, 'for thus gratifying their carnal inclinations', to take whips, strip themselves naked, and whip one another. Elder Timothy Hubbard and Jonathan Slosson were present to see that the punishment was properly carried out. 'Two happened at once to strike the third, when she cried *murder!* they were then ordered to stop and plunge into a brook near by.'

In the early years of the 19th century, the Shaker communities thrived and expanded westwards into Maine and Kentucky. The English journalist, William Hepworth Dixon, who was curious about communal and religious experiments, visited the Shaker farms in New Lebanon, New York, in the 1860s; he was astonished at the fertility of their fields and the neatness and order of their houses and workshops. What, asked Dixon, was the secret of such bounty and beauty? He talked to Elder Frederick Evans who, later, corresponded with Leo Tolstoy about the pacifist and communist principles of Shakerism.

'A tree has its wants and wishes,' said Elder Evans, 'and a man should study them as a teacher watches a child, to see what he can do. If you love the plant, and take heed of what it likes, you will be well repaid by it . . . Now, when we planted this orchard, we first got the very best cuttings in our reach; we then built a house for every plant to live in, that is to say, we dug a deep hole for each; we drained it well; we laid down tiles and rubble, and then filled in a bed of suitable manure and mould; we put the plant into its nest gently, and pressed up the earth about it, and protected the infant tree by this metal fence.'

'You take a world of pains,' said Dixon. 'Ah, Brother Hepworth,' Evans replied, 'thee sees we love our garden.'

The Shakers bought and reclaimed the land, grew crops, sold seeds and medicinal herbs, honey, pickles, maple sugar and the vegetables and fruit produce which they did not themselves consume, and a variety of manufactured goods, such as brooms and brushes, saddles, saddlebags, stockings, gloves, cushions, mops, and furniture which, because of the simplicity of its design and lack of fussy ornament, is highly prized today as antiques. By the middle years of the 19th century, the Shaker communities had become the model of other communist societies in the United States, such as John Humphrey Noyes's Oneida community (see COMMUNISTIC RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS).

Dancing to Trample Sin

The Shakers' main mode of worship was dancing. It was as much a march as a dance, the men at one end of the hall, the women at the other. They faced the other sex and danced or marched with swinging arms, backwards and forwards, singing a hymn as they went; then they faced the wall and marched forwards and backwards. Finally, they formed two circles, the smaller one in the centre composed of women who were the principal singers, the outer circle of men, and round and round they went, singing, swinging, marching; they were symbolically trampling sin underfoot as well as praising God. Their Bible reference for this mode of worship was a verse from Psalm 47: 'O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph'.

In additinn to communal dancing, there were operations of shaking, trembling, stamping and whirling – hence the name Shaker. Thomas Brown, who joined the Shakers in 1799, and who wrote an account of the sect, witnessed a young woman whirl round like a top for as long as half an hour; then she broke out into an unknown tongue. She had seen angels and damned spirits in torment, she said to Brown, and other spirits in lesser torments for they were receiving the gospel, and she was not made a bit giddy by her whirlings. Brown himself experienced the shaking and

'A tree has its wants and wishes,' said Shaker Evans, 'and a man should study them as a teacher studies a child, to see what he can do.' Shaker Evans is the main figure in each of these illustrations of Shaker meetings, from *The Graphic*, 1870

Mary Evans Picture Library

Mary Evans Picture Library

the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue; this outbreak was involuntary, and Brown was sad to think that neither he nor any one else knew what he had said.

Other gifts were even less useful – that of crowing like a cock, mewing like a cat, barking like a dog or making the noise of a squirrel: these were gifts of mortification. The opposite, the gift of joyousness, expressed by laughing, was given to the more favoured brethren; but the one who was so taken with laughter or, as it was put 'labouring under the spirit of God', was powerless to stop laughing.

Yet another gift was the involuntary raising of one's arm, accompanied by the compulsion to follow the direction in which the finger pointed. An Elder called Ebenezer Cooley once felt his arm rise in the air and was constrained to follow his finger to a house in which there was a man who had fallen downstairs and was lying unconscious with three ribs broken. Cooley's hand led him 'into the house and to the place where the man lay, and finally stopt on the broken ribs; the man immediately felt an healing power, and was restored whole in a few minutes.'

In 1838, a Shaker called Philemon Stewart came to the meeting 'so agitated that he needed the support of two brethren' and delivered himself of the first direct communication from the Heavenly Parents (Jesus and Mother Ann). The 'instrument', or medium of these divine revelations, would sometimes fall on the floor in a deep trance after he or she had delivered the message, or be thrown into convulsions, with loss of speech. The spirit messages were for the most part trivial – calling the brethren to task for borrowing tools, for leaving broken glass about, or neglecting to clean muddy boots. Communications were also made by the spirits of departed Elders. The Shakers can therefore be said to have been in at the start of modern Spiritualism.

Arrival of a Female Christ

The Shakers or Shaking Quakers derived from the French refugee Camisards (see CAMISARDS), who appeared in England in 1706, and whose entranced utterances and grotesque postures were a source of interest and amusement. A clergyman named Richard Kingston who visited them in a house in London reported that they spun round with great violence and fell on the floor; started up again, shaking, hiccupping, clapping their hands and trembling as if in convulsions. Then, as the stage of speaking under the influence of the Spirit approached, they groaned, sighed, quaked, belched, sang and shrieked hideously. Finally, their mouths opened wide in a distorted fashion, and they spoke prophecies in doleful tones.

With their English followers, the Camisards spread out to Oxford, Manchester, Dublin and the Protestant parts of the Continent, their activities finally dying away at the end of Anne's reign, in 1713. Some 30 years later, the English disciples of these French prophets reappeared in Manchester; they held their meetings at the house of a rich bricklayer called John Townley. Later they were joined by a small group from Bolton, led by James Wardley, who became the leader of these Manchester Shakers. Wardley was a member of the Society of Friends, but he believed that the millennium, or Christ's Second Coming, had actually commenced, and that Antichrist, by which he understood all the Protestant Churches as well as the Church of Rome, would soon be overthrown.

They would sit for a while in silent meditation; then they would begin to tremble, and while under this emotion would express 'God's indignation against sin'. They would also shout (for the downfall of Satan), sing, or walk the floor and jostle one another, 'swiftly passing and repassing, like clouds agitated by a mighty wind'. It was not surprising that they were called Shakers, or Shaking Quakers, also Shiverers and Jumpers. (Their French predecessors had also been called Shakers, but the term is earlier still.) The only formal institution they adopted was that of confession of sins which was made to Wardley's wife, Jane, whom they called Mother.

In 1758, they were joined by a 23-year-old woman of abundant energy and creative ideas: Ann Lee, daughter of John Lee,

blacksmith. In spite of being 'entirely destitute of school education', she held views, especially on the upbringing of children, which were in advance of her time. Four years after joining the Shakers, she married Abraham Standley, also a blacksmith. She gave birth to four children, but they all soon died, a common fate of children in those times. The birth of her last child was difficult and forceps had to be used. She lay for several hours apparently dead, and on her recovery declared that she would never again have sexual intercourse. She was overwhelmed with guilt and cried to God for forgiveness. This was called 'labouring in the works of God' and 'travailing in the way of God'. Sometimes she laboured and travailed the whole night long.

The Shakers believed that Christ, whose Second Coming is foretold in the book of Revelation, would appear in the form of a woman. And slowly it dawned upon them that Ann Lee, through her suffering and labouring for the lost state of mankind, had so purified and prepared herself that she had become the vehicle for this divine female spirit which the Shakers called 'Mother Spirit in Christ, an emanation from the Eternal Mother'. Ann's leadership of the society inevitably followed, and to her confession of sins was now made.

In 1774, Mother Ann and eight other members of the group set out to establish the faith in America. 'I knew,' said Ann, 'that God had a chosen people in America; I saw some of them in a vision; and when I met with them in America I knew them.'

Staying with the Shakers

During the second quarter of the 19th century a printer named A. J. Macdonald toured the United States gathering material for a book about the utopian and socialistic communities. A friend of his, who for the purposes of this article may be called Stallybrass, visited the Shakers at Niskayuna in the winter of 1842 and told Macdonald about it. Partly out of curiosity about the sect and partly to escape worldly troubles, Stallybrass had hoped to be invited to stay with the Shakers. On inquiring what were the conditions for receiving new members, he was told by one of the Elders that all newcomers had a week's trial to see how they liked it. 'And after that,' said the Elder, 'if they wish to continue, they must take up the daily cross, and commence the work of the regeneration and salvation, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and Mother Ann.'

Stallybrass expressed his satisfaction with this; he was more than willing to turn his back on the Devil and the flesh, and to take up his cross. The Elder then informed him that he would have to confess his sins – all the wicked acts he had ever committed. Stallybrass agreed to make a week's trial, and was asked to supper.

Meals were served on two long tables, one for the women, the other for the men. They entered the dining-room in single file, sat on benches, and ate in strict silence. As Stallybrass was not yet a member, he did not eat with the others. Afterwards, he was shown to a bedroom set aside for new members. Later one of the brethren entered the room and invited him to go to the meeting. He did so and there, in the meeting-house, he witnessed how the Shakers worshipped God. They had walked to the meeting-house two by two, the men entering by the left door, the women by the right.

After a few days during which he had been eating alone in his room, he was invited to prepare himself for confession. He was taken to a private confession room and before an Elder of mature years, to whom he briefly told the story of his life. He must have left out of his account the events which had led him to flee the world and the secular authorities, for after he had finished, the Elder observed: 'You have not been very wicked.' Stallybrass replied modestly, 'No, I have not abounded in acts of crime and debauchery.'

The Elder was not satisfied and he told Mr Stallybrass about a number of persons who had not made a full confession, who had held back certain matters, with the result that they could find no peace or pleasure until they had returned to the confession room and made a clean breast of everything. And he concluded by pointing out that no wicked person could continue with them for long without being found out.

Stallybrass was, of course, holding something back, and he intended to continue to do so. He asked the Elder how such persons could be detected. The Elder replied by taking him to the window and pointing out the place in the grounds of the community where Mother Ann had stationed four angels. 'These angels,' he said, 'always communicate any wickedness that is done here, or the presence of any wicked person among us.'

Seeing the look of incredulity on Mr Stallybrass's face, the Elder added: 'But you cannot understand these things; neither can you believe them, for you have not yet got faith enough.' Still looking out of the window, Stallybrass said: 'I can see no angels!' 'No,' replied the Elder, 'you cannot see them with the eyes of sense; but you can see them with the eye of faith. You must labour for faith.' And as if he had an excellent sense of humour, he placed upon Stallybrass's nose a pair of glasses, described as 'a pair of spiritual golden spectacles', to make him see spiritual things. Instinctively Stallybrass put his hand up to touch them. 'Oh, you can't feel them; they will not incommode you, but will help you to see spiritual things.' After this he was integrated into the millennium.

Unattractive Message

According to Edward D. Andrews, the historian of the Shakers, the Society reached its greatest expansion in the decade before the Civil War (1861–65); it then had 6000 members and 18 centres in several states. Fifty years earlier its numbers had been no more than 1000, and 50 years after the Civil War it had sunk back to the 1000 mark.

The Shakers had failed in a rapidly changing world to recruit a sufficient number of new members or to retain those they had. The millennium, as the case of 'Mr Stallybrass' shows, with its strict celibacy, goods in common, and obedience to the Elders, did not appeal to the spirit of the new America with its emphasis on liberty and the acquisition of property. In addition, the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing had its economic roots in handicrafts; the power of modern industry and finance had simply left it behind.

JOHN SYMONDS

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SHAMAN

SHAMANISM is a religious phenomenon characteristic of Siberian and Ural-Altaic peoples; the word shaman itself is of Tungus origin. But shamanism, although its most complete expression is found in the arctic and central Asian regions, must not be considered as limited to those countries. It is encountered, for example, in southeast Asia, Oceania and among many South and North American aboriginal tribes. A distinction is to be made, however, between the religions dominated by a shamanistic ideology and by shamanistic techniques (as is the case with Siberian and Indonesian religions) and those in which shamanism constitutes rather a secondary phenomenon.

The shaman is medicine-man, priest and psychopomp; that is to say, he cures sicknesses, he directs the communal sacrifices and he escorts the soul of the dead to the other world. He is able to do all this by virtue of his techniques of ecstasy, that is, by his power to leave his body at will.

There are three ways of becoming a shaman: first, by spontaneous vocation (the 'call' or 'election'); second, by hereditary transmission of the shamanic profession; and, third, by personal 'quest' or, more rarely, by the will of the clan. But, by whatever method he may have been designated, a shaman is recognized as such only after having received two kinds of instruction. The first is ecstatic (for example, dreams, visions, trances); the second is traditional (shamanic techniques, names and functions of the spirits, mythology and genealogy of the clan, secret language). This two-fold teaching, imparted by the spirits and the old master shamans, constitutes initiation. Sometimes initiation is public and includes a rich and varied ritual; this is the case, for example, among some Siberian peoples. But the lack of a ritual of this sort in no way implies the lack of an initiation; it is perfectly possible for the initiation to be performed in the candidate's dreams or ecstatic experiences.

In Siberia, the youth who is called to be a shaman attracts attention by his strange behaviour; for example, he seeks solitude, becomes absent-minded, loves to roam in

John Webb

A shaman dancing in a hut, from an account of an expedition to northern Russia, published in 1802: the main function of Asian shamans is magical healing, which involves finding the stolen or strayed soul of the patient and restoring it

the woods or unfrequented places, has visions, and sings in his sleep. In some instances this period of incubation is marked by quite serious symptoms; among the Yakut, the young man sometimes has fits of fury and easily loses consciousness, hides in the forest, feeds on the bark of trees, throws himself into water and fire, cuts himself with knives. The future shamans among the Tungus, as they approach maturity, go through a hysterical crisis, but sometimes their vocation manifests itself at an earlier age – the boy runs away into the mountains and remains there for a week or more, feeding on animals, which he tears to pieces with his teeth. He returns to the village, filthy, bloodstained, his clothes torn and his hair disordered, and it is only after ten or more days have passed that he begins to babble incoherent words.

Even in the case of hereditary shamanism, the future shaman's election is preceded by a change in behaviour. The souls of the shaman ancestors of a family choose a young man among their descendants; he becomes absent-minded and moody, delights in solitude, has prophetic visions, and sometimes undergoes attacks that make him unconscious. During these times, the Buriat believe, the young man's soul is carried away by spirits; received in the palace of the gods, it is instructed by his shaman ancestors in the secrets of the profession, the forms and names of the gods, the worship and names of the spirits. It is only after this first initiation that the youth's soul returns and resumes control of his body.

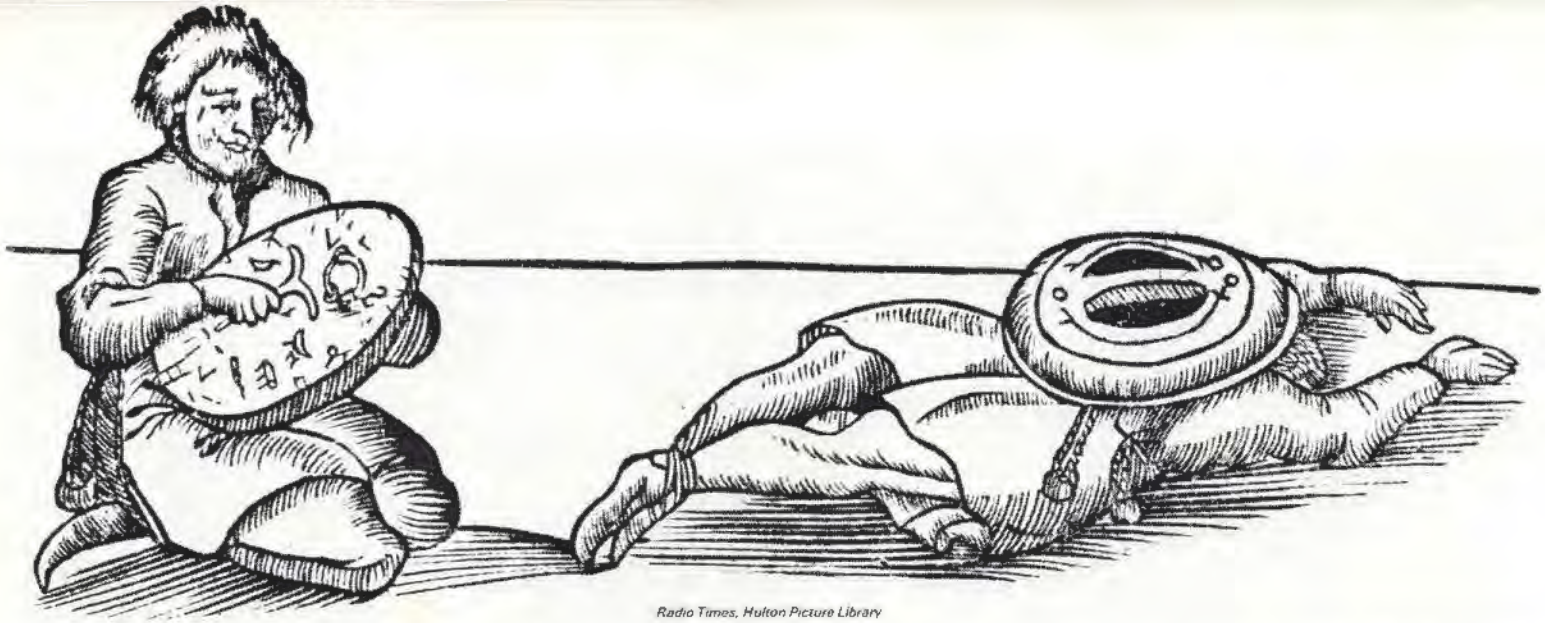
A man may also become a shaman following an accident or a highly unusual event – for example, among the Buriat, the Soyot, the Eskimo, after being struck by lightning, or falling from a high tree, or undergoing an ordeal similar to an initiatory ordeal.

Solution of a Psychic Crisis

From the middle of the past century several attempts have been made to explain the phenomenon of shamanism as a mental disorder. But the problem was wrongly put. For, on the one hand, it is not true that shamans always are or always have to be neuropathics; on the other hand, those among them who had been ill became shamans precisely because they had succeeded in becoming cured. Very often in Siberia, when the shamanic vocation manifests itself as some form of illness or as an epileptic seizure, the initiation is equivalent to a cure. To obtain the gift of shamanizing presupposes precisely the solution of the psychic crisis brought on by the first symptoms of election or call.

But if shamanism cannot simply be identified with a psychopathological phenomenon, it is nevertheless true that the shamanic vocation often implies a crisis so deep that it sometimes borders on madness. And since the youth cannot become a shaman until he has resolved this crisis, it is clear that it plays the role of a mystical initiation. The disorder provoked in the future shaman by the agonizing news that he has been chosen by the gods or the spirits is by that very fact valuated as an 'initiatory sickness'. The precariousness of life, the solitude and the suffering, that are revealed by any sickness are, in this particular case, aggravated by the symbolism of initiatory death; for accepting the supernatural election finds expression in the feeling that one has delivered oneself over to the divine or demonic powers, hence that one is destined to imminent death. We may give all these psychopathological crises of the elected the generic name of initiatory sicknesses because their syndrome very closely follows the classic ritual of initiation. The sufferings of the elected man were exactly like the tortures of initiation; just as, in puberty rites or rites for entrance into a secret society, the novice is 'killed' by semi-divine or demonic beings, so the future shaman sees in dreams his own body dismembered by demons; he watches them, for example, cutting off his head and tearing out his tongue. The initiatory rituals peculiar to Siberian and central Asian shamanism include a symbolic ascent to heaven up a tree or pole; in dream or a series of waking dreams, the sick man chosen by the gods or spirits undertakes his celestial journey to the World Tree.

When speaking of the ordeals that they undergo during their initiatory sicknesses, all Siberian shamans maintain that they



Radio Times, Hulton Picture Library

A Lapp shaman with his drum and *(right)* lying on the ground in trance: it is in ecstatic trance that the shaman makes his journeys to heaven and hell; he is the man who can die and return to life again, many times

'die' and lie inanimate for from three to seven days in their yurt (tent) or in a solitary place. During this time, they are cut up by demons or by their ancestral spirits; their bones are cleaned, the flesh scraped off, the body fluids thrown away, and the eyes torn from their sockets. According to a Yakut informant, the spirits carry the future shaman to hell and shut him in a house for three years. Here he undergoes his initiation; the spirits cut off his head (which they set to one side, for the novice must watch his own dismemberment with his own eyes) and hack his body to bits, which are later distributed among the spirits of various sicknesses. It is only on this condition that the future shaman will obtain the power of healing. His bones are then covered with new flesh, and in some cases he is also given new blood.

The following are a few significant episodes selected from a long and eventful autobiography that an Avam-Samoyed shaman confided to A. A. Popov. Stricken with smallpox, the future shaman remained unconscious for three days, so nearly dead that on the third day he was almost buried. He saw himself go down to hell and, after many adventures, was carried to an island, in the middle of which stood a young birch tree which reached up to heaven. It was the Tree of the Lord of the Earth, and the Lord gave him a branch of it to make himself a drum. Next he came to a mountain. Passing through an opening, he met a naked man plying the bellows at an immense fire on which was a kettle. The man caught him with a hook, cut off his head, and chopped his body to bits and put them all into the kettle. There he boiled the body for three years, and then forged him a head on an anvil. Finally he fished out the bones, which were floating in a river, put them together, and covered them with flesh. During his adventures in the otherworld, the future shaman met several semi-divine personages, in human or animal form, and each of them revealed doctrines to him or taught him secrets of the healing art. When he awoke in his yurt, among his relatives, he was initiated and could begin to shamanize.

It becomes clear that initiatory sicknesses closely follow the fundamental pattern of all initiations: first, torture at the hands of demons or spirits, who play the role of masters of initiation; second, ritual death, experienced by the patient as a descent to hell or an ascent to heaven; third, resurrection to a new mode of being – the mode of 'consecrated man', that is, a man who can personally communicate with gods, demons, and spirits. For initiatory death is always followed by a resurrection; that is, in terms of psychopathological experience, the crisis is resolved and the sickness cured. The shaman's integration of a new personality is in large part *dependent* on his being cured.

One of the specific characteristics of shamanic initiations, aside from the candidate's dismemberment, is his reduction to the state of a skeleton. This motif is found not only in the accounts of the crises and sicknesses of those who have been chosen by the spirits to become shamans, but also in the experiences of those who have acquired their shamanic powers through their own efforts, after a long and arduous quest. Among the Ammasilik Eskimo, the apprentice spends long hours in his snow hut, meditating. At a certain moment, he falls 'dead', and remains lifeless for three days and nights; during this period an enormous polar bear devours all his flesh and reduces him to a skeleton. It is only after this mystical experience that the apprentice receives the gift of shamanizing. The *angakuts* of the Iglulik Eskimo are able in thought to strip their bodies of flesh and blood and to contemplate their own skeletons for long periods. Visualizing one's own death at the hands of demons and final reduction to the state of a skeleton are favourite meditations in Indo-Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism.

Ladder to Heaven

Among the public initiation ceremonies of Siberian shamans, those of the Buriat are particularly interesting. The principal rite includes an ascent. A strong birch is set up in the yurt, with its roots on the hearth and its crown projecting through the smoke hole. This birch is called *udeshi burkhan*, 'the guardian of the door', for it opens the door of heaven to the shaman. It will always remain in his tent, serving as distinguishing mark of a shaman's residence. On the day of his consecration, the candidate climbs the birch to the top (in some traditions, he carries a sword in one hand) and, emerging through the smoke hole, shouts to summon the aid of the gods. After this, the master shaman, the apprentice, and the entire audience go in procession to a place far from the village, where, on the eve of the ceremony, a large number of birches have been set in the ground. The procession halts by a particular birch, a goat is sacrificed, and the candidate, stripped to the waist, has his head, eyes and ears anointed with its blood, while other shamans play their drums. The master shaman now climbs a birch and cuts nine notches in the top of its trunk. The candidate then climbs it, followed by the other shamans. As they climb they all pass – or pretend to pass – into ecstasy. According to one authority, the candidate has to climb nine birches which, like the nine notches cut by the master shaman, symbolize the nine heavens.

In the initiatory rite of the Buriat shaman the candidate is believed to go to heaven for his consecration. To ascend to Heaven by the aid of a tree or a pole is also the essential rite in the seances of the Altaic shamans. The birch or the pole is assimilated to the tree or pillar which stands at the centre of the world and which connects the three cosmic zones – earth, heaven, and hell. The shaman can also reach the centre of the world by beating his drum. For the body of the drum is supposed to be made from a branch taken from the cosmic tree. Listening to the sound of his drum, the shaman falls into ecstasy, in which he flies to the tree, that is, to the centre of the world.

Techniques of Ecstasy

The shaman or the medicine-man can be defined as a specialist in the sacred, an individual who participates in the sacred more completely, or more truly, than other men. Whether he is chosen by superhuman beings or himself seeks to draw their attention and obtain their favours, the shaman is an individual who succeeds in having mystical experiences. In the sphere of shamanism in the strict sense, the mystical experience is expressed in the shaman's trance, real or feigned. The shaman is preeminently an ecstatic. Now on the plane of primitive religions ecstasy signifies the soul's

flight to heaven, or its wanderings about the earth or, finally, its descent to the subterranean world, among the dead. The shaman undertakes these ecstatic journeys for four reasons: first, to meet the God of heaven face to face and bring him an offering from the community; second, to seek the soul of a sick man, which has supposedly wandered away from his body or been carried off by demons; third, to guide the soul of a dead man to its new abode; fourth, to add to his knowledge by associating with higher beings.

But the body's abandonment by the soul during ecstasy is equivalent to a temporary death. The shaman is, therefore, the man who can die, and then return to life, many times. Through his initiation, the shaman learns not only the technique of dying and returning to life but also what he must do when his soul abandons his body; and, first of all, how to orient himself in the unknown regions which he enters during his ecstasy. He learns to explore the new planes of existence disclosed by his ecstatic experiences. He knows the road to the centre of the world, the hole in the sky through which he can fly up to the highest heaven, or the aperture in the earth through which he can descend to hell. He is forewarned of the obstacles that he will meet on his journeys, and knows how to overcome them.

Because of his ability to leave his body with impunity, the shaman can, if he so wishes, act in the manner of a spirit; he flies through the air, becomes invisible, perceives things at great distances, mounts to heaven or descends to hell, sees souls and can capture them, and is incombustible. The exhibition of certain fakir-like accomplishments during the seances, especially the so-called fire tricks, is intended to convince the spectators that the shaman has assimilated the mode of being of spirits. The powers of turning themselves into animals, of killing at a distance, or of foretelling the future are also among the powers of spirits; by exhibiting them, the shaman proclaims that he shares in the spirit condition.

Descent to the Underworld

The Buriats, the Yakuts and other Siberian tribes speak of 'white' shamans and 'black' shamans, the former having relations with the gods, the latter with the spirits, especially evil spirits. Their costumes differ, being white for the former and blue for the latter. The Altaic white shaman himself sacrifices the horse offered to the god of heaven; afterwards he conducts, in ecstasy, the animal's soul on its journey to the throne of Bai Ülgän. Putting on his ceremonial costume, the shaman invokes a multitude of spirits, beats his drum and begins his celestial ascent. He laboriously mimes the difficult passing through heaven after heaven to the ninth and, if he is really powerful, to the twelfth and even higher. When he has gone as high as his powers permit, he stops and humbly addresses Bai Ülgän, imploring his protection and his blessings. The shaman learns from the god if the sacrifice has been accepted and receives predictions concerning the weather and the coming harvest. This episode is the culminating point of the ecstasy: the shaman collapses, exhausted, and remains motionless and dumb. After a time he rubs his eyes, appears to wake from a deep sleep, and greets those present as if after a long absence.

The Altaic shaman's celestial ascent has its counterpart in his descent to the underworld. This ceremony is far more difficult, and though it can be undertaken by shamans who are both white and black, it is naturally the speciality of the latter. The shaman makes a vertical descent down the seven successive 'levels', or subterranean regions, called *pudak*, 'obstacles'. He is accompanied by his dead ancestors and his helping spirits. At the seventh obstacle he sees Erlik Khan's palace, built of stone and black clay and defended in every direction. The shaman utters a long prayer to Erlik, then he returns to the yurt and tells the audience the results of his journey.

These descents to the underworld are undertaken especially to find and bring back a sick person's soul, or to escort the soul of the deceased to Erlik's realm. In 1884 Radlov published the description of a seance organized to escort the soul of a woman 40 days after her death. The ceremony takes place in the evening. The shaman begins by circling the yurt, beating his drum; then he enters the tent and, going to the fire, invokes the deceased. Suddenly the shaman's voice changes; he begins to speak on a high pitch, in falsetto, for it is really the dead woman who is speaking. She complains that she does not know the road, that she is afraid to leave her relatives, and so on, but finally consents to the shaman's leading her, and the two set off together for the subterranean realm. When they arrive, the shaman finds that the dead refuse to permit the newcomer to enter.

Tartar shaman in Russia, clothed as a bird: 'the shamanic vocation often implies a crisis so deep that it sometimes borders on madness', and the candidate cannot become a shaman until he has resolved this crisis

Chris Barker

Prayers proving ineffectual, brandy is offered; the seance gradually becomes more lively, for the souls of the dead, through the shaman's voice, begin quarrelling and singing together; finally they consent to receive the dead woman. The second part of the ritual represents the return journey; the shaman dances and shouts until he falls to the ground unconscious.

Magical Cures

The principal function of the shaman in Central and North Asia is magical healing. Several conceptions of the cause of illness are found in the area, but that of the 'rape of the soul' is by far the most widespread. Disease is attributed to the soul's having strayed away or been stolen, and treatment is in principle reduced to finding it, capturing it, and obliging it to resume its place in the patient's body. The Buriat shaman holds a preliminary seance to determine if the patient's soul has strayed away or if it has been stolen from him and is a captive in Erlik's prison. The shaman begins to search for the soul; if he finds it near the village, its replacement in the body is easy. If not, he searches the forests, the steppes, and even the bottom of the sea. Failure to find it indicates that it is a prisoner of Erlik, and the only recourse is costly sacrifices. Erlik sometimes demands another soul in place of the one he has imprisoned; the problem then is to find one that is available. With the patient's consent, the shaman decides who the victim shall be. While the latter is asleep the shaman, taking the form of an eagle, descends on him and, tearing out his soul, goes down with it to the realm of the dead and presents it to Erlik, who then allows him to take away the patient's. The victim dies soon afterward, and the patient recovers. But he has gained only a respite, for he too will die three, seven, or nine years later.

It is as a further result of his ability to travel in the supernatural worlds and to see the superhuman beings (gods, demons, spirits of the dead) that the shaman has been able to contribute decisively to the knowledge of death. In all probability many features of 'funerary geography', as well as some themes of the mythology of death, are the result of the ecstatic experiences of shamans. The unknown and terrifying world of death assumes form, is organized in accordance with particular patterns; finally it displays a structure and, in course of time, becomes familiar and acceptable. Little by little the world of the dead becomes knowable, and death itself is evaluated primarily as a rite of passage to a spiritual mode of being. In the last analysis, the accounts of the shamans' ecstatic journeys contribute to 'spiritualizing' the world of the dead, at the same time that they enrich it with wondrous forms and figures.

(See also DRUM; ESKIMO; FINLAND; LAPLAND; PRIESTS; SOUL.)

MIRCEA ELIADE

FURTHER READING: M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), M. Harner, *Way of the Shaman* (Harper & Row, 1980); S. Larsen, *The Shaman's Doorway* (Harper & Row, 1976).

Gods, sorcerers and the Devil himself have been credited with the power to change form at will; even the ordinary man or woman in the Middle Ages ran the risk of being turned into a werewolf

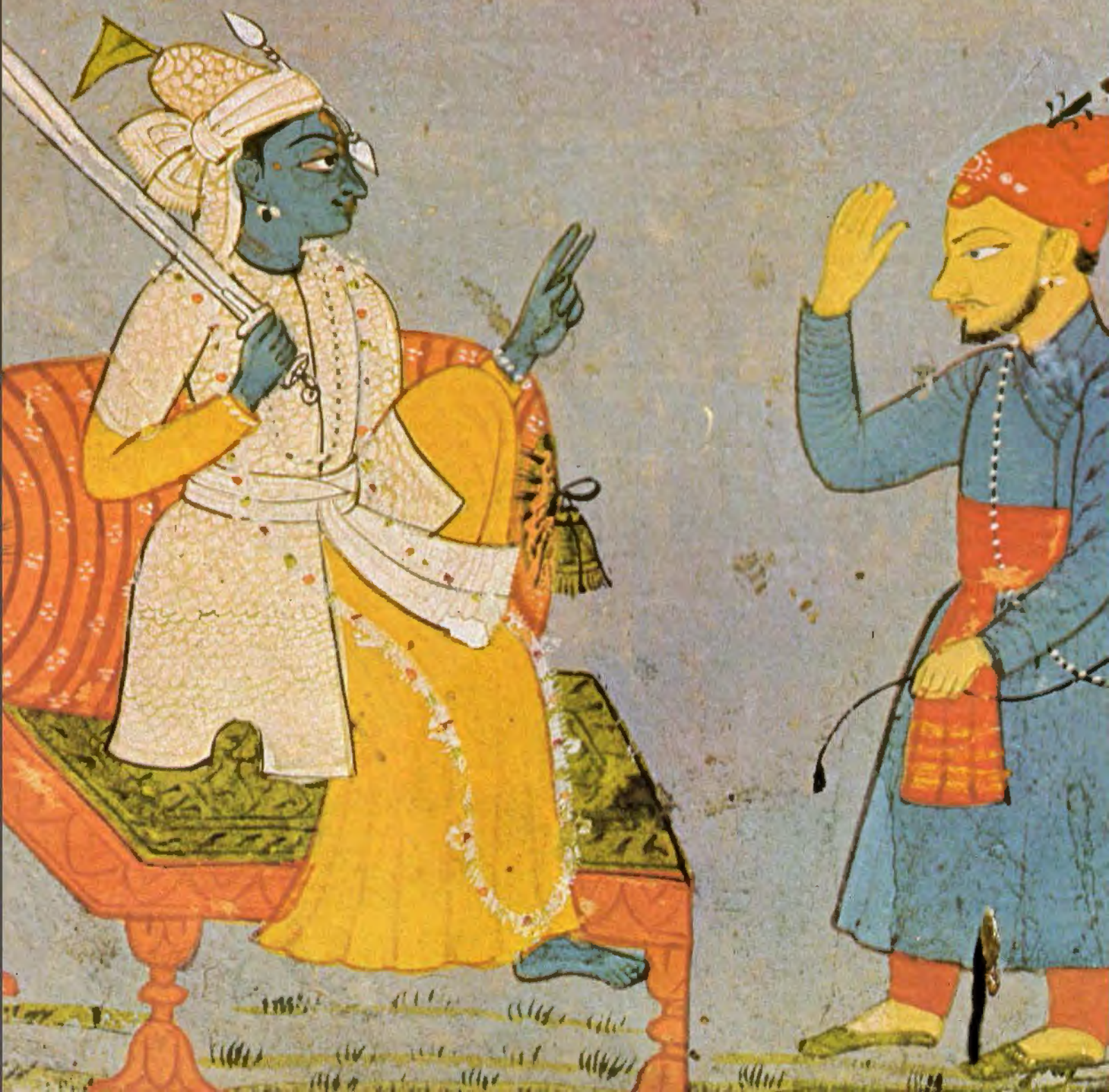
SHAPE-SHIFTING

THE IDEA that it is possible, in certain circumstances, for men to change their natural bodily form and assume, for a time, that of an animal or a bird or some other non-human creature, is very old and was once practically worldwide. The gods of many regions were credited with the power of transforming themselves at will into anything, animate or inanimate, that they chose. Sorcerers also, and some great heroes, were believed to have the same power, by virtue of magical knowledge or some innate quality; and so, though more rarely, were a few otherwise ordinary people who acquired the gift through possession of a charm or the performance of a ritual act. The medieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson, in *Ynglinga Saga*, says that Odin often changed into a bird, or a wild beast, or a fish, or a dragon and travelled thus to far-off places in the twinkling of an eye (see ODIN). Zeus, in the course of his frequent amorous adventures, became a swan, a bull, a ram, a serpent, a dove, an eagle, and a shower of gold (see ZEUS).

Similar tales of self-transformation are told of various Celtic, Hindu and Egyptian deities, and of spirits, heroes, sorcerers or magicians in the Far East, Polynesia and throughout the Americas.

Man Into Wild Beast

A widespread story with many variants is that of an individual, human or divine, who changes in quick succession into a number of different shapes during a fight, or in order to escape from some peril or difficulty. Homer relates in the *Odyssey* how the soothsayer Proteus was seized, as he lay asleep, by Menelaus, who had come to him seeking guidance. But Proteus would never give of his wisdom unless he was forced to do so, and now he instantly turned himself, first into a bearded lion, and then into a snake, a leopard, a bear, running water, and a



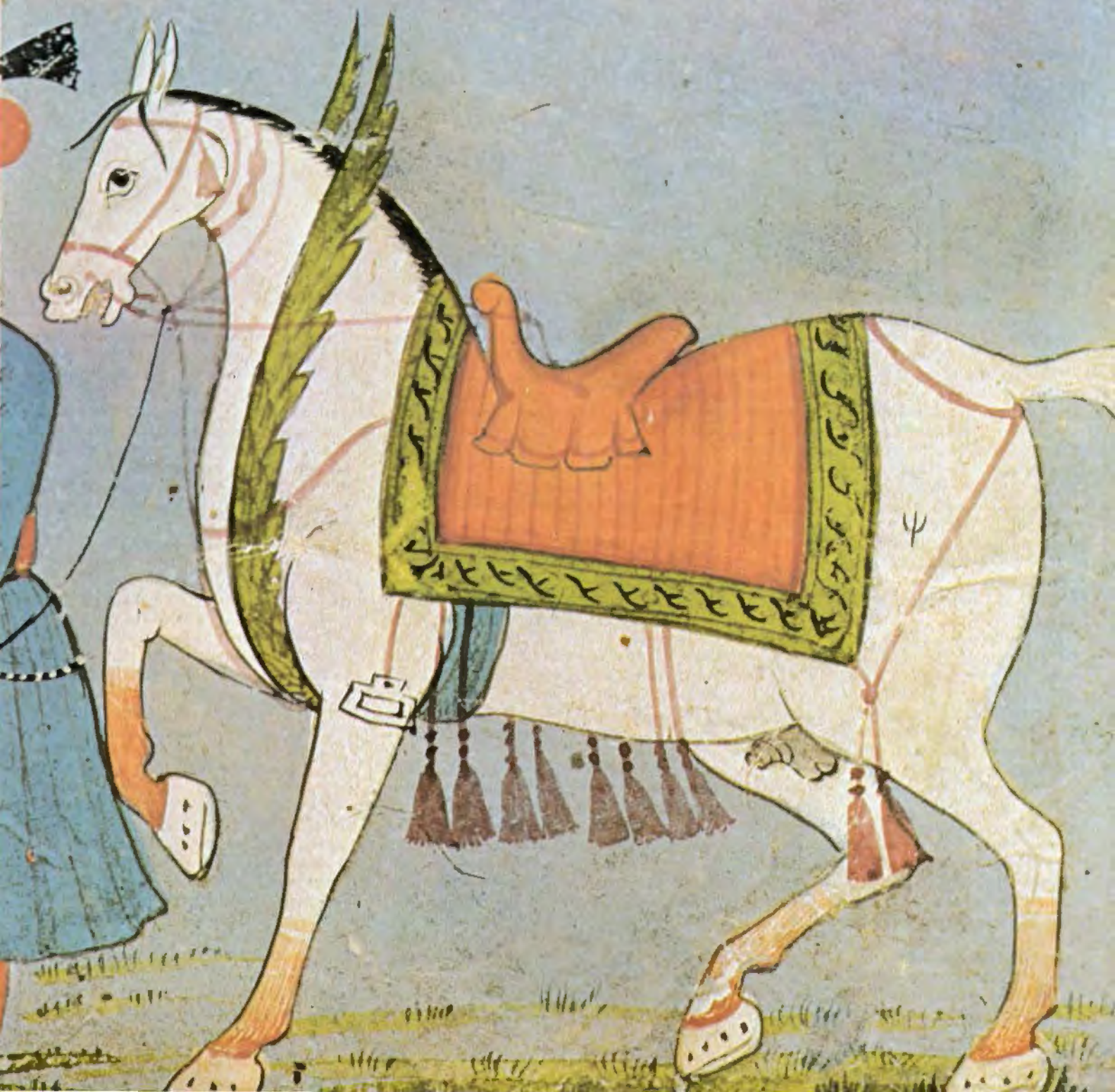
tree. Through all these changes, Menelaus held on firmly, until at last Proteus resumed his true form and consented to answer his adversary's questions.

In the Welsh legend of Taliesin's birth, Gwion Bach, flying from Ceridwen's anger, changed himself into a hare, and she pursued him as a greyhound. Then he became a fish in the river, but she turned into an otter and swam after him there. Hard-pressed, he became a bird, and found her hovering above him as a hawk. As she stooped upon him, he fell headlong into a heap of winnowed wheat on a barn floor and turned into one of the grains. That was the end of the contest (though not of the story), for Ceridwen transformed herself into a black hen which found and swallowed that grain. There are other tales of this kind in which the hero's changes of form are not of his own choosing, but are imposed upon him by outside magic. In the Scots ballad *Tam Lin*, when Janet plans to rescue her lover from fairyland, he warns her that the fairies will change him in her arms into a variety of fearsome creatures. She must, he tells her, 'hold me fast and fear me not' until he becomes a burning coal, and that she must instantly douse in well-water. In the end, if her courage does not fail her, he will be freed from enchantment and become himself again.

The commonest form of the shape-shifting tradition was not, however, concerned with multiple change, but with transformation, voluntary or by compulsion, into one particular type of wild creature. The belief that this could and did happen was very long-lived, and is the basis of countless legends of European werewolves and were-bears, of Indian were-tigers, and of leopard-men or hyena-men in Africa. It was well known in the ancient world. Pliny mentions it in his *Natural History*, though he thought it a 'mere fable', and he quotes Euanthes' curious account of the Antaei in Arcadia.

The gods of many religions have been credited with the power to change themselves into anything they choose, animate or inanimate: the Hindu god Vishnu is said to have been incarnated as a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a man-lion, a dwarf and the Buddha; this 18th century Indian painting shows him as a white horse

C. M. Dixon



Wallace Collection

On the feast of Zeus Lykaios, a member of that family was chosen by lot and conducted by his kinsmen to the shore of a certain lake. His clothes were taken from him and hung upon an oak tree, after which he plunged into the water, swam across to the other side, and disappeared into the forest. There he became a wolf and ran wild with other wolves for nine years; but if, during that time, he managed to refrain from eating human flesh, he could then return to the oak tree, put on the clothes that hung upon it, and become a man again.

Petrified Clothes

Herodotus, in the 5th century BC, reported that all the men of the Neuri, a Scythian tribe, became wolves for a few days in every year, and then resumed their human form. He found this very hard to believe, but he observed that the Neurians themselves constantly asserted that it was true, and were prepared to do so upon oath. It seems likely that here we have a record of a ritual transformation connected with an animal cult, in which the men concerned 'became' wolves for the time being by ceremonially putting on the skin or mask of a wolf, or by some similar rite. Centuries later, during the European witchcraft persecutions, evidence given at some of the trials seems to suggest that the animal transformations to which many witches confessed were often of the same ritual character.

A straightforward werewolf story of the time of Nero occurs in Petronius's account of Trimalchio's feast, in the Satyricon. Niceros, who was present at the feast, related how he went one night to visit Melissa, and persuaded an acquaintance to go with him for part of the way. As they came by some tombs, he was astonished to see his companion take off his clothes, lay them on the roadside, and make water round them. He then turned suddenly into a wolf and ran off, howling, into the woods. When Niceros went to collect the clothes, he found them changed into stone. Much alarmed, he hurried on to Melissa's house, and was told on arrival that a fierce wolf had been there before him. It had attacked the livestock, but luckily it had been driven off by a slave who had wounded it in the neck with a spear. Next morning, on his way home, he saw that the petrified clothes had disappeared, but the ground on which they had lain was stained with blood; and on going later to inquire for his companion of the previous night, he found him in bed, being treated by a surgeon for a severe wound in his neck.

That injuries suffered in the animal body were reproduced in the human body was a very persistent belief. Gervase of Tilbury remarks in *Otia Imperiala* (c 1211) that 'women have been seen and wounded in the shape of cats by persons who were secretly on the watch, and . . . the next day the women have shown wounds and loss of limbs'. Five centuries later, in 1718, the same idea appeared in evidence given at an enquiry held in Caithness. A certain William Montgomery, enraged and terrified by the nocturnal yowlings of cats which he believed to be witches, rushed out with a sword and a hatchet, killed two of the cats, and injured others. Soon afterwards, two local women were found to have died very suddenly, and a third, Margaret Nin-Gilbert, was so badly wounded in the leg that the limb subsequently withered and dropped off. Even as late as the 19th century, the guilt of women suspected of turning into hares was often 'proved' when a hare was shot, and a woman was later seen to have some injury in the corresponding part of her body.

Werewolf with Human Speech

How, and for what reason, men were thus transformed was the subject of much earnest debate in the Middle Ages, and later. Many learned men, from the time of St Augustine onwards, rejected the whole idea of metamorphosis, and declared that any person thinking himself changed was really the victim of delusions inspired by demons.

The unknown author of the Canon Episcopi, a document first recorded by Regino de Prüm in the early 10th century, stated clearly that even to believe a man could turn, or be turned, into a creature of another species was impious, since only God could alter that which he had created. Nevertheless, many did believe, then and much later, that shape-shifting was possible, as an effect of magic, or a curse, or by the help of Satan who was himself a shape-changer, or simply through kinship between man and beast.

St Natalis is said to have cursed all the people of Ossory so that, two by two, they

National Gallery of Art, Washington

were forced to become wolves for seven years at a time. In *Topographica Hibernica*, Giraldus Cambrensis describes how a priest met a wolf who was one of the saint's victims. The animal addressed him in human speech, imploring him to come and shrive his dying wife, who also lay under the curse and was now a wolf.

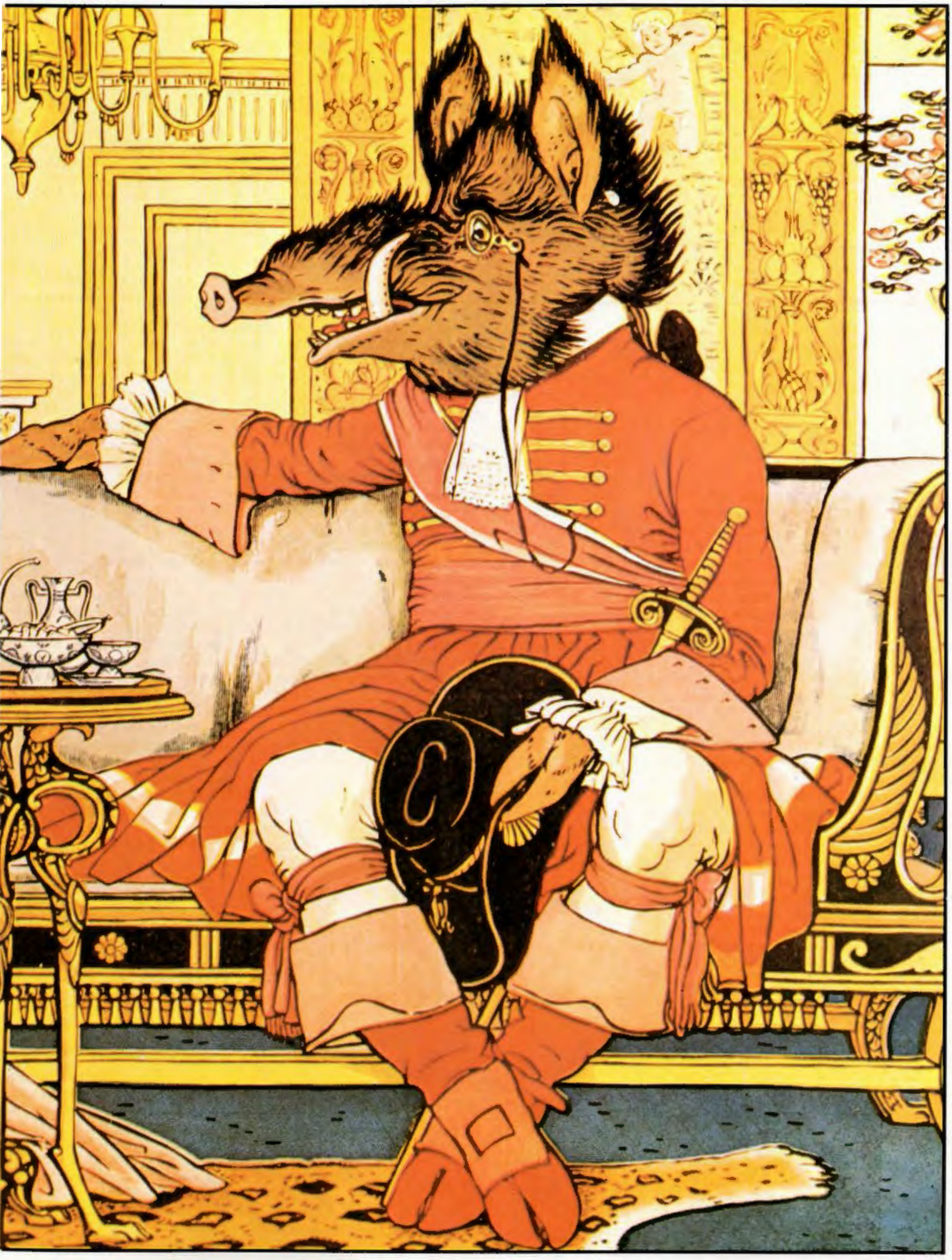
A folktale from Ireland relates the power of changing oneself into a wolf to the ancient concept of the animal ancestor. A hunter took shelter during a storm in the house of an old man previously unknown to him. While he was there, two wolves entered and went into an inner room; soon after, two young men emerged from that room and sat down by the hearth. The old man said they were his sons, and that he and they, being descended from wolves, could assume that form whenever it pleased them to do so.

Condemned to Run Wild

The actual change was commonly supposed to be effected by the use of magical salves, or by spells and incantations, or by putting on the skin of a wolf or a bear, or a girdle made from such pelts, or from human skin. Bjorn, in *Hrolfs Saga Kraba*, was struck by his stepmother with a pair of wolfskin gloves, and thereafter became a bear by day, though he was a man at night. In *Volsunga Saga*, Sigmund and Sinfjolti found two men sleeping in a cabin, with wolfskins hanging on the wall above them. These skins they were able to shed only once in ten days. Sigmund and his son put on the

Facing page **Zeus pursued his love affairs in various shapes, including those of a swan, a bull, a ram, a serpent, a dove, an eagle, and a shower of gold, and he took the form of a satyr to make love to the nymph Antiope: late 18th century painting by Jacques Charlier**
Above **The *Odyssey* describes the great enchantress Circe in her island home, surrounded by men she had bewitched and turned into animals: painting by the 16th century Italian artist Dosso Dossi *Below*** **Two characters in a New Guinea myth, transformed into crocodiles**
Following page **In the story of Beauty and the Beast, the Beast is a prince who has been turned into a monster by a spell: illustration by Walter Crane**

Axel Poignant



Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

pelts, and found they could not get them off again. They became wolves, and killed many men while the enchantment lasted, but when the day came round on which they could doff the skins, they burnt them, to prevent further evil.

A French legend which has been collected by Claude Seignolle speaks of a woman to whom a strange-looking pedlar brought an apparently ordinary green leather belt. She could not resist wearing it, though her husband forbade her to do so, and in consequence she was condemned to run wild as a wolf every night for seven years.

These tales, and others like them, reflect the must usual form of the European tradition, in which actual bodily transformation was thought to occur. The shape-shifter, voluntarily or otherwise, cast off his human attributes and appearance and, for the time being, really became an animal or a bird, though he sometimes retained his human eyes.

There was, however, another type of belief, better known in Asia than in Europe, but found in both continents, where no physical change took place. The man's soul passed into the body of an existing wild creature, while his own body lay in a sort of cataleptic fit, sometimes quite still and lifeless, and sometimes tossing and violently moving in correspondence with the movements of the beast that temporarily contained his soul. Odin's shape-shifting seems to have been of this kind, for Snorri says that while he passed through the world in many different forms, 'his body then lay as if sleeping or dead'. Bothvar Bjarki, the famous champion of King Hrolf of Denmark, is said to have fought in the forefront of that king's host in the shape of a huge bear which killed more men with its strong paw than any other five champions together. Yet all the while, he seemed to be sitting quietly indoors, taking no part in the battle. it was only when he was reproached for cowardice that he rose and went into the fight; and from that moment onwards, the bear was no more seen.

(See also WEREWOLF.)

CHRISTINA HOLE

'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'; according to a tradition far older than Christianity, the lamb was a symbol of innocence which was especially appropriate for sacrifice

SHEEP

IN PREHISTORIC TIMES sheep were already domesticated; it may be assumed that they practically domesticated themselves, because a newly-born lamb has so strong and undifferentiated an instinct to follow a large moving object that it may become attached to man. No doubt a few such lambs, led or brought back to human settlements, constituted an advantageous asset as a ready supply of milk, butter, meat and clothing. An early example of a lamb becoming a pet is provided by the parable of the rich man and the poor man told to David by Nathan the prophet, reproving him for bringing about Uriah's death in order to enjoy his wife Bathsheba (2 Samuel, chapter 12). The little ewe lamb grew up in the poor man's house with his children, 'it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him'. So docile and profitable an animal naturally became highly important in the economy of pastoral peoples over much of Asia, Europe and Africa.

At an early period the sheep became associated with religious and magical ideas and customs. Its remains in Neolithic graves indicate that it served as a burial offering. Khnemu, the great god of Elephantine in Egypt, was represented originally as a ram but in historical times as a ram-headed human figure. From the 16th century BC he became combined with the sun god Re and was worshipped throughout southern Egypt as Khnemu-Re, ram-headed and wearing a solar disc, indicating his connection with the sun. The provincial god of Thebes, Amun, became more important with the rise of Theban power. As Amun-Re, with a ram's head or horns, he became king of the gods of all Egypt. Thebans treated rams as sacred but once a year they killed, flayed and cut up one and draped the statue of the god with it. They ran around the temple mourning the animal's death and then buried it in a sacred sarcophagus.

According to the myth of the Golden Fleece, Pelias, king of Iolcus in Thessaly, urged Jason to set forth to Colchis to fetch the Fleece in which, according to one version, Zeus had climbed to the sky. After achieving a number of prodigious feats, he managed to seize it, having lulled to sleep the dragon which was guarding it, by means of a potion provided by Medea. Other myths, Greek, Etruscan and Italian, connected prosperity with a ram bearing a golden or purple fleece. At the season when the dog star rose and heat was greatest, youths clad in skins from newly-slaughtered rams ascended Mount Pelion in Greece. Thus as a ram god Zeus was a solar deity and connected with the powers of growth and fertility. In Crete Pythagoras submitted to a purificatory ceremony, lying by the sea during the day and by the river at night, with the fleece of a black lamb wrapped around him. Then he descended to the reputed tomb of Zeus clad in black wool. The wearing of a sheep's fleece may have meant that the man so clothed was regarded as a sacrificial substitute for a sheep. Although the records are fragmentary, this view accords with what is known of a ritual observed at Hierapolis in Egypt during which the sacrificer ate some sheep's flesh and laid the skin on the ground, kneeling on it with the feet and head over his own head. Thus, pleading with the god, he made a vicarious sacrifice.

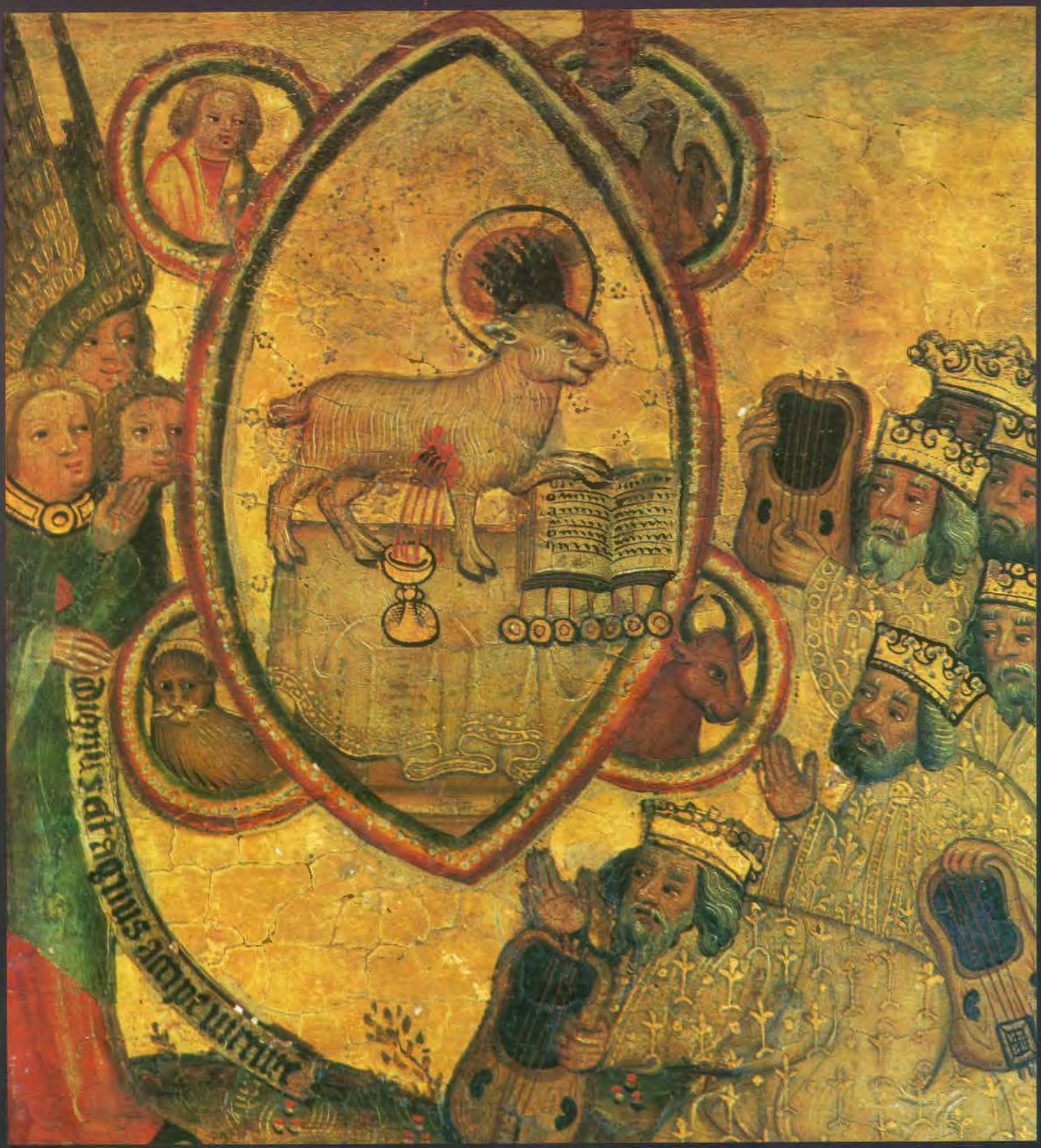
C. M. Dixon

The Lamb of God

The ram was widely regarded as a sacrificial animal. Genesis 22.1–18 relates how Abraham was prevented from sacrificing his son Isaac and how he substituted a ram. This is generally regarded as indicating that among the Hebrew and other Semitic peoples animals at some early period were substituted for human sacrifices. After childbirth a Hebrew mother made an offering of a yearling lamb (Leviticus 12.6) and a leper's sacrifice was two yearling rams and one yearling ewe lamb (Leviticus 14.10). The custom of slaying the Passover lamb, traced back to the delivery of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt but apparently an adaptation of an earlier custom, continued as a Jewish religious observance which influenced Christian doctrine and imagery.

As lambs, unblemished and representing innocence, figured in Jewish thought as sacrificial objects it was natural that this imagery should be transferred to Christ. John the Baptist is reported as saying when Jesus came to him: 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1.29). When Philip met the Queen of Ethiopia's official on the road to Jerusalem, he read to him a passage from Isaiah identifying Jesus with the sacrificial lamb (Acts 8.32). In Revelation 7.9–17 Christ is again referred to as the 'Lamb of God'. According to a widespread English folk tradition current into the late 19th century, a person mounting a hilltop at dawn on Easter morning would see the symbol of the Lamb of God bearing a banner marked with a red cross on the sun's disc.

The concept of the Church as Christ's flock has exercised a powerful influence on Christian thought. During the first centuries of the Christian era the figure



Victoria and Albert Museum

In the Old Testament, God has the symbolic role of the shepherd who cares for his flock, and lambs, unblemished and representing innocence, are sacrificial victims. In Christian symbolism, Christ is both the Good Shepherd and the Lamb of God

Left Figure of the Good Shepherd, from Corinth, 4th century AD *Above* Christ as the Lamb, the blood pouring from his wounded side into the cup of the Eucharist: he has opened the book with seven seals (Revelation, chapter 5); from a German altar piece, c 1400

C. M. Dixon

of the Good Shepherd was the most important Christian symbol. In biblical times the shepherd did not drive but led his flock; and the crook or crozier carried by a bishop is symbolic of his pastoral office as shepherd of Christ's flock (see GOOD SHEPHERD).

Festivals and Celebrations

Another line of tradition, long established in Europe, has contributed to the folklore and customs connected with sheep. The Roman sheep festival, known as the *Parilia*, was honoured by shepherds and herdsmen and considered highly important for the maintenance of the health and increase of their animals. The festival took place on 21 April and was celebrated in both town and country but obviously its origins were rural. People who went to the temple of Vesta were given ashes, blood and bean-straw to use in a cleansing rite during which they fumigated themselves and also, probably, their beasts. The blood had been obtained from the tail of a horse sacrificed in October (see MARS) and the ashes were those of unborn calves taken from the womb on 15 April.

It was believed that the rites quickened the wombs not only of cows and ewes but also of women. The sheepfold was decorated with boughs and a wreath hung on the door. The flocks were purified by being driven through bonfires of pine wood, laurel, branches of the male olive and grass. They were also fumigated with burning sulphur. The shepherds provided offerings for the deity, including pails of milk and cakes of millet, praying as they faced towards the east that the sheep might be preserved from witchcraft and wolves, that fodder might be plentiful and the animals prolific. Then the shepherds washed their hands in the morning dew, drank a bowl of milk and wine, and jumped over bonfires. Their petitions were not only for the material well-being of their flocks. They sought pardon from the nymphs for the disturbance of the pools by their animals and for trespassing unwittingly in sacred groves.

Many festivals exhibiting features similar to those of the Parilia were celebrated elsewhere in Europe. Some of these still survive. Usually the procedure is observed on 23 April, St George's Day, when the cattle are driven out to pasture. In the Carpathian mountains the Huzuls kindle a fire of dung on St George's Eve, fumigate the animals and decorate the gate-posts with boughs of the silver poplar, considered effective in repelling evil spirits. Before the cattle are turned out on St George's Day the Ruthenians fumigate them with smoke from a burning snakeskin or rub their horns and udders with serpent's fat. The widespread observance of comparable ceremonies indicates their antiquity.

Later in the year the sheep-shearing celebrations were the counterpart of the harvest festivities among agriculturalists. Shepherds and their families and friends gathered to the shearing and there was feasting and merriment. Among the Romans it was a very convivial occasion. In southern England the sheep-shearing festivities were more elaborate than in the northern counties. A good dinner was provided for the shearers, their relatives and friends, and also for the young people of the village.

Divination by Sheep's Bones

The sheep was regarded as having oracular significance. Virgil (*Aeneid*, book 7) refers to priestesses sleeping on fleeces in order to hold converse with the gods. In England and Germany it was held to be lucky to meet a flock on setting forth from your house. Good fortune could be expected if on seeing the first lamb in spring its head was turned away from you. In Germany if a sheep bore three black lambs it was feared that someone belonging to the household would die. A girl, anxious about when she would get married, would go to the sheep-stall at night on Christmas Eve and grab an animal. If it turned out to be a ram, this was propitious but if she found herself holding a ewe she would remain unmarried. In England it was believed that you could forecast the weather by observing the sheep. If they were quiet fine weather might be expected, but a restless flock betokened wind and rain.

Divination by means of sheep bones,

Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

Left **Egyptian deity with the head of a ram, from the tomb of Tuthmosis III in Thebes, where rams were sacred to the god Amun: once a year a ram was slaughtered and the statue of Amun draped in its skin** ***Right*** **Jason seizing the Golden Fleece, aided by Medea: illustration from Charles Kingsley's** ***The Heroes*** **(1868)**

especially the shoulder-blade, was widespread and probably dates from very early times. Such oracular practices have been noted among the Icelanders, Scots, Southern Slavs, Bedouin and Mongolians of inner Asia. English maidens believed that a faithless lover could be recalled by piercing a sheep's shoulder-blade with a knife and repeating this charm:

> It's not this bone I wish to stick
> But ––'s heart I wish to prick.
> Whether he be asleep or awake
> I'd have him come to me and speak.

For divinatory use in Scotland the shoulder-blade of a black sheep was scraped, avoiding the use of iron. On Lewis the seer held it lengthwise in the direction of the island's greatest length. In some areas of the Highlands two persons cooperated, one holding the bone over his left shoulder while the other inspected the broad end and interpreted what it revealed, according to the lines and shades.

The ram was involved in magical ceremonies in many parts of the world. The Tibetans, who feared earth demons, regarded the goddess Khon-ma as their leader. Dressed in golden robes and holding a golden noose, she rode on a ram. In order to deter her host of fiends an elaborate structure containing a ram's skull as well as precious objects of turquoise and silver was placed above the door of the house. In South Africa the Ba-Thonga attribute drought to the concealment of miscarriages by women and perform rain-making ceremonies involving the pouring of water after a completely black ram has been killed.

Various members and organs of the sheep were used to cure all sorts of ills in ways which often savoured more of magic than of medicine. The dung was applied to heal wounds and even eaten as a tonic. It was believed that a child suffering from whooping cough could be cured by taking it to the sheepfold at dawn, allowing a sheep to breathe on it and then placing it on the spot which the animal had vacated. The underlying assumption seems to have been that as sheep bleat in a hoarse way the child's cough would transfer itself to the animal.

EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG

Shekhinah

An aspect of God in Jewish mysticism, 'the glory of the Lord', the light of God's presence, and also the bride of God and the mystical Israel or people of God; in the Cabala identified with the tenth sefirah, Malkhuth, the kingdom of God and the point at which the divine and the non-divine touch.

See CABALA.

Shells

Symbols of refuge and protection against danger because of their hard covering, and frequently used as protective amulets; in Christian art symbols of immortality as signs of the discarded body from which the soul has moved on.

See SEA.

Camera Press

Sheol

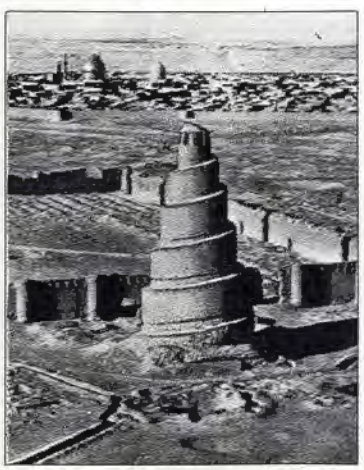
In older passages of the Old Testament, the underworld of silence and forgetfulness, dust and darkness, worms and maggots, to which all the dead go to live in shadowy and powerless obscurity, good and bad alike; it later developed into the place where the wicked go to be punished after death.

See HELL; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.

Shia

A branch of Islam which is the official religion of Iran and flourishes in important communities in India, Pakistan and Iraq; the movement first developed among supporters of Mohammed's cousin, Ali, and is much concerned with leadership; Shiites look to an imam, or leader, who is sinless and possessed of a divine light, and who will return at the end of the age.

See ISLAM; MOHARRAM.



'If Shinto has been responsible for much that is worst in the history of Japan, it has also been responsible for much that is best'; both arrogance and a high sense of duty arose from the Shinto tradition that the Emperor was a direct descendant of the sun goddess

SHINTO

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to write of Shinto with the same exactitude as of Christianity, Mohammedanism or even Buddhism, since it is not, in a strict sense, a religion, much less a philosophy. It is almost wholly lacking in any metaphysical doctrines and it imposes no coherent and consistent system of morality on its followers. A compound of Nature worship and ancestor worship, it is often characterized in its original animistic form as 'primitive'; but on these primitive foundations repeated attempts have been made through the centuries to erect more sophisticated metaphysical and ethical structures. One of its strangest features is that, though it is concerned with the dead as ancestors, it concerns itself so little with death as the ultimate fate of those who believe in it. Essentially it is a religion of the 'middle-now', 'the eternal present'.

Embedded in fossil form in the Christian religion there are, of course, innumerable survivals from our pagan past; but that Shinto and Buddhism should still exist side by side in Japan and that the Japanese should not consider it strange that, for example, they should be married according to Shinto rites and buried according to Buddhist ones, is rather as if in England each village had not only its vicar but also its Druid priest. Even the life of a Japanese who has embraced the Christian faith is likely to be subtly permeated by Shinto influences, so that in business, in sport, in politics, in every aspect of private and public life he will, however unconsciously, be affected by them.

The word 'Shinto' itself long postdates the actual emergence of the religion among the people of the Japanese archipelago.

A Chinese term, consisting of two ideograms, it is usually translated into Japanese as *Kami no Michi* or 'The Way of the Gods'. (Taoism, the religion of 'The Way', may have been responsible for the designation 'Way'; see TAOISM.) When Buddhism first reached Japan in the 6th century, the need to differentiate between the new body of beliefs and the old impelled the Japanese to give a name to a system that until then had been nameless. Some modern Shinto adherents object to the plural form 'The Way of the Gods', on the grounds that this gives an undue prominence to its polytheistic aspects, and prefer the translation 'The Way of the One and Many Gods'. The translation 'The Divine Way' obviates the difficulty.

The word 'Kami' in Kami no Michi in itself presents a problem, since it is a different concept from our 'god'. D. C. Holtom in *The National Faith of Japan* writes: 'No other word in the entire range of the Japanese vocabulary has a richer or more varied content, and no other has presented greater difficulties to the philologist.' Yet to attempt to understand the meaning of this concept is essential if one wishes to reach any understanding of Shinto itself. In many ways the word 'mana' (see MANA) is a near equivalent, as is borne out by this attempt at a definition by the great 18th century scholar, Moto-ori Norinaga:

> I do not yet understand the meaning of the term *kami*. Speaking in general, however, it may be said that *kami* dignifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits nf the shrines where they are worshipped. It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains and so forth. In ancient usage, anything whatsoever which was outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power, which was awe-inspiring, was called *kami*. Evil and mysterious things, if they are extraordinary and dreadful, are called *kami*.'

Heroes or great rulers are Kami manifest

A Shinto shrine: probably the gods were first worshipped in the open, though tradition has it that the shrines or 'houses' for the gods go back to the earliest times

Alan Irvine

Alan Irvine

in corporeal form, so that the demarcation between divine and human, so integral a part of the Christian religion, hardly exists in Shinto. Missionaries in Japan are often particularly intolerant about this ascription of divinity to dead ancestors or even to living individuals. In *The Religions of Japan from the Dawn of History to the Era of Meiji* (1913), for example, the Rev. William Elliot Griffis writes: 'Keep the boundary clear between God and his world and all is order and discrimination. Obliterate the boundary and all is pathless morass, black chaos and . . . the phantasms that belong to the victims of delirium tremens.' Yet it might be argued that it is precisely because of their willingness to believe that men can also be like gods that the Japanese can find dignity and self-fulfilment in even the most humdrum and arduous of occupations.

Gods of Sun and Storm

Shinto lacks any definite account of the origins of the gods and its various cosmological myths, like those of the classical world, are often difficult to reconcile with each other. The story begins when the seven generations of celestial deities emerged spontaneously out of the primeval vapour and then vanished without leaving any trace behind them. After them the two great creative deities, Izana-gi (The Male-who-invites) and Izana-mi (The Female-who-invites) descended from the high plane of heaven to become the begetters of the race. In the words of the *Kogoshui* (Gleanings from the Ancient Stories), a 9th century document which is one of the chief literary sources for information about Shinto mythology, 'They begat the Great-Eight-Islands, also mountains, rivers, grasses and trees, and they likewise begat the Sun goddess and the Moon god.' Unlike the spontaneous generations that preceded them, these acts of creation were evidently sexual in form.

In addition to the sun goddess, Amaterasu-Omikami, who emerged from the left eye of Izana-gi, and the moon god, who emerged from the right, there also came out of his nose the violent god Susa-no-o, often translated 'The Valiant-Swift-Impetuous-Hero'. The moon god never played any prominent part and it was the other two, the sun goddess and the storm god who divided the rule of the universe between them. The female was benign and beautiful, representing the forces of procreation, fertility and life. Her brother, like the storm gods of other mythologies, brought with him chaos, destruction and death. He subjected his sister to innumerable insults and indignities, laying waste the rice fields in her cultivation and voiding excrement in the palace in which she was about to celebrate the first fruits. Eventually the sun goddess retreated in her indignation into a deep cave, thus depriving the world of any light. The 80 myriads of gods then performed a lengthy series of propitiation ceremonies, at the end of which she was at last coaxed and cajoled into opening the Rock Door and peeping forth. Another god, Tajikara-Wo-no-Mikoto, took her by the hand and led her out.

Here, obviously, is a mythological explanation of rituals performed in remote times to intercede for a return of the sun and the fertility that the sun brings with it. Similar myths – those in connection with Persephone and Adonis for example – exist in every corner of the globe.

Yet though Amaterasu-Omikami and Susa-no-o represent the opposing forces of sun and storm, each can only give birth by exchanging either respiration or jewels with the other. Thus there is little of the expected dualism, such as we find in the ancient religion of Persia (see AHRIMAN). The two powers are often in conflict but they have reached some kind of accommodation. To the descendants of the sun goddess was entrusted the rule of the actual world; while the hidden, underworld, mysterious forces of existence were in the hands of the children of the storm god.

The phallic elements in Shinto mythology are often strong. Thus, for example, Izana-gi begets various Kami when drops of blood fall off his sword; and when the other gods try to lure Amaterasu-Omikami out of her retreat in the cave, one of them, Ame-no-uzume, performed a dance, at the end of which, as the *Kojiki* recounts it, 'She pulled out the nipples of her breasts and pushed down her skirt-strings to reveal her pudenda.' The sun goddess, bringer of fertility to crops and men, was thus reminded of her obligations.

Significantly, until recent times prostitution had a close connection with some of the most important Shinto shrines. The women attached to the shrines were, in effect, fertility maidens – the Japanese word for

temple dancers, *sarume*, even has the same root as that of the name of the chief of the sexual deities, Saru-ta.

Mirror, Necklace and Sword

In early times it seems unlikely that Shinto ceremonies took place at man-made shrines. A mountain, a stream, or even a tree or a rock, might be the focus for some ceremony of propitiation or thanksgiving. In a rural society, the majority of such ceremonies would be concerned with the crops. Later, one must presume, certain areas – around a clump of trees, for example, by a spring, on top of a peak – would become taboo, because regarded as numinous, imbued with the feeling of divinity, and from this it became a small step to build a house for the deity on the spot. No date can be given for the first building of such houses or shrines – Shinto tradition has it that they first came into existence in the Age of the Gods – but we do know from written sources that by the 10th century there were already 2861 shrines, according to a census then conducted, which were graded into three categories of importance. Then as now, at the apex there was the shrine of the sun goddess at Ise, the Mecca of Japan, descending down through shrines to minor gods, to princes and heroes, to local notables, to the spirits of this or that village landmark.

With the introduction of Buddhism into Japan by way of Korea in the 6th century, the old animistic cult underwent a metamorphosis. Unlike Christianity, Buddhism has always been tolerant of other creeds, and it was willing to afford hospitality to the Shinto deities in its own pantheon. The theory thus came to be propounded that the Buddhist pantheon represented the eternal and indestructible elements of the gods, while the Shinto deities were their temporary incarnations – the Japanese term *gongen* is usually translated as 'temporary manifestations', the equivalent of 'avatar'. Hence arose Ryobu Shinto or Double Aspect Shinto, as contrasted with Pure Shinto.

For 1000 years Ryobu Shinto maintained its ascendancy. Except at the great shrines at Izumo and Ise, those who conducted Shinto rites were usually also Buddhist priests; and the Buddhist influence on the architecture of Shinto also became strong during this period – even the pagoda, an essentially Buddhist feature, appeared.

In the 15th century Shinto underwent further attempts at systematization. The chief of these was initiated by Ichijo Kanera (1402–81), a noble who served for a time as premier and who wrote a number of books. A syncretist, whose philosophy can best be described as idealistic monism, Kanera attempted to fuse together elements of Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism into a single coherent whole. He contended that, though there are myriads of Shinto deities, all are in fact merely aspects of a single divine entity, which assumes different aspects according to the activity in which it engages itself.

Kanera postulated a triad of divine virtues, symbolized by the imperial regalia: the necklace for charity; the mirror for veracity; and the sword for justice. 'The man of charity is not anxious; the man of veracity does not err; the man of justice has no fears.' Thus he summed up the imperial attributes and the virtues by which the state could best survive. This same triad, in his view, embodied the three aspects of Buddhahood – Wisdom, Emancipation and Truth. But in primitive times the symbolism of the imperial regalia must have been wholly different, with the mirror standing for the sun, giver of fertility and life, the beads of the necklace for the seeds of procreation and the sword for the phallus.

In the 18th century a school of enthusiastically patriotic literary men set about reviving the ancient traditions of what they called Pure Shinto, purged of the alien elements derived from Buddhism and Confucianism. Chief of these was the great scholar Moto-ori Norinaga (1730–1801), who looked nostalgically back to the purity and simplicity of a remote past, as to a Japanese garden of Eden. According to his view, Japan, having been created at the behest of the sun goddess, was therefore the

Morris Newcombe

Above left **Burning joss-sticks: offerings generally consist of small trays of rice, fish, fruit, vegetables and saké – the staple diet of the Japanese throughout the ages *Right* Sumo, the traditional style of Japanese wrestling, was a feature of the Festival of Five Grains, or harvest festival, from the 8th century, the victor being called 'Prince of Lions', and was kept up by the Samurai, the warrior caste**

greatest nation in the world. The emperors, by virtue of their direct descent from the sun goddess, enjoyed a divine right to rule. As Sir Eric Satow puts it in 'The Revival of Pure Shinto' (*Transactions* of the Asiatic Society of Japan, volume 2): 'From the central truth that the Mikado is the direct descendant of the gods, the tenet that Japan ranks far above all other countries is a natural consequence. No other nation is entitled to equality with her, and all are bound to do homage to the Japanese sovereign and pay tribute to him.'

According to Moto-ori Norinaga, the divine will, which is essentially benevolent, has been implanted in each successive emperor; so that if the people give unquestioning obedience to his edicts, then they will live naturally fruitful and harmonious lives. From such doctrines it was only a short step to State Shinto, on which the Japanese nationalism of recent years was arrogantly based.

State Shinto

At one time extremist members of the imperial faction had hoped for a total suppression of Buddhism and the elevation of Shinto to the position of being the sole religion of Japan; but they did not get their way, the first reform being limited to a complete separation of the two religions. After an ambiguous period, during which an unsuccessful attempt was made to harness Buddhism and Shinto together in the service of the new state, Buddhism was allowed to go its own way and Shinto was divided into two classes: Jinsha or State Shinto on the one hand, and Sectarian or Denominated Shinto on the other. The former represented Shinto as a national ritual, enabling the subjects of the Emperor to acknowledge his divine origins; the latter represented Shinto as a religious doctrine.

In 1945, after the Second World War, the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers issued a directive to the Japanese government for the disestablishment of State Shinto. This prohibited any manifestations of nationalism based on the three doctrines, implicit in State Shinto, that ancestry and special origin had firstly made the Emperor superior to other heads of other states, secondly, made Japan superior to other nations, and thirdly made the Japanese people superior to other peoples. Shinto became one of a number of other religions.

Alan Irvine

In the 18th century, the traditions of 'Pure Shinto', the traditional religion cleansed of alien influences from Buddhism and Confucianism, were revived by patriotic literary men. Moto-ori Norinaga maintained that Japan, created by order of the sun goddess, was the greatest of nations, that the Emperor as a direct descendant of the sun goddess, and one in whom the benevolent divine will had been implanted, was the greatest of rulers, and that the Japanese people would live fruitful and harmonious lives if they obeyed him without question. State Shinto, in which these principles found expression, was disestablished in 1945 ***Below*** **When an offering is made at a Shinto shrine, a card with a picture of the offering is put on a board outside the shrine** ***Above*** **A symbolic Shinto knot**

D. Stevenson

Offerings of Prayer and Food

Shinto has virtually no regular liturgies, as we understand them in the Christian Church, and its priests enjoy great freedom – marrying and in many cases pursuing other occupations. Worship consists for the most part of obeisance – a bow that lasts for a minute or two – prayers and offerings. At some of the larger shrines young girls, who are likewise under no vows, perform ritual dances and assist in the presentation of offerings. These offerings consist of small trays of rice, fish, fruit, vegetables and saké – symbols of the staple diet of the Japanese through the ages. In former times pieces of cloth were also offered, but these are now symbolized by strips of white paper tied to twigs of the sakaki-tree and placed in front of the altar. Purification rites are common to banish defilement caused by disease, death or any other unclean thing, as is exorcism. Abstention, in which the believer avoids any activity that might pollute him, is often practised for a limited period; but it is more common among the priesthood than the laity.

There are still Japanese, many of them people of intellectual distinction, who believe that there is a place for the Shinto faith in the life of their country in the future. Shinto, they point out, has deep roots in the common life of the family, in the community and in the nation at large, and has for generations served to unite and harmonize groups that would otherwise have been at variance and in conflict in the social structure. Jean Herbert, in *Shinto*, says of it: 'From it arises respect for all that is, a high sense of duty and a feeling of security and resultant fearlessness.' If it has been, in part at least, responsible for much that is worst in the history of Japan, it has also been responsible for much that is best.

(See also JAPAN.)

FRANCIS KING

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MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 10

Ship - Tibe

Österreichische Galerie, Vienna

SHIP

The black-sailed 'ship of death' travels over the land and sucks into itself the souls of damned seamen; the belief that the dead are transported to their final destination by boat is common to many religions

THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL navigations of wide stretches of water by primitive man must have seemed as much of an achievement as the development of space travel in our own day. Apart from the physical hazards of venturing on the ocean, this unknown element was believed to be ruled by dangerous spirit forces and gods; and as with all other apparently superhuman achievements, navigation has always been closely associated with the supernatural.

The ship, like the sea itself, is rich both in symbolism and superstition. Because it crosses the unknown ocean where it may encounter unexpected dangers, it is a symbol of confidence, adventure and enterprise. A ship in full sail symbolizes safe conduct, while a similar motif displayed on a coin is a token of joy and happiness. The ship is the Christian symbol for both Church and State; the barque which bears the faithful over the stormy seas of life to the promised land on the distant shore. Medieval Christians wore badges in the form of a ship to show their faith in salvation, and these were also thought to provide protection against the temptations encountered by a traveller on life's voyage. In this sense the ship may be seen as a symbol of transience and spirituality, of faith and hope. The

Ship of Fools **by Oscar Laske; engrossed in worldly pursuits, the passengers 'sail' through life, heedless of the need for a spiritual goal and the futility of an existence based on material pleasures**

'ship of fools', a constantly recurring theme in Christian imagery, is a symbol of the belief that to 'sail' through this world, treating life merely as an end in itself, is futile; man's spiritual goal must be transition, evolution and finally, salvation.

In some ancient mythologies a ship was said to carry the sun and the moon in their journeys across the heavens. The Egyptian sun god travelled in a ship, and there was much ship symbolism in the worship of Isis (see ISIS). The Babylonian moon god, Sin,

Superstition surrounds the life of a ship, from the time of its building until it reaches the breaker's yard

was also known as the 'ship of life'. The ship with its mast is a fairly obvious fecundity symbol, representing the sexual union of the male with the female, and its motion as it is tossed on the ocean waves represents the action of coition.

As a heraldic symbol a ship represents swiftness and succour in extremity. Its rudder generally symbolizes guidance, truth and wisdom, while the anchor stands for hope, patience and steadfastness. Noah's Ark is the symbol of God's covenant with man, the human race's hope of survival; it appears in the crest and coat of arms of the Company of Shipwrights.

Superstition surrounds the life of a ship, from the time of its building until it reaches the breaker's yard; and even after its natural lifetime, there are many stories of the ghost ship which continues to haunt the site of its wreck. The landsman's custom of laying a foundation stone is paralleled by the laying of the ship's keel, which may be seen as the foundation of the boat, its backbone. At Boulogne-sur-Mer, no alteration to the design of a fishing boat was ever permitted once the keel had been laid down, as this brought bad luck. In Scotland it was customary to hide a gold coin in some hidden recess in the keel to bring good fortune, the hiding-place being known only to the builder and never to the ship's owner. The first nail knocked into the keel was sometimes tied with red ribbon, to protect the craft against storms and similar misadventures.

It was axiomatic among shipwrights that they were free to curse anything on board ship except the keel, which was sacrosanct. It was forbidden to lay down the keel on a Friday, and an old legend tells of a shipbuilder who flouted this prohibition, named the ship *Friday*, gave its command to a Captain Friday and despatched it on its maiden voyage on a Friday; the craft was never seen again.

In Pomerania, in Germany, it was

Figureheads used to mean a great deal to sailors, and were most carefully tended. At one time it was generally thought that it was impossible for a ship to sink without her figurehead, possibly because it was connected in seamen's minds with the life and soul of the craft; in fact, these figures were originally effigies of the female deities of the sea, and libations, sometimes in the form of human blood, were made to propitiate them. The custom of breaking a bottle of champagne across the bows of a ship at its launching ceremony is a modern version of this old tradition *Below, left to right* Figurehead on a tea clipper; effigy of William Wilberforce, the English politician who fought to abolish the slave trade; matronly figure known as 'Old Goody', possibly symbolizing a kindly spirit who cares for sailors *Facing page* Partly-draped figurehead on the *Cutty Sark*; sailors have always regarded the naked body of a woman as a luck-bringer, whether in reality or in the form of an effigy

National Maritime Museum/John Moss

John Moss

Bardo Museum/Sonia Halliday

believed to be lucky to use stolen timbers for the construction of a boat. In the North of England, during the caulking of a wooden boat a shipwright could claim a 'caulking kiss' from any passing girl. If she refused him, she had to pay a shilling. The painted eye on the bow of a Mediterranean boat guides the craft to its destination and protects against the Evil Eye (see EYE).

Even today it is customary for shipbuilders to lay a silver coin beneath a ship's mast. An emblem of the moon, this coin, usually a silver sixpence, is supposed to preserve ship and crew from storms. There are also a number of 'topping-out' ceremonies, intended to provide magical protection against storms, during which the ship is decked with laurel leaves and woodland flowers.

The figurehead on sailing ships was often in the form of a naked woman, who was in reality an idol or divine figure to whom propitiation had to be made in the form of a libation. In the past this female figure meant a great deal to seamen, and was most carefully tended. The breaking of a bottle of champagne across the bows of a craft at its launching ceremony is a modern version of the pagan libation. Mediterranean fishermen sometimes pour an offering of wine into the sea to lull a storm, and it is not at all uncommon for European yachtsmen to drop a coin into the water when the weather is threatening. In primitive societies, the libation was often in the form of human blood.

Throughout the recorded history of seamanship, ships have been blessed, in one form or another, during their launching ceremonies. While the boat of an Indonesian fisherman is charmed by a sorcerer, that of his European counterpart is blessed by a priest. In both cases a boat is doomed either to disaster or to a run of misfortune if it does not receive this benediction.

Whatever the size or importance of a craft, the act of naming it is an event of profound psychic significance; the selection of an unlucky name can have dangerous consequences. Seamen object to any name ending in the letter a, and the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 reinforced this superstition. Once christened, a ship's name must never be changed or disaster will fall upon craft and crew alike. The ill-fated *HMS Victoria*, which in 1893, while on

The act of naming a craft is an event of profound psychic significance; the selection of an unlucky name can have dangerous consequences

Victoria & Albert Museum/Michael Holford

A symbol of confidence and enterprise, the ship is sometimes also a bearer of good fortune, carrying treasures from one part of the world to another *Left* Dionysus is said to have brought the vine across the seas to Greece; a legend tells that he was attacked by his crew on one occasion, and drove them mad so that they jumped overboard, and were changed into dolphins: mosaic, 3rd century AD, from Dougga in North Africa *Right* Netsuke, by Masshiro, depicts the Japanese gods of luck aboard a treasure-ship

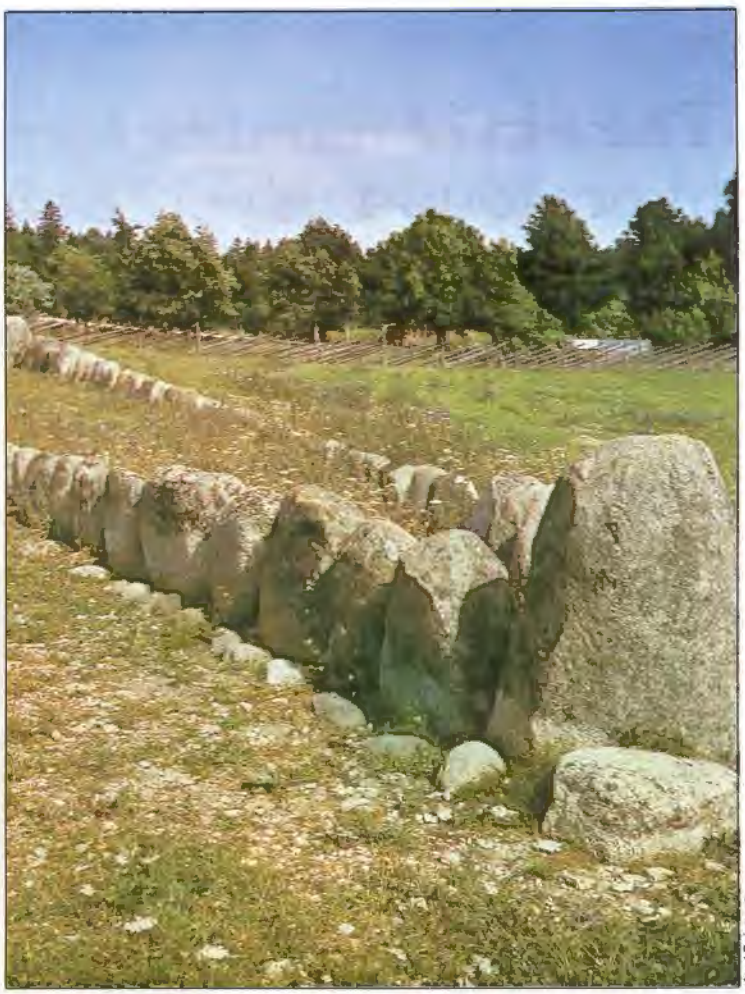
manoeuvres, collided with another battleship in mysterious circumstances, leading to appalling loss of life, is an example of a ship which had been given a new name. The story is told of a skipper who decided to rename his boat after his new wife, with the result that it sank.

Many customs and superstitions that originated far back in the past have survived relatively unchanged, and are still part of shipboard life. When naval officers salute the quarter-deck they are in effect paying their respects to what was the site of the altar, with its image of the Virgin Mary, in pre-Reformation times. Among the Greeks and Romans, every ship had an altar upon which sacrifices were offered to the sea and sky gods as an insurance against storms and wrecks. The albatross, which is a 'soul bird', is sacrosanct today, largely as a result of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*; and its arrival is regarded as a sign of coming storms. If it leaves its mark on the deck in the form of excrement, this must never be removed but must be left to weather away.

It is said to be unlucky to step forward with the left foot first when boarding a ship and highly ominous to sneeze to the left while doing so. The prejudice against whistling aboard ship, which is still very much alive, is because this was supposed to invoke an adverse wind to the detriment of ship and crew; an example of a superstition which has outlasted the days of sail. One long-standing tradition, now almost forgotten, was to tie a broom to the masthead if a ship was for sale. In Holland this device was used to raise a favourable breeze. In some parts of the British Isles owners of small craft consider it unlucky to pull a boat out of the water stern first.

Portuguese cod fishermen who sail in Newfoundland waters believe that it is unlucky

Universitets Oldsaksamling, Oslo


Axel Poignant

to fish close to the mother ship, and regard Greenland as a 'bad luck area', an island of the dead. Most seamen, however modern their outlook, believe that it is extremely unlucky to have a dead body aboard ship. A corpse should be buried at sea as soon after death as possible, but if it is necessary to bring it ashore, it must always be taken off the ship before anyone else disembarks. In the meantime, for the safety of all on board, the corpse should be laid athwart the ship, and never parallel to the line joining bow and stern. This point is specifically discussed in a 17th century work which inquired as to 'whether a dead body in a ship causes the ship to sail slower and if it does so, what is the reason thereof'.

Fishermen attempt to preserve the luck of a boat, or attract good fortune to it, in various ways. In Ireland a fisherman may refuse to give a light from his pipe on a Monday, in case he should inadvertently surrender his luck for the whole of the ensuing week; and a fisherman will sometimes try to steal someone else's luck by rubbing the bows of his own boat against those of a more fortunate craft. Irish fishermen object strongly to being in the third boat to leave harbour for the fishing grounds as this is said to bring in a poor catch.

In past centuries, boatmen attached stones with holes in them to the bows of their boats, to ward off psychic attack. Called 'holy flints', these were made of the same kind of stone as that used to protect houses against witchcraft. Until comparatively recently it was customary in

Above **The belief that the souls of the dead have to cross a stretch of water in some kind of craft before reaching the otherworld is widespread, and many communities practised ship-burial in ancient times** ***Left*** **Ship in a grave in Norway; Vikings were seated in their boats before being buried** ***Right*** **Viking grave in Denmark, with stones laid out in the shape of a ship** ***Below*** **Illustration of a phantom ship; the concept that a ship is a living entity with a soul has resulted in many legends that tell of ghostly craft**

Harry Price Library/University of London

British ports to throw shoes after a departing ship for luck, a tradition reminiscent of the custom of hurling shoes after the car of a newly-married couple to ensure fertility. Wearing a cap made of hazel catkins was said to protect a vessel from shipwreck.

Any ship cursed with a long run of bad luck is said to be a 'jinx'. In some communities in Britain a small craft with an ominous reputation will be set on fire 'to kill the death in her'. The most notorious of all jinx ships was Brunel's *Great Eastern*, launched in 1858. She was so vast that she had to be launched sideways, in itself an ominous portent. The ship's career was associated with disasters, and she was also uneconomic to run. She acquired a reputation as an ill-fated ship, not only because of her much publicized misfortunes, but also because the ghosts of a riveter and his assistant, who had been accidentally built into the ship's hull, were said to be on board.

There are distinct traces of pagan sacrifice in the 'crossing the line' ceremony, during which anyone who is crossing the Equator for the first time is ritually 'shaved' and ducked. In the days of sail, the ceremony was intimidating to say the least. Tar brushes and bilge water were used, and the razor was usually a rusty iron hoop.

It was at one time customary in various parts of Europe to throw young boys over the ship's side when passing by important headlands, or within sight of temples on the coast. This was apparently a nautical replica of the 'beating the bounds' ceremony on land. A curious tradition, long current in

It was at one time customary in various parts of Europe to throw young boys over the ship's side when passing by important headlands, or within sight of temples on the coast

Devon, associated Sir Francis Drake with throwing a ship's boy from the *Golden Hind* when 'on the other side of the world'. Drake was credited with having supernatural powers of a high order; in one legend, he is said to have cast into the English Channel pieces of wood, which were immediately transformed into the warships with which he overcame the Spanish Armada. In another story, Drake's drum was heard to beat from the flagship of the British Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1918.

A considerable amount of ship lore may be found in sea shanties and ballads belonging to the days of sail. The concept that a ship is a living entity, capable of responding in an intelligent manner to the demands made upon it, is implicit in the song of *Young Allan:*

'Spring up, spring up, my bonny ship
And gold sall be your fee'
Whan the bonny ship heard o' that
That gold sall be her fee
She sprang as fast frae the salt water
As the leaf does frae the tree

An extension of this animistic approach is the ancient concept that a ship has a soul. In Japan, ceremonies were held after a shipwreck and the custom of offering up prayers on behalf of ships that had been despatched to the breakers' yard continued into the present century.

The custom of preserving the bell of a ship after the vessel itself has been broken up is in effect a gesture of respect towards the ship's soul. Like the bell of a church ashore, the ship's bell once had the task of keeping at bay all hostile influences including storms and devils. Understandably enough, the bells of sunken ships are supposed to ring from beneath the seas, from the places where the craft itself lies wrecked. It is said that a ship's bell that rings without human aid is an omen of death; and similarly, a wine glass that emits a ringing sound of its own accord is a sign that a ship and its crew will soon die. The tradition that a captain goes down with his ship is based to some extent upon the old belief that the ship, customarily referred to as 'she', is a living entity.

Ghost ships which haunt the sites of wrecks are often omens of disaster:

The spectre ship in vivid glympsing light,
Glares balefully on the shuddering watch
at night,
Unblest of God or Man.

A ghostly ship with supernatural associations is the 'ship of death'; this vessel has black sails and leaves the water to travel over the land where it sucks into its dreadful vaporous mass the souls of seamen who are doomed to rot in hell. The tradition of the 'ship of death' has a close affinity with that of the phantom coach, the sight of which is supposed to herald a death.

The belief that the souls of the dead have to cross water in some kind of craft in order to reach the otherworld is widespread and there are parallels in many religions: the River Styx of the ancient Greeks, the Vaitarani which borders one of the hells of Hinduism, and the River Jordan which separates the world from the Promised Land of the Christians. The Fijians believe that they can only reach their abode of bliss in a canoe, and the Samoan islanders say of a chief who has recently died that 'he has sailed'. According to Finnish belief, the dead had to travel over nine and a half seas in order to reach the otherworld, and in Arthurian tradition the King was conveyed to the Celtic underworld in a boat.

Apparently working on this assumption that the soul had to be ferried to the underworld, many communities practised ship burial in ancient times. Clay models of barges have been found in Egyptian graves dating back to the Stone Age. Vikings were seated in their boats before burial, as at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk where a king was interred with his longship and treasure, and according to Norse mythology the body of the Scandinavian god Balder was laid in a ship on a funeral pyre (see BALDER). In Denmark Viking graves may be seen on which stones have been laid out in the design of ships.

For the sailor, life after death was represented by 'Fiddler's Green', a happy land where a fiddle never stops playing, where there are wild dances, barbaric music and uninhibited women; in short a place of never-ending shore leave. However, if the seaman had suffered a violent death he would be condemned to haunt the site where he had died as a 'seabound' ghost.
(See also SEA.)

ERIC MAPLE

The Case of the 'Calpean Star'

On 6 July 1959 the *Calpean Star*, a British 14,232 ton cargo liner owned by the Calpe Shipping Company Ltd of Irishtown, Gibraltar, docked at the Huskisson Dock, Liverpool, with a cargo of seals, penguins and an albatross bound for a German zoo. The ship had sailed from Antarctica, picking up the albatross at Bird Island, South Georgia, and was due to sail on to Oslo, concluding a five and half month trip. When the ship docked, 50 of the crew staged a sitdown strike, demanding to be paid off.

The immediate cause of the strike was the crew's objection to having to continue to Oslo instead of being paid off at Liverpool, said the ship's master, Captain Philip Everett-Price, but they also complained of 'misfortunes' which had occurred during the return voyage – engine trouble amongst them.

A report in the *Liverpool Echo* for 7 July said: 'It had been suggested that superstition about the "bird of ill-omen" was a part cause of the trouble, but this the men denied.' In fact, the 'bird of ill-omen' was found dead in its cage after the ship had docked.

The following day, 8 July, a report appeared in the *Liverpool Echo*: 'Violent explosions of propane gas followed by sheets of flame engulfed the new Mersey Docks and Harbour Board shed under construction on the Huskisson Dock early today. Twelve fire engines from all over the Liverpool area fought the blaze.'

According to mariners' tradition, the *Calpean Star* was ill-fated even without having to carry an albatross as part of her cargo, because her name had been changed early the same year from *Highland Chieftain*, when she was taken over by the Calpe Shipping Company and converted from Royal Mail Vessel to whaling transport and cargo liner.

In June 1960 she grounded in Montevideo Harbour and became a total loss – whether the albatross or the name change was responsible is a moot point.

Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

SHIVA

IN MEDIEVAL and modern Hinduism Shiva (or Siva) has come to share with Vishnu the honour of being the supreme deity. 'Share', perhaps, is the wrong word, since for his own devotees Shiva *is* the Supreme Deity, the Absolute, universal Creator and Destroyer of all things, while for Vishnu's devotees the same holds true.

How Shiva came to achieve this supreme position is not clear since in the oldest Hindu scriptures, the *Vedas*, he is not mentioned at all by name. Later tradition, however, associated him with the Vedic god Rudra who himself plays a very minor part in the earliest texts. Of all the Vedic gods Rudra-Shiva is the most magnificent, and yet even there he has two sides to his character, a terrible one which is uppermost and a benign *(shiva)* one which is subsidiary.

In the earliest text, the *Rig-Veda*, Rudra-Shiva is rather a lone wolf. He is rarely associated with other gods except the Maruts (also called Rudras), the gods of the storm. As the divine archer he pursues a solitary course, shooting his arrows indiscriminately at whom he will. These arrows bring death and disease, 'fever, cough and poison'. His anger is unpredictable and all his devotees can hope for is to transfer it to their enemies. In the *Vedas* he is 'black, swarthy, murderous and fearful' and, stranger still, 'the lord of thieves and robbers'.

But there is another side to him: for he is not only the great destroyer, but also the divine physician, and his hand is 'soothing, healing and cool'. In him the opposites of unbridled erratic force and an almost maternal gentleness meet.

In the last of the *Vedas*, the *Atharva-Veda*, Rudra is called the 'Lord of Beasts'; and it is in this form that one of the sects devoted to him were to worship him in later times, for they saw themselves as Rudra's flock and Rudra (-Shiva) himself as the divine shepherd. And yet the full status of the later Shiva was only faintly indicated in the earliest Vedic texts. Scholars, therefore, assumed that his origins must have gone back to a more ancient period before the Aryans invaded India. This view has now been vindicated by the discovery of figurines of a deity whose head is adorned by the horns of a bull and who is surrounded by wild beasts. This has very plausibly been identified with the 'Lord of Beasts' of the *Atharva-Veda*. What is more, the god is squatting in a position later characteristic of the contemplative yogi and he has an erect phallus. This surprising bringing together of the posture of contemplation and the symbol of sexual power is in fact characteristic of the later Shiva.

Left **Universal Creator and Destroyer of all things, Shiva is often depicted as a slayer of demons; one of his victims was Andhaka who attempted to steal the Parijata tree of Indra which perfumed the whole of paradise: illustration to a 16th century Mogul manuscript**
Facing page **The male and female principles are united in Shiva; 18th century miniature showing Shiva as a fair man with five faces**

The mythology of Shiva is fully developed in the *Mahabharata*, India's great epic poem, and in the various *Puranas* dedicated to him or to his symhol, the phallus. His original (Vedic) name Rudra gradually gives way to Shiva, the 'auspicious' or 'benign'. And yet the fully-developed figure of Shiva is anything but 'benign'. He is wrathful, incalculable, jealous in the Old Testament sense of that word, devoid of comeliness, wild, sometimes raving mad. He haunts the cremation-ground, clad in elephant hide or tiger skin, his neck encircled with a necklace of skulls, with serpents in his hair. He wears the matted locks of an ascetic and his austerities are prodigious.

But this fierce asceticism is only one side to his character; he is also the 'Lord of the Dance'; and his dance is twofold. Either he dances in the sheer joy of overwhelming power – he dances creation into existence; or else, in the Tandava dance, he careers down the mountainside, like a madman or a drunkard, surrounded by a rout of half-human, half-animal creatures who urge him on in his mad career. This dance represents the destruction of the world. His constant companion is the white bull Nandin and his consort is variously called Parvati, Uma, Kali, and Durga, the last two represented as even more terrible than himself (see KALI).

The significance of Shiva is that he is the reconciliation of all opposites: therefore he is both creator and destroyer, terrible and mild, good and evil, eternal rest and ceaseless activity. His consort is really only a part of himself – his 'power' by which he creates, sustains, and destroys. In the so-called Shakta cults (cults of Shakti or 'power') this 'power' is worshipped to exclusion of Shiva himself as being the active and 'committed' side of his nature.

In the full figure of Shiva, however, the male and female principles are united, and he himself is sometimes represented as half male and half female. The emblem under which he delights to be worshipped is the *lingam*, or phallus, which is always erect. Lingam and *yoni* (the female organ) together represent the totality of Nature and of all created existence. Unlike the discus of Vishnu, Shiva's lingam is the *natural* symbol of supreme creative power, and even the gods bow down in worship of it.

In the *Shvetashvatara-Upanishad* Shiva is identified with the Absolute but he is also the Supreme Deity who created and sustains all things. The sexual mythology is still there but 'spiritualized': 'With the one unborn Female . . . who produces many creatures like herself lies the one unborn Male, taking his delight: another unborn Male leaves her when she has had her pleasure.' Both the one and the other are Shiva, for he is forever involved in the creative process and forever unaffected by it.

'Who over wisdom and unwisdom rules, he is Another':.that 'other' is Shiva, 'the One God hidden in all beings, pervading all, of all beings the Inmost Self, of all works the overseer, . . . witness, observer, absolute, alone, devoid of attributes', the one *personal* God who transcends both time and eternity. (See also HINDUISM; INDIA.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

Sven Gahlin

Blasted to Death

The legend goes that after the tragic death of Sati, Siva returned to Mount Kailasa where he sat wrapt in meditation. In the interval Sati was reborn as Parvati and when she came of age she desired to marry Siva. Accordingly she made her abode not far from the scene of Siva's meditations, and worshipped him.

It was at this time that the demon Taraka began his tyranny over the fourteen worlds, and it became imperative that Siva be the father of a child, since only a son of Siva could be expected to cope with Taraka. The love-god Kama was entrusted with the task of distracting Siva, and he waited for a suitable opportunity and shot an arrow at the god just as Parvati was walking past. Opening his eyes and beholding the voluptuous form Siva emitted his seed, which fell into a fire and from this was born Karttikeya who eventually killed Taraka.

Another version has it that Siva merely blasted Kama to death with a flash of his third eye, scorned Parvati for her dark complexion, for she was an aboriginal deity, and resumed his meditations. Parvati thereupon took to asceticism to win the god's love.

Benjamin Walker *Hindu World*

The prophecies of the Sibyls were manifestations of a power to which they felt they were enslaved, and usually referred to disasters such as war and famine; wanderers without regular succession in most places, the Sibyls have been described as freelances in prophecy

SIBYLS

THE PROPHETESSES who bore the title of Sibyl in antiquity are celebrated in literature, and many are mentioned in allusions scattered through Greek and Latin texts, but their historical character is not easy to grasp. Some of their personal names are known, but even in ancient tradition these appear unimportant. The classical Sibyls originated in Greek Asia Minor and were probably of oriental origin. They are always connected with Apollo, the god of prophecy (see APOLLO), who also originated in Asia Minor. But they are not his ordinary priestesses, nor even his ordinary prophetesses, for by comparison with the Pythia of Delphi, who was protected and controlled by a skilful priesthood, they appear as freelances in prophecy without regular succession in most places. They would be little more than a minor curiosity of classical lore if Virgil had not assigned a crucial role in the *Aeneid* to the Sibyl of Cumae. Indeed, when the Sibylline books of Rome are added to this account, it is clear that the renown of Sibyls in later literature and art is Roman rather than Greek.

Sibyls do not appear in Homer and are not well established elsewhere in Greek epic. But one character who has the marks of a Sibyl and is occasionally called one, is the Trojan princess Cassandra, whom Apollo loved but could not win, so that he gave her the gift of prophecy, but always as a painful fit of inspiration, in which her utterances were never believed. In Lycophron's iambic poem *Alexandra*, written in the 3rd century BC, Cassandra is made to give a long and exceedingly obscure prophetic monologue on the future fates and wanderings of the Greek chiefs returning from Troy, and of Aeneas, their opponent, who reached Latium in western Italy. This tradition reappears in the *Aeneid*, where the Sibyl leads Aeneas eventually into the presence of the dead Anchises to hear him foretell the future greatness of Rome.

In Greece the best-known Sibyl, typical of all of them, belonged to Erythrae on the coast of Asia Minor facing Chios. She is probably the one mentioned by Heraclitus as quoted by Plutarch, who says of her, 'The Sibyl with raving mouth, uttering things without smiles, without graces and without myrrh, reaches over a thousand years because of the god.' Sibyls were in fact believed to live for 900 or 1000 years, and it was thought that sometimes even after death they could make their voices heard in the air. Other Sibyls, of whom little is known, were those of Marpessus of Alexandria in the Troad, of Phrygia, of Sardis, of Delphi, of Thessaly, of Egypt, and, in the west, of Cumae in Campania. Very little remains of their actual prophecies except for inscriptions such as one at Erythrae in the Sibyl's dwelling, and such late compilations as the book *On Long Lived Persons* by Phlegon of Tralles, who lived in the 2nd century AD. In one utterance there a Sibyl claims a status between the human and the divine, and in another expresses jealousy or dislike of Apollo's priests or even of Apollo himself. The prophecies generally refer, like many others in history, to expected disasters such as war, plague and famine. The Sibyls were very loosely attached to the pan-Hellenic Olympian religion and even to local cults, and are often said to have been wanderers. Their prophecies were compulsive manifestations of a power to which they felt enslaved.

In the *Aeneid* Virgil makes the Sibyl a figure already established at Cumae at a time corresponding to the Greek heroic age. Such traditions at least suggest the antiquity of the influence of Greek religion in

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase 1924, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest

'The Sibyl with raving mouth, uttering things without smiles, without graces and without myrrh, reaches over a thousand years because of the god'; Heraclitus was probably referring to the Sibyl of Erythrae, on the coast of Asia Minor, but in fact these prophetesses of antiquity were commonly thought to live for as long as 1000 years. It was sometimes said that, even after death, they were able to make their voices heard in the air: Michelangelo's studies for a Sibyl, one of the hundreds of figures in his series of paintings in the Sistine Chapel, Rome

Italy, even if it is here exaggerated. The Sibyl, in frenzied inspiration, prophesies the terrible wars which will follow Aeneas's landing in Italy. She then conducts him through the entire extent of the infernal regions before leading him to meet his father Anchises among the blessed, and from there into the upper world again, through the ivory gate of dreams. No Sibyl of old Greece had a role of such grandeur.

The Sibylline Books

The celebrated legend of the Sibylline books, recorded by Varro and Dionysius, is among the more historical of Roman traditions of Sibyls. These were offered for sale to King Tarquin of Rome (reports vary between Tarquinius Priscus and his son Tarquinius Superbus) by a mysterious woman who was perhaps the Sibyl of Cumae. Nine books were offered but rejected because the price was too high; then, when she had destroyed three, six were offered at the same price as the nine but were again refused. Finally on the insistent advice of the augurs, the last three were bought at the price of the original nine. They were kept by the Roman state for centuries under the special care of a board of magistrates, were concealed from public view, and were consulted, with the help of Greek slaves, at moments of crisis or when alarming prodigies such as monstrous births occurred. They were used during the Latin wars and much later when Rome was threatened by the Gauls and Hannibal. Exceptional sacrifices were ordered for the infernal powers after consultations and once in 226 BC the burial alive of a Gaulish and a Greek couple. Sibylline oracles had much earlier been mocked by the Greek Aristophanes as texts of nonsense, but the Romans, perhaps following Etruscan tradition in such matters, regarded them as sacred texts giving practical rules for dealing with abnormal, uncanny and perilous situations.

Apart from the classical Greek and Roman framework, a large collection of Jewish, Chaldean and Christian prophetic poetry, in Greek hexameters, was formed in the eastern Mediterranean region in Hellenistic and Roman times. This collection is now known as the *Oracula Sibyllina*.

E. D. PHILLIPS

Based on the teachings of Guru Nanak, Sikhism requires its followers to 'avoid all conduct that does not conform to the truth that is God'

SIKHS

THE ROOTS of the Sikh tradition lie in the Punjab, a region in north-western India where Hinduism and Islam have confronted one another ever since the 10th century AD. At various times religious movements arose which combined features of Hindu and Islamic thinking, and the 11th and 12th centuries saw the development of a mysticism based on the ecstatic experience of saintly men, the Sufis (see SUFIS). Though they were adherents of Islam, the Sufis accepted certain Hindu ideas and practices, and converted many Hindus to their own faith. The interaction of the two religions did not lead to a true synthesis, however, and repeated attacks by fanatical Moslem invaders destroyed such mutual tolerance as the Sufi movement had created.

In the 15th century there was another upsurge of syncretistic ideas, and it was in this atmosphere that Sikhism arose as a new and distinct religious movement. The Sikh community gradually assumed the character of an ethnic group of distinct cultural heritage and national sentiment. Today there are about eight million Sikhs in India, and expatriate Sikh communities which retain their sense of identity exist in Britain, Canada, the United States, Afghanistan, Iran, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia and East Africa.

The undisputed founder of Sikhism was Nanak, believed to have been born in 1469 in a village not far from Lahore. The story of his life is embedded in a welter of legends, but there is no doubt that his family background was that of a high Hindu caste, and that he became familiar with Moslem concepts and practices at an early age. His father was a village accountant, but Nanak showed little interest in the family profession, although he entered the service of a Moslem prince and held this position for 13 years in order to support his wife and children. Though he was deeply religious, and often consorted with both Hindu and Moslem ascetics, Nanak did not envisage complete renunciation of secular life. He was middle-aged when he had a mystic experience while taking a ritual bath in a river. It is believed that in this vision he received the divine command to go into the world and teach mankind to pray to one supreme Creator god. Nanak then disappeared for three days, and was believed to have been drowned; but he returned to announce his newly-found faith which was epitomized in the declaration: 'There is no Hindu, there is no Moslem.'

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Religious power is vested in the entire Sikh community, and their actions are guided by the scriptures set out in their holy book, a focal point of their ritual: gold tablet inscribed with the sacred tenets of the Sikh religion, in the 'golden temple' at Amritsar

This incident marked the end of the first phase in Nanak's life. The search for truth was over, and he was intent on proclaiming his faith to the people of the world. He left his wife and home, and travelled widely, visiting many places sacred to Hindus and Buddhists as well as to Moslems. He saw how religion was practised by the adherents of various faiths and he determined to do away with superficial ritual, and concentrate in his teaching on the essence and purity of faith in a supreme deity.

From then on he became known as *Guru* (teacher) Nanak, and it is believed that his mission took him to Baghdad, Mecca and Medina. He certainly mixed with both Hindus and Moslems, and dressed in a manner combining the styles of the ascetics of both faiths. Many incidents of his life as a wandering ascetic are reported in the biographies compiled by his disciples, and though historical facts are interspersed with legendary elements, the picture that emerges is of a preacher of great independence of mind, who discounted the value of many traditional ritual practices, and advocated a religion focused on the love of God and the love of man.

On his travels Nanak gathered as his disciples many men and women who dissented from both Hinduism and Islam. The earlier Sufis had prepared the ground for a religion which dispensed with elaborate ritual and sought mystical union with God. Nanak's teaching appealed especially to the underprivileged Hindus of the lower castes, and to the poorer Moslems.

In later life Nanak returned to his family and settled down at Kartapur, where he combined work on his farm with teaching the disciples who flocked to him from many parts of the Punjab. He made them observe

William MacQuitty

a strict routine of prayers and work, and set up a communal kitchen where people of all castes and social status ate together, a practice diametrically opposed to the traditional segregation of the various Hindu castes. Nanak is believed to have died in 1539 and, according to legend, his body disappeared from among the flowers which surrounded it, thus obviating the problem of whether it should be cremated in Hindu style or buried according to Moslem custom.

During his wanderings as a preacher Nanak had set up centres of worship in widely separated areas, but those in distant places did not last very long. He had spoken and written in the language of the Punjab and it was in the Punjab that his message took root. His concept of God was derived more from Islam than from Hinduism. He was a strict monotheist and his disapproval of the worship of images placed him in conscious opposition to Hindu ritual. He believed that God was truth as opposed to falsehood and illusion; to tell a lie is to be ungodly, and untruthful conduct not only hurts one's neighbour, but is also irreligious. A good Sikh therefore must believe that God is the one omnipotent reality, and he must avoid all conduct that does not conform to the truth that is God. Nanak believed that the power that was God could not be defined because God was formless.

This abstract definition of God did not prevent Nanak from referring to him by a variety of names, such as 'Father of all mankind', 'Lover and Master of the devotee', and 'Great Giver'. He insisted that in order

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Top **The 'golden temple' at Amritsar, the central sanctuary of Sikhism; built by Ram Das, the fourth Sikh guru, it contains the *Granth Sahib* or 'master book' of sacred scriptures *Above*** **Pilgrim outside the 'golden temple'; because they are forbidden to shave or cut their hair, orthodox Sikhs have beards, and long hair which they tie up under turbans**

to understand the nature of God, man needed a guru, a religious guide inspired by God. Hinduism was the source of Nanak's belief in rebirth and his doctrine that man's fortunes are shaped by his deeds in a previous existence. Fortune and misfortune and all social inequality are said to be the natural products of individual conduct. Linked with this idea is the belief in retribution and rewards after death. A bridge as narrow as a knife's edge leads to the world beyond, and sinners, unable to cross this bridge, fall into an abyss filled with blood, while the pure walk safely across. Redemption is achieved neither by rigid asceticism nor by pilgrimages and the endless repetition of prayers, but by faith in the truth of God, and by integrity of conduct.

As well as being a preacher of a new doctrine, Nanak also organized and advocated social and religious reforms. His message has been preserved in a book of hymns which he recited so frequently that they became firmly lodged in the minds of his followers. Today they are a central part of Sikh sacred scriptures. They were composed in metric form and in a peculiar language, known as Gurmukhi, the 'tongue of the Guru'. In the same way that Nanak's teaching embraced Hindu and Moslem ideas, so the literary Gurmukhi language was a conglomerate of Hindi, Arabic and Persian elements. His successors developed a special alphabet for the Sikh scriptures.

Although Nanak did not formulate a rigidly defined doctrine to be adhered to by all Sikhs, he made arrangements for his succession and by doing so laid the foundations for what became in practice a Sikh 'Church'. In preference to his own sons Nanak chose Guru Angad (1539–1552) to be his successor. Angad was a former devotee of the fierce Hindu goddess Durga. Like his master, he tried to avoid the formation of a separate sect, and sought to preserve Sikhism as a movement of reform and a

medium of reconciliation. But he was conscious of the twin dangers of absorption in Hinduism and eradication by militant Moslems.

Angad's successor was Amar Das and under him Sikhism assumed an attitude of conscious opposition to Hinduism. He rebelled against the practice of burning widows, a Hindu custom that had continued among Sikhs, he castigated the avarice of many Brahmin priests in his poems, and he argued against the evils of worshipping images and a multitude of gods. He emphasized the sad state of the world and the virtue of humility and penitence, and spoke of a God dwelling in men's hearts. He made the communal kitchen an integral institution of the Sikh Church by insisting that anyone who wanted to see him had first to accept his hospitality by eating with his disciples. In the case of high-caste Hindus, doing so showed willingness to abandon narrow caste-prejudices. Among Amar Das's innumerable visitors was the Mogul Emperor Akbar, who was so impressed by the lofty ideals of the community that he assured the Guru of his patronage.

Amar Das was succeeded by his son-in-law Ram Das, who founded the town which later became known as Amritsar, 'pool of nectar'. When Ram Das died, his own son Arjun (1581–1606) became the fifth Guru and during his term of office the Sikhs turned more and more into a distinct religious and political community. By compiling the writings of his predecessors and adding hymns and poems of his own, he created a large body of sacred scriptures which subsequently came to be regarded as the religious heritage of Sikhism. Arjun also built the 'golden temple' at Amritsar, which became the central sanctuary of Sikhism.

Martial Tradition

After the death of the Emperor Akbar, the Sikhs suffered from the oppressive policies of less tolerant Moslem rulers. This forced them into a defensive position and accelerated the growth of a political organization. Under Arjun's successors, and particularly the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh (1675–1708), the Sikhs created a theocratic state, of which the Khalsa, an elite group, became the military arm. Gobind Singh did not appoint a successor but decreed that after him the power of the Guru should be vested in the entire Sikh community, whose actions should be guided by the sacred scriptures, to be referred to as Guru Granth Sahib, 'Master Book'. This book has been venerated ever since, and has been treated as if it were the Guru himself.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the Sikhs became involved in armed conflicts with the imperial Moslem power, as well as with the Hindu states that surrounded the Sikh region. Gradually they carved out several principalities which were integrated into a sovereign state by Ranjit Singh, the most prominent military Sikh leader of his time. In 1809 he concluded a treaty with the British, which defined the southern limit of his kingdom. Subsequently the Sikhs fought successfully against invading Afghans, but a clash with the British in 1849 ended with the subjugation of the Sikh state and the annexation of the Punjab by the British rulers of India. By that time, however, the Sikhs had developed as a separate ethnic and cultural group, distinct from all other communities of India.

After the establishment of the Khalsa as a military elite, the Sikhs developed a strong martial tradition. They entered the British Indian Army in great numbers and distinguished themselves in many wars as tough and dependable soldiers.

A tragic situation arose when, in 1947, the division of the Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan resulted in the partition of the Punjab, the Sikh's traditional homeland. While the majority lived in the regions allotted to India, substantial minorities remained on the Pakistan side of the newly-drawn boundary. Though the founder of Sikhism had envisaged his doctrine as a means of reconciling Hindus and Moslems, it now appeared that in the Islamic state of Pakistan there was no place for Sikhs, and in bloody clashes between Moslems and Hindus, the Sikhs found themselves on the side of the Hindus.

In a mass emigration triggered off by persecution and massacres, the Sikhs of West Punjab flooded into India, leaving their ancestral homes and many of their temples. Their cohesion as a community with a fanatical faith in its identity enabled them to establish themselves among their co-religionists in East Punjab. In the course of a long political struggle they finally obtained their own state, carved out of East Punjab, while the districts where Hindus are in a majority were established as the new state of Haryana. The fulfilment of the Sikhs' agitation was reached in 1970 when Chandigarh, the town designed by Le Corbusier as the capital of the undivided East Punjab and till then shared with Haryana, was allotted to the Sikh state.

Wherever their communities dwell, both in India and in Western countries, Sikhs follow the same practices in worship and the same pattern of living. The focal point of their ritual is the holy book. It occupies a central position in all temples and is solemnly displayed at every service. One room in the home should be set aside for this holy book, and part of it read every day. Most Sikh services include the distribution of communion food, and new members are initiated in a rite during which they must vow to adhere to the Sikh faith and to observe certain rules of behaviour. Among these is a ban on shaving or cutting any part of the body hair; it is for this reason that orthodox Sikhs have beards, and long hair which they tie up under their turbans. Any mutilation of the body, such as circumcision or piercing the nose or ears is also forbidden.

Sikhs in foreign lands consider the observance of these rules to be an essential part of their religion and tend to resist adaptation to local customs of hair style. Nevertheless, there is a class of young men among the educated and wealthy Sikhs in India who have begun to give up the practice of wearing their hair and beards unshorn. Although they may retain other symbols of Sikhism, they are regarded as renegades by the orthodox, who maintain that there is no such thing as a clean-shaven Sikh; at best such a person is a Hindu believing in Sikhism. Today there is a tendency where Sikhs are dispersed among Hindus to adapt to the Hindu pattern, and to dilute Sikh ritual and tradition. However, with the creation of the Sikh-dominated state of East Punjab, where nationalistic sentiment underpins religious practice, the Sikhs have acquired a national home and with it a new lease of life for their religion and their traditions.

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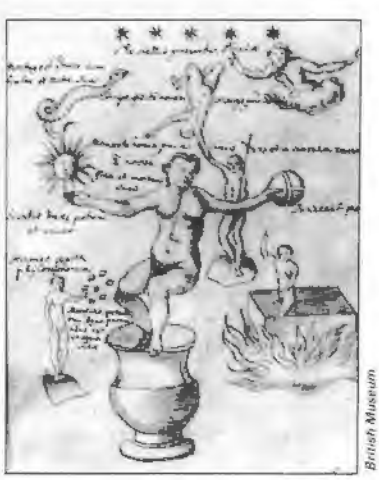
Mansell Collection

Silenus

In classical mythology, one of the Sileni, woodland spirits who became associated with Dionysus and the satyrs (see DIONYSUS; SATYRS); represented as an elderly, fat, hairy but bald-headed man with the ears of a horse, riding an ass or a wineskin; he is profoundly wise and constantly drunk; sometimes said to have been the teacher of the young Dionysus or the father of the satyrs; Socrates was compared with him for wisdom and ugliness.



British Museum

Silver

Metal of the moon, because of its colour; according to some alchemists a stage in their work was the making of the White Stone, which turned all things to silver and which they connected with the white stone mentioned in Revelation 2.17: there is a widespread tradition that a silver bullet is needed to kill a sorcerer, a witch or an evil ghost.

See ALCHEMY; CORRESPONDENCES.

SIMEON STYLITES

Sonia Halliday

Renowned for the fanatical austerity of his life, Simeon has nevertheless been described as modest, humble and sweet-tempered: wall painting from Asinou Church, Cyprus

A CHRISTIAN SAINT of the 5th century, Simeon passed 42 of his 70 years in the Syrian desert, perched on top of a pillar which he eventually built up to a height of 50 or 60 feet. Here he endured not only the scorching summer days and bitterly cold winter nights, clad only in a simple leather tunic, but also the rigours of frequent fasting, and the hideous discomfort of a platform too small to lie down on.

Simeon was born to Christian parents in 389 at Sisan, a village on the borders of Syria and Cilicia in Asia Minor. He never attended school, but from an early age helped to look after his father's sheep. When he was 13, he entered a local monastery as a servant, after hearing the Sermon on the Mount read in church. He had been deeply moved by the Beatitudes, and had a vision in which he was digging the foundations of a building, and heard a voice bidding him four times to dig deeper in order to build higher.

After two years as a novice, Simeon went to another monastery at Teleda, where he led a life of such fanatical austerity that he was finally ordered to leave, in case he exerted an undue influence on his brother monks. A typical incident was his attempt to mortify the flesh by tying a rope of twisted palm leaves round his waist so tightly that he caused ulcers, the stench of which, after a number of days, drew the attention of his superiors. Simeon fainted with the agony when the rope had to be cut out of his flesh with a knife, and lay on the floor for some time as if dead.

Leaving Teleda, Simeon went to Tell-neshin, near Antioch, where he persuaded a local abbot to wall him up in a cell during Lent, with ten loaves and a jug of water. At the end of Lent, Simeon was found stretched almost lifeless on the floor of his cell, with the bread and water untouched. He was revived with a moist sponge, and given a few lettuce leaves to eat. For the rest of his life Simeon fasted completely throughout Lent, standing and praising God to begin with, and gradually sinking to the ground as the strength ebbed from him. Later in life, on his pillar, he managed to remain standing throughout the fast, tied to a pole in the early years; gradually he was able to dispense with this aid.

When Simeon eventually took up the life of a solitary in the rolling stony hills to the west of Aleppo, he at first chained himself to a rock. But Bishop Meletios of Antioch advised him to scorn such a material bond, and to trust in his own will, sustained by divine grace, to keep him to his ascetic life. Simeon's first biographer, who knew him personally, reported that when the iron chain was removed from Simeon's leg, 40 large bugs were discovered on his skin underneath the shackle.

Simeon acquired a reputation as a healer of all sorts of sickness, and was an especial favourite of women who believed themselves to be barren. It was to get away from mobs of admirers and miracle-seekers that Simeon first resorted to the idea of building a column. He first built an enclosure, and then a column inside it. Accounts vary as to the exact size of this column, which he raised higher and higher as the years passed, but according to a Syriac biography written not long after his death, it rose finally to a height of 40 cubits (roughly 67 feet) and consisted of three huge drums, in honour of the Holy Trinity.

Simeon spent most of the time standing upright on a small platform at the top of the column, which could be reached by means of a rope ladder, though he varied his posture by leaning against a post, and inclining his head in prayer. An observer once counted 1244 obeisances during a day's prayer before coming to the end of his own, but not the saint's, powers of endurance. The constant standing gave Simeon an ulcer on his foot from which pus ran constantly. He is reported to have had spells of blindness, during which his eyes were open.

He regularly preached two sermons a day, and prayed all night with his hands raised. His sermons were greatly admired, and he is also described as a pleasing and ready conversationalist. He was at the disposal of the crowd who flocked to stare at him every afternoon, and to the end of his life listened to requests, healed the sick, and reconciled disputants. He was available to labourers, peasants and beggars, and also to the high and mighty of his time. He was in correspondence with potentates and Church dignitaries in many parts of Christendom, but also preached to pagans and prayed and spoke on their behalf. His extraordinary way of life had its detractors, but those who knew him well insist that he was humble, modest, easy and sweet-tempered. In spite of his solitary existence, he took part in many of the controversies of the day.

When he died thousands attended his funeral, which was celebrated with a torch-light procession through Antioch. A great church was built at Qalaat Semaan, which was unique in Christendom in being centred on the saint's pillar, instead of an altar. Simeon set an example for dozens of stylite (pillar) saints in the centuries that followed his death, and isolated examples have been reported down to modern times. The base of the original column is still standing at Qalaat Semaan to this day.

SIMON MAGUS

THIS SAMARITAN magician and, perhaps, Gnostic teacher of the first Christian century, is known from the New Testament book of Acts and from later Christian writers. According to Acts (chapter 8), Simon was a magician (hence called 'Magns'), baptized as a Christian after seeing miracles performed by Christian evangelists in Samaria. Two apostles, Peter and John, came from Jerusalem and laid hands on other converts, who then received the Holy Spirit. Simon offered money (hence the later term simony) for the power of transmission; Peter harshly rebuked him and predicted his doom. Conceivably, the author of Acts knew that Simon was also a Gnostic revealer and redeemer, for he is described as 'saying that he himself was somebody great' and as known in Samaria as 'that power of God which is called Great'. It may be that the author intentionally refrained from mentioning his dangerous Gnostic teaching, although it is possible that Simon had not yet developed it.

In any event, by the time of the theologian Justin Martyr (c 150) Simon was regarded as the founder of Christian heresy. Justin himself came from Samaria and knew that Simon was a native of the village of Gitthae. It was said that he claimed to be 'the first God' and that a prostitute named Helen embodied 'the first conception' of his mind. He was worshipped by 'practically all the Samaritans'. Justin had also been told that during the reign of Claudius (41–54) Simon had practised the art of magic at Rome; the Senate and the Roman People had erected a statue in his honour, with the inscription SIMONI DEO SANCTO ('to Simon, the holy God'). Unfortunately, in the 16th century this inscription, or one like it, was discovered. It read SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO, a dedication to the old Sabine deity Semo Sancus. Presumably the error was due not simply to Justin's poor eyesight but to the power of suggestion exercised over him by Simonians. It reflects Simonian propaganda of the mid-2nd century.

Other Church writers, perhaps relying on a lost work by Justin, tell more about Simon's system. He was the 'Father above all' and in the beginning emitted from himself the 'Mother of all', his first Thought. She descended from the height and generated angels and powers who, in turn, made the world. Because of their desire to be regarded as supreme creators, they imprisoned their Mother and made her pass from one female body into another – for example, into Helen of Troy, whose fatal beauty was the cause of the Trojan War. Finally she was a captive in the body of a prostitute from Tyre. Simon, who viewed her as his 'lost sheep' (compare Luke 15. 4–7), came down through the planetary spheres to look for her and save her. He appeared among the Jews as Son (that is, as Jesus), among the Samaritans as Father, and elsewhere as Holy Spirit; his followers also identified him with Zeus and Helen with Athene. His rescue of Helen was a model for his rescue of 'those who are his' everywhere. He freed her and them from the authority of the hostile angels, who not only had created the world but also had produced the Old Testament law and prophecies in order to enslave mankind under conventional morality. Simon's followers, saved by his 'grace' or favour, were free to do whatever they wished. What they wished, according to Christian critics, was to make use of incantations and magic.

With the passage of time, further details about Simon's life came into existence. Christians at Rome told of his flight over the city, terminated after prayer by the apostle Peter. Others claimed that he tried to emulate the burial and resurrection of Jesus but did not survive the experience. In the Jewish-Christian Clementine romances he was described as a follower of the Jewish or Samaritan heretic Dositheus, who recognized him as 'the Standing One', as God.

Regarded as the 'Father above all' by his followers, Simon Magus was credited with numerous magical feats; according to one legend he attempted to fly over Rome, but the evil spirits who had raised him were forced to cast him down to earth again by the prayers of Peter and Paul: Simon Magus with the Roman emperor and the apostles, from a 14th century Italian manuscript

Simon's magic was said to produce everything one could desire: invisibility, invulnerability, the animation of statues, tunnelling under mountains, transformation into a sheep or goat. Like Jesus, he was said to have been born of a virgin mother.

Since the 16th century the figure of Simon Magus has been merged, in Western culture, with that of the magician Faust, whose memory was combined with medieval tales about Simon and with the idea of a pact with the Devil (see FAUST). The first book about this Faust, by an anonymous author, was published at Frankfurt in 1587. In an English translation it inspired Christopher Marlowe's *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, published in 1604. Extremely popular during the 17th and 18th centuries, the story of Faust was given its greatest expression in the work of Goethe, who recast it and deepened its philosophical interpretation (see GOETHE). Composers were attracted by the story – for example, Berlioz, Liszt and Gounod in the Romantic era. The most successful treatment is to be found in the eighth (choral) symphony of Gustav Mahler (1907).

The modern Faust is not, of course, identical with the Simon Magus of the early Christian period, who was not described as making a pact with the Devil; and Faust's Helen is not Simon's. Goethe's emphasis on the goodness of human freedom and striving, however, is not unlike the Simonian stress on emancipation and magic.

Certain questions raised by the Simonians were faced more radically than was the case among their Christian opponents. Was man simply to accept (or, among ascetic groups, to reject) the world of Nature or was he to control it? To what extent were traditional and biblical ethical systems simply the products of convention? What was the place of woman or 'the female principle' in the created order and in the process of salvation? These questions were to be elaborated in the modern treatment of Faust, but in principle, at least, they were already raised among the followers of Simon Magus.

R. M. GRANT

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The experience of sin is not the same as that of the difference between right and wrong, or good and bad; it is an essentially religious concept based on man's relationship with a transcendent reality or order

SIN

FEW CONCEPTS have been as significant and influential in the history of religions, and few have been so denigrated in modern times, as the concept of sin. Most religions have a variety of terms to render the idea of sin, and there is a wide range of nuances and emphases in the various religious cultures, and even within a single religion. One way of studying the concept of 'sin' would therefore be to analyse the meanings of the different terms used in the various religions, cultures and languages. For example, there is the Old Testament (*het, awon, pesha*, and so on), the New Testament (which mostly uses the Greek word *hamartia*), Hindu tradition (*papa*, which includes both ritual and moral sin), China (*tsui, o, kuo*), or Japanese Shinto (*tsumi, aku*). Practically all religions and cultures, even the most primitive ones, have terms more or less equivalent to 'sin', and very often the variety of terms in even a single culture reflects differentiations of various types of categories of sin (for example, *ama-tsu-tsumi* and *kuni-tsu-tsumi*, 'sins relating to heaven' and 'sins relating to earth' in Japanese Shinto).

Offending the Gods

Sin is an essentially religious concept since it implies an offence with regard to a religiously or supernaturally conceived reality: a personal god or gods, a divine order of things, or a set of taboos possessing supernatural sanctions. It is this added quality which distinguishes 'sinning' from 'wrongdoing', and renders the experience of sin different from the experience of the difference between right and wrong, or good and bad.

Sin is based on man's experience of, and his relation with, a transcendent reality or order. In the perspective of this relationship, all evil, wrong or unjust acts, and even the awareness of inescapable human inadequacy, acquire the additional quality and depth-dimension of 'sin'.

The elaboration of this concept, the interpretation and the consequences of the sense of sin, vary in different cultures, at different periods in the history of the same culture, and in the lives of individuals, even in any one period. So do the means devised for escaping the consequences of sin – rites of purification, atonement, remission of sins, penitential exercises and mortifications. Or means may be devised to escape the sense of sin itself, for instance by mobilizing psychological theories in defence of the assertion that there is no such thing as sin or sinfulness.

Rejection of God's Will

Because sin, as distinct from mere wrongdoing, is connected with man's relationship with the transcendent sphere, it is closely bound up with the ways in which the various religions represent this sphere and man's relation to it. There is a tendency in most religions to consider misfortunes of all kinds (sickness, famine, drought, defeat in war) as the result of sin (the anger of irate gods or spirits, punishment meted out by a just godhead, the automatic irruption of destructive forces resulting from a disturbance of the right order). Methods and rituals are therefore evolved for detecting sin, punishing the culprits or finding a scapegoat, or obliterating the sin by appropriate ritual acts or by obtaining forgiveness from the offended deity. By and large, most ancient religions do not distinguish between ritual and moral offences, and very often the former, the breaking of ritual taboos, for instance, appear to have been regarded as more serious.

The ancient Mesopotamian texts suggest a preoccupation with ritual offences. The ancient Egyptian texts (in which innocence from all sins is mentioned as a prerequisite for life after death) catalogue both ritual and moral transgressions, blasphemy and murder for instance, without distinction, whereas in ancient Greece and Rome the social character of religion also led to a greater emphasis on 'sins' relevant to the social order. The Hebrew prophets, who never tired of speaking of the sinfulness of the people and of God's wrath and imminent punishment, nevertheless shifted the emphasis from ritual to moral values as in the book of Micah (chapter 6).

> "With what shall I come before the Lord,
> and bow myself before God on high?
> Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
> with calves a year old?
> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of
> rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
> Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
> the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
> He has showed you, O man, what is good;
> and what does the Lord require of you
> but to do justice, and to love kindness,
> and to walk humbly with your God?

A deepening of experience and of reflection on the character of human nature and its inherent failings and inadequacies led to a more systematic and fundamental consideration of sin and sinfulness. Whereas Islam takes it for granted that man is weak and always liable to sin, it holds Allah to be not only a stern judge but also compassionate and forgiving. Sins are essentially the result of human weakness which fails to obey the commands of Allah.

In Christianity, too, sin is conceived essentially as disobedience to, or a conscious rejection of, God's will; but the experience of sinfulness and the elaboration of the doctrine of sin have been carried further than in any other religion. In fact, sin can be regarded as one of the pivotal concepts of Christianity. Though essentially a religion of salvation, the salvation which it brings is primarily from sin. Christ on the cross took upon himself the sins of mankind, and by his suffering and death procured atonement and expiation. He was the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world', and in the account of the Last Supper, on which the rite of the Eucharist is based, Jesus says to his disciples as he gives them the cup of wine 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matthew 26.27–8).

Whilst bringing the good news of liberation from the power of sin, Christianity also did much to foster awareness of this power, sometimes to a pathological degree. Man is a poor and miserable sinner, and only contrition, continuous penance and resort to the sacramental means of grace provided by the Church will save him from

the dire consequences of both his essential sinfulness and his specific sins. The source of sin and the nature of sinfulness were described in various idioms, ranging from mythology to a theological psychology. In mythological symbolism the Devil played a major role: it is he who tempts man away from God, hence the tendency to associate everything 'tempting', including the pleasures of this world and especially sex, with the Devil and lord of demons. Hence also the tendency of medieval Christianity to associate sin, heresy and magic.

The analysis of sinfulness as an inherent human trait and as a basic feature of the human mode of being in its actual ('fallen') state was first made by St Paul and subsequently developed by the Church Fathers, especially St Augustine, and by later theologians. Man's nature is so corrupted and vitiated that he cannot turn towards the better out of his own resources. Even his repentance, faith and conversion are the result of a divine grace moving him. In Christian doctrine this inherently sinful state of human nature was connected with the biblical account of Adam's Fall in Paradise (Genesis, chapter 3), giving this story of 'original sin' an importance it never had in biblical and rabbinic Judaism (see EVIL; FIRST MAN).

Whilst medieval Catholic belief held that it was possible for individuals to overcome sin and to rise to the level of sainthood, Martin Luther and the reformers reaffirmed the sinfulness of even the good Christian. To be saved is not to be free from sin but to acquire, through faith, the grace and pardon given in Christ. The role of sin in the experience and consciousness of Christianity in all its major historic forms is attested by its liturgy, traditional beliefs and practices, and literature.

The prevalence and omnipresence of a sense of sin were intensified by the teaching that sin was a matter of intention and desire no less than of overt action. 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already commited adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5.27–8). 'For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander' (Matthew, 15.19).

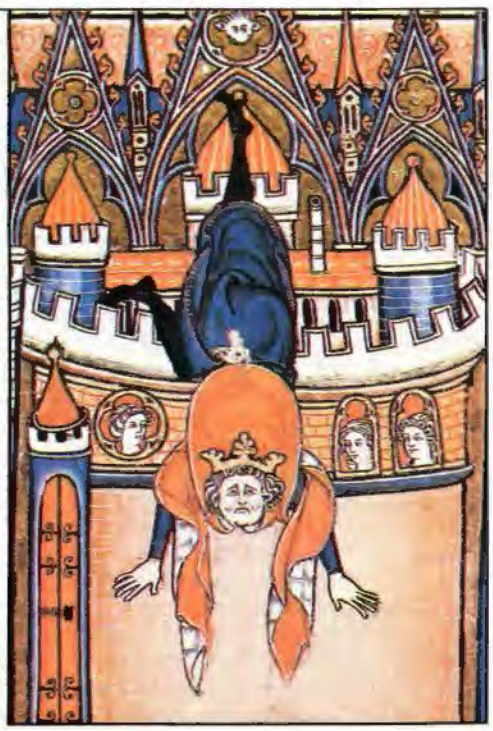
In due course Christianity developed very elaborate doctrines and catalogues of sins, as well as practices for dealing with them. There was original sin to which every human being is heir (according to St Augustine it was transmitted through the act of procreation), and the individual sins man committed during his life. There are the sins committed after baptism (which posed a serious problem to the early Church since it was believed that baptism had washed away not only all past sins but also the inclination to sin). These were divided into 'mortal' sins, which entail everlasting punishment, and venial or pardonable sins. The 'Seven Deadly Sins' became a favourite theme of medieval art. Around the basic idea of sin were built many other doctrines and practices; the sacrament of penance, confession and absolution, hell and purgatory,

Courtauld Institute Galleries/Colorific!

The Christian concept of original sin, the belief that sinfulness is an inherent human trait, was introduced by St Paul and developed by the Church Fathers and later theologians; it is traditionally said to stem from Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden: *Adam and Eve* by Cranach the Elder

and the belief in the possibility of escaping the snfferings of purgatory. The abuses, such as the sale of indulgences, to which the latter belief led were important factors in precipitating the Reformation in the 16th century. But whilst the reformers did away with many Roman Catholic beliefs and practices, the doctrine of sin and sinfulness still remained central in their theology.

The significance attributed to the notion of sin can be gauged by, among other things, the practice of confession of sins. This flourishes wherever the reality of sin is taken so much for granted that the attempt to deny it would merely be compounding it, and wherever remission, expiation and atonement are considered to be real possibilities. Where these pre-conditions are lacking, 'declarations of innocence' may take the place of confession, as in the ancient mortuary ritual of Egypt, where the tomb inscriptions contain such declarations, evidently for the purpose of enabling the person buried to pass the Judgement of the Dead (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). Confessions of sin are essential parts of the Jewish and Christian liturgies, and quite naturally precede every



The Christian Church taught that sin was a matter of intention and desire as well as of overt action. Elaborate doctrines were developed and sins were divided into various categories; as well as original sin there were individual sins committed during a man's life. Mortal sins entail everlasting punishment, and there are also venial or pardonable sins. The Seven Deadly Sins are those which are held to endanger the life of the soul if they are committed with full consent; a variety of sins were in fact depicted under this heading in art before the list was finally formulated *Above, left to right* Hypocrisy; pride; wrath; sloth *Below, left to right* Hatred; avarice; gluttony. All these illustrations are taken from a 13th century French manuscript which is now in the British Museum

prayer for forgiveness. In Psalms (51.1–4) the psalmist prays:

> Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love;
> according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight . . .

The General Confession in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer reads:

> Almighty and most merciful Father: We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent: According to thy promises declared unto mankiud in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This type of confession, as well as the underlying doctrine of sin, presupposes a personal god who is a law-giver, judge and forgiving father. But the notion of sin is also found in religious cultures that do not recognize a personal godhead and where the problem of expiation is not conceived in terms of humble prayer and personal forgiveness. The Indian notion of sin is related to the general theory of karma (see KARMA); liberation from evil karma leads to the great and ultimate liberation. To assist man on his way to liberation, Hinduism has an elaborate system of penances to counterbalance and efface the effects of sin with corresponding merits.

In Buddhism, too, sin is essentially an act that produces evil karma. But although the commission of such acts is itself the outcome of earlier bad karma, man is thought to be sufficiently the master of his fate to break through the chain of karma and to advance on the path of right knowledge, insight and conduct to the great liberation.

Wrong acts have to be neutralized or balanced, and much Buddhist ritual is concerned with accumulating merit and applying it for the benefit of the departed. Rites of confession of sin were practised in early Buddhism, but these were chiefly the Buddhist monk's confession and enumeration of breaches of the rules of the order. In fact, early Theravada Buddhism thought of sin mainly in terms of individual offences against the rule. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, developed a concept of man's fate and karma-bound existence which put the emphasis on his sinfulness in its totality, rather than on specific offences. This is clearly brought out by the form of confession of sins which is still in use in many Mahayanist circles. The text originally occurs in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*; it is still used among Zen Buddhists:

> All the evil karma ever committed by me since of old
> On account of my beginningless greed, anger and folly
> Born of my body, mouth and thought (that is, committed in action, speech and thought)
> I now make full open confession of it.

The notions of both 'original' and 'karmic' sinfulness go beyond the purely moralizing, and give to sin an almost ontological status. Modern psychology and existential philosophy, whilst doing away with many primitive, perverted and obsessive ideas of sin, illuminate the nature and character of human existence so as to place the problem and reality of sin in a new light.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

Sinai, Mt

Holy mountain where God delivered the law and commandments to Moses (Exodus, chapter 19); which mountain it was is uncertain, but it was first identified as Gebel Serbal and later as Gebel Musa, in the Sinai peninsula; the episode of the burning bush (Exodus, chapter 3) was also placed there; the monastery of St Catherine on Gebel Musa became a centre of pilgrimage.

Mansell Collection

Sinbad

Or Sindbad, legendary Arab traveller who sailed on seven voyages in the Indian Ocean and the seas further east; he encountered all sorts of wonders and marvels, including a roc (see ROC) and the Old Man of the Sea, a monster which climbed on his back and would not leave him, until he killed it.

Mansell Collection

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

As long as the doctrine of hellfire was preached the sin eater, who took upon himself the sins of someone who had just died, could always find work; the unsaved dead were said to be doomed to the everlasting torments of hell: illustration from a 16th century Flemish manuscript showing the sinfulness of man

SIN EATER

THE FUNCTION of the person known as a 'sin eater' was to act as a human scapegoat for the sins of someone who had just died. By eating bread and drinking either milk, beer or wine that had been placed on the body of the corpse, the sin eater took upon himself the sins of the departed, absorbing them into his own body. He was paid a small amount of money for saving a soul from hell in this way.

Sin eaters were first recorded by the antiquary John Aubrey in the 17th century, in his book *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme*: 'In the County of Hereford was an old custome at funeralls to hire poor people who have to take upon them all the sinnes of the parting deceased . . . The manner was that when the corpse was brought out of the house and layd in the biere, a loaf of bread was brought out and delivered to the sinne-eater over the corpse as also a mazar bowl of maple full of beer (which he was to drinke up) and sixpence in money in consideration whereof he took upon him (*ipso facto*) all the sinnes of the defunct and freed him or her from walking after they were dead.' In North Wales, according to Aubrey, milk was used instead of beer.

A later writer, Bagford, referring to information obtained from Aubrey, described the sin eaters of Shropshire: 'Within the memory of our fathers . . . when a person dyed there was a notice given to an old sire (for so they called him) who presently repaired to the place where the deceased lay and stood before the door of the house when some of the family came out and furnished him with a cricket (stool) . . . Then they gave him a groat which he put in his pocket; a crust of bread which he ate, and a full bowl of ale which he drank off at a draught . . . (after which) he pronounced the ease and rest of the soul departed for which he would pawn his own soul.'

In the late 17th century sixpence or a groat (fourpence) were worth very much more than they are today but even allowing for this, it seems a ridiculously small fee for the redemption of a human soul.

The concept of a scapegoat, who takes upon himself other peoples' sins, is based upon the primitive idea that the qualities of a human being or animal, whether good or evil, can be transmitted to another by some supernatural agency (see SCAPEGOAT). Some primitive peoples ate the flesh of the newly-dead in order to acquire their strength. In ancient Europe human blood (which was identified with the soul) was frequently drunk in order that the living might share in the strength or valour of the dead. The Greek geographer Strabo writes that in the British Isles it was the custom for sons to eat the flesh of their dead parents in order to prevent their ghosts from returning to haunt them. It is probable that the bread consumed by the sin eater represented the body of the deceased and that the wine, beer or milk symbolized the blood.

Rites developed by human beings for the purpose of keeping the soul at rest seem to have been based originally on the principle that unless obligations to the dead were fulfilled, the soul was bound to suffer. For this reason it was imperative to remove the burden of sin from the person who had died.

As long as the doctrine of hellfire was preached, the sin eater could always find work. In *Sighs From Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soul*, published in 1658, John Bunyan compared the agonies of the dying with those of the unsaved dead who were transferred from the discomforts of 'a long sickness to a longer hell – from the gripings of death to the everlasting torments of hell'.

Although later references to sin eaters are scarce, they probably survived in remote places in the British Isles until well into the 18th century. They were occasionally seen in the Lowlands of Scotland at this time; in this area it was essential that the sin eater was a stranger to the dead person, and that he did not consume the food and drink 'with a grudge in his heart'. There is reason to believe that vestiges of the custom continued to influence funeral rites in Welsh border districts for a considerable period; for instance, a poor man might be given a present of money at the graveside. In Derbyshire in the 19th century a glass of wine from a box resting at the foot of the coffin would be offered to mourners, the intention behind the ceremony being the sacramental 'killing' of the sins of the deceased.

It seems that in East Anglia an unsuspecting tramp or beggar who happened to apply for charity at the door of a household where an unburied body awaited interment, would sometimes be tricked into taking the sins of the dead person upon himself. A piece of bread which had previously been passed over the corpse would be given to the vagrant who would eat it in good faith, unaware of the meaning of this innocent act. The last relic of this ancient superstition is possibly the reluctance of tramps to beg where there is a dead body in the house.

In the Theravada school of Buddhism the highest ranking layman has always been considered of lower status than the youngest religious novice; the scriptures on which Ceylon's predominant religion is based were brought to the island in the 3rd century BC

SINHALESE BUDDHISM

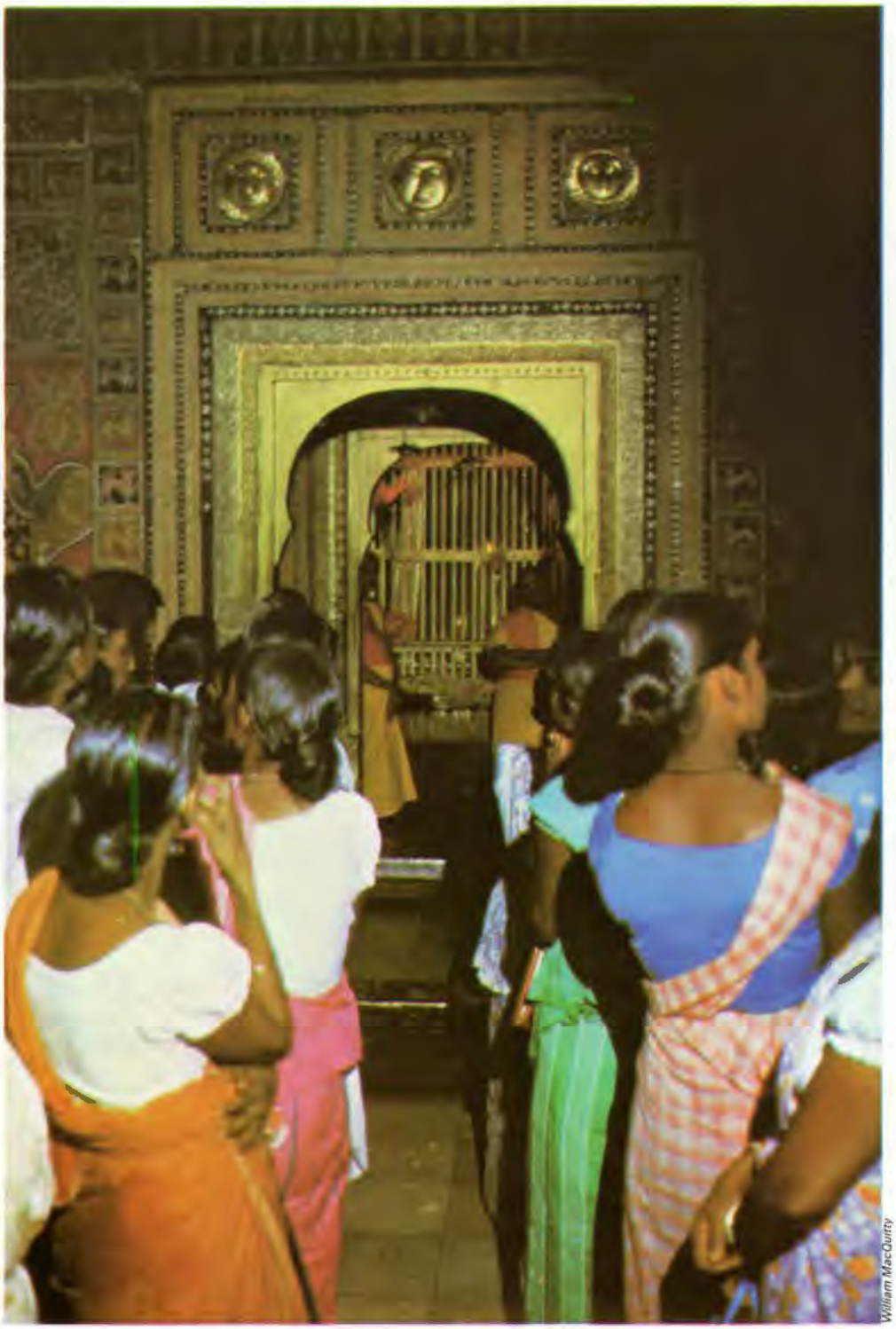
THE MAIN INTEREST which Buddhism in Ceylon holds for the outsider is its long and continuous tradition. Introduced into Ceylon from India soon after 250 BC, less than 250 years after the Buddha's death, Buddhism has been the religion of most Sinhalese, who are the principal inhabitants of Ceylon.

The school of Buddhism preserved in Ceylon is the Theravada, which has since become dominant in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and the southern part of South Vietnam. The scriptures of Theravada Buddhism, the *Tipitaka*, are preserved in an ancient language called Pali, a word which originally means 'text'. The Pali language and the Pali Canon (see GAUTAMA BUDDHA) were first introduced to Europeans in the middle and late 19th century from Ceylon; and the size and importance of these scriptures persuaded many scholars that Theravada represented the 'original' form of Buddhism.

This is now considered to be an exaggeration. When Buddhism was brought to Ceylon, traditionally by Mahinda, a son of the Indian Emperor Asoka, Theravada was but one of many schools with equal claims to authenticity. That it has so well preserved its scriptures, and the doctrines and practices which they embody, is mainly due to the historical accident that Mahinda converted the King of Ceylon, Devanampiya Tissa, who established Buddhism as the official religion of the Sinhalese.

Since then the fortunes of Buddhism have usually been identified with the fortunes of the Sinhalese nation; and Sinhalese literature, art and education have predominantly used Buddhist materials. The Sinhalese view of themselves as a kind of Buddhist 'chosen people' is exemplified in the *Mahavamsa*, a chronicle written in Pali by Buddhist monks through the centuries. The first part, written in the 5th century, is especially interesting. In the first chapter are alleged accounts of three visits to Ceylon made by the Buddha in his lifetime. Vijaya, the reputed founder of the Sinhalese nation, is said to have landed in Ceylon on the day of the Buddha's death, while the Buddha was prophesying to the king of the gods that his doctrine would be established in Ceylon.

After describing Mahinda's mission the chronicle is devoted mainly to the exploits of King Dutugamunu (101–77 BC), the greatest Sinhalese folk hero. When Dutugamunu ascended the throne, the Sinhalese capital, Anuradhapura, was held by Tamil invaders. In his successful campaign against them he fought with a relic of the Buddha in his spear and monks (who left their order for the purpose) in his army.



William MacQuitty

One of the best-known Buddhist celebrations is the annual festival in Kandy, during which the Buddha's tooth, which is said to have reached Ceylon in the 4th century, is paraded through the streets of the town every night for a week; at one time possession of the tooth was thought to confer the right to rule: worshippers outside the Temple of the Tooth, a celebrated Buddhist shrine

Mahinda is traditionally held to have brought the complete Pali Canon to Ceylon. This is substantially correct in spirit, as most of the texts must antedate his arrival. However, all teachings at the time were preserved orally, and it is very doubtful whether one man could memorize the whole Canon. The Pali Canon was written down in Ceylon in the 1st century BC, probably the first time that the Buddhist scriptures had been committed to writing. Again, although it cannot be literally true that Mahinda brought with him the commentaries on the whole Canon, those composed in Ceylon certainly preserve Indian traditions. They were in Sinhalese, and were probably all completed by about 100 AD. These old commentaries have been lost.

In the early 5th century Buddhaghosa came to Anuradhapura from northern India, and wrote commentaries in Pali on most of the canonical texts, basing his work on the Sinhalese commentaries. His edition was regarded as definitive, and the Sinhalese originals were superseded. Buddhaghosa also composed a summary of Buddhist

William MacQuitty

The doctrine that an individual is responsible for his own salvation is explicit in Theravadin Buddhism; there are no millenarian movements, and the coming of Maitri, the only figure who could be regarded as a future Messiah, is thought to be immensely distant. Although Sinhalese Buddhists accept the concept of a Bodhisattva, one who is on his way to becoming a Buddha, this belief is not based on fact or demonstration: wall painting of a Bodhisattva in the Temple of the Tooth

doctrine, the *Visuddhi-magga*, 'the Path to Purity', which is still considered authoritative. His interpretation of the Canon is unquestioned in Ceylon and constitutes the touchstone of orthodoxy.

Buddhists traditionally believe that their religion is embodied in the *Sangha*, the community of monks and nuns, and for them their religious history is properly the history of the community, which depends for its continuation on the preservation of a valid ordination tradition: a monk must receive the full ordination, *upasampada*, from no fewer than five fully-ordained monks, and nuns must similarly be ordained by nuns. The community of nuns *bhikkhuni sangha*, died out in Ceylon in the 11th century, while the order of monks also died out during several periods of political turmoil, and was then re-established by contact with monks from abroad. However the discontinuity is of little importance, because succession has always been renewed by monks from Burma or Thailand, countries which themselves originally received their succession from Ceylon. The largest body of monks in Ceylon today, the Siam Nikaya, traces its ordination line back to the last such renewal, when monks came from Thailand to hold an ordination ceremony in 1753. It therefore has a strong claim to stand in the direct tradition of the *Mahavihara*, 'Great Monastery', of Anuradhapura, which was founded by Mahinda.

The Mahavihara was always the bastion of Theravadin orthodoxy in Anuradhapura, but the main currents of Mahayana thought seem to have reached Ceylon from India. The first Ceylonese schism occurred shortly before the beginning of the Christian era and throughout the first millennium AD, until Anuradhapura finally fell to the Tamils, the monks were split into three *nikayas*, or fraternities. For more than a hundred years there have again been three nikayas in Ceylon. Monks from different nikayas will not co-operate in religious acts, generally live apart, and do not recognize each other's ecclesiastical seniority or authority. In ancient times the lines of division, whatever their origin, were generally given a doctrinal basis; but in modern times this is not so, and Sinhalese Buddhists stress that they all follow Theravadin orthodoxy.

The reason for the modern split is caste. The Siam Nikaya in the late 18th century would ordain only members of the *goyigama*, (farmer) caste, the top caste and by far the largest. Early in the 19th century members of other castes went to Burma for ordination and started independent lines, which are known jointly as the Amarapura Nikaya. A similar

Buddha's Footprint

Fa-hsien, a Chinese traveller, visits Ceylon in the 5th century AD

After fourteen days and nights he reached the Land of the Lion (Ceylon), said by the inhabitants to lie at a distance of seven yôjanas from India . . . This country was not originally inhabited by human beings, but only by devils and dragons, with whom the merchants of the neighbouring countries traded by barter . . .

When Buddha came to this country, he wished to convert the wicked dragons; and by his divine power he placed one foot to the north of the royal city and the other on top of Adam's Peak, the two points being fifteen yôjanas apart. Over the footprint to the north of the city a great pagoda has been built, four hundred feet in height and decorated with gold and silver and with all kinds of precious substances combined. By the side of the pagoda a monastery has also been built, called No-Fear Mountain, where there are now five thousand priests. There is a Hall of Buddha of gold and silver carved work with all kinds of precious substances, in which stands his image in green jade, over twenty feet in height . . .

The Travels of Fa-hsien (399–414 AD)
trans by H. A. Giles

renewal from Burma in the mid-19th century is the Ramanna Nikaya; it has a fundamentalist tendency, mainly in its monastic regulations, which insist, for instance, that monks handle no money. There are in fact many different nikayas, and the fact that they are usually grouped together and spoken of as three must be mainly due to the ancient model.

The appearance of caste criteria in the Sangha is only one aspect of the intrusion of secular institutions into the Sinhalese monastery. Though monasteries in ancient Ceylon, as elsewhere, continually received valuable gifts, and even held slaves, monastic landlordism in its present form is probably only about 700 years old. Individual monasteries own land, which the incumbent has the right to use, and some own the estates of entire villages and command the services of the cultivators, as did the kings of Kandy and members of the lay nobility. These service tenures are now diminishing greatly.

In other respects, however, monastic organization in Ceylon is still archaic. Nikayas are autonomous, and though each has an acknowledged head, who is usually elected by a small council of elders, there is little centralization, even within the nikaya, except in holding ordination ceremonies. For most purposes the unit that counts is still the individual monastery. Though king and government have at times had, and even exercised, the power to intervene in monastic affairs, this has never been formally acknowledged; the highest layman has always been considered of lower status than the youngest novice, and until recently lay participation in controlling monks has been unthinkable.

In Ceylon alone among the Theravadin countries has been preserved the ancient custom by which it is normally assumed that someone entering the Sangha does so for life. It is always possible to leave without formal stigma, although there may be social disapproval. Novices usually enter young, at any age from seven onwards, and receive the higher ordination at the minimum age of 20, or soon after.

There are now about $7\frac{1}{2}$ million Sinhalese Buddhists, about 17,000 monks and about 5500 monasteries. About two thirds of the monks and over half the monasteries belong to the Siam Nikaya.

Beliefs and Rituals

Buddhists have always believed in gods and lesser spirits, all of whom they regard as subject to the law of karma (see KARMA) and therefore to finite knowledge, power and longevity. Gods and demons exist for the vast majority of Buddhists just as other humans do; they accept their existence much as we accept that of nuclear particles, and consider them equally irrelevant to genuinely religious concerns, by which they mean the Buddha's *Dharma*, 'doctrine'. The Sinhalese believe that when the Buddha on his deathbed prophesied that Ceylon would be a stronghold of his religion, the king of the gods put the country under the particular protection of the god Vishnu. Gods and other spirits all hold authority under *varam*, 'warrants', which go back to this and similar events, so that ultimately they derive legitimacy from the Buddha. In granting material rewards and sending diseases and misfortunes, the gods and demons can only realize a man's karma: if by this moral law he is due for some good fortune, it may come to him from a god, but the god is only acting as a powerful man might act, and is likewise morally responsible in his turn. A demon who hurts a man will not go further than the man's bad karma will justify, for he is liable to have his warrant withdrawn by a higher, and therefore more just and more powerful spirit. Moreover, his malevolence creates more bad karma for himself. Relations with gods and demons are not considered religious matters.

Religion and mundane affairs do, however, meet occasionally. A ritual of very varied function and extent consists of monks chanting a collection of Pali texts called *pirit*, 'protection'. This occurs especially at set intervals after a death, when monks are also fed. Monks also officiate at funerals, but have nothing to do with any other life crises; birth and marriage are purely secular events. Monks serve the laity principally by enabling them to earn merit by listening to sermons and by giving food; the alms round is exceptional in Ceylon, as laymen usually take food to a temple.

Laymen also earn merit by observing the precepts. The Five Precepts (*pan sil*) must always be observed; the Eight Precepts (*ata sil*), which involve some abstention from normal indulgence, are taken on quarter days of the lunar calendar, especially full moon days, but traditionally only by elderly people. Those taking the Eight Precepts spend all, or most, of the day at the temple and wear white. More positive ways of earning merit include going on pilgrimages, especially to one of the 16 spots in Ceylon that were supposedly visited by the Buddha. However, the religious festival that is most widely known abroad concerns none of these. Once a year the Buddha's tooth, which reached Ceylon in the 4th century, is paraded through the streets of Kandy on the back of an elephant with huge tusks, preceded by dancers, drummers and many other elephants. This is repeated every night for a week.

Even a summary of ways of earning merit would be incomplete without mention of meditation, which is necessary to attain Nirvana, or even the highest (formless) heavens. It is conceived to be the supreme purpose of monasticism, but in neither theory nor practice is it confined to monks. However it seems likely that meditation has never been practised by more than a small minority of people. The recent propaganda for meditation, and its increased practice, is a result of modern developments, including rivalry with Christianity and lay Buddhist control over the state school system. This contrasts with the traditional belief that the last person to attain Nirvana in Ceylon lived 2000 years ago, and that no one on earth will do so again until the coming, aeons hence, of the next Buddha, Maitri. Most Buddhists are willing, even content, to postpone the attainment of Nirvana to a future life, and make rebirth in one of the lower heavens, or even in a good station on earth, their immediate goal.

In theory Theravada Buddhism has no place for devotional religion; in practice this rigour is mitigated. The doctrine that each individual is wholly responsible for his own salvation is universally explicit. Sinhalese Buddhism completely lacks millenarian movements, and the coming of Maitri, the only figure who might be considered a future Messiah, is conceived of as being immensely distant. Bodhisattvas play a purely notional part in the religion. On the other hand Gautama, the historical Buddha, is venerated as supreme. Whether one can describe him as deified depends on the level of analysis. No Sinhalese Buddhist would accept the term, for they say that the Buddha was human, and is dead and gone, but they certainly derive emotional satisfaction from his veneration. Every house has an image of the Buddha, even if only a picture, and the image house, the most essential feature of a temple after the residence of a monk or monks, contains at least one Buddha statue. Images are venerated as 'reminders' of him.

The other main features of a temple, the bo-tree and the stupa, are also venerated for their association with him: the one because under such a tree did he attain enlightenment, the other because it contains relics. Offerings (*puja*), most commonly of flowers, incense sticks or lights, are made before images, bo-trees and stupas, and people often recite Pali verses, some of them definitely devotional in tone, before representations of the Buddha.

(See also BUDDHISM.)

RICHARD GOMBRICH

FURTHER READING: Nanamoli Evans, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhi-magga)* distributed by Luzac, London; W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: the Anuradhapura Period* (Intl. Pubns. Serv., 1966).

Gautama, the historical Buddha, is venerated as supreme by Sinhalese Buddhists; every house has an image of him, even if it is only a picture, and the image house of every temple contains at least one Buddha statue: feet of the giant reclining Buddha at the site of the ruined city of Polonnaruwa

Picturepoint London

IMMAMOU

SIRENS

Originally characters in Greek mythology, the Sirens have also become part of Voodoo belief; the consort of Agoué, the *loa* or spirit of the oceans, is the Lady of the Sirens: *The Mangé-Loa of Agoué*, a feast in honour of Agoué and his wife

Sheldon Williams

Bardo Museum/Sonia Halliday

British Museum/C. M. Dixon

Left **The Sirens appear in the *Odyssey* as beautiful maidens who enchant passing sailors with their song so that they swim ashore and perish; Odysseus escaped this fate by commanding his men to bind him to the mast: *Odysseus and the Sirens,* 3rd century mosaic from Dougga *Below left* Formed partly like birds and partly like women, the Sirens are said to have attended Persephone before she was carried off to Hades: tripod, c 600–570 BC**

SIRENS

FEMALE BEINGS connected with the underworld, the Sirens were particularly dangerous to men; it is hard to find any story in which women suffered at their hands. They first appear in the *Odyssey* (book 12) as beautiful females who sit in a meadow by the sea, enchanting passing sailors with their song so that they swim ashore, or land, and perish miserably. Round them is a great heap of bones which come from the rotting corpses of men.

Odysseus was advised by the enchantress Circe (see CIRCE), when she warned him of the Sirens, to stop the ears of his rowers with wax as the ship passed them; and she told him that, if he wished to hear their song himself, he should make his men bind him to the mast and not release him however much he might implore them. A mysterious calm fell as the ship passed their island, so that it depended entirely on rowing to make headway. The Sirens sang to Odysseus that they knew of all his deeds and sufferings at Troy. In Homer they are mentioned in the dual number, so that he recognized no more than two. Their names are not given, and their physical form is not described. Like other such beings in the *Odyssey* they are not located in known or normal geography.

For the historical period corresponding to the heroic age, it is of some interest that tablets inscribed in the script known as Linear B from Mycenean Pylos seem to refer to decorations on furniture as *seremokaraoi* and *seremokaraapi* which has been interpreted as 'siren-headed'. If this is so, the word *serem*, in that form with M not yet changed to N, already existed in Mycenean Greek, and the Sirens were known in myth in some form. What form the Mycenean 'siren-headed' decorations had is not known.

In later periods poets and mythographers continued to write of Sirens, revealing more of their nature. Hesiod in a fragment of his *Eoiai* called their island Anthemoessa and named them Thelxiope, Molpe and Aglaophonus, daughters of Phorcys the sea god, saying also that they calmed the winds. In the 7th century BC the lyric poet Alcman spoke of the Muse 'the clear-voiced Siren' as if Siren and Muse were the same, and elsewhere mentions the Sirenides, but only for their music. A fragment of Sophocles makes them daughters of Phorcys and 'singers of songs of Hades'. The comic poet Epicharmus makes the Sirens try to attract Odysseus by descriptions of the food and drink that they enjoyed and which he might share; plump anchovies, sucking pigs, cuttlefish and sweet wine. When they begin to speak of their evening meal Odysseus cries 'Alas for my miseries'. Other comic poets, Theopompus and Nicophon, mention the abundant feasting of the Sirens and their taunting of the hungry wanderer Odysseus. This association with fabulous plenty is difficult to explain, even given the food-loving conventions of comedy.

'Barren Nightingales'

In Apollonius the island of the Sirens is Anthemoessa and they are the daughters of the river Achelous and Terpsichore, the Muse of choral dance and song. They once attended Persephone before she was carried off to Hades and they were then formed partly like birds and partly like maidens. The Argonauts would have been drawn into their power as they passed, but Orpheus with his lyre drowned the sound of their voices. Only Butes swam toward the shore, but Aphrodite snatched him up and set him on the height of Lilybaeum. In Apollonius the Sirens are placed on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, as is usual in post-Homeric poetry. But the river Achelous belongs in Aetolia in north-west Greece, which may have been their original home in Greek legend. The tradition of this location is preserved later by Lucian and others, particularly by another Alexandrian poet, Lycophron, author of the poem *Alexandra*, in which Cassandra prophesies the future wanderings of the Greek chiefs, including Odysseus, on their return from Troy.

Lycophron calls the Sirens 'barren nightingales and slayers of the centaurs', because the centaurs were so charmed with their song that they forgot to eat. Later he says that Odysseus will be the death of the Sirens, who will hurl themselves from the cliff-top into the Tyrrhenian Sea. One will be washed ashore by the towering Phalerus (Naples) and the river Glanis (Clanius) where the inhabitants will build a tomb for her as the bird goddess Parthenope, and honour her with yearly sacrifices. Leucosia will be cast ashore by the strand of Enipeus (Posidon), that is, at Posidonia or Paestum. Ligeia will come ashore at Tereina and will be buried with honour in the stony beach. The tone of this passage shows that in Italianate Greek belief, on the coast of Campania and further south, the Sirens were regarded as beneficent beings, at least after their death. Their cult here and its centres, particularly on the Sorrentine peninsula south of Naples and its neighbouring islands, are also described by Strabo. This region became their regular location in myth, and this is where they had a temple. This lore, like most of the legends about Odysseus in Italy, was spread by the Greek colonists from Euboea who reached Italy by passing north-west Greece.

In later tradition Parthenope is presented by the medieval *Cronaca di Partenope* as a princess of Sicily who sailed into Naples Bay and died of the plague. She was buried there and became a sort of local saint who was consulted as an oracle. At some time in the Middle Ages the Sirens lost their bird form and acquired fishes' tails so that they became a form of mermaid. Earlier Greek art shows them always in the form of birds or birdlike women. One reason for locating the Sirens on or near the Sorrentine peninsula, while their character was still conceived as in the *Odyssey*, is the appearance of a cave on the coast. In this is a great mass of prehistoric bones preserved under transparent breccia (composite rock consisting of fragments of stone cemented together). The bones are in fact the remains of game that was killed and eaten by Paleolithic hunters. They must have been seen by generations of Mycenean and later Greek voyagers who thought they were human bones.

E. D. PHILLIPS

SIVANANDA

Kenneth Grant

Founder of the Divine Life Society, Sivananda believed that selfless service, and work without thought of personal gain, were vital factors in development; he maintained that just one sincere student could move the world by the power of his devotion

BORN ON 8 September 1887, in the small village of Pattamadai in south India, Sri Swami Sivananda was a descendant of the 16th century holy man Appaya Dikshitar, who wrote 104 works on *Vedanta* and the Sanskrit language. Named Kuppuswamy by his parents, he matriculated from the Rajah's High School at Etiapuram in 1903, and shortly afterwards took a course in medicine at the Tanjore Medical Institute.

In 1913 he was appointed doctor-in-charge of a hospital on a rubber estate near Seramban in Malaya, where he worked for nearly seven years. He then joined the Johore Medical Office, where he served for three years, until he experienced, in 1923, what Western mystics have referred to as the 'dark night of the soul'. He suddenly realized that however many people he might help by remaining a doctor, he could alleviate only the sufferings of a few.

Kuppuswamy withdrew from medical practice and sunk himself in deep meditation, striving to solve the problem of how he might bring relief, not to the few, but to all: not temporary bodily relief, but permanent spiritual peace. The solution came as a revelation which fully enlightened him; he would become a doctor of the Spirit. He would heal the entire universe of its worries and woes or, failing this, he would give people the means of healing themselves. Kuppuswamy had become Sivananda, the name by which he was soon to be known. He renounced the world and became a mendicant; he visited many sacred places in south India and stayed at the *ashram* (spiritual colony) of the celebrated sage Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi (see RAMANA MAHARSHI). Shortly afterwards, Sivananda met his own personal *guru*.

He travelled to north India and came to Rishikesh on the banks of the Ganges, in the Himalayas, where, on 1 June 1924, he was initiated into the Order of *Sannyasis* (celibate monks) by Paramahamsa Visvananda Saraswati. Finding Rishikesh alive with spiritual power, Sivananda engaged in intensive *sadhana* (spiritual culture). He made his home at various places in the region for the next 35 years.

He settled at Swargashram and lived in a small hut where he meditated deeply, gradually piercing the layers of illusion until he realized the *Atman*, or impersonal Self of the universe (see BRAHMAN). It was here that people first flocked to him.

On 12 June 1931 he began an arduous pilgrimage to Mount Kailasa in western Tibet, considered by millions to be the physical form of the god Shiva himself. He was accompanied by several saintly men and walked barefoot every inch of the 475-mile journey, despite chronic lumbago.

Swargashram swarmed with devotees and the regional authorities were soon unable to cope with them. Sivananda therefore decided to leave. He moved to a small and dilapidated hut nearby, where he stayed for eight years. It was here that he founded the Divine Life Society in 1936. Subsequently 300 branches were established in large cities, and by 1960, shortly before his death, the Society was in a position to maintain about 400 persons.

One of Sivananda's most important contributions to the science of the Spirit was *Namapathy*, healing by name; that is, by any name of God, or by a *mantra* (see MANTRA), a form of words or sounds which are believed to have a magical effect when uttered with intent. To perform Namapathy he composed a special ritual so that new life could pour into sick persons all over the world. Several Western centres of spiritual healing were modelled on the ashram in Rishikesh.

Sivananda's personal experience of all forms of yoga and religions enabled him to combine them for the rapid development of widely differing types of students. He reduced to their essentials all systems of spiritual attainment and called the result 'Synthetic Sadhana'.

The Divine Life Society, the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy and the Sivananda Ashram, all of which he founded and imbued with powerful spiritual impetus, attracted aspirants from all parts of the world. He stressed that work without thought of personal gain, and selfless service, were vital factors in development; and maintained that even a single sincere student could move the world by the power of his devotion.

He advised his helpers against refusing money from sympathizers on the grounds of non-attachment to worldly things. Money was needed for the work of printing and publishing great spiritual truths; for buying medicines for the sick; for clothing the poor and housing the homeless.

He treated women with the same courtesy, affection and generosity that he extended to men. Although he warned his male disciples against the wiles of women, and described them in some of his books as epitomizing uncleanness, he did so to obviate disaster to immature aspirants. He knew that it was not easy to acquire the perfect *samadrishti*, equal vision with regard to all, that enabled him and those of his stature to neutralize the glamour of women or, alternatively, to recognize them as channels of spiritual power. His own attitude was

characterized by that supreme reverence to the feminine aspect of divinity that is one of the redeeming features of Hinduism.

Sivananda converted the villainous, lazy, and ill-tempered into ardent and cheerful workers who performed useful work in the ashram. Other, less successful, gurus who claimed astonishing occult powers, referred to him as 'a guru for thieves and rogues'. In fact he welcomed thieves and rogues as cheerfully as anyone else, knowing they would eventually become dynamic yogis after being transformed in a place charged with spiritual vibrations, and regarded the quip as a sublime compliment. However, he deprecated the use of the term guru in connection with himself, and asked his devotees never to describe him as a master or world teacher, but always as an ordinary *sadhu* (seeker). He never attempted to monopolize anyone who sought his help; on the contrary he recommended their visiting other ashrams and other gurus, if he thought it was necessary.

The mass of people he imbued with the spirit of devotion. He advocated *kirtan* (devotional singing and dancing), but likened its effects to the intoxication produced by drugs: 'Just as the intoxication from hashish, opium, or alcohol, lasts for some hours, so also this Divine intoxication that you get from kirtan will last for many hours during the following day, and at night also during dream.'

By this analogy he implied that there is a path, the effects of which are everlasting. This is the *Jnana Marga*, or path of Pure Wisdom, which he embodied and exemplified. But, although he had realized the Ultimate Truth of One-Self-in-All, he taught this interior science only to those who had pierced the last veils of illusion.

KENNETH GRANT

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SIX

THE MAJOR characteristics allotted to the numbers in Western numerology fit neatly into a table of opposites (see NUMEROLOGY) and the qualities of 6 are in direct contrast to those of 5. Where 5 is jumpy, nervous, many-sided, erotic (see FIVE), 6 is settled, calm, simple and straightforward, and is the number of mother-love rather than sexual love. It is an even number, which means it is female and passive, but it is the least unlucky and disagreeable of the female numbers, because it is the only 'perfect' number in the first ten. A perfect number is one which equals the sum of its divisors other than itself, and $6 = 1 + 2 + 3$. The next perfect number is 28, followed by 496, 8128 and 33550336. Because its component parts produce the same total whether added or multiplied, 6 is considered a balanced and harmonious number and those whose names add to 6 (see ALPHABET) are described as well-adjusted, peaceable people who are not racked by inner conflicts.

Since 6 is mathematically perfect, it is appropriate that the book of Genesis describes God's work of creation as complete in six days, the seventh being the day on which God rested. St Augustine observed that 6 must be a perfect number, because God could have taken more or less time if he had so chosen, but generally in numerological theory 7 is a number of completeness (see SEVEN) and 6 is not. On the sixth day God created man and woman (Genesis, chapter 1), and the Tarot trump numbered 6 is The Lovers, frequently depicted in modern packs as Adam and Eve. In addition, 6 is the number of marriage from the female point of view because it is made of 2×3, the female (2) 'multiplied' or fertilized by the male (3).

As a result, 6 is essentially the number of the wife and mother, and people whose number it is find their greatest responsibilities and happiness in love and marriage, home and family. Decent, tranquil, unselfish, companionable, perhaps rather humdrum, they are warm, affectionate and kindly, thoroughly domesticated and staunchly respectable, at their best in the family circle. They tend to be conservative and conventional, plain and honest, wholesome and admirable, but they have the defects traditionally associated with the housewife, of being fussy, gossipy, limited in outlook, sometimes obstinate and unreasonable and a trifle dull.

The only 'perfect' number in the first ten, 6 is the number of love; God is said to have created man and woman on the sixth day, and the Tarot trump numbered 6 is The Lovers: sixth card of the Tarot pack

Someone whose number is 6 ought to make an excellent marriage partner and parent, loyal and sympathetic, faithful, dependable, and probably inclined to spoil his children a little, though it is said that a 6 gone wrong can be the worst sort of domestic tyrant. He is a conscientious worker, a good breadwinner, a good manager, much more thorough and reliable than 5, but without his versatility. Though he does not have the brilliance and sparkle associated with the number 3 (see THREE), he may be more successful in the long run. His failings in business tend to be a lack of firmness and self-assertion and, more crucially, a lack of ambition, since he really prefers his fireside and his slippers to the heights of business or artistic achievement. On the other hand, he is an able negotiator and peace-maker.

A 6 likes peace and quiet, and shuns quarrels, jealousy and all sources of discord. He is usually good with his hands and may be a capable cook or gardener (like Adam, created on the sixth day). He values comfort and ease, enjoys beautiful things and likes to surround himself with them, and is distinctly uneasy in any situation which is unsettled and uncertain.

A year which adds to 6 is supposed to have the same basic characteristics, as a time of peaceful harmony and quiet adjustment. It is naturally a good year for marriages, and an American numerologist says that, 'Marriage licence bureaux usually have to increase their staffs in a 6-year, or work overtime to take care of the applications.' It is a good year in which to set up a business partnership, acquire a pet or establish a permanent home.

Another set of ideas which contribute to the picture of 6 as the number of balance, equilibrium, symmetry, and the harmony of opposites, comes from the two interlaced triangles of the six-pointed star, or hexagram. One triangle points up and the other down, and they stand respectively for 'above' and 'below', God and man, male and female, fire and water, spirit and matter (see HEXAGRAM). On the sixth day of creation God made man 'in his image' and where 5 is the number of man as microcosm, 6 is the number of the Universal Man, man as macrocosm (see MACROCOSM; MAN). The number indicates, according to A. E. Abbot's *Encyclopaedia of Numbers*, 'that man's spiritual path lies in the balance of the spiritual and the physical, the external and the transitory. It represents harmony, proportion, co-operation, and implies order and harmony brought to manifestation.' In the Cabala, the sixth sefirah, Tifereth, is the central, balancing and harmonizing sphere of the Tree of Life (see CABALA). All this has bolstered the concept of 6 as signifying balance, harmony, settledness, peaceful married love. Someone whose name adds to 6 is 'good at making ends meet', not only because six is the number of the good housewife, but because of the joining of opposites in the hexagram.

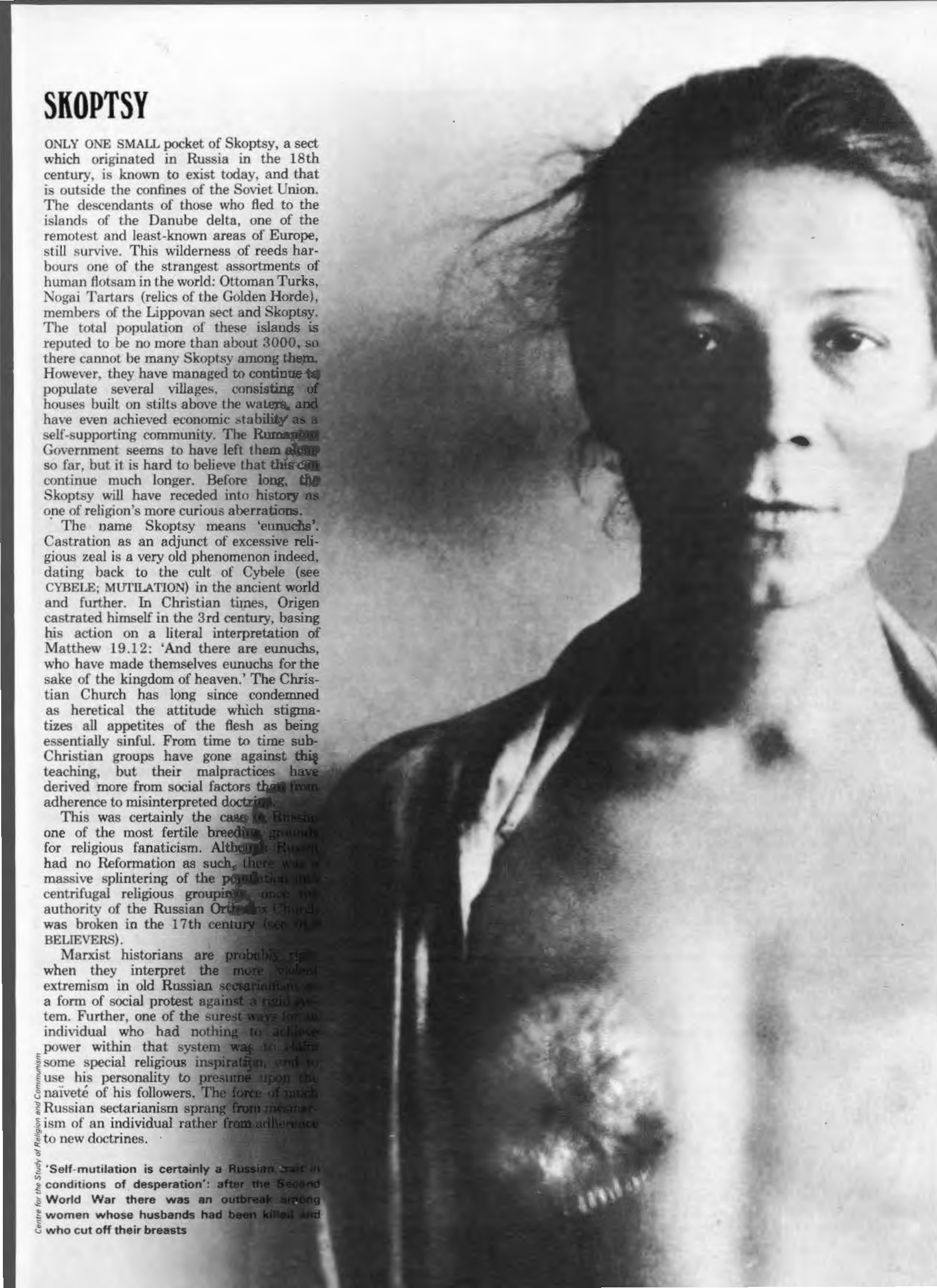
SKOPTSY

ONLY ONE SMALL pocket of Skoptsy, a sect which originated in Russia in the 18th century, is known to exist today, and that is outside the confines of the Soviet Union. The descendants of those who fled to the islands of the Danube delta, one of the remotest and least-known areas of Europe, still survive. This wilderness of reeds harbours one of the strangest assortments of human flotsam in the world: Ottoman Turks, Nogai Tartars (relics of the Golden Horde), members of the Lippovan sect and Skoptsy. The total population of these islands is reputed to be no more than about 3000, so there cannot be many Skoptsy among them. However, they have managed to continue to populate several villages, consisting of houses built on stilts above the waters, and have even achieved economic stability as a self-supporting community. The Rumanian Government seems to have left them alone so far, but it is hard to believe that this can continue much longer. Before long, the Skoptsy will have receded into history as one of religion's more curious aberrations.

The name Skoptsy means 'eunuchs'. Castration as an adjunct of excessive religious zeal is a very old phenomenon indeed, dating back to the cult of Cybele (see CYBELE; MUTILATION) in the ancient world and further. In Christian times, Origen castrated himself in the 3rd century, basing his action on a literal interpretation of Matthew 19.12: 'And there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.' The Christian Church has long since condemned as heretical the attitude which stigmatizes all appetites of the flesh as being essentially sinful. From time to time sub-Christian groups have gone against this teaching, but their malpractices have derived more from social factors than from adherence to misinterpreted doctrine.

This was certainly the case in Russia, one of the most fertile breeding grounds for religious fanaticism. Although Russia had no Reformation as such, there was a massive splintering of the population into centrifugal religious groupings once the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church was broken in the 17th century (see OLD BELIEVERS).

Marxist historians are probably right when they interpret the more violent extremism in old Russian sectarianism as a form of social protest against a rigid system. Further, one of the surest ways for an individual who had nothing to achieve power within that system was to claim some special religious inspiration, and to use his personality to presume upon the naïveté of his followers. The force of much Russian sectarianism sprang from mesmerism of an individual rather from adherence to new doctrines.



'Self-mutilation is certainly a Russian trait in conditions of desperation': after the Second World War there was an outbreak among women whose husbands had been killed and who cut off their breasts

Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism

The immediate ancestors of the Skoptsy were the Khlysty ('Flagellants'), themselves one of the dozens of offshoots from the Old Believers at the end of the 17th century. Danila Filippov, the peasant founder of the Khlysty, was himself an ascetic, whom his followers considered to be of equal status with Christ. He sought the 'gifts of the Spirit' for his followers by denying them the right to have sexual relations with their wives, to drink alcohol and to eat meat. All sought the charisma or grace of the Spirit, but those who believed they had attained it considered themselves above human laws. Denied the right to cohabit with their wives, they considered extra-marital relations to be especially sacred. Filippov, however good his original intentions may have been, found himself quite incapable of controlling the excesses of his followers, or of preventing other rival petty would-be charismatic leaders from pressing their own claims to participation in the divine revelation.

So it was that the Skoptsy arose as a reaction against the Khlysty. Ironically, considering the original ascetic intention of the Khlysty, it was against their sexual excesses that the Skoptsy inveighed. The man who founded the new sect, Kondrati Selivanov, was himself a Khlyst. He, too, gave it out that sexual union was the fount of all sin; the only possibility of salvation for mankind, he said, was to renounce sex totally.

Baptism By Fire

It was in 1757 that Selivanov, then in his 26th year, first attracted a following. He said that to attain total purity and finally remove any possibility of sin, he must make himself a perfect example to his followers. He would undergo a second baptism – 'by fire' – and shed his own blood for Christ. As a public proof that he meant what he said, he had himself castrated.

The Skoptsy came to believe that as soon as 144,000 converts had been found to follow this path, the Last Judgement would descend upon all mankind. Selivanov himself was apparently in no hurry to meet his maker, for he lived to be 100 years old. As time went on, his followers imbued him with more and more attributes of the godhead, although he slightly confused the issue by making himself out to be the Tsar Peter III, who was murdered in 1762.

Portrait of Kondrati Selivanov, founder of the Skoptsy, who claimed that the only possibility of salvation for mankind was to renounce sex totally. As an example to his followers he had himself castrated

The Skoptsy never became numerous enough to be as important as many other religious sects in Russia, but for years they remained the most notorious. Groups sprang up in many areas of central Russia. Surprisingly, in view of the usual hostility of the authorities to any kind of sectarian deviation, they seem to have been treated with some awe by both the Tsarist regime and by the Russian Orthodox Church. The aura of super-monastic sanctity which seemed to surround the Skoptsy leaders was reinforced by a visit which Alexander I paid to Selivanov in St Petersburg. After this, Selivanov's own safety was guaranteed.

Some groups, however, were forced to flee and they established communes in remote areas of Siberia, which soon gained the reputation of being extremely clean and hard-working. Some also fled southwest to the Danube delta. In the main, however, they flocked in comparative safety to the towns, where they established themselves as economic, quasi-monastic communities, living in dormitories, but going out daily to work in factories.

Spiritual Castration

It became the practice for a male follower to father a small family before becoming a 'full member' of the sect. Before long, too, the Skoptsy doctrine became modified, so that some leaders preached 'spiritual castration' as the ideal. Physical mutilations had already become far less frequent by the time of the Revolution, but there was a tendency for them to increase in number as an act of violent protest when conditions became exceedingly hard. Soviet sources have admitted that in 1929 there were as many as 2000 adherents of the sect, that their number was increasing during collectivization and the mutilations becoming more prevalent. Self-mutilation is certainly a Russian trait in conditions of desperation, witness Anatoli Marchenko's prison experiences, recounted in *My Testimony*. In the terrible conditions prevailing after the Second World War, there was another outbreak, especially among women who had lost their husbands in the war (they mutilated themselves by cutting off their breasts). The last recorded instance of a castration in the Soviet Union was in 1951, by a certain Lomonosov, living near Rostov-on-Don, who was then the leader of the sect. He persuaded his brother to undergo this after the latter's demobilization. Such is the claim of F. I. Fedorenko, author of *The Sects, Their Faith and Practice* (1965), the most recent Soviet book to devote any considerable space to the Skoptsy.

With the rising Soviet standard of living and great improvements in universal education, there is certainly now much less of a tendency to be drawn into such extremism. The mainstream religions now are able to provide the antidote to Communist materialism which many in the Soviet Union, including the young, feel that they need.

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX

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'The eyeless sockets peer back sightlessly into our own', a reminder that in the midst of life we are in death; the psychic qualities attributed to the skull, both human and animal, led to its use in religious practices, magical ritual and medicine

SKULL

THE HUMAN SKULL is a pre-eminent symbol of mortality and the vanity of this earthly life, representing at the same time a warning sign and a threat. Two beliefs which are found the world over, and which are shared by humanity past and present, are that all bones are centres of psychic energy, and that the head is the dwelling place of the soul; until well into the 17th century it seems to have been generally accepted as a scientific fact that the soul flowed in the fluids of the ventricles of the brain, while even in our own times there exists a strong tendency to regard mind as an aspect of spirit. These basic themes have had a profound influence upon social and religious attitudes down the ages.

A number of significant ideas emanating from the prehistoric cult of the dead continue even now to infiltrate religious thought, as they have done for many thousands of years. At the cave of Ofnet, between Augsburg and Nuremberg, nests of skulls were discovered in post-Magdalenian deposits, relics of a primitive European culture; one cache alone contained as many as 27 skulls, and each of the skulls was turned in a westerly direction, no doubt towards some mythical land of the dead. Modern graves too, lie in an east-west orientation. (See also CULT OF THE DEAD.)

From the discovery of large numbers of skulls buried separately from the other parts of the skeletons it is evident that some form of second burial must have taken place in former times. It is widely held by historians and archeologists that from the beginning of the Pleistocene period such burials took place following the extraction of the brains, perhaps for use as food. Rare

artistry was often displayed in the decoration of human skulls, many being painted red, or decorated with sea-shells.

The skull motif dominated the ideology of northern Europe, and we find for example that the ancient Norse imagined the heavens to be constructed from the sky dome or skull of the giant Ymir. In the Swedish text of an old ballad – 'The Twa Sisters' – the frame of a fiddle is said to have been created out of a magic skull. The alchemists regarded the skull as the receptacle of transmutation or psychic change. The Irish swore solemn oaths upon skulls.

Skulls were frequently used to decorate the facades of buildings, only later being superseded by stone balls. They also had a vital, if gruesome, function in builders' rites for they have been found embedded in the foundations of very old churches. It was discovered in 1895, for example, that the west wall of Darrington Church near Pontefract rested upon the skull of an unfortunate individual who had apparently been buried alive some 600 years earlier (see BUILDERS' RITES).

That there was supposed to exist some supernatural quality in the human skull is evident from the custom in Easter Island in which sacred caverns were placed under the protection of skull guardians. In some places the heads of warriors have actually been found buried facing the direction from which danger has been anticipated. A comparable case occurring in the British Isles relates to Bettiscombe Manor in Dorset where a skull is preserved; it is said to be that of a Negro and is supposed to keep ghosts and other evil spirits from entering the house. Should it be removed from the house, however, the skull is reputed to scream at the top of its voice. Skulls are associated with other ancient homes including Burton Agnes Hall in the East Riding of Yorkshire, Higher Chilton Farm at Chilton Cantelo, Somerset, and at one time Tunstead Farm near Chapel-en-le-Frith in Derbyshire (see HAUNTED HOUSES).

Trophy and Symbol

The skulls of enemies were once extremely popular as drinking cups. The 17th century writer Sir Thomas Browne refers to this practice in *Urn Burial*: 'To be gnawed out of our graves, for our skulls to be made into drinking bowls and our bones turned into pipes to delight and sport our enemies are tragical abominations'. The barbaric Scandinavians and Germans imbibed human blood from the skulls of valorous foes in order to acquire the dead warriors' strength. Among certain peoples of the Far East, however, only a skull that had been picked clean by vultures made an acceptable libation bowl. As late as the last century, pious pilgrims would travel to the holy well at Llandeilo, south Wales, where they drank water from the brain pan of the pre-Reformation saint Teilo. Saintly skulls were once a common sight in churches all over Europe, but in Protestant countries few seem to have survived the Reformation in the 16th century. In Roman Catholic areas of Europe, however, thousands of skulls of martyrs and saints are displayed in the churches, bearing silent testimony to the continuing influence of the skull as a religious motif. The skulls of the 11,000 holy virgins of Cologne must have presented a truly imposing sight to the credulous. A relic preserved as the holy skull of St Thorlac at Skalholt in Iceland was later discovered to be a coconut shell washed up by the sea.

Regarded as the seat of soul power, the skull has played an immense part in primitive ritual. In New Caledonia pilgrimages were made by the natives to pay homage to the skulls of chieftains and others considered worthy of high honour. Skulls were also offered as gifts to the primal ancestors by the Wa people of Indo-China.

There is some reason for the belief that the original inspiration behind the preservation of the skull as a trophy was the ancient sport of headhunting which is still practised by a few isolated tribes today (see HEAD). To the headhunter, the skull of a slain enemy could represent not only considerable prowess in the field but a decided advantage over the victim. In the long-houses of New Guinea enemy skulls were displayed on racks, before each of which stood a shield representing the spirit of the warrior responsible for the murders. It was taken for granted that the ghost of the conqueror was in a position to command the services of the ghosts of those he had killed and in this way slavery could be perpetuated into the afterlife. The headhunters of Borneo used the skulls of enemies as pillows. Trobriand Island widows converted the skulls of their late husbands into lime pots. Widows of other peoples such as the Andaman Islanders sometimes suspended such skulls from their necks as ornaments after cleaning them thoroughly in sea water. Indians of the Amazon frequently adorned the ancestral skulls with feather head-dresses.

As a symbol, the skull appears frequently in art. The medieval painter Albrecht Dürer was fascinated not only by the visual aspect of the skull, but also by its symbolism. A grinning skull is frequently depicted in representations of the medieval Dance of Death and also of Ankou, the skeletal death-summoner of Brittany (see DANCE OF DEATH; BRITTANY). In Mexico the skull can be said to dominate certain forms of artistic expression. This can be seen, for instance, in the stone skulls carved on the temple of Tepoztlan and in Aztec models constructed out of wood, black stone or rock crystal. The Mexican death god Mictlantecuhtli, the skeleton with the conical hat, is probably responsible for the shapes of the toys and sweets of modern Mexican children, which often take the form of skulls.

The ancient Etruscans are said to have employed a skull impaled on a pole as a device 'to scare away death by his own likeness'. In New Guinea the same device is employed somewhat pointedly as a 'Keep Out' sign.

The skull and crossbones symbol is not only the hallmark of the pirate. This device was carved on gravestones in the 17th century, as a reminder of mortality. A British regiment, the 17th-21st Lancers,

Horniman Museum

Axel Poignant

Below **Nazi Death's Head badge in the shape of a skull and crossbones. Besides its associations with death, the skull is valued in many societies as the seat of a person's soul** ***Top*** **Skull from New Guinea, probably a headhunter's trophy** ***Above*** **Maori** ***tiki*** **amulet made from a human skull and thought to bring the owner good luck**

Andrew Mollo

As the framework of the body and the part which lasts longest, bones and skulls are often regarded as the basis or root of life *Left* Skulls of former abbots are carefully preserved and named at Stavrouni monastery in Cyprus *Right* Detail from Signorelli's *Resurrection of the Body,* in Orvieto Cathedral, showing skeletons being clothed with flesh

known as the 'Death or Glory Boys', used the skull and crossbones as a regimental badge, and the helmet of the German Death's Head Dragoons bore this emblem as their insignia. In modern times it has become an international warning sign which is used, for example, on the labels of poison bottles in some countries and on Spanish electricity sub-stations.

Medicine and Magic

One curious feature of skull lore which has attracted the attention of archeologists and anthropologists is artificial cranial deformation as practised by the ancient Egyptians, among others; this was achieved by bandaging tightly the soft and malleable skulls of young children. Yet another type of deformation was trepanning, a surgical operation carried out by Stone Age savages apparently to relieve pressures on the brain caused by skull injuries. It was supposed that this operation permitted the evil spirit responsible for the headache or similar pains to make its escape, thereby freeing the sick person from discomfort. This primitive surgery must have been highly skilled in view of the fact that some of those operated upon are known to have lived for years afterwards.

The skull played a considerable part in medicine and magic. Epilepsy, a disease regarded with supernatural awe in the Middle Ages and later, was sometimes treated with a special elixir known as Spirit of Human Skull, which was prepared from the unburied skull of a criminal. Self-medication was readily available to those prepared to drink water from the skull of a suicide. Death by violence was an essential requirement when selecting a skull for medicinal purposes, and a flourishing trade in skulls developed between English apothecaries and Irish executioners. A distillation particularly favoured by King Charles II consisted mainly of filings of skull bone, spirits of wine and sage. A draught was administered to Charles on his deathbed with apparently little effect upon the outcome.

Irish skulls were particularly valuable by virtue of the greenish lichen which grew on them, known as usnea; they could realize as much as ten shillings each on the open market, a considerably larger sum in the 17th century than today. Severe headaches were said to be cured by an inhalation of snuff made from skull-scrapings, and in order to relieve toothache the sufferer had only to bite a molar out of a freshly disinterred churchyard skull.

Most medieval magicians, following the ancient theory that the skull was a centre of psychic power, included it in their ceremonies. At her trial in 1324, the notorious witch Dame Alice Kyteler (see KYTELER), was said to have brewed a potion consisting of the brains of an unbaptized child, scorpions, chickens' entrails and other horrors, using the skull of an executed thief as a cauldron. Some 50 years or so later, when a Surrey wizard was arrested he was discovered to have in his possession what was described in the indictment as the 'head and face of a dead man'. Both the skull and the wizard's book of spells were afterwards consigned to the flames. Skulls play an important part in the rites of modern black magicians; a skull impaled on a post was a prominent feature of the rituals carried out in Clophill churchyard, Bedfordshire, in 1963 (see CLOPHILL).

At about the time when magic was at long last giving way to scientific knowledge and most of the older medical superstitions were disappearing from the scene, skull mysticism reappeared in the form of the 'science' of phrenology. Dr Franz Joseph Gall, an 18th century Viennese physician, put forward the intriguing theory that a man's physical constitution determined his character and that the faculties of the brain could be assessed from the shape of the cranium. In the 19th century phrenology gained widespread popularity, both in Europe and in America. Although this latter-day cult of the skull has now been relegated to the fairground quack and the seaside pier entertainer, in the present century there has nevertheless been a revival of scientific interest in the possible effects of physique on character (see PHRENOLOGY).

Animal Skulls

In the 1st century AD the Roman writer Tacitus noted the curious custom of the ancient Germanic tribes of suspending the heads of animals from trees in sacred groves as offerings to the god Odin (see ODIN), while other early peoples offered the skulls of animals to their gods in return for success in battle. This idea is far from extinct, for modern huntsmen continue to exhibit the skulls of slain animals as trophies. It would appear that among some peoples the skulls of animals may have had a totemic significance similar to that of human skulls. In the Indian Archipelago turtle skulls were hung up to receive the prayers of turtle fishermen, and the Ainu of Japan offered libations of millet beer to the skulls of bears impaled on sacred posts (see BEAR). Nearer home, the 16th century historian John Stow in *A Survey of London*, recorded the discovery in 1316 of a huge cache of animal skulls, 'more than a hundred scalps of oxen and kine', in the vicinity of St Paul's Cathedral; this seems to indicate the existence of some kind of animal cult in England in prehistoric times. A further discovery of 1000 ox skulls buried on Harrow Hill, a pagan site at Angmering, Sussex, supports this theory. In 1895 a number of bullock and horse skulls were found under a building in south Devon.

Similar discoveries of horses' skulls buried beneath barn floors or concealed in church buildings remain as yet something of a mystery. In Ireland horse skulls were often deposited under the corners of threshing floors, so as to make the sound of the threshing reverberate and echo; this not only announced to passers-by that threshing was in progress, but was thought to be lucky. The skulls also magnified the music which accompanied dancing at the conclusion of threshing time. Towards the close of the last century, when the Presbyterian meeting house in Bristol Street, Edinburgh, was being demolished, the skulls of eight horses were found concealed behind a sounding-board. In some churches sounding-jars, usually of earthenware, were used to produce sonorous echoes; a number of these jars were discovered at Leeds Church, near Maidstone, in 1878. The practice of using jars for this purpose seems to have displaced the earlier use of horses' skulls. The horse skull motif also occurred in a number of folk ceremonies, well-known examples being the Welsh Mari Lwyd in which the skull was carried on a pole by a cloaked performer, and the related Hodening ceremony of Kent in which a skull which had been 'long buried in the soil' was occasionally used (see HOBBY-HORSE).

The skull is the emblem of finality, the perpetual reminder of death and the transitory nature of human existence. In the form of the libation cup, it is a hint to all to drink deeply of life while we yet have it. Its eyeless sockets peer back sightlessly into our own, and within them we may read Fate's immutable decree.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: Barbara Jones, *Design for Death* (Andre Deutsch, 1967).

Giraudon

SKY

The Home of the Highest

'If many of us, still, are afraid of thunderstorms but welcome the rain falling on our gardens in due season, without associating meteorological phenomena with the divine, we can perhaps understand something of the emotions of people who did'

'OUR FATHER who art in heaven' is a familiar prayer to a Supreme Being in the sky, and the Old Testament is full of passages which associate God with phenomena of the sky, with light and darkness, clouds and winds, thunder, lightning and rain. When God was angry with the world he sent a deluge of rain which lasted for 40 days, and when he made an agreement with the survivors he set the rainbow in the sky as a sign (see FLOOD; RAINBOW). When he descended on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people, 'there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain', and when Moses spoke, 'God answered him in thunder' (Exodus, chapter 19). Psalm 18 describes the Lord coming down from the heavens in wrath, flying swiftly on the wings of the wind, with thick darkness under his feet and rainclouds as his canopy, thundering and flashing forth his arrows of lightning.

These passages are expressions of God's raging and overwhelming power. Elsewhere, he is not himself the tempest and the thunder, for when Elijah experienced his presence on Mount Horeb, the Lord was not in the wind which tore the mountain or in the earthquake that followed the wind or in the fire that followed the earthquake, but in the 'still small voice' which came after the fire (1 Kings, chapter 19). God wields the weapons of the sky because the sky is his eternal home, the place from which he watches and dominates the earth. It was there that Ezekiel and the author of Revelation saw visions of God, and still today, if you asked a broad sample of people what

Height is associated with power and moral superiority, and so the great gods often live in the sky *Above* Psyche is received by the Greek gods on Olympus, set among the clouds: painting by Caldara da Caravaggio *Right* Lucifer and his fellows are cast down from the heights of heaven into the pit, to the accompaniment of lightning and whirlwinds: *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* by Charles le Brun

Giraudon

British Museum

The sky god might control the weather himself or he might delegate these various functions to other deities: a lecturer in a 14th century manuscript expounds on the winds that blow from each quarter of the compass

area of the universe they particularly associated with the Almighty, the majority would probably point to the sky.

The sky is naturally the home of the Supreme Being, or may actually be the Supreme Being, because it is above the earth. We constantly associate height with power and often with moral superiority as well. The connotations of the words lofty, exalted, uplift and sublime (from Latin *sublimis*, 'high') indicate this double significance of height. High aims are ambitious or noble or both, to rise in life is to better your status, and Highness is a title of kings.

Access to the Divine

God is the highest of all things, the Most High, and in many traditions the righteous go after death to join him in a paradise high in the sky (see PARADISE). The pharaohs of Egypt were buried with rites to enable them to join the sun god in the heavens. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was taken up into the sky by Jupiter. After Jesus had 'risen' from the tomb, he ascended into the sky: 'he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight' (Acts 1.9). In Christian art, saints, kings and heroes are shown being carried up into heaven. The rebel Lucifer, on the other hand, was expelled from the sky and hurled down to the earth.

Because they can fly, birds were long believed to have access to the gods in the sky and to be in touch with power and knowledge denied to earthbound creatures (see BIRDS). Mountains are linked with the divine because they reach up to the sky (see LANDSCAPE; MOUNTAIN). Superhuman beings of all sorts have been observed careering through the sky, including phantom armies, dragons, visitors from distant planets, and the Wild Hunt (see ARMIES; DRAGON; FLYING SAUCERS; WILD HUNT). The astral body in which, according to occult lore, a man can rise into a higher plane has its origin in speculation about the souls of stars (see ASTRAL BODY).

There is no evidence of sky worship among the earliest of prehistoric men, but as supreme sky gods are known from most societies and as they are often more important in myth than in cult, it may be that one of the oldest and deepest of religious emotions is the sense of the immensity of the sky dominating and dwarfing the little figure of man walking on the earth. The sky contains the sun and moon, which provide heat and light, the rain which fertilizes the earth falls from the sky, the storm in which all the violence of Nature terrifyingly explodes brings the life-giving rain, and all this has affected the human view of the heavens. If many of us, still, are afraid of thunderstorms but welcome the rain falling on our gardens in due season, without associating meteorological phenomena with the divine, we can perhaps understand something of the emotions of people who did. And the fact that in changeable climates the appearance of the sky tends to affect people's feelings – bright and cheerful on a sunny day under blue skies, depressed on cloudy, overeast days – has probably contributed to the belief in dominant sky deities, as well as

The supreme sky god is the master and sovereign of all things... he is all-seeing and all-knowing, because the sky looks down upon every part of the earth

accounting for the passionate addiction to talking about the weather.

There are different sorts of sky deities and the god of storm is not always the same as the supreme power of the sky itself. The supreme sky god is the master and sovereign of all things, which he himself generally created. Usually, he is all-seeing and all-knowing, because the sky looks down upon every part of the earth, and even at night in the darkness he sees everything through his myriads of eyes, the stars. Though he lives in, or actually is, the sky, he may also be everywhere because the air is everywhere, and the air or the wind is his breath, which is also life (see BREATH).

The Father in Heaven

Because he is the supreme ruler and made everything and knows everything, the sky god is likely to be supremely responsible for law and order, both on a cosmic scale and in human terms, and he may be thought of as the Father, the heavenly parallel to the patriarchal father on earth, the author of life, the originator and upholder of rules and standards, the benevolent tyrant who loves and punishes and inspires and provides for his children. The sky's connection with law and order is strengthened when an orderly calendar is worked out by reference to events in the sky, when the stars are used as aids to navigation on sea or land, when the regular and predictable motions of the planets suggest that here in the heavens is the principle of order in an apparently chaotic universe, so much so that their movements can be used to calculate the future course of events on earth (see ASTROLOGY).

And yet the supreme sky being himself is frequently (though not always) unimportant in day to day matters. He made the world and man, he put the wheel of the seasons in motion and set the stars in their courses, but he is distant from the everyday world of humanity and does not much concern himself with it. Presumably this is a consequence of the fact that the sky really is far away and unreachable (at least until recently) and so the sky god is too.

The Andaman Islanders in the Indian Ocean, for instance, have a Supreme Being called Puluga, who lives in the sky. The wind is his breath, the thunder his voice and hurricanes his rages. He made the world and the first man, sent a flood to drown most of humanity when they disobeyed the laws he had made for them, and when later generations were still disobedient he went away and has oever heen seen since. People are frightened of him and respect his laws but they do not worship him or offer him sacrifices.

Similarly, in Africa there are traces of a great sky god who has practically no cult. The Ashanti people in Ghana, for example, say that he used to live close to the earth but moved far away into the heavens. He is everywhere and sees everything, you can speak to him by talking to the wind and place offerings to him in a pot which contains his thunder axe, but he has no organized cult, no set rituals or occasions for his worship, and rituals are mainly concerned with lesser and closer gods (see ASHANTI).

In many parts of the world Sky Father appears in myths as the great male prineiple who fertilizes Earth Mother with his rain (see EARTH), but little attention may be paid to him in cult and ritual. The gods who are more actively worshipped may be gods of the sun or the moon, or gods who have little to do with the sky at all. The general prevalence of Supreme Beings in the sky suggested the theory that the earliest religion was monotheism, which degenerated into polytheism, but this theory has not found general acceptance. Where a High Gòd in the sky is believed in, there are also lesser gods who rank below him but may be regarded as more accessible to men. Sun, moon, storm, weather, may be the preserve of separate deities who are the High God's children, or they may be fully the preserve of the High God himself (see HIGH GODS; RELIGION).

Lord of Lightning

One High God who thundered for himself was Zeus. He is related to Dyaus, meaning basically 'bright, shining', the name of an early Aryan sky god, which lies behind Latin *deus*, 'god' and *dies*, 'day', French *dieu* and our 'divine'. The titles of Zeus demonstrate his connection with the sky and the weather – 'cloud gatherer', 'lord of lightning', 'rainy', 'thunderer', 'he who sends favourable winds'. Altars were sometimes dedicated to him in Greek houses as Zeus Kataibates, 'who descends', a reference to lightning, and sacrifices would be offered on the altar to prevent the house being struck by lightning. But he was, of course, much more than a weather god. He was supreme ruler, the father of gods and men, the giver of fertility and master of fate. He could he spoken of as being the sky itself: sometimes he shines brightly and sometimes he rains, and this is probahly a statement of his oldest role, as the living sky whose overwhelming power dominates all things (see ZEUS).

One common function nf a High God Zeus did not perform, according to Greek mythology. He was not the Creator. He wrested supreme power from his father Cronus, who had himself castrated his father, Uranus, in a myth based on the widespread idea that the sky and the earth were originally joined together and had to he separated (see CRONUS). Uranus was the Greek word for 'sky' and rain was sometimes represented as his seed, which fertilized the earth. But according to Hesiod's *Theogony* there was a sinister aspect to his virility, for the children he begot on the Earth included dangerous monsters, and Uranus hated his children and imprisoned them in the earth. He had no place in Greek worship: 'Zeus was the original Father Sky and consort of Mother Earth, and he remained the real Greek sky god' (see URANUS).

Bull of the World

Zeus's Roman equivalent, Jupiter (see JUPITER), was again a personification of the sky, father of gods and men, inspirer of Rome's greatness and guardian of law, armed with thunder and lightning, and sender of rain. 'Lo, through the clouds the father of the gods scatters red lightnings,' says Ovid's *Fasti*, 'then elears the sky after the torrent rain.' His temple on the Capitoline Hill in Rome was open to the sky, and thunder, lightning and the flight of birds could be interpreted as signs of his will (see AUGURY).

Dyaus Pitar, Zeus Pater, Jupiter, all mean Sky Father. Dyaus was a remote sky god hy the time the Aryans reached India and was the father of nearer and more active deities, several of whom were connected with the sky (see INDIA). Indra was lord of the atmosphere between the earth and the far heavens, of weather and war. In early myths he wages successful campaigns against demons, who presumably represent the

C. M. Dixon

Michael Holford

Left **Roman statuette of the 2nd to 4th century AD, showing the god Zeus or Jupiter holding a thunderbolt: the supreme god of Greek and Roman religion was the power of the living sky** ***Above*** **In Canaan the most active deity was Baal, 'the cloud-mounter, god of storm and rain': stele from Ras Shamra dated 1900–1750 BC** ***Right*** **In this beautifully colourful Persian illustration, the sky is depicted thronged with angels**

native inhabitants who were defeated by the Aryan invaders. He was golden or red in colour and rode in a golden chariot drawn by tawny horses. The thunderbolt was his weapon, the rainbow his bow, and he wielded a great hook to trip and slaughter his enemies and a net of illusions to snare them in.

The heroic god of warrior chieftains (the poetic analogy between war and storm is obvious), Indra had superb and terrifying vitality. He lashed the world with tempests, he burst the clouds open to pour down the rain, he made the blood circulate and the sap. He had a thousand testicles, he was 'master of the fields', 'master of the plough', 'bull of the world', the god who made land and beasts and women fruitful; not himself the Creator but the virile promoter of life.

Another Aryan god, Varuna (the name means 'sky' and seems to be basically the same as Uranus), also had storm and weather attributes. The wind was his breath, he growled in the thunder, darkened the clouds and made the sky rain. But he was more important as the all-seeing, all-knowing sky. He had a thousand eyes, which were the stars, and he knew all acts and motives and secrets. He was responsible for the law and order of the universe, for the passage of the seasons and the moral code of men. Mircea Eliade comments that Varuna 'does not take to himself any rights, conquers nothing, does not struggle to win anything (as does Indra for instance); he *is* powerful, he *is* sovereign, while remaining a contemplative . . . power is his by right because of his very nature . . . the tendency to passivity is shown by all the supreme sky gods who live in the higher spheres, far from man and more or less indifferent to his daily needs.'

The Storming of Ur

In Egypt the sky itself was female, an exception to the general rule, but the principal sky deity was Horus, 'he who is on high' or 'the distant one', who was a falcon, 'the most fierce and terrifying of all the birds of prey which scoured the Egyptian sky'. Each of the pharaohs was identified with him as supreme ruler, and he was assimilated to another dominating power in the

William MacQuitty

Scala

Above **Zeus, Sky Father and supreme god, was the lover of many mortal women; to approach Danae, who had been imprisoned by her father, he took the form of a shower of gold – a possible reference to the sky as the source of fertilizing rain:** ***Danae and the Shower of Gold*** **by Titian** ***Below right*** **A cartoon by George Cruikshank, 'St Swithin's Chapel', pokes fun at the fashion for carrying umbrellas: this modern defence against the rain soon attracted a variety of superstitions**

sky, the god of the sun (see CREATION MYTHS; EGYPT; HORUS).

In Mesopotamia the god An or Anum ('sky') was the oldest of gods, the supreme father and king, the ultimate source of all existence, but in practice the divine power of the sky was more often exercised by the god of the atmosphere, Enlil, 'Lord Wind'. When the city of Ur was taken and sacked by invaders from Elam, to the east, the attack was described as an appalling storm, mounted by Enlil. The god summoned evil winds, he called the hurricane of heaven howling across the skies, the shattering storm, the relentless tempest which covered Ur like a cloth and wrecked the city. The attackers 'stormed' the walls, as we would say, but here not just as a vivid metaphor but in the sense that they embodied the terrible violence of the god.

There were also other powerful gods of the sky – the sun god, the moon god, the lady of heaven (Ishtar), and the weather god, Adad. Several of these deities were connected with the bull, an animal frequently linked with gods of sky and storm because of its dominance, its virility and fierceness, and its bellowing voice, like the thunder or the roaring of the wind (see ANIMALS; BULL; MESOPOTAMIA).

Powerful sky gods are also found among many other ancient peoples, including the Germans and Scandinavians, and the Hittites (see GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY; HITTITES). In Canaan the supreme god El remained in the background and the most active deity was Baal, the cloud-mounter, god of storm and rain. The bull was his cult animal and he wore the horns of a bull on his helmet. His weapons were thunder and lightning. Unlike most gods of sky and storm, he died and rose again, being both the fall of rain and the growth of vegetation (see BAAL).

St Swithin and Umbrellas

In religion the sky gods range from supreme but passive deities through supreme and highly active ones to gods with more specialized sky functions. In folklore and superstition it is naturally not so much the all-powerful and all-knowing sky that occupies attention as the more immediate phenomena of thunder, lightning and rain.

Church bells are still sometimes rung in parts of Europe during thunderstorms and hailstorms to shield crops from damage (see BELLS). Red coral, houseleek, St John's wort, hawthorn, mistletoe, sprigs of holly, and small branches of hazel gathered on Palm Sunday are all supposed to protect houses against lightning. When out of doors, you can protect yourself by wearing rosemary or mugwort (which will also ward off sunstroke and the malevolence of witches), or by carrying a nettle. Some people still cover mirrors and hide away all metal objects during a thunderstorm, and some say that the doors and windows should all be opened, so that if the thunder does get into the house, it can swiftly get out again.

The oak is generally considered the most protective tree against lightning (see OAK), which is probably a paradoxical result of the fact that oaks are peculiarly prone to being struck and so became sacred to Zeus, Jupiter and other gods of thunder and lightning, since anything struck by a bolt of lightning becomes a container of something of the god's force. All ferns are associated with thunderstorms and bracken is sometimes called Oak-fern. The marks on a stem of bracken that is cut across close to its root were thought to represent an oak tree, or alternatively an eagle, which is also sacred to sky gods (see EAGLE). There is an old belief that cutting or burning ferns will bring rain, and in 1636 when Charles I was going on a visit to Staffordshire, a letter was sent ahead of him asking the High Sheriff of the county to see that no fern was burnt during the royal visit, to make sure of fine weather.

If it rains during a funeral, this is a good omen for the dead person's soul. 'Happy is the bride that the sun shines on, happy is the corpse that the rain rains on', presumably because the sky is in harmony with the spirit of the proceedings.

'Happy is the bride that the sun shines on, happy is the corpse that the rain rains on', presumably because the sky is in harmony with the spirit of the proceedings

On the other hand, if a ray of sunshine lights up the face of somebody attending a funeral, he will be the next to die.

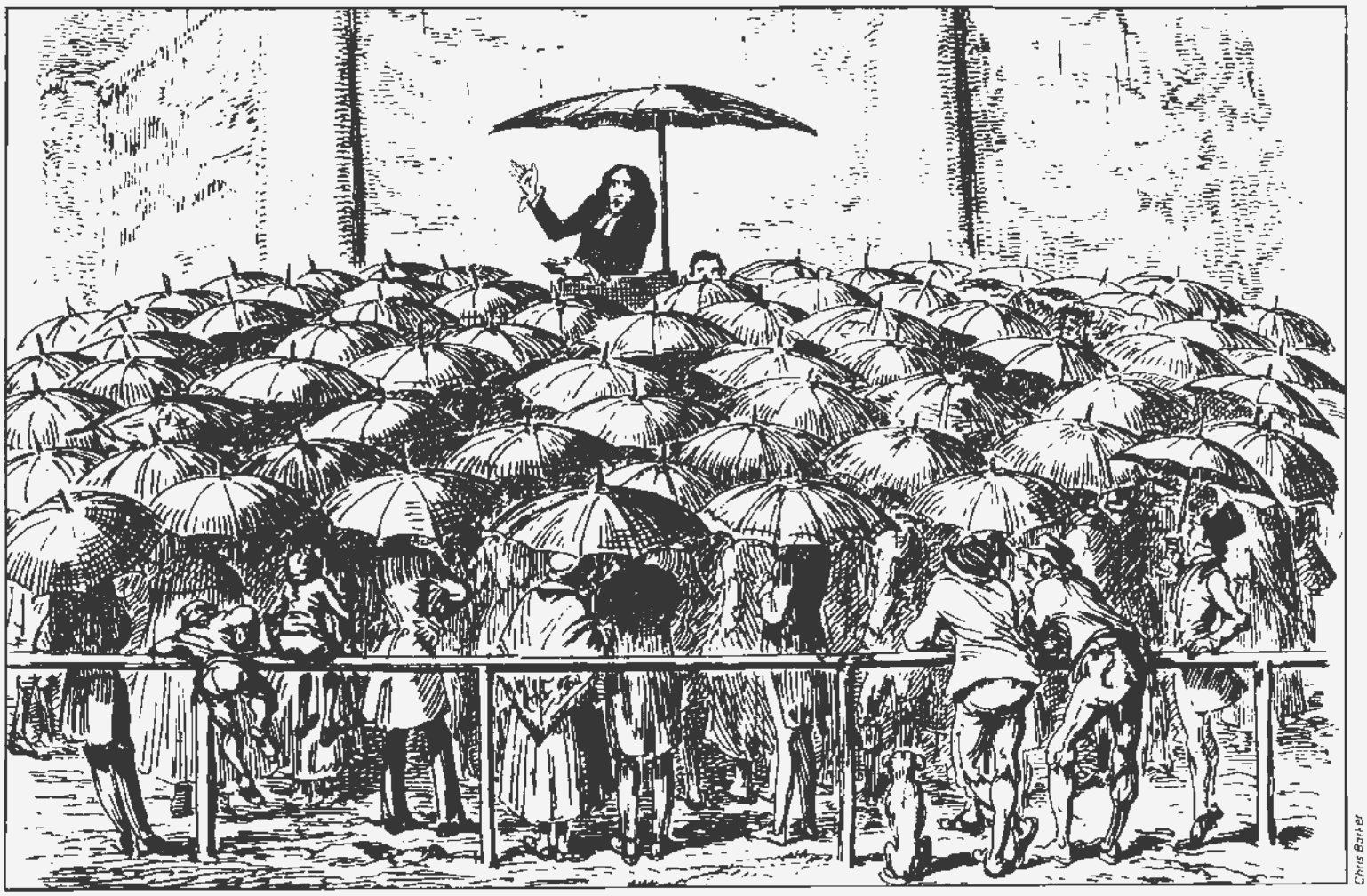
There is an old tradition that if it rains on St Swithin's day, 15 July, it will go on raining for 40 days afterwards, but if the weather is fine that day, there will be no rain for 40 days. St Swithin (or Swithun) was Bishop of Winchester in the 9th century and according to legend humbly asked to be buried in some vile and unworthy place. Years afterwards the monks of Winchester decided to dig him up and give him a more honourable resting place but they were prevented from beginning work, on 15 July, by torrential rain which fell for 40 days and 40 nights (as in the Flood story in the Bible).

'Rain, rain, go away, come again another day' and 'Rain, rain, go to Spain' are rain-repellent charms, still chanted by children. Even the modern adult's practical defence against rain, the umbrella, has attracted superstitions to itself. Through an obvious association of ideas, to open an umbrella in fine weather will cause rain, and to open one indoors at any time will bring bad luck. It is also unlucky to give anyone an umbrella, and if you drop one, you should never pick it up yourself but let somebody else pick it up for you. In the *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions* Christina Hole remarks that 'although these beliefs are themselves trifling, it is interesting that they should exist at all in Britain, in view of the late appearance of the umbrella there.' Long known in the East as an emblem of majesty held over the heads of kings on ceremonial occasions, presumably as a symbol of the sky, the umbrella was apparently used by a few women in England in the 17th century but was not adopted by men till the late 18th. A man named James Hanway appeared with one in London in 1778 and was jeered and hooted at in the streets.

(See also AURORA; AUSTRALIA; HAMMER; LIGHT; METEORS; MOON; STARS; STEPS AND LADDERS; SUN; WEATHER MAGIC.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: G. Wainwright, *Sky-Religion in Egypt* (Greenwood, 1971, c1938); R. Williamson, *Living the Sky: The Cosmos of the American Indian* (Houghton Mifflin, 1984).



Chris Baker

Medieval Slav peasants at the confessional were asked: 'Have you worshipped animals, the sun, moon and stars, giving them the name of god?' Long after conversion to Christianity, the Slavs continued to worship the old gods of sun, fire, water, woods and fields

SLAVS

THE EVIDENCE relating to the existence of Slavonic tribes, who at this time were probably part of the Scythian and Sarmatian political units, does not go much beyond the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, though there is a tendency among the Russian chroniclers of later centuries to push their ancestry back as far as possible. References to the Slavs in the 6th and 7th centuries speak of them mainly as living near the estuary and central part of the River Danube. The period of their expansion covers the time of the decline of the Byzantine Empire between the advance of Attila in the 5th century and that of Genghiz Khan in the 13th century. The rapid spreading out of the Slavs over a large territory was facilitated by the fact that nowhere did they meet with a strong enough resistance to halt their progress. Slav tribes raided Macedonia and the Balkan peninsula; some of these scattered tribes remained on the Peloponnese until the first centuries of Turkish rule. By joining up with the Turkish tribe of the Avars the Slavs moved into the Hungarian Plain, settling as far as Dalmatia. In the north they pushed back the Finns who had settled in what is northern Russia today. Later too, the Slavs spread into what was then the Frankish Empire. They crossed the Rhine in the south and they even reached Spain. Lasting settlements in the west were to be near the river Elbe and the Baltic shore, including the island of Rügen, which became a centre of pagan Slav worship.

Mauritius in his *Strategicum* describes the ancient Slavs as follows: 'Physically they are strong, well able and accustomed to endure cold and lack of clothing and food. They have great reverence for the laws of hospitality and are very kind to strangers and prisoners. They are armed with two javelins, wooden bows, and small poisoned arrows, some use shields; they are supreme in the art of defence. When pursued by enemies or suddenly attacked, they dive under the water and, lying on their backs at the bottom, breathe through a long reed. They live in a continuous state of defence, having several exits to their houses and burying all their superfluous food.'

Geographically, the Slavonic tribes came to be divided into southern, eastern and western Slavs. All three groups are now distinguished by their different dialects and their own folklore but, as far as is known, the mythology was, in the main, similar among all Slavs. Information about the customs, religion and myths of the ancient Slavs has come down to us almost exclusively through their neighbours. Apart

Victoria & Albert Museum/Chris Barker

Kupala's Fire, **a drawing by a 20th century Polish artist. The worship of fire for its cleansing and healing properties was an important element of early Slav religion. Although condemned by the Church in the Middle Ages, some aspects of fire worship are still to be found in local belief**

from written sources, of which there are few that are reliable, there is some rather imaginative information to be found in Arabian travellers' accounts. The western sources are by far the most precise, but allowance must be made for their obvious Christian bias. These accounts tend to contain sweeping parallels to the Greek and Roman pantheon of gods. Russian chroniclers, who wrote their accounts when the Slavonic gods had long been dethroned, stress the inferiority of the old religion in comparison with the Christian faith.

More valuable is the archeological evidence and that of the existing folklore, such as the customs connected with the seasons, as well as Church records that deal with those pagan practices that have passed into Christian ritual. Folklore, songs, sayings, epics, sculpture, dances and games provide material that yields much reliable information. Slavonic folklore is abundantly rich and has survived well into the 20th century: in Russia major changes in the social structure and the way of life occurred only with the Revolution.

All-Pervading Life Force

The pagan Slav felt himself to be part of Nature and his feelings for it were of a religious kind – he worshipped all its manifestations. From these very close ties his gods were created and can be seen to be personifications of the life he experienced around him. He worshipped individual aspects of Nature, from an oak tree to a large stone, a swamp or a ravine. In an equal measure everything was endowed with an all-pervading life force with which he felt an affinity. From this intimate connection with Nature arose the knowledge of how to make use of its gifts and powers, such as were latent in springs and herbs, for example. The pagan Slav personified those powerful manifestations of Nature on which he felt most dependent, and these personifications entered the upper ranks of his mythology as gods. He also believed that each domain of Nature was inhabited by all kinds of spirits and demons. Whereas the ancient gods came to be forgotten soon after Russia became converted to Christianity, this lower order of beings survived in popular belief and magical practices and in folk customs, many of which merged with the Christian folk tradition.

Although many names of Slavonic gods and spirits have come down to us, in many cases their individual functions are not clear. Often it is not even known whether, perhaps, they originated in another people's mythology, or where exactly they were worshipped. The attempt has been made to establish their geographical distribution through an etymological analysis of place

names. As there is no written evidence of the gods of the Poles, Czechs, Serbians or Bulgarians, the information available covers mainly the areas of the eastern Slavs and the Baltic or western Slavs.

Opinions are divided as to whether a basic dualism underlies the Slavs' mythological concepts. According to the 12th century chronicler Helmold, whose evidence is confirmed by recent Soviet research, the Elbe Slavs used to offer prayers to the divinity of good and evil; these were personified in Chernobog and Byelbog, gods of darkness and light. Chernobog was regarded as very powerful, being the cause of all calamities, and prayers were offered to him at banquets to avert misfortune. 'The Slavs have a remarkable superstition, for on the occasion of banquets and festivities they carry about a round vessel, over whieh they speak words whieh are not a blessing but rather a curse, which they utter in the name of the gods of good and evil, for from the good god they expeet good fortune, but from the evil god misfortune.' No other specific evidence concerning these two divinities has been preserved. Helmold testifies further that in spite of a fundamental dualism, the Slavs worshipped one god, ruler of all the other divine powers to whom they used to attribute parts of Nature, as fields or forests, as well as the human emotions of sorrow and joy. This god, he says, cared only for things celestial, whereas the rest, who sprang from his blood, obeyed the duties assigned to them, enjoying distinction in proportion to their nearness to the chief god. The name of this Supreme Being is not known.

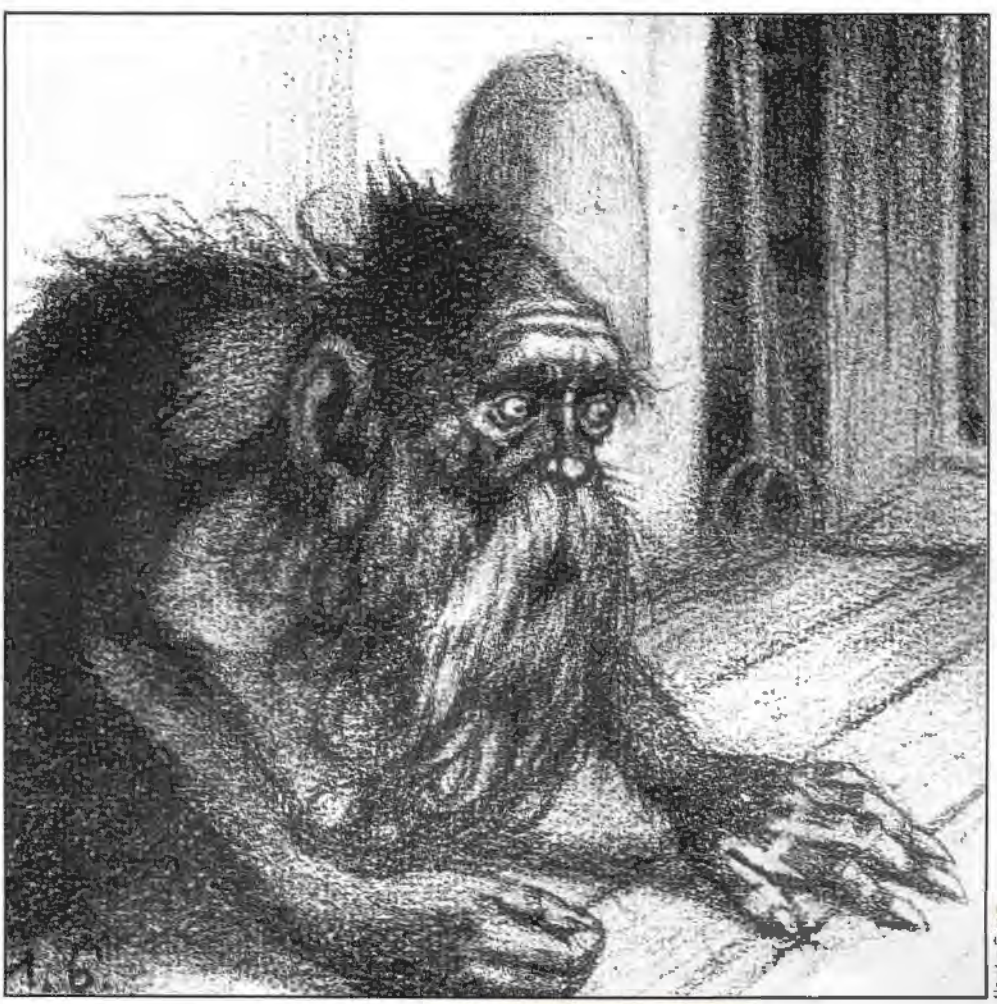
The names of a number of gods and spirits that were worshipped at one time have been established with some degree of certainty. The sites of some of the statues of the principal east Slavonic gods were the hill before the palace in Kiev and by the River Volkhov in Novgorod. According to manuscripts dating from the 12th to the 16th century, these statues represented the gods Perun, Khors, Volos and Dazhbog. Perun's statue was erected by Vladimir, who later became the first Russian prince to accept Christianity. The idol is described as having been made of wood, with a silver head and a golden beard. Vladimir's uncle Dobrynya, a celebrated semi-legendary hero of many historical songs, was responsible for setting up a similar image of Perun in Novgorod. As no remains of temples dedicated to their gods have been found among the eastern Slavs, it is assumed that they used to erect their statues in the open. We are told that they were commonly placed on hills, facing east and the direction of water, a nearby river or lake.

When Prinee Vladimir received baptism in 988 AD, he ordered all idols in Kiev to be destroyed. The statues of Perun in Kiev and Novgorod were dragged down to the river. The Novgorod idol was tied with ropes, pulled through the mire down to the river, where it was heaten with rods so as to cast out the demons that were thought to inhabit it. Perun appears to have been perhaps the most important east Slavonic god, being a solar deity, a god of lightning and of fire. His worship was widespread among the Slavs, judging by the many place-names in Slovenia, Bohemia, Bulgaria and Poland which are connected with his name. Worship of this god disappeared in about the 11th century. In the Christian era his worship was transferred to St Ilya. Nestor, the medieval Russian chronicler, tells that when Prince Igor was about to conclude a treaty with the Byzantines, the Christian Russians took oath in the church of St Ilya, while the pagans swore to Perun.

Gods of Sun and Fire

Dazhbog's statue also stood on the hill in the courtyard of the castle at Kiev. In old manuscripts this god is referred to as 'Tsar Sun'. According to the 12th century Russian prose epic *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, Vladimir and the Russians call themselves the grandchildren of Dazhbog; however, it is a common tendency of all people to explain their origins as having links with divine beings. Dazhbog also seems to have been known among the southern Slavs. A Serbian fairy tale relates that 'Dabog, the Tsar, was on earth and the Lord God was in heaven.' Dazhbog is here contrasted with God and is regarded as an evil being, for in early Christian times the memory of the previous pagan gods was linked with the Christian concept of evil and its personification, the Devil or Satanael. Dazhbog, who probably took over the role of sun god from Perun, played a significant part till long after Christianization because of his connection with fire and the Slavs' worship of the hearth as a sacred place in the house. The Christian clergy fought a long and difficult battle against this worship of fire. In a sermon we read that even 'priests do not scorn the company of the idol-worshippers, they eat and drink with them . . . they pray to the fire which they call Svarozhich' (another name of Dazhbog). As Christianity was introduced to the Slavs by their rulers, the common folk clung to their pagan beliefs for a long time, but gradually the old gods of the sun and the fire were replaeed by Christian angels and saints.

The worship of fire and the hearth dates back to the days of nomads and hunters of Paleolithic times, to whom the fireplace and the spirit of the ancestors which lived in it was the central point of their religious worship (see FIRE: HEARTH). The names Ovinnik, Yarilo and Kupala, which were later used in folk ritual in connection with the worship of fire, stand for basically the same idea, since all are part of the customs of the sacred fire and its purifying power. Fire worship was frequently condemned by the Church, as in a sermon of the 12th century by the Bishop of Turov,



Left A Domovoy or Slav domestic spirit; usually conceived of as a hairy creature in human form, he protected the family and warned them of impending disaster in the home *Right* Slav mythology abounds with stories of heroes and their legendary feats; Ilya-Muromyets tries to release Svyatogor from the coffin in which he has shut himself. Drawings by I. Bilibine

И.Б.
1928

Giraudon

Left **Volkh, a mythical being of Slav mythology, depicted as a hawk. He had the ability to assume a number of forms, such as a grey wolf or a tiny ant, and was renowned for his sorcery** ***Below right*** **Baltic Slavs pay homage to an image of the god Svetovit; he was famous for his prophecies, especially those to do with the success or failure of the harvest. Drawings by I. Bilibine**

Cyril, who wrote: 'We do not worship fire. Now neither the forces of Nature, nor the sun, nor the fire . . . are called by the name of God . . . for idol-worship has come to an end and the devilish violence has been overcome by the sacrament of the cross.'

Many magical rites stemmed from belief in the capacity of fire to cleanse and heal. Until the 20th century, for example, Russian peasants believed that the most effective means of healing and protecting was the so-called 'new fire', which was obtained by rubbing together two pieces of dry wood. In the event of an epidemic, frightened superstitious villagers would put out all fires in their houses and then, after having said special prayers, would go out together to fetch this 'new fire' for their homes. The holy fire became part of Christian belief. It would be brought home from church on particular feast days, especially at Easter, and was regarded as a protection against unclean powers. On the whole, Christianity succeeded in banishing the old gods from the consciousness of the Slavonic tribes, but it did not succeed in suppressing the religious customs connected with them; these customs remained closely connected with Nature and the seasons.

Another major Slavonic deity was Volos or Veles, the god who protected cattle. What appear to be remnants of the worship of this god were still to be found until recently as part of the harvest festival customs in southern Russia. The peasants would tie the last handful of ears into a knot, which used to be called 'plaiting the beard of Veles'; in some districts a piece of bread was put among the ears. Veles was also known among the ancient Bohemians. Later his worship came to be transferred to St Blaise, a shepherd and martyr of Caesarea in Cappadocia whom the Byzantines called the guardian of flocks.

The Human Sun

Some Church records give an interesting indication of the Slavs' worship of the heavenly bodies. A sermon of John Chrysostom admonishes those who worship the sun, the moon and the stars to repent of their sins. Similarly, in a sermon, Cyril of Turov regrets that even now, in the 12th century, the Devil tempts people to believe in God's creatures, in the sun, the moon and the stars. In his 'Hymn of the Mother of God' he says: 'They have forgotten God and believe in the creatures that God has given us for work, and so they have called everything gods.' The questions asked by the priest during confession are also revealing: 'Have you perhaps worshipped animals, the sun, the stars, the moon, dawn and dusk? Or have you worshipped God's creatures . . . the sun, moon and stars, giving them the name of God, and the sun, the moon and the stars and the planets of the zodiac, looking at them, did you believe in them?'

In proverbs, songs and legends the sun has a human body, rises like a human in the morning and shows human emotions like happiness and sorrow. The setting sun is visualized as an old man with a golden head and a silver beard. The sun's sister is the *deva-zorya* or *solntseva sestritsa* which is dawn and dusk. The conviction was widespread that stars and humans are closely related, that there are as many stars as there are people, and that the luminaries of the night are the abode of the souls of the departed.

Various chroniclers give colourful accounts of the temples and idols of the western Slavs, who appear to have reached a considerably high cultural level, with a well-organized priestly caste and a definite ritual. The best known centre of worship was Arkona, on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea. The 12th century Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus reports of the image of the god Svantovit (or Svetovit) that it had four heads and necks, two facing the front and two behind. The faces of this image were clean-shaven and the hair cut short, as was the custom of the people of Rügen. In his right hand the idol held a horn, made of various metals and in his left he had a bow. He wore a tunic of wood reaching to the knees.

Svetovit was famous for his victories and

prophecies. Divining the success or failure of the crop of the following year was also connected with this god. After each harvest a great festival was held in his honour and people assembled from all parts of the island to sacrifice cattle and join in the rites. The king was held in very moderate esteem compared with Svetovit's priest. His temple was of wood and extravagantly adorned, for neighbouring tribes and nations sent abundant tribute to his sanctuary. The god had a magnificent sword and horse which were sacred to him; this horse could be ridden and tended only by the priest. Svetovit had 300 men-at-arms and horses attached to him and always received one third of their spoil. The priest of the image, so we are told, on the day before the celebration of the god's power, carefully cleaned out the sanctuary with a broom; this sanctuary no one was allowed to enter. He was careful not to breathe in the building and, as often as he was forced to inhale or exhale, he would run to the door, lest he should contaminate the presence of the god with the pollution of his mortal breath. In 1169 the Danish king Valdemar seized the treasures of the temple in Arkona, ordered the destruction of the sanctuary and then had the idol smashed to pieces and burnt. The name of this god suggests that he was probably a personification of the power of light.

Among the Elbe or western Slavs Svarozhich is said to have been a war god. His temple stood in Radegast, near Leipzig. The idol wore a helmet resembling a bird with outstretched wings and on its breast was the head of a black bison. The idol's right hand rested on this symbol, while the left grasped a double-edged axe. The temple was much visited by all Slavonic tribes to make use of the prophetic powers of this god, to whom human sacrifice was made. According to the records, in honour of a victory won in 1066, the head of John, Bishop of Mecklenburg, who had been captured in battle was offered to this divinity.

Tribute of a Bishop's Head

Apart from the sanctuary of Svarozhich there were other places of worship both in Radegast and in Stettin, near the mouth of the River Oder. Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg, describes the town of Radegast with its three gates as being surrounded on all sides by sacred woods. The temple of Svarozhich, however, also contained the images of other gods and goddesses in armour. In time of war incantations and spells were used to induce a propitious sign from the gods. A sacred horse was used for divination, as in the ritual connected with Svetovit. Thietmar speaks of many temples and single images in these parts. Apparently, human sacrifice was common to appease the wrath of the gods.

Helmold mentions four temples in Stettin, all of which were devoted to the god Triglav. His three heads denote the three kingdoms: the heavens, the earth and the underworld. The image was made of gold and his eyes and lips were covered with a veil, that he might not see the sins of men. A black horse, used for divination, was sacred to him. The god's statue stood in a temple whose outer and inner walls are described as having such beautifully embossed figures of men, animals and birds that they seemed to live and breathe. All the temples in Stettin were full of valuables. Triglav's statue was broken by Otto, Bishop of Bamberg, and its head was sent to the pope. All pagan temples in the town were burnt to the ground, and churches in honour of St Peter and St Ethelbert were built on the hill that once had been sacred to Triglav.

Worship was also given by the Pomeranians of northern Poland to Gerovit (Herovit), another war god, in whose sanctuary hung an enormous shield, skilfully wrought and adorned with gold. It was carried before the army and was believed to ensure victory. Other colossal many-headed idols were those of Rugievit, with seven faces and seven swords hanging from his belt, and of Porevit and Porenutius, whose idol had four faces and a fifth one in his breast. It is assumed that all these gods were different versions of Svetovit.

The Pregnant Earth

The southern Slavs or Bulgarians accepted Christianity in the middle of the 9th century from Byzantium. About a hundred years later began the conversion of the eastern Slavs, followed by that of the Czechs. Other west Slavonic tribes became Christian much later; the Elbe Slavs, who today are extinct except for the Upper and Lower Lusatians, who occupy an area in East Germany

Giraudon

between Dresden and the Polish and Czech frontiers, were converted in the 12th century. For some time the old and the new faiths existed side by side, as is evident from references in many sermons and chronicles. In a 12th century work, *Slovo o khristolubtsa*, the author complains that there are many Christians who still believe in the old gods, making sacrifices to them and practising the old rites. Yet the early Slavonic chroniclers seemed to know very little of the old gods, and often remembered even their names wrongly. This ignorance is also reflected in the sermons of many of those preachers of the Christian faith who were concerned with propagating the new religion, and from the 16th century onwards the pagan Slavonic gods are only very occasionally referred to in the chronicles.

Finnish tribes who used to inhabit the region which is eastern Russia today influenced the beliefs of the Slavs to a great extent. The Finns worshipped the forces and manifestations of Nature (see FINLAND) and it appears that until about the 13th century the folk beliefs of the eastern and southern Slavs were largely identical, and pagan customs were retained for a considerable time. Such survivals are particularly to be found in north Russia which was far less accessible to Christianity, partly for geographical and climatic reasons.

The Slavs worshipped the earth, calling it 'Holy Mother Earth'. This reverence for the earth is also apparent in many agricultural customs and popular beliefs. In Russian villages, if the children were seen to strike the ground with a stick in the course of a game, older people would often stop and tell them, 'It is a sin to beat the earth, for she is our mother.' In White Russia (Byelorussia) the peasants believed that to injure the earth in any way in spring until about 25 March was a sin, as she was considered pregnant at this time. Since the earth was thought to be a pure element, the belief arose that she would not receive back into her womb the bodies of sinners, black magicians or suicides.

Water was an element in whose cleansing powers the Slavs believed deeply. It was thought to be neutral and could therefore carry positive and negative qualities. Because of its capacity to reflect, to mirror, water was used for divination and for healing magic generally. A custom which survived until the turn of the 19th century was to wash one's face three times in the first spring rain for beauty and good fortune, and to preserve this water for the whole of the year. The Slavs had holy springs and sacred lakes. This ancient cult of water is also linked with the belief in water spirits such as the Vodyanoy and Rusalki among various others.

Cult of the Dead

The Slav felt himself to be surrounded by spirits and demons who were mainly ancestral spirits, either helping or harming their descendants. Often they had no distinct features but might be recognized by general characteristics, such as a particular type of behaviour, a certain smell, or by leaving traces of their appearance. The memory of the ancestral spirit was honoured in a cult which was widespread among all Slavs, and which was linked with that of the domestic spirits and with animal worship. Ideas that are linked to ancestor worship have been handed down in proverbs and funeral laments, and in many folktales. Archeological material suggests that the Slavs believed that the soul had the same needs in the otherworld as on earth. The dead were therefore buried with food, clothes and household utensils. When they felt death approaching, old men used to go out in the fields and take leave of the earth and the light. A coffin would be made from a single tree trunk, with a little window cut into it; this was known as *domovina* (house, or boat). The funeral meal with the various offerings and the laments formed a substantial and obligatory part of the cult of the dead. The soul was believed to enter other people, birds or other winged creatures, or to become a spirit whose presence would be experienced by his next of kin: in this way the domestic spirits were the ancestral spirits who protected the family and their home and property: they were called Ovinnik or Domovoy.

The animal cult, such as the worship of the bear and deer, for instance, was closely linked with ancestor worship. In folktales the bear often figures as the protector and guide of man in the form of *Tsar-medved* (Tsar bear). The cock, as a bird that was at one time sacred to the sun and to fire, enjoyed particular respect among the Slavs. It was thought to banish evil spirits; it indicated the time of day by crowing, and predicted the weather. In an anonymous episcopal sermon for clergy and laymen alike, Christians are threatened with excommunication for several years who believe in 'bird song and who predict the future with bird omens'. A 16th century Russian book of rules and admonitions for the successful regulation of a household prohibits the belief in *rodoslovie* (genealogy) and in the forces of destiny, the *rozhanitsy*, that were believed to protect their descendants. Genii of fate would appear, according to a popular belief, at various crucial periods in life: at birth, for instance, three female spirits were thought to appear. Each of them would speak in turn of the fate of the newborn child. Bread, salt and wine were put next to the mother-to-be as a welcome for the rozhanitsy. Annual festivals, commemorating the dead, took the form of solemn banquets in which the ancestors were invited to take part. These old sacrificial customs were maintained long after the coming of Christianity.

The woods, waters and fields were the domains of Nature which belonged to various different spirits. The waters were the realm of the Vodyanoy, who was thought to live in deep rivers, lakes and brooks. He could transform himself in many ways and had nymphs as his wives and daughters. At night he would come to the surface of the water; when he appeared he could often be troublesome, but could be appeased by offerings. The Rusalki were water creatures who were believed to be women who had died a violent death; the Slavs visualized them as beautiful girls with long hair. At night, during the new moon, they would dance in forest clearings, luring the lonely wanderer. He who came into their power was doomed unless he could solve the riddle which they put to him. The Navy, also spirits like the Rusalki, were thought to be the souls of children who were killed or who had died in infancy. Sometimes at night they would appear in the shape of birds and give a shrill cry. The Serbians and Croats thought of them as big birds with the heads of children.

Dwarfs and Vampires

It was the task of the Leshy to guard the woods and to take care of all the animals and birds in them. He was thought to have green eyes that burnt like coals, his hair and beard were white and long; he was portrayed as an old man in white robes and a greenish-white hat; sometimes he would wear a crown. There were also a great variety and number of dwarfs, wild women, field spirits, 'mid-day women', and nightmares and vampires, all of which had a particular time when they appeared, often harming those who met them, playing tricks on people working in the fields, luring away little children or giving people hallucinations. These spirits had to be rendered harmless; countless magical practices existed for controlling their influence.

The belief in the supernatural and its manifestations in good and evil spirits was closely linked with the multiform magical practices and their exponents the Kolduny, Znakhary and Ved'my. The Christian clergy preached incessantly against the old gods and spirits and made the magical rites out to be 'devilish games'. But the belief of the Slavs in their traditional rites and customs was not to be uprooted easily. Instead of seeking advice from their local priest, the common folk turned to their wise men, their magicians and witches, who all had a well-tried remedy for anything from nightmares to toothache. They specialized in predictions, and would cast spells and cure with herbs and potions which only they knew how to apply. These exponents of traditional wisdom were both feared and hated as well as deeply trusted and revered. Almost every village had its own wise man and black magician who had often more power over the lives of the people, largely based on fear and superstition, than the Church ever succeeded in obtaining. But in due course the Church too produced its holy men, the 'Men of God', 'Elders' and 'Fools in Christ' who were believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. In the course of time, what was left of the former pagan beliefs and customs become emptied of their original religious content and survived as traditional customs that often merged with the Christian ones; they became incorporated into folk beliefs, children's games and legends.

MARIA-GABRIELE WOSIEN

FURTHER READING: L. J. Gray ed. *Mythology of All Races*, Vol 3: Slavic Mythology (Cooper Square Publishers, N. Y., 1964). Z. Vana. *the World of the Ancient Slavs* (Orbis).

Mary Evans Picture Library

Rip van Winkle, a Dutch colonist, meets a strange band in the Catskill Mountains, tastes their liquor and falls asleep for 20 years, in an American version of a widespread folktale: illustration by Arthur Rackham

The connection between 'Death, and his brother, Sleep', occurs both in magical practice and also in legends of bygone heroes, who are not truly dead but lying in a death-like trance, ready to rise up in time of national danger

SLEEPERS

A CURIOUS ACCOUNT of an attempted robbery in County Meath appeared in the *Observer* of 16 January 1831. A group of thieves, who had entered a house without any attempt at concealing themselves, were discovered by the household and fled. The men supposed, wrongly, that a magic charm they had brought with them would act as a protection by casting a spell over the occupants. The charm, well known in Europe centuries ago, was called the Hand of Glory: that is, a hand cut from the body of a man who had been hanged. Dried and pickled, it was used as a holder for a candle made from the fat of a hanged man, or sometimes the fingers themselves were set on fire. When this charm was carried into a house and set alight, everyone inside would fall into deep sleep from which they would only wake if milk was used to extinguish it (see HAND OF GLORY).

Sleep and death are obviously closely linked here and the logic behind the charm may have been that, just as the dead sleep in their graves, so portions of a dead body may be used to induce a similar condition. The Hand of Glory was specifically a European charm but related objects have been used both in Europe and in other parts of the world, again chiefly by burglars, to induce a similar condition. Among the southern Slavs the thief threw a human bone over the roof, saying: 'As this bone will waken, so may these people waken', the significance of the spell lying of course in the fact that a bone remains as it is, an immutable object. In Java the thief strewed earth from a grave right round the house. Hindus

placed ashes from a funeral pyre in front of the door, and Peruvian Indians also used charred human remains. The left arm stolen from the corpse of a woman who had died in her first childbirth was used by Mexican Indians. With this they struck the ground in front of the house to be burgled. In Indonesia, when a young man wanted to visit his girl friend at night, he threw soil taken from a grave over her parents' room. This was to prevent them from waking and disturbing the young couple. All these charms served the same purpose: to throw the householder and his family into a trance.

Methods for inducing magic sleep make an interesting comparison, and in some cases they are perhaps suggestive of a rudimentary knowledge of hypnosis. Combing the hair is one method occurring in certain fairy tales. Another is the sung or chanted verse, sometimes so reminiscent of a lullaby or sleep charm that one might assume this to be its origin.

A tale from Bengal, 'The Story of the Rakshasas', describes how a beautiful girl is placed in a death-like trance by means of a silver stick, and revived with a gold one. Slumber is produced by a spindle in the well-known story of 'The Sleeping Beauty', the princess who lies in enchanted sleep for 100 years until a prince arrives and revives her with a kiss. Opera-goers are familiar with Richard Wagner's treatment of Germanic legend in *The Ring of the Nibelungs*: Wotan lays Brunhild down on the mountain and causes a magic fire to blaze around her. Only a hero brave enough to pass through the flames can rouse her from this charmed slumber. Eventually it is Siegfried who awakens her with a kiss.

The converse of this idea occurs in the widespread legend of sleeping heroes, such as Sir Francis Drake in Henry Newbolt's poem *Drake's Drum*:

> Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come
> (Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
> Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
> An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
> Call him on the deep sea, call him up the sound,
> Call him when ye sail to meet the foe.
> Where the old trades plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
> They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!

Inevitably human psychology plays its part. Popular leaders are not readily forgotten by the people from whom they sprang. They live on in the memory of the folk, and in times of peril and national emergency it is good to feel that they are there, waiting to be called upon. This expresses partly that basic human unwillingness to face up to unpleasant facts, and partly that dependency upon another greater than oneself, represented in its simplest form by the child who wants his parents to live for ever, and never die. The hero fulfils such a need. Bridging the gap between deity and man, he represents an image of transition, the pre-Christian version of a saint.

According to many accounts, King Arthur (see ARTHUR) is not dead but living, sunk in magic sleep and waiting to be roused. One of the best known is from Yorkshire, where Arthur and his host are believed to sleep beneath the ruins of Richmond Castle. Once, so it is said, a man called Potter Thompson was taken to an underground vault where they all slumbered. He was told to unsheath a sword and blow a horn, but though he tried to do so, he grew timid before the task was completed; the sleeping figures had begun to stir. As he left, a voice cried:

> Potter Thompson, Potter Thompson,
> If thou hadst either drawn
> The sword or wound the horn
> Thou hadst been the luckiest man
> That ever yet was born.

Parallel stories of slumbering heroes appear all over Europe: King Wenzel and his knights below Blanik mountain in Bohemia; Frederick Barbarossa with his men beneath the Kyffhäuserberg, a peak in Thuringia; King Marko sleeping in the mountain Urvina with his horse Sharatz, according to Serbian legend; Dobocz, the Carpathian robber chief; the founders of the Swiss Federation; Olaf Tryggvason; Ogier the Dane, one of Charlemagne's paladins; Charlemagne himself, and Don Sebastian of Portugal (see CONSELHEIRO). There are many others.

Sometimes there are references to treasure: King Arthur dreams in the Vale of Neath beneath the Craig-y-Ddinas

Robert Skelton

(Castle Rock) with his warriors and a quantity of gold. Of course, important leaders often possessed great riches during their lives, so the idea of the hero and his treasure is easily understandable. But it has also been suggested that such wealth was originally linked to the Nature spirit of the site, an idea perhaps associated with the ancient custom of killing a man so that his shade could guard buried treasure.

Slumbering Heroes

Certainly in many of these legends the hero sleeps, not in a distant land of the imagination, but literally underneath the ground, which could represent some earlier stage of folk belief and an identification with local earth deities. Legendary heroes exhibit a tendency to sink from the fortresses in which they lived to the clefts and caverns below. Norse tradition holds that aged heroes, dissatisfied with the world, shut themselves up in a hill. The subterranean location of the sites is of interest since a characteristic theme in mythology is removal: disappearance or translation to another sphere. A usual method is enclosure within the earth, which opens for the purpose.

Popular belief sometimes places the world of souls underground, and there the hero is secluded with his company. This suggests a possible association of ideas between the sleeping army and the host of the dead. Or there may be a memory here of the custom of slaughtering a man's retinue to keep him company and maintain him in his customary state in the afterlife. Such sleeping warriors occur in two examples from the Isle of Man and Rathlin Island, County Antrim. The first describes a hole called Devil's Den at the base of a mountain: one man brave enough to go in found a group of sleeping giants and, on a stone table in the midst, a bugle. He blew a blast, which woke the giants, and he fled in terror. On Rathlin Island, one of the traditional sites of Robert the Bruce's escape in a cave, where he was inspired by the spider and its web, there is a ruin called Bruce's Castle. Below it, in a grotto, the Bruce and his men lie in enchanted sleep. A man who ventured in found a group of slumbering men dressed in armour, and a sabre, partially sheathed, in the ground. When he tried to draw the sabre, the warriors woke and he ran away.

A Christianized sleepers myth, well known in the early centuries of this era, is the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. It appears in many versions and Mohammed used it in the Koran. According to *The Golden Legend*, a medieval collection of lives of the saints, seven Christians – Maximian, Malchus, Marcian, Dionysus, John, Serapion and Constantine – were living in Ephesus during the persecution by Emperor Decius in 250 AD. This group of Christian heroes, refusing to abandon their faith, hid in a cave on Mount Celion and fell asleep. Hearing a rumour to this effect, Decius caused the entrance to be blocked with stones. Several centuries later during the reign of Theodosius II, a workman chanced to remove the obstruction and the sleepers awoke. They were hungry so

British Museum

Left **Vishnu asleep upon the coils of the serpent Ananta: the god was said to sleep for the four months of the rainy season** ***Above*** **The disciples beg Christ, asleep during a storm on Lake Galilee, to awaken and save them from sinking: from a 15th century French psalter. Many stories tell of sleeping heroes who wake in time of trouble to save their people**

Malchus was sent to buy bread. Shopkeepers in the city, amazed at the ancient money with which he tried to pay, took him before the authorities and accused him of stealing treasure. The bishop agreed to go to Mount Celion and see the cave where the others were waiting. At that time there was a heresy in Ephesus denying the resurrection of the dead. The seven martyrs who were shown to Emperor Theodosius declared: 'God has resuscitated us before the great resurrection day, in order that you may believe firmly in the resurrection of the dead.' This said, they bowed their heads and died. The day commemorating the event is still venerated by the Eastern Church, and people suffering from insomnia ask the seven martyrs for assistance.

The timely appearance of these religious heroes when the Church was threatened with heresy resembles the sleeping patriots waiting to come when their country is in peril. These ideas may seem remote from us today, but are they really so? Siegfried, hero of the *Nibelungenlied*, traditionally slumbers in the mountain of Geroldseck, ready to fight for the fatherland; and, because the imagination of Hitler was fired by these old legends, the motif of the slumbering hero played a prominent role in Nazi ideology – the sleeper is Germany itself.

> Rage! Rage! Rage!
> The alarm bells sound from tower to tower . . .
> The sleepers call from their chambers . . .
> The dead call from their graves
> Germany awake! . . .
> Woe to the people that today dreams on!
> Germany awake!

The refrain of the first Nazi party anthem – 'Germany awake!' – was the Nazis' favourite slogan. It was inscribed on their banners, which were designed by the Fuehrer himself, and it was also the title of the volume which commemorated their seizure of power.

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales* (Gale, 1968); Sabine Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 1978).

Indispensable to the community, the smith was nevertheless regarded with a mixture of respect and fear; working amid darkness and flame, the master of fire was associated with all manner of underground beings, enemies of the gods, and sometimes with the Devil himself

SMITH

IN GERMANY, when speaking of someone who is trying to be a match-maker, the expression '*Er ist der Schmied von Gretna Green*' (He's the smith from Gretna Green) is commonly used, so widely known is the story of our Border blacksmith and his part in uniting runaway couples. In England it is still popularly supposed that eloping couples who slipped into Scotland needed the services of a smith to officiate on these occasions, although in fact other tradesmen were called upon as well. Behind this belief lies a persistent folk memory of the magic-religious role within the community once occupied by the smith.

Undoubtedly the ritual importance and significance of the smith were closely associated with his role as a worker with iron, a substance which, because of its comparatively late appearance in the history of the world, made a tremendous impact on the minds of our early ancestors (see IRON). A novelty when first introduced, its magnetic properties and the spectacular processes of smelting and forging must have invested it with a sense of mystery, which gave rise in turn to taboos and magic practices of all kinds.

For primitive peoples iron, which is dug from the depths of the earth or falls inexplicably from the sky as a meteorite, is charged with mysterious power. In folklore iron objects are traditionally protectives against witchcraft, evil spirits and malign influences, such as the universally dreaded Evil Eye. The kings of Malaya used to venerate a block of iron, and the famous Black Stone kissed by Moslem pilgrims to Mecca is probably a meteorite. The Bedouins of Sinai believe that whoever makes a sword from a meteoric iron will be invincible; death will come to an enemy who attempts to stand against this weapon. But iron serves not only the warrior; it can be seen as benefiting the new-born child. For example, on the birth of a child in the Nguon Son valley of Vietnam, the parents would sell it to the village smith, who would make a small iron ring with an iron chain attached and place it around the child's ankle. This hindered evil spirits from snatching the infant away, mortality being particularly high among new babies in undeveloped societies. When the child is grown up and this particular danger is over, the parents thank the smith for his help and ask him to break the ring.

Among some primitive peoples, such as the Tiv of northern Nigeria, if a death occurs, iron can play a part in making contact with the deceased; the metal acts as a mode of communication between the worlds of the living and dead.

In days past, when most economic necessities were supplied by a family for itself, the blacksmith, as maker of edged tools, was a particularly important craftsman. Even the water in which he cooled the iron was thought to possess medicinal properties. In Ireland he was credited with magic powers and, under the old laws, certain foods were ceremonially presented to him, since he was not himself a grower of food. He was given a tribute of corn and some of the first fruits of the crop. The head of any slaughtered animal was always his: a 19th century antiquary recollected seeing as many as 100 heads of pigs and cows preserved in the kitchen of a smith.

The blacksmiths of England liked to say that theirs was the first of the trades, since other craftsmen depended on them for their equipment. Indeed the blacksmith's tools themselves have been venerated in many countries. The people of Angola revered the hammer because it forged their agricultural implements. The Ogowe, who do not work with iron themselves, esteemed the bellows used by smiths of neighbouring tribes. The Ewes swore oaths before the hammer and anvil, which they believed fell from heaven. A smith among the Wachaga had to be very careful about handling his tools. If he pointed his hammer or tongs at anyone, or even allowed the iron-slag to spill over them, that person would die.

Here it is not only the substance from which the tools are made, but the tools themselves, forged by the skill of the smith, which possess magic properties. In certain myths, a smith god forges weapons which enable another god to defeat his foe: the Egyptian Ptah forges arms with which the god Horus defeats Seth; Indra, using weapons made by the smith Tvashtri, overcomes the demon Vritra; Hephaestus makes the thunderbolt with which Zeus will overcome Typhon; and Thor vanquishes the serpent with his hammer Mjölnir, forged by dwarfs (see HAMMER). These mythical smiths prepared thunder and lightning as weapons for the gods, and their stories stress the tremendous importance attached, not only to the manufactured tool, but to the craftsman capable of forging it.

Trade of the Devil

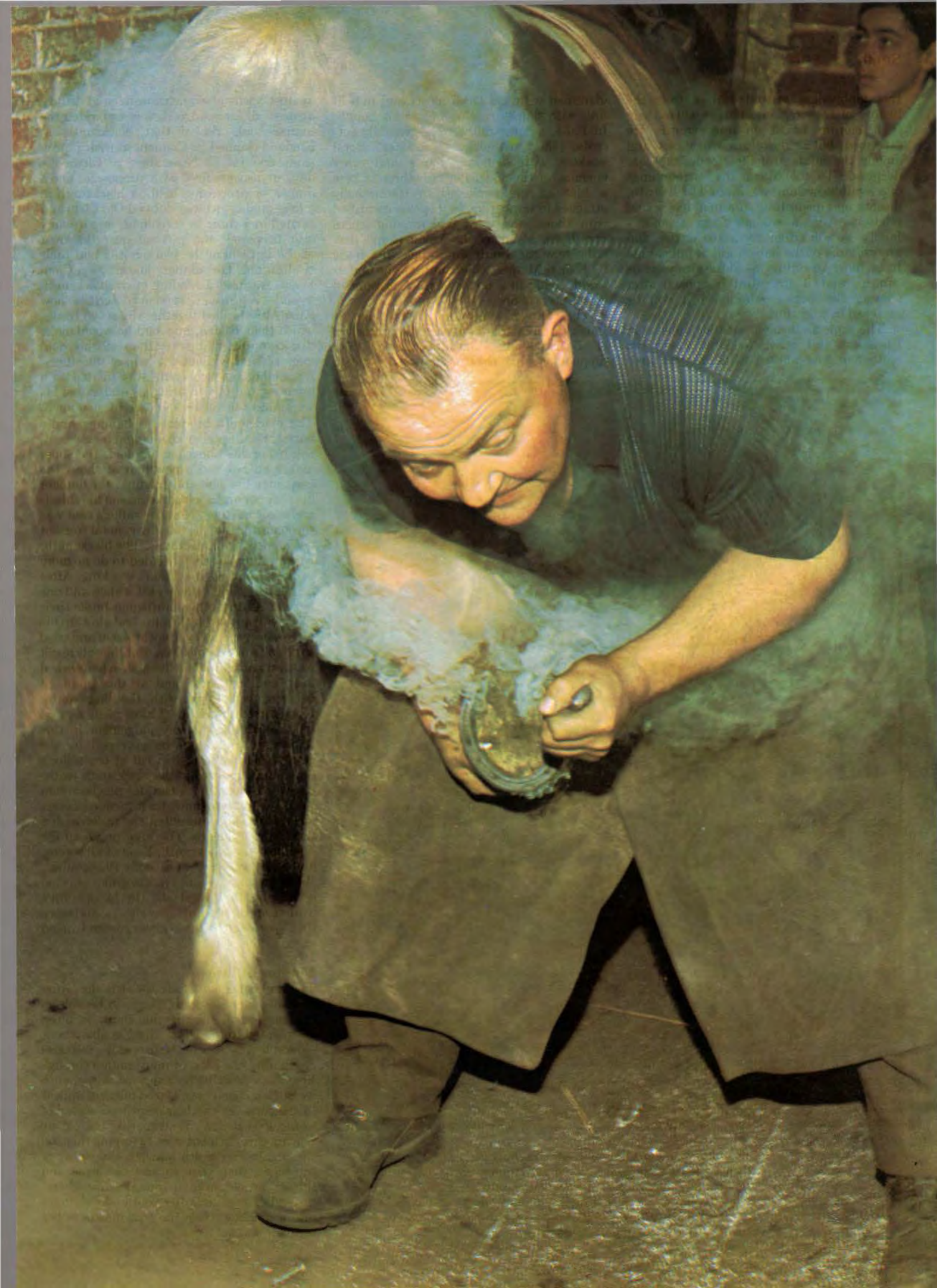
Another reason for the exalted position of the smiths arose from their often being outsiders, itinerant workmen who spoke a different language, practised different customs, and kept the secrets of their profession to themselves. In many countries metal workers have been found in separate groups, apart from the community: among north-western American tribes, the smith is a privileged person who hands on trade secrets to members of his family.

In Africa smiths are both respected and despised. Professor Eliade believes that

Camera Press, London

The village blacksmith *(right)* was formerly revered as a 'master of fire' and possessor of secret knowledge, acting as healer, charmer and practitioner of the occult. In Africa such beliefs continue, and this smith from the Sudanese bush *(left)* is priest and physician as well as craftsman

John Moss



this ambivalent attitude arises from the history of each region. In areas where there is a culture based on iron, smiths are esteemed; but in pastoral civilizations, and among the hunters of the steppe, they are despised. To the Masai the surroundings of a smith's dwelling are infected with death, disease and misfortune. If a man has sexual relations with a woman from a smith's family, he will either go insane or die, and any children of the liaison will be unhealthy. It is most insulting to address anyone as 'smith', and if the word is spoken after sunset, the person who used it will be attacked by wild animals.

The same ambivalent attitude appears in Christian and other folklore, where the craftsman who worked with fire was often identified with the Devil, portrayed in hell-fire, with flames coming out of his mouth. In India, where smiths were generally outcasts, the mythology associates metal workers with demons, giants and other enemies of the gods. Perhaps there is here a hint of the curse which traditionally attaches to wanderers, in this case identified with those who work underground where fires burn. Myths of the Yakut people describe how the smith was taught his trade by K'daai Maqsin, chief smith of the underworld, living in a house of iron surrounded by splinters of fire.

The prayer known in Ireland as St Patrick's Breastplate invokes the protection of God: 'Against incantations of false prophets, against the black laws of paganism, against spells of women, smiths and druids, against all knowledge that is forbidden the human soul.' For all that, blacksmiths in England claimed St Clement as their patron saint and on 23 November, St Clement's day, anvils were fired with gunpowder and a dinner or procession held. A blacksmith in a long grey beard was dubbed Old Clem and carried in a chair by torchlight; or a dummy was prepared and put up over the door of the inn where the blacksmiths had their celebration. The dinner, known as a Clem Feast, featured a reading of the blacksmith legend. A Sussex version describes how King Alfred called together the seven trades which then existed, and said he would make that tradesman king over the rest who could manage best without the help of the others. A member of each trade was invited to a banquet and told to bring an example of his work, and the tool he had used for making it. The blacksmith brought his hammer and a horseshoe, the tailor shears and a new coat, the baker his shovel and a loaf, the shoemaker an awl and a new pair of shoes, the carpenter his saw and a trunk, the butcher his chopper and a joint, the mason his chisels and a cornerstone. Now the tailor's coat was so beautiful that he was by general consent declared King of all trades. The blacksmith, being furious at this, decided to do no more work so long as the tailor was king. After a time the King's horse cast a shoe and one by one all the other craftsmen broke their tools. Since the blacksmith had shut up his forge and gone away, they broke in and tried to do the work themselves. But the only result was a dreadful mess. The anvil was knocked over and exploded, and at this point St Clement walked in with the blacksmith. King Alfred then said: 'I have made a great mistake in allowing my judgement in this important matter to be governed by the gaudy colour and stylish cut of the tailor's coat, and in justice to the blacksmith (without whom none of us can do) proclaim him King.' The blacksmith then mended everyone's tools, and presented the tailor with a new pair of shears. The king proposed the health of the blacksmith, King of all trades, and everyone sang 'The Jolly Blacksmith'. While this was going on, the tailor crawled under the table and slit the blacksmith's leather apron with his new shears, and since then blacksmiths have always worn fringed aprons.

British Museum

The martyrdom of St Clement, who was bound to an anchor and thrown into the sea: from a 13th century manuscript. English blacksmiths claimed him as their patron saint, and on St Clement's day anvils were fired with gunpowder and a dinner or procession held

Master of Fire

The ambivalent attitude towards the 'King of trades' appears most closely in his role as the master of fire. If the smith is often assimilated to the Devil, there is also a considerable cycle of European folktales containing the idea of rejuvenation through fire. They describe how various saints, such as St Peter, and even Christ himself, appear in the forge as the blacksmith possessed of miraculous powers, rejuvenating the old by placing them in a hot oven or forging them on the anvil. The smith himself, the owner of the forge, then tries to imitate Christ and throws an old woman into the fire where, instead of regaining her youth, she changes into a monkey. Here the true master of fire is divine and not a demon.

As Christ carries the cross on the road to Calvary, a smith forges the nails for the crucifixion: from a 14th century English bible. In Christian society, the craftsman who worked with fire was often associated with the Devil

British Museum

In old Russian belief the celestial blacksmith Kuznets, the Vulcan of the Slavs, was transformed under the influence of Christianity into the double saint Kuz'ma-Dem'yan (St Cosmas and St Damian). The old pagan gods appeared in the role of protectors of marriage; crowns are traditionally worn by both bride and groom for an Orthodox Church wedding service, and the god who made the tools and the first plough for man was also said to have fashioned the first nuptial crown. Ancient marriage songs exist in the form of a prayer to a mysterious smith who is asked to make a golden bridal crown, and out of the tiny pieces remaining, a wedding ring and a pin to fasten the veil.

A legend about Kuz'ma-Dem'yan describes how, when he had just made a plough, a great snake tried to attack him. It licked a hole through the iron door of the smithy but the saint grasped its tongue with the pincers, harnessed it to the plough, and made it plough the land 'from sea to sea'. The snake prayed for a drink of water from the River Dnieper. But the saint drove it all the way to the Black Sea, which it drank half dry, and then burst. This tale is strongly reminiscent of the well-known legend in which St Dunstan seized the Devil by the nose with his tongs. Dunstan, patron saint of goldsmiths, was himself a blacksmith and a jeweller noted for his work in gold. Having been expelled from court, so the legend goes, he built a cell near Glastonbury, where he worked at these handicrafts. One day the Devil came and talked to him. St Dunstan kept him in conversation until the tongs were really hot, then turned suddenly and caught Satan by the nose, refusing to let go until the Devil had promised not to tempt him again.

The Iron Doctor

In mythology there is frequently a connection between trades which make use of fire, and the magic arts. Hence in Africa smiths are often greatly dreaded as possible sorcerers: the Ethiopians say that they can, if they choose, change into hyenas. Among the Wa Tchaggas, Bantu agricultural workers, if the wife of a smith is divorced, it is believed that she will be exposed to great danger. Only the smith himself can mitigate this to some extent by rubbing her all over with butter, in the presence of a female relative, before pronouncing the divorce. The 'iron doctor' of the Ba-ila tribe is a very important person. Without his magical assistance, it would be impossible to obtain iron from ore. Before smelting starts, a boy and a girl are put into the kiln. The iron doctor gives each of them a bean, to be cracked in the mouth. When this is done, it makes a noise and everyone shouts. It is forbidden to call the fire by name; it must be addressed as 'the fierce one', and the compliment will result in it burning the better.

The Kenyan Kikuyu believe that a

Wayland Smith

Puck describes how Weland has come down in the world

'. . . There was no trace of Weland, but presently I saw a fat old farmer riding down from the Beacon under the greenwood tree. His horse had cast a shoe in the clay, and when he came to the Ford he dismounted, took a penny out of his purse, laid it on a stone, tied the old horse to an oak, and called out: "Smith, Smith, here is work for you!" Then he sat down and went to sleep. You can imagine how *I* felt when I saw a white-bearded, bent old blacksmith in a leather apron creep out from behind the oak and begin to shoe the horse. It was Weland himself. I was so astonished that I jumped out and said: "What on Human Earth are you doing here, Weland?"' . . .

'He pushed the long hair back from his forehead (he didn't recognise me at first). Then he said: "*You* ought to know. You foretold it, Old Thing. I'm shoeing horses for hire. I'm not even Weland now," he said. "They call me Wayland-Smith."'

'Poor chap!' said Dan. 'What did you say?'

'What could I say? He looked up, with the horse's foot on his lap, and he said, smiling, "I remember the time when I wouldn't have accepted this old bag of bones as a sacrifice, and now I'm glad enough to shoe him for a penny."'

Rudyard Kipling *Puck of Pook's Hill*

member of the guild of smiths can, by placing a spell, prevent anyone damaging a piece of forest land. If thefts have taken place in a village, the victim takes a dead person's iron bracelet to the smith, who heats and cuts it, saying: 'May the thief be cut as I cut this iron.' Or: 'May the members of that family have their skulls crushed as I crush the iron with my hammer! May their bowels be seized by hyenas as I seize the iron with my tongs! May their blood spurt from their veins as the sparks fly from beneath my hammer! May their hearts freeze from cold as I cool this iron in the water.' Curses like this are used to cast a spell over people who may be at a great distance. Most people would not dare to steal anything from the smith himself. The Bakongo are convinced that if anyone ventured even to sit on the blacksmith's anvil, his legs would swell up.

Traces of such beliefs embodying the supernatural powers of the smith can be found in traditions where he is healer, charmer, and practitioner of the occult. As possessor of the Horseman's Word, a secret charm, he was supposed to have complete control over even the wildest horses. Until the time of the Renaissance, smiths practised medicine: an Italian story places one in the role of dentist. Later still smiths were known to cauterize wounds. They were thought to possess the power of healing and to be able to read the future.

In England blacksmiths were often blood-charmers. This was a kind of magical 'first aid', used to stop bleeding in days when doctors were few and unskilful. A spectacular cure for a sick child involved seven smiths, all of whom had to be the descendants of smiths in unbroken line for three generations. The ailing child was taken at night to the forge and laid on the anvil. The seven smiths stood round, flourishing their hammers, as though about to hit the child, at the same time shouting the stroke-cry 'Heigh' very loudly. If the child seemed alarmed it would recover; and the converse was also said to apply. The men were given sixpence each and bread, cheese and ale in return for performing this service.

If the smith was a healer, he was also a divine being. Sometimes he appears in the role of culture hero. In Africa for instance, among some tribes, he taught people how to use fire, the arts of husbandry, and such knowledge as circumcision, how to give birth, and the sexual behaviour necessary for procreation. In other cultures, India for example, he is the creator of the world, and the Japanese smith god is Ame No Ma-Hitotsu No Kami, the one-eyed god of the sky. Celtic tradition associates the supernatural smith with the divine warrior, and Goibniu, the Irish celestial smith, presides over the otherworld feast. The forge of Hephaestus, the Greek Vulcan in classical myth, was situated beneath Mt Etna (see HEPHAESTUS). He worked there with the Cyclops, and the fires from the volcano were his furnaces. Homer says the god's workshop was on Olympus. Another of his establishments was on Lemnos, a volcanic island, and when Mt Moschylus rumbled, the smith was said to be hammering in his underground forge, the dwarf Cedalion working alongside him.

Where are Wayland's Bones?

Certain traditions identify smith and dwarf. The legends of small people living deep in the earth, devoted to metallurgy, appear in northern myth as well as in Africa (see DWARFS). Familiar to us is the tale of Wayland the Smith, sometimes represented as a dwarf, sometimes as a giant. In England he was an invisible smith, haunting a stone tomb called Wayland's Smithy on the Ridgeway in Berkshire, near the White Horse. If a horse was left there, together with a coin for payment, the owner would find on return, so it was said, that the animal had been shod and the money taken.

Similar traditions are to be found elsewhere in northern Europe. The smith appears as troll, headless man, dwarf, and his forge may be located in a variety of places, including an underwater cave. Germanic legend contains various supernatural smiths. Alberich, who appears in the famous *Nibelungenlied*, keeping guard over the treasure of the Nibelung, is sometimes giant and sometimes dwarf. In Old Norse tradition the smith Regin appears as both: his brothers are an otter and a dragon. To reach Mimir, the smith in Scandinavian mythology, it was necessary to make an arduous journey through cold and darkness: presumably the realm of the dead (see SCANDINAVIA).

The belief in supernatural smiths who live in subterranean regions beneath the ground or under the water, and who appear to be connected with the Land of the Dead, is not peculiar to Germany and Scandinavia. The Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala* describes how the smith Ilmarinen undertook to forge the *sampo*, a mysterious talisman, and in Estonian tradition, which is closely related to that of the Finns, Ilmarine forges a great sword in a mountain in the middle of the earth, located in the Land of the Dead (see FINLAND).

King Alfred, translating Boethius's famous work *De Consolatione Philosophiae* from Latin into Anglo-Saxon, wrote: 'Where are now the bones of that famous and wise goldsmith Wayland? I say the wise, since from the skilful man his skill can never depart, and can no more be taken from him than the sun can be turned from its course. Where are the bones of Wayland now, and who knows now where they may be?' In Anglo-Saxon poetry a particularly fine weapon or piece of armour is known as 'the work of Wayland'. Beowulf's corselet is so described, and in several countries of north-west Europe throughout the Middle Ages fine weapons were said to be made by Wayland.

Another tradition concerning Wayland, which dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, describes a gifted smith who was taken prisoner by a king, deliberately lamed, and forced to work for his overlord. One day the king's sons come to his workshop. He murders them, cuts off their heads, sets the skulls in silver, fashions ornaments from the eyeballs, and sends them to the parents. Their teeth are made into brooches, and given to the king's daughter, Bothvild. When she herself comes with a ring to be mended – a ring which was stolen from the smith and belonged to his wife – he stupifies the girl with drink, and rapes her. When the king asks what has happened to his sons, the smith taunts him and tells him to 'go to the smithy built for Wayland', where he will 'find the bellows covered in blood', and the sons' bodies buried beneath them. The smith then flies away, mocking his tormentor as he goes.

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (University of Chicago Press, 1979); Lee M. Hollander ed., *The Poetic Edda* (Univ. of Texas Press, 1964).

Snail

Used for magical healing in the past, especially in wart cures; one method was to rub the warts with a snail and then impale the snail on a thorn, so that as it slowly died the warts would fade away: snail slime was considered effective against consumption and other diseases: shut in a box or dish on Hallowe'en, a snail would trace the initials of your fnture lover in slime during the night.

Snake

Appears in the myths and religious beliefs of almost all societies, playing many different roles: associated with rejuvenation, immortality, longevity and wisdom, because it sloughs its skin, and with sexuality because of its phallic shape: snakes which live under rocks or in holes in the ground are connected with the underworld, the dead, fertility, the unconscious mind: in Christianity, linked with evil and sex, because of its role in tempting Eve.

See ANIMALS; FIRST MAN; SERPENT; SNAKE-HANDLING CULTS.

Mansell

Natural Historical Photographic Agency/Douglas Dickens

The power of the Indian snake charmer, playing on his pipe to entice the cobra out of its basket can be paralleled in some rural areas of the United States by snake-handlers who pick up snakes and even caress them

In 1909 George Went Hensley decided that the scriptures commanded the faithful to handle snakes; and even today among the depressed rural communities of some American states snake-handling cults are carried on

SNAKE-HANDLING CULTS

THE SNAKE is a powerful symbol in many different religious traditions. In Judaism and Christianity it has generally represented the power of evil and, perhaps because the snake resembles the phallus, it is frequently identified with unbridled sexual desire (see also SERPENT).

In Judaism snake imagery is plentiful, and circumcision, as a symbolic act that implies the regulation and social control of sexuality, also suggests the transcendence of the people, through a covenant with God, above the sinfulness of sexual behaviour into which Eve was led by the snake. Christianity employed snake imagery much less. In the gospel of St Mark, however, it is promised that signs shall follow them that believe, one of which is that 'they shall pick up serpents'.

It is this promise that is invoked to justify the snake-handling cult that has arisen in parts of the United States, and which today is practised in probably 30 or so different congregations by fundamentalists who accept Holiness teachings; they often regard themselves as anointed saints who have experienced the second blessing of the Holy Ghost that confers upon them entire sanctification (see HOLINESS MOVEMENT). Their services commonly include a variety of dramatic practices: speaking in unknown tongues; shaking, jerking and ecstatic dancing; faith healing; and foot-washing. These independent congregations are locally controlled and served, by lay, or self-ordained evangelists. They do not constitute an organized, centrally administered movement, and they

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Camera Press, London

Though frequently associated with evil, the snake can also be regarded as a fount of power, partly because it is phallic and because in sloughing its skin it seems to possess the secret of rejuvenation *Facing page* In southern Italy villagers at the San Domenico festival (*far left*) twine snakes around their saints and touch them; (*left*) the local 'medicine-man' marches in the procession, snakes garlanded around his neck. In another culture, guides at the Snake Temple, Singapore (*below*) handle vipers fearlessly *Left* In Tanganyika, a snake is coiled around the body of a dancer: snake dancers attempt to invoke the magical powers of the serpent *Below* At a Tennessee snake-handling service, frenzy and ecstasy culminate in snake-handling in obedience to the words of the Bible: 'they shall pick up serpents'

William Sargant

are linked, if at all, only by itinerant evangelists. Some of these evangelists have been responsible for introducing snake-handling to congregations which already worship in an ecstatic manner.

Snake-handling appears to have begun in 1909. In that year, George Went Hensley decided that the scriptures commanded that the faithful should handle serpents; and he introduced the practice in churches in Tennessee and Kentucky. The cult spread to neighbouring states, particularly to North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, and in more recent years has been encountered in Georgia, Florida and California. Despite legislation introduced in some states to prohibit the cult, it has not been eliminated by being made illegal.

The practice appears to have arisen spontaneously in Holiness churches. It is true that some North American Indian tribes practised a snake dance, and that snakes were strongly associated with rain-making by many primitive peoples, but this idea has no echo in modern Christian tradition. Indeed the populations among whom snake-handling has arisen in the 20th century have had little, if any, recent contact with Indians. Their interpretation of the practice conforms to their general literal belief in the Bible: it is done in obedience to scripture. Its ultimate rationale may be beyond man's comprehending: just as God chose to give men the gift of unknown tongues so that they might worship him in ways that transcended their understanding, so, in his wisdom, the Lord decided that the truly faithful should handle serpents.

The snakes used in services are obtained some time beforehand, and the usual types are rattlesnakes, water moccasins and copperheads – all poisonous snakes. They are kept in a box while hymns are sung, spontaneous preaching occurs, healings are attempted and ecstatic emotions expressed. They are then taken out and handed from one believer to another. Great prestige is attached to those who first handle the snakes. In some services handfuls of snakes are taken up, thrown about, caressed: believers readily wrap them around their heads or push them under their shirts, or even kiss them. They admit that they fear snakes, but they handle them when the Lord anoints them to do so; and they see their activity both as a proof of their own sanctified condition, and as a demonstration of faith and a glorification of God.

The snakes are actually handled for about 15 or 20 minutes, a period which forms the high point of the service, which may last altogether about four hours. There is no question of these poisonous snakes having had their fangs drawn beforehand. Usually snakes are kept for only a few services and are then released, and new ones captured. Votaries of the cult are frequently bitten, but most of those who are bitten recover. There have, however, been a considerable number of fatalities in the course of half a century and most of these have been given widespread and adverse publicity. In 1955, Hensley himself, then aged

A Rattler Round the Neck

Snake-handling at Dolley Pond Church, Tennessee

The climax comes when the power is strong within the congregation, heightened by the clichéd preaching of the minister. A rope is stretched out by a member to separate the audience from the snake-handling devout, and visitors are warned that the snakes are about to be produced. This precaution may be barely accomplished before an impatient believer snatches up a snake from the angry knot in the opened box. Removing a snake from the box is regarded as a supreme test of faith, for the constantly jolted reptiles are by then thoroughly aroused and it is believed that they are most likely to strike when they are first touched. The box has been kicked, in a kind of half-jocular sin-baiting, because the snake represents the Devil, whom the spirit of God allows the true believer to overcome . . .

The snake may be held in various ways . . . Sister Minnie Parker, a buxom elderly gap-toothed woman – who walked barefoot among seventeen buzzing rattlesnakes in a homecoming service in the summer of 1946 – held a beautiful large timber rattler around her neck like a necklace, with the free neck and head of the snake along the outside of her left forearm, while cooing with closed eyes and a delighted expression on her face.

Weston La Barre *They Shall Take Up Serpents*

Museum of the American Indian, New York

The practice of snake-handling among white Americans seems to have arisen spontaneously, as an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement, though some North American Indians practised snake dances: painted hide of the legend of the snake clan, Arizona

70, received a fatal bite while practising in Florida. Adepts regard recovery from a bite as a miracle wrought by God, but they also profess their willingness to die when the Lord decides, since they believe that the true saint is then brought to God's throne.

The cult has been prohibited in Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, and also by some municipal authorities in North Carolina, but adherents are prepared to travel long distances to services in states where the practice is not forbidden. Some of the leading evangelists have been arrested at services, and police raids have occurred periodically. The notoriety that such attention from the police engenders appears to be not unwelcome. Insurance companies some years ago decided to refuse to regard death from snake-bite at church meetings as accidental but this has apparently not affected the practice of the cult.

Excitement in a Grey World

The congregations which practise snake-handling are all located in relatively remote country areas, particularly in the Appalachian mountains. There, Holiness religion of the more extreme type flourishes, and many sects indulge in ecstatic manifestations of Holy Ghost power, with free expression of their emotions, and sometimes with tongues, jerks and rolling. This is a typical economically depressed area, and among the snake cultists even the younger members are usually unemployed. Although rural, these areas are not farming districts, and many of the population live on government relief. Snake-handlers tend to come from the poorest section of the population, and their members have little education.

Holiness religion appears to have an important function in these culturally retarded areas in asserting that, despite poverty, its adepts are more worthy than the affluent and socially respected. Their sense of superiority is powerfully reinforced by what they regard as the tangible spiritual power evident in the emotional vigour of their services, and in their ability and daring in handling snakes. The cult offers the intense excitement of real danger for people who have fewer inner resources and little creativity, and whose daily lives are marked by boredom and lack of cultural interests. Their normal social relations are emotionally impoverished, and they live in areas characterized by frustration, cynicism and repression. The element of fatalism in the cult may also serve to absolve its members from blame as social failures.

Psychoanalytic interpretation of the cult might suggest that since the snake generally symbolizes the phallus, the manipulation of snakes represents the ability to handle phallic power: the cult thus appears as a significant and ambivalent undercurrent in response to the rigorous sexual morality that is demanded in Holiness religion. In his book *They Shall Take Up Serpents*, Weston La Barre considers that 'to dominate the snake is to dominate the guilty and dangerous sexual desire': it may also be a curious sublimation of sexual desire, as indicated by episodes in which women have gained immense elation from repeatedly kissing the snake over its whole body despite being struck repeatedly by it. Psychological tests do not suggest much abnormality in snake-handlers; the older members show more cheerfulness and fortitude in the face of old age and death than do members of conventional Churches. Nor have the young proved to be particularly maladjusted. Relations of young and old in these churches appear to be more harmonious than among the general population of people in similar social circumstances. Older people are accorded respect by the young for the greater frequency with which they handle snakes and for their greater knowledge of the Bible. These results may, however, reflect the amount of authoritarianism in the belief system of Holiness Churches.

BRYAN WILSON

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SNEEZING

BECAUSE IT IS an involuntary process, the sneeze, like the yawn and the shudder, was once believed to have a supernatural quality. The Siamese, for example, believed that the gods were continually turning over the pages of the Book of Judgement and that a man would be forced to sneeze, whenever his name came under scrutiny. The Greeks and Romans regarded the sneeze as a signal from the soul, giving warnings of danger, or indicating good or evil prospects for the future. To sneeze during the course of a conversation was a clear affirmation from the celestial regions that the truth was being spoken. In 480 BC, just before the battle of Salamis, the Athenian leader Themistocles was offering sacrifices to the gods when an onlooker happened to sneeze; this was construed as a sign of divine favour.

In the supernatural sense, sneezing has always had a twofold aspect: there are good sneezes and there are bad. The sneeze can represent the spirit of life, as in the case of the image of clay animated by Prometheus with fire stolen from the sun, which gave proof of its vitality with a sudden sneeze, or it can represent, as it did in Aristotle's time, the first sign of recovery in a patient who was thought to be dying. In later European folklore, a sick person who sneezed could look forward to a restoration of full health, and even today in Yorkshire regular sneezers are supposed to enjoy long life. A 17th century writer observed that 'sneezing . . . is profitable to parturient women in lethargies, apoplexies and catalepsies.'

In its more sinister aspects, however, the sneeze provided clear evidence of some forthcoming tragedy: it was in fact an omen of death since it symbolized the expulsion of the breath of life from the body. According to a current American superstition, sneezing during a meal is a sure sign of a death in the family.

A sneeze was commonly regarded in the past as evidence of psychic attack or of diabolic possession, for it was believed that demons liked nothing better than to enter the human body by way of the orifices, especially the nostrils, unless these openings were protected by amulets or sometimes nose rings. The natives of the Celebes Islands in Indonesia secured the dead against the intrusion of devils by inserting fish-hooks through their nostrils, while the Chinese plugged the nostrils with pieces of jade. A Brahmin touches his ears when he sneezes, as spirits are supposed to enter through the ears at such times. A belated relic of this old attitude may be seen in the Scottish superstition that a baby remained under the control of the fairies until its first sneeze.

The social response to the sneezer almost invariably takes the form of a blessing. The Hindu says 'live' and his friends say 'with you'. The Englishman says 'bless you' and the Zulu 'I am now blessed'. In 1542 a Spanish explorer, Hernando de Soto, was surprised to find a similar type of response among the Indians of Florida. In 17th century England it was customary to raise the hat at the first blast of a sneeze.

The connection between blessings or other precautionary formulas and the sneeze has given rise to much speculation. The Romans used to say *Absit omen* (banish the omen) after someone had sneezed, and Aristotle mentions a similar custom among the Greeks. The fact that sneezing is a symptom of some types of plague – noted by the Greek historian Thucydides in the 5th century BC – greatly strengthened the feeling that there was a need for supernatural protection in the course of this frequently mortal disease. The custom of saying 'God bless you' after sneezing has been attributed to Pope Gregory the Great in the 6th century; he is said to have recommended its use during an outbreak of plague in Rome, and called for prayers to secure protection against the dangers of infection, accompanied by the sign of the Cross. During the ravages of the plague in the Middle Ages in Ireland, it became customary for the stricken to cry out 'God help me'.

Most modern sneezing superstitions confirm that the sneeze continues to be regarded as supernatural. When starting out on a journey or any important enterprise, it is a good sign if you happen to sneeze to the right, but a bad one if to the left, or in the general direction of a grave. It is almost as ominous to sneeze on New Year's Eve, unless you hasten to visit three houses before midnight, which offsets the curse. In parts of Europe three sneezes clearly indicate the presence of four thieves, while in Estonia, if two pregnant women sneeze simultaneously they may look forward to twins. Many Japanese believe that to sneeze once means that you are blessed, twice that you are guilty, and thrice that you will be ill.

It has been suggested that the familiar nursery rhyme *Ring A Ring O Roses* is a reference to the Great Plague: 'Atishoo, atishoo, we all fall down' refers to the sneeze, the fatal symptom of the plague, preceding death

Mansell Collection

Sodom and Gomorrah

The most notorious of the 'cities of the plain' which, according to Genesis (chapter 19), were destroyed by God in a rain of fire and brimstone because of the sexual depravity of their inhabitants (hence the term 'sodomy'): thought to have been located at the southern end of the Dead Sea and perhaps to have been overwhelmed in some natural catastrophe: they became symbols of exceptional wickedness.

Solomon

King of Israel in the 10th century BC, the builder of the Temple, a younger son of David and Bathsheba; renowned for his wisdom and wealth, and his long and prosperous reign, he flourished in legend as a master magician who controlled all demons by the power of his magic ring; he was said to have employed them in building the Temple; the *Key of Solomon* and other magical textbooks were attributed to him.

See GRIMOIRE: QUEEN OF SHEBA.

Soma

Sacred plant of ancient India, and the intoxicating drink obtained from it; it was the food of the gods and was also considered a god itself; the great warrior god Indra was particularly fond of it; the identity of the plant is uncertain but some authorities believe it to have been the mushroom *Amanita muscaria*.

See DRUGS; INDIA; MUSHROOM.

'A pox take it' was an all-purpose cursing formula used by the Somerset witches of the 1660s, who claimed to meet the Devil, 'the man in black', at their open-air meetings

SOMERSET WITCHES

'ON THURSDAY night before Whitsunday last, being met they called out *Robin*. Upon which instantly appeared a little man in black to whom all made obeisance, and the little man put his hand to his hat, saying, How do ye? speaking *low* but *big*. Then all made low obeisances to him again.' This description of a polite exchange between the Devil and his followers, and most of what is known of the Somerset witches in the 1660s, comes from Joseph Glanvill's *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, first published in 1681, a year after his death. Glanvill, who has been described as 'the father of modern psychical research', was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a former vicar of Frome in Somerset, who believed in the reality of witchcraft and had earlier published an account of the case of the Drummer of Tidworth in Wiltshire (see POLTERGEISTS).

The witches tried in 1665 seem to have belonged to two separate groups or covens. The Wincanton group numbered 14, six women and eight men, headed by Ann Bishop and including Elizabeth Style and Alice Duke. The other group, at Brewham, numbered 11, ten women and one man, and included four women named Green, who were perhaps related, and three named Warberton.

The Devil was described as 'the man in black' or 'a man in blackish clothes' and Elizabeth Style said he was handsome. He presided at the open-air meetings of the Wincanton group, sitting at the head of the white cloth spread on the ground, with his favourite, Ann Bishop, beside him, while they all feasted merrily on wine and beer, cakes and meat, which he had provided. He spoke a grace before the meal, but none after, and his voice was audible but very low. Sometimes he played a pipe or a cittern (an instrument like a guitar) and 'they danced and were merry', according to Elizabeth Style, 'and were bodily there and in their clothes.'

The other side to this peacefully rustic picture comes out in the description of the use of wax images, which the witches called 'pictures', to harm people. The doll was brought to the meeting and the man in black baptized it, with himself as godfather and two witches as godmothers, anointing its forehead and saying, 'I baptize thee with this oil', so as to create an additional link between the image and the victim whose name was given to it. Then they stuck pins into it and said, 'A pox on thee, I'll spite thee.' Margaret Agar, of the Brewham group, 'delivered to the little man in black a picture in wax, into which he and Agar stuck thorns, and Henry Walter thrust his thumb into the side of it; then they threw it down and said, *There is Dick Green's picture with a pox on it*' (and Dick Green died soon after). They were fond of the phrase 'A pox take it', which they used as an all-purpose cursing formula.

To go to the meetings, the witches smeared on their foreheads and wrists a greenish oil, which the Devil gave them, and were quickly carried to the meeting-place, saying as they went, 'Thout, tout, a tout, tout, throughout and about'. When it was time to leave again, they cried, 'A boy! merry meet, merry part', and then each said 'Rentum, tormentum' and another word which the witness could not remember, and was swiftly carried back to her home.

They said they were sometimes 'really' present at the meetings, 'in their bodies', but at other times they left their bodies at home and attended in spirit form, and it is interesting that the word trance occurs in Glanvill's account of their familiar imps. Alice Duke's familiar, in the form of a little cat, sucked her right breast, 'and when she is sucked, she is in a kind of trance'. Christian Green said that the Devil had what would seem the inconsiderate habit of sucking her left breast at about five o'clock in the morning in the likeness of a hedgehog: 'she says that it is painful to her, and that she is usually in a trance when she is sucked.' When Elizabeth Style wanted to do someone harm, she shouted for Robin, and when the familiar came as a black dog, she said, 'O Satan, give me my purpose', and told him what she wanted.

Alice Duke said that, 11 years before, Ann Bishop had taken her to the churchyard, where they walked backwards round the church three times. The first time round, they met a man in black clothes who went with them. On the second circuit a great black toad jumped up at them, and on the third round they saw something like a rat. Then the man in black spoke softly to Ann Bishop and they went home. It was after this that Alice joined the coven, and the Devil made his mark on her by pricking the fourth finger of her right hand, between the middle and upper joints.

The same mark in the same place was seen on the hands of Christian Green and Elizabeth Style. Elizabeth said that when the Devil first came to her, he promised her money and that 'she should live gallantly' and enjoy the pleasures of the world for 12 years, if she would sign in her blood a written pact giving him her soul. When she signed, with the blood he pricked from her finger, he gave her sixpence and vanished with the paper.

'Lead Us Into Temptation'

A little earlier, in 1663, a woman named Julian Cox, aged 70, had been tried at Taunton Assizes, accused of bewitching a servant girl who had refused to give her money. She had appeared to the girl in ghostly form, invisible to others, and had forced her to swallow several large pins. Evidence was given that she could transform herself into a hare, that she had a toad as a familiar, that she had driven a farmer's cows mad, and that she had been seen to fly in at her own window. She was found guilty and executed.

It was Julian Cox who gave the curious account of seeing two witches and a 'black man' flying towards her on broomsticks 'about a yard and a half from the ground' (see SABBATH). An interesting feature of her trial was that the judge attempted to test the belief that a witch could not say the Lord's Prayer. Julian Cox tried several times and repeated it correctly, except that she said 'And lead us into temptation' or 'And lead us not into no temptation' which, if she was really a member of the Devil's congregation, is the form of the prayer to which she might have been accustomed.

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People the world over address their deities in song; in daily tasks, in the crises of life and in disaster, the human voice is used as a musical instrument to supplicate or thank the gods

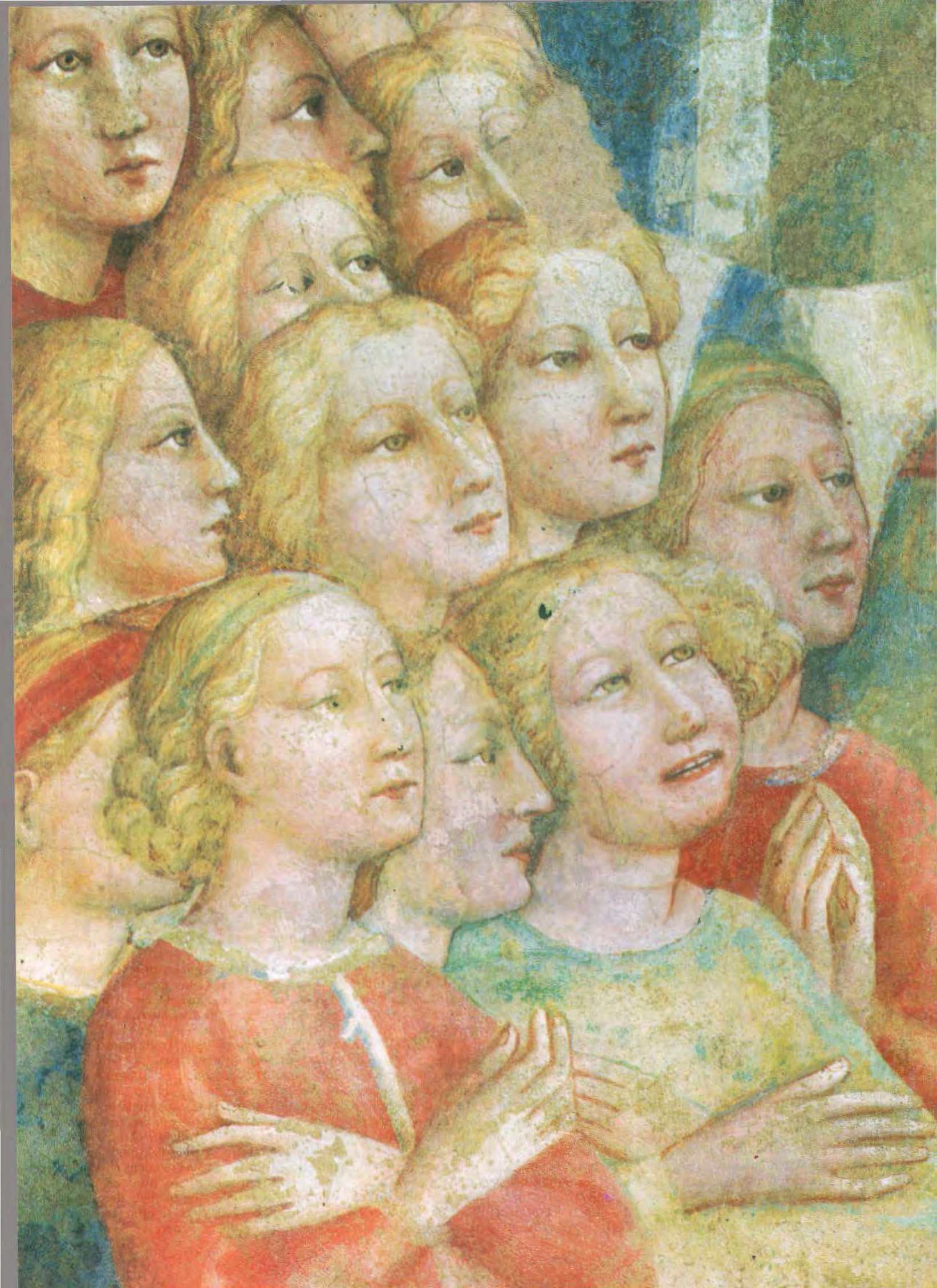
SONG

SONG CAN BE a spontaneous expression of feeling or a sophisticated art form. At all times, in every part of the world, people have evolved modes of singing which originated in emotion. A mother softly lulls her child to sleep; a medicine-man tries to soothe a disturbed patient; so their songs are gentle and subdued. At the other extreme, war dancers of the American Plains scream at top volume and frenzied Negroes in the American Holiness Churches strain their lungs, as do other frenzy singers such as the rock and rollers. A lover may croon to his beloved or he may shout the agony of unrequited passion, with the glides and intense accents of flamenco singing. Between these two poles lie the *mezzo forte*, controlled renderings of folk singers and ballad singers, as well as many pleasurable song-dances. Sometimes the singers invent special effects, say, for comedy. Within the melody they may imitate a railroad engine's whistle, a pig's grunt, a duck's quack, or they may exaggerate the emotional wails.

Universally, these expressions depend on the functions of song. Singers may burst forth in spontaneous songs of joy or sorrow.

Songs have a flexible quality in that itinerant travellers may carry a song many miles when it will become an integral part of another culture: detail from *The Song* by Matisse

Usually they draw upon traditional repertoires or compose new songs for traditional functions. They may address supernaturals or fellow beings; they may tell about the glories of the deities or illustrious humans. They may celebrate crises of life, or accompany their daily tasks or hours of recreation. In different parts of the world and on different occasions, song has religious or secular intentions, although these purposes often overlap. All people sing to their deities, to avert sickness or disaster, to promote enterprises like hunting or harvest. Sometimes



they emphasize the supplication with dancing (see DANCE). Some people laud their deities in hymns of praise; or in dramas enacting their exploits, like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* of India and its cultural satellites; or in great song cycles, like Manipur's Creation myths and the hero myths of America's Mohave tribe. Serbians, Finns and other Europeans sing long epics of demigods or heroes who liberated the people. The British sing of heroic outlaws such as Robin Hood. Faroe Islanders recall their history in song-dances which they mime. Roman Catholics invoke and praise the Virgin Mary on ritual occasions. In the past, youths of Spain, Portugal and Latin America would address worshipful serenades to their beloved, who might listen from a window or balcony.

Songs whose purpose is to mark the crises of life evoke manifold moods. Peasant weddings in some parts of Europe include a solemn ritual and chants for the exorcism of harmful demons; they conclude with gay songs for social dances. Negroes of the Bahamas sing mournful hymns in English for dying and dead relatives. However, Spanish singer guitarists sing gay tunes at the funeral wake of a child. Gabon pygmies in Central Africa lament a deceased chief with responsory songs and mimetic recreation of his exploits.

People who live close to Nature invoke or thank deities for every daily activity, especially in connection with hunting and agriculture. Even in the modern world, Iroquois and Pueblo Indians and Serbian peasants continue these song-dance rituals and social dances of celebrations for success. On a secular plane, many people, especially those who work in groups, such as the Negro field and chain-gang workers, have eased their labour by rhythmic group singing. With mechanization, the motivation for such songs is disappearing.

Gay gatherings with song and dance conclude many solemn occasions. But, increasingly, social gatherings lack any ritual connections, such as Serbian epic recitations, song contests of the Eskimos and Mexicans, the Latin American *romanceros* and calypsos with their manifold contents, concerts of protest or love songs, and the thriving meetings of folk dance and song clubs.

Technique, Range and Tone

Certain stylistic vocal tricks play a part in the singing styles of individuals, tribes, or geographical areas. For instance, when singers do not want to hit a note exactly, they use various devices to avoid an exact hit. One common device is a slide into a note upwards or downwards, as in many American Indian and hillbilly songs. Among the Great Plains Indians, barks or hiccoughs may announce a note; they also use *melismata* (melodic ornamentation) to adorn tones in their native songs. These strange techniques are most elaborate in Spanish flamenco songs, Yugoslav folk-tunes, Near Eastern chants, and art songs of India and Japan. More specialized techniques include bird-like trills by Ainu women in Hokkaido, Japan; and the *vibrato* (controlled undulation of pitch) of European opera sopranos. A technique that is apparently limited to North American Indians is pulsation, a repeated rhythmic impulse on one tone and one vowel. Pulsations are especially strong in the south-west region of North America, especially in male rain songs of the Pueblo tribes on the Rio Grande River.

Singing is such an essentially spiritual activity that one of the principal occupations of angels and the blessed in heaven is said to be singing the praises of God: detail from a 15th century Italian fresco

Range can be extended by the yodel, a spasmodic breaking of the voice, and the falsetto, the forced high-pitch voice, usually used by male altos. The yodel of the Austrian Alps has tremendous carrying power, while the falsetto of Amerindian and Alpine ghost impersonators is eerie and unreal. There are other tricks for range extension although a trained singer can usually only reach a little over two octaves melodiously, women in the upper registers and men in the lower registers.

Tonality is determined by the limitations of vocal compass. Again, the tradition and purpose of particular songs have evolved scales of interest as art and local features. A scale is a series of tones that recur within a melody. It may consist of one or two adjacent tones as in some ancient medicine chants of the American Iroquois and the Ceylonese Vedda. It frequently contains four or five tones spread over an octave, termed tetratonic and pentatonic respectively. Pentatonic melodies are widespread in native North America, Scotland, China and Tibet. Some six-tone or complete diatonic scales occur in Pueblo corn dance songs; and they characterize many folk songs, hymns, and art songs of Europe and America. As the usual major and minor scales, they are focused respectively on scales beginning on C and A, as played on the white notes of the piano; scales starting on other notes – so-called modes – evidently evolved in ancient Greece and survive in chants of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches and also in many traditional songs of Europe and its colonies. In addition, there are microtonic scales with intervals less than a semitone. These scales coincide with the area of song which includes Spain, the Near East, India, Indonesia, and Japan.

Whatever the structure of the scale, melodies of all kinds of scales may descend, ascend, or waver. European songs tend to ascend and descend symmetrically, while Amerindian songs generally descend from a high to a low tone. However, many Pueblo rain songs have a pyramidal contour, like European songs. While a song may start on any tone, it usually (but not always) ends on the tonic, the first note of the scale. Significant exceptions are for emotional effects or in conformity with local practices, especially in the Far East.

To enrich the single melody, and to expand the range of a song, harmony is used. Harmony results from the parallel movement of voices in various intervals: often in seconds in the Balkans, in fourths or fifths in north-west Europe, Africa, and much liturgical music, in thirds in Central Europe, Iberia, and Latin America. The part singing of today involves complex counter-movements of voices in a variety of intervals, such as in the songs of Africa and Afro-America, and in modern hymns. The use of polyphony (two or more concurrent melodies) to produce harmony may be simple or complex and may produce startling effects from the transient relationships of voices. The round is the simplest device for polyphony. In *Three Blind Mice*, *Frère Jacques*, *O wie wohl ist mir am Abend*, singers or groups of singers start each of the three or four phrases successively.

A cappella (unaccompanied choral) singing or the combination of voice and instrument can produce harmony. A solo singer can produce harmony only in combination with another instrument. He may play his own accompaniment or depend on a collaborator. A solo singer or a chorus may combine with an instrument or an ensemble in stupendous chorales like the *Mass in B Minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach or the *Symphony of Psalms* by Igor Stravinsky.

Timing includes tempo, metrical divisions, rhythms, and total structure. Tempo defies categorization. Generally, laments and hymns are slower than dance songs, but there are slow dances and lively hymns. Though some prolonged art forms remain in slow tempo, like the Japanese *Noh* drama, many ceremonies like the Iroquois medicine rites start slowly and gradually get faster and faster; an entire dance ritual may alternate fast and slow episodes, according to mood. Metre ranges from the regular triple time of an Austrian or Spanish waltz or a duple-time polka or march to the 5/4 Basque folk dance *Zortziko* or the elusive, changeable metres of Serbian dances.

Rhythmic patterns rarely coincide with metrical divisions. In the triple-time *mazurka*, the melodic accent falls on the second metrical beat; and in the 'hot' rhythms of jazz, for example, syncopation occurs when the vocal rhythms conflict with the metre (marked by an instrument). Less extreme syncopations characterize Spanish dance songs. While European songs use relatively simple clusters of half-notes, quarter-notes, and so on, Scottish songs favour a form of syncopation called the Scotch snap, which also prevails in Hungary. North Africans and Orientals have devised infinitely complex rhythmic figures, accented and melodic.

The structure of song varies greatly. Rounds show a neat structure within their brief extent – a repeat of the first phrase on a higher level (termed a sequence). This form occurs in many ancient Iroquois songs. Many songs are 'through-composed', that is, developed ingeniously from one or several motifs, or freely moving through melodic inventions without any particular theme. The former has become a sophisticated art device; the latter characterizes improvisations in primitive songs of the pygmies and Australian aborigines.

The combination of a number of songs as part of a larger production is a sign of a highly-developed culture. A number of songs and their dances may constitute a ceremony

Participation in singing depends partly on function and partly on social convention: religious services often use choirs to lead the singing and perform special anthems *Bottom* Boy choristers in a London church *Top* Singing in the rain at a funeral, marking the final crisis of life *Centre* Thomas Webster's *The Village Choir* evokes a sense of community in joining together for a religious occasion

Homer Sykes

Victoria and Albert Museum

Syndication International

such as the Iroquois food spirit rituals with a succession of songs in various tempi and qualities, each with its own rhythmic patterns. In great dance dramas, such as the *Ramayana* of India, songs and dances weave a complex pattern in obedience to the emotional intent of the successive scenes.

The Singer and the Song

Participation in singing depends partly on its function and partly on social conventions. For instance, in the home a woman may sing a lullaby, while a small group of friends may assemble for a 'sing-song' of an evening. During a church service several hundred worshippers unite in hymn-singing, listen to a specially-trained choir or soloist, or, if they are Roman Catholic, to the chanting of their priest. At festivities huge groups may assemble for choral singing, up to 700,000 pilgrims at the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, for example.

Sometimes particular social or racial groups assemble to sing together to the exclusion of other groups; for example the worshippers in a Negro church, or Germans living in America who meet to sing songs from their homeland.

While amateurs may be enthusiastic singers, professionals dominate some aspects of song, such as the epics, and in countries like Japan their specialization is highly regulated. The aristocratic male *Gakunin*, the royal choir of the emperor, specialized in religious *gagaku*, imperial court music. The *Genin*, of the merchant class, have a more secular repertoire, while blind musicians perform popular songs to their *koto* (zither) accompaniment. Female geishas, the tea-house entertainers, limit themselves to secular songs with *samisen* (three-stringed guitar) accompaniment.

In many societies sex determines the singers' roles. Women excel in lyric ballads and folk lamentations, while men predominate in strong epics, in dance accompaniments, and directing mixed choirs.

The nature of song texts seems largely a national or tribal characteristic, while the co-ordination of the three arts of melody, text and dance is a matter of skill, more highly developed among some peoples than others. A familiar type of text and melody co-ordination is the verse set to hymn or folk tunes. The text is paramount and may extend to many stanzas, with a recurrent melody. In European tradition there is a refrain, a response by a group to a soloist's narration of stanza after stanza.

Though Europeans may interpolate nonsense syllables, like 'Hey nonny no', this does not compare with the extensive use of vocables in Amerindian songs. Chorus syllables like *howajine* predominate in Iroquois and Cherokee songs, with an

occasional native word referring to, say, the bear. Indians of the Great Lakes tribes use more meaningful words; Oklahoma singers sometimes use English words of an amorous nature. Pueblo singers have some songs with chorus syllables, and others with elaborate, symbolic texts, which are mimed by a chorus of special singers.

When the chanters are also the dancers, as in the case of the Hawaiian *hula*, the liaison between the three arts is most intimate. The same is true for other singer dancers, like the Faroe Islanders; but this liaison is most skilled in India's art dance. According to Kapila Vatsyayan, author of *Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts* (1968) each song has sections of pure melody, for abstract dancing; and of narration, for mime with the traditional *mudras* or gestures. Despite some improvisation, the interplay of singer and dancer is meticulous.

While the previous examples have indicated local qualities, such qualities, single songs, and large repertoires have travelled far from the homelands. A single man can carry a song over many miles, as did the medieval troubadours and the early French explorers in the New World. Groups of immigrants may establish their folk songs in the new settlements, like the Poles and Scots and Norwegians around the Great Lakes of America. They may preserve songs in variant versions that are lost in the homeland, such as those of the Appalachian mountaineers which developed from English ballads. Of course they also compose new songs, and develop new mannerisms. The following are a few examples of single itinerant songs and of large repertoires transferred with or without changes.

The national anthem of Great Britain, *God Save the King*, composed by Henry Carey in 1743, was fitted in 1781 to the Austrian words *Heil, Kaiser Josef*, in 1793 to the German *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz*. It is also the tune for *America* and for an Ottawa Indian hymn to the gracious Virgin, *Guanatch Marie*. The hymn *Nearer my God to thee*, by Lowell Mason, is a favourite not only among white American Methodists but also among Christian Indians, in their native language: Cree on James Bay, Ottawa and Chippewa along Georgian Bay, Dogrib by the Great Slave Lake.

Repertoires of hymns spread far and wide, due to the efforts of missionaries. The hymns of Britain's Wesleyans have reappeared in America, in the original language or in versions prepared for Christianized Indian tribes. The converts have adopted the 18th or 19th century harmonies and followed the custom of interchanging texts and tunes.

In contrast, Spanish-Americans have formed ritual 'islands' in the mountains of New Mexico's Rio Grande area. They maintain a brotherhood, the Penitentes, and they continue their Easter Passion Plays, secret ceremonies in their *moradas* (sanctuaries), and self-flagellation. They mourn the agony of Jesus and they supplicate the Virgin Mary in their *Alabados* (paeans). In addition to medieval songs from Spain, Italy and Germany, they may present a new Alabado by a local minstrel. Some prototypes survive in Spain and also in other areas of Latin America.

While the Penitentes offer their blood and their songs as atonement for their transgressions, and as worship to their Saviour, the neighbouring Pueblo Indians offer traditional songs and dances to their rain gods. Indians and non-Penitente Spaniards sing Gregorian chants in the vernacular. In the Catholic churches they also render ecumenical hymns.

The fate of Protestant hymns among American Negroes illustrates another aspect of the diffusion of song. Though members of the Pentecostal Churches subscribe to Christianity and though they sing in English, they metamorphose the old hymns with words by Isaac Watts and the Wesleys, who went to America in the 18th century. Starting a tune in a recognizable fashion, they then transform it by a free, melodic rendering, or by elaborate, rhythmic syncopations in voice, hand clapping, piano, electric guitar, percussion instruments, and perhaps a trumpet. They also improvise responsory passages, which may be a fusion of African style and florid Puritan psalmody. Frequently they gesticulate or dance in the aisles.

The infectious rhythms and intense vocal style of Negro hymns reappear in the secular variants of jazz and blues, from the ragtime of the early 20th century, the later swing and boogie-woogie, to the rock and roll of the '50s and '60s. The musical and dance patterns have blended African, Spanish, French and British influences, and have diffused to many parts of the world. Rock and roll derived some of its modulations and vocal tricks from the Near East and, in 'raga rock', from India.

The ever-changing 'pop' music scene started as a teenage fad and it is still sometimes called 'the voice of the young people', in the expression of nostalgia, love, and frustration. It is now, however, demanding the attention of adults and even scholars. The difference between the British style, such as that of the Beatles, and American style is appreciated. Experts contrast black, white, psychedelic, and raga rock.

While most pop music has a secular, commercial motivation, it is showing an increasingly liturgical trend. Negroes say that except for the words it is like the singing in the Pentecostal Holiness Churches. The lyrics are becoming more sophisticated, using mystical, visionary ideas and words. New, anonymous rock hymns are springing up, for use in churches, predominantly in Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Episcopal services. In addition, serious composers are producing 'rock masses' and psalms in Africa and America. The texts range from English versions of the Nicene Creed to original verses on the theme of 'Praise the Lord with a New Song'. These creations appear in record albums, alongside Negro spirituals. They point the way to a new liturgical folk style, as hybrid as jazz.

While the dancing to pop is perhaps limited and monotonous, the secular and sacred music shows melodic and rhythmic resourcefulness, drawing on instruments old and modern, as well as on a vast range of vocal techniques.

GERTRUDE KURATH

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Socio-economic factors are important in both the act and the accusation of sorcery; the Kikuyu, when deprived of their livelihood, resorted to black magic, and the African farmer who is more successful than his neighbours may have his prosperity put down to witchcraft

SORCERY

AN ACCUSATION of witchcraft can be regarded as a culminating stage in a special process by which an individual is psychically (and often, largely unconsciously) extruded from the group. Psychologically this is a process that resolves interpersonal tensions that might otherwise destroy the group itself. Any theory that hopes to delineate the motivation of the accuser has to recognize that much human behaviour stems from unconscious and sometimes atavistic impulses. Whatever the underlying motivation, socio-economic observations should apply not only to medieval European witchcraft but to contemporary case studies in Africa and elsewhere.

To a considerable extent the European witch persecution was developed by the Holy Office of Inquisition, formally created in the 13th century to expurgate heresy (see HERESY). So effective were the Inquisitors that by 1375 they had all but worked themselves out of a job. Certainly, those original medieval heretics, the Waldenses and Cathars, had been all but exterminated; and their confiscated lands and goods had provided princes and officials with considerable reason for zeal (see CATHARS; WALDENSES). It was Pope Innocent III (1160–1216) who provided that the goods and lands of those found guilty of heresy stood forfeit. But by the 14th century this lucrative process was drying up.

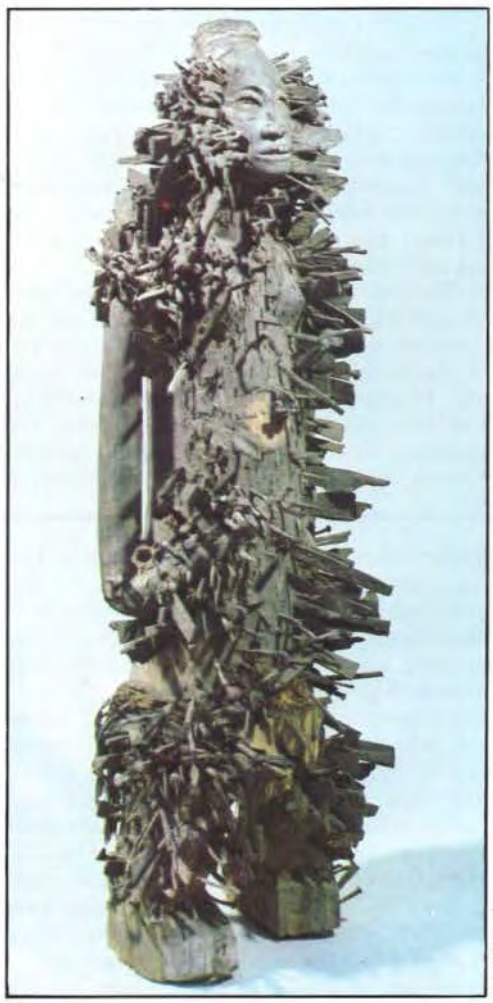
Attempts were made to persuade the Pope to allow the Inquisition to transfer its attention from heresy to sorcery; but for a while the Pope wisely resisted this ploy, insisting that unless the Holy Office could show that sorcery was in fact buttressed by heresy, it was not the concern of the Church.

It was only by reviving the notion of a pact between witches and the Devil, that earlier writers such as Augustine and Aquinas had touched on, that this particular theological problem could be solved, and the frequently lucrative benefits of the Inquisition restored (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS).

The Dangers of Success

If both the act and the accusation of witchcraft (and sorcery) frequently involved socio-economic motives, it is interesting to observe that apart from expressions of jealousy of a more successful neighbour, English witch-hunting never really achieved the intensity that was found on the Continent during the 14th and 15th centuries. Even the consumptive Witch-Finder General, Matthew Hopkins, managed only a fair living during his self-imposed year of office in 1645. In Germany, however, in the same century, the direct connection between economic gain and a spate of accusations is seen clearly enough in the records of the Bamberg diocese. Between 1626 and 1629 there was an average of 100 executions a year for witchcraft. However, in 1630 an Imperial edict forbade the confiscation of the property of condemned witches. In that same year Bamberg's execution rate dropped to 24, and by 1631 it had fallen to nothing (see BAMBERG WITCHES).

In England, where the definition of sorcery and witchcraft was often so vague that the one frequently included the other, acts of so-called *maleficium* (supernatural evil-doing)



Axel Poignant

Above Pressure to allow the Inquisition to try cases of witchcraft was partly motivated by greed for the property of those condemned: 18th century engraving *Left* In African societies economic and social success is frequently attributed to sorcery: Bakongo nail fetish, believed to contain or act as a conductor of magic power *Above right* Mau Mau was a reaction against economic pressures on the Kikuyu: members hand over their weapons *Below right* Poor and outcast gypsies are still widely feared as witches

were often transparent projections of village tensions in which the accusation was to a large extent a safety valve to protect a close-knit community. C. L'Estrange Ewen's survey of the indictments for the home counties in Elizabeth's reign contains many examples of envy of individuals who had achieved rural prosperity, resulting in acts of ill-will, for such successful people are felt to threaten the security of accepted norms.

Michael Gelfand, who has studied the Shona of Rhodesia, is not alone in pointing out that the modern African cultivator who is in any way successful lives in fear of the envy of his neighbour, who may point to his farming success as a clear demonstration of the use of sorcery. There is one story recounted by an anthropologist, M. G. Marwick, of an African migratory worker who returns to his village after months of absence loaded with purchases and savings; but he sneaks into his own dwelling after dark so as not to be seen. Members of his often large and extended family who felt he had

Camera Press, London

Spectrum Colour Library

been mean towards them might well accuse him of sorcery or might practise sorcery against him. In a way, sorcery acts as a levelling mechanism in the economic life of a community. And although this is only one aspect of the function of sorcery, it is a function that is often overlooked. In recent times an African cultivator who had most successfully adopted European agricultural practices was murdered. Parts of his body were distributed so that the magic that he had obtained could benefit the whole community. This act was probably a completely unconscious rationalization that restored the *status quo* in a manner wholly acceptable to everyone in the community, except the dead man.

The relationship of an outbreak of witch hysteria to socially unsettled times has been noted by a number of writers and may well explain in different terms much of the disquiet during the 1970s when there were extreme sub-groups opposed to society at large. Although the rituals of such groups are no longer centred on the Devil, they are supposed to have strong sexual undertones, and in their dance routines, their drug-taking and nakedness, they come close to paralleling the fantasies of the witches' sabbath. There cannot be much doubt that world society since the Second World War has been passing through a period of change, but whether it is more anxiety-provoking than the socio-economic turmoil that followed in the wake of the Black Death in the 14th century is another matter. Social and economic change was already in progress when the plague reached epidemic proportions, so that it merely enlarged a process that had been evident for some time. But it would be unwise to undervalue its importance. It has been estimated that some 25 million people died of plague in Europe alone; and that the population of England was reduced by a figure of between one third and one half.

Search for a Scapegoat

The already decaying manorial system crumbled after the Black Death, and its collapse smashed for ever the extended family system in England, with its group responsibility towards the individual, its comfortable social loyalties and ties. From this desolation was to emerge the modern nuclear family and eventually the tougher and much more individualistic mercantile practices that are the basis of modern capitalism.

It is significant that in Britain it was only in the trail of social desolation that followed the Black Death that there was an upsurge of witchcraft accusations. A close parallel has been established in the Eket district of Calahar, Nigeria, which had been decimated by the influenza outbreak in 1918–19. A spate of witchcraft accusations followed the epidemic, and 110 persons perished after ordeal by poison, while in one small village in the area, 18 persons were hanged. The great 19th century historian, William Lecky, noted collateral evidence of a similar nature in Switzerland and Germany, where plague deaths were subsequently attributed to the malice of Jews.

Epidemic and natural disasters concern us not only because our simpler rural forefathers required some sort of theological explanation, but because, in the resultant socio-economic dislocation, they produced states of acute anxiety in the afflicted communities. It is well known that as English manors disintegrated, because of acute labour shortages, landowners turned to less labour-intensive activities such as sheep-farming. The able-bodied were advantageously freed to sell their labour anywhere, but the old and infirm were rather like people whose pension rights had been suddenly removed. Often denied all privileges they had earned in the manor, and physically enfeebled, they had no welfare state to turn to. Robert Cowley thundered: 'They take our houses over our heads, they levy great fines, they enclose our commons. In the country we cannot tarry, but we must be their slaves and labour till our hearts burst and then they have all.' Despite their brutality, our forefathers could not consciously accept the extermination of unproductive or unwanted sectors of the population. But, with theological support, the witchcraft accusation provided a quasi-legal process to eliminate thousands of economically useless old women (see OLD AGE AND WITCHCRAFT).

Link with Mental Illness

The 16th century stereotype of the witch as a mumbling old crone was well expressed in the verbal cartoon of Reginald Scot, author of *A Discoverie of Witchcraft*, and perpetuated in our times by Walt Disney. Although J. C. Baroja has noted her appearance in Spain, she is central to the English tradition. German, French, and even Scottish witches are often young and pretty. In Africa the witch is more likely to be a jealous younger wife. But European society, and particularly English society, has experienced a good deal of stress in trying to accommodate the elderly. In fact, the unending spate of 'in-law' jokes indicates underlying tensions as little resolved today as they were centuries ago. If the *maleficium* continues to exist, the ducking-chair and the stake have gone. Of course, another factor has changed. Many elderly women in our present-day society have led economically active lives and their pensions render them relatively independent. Their final retirement is marred less by want than by loneliness. In Africa, the inchoate jealousies that so easily disrupt a psychically closely related group such as a family, take other forms. Marwick's brilliant depiction of Cewa society in Zambia shows that the polygamous family is often saved from collapse by the accusation of witchcraft brought against a disruptive wife. Behaviour that is disruptive of the social life of a group is also detrimental to its economic production.

There is a further interesting link between social disruption and economic well-being. Recent descriptions of the personalities of psychotics bear a close resemblance to contemporary verbal cartoons of medieval witches (see HYSTERICAL POSSESSION). In one study, a sample of the American psychotic population was examined by Hollingshead and Redlich, and divided into five classes. Class 5 was described as a group that was hostile, self-centred and suspicious. This group consisted almost entirely of factory hands and unskilled labourers, people with low educational standards, who had all the personality characteristics that lead to further isolation and discrimination. The authors of this study commented that these people had about them 'a spell of gloom and disaster which they exuded even when they were not depressed . . .' Centuries earlier the Swiss physician Thomas Erastus (1524–83) had described women accused of witchcraft as having a 'corrupt fantasy abounding with melancholic humour'. In the 1960s Michael Gelfand, speaking as an experienced physician, asserted that in Africa 'a sullen, sour, unfriendly personality is linked with the witch.'

If the psychotics in the American study resemble witches, both are frequently at the bottom of the economic ladder. The gradual extrusion of these difficult, uneconomic members of society has been examined in a recent study by Y. Talmon. Working among ageing women in Israeli collectives, she found that they tended slowly to retreat from communal affairs and to show increasing anxiety about their shrinking economic and, therefore, social status.

The importance of the economic factor in social cohesion (and hence an important element in the dynamics of witchcraft) is evident in the work of M. J. Field in Ghana. There, shrines manned by priests are open several times a week to ordinary men and women who want to discuss their problems and troubles. These therapeutic sessions are a source of significant socio-psychological information. In Dr Field's analysis of some 2500 cases at one shrine, it is interesting to note that the highest single class of consultation was 'Complaints of "not prospering".' 'Not prospering' includes the wrecking of one's lorry, failure to let property, bad marksmanship on the part of a hunter or personal sickness. But the African goes further with such human complaints. Why, he wants to know, is he not prospering whilst his neighbour is? Sometimes, Dr Field found, patients had their own solutions for their troubles. 'Witches have caused people to dislike me,' one reported.

The Cause of Failure

Failure is seldom seen as a personal responsibility. In African psychology there is always the outside power, apparently a projection of internal anxieties, that is responsible – the witch or the evil power that bears a personal animosity. Among the consultants at the shrine were two policemen asking for protection from their colleagues, a dismissed teacher and various schoolboys who had failed their examinations. Some applicants for help demand support because 'I want help in destroying my enemies' or 'I am not prospering because of my envious brother'. In Ghana the alcoholic is the victim of witchcraft. Economically disintegrating, the drunkard laments: 'You see how my house is spoilt. Witches have done that. My house is full of witches, and they have made me a drunkard.'

British Museum

In the trail of desolation that the Black Death left in its wake there was an upsurge of accusations of witchcraft, and a similar reaction to social and economic stress is known from other societies: illustration from a 15th century Book of Hours, reflecting the terror of plague

And just as English witch lore is full of complaints about envious neighbours who have caused crops to be bewitched and reduced, so the Ghanaian farmer attends a shrine to complain about pests and disasters of climate – but he generally regards these as instruments of witchcraft and bad medicine. As Dr Field comments, financially successful men are certain that envious kinsmen will do their best by means of bad medicines to 'bring them down'.

If we move from the stresses of interpersonal relations to the macroscopic tensions that erupt into inter-group conflict, we find a close association between economic forces and atavistic expression. The Mau Mau insurrection which marred the British withdrawal from East Africa is an example (see KIKUYU). Reports during the Mau Mau period suggested a return to the practices of black magic, and although much that was sensational was frankly hysterical, it is of interest to realize that the Kikuyu revolt only came about as a result of British administrative pressures which attempted to confine the Kikuyu to agriculturally depleted reserves that were incapable of supporting the population.

The Mau Mau leadership came from migrants who had flocked to the towns, had been deported to their own reserves by the authorities and, driven by hunger, had returned again to the towns. Their oath, like almost any ritual, was a device to create unity. The Mau Mau was a large fragment of society that had splintered from its matrix; and oaths, rituals, symbols were essential anthropologically to give positive stance to a negative commitment.

The Kikuyu were described as endemically secretive, a sour, inward-looking people – an obvious stereotype, of course, and not far removed from Hollingshead's Class 5. The rehabilitation of Mau Mau detainees closely resembled many of the medieval practices. T. G. Askwith, who led the psychological cleaning-up operations, postulated the necessity of attacking feelings and emotions. Consequently the first step in the process was a confession that 'would get rid of the poison of Mau Mau'.

Living in a different period of history, we have not completely interpreted the Mau Mau insurrection as a manifestation of witchcraft, although in its rituals and in the administrative treatment of rehabilitation, it had many elements in common. Almost always, sorcery and witchcraft are associated with pressures that are not resolved by normal social procedure. They offer a means of expression to the extruded: they express the anxiety of the economically unviable without, unfortunately, in any way resolving his deeper inadequacies.

(See also FINDING OF WITCHES; WITCHCRAFT.)

BRIAN ROSE

Barnabys

Sortilege

Divination by lots, from Latin *sors*, 'lot', and *legere*, 'to read': *sortes* is the type of divination which picks a passage at random from Homer, Virgil, the Bible or some other work as a guide to the future: more generally, a term for magic, sorcery and witchcraft.
See DIVINATION: LOTS.

Soteriology

Technical term, from Greek *soter*, 'deliverer' or 'saviour', for the branch of theology concerned with the doctrine of salvation, the redemption of fallen man by Jesus Christ.

The idea of the soul as an entity which can exist outside the body occurs among many primitive peoples, some of whom believe that each person has more than one soul

SOUL

THE BELIEF in a spiritual element of the human personality distinct from the visible and tangible body is widespread among primitive peoples. Ideas about the nature of this element vary greatly and its equation with the 'soul' as conceived by Christians is only of limited relevance. There is, however, the fairly general assumption that an invisible substance, separable from the material body, is responsible for the phenomena which distinguish the living from the dead. According to the views of some peoples, this element is the 'soul' or 'life-substance' of a person, and its temporary separation from the body leads to illness or loss of consciousness, while permanent separation causes death.

The enlivening element which may be described as 'soul' is not necessarily considered as totally immaterial, for it is sometimes associated with the breath or the shadow of a person (see BREATH; SHADOW), and under certain circumstances it can manifest itself and become perceivable as a phantom or ghost. Yet the idea that the soul is not merely a function of the living body, such as the breath, but an entity by itself capable of existing outside the body occurs among many primitive populations. Frequently this element is described in terms suggesting not complete insubstantiality but a finer type of materiality such as that of breath, shadow or double (see DOUBLE). It is in the nature of a soul to be capable of surviving after the body's decomposition following death. But there is a common belief that a disembodied soul is not necessarily freed from the exigencies of earthly life; it may be in need of the attention of the living and depend on their offerings of food.

The experience of dreams has certainly influenced the development of the belief in an immaterial part of the personality which can move about freely and encounter people in distant places while the body of the sleeper is known to remain static. In the 19th century, anthropologists such as E. B. Tylor, made a great deal of the role of dreams as the source not only of the concept of the soul but also of the belief in ghosts and spirits, beings conceived in the image of disembodied souls existing and acting independent of a tangible and visible body. This theory, generally known as animism (see ANIMISM), may well explain certain concepts of ancestor spirits and demons, but it cannot account entirely for the belief in spirits and gods belonging to a sphere outside the world of men and of a nature different from that of the human soul.

National Gallery

In major religions the fate of the soul is generally believed to be determined by the dead person's conduct in life, an idea which is frequently absent from primitive beliefs: *The Soul of St Bertin Carried up to God*, by the 15th century Dutch painter Simon Marmion

How Many Souls to a Body?

Christian doctrine assumes that man is endowed with a single soul, in which his personality survives after death, but which during his lifetime has no perceivable separate existence. The views of many primitive peoples on the composition of the human personality are far more complex. Beliefs in a plurality of invisible elements associated with one body are widespread, and the idea of multiple 'souls' is current in many primitive societies. Sometimes they are thought to be localized in different parts of the body during life, and almost invariably they have separate fortunes after death. The Menomini, an American Indian tribe, used to assign one soul to the head and another to the heart. After death the former was believed to roam about aimlessly, to linger about the grave and whistle in the dark, and this soul was given offerings by the kinsmen of the deceased. The other soul was believed to travel to the realm of the spirits and to dwell there without ever returning to earth. The Bagobo of the Philippines distinguish a right-hand and a left-hand soul. The former is manifested as the shadow on a person's right side, and is believed not to leave the body until death. When a person dies, this soul goes straight from the grave to the underworld, and by purification it becomes a naturalized spirit, who joins his predecessors in a mode of life closely patterned on that of

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

A dead Egyptian and her soul in the form of a bird receive water from Nut, protectress of the dead: illustration on a funerary casket, c 1000 BC. The Egyptians believed that at death a free-moving entity separated itself from the body but remained in close proximity to it

the living. The left-hand soul appears as the shadow on the left side and also as a man's reflection in water (see also MIRROR). It is this soul which leaves the body at night to go flying about the world. These adventures are fraught with danger, for were a demon to catch it, the owner of the soul would fall ill and ultimately die. At the moment of death the left-hand soul leaves the body and then becomes merged in the company of demons who cause disease. The left-hand soul is associated with sickness and pain, whereas the right-hand soul is a source of health, activity and joy.

Some American Indian tribes attributed four souls to every human body, and certain Melanesians believe that a man possesses seven souls of different type. The implications of a belief in several distinct elements in a person's spiritual make-up are exemplified by the Gonds, an aboriginal tribe of central India. The Gonds share with many Indian tribes the belief that a child in the mother's womb is lifeless until a *jiv*, or life-substance enters and animates the embryo. This life-substance is sent into the child by Bhagavan, the supreme deity, and failing the arrival of the life-substance the child will be still-born. During a Gond's life little attention is paid to the life-substance, which is unrelated to a man's consciousness or emotions. But when a Gond's span of life draws to its end, the supreme deity recalls the life-substance and thereby causes death. When a life-substance has returned to the deity, it is added to a pool of such life-substances available for reincarnation, and the link between the personality of the deceased and the life-substance comes to an end as soon as the latter returns to this pool. Thereafter it may be reincarnated in any living creature, be it animal or man, but there is a likelihood that a man's life-substance will be reincarnated in the son of one of his sons.

Despite this belief in the possibility of reincarnation within the same family, the personality of the deceased does not adhere to the life-substance but to another element, the *sanal*, which corresponds to the 'shade' or soul of the dead in the Homeric view of the underworld. Nearly all the rites and ceremonies of Gond funerals and memorial feasts, as well as the subsequent cult of the ancestors, relate to the shade in whom the personality of the departed is perpetuated. While in the moment of death the life-substance moves to the realm of the supreme deity, the shade is believed to linger near the corpse and throughout the funeral rites the presence of the shade is very much in the minds of the mourners. From the house of death the shade follows the bier bearers to the grave or the cremation-ground and hovers close by while the mourners dispose of the corpse. Immediately after the burial or cremation the mourners go to a stream and put down a miniature seat, a twig such as Gonds use for cleaning the teeth, and a cup of water. They then address the departed and admonish him to sit on the seat and to rinse his mouth, in the belief that the shade should purify himself from the pollution of death. Then a goat or fowl is sacrificed, and the cooked flesh is offered to the shade with the request to eat of it and to grant his favour to the living.

A soul in need of purification by means of a twig and water, and capable of partaking of food, is clearly not thought of as completely immaterial, but its substantiality is of a different and more subtle kind than that of living persons.

After the funeral the Gonds perform a rite whereby the shade of the deceased is joined with the company of the shades dwelling in fields and forest. This rite reflects the belief that for some time after death the shades roam the world of the living, but normally they live in the Land of the Dead, and an elaborate ritual is designed to introduce the shade of a recently departed to the company of the ancestors and the clan deities who reside with them in the underworld. There the shades lead a life very similar to life on earth, and every man and woman is believed to join ultimately his or her original spouse, even though several other marriages may have followed the first marital union. Although the souls of the departed live in a sphere of their own, they are not far removed from the living, and they come to the houses of their surviving kinsmen and partake of the food offered to them on the occasion of feasts. Far from dreading contact with the shades of the departed, the Gonds believe in their beneficial influence and the blessings they can bestow on the living. It is only when their cult is neglected that they may withdraw their favour.

Condemned to Roam the Earth

In so far as the afterlife is concerned, the shade approximates the Western concept of the 'soul' much more closely than does the life-substance to which adheres very little of a man's personality. Being the dead person minus the material body and the animating life-substance, the shade retains the personality of the deceased, and remains within the framework of the social system which places him in certain prescribed relationships to the living as well as to the dead members of Gond society. However, Gonds believe that in exceptional circumstances, a deceased may be unable to join the company of ancestors in the Land of the Dead, but turns into an evil spirit condemned to roam this earth and haunt the living. This may be the fate of a woman who died in pregnancy or childbirth. To encounter the ghost of such a woman is highly dangerous; the mere sight of her may cause a wasting disease or even death, and women who died in childbirth are buried in such a way as to make their emergence from the grave as difficult as possible.

Different from the concept of the soul or shade, which represents a man's personality surviving after death in a transformed state, is that of a soul which can leave a

man's body even during his lifetime. Many primitive peoples, such as the tribes of central and northern Asia, believe that a man's soul has a separate existence, and they attribute disease to the soul's having strayed away or been stolen. Treatment is in principle reduced to finding it, capturing it, and obliging it to resume its place in the patient's body. Only a shaman or spirit-medium can undertake a cure of this kind, for only he recognizes that the soul has fled, and is able to overtake it. In a state of trance or ecstasy he 'sees' the spirits who may have abducted the soul and can follow them into their realm and bargain with them for the soul's release. While an ordinary person's soul may detach itself from the body involuntarily, the shaman is capable of sending his own soul into the world of the spirits and there searching for the truant soul of his patient (see SHAMAN).

Here the soul is clearly a separate entity and not merely the personality which after the death of the body appears as a shade, as believed by the Gonds. Certain Himalayan tribes, for instance, perform at every wedding an elaborate rite in order to induce the soul of the bride to reside happily in her new home. For it is believed that if her soul were to escape from her husband's house, the bride would pine and die.

The soul-concepts of north Asian peoples are complicated by the belief that man can have as many as three or even seven souls. At death one of them remains in the grave, another descends to the realm of shades, and a third ascends to the sky. Some north Asian tribes believe that at death one soul disappears or is eaten by demons, and during earthly life may cause illness by its flight.

As the soul of a dying man is breathed out of his body, angels and demons fight for control of it; for many peoples the soul is not merely a function of the living body but is capable of survival after death: drawing from De Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 1835

The Vengeful Ghosts

Among primitive peoples we find two contrasting attitudes to the souls of the dead. Most Indian tribes, such as the Gonds, endeavour to maintain contact with the departed, believing that their support and favour will aid the prosperity of surviving kinsmen. In Africa, on the other hand, there is a widespread desire to turn the dead away from the living and to prevent them from meddling in their affairs. Thus the Nuer of the southern Sudan (see NUER) bury the dead with their backs to the homesteads and their eyes to the bush, in order to induce the ghost of the dead person to look outwards and leave the living alone. There is no cult of the dead and their graves are soon forgotten. The Nuer, like many other African tribes however, believe that ghosts may come to trouble the living. The dead are resentful of injustice and bear malice to those who have wronged them. Hence those who have recently become ghosts may take vengeance on anyone who harmed them in their earthly life.

We can conclude that most primitive people have a belief in an element in the human personality which survives in one form or other after death. Less general but still of considerable currency is the assumption that an intangible part of man can separate itself from the body and stray to other spheres, but that permanent separation inevitably results in the death of the body. The Christian idea of one single immortal soul, completely identified with a man's or woman's personality, is only one of numerous ideas regarding the spiritual side of human nature. The fate of the soul or other spiritual entity after death is rarely connected with a person's moral conduct in this life. More common is the belief that the circumstances of a person's death determine the future life of the surviving soul, and that those who died an accidental or violent death turn into malignant ghosts who cannot find rest and constitute a source of danger to the living.

Most of the assumptions of modern Spiritualism regarding the nature and fate of the souls of the dead are anticipated by the beliefs and practices of primitive peoples, and it would seem that a great variety of attitudes towards the spiritual elements in the human personality has persisted throughout the ages.

(For the soul in major religions, see MAN; and see also BRAHMAN; BURIAL; CULT OF THE DEAD; GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; IMMORTALITY; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD; PACT; PSYCHOLOGY; REINCARNATION; SPIRITUALISM.)

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

SOUTH AMERICA

In the candomblés of Brazil, descendants of slaves beg favours equally from St Peter or the African Xango; while among their wealthier white countrymen a girl who wants her lover back will offer perfume and champagne to Iemanja, and a man who seeks Exu's help in a lawsuit will pour whisky over the roots of a certain tree

BRAZIL IS UNIQUE in South America for it has its own language – Portuguese – and its own religion – spiritism. The Vatican refers to Brazil as 'the largest Catholic nation in the world', but the majority of its 90 million people practise a form of spirit worship that has never received the approval of Rome.

Spiritism in Brazil (not quite the same thing as Spiritualism) goes back centuries to Africa, to the enlightened and progressive West Africa of the Yoruba culture and the nation of Benin, famous for its magnificent bronze sculptures and masks. The Yoruba developed in the region known today as southern Nigeria; they had their own cities, armies, priesthoods, elites and political systems. The people were guided by a host of deities and spirits that were all-seeing and all-powerful. They were everywhere: in the sky, in the trees, under rocks and inside animals. They could be called upon at any time and for any reason, but they demanded gifts and devotion.

The god Orolum was their Jehovah. He was so omnipotent that there was no direct way to approach him. An intermediary, or *orisha*, had to be used, and he would have to be convinced of a mortal's sincerity before he would take the request to his chief.

The two most important messengers were a black Adam and Eve who descended from heaven to the African jungles to intercede for Yoruba tribesmen. They had a son named Aganju and a daughter called Iemanja; brother and sister married and had a son named Orungan. When Orungan

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Blood is poured over the head of a young boy holding a sacrificed cockerel during a Brazilian spiritism ritual: many old African beliefs and practices, originally brought by Negro slaves, have survived and have coalesced with aspects of Christianity to create vigorous new religious movements

Keystone Press

The Umbanda cult of Brazil is a unique hybrid religion combining African paganism, spiritism, and Christianity; at a beach initiation ceremony drums and bottles of champagne play as vital a role as statues of Christian saints

grew to be a man he fell in love with his own mother. Iemanja repulsed his advances and tried to run away, but he caught her, knocked her to the ground and raped her. Iemanja was so ashamed of what had happened that she went into the jungle and hid. There her belly began to grow at an alarming rate. From her breasts spurted two fountains of water that became lakes. Then her womb burst open and out came the hierarchy of Yoruba spiritism: the god of thunder and the god of twins, the god of hunting, the goddess of disease, the god of wealth, the god of war, and five others. After 11 children had been born to her, she then gave birth to the sun and the moon. Thus Iemanja became the mother of all spirits and the most powerful and venerated of women in Yoruba mythology.

When the Portuguese initiated the slave trade at the beginning of the 16th century, Arab buyers attacked the villages and bound the tribesmen in chains. They were herded and branded like cattle, marched to the sea and stacked in layers inside slave ships. Many of them had never seen the sea, and when the ocean rolled, and the ships felt as if they were sinking, the slaves had only one hope of salvation; the goddess Iemanja. They begged her not to let them drown and prayed to her to calm the waters. When they arrived safely on Brazilian soil they were positive it had been Iemanja who had listened to them and who had delivered them from the terrors of a watery grave. She had guided them to safety. She and all her sons and daughters were immediately venerated in the New World.

Saints Merged with Spirits

The Portuguese were generally comparatively lenient masters, and they were also easy-going Catholics. Many of their religious beliefs were mixed with superstition and folklore, relics of centuries of Moorish influence. They believed in the Evil Eye, black magic and the power of amulets. Ideologically, Rome had always been at a

One by one the Christian saints became confused with the Yoruba spirits, and in less than a generation they were one and the same personality

distance from Lisbon, but it was almost on another planet from Brazil. The Portuguese masters were uninterested, therefore, in the gods their slaves worshipped as long as the work was done. When the Blacks set up altars to Iemanja and the other spirits they were allowed to keep them. The masters even allowed them to beat drums and light candles; and as long as the services did not end in physical injury, the masters were unconcerned.

But visiting Catholic priests were concerned, and admonished the Portuguese, insisting that their slaves should be converted to Christianity. The Church even threatened to take away slaves who remained pagan. So the masters held classes where the lives of the saints were read, and gave the slaves plaster statues of their various Christian heroes; and told them to worship them. The slaves were delighted because it gave them a new and very powerful collection of deities to pray to. If their masters worked through these white spirits, then they must be very strong indeed. They were pleased that the Virgin Mary was so important and looked so much like Iemanja. They put the image of Mary right up on the altar beside the goddess of the waters. Soon the two women were fused into one deity who would answer to either name. Other saints were also mingled with their jungle counterparts: Oxala was the god of purity and goodness, so he merged easily with Jesus. Xango was the spirit of the wilderness; he and St John the Baptist became one. Omulu was the spirit of disease and therefore a natural partner for St Lazarus, the poor man who was 'full of sores', mentioned in the parable in Luke, chapter 16. One by one the Christian saints became confused with the Yoruba spirits, and in less than a generation they were one and the same personality.

When the slaves of the northern states, Ceara and Amazonas, were freed in 1884

C. Waterson

C. Waterson

Iemanja, the mother of all spirits, and goddess of the sea, who saved the slaves from the perils of the journey from Africa to the New World, is still venerated; every New Year's Eve, crowds gather on the Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro, to honour her *Above right* The faithful prostrate themselves before her picture *Right* The 'mother' and 'father' of the saints carry her picture to the sea

Left A woman prostrates herself before an Umbanda altar decorated with the images of Catholic saints: Umbanda is full of beliefs, rituals and recipes to smooth out life's daily problems, and appeasements are offered to the spirits for everything from success in business to good-fortune in love

Right Brazilian spirit doctors play a vital role in a society where there are too few medical facilities: a spirit doctor blesses a cripple whom he has just cured

London Express News & Features

they set up churches and called them *candomblés* (meeting places). Black women, who were the religious leaders during captivity, because they had more free time than the men for elaborate rituals, became the high priestesses. Their acolytes, also women, were chosen from the devout who wished someday to move up the hierarchy themselves. The men were limited to beating the drums.

There are some 700 Candomblé spirit temples in the city of Salvador, Brazil, today that are faithful to the rituals of the Afro-Christian slave churches of the past. The high priestess (called 'Mother of the Saints') trains her 'daughters' in the art of charms, spells, ritual, African dialects and cures. The congregation sits divided, men on one side of the room and the women on the other. Drums beat and candles are lit in the four corners while special food and alcoholic drinks are placed outside to keep Exu, the Devil, away from the ceremony. The dancers swirl to the rhythm of the drums and sing imploringly for the spirits to descend. One by one the dancers become possessed and take on the physical characteristics of their particular deity. Then they are dressed in the costume of that specific spirit and are led in a trance around the room blessing and embracing those who believe.

For true adepts, it is important to be present. They believe that the spirit saints are in that very room. The devout can touch the Virgin Mary. They can ask a blessing of St Peter. They can have their lives bettered by Xango. They claim they cannot become so intimate with the gods at the Catholic Church because the spirits there do not live and breathe: they just stare down from niches on the wall. At a candomblé the people are in the actual presence of the gods.

Faith for the Upper Class

Down the coast, in wealthy Rio de Janeiro, the upper-class Brazilians wanted something else in a religion. Catholicism failed to provide the answers to all their questions, as did the pagan African transplant of Candomblé. The wealthy and educated believed in spirits and spirit healing but could not reconcile themselves to worshipping beings such as Iemanja and Orolum. The whites needed a more 'civilized' way of believing in spirits, and found it through a Frenchman.

Alan Kardek (whose real name was Denizard Rivail) was a 55-year-old doctor of medicine in Paris. A scientist and sceptic, he trusted nothing he could not see. One evening, when he was present at an exclusive Parisian *salon*, the hostess, much to his astonishment, made her guests play 'table-rapping'. Kardek sat at a heavy round table and placed his hands on its surface along with everyone else. Shortly the table began to rap out messages. It told where Mme 'X' had misplaced her jewels and whom M 'Y' would marry. The spirit of the table identified itself as being that of a famous and long dead poet. The guests laughed at the table's messages but Kardek was not amused. He was incredulous, then appalled, and finally intrigued. He contended, as a doctor and scientist, that if these messages really came from the departed they should be taken seriously and should not be used for idle parlour games but should be seriously investigated. And if there really were spirits, then did not their very existence put an entirely new aspect on all the sciences?

He sent out teams of researchers armed with the same set of questions, to visit table-rapping parties across France. When they returned to Paris their answers were compared and found to be amazingly similar. Kardek became certain that spirits did exist and that they were trying to contact the living. He devoted the rest of his life to questioning them and compiling their answers.

In 1857 Kardek published his research.

Keystone Press

Right **As the dawn of the New Year breaks on Copacabana Beach, the crowds still cluster round their offerings to the goddess Iemanja** ***Facing page (left)*** **flowers placed in the sand in honour of Iemanja and** ***(right)*** **candles still burn after the long night celebrations**

Foto Helzel

calling it *The Spirits' Book*. It dealt with the spirit world, its origins, its various planes and its various classes. A small group formed around Kardek and supplied him with funds to continue his research, but on the whole he was ignored in France. In England there was a brief flurry of interest in his views, but this also died away. Then a nobleman of the Brazilian emperor's court returned to Rio de Janeiro from Europe with a copy of Kardek's book. It was just what upper-class Brazilians had been looking for. It was by a cultured Frenchman, he was a scientist and he was white. Also, he said what they had been waiting to hear: 'There is no death.'

His writings were quickly translated into Portuguese, and Kardekian centres sprang up all over Brazil. The better educated attended meetings, joined hands and received messages. They studied the rules that the spirits laid down to govern human behaviour, they learned to combine the spirits' ideas with those of Christ, and they learned how to heal by the laying on of hands.

Laying on of Hands

Kardek temples, numbering some 3000 in present-day Brazil, specialize in curing the body so that the mind can do its necessary work. Cures are performed by a medium stretching out his hands and letting jets of electricity speed from his fingers into the patient's aura, which is believed to be imbalanced. The aura, transmitter of physical health and mental balance, is regulated, thus stopping its damaging effect on the flesh of the patient.

Kardek doctors claim cures for thousands of believers after just one visit to an *Espiritista* service. Cripples have been reported to walk again, skin diseases have disappeared and the blind have regained their sight. A well-known psychic surgeon, Jose Arigo, has performed operations under strict surveillance, yet no sign of fraud or subterfuge has ever been noted. Kardek spiritists also work to orientate lost souls back to the spirit world, claiming that many confused 'souls', especially after an accident or an unexpected illness, are roaming the earth in search of their missing mortal bodies.

There is yet another form of Brazilian spiritism. It is called *Umbanda* and, at times, referred to erroneously as *Macumba*. Umbanda was created about 50 years ago by a Kardek medium who felt that African Candomblé was too 'low' for the average man and Kardek spiritism too 'high'. What was needed was a mixture of the best of both creeds. Umbanda was the result. The primitive gods (including Iemanja), the drum beats, the candles and the body-wracking possessions are present, taken from the African rituals. The Kardek rituals that were retained were veneration of Jesus Christ, communication with the dead and curing by the laying on of hands. It is a unique, hybrid religion with some 500 churches and meeting places across Brazil.

At last the majority of Brazilians had found a religion with which they could identify. At an Umbanda session the spirits spoke in Portuguese, not in African dialects. One could converse directly with the Old Slave, the Devil and even the Virgin Mary. The spirits advised, they cast spells and they cured. The spirits were with the people, on their level.

Umbanda is full of beliefs, rituals and recipes to smooth out life's daily problems. There are *despachos* (appeasements) to the spirits for everything. If a shopkeeper wants success in business he lights three candles to Ogun behind his closed shop door and hangs up a carved jacaranda fist called the *figa*. If a girl wants a missing lover to return home, she lights three candles on the beach at midnight and throws such gifts as flowers, combs, perfume or champagne into the sea for Iemanja. If a man wants to win a court case he makes a photostat copy of all

C. Waterson

Foto Hetzel

the important documents and buries them at the base of a tree standing at a deserted crossroads; then he lights seven candles to Exu and pours a bottle of cheap whisky over the tree's roots. He also leaves a fresh cigar and an unopened box of matches for the spirit. When he wins the case he brings a whole box of fine cigars and a better brand of whisky in gratitude for the spirit's services.

Meeting a Secular Need

Brazil is a gigantic, sprawling land and it is difficult for the bureaucratic federal government to supply the populace with their basic needs. Both the Kardek churches and the Umbanda temples have therefore set up schools, orphanages, homes for old people, free clinics and pharmacies for their members. These charitable institutions far outnumber anything established by the government or the local Roman Catholic Church. Spirit doctors perform an important service in a nation where the ratio is around one doctor for every 4400 citizens. In some areas of the interior there is no doctor for 15,000 square miles and the people depend on spirit doctors and priests for cures. Whether the treatment is completely effective or not is not the point; the important thing is that the people do not feel abandoned. 'To be an Umbandista,' a popular saying goes, 'is to practise good for others'.

The Roman Catholic Church has made some attempt to combat spiritism in Brazil but has completely failed. Some years ago a young Franciscan priest named Bonaventura Kloppenburg was appointed by the Vatican to denounce the various religions and reveal them, on television and in meeting halls, as fraudulent. He lectured and travelled around the nation; he made tables 'talk' and defied curses and hexes. Once he even healed a boy who was blind. He became a celebrity in his own right and was called to Rome where he tried to tell Pope Pius XII all about Brazilian spiritism. Later John XXIII asked the young priest to stop his work against the spirits and help him organize the Vatican II Congress. No one replaced him in his fight against the spirit religions.

It must be emphasized that the followers of spiritism in Brazil are not just the poorer, blacker and more ignorant classes. Such lines of wealth, race and education cannot be drawn. While it is true that the upper classes will deny their beliefs when asked about them by a foreigner, they will never do anything against a spirit organization nor belittle any deity or ritual. Almost everyone in Brazil has a friend or a relative who was cured, hexed or saved by a spirit. Wealthier homes may have a Picasso print in the living-room but they will almost always have an image of Iemanja or the Old Slave in a back bedroom. Appeasements to the gods can be seen glowing under neon lights on fashionable street corners. Steaks, bottles of alcohol and dishes of cornmeal are set out to the gods in central areas of Rio de Janeiro, yet starving dogs and hungry humans never touch them. Each New Year's Eve, Copacabana beach, Rio de Janeiro's wealthy coastal area, is filled with thousands of spirit believers who come to honour Iemanja. They wear full white skirts or white shirts and trousers. They light candles in the sand and beat on drums, and strew the beach with flowers and gifts. Some of them will sacrifice chickens or goats. Then at midnight, as fireworks are exploding and radios from the expensive beach-front apartments play *Auld Lang Syne*, they surge into the ocean tossing presents and praying to the goddess.

The rest of South America has accepted the teachings of the Vatican almost completely. The Spaniards, who conquered the whole of South America except Brazil and the Guianas, were devout and merciless Catholics. There are a few pockets in Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and northern Argentina where Inca gods and beliefs are still venerated, but these ceremonies are heavily laced with Catholic ritual and ideas. The few Inca festivities that have remained take place under the tolerant eyes of local padres. Almost nothing is left of the rituals once observed by the Indians of Paraguay. Moslem mosques can be found in Guyana and Surinam because of the large immigrant population from India. Negroes from Colombia, Surinam, Guyana and French Guiana have a kind of 'voodoo' that is closer to the New Orleans and Haitian versions than the spiritism of Brazil.

(See also NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.)

DAVID ST CLAIR

FURTHER READING: D. St Clair, *Drum and Candle* (Macdonald, 1971), G. Playfair, *The Flying Cow* (Souvenir Press, 1975).

JOANNA SOUTHCOTT

'WAR, DISEASE, crime and banditry will increase until the Bishops open Joanna Southcott's box' – so say the advertisements which the Panacea Society of Bedford, England, still place in newspapers. The society is the descendant of the groups of people who surrounded a remarkable prophetess of the early years of the 19th century. A dairy-maid, turned domestic servant, born in Devonshire in 1750, Joanna Southcott had joined the Methodists in 1791, but only a year later had discovered that hers was no ordinary vocation but that she was indeed the 'woman clothed with the sun' of Revelation, chapter 12. This assurance was backed up by a prophetic gift which caused an enormous amount of stir in the Exeter area, so much so that by 1801 she had been carefully vetted by the Rev T. P. Foley, an Anglican rector, who pronounced himself convinced and was rewarded by Joanna by being named as one of the stars which adorned her crown.

In essence, her teaching was simple. She saw that as man had first been led astray by a woman, so by another woman would he be saved. In Christian thought this parallelism is, of course, already present in the comparison between Eve and the 'second Eve' – the Virgin Mary who, as the Mother of Christ, is the instrument of man's redemption from the original sin precipitated by the first woman.

Joanna Southcott, however, took this second Eve to be herself and set about establishing her followers as the 144,000 of the elect who were to be saved (Revelation, chapter 7). She 'sealed' them into the faith and about 14,000 people took part in such ceremonies – each paying between 12 shillings and 21 shillings for the privilege. Her followers were called upon to observe many of the Jewish laws and particular emphasis was laid upon keeping the Sabbath as well as attention to the dietary restrictions of the Old Testament. She presented each of those who were 'sealed' with a signed certificate, on which was written: 'The

Sealed of the Lord – the Elect-Precious Man's Redemption – To inherit the Tree of Life – To be made Heirs of God and Joint-Heirs with Jesus Christ.' Those who received the paper were said to be already saved.

Unfortunately, in 1809, one of the elect was hanged for murder and thus some doubt was cast on the infallibility of Joanna's selection procedures. She therefore ceased the practice but continued to bombard the bishops of the Church of England, the peers of the realm, and every member of the House of Commons with letters putting forward her views. In all, Joanna Southcott produced some 60 publications, and her correspondence books as well as some writing in her own shorthand are preserved. It is, however, not by her known writings that she is best remembered, but through the two remarkable claims she made. She left behind her a sealed box which was only to be opened by the bishops of the Church as foretold in the Apocalypse. It was this 'ark' which contained the revelations necessary to avoid the dire consequences mentioned by the Panacea Society in its advertisements, and it was the guardianship of this box and the continued pressure on the bishops to open it which has kept the Southcottians alive for nearly 200 years.

More remarkable at the time was Joanna Southcott's assertion that she was about to give birth to Shiloh, the Prince of Peace and the male child destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation, chapter 18). She was by then, in 1814, 64 years old and was visited by large numbers of doctors as the phantom pregnancy proceeded. Her followers' hopes were unfounded and she died at the end of the year.

But they were undaunted by the non-appearance of Shiloh and set about arguing among themselves as to who was the true successor of the prophetess. Later the dissension hinged on the theological dispute as to whether Joanna actually gave birth to a spiritual child, or whether instead she would return and actually present the world with a baby.

From these arguments emerged several sects. In the north, the Christian Israelites were founded by John Wroe, while much later, their Chatham branch was taken over by James White and renamed the New and Latter House of Israel. He took the new title of James Jershom Jezreel, and with it the mystic letter J, which stood for Joanna (see JEZREEL). The 'orthodox' followers dwindled away until, by the end of the 19th century, there were only a handful left, mainly concentrated in Walworth, where they met under a railway arch.

An X-ray of Joanna Southcott's second sealed box reveals a pistol but no sealed writings

Harry Price Library

The Sealed Box

Yet their story was not over, for in 1902 Alice Seymour was attracted to the sect and began to read Joanna Southcott's writings. In 1909, she published 'The Express', which put forward the Southcottian doctrines again. This proved popular enough for her to set up the Panacea Society, whose activities were mainly concentrated upon getting the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, to open up Joanna Southcott's box. He refused to do this, but the publicity was enormous and finally the box was opened unofficially, in 1927, with no bishops present. It was found to contain a lottery ticket and a woman's nightcap.

Undeterred, the followers of Joanna Southcott claimed that this had been the wrong box and that they still retained the real one, which was full of sealed writings only waiting for the bishops to open it up. There is no likelihood of this happening, but it says much for the effect of Joanna's writing and for the appeal of the mystery of a locked chest, that even after the mammoth set-backs of the phantom pregnancy and the lottery ticket, there are still those who continue to look back to the prophetess.

JOHN SELWYN GUMMER

SOUTHEAST ASIA

THIS AREA has been the scene of a second flowering of several of the great religions of mankind, but unlike India and western Asia it has not been the birthplace of any religious movement powerful enough to shape the ideology of a civilization. Today Buddhism and, in a few regions, Islam dominate the cultural life of the countries of the Southeast Asian mainland, while Hinduism, though no longer practised to any great extent in its original form, has left its imprint on folk belief and ritual traditions.

Indian cultural influence spread into Southeast Asia as early as the beginning of the Christian era. It was characterized by the introduction of a way of life based on a specific philosophical and religious doctrine. Once accepted, the Hindu ideology provided a total pattern for the organization of the social and political system such as is exemplified by some of the ancient Hindu kingdoms of Southeast Asia, but Hinduism's tolerance of a variety of cultural forms facilitated the assimilation of numerous cultural and indigenous elements. Christianity reached Southeast Asia only during the colonial period, and has become established mainly among certain minority groups, such as some of the hill tribes of Burma and some communities in Vietnam.

Throughout Southeast Asia the historic religions introduced by colonists and missionaries from India and other countries have overlaid ancient indigenous religious traditions; but many of these traditions are still alive and are expressed in ritual practices, even among people who consider themselves Buddhists or Moslems. An analysis of the religious pattern peculiar to Southeast Asia must thus focus on the indigenous religious ideas and attitudes rather than on the doctrines imported from the homelands of such historic religions as Buddhism and Islam. These local religious phenomena are found among populations which have remained untouched by external influences, and in their comparative isolation preserve their traditional way of life. Typical of such populations are the hill tribes of Burma, Thailand and Laos as well as some of the simpler indigenous peoples of Malaya. The Lamets, a primitive hill tribe of Laos, for instance, exemplify by their beliefs in a great variety of supernatural beings, and their complex ritual practices, an ideological system unaffected by any of the higher religions. They share with other tribes the firm conviction that the human personality survives after death, and the ancestor cult occupies a central place in their religious thinking and acting. The Lamets believe that if they look after the spirits of their ancestors properly, they will enjoy good health and prosperity. These spirits are believed to live in the house, and if a new house is built they are formally invited to reside there. They are given sacrifices of buffalo and other animals when any change in the fortunes of a family occurs, such as at marriages, burials and adoptions. The greatest feast, combined with the largest economic expenditure, is directed towards the ancestor spirits, who in return for the sacrifices are expected to give happiness and success in all undertakings of the family. Thus the ancestor cult acts as an important factor in the life of a family, and contributes to a feeling of security.

Many of the religious practices of the Lamets and similar tribes are directed towards the increase of their food supply and specifically towards the prosperity of their crops. The Lamets attribute to the rice a 'soul' which is referred to by the same term as the soul of a human being. The soul of the rice is believed to exist not only in the grains but in the whole plant and indeed in a whole rice field. Numerous rites are concentrated on the rice, and many sacrifices are performed in order to protect the soul, which is the growing power of the rice. Such rites aim not only to increase the crop, but also to keep the harvested rice securely. To a certain degree the 'soul' of the rice is treated like a spirit and equated with the soul which enlivens man.

The coexistence and interpenetration of different religious ideas and practices in Burma may serve as an example of the religious scene in all those countries of Southeast Asia where old beliefs dovetail with the ideology of Buddhism. All tribal populations of Burma, as of other regions of Southeast Asia, share the belief in a multitude of spiritual beings. Among these are

personal spirits attached to individuals, family or house spirits, communal spirits, Nature spirits inhabiting forests, hills, streams and lakes, and the disembodied spirits of the deceased. Buddhist Burmese believe in spirits of the same types, and the Buddhists retained and reinterpreted many of the beliefs in supernatural beings held by their pre-Buddhist forbears.

Most prominent among these spirits are the *nats*. They are the objects of an elaborate cult which forms part of an organized religious system. The cult of the nats rivals Buddhism in its elaboration and ideological systematization. The term nat is used to describe supernatural beings of a great variety of types, but in general they are considered more powerful than humans and able to affect men for good or evil. Most distinctive among the nats is a group referred to as the 'Thirty-Seven Nats', each of whom possesses a distinct, historically or mythologically determined identity. They are conceived as the spirits of outstanding men and women, who suffered a violent death, and on account of this became nats. They are potentially dangerous and easily offended, and some of them personify qualities abhorred by Buddhism, such as sexual profligacy, aggression and drunkenness. The festivals connected with their cult express a general saturnalian spirit, and function as an outlet for the human drives frustrated by the puritanical aspects of Buddhism. The cult of the nats received the support of the ancient Burmese kings, and in modern days political leaders have continued to allocate government resources to the maintenance of nat shrines and the lavish performance of festivals in the honour of these spirits.

Distinct from the nats with malevolent tendencies are benevolent spiritual beings who protect men and accede to their prayers for help. Among them are the gods of the Buddhist pantheon, whose images stand on the platforms of many pagodas, where they enjoy the worship of those visiting the Buddhist sanctuaries. The assistance of these deities is invoked by ritual offerings of food consisting of fruits and other vegetarian items.

In Burma and other countries of Southeast Asia, there is also a widespread belief in ghosts and demons. Among the ghosts are the souls of those dead who were denied proper mortuary rites and therefore remain near houses and settlements and haunt the inhabitants. Since any soul is potentially dangerous, certain rites are performed to prevent it from remaining attached to the scene of its previous existence. In the case of government officials, for instance, it was customary to prepare a special document, signed by the superior officer of the deceased.

Picturepoint, London

Popperfoto

Picturepoint, London

In Southeast Asia the worship of a multitude of spirits dovetails with Buddhism: spirits are propitiated to obtain earthly benefits, while Buddhism is the means of obtaining spiritual goals *Top* Buddhist priest at Angkor Wat, Cambodia *Centre* Buddhist priests in the gallery of the Reclining Buddha Temple, Bangkok *Bottom* A family shrine in a Balinese village; the appeasement of spirits is still an important feature of everyday life

discharging the soul from all connections with his past position. Such discharge statements were often buried in the grave with the deceased.

Cannibal Ghosts

Ghosts are thought to be usually invisible, but to become visible in certain circumstances. Those claiming to have seen ghosts describe them as monstrous in size and terrifying in appearance. They are believed to feed on corpses, but to enjoy also the flesh of living persons whom they attack when particularly hungry or malevolent. Children are believed to be specially vulnerable to an attack by ghosts. Epidemics are attributed to the action of ghosts or evil spirits, and if an epidemic breaks out, special rites are performed to drive away the supernatural being responsible.

Ghosts and evil spirits can be controlled by practitioners of witchcraft, and those who obtain power over a spirit can compel him to do their bidding. The belief in witches is widespread, but the Burmese distinguish between those witches whose powers are innate and those whose powers are self-acquired. The former, who have become witches on account of evil deeds in a previous existence, are more powerful than those who have learned the art of sorcery. Not only can they cause illness and death, but they can transform themselves into animals and fly through the air. Sexual jealousy is a frequent motive for the malice of witches, for witches are not immune from falling in love, and they attack those who frustrate their desires.

To ward off the attacks of witches the Burmese employ various types of protection. They place trays of food outside the house, in the hope that the witch will eat of the food and desist from harming the inhabitants, or alternatively obtain protection by wearing amulets. If these preventive measures are ineffective and a witch has caused a person to fall ill, the only remedy is exorcism. Should this fail too, so that the patient dies, attempts are made to take revenge on the witch by enlisting a more powerful witch or sorcerer.

Although in Burma and in other Southeast Asian countries some intellectuals educated in Western ways of thinking are sceptical about the power of spirits and witches, the great majority of the population believes implicitly in supernatural beings of various types. This belief is in accordance with Buddhist doctrine, which acknowledges the reality not only of gods but also of harmful supernaturals. Buddhist cosmology postulates six realms, inhabited by gods, humans, demons, ghosts, infernal beings and animals, and those believing in the existence of such beings in their appropriate realm find no difficulty in accepting the idea of their influence on human affairs.

The Buddhist Way of Life

Although the belief in gods, spirits and ghosts is firmly rooted in the thought of the people of Southeast Asia, there exists a clear division between these supernatural cults and the Buddhist religion. Gods and spirits, and in Burma specifically the great nats, are propitiated in order to obtain benefits in the mundane sphere, while Buddhism is the exclusive means for attaining otherworldly goals. To avoid rebirth in one of the subhuman realms, to achieve rebirth in the celestial abode of the gods, or to escape altogether from the cycle of rebirth and achieve the state of ultimate liberation known as Nirvaua, are goals which can be achieved only by Buddhist means. Exertions in the worship of nats or other spirits have no influence on the attainment of these goals. Buddhist ritual and the cult of the nats of Burma, or equivalent supernaturals in other countries, appear thus as two distinct religious systems, though in popular practice there is some overlap, and Buddhist means are sometimes used to achieve worldly ends.

The values of Buddhism, however, clearly dominate the ethical outlook of the majority of the peoples of Southeast Asia. This is reflected in the veneration accorded to those whose conduct exemplifies the Buddhist way of life. The monk who has renounced the world and devotes his life to meditation and religious practices is highly respected by all sections of the population. To the people of the countries within its cultural influence Buddhism is the measure of all things and the criterion by which all ideas and all conduct are judged.

Not only the monks who have dedicated their lives to the pursuance of Buddhist ideals but also the ordinary laymen are conscious of the desirability of obtaining merit in the terms of Buddhist doctrine. Thus in Thailand, villagers regularly perform various acts with the specific intention of increasing their store of merit. Providing food for monks is the most common way to acquire merit, and as Thai monks are no longer wandering ascetics, but normally live in village monasteries, the monks do not go with their begging bowl from house to house, but are daily brought food by the village women. In the monastery the women serve the monks, watch them eat and receive the monks' blessings. The construction or the repair of a temple, the attendance of calendrical rites at a temple combined with the giving of gifts, and the strict observation of the principal Buddhist precepts, especially the avoidance of the taking of life and the excessive use of intoxicants, all rank highly as ways of acquiring merit.

Buddhism is the national religion not only of Burma and Thailand, but also of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. In all these countries, both of the main branches of Buddhism, known respectively as Mahayana and Theravada, flourished at various times over more than a millennium, but in recent centuries the Theravada ideology, which prevails also in Ceylon, has in most regions attained prominence at the expense of Mahayana sects. The function fulfilled by Buddhism in the countries of Southeast Asia resembles the role played by Christianity during a large part of the history of the West. As the state religion it is a symbol of national and social cohesion, and enjoys the protection of the king or the head of state. Religious and moral education is largely in the hands of the Buddhist clergy, and the monks have been the main agents in the spread of literacy. In these countries it is customary that at least once in their life all young men spend several months as novices in a monastery, and during that time they wear the saffron robe and lead the celibate life of monks. This practice tends to even out social differences, for all monks, from whatever social stratum, are regarded as equals and are subject to the same rules. Apart from the purely religious instruction given in the monasteries, much of the general education is imparted by members of the clergy, and the classical languages of the Buddhist scriptures, Pali and Sanskrit, occupy a position comparable to that which Latin used to occupy in the Christian world. In these countries the Buddhist 'Church' *(sangha)* also maintains such charitable institutions as hospitals and orphanages, for the emphasis on the importance of compassion and charity has always been a characteristic feature of Buddhist societies.

Even though Buddhism preaches detachment from worldly affairs, the members of the clergy as representatives of a state religion have sometimes been drawn into political controversies, and within the Buddhist Church there are two distinct trends. The more conservative elements advocate a certian aloofness from secular problems and seek to influence the faithful simply by their example of adhering strictly to the austere pattern of the traditional monastic life. Others wish to modernize the Buddhist community and to participate more actively in the secular life in order to make it into a more useful and positive force, and prevent its decline into insignificance. In all those Southeast Asian countries which have not fallen under the sway of Communism, Buddhism has so far retained a considerable vitality, and its ideological primacy is not seriously threatened. (See also BUDDHISM; SINHALESE BUDDHISM.)

There is only one country on the mainland of Southeast Asia where Buddhism has virtually disappeared from the scene. In Malaya, Buddhist sects were already active in the first centuries of our era, and in the 8th century the Mahayana doctrine was introduced from Sumatra. But with the coming of Islam in the 14th century, and its rapid acceptance by nearly the whole of the Malay population, Buddhism as an organized religion met its doom. Many of the indigenous folk beliefs and practices have survived, however, and the Malayan Moslem is no less inclined to believe in spirits, ghosts and the power of exorcists than the Buddhist of Burma or Thailand. Thus a common sub-stratum of archaic religious concepts and practices persists throughout Southeast Asia irrespective of the nature of the historic religion which their inhabitants officially profess.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

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Mansell Collection

***The Descent of the Holy Spirit,* by Pinturicchio; Acts, chapter 2, describes the experience of Christ's disciples at Pentecost, when they 'began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance'**

When the apostles met on the day of Pentecost, 'they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues': glossolalia has recurred on rare occasions ever since, and has greatly increased in recent years

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

SPEAKING IN TONGUES, or glossolalia, is best known as the practice of Pentecostalists (see PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT) but it is very much older than the Pentecostalist movement and, in recent years, the incidence of glossolalic experience within Christendom has extended far beyond the boundaries of the various Pentecostal denominations and sects. Although there is some evidence of glossolalia in the Old Testament and in ancient Egypt, and reports of it in China and among various tribes in Africa and Burma, it is in Christianity that speaking in tongues is best recorded and has been of most significance doctrinally.

Although the authenticity of the text is disputed by scholars, there is in the gospel of Mark (16.17) a promise concerning tongues. In Acts (chapter 2) the outbreak of speech in unknown tongues on the occasion of Pentecost is recorded. A case at Caesarea is reported in Acts 10.44–46, and the speaking in tongues at the baptism by the Holy Spirit in Acts 19.1–7. St Paul describes the gift of speaking in unknown tongues as a gift of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians, chapters 12 to 14, and specifies the circumstances of the use of this gift. Pentecostal writers usually also consider that the gifts of the Spirit are alluded to in I Thessalonians 5.19–20, Ephesians 5.18–20, and in the Old Testament in Joel (2.23 and 28–29) and Isaiah (28.9–11).

The nature and purpose of speaking in unknown tongues has been disputed, but Paul appears to have regarded the use of unknown tongues at Corinth as ecstatic utterance that was not to be understood

hanc turrē nembroth gigas construxit. Qui p confusionē ligua
rū migrauit ide ad plas. eosq; ignē colere docuit.

except by divine inspiration. On the other hand, the scriptures make clear that when the apostles spoke with tongues at Pentecost, the Jews who had gathered, and who spoke many different languages, all heard them each in his own native language. However, some have regarded that incident as a miracle of hearing rather than of speech.

The Church Fathers had relatively little to say of the phenomenon of glossolalia, and it may be that after the early development of Christianity speaking in tongues became disregarded, except among those whose Christianity was doubtful or heretical, the Montanists being a case in point (see MONTANISTS). Subsequently theologians believed that the gift of tongues was not a permanent endowment, but was a sign confirming the divine authority of the teachings of Christ, especially adapted for the proclamation of the gospel in the beginning, but thereafter withdrawn. Nor did they continue to expect evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit such as occurred at Ephesus (Acts, chapter 19).

As the Church became fully institutionalized, control of its practices led to a severe circumscription of inspiration. The view that generally prevailed, instanced by the stories of St Pachomius, St Hildegard and later St Francis Xavier, was that God might grant men a gift of tongues, which was in fact a gift of languages, for scholarly purposes or, more usually, for promulgating his word among the heathen. Unknown tongues were clearly much more suspect and more readily simulated, and increasingly were looked upon as dubious if not heretical: most of those who gave utterance of this kind were already recognizable as heretics from their teachings.

Tarrying Meetings

A considerable number of Protestant sects have experienced glossolalia at different times. The most celebrated are the Camisards, among whom a number of children suddenly broke out into speeches in eloquent French that was considered far beyond their natural capacity (see CAMISARDS). In the 1780s, Mother Ann Lee, who had become the leader of a small religious group in Lancashire known as Shakers (see SHAKERS), whose origin is traced to the missionary activities of refugee Camisards, spoke in a number of apparently recognizable languages.

During the Welsh Revival of 1904–5 a number of converts who spoke little or no Welsh suddenly broke out into eloquent prayer in that language, which impressed observers. One of those who was deeply influenced by what he saw in Wales was an Anglican clergyman, the Rev Alexander A. Boddy who, in 1907, as Rector of All Saints, Monkwearmouth, was a leading figure in England in introducing 'tarrying meetings' at which believers prayed together for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them and its manifestation by glossolalic utterance. The expectation of such experience had arisen principally in Holiness groups (see HOLINESS MOVEMENT) in the United States between 1901 and 1906, and had spread to Europe in that year, after T. B. Barratt, Methodist minister in Oslo, had been converted to the new movement, Pentecostalism.

The Pentecostal denominations, which trace their beginning to the American meetings at which Barratt experienced glossolalia, were not, however, the first Christian denominations to incorporate the gift of tongues in their regular worship. In 1830 a reputedly dying woman in Scotland was reported to have spoken in unknown tongues and to have instantly recovered her health. The news fired the interest of a group of devout Christians gathered round Edward Irving, a celebrated Presbyterian preacher, who soon after established his own Catholic and Apostolic Church, in which glossolalia became a dominant feature (see IRVING). For the Irvingites, tongues were a distinct sign of the nearness of the coming of Christ, and they devoted themselves to warning the established Churches of the need to accept Irvingite teaching and organization before it was too late. Tongues had also broken out spontaneously in a church in southern Germany, and this congregation joined the Catholic and Apostolic Church, which enjoyed rapid growth, in particular in the United States and Britain. Tongues continued as part of its devotional practice until, disappointed in the falsification of the prophecies on which the Church was based, the movement went into a decline in the 20th century.

Gift of the Spirit

Although the gift of tongues is officially accepted as part of Mormon belief, its practice was never of great importance in that movement. Only in contemporary Pentecostal churches is speaking in tongues a well-integrated, theologically justified and spiritually essential element of religious belief and practice. The need for the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was accepted by many Holiness believers before speaking in tongues had actually occurred, but the full theological justification for glossolalia, and the distinction of the different occasions of its occurrence were only gradually worked out. Inevitably, some differences in doctrine arose between the various groups who came to accept tongues as an authentic experience prompted by the Holy Spirit but there is, despite differences of detail, broad agreement among Pentecostal bodies in respect of these phenomena, which are indeed the determining factors in the distinctiveness and separation of Pentecostal groups from other evangelical fundamentalist Protestant bodies.

Pentecostalists distinguish between two main occasions and one subsidiary occasion when glossolalia might occur. The first of the two principal circumstances in which a

British Museum

William Sargant

Left **The Tower of Babel, French, 15th century: the original 'confusion of tongues', the many languages of humanity, was said to have resulted from man's attempt to ascend to heaven, while the gift of speaking in tongues is said to come from the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven**

Right **Worshipper believed to be possessed by the Spirit, in Barbados**

Giraudon

Illustration from a 15th century French Book of Hours, showing the Holy Spirit as a dove descending at Pentecost: St Peter described the event as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy

believer might speak in tongues is on receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is an event that occurs after conversion, sometimes months or even years after, although there is a tendency for it to be expected sooner rather than later. Its purpose is to confer power for God's service, and it is said to prepare men for deeper communion with God and better understanding of his gospel. Not all Pentecostalists believe that the baptism must be marked by glossolalia, although all agree that it is a charismatic experience of transcendent and miraculous character, producing extraordinary effects that are visible to the onlooker. In practice, it is almost always assumed that the baptism will be evidenced by glossolalic utterance.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an event that occurs only once to a believer, but after the baptism he may receive one or more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are listed in I Corinthians, chapter 12, as: the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge; faith; the gifts of healing; the working of miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits; various kinds of tongues; the interpretation of tongues. Without doubt the gift most frequently claimed by Pentecostalists is the gift of tongues, even though Paul regarded it as one of the lesser gifts. The gift is not at the disposal of the recipient, so contemporary Pentecostals insist: it is a gift to the Church rather than to the individual, and it should be used as the Holy Spirit directs.

Following St Paul, the large Pentecostal denominations expect there to be only two, or at most three, speakers in tongues at any one meeting. It is said that many who receive messages in tongues may never be anointed to speak forth, and it is also maintained that the Spirit is always 'subject' and need never cause a speaker to burst forth in tongues when someone else is speaking or, indeed, at an inopportune moment in the meeting. Insistence on this precept has, of course, improved the order and decorousness of Pentecostal meetings. The glossolalia occurring at the baptism of the Holy Spirit requires no interpretation, but at other times Pentecostalists maintain that when someone uses the gift of tongues there should be an interpretation from a person with this gift who is inspired by the Spirit to speak. The interpreter must be the same for all messages received in one meeting, and may be one of those who has spoken in tongues.

In the early days of Pentecostalism, before these precepts were well established, speaking in tongues was much more frequent in the meetings than (at least in the larger denominations) it is now, and often several spoke in tongues simultaneously. In the early days some used the claim to Holy Spirit inspiration to work off spites, to upbraid rivals, and to acquire influence in Church affairs. Pentecostals have increasingly come to stress that messages given in tongues must be in confirmation of the Bible, and today the interpretations often tend to be exhortatory messages, quoting or paraphrasing passages of scripture.

The third, and very much the least important, use of glossolalia is in the devotional exercise known as 'singing in the Spirit', which is merely a particular way in which God may be praised quietly in public, or in private, by a believer who has the gift of tongues. This use of tongues requires no interpretation. Pentecostalists acknowledge that the gift of tongues can be easily simulated, and it has become a general and informal assumption that the ministers of the Pentecostal churches possess the gift of the discernment of spirits, by which they are enabled to distinguish genuine from doubtful gifts, and on the authority of which they may counsel individuals to desist.

The Lost and the Last

In general, it is believed that the unknown tongues given to believers are all actual languages of some people who have lived on earth, even though they may be no longer spoken. Pentecostal writers claim many occasions when foreigners have recognized their own language spoken perfectly by someone speaking under the power of the Holy Spirit, but such demonstrations of the miraculous cannot, of course, be prearranged. The theoretical justification for glossolalia is not its possible practical use, but simply that God wishes to be praised in all languages, and that it is spiritually beneficial for man to have the experience.

There is no obvious or pre-ordained form for glossolalic utterance. Many speakers in unknown tongues do not appear to be speaking a language, but rather to be uttering a few repeated syllables, often in a rhythmic and lilting way. Many of those who speak in tongues are people whose powers of articulation in ordinary speech are rather limited, and such evidence as is available suggests that women are more frequent speakers in tongues than men.

Those who have been converted to the modern Pentecostal movement come very largely from the least educated sections of the population, and some Pentecostal writers have boasted that their fellow religionists are 'the lowest, the least, the lost and the last' among men. On the other hand, the Irvingite congregations of the last century were drawn much more extensively from the middle and upper classes. Glossolalia demands an atmosphere of considerable emotional freedom, and is itself a means by which inhibitions are reduced.

The incidence of glossolalia has probably very much increased during the last decade, with the development of a large number of informal prayer meetings by small groups of orthodox Christians who have become convinced of the authenticity and desirability of glossolalic experience. This 'charismatic movement' is now well organized, and its membership includes priests and prominent laymen from the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches and from the major Protestant denominations. Among its well established organizations is the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, but there are also many small groups in which speaking with tongues occurs.

BRYAN WILSON

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Spectre

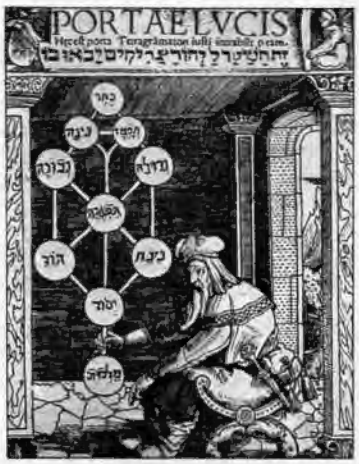
From Latin *spectrum*, 'vision', a ghost or apparition, especially one which is frightening: the Spectre of the Brocken is a huge shadow, often accompanied by rings of coloured light, cast by an observer on top of a hill on the upper surfaces of clouds which are below him.

See GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

Spell

A word, set of words or procedure, frequently of a relatively minor kind, believed to have magical effect: an enchantment, as in the case of a person or country which has been placed under a spell.

See INCANTATION; PSYCHIC ATTACK.



Layton-Sun

Sphere

One of the hollow, transparent, concentric globes formerly believed to revolve round the earth, carrying with them the sun, moon and planets; their motion was thought to produce a harmonious sound, the 'music of the spheres'; allotting one sphere to the Prime Mover, the fixed stars, and each of the seven planets, gave a total of nine, with the earth at the centre; or the earth itself could be allntted a sphere, making ten, as in the Cabala.

See CABALA; MAGIC.

Sphinx

Hybrid creature combining human and animal parts, typically a lion's body and the head of a man (or sometimes of a hawk or ram): pairs or avenues of sphinxes guarded the entrances to palaces, temples and tombs in Egypt; the Great Sphinx is a colossal image near the pyramids of Giza; in Greek mythology, the woman-headed Sphinx of Thebes strangled passers-by when they failed to solve the riddle she put to them.

See RIDDLES.

SPIDER

'WILL YOU come into my parlour, said the spider to the fly?'. The spider inevitably suggests an evil arch-intriguer, weaving a web of duplicity in which fragile innocence is entrapped, or a blood-sucking money-lender who entangles the unwary borrower in his toils. In fact, the spider is as much preyed on as predator, providing food for lizards, wasps and other foes, and it is ironic that the fly, a creature of dirt and disease, should be equated with the innocent victim who is ensnared.

Some people have a deep loathing of spiders and could not bear to touch one, but although the spider can be a type of evil and betrayal, and so of Satan, it has also been seen as a model of industry and wisdom, and a spider motif engraved on a precious stone makes a talisman which is supposed to confer foresight on the wearer.

Attitudes to spiders vary considerably, in fact. In West African and West Indian folklore, there is a great body of stories about Ananse, or Anansi, a spider who is a hero and trickster of infinite cunning and resource, and in some cases the Creator of the world. In European lore the spider spun a web to conceal the child Jesus from his enemies, and spiders also saved the lives of Mohammed and Frederick the Great. The famous story of Robert the Bruce and the spider points the moral that faith and persistence can bring victory out of defeat. Or the spider's web can be regarded as the home of the eternal weaver of illusions, and the spider which spins and kills, creates and destroys, can symbolize the perpetual alternation of forces on which life depends for its precarious balance.

The cross on the back of the common garden spider has helped to preserve it from the hostility of mankind, and the spider, like the toad, has played an important part in the folklore of medicine, since both creatures were believed to contain within their bodies a powerful health-giving stone. The 17th century antiquarian Elias Ashmole claimed to have cured himself of the ague by suspending three spiders around his neck. To relieve whooping cough it was once customary to wrap a spider in raisin

2654

Victoria and Albert Museum

Left and above **'Earth Spider making magic in the palace of Raiko', a triptych by Kuniyoshi: the warrior Raiko is lying sick while his guards are playing *go* and the Earth Spider marshals its hordes of goblins above them; the picture was a satire on contemporary politicians**

or butter, or shut one in a walnut shell, the malady fading away as the spider died. Spider's web was used as a bandage for wounds and was supposed to cure warts.

On the other hand, in Suffolk in 1645, an accused witch named Mirabel Bedford admitted possessing a familiar imp in the form of a spider called Joan. In another trial, one of the accused defended himself with such eloquence as almost to sway the court in his favour, until the prosecutor noticed a spider crawling close to the prisoner's lips and cried out warningly, 'See who prompts him'. The prisoner was sentenced to death.

Spider's venom was once in demand as poison, and in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, Leontes remarks, 'There may be in the cup a spider steeped'. The bite or sting of the tarantula spider was supposed to cause Tarantism, a hysterical disease characterized by an extreme impulse to dance, and the Italian Tarantella was a wild dance which was thought to be the only cure for it.

The golden money spider, the living symbol of a gold coin, confers riches on anyone upon whose body it runs, and if caught and put in the pocket ensures plenty of ready cash, or a new suit of clothes. The superstition is current in Norfolk that a money spider suspended over the head is a charm for winning the football pools.

'If you would live and thrive, let a spider run alive' is an old saying. In Britain to kill a spider brings unwanted rain, and in Scotland and the West Indies the spider-killer is sure to break his crockery or his wine glasses before the day is out. The appearance of numerous spiders is a sign of much rain. A long thread of spider's web hanging from a tree or a beam symbolizes the ladder or rope by which you can ascend to heaven, and if you should find a web inscribed with your initials near the door of your house, it will bring you luck as long as you live there.

ERIC MAPLE

Spinning

Activity symbolically connected with fate; in classical mythology the three Fates spin the thread of each man's life, weave it, and sever it; the fact that spiders spin webs to catch flies has contributed to their folklore and symbolism.

See FATE; SPIDER.

Spirit

Related to Latin *spirare*, 'to breathe', the animating principle in living things, contrasted with the body or matter: a being or intelligence which has no earthly body, or is separated from it, such as an angel, demon, fairy, ghost or poltergeist: sometimes equivalent to 'soul', or sometimes distinguished from it, when man is said to be made of body, soul (roughly, emotions and feelings) and spirit (mental faculties).

See ANIMISM; BREATH; GHOSTS; GUARDIAN SPIRITS; POLTERGEISTS; SHAMAN; SOUL; SPIRITUALISM.

SPIRITUALISM

Offering man a new view of the universe and proof of survival after death, Spiritualist beliefs derive from communications believed to emanate from the spirits of the dead

THE TERM Spiritualism has been used to refer to two distinct types of ideas. In the 18th and 19th centuries it referred to those philosophical theories which held that spirit was the ultimate reality. Today the term is used to denote a movement which is characterized by two major beliefs; that the human personality, in some form, survives the death of the body, and secondly that it is possible to communicate with the spirits of the dead. During the 19th century the critics and opponents of modern Spiritualism used the word Spiritism to describe the movement.

A belief in spirits is not restricted to modern Spiritualists, indeed as the anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor suggested in his study of *Primitive Culture* (1871), a belief in spirits is a universal feature of human societies (see ANIMISM). This is linked with a belief in life after death and that spirits may be contacted by the living. Amongst the earliest forms of religious specialists were the shamans and spirit mediums who in different ways were concerned with the contact between the 'spirit' world and the human world (see PRIESTS: SHAMAN).

It has been claimed that Christianity itself originated as a 'spiritualist' movement and that Jesus himself was a highly-developed medium. Spiritualists have argued that such an interpretation enables us to understand the 'miraculous' elements in the biblical accounts of the life of Jesus. There is also evidence which indicates that mediumship was practised in the early Christian Church, but it had certainly ceased to be a regular feature of Christian practice before the 3rd century AD, although the Church continued to recognize the possibility of occasional communications with saints and angels.

The Reformation led to what the sociologist Max Weber described as 'disenchantment', a growing disbelief in the supernatural associated with the rise of rationalism and modern science. By the 18th century rationalism was triumphant amongst the educated classes in Western Europe but while rationalism was still growing, a reaction against the extreme forms of materialism was already appearing. Within Christianity this reaction took the form of the development of mystical movements, such as the Quakers and the Quietists, and of 'enthusiastic' movements such as Methodism. But the sources of modern Spiritualism are to be found outside the Christian tradition, in the work of the alchemists, in the theories of Paracelsus, of Franz Mesmer and Emmanuel Swedenborg (see ALCHEMY; MAGNETISM; MESMER; PARACELSUS; SWEDENBORG), in ideas derived from eastern religions and from contact with the shamanistic practices of the North American Indians.

The modern Spiritualist movement arose in America in 1848 as a result of the publicity given to the events that occurred in the home of the Fox family in Hydesville, a small hamlet in New York state. The Fox family moved into the house in December 1847, and for the next three months they were disturbed by strange noises that frequently kept them awake at night. The family consisted of John Fox, his wife and two young daughters, Margaretta and Kate. On Friday 31 March 1848 the family retired to bed early. Mrs Fox described the events of that night in the following statement:

> It was very early when we went to bed on this night – hardly dark. I had been so broken of rest I was almost sick – I had just lain down when it commenced as usual – the children, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the rapping, and tried to make similar sounds by snapping their fingers.
>
> My youngest child, Cathie, said: 'Mr Splitfoot, do as I do', clapping her hands. The sound instantly followed her with the same number of raps. When she stopped the sound ceased for a short time.
>
> Then Margaretta said, in sport: 'Now do just as I do. Count one, two, three, four, striking one hand against the other at the same time' – and the raps came as before. She was afraid to repeat them.
>
> I then thought I could put a test that no one in the place could answer. I asked the 'noise' to rap my different children's ages successively.
>
> Instantly, each one of my children's ages was given correctly, pausing between them sufficiently long enough to individualise them until the seventh – at which a longer pause was made, and then three more emphatic raps were given, corresponding to the age of the little one that died, which was my youngest child.
>
> I then asked: 'Is this a human being that answers my questions correctly?'
>
> There was no rap.
>
> I asked: 'Is it a spirit? If it is, make two raps.'
>
> Two sounds were given as soon as the request was made.

Left **The Fox sisters, who in 1848 claimed to have discovered a way of communicating with the spirit of a dead man: the intense interest this aroused was the starting point of the modern Spiritualist movement** ***Right*** **That the dead can communicate with the living is, of course, a very old belief: a ghost warns of approaching doom in this illustration from** ***The Astrologer of the 19th century***

British Museum

A medium and her spirit guide, a statue by G. H. Paulin. The key role in the Spiritualist movement is played by the medium, through whom the spirit world communicates with the material world: in some cases messages from the dead come through a spirit 'guide' or 'control' whose personality temporarily replaces the medium's normal personality, and whose function is to protect the medium and to regulate the attempts made by the departed to communicate through her

John Moses

In this way Mrs Fox and her daughters believed they had discovered a means of communication with a spirit who claimed to have been murdered in the house. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his *History of Spiritualism* (1926) says that subsequent excavations on the site disclosed human remains.

The Fox family were now plagued not only by spirit noises, but by sensation seekers, and Mrs Fox and the girls went to live with her married daughter in Rochester. Their psychic abilities continued and around them developed the first Spiritualist circle. In 1849 the girls gave a first public demonstration in Rochester and followed this up with demonstrations in many other towns in the eastern states. Their activities created a sensation in the popular Press, and their popularity was not affected by pronouncements made by three professors from Buffalo University, following an investigation in 1851, that the raps were produced by movements of the knee-joints, or by the subsequent alleged confession by Kate that they were produced by cracking her toes.

'Spirit rapping' rapidly became a craze in the United States, but in the early stages Spiritualism was as much a popular scientific movement as a religious movement. People who had attended a mediumistic demonstration, or had read about such events, held seances in their own homes attended by relations and friends. They were often motivated by curiosity and the spirit of scientific enquiry. They met in an attempt to test the claims of Spiritualists, they continued to meet if they felt that such claims were being confirmed by their experiences within the circle, and it was on the basis of such successful groups that permanent organizations, societies and churches began to develop.

The National Union

The Spiritualist movement was introduced to Britain in 1852 when Mrs Hayden, an American medium, gave demonstrations. She was followed by other mediums and, as in America, a short-lived craze swept the country. The early days in Britain were similar to those in America, the movement of that period consisting of 'home circles', either of friends who met to experiment or of followers who gathered round a successful medium.

The visits of D. D. Home to Britain in

Non-Christian Spiritualists frequently held that Spiritualism was a new religion which would ultimately replace Christianity, while others saw Spiritualism as the basis of all religion

the 1850s and '60s created considerable interest. Home was probably the most remarkable medium of the 19th century and unlike most well-known mediums was never detected committing a fraudulent act (see HOME). There were only two known professional mediums in London as late as 1867, though there were many private mediums in that period, including the infant prodigy of mediumship, Master Willie Turketine.

During the 1860s Spiritualist societies began to appear, as the more successful circles developed organizations. These first appeared in London and in the Keighley area of Yorkshire, which formed the two centres from which Spiritualism spread. Outside London the movement in the second half of the 19th century was most successful in the industrial towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and in the mining areas of the north-east. The first national organization, the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists, was formed in 1865 at a meeting held at Darlington. The Progressive Spiritualists were attacked by more conventional Spiritualists for being 'anti-Christian' and their organization collapsed in 1868.

At this time many Spiritualists feared the development of organizations which they held would destroy the freedom and spontaneity which were essential to the movement, and would lead to the growth of bureaucracy and oligarchy. A writer of the period expressed these feelings by pointing out that the movement would become 'controlled by the lower stratum of minds – minds that live and work almost solely for the interests of organizations.'

In spite of misgivings of this sort a further attempt to establish a national organization in 1873 led to the rise of the British National Association of Spiritualists. It consisted mainly of Spiritualists from the London area and was gradually forced to recognize its failure to acquire national status. In 1883 it was re-constituted as the London Spiritualist Alliance.

In the 1870s and '80s local Spiritualist societies in many areas began to associate with each other for mutual benefit and to form district organizations. The first of these, the Lancashire Association, was formed in 1875, and by 1912 there were fifteen of these associations. The first effective national organization was formed in 1890; the Spiritualists' National Federation was a federation of local churches which made rapid progress mainly in the north and by 1896 had 58 societies affiliated to it. In order to enable the movement to obtain legal status the Federation was re-constituted as the Spiritualists' National Union Ltd in 1902, and this remains the largest organization of Spiritualists in Britain.

In Britain the Spiritualist movement grew most rapidly in the period between the two World Wars, a period in which there was no lack of able mediums, including Rudi Schneider and Mrs Leonard (see LEONARD; SCHNEIDER BROTHERS), and the movement was also greatly assisted by the work of three able proponents, none of whom seem to have had any psychic gift themselves. Sir Oliver Lodge was an eminent scientist whose account of communications with his son, who had been killed in the First World War, was published under the title of *Raymond* in 1916. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, then at the height of his fame as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was converted in 1917 and until his death in 1930 worked ceaselessly to promote Spiritualism (see DOYLE). Hannen Swaffer set out to investigate Spiritualism for *The People*, of which he was the editor. In the course of his investigations, Swaffer believed that he had received evidence of the survival of his old 'chief' – Lord Northcliffe. He organized a public meeting at the Queens Hall in January 1925 to announce his conversion. Swaffer became an active protagonist and it was through the medium in Swaffer's private circle that the messages of the guide named Silver Birch were communicated.

Harry Price Library

Photograph by A. Martin, of Denver, Colorado, showing Houdini, the famous escape artist and fierce opponent of Spiritualist mediums, with spirit forms

Science or Religion

Although the Spiritualist movement seems to have arisen out of a semi-scientific curiosity about the nature of 'psychic phenomena', religious aspects began to appear at a very early date. The idea of communication with spirits is readily associated with religious concepts, and since many early Spiritualists were searching for a system of belief to replace Christianity they quickly seized on the 'messages' that were given by spirits through the mediums, for although these were often evidence intended to prove survival, many spirits could not resist the temptation to preach their philosophy. Spiritualist meetings also began to develop a ritual which included music, hymn singing, prayer and Bible reading. Such ritual is claimed to create an atmosphere conducive to the appearance of psychic phenomena and to the prevention of the disruption of the seance by evil spirits. By the 1870s many societies were adopting the title of churches.

Non-Christian Spiritualists frequently held that Spiritualism was a new religion which would ultimately replace Christianity, while others saw Spiritualism as the basis of all religion. The Christian Churches as a whole attacked Spiritualism, arguing that communication with the dead was forbidden by the authority of the Bible, and that the spirit communicators were evil entities dispatched by the Devil to mislead men. The Roman Catholic Church has maintained this

The Mediumship of W. S. Moses

Mr. Moses himself, in his published writings, was wont to attach considerable importance to the evidence for the doctrines of Spiritualism afforded by the communications, ostensibly from the spirits of deceased persons, received through his mediumship. Of communicators who thus claimed to furnish definite proof of their identity, Mr. Myers, who has collected the evidence under this head in a convenient form, reckons thirty-eight in all. Of these thirty-eight persons some had been known in life to Moses himself or to other members of the circle; some, such as Bishop Wilberforce, Swedenborg, or President Garfield, were historical personages; yet others were individuals of no special eminence, and without any point of contact with Mr. Moses or his circle.

In one important particular the evidence of identity in these cases is superior to that generally furnished through so-called clairvoyant mediums. In marked contrast to the vague generalities which commonly pass for tests, Mr. Moses' spirits were prodigal of names, dates, and other concrete facts which lend themselves to ready verification. Here is an example: "On February 28th, 1874, a spirit came by raps and gave the name 'Rosamira'. She said that she died at Torquay on January 10th, 1874, and that she had lived at Kilburn. She stated that her husband's name was 'Lancaster' "; and added later that his christian name was "Ben". As a matter of fact the whole of these particulars, given at the séance at the end of February, are to be found in the notice of the death in the *Daily Telegraph* of January 15th preceding.

The case is typical. Mr. Moses' spirits habitually furnished accurate obituaries, or gave such other particulars of their lives as could be gathered from the daily papers, from published biographies, or from the *Annual Register* and other works of reference.

F. Podmore *Modern Spiritualism*

attitude, as have such sects as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Pentecostal movement, but the 'Free Churches' and the Anglicans have moved towards a more tolerant position, reflected in the establishment of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study in 1953. Christian Spiritualists have always argued that they were attempting to restore to the Church those practices which were commonly accepted by the early Christians.

Spiritualists were subjected not only to verbal attack by the Churches, the Press and rationalists, but to legal prosecution up to 1951, with the passing of the Fraudulent Mediums Act. As late as 1945 a Spiritualist church at Redhill had closed as a result of threats of prosecution. In the previous year the famous medium Helen Duncan had heen sentenced to imprisonment for nine months. Under earlier acts the professional practice of mediumship (even if admitted to be genuine) could be construed as illegal, but the new act made it necessary for the prosecution to prove that fraud had been committed, thus implicitly accepting that genuine mediumship was a possibility.

One of the main sources of conflict within the movement has centred around the acceptance of Christian teachings. While accepting a broadly religious basis, the Spiritualists' National Union has consistently refused to adopt specifically Christian doctrine. After the failure in 1928 of Conan Doyle's attempt to convert the S.N.U. to Christianity and of a number of attempts to organize Christian Spiritualists, the medium Winifred Moyes established the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League in 1931. The League was an immediate success and by 1935 it had 580 affiliated churches.

Until the middle of the 20th century Britain and the U.S.A. were the main centres of Spiritualism. In recent years the movement has grown most rapidly in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, where there are said to he at least two million Spiritualists. The movement in Brazil is divided into two broad groups, the Western type based on the teaching of Kardec and largely supported by the middle-class, and native Spiritualism or Spiritism which is derived largely from African and American-Indian influences and is practised mainly by the poor (see SOUTH AMERICA).

The Seven Principles

Spiritualism is a movement and not an organization. It consists not only of international and national associations but of many independent local societies and of numerous 'home circles' and individuals who are unattached to any formal organization. You do not have to join any organization to be a Spiritualist. There is no agreement on a Spiritualist creed of beliefs, beyond the two broad beliefs already mentioned. Spiritualist beliefs are the result of messages received from the spirits through a medium, and the teachings of the spirits display wide differences. Spiritualists explain that spirits are human beings who have survived death; transition to the afterlife does not immediately make a man wise, he takes with him the ideas he had in life, and continues to hold to these beliefs at least during his stay in the lower planes of the afterlife. Spirits who have moved upwards after death, to increasingly high planes of existence, find it more difficult to communicate through mediums, so that communications usually come from the recently dead and those who have made little progress in the afterlife. It is not surprising therefore to find a wide diversity of belief held by Spiritualists. In Europe and Latin America, where the teachings of the French Spiritualist Alan Kardec predominate, most Spiritualists believe in reincarnation, in England and America few Spiritualists do. Some Spiritualists are agnostic, since there appears to be no greater proof of the existence of God in the lowest levels of the spirit world than on earth.

If there is no Spiritualist creed neither is there a Spiritualist bible. The most widely accepted book is *Spirit Teachings*, a series of communications from the spirit world transmitted through the automatic writing mediumship of Rev W. Stainton Moses (see AUTOMATIC ART).

A widely accepted credal statement is to be found in the Seven Principles subscribed to by all members of the Spiritualists' National Union, which were derived from a spirit communication received through the medium Emma Hardinge-Britten. The principles are: the fatherhood of God; the brotherhood of man; the communion of spirits and the ministry of angels; the continuous existence of the human soul; personal responsibility; compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done on earth; eternal progress open to every human soul.

The S.N.U., which is the largest of the two national organizations in Britain, has about 460 affiliated churches with some 15,000 members and represents the non-Christian element in Spiritualism. The other organization, the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League, with over 200 churches represents the specifically Christian influence in the Spiritualist movement. There are also many churches not affiliated to either of these organizations offering a variety of beliefs and practices.

While it is difficult to generalize about Spiritualist beliefs, most Spiritualists in Britain and America would probably accept the following beliefs. Man is an immortal being composed of two elements, a body and a soul or spirit, and on death the spirit leaves the body and enters a phase of existence in a 'spiritual plane'. The universe consists of seven such planes of existence, of which the material (earth) is the lowest. After death most souls awake into the second plane, known to many as the Summerland, a level of existence in which life is not unlike that on earth except for the absence of pain and suffering. In this plane, as on earth, each soul has the opportunity for spiritual development which opens up the possibility of ascent to high planes.

Every individual has the opportunity of rising through the ascending order of spiritual levels until he reaches the seventh heaven, in which he will finally be united with God and all the great souls who have preceded him. Great souls such as Jesus are said to have risen directly to the seventh heaven, but just as goodness leads to spiritual advancement, so evil leads to decline; men are not punished, they punish themselves by opting for a course of action which prevents their spiritual development.

Spiritualism aroused violent antagonism and criticism, concentrating particularly on the physical phenomena occurring at seances, which opponents claimed were faked: the famous conjurer J. N. Maskelyne put on long-running shows (*above*) to demonstrate his ability to duplicate Spiritualist phenomena *Below* A 'rapping hand', used at fraudulent seances and probably controlled pneumatically through rubber tubing

Between the First and Second Parts of the Entertainment

MR. CHARLES WOODMAN

Will introduce his wonderful Musical Novelties.

Exposition of Spiritualism (so-called)

LIGHT AND DARK SEANCE EXTRAORDINARY.

Mr MASKELYNE briefly opens the subject, requests the audience to elect a Committee to examine the Cabinet, the Stage, and everything that may be considered auxiliary in producing the manifestations.

After the light in the Hall has been subdued the spiritualists' most favourite spirit-form of

JOHN KING,

appears rising from the stage, and distributes amongst the audience, flowers from the spirit garden.

SELF-LEVITATION AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS.

MR COOKE FLOATS INTO THE HALL, TAKING WITH HIM THE CABINET IN WHICH HE IS SECURED.

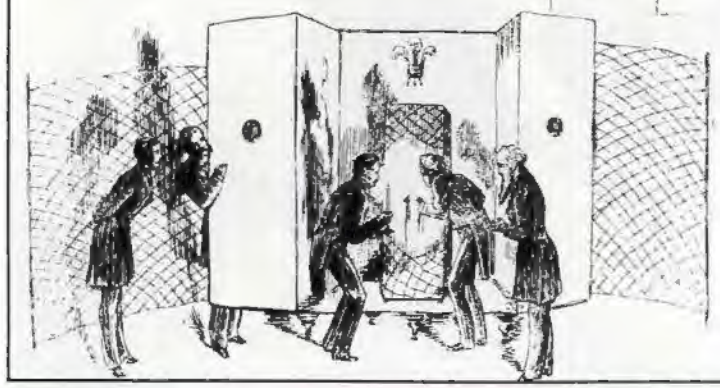
Luminous musical instruments are distinctly seen moving about the room and the audience generally participate in the peculiar pleasures of the Dark Seance.

ZOE!

In preparation, and shortly to be presented. Mr MASKELYNE'S new Writing and Sketching Automaton, ZOE, Psycho's mysterious lady companion.

Price 6d.—A Book containing a full description of the Entertainment, and brief biography of Mr MASKELYNE, can be had in the Hall.

Price 1s.—Spiritualism (Raps for the Rappers), being a short account of the Rise and Progress of Modern Spiritualism, with exposures of the frauds of so-called Spirit Media, by JOHN NEVIL MASKELYNE, can also be obtained of the attendants.



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Fauteuils, 5s. Stalls, 3s. Area, 2s. Balcony, 1s.

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Messrs. MASKELYNE & COOKE had the distinguished honour of a Royal Command to perform before H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, at Sandringham, on Monday, January 11th, 1875.

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John Moss

John Moss

Evil men find themselves after death in a condition of limbo in which they perceive themselves as alone and lost in a fog, but this situation is not irretrievable. Through remorse and repentance they may find their way back to the light. Some Spiritualist societies organize 'rescue circles' with the aim of contacting and aiding such lost souls, and Lord Dowding's book *The Dark Star* (1951) contains graphic accounts of the work of these circles.

Those who are over-attached to earthly things may find themselves unable after death to leave the material world. Such 'earthbound' spirits may be perceived by those who have psychic abilities as ghosts, but these may also free themselves from their attachments and develop spiritually.

Many Spiritualists also believe that animals have souls and are active in anti-vivisection and other animal welfare movements. Some believe that the spiritual universe is not only inhabited by human spirits but by many spirits who have never been incarnated as humans, ranging from poltergeists and earth elementals, such as fairies, to cosmic powers of good and evil, angels and demons.

Spirit and Matter

Spiritualists' beliefs are derived from communication with the spirit world and such communication may take any one of a number of forms. The spirits may speak directly through the medium who is in trance, or the medium may use his own voice to convey the message. In the case of automatic writing the medium's hand is controlled by the 'spirit', and the ouija board is a device which facilitates this form of communication (see OUIJA BOARDS). Other methods (far less common today) are the raps (used by the Fox sisters) and slate writing, a popular Victorian technique, both of which methods were open to fraud. Clairvoyance and clairaudience in which the medium sees, hears, or senses information which he attempts to transmit to the sitter are the most common forms of mediumship.

From the early days Spiritualism has involved phenomena in which material objects have been moved by what many have claimed to be supernatural forces. As early as 1849 there is the record of a table

Left and above **A medium in trance: though fraudulent mediums flourished in the earlier days of the Spiritualist movement, there have always been genuine mediums, and Spiritualists are convinced that communications coming through them constitute conclusive proof that human beings survive death**

being levitated six inches. The first instance of the levitation of a human being, a Mr Gordon, was reported in the journal *Spirit World* in February 1851. Materialization of a spirit and the 'apport' or mysterious appearance of a physical object were also early forms of manifestations. At some seances coloured lights appeared which floated round the room, and at others musical instruments were mysteriously played.

Spirit photography was first practised by William Mumler, a Boston photographer, in 1862, but his work was soon exposed as fraudulent. Frederick Hudson was the first spirit photographer in Britain, but he was exposed by the well-known Spiritualist writer W. H. Harrison in *The Spiritualist* in 1872. The most famous spirit photographer was William Hope (died 1933) who worked with the Crewe circle: his work was also exposed, but he found a faithful champion in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

There appears to have been a decline in physical mediumship since the Second World War, which cynics have attributed to the greater ease of detecting fraud by modern scientific methods. From the first, Spiritualists practised 'spirit healing' and this has become an increasingly important part of their work.

The key role in the Spiritualist movement is played by the medium, who is quite literally the medium through which the 'spirit world' communicates with the material world. In theory all men are potential mediums, but it is clear that while some people are endowed with psychic abilities which may appear spontaneously, others require years of training before they can make use of their abilities. Many of the most gifted mediums report that they had spontaneous psychic experiences when they were children. The claims of Spiritualists have frequently been investigated by critics and during the 19th century psychic phenomena were subjected to rigorous study by a series of eminent scientists. Some were convinced that not all Spiritualist manifestations could be explained by theories of fraud or illusion, but in spite of a considerable body of accumulated evidence most scientists have remained unconvinced by the Spiritualist interpretation.

If psychic phenomena are a universal feature of human life, why did the modern Spiritualist movement arise in the U.S.A. and Britain in the 19th century? Sociologists attempt to explain the rise (or decline) of social movements in terms of the conditions affecting the lives of the members of a society, in terms of the processes going on within the society and of the changes in the structure of that society.

The Sociology of Spiritualism

Modern Spiritualism is one of a particular type of religious movements known to sociologists as cults. Such movements are characterized by two general features; they are outside the major religious tradition of the society in which they originate (as already mentioned, Spiritualism owes more to non-Christian than to Christian sources), and they are attempts to solve the problems of individuals, particularly those problems that arise out of man's attempts to understand the world in which he lives, to give meaning to his life and to experiences of a psychic or mystical nature. Spiritualism certainly offers man a new view of the universe and man's place in it and is particularly concerned with the place of psychic experiences in human life.

Cults seem to arise in the greatest profusion, and to gain the most adherents, when a society is disorganized by rapid changes. In such circumstances the old religious traditions are challenged and men find the old views of life no longer satisfying. American society in the middle of the 19th century was going through a period of particularly rapid change as the result of the influx of emigrants, mainly from Europe, as well as the early effects of the industrial revolution. In Britain the industrial revolution was changing the traditional way of life; in particular this was the period of rapid urban expansion, and Spiritualism was from the first predominantly an urban religion.

The rationalism of the 18th century intellectual was beginning to spread more widely through society and following such publicists as Thomas Paine men began to demand proof of religious claims. While not claiming to offer proof of the existence of God, Spiritualism did claim to provide proof of the survival of the human soul beyond death.

Many of the early adherents to Spiritualism were agnostics or atheists, men who had ceased to find Christianity credible but who nevertheless sought a philosophy of life which went beyond scientific materialism while remaining consistent with science. Spiritualism was at first closely connected with psychical research though the two movements gradually drifted apart. In common with many modern cults, such as the Flying Saucer movement, Spiritualism started as an attempt to study phenomena which were not being seriously studied by orthodox science and indeed which did not 'fit' the established scientific theories of the time. In each case the movements developed into religions, because they offered solutions which were not only intellectually but emotionally satisfactory to certain key problems in the lives of individuals. The 19th century was obsessed with death but many people were losing faith in the Christian explanation, as a result of the growth of belief in science. Death was a major source of tension in the lives of such persons, who were not satisfied with faith but needed proof of the survival of the soul after death. Spiritualism was attractive because it offered evidence of survival.

It was during the First World War and in the following years that the movement experienced its greatest growth, thus reflecting the tension created by the high death rate. In the second half of the 20th century death has ceased to be such an obsession and many people are more concerned with a search for the meaning of life; this has meant on the one hand that the Spiritualist movement has ceased to grow, and on the other that within the movement there is less concern with proofs of survival and a greater interest in the philosophy of Spiritualism.

(See also MEDIUMS; PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.)

G. K. NELSON

FURTHER READING: R. Brandon, *The Spiritualists* (Prometheus Books, 1984); S. Brown, *The Heyday of Spiritualism* (Hawthorn, 1971); William S. Moses, *Spirit Teachings* (Arno, 1976); G. K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society* (Schocken, 1969).

SPITTLE

THE FLUIDS of the body, the blood and the saliva, have an importance in the history of magic in that they are both aspects of soul power. Among some communities in the past, expectoration was regarded as a deeply religious act since it involved the sacrifice of an essential element of the person to the gods. The close connection between the flow of saliva and the emotions probably contributed to this idea: one spits with disgust, or licks the lips in anticipation of some delight.

Since it is a holy fluid, spittle has had an important role in consecration and anointing, for it sanctifies and protects whatever it touches. In some primitive communities, property was protected against theft by being spat upon, and spittle was used for the ratification of agreements. Among the Masai in Africa the equivalent of the European handshake was mutual spitting, and in some societies it was customary for the respective parties to an agreement to spit into one another's mouths.

Saliva has also been credited with therapeutic properties, the most effective type being the first spittle of the day, known as fasting spittle. Pliny insisted that fasting spittle could cure snakebite and boils, and English country healers of the 19th century used it for the treatment of abrasions, skin irritations and eye disorders. A modern Japanese cure for headaches involves a matchstick steeped in spittle which is placed in the centre of the forehead. An old treatment for a crick in the neck was to convey spittle by means of the right hand to the right knee, and by the left hand to the left knee. To a minor extent the New Testament has been responsible for the continued respectability of saliva therapy among Christians, for Christ used spittle to restore sight and speech to the afflicted.

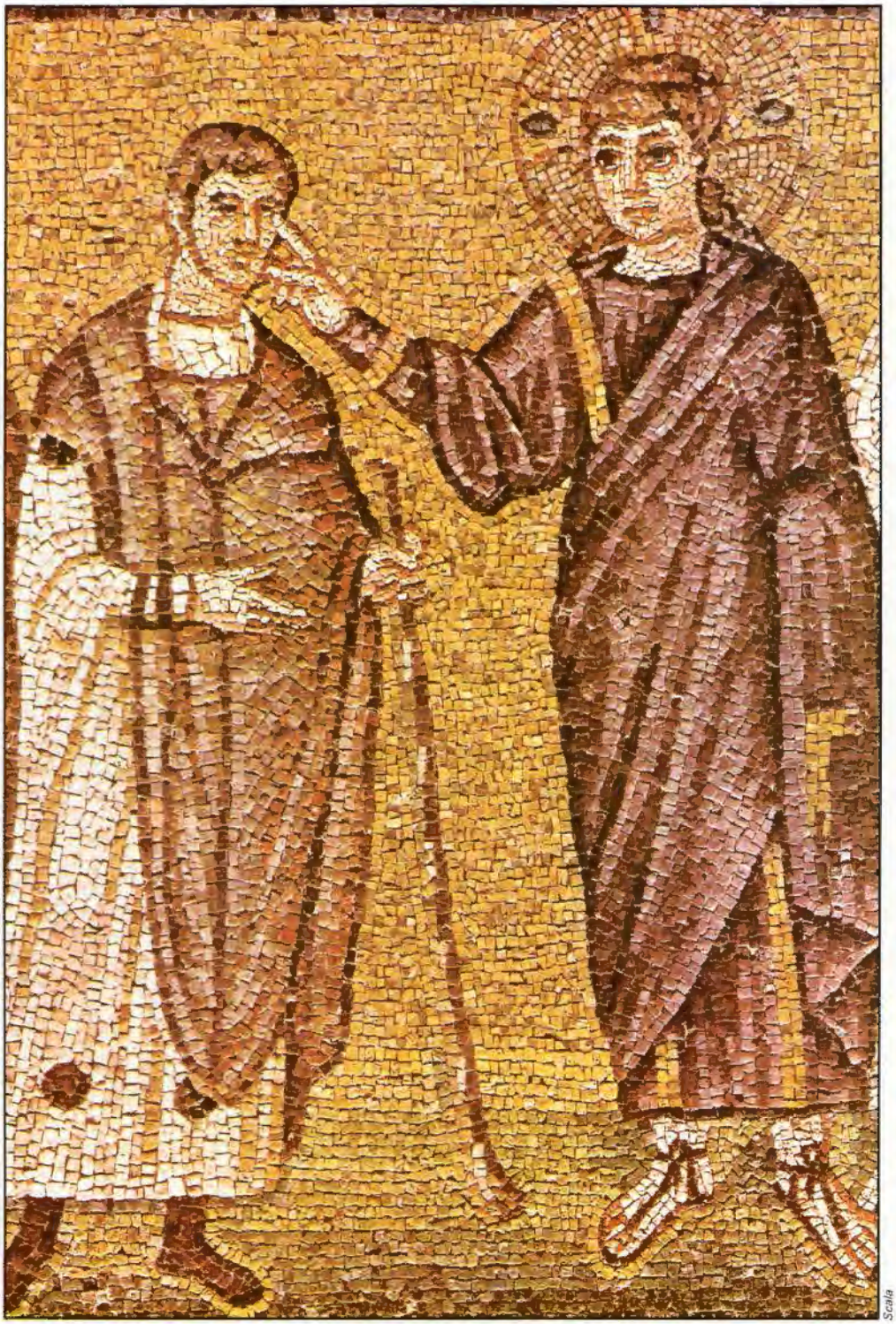
Then there is the importance of spittle as an aid to economic activity. Handsel money, the first coin of the day received by a trader, is frequently spat upon, ostensibly to attract further money, but basically to ensure that it does not vanish away like a fairy gift. Similar action is often taken in respect of money found in the street. Anglers, before casting their lines, spit on their hooks, and deep-sea fishermen are known to expectorate soulfully into their trawls.

At one time it was customary to spit on any member of the family before he or she embarked upon a long journey, as protection against the hazards of the road. A few years ago it was reported in the newspapers that a woman in Oxford always spat at her daughter on the day of an important school examination, and at her husband before he played in a bowls match. On the other hand, it is an old belief that your spittle can be used by an enemy to work magic against you.

Where the fear of the Evil Eye remains strong, spittle is sometimes used as an antidote. The stranger who unthinkingly praises the child of a Mediterranean fisherman may be astounded when the outraged mother spits into its face three times, three being a lucky number. In some cases a mixture of spittle and dirt is used to anoint the child's forehead and lips. The ill effects of boasting, a presumptuous act calculated to provoke the angry intervention of the gods, can be countered if you spit thrice into your own bosom. People who are conscious of having violated some taboo or feel vulnerable to psychic attack will often spit as a matter of course. Scottish fishermen who incur the wrath of higher powers by uttering tabooed words like 'dog', 'salmon', 'rabbit', 'pig', 'kirk' or 'minister', can restore their fortunes by 'spitting out the names'. The clergy are often in bad odour among the superstitious, and at one time the working men of Birmingham used to expectorate whenever they passed a parson in the street.

Dressmakers have been known to spit on their work to ensure the customer's satisfaction, boxers will spit on their hands before commencing a fight, and gardeners before they begin to dig. Although few people are still given to spitting into their right shoe or their urine for luck first thing in the morning, spitting superstitions have not quite died out. Some people invariably spit thrice on seeing the new moon for the first time, and others studiously spit three times whenever they see a dead dog, a magpie, or that rarity, the piebald horse.

ERIC MAPL.



Scala

In folklore, spittle has healing properties because it contains part of the body's life-energy: Christ touches a blind man's eyes with spittle, a fresco in Ravenna

Death or danger is somehow foreseen in dreams or hallucinations, people become aware of things which they have no normal means of knowing, messages are apparently received from the dead, a picture falls off the wall at the moment of a death: many curious experiences of this sort may be the result of an obscure mechanism of the human mind

SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES

SPONTANEOUS PSYCHIC experiences include widely diversified kinds of unusual occurrences. They range over unaccountable 'awarenesses', true dreams, seemingly uncaused movements of physical objects, and unexplainable sights and sounds sometimes taken to be caused by the dead. The common element in all of them, however, is that by them the persons involved secure information not revealed by their senses, or produce effects not mediated by their muscles. This is the characteristic that divides these experiences from sensorimotor ones on the one hand, and instances of fantasy, imagination or delusion on the other.

Historically, psychic experiences had no rational explanation, since the phenomena were not caused by the senses or muscles, and therefore seemed mysterious, even supernatural. Research in parapsychology, however, has thrown light on their nature and origin. They turn out to be the result of normal but obscure mental processes, that do not operate like the sensorimotor ones but have their own laws and regularities. These processes constitute what is known as psi ability, the subject of parapsychological research.

Spontaneous experiences have played a part in parapsychological research and will continue to do so, even though the individual reports of them cannot produce conclusive reliability. Human testimony is fallible and the psi element is difficult to identify with finality. In large numbers of cases, however, the importance of individual or personal variations, even inaccuracies and mistakes, diminishes, while common aspects stand out and make the identification of psi more certain. In fact the relationship between this mental function as demonstrated in the laboratory and as evidenced in spontaneous experiences is, in a way, a reciprocal one. The experiences came under observation and study first, and because of their strangeness they were hard to take seriously as actual occurrences. The question of their validity led eventually to experimental tests, and the experiments eventually showed that there could well be something more to many of the manifestations that had been called psychic than a mixture of imagination, exaggeration and fraud. They showed, in short, that the human mind has two general types of psi ability, that of getting information without the senses through extrasensory perception, or ESP, and that of influencing physical objects without contact through psychokinesis, or PK (see EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION; PSYCHOKINESIS.)

The experimental work, besides showing that psi ability exists, has also led to a degree of understanding of it, so that the experiences can now be taken as the probable spontaneous natural operation of a known human capacity. At the present stage their range offers a wider perspective on psi ability than the experimental researches have as yet verified. Therefore they can be the source of further suggestions about the still unknown aspects of it, suggestions that will be supported or discarded later according to the outcome of future experimental testing.

It is easy to see now why psychic manifestations have been baffling and mysterious, because it is now recognized that the psi process is an unconscious one. The person does not know when it operates or that he himself was involved in the operation. It was largely because of this unconscious origin that psi was long unsuspected and its effects generally misunderstood and often misinterpreted. For because the person is unaware of his own role in the production of a psi effect the tendency has been to assume it to be something imposed upon or communicated to him from the outside. This has been particularly true when a dying or deceased person seemed to play an active role in the phenomena or when it was possible to suppose that such an influence was involved.

Besides the mystery raised by the unconscious operation of psi, the manifestations themselves took many different forms and no unifying underlying principle was obvious. Only after decades of controlled research has it been established that the phenomena are the result of an underlying mental process (the psi process) that is expressed in various ways in different situations.

The concept of the psi process can be simplified by considering it as consisting of two stages. Stage 1 is that in which an item of information somehow becomes 'accessible', at an unconscious level. How this can occur is the true unknown of the psychic process.

The ghost of St Denis: if the dead do survive, 'psi would be the necessary form by which communications from the deceased to the living would take place' but methods of research which could establish the fact of survival have not yet been developed

Harry Price Library

Also unknown are the factors or influences that permit one specific item to be 'chosen', picked out from all others, as the topic of a given experience. Stage 2 is a psychological rather than a parapsychological one, for in it the selected item is transferred to consciousness in a psychological form or as a physical effect. Nearly all of the facts about the psi process that have now been established concern this psychological stage.

Even though psi effects occur in what superficially appear to be a great many different ways, the seeming confusion they represent is largely dispelled once the basic underlying processes are understood. First of all, although the two main types of psi are very different in their obvious effects, ESP being cognitive and PK physical, still they can now be recognized as two different aspects of the same basic psi process. Consequently, the phenomena produced by each are related. Then the phenomena of these two basic types, particularly those of ESP, can be even further classified into sub-types.

ESP experiences have been distinguished on the basis of the kind of subject matter involved. It may be an object or event, it may involve the thought of another person, or it may concern an event still in the future, and be clairvoyant, telepathic, or precognitive accordingly. And since ESP experiences are not limited by time, they are not limited by space, but may involve events at any distance. All three ESP types thus are in sharp contrast to sense perception, which is limited to events happening in the present and within a relatively short distance. Psi thus denotes an extraphysical aspect to human nature.

The following is an example of the clairvoyant type of experience, for in it the person's mind somehow 'made contact' directly with the object. A man in Ontario operated a sawmill in the woods, and occasionally stayed at the logging camp with the workmen. One day he found his wallet missing. After searching for it in vain, he gave up hope of finding it. About two weeks later he dreamed it was at the bottom of the well at the camp. The dream was so vivid that the next morning he drove the 13 miles to the camp. He baled out the water from the well and found the wallet, though he never knew how it got there.

Precognition cases can be illustrated by the experience of an Ohio woman. She reported that one Sunday morning in Cleveland while her mother was in church, her mother's new Oldsmobile was stolen from the parking lot. The police held out little hope of finding it. But two nights later the daughter dreamed that the car was at a certain location in downtown Cleveland. Telling her husband of her dream the next day, she drove to the place and found the car. However, the bystanders testified that it had only been parked there *minutes before she came*. The dream showed where it *would be*, not where it was. The case is typical, except that the time interval may cover years as well as minutes.

An instance of the telepathic type of case is the experience reported by a teacher in New Jersey. She was teaching spelling to

her class by giving out a list of words for the children to spell. As she pronounced the words, slowly walking up and down the aisles, she saw that one little boy, Ralph, had misspelled the word 'grief'. But when she asked how many of the children had all the words correct, he raised his hand. She said, 'You missed one, Ralph.' He looked puzzled and she said, 'You misspelled grief.' They examined his paper and the word was not on it. Then a light broke over his face. 'Oh, now I remember. I wasn't sure how to spell it and as I was thinking you gave out the next word and I wrote it and forgot the other.' She asked him how he thought it should be spelled and he misspelled it just as she thought he had, though he had never written it, for he had written in ink and there were no erasores.

A Grim Case

In all three types of experience, it is as if the experiencing person's mind 'reaches out' and makes contact with the item of information. However, in some telepathy cases, because of the second person involved, the superficial impression is given that the action is initiated by him rather than by the experiencing person. An example was given by a woman in New Brunswick. She had gone downtown with a friend to do some shopping. Her husband was at home where he had a battery to recharge and replace in the car. Suddenly she knew she had to go home. She rushed off, regardless of her friend's remonstrances, and found her husband unconscious in his car in the garage. She was in time to get help and save him. She found that he had closed the garage door, thinking there would be ample air, but carbon monoxide fumes overcame him. The last thought he remembered was an orgent call to his wife to come home.

Apparently the wife was not thinking of her husband when she got the urge to go home, and presumably it was at the time that her husband in his extremity was calling to her. Thus the obvious suggestion would be that his mind, not hers 'reached out', and that her impulse to go home was a response to his message. Because of cases like this one, the experiencing person was called the receiver or percipient, and the second person the agent. These terms however are misnomers, for the sending is not the crucial part of the process, as was illustrated by the case of the teacher in New Jersey. The telepathic reception, just like that of the clairvoyant and precognitive types, can occur without it; although, possibly, it adds to the likelihood that the thought will be 'noticed' or picked up by the experiencing person.

Of course, to describe the psi process as one in which the experiencing person's mind 'reaches out' is only to employ a figure of speech based on sense experience, in which distance intervenes between the person and his environment. In ESP distance as such is not a factor. The language, however, lacks a word for mental contact without distance.

Cases cannot always be exactly classified as to type. For instance, experiences are often reported in which both a thought and an objective event are involved, so that it is not clear whether the situation was one involving telepathy or clairvoyance. The type of such a case cannot be determined exactly and consequently it can only be classified as general ESP (GESP). Today in the attempt to understand the psi process, it makes little difference just how an individual case is classified. The important point is simply that the types of ESP show its potentially great reach.

The PK type of psi is still in a comparatively early stage of investigation. The meaning or content of spontaneous PK experiences usually concerns the crisis of another person, and usually is one of strong emotional quality for the experiencing person. The situations thus tend to be similar to those of telepathy, and in any event their associated meaning falls within those of the types of ESP. Potentially the phenomena of PK fall into three sub-types, which are based on the state of the object affected. It may be moving, or at rest, or it may be a complex combination of the two in living tissue or organisms.

Research into PK on falling objects has now well demonstrated the PK effect, and very recently experiments have been reported on living organisms, in which positive results have been secured. If they are confirmed they should be significant for the treatment of disease, and have bearing on a wide range of psychosomatic functions. As yet no laboratory tests have been reported in which static objects have been caused to move, under adequately controlled conditions though, of course, many spontaneous cases that seem to involve PK deal with the movement of static objects.

Intuitions and Hallucinations

Psi experiences vary not only in the type of information they bring, but also in the way or form of manifestation. This is the product of the psychological process of Stage 2 by which the information secured by ESP in Stage 1 is manifested. Different forms are shown even in the three cases of ESP already given. The man who found his lost wallet did so by a dream. The woman who went home when her husband was in danger did so because of a strong intuitive compulsion. The teacher who knew her pupil misspelled a word 'saw' it written on his paper so realistically she was convinced that her eyes had actually seen it.

ESP experiences may take any of four different forms, but PK only one. They follow closely but not exactly the distinction between waking and dreaming mental states. Two of the ESP forms, the intuitive and the hallucinatory, occur when the person is awake, and two occur as dreams. The PK form is not known to be limited by the mental state of the person. Each form represents a different process and therefore they must be presented separately.

Certain psi experiences are just like the intuitions of ordinary life except that their subject matter was apparently received (in Stage 1) by ESP. The characteristic of intuitive experience, both when ESP is involved and when it is not, is the sudden 'awareness' of the given item of information without any recognizable reason for knowing it and without mental imagery, as in the case reported by a woman in Michigan. During the Second World War, when she was in hospital after the birth of her child, a letter came saying that her husband in France had died of a heart attack. But she said, 'It wasn't a heart attack. He was poisoned.'

'I honestly did not know I was going to say it,' she said. 'It was as if someone else had said it for me. I insisted that they check with Washington. They did and I was right. He had been poisoned. I never knew why they first said it was a heart attack.'

The experience brought a complete item of information without a reason and without imagery. The person 'just knew' it. The case given earlier of the woman who rushed home when her husband was in danger also was apparently based on an intuition. But the information in that instance was not complete. She knew she must go home, but she did not know why. Instances of incomplete information in the intuitive form are frequent. The degree of incompleteness varies, many of the cases consisting only of a strong emotion, or a compulsion to action. It is as if the information is entirely suppressed, unable to cross the threshold of consciousness. But the accompanying emotion or tendency to act breaks through.

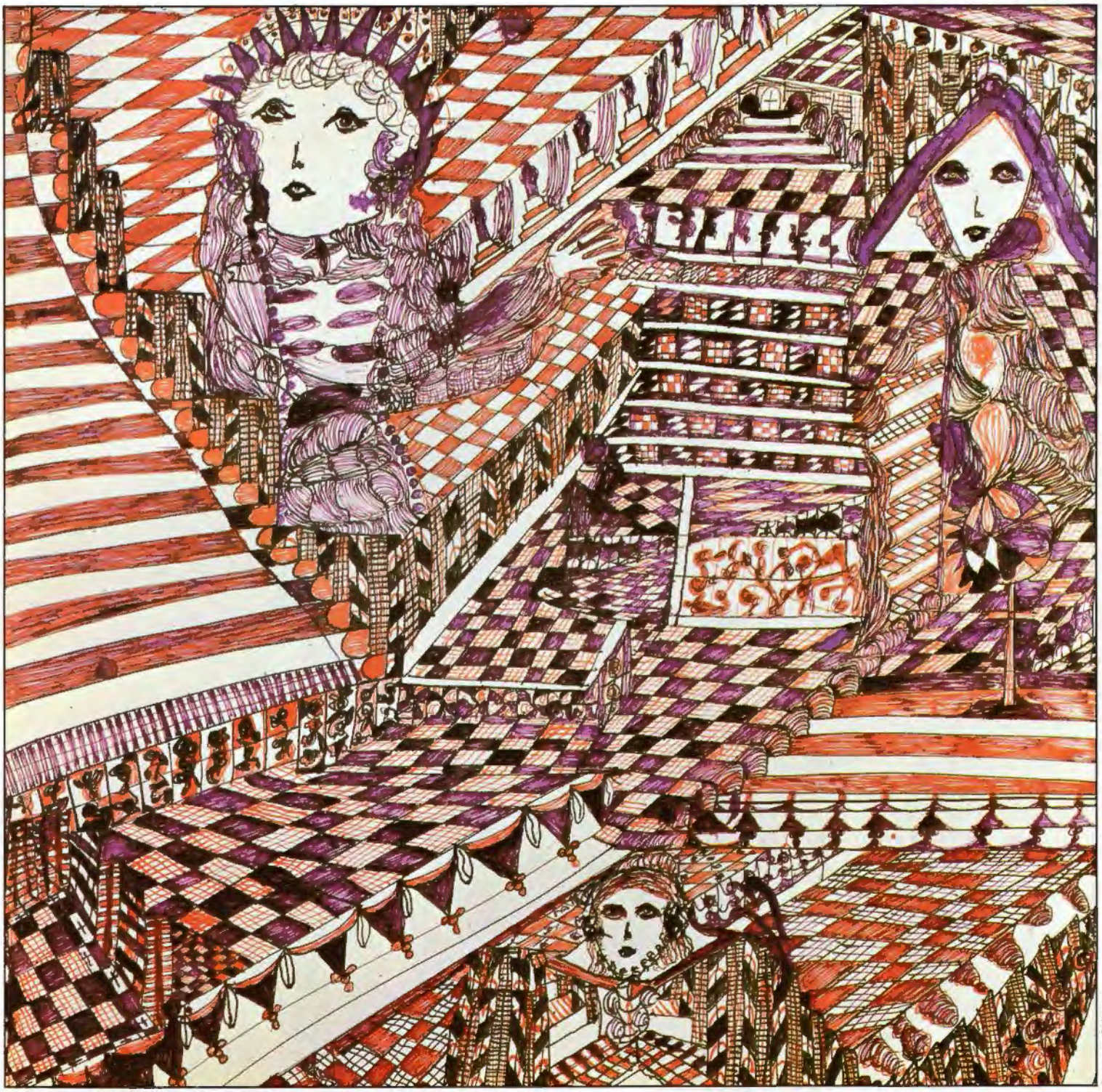
Probably over half of the intuitive experiences reported are incomplete to some degree. This, along with the absence of detail even in complete cases, means that the transfer of an idea from onconscioos levels to the conscious one of the waking state is accomplished with some difficulty. However, the majority of intuitions carry a strong feeling of conviction that the information is troe. The case of the woman who knew that her husband had been poisoned illustrates this.

Hallucinations are pseudo-perceptual impressions: they occur when no external objective stimulus is present to cause them. Usually they do not involve ESP, but when they do the experience brings information about a real situation. In these any sense modality may be involved but the auditory is reported most freqnently. The human voice is perhaps the sound most often 'heard'.

Probably better known, even if actually reported more rarely than the auditory, are visual hallucinations. Many of them coincide with the death of the individual 'seen', the experience thus seeming to serve as a communication to report it. A typical case comes from a woman in Kansas, who said: 'At an early hour one morning my father sat up suddenly in bed. My mother asked, "What is the matter, Bob?" he replied, "Mother is dead." She tried to convince him it was a nightmare, but he said, "No, I was never

Bouquet with Flying Lovers, **a 'dream' picture by Chagall: at least half of the spontaneous psi cases reported are dreams, in which an item of information that has somehow become accessible to the unconscious mind is transferred into the conscious mind, though often with deceptive alterations**

Tate Gallery, John Webb



Grosvenor Gallery

'Because the person is unaware of his own role in the production of a psychic effect, the tendency has been to assume it to be something imposed upon or communicated to him from the outside': an automatic painting by Madge Gill, who attributed her work to the influence of a spirit

wider awake. Mother was standing by the bed just looking at me. She was pale, her hair was down, she was dressed in a white gown. There was a large red spot on the right side of her neck. I know she's dead." Word came that she died from an aneurism at about the same time on the same date.'

Since the message in such hallucinatory experiences is not expressed directly as an idea but by sensory imagery, its meaning must be inferred. The result is that only about a third of them transmit a reasonably complete item of information. In fact, when the information is reasonably complete, it usually means that more than one sense modality was involved, as for instance in the case reported by a woman in Illinois. During the Second World War her family received a telegram from the War Department saying that her brother, a Marine, had been killed in action. With the family distressed she had gone into a separate room, when she heard the front door open, and went to see who had come in. She writes, 'I "saw" my brother coming up the stairs in his Marine uniform. He said, "Shirley, don't cry. I'm all right", and then when he got to the head of the stairs, he vanished.'

The next evening the family got another telegram from the War Department, saying that a mistake had been made and her brother was alive and well. When he finally got home he did not know that he had been reported killed in action, but at the time he had been lost from his unit and knew his family would be so worried about him that in his mind he kept telling them he was all right. The experience thus may have been telepathic, although the vehicle of expression was hallucinatory, and used both the visual and auditory modalities.

In an occasional report of hallucinatory experience, a concomitant intuition brings added information and thereby gives a hint of the origin of the hallucinatory effect. An example was reported by a woman in

California. She had been divorced from her husband for some time, when as she says, one night 'I awakened around midnight in a cold sweat. I sensed I was not alone in the room. I felt a horrible suspense and I shivered as I stared straight ahead. Suddenly about six or eight feet directly in front of my bed I saw the darndest thing I'd ever seen and I was scared out of my wits. It was a greenish grey whitish foamy substance – and then I knew somehow it was the spirit of my husband. And yet how could it be, when he was alive and in New York?' The next morning she saw an account in the paper saying that her ex-husband had drowned in the East River the night before. It happened about the time of her experience.

The point in this case, of course, is that she knew 'somehow', or in other words she intuitively identified her husband in connection with what she saw, although it was not even in the shape of a human being. The intuition and the hallucinatory image together expressed the idea of her husband's death, or were the vehicles by which the fact, accessible by ESP, was brought to consciousness.

Cases like this suggest that the intuition and the hallucinatory effect develop together at the start of Stage 2. For instance, a message in Stage 1 about the crisis of a family member, might create, in Stage 2, an incipient intuitive idea, and along with it in those individuals for whom a sensory pathway is easily stimulated an auditory or visual impression of him. Then if the intuitive idea was repressed and did not cross the threshold of consciousness, the result would be a typical visual or auditory hallucination, and this would become the 'figment in consciousness', the only sign that an ESP impression was received in Stage 1. Thus the hallucinatory form may be an adjunct of the intuitive, and limited to those individuals for whom the internal activation of sensory centres is possible.

ESP Dreams

At least half of the spontaneous cases reported are dreams. They carry their meaning by imagery, and the development of this is the point of special interest. Of course, it is not the imagery of pseudo-sense experience as in hallucinations, but it is rather a dramatization of elements of *memories* of sense experience. The person usually recognizes this upon waking and does not believe, as in hallucinations, that his senses were involved.

On the basis of the kind of imagery used, two dream forms can be distinguished, the realistic and the unrealistic. The imagery of realistic psi dreams is detailed and true to the actuality on which presumably it is based. Details may be so profuse as to suggest that the imagery must have been made by a kind of photographic copying process. An example was given earlier in the case of the woman who dreamed of the location of the car. However, occasionally a dream of this kind is defective and does not completely disclose the item on which it is ostensibly centred. In such cases the nature of the defect shows that the mental process involved is not one of automatic copying after all, for it was possible to alter the meaning that presumably lay back of the imagery. The defects in different cases seem to have originated in different stages of the process. Some of them apparently came in the construction of the imagery, in others even before it, and in still others after the imagery had been made.

An instance in which the imagery was defective and did not reveal correctly the identity of the person involved was reported by a California woman. She dreamed that she was attending a funeral. In it she was impressed especially by the rays of the afternoon sun coming through the stained glass windows of the funeral parlour. She also noted many floral wreaths, not only banked around the casket but hung on the walls. (She had never actually seen this done before.) She went up to the casket and saw her mother in it. She was awakened then by a phone call telling her of a friend's accidental death. Later she attended his funeral which was held in the late afternoon. The sun and the wreaths were the same as in the dream. Only the corpse was different, and this fact shows that the copying was not automatic, but that changes could indeed be made in it.

Cases of the second kind, those in which the defect seems to have occurred even before the imagery was made, involve the scene 'selected' to convey the information. It may not be the proper one, as in the experience of a woman in Washington. She dreamed she answered the doorbell and a brother she had not seen for years was there. She saw the details of his clothing, a camel hair coat on his arm, the peculiar kind of suitcase he carried, and an especially serious look on his face as he walked in the door. Upon waking she wondered if it might have meant that her brother was intending to pay her a visit. Several days later her father passed away quite suddenly. Her brother came to her house and the dream scene was enacted, down to details of the suitcase and the camel hair coat. Now she knew the reason for the serious look on her brother's face, but the scene of the dream had given no hint of the real reason for the visit. It obviously had not been 'selected' to inform her of her father's death.

The third kind of defect, the one that occurs late in the process, involves the interpretation of the imagery. Even though the person himself has constructed it, in some deep unconscious level, that does not mean that he knows it on a higher (conscious) level. This is shown by instances in which this higher level interpretation is wrong. Such a dream was reported by a California woman. It was in the early stages of the First World War, when a man still needed his wife's consent to enlist in the army. This woman's husband wanted to enlist, but she had not consented because of their small children and the need for her husband's support. Very worried one night, she fell asleep, to dream that she saw her husband in a field crushed by a big heavy machine. She told him of it and said she thought it was a warning that if he went to war he would be killed. The next day a neighbour found her husband dead under his big tractor. He had gotten off it to take some trash from behind it. The gear slipped into reverse and the tractor ran over him. Although she had constructed the imagery of her dream, she did not interpret it correctly upon waking.

While incomplete realistic dreams do not occur very frequently (probably not more than one in ten of those reported is incomplete), the fact that they do occur shows that the person does not have to copy the reality, but can influence the message by changing the imagery, selecting the wrong scene, or misinterpreting the situation. In each instance the influence that leads to the defect seems to be personal. Even though the reasons vary from case to case, they appear in the main to be emotional. While they cannot be pinpointed exactly in material like this, they appear to include factors like hopes, fears, anxieties, memories and desires. In view of these possibilities, and since presumably all individuals who have dreams of this kind could so distort the pictured reality, it is rather surprising that a large percentage of these dreams present an essentially true and complete item of information, and so make this form a comparatively effective message-bearer.

Hail and Farewell

Unrealistic dreams, as well as realistic ones, carry their meaning by detailed imagery but in these the details are not true, as can be illustrated by the dream of a woman in New York. She lived away from her parents' home at the time. Though her father was 79, he was in good health and she was not worried about him. But in this dream she thought she was at home and with the family sitting around the dining table. She, but none of the others, looked at her father. He rose from the table, smiled at her, pointed to his heart, turned, left the table still smiling and waved his hand at her as if in farewell. He said nothing, but she thought he meant that he was going to die because of a heart ailment. The dream troubled her. A few weeks later her father had a heart attack, his first, and died.

In this form, obviously the imagery is not a copying process based on the item of information secured in Stage 1 by ESP. Instead, at the beginning of Stage 2 a process of suggestion goes on first, and the result of it becomes the basis of the dream scene, as when the woman dreamed that her father waved goodbye to her from the family dinner table. Even though the elements of this fantasy were realistic in that they were true to memory, the scene itself was a dramatization. If the reality was the father's approaching death, it suggested the fictitious scene which then was embodied in the dream imagery. However, the meaning in this instance was fairly clear.

But incomplete cases are frequent, and again the defect may occur in a number of different ways. One fairly common one is that personalities are substituted in the imagery. A frequent substitution is that of the dreamer himself for the one actually involved. Such was the case of a woman who

dreamed she was driving along a lonely stretch of road when suddenly a heavy black car loomed up ahead in the early morning light. A woman and child were in the front seat. The woman lost control of the car, swerved into the other lane and a head-on collision resulted. All three persons were thrown against a lone tree, and she 'saw' all of them including herself, hanging as if dead from its limbs. The reality was that her brother Bill and his wife set out on an early morning trip. They were on a lonely highway with few trees when suddenly a heavy black car loomed up with a woman and child in the front seat. The woman lost control of her car and headed for Bill's. But just *before* he saw it his wife grabbed the wheel and jerked the car to one side where it came to a stop beside a lone tree. Although the woman's car swerved into Bill's lane, she got control of it in time and no one was hurt. The tendency toward fantasy introduced by the initial substitution of identity was plainly illustrated here by the striking embroidery that went on in the dream beyond the reality, although that had been reproduced fairly realistically.

In other cases the fantasy may be so remote from the actual situation that the latter may not be shown at all. The suggestion made by the actual situation takes off from it without embodying any recognizable detail of it. In 1948, when automobiles were scarce and expensive, a man in Los Angeles dreamed one night that a salesman was trying to sell him a two-toned grey Hudson. He tried to explain to the salesman that he could not buy it, but the latter was insistent and the contract was eventually signed. The next morning the man's sister called to say that the night before at a charity ball she had drawn the lucky ticket and won a two-toned grey Hudson. She said her first thought was to call her brother.

Sometimes a dream is repeated under circumstances that make it appear to be symbolic. For instance, if a dream fantasy is recognized as being connected with a given situation, then a similar dream may precede a comparable situation if one occurs. A man in Minnesota had been convicted as an accessory to a serious crime. As the result of much pressure he pleaded guilty and was held for years without a hearing. His family worked for his parole, but each time when their efforts seemed about to succeed he would dream he saw his dead parents sadly turning their heads from side to side as if saying no, and each time the parole effort was unsuccessful. But finally he did secure a hearing and was freed. A few days before it he again saw his parents in a dream and they were smiling and giving every evidence of joy. He felt the appeal would be successful, and it was.

In cases like this the repetition of the precognitive dream appears to stamp it in. The first time it is fashioned on the event, and then it is repeated so that with some reason it comes to be taken as an indication of the coming event.

One feature of dreams like the preceeding two is that the fantasy is obviously suggested by the person's own individual situation. It is not really symbolic, as it was in the case of a woman who dreamed for three nights of swirling muddy water. When ten days later her sister died of peritonitis after an appendectomy, the dreams were taken to have been 'signs' of it. This woman's grandmother, who died before she was born, was said also to have dreamed of muddy water as a sign of death, so that muddy water taken to mean a death had no doubt been mentioned in the family. It therefore could have been a natural association from which an apparently 'stylized' and impersonal symbol had developed.

However, when the fantasy has no personal connection the likelihood that it was based on ESP is questionable. Take for instance the kind of dream imagery reported by a man in Michigan, who said, 'When I dream of ice or snow I always have trouble on the job or am laid off. It has happened so many times that I can't ignore it.'

In such cases, if no time or other limit was set, the next 'trouble on the job' could be taken as a fulfilment of the dream without any necessary ESP impression at all. As a matter of fact, the unrealistic ESP dreams most frequently reported scarcely support the commonly held belief that dream imagery tends to be symbolic. In the first place the majority of unrealistic dreams that are reported do not show the impersonal imagery involved in symbolism, and many dreams that appear to be symbolic do not involve ESP.

Not quite all of the ESP experiences that feature imagery occur in sleep. Occasionally a person while awake may have an experience involving imagery (day-dream) which also brings information by ESP. Since the form is the same as that of a dream such experiences, whether realistic or unrealistic, can be classed as dreams even though the person was not sleeping.

All ESP experiences come in one or other of these forms – intuitive, hallucinatory, or realistic or unrealistic dreams, and bring items of information in varying degrees of completeness. The forms usually are fairly distinct from each other, although in occasional instances a tendency to change from one to another in the same dream may occur.

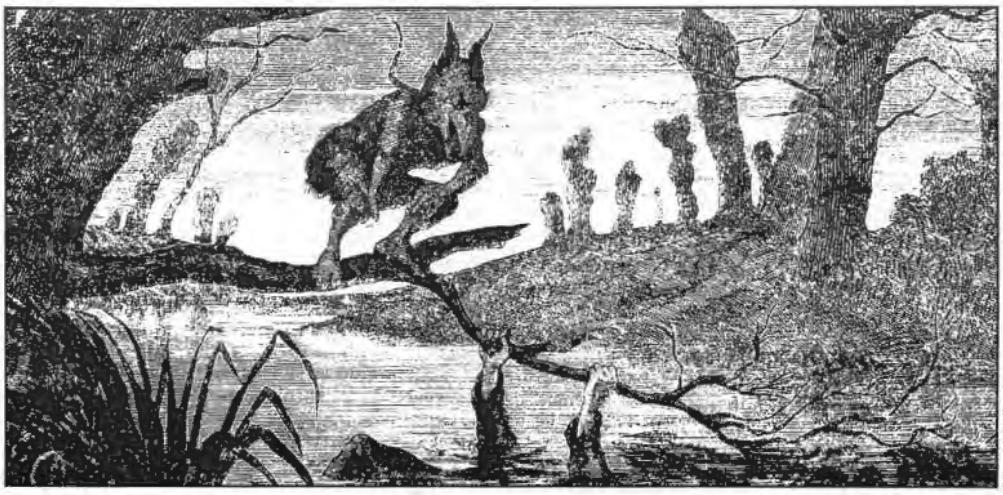
The Falling Picture

PK, the second main type of psi, is manifested by effects on objects without physical contact. They usually appear to bring messages, much as do the forms of ESP experience; as if the physical manifestation was a method of signalling a message without using the ESP channels. In them, instead of a hallucinated effect, a real objective one occurs. Such occurrences can thus be considered a fifth form of psi. While theoretically the information might concern a thing, a thought or a future event, just as in ESP experiences, it generally concerns another person, often one at a distance, and usually one who is undergoing a crisis at the time. The other person, the target person, almost invariably is one with whom the experiencing individual is emotionally involved. The physical effect then appears to the experiencing person to be a message or 'sign' of the crisis.

The crisis very frequently is that of dying, but sometimes the person is already dead, sometimes still living. There seems to be no connection between his state or condition and the specific kind of effect that marks his crisis. It may be different or the same from case to case, regardless of whether he is dying, dead, or still living.

One frequently noted effect is the falling of a picture at the time of the crisis of the target person. The following three cases, in which a picture fell and seemed to mark a target person's crisis, illustrate similar effects related to different conditions of the target person.

The first case involved a dying person. (The timing in cases when the target person dies, however, is seldom sufficiently exact to make it possible to tell if the person was still living or already dead when the physical effect occurred.) It was reported by a college girl whose father frequently flew his own plane. She was accustomed to the idea and not worried about him, but one Sunday morning in her dormitory room she was



Mansell Collection

Another way in which information known to the unconscious mind through ESP is sometimes transferred into the conscious mind is through a hallucination, seeing or hearing or otherwise sensing something which 'is not really there', as we say (though many hallucinations do not involve ESP)

Facing page **Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth, though no one else can see it** ***Left*** **A night phantom, traditionally believed in Normandy to lure men to their deaths in marshes**

lying on her bed, her roommate sitting by the closed window, both reading, when her father's picture fell off the desk. Both girls looked up in surprise for there had been no motion in the room to cause it. Before long the message came that her father's plane had crashed that morning and he had been killed. The accident occurred about the time the picture fell, and its falling was taken as a sign to the girl of her father's crisis.

The next example is of an experience involving a person already dead. It was reported by a woman in Argentina. She tells of her father's death after a serious heart illness. She was sleeping in the room with him when she was wakened by his loud breathing followed by silence. Uneasy, she arose and found him no longer breathing. It was half past three in the morning. She decided she would not wake her mother since there was nothing to be done at that hour, and it would be better to 'prepare her for the mournful news when she had wakened'. She dressed, went into an adjoining room, took down a medical book and was reading and thinking about her father when a loud noise from his room caused her to go back into it. She found that her grandfather's picture had fallen from the wall where it had hung for years. The wire had broken and it seemed to her more than a simple coincidence that it broke just then. She reflected that her father had been her grandfather's favourite son-in-law and she felt that this had been his signal of awareness of the death.

The third is an instance of a picture that fell when the target person, though in a crisis, did not die at the time. It was reported by a woman who was then in Budapest. She and her mother were in their apartment when 'spontaneously a big heavy picture jumped from the wall and dropped with a loud crash to the floor'. Soon a message came that her sister in Vienna had had a stroke, that the case was hopeless and that they should come immediately. The sister died soon after, but was living when the picture fell.

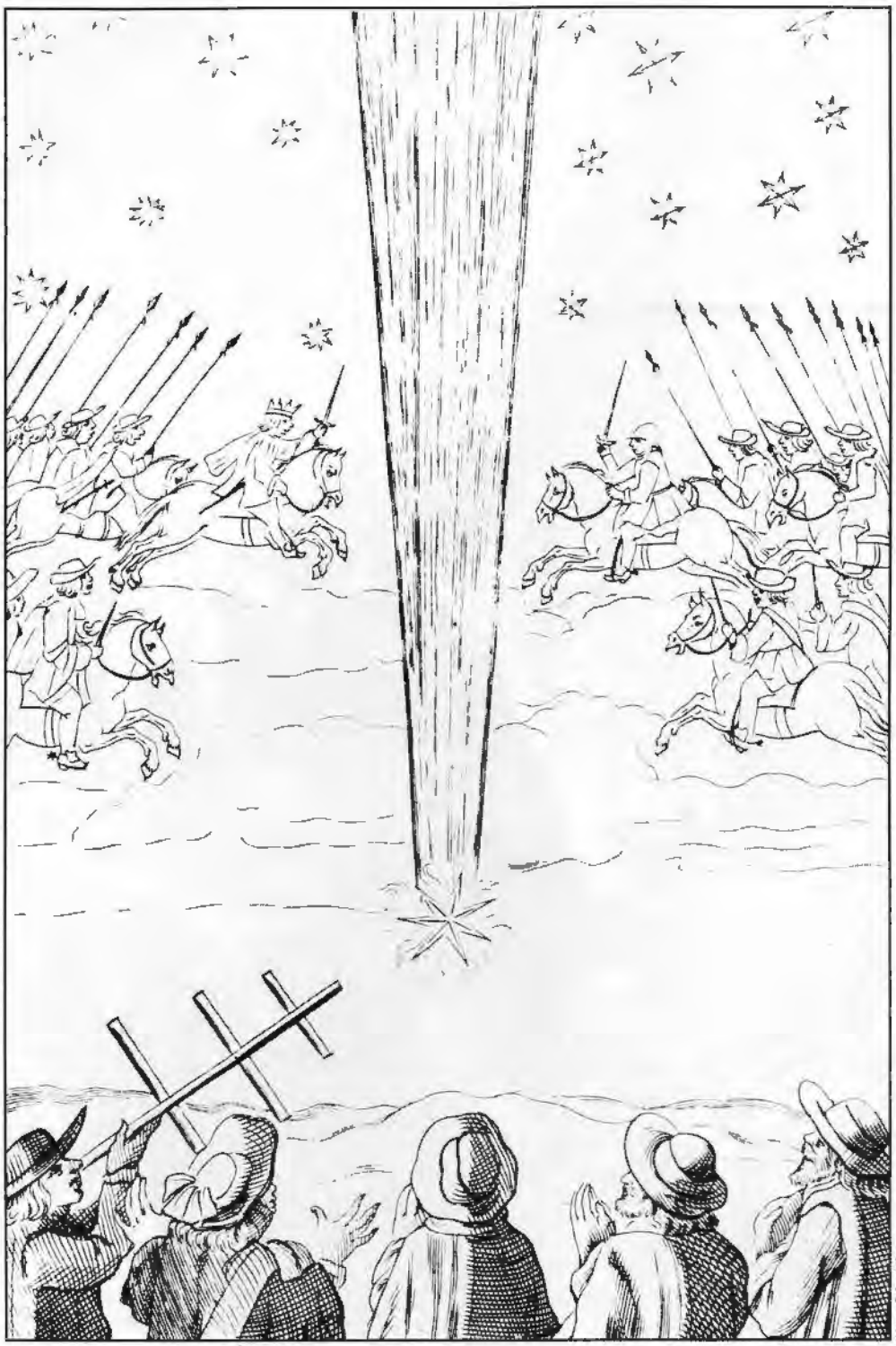
Regardless of the actual kind of effect observed, such an occurrence until recently was usually taken as a message from the target person, particularly in cases in which the target person was dying or dead. Instances in which he was still living were seldom taken into consideration, and probably, if noticed at all, were put down to 'coincidence'. The natural though unspoken assumption when the dying or dead were involved was that an unusual ability to affect objects at a distance must have been activated, an ability that living persons were not known to have.

However, since PK has been demonstrated in the laboratory to be a capacity that does belong to the living, the interpretation now is different. It now hinges on the question whether the messages did come from the target person, or were instead spontaneous PK effects produced by the persons in whose presence or vicinity they occurred. The question is whether the effects were produced by the target persons or by the experiencing persons.

Harry Price Library

This question of who is responsible for a PK effect comes up in the laboratory as well as in life-situations. If an individual subject produces evidence of PK when alone, he himself of course can be assumed to have caused it. But the exercise of PK, like that of ESP, is an unconscious process and can only be recognized by its end product. Therefore if a subject and an experimenter are both present in a PK test, both aware of the target and both eager to succeed, and do then succeed, it is not possible to decide with certainty which one is responsible.

The experimental results thus may not show which of two individuals involved in PK is the effective one. But they do show that living persons can exercise the PK effect. Whether or not the deceased can do so, or even whether they 'survive' death at all, are still unsettled questions. Further, in occasional cases the likelihood that the target person created the effect is ruled out entirely by the fact that he did not know (or perhaps, even know of) the experiencing person. These are mostly instances in which the target person is a public figure. Such a case was reported by a man in Colorado, who said that a clock in his home stopped on 22 November 1963, at the very time that President Kennedy was assassinated. It had run perfectly for years and he did not feel that it stopped at that precise time just by coincidence. The effect, of course, could not be ascribed to an influence from the target person. Instead some of those in the home who were shocked, as was the nation, must



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Collective hallucination, when several people experience the same apparently 'unreal' phenomena, has been suggested as a possible, if highly tentative, explanation of some strange cases reported in the past: from a broadsheet of 1681, describing a battle between two phantom armies in the sky

be supposed to have exercised PK, if indeed something other than coincidence was involved. But in all cases the experiencing person could have caused the effect. He could have done so regardless of the nature of the crisis of the target person or whether he was dying, dead, or still living.

The experiencing person thus appears to be the one who causes the physical effect. It would be, in a way, a sign to himself of the unconscious reception at Stage 1 of the item of information. There is reason to think that in Stage 2, the PK effect may occur in a way quite analogous to that of a hallucinatory effect; that is, in conjunction with an incipient intuition which is then usually blocked. The reason for thinking this is that here, too, in an occasional report, an intuitive component is recognizable. For instance the daughter of a coal miner, asleep in her home miles from that of her parents, was awakened by her bedroom light suddenly coming on. She says, 'I knew something was wrong down home', an intuitive idea, of course. It was correct, for at the time a motor down in the mine fell and crushed her father.

The physical effect in such cases thus appears to have originated with the intuition at the start of Stage 2. The origin of the PK form thus appears to be quite parallel with that of hallucinatory experiences.

The PK form never produces a complete item of information, and is also the form least frequently reported. This may mean that relatively few personalities can produce cases of spontaneous PK. It also may be partly because this is the most difficult form of all to identify with a degree of certainty. For not only must the effect be timed with the crisis but the absence of ordinary causes, too, must be established. These points often are difficult to make, for usually it is only some time afterwards that the details are noted. Consequently they are often unconvincing.

The general observation that follows from this catalogue of the forms of psychic experiences is that psi ability has no form that is exclusively its own, except that of PK. All of the other forms, and especially the intuitive and the dream forms, are common mental experiences that usually have nothing to do with psi. Hallucinations, while not so common, do occur in situations that have nothing to do with psi. They have been associated mostly with abnormal mental states rather than normal ones. Psi hallucinations, however, are not commonly associated with abnormality.

Since ESP does not have a characteristic form of its own, and the PK form occurs so obscurely that it is seldom recognized, psi is difficult to identify and can only be recognized tentatively in everyday life by considering the meaning of the information transmitted. It must be such that it could not have been supplied by sense experience. Also it must be beyond reasonable explanation as a case of chance coincidence. Reliable identification of psi has therefore depended on experiments, in which sensory cues were ruled out by the conditions and in which the unlikelihood of coincidence could be estimated.

The classification of cases as to form thus indicates that they are not really a heterogeneous manifestation of a mysterious, perhaps supernatural, order. Instead they appear to be the result of normal psychological processes, bringing parapsychologically received information to conscious attention.

Who Chooses the Message?

Even though psi experiences may bring information about a practically unlimited range of topics, the message in any particular case concerns only one specific topic. Obviously it is selected from all other thoughts, things or future events that might have concerned the person. But is it a topic that impresses itself upon the person from the outside, something like a telegram bringing an item of news? Or does he himself 'reach out' and pick this particular item from all the others, because of his interest in it? Indirectly, if not directly, it is possible now to get something of an answer to this question, both logically and by studying the range of topics involved in a large number of experiences.

Logically, the choice between the two

alternatives is different now than in the past. Before the occurrence of precognition had been recognized, it seemed more likely that the person was the receiver of a message impressed upon or communicated to him from the outside, for all experiences under consideration then were contemporaneous with the time of the event. But now no such necessary temporal connection exists. Presumably an experience involving a future event could occur at any time beforehand, and besides that it would be difficult to think of a future event as being 'sent' to a person.

Earlier, another impression was also current, which was that psychic experiences nearly always concern crises of great importance to the person, and that they frequently involve communications from the dead. Both ideas implied that the psi message was at least urgent, if not that it actually induced a sensitive person to have an experience about it.

The impression of the usually critical nature of the topics of spontaneous psi was based in part on 19th century studies in psychical research, in which special emphasis was put on crisis cases and those that involved the deceased. In the background of this work was interest in finding evidence that had a bearing on the survival question, and so there was naturally an emphasis on experiences involving crises.

But in addition to establishing the occurrence of precognition, research in parapsychology has shown that the psi process is essentially unitary; not only do ESP and PK seem to be aspects of the same process, but the types of ESP too are the result of a single process acting on different kinds of subject matter. Even telepathy, as shown above, is not dependent on outside initiative, but is a function of the experiencing person just as are the other types. This changes the likelihood that the event triggers the experience, rather than the experiencing person's interest in it.

A few years ago I made a special study of the subject matter of psi experiences. For this I turned to a collection of cases at the Parapsychology Laboratory of Duke University, and used the reports in it that came in the form of realistic dreams. About a third of them were conteroporaneous (experience and event occurring at the same time) and the rest precognitive (experience occurring before the event). This particular form of experience was chosen because in it the detailed and accurate imagery makes the connection between the experience and the event it concerns more certain than in any other form. The distribution of topics in these dreams is fairly representative of reported psi experiences.

The study was made from the viewpoint of the experiencing person who in these cases, of course, was the one who had the dream. The objective was to see whether the topics of the cases as far as the dreamer himself was concerned, seemed to be distributed as if they had been forced on him from the outside, as an inordinate number of crisis cases might suggest, or whether he seemed to have selected the topics himself.

Since emotional relationships seem obviously to be involved in many psi experiences, the study began by dividing the cases into groups according to the emotional involvement of the dreamer with the individual who seemed to be the main character in the dream. Four such groups in descending order of involvement were formed. The first included all dreams in which the dreamer himself was the person most concerned, and also instances in which no other person was primarily involved, but which were situations the dreamer would later experience. For example, a girl in Texas dreamed she was at an outdoor theatre and, looking to one side, she saw a man in a cowboy hat lift a whisky bottle to his lips and take a drink. A few nights later she was at an outdoor theatre, looked to one side and saw a man in a cowboy hat lift a whisky bottle to his lips and take a drink.

The group next most important to the dreamer was that of his immediate family; his parents, his children, husband or wife. The third group included his remote relatives, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, neighbours, acquaintances and pets. The fourth was made up of strangers, people he had never met. In the case of public figures, he may have known of them.

Each of these four groups was then subdivided according to the importance of the subject matter, into crisis and non-crisis topics. Crisis cases involved death, serious accident, illness, operations, and weddings. The non-crisis cases were then further divided into two groups according to whether their topics were important or unimportant. The important topics included job incidents, honours, visits, journeys and contests. The unimportant were quite incidental experiences that seemed to have no particular purpose.

The percentage of the entire number of dreams which each subdivision represented was then found, as in the following table.

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Broadsheet of 1833, giving an account of the death of Mrs Jane Pallister in Yorkshire in that year, with 'a faithful Relation of the wonderful Appearances which rested upon the Corpse, as represented in the Engraving, after the decease, with the Names of the Persons who witnessed the wonderful Phenomena'

The results showed no inordinate proportion of crisis cases, for only half of the total fell into that category, and many concerned trivial topics (15%). Besides, over a quarter of the dreams were either about distant relatives (15%) for whom the dreamer's emotional attachment was low, or strangers (13%) for whom it was practically non-existent. On none of these counts did it look as if the pressure or urgency of the event would have been the reason why it became the subject of the psi experience.

However, in the contrast between the distribution of cases involving the dreamer himself, and that of the other groups, especially that of his immediate family, a clue could be seen as to the basis of selection of the topics. The contrast begins in the difference in the percentage of crisis cases in these two groups, 7% in the first, 27% in the second. The 7% is very low, although it must be remembered that it is to some extent depressed because people can scarcely have experiences about their own crises in the present. These experiences are therefore practically all precognitive, while in contrast, half of the crisis experiences involving the immediate family were contemporary. But the percentage of crisis cases of the dreamer himself is low also in comparison to the rest of his experiences. His important but non-critical topics (17%) are more than twice as frequent as his crises. Even the unimportant cases (9%) are more frequent.

But the pattern is quite different in all of the groups except that in which the dreamer himself is concerned. In the immediate family

Distribution of Subject-Matter of 2878 Realistic Dreams

Relation to Dreamer	% of Crisis Cases	% of Non-Crisis Cases: Important	% of Non-Crisis Cases: Unimportant	Total %
Himself	7	17	9	33
His Family	27	10	2	39
Distant Relatives	10	4	1	15
Strangers	6	4	3	13
Total %	50	35	15	100

British Museum

Dreams carry their meanings by imagery, not the imagery of pseudo-sense experiences as in hallucinations but a dramatization of memories of sense experience. In the *Romance of the Rose* the hero dreams of his quest for love – the Rose: he finds the Rose in a beautiful garden but is driven away by Danger, Scandal and Shame; French, 15th century

group, not only is the percentage of crisis cases high (27%), but important non-critical topics are low in comparison (10%) and unimportant topics almost negligible (2%). Distributions in the last two groups, though less pronounced, are similar. In both, crisis cases are the most frequent, unimportant topics rare. In all three, the total frequencies reflect somewhat the degree of emotional attachment (39%, 15%, 13%), the percentages tapering off, although not disappearing entirely when it is non-existent.

A great difference is thus shown between distributions when the person is dreaming about his own affairs and when he is dreaming about those of others, and especially those of his immediate family. This, of course, is the group with which his emotional links are strongest, the group for which his concern and anxiety presumably is the greatest. However, in the low-emotion groups, too, crisis cases still are more frequent than others, although in these his concern or anxiety would certainly not be so strong, and he would have only a general interest. But it could well be strong enough to be aroused by a death or other critical event, while it would leave him fairly oblivious to less important happenings.

From these results, it looks as if the topics, in a general overall way, are oriented from the viewpoint of the dreamer himself. They do not appear to be random choices forced upon him. Instead they follow psychological rules recognizable in ordinary life, for the distribution of cases involving the dreamer himself seems similar to the interests of normal healthy-minded persons. They do not dwell overlong on their own crises or worry about those sure to come sometime in the future. They are of course interested in many of their own important but non-critical affairs, but they also have frequent occasions when, as it were, their reflections are merely 'idling', when a myriad of inconsequential thoughts

and episodes occupy their minds. The distribution of their psi experiences appears to reflect this same pattern.

But in real life the pattern is different when the emotionally close circle is involved and here, too, it is different. With that circle, crises are highly important. The smaller the items of their lives, the less is the inducement to follow them, whether by sense perception or ESP. In both, each individual must first of all live his own life, and although in a sense he also lives the lives of his children and other close relatives, he cannot follow them in detail as he does his own.

However, in the situation in areas in which the link of emotion is weak, here, as in the sensory world, a change in motivation comes in. The person does not lose all interest where stronger emotions cease, but it becomes less personal. It becomes the general kind that makes each person want to know something of the outside world even if beyond his immediate contact, the kind of interest that makes him read the newspapers. And of course if anyone doubts the general interest there in crisis as against non-crisis topics, a glimpse of the headlines of almost any daily paper will remind him.

It seems, then, that the dreamers in the realistic dreams of this study were in general acting normally and in some way influencing or selecting the topics of their dream experiences. They selected them, not from some otherworldly idealized principle but according to inherent – one might almost say – primitive interests. The selecting, of course, was done on a deeply unconscious level, and consequently the principles that guided it were also unconscious ones, far removed from those that perhaps would be chosen if upper levels of mind were making the selections.

It looks as if the experiencing person himself is the measure of his ESP experiences, within the limits of his sensitivity to non-sensory targets. And with this picture of the topics that he selects for his psi experiences, his horizon, which in earlier days was supposed to be limited closely to his own calamities, is much expanded. In his psi contacts the person appears to be more broad-minded, more a citizen of his world, after the correction introduced by experimental parapsychology, than he would have considered, much less have known, himself to be before it.

Psi Experiences and the Dead

Psi experiences in which someone dead appears to play an active part are infrequent in comparison to those in which no such personality is involved. They occur, but since all types of spontaneous ESP, and especially the precognitive, are now recognized, those that involve the deceased make up a very small part of the total number.

Reported cases that seem to involve the deceased are of two general kinds which are different superficially, though not in the basic psi process. One of these is the simple isolated kind, like those mentioned above; the other is more complicated and the phenomena tend to recur in much the same way for an indefinite time. The second category includes haunting and poltergeist phenomena.

Unrepeated experiences in which deceased persons appear to be involved take some of the same forms discussed in earlier sections. One of these is the dream. Dreams involving the deceased are usually realistic in details, but the appearance of someone dead in an active role in a dream of course cannot be considered to be realistic. Such dreams are therefore classified as unrealistic in form. An example was reported by a woman in Detroit. She said that after her mother died, her father said she should have her mother's jewels; they lived in the same apartment and he kept them in his possession. Later he moved to another city and she supposed he took the jewels with him. After his death there, she did not find them among his belongings and she began to worry about them. One night in a dream her father appeared and told her she had worried enough, and she would find the jewels in the dresser in his old room. She should pull out a certain drawer and at the back she would find a small box built into the dresser, so that it could not be seen unless one knew where to look. She did as he said and found the jewels.

Even better known than dreams of the deceased are hallucinatory experiences involving them. (Hallucinatory, it should be recalled, is a term to denote that the person thought a sense, or senses, was involved when no objective reason was present.) A visual hallucinatory experience was reported by a woman in Connecticut. Her father had died some years before. She was awakened very early one morning. She heard nothing but saw her father standing at the foot of her bed. Somehow, though he did not speak, she got the command to go to her mother's home at once. She felt it was so urgent that she got up and within the hour had started on the trip home, a distance of over four hundred miles. She found her mother very ill and alone, and almost certainly she would have died without the help of her daughter.

Even more frequent than visual hallucinations are auditory ones involving someone deceased. An example comes from a woman in South Dakota. Her father, on whom she had depended a great deal, had recently died, and she felt very much alone and helpless in the midst of many troubles. Her husband had long been ill and the family was badly in debt. They were behind in their car payments, and a man came one day to repossess the car. As she reports, 'While I was talking to the man at the front door, just as clear as my own voice, I heard my father say, "Tell him to wait till Friday." Without hesitation I told him to wait till Friday and I would pay him. He agreed and went on. Then I began to wonder how I could raise the $280 due. Thursday afternoon my father's lawyer called me and told me to come to his office and pick up a check for $417. The court had collected an old account owed to my father.'

PK effects that seem to relate to the deceased also occur. Such an experience was reported by a woman in New York. The occasion was a dinner party that she gave for five couples, all of whom had known a man who had suddenly died of a heart attack two days before, while on a trip to South America. When the wine was passed, the closest friend of the deceased rose and proposed the toast. She was holding her glass by the bowl, the stem broke off and fell to the floor. Her glass had not touched anything – she was just holding it. They all felt that their deceased friend was present.

These are the main forms of spontaneous cases in which the dead seem to play an active part – dreams, hallucinatory experiences and instances of PK. Of course, the question in all of them is whether the communications do actually come from discarnate personalities. Before the establishment of ESP and PK as abilities of living persons, it was necessary in the interpretation of such cases as evidence of survival to suppose that the deceased somehow had powers beyond those of living persons. And it was by these unusual powers that they could return and communicate with the living as they purported to do. But it is now known that living persons could themselves secure the needed information in ESP cases like the three above, and that the person or persons present could be responsible for effects like the breaking of the wine glass at a moment of strong emotion.

The imagery of dreams carries information secured by psi to levels of consciousness where memory of the dream can take over, and it is clear that the imagery itself is unconsciously constructed to fit the case. The hallucinatory forms and PK are also

Clairvoyant Reading

In general, the senses (of certain people, at least) are sometimes capable of surprising feats of hyperacuity. In the 1880's, for instance, two Frenchmen, Bergson and Robinet, discovered a boy who, under hypnosis, appeared to be able to 'read' by clairvoyance book page numbers chosen at random by one of the experimenters. The conditions under which he could do this, however, were extremely specific: the experimenter had to stand with his back against the light, the book had to be held nearly vertical, about 4in. from the experimenter's eyes, but slightly below them so that he could look sometimes at the page and sometimes at the boy. It occurred to one of the experimenters that the boy might conceivably be reading the numbers from their reflection in the cornea of the reader. F. W. H. Myers, in reporting this case, calculated that the corneal image would have been about 1mm. in height, while two people who carried out some experiments on reading similar letters in this way found they could only succeed when the letters were about 10mm. high. This may seem to put the boy's performance beyond the bounds of (normal) possibility, but there is no knowing to what extent he was endowed with abnormal visual acuity, and, furthermore, it is possible that, whatever the boy's normal acuity may have been, it was enhanced under hypnosis.

Charles McCreery *Science, Philosophy and ESP*

National Gallery/Brompton Studio

Visual and other hallucinations sometimes carry a powerful and terrifying sense of impending danger, which may prove to have been justified: King Belshazzar sees a hand writing on the wall of his palace during a drunken feast; painting by Rembrandt

vehicles for the expression of information below the conscious level, and are forms in which information may be expressed when no deceased person is involved. Presumably, therefore, when a spirit agent appears as a character in the drama he could be another imaginary creation. The *forms* of the experiences in themselves can thus have no definitive significance for survival.

If spirit personalities exist after death and are in any way actually involved in these experiences, then detection of the fact would have to depend on evidence other than that the dead person *appeared* to play an active role in the drama of a psi experience. It would have to distinguish between influences ascribable to the deceased and those that might be exerted by the living person.

Possibly such evidence might be found in differences between the reasons or motives for communicating which the two persons, the living and the dead, might be presumed to have had. If the motive of the dead person in making the specific communication was much stronger than that of the living, then the bearing of the case would at least favour the idea that the deceased had influenced or caused the experience.

In the examples already given no great difference in motives exists, and it is only fairly rarely that a situation is such that the deceased person's interest in the communication can be presumed to have been much greater than that of the living person. One such, reported by a woman in Florida, happened some years ago, when she was a young girl in her 20s and travel was still mainly by train. In her Pullman one night she woke up, she said, 'to see the face of a nice man, probably in his late 50s, brown hair and eyes and a Van Dyke beard. He apologized, said his family was on the train and he was looking for them, and that I looked so much like his daughter that he thought he had found them. I went back to sleep resolved to waken early and try to get a look at the girl who looked like me. I did not find her until I was in the station. Then I saw her and with her were her mother and brother. The brother looked just like his father. Just then from the baggage car a coffin was taken off the train, and the girl, her mother and brother, in deep mourning and weeping followed with sad eyes the transfer of the coffin. I did not have the presence of mind to tell them of my experience, but I realized then that the buttons of my berth had not been opened and it was dark in it, yet that face and head had certainly been very visible.'

In this instance, as in many of the cases when the emotional situation is strongly weighted toward the deceased, he was a stranger to the experiencing one. The latter had no apparent reason for making the contact implied in the psi experience, while the deceased one seemed to have a motive. But still the evidence is not conclusive.

It can be observed, however, that experiences in which the dead seem to play an active role, if considered as unconscious dramatizations, do involve more complicated levels of it than other unrealistic psi dreams usually do. In these not only do the deceased appear as self-activated characters, but they also deliver the message. This may mean that these appearances of the deceased are not purely dramatizations, but actual influences; or on the other hand, it may mean that the unconscious dramatizing ability of very few dreamers is sufficient to produce this level of fantasy.

The situation regarding these experiences, therefore, is that they cannot be finally interpreted now that psi is known to be an ability that living persons possess. But at the same time that psi prevents an interpretation for or against the survival hypothesis, it does permit the question to be raised. If survival does occur, psi would be the necessary form by which communications from the deceased to the living would take place. But if it does occur, the methods of research by which the fact could be established have not yet been developed.

(See also DREAMS; GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; POLTERGEISTS.)

LOUISA E. RHINE

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SPRING

John Moss

The renewal of life in spring has been celebrated since very early times and some pagan rites blended with the Christian festival of Easter: children dressed as angels, in an Easter procession in Brazil

The celebration of returning fertility, and its magical stimulation, is the basis of all spring rituals and festivals, from the Great Dionysia of the ancient Greeks to the Mardi Gras which is still an annual event in modern New Orleans

DRINKING, DANCING, FEASTING, noise-making and love-making have been the usual ways in which men have celebrated occasions of communal happiness: the winning of a war, for instance, or an election, the birth of a royal heir or the death of a tyrant. But ever since prehistoric times man has reserved special celebratory energies for the turning of the seasons, and has reacted with perhaps the strongest surge of emotion to spring, the time when the earth is freed from the shackles of winter.

This emotion was expressed in the form of religious rites, mainly because for ancient man no aspect of life could be kept apart from religion. Modern commentators have seen in the Paleolithic cave paintings of dancing figures in animal masks or disguises a form of hunting magic that itself was probably seasonal; but later ages brought agriculture to mankind, and the seasonal rites became of crucial importance. The celebration of returning fertility along with the magical stimulation of fertility form the basis for all ancient spring rituals and festivals, and so through them for most modern ones.

Something of their essence can be seen in the ancient spring customs of Mesopotamia in which the Babylonians performed ritual re-enactments of a Creation myth, reflecting the re-creation of spring. And they staged the sacred intercourse of the king and a priestess in a room set aside for the rite and decorated with leaves and flowers.

Sex and drama also occur in the rituals of the Greeks, a festive people who took every opportunity available for some sort of celebration. And the eastern cults that were introduced during later centuries offered many opportunities. Before that the early Greeks held a spring Festival of Flowers to

The sexual and dramatic aspects of springtime revelry sometimes overlap with another common motif in which the normal order of things is overturned

praise fertility and the god Dionysus (see DIONYSUS), with plenty of sacrificing, feasting and drinking. There was also some placation of the community's dead, the ancestral ghosts, a practice that found its way into many later traditions.

In March, the Great Dionysia was celebrated, which by the 6th century BC had come to be a time not only for general revels of a wildly unrestrained nature, but also for the presentation of drama in Athens. Evolved from older choric hymns and rites of Dionysus, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides developed first, but comedy followed fast. And the latter retained explicit aspects of its fertility rite origins, as in the traditional flaunting of over-size phalluses.

Rome's spring festivals took up many of these older threads and entwined them with new ones. In early Republican days there were minor festivities such as the dancing and processions of the *Salii*, in March (see MARS), or the uninhibited merrymaking of the April *Parilia*, originally a shepherds' rite (see SHEEP). Also in April was a movable feast, the beautiful *Floralia*, which in the true primitive tradition combined vegetation magic and ritual sexuality.

The better known ceremonies of the *Lemuria* in May recall the Greek festival that paid homage to the dead: for the Romans it was also a time for laying restless ancestral spirits, and preventing them from wreaking harm. Something of the same intention functioned in another well-known late Roman festive occasion, the *Lupercalia*, which was held in February, at the very start of the Roman spring. It involved sacrifices, offerings of the first fruits of the previous harvest, and the other usual basic enjoyments. But it also required some ritual flagellation of people, most usually of barren women, to stimulate their fertility and perhaps to drive off whatever evil baulked that fertility. The priests also 'beat the bounds' of the communities, or of the fields, again to set up magical protection against evil for the year to come.

The declining Empire came to know many new cults and their festivals (apart from the novel worship of Christianity). One was the *Bacchanalia*, the frenzied Roman version of the Greek Dionysia, but another more austere festival developed with the cult worship of Attis (see CYBELE). This was the March celebration called *Hilaria*. It involved processions and sacrifices, followed by abstention from meat, and general restrictions, to accompany the ritual mourning of the god's death. The god's eventual resurrection was followed by ritual joy and festivity. Christians will find the pattern not unfamiliar.

First and Last Flings

From the earliest Christian times, the celebration of spring tended to begin on or shortly after Twelfth Night, but to come to a head especially in the few days before Ash Wednesday and the austerities of Lent. Many pre-Christian festivals were held at this time, and again this is an example of Christianity superimposing itself onto paganism. In fact, the folk festivals, as opposed to the liturgical ones, always tended towards the secular, not to say the profane. Nevertheless, the Church's terminology took over: the final day of the festivals is invariably Shrove Tuesday, presumably so called because it was a day for priests to shrive folk in preparation for Lent. Yet, although the festivals may appear to be in the nature of 'last flings' before Lenten asceticism, they were, and are, also 'first flings', expressing universal joy at the spring renewal. The pre-Lenten festivals were not the sole spring festivities, but for Christian Europe and the Americas, they were the first.

Some motifs are found in most of these early spring celebrations. Feasting is always important, especially for Christians who had to give up meat and any kind of rich delicacy in Lent; but sometimes the feasting is merely symbolized by the eating of some special Shrovetide food. Dancing invariably takes place, as always at times of communal joy; some special dances may be mimetic and dramatic, concerning some suitable springtime theme, while others might be processional, the ancestors of later parades. The modern idea of parades with great decorated 'floats' was foreshadowed in the Germanic rite praising the goddess Nerthus, which involved processions with sacred objects borne on a strange 'boat-on-wheels' called a ship-wagon or ship-cart.

Masks and costumes are always part of the festivities, perhaps recalling the prehistoric dancers in animal head-dresses, and the primitive belief that fearful masks provided a way of keeping evil spirits at bay. But in more modern times the costumes are worn largely for the sake of competitive splendour, and the masks have always helped the celebrants to shed their inhibitions in relative safety.

The motif of warding off or driving off evil crops up in many places in forms other than masking. Sometimes it is a magical ritual to protect the crops, at other times it appears as a magical destruction or exorcism of the demonic winter or some other appropriate symbol of evil. Noise plays a large part in the expulsion, as it does in many primitive rites; often an effigy figure is burned or suitably destroyed.

Mock battles of one kind or another occur frequently, and are probably linked with the motif of driving off evil. For while they may have taken on special colourations, such as re-enactments of historical combats, or riotous sport, their presence in a spring festival links them with more ancient ritual battles symbolizing the conflict of winter and summer.

Spring festivals all naturally incorporate some form of sexuality – not only private sex activity, which has always accompanied drinking, feasting and dancing, but also ritual sex that long antedates the Christian traditions. Some traditions incorporate variants of the sacred marriage; others merely bring in rude songs, the coarse antics of clowns, and earthy folk drama.

Drama, on any level, is a spring motif of its own. The incomparable Greek drama grew from much older, primitive rites; and the high traditions of English drama had their roots in choric liturgical rites of the Church at Easter which gave rise to later mystery and miracle plays, and the folk dances, mimes and mummery of the people, performed at Shrovetide, which developed the morality thread of the English tradition. Many lands still have special folk dramas and masques which are performed before Lent as they have been for centuries (see DANCE; DRAMA; MYSTERY PLAYS).

The sexual and dramatic aspects of the revelry sometimes overlap with another common motif, in which the normal order of things is overturned. Servants or fools become rulers. Lords of Misrule dominate the festivities of many countries, men dress as women.

It may seem odd that countries of the far

The celebration of fertility, and its magical stimulation, form the basis for spring rituals all over the world *Right* Fertility dance, in a village on the Ivory Coast *Below right* The maypole with its phallic symbolism is a traditional feature of springtime celebrations, and the custom of performing a dance around it is widespread: young men raising the maypole in Sweden

Uniphoto

Spectrum Colour Library

North start their festivities to celebrate spring and fertility at a time when the snow is usually no less deep than at Christmas. Similarly, it may seem strange that customs left over from Catholic observances of Lent still survive in primarily Protestant countries. The latter fact may be accounted for simply because the old ways die hard, especially when they are enjoyable, and the former may be because the combined pagan and Christian jollity, though perhaps imported to the northern lands, proved able to overcome even the frost and ice of February.

Indeed, a Finnish tradition makes use of the snow: outdoor games are part of the holiday, and old lore says that if the children's sleds can coast long distances on Shrove Tuesday, the year's crops will be bountiful. Elsewhere in Scandinavia, feasting, processions, games and dances are hallmarks of the pre-Lent time as is the custom of playful ritual flagellation with birch or willow switches, recalling the old purification theme, the driving off of winter and evil.

Driving off demons also seems all-important in Teutonic traditions, especially in the great *Fastnacht* celebrations of Germany, known as *Fasching* in Austria. The Austrian *Schemen*, a wild assortment of masked demonic dancers, which form the centrepiece of the Innsbruck festival the week before Ash Wednesday, are especially notable. Cologne's revelry features a Prince of Fastnacht with a court of fools, while Saxony was given to staging a mock battle between the forces of winter and summer. Munich's gorgeous pageantry is world-famous, but seems to dwell more on the city's medieval history than on folk custom or ancient rite; the German-speaking Swiss of Zurich have a tradition of killing an effigy of winter in their spring festivities.

British customs generally seem to have missed out the parades and pageantry so favoured in other lands, but some of the old spring motifs make their appearance. Shrove Tuesday is still Pancake Day in Britain, symbolic of the coming abstention from meat. But apart from this special food, Shrovetide for Britons once meant a time for rough games and hooliganism. In the past apprentices were given a holiday on the Tuesday, and showed their appreciation by all kinds of happy rowdiness. A special sort of Shrovetide football was played in many towns and rural villages (see GAMES).

The sexuality theme seems to be lacking in the British Shrovetide, though the traditional post-Easter fun, and especially the Maytime delights of the past, tended to make up for this lack (see MAY DAY).

In other countries pancakes are eaten as in Britain, and there are also splendid parades or dances. In Belgium where pancakes and door-to-door begging are both part of the tradition, glorious processions were staged. These were dominated by the Gilles, who wore beautiful costumes of silk embroidered with lace, and ostrich-plume head-dresses, and who used to pelt onlookers with oranges.

Old Russian and eastern European customs included eating special cakes: the Russians called them *blini*, and the time of celebration was known as *Maslenitza*, 'butter week'. Apparently the Soviet Union has retained some of these traditions – especially the blini – though stripped of any religious associations. However, it is unlikely that other Slavic customs have lasted; the eastern European dance where the women had to leap high, so that the crops would grow tall, for instance, or the Bulgarian processions with men, dressed as women, performing mimetic ploughing and sowing dances.

Farther south in Europe, terms meaning 'Shrovetide' are replaced by the word carnival, which has come to mean unrestrained festive gaiety. Italy sometimes begins its *carnevale* in mid-January or earlier, and keeps up the feasting and

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In Christian Europe, and later in North and South America, the first celebrations of spring were also in the nature of a 'last fling' before the strict fasting of Lent; the Shrovetide celebrations of Britain were paralleled further south by carnivals, times of unrestrained festivity *Above* and *Left* Scenes from the Mardi Gras held annually in New Orleans; brought to Louisiana by French settlers when the state was a colony of France, it has developed into a major tourist attraction *Above right* Masks are always part of the festivities, possibly recalling the primitive belief that they keep evil spirits at bay: masks for sale in Rio de Janeiro which is the scene of the most famous carnival in South America *Far right* Effigy used in celebrations held in May in Portugal

John Moss

Robert Estall

The spring fiesta in Spain includes many folk dramas on sacred marriage or Resurrection themes, and dramatic dance battles between Moors and Christians

dancing and pageantry until Shrove Tuesday. Venice crowns an overweight effigy, the spirit of fleshly indulgence, as King of Carnival and ritually burns him to bring in Ash Wednesday. Florence, among other centres, is noted for the delightful rudeness of traditional carnival songs.

The Spanish carnival spirit produces most of the usual traditions, especially public dancing and masked processions. In northern Spain, a stuffed effigy again acts as the emblem of carnival licence; it rides in a cart decorated with greenery, reflecting the ancient belief in vegetation magic, and is duly burned. Elsewhere in Spain an effigy representing the King of Evil is ritually buried; and the spring *fiesta* also includes many folk dramas on sacred marriage or Resurrection themes, or on the symbolic battle theme, which is sometimes in the form of dramatic dance battles between Moors and Christians.

The Spanish concepts of pre-Lent fiesta were widely adopted in Latin and South America, and there too the motif of the mock battle seems to be strong. A Mexican drama ritually depicts the capture of a famous bandit by soldiers, while in south-east Mexico a mock battle dance concerns 'priests' and 'devils'. Throughout Latin America maskers represent devils and the dead, signifying the supernatural forces that are to be warded off.

But the Spanish ex-colonies take fiesta to its heights in their immense variety of special dances, such as the quadrille-type dance of central Mexico, for instance, in which participants wear medieval garb. Many of the dances incorporate elements of pre-Columbian Indian dances and rites. In Mexico, for instance, the time that is now carnival was once given to revelry in praise of the Aztec god of agriculture.

Portugal's carnival spirit rivals that of Spain. It was once especially famous for the extreme coarseness of the songs, dances and jokes of the masked Fools who dominated it, though this feature has diminished in recent times. The mock battle theme recurs abundantly: in the town of Loulé, for instance, the ritual conflict is fought out with flowers.

Portuguese carnival traditions were naturally exported to Brazil, where in 1840 the urban carnival of Rio de Janeiro began;

it is now regarded as the most lavish on the continent. All the expected features of carnival can be found in costly abundance, especially parades with vast resplendent floats and ornate costuming, in which various societies and clubs ruthlessly compete. Otherwise, besides the street dancing and music, noise and drinking and wild revelry, Rio finds some quiet corners to stage a major song contest, with rich prizes. And the whole festival culminates in a masquerade ball in the Municipal Theatre.

'Fat Tuesday'

The French have always enjoyed many different kinds of carnival, including a now extinct festival of butchers in Paris, which featured Le Boeuf Gras, a fattened ox decorated with ribbons, which was probably another emblem of the indulgence to be forsworn in Lent. But the chief festival is the carnival of Nice, with glorious parades and pageants, dominated by King Carnival and his court of clowns and harlequins, embodying the free wild spirit of the season. This spirit flourished especially in the French colony which is now the American state of Louisiana. There the significant French name for Shrove Tuesday took on new meaning as the general term for the whole festive time. The name is Mardi Gras, 'Fat Tuesday'.

Mardi Gras traditions date from the mid-18th century, in New Orleans, when private masquerade balls often exploded onto the streets to become public, sometimes violent, merrymaking. By the early 19th century the city's revellers had taken to parading through the streets on horseback or in carriages to display their finery; and tableaux, masques and similar light dramas had become a part of the occasion.

By the mid-19th century, the Creole domination of this essentially French tradition had begun to be eclipsed by the eager 'Saxons'. Then in 1857 a group of the latter formed a theoretically secret society called the 'Mystic Krewe of Comus', and staged a colourful street parade depicting the demons from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. So the modern Mardi Gras was born.

The Civil War interrupted the tradition but the Krewe of Comus formed itself again afterwards and continued its parades, always with a special theme that might be allegorical or sometimes satirical. There was always a torchlit night parade on the Tuesday. The Krewe also staged tableaux, and topped off the night with a grand ball that rapidly became a major social occasion.

The festivities were often marred by Creole-Saxon conflicts and general riotous behaviour, but the protests of some citizens could not stem the Mardi Gras tide. In 1872 the day was declared a legal holiday, though by then the festival had been getting under way much earlier. Indeed, in 1870 a Lord of Misrule figure had briefly appeared, with a parade of his own, on Twelfth Night. But in 1872 he faded out, for Rex, King of Carnival, and his court of Dukes, came into being partly to impress the Russian Tsar's younger son, who was visiting the city. The parades were enormous that year, the decorations lavish, the merriment frenzied. On the Tuesday more than a dozen bands played a song called *If Ever I Cease to Love*, supposedly a favourite of the royal Russian; and though he must have been heartily sick of it by the end of the day it remains a traditional tune of Mardi Gras. That year also there was a Boeuf Gras in the old French tradition. Rex, whose parade was at noon on the Tuesday, initiated the now fixed custom of acquiring a Queen, usually a pretty society debutante, and escorting her to the 'court' of Comus at midnight, to pay respects to the first lord of Mardi Gras.

Soon other krewes, as the clubs and societies are still generically known, began to take part. The Knights of Momus led the newcomers, and at first paraded on New Year's Eve, later switching to the Thursday before Fat Tuesday. In 1882 the Knights of Proteus began parading on the Monday; the Krewe of Hermes took over the Friday; and krewes of Orpheus, Osiris, Mithras, Elves of Oberon, the Harlequins, Pierettes, Marionettes and dozens of others found room where they could for their own parades and displays.

Some citizens thought it was all getting out of hand. Sometimes the festivities began before Christmas, as they still do: in 1965 the society balls began on 23 December and there had been 62 of them by Fat Tuesday. From the start, the inter-krewe rivalry had been lavishly expensive. But there was no stopping the flood. Neighbourhood parades began to spring up, smaller versions

Intended to promote fertility and reinvigorate the year, the *Holi* is celebrated in northern India when the crops of the spring harvest are almost ripe; festivities include ritual dramas in which women battle with the men, and generally culminate in a procession; on the second day dust and coloured water are flung over the spectators *Left* 18th century gouache, showing men of a village spraying red water over the women during the spring festival *Right* Dyes for use in the celebrations, for sale in an Indian market place

Brian Moodie

of the great downtown processions, and on the Saturday schoolchildren organized their own parades. After the First World War the Negroes of New Orleans introduced a parade on the Tuesday itself, before Rex's parade began. The black contribution was headed by the Zulu King, with a ham-bone as sceptre, who was clearly in the Lord of Misrule tradition of overturning the usual order of things. He parades still, though black militants deplore his presence.

Others now tend to deplore the New Orleans' Mardi Gras as a whole, feeling that its French antecedents and the pre-Lent gaiety have been forced into a back seat by the more modern spirit of public relations. Mardi Gras remains still the high point of the social calendar, with an invitation to the Comus ball being a testimonial to social success; otherwise, the ruling theme is not snobbery but civic promotion and commercialism. The two may overlap, of course, for many of the krewes are somewhat identified with businessmen's lunch clubs.

Mardi Gras has been taken over by the promoters because it is a vastly successful tourist attraction. Though the carnival spirit of the citizens is supposed to be the mainspring of the festivities, the Chamber of Commerce is in fact a more likely one, and the city itself pours hundreds of thousands of dollars into the occasion. Nor are private promoters far behind: the trinkets traditionally thrown to the crowd from Rex's parade, once considered luck-bringing souvenirs, now carry advertising matter.

Once again, citizens are calling for the abandonment of the celebration because, they say, commercialism and violence have distorted the original 'folk-celebration' spirit of Mardi Gras. But it is doubtful if that folk spirit truly survived much past the 1850s. After all, the originators, with their self-conscious title of a Mystic Krewe, their high literary themes from Milton, and their expanding sense of their own social cachet, could hardly be said to have represented a spirit that had much to do with the simple, age-old human urge to celebrate the earth's renewal in spring.

DOUGLAS HILL

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Many holy wells were pagan sacred springs which were re-dedicated by Christian missionaries; some were prophetic, others therapeutic, and others again had power to work evil

SPRINGS AND WELLS

THE SACRED character of particular springs and wells, like that of many rivers, lakes and waterfalls (see WATER), is an exceedingly old tradition which has its roots in one of the most ancient and universal forms of worship. Water itself was considered to be essentially holy by primitive peoples because it was a basic necessity of life. It was also mysterious, as its movements were often unpredictable and beyond man's control, and it could destroy by drowning or by flood.

Where rivers flowed, or springs welled up out of the ground, or waterfalls thundered over rocks, there some divine force was felt to have its abode, and was worshipped in fear and hope by all who approached. To the unseen spirits who dwelt there, prayers and propitiatory sacrifices were offered, that their dangerous anger might be averted and the life-giving waters continue to flow. To them also, men came to be cured of their ills, or to seek answers to their problems, or to call down destruction upon their enemies. Such beliefs and practices were very deep-seated and, in one form or another, they managed to survive all the religious changes of many centuries, including the advent of Christianity. Even today, their traces are clearly visible in numerous legends of healing or wishing-wells, or life-demanding rivers, and in some wellside ceremonies.

Certain springs and streams were believed to have foreknowledge and, from time to time, to predict the future by sudden variations in level or colour, or the manner of their flow. The now-vanished Drumming Well at Oundle in Northamptonshire gave warning of coming changes in the state of the nation by sounds resembling the persistent beating of a drum. In his *Certainty of the World of Spirits* (1691), Richard Baxter, who heard it once during the Civil War, said that the noise continued for several days together, and was clearly audible some distance away. St Helen's Well at Rushton Spencer in Staffordshire dried up before any calamity, even in the wettest seasons. Tradition says it did so before the outbreak of the Civil War, before the execution of Charles I, and at the beginning of the Popish Plot terror in 1679. Other springs, normally dormant, foretold misfortune by suddenly breaking out and flowing very freely for a short time. One such is the intermittent Assenden Spring, in Oxfordshire, which traditionally runs before a war, and is said to have done so in 1914, and again in 1939. The uncertain land-springs found in chalk country, which appear only occasionally and are known as levants, or corn-springs, were believed to predict by their sudden uprising a dearth of corn, and consequently its high price.

Prophetic waters of this kind seem to have concerned themselves only with matters of national importance or, at least, with coming events likely to affect a fairly wide area. There were other springs which had knowledge of a different kind, and to which inquiries of a more personal character were often directed. The famous Holy Well of Gulval, in Cornwall, used to be visited by people anxious about the welfare of absent friends. Kneeling by the well, and looking into it so that they could see their faces reflected in its depths, they put their questions to an old woman who acted as guardian of the spring, and the water replied. If the friend was well, it bubbled up as if it were boiling, if he was ill, it became muddy and discoloured. If he was already dead, it remained unchanged.

Many ancient holy or healing wells now associated with particular saints started life as pagan sacred springs, and were re-dedicated and given a new spiritual significance by the Christian missionaries of the early conversion period. It was the wise policy of the Church at that time to transform and purify, rather than destroy, whatever was innocent and harmless in the older

Homer Sykes

Found in parts of Derbyshire, the Christian custom of well-dressing is a survival of the pagan belief that each well had its own guardian who had to be propitiated every year if the crops were to grow. Ceremonies usually take place on Ascension Day, immediately following the three days on which God's blessing is asked for the crops *Left* Ceremonial blessing of the Yew Tree Well at Tissingdon in Derbyshire *Facing page* Plaques depicting Cain and Abel, and illustrating a text from the book of Isaiah

faith and, by consecrating familiar sanctuaries anew to the service of Christ, to make the transition from paganism to Christianity easier. This is why the first small churches were often built inside or near stone circles, or close to heathen holy springs, and the water of the latter was used for the baptism of converts. The little wooden chapel that was the humble predecessor of York Minster was built over one such spring, which still exists in the crypt of the present cathedral. The healing virtues of medicinal wells were no longer attributed to the power of pagan indwelling spirits, but to the intercession of saints in whose honour the wells had been re-named; and as new legends replaced the old, their very existence was often thought to be due to the prayers of holy men or, occasionally, to the blood of martyrs shed at that place.

Tradition says that St Augustine's Well at Cerne, in Dorset, came into being when that great missionary, finding himself astray and thirsty in a dry countryside, struck the ground with his staff. Another version of the tale says that he performed this kindly miracle when certain shepherds complained that they lacked water for their flocks. At Binsey, near Oxford, a healing well, into which coins are still dropped by people seeking relief from eye ailments, was called up by the prayers of St Frideswide.

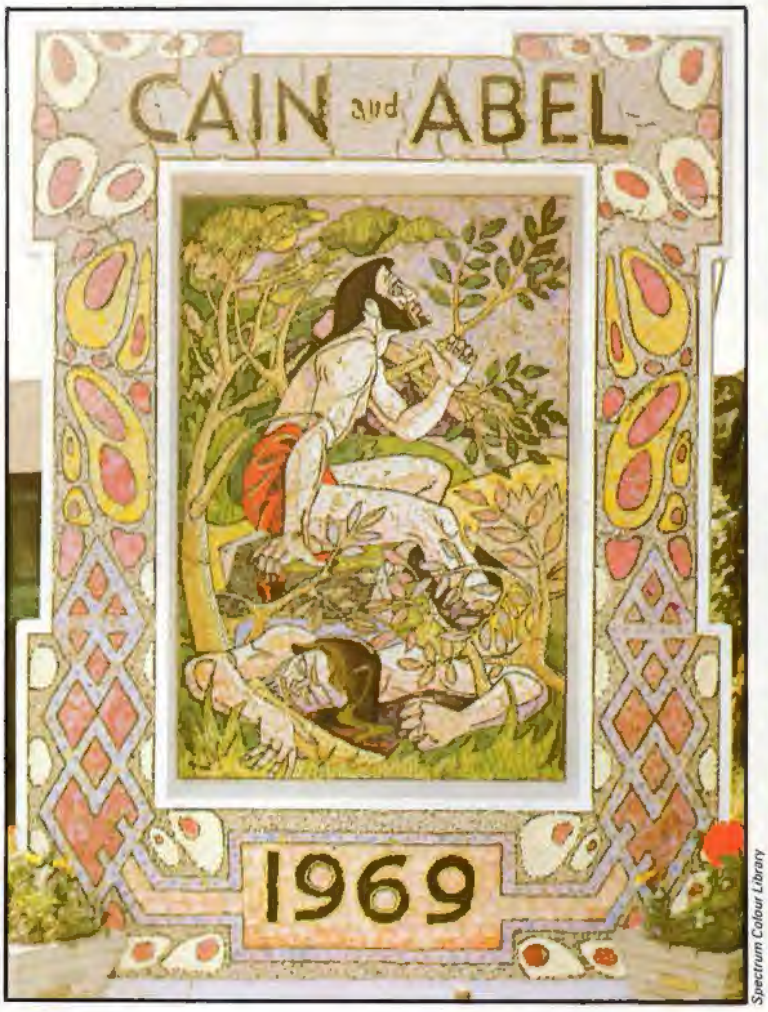
The famous medicinal well at Holywell, in Wales, had its legendary origin in the 7th century, when St Winifrid was murdered in what was then a waterless valley. Because she repulsed his advances, Caradoc of Hawarden killed her by cutting off her head with a single stroke of his sword. Where the head fell, a strong spring burst out of the stony soil, and has run unfailingly ever since. A further legend relates that St Beuno reunited the severed head to the body and restored her to life, and that she lived to meet a second death long afterwards.

Wells dedicated to St Anne exist in many parts of Europe. In England they are often known as granny-wells because, being the mother of the Virgin Mary, she was the grandmother of Christ. A Breton legend says that, in her old age, she made her home in Brittany, and there, just before she died, Christ came to visit her. At her request, in order to help the sick people of the province, he struck the ground three times with his staff, and so called into being the spring of St Anne-de-la-Palue. St Anne's Well at Buxton in Derbyshire has no such personal legend attached to it, but there is a tradition that it is dedicated to her because, in the Middle Ages, a statue representing her was found in its depths. A figure of the saint, enshrined in a wellside chapel, certainly existed in Henry VIII's reign, for it was removed then and subsequently destroyed, but whether this was the one so curiously discovered is now uncertain. Nor can we be sure that the original image was in fact one of St Anne, or any other Christian saint. The spring was venerated in Roman times, and perhaps earlier, and the statue may quite possibly have been that of some pagan water nymph or goddess. It need hardly be said that no such idea crossed the minds of the countless pilgrims who came to the spring to be cured of their ills, and deposited their offerings in the chapel of the saint by whose intercession they had been healed. In 1538 the well was arbitrarily closed by one of Thomas Cromwell's agents, 'for that,' as he said in his report, 'there should be no more idolatry and superstition there used'. Some 30 years later, by a curious turn of fortune, it was once again a centre of healing, though not for religious reasons. It became one of the main medicinal wells of the then newly-founded spa at Buxton, and as such it endures to this day.

A Source of Evil

In some holy wells that were once pagan springs, the ancient indwellers seem never to have been altogether forgotten, or perhaps they raised their hoary heads again as the saints who replaced them gradually lost their influence on everyday life. St Nun's (or Nonna's) spring at Pelynt in Cornwall is sometimes called the Piskies' Well, and pins used to be thrown into it to gain the goodwill of the pixies, rather than that of St Nun, the mother of St David. Its water was used for baptisms in the parish church, but according to a story collected in the late 19th century, it was the fairies who were blamed for the misfortunes that befell a farmer after he had rashly tried to steal its granite basin.

When St Aelian in the 6th century prayed for water and so called up the Denbighshire spring named after him, he can hardly have imagined that it would become notorious,



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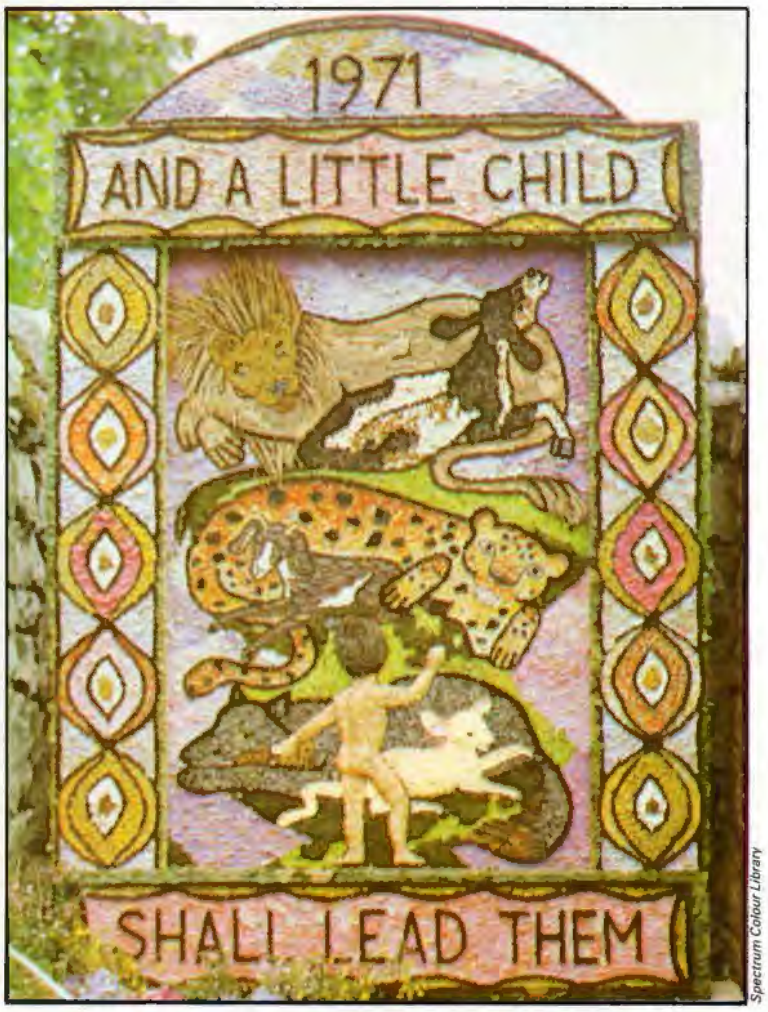

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Because of their mysterious nature, wells are sometimes depicted in legends as being suitable refuges for malevolent beings; in the Persian *Romance of Amir Hamza*, the giant Zamurrad is lured into a well, and beaten by gardeners: 16th century Mogul miniature

and universally dreaded, as a cursing-well. It seems at one time to have been a simple healing spring, like many others, but during the 18th and 19th centuries, it had an extremely evil reputation. People came to it to curse their enemies. They gave money to its guardian, who wrote the victim's name in a book. His initials were then scratched on a slate, or inscribed upon parchment, and thrown into the well. A pin was also thrown in, and some passages from the Bible were read aloud. The seeker was then given water to drink, and some was thrown over his head, while he stated the nature of the evil he wished to inflict. It was widely believed that any person so cursed would become very ill, or would meet with constant misfortune, or that he would die. Exactly how these malevolent powers became attached to this spring is unknown; the well has now been filled up (see also CURSE).

Some venerable holy wells, to which pious Christians once came in true faith and devotion, have degenerated into simple wishing-wells, where secretly-formed wishes have taken the place of prayers, and pins or coins, or occasionally small pebbles, are dropped in. Those who visit such springs today are not actuated by religious motives, and probably they have only a very vague notion of who or what it is they expect to grant their wishes. Yet it can hardly be doubted that this is a curious reversion to heathen beliefs, unrecognized though they may be by those who offer their pins or coins. The wheel has come full cycle, and the pagan spirit, which some saint displaced for a time, has come into his own again.

CHRISTINA HOLE

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STAG

ANIMALS WITH HORNS or antlers are depicted in paintings and carvings executed by men of the Old Stone Age; and the 'Horned Sorcerer', a painting of a man wearing antlers, in the cave of Les Trois Frères in southern France, suggests that such beasts were of ritual importance (see ICONOGRAPHY). Among the Hittites a god whose sacred animal was the stag was worshipped. His cult, which dates back to the third millennium BC, was widespread, and models of stags have been recovered from tombs. A god of the countryside, he is represented standing on a stag, holding a falcon and a hare, and it is possible that, before the Hittite city states arose, he may have presided over the chase.

The Celtic divinity Cernunnos was depicted wearing antlers and, usually, in a squatting posture, as on the Gundestrup cauldron found in Jutland, where he is shown surrounded by animals and may have been regarded as a Lord of Beasts. A rock carving in Val Canonica in northern Italy shows a phallic figure apparently worshipping before a horned god who wears a torque (metal ornament). The god was probably regarded as a source of fertility and power. Evidence from the Near East indicates that horns represented supernatural power (see HORNS).

At Syracuse in Sicily women singers wore garlands, and antlers on their heads, and at a festival in honour of Artemis men were similarly adorned. In another such ritual men postured like women. There was yet another ceremony in which men wore phalluses, and one in which women wore imitations of the male organ. There were evidently ambivalent ideas concerning Artemis, the huntress goddess, who was represented in art with one or more stags. Animals, and even human beings, were sacrificed to her. Actaeon, the young hunter who inadvertently interrupted her bathing, was transformed into a stag and torn to pieces by his own hounds (see DIANA).

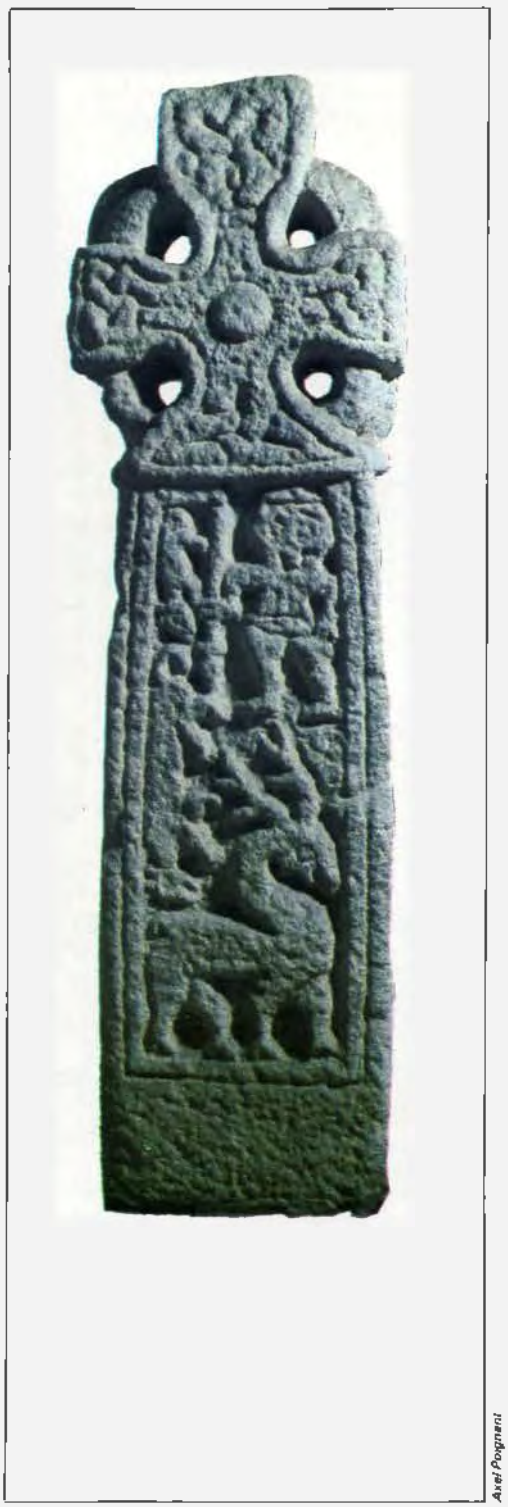
There is a curious connection between the stag and precious metals. The hinds captured by Artemis and harnessed to her golden chariot bore horns. Hercules's third labour involved capturing the Ceryneian hind which had brazen hooves and golden horns, and which was sacred to Artemis, and bringing it to Mycene (see HERCULES). The *Rama Yana*, an Indian epic, mentions a golden-antlered stag whose coat was flecked with silver, and in China deer are associated with places where precious metals are mined. Silver models of deer were placed in Christian sanctuaries because the stag was regarded as a symbol of Christ; when confronted with a serpent it represented the Christian overcoming evil.

A ritual stag-hunt took place on Mt Lycaeum at the beginning of the Christian era, and as late as the 5th century AD stag mummers danced in the south of France. In North America deer dances were performed by antlered dancers to increase fertility by causing rain to fall, and to encourage the growth of wild crops. Men wearing antlers still perform a dance in September every year at Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire.

Deer Women

The abundance of legendary lore concerning deer where Celtic culture and languages survive confirms that the stag was regarded as a supernatural animal. In the Scottish Highlands and islands the deer is associated with supernatural beings, always female, and there are many tales of deer-human transformations. These fabulous creatures are seldom malicious, but they are sometimes thought of as being gigantic. There was one, for instance, who was so colossal that when she waded across the Sound of Mull the water came only up to her knees.

A Gaelic tale relates that after a tragedy in which her baby was killed, a woman took to the hills where she lived with the deer and eluded her husband's attempts to capture her. After seven years he decided to marry again, but when the day for the wedding arrived his wife appeared at the church and took her place by his side; she was covered in fine fur like that of a red deer fawn. In other tales a hunter sees a deer turn into a woman and falls in love with her. He arranges to meet her at a church where they are to be married, but their plans are foiled by a witch.



The stag was widely regarded as a supernatural animal; in some areas it was thought to be connected with the underworld, but there are also signs that it was associated with the sun. Carving of a stag and a Viking, on a cross at Middleton in Yorkshire

Victoria & Albert Museum

Axel Poignant

British Museum

After many adventures they meet on a distant island and marry.

According to another Celtic legend Ossian hurled his spear at, but missed, a beautiful white deer, who turned out to be his mother. She led him to a rock in which a door mysteriously opened, and closed after them, and then revealed herself as a lovely woman. Yet another story describes how a hunter wounded a deer which managed to escape. Later she appeared to him in a dream, in human form, and returned the arrow with which he had shot her.

The ghosts of deer were thought to change into supernatural women. In some areas the lore concerning deer suggests that they were connected with the underworld but there are also signs that they were solar animals; a rock engraving in Scandinavia shows stags drawing the disc of the sun.

Fairies' Cattle

Folklore in Scotland and elsewhere refers so frequently to deer serving mankind in various ways that it has been suspected that red deer were domesticated at some time in the remote past. However, with the exception of the reindeer, there is little firm evidence of their having been tamed in ancient times. In Scotland they were said to be the fairies' cattle, and tales of benevolent deer go back to ancient times. Telephus, Hercules's son by the virgin priestess of Athens, was abandoned in a forest, and was said to have been suckled by a doe. Stories of Christian saints and hermits similarly describe their receiving sustenance from these creatures. Hermits gave sanctuary to hunted deer, who aided them in various ways, by carrying baggage, or providing an antler book rest or antler candlesticks.

The antlers of deer have often been regarded as having special powers, often magical. Picks made from deer-horn, and a chalk phallus, which were found at the end of a worked-out seam in a Neolithic flint mine at Grimes Graves in Norfolk may have been placed there in the hope that the mine could be made more productive. Practically every part of the deer has been believed to have medicinal qualities, in one part of Europe or another, while in China powdered antlers was thought to be an aphrodisiac. In some areas antlers are hung up on buildings to ward off evil influences.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Homer Sykes

Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

Left **The relationship between stags or deer and human beings is generally a benevolent one; the Roman general Sertorius gained the goodwill of the inhabitants of Spain because he had a pet fawn which they regarded as a sign of divine protection: Sertorius and his fawn, 15th century Italian manuscript** ***Above right*** **Horned animals were of ritual importance to primitive man, who regarded them as sources of fertility and power: the Horn Dance, performed in Abbots Bromley every year, is a relic of pagan worship. There are many tales of people being transformed into deer; in Greek mythology Diana turned Actaeon into a stag because he saw her bathing: a 16th century Italian dish** ***(right)*** **and a painting by Giuseppe Cesari** ***(following page)*** **both depict Actaeon's transformation**

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest/Corvina Press, Budapest

STARS

Mansell Collection

18th century map of the northern hemisphere: the Mesopotamians regarded the movement of the planets in relation to the fixed stars as the 'writing of heaven'; although Christ was said to have disrupted the planets' courses, and to have broken their control over human destiny, belief in astrology has survived throughout the centuries

WHETHER STARS have ever been worshipped purely as stars is doubtful. For, mysterious though they surely were to ancient man, those remote points of light in the night sky had no obvious effect on his life as, for example, the sun had. However, they have been associated with divine beings from a very early period, often as their place of abode or form of manifestation. The ancient Sumerians identified the planet Venus with an important goddess called Inanna, the 'Lady of Heaven'; the Babylonians knew her as Ishtar (see ISHTAR). Since the planet appears as both the Morning and Evening Star, the two forms under which the goddess was conceived could be conveniently represented: as the goddess of the Morning Star, Ishtar presided over war and carnage; as the Evening Star, she was the fertility goddess, associated with love and luxury. Her symbol was a star of eight or 16 rays, inscribed in a circle. The awful god Nergal, the ruler of the Mesopotamian underworld, who was also associated with war and pestilence, was identified with the red planet Mars.

The locating of the gods in the stars and the origins of astrology are graphically recorded in the famous Babylonian Creation epic, known as the *Enuma elish* (see CREATION MYTHS). It is related of Marduk, the great god of Babylon: 'He constructed stations for the great gods, fixing their astral likenesses as constellations. He determined the year by designating the zones: he set up three constellations for the 12 months.' The movement of the planets in relation to the constellations of the fixed stars was, consequently, regarded by the ancient Mesopotamians as the 'writing of heaven', by which the will of the gods for the state or individual persons was signified. This resulted in the development of astrology as a science of divining what was portended by the stars, and the casting of horoscopes, which can be traced back to at least 410 BC (see MESOPOTAMIA). The belief that the gods revealed the fates of nations and men through the stars, in which they resided, inevitably led to the idea that human destiny was controlled by the stars or planets. This idea became very influential in the world of Graeco-Roman civilization.

In ancient Egypt, the stars were objects of great significance, although none achieved the status of a major god, apart from the sun (Re), which was worshipped as the chief state deity, and the moon god Chons, the 'lord of time' who counted the years of both kings and men. The Egyptians imagined the stars, which 'grow not weary', as manning the boat in which the sun god journeyed across the night sky. The circumpolar stars, that never set in the west, were seen as 'the imperishable ones', and in the Pyramid Texts the dead kings hope to fly up to heaven and join their company, to be for ever safe from change and decay. The association of the dead with the stars was a long-established tradition in Egypt, which finds expression in the depiction of stars on coffins, often in connection with the protecting image of Nut, the sky goddess.

The Egyptians, like the Mesopotamians, formed pictures in the stars, seeing in the various groups the figures of gods, animals and things. The Plough suggested to them both the implement used in the ceremony known as the 'Opening of the Mouth' in the Osirian mortuary ritual (see MUMMIFICATION), and the thigh of an animal. Because the latter symbolized a sacrificial offering, which in turn was connected with the evil god Seth (see SETH), the Plough was also called the 'thigh of Seth'. The constellation of Orion was held in particular veneration; like many other peoples, the Egyptians saw in it the form of a man, whom they identified with Osiris (see OSIRIS). The equation had a deep significance, in view of the ancient connection of the dead with the stars: for Orion, the 'king of the stars', was also Osiris, the ruler of the dead.

Another star of great significance was Sothis (Sirius, the 'dog star'). Because of its apparent proximity to the constellation of Orion, which represented Osiris, Sothis was identified with the goddess Isis (see ISIS) the wife of Osiris; and because Isis had succoured the dead Osiris and helped him to rise from the dead, Sothis was accordingly deemed to help those who had died. Further, the Egyptian calendar had originally been based upon the fact that Sothis's rising near the sun coincided with the commencement of the annual flooding of the river Nile. Consequently, since the prosperity of Egypt depended upon the fructifying flood waters of the Nile, the equation of Isis with Sothis was endowed with even greater meaning. According to the Greek writer Plutarch (1st century AD), Sirius (Sothis) was the soul of Isis. In iconography Isis is often depicted with a star between the two horns of her crown.

The ancient Egyptians did not come to believe that the stars controlled human destiny until the Hellenistic period (330–30 BC). Then, most probably under the influence of Mesopotamian astral beliefs, they adopted the idea with enthusiasm and developed a form of astral religion or mystical philosophy which became widely influential in the world of Graeco-Roman culture. Star charts were elaborated, comprising 59 deities who presided over the various time units of the year: months, decades, and supplementary days. Astrological writings were composed c 150 BC, doubtless in Alexandria, and were ascribed to a fictitious king Nechepso and a priest Petosiris, who were associated with the attribution of each day of the week to one of the planets, although the notion probably originated with Chaldean astrologers. The importance of horoscopes became so great in Egypt that they were inscribed on the roofs of tombs. How this astrological lore assumed that the fates of individual persons were decided by the planets is set forth, with pseudo-scientific detail, in the *Tetrabiblos* of Ptolemy, who wrote in Egypt in the 2nd century AD. For example, he attributes to each planet a particular form of death; Saturn controls death by pulmonary consumption and rheumatism; Jupiter by apoplexy and cardiac affections; Mars by strokes and kidney diseases. The planets similarly determined the temperament and length of life of each man and woman.

Slaves of the Universe

The idea that mankind was subject to demonic powers, resident in the planets, was elaborated into a complex doctrine of salvation in the *Corpus Hermeticum* (see HERMETICA). This remarkable collection of mystical scriptures purport to be revelations made by Hermes Trismegistus, who was in origin the Egyptian god Thoth. In one of the texts, known as the *Poimandres*, the subjection of mankind to the planets is explained in an esoteric imagery. In the beginning the Primal Being, who is described as Mind, *Nous*, Life, *Zoe*, and Light, *Phos*, generated a second demiurgic Nous, who created the universe. In the course of his creation the demiurge made the seven planets called governors, *dioiketai*, whose cycles envelop the material world, which they govern; their government being called *Heimarmene*, Destiny. Next, the Supreme Nous generated an archetypal man, *Anthropos*, in his own image. This Anthropos, seeing the creation of the demiurge, desired himself to create. Passing through the celestial spheres, he descended to the material world, where he cohabited with Nature, *Phusis*. From their union mankind was born, having a dual nature: their mortal bodies derived from Nature, and their immortal souls from divine Man. But owing to their situation in this material world, human beings are subject to the planetary powers, who control their destiny. It was the purpose of the *Poimandres* to show how the human soul could be saved from this fatal enslavement to the planets, and ascend through the spheres to the highest heaven from which its divine progenitor had come.

This explanation of the human situation, variously adapted, constituted the basic doctrine of the many forms of Gnosticism which flourished in the Graeco-Roman world (see GNOSTICISM). Its ideology

appears in many writings of St Paul and it obviously influenced his doctrine of salvation (see PAUL). He uses a number of terms which relate to this astral doctrine: he reminds the Galatian Christians that before their conversion they 'were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe' (Galatians 4.3); he explains that God misled the 'rulers of this age' into crucifying Christ, which enabled mankind to be delivered from their power (1 Corinthians 2.6–8); he tells how Christ, through his crucifixion, 'disarmed the principalities and powers' (Colossians 2.15); and he asks the Christians of Galatia whether they desire to return to their bondage to the planets, because they 'observe days, and months, and seasons, and years' (Galatians 4.10).

In Christian Gnosticism these ideas were further developed. It was maintained that Christ had broken the control of the planets over human destiny by disrupting their courses. The star which announced his birth to the Magi (Matthew, chapter 2) was explained as a new star that changed the old inevitable astral order to one that was providential. This subjection of the planetary powers is dramatically symbolized in the book of Revelation (1.16), where Christ as the Cosmocrator, ruler of the world, appears holding the seven stars in his right hand.

Although Christ was deemed to have delivered mankind from the dominion of the stars, Christians continued to regard them with awe. Astrology survived the downfall of paganism, and its practice continued on through the Middle Ages with even popes consulting the prognostications of the stars. The planets still remained associated with the pagan deities, and their depiction in medieval manuscripts reveals that they were still conceived of in personified forms.
(See also ASTROLOGY.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Axel Poignant

Stations of the Cross
A series of paintings or sculptures representing the 14 stages of Christ's Passion; usually ranged round the walls of a church, they depict scenes, from the condemnation of Jesus by Pilate and his reception of the cross, to the crucifixion, descent from the cross and burial; in the Roman Catholic Church a form of devotion is to pray before each station in turn

The extraordinary originality of Rudolf Steiner's mind led him to a philosophy which linked up the world of natural science with the world of Spirit: his revolutionary ideas took form in a number of enterprises, ranging from art and architecture to education and farming

RUDOLF STEINER

THE SON of a minor official on the Southern Austrian Railway, Rudolf Steiner was born on 27 February 1861 at Kraljevic, then on the borders of Austria and Hungary, now in Yugoslavia. The modest schooling available made little impression on him but he was intensely awake to Nature, and to the personalities with whom he came into contact. A conviction as to the reality of the inner life, 'a soul space in man' as he called it, which manifested itself in some clairvoyant experiences and was strengthened by a delighted discovery of the world of pure ideas in geometry, gave the first promise of his future activity. At his secondary school he studied science but taught himself the classics, and even tutored other pupils in the humanities. He continued this practice when he entered the Technical College of the University of Vienna, and laid the foundation of the extraordinarily wide-ranging knowledge for which he was so remarkable. Outside his official science course, philosophy was his principal interest, but he was keenly interested in literature and the arts.

The unusual combination of scientific and artistic interests led him to Goethe, and at the age of 23 he edited Goethe's scientific works for an edition of *Deutsche Nationalliteratur*. The connection with Goethe was later to take him to Weimar to work at the Goethe Archives on the scientific side of another edition of Goethe's works. One special activity he undertook in Vienna was the tutoring of a backward boy, an experience of great importance for his later work. Meanwhile, however, he was elaborating his own philosophy in *Truth and Science* (for which he received a Ph.D. from the University of Rostock) and *The Philosophy of Freedom*, in which he argued that thought can become an organ to perceive a spiritual world. He was attracted to the mystics but differed from them in wanting to experience the sources of human wisdom through ideas – 'a mystical experience of thoughts'.

The work in the Goethe Archives at Weimar, begun when he was 29 years old, was Steiner's first settled job. His elucidation of Goethe's *Theory of Colour* later deeply influenced Kandinsky, the Russian painter. Nor did Steiner confine himself to Goethe. He also edited the works of Schopenhauer, and concerned himself with the Nietzsche archives.

Weimar, however, gave him no opportunity for the expression of his own growing spiritual experience, and in 1897 he accepted an invitation to go to Berlin to edit the *Magazine for Literature* which was associated with a stage society which produced 'modern' plays that were not likely to reach the ordinary theatre. Here Steiner, always devoted to drama, had his first experience of stage management. In Berlin he also joined the staff of a working men's college, which gave him a deep insight into prevailing social conditions. In the magazine he could only express his ideas exoterically, in a form adapted to its readers.

Meditation, however, had become a necessity to him – that 'experience of the whole man through which he reaches the actual spiritual world far more than through ideas'. His first opportunity to speak to an audience esoterically was when a certain Count Brockdorff, having read an article of Steiner's on Goethe's esoteric fairy tale, *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, invited him to lecture to a theosophical circle.

This led to a ten-year connection with the Theosophical Society, to visits to London where he met Annie Besant, Colonel Olcott and other leaders of the movement (see BESANT; THEOSOPHY), and to his accepting the position of General Secretary to the German branch of the Society. He reserved the right, however, to speak only of his own spiritual investigation. He was already lecturing on 'An Anthroposophy' and in 1909, being totally opposed to the declaration of a further incarnation of Christ and other theosophical trends, he broke with that society and founded the Anthroposophical Society (from the Greek words *anthropos* and *sophia*, 'man' and 'wisdom'). Speaking of the Anthroposophical movement in a letter written the year before his death, Steiner said: 'Anthroposophy has its roots in the perceptions – already gained – into

the spiritual world. Yet these are no more than its roots. The branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits of Anthroposophy grow into all the fields of human life and action.'

Earth-Memory

From the beginning of his theosophical connections, Steiner had given independent lectures in many places, helped by Marie von Sivers (whom he subsequently married), and had produced the monthly magazine *Lucifer* ('light-bearer'). In this he published his first two anthroposophical works, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* and *From the Akashic Chronicle*. The former contains his description of the path of initiation for modern Western man, with exercises leading to successive stages of development. Characteristic of the book is the recognition of the dangers as well as the difficulties of initiation, and the need to take three steps in morality for every one in higher knowledge. The second begins the teaching about Universe, Earth and Man which he was to elaborate during the next 20 years. For Steiner claimed that there is such a thing as an earth-memory, written in the earth aura, and that this memory, accessible to a trained and conscious clairvoyance, is valid for a new interpretation of human and geological history. This interpretation must, however, take fully into account all the discoveries (not necessarily the theories) of modern scientific investigators.

During this early period of his theosophical or anthroposophical activity, Steiner lectured widely on the gospels. He had never been able to accept Christianity as a religion 'revealed from without'. It was his own inner experience of the event of Golgotha that led him to see it as the fulfilment of what had been presented in the ancient Mysteries. He had expressed all this in his book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (1902). He now expounded the gospels as esoteric documents, that is documents meant only for the initiated. The 'Mystery of Golgotha' became central to his teaching of the evolution of world and man.

To this period also belongs *Occult Science – An Outline*, a compendium of 'spiritual science' (as he often called Anthroposophy) dealing with the four 'bodies' of man, his soul members, and his spiritual principles; with life in the spiritual worlds between death and a new birth; with the evolution of the earth through the four embodiments as Saturn (warmth), Sun (air), Moon (water), and Earth (mineral). In Steiner's monism (the position opposed to dualism) even physical substance had its origin in living spirit, and man himself – the last to appear in evolution – was the first in conception, though indeed as macrocosmic man. The section on Earth evolution introduces the seven epochs and the seven historical civilizations, developed in great detail in later lectures, and the two opponents of human evolution, Ahriman and Lucifer, fundamental to Steiner's teaching on ethics, psychology, history, and all his 'science of man'. The book ends with a chapter on initiation, complementary to *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*.

During the years of his association with the Theosophical Society, between 1902 and 1912, Steiner travelled on lecture tours with Marie von Sivers over almost the whole of Europe, also studying the art and architecture in all the places he visited. He wanted to express his spiritual vision in the form of art. With the help of Marie von Sivers, who was a trained actress, he first produced Eduard Schuré's *Drama of Eleusis* at a congress in Munich in 1907, after which he wrote, in successive years, four mystery plays dealing with the karmic connections of a group of people in successive incarnations, with scenes in the soul and spiritual worlds as well as on earth. He was also developing eurythmy, an art of movement to speech and music, based on the gestures latent in the sounds of speech and in the tones and intervals of music. This new art is used effectively in representing the soul and spiritual scenes in Steiner's mystery plays.

Rudolf Steiner: founder of the Anthroposophical Society, and a prolific teacher and author, in the last years before his death in 1925 he 'developed with special intensity the subject of karma and reincarnation (the latter in a new and Christian form), which he considered vital for the modern age'

All this artistic activity, together with Steiner's conviction that a new spiritual impulse demanded a new form of architecture, led to the building of the first Goetheanum, at Dornach near Basle in Switzerland, as the headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society, which had been founded in 1912. It was built largely of wood and consisted of two intersecting domes, the smaller over the stage, and the larger (bigger than the dome of St Paul's in London) over the auditorium. Notable features in it were the interior columns made from different woods, the change of form in their capitals and bases, the windows of sculptured glass (since copied in many places) and the painting of the dome. During the First World War men and women from all combatant nations worked on its construction. It was burnt down on the night of 31 December 1922, only the great sculpture of the 'Representative of Man between Lucifer and Ahriman' surviving: it had been carved by Steiner with the help of an English sculptress. Steiner immediately designed the second Goetheanum in a completely different and equally original style of moulded concrete.

At the end of the First World War Steiner won much support for his suggestion of a threefold commonwealth to solve the tangled problems of central Europe. This arose out of a view which he had developed in great detail, over many years, according to which the whole physiology (not the brain and nerves alone) is related to the psyche. Steiner maintained that thinking finds its physical basis in brain and nerves, feeling in the rhythmical processes of heart and lungs, and willing in the system of limbs and metabolism. He now extended this threefold conception into social life, which he saw as three spheres of human activity, each of which should have its own suitable organization: a cultural sphere with the ideal of liberty, a political or 'rights' sphere with the ideal of equality, and an economic or production sphere with the ideal of fraternity. Rightly conducted, these spheres would find a natural harmony (comparable to that of head, heart and hand), but these spheres of operation would by no means necessarily coincide.

The Waldorf Schools

An example of an institution free from political control within the cultural sphere was the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, originally founded in 1919 for the employees of a local factory. As its educational director, Steiner gathered teachers from all walks of life, and lectured to them on the three great psychological and physiological periods of childhood, on the temperaments, on the curriculum, and so on, as well as discussing with them the problems of individual children. This educational work roused particular interest in England, where he was invited to the 'New Ideals' educational conference in Stratford-on-Avon, and in the same year to a summer school in Oxford under the patronage of H. A. L. Fisher, Professor L. P. Jacks, and other well-known educators. At this time he also met Margaret McMillan, pioneer of the nursery school movement, who became his fervent admirer. The Waldorf School movement has now extended itself over most of Europe and the English-speaking world.

Among other groups who approached Steiner at this time for help and guidance in their special tasks were teachers of backward children, farmers, actors, doctors and a circle of ministers and others concerned with religion who wished to work for religious renewal. The lectures and practical advice which Steiner gave to these groups led to a widespread movement in curative education, to the biodynamic method of agriculture (in which soil, plant and animal live in a healthy and natural relationship), to stage productions at the Goetheanum and other

Steiner's conviction that a new spiritual impulse demands a new form of architecture led to the building of the first Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland *(right)* as the headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society; constructed largely of wood, it was burnt down on the night of 31 December 1922; the second Goetheanum which replaced it *(below right)* is made of moulded concrete. Both buildings were designed by Steiner, who believed that their form should correspond, to the smallest detail, with the activities that would take place within them

places, to a school of medicine centred on a clinic near Basle (founded in conjunction with a Dutch doctor, Dr I. Wegman) and to an independent religious body known as the Christian Community.

In the years before his death Steiner's lecturing activity was of immense range, embracing mathematics, astronomy, science, medicine, theology, philosophy, drama, education, economics and many other subjects. Many lectures were for specialists who were astounded at his knowledge in their special fields. But he continued to foster the esoteric character of the Anthroposophical Society, believing that esotericism should become an open secret for all who have eyes to read. In his last years he developed with special intensity the subject of karma and reincarnation (the latter in a new and Christian form), which he considered vital for the modern age. And in 1923 he founded the Anthroposophical Society anew, placing at its centre the 'School of Spiritual Science' for those who wished to follow a path of self-development. He died two years later, on 30 March 1925.

A. C. HARWOOD

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Amulets representing ladders, the means by which a king was thought to ascend to the sky after death, have been found in Egyptian tombs; and in the Mithraic Mysteries, the worshipper climbed the seven steps of initiation, symbolized by a ladder with seven rungs

STEPS AND LADDERS

IN THE GAME of Snakes and Ladders the snakes, being betraying and evil creatures, lead downwards. The ladders lead up, which is perhaps a reflection of the main role of ladders, steps and stairs in symbolism, as means of ascent. They lead up from the earth into the sky and to climb them is to rise above the human condition to a higher plane. St John Climacus (from *klimax*, the Greek for 'ladder'), a monk of Mount Sinai in the 7th century, wrote a book called *Ladder to Paradise*, which helped to bring into Christian iconography the picture of the souls of the dead climbing the rungs of a ladder towards heaven, with the unrighteous being snatched off it by demons (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). There is a tradition that Mohammed saw a ladder rising into the sky from Jerusalem, on which the souls of the just ascended to God.

We connect height with spiritual superiority and power, and when the source of ultimate power or the final home of the blessed is located in the sky, kings, heroes, shamans and the souls of the good are naturally thought of as rising into it (see SKY). Among the methods of ascent, besides ladders and stairs, are climbing a mountain, a tree, a rope, the rainbow or a spider's web, or being carried up by angels or in a chariot. The Tree of Life in the Cabala (see CABALA) and the idea of rising through its spheres to God is an example of the same underlying idea. A Maori hero reached the sky by climbing a vine and the folktale hero Jack by shinning up a beanstalk (see JACK). There is a widespread myth in the Pacific in which the hero fires an arrow into the air, then a second arrow which transfixes it, then a third, and so on until he can climb into the sky on a chain made of arrows.

The Pyramid Texts of ancient Egypt (see

British Museum

A means of ascent or descent, a ladder can symbolize the path from heaven to earth: *God's Covenant with Abraham*; in this 11th century Anglo-Saxon manuscript Abraham is shown lying on the ground while God, descending from heaven on a ladder, promises that he will make him 'the father of a multitude of nations'

BOOK OF THE DEAD), in spells meant to enable a dead king to ascend to the sky, speak of him climbing a ladder or staircase, as well as flying like a bird, leaping like a grasshopper or using other methods. He 'flies as a cloud to the sky' or 'kisses the sky like a falcon'. He 'goes to the sky on the wind' or 'stairs are laid for him' or he 'ascends upon the ladder' which the sun god made for him. Amulets representing ladders have been found in Egyptian tombs, and the Egyptians saw in the rays of the sun shining through a gap in the clouds a pathway to the sky, the radiant stair which the king ascends.

The Romans sometimes placed a miniature ladder, made of bronze, in a tomb, and in the Mithraic Mysteries of Roman Imperial times the worshipper rose to divine status by climbing the seven steps or grades of initiation, symbolized by a ladder of seven rungs, one for each of the planets (see MITHRAS). The staircase, with its steps corresponding to planets and metals and stages in the spiritual process, appears frequently in alchemical symbolism. The stairs lead to the summit of a mountain or to the gateway of the celestial city, and to climb them is again to transcend the ordinary human state and attain perfection and the divine.

The Ladder of Bethel

The golden ladder which Dante describes rising to the highest heaven (in *Paradiso*, cantos 21 and 22) he identifies with the most celebrated of all symbolic ladders, the one which Jacob saw in a dream at what is now the village of Beitin, some ten miles north of Jerusalem. He went to sleep with his head on a stone: 'And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!' When Jacob woke up, he said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven' (Genesis, chapter 28). He named the place Bethel, 'house of God', and later the ark of the covenant was kept there and God was consulted there in time of stress (Judges, chapter 20). According to cabalistic commentators, the ladder had 72 rungs, corresponding to the 72 syllables of the great mystic name of God (see NAMES).

Christians interpreted the ladder of Jacob's dream as a sign that the righteous will attain salvation (and Bethel became a general term for a Nonconformist meeting-house). St Benedict in a vision saw his monks rising to heaven on a ladder, and in the 11th century St Romuald, founding a monastery at Camaldoli in Italy, dreamed of men in white robes ascending a ladder to the sky, and decided that he would dress his monks in white.

The ladder or stair leads down as well as up, of course, and the Pythagoreans saw the particles of dust which swirl and dance in a sunbeam as souls or life-sparks descending to the earth on wings of light. The Jewish author Philo in the 1st century AD and the Christian author Origen in the 3rd century both interpreted Jacob's ladder as the air through which souls descend and ascend before birth and after death.

Walking Under Ladders

Disinclination to walk under a ladder, even at the cost of stepping out into traffic on the street, is very common. The simplest explanation of it is that it is based on a sensible reluctance to risk something falling on your head. Another possible explanation is that to walk under a ladder is to break through the triangle formed by the ladder, the wall and the ground, and that this is dangerous because the triangle is a symbol of good luck in general and of the Trinity in particular.

In folk tradition, a dream of going up a ladder is a beneficent dream of good omen, and a dream of going down one is the reverse. A more modern interpretation, by Freud, is that dreams of going up or down ladders, stairs or slopes are symbolic representations of sexual intercourse.

(See also HOUSE; SUPERSTITIONS.)

Physical phenomena have appeared in holy men and women for which no 'natural' cause has so far been found; it may be, however, that 'profoundly religious temperaments may be correlated . . . with metabolic effects in which biochemical and psychosomatic factors participate'

STIGMATA

'WOUNDS', MARKS OR POINTS of bleeding which simulate the injuries of Christ are known as stigmata. Stigmatics (those who receive stigmata) can develop marks corresponding to any or all of the piercing of hands and feet, the *ferita* or lance-wound in the side, the bruise on the shoulder caused by the weight of the cross, chafing of wrists and ankles, weals of scourging and a coronet on the brow (Crown of Thorns). Allied to the stigmata is the mystic ring, a modification of the skin or flesh of the ring-finger of the right hand, appropriate to a nun's 'bethrothal'.

If healing miracles are omitted as essentially psychological (see MIRACLES), the curious physical phenomena reported variously of some mystics include: stigmatization, *incendium amoris* ('flames of love'), incombustibility, fragrance, bodily elongation, and *inedia*, the ability to survive without food. Physiological peculiarities alleged of the mystic's mortal remains comprise the ability to bleed, incorruptibility and absence of rigor mortis. Levitation, irradiance, telekinesis and 'miracles of abundance' may also be classified as physical phenomena.

It is difficult to reject all the alleged physiological and physical phenomena as frauds or fictions. Admittedly we can have little confidence in many of the reports, particularly concerning the elder saints, where hagiographers (writers of saints' lives) have been over-zealous. But the position has improved of late as a result of modern critical hagiography and the principles established by Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758), who stressed that nothing should be ascribed to the supernatural if a natural explanation is possible. Extraordinary phenomena (other than posthumous miracles of healing) are not nowadays required in proof of holiness of life; and this diminishes the motive for ascribing wonders to the virtuous departed.

The tests of evidence in this field are the same as those in psychical research or in historical studies. Eyewitness depositions are preferred to hearsay evidence, and should be recorded soon after the event with circumstantial detail. The value of depositions made at processes for beatification or canonization is often, but not always, reduced by the lapse of time between the death of the candidate and the inquiry. Because of these or other uncertainties we cannot readily form a judgement concerning the status of fragrance, *incendium amoris*, bodily incorruption and so on, telekinesis or miracles of abundance. But with levitation, irradiance and stigmatization the evidential position is distinctly better.

A Kind of Trance

Little is known with any certainty of mystic phenomena in the orient, in Islam or in the Orthodox Churches; Protestants, it seems, incline neither to mysticism nor phenomena. Almost all the material worthy of study occurs in the Roman Catholic sphere. Non-Catholic students (including the present writer) have to overcome a lofty barrier of initial scepticism. But it is wrong to suppose that intelligent Catholics (to whom we are indebted for searching factual and critical studies) have all been gullible. Even in the 13th century, many ecclesiastical authorities would bear heavily on mystics suspected of fraud or love of notoriety.

In the present context 'mysticism' means 'mystical prayer' ('contemplation'). It is not given to all to graduate from ordinary prayer to any or all of the three stages of mystical prayer. At the first level the mystic concentrates his mind, by conscious effort, on divine themes. If the state of 'full union' supervenes, he enjoys a sense of divine presence but is still capable of voluntary withdrawal, unless the state of 'rapture' or 'ecstasy' has been attained. Ecstasy is, broadly speaking, a kind of trance in which the mind is cut off from the environment unless aroused by some drastic intervention such as a blow or an imperative command. Sometimes, when overtaken by ecstasy, the mystic continues in automatic fashion with his present occupation which may be preaching or saying Mass.

Attempts have been made to equate ecstasy with other forms of trance; hysterical

catalepsy, somnambulism, hypnotism, the mediumistic trance or drug-induced states; but it is unsafe to suppose that these conditions are identical either to one another or to ecstasy, though as pointed out by St Teresa of Avila (see TERESA OF AVILA), distinguishing between 'natural' and mystic ecstasies, a hysterical trance can be confused with ecstasy. Religious mystics normally interpret ecstasy in terms of real contact with God. This is debatable in cases where they receive demonstrably false revelations concerning matters of fact. But in other cases the belief cannot be contradicted, though equally it cannot be logically proved true. Judgement has therefore to be suspended in the face of an important empirical fact; the majority of the alleged physical phenomena occur in persons who engage in mystical prayer and experience ecstasies. This goes some way to explain why, if the phenomena are not fraudulent or illusory, they belong only to religions where mystical prayer is practised. The link between ecstasies and phenomena does not, of course, prejudge the issue as to whether the latter are supernatural or due to obscure natural causes.

Few stigmatizations, if any, can be dated earlier than 1224 when, it is said, St Francis of Assisi (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI) received wounds in hands and feet after a vision of a seraph received during ecstasy. His stigmata were described as fleshy excrescences resembling the curved-over point of a nail on the palm, and a nail-head on the back of the hand. But examination of portraits of the saint and evidence from modern cases suggest that the excrescences were merely raised scar tissue, so that the problem is reduced to how the wounds originated. As many as 300 subsequent instances of stigmatization have been alleged but only a few provide data of value.

Bleeding Through the Skin

Elena Ajello (born in 1901 in Montalto Uffugo, Calabria, Italy) was especially devoted to St Rita of Cascia (1386–1457), who was said to have had an evil-smelling stigmatic wound which remained unhealed in her forehead. In 1923 Elena experienced a vision in which Christ injured her brow with his own Crown of Thorns. Some hours later, while she was still in an ecstatic state, a physician was called to her because blood was flowing copiously from her forehead. Dr Turano wiped away the blood and found that at intervals she would contract her brow in a painful spasm and blood would then exude from the pores. Similarly, when Dr Gerald Molloy wiped the blood from the backs and palms of the hands of the famous stigmatic Louise Lateau (1850–1883) of Bois D'Haine, Belgium, he found oval marks of a bright red hue about one inch long by half an inch wide. The blood forced its way through unbroken skin in sufficient quantity for visiting pilgrims to soak it up in their handkerchiefs several times in an hour. Dr Warlomont of the Belgian Medical Academy enclosed Louise's arm in a special glass apparatus and showed that the bleeding was spontaneous and not due to prior irritation of the skin by Louise. Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824) of Coesfeld, Rhineland, besides other stigmata, had the lance-wound on her right side and a Y-shaped cross on her chest, both of which were areas from which the blood exuded at certain times.

Bleeding through the skin is indeed an exceptional occurrence but would seem to lie within the limits of what is naturally possible. Various facts weaken the case for supernatural causation. On the supernatural hypothesis it is odd that 12 centuries elapsed without stigmatics. The historical facts of the Crucifixion are not made plain by the stigmata. Was Jesus pierced in the left side (Louise Lateau) or the right (Catherine Emmerich)? The shape of the stigmata vary between stigmatics and from time to time in the same person; the marks on the hands of Teresa Neumann (1898–1962; see NEUMANN) of Konnersreuth, Bavaria were sometimes square and sometimes round. Elena Ajello was devoted to St Rita. Catherine Emmerich's Y-shaped cross was unique to her, but resembled the unusual Y-shaped cross in the church of St Lambert at Coesfeld where Catherine had spent long hours in prayer. These oddities are suggestive of the influence not of the supernatural but of ideas that have become lodged in the mind of the stigmatic.

Indeed, if supernatural intervention be discounted, stigmatization cannot be explained naturalistically in purely organic terms such as haemophiliac bleeding because of the specific location of the stigmata. Analysis shows that in stigmatic bleeding actual blood is exuded, which further distinguishes the condition from haemathidrosis, which is characterized by red perspiration due to the presence of the bacterium *micrococcus prodigiosus*. The naturalistic explanation of stigmatization therefore sees the stigmata as the result of auto-suggestion on the part of the stigmatics who, almost without exception, have been given to brooding intensely on the sufferings of Christ.

This theory is well supported by the fact that many stigmatics show undoubted signs of having suffered from hysteria at some time in their lives. 'Hysteria' is employed in the technical sense to designate an illness that can take a bewildering variety of forms: temporary blindness, deafness, paralysis, losses of sensibility in the skin, or excessive sensibility; comas, fainting fits, spasms; miscellaneous aches and pains, and so on. Some stigmatics like Elena Ajello are described as manifesting hysterical symptoms. Others like Teresa Neumann and Berthe Mrazek (a friend of Nurse Edith Cavell who was shot by the Germans in 1915) suffer from mysterious paralyses of sudden onset, relieved by equally mysterious cures, which almost infallibly may be ascribed to hysteria.

A hysterical illness has no organic cause, and is psychological in origin (see FAITH HEALING). But the patient is not shamming; he is really ill and is the victim of a complex and mainly unconscious process of auto-suggestion. When hysteria is found in a stigmatic it is a good indication of a high degree of auto-suggestibility. The naturalistic theory of stigmatization ascribes it to auto-suggestion affecting blood flow and tissues, in persons endowed with unusual suggestibility and an obsession with the sufferings of Jesus. This is not quite the same as ascribing stigmatization directly to hysteria, which would go beyond the facts, as there are stigmatics like Father Pio Forgione (1887–1968), of the Capuchin monastery of San Rotundo near Foggia in Italy, who cannot at the present time be classified as hysterical. The link between hysteria and stigmatization is merely that each is a possible result, in appropriate conditions, of a temperament potentially auto-suggestible in certain ways.

Wounds that Open and Close

Advocates of the supernatural origin of stigmata have stressed the rather minor character of the effects such as blisters, rashes and eczemas, produced on the skin by suggestion under hypnotism. But this does not do full justice to Dr Adolph Lechler's results with 'Elizabeth', an Austrian peasant girl who was both very devout and under treatment for hysteria. On Good Friday 1932 she was deeply affected by seeing a film of the suffering and death of Christ, and (significantly) complained of pain in feet and hands. That evening Dr Lechler gave her the hypnotic suggestion that wounds would develop at the site of the pains. Moist wounds appeared during the night. Further suggestion deepened them, and resulted also in tears of blood, the Crown of Thorns and inflammation and sagging of the shoulder. Dr Lechler substantiated his claim with

'Drink of My Chalice!'

Day after day (Passitea) lay there upon her bed, motionless, and, as all believed, at death's door. Good Friday came, when suddenly between two and three o'clock she rose up on her knees with outstretched arms, a dazzling ray like lightning flashed through the room, a sharp loud clap as if of thunder was heard, and with a piercing cry, Passitea, her face radiant with some unearthly glow, fell swooning in utter collapse. Her two sisters who were in the room, alarmed, ran to lift her up when to their astonishment they saw that blood was pouring from her hands, her feet, and her head, whilst her white night-rail was crimsoned all down the left side with blood welling through as if from a deep wound. As quickly as they could they mopped up the stains with towels and ewers of fresh water; they changed the coverlets which were all spotted with blood, and even scoured the floor round the bed . . . a priest of much experience in mysticism was urgently sent for. Upon his arrival he at once recognized that Passitea had received the stigmata. In reply to his questions . . . Passitea under obedience described that she had seen as it were in a vision, Christ crucified, livid and bruised, and covered with wounds streaming with red blood. She heard the words "Daughter, drink of My Chalice", whereupon there darted out rays of transparent glory which struck her hands, her feet, and for a second's space encircled her head. The pain was so acute that she lost all consciousness.

Montague Summers *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*

University of London/Harry Price Library

Scala

A naturalistic explanation of stigmatization is that the stigmata are the result of auto-suggestion on the part of the stigmatics who, almost without exception, have brooded intensely on Christ's sufferings *Left* Anne Catherine Emmerich: besides the stigmata shown in this picture, she also had the lance-wound on her right side, and a cross on her chest *Below left* St Catherine of Siena: she was said to have suffered the pain of the stigmata while undergoing a mystical experience at Pisa; painting by Sodoma

photographs taken before restoring normality by counter-suggestion.

In the light of Lechler's achievement it would be daring to say that stigmata are supernatural, and in modern canonization processes such as that of St Gemma Galgani (1878–1903) of Lucca the Church abstains from doing so. On the other hand, we cannot assert that stigmata have yet been proved entirely natural. Difficulty may rationally be felt concerning a naturalistic interpretation of St Gemma's stigmata. A beautiful Italian girl with a disposition of great sweetness, Gemma often had ecstasies each Thursday evening (a common pattern to which many stigmatics conform) when red marks showed on the backs and palms of the hands. A rent in the flesh opened by degrees, sometimes becoming very deep, the openings on each side almost reaching each other so far as could be ascertained without painful probing. The cavities were full of blood. On the Friday the flow would cease and the wounds close and heal with astonishing rapidity, usually leaving very little trace except sometimes a raised scar.

St Gemma's case lends credibility to the accounts of deep wounds in some of the older stigmatics such as St Mary Frances of the Five Wounds (1715–91). Extraordinary as these deep stigmata are, they do not decisively contradict the naturalistic hypothesis. 'Elizabeth's' wounds deepened under suggestion and we cannot say to what depth they might not have proceeded had Dr Lechler persisted with suggestion beyond the point that was medically ethical.

The genesis of the mystic ring is akin to that of stigmata. Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850–1941), a somewhat exhibitionistic stigmatic of La Faudrais in Brittany, was in the habit of announcing the particular stigmata she would receive some time before they appeared; a fact strongly in favour of the auto-suggestion hypothesis. In an ecstasy in January 1874 she predicted that she would plight her troth to her heavenly spouse on 20 February. On the predicted day in the presence of 14 witnesses the ring-finger of the right hand became swollen and red beneath the skin. Shortly afterwards it bled. Within 30 minutes a ring shaped formation appeared. There is evidence that Marie-Julie retained it for at least 20 years as a ring of fleshy tissue resembling a hoop which had sunk into the skin.

The tears of blood shed by St Gemma and others were observed by the French physician Dr Parrott in the last century in a patient (presumably hysterical) who shed them while affected by violent grief. She bled also from the breast, hands and knees.

It is a curious fact that apart from St Francis only three cases of conditions akin to stigmatization have been reliably reported as occurring in men, and these all in the present century. At first sight it might seem to follow from the correlation between hysteria and stigmatization, in view of the old belief in masculine immunity to hysteria. But this comfortable premise was shattered in the last century. Present estimates differ but it seems that hysteria, in one form or another, occurs in men at least half as frequently as in women. Retaining the naturalistic viewpoint there is no reason, however, either to deny the indirect link with hysteria or to suppose that the male stigmata are not produced by the same auto-suggestive mechanism that operates in women. The low incidence in men may be explicable in terms of biological or hormonal differences between the sexes, or by a lesser proclivity to brood on physical aspects of the Crucifixion.

Flames of Divine Love

Some very famous saints such as Catherine of Genoa (1447–1510) and Mary Magdalen of Pazzi (1566–1607) were reputedly sufferers from *incendium amoris*, ascribed to the warmth of their love of God, so that even in winter they sought for cooling winds and cold compresses. In the case of the boy saint Stanislaus Kostka (1550–68) who died during his novitiate we may suspect an actual infection. In other cases we might suppose the ardours to have been subjective. But Cardinal Crescenzi said of St Philip Neri (1515–95) that the touch of his hand was as from one in a raging fever, and the attendants of St Catherine in her last illness deposed that the blood she discharged was exceptionally hot, even for a patient in fever. At the beatification process of Serafino of Dio (d. 1699), nuns affirmed that it scorched them if they touched her.

Fever of hysterical rather than organic origin has been alleged to occur as a medical condition, but would appear to be extremely rare. But it seems that a restricted region can have its temperature raised by hysterical mechanisms. (The left arm of a poltergeist girl, Angélique Cottin, investigated in Paris in 1846 gave off a gentle heat.) St Philip Neri was neither stigmatized nor hysterical, but Mary Villani, St Catherine and Mary Magdalen were stigmatics, which may be relevant. We would however tend to disregard the whole problem were it not for Father Pio Forgione whose stigmata, received first in 1915, were declared in 1923 by the Holy Office not to have been proved to be supernatural. Father Pio was something of a latter-day Curé of Ars (see CURÉ OF ARS), because, though very reserved and retiring like St Jean Vianney, he was also a great confessor and was said to have the same gift of telepathy or 'reading of hearts', as well as other psychic abilities. It is said that as a novice at Benevento he occasionally ran a fever with a temperature so high as to break the clinical thermometer. Special measurements showed a blood heat of 112°F (45°C).

It would be unwise to speculate overmuch on incombustibility or immunity to fire

Prado/MAS

Alinari Federico

Left **Few, if any, stigmatizations can be dated before 1224, when St Francis of Assisi is said to have received wounds in his hands and feet, after a state of ecstasy during which he had a vision of a seraph: *St Francis receiving the Stigmata*, painting by Tiepolo *Above* Father Pio Forgione ('Padre Pio'): a Capuchin monk, he received the stigmata in 1915. He is said to have been telepathic, and as a novice was reported to have occasionally run a fever with a temperature so high as to break the clinical thermometer**

because little of this nature has been asserted since the 16th century, when it was said that Venerable Domenica del Paradiso (1473–1553) could carry live charcoal in her hands. Numerous incidents of this sort were reported of St Francis of Paola (1416–1507), such as putting his hands into boiling oil or mending hot lime-kilns. St Catherine of Siena (1347–1389) and her clothes are said to have been miraculously preserved from scorching when she lay for an appreciable time in contact with the kitchen fire, in an ecstasy. Father Thurston has attempted to erect some parallels between mystic incombustibility and the practice of fire-walking, as well as the feats of the 19th century medium Daniel Dunglas Home (see HOME), but the subject seems at present beyond the reach of critical analysis.

Because of the opportunity for fraud in darkened seance rooms, it is hard to attach much significance to the fragrances (usually of known species such as rose, verbena or sandalwood) common at Spiritualist seance rooms in the last century. Peculiar smells, often unpleasant, reported in contemporary poltergeist cases are also difficult to assess. But stories concerning the 'odour of sanctity', perfumes manifesting in the vicinity of persons of holy life, are numerous. There was abundant testimony regarding the fragrance which clung to everything touched by St Mary Francis of the Five Wounds, and to the scent of a species of violet that was associated with St Catherine of Ricci (1522–29). These saints were stigmatics, as was Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified (d. 1878), who was similarly favoured according to her Carmelite companions. The nuns at Reckshill in New York state claimed that a wonderful fragrance persisted in their chapel after a visit by the stigmatic Margaret Reilly (d. 1937). In the case of St Veronica Giuliani (1676–1727) it was definitely believed that the scent proceeded from her stigmata. The same was said of Father Pio Forgione, and there appears to be competent medical testimony as to the objective reality of the scent which was variously compared to roses, violets or incense.

It is not clear whether these fragrances are invariably associated with stigmata. No chemical analysis of stigmatic blood yet published has claimed to find aromatic substances therein. The door is by no means closed to a naturalistic explanation. Agreeable odours are occasionally reported by physicians in connection with various maladies; and it is not inconceivable that profoundly religious temperaments may be correlated in some degree with metabolic effects in which both biochemical and psychosomatic factors participate.

Allegations of distortion or elongation of the mystic's person would seem on the face of it to be too grotesque for pious hagiographers to insert them into the record as conventional indications of sanctity. But there are no recent instances. Also, even if the veracity of the witnesses is accepted, there is in some cases a doubt as to whether the more understandable and better authenticated phenomenon of levitation has not been mistaken for elongation. Thus the fellow nuns of Sister Veronica Laparelli (1537–1620) measured her height with a yardstick and found that during her prolonged ecstasies she seemed to be some 10 inches taller than usual. But on one occasion Mother Plautilla Semboli put her hand under Veronica's robe and 'found she was lifted up above the ground'.

Other cases can in principle be explained as being hallucinatory, like the occasion in about 1700 when a single witness saw Sister Maria Constante Castreca 'grow a considerable height from the ground'. More puzzling, was the affidavit signed by 21 ecclesiastics and notables to the effect that both arms of Blessed Stefana Quinzani (1457–1530) appeared to their view to be stretched some inches during her Friday ecstasies. There was muscular tension, swelling of the veins and blackening of the hands. But a careful reading suggests that the elongation may well have been within the limits of natural stretching possible in some individuals. Dr Imbert-Gourbeyre described some remarkable distensions, contractions and distortions exhibited by Marie-Julie Jahenny in 1880. Though he was a professor of medicine and believed the contortions to be inexplicable by natural means we are entitled to reserve our opinion, particularly in view of the fact that the stigmatic had previously announced that her body would be compressed and her limbs shortened in expiation of the sins of mankind.

Living with very little food, *inedia*, varies from instances like that of the Curé of Ars, where great activity is maintained on a very light diet, to cases often hailed as miraculous where the individual, almost invariably a woman, apparently survives for months and years on no food and little drink. Many attempts have been made to prove by observation that fasting is complete, and occasionally they end tragically in the subject's death, which suggests that the inedic does in fact take a little nourishment when unsupervised. Inedics are not always Roman Catholics or even particularly religious. Usually there is evidence of nervous disorder; they are bedridden with a mysterious illness, or given to fits or trances. Hysteria inedia or anorexia is a very well-known disorder, and can end in death. The anorexic is often literally incapable of accepting solid food and rejects it by automatic choking or vomiting outside of conscious control. It is not fully understood why inedics can survive for such long periods and it would be foolish to underestimate residual difficulties of naturalistic explanation. But there is no obvious feature by which inedia in the devout differs from anorexia in hysterical persons. Religious inedics usually show other signs of hysteria; female stigmatics are almost invariably inedics also.

As pointed out by Father Thurston, a surprisingly high proportion of saints have been exhumed *after* beatification and their bodies discovered to be in a remarkably good state of preservation. In only a few cases has beatification or canonization been authorized on the basis of apparent incorruptibility of the remains. The body of St Bernadette of Lourdes (1844–79; see LOURDES) was found to be incorrupt in 1909, though the face was brown and the eyes sunken, but only bones were revealed when St Thérèse of Lisieu (1863–97) was disinterred.

If there is no circulation of air the decay of a corpse can be hindered. Dry conditions favour mummification even if there has been no embalmment. Moisture sometimes produces saponification, in which the internal tissues are converted into a kind of ammoniacal soap, called *adipocere*, or *gras de cadavre*, and the skin becomes like that of a mummy. The body of Blessed Marie Pelletier was found in this condition in 1903 when exhumed 35 years after death. But when Blessed Anna Maria Taigi (1769–1837) was exhumed in 1868, the surgeon reported that the corpse resembled that of a person only three days dead. The skin was soft and discharged an inoffensive somewhat aromatic fluid, recalling the balsam or oil which have been reported of the bodies of holy persons on other occasions. The absence of rigor mortis has often been commented upon, but might just possibly occur naturally in aged inedics who have had a tranquil death. Liquidity of the blood and bleeding from incisions long after death have also been alleged. At present it seems impossible to say whether or not naturalistic explanations are potentially available, or whether attitudes of mind during life can bequeath unusual biochemical features to the remains.

Tate Gallery/Brompton Studio

Detail from *Christ in the House of His Parents*: in this romantic painting, by Millais, Jesus is depicted showing the stigmata in anticipation of the wounds that he later received on the Cross; many people regarded the picture as blasphemous when it was first exhibited

Lifted Up by Ecstasy

Psychokinesis is the name given in parapsychology to the movement of objects by means unknown to physics (see PSYCHOKINESIS). It occurs in poltergeist outbreaks (see POLTERGEISTS) and is alleged to happen in seance rooms. Catholic writers recognize 'diabolical assaults' on the religious, which to the non-Catholic bear a considerable resemblance to poltergeist phenomena. Psychokinesis is rarely alleged of the more recent saints. However the term telekinesis is applied to the spontaneous flight of the host (the wafer of consecrated bread in the Mass) to the mouth of a divinely-favoured recipient. An aspirant to a reputation for sanctity might fraudulently conceal a wafer in his mouth prior to announcing the miracle, as seems to have been done by Vittoria Bondi in the 18th century. However when the Curé of Ars said that the host once detached itself from his fingers and placed itself upon the tongue of a communicant we cannot doubt his veracity, although the possibility of a hallucination or a false memory remains. It is also possible that the Curé produced the 'miracle' himself by unconscious psychokinesis, having been for many years the centre of poltergeist activity.

Teleportation or apportation, the mysterious conveyance of objects into closed rooms, is alleged both of poltergeist cases and the mediumistic seance. The only phenomena at all analogous to teleportation met with in connection with latter-day saints are alleged miracles of abundance. The heaps of corn in the granary of the 'Filles de la Croix' at La Poye, Poitou, in France, were mysteriously replenished over a continuing period around 1824, after St Andrew Fournet (1752–1834) had prayed over them. But one wonders whether the supplies were put there stealthily by an unknown well-wisher. One is at a loss to comment on St John Bosco's basket which contained initially only a score of rolls, but which in 1860 provided, it seems, enough bread for his 300 students. Interestingly enough no other marvels are narrated of 'Don Bosco' (1815–88), not even ecstasies.

Levitation is alleged of comparatively few saints; which suggests it is not a hagiographic commonplace. Professor Leroy's scholarly review lists 50 traditions as ancient (before 1500), 85 cases as modern (1500 to 1800), and 20 cases as recent (since 1800). In the ancient traditions, as with St Dunstan (918–988) and St Francis, we encounter the difficulty that their levitations are mentioned by their later biographers but not their earliest ones. Some modern critics have taken the view that levitation is purely a subjective feeling experienced by ecstatic persons, many of whom have certainly spoken of a sense of lightness and of being lifted up. But the case of St Joseph Mary Desu (Joseph of Copertino, 1603–63) is adequate by itself to prove the occurrence of levitation as an objective physical happening. Very slow of wit, he nevertheless gained such fame in the district of Copertino in southern Italy for his goodwill, piety and holiness that he was examined by the Inquisition of Naples but acquitted of the charge of deceiving the populace by false miracles. Subsequently the authorities, rendered even more suspicious by his levitations, transferred him to Assisi, Urbino, Fossombrone and Osimo, but at each place he attracted a pilgrimage.

Joseph's levitations occurred during joyous raptures which could easily be triggered off by music or the sight of a sacred image or a beautiful leaf or twig. Sometimes they were simple suspensions in the air as happened in Rome before Pope Urban VIII; to which the Holy Father testified. At Copertino alone, no less than 70 levitations are alleged. Some were comical rather than edifying. The wife of the High Admiral of Castile fainted when she and her husband saw Joseph fly a distance of 12 paces over their heads. The Lutheran Duke of Brunswick, and his chaplain, saw Joseph at Mass transported in the air about five paces from the altar while still in a kneeling posture, and return in similar fashion. They became Roman Catholics.

Joseph's flights are exceptional among levitators. The majority of eyewitness accounts concerning other mystics (and there are many relating to widely different times and places) affirm that the mystic is suspended about six inches above the ground

while in ecstasy and at length makes a gentle landing. The levitating mystic may be preaching like St Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787) and St Andrew Fournet or praying like St Teresa of Avila and the great theologian Francis Suarez (1548–1617). The evidence is not conclusive but it strongly suggests that levitation occurs only in ecstasy. In 24 cases out of the 155 listed by Leroy the face or figure of the levitating ecstatic have been said to give off or be bathed in a mysterious radiance. Sometimes this light is said to emanate from a sacred image or crucifix, but in other cases there is no obvious source. Puzzling as this may be, it does not weaken the evidence for levitation which rests on non-irradiated cases like St Joseph's. Levitation (including radiance) is the one mystic phenomenon requiring us to postulate either a supernatural explanation or the existence of natural forces unknown to physics.

On a naturalistic view such forces are possibly the same as those released in poltergeist outbreaks, but with a different 'style' of operation corresponding to a radically different psychological situation. The contrast between the wilder transportations of St Joseph and the gentler levitations of most mystics so favoured also points to psychological factors. Accounts of radiance are not easily equated to the 'aura' as described in occultist literature. Scientists have tended to discount the observation by the reputable 19th century French physician Charles Féré of orange-coloured light surrounding the head and hands of two hysterical patients.

A. R. G. OWEN

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Mansell Collection

Stockings

It is often considered lucky to put on the left stocking before the right, or by mistake to wear odd stockings, or put them on inside out: to correct the mistake is to change the luck; a pair of stockings fixed crosswise at the head and foot of the bed was thought to banish nightmares; to hang up an empty stocking at Christmas is to invite Father Christmas to fill it with gifts.

Archeology has shown that Stonehenge was not built by the Druids, as was sometimes supposed, but existed at a far earlier period. As to whether it served as a temple, observatory or political centre, opinion is still divided

STONEHENGE

FEW PEOPLE would disagree that Stonehenge is an unnerving place, rising out of the empty Salisbury plain, with a quality of immensity and stillness and awesome age seldom conveyed by anything man-made. And no one would dispute that it consists of a number of giant standing stones, some in pairs with lintel stones across their tops, and also many fallen stones – all placed with sufficient symmetry to indicate that what we now see may not have been the whole of the construction in its original state. But people disagree about who built Stonehenge, when, and for what purpose, and even how it was built. The best we can do is to hint at the immense range of theories, and to sketch broadly some of the more cogent conceptions – and some of the more fanciful, including some of the best-known legends.

The most persistent of these legends describes it as a monument erected in memory of a number of ancient British nobles, murdered by the treachery of Hengist, the Saxon, during a supposed truce. The king of the Britons sought the advice of Merlin on a suitable memorial; and the magician recommended the use of vast stones brought from a structure he called the Giant's Dance, in Ireland (see MERLIN). These stones were especially rich in magical force. But it required Merlin's powers to convey them to England, once the Britons had routed the Irish who defended them. It is an interestingly tangled legend, containing elements of Arthurian myth, the age-old belief in the magic of stones (see STONES), and possibly some kind of folk memory of the actual transporting of the stones to Salisbury Plain.

The main source for this tale is the 12th century chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth. Another story is that the Devil built Stonehenge for the malicious pleasure of puzzling everyone in years to come. A friar spied upon him and ran to reveal all, but the Devil flung one of the great stones and pinned the friar by his heel. Hence the stone standing alone to the north-east of the main structure is called the Heel Stone. (Its name has been otherwise derived from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to hide – but no one knows what it hides, if anything.) Finally, a variant tale combines the two: the Devil is said to have built Stonehenge on Merlin's instructions, for the memorial purpose mentioned, having bought the stones cheaply by trickery from an old Irishwoman.

Today, it is still commonly thought that the Druids built the place as a sun-worshipping temple and site for human sacrifice. Many 18th and 19th century authors produced lengthy proofs of the Druid involvement, and many 20th century authors (not to mention newspapers) continue to accept this explanation. In fact, all the archeological evidence makes it clear that the structure had existed for over 1000 years before the arrival of Druidic cults and practices in Britain.

It was the 17th century antiquary John Aubrey who first suggested the connection with the Druids and the idea has persisted, particularly as the self-styled Druid sects of today have tended to gather at Stonehenge for midsummer observances (see DRUIDS). It is possible that the ancient Druids might have used Stonehenge now and then for ceremonies, but normally they preferred forest groves. The modern sect seems to have been drawn to Stonehenge because of Aubrey's idle suggestion, and the later credit given to it.

These romantic Druid links led to the silly but lasting names of two of the great prostrate stones – the so-called Altar Stone, near the centre of the structure, and the Slaughter Stone lying out near the Heel Stone. Both are now thought to have once been standing, and to have had nothing at all to do with any kind of sacrifice.

There has been no lack of other notions about the builders, if none so popular as the Druidic one. Inigo Jones, the 17th century architect, rejected the Druid theory (on the sound grounds that the Druids were not noted for architectural achievement), but thought Stonehenge to be a Roman edifice in the Tuscan manner. Others have ascribed it to invading Belgae from north-eastern Gaul, or even Phoenicians. And because in

Celtic lore the Little People are traditionally thought to have put up dolmens and cromlechs (megalithic tombs), they have been credited with Stonehenge too.

Present-day archeology has managed to sort out fairly clearly who the builders were. In doing so it has also managed to deduce a general dating of the construction, which apparently went on for some centuries. It was built in three stages, corresponding to stages in the cultural development of ancient Britain.

The first builders, it is thought, were a Neolithic people who moved into Britain before 3000 BC, bringing with them a penchant for circular earthworks. They also buried their dead in vast barrows, 100 feet or more in length, many of which are in the vicinity of Stonehenge. The tribes of this period left many enclosures surrounded by circular banks and ditches, and are usually thought to have made the ditch and inner embankment around Stonehenge, now mostly filled in by wind and time. They may also have set up the Heel Stone.

The next stage, from about 1800 BC, saw the arrival of the 'Beaker' people, who are known for their pottery and who buried their dead in individual tombs; they are also known for setting up many circular arrangements of standing stones along with 'henge' enclosures – like that at Avebury near Stonehenge. These were the people who brought the bluestones to Stonehenge from – it is now generally agreed – the Prescelly Hills in Wales.

The Beaker folk were a highly developed late Stone Age and early Bronze Age people. The ensuing stage introduced an even higher Bronze Age culture, the 'Wessex' people – workers in metal ruled by warrior chiefs, with direct trade links to Europe reaching perhaps as far as the Mediterranean. It was once thought that there might be Mycenean influence in the architecture of Stonehenge, but it is now known that Stonehenge was completed before Mycene. In their time, the mighty project became mightier. The older bluestones were uprooted and the huge inner 'trilithons' (structures formed of three stones), of sarsen sandstone from some 20 miles away, went up. Then followed the outer circle of uprights and lintels, also sarsen, and some crucial single stones including the Slaughter Stone.

So ended the construction of Stonehenge, somewhere about 1400 BC. Apart from the structures so far mentioned, there are various holes where no stones stand – like the 'Aubrey holes', named after the antiquary and surmised later to be pits dug for some sepulchral or chthonic rites.

A Prehistoric Computer

People have believed that Stonehenge was either a temple or a place of worship, or a vastly important meeting place for chiefs and kings, or a structure for observing and predicting the movement of heavenly bodies, mainly the sun and moon. This last idea is based on the belief that the sun rises, at the summer solstice, directly over the Heel Stone as seen from the centre of Stonehenge. And so, apparently, it does – depending on what spot you call the centre, what precise line you take to be the much sought-after axis of Stonehenge, what precise moment you take to be true sunrise, and how much margin of error you allow for erosion, cosmic adjustments over the millennia, and so on.

R. J. C. Atkinson, archeologist and leading authority on Stonehenge, insists that the midsummer sunrise alignment was only approximate, and that the reasons for it remain unknown. Nor does he accept the dating of the structure that is based on the alignment. But more recently G.S. Hawkins, an astronomer, turned to a computer and announced that he had 'decoded' the place. He found quantities of astronomical alignments, involving the Heel Stone, the outer 'Station' stones (from which diagonals give a putative centre), the Aubrey holes and much else. By his account Stonehenge is no less than a prehistoric computer, a device for making highly intricate astronomical calculations, including predictions of equinoctial sunrises and sunsets, moonrises and moonsets, and eclipses. But these findings are still very much in dispute.

FURTHER READING: C. Chippendale, *Stonehenge Complete, Archaeology* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1983); E. Raymond, *Stonehenge & Druidism* (Artisan Sales, 1979).

Stonehenge silhouetted against the sunset: its quality of awesomeness, and its antiquity, have made it the focus of romantic legends; modern Druids gather there to celebrate the midsummer solstice

Uniphoto

Even before man sculpted representations of his gods, he recognized in stones and pebbles a supernatural power to be venerated and, on occasions, tapped

STONES

THE PRESENCE of pebbles, ordinary stones and chunks of unhewn rock in so much mythical and magical lore reflects mankind's willingness to find the supernatural in anything and everything. Demons in wild animals, gods in trees, magical power in lightning or eclipses are readily comprehensible. But it must be an overwhelming, all-consuming myth-making urge that puts spirits in mossy old boulders, magical power in a handful of gravel.

In man's earliest myth-making days the stone would often be worshipped directly as a god in itself. Usually the object of such worship inspired awe because of its size, its odd shape or its colour. Pre-biblical Semitic peoples apparently possessed stone-worshipping cults, as did tribes in parts of pre-Hellenic Greece, Crete and Thessaly. Stones have also been worshipped as gods in parts of Africa, and widely in India.

But sophistication of a sort usually overtook these cults fairly soon, and the stone ceased to be a god, becoming instead the abode of a god. The god in the stone, the natural stone, not the sculpted, is a world-wide phenomenon. The ancient Greeks devoted much of their religious attention to such stones, including those that were vaguely phallic in shape and associated with Apollo. The Greeks also set up their famous *hermae*, cairns or heaps of stones ascribed to Hermes (see HERMES), which partook of some of his divinity as god of travellers. These were placed on roadsides, on boundaries, and in later days on street corners and outside houses. And though they eventually developed into carved representations of the god, erect phallus and all, many were originally plain, unwrought, columnar rocks.

The boundary stones of the Babylonians were often also plain, columnar rocks, though the boundary-makers carved inscriptions on them, mostly warning anyone who might dare to shift a particular stone that an awful curse would descend from the god to whom it was dedicated. In much the same way, the Celts scraped semi-abstract representations of gods onto tall, upright monumental stones known as menhirs. But the Celts, along with many other peoples, also made much use of unadorned, natural standing stones, sometimes in groups, as at Stonehenge, or as in the great dolmens of Celtic regions, flat, unhewn stones which rest horizontally across upright stones. Stones were also used singly, frequently as grave markers. The idea of erecting a tombstone over a grave may possibly have arisen from the belief that the spirit of the dead person would inhabit the stone. What is now a memorial may have once been a spiritual abode (see BRITTANY; CULT OF THE DEAD; STONEHENGE).

The Jungian psychologist Marie-Louise von Franz has written that ancient Germanic peoples believed in this role of the tombstone, adding that the belief may spring from 'the symbolic idea that something eternal of the dead person remains, which can be most fittingly represented by a stone'. This may explain much of the general mythological role of unwrought stone: its eternality symbolizes and magically confers spiritual eternality.

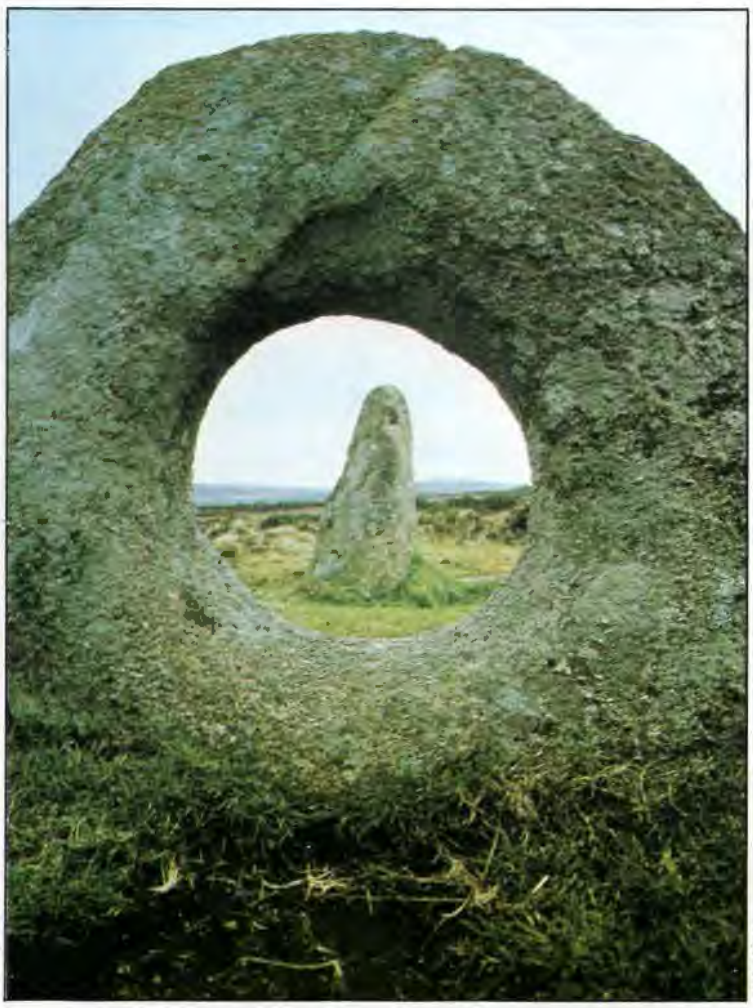
The most primitive form of boundary or marker stone, still widely in use, was the cairn, which was built up at holy places and to which each traveller added another stone. The practice is found throughout Celtic regions of Europe, including Britain, in the Middle East and Asia, and among Australian aborigines. The Celts dedicated many cairns to mountain gods on peaks and

Previous page **Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, according to Greek legend the only survivors of a universal flood, created mankind anew by casting stones behind them: as they struck the ground, the stones thrown by Deucalion became men, while those thrown by Pyrrha turned into women: illustration from a 15th century Flemish edition of *The Romance of the Rose***

Below left **Stone dolmen in County Donegal: these constructions of flat, unhewn stones resting horizontally across stone uprights are numerous in Celtic regions**

Below right **Formation in Cornwall dating from 1600–1000 BC; stones with natural holes were taken to represent the female principle, and sick persons or barren women might be passed through the hole in a symbolic rebirth**

Ianthe Ruthven



John Moss

summits, believing that adding a stone magically swept away the traveller's weariness. Hikers and mountain-climbers still carry on the practice today, but as a pleasant tradition rather than a piece of magic or worship.

The 'god-in-the-stone' motif also occurs among North American Indians. Vast stones were worshipped by Plains tribes like the Sioux, Ojibwa and Canadian Cree, to whom, obviously, a solitary huge boulder on the empty face of the prairie would seem especially awesome. In the myths of these tribes, the great stones seem to be both dwelling places for special gods and almost ancestral spirit beings in their own right, as if they had not quite completed the transition from 'god-*as*-the-stone' to 'god-*in*-the-stone'.

The spirits in stones can often be lesser divinities, not much more than imps. Many old Irish and Welsh tales tell of stones that speak or move, usually on especially supernatural occasions, like Midsummer Eve; and there are moving stones in the folklore of France, Borneo, Central America and elsewhere. The Central American stones are on a mountain and are shaped rather like jaguars; they are believed to transform themselves into these animals at will. The Chukchansi Indians of California had a legend of a rock, about five feet high, that would grow, if anyone tried to jump it, just enough to scrape the jumper's backside. The belief that all stones increase in size is common to many peoples. According to an old American superstition, lightning aids this growing process.

Coronation Stones

In many parts of the world the concepts of the god-as-the-stone and the god-in-the-stone frequently develop into the belief that a particular stone is a sacred object merely because of some mythic association with supernatural powers. Perhaps the most famous example is the Black Stone of Islam, in the Kaaba at Mecca (see MECCA). It does not contain a god, but has traditional associations with God. Of course, as a meteorite it would be doubly venerable, as meteorites are considered to be extremely sacred in almost every mythology.

The Old Testament contains its share of sacred stones, like the one set up and anointed by Jacob at Bethel, after his dream of the ladder to heaven (Genesis, chapter 28). And Joshua set up a great stone to mark the covenant he made with the people of Israel that they would forsake 'foreign gods' and serve the Lord (Joshua, chapter 24).

According to a Greek legend, the centre of the world was found by Zeus to be at Delphi, and was marked by the conical 'navel stone' called *omphalos* (see NAVEL). Its shape and site undoubtedly made it sacred to Apollo; and a variant of the myth states that the omphalos marked the grave of the sacred snake of an older religion, supplanted by the worship of Apollo.

With the movement away from the concept of the god-in-the-stone to that of the less divine sacred stone, men developed the idea of the altar-stone: a sacred stone that still provided a way of access to the god, even if he no longer lived in it (see ALTAR). For instance, some tribes in Annam, now part of Vietnam, would wash natural, unwrought stones and place food and drink on them for the gods. The Aztecs and Maya used vast stones, partly hewn, and grooved to catch blood, as altars for human sacrifice; and Norse saga mentions Thor's stone, a sacred rock on which men being sacrificed to the god had their backs broken.

Another famous stone, which is not strictly an altar but which nevertheless is a feature of holy occasions, is the Stone of Scone, on which the kings of Scotland were once crowned. Edward I took it to Westminster Abbey in the 13th century, where it forms part of the throne occupied by British monarchs at their coronation. It was stolen by Scottish nationalists in 1950, but was recovered and returned to London the next year. A legend identifies the Stone of Scone with the coronation stone of the old kings of Ireland. Known as the Lia-fail, it was said to shriek aloud whenever the rightful heir to the throne stepped on it. The Anglo-Saxon tribes crowned their kings on a sacred stone at the present site of Kingston-on-Thames in England. The name Kingston is in fact derived from King's Stone.

Most sacred stones were believed to possess inherent magical powers and this is especially true of the chipped-flint tools of the Stone Age, when they were found in the fields of later peoples. Throughout Europe and much of the rest of the world these flint axes and arrowheads were thought to have dropped from the sky, or to have been hurled by the gods, and were called thunderbolts or thunderstones. Naturally they were associated with Zeus or Jupiter in the Graeco-Roman world, and with Thor in Scandinavia, although some ancient Scandinavians apparently worshipped them directly, almost as household gods in their own right.

Fire and Magic-Maker

In North and South America the Indians venerated flint. The Cherokee, for instance, regarded this kind of stone as a god, as did the Quiché of Guatemala, for whom it was the fire god, because of its ability to create fire. The Pueblo Indians had flint societies among their numerous clans and secret cults; predictably, these groups were concerned with weather control and magic-making.

Throughout Europe, the old popular superstitions give a protective role to the Stone Age implements, which were thought to protect against lightning, disease, witches or (in France) difficult childbirth. Many Asians considered the sacred flints to be lucky charms, and also aids in searching for buried gold. In Britain the prehistoric axes and arrowheads were sometimes called elf-bolts, or fairy-shot, for they were said to have been fired by the little people at humans, to bewitch them. By reverse magic, it was said that carrying such a flint ensured safety from fairy-shot, an idea once also current in Sweden.

Europeans took these ideas about flint to the United States, where rural superstition says that a clean white flint will keep witches from a house, or hawks from the chickens. And rubbing with a flint cures goitre, if the flint is returned to the exact spot where it was found.

Apart from flints, everything from vast granite blocks to plain pebbles can contain magical virtue. The Irish Blarney Stone confers eloquence on those who kiss it; a sacred stone in British Columbia needs only to be struck to cause rain for nearby Indian tribes; special stones in Scotland, Fiji,

Gravestones near Lake Awusa in Ethiopia, thought to belong to Arussi chiefs: 'the idea of erecting a tombstone over a grave may possibly have arisen from the belief that the spirit of the dead person would inhabit the stone'

John Moss

Edinburgh University Library

Mohammed, chosen by lot for this sacred task, reverently replaces the Black Stone in the repaired Kaaba: from a 14th century Arabic MS

Greece and elsewhere bring storms if they are turned or set upright. In India standing stones with their phallic associations can be ritually used to cure barrenness in women, or to ensure easy childbirth; and another ritual widespread in India employs a sacred stone to keep evil spirits at bay during funerals.

Stones with natural holes (the female symbol) tend to be as prominent in magical lore as the upright phallic kind. Barren women, or any ill person, would be passed through the holes of large specimens, to undergo the curative power of a symbolic birth or rebirth. Pledges may be sealed with such stones when the participants clasp hands through the hole, as with Scotland's 'Plichtin (plighting) Stane o' Lairg'. Small stones with natural holes are worn as amulets the world over, on pendants or necklaces.

An old American superstition suggests hanging such an amulet over the bed of a woman in labour, or over a door to fend off witches. From similar backwoods American sources come many uses of plain pebbles, without holes or any other unusual features, for minor magic-making such as curing warts. For instance, take as many pebbles as you have warts, spit on them (or rub them on the warts, or prick the warts and smear the blood on the pebbles), then throw the pebbles over your left shoulder and walk away without looking back. This cure was also said to work for freckles.

Round white or black pebbles from a beach are supposed to be lucky in American lore. And it is unlucky to trip over a stone, unless you go back and touch it. This idea parallels the bad luck omen of stumbling, which crops up in an old Hawaiian tale of a man who kicked a stone that was, unknown to him, sacred to a god. His sleep was plagued with dreams of being struck by the stone, and they stopped only when he went back and replaced the stone exactly as it had been.

In the southern states of America it was once believed that snakes, and sometimes toads, could be made to excrete a miraculous stone that could extract poison from a snakebite; and elsewhere the toad-stone was credited with magically protective powers (see JEWELS: TOAD). In North Carolina a fish called a sheepshead was believed to have a magical stone in its head, small and white and marked with an 'L', presumably because of the good luck it would bring to its finder. And in the North of England miners used to believe in the protective magic of a hard, black, compacted stone called a 'coal nut', occasionally found in a vein of coal.

The ancient Japanese used sacred stones in a method of divination, based on their apparent weights when lifted in the hand. And some Central American Indians looked for the future in the face of smooth and naturally polished stones. This was an early form of mirror divination, and was used mainly for death omens, as the stone was said to show the face of Death to anyone fated to die in the near future.

DOUGLAS HILL

Himself a model of domestic virtue, the stork is best known in folklore today as the bringer of new life to human households

STORK

TWO SPECIES of stork, the white and the black, breed in Europe, but folklore is concerned mainly with the white species, which is more conspicuous and bolder. In many parts of Europe, and in North Africa, it has adapted itself to living in close proximity to man and chooses to nest on houses, church towers and, in some places, cart-wheels that have been fixed on tall poles or heavily pruned tree trunks. Although the white stork is practically voiceless, the clattering of its mandibles as it arches its neck over its back attracts attention. Ovid, Petronius and Dante are among the writers who mention this characteristic. The regularity of the bird's appearance in spring was noted in ancient times. Jeremiah commented: 'Even the stork in the heavens knows her times' (Jeremiah 8.7); while the Roman writer Pliny remarked that the birds' comings and goings were mysterious.

Legends tell of storks being transformed into human beings, possibly because the large size and upright posture suggest an affinity with mankind. Typical versions occur in Germany, where it is also said that a wounded stork weeps human tears, and there are modern Greek and Arab

stories relating that in the distant lands to which the birds go in autumn they live as men. As early as the 13th century, Gervase of Tilbury mentioned people who at times became transformed into storks. There is an Eastern legend of a man who managed to turn himself into a stork, and who found the birds' conversation so amusing that he forgot the formula by which to regain human form.

Filial Duty

During the Middle Ages writers quoted Aristotle to the effect that the male stork kills his mate if she is unfaithful, and Chaucer referred to it as 'the avenger of adultery'. In the 3rd century AD Aelian embroidered on this belief in a story about a stork who blinded a human adulterer in gratitude to the husband who had allowed it to nest on his house. From classical times the stork has had a reputation for filial piety. The young were said to care for their parents in old age. The English poet Michael Drayton (1563–1631) referred to the 'careful stork . . . in filial duty as instructing man'. In a Russian folktale an old man pleads with a stork to be his son.

The fable that the stork brings babies seems to be a fairly recent one and is most detailed in Germany. Bavarians say that baby boys of good disposition ride on the bird's back while naughty boys are carried in its bill. In some localities, if a Christmas mummer dressed as a stork nudges a woman or girl it is said that she will soon be pregnant. In Holland and Germany children sing to the stork to bring them a little brother or sister.

A number of ancient ideas may have contributed to the development of the baby-bringing theme. Its association with water connects the stork with fertility, it was the messenger of Athene, who in some places was associated with childbirth, and its old Germanic name, *Adebar*, means 'luck-bringer'.

The stork's bill is red and, in common with a number of other birds with red markings, it is associated with fire. A stork's nest on the house protects it from fire, although if its young are stolen it may set the building on fire. Although it is generally regarded as a bringer of good fortune, there are localities where it is held to be an evil portent if a stork alights on a house. In other regions a wedding may be expected if this occurs.

A Welcome Guest

As an ambassador of spring the stork's arrival is greeted with a great variety of welcoming calls and songs. Predictions may be made from the bird's behaviour, for example, that when they arrive late in spring the season will be unfavourable. To see a white stork foretells a dry year, whereas a black one indicates that the coming months will be wet. An exceptional saying is that if storks circle over a group of people one of them will die shortly.

The kindliness with which the bird is generally viewed is probably due in part to the fact that certain types of storks kill small snakes. This is given as the reason why it was held in such great honour in ancient Thessaly that a man who killed a stork was treated as a murderer.

The stork has long been regarded as possessing valuable medicinal qualities. The bird's stomach was a remedy against murrain, an infectious disease in cattle. Its sinews were used to bind up a foot afflicted with gout, on the principle that a bird with legs as long and healthy as those of the stork must be capable of alleviating pain in human limbs. According to Jewish folk traditions, its gall may be used to cure scorpion stings.

The stork appears in Aesop's *Fables*, where we are told that the wolf swallowed a bone which stuck in its throat. He roamed around howling with pain and offering a generous reward to anyone who would help him. At last the stork undertook the task. Poking his long bill into the wolf's throat he extracted the bone. When he asked for the promised reward the wolf laughed and said: 'You should count yourself lucky that I did not bite your head off when it was in my mouth.' The moral is that kindness is not always requited.

In another fable a farmer catches a stork in a net with cranes and geese. The stork pleads that he only happened to be in the company of the other birds and was not stealing grain as they were, but the farmer tells him that as he was with thieves he must suffer the same punishment. In other words, be careful what company you keep.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Mary Evans Picture Library

Storm

Frequently regarded as an expression of the anger of the sky god, whose voice is the thunder and whose weapon is lightning: Yahweh, Zeus and Jupiter were all storm gods as well as supreme gods, but storm may also be the preserve of a lesser deity; the analogy between storm and war is frequently drawn; in parts of Europe church bells are rung to ward off storm damage, and various plants traditionally give protection against lightning.

See SKY.

A length of string can serve as a link, while the function of a knot is to impede or make fast; man's ability to see occult meaning in everyday objects is typified by the symbolic importance of cord and knots in witchcraft, medicine and magic ancient and modern

STRING

THE NEED TO BIND and connect, to fasten and make secure, must have led man in very early times to produce forms of twine, thread and cord, which could be made firm by knotting. He needed line for fishing, thread for stitching and cord for rudimentary construction work, such as bridge-building, or lashing together the framework of log huts. And taking into account man's tendency to invest the familiar natural objects of the world around him with supernatural qualities, it is fairly easy to understand how thread, string and knots came to acquire their present symbolic meanings.

Thread is regarded as the connecting link between two separate planes of existence, and it is also connected with fate, as the thread of life. In classical mythology Clotho spins man's destiny, Lachesis weaves the web of luck or chance which sustains his life, and Atropos severs the thread when death comes (see FATE). Thread was also linked with fate in Finno-Ugrian folklore, and it was the means by which the dead ascended to the otherworld; thread was at one time placed in coffins for this purpose. There was also a custom in which the mourners participated in a kind of lottery of death, each picking a single thread. The one who drew the shortest was fated to die next.

In the interpretation of dreams, a tangled thread is said to represent trouble, and a broken one disaster. Some actors believe that it is very lucky to pick up a long thread from the floor of a theatre, as this promises a long and successful production.

String possesses symbolic qualities closely akin to those of thread. It represents the line of continuity and is used when making a magic circle, and to bind individuals with unbreakable spells. As a medical amulet it protects against sterility and death.

Making string figures (such as 'cat's cradles') is a popular game among children, and in primitive communities all over the world, and these pastimes often possess magical overtones. In the Far East, ghost traps made from string are sometimes set on the outskirts of villages to ensnare prowling spectres.

The Power to Bind

The bulk of the lore relating to string and thread is concerned with knots, which represent tightly closed links, and have many psychic implications that arise from the fact that, in magic, that which has the power to bind the body can also be used to confine the spirit. The knot is also the symbol of the sealed bargain. The continuous knot in the form of a horizontal figure eight represents infinity.

The Gordian knot which was wrought so intricately that no one could undo it – until Alexander cut it with his sword (see SWORD) and thus became conqueror of the East – also had an occult significance. It stood as a symbol of the labyrinth, and it was said that to untie the knot to its heart was equivalent to finding the centre which formed such an important part of mystic thought. In certain religious orders and secret societies, ceremonies involving knotting and binding take place during the initiation of a new member, as in the case of high-caste Brahmins and, in the past, the Knights Templar. Modern witches use cords and knots in many rituals: for example, cord of a given planetary colour may bind an image in a restraining spell, or a knot may be tied as a focus of concentrated will in a healing spell.

Closely associated with the knotting of cords or garments, are a number of religious taboos. The *flamen Dialis*, the Roman priest of Jupiter (see JUPITER), was forbidden to have a single knot in his clothing; and Moslem pilgrims to Mecca are prohibited from wearing knots and rings. It has been suggested that the origin of the phrase 'the bonds of matrimony' is the custom of draping the priest's stole over the clasped hands of the bride and groom to form a symbolic knot. In former times, knotted ribbons were often worn at weddings to symbolize the binding effect of the marriage ceremony as well as for their decorative value.

Love, Birth and Death

A girl who used illicit love magic in an attempt to lure a reluctant lover into her clutches would tie knots in lengths of thread or wool, at the same time chanting:

> This knot I knit,
> This knot I tie,
> To see my lover as he goes by,
> In his apparel and array,
> As he walks in every day.

The symbol of fidelity and love, the love-knot, is a double knot of ribbon with two bows, and two ends.

One of the arts of the Age of Chivalry was point-tying, a method of inhibiting the sexual prowess of a husband on his wedding night by artfully tying a knot in his points, the tagged lace or cord that attached his hose to his doublet. Similarly, tying a knot in a length of thread or string was popularly supposed to render a man sexually incapable. If the knot were not discovered, the condition of impotence could be permanent. This practice, which savoured of black magic, was greatly frowned upon by the Church.

Tying knots to avoid an unwanted pregnancy was at one time practised by both men and women. A Moroccan husband would knot and then swallow the oviduct of a hen, while in eastern Europe a woman would tie ten knots in a length of flax which she would wear for nine successive days and nights before burying it.

During the Renaissance churchmen were often horrified by the superstitious practices associated with childbirth; in 1584, for instance, in Shropshire, the prevailing custom of unlocking all the doors and loosening every knot in the house in order to ease the mother's labour was roundly condemned. This curious custom persisted in some rural districts of Britain until less than a century ago.

Because untying knots was supposed to facilitate childbirth it seemed perfectly logical to ascribe difficult births to the malicious tying of knots by an enemy of the mother concerned. As a result of this reasoning, a great number of so-called witches ended their lives on the gallows or at the stake, having 'freely' confessed under torture to the crime of inhibiting childbirth.

Tate Gallery/John Webb

Clotho spins the thread of human life, Lachesis measures its length and Atropos waits to cut it at the last: the three Fates, in a detail from a painting by John Melhuish Strudwick, *The Golden Thread*

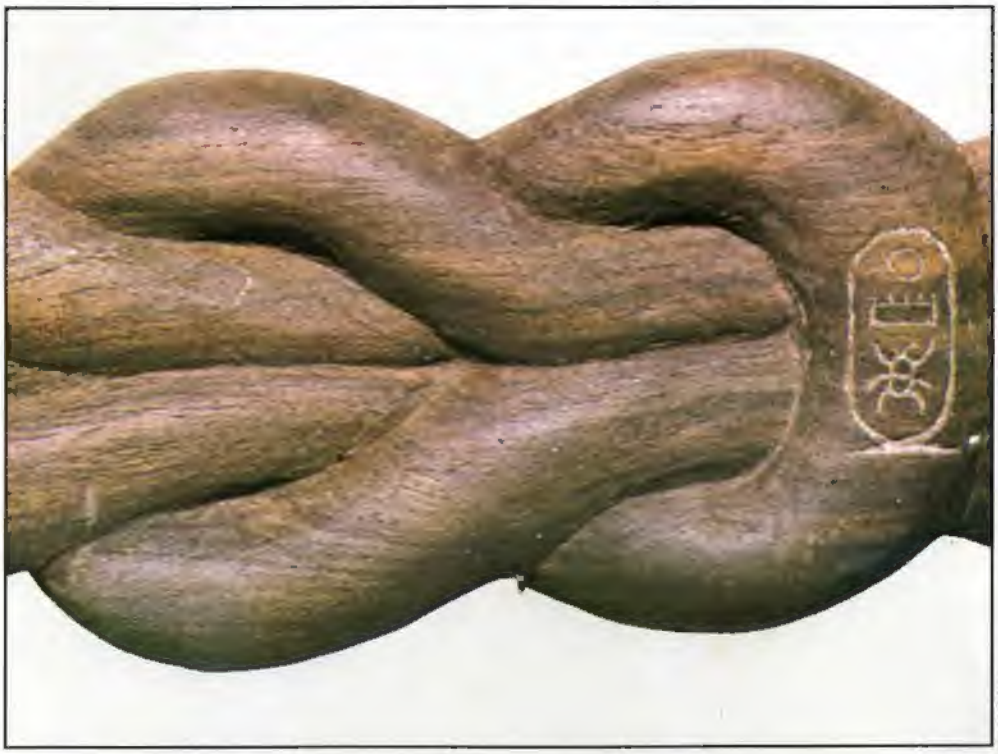
Knots have been used in the magical treatment of disease from ancient times to the middle years of the 19th century. A well-known country remedy for nose bleeding was to tie a skein of red silk, which had previously been knotted by nine maidens, around the neck of the sufferer. The mystical number nine occurs yet again in the once popular cure for whooping cough, in which a string with nine knots was worn as a neck-band. A well-known treatment for warts was to knot a piece of string and then bury it in the earth. It was said that the wart would disappear as the string rotted. In ancient Babylon, 4000 years ago, a three-fold cord with twice seven knots was said to cure headaches if it was tied round the brow.

Before the development of sedative drugs a protracted death could impose an intolerable burden upon both the dying person and his family and, understandably, every legitimate method of hastening the inevitable end was explored. Every door in the house was unlocked, all windows were opened and all knots loosened to clear a way of exit for the departing soul. The relief that members of a family felt when death had finally claimed its victim often resulted in agonies of guilt, and these led, perhaps inevitably, to a growing fear that the angry ghost would return. To insure against this happening, a piece of knotted thread or string would be carried in a pocket to serve as an antidote. A holed stone suspended from the ceiling by a thread with nine knots was said to give protection against nightmares.

In Scotland, fishermen use knotted thread and string, in various different colours, as charms. Red thread is said to he the most effective, particularly when used in conjunction with a piece of rowan or mountain ash (see RED; ROWAN). There was an old saying:

> Rowan tree and red thread
> Will put the witches to their speed.

This charm was believed to be effective only if the thread had been knotted by an



C. M. Dixon

Axel Poignant

Above **'The continuous knot in the form of a horizontal figure eight represents infinity': magical knot inscribed with the name of Pharaoh Tuthmosis III, dated c 1450 BC**
Below **Games with string are popular all over the world, sometimes carrying magical or religious overtones: a Maori woman teaches her grandsons how to make the two volcanoes of the central highlands of North Island**

individual 'having the knowledge'.

Even the most innocent forms of magical knot-tying could involve great dangers in 17th century Scotland, where all supernatural practices were constantly scrutinized by the clergy. Margaret Barclay, one of the witches of the town of Irvine in Ayrshire, was put to torture solely on the evidence provided by a length of knotted red thread and a twig of rowan which she carried as a protective charm. Witches were said to be able to steal the milk of cows, from a distance, by plaiting, or tying magical knots, and Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE), the Scottish witch, confessed to this crime. She declared: 'We plait the rope the wrong way (widdershins) in the Devil's name and thereby take with us the cow's milk.'

As recently as the 1870s Scottish farmers attempted to protect their stock against bewitchment by threading red cord through one of the ears of each new cow when it first entered the byre.

At a Rate of Knots

One of the best-known arts of the sea witches of Finland, the Orkneys and the Isle of Man was that of controlling the wind by means of magical knots. Three knots were to be tied in a length of string, and as each was undone the power of the wind increased. It was said of the women of the Isle of Man, especially those on the coast, that they would 'selle to shipmen wynde so it were closed under three knotes of thread, so that the more wynde he would have the more knotes he must undo'.

The last surviving relic of the ritual tying of knots is possibly the ornamental intertwining of cords known as knotwork, an art which was popular in Britain towards the end of the last century, and which under the name of Macramé is currently enjoying a revival of popularity in the United States.

ERIC MAPLE

SUBTERRANEAN RACE

AN ANCIENT PERUVIAN legend relates that four brothers and four sisters emerged from the cavern of Pacari-Tambo, east of Cuzco, the ancient city that became the capital of the Inca Empire. The eldest brother climbed a mountain and, throwing stones to the four cardinal points, took possession of the land. The youngest brother, Ayar Uchu Topa, contrived to dispose of his elders, married the sisters, and subdued the surroumding peoples. He founded Cuzco and many other cities.

The great Mammoth Cave in Edmondson County, Kentucky, in the United States, was discovered only in 1809. Bodies of an unknown race reputed to antedate the Indians were found in its recesses with reed torches beside them, but all crumbled to powder when touched.

There is a belief that a low type of subterranean being sometimes appears in astral form on the earth's surface, and that it is somehow attracted by manifestations of human sex-force. For example, in *Real Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead tells of an apparition seen by a woman in an English suburb: 'I saw this light develop into a head and face of yellowish-green light, with a mass of matted hair above it. The face was very wide and broad, larger than ours in all respects, very large eyes of green which, not being distinctly outlined, appeared to merge into the yellow of the cheeks; no hair whatever on the lower part of the face. The expression was diabolically malignant.'

One of the most interesting accounts of the subterranean people, which purports in one sense to be factual, is by the Theosophist C. W. Leadbeater. Although he claims elsewhere to have up-to-date confirmation of some of the facts, his story is alleged to be a report of an experience undergone by two Indian youths, which took place in 10,402 BC and was recovered from the 'memory of Nature' (the record of history supposed to exist on the astral plane).

Both young men had some psychic faculty, and one heard a voice, from time to time,

which guided him and suggested interesting enterprises. On the instructions of this invisible guide, who demanded a pledge of secrecy, they set out on the pretext of a pilgrimage to a certain mountain area where they ultimately found a cave entrance. They prepared food packages to last several weeks and bundles of torches, and with some reluctance entered the depths of the cave.

After a long, fairly level, penetration into the mountain, they reached a sloping rugged downward fissure, which they descended perilously for some days. Finally they reached an immense cavity in the earth. Their torches were unnecessary there, because the air overhead and around them was charged with a strange luminosity.

They found underground rivers, several varieties of vegetation (which lacked the green of the upper earth), semi-reptilian animals and, to their astonishment, naked humans. These were of less than normal stature, but broad and stocky, and their skin had a repulsive leaden hue. The people had no culture and no shelters, and merely caught the reptiles and ate them raw. They also fed on an abundant huge toadstool-like fungus.

The youths declined the reptile flesh, but found the fungus quite good and invigorating. After a week or so their unseen guide directed them to walk in a straight line away from the wall where they had entered. Having done this for some hours, they came upon a different type of people, of higher intelligence. Although they were ignorant of fire, like the primitives already seen, they availed themselves of hot springs or geysers to cook the flesh of turtles and goat-like animals that they kept, and they drank the animals' milk. They lived in chambers hollowed out in the rock, and wove a kind of matting and string from reeds. Some of the women wore coloured stones, and both sexes smeared themselves with rose, green and yellow mud from the edges of the hot springs.

They were able to draw, and incised meaningful sets of marks on the rocks. These were mainly cup-markings, rounded hollows ground on the surface and arranged in patterns, each pattern having a meaning.

'Mysterious race in the earth's interior': illustration from *The Occult Gazette*

In other words they were not letters but ideographs, symbols in picture-writing. A certain number of these in a straight line had one meaning, a set making an angle had another. The two young explorers eventually found their way back to the entrance of the cave, as they had carried their primitive fire-making equipment with them, and could relight their torches.

A Scientific Possibility?

The existence of an underground race, or races, presupposes that there are great cavities in the rocks deep inside the earth. Surprisingly enough, there seems to be a possibility that these races could exist. Although the core of the earth is a molten ball, the mantle or overlying mass of rock must have two distinct zones, one nearer the core where heat and pressure put the solid rock in a state of 'flowage', and an upper zone where 'fracture' can occur. The depth of this upper zone is the crucial point. Professor Frank D. Adams of Montreal has shown by actual experiment that empty cavities might exist in granite at a depth of at least 11 miles, and his conclusions were supported by the mathematician Louis V. King, who calculated that, at normal temperature, a cavity could exist at depths down to between 17.2 and 20.9 miles. The newly-discovered 16 Rouse Belts, which give planes of fracture completely penetrating the globe, give additional support to the possibility.

(See also LYTTON.)

C. NELSON STEWART

Succubus

Female counterpart of the incubus: a demon in female form which makes love to men while they sleep; the Devil himself was said to serve his worshippers as incubus or succubus and the children of such a union were expected to be deformed and demonic; belief in these demons is often attributed to exotic dreams and nightmares.

See INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS.

'Sufism is a concentrated essence which for the majority needs diluting'; yet paradoxically, its most remarkable quality is a universality which bridges East and West

SUFIS

JUST AS the Cabalists are the mystics of Judaism, the Sufis are the mystics of Islam. The Sufi orders fulfil in Islam something of the same function as that of the monastic orders in Christianity. They differ from the Christian orders in not being celibate, in not being under the control of any outside authority, and in not being so highly organized. They nevertheless have a certain organization, and many of them have accumulated rich endowments with the passage of the centuries, nearly always including a mosque which has in it the tomb of the saint who founded the order.

As in other religions, the mystical orders of Islam appear to have originated in groups which gathered spontaneously round some person of outstanding spirituality. One of the earliest of these guides was the Prophet Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, Ali (d. 661), the fourth caliph. All the orders trace their spiritual ancestry back to Mohammed himself, and in most of these 'chains' Ali is the ultimate link, though one or two orders are descended from the Prophet through Abu Bakr, the first caliph (d. 634). By the end of the 9th century some of these groups had become organized brotherhoods, and the term 'Sufi', which was not used at the beginning of Islam, had become current. Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910) is something of a landmark in this early period, and most of the Sufi masters are his spiritual descendants, whence his title 'the Sheikh of the Sheikhs'.

Sufi means literally 'wearer of wool', and long before the beginning of Islam woollen dress had been traditionally associated with the spiritual life. But the Sufis have not made a speciality of wearing wool. The term, which has profoundly venerable implications, was no doubt first applied to

a particular group, spreading subsequently into a more general use.

The Sufis refer to themselves however as *fuqara*, 'poor (in Spirit)', plural of *faqir*, in Persian *darvish*, whence the English words 'fakir' and 'dervish' (see FAKIR; DERVISH).

The Koran affirms that the community of Mohammed is 'a middle people' and it is, above all, in its mysticism that his religion shows itself as a bridge between East and West. A Vedantist, a Taoist or a Buddhist can find, in many aspects of Islamic mysticism, 'a home from home', such as he could less easily find in Christianity or Judaism. Prince Dara Shikoh (d. 1659), the Sufi son of the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan, was able to affirm that the only difference between Sufism and Advaita Vedantism is one of terminology. But this universality of Sufism cannot be attributed to any influences outside Islam. The foundations of Islamic mysticism were laid, and its subsequent course irrevocably fixed, long before it would have been possible for any farther Eastern or even Neoplatonic influences to have introduced non-Islamic elements, and when such influences came they touched no more than the surface. The universality of Sufism must be attributed in a large measure to the fact that in Islam, from the very beginning, a clear distinction is made between exoterism and esoterism. The majority are provided for by a well defined legal minimum, and esoterism is left free to devote itself to the needs of the few, absolved from any duty to stretch beyond measure the mystical net in order to find room for as many adherents as possible. The Sufis have always concentrated on the highest doctrinal truths and on the practices which correspond to them; and what is highest in religion is at the same time what is most universal.

Flash of Absolute Truth

The doctrine of Sufism, like that of Islam as a whole, is summed up in the formula of testification 'there is no god but God' which every entrant into Islam must pronounce. The Supreme Name *Allah*, 'God', is not to be separated from the Name *Haqq*, 'Truth, Reality', so that the above formula means also 'there is no reality but Reality'. Every Moslem must believe this, but only the Sufis take this belief to its ultimate conclusion. Reality, according to them, is that which *is*, and if only God is absolutely Real, only God *is*, whence the term 'oneness of being' by which the doctrine of Sufism is known and which is none other than the *Advaita* (non-duality) of Hinduism.

This does not mean that God is made up of parts, but that the whole created universe in all its seemingly incalculable multiplicity is mysteriously one substance with the Transcendent Infinite. The Sufi Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. c 1428) used the image of ice and water to denote respectively the illusory world of coagulated forms and the Reality which is its Origin and End. Other Sufis use the image of the waves of the ocean which symbolize form and vicissitude while never being really separate from the ocean into which they are bound to subside. The Koran formulates this doctrine as follows, indicating at the same time that it is not within the scope of everyone: 'Verily We created the heavens and the earth with naught but Truth, yet most men know not' (Sura 44.39). On other occasions also the Absolute Truth suddenly flashes out of the Koranic text, as for example in the verses: 'Wheresoe'er ye turn, there is the Face of God' (Sura 2.115); and 'He (God) is the First and the Last and the Outwardly Manifest and the Inwardly Hidden' (Sura 57.3); and 'We (God) are nearer to him (man) than his jugular vein' (Sura 50.16). In connection with this last verse we may quote the saying of the Prophet: 'Who knoweth himself knoweth his Lord'. Also relevant is another of his sayings, of the kind that is known as a 'Holy Tradition', because in it God speaks in the first person: 'I was a Hidden Treasure and I wished to be known and so I created the world'. These two Traditions form the basis of some of the profoundest writing of Ibn Arabi (see IBN ARABI).

The Sufis are unanimous in considering the Prophet Mohammed to have been not only the first Sufi (in all but name) but also the first and incomparably the greatest master of Sufism. The main practices of the Sufis were all instituted by him; the differences between the orders are for the most part differences of choice, by the founders of the orders, from the wide range of possibilities offered by his own example. The whole of Sufism – its means and its end – is summed up in another Tradition: 'Nothing is more pleasing to Me, as a means for my slave to draw near unto Me, than the worship that I have made binding upon him; and My slave ceaseth not to draw near unto Me by devotions of his free will until I love him; and when I love him I am the hearing whereby he heareth and the sight whereby he seeth and the hand wherewith he smiteth and the foot whereon he walketh.'

The opening part of this Tradition refers to practices that are often called the 'five pillars of Islam' (see ISLAM). The voluntary practices referred to in the second part are drawn from what was recommended by the Prophet and they consist of reciting the Koran, extra prayers, fasts and pilgrimages, litanies, vigils, spiritual retreats and, as a complement to these solitudes, organized gatherings for the purpose of communal glorification and invocation. It is at these gatherings that in some Sufi orders a sacred dance is performed, as a means of inducing concentration, the most elaborate and celebrated of these being that of 'the whirling dervishes' originated by Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi Order (see RUMI).

The most basic rite of Sufism is the invocation of the name Allah, which was enjoined upon the Prophet in one of the first Koranic revelations. There might seem to be a contradiction between the opening of the last quoted Tradition, which sets the obligatory before the voluntary, and a verse of the Koran (Sura 29.45) exalting the invocation of Allah, which is voluntary, above the five daily prayers, which are obligatory. The question is resolved for the Sufis on the understanding that the invocation, in itself the most powerful of all rites, is only acceptable to God on the basis of the invoker's having performed what is obligatory.

The first thing done with a novice in a Sufi order is to make sure that he is regular in his practice of what is binding on all Moslems. In this connection it may be remarked that the Sufis altogether disown those pseudo-Sufi movements in the modern world which profess to have made Sufism independent of Islam. The claim to be a Sufi without being a Moslem is on a level with claiming to be a Franciscan or a Dominican without being a Christian.

In the Sight of God

The dimension of depth which Sufism represents in Islam was indicated by the Prophet in his definition of the religion as a whole when, in addition to what must be believed and what ritually accomplished, he mentioned a third aspect of the religion which, by its very nature, is beyond the reach of the majority, namely, being an adept as regards faith and practice: 'Excellence is that thou shouldst worship God as if thou sawest Him; and if thou seest Him not, He seeth thee.' This definition, which is one of the foundation stones of Sufism, has always marked an ideal for the Sufis and is quoted again and again in their writings.

The difference between the Sufis and the majority of Moslems is not so much in what they do but how they do it. The prostration, for example, which is a gesture of humility before God, means for the Sufi no less than extinction, a ritual affirmation that there is no room in the Divine Presence for more than the One. The fast is another mode of extinction, 'abstaining from other than God', the ablution yet another, for it enacts the washing away of the impurity of the illusion that one exists apart from God. In this connection we may quote the saying of Rabiah (d. 801), one of the greatest women saints of Islam, who replied to a man who asked for her spiritual advice, saying that he had not sinned for 20 years: 'Alas, my son, thine existence is a sin wherewith no other sin may be compared.' It is only through extinction that the end of the path can be reached; in other words, it is only through emptiness that the receptacle can be flooded with the Divine Consciousness in the sense of the words: 'I am the hearing wherewith he heareth and the sight wherewith he seeth.' The Sufi does not conceive of the beatific vision as anything other than vision of God by God.

Sufism is a concentrated essence which for the majority needs diluting – hence the Koranic distinction between 'the slaves of God' (the word slave here implies extinction) and 'the righteous'. The slaves drink directly from the fountains of Paradise, whereas the righteous drink a draught which is flavoured at those fountains. Sufism, like all mysticisms, is both dangerous and necessary – as necessary to its religion as the heart is to the body. It is both closed and open; the Sufis are continually cleaving chasms, as it were, between themselves and the rest of the community, and building bridges. The relationship between Islamic esoterism and exoterism is both complex

British Museum

A Sufi saint, refused a passage on the ferry, calmly seated himself upon his prayer-mat and floated across the river in the boat's wake: a Persian miniature depicts the incident

and delicate, for if the Sufi orders are closed, requiring a rite of initiation for entry, their practices are in principle open to the community as a whole, even those which, in consequence of their power, are virtually dangerous.

But the power – and therefore the danger – of mystical practices depends partly on their methodical performance with the implacable regularity of a drumbeat, whence the insistence of the Sheikhs on patience and perseverance to a degree which far surpasses the average conception of these virtues. An unqualified person is normally protected from danger by the mediocrity of his practice, the danger in question being that a psychic substance which is caught up on the hook of some hidden or half-hidden egoism will be ruptured by a pull that is too sudden or too sharp. It is part of the function of a Sheikh to protect his disciples in this respect. A true master will know how much strain each soul is capable of taking.

The Wings of Poetry

Heralding as it were the exclusive aspect of Sufism, Abu Hurayrah (d. 678), one of the Companions of the Prophet, said: 'I have treasured in my memory two stores of knowledge which I had from the Messenger of God. One I have divulged; but if I divulged the other ye would cut my throat.' In connection with this aspect of Sufism, mention must be made of the inspired ejaculations which have always been characteristic of the Sufis such as the 'Glory be to Me!' of Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 874), sword thrusts which may bring about a sudden opening up of new horizons in the intelligences not only of disciples but also of those hearers who, unknown to themselves, have a vocation for the mystic path. But for those who have not, namely the vast majority, such ejaculations are liable to cause scandal, especially when repeated out of context and 'in cold blood'. No doubt the most famous of them is Hallaj's 'I am the Truth', for which, in 922, he was put to death.

Apart from such ejaculations and kindred aphorisms, many of the most profound formulations of the Sufis are in their poetry. Rumi is generally recognized as the greatest of Persian poets, and his contemporary, the Egyptian Umar ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) is certainly one of the greatest of the Arab poets. For the more uncompromising of their utterances formal beauty serves as a cloak and also lends wings to bridge chasms which could not otherwise be crossed. It is unlikely that Hallaj would have been put to death for his poem which begins:

> I saw my Lord with the eye of the heart.
> I said: Who art Thou? He answered:
> Thou.

Many of the Sufi poems take the form of love lyrics. Sometimes God is addressed directly, but often the Divinity is personified by a woman, usually named Laila which, in addition to being the name of the heroine of the best-known love story of the Near East, has the meaning of 'night', indicating that it is the holiest and most secret inwardness of God, the Divine Essence Itself, which marks the end of the Sufi path.

Of the Sufi treatises, some are written by the Sheikhs exclusively for their most intimate disciples, while others are written for a much wider circle of readers; and this brings us to what might be called the inclusive aspect of Sufism, the overflow of which into the outer domains of Islam is especially incarnated in Sufis who, in addition to their esoteric function, have been eminent exoteric authorities in ritual law or dogmatic theology. Amongst the most famous of these is Ghazali (see GHAZALI). In response to this 'overflow', almost every great order has at its fringe a multitude of men and women who would not be capable of following the Sufi path but who seek blessings from the Sheikh and also his guidance as regards voluntary worship. Such guidance often takes the form of a litany, long or short as the case may be, to be recited once or twice a day; but from humbler aspirants a Sheikh may simply demand that they make a solemn pact with him to perform regularly, until their dying day, all their ritual obligations.

Sufism Today

In connection with this aspect of Sufism it must be remembered also that visits to the tombs of saints play a large part in the spiritual life of the Islamic community as a whole, and apart from the tombs of the Prophet, his close companions, and some of his family, by far the most venerated tombs in Islam are those of the Sufi Sheikhs. In fact almost every community in the Islamic world has as its patron saint a Sufi who lies buried in its midst.

It is partly because of this that Sufism is banned by the puritanical Wahhabi sect which rules Saudi Arabia. Even prolonged visits to the tomb of the Prophet at Medina are frowned on, for fear lest some element of worship might be given to other than God. They cannot, however, prevent Sufis from making the pilgrimage, and in consequence Mecca and Medina are meeting places for Sufis from all over the world. Sufism is also officially banned in Turkey, but for very different reasons. It was in the Sufi orders, as the most conservative element in Islam, that the revolutionary statesman Kemal Ataturk (1881–1938) met with the sharpest resistance to his secularizing aims. Consequently, heads of orders were put to death and the orders themselves made illegal and thus driven underground. In other Islamic countries, however, the Sufi orders are a recognized part of the community –

a 'backward' part, no doubt, in the eyes of the majority for, like all mysticisms, Sufism would be untrue to itself if it subscribed to any of those aspirations and ideals which dominate the modern world.

The orders differ considerably from each other. The Tijani Order which is fairly widespread in north-west Africa and particularly so in West Africa (Senegal and Nigeria, for example), and throughout the Sudan is not well disposed to other orders, which it claims to have superseded. It is less aloof and more proselytizing than they are. Some of the other orders, the Isawi and the Rifai, for example, have degenerated in certain of their branches to the point of being dominated by snake-charming and fire-eating, practices which originated as subsidiary tests of faith and of reliance upon God. But the main body of Sufism can be said to be still true to its medieval heritage.

In India the Chishti Order is of considerable importance, and so throughout the East is the Naqshabandi Order; but the most widespread in both East and West are the great Qadiri and Shadhili Orders, founded respectively by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), and Abu 'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili (d. 1258), who imposed on his disciples an intellectual approach which still characterizes the Shadhili Order in its many branches. One of the most eminent of these is the Darqawi Order, with its Alawi sub-branch, founded respectively by Arabi ad-Darqawi (d. 1823) and Ahmad al-Alawi (d. 1934), both outstanding amongst the Sheikhs of more recent times.

MARTIN LINGS

FURTHER READING: Martin Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century, Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi* (Univ. of California Press, 1972); Shaikh ad-Darqawi, *Letters of a Sufi Master* (Weiser, 1970); Idries Shah, *Seeker after Truth: a Handbook of Sufi Tales and Teachings* (Harper & Row, 1982); Titus Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Weiser); A. J. Arberry, *Sufism* (Allen & Unwin, 1979).

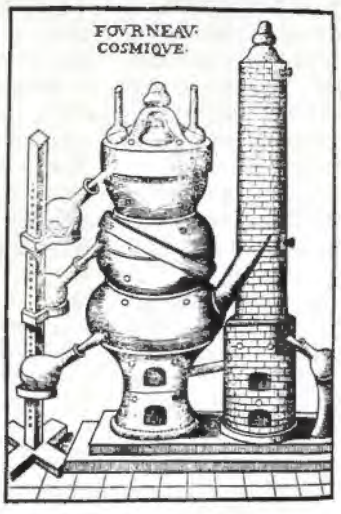
Dancing dervishes of the Mevlevi Order, one of the numerous Sufi sects: illustration from a Persian *Lives of the Mystics*

British Museum

Sulphur

According to early alchemists, the element in a substance which enables it to burn: regarded as one of the basic components of all matter, the others being mercury and salt; in man's constitution, identified with the emotions and passions, the 'fiery' part of the personality; associated with hell-fire and the Devil because of its fiery stench.

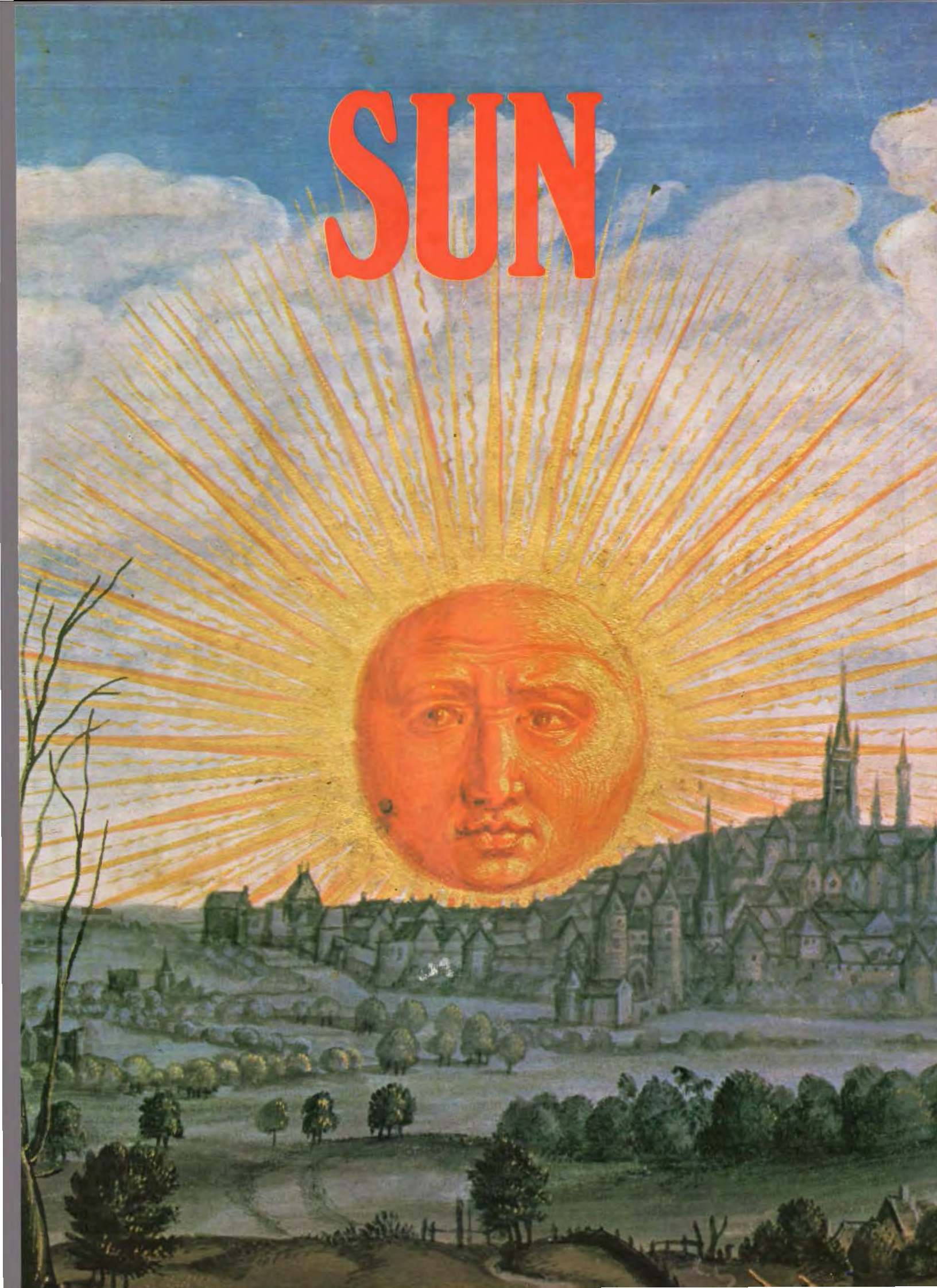
See ALCHEMY; MERCURY.



Sumerians

Early inhabitants of Mesopotamia: they had settled in Babylonia by 3500 BC and 'initiated a cultural revolution which gave the world writing, cities, and a corpus of religious practices and concepts'; each early settlement had its own local deity, so that there was a large pantheon of gods and goddesses, and a complex web of relationships between them.

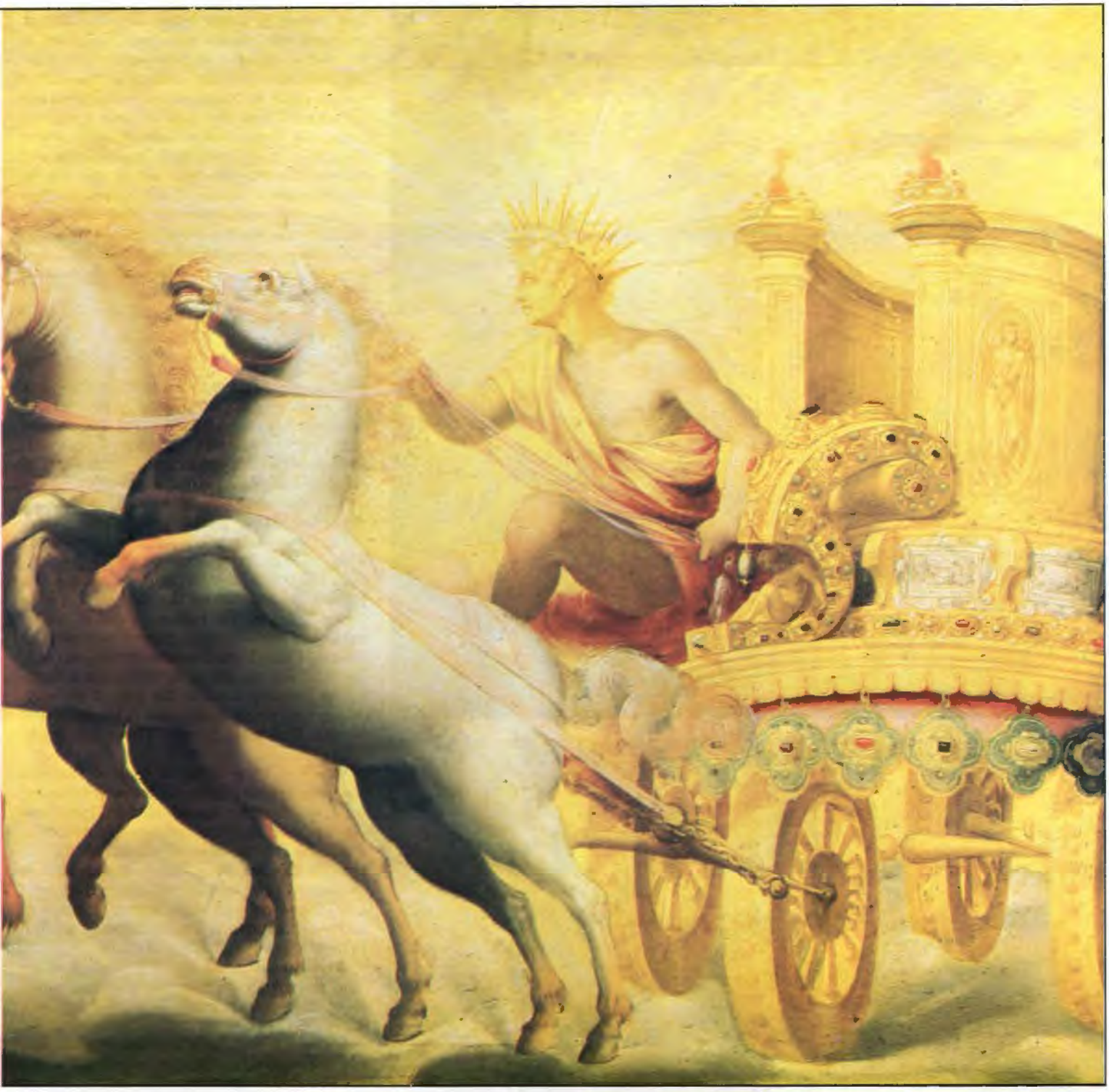
See MESOPOTAMIA.


SUN

Orthodox Hindus begin the working day with an invocation of the sun: 'We meditate on the lovely light of the god, Savitri; may he inspire our thoughts'

ON THE FACE of it, there is no more obvious recipient of divine honours than the sun: visible and yet mysterious, beneficent and yet thoroughly dangerous, it is the giver of life and yet the most potent of destructive forces. In fact it can be regarded as summing up most of the characteristics which mankind has always attributed to its gods and goddesses, not least the characteristic of awesome remoteness. In the 6th century BC the Ionic philosopher Anaximander announced that the sun was not a deity, but merely a circle of fire. That he also said that it was only 28 times larger than the earth seems little more than curious; the denial of deity was the more important thing. To Anaximander's contemporaries, and the majority of his successors the world over, however, the sun was surely a deity, impinging upon the life of man at every point, measuring the rhythm of the days and the seasons, giving and withholding life, warming and burning by turns.

Nevertheless, the study of sun worship is by no means as straightforward as might at first sight appear. The simple adoration of the sun in its daily march, or ride, across the heavens can be observed and documented. But counected with this are a host of kindred notions. For instance, there is the matter of the daily and seasonal cycles which the sun establishes. Does the sun in fact establish the sacred rhythms, or is the sun itself subservient to a greater and more divine order, within which it acts essentially in the role, not of master, but of servant? Ancient Indian speculation spoke of a natural order, *rita*, of which the High Gods Varuna and Mitra (a sun god) were the guardians; but it certainly seems that they were not held to be the originators of this order. And from the other side of the world, Garcilaso de la Vega recorded the story of the Inca who was puzzled by the thought that if, as was supposed, the sun was the Supreme God, then why did he have to follow precisely the same path across the heavens every day? Was he not free to wander like the other planets? The Inca in



Corvina, Budapest

question is said to have concluded that there must be a god greater than the sun whom the sun was forced to obey, and to have set up an altar to that unknown deity.

The problem here is to know what is (or was) the relationship between the sun god and the High God of the sky. Other problems concern the relationship between the sun god and the world of men as reflected, for instance, in astrology; and the sun god's role in determining man's destiny after death.

When evaluating the mythology of sun worship, a great deal obviously depends on the geographical location of myth and cult. In tropical and sub-tropical areas, where the pattern of the seasons is not as clear-cut as it is in Europe, and where the omnipresence of the sun is taken for granted for the greater part of the year, particular importance is attached to the daily cycle of the sun's rising and setting; in temperate zones and in the Arctic, the seasonal cycle is by far the more important. It is significant that the nearest approach to a solar monotheism in the history of religion comes from ancient Egypt; such a belief would have been virtually impossible in northern Europe, where the sun emerged in the spring only after a bitter struggle with dark powers.

Explanatory Myths

The so-called primitive peoples of the world possess a vast store of myths concerning the sun, often coupled with moon myths, since sun and moon are frequently regarded as being related in some way.

Previous page **The rising sun brings light into darkness, a symbol of inward and spiritual illumination: from *Splendor Solis*, an alchemical work of the 15th century *Above* As Phoebus Apollo, 'bright Apollo', the Greeks identified the god of prophecy, healing and the arts with the sun: in a painting from the studio of Rosso Fiorentino, the sun god escorts the four seasons of the year**

The sun is sometimes male, sometimes female. Among certain Australian aboriginal tribes, for instance, it is personified as a woman who has a lover under the earth, among the dead. Every night she enters the underworld to be with him, and every morning ascends once more dressed in her lover's present, a red kangaroo skin. Another

Giraudon

C. M. Dixon

Left **Helios, a Greek solar deity sometimes confused with Apollo, rises from his palace in the east in readiness to drive his chariot across the heavens: chariots were also associated with the sun in Denmark and India** ***Below left*** **'It has been said that solar worship is the real religion of India': Surya holds in each hand a lotus, symbol of divine light, immortal life and fertility** ***Below right*** **Pyramid to the sun at Teotihuacan, a centre of Mexican civilization of the 1st millennium AD: the similarities between sun worship in America and in ancient Egypt have led some scholars to believe that Egyptian culture must have crossed the Atlantic**

tribe is said to have had a myth to the effect that every day the sun burns up her stock of fuel, and has to descend into the underworld each night for fresh supplies of firewood. Stories of the sun entering the underworld at night and emerging afresh every morning are legion, the sun having walked, ridden, or been carried from west to east.

Its daily course is similarly surrounded with stories and explanations. Ancient Indo-European myths usually picture the sun as driving across the sky in a golden chariot, drawn by horses, a belief which led to the horse being regarded as especially sacred. From Peru comes a variant, according to which the sun is tethered like a llama by an invisible cord to the pole of the sky, and driven round and round it by the power of the Universal Spirit. There are many such examples.

Another type of myth told of the sun concerns the need to 'tame' its power in some way. A Mexican legend tells that the sun was once a man who, to show his devotion, immolated himself in a sacrificial fire; in reward the Supreme Being conveyed him to heaven. He burned so fiercely, however, that the world was endangered by his very ardour, and arrows had to be shot at him to persuade him to temper his rays.

Myths concerning the relationship of the sun and moon explain why the two never meet in heaven. Usually it is held that sun and moon are brother and sister, but that for some reason they have become enemies, and the male partner, who can be either the sun or the moon, pursues the female for all eternity. There is a Masai legend to the effect that sun and moon were married, but fell out; in shame, the sun became bright in order that men might not look at him. From the Paiute Indians of California this is recorded: 'The sun is the father and ruler of the heavens. He is the big chief. The moon is his wife and the stars are their children. The sun eats his children whenever he can catch them. They flee before him, and are all the time afraid when he is passing through the heavens. When he appears in the morning, you see all the stars, his children, fly out of sight . . . and they do not wake to be seen again until he, their father, is about to go to his bed.'

These naïve explanatory myths take on a much more serious tone in Scandinavian mythology. There the daily rising and setting

Ancient Indo-European myths usually picture the sun as driving across the sky in a golden chariot, drawn by horses

of the sun was of less importance than the sun's battle with the powers that threatened to destroy her (once again, the sun is female). In Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* the question is posed: 'Swiftly rides the sun; it is almost as though she were afraid, and she would surely not fly faster, though she were pursued by death.' The questioner is told that the sun is indeed pursued, by two wolves, the offspring of giants. 'And it is said that one of that breed will be stronger than all others . . . He feeds on the blood of all those who die, and he pours blood over the air and the sky, so that the sun ceases to shine . . .' This is not only the vision of winter, but also the vision of the end of the world, heralded, among other things, by the howling of the Fenris wolf (see END OF THE WORLD; SCANDINAVIA).

To relate stories of the sun is not necessarily to worship it; but the power of the sun was in fact an object of active worship among many archaic peoples. Once more, though, elements other than 'pure' sun worship were frequently involved. The famous Sun Dance of the Great Plains Indians of North America, for example, was part of a major act of worship that lasted for eight days, and took place every summer after the buffalo hunt (see GREAT PLAINS INDIANS). On arrival at the place of meeting, the participating tribes formed a circle, leaving an opening to the east, the direction of the rising sun. A vast lodge, which might in some cases be open to the sky, was erected and an altar was placed to the west of the site. The dance itself lasted from two to four days, during which the dancers kept their gaze fixed on the sun or on the lodge's centre pole, which symbolized the cosmic tree. Self-torture was sometimes practised as an act of dedication and sacrifice, and as a means of obtaining that vision without which the Sun Dance was held to be incomplete.

It is perhaps justifiable to see in the Sun Dance an elaborate form of a type of sun ritual that was once found in many parts of the world, and which aimed at the annual renewal of the cosmic order by means of participation in the divine power of the sun, the greatest of the Great Spirit's manifestations.

William MacQuitty

Modern Sun Worship

Our civilization is almost wholly secularized, having lost its symbolic dimension and its guiding myths. That was the meaning of Nietzsche's cry 'God is dead'. . .

Instead we find our apparently secular substitutes. The cult of the sun is certainly one of the more important. Millions of men, women and children of all classes and many types go to places, usually the edge of the sea, held suitable for their secular rites. They buy vast quantities of oils, greases and lotions to anoint, not as of old the *benben* or other sacred images, but their own bodies. They don strange dark spectacles and strip off their clothes. No less than former worshippers, they are prepared to suffer. Strong men make themselves ill, women ruin their complexions, children get sunstroke. Since the cult began acres of skin must have crusted and peeled, exposing areas of pink and white ruin surely as painful as the gashes of the Aztecs. Yet day after day they return to worship, determined to gain the tan which is the proof of salvation.

Among all these millions there must be many who could say with Julian the Apostate, 'From my childhood an extraordinary longing for the rays of the god penetrated deep into my soul.' I do not doubt that there is an element of mysticism in all these practices . . . Nudists, presumably, must share in it. And it is there because the sun in our skies has always been able to invoke such feeling in the bodies and minds it has created out of rock and water. Quite simply, the sun has been the agent of our long creation, and we know it.

Meanwhile the travel agencies, far more cynical than any priesthood, pile up their gold. They cover their pamphlets with sun images bright with rays and happy-faced. And when the worshippers reach the beaches and the gardens do they not place themselves under huge, many-quartered umbrellas? Perhaps they, too, are solar symbols – sun wheels, mandalas. . . .

Jacquetta Hawkes *Man and the Sun*

The Maker of Light

It has been said that solar worship was the real religion of India, and to this day the orthodox Hindu begins his working day with this invocation of the sun: 'We meditate on the lovely light of the god, Savitri; may he inspire our thoughts.' Another hymn to the sun, this time from the *Ramayana*, reads in part: 'Adore the Sun rising with all his rays, receiving the obeisance of gods and demons, the shining maker of light . . . He is indeed the embodiment of all gods . . . He who with his rays consumes, produces, propels; who traverses the skies like a bird, shines like gold, makes the days and is the golden seminator of the universe. The hot, tawny disc, he burns everything and is indeed death; he is also the universal creator, greatly effulgent, loving and the source of all good . . .'

The Hindu scriptures contain references to the sun under many names and in many aspects, three of the best known being Savitri, Surya and Mitra. In classical times there were several distinct sects of sun worshippers in India, one of which was responsible for building what must be one of the most spectacular pieces of religious architecture anywhere in the world, the sun temple at Konarak. Built in the form of a temple car, with huge stone wheels, and drawn by horses, this is a tangible reminder of the mythical form in which the sun presented itself to the Indian mind. The close link between sun cult and fertility cult is attested by the erotic nature of many of the sculptures with which the temple is adorned.

An interesting parallel to the Konarak symbolism is provided by the Trundholm sun chariot, excavated in 1902 in Denmark. This is also in the form of a wheeled car drawn by horses, although in this case the centrepiece of the car is a model of the disc of the sun. It has been supposed that the chariot is an actual cult object, carried around the fields at certain times of the year, particularly in spring or at the time of sowing, in order to ensure a fruitful year.

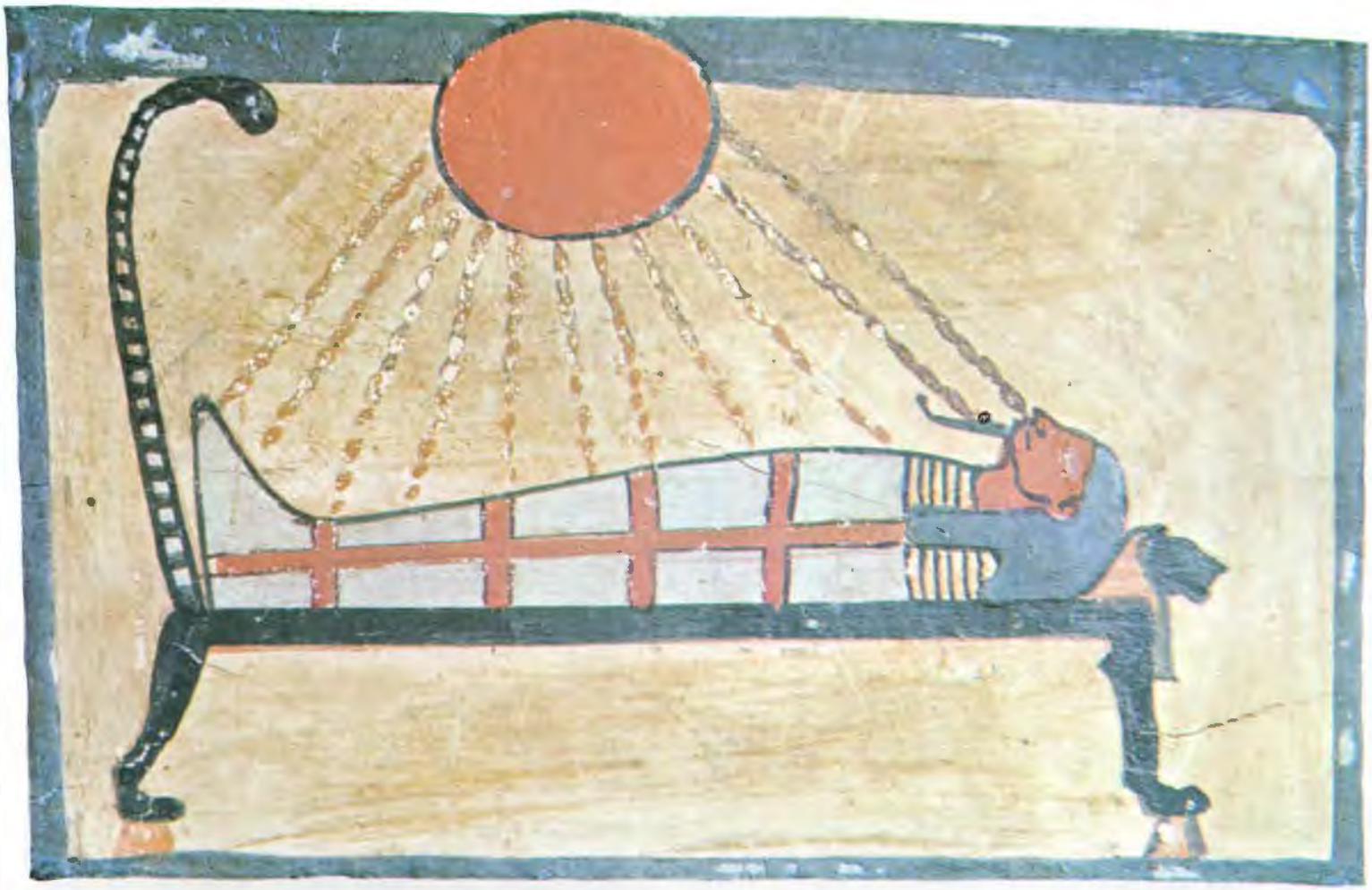
The Indian god Mitra is better known in his Persian form as Mithra, although in this case the sun was only one of his aspects. From Persia the cult of Mithra (see MITHRAS) passed into the Helleuistic world and the Roman Empire, where elements of solar symbolism were combined into the cult of *Sol Invictus*, the unconquered sun, by the Emperor Heliogabalus (3rd century AD). In 274 AD the Emperor Aurelian built a magnificent temple in Rome to Sol Invictus.

Sun Worshippers of Egypt

One of the impulses which helped to establish the solar cult in Rome certainly came from Egypt, where sun worship had been established for many centuries. Its undisputed preeminence in Egypt is one of the factors that has led some scholars to postulate the diffusion of this type of religion from Egypt westward to the Americas, eastward into India and northward into Europe. Certainly, all the nations which went to make up the Near Eastern cultural cauldron in ancient times were sun worshippers to some extent. The sun god, who was always male, had a variety of names: in Sumeria he was Babbar or Utu, in Babylon Shamash, in Ugarit Shapshu. Among the Israelites the worship of the sun was officially forbidden, since it was merely a created agent of God: 'And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night . . ."' (Genesis 1.14). In Deuteronomy

John Moss

Left **On reaching puberty, young girls of the Caraja tribe in Brazil perform a traditional dance in honour of the sun** ***Above right*** **Painting from the coffin of a Theban priest, Besenmut, dating from c 600 BC: it shows the dead man receiving life and warmth from the rays of the sun. In Egypt the sun god, Re, was the giver of life and the bringer of light out of darkness**



Michael Holford

It became customary to refer to the pharaoh as 'son of the sun', a feature of royal houses from India to the Americas

(4.19) the Israelites are warned to 'beware lest . . . when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them . . .' Such prohibitions were never placed on hypothetical dangers. King Josiah of Judah, in the course of his reforms, '. . . removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord . . . and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire' (2 Kings 23.11). Solomon's Temple, from which these images were removed, was in all probability oriented in such a way that the rays of the rising sun shone into the sanctuary at the autumnal equinox, a common feature of temples throughout the ancient Near East.

In Egypt itself, sun symbolism is so pervasive that it is difficult to disentangle separate elements within it. However, the most widely recognized name of the sun god was Re (or Ra), and the centre of his worship was at Heliopolis, in Lower Egypt (see EGYPT). He is a typical, perhaps *the* typical, sun god: a giver of life, and creator of the balance between light and darkness which is typified by his regular rising and setting. He traverses heaven, not in a chariot, but in a boat, and during the night he sails in another boat through the underworld. Every morning he conquers the dragon Apophis, who lies in wait for him (and, on the occasion of infrequent eclipses, catches him temporarily). This daily battle reflects the struggle which took place at the beginning of time when, in the form of the Creator god Atum, he created light and order out of darkness and chaos. Re is also identified with other deities, notably with the sky god Horus (see HORUS).

In the Pyramid Texts (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) the pharaoh is already regarded as passing into the sphere of Re after death; later he became identified with the living Horus. After the 5th Dynasty, it became customary to refer to the pharaoh as 'son of the sun', a feature of royal houses from India to the Americas. The greatest of Egypt's sun kings was Amenhotep IV, also known as Akhenaten (see IKHNATEN), who attempted, partly no doubt for political reasons, to create a solar universalism out of elements of the Heliopolitan tradition.

The possibility that at various times in

Swedish National Museum

the remote past, adventurers, merchants or missionaries might have communicated something of Egypt's devotion to the sun god to other lands and races is an intriguing one. Unfortunately it is only a possibility, and one which archeology is very far indeed from having confirmed. There are two entirely independent lines along which a few scholars have believed this influence to have been transmitted. One leads from the eastern Mediterranean westward and northward into Spain, France, the west of Britain and Ireland, north Germany, Denmark and southern Sweden. Its evidence consists in the trail of vast stone structures, megaliths, in which the dead were buried, and in the stone circles and alignments, of which the best known are Stonehenge and Carnac in Brittany, at which the sun may have been worshipped. Unfortunately, speculation has tended to run riot as soon as this subject has been broached; but it seems to have been established that the megalith-builders were sun worshippers.

The second line leads directly westward, out across the Atlantic to the Americas. The most recent advocate of this theory is the Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl, whose two voyages in the papyrus boats *Ra I* and *Ra II* aimed at demonstrating that such a culture-contact would have been possible. But the theory was expressed forcefully in the 1920s by a British scholar, W. J. Perry, who pointed out that the Peruvian royal family, like that of Egypt, mummified their dead, practised marriage of near relatives, built pyramids, and called themselves 'children of the sun'.

Writing about the megalith-builders in *The Growth of Civilization* (1924) he noted that: 'The presence of vast graves undoubtedly means the coming to Europe of members of a ruling family, for no one else could build them. The use of solar symbols suggests that the people responsible for these graves were sun-worshippers. Since, the world over, the sun-cult has been an ancestor cult in the family of the Children of the Sun, who ruled Egypt . . . for thousands of years, it would seem that these facts, when put together, mean that the Children of the Sun had begun to move out from Egypt, and had founded kingdoms in

The possibility of the withdrawal of the light was always present: it happened every winter in the North

Jeffrey Craig

Left **The legendary inventor Daedalus made wings for himself and his son Icarus, but when the boy presumed to fly too near the sun the heat melted the wax, and he fell into the Aegean Sea and was drowned: *The Fall of Icarus* by Petrus Stevens and Joos de Momper** ***Above right*** **Embroidery representing the sun, from Isfahan, Iran**

various parts of Europe, just as they had done when moving out to America.'

No doubt Perry's theories went too far; but the fact, not of sun worship, which needs no diffusionist excuse, but of certain forms of sun worship in various parts of the world, calls for explanation in terms of more than mere chance.

Warnings of Misrule

One other general feature of sun worship is the association of the sun with other heavenly bodies in patterns of astrological prediction. The sun was never isolated in the heavens. Subservient to the High God, linked in various mythical ways to the moon and the stars, maintaining the fabric of the universe by means of its regular rhythm, the sun served in many cultures as a pattern of natural order backed by divine favour. To be sure, sacrifices were always necessary, often, particularly in the Americas, blood sacrifices, in order to mark man's acknowledgement of his dependence; but the possibility of the withdrawal of the light was always present. It happened every winter in the North. And on rare occasions it would happen without warning, in which case it was taken as an omen of dire events to come (see ECLIPSE).

This extract is from an edict of the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti, consequent upon the solar eclipse of 233 AD: 'We have heard that if a sovereign is remiss in government, God terrifies him by calamities and portents. These are divine reprimands sent to recall him to a sense of duty. Thus, eclipses of the sun and moon are manifest warnings that the rod of empire is not wielded aright. Ever since we ascended the throne, our inability to continue the glorious traditions of our departed ancestors and carry on the great work of civilization has now culminated in a warning message from on high. It therefore behoves us to issue commands for personal reformation, in order to avert impending calamity.' There may be more spectacular, more bloody and evocative forms of sun worship in the history of religion; but there is none more moral.

(See also ALCHEMY; AZTECS; INCAS.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

The Sun in Astrology

As the most important of the heavenly bodies, the Sun naturally plays a dominating role in the interpretation of a horoscope, and is said to be the most powerful single factor in the chart. In popular astrology columns in newspapers and magazines, you will find yourself classified under your Sun sign, the sign of the zodiac which the Sun was 'in' at the moment of your birth, with the implication that this is the major general key to analysis of your character and fortunes. More sophisticated interpretation tends to give great weight to the Ascendant, where the Sun rises, and the Mid-heaven, where it is at its peak of power, and both the sign and the house occupied by the Sun are taken as influential factors (see ASTROLOGY).

Since the Sun is the world's natural powerhouse of light and heat, it is believed to affect the creative abilities, vitality, ambition and will-power of human beings. Its position in the sky is generally said to indicate your basic temperament, the type of person you are, and sometimes your physical appearance. Some astrologers stress its role in influencing the conscious or 'lighted' part of your mind (with the unconscious mind being the domain of the Moon). If the Sun is favourably placed in the horoscope, especially if it is in its own sign, Leo, it is said to produce a commanding and kingly personality – powerful, proud, dignified, impressive, generous, faithful and affectionate. This symbolic link between the Sun and kingship is very old, and the good humour often associated with the Sun follows from the cheerfulness which its radiant appearance in the sky tends to promote in northern countries.

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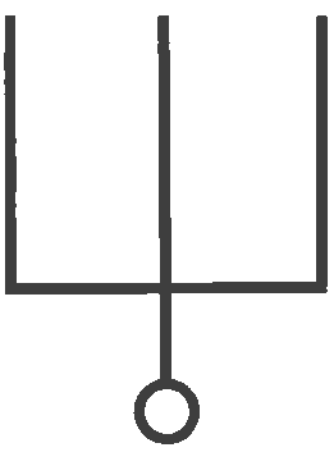


Sunday

The Christian sabbath, the day of rest, set aside for the worship of God in the tradition of the Jewish sabbath, and believed to be the day of the week on which Christ rose from the dead: named for the sun, with which the first day of the week was associated in the Roman Empire; a fortunate day to be born on, but unfortunate for any other secular activity.

See DAYS AND HOURS.

Sunnites

Members of the main branch of Islam, to which the majority of Moslems belong: they hold the Koran to be infallible, as the eternal word of God, and also place reliance on Tradition, originally transmitted orally and stemming from Mohammed or his Companions; the Shiites, the second principal branch, differ from them over the question of imams, over free will, and over other matters of doctrine, tradition and ritual.

See ISLAM.

SUNYAVADA

GAUTAMA, the Buddha, taught that the soul is a temporary combination of transient entities called *skandhas* (see BUDDHISM). Mahayana Buddhism, which arose about four centuries after the death of Buddha (c 483 BC), developed this doctrine more fully, and several of its early literary works, called Sutras, proclaimed the doctrine of emptiness, Sunyavada.

Whereas in early Buddhism wisdom is insight into impermanence, suffering and no-self, in Sunyavada the perfection of wisdom is the realization that all *dharmas* (doctrines or laws of life) are 'empty'. Transmigration and Nirvana (see NIRVANA) are both empty. The saviours are empty, and the beings whom they save are empty. From the absolute viewpoint, there is no difference whatsoever between the relative and the absolute, between *samsara*, the world of change and transmigration, and Nirvana, the perfect state beyond change. Emptiness, though, is not non-being, and Sunyavada is not nihilism, no matter how readily the charge springs to the lips of those bewildered and frightened by this doctrine. Emptiness is just that Middle Path between being and non-being that Gautama had declared. Things do not have being, because they are mutable and impermanent, and what is truly real does not change or perish. Things do not have non-being, because they arise and function, and whatever appears and acts is relatively real. That things are empty means that they lack own-being (*svabhava*), that is, they exist through the power of another rather than through their own power, they do not possess an inalienable set of marks, and they have no immutable essence.

The Hinayana Sutras say that all the skandhas, sense-spheres and elements are impermanent and devoid of self, which is tantamount to saying they are empty. However, the Abhidharma schools, especially the Sarvastivadins, drew up lists of 70 or so conditioned dharmas (force-factors), including all the skandhas, which they treated as realities. The Sarvastivadin doctrine that not only present but past and future dharmas are real comes perilously close to the theory that coming-to-be is just manifestation of what was already there in a latent state. Sunyavada was a reaction against this tendency in Abhidharma. Mahayana, charging that the Abhidharmists denied an *atman* (soul) in the person but admitted one in the dharmas, declared that both person and dharmas are empty of atman.

The Sunyavadin polemic against the Abhidharmists, and against Samkhya and Vaisesika (the two major Hindu philosophies at the time), was prosecuted most brilliantly by Nagarjuna (c 150–250 AD), founder of the Madhyamika school of Mahayana Buddhism. Born a South Indian Brahmin and well educated in Sanskrit and the Hindu philosophies, he became a Buddhist and proceeded to defend Mahayana principles using the logic and debating techniques of the Hindus. He reduces to absurdity all propositions that assume the existence of an own-being. This is not too hard, since the concept is self-contradictory as Nagarjuna defines it. Own-being exists and is immutable. But to exist means to change.

A sample of Nagarjuna's dialectic is his critique of causation. He says that a thing cannot arise from itself, since that would be the arising of the already arisen, an absurdity as great as the second cutting off of a head. A thing cannot arise from another thing, since that which is non-existent cannot be the agent of the action 'arising' or the object of the action 'production'; a real action requires that both agent and object be real, too. Nor can a thing arise from a combination of other things (the Abhidharma and Vaisesika position), since the effect does not exist in the separate causes before they are combined.

The Empty-ists introduced a whole new epistemology (theory of the grounds of knowledge) to the Buddhist tradition. Ordinary cognition is essentially deceptive, they held, because it involves thought-construction (*vikalpa*). What is changing is grasped as something persisting, class properties are superimposed on events that are really unique particulars, and consequently the imagination, like a magician, figments the ordinary world which is really an illusion or phantom. Ordinary language carries with it the acceptance of vikalpas and consequently the belief in the own-being of things. Nagarjuna's dialectic aims to purge thought and language by the use of thought and language, just as the physician uses poison to cure poison.

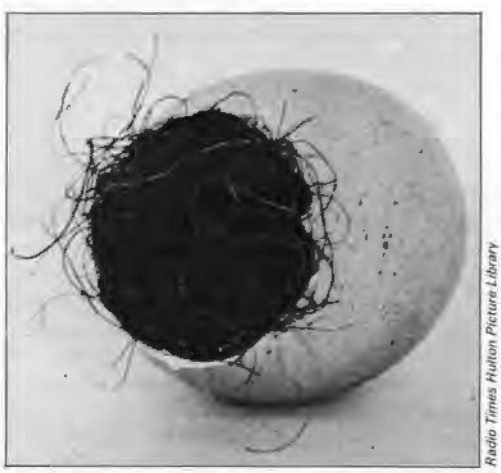
Man resorts to irrational beliefs whenever his faith wilts and he becomes afraid; superstition is a form of personal magic which is used for coming to terms with the unknown

SUPERSTITIONS

IT HAS been said that man is a religious animal, but it could equally be averred that he is a superstitious one. Throughout the whole of man's history an elaborate system of apparently irrational safeguards, often barbaric in character, has provided a foundation for much of his ritual life. The minor ceremonies which survive today in the form of superstitions, are a constant reminder of the fact that man's mind has probably changed but little from that of his primitive ancestors.

Many of these superstitions are apparently outward manifestations of deeply-seated anxieties, the precise character of which remains as yet relatively unexplored territory. Their very existence implies an unquestioning assumption that there is some power (or powers) external to man himself, which is capricious, tyrannical and highly dangerous, a force that must be cajoled and won over to one's side, or, if it is hostile, kept at bay.

The word superstition is related to the Latin *superstes*, a word which includes among its meanings that of outliving or surviving. Used in this sense, superstition became a useful term for the description of religious ideas which lived on when the religion from which they sprang had died. For this reason superstitions have usually been condemned as relics of outmoded ways of thinking, rather than as living expressions. More commonly the term has been used to denigrate forms of faith which disagree with one's own. In the 16th century 'Popish superstitions' were roundly condemned by Protestants, and in the 19th century pious missionaries risked their lives to rescue pagan savages from 'superstitious barbarism'.



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Most superstitions involve a simple, if unscientific, logic *Above* An eggshell stuffed with horsehair was rubbed on a patient's body and then thrown into the street, transferring the disease to whoever trod on it
***Right* Reversed symbols, the cat and the colour black belong to the Devil as the principle of rebellion, abnormality and darkness**

Yet however superficially absurd their character, unvarying features of behaviour deserve to be treated seriously. Any examination of contemporary superstitious beliefs indicates that these should not necessarily be written off as the result of errors of observation or reasoning, but should be considered as permanent traits of mind.

The thought-processes of pre-scientific man can be observed in the widespread and still current superstition that breaking a mirror (see MIRROR) brings seven years' bad luck. The reflected image was originally regarded as the *alter ego*, or other soul, and damaging it was supposed to cause an injury to the person who had broken the mirror. Fear of walking under a ladder (see STEPS) may be partly derived from the terror once felt at the sight of the gallows, which was often merely a ladder propped against a tree.

The Philosophy of Magic

All superstitions seem to have the dual purpose of attracting favourable influences and warding off unfavourable ones. The name we give to these influences may be good luck and bad luck but they correspond too closely to the good and evil spirits of our primitive ancestors to be dismissed as

Transworld

Unforeseen effects of observing popular superstitions: 'at the root of every type of superstition lies a belief in magic'

A corpse's eyes will be closed, sometimes by weighting them with coins: superstitious fears still govern our attitude to death

illogical fantasies. The curious predisposition of civilized man to revert in times of crisis to an archetypal mode of thought was noted by Paul Bauer in *Christianity and Superstition*, and he added that whereas the primitive man was perfectly at home in his superstitious environment, the civilized man most certainly is not.

It can therefore be argued that at the root of every type of superstition lies a belief in magic, which is a philosophy to which man resorts again and again whenever his modern gods fail him; in short, when his faith wilts and he becomes afraid. Superstition offers the comforting assurance that it is possible to influence one's fate for good and evil by will-power reinforced with ritual. There is obviously only a difference in degree between the act of worshipping a sacred tree and that of 'touching wood'. By physical contact with a piece of the magically charged wood one summons the power of the tree-spirit to one's aid. This magic is of the defensive type, however, for although the wood may hold bad luck at bay, it has no power to attract good luck.

More positive luck-bringing measures are the various uses of charms and talismans. Although to most people nowadays such objects have little real significance, the modern charm bracelet, first introduced about a century ago, has found ready acceptance as a luck-bringer. The symbolic meaning of the particular charms – the horseshoes, lucky pigs, and nowadays miniature golf clubs and cars – is quite lost upon the wearer, who is conscious only of the fact that they are supposed to exercise a collective power to attract good fortune. To an earlier generation, each particular charm would have had its clearly defined function; the pig, for instance, representing the Scandinavian Sun Boar, protected its domestic counterpart from evil; while the horseshoe, having the shape of a crescent moon, provided a safeguard against witches (see BOAR; HORSESHOE).

The most important characteristic of a luck-bringer is the source of the power with which it is endowed. How does a piece of wood or metal acquire its status as a charm, and what are the channels by which superstitions are transmitted? One of the ways in which an object may acquire supernatural power is through association; thus a toy animal given to a child by its grandmother is regarded as an embodiment of her love and is a powerful luck-bringer. In a series of experiments carried out among London children by the present writer, it became clear that superstitions are mainly communicated to the child by his mother or grandmother, and only occasionally by his father. In an almost literal as well as a figurative sense, they are 'taken in with the mother's milk'. The superstitious routines or lucky charms made their appearance at times of crisis, such as an examination. The particular type of charm employed included objects such as a lump of coal or a bent nail, the one originally representing the power of

fire and the other that of iron (see FIRE; IRON). Charms that have failed to produce the desired results are rarely discarded but instead are hidden from sight in a desk or drawer. Luck-bringers are traditionally kept secret except in times of crisis, since discussing them is supposed to exhaust their powers. Protective charms, on the other hand, are more openly displayed since their function is to keep bad luck at bay, in other words to warn off evil spirits.

Stages in the Life Cycle

Two human fears may be found at the root of a vast number of widely differing superstitions: firstly, fear in the face of change at the various crises of life, and secondly, fear of presuming upon the future, thus inviting the anger of the gods.

Of the two, perhaps the most dominant is that aroused by the prospect of change. It was for this reason that new objects and occurrences were in the past greeted with elaborate ceremonies designed to ward off the hostility of the supernatural powers.

Among primitive peoples, the various stages of development in each individual from birth to death were always associated with protective devices, the vestiges of which survived until recently in the form of superstitions. With today's safer childbearing, many of the old birth taboos have disappeared, but some mothers-to-be continue to observe superstitious rites, such as those calculated to produce a child of the desired sex. A mother who wants a boy, for example, will wear a blue dress, and when hoping for a girl, she may still wear pink. A relic of the old uncertainty associated with birth survives in the belief that it is unlucky to take the pram into the house until after the baby has been born; an example of the superstitious fear of presuming upon the future (see BIRTH).

The onset of puberty was originally accompanied by magic rites designed to give protection against the hostility of evil spirits who were supposed to be particularly aggressive at this important period of one's life (see INITIATION; MENSTRUATION; RITES OF PASSAGE). The time has long since passed when menstrual blood was considered so threatening that a butcher would not permit his daughter to enter his shop during her periods, but it is still possible to find individuals who retain the belief that the sexual act carried out with a woman at such times can result in venereal disease.

With marriage comes a complete change of direction in the lives of both partners, and the marriage ceremony is a veritable museum of old superstitions (see MARRIAGE). Again out of fear of anticipating the future, the bride is careful not to see her image as a completely wedded woman in the mirror. If she has to take a last look before leaving for the church, she is careful to take off her glove. For the same reason, she will take care to avoid being seen by the groom before the actual ceremony. Every feature of this important magical occasion has its particular superstitions; even the dressmaker who inserts the first stitch into the wedding dress can expect to be a bride herself before the year is out. Should the wedding ring, which is in effect a magic circle, be removed or broken it becomes ominous for the marriage prospects.

Many primitive sexual superstitions have passed down the generations. Because the heat of the sun was once thought to be the source of life on earth, we continue to regard Mediterranean men as sexual athletes and Negroes as sexual dynamos (see RACE MYTHS). Because sexual activity was once regarded as a magical act, the seed or semen became sacrosanct; hence the long-standing myth that masturbation leads inevitably to a weakening of the physical powers, madness or even death. This may fairly rank as superstition.

Sickness and ill health, once the most feared of life's crises since they could lead to financial ruin, have lost some of their superstitious associations, thanks to modern medicine and welfare systems. Even so, to boast of excellent health is regarded as inviting psychic reprisals. The permanent fear of creating a situation by the mere act of referring to it by name is the real reason why certain diseases are mentioned only in hushed tones. For the same reason, the word death itself is often avoided.

The onset of death is even today associated with natural occurrences, prophetic visions and mystical utterances. Here, at the grand climacteric, superstition reaches its peak. The moment of death itself is signalled by stopping of clocks, and pious drawing of curtains and the covering of mirrors. The mourner, as Geoffrey Gorer has pointed out, has entered 'a special state of mind'. It is in the funeral ceremony that one observes an intensity of superstitious awe that no longer survives in the other departments of life. If the wreath has ceased to be regarded as a magic circle to contain the soul and prevent its return to haunt the living, it remains none the less obligatory even in cremations (see BURIAL).

War and Peace

A crisis in the life of a nation, as in the life-cycle of an individual, is the focus of superstition, and it is traditionally the onset of war which raises the tempo and intensity of irrational belief. During the First and Second World Wars a number of superstitions which were centuries old suddenly received a new lease of life. To paint the portrait of a battleship now became, to the seaman's mind, the equivalent of a sentence of death upon her. The jinx ship which is a commonplace of nautical life was discussed with even greater anxiety than previously. Sailors when about to embark upon a voyage considered it dangerous if a menstruating woman sewed a badge of rank onto a uniform. In 1914 German prisoners-of-war bore ancient amulets offering protection against death from bullets. In 1942 American servicemen carried iron-bound Bibles in their breast pockets for exactly the same reason.

Aircrews tended to resort under danger to a variety of death-defying fetishes, including amulets, mascots and lucky silk stockings, while their planes were invaded by those latter-day familiars, the gremlins. The belief in lucky and unlucky days was revived and one and all displayed a reluctance to presume upon the future.

In peacetime, the degree of superstition which a man is likely to display is usually related to the riskiness of his occupation. Stockbrokers, whose financial lives are so often balanced upon a knife's edge of chance, have a strong tendency to consult clairvoyants, and American bankers are reputed to derive a sense of security from furtively touching the backs of passing hunchbacks. Out-and-out gamblers, whether at the ronlette or card table, wear their superstitions almost as badges, displaying a fervent belief in lucky seats and hunches. But the perfect example of a trnly superstitious profession is the theatre. The life of an actor is extremely insecure, and every theatrical production is a hazardous venture. In these circumstances many actors have a complete philosophy of superstitious practices, some of which must be as old as the profession itself. To stumble is an omen of forgetting one's lines. The final line of the play is never spoken in rehearsal as any anticipation of completion is an invitation to disaster. If a long thread of cotton is found on an actor's back, it means that a contract is on the way. An actor will frequently treasure some little object associated with a successful first night's performance, regarding it as a form of magical insurance.

Another trade which was originally encrusted with superstitious usages is that of the seaman. In the hazardous days of sail, the men on the big ships surrounded their lives with a complicated system of rituals and taboos (see SEA; SHIP). Today the situation has changed radically as the direct result of a century-long revolution in shipping. Long sea voyages are now relatively safe and in consequence deep-sea superstitions of all kinds have dwindled. On the other hand, among fishermen, whose lives continue to be at risk and whose incomes are precarious, the majority of the older sea superstitions retain much of their original force. A skipper will frequently refuse to put to sea should he discover his hatch upside down on boarding his craft; a bucket lost overboard is still interpreted as a sign from the fates that the ship is doomed.

Sporting Chance

It would appear to be the rule that if the stock of superstitious beliefs remains undiminished, the point of emphasis is continually shifting from one situation to another in accordance with the amount of anxiety experienced at any particular time. Today at the factory bench, for example, a threat of unemployment at once brings all the old wives' tales to the fore. Placing a pair of new shoes on a bench is now seen as a threat to one's job, whereas in more settled times it was interpreted as an omen of death, the shoes being required for that long journey to the underworld.

All competitive situations, whether at work or at play, tend to create anxiety and therefore provide a solid foundation for the growth of superstition. In sport this principle is often paramount. The traditional belief that there is luck in odd numbers

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Left **A variety of superstitions illustrated: it is lucky to hear a goblin sneeze, unlucky to walk under a ladder or to be the third to share a lighted match** ***Below*** **Members of the Eccentric Club defy the omens of bad luck at a luncheon held on Friday the 13th**

prompts punters to place their bets on threes, sevens and nines. Jockeys have their lucky caps, cricketers their lucky bats and boots, and some footballers not only touch the goal-posts at the commencement of a match but have been known to prevent their wives from looking at the game on television. In most cases a lucky object acquires its supernatural reputation because of its association in the player's mind with some important success in the field. The cricketer who makes his century while wearing a particular shirt will often go on wearing it until it is almost reduced to tatters. Luck by association is the rule in sport as in all other kinds of activity.

Any survey of the superstitious scene makes it clear that superstitions possess a powerful tendency to move with the times, changing in outward form although never in essence. Motorists advance down the motorways protected by lucky key-fobs, and automobile salesmen display a noticeable aversion to dealing in cars that have been involved in fatal accidents. Motor-cycle policemen and Hell's Angels alike believe it unlucky for their crash helmets to be touched by alien hands. Civil air pilots and even astronauts are reported to take amulets with them on their flights, while the computer operator is coming to believe that his machine has a life of its own.

Superstitious fears are likely to arise in anyone – irrespective of social class or nationality – who feels himself threatened by forces lying beyond the range of his power. The form of a particular superstition is determined by environmental and social factors, but the function of superstition itself seems to be unvarying.

Superstition may perhaps be defined as a form of personal magic which is used for the purpose of coming to terms with the unknown. By false analogy a particular course of action which has proved successful in the past is associated with some object worn or action carried out at the same time, which is then accorded a kind of talismanic quality. The object or action is then used again or repeated, in the expectation of achieving a similar result at another time. Negative superstition, which may be defined as the avoidance of certain acts with the object of preventing undesired contingencies, arises from a similar false association of ideas. In all this activity, however, can be detected an awareness of some law of cause and effect, but it is the cause and effect of the savage, not that of the scientific man, the rule of assumption rather than thought.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: F. E. Planer, *Superstition* (Horizon, 1981); Gustav Jahoda, *The Psychology of Superstition* (Aronson, 1974); Eric Maple, *Superstition and the Superstitious* (W. H. Allen, London, 1971).

Mansell Collection

To perish in flames with her dead husband as an act of purification was the duty of the high-caste Hindu widow; a practice which survived here and there, in defiance of the law, until as recently as the 1940s

A Hindu widow leaps into the flames of her husband's funeral pyre; men with poles pinned the sati down if her courage failed her. Some believed that this sacrificial act expunged the sins of both husband and wife: 18th century engraving

SUTTEE

THE SELF-IMMOLATION of a Hindu widow on her husband's funeral pyre is described by the term *suttee*, more correctly spelt *sati*. The literal meaning of sati is 'a virtuous woman', but early European writers applied the term erroneously to the ritual burning of such a woman with her dead husband. The origin of the practice is not certain, but parallels are found in many ancient cultures. The kings of Ur, for example, were buried with their wives, attendants and possessions, so that in the next world they should have all the comforts they were used to on this earth. Similar customs prevailed among the ancient Chinese, among early Indo-European peoples and also among the nomads of Central Asia.

There is no direct reference to the burning of widows in the most ancient Indian scriptures, known as the *Rig-Veda*. A funeral hymn describes how the widow lies down on the pyre beside her dead husband, but she is then called back to the land of the living. A reference in the later *Atharva-Veda* suggests, however, that subsequently the burning of widows became common. The Greek accounts from the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of India (327–325 BC) contain references to the self-immolation of widows, and among the high Hindu castes the practice continued intermittently until the 19th century when the British authorities declared it illegal.

The earliest memorial to a sati is an inscription on a pillar dated 510 AD, and similar monuments from later days are found in many parts of India. Some medieval

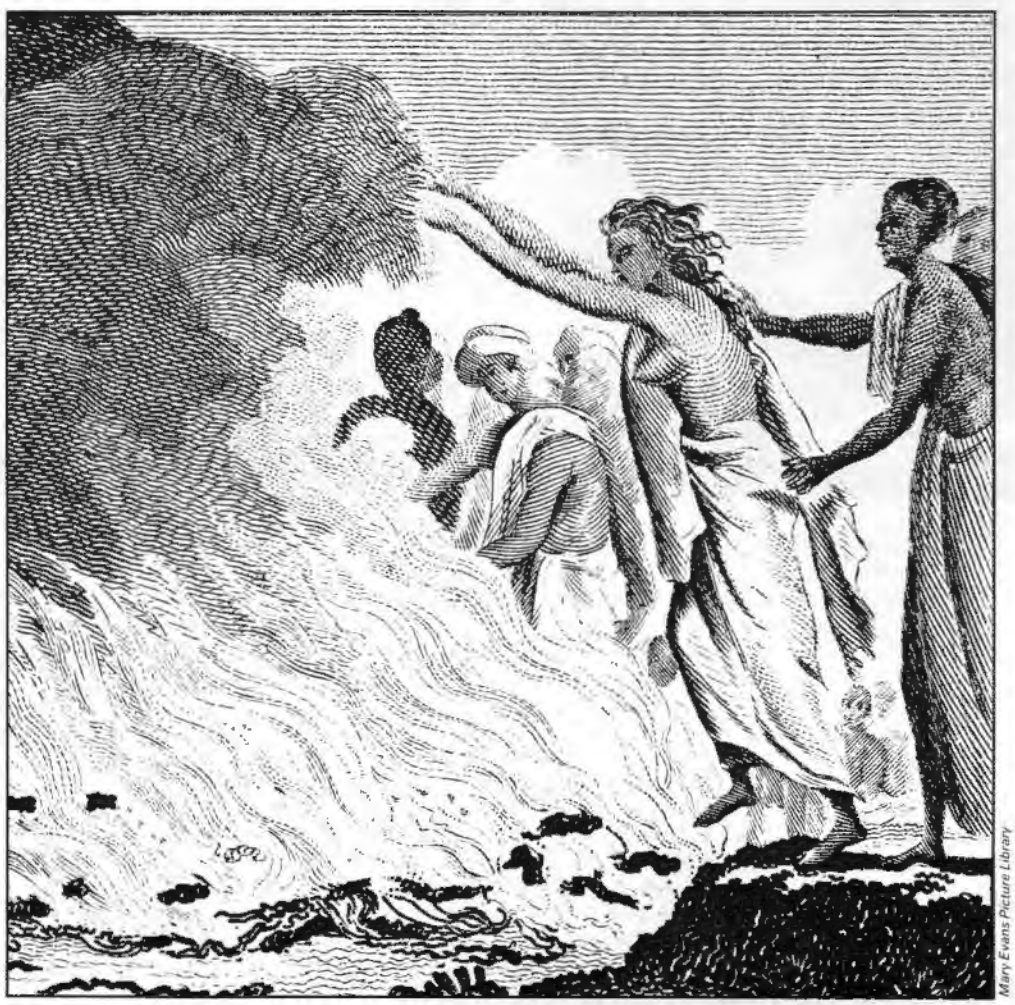
writers declared that the sati by burning herself on her husband's pyre expunges both her own and her husband's sins, and that the two would enjoy millions of years of bliss in heaven. There was also the idea that the self-immolation of a widow would purify her own as well as her husband's family. If her husband had died far from home she was advised to take some article of his dress, tie it to her breast, and then ascend the funeral pyre. In theory the cremation of a sati was always voluntary, but social and family pressures to follow the custom may often have been irresistible, particularly in the case of high caste widows of warrior class.

Criticisms of the custom were not unknown even in ancient times, and in the Middle Ages writers of tantric sects (see TANTRISM) even declared that a woman burning herself with her husband would go straight to hell. Yet, the fate of widows in orthodox Hindu families was unenviable, and women without young children may often have preferred a self-imposed death to a life of privation, scorn and domestic servitude in the house of unsympathetic kinsmen of a deceased husband.

The circumstances and methods of conducting the cremation varied. In northern India it was the custom for the sati on her way to the pyre to mark the chief gateway of a temple with the impression of her hand steeped in vermilion, or to impress her stained hand on a stone, forming marks which would afterwards be made permanent by chiselling. Stones bearing such marks were considered sacred, and a woman who chose self-immolation was revered as a divine figure. A blessing given by a sati on the way to her death was highly valued and her curses were feared. The actual cremation was accompanied by elaborate rites. In some parts of India it was customary for the widow to sit beside her husband's corpse in a straw hut erected on a pyre, which she finally set alight with a torch. Elsewhere she lay beside the corpse surrounded with inflammable materials, and if her courage failed her she was pinned down in the flames by men wielding long poles. In southern India a fire was kindled in a pit into which the widow had to leap.

The practice of self-immolation of women was particularly common among Rajputs, people from the present-day state of Rajasthan in north-west India. Not only did many Rajput widows burn themselves with their husband's corpse, but on the capture of a fortress many of the noble women burned themselves in the rite known as *Johar* in order to escape dishonour.

In many places in northern India, and particularly on the banks of rivers or tanks, small masonry shrines dedicated to satis may be seen. Such a shrine is often decorated with a carving in stone representing the husband and his faithful wife. Women come to such shrines to pray for male offspring or for the health of their husbands and children.



Mary Evans Picture Library

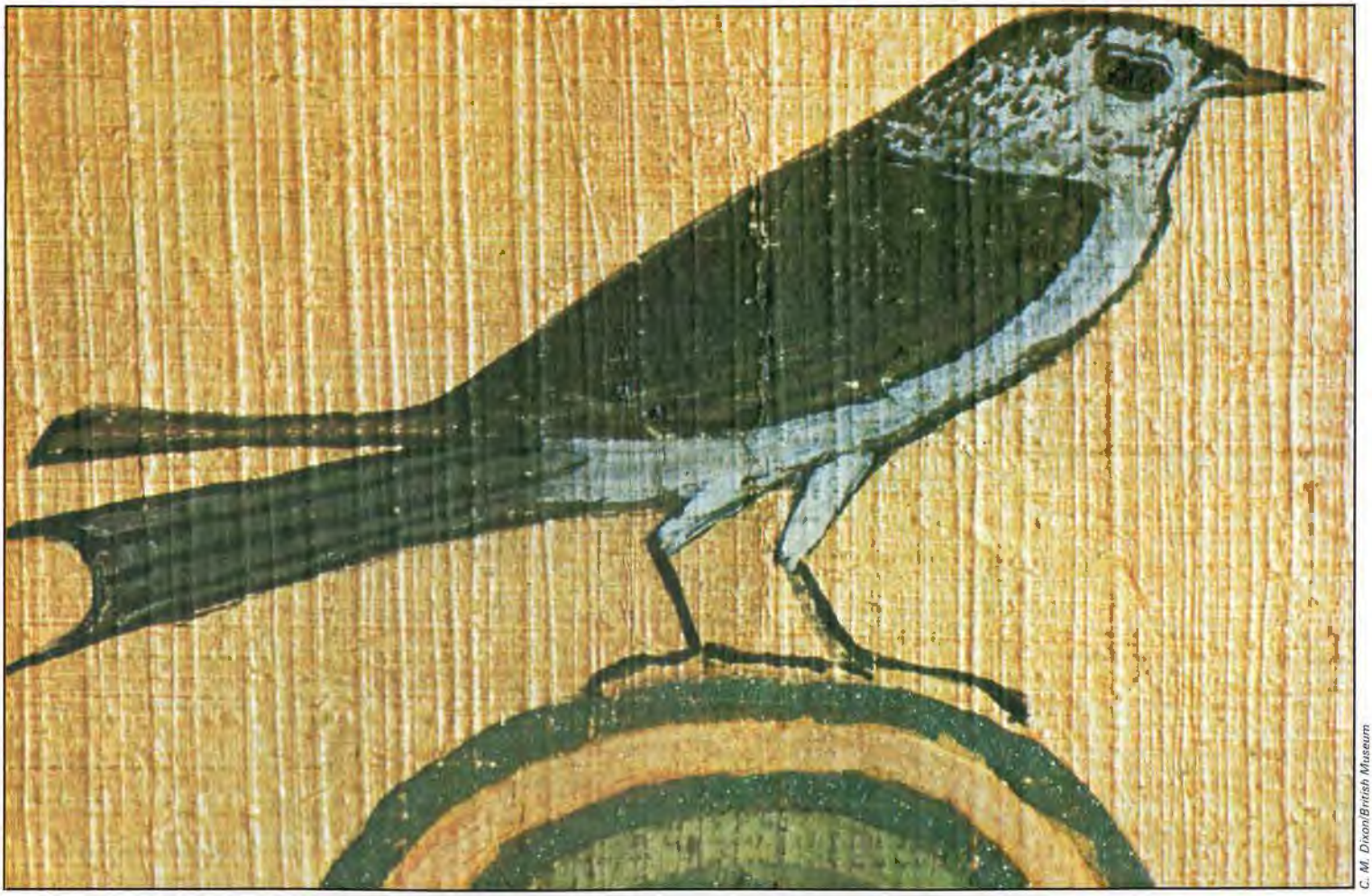
Detail from a 19th century engraving: a blessing given by a sati on her way to her death was highly valued and her curses were feared, for she was regarded as divine; the burning was accompanied by elaborate rites

With Snakes to the Flames

The self-immolation of widows is paralleled by other instances of ritual suicide once practised in India. In the Punjab mothers were known to burn themselves with their dead children, and in the past it was not unusual for men to kill themselves in order to accompany a beloved lord and master to the next world. There are many historical references to ministers, courtiers and servants voluntarily ending their life after the death of a ruler, and those who sacrificed themselves in such a manner were held in high esteem. The cult of such heroes as well as that of women who chose the role of sati is closely linked with the whole idea of worshipping the sainted dead. Representations of snakes rising out of the masonry of sati memorials to receive the adoration of the living suggests such a connection with the cult of ancestral spirits. A legend tells how once upon a time in the Narbada River valley of central India, when the three widows of a man were burnt on his funeral pyre, two great snakes appeared and entered the flames to be burnt with them. The bystanders were convinced that these were two wives of the dead man in a previous birth, and when the memorial rite was performed it was done for six souls instead of four.

The prohibition of the burning of widows, though enacted during the period of British rule, was the result of a campaign by progressive Indians. A Hindu sect known as the Brahmo Samaj, which combined ethical doctrines derived from Christianity with traditional Indian beliefs, agitated for the abolition of the custom, and though vigorously opposed by orthodox Hindu opinion gained the support of the British authorities. In 1829 the custom then officially described as 'suttee' was prohibited in Bengal, and similar legislation soon followed in the provinces of Bombay and Madras. But in the independent princely states not affected by British legislation the practice continued unchecked, and there were cases of people from adjoining British territories going there to perform the rite. Gradually, several of the rulers of the larger states, such as Baroda and Indore, were persuaded to prohibit the immolation of widows, but resistance to the reformist movement was strong in Rajputana. The opposition to abolition was weakened, however, by a ruling from the chief Brahmin priest of Jaipur to the effect that the immolation of widows was less meritorious than the 'living suttee' of chastity and devotion. In 1846 several Rajput states prohibited the practice but as late as 1861 the cremation of widows openly took place in Udaipur (then a princely state). Secretly it continued very much longer, and in remote areas isolated cases of the immolation of widows occurred as late as the 1940s, though criminal proceedings were taken against those involved whenever a case came to the notice of the authorities.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF



C. M. Dixon/British Museum

It was a common belief in many cultures that the human soul might leave its body in the form of a bird: Ani, a royal Egyptian scribe, is represented after death as a swallow, in the Theban Book of the Dead, c 1250 BC

SWALLOW

WHEN MAN BEGAN to erect solid buildings the swallows found that the eaves provided sheltered niches for their nests. An ancient Egyptian papyrus refers to a lovesick girl hearing the swallows early in the morning inviting her into the countryside. Greek writers often mentioned the bird which, in common with other European peoples, they looked upon as a harbinger of spring. And it was a Greek writer, Aristotle, who first wrote: 'One swallow does not make a summer.' A black-figured Greek vase now in the Vatican depicts an elderly man, a youth and a boy greeting the first swallow to appear in spring. The youth shouts 'Look, there's a swallow!,' the man cries 'By Heracles, so there is.' The boy exclaims 'There she goes,' and then, 'Spring has come.' In the 2nd century AD boys went from house to house on Rhodes singing:

> The swallow is here and a new year he brings,
> As he lengthens the days with the beats of his wings,
> White and black
> Are his belly and back.
>
> Pay his tribute once more
> With cheese in its basket,
> And pork from your store,
> And wine from its flasket,
> And eggs from your casket, and bread
> when we ask it.

A springtime swallow song is still sung in some areas of Greece. The Greeks had a low opinion of the swallow's song which they likened to a chattering in barbarous tongues. In spite of its joyous spring associations, the swallow became associated with wretchedness in the story of Philomela and Procne (see NIGHTINGALE). In this myth, Tereus cut out the tongue of his wife Procne lest she should divulge that he had violated her sister Philomela. Whereupon the gods transformed all three into birds: Tereus was turned into a hoopoe, Philomela into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow. Ever since, the swallow has only been able to utter incoherent twitterings.

Augurs claimed that they could interpret the bird's call, and inferences were drawn from its behaviour. The fluttering of a swallow around the head of Alexander the Great was regarded as a portent of tragedy, but returning swallows were considered to predict the safe return of Dionysus. Greek and Latin writers mention that weather was forecast from the swallow's flight; and throughout Europe low-flying swallows are still regarded, with some justification, as an indication of bad weather.

Observations of swallows flying low over lakes and rivers may have inspired the Chinese to throw swallows into water when they prayed for rain. The associations between swallows, rain and springtime growth were responsible for offerings being made to the genius of the house on the day when the swallows returned. According to one poem, heaven decreed that the swallow should give birth to the Shang Dynasty. Its egg was said to have caused the pregnancy of the ancestress of the Shang line.

The swallow has long been associated with gifts of healing. The white or red swallow-stones which were believed to be secreted in the bellies of the nestlings had medicinal value. During the Middle Ages, this belief became elaborated into the notion that the swallow fetches a pebble from the sea-shore to restore the sight of its fledglings. Confusion apparently arose between the swallow-stone legend and the ancient belief that the swallow brings to its nest a herb which cures the young swallows of their blindness. Parts of the bird were widely believed to cure various diseases: snake bite, epilepsy, rabies, and so on. Its droppings cured diphtheria and turned hair grey; and mud from its nest was a remedy for erysipelas (a fever accompanied by inflammation of the skin).

A Drop of Devil's Blood

In general the swallow has been viewed as a helpful, propitious bird, but as is often the case with other lucky birds, it has in some localities been regarded with suspicion. In regions of France and Hungary it was said that if a swallow flew under a cow's belly it would give bloody milk, and in Scotland it was reputed to have a drop of

the Devil's blood in its veins. Yorkshire folk considered it a death omen when a swallow came down the chimney. If the first swallow seen by a girl in Czechoslovakia was alone she would be married within the year but if she caught sight of a pair she would remain unmarried.

It is widely believed that swallows should be kindly treated, and that ill luck befalls those who harm them. The Tyrolese say that if you destroy a swallow's nest your own house will be burnt down. In France it was believed that if a man robbed a swallow's nest his horse would go lame. The Chinese revere the bird, and although they use most organisms either as food or medicine, they do not molest the swallows nesting under the low eaves in city streets.

The helpful swallow plays a prominent part in Christian legends. The Swedes say that it hovered over the Cross crying '*Svala! Svala!*', 'Cheer up! Cheer up!'. The Norwegian version is that it twittered 'Console him!'. In France it is said that the swallow picked off the Crown of Thorns ignoring the wounds made in her breast by the spines. Ever since, the swallow has borne stains of blood on her breast. Similar stories are told of the robin and crossbill, both of which have red breasts. According to another French legend magpies pricked Christ's feet and head with thorns while he was resting in a wood, but swallows came and extracted them. Because of this the magpie has been hated and forced to build its nest in tall trees, but the swallow breeds in safety in man's dwellings.

In English folk rhymes the swallow is included among sacred birds:

> The robin and the wren,
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen;
> The martin and the swallow
> Are the two next birds that follow.

The disappearance of swallows in autumn and their reappearance in spring caused speculation and gave rise to one of the oldest ornithological fallacies, that they had hibernated in crevices or even under water. Aristotle mentions this belief which was substantiated by natural historians up to the 19th century.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Swami

Or svami, a Hindu holy man and teacher: in certain religious and ascetic orders, title of initiates who have reached the highest stage of spiritual progress and have renounced the world: a popular term in the West for almost any Hindu adept, teacher or occultist.

Camera Press

The belief that the swan sings while dying has a long history endorsed by poets down the ages: Shakespeare wrote in Othello, *'I will play the swan and die in music'*

SWAN

SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS account for the swan's importance in mythology and folklore: they are among the largest birds of the Northern Hemisphere and, except for the Australian black swan, all swans have conspicuous white plumage. Moreover, except for the mute swan which makes a remarkable musical sound with its wings as it flies, the other species – the whooper, trumpeter and bewick – utter loud vocal calls.

Engravings and designs from the Old Stone Age onwards of long-necked birds resembling the goose or swan indicate that such species had a magico-religious significance in various ancient cultures. The Middle Bronze Age Urnfield folk of Central Europe and other later cultures incorporated such long-necked birds in designs which included a sun disc, showing that these birds were associated with solar beliefs. As swans and geese fly high and also frequent water they became linked as well with ideas about growth and fertility (see GOOSE). Swans appeared over northern tundra areas when the days were lengthening, the sun's path in the heavens was getting higher, and the snows were melting and the flowers appearing. Thus swans are thought not only to accompany spring but to help usher it in. Even now, some of the inhabitants of the woodlands of northern Asia erect poles with wooden effigies of flying swans near sacrificial platforms; below they place carved wooden models of fish, symbolizing the powers of sky, earth and water.

Since myths in which people are transformed into swans are ancient and widespread, they evidently hark back to primitive modes of thought in which the distinctions between gods, men and animals were blurred. Aeschylus, the Greek playwright, mentions swan maidens; Aphrodite was represented in art riding on a swan or goose, and Ovid tells of Cycnus being turned into a swan by his father Apollo. Both Apollo and Venus rode in chariots drawn by swans. Zeus was said to have turned himself into a swan to couple with Leda. The sacred character of the swan is indicated by the belief held in areas as far apart as Siberia and Ireland that to kill a swan brings misfortune or death. In County Mayo the souls of virtuous maidens were said to dwell in swans.

For Love of a Swan Maiden

The most widespread swan transformation myth tells of a man who sees a flock of swans alight by the water, and watches them discard their feather garments, revealing themselves as beautiful maidens. He steals the robes of one of the swan maidens and lives happily with her until one day she finds the garments, puts them on and disappears. In an Irish account dating from the 8th century, Angus, the son of the Dagda, 'the good god', falls in love with the swan maiden Caer who appears to him in a dream. On visiting Loch Bel Dracon at the time of the great Celtic festival of *Samain* (1 November) he sees a flock of 150 swans, each pair linked with a silver chain, and among them his beloved Caer wearing a golden chain and coronet. When he calls to her she leaves the flock and he, too, takes swan form. Together they circle the loch three times and, chanting magical music which puts to sleep all who hear it for three days and nights, they fly to the royal palace. Among the Buriats of Siberia who regard the eagle as their paternal forbear and the swan as the mother of their race, a swan maiden tale is told which has close affinities with Irish stories. There are also Indian versions, and in Malaya and Siam the theme forms the basis of a dramatic performance. It appears to have inspired the Japanese Noh play, *The Robe of Feathers*.

Christian elements introduced into swan transformation stories are obviously later embellishments; this confirms that these stories date from pre-Christian times. In a Russian ballad, a swan maiden declares

The size of the swan and its flight high in the sky implies power, and its association with water implies fertility: Zeus turned himself into a swan to father children on Leda; *Leda and the Swan*, school of Leonardo

Myths in which gods or humans turn into swans are ancient and widespread, reflecting primitive concepts that blurred the distinction between gods, men and animals: Roman limestone relief of Leda and the swan, Crete

that she will not marry the hero until he has been baptized, and a version of the beautiful Irish tale of the Children of Lir relates that after centuries had elapsed during which Fionnuala and her brothers, transformed into swans, swam the Irish sea, they were restored to human form in a very weak condition, and were baptized just before they died.

The belief that the swan sings while dying has a long history. Although Pliny contradicted this tradition it has been transmitted down the ages, and has been endorsed by poets almost up to our own times. This story may also have originated in the North. Although dying swans do not sing, a flock of bewick swans in full cry produces a resonant, mysterious, melodious tumult which seems to pervade the whole landscape. Chaucer refers in *The Parliament of Fowles* to 'swan-song'. Shakespeare wrote in *Othello* 'I will play the swan, and die in music', and in *The Merchant of Venice* 'He makes a swan-like end, fading in music'. Drayton in *Polyolbion* referred to 'swans who only sing in death' and Byron made the sad request:

> Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
> Where nothing but the waves and I
> May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
> There swan-like, let me sing and die.

Yet another poet to make use of this familiar theme was Alfred Lord Tennyson, in *The Dying Swan*.

The notion that swans are linked together or wear chains is also ancient. In *As You Like It* Celia says:

> And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans,
> Still we went coupled and inseparable.

In Greek art, swans are depicted harnessed; a French medieval legend refers to six brothers and sisters whose transformation into swans depends on the possession of golden chains and in Grimm's tale of *The Six Swans* a golden chain is placed around the neck of the swan maiden. After Edward I had knighted his son at Westminster two swans with trappings of gold were brought into the palace. The stories of the Knight of the Swan both in France and in Germany also embody such traditions.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

SWASTIKA

THE WORD SWASTIKA is derived from the Sanskrit, *svastika*, which means well-being, good fortune, luck. Although the figure bearing this name has been extensively used as a decoration or mystical symbol in many parts of the world from prehistoric times onwards, the history of its origin and world-wide dispersion is obscure. Known as the *Hakenkreuz* (hooked cross) in German, its association with Hitler's Germany is universally familiar and the symbol is therefore generally equated with all the negative features of the Third Reich: antisemitism (including genocide), aggression, persecution and terror (see also CROSS).

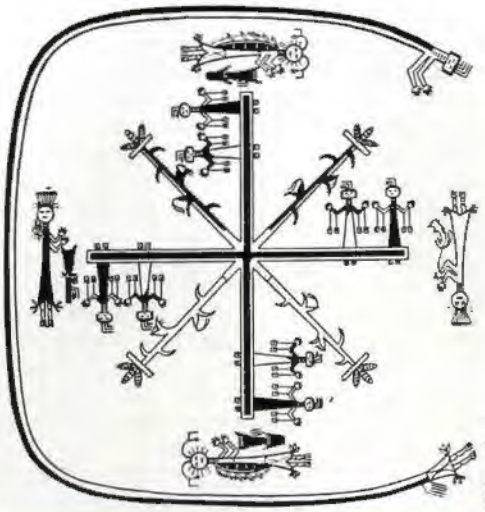
Both before and after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, German archeologists and cultural historians studied every conceivable aspect of swastika symbolism, although without reaching definite conclusions. The subject inevitably attracted the attention of 'lunatic fringe' researchers, who went to irrational lengths to establish that it represented an ancient Germanic and therefore acceptably Nordic symbol.

Guido von List (see LIST), for example, confidently proclaimed that the runic equivalent of the letter G was a disguised swastika and quoted the *Edda* to prove that this rune had a secret and mystical significance for ancient Scandinavian bards.

For many, including List, the swastika also had a cosmic meaning, for example as a 'sun wheel', symbolizing eternal rebirth and eternal movement. One Germanic enthusiast asserted that it was an essentially Christian symbol until the Church adopted the crucifix in the 6th century. Friedrich Döllinger proposed in his book *Baldur und Bibel*: 'The hooked cross, also known as "Sun wheel", can be found as a common holy symbol with all Germanic peoples, in the Near East as in Crete, alluding to the religion of Odin (Wotan).' Ludwig Fahrenkrog (see NEO-PAGAN GERMAN CULTS), the founder of one of the many Germanic religious sects – non-Christian but not always specifically pagan – that flourished in Germany after the early 1900s, supposed that the form 卐 suggested 'cessation' or 'away from God', while its counterpart 卍 meant 'genesis' or 'to God'. Here he followed contemporary Theosophical concepts which were based upon Buddhist traditions.

The date when the swastika first became associated with the ideology of the German *völkisch* movement, emotionally inward-looking and intensely nationalist, is uncertain. The few available clues point in the direction of the Austrian Pan-Germans, that is, followers of Schönerer, in the 1870s. Guido von List, for instance, who was close to Schönerer, was probably speculating about the swastika as a Germanic symbol long before it became identified with völkisch groups in the Third Reich.

In Germany, Wilhelm Schwaner (b. 1863), the publisher of one of the earliest völkisch periodicals (*Der Volkserzieher*, 1897) displayed a swastika on the titlepage of his publication, which was intended to inculcate truly Germanic (that is, völkisch) sentiments among its readers.



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The swastika has been used as a decoration or mystical symbol in many parts of the world ***Top*** **Swastika pattern of the Navaho Indians** ***Above*** **Adopted by the Nazis as their party badge, the swastika came to stand for Hitler's Germany in general, and for Nazi racial policies in particular, since it was chosen on the mistaken ground that it was a 'Nordic' emblem: 'few other symbols have become so widely associated with evil'** ***Below*** **Swastika on a pot found at Argos in Greece, c 8th century BC**

C. M. Dixon

By 1912 half a dozen or more völkisch groups, some of them quite large, were using the emblem on the titlepages of their periodicals and on their stationery. It had also begun to appear on private letterheadings, either printed, rubber-stamped or drawn with a pen. This insistent exhibition of the swastika was intended to advertise an emotional and complete identification with truly völkisch sentiments, and these invariably included rigorously antisemitic attitudes. The swastika had by this time become a symbol of recognition for like-minded people. A number of firms, such as Ecklöh at Ludenscheid in Westphalia, began to manufacture swastika badges, tie pins, amulets and belts or buckles incorporating the device.

The famous pre-1914 youth movement, the *Wandervögel*, inevitably encountered the swastika by way of various völkisch writers and periodicals and the symbol was therefore completely familiar to the generation that fought in the First World War. Soon after Germany's defeat in 1918 it was adopted by various paramilitary Freikorps units, which included many ex-students and members of the *Wandervögel*. The famous Erhardt Brigade, which participated in the liberation of Munich from the Communists in April 1919, arrived at the Bavarian capital singing their marching song which began with the words: 'Hooked cross on steel helmets . . .' The swastika was soon no longer an exclusively romantic völkisch symbol but became associated with the 'national revolutionary' right-wing opposition to the Weimar Republic.

Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party had its roots in Anton Drexler's German Workers' Party, a minute völkisch group founded in Munich in January 1919. Hitler joined the latter in September 1919 and was largely responsible for re-naming it as the National Socialist German Workers' Party in February 1920. When Hitler and the Nazis adopted the swastika as their party emblem they therefore chose a symbol that already reflected all or most of the tenets of National Socialist ideology, and antisemitism in particular.

The form in which the Nazis used the swastika was designed by Dr Friedrich Krohn, a dentist who had belonged to various völkisch groups, including the Germanen Order (see GERMANEN ORDER), before 1914. He was aware of the Buddhist theory that the 'anti-clockwise' swastika signified 'fortune and well-being' and made his first design accordingly. It was shown to Hitler and others. The majority readily accepted Krohn's arguments but Hitler insisted that the clockwise alternative be adopted – some would say with disastrous consequences. The Party flag, badge and armband, all based upon Krohn's design, were in official use by the summer of 1920. Almost exactly 25 years later the swastika became a symbol of shame and defeat in Germany. It is probably true to suggest that few other symbols have become so widely associated with evil.

SWEDENBORG

Mary Evans

A scientist turned visionary, Swedenborg claimed that the real meaning of the scriptures was revealed to him through his conversations with God and the angels

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG was born in Stockholm on 29 January 1688, the second son of the Lutheran Bishop of Skara, who had himself once been a professor at the University of Uppsala. Emanuel's father had changed his name from Swedberg when his family was ennobled in 1719. He was a remarkably learned and saintly man who was to have a longlasting influence on his son Emanuel.

From the first, Emanuel showed great promise in his scientific studies and, after graduating from Uppsala, travelled in Britain, Holland and Germany, pursuing his investigations. In England he met and was befriended by the astronomers Sir Edmund Halley and John Flamsteed, and on his return to Sweden had already established such a reputation that, in 1716, King Charles XII made him a special assessor to the Royal College of Mines. This work so absorbed him that he turned down the chance to follow in his father's footsteps as a professor at Uppsala, in order to continue with the practical work associated with the mines.

In 1718, he invented a means of transporting boats overland for 14 miles. While still a student, he had been concerned in 'a plan for a certain ship which, with its men, was to go under the surface of the sea and do great damage to the fleet of the enemy'. He had designed an air-gun with a magazine which could fire 60 or 70 shots without reloading and he had even busied himself with an attempt to design a flying machine.

Yet it was not as an inventor that he gained his first international triumph. In 1734, Swedenborg produced a three-volume work *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia*, in which he developed his theory of 'nebular hypothesis' to account for the formation of planets, which predates the work of Kant and the French astronomer, the Marquis de Laplace, and is often erroneously attributed to them. Publication proceeded apace. In 1740 *Oeconomia Regni Animalis*, an anatomical work, was produced in Amsterdam; in 1743 *Miscellaneous Observations on Geology and Mineralogy* was published in Leipzig, and in 1744 he wrote, *On the infinite and final cause of Creation*, in which he attempted to discuss the relationship between the soul and the body. All these were major works of importance to the several branches of science to which they were addressed, yet all had the germs of his later religious preoccupation. Nevertheless, it was not until 1745, with the publication of *Worship and the Love of God*, that religion became his one and only concern.

No Flight of Fancy

His life became totally taken up with his religious work so that in 1747, at the age of 59, he resigned his assessorship and took a pension of half-pay so that he could devote himself to the new revelations. But he was in no sense a spiritist, for he believed that he had held conversations with these heavenly beings while still being very much aware of his surroundings and in much the same way that he might talk with another human being. His mysticism was not the mysticism of the trance or of the seance – it was a full-blooded avowal of his regular direct communication with beings from heaven. His religious writings are the record of these communications and he makes no concessions.

He was aware of the scepticism that such extraordinary claims would arouse, and in his first theological work he admitted: 'I am well aware that many persons will insist that it is impossible for anyone to converse with spirits and with angels during his lifetime in the body; many will say that such intercourse must be mere fancy; some, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit; whilst others will make other objections. For all these, however, I care not, since I have seen, heard and felt.'

For statements of this kind to have any credence, it is important to remember that Swedenborg was neither a dreamer, nor an ascetic with little experience of the world, but a practical applied scientist who had preferred the real business of mining to becoming the Professor of Astronomy in the University of Uppsala.

Swedenborg's theological works are not easily read and they are certainly not the products of a slapdash mystical enthusiast. Just as in his earlier days he had learned about watch-making by apprenticing himself to a watch-maker, so he set about studying theology, becoming well-skilled in Greek and Hebrew and in the standard commentaries. Although his work was all based upon his own direct mystical experience of God, he did not neglect scholarship, and the large volumes, written in Latin, were intended for the serious student and were in no sense considered as the means of popularizing a new religion.

Despite the enormous claims made in his writings, Swedenborg remained throughout his life a modest and simple person, working enormously hard, never marrying, and without any intention of founding a new sect, believing that his followers could be of any denomination.

'God is a Man'

What then were the special doctrines which he taught, and how did he make his influence felt? The key to it all is in his belief that he was a divinely-appointed instrument of God's revelation to man. He put no special gloss on Christianity, except incidentally, for it was his view that his writings fulfilled the New Testament story, just as the gospels had fulfilled that of the Old Testament. He thus approached the gospels as one with superior knowledge. Swedenborg believed that his scholarship was informed by his own direct contact with God. His spiritual world was not seen through an inspired individual approach to scripture which Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, claimed as her contribution; nor was it seen as the result of the miraculous discovery of a new book of revelations, like the Book of Mormon; but it was revealed to him personally by God himself, who had led him along the paths of heaven, enabling him to talk directly to the angels. Indeed, Swedenborg spoke as if heaven and its inhabitants were his 'second home'. He knows them as he knows human beings and his knowledge enables him to maintain that man's real self is in form exactly as is his physical body, and if it had not been for the Fall, the body would have been sloughed off like a snake-skin. Instead, men need to die before they move on to a higher place. So important is this concept of humanness that Swedenborg continually emphasizes that it is only through man's own eyes that he can see God, that God exists only in the terms that man can see him, and that those terms are human terms.

This position undoubtedly comes from Swedenborg's reliance on his visions, and in these, God certainly does appear as a man. Of course, he would admit that God in his essence is unknowable, but insists that it is part of the essential God to be known in human form. It would be misleading, says Swedenborg, for us to think about God in human symbols if those symbols were not more than mere forms, but instead they must be an essential part of the reality of God himself. This explains the otherwise baffling comment: 'God is a man'. It cannot to taken totally literally and yet it is not merely symbolic. There is a real sense in which God shares the human form.

Swedenborg retained the doctrine of the Trinity, but twisted it slightly to fit in with the experience of his vision. The Father is absolute – God in his essence, unconditionally, worthy to be called Jehovah. When Jehovah determined to save mankind, he assumed the humanity of the Son. That humanity was complete, with all its defects

and all its blemishes. Thus God took on the ignorance of the child, was tempted with real temptations, which played upon real human desires and weaknesses. Like all humanity, the humanity of the Son could reach towards perfection – he was not, as in orthodox Christianity, perfect God and perfect Man.

The redemption of the world was the mystical redemption of this humanity becoming perfect and thus reaching to the Divine Father and reuniting the now perfect humanity with him who is perfect Divinity. This example makes it possible for all men to come to the Father.

Staircase to Heaven and Hell

All this is based upon a very special doctrine of creation which acknowledges man as the highest form of life on earth, but does not see him as created. Man is a form which is capable of receiving the life which constantly flows into him from God. Life is, in fact, Love-Wisdom, and this was received gladly before the Fall, when man accepted the harmony with God. Once he began to ignore the fact that his life came from God, then he had to stand alone. God did not leave him without a help to perfection, but instead provided him with the old dispensation, which led him towards a stage at which he was able to receive the revelation of God's human form. God did not become man, but merely clothed his divinity in man's form. This revelation is to be found in the New Testament, and it in turn has been elucidated by the direct communication of God with Emanuel Swedenborg.

Once again, returning to this direct revelation, Swedenborg *saw* heaven and hell. He also saw the intermediate place to which we go at death and from which we move, as our spirit leads us towards perfection or destruction. For those on the upward 'escalator', the approach towards God is inevitable. For those on the downward, the Devil is reached by easy stages. Swedenborg describes the spiritual world, with its spiritual patterns of all that there is in the material world, and he calls this vision the Second Coming of Christ. For him, the Advent is not a physical return, but the spiritual vision of Christ in his true surroundings. This vision comes to us all as we near perfection and pass to that state of spiritual vision which Swedenborg reached and upon which all his religious writings are based.

The revelation which God makes to man is, in fact, a kind of distillation of the Word which is found in God himself. There is a great danger in revealing to unready minds the full force of this truth and therefore the Bible contains a 'sifted-down' version of the Word which has descended until it has reached the level at which man can understand it. Of course on other planets, says Swedenborg, there are beings far brighter than man, for whom revelation has been presented in more direct a form. Yet in the sifted state in which the scriptures reach us, they make a direct appeal to the spirit of man, who has the capacity to understand and search out the real meanings contained within them.

This enables us to see that there is among the books in the Bible, a true canon of books which are really the Word, and which can be read for their spiritual meaning, and some others which are merely devotional aids. This view allowed Swedenborg to concentrate his work on the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament); Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel; I and II Kings; the Psalms, and most of the prophets. He also accepted the four gospels and the Apocalypse as of this specially divine nature. Their real meaning was revealed to him in his understanding which came from contact with the other world, and from his direct conversations with spirits and with God.

From this understanding, Swedenborg was able to see that the Atonement did not reconcile God with man, but made it possible for man to relearn the way to union with God – a way he had lost through choosing to love other than God at the Fall. When Christ had shown this way, he put off all the weaknesses of humanity and put on the divine humanity, given him by Jehovah. This was the glorification which is so much a part of Swedenborgian philosophy.

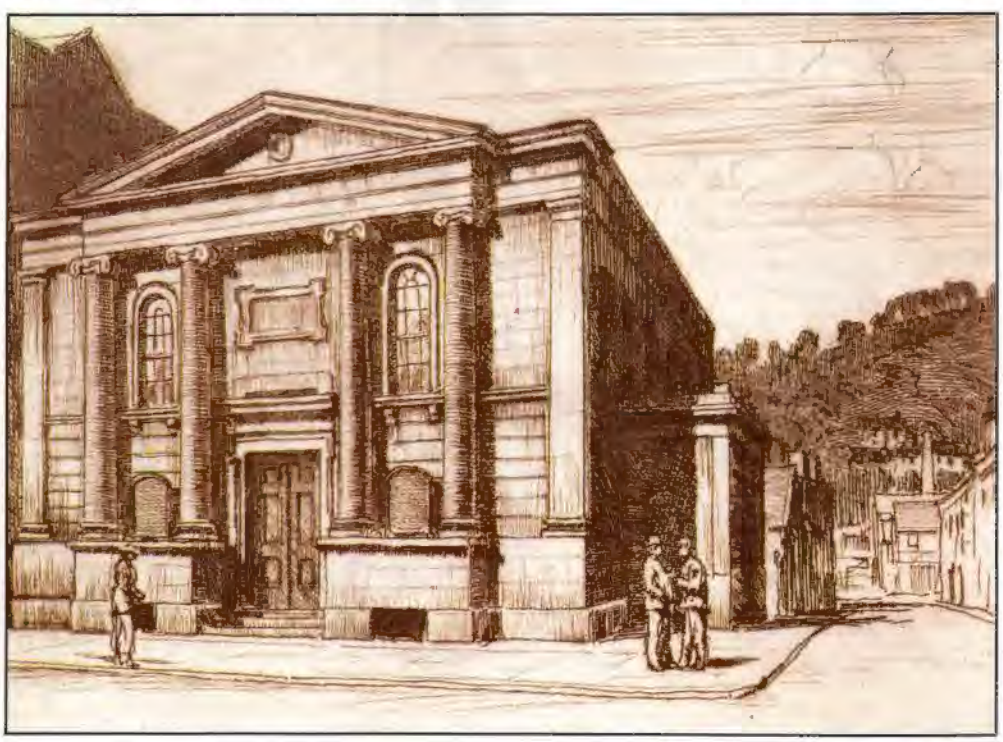
A Challenge to the Intellect

Now a knowledge of the truth is to be found in the Church. It is this knowledge that shows the way back to God. The Church is the true Church in so far as it has the truth. Therefore the founding of the Swedenborgian Church – or the New Church, as its adherents prefer – does not imply that other Churches are wrong; it is merely to help to point the way and to complete the revelation which may already be seen by people in other Churches. Nor is it the final revelation, for no doubt God may wish to show more of himself when the time is ripe. Swedenborgians claim, therefore, to be one of God's instruments, guided by the direct revelations made to Emanuel Swedenborg by God and his angels. These revelations they believe to be true, but in no way unique or exhaustive. They are not easy to assimilate, for the truths are theologically complicated and unarresting to the ordinary person, yet they have seized upon the minds of some great intellects. Much of William Blake's work, for instance, is imbued with the Swedenborgianism he embraced and then left behind. Despite his satire on Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* – which Blake called *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* – he continued to be inspired by the directness of the revelations of a real other world which is the hallmark of Swedenborg's message (see BLAKE).

In our own day, Helen Keller, who was born blind and deaf, wrote of her love for the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, 'If people would only begin to read Swedenborg's books with at first a little patience, they would soon be reading them with pure joy.' Miss Keller recognized that her hero was at first not easy to understand, and it is certainly true that for most people he does not get any easier even upon closer acquaintance, yet for some, he does appear to 'bring men by a wondrous way to God's city of light'.

His appeal is not universal. The New Church has never been very large, and its adherents have been few. Swedenborg presupposes a dedication to heavy reading. It would be surprising if the God who appeals to all men should have chosen so esoteric a character to continue his revelations made manifest in the carpenter's son. Nevertheless, here is obviously a mighty mind at work – a mind which was convinced of its personal and direct contact with God and which set out to describe that contact for the enlightenment of an inevitably dedicated readership.

JOHN SELWYN GUMMER



The founding of the Swedenborgian Church, or New Church, 'does not imply that other Churches are wrong: it is merely to help to point the way and to complete the revelation which may already be seen by people in other Churches'; etching of the New Church, Bath

SWEDISH WITCHCRAFT

BY CONTRAST with Germany, France, England and Scotland, the Scandinavian countries were comparatively free of organized witch hunts. But that fear of witches existed and could arouse hysteria and panic is shown by the case of the witches of Mora in Sweden, who were accused of taking children to a mysterious place called the Blocula and there enrolling them in the service of the Devil.

In July 1668 the Lutheran pastor of Elfdale in central Sweden, an area with a suitably evocative name in view of what was to happen, reported to his bishop that a girl named Gertrude Svensen had learned the art of magical incantation from a servant, Marit Jonsdotter, and had stolen several children of the district for 'the evil genius', the Devil. Her activities had been detected by a boy of 15, Eric Ericson, who also accused several others of stealing children for the Devil. One of them, a woman of 70, admitted that the accusation was true, but the others denied it. Officials of the royal government had investigated and discovered that the accused had stolen consecrated wine from the church, the implication being that they could only have a diabolical use for it.

The accusations caused great uproar locally. Rumours spread that hundreds of children had been delivered into the Devil's hand and that the evil genius himself had been seen going about the countryside. In May 1669 the royal government (King Charles XI was then aged 13) instructed the bishop to appoint worthy ministers to join members of the royal council in a commission to restore peace and order, without the use of imprisonment or torture. In June the bishop was told to order public prayers throughout his diocese to ward off the Devil's wrath, and this may perhaps have made the panic worse, for when the commission met, on 13 August, 3000 people came flocking to hear its deliberations.

After an investigation lasting till 25 August, the commission found that 300 children had been involved, and identified 70 witches. Far from being treated mildly, 23 who freely admitted their guilt were promptly beheaded and their bodies then burned to ashes. The other 47 were sent to the town of Falun, where they were later executed in the same way. In addition, 15 of the children were executed, 36 aged between nine and 15 were made to run the gauntlet and condemned to be publicly beaten on the hands with rods every Sunday for a year, and 20 more, aged under nine, were to be beaten on the hands on three successive Sundays.

Man in Gray

The atmosphere of dream or fantasy so often found in the confessions of accused witches hangs thickly round the Mora case. According to the evidence given to the commission, the children were dressed in red or blue clothes and carried by the witches to the Blocula, riding on goats or sticks or cooking spits or on the bodies of men who were fast asleep. The Blocula itself sounds like a place from a dream. It was 'situated in a delicate large meadow, whereof you can see no end'. There was a gate, painted in various colours, and behind it a smaller meadow and a house. The beasts the witches rode were left in the smaller meadow and the bodies of the sleeping men were propped up against the wall of the house. Inside, in one huge room there was a very long table at which the witches sat down to feast, and near it was another room, 'in which there were very lovely and delicate beds'.

Every witch had to take a child with her, such was the Devil's dubious fondness for young souls, and he bullied them and whipped them if they did not. Some of them took as many as 15 or 16 children with them. The children were made to deny God. They were baptized anew by the Devil's priests and their names were written in blood in the Devil's book.

The Devil appeared as a man. He had a red beard and he usually dressed in a gray coat, a high-crowned hat with linen of various colours wrapped round it, and stockings of red and blue with long garters. When they sat down to eat, those who stood highest in the Devil's favour were placed nearest him. The children stood by the door and the Devil himself gave them their food and drink.

Afterwards the witches danced, careering round and round astraddle on halberds (weapons which were a combination of a

National Film Archive

The Scandinavian countries were relatively free of organized witch-hunting, but fear of witches existed and could arouse panic and hysteria ***Left*** **Detail from a contemporary illustration of witches in Sweden in 1669: they were accused of stealing children for the Devil** ***Above*** **A suspect about to be tortured, a still from the Danish film** ***Day of Wrath***

spear and a battle axe), while the Devil roared with laughter and played the harp with fingers which were like claws. The dancing culminated in a mixture of fighting and copulation. The Devil had children as a result of sexual intercourse with the witches, but they bore toads and snakes through their intercourse with each other.

The witches also said that they used to meet at a gravel pit which was near a crossroads, and there they would cover their heads with garments and dance. On the beasts or instruments which the Devil provided they would be carried over churches and high walls. He gave them ointment which they smeared on themselves, and a saddle to ride on. He would give a witch a purse in which were shavings filed off a clock. It had a stone tied to it, and the witch would drop it into water, saying, 'As these shavings of the clock do never return to the clock from which they are taken, so may my soul never return to heaven.'

The panic spread beyond Elfdale. In 1670 commissions of investigation were appointed in the Uppsala area and in Helsinki, in the Swedish province of Finland. In 1674 and 1675 a royal commission inquired into allegations of witchcraft in the parishes of Thorsaker, Ytterlannas and Dahl, and there was another holocaust.

In 1676 there were investigations in Stockholm and six women were executed. Many more were imprisoned, and many of them insisted that they were guilty. A Finnish woman named Magdalen Mattsdotter was accused by several children and servant girls, and her own two daughters said they had seen the Devil standing beside her. She denied the accusations and was burned alive, her younger daughter walking all the way to the stake with her trying to persuade her to confess. Later it became clear that the servants had accused her out of envy and malice, and they were condemned to death in their turn. The case contributed to a revulsion of feeling, Charles XI banned all further accusations, and the hysteria died away.

Christian Thomasius, a German lawyer and author of *De Crimine Magiae* (1701), who was head of Halle University (which his opponents nicknamed Hell University), said that he met one of the Swedish officials appointed to investigate accusations. The official told him that he and the other lay judges easily saw through the evidence, which was based on the lies and fantasies of children. But the Lutheran ministers, who dominated the proceedings, were convinced that the Holy Spirit spoke through the children and would never allow them to tell lies in such a case, citing the text 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings' (Psalm 8, Matthew 21.16). After many innocent people had been put to death, one boy accused a man everyone respected. One of the commissioners offered the boy money to admit that he had made a mistake and had really meant to accuse somebody else. This the boy readily did, and the ministers on the commission decided that the Holy Spirit did not speak through the children after all. They gave the boy a beating and abandoned the inquiry.

Fighting in Germany during the Thirty Years War, Swedish generals had put a stop to witch trials in areas under their control, on the orders of Queen Christina, who believed that persecuting supposed witches simply entangled increasing numbers of people in 'an inextricable labyrinth', a conclusion which all the European evidence bears out. H. R. Trevor-Roper has commented (in *The European Witch-Craze in the 16th and 17th Centuries*) that the subsequent persecutions in Sweden itself followed on the new intolerance of the Swedish Lutheran Church in the 1660s. 'Like the established Calvinist Church in Scotland, it had shaken itself free from other, more liberal Protestant parties, and its Puritan leaders prepared to advertise their purity by a great witch-hunt.'

FURTHER READING: H. C. Lea, *Materials Towards a History of Witchcraft* (Yoseloff, 1957 reprint, 3 vols); M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Clarendon Press, 1967 reprint); R. H. Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Spring Books, 1959).

SWORD

Regarded with mystical reverence in the Dark Ages, the sword was credited with a personality and power of its own; in dances of immensely ancient lineage it replaced the sticks and clubs of victory celebrations and seasonal fertility rites

UNLIKE SPEARS AND AXES, which can be traced back to the Stone Age, the sword never existed in primitive times, for it presupposes a certain skill in metallurgy, and a certain sophistication in war; also, a social class willing to support the craftsman and learn the best use of his handiwork. For these reasons, the sword has a mystique which cruder weapons lack.

According to an Arabian tradition, swords were invented by the Hebrews, and first made on a hill near Damascus where Cain slew his brother Abel. Archeology, however, favours a European origin. The oldest known specimens are Bronze Age products dating from the second millennium BC, and found in Crete and north-western Europe. The sword appears to have developed originally as an enlargement of the knife or dagger, and repeated sharpening produced tapering blades that came to a point. When these were found to be deadly, smiths hit on the idea of a greatly elongated dagger with a sharp end.

The earliest swords of all were primarily for thrusting rather than slashing. Engraved gems from Mycenae portray warriors running their opponents through; an Irish sword from Lissane resembles a rapier. And although slashing with the sharp edge must have developed early, it was not until the 18th century that any swordsmen explicitly fenced with the point alone. However, the amount of practice required for this modern art suggests that the early thrusting swords must have demanded considerable skill. They imply a warrior elite with the time and inclination to undergo training.

It is not surprising, therefore, that legends of superhuman armourers lay stress on their sword-making. A letter written in 520 AD by Cassiodorus, secretary to the Gothic king Theodoric, thanks another monarch for a gift of swords 'so beautiful that one is tempted to attribute them to Vulcan': for this late classical writer, Vulcan's fame for such weapons is a literary cliché. The Teutonic peoples had their counterpart for Vulcan in Volund or Wieland, who made Siegfried's sword, Balmung. In England, Wieland became Wayland the Smith (see SMITH) and had a forge in a cave near Lambourn, Berkshire. Testing Balmung on a rival, Amilias, he cleft him down to the thighs so adroitly that Amilias only realized he had been struck when he tried to walk and fell apart.

The sword with which Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon epic hero (see BEOWULF), kills the mother of the monster Grendel, whom he had mortally wounded, is the work of giants, not men. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, King Arthur's sword Caliburn (an early form of the better-known name Excalibur; see ARTHUR) was forged in the enchanted island of Avalon. Several other fabulous swords are the gifts of fairy folk.

While classical legend acknowledges a divine armourer, its interest in swords is not nearly as pronounced as that shown later by the barbarian and Christian worlds. However, the two most famous classical stories do reflect the weapon's association with royal status and power.

It is said that when Alexander invaded Asia Minor, he visited a temple of Zeus where a cart was tied up with a complicated knot of bark, known as the 'Gordian Knot'. Gordius, the father of Midas and king of Phrygia, had gained the throne in obedience to an oracle when he arrived riding in the cart, which he dedicated to Zeus. A prophecy declared that whoever could undo the knot would become ruler of Asia. Alexander wasted no time; drawing his sword, he cut the Knot, and became ruler of Asia.

The second legend, preserved by Cicero, has given rise to another proverbial phrase. Damocles, a sycophant of the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius, wishing to flatter him, remarked how happy a man in such a position must be. Dionysius invited him to a banquet and offered him the royal chair. Damocles sat down on it, and suddenly realized that a sword was suspended above his head by a single horsehair. From this he could draw a moral about the insecurity of greatness.

On the whole, the Greeks and Romans did not regard their weapons with mystical reverence. The precursors of the romanticized swords of medieval chivalry are Teutonic and Celtic, not classical. Iron swords of the *La Tène* Celtic culture, in the last centuries BC, have almost parallel edges

In pagan legends of northern Europe a great hero frequently has a magic sword, possessed of wonderful powers and a life of its own, and the swords of Viking chieftains bore such names as Odin's Flame, Battle Snake or Sea-King's Fire. In the Middle Ages the mystique of the sword was adapted to a new symbolism, including the concept of Church and State as the 'Two Swords' *Left* The English Great Sword of State, symbolizing royal power and authority *Right* The Sword of Justice, in a British propaganda poster of the First World War

and rounded points, foreshadowing the massive two-handed swords of the knights. According to Livy and other sources, the swords of 'barbarian' Europe were always associated with social rank; common men seldom possessed them. Their special aura is pagan long before it is Christian. Tacitus, writing of a German tribe, notes a reverence for weapons: 'no business, public or private, is transacted except in arms'.

A Life of Its Own

Numerous swords have been found in the peat bogs of Denmark, which were originally meres. They were laid under the water with care, sometimes deliberately bent, in fenced-off areas. This northern practice belongs to the early centuries of the Christian era. It may have been partly sacrificial, but it may also have been akin to the custom of burying swords with the noblemen who owned them. The idea was not simply that the dead man might need his weapon in the hereafter; the sword symbolized his power, and was linked with him personally. It shared his life and had a life of its own. Hence, anyone else would be rash to take it. It might injure him or fail him in battle, or the owner's ghost might return to claim it. So even when the corpse of the owner lay elsewhere, it might be advisable to put his sword out of others' reach at the bottom of a mere, for instance, under magical protection. The implied personality of the sword itself is a frequent motif in northern mythology. Those recovered from chieftains' graves of the period 400–700 AD show a fineness of workmanship, a richness of

Although many sword dances are now showpieces, it is thought that they originated as rituals honouring and promoting virility, victory and fertility. The swords may be used more as props than as weapons, but dances in which a combat is danced out are believed to be descended from mock battles between individual groups representing summer and winter, fertility and sterility *Below* Sword dancing at the Braemar Games *Bottom* The North Skelton Long Sword Dance, from the English Midlands *Right* Turkish dancers in mimic combat *Far Right* A Javanese fighting dancer

Picturepoint, London

Spectrum Colour Library

ornament, which accord with many literary indications that a sword was more than a utilitarian object. It was a living being with a name and a character. If not buried with its lord, it might be handed on in his family.

When Beowulf prepares for his combat with Grendel's mother, the royal herald Unferth lends him a weapon:

> Not the least or the worst of his war equipment
> Was the sword the herald of Hrothgar loaned
> In his hour of need, Hrunting its name,
> An ancient heirloom, trusty and tried;
> Its blade was of iron, with etched design
> Tempered in blood of many a battle.
> Never in fight had it failed the hand
> That drew it, daring the perils of war.

Many of the swords in other folklore and legend have outright supernatural properties. They shine, and discharge lightning-bolts. They grow and shrink at need, they make the owner invisible, they give him the power to travel fast over long distances, and they run with blood when he dies. Heroes pierce rocks with them, splinter arrows in flight, and create hills and springs by striking the earth.

Numerous tales of magic further reveal the personality of the weapon, and its independent wisdom and virtue. There are swords that can cause death whenever drawn, or throw enemies into an enchanted sleep. Some, on the other hand, can release the spellbound, keep the dying alive, and even resuscitate the dead. Swords act by themselves, striking out of the air in forests, or falling on an enemy. They speak to save their masters from danger, and understand when spoken to themselves.

Reserved for a Special Task

A number of stories tell of a sword's gift of discrimination. Some are unwilling to deal a wrongful blow. When the owner of one tries to attack a friend, it becomes too heavy for him to lift. Others turn to wood when somebody raises them against an innocent victim.

The use of these marvellous weapons is governed by many rules and hazards. Some can only be moved at all by the right person. Some are reserved for a single appointed task (as when a son must take up his father's sword to kill his father's murderer).

Sonia Halliday

Picturepoint, London

Some must be handled in a special manner, for example, they must be drawn, and sheathed, and drawn again a fixed number of times before the battle.

A hero's vulnerability may be bound up with the magical qualities of his weapon. He may wear an impenetrable garment which his own sword alone can pierce, and eventually does. His sword may be bewitched so that it will break in one particular peril, or fail in one crucial crisis. However potent the sword's virtue, a hostile magic can be stronger. It can be dulled or otherwise neutralized, perhaps by an incantation, or by scratching a counter-charm on the blade. A magic wand may break it, or an evil spirit get into it. Grendel's mother is a case in point. She is a troll woman living in a cave under a

Picturepoint, London

The warrior's sword is a common motif in heraldry and on military medals *Above (left)* Nazi war insignia awarded for 75 military engagements, *(centre)* the arms of the Howard family, *(right)* badge of the Order of Merit, military division *Right* Richard, Earl of Warwick is dubbed Knight of the Garter: the method of conferring knighthood by striking the candidate on the shoulder with a sword is still used

lake. Beowulf assails her with the sword Hrunting, but finds it useless against the demon:

> He swung his war sword with all his strength,
> Withheld not the blow, and the savage blade
> Rang on her head its hymn of hate.
> But the bold one found that the battle-flasher
> Would bite no longer, nor harm her life. . . .
> That time was the first for the treasured blade
> That its glory failed in the press of the fray.

On the wall, however, Beowulf spies an ancient sword made by giants. He manages to seize it, kills the trull woman, and cuts off the head of Grendel, whose corpse is still lying in the cave. The monster's blood melts the iron, so Beowulf can take only the hilt back with him. When he returns the ineffectual Hrunting to Unferth, despite its almost disastrous failure, 'the great-hearted hero spoke no word in blame of the blade'. Hrunting deserves a human courtesy for doing its best.

The swords of the Vikings have many descriptive phrases and nicknames applied to them: Odin's Flame, Battle-Snake, Battle-Fire, Sea-King's Fire, Tongue of the Scabbard, Ice of Battle, Dog of the Helmet, Mail-Coat's Terror. Several sagas refer to Skofnung, 'the best of all swords which have been carried in northern lands'. Made for Hrolf Kraki, a 6th century king, it uttered a cry when it saw wounds. Skofnung was buried with its master, but 200 years later a warrior named Skeggi opened the grave and appropriated the sword.

Such an action was fraught with danger, though Skeggi himself knew the weapon's secrets and could handle it. Skofnung must never be drawn in the presence of a woman, or casually, with no immediate intention of fighting. Nor must the sun shine full on its pommel, which was protected by a cover. It had a 'life stone' as an accessory and wounds inflicted by the sword could be healed only by rubbing with the stone (archeology supplies evidence for these magical stones, which were large heads attached to the hilt by a thong). Skeggi reluctantly lent Skofnung to a young friend, Kormak, who had challenged a rival to a duel. Handing it over, Skeggi gave him all the necessary warnings and added that when the time came to fight, Kormak should breathe on the blade and a little snake would creep out under the guard. Scornful of all this cryptic advice, Kormak made every possible blunder. When he got home he tried to draw the sword to show to his mother (a double error) and it stuck in the scabbard, making a weird noise when he pulled harder. On reaching the duelling ground, he removed the cover so that the sun shone on the pommel. The snake appeared, but 'it was not handled as it should have been, and the luck of the sword was changed'. Again archeology sheds light: the snake would have been a faintly etched design, a charm of some sort, which showed up when the blade was breathed on.

In the medieval romances of Charlemagne and his peers, a similarly respectful spirit is evident. The Emperor's sword is Joyeuse, and that of his champion Roland is called Durandal. Joyeuse, 'the unconquered' was made by the smith Gallas and took him three years to finish. The gold-hilted coronation sword of the kings of France, now in the Louvre, is traditionally described as the sword of Charlemagne. Apart from a new grip fitted by Napoleon, it does appear to be 9th century work, though its identity as Joyeuse cannot be proved. A second sword in Vienna, said to have been given to Charlemagne by Haroun al-Raschid, the Caliph of Baghdad whose adventures are recounted in the *Arabian Nights*, is probably Hungarian.

The kinship of the Charlemagne cycle to the masculine world of Skeggi and Beowulf is reflected in an allusion to the sword Durandal, in the *Song of Roland*. When Roland is dying and recalls the things dearest to him, he is sad that Durandal will be masterless, but he does not think of Aude, his betrothed. In the more cultured romances of King Arthur (later as literature, though referring to an earlier period historically), women can, and usually do, put swords in the shade. Yet it is Arthur's sword, rather than Charlemagne's or Roland's, which has become immortal: doubtless because the advance in sophistication was also an advance in magical fantasy.

Arthur becomes king after passing the test of pulling a sword out of a stone, which no other claimant had succeeded in doing. In some versions, but not in all, this is said to have been the famous Excalibur which he wields later. Arthur's sword in the *Mabinogion* is called Caledvwlch, a Celtic name of uncertain derivation. In Geoffrey of Monmouth it becomes Caliburn. The form 'Excalibur' is supposed to be based on the Latin phrase *ex calce liberare*, 'to liberate from the stone'.

In Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, Excalibur is distinguished from the sword in the stone, and a different story is told of how Arthur came by it. Here Merlin brings Arthur to a lake, and he sees 'an arm clothed in white samite' rising above the surface with a sword in its hand, richly jewelled, in a fine scabbard. The Lady of the Lake approaches. In return for Arthur's promise of a boon to be specified later, she agrees to let him have the sword. He rows out and takes it, and the hand vanishes under the water. Merlin tells him to prize the scabbard also, for while he wears it, no wound can ever cause him to lose blood. Many years afterwards, Excalibur has to be thrown back into the water. The hand rises to catch it.

One suggestion to account for this story is that there may have been a tradition of sinking the weapons of dead chiefs in meres, as practised in Denmark. The Lady of the Lake was perhaps a priestess in charge of the sacred place, who allowed a particular sword to be recovered in order to endow a new chief with an old one's authority.

Twin-Edged Blade

Medieval legends name many other wonderful swords belonging to British, French, Scandinavian, German and Spanish heroes. The mystique did not die with the triumph of the Church, but it was Christianized. During the 12th century the sword was adapted to a new symbolism; it looked like a cross, it was wielded by crusaders against the infidel, and the twin edges of its blade could stand for truth and loyalty. Medieval political theory symbolized the spiritual and secular powers as the 'Two Swords', and the

'Receive this sword in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and use it in thine own defence and that of the Church of God . . .'

more ambitious popes claimed the right to carry both. The figure of Justice on the Old Bailey bears the secular sword.

In Germany, there are accounts of swords being introduced into marriage ceremonies. Sometimes the bridegroom held out the ring lying on the blade. One ritual required the bride to place her thumb on the pommel. A poem tells how an unwilling girl clenched her fist so tightly that the marriage could not proceed. The weapon's function in pledges and oaths of other types was by this time already ancient. When Hamlet says 'Swear by my sword', he is following a custom traceable a long way back to pagan Teutons.

Swords played an important part in the rituals of knighthood. Here too there were pagan antecedents. In *Beowulf* the king of the Geats honours the hero by giving him a rich sword. A Norwegian law manual describes the ceremony when a new member of the royal bodyguard, the Hearthmen, took the oath of allegiance. The king rested his own coronation sword, sheathed, on his right knee, with the hilt pointing forward with his hand covering it. The new Hearthman knelt before him, placed his own right hand under the hilt, and kissed the hand of the king.

In Christendom, when a knight went to church to be admitted into an order of chivalry, he handed his sword to the priest, who laid it on the altar, blessed it, and gave it back, saying: 'Receive this sword in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and use it in thine own defence and that of the Church of God, and for the confusion of enemies of the cross of Christ and the Christian faith.' The knight brandished it three times, sheathed it, and passed it to his sponsor. In the East too, the Samurai of Japan made the sword an object of reverence and ritual.

The lore of symbolism and magic gives the sword a variety of roles according to context. Viewed structurally, as a union of blade and guard, it stands for conjunction; functionally, as an instrument with the power to wound, it stands for liberty and strength; sexually, it is ambiguous. The straight Western type of sword is male, the curved oriental type is female. Despite the relationship with the scabbard, it is often

C. M. Dixon/British Museum

emblematic of chastity, because of its brightness and also its power to separate. Many characters in legend, for example, Siegfried, sleep beside a woman who must not be touched, with a sword between them.

For alchemists the sword is a symbol of purifying fire. In the magician's hands, it is a protection against malevolent ghosts and hostile enchantments. Its polished surface can be used like a crystal ball for 'scrying'. It figures in Arthurian legend as one of the four Hallows or sacred objects seen by Grail seekers: the sword, the cup, the dish and the lance. Occultists assert a connection between these Hallows and the four suits of the Tarot pack, in which swords correspond to the spades in the ordinary pack.

GEOFFREY ASHE

Sword Dances

In sword dancing the swords are used as props and not necessarily as weapons; dancers wield swords to build up elaborate group figures or for use in dance tricks. There are many variations and types of sword dances, but they share some characteristics: for instance, they are exclusively performed by men, they are highly stylized even when they portray combat, and they derive from cultic and perhaps mythological sources.

Although many sword dances are now showpieces, they probably all originated in pre-Christian rituals in honour of virility, victory and fertility. For instance, the *Moriscas* ('Moorish dances', in which a ritualistic form of battle is mimed) and the various types of sword-or-stick dances have intrigued scholars over a long period. These dances have now been traced, not to Moorish origin, but to very ancient springtime seasonal rites for the return of the sun and of vegetation, culminating in a human or animal sacrifice. The combat signified the battle between summer and winter, night and day; and the leaps and high kicks promoted growth. In the Iron Age, the sticks and clubs were replaced by metal swords, especially in mining areas, and the symbolic developments became increasingly complex.

Whatever the aboriginal motivation, the overt meaning of the Morisca type of sword dance changed during the Crusades and the Moorish invasion of Spain. In the

The Sword of Arthur

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his own –
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it – rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye – the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it – on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! The time to cast away
Is yet far off.' So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.

Tennyson *Idylls of the King*

view of the anthropologist George Foster, the trail of Iberian Moriscas spread from north to south along with the gradual expulsion of the Moors, from Lérida in 1150 to Andalusia in the 14th century. A further two centuries later, the Moriscas were taken by the Spanish to the New World.

Meanwhile, in the Middle Ages the sword dances of central Europe became attached to guilds as well as to male fraternities, and in Austria this is still the case. In Austria and in Spain and Portugal, the sword dances are traditional, while in England they were revived after 1900, thanks to the efforts of Cecil Sharp, the famous collector of folk song and dance; today they are losing their ceremonial meanings, even in the villages. In America they are kept alive by the enthusiasm of folk dance societies.

Despite the widespread diffusion of sword dances within the Old World and to the New, the celebrations have retained some of the original costuming and music, and a great deal of the aboriginal and medieval seasonal timing. They are held during the season of new life, from Epiphany to Corpus Christi. Moriscas abound during carnival time at Corpus Christi, sword dances on Plough Monday (first Monday after Twelfth Night) and during Whitsuntide or at May Day. Some dances are performed at unusual times, such as the September guild observance of the Hallein dancers from Austria, who also observe Whit Sunday.

Crossed and Wielded Weapons

Scholars have divided sword dances into various groupings. Solo dances which feature the brandishing of a sword or sabre predominate in the Near East. The Arab *Aissoua* is performed in a semi-trance culminating in self-mutilation. The Ukrainian *Zaporotchez* and the *Lezginka* of the Lezgis, Georgians, and Tartars in the Caucasus Mountains appear as a display of virtuosity, but probably originated in an old fertility rite, or at least a courtship rite for the display of masculine prowess. Before his female partner, the vigorous male leaps and whirls while he flourishes a sabre.

Stepping between two crossed swords or a sword and scabbard, or perhaps two crossed sticks, or pipes, originated as a victory dance. The best-known examples, all from Europe, are the Scottish *Gillie Callum*, the English *Bacca Pipes*, the Finnish *Skin Kompasse*, the Catalan *L'Hereu Riera*, and the Hungarian *Kanász Tánc*. Gillie Callum is now as popular among Scots in America as it is in Scotland, and women and children have been admitted as performers. The soloist follows a set routine to the traditional bagpipe music. With an elegant, erect carriage, and with extended arms and hands held to form a semi-circle, he lightly steps among the four spaces between the crossed sword and scabbard, excecuting a series of *jétes*, *pas de basques*, and other steps familiar to ballet dancers.

Left **The Greek hero Theseus raises a stone to take his father's sword: Roman terracotta relief, 2nd century AD. In the Arthurian legends, Arthur becomes king by drawing a magic sword from a stone, which in some versions is identified with his great sword Excalibur** ***Below*** **In alchemy the sword was a symbol of purifying fire; and when God drove Adam from the garden of Eden he placed an angel at the gate with 'a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life': detail from the Bedford Book of Hours**

British Museum

Combat mime by a pair of opponents or two opposing factions involves the use of metal or wooden weapons. Among primitive tribes the weapon is usually a spear, a long staff or a war club, as in the Bontoc and Igorot war dances of the Philippines. More advanced civilizations have used metal in the construction of swords. In China and Japan swords feature in stylized, theatrical presentations of warrior dances. In Europe (except for Scandinavia), Latin America and the Caribbean, swords of metal or wood serve as weapons in the Moriscas. Closely connected to these are the Dalmatian *Moreshka*, a battle mime between two factions involving elaborate formations, and the Portuguese *Mouriscada* featuring the combat between beautifully-dressed men and demonic masked dancers. In Spain and Mexico *Los Moros y Cristianos*, the Moors and the Christians, is a drama of combat, ending with the victory of the Christians. The obvious reference to the Crusades has been reinterpreted by scholars such as Cecil Sharp and Curt Sachs as a medieval version of an ancient, pagan vegetation rite, a battle between the seasons, with the inevitable victory of the good, warm season. The drama usually includes dialogue, always elaborate costuming and masking, sometimes even realistic additions such as horses. If the Christian group has a leader called Santiago (St James, patron saint of Christendom), it is termed *Santiagos*. The English Morris Dance, despite the similarity of its name, differs from the south European Moriscas in the extreme stylization, the absence of actual conflict or the clash between sticks in set patterns, and the presence of side actors portraying a death and resurrection theme (see MORRIS DANCES).

When Spanish missionaries taught

Moriscas to their converts in Latin America, they apparently received a warm welcome. And they were able to substitute these vegetation combat dramas for the indigenous Indian dramas. Today, in Mexico, most religious fiestas include Los Moros y Cristianos under various names. The male dance-actors have substituted medieval costumes and masks for their aboriginal outfits; they clash with swords, usually of wood, instead of the aboriginal war clubs; the words spoken in Spanish or their native tongue are about the victory of Christianity. But they dance in a way that is earthly, relaxed, and retentive of ancient native styles.

Such importations have taken root in other areas colonized by the Spanish: the Philippines, Trinidad, Peru, Bolivia. In Brazil they have mingled with Negroid styles, as in the Mocambique of Sao Paolo, for the agrarian saint, San Benito. Here, the swords have become sticks and the battle features complex, syncopated rhythms and African steps. In the course of the fray, the swords are not only weapons, they are also used as percussion instruments. In time with the musical accompaniment usually of flute and drum, metal swords clang rhythmically and wooden swords clash with a duller sound. In some areas, such as Papantla in eastern Mexico, excitement is intensified by the dancers' high-pitched, monotone yells, and by the stamping of feet. These martial sounds synchronize with the visual effects of encounter, retreat, and advance.

Geometric Patterns

Sword dances of western Europe lack the element of combat; they create excitement by the steady evolutions of geometric patterns and metric beat of drum and stepping. In this dance, swords are not weapons. They connect the male dancers, usually six, sometimes ten or more. In her book *Sword Dance and Drama* (1962) Violet Alford describes the link:

> It begins by each man grasping his hilt in his right hand and in his left taking the point of his neighbour's sword. A closed chain or ring is thus formed, a sword between each man and the next, and except for the weaving of broadswords at fixed moments into a pentagon, hexagon, or octagon according to the number of swords and dancers, it never comes undone until each figure is finished.

In this book Miss Alford points to the frequency of sword dances in mining regions, perhaps as magical cults of sword forgers. She supports this discovery by giving lists of mining sites, in which she includes, however, some sites that are salt mines, such as the one near Hallein, Austria. Some scholars, like the folklorist Douglas Kennedy, regard sword dances as vestiges of seasonal rites. Kennedy supports this theory by describing two aspects of death and resurrection, the symbolic killing of a captain or the Fool in an associated acting group, and the revival by a doctor (see FOLKPLAYS).

In Kennedy's book *England's Dances* he also suggests a further theory, of influence from invading Norsemen. British sword dances are indeed concentrated in northern England, with long-sword dances in Danish Mercia (covering the present-day Midlands) and Rapper Sword Dances in Northumbria (much of northern England). They are further north than the Morris dances, and in distinct areas.

Elsewhere in Europe, hilt-and-point sword dances abound in the mountainous regions of northern Spain and the Basque provinces, and in the mountainous areas of Austria. Everywhere the dances share basic formations and types of costume and music, although regional differences are often evident.

The dances usually progress in a sunwise circle or weave within a circle, but the Flamborough Sword Dance straightens out into longways formations. The character of the figures depends on the length of the swords. A ring-and-step usually starts the dance, that is, a circling with a steady run, shifting the sword from shoulder to shoulder; this section concludes with foot-tapping, 'stepping' in place, and sometimes with a clash, that is, a meeting of the swords in a central pyramid. Afterwards follow evolutions such as the 'single-under' and 'double-under', in which the dancers in succession twist under the upraised swords; the 'single-over' and 'double-over', in which they successively step over the lowered swords; the 'roll' or 'waves', in which the parallel swords are successively raised and lowered and the dancers pass under and

The basis of the sword's mystique is its efficiency as a killer combined with its use by a warrior elite in advanced societies, skilled in metallurgy and comparatively sophisticated techniques of war *Left* Effigy of a crusader: the sword looked like a cross, it was wielded by Christian knights against the infidel, and its two edges could stand for truth and loyalty *Right* The triumphant Ottoman leader Mehmed II at the death of Uzun Hasan, ruler of northern Mesopotamia

over; the 'reel' or circular hey with raised swords; and 'threedling' with double overhead arches. In the final, triumphant 'lock' the swords are linked into a star shape. Then the leader displays the star during stepping, or the group wraps the lock around the neck of an attendant character and circles clockwise in the 'rose'. This leads to the decapitation and to the resurrection that follows.

Among the many variations, the dance figures at Dürrnberg near Hallein are particularly ingenious. In addition to the basic formations, they include symbolic presentations of mining activities, along with rhymed speeches by the sergeant. In the 'bridge' sequence the dancers stand in two parallel lines, with lowered swords. The sergeants step across and the files follow. For the shaft the dancers form a vault with their raised swords; they conclude with a rapid winding movement for the joyous return homeward.

Richard Wolfram, who has published many books and articles in German on the topic, considers these semi-realistic formations recent inventions, superimposed on older, basic patterns of sun-circling and interweaving. He agrees with Kennedy that the probable origin was an ancient vegetation cult, long preceding the first historical reference of 1398. He associates the custom with pre-Christian brotherhood initiations, since he has observed that these dances are always performed by members from within a closed fraternity group.

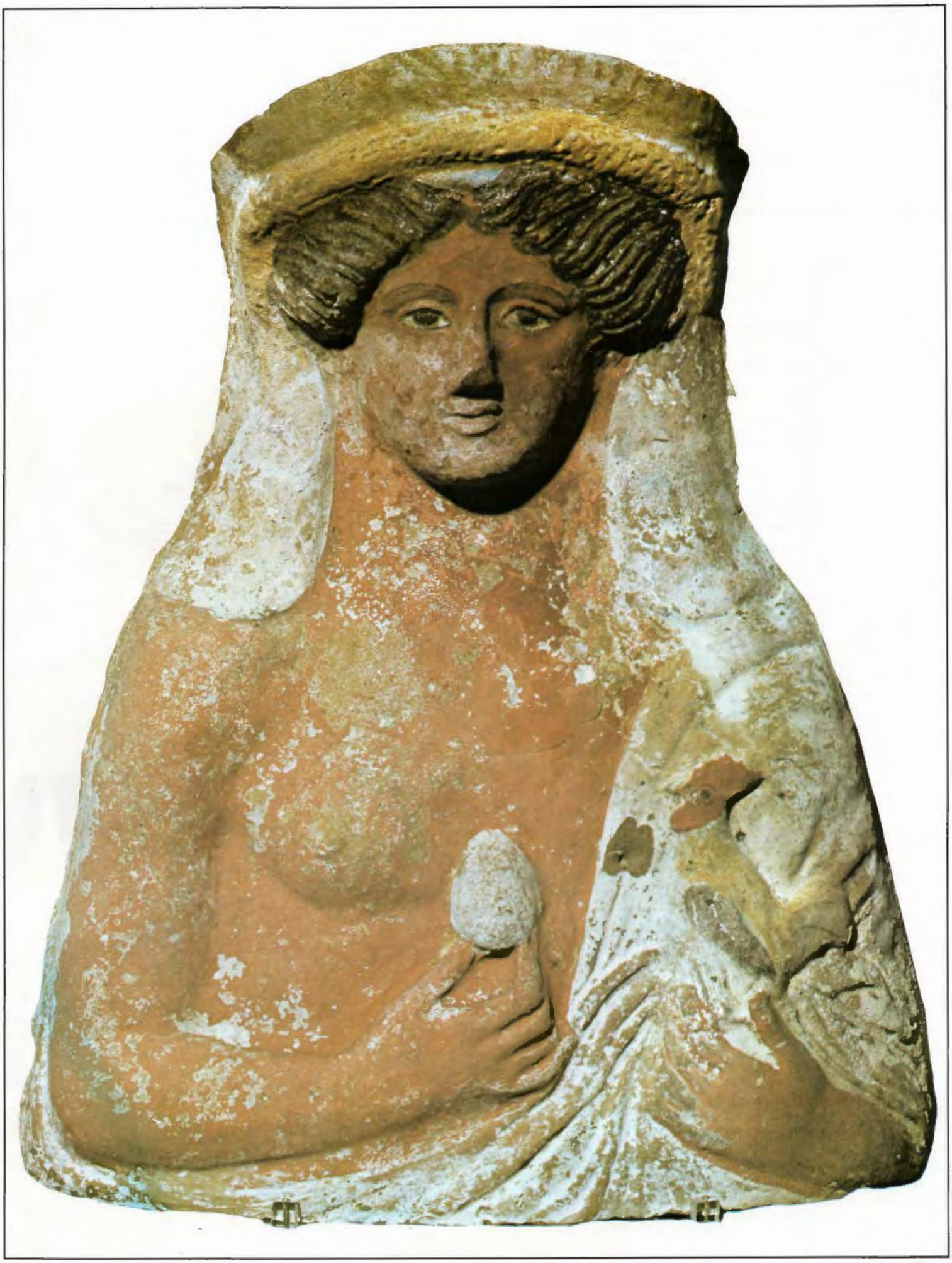
In every setting, from village green to gymnasium, the well-performed versions of these dances continue to enchant the performers and to captivate the audiences, not only due to the skill and beauty of the execution, but also thanks to a primordial magic of intent and geometry.

(See also DANCE; FOOL).

GERTRUDE KURATH

FURTHER READING: For sword: H. R. Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1962); R. E. Oakeshott, *The Archaeology of Weapons* (Lutterworth Press, 1960). For sword dances: Violet Alford, *Sword Dance and Drama* (Merlin Press, 1962); Violet Alford and Rodney Gallop, *The Traditional Dance* (Methuen, 1935); Douglas Kennedy, *England's Dances* (Bell, 1949).

Sonia Halliday



British Museum/C.M. Dixon

'It is the role of religious symbols,' said C. G. Jung, 'to give a meaning to the life of man': it is increasingly suggested in the West that the lack of adequate symbols is part of the Western malaise

SYMBOLISM

'THE GREAT function of symbols,' wrote the distinguished German Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, 'is to point beyond themselves, in the power of that to which they point, to open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed, and to open up levels of the human mind of which we otherwise are not aware.' There is no doubt that man's tendency to see in everything around him intimations of a veiled reality, and to perform actions which are themselves symbolic, has played an immensely important role in the history of religion and magic, but the elucidation of symbols is a highly precarious business. This is because a symbol is essentially an attempt to express what is otherwise inexpressible, which means that it cannot be expounded satisfactorily in words. The more powerful the symbol, the more this is so. Having caught it in your butterfly net, you can only display it with its wings spread out and a neat classificatory label underneath if you pop it in the killing bottle first. It is now unfortunately dead – it has lost the elusive quality which made you want to capture it in the first place.

Major religious symbols have about them a tantalizing vagueness or, put the other way round, a haunting richness, with an air of holding the key to a secret beyond the grasp of rational intelligence. It is because they are felt 'to open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed' that some Christian writers have suggested that if God has chosen to disclose himself to man, symbols would be the natural vehicles of his revelation. Whether this is accepted or not, it is at least impressive evidence of one of the cardinal facts about symbols (as distinct from minor conventional signs, like trademarks or traffic lights), that the impact they make on the mind is one of recognition, not of invention. They are felt to be discovered, not devised.

What is discovered, however, may vary considerably from one mind to another. Even within the same broad tradition, a symbol will have different connotations for different people (and even for the same person at different times). A telling example is provided by Mary Douglas in her book *Natural Symbols*, in connection with the Roman Catholic rule of abstaining from meat on Fridays. This was originally a symbol of 'personal mortification, a small weekly celebration of the annual celebration of Good Friday. Thus it pointed directly to Calvary and Redemption.' Among sophisticated Catholics the rule is increasingly ignored and its symbolism regarded as empty. But the rule is strictly maintained by many Irish immigrants to England, in a country where they have no roots and often no relatives or friends. To them, abstaining from meat on Fridays is a vital symbol of 'allegiance to a humble home in Ireland and to a glorious tradition in Rome.'

Another factor which makes the interpretation of symbols difficult is the confusing variety of ways in which the symbolic is related to the real. A symbol, by definition, is not what it represents. It stands for, suggests, reveals to the mind a reality other than itself. But in practice the symbol is frequently treated as if it *is* what it represents. When someone insults the American flag in the United States, for example, the violence of the reaction provoked among some patriots suggests that what has been maltreated is not merely a piece of cloth but America itself. Both the culprit and the patriot know perfectly well that the flag is not the same as America, but represents it, but they also feel that in a more profound sense it is America that has been damaged, not just the piece of cloth.

This principle applies to much religious

National Gallery/John Freeman

Left **Greek figure of the god Dionysus as a youth, holding a cock and an egg, symbols of creator and created, youth and age, death and rebirth** ***Right*** **At the simplest level, the cross merely represents the instrument of Christ's death, but it has a great wealth of symbolic references, leading the mind on to the idea of sacrifice and suffering, resurrection, a burden to be borne, trust in God's will, reconciliation between God and man, reconciliation of opposites, the essential unity of all things:** ***Crucifixion*****, by Antonello da Messina**

Practically everything of which human beings have become aware has been used as a symbol, but the same symbol will have different connotations for different people: the Rorschach test, devised by a Swiss psychiatrist, follows the principle of the child's inkblot game and takes the shapes, scenes and characters which you see in the blots as clues to your personality

and magical symbolism. When a sorcerer inflicts injuries on a puppet which represents his victim, he believes that he is inflicting the same injuries on the real body of the victim, and all imitative magic depends on the belief that the symbol of a thing *is* the thing (see IMITATIVE MAGIC).

Christ and the Host

The host, or communion wafer, is a symbol of Christ but when it has been properly consecrated in the Mass, it also *is* Christ. The Pope's Encyclical letter *Mysterium Fidei*, issued in 1965, observes that it is wrong 'to be so preoccupied with considering the nature of the sacramental sign that the impression is created that the symbolism – and no one denies its existence in the most holy Eucharist – expresses and exhausts the whole meaning of Christ's presence in this sacrament. Nor is it right to treat of the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the marvellous change of the whole of the bread's substance into Christ's body . . . Nor, finally, is it right to put forward and to give expression in practice to the view which maintains that Christ the Lord is no longer present in the consecrated hosts which are left over when the sacrifice of the Mass is over.'

On the other hand, there are many contexts in which the symbol is sharply distinguished from the reality, which it merely stands for. And between the two extremes is a large 'in between' area, in which the symbol is felt to be intimately connected with the reality without fully being it. Magical systems of correspondences, for instance, create links of this sort between symbols and realities (see CORRESPONDENCES). The Hungarian students who, in the uprising of 1956, hanged a bust of the Stalinist politician Matyas Rakosi from a lamp post, probably felt that they were doing something more effective than making a mere gesture of defiance. Going back to the Eucharist for a moment, there is a whole range of responses from Christians of different denominations to the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament, as being 'real' or 'spiritual' or 'merely symbolic' (see MASS; SACRAMENTS).

Practically everything of which human beings have become aware has been recognized somewhere by somebody as a symbol of something. Unusual events are treated as omens, signs of an underlying maladjustment of the order of Nature which will bring death or disaster. The rustling of trees, the fall of lots, the speech of a person in trance, the lines on a hand or the stars in the sky, are interpreted as symbols of the will of the gods or the pattern of fate (see DIVINATION; OMENS; ORACLES). Animals, plants, features of landscape, thunder and lightning, parts of the body, clothes, numbers, buildings and innumerable other objects are felt to have greater significance than appears on the surface. A rolling wheel may be a symbol of the sun or the course of the year, and the sun and the year themselves may be symbols of the divine. An early Christian writer, Hippolytus of Rome, said of Christ: 'He the Sun, once he had risen from the womb of the earth, showed the 12 Apostles to be as it were 12 hours . . . Once they were gathered together, the 12 Apostles like 12 months proclaimed the perfect year, Christ.'

In Green Pastures

People and their occupations may be symbols. Among the symbols associated with the pharaohs in Egypt were the herdsman and the shepherd. 'The functions of the state,' said Henri Frankfort (in *Before Philosophy*), 'were to own, control, drive, discipline, and defend; they were also to cherish, nurture, shelter, and enlarge the population. The god-sent controller of the Egyptian people was the herdsman who kept them in green pastures, fought to secure fresh pastures for them, drove off the voracious beasts who attacked them, belaboured the cattle who strayed out of line, and helped the weaklings.' He went on to point out that, 'The concept of the herdsman has its negative pole in the implication that men are simply cattle, property on a lower stage of existence.'

Similarly, the king could be thought of as a shepherd. The sun god had appointed him, 'to be shepherd of this land, to keep alive the people', watching by night and by day. One of the earliest emblems of Egyptian kings was the shepherd's crook. The imagery of the shepherd has also played an inspiring role in Judaism and Christianity. In the Old Testament God is a shepherd ('The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want' – Psalm 23) and, in the New, Jesus says: 'I am the good shepherd . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep' (John, chapter 10). Christ or the Church or the priest cares for the 'flock' of humanity, including its 'black sheep', and the crosier, or pastoral staff, of a bishop, may be descended from a shepherd's crook and is an emblem of firmness and mercy, and of the authority that combines both these qualities (see also GOOD SHEPHERD; SHEEP).

Evocative and long-lived myths are powerful symbols, stories which are felt to reveal otherwise inexpressible truths. Religious and magical rites and actions are symbols, ranging from an initiation ceremony in which the candidate symbolically dies and is reborn (see INITIATION) to such simple gestures as the kiss of peace, the finger held to the lips as a sign of silence, kneeling as a mark of humility, standing as a mark of respect, sitting as a mark of authority, in the case of a king or a judge (see also GESTURE). But even an apparently simple gesture may have unsuspected depths. In Islam, prostration is an expression of humility before God, but to the Sufi mystics it is something much more, meaning 'no less than extinction, a ritual affirmation that there is no room in the Divine Presence for more than the One' (see SUFIS).

The Key and the Net

Some symbols have a basic meaning which is obvious enough and depends on some evident resemblance or analogy, though many will see deeper significance below the surface. Inverted symbols, for example, things which are upside down, backwards, the wrong way round, are generally connected with evil, black magic and witchcraft because they reverse accepted standards of what is good. To turn a crucifix upside down, with deliberate intent, is to state allegiance to God's adversary, the Devil. A key opens a lock and so it stands for access to some spiritual truth or condition. In Christian art St Peter is shown with the keys of heaven as a sign of the authority and function which Jesus conferred on him (Matthew 16.19). More broadly, a key may be a symbol of the longing for God which opens the door of Christian hope. More broadly still, it may be a key of wisdom or eternal life, of initiation, of entrance into mysteries (see HOUSE). A net is an obvious image of entanglement, of difficulties and snares. It appears in the book of Ezekiel as a weapon in the hand of God, who will throw a net over an offender and entrap him. But also in Ezekiel, and in the New Testament, the net is connected with fishing, and in Christian symbolism it is linked with the apostles and their successors as fishers of men, the Pope is called the Fisherman.

Other symbols are not approached so simply (or deceptively simply). Receptacles are, in general, symbols of woman, for obvious reasons, but they are readily spiritualized: one of the emblems of the Virgin Mary, for instance, is a golden vase filled with white lilies (for purity). The cup is a female sex symbol but it also carries connotations of nourishment and abundance. When it becomes the cup of the Eucharist, and still more when it becomes

A dream-like painting by Chagall, *Time is a River without Banks*: both the Freudian and Jungian schools of psychoanalysis treat the scenes and images which appear in dreams as symbols which reveal unconscious mental processes, and Jungian methods of interpretation relate them to symbols in alchemy, myths, legends and folktales

the Grail, it has clearly far transcended its simple anatomical reference (see GRAIL).

One of the functions of a symbol is to act as what has been called 'a rallying point for meaning'. Through it the mind connects together several meanings which are not outwardly or immediately connected. Mircea Eliade cites as an example the symbolism of the moon, which links together the moon's changing cycle in the sky, the rhythms and cycles of life on earth, woman, the waters, death and rebirth, and human destiny (see MOON). 'The symbol is capable of revealing a perspective in which diverse realities can be fitted together or even integrated into a system.' This is why symbols are used in meditation, in many traditions, to lead the mind on to the realization of unsuspected truths or aspects of truth.

The Christian cross, at the simplest level, merely represents the cross on which Jesus died, but it has a great wealth and variety of symbolic references. The mind which dwells on it may be led on to ideas, among others, of death, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, of a crisis to be endured or a burden to be borne, of God's love, of trust in God's will, of the reconciliation of God and man, the reconciliation of opposites, the unity of all things (see CROSS).

The cross can lead on towards the symbolism of the centre. The directions of east, west, north and south have their own symbolism, as do left and right (see DIRECTIONS), and up and down are naturally connected with ideas of progress and decline, superiority and inferiority, good and evil, heaven in the sky and hell underground (see SKY; STEPS). The cross on which Christ died can be thought of as an emblem which connects the directions and the centre, and in Christian tradition it was erected at the centre of the world. The cross was also thought of as a tree, and in various myths a great tree is the *axis mundi*, 'axis of the world', its trunk connecting the underworld, the earth and the sky, and affording a means of communication between the different levels. The tree reconciles the opposites of sky and earth, 'above' and 'below', as Christ's death on the glory tree made it possible for men below to be reconciled with God above. (Or the tree may be an *imago mundi*, a diagram of the world, as it is in the Cabala – see CABALA; TREES.)

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A sacred mountain is sometimes thought to stand at the centre of the world, its 'roots', so to speak, beneath the surface and its summit in the sky. The Hindu heavens are located in a 'divine enclosure', said to lie somewhere north of the Himalayas, at the centre of which, marking the centre of the universe, is Mt Meru, a towering peak of pure gold, round which the heavenly bodies revolve. Alternatively, a shrine or city may be said to stand at the navel or centre of the earth, and sites where the divine is believed to have revealed itself become sacred 'centres', places where communication is possible between different levels of existence, between men and the gods, or the living and the dead (see MOUNTAIN; NAVEL; PILGRIMAGE).

In myths, legends and folktales a temple, a palace, a castle, may be a centre in which is concealed a secret goal of overwhelming importance, a holy of holies, the Grail, the enchanted princess, the treasure hoard. A maze contains a hidden centre, the way to which is hard to find, but in reaching the heart of the labyrinth a man penetrates perhaps to the Heavenly Jerusalem, perhaps to the underworld, perhaps to the innermost recesses of his own being (see MAZE). It is interesting that a map of Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*, reproduced earlier (page 2147), shows his path as a spiral, circling in from the periphery to the Celestial City at the centre, suggesting a journey inwards.

The Hero Within

That symbols illuminate the world within us, whether or not they reveal the world without, is one of the answers to the view which regards a symbol as at best unimportant and at worst undesirable, because it stands in place of a reality instead of being the reality itself. In practice, as suggested above, important symbols are not treated as reality substitutes but as things closely connected with a reality which could not be approached without them. In many societies outside the West symbols and symbolic actions are essential ingredients of human understanding of, and relationships with, reality, including relationships with the human as well as the sacred (see, for instance, MENSTRUATION; RITES OF PASSAGE; RITUAL). In the West, it is

increasingly suggested that a lack of adequate symbols is part of the modern malaise.

For example, in his last book, *Man and His Symbols*, C. G. Jung said: 'It is the role of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of man. The Pueblo Indians believe that they are the sons of Father Sun, and this belief endows their life with a perspective (and a goal) that goes far beyond their limited existence. It gives them ample space for the unfolding of personality and permits them a full life as complete persons. Their plight is infinitely more satisfactory than that of a man in our own civilization who knows that he is (and will remain) nothing more than an underdog with no inner meaning to his life . . .

'Today, for instance, we talk of "matter". We describe its physical properties. We conduct laboratory experiments to demonstrate some of its aspects. But the word "matter" remains a dry, inhuman, and purely intellectual concept, without any psychic significance for us. How different was the former image of matter – the Great Mother – that could encompass and express the profound emotional meaning of Mother Earth. In the same way, what was the spirit is now identified with intellect and thus ceases to be the Father of All. It has degenerated to the limited ego-thoughts of man; the immense emotional energy expressed in the image of "our Father" vanishes into the sand of an intellectual desert.'

Both the Freudian and Jungian schools of psychoanalysis maintain that the scenes and images which the mind throws up into consciousness, especially in dreams, may begin to make sense if treated, not at their face value, but as symbols which reveal unconscious mental processes. Jungian methods of interpretation relate these scenes and images to symbols in alchemy and in myths, legend and folktales from all over the world. Common features in numerous hero legends, for instance, suggest that the myth of the hero is really about the process of psychologically growing up. 'In the developing consciousness of the individual the hero figure is the symbol by which the emerging ego overcomes the inertia of the unconscious mind, and liberates the mature man from a regressive longing to return to the blissful state of infancy in a world dominated by his mother' (this and following quotes are from Joseph L. Henderson's essay in *Man and His Symbols*).

The 'tutelary' figure often found presiding over the upbringing and education of the hero (the centaur Chiron who taught Achilles, for example, or Merlin in the case of Arthur) becomes on this view a symbolic representation of the 'whole psyche, the larger and more comprehensive identity that supplies the strength that the personal ego lacks', and his role in the story suggests that 'the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual's ego-consciousness – in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him.'

When the hero does battle with dragons, monsters and evil beings, he is really in combat with his own 'regressive' trends, with the dark and negative side of his personality, with the shadow in himself. When he rescues a beautiful girl from danger – the damsel in distress theme – he is really liberating his own 'anima', the female component in his being (a woman's male component is the 'animus'). The hero eventually falls, betrayed or sacrificed, because 'the human ego can be exalted to experience godlike attributes, but only at the cost of over-reaching itself and falling to disaster' (a theme which many who are not Jungians have seen in the story of Adam and Eve, or in the Faust legend, and which flourishes in science fiction).

The hero myth, on this interpretation, is concerned with individuation, the process of becoming a 'whole person', which has parallels in the processes of alchemy and magic, where the attempt is made to find the true inner self and expand it, as it were, into the whole man, who is the divine man (see ALCHEMY; MAGIC).

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Left **Jung believed that alchemical symbolism expressed ageless realities of the human mind and that the alchemists were exploring their own innermost depths: symbols of alchemy and science mingled on the title page of Athanasius Kircher's *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae*, 1671** ***Above right*** **Rembrandt's *Philosopher with an Open Book* suggests the light of illumination penetrating the darkness of ignorance, and the spiral stairs recall the alchemical motif of a return to the womb as a penetration of the recesses of the self**

The Jungian approach has been criticised on various grounds, among them that it involves talking about 'the' hero myth, when in fact there are many hero myths, which have to be stretched or lopped on a bed of Procrustes to fit them into the desired pattern, and similarly with other types of myth; and that it equally blurs the different meanings which people recognize in the same myth or symbol. The archetypes, or symbolic figures and patterns which the Jungians identify, do not appear as regularly as Jungians maintain; and when they do, they may be more easily explained as images drawn from the ordinary conscious experience of humanity than as images from the unconscious.

The Collective Unconscious

Jung explained the appearance of the same themes over and over again by locating them in the 'collective unconscious', but it was difficult to explain how this reservoir of images, if it exists, is transmitted from one generation to the next. In *Man and His Symbols* Jung suggested that the human mind has a tendency to form symbolic representations of a motif, 'representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern', and that this tendency is 'an instinctive *trend*, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests . . .'

Common themes and symbols in different societies can no doubt often be explained as the result of common human tendencies and common human experience, but

The dignity of work, strength in unity, rejection of war and desire for peace – these concepts are symbolized in a Victorian trade union membership certificate

Chris Barker

symbols can also be seen migrating from one culture and religion to another. Obvious examples are Old Testament symbols which were adopted and adapted by the early Christians. In the Old Testament God is the Father, as he remained in Christianity, and he is king, judge and shepherd, which all became symbolic roles of Christ. He is also the cultivator of vines, which are his people ('My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill' – Isaiah, chapter 5). Ignatius of Antioch, expanding on the theme in the 2nd century, said: 'Christ the tree of life . . . has the Apostles for branches, the redeemed for fruit, words for leaves; baptism is the root, and the Father, the gardener.' In St John's gospel again, Jesus is 'the bread of life' (chapter 6), referring back to the manna on which the Israelites fed in the wilderness, and this symbolism became linked with the host in the Mass.

The Christians saw figures and events in the Old Testament as 'types', or symbolic foreshadowings, of Christian figures and events. Jonah emerging from the belly of the whale, for example, was a type of Christ's resurrection from the dead (see JONAH). And, in one of the supreme examples, Christ was identified with the 'suffering servant' of Isaiah (chapter 53): 'He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed.'

(See also numerous other articles, including ALPHABET; BODY; BURIAL; CIRCLE; COLOURS; DREAMS; ICONOGRAPHY; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; MANDALA; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Sympathetic Magic

Term coined by Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough* for the principle that 'things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy'; combining two basic assumptions of magical thinking, the principle of mimicry, 'that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause', and the law of contact, 'that things which have once been in contact with each other contrive to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed.'

See IMITATIVE MAGIC.

Syncretism

The mingling in one religious system of elements drawn from different systems: for example, the blending of cults in the Roman Empire as Eastern religions spread to the West and gods of different regions were identified with each other; or the blending of Egyptian, Greek, Christian and other elements in Gnosticism; or the mingling of eastern and western ideas in some modern occult systems.

The great bull god El and the dying and rising god Baal, with his consort Anat, were worshipped in rites which were ceaselessly denounced by the Old Testament prophets; yet nevertheless, their pagan temples withstood Syria's official adoption of Christianity

SYRIA AND PALESTINE

THE FULLEST contemporary record of religion in Syria is the texts in alphabetic cuneiform from ancient Ugarit, Ras Shamra, about 12 miles north of Latakkia and two miles from the coast. Theophoric names (personal name including in its form a divine name) as in the Egyptian Execration texts, lists of offerings to various gods, ritual texts, incidental references in legends and above all myths of the fertility cult illustrate the religion of Syria in the 14th century BC. The many gods, both Semitic and non-Semitic, reflect the mixed population of this city in north Syria, but only the cult of the fertility god Baal (see BAAL) and the goddess Anat and their associates is documented sufficiently to permit a reconstruction of the cult.

From these texts we learn that the senior god was El ('god'), the King Paramount, Father of the Exalted Ones and Father of Men and Creator, depicted as enthroned at the remote 'source of the streams'. His strength and procreative influence is expressed in his title 'the Bull', but he was the principal god in social relationships, and this aspect of his character is expressed by his title, 'the Kindly, the Compassionate'.

El's executive king is Baal, whose proper name was Hadad ('the Thunderer') or Baal Ramman ('the Thunderer'), which Jewish scribes parodied as Rimmon ('pomegranate'). He establishes his kingly power and order in Nature in a primeval conflict with Sea-and-Ocean Currents and associated monsters like Letan (Leviathan of the Old Testament) and Tannin, also

Goats figure frequently in the religious art of western Asia: he-goat in a thicket, in gold and lapis lazuli, from Ur in Mesopotamia, the city which Abraham, the Jewish patriarch, left to settle in Canaan

Michael Holford

known in this connection in the Old Testament, and has his 'house' built as a visible token that he is the reigning king. He is obliged, however, to reassert his kingship in a seasonal conflict against Sterility, or Death (Mot) in a myth which is believed to be related to the chief seasonal crisis in Syria, at the autumn equinox.

The Fertility Cult

In this myth Baal is the god of thunder, lightning and winter rains, 'He who Mounts the Clouds', and is, like the Mesopotamian Tammuz, a dying and rising god, whose fortunes fluctuate with the vegetation he promotes (see DYING GOD). In his eclipse in the summer season his sister and consort Anat (the north Syrian counterpart of Astarte; see ASTARTE) is particularly active. Baal, as the vegetation he promotes, succumbs to Mot. His dead body is sought over hill and dale by Anat, called in the Ras Shamra texts 'the Virgin Anat', a rite which had its counterpart in the fertility cult throughout the Near East (see APHRODITE; DEMETER; OSIRIS; TAMMUZ). There is definite reflection of the mourning of Anat on the recovery and burial of the body of Baal in the Old Testament (Zechariah 12.11) in 'the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo'. Anat proceeds to avenge Baal. She cuts down Mot, winnows him, parches him with fire, grinds him with a millstone and scatters his remains in the fields for the birds to eat. This obviously relates to the desacralization of the new crop, setting it free for common use, as in the offering of the first sheaf of 'new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire,' in Leviticus 2.14.

In myth related to ritual strict logical consistency is not expected, and Baal revives. His revival is anticipated in a dream by El, who is the final authority in these texts and intervenes at significant junctures to confirm a decision or to foreshadow the future. El's vision is of the skies raining olive oil and the wadis running with honey, which recurs in the liturgies of Israel reflected in Amos 9.13 and Joel 3.18. With similar lack of consistency Mot is introduced in a final 'showdown' with Baal, out of which Baal emerges victor and again vindicates his kingship. This conflict is set 'in the seventh year' and may be related to the seven-year cycle marked in Israel by an artificial famine, when the land lay fallow on the principle that drought must be given full play in order that its force might be exhausted. Thus in the seasonal tension after the long dry summer, pending the coming of the 'early rains', the Syrian peasant relieved his anxiety and predisposed providence by homoeopathic magic, which was the genesis of drama in Greece in the cult of the wine god Dionysus at Athens. In Syria no such dramas are attested, but all the elements of drama are in the Baal myth.

The Canaanite mother goddess Athirat or Ashera, was probably a form of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, shown with a palm tree on this Assyrian seal: the fertility rites of Canaan were fiercely denounced by the Old Testament prophets

Michael Holford

It will be seen that Israel inherited this liturgic theme of the great autumn festival, which she developed in the light of her own historical tradition of the great deliverance from Egypt and the Covenant, but the essential features of the seasonal festival survive, conflict with the forces of destruction and disorder, the demonstration of the effective kingship of God and the establishment of his government, often by judgement. This is expressed notably in the Enthronement psalms in the Old Testament, in passages in the Prophets which reflect this liturgical theme and in passages on the Day of the Lord in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, for example, Revelation. There the sea and certain sea monsters are arch-enemies of God's ordered government, as in the Baal myth of Ras Shamra in the New Year festival in Canaan.

The role of the king in his sacral function as executive of Baal as the Divine King in his 'passion' and triumph in the great autumn festival cannot be established on the evidence of the Ras Shamra texts, but on the analogy of the corresponding occasion in Mesopotamian religion it is likely. With the necessary changes, it may certainly be demonstrated that in Jerusalem the Davidic king was the temporal guarantee of the effective Kingship of God, which was expressed in the liturgy of the great autumn festival. For Canaan Ezekiel's denunciation of the King of Tyre (chapter 28) expresses the conception of the king as the representative of God, the channel of divine blessings, and, as representative of the community, the royal man in the garden of God. The Legend of King Krt at Ras Shamra speaks of the king as 'the son of El', and the crown prince is 'suckled by the fertility goddesses Anat and Athirat'. The conception of the king as the upholder of the social justice which is the concern of God is expressed in the royal texts from Ras Shamra and, as in Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11.1–9, he is the medium of blessings in Nature. It is not difficult to see here an ideology from which the conception of the Messiah in Israel developed.

The protagonists of this cult are well known through texts, sculpture and figurines. Baal is the active young warrior god, El is an elderly god on his throne and footstool, both being associated with the bull in virtue of procreative interests. Anat, like Astarte in the Old Testament, is the goddess of love, and appears naked in moulded reliefs and pendants, either devoted to shrines or given in return for the payment of a vow and used as amulets to promote childbirth. Sexual rites of imitative magic associated with the Canaanite fertility cult survived in Israel and are constantly denounced by the Prophets. Anat was also the goddess of war, like Ishtar in Mesopotamia, and is involved in what is evidently a bloody massacre in her temple in an episode in the Baal myth at Ras Shamra, which may really describe a blood-letting rite, like the self-laceration of the devotees of Baal at Carmel (1 Kings 18.28), or perhaps circumcision. The mother goddess Athirat (Ashera of the Old Testament) appears as the consort of El, and is probably the goddess represented as the nourisher of life who offers ears of corn to

C. M. Dixon

C. M. Dixon

Bronze figures of Canaanite gods, thought to be El (*left*) and Baal (*right*): El was the paramount deity, father of gods and men, the kindly and compassionate; Baal, god of storm and the winter rains, was a dying and rising god, linked with the seasonal death and rebirth of vegetation; both El and Baal were associated with the bull

two rampant caprids (goats) on an ivory relief from the seaward quarter of Ugarit. The motif is a development of the rampant caprids reaching up to the fruit of the Tree of Life, which is familiar throughout the Near East. In the references in the Old Testament to the *ashera* as a feature of sanctuaries this is a tree, either natural or stylized, representing the mother goddess Ashera as the receptive element in Nature and as the universal nourisher. The Tree of Life is closely associated in the ancient Near East with the king in his sacral function as mediator of the divine blessing, as in Assyrian sculpture and on the royal couch from the palace of Ras Shamra.

The Will of the Gods

Significant as the fertility cult of Canaan undoubtedly was, it is possible that the dramatic nature of the Baal myth gives an incomplete picture of the actual situation. In royal legends for instance, in dynastic succession and other historical and social situations the predominant deity is not Baal but El, to whom chiefly sacrifice is made in a fast-liturgy on the occasion of a national emergency. This and a certain text from Ras Shamra containing oaths by certain attributes of El indicate a more spiritual conception of El, which is nearer to the Hebrew conception of God.

Among many other deities in Canaanite religion Dagan, the god of corn (*dagon*), is known at Ras Shamra from offering lists, from Baal's stock epithet 'the Son of Dagan', and from dedication inscriptions on stelae from a temple adjoining that of Baal at Ras Shamra, which dates from *c* 2000 BC. Reshef was the god who slew men by war and plague. He is known from Egyptian sculpture and may be recognized in bronze figurines of a striding warrior with offensive weapon and shield, well known from archeological sites in Syria and Palestine. In one of the Ras Shamra texts he is called Reshef of the Arrow, and in the Graeco-Roman period he was assimilated to Apollo with his pestilential arrows. From later inscriptions from Sidon, Eshmun is known as the god of healing, assimilated to Asclepius in the Graeco-Roman period, as Baal was to Hercules, by whose labours also order was sustained against the constant menace of chaos. The sun, regarded as a goddess, is a minor figure in the Baal myth of Ras Shamra, and the moon god and his consort Nikkal were also worshipped, particularly at Harran in north-west Mesopotamia, and in north Syria (see HARRANIAN RELIGION). Ritual texts from Ras Shamra indicate that special rites and sacrifices, in which the king was involved, were observed at certain days of the month, probably at lunar phases.

The will of the various gods was consulted and communicated in various ways. In the 2nd century AD, Lucian of Samosata mentions oracles according to the movement of statues of the gods, doubtless at the manipulation of priests in response to specific questions, conveying a simple 'Yes' or 'No', like the sacred lots Urim and Thummim in early Israel. Divination by the entrails of sacrificed animals was also practised, the liver being especially significant, as is indicated by clay models from archeological sites, charted and annotated for consultation or instruction. The medieval Arab writer Ibn an-Nadim mentions divination at Harran by the direction of the gaze or the expression in the eyes of the dying victim. Texts from the Amorite city of Mari on the mid-Euphrates mention diviners who consulted the auspices in this way and communicated their findings to the king in matters of ritual or state. There were also communications by ecstatic devotees, who suggest 'the sons of the prophets' in the Old Testament and dervishes of later Islam.

At Byblos c1100 BC there is an instance of the will of the god communicated to the king in an affair of state by an ecstatic of his household and considered authentic by the king. The account of the distress of King Saul before his last battle (1 Samuel 28) mentions prophets and dreams as the media of the communication of the will of God in a crisis, and the patriarchal narratives in the Old Testament and the passage in the Baal myth where El sees the revival of Baal in a dream indicate the significance attached to dreams as communications of the will of God in future events or on the significance of the present situation. People would often resort to shrines in ritual incubation when dreams were taken as sure communications of the purpose of the god.

The temple in Syria varied in form, but the general conception was a large area within the sacred precinct in which the temple proper was the focal feature. This conception is best illustrated in the sanctuary of Bel, or Baal, in the early Roman period at Palmyra in the Syrian desert and the Moslem sacred precinct at Jerusalem. At Ras Shamra and Hazor in the 14th–13th centuries BC, the tripartite temple is known, comprising an outer court with a great altar, shallow vestibule, main nave and inmost shrine, or 'Holy of Holies'. This is the plan of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, which was constructed by Phoenician craftsmen. Administrative texts from Ras Shamra attest hereditary office in a large number of professions among temple personnel, priests, votaries both male and female, temple prostitutes, singers, makers of sacred vestments, sculptors, potters, launderers, slaughterers, augurers, or possibly Temple herdsmen, and merchants who traded on account of the Temple. The king of course was the supreme priest, though except on special occasions he would delegate his duties.

Sacrifice of the Infants

The myths and legends of Ras Shamra in their fuller context amplify the simple listing of various types of sacrifice in the offering lists. Thus from the description

Sonia Halliday

Left **Statue of Baal Hammon, the principal god of Carthage, the Phoenician colony in North Africa: the name Hammon may derive from Ammon, god of the Siwa oasis in Libya; 1st century AD, from Tunisia** ***Below right*** **Ruins of a temple of Baal in Tunisia** ***Above right*** **Roman ruins at Palmyra in Syria, where the moon god was venerated by the caravan merchants**

of the duties of the son and heir of the king in the royal legend of Prince Aqhat at Ras Shamra it is known that communion meals were eaten in the sanctuary. The blood and vitals were offered to the god, and the rest was cooked and eaten by the community, thus effecting solidarity of the participants with the god and with one another. The shrine might also house memorials of the ancestors of the community, represented by standing stones, as in the Canaanite sanctuary of Hazor, and probably also at Gezer. By offerings at this tangible token of a favoured ancestor the community hoped to continue to share in the blessing which had been his.

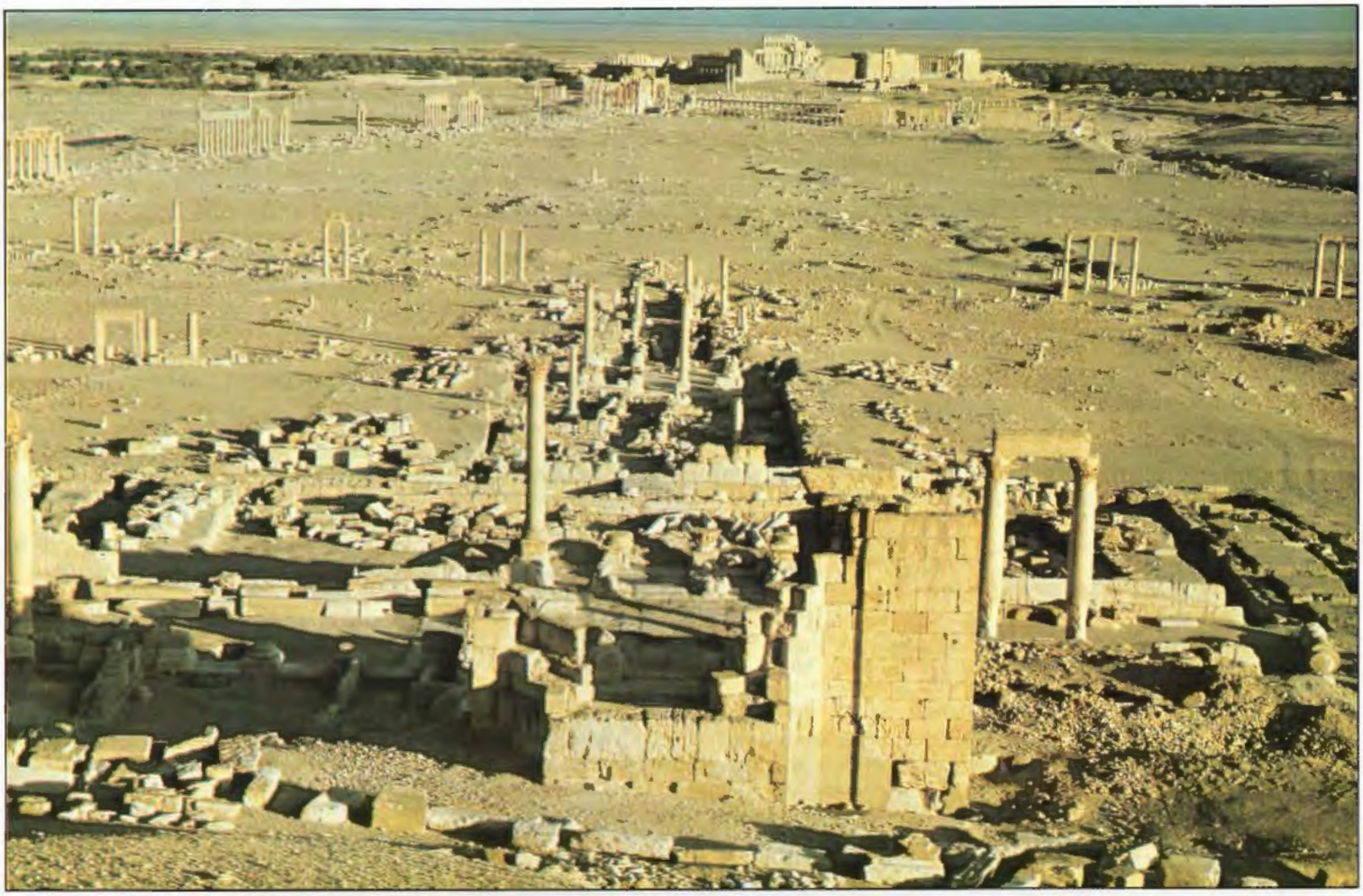
Besides communion sacrifices there were those that were offered wholly to the gods either as food or as an act of total renunciation on the part of the worshipper, being wholly burnt on the altar; and other such offerings were made for purification, as doves were sacrificed in Israel after childbirth, and as firstlings of crop and flock and of game in hunting. In Israel and among the Carthaginians in North Africa animals were sacrificed in redemption of first-born sons, and this was almost certainly done also in Syria.

Archeological evidence has been claimed from Gezer and Tell al-Fara by Nablus for foundation sacrifice of children, but this is disputed. Multiple infant sacrifice, however, is attested by jars full of calcined bones of infants and young animals from the sanctuary of the fertility goddess Tanit at the Tyrian colony of Carthage (see PHOENICIANS), in Punic inscriptions and in the writings of the African Church father, Tertullian (3rd century AD). Those may have been first-born children dedicated thus as firstlings, but in King Mesha's sacrifice of his eldest son (2 Kings 3), like those in Judah in the latter period of the kingdom, they may have been sacrifices in extremity, to which Philo of Byblos (64–161 AD) alludes. Other cases, such as that which Diodorus Siculus attributes to the Carthaginians in Sicily after a victory over the Greeks in 307 BC, may be a case of 'death-devotion' (*herem*), a great act of renunciation of the spoils of war, to which King Mesha also refers in his inscription recording his war of liberation from Israel (c 835 BC). The sacrifices would thus correspond to Samuel's 'hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord' (1 Sar uel 15.33).

The Dead and the Afterlife

Besides the commemoration of the dead as recipients of the divine favour ritual texts from Ras Shamra refer to the family god (*'il 'ib*), certain of these alluding to 'offerings at the aperture of the divine ancestor'. This is amplified by the discovery of grave-installations of such apertures as pipes of bottomless jars to communicate offerings, especially libations, to the defunct, probably to promote fertility of the earth, over which the dead were believed to have some influence. Such offerings to the dead may be the substance of the ban on offerings of a portion of the harvest to the dead in Deuteronomy 26.14. The dead were termed *repa'im* by the Phoenicians as in Israel, the name for the 'weak' shades in the Old Testament, and were possibly referred to in funerary inscriptions of King Tabnith of Sidon (5th century BC) as 'divine', or at least supernatural, as in the passage on King Saul and the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28.13), where the shade of Samuel is described as 'a god'. In this case the king sought revelation of the future.

As recipients of offerings, givers of fertility and revealers of the future, the departed in ancient Syria were regarded as not quite defunct. The Aramaean king Panammu in his inscription (c 750 BC) expects his descendants to invoke him when they make an offering to Baal, so that 'his soul may eat and drink with Baal'. The existence of the shade in the gloomy underworld is familiar in the Old Testament, particularly in Job chapter 3. Though quite undesirable this was apparently still an existence, however insubstantial, and this attenuated life was sustained by offerings, particularly libations, though one of the more recently discovered texts from Ras Shamra refers to animal sacrifice 'for the life of the family god', or the divine ancestor. The belief in



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this insubstantial life of the dead who require to be revived by libation survives among Arab peasants in Syria and Palestine, who believe that the dead come at dusk to wells, springs and rivers to drink; however, this was but a tenuous existence. In the Legend of Prince Aqhat in the Ras Shamra texts occurs the passage:

> As for mortal man, what does he get as his latter end?
> What does mortal man get as his inheritance?
> Glaze will be poured out on my head,
> Even plaster on my pate,
> And the death of all men will I die,
> Yea I shall surely die.

These lines express the typical view of the afterlife in ancient Canaan.

Incantations and Amulets

Apart from the regular cults, men in Syria, as elsewhere and at all times, sought to enlist the powers of the supernatural or to ward off their evil influences by charms and amulets. Prophylactic charms in Aramaic are known, and at least one excerpt from the Baal myth of Ras Shamra was probably used as an aphrodisiac charm. The figurines of the nude fertility goddess were probably also used to promote procreation and childbirth. Besides, a great number of amulets have been found in excavations. Those are chiefly Egyptian, the cat and the intelligent ape, the hippopotamus, which was both a sinister force to be placated as the representative of chaos or, in the form of an upright female, a beneficent patroness of mothers. The grotesque dwarf Bes, the protector of children and pregnant women was also popular. From the Egyptian cult of the fertility god Osiris, the goddess Isis and their son Horus, who survived a hazardous infancy to avenge Osiris' death (see HORUS), small images of the infant Horus were favourite amulets, and also the 'Eye of Horus' with its fertilizing tear-drops. Small gold flies and other insects resembling lice, which were found by Sir Flinders Petrie at a site at the mouth of the Wadi Ghazzeh in Palestine, may have had a prophylactic purpose to ward off disease, like the gold mice referred to in 1 Samuel 6.4, which were sent back with the ark by the Philistines.

In describing the religion of Syria the documents of Ras Shamra have been taken as the basis of this account, firstly because they are a contemporary statement, the fullest and most reliable that is available, and secondly because they document the fertility cult, which was the most conspicuous aspect of local religion that impressed Israel as she settled in Palestine. Ugarit, however, was but one city state in Syria, and in the history of the land it is notable that, despite a general community of religion in any given period, there were local variations and different emphases. So too over the long period of paganism, until Christianity was established as the faith of the majority (c 500 AD), different variations of the old religion developed through time and in different localities.

In the Graeco-Roman period the Canaanite gods were identified with classical deities: coins of the 2nd century AD show Baal (*top left*) who was assimilated to Hercules; Eshmun (*top right*) the god of healing, with twin serpents, assimilated to Asclepius; the sea (*bottom left*) assimilated to Poseidon, the city god of Beirut; the sanctuary of Byblos (*bottom right*)

British Museum

The Blood of Adonis

In the settled land the old gods were assimilated to the gods of Greece and Rome, as Baal to Zeus the sky god with his thunderbolt, the fertility goddesses Astarte, Anat, and Ashera to Aphrodite and Juno. Baal in his role as a dying and rising vegetation god was assimilated to Adonis, the lover of Aphrodite, or Venus, but retained his Syrian title Adonis ('lord'); their cult was practised at the source of the River Adonis just south of Beirut. When it ran red, as it did at a certain time in summer, it was considered to be discoloured by the blood of Adonis, who was lamented at that time by the Syrian women. Baal, the divine king who must always struggle to vindicate his kinship and order against the forces of chaos, was assimilated to the labouring Hercules, particularly at Tyre and her colonies in the coastal plain of Palestine south of Jaffa. The god Reshef, with his power of life and death, was assimilated to Apollo with his bow and arrows as plague-shafts, and Anat, the goddess of love and war was assimilated to Athene and Minerva. The sea was assimilated to Poseidon, who appears as the city god of Beirut on coins from the Graeco-Roman period, and the healing god Eshmun to Asclepius with his serpents. The latter was particularly venerated at Sidon, judging from the name Eshmunazzar, which was borne by two kings of Sidon.

In the caravan city of Palmyra, between Damascus and the Euphrates, the needs of the caravan merchants in the first three centuries of the Christian era are indicated by the cult of the moon, which was also venerated at Harran, another great caravan city in north Mesopotamia. The moon had evidently a peculiar significance for those merchants and their distant and protracted enterprises. The Venus star Athtar, the brightest star in those latitudes, the first to rise at evening and the last to disappear in the morning, was also greatly venerated at Palmyra, where as two gods Arsu and Azizu ('the Gracious and the Fierce') they are represented as mounted respectively on a camel and a horse.

Christianity did not easily oust the Nature religion of Syria, even after it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Indeed when Porphyry the Bishop Elect of Gaza went to his see at the end of the 4th century AD the lusty heathen impeded his journey; and according to his deacon and biographer, there were eight pagan temples and many private shrines in Gaza and only 280 Christians out of between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants, and that after an Imperial edict against paganism.

JOHN GRAY

FURTHER READING: John Gray, *The Canaanites* (Thames & Hudson, 1965); *Near Eastern Mythology* (Hamlyn, 1970).

Table Turning
Or table tilting, a popular method of communicating with 'spirits'; the table tilts up and raps on the floor with its foot in response to questions, without being consciously pushed by the experimenters, who rest their fingers on it.
See OUIJA BOARDS.

Rules of behaviour which govern the human uses of things and people, taboos are not isolated restrictions; they are always part of a whole system and cannot be understood outside their social context

TABOO

A TABOO (sometimes spelt tabu) is a ban or prohibition; the word comes from the Polynesian languages where it means a religious restriction, to break which would entail some automatic punishment. As it is used in English, taboo has little to do with religion. In essence it generally implies a rule which has no meaning, or one which cannot be explained. Captain Cook noted in his log-book that in Tahiti the women were never allowed to eat with the men, and as the men nevertheless enjoyed female company he asked the reason for this taboo. They always replied that they observed it because it was right. To the outsider the taboo is irrational, to the believer its rightness needs no explaining. Though supernatural punishments may not be expected to follow, the rules of any religion rate as taboos to outsiders. For example, the strict Jewish observance forbids the faithful to make and refuel the fire, or light lamps or put them out during the Sabbath, and it also forbids them to ask a Gentile to perform any of these acts. In his book *A Soho Address*, Chaim Lewis, the son of poor Russian Jewish immigrants in London's Soho at the beginning of this century, describes his father's quandary every winter Sabbath: he did not want to let the fire go out and he could not ask any favour outright. Somehow he had to call in a passer-by and drop oblique hints until the stranger understood what service was required. Taboos always tend to land their observers in just such a ridiculous situation, whether it is a Catholic peasant of the Landes who abstains from meat on Friday but eats teal (a bird whose fishy diet entitles it in their custom to be counted as fish), or a Maori hairdresser who after he had cut the chief's hair was not allowed to use his own hands even for feeding himself and had to be fed for a time like a baby.

In the last century, when the word gained currency in European languages, taboo was understood to arise from an inferior mentality. It was argued that primitive tribes observed countless taboos as part of their general ignorance about the physical world. These rules, which seemed so peculiar to Europeans, were the result of false science, leading to mistaken hygiene, and faulty medicine. Essentially the taboo is a ban on touching or eating or speaking or seeing. Its breach will unleash dangers, while keeping the rules would amount to avoiding dangers and sickness. Since the native theory of taboo was concerned to keep certain classes of people and things apart lest misfortune befall, it was a theory about contagion. Our scholars of the last century contrasted this false, primitive fear of contagion with our modern knowledge of disease. Our hygiene protects from a real danger of contagion, their taboos from imaginary danger. This was a comfortably complacent distinction to draw, but hygiene does not correspond to all the rules which are called taboo. Some are as obviously part of primitive religion in the same sense as Friday abstinence and Sabbath rest. European scholars therefore took care to distinguish on the one hand between primitive taboo with a mainly secular reference, and on the other hand rules of magic which infused the practice of primitive religion. They made it even more difficult to understand the meaning of foreign taboos by importing a classification between true religion and primitive magic, and modern medicine and primitive hygiene; and a very complicated web of definitions was based on this misconception.

In the Eye of the Beholder

The difficulty in understanding primitive taboo arose from the difficulty of understanding our own taboos of hygiene and religion. The first mistake was to suppose that our idea of dirt connotes an objectively real class from which real dangers to health may issue, and whose control depends on valid rules of hygiene. It is better to start by realizing that dirt, like beauty, resides in the eye of the beholder. We must be prepared to put our own behaviour under the same microscope we apply to primitive tribes. If we find that they are busy hedging off this area from that, stopping 'X' from touching 'Y', preventing women from eating with men, and creating elaborate scales

Axel Poignant

Axel Poignant

Methods of purification in Arnhem Land, Australia: water is poured over a girl *(below)* and a man is purified by sweat from another's armpits *(above)*. Many of the rules of primitive societies, breach of which might cause a pollution that needed to be cleansed away, used to be termed taboos, with the implication that they stemmed from inadequate knowledge and inferior mentality: in fact, all societies have rules which may appear irrational in isolation but are part of a larger and necessary system of classification

Uniphoto (London)

John Moss

of edibility and inedibility among the vegetable and animal worlds, we should realize that we too are given to this ordering and classifying activity. No taboo can ever make sense by itself. A taboo is always part of a whole system of rules. It makes sense as part of a classification whose meaning is so basic to those who live by it that no piecemeal explanation can be given. A native cannot explain the meaning of a taboo because it forms part of his own machinery of learning. The separate compartments which a taboo system constructs are the framework or instrument of understanding. To turn round and inspect that instrument may seem to be an advanced philosophic exercise, but it is necessary if we are to understand the subject.

Above left **A seller of dye for caste-marks, in India: the Hindu caste system involves elaborate rules regulating behaviour between the castes** ***Above right*** **Street scene in Morocco: for centuries it has been taboo in Arab countries for women to appear unveiled out of doors** ***Below*** **A ban on wearing shoes on holy ground is a common religious rule: special slippers provided for worshippers at a mosque**

The 19th century scholars could not understand taboo because they worked within the separate compartments of their own taboo system. For them religion, magic, hygiene and medicine were as distinct as civilized and primitive; the problem of taboo for them was only a problem about native thought. But put in that form it was insoluble. We approach it nowadays as a problem in human learning.

First, discard the idea that we have anything like a true, complete view of the world. Between what the scientists know and what we make of their knowledge there is a synthesis which is our own rough and ready approximation of rules about how we need to behave in the physical world. Second, discard the idea that there can ever be a final and correct world view. A gain in knowledge in one direction does not guarantee there will be no loss or distortion in another; the fullness of reality will always evade our comprehension. The reasons for this will become clear. Learning is a filtering and organizing process. Faced with the same events, two people will not

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necessarily register two identical patterns, and faced with a similar environment, two cultures will construe two different sets of natural constraints and regular sequences. Understanding is largely a classifying job in which the classifying human mind is much freer than it supposes itself to be. The events to be understood are unconsciously trimmed and filtered to fit the classifications being used. In this sense every culture constructs its own universe. It attributes to its own world a set of powers to be harnessed and dangers to be avoided. Each primitive culture, because of its isolation, has a unique world view. Modern industrial nations, because and insofar as they share a common experience, share the same rules about the powers and dangers aroused. This is a valid difference between 'Us' and 'Them', their primitive taboos and ours.

For all humans, primitive or not, the universe is a system of imputed rules. Using our own distinctions, we can distinguish firstly, physical Nature, inorganic (including rocks, stars, rivers) and organic (vegetable and animal bodies, with rules governing their growth, lifespan and death); secondly, human behaviour; thirdly, the interaction between these two groups; fourthly, other intelligent beings whether incorporeal like gods, devils and ghosts or mixtures of human and divine or human and animal; and lastly, the interaction between this fourth group and the rest.

The use of the word supernatural has been avoided. Even a small amount of reading in anthropology shows how very local and peculiar to our own civilization is the distinction between natural and supernatural. The same applies even to such a classification as the one just given. The fact that it is our own local classification is not important for this argument as the present object is to make clear how taboos should be understood. Taboos are rules about our behaviour which restrict the human uses of things and people. Some of the taboos are said to avoid punishment or vengeance from gods, ghosts and other spirits. Some of them are supposed to produce automatically their dreaded effects. Crop failures, sickness, hunting accidents, famine, drought, epidemic (events in the physical realm), they may all result from breach of taboos.

The Seat of Mana

Taboos can have the effect of expressing political ideas. For example, the idea of the state as a hierarchy of which the chief is the undisputed head and his officials higher than the ordinary populace easily lends itself to taboo behaviour. Gradings of power in the political body tend to be expressed as gradings of freedom to approach the physical body of the person at the top of the system. As Franz Steiner says, in *Taboo* (1956): '. . . in Polynesian belief the parts of the body formed a fixed hierarchy which had some analogy with the rank system of society . . . now the backbone was the most important part of the body, and the limbs that could be regarded as continuations of the backbone derived importance from it. Above the body was, of course, the head, and it was the seat of mana. When we say this, we must realize that by "mana" are meant both the soul aspect, the life force, and a man's ritual status. This grading of the limbs concerned people of all ranks and both sexes. It could, for example, be so important to avoid stepping over people's heads that the very architecture was involved: the arrangements of the sleeping rooms show such an adaptation in the Marquesas. The commoner's back or head is thus not without its importance in certain contexts. But the real significance of this grading seems to have been in the possibilities it provided for cumulative effects in association with the rank system. The head of a chief was the most concentrated mana object of Polynesian society, and was hedged around with the most terrifying taboos which operated when things were to enter the head or when the head was being diminished; in other words when the chief ate or had his hair cut . . . the hands of some great chiefs were so dangerous that they could not be put close to the head.' Since the Polynesian political system was very competitive and chiefs had their ups and downs, great triumphs or total failures, the system of taboo was a kind of public vote of confidence and register of current distributions of power. This is important to correct our tendency to think of taboo as a rigidly fixed system of respect.

We will never understand a taboo system unless we understand the kind of interaction between the different spheres of existence which is assumed in it. Any child growing up learns the different spheres and interactions between them simultaneously. When the anthropologist arrives on the scene, he finds the system of knowledge a going concern. It is difficult for him to observe the changes being made, so he gets the wrong impression that a given set of taboos is something hard-and-fast handed down the generations.

In fact, the classifying process is always active and changing. New classifications are being pushed by some and rejected by others. No political innovation takes place without some basic reclassification. To take a currently live issue, in a stratified society, if it is taboo for lower classes or Negroes to sit down at table or to join sporting events with upper classes or whites, those who assert the rule can make it stronger if they find a basis in Nature to support the behaviour they regard as right. If women in Tahiti are forbidden to eat with men, or in Europe to enter certain male occupations, some ultimate justification for the rule needs to be found. Usually it is traced back to their physical nature. Women are said to be constitutionally feeble, nervous or flighty; Negroes to smell, lower classes to be hereditarily less intelligent.

Rules of the Game

Perhaps the easiest approach is to try to imagine what social life would be like without any classification. It would be like playing a game without any rules; no one would know which way to run, who is on his side or against him. There would be no game. It is no exaggeration to describe social life as the process of building classification systems. Everyone is trying to make sense of what is happening. He is trying to make sense of his own behaviour, past and present, so as to capture and hold some sense of identity. He is trying to hold other people to their promises and ensure some kind of regular future. He is explaining continually, to himself and to everyone else. In the process of explaining, classifications are developed and more and more meanings successfully added to them, as other people are persuaded to interpret events in the same way. Gradually even the points of the compass get loaded with social meanings. For example, the west room in an Irish farmer's house used to be the room where the old couple retired to, when the eldest son married and brought his wife to the farm. West meant retirement as well as sundown. In the Buddhist religion, east is the high status point; Buddha's statue is on a shelf on the east wall of the east room; the husband always sleeps to the east of his wife. So east means male and social superior. Up and down, right and left, sun and moon, hot and cold, all the physical antitheses are able to carry meanings from social life, and in a rich and steady culture there is a steady core of such agreed classifications. Anyone who is prepared to support the social system finds himself impelled to uphold the classification system which gets meaning from it. Anyone who wants to challenge the social system finds himself up against a set of manifold classifications which will have to be rethought. This is why breach of taboo arouses such strong feeling. It is not because the minor classification is threatened, but because the whole social system (in which a great investment has been made) looks like tottering, if someone can get away with challenging a taboo.

Classification involves definition; definition involves reducing ambiguity; ambiguity arises in several ways and it is wrong to think that it can ever be excluded. To take the classification of animal species, they can be classified according to their obvious features, and according to the habitat they live in, and according to how they behave. This gives three ways of classifying animals which could each place the same beasts in different classes. Classed by behaviour, using walking, swimming or flying as basic types, penguins would be nearer to fish; classed by bone structure and egg laying, penguins would count more clearly as birds than would flying fish, which would be birds in the other classification. Animal life is much more untidy and difficult to fit into a regular system of classification than at first appears. Human social life is even more untidy. Girls behave like boys, there are adults who refuse to grow up, every year a few are born whose physical make-up is not clearly male or female. The rules of marriage and inheritance require clear-cut categories but always there will be some cases which do not fit the regularities of the system. For human classifications are always too crude for reality. A system of taboos covers up this weakness of the classification system. It points in advance to defects and insists that no one shall give recognition to the inconvenient

facts or behave in such a way as to undermine the acceptability and clarity of the system as a whole. It stops awkward questions and prevents awkward developments.

Sometimes the taboo ban appears in ways that seem a long way from their point of origin. For example, among the Lele tribe, in the Kasai district of the Congo, it was taboo to bring fishing equipment direct into the village from the streams or lakes where it had been in use. All round the village fishing traps and baskets would be hung in trees overnight. Ask the Lele why they did this and they replied that coughs and disease would enter the village if the fishing things were not left out one night. No other answer could be got from them except elaboration of the danger and how sorcerers could enter the village if this barrier were not kept up. But another kind of answer lay in the mass of other rules and regulations which separated the village and its human social life from the forest and streams and animal life. This was the basic classification at stake; one which never needed to be explained because it was too fundamental to mention.

Injecting Order into Life

The novelist William Burroughs describes the final experiences of disgust and depression of some forms of drug addiction. What he calls the 'Naked Lunch' is the point where all illusions are stripped away and every thing is seen as it really is. When everyone can see what is on everyone's fork, nothing is classed as edible. Meat can be animal or human flesh, caterpillars, worms or bugs; soup is equally urine, lentils, scotch broth or excreta; other people are neither friends nor enemies, nor is oneself different from other people since neither has any very clear definition. Identities and classifications are merged into a seething, shapeless experience. This is the potential disorder of the mind which taboo breaks up into classes and rules and so judges some activities as right and proper and others as horrifying.

This kind of rationality is the justification for the taboos which we ourselves observe when we separate the lavatory from the living room and the bed from the kitchen, injecting order into the house. But the order is not arbitrary; it derives from social categories. When a set of social distinctions weakens, the taboos that expressed it weaken too. For this reason sex taboos used to be sacred in England but are no longer so strong. It seems ridiculous that women should not be allowed in some clubs or professions, whereas not so long ago it seemed obviously right. The same for the sense of privacy, the same for hierarchy. The less we ourselves are forced to adopt unthinking taboo attitudes to breaches of these boundaries, the easier it becomes to look dispassionately at the taboos of other societies and find plenty of meaning in them.

In some tribal societies it is thought that the shedding of blood will cause droughts and other environmental disasters. Elsewhere any contact with death is dangerously polluting, and burials are followed by elaborate washing and fumigation. In other places they fear neither homicide nor death

Keystone

In the West women and 'dirt' have long been the subjects of powerful taboos *Above* Suffragettes campaigning for votes for women *Below* The London Stock Exchange used to be barred to women *Right* Marcel Duchamp's *The Fountain* (1917): sent to a New York art exhibition, this urinal was greeted with a mixture of outrage and delighted shock

Keystone

Barney Burstein, Boston

pollution but menstrual blood is thought to be very dangerous to touch (see MENSTRUATION). And in other places again, adultery is liable to cause illness. Some people are thickly beset with taboos so that everything they do is charged with social symbolism. Others observe only one or two rules. Those who are most taboo-minded have the most complex set of social boundaries to preserve. Hence their investment of so much energy into the control of behaviour.

A taboo system upholds a cultural system and a culture is a pattern of values and norms; social life is impossible without such a pattern. This is the dilemma of individual freedom. Ideally we would like to feel free to make every choice from scratch and judge each case on its merits. Such a freedom would slow us down, for every choice would have to be consciously deliberated. On the one hand, education tries to equip a person with means for exercising private judgement, and on the other hand, the techniques of education provide a kind of mechanical decision-making, along well-oiled grooves. They teach strong reactions of anxiety about anything which threatens to go off the track. As education transmits culture, taboos and all, it is a kind of brain-washing. It only allows a certain way of seeing reality and so limits the scope for private judgement. Without the taboos, which turn basic classifications into automatic psychological reflexes, no thinking could be effective, because if every system of classification was up for revision at every moment, there would be no stability of thought. Hence there would be no scope for experience to accumulate into knowledge. Taboos bar the way for the mind to visualize reality differently. But the barriers they set up are not arbitrary, for taboos flow from social boundaries and support the social structure. This accounts for their seeming irrational to the outsider and beyond challenge to the person living in the society.

(See also FOOD AND DRINK; MANA; MAORI; POLYNESIA.)

MARY DOUGLAS

FURTHER READING: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (Norton, 1962); Franz Steiner, *Taboo* (Penguin, 1967 reprint); H. Webster, *Taboo: a Sociological Study* (Octagon, 1973, c1942).

Likened to a sword and a shield, a talisman may be defined as an object which has been magically endowed with the power of attracting good fortune, while an amulet is something which naturally possesses protective properties

TALISMANS

THE WORD TALISMAN is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as an 'object engraven with figures or characters to which are attributed the occult powers of the planetary influences and celestial configurations under which it was made; usually worn as an amulet to avert evil or bring fortune to the wearer'. The word is traced to the Greek *telesma*, meaning in this case a consecrated object, one over which a rite has been completed. An amulet, according to the same authority, is 'anything worn about the person as a charm or preventive against evil, mischief, disease, witchcraft, etc.': its derivation is traced through the Latin, *amuletum*.

It will be seen that in these definitions no clear distinction is made between amulets and talismans. According to Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the Egyptologist, expert opinion is divided on the subject; he himself considered that the essential difference between an amulet and a talisman is that while an amulet exercises its protective powers continuously and in general over its owner, a talisman is called upon to perform some isolated task of protection. In this article it is proposed to treat the two as differing in nature. A talisman is an object ceremonially endowed with the power of attracting favourable influences: it reinforces, and may be thought of as a sword. An amulet is an object naturally possessing the power of turning away evil or undesired influences: it *protects*, and may be likened to a shield.

The idea that special influence, luck, or protection is somehow inherent in objects is universal. Anthropologists have collected great stores of information on the subject of *mana* (see MANA), belief in which directs innumerable customs in many cultures throughout the world. Mana is perhaps especially potent in the substances and fluids of the body, and so might be equated with the idea of 'personal magnetism'. Hence possession of items endowed with mana is possession of the soul-code of the person, a tiny tuning-fork as it were, to which he must automatically respond. So hair, teeth, saliva or blood, are powerful levers in magic, black or white, the psychic equivalent of a telephone number.

From Diamonds to Skulls

Ancient Egypt was pre-eminently the land of amulets. They were worn by the living, and placed in great abundance within the inner coffin of the mummy. The head of the mummy rested on a circular piece of linen inscribed with magical figures. Chief among the mummy amulets were the Uzat or Eye of Horus, left and right eyes representing the sun and moon (see HORUS); the Two Fingers, in obsidian or haematite; and the Five Steps. Probably best known is the scarab beetle, symbol of the sun god Khepri, whose revolutions were pictured in the rolling movement of the beetle (see SCARAB). The list is long: the Buckle of Isis, the Heart, Papyrus Sceptre, the Tet (backbone or tree-trunk), Vulture, Frog, Serpent's Head, Menat, Nefer (a musical instrument), Ankh or life-symbol, and the Sam, symbol of union, and so on. Modern Freemasons would recognize the Angle or Square, symbol of protection, and the Plumb-line. Most of the amulets were fashioned either in certain materials or in certain colours, although they could be in a precious metal such as gold.

All races have traditional amulets. The jungle Negro hangs from his neck his personal charm or *gris-gris*; the Chinese carry an object engraved with a character from the ancient text, the *Shu-Ching*; the Mohammedan a verse from the Koran; the Christian a scapulary or relic; and the Jew fastens at his door a little roll of parchment inscribed with SHADAI, the ninth of the ten divine names of the Cabala. The followers of Zoroaster have an amuletic garment, a sacred shirt and cord which is woven with a peculiar holy thread made of fine wool woven by the wives of Parsee priests, with special invocatory charms. The sacred book, the *Khordah-Avesta* describes how, standing or sitting, and wherever he may be, the garment

G. L. Carlisle

Talismans are objects believed to attract favourable influences, like these tokens hung up in a church to obtain cures or heavenly protection

will protect him from injury from slings, arrows, knives or clubs.

Pieces of the wood of the True Cross were held in especial reverence for their power by the Christian nations in the Middle Ages. Although orthodox teaching stated it to be all of oak, some ancient writers maintained that four kinds of wood were used. The stem was of cypress, the cross-piece of cedar, the superscription of board pine, and the block to support the feet, of boxwood.

A wide variety of natural objects from jewels and semi-precious stones (see JEWELS) to berries and animals' hairs have been used as amulets. Coral, especially the red or pink variety, has always been believed to have amuletic properties; and one of the main reasons for its being used with bells on babies' rattles was that it was reputed to safeguard against the Evil Eye (see EYE). Ferdinand I of Spain wore a small branch of coral suspended about his neck, which he would point at anyone whom he suspected of having a malignant influence. In the Middle Ages it was held to be a protection from lightning, storm and witches.

Garnets were popular as amulets in Egypt, where they were known as 'happy stones'; the Romans called them 'loyal stones'. Jet was also highly prized. In 1841 in Cologne a stone coffin of about the 5th century was found which contained, in addition to human remains, beautifully made jet ornaments such as armlets, rings, buckles, necklets and hairpins. Jet was considered valuable not only as a remedy for toothache and tumours, but as a revealer of unfaithfulness. Sardonyx was supposed to ensure marital happiness, and in classical times it also had a reputation as an aid to the eloquence of lawyers. Pliny relates that a lawyer named Paulus hired a sardonyx ring to wear when he defended a wealthy widow; he won his case and the widow as well.

Jade was believed to keep off kidney complaints; and even in this century it has been reported to be effective in curing headaches, when pressed to the forehead. The star sapphire is undoubtedly in the amulet class. It is greatly sought after for this purpose in Thailand, where a tourist was told recently, 'Should the world come to an end, it will protect you from all harm!' Rock crystal is said to stimulate clairvoyance, and was made into polished spheres for crystal-gazing in quite ancient times. A ball of

John Moss

Above **Talisman of the moon, intended to harness the moon's influence to protect the wearer against evil** ***Below, left to right*** **Lucky charms, from a set of Wills's cigarette cards of the 1920s: jade hei-tiki, used by the Maori in New Zealand; the ankh, the ancient Egyptian symbol of life; hand, making the gesture of blessing; tau cross, protecting against disease and snakebite**

this stone surmounts the sceptre of the Scottish regalia. Some of the crystal balls preserved as healing stones were no doubt originally intended for divination. A diamond is said to have been the Schamir stone in Solomon's magic ring, which was reputed to have the power to preserve his throne.

Amulets in Reverse

Vegetable and animal products also have a place in the lists of amulets or charms. In India the *rudraksha* berry and beads from the *tulsi* or Indian balsam plant are believed to have properties making them suitable for necklaces of the rosary type. In Africa, the stout hairs from the elephant are plaited into lucky rings, and elsewhere the rabbit's paw has been used as an amulet.

There are several cases of human skulls being associated with a particular family and house, the removal of which is said to affect the owners' fortunes unfavourably. In this sense the skull must be regarded as an amulet (see HAUNTED HOUSES; SKULLS).

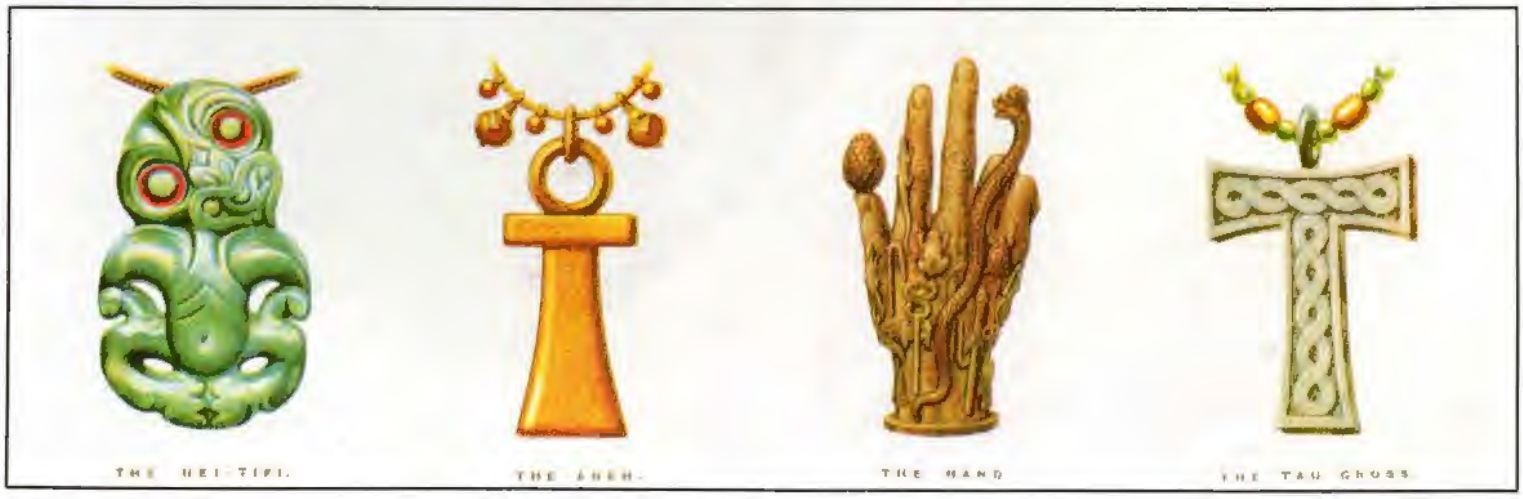
Certain objects, usually gems, have a documented history of bringing evil and disaster upon their possessors, rather than good fortune. The Hope Diamond is perhaps the best known. In 1965 it was disclosed that it had been on loan for study at the De Beers' laboratories in Johannesburg, and it was found that after exposure to ultra-violet light it glowed for several minutes like a red-hot coal, a phenomenon which had not occurred with other diamonds.

It seems as if an atmosphere or aura of violence lingers about these articles, and acts as a kind of detonator when it again enters a field of intense emotions. But this would hardly apply in the case of Mephisto's Ring. This was a ring set with a large and beautiful emerald which came into the possession of the Spanish royal family in the reign of Philip II, who sent the ill-fated Armada. Centuries later the ring was presented to a church at the time of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Soon after, the church burned down, but the ring was rescued and placed in a museum. The museum was severely damaged by lightning and the ring was sent back to the royal family. That same week they received news of the defeat of their navy at Manila. Mephisto's Ring was then sealed up in a strong box and buried in the ground.

The Healing Talisman

A common use of talismans down the ages has been for the purpose of healing. In the New Testament, simple cloths became effective talismans when charged with the power of Paul the Apostle (Acts 19.11–12): 'And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs and aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.'

The case of a woman who seemed to be afflicted with an incurable eye inflammation is cited by Eliphas Levi, the 19th century occultist. She was suddenly and mysteriously cured, and confessed to her priest that she had had recourse to magic. For a long time she had pestered a scholar – whom she supposed to be a magician – to give her a written charm to carry, and finally the scholar had given her a little roll of parchment with the advice to wash three times a day in cold water. The priest made her bring the parchment, and when he opened it he found it inscribed in Latin with these words: 'May the devil dig out your eyes and fill the empty spaces with dung!' He



translated the words to the woman, who was thunderstruck, but nevertheless cured.

This anecdote illustrates one aspect of the use and effect of talismans. The wearer's thoughts are constantly turning towards the talismanic object and picturing its purpose or quality. If it has been impregnated by the act of a powerful will, when one who has faith concentrates his thought upon the talisman, he draws from it a strong suggestion which his own will-power reinforces. Even where there is no 'magnetic charge', as apparently in the case of the roll of parchment, the wearer's belief quickly builds up a charge which is effective at subconscious levels.

A talisman kept by a Scottish family, the Lee Penny of the Lockharts which is said to have originated with the Moors in Spain in the 14th century, has a long record of healings by water in which it was dipped. Sir Simon Locard of Lee obtained the talisman as part of the ransom of an emir whom he took prisoner in Spain. The emir's mother explained the powers and method of using the penny, which was a silver groat with a dark red triangular stone set in the middle. It could stop bleeding, cure fever, and especially cure animal diseases by means of the water in which it was dipped three times and then swirled round. The last record of its successful use was before the First World War when one of Sir Simon Lockhart's guests accidentally sustained a deep cut in his hand which bled obstinately. Sir Simon 'magnetized' a basin of water with the penny, and the guest soaked his bandaged hand in it. The bleeding stopped, and the cut healed rapidly.

As J. G. Lockhart, who has written a full record of this famous healing stone, says: 'It might be observed that the Lee Penny appears to have been at least as successful in dealing with the complaints of its time as in a later day the Ministry of Agriculture has been in dealing with Foot and Mouth Disease. The Penny was at any rate reputed to cure where the Ministry can only kill.' It was the Lee Penny, incidentally, which inspired one title of Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Talisman*.

How to Make a Talisman

An old work, Sepharial's *Book of Charms and Talismans* is still widely read for its delightful blend of Hebrew-inscribed medieval cabalistic diagrams and Victorian descriptions of their usefulness. Consider, for example, what the 'Talisman for Travelling on Land or Sea,' engraved on a Monday in silver, can do: 'Train drivers and guards should certainly wear it, and signalmen too. All those who hold any position on board ship from Commodores and Captains down to waiters and stokers should wear it as it will assist from the safety standpoint, will help to prevent seasickness and will cause the ordinary work to seem less arduous.'

Ancient Egyptian amulet, c 1250 BC, showing the head of the popular god Bes, a squat, dwarfish, cheerfully grinning deity, who presided over fun and music, and helped women in childbirth: numerous amulets depicting him have been found

C. M. Dixon

In making a talisman, your will, and to a secondary degree your personal emanation, can impregnate a suitable chosen piece of material with lasting power. You can set up in it a 'field' or charge of a particular type of force. But the material to receive this should be new or virgin, although used material can be cleaned and purified.

The type of material will affect the permanency of the result. Parchment is more enduring than paper and has other advantages; the nobler metals such as platinum, gold, silver, and even nickel, are less absorptive of gross vibrations; while gem stones, containing the most highly developed mineral life, can sing the same vibrational song over thousands of years. Sensitives will tell that this is so in the case of many of the Egyptian symbolic jewels and the inscribed gnostic gems used in initiation ceremonies in the past. The serpent-entwined rod of the caduceus was charged with power and when laid along the spine of the candidate in the Mysteries, produced a stirring of power and intuition in him.

On the other hand, for a temporary purpose, you can make an effective talisman for a friend from a short length of new cord. Holding it, you make a loose knot, and then concentrate with all the intensity you possess on the quality you are to give. When you feel supremely charged, picture that charge pouring down your arms and concentrating in the knot as you pull it tight with a fierce jerk. Make seven knots like this and you have your talisman.

Supposing you wish to give a ring or jewel for a talismanic purpose, the technique is to visualize a sheet of tense etheric matter between the curved forefinger and thumb of your left hand and, holding the object in your right hand, pass it through the web several times with the intent that all past 'magnetism' be combed out. The object can then be made potent by a process of tension and discharge into it, somewhat similar to the knotting procedure just described. All authorities agree that many types of talisman are better enclosed in silk, and not exposed to the gaze of the inquisitive.

Although the human will is the most powerful element in its creation, it is usual to take into account the best possible astrological conditions in deciding the time. It is unwise, say the astrologers, to wear the birthstone traditional for your sign if in your nativity map the sun has serious adverse aspects; so you require to know your personal horoscope. Very few occultists nowadays would care, however, to go through the elaborate ceremonial with dress, colours, and invocations at exactly appropriate times, feeling that they mainly serve as psychological props and aids to concentration.

C. NELSON STEWART

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TAMMUZ

THE HEBREW PROPHET Ezekiel tells how, in the year 592 BC, in a mystic vision he saw the iniquity of the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. In particular, he relates how he was brought to 'the north gate of the house of the Lord; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz' (8.14). The prophet thus, unintentionally, witnesses to the widespread influence of the cult of the Mesopotamian god Tammuz and to a notable feature of that cult. The Jewish women were performing a ritual lamentation for the death of Tammuz, which was annually mourned at the summer solstice when the year begins to wane and vegetation has withered under the sun's heat. The mourners chanted in their lament:

> How long will the springing up of verdure be withheld?
> How long will vegetation be withheld?

The Hebrew name 'Tammuz' derived from the Sumerian 'Dumuzi', which was both the name of an ancient Sumerian deity and of the month in which he was specially commemorated. In the Jewish calendar there is also a month 'Tammuz', as there is with the Arabs under the name 'Tamuz'. The god was known, too, by the title *Adoni*, 'my Lord', which passed into Greek and Latin as Adonis (see APHRODITE). Although this ancient deity was so widely known and abundant reference is made to him in Mesopotamian texts, our modern knowledge of him is pieced together from a variety of material, most of it fragmentary.

The Sumerians, who originally conceived of this deity, called him 'Dumu-zi-abzu', meaning 'True son of Apsu'. The Apsu was the personification of the sweet waters, as opposed to Tiamat, the personification of the salt waters or sea (see CREATION MYTHS). Since it was the sweet waters (as rivers or rain) which fertilized the earth, Dumuzi's filial relationship to the Apsu doubtless indicates some original connection with fertility. There is indeed evidence of this aspect of his nature; however, in Sumerian mythology the god appears in various guises. Thus, in one myth concerned to exalt agriculture over a pastoral economy, Dumuzi is a shepherd god, who competes unsuccessfully with Enkimdu, the farmer god, for Inanna, the fertility goddess.

Dumuzi's connection with Inanna ('Ishtar' in Akkadian; see ISHTAR; MESOPOTAMIA) constitutes the most celebrated feature of his mythology, but the evidence about it is curiously ambivalent. Although represented in the previous myth as the rejected suitor of the goddess, in another myth he appears as her husband; but the relation had direful consequences for him. For Inanna became desirous of ruling in the underworld as she did in the world above. Consequently she descended to the realm of Ereshkigal, the Sumerian goddess of the dead, to challenge her sovereignty. But Ereshkigal was too strong for her, and Inanna was held prisoner in the 'Land of No Return'. Eventually the god Enki secured her release and return to the upper world, but on condition that she found a substitute to take her place. To save herself, Inanna delivered Dumuzi to the demons who accompanied her, as the required substitute, and Dumuzi was carried off to the grim domain of Ereshkigal.

Sacred Prostitutes

In the famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* (see GILGAMESH), curious reference is made to Ishtar's responsibility for the fate of Dumuzi. In repelling the amorous advances of the goddess, the hero Gilgamesh includes Dumuzi among the list of her victims; hut he adds 'To the god Dumuzi, the lover of thy youth, thou hast ordained lamentation year by year'. This cryptic statement doubtless refers to some aspect of the myth which found expression in an annual ritual lamentation for Dumuzi, in which Ishtar was involved. Further information, though still of a cryptic nature, is provided in the later Akkadian version of the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld. In this version there is no mention of Dumuzi's being a substitute for Ishtar. However, at the end of the narrative, after the account of Ishtar's return from the 'Land of No Return', reference is suddenly made to Tammuz (Dumuzi): 'Tammuz, her young husband, wash with pure water; anoint him with goodly oil; clothe him with a resplendent robe; let him play on the flute of lapis lazuli; let the courtesans appease his wrath! . . . On the day when Tammuz comes up to me, and the lapis lazuli flute with him, and the carnelian ring, come up to me. When those who lament, men and women, come up with him to me. May the dead arise and smell the incense.'

These invocations or injunctions clearly relate to an elaborate ritual drama in which the death and resurrection of Tammuz were portrayed. The 'courtesans' were undoubtedly the sacred prostitutes who served in the temples of Ishtar. However, it is difficult, in turn, to relate the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld to these rubrics concerning Tammuz. The obvious explanation that Ishtar descended there to rescue the dead Tammuz is not actually supported by the Akkadian text; and it is certainly contradicted by the Sumerian version. However, the Akkadian text does imply a ritual connection of some kind.

The general bearing of the extant evidence indicates that, whatever may have been his original Sumerian form, in Mesopotamia later, and in other adjacent lands, Tammuz was the central figure of a death and resurrection ritual which was related to the annual cycle of vegetation, and in which the fertility goddess Ishtar was intimately implicated (see VEGETATION SPIRITS; DYING GOD).

As a 'dying-rising god', Tammuz naturally suggests comparison with similar types of deity, and above all with Osiris of Egypt (see OSIRIS). Such phenomenological similarity makes it reasonable to ask whether Tammuz also played the role of the saviour god in Mesopotamian religion which Osiris so notably did in the religion of Egypt. The answer is that Tammuz did so, but in a different way, and the reason for the difference is interesting and important.

The religion of the ancient Mesopotamian peoples was based upon an evaluation of human nature that precluded any hope of a happy afterlife. Death irreparably shattered the constitution of the individual person, and what survived (the *etimmu*) descended to the grim Land of No Return. Hence, Tammuz could never assume that role in a mortuary ritual which Osiris had in Egypt, whereby the dead participated in the resurrection of the divine hero. However, ritual texts do exist in which salvation was sought through Tammuz; but the salvation was from sickness, not from death.

An attempt has been made to show that there existed in Sumer a myth and ritual pattern in which a divine king represented Tammuz. This pattern involved the sacred marriage of the king and the chief priestess of Inanna, and the death and resurrection of the king. The purpose of the rites was to ensure the fertility of men, flocks and land. The theory has not, however, found general acceptance among scholars.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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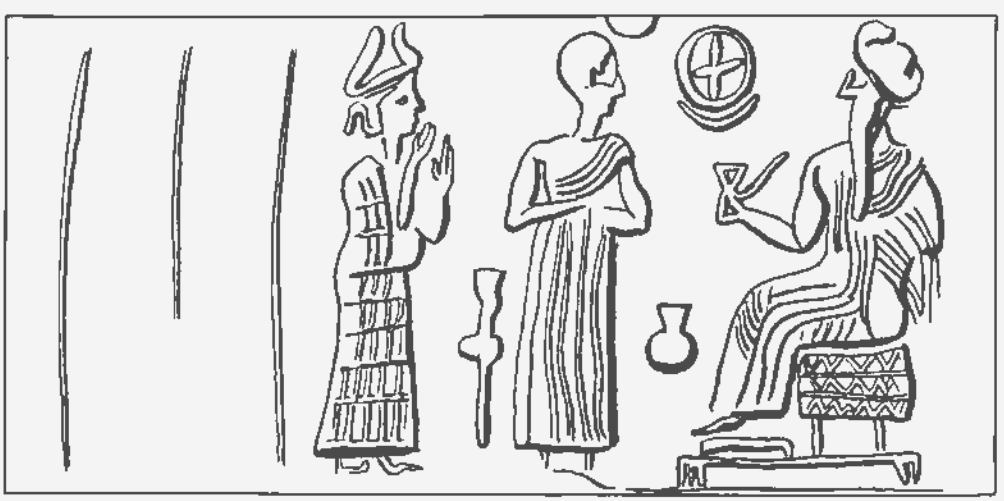


Sumerian seal showing the mother goddess, a worshipper and Dumuzi, or Tammuz: in the 6th century BC the prophet Ezekiel described how the women of Jerusalem lamented the god's death

John Moss

TANTRISM

Sven Gahlin

In tantric philosophy the interplay of two basic forces, Shiva and Shakti, male and female, underlies the entire universe: the female principle is the dominant one and the male the subordinate, for 'Shiva without Shakti is a corpse'

Previous page **Copies of statues from the temple of Konarak, c 1000 AD, showing the male and female principles embraced**

Left **and** ***right*** **18th century pictures of Kali, a personification of the elements of terror and dread in Shakti, dancing on and dominating her male partner, Shiva**

Believing that the generative organs are instruments of a supreme magical operation, the tantrics seek salvation through sex, but in their highly disciplined rites sensual pleasure is incidental

UNTIL THE END of the last century comparatively little was known in Europe about Tantrism, although it is one of the most extraordinary cults of the East. Today in one form or another it plays an essential role in certain occult societies, both in Europe and America. It is in a sexual context that this philosophy is usually considered because its treatment of sex is so remarkable, but Tantrism touches on a great deal more than sexual matters.

The name comes from *Tantra*, a general term used for the texts in which this system is expounded, as a rule in the course of a dialogue between the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Shakti (see SHIVA). Tantrism is practised with local variations in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and before the Chinese occupation it formed part of certain lamaist sects of Tibet. Its philosophy is as complex as any that can be found in the orthodox religions of these countries, and some of it reaches heights of subtlety and finesse to match anything in the more traditional theologies. But there are critics who maintain that it bears the same relationship to orthodox Hinduism and Buddhism that the Black Mass bears to Christianity. Though an outgrowth of Hinduism it is opposed to the *Vedas*, the sacred writings that are the fountainhead of all Hindu orthodoxy; and the Buddhist frowns upon most of its teachings and practices, which to the puritan border on the scandalous.

Tantrics, the followers of Tantrism, claim that theirs is perhaps the oldest religion in India. Yoga (see YOGA), now regarded as one of the six orthodox systems of Aryan Hindu philosophy, is in their view basically tantric. A figure in a typical squatting posture, and a priest gazing at the tip of his nose, which both suggest yogic breathing and meditative techniques, have been found impressed in seals of the Indus Valley civilization (c 2000 BC), which preceded the arrival of the Aryans in India by more than 1000 years.

This priority can, of course, be disputed, but the tantrics' claim to uniqueness admits of little doubt. Theirs is a special cult; its teachings confer personal and social emancipation; it liberates the follower from the bondage of all moral restraints. The tantrics regard themselves as the elect, and all those outside the sect as *pashu*, or the animal herd.

Most tantric writings are traceable to a period after the 10th century AD. Many of the earlier manuscripts were destroyed by Hindu zealots, and the bulk of the remainder by a succession of invaders who conquered India, and to whom the doctrines appeared unworthy of perpetuation or remembrance. The monasteries where they were taught were razed to the ground, the libraries burned, and the monks slain. The nucleus of the teaching was thereafter preserved with great secrecy.

According to tantric philosophy the whole universe is built up of and pervaded by two basic forces which are in intimate and intricate union. These forces, named Shiva and Shakti, are personified as male and female deities. Of this divine pair, Shiva is the subordinate one, for it is the Female Principle that ultimately underlies all manifestation, and everything, including Shiva himself, is contained within the Female Principle. There is a tantric saying, 'Shiva without Shakti is a corpse.'

So important is the Shakti concept in this philosophy that Tantrism is often known by the alternative title of Shaktism, the Tantras spoken of as the Shakta writings, and tantric cults often called the Shakta cults. Among the various reasons advanced by tantrics as the basis for their claim to

Women are treated on terms of complete equality with men, and in many of the rites are assigned superior status

superiority over orthodox Hinduism is the high place assigned to women. The latter are treated on terms of complete equality with men, and in many of their rites are assigned an even superior status, as living embodiments of Shakti, the mother goddess.

The main subjects dealt with in the Tantras include the creation of the world, and its final dissolution; the various gods and goddesses and the worship appropriate to their status and powers; physical culture; mental and spiritual discipline; and the rites by which magical powers can be acquired to enable one to control oneself, control others, the forces of Nature, and, on the highest plane, even the gods themselves. This emphasis on magic has brought Tantrism into further disrepute, and the term 'tantric' retains its overtones of black magic in India to this day.

Indeed, there is hardly an occult procedure that is not dealt with in Tantrism. Some of its rituals are reminiscent of the forms of ceremonial magic described in the Western grimoires. Candles, incense, bells, magical wands, spells, magic circles, bodily postures, occult gestures, symbolical designs, words of power, are as much part of the tantric's paraphernalia as of the Western magician's. Much of the ritualism has in fact been embodied into their own traditions by Western magicians who have been largely influenced, especially in rites of sex mysticism and sex magic, by what they have found in tantric manuals or learned from tantric teachers.

Long periods of preparation and training in techniques of highly specialized physical culture are a pre-requisite to tantric progress. In particular, great emphasis is laid on *pranayama* or respiratory exercises (see BREATH); on heliotherapy or invigorating the body by adoration of the sun and exposure of the body to the sun; on the control of certain autonomic functions, that is, of those physiological processes not under the direction of the conscious mind, such as body temperature, pulse rates, and the reflexes that trigger ejaculation; on methods of superconcentration that bring all bodily functions under the control of the will; and on very subtle processes of internal alchemy. Certain exercises are motionless stances with the limbs fixed in prescribed symbolic attitudes during which the internal exercises are carried out. Running parallel with these

Sven Gahlin

'Acts that cause the moral degradation of the ordinary man, by those very acts does the wise one obtain salvation'

practices is the intonation of holy *mantras* or spells of a special abbreviated kind. Like the physical exercises, the voicing of such mantras is first minimized, and then carried on interiorly (see MANTRA).

Rousing the Sleeping Snake

The alchemy expounded in the tantric texts, like its counterpart in the writings of the Western alchemists, is replete with esoteric passages and little can be made of their jargon. The secret door will not open to the uninitiated without a key. In tantric writings a curious symbolism underlies the outward meaning, much of it couched in metaphorical language or expressed as though an actual laboratory experiment were being described.

Though ostensibly concerned with the transmutation of baser metals into gold, and with the vessels, implements and apparatus of commerce and the ritual movements of the alchemist in his workroom, this alchemy actually takes place within the body itself. It is a hermetic distillation, as it were, from the bodily fluids, with the aid of instruments and utensils provided by the body itself, of the gross substance within oneself, into the subtle quintessence that can reinvigorate the physical frame, make the body glow, activate one's supernatural faculties and put one in communication with any entity in the universe. All the processes as described are carefully concealed parallels of physiological processes by which the internal ingredients manufactured within the body are heated to an even heat by the bodily fires, and rising upwards through various stages are distilled in the brain to produce the alchemical liquor of transcendence – the celestial dew of the hermetic philosophers of the Western tradition (see ALCHEMY).

This naturally presupposes a complex system of subtle anatomy and physiology, by which the invisible transmutation is effected, and such indeed is the case. It is based on the *chakras* or plexuses of the etheric body, situated along an axis that passes from tail-bone to skull (see KUNDALINI). They are seven in number, like lotuses of variegated colour, located roughly at the base of the spine (the basal chakra), the sex organs, the solar plexus, the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows, and at the crown of the head (the *sahasrara*). There is a connection between the base and crown chakras, between the abode of Shakti and Shiva. In some texts the head is compared to an inverted bowl and the pelvis to a basin, the two being joined by a hollow tube. All power is promised to him who can siphon the lower energy towards the upper, but in the ordinary man this is an almost impossible task for the tube is blocked at the stages marked by the chakras, each of which has a formidable gate that will never open to anyone without the password.

The basal chakra is inhabited by the mysterious *kundalini*, which is likened to a tiny snake, normally lying curled and asleep near the tail-bone. Its arousal is the goal of an elaborate technique taking many years to master and requiring the personal guidance of a guru. When aroused, the serpent begins its upward ascent, piercing the gates of the chakras one by one until it reaches the summit.

Sometimes the chakras are compared to focuses of occult fire, lying dormant. There is an ember flickering in the kundalini which is the incendiary point, but normally quiescent. A sympathetic resonance exists between the chakras. By tantric method the kundalini can be made to blaze up and when the blaze reaches the chakra next above it, ignites it and in this manner the stream of flame going from chakra to chakra reaches the crown, the sahasrara.

The dangers of this discipline can be very real for unless one has been trained to deal with this fire-force it can leave madness or even death in its trail. But words fail in attempting to describe the climax of the operation if it is successful. For then Shakti and Shiva are united and their ecstasy is known with a hundred variations under countless names. It is the Great Awakening, the Immortal Draught, the Supreme Bliss.

Transcending Good and Evil

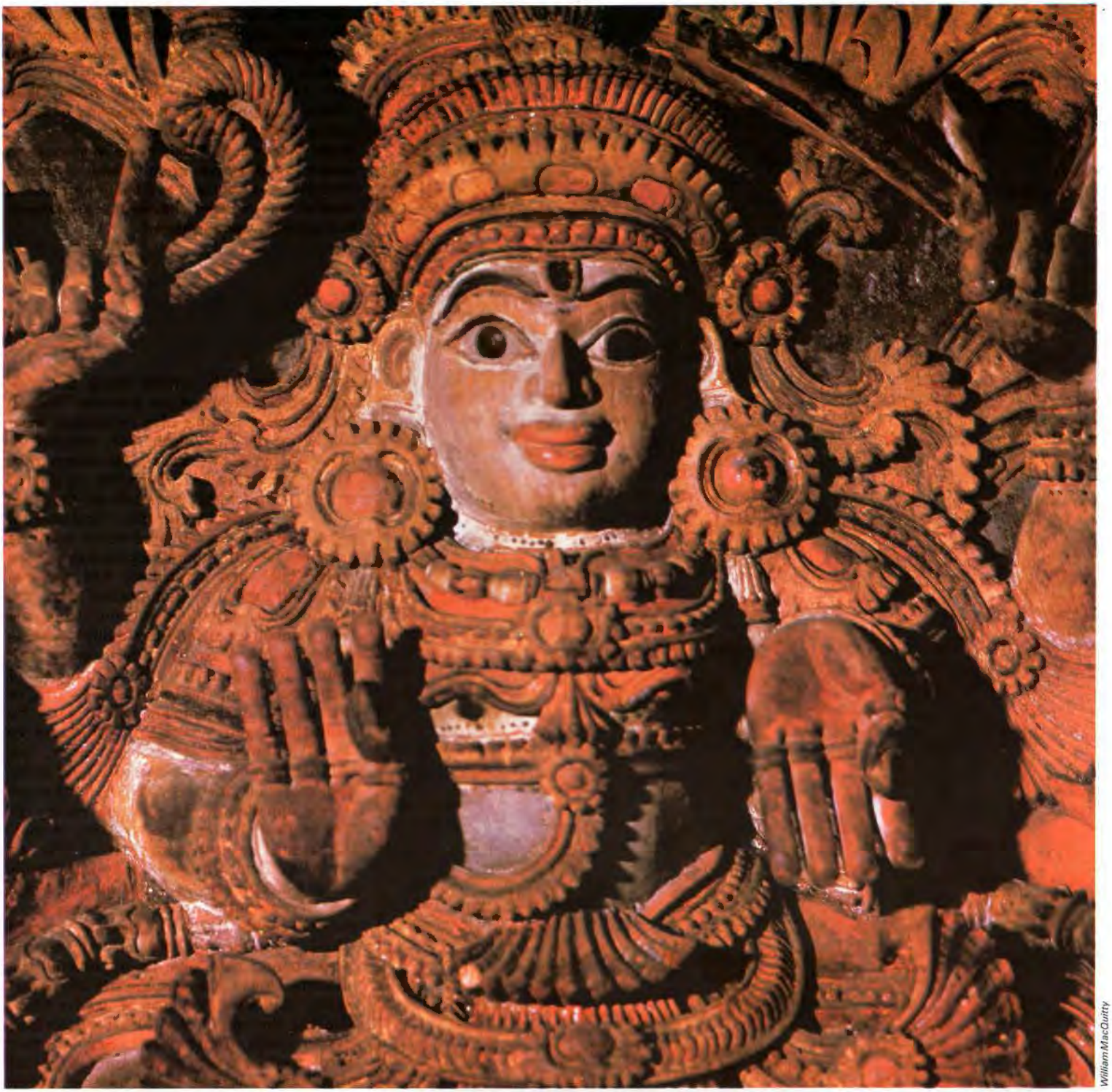
Besides personal disciplines there are a number of rites which are regarded as essential to the tantric's progress. They include nudism, sexual freedom, group sexuality, adultery, incest and, in the higher planes, intercourse with elemental creatures, female demons and goddesses. Tantrism has therefore been condemned as representing the worst side of religion and a travesty of Hinduism and Buddhism. But its advocates

Early 19th century figure of Parvati, the consort of Shiva and another aspect of Shakti, the female principle of Tantrism: the tantric scriptures contain dialogues between Shiva and Parvati in which the doctrines of Tantrism are expounded

defend it as a noble and inspiring philosophy, condemned and vilified only by misrepresentation and prejudice.

Since the law and the social code are opposed to the doctrines, tantrics feel that attempts cannot be made early enough to wean the initiate from traditional standards of morality and set forth the virtues of the tantric code. Sex may be impure if treated solely as an animal function, on an equal footing with the other animal functions performed by man. But even on grounds of its naturalness alone it should be free from any unpleasant overtones, and no more subject to moral stricture than drawing breath. Part of the discipline therefore consists in a gradual psychological indoctrination that inures the disciple to the new outlook and conditions him by precept and practice to the tantric view. The mind must be jolted into a new way of thinking, and this is achieved by deliberate antinomianism, or working against the law and acting against the dictates of morality and conscience. Just as two lovers, ravished by their passion, care not whether their love is moral or permissible but only that they should continue in their loving, and in this manner override society and its laws and the conventional standards of right and wrong, even so must the mind of the tantric, absorbed in the sublimity of the tantric doctrine, transcend the ideas of good and evil and move to a higher level of morality to a condition beyond the jurisdiction of family, society and state.

Human existence in the so-called civilized environment is cluttered with convention, artificiality and superfluity. Lessening the load is therefore a pre-requisite to success along the tantric path. But no half-hearted or apologetic contravention of the dictates of society is worth the effort; what is needed is a complete and total denial of their validity. The Tantras repeatedly preach the need for going against the established order of things so that the will might be strengthened, the new way of life properly understood, and accepted in its true sense.



William MacQuitty

'Acts that cause the moral degradation of the ordinary man, by those very acts does the wise one obtain salvation', runs a typical tantric text. Another says, 'Just as a thorn in the foot can be removed by another thorn, and poison neutralized by poison, so can sin purge sin.' 'Actions that cause a man to burn in hell, are those by which the yogi attains beatitude.' And to sum up: 'Perfection is gained by satisfying all one's desires'. This is the idealization of Self, for within the self dwells Shakti. What you desire, that do, for this gratifies the goddess.

Organized society, religion, law, are all inimical to the doctrine of spontaneity. What is natural is right. The mind must be emptied of all its familiar preconceptions and prejudices or the tantric doctrine will be resisted. What is natural must be freely enjoyed. There can be no sin in spontaneity, for Nature cannot be transgressed. Eating and drinking, breathing, sleeping, sexual intercourse, there is no 'moral' difference between them.

Salvation through Sex

In the higher reaches of this line of thought the idea of good and evil is altogether abandoned as a purely artificial distinction. And down the line the whole set of conflicting opposites is similarly thrown overboard. There is no difference between rich and poor, between prince and pauper. In fact social stratification is non-existent among tantrics, and the only hierarchy is one of cultic eminence. Still more carefully must one try to grasp the idea that there is also no difference between wisdom and folly, industry and idleness, food and offal. And among some tantrics offal is actually eaten, as part of a ritual to symbolize the rejection of all traditional values imposed by habit and convention and acquired taste.

One rite commonly celebrated in many tantric sects is known as the *chakra-puja* or circle worship, where the participants sit in a circle, which implies complete mutual equality among those present. Male and female participants sit next to each other on the floor, and in the middle of the circle sit another couple, who represent Shakti and Shiva. Sometimes a nude girl occupies the central place as Shakti, or else a drawing of the yoni (female genitals) may be made

Victoria and Albert Museum

The terrifying aspects of Shiva and Shakti are the subject of tantric meditation in graveyards during rites of contact with corpses

Left **Lamaist temple banner from Tibet, 18th century, showing the goddess of terror surrounded by deities and demons**

Right **Mandala of Shiva in his awe-inspiring aspect as Bhairava (from *bhairav*, 'terror'): Bhairava was said to have been born from a drop of Shiva's blood and became the personification of his rage and hatred**

on the floor, this symbol being taken to signify the presence of the goddess. Then all the members partake of a ceremonial meal consisting of wine, flesh, fish, and bread, followed by a rite of sexual intercourse. These five items have been the subject of much philosophical speculation; they are said to represent certain fundamental categories and are equated either with the elements or with the interior faculties of the body. The wine symbolizes fire and the subtle draught of immortality that the tantric must learn to distil and drink; the flesh symbolizes air and the bodily functions that must be brought under control; fish stands for water and the techniques of sexual occultism; the bread is the earth, or the natural environment which must be understood and controlled. *Maithuna* or sexual intercourse symbolizes ether, the quintessence of all the elements, and is the final goal of all tantric endeavour, for through it one apprehends the ultimate reality. In this context the esoteric meaning of maithuna must be clearly understood. The sex act in its normal, gross form may occasionally bring a fleeting revelation of eternal truth, but that would be rare, for the smoke of passion clouds the mind. Sex as a sacred ritual, unclouded by passion can, on the other hand, help one to apprehend the ultimate Unity. The genuine rite can reveal Being, expand consciousness, confer bliss. The way through *bhukti* (pleasure) can lead one to *mukti* (redemption). Sex, in other words, can be a way of salvation. And this profoundly mystical belief is the tantric secret.

The gods have ordained that the evolution and purification of man's soul can only be achieved by living in an earthly incarnation and experiencing life on the physical plane. So it is the destiny of the initiate to utilize the sex organs for the purpose of discovering the ultimate principles of the universe. Union of male and female brings about the union of man and God. In the religious art of many Indian sects the procreative organs are stylized in the form of the lingam (phallus) and yoni. The lingam being the symbol of transcendent life is regarded as worthy of adoration, and anointed, garlanded and given homage. The yoni, symbolizing regeneration, is drawn on the ground in the form of mandalas (see MANDALA), often in composite designs of

Sven Gahlin

three or nine yonis; sometimes little vessels representing the lingam and yoni in union are used as lamps to keep the symbol of the divine encounter ever before the eyes of the worshipper.

Woman, the Opposite

The human organs that perform the divine rite of maithuna receive veneration for special reasons. In tantric theory the seat of pleasure during the sex act resides not in the active members but in the heart, so the members do not need to be venerated for the pleasure they are erroneously thought to give. The apparent purpose of food is the satisfaction of one's appetite, whereas only after the food has passed from plate to palate and the taste buds have been satisfied, does the actual process of nourishment take place. Only the pashu, or animal, thinks of sex in terms of pleasure or procreation. The gróss product of the sex apparatus results in children, but such procreation is not a human prerogative. All animals procreate; in tantric belief they derive greater pleasure from the act than men; they produce more abundantly, and procreation is therefore rightly for the pashu. The human sex organs are instruments of a supreme magical operation of which no animal can possibly be aware. They help the participant of the sex rite to transcend the physical, to transcend the mental, and rise to a psychic and spiritual state. Sex, like every other blessing can be debased and become a mere lustful interlude in which the worst elements of human animality are given full play, and the erotic components of smell, sight, touch, taste and hearing are directed towards a purely sensual gratification. But to the tantric pleasure plays only an incidental part in the process.

Woman provides an element that nothing else can give a man, for she represents the Opposite, the contrasting and vitalizing component that brings the vision of the goddess. Again, only the pashu thinks of the female in terms of intercourse with her. There is no room in Tantrism for the man who seeks out women for their beauty, youth, status, wealth, pleasure or progeny. The unique quality about a woman is her sex, and it is imperative that one's motivation should be moved from all considerations of personal desire to the pure fact of experiencing sexual union.

The further a woman is removed from all deceptive allures the better, for then the power of the female can be brought into operation in a pure unadulterated state, transcending all considerations at the physiological or social level. To the adept it makes no difference whether his sexual partner is a Draupadi (a voluptuous heroine of the *Mahabharata*) or a dombi (a low-caste untouchable woman). Beauty is a snare and an impediment, and in order to avoid its attraction it is necessary to overcome the obstacles of conventional revulsion. To avoid all possibility of desire entering into the rite, the true adept often insists that his partner be an old or ugly woman.

In the tantric circle worship it therefore becomes important that no claim should be made on any partner, and that no personal preferences should be allowed to decide the selection. Various means are used to ensure that the partners should pair not by choice but by chance. One method is for each woman on entering the sanctuary to deposit her bodice in a box, and at the end of the preparatory ceremonies for each man to pick one and take as his partner for the occasion the woman to whom it belongs, be that woman his wife, another's wife, his daughter, sister or even mother. This last requirement is explained away by some tantrics as symbolizing certain other mysteries.

Each stage of the tantric exercise demands some form of personal discipline. The asceticism of the unenlightened person involves resisting, conquering and killing physical desire. This latter does not dam the turbulent stream of sex, but only muddies it. The tantric practises *tapas*, which means both 'heat' and 'asceticism', and in tapas sexual desire is not obliterated but vitalized and used. It is a means whereby sexual energy is brought to a controlled intensity and then re-absorbed into the system. In one curious rite the tantric undertakes to serve the female like a domestic, for three months. He sleeps in the same room with her, but on the floor, while she sleeps on the bed. Later he sleeps in the same bed, but at her feet; then beside her, but clothed; then they lie together nude in each other's arms. But at no time during this cycle of 'closed intercourse' does he have sex with her. He builds up an inner tension, deliberately controlled by long self-discipline and complex yogic techniques so that his system becomes a reservoir of power and he is ready for the very difficult sex procedures that follow. One tantric text says, 'The man who knows the fiery form of Shiva procreates himself anew at every intercourse. His body glows, his mind is crystal clear, his spirit in harmony with heaven'.

(See also BUDDHISM; SEX.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

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Typical of the many paradoxes contained in this ancient philosophy is the fact that 'Tao' means the 'Way', yet it does not prescribe a particular path; Tao is simply 'the uncomplicated essence of what is right'

TAOISM

ONE OF THE THREE great religions of China, Taoism, like the other two, Confucianism and Buddhism, has a traditional founder. He is Lao Tze, born in 604 BC in a hamlet in Honan province. During his long life he held a number of public offices and was for a time the curator of the royal library in Loyang. Confucius, more than half a century his junior, visited him and was overawed by his presence and his phenomenal learning. After the interview Confucius told his disciples, 'I understand how birds move through the skies, how fish swim in water, how animals run over the hills. Things that fly can be snared; things that swim can be caught in nets; things that run can be trapped. But what can one do with a dragon that soars into the heavens, trampling on the clouds and riding the storms!'

At an advanced age Lao Tze retired from government service and travelled westward on buffalo-back to the borders of the barbarian lands somewhere in the region of the Gobi Desert. At the boundary warden's earnest plea for a record of his teachings, the sage paused long enough to inscribe a mere 5000 characters on bamboo parchment. Leaving this with the official he resumed his journey to an unknown destination, and was seen no more.

This small book, the *Tao Te Ching*, is one of the world's great religious classics; zealous Taoists claim that it enshrines the wisdom of the universe. As a result of speculation and commentary on its verses a vast library of Taoist scriptures grew around it. By the 1st century AD it comprised about 60 volumes; by the 7th century the number had increased to 4500. By that time, too, Lao Tze was worshipped as a god; temples were raised in his honour, and his original slender masterpiece was engraved on stone at the capital of every Chinese state.

The teachings of the *Tao Te Ching* are amongst the strangest ever propounded. They are paradoxical, inverse, passive, irrational. Although the term Tao means course or way, Taoism does not point to any particular way and there is no fixed track to be followed. Tao has reality but no form. Like the deep and obscure highways of the sea the waters close behind the moving ship and leave no trace of its passing. Little can be taught: 'The Tao that can be put into words is not the eternal Tao.' It opposes complexity, sophistication, 'cleverness', for these corrupt both mind and spirit.

This idea is well expressed in a famous Chinese story about the clever young fellow who saw a peasant watering his fields by the tedious process of carrying one pitcher at a time from the well, and told him about a mechanical contrivance that would enable him to get his water straight from well to furrow in a fraction of the time. 'I know of the contrivance,' said the old one, 'but I also know that those who use cunning contrivances soon begin to practise cunning ways. Practising cunning ways their hearts become cunning. Those with cunning hearts are incapable of being pure in their thoughts. Those with corrupted thoughts have restless and disturbed spirits. And those who are troubled in spirit are not fit vehicles for the Tao.'

Yielding Is Life

Tao is the uncomplicated essence of what is right. It overflows into everything that is in harmony with it. It is easy, but people still prefer the difficult and intricate little paths, straining to get 'there', when the way 'there' is best found by not making 'there' your goal. Ambition, fretful desire, thirst for fame, striving to be first, are the real hindrances along the way. Take long strides and your progress is unsure. On tiptoe you are unsteady. Grab and it eludes you. Action and achievement are limitations. The Tao has no shape but like an uncarved block of wood it holds within itself an infinity of shapes. Give it shape and it

The three great religions of China are Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism: the founder of Taoism was Lao Tze, and Confucius, who visited him, was overawed by his presence and his learning *Below* The meeting of Confucius and Lao Tze *Right* Lao Tze, Buddha and Confucius, shown tasting saké on a 19th century Japanese sword guard

Chris Barker

Sotheby's/Michael Holford

becomes fulfilled, formalized and limited.

The simple is better than the sophisticated. In the words of the *Tao Te Ching*: 'Relish unflavoured things'. Staying at home is better than wandering: 'The Tao can be known without leaving the house. The further one travels the less one knows.' Silence is better than speech: 'He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know.' Beware the distraction of the senses: 'The eyes of a man blind him; his ears make him deaf.' Cultivate less rather than more: 'Power and learning is adding to oneself more and more. Tao is subtracting day by day.' Submission is better than resistance: 'Rigour is death; yielding is life.' Bureaucracy is remorselessly greedy: 'The more government, the still more government.' Legalism defeats its own purpose: 'As laws increase, crimes increase.'

The *Tao Te Ching* is extremely susceptible to interpretation. When Christian missionaries first discovered the book they were so astonished to find what they thought were resemblances to the teachings of the New Testament, and particularly the Sermon on the Mount, that they called Lao Tze an inspired forerunner of Christ. Some even discovered hints of the doctrine of the Trinity, and found evidence of the Tetragrammaton, the four letters YHVH that make up the name of Jehovah.

Chinese scholars for their part read into the enigmatic verses many strange doctrines, and built up schools of thought and practice on innocuous words and isolated phrases. The expression 'divine man' sparked a search for immortality; 'long life' resulted in the manufacture of elixirs that would enable one to live for centuries; 'taste' inspired a system of dietary observances; 'harmonious infant' laid the foundation for a method of concentration which would create within one's body an embryonic seed that formed the nucleus of another, imperishable body; 'breath retention' started techniques of respiratory mysticism; the 'unknown female' sought the universal life essence in women; 'sex organ' was the beginning of a widespread cult of sexual mysticism.

Taoism actually existed long before Lao Tze, and is sometimes regarded as the primary religion of the Chinese people. One

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of its mythical founders was the fabled Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, who lived about 2600 BC, ten centuries before the Jewish law-giver Moses. In Chinese tradition the Yellow Emperor, like Lao Tze, was reputed to talk at birth. But unlike Lao Tze a great deal of magic was linked with the personal life of the Yellow Emperor, particularly of a sexual kind. Through a combination of the names of these two founders, Taoism is sometimes called the doctrine of Huang Lao, and Taoism in later centuries came to be associated not only with the refined principles of the *Tao Te Ching*, but increasingly with occultism and with the black arts as well.

In the course of time its pantheon came to include ancient deities of sky and mountain, Buddhist gods, deified emperors, legendary and historical personages, a number of 'immortals', spirits of the stars, constellations, moon and sun, and of all things under the sun. There are guardian spirits of wind and cloud, kitchen and sewer, stone and stove, teats and intestines, tongue and teeth, literary works and account books, doors and hinges.

Most Chinese thaumaturgists have claimed kinship with the cult to add distinction to their particular brand of magic, and Taoism evolved an elaborate hierarchy of priest-magicians, both male and female, who were specialists in various branches of Chinese occultism. They communed with the dead, spoke with the ancestors, flew to heaven or hell as the occasion demanded, and cast out demons and invoked celestial spirits. They combined the role of medium, oracle, sorcerer and physician.

The Bandits

Taoism has drawn into its orbit all the floating traditions of Chinese magic and sorcery, adding considerably to the bulk of Chinese superstitions and permeating all branches of Chinese occultism. It absorbed the doctrine of the two basic principles that underlie the universe, Yang the active, male and positive force, and Yin the passive, female and negative force (see CHINA). These contrasting but complementary principles lent themselves to further elaboration along sexual lines. Yang and Yin were said to be found in greater concentration in

The Taoist pantheon came to include a bewildering number and variety of gods and spirits, including deified emperors, real or legendary people, and guardian spirits 'of wind and cloud, kitchen and sewer, stone and stove, literary works and account books . . .' *Left* Hsi Wang Wu, a Taoist deity, walking on the sea: Chinese saucer, 18th century *Right* Bronze mirror of the 3rd century AD, with figures of Taoist gods

the human male and female respectively, but a mutual interchange was beneficial, and this was effected through sexual intercourse in certain special ways, first in normal partnership and later in group orgies, so that the Yang and Yin might be absorbed in greater variety.

Similarly the various forms of Chinese divination, including the highly respected method of the I Ching or Book of Change (see I CHING), were subject to interpretation along Taoist lines. Indigenous schools of medicine and healing, including acupuncture or the curing of bodily ills by pricking the surface of the skin (see ACUPUNCTURE), similarly claimed a Taoist derivation. Astrology or the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs; geomancy or the selection of propitious sites for cities, temples, palaces, private dwellings and graves, all developed on lines indicated by Taoist masters on the subject. Alchemy too evolved along Taoist lines. External alchemy concerned itself with the manufacture of elixirs of immortality. Internal alchemy combined breathing with sex techniques in which subtle fluids were manufactured by the body, and were then potentialized and reabsorbed into the system.

Finally the *Tao Te Ching* provided the theoretical basis for a number of secret societies, many of which combined banditry, sorcery and the precepts of the *Tao Te Ching* with a shrewd knowledge of military strategy and tactics, and these societies remained the bane of Chinese political and social life for more than 18 centuries. The chiefs of these societies virtually ruled large areas of China, and their priest-magicians boasted dominion over the forces of Nature, and claimed to be able to divert rivers and command the lightning.

In 1912 the newly established Chinese Republic tried to put an end to these outlaw organizations, but made little progress as many in their own ranks were themselves Taoists. But the time of the secret societies had run out. In 1930 the Red Army stormed the strongholds of the most enduring of the great societies, entered the sanctuary in their mountain stronghold in the province of Kiang-Si, and smashed all the jars in which their magicians were said to have imprisoned the winds.

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Pervading Unity

At the beginning of the present century we find Taoist religious beliefs and practices still carried on by numerous and mostly secret sects. Among these was the society of the 'Pervading-Unity Tao' (*I-kuan Tao*). This sect believed that the One is the root of all things and, as a principle, penetrates through and pervades all existence . . . Followers of the *I-kuan Tao* were much addicted to the use of charms, planchette, the practice of the 'three secrets' of finger signs, and magic phrases and incantations. They also abstained from meat, tobacco and alcohol. They worshipped images of all religions . . .

Werner Eichhorn, in
The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths

TARA

'NOW UPON another time it chanced that Eochaid Airem, the king of Tara, arose upon a certain fair day in the time of summer and he ascended the high ground of Tara to behold the plain of Breg: beautiful was the colour of that plain.' As the king looks out over his domains he sees a splendid warrior approaching him, unusual both in his beauty and in the splendour of his weapons: 'And Eochaid held his peace, for he knew that none such had been in Tara on the night before, and the gate that led into the enclosure had not at that hour been thrown open' (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*). The majestic warrior is in fact the god Midir coming to claim his wife Etain who, in her state of rebirth countless years later, is now married to the king of Tara.

This is the Tara of the ancient Irish tales, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland, and the focus of much mythological tradition and ritual practice. Here the supernatural is constantly present, and the tales frequently make the visitation of some god or goddess the introduction to some amorous or adventurous situation associated with the otherworld. In the story of the *Adventures of Art son of Conn*, for example, we learn concerning Conn (who subsequently marries a goddess after the death of his wife) that 'Conn the Hundred-Fighter son of Fedlimid Rechtmar son of Tuathal Rechtmar . . . was once at Tara of the kings, the noble conspicuous dwelling of Ireland, for a period of nine years, and there was nothing lacking to the men of Ireland during the time of this king, for indeed, they used to reap the corn three times in the year.'

According to ancient Irish belief, a good king, one whose conduct was in complete accordance with the moral attitudes of his tribe and whose physical being was entirely unblemished, brought prosperity and peace to the land and to the livestock and to the people; the lord of Tara had to be perfect in these respects or he was deposed by his followers. All these things we learn from the rich literary tradition of medieval Ireland which casts so much light on the darkness of the Iron Age world.

The Screaming Stone

There is, moreover, another source of evidence for 'Tara of the Kings' as it was called, the 'noble conspicuous dwelling'. This is the archeological record. Excavations of the site have provided convincing proof of the veracity of the story-tellers in their descriptions of this powerful royal seat, and have given concrete reasons for the recurrent mythological episodes which characterize references to the place in the early tales.

Tara is situated on a low hill in County Meath, 23 miles from Dublin. The remains consist of various earthworks, and a Neolithic passage grave which was used again in the Bronze Age; this suggests that the Iron Age occupants of the site took over a place which was already hallowed, and applied their own religious traditions to it. The Celts venerated divine ancestors, deities who gave their names to the various tribes, and several of their sanctuary sites can be seen to have had religious associations antecedent to their own occupation. At Tara, then, Celtic traditions were clearly attached to an existing hilltop shrine, which contained a passage grave with later burials in the mound which covered it. Just as the Romans tended to construct their temples on ground already sanctified by the presence of native shrines, thereby winning over and at the same time propitiating the supernatural forces already there (as did the Christians in respect to pagan shrines), so we must expect the innovating Celts to have created their holy places at sites which had been made sacred by centuries of ritual and belief. They would thus both conquer the older forces which were believed to control the territory, and at the same time render them quiescent by continuing to observe religious rites there, but in honour of their own deities. The fact that the patron goddess of the great Assembly of Tara was Tea, who is represented in the tales as having been kept in captivity, and that two other powerful goddesses of the early tradition, Etain and Medb, were also closely associated with Tara, suggests that these may have had an ancestry much earlier than the Celtic Iron Age, and linking them with such deities as the tomb goddesses of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Little is known, comparatively speaking

Tara's Halls

The harp that once through Tara's halls
  The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
  As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
  So glory's thrill is o'er;
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
  Now feel that pulse no more.

Thomas Moore

. . . the exaggerated pretensions of St Columcille had come almost at once into opposition with the established laws of the land, the law which enjoined death as the penalty for homicide at Tara . . . Of precisely such a nature – only with far worse and far more enduring consequences – was the cursing of Tara by St Ruadhan of Lothra. The great palace where, according to general belief, a hundred and thirty-six pagan and six Christian kings had ruled uninterruptedly, the most august spot in all Ireland, where a 'truce of God' had always reigned during the great triennial assemblies, was now to be given up and deserted at the curse of a tonsured monk. The great Assembly or Féis of Tara, which accustomed the people to the idea of a centre of government and a ruling power, could no more be convened, and a thousand associations and memories which hallowed the office of the High-king were snapped in a moment. It was a blow from which the monarchy of Ireland never recovered, a blow which, by putting an end to the great triennial or septennial conventions of the whole Irish race, weakened the prestige of the central ruler, increased the power of the provincial chieftains, segregated the clans of Ireland from one another, and opened a new road for faction and dissension throughout the entire island.

Douglas Hyde *A Literary History of Ireland*

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Tara of the Kings, in County Meath, the seat of the High Kings of the Irish and 'the noble conspicuous dwelling of Ireland': a magical stone pillar, the Lia-fail, used in the ceremonies accompanying the enthronement of the High King, was said to scream in the presence of the rightful ruler

of the archeology of this ancient royal seat as yet. There are various features which have been named by antiquarians. The Mound of the Hostages, for example, which has been excavated in recent years, contains the primary passage grave and some 40 Bronze Age burials dating to c 1400 BC. The so-called Royal Enclosure consists of a hilltop enclosure with features which are again suggestive of ritual. It has also been suggested that the Banquet Hall is in fact yet another sacred enclosure of a kind known on the Continent. Other structures associated with the site would also seem to have been of a ritual rather than a domestic character.

Archeology, in conjunction with the vernacular literature, demonstrates that the Celts in general venerated stones of various kinds and that stone pillars in particular were worshipped. At Tara a magical stone pillar, known as the Lia-fail, 'Stone of Fail', was used in the inauguration ceremonies which accompanied the enthronement of the High Kings (see STONES). According to tradition, the stone used to scream when a rightful king was about to be inaugurated. A stone pillar which originally stood near the Mound of the Hostages and today marks an 18th century grave, has been taken to be the Lia-fail; it consists of a pillar of granite some five feet in height. The inauguration and choice of the High Kings was attended by much ritual, and a great bull feast (*tarb-feis*) used to be prepared whereby a seer could envisage in a trance the rightful King of Tara.

ANNE ROSS

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TAROT

The strange and beautiful Tarot cards form a system of communication through symbols, showing the relation between God, man and the universe; the symbols act as stimuli to the imagination and it is for each student to interpret them for himself

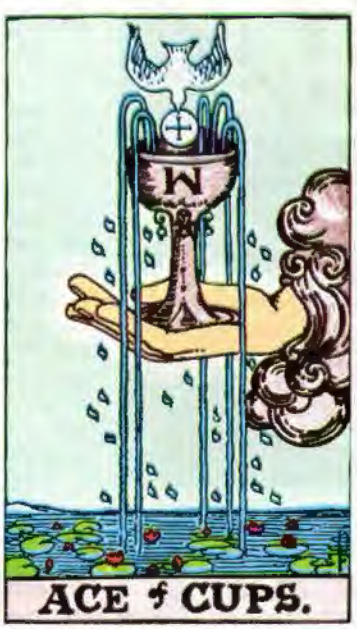
THE UNINITIATED usually regard the Tarot as a system of fortune telling using a special pack of fancy cards. But this is the lowest, if not a debased, aspect of a method of communication by symbol which has behind it not only antiquity but esoteric knowledge. It may be described as 'the cosmic method in universal creation or emanation, including its purpose and result'. As practised by the Western user, it is generally associated with the Tree of Life of the Cabala (see CABALA) but it has also affinities with the pyramids of Egypt and with Indian theosophical philosophy. 'Like all ancient cosmic symbols which are but the reduction of natural law to the simplicity necessary for human use, the Tarot is of the utmost practical value in all senses.'

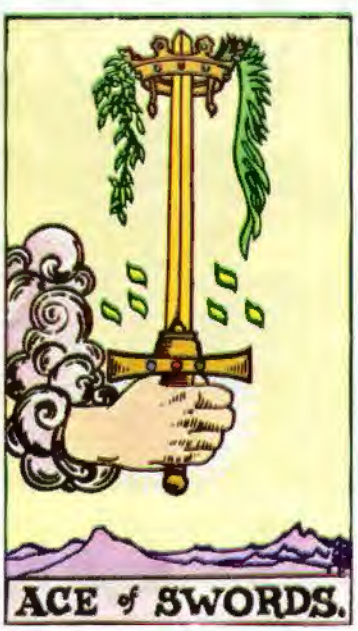
The origins of the Tarot are not clearly defined. A. E. Waite concluded that it had no exoteric history before the 14th century and the oldest examples of Tarot cards probably date from about 1390, while occult tradition places their origin at about 1200 AD. It is said that the gypsies are believed to hold the first set of cards and that they alone hold the secret of its meaning.

According to occultists, the system comes first from the East, probably from Chaldea. After the destruction of the seat of learning in Alexandria, the adepts of all countries converged upon Fez in Morocco and made it the pivot of their esoteric science; since they spoke in many tongues, they decided to create a set of common symbols which all could understand and in which their truths could be pictured. 'As a skeleton for their invention the wise men chose the relatively simple system of numbers and letters afforded by the Qubalah' (S. Mayananda, *The Tarot Today*). The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 letters and these placed upon the 22 Paths of the Tree of Life gave a combination of bases for correspondences (see PATHS). By this system of a pack of cards containing four suits of 14 cards each and 22 trumps unconnected with the suits and called the Major Arcana, ideas could be exchanged without the necessity of either the spoken or the written word.

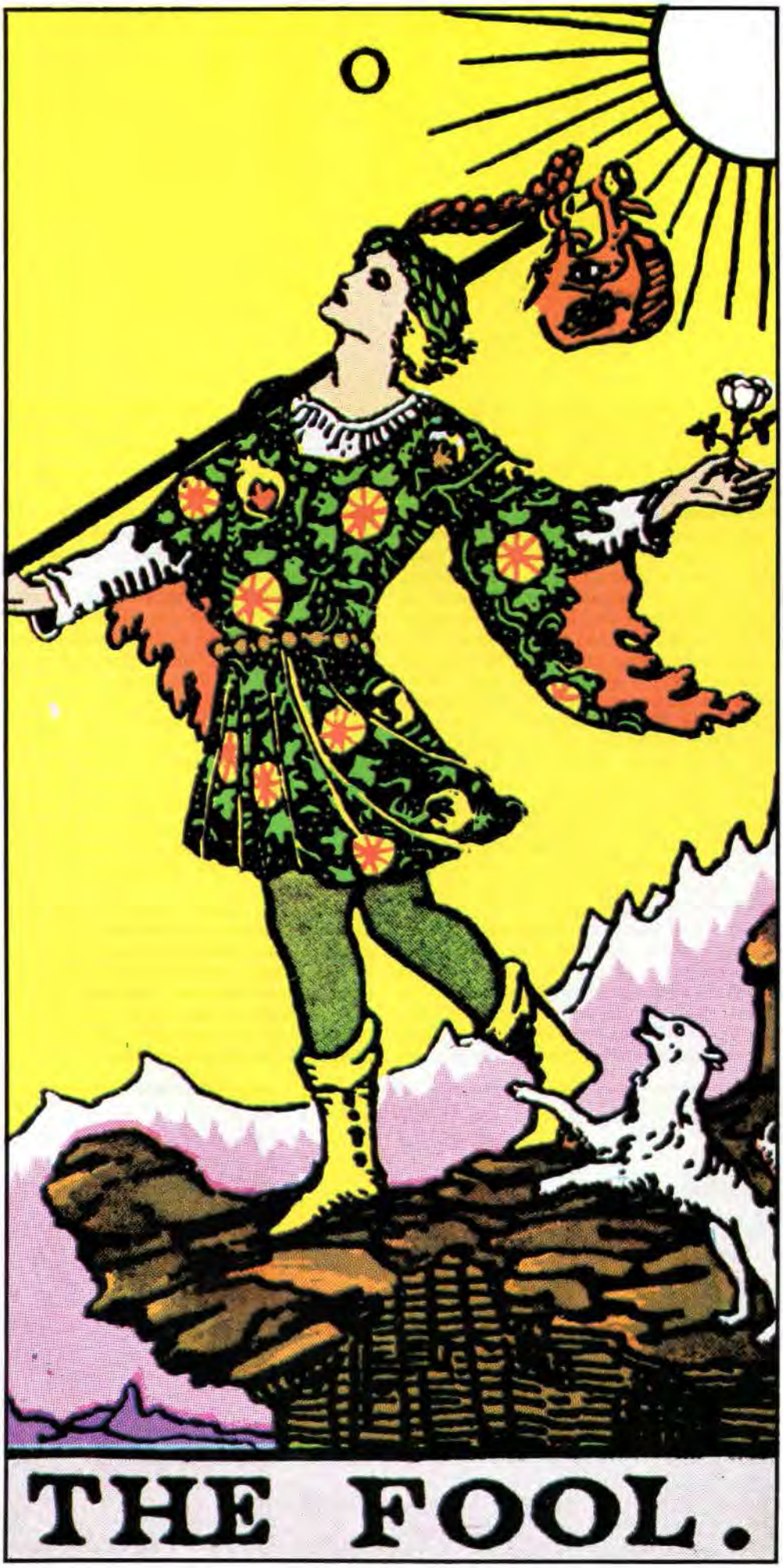
The four suits are designated Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, symbolizing amongst other things fire, water, air and earth: in each suit are four court cards: the King, the essential Self, 'Spirit', in man; the Queen, the 'Soul' or inner pattern part of a particular human personality; the Knight, representing the special focusing of energies and a personal sense of selfhood; the Page or Esquire, standing for the Body or personal vehicle. These four court cards correspond also to the four letters of the sacred Name of God in Hebrew theology – *Yod, He, Vau, He* (see NAMES). Yod is represented by the Kings of the four suits, and more especially by the suit of Sceptres or Wands, and it stands for the First Principle – the origin of all things. The first He symbolizes substance, in opposition to essence, and this is represented by the four Queens and by the suit of Cups, the form which contains the Life and the Feminine Principle. Vau which indicates Affinity completes the Trinity, and is pictured by the bond of love and the mystery of union exemplified by the four Knights and the suit of Swords. To stop there would indicate Finality. So the fourth court card, that of the Page or Esquire, represents the second He, marking the transition from the metaphysical to the

According to occult tradition, the Tarot pack was invented by adepts and forms a complete symbolic system. Different packs use varying designs and symbols, but there is a rough general similarity. The pack has four suits – Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles (*below*) – of 14 cards each, plus 22 extra cards called trumps or Major Arcana





Tarot Production Inc.



The trumps of the 'Waite' pack, drawn by Pamela Coleman Smith under the direction of A. E. Waite: this is probably the best-known and most often used version of the Tarot pack though the cards, shown on this and the following pages, vary from the traditional designs of older packs in many respects

material world – God in man made manifest. This is the suit of Pentacles or Coins, the symbol of material gain but also the five-pointed star which leads man from the unreal to the real.

The Tarot in its cabalistic form sets out to show the relation between God, Man and the Universe, and amongst other things it is a symbol of incarnation. It is one of those immemorial systems which were destined to convey this abstruse fact to mankind in a form that could be appreciated even by almost submerged awareness. Oswald Wirth says that a symbol is designed precisely to awaken in our consciousness the memory of that which we have already known. In other words, the use of the Tarot evokes the associations which we have already formed in the past. In *Le Symbolisme Hermetique* he states that 'a symbol can always be studied from an infinite number of points of view and each thinker has the right to discover in the symbol a new meaning corresponding to the logic of his own conception. Symbols are intended to arouse a thought by means of suggestion and thus cause the truth which lies hidden in our consciousness to reveal itself.'

P. D. Ouspensky (see OUSPENSKY) postulates that only a symbol can deliver man from the slavery of words and formulas, and allow him to attain to the possibilities of thinking freely: '. . . occult knowledge cannot be transmitted either orally or in writing.

The Tarot in its cabalistic form sets out to show the relation between God, Man and the Universe; amongst other things it is a symbol of incarnation

It can only be acquired by deep meditation.'

Tarota or *Taro-Rota* means the Wheel of the Law and the Law of the Wheel, and is a widespread symbol of universal life; the same idea is found in Western symbology in the phrase 'spinning of the Web'.

Dance of Life

There are various methods of using the Tarot cards; reference has already been made to placing them upon the Tree of Life, they can be paired as opposites or complementaries, or they may be set out in a circle or wheel representing the universe.

There are no standard pictures on the packs of Tarot cards. While the pictures are basically the same the presentation may vary. There is one known as the Marseilles or French pack which is probably the oldest in design and can be found reproduced in many books; generally speaking, the designs are crude and not well drawn. Manly P. Hall produced a pack drawn by Augustus Knapp but this is no longer on the market. Paul Foster Case, founder of the Builders of the Adytum, had a pack drawn by Miss Jessie Burns Parke which was very similar to the one usually referred to as the 'Waite' pack, drawn by Miss Pamela Coleman Smith under the direction of A. E. Waite; this, in turn, is generally held to be based on the Oswald Wirth symbolism, though it has been considered that in certain details Dr Waite expressed his personal ideas of symbolism rather than the traditional esoteric ones. There is no reason why any interested student of the Tarot should not make his own pack, provided that he is prepared to undertake the necessary study to incorporate the correct symbols. Instructions for interpreting the meanings of the cards may be found either in booklets sold with the packs, or in the books on the Tarot written by authorities.

While there is an interpretation for each one of the 14 cards in each suit, either right way up or reversed, the ordinary person is chiefly concerned with the Major Arcana, the trumps, since these are the only cards used in dealing with the Tree of Life or with the system of the Wheel.

There are 21 numbers on the cards, and a zero. This is the attribute of the Fool and its position has been the subject of much discussion. Where does one place 0 and what is its significance? Taking the cards in numerical order it would seem clear that 0 should precede 1, yet Papus, one of the best known and most authoritative writers on the Tarot, places it between 20 and 21, and takes it to refer to the Animal Kingdom, that is the Kingdom of Instinct and not of Mind. If it precedes 1 the subsequent cards will fall sensibly upon their paths on the Tree, ending with the card called the Universe on the final path leading to Earth – the Plane of Matter. Israel Regardie says '0 must precede 1. This is the most logical place for it'.

If the method of the Wheel is worked 0 will be placed in the centre as the hub; the remaining 21 cards will fall naturally into three segments of seven apiece, and when studied their mutual correspondence, either complementary, fulfilling or opposing, will be clear. There is a legend that once upon a time a man made a magical table and placed on it statuettes of the major trumps modelled as small golden figures. By his own great knowledge of the mysteries he was able to set the figures in motion and they wove in and out of the figures of the Dance of Life, so that he could see the pattern of evolution. But it was not given either to that adept or to his disciples to be able to move the 22nd figure – that of 0 or the Fool; for if the Fool joins in the dance the world is completed and there is an end to all things as we know them.

In this case the Fool represents the mystery of the Divine Love; when that is understood and he takes his place among the dancers there will be no more sorrow and no more misunderstanding, for the former things will have passed away. It will be the Golden Age in reality; we shall see ourselves in proper relation to God and man; we shall

indeed be united with the Highest and therefore there will be nothing left for which to struggle.

The trumps of the Major Arcana, their sequence and their general meaning are:

0. ***The Fool.*** The picture is of a young man, a bundle over his shoulder, a dog at his heels, gaily treading a cliff edge with no regard for where his steps are leading him. To those who have begun to perceive the esoteric meaning of the cards, this carefree attitude is significant of the man who has followed the Divine Law and become as a little child. In German the title of the card is *Der Sille*, which means the Holy or Innocent one.

1. ***The Magician.*** In exoteric packs this card is sometimes labelled 'The Juggler'; in the Marseilles and other French packs it is called *Le Bateleur*, which means 'the holder of a small farm or estate' in Old French; no previous origin of the word is known, but it could be that the card is intended to represent a lesser Sun. The man in the picture has a figure eight shaped device over his head, a lemniscate, the sign of Universal Life. One of his hands points upwards and the other down, while before him lies a table on which are displayed the four suits of the Tarot pack.

2. ***The High Priestess.*** She sits between two pillars in the place of Equilibrium; partially veiled, a book upon her knees, she is typified in the Book of Wisdom and in the mystical poets; she is the feminine aspect, the reflection of God. In Egypt she represents the Isis of Nature whose veil must not be raised by the profane.

3. ***The Empress.*** This shows a fine woman with flowing hair; she wears a crown with 12 points, signifying the diffusion of the First Principle in the same way that the 12 signs of the zodiac are disseminated and yet form a perfect whole. The card signifies the basis of Reality.

4. ***The Emperor.*** He represents the positive or active form of the Empress; he wields a sceptre which has always been taken as an attribute of the progenitor.

5. ***The Pope or Hierophant.*** This is the complementary opposite of the High Priestess, who is the instructress of the initiates to whom she imparts occult knowledge. The Hierophant gives this knowledge to ordinary people in a practical and oral form that they can understand.

6. ***The Lovers.*** This card represents on one hand the dual nature of man: when the child is first conceived its sex is not determined; the potentials of both sexes are carried by every embryo and one sex is finally assumed in the material world. But the lovers also symbolize the most powerful of all the emotions; love properly expressed brings unity with the beloved, so that this dual card is both an analysis and a synthesis.

7. ***The Chariot.*** This portrays the man who has vanquished the elementary forces. It is the final card of the first seven into which the 21 numbered trumps are divided when they become a triad in the Wheel system; on the Tree of Life in the Hebrew version the card corresponds with the Hebrew letter *Zayin*, which signifies Victory in All Worlds.

8. ***Justice.*** This card stands for equilibrium in all worlds and in all forms. Occult science has been taught in word and in deed; the sword and the balance are the reward of a man's acts, whether they be black or white. As a man sows, so shall he

reap. (In the Waite pack, illustrated here, and in several later ones, cards 8 and 11 are transposed.)

9. ***The Hermit.*** This card sometimes pictures an old man and sometimes a young one. If he is old he is thought to be the man aged in years who yet has a young heart; if he is a young man, he is one who has already learned to walk in the right way. He wears the cloak of protection, carries the lamp of wisdom and is supported by the staff of righteousness. His quality is prudence, and some packs will give the card this name rather than that of the Hermit. His significance is silence regarding the Inner Knowledge.

10. ***The Wheel of Fortune or the Wheel of Life.*** This card does not denote anything in the way of chance but is the symbol of the eternal action of time, the continuous rotation of the aeons, the mutable laws each recurring in turn and then resting in Equilibrium.

11. ***Strength.*** This is the strength of the young girl closing the mouth of the lion; above her head is the lemniscate – the sign of spiritual life and virility. Here is the counterpart of the young child in the cockatrice's den; she is Sir Galahad in opposition: 'my strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure'. Galahad the boy knight is as sexless as this maiden.

12. ***The Hanged Man.*** This most curious of all cards has been given different interpretations by different writers but it is generally accepted that it stands for Equilibrated Power. In the Hebrew alphabet the letter *Mem* accompanies this figure on the path of the Tree and is one of the three 'mother letters', standing for water. In all occult matters the element of water signifies a change of plane or of consciousness. This man has come far enough on the road to find absolute submission to the Will Divine.

13. ***Death.*** Death is the culmination of life in the exoteric sense; in the esoteric meaning it is the passing from one stage of progress to the next. Death has been termed the Negative of Realization, the universal link between material and spiritual. Nearly all versions of this card are based upon a skeleton, and include the very ancient phallic symbol of the sickle or curved blade.

14. ***Temperance.*** Here man is individualized. The water of life is being poured out and he has the power to accept or reject it for himself.

15. ***The Devil.*** This is a card which has puzzled many people but if it be looked at carefully it will be seen to represent No 1, the Magician, in reverse. The power is now misused. The right hand, the hand of power, points sometimes downwards and sometimes upwards, and those he has taken in bondage are in chains at his feet. The card is sometimes referred to as Pan, unbridled Nature, and his lighted torch is the symbol of destruction. He is to be feared and to be conquered. To allow him to gain the mastery is to allow Matter to overcome Spirit.

16. ***The Tower Struck by Lightning.*** This card is usually said to be symbolic of the Fall of man; here is the Tower of Babel; man is being hurled into materialism; as he proceeds down the Tree of Life he becomes more man and less God. But it must be noted that in two French versions this card is considered to be a divine happening; one refers to it as 'The Fire of Heaven' and the other as 'The House of God'.

Pat Keene/Mahlig

17. ***The Star.*** This picture represents the Word in action in Nature. The butterfly or ibis symbol is a sign that the spirit is not lost though man may have far to go; the spirit will survive and the Fall is not irreparable.

18. ***The Moon.*** Here again is comfort for the soul in involution. The material world is only a reflection; man can descend no lower, and the Spirit is now immersed in Matter from which it must eventually start to climb again. Yet other writers have other ideas. S. Mayananda says, 'The picture presented by this Trump is a terrible travesty of what should be shown, or rather it is but the negative half. It seems to have been dictated by sorcerers or the Church in whose teaching the "world" is merely an evil condition to escape from to "Heaven".' And an Indian writer, Govinda, says of this card 'the symbolism of the elements moves on many planes'.

19. ***The Sun.*** This picture represents the first of the elemental kingdoms beginning its slow progress by development back to God. Spirit is renewed in a different form; man is freshened for his evolutionary climb and the mineral kingdom is slowly individualizing.

20. ***Judgement.*** Life is progressing a little further up the stairway, for this trump governs the evolutionary development of the vegetable kingdom.

21. ***The Universe.*** Here in this last card the macrocosm and the microcosm have met. Here the Earth of matter is represented in the four quarters – the four Worlds – and here the four animals of the Apocalypse and of the vision of Ezekiel are depicted. It is the reconstruction of the synthesis of all and the figure of the androgyne is lightly veiled; as with the Lovers, sex is undefined. This represents in one form God in man at the foot of the middle pillar of the Tree of Life.

These are the major trumps of the Tarot pack. Only one suggestion of meaning can be given by any one person in a limited space; and it must be remembered that there are meanings to each trump according to the understanding of each student, and that they are intended to act as stimuli to the imagination. Each and every writer on the Tarot will have something different to say, will develop another aspect; all anyone can do is to suggest an approach. This is a system of universal communication by symbol and therefore it must be sufficiently fluid to allow each man to use it as an expression of his ideas on the Absolute. The more that is read about the Tarot; the more the cards are meditated upon, the greater will be the flow of understanding and the wider the comprehension.

(See also CARDS; WALDENSES.)

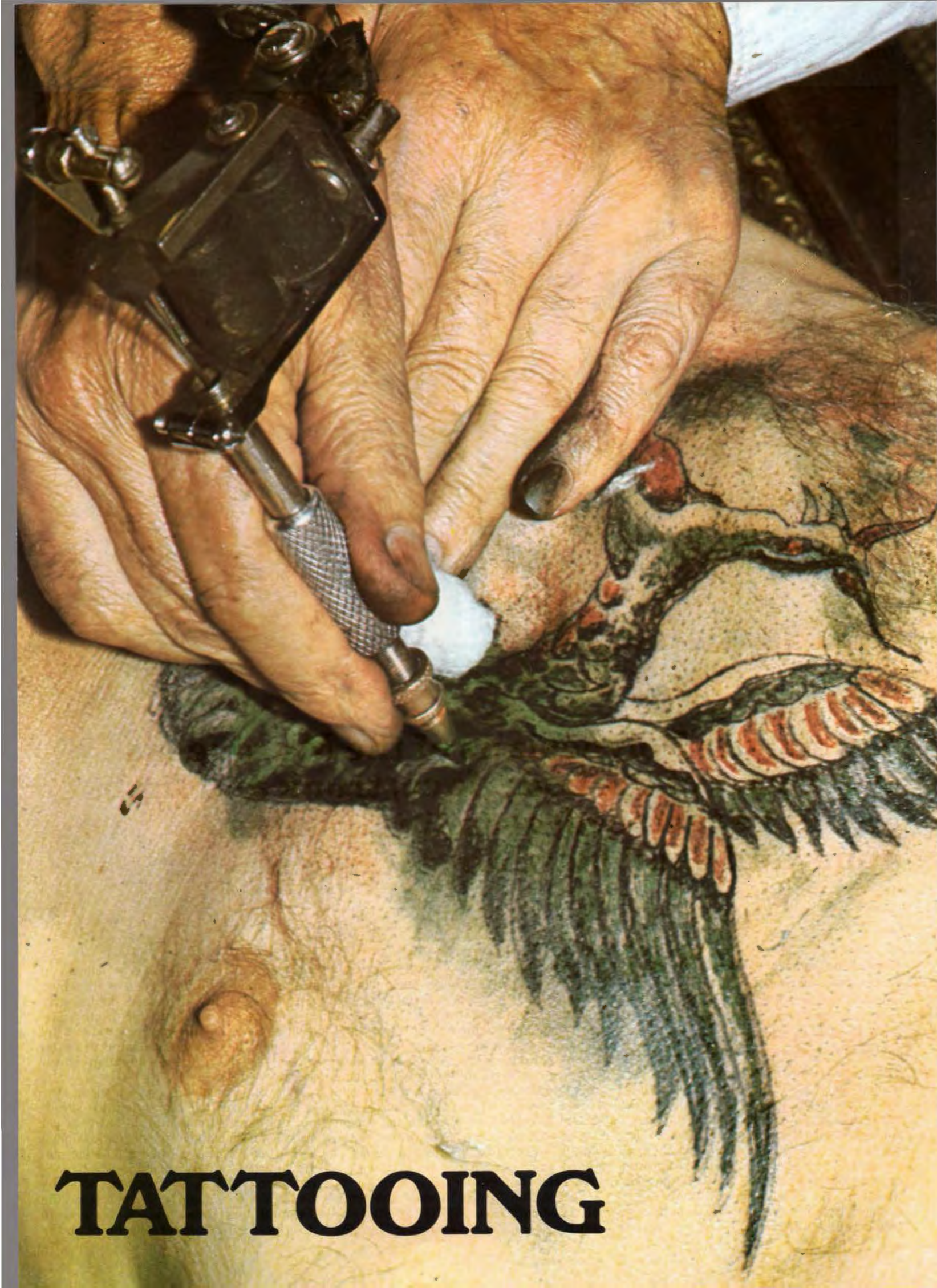
CHRISTINE HARTLEY

FURTHER READING: P. F. Case, *The Tarot* (Macoy, 1977); M. Dummett, *Game of Tarot* (Duckworth, 1980); S. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot,* (U.S. Games Systems, 1978); Gareth Knight, *Practical Guide to Quabalistic Symbolism* (Weiser); R. Cavendish, *The Tarot* (Harper & Row, 1975); Papus, *Tarot of the Bohemians* (Weiser); A. E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah; The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* (Citadel).

There are almost as many interpretations of the Tarot as there are interpreters, and the meanings attributed to each card vary with the understanding of the student *Above* The Tarot may be used for fortune telling, although occultists generally regard this as the lowest use to which the cards can be put; during a reading the client shuffles and cuts the cards of the Major Arcana (*left*); these are then returned to the reader, who spreads them into a fan (*right*) from which the client selects seven cards which are placed clockwise on the table *Below* The cards of the Major Arcana laid out according to the system of the Wheel; the Fool is placed in the centre as the hub, and the student of the Tarot then meditates upon the significance of the cards, either complementary, fulfilling or opposing

Pat Keene/Mahlig

John Moss



TATTOOING

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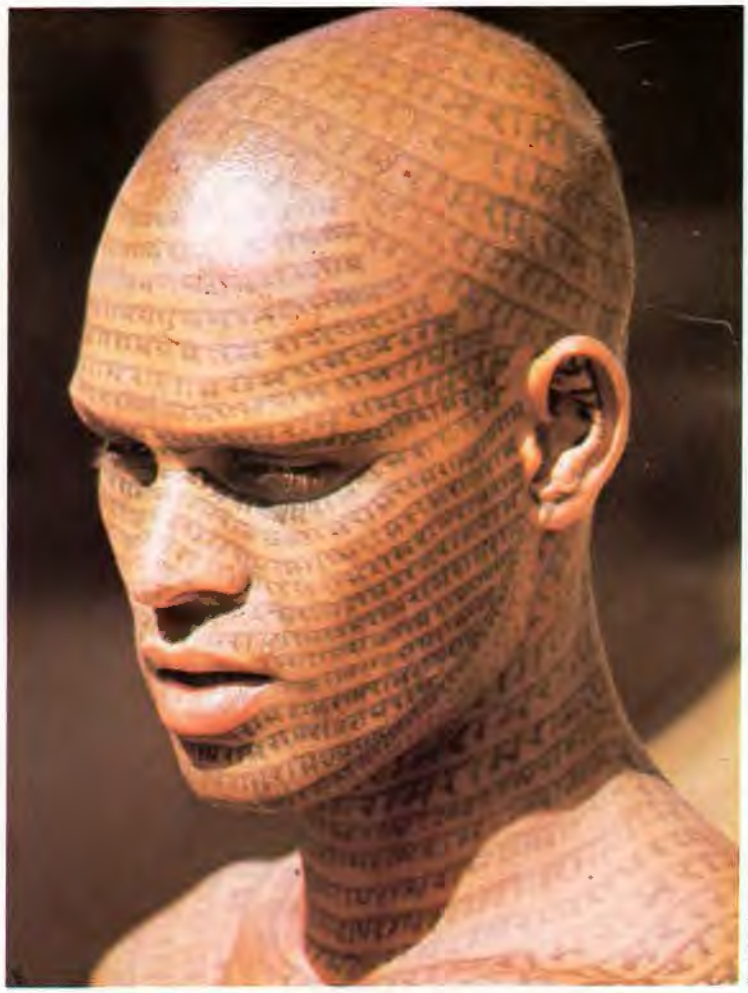


R. K. Singh

Among the Polynesians of the Marquesas every part of the body, face, trunk and limbs had to be tattooed; even lips, eyelids, gums and skull were not excluded

Elaborate decoration of the face and body satisfies an almost universal human drive; in many primitive societies tattooing and cicatrization have ritual importance as part of an initiation rite, and marks on the body often emphasize an individual's achievements or social status

THE URGE TO ENHANCE the beauty of the human body by artificial means is worldwide, but the techniques of doing so differ from culture to culture and age to age. Among peoples who do not wear clothes, or whose clothing is sparse, efforts at altering the body's natural appearance concentrate on the decoration of the actual surface of the skin. The most prevalent methods of achieving this may be classified as painting, tattooing and cicatrization.

Painting includes all types of decoration in which coloured substances are applied to the skin without causing permanent discoloration. Tattooing consists of pricking pigment into the skin in such a way as to produce, under a smooth surface, a permanent pattern, usually of black or blue. This may be done in two ways. A small chisel or adze-like implement can be used to produce grooves in the skin, into which pigment is rubbed; or a needle and thread covered with soot may be drawn under the skin. In some cases the desired design is painted or imprinted on the skin with a stamp before the tattooer sets to work.

Cicatrization, which involves the artificial creation of scars, is effected by scratching, cutting, piercing or burning the skin. The wounds may be allowed to heal naturally, forming plain scars which are usually slightly depressed, or they may be aggravated so that they form deep gashes. Raised scars may be produced by continued and extremely painful irritation which results in the proliferation of regenerative tissue.

All these methods of changing the appearance of the skin are widespread, but the most extreme forms of cicatrization are confined mainly to the dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Australia and Melanesia.

The word 'tattoo', sometimes spelt 'tatu', was introduced to the Western world by Captain Cook, and is derived from the Tahitian term *tatau*, which is used to describe the marking or puncturing of the

Horniman Museum

During tattooing pigment is pricked into the skin so that a permanent pattern is produced under a smooth surface *Previous page* A tattooist at work in London *Facing page* Patterns formed by tattooing vary in different parts of the world; plain stripes are imprinted on the face, neck and shoulders of a New Guinea woman (*far left*) while a formalized design (*left*) covers an Indian's shaven head *Right* Selection of implements used for tattooing and marking the flesh includes (*back row, left to right*) a skin-marker from Guyana, tattooing instruments from New Zealand, Borneo and Japan, and (*front*) implement used in making Hindu caste-marks and tattooing tools from Burma

skin for ornamental purposes. Although tattooing in its most elaborate form was found among the Polynesians of such islands as the Marquesas and New Zealand, the technique was well known to the ancient civilizations of the Near East and the Mediterranean countries.

The pre-dynastic tombs of Egypt (c 3500 BC) contained clay figurines which bear marks suggesting tattoos, and the Egyptians of the New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC) tattooed their breasts and arms with the names and symbols of deities. In more recent times the practice has been common in many parts of Egypt, reflecting a persistence of the custom throughout more than 5000 years. Today its purpose is mainly curative, and tattooing is used for such ailments as headache, toothache, weak eyesight and possession. There are suggestions that it is a sign of sexual maturity, and it is also used to enhance sex-appeal.

In Iraq tattooing is believed to increase a woman's fertility, and her chances of becoming pregnant. It is also used for protective purposes. A woman who has had several children who have died will try to save the next by having it tattooed, for the practice is held to confer a long and vigorous life.

In Europe tattooing was known to Greek and Latin writers of the classical period. Herodotus mentions that Thracian women were tattooed as a sign of noble status, while Pliny refers to Dracian and Sarmatian men being tattooed. The custom was also current among several tribes of ancient Gaul, but was not practised by the Greeks and Romans. It seems to have disappeared from all parts of medieval Europe. The revival of tattooing among certain classes, such as sailors, may be the result of contacts with Asian and African countries where it was widespread, and often practised by professionals whose services were available to European travellers. It was common among the pre-Columbian indigenous population of the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and South America. Other areas where there is a high frequency of tattooing are Polynesia, including New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma. It is practised to a lesser extent in India and Tibet. Although it was common in ancient China it soon ceased to be used as decoration and survived only as a distinctive mark. Today elaborate tattoos are found mainly among primitive peoples.

In traditional Maori society (see MAORI) men of aristocratic families had their entire faces tattooed, the patterns consisting of intricate designs of curved lines which formed spirals and arabesques and emphasized the nose and chin. Each chief was tattooed with the design peculiar to his family or tribe, while the figures marked on the faces of dependants and retainers were the same in form as those by which the chief was distinguished, although they were less elaborate. During the operation of tattooing a Maori chief had to be fed through a special funnel, for he was not allowed to touch his food, and a strict taboo prevented him from communicating with anyone not in the same condition. The pattern imprinted on the faces of Maori women was much simpler than that tattooed on the men, and covered mainly the upper lip and the chin. It was a disgrace for a woman not to have her mouth tattooed, for red lips were thought to be shameful. The operation was performed as soon as a girl had reached puberty. A girl's tattoo was also a sign of her maturity in Tahiti.

The most extensive tattooing found anywhere in the world was that common among the Polynesians of the Marquesas Islands. There every part of the body, face, trunk and limbs had to be tattooed, and even lips, eyelids, gums and skull were not excluded. The tattoo was applied in several stages, each taking three to six months. It was rare for a tattoo to be completed before a man reached the 30th year of his life. The women were not as extensively tattooed. The designs and motifs in Polynesian tattoo patterns are largely the same as those used in the decoration of implements and boats; it seems that they are chiefly ornamental.

In Polynesia it is commonly believed that tattooing originated among the gods, and a similar idea is current among the Ainus, in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago. Their women are tattooed on their lips and arms in order to keep away the demons of disease, who believe them to be the wives of gods, since the gods are tattooed in the same manner.

Tattooing is an essential part of an initiation rite among the inhabitants of the Indonesian island of Mentawei, and no man who has not undergone it is allowed to marry. The tattooing is done with the aid of two little sticks, on one of which is a vertical needle. This tool is used by tapping it with the other stick to make small punctures in the skin, into which the colouring matter, the darkened sap of sugarcane, is inserted. The design starts with a convex bow running from the chin to the shoulders, and lines are also made over the breast to the pit of the stomach. The hips, arms, legs and fingers are tattooed. A man's upper legs are always tattooed just before marriage. The calves of the legs, the backs of the hands, and the sides of the body are the last areas to be decorated. Formerly this was always done at the time of a special religious ceremony involving the

In some Naga tribes great ritual and social importance is attached to the tattooing of girls; the operation has the character of a 'rite of passage'

Left **Fantastic animals tattooed on the mummified arm of a Siberian chief who lived in the 5th century BC** ***Below*** **Designs on a sailor's arms and chest; many seamen have themselves tattooed, as a mark of virility and heroic adventure** ***Below right*** **Intricate tattoo, typical of the elaborate designs that may still be seen in modern Japan**

purification of the participants and the sacrifice of animals. This particular rite was performed to nullify the evil influence of blood shed when someone was stabbed inside the village or killed by a crocodile. A special porch was constructed to prevent the blood that flowed from the tattooing, and which was intended to 'cover the blood of the dead man', from falling on the ground. Every village has its own pattern of tattooing. After a headhunting expedition the victorious warriors were traditionally allowed to have the beheaded man's image tattooed on their bodies.

The custom of using tattoos to register martial deeds is widespread. Among the mountain tribes of the Philippines, such as the Kalingas, successful headhunters were entitled to cover their chests, and in some cases also their backs, with elaborate patterns. Even women who participated in headhunting expeditions as carriers were marked with a special sign. But not all tattooing has a symbolic character, and Kalinga women cover their necks and arms with intricate designs made from lines as a form of decoration.

The Naga tribes of the Assam-Burma borderland (see NAGAS) also tattoo the bodies, and in some cases the faces, of men who have been successful in headhunting raids. The Kanyak Nagas, in particular, cover the faces of warriors with an extensive pattern of curved broad lines, giving them a fierce expression. The tattoos on their chests consist of geometric patterns combined with small figures of men which represent enemies killed in war. However, tattooing is not confined to men and in some Naga tribes great ritual and social importance is attached to the tattooing of girls. For them the operation has the character of a 'rite of passage', symbolizing the transition from one stage of life to another.

The tattoo of an Ao Naga woman consists

C. M. Dixon

Pat Keene

John Hillelson Agency

Strength from the Forest

With regard to preferences among the women as to where they give birth, it varies. But there is unanimity that if there is any difficulty at all, then the right thing to do is to go off away from the camp and into the forest, which will 'help'. The forest appears quite clearly as helper and protector in the vine and wooden medicines and charms, and in the scarification that will take place at the first sign of sickness. Even with adults this is done: the skin is cut in a number of small slits with an arrow, and some of the flesh is gouged out. The ashes prepared from forest woods and plants are made into a paste with spittle and rubbed into the wounds. When the skin grows back, the black ash is still visible beneath, and is regarded as a source of the strength and health and happiness that derive from the forest . . . Insofar as this strength is conveyed by washing the baby with the juice of forest vines, tattooing it with forest ashes and binding it with forest symbols, this may be regarded as sympathetic magic. But it is better regarded as the beginning of a lifetime of close intimacy between the Mbuti and the forest . . .

Colin M. Turnbull *Wayward Servants: The Two Worlds of the African Pygmies*

roughly of four vertical lines on the chin, a chain of lozenges from the throat to the bottom of the breast-bone, inverted V's on the front of the shoulders and the stomach, solid squares on the wrists, an arrow pattern on the knee and lozenges on the lower part of the leg. It usually takes five years to complete this elaborate ornamentation. When a girl is about ten or 11 years old her legs are tattooed up to the bottom of the calf; the next year her chin, chest and the front of her shoulders are completed; in the third year the pattern on the calf is done, and in the fourth year the knees are tattooed; in the final year her wrists and stomach are ornamented. All the girls of the same age are tattooed in the same year, although in small villages there may not be enough girls to make it worth while calling a tattooer every year. In this case some of them may have reached marriageable age before their tattoo has been completed. Once a girl is married the only addition that may be made is on the wrists, and there are numerous women whose tattoo pattern has never been completed.

The tattooing is carried out in the jungle near the village by old women, and no male may be present. The pattern is marked on the skin with a piece of wood dipped in colouring matter, and the girl is held firmly to the ground while the marked-out design is punctured all over with an adze-like instrument to which a little bunch of cane-thorns is attached. The black colouring matter is applied once again after the blood has been washed off. The process is exceedingly painful, and if a girl struggles and screams overmuch a fowl is sacrificed close by to appease any evil spirit that may be increasing her pain. The punctures sometimes become infected resulting in bad sores, and a girl may occasionally lose a leg. However, considering the lack of precautions against infection, the proportion of septic cases is small.

Passport to Heaven

The Baigas, a primitive tribe of middle India, also regard tattoos as greatly enhancing feminine beauty, and aesthetic considerations are foremost in their attitude to the practice. That they are inextricably linked with the function of tattoo marks as a powerful sexual stimulant is partly indicated by the fact that a girl's arms and breasts are not tattooed until she is adolescent, nor her legs until her marriage. Tattooing seems to play a role in the skin-eroticism that is a strong sexual agent in Baiga love-making. Women themselves take great pride in their marks, mainly no doubt, because they know it increases their attractiveness to their men. A woman's husband is forbidden to watch her being tattooed, and for two days afterwards she is treated as though she were menstruating. Her body is then covered with turmeric and oil, and she bathes. A triangular decoration on the forehead is generally made when a girl is about five years old, and on the breast is the figure of a peacock or of a basket, done when the girl reaches puberty. At the time of marriage, or later, a pattern is applied to the back of the hands and lines of dots are tattooed on the thighs.

Among the Muria Gonds of the middle Indian highlands, tattooing is used mainly for feminine adornment. The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is desirable that girls should be tattooed before marriage, and if possible before they are betrothed. The marks also appear to be a kind of passport to heaven. According to a Muria saying, 'the god of heaven will punish a girl who dies without being tattooed, but if she brings him beautiful drawings from the terrestrial regions, he will keep her with him and look after her'. The tattooing is done by women of a special caste, and a myth relates how a goddess performed the operation on a woman of that caste at the beginning of time, and then instructed her in the art of tattooing. The method followed today is still the same as that described in the myth. Lamp-black, charcoal and pounded incense are mixed with castor oil and then burnt in a potsherd over a fire. The resulting black deposit is used as colouring matter which is pricked into the girl's skin with needles.

Some Indian tribes ascribe protective qualities to tattoo marks, particularly if they represent symbols of family or guardian deities. But in other cases they are curative; tattooing over a tumour is supposed to relieve it, for instance, and applied to the belly it will cure colic. Some Gonds tattoo the figure of a horse on the front of their thighs, and of a saddle between the knee and thigh, to represent the horse god who can make their thighs as strong as those of a horse; or they mark each upper arm with the image of Hanuman, the monkey god who is a symbol of strength; this is believed to enable a man to carry unusually heavy weights. Cicatrization is not unknown among the tribal people of India, although it is not used as extensively as in Africa and Australia. The Oraons of Bihar brand young boys in five or six places on one arm with a piece of burning cloth before admitting them to the bachelors' hall, and Gonds brand their joints with burning wood in the belief that this will make them supple for dancing.

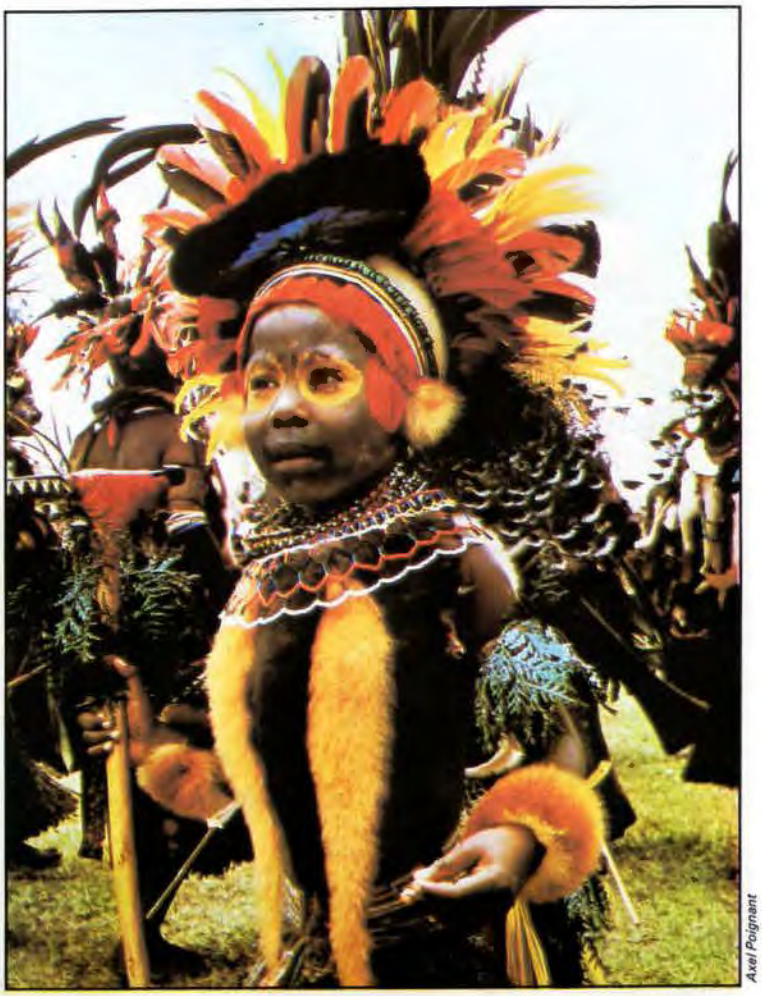
Tattooing is also widespread among the Indians of the tropical zone of South America. The usual tattoo of the Apiaca Indians consisted of three lines extending from each ear to the nose, mouth and chin. At the age of 14 a boy's face-tattoo was completed with a rectangle around the mouth, indicating that the wearer was allowed to eat human flesh. The designs on the body illustrated a man's deeds in war and hunting. They included crude representations of animals, fish, men and women applied to the arms and legs. Among the tribes of the Xingu region a person's social importance was indicated by the width of the vertical stripe running down the middle of the face. A chief's face was tattooed all over, and gave the impression of being totally black.

While in most societies tattooing is done mainly for aesthetic purposes, it may also fulfil a protective function. The women of certain Arab communities of Morocco, for instance, have small crosses or other designs tattooed on their cheeks or the tips of their noses to avert the Evil Eye.

Cicatrization is widespread among the dark-skinned races of Africa, and the scars,

Body painting may be practised for religious or ceremonial reasons, or it may be purely decorative *Above right* A tribesman, his face painted white in order to intimidate the enemy, and a child (*far right*), his face decorated with paint *Right* A woman in ceremonial costume. All these examples of body painting are from New Guinea *Far right* A young girl's sexuality is emphasized by the formal pattern painted on her body *Following page* New Guinea tribesmen; their bodies are covered in mud as a sign of mourning

Axel Poignant



Axel Poignant

Axel Poignant

Carl Peruitz

Axel Poignant

Harald Schultz

Harald Schultz

Axel Poignant

The artificial creation of scars, cicatrization is caused by cutting, scratching, burning or piercing the skin; the wounds may be allowed to heal naturally, or they may be aggravated so that a raised scar is produced *Above left* and *Above* A Brazilian Indian undergoes a form of cicatrization in which vertical lines are scratched into his leg *Above right* Aborigine woman: the cicatrix strengthens her breasts and is also decorative

which are produced artificially on the face as well as other parts of the body, often serve as distinctive marks by which members of a tribe or clan can be recognized (see MUTILATION). In many tribes the operation forms part of the initiation rites of boys and girls, and is therefore a sign that social maturity has been attained. Similar practices occurred among many of the aboriginal tribes of Australia, and also among the indigenous and now extinct inhabitants of Tasmania. The scars, which usually cover the chest and abdomen and sometimes also the shoulders and arms, were produced by cutting the skin with sharp shells or stone-blades and by rubbing clay or sand into the wounds to delay the healing process. The scars are partly decorative and partly indicative of social situations. For instance, bereaved persons may inflict scarification on themselves to express their sorrow over the death of a relative. As in Africa the operation is also performed during the initiation rites through which boys attain the status of fully privileged members of the tribe (see INITIATION).

Paint for Beauty and Status

In the course of these rites and other religious ceremonies, the Australian aborigines change their appearance by painting their faces and whole bodies in a variety of fantastic patterns. The only colours available are red, yellow, white and black, and these are applied in broad bands and stripes. The aborigines often use their own blood, which they draw from their veins, as a basis for the paint.

Body painting is also widespread among the tribesmen of New Guinea and other islands of Melanesia, where, in addition to wearing masks, it transforms the appearance of men who represent ghosts and ancestor spirits when performing the ritual dances which form part of initiation rites and agricultural ceremonies. But the face and body are also painted for cosmetic reasons, and Melanesians make a clear distinction between decorative painting, which enhances their beauty, and the custom of smothering themselves in soot to extinguish all their attractions as a sign of mourning.

The Indians of South America, many of whom wore no clothes before they came in contact with Europeans, make extensive use of paint to adorn body and face. The most common pigments are red and blueish-black, both of which are derived from locally available vegetable substances. Some of these pigments remain indelible for ten days or more, and travellers often confused these apparently permanent painted patterns with tattoos. Among the Indians of the Uapes-Caqueta region, body painting is widely practised by both sexes, elaborate designs being produced by a roller dye. Women paint the undersurface of the jaw and throat blue to achieve a curious sculptured effect for ceremonial occasions, and smear their faces with red pigment to ward off danger on working days. Their backs are crudely spattered with blue pigment, but care is taken with painted designs on the legs, thighs, breasts and face (see COSTUME).

Elaborate painted designs were also common among the Tupi Indians. The combination of arabesques, frets, undulating lines, and other motifs differed so greatly in the various groups that a person's tribal affiliation could be immediately discerned. The design was named after an animal, the markings of which were supposed to have served as a model.

The custom of decorating the body, either permanently or temporarily, appears to exist in primitive and more advanced societies throughout the world. Tattooing and cicatrization are the most common types of permanent decoration, and though similar methods are used in widely separated countries it can hardly be assumed that the wide distribution of such techniques is entirely due to diffusion. Specific styles, such as the elaborate tattoo patterns of Polynesia and the Philippines, which cover the whole body and represent an art form comparable to painting or sculpture, are certainly associated with a definable cultural tradition, but the actual technique of inserting pigment into the skin must have arisen independently in various parts of the world.

There can be little doubt that artificial modifications in the appearance of the body by tattooing, cicatrization and painting developed in early prehistoric times, but tangible evidence is limited by the impermanence of human flesh and the substances used. Tattooing has, however, been found on mummified corpses from tombs of the first millennium BC in the Altai region of central Asia, but such discoveries are rare; for the most part evidence is provided by stamps of baked clay which were used to apply paint to the skin, and earthen palettes used in the preparation of paint for cosmetic purposes. These palettes have been found on various Neolithic sites as well as among the ruins of higher civilizations. It seems that the modern practice of elaborate cosmetic make-up satisfies an almost universal human drive, and has its antecedents in the earliest civilizations accessible to archeological research.

Aesthetic considerations may be the most frequent, and are often the dominant, motives behind the practice of tattooing; but they are usually by no means the only reasons for the importance which many societies attach to body marks. Among peoples who lack a system of writing, tattoos and patterns painted on the body are a convenient means of recording and publicizing information about an individual's activities and achievements, and they may serve a similar purpose in societies where there are no distinctive clothes, uniforms or badges of rank to emphasize the status or social condition of persons and groups. However, their role as identifying labels becomes obsolete where more precise and sophisticated symbols are available to indicate the rank of individuals or the identity of groups.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

FURTHER READING: W. D. Hambly, *History of Tattooing* (Witherby, 1925).

Tau
Last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so connected with the end of the world and believed to be the sign with which the righteous would be marked, to protect them in the last days; as a result, a T-shaped cross, or St Anthony's cross, became a protective device against evil.
See CROSS; TALISMANS.

Taurobolium
Rite in the Mysteries of Cybele and Attis; the initiate descended into a pit and was drenched in the blood of a bull which was slaughtered above him; after this the initiate was regarded as 'reborn'.
See BAPTISM.

TAURUS

THE SECOND sign of the zodiac, Taurus the Bull was identified by the Greeks with Zeus's transformation into a bull when he abducted Europa; to the Babylonians he was the heavenly bull whose rising marked the beginning of spring.

Taurus is ruled by Venus, and people born under this sign are governed by their affections; they will go out of their way to avoid ill feeling. Modest, they do not seek popularity. Because he is associated with the earth, Taurus has been described as hefty, clodhopping, obstinate, lazy and the opposite of intellectual. However, these adjectives are no longer thought to apply to the constellation. The following description, by the 1st century AD Roman astrologer Manilius, has similarly been superseded:

> Dull honest Taurus to manure the field
> Strong Taurus bears, by him the Grounds are till'd:
> No gaudy things he breeds, no prize for worth,
> But blesseth Earth, and brings her Labour forth.

According to modern astrologers, although Taurus is not ambitious his rewards are the fruit of his toil, and not the result of getting others to work for him. Valens, a classical writer of the 2nd century AD, says: 'Those born will be good handicraftmen, hard-working, good at keeping things, fond of pleasure and music, and generous: but some of them will be labourers, planters, and builders. And if the benefics (that is, Jupiter and Venus) aspect the ascendant, or the ruler is well placed, they become high priests or athletic trainers, and are awarded wreaths and purple robes, statues and busts, and are given charge of sacred rites and become notable and famous.'

This is the origin of the association that Taurus is supposed to have with money. In fact, this sign actually symbolizes not money but real wealth, the result of the material forces of production. However, music is also a Taurean art, and people born under Taurus are competent musicians and singers. The influence of Venus means that the Taurean is fond of pleasure, generous and more than usually amorous. The bull is naturally highly sexed, but his attitude to sex is uncomplicated and he does not need to be stimulated by artificial glamour. Taurus's keynote is devotion, to a person, an ideal or simply to his work. His love is deep, lasting and undemanding. Humble by nature, he feels that he has no right to ask anything for himself.

The Babylonians associated Taurus with the heavenly bull whose rising marked the coming of spring. People born under this sign of the zodiac are said to be good-natured and reliable; fond of pleasure, they are nevertheless hard workers, often scholars or philosophers and often extremely creative: illustration from *Stars and Marvels of the East*, a 12th century English manuscript

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Faithful Friend
Because he is ruled by Venus there is nothing heavy or unimaginative about Taurus. Although sensitive and keen-witted, the Taurean is not afraid of hard work or dirt or the unpleasant aspects of life, but accepts them as part of living. He enjoys beauty, however, and tries to avoid ugliness.

Emotionally truthful, the person born under Taurus is good-natured, reliable and a faithful friend. But he is inclined to brood, and needs encouragement. If religious, he is not necessarily conventional in his beliefs even though he is strong in faith and devotion. The Taurean gift for profound study makes scholars, philosophers and artists, and people born under this sign excel at work that requires patience.

THOMAS TAYLOR

THE FIRST TRANSLATOR of Plato's work into English was Thomas Taylor the Platonist (1758–1835). His edition, published in 1804, includes nine dialogues by Floyer Sydenham (who had died in a debtors' prison). Taylor's edition includes long introductory essays, and extensive notes, with long extracts from the Commentaries of Proclus. He also translated much of Plotinus, founder of the Neoplatonist school of philosophy, and the principal works of his successors, Porphyry, Iamblichus, the Emperor Julian, Sallust and Proclus, besides the Chaldean Oracles, the Orphic Hymns and the works of Aristotle, and many minor works. To all these he added long introductory essays and notes; of his own writings, the most important is his *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*.

His translations have been superseded; his English style has at all times been criticized; according to Coleridge he translated Proclus from 'difficult Greek into incomprehensible English'. S. Mackenna's translation of Plotinus is, as a work of literature, superior to Taylor's; in philosophic exactness of rendering this is not always so: he himself wrote that 'in perusing the works of these great men, the reader must not expect the sublimest truths to be explained in a familiar manner, and adapted, like many modern publications, *to the meanest capacities*'. G. R. S. Mead (whose own work on Orpheus is but an expansion of Taylor's preface to the Mystical Hymns of Orpheus) called him 'a wonderful genius and profound philosopher'; 'what was true of his critics then is true of his critics today: though they may know more Greek, he knew more Plato . . . Taylor was more than a scholar, he was a philosopher in the Platonic sense of the word.'

Taylor himself recorded that his interest in the Platonic philosophy came through mathematics; his first work (published when he was 23) was a mathematical essay; and in 1816 he published *Theoretic Arithmetic*, based upon the Pythagorean philosophy of number; a work which retains its value to the present time. But his first significant publication – one of the seminal

works of the Romantic movement – was the anonymous translation of Plotinus *On the Beautiful* in 1787. This paraphrase translation of the epitome of the aesthetics of Plotinus lies at the root of that doctrine of the imagination as the formative principle of all art which Blake and Coleridge independently formulated. This little book may well be the common source of their similar ideas. Wordsworth too must have read it, for the theme of 'the inward eye' of the mind, as well as the phrase itself, comes from this tractate with its impassioned introduction and epilogue in which the young Taylor summoned his contemporaries to a revolutionary return to tradition: 'Let us then boldly enlist ourselves under the banners of Plotinus, and, by his assistance, vigorously repel the encroachments of error, plunge her dominions into the abyss of forgetfulness, and disperse the darkness of her baneful night. For, indeed, there never was a period which required so much philosophic exertion; or such vehement contention from the lovers of truth. On all sides nothing of philosophy remains but the name, and this has become the subject of the vilest prostitution: since it is not only engrossed by the Naturalist, Chemist, and Anatomist, but is usurped by the mechanic, in ever trifling invention and made subservient to the lucre of traffic and merchandise.'

For Taylor erudition was not an end but a means 'to diffuse the salutary light of genuine philosophy', which was for him '. . . that sublime theology which was first obscurely promulgated by Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato, and was afterwards perspicuously unfolded by their legitimate disciples; a theology which, however it may be involved in oblivion in *barbarous*, and derided in *impious* ages, will again flourish for very extended periods, through all the infinite revolutions of time'. That Taylor took seriously the ideas of the Platonists and hoped to see these ideas carried into effect, was, to the 'pedants' and 'verbal critics' with whom he carried on a lifelong battle, intolerable. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'His efforts were unfavourably – almost contemptuously – received'. For this the chief reason was undoubtedly the extreme antipathy of the age of deism and pragmatism to the Platonic philosophy as such. Taylor's works nevertheless proved seminal for the three most significant intellectual revivals of the 19th century, in England, America and Ireland.

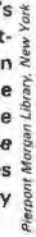
The texts Taylor placed in the hands of the Romantic poets were the same that Ficino, founder of the Platonic academy of Florence in the 15th century, had made accessible to the Florentine painters, and their transforming effect was the same. As a translator and exponent of the Platonic philosophy Taylor must be seen in the context of that renaissance at the end of the 18th century of which the Romantic movement in poetry is only the most discernible aspect. The Greek revival had its beginnings in the visual arts, with such works as Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens and Ionia*; in the publicity that was given to the Portland Vase by the Wedgwood replicas, made at the suggestion of Flaxman, the sculptor; and with work brought to England by collectors, notably Lord Elgin. Taylor must be seen in this context, as providing the Platonic texts and the exposition of Greek theology which accompanied this rediscovery of ancient Greece. He gave, in 1787 or 1788, a series of lectures on the Platonic philosophy at the house of Flaxman; and it is likely that among those present was Flaxman's friend William Blake. The substance of these lectures is probably to be found embedded in the several long essays included in Taylor's *The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus* (1788–89). In the second volume of this work is included *A History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology by the Latter Platonists*, an impassioned discourse upon the Neoplatonic philosophers.

This essay is a manifesto; and on the title page of the first volume (dedicated 'To the Sacred Majesty of Truth') is a quotation from Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*: 'Mr. T. Taylor, the Platonic Philosopher and *The Modern Plethon*, consonant to that philosophy, professes polytheism.' Taylor's polytheism was of course of a philosophic kind; his profession was perhaps made in order to add greater force to his rejection of Christianity, and his challenge to the monopoly of 'the classics' by Anglican clerics who alone could hold Fellowships at the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

Taylor was educated at St Paul's School; his father was a Dissenter, and Oxford and Cambridge were therefore closed to him. His father intended him to go to Aberdeen University, but he made instead a rash (but apparently very happy) early marriage, and so never went to any university, working instead in a series of ill-paid posts. Nevertheless his reputation extended to France; and the Platonic Marquis de Valady stayed for a time in Taylor's house before returning to France, there to be guillotined under the Terror. Another lodger under Taylor's roof was Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the first champions of the rights of women, who described the philosopher's study as 'the abode of peace'.

Taylor's studies were pursued in such spare time as his employment allowed; he was for some years assistant secretary to the Royal Society for the Promotion of Arts, Industries and Commerce, whose President, the Duke of Norfolk, subscribed to the whole edition of his Plato. In later years

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

Left **Portrait of Thomas Taylor by Sir Thomas Lawrence; described as 'a wonderful genius and profound philosopher', Taylor exposed himself to satire because of his professions of polytheism. According to rumour he sacrificed a bull to Jupiter, and honoured other gods in equally appropriate rites** ***Right*** **Taylor's Neoplatonism influenced the poetry and paintings of William Blake, and his translation of Plotinus *On the Beautiful* may have been the source of Blake's belief that imagination is the formative principle of all art: *When the Morning Stars Sang Together*, one of a series of illustrations to the biblical book of Job by William Blake**

As a translator and exponent of the Platonic philosophy, Thomas Taylor must be seen in the context of his time, a period when there was a great revival of interest in ancient Greece and its works: part of the Parthenon frieze, one of the most famous of Greek antiquities, which was brought to England at the beginning of the 19th century

he found a patron, William Meredith, but it is his early works – those published before 1800 – which had the greatest impact upon his contemporaries. These were welcomed by the young Romantics for precisely those elements for which they were anathematized by the *Edinburgh Review*, Horace Walpole, and 'the black-coated gentlemen' of Oxford. The strong Neoplatonic element in Blake comes from Taylor; his works were among the 'darling studies' of Coleridge as a schoolboy; traces of Wordsworth's reading of his translations of Plotinus are to be discerned in many images and verbal echoes. Shelley possessed a copy of his Plato; and his friend Thomas Love Peacock was one of Taylor's circle of friends in later years.

By his open professions of polytheism Taylor willingly exposed himself to satire; according to rumour he sacrificed a bull to Jupiter in his house at Walworth, and honoured the other gods in no less appropriate rites. This was of course pure invention; but an episode in which the young Taylor started a fire at the Freemason's Hall while demonstrating the principle of the Perpetual Lamp of antiquity, is fact. That Taylor was a striking personality even in a generation of eccentrics is evident from his appearance in Isaac D'Israeli's novel *Vaurien*, as 'the modern Pletho'; and, many years later, as 'Mr Mystic' in Thomas Love Peacock's *Melincourt*. Coleridge refers to him as 'the English Pagan'; and he was in his lifetime always known, as he remains to the present time, as 'Taylor the Platonist'.

Taylor's 'polytheism' (or rather, his exposition of the symbolic language of Greek mythology) was for the Romantic poets the main source of the revival of mythological poetry which distinguishes their work. Blake's polytheism is contained within a Christian framework; both Blake and Coleridge gave modern guise to their gods and daemons; though Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* evidently derives in part from Taylor's writings on Odysseus as symbolically understood by Porphyry and Plotinus.

Shelley and Keats revived the Greek pantheon, but in a living way made possible by Taylor's presentation of the gods as the ever-active divine energies of the cosmos. The most important of Taylor's works on the interpretation of Greek mythology are his

British Museum/Michael Holford

Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries; *The Mystical Initiations, or Hymns of Orpheus*; Porphyry's *Cave of the Nymphs*; Apuleius' *Fable of Cupid and Psyche*, and his dissertation on daemons; Sallust's *On the Gods and the World*; and an Introduction to *The Republic*, books 2 and 3, *Containing an Apology for the Fables of Homer*. The great merit of Taylor's expositions is their fidelity to the tradition from which they derive. Bacon had set the fashion in euhemerist interpretation (referring myths to a historical basis), so congenial to the 18th century English mentality; Jacob Bryant (author of the *New System of Mythology*) and Bishop Warburton interpreted the Greeks in terms of a religion alien to them; whereas Taylor unfolded the Greek mythology in terms of the Orphic theology (see ORPHEUS) and Platonic metaphysics.

Through the enthusiasm of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott the works of Thomas Taylor crossed the Atlantic to become one of the main sources of the inspiration of the Transcendentalist movement, that 'new declaration of independence made on behalf of literature and art and philosophy'.

When in 1842 Bronson Alcott visited England, he paid Taylor the compliment of collecting, with Charles Lane, a library which included as many of Taylor's books as they could find; of the 214 titles which were taken to America for the library of their 'new Eden' at 'Fruitlands' in Harvard, Massachusetts, 16 bore the name of Thomas Taylor as translator, editor or author.

In England there was little interest in Taylor from the time of his death until the beginning of the Theosophical movement (see THEOSOPHY). Through the movement Taylor became known to George Russell (the poet A.E.) and to W. B. Yeats. A.E. called Taylor 'the uncrowned king'; as Emerson had described him as 'a better man of imagination, a better poet, or perhaps I should say a better feeder to a poet, than any man between Milton and Wordsworth'. William E. A. Axon, who published in *The Library* (1890) a bibliography and memoir of Taylor wrote: 'He was an enthusiast, and only an enthusiast could have done his work. His translations represent a side of Greek thought that but for him would be unrepresented in English literature.'

KATHLEEN RAINE

FURTHER READING: *Selected Writings of Thomas Taylor the Platonist*, with an Introduction by Kathleen Raine, an essay on 'Taylor in America' by G. M. Harper, and a bibliography (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

TEA-LEAF READING

ALTHOUGH TELLING FORTUNES by consulting the patterns formed by tea-leaves on the base and sides of a cup is often regarded as drawing-room entertainment, it is not purely an amusement. The tea-leaves can act as a medium through which the clairvoyance of the reader is stimulated so that he or she is able to reveal truths that would otherwise remain hidden; or the figures formed by the leaves may be believed to reflect patterns that exist in the astral.

The method used in tea-leaf reading is time-honoured and simple. The client inverts her cup, turning it round three times; she places it on the saucer and then taps the bottom three times with her left index finger. The clairvoyant, who is in a light trance, picks the cup up and turns it round so that the leaves can be inspected.

All tea-leaf readers have their preferred methods of interpreting the patterns made by the leaves, and only some general indication of their meaning is given here:

Chain of small leaves: A journey, travel; if two larger leaves are in close proximity, the excursion is mental and not physical.

Serpentine chain of small leaves: a visit to the mountains; if two larger leaves are in close proximity, there will be ups and downs in daily life; inability to settle down.

Three small leaves close to one leaf: A man.

Two leaves close to a small leaf: A woman.

Group of small leaves in a triangular pattern: A child or children.

Heart: Love; a heart broken or crossed by a chain of leaves represents a broken love-affair or a divorce.

Triangle: Emotional involvement; jealousy; rivalry. If pointing downwards this shape indicates a *ménage à trois*, if upwards, ambition and success are suggested.

Square: Several different possibilities are suggested by this formation; it may mean that the person concerned is well-established, conservative and a solid character. But it can also imply a need for protection, or the client's failure to excel in his career.

Star: Great success; a sign of genius; spiritual enlightenment. However, if it falls on or near a heart formation, the passions may be crushed and replaced by a life of asceticism.

The appearance of more complicated symbols or geometric signs needs profound study; because of their rarity they are extremely significant.

Many leaves spread all over the cup: A rich or confused character; extravagance; negligence; generosity.

Very few leaves in the cup: Clarity; direct action in the future. However, this also indicates poverty in emotional life, and if the leaves seem to arrange themselves in a provocative way they must he read with great care so that they offset the poverty of the all-over pattern.

Cup-Tossing, **a 19th century engraving: tea-leaf reading is a homely branch of the old art of geomancy, the reading of omens in the patterns formed by earth, sand, pebbles or shells scattered on the ground**

Mansell Collection

Cross: This means that the client is at a crossroads in life, and that a personal sacrifice may be necessary. If this pattern is in conjunction with one large leaf, it can signify death. However, care and tact should be exercised in making such an interpretation, and it should be remembered that the possible death is not necessarily that of the client. Other leaves close by will ward off danger, and show a remedy for whatever ill is likely to befall him.

Circle: Marriage; a close partnership; fame. A good omen.

Circle with a cross on it: Enforced confinement, possibly in a hospital, prison, or other institution.

Two parallel lines of leaves: A propitious journey; dreams that will come true; a long and happy life. Reinforcement of all else seen in the cup.

Dots: Letters; messages; thoughts.

Stars: Good luck.

Dashes: Surprises.

Flowers: Joy; an engagement and marriage.

Fruit: Good fortune; children.

Daisy: Simple happiness.

Gun or dagger: Danger; strife.

Scythe: A good harvest; a death warning.

Musical instruments: Good company.

Scales: Justice; success at law.

Ladder: Increasing success.

Key: Secrets revealed; knowledge.

House: Stability.

Bottle: Excess; flirtation at a party.

Envelope: News.

Fan: An indiscreet love-affair.

Teapot or kettle: Good cheer; contentment.

Pair of scissors: Angry words.

Hammer: Hard work.

There are other general indications:

Time is represented by the different levels of the cup. The rim is the present, and below this lies the near future, while patterns formed on the base refer to events that are many years ahead.

Place is indicated by the parts of the cup in which the leaves settle. Those nearest the handle tell of events that affect the home; the leaves on the sides suggest distance according to their proximity to the handle, and the ones on the base show the place of birth, nationality and hidden nature of the client.

Letters of the alphabet represent the initials of people concerned in the reading; the nearer they are to the handle, the closer their relationship to the client.

Clear symbols are lucky, with the exception of those that represent illness or death. *Faint symbols* tend to be unlucky, suggesting a weak character or lack of purpose.

In occult lore the bowl of the cup corresponds to the dome of the sky, and the leaves to the stars, and there is therefore said to be a connection between tea-leaf reading and astrology. There are also correspondences between the cup, the sky and the palm of the hand, and tea-leaf reading is linked with palmistry as well as with the stars. Other correspondences, such as the link between the leaves and the moles on the body and the bumps on the head, have also been observed.

(See also DIVINATION; GEOMANCY.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

Marxist and 'hyper-Catholic', Teilhard de Chardin believed that the human race is still evolving; his vision was of humanity as a union of free persons propelled towards the God 'ahead', the point of convergence at which mankind is to find its consummation and meaning

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

BORN ON 1 May 1881 at Sarcenat near Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne, France, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin died of a heart attack in New York on Easter Sunday, 10 April 1955. In 1901 he took his first vows as a Jesuit and remained within the order until his death. But Teilhard was not only a priest but also a scientist – a paleontologist – of some distinction. Before his death he enjoyed a considerable reputation in his chosen field and in 1948 was offered a chair in Prehistory at the Collège de France. This offer he had to decline because his Jesuit superiors in Rome would not allow him to publish his most famous book, *The Phenomenon of Man*. For Teilhard had ideas of his own, and these did not correspond to the official Roman orthodoxy of the day. Hence his superiors considered it more 'prudent' that he should spend most of his life working 'in the field', mostly in China, while the last four years of his life were spent in the United States where the impact of his ideas was less likely to be felt than in France where he was already well known. Right up to his death, however, he was not allowed to publish anything except papers of a purely scientific nature within his own speciality, but fortunately he had the prudence to entrust his manuscripts to a friend and not long after his death *The Phenomenon of Man* was published in the original French, the English translation appearing with a warmly sympathetic introduction by Sir Julian Huxley, in 1959.

The Soul of the World

The publication of *The Phenomenon of Man* created something of a sensation. The worlds of both science and theology were split down the middle in their attitude towards the 'phenomenon' of Teilhard. Some scientists denounced him as insufficiently grounded in biology, while others took up his ideas with enthusiasm. The theologians were also split, the orthodox remaining obdurately antagonistic while the liberals hailed his totally new approach to Christianity as a real breakthrough in that it seemed to make Christianity once again relevant to the modern world. Rome severely discouraged the reading of his works since they had been published without its permission under the auspices of a committee that was largely scientific and not by any means entirely Christian. Then came Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, and the rock of Peter, monolithic and unmoving since the Council of Trent in the 15th century, lurched forward with unforeseen and unforeseeable speed.

Teilhard was dead; but at last his ideas received a sympathetic hearing from the great majority of his fellow churchmen. Posthumously he had his reward, for the contradictions of his life reflected the integrity and completeness of his thought. Within the Church he was the apostle, prophet and mystic of a purposeful progress, and yet, despite constant setbacks, despite what often seemed petty and timorous persecution, he remained not only a loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church but also faithful to his vows of absolute obedience to the Society of Jesus and the pope. His non-Catholic friends could not understand why he did not break with such pusillanimous lack of understanding. But his own philosophy of life, and vision of the future, made it impossible for him to break away from what he saw as the one 'axis' of cohesion in a world in travail. He had been attacked as a theologian, as a scientist, and as a philosopher, but basically he was none of these things. True, he *was* a scientist but his science was the prehistoric past of this planet, whereas his real and absorbing interest was the goal towards which evolution was, in his opinion, guiding and pushing not only Earth, but the whole universe. As a theologian and philosopher he was never more than an amateur and he knew it. He was one of those awkward human beings who could not be pigeonholed into any obvious category: he was a mystic, a visionary, and a prophet.

'One of those human beings who could not be pigeon-holed into any obvious category', Teilhard de Chardin was a mystic, visionary and prophet; because his ideas did not correspond to the official Roman orthodoxy of the day, it was considered 'prudent' that he should spend most of his life working in the field, mainly in China. Although he was only allowed to publish scientific papers, he entrusted his manuscripts to a friend and his most famous book *The Phenomenon of Man* appeared in French not long after his death

Basically he saw the salvation of the world in terms of a real reconciliation between science and religion, a situation in which religion would be able to re-interpret itself in terms of evolution, and in which science itself would be 'tinged with mysticism and charged with faith', in terms of a 'synthesis of the (Christian) God "above", with the (Marxist) God "ahead"'. In scientific terms he saw the world as evolving to ever-higher stages of 'complexity-consciousness', for, quite rightly, he saw that there was no reason to suppose that evolution had suddenly come to a halt with the emergence of self-conscious man. The very troubles of our times were a sign that the human race was undergoing a new 'mutation', a new qualitative change which would result in a new and higher form of consciousness in which the individual consciousness would be transcended in some form of collective consciousness. The precursors of this were the modern totalitarian movements. During the Second World War, most of which he spent in China where he was out of touch with the ghastly realities of the European situation, he refused to see the conflicting powers as black-and-white alternatives. Nazism, insofar as it was a cohesive and progressive force, he considered as an advance on what had gone before, although he was well aware that ultimately it could only lead to an 'ant-hill' civilization, which would be an evil parody of his own vision of the 'totalization' of humanity as a union of free persons animated and propelled forward by what he had once called the 'Soul of the World' towards a unique point of convergence. He was later to call this point 'Omega', that is, God or Christ as the ultimate term of human evolution and history.

The Cosmic Christ

At a time when the Vatican under Pius XII was fulminating against international Communism as the chief enemy, Teilhard saw in it the shape of things to come. In China where he had seen it at first-hand and had witnessed the vast human energies it had been able to unleash, he was convinced that here was a power working along the very 'axis' of evolution, which no earthly force could stop. Yet he saw that the new 'totalized' society could never be wholly valid unless it were underpinned by love. 'The world cannot endure, advance, or realize itself,' he wrote, 'without the action of a power that is a species of love. This is why, much as I sympathize with the "totalitarian" faith of popular fronts, I am forced to acknowledge that their *impersonal* forms of ideal "Humanity", "Society", (*a fortiori* the "Race" or "Empire of fascist doctrines") without soul or "face", are going to nip the Evolution that they want to promote and save in the bud.' What Teilhard had been anticipating actually came to pass for an all too brief period in Czechoslovakia, when

'Communism with a human face' became a living reality.

Despite the divisive tendencies that seemed to be tearing this world to pieces during two World Wars and their aftermath, he remained incurably optimistic; for he had an unshakable faith in Christ and the Catholic Church, which he liked to speak of in biological terms as the Christian 'phylum' (in biology a 'phylum' is a main division of the animal or vegetable kingdom).

But what kind of Christ did Teilhard worship? His was not Christ as preached by the 'orthodoxy' of the Roman bureaucrats but the cosmic Christ preached by St Paul in his letter to the Colossians in whom 'were created all things in heaven and earth' and who 'holds all things in unity'. As to the Roman Catholic Church (and Teilhard, far from denying his Catholic faith, described himself as 'hyper-Catholic'), according to this same letter of St Paul 'the Church is his body, and he its head'; and 'in this body lives the fulness of divinity, and in him you too find your own fulfilment, in the one who is the head of every Sovereignty and Power.' All this was vitally real to Teilhard, and this was the 'gospel' of which he felt himself to be the prophet.

'Spirit of the Earth'

In his vision the Church was not just a divinely appointed organization designated to save individual souls through a more or less mechanical administration of the sacraments. Rather, it was a living organism – a single phylum – which had to be saved in its totality, for he could not conceive of the salvation of the part except in the context of the salvation of the whole. Nor was his God simply 'our Father which art in Heaven,' but the God 'ahead', the point of convergence at which the human race, through the instrumentality of the Church, was to find its consummation and meaning. This vision presented itself to Teilhard with irresistible force when he was serving as a stretcher-bearer in the First World War; and it never left him till his dying day.

In his vision there were two ingredients always present. Christ as the point of convergence in the future and his own almost physical awareness of the 'Spirit of the earth' – an awareness of the 'holiness' of matter and the 'essence' of the world that had 'hit' him when he was still a child and from which his 'whole internal life had sprung and grown . . . a personal psychological experience: nothing more, but also nothing less.'

A Paroxysm of Love

Teilhard was a pantheist and he knew it; but according to him there were two types of pantheism. These were what he describes as Hindu pantheism – the pantheism of diffusion and dissolution of all individual personality into an indeterminate whole – and a pantheism of 'centration' in which personality, so far from being obliterated, is heightened and clarified through love and centred on to the cosmic Christ who is the point to which all creation (or at least all of it that can be saved) is destined by evolution itself to converge. The 'oriental' pantheism of diffusion, which he had himself experienced time and again, is a blissful experience all right, but it is nonetheless essentially retrograde, a step back into a state of 'co-consciousness' before *self*-consciousness was born. The new mysticism neither abolishes personality nor sinks back into the beatific peace of undifferentiated oneness, but throws itself in a paroxysm of love into him who is both the source and goal of all personality and the collective fulfilment of all personalities.

Teilhard was both a mystic and a Marxist. He looks forward to the Marxist 'association in which the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all' and to a state of cosmic awareness which will be suffused by love, and concentrated on and towards that ultimate unity to which evolution is driving us and which is the true goal of Christianity and the Catholic Church – Christ Omega, the cosmic fulfilment of mankind. This is the gospel according to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, humanist, Marxist, mystic, and 'hyper-Catholic.'

R. C. ZAEHNER

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Telekinesis

Paranormally caused movement of objects: examples include the fall of a picture at someone's death, the flight of the Communion wafer to the recipient's mouth, and the movement of furniture or flinging of stones or crockery in poltergeist cases; teleportation, or apportation, is the mysterious conveyance of objects into closed rooms.

See MEDIUMS; POLTERGEISTS; PSYCHOKINESIS; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES; STIGMATA.

Telepathy

Communication between one mind and another without the use of speech, gesture or any of the normal methods of communicating; thought transference; 'the direct experience of another person's mental state'; a type of extra-sensory perception.

See EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

A practical and down-to-earth mystic, Teresa of Avila at the same time attained lofty heights of spiritual experience; on the one hand, an able administrator and on the other, a saint who showed the way to the ultimate fusion of the soul's being with God

TERESA OF AVILA

RECOGNIZED AS ONE of the greatest Christian mystics, Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada, in religion Teresa of Jesus, will always be known as Teresa of Avila, from the Castilian town in which she was born on 28 March 1515 and where she spent most of her 67 years until her death on 4 October 1582. She was one of ten children – mostly boys – and when her father's second wife died in 1528, Teresa became something of an anxiety to her father, who finally put her in a boarding school, which she had to leave after 18 months owing to ill-health. He opposed her wish to become a nun, but at the age of 20 she eventually entered the Carmelite convent of the Incarnation in Avila.

The Carmelite Order, which originated in Palestine at the foot of the mountain from which it takes its name, had been, in intention, a body of hermits dedicated to extreme austerity. The extension of the hold of the Moslems in the Levant in the 13th century made life increasingly difficult, and the members of the order left Carmel for Cyprus, France, England and Spain. Progressive mitigation of the primitive rule became the accepted thing, and the convent of the Incarnation was lax in its observance and worldly in its spirit. Teresa was to reproach herself in later years for her own unfaithfulness, yet we know that during the 18 years she spent in that first convent, she seems to have had authentic mystical experiences. As the result of one of these, a vision of Christ in his Passion, she experienced a 'conversion' and began to lead a stricter life. In the year 1560, together with a small group of like-minded nuns, she decided to found a convent of strict observance, and in August 1562 she left the Incarnation for the new house, dedicated to St Joseph, also in Avila. There she was to spend what she later described as the happiest years of her life,

from 1562 to 1567. It was at this time that she wrote the first version of her *Life* and also her *Way of Perfection*.

In 1567 she was ordered by the general of the Carmelite Order, then on a visit to Spain, to make other foundations. The remaining 15 years of her life were largely spent in travelling, negotiating, working with her own hands – she was, a contemporary declares, the best cook in the order. For, whilst she enjoyed the most remarkable and lofty mystical experiences, she always kept her feet on the ground. 'The Lord walks amongst the saucepans', was a famous saying of hers. In all, she was personally responsible for setting up 19 establishments, including two for men. She was helped in her work by a Carmelite friar, Fr Jerome Gracian. But her chief support in the closing years of her life came from an even greater exponent of mystical theology, John of the Cross (see JOHN).

The seal was set on her life's work when, in 1581, the distinction between the 'calced' or shod, and 'discalced' or shoeless Carmelites, as the relaxed parent body and the stricter reformed order were respectively known, was officially recognized by their separation into two orders, with separate governing bodies. She died in the following year, at Alba, one of her many foundations.

'Suborned with a Sardine'

The first important work from her pen was the *Life*, written between 1562 and 1565. It falls into four main divisions: an account of her early years, down to her 'conversion' to a life of perfection; a treatise on prayer; an account of her spiritual experiences, graces and temptations after her conversion; and the story of the foundation of St Joseph and some account of further experiences. To be grouped with the *Life* are the *Relations* which, from time to time, she wrote for the benefit of her confessors and spiritual directors. We should bear in mind that there was in Spain at the time much suspicion of those who claimed to have had special revelations, and Teresa was always anxious lest she should be deluded. Equally, her spiritual directors needed reassurance about their remarkable penitent.

The Way of Perfection, probably written in the year 1565, and rewritten before 1571, was intended as a guidebook for her nuns at St Joseph. The first part is a treatise on the ascetical preparation necessary for the aspirant to the heights of mystical experience, together with some account of 'mental prayer', the preliminary to true mystical prayer. The latter is treated, in the second part of the work, in the shape of a commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

The Interior Castle, written in 1577 and revised three years later, is universally recognized as her greatest achievement. It treats of the progress of the soul from the earliest imperfect stage to the final achievement of the mystic marriage. The 'castle' is pictured as a fabulously rich building, consisting of seven 'mansions' or apartments, the seventh and central one being the dwelling place of the Blessed Trinity, residing in the depths of the soul. Thus the mystic way is a turning away from outward reality to enter 'into oneself', there to find oneself in the embrace of God.

The Foundations, written at intervals during the last nine years of her life, is basically an account of the travels, negotiations, adventures and difficulties that attended the work of setting up the different convents of the reformed order. But it also contains much practical and spiritual advice to her nuns and to their superiors.

Letters, written throughout her life, give us an invaluable picture of the woman of affairs, the negotiator, the mother, the friend, remaining a complete human being even in the times of her great mystical experiences. They bear the stamp of a remarkable personality the warmth of whose heart is equalled, it would seem, ouly by the range of her interests and the solidity of her common sense.

Like all mystics, who see the end of human existence as a union with God, Teresa used language which implied a disregard of, if not a positive contempt for, the ephemeral realities of this world. Since this seems to be a basic element in all types of mystical doctrine, it calls for a further study. It must be recognized that such an attitude of mind, even if it is often expressed in absolute terms, can be justified only as an appreciation of relative values. In any human situation, certain values, pleasures, satisfactions, have to be sacrificed for the sake of a more pressing, more important demand. We have seen that, in everyday affairs, Teresa was eminently practical; we know that she was immensely affectionate and sensitive; she had her natural preferences, as when she said: 'It must be my nature – I could be suborned with a sardine!'; she constantly exhorted her nuns to accept their daily, concrete responsibilities. If, then, she was fond of saying *'todo es nada'*, 'everything is nothing', she meant this in the sense that everything derives its value and its significance from its relationship to God, its creator. Apart from him – if such an expression has any meaning – 'everything' is worthless and meaningless.

The Carmelite convent of the Incarnation in which Teresa of Avila spent 18 years was worldly in spirit and lax in its observance, and she later reproached herself for her unfaithfulness during this period. However, she seems to have had authentic mystical experiences while at the convent, and as a result of one of these, in which she had a vision of Christ in his Passion, she was 'converted' and began to lead a stricter life: *The Ecstasy of St Teresa* by Cignaroli

Mansell Collection

In her description of the total process leading to final mystical union, she distinguishes two main stages – the stage in which the emphasis is primarily on human effort, and the stage where all the work is seen as done by the spirit of God. In a famous passage in her *Life*, she compares the soul to an orchard, in need of water. At first this water is laboriously drawn from a well by hand. Then, the labour is lightened by the use of a *noria* (windlass), and water pipes. Yet more effective is the irrigation of the soil by streams, but best of all is the beneficent rain of God.

The approach to God, the way of perfection, is to be achieved, then, first by the ascetical effort which 'detaches' the soul from created reality so that it may come to a clearer vision of the Creator. Such detachment, not merely from possessions but from the sort of 'natural' affection which is a kind of self-seeking, will pave the way for true charity, a total love of the other for the sake of the other. Humility, the recognition of our own insignificance before God, is seen as another kind of detachment – from comfort, health, even life, to say nothing of reputation.

Concurrently with this ascetical effort must go the cultivation of 'mental prayer', the use of imagination and intellect about the things of God. As distinct from 'contemplation' or what Teresa calls 'supernatural' prayer, this first stage is due primarily to our own striving. In general, she would lump together the asceticism and the kind of prayer that goes with it as forming our contribution, our active progress towards the stage when God 'takes over' and the soul becomes 'passive'. In the imagery of *The Interior Castle*, the first three 'mansions' represent the first stage of the soul's journey.

When the soul enters the fourth mansion, it is coming under the influence of those graces which become more and more powerful as the soul submits more and more to their influence. From a state of recollection, in which the aspirant finds less and less savour in the sort of human conversation which merely dissipates the mind, God brings the soul to the prayer of 'quiet', in

which the faculties of imagination and intellect become almost completely suspended. It is, one may suggest, as though the specific qualities of the individual human personality are surrendering to the power of God. Yet, as Teresa insists, the personality does not thereby become weakened or impoverished. On the contrary, the effects of this kind of prayer are an increased liberty of spirit, a growing sense of the Infinite and 'a great mastery of earthly realities'.

The final stages of the mystic way are the steps leading to the ultimate fusion of the soul's being with the Godhead. In Teresa's analysis there are three successive experiences to be undergone. Using the analogy of marriage, she speaks first of the meeting, the introduction of the spouses. The soul is being prepared for betrothal and marriage by a minute conformity of its will with the will of God the Beloved. In the prayer of (infused) 'union', the understanding and the will become united with the Godhead, in such a way that the human being no longer understands or wills anything otherwise than as God sees and wills. During this phase, too, the soul undergoes the purification of the senses. Yet the pain of this purification, and the purification of the spirit which follows, are essential experiences in that fullness of union which, daringly described in language reminiscent of sexual ecstasy, is at once intolerably painful yet incomparably delightful. But, in the very heart and centre of the 'castle', where the mystical marriage is at last celebrated, the encounter is such that the soul, now totally forgetful of itself, lives only for God. Life is desired solely as an opportunity of serving him. A foretaste of eternal bliss, this full union represents the highest favour that God can bestow on a human soul. Perfection is achieved.

T. CORBISHLEY

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Tetragrammaton

The four Hebrew letters of the name of God in the Old Testament, spoken as Jehovah or Yahweh; regarded with profound awe it was rarely pronounced, and in the ordinary services in the synagogue the names Adonai or Elohim were substituted for it; it passed into European magic as one of the major 'names of power'.

See NAMES.

Theogony

Birth of the gods, an account, myth or theory of the origin, generation and line of descent of the gods; specifically, Hesiod's poem on the genealogy of the Greek gods.

See CREATION MYTHS: CRONUS.

The Theosophical Society does not identify itself with any particular religion, but has been described as 'a philanthropic society in that it attempts to promote a love of mankind and it is religious in that it demonstrates a spiritual background to existence'

THEOSOPHY

THE GERMAN ORIENTALIST Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) defined theosophy as 'expressing the highest conception of God within the reach of the human mind, and the perception of the eternal oneness of human and divine nature.' The emphasis is on the intuitive, inner nature of the knowledge, something not experienced through facts open to ordinary intelligence.

It is an ancient conception, particularly in India, where the philosophical schools of Vedanta and Sankhya, and the Yoga *Uponishads* teach it. At Alexandria the philosopher Philo Judaeus (1st century AD) joined the ideas of Plato with Judaism in a theosophic system. It persisted in the Cabala and Neoplatonism, and adherents of the system appear down through the centuries. Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Jacob Boehme, Emmanuel Swedenborg, John Tauler and Meister Eckhardt – all taught the essential basis of theosophy (see BOEHME; BRUNO; CABALA; ECKHARDT; NEOPLATONISM; PARACELSUS; SWEDENBORG).

In modern times the name is associated with the system set out in the 19th century in her books by H. P. Blavatsky (see BLAVATSKY). She stated that she had received these doctrines from Indian teachers or masters who had reached a higher plane of being and of spiritual development. Her experiences and witness to occult feats made her salon a magnet for a wide variety of people, who usually found her in possession of out-of-the-way facts in their own special subjects. The Theosophical Society, which she founded in conjunction with Henry S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge, exercised an influence on many notable people, either by its books, or by recruiting them as members. A copy of Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* was on Lord Tennyson's bedside table when he died. Sir William Crookes, chemist and psychic researcher (see CROOKES), was a member; so were Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor, and W. B. Yeats, the poet (see YEATS). Lord Crawford, the astronomer, was a frequent visitor in London, and the student Mahatma Gandhi made his first acquaintance with the *Gita* among the theosophists. Rudolf Steiner, editor of Goethe and founder of Anthroposophy, was for a time at the head of the German section of the Society (see STEINER).

Annie Besant (see BESANT) was criticized for her political activity in India, but she explained, in 1929: 'What I say of the Inner Government of the World I speak from personal knowledge, for I have studied and practised Raja Yoga steadily during 40 years. . . . the Freedom of India within the great Federation of Free Nations linked by the British Crown is a condition essential to the Great Plan which must ultimately succeed.'

On her death in 1933 the Vice-President, A. P. Warrington, took charge, and appointed in his own post C. Jinarajadasa, a well-loved and accomplished lecturer and author. There were two nominees for President, and some acrimony because a letter had been made public in which Mrs Besant had remarked to the recipient, Dr George S. Arundale, that he was to be her successor. The other nominee, Ernest Wood (Sanskrit scholar and former secretary to C. W. Leadbeater, who had been closely associated with Annie Besant) objected to this and himself circularized the membership. However, out of a 72 per cent vote he secured only 4825 votes against Dr Arundale's 15,604.

In 1934 Dr Arundale stated what he called the marks theosophy makes upon the chart of Life: '(1) Life is essentially one and universal; (2) Life is within a great evolutionary process whereby an infinitude of life-units move from lowliest unconsciousness through innumerable stages of unfolding to heights of self-consciousness; (3) This irresistible movement is under beneficent and immutable law, order and purpose; (4) That all good and ill fortune individual or collective are signs of this evolutionary principle at work; (5) Each life-unit can hasten or retard the pace of its own evolutionary process, through understanding or through ignorance.'

Dr Arundale married an Indian lady,

Shrimati Rukmini Devi, who did important work in the revival of the classical Indian dance, Indian art, and the education of women. As President he did not travel as widely and frequently as others, but that was partly owing to the Second World War. He did give a great deal of attention to the movement in Australia, with good results. His books on special subjects like *Nirvana*, *Kundalini*, *You* (some critics said it should be 'Me') and *Mount Everest, its Spiritual Significance*, were intended to stimulate the intuition of the reader. This applied still more strongly to his large book on symbolism, *The Lotus Fire*, which most people found too difficult.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

In the early 1900s some European male residents of the Theosophical Society's headquarters used to swim of a morning in the Adyar river. Two young Indian brothers used to watch them and then were given swimming lessons. C. W. Leadbeater had noticed the exceptional aura of the older boy, and it occurred to him that it would be interesting to look at the previous lives of an ordinary Indian boy like this and see what his history was. The boys were two of a rather large family who lived in the village on the estate, sons of a minor local official, G. Narayaniah. Ernest Wood claimed to have suggested to Leadbeater that he look up the past lives of Krishnamurti and Nityananda, and that this was done with the father's permission. Wood's idea was that most Indians he knew abhorred the suggestion that they might be reborn in the West, and he wondered if experience in different races was the general rule. Leadbeater found to his surprise that the boy had had previous lives of great significance, and he commented, 'surely he is not here by accident'.

An offer was made to the father that Mrs Besant would undertake the future education and development of Krishnamurti and Nityananda, and he signed a statement before witnesses that he had no objection to the boys being taken to England to continue their education. However, pressure from orthodox Hindu friends and relatives made the father change his mind, and he sued for the restoration of the boys; and the court ruled that they should be returned to the father by May, 1913. Mrs Besant appealed first to the High Court, Madras, where she lost, and then to the Privy Council in London. There the case was reviewed with the welfare of the boys as the first priority. The boys had stated that they wished the benefits of an English education and did not wish to return to India. The Council over-ruled the two previous decisions, allowing the father, if he so wished, to make application in England for restoration regarding the guardianship, custody and maintenance of his children.

In 1910 Dr G. S. Arundale had formed among the boys of the Central Hindu College a private association called 'The Order of the Rising Sun of India'. He meant it to include those of his pupils who believed that the coming of a great Teacher was near. This Order was opened to the public in 1911, at the instance of Mrs Besant, and shortly afterwards she altered its name to 'The Order of the Star in the East', and put Krishnamurti at its head. The Order brought out a magazine called *The Herald of the Star*, and through sympathetic members of the Theosophical Society it spread rapidly in many countries. Other members strongly opposed its intrusion upon the time and resources of its followers.

Much newspaper publicity was focused upon Krishnamurti, whom they concluded to be a 'Messiah'. This effectively prevented him being sent to an English university, as it seemed certain his life would be made intolerable. His first venture into print was while still a boy, a booklet in simple English titled *At the Feet of the Master*, in which he recorded the instructions said to have been given him in sleep by an adept. Later he tried to express his mystical feelings in collections of poems, and wrote editorials for the magazine of the Order.

In the middle and late 1920s large gatherings of Star members took place yearly, camping in the grounds of Castle Eerde, belonging to Baron van Pallandt, near Ommen, in Holland. At the time of the first Camp, an unusual and severe cyclone tore across that part of the Low Countries, and strangely seemed to bifurcate and pass on either side of the tented camp. The local villagers were much impressed in favour of the Star by this phenomenon. These gatherings with ritual camp-fires in the evening were like elderly versions of a Scout jamboree. According to Lady Emily Lutyens, on 10 August 1925 Dr Arundale brought through from his overnight experience the names of ten of the '12 apostles' of the new religious impulse that was to come through Krishnaji, as he was called.

However, Krishnamurti became increasingly impatient of being associated with theosophists. He had his own individual outlook and message. In 1929 he dissolved the Order of the Star in the East, and returned Castle Eerde and its grounds to Baron van Pallandt, who had wanted him, or a group on his behalf, to take it over. In the following years he made his base at Ojai in California, and there and elsewhere held seminars of talks and question and answer meetings. Many books, revised from these occasions, were published. He became a friend of Aldous Huxley and other original thinkers. From time to time he has visited Europe and India.

In 1927 he had a profound experience, and on 2 August he said: 'I could not have said last year, as I can say now, that I am the Teacher; for had I said it then it would have been insincere, it would have been untrue. But now I can say it. I have become one with the Beloved, I have been made simple. As I have changed, as I have found my end, which is the end for all . . . and because I have affection – and without affection you cannot attain the end . . . because I have suffered and seen and found all, naturally it is my duty . . . my pleasure, my dharma, to give it to those who have not . . . I am not going to be bound by anyone; I am going on my way, because that is the only way. I have found what I wanted. I have been united with my Beloved, and my Beloved and I will wander together the face of the earth.'

One cannot but agree with the English theosophist T. H. Redfern when he says: 'The strange and puzzling thing is that although his work has turned out much different from what was expected of him, yet Bishop Leadbeater, using his psychic faculties "picked a winner" in a lad of about

Psychic News

Theosophical Publishing House

Founded by H. P. Blavatsky, in conjunction with Henry S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge, the Theosophical Society influenced many eminent figures including Mahatma Gandhi, the inventor Thomas Edison and W. B. Yeats *Below left* Mme Blavatsky, and (*left to right*) Dr G. S. Arundale, C. Jinarajadasa and N. Sri Ram, successive presidents of the Society

12, described by Professor Wood as "a very frail little boy, extremely weak . . . He was bullied and beaten to such an extent that it seemed the boy might fade away from this life and die."'

On the death of Dr Arundale in 1945, C. Jinarajadasa, or 'Brother Raja' as he was affectionately called in theosophical circles, became President of the Society and so remained until 1953. He took his degree at St John's, Cambridge, and later studied languages so that he could lecture in French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. He continually pressed for the introduction of Beauty and Art into theosophical work. He branched out in original directions; interviewed Mussolini in 1923; inspired the formation of a Muslim League to study the relation between Islam and theosophy; and devised a Ritual of the Mystic Star. Apart from his many excellent books, students of theosophy hold him in high esteem for his care of the headquarters archives, and the editing and publication of many documents which would otherwise have slipped into oblivion.

The successor to C. Jinarajadasa was N. Sri Ram. He was assistant editor of Mrs Besant's paper *New India* from 1923 to 1933, and was also her private secretary. In 1937 he was made Treasurer of the Theosophical Society. His lectures and writings are logically structured and full of a limpid wisdom. In spite of his years he is an active and continual traveller, and inspires the national sections by his quiet emphasis on the truly spiritual and unselfish solutions to world problems. His tenure of office has seen the completion and opening at Adyar of a fine new library building, which in addition to printed books, houses a very valuable collection of palm-leaf manuscripts. Recently a new building has been erected for the printing and publishing department, with a bust of its founder, Annie Besant, in the forecourt. The North American membership has been generous in its support of these projects.

Blueprint of Evolution

The important divergence of viewpoint between modern theosophy and current scientific thought is that the former insists that the evolutionary plan, both in the material and the non-physical worlds, pre-exists in blueprint form in the Universal Creative Mind. It cannot be substantially interfered with by man or angel. The supposed chance emergence of an organizing force which we call life, owing to the juxtaposition of certain chemicals, water, and sunlight, is regarded by theosophists as confusing the predetermined suitable conditions for life manifesting, with the cause of life so manifesting.

Theosophy harks back to Pythagoras (see PYTHAGORAS), and indeed to ancient India, in underlining number as a guide to understanding the scheme of things. There is One Supreme, the Logos or Word, expressing itself in a triple mode or Trinity. Seven distinctive streams of energy from the One pour out into 12 areas of expression. Creation is a continuous, or rather cyclically recurring, process throughout the Universe.

The widespread variety of stages in cyclic development occurring among suns, planets, supermen, men, animals, and lower kingdoms, permits the maximum economy of energy by using the mutual aid and interaction between the older and younger lives. For example, man in his extraction and manufacture of metals for his own use is speeding the development of the minerals. The failures and backward units of one cycle become the wise and stable shining lights of another or later cycle.

Self-conscious man, in theosophical theory, is the product of an extraordinarily long evolution, not only as to his body, but as to his thinking and emotional consciousness. The innermost unit of consciousness is divine in origin – 'the One willed to become Many' – but the bridging sheaths, through which that unit or monad can contact the physical world, have been taken over by him from some animal which reached the peak of animal consciousness. Then a long pilgrimage of incarnations is required to develop the means to become self-conscious at the highest levels, and ultimately conscious of unity with the One. These lives or incarnations are linked and moulded by the operation of the law of adjustment, or Karma (see KARMA). This law continually tends to balance outgoing forces. Energy continuously expended towards an objective must bring success if it lies in the realm of the possible. But it can produce an imbalance in the individual, and a back-surge of unexpected results if it is selfishly motivated.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi; the wife of Dr G. S. Arundale, she played an important part in the revival of the classical Indian dance, Indian art, and the education of women

C. Nelson Stewart

The prehistory of mankind goes back, in the theosophical system, not tens of thousands, but millions of years. Seven great human types will develop during the earth's present cycle of activity, and we are already well through the fifth type. But there are natural phenomena which shut off the great races from each other – ice ages, subsidence into the ocean, earthquakes and volcanic storms. These catastrophic events are initiated and controlled by non-human intelligences under the command of the Planetary Logos. Hence the last word does not lie with man, who thinks he is now powerful enough to devastate his home in space.

Later theosophists have published what they claim to be life-stories and incidents recovered by clairvoyance from the 'memory of Nature'. Something similar is done by what are called object-readers or psychometrists in regard to more recent events. One extraordinary compilation by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater purports to describe in detail the infra-structure of many of the chemical atoms and molecules. So far no bridge has been found between their diagrams and models and the mathematically-based arrangements of the physicists. They tell us that the ultimate physical atom is built in a spiralling vortex of about 14,000 million bubbles in *koilon*. Koilon, it seems, is what fills space. In this study of the building bricks of matter it is interesting to hear that the atoms themselves alter in their capacity to respond to vibrations as the cycles proceed. And it must be admitted that these seers stumbled upon isotopes before the scientists did.

An early Vice-President like A. P. Sinnett thought membership should be sought in the upper classes, and their acceptance of the ideas would filter down to the lower orders. When Annie Besant was at her peak as a travelling lecturer, the membership probably reached its highest level. When the post-Revolutionary spread of Russian power took place, the countries dominated were unable to maintain theosophical societies. To some extent counterbalancing the loss, many new centres opened in South American countries as a result of tours by C. Jinarajadasa, who was able to lecture in Spanish and Portuguese. In 1925, when the Order of the Star in the East was flourishing world-wide, its membership exceeded 100,000 or more than twice that of the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical membership figures (with some returns awaited) given in the General Report for 1966 were 26,487 in 49 countries. The three largest totals were India, 7664; United States of America, 4054; and England, 2252.

C. NELSON STEWART

FURTHER READING: H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Theosophical Publishing House, 1980, abridged edn.); *Key to Theosophy* (T.P.H. reprint); W. Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy* (T.P.H. reprint); Mary Lutyens ed., *The Krishnamurti Reader* (Penguin, 1970); Victor A. Endersby, *The Hall of Magic Mirrors* (Carlton Press, 1969).

As legendary hero, Theseus is represented as the slayer of the monstrous Minotaur and an adventurer who went down alive to Hades; as statesman, he appears as magnanimous champion of the oppressed and author of the Athenian constitution

THESEUS

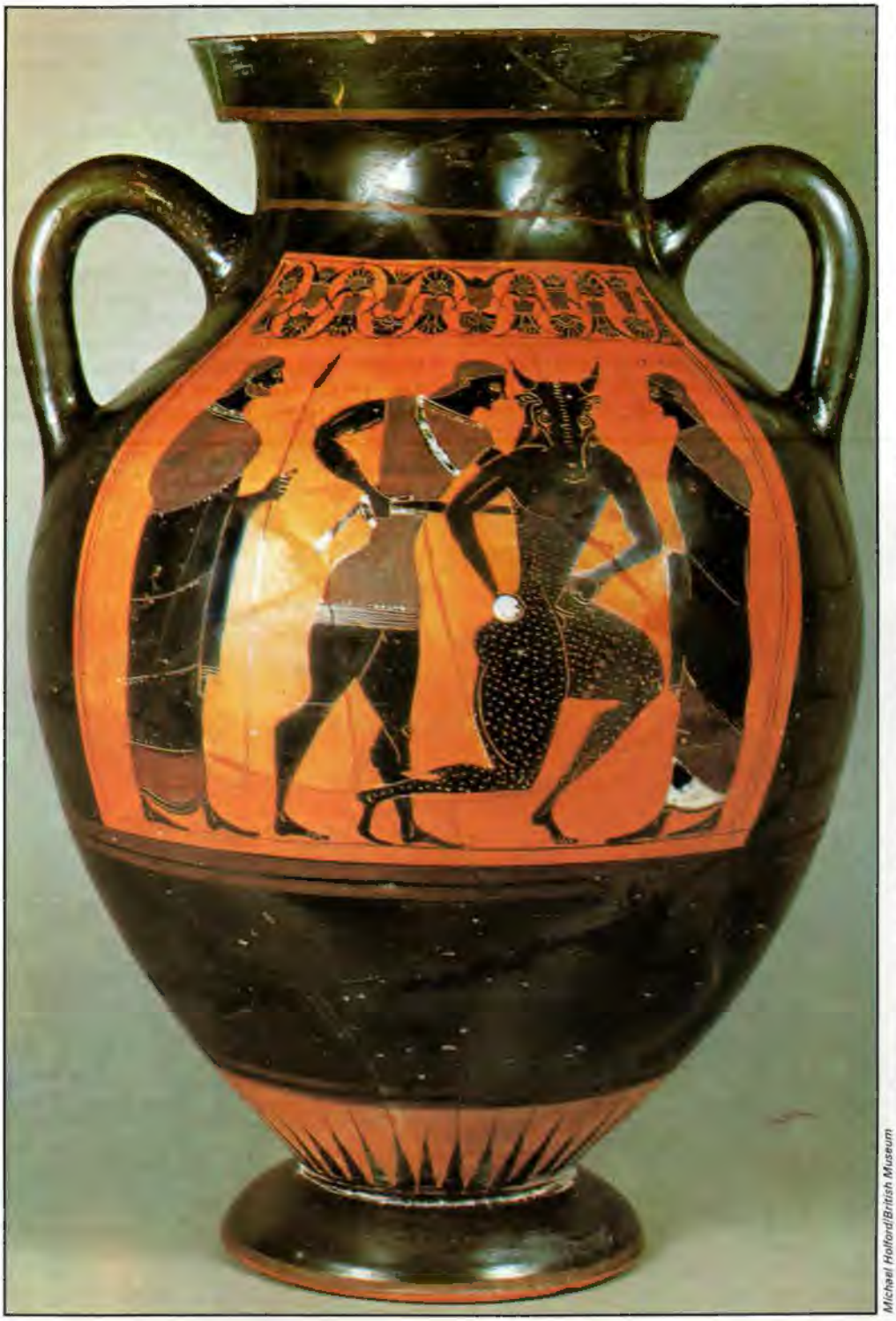
FOR THE ATHENIANS, as for us, Theseus was one of the more important heroes of Greek legend. But his full renown is of relatively late growth and peculiar to Attica. In fact Theseus has two aspects, which may be called the heroic and the political. In his heroic aspect he is an adventurer, subduer of monsters and chaser of women, after the fashion of Hercules, on whom he came to be modelled. In his political aspect he is a symbol of Athens and of Attic unity and power, indeed almost the only hero to become such an established symbol. He is treated for all purposes as a historical figure, even by sober writers of prose such as Aristotle. For this reason Plutarch brackets him with another legendary figure in his parallel *Lives* of Greeks and Romans, the founder of Rome, Romulus.

Though for ordinary Greeks legend was not separate from the history of earlier periods, in the case of Theseus this distinction must be made in some form. But it is not enough to argue simply that the heroic Theseus in his marvellous adventures is purely legendary, while the political Theseus is historical in the sense of being a man who really lived. For the political Theseus is a figure answering to other needs of the Attic imagination, but hardly less fictitious.

As a pan-Hellenic hero, Theseus is a relatively minor figure of the generation before the Trojan War, by no means of such stature as his contemporary Hercules or some other figures. He is connected in legend

***The Minotaur*, by G. F. Watts, suggests the pathos of the monster with a human body and a bull's head which in legend was kept in the labyrinth of Cnossus. With the help of Ariadne, daughter of the king of Crete, Theseus penetrated to the heart of the labyrinth, killed the Minotaur and made his way safely out again**

Tate Gallery/John Webb



Michael Holford/British Museum

Bulls occur frequently in the history of Theseus, adventurer, ravisher of women and subduer of robbers and monsters: he slew the bull-headed Minotaur and subdued the wild bull of Marathon, and his son Hippolytus was killed by a bull from the sea ***Left*** **Black-figured Greek vase of the 6th century BC, showing Theseus killing the Minotaur** ***Right*** **Heroic statue of Theseus in Hyde Park, London**

with Troezen in the eastern Peloponnese but otherwise only with Attica, apart from the regions visited in his adventures and wanderings. For the Athenians of classical times he was not only the slayer of the Minotaur but also the author of a great political change, the *synoikismos*, that is to say the incorporation of all Attic communities into a single state ruled from Athens. In Attic legend he is also the pattern of the humane ruler who receives refugees and unfortunates, since Attica is never in his time ravaged by war.

From Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* and from two other compilers, Diodorus and Apollodorus, the outline of Theseus's life can be told. This is fortunate because there is no continuous and complete narrative in extant poetry, and even vanished epic poems of Attica such as the *Theseis* and the *Minyas*, which are later than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, do not seem from remaining fragments or from references in other writers to have told the whole story.

Sword beneath the Rock

Theseus was born in Troezen to Aethra, daughter of King Pittheus. In Athenian legend his father was King Aegeus of Athens, who returned to Athens before he was born, leaving under a hollow rock a sword and a pair of sandals, to be claimed by his son when he was big enough to raise the rock. In the Troezenian legend his father was the god Poseidon, who has an important part even in the Athenian legend. Having lifted the rock, Theseus then made his way to Athens.

However, he did not take the easy way by sea. He went by land, overcoming and killing dangerous robbers. Such were Periphetes, who attacked travellers with his club; Sinis who bent down pine trees, tied his victims to the tops and then let the trees spring up and apart to tear them limb from limb; Cercyon who forced men to wrestle with him until he killed them; Sciron who made travellers wash his feet on the top of a precipice so that he could kick them over; and Procrustes who forced them to fit one of his two beds, stretching out the shorter travellers to fit the longer bed and lopping the taller to fit the shorter. He also killed the ravaging sow of Crommyon. On being welcomed by Aegeus at Athens, he was very nearly poisoned by a drink offered by the witch Medea, then married to Aegeus; but Aegeus recognized him and cried out in time.

Aegeus then told Theseus of the affliction that the Athenians suffered at the hands of Minos of Crete. In vengeance for the killing of his son Androgeus in Attica, Minos every year carried off a band of Athenian youths and maidens to be given as victims to the Minotaur. This was a monster with a human body and a bull's head, usually said to have been kept in the labyrinth of Cnossus, a building designed in the form of an intricate maze, from which no one who entered could find his way out (see BULL; MAZE).

Food for the Minotaur

Theseus went voluntarily as one of the victims. When he arrived on Crete, he won the help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos. She gave him a ball of thread to unwind as he made his way into the labyrinth and follow so that he could find his way out again. He killed the Minotaur with his sword and then set off homeward in triumph with the captives, who were no longer needed as food for the Minotaur. He took Ariadne with him, but left her behind on the island of Dia off the coast near Cnossus or, as was more commonly said, on the island of Naxos, where the god Dionysus found her and took her as his wife.

As Theseus approached Athens, he forgot to change the black sail of the ship, a sign of mourning for the young Athenians, for a white one which would be a sign of deliverance. This he had promised to do if he came home safe. Aegeus, who was looking out for him, concluded that he had perished and hurled himself from a cliff.

Theseus thus became king of Athens. He had to fight rivals, the sons of Pallas, brother of Aegeus, but prevailed over them. He subdued the wild bull of Marathon, being sheltered on his way by an old peasant woman, Hecale. On an expedition with

Hercules and others to Themiscyra, where the Amazons lived on the south coast of the Black Sea (see AMAZONS) he carried off an Amazon, Antiope or, according to others, Hippolyta, and made her his wife; he later repudiated her and married Phaedra, daughter of Minos. The Amazons made war on him, invaded Attica and were with a great effort defeated. By his Amazon wife he had a son, Hippolytus. He also carried off Helen as a girl from Laconia, but she was brought home by force while he was away by her brothers Castor and Polydeuces.

Theseus was in Hades at the time with his friend Pirithous the Lapith, who was attempting to carry off Persephone, queen of the underworld. Pluto, however, cunningly persuaded Theseus and Pirithous to sit on seats, to which their flesh grew. Theseus was rescued by Hercules, who could not free Pirithous.

When Theseus eventually returned to Athens he found that the people were disaffected. He left for the island of Scyros, where the king Lycomedes, fearing that he meant to annex the island, treacherously thrust him over a cliff. A skeleton of great size, said to be his, was found on Scyros centuries later and carried to Athens by Cimon.

The adventures given in this framework appear here and there in surviving poetry, including some celebrated plays, which introduce something of his other aspect of statesman. Within extant poetry the earliest mention of Theseus is in a speech by Nestor in the *Iliad* (book 1). Nestor compares the warriors at Troy to their disadvantage with the earlier generation which included Pirithous and Theseus, son of Aegeus. 'They were like the immortals, the mightiest of men, who fought the mightiest of enemies, the beast-men of the hills.' The reference is to the centaurs whom Pirithous and his Lapithae subdued with the help of Theseus. In the *Odyssey* (book 11) there is mention of the ghost of Ariadne in Hades 'whom Theseus wished to bring from Crete to Athens but who was slain by Artemis on Dia by the witness of Dionysus': a puzzling passage. The *Odyssey* also relates that Odysseus, after seeing the phantom of Hercules, also hoped to see the ghosts of Theseus and Pirithous. The expedition of the two heroes to Hades must have been known to Homer.

According to Hesiod as reported in Athenaeus and Plutarch, Theseus abandoned Ariadne because he took a fancy to the maidens Hippe and Aegle. A damaged papyrus contains a fragment of a Hesiodic poem *The Descent of Pirithous*, in which the ghost of Theseus in Hades tells the ghost of Meleager how he and Pirithous came down to carry off Persephone. Meleager apparently hears the story with disgust.

In the remains of the Epic Cycle, poems of the same type as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but later and inferior, there is an occasional allusion to Theseus. In the *Nostoi* (Homeward Journeys of the Heroes from Troy) it is said that the love of Antiope for Theseus led her to betray Themiscyra to him and Hercules. In the *Cypria* Theseus is said to have carried off Helen and to have kept her

Jeffrey Craig

Spectrum Colour Library

The 'Horns of Minos' rise from the ruins of Cnossus, relics of the bull cult of ancient Crete: the legend of Theseus as national hero of Athens, who challenged the authority of Crete and founded Athenian greatness, seems to preserve memories of a time when Attica was dominated by Crete

until she was rescued by her brothers, the Dioscuri.

Among the lyric poets Alcman, as reported by Pausanias, tells how the Dioscuri, retrieving Helen, took Athens while Theseus was away and captured his mother Aethra. Stesichorus says that Helen was pregnant at the time of her rescue, and gave birth at Argos to an infant which she handed over to her sister Clytemnestra, before she herself married Menelaus. Pindar tells much the same story, explaining that Theseus kept Helen because he wished to become brother-in-law of the Dioscuri.

Palace under the Sea

But the most celebrated treatment of Theseus in lyric is found in two poems of Bacchylides. In *Dithyramb* 18, Aegeus is presented in conversation with a chorus about the approach of a remarkable stranger coming from Troezen. Aegeus has heard that he has killed Sinis and the other robbers and the sow of Crommyon. Two men are accompanying him; he wears a sword, a Laconian helmet, a red tunic and a woollen Thessalian cloak. His hair is flame-coloured and he darts from his eyes a red flame like the earth-fire of Lemnos. He is in the flower of his youth, his thoughts are of weapons and he is making for Athens. In *Dithyramb* 17, Theseus is shown sailing to Crete in the charge of Minos with the captive youths and maidens. He disputes with Minos, who is laying his hands on one of the maidens, claiming that if Minos is son of Zeus he himself is son of Poseidon. Zeus gives a clap of thunder as a sign for Minos, who throws his ring into the sea, challenging Theseus to dive for it. Theseus plunges in and reaches Poseidon's palace under the sea, where he is greeted by Amphitrite and presented with a bright garment. He comes up to the surface still dry, and the Nereids sing around him as he returns on board.

In Attic drama Theseus is prominent in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and in Euripides' *Mad Hercules*, *Hippolytus* and *Suppliants*. In the *Oedipus at Colonus* the aged and blind Oedipus, exiled from Thebes, is received in Attica at Colonus as a refugee with his two daughters. Theseus gives him protection and will not allow Creon of Thebes to carry off him or his daughters. In reward Oedipus reveals to Theseus alone where he must die in Attica and how, when he has disappeared beneath Attic earth, his presence will be a blessing to Attica. Only Theseus sees the manner of his death, and on oath reveals it to no one except his heirs. For this service Oedipus will hold Athens unscathed from any attack that may come from the Thebans who cast him out. Sophocles also wrote a *Phaedra*, which has perished; it dealt with the adulterous passion of Phaedra, wife of Theseus, for her stepson Hippolytus, but details are not known. It is believed that at the time of the action Theseus is supposed to be away.

In *Mad Hercules* Euripides relates how Hercules, after recovering from the fit of madness in which he killed his children, is brought to Attica from Thebes by Theseus and cleansed from the defilement of his deed. He also receives the promise of a place to dwell in recognition of his services to the Greeks, including Theseus. So too in the *Suppliants* Theseus supports the claim of Adrastus, the survivor among the chiefs who led the great Argive expedition against Thebes, to receive back the dead from the Thebans. If the Thebans will not yield, Theseus will make war on them, after putting the proposal to the Athenian people for their approval. He receives back the bodies of the Argive troops which the Athenians bury on Cythaeron, while those of the leaders are brought to Eleusis in Attica for burning before the bones and ashes are taken to Argos.

Deceived Husband

In the *Hippolytus*, Theseus has a very different part. There were two versions, of which the older, now lost, presented Phaedra in the style of Potiphar's wife, as perhaps Sophocles did, attempting to seduce Hippolytus and, when she failed, denouncing him for an attempt on her virtue. In the later one, which survives, Phaedra at first takes no action and conceals her passion until she is ill with it. Her old nurse induces her to confess it and unwisely reveals it to Hippolytus, making overtures in Phaedra's name but without her permission. Hippolytus recoils in horror and upbraids Phaedra for advances which she did not make. Phaedra hangs herself, leaving a written message for Theseus, accusing Hippolytus of rape. On his return Theseus believes the message and curses Hippolytus, driving him into exile. As Hippolytus drives along the shore, Poseidon, carrying out Theseus's curse, sends a bull from the sea to terrify his horses. They smash his chariot and drag him until he is nearly dead. The goddess Artemis then appears to tell Theseus the truth, and he is reconciled to his dying son. Theseus appears here only as a deceived, outraged and hasty husband and father. But in the other plays he appears as a humane ruler with a certain leaning toward democracy.

Episodes of Theseus's career are treated in Alexandrian poetry. Bion remarks that all lovers are happy, even Theseus when he went down into implacable Hades, because Pirithous was at his side. The remains of Callimachus's *Hecale* tell how the old peasant woman, Hecale, entertained Theseus on his way to capture the bull of Marathon, but was dead when he returned.

It has been argued that Theseus was originally a hero of the Ionian Greeks, who lived in the northern Peloponnese as well as in Attica and Euboea before the Dorian and West Greek invasion, so that his connection with Troezen, a Dorian city in classical times, goes back to the Mycenean period. Within Attica he seems originally to have belonged to the north-eastern region about

Marathon. The power of Minos over Attica could represent the power of rulers in Cnossus, who were already, in the 15th century BC, Greeks rather than Minoans, though Cnossus fell later to other Greeks from the mainland. Theseus's defeat of the robbers between Troezen and Athens may be a fairly late development of his story, not much earlier than the 6th century BC.

Friend of Democracy

The political Theseus no doubt has ancient roots in Attic tradition. But he appears in definite form first in Thucydides, and in plays of Euripides which apply forms of thought belonging to the 5th century BC to heroic legend. According to Thucydides, Attica before Theseus's reign was divided between separate communities which had their own authorities and took little common counsel or action except in face of external peril. The shrewd and energetic Theseus abolished these local assemblies and directed their members to meet in Athens, though the rest of the local inhabitants still lived separately. By the death of Theseus, Athens had become a large and powerful state, and the Athenians date their political unity from that time. Euripides in his *Suppliants* even makes Theseus claim to have set the people free to exercise equal votes and to elect annual officers, an equal part of these to be chosen by the poor. Isocrates *(Panathenaicus)*, Aristotle *(Politics* and *Constitution of Athens)* and Plutarch *(Life of Theseus)* regard Theseus's constitution as a historical creation, a mixture of various elements which was intended to be just and stable and was later gradually improved, until finally it was transformed for the worse into extreme democracy. Some oligarchs regarded Theseus's concessions to the people as the remote beginning of decay.

The truth symbolized by this treatment of Theseus, alone among epic heroes, is that Attic society, and even the Attic state, had a continuous existence since heroic or, historically, since Mycenean times. In other regions of Greece overrun by the Dorians the heroic or Mycenean society had been swept away and no such continuity could be claimed.

E. D. PHILLIPS

'The similarities between ancient theurgy and modern Spiritualism appear too numerous to be dismissed as pure coincidence' and 'it is tempting to conclude that they have a common psychological basis in actual experience'

THEURGY

THEURGY WAS DEFINED by the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus (5th century AD) as 'a power higher than all human wisdom and knowledge, embracing the blessings of divination, the purifying effects of the ritual art, and in a word all the operations of divine possession.' It can be described more simply as magic applied to a religious purpose and resting on a supposed revelation of a religious character. Its practitioners called themselves 'theurgists' because they claimed not merely to talk about the gods as 'theologians' did, but to *act* upon them in a direct manner. Whereas vulgar magic used names and formulae of religious origin to profane ends, theurgy employed the methods of vulgar magic primarily (though, as we shall see, not exclusively) to a religious end, the salvation of the soul through contact with the Divine.

The revelation on which the theurgists based their practice was contained in a long poem in Greek hexameters, known as the *Chaldean Oracles*. It was the last Sacred Book of classical antiquity, published and perhaps composed by one Julianus (called 'the Chaldean' to distinguish him from the Emperor Julian) who lived in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD). Of his life and personality we know virtually nothing, but later tradition represents him as a potent magician who could cause men's souls to leave and re-enter the body and could produce apparitions of divine beings; the timely thunderstorm which saved the Roman army from destruction during Marcus's campaign against the Quadi in 173 AD was attributed by some to the magic arts of Julianus. His book is unfortunately lost, but numerous fragments of it and descriptions of the rituals founded on it are preserved by the

British Museum

Medieval Christian view of Julian the Apostate, the patron of theurgy

later Neoplatonists. It seems to have been a strange amalgam of oriental religious ideas, derived ultimately from Iranian, Babylonian, Syrian, Egyptian and Jewish sources, with Greek concepts most of which go back in origin to Plato.

Theurgy had a chequered history. For a century after Julianus's time it seems to have created little stir. Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, never mentions it and is never described as a theurgist. Its heyday came later, when Plotinus's successors in the Greek-speaking Neoplatonic schools perceived in it a valuable ally in their long struggle against the rising power of Christianity. Iamblichus (*c* 250–325 AD) in particular exalted theurgy above philosophy, ritual above reason. 'It is not thought,' he says, 'that links the theurgists with the gods . . . Theurgic union is attained only by the efficacy of the unspeakable *acts* performed in the appropriate manner.' The last pagan Emperor, Julian 'the Apostate' (died 363), had complete faith in theurgy and elevated its practitioners to high office, but the subsequent Christian reaction drove it underground for a time. It re-emerged in the 5th century at Athens, where Proclus set the *Chaldean Oracles* beside the *Timaeus* of Plato as the two indispensable cornerstones of pagan orthodoxy and was himself an expert in theurgic magic (see NEOPLATONISM; PROCLUS). Under Justinian (527–565) it was finally prohibited along with other pagan practices, but the tradition of it lingered.

Animated Statues

From the many scattered sources the procedures of theurgy can be reconstructed in broad outline, though much remains uncertain. We can distinguish two main types – those which depended exclusively on the use of 'symbols' or 'tokens' and those which involved the employment of an entranced 'medium'. The former type seems to have been used mainly for the purpose of consecrating and 'animating' magical statues of deities in order to obtain oracles or other help from them. The 'symbols' were the animals, herbs, stones, scents and engraved characters appropriate to the particular god invoked; each god had his 'sympathetic' representative in the animal, the vegetable and the mineral kingdom which was

The theurgists' attempt to induce the temporary presence of a god in a human medium had a famous precedent at Delphi, where Apollo spoke through a priestess *Left* Apollo, on a bowl from Delphi, 5th century BC *Below right* Aegeus consults the priestess of Apollo: Attic vase of the 5th century BC

permanently *en rapport* with its divine cause. The symbols were hidden inside the statue, so that their identity was known only to the magician. The ceremony was completed by the recitation of certain secret 'life-giving names' which the gods had revealed to Julianus. If the consecration had been correctly performed, the statue would give omens to its worshippers by apparent movements or changes of expression, or would procure for them communications from the deity in sleep.

This practice, though foreign to classical Greek tradition, was by no means new. Its centre of diffusion appears to have been Egypt, where it was rooted in native religious ideas. The Hermetic dialogue *Asclepius* knows of it as an ancient Egyptian usage (see HERMETICA), and the magical papyri from Egypt offer recipes for the manufacture of such images. But from the 1st century AD onwards we begin to hear of the private fabrication and magical use of oracular statues outside Egypt. Its real vogue, however, came later with Iamblichus, who doubtless saw in it the most effective defence of the pagan cult of images against the sneers of Christian critics. From his teaching seems to derive the belief in consecrated statues as protective 'talismans' *(telesmata)* – enchanted images whose presence, concealed or visible, had power to avert natural disaster or military defeat. Such a 'talisman' was the statue of Achilles, dedicated in the Parthenon in 375 by the theurgist Nestorius, following instructions received in a dream, which is said to have saved Athens from an earthquake.

The Medium Possessed

Of greater interest to the anthropologist and the psychical researcher, since it invites comparison with 'possession'-cults elsewhere and in particular with modern Spiritualism, is the other branch of theurgy, which sought to induce the temporary presence of a god not in a statue but in a living human organism. This too was in principle no novelty. At Delphi the oracular god Apollo had for many centuries spoken in the first person through the lips of an entranced priestess, and in the Roman Imperial Age similar methods were in use at several other public oracles (see ORACLES). But this was institutionalized mediumship, confined to certain holy places and certain officially authorized persons. What seems to have been new in theurgy was the systematic exploitation of mediumship at private seances which had no official standing and might apparently be held anywhere.

The best mediums, says Iamblichus, are 'young and rather simple persons'. Ritual means, such as the putting on of a special dress, were employed to throw them into a state of dissociation and to secure the presence of the particular god desired. A distinction is drawn between trance automatism, in which the medium's personality is completely in abeyance, and automatism without trance, which the medium can both induce and terminate at will. The symptoms of trance are said to vary widely with different communicating gods and on different occasions: there may be anaesthesia, including insensibility to fire; there may be bodily movement or complete immobility; there may be changes in the quality of the voice. The gods, we are told, come at first reluctantly, but more easily when they have formed a habit (that is, no doubt, when a secondary 'trance personality' has been built up). Most of these observations can be paralleled from the annals of modern Spiritualism (see MEDIUMS; SPIRITUALISM).

The possessing gods, like 'communicators' today, claimed to establish their authenticity by exhibiting supernormal powers. In true possession, we are assured, the possessing spirit will 'utter things outside the medium's knowledge and sometimes predict future events'. Some gods even venture an answer to such questions as, 'Will it be a boy or a girl?' This may be thought risky, but in the event of failure there were explanations available: 'bad conditions', or the disturbed state of the medium's mind, or the inopportune intervention of his normal self; or again the intrusion of a lying spirit who 'jumps in and usurps the place prepared for a higher being'. All these excuses recur in the literature of Spiritualism.

The gods also granted to the theurgists visible signs of their presence. Sometimes these were seen by all present, though on other occasions only the operating magician claimed to see them. Iamblichus alleges that there may be dilatation or levitation of the medium's person; that lights may be seen, sometimes by all present, at the moment when the medium is falling into or emerging from trance; and that the operator may see spirit forms entering the medium's body (this last he calls 'the most important sign'). To the psychical researcher this is a familiar-sounding list. The apparition of lights, which seems to have been the most frequent phenomenon (and one of the easiest to fake, as the Christian writer Hippolytus showed) is frequent also in the modern seance-room. Levitation and dilatation have been ascribed to modern mediums. And the 'spirit forms' – which may appear either as shapeless masses or in recognizable shapes – are suggestive of the so-called ectoplasm which modern observers claim to have seen emerge from, and return to, the bodies of certain mediums. Iamblichus also seems to refer to what spiritualists call 'apports' (materializations of objects); and from other sources we hear of 'autophonic' oracles, corresponding to the so-called 'direct voice' which dispenses with the use of the medium's vocal organs.

The similarities between ancient theurgy and modern Spiritualism appear too numerous to be dismissed as pure coincidence. And it is not altogether easy to account for them by literary tradition or any diffusionist theory. It is tempting to conclude that they have a common psychological basis in actual

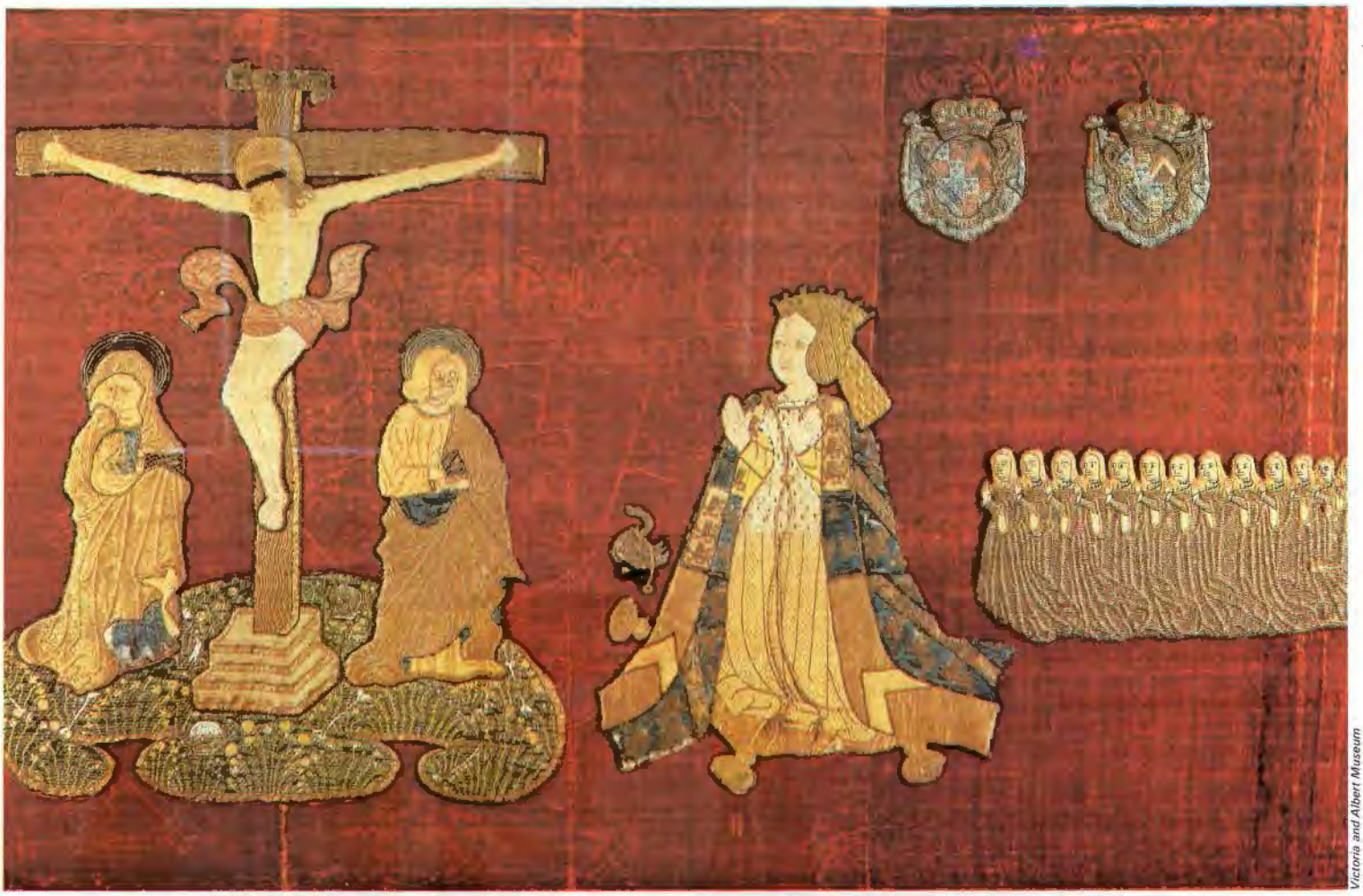
Staatliche Museum, Berlin

experience. It should, however, be remembered that with all these similarities there is associated one fundamental contrast: what the Spiritualists ascribe to the activity of a discarnate human mind the theurgists normally attribute to non-human spirits, 'gods' or 'daemons'. In this way they agree with the preponderant weight of ancient opinion. The *possibility* of communication with the dead was indeed seldom denied, save by Epicureans and sceptics, but religious feeling was strongly opposed to it. Under the Roman Empire necromancy was occasionally practised in secret, but it had no place in religious life and was subject to severe legal penalties. Nor is there any evidence that Graeco-Roman necromancers ever made use of mediums in their rites.

The pious theurgists, who did employ mediums, were not necromancers and had little interest in calling up the dead. They admitted, however, that cases of disputed identity – ghost or non-human spirit – might sometimes occur, since the lower orders of spirits were liable on occasion to simulate the higher. Thus for example Iamblichus was credited with having unmasked a self-styled Apollo, evoked by an Egyptian magician, who was in reality only the ghost of a gladiator. But such cases were thought to be exceptional, as were also the occasional intrusions of the evil spirits known as 'anti-gods' *(antitheoi)*: they happened, it was believed, chiefly where the operator was inexperienced or ritually impure. The motivation of the theurgist was religious. He was not interested in demonstrating survival, which he took for granted; his object was to achieve communion with the divine beings of a traditional faith and by their aid to transcend earthly experience and 'ascend to the intellectual fire'.

E. R. DODDS

FURTHER READING: Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy* (Cairo, Institut Français, 1956); E. R. Dodds, 'Supernormal Phenomena in Classical Antiquity', *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* vol. 55 (1971).



Victoria and Albert Museum

Lady Westmorland and her 13 children pray to Christ, in a 16th century altar frontal: 13 is widely regarded as an unlucky number, possibly because it is one more than 12, a number of completeness, and so has the connotation of dangerously exceeding proper limits or starting on a new and uncertain course

The Tarot card numbered 13 is Death, the skeleton, and 13 is the traditional number of a coven of witches: the number's uncanny and ominous associations reach back to pagan times

THIRTEEN

THAT THE NUMBER 13 is unlucky is one of the most common and persistent of superstitions and one of the few that is openly catered to. Hotel managements still frequently take care to have no 13th floor and some builders and local authorities do not number a house 13, because if they do it will be difficult to dispose of. Gustav Jahoda records in his book *The Psychology of Superstition* that in 1965, when the Queen paid a visit to West Germany, the number of the platform at Duisburg railway station from which her train was to leave was changed from 13 to 12A.

A good many people dislike parties of 13 and it is thought to be extremely unlucky for this number of people to sit down to a table. One of them, sometimes said to be the first person to rise from the table, or sometimes the last, will die or suffer some damaging misfortune before a year is out. The belief has been recorded in Oxfordshire that it is ominous for 13 people to be together in one room, especially for the one who is nearest the door, and in London that if the number on a bus ticket adds to 13 it brings bad luck. The 13th day of the month is widely regarded as a most unpropitious day for beginning any new undertaking (though there is nothing unfortunate about being born on it) and even people who think of themselves as entirely unsuperstitious may show slight symptoms of unease when the 13th falls on a Friday, which is an unlucky day in its own right (see DAYS).

The reasons for this uneasiness about 13 are obscure. Though it has probably

The Last Supper by Damaskinos, a 16th century Cretan ikon painter: the fact that 13 people attended the Last Supper, which was followed by betrayal and death, has added to the number's evil reputation. It is still thought very unlucky for 13 people to sit down to a table

C. M. Dixon

been strengthened by the fact that 13 sat down to the Last Supper, the first person to rise from the table being Judas, who went out to betray Christ, the uneasiness is older than Christianity, for the Romans associated 13 with death and misfortune. The root reason may be that 13 is one more than 12, which is a number of completeness – the whole year consisting of 12 months, the whole day of 12 hours (see TWELVE) – and so it has the connotation of dangerously exceeding proper limits, of going beyond a natural cycle or starting on a new and uncertain course.

The Coven of 13

In early Christian numerology 13 was sometimes categorized as the number of sin, because it goes beyond the 12 apostles, though it could equally be a holy and admirable number which adds faith in the Trinity to the Ten Commandments. In the European magical tradition 13 is the number of necromancy, of bringing the dead back to temporary life, which again implies transgressing natural and proper limits.

One of the Graeco-Egyptian magical texts of the early centuries AD provides a method of animating a corpse which can then be forced to obsess a woman until she submits to the magician. It involves making a doll to represent the woman, piercing it with 13 needles and putting it on the grave of someone who died young or by violence, and then conjuring the corpse by incantation to rise up and stalk the streets to the woman's house, there to prey on her mind until she does the magician's will. The Tarot trump numbered 13 is Death, a skeleton who is mowing a field of human heads with a scythe while hands and feet grow in their place, a symbol of death and new life.

The fact that 13 is the traditional number of a coven of witches, with the 13th being the Devil or the local leader, may also have contributed to the number's evil reputation. Margaret Murray, in *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* and *The God of the Witches*, maintained that witches were in fact organized in groups of 13, each with a leader and 12 followers. Modern witches generally regard 13 as the proper number for a coven, though most real covens are smaller. The famous witch Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE) said that there were 13 in each coven, and in 1673 a woman named Anne Armstrong, of Morpeth in Northumberland, said that every 'covey' of witches had 13 members and 'every covey of 13 had a Devil, who danced first with those boasting the most evil'. But in general the evidence for real covens of 13 is slight and unconvincing.

It has been suggested that a 'baker's dozen' of 13 really means 'the Devil's dozen' and is derived from 'Boucca's dozen', Boucca being an old name for a god or spirit, surviving in the buccas of Cornish lore (see CORNWALL). Margaret Murray, who to the mingled scorn and amusement of more orthodox historians connected the founding of the Order of the Garter by King Edward III with the 'old religion' of witchcraft, noted that there were 26 knights, equivalent to two covens, and that Edward's mantle as head of the order was decorated with 168 garters which, adding the one he wore on his leg, makes 169, or 13 times 13, equalling 13 covens. However, it seems more likely that the number 13 here was drawn directly from the model of Christ and the 12 apostles.

A bluff, straightforward fellow who preferred strong-arm tactics to diplomacy, the red-bearded god of thunder, whose hammer laid low trolls and giants, was a god after the Vikings' heart

THOR

THE GOD OF THUNDER among the Germanic peoples, Donar, developed in the Scandinavian North into a vigorous, dynamic figure of mighty strength, with a red beard, a voracious appetite, and a great axe-hammer to protect gods and men from the evil forces of chaos and destruetion. Thor remained a dominant influence until the end of the heathen period, and in the 10th century his silver hammer symbol was worn in opposition to the Christian cross, while his famous fishing exploit when he hauled up the World Serpent from the sea was carved on crosses and memorial stones in Scandinavia and the British Isles and celebrated in a number of Icelandic poems. He is presented in the literature as a god of considerable popular appeal, worshipped by the landowners of Norway in particular, and carried by them to Iceland.

Thor was a suitable god for a farming community, for he was closely linked with the earth. As the 11th century chronicler Adam of Bremen observed, he ruled not only thunder and lightning but winds and showers, fair weather and crops; while his wife Sif, famous for her bright hair, might be a variant of the ancient fertility goddess, typifying the golden corn. It was said that Thor's mother was Earth itself, so that the link between sky god and earth goddess is still reflected in the traditions concerning him.

Thus it is not surprising that Norwegians leaving for Iceland used sometimes to take with them earth from under the family shrine to the god, and also the two main pillars supporting the building, the 'high-seat pillars', which were sometimes said to have Thor's image carved on them. These could be thrown overboard as the ship drew near Iceland, so that Thor himself might lead his worshippers to the place where he desired them to dwell. The ancient Germanic thunder god was associated

with oak forests (see GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY), and in Iceland, where forests were unknown, the wooden pillars sacred to the god served as an echo of the earlier tradition. Once a settler who had no wood for high-seat pillars prayed to Thor, and in answer a great tree was washed up on the shore, which provided pillars not only for him but for his neighbours also.

Whether indeed Thor had special temples built for him, as described in the sagas, is a matter for controversy. It may have been that he presided over the living quarters, and that the high-seat pillars were those of the hall itself, where the ritual feasts were probably held; certainly no convincing archeological remains of temple buildings have yet been found in Iceland.

His worshippers turned to Thor for blessing on hearth and home, and protection from wind and storms, as also from evil spirits haunting the waste places and bringing misfortune to the community. He presided also over law, which played an important part in Icelandic life. The Althing, the main Law Assembly held yearly at Thingvellir, opened on Thursday, Thor's day. When men made contracts with one another they swore oaths on Thor's ring, a heavy arm-ring of gold or silver which was said to lie on his altar.

An enthusiastic worshipper of the god would set up his home in Iceland only after careful consultation of Thor. He would organize feasts in Thor's honour along with the other gods at certain seasons of the year, and would turn to him at the important times in family life, at births, marriages and deaths. The hammer of Thor was raised over the new-born infant received into the community, and was laid in the lap of the bride and carved on memorial stones to the dead. Thor could help travellers, since he controlled the winds and the sea, and one Icelandic Christian from the Hebrides, Helgi the Lean, was said after his conversion to continue to pray to Thor for help whenever he had to make a sea voyage. The red beard of the god may be associated with the stormy sky, while his terrible blazing eyes and great voice remind us that he controlled the lightning and thunder.

The Sign of the Hammer

In the myths Thor is an active figure, frequently said to be off fighting trolls, and continually engaged in struggle and adventure. He does not ride on horseback like Odin, but is said to walk to the assembly of the gods, wading through rivers. In his passage across the sky, however, he is said to travel in a wagon drawn by goats, and the noise of its rattling wheels is heard as thunder in the world of men. When he hurled his hammer at giants, rocks split and boulders were shattered (see HAMMER). This was a magic weapon of great potency, held to be the greatest treasure of the gods; it was used as a throwing hammer and was said always to return to the hand. It is pictured on carvings with a long thong, as if the thrower whirled it round his head before letting it fly at his opponent. The hammer symbol long lived on in folklore, and was a protective amulet not only against lightning and fire, but against theft and flood and all kinds of calamities, while the sign of the hammer made with the hand, like that of the cross, conveyed a blessing and gave protection.

Sometimes in the myths Thor hurled glowing fragments of red-hot metal at his enemies, but his favourite technique was to smash their skulls with his hammer. The association with fire is suggested by the strange story of Thor's duel with the giant Hrungnir. Thor flung his hammer, and the giant, who was armed with a stone shield, threw a whetstone at Thor. Hammer and whetstone met in mid air; the hammer went on to shatter Hrungnir's head, but one piece of the stone lodged in Thor's forehead. A possible explanation of this myth might be sought in Lapp custom: the image of the thunder god of the Lapps had an iron nail in the head on which fire could be kindled with flint, in a ritual which re-enacted the lightning.

In accounts of Thor's temples in Norway, there are descriptions of large figures of the god seated in a chair or, in one case, in his wagon, with goats of bronze which could be pulled along by a cord. How common such impressive statues were in pagan times is uncertain, but we have one small amulet of the god in a chair, holding his hammer, which seems to grow out of his beard; this was found on a farm in Iceland. A number of runic stones in Norway and Sweden have invocations to Thor to hallow the memorial, and his protection evidently extended to the dead as well as the living. In one story Thor slew his own goats to provide a meal for himself and his companions, and then, raising his hammer aloft over bones and skin, called back the animals to life.

Thor plays a large part in the myths, and from these much of our knowledge of his powers and importance is drawn. Sometimes he appears as a figure of comedy, the bluff, simple fellow who trusts in his strong arm and has no time for the tortuous wiles of Loki and Odin. But the humorous tales do not indicate hostility towards the god, but rather testify to the affection felt for him by his worshippers. One of the most famous myths was that of his struggle with the World Serpent, of which several accounts survive. He went out in the boat of the sea giant Hymir, who did not recognize his divine passenger, and he had with him the head of Hymir's largest ox. The giant was alarmed by the speed with which the boat moved when Thor took the oars, and utterly terrified when the ox-head was thrown out as bait for the serpent which encircles the world, and the monster was hooked on Thor's line. As the struggle continued Thor took on his divine strength, pushing his feet through the boat and bracing himself against the sea bottom. The serpent's terrible head appeared and the two stared fiercely into each other's eyes; then according to one version Hymir cut the line, and the serpent fell back into the depths, there to await the world's end. Thor in wrath knocked the giant into the sea and waded back to shore. The struggle between the sky god and a monster of the deep is a pattern familiar in many mythologies. Originally Thor may have slain the serpent, although at the end of the pagan period the episode was set in the account of Ragnarok, the last battle between gods and monsters, and Thor, after slaying the serpent, himself perished from its poisonous breath (see SCANDINAVIA).

John Moss

Battles with Giants

The fishing story is linked with a visit to Hymir's hall and a battle with the giants. Hymir's wife assisted Thor, who had been challenged to break the giant's precious cup, by prompting him to hurl it at Hymir's head, against which it was shattered. Thor then marched away with the giant's cauldron, which was to be used to brew ale for a banquet of the gods. This is one of a series of tales in which Thor enters the realm of the giants and finally overcomes them, although the odds at first are against him. Once he visited the kingdom of Geirrod, who had forced the god Loki to bring Thor out without his hammer or his belt of might. Thor was again helped by a giantess, who lent him another belt, gloves of iron and her magic staff, so that he was able to survive the ordeals prepared for him. First he was beset by the swelling waters of the River Vimur, because one of Geirrod's daughters stood astride the river and was adding to the waters by her own efforts. He struck her with a well-directed rock and reached the shore with the help of a rowan tree. Next he sat down in the goatshed, and found his seat being forced up to the roof by two other daughters of the giant, but he pushed it down with his magic staff and broke their backs. Finally Geirrod himself flung a ball of hot iron at him, but Thor caught it in the gloves and sent it back to lay Geirrod low.

Another famous story reads like a satiric version of the myths, and is told with much wit by the antiquarian writer of the 12th century, the Icelander Snorri Sturluson. Thor set out with Loki and two servants to visit the realm of Utgard-Loki, a giant

Left **The hammer of Thor, the Scandinavian thunder god, as a talisman: in the North the sign of the hammer rivalled the cross as a sacred symbol and was a protective amulet against lightning, fire and calamities of all kinds *Right* 'The struggle between a sky god and a monster of the deep is a pattern familiar in many mythologies': Thor in the giant Hymir's boat, catching the World Serpent, an illustration from an *Edda* MS**

Royal Library, Copenhagen

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expert in magic. On the way, they encountered an enormous giant, who gave his name as Skrymir and offered to accompany them. Thor was continually frustrated, since he was unable to unfasten the giant's bag of provisions, and when he finally lost patience and struck Skrymir on the head, the giant only asked if a leaf had fallen, or a bird dropped something from the tree above. Finally he left them and they went on to Utgard, a stronghold of such size that they were able to creep through the bars of the gate. The king was rather contemptuous of such puny figures, but asked if they had any special skills.

Joke at Thor's Expense

In the trials of strength that followed Thor and his companions suffered further humiliation. Loki had an eating contest with a man called Logi, but although he devoured all the meat he was given his opponent ate the bones and the trough as well. Thialfi ran a race with a lad called Hugi, and was utterly outstripped. Thor himself undertook a drinking contest, but to his shame was unable to empty the horn offered him in three draughts: the liquid only fell a little below the rim. Next he tried to raise the king's grey cat from the floor, but could only get one paw off the ground. Finally he was asked to wrestle with the king's old foster-mother, but found himself unable to throw her. The king feasted them well after their defeat, and next morning they took their leave. Once outside the gates, the truth was revealed to them. The blows aimed at Skrymir, really Utgard-Loki in disguise, had been diverted by magic and had fallen on three mountains, leaving deep pits where the hammer had struck. The bag which Thor could not undo was fastened by iron bands; Loki's opponent in the contest was Fire, which can consume more than any god or man, while Thialfi had raced against Thought, swifter than any in its flight. The horn offered to Thor had its tip in the ocean, and his great gulps had lowered the sea, as if the tide had ebbed; while the cat was in reality the World Serpent, and all had trembled when Thor raised it so far by his strength, lest the universe should perish; his last opponent was Old Age, able to overcome the mightiest.

Thus the witty tale, by a clever series of reversals, reveals the mighty powers of the great sky god even as it makes merry at his expense. The indomitable Thor, trusting in his own strength and rejoicing in a good fight against heavy odds, is a fitting deity for the Viking Age; while in the conception of the mighty god of the sky, who supports justice among men and fights unceasingly against the forces of chaos, there is a deeper truth than at first might be apparent in the light-hearted myths of his exploits against the giants.

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

Hamlyn Group

Small brooze statuette of Thor, of *c* 1000 AD, seated in a chair and holdiog the hammer; it was found in Iceland where Thor, who controlled rain and storms, was highly regarded by farmers and seaferers

FURTHER READING: H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Penguin, 1964); E. O. G. Turville Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (Weidenfeld, 1964).

The identity of the Thracian Rider, and what he meant to those who carved his figure, remains uncertain but clues to his character may be deduced from the way he is depicted on the numerous stone stelae on which he appears

THRACIAN RIDER GOD

OVER A WIDE AREA of the Balkans, especially in the territory known as Thrace in ancient times (now Bulgaria), great numbers of monuments have been found of what is called the 'Thracian Rider'. These monuments generally take the form of stone stelae, upon which the figure of a horseman is carved, together with other attendant figures or symbols. They date from the Roman Imperial period, mostly from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Some specimens have been found further afield, in Anatolia and Western Europe. The identity of the 'Rider', and what he meant to those who carved his figure on these stones, remain uncertain, despite the research of many scholars. That he commanded the allegiance of many peoples is evident from the multitude of the monuments bearing his effigy, and the wide area of their diffusion.

There are a few deductions which can be made about the significance of this mysterious figure. First, it must be noted that the figures of a horse and rider frequently occur on classical Greek and Etruscan funerary monuments. Such representations had a mortuary significance – the deceased was departing from this world to the next. But the Thracian Rider does not appear on tombstones, and so cannot be reckoned as having a sepulchral character. Instead, his monuments were located in sanctuaries, indicating that he was a divinity of some kind.

Unknown Hero

Here the mystery of his identity becomes very puzzling. Although the monuments often bear inscriptions in Greek and Latin, and name the divine Rider to whom they are dedicated, the mystery is only deepened by what they record. The name most frequently given is 'Heros' or 'Heron'. This could be the designation of a dead man, for the dead were sometimes 'heroized' in Greek funerary inscriptions. But this is unlikely to have been the case here, since the monuments were not tombstones; some inscriptions, moreover, read *theo Heroti*, 'to the god Hero'.

In other inscriptions, the Rider is named Phoebus, that is, Apollo, or Asclepios, the Greek god of healing. Such names suggest that the mysterious Rider was being equated with well-known Greek gods, though himself remaining unnamed.

Clues to what the divine Rider meant to his devotees seem to be provided by various iconographic features of the monuments. The Rider was generally depicted with his cloak streaming out behind him, suggesting vigour and speed of movement. He frequently flourishes a club or double-axe, the latter being a symbol of many Near Eastern weather or sky gods. But more significant is the fact that a number of monuments show the deity with three heads. Such multiplication of physical features is usually a primitive way of suggesting superhuman ability. Three heads, so arranged that one looks forward, one backwards, and one full-face, would seem to indicate a deity who was all-seeing and all-knowing. Since these powers were usually attributes of a sun god, the Thracian Rider probably had solar associations, even if he was not actually a sun god. Then the fact that he is sometimes shown as hunting a great wild boar, often a symbol of evil, may mean that the deity was regarded as a divine saviour, who hunted and subdued the forces of evil and disorder.

These deductions are reasonable, but they cannot be proved. However, we may certainly conclude that, whatever his significance, the mysterious Rider god answered some deep need or aspiration felt by the various peoples inhabiting these rather savage regions in ancient times.

FURTHER READING: R. Pettazoni, *The All-Knowing God* (Arno Press, 1978).

Horse and rider, worked in silver on a helmet of the 4th century BC, found in the tomb of a Thracian chief and now in the Bucharest National Museum of Antiquities: the horseman motif appears in classical times over a wide area of the Balkans but its significance is still not fully understood

Thracian Rider God

C. M. Dixon

THREE

THIS IS GENERALLY considered the luckiest of numbers and if your name adds to 3 (see ALPHABET), you will be described by numerologists as a fortunate being indeed. Creative, clever, charming, lively and entertaining, extremely successful, a 3 has a natural attraction for both money and the opposite sex. He is one of those people to whom everything seems to come easily, who succeeds without really trying. Rarely worried or depressed, he takes life as it comes and may have difficulty in taking anything seriously, though he will have a strong underlying sense of his own value and importance. One of the key ideas attached to 3 in numerology is 'expression', and those whose number it is express themselves wittily, effectively and with frequency. Imaginative and optimistic, cheerful, generous and agreeable, they get on well with everyone, but perhaps more because they are anxious to be liked than because of any deep concern for others.

A 3 enjoys the limelight and detests obscurity. Active, energetic and proud, he may have a commanding air about him and he will make a bad subordinate. He likes to show off and to be admired, but is probably more nervous and sensitive than his assured and brilliant exterior suggests. He has a tendency to expend his energies wastefully in too many directions and, since he loves pleasure and luxury, to scatter his money about. Though always the life and soul of the party, he can sometimes be exasperatingly vain, gossipy and superficial.

The Manifest Creator

Behind this picture of the creativity and self-expression of 3 are a number of converging numerological theories. To begin with, the number 1, though potentially all-creative, is regarded as barren by itself, for however many times it is multiplied (fertilized) by itself, it remains 1. The number 2 introduces a pair of opposites, but 2 multiplied by 1 remains 2. It is 3 which fruitfully reconciles these opposites and creates more numbers (3 + 2 = 6). As the French magician Eliphas Levi put it: 'Were God only one He would never be creator or father. Were He two there would be antagonism or division in the infinite, which would mean the division also or death of all possible things. He is therefore three for the creation by Himself and in His image of the infinite multitude of beings and numbers.'

Again, 1 is assigned to the point and 2 to the line, both of which are theoretical constructs. When 3 points are connected, in the triangle, the first plane figure is constructed, the first which has surface and is therefore observable. So 1 is regarded as the number of God as alone and complete in himself but hidden and unmanifested. In 2 something emanates from within God's wholeness to create the great opposite forces which run all through the universe. In 3

The Three Fates, in a 15th century tapestry; the number 3 occurs frequently in Greek mythology, as a mark of completeness

C. M. Dixon

the opposites are reconciled and God is for the first time manifest, for the first time comprehensible to human experience in having, as it were, a surface. This is followed by the creation of solidity in 4, when a fourth point is added above the triangle and a pyramid constructed (see FOUR). Then the 3 of spirit and the 4 of matter, added or multiplied, produce 7 and 12, the numbers which govern the rhythms and cycles of life in the universe – the 7 planets and days of the week, the 12 zodiac signs, months and hours of the day (see SEVEN; TWELVE).

Added to all this is the sexual symbolism of 3. It is the first of the masculine numbers (see NUMEROLOGY) and the number of the male genitals, which are threefold. The triangle is a natural symbol for the male genitals (though it can also be a symbol for the female). Where God as 1 is the hidden and unknowable Absolute, God as 3 is the manifest creator of 'the infinite multitude of beings and numbers', and this is the basic numerological interpretation of the Trinity, the three-fold godhead.

It follows that 3 is the number of creativity and self-expression on the human plane, as it is the number of God making himself known on the divine plane. The connection with 'surface' accounts for some of the other characteristics of 3 – sparkle and glitter, showing off, a tendency to superficiality. The triangle, facing 3 ways, accounts for the tendency to expend effort in many directions, but this and other traits allotted to 3 also have a genital reference – attractiveness, need for approval, pride, energy, love of pleasure. The idea of 3 reconciling the opposites in a third term which harmonizes and transcends them accounts for the harmonious progress through life attributed to 3, easy money and success, getting on well with everyone.

Three Blind Mice

As the number of the Trinity, in Christian numerology 3 is naturally linked with the most holy, the most perfect, the best. But the number's connection with the superlative is older, and is expressed in the Greek word *trismegistos* ('thrice-greatest', superlatively great) and the Latin *ter felix* ('thrice-happy', happiest). The notion of the superlative itself involves the third term in a series of 3 – good, better, best. And 3 is not only connected with 'best' but also with 'all', and is the most important of the numbers of completeness. Time is made of 3 ingredients (past, present and future) and so is space (length, breadth and thickness). All created things have a beginning, a middle and an end. The feeling that 3 is the basis of everything we experience may account for the belief that runs of luck, good or bad, tend to happen in threes. 'Third time lucky' is a common phrase and, on the other hand, if two unlucky things happen one after the other, some people will deliberately break a dish or do some other minor piece of damage in the hope of ending the run of ill luck.

Three of anything is somehow 'all' of it and 'enough' of it. 'I'll give you 3 guesses,' we say, with the feeling that 3 are enough. The hero of a folktale frequently has 3 wishes or 3 tries at a task, the heroine has

British Museum

Left The godhead as both One and Three, from a 14th century manuscript
Right The 3 magi and their 3 gifts were regarded as foreshadowing the Christian Trinity: 6th century mosaic from the church of San Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna

3 suitors, and 3 frequently bobs up as a number of completeness in nursery rhymes. Goldilocks met 3 bears, there were 3 blind mice, 3 little kittens who lost their mittens.

In the distant past behind all this there may lie very early methods of counting which used special words for 1 and 2, but for 3 or more simply said 'many'. The Babylonian term for a constellation, for instance, regardless of how many stars it might contain, was 'three stars', meaning 'many stars'. In this way the connotations of 3 may have come to include 'many', 'all', 'abundance', 'best', and so 'lucky'.

Numbers of completeness are always important in magic, because they prescribe how many times an action must be repeated to be effective. To chant an incantation 3 times, for example, is magically to chant it 'enough' times or 'all possible' times. In European magic 3 is even more important than 7 or 9, and the instruction to repeat a process 3 times over occurs constantly.

The Threefold God

Medieval Christian numerologists remarked on various uses of 3 as a number of completeness in the New Testament, including the 3 gifts of the magi to the infant Jesus, the 3 temptations in the wilderness, the 3 denials of Christ by Peter, the 3 falls on the road to Golgotha, the 3 days between Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the 3 appearances of the risen Christ to his disciples. These could all be taken as foreshadowings or reflections of the Trinity.

The period of 33 years is also regarded as significant by some modern occultists. A. E. Abbott observes in his *Encyclopaedia of Numbers* that 'important phenomena of history receive their special imprint through the fact that they unfold in a cycle of 33 years from their origin to maturity and fulfilment or to rebirth . . . The life of Christ, occupying 33 years on earth, has impressed its forces and rhythms into the earth-organism and into time, thus giving form to world history.'

The doctrine of the Trinity was officially recognized by the Council of Constantinople in 381. The earliest Christians were Jews who had been brought up to believe that God is One and to think of him as the heavenly Father. But in recognizing Christ as divine they introduced a second person into the godhead, the Son. And in their confidence that the spirit of God, which had descended on the apostles after Christ's death (Acts, chapter 2), was with them and working in them, they added a third divine personage, the Holy Spirit. The nature of God as Three-in-One, and of the relationship between the persons of the Trinity, caused an immense amount of philosophical speculation (see HERESY).

Occasional groupings of deities in threes can be observed in pagan pre-Christian religions: Osiris, Isis and Horus as father, mother and child in Egypt, or the triad of Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates (Horus) at Alexandria, or the three universal gods at the head of the pantheon in Mesopotamia (see MESOPOTAMIA). Numerous other examples come from the Celts, to whom 3 was a sacred number. They sometimes portrayed their deities in groups of 3, or with 3 heads or 3 faces (see BRIGIT; CELTS), apparently as a way of emphasizing their power and perhaps with the same basic idea of a single god making himself known in terms of 3 which underlies the numerological approach considered earlier.

Groups of 3 can also be found in Greek mythology, including the 3 Graces, the 3 Fates and the 3 Furies. Early in this century a German scholar counted more than 120 triads in Greek myth and ritual, but his conclusion was not that 3 was sacred to the Greeks but that it merely meant 'all' or 'many'. Greek triads attracted the interest of Renaissance humanists, who connected them with the Christian Trinity (even the 3 heads of Cerberus, the dog of the underworld, becoming an emblem of the Christian doctrine) and who saw them, again, in terms of a unity manifesting itself by displaying its 3 component parts, the opposites and the factor which reconciles them (see RENAISSANCE).

In Hinduism the concept of God as both 1 and 3 appears in Brahman, which in itself is One but which as it presents itself to the world is Three – Being, Consciousness and Joy, or the godhead which originates,

sustains and destroys the universe, personified as the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (see BRAHMAN). In his book *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* R. C. Zaehner comments on the remarkable closeness of the concept of the threefold Brahman as *Sat* (Being), *Cit* (Logos or Reason) and *Ananda* (Joy or Love) to that of the Christian Trinity of the Father (Being), the Son (Logos) and the Holy Spirit (Love).

That God must be both 1 and 3, One as he essentially is, Three as he is manifested and known, has been observed by mystics of Christian and other traditions on the analogy, to put it over-simply, that a complete sentence must have a subject, a verb and an object. If there is divine love, there must also be a lover and a beloved, if there is divine knowledge there must also be a knower and what is known. Professor Zaehner quotes the 13th century Jewish mystic Abraham Abulafia, who said that the Master 'is called . . . the knowledge, the knower and the known, all at the same time, since all three are one in Him'; and a Sufi mystic, who was asked about the divine Union, and replied, 'Union, He Who unites, and He Who is united – and that is three.'

FURTHER READING: A. E. Abbott, *Encyclopaedia of Numbers* (Emerson Press); E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Penguin, 1967 reprint); R. C. Zaehner, *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1967 reprint).

C. M. Dixon

THRESHOLD

TO THIS DAY, a bridegroom will carry his bride across the threshold of their new home, even when the 'new home' is merely a hotel room in which they will spend their honeymoon. It is one of the pleasant minor customs attached to weddings but it has links with special ceremonies involving doorways and thresholds all over the world.

In Rome the god Janus (see JANUS) was present at the main doorway of every house and the threshold itself, a block of stone big enough to keep water and mud from spilling into the house from outside, was presided over by its own god and goddess, Limentius and Lima. When a bride came to her new home, she was lifted over the threshold by her husband. This was partly to prevent her from stumbling over it, which would have been a bad omen for the marriage, but there was evidently more to it than that, for she anointed the doorposts, preferably with wolf's fat, and fastened wool onto them before being carried in.

Similarly, the Chinese make sure that the bride's foot does not touch the threshold when she first goes into her husband's house, and in many other parts of the world the bride is either carried across the threshold or takes care to step over it without treading on it. Other rituals involving doorways include sprinkling blood or water or perfume on the threshold and doorposts to purify them, and hanging charms or sacred objects from the lintel or on the doorposts.

In his book *Folklore in the Old Testament* Sir James Frazer compared a number of threshold customs and beliefs, taking as his starting point the officials of the Temple in Jerusalem who were called 'keepers of the threshold'. They are mentioned several times in the Old Testament (2 Kings 25.18, for example). There is also the passage in 1 Samuel (chapter 5) which records that the worshippers of the Philistine god Dagon took care not to tread on the threshold of his temple, and the curious verse in Zephaniah (chapter 1) in which God vows to punish everyone who leaps on (or over) the threshold.

Frazer suggested that the function of the keepers of the threshold was to prevent people from treading on it. In the 19th century in Syria it was still considered unlucky to tread on the threshold of a mosque or a saint's shrine. The great 13th century traveller Marco Polo reported that each door of Kublai Khan's palace at Peking was guarded by men whose duty was to see that no one trod on the threshold in entering, and to punish anybody who did. Another traveller in the Far East at the same period said that anyone who touched the threshold of the hut or tent of a Tartar chieftain was liable to be put to death. It was equally considered a crime to tread on the threshold of the gate of the palace from which the caliphs of Baghdad held sway.

Frazer quoted several curious cases from 19th century England of farmers burying a premature calf under the threshold of a cowshed to prevent the other cows from giving birth prematurely. In Yorkshire, for instance, the traditional method was to remove the threshold, dig a deep hole there and bury the corpse of the calf on its back with its legs sticking up, then filling in the hole and replacing the threshold.

Arnold van Gennep pointed out, in *The Rites of Passage*, that the key to much magical and religious reverence, not merely for the threshold which must not be profaned by treading on it, but for the whole doorway, is the idea of passing through a door or gate or portal of any kind as a transition from one realm or condition to another. 'The door is the boundary between the foreign and domestic worlds in the case of an ordinary dwelling, between the profane and sacred worlds in the case of a temple. Therefore to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world. It is an important act in marriage, adoption, ordination, and funeral ceremonies.'

Arch of Triumph

The Roman arch of triumph seems originally to have been a portal of this sort. A general returning to the city after a successful campaign passed through the arch as part of a rite of separating himself from the enemy world outside and returning to the world of Rome. The symbolism of transition is expressed nowadays at military weddings when the newly married couple pass through an arch of swords as they leave the church, as a sign of their entry into the community of the regiment.

Some doorways, as in Rome, are believed to be the domain of gods or spirits. In central

A. J. Huxley

The threshold, which marked the transition from one state of existence to another, might be emphasized by guardian statues: the Lion Gate, the main entrance to the fortified city of Mycene, dating from the 14th century BC, is surmounted by two great limestone lions

India the threshold was said to be the seat of the goddess Lakshmi. Others are guarded by statues, frequently of hybrid and monstrous creatures, such as sphinxes in Egypt, winged bulls in Mesopotamia, dragons in China. The main doorways of palaces, temples and churches are embellished with decorations or emphasized with porches or other architectural features to mark their importance as gateways to another world.

On a smaller scale, the same treatment is often applied to the main door of a house, and because it must not be polluted tradition says that a corpse must be removed through the back door or a window, or that women who are pregnant or menstruating must only be let in through the back door. In many farms and houses in the countryside, the front door is scarcely ever used, except on important and formal occasions. All everyday coming and going takes place through the back door, a faint reflection of the old reverence for the portal and its threshold. (See also HOUSE; RITES OF PASSSAGE.)

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Only chosen adepts were allowed to engage in the mystical disciplines known as 'the work of the chariot' and to encounter the dangers of the ascent to the heavenly throne

THRONE MYSTICISM

'IN THE YEAR that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory"' (Isaiah 6.1–3).

'In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month . . . the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God . . . As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze. And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures . . . And each went straight forward; wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire . . . and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning . . . Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them . . . their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite; and the four had the same likeness, their construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel . . . Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal . . . And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters . . . And above the firmament over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form' (Ezekiel 1.1–26).

These quotations from two of the major Old Testament prophets illustrate the visionary tradition of beholding the glory and majesty of the Lord upon a high and exalted throne. This tradition goes back to earlier prophets, like Micaiah who declared to King Ahab: 'I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left' (1 Kings 22.19). It was no doubt indebted to ancient Near Eastern forms and patterns of kingship. During the latter part of the Second Temple period and in the Rabbinic period (the period preceeding, and the centuries which followed, the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD), these records of prophetic visions provided the basis of the visionary and ecstatic forms of early Jewish mysticism.

But the more rationalist and non-mystical thinkers also concerned themselves with these biblical passages, since they raised a basic problem of theology and religious philosophy – that of anthropomorphism. Was there a throne in heaven? Could a purely spiritual God be 'seen'? Were these visions, if taken literally, not gross and crude heresies rather than expressions of mystical spirituality? Many of the great medieval Jewish thinkers discussed these questions and suggested various solutions: the biblical accounts were allegorical figures of speech; or perhaps God created visible forms of glory in order to enable mortal eyes to behold a reflection of the splendour of the invisible Godhead.

The Ascent to the Throne

But in the circles of visionary mystics these philosophical analyses played a minor role. The earlier Jewish mystics cultivated an ecstatic kind of mysticism which taught its initiates ways and techniques of achieving the visionary experience of the divine glory and splendour of light: the throne. In the literature of these mystics, the throne (Hebrew *kisse*) which is the object of the ecstatic vision is more often called 'chariot' (Hebrew *merkabah*), probably under the influence of Ezekiel's great vision with its description of wheels, and wheels within wheels. This is therefore known as Merkabah or throne mysticism, and is distinct from later forms of Jewish mysticism, which were largely speculative, and whose practice of meditation and contemplation culminated in the experience of communion, if not union, with God (see CABALA).

The Merkabah mystics seem to have experienced ascensions of the soul, which

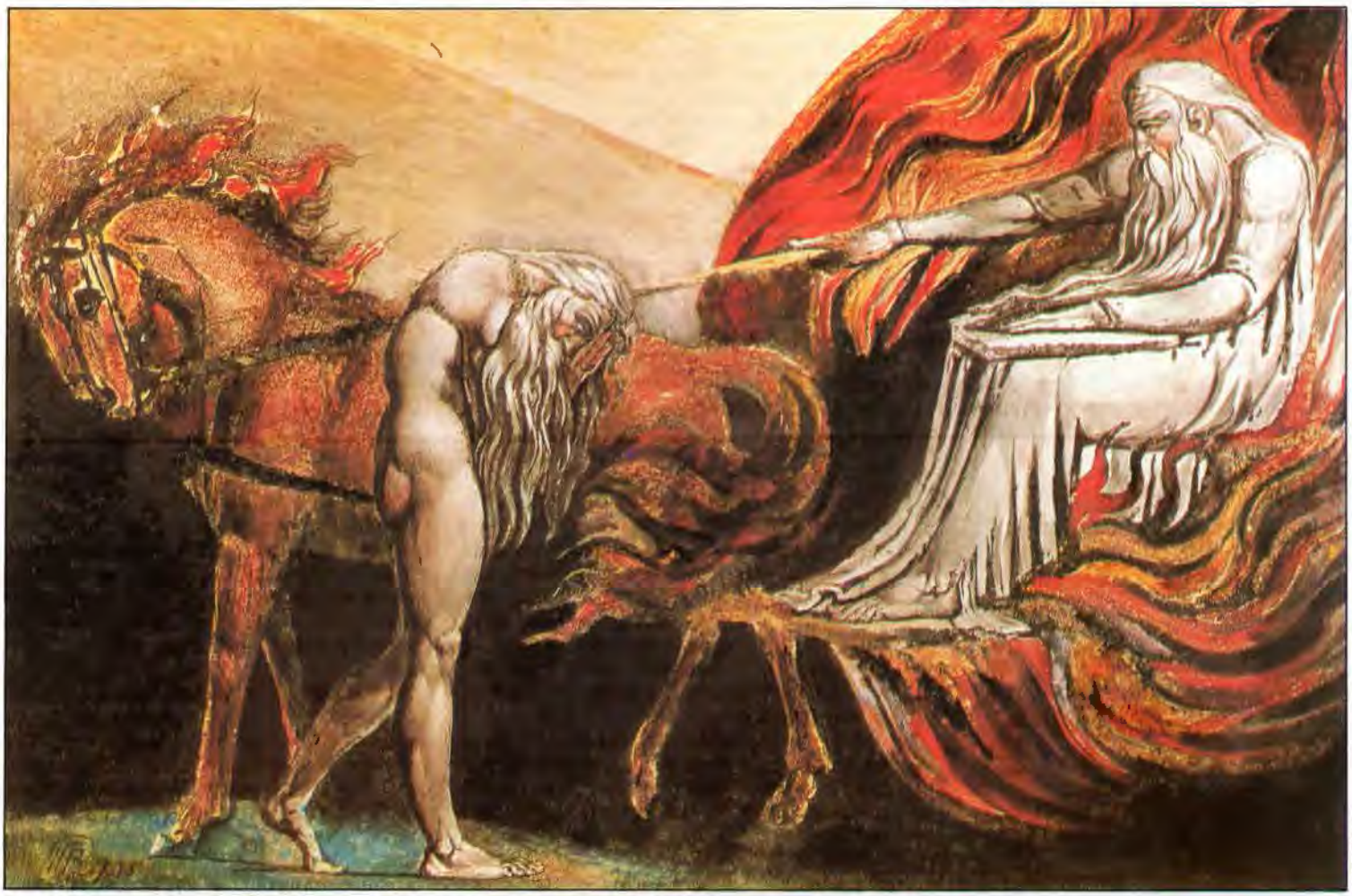
were not without danger. In rabbinic circles only chosen disciples were permitted to engage in these mystical disciplines, known as *ma'aseh merkabah* (the work of the chariot). The 'perils of the soul' which the adept encountered during his ascent through the various celestial spheres are described realistically and convincingly enough in the ancient texts. To overcome these dangers and pass the various celestial barriers the adept had to use mystical formulae and 'seals'. Hence Merkabah mysticism also had its magical side: an apparatus of incantations, spells and conjurations.

Within the Merkabah practice proper the magical part was subservient to the essentially mystical goal of the vision of the throne (and possibly of the splendour of the divine majesty on the throne). The outstanding feature of this kind of mysticism is its emphasis on the transcendent, majestic, tremendous and awesomely numinous character of the deity. The experience of loving communion, so common in later mysticism, is absent here. The initiate rises through worlds, spheres and heavens guarded by all kinds of terrifying celestial keepers until, at last, if all goes well and he be found worthy, he stands in awe and trembling before the supreme and blinding vision of the divine splendour. Merkabah mysticism is a mysticism of the *mysterium tremendum* (awesome divine mystery), and it left a permanent mark on the Jewish liturgy, inspiring some of the finest and most impressive religious poetry and hymns. The esoteric teachings and practices of the Merkabah mystics subsequently fell into disuse, but some of the Merkabah traditions and literary documents were absorbed by the Cabala.

R. J. ZWI WERBLOWSKY

FURTHER READING: G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Thames & Hudson, 1955).

Merkabah mystics sought the visionary experience of the divine splendour of the throne of God, which was more usually referred to as a 'chariot', probably under the influence of the prophet Ezekiel's great vision: God appears seated in a fiery chariot in Blake's painting of the Lord passing judgement on Adam



Tate Gallery

THUGS

THESE ROBBERS and ritual murderers in India strangled their victims as sacrifices to the goddess Bhavani, a form of Kali, the Hindu goddess of terror and destruction. They believed that the goddess herself had founded their organization and had taught her worshippers the art of throttling, using a clay dummy for purposes of demonstration (see KALI). They are first mentioned in the 12th century but their history probably goes baek much further, and some of them maintained that their rituals were portrayed in carvings of the 8th century in the caves at Ellora in Hyderabad.

The thugs had a secret language of their own and a system of secret signs. Their children were brought up to the craft and sometimes the children of murdered victims were adopted into the cult. Preying principally on travellers, a gang of thugs would join a party of traders or pilgrims and accompany them, perhaps for weeks, until they found a safe opportunity to kill them.

Apprentice thugs were taught the art of choosing suitable victims, gaining their confidence and luring them to a convenient place of execution, and strangling them in the prescribed manner. They would approach a victim from behind, pass a length of cloth round his neck, jerk it tight and relax it, whispering to the goddess to come and watch. Then the noose was tightened and relaxed again, and the summons to the goddess repeated, and finally the victim was slowly throttled to death – slowly so that Bhavani could enjoy his agonies.

The corpse was then mangled, the legs disjointed, the face cut and disfigured, the body slashed and gutted. Burial of the body was followed by a solemn feast, sometimes held on the grave. The stranglers sat on a sheet or blanket, near which were the sacred pickaxe of the goddess and an offering of silver. A little sugar was poured into a hole in the ground and a prayer spoken to the goddess, asking her to reward her faithful followers with plenty of loot. Holy water was sprinkled on the pickaxe and those who had

British Museum

A thug prepares to strangle a victim with a length of cloth, as a sacrifice to Bhavani, while his attention is distracted by others in the band: 19th century Indian painting

committed the murder ate a little of the sugar from their hands.

Before an expedition, a sheep was sacrificed before an image of the goddess, which was black and smeared with blood. Flowers, fruit and cakes were also offered to her, and near her effigy stood images of a snake and a lizard, and the tools of the thug's trade – noose, knife and pickaxe.

On initiation into the society each member was given a pickaxe, the tool with which graves were dug. Each band of thugs carried a sacred pickaxe, a symbol of the goddess in which something of her power resided. The pickaxe, which had been passed seven times through the fire to consecrate it, was treated with awed respect and solemn oaths were sworn over it. If it was dropped by its bearer, either his death or the break-up of the gang would certainly follow within a year.

Though the thugs worshipped a Hindu goddess, many of them were Moslems, especially in the Delhi area, where they held in reverence a famous Moslem holy man of the 14th century in Delbi, Nizam-ud-din Auliya, whom they believed to have been one of the founders of thuggee.

Instruments of the Goddess

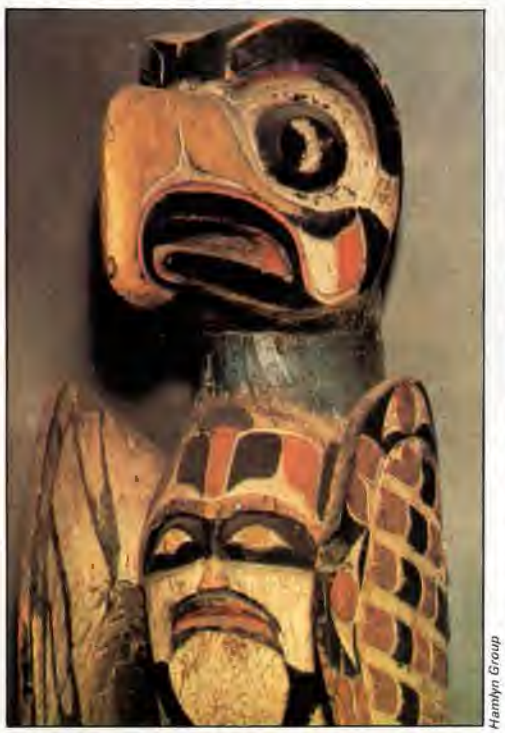
Sir William Sleeman, a British army officer and administrator who took a leading part in suppressing thuggee, said that a thug thought of his human victims much as a priest of Jupiter must have thought of the sacrificial oxen. 'He meditates his murders without any misgivings, he perpetrates them without any emotions of pity, and he remembers them without any feelings of remorse. They trouble not his dreams, nor does their recollection ever cause him inquietude in darkness, in solitude, or in the hour of death.'

Though strangling was their preferred method of murder, the thugs sometimes poisoned or drowned their victims or burned them alive. Women were not acceptable offerings to the goddess and men following certain trades were also in theory exempt from the attentions of the thugs, but by the 19th century at least many of them had become indiscriminate killers, and some of them attributed their downfall to this disregard of their rules.

In the 1830s the British authorities waged what almost amounted to a war against the thugs. Many of them were killed in action and by 1837 more than 3000 had been captured, of whom over 400 were hanged. By about 1860 they had been almost entirely wiped out, and the last known thug was hanged in 1882.

FURTHER READING: N. Mackenzie ed., *Secret Societies* (Macmillan, 1971); B. Walker, *Hindu World* (Praeger, 1968).

THUNDERBIRD



Hamlyn Group

The widespread belief in the thunderbird, a gigantic winged creature responsible for storms, is connected with the fear that the fertility of the earth might fail for lack of rain: carved wooden thunderbird from Vancouver Island

IN THE PAST it was widely believed that birds were connected with the sun, wind, thunder and lightning. As aerial creatures seen ascending into the heavens, they were associated with the celestial powers and particularly with those controlling the weather. For this reason birds were often regarded as in various ways responsible for rain and the conditions which make life possible for man and the plants and animals on which he depends.

Since in many parts of the world outside the tropics migratory birds appear in spring, it was assumed that they were in some way responsible for the increasing warmth and fertility or, at least, in league with the powers responsible for favourable weather. The mysterious appearances and disappearances of migrating birds stirred the primitive imagination, and mythical birds were endowed with powers beyond those of any known species; commonly these birds were thought to be gigantic. Birds fan the air with their wings, and it was therefore supposed that storms and tempests were caused by huge winged creatures. And as some make drumming, booming and clattering noises with their wings, voices or bills, primitive folk supposed that thunder was caused in some such way by invisible, supernatural, monstrous birds.

Thus belief in a thunderbird, sometimes also conceived as a fire bird, lightning bird or storm bird, became widespread. Such birds could be regarded as beneficent because fire is useful to man and thunder showers foster fertility, but they could also be viewed with fear and awe because lightning can be destructive, killing men, shattering trees and setting forests on fire. Moreover, as giant birds were thought to act as the steeds of the gods, some of whom were not always friendly to man, their nature and activities might have an important bearing on human welfare.

The Flapping of Great Wings

In North America the thunderbird was pictured differently by various tribes. The Hareskin Indians spoke of a huge bird which spent the winter in the land of the dead with other migratory birds and beasts, returning with the warm weather. When it shook its tail thunder was heard, and lightning was the flashing of its eyes. At Eneti, in Washington state, a face said to represent the thunderbird was carved on a rock; the Indians believed that rain could be caused by shaking the rock and so arousing the anger of the thunderbird. According to the Dakotas, it was the parent thunderbird which made thunder; it was wise and did no harm, but the young were irresponsible and might cause destruction. These Indians claimed to have killed a thunderbird, and to have discovered that it had a man's face with a nose like an eagle's beak.

On the north-west coast the thunderbird was thought of as an eagle with an extra head on its abdomen; it was huge enough to be able to carry off whales. A story told how two hunters saw an enormous bird rise from a lake with the sound of thunder

and then sink back with a terrific roar. An early traveller recorded that the Hurons regarded thunder as a large bird because a similar noise, on a smaller scale, was made by a bird like a swallow. In British Columbia the Indians likened the thunderbird to the ruby-throated hummingbird. The sound made by the hummingbird's wings probably suggested the connection with thunder, while its red throat feathers associated it with lightning.

In West Africa the spirit of lightning, So, is a flying being partaking of the nature of a god. Thunder is caused by the flapping of his wings and he casts lightning from the dark clouds. The image of the Nigerian thunder god is placed between two poles, on which are placed representations of birds. Among many Bantu tribes an image of a bird is placed on huts to ward off lightning; its form may vary from that of a flamingo to that of a bird of prey. Stone effigies of birds found at the ancient town of Zimbabwe have a crocodile or serpent carved at the base, suggesting that the powers of heaven and earth respectively were symbolized, as in some Asian cultures. In southern Africa the lightning is said to be a bird, brown or white-necked like the fish eagle. Persons struck by lightning are said to have been scratched by its claws. The Luyia in Kenya say that a huge red cock lives up in the clouds. He sends lightning when he shakes his wings and thunder is the sound of his crowing.

In Asia the thunderbird is widely associated with rain. The forest Tungus of north-east Asia say that thunder is caused by the rustling of a mighty bird's wings. Ancient Chinese literature reveals belief in thunderbirds: the pheasant is prominent in these traditions, probably because pheasants make a thudding noise when they flap their wings, and carry red markings on their heads. Young people in China used to perform springtime dances, in the course of which they imitated pheasants and flapped their arms to induce rain to fall. The connection between the bird and fertility also appears from the fact that in Chinese the word or character representing the sounds made by a pheasant also signified the noise of thunder and the 'agitation of a woman as she becomes pregnant'.

The Chinese thunder god, Lei Kung, is thought to have been originally a bird, possibly an owl. He is represented with a man's body, blue and hideous; he has a beak, wings and talons, and carries a wooden mallet, with which he beats a number of drums hung around him. He may carry a dagger or be shown shooting the arrows of lightning. The Japanese thunder god is also shown festooned with drums. In northern Asia tribal drums are painted with pictures of birds and frogs; as in other areas the drums are beaten, imitating thunder, to induce rain to fall.

The diver (see DIVER) is associated with rain in Europe, Asia and North America because of its close connection with water. Its cry is said to foretell rain and the Thompson Indians of British Columbia therefore imitate its call to make the rain fall. Belief in the efficacy of imitative magic extends to Mexico, where the Tarahumare Indians perform dances imitating the courtship antics of the turkey: they assume that as the gods grant the prayers of the bird, expressed in its dances, by sending rains, so they too must dance like the turkey to bring fertility to the countryside.

Imitative rain magic was also performed in Europe: near Dorpat in Estonia a man would climb a tree and rattle on a kettle, simulating the noise of a woodpecker drumming on a branch. The drumming noise which the bird makes with its bill as it hammers on a tree has been regarded from ancient times as rain magic, mimicry of thunder in order to create thunder and cause a downpour, a belief which still survives (see WOODPECKER).

A Potawatomi 'thunder war medicine bundle' from the Great Plains includes two stuffed birds. Birds were associated with thunder in America, Africa, Asia and Europe; these thunderbirds 'could be regarded as beneficent because fire is useful to man and thunder showers foster fertility, but they could also be viewed with fear and awe because lightning can be destructive'

Museum of the American Indian

Enemy of Snakes

In southern Asia the thunderbird belief appears to be superseded or obscured by the concept of a solar bird dominating a creature of the waters. The Hindu god Vishnu, who sometimes appears as a solar deity, rides the Garuda bird which is itself a solar divinity. In the art of Indo-China, Garuda is represented in immense stone sculptures as a winged and beaked human figure holding a snake in its taloned feet. This is interpreted as symbolizing the sun drying up the waters, represented by the Naga snakes, Garuda's traditional enemies. The Brahmanic god of the waters, celestial and terrestrial, Varuna, is depicted mounted on a monster, half-bird, half-reptile. Other gods also ride birds: Kama, the god of love, rides a parrot, Sarasvati, goddess of eloquence, a peacock (see PEACOCK). The immense birds of Near Eastern mythology such as the Simurgh and the Roc (see ROC), and even the huge birds of Irish legend, appear to have some affinity with the mythical birds further east.

The concept of opposing powers, celestial and terrestrial, is also found in Europe where the design of an eagle holding a snake or perched on an aquatic creature appears in ancient art. In Greece Zeus, the Thunderer, was symbolized by an eagle, and he disguised himself as an eagle in order to abduct Ganymede, the son of King Tros. The myth of celestial and terrestrial powers in conflict is very ancient. Among the Hittites there was a story describing the conflict between the weather god and the dragon (see HITTITES). In various forms this myth is represented in many cultures, including our own, for the legend of St George and the Dragon may be regarded as a variant.

(See also BIRDS; EAGLE.)

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Thyrsos

Ivy-twined staff tipped with a pine cone, or sometimes with a bunch of grapes and vine leaves, which was an attribute of the Greek god Dionysus aud was carried by his worshippers: ivy was the plant of Dionysus and the phallic pine cone was an emblem of fertility and immortality; the grapes and vine leaves marked the god's link with wine and intoxication.

See DIONYSUS.

Tiamat

Monstrous personification of the sea in Babylonian mythology: from her mingling with the fresh waters the first generation of the gods was born; she threatened to destroy the gods but was killed by Marduk, the god of Babylon, who fashioned the universe from her body and created mankind from the blood of the leader of her army.

See CREATION MYTHS; MARDUK.

TIBET

Marco Polo records that by their extraordinary powers, Tibetan lamas at the Mongol court could make the Khan's cup rise spontaneously from the ground to his mouth, thus convincing him that their religion was superior to Christianity

IN APRIL 1982 a British television programme in the series *The World About Us* described the impact of Chinese Communism on Tibetan life. By 1982, of the 3,500 original monasteries, only 13 were left. By 1979, the Cultural Revolution in China was over, and the Chinese asked the Dalai Lama to consider returning to Tibet from exile. He sent delegates to investigate conditions in the country, and the people turned out in their thousands to greet them. Clearly, despite the official ban on their religion, the Tibetans had kept faith in their personal lives, and evidence of this caused a distinct waning of support by the Chinese for the Dalai Lama's return. Tibetan religion and culture live freely only in the remoter Himalayan frontier lands, where people are Tibetan by race but for past historical reasons do not belong politically to Tibet. Also the Dalai Lama has founded a small, symbolic kingdom in Dharmasala, Northern India.

Mainly thanks to several scholarly officials, chiefly British, and to European scholars who have visited Tibet and studied its art, religion and literature during the course of this century, far more is now known about the life and religion of Tibet than is popularly imagined. The first European to write about the religious life of Tibet was Ippolito Desideri, a Jesuit missionary-priest, who lived happily in Lhasa from 1716 to 1721, saying mass regularly in his rooms at the great Tibetan Buddhist monastery of Sera. He learned classical as well as spoken Tibetan (they relate to one another rather as do Latin and Italian) and was thus able to engage in friendly written and oral disputation with his hosts. His description of Tibetan life and religion (*An Account of Tibet*) remains a classic to this day. While true to his own faith, he willingly recognized the merits of Tibetan religion. 'Not only do the Tibetans possess treatises and codes about contemplation, but they obey them. I have already said that during two months of the year the Lamas hold conferences, preach and give instruction to the monks in their monasteries. Others retire to some solitary place and pass the time in

Victoria and Albert Museum

A Jesuit who visited Lhasa in 1716 held the Tibetan faith to be 'wrong and pestiferous' - yet admitted that it led men towards heroic perfection

Victoria and Albert Museum

Tibetan religion is basically Buddhist, incorporating elements from the indigenous, more primitive religion of Bon; a main feature is belief in Bodhisattvas, who may be devotees on the road to Buddhahood or Great Beings who themselves chose to be reborn into the world to help suffering creation *Left* The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, national god of Tibet, was believed to become incarnate as each succeeding Dalai Lama: gilt copper figure of the 16th or 17th century *Above right* A lesser Bodhisattva was Vajrapani, wielder of the thunderbolt, gracious to the faithful and terrible to the impious: 5th or 6th century AD

peace and tranquil contemplation, while others withdraw from the world and devote themselves entirely to profound and subtle contemplation. If one considers what I have stated about Tibetan religion, although I believe the articles of faith to be absolutely wrong and pestiferous, yet the rules and directions imposed on the will are not alien to the principles of sound reason; they seem to me worthy of admiration as they not only prescribe hatred of vices and inculcate battling against passions, but what is more remarkable, lead man towards sublime and heroic perfection.'

Not until the end of the 19th century did another European attempt a serious evaluation of Tibetan religion. Even before going to Tibet, L. A. Waddell, a British member of the Indian Medical Services, made good use of local informants in Darjeeling on the Tibetan frontier, amassing much detailed information about popular Tibetan religion, especially charms, oracles, magical rites, prayer-flags and other religious symbols, as well as about more serious religious beliefs. His work, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, remains an important reference book. However, he had an excessive loathing for 'priestcraft' and Tibetan religion continually reminded him of Catholicism. He writes of Tibet as subject to its 'Dalai Lamaist Pope' and of its 'Lamaist priestly domination', for which he never has a good word. His general opinion of Tibetan religion is therefore far different from that of the saintly Desideri. 'The bulk of Lamaist cults,' writes Waddell, 'comprise much deep-rooted devil-worship and sorcery, which I describe with some fulness. For Lamaism is only thinly and imperfectly varnished over with Buddhist symbolism, beneath which the sinister growth of poly-demonist superstition darkly appears.' It was Waddell who popularized the unhappy term 'Lamaism', which had the same connotation for him as 'Papism' once had in England. His information, culled at a very popular level, is relatively accurate, but he simply never made contact with higher religious practice. The books of Sir Charles Bell, for many years British representative to Tibet, show a great progress, especially in the first-hand information they contain and in their serious attempt at a historical presentation of Tibetan religion.

However, the main incentive for modern Tibetan studies in the West derives from the travels and writings, the editions and translations of Tibetan works, which are the main fruits of the long life of Professor Giuseppe Tucci of Rome. He made eight expeditions in western and central Tibet between 1930 and 1948, and his discoveries brought to light whole past centuries of Tibetan art, literature and learning. From 1946 onwards other European scholars of Tibetan and Sanskrit, and of Tibetan and Chinese, although still a small select band, have done their share of research and writing, so that by now the history of Tibetan civilization, particularly relating to its religious and cultural connections with India on the one hand and its political connections with China on the other, is by no means unknown.

An Imported Faith

Buddhism became gradually established in Tibet from the 7th century AD onwards. The beginnings were slow, rather like the progress of Christianity in the British Isles about the same period, since those who practised the old indigenous religion, often supported by local chieftains, resisted the new faith. The Yarlung line of kings are represented with few exceptions as being its leading early patrons, but it is now historically certain that most of them continued to support the ancestral religion, while sometimes encouraging the founding of Buddhist temples and small monastic foundations.

Little is known with certainty of pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion, but it certainly comprised a cult of the king as a divine being, and special funeral rites involving the immolation of chosen companions together with the deceased king. There is mention of this rite being practised as late as 800 AD. The early religion also included the cult of local gods, especially mountain gods and warrior gods, and rites of sacrifice which were performed when special oaths were taken. This old Tibetan religion is often referred to by Western scholars as 'shamanism', and there were doubtless shamanistic elements, especially in the sense that some priests, through the practice of trance, might 'visit' or identify themselves with the divinities with which they were in special contact (see SHAMAN).

The assassination of the last of the Yarlung kings in 842 reduced the country to political chaos and so caused a further set-back to the introduction of Buddhism. However, new initiatives were taken in western Tibet by the descendants of the Yarlung dynasty, who established three small kingdoms there. From the 10th until the end of the 12th century trained Tibetan monks and scholars made continuous visits to India and Nepal, collecting and translating all the Indian Buddhist literature they could find. Central and eastern Tibet began to take an interest again, thanks to local aristocratic families who saw political advantage in supporting the new religion. Certainly Buddhism presented itself as a much higher culture than anything the Tibetans had possessed hitherto. Not only was a whole new written style developed in order to make possible the translation of obscure Sanskrit philosophical and religious terms, but this same Buddhist form of literature became the model for all Tibetan literature whatsoever. Thus when the representatives of the pre-Buddhist religion, known as *Bon* (perhaps simply meaning 'indigenous'), came to record their traditions, they inevitably made use of the new Buddhist vocabulary and introduced into their own teachings all kinds of Indian Buddhist doctrines.

High and Low Buddhism

During the last period of Buddhism in India (8th to 12th centuries) there were generally two kinds of religious practisers, the celibate monks who lived together in well-established monasteries, following a religious rule that went back to the earliest Buddhist period (5th century BC and onwards), and the yogis, who lived a much

Spectrum Colour Library

Since Tibet became part of the People's Republic of China, public practice of its religion survives only in surrounding regions and refugee communities *Left* Prayer flags stream from a stupa near Katmandu, Nepal, as trumpets are blown in a ceremony to welcome the Year of the Iron Pig *Right* A procession of monks symbolically carry the Dalai Lama's portrait back to Tibet in the hope of reconquest

freer life and might be either celibate or married. The yogis, with their greater religious freedom, were able to introduce the later theories and practices known as 'tantric' (see TANTRISM). They used as special means of invocation magical spells and formulas; they also employed symbolic cosmological designs called mandalas (see MANDALA), impressive initiation ceremonies, special forms of violent yoga (as still practised nowadays by some groups of non-Buddhist Indian yogis), and sometimes a particular kind of sexual yoga. Some of these yogis also practised everyday magic, for a fee placing curses on enemies, locating lost items or causing rainfall. All these higher and lower forms of Buddhism gradually entered Tibet, and some of them easily combined with Bon practices. From the first, Indian Buddhists seem to have adopted local gods as converted 'defenders' of their own, higher religion, and this process continued quite naturally in Tibet, where the pantheon was already quite large.

However, the main strength of the new religion lay in its scholarly and its higher religious aspects. Tibetan religious life was deliberately modelled on the Indian Buddhism of the 10th to 12th centuries AD. This included organized monastic life with its highly developed systems of philosophy and logic, complex forms of liturgy, disciplined behaviour and meditational practice, and the encouragement of literature, architecture and religious painting and iconography. When Buddhism disappeared from India about 1200 AD, the Tibetans were already its full inheritors. The Tibetan Buddhist canon, which reached its final state during the first half of the 13th century, comprises all the known Buddhist literature developed in India from the 1st century AD onwards, as well as part of the still older literature. It is arranged in two parts, known as the Kanjur, or translated (Buddha-) word, and the Tenjur, or translated treatises. The Kanjur, subsequently published in 108 large volumes, contains everything traditionally regarded as 'revealed' teachings (the word of Buddha). The Tenjur, subsequently published as 225 large volumes, contains translations of commentaries, exegetical literature and discourses by Indian Buddhist monk-scholars and yogis.

The pioneer discoverer of this wealth of Tibetan literature was a Hungarian traveller and scholar, Alexander Csoma de Körös. For years he lived like a monk in a small remote Tibetan monastery in the Himalayas, compiling a dictionary and cataloguing the contents of the Tibetan canon. His dictionary was published in 1834. His linguistic work was carried forward by another Hungarian, H. A. Jäschke, who likewise lived for years in the Himalayas, always under hardship, often in utter poverty. The chief fruit of his self-sacrificing labours was a Tibetan-English dictionary, first published in 1881, which remains an important standard work.

Reincarnating Lamas

The Tibetans have proved themselves great commentators and expositors of scripture, great compilers of manuals, great historians and biographers. Every religious order of Tibetan Buddhism has produced its own voluminous stock of writings, including the 'complete works' (*gsung-'bum*) of their leading scholars and prelates; these often run into many volumes. One order in particular, the Ka-gyu-pa, which goes back to the saintly yogi Mila Repa (1040–1123) and his religious master Mar-pa, developed a semi-popular religious literature in the form of delightfully written biographies combined with doctrinal teachings. Tibetan Buddhism is very much a religion of the written word, as well as of the mind and the heart.

There developed from Mila Repa's disciple,

Camera Press, London

sGam-po-pa, no less than six schools or sects, all based on his teachings. Some of these were connected with aristocratic families, whose members tended to be the leading lamas (lama simply means 'religious superior'). Others found their head lamas by making use of the traditional Buddhist belief in rebirth or reincarnation (see LAMAS). The process of rebirth is universal and inevitable; one is reincarnate as man or animal or tormented spirit, as a sufferer in hell or as a kind of petty god, depending upon one's good and evil acts. Release from this continual process is gained only by salvation in Buddhahood. Those who are especially aware of a religious vocation may take the vow to become eventually a perfect Buddha. Such a man becomes immediately a Bodhisattva (one who is intent on enlightenment) and, gradually overcoming his present imperfections, he advances through a series of lives towards final sanctity. This Buddhist path towards perfection remains perhaps the highest spiritual aspiration devised by man. The progress towards Buddhahood of Sakyamuni Buddha (6th to 5th centuries BC) was interpreted in this way, and at no time was it believed by his followers that he was the only Buddha. From the 1st century AD onward the 'career of the Bodhisattva path' was regarded by the followers of the 'Great Way' (*Mahayana*), which represents the 'great church tradition' of Indian Buddhism, as the ideal religious life, available to all, whether monk or layman, man or woman, who felt the workings of 'the thought of enlightenment' (see also BUDDHISM).

Having taken over all such doctrines and aspirations, the Tibetans would naturally assume that the head lamas of their monasteries were human Bodhisattvas on the gradual path to Buddhahood. Because of the merit they had already accumulated they were certain after death to be reborn in the human world as males, as this would present the best initial circumstances for religious progress. All one needed to do was to locate and identify the new child, and one would have rediscovered one's revered head lama returned to this world.

The system was already under way by the 12th century amongst the Ka-gyu-pas, and gradually other Tibetan religious

Eccentrics and holy madmen and mad women abound in Tibetan literature; even practical joking plays a part in the religious life

orders adopted it, usually where the interests of some great aristocratic family were not involved. As an example of a family monopoly, the succession in the important and powerful Sa-kya-pa order has continued through the centuries from uncle to nephew, down to the present day. By contrast the dGe-lug-pa or 'Yellow Hat' order, attached to no aristocratic family, soon adopted the system of reincarnation for the appointing of their chief lamas. These grand lamas (known in China and in the West as Dalai Lamas) have been the titular and sometimes the actual rulers of Tibet since the fifth Dalai Lama won political power in 1642.

Mongol Raiders Converted

As in medieval Europe, so in Tibet, religion and politics went close together. By offering political submission together with the services of their holy religion, the Tibetans managed to remain at peace with the murderous Mongol hords of Genghis Khan, who ravaged every other country in central Asia except Tibet. One lama in particular, abbot of Drikung, so overwhelmed a marauding Mongol chieftain by his magical powers, that he repented of his evil ways and paid for the restoration of the three monasteries he had raided. The Mongols were certainly impressed by Tibetan religion, and in 1249 Godan Khan, to whom Tibet came as part of his heritage, appointed the abbot of Sa-kya his vice-regent in Tibet. Religious rule in the country dates from this time. Seeing the material benefits of allying themselves with the Mongols, who also offered a rewarding mission field, other Tibetan religious orders began to seek Mongol patronage and to intrigue against Sa-kya.

Mutual jealousies amongst the various Tibetan groups at the Mongol court (from 1263 Kublai Khan was the effective Emperor of China) do not seem to have weakened the Tibetan religious hold on the Mongols. This spiritual conquest of a barbarian people is proof of the extraordinary ability of the great lamas of the day, who had to compete for Mongol favours against many other religious faiths, Christian (both Nestorian and Catholic), Moslem and Taoist, as well as the shamanism of the Mongols themselves. As for their magic, Marco Polo records that by their extraordinary powers they could cause the Khan's cup to rise spontaneously from the ground to his mouth, thus convincing him that their religion was superior to Christianity.

Even before the end of the Mongol dynasty in China in 1368, the hierarchs of Sa-kya were deprived of their rather feeble vice-royalty by a determined aristocratic layman named Chang-chub Gyal-tsen, who was closely connected with another religious order, the Phag-mo-gru branch of the Ka-gyu-pa. After his death in 1364 Tibet continued to remain independent of Mongol and Chinese encroachments for some 275 years, but it was internally divided by the mutual enmities of the main religious orders in league with leading aristocratic families.

But even this politically disturbed age produced scholars, contemplatives and poets, whose devout lives are portrayed in Tibetan historical works and indeed throughout Tibetan literature. For instance, in *The Blue Annals*, an English translation by G. N. Roerich of a religious history written by a famous Tibetan scholar named gZon-nu-dpal (1392–1481), there are numerous short biographies and anecdotes about Tibetan lamas, monks and yogis. One reads of the strict religious life of the Lama of Drikung and of that of the Karmapa Lama, who became spiritual adviser to the Emperor of China. Others studied religious texts and then withdrew to solitary meditation, acquiring spiritual and sometimes miraculous powers. Some described their experiences in poetry, and all of them were intent on transmitting their special knowledge to chosen disciples. There were others who were addicted to extreme asceticism, living naked in snow and ice, haunting graveyards, eating vile things and enduring all kinds of self-inflicted hardships; some of them gained great prestige and wealth from such a way of life.

Then there are the eccentrics and the holy madmen and mad women who abound in Tibetan literature. Even practical joking plays a part in the religious life: one story tells of a disciple who put on the dancing mask of the Lord of Death and chased his terrified teacher round the monastery by moonlight.

Tibetan religious life is hardly ever dull, and magical practices always played an important part. A certain lama of Drikung was famed in this way. Once a magician tried to transfer to him certain evils which were threatening the son of a local prince, but the lama's superior powers turned back upon the magician the whole complex of spells.

The Yellow Hats

In the midst of political strife and all the extraordinary variety of religious practice, a new religious order, founded by the saintly and scholarly Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419), gradually grew in numbers and strength. During the first two centuries of its growth the dGe-lug-pa or 'Yellow Hats' remained largely uncontaminated by temporal power, and the simplicity, the religious devotion and the calm austerity of its life gradually won for its monks a

Killed by a Demon

A refugee worker describes the death of a young Tibetan woman

Suddenly the incense – or something else – took effect and Rinchin, who had been reclining against a bed-roll, sat bolt upright without assistance and began to talk in a low but very clear voice. At once the ayahs, who had by now reassembled, stopped their agitated chattering and seemed hardly to breathe . . .

I whispered an enquiry to the interpreter and he replied briefly that Rinchin had described her visions and concluded by affirming that a few months ago an Evil Spirit from Tibet had entered into her and she had known then that after the birth she would die.

Now the Lama anointed Rinchin's ears, eyes and nose with butter-fat, before going into a trance to attempt to exorcize the Evil Spirit. Within moments he had gone completely rigid as he sat cross-legged, his eyes open but blank and beads of sweat standing out on his face . . . Soon the Lama had gone so white and was sweating so hard and looking so odd that I feared he might die first. Two other Lamas now arrived, carrying the *Bardo Thödol* (a Tibetan Buddhist scripture recited for the benefit of the dying and the dead) rolled up in two silver cylinders. These manuscripts were immediately unfolded and the monks began to chant them *sotto voce* in that indescribable Tibetan manner which has to be heard to be believed . . .

An hour later the interpreter came to tell us that Rinchin was dead.

Dervla Murphy *Tibetan Foothold*

Picturepoint

Picturepoint

Travellers to Tibet often commented on the mingling of magic and mysticism in Tibetan Buddhism *Left* Tibetan magician: he works spells for his clients, besides dealing with unfriendly gods and demons – a survival of old shamanistic beliefs *Above* A feature of Tibetan worship is the use of prayer-wheels, cylinders containing mantras; both the mechanical repetition of the mantras and the turning movement itself conveyed a blessing, if turned from left to right, but 'demon-worshipping' Bon priests turned their wheels anti-clockwise

large measure of popular support. Then in 1578 the head lama of the dGe-lug-pa visited and befriended a Mongol chief, Altan Khan; he and his following proved ready converts. This head lama died in 1588, the third in the series of reincarnating lamas recognized by the Yellow Hats, and the first to use the title 'Dalai', meaning 'Ocean (of Wisdom)' given him by Altan. His successor was discovered in a grandson of Altan Khan, thus consolidating politically the relations between the Yellow Hats and an important Mongol tribe.

The now obvious political pretensions of the Yellow Hats provoked the older orders to violent opposition, and as a result the Mongols continually invaded Tibet in support of their favourite religious order. The next Dalai Lama, the 'Great Fifth', was supported by the Mongols with sufficient strength to win political control over the whole of Tibet from 1642 onwards, but his death in 1682 led to another period of political chaos. The Mongols and then the Manchu Emperor of China very soon interfered, and when the problems were finally resolved in 1721 Tibet emerged still subject to the rule of the Dalai Lama (or more often that of the high Tibetan ecclesiastical dignitaries who ruled in his name), but also as a religious protectorate of the Manchu emperors, who remained until their fall in 1911 Tibetan Buddhists by religion, and not Chinese Buddhists. For nearly two centuries they acted as patrons of many Tibetan monasteries. This unusual relationship, which ended in 1911, is the basis of the claim of Republican as well as Communist China that Tibet is politically part of China.

Desideri's appreciative comments on Tibetan higher religious life and Waddell's harsh words about devil-worship, sorcery and superstition represent the extremes of Tibetan religious practice. The higher religion of those who devote themselves single-mindedly to a purely religious and world-transcending goal (always a minority in any country and any culture) is fundamentally Buddhist. By strict control of all selfish tendencies and by the practice of concentrated meditation they seek to experience already in this life the joyful tranquillity which comes from such practice, and after death to pass into Nirvana (see NIRVANA).

Gods, Demons and Magicians

The majority of Tibetans, monks as well as laymen, scarcely hope for such an achievement in the course of one lifetime. But they hope that their continual practice of good works, particularly generosity to religious houses and to all in need, will build up a sufficient store of merit for them to be reborn as humans again. This concept too is entirely Buddhist. However, in the course of their everyday lives they meet with obstructions, especially illness or economic ill-fortune, and for these they want antidotes. Buddhism teaches patience in such circumstances, for is not all life a transient passing show, of no real substance whatsoever? But since for practical purposes most men who live in the world must treat it as real, the Tibetans (like ourselves) try to remedy the causes of their misfortune and ensure their continual good fortune.

Because of the Tibetans' ancestral belief in local gods and demons, these are readily recognized as the cause of troubles. A local god may be angry because a house has been built on his territory without suitable propitiation ceremonies. A house god may be upset by a dirty hearth, or a local water spirit infuriated by refuse thrown into his stream. Throughout the centuries the Tibetans have called upon local religious practisers, including Buddhist lamas of the older religious orders, to deal with these local gods and demons by either quelling or placating them, whichever proves more efficacious. The Tibetans believe that some local magicians are able to control natural phenomena and especially to keep off hail, which sometimes destroys whole crops in Tibet just before harvest. They also believe them capable of turning the same rites which quell troublesome local gods against the personal enemies of their clients.

In their extreme forms it is easy to distinguish between genuine Buddhism and local superstitious religion, but in practice the two were so closely combined in Tibet as to form in most people's minds a single religion. So long as a man was attached to worldly affairs, he simply had to take local gods, and therefore local magicians, into account. But in so far as he was detached from life, as in the case of the sincere monk intent on religious perfection, or of any man

Five of the 16 apostles of Sakyamuni, the Buddha, appear in a Tibetan temple-hanging of the 17th or 18th century: Tibet was until recently ruled by priests, and the monasteries were storehouses of art and learning

approaching death, his religion became ever more purely Buddhist. Yet even so, Tibetan religion sometimes introduces extraordinary non-Buddhist elements. There is the terrifying rite of deliberate sacrifice of oneself to local demons, as performed by some ascetic yogis. There is also the amazing *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, by means of which a competent lama might guide the consciousness of the deceased towards some satisfactory form of rebirth. The regions through which he guided the frightened human consciousness were peopled with terrifying divinities, which may only be called Buddhist in so far as most of them had already been accepted into the Indian Buddhist pantheon before the Tibetans imported such doctrines.

DAVID SNELLGROVE

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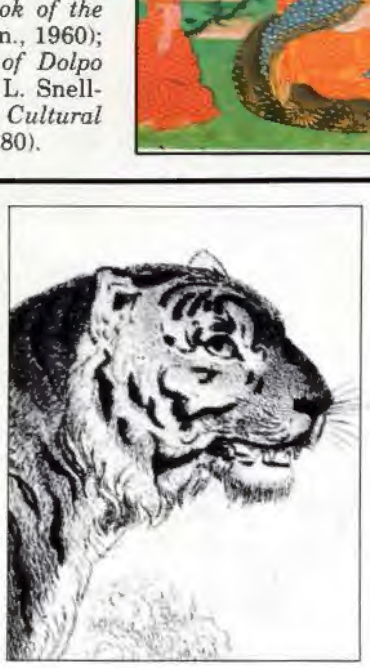
Tiger

Feared as a maneater and shape-shifter, and often regarded as a sensitive creature which must he treated with formal respect: in Sumatra apologies are offered to a maneating tiger, and its forgiveness asked, before it is killed; in Malaya tiger claws and whiskers are valued as charms and tigers are said to live in houses in their own village, where the roofs are thatched with human hair.



Tiki

Polynesian carving of a human figure, frequently worn round the neck as an amulet: the Maori said that the first hei-tiki was made for the goddess of childbirth by her father; also the name of the first man, created of red clay by the god Tane, or the phallus of Tane, or alternatively the name of the god who created the first man; tikis have become popular in the West as good luck charms.

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

VOLUME 11

Time - Zurv

TIME

Susan Griggs/Adam Woolfitt

Awareness of time has made man conscious that he is inexorably subject to decay, old age and death, and his reactions to this grim fact have been expressed in his religions: the myth of the Golden Age states the general human conviction that history is a process of decline, that things are worse than they used to be

THE MYSTERIOUS NATURE of time, as it is presented to human experience, has been described in a celebrated passage by St Augustine of Hippo (354–430). He writes in his *Confessions*: 'What then is Time? If no one asks me, I know; but if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not. Yet I say boldly, that I know that if nothing passed away, Time past were not; and if nothing were coming (into existence), a Time to come were not; and if nothing existed, Time present were not. These two Times, then, past and to come, how are they, seeing the past now is not, and that to come is not yet? But the present, if it were always the present, and never passed into Time past, would surely not be Time, but Eternity.'

The enigma of time is of fundamental importance, for time is one of the two dimensions of our consciousness, the other being space. We are aware of time through the change of phenomena presented to our senses; for, as Augustine saw, if the present pattern of our experience did not change, we should have no sense of time, but be in a state of timelessness or eternity. In other words, normal human consciousness consists of awareness of the three temporal categories: past, present and future.

'To the last syllable of recorded time': clock shop in Camden Passage, London. Man's consciousness of time is one factor distinguishing him from other species and has profoundly affected his view of life, death and the gods

On analysis, it is impossible for us at any given moment to define exactly what is the present. The 'here-now' of the present is an ever-moving point separating our past and future. Indeed, psychologically our 'present' includes our immediate past experience and anticipates the continuance of our experience into the immediate future. However, when we reflect on our experience over a longer

For whereas the animals suffer the experience of dying without the long anticipatory knowledge of mortality, man contemplates his end from the moment of his first discovery that all life dies

period, we can distinguish more clearly what is 'past' and what is 'future', although the existential reality of what is past and future constitutes problems of great metaphysical subtlety and complexity.

Enigmatical though time is and replete with problems beyond the comprehension of most persons, it constitutes a factor that has profoundly affected the evolution of the human race. For man, in contra-distinction to all other species, is endowed with an acute time-consciousness which he has exploited with amazing results. Because man is so acutely aware of time, he is by nature a 'planner': he is for ever drawing upon past experience in the present to provide for future needs. This trait finds expression in the earliest evidence we have of mankind. For the Paleolithic peoples were tool-makers, and the making of a tool, for example, a stone axe, involves the anticipation of the future need of such an axe and busying oneself in the present to make it. Through his ability to anticipate and so provide for his future needs, man has succeeded, since Paleolithic times, in dominating the world and eliminating or enslaving all his animal competitors. The complex scientific and technological civilization which we now enjoy is a sophisticated product of our time-sense. And its range is enormous: from the planning of a nuclear power station to the taking out of an insurance policy, past experience is being utilized in the present to meet future contingencies. In short, the time-consciousness of man has been, and is, a primary cause of his success in the struggle for existence.

But this endowment has a kind of debit side. Man's time-consciousness has not only enabled him to plan ahead to ensure his physical well-being; it has also made him acutely aware that he is subject to the flux of time that brings change, decay, aging and finally death to every form of life. Accordingly, every human being learns early in childhood to anticipate his own death. In this sense, it has been truly said that man has invented death. For whereas the animals suffer the experience of dying without the long anticipatory knowledge of mortality, man contemplates his end from the moment of his first discovery that all life dies.

This awareness of his mortality, which stems from his ability to project himself mentally into the future, produces in man a fundamental sense of insecurity. It prevents him from immersing himself wholly in the enjoyment of present well-being. He ever fears that changing time will bring misfortune; and he knows that it is surely bearing him towards that dread moment of personal extinction to which he has seen so many of his fellow-beings come.

This ambivalent endowment of acute time-consciousness has found expression in human history in a twofold quest for security. As we have seen, the whole complex structure of civilization is designed, on its final analysis, to ensure constant and adequate provision for the material needs of man. But beyond the satisfaction of these needs, the prospect of death has remained as the ultimate menace. Mankind's reaction to this grim fact has found expression in religion.

In Search of Security

It can be reasonably shown that all religions are basically concerned with the problem of security after death. The logic of experience has precluded any serious attempt to provide immunity from physical death in this life (the quest of some Taoist magicians in China to find an elixir of immortality is notable only for its persistence against all evidence of failure). But though forced to accept the inevitability of death, mankind has generally believed that some part of the personality survives physical disintegration and needs to be secured against post-mortem perils. In conceiving of such security, man's fear of the destructive process of time is reflected in a variety of imagery expressive of his instinct to transcend time. Behind this imagery certain distinctive forms of belief and action can de discerned hy the comparative study of religion.

What is undouhtedly the most primitive attempt, so far as thought and action are concerned, to gain everlasting post-mortem security from the destructive process of time occurred in ancient Egypt. There the elaborate mortoary ritual, including mummification, was designed to effect two things. By embalming the corpse, it was hoped that physical decomposition would be stopped and the body preserved intact for ever. Through the magical efficacy of the ritual 'Opening of the Mouth' it was believed that the ability to see, breathe and take nourishment was restored to the mummified remains, so that the deceased might live, together with his *ka*, a kind of double or second self, and revisited by his *ba*, an entity separated from the human body at death, in his 'house of eternity', the tomb, for ever. Arrangements were also made for the perpetual offering of food at the tomb, and it was hoped that the dead, revivified and immune from decay, and 'perfectly equipped' with magical spells, would be eternally secure, 'coming forth' each day to the portal of the tomb, to see the sun and feed on the mortuary offerings. The other purpose of the mortuary ritual was to assimilate the dead person to the god Osiris, and among the various virtues that would accrue from such assimilation was transcendence of time. This was achieved, as a text in the Book of the Dead shows, by magically incorporating time into one's own being. The dead person, who had become one with Osiris, exclaims: 'I am Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; EGYPT; MUMMIFICATION; OSIRIS).

The idea of gaining immunity from the destructive flux of time by union with a supernatural being regarded as eternal, which lies behind this passage in the Book of the Dead, finds various forms of expression in many religions. It appears in a non-Osirian context in Egypt as far back as the Pyramid Texts. The dead pharaoh is imagined as flying up to heaven to join the sun god Re in his solar boat, in which he daily crossed the sky; on this unceasing journey he would be beyond temporal change. In Christianity, the 'beatific vision', which constitutes the final reward of the redeemed, is an eternal communion of the individual soul with God. In the Apocalypse of St John, an attempt is made, in an esoteric imagery, to represent the transcendence of time in the eternity of worship. The four living creatures about the throne of God 'never cease to sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"' (chapter 4). Indian thought similarly conceives of the effect of the individual's ultimate realization of Brahma: 'Verily, for him who knows thus, this mystic doctrine of Brahma, the sun neither rises nor sets. For him it is day for ever' – in other words, he is beyond time, whose passage is marked by the succession of day and night. Nirvana, in Buddhist imagery, is likewise a state beyond time's changing phenomena (see NIRVANA). The Buddha is represented as teaching: 'There, monks,

Man can never escape from death, and from early childhood he learns to anticipate his own end: 'he knows that Time is bearing him towards that dread moment of personal extinction which he has seen come to so many of his fellow beings' *Above left* 'Inexorable Fate' *Above right* 'Time changes, and we change with it', both engravings from the 16th century book *Fiacci Emblamata*

I say there is neither coming nor going nor staying nor passing away nor arising. Without support or going on or basis is it. This indeed is the end of pain.'

'Know I Am Time'

Concern about time has not only expressed itself in religion by imagining states of beatitude beyond its range. Since man is so disturbingly aware of his subjection to time in this world, his religions reflect his preoccupation with its nature and the significance of its operation throughout the universe. This preoccupation has led to the deification of time among some peoples. The rich imagery of Hinduism provides examples that are both impressive in their dramatic portrayal and significant in their theological implication. In the famous *Bhagavad Gita*, which is one of the foundational documents of Hinduism, the god Vishnu, in his form of Vasudeva, is equated with time (see BHAGAVAD GITA; VISHNU). This aspect of Vishnu is revealed in the culminating vision given to the prince Arjuna. At first Vishnu had revealed himself as the Creator and sustainer of the world. This was a revelation of the beneficent providence of the deity. Arjuna was impressed; but feeling that he had not seen all, he asks that a full revelation be made. His request is granted, but he is appalled by what he then beholds. Vishnu appears as a monstrous being, into whose awesome mouths, beset by hideous fangs, all forms of life are seen passing swiftly to destruction. And Vishnu announces: 'Know I am Time, that makes the worlds to perish, when ripe, and come to bring on them destruction.'

This account is significant both for the ambivalence of its concept of deity and its identification of the supreme deity with time. It reflects the Indian conviction that creation in the empirical world inevitably entails destruction, that life involves death, and that time governs this alternating rhythm that never ends. This Vaishnavite theology is paralleled by a similar conception in Shivaism. The god Shiva (see SHIVA), on one side of his being, personifies the dynamic persistence of life, in all its teeming abundance and complexity of form, which is symbolized by the *lingam*, the mighty generative organ of the god. In his other aspect, he is Bhairava, 'the terrible destroyer', and Maha-Kala (great Time), and Kala-Rudra (all-devouring Time). An even more remarkable conception is that of Kali, the goddess who personifies *kala* (time). She derives from the concept of Shiva's *shakti*, or activating energy. Her iconography is horrific, being thus designed to portray the baleful nature of time. She is depicted as black in hue, and wearing a chaplet of severed heads; her many hands hold symbols of her destructive power – the exterminating sword, scissors that cut short the thread of life. Yet, like Shiva, her lord, from whom she emanates, Kali is of ambivalent character; for she also holds the lotus of eternal generation and her body is expressive of vigorous fecundity (see KALI).

This deification of time is related to the Indian view that the empirical world is not ultimately real. It is a view designed to account for human destiny, and it involves a belief that time moves in cycles, which will be considered later.

The Infinite and the Finite

The ancient peoples of Iran had a god of time called Zurvan. How old this deification of time may be is unknown; there is some evidence that such a god was worshipped as far back as the 12th century BC. The earliest reliable information, however, comes from a Greek scholar, Eudemos of Rhodes, who explained in the 4th century BC that the well-known gods of Persian dualism, Ohrmazd and Ahriman, were derived by the Persians from time and space. Although the native Iranian writings which witness to this deification of time are comparatively late, they are very definite about the primordial nature of time and its religious significance. Thus in the *Rivayat* it is stated: 'it is obvious that, with the exception of Time, all other things have been created. For Time no limit is apparent, and no height can be seen nor deep perceived, and (Time) has always existed and will always exist . . .

Picturepoint, London

The Timeless Gods

All we wax old and wither like a leaf.
We are outcast, strayed between bright sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish; and the noon
As midnight, and the night as daylight hours.
A little fruit a little while is ours.
And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
Lay hands upon the draught that quickeneth,
Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things done,
And stir with soft imperishable breath
The bubbling bitterness of life and death,
And hold it to our lips and laugh; but they
Preserve their lips from tasting night or day,
Lest they too change and sleep, the fates that spun,
The lips that made us and the hands that slay;
Lest all these change, and heaven bow down to none,
Change and be subject to the secular sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.
Therefore they thrust it from them, putting time away.

Swinburne *Atalanta in Calydon*

Clocks express a variety of ideas about time: the movement of the hands round the face suggests inexorability and the 'weary wheel' of time as a cycle in which man is imprisoned; a clock stopping suggests escape from the cycle, death, timeless eternity *Above left* The cuckoo is linked with time and with clocks because its call heralds the changing of the seasons with the coming of spring *Right* Photo montage of a grandfather clock and alarm clocks, by Erich Lessing

Time is both Creator and the Lord of the creation which it created.'

The Iranians, however, distinguished between two forms of Zurvan. Zurvan *akarana* was Infinite Time; Zurvan *daregho-chvadhata* was 'Time of the long Dominion' or Finite Time. This latter form of Zurvan represented the time that rules in this world, and which brings age, decay and death to all men. Although its dominion was believed to be long, extending to 12,000 years, it was finite. During the Sassanian period (226–637 AD), it appears that a cult of Zurvan developed which explained mythically the relation of Zurvan to Ohrmazd and Ahriman, who personified the opposing forces of good and evil in Zoroastrian dualism. According to this myth, Zurvan, as the primal being, desired to have a son who would create the universe. To this end he offered sacrifice for 1000 years. But before the millennium had been completed, Zurvan doubted for one brief moment the efficacy of the sacrifices. This momentary doubt had a fatal consequence; for it caused a second son to be conceived, who was to be Ahriman. And so, when the time was fulfilled, two sons were born to Zurvan: Ohrmazd, radiant with light; Ahriman, dark and foul. And when Ohrmazd created that which was good and beautiful, Ahriman countered by creating the evil and the ugly (see AHRIMAN; OHRMAZD; ZURVAN).

This Iranian deification of time appears to have been incorporated into Mithraism, which originated in Iran and gradually spread westwards into the Roman Empire (see MITHRAS). The form in which it found expression was strange but significant. Images were set up, in the cave sanctuaries of Mithras, of a nude man with a lion's head, the mouth being open in a menacing grimace. About the body a huge snake was entwined, and on the body the signs of the zodiac were carved. The monster was winged, and usually held a staff and keys. These images undoubtedly represented Zurvan *daregho-chvadhata*, with whom Ahriman appears to have been identified. Of the significance of such images in the cult of Mithras no certain evidence survives. But there is reason for thinking that they signified the sovereignty of 'Time of the long Dominion' over mankind in this world. It is possible that the devotees of Mithras thus recognized the cosmic dominion of time, but looked to Mithras for salvation from its baleful tyranny.

The influence of this form of Zurvan can be traced also in the figure of Phanes in the Greek Mystery religion known as Orphism (see ORPHEUS). The Persian concept of Infinite Time was also carried into the Graeco-Roman world, where it was identified with the supreme deity under the names of Cronus (see CRONUS) and Aion. In Egypt, the cult of Cronus was closely associated with that of Serapis (see SERAPIS) and, according to the Latin poet Macrobius, the cult image of Serapis in Alexandria symbolized this connection with time in a curious way. Serapis was portrayed accompanied by a three-headed monster: the middle head, that of a lion, represented time present; the wolf's head to the left signified time past, and that of a 'fawning dog' to the right depicted future time.

Janus, the ancient Roman god associated with beginnings (see JANUS), has sometimes, erroneously, been regarded as a time god, his two faces being interpreted as looking to the past and the future. So far as the Romans did deify time, it was in the form of Aeternitas, which derived from the Alexandrian concept of Aion. The most notable depiction of Aeternitas is in a bas-relief adorning the base of the column of the Emperor Antoninus Pius in Rome. Aeternitas is represented as a heroic male figure, nude, with eagle's wings, and holding a serpent-encircled globe in his left hand: he bears the dead emperor and his wife Faustina to heaven.

The Sorrowful Weary Wheel

In contrast to these personifications of time, in other religions time has been regarded as an impersonal cyclic process, to which all life in this world is subject and obliged to conform. This view of time is linked with the idea of metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. It forms a basic concept of Hinduism and Buddhism, of Orphism and some forms of Gnosticism.

The impression that time is cyclic in its movement, and unceasingly reproduces the same pattern of events, is an obvious deduction to make from natural phenomena. The succession of day and night, the rotation of the seasons, and the movements of the heavenly bodies, all suggest that time moves in cycles. This view has sometimes led to a cynical evaluation of life such as finds expression in the well-known verses of the book of Ecclesiastes (1.9–10): 'What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said: "See this is new"? It has been already, in the ages before us.'

But it has been in connection with the idea of the transmigration of souls that the cyclic pattern of time has been most impressively utilized. The Indian sages taught that the individual self or *atman*, by mistaking the phenomenal world for reality and becoming attached to it, is involved in the stream of time. By the process of *samsara* or rebirth, the atman is continually reincarnated in this world in a form determined by its previous actions or *karma* (see KARMA). Hence it becomes subjected to an unceasing process of births and deaths, with all their attendant pain. To emphasize the unending misery of such existence and impel the self to seek salvation, Indian thinkers invented an elaborate chronology based on the cyclic nature of time. A *mahayuga* was conceived, which was a period of 12,000 years; but these were reckoned as years of the gods, each being equal to 360 human years. One thousand of such mahayugas made up one *kalpa*, which represented one day of Brahma, and that one day spanned the whole period from the creation of a world to its destruction. On the dawning of the next day, Brahma creates the world anew, and the dreary wheel of existence begins to turn for another kalpa, through which the unenlightened soul is doomed to a further succession of births and deaths. Both Hinduism and Buddhism claim to provide a way of salvation from this 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time.

The expression 'sorrowful weary wheel' actually comes from an Orphic text; for a

Magnum/Erich Lessing

National Gallery

According to Hesiod, a Golden Race, the earth's first human population lived like gods, free from pain, toil and old age. In Rome the Golden Race turned into the Golden Age, an idyllic period far in the past, when man lived happily, simply and naturally: *The Golden Age*, after Giorgione

similar view of the fate of the uninitiated soul was held in ancient Greece by the members of the Pythagorean and Orphic Mystery cults. Plato also conceived of the errant soul as having to endure a series of incarnations for 10,000 years before it could return to its former happy state. And the mysterious philosopher and poet Empedocles tells of having for 'thrice ten thousand seasons' wandered 'far from the blessed, being born throughout that time in the forms of all manner of mortal things and changing one baleful path of life for another'. For those who thought thus, salvation was to break out from time's inexorable process, or, as it is eloquently phrased on an Orphic grave tablet by one who thought that he had achieved deliverance: 'I have flown out of the sorrowful weary wheel; I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired.'

To believe that the course of time is cyclical has been the more common view; but the idea that time's movement is linear has been a basic concept of four great religions – Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Both Judaism and Christianity (and the Islamic view has essentially followed the same pattern) equate the process of time with the unfolding of the purpose of God. This view finds expression in the Old Testament in what is virtually a philosophy of history (see HISTORY). The main theme is the gradual revelation of Yahweh's providence for Israel, which starts with the call of Abraham (Genesis, chapter 22). Christianity took over this interpretation of the temporal process, but adapted it to its own recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah and of the Church as becoming the true Israel, consequent on the rejection of Jesus by historic Israel. From these basic notions there was gradually evolved the great synthesis of medieval Christianity, in which both the destiny of mankind and of its individual members were related in a time scheme that commenced with the Creation and would end with the Second Coming of Christ. The theme of this cosmic drama was the redemption of mankind after the Fall of its original parents, by the vicarious sacrifice on the cross of the incarnate Son of God.

This view of time has found significant expression in the division of its process into two parts, labelled respectively the era 'Before Christ' and the era *Anni Domini*, the 'years of the Lord'. In medieval iconography, the end of time was symbolized by the catastrophic destruction of the world, and its replacement by a new and eternal order (see END OF THE WORLD). But the most impressive statement, as it is also the most concise, of the Christian view that God incorporates and transcends time is surely given in Revelation (chapter 22) when the Glorified Christ is represented as saying: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

It is interesting, in conclusion, to notice briefly the evolution of the idea of Father Time. The Christian view of God precluded any deification of time, but it did not prevent its personification. In the Middle Ages there were two lines of tradition concerning human destiny which finally coalesced, during the Renaissance period, in the figure of Father Time. One tradition was astrological, through which the image of the pagan god Saturn survived as a grim old man, armed with a sickle and hour-glass, symbols of the termination of human life. In the other tradition, Death was personified as a skeleton, armed with a scythe or dart with which he gave the death-blow. These two figures were eventually fused into the figure of Father Time, complete with hour-glass and scythe. In the iconography of Western mythology his figure still symbolizes, perhaps a little vapidly, man's ancient association of time with death.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Living Backwards

Alice was just beginning to say 'There's a mistake somewhere – ,' when the Queen began screaming, so loud that she had to leave the sentence unfinished. 'Oh, oh, oh!' shouted the Queen, shaking her hand about as if she wanted to shake it off. 'My finger's bleeding! Oh, oh, oh, oh!'

Her screams were so exactly like the whistle of a steam-engine, that Alice had to hold both her hands over her ears.

'What *is* the matter?' she said, as soon as there was a chance of making herself heard. 'Have you pricked your finger?'

'I haven't pricked it *yet*,' the Queen said, 'but I soon shall – oh, oh, oh!'

'When do you expect to do it?' Alice asked, feeling very much inclined to laugh.

'When I fasten my shawl again,' the poor Queen groaned out: 'the brooch will come undone directly. Oh, oh!' As she said the words the brooch flew open, and the Queen clutched wildly at it, and tried to clasp it again.

'Take care!' cried Alice. 'You're holding it all crooked!' And she caught at the brooch; but it was too late: the pin had slipped, and the Queen had pricked her finger.

'That accounts for the bleeding, you see,' she said to Alice with a smile. 'Now you understand the way things happen here.'

'But why don't you scream *now*?' Alice asked, holding her hands ready to put over her ears again.

'Why, I've done all the screaming already,' said the Queen. 'What would be the good of having it all over again?'

Lewis Carroll *Through the Looking Glass*

The Golden Age

Strictly speaking, the Greek myth was not of a 'Golden Age' but of a Golden Race which was the earth's first human population. Hesiod (*c* 700 BC) tells the story in his *Works and Days*. They lived when Cronus was king of the gods, and they lived like gods themselves, free from pain and toil and old age. The earth bore them its fruits untilled, and death came to them gentle as sleep. Now they have become invisible spirits that watch over men and bring them prosperity. They were succeeded by a Silver Race, foolish, violent, and irreligious: their childhood lasted 100 years, but then they aged rapidly. They have become spirits of a lower order, the Mortal Blessed. The gods next made a Bronze Race, out of ash trees, more stern and brutal still, who destroyed themselves and left no trace. They were the first to kill animals for food. Then the succession of metals and the moral decline was interrupted: the fourth race was that of the noble heroes who fought at Troy and elsewhere, and who now live in the Isles of the Blessed and are revered as demigods. But now we have an Iron Race, doomed to toil, suffering, and eventually destruction, as their wickedness increases and children begin to be already grey-haired at birth.

The metal names do not have a single consistent significance. Of the Bronze Race, Hesiod says that their armour, tools and houses were of bronze, for there was no iron then. This evidently represents a memory of the 'Bronze Age' of our archeologists, which in Greece gave way to the Iron Age about 1100 BC. At the same time, the Iron Race's name is appropriate to its inhumanity; while gold and silver join up with bronze to form a scale of absolute value. (Iron, however, ranked as a precious, not a base metal.) Thus the myth represents a compromise between abstract theory and a genuine memory of the past. The conflict shows itself again in the way the Heroic Age is accommodated between the Bronze and Iron Races. It has often been assumed that Hesiod was adapting a mythical scheme in which there were four races instead of five: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron, each worse than its predecessor. It may have been of oriental origin. Medieval Persian texts, which certainly contain some ancient material, tell how Zoroaster saw in a vision a tree with four branches, of gold, silver, copper and iron, and Ahura Mazdah explained to him that these were the four kingdoms of Iran that were to succeed one another, each worse than the last. We recall, too, Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the book of Daniel (chapter 2) in which four successive kingdoms are represented by the gold, silver, brass, and iron and clay parts of an effigy in human form. The metal symbolism has been thought to point to Babylon, where alchemy was practised early, and metals were assigned to each of the planets. In India, there developed a theory of four world ages, of advancing badness and decreasing length, associated with different colours of Vishnu, though not with metals. Here too the last age is characterized by encroachment of old age upon youth.

Hesiod's poem has a double theme, honesty and industry. The myth serves to show how human morality has declined from a perfect state, and also how it has become necessary to work for a living as the earth has withdrawn her bounty. In the time of the Golden Race, righteousness went together with leisure. The general conviction of mankind that the times are growing worse, that today's men are inferior to yesterday's, here finds systematic expression. The details of the idyll follow from a negation of all that is most bothersome at the present day: toil, pain, war, want, worry, old age. Even the residual guilt over animal sacrifice is purged away in the recollection of the time of innocence when men lived in amity with each other and their fellow creatures. The statement that Cronus was king may be connected with the fact that he presided over a summer festival at which conditions approached those enjoyed by the ideal race.

The Philosophers

Later Greek and Roman accounts all derive ultimately from Hesiod, but show a perspective that gradually changes with the times. Philosophers and moralists constructed their own accounts of the development of human society. Reflection, and observation of more backward peoples, brought a new awareness of the fact of technical progress. In 5th century BC accounts, the blessed vegetarians of the earliest age have been replaced by shivering cave-dwellers subsisting on acorns and whatever else they can find. So far from declining, on this view, man's state has constantly improved. This has little in common with Hesiod's picture, and at first there was no attempt to reconcile the two. Plato more than once makes use of Hesiod's metal races, adapting them freely in myths of his own. In his *Republic*, he proposes justifying his strict class structure to the citizenry by persuading them that God has fashioned them with different metals in their constitutions, gold, silver, bronze or iron. Here the metals keep their qualitative significance, but there is no idea of temporal succession. Elsewhere, too, while he allows the idea of world cycles, Plato is disinclined to link virtue and happiness to them too firmly.

Later in the 4th century BC, the philosopher Dicaearchus gave a rationalistic interpretation of Hesiod's description of the life of the Golden Race. Naturally their food grew of its own accord, because they had no agriculture, and that was why they were free from toil and care. They did not fall sick, because their diet was sparse and simple. There was no warfare, because there was nothing worth taking. So the myth is brought into harmony with more recent speculation about how early man's life must have been. As yet there is no exaggerated insistence on the virtue and nobility of the primitive, no connection is seen between technical progress and moral regress. The influential Stoic writer Posidonius (135–50 BC), praising the benefits that philosophy had conferred on mankind, claimed that in the Golden Age the rulers were philosophers, who taught their subjects wisdom, restraint and justice, besides providing for their wants. It was the passing of power to tyrants that brought about the decline, and the need for laws. But the philosophers remained active as makers of these laws, and in developing the arts and crafts.

It is when we pass to Rome that we find the Golden Race turned into a Golden Age, as a result of the ambivalence of the Latin word *saeculum*. Other new developments can also be explained from Roman conditions. The myth is given political applications. In his famous fourth Eclogue (40 BC), Virgil announces that the wheel has come full circle, and that a return of the Golden Age is imminent. Within 20 years or so, he says, the earth will become generous again, fruit and crops will grow of their own accord, honey will run from the

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Allegory with Time, **by the Venetian painter Tiepolo: the figure of Father Time goes back partly to the astrological image of Saturn as a grim old man, armed with a sickle and hour-glass as symbols of the ending of human life, and partly to the image of Death as a skeleton, reaping men's lives with a scythe; the two images fused in Father Time**

oaks, the snake will bite no more, warfare and commerce will disappear, the sheep will even grow coloured wool to save us dyeing it artificially. Obviously Virgil did not believe all this literally, and it is hard to say what he meant by it. But later, in the *Aeneid*, it becomes the reign of Augustus that he celebrates as the new Golden Age. His enthusiasm was sincere, but he was setting a bad precedent. To speak of 'this golden age' became a commonplace in the art of emperor-flattery.

Freedom of the Primitive

Virgil has a new concept of the connection between the end of the Golden Age and the growth of civilization. In the *Georgics*, he explains that Jupiter put a stop to the life of ease in order to stimulate mankind to resource and discovery, and 'so that his kingdom should not bask in torpor'. Deprived of automatic sustenance, they were forced to find out how to grow crops, strike fire from the flint, navigate, hunt, saw wood; harsh necessity was the mother of invention. This favourable view of human progress was soon to be challenged. The complexity of life in the big city, and the diversity of luxury and ostentation that flourished there, increasingly provoked the censure of moralizers and satirists. Hence the advances of material civilization finally came to be identified as the symptoms and concomitants of moral degeneration. Seneca (60 AD) voiced the opinion that it was better to live in caves and hollow trees than in towering tenements that threaten to collapse, with locking doors that only encourage avarice; the primitive's freedom was more valuable than our pastrycooks and ornamental ceilings. Man's essential needs can be very easily satisfied in simple ways.

Thus mankind is made fully responsible for its own fall. It was not the gods' will or the exhaustion of Nature that put an end to the Golden Age, but man's folly.

M. L. WEST

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The tinkers who still travel the roads of Scotland and Ireland are probably the descendants of an ancient caste of itinerant metal-workers, whose skill once endowed them with great prestige

TINKERS

IN SCOTLAND and Ireland, as well as in parts of Scandinavia, there are still to be found nomadic or quasi-nomadic groups whose way of life resembles that of the gypsies, although they have little or no gypsy blood in them. It is impossible to speak with certainty of their origin, but it seems likely that they are the descendants of a very ancient caste of itinerant metal-workers whose status in tribal society was probably high. One of the trades associated with them from early times was that of tinsmith, and it is clear that to primitive man the ability to use metals seemed very close to magic; consequently, both 'black' and 'white' smiths for long enjoyed immense prestige, not only as craftsmen but as wielders of secret powers (see SMITH).

When the gypsies arrived in Western and Northern Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries (see GYPSIES), there was no doubt a certain amount of biological and socio-cultural mixing between them and the aboriginal itinerants whom they encountered (and in some areas appeared to have displaced). In certain regions a measure of fusion took place between the two groups, and a mixed 'tinkler-gypsy' race came into being, but at the present day the gypsies and tinkers view each other as quite distinct groupings; and there is not much love lost between them.

The ranks of the Scots tinkers were augmented at various periods as a result of events in the country's troubled history. Writing in the 1690s, Fletcher of Saltoun stated that as a result of repeated famine and breakdown in trade there were at least 200,000 people wandering homeless in Scotland, and reduced to begging for their bread. Many of these must have become absorbed in the tinker clans. Dynastic and religious wars, and the ultimate disaster of Culloden (1746) sent sizeable new contingents to join the fraternity, and some of the victims of the Highland clearances (mass evictions) no doubt added their quota. Tinkerdom, therefore, constitutes not so much an ethnic as a socio-cultural group; it has been described by F. Rehfisch, in an unpublished thesis, as 'cultural inasmuch as many of the cultural norms of the fraternity are different from those of the Flattie (the non-tinker), and social because most members interact with fellow tinkers and generally not with outsiders, if it can be avoided.'

Hamish Henderson

The tinkers' fear of persecution finds expression in their belief in 'burkers', body-snatchers supposed to lie in wait to murder them; especially suspect were medical students who seized bodies to sell to the anatomy departments of hospitals
Top right **A tinker's camp, north of Perth** ***Centre*** **Tinkers round a camp-fire** ***Right*** **A tinker family near Kintyre in Argyllshire**

Travellers From the Past

Some of the tinker groupings, both in Scotland and in Ireland, make up a kind of 'underground' clan system of their own, and individuals are intensely conscious of kinship and family ties. They want nothing to do with tramps and other solitaries, feeling themselves as distinct from this type of itinerant as they are from the Romany gypsies. A very intelligent tinker youth once put the distinction in a nutshell when, referring to an Irish tramp who used to wander around Scotland, he declared: 'That sort of lad just lives from day to day, but we (tinkers) live entirely in the past.' (It should be stressed at this point that the term 'tinker' itself is disliked by the fraternity because of its frequent use in a derogatory context; tinkers call themselves 'travellers'.)

There were, of course, many tinkers in the south as well as in the countries of the 'Celtic fringe', but in England the gypsies seem to have taken over their role in society and to a large extent put them out of business. It may safely be conjectured that the organized tinker groupings survived longer in Scotland and Ireland than in the south because a semi-tribal state of society lingered until a much later date in these countries.

Unlike the true gypsies, whose language is (or used to be) Romany, the tinkers use a cover-language known as 'cant'. The cant of the tinkler-gypsies of Galloway and south-east Scotland has quite a strong admixture of Romany in it, but north of the Forth-Clyde line the amount of recognizable Romany in the cover-tongue is hardly more than 15%. The tinkers of the North and West and of the Hebrides, whose native language is Gaelic (or was, until very recently) have a cover-tongue of their own which resembles one of the secret languages of Ireland. Their name for it is 'Beurla-cheard', or 'lingo of the cairds' (the tinkers). That this is a very ancient cover-tongue is shown by the fact that some of the vocabulary which it reflects and deforms is archaic Gaelic.

The Black Coach

Although the 'flattie' (non-tinker) population for long feared that the tinkers were child-stealers (witness the lullaby 'Hush ye! Hush ye! Dinna fret ye! The black Tinkler winna get ye'), the folklore of the tinkers shows clearly and even poignantly that they lived in much greater fear of the ordinary population than the 'flatties' did of them. This persecution complex found, and still finds, expression in gruesome folklore about 'burkers' (body-snatchers) who were supposed to be continually on the wait to waylay and murder travelling folk, and sell their bodies to the anatomy schools. An Aberdeenshire tinker, quite well known as a country dance-band musician, told me in 1954: 'I mind, once upon a time, when ye couldna pass the Marischal College or the King's College, for the students would fairly tak a haud o' ye with a cleik (a hooked piece of iron) by the leg . . . they took ye right inside – they wanted fresh bodies.'

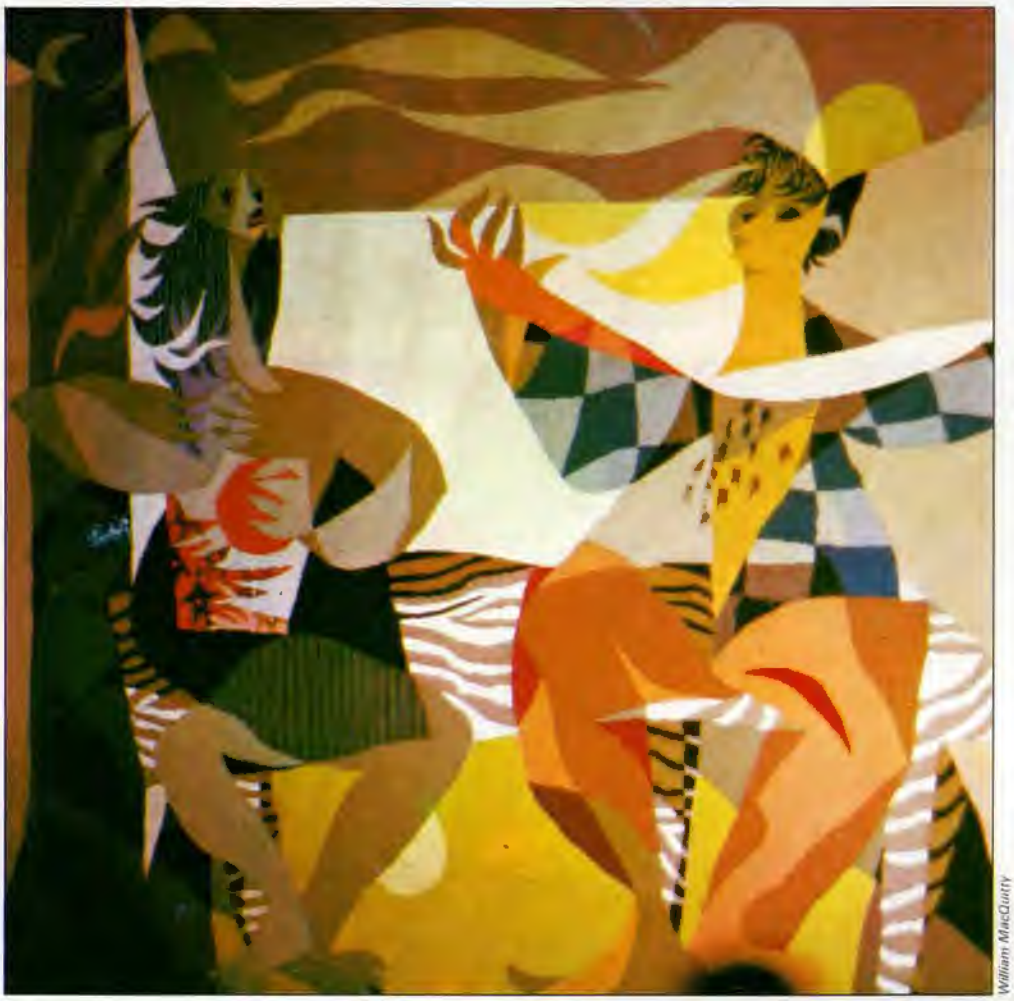
Writing four years later Rehfisch stated: 'To my surprise, I discovered that there is still a real belief in 'burkers', the villains of many of the most hair-raising tinker stories. We were told that the neighbourhood of the University of Aberdeen was a dangerous place to visit at night, and is so even today. One of our Blairgowrie informants claimed to have been chased by two or three red-robed students not more than five years ago. She said she knew their aim was to kill her and sell her body to the Anatomy Department . . . Another informant noticed a sign posted in the neighbourhood of that same university stating that it was dangerous for persons alone to frequent the area after dusk. Still another one said that the missing persons column in the Sunday newspaper *The News of the World* was concrete evidence that the body-snatchers were still active . . . She explained that in all probability those whose names appeared in that column were for the most part victims of these villainous burkers.'

Paraded by an accomplished storyteller at the camp-fire, the ghoulish trappings of the burker stories conjure up a phantasmagoric *grand guignol* world reminiscent of Dylan Thomas's 'The Doctor and the Devils'. Lum-hatted black-frockcoated noddies (medical students) drive the 'burker's coach' into the countryside to try and find isolated tinker encampments; the coach is long and black-draped, looking like a hearse; bloodhounds lope silently beside it; the horse's harness is swathed in cloth to prevent it chinking; the horse's hooves have rubber pads on them. In some of the stories the tinker victim gets his throat cut, and his relatives discover too late that he is missing; in others, there are hair's-breadth escapes from the villainous doctors and noddies. Looking at the faces round the camp-fire, I could well believe statements made to me that Perthshire tinkers would (until quite recently) leave their encampments and rush in panic to the hill on the appearance of a suspicious vehicle.

Although we can well believe that defenceless ragged nomads were occasionally the victims of murderous body-snatchers, we must probably look further back in history in order to understand the deeper-lying reasons for this persecution complex. In the 17th century it was a capital crime in Scotland merely to *be* an 'Egyptian' – Egyptian, for the courts, meaning not merely a gypsy, but any sort of wanderer, vagabond minstrel or travelling tinsmith of no fixed abode. If it could be proved that a travelling man of uncertain occupation was 'halden and repute to be an Egyptian', he was as good as dead. Among the victims of this law was the famous fiddler James MacPherson, who was hanged at Banff in 1700.

Like the gypsies, tinkers sometimes make money by telling fortunes. Quite a number are believed (by themselves and others) to possess the gift of 'second sight', but this gift is not at the beck and call of its possessor

In the north and west of Scotland the tinkers use a language that resembles one of the ancient and secret tongues of Ireland, which the tinkers call 'Beurlacheard' or 'lingo of the cairds': tapestry of Irish tinkers



William MacQuitty

and is never exploited commercially. The tinkers believe, as do many ordinary Scots country folk, that the seventh child of a seventh child is likely to possess this strange psychic gift.

The Uncanny MacPhees

Belief in the existence of fairies is still very widespread among the tinkers. In *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales*, Dr. K. M. Briggs prints several allegedly true stories about fairies recorded by the School of Scottish Studies from tinker informants. These include stories about brownies, elves, changelings, water-kelpies, fairy funerals, fairy music heard by mortals, and – last but not least – 'a wee green man' seen in the Sma' Glen. Rehfisch reports (in 1958): 'Some of our informants had seen one or more fairies, with never any harm to themselves. One had found a fairy's coffin with a little corpse inside! They kept it for some time until one day it mysteriously disappeared. Ghosts are feared, though there are but few tales of them harming living persons. The number of our informants who claim to have actually seen one or more of them is legion.' Belief in witches and the black art is also common.

Finally, one rather curious item of tinker folklore deserves mention. A sort of mystical aura surrounds the name of the MacPhees, one of the Scots tinker clans. The MacPhees are regarded by some as the 'original' tinkers, the 'first on the road', but even so an undoubted 'hoodoo' seems to lie over their very name: it is bad luck to hear or speak the name MacPhee, and a substitute name such as MacFud, MacaFud or Maca-Tuttie, is supposed to be used in place of it. If the first person one sees when leaving for work in the morning is a MacPhee, it is advisable to turn back; no good will come of the day's endeavours. Some tinkers believe that to say the words 'cold iron' constitutes an effective counter-spell.

HAMISH HENDERSON

FURTHER READING: Scottish Dev. Dept., *Scotland's Travelling People* (H.M.S.O., 1971).

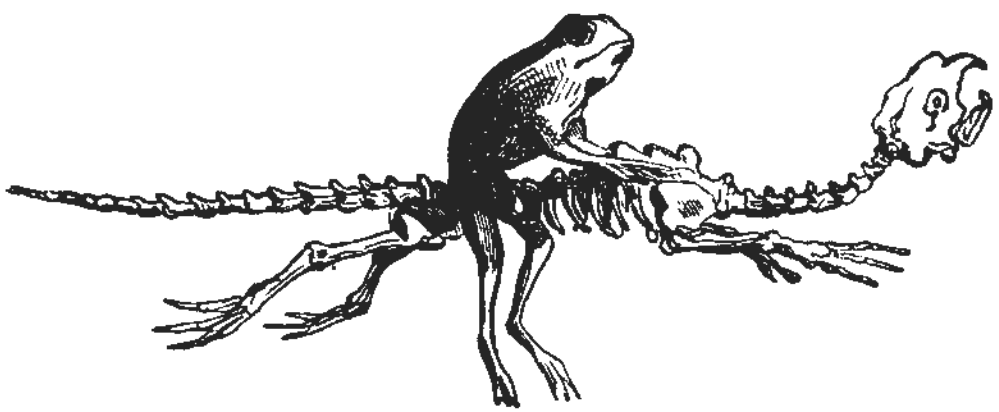
The grotesque physical appearance of the toad does nothing to endear it to humans: indeed in England a toad might be a witch's familiar and in Europe it could be the witch herself

TOAD

THE IMPORTANCE of the toad in world folklore seems to derive more from its basic characteristics than from any diffusion of notions about it from one area to another. Being associated with water, toads and frogs are involved in rain-making and other fertility rites. Moreover, the fact that toads resemble grotesque, miniature human beings arouses the ambivalent feelings so often inspired by mysterious and possibly sinister creatures. Not only are the faces of toads reminiscent of a very wide-mouthed human face but their attitudes while swimming and copulating bear some resemblance to human postures and human movements.

The toad is rightly regarded as venomous. If irritated, toads exude a substance, from glands on the skin, which carries two separate poisons sufficiently violent to cause dogs to foam at the mouth and become feverish. During the Middle Ages, bandits sometimes forced a toad into the mouth of one of their victims. Thus there are adequate grounds for regarding toads with repugnance.

In England, particularly in East Anglia, the toad had an evil reputation. A toad might be a witch's familiar and she was said to make a magic lotion of toad spittle and the sap of the sow-thistle. With this concoction, she outlined a crooked cross on her body, and so could make herself invisible. In parts of central Europe, toads were believed to be witches and in many areas their evil repute was such that they were killed, but in Rumania a toad killer was believed capable of murdering his mother and therefore they remained unmolested.



Toads have an evil reputation in many parts of Europe, and were often believed to be in league with the Devil or to be witches' familiars *Above* Toads dancing at a sabbath and *(below)* a toad flying to a sabbath, from De Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*

In Cambridgeshire certain men, called toadmen, were believed to have special power over horses, and to be able to make them stand still despite all efforts to get them to move. They could also render horses uncontrollable. Such a person might be regarded as in league with the Devil and viewed with some anxiety. A man wishing to acquire this power had to skin a toad, or peg it to an ant-hill until its bones were picked clean. He then carried the bones in his pocket until they were dry, and at midnight, when there was a full moon, he floated the bones on a stream. They would screech and one bone would set off upstream. If he secured this bone, he gained the powers of a toadman. Such men were said to be found in Cambridgeshire up to 1938. It is difficult to decide the extent to which this ritual was actually carried out or taken seriously.

Also in Cambridgeshire, toads were regarded as predicting storms. It was believed that they could hear distant thunder, inaudible to human ears, and could then be seen making their way to water. The origin of this belief may be that toads move from their winter quarters to their breeding place with remarkable unanimity within a period of a few days, and thunderstorms may occur around this time.

Toads, or parts of them, were considered efficacious as charms. A Herefordshire man declared that he could steal as much as he liked, and would never be found out, because he wore a toad's heart around his neck. In Devonshire, toads were burnt because they were believed to be in league with the Devil. Perhaps on the principle 'Set a thief to catch a thief', the toad was reputed to be able to drive away noxious things. In a book on gardening which appeared in 1593, Thomas Hyll recommended that before sowing seeds a toad should be drawn around the garden, then placed in an earthenware pot and buried in the centre of a flower bed. He advised that after the seeds had been sown the toad should be dug up, otherwise the vegetables growing round about would acquire a bitter taste. Having taken these precautions, the gardener could feel confident that no creeping thing would injure his crops. This appears to be a version of an ancient belief: the Greek writer Apuleius and the Roman writer Pliny advocated placing a toad in an earthenware pot in a field to avert storms, and two years after Hyll's book appeared another writer repeated this timeworn recipe for protecting the fields.

There was said to be enmity between toads and spiders. Toads do indeed eat spiders, and possibly by an extension of this observed fact the creatures were credited with being able to repel evil.

Jewelled Head

A toadstone (in practice, any stone that resembled the toad or frog in shape or colour) was believed to have the power of curing bites and stings, when applied to the affected part. You could always tell whether such a stone was genuine by holding it in front of a toad; if the toad jumped forward to snatch it from you the stone was no counterfeit.

During the Middle Ages and later, it was believed that the toad concealed a precious jewel in its head. In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the Duke remarks:

> Sweet are the uses of adversity;
> Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

Earlier writers also refer to this belief. One, in 1569, commented: 'There is to be found in the heads of old and great toads a stone they call borax or stelon, which being used in a ring gives a forewarning against venom.' The fear of assassination by poison was very real among the upper classes in some countries during the medieval period and the Renaissance. Lyly, the Elizabethan playwright, wrote in *Euphues*: 'The fayrer the stone is in the toades head the more pestilent the poyson is in hir bowelles.' Thus association proceeded from the fact that the toad produces a poisonous secretion to the supposition that it carries within itself an antidote.

The belief in the toadstone's efficacy against poison dates from at least as far back as the 12th century. But the poisonous characteristics of the toad were recognized much earlier. Pliny said that the creature was full of poison and Aelian (3rd century AD) added his own touch of exaggeration, remarking that people had been killed instantly by drinking wine to which the blood of a toad had been added. Milton, influenced by his classical learning, relates in *Paradise Lost* that Satan transformed himself into a toad in order to squat by Eve's ear and inject poison into her blood.

Probably because the toad and the fabulous basilisk were both reputed to be venomous, they were brought into association during the Middle Ages. The basilisk was said to kill shrubs by touching them and smash stones by breathing on them. Writers of the 12th and 13th centuries stated that it was born from an egg laid by a cock in old age and hatched by a serpent or toad.

In general, and especially in ecclesiastical circles, the toad was regarded during the medieval period as a revolting, Satanic creature. A story was told of a monk who, during Lent, caught a cock in order to cook and eat it. When he put in his hand to extract the entrails he pulled out a toad. Another tale relates that as an extremely avaricious money-lender lay dying he begged his wife to place a purse full of money in his tomb. This she did, as stealthily as possible, but the secret leaked out. Searching for the money, some people went to the grave and opened it. They saw there two toads, one in the opening of the purse and the other on the man's breast. 'One with its mouth was extracting coins from the purse, the other taking those that had been extracted and putting them into his heart. It was as if they said: "We will satisfy that insatiable heart with money."' Those who concocted such stories were not interested in natural history but in edification, so they associated a revolting creature with self-indulgence and greed. A sculpture at Strasbourg entitled *The Seducer of Unfaithful Virgins* depicts snakes and toads climbing up a handsome youth's back while he holds forth an apple.

The fact that one of the Zoroastrian sacred books states that toads are evil creatures and should be killed, shows that the dislike of toads is not confined to Christendom and confirms that their appearance and characteristics awaken a deep-seated and widespread repugnance.

Such feelings may account for the toad being among the animals which in various parts of the world are treated as scapegoats. In Togoland the Hos enacted an elaborate ceremony annually to expel noxious things and influences from their midst. After they had besought evil spirits and witches to enter into bundles of creepers, which they carried out of town, they swept their houses and yards, and washed their faces with magical medicine. At night, a toad, tied to a palm leaf, was drawn through the streets. Among the shamanistic Gilyaks of Northern Asia the toad also figured as a scapegoat. After bears had been ritually sacrificed, the figure of a toad, made of birch bark, was placed peering in through a window while inside the house a dummy bear, dressed in Gilyak costume, occupied a bench of honour. The guilt of slaying the bear was laid upon the toad.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Despite the toad's bad reputation in magic and folklore, the Toad in Kenneth Grahame's book *The Wind in the Willows* is a foolish and boastful but essentially amiable creature: illustration to the book by Arthur Rackham

Demon Puppets

There are some magicians who feed puppets, little demons in the form of toads, on a brew of milk and flour, giving them the first morsel to taste. These magicians dare not leave their homes without first asking permission of the puppets and telling them how long they are going to be away, whether it is three or four days. If the puppets reply that it is too long, then they dare not undertake the journey or in fact do anything to upset the puppets . . . Gentil -or Gentien le Clerc reported that he (Nevillon) could get more out of his puppet than out of God. He said that he had often seen Nevillon's puppet which looked like a big black toad covered with black fur. It was kept in a box beneath a tile on the floor, which jumped and lifted when the toad wished to be fed. He said that he had seen it again six weeks later in Nevillon's bedroom and on another occasion he saw Nevillon carrying it under his coat. Nevillon told him a dozen times that he would get one for him, if he liked, and that there was more to be gained from the puppet than from God. He said that he would get nothing from God, whereas his puppet would always bring him something.

Pierre de Lancre
L'Incrédulité et Mécréance du Sortilège

Mary Evans Picture Library

TOBACCO

WHEN white explorers reached the New World, tobacco was grown abundantly in the West Indies, Latin America and much of what is now the United States. It was cultivated by many agricultural Indian tribes and also by some who were not agriculturalists. Most western and south-eastern Indians gathered wild tobacco, if they did not grow their own. Other tribes, who could neither grow it nor find it, acquired it by trade or theft. Certainly they almost all smoked it. They stuffed the dried and crumbled leaves into hollow reeds, like primitive cigarettes, or rolled the leaves themselves into cylinders like cigars, or packed their tobacco in superbly crafted, decorated and far from primitive pipes.

Smoke of all kinds – from burnt offerings or incense, for example – has always been used as a carrier of man's prayers and praises upwards to the gods, and American Indians used tobacco smoke for this purpose. At the beginning of any holy or otherwise important enterprise, honour would be paid to the gods and their blessings sought by four (or six) puffs of smoke from a ceremonial pipe, passed among the chiefs and warriors: four puffs to each of the sacred four directions (and often two more to the other two directions, upwards and downwards). The Incas and other South American peoples used this ritual; it is thought that the early Mound Builders, prehistoric inhabitants of the eastern woodlands of North America, did too, for they had numerous and sophisticated pipes.

When the Plains Indians performed this tobacco ritual, using their glorious calumet (reed-stemmed) pipes, the paramount chief smoked first, facing east, and the pipe passed to the right, sunwise. But there were variations: a smoker might dance briefly with the pipe, or the pipe stem itself might be presented to the four corners (giving the spirits a puff) instead of the smoke. The Pawnee used enormous calumet pipes, with stems four feet long, and bowls that rested on the ground, too large to pass from hand to hand.

But if outward forms differed, the ceremonial purpose remained the same. The act of smoking together bound the smokers in a pact or covenant, and called down the sanction of the spirits on their intentions. Western films have provided a typically over-simplified idea of 'the peace-pipe', but certainly such ritual smoking together did take place when warring tribes drew up treaties.

Smoke Offering to the Gods

Smoking to the four directions was by no means the only occasion at which tobacco was used in Indian ceremonial. Most south-eastern tribes offered tobacco smoke to gods and spirits whenever the occasion demanded – even smoking to the spirits of trees before cutting them down. They also put tobacco in the graves, along with other gifts, to ensure the dead person's well-being in the next world.

The Iroquois and other north-eastern tribes made their smoke offerings by placing tobacco directly onto a fire during dances and ceremonies. The hunters of the Labrador region of Canada might blow smoke onto some talismanic object that bore their personal good luck; similarly, a Plains warrior might offer pipe smoke to the magical objects within his medicine bundle.

Tobacco smoke is sometimes part of a purifying ritual that precedes most Pueblo ceremonies. Under the supervision of a special Tobacco clan, smoke from reed cigarettes or special clay pipes will be blown over altars, magical objects and prayer-sticks. And the meeting of the Pueblo men to discuss and plan a major ceremony becomes itself a ritual occasion on which tobacco is formally and communally smoked.

Tobacco can function as more than an offering to the spirits. The Crow Indians consider it to be an object of religious veneration in its own right. Their myths say that a high spirit called a Star Being came to earth in the form of tobacco, but was recognized by a culture hero who declared the plant and its cultivation to be sacred. (Many other tribes have comparable legends of tobacco as a gift from the gods.) The Crow developed a Tobacco Society that devoted itself to the ceremonial planting, harvesting and curing of tobacco as a major part of the year's religious observances. The Omaha Indians had a different cult, centred on sacred pipes. Two special pipes served as the tribe's main totem objects, brought out and smoked by the great chiefs before any major event.

Healing Powers

In general the tobacco used by Indians of North America was a rough variety, strong enough to make men dizzy and mildly 'high', and some used it to induce visions. The Indians also used tobacco in healing. They believed that the smoke was good for asthma and lung complaints, but they especially found the leaves useful in poultices for sores and wounds.

Folk medicine (mainly American) also uses tobacco in more overtly magical cures, often linked with the traditional healing powers of human breath and spittle. Blowing smoke into the ear cures ear-ache; blowing smoke onto a baby's stomach cures its colic; spitting tobacco juice onto warts causes them to disappear. Chewing tobacco is also believed to forestall pain while treating snakebite, and anglers can spit tobacco juice onto their bait, for extra luck. The raw tobacco leaf serves in a cure for indigestion, by crossing two leaves on the sufferer's stomach; and to keep the household from disease all winter, hang a tobacco leaf in the chimney all summer.

Today with all the medical warnings surrounding the habit, smokers know that smoking is itself unlucky. On a slightly happier note, it is said that if your cigarette keeps going out, it is a sure sign that you are in love.

Sovereign Remedy

King James I's *Counterblaste to Tobacco*:
Tobacco was widely thought to possess rare medicinal power and to be a cure for all and sundry disorders; and the bulk of the *Counterblaste* is a scathing attack upon these claims. The King's notions of medicine and anatomy are, of course, absurd . . . Yet he is on solid ground in challenging the therapeutic powers claimed for tobacco. Smoke flies up into the head, he scoffs, yet is supposed to cure gout in the lower limbs. It is a remedy for diseases directly opposed to each other. It makes a drunken man sober and a sober man drunk, it induces sleep yet quickens and awakens the brain.

D. H. Willson *King James VI and I*

Tongs

American term for Chinese secret societies, frequently combining religious and political aims with racketeering; in the 1850s the Tongs fought gang wars in the United States, wearing warpaint and armed with hatchets: these societies originated in China, among rebels against the established government and the state religion.
See CHINA.

Torah

Hebrew for 'teaching', applied in the first instance to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, traditionally believed to have been dictated to Moses by God, and by extension to the other books of the Old Testament; there is also the oral Torah, the teachings held to have been conveyed by God to Moses by word of mouth, together with the commentaries of the rabbis during the first five centuries AD.
See JUDAISM.

Keystone Press

'For those who live within a totemic culture, it is the very basis of their understanding of the world'; a totem is a hereditary badge or emblem of a tribe or other group, usually representing an animal after which the group is named; the word is also applied to the animal itself

TOTEM

THE WORD TOTEM comes from the North American Indians, who did not so much believe in descent from animals as that their early ancestors were partially divine and could change their shape from time to time to suit their convenience. Echoes of this belief remain in some of the Greek myths, quite as much as among Indian tribes, such as the Haida of Queen Charlotte's Islands, British Columbia, who have left remarkably beautiful carvings illustrating their mythology. The development of totemic animal myths into romantic epics, symbolized in the carved house poles and decorated costumes of the tribal leaders, is not unlike the system in the early Middle Ages when mythology first developed into the rich artistic heritage of heraldry. A Haida chief who belonged to the bear clan and wore symbols of Bear Mother on his clothing was not so very different from the ancient Earls of Warwick who, from a family tradition, adopted a bear with a ragged staff as their badge.

On the great plains of North America, the tribes of the prairie were also interested in animals which symbolized the spirit world. Young men would hope for revelation of an individual totem creature. On reaching puberty they would go through a short period of instruction from the elders and magicians of the tribe, and were then sent out on a difficult journey to find their protective spirit. The young man would walk away from the village into the open prairie: he would carry neither clothes nor blanket, but he was allowed a bow and arrows. He was expected to abstain from all food for the four days of his journey and as he went through the days and nights he asked the Power Above and Earth Mother to grant him protection and to give him a spirit helper who would stand beside him through life, warn him of danger and lead him into paths which would be honourable and profitable. In a state of semi-starvation, combined with near ecstasy in his prayerful relation with the spirit world, he would naturally experieuce many visions, like waking dreams. At some point he would see an animal which might possibly talk to him, but in any case he would become aware that this was the creature which was meant to be his totem. He was expected to shoot it, kill it and skin it. Then he would keep some special portion: claws, or skull, or some of the bones which would go inside the dried skin. This was what Europeans would call his 'medicine bag'. He would carry it with him tucked in his belt: it would be his protector in battle and his guide in times of peace. This was the traditional totem.

Australian aborigines held totemic dances in which the men dressed to resemble their totemic ancestors and believed that they entered the Dreamtime and became their ancestors: carvings of a totemic dingo and whale

The Continuity of Life

There are examples of this type of attitude throughout humanity. One may think of the young squire kneeling in prayer all night, asking for the blessings of heaven and for the care of a patron saint in the days to come when he would be a knight and become a leader in peace and in war. Among the peoples of ancient America, symbolic animals and birds were regarded as sent from the spirit world. Among the Inca, the respect paid to the condor and the puma was characteristic of this belief, and even in ancient Britain, the blackbird was a messenger of the dead and the magpie a kind of fairy bird. However, the basic feeling for totemism rarely reaches the development that it had among the North American Indians, and also among the far more primitive Australian aborigines.

The aboriginal tribespeople of Australia lived a reasonably comfortable life with early Stone Age equipment. The primary skills of hunting animals, finding edible roots and supplies of water allowed them to live well in regions of the Australian desert which are quite uninhabitable to Europeans. The philosophical elders among the aborigines considered that in the long ago, in the Dreamtime (see AUSTRALIA), the world was not so well organized as

E. L. Cranstone/Axel Poignant

today. Land and water were not properly separated, there were trees and grasses that were living beings which could move about, man and animals were somehow all one, so that the beings which finally developed as men had quite probably inhabited animal forms previously. Within any given tribe there were several divisions; each was named after an animal or other creature from the Dreamtime, who had developed his human side and so become a direct ancestor of that part of the tribe. It was very important for people to know about their totem ancestor. They not only held ceremonies in his honour, but also it was well known that people of one totem might only marry people of a specified other totem; it was a way of making sure that intermarriage was not too close between related groups.

The aborigines did not believe that death was the end. The body was often thrown away to decay, except perhaps for a few bones that were removed for magical use, for the body was but a temporary house for the reality of the living being. Aborigines believed that after the body died, the personality escaped, sometimes into sacred trees, sometimes to hide in caves. Among the aborigines of central Australia, the spirits went back into sacred slabs of stone or wood which had been carved with patterns representing the emergence of the totem ancestor in the ancient Dreamtime. The soul would rest in one of these *churinga*, as they were called, and wait until a likely mother passed by.

This magic was known to the elders of each tribe and was not shared by women. All the women were allowed to know was that somewhere in a sacred area which they were not allowed to visit there were the souls of ancestors waiting to enter their bodies and be born as new babies. Since in the wandering, hunting life of the aboriginals it was difficult to look after many children, women were usually careful to keep away from these magical places. It appears that they knew that babies could not be born without the help of man, and also that intercourse would not necessarily result in the birth of a child; pregnancy would occur only when the spirit had entered them and so given life which could properly develop into a baby. When a child was born, the elders of the tribe consulted together and decided whose spirit was in the child. They then removed the appropriate sacred churinga from its store, and it was kept in another place for the whole lifetime of the newly born person. At death the soul was thought to have re-entered the churinga and it was then placed with the remainder, where souls were waiting rebirth into the pleasant world.

The belief that people belonged to certain selected groups of totem ancestors, related to the non-human world, led to many interesting ceremonies. These were conducted by the men, mostly in places which women would not visit. Women took part only in the social *corroboree*, an occasion for singing and dancing, in which very often the men might wear the secret painted decoration of the totem ancestors. The women, of course, did not know the meaning of the designs. They had dances of their own, and when the men were putting on their little theatrical ballet about the ancestors, the women could join in the rhythm and beat out the time on pieces of wood or bundles of kangaroo skin on their laps.

Jeffrey Craig

Above **Australian aborigines believed that spirits waited for rebirth in churingas, sacred slabs of stone or wood, carved with patterns representing the emergence of the totem ancestor in the ancient Dreamtime** ***Right*** **Totemic figures from British Columbia: an American Indian totem might be a man's individual guardian spirit or the spiritual protector of an entire group; it would usually show itself in the form of an animal or bird**

But at the really important occasions where the history of the totem ancestor was mimed, no women were allowed. The men painted themselves with red and yellow ochre and white pipe-clay. They decorated themselves with white tufts of down from the feathers of the larger birds which they stuck to themselves by making little cuts in their skin so that the blood would act as glue. From their hair, they often built up elaborate head-dresses of sticks and grass, all painted with ochre which made them in some way resemble their own ancestral totem, such as the emu or the kangaroo. Then, to the accompaniment of explanatory chants by their elders, they would dance around sacred objects which represented the places where the ancestors had emerged from the earth and they would pretend to be once again in the Dreamtime where man and animal were indistinguishable.

In imitating the animal, one could see through the disguise to the shape of a man who was going to develop into the totemic ancestor. Among the Australian aborigines this was not just a representation, it was so important a ritual that the people taking part really believed that they had entered another time and were at one with their ancestors. In fact, it was perfectly clear to them that since their spirits had come from sacred churinga they had formerly inhabited a human body. Before that, the soul had been in the churinga; and so on through time, from man to storage stone and back, and back into the Dreamtime itself. They believed that they were the same people who had been the ancestors, though they were now living in a modern body in a modern time. So to the Australian aborigines, the totem belief was a belief in the continuity of human life from the very beginning of things when man and animal were all one.

In a way, this is reminiscent of the scientific teaching about the evolution of man through the humanoids from a physical animal ancestry, but of course the aborigine was not interested in studying the origin of species. He just believed that the chants and the words handed down to him from the elders in the past were the sacred truth about the nature of humanity and the relationships between man and the totem.

The totemic idea is very widespread, but in many cases it amounts to little more than

Picturepoint, London

poetic simile. People of certain occupations were supposed to be like the animals which were symbolic of their activities, so that they were distinguished by the names of animals and birds, more or less as one might give someone an appropriate nickname. In Aztec Mexico there were two groups of military orders, one of which was named for the wild cat, the ocelot. These were the people who were sent out as scouts to hide among the rocks and find out about the disposition of the enemy and, when possible, to leap upon one and seize him, making him prisoner for sacrifice, just as the wild cat among the rocks of the mountains might leap upon an unsuspecting traveller. The other warriors, who led frontal attacks on the enemy, were dedicated to the eagle; they were thought of as the people who descended from above upon the foe and seized him in their talons, and so wrapped him up to be taken as an offering to the gods. These were poetic images as well as the badges of the particular clans of warriors.

Sometimes, however, certain creatures have been regarded as sacred. In many tribes where an animal totem was respected, this totem was never eaten by members of its related social group, for this was considered insulting to a relative.

This idea of relationship between man and animal occurs occasionally in everyday life, when we compare each other to some creature which exhibits the characteristic we are talking about. To say that a person is a cat is something of an insult, but it does imply a quality of personality. To say that a person is hawk-eyed implies that he possesses the keen vision of the bird. Such habits of speech help us to understand totemism as something perfectly natural. The idea has so many different origins that it is quite wrong to think that it is the same thing in every part of the world. The relationship is in a certain community of ideas and not of direct meaning. It is best to use the word to relate to those groups of people who believe in their descent from an animal ancestor; and this is much more true of the Australian aborigines than of the North American Indians.

As has already been noted, the word totem had a North American Indian origin, derived from a Chippewa dialect of the Algonquian group of languages. The word was originally *ototeman*, which refers to a close relation like a brother or sister. A boy obtained a personal spirit protector through his visions during the lonely vigil of his days of initiation, but he also had a group totem, a symbolic being who protected all members of his social group. This group totem was usually in the form of an animal or bird, though representing a kind of hidden power. It was symbolic of the *orenda* or inner power which inspired the community.

Although the American Indian totem was not directly ancestral, as among the Australian aboriginals, it was also an expression of the human relationship with the powers of Nature. The spiritual quality of orenda was something which men shared with all other creatures and objects in Nature. To the American Indian all Nature was instinct with life and capable of being brought into relationship with mankind. One called, or asked the wise man to call, in a specially receptive state of mind, and the answer would come. The 'medicine bag' would be handled or even displayed on such occasions, because it represented the first firm contact with the world in which one's personal totem was at home. Rapport with the hidden powers was important since they were man's supporters in the quest of life.

Although the American Indian was no longer as totally dependent upon the gifts of uncultivated Nature as the aborigine, he relied on many more spirit powers for help. There were the animal spirits who would affect his success in hunting by their willingness or unwillingness to yield their bodies to feed humans. There were the spirits of maize, tobacco, beans and pumpkins, who must be asked to give their fruit abundantly, as well as to produce living seed for future sustenance. All these were influenced by this gentle mystery of the totem who was the protector of the individual and his community. Maybe this was a projection of the 'unconscious', but to the Indian this was no matter for introspection. The powers were felt to be external, and the totem spirit was an external protector.

The transition from the diffuse feeling of a spirit being, as expressed in North American totemism, to organized religious systems with hierarchies of defined divinities is a natural one. It can be seen in the ceremonies of such highly cultured societies as those of the Pueblo Indians, whose *kachina* spirits partake of both the generalized vagueness of the totem and the clear-cut line of action expressed in a formalized mythology characteristic of incipient gods (see PUEBLO INDIANS). Though one must remember that to all known American Indian societies there was an awareness of a being which Europeans have called the Great Spirit, but which may best be described in the Iroquois term *Wa'nkonda*, the 'Power Above'.

The Watchful Ancestors

A kind of totemism has existed in almost every branch of the human race. In the late Paleolithic in Europe, the engravings and paintings suggest that there was some magical connection between the painting on the wall of a deep cave and the bringing of animals to be hunted in the outer world (see CAVE ART). Numerous implements, such as spear throwers, have engravings of animals on them: one is led to imagine that they represent either good-luck charms or are the owner's marks, symbolic of the owner's name. However, we have no real factual information about the mental processes of our remote ancestors, only the knowledge that they must have had much experience in common with other peoples at the same stage of cultural development. Is the reindeer carved on a bone staff the totem of a hunter, or a sign to help the staff throw a dart at a reindeer? We do not know.

The idea of the relation of man to Nature was important in Polynesia, but it can hardly be said to be expressed in any recognizably totemic form. In the background of Polynesian religion was the idea

Detail of a totemic carving of 'double-headed snake', executed in 1958 by Chief Mungo Master of the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia: the word totem itself comes from the North American Indians but the idea of a close relationship between the human and the animal is known all over the world

that the Creator had brought forth the first ancestor of all classes of being; that the oceans, islands, birds, plants and fishes were as much the children of the Creator as the tribes of men. The relationship was expressed in sexual life. Everywhere the descent of man from the gods was a family matter, and was expressed by reduplicating the race generation after generation. Similarly, the other creatures descended as great families, all eventually linked in a common ancestry to the Supreme Being.

Melanesian societies often have a more clearly distinguishable totemic belief. For instance, for the village agriculturists of New Ireland their ancestors have become watchful spirits who look after the welfare of their descendants and protect them from evil forces. Wood sculpture, brightly painted, represents the more important citizens at their funeral ceremonies. The protective departed is usually shown as a bird holding a fish, and clutching a serpent in its talons.

In Africa there are remnants of totemism in the spirits worshipped in animal form, like the Old Man Mantis who was an important divine being to one group of Bushmen. Similar fragmentary survivals of the totemic idea can be found among many peoples, but the usual type of belief which looks like totemism is more of a comparative nature. People are named after animals, both factually and jokingly, but they are not seriously thought of as being descended from animals. Mpande, a Zulu king, was saluted as the Great Black Elephant, not because he was a member of an elephant clan, but as a description of his great power and his rich darkness. It was an honorific nickname, like that accorded to the English king Richard the Lion-Heart. In many African regions, the old initiation ceremonies represented human-animals but these were symbolic of the animal side of raw human nature before it had been reformed by the initiation rituals. True, some tribes have stories, which may find expression in masked dances, in which distant ancestors are supposed to have had animal forms, but this rather undefined totemic idea is widely scattered and not totally African.

In the religions of the East there is little of the ancient animal magic and totemism of some of the Siberian tribes. There are ideas of reincarnation and transmigration from animal to man, and vice versa, in Hinduism and Buddhism, but in no sense can the animal be considered the ancestor of the man. These religions derive from a rich philosophical background, and not from the simple animal ancestor cults which are most properly described as totemistic.

In both Norse and Celtic mythology there is a close relationship between gods, heroes and magical animals. Some clans were described in a vague way as being descended from animal ancestors, of which the bear and the wolf seem to have been most popular. But in all their rich poetry, and poetic history, there is little which can truly be said to go back to the world in which totemic beliefs were the accepted explanation of man's place in Nature. One can hardly regard the shape-changing propensities of demigods or witches or werewolves as totemic activities.

The most one can say is that the folklore of Europe is full of animal stories and that this may well imply that in ancient times totemic ideas were common; but mostly they seem to rely simply on the comparison of various human characters with traits of animal behaviour.

Totemism as an idea must be treated as a diffuse subject of much obscurity and confusion. Whatever definition of the totemic cults one may take, there remain confused areas where the totemic merges into other systems of primitive belief. Perhaps it is best to consider it as a useful research tool which had a widespread vogue when introduced by 19th century anthropologists, and which must now be more closely defined and limited to more exact categories of belief before it can become of much practical scientific value. But for those who live within a totemic culture, it is the very basis of their understanding of the world.

(See also GREAT PLAINS INDIANS; NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS; PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS.)

C. A. BURLAND

Though the Touareg are Moslems, it has been suggested that they were once Christians, for they use the cross as an amulet

TOUAREG

THESE are the most mysterious and, at the same time, the most easily recognizable race of people in Africa. The men wear a 'veil' which allows only their eyes to be seen through a slit, and this alone gives these tall, robed men a vaguely sinister appearance, especially in the desert when mounted on their racing camels. A genuine Touareg wears the veil inside as well as outside his tent, and only raises it to eat.

The Touareg live in scattered groups throughout the Sahara, especially in those regions which are farthest away from civilization. Born and bred to a nomadic existence, they despise cities and the urban way of life. Yet they are by no means a primitive people, and their aloofness is a matter of choice.

The Touareg belong to the white race. Taller than the general run of Europeans, their average height is six feet; they are small-boned, graceful, and even rather languid in their movements. Yet their history shows them to have been the most dreaded warriors of the Sahara, with a reputation until quite recently for brigandage and rebellion. Today, they are still the great caravanners of the desert.

John Moss

Though they are nominally Moslems, they are considered by strict Mohammedans to be extremely lax, for they flout the basic religious code in allowing their women to go unveiled, and in fact the degree of liberty permitted their women is unique among Moslems. For not only is a woman entitled to take part in public life, but she can own her own property and even choose her own husband. Before marriage the Touareg girl is permitted to have as many lovers as she likes, though she is expected to be loyal and faithful to the man she eventually marries.

Like all desert-dwellers, the Touareg are very religious in the sense of being conscious and to some extent fearful of forces outside their control. Consequently they rely to a great extent on charms and amulets to ward off misfortune; and one of the objects most used by them is the cross. This has led some ethnologists to suggest that the Touareg were once Christians, for it is difficult to explain otherwise their predilection for this Christian symbol, specifically proscribed by Moslems. The cross appears on a great many items of their equipment – the pommels of camel saddles, the bosses of shields, the handles of swords and even on their spoons.

Like Knights of Old

The theory that the Touareg were actually Christians during the Roman occupation of North Africa may help to explain the unique status of women in Touareg society, for nowhere else in Africa do women have equality with men, let alone so much freedom. The Touareg seem to idolize women, somewhat in the manner that medieval knights in Europe idealized their ladies. As their contribution to this tradition of chivalry, well-born Touareg women devoted themselves to the arts of music and poetry, as the men devoted themselves to war and hunting.

In the sand seas of the central Sahara and the mountain ranges of the Hoggar and Air, where they are still found in their traditional communities, the Touareg retain many of their old customs. Their medicine, for instance, is still based on the efficacy of charms which they combine with barbarous practices picked up from the Arabs. 'Firing', or burning wounds and infections with red-hot irons, is still used for liver complaints, tuberculosis, hernia, and even blindness. Great use is also made of urine and dried dung: the urine of the male camel – but never of the female – is considered excellent for diseases of the skin, while a paste made of dried donkey dung mixed with wood ash is applied to abscesses.

But though Touareg medicine, by Western standards, is a combination of ignorance and superstition, the people themselves have nothing resembling the witch-doctors of pagan Africans. The reason is that they have kept themselves aloof from both black Africa and white Europe, although it is becoming obvious that they cannot resist what we call progress much longer. Camels

are their principal source of wealth, and conducting caravans across the sand seas is their principal activity, but both camels and caravans are becoming things of the past. More modern forms of transport are replacing them, and it is increasingly difficult for the Touareg to survive.

The abolition of the slave trade has also affected the situation. During the 19th century, the slave caravans moved continuously across the Sahara to the North African ports. This trade was organized by Arabs, but the running of it was in the hands of the Touareg whose knowledge of the desert and the location of the wells made them the link between Central Africa and the Mediterranean.

Many of the Touareg today are being slowly absorbed into the modern world of factories and machines. The discovery of oil in the Sahara has been, perhaps, the major factor in this change, for oil exploitation has brought American standards as well as methods to the desert. Touaregs can now be found driving Land Rovers, working on oil rigs and laying pipelines, where in the old days any sort of manual labour was considered beneath their dignity. Jobs and wages have led many of the younger men to abandon the traditional way of life and to think in terms of Western values. The veil is discarded; their language (called *Temajegh* when it is spoken and *T'ifinagh* when written) is tending to disappear; and some sort of a house, even if made of mud, is preferred to the traditional tent.

But there are still vast areas of the Sahara where the Touareg live as their ancestors did, notably in the Hoggar Mountains of southern Algeria and the Air Mountains of the Republic of Niger. These tribesmen continue to measure their wealth in terms of their camel herds and the number of serfs or retainers who serve them. They still wear the veil and the long cotton gown, usually black, which has always been the distinguishing garb of the genuine member of their nation. They still live the free, simple and rigorous life of their forefathers. Their food, for instance, is coarse and unvaried – an endless diet of goat's milk and cheese, bread made from millet flour, dates, and only very occasionally, meat. Most of these true nomads are still uneducated in the Western sense, for the children are sent out with the camels and goats instead of attending school.

Lords of the Desert

Yet the last of these genuine Touareg retain the classic virtues of their race – independence, pride, courtesy, respect for women, and a simple belief in God. At the same time, it would be unrealistic to regard them as the 'noble savages' of romantic literature. They are manifestly harassed by poverty, malnutrition and disease. It may be hard for the Western observer to understand why they do not try to improve their way of life, except that if you are born in a country of sand and eroded mountains it is very difficult to do so. But the fact is that the old-fashioned Touareg has no desire to change, for he is still convinced that his way of life is preferable to that of the city-dweller.

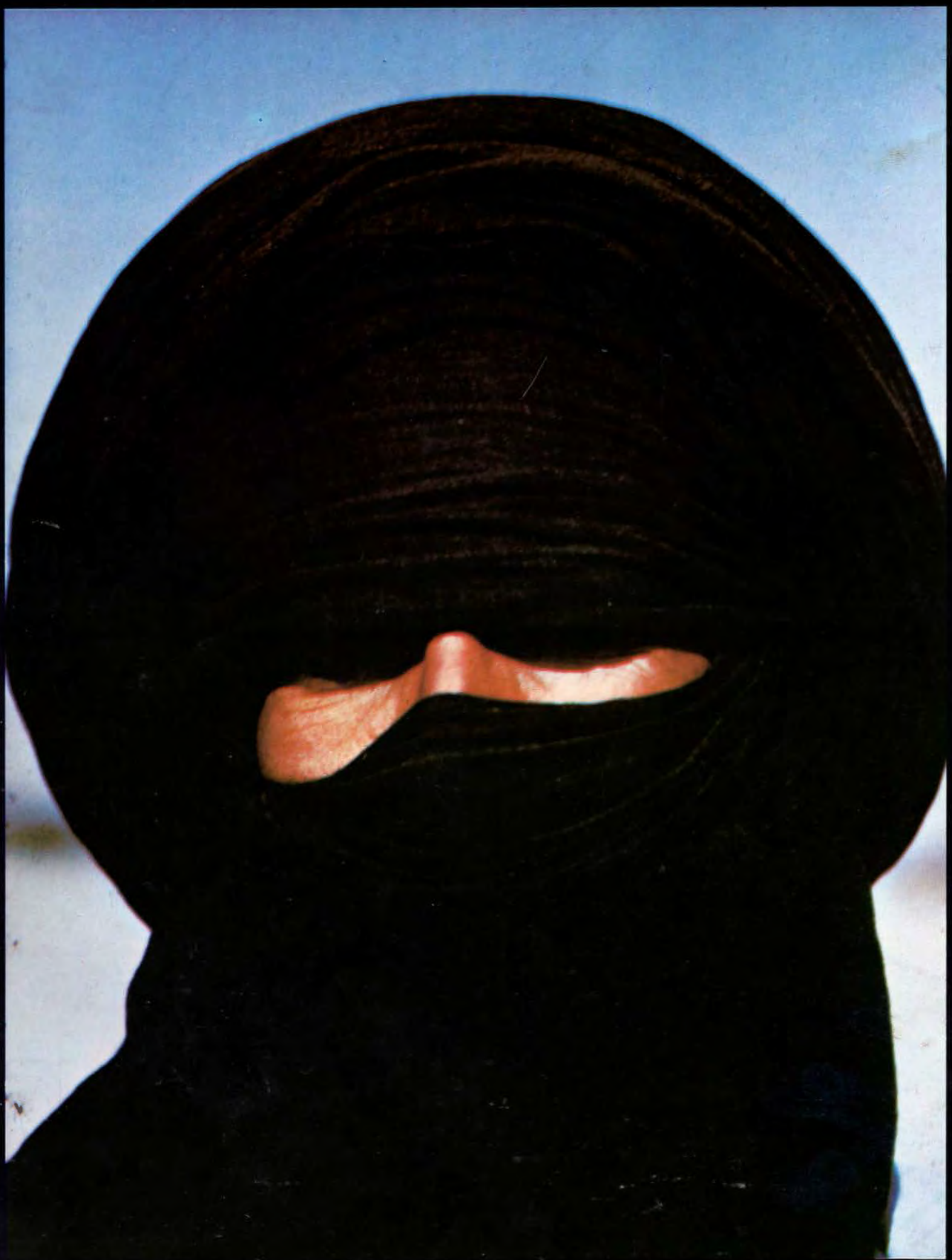
What is happening to the Touareg is that progress is changing the life and philosophy of many of the younger men, while tradition is driving the older generation deeper into the wastelands of the Sahara. But it is extremely unlikely that even the most obstinate of the old guard can continue to keep alive the traditions of the 'Lords of the Desert', as was once their boast. The veiled warrior mounted on his white camel, armed with a spear and shield, will never be seen again, except at folklore festivals put on for the benefit of tourists. Gone, too, are the famous 'courts of love' at which Touareg girls entertained with music and poetry the young warriors who had ridden a hundred miles or more to find perhaps a lover for a few nights, perhaps a wife for a lifetime.

JAMES WELLARD

FURTHER READING: H. T. Norris, *The Tuaregs* (Aris & Phillips, 1975); Francis Rennell Rodl, *People of the Veil* (Humanities, 1966); James Wellard, *Lost Worlds of Africa* (Dutton, 1967).

Below **The Touareg are nominally Moslem but they flout orthodoxy by allowing their women to go unveiled; some experts believe they were once Christians, for the cross features as a symbol on many items of their equipment: Touareg men at a tea-drinking ceremony *Right* The men wear a veil which covers the face, except for a slit for the eyes, and gives them a sinister appearance in keeping with their old reputation as dreaded warriors**

George Rodger/Magnum



TOWER OF BABEL

THAT the original language of mankind was Hebrew was assumed in the Judaeo-Christian tradition down into modern times and, as Sir James Frazer remarked, 'when the science of philology was in its infancy, strenuous but necessarily abortive efforts were made to deduce all forms of speech from Hebrew as their original'. The story of the tower of Babel in Genesis (chapter 11) was an attempt to explain how the various nations of men, all descended from the sons of Noah, who with their wives had survived the Flood, came to speak in a 'confusion of tongues'.

When 'the whole earth had one language and few words', the descendants of Noah migrated from the east to the land of Shinar (Babylonia), where they decided to build a city, called Babel (Babylon), and a tower 'with its top in the heavens'. God came down to look at the city and the tower, and said: 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.' And God confused their language and scattered them over the face of the earth.

This brief story, which so strongly conveys that inability to communicate is one of the great obstacles to man's overweening and potentially godlike power, is based on the *ziggurats* or temple towers of Mesopotamian cities, and perhaps on the confusing medley of tongues spoken by citizens and traders in their streets. A ziggurat was a tall tower which might well look as if its top was in the heavens, often constructed in seven stages which were probably connected with the planets, and evidently regarded as a means of communication between gods and men. The ziggurat of Marduk in Babylon, which some have identified as the original of the tower of Babel, was said to have a shrine at the top to which the god descended each night (see RELIGION).

According to later Jewish traditions, the tower was built in deliberate rebellion against God. Some said it was constructed by Nimrod, 'the first on earth to be a mighty man' and 'a mighty hunter before the Lord' (Genesis, chapter 10, where he is King of Babel), who was a great-grandson of Noah. Nimrod's father bequeathed to him the garments of skins which God had made for Adam and Eve (Genesis, chapter 3), and when Nimrod put them on he became immensely strong and a bold and skilful hunter. He was the chosen king of the descendants of Noah's son Ham, and in his monstrous pride he built the tower so that he could invade heaven and take revenge on God for drowning his ancestors in the Flood.

The tower eventually rose 70 miles high, according to some accounts, and had seven stairways on the eastern side up which the bricklayers climbed, and seven on the western side down which they descended (following the course of the sun). Others said that the tower was so high that it took a year for a hod-carrier to reach the top. If he fell off and was killed, the people did not weep for him but mourned over the brick because it would take so long to get it to the top again. From the top the builders fired arrows into heaven, which fell back to them stained with blood. They assumed they were doing fierce execution among God's court, and continued building with enthusiasm.

In the end God lost patience and with the 70 angels who surround his throne he descended and confused the language of the builders, which caused quarrels and violence. A man would ask his helper for mortar and be given a brick, and after a while would become so angry that he hurled the brick at his helper's head and brained him. The work was abandoned. One third of the tower sank into the earth, one third was destroyed by fire and only one third was left standing. Nimrod was eventually killed by Esau, who robbed him of the sacred garments of skins, which were in turn stolen from him by his brother Jacob.

According to both Jewish and local traditions, the original tower of Babel was a temple of Nabu, or Nebo, master of writing and wisdom, and the god of Borsippa (modern Birs Nimrud), a city close to Babylon.

Left **The Tower of Babel, from the Bedford Book of Hours, 15th century**

However a trance is induced, whether by drugs or by mystical or magical techniques, the result is that part of consciousness is split off from the whole. The symptoms of trance are readily apparent, but its true nature is still not understood

TRANCE

QUITE ORDINARY words are often used by occultists and magicians in a sense different from their everyday meaning. In the case of the word trance, however, there is no such semantic divergence and a majority of occultists would have no quarrel with the dictionary definition: 'state suggesting that the soul has passed out of the body; ecstasy, rapture, extreme exaltation'.

Such a state can sometimes be induced by physical causes, a brain tumour or, more typically, a blow on the head. I remember a player in a rugby game suffering a trance of this type: he continued to play the game, although perhaps rather more erratically than usual, and it was not until the final whistle had blown and it was seen that he continued to play against a totally non-existent opposing team that his peculiar condition became apparent. It was this aspect of trance – the combination of a grossly abnormal state of mind with the continuation of conventional behaviour patterns and even comprehensible speech – that probably originated the idea that the soul had temporarily left the body. Once this theory had been accepted, it was an easy step to the concept that the soulless body could be used by non-human entities, that the entranced person could become, quite literally, a mouthpiece of the gods.

In many societies the use of such a divine mouthpiece became an established part of the prevailing religious culture; in ancient Greece the Delphic Oracle was consulted not only by citizens of the Greek city-states but by representatives of colonies as far away as Spain, and wherever Hellenic culture was dominant the Delphic Oracle was held in veneration. In pre-Communist Tibet, not only did every major monastery have an individual oracle who, while in trance, answered questions and gave spiritual and mundane advice, but the Dalai Lama and his government had their own state oracle.

Such official oracles did not, of course, have their trance states induced by anything so crude as a blow on the head; in Tibet the oracles almost all appear to have been epileptics, looked upon as people in whom trance could be particularly easily induced, but rhythmic drumming, dancing and (possibly but not certainly) psychedelic drugs were used to achieve the desired disassociation of consciousness. At Delphi, the oracle inhaled the smoke of burning laurel leaves. This would have contained both a small amount of hydrocyanic acid and a certain amount of complex alkaloids, and it is probable that inhaled in sufficient quantity it produced a state of cerebral intoxication highly conducive to trance and other abnormal mental states. In any case, however, it seems likely that as in Tibet, oracles were chosen for their inherent ability to achieve a voluntary disassociation of consciousness.

There is no doubt that trance is most easily attained by the use of such drugs as LSD and *anhalonium* (mescaline), but while the states of consciousness attained in this way seem fundamentally identical with the trances of the mystic and the magician, their effects do not seem to be either as permanent or as profound as those produced by more physically and emotionally demanding techniques, such as those of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola or the frenzied dancing of Haitian Voodoo. In the trance experienced by participants in Voodoo rites the entranced worshipper is not just the mouthpiece of the god but actually becomes the god.

The White Darkness

Voodoo is a synthetic religion, a blend of elements derived from West African religious cults, popular Catholicism and the debased ceremonial magic of the printed grimoires (textbooks of ritual magic) of 18th century France. Its central religious rite is the invocation of the *loa* (gods) by drums, dance and sacrifice, and these invocations normally end in the entrancement and possession ('mounting') of one or more of the participants in the ceremony by the particular loa invoked – each loa has its own particular dance pattern and drum rhythm. Sometimes, however, an unwanted loa makes a spontaneous appearance but in

this case it is made clear to it that it is not welcome and the possessed worshipper comes out of his trance fairly quickly.

In the last analysis, all trance, whether mediumistic, drug-induced or the result of mystical, magical or Voodoo techniques, is identical; that is to say, a part of consciousness is split off or disassociated from the whole. Nevertheless, most of those who have experienced trance have been unable to communicate to others even a faint idea of the nature of the subjective experience they have undergone. Fortunately, the late Maya Deren, who was herself frequently possessed by the goddess Erzulie (the Haitian Venus), has left us a clear description of the processes of Voodoo trance, and when due allowance has been made for the cultural variations between Haiti and, say, Tibet, her account throws a great deal of light on the nature of trance in general.

Maya Deren, a maker of avant-garde films with a particular interest in choreography, first visited Haiti in 1947 with the object of filming Haitian dance forms. She began to attend Voodoo rituals, soon realized that the dance could not be separated from the mythology, the rapture from the religion, joined the dance, and was entranced and 'mounted' by the loa Erzulie. She described her experience of entrancement as being 'the white darkness' – a contradiction in terms that is reminiscent of the paradoxes used by mystics of all ages in an attempt to communicate the incommunicable. She wrote: 'Resting . . . I felt a strange numbness . . . I say numbness, but that is inaccurate . . . To be precise I must call it a white darkness, its whiteness a glory and its darkness terror. It is the terror which has the greater force . . . The white darkness starts to shoot up . . . My skull is a drum . . . This sound will drown me . . . The white darkness moves up the veins of my leg like a swift tide rising, rising; is a great force which I cannot sustain or contain, which, surely, will burst my skin. It is too much, too bright, too white for me; this is its darkness. "Mercy!" I scream within me. I hear it echoed by the voices, shrill and unearthly: "Erzulie". The bright darkness floods up through my body, reaches my head, engulfs me. I am sucked down and exploded upward at once. That is all.'

Maya Deren had no memory of her actions while entranced, but as the *hougan* (Voodoo priest) assured her that she showed all the signs of genuine 'mounting' by Erzulie we can be sure that her behaviour pattern followed the conventional lines of possession by this loa. Her first act would have been to perform an elaborate toilet with the consecrated comb, perfume, face-powder and mirror always kept ready in the temple for Erzulie's use. She would have followed this by donning bangles, ear-rings, necklaces and three wedding rings (Erzulie is married to more than one of the male loa).

Her toilet completed, she would have chosen several handsome men to accompany her on a tour of the congregation, shaking hands with the men but extending only her little finger to the women. Following this she would have perhaps asked for songs, dances or delicate food, or she may simply have sat in a chair, flirtatiously basking in the admiration of her worshippers. The whole period of entrancement and divine possession probably extended over two or three hours.

Camera Press

Ian Barry/Magnum

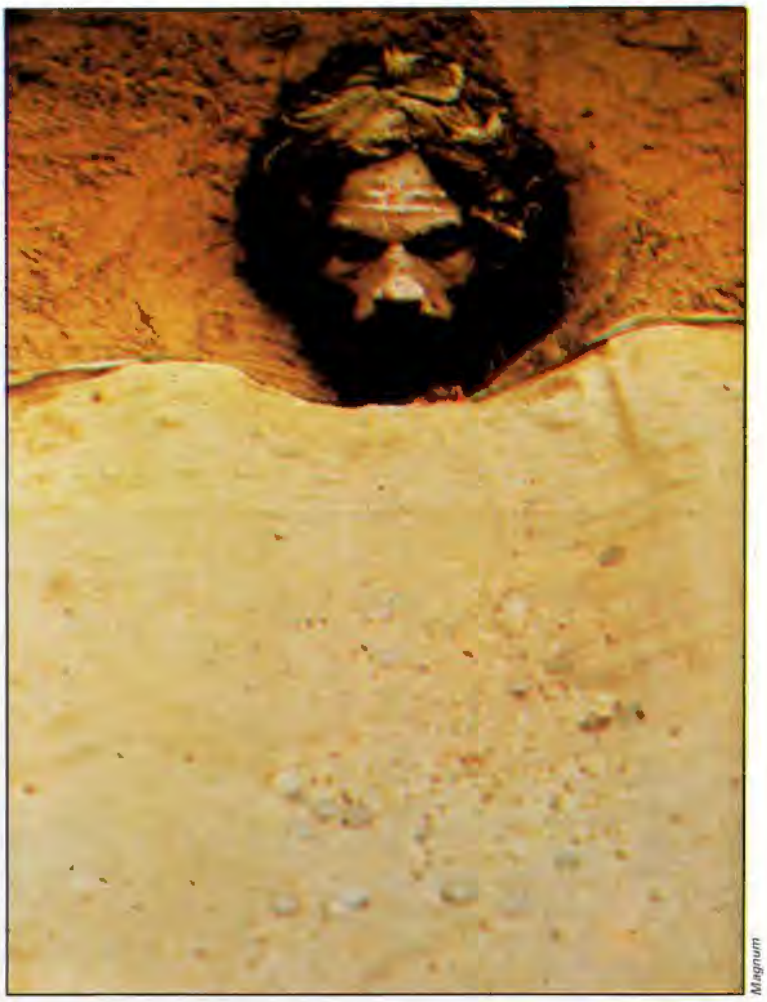
The Magical Method

Western magicians have a number of ways of inducing trance, and all of them show some similarity with the techniques of Voodoo, although they do not usually involve the complete cessation of normal consciousness: in some little corner of his mind the magician retains his individuality and can observe the actions performed by the disassociated aspects of his own consciousness.

One of these methods involves the performance of a mystery play (Aleister Crowley particularly recommended the *Bacchae* of Euripides for this purpose) with the actors so strongly identifying themselves with the characters they play that they become those characters. At the Abbey of Thelema in Sicily, Crowley and his disciples performed such a magical version of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, seemingly with considerable success. Years earlier, Crowley had stage-managed the public

In trance, 'a part of the consciousness is split off and disassociated from the whole': the condition has long been valued because it puts man in touch with planes of experience beyond his normal grasp. Techniques of trance include rhythmic drumming and chanting, as in the Jamaican Pocomania cult *(above left)*, or the dangerous and unsatisfactory use of drugs *(left)*

René Burri/Magnum



Magnum

Left **The Diolas of Senegal celebrate major festivals with several days of dancing which culminates in a state of collective trance** ***Right*** **The solitary trance of a yogi; the attainment of *samadhi* demands extraordinary discipline to achieve total control over all mental and physical faculties**

performance of a series of dramatic rituals incorporating music and dance, the *Rites of Eleusis*, during which the poet Victor Neuburg became entranced and, according to Crowley, literally inspired (see also CROWLEY).

Curiously enough, the technique of achieving partial trance by the conscious and deliberate identification of oneself with an imagined being or situation has been known and used by non-occultists. The great physiologist Galton once spent a day in London strongly imagining himself as the most hated and evil man in the world; so strongly did his abnormal state, a light trance, change his bearing and appearance that it affected other people. Respectable looking men jostled him off the pavement; women crossed the street to avoid him; shopkeepers falsely stated that the goods he required were out of stock; finally he was violently kicked by an aged and usually docile cab-horse. Similarly, in his novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, John Buchan gave a fictional description of how a wanted man succeeded in being mistaken for a road-mender by persistently imagining himself as one and thinking of nothing but stones, hammers and roads.

Other Western methods of achieving trance and possession are the processes of invocation and evocation (see MAGIC). Here the idea is to achieve 'one-pointedness' by surrounding the practitioners with the symbols of the force invoked, and to achieve the frenzied psychic escape – a form of trance – by 'enflaming oneself with prayer' and chanting the barbarous words of evocation. Once this suspension of everyday consciousness has been achieved, the god invoked is enabled to manifest himself in one or more of the practitioners. In a variant version of this system, sex, sometimes deviant sex, is used to induce trance; in *The Great Beast*, John Symonds gives a fascinating description of how a ceremony of this type, part of the so-called 'Paris Working', resulted in the entranced Victor Neuburg being obsessed by a 'demon' who demanded human sacrifice.

The word trance is also used in a secondary sense by Western occultists; in this sense it is approximately equivalent to the word 'rapture', and reference is made to the 'Trance of Wonder', the 'Trance of Indifference' and even the 'Trance of Sorrow'. During such a trance, ordinary consciousness is not in any way interrupted; the occultist is able to carry on a conversation or go about his ordinary business, while at the same time undergoing the extraordinary subjective experiences associated with, for example, the Trance of Wonder. In this meaning of the word, every authentic occult operation partakes of the character of trance. Aleister Crowley wrote that: 'The essence of the idea of Trance is indeed contained in that of Magick, which is pre-eminently the transcendental Science and Art. Its method is, in one chief sense, Love, the very key of Trance; and, in another, the passing beyond normal conditions . . . Nor need any man fear to state boldly that every Magical Operation soever is only complete when it is characterised (in one sense or another) by the occurence of Trance. It was ill done to restrict the use of the word to the supersession of dualistic human consciousness by the impersonal and monistic state of Samadhi . . . it is the first necessity as it is the last attainment of Trance to abolish every form and every order of dividuality.'

Interesting, and perhaps important, as such magical trances are, there is no doubt that the types of trance which are most familiar to the layman are those of the Spiritualist medium on the one hand, and of the yogi on the other. Mediums can be divided into three broad groups; the deliberately fraudulent, who are a small minority; the self-deceived, of whom there are a surprisingly large number; and the genuine – genuine not, of course, in the sense that they are necessarily in authentic contact with the dead but in the sense that they enter a trance state. While the phrase 'trance medium' is usually confined to those who lose normal consciousness during a sitting, it seems probable that all genuine mediumship, even the mildest clairvoyance, is characterized by disassociation of some sort or another.

When in deep trance and the mouthpiece

of a 'guide' or other supposedly discarnate communicator, the mental state of the medium seems remarkably similar to that of a Voodoo devotee who has been mounted by one of the loa. He, or she, appears to be the vehicle of a distinct personality in its own right, and Professor H. H. Price has commented that, 'If all this is just subconscious dramatization on the medium's part it is comparable to Ruth Draper at her very best.'

One of the main differences between Spiritualistic and Voodoo possession is that the latter almost always follows a highly conventional pattern, the loa using the entranced worshipper's body in the way that it is expected to use it. This difference, however, originates in contrasting cultural patterns, not in any profound variation between one sort of trance and another.

The same is true of the trances experienced by devotees of Yoga. While it may seem that there is an enormous gulf between the silent entrancement of a yogi experiencing Samadhi and the behaviour of the medium possessed by her spirit guide, there is considerable evidence to show that on a physiological and psychological level they are undergoing the same experience. This is not, of course, to say that the two are spiritually of equal value.

Finally, we come back to our dictionary definition of trance – and we find it not so much a definition as a description. For today we are only a very little nearer to comprehending the real nature of trance (and its first cousin, hypnotic trance) than were our ancestors. It is true that there are a multitude of psychological explanations – Freudian, Jungian, Behaviourist – of the phenomenon, but the very fact that so many conflicting hypotheses can be defended so vigorously by men of real intellectual integrity is an indication that we are still far from understanding what trance really is.

(See also DRUGS; ECSTASY; MEDITATION; MEDIUMS; MESMER; ORACLES; POSSESSION; SEX; SHAMAN; VOODOO; YOGA.)

FRANCIS KING

FURTHER READING: M. Deren, *Divine Horsemen* (Thames & Hudson, 2nd edn., 1969); M. Lambek, *Human Spirits* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981); Stewart Wavell, *Trance* (Allen & Unwin, 1966).

Transmigration

Or metempsychosis, the passage of the soul into another body after death; the idea is basic to Hinduism and most schools of Buddhism, and is also found in various forms in many other religious traditions: the soul is sometimes believed to be reborn in higher or lower forms of life, according to its past behaviour and its spiritual needs.

See REINCARNATION.

Transubstantiation

In the Eucharist, the changing of the 'substance' (the underlying reality) of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, though the outward appearance (the 'species' or 'accidents') of the elements remains unaltered; the doctrine is central to the Roman Catholic Mass; many Protestants have denied it, interpreting the 'real presence' of Christ in the sacrament in a spiritual or symbolic sense.

See MASS.

Keystone Press

The tradition still persists that buried treasure is accursed; perhaps a relic from the days when treasure-seekers had to protect themselves against demons and spirits who would resist man's attempts to plunder the earth

TREASURE MAGIC

THE LURE of buried treasure has fascinated man for centuries. Burial mounds, prehistoric monuments, Iron Age hill forts, and sometimes natural outcrops of rock have all been regarded as likely sites of buried hoards, providing an irresistible temptation to grave robbers and other vandals, despite the fact that comparatively little gold has been discovered interred with the dead. The majority of deposits of gold and silver that have come to light have consisted simply of wealth hidden in times of danger, when the safest place to conceal it was below the earth's surface.

It is true, of course, that some treasure has been found in burial sites, as for example, the gold cape discovered at Mold, Flintshire, on a site haunted by a knight in golden armour. The famous find of treasure at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk and coins in Roman graves are further instances; but there is good reason to believe that some of the treasure recovered from burial mounds had been placed there at a later date for safekeeping, in the belief that no treasure seeker would risk angering the ghost of the deceased by invading his grave.

Traditionally, the domain of the Earth Mother was peopled by hideous spirits, dwarfs, Germanic gnomes, Cornish knockers (spirits of the tin mines), and other treasure-guarding elementals (see CORNWALL; DWARFS; FAIRIES), to whom supplication and sometimes sacrifices had to be made before the earth could be disturbed. Even then, the most elaborate magical ceremonies were undertaken before disturbing the soil. It is said that when Irish grave robbers discovered only calcined bones and ashes in a grave, they assumed that the fairies had transformed the gold into this form in order to outwit them.

Terrifying treasure guardians were supposed to lie in wait, deep within the bowels of the earth, ready to curse the sacrilegious sorcerer's apprentice unprotected by magic. Dragons were among the most frequently encountered monsters (see DRAGON), as were phantom dogs, usually jet black, extremely fierce and hideous. On the other hand, in some legends, there are references to dogs which actually led the treasure-seeker to the hidden hoard. In later anecdotes, the treasure guardian was often Satan or one of the minor fiends of hell.

The Vibrating Ring

Elaborate magical rites were considered necessary for the discovery of the treasure and for its successful recovery. Divining for metals or hidden veins of ore by means of a forked hazel twig, a device borrowed from the miners of Germany, was the method usually employed, but to be really effective the twig had to be cut from the tree on St John's Eve. Dactylomancy, or divination by means of a magic ring, was also popular among the treasure conjurers, the ring being suspended on a fine thread over a round table marked with the letters of the alphabet. The ring, as it travelled or vibrated over the table, stopped at the various letters, supplying answers to the questions asked. In 1577 Robert Mantell, an Essex alchemist, was in trouble with the authorities for having in his possession 'a familiar in a ring', who guided him in his treasure-hunting exploits.

Another method in common use was scrying or crystal gazing, in which the conjurer was accompanied by a pure young boy, that is one who had not yet attained puberty. Catoptromancy or mirror magic was also used, the glass being suspended over a holy well, where it reflected the secrets hidden in the water. In hydromancy, a thin film of oil was spread upon the surface of a bowl of water upon which would then be seen, usually in symbolic form, the site where the treasure lay hidden.

Once the treasure had been located, the conjurer and his assistant had to protect themselves from the anticipated anger of the ghost, phantom dog, dragon, or demon, by a complicated system of rituals. Often, a magic circle some 30 feet in circumference would be drawn, at the centre of which the magician stood, wand in hand, invoking the demon of the treasure by name. The position of the planets was also considered; and it was the generally accepted view that

Sunday was the most favourable time for the start of operations. Treasure-guarding demons expected to be paid for their information with a human sacrifice, a demand usually modified to a dog, cat, or black cock following a blasphemous baptism. A human offering was by no means excluded, however, and as late as 1841 there occurred a case in which a boy was murdered by some Italian treasure-seekers.

A Snorting Devil

During the 16th and 17th centuries it was taken for granted that any disturbance of a burial mound containing treasure would be followed at once by a furious outburst of thunder. It is recorded that at the very time that the famous wizard, Dr Dee (see DEE), brought to light a hoard of gold in Brecknockshire, 'a mighty storm and tempest was raised'. Sometimes the barrow would collapse, crushing the pillagers to death beneath a mountain of fallen earth and stone. There were even occasions when a fiend actually materialized, chasing the audacious tomb robber from the scene. In 1549 William Wycherley, a treasure-hunter from London, fled for his life when a devil, snorting furiously, lunged wildly towards him. He later discovered that his attacker had been a blind horse.

During the height of the treasure-seeking mania, the conjurers seem to have concentrated their attention on the counties of Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. This says little for their psychic faculties, since most of the recorded discoveries of treasure have been made elsewhere.

The authorities seem to have regarded treasure-hunting with suspicion, but even when the law was invoked against the conjurers the penalties were relatively light for an age when witchcraft was sometimes punished by death. If found guilty, a treasure-magician might be sentenced to stand in the pillory with a whetstone suspended from his neck, or compelled to parade barefoot through the streets of the town, and ordered to limit himself each Friday for 12 months to a strict diet of bread and water. His books, wands and other magical paraphernalia would be burned.

Beneath the Crosses

During the first half of the 16th century there is evidence to suggest that a number of superstitious individuals began to bury their surplus gold beneath the stone crosses which usually stood at the crossroads outside the villages; presumably they imagined that their property would be inviolate on such sacred sites. The result was perhaps predictable. The treasure conjurers immediately transferred their attentions from burial mounds to this novel and extremely profitable field of exploitation; they destroyed the village crosses without the slightest compunction. Indeed the Witchcraft Act of 1542 makes special provision for this offence in a clause beginning: 'Whereas divers and sundry persons unlawfully have devised and practised invocations and conjurations of spirits, pretending by such means to understand

Mansell Collection

Among the elemental spirits of the earth which jealously guarded buried treasure and might have to be appeased or outwitted by treasure-seekers were dwarfs and gnomes, who were sometimes said to cheat grave-robbers by turning buried gold into bones and ashes
Above The Elf-king asleep, by Richard Doyle *Right* The modern counterparts of the old elementals are the aptly-named 'Gnomes of Zürich' *Below* The Blackgang gnomes counting their treasure

Picturepoint, London

"Of course it would be fatal to international finance if the least suspicion leaked out that the Gnomes don't understand it either. . ."

Hans Tasiemka

Those who seek gold, the elixir of power, must sometimes pay too great a price to fulfill their desires; legend says that treasure-guarding spirits often demanded a life in return for gold. There is a story that King Midas, who asked the gods to turn to gold all that he touched, turned his daughter to gold: illustration by Arthur Rackham

Chris Barker

and get knowledge for their own lucre in what place treasure of gold and silver should or might be found or had in the earth or other secret places . . . ', and which goes on to condemn as felons those who 'have digged up and pulled down an infinite number of crosses within this realm'.

The Magic Black Box

The methods used by the treasure-seekers could be applied equally well to divining for lost and stolen property, a practice that was also made illegal by the same act. William Lilly, the famous 17th century English astrologer, is said to have charged his clients half a crown for seances of this character.

Treasure-hunting reinforced by magic never seems to have completely died out, for it was practised as late as the 19th century by Cunning Murrell, the famous Essex witch-doctor (see MURRELL). Very similar techniques were used by gold and oil diviners in the United States of America. Here the conjurer, armed with hazel stick and 'doodle bug', as his magic black box was known, could usually be found prowling in some abandoned graveyard which he believed to be a treasure site.

Many treasure-seekers also turned their attention to the buried treasures of the 17th century Scottish sailor Captain Kidd and other pirates which, like the gold of European burial mounds, were supposed to be protected from the searchers by some foul fiend or a dead man's curse.

Even today the tradition persists that all buried treasure is accursed; and even money which has been picked up in the street is considered so unlucky that superstitious people will spit upon it, for safety's sake. No doubt this attitude is a relic of the terror once inspired by the treasure-guarding spirit who had to be propitiated with the gift of a life as the price of that elixir of power, gold.

ERIC MAPLE

Tree of Life

The concept of the universe as a tree is best known in its Scandinavian form, where the ash, Yggdrasil, is the world tree, but also appears in other traditions, in some of which the cosmic tree bears fruits which the gods eat to ensure their immortality; the garden of Eden contained the tree of life (Genesis, chapter 2); in the Cabala, the Tree of Life is a diagram of God, man and the universe.

See ASH; CABALA; EVIL; FIRST MAN; PATHS; TAROT; TREES.

TREES

A great tree with its roots drawing strength from the earth and its head commandingly in the sky, with a lifespan far longer than that of man, with sap flowing like blood in its veins and its leaves rustling in the wind as if it had speech, has frequently been seen as an image of the world and all Nature, as the tree of life. The network of branches springing from the trunk suggests relatedness and a complex pattern unifying all things: *The Co-Existence Tree*, a modern variation on this theme, by E. Box *(previous page)*
***Right* The tree of Jesse, showing the descent of David's line in the form of a tree: from Cyprus, 15th century *(above)* Tree of life, from the church of St Dominic in Oaxaca, Mexico *(below)* *Facing page* Genealogical tree of the Mackay family**

At Phlius in the Peloponnese a sacred grove of cypresses provided a refuge for fugitives from justice, and the trees were entwined with prisoners' discarded chains: sacred trees and the gods or spirits associated with them have played a great variety of roles in religion and magic

WITH THE EARLIEST glimmerings of man's intelligence came, one surmises, the need for an explanation – where had he come from, who was responsible, what did it mean? In that far distant epoch all that early man could do, presumably, was to look around him. His environment was land and water, animals and plants. Everywhere around him were plants and, at a time when a very large proportion of the land was covered with forests, trees were dominant. To short-lived man, any tree must have seemed immortal, especially the evergreens which remained changeless whatever the time of year.

Man's instinct was, perhaps to venerate the trees, and once his need for more or less identifiable deities had crystallized, it was a short step to identify tree with god, or make tree embody deity. It seems clear that trees in general, and some trees in particular, were very widely venerated among early peoples.

We can see how deep-rooted tree worship must have been by examining the earliest records available to us. Representations of sacred trees are to be found on Chaldean and Assyrian engraved cylinders and, from slightly later periods, on temples. The tree seems to have been an essential symbol of Chaldean religion; it is sometimes shown stylized or, later on, more clearly represented as a palm, pomegranate or cypress.

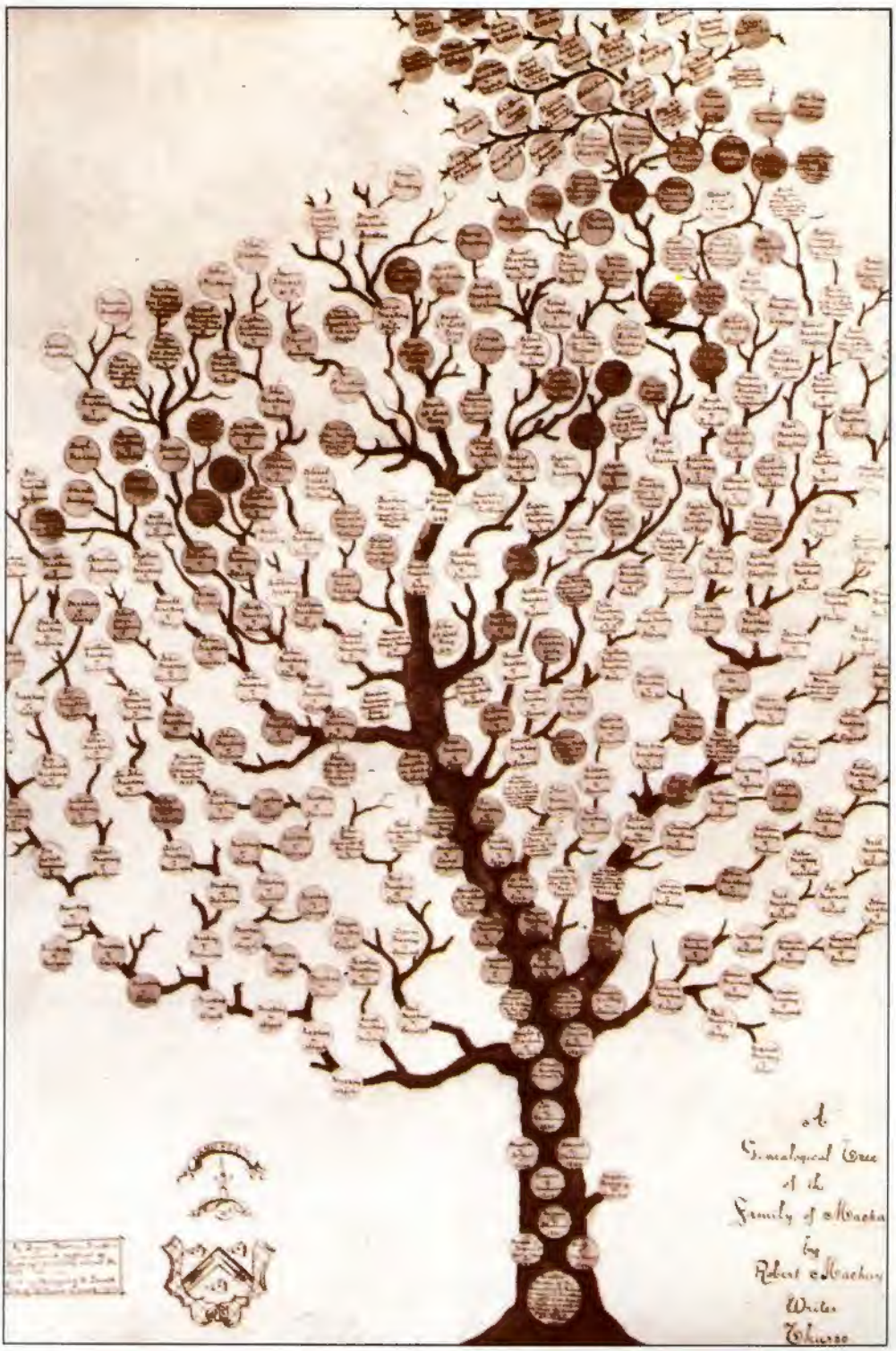
In ancient Egypt, the numerous deities were frequently supposed to inhabit trees, chiefly the sacred sycomores (*Ficus sycomorus*, not to be confused with our sycamore). These sycomores were thought to exist on the borders of the great desert that lay between this world and the next, and the souls of the departed, on reaching these trees, would receive from the deities supplies of food and water. Paintings in the Book of the Dead, and in tombs, depict such meetings on the soul's travels.

In the Old Testament there are many references to sacred groves and to the setting up of altars in these groves and under trees, notably oaks; the history of

Sonia Halliday

ZFA, Düsseldorf

To short-lived man, any tree must have seemed immortal, especially the evergreens which remained changeless whatever the time of year



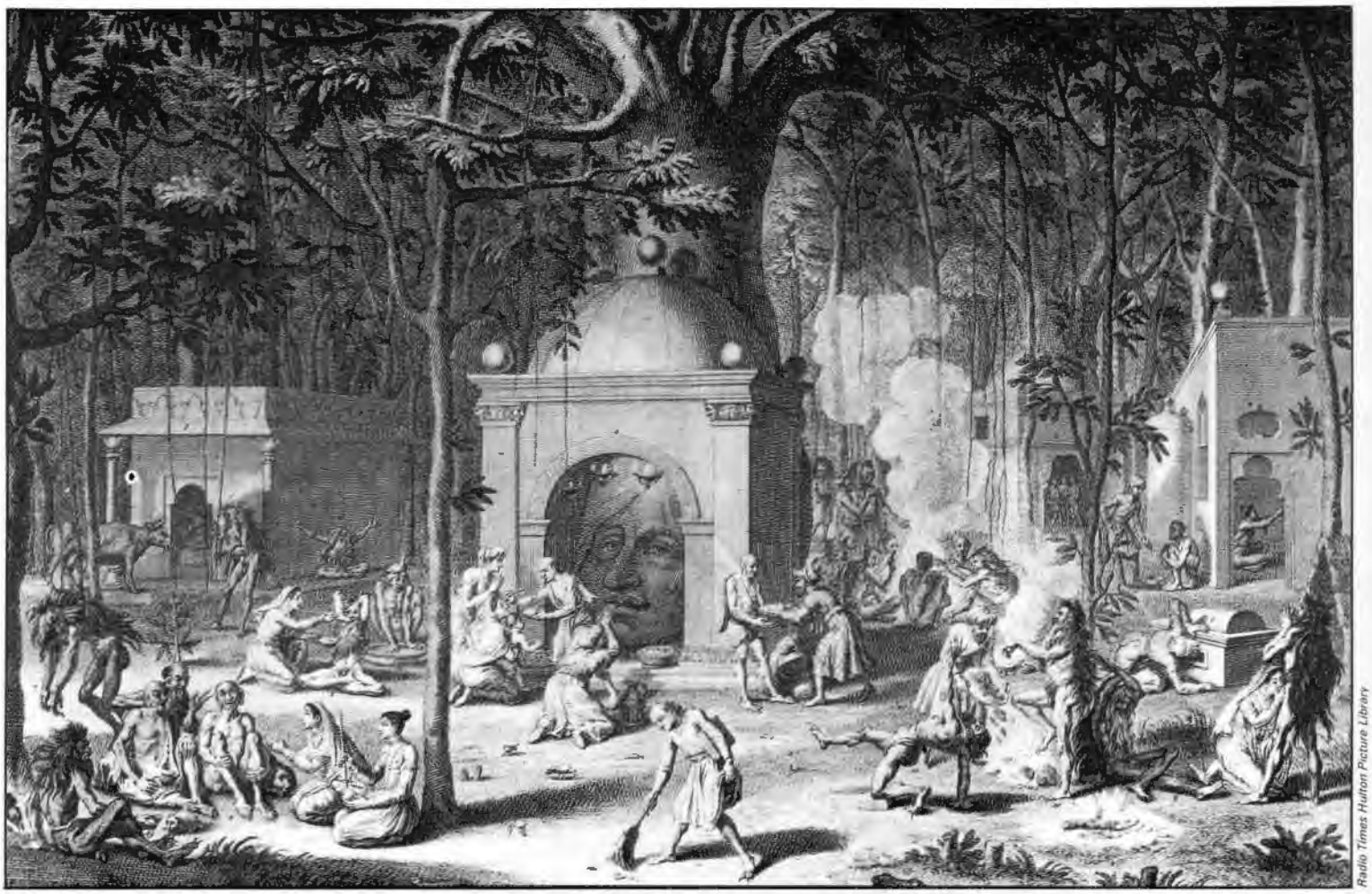
Old Testament religion is of a struggle between the worship of a unique, omnipresent deity and that of a great many lesser ones, such as the Canaanites held in regard. Similarly, the earliest Christian missionaries often had to contend, as in ancient Germany, with sacred groves, trying to destroy them or to build their churches within them.

Even when lesser deities had been overthrown, the need to placate the tree, or to use its magic power, was such that temples carried representations of them, as in the temple of Ezekiel's vision where, echoing Assyrian and Babylonian motifs, the decoration included 'cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces; the face of a man toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side' (Ezekiel, chapter 41).

The concept of the tree as a god's dwelling place appears in Persian mythology: the cypress was considered especially sacred, symbol of Ahura Mazda or Ohrmazd, chief of the pantheon. Tree worship was widespread in India; Gautama Buddha was reputedly incarnated as a tree spirit some 43 times, and he received spiritual illumination while meditating under the bo-tree. Many ancient Indian sculptures show a stylized sacred tree, surrounded by devotees and often hung with garlands. On the Stupa of Barhut there is one showing elephants paying homage to a banyan. There were not dissimilar decorations in Mexico.

The God-Boxes

The original object of veneration was doubtless the tree itself, as continued to be the case until very recently, with primitive peoples in Africa, Malaya, Sumatra and elsewhere. Later an erect tree-trunk might suffice, and an altar might be placed before the tree or trunk for offerings. The next logical step is to transform the trunk into a pillar which, like a cut trunk, can be erected in a suitable place. Standing stones in Britain and menhirs in Brittany are examples. The upright stones which represented gods in ancient Phoenicia may well derive from such pillars. In his book *From an Antique Land*, in which he christens such stone pillars 'god-boxes', Sir Julian



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Huxley brought this possibility into his description of the Obelisk Temple at Byblos in the Lebanon as a 'savage forest of primitive stone pillars' (see also STONES).

Later comes the combination of pillar and sacred animal foreshadowed by Ezekiel: the ancient world was full of representations of a pair of animals facing each other on either side of a stone pillar, such as the lionesses over the famous gate at Mycene, or the antique slabs within St Mark's, Venice, which show a stylized tree between pairs of monsters. A further stage in the stylization of the worshipped tree is the placing on it of a mask or cloak to represent the god, and finally the carving of the trunk into a statue.

The statue treatment is, of course, very familiar to us in the religions of ancient Greece and Rome, where personified deities abounded. In both countries gods were worshipped in connection with individual trees or groves. The symbolized tree is frequently seen on Greek paintings, vases and tablets. Many of the deities had particular trees: Artemis was in different places goddess of the cedar, hazel, laurel, myrtle and willow. Pausanias (2nd century AD) records the cult of the 'hanging Artemis' in Arcadia, presumably in reference to a mask hung on a sacred tree. The laurel, sacred to Apollo, became very important both in religious and lay ceremony, as did the olive, Athene's tree. Could the impressive pillars of Greek temples – as indeed of Egyptian ones before them – have derived from tree trunks; like the Byblos obelisks,

That trees are divine, or are the abodes of gods or spirits is widely believed *Above* Grove of sacred banyan trees in India, from an 18th century French print *Below* Hindu women, praying for long life for their husbands, wind cotton thread round and round a banyan, and offer it flowers and milk

B. Bhansali

a formal statement of the sacred grove? They were certainly decorated with vegetation motifs, while in many places they were combined with a sacred grove planted outside the temple.

In his form of Jupiter Feretrius, the chief god of Rome appears to have been a sacred tree, and Rome was reputedly founded where the floating cradle of Romulus and Remus became entangled in the roots of a fig tree, the *ficus Ruminalis*. The 'King of the Wood', the priest of the sacred grove of Diana at Nemi, was the king of the trees, 'the incarnation of the spirit of all vegetation' (see KING). Maximus of Tyre, writing during the 2nd century AD, refers to the continuing worship of individual trees, notably at the festival of Dionysus, when anyone with a tree in his garden dressed it up to represent the god.

Fruit of Goodly Trees

Throughout Eastern countries there was the practice (and still is, here and there) of hanging gifts on any particularly sacred tree, or attaching pieces of clothing to it so that luck and good health would attend the wearer. In Greece and Rome, sacred trees received the trophies of the chase and the arms of conquerors.

Sacred texts from Chaldean times describe the use of tree branches at ceremonies, while the Israelites, at the Feast of Tabernacles, were told to 'take the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord'

Right The Naga Kalika and his wife comfort Buddha as he takes his seat under the bo-tree: it was while meditating under this tree that the Buddha received spiritual illumination
Below Adam and Eve with the serpent and the tree of knowledge, which bears the forbidden fruit: from a late 13th century manuscript. The other sacred tree in Eden was the tree of life

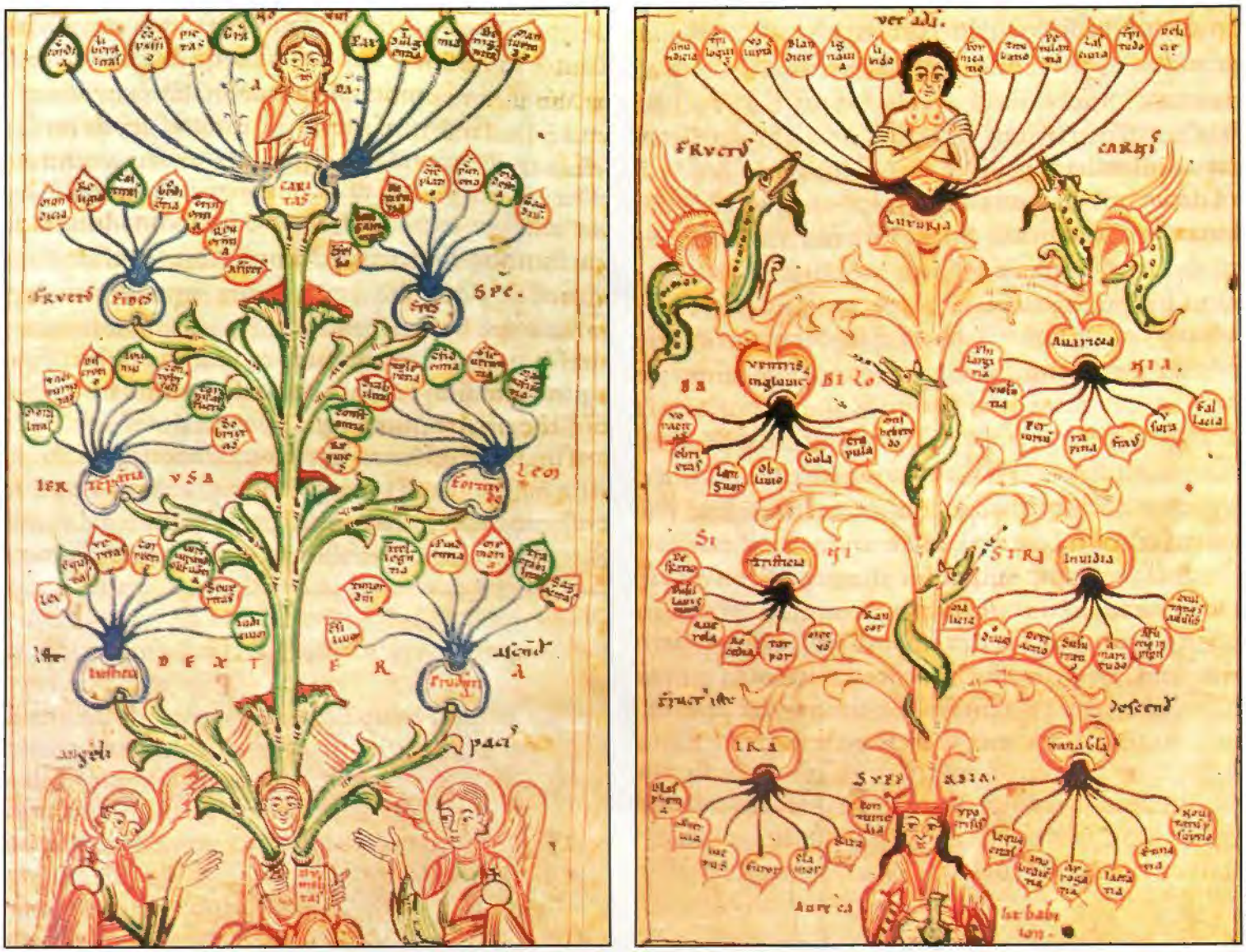
C. M. Dixon

(Leviticus 23.40). In Greece wreaths of the tree of the deity being honoured were both placed upon it and worn by worshippers. In the nine-yearly ceremony of the Daphnephoria in honour of Apollo, a branch of laurel was carried to the temple by the laurel-bearer, a specially chosen young man. Another important Greek festival was Eiresione, a harvest festival and fertility rite combined, in which a branch of laurel or olive, decorated with fruits, cereals and ribbons, was carried and finally fixed over the farm door, its predecessor being ceremonially burnt.

A holy tree might also afford the right of asylum. There are many classical allusions to tree-sanctuaries, such as the holy tree at Ephesus where the Amazons found refuge. Orestes fleeing from the Furies found safety under Apollo's laurel, while at Phlius in the Peloponnese a sacred cypress grove gave fugitives refuge from the normal course of justice, and the trees were entwined with prisoners' discarded chains. Such sanctuaries were pre-Homeric in origin, and often sacred to heroes rather than gods; and beside them the Greek games were often held.

Early rituals were frequently designed to ensure fertility, and in the cradle of civilization the tree mainly involved was the date palm. The representations associated with the date often show kings or priests approaching the tree, holding an object resembling a pine cone, which represents the male flowers of the palm, since it was necessary to fertilize palms artificially to ensure good crops. Long after the connections of trees with specific gods had disappeared, the feeling of the tree as a beneficent fertility symbol remained. From it undoubtedly derives the carrying of various kinds of tree sprig, including myrtle, pine, hawthorn, hazel, oak and ivy, by brides at their weddings, as well as the whole complicated ceremony of the Green Man or Jack-in-the-Green (see GREEN) and the May Day observances (see HAWTHORN; MAY DAY). These included the choice of a King or Queen of the May, almost always finally symbolically sacrificed, who was typically clothed in oak leaves. A Puritan commentator, Stubbs, described the maypole as a 'stinckyng idoll'; after the populace had set it up, he goes on, 'then fall they to banquet and feast, to leape and daunce

British Museum



'But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat': virtues *(left)* and vices *(right)* depicted as fruits growing on trees in two German manuscript illustrations of the 12th century, reflecting the tradition of the tree of knowledge in Eden

around it, as the Heathen people did at the dedication of their idolles, whereof this is a perfect patterne, or rather the thyng itself.'

The Long Parliament of 1644 forbade the maypole, and though it came back after the Restoration the leaping and dancing was never quite the same. The importance of the May Day ceremonies, lasting certainly into the 17th century, all over Europe as well as in Britain, testify to the importance and spread of tree worship. In the north European countryside the harvest-May ceremony was exactly parallel to the antique Greek Eiresione. In many ways the Christmas tree and greenery are very similar observances, while the burning of the Yule log, usually of oak, is another symbolic sacrifice for future fruitfulness (see CHRISTMAS; FIR; HOLLY AND IVY).

Trees as Oracles

Among the sacred groves of the ancient world one of the most notable was that of the oaks of Zeus at Dodona, which apparently flourished for at least 2000 years. The laurel at Delphi has perhaps achieved more notoriety. The tree oracle was thought to be connected by its roots with the underworld and hence to the wisdom and foreknowledge of the dead. In Mesopotamia the cedar was both deity and oracle; it was sacred to the god Ea, whose name was supposedly engraved on its innermost core.

Many oracular trees are mentioned in the Old Testament, such as the 'tree of the diviners' at Shechem, mentioned in the book of Judges (9.37); 'the tree of the revealer' in Genesis (12.6); and the mulberry trees which gave David the signal to attack the Philistines (2 Samuel, chapter 5). Tree oracles are recorded from Armenia, Arabia and Persia, while in Rome there was a prophetic ilex grove on the Aventine hill. Tree omens remained important to the Romans, among many other types of augury; major examples are the withering of laurels which foretold Nero's death, and the fall of a cypress which did the same for Domitian.

The Scythians practised divination with the aid of willow rods, and the Druids used 'omen sticks', perhaps of fruit branches in similar manner. Such wands and rods lead on to sceptres, heralds' wands, generals' staffs and perhaps even the policeman's truncheon – all symbols of power and inviolability, partly deriving from the original sacredness of the tree. In a rather different field there is the divining rod, for the finding of water, treasure or metal. Such rods were cut from all manner of trees, notably hazel but including fruit trees, willow, blackthorn and mistletoe, with special ceremony at specific times (see DOWSING; WAND).

In many societies, people have believed in lesser spirits who inhabit trees. They were responsible for the well-being of their trees, and sometimes of other plants and animals, and if not propitiated might be hostile to humans. Those most similar to man were likely to be least hostile.

The jinn of ancient Arabia, for example, inhabited trees and thickets among other places, and were monstrous creatures capable of assuming different forms (see JINN). Unfriendly Egyptian monsters of similar type inhabited trees or posts and were likely to waylay the spirits of the dead on their difficult journey. Similar monsters appear in the Bible, translated as 'satyrs' or 'devils', but in the original they are 'hairy monsters', and similar to jinn.

Greek and Roman mythology has a wide range of wood-inhabiting creatures, including the centaur and cyclops, haunters of forests, and the man-goat combinations

The Greenwood

Enforced to seek some covert nigh at hand,
A shady grove not far away they spied,
That promised aid the tempest to withstand:
Whose lofty trees yclad with summer's pride,
Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
Not pierceable with power of any star:
And all within were paths and alleys wide,
With footing worn, and leading inward far:
Fair harbour that them seems: so in they entered are.

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dread,
Seemed in their song to scorn the cruel sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,
The sailing Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop Elm, the Poplar never dry,
The builder Oak, sole king of forests all,
The Aspen good for staves, the Cypress funeral.

The Laurel, mede of mighty Conquerors
And Poets sage, the Fir that weepeth still,
The Willow worn of forlorn Paramours,
The Yew obedient to the bender's will,
The Birch for shafts, the Sallow for the mill,
The Myrrh sweet bleeding in the bitter wound,
The Warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,
The fruitful Olive, and the Platane round,
The carver Holm, the Maple seldom inward sound.

Spenser *The Faerie Queene*

of pans and dryads. Pans had many human attributes: protectors of herds, they were generally friendly to man, but by no means beyond playing unkind tricks on him. Satyrs and sileni, and their Roman counterparts, fauns and silvani, were more bestial; Hesiod described these wood spirits as 'a useless and crafty tribe'. Within the last century Greek peasants believed in malicious demons which were half human and half goat. Many of these creatures later became specific: Pan, Silenus and Silvanus became particular spirits, representations of their class (see PAN: SATYRS).

The spirits most closely connected with trees were the female hamadryads. Consorts of the sileni, it was into their care that Aphrodite put the infant Aeneas. When they died, the trees did too. There was also a whole family of nymphs linked with trees – Rhoea with the pomegranate, Daphne with laurel, Helike with willow, Philyra with lime. Tales such as that of Daphne turned into a laurel to escape from Apollo (see APOLLO) are probably inversions of older associations. Lucian's parody *Verae Historiae* describes vines, part of which were in the form of girls; if you tried to pick the grapes growing from their fingers they cried in agony. It was frequently held that trees bled if cut. The reverse is shown by legends surrounding elder – a basically evil tree in which witches were supposed to reside. If you cut an elder branch, some old woman living nearby would be sure to appear with her arm in a sling. There was always a strong feeling that it was bad luck to cut down a tree, particularly those especially associated with fairies or tree spirits like hawthorn, oak, birch and rowan. In Dalmatia, within the last century, it was customary to sacrifice a chicken before cutting down a tree.

East and West alike have tales of spirits, elves, pixies and similar creatures inhabiting trees, especially in central and northern Europe. Such were the Scandinavian 'wild people' covered in moss, the German moss-women, the Tyrolean wild women, the Russian wood demon, often one-eyed, all of whom lived in woods. The Japanese had wood-spirits with a man's body, hawk's head and claws, and a proboscis, which emerged from eggs; the primitive South Americans a wood-ghost who lured men to death (see WILDWOOD).

The Tree of Life

The concept of the tree as the universe is best known in its Scandinavian form, where the ash, Yggdrasil, was the world tree (see ASH); in India it was the fig, Asvattha. But the idea is found in many other parts of the globe. With this tree the world of man rises in a mountain, where the gods live; the tree's trunk springs from this mountain, its outspread branches forming or supporting the sky, and the stars and planets, while its roots reach into the abyss or underworld, forerunner of hell. The fact that the branches held the stars may account for the frequent Eastern jeweller's conception of golden trees hung with jewels. An infinity of symbolic detail accompanies the different parts of the world-tree. Metal world-trees were conceived in China and Russia. Charlemagne destroyed the Saxon 'Irmensul' or World-pillar, which was a tree-trunk representation of this belief.

A tree of immortality, like other conifers, the yew was planted in graveyards, and so it came to be believed that to sleep in its shade meant death: 15th century illustration

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

The cosmic tree often bore fruits which the gods ate to ensure their immortality: and so it became a tree of life. The Persian *haoma* and Indian *soma* are examples of such life-giving trees; and so of course are the mystical trees of the paradise from which Adam and Eve were expelled – the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (see FIRST MAN). Man was created within this paradise and, if he spent a righteous life, would return to another, such as that described by Esdras in which were 'twelve trees laden with divers fruits' as well as a tree of life. The Talmud (the code of Jewish law) specifies two paradises, connected by a pillar, up which the souls of the righteous ascend on the sabbath to enjoy the light of the Divine Majesty. In the Cabala, the structure of the universe is conceived in terms of the 'tree of life' (see CABALA). Indian, Chinese and South American legends mention the souls of the dead climbing into heaven up the trunk of a tree.

In India the tree of life and knowledge was, yet again, the fig. In the Koran, paradise – the 'seventh heaven' – contains the enormous Tooba tree, covered with many kinds of fruit, and from which rivers spring, flowing with water, milk, honey and wine.

In Greek myth the garden of the Hesperides is supported on Mount Atlas, which Herodotus describes as the Pillar of Heaven; Hercules overcame the multi-headed dragon that guarded the sacred tree and snatched its golden apples, the fruits of knowledge.

Family Trees

These stories show how deeply the sense of sacred trees was fixed in man's mind. He came to regard the tree as embodying earth, heaven and hell, as the paradise of the departed and even as the origin of the human species, as well as a symbol of immortality. Many widely separated mythologies describe the origin of the human race from trees. In the Norse *Edda*, Odin and his brothers change two trees on the seashore into male and female humans who become the parents of mankind. One Greek story was that men had germinated from tree seeds: Hesiod specified ash, but in the *Odyssey* it was the oak.

These stories link up with such myths as the story of the birth of Adonis, who appeared when the tree into which his

C. Barker

***Philemon the Oak and Baucis the Linden Tree,* by Arthur Rackham: Philemon and Baucis were a devoted husband and wife who after death were turned into trees by Jupiter, their branches intertwining at the top**

mother Myrrha had been transformed was struck by a sword. Attis originated in an almond, and was later imprisoned by Cybele in a pine tree, from which every spring he was reborn. Parallel with Attis is Osiris, whose image was annually imprisoned in a hollowed pine log, which was burned a year later. From these legends came the pine cone as a symbol of resurrection. Many Greek and Roman gods were supposed to have been born under a tree.

This notion is inverted in the widespread custom of planting trees to celebrate the births of children, whose progress could be forecast by the trees' behaviour – a practice of the Romans, reported equally among less civilized peoples from, for example, western Africa and New Guinea. Such trees, if they survived, became 'family trees', and it seems likely that surnames based on tree names are a result of such associations.

It goes almost without saying that the trees which became particularly revered for various reasons, notably the ash, birch, hawthorn, hazel, holly, oak and rowan in north temperate countries, were protective against evil and its manifestations – witches, fairies and the like. Pieces of these trees, especially birch and rowan, would safeguard the individual if carried, and his house or his cattle if fixed to porch or byre. Some trees protected against lightning, such as bay laurel, elm, holly, oak and olive; some indeed were reputed to have sprung from lightning. A birch, fir, or other tree is still placed on houses being built, and on bridges, dams and other large constructions, to avert any disaster.

(See also ANIMISM; BUILDERS' RITES; CRETE: CROSS; DRUIDS; ORACLES; VEGETATION SPIRITS; and articles on individual trees.)

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'Trickster is comic relief; he is psychic catharsis on a deep and vital level; he is a hero whose own evolution perhaps mirrors that of mankind . . .'

TRICKSTER

THE MYTHOLOGICAL character generically called Trickster has many dimensions and roles. Often he is called Trickster-Transformer, to emphasize the fact that he is not single-natured, but a culture hero who transforms aspects of the world for man's benefit, as well as a player of pranks. The ethnologist Paul Radin, author of a pioneering study of this figure, defines the totality of Trickster as 'at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself'. Radin found Trickster prominently in the myths of the Winnebago Indians, a tribe from the Nebraska area. But he found him also in various forms in the mythology of nearly every North American Indian tribe.

Generally, Trickster is the hero of a group of myths or tales, usually only loosely interrelated, which is called a cycle. He is pictured as a primordial being, who existed from the beginning of things or at least from soon afterwards. The Blackfoot and Crow Indians give their trickster-transformer the name of 'Old Man', but they do not see him as a doddering ancient. He is Old Man because he is ageless, as old as time.

Most other tribes give their trickster an animal name: Rabbit or Hare in the east and south-east of America, Bluejay or Mink in the north-west, Raven on the Pacific coast of Canada, Spider among some Siouan peoples and, among tribes of the Plains, the Great Basin, the south-west and California the incomparable Coyote. The Crow Indians' 'Old Man' is sometimes also known as 'Old Man Coyote'.

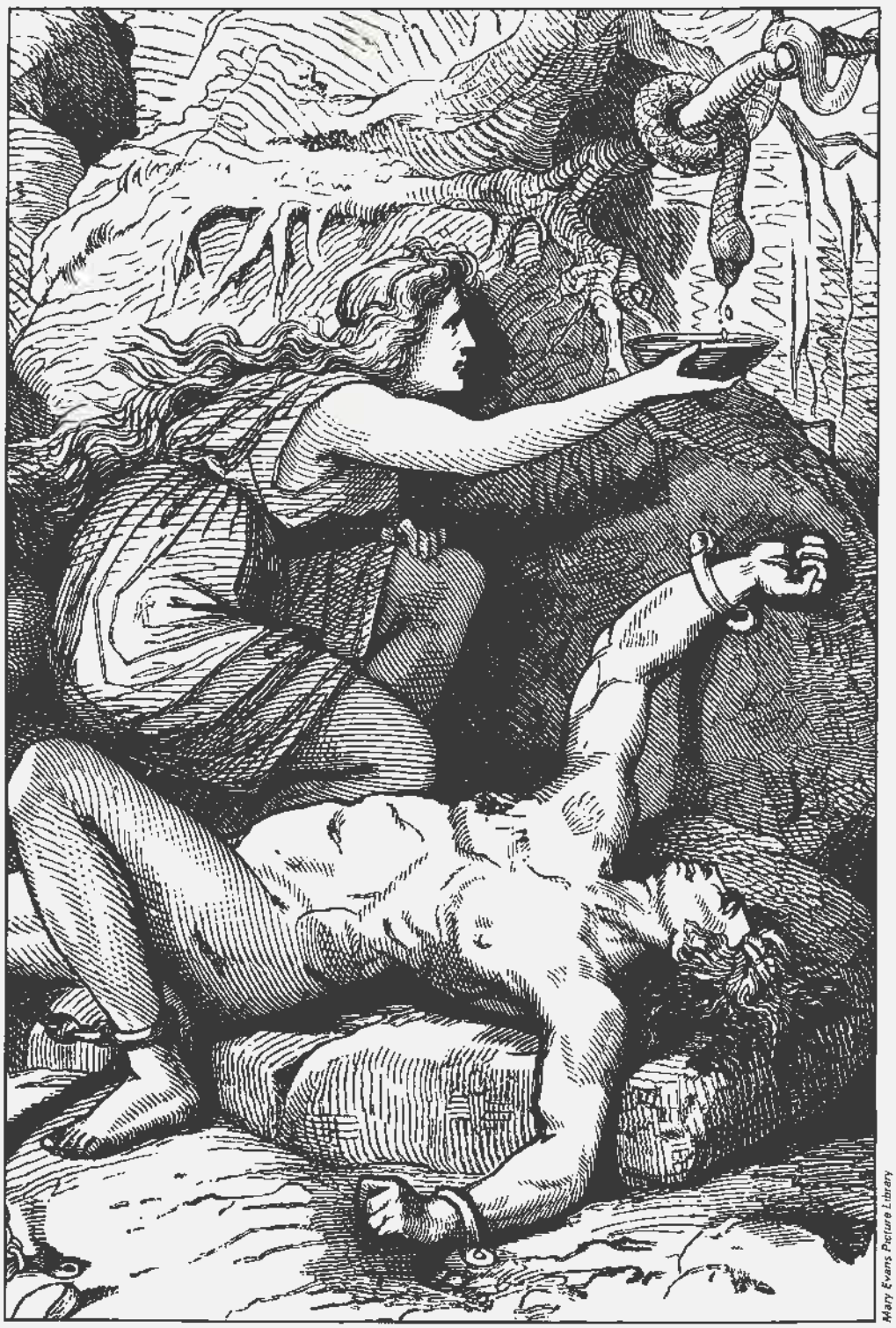
Most of these animals have reputations, in reality, for being clever or mischievous. But the animal form of Trickster is more metaphoric than literal. He is not a little furry creature with cunning ways. He possesses and embodies the essence of the animal – or of animalism, in general – and it is unrewarding to try to pin down his form, precisely and consistently.

Within the same story there may be mention of Coyote's tail, and of his hands. Raven is sometimes described in a decidedly human way, but then he pulls on his 'Raven mask' and costume, and flies off. We must take Trickster as he comes – seeming man-shaped here, seeming an animal there, seeming a giant or a monster or merely shapeless elsewhere. As a supernatural being he can change shape if he wishes; and quite often, he can set parts of his body free in an independent existence.

Though he may bear the name of a reputedly wily creature, Trickster is not always clever. In some of the most crudely enjoyable tales he is the fool, whose stupidity leads him into trouble or causes him to be tricked by other creatures. One recurring plot shows him setting a part of his body, usually his anus, a task. It fails and he foolishly punishes it, thereby causing himself great pain. The Winnebago Trickster finds that his right arm quarrels and fights with his left, wounding it severely and painfully. These comic blunderings have been explained as a mythic expression of life on an animal level – instinctual, lacking in self-awareness, with an undeveloped consciousness.

Trickster is usually highly curious, unable to leave well alone, unable to avoid interfering in the doings of others, usually with disastrous results all round. Several tales show Coyote getting his head stuck in a buffalo skull because he had to peer inside to watch a ceremony being performed by mice, or flies. Comparable tales reflect his stubbornness: he is obsessively, mindlessly persistent when he wants something, and his wants are on a primeval level. He is a creature of his appetites, and these are usually a voracious hunger and an equally voracious and gross sexuality. Raven is the hungriest North American trickster, constantly led into trouble by his lust for food – as when he dives to the sea-bed to steal a fisherman's bait, is caught by the hook and loses his beak. The Siouan

The Scandinavian god Loki has been interpreted as a trickster figure, mischievous, amoral or sometimes evil, a shape-changer who plays comic or revolting pranks but is also a culture hero who brings benefits to men: 19th century illustration of Loki in chains



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Trickster is shown finding a land of women without men and teaching them about sex by practical example. Many Indian tales echo the Winnebago stories of Trickster's enormous penis: once he stupidly mistakes it for a flagpole, and another time he sends it off to rape a chief's daughter by, as it were, remote control.

In all such tales we are seeing man's 'animal nature' in action. Other aspects of this nature are less comic, reflecting the vicious amorality of a being who knows nothing of ethical or moral values. Trickster lies and cheats and steals and kills, without guilt or hint of conscience. He talks Deer or Buffalo to the edge of a precipice, and then pushes him over for supper; Coyote cons Porcupine into a jumping contest with some meat as the prize, making Porcupine forget that he cannot jump. Here is Trickster less doltish, more crafty, but also cruel and treacherous. He does not always escape the consequences of his actions: it is often Trickster who is credited with introducing death and pain into the world; but in a Maidu tale it is Coyote's own son who is the first creature to suffer death.

The Theft of Fire

Lacking values and any sense of propriety, Trickster naturally comes into conflict with customs, rules, laws and taboos. In the widely told tale of Coyote learning to juggle with his own eyes, he is told by his instructor never to take his eyes out more than three times a day, or he will lose his sight. Of course he does, the threat is realized, and he has to use trickery to cheat some other animal of its eyes in order to regain his vision.

But the myths also picture Trickster as a positive being, a transformer, if not a fully-fledged creator, who brings benefit to the world. Sometimes, these positive achievements happen by accident, as a side effect of some blunder or some trick. Many of the myths that purport to explain the growth of certain customs, or the invention of certain artefacts, have this element of Trickster's random and unintentional creation.

The world and man also receive benefit from one of the most universal acts of the trickster-transformer: the stealing of fire. Usually the trickster wheedles his way into the confidence of the powerful Fire People (or whatever the fire's supernatural guardians are called) and seizes the moment to take up a bit of fire and run. The guardians pursue, and often the fire is passed along a relay of other creatures until finally it is lodged in Wood or Tree. The Fire People cannot get it out, but the trickster teaches man how to get fire from wood (by rubbing two sticks together).

In most examples of the fire myth, and in other comparable tales, the Trickster has become a straightforward hero, whose good deeds are not the result of trickery or accident, but of his heroic devotion to the good and the right.

There are also tales in which Trickster is identified with the original creator-god, the Prime Mover and First Cause, who made the world and everything in it, like the Old Man of some Plains tribes, who sends the diver bird or some other creature to the bed of the primal sea for a bit of soil from which to mould the earth. The Blackfoot Old Man, seen at one point losing his sight in the eye-juggling idiocy mentioned before, is in the same cycle of tales seen sculpting the shapes of men and beasts and infusing life into them. So Trickster-Transformer is identified by the Indians as encompassing simultaneously a blockhead, an amoral practical joker, a hero who aids mankind and changes the world, and a god who creates mankind and the world.

Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby

The North American Indians have no monopoly on the trickster figure. He is found in myths and folktales throughout the world, for example in the jackal and hare of Indian folktales. In most of Africa Hare is the trickster, though Tortoise is prominent in some places. But West Africa has its own trickster, the spider Anansi. Anansi is a high-powered trickster who rarely appears as a dolt or fool; and he is seldom seen as a creator god, but he does perform his share of heroic and 'transforming' acts. He was taken to the Americas by the West African slaves, and now has a starring role in Caribbean traditional folktales, under a variety of names, including 'Aunt Nancy'.

Legba, a trickster figure of Dahomey, made his way also to the Caribbean and is now an important *loa* of Voodoo religion (see VOODOO). He acts as an intermediary,

appearing first at a ceremony to open the way for people to be later possessed by other loa. The Hare trickster of southern Africa is thought to have made his way to the New World, to be reincarnated in southern Negro folktales as 'Brer Rabbit', though the Indian tribes of the south-eastern United States also have a notable Hare trickster who resembles Brer Rabbit.

Brer Rabbit appears in the folktales retold in a stage-Negro dialect by 'Uncle Remus', the journalist and folklorist Joel Chandler Harris. Like Anansi, the Rabbit is rarely seen to be a fool, though now and again he slips up. Every American child knows the story of the Tar Baby – a sticky figurine made by Brer Fox, which holds Brer Rabbit fast when he assaults it. Not every American child or adult knows that the motif of the 'stick-fast' trap recurs in Trickster cycles round the world. But not all of them get away from the trap so neatly as Brer Rabbit, who tricks the fox into flinging him into the briar patch, where he will be safe.

Trickster figures also exist in more sophisticated mythologies of the past. Monkey in China, for example, a supernatural being who defeats by magic and trickery various monsters and demons, and then forces the high gods to recognize and respect his power. Yet he remains a monkey, constantly getting into trivial and comic scrapes. Eventually his defiance of the gods is crushed by Buddha and he is imprisoned, but is later released (no less bumptious than before) to aid a noble traveller on a heroic quest.

Trickster and Devil

Upon his release, the Monkey story shades from the trickster theme into that of the 'clever animal' who aids the hero in his hour of need. Even in his trickster aspects Monkey is a long way from the more primitive Coyote or Anansi. Even farther are the Greek god Hermes (see HERMES), who has been classed as a trickster because of the mischief he plays as a child, and the hero Prometheus, classified as a trickster because of the fire-stealing myth (see PROMETHEUS). But many primitive tricksters have something in common with Hermes. Most North American tricksters have myths in which they are killed and yet revive themselves effortlessly (often by tricking the powers of death into freeing them). Hermes, too, as psychopomp – guide of souls to the realm of death – moves freely into that realm and out again. And, oddly, the Dahomean Legba is an intermediary between gods and men just as is Hermes (the messenger of Zeus).

The mythology of the Teutonic and Norse peoples provides another parallel in the figure of Loki. One of the Aesir (as Hermes was one of the Olympians), Loki appears in many tales as a mischievous but not demonic trickster. But in other myths he is an embodiment of amorality and evil, the killer (by a trick) of Balder, the father of the Fenris wolf and the Midgard serpent, the ultimate author of world-ending Ragnarok (see LOKI; SCANDINAVIA).

Here the trickster figure overlaps with the figure of the Devil or comparable personification of evil. Another example is the apparent mingling in early Christian times of the classical god Pan, lord of all that is instinctual and animal (see PAN), and the horned, split-hooved Satan. Pan has much in common with the animalistic, amoral tricksters, who are identified by many primitives with powerful demons. And it is often the trickster who introduces pain and death into an Eden-like, paradisal world. The Navaho explicitly ally their Coyote with forces of outright evil, and also say that the sight of a real coyote at the start of some enterprise is a frightful omen.

Other tales of Trickster refer to him as someone who has been a high god, but who has fallen or been cast down from those heights. A comparable theme is the trickster's background as the prodigal and reprehensible son or brother of a high god, as Raven is in many north Pacific tales, as Loki is sometimes said to be the brother of Odin, as Legba is the youngest son of the Dahomey creator. The myth is not being strained when we link it with the fall of Lucifer and other aspects of the Christian Devil. Indeed, as Joseph Campbell points out, many primitive tribes after being

Victoria and Albert Museum

Facing page Brer Rabbit has again outwitted his enemy Brer Fox in this illustration to the 'Uncle Remus' stories: the African trickster Hare is thought to have influenced the figure of Brer Rabbit, though Indian peoples of the eastern United States also have a notable Hare trickster *Right* The fairy tale hero Jack is another trickster figure

Christianized adopted the figure of Satan as a trickster, and imposed onto him many of the usual themes from trickster cycles, including in some instances giving him a hand in creating the earth.

There is another interesting parallel in the ancient but still extant tradition of the fool, harlequin, Lord of Misrule or the like, who cavorts and plays rude pranks during the great pre-Lent caruivals. Here is Trickster in his flouting of authority, taboo-shattering mode; and many of these European fools appear, interestingly, in animal guise (see FOOL; SPRING).

The Middle Ages also spawned trickster characters outside the conventions of Carnival, like Till Eulenspiegel, hero of comic German tales on the theme of a crafty peasant outwitting pompous city folk who underestimate him. Still older were the fables that came together in the French *roman* of Reynard the Fox, a classical trickster.

Farther afield, some writers have seen traces of Trickster in what Ali Baba does to the thieves, but there is more to be found in the ancient, hilarious but meaningful Sufi tales of Mulla Nasredin, recently reintroduced to the West by Idries Shah.

Punch, abbreviated from Punchinello, a character in 17th century Italian comedy, is a bully and clown with hooked nose and humped back who kills his wife and baby, and outwits the law: from the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection

Mander & Mitchenson

The Mulla is in the Eulenspiegel tradition of the 'cunning fool'; foolery masks his ability to puncture self-importance, show up prejudice and undermine narrow minds. He is Trickster ignoring the rules, the proprieties, the rigid and sterile dogmas of minds that have stopped expanding.

In this century, folklorists see echoes of the blockhead trickster in widespread joke cycles about the 'Little Moron' and his ilk, and other echoes in similar jokes about cunning fools like the 'clever Yankee'. But perhaps the fullest recent flowering of the trickster figure was in the multi-faceted comedy of men like Charles Chaplin, in films like *The Pawnbroker* – where the hero is capable of great stupidity at times, but able always to rise to the occasion (if, sometimes, by accident) to thwart a bully, aid the distressed and leave a much benefited and 'transformed' world behind him.

Angel and Ape

How can one mythological character contain at the same time a benighted idiot, an amoral villain with a certain low cunning, and a culture hero or god to whom man owes most or all of his humanity? Most authorities see in these apparently irreconcilable elements a fusion (or confusion) of two age-old strands in primitive myth-making. Paul Radin's interpretation of the Winnebago myth structure seems to support this view, because the Winnebago have not made (or have unmade) the fusion. Their trickster is the animalistic blockhead with occasional flashes of animal cunning – and nothing more. He is not a culture hero. That role is filled by Hare, in a separate myth cycle, and by other even more heroic figures in their myth cycles: and where Hare retains some of the craftiness of a true trickster, these other heroes have evolved past that stage.

So the Winnebago appear to show us the two strands for what they are. Radin, looking at the animalistic trickster in the light of Jungian psychology, sees him as representing the early, dim stumblings of humanity from a state of 'undifferentiated' animalism towards a humanized state of self-awareness, with a firm grasp on identity and social values. He suggested that the archetypal hero myth passes through four stages, representing the human consciousness on its way to a full flowering. Trickster is stage one – full of blundering, of a single-minded urge to satisfy primal desires.

Trickster myths are usually of extreme antiquity and Radin calls Trickster 'the oldest of all figures in American Indian mythology, probably in all mythologies'. The true culture-hero activities and the less animalistic aspects of Trickster cycles can be seen as later additions to the original figure. It may be that increasingly sophisticated shamans and priests gradually altered the old tales over the generations, so that the original doltish, obscene Trickster changed and improved, and gained heroic, or even divine, stature.

No doubt this fusion of dullard and deity did not disturb the primitive sense of religious propriety, as it would disturb ours. American Indians themselves in our day have expressed puzzlement and

distress at the contradictions in their trickster tales. But their ancestors – and ours, in pagan Europe – knew better. Their gods were humanized, and Trickster is the most human of all, a clear expression of man's true nature, angel and ape in one.

C. G. Jung believed that the human ego, the bright nucleus of the conscious mind, has in the unconscious an exact counterpart or reverse image, which he called the 'shadow'. It appears in dreams as a 'compensatory' figure, pointing up a lack of balance or harmony in the psyche. And the animalistic Trickster, Jung felt, is a mythological shadow figure, the reverse image of the saint or angel; he is the ape or imp or dark opposite, without which a balance, a psychic wholeness, could not be achieved.

The tales are a primary source of entertainment, whether we laugh at the doltish trickster blundering into trouble or the wily trickster outwitting others. They were also used as a means of moral instruction for the young. The Coyote stories of treachery, stupidity, cowardice and taboo-smashing were effective ways of communicating to Indian children the need to obey tribal laws and aspire to the high virtues of warriors. But besides instruction and entertainment, the stories have a primary purpose which recalls Jung's theory of the 'shadow'. The myths are cathartic. They provide an outlet for the tensions that inevitably build up in societies bound by ritual, taboo, hierarchical order and the requirements of a highly organized and demanding religion which permeates every fibre of the social structure.

Trickster survives in Europe and the Americas in the fool, harlequin or Lord of Misrule of the carnival season before Lent who cavorts about playing rude pranks, flouting established authority and convention: Harlequin, from the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection

Mander & Mitchenson

Most tribal societies are so permeated, and have their tricksters. Prominent in the ceremonies of the Pueblo Indians, for example, are the holy fools, the *koyemshi*, daubed in mud and excrement, screeching obscenities, mocking the chants and songs, embodying and purging every individual's yearning to break free of his society's cumbersome demands. Other tribes had their variants of the koyemshi, and their trickster tales. Medieval Europeans found their cathartic release in the wild revelry of Carnival, led by a trickster figure. Perhaps we find ours in the films, watching the modern successors to Chaplin and Keaton.

So it seems that the many roles of Trickster blend and fuse. Trickster is comic relief; he is psychic catharsis on a deep and vital level; he is a hero whose own evolution perhaps mirrors that of mankind towards a higher consciousness and social maturity. And, embodying all these essentials, he is deathless – no ethnological museum piece but alive and flourishing today as in the primeval past.

(See also GREAT PLAINS INDIANS; PACIFIC NORTH-WEST INDIANS; PUEBLO INDIANS.)

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: J. Ferrante, *The Conflict of Love and Honor*, (Mouton, 1973); Paul Radin, *The Trickster* (Schocken, 1972); Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God* (Penguin, 1976).

Trinity

A set of three forming a unity or closely connected: in Christianity, God is One and also Three (Father, Son and Holy Ghost): in Hinduism, Brahman is One and also Three: deities grouped in sets of three occur in pagan religions, especially among the Celts: numerologically, the number 3 is held to reveal a pair of opposites and the Unity which reconciles and transcends them.

See BRAHMAN; CELTS; CHRISTIANITY; THREE.

TRISTAN

THE STORY of Tristan and Ysolt is one of the great love stories of all time. It is a tale of illicit passion, for Tristan is the nephew and favourite champion, and Ysolt the beloved wife, of Mark, the kindly but irresolute king of Cornwall, whom both regard with feelings of deep respect and affection. Like all the greatest love stories, it is about a pair in equal bondage to their passion rather than about a great lover wooing and winning the object of his desire. Tristan and Ysolt have gained the immortality of Romeo and Juliet, not that of Paris and Helen of Troy.

The Tristan legend is of great antiquity and during its long history from early Celtic tales through medieval Arthurian literature to Wagner, Tennyson and Thomas Mann the style of its presentation and interpretation has varied greatly. But the two finest of all the versions of the legend, though separated by over 600 years, share to a marked degree the same subtle psychological framework in which the story is set, though many details of the narrative are different. These are the *Tristan* of Gottfried von Strassburg, one of the masterpieces of early 13th century German poetry, and Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*. Both works profoundly analyse the mainsprings of the most powerful of human emotions and their tragic outcome in this particular version of the eternal triangle.

In both works, the first element of the passion of Tristan and Ysolt that gives it its archetypal quality is the equality of the lovers. It is moreover, a 'passion' in both senses of the word: no pair was ever more rapturously in love and because of that rapture, much suffering came to them and to others who were dear to them. It is this sorrow, willingly accepted on their own behalf but bitterly regretted when caused to others, that is the second of the main archetypal themes. Love, in one of its aspects, is inevitably a destroyer and lovers may despairingly watch their own actions, which they are powerless to control, damage or ruin the well-being of good people with whom they have enjoyed relations of trust and affection. At the same

Bodleian Library Filmstrip

The legend of Tristan and Ysolt has a long history from its beginning in Celtic tales through Arthurian romances to treatments by Wagner, Tennyson and Thomas Mann ***Right*** **A tournament scene from** ***Roman de Tristan,*** **French, 15th century** ***Left*** **Tristan arrives at a castle below the sea: from a Flemish MS, c 1500**

time, at least in the eyes of the world, the lovers are destroying themselves and their position in it. The good hurt the good; the innocents, almost, are massacred without the need of a butcher. Yet the lovers, caught in a web of deceit and circumstance, trying, in their more lucid moments, to balance an impossible account of lust, worldly honour and human decency, may themselves sometimes be brought to attempt vile deeds. They will later suffer remorse or be shamed by the generous forgiveness or loyalty of their intended victim.

The third archetypal strand also relates to the helplessness of the lovers. Tristan and Ysolt fall in love, at least in the simple terms of narrative, not as they might in a modern novel but because they unwittingly drink a love potion. How far the swallowing of this fatal draught absolves them of their moral responsibilities, of which they remain painfully aware, is uncertain. But it does symbolize love as an exterior force, an elemental power that strikes at mortal men and women and drives them 'mad'. The more powerfully are such mortals struck, the more total does their love become as the intensity of their spiritual union matches the pitch of their physical passion and, thereby, the further removed they become from choice, guilt or blame. Indeed, in extreme cases, like that of Tristan and Ysolt, an 'illegitimate' love acquires a sanctity that is recognized and revered even, and indeed especially, by those whom it has harmed. Such are the main themes against which both Gottfried and Wagner set their versions of the story of Tristan and Ysolt. The summary of the legend which follows is close to that of Gottfried's narrative.

The Splinter in the Bone

Tristan was the son of Blancheflor, sister of Mark, king of Cornwall, and Rivalin, the lord of a part of Brittany. Rivalin was killed in battle before Tristan's birth and Blancheflor died in childbed. Brought up by his father's loyal marshal, Tristan grew to be strong and handsome, skilled in hunting, literature and music. Stranded by misadventure in Cornwall, he made a favourable impression at Mark's court, and was recognized as the king's nephew and knighted.

At that time one of the great sorrows of Cornwall was the tribute exacted by the Irish. Every year Morold, champion of the king of Ireland, would appear and demand the handing over of a party of noble youths for service in Ireland. So fearsome was he, no Cornish knight dared oppose him, but Tristan challenged him to combat. After a long and savage duel, Tristan slew Morold by cleaving his skull, a splinter of his sword remaining in the bone when the body was taken back to Ireland. But Morold had wounded Tristan with a poisoned spear: the wound would not heal and his life was feared for. It was known that the only person skilled enough to cure him was, of all people, Morold's sister Ysolt, the queen of Ireland. Tristan therefore made a typically bold plan. He sailed to Ireland and, off Dublin, his friends set him adrift alone in a small boat disguised as a minstrel named Tantris. The locals pitied him and took him to court, where the queen did indeed cure his wound. Tantris became a great favourite and was engaged as tutor in literature and music to the young princess, also called Ysolt.

When he finally returned to Cornwall, some of the courtiers began to be jealous of this young paragon who was the king's heir. They persuaded Mark that he should marry and have sons; and who better for bride than the young Ysolt, whom Tristan had praised so vividly for her beauty and intelligence and whose hand would bring peace between the two nations? Mark agreed and Tristan was sent to put the proposal.

Tristan landed in Ireland and found the country ravaged by a dragon so terrible that the king had promised his daughter in marriage to any knight who slew it. Tristan killed it and cut off a large piece of its tongue which he kept under his shirt. Now the king's steward (a cowardly man who was the princess's unwelcome suitor) happened to be riding past and could not believe his luck when he saw the reptile dead and nobody about – for Tristan, sorely wounded and overcome by the foul fumes exhaled by the monster, had fainted in a nearby wood. The steward lopped off the dragon's head and hurried to court to claim Ysolt's hand, to the dismay of the princess. But her wily mother knew the steward was incapable of this heroic deed. She and her daughter, accompanied by her niece Brangane, searched in the neighbourhood and found a stricken man whom to their astonishment they recognized as 'Tantris'. Under the queen's care, Tristan speedily recovered. But the young Ysolt noticed to her horror that a nick in the blade of his magnificent sword exactly matched the splinter she had taken from the skull of her beloved uncle Morold, whom she had sworn to avenge.

In a scene of high comedy, as Tristan sits helpless in his bath, Ysolt rails at him and tries to kill him with his own sword. Her mother, to whom Tristan confesses all and discloses the object of his present mission, calms her down and declares that bygones should be bygones – and that if the truth is not brought out before the king, Ysolt will have to marry the hateful steward. The princess agrees but remains implacable in her hostility to Tristan. When, at court, the steward is humiliated by Tristan producing the dragon's tongue, the king agrees to the alliance. Tristan sets sail for Cornwall with Ysolt, Brangane and all the youths who had been taken in tribute.

Now begins the passion. During the voyage, Tristan and Ysolt, still barely on speaking terms, call for a drink. By a fatal error, a lady-in-waiting gives them the flask containing a love potion brewed by the queen for Ysolt to give to Mark. It has an immediate and catastrophic effect, and by the

Tristan

time they make port Tristan and Ysolt have consummated their love. Terrified, Ysolt persuades her virgin cousin Brangane to lie in the dark with her husband the king at the beginning of the wedding night. The stratagem is successful: Ysolt comes to bed before wine and lights are brought. Later, she orders Brangane to be secretly murdered, lest the truth come out. But her assassins have not the heart to kill the girl who protests her innocence so eloquently. Ysolt and Brangane are reconciled.

Tristan and Ysolt then begin a long period of hidden tortured love. Rumours begin to go about of an attachment between them, and Mark is tormented by doubt and indecision, above all by the horrible possibility that the gossip might be true. Various traps are laid for the lovers but although there is a mass of circumstantial evidence there is no proof. Finally it is agreed that Ysolt should submit to the ordeal: if she swears her innocence as she grasps a red-hot iron she will not be burned. In this passage, one of the most remarkable episodes, Tristan disguises himself as a ragged pilgrim in the watching crowd. Ysolt arrives in a boat at the appointed place and Tristan carries her ashore. He slips 'so that his fall brought him to rest lying in the Queen's lap and arms'. Thus Ysolt can swear that no man has lain with her save Mark and the pilgrim – and the iron did not burn her.

Mark's doubts are laid to rest; but only for a little while. The talk goes on and, indeed, it is now obvious, even to Mark, that Tristan and Ysolt love each other.

In the Cave of Lovers

Some people are smitten with curiosity and astonishment, and plague themselves with the question how these two companions, Tristan and Isolde, nourished themselves in this waste-land? I will tell them and assuage their curiosity. They looked at one another and nourished themselves with that! Their sustenance was the eye's increase. They fed in their grotto on nothing but love and desire. The two lovers who formed its court had small concern for their provender. Hidden away in their hearts they carried the best nutriment to be had anywhere in the world, which offered itself unasked ever fresh and new. I mean pure devotion, love made sweet as balm that consoles body and sense so tenderly, and sustains the heart and spirit – this was their best nourishment. Truly, they never considered any food but that from which the heart drew desire, the eyes delight, and which the body, too, found agreeable. With this they had enough. Love drove her ancient plough for them, keeping pace all the time, and gave them an abundant store of all those things that go to make heaven on earth.

Gottfried von Strassburg *Tristan*
(trans A. T. Hatto)

King Mark and Tristan, and Ysolt nursing Tristan, by Aubrey Beardsley: an essential element in the love-story of Tristan and Ysolt is the suffering which their passion inflicts on those who are dear to them, especially King Mark, who is Ysolt's husband

At last the desolate king admits this to himself. He summons the pair before the court and in a speech of great nobility and generosity he tells them that he loves them both too much to harm them. They must leave and go their own way. Then follows the most extraordinary part of Gottfried's poem. Tristan and Ysolt, accompanied only by Tristan's faithful retainer Curvenal and his hunting dog Hiudan, repair to the wilds to live in the 'Cave of Lovers'. Here they dwell in a gentle rapture in which the desires of body and spirit fuse in a mystical union. The lovers' condition, and the cave and its furnishings, are described in language which overtly uses the vocabulary of the Christian mysticism of the period.

Meanwhile, Mark is mourning their absence. Out hunting one day, he happens on the cave and through a window sees the pair asleep on the bed but between them Tristan's great sword – a symbol of chastity. The wretched king summons them back to court but is still suspicious, and one day actually finds them asleep in a garden, close and naked in each other's arms. As he rushes off to fetch witnesses (as the law required), Tristan awakes and sees him. Tristan rouses Ysolt. It is the end: they will both be killed if the witnesses see them and now they can never be happy together. 'Keep me in your heart; for whatever happens to mine, you shall never leave it.' Ysolt gives him a ring as a token of their love and to use to confirm any message he might ever have to send. She passionately bids him an agonized farewell.

Tristan tries to forget his sorrows in warfare, in Spain, in Germany, back in his homeland. He allies himself with a lord named Kaedin who has a sister, also called Ysolt – Ysolt of the White Hands. Tristan finds himself attracted to her, but he cannot understand his own feelings: is he trying to forget his true Ysolt by allowing (or even urging) himself to fall in love with another; is he drawn to Ysolt of the White Hands because she seems, by her very name, like a dream of Ysolt of Ireland? (Around this point Gottfried's poem breaks off and the story is continued in a fragment of the *Tristran* of Thomas 'of Britain', whom Gottfried admired and had used as one of his chief sources.) Finally Tristan commits the culpable folly of marrying this other Ysolt – and finds himself incapable of consummating the marriage.

Eventually, in a battle, as so many years before, Tristan is wounded by a poisoned spear and the wound will not heal. He suffers atrociously and knows that only Ysolt who learned her mother's skills can cure him. He sends Kaedin with the ring, to beg Ysolt to come. Overheard by Ysolt of the White Hands, Tristan asks that the ship, when it returns, should carry a white sail if Ysolt is on board and a black if she is not. Kaedin sets out, finds Ysolt and has little trouble in persuading her to come.

At last the ship comes into view and Tristan, rousing himself on his bed, asks his wife the colour of its sail. 'Black,' she replies. 'At this,' in the words of Thomas, 'Tristan feels such pain that he has never had greater nor ever will, and he turns his face to the wall and says: "God save Ysolt and me! Since you will not come to me I must die for your love. I can hold on to life no longer. I die for you, Ysolt, dear love!" Ysolt lands, and hearing of Tristan's death cries that she will die for him in return. She lies beside him, kisses him and dies. There, in Thomas, the story ends, in the love-death, the same *Liebestod* that brings Wagner's opera to its tragic end.

C. DE HOGHTON

FURTHER READING: Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* and Beroul's *Romance of Tristan* are available in the Penguin Classics series.

TROLL

THIS elemental spirit of northern European mythology belongs to that supernatural fairy community which was once assumed to exercise dominion over Nature, a class of spirit regarded with considerable apprehension since all elemeutals were known to be capricious, treacherous and frequently hostile. Elementals were in the main associated with particular sites, in the case of trolls mountain caverns from which they emerged after nightfall. Broadly speaking, there were two classes of trolls: the giant and the dwarf, both of which were reported to steal women, exchange human children for their own hideous offspring and indulge in a good deal of petty theft. It has been generally assumed that all trolls were originally of giant stature but that, especially in areas like Denmark and Finland, they became gradually reduced in size. Giant trolls, however, abounded in mountainous countries like Norway and Sweden, where they were the spirits of the mountains, and were in the main dull-witted, hairy caunibals with huge noses for smelling out the blood of their human prey. An allied species, the trow, haunted the Orkneys and Shetlands, frequenting both land and sea.

The dwarf trolls in their own particular way were quite as hideous as their giant counterparts and were recognizable by their humped backs and red caps. They were good mechanics and clever dancers, and they possessed beautiful wives but, unlike the giants, they seem to have been extremely sharp-witted although their cunning was of a low order. One species at least must have been extremely small, hence the words of an old Danish ballad: 'Out then spoke the tiny troll, no bigger than an emmet'.

Scandinavian folklore contains a great deal of interesting information about the habits and idiosyncrasies of the troll population. All trolls hated noise, an aversion they acquired in the days of old when the Teutonic god Thor dedicated much of his time to hurling his hammer in their direction. Their instinctive hostility to the Christian faith led to an intense loathing of church bells, the sound of which could reduce the most powerful troll to a heap of pebbles. As creatures of darkness, trolls were terrified of sunlight, which could petrify them.

Giant trolls were frequently credited with building mighty structures like castles, bridges and churches, and legends abound describing how they were cheated of their wages (usually human souls) by their sharper-witted clients. At the root of this tradition lay the belief that some kind of payment was due to the owner of the soil when land was set aside for building or cultivation, the landlord, in this case, being an earth elemental demanding his rent in blood or souls.

Anyone who managed to learn a troll's name had the power to destroy him by repeating it. There is a famous Norse legend about a troll named Wind and Weather, who contracted to build a church in return for which he was to receive as wages the sun and moon. Alas, his client, the saintly King Olaf, discovered his name by accident, and cried out: 'Hold, O Wind and Weather, you've set the spire askew', and the troll crashed to the ground, being reduced to a large heap of flints.

Figure of a troll, from Sweden: the lore of these nightmare creatures of past belief has been revived in the interests of the tourist trade, though trolls are no longer credited with eating human flesh

Philip Rahtz

Despite the useful work performed by church-building trolls a pronounced antipathy existed between mankind and trolls in general, due largely to the trolls' deplorable habit of stealing babies and seducing wives. Trolls could be kept at bay, however, by attaching sprigs of mistletoe to crib and byre and bedroom ceiling, and by lighting huge bonfires known as Baldur's Bale Fires at crossroads on St John's Eve, using nine varieties of wood, and at the same time hurling toadstools into the flames. In Sweden fires were lit at Eastertide, the peasants firing warning shots in all directions.

A rapid degradation in the status of the troll followed the advance of Christianity into northern Europe which had the effect of transforming all Teutonic elementals into what can ouly be described as Christianized devils. Among the 17th-century evil spirits referred to by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* were 'Robin Goodfellows, trolls etc., which as they are most conversant with men do them the most harm'. Many of the basic characteristics of the troll are clearly discernible in the attributes of devils, the troll wife-stealer becoming in time the demon lover, the incubus seducing women in their sleep (see INCUBUS).

With the departure of devils from the modern mythological scene troll-lore has undergone an encouraging revival, largely in the interests of the Scandinavian tourist industry. Toy trolls, huge, long-nosed and hairy, often brandishing flint axes, are now available in Norwegian shops and the traveller is carefully reminded that trolls wearing their traditional red caps can occasionally be seen at night in the proximity of hills and mounds. Fortunately, modern trolls have developed more sophisticated appetites than their ancestors for, according to the last vagary of folklore, they no longer demand tribute in the form of souls but request heaped platefuls of bananas and cream.

ERIC MAPLE

TROUT

IN CELTIC regions of the British Isles the trout was long regarded as a 'fish of wisdom' and was credited with supernatural powers of a high order. Sacred trout were quite often found in holy wells, sometimes in the company of eels which were frequently assumed to have similar powers. In Wales, at the well of Ffynnon Beris in Caernarvonshire, there were two trout whose movements showed what fate held in store for those who consulted them by throwing bread into the water. If no fish put in an appearance, the omen was bad, but if they could clearly be seen swimming in the water, the auspices were favourable. The local people jealously guarded the fish, and a similar brace of trout in the well at Ffynnon Gwyfan, near Disserth Church, were also protected.

In Ireland, the trout of the well at Kilmorne were regarded as guardian spirits and were said never to vary in size over the centuries. There were two beautiful trout at Tober Kieran, one of which showed its supernatural qualities in a most startling manner. An irreverent soldier, wanting a fish for dinner, caught it with rod and line, but discovered to his astonishment that he had hooked a beautiful woman instead. Overwhelmed, he let her fall back into the water, where she again became a trout. The well at Tullaghan in County Sligo was tenanted by two miraculous trout, which were invisible to those without second sight.

In the Crammag River in the Isle of Man there is a pool which has a reputation for bringing misfortune to those who fish there. It is said that long ago an angler tried to catch trout there, but fainted on seeing a host of tiny fairy creatures clothed in red, which rose from the pool and then vanished.

Trout fishermen, like other anglers, have their own lore and superstitions. The saying, 'You must lose a fly to catch a trout', has a hint of a sacrifice required in return for the acquisition of so uncanny a fish. Some fishermen spit on the bait before casting the line, and some will never change rods after catching their first catch. The first of the catch is sometimes returned to the water 'for luck'. The cry of the cuckoo, first thing in the morning means no luck in fishing that day.

According to Homer, the Greek princess Helen, the loveliest of mortal women, was seduced and abducted to Troy by Paris, the son of King Priam: to recover her, the Greeks besieged Troy for ten years and took it in the tenth. Though formerly dismissed as fiction, it is now clear that the story of the siege was based on fact

TROY

THE PRINCIPAL sources of our knowledge about Troy are twofold and complementary; the Homeric epics, and archeological investigation in modern times. It is as a result of archeological investigation that there is now general acceptance of the view that there is a historical reality behind Homer; and that the tale of a ten-year siege of the city by an expedition under the command of the Achaean overlord Agamemnon from mainland Greece had a real basis. In addition, as the result of recent researches into the techniques of orally transmitted poetry, there is also wide acceptance of the theory that, no matter what the precise date may have been when the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were first written down in their present form, the sagas about the Trojan War and its aftermath could have been commemorated by bards soon after the actual events. These early sagas would then have formed the basis of the epic tradition, which was refined and eularged by succeeding generations of poets depending upon memory and improvisation. It seems likely that the Trojans and Achaeans not only had the same kind of material culture but were perhaps of similar 'Indo-European' extraction.

The name of Homer is primarily associated with the two great epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Each of them is independent but their common background is the Trojan War. The central feature of the *Iliad* is the 'Wrath of Achilles', or the quarrel between Achilles and his overlord, Agamemnon (see ACHILLES). As a result of this quarrel, Achilles refused to continue fighting and the Greeks are pressed back. Then Achilles takes up arms again and kills Hector, the Trojan prince. The *Iliad* ends with Hector's funeral.

The *Odyssey* contains much about the Trojan War too, but it starts at a point in the tenth year after the war ended. There is a council of the Olympian gods, at which it is decided that Odysseus, who has been wandering about as a result of the anger directed against him by the sea god Poseidon, should be brought home to his kingdom of Ithaca. The nucleus is a cunning man's voyage overseas among miracles and monsters, his revenge on his enemies who took advantage of his absence, the faithful wife at home, the young son growing to maturity in the absence of his father. Though the adventures extend over ten years, all but the last are concentrated in a single section. As in the *Iliad*, a large subject is embraced in one view by focusing on a single portion.

The Towers of Ilion

Epic poetry is simply recitation; and Greek epic is written in hexameters, a single verse constantly repeated, saved from monotony by the device of a shifting caesura or 'pause' in the line. One of the features of epic diction is the use of stock phrases, many of them very old. They frequently consist of a half-verse preceding or following the caesura. The formality of these set verses, used repeatedly and without variation whenever the subject requires them, stamps them as archaic. The roots of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* lie far back in the Mycenean Age, though the poems as a whole appear to have taken shape in Asia Minor during the 10th and 9th centuries BC; and they were still expanding in the 7th.

Homeric archeology is a comparative study. Its object is to interpret the poems in the light of the excavated remains, and the remains in the light of the poems. There are elements in the poems – descriptions of material objects and social usages – which have accordingly been dated to definite periods, early or late, from the 15th to the 7th centuries BC.

From a reading of Homer we gather that Troy was an extensive city, defended by mighty walls and towers and it is called either Troy (*Troie*) or Ilios (later to be Ilion), both conventionally described as 'well-walled', but each having more distinctive epithets. Troy is a 'broad city', 'a great city', 'the city of the Trojans', with 'deep rich soil'; it is the 'city of Priam', having 'lofty gates' and 'fine towers'; and Ilios is 'well-built', 'very windy' but 'a comfortable place to live'; it is also 'steep', 'sheer' and 'frowning', as well as 'holy' and 'sacred'; since it was the city of the Trojans ('those tamers of horses') it not surprisingly has 'fine foals'. It has been conjectured that the city of which Homer gives us these revealing glimpses could have sheltered as many as 50,000 people. A great city indeed must have been required for the indigenous people and the many allies of the Trojans with their horses and war-gear.

There was an open *agora* (place of assembly) in the upper part of the citadel outside the palace of King Priam. This magnificent place 'was fronted with marble colonnades, and in the main building behind there were 50 apartments of polished stone, adjoining each other, where Priam's sons slept with their wives. His daughters had separate quarters, on the other side of the courtyard, where 12 adjoining bedrooms had been built for them, of polished stone and well roofed in. Priam's sons-in-law slept with their loving wives in these.' Nearby were other palatial residences, including those of Hector and Paris, the latter built by Paris himself with the aid of the best workmen to be found in the land of Troy.

There were temples of Apollo and of Athene. The latter seems to have had a seated image of the goddess, for Hector (*Iliad*, book 6) bids his mother Hecuba to take a robe, the loveliest and biggest she can find, the one she most prizes herself, and lay it on the knees of the goddess. She is to promise to sacrifice a dozen yearling heifers, if only Athene will take pity on the town, on the wives and children of the Trojans. Homer then describes how Hecuba went into the palace and ordered her attendant ladies to gather the old women together from all parts of the city. Then she entered her bedchamber, where she stored her embroidered robes, woven by the women of Sidon whom Paris had brought back with him on the voyage on which he had fetched Helen. One of these robes, the largest and most richly adorned, lying at the bottom of the pile like a cluster of brilliant stars, she picked out as the gift for Athene. The old women thronged after her to the shrine in the citadel, and the door was opened to them by Theano, daughter of Kisseus and wife of Antenor, whom the Trojans had

J. R. Freeman

chosen to be priestess. They lifted their hands to Athene, and Theano took the robe and laid it upon the lap of the goddess.

Was this magnificent city, doomed to destruction at the hands of the besieging Greek forces, conjured out of poetic imagination? Did the Trojan War really take place? The search for the site, the work of excavation, the correlation of material objects with Homeric description – all this has led to impressive archeological discoveries in the past hundred years, making impossible that kind of scholarly scepticism which once dismissed the age of the Greek heroes as entirely fictitious. We have now been able to discern a basis of hard fact in many cases, though inconsistency, exaggeration and imaginative adornment must always be taken into account as possibly operative factors.

There is general agreement that no other city in the Troad (the north-west promontory of Asia Minor) except Hissarlik has any good claim to be the site of Troy. It also seems clear that the settlement known as Troy VI was severely damaged by an earthquake at the beginning of the 13th century BC, and was succeeded by the settlement known as Troy VII(a), which had real continuity with Troy VI. Troy VII(a) was destroyed by fire about half a century later, apparently through human agency. It is therefore Troy VII(a) which has strong claims to be regarded as the Homeric Troy.

From the fourth century BC onwards, Greek historians reckoned years in Olympiads, from 776 BC (see GAMES; ZEUS), though local events continued to be dated by the names of annual magistrates and calculations for earlier times were based on the traditional genealogies. It is the Parian Marble, a long inscription of the 3rd century BC, which embodies the first attempt to work out a comprehensive chronology. Some time afterwards another effort was made by the Alexandrine scholar Eratosthenes, whose *Chronographicae* in nine books (known to us in fragments) started with the capture of Troy, dated to 1184 BC, as compared with 1209 BC. Other historians and chronographers gave different dates and their conjectures ranged over a period of two centuries. A destruction date for Homeric Troy around the middle of the 13th century BC, would roughly agree with that given by the historian Herodotus.

'The archaeological Troy,' wrote Carl Blegen, 'the Troy that was built by masons, carpenters and labourers, of rough stones or squared building blocks, and crude bricks made with straw, of wooden timbers and beams, of clay and probably thatch for the roofing – that Troy, in its ruined state today, differs greatly, so far as its appearance is concerned, from the glamorous citadel pictured in the epic poems. But – if one is blessed with a little imagination – when one stands on the ancient hill top in the extreme north-western corner of Asia Minor and looks out over the Trojan plain and thinks of some of the many exciting scenes it has witnessed, one cannot escape feeling that this Troy, too, has a powerful touch of enchantment.'

Above **The Greeks finally entered Troy by what has become the far-famed stratagem of concealing warriors inside a wooden horse:** ***The Building of the Trojan Horse,*** **by Tiepolo** ***Following page*** **Flemish tapestry of the siege: the tale of Troy was immensely popular in the Middle Ages**

Ulysses Remembers Troy

Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy . . .

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tennyson *Ulysses*

The ruins, called Hissarlik, he continues, occupy the western tip of a low ridge coming from the east and ending somewhat abruptly in steep slopes on the north and west and a more gradual descent toward the south. Some four miles distant to the westward, across the flat plain of the tree-bordered Scamander, and beyond a line of low hills, is the Aegean Sea. On it, to the southwest, floats the island of Tenedos – which was sacked by Achilles – and much farther northward is Imbros, where, the sorrowing Hecuba says, some of her sons who had been captured by Achilles were sold into slavery. Behind Imbros, on a clear day, one sees the twin-peaked height of Samothrace, and often when the weather is at its clearest, one can even make out the summit of Mount Athos. Looking on all this, one remembers the old story told by Aeschylus of the fire-signals that flashed from peak to peak across the sea and land to Mycenae, announcing to Clytemnestra that Troy had been captured.

The Mound of Hissarlik

Heinrich Schliemann, a German businessman turned archeologist, started to excavate the hill of Hissarlik in 1870 and he conducted seven major campaigns before he died in 1890. His work was then continued by his architect and assistant, Wilhelm Dörpfeld, in two large-scale campaigns in 1893 and 1894. His discoveries were published in his *Troja und Ilion* (1902). Then, between 1932 and 1938, seven campaigns of three to four months were arranged by the University of Cincinnati, with the aim of investigating anew the stratification and other problems. The results of this work under Carl Blegen have now been published in the series called *Troy*.

The evidence of inscriptions found at Hissarlik caused it to be identified more than a century and a half ago as the site of Hellenistic and Roman Ilion. However, some of those who believed in a historical reality behind the Homeric poems considered that the site could be identified in the stronghold known as Bali Dagh, above the gorge through which the Scamander flows from the hills into the lower plain. In 1822 Charles Maclaren collected, in his *Dissertation on the Topography of the Plain of Troy*, all the relevant data from the *Iliad* and compared it with the best modern maps. As a result he revived the idea, prevalent from classical to Roman times, that Hellenistic and later Ilion lay upon the same site as the Homeric Troy. Frank Calvert, some 50 years later, arrived at a similar conclusion and, in 1865, put his theory to the test of actual excavation on a small scale. This produced Roman, Hellenistic and prehistoric pottery and other objects. When Schliemann visited the Troad in 1868, Calvert showed him the site. He agreed that Hissarlik was a more likely possibility for the site of Troy than Bali Dagh, and determined to begin his excavations there.

The Hissarlik mound had a length of about 200 metres maximum and was under 150 metres wide. It went up to about 31 metres above the level of the plain at its northern extremity. As Blegen says: 'For an administrative centre and a capital the situation was admirably suited, both for security and for economic reasons. It lay near enough to the sea to have landing places and perhaps a small port or two within easy reach, and yet far enough away to be reasonably safe from sudden hostile attacks or piratical raids. It also controlled a land route that apparently came up along the western coastal region of Asia Minor to the shortest crossing of the straits from Asia to Europe. From its vantage grounds it could no doubt likewise dominate traffic up and down the straits, and perhaps tolls of some kind were exacted from those who passed.'

In *Troy and the Trojans* Blegen gives the following chronological table:

Troy	I	3000–2500 BC
	II	2500–2200
	III	2200–2050
	IV	2050–1900
	V	1900–1800
	VI	1800–1300
	VII(a)	1300–1260
	VII(b)1	1260–1190
	VII(b)2	1190–1100
	VIII	700–

He is, however, careful to point out that the

Scenes from Lydgate's *Siege of Troy*, early 15th century *Left* Agamemnon, the Greek leader, in his tent *Right* King Priam, the ruler of Troy, mourns for Hector, the most redoubtable of the Trojan champions, who was killed by the Greek Achilles

British Museum

British Museum

dates given, making no claim to represent more than a general approximation, with a wide margin of error in each direction, essentially follow the conclusions of the Cincinnati Expedition. Though these have been accepted by some scholars, they have been rejected in varying degrees by others. Also, a general chronology, as he says, cannot safely be worked out from the evidence of any one site alone. This must be based on the results obtained at many sites, with due allowance for local accidents and vicissitudes. The large establishments often afford a less trustworthy record than more modest settlements, which sometimes escaped the disturbance caused by grading, changing of levels, and deep digging for the foundations of palaces and great structures. Whole underlying layers could easily be eliminated by ambitious works in later times, as is well illustrated in the central part of the citadel at Troy itself.

Break with the Past

The archeology of Troy, then, dates back for about 5000 years. The first five settlements belong to the Early Bronze Age and are marked by a stratified deposit of some 12 metres in thickness. From the beginning the settlement was a kind of fortified stronghold and the debris of Troy I alone consisted of no less than ten phases of building. The fortification wall in this first phase of the occupation of the site is its most peculiarly impressive feature, some of it found standing to a height of about ten feet 5000 years after its construction. Well-built houses were sometimes coated with plaster and there were woven mats on the floors.

Troy VI of the Middle Bronze Age shows marked and novel differences from what had gone before. Blegen is not alone in thinking that these differences indicate a clear break with the past, and the arrival and establishment of a new people endowed with a heritage of its own. This new people could well have been culturally, perhaps ethnically, closely related to the Mycenaean Greeks.

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: M. Forrest ed., *Troy and the Early Greeks* (Cambridge U. Press, 1973); C. W. Blegen and others, *Troy* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1950–58, 4 vols).

TRUMPET

'BEHOLD, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed' (1 Corinthians, chapter 15). This tremendous passage in St Paul was familiar to generations of Christians through its use in the funeral service, and the picture of the great archangel sounding the last trump and the dead rising from their graves in response was part of the traditional Christian picture of what would happen at the Last Judgement.

In 1 Thessalonians (chapter 4) St Paul again refers to Christ descending from heaven, 'with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God', to judge the living and the dead. And in Matthew (chapter 24) Jesus is quoted as describing what will happen at 'the close of the age': the sun and moon will be darkened, the stars will fall from heaven, and all the people of the earth will see 'the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

This Christian association of the trumpet with the judgement at the end of the world goes back directly to a verse in Isaiah (27.13) which says that in the days to come a great trumpet will be blown and all the scattered people of God will reunite to worship him in Jerusalem. More generally, it goes back to the use of trumpets in Jewish ritual and the Old Testament association of the trumpet with the voice, power and judgement of God.

In many parts of the world the harsh, strident, carrying call of a horn or trumpet has been regarded, on occasion, as the voice of a supernatural being, and the same sound has also been used to attract the attention of supernatural beings. When God descended

John Moss

The trumpet or horn has a heart-stirring sound, connected with its use in hunting and war, and in salutes to kings and heroes. War horns and trumpets were originally blown to convey signals and to frighten the enemy

Trumpet

Giraudon

2896

Left Sacred trumpets, made from ram's horns, and blown by priests, were used at Jericho to create a blast of sound which knocked down the walls: *The Fall of Jericho*, by Jean Fouquet, c 1475 *Right* An angel with a trumpet, from a window in Oxford Cathedral

Sonia Halliday

on Mount Sinai to deliver the Ten Commandments, 'there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast', which made all the people afraid (Exodus, chapters 19, 20). The author of Revelation heard behind him 'a loud voice like a trumpet', and turned to see that the speaker was Christ in majesty (chapter 1). It was the Jewish custom to blow trumpets at all religious feasts, on the first day of each month, and at the daily sacrifice, when the sound of the trumpet was the voice of the people calling to God. The deity himself had instructed Moses to have silver trumpets made, which were to be sounded to remind him of the people's presence and needs (Numbers, chapter 10).

The Feast of Trumpets was held in the autumn, on the first day of the seventh month, which was later termed the New Year but was originally the opening of the yearly period of repentance that reached its peak on the Day of Atonement (see JUDAISM). The day of the Feast of Trumpets was said to be the day on which God judged mankind and allotted rewards and punishments, and some said that the trumpets were sounded to confuse Satan, the prosecutor in the heavenly court. This reinforced the connection between the trumpet and God as Judge, already suggested by the trumpet blast on Sinai.

The rabbis also connected the trumpets of Exodus and Isaiah, and the Feast of Trumpets, with the story of how Abraham obeyed God's orders to sacrifice Isaac, his son (Genesis, chapter 22). He bound Isaac and laid him on the altar but at the last moment his instructions were changed, and instead of Isaac he sacrificed a ram which he found nearby, caught by its horns in a thicket. This ram, it was said, had been specially created by God. It was the ram's left horn which God sounded on Sinai, and it was the right horn which would be blown in the time of the Messiah to summon the strayed sheep of Israel back to Jerusalem. The sacrifice of the ram had occurred on the first day of the seventh month, and the sounding of ram's horn trumpets on that day had been commanded by God, to remind him of Abraham's obedient binding of Isaac and as a sign that the congregation regarded themselves as bound offerings to God.

The Horn of Heimdall

The use of an animal's horn as a musical instrument, like the Jewish *shofar* of ram's horn, would naturally tend to carry the associations of power, virility and aggression linked with horns (see HORNS). In many societies trumpets have been used to herald the accession of a king, for sounding alarms and for signalling in battle, because the sound carries well and in the hope of frightening the enemy. The fall of Jericho was accomplished by the blast of the ram's horn trumpets, combined with the magic of the number seven (see SEVEN), creating so formidable a battering ram of sound that the walls of the city fell down flat. The trumpets were blown by the priests who escorted the sacred ark of God, and when the ark was brought to Jerusalem by King David seven priests blew trumpets before it (Joshua, chapter 6; 1 Chronicles 15.24).

These priests reappear in the book of Revelation (chapter 8) in the form of the seven angels who stand before God, who are given seven trumpets. They blow them in turn and appalling plagues and horrors strike the world. When the seventh trumpet sounds (chapter 11), voices are heard in heaven proclaiming that the kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of God.

The association of the trumpet or horn with the end of the world appears again in Norse mythology. Heimdall, the watchman of the gods who never sleeps, lives beside Bifrost, the rainbow bridge, at the point where it reaches the sky. At the first signs of the approaching end, he will blow his great horn Gjallarhorn (ringing horn), whose note is heard through all the worlds (see SCANDINAVIA). There is a rough parallel here with the Christian belief that an archangel, Gabriel or Michael, will wake the dead at the end of time with the blast of the last trump.

In Bali spirits were summoned by blasts on horns or trumpets, which were blown again to drive them away. In some societies a medicine-man talks through a trumpet when he is speaking with the voice of a god or spirit, and the spirits of the dead played trumpets at shows staged by some 19th century mediums. In the Alps the wooden trumpet called the Alphorn, used for calling cattle and signalling over long distances, was believed to protect men and beasts from evil when sounded at dusk. Some ceremonial trumpets are of enormous size, the lengthening of the tube deepening the note. Metal trumpets carried in funeral processions in China are so long that they can only be played when rested on the ground during a pause in the procession, and the Tibetans and Mongols used copper trumpets 16 feet long.

Triton, the Greek merman, who played only a very minor role in mythology, was a favourite subject in art and was frequently shown blowing a conch shell. Virgil's *Aeneid* (book 6) tells the story of how Misenus, the Trojan trumpeter, who excelled all others in his skill at 'stirring hearts with his trumpet of bronze and kindling the blaze of battle with his music', rashly challenged the gods to outdo him. The jealous Triton trapped him among rocks at the sea's edge and drowned him.

The horn or trumpet has indeed a heart-stirring sound, connected with its use in hunting and war, and in salutes to kings and heroes. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* the pilgrims come to the river of death, the last barrier that separates them from the Celestial City, and Mr Valiant-for-truth is summoned to cross: 'So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'

TURIN SHROUD

THE TURIN SHROUD is a piece of linen, 13½ feet (4 m) long by 3½ feet (1 m) wide, supposed by many people to be the actual shroud used to wrap the body of Christ. It bears a faint, brownish image of the front and back of a bearded, male human figure, 'hinged' at the head, and superimposed are darker stains, said to be blood, found on the left hand side, wrists, feet and head.

Despite a battery of the most sophisticated tests, and the combined resources of modern technological methods, the shroud has stubbornly refused to yield up its mysteries. The exact nature of the image – paint? dye? sweat and embalming fluids? – remains inexplicable except to those who regard it as the result of supernatural radiation or burning produced at the moment of resurrection; and all the efforts of sceptics have failed to show that the shroud is a fake. Furthermore, the shroud has a habit of surprising investigators with still deeper mysteries: for instance, it was not until 1898, when the first photographs were taken of it, that the image was discovered to be a perfect photographic negative. The negative of a photograph of the shroud image shows up the features and body far more clearly – the original marks being rather blurred and hard to interpret. As yet no one has suggested how a mediaeval forger could have achieved this effect, though some bizarre attempts at reconstruction have been made.

The details of the 'bloodstains' on the shroud correspond exactly with the details of Christ's crucifixion as we now know them. They indicate that the body was scourged, crowned or capped with thorns, crucified, by nails through the wrists and feet, and pierced in the side. The apparent scourge marks, covering the entire body in parallel pairs, correspond to what we know of Roman scourges or *flagrae*, two-thonged whips tipped with pieces of lead or bone. The wrist wounds are in the correct position for crucifixion, since a body could not be supported by nails through the hands, as the flesh would

tear; this recent discovery is of course contrary to the popular artistic image of the crucified Christ, with the nails through the hands – another point making the forgery theory unlikely. Even the way the blood has run is correct. Blood from the wrist wounds has run up the arms towards the elbows, as it would if the arms were in a crucified position; and it has run at two slightly different angles, consistent with modern knowledge of how crucifixion tortured the victim – he alternately raised himself on his pierced feet and hung from the wrist nails. Many other correspondences have been found by medical experts.

The earliest certain historical reference is in 1389, when we hear of the shroud being exhibited for money in France by a knight named Geoffrey de Charny. There are possible references to it earlier than this, and Ian Wilson in his *The Turin Shroud* has reconstructed a very plausible history right back to its possible creation, suggesting that a famous image of Christ's face known as the Mandylion was in fact the face section of the shroud. He supports this with a wealth of historical and art-historical evidence, but it remains unproven. We do know that in 1453 the shroud was given or sold by the de Charnys to Louis, Duke of Savoy, and it has remained in that family ever since. The present Duke of Savoy, ex-King Umberto of Italy, owns the shroud, which is kept at Turin Cathedral. In 1532 the shroud was damaged by fire; holes were burnt in it by melted silver from its case, and patched by nuns two years later.

In 1973 pollen grains from the shroud were analyzed, and found to contain some examples from plants found in Palestine. Middle-Eastern cotton plants had been used to make the linen. In 1974 pictures of the shroud were scanned with a VP-8 image analyzer by two American scientists, and the three-dimensional model they produced led to the launching of the Shroud of Turin Research Project in 1977. In 1978 36 scientists from various disciplines met to examine the shroud with the most sophisticated equipment at their disposal.

The results of this arsenal of tests have not yet been published fully, but the major questions still remain unanswered. Evidence on the 'bloodstains' showed that they could be, and probably were, blood. The image seems not to be pigment of any kind, except that a small amount of iron oxide was found. One expert, Dr Walter McCrone, concluded from this that the image must be an artist's forgery, probably of the 14th century; but most of the investigators agreed that the image is not painted on or the result of a chemical reaction. One expert found that it 'may have been caused by a violent burst of radiant heat'. But what natural process could have produced this result?

The 1978 tests did not include dating by the carbon-14 method, as this would have meant destroying part of the shroud. New methods would use only small samples and could be accurate within 150 years, but this test has not yet been authorised. Even if the shroud was shown to be of the right date, this would not prove that it was Christ's shroud; and if it was shown to be of a later date, science still has to explain what formed the image. This paradoxical object, with its ability to reveal new puzzles as fast as new tests are devised, remains a baffling challenge to sceptics.

Above **The Turin Shroud**

TWELVE

Twelve is the number of a complete cycle or set of things, as in the 12 months of the year, the 12 signs of the zodiac: another example is the 12 days of Christmas ending on Twelfth Night, which inspired carols and songs in which the 12 days are connected with ideas or creatures or objects. The illustrations to 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' on the following pages are by 'Herry', published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1926

IN THE CLOSING chapters of the book of Revelation, the holy city, new Jerusalem, is seen coming down out of heaven from God, 'its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.' One of the striking things about this vision of perfection and loveliness is the repeated use of the number 12. The city's wall has 12 gates, at which 12 angels stand and on which are inscribed the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. The wall has 12 foundation-stones, on which are written the names of the 12 apostles and which are adorned with 12 jewels. Within the city stands the tree of life with its 12 kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The city's dimensions are stated in terms of 12. It is a cube, 12,000 stadia long, broad and high, and its wall stands 144 cubits high. But the stadia and cubits are not earthly measurements; the cube means perfection, and 12 is used all through this passage as a number of completeness.

The year is made of 12 months, at the end of which the sun and the life of Nature return to their starting point, as it were, to run their course through the seasons again, and so 12 is the number of an entire cycle or a whole set. It is related to 7, another number of completeness, because both are made of 3 and 4, multiplied or added, and both are regarded by the numerologically minded as linked with the essential underlying structure of the universe. There are the 7 planets of antiquity, 7 days of the week, 7 colours, 7 notes of the musical scale, and the 12 months, 12 zodiac signs, 12 hours of the day. Some Christian writers said that Jesus chose 12 disciples to make known the Trinity to the four corners of the world, and to show that he is the spiritual day or the perfect year, with the apostles as the hours or months (see also SEVEN; THREE).

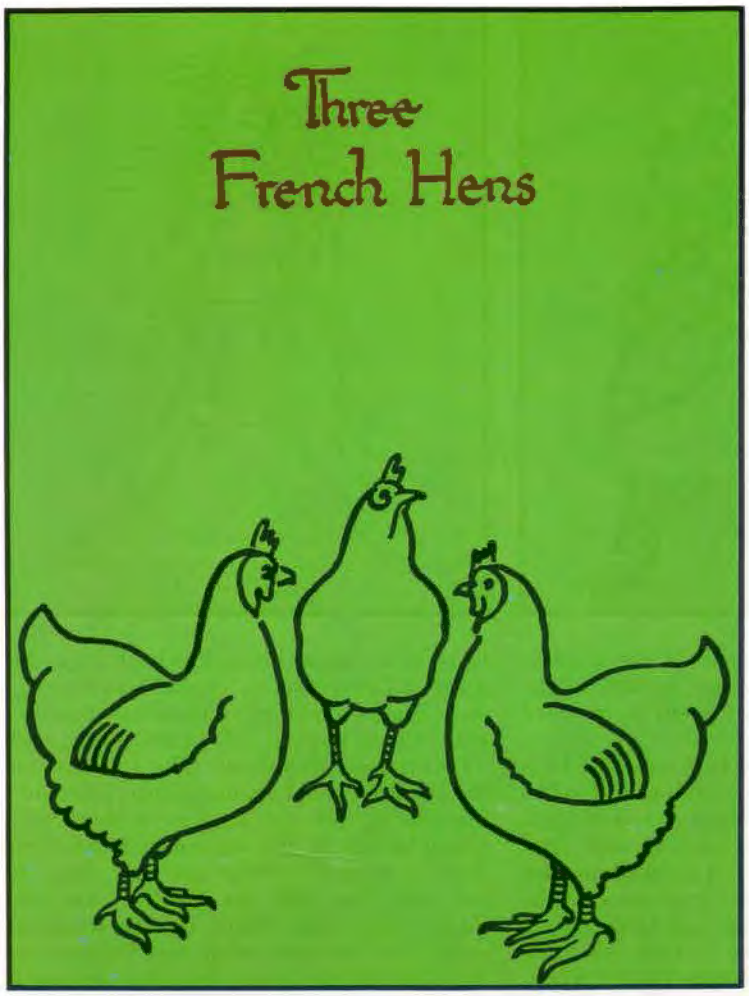
The earliest code of Roman laws was written on 12 tablets.

In Exodus (chapter 28) there are instructions for making the vestments of the high priest, including the mysterious 'breastpiece of judgement' on which were to be set four rows of precious stones, three in each row: sardius (or cornelian), topaz, carbuncle; emerald, sapphire, diamond; jacinth, agate, amethyst; beryl, onyx, jasper. The 12 stones were to be engraved with the names of the 12 tribes. 'So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgement upon his heart, when he goes into the holy place, to bring them to continual remembrance before the Lord.' Much later, in the 1st century AD, the philosopher Philo Judaeus thought that the 12 jewels stood for the signs of the zodiac, and the historian Josephus said that the high priest's robes symbolized the entire universe, with the jewels representing either the months or the zodiac signs.

In Numbers (chapter 2) there are instructions for the order of march and the pitching of camp when the Israelites are travelling through the wilderness towards the Promised Land. The camp is to be laid out in a square, like the holy city of Revelation later, with three tribes on each side and the Levites in the middle. When Elijah was engaged in his contest against the priests of Baal, he built his altar of 12 stones, to stand for the 12 tribes (1 Kings, chapter 18).

The gospels do not explain why Jesus chose 12 apostles, rather than some other number, but he is quoted as telling them that 'in the new world' they would sit on 12 thrones to judge the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19.28). They are listed in St Luke (chapter 6) as Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, another James, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

In the book of Revelation (chapter 7) an angel appears and 'seals' the servants of God, making God's mark on the foreheads of 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes, 144,000 in all, who are later (chapter 14) seen standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb and singing a new song before the throne of God. Here the 12 tribes presumably stand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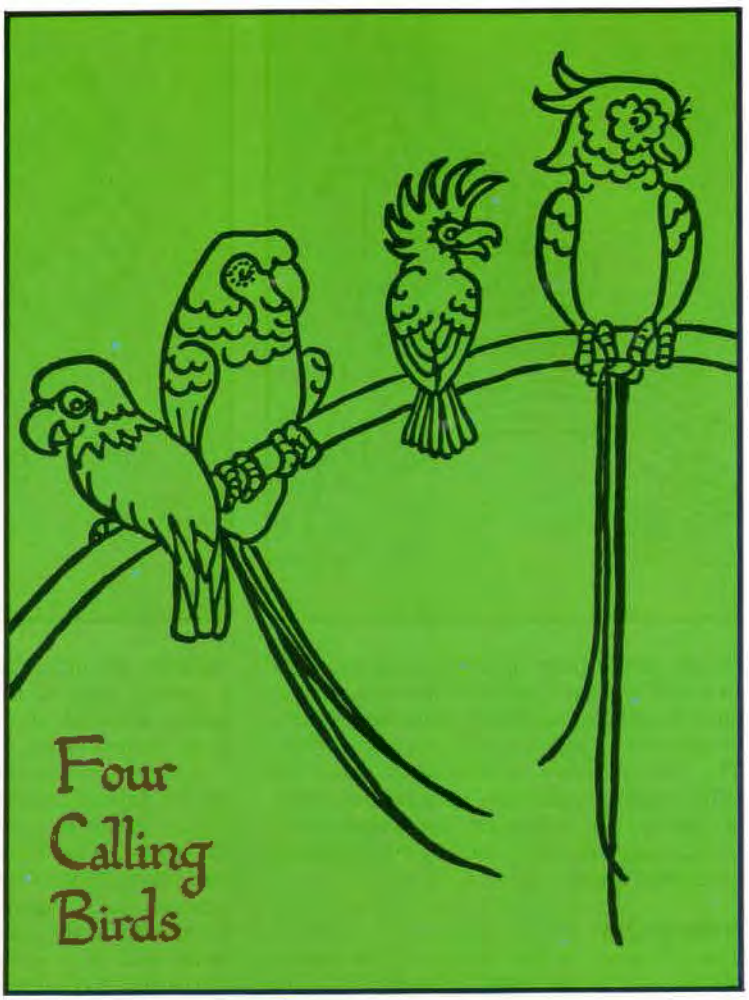
French Hens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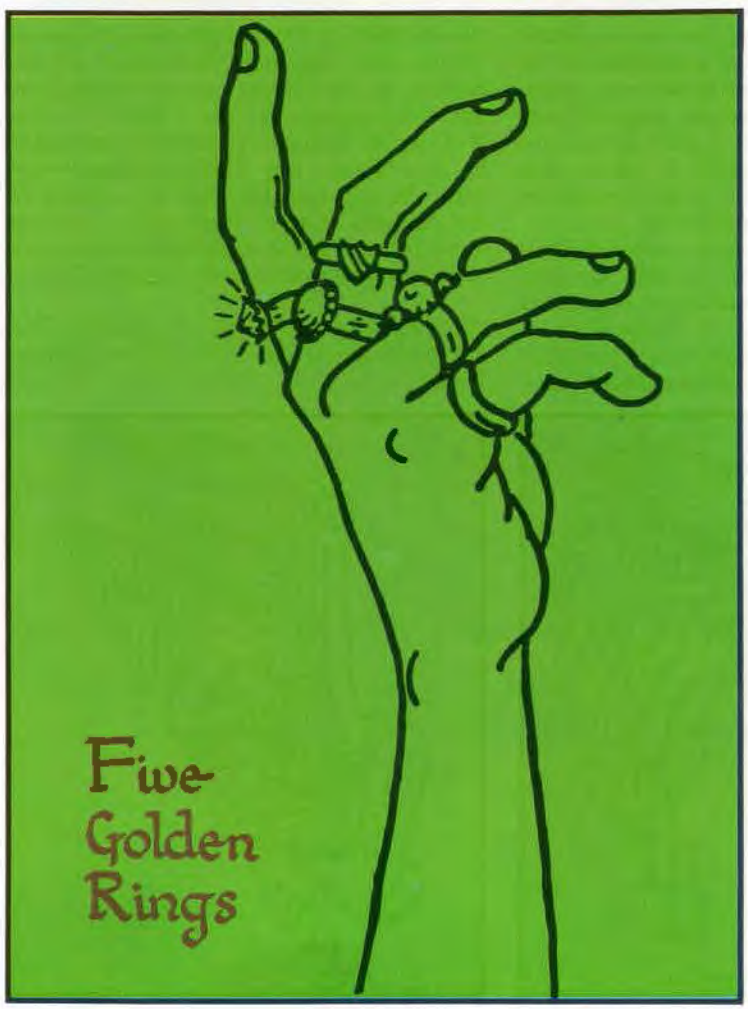
Birds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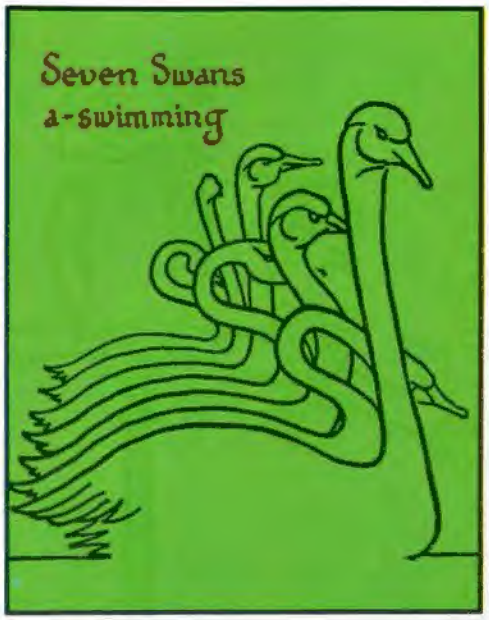
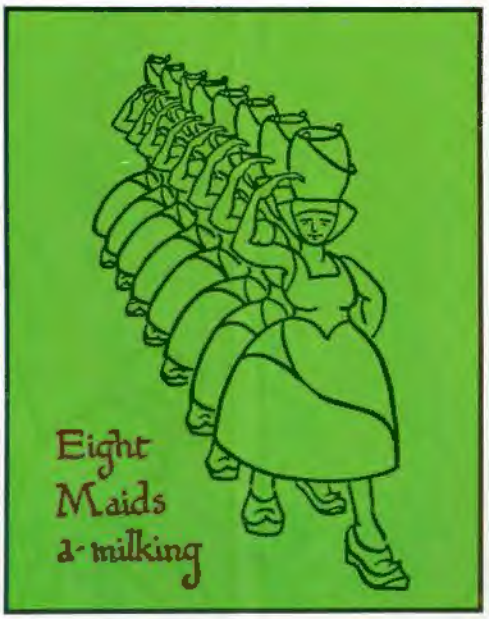
Six
Geese
a-laying





for the whole body of God's people and the 144,000 for the Christian martyrs slaughtered in the persecutions, with the counting in terms of 12 again a mark of completeness. The list of tribes in chapter 7 omits the tribe of Dan, apparently because the author of Revelation, following up Jewish traditions, expected the Antichrist to emerge from their ranks.

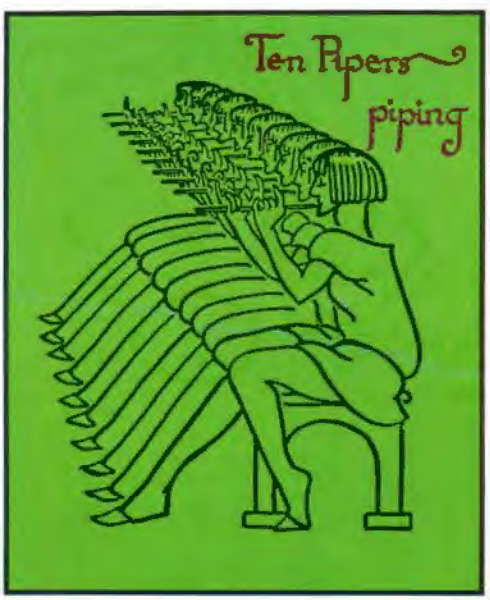
A New Dial

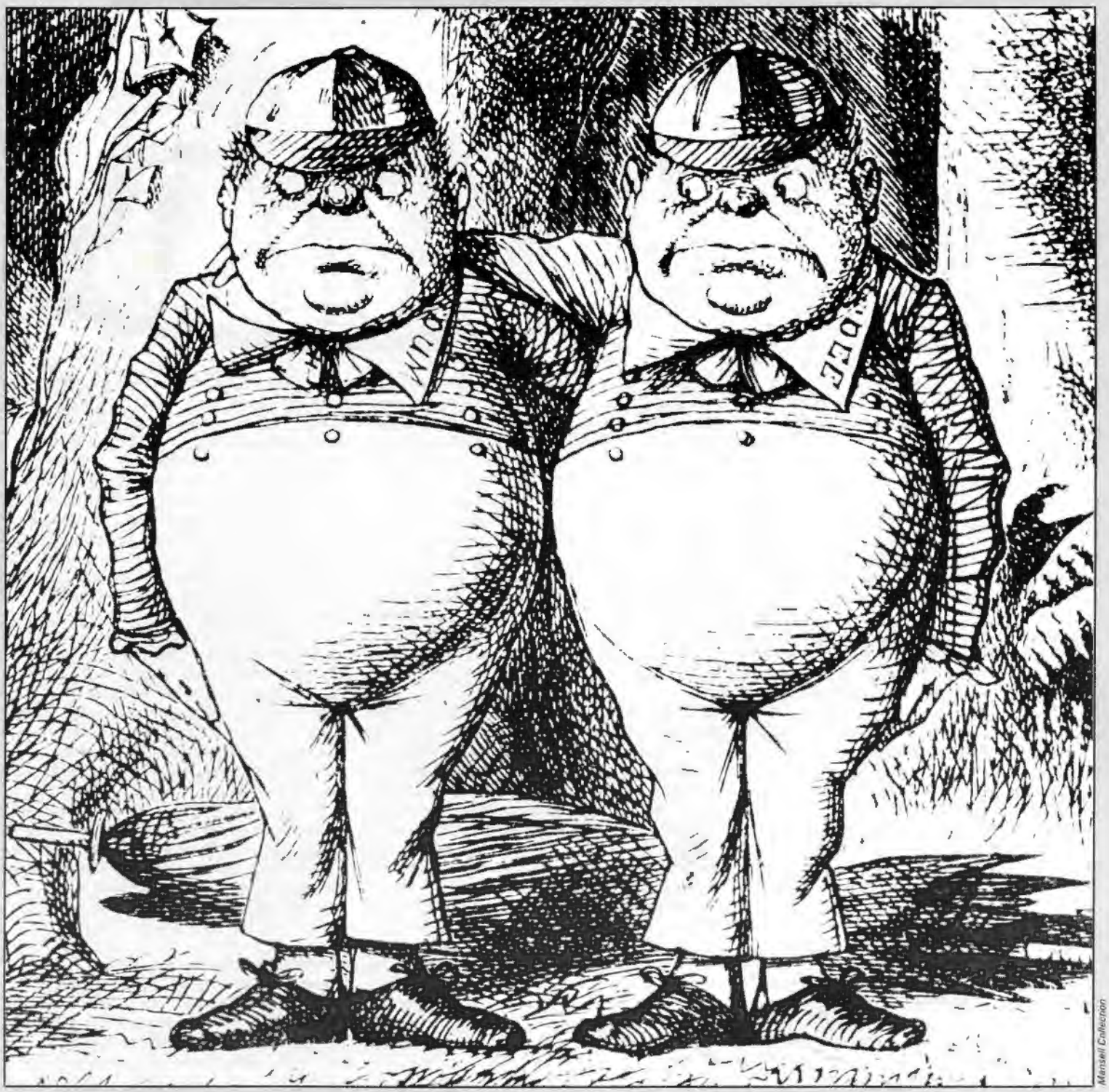
The 12 stars in the crown of 'the woman clothed with the sun' (chapter 12) are generally agreed to be the signs of the zodiac, but whether there is any astrological significance in the repeated use of 12 in the vision of the holy city is doubtful. The description of the city draws on the account of the Israelite camp in the wilderness and on the city of Ezekiel's vision, which also had 12 gates for the 12 tribes (Ezekiel, chapter 48). The 12 jewels which adorn the foundation stones are evidently related to the stones on the high priest's breastpiece, but they are given in a different order and they are now connected with the 12 apostles instead of the 12 tribes, presumably as a sign that the 'new Israel' of Christianity has replaced the old. The order of the jewels is a puzzle and, if they are related to the zodiac signs at all, they seem to be listed in the reverse order.

A still surviving example of a cycle of 12 is the 12 days of Christmas, ending on Twelfth Night (the evening of 5 January) which used to be an occasion of feasting and revel (see BEAN; CHRISTMAS). A parallel was seen between the 12 days of Christmas and the 12 months of the ensuing year, hence the old belief that it is unlucky to take down the Christmas decorations before Twelfth Night, because to shorten the festive season is to curtail the prosperity of the months ahead and possibly the life of a member of the family, who may die before the year is out. This has in turn created the comparatively new superstition that it is unlucky to leave the Christmas decorations in place after Twelfth Night, which is to go beyond the proper limits, and so is dangerous.

The Christmas season also inspired carols and songs in which the 12 days are connected with ideas or creatures or objects, as in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', in which the days are linked with a partridge in a pear tree, two turtle-doves, three French hens, four calling birds, five gold rings, six geese a-laying, seven swans a-swimming, eight maids a-milking, nine ladies dancing, ten lords a-leaping, 11 pipers piping and 12 drummers drumming. The 12 hours on the clockface could similarly inspire a counting song of this sort, such as 'A New Dial', which begins (in the version in *The Oxford Book of Carols*): 'What are they that are but one? One God, one Baptism, and one Faith, one Truth there is, the scripture saith.' It continues with two Testaments (the Old and the New), the three persons of the Trinity, four evangelists, the five senses, the six working days of the week, the seven liberal arts, the eight beatitudes (of the Sermon on the Mount), the nine Muses, the ten Commandments, the 11,000 Virgins of Cologne (legendary martyrs massacred by the Huns), and finishes triumphantly with the 12 apostles and 12 articles of the Apostles' Creed. Here again, in crude form, is the attempt to picture the structure of the universe as arranged in terms of 12.

FURTHER READING: G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John The Divine* (Black, 1966).





Mansell Collection

The reason for the psychic affinity that sometimes exists between twins still eludes investigators. This is reflected in Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the best-known twins in literature; when Alice meets them, only the words 'dum' and 'dee' are visible; 'Tweedle', the mysterious element they have in common, is hidden from her. Illustration to *Through the Looking-Glass*, by Sir John Tenniel

'If telepathic communication is to be found anywhere, it is much more likely to exist between identical twins than between ordinary persons': that there is something uncanny about twins has long been recognized, and in many societies the birth of twins has been greeted with fear – fear of both the children and their mother

TWINS

THE PHENOMENON of twins appears always to have exercised a remarkable fascination. Statistically it is not uncommon, and yet it is sufficiently unusual to call for comment and to arouse interest. As we follow the phenomenon back into the labyrinths of religion, mythology and folklore, however, we find other aspects besides the innocent curiosity of the envious bystander. There is also the aspect of fear – fear of both the children and their mother – which demanded special precautions, or worse, on birth, and continued respect and reverence afterwards. In addition, many peoples have worshipped at least one pair of twin gods, either brothers or brother and sister, reflecting some of the concerns and taboos which have surrounded human twins. Twins have been useful material for many novelists and scientific investigators, not least because of the extraordinary affinity which has been seen to exist between them. In short, twinship shows a type of human relationship consisting not only in similarity of appearance but in something more mysterious and intangible; it is this intangible quality which has left such fascinating traces in all the frontier sciences.

It is common knowledge today that twins are of two kinds: identical twins, of the same sex, having developed from one fertilized egg (monozygotic twins); and fraternal

twins, who may or may not be of the same sex, but who have developed from two independently-fertilized eggs (dizygotic twins). In pre-literate societies, however, this important distinction is as a rule not known, or at least known only by its effect; and in comparison with the primary belief that normal human births take place strictly one at a time, the birth of two children more or less simultaneously from the same mother is inevitably regarded as a special manifestation of supernatural power. (This of course applies even more strongly to triplets and other 'supertwins'.)

In the so-called primitive and archaic cultures, which have been dominated by a thoroughgoing belief in the reality and influence of a supernatural order alongside and within the natural, the act of giving birth has always been hedged about with taboos, since there the supernaturals are active (see BIRTH; FERTILITY). But since humans normally have only one child at a time, the birth of twins seems always to have been regarded as a temporary disturbance of the balance between Nature and the supernatural, and therefore 'uncanny'. Man's reactions to such manifestations have varied more or less as his reactions to any holy or sacred manifestation have varied – between horror, fear, fascination and devotion. As a rule, though, definite measures have had to be taken in order to restore the balance. Sometimes the offending infants have been put to death, together with their mother; sometimes one child has been destroyed, one saved; sometimes all three have been reverenced as repositories of divine power. Always rituals were resorted to in order to appease the unusually active spirits.

'Betrothed' in the Womb

Since sacredness was the peculiar property of the spirit world, it could provoke one of two reactions in primitive societies. One was to destroy whatever was so affected and thus return it to the spirits, on the principle of its being too dangerous to tolerate. The other was to accord the manifestation special honours, since it was too dangerous not to tolerate. It is recorded that in the Niger delta area at the turn of the century a woman who had given birth to twins was simply too dangerous to touch; she was allowed neither to touch anything belonging to ordinary people nor even to drink from the same spring. As a result both she and her twins might die from hunger and exposure, not because of callousness, but from fear. It is also reported that to say to a woman, 'May you become the mother of twins!' was tantamount to a curse. It seems to have been commonly held that since a man could normally father only one child at a time, the second twin was the result either of the infidelity of the mother, or of the direct intervention of the spirits.

In Togoland, if the twins were of different sexes, the boy was kept, the girl disposed of; if both were of the same sex, only the stronger was kept. In such cases, the surviving child might be given a carved piece of wood, said to represent the deceased twin; this may have been to prevent the survivor from pining for the deceased, but may also have served the practical purpose of giving the ghost of the child who had died somewhere to return to, other than to the living body of the survivor. One Borneo tribe gave the need to preserve the life of one twin as a motive for killing the other. In a dangerous world, twins, by reason of the bond of sympathy between them, were subject to a double share of danger and misfortune, since each was liable to all the ills which might befall the other.

Mansell Collection

Castor and Polydeuces, the Dioscuri or 'heavenly twins', returning to their parents' home; scene from a Greek amphora, c540 BC. Best known for their protection of travellers, the Dioscuri are representative of the many twin deities, particularly pairs of brothers, who occur in Indo-European culture and who are regarded as helpers of mankind in a special sense. A body of mythological material concerning the classical 'heavenly twins' was assimilated to Christian themes and resulted in the legend that the Apostle Thomas, called Didymus, 'the twin', in the New Testament, was the twin of Jesus Christ; although they were outwardly alike, Jesus was divine and Thomas was human

To some extent, this attitude survives today. According to Professor E. E. Evans-Pritchard, twins are still regarded as one single social personality (although not as one individual) among the Nuer. In practice this means that on certain important ritual occasions they must act together. When the senior twin marries, for instance, the junior has an important role to play in the marriage ceremonies; female twins should be married on the same day. When one twin dies, no mortuary ceremonies take place, since it is not possible for the one symbolically to enter into the future life without the other. Among the Lele, according to Mary Douglas, the parents of twins are believed to have been especially honoured by the spirits (the 'positive pole' of sacredness); they are treated as diviners, and are exempted from the normal rituals which are carried out by those who wish to obtain magical powers. A woman who has borne twins does not suffer from the ritual disabilities which normally affect women; she is allowed to attend conferences on 'twin magic' on the same footing as men. As a rule, though, the parents of twins have to be secluded in a special hut for almost a month, until the proper customs have been carried out.

In parts of Nigeria, women who had given birth to twins were sent to live in 'twin towns', where they were maintained by their husbands, but were in effect living in a state of divorce. A variant was in some cases provided by the 'twin-market', where women who had already had twins offered goods for sale, and where something was bought on behalf of the new-born (four-month-old) infants. This again is a means of restoring the disturbed balance of Nature, and of receiving mother and children back into the normal fellowship of the tribe. A woman who died in childbirth was always regarded as dangerous, and it goes without saying that one who died in the course of giving birth to twins was thought to be doubly so.

It is interesting that there seems to have been a close analogy between the second of a pair of twins and the placenta of an ordinary child, which was sometimes called 'the twin'. In either case, the fate of the one (whether child or afterbirth) was closely bound up with that of the other. In parts of India, the connection of boy and girl in the womb seems to have been taken almost as a form of pre-natal incest, while it is on record that in Bali, twins of different sexes were called 'betrothed'.

The Twin Brother of Jesus

There are two kinds of mythological twins: brother and sister, and two brothers. Many myths in which sun and moon are brother and sister, condemned by some primeval transgression, possibly incest, to pursue each other across the heavens, fall into the first category. However, the twin motif is less marked in these stories than in the ancient Indian myth of the first human pair, Yama and Yami. In a hymn of the *Rig-Veda* the first man, Yama, is wooed by his sister, Yami, and in later tradition the two become rulers of the underworld (though in practice Yami fades away almost entirely). The similarity of the names is significant; in many pairs of mythological twins, the closeness of the bonds that bind them together is marked by the practically identical names that they bear.

Far more mythological material has gathered around pairs of brothers than around twins who are brother and sister. In some cases it may well be that the stories have a basis in historical fact. For example there are the two pairs of Old Testament

twins, Esau and Jacob (Genesis, chapter 25), and Perez and Zerah (Genesis, chapter 38), the twin sons of Tamar. In the latter case, the mother is said to have conceived twins as a result of harlotry, a belief that has primitive roots. The practice of binding a thread on the first of the infants to emerge from the womb, presumably in order to avoid later complications when it came to determining questions of precedence, is mentioned in the second story.

A curious example, also from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, concerns the Apostle Thomas, who is called Didymus, 'the twin', in the New Testament, and who is traditionally regarded as the first missionary to India. According to a late legend, Thomas was the twin of Jesus Christ, born to Mary shortly after Jesus. The three Magi, when they brought their gifts to the infant Jesus, asked for his swaddling-band as a memento, but were given that of Thomas instead. Jesus and Thomas grew up together, making ploughs and yokes in their father's carpentry shop; the two were outwardly alike, but in reality Jesus was divine, Thomas human. What has happened here is that mythological material concerning the classical 'heavenly twins', the Dioscuri (see below), has become assimilated to Christian themes.

Another interesting example from the borders of the Christian tradition concerns Mani, the founder of Manicheism, who probably lived in the 3rd century AD. Mani claimed to have a 'twin self' in the heavens, who came down and united with him, bringing revelations from the deity. This 'twin' was in fact none other than the Holy Spirit (see GNOSTICISM; MANICHEANS).

However, the best known examples of twin deities come from the wide area of Indo-European culture, from India in the east to Scandinavia in the north. Although the details vary considerably, the outlines are constant: the worship of two brothers who are in a very special sense the helpers of mankind. They are connected in a general way with fertility, and with human birth (not surprisingly, in view of the primitive view of twin births); but in addition they have special links with horses and chariots and harnesses, they make yokes for oxen, and they are believed to be connected with the craft of stonemasonry and the building of cities. They also protect travellers, particularly those who travel by water. These detâils are not easily reconcilable with one another, and it is impossible even to speculate on the origins of such a wide variety of belief concerning one mode of deity; nevertheless all these points recur frequently.

In Indian tradition, the twin deities are called the Asvins, who are charioteers, rainmakers, and givers of fertility to humans and to the earth. They are also called *natasya*, 'healers', but the fertility aspect is the most prominent; they are invoked in the Hindu marriage ritual, and in the *Rig-Veda* it is said of them: 'You place the child in a woman's womb, you place the seed in all beings, that it may grow.'

In the Greek tradition, the heavenly twins were called the Dioskouroi, 'sons of Zeus'. Together with their sister Helen they were born of Zeus and Leda – though in some versions there is an echo of the idea of divided paternity in the tradition that only one, Polydeuces, was fathered by Zeus; the other, Castor, was the son of Tyndareus, King of Sparta. Their worship early passed to Rome, where they received the better-known names of Castor and Pollux. They still retained a wide range of functions, being connected with the sky, thunder and storms, as well as guarding hospitality and oaths. It was, however, for their role in the protection of travellers that they were best known. A minor illustration of this is found in the Acts of the Apostles (28.11) where Luke and Paul 'set sail in a ship which had wintered in the island (Malta), a ship of Alexandria, with the Twin Brothers as figurehead'. This ship was clearly believed to be under the special protection of the patrons of navigation.

Incidentally, for seamen to catch sight of the constellation of Gemini (the heavenly prototype of Castor and Pollux, and probably of all other Indo-European twin gods as well) in a bad storm, was a sign of the greatest good fortune. The following lines by Macaulay refer to a ball of fire which is sometimes seen

Mythological twin brothers are often associated with horses, chariots and harnesses, and with stonemasonry and the building of cities; Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, traced the boundaries of the future city with a bull and heifer, symbols of fertility, yoked together: statue of the twins being suckled by a wolf

Mansell Collection

playing round ships' masts in a storm, and which was once identified with the visible presence of Castor and Pollux:

> Safe comes the ship to harbour
> Through billows and through gales,
> If once the Great Twin Brethren
> Sit shining on her sails.

Another name for this electrical phenomenon is 'St Elmo's Fire'.

A similar combination of mythological motifs is found in the story of Romulus and Remus (see FOUNDING OF ROME). They were builders; one, Romulus, was divine; and the bounds of the future city were traced out by a bull and a heifer, both symbols of fertility, yoked together. Another building myth ascribes the founding of Thebes to Amphion and Zethus. Amphion was immortal, Zethus mortal, and both were tamers and riders of horses.

Mention has been made of the link between the Dioscuri and the constellation Gemini. There is no evidence that human twins were believed to be under the special influences of this sign of the zodiac, but twins would clearly have identical, or virtually identical, astrological horoscopes. The convinced believer in astrology finds no difficulty in explaining certain aspects of the psychical affinities that have been observed in twins in terms of identical planetary influences at every stage. In fact, twins, even when they are identical, are not always identical in behaviour or temperament; but some startling facts have been reported.

In societies that regarded normal twins as uncanny, a temporary disturbance of the balance between Nature and the supernatural, the birth of twins who were joined together physically must have been a fearsome event; in more sophisticated societies, Siamese twins were often exhibited as freaks. 'Anna Belle Grey', from *Dear Dead Days: A Family Album*, edited by Charles Addams

Library of Congress, Washington

In 1962, for instance, two 32-year-old identical twin sisters died in different wards of an American hospital within moments of each other, having been admitted with identical schizophrenic symptoms, and having deteriorated in precisely the same way. There are, of course, many reports of twins who have known when their 'other half' was ill, in danger or in trouble. Like the twins Esteban and Manuel in Thornton Wilder's novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: '. . . there existed a need of one another so terrible that it produced miracles as naturally as the charged air of a sultry day produces lightning. The brothers were scarcely conscious of it themselves, but telepathy was a common occurrence in their lives, and when one returned home the other was always aware of it when his brother was still several streets away.' Twins in school have been known to submit examination papers so nearly identical as to suggest to the authorities that there had been collusion, and there have been many other coincidences of thought and action.

Recent research has attempted to demonstrate and chart twin telepathy; J. B. Rhine, one of the foremost authorities in this field, has tested many pairs of twins for evidence of telepathic communication, and although he has not achieved spectacular results, he has recorded that 'cases have been reported to us from time to time of what would appear to be exceptional telepathic rapport between identical twins'. Patterns of the rhythmic electrical changes in the brains of identical twins are often remarkably similar, and although some scientists are disposed to explain away similarities of thought and behaviour as resulting from identical environmental influence, this explanation is forced. The Danish scientist Dr N. Jule-Nielsen has studied identical twins brought up for the most part in different environments, and has shown how similar their aptitudes and personalities are. Since 1953 a Roman scientist, Professor Luigi Gedda of the Gregor Mendel Institute has studied well over 15,000 pairs of twins. He put forward a 'clock-of-life' theory to explain the amazing coincidences in twins' lives. He describes these in his book *Chroagenetics* (1978), citing many cases of telepathy.

There are therefore solid reasons why twins should have exercised a perennial fascination, and why so many aspects of the phenomenon should have been recorded and commented upon. Perhaps the genetics of twinship are more thoroughly known now than at any time in the past; but the psychology of twinship is still very largely a closed, or at all events an unread book.

We may perhaps end with an allegory. The best-known twins in literature are

Ibedji from western Nigeria: because they believe that the affinity that exists between twins while they are alive continues after the death of one twin, the Yoruba make an effigy of the child who has died. The survivor is taught to tend and care for the statue

Lewis Carroll's Tweedledum and Tweedledee (whom no one now remembers to have been originally the 18th century musicians Handel and Bononcini, whose music the critics professed not to be able to tell apart). In *Through the Looking-Glass* they are introduced thus: 'They were standing under a tree, each with an arm round the other's neck, and Alice knew which was which in a moment, because one of them had 'DUM' embroidered on his collar, and the other 'DEE'. "I suppose they've each got 'TWEEDLE' round at the back of the collar," she said to herself.' If Alice is the eternal investigator, although she may be able to tell a certain amount about the twins in front of her, the writing on the back of their collars – the element which they genuinely have in common – still eludes her. Some day, though, she may find her way round to the back.

ERIC J. SHARPE

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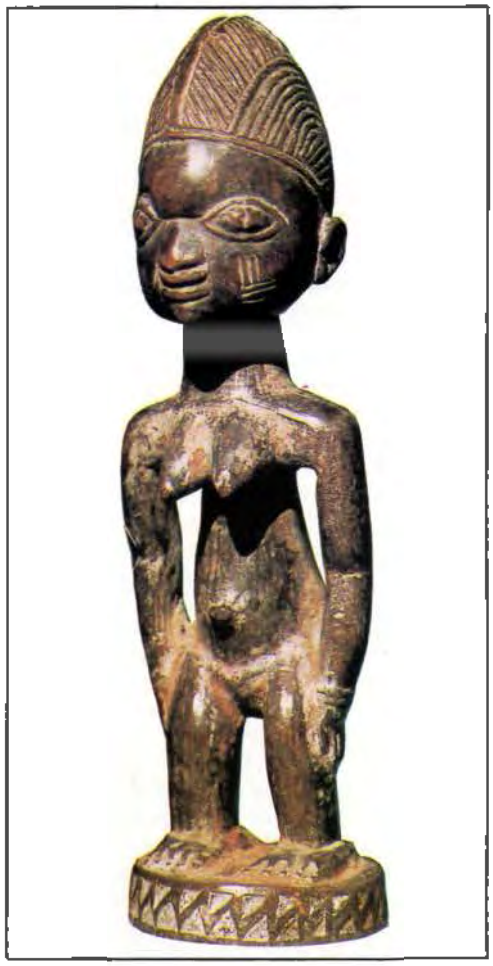

John Moss

TWO

TRADITIONALLY, 2 is the number of evil and the number of woman, long regarded in male-dominated societies as an essentially evil creature (see WOMAN). From the Pythagoreans onwards, 2 has carried a connotation of evil, but modern numerologists are reluctant to classify any number as inherently vicious and in their picture of 2's characteristics this old link is largely submerged. But the link with woman has remained, and in modern numerology 2 is regarded as the number of femininity and as the opposite of 1 (see ONE). Two is passive where 1 is active, negative where 1 is positive, weak where 1 is strong and, as a result of the sexual roles of male and female, receptive where 1 is thrusting.

Someone whose name adds to 2 (see ALPHABET) will be described as a quiet, unassuming, gentle person. He is tactful and diplomatic, a follower rather than a leader, and if he gets his own way at all, it is by persuasion and co-operation instead of by the forceful methods of 1. Unambitious and disliking the limelight, he is content to stay in the background, and since he is obedient, neat, modest, helpful and good at keeping a secret, he makes an admirable subordinate. Good-natured, sympathetic and understanding, he gets on well with people but is likely to be rather shy and timid. He likes detail and settled routine and is worried by new departures, bold initiatives, sudden changes of plan. He probably undervalues himself and because he loves peace and quiet, and fears argument and quarrels, he is always in danger of being trampled on by other people. He is likely to be deeply uncertain of himself, insecure and restless, and he will find it hard to make his mind up and almost impossible not to change it again.

People whose number is 2 have considerable charm and, being of a romantic disposition, they fall in love easily and are readily moved to tears. Though frequently worried and upset themselves, they are good at comforting and soothing other people and binding up their physical or psychological wounds (an obvious reference to woman's role as nurse). They are probably fussy and nervous, and inclined to take up fads, in religion or politics or food. They are intuitive rather than intellectual, and their inclination is always for reconciliation and compromise. Patient and frugal, they dislike risks and are uneasy with responsibility, and they often seem to lack any clear purpose in life. Easy-going, soft, indulgent, they are generally not as physically strong as those whose numbers are 1 or 3, and they are not such strong characters. Deep in their personalities is a strain of malice, cruelty and deceit, and at their worst they can be liars and mischief-makers, spineless and sulky, pessimistic and cowardly.

The Twin Pillars

Hiram of Tyre makes the bronze pillars for the Temple at Jerusalem

He cast two pillars of bronze . . . He also made two capitals of molten bronze to set upon the tops of the pillars . . . Then he made two nets of chequer work with wreaths of chain work for the capitals upon the tops of the pillars; a net for the one capital, and a net for the other capital. Likewise he made pomegranates; in two rows round about the network, to cover the capital that was upon the top of the pillar; and he did the same with the other capital . . . He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jachin; and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Boaz. And upon the tops of the pillars was lily-work. Thus the work of the pillars was finished.

1 Kings, chapter 7

Two By Two

All this is a picture of woman, not as housewife and mother and partner of man, which is more the preserve of 6 (see SIX), but as the opposite and subordinate of oran. The characteristics apply equally to a day or year which adds to 2, which numerologists expect to be a time of peace and quiet, of gentle progress by way of harmonious co-operation with others, of negotiation and reconciliation. As one numerologist puts it, the seed sown in a 1-year is quietly growing in the 2-year. Another says that in a 2-year you should pull in your oars, sit on the sidelines, reap what you sowed in the year before. And for businessmen, since 2 is the number of receptivity, a 2-day ought to be a good time to collect accounts receivable.

Two is the number of woman and wickedness because it is the first of the even numbers, which are evil and female (see NUMEROLOGY). It is evil because it is the first number to break away from the wholeness of 1. It sets up a pair of opposites, so creating antagonism and division, and it represents the second and unfavourable term in all the pairs of opposites seen in the structure of things – good and evil, one and many, male and female, light and darkness, active and passive, right and left, infinite and finite, and the rest. It is connected with lifeless, passive matter, because in it the One begins the process of making itself manifest in the world by splitting itself into two segments, the spiritual and the material.

The 'not-One' is fundamentally unstable. It may be an old lovers' saying that two's company and three's none, but in numerological theory a pair of opposites alone is readily divided and the number 3 has to be brought in to link them together in harmony and stability (see THREE). This accounts for 2's lack of clear purpose, lack of physical and psychological strength, uncertainty, restlessness and tendency to be easily upset.

Christian numerologists found confirmatory evidence of 2's evil and unstable nature in the Bible. The first chapter of Genesis does not say that 'God saw that it was good' after the work of the second day of creation, though it does say it about the creations of the other days. And in the story of the Flood, God told Noah to take with him in the ark seven pairs of all the clean animals but only one pair of the unclean ones (Genesis, chapter 7). Commenting on this, St Augustine said that the clean animals went into the ark in sevens and the unclean in twos 'as good and bad take part in the sacraments of the Church', and that the bad were in twos 'as being easily divided, from their tendency to schism'. In the 12th century Hugh of St Victor said that because 2 is the first number to recede from unity, it represents sin, which deviates from original good, and is the mark of things which are transitory and corruptible.

The Cloven Hoof

As the evil number which sets up an opposite to 1, 2 naturally belongs to the Devil, the principle of evil and the arch-opponent of God. The reversed pentagram, with two points upwards, is a symbol of evil and the Devil (see PENTAGRAM). The cloven hoof is a mark of the Devil and so is the forked tongue of the serpent. The Devil's fondness for horns may have something to do with his link with 2, and he was said to have two faces, one in the conventional position and one at his backside. Pierre de Lancre, a notorious French witch-hunter of the 17th century, said that the Devil appeared in the form of a goat with the face of a black man under his tail, and it was this face which his worshippers kissed in homage. The fact that the Roman god Janus was represented with two faces (see JANUS) has given him a certain sinister air which he did not originally possess.

The first of the even numbers, which are evil and female, two is traditionally the number of woman and the Devil, and the Devil's fondness for horns may have something to do with his link with the number: horned demon tempting a woman, from Chartres Cathedral

C. M. Dixon

This link with the Devil accounts for the streak of malice and cruelty which numerologists attribute to 2, and the characteristics of telling lies and making mischief come from the Prince of Darkness. The sense of 2 as evil and deceitful survives in several common expressions. To double-cross an ally is to cheat or betray him, to be two-faced is to be insincere, to be in two minds is to be indecisive, to speak with forked tongue is to deceive, double dealing is trickery. Your 'double' is a shadowy counterpart of yourself, a second self, which usually has sinister associations, and twins have been widely regarded as uncanny and sometimes as evil (see DOUBLE; TWINS).

Of course, not all connotations of two and double are evil by any means. The members of the three highest Hindu castes are called 'twice-born', approvingly, because their initiation involves a second and spiritual birth (see CASTE). Janus had two faces because he was the god of entrances and passages, which run in two directions. Entrances consist, at a minimum, of two uprights and a space between them, and may mark the point of transition from one spiritual condition to another (see THRESHOLD). Solomon erected two massive pillars of bronze, named Jachin and Boaz, in front of the Temple at Jerusalem (1 Kings, chapter 7). They stood 27 feet high and were 18 feet round, with elaborate capitals on top. Beyond them was the vestibule of the Temple, beyond that the main hall, and beyond that again the Holy of Holies itself.

The names of the pillars are used as passwords in Masonic initiation ceremonies. Occultists tend to interpret them as showing the opposites in balance, with the space between them as the entrance to the divine, to eternity, to ultimate truth, to the One. The connection with woman reappears again, since the two pillars and the entrance can be taken as a female sexual symbol. In some Tarot packs the trump numbered 2, the Female Pope or High Priestess, shows a woman enthroned between two pillars, one black and one white for the opposites. Between the pillars is a veil, and the card is a symbol of the gateway to heaven.

Tyr

Scandinavian sky god, worshipped as Tiw in Anglo-Saxon England; his early Germanic name was probably Tiwaz, related to Greek Zeus and Roman Jupiter; he had only one hand, the other having been bitten off by the Fenris wolf; he gave his name to Tuesday, but had declined in importance by the Viking Age.

See GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY.

Umbilical Cord

Part of a newly born child, and so believed to be intimately linked with its life and fate; sometimes thought to be the seat of the 'free soul', which wanders in dreams and finally departs from the body in death; it was important to prevent it from falling into the hands of people who might use it to work magic against the child; also used as a cure for barrenness.
See BIRTH.

Umbrella

In the East a symbol of majesty, carried over the heads of dignitaries on ceremonial occasions; though only introduced into the West comparatively recently, several superstitions have become linked with it; it is unlucky to open an umbrella indoors or to give one as a present, and to open one in fine weather brings rain.
See SKY.

Unction

Anointing with oil, as a religio-magical rite through which a person or object is endowed with supernatural power or grace, or set apart as sacred; frequently a crucial part of coronation ceremonies; extreme unction is a Christian sacrament administered to those near death, 'for the health of soul and body'.
See OIL.

This bearded female saint is one of the oldest figures thrown up by the medieval cult of saints: created by a misunderstanding of the significance of depictions of Christ crucified in a long robe, she was offered oats in London by wives who wanted to be 'uncumbered' of their husbands

ST UNCUMBER

THE MEDIEVAL CULT of saints was as prolific as Greek mythology in creating fantastic figures out of ancient objects and customs no longer understood. For example, the priest whom St Alban, the first British martyr, sheltered during the Diocletianic persecution (c 305), was venerated as St Amphibalus, owing to his being confused with the *amphibalus* or priest's cloak in which St Alban was disguised when arrested. St Barlaam and St Joasaph, two popular medieval saints, owed their origin to a confused account of the Buddha that found its way into Eastern Christendom. And St Ursula and the 11,000 virgins martyred with her at Cologne, whose adventures were so graphically depicted by Flemish artists, probably originated from the fanciful interpretation of an ancient inscription found there.

The 'Manly Virgin'

But no medieval saint was stranger in nature and origin than St Uncumber. Known also as Santa Liberata, Sanct Oncommer, Sainte Wilgeforte, and the Maid Uncumber in various parts of Europe, she was depicted as crucified, wearing a long robe and crown, and bearded.

According to the odd legend associated with her, she had been a daughter of a pagan king of Portugal, whose hand was sought in marriage by a king of Sicily. To preserve her virginity, she prayed fervently to God to disfigure her so that she might escape the abhorrent marriage. Her prayer was answered; God gave her an abundant beard *(prolixam barbam)*. Rejected in disgust by her princely suitor and publicly professing her devotion to Christianity, she was taken out and crucified by her enraged father.

How this strange legend originated can be reasonably explained. Although the portrayal of the crucified Christ unclothed goes back to the 5th century (as the Crucifixion scene carved on the doors of Santa Sabina in Rome shows) Syrian Christians from about the same period preferred to represent him as wearing a long tunic, a *colobium*, on the cross.

Well before the 12th century an image of the crucified Christ in this Syrian tradition, at Lucca in northern Italy, became famous as the 'Volto Santo', known in English as the Holy Face of Lucca. Its popularity among pilgrims led to its reproduction elsewhere in Europe for a time; but the more realistic presentation of the unclothed Christ eventually prevailed. When the significance of the enrobed crucifixes had become forgotten, a new explanation was sought. The long robe was taken as indicating that the crucified figure was that of a female saint; and the beard was explained, in France, in terms of the legend of Sainte Wilgeforte, the name probably being a popular corruption of the Latin *virgo fortis*, which means 'manly virgin'.

Offering Oats to the Saint

The English name 'Uncumber' for the saint seems to have given rise to another curious explanation. According to Michael Nodde, writing in 1554, 'If a wife were weary of a husband she offered oats at Poules (St Paul's) in London to St Uncumber'. Speculation about this custom is recorded by Sir Thomas More in his *Dialogue*. It was suggested that the oats were offered to the saint, 'because she should provide a horse for an evil husband to ride to the devil upon, for that is the thing that she is so sought for as they say. In so much that women hath therefore change her name, and instead of saint Wilgeforte call her saint Uncumber, because they reckon that for a peck of oates she will not fail to uncumber them of their husbands'.

The cult of this strange saint flourished in France, Belgium, England, Spain, Germany and Bohemia. Her bearded image was still being venerated at Saalfeld, near Weimar in Germany, until comparatively modern times.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Giraudon

16th century French tapestry illustrating the belief that only a virgin holding a mirror can tame a unicorn; the sexual symbolism, which includes the flagstaff, the crescent motif on the flag, rabbits, holly berries and oak leaves, suggests that the tapestry depicts the traditions of courtly love

Born of misunderstood travellers' tales, nurtured by the error of biblical translators and adopted by the alchemists, the legend of the unicorn who combines male and female in one beast is rich in the symbolism of opposites

UNICORN

A FABULOUS BEAST born of man's imagination, the unicorn plays a leading role in some of his most ancient myths and legends. Its form and function are as variable as the minds and religions of men; but whatever its shape – and it has been described as an ox, ram, goat, bull, antelope, wild ass, horse, rhinoceros, serpent or fish, and as a monster in which the characteristics of several of these animals are combined – a one-horned beast was always a symbol of supreme power, connected with gods and kings. It concentrates into a single horn the vigour and virility associated with the two horns of real animals (see HORNS).

An early distinction was made between the caprine unicorn, a gigantic one-horned goat, and the equine unicorn, in the form of a horse. The latter, the unicorn *par excellence*, was gracefully adapted by the College of Heralds as a symbol of 'the very parfit gentil knight'.

The first to mention the unicorn in the West was Ctesias of Cnidos, a Greek historian and doctor who was court physician to the kings of Persia for some 17 years. A fragment of his book on India, written about 398 BC, is the most important Western document concerning the unicorn: 'There are in India,' wrote Ctesias, 'certain wild asses, which are as large as horses, and larger. Their bodies are white, their heads dark red, and their eyes dark blue. They have a horn on the forehead which is about a foot and a half in length. The dust filed from this horn is administered in a potion as

a protection against deadly drugs. The base of this horn is pure white, the upper part is sharp and of a vivid crimson; and the remainder or middle portion is black. Those who drink out of these horns made into drinking vessels are not subject, they say, to convulsions or the holy disease. Indeed they are immune even to poisons if, either before or after swallowing such, they drink wine, water, or anything else from these beakers . . .'

The Ctesian unicorn is a compound of three animals: rhinoceros, wild ass and a rare, fierce Himalayan antelope which, in profile, appears to have one horn. This confusion of the attributes of different animals, and the inability to distinguish between the artificial and the natural, is a perpetual stumbling-block in the complex history of the unicorn; but it was inevitable in a time when travellers' tales were the only sources of information. Ctesias had never seen a rhinoceros, but it is assumed that he saw a cup made from rhinoceros horn, which had been brought from India where these were commonly used as drinking vessels by potentates and princes, and often decorated with bands of colour – white, black and red. These are of course the colours on the horn of the Ctesian unicorn.

The Great Re'em

Aristotle (384–322 BC) mentions two kinds of unicorn, the Indian ass and the oryx, a kind of antelope that is single-horned in profile; and the Roman writers Pliny (23–79 AD) and Aelian (170–235 AD) between them muster seven different kinds, the most important being the rhinoceros, though, like Ctesias, neither realized they were describing that beast. Pliny emphasized the fact that unicorns could not be captured by men, and Aelian their love of solitude and their indomitability.

The most momentous thing that happened to the Western unicorn was a mistake. The Greek translators of the Old Testament rendered the word *Re'em* as *monoceros*, 'single-horned' or unicorn. This magnificent error conferred on the unicorn a lifespan far exceeding that of the rest of the mythical menagerie and lasting well into the 18th century. Through this mistranslation the unicorn became part of the Bible and to doubt its existence was to question the inspired word of God. The battle over the true identity of the Re'em was long and complex, but it was eventually identified as *bos primigenius*, the giant aurochs, a species of wild buffalo that was extinct in Mesopotamia by about 500 BC (see BULL).

Sir Austen Layard identified the aurochs with the superbly sculptured 'bulls of Nineveh', dating from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (6th century BC) which were seen by the Jews at the time of their captivity. The beasts are shown in conventional profile and therefore look single-horned. However, as Odell Shepard points out in *The Lore of the Unicorn*, there is little in the Hebrew text of the Bible to suggest that the Jews themselves thought of the Re'em as anything but two-horned, since the word for 'horn' is almost invariably in the plural.

Later Jewish commentators exaggerated the Re'em out of all proportion. A young unicorn becomes as large as Mount Tabor and as high as the sky. Because it could not fit into Noah's ark, the unicorn had to be towed by a rope attached to its horn; and another tradition states that it perished in the waters. Talmudic texts link the unicorn firmly with the lion: 'And in our land there is also the unicorn, which has a great horn on its forehead. And there are also many lions. And when the lion sees a unicorn it draws him against a tree, and the horn pierces so deep into the tree it cannot pull it out again, and then the lion comes and kills the unicorn – but sometimes the matter is reversed . . .'

Bestiaries, collections of moral tales about real or fabulous animals, were very popular all through the Middle Ages. Texts varied according to local and religious influences, but all recounted the most famous of all legends about the unicorn – its capture by a virgin. According to this tale, the unicorn, a small kid-like beast armed with a sharp pointed horn, is too fleet and fierce to be taken by hunters. Only a virgin seated alone under a tree in a forest can capture it; because it is irresistibly attracted by the odours of virtue, the unicorn approaches the virgin, lays its head in her lap and permits itself to be caressed into sleep. She breaks its horn, the dogs leap, the huntsman pounces, and the unicorn is taken to the palace of the king.

Details vary, vividly, from text to text; in some the unicorn indulges in familiarities remarkably unsuited to virginal virtue, and in others the virgin is a boy in disguise. Although this legend, of unknown provenance, is transparently erotic, it was tortured into ill-fitting Christian significance. The treacherous virgin was identified with the Mother of God, and the unicorn with Christ and also, despite its dubious familiarities, with purity. The single horn was said to symbolize the unity of Father and Son, and also the 'horn' of the cross, the upright beam projecting above the transverse. The huntsman became the Holy Spirit acting through the angel Gabriel, and the king's palace was heaven. The dogs represented truth, justice, mercy and peace, despite the fact that their function was to tear the unicorn to pieces; they were said to couple at the beast's death, signifying that, though seemingly irreconcilable, truth, justice, mercy and peace were now one.

Another famous legend concerns the virtues of the alicorn, the beast's horn, as an antidote to poison. The animals gather at sunset to quench their thirst, and find the 'great water' poisoned with venom discharged by a serpent. Unable to drink, they await the unicorn. The beast approaches, makes the sign of the cross over the water with its horn and instantly the water is cleansed. The

A symbol of supreme power, a one-horned beast concentrates into its single horn the strength associated with animals that have two horns: the demon Amduscias, who commanded 29 legions, is depicted with a man's body and the head of a unicorn: illustration from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal* (1863)

horn symbolizes the cross, the serpent the Devil, and the poisoned water stands for the sins of the world.

As a result of this legend, drinking cups made from horn were commonly found on the banqueting tables of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as a defence against death by poisoning, a common hazard besetting those in high places. The horn was said to sweat in the presence of poison. Alicorns, bought and sold at formidable prices, were rated among the most precious items of princely and papal treasure. For the rich there were cups made from alicorn or pieces of it; while for the poor there were scrapings of horn or *l'eau a la licorne*, water into which the horn had been dipped. Apothecaries kept an alicorn chained to their counters, for it was considered to be the most effective panacea for a variety of evils; finally, it was claimed to raise the dead.

A veritable library of learning has been built up in search of the beast providing the 'true alicorn', and it is sad to reduce that quarry of forgotten lore to a brief citation of the main providers: rhinoceros, antelope, mammoth tusk, and the tusk of narwhal, a marine mammal. Practically all the pictures in ancient books show a horn based on the last of these. By 1600 Europe boasted at least 19 famous alicorns.

Unicorns held a high place in the religion and sacred writing of Persia: '. . . the three-legged ass . . . stands amid the wide-formed ocean . . . its feet are three, eyes six, mouths nine, ears two, and horn one. Body white, food spiritual and it is righteous . . . The horn is as it were of pure gold and hollow . . . With that horn it will vanquish and dissipate all the vile corruption due to the efforts of noxious creatures . . .' However, the one-horned ass is frequently thought to have been imported from an older culture; it is thought that the one-horned beast that haunts the high snows of the Himalayas has the most ancient tradition, and many authorities cite Tibet as the most likely source of unicorn legends, though there was a time when the Mountains of the Moon, heaving high over Ethiopia, held pride of place. The tradition was long and strong, and four brazen unicorns dominated the court of the Ethiopian kings.

In Tibet, antelope horns were used for magical and ritual purposes for centuries, particularly the horn of a fierce fleet antelope known as *Anthlops Hodgsoni*, named for a 19th century British resident of Nepal who identified its horn. In profile, the beast looks single-horned. The unicorn is frequently depicted in the paintings and sculptures of Buddhist temples; the circle containing the body of a dead lama was drawn with the horn of the sacred antelope. From Tibet the unicorn is assumed to have spread into China.

The Chinese unicorn does not have the fierceness of its counterpart further west; it is so gentle that it will not tread on so much as a blade of grass, and its backward sweeping horn is fleshy-tipped, indicating that it was not used for attack. Called the *ki-lin*, the Chinese unicorn was believed to appear at the start of a beneficent reign or the birth of a man equal to an emperor in stature; traditionally it announced the birth and death of Confucius. But there is more to the unicorn than that. The 'key' to the beast lies hidden in its Chinese name, *ki*, 'male', *lin*, 'female'.

The unicorn's most vital function has been as a symbol, whether of power or virility, or purity, or the combination of opposites, of the male horn and the female body. Many modern interpreters regard this last role as the crucial one and relate it to the symbolism of the soul as the spark of divine light in the darkness of matter and evil, the body, and to the concept of the hermaphrodite as the perfect union of opposites (see OPPOSITES).

This explains the unicorn's place in the symbolism of alchemy. The 'great work' of alchemy was an attempt to liberate the divine spirit of light from its prison of darkness by transforming base metal into gold by means of the Philosophers' Stone, and by transforming the alchemist himself into the psychic equivalent of gold, a being who was spiritually purified, who had liberated the god within himself. Mercury, the 'male-female', the androgyne, was an essential element in the work, and the personification of Mercury as the precursor of triumph, proclaiming victory over darkness was the unicorn. (See also ALCHEMY; MERCURY; PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.)

The moment for which every alchemist laboured is illustrated in *The Book of Lambsprinck* (1625) by a picture which shows a deer and a unicorn meeting in a forest, with the text: 'In the forest (body) there is a soul (deer) and spirit (unicorn) . . . He that knows how to tame and master them by art, and couple them together, may justly be called a master, for we judge rightly that he has obtained the golden flesh.' Another of the many symbols of Mercury as androgynous god and precursor to triumph was the green lion wounded in the lap of the virgin. Because both were figures for Mercury, green lion and unicorn were often considered one, and certainly the image echoes with familiar resonances for those acquainted with the legend of the 'virgin capture'.

The French scientist, Baron Cuvier (1769–1832) dealt the final blow to man's belief in unicorns as an actual species when he declared that beasts with cloven hooves had cloven skulls, and that no horn could grow in the cleft. Although Dr Dove, an American biologist, proved Cuvier wrong in 1933 when he transplanted the horn buds of an Ayrshire calf into its skull cleft, and produced a synthetic unicorn, this did nothing to resurrect belief in the beast.

JUNE GRIMBLE

FURTHER READING: N. Hathaway, *The Unicorn* (Viking, 1980); P. and K. Johnsgard, *Dragons and Unicorns* (St Martin's, 1982); Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (Harper and Row 1979 reprint); M. Walser, *The Unicorn* (Marion Boyars/Scribner, 1983).

The lion and the unicorn, which have long been associated together in legend and heraldry, are the supporters of the shield in the English royal coat of arms

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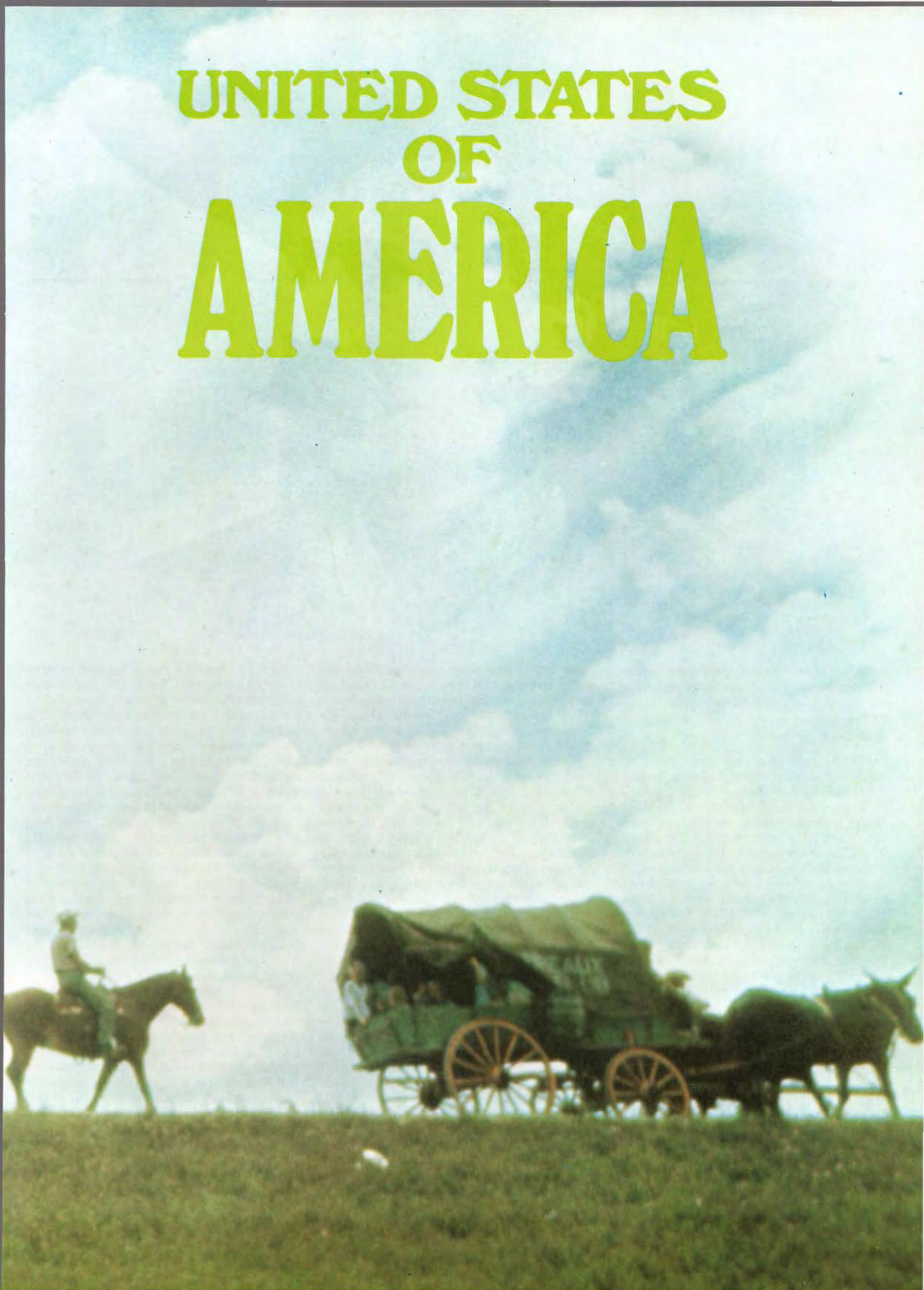

American folklore is still developing; contemporary superstitions and tales of the supernatural are absorbed into the mainstream tradition with its frontier and pioneer lore, and the 'yeasty oral tradition' of the Negro

NOT SO LONG AGO the idea that there might be a fully distinguishable body of American folklore was generally dismissed as just so much . . . folklore. The United States might be swollen with folk traditions, it was said, but these were in fact European, where they were not Asian or African. While some authorities might have admitted that these transplanted traditions seemed to be flourishing, others insisted that the foreign folk materials existed in America like pressed flowers between the pages of a book.

The basic idea of the transplant is indisputable. Folklore came to the New World with its people, on the *Mayflower* and its successors. The early colonists in New England held the beliefs and followed the customs of their fathers, the usual folk superstitions, the ghost stories, the seafarer's tales of monsters and phantom ships, the herbal remedies, the old songs and ballads. Because many of the colonial folktales grew out of Puritan preoccupations, there were examples of the Devil's work among men, and of visitations of the wrath of God upon the sinful.

But not all the lore was explicitly of the Old World. The settlers of Massachusetts may have brought the witch tales of Britain to the innocent soil of Salem (see SALEM WITCHES), but more general beliefs and tales concerning pagan magic were imputed to the Indians, and these formed a relatively new strain. At the same time some of the white Americans' race myths about the craftiness, cruelty and superstitious ignorance of the Indians took root; and other myths about New World marvels were promulgated, including wildly unlikely natural history. Many of these exaggerated the fertility of the land, where every seed grew 100 stalks and edible wild creatures were impossibly fat and almost begging to be caught. But other wild creatures were terrible in their danger to men and tales were told of fearsome snakes, monstrous bears, alligators and the like. In these tales another new note is struck; the awe of the new American confronted by all that space, most of which was then howling wilderness. Even in the earliest days of American history, certain apparently indigenous strands were being woven into the lore of the folk. However, those who scoff at the idea of an American folk tradition choose to consider these indigenous elements as mere reworkings of older European themes.

Much of the refusal to believe in an American folklore, a refusal that has been less in evidence in the years since the Second World War, stems from the fact that America likes to think that she has no 'folk', in the sense of *Volk*, the peasant classes that hold on to, and perpetuate, old oral traditions. Democratic, egalitarian, freedom-loving America, it is said, has no classes of any kind, and certainly no peasant class. How then can she have folklore?

In fact, America has a superabundance of small, close-knit rural and agricultural communities. More or less isolated before 20th century transport and communication bridged all gaps, these settlements supplied the requirements for the perpetuation of oral folk traditions. Regional variations naturally occurred: the themes of favourite folktales in rural New England differed from those of the cornfields of Iowa, for instance.

Although cars and aircraft, radio and television, put much of the old lore to death, a few communities nevertheless resisted integration. These were generally pockets of people who were isolated by geography and topography, and content to remain that way; predominant among them were the so-called 'hill-billies', who lived in mountains and foothills like those of the Ozarks on the Missouri-Arkansas border (see OZARKS), or the region called 'Egypt' in Illinois.

The hill-billies were the most prominent producers of a sort of music that was in fact the property of the whole of rural America, and which is known as 'Country and Western'. The songs of the country folk, played on banjo and fiddle and primitive instruments like the jews' harp, tended to be fairly recognizable versions of Old World songs, which had undergone many permutations on their journey through New England to the backwoods. Many such songs continued to journey westward, with the migrating 'folk'; and country dancing recalled the quadrilles and 'contre' dances of Europe transmuted into a genuine American folk tradition (see DANCE; SONG).

The early colonists held the beliefs and followed the customs of their fathers, but tales of pagan magic were imputed to the Indians, forming a relatively new strain

Out of these pockets of mainstream folklore also come abundant superstitions and legends. The Ozarks, for instance, were rich in ancient folk medicines and herb doctoring, and rich too in legends of fabulous animals very similar to those spawned by colonists in the 17th century. To a large extent the same kind of folk material is prominent in the lore of the 'Egyptians' of Illinois. Tall tales and unlikely legends are innumerable, including many that provide contradictory explanations of how the region got its name. One version suggests that the corn crop in neighbouring regions failed, and people went to 'Egypt' for corn as Joseph went to the real Egypt in the Old Testament. Egypt has an Ozarkian plenitude of witch tales and folk medicines, but seems to specialize above all in ghost stories. The number and variety of apparitions is astonishing, and many seem to reflect ghost motifs similar to those in English tradition.

None of this hill-billy material, or the traditions of backwoods communities generally, is unusual in the overall picture of American folklore. Indeed, Richard Dorson finds in Egyptian lore a reflection of 'general American patterns' and others have said the same about Ozarkian or Appalachian elements. It seems that such backwoods communities, which are mainly dominated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, and which hark back to colonial and old British traditions, provide the basis of America's folk culture.

But there are also other cultures whose folklore is embodied in other languages. These belong to the 'ethnic' minorities, some of whom immigrated to the United States shortly after the first British colonists, some of whom are more recent arrivals.

In most cases these 'foreign' communities managed to retain a good deal of their old traditions, though in time certain adaptations and alterations naturally crept in. The Germanic folklore of the Pennsylvania 'Dutch' settlements is a case in point: their tales still relate the trickster adventures of Till Eulenspiegel, but according to Dorson this traditional character has become less of a cruel jokester, and even his name has undergone certain changes. The penchant for proverbs, for sound Germanic folk remedies, for homely folk beliefs and

Culver Pictures

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Previous page Covered wagons: 'America is a land of heroes, perhaps because in pioneer days individual strength and courage were at a premium, or perhaps because of a rose-coloured nostalgia for those days.' The Wild West with its larger-than-life heroes and villains, cowboys and Indians, the U.S. Cavalry, marshals and gunmen, has become part of the hero mythology of the world

Facing page 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, frontiersman, gold prospector, cavalry scout, buffalo hunter, marksman and showman, who killed and scalped Chief Yellowbrand of the Sioux in 1876: books about his exploits made him a household name *Right* 'Custer's Last Fight': General George A. Custer *(above)* and a force of cavalry were defeated and massacred by the Sioux at the Little Big Horn in 1876

The modern myth of the Wild West has been created largely by the cinema and television, and the true folklore of the cowboy has been overwhelmed by the 'fakelore' of the gunfight and the chase: John Wayne *(far left)* epitomizes the tough lawman to filmgoers all over the world; Butch Cassidy (seated right in the top group in this montage) is one of many outlaws who have been romanticized as devil-may-care rebels, while Wyatt Earp (third from the right in the bottom group) is one of the few lawmen who have been immortalized. The Apache Indian *(left)* is a stock figure in Western films. *Top* Poster offering a reward for the capture of Jesse James; a murderer and robber, he and Billy the Kid *(above)* were both transmuted into 'good criminals', popular figures in modern American folklore

Pan on Tour

Culver Pictures

Above **Poster advertising Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West and Pioneer Exhibition'; a brilliantly successful showman, he brought the legendary Wild West of cowboys and Indians, the Union Pacific Railroad, Wells Fargo and the train hold-up, to life: Annie Oakley *(right)* one of the stars of the show, has been immortalized in the musical *Annie Get Your Gun***

superstitions is much the same as it would have been in Europe. But the equally traditional fear of witchcraft has become to some extent Americanized. There is a famous story about a 'Dutch' couple who bought a new car and found it bewitched by a neighbour, but who were aided by a witch-finder, a *braucher*, who provided a counter-spell. The basic tale is very old; the car is an American addition.

French folklore has also found its way into America. Among the 'Cajuns' of Louisiana, for instance, who still speak a special patois, remnants of traditional French children's games and dances are strongly apparent, while their Shrove Tuesday celebrations are the equivalent of the Mardi Gras of New Orleans, a festival that was introduced to what is now the state of Louisiana by French settlers (see SPRING).

The Mexican-Americans of the southwest have struggled to retain their ethnic homogeneity against many social pressures; and also to retain their religious beliefs, their customs and their self-respect in the face of discrimination. Their folklore, which reaches back to Spanish colonial days and to Spain itself, is a major aid in this struggle. Some aspects, such as their traditional ballads, superstitions and folk beliefs are plainly European. But they have also added local colour to their store of folk materials, such as the additions to their folksong traditions. The *canciones* may reflect older matters, but the *corridos* grew very much out of the American experience of this people and, because of the nature of that experience, many of them are in some way protest songs.

Some of the corridos attack the Americans by lauding the deeds of Mexican border heroes such as Jacinto Trevino, the scourge of the Texas Rangers. There is something of the same reflection of the Mexican-American experience in the newer additions to the hoard of folktales, or *cuentos*. These are often comic stories with an edge to them, in which a pompous Anglo-Saxon American is made to look a fool by his ignorance of Spanish and his lack of Latin social graces. Needless to say, the outwitting or humiliating of the outsider, who is usually some far from silent representative of the majority, is a common theme in the lore of most ethnic minorities in America.

The German, French and Spanish-speaking cultures have been part of America since colonial times, but more recently, during this century, the American melting-pot has received ingredients from nations not previously represented in the New World. Each of these groups naturally brought its own folklore, and to some extent these traditions flourished, especially in rural areas where the group could form a tight little community cut off from many of the conformist Americanizing pressures. Out of such communities come gobbets of European and Asian folk material: gloomy Scandinavian tales, southern Italian witch fears, Greek songs and dances, Japanese ghosts and shape-shifters. The folklorist Americo Paredes has called these ethnic incursions 'tributaries to the mainstream', a phrase that sets up some interesting reverberations. It asserts, primarily, that these cultures are making a visible and positive contribution to the folklore of the majority.

Perhaps one of the first, most noticeable effects that America has on this transplanted lore is reflected in the satiric stories or bitter protest songs that spring up when a recently arrived minority feels victimized and oppressed. One of the last effects occurs when the second or third generation can no longer remember the old songs and stories, can no longer even speak the old tongue.

But how does the transplanted folklore affect the American mainstream? One of the most obvious effects is also one of the least attractive: it is the appearance of cruel new joke-cycles and anecdotes about the 'stupid immigrant', stupidity being defined as inability to speak English, and inexperience of American ways.

Equally unpleasant are jokes that revolve around some supposedly innate characteristic of an immigrant group; jokes about Jewish craftiness, Irish drunkenness, Swedish or Slavic thick-headedness. If this is all that American mainstream folklore can derive from the wealth of ethnic cultures in

its midst, one might say that it does not deserve that wealth.

But of course that is not all. The minorities give much to the majority, as Americo Paredes states: 'There is a trend in the United States away from the uncompromising 100 per cent Americanism of earlier times when the country was younger and less sure of itself. There is a tendency to admire the values of minorities and to recognize their role in the enrichment of the majority culture . . .' Because this trend is still fairly new, detailed folklore investigation still needs to be done in order to value that enrichment correctly. Part of the difficulty, perhaps, lies in the fact that the minority contributions are made on a regional scale. The outsider may notice the place names, the use of dialect terms in ordinary speech, the majority awareness of the folksongs, and perhaps even some of the stories from the minority traditions. For instance, there is the effect that Mexican-American songs have had on the development of the Western or 'cowboy' song: and there is the pervading presence of Yiddish dialect terms, and Jewish jokes – or the whole Jewish approach to joke-telling and humour generally – in the urban 'folk culture' of New York. Because New York is a communications centre these Jewish materials have diffused outwards to pervade much more of America than just that region. Other aspects of minority folk traditions have similarly diffused on a broader scale.

Strangely enough, the wealth of American Indian culture has had little or no effect on the mainstream. It has retreated into a kind of limbo, accessible for ethnological or anthropological study, but no longer an entirely living tradition open to folk borrowings and diffusions. But the other non-white folk culture of the United States is the broadest, most effective and most pervasive tributary of them all.

The black man arrived in the United States as a slave, not as a colonist or immigrant. This was not an ideal situation for the retention of traditional culture; families were broken up by the slave-owners and their dealings, quite apart from the effect that the trade had on village or tribal groupings. In a very short time the Negroes had lost their

White America took the blues and New Orleans jazz and other forms of Negro music and made it not black or white, not southern or northern, not urban or rural, but all-embracingly American

Africanness and, in order to survive, had begun to acquire the white man's language, religion and to some extent his customs.

But during the time of slavery and afterwards the Negro had been making what Dorson calls a 'yeasty oral tradition' all his own from the white folk materials accessible to him. Eventually the whites took an interest, and from that point the Negroes began to enrich American folklore by feeding back into it the wholly altered material that they had adopted long before.

But the whites did not easily recognize their own traditions. They saw a host of supernatural beliefs and superstitions in Negro lore, and believed these to be the products of an inferior mind or remnants of African primitive belief, or a combination of both. Yet most of the ghost and witch stories, the sorceries and taboos and omens that have been collected among Negroes of the old South can be traced directly to Europe and Britain.

It seems clear that any direct connection with African tradition stops at the West Indies, for several geographical and sociological reasons. As many folklorists have discovered with surprise, the West African spider-trickster Anansi (see TRICKSTER) occurs in folktales throughout the Caribbean, but never among black North Americans. However, the latter have produced another notable trickster, and in so doing have made a sizeable contribution to American folktales. This is Brer Rabbit, hero of the Uncle Remus stories gathered and retold by Joel Chandler Harris.

Negro contributions deserve the dominant place in a survey of American folk music. Indeed, most musicians would agree that indigenous American music owes most of its special and separate character to the Negroes. No one needs to be reminded of all those intertwined musical roots, going back to the condition of slavery and oppression: the spirituals, work songs, gospel songs, party songs; the advent of the blues, the birth of jazz with all its later forms and variations, and the even more recent protest songs, and all combinations of these. Experts may argue about whether a specific work song or 'holler', for instance, has any roots in African chant or singing. What is more important is that white America took the blues and New Orleans jazz and the other forms of Negro music and made it not black or white, not southern or northern, not urban or rural, but all-embracingly American. In the process it was also torn up from its folk roots and made highly commercial, but that seems to be an inescapable aspect of the American way of folk diffusion. Jazz went on to influence serious 'highbrow' music, and became in itself an international highbrow concern. And the blues and work songs and ballads permeated and influenced every sort of basic folk song in America: their presence can be felt in even the purest hill-billy music, in cowboy ballads, and in the 'rhythm and blues' that gave birth to most of modern pop music.

Lore of the Frontier

The Negro contribution is undeniably the greatest single ethnic tributary to the folklore mainstream. But there is also another category that adds further dimensions to the American traditions, because of the nature of the nation's history. This includes the more heroic and romantic of the traditional occupations associated with that epic history.

Farming itself was once such an occupation, in the days of pioneering when a farmer was also hunter, woodsman and fighter of Indians. Eventually these occupations became separated; but they left behind the remarkable lore of the frontiersman. This was mainly a collection of heroic legends telling of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett on the old frontier, Kit Carson and the mountain men in the far West. But there were also plenty of tall tales about adventures experienced and marvels seen. There is the tale of the 'wonderful hunt', for instance, in which a crack shot manages to kill a huge array of game with only one bullet, thanks to some fortuitous ricochets and other unlikely bits of luck. Variations on this theme crop up in nearly every region, ascribed to different hunters.

Other equally dramatic occupations became prominent. American seamen off the New England coast developed their own lore to add to the British seafaring traditions they had inherited. Inland, on the great commercial freeway of the Mississippi, the river men evolved their special songs, customs, taboos and superstitions, and of course their own heroes. The lumbering industry developed its set of folkways and beliefs, often with traces of Scandinavian lore from the many Swedish and Norwegian lumberjacks. The tales are especially rich, and tell of haunted trees, magical trees and trees that are impossibly high.

Railroading later brought new tales, legends and songs into the mainstream. Songs like 'Casey Jones', for instance, or 'John Henry' which tells of a Negro culture hero who died in competition with a track-laying machine. Coal miners in the East added their own variations to old British and European superstitions about mines, and these were themselves increased, as were mining ghost tales, by gold seekers in mid-19th century California. More recently, the steel industry cast up a quasi-folk hero in Joe Magarac, a Hungarian-American man of steel, who paddled unconcernedly in the molten metal.

Prominent among the special characteristics of mainstream folklore is the American love of story-telling, with the emphasis on particular types of comic stories. One of the favourite kinds is the short 'anecdote' which tells of some brief humorous events or action, and often features an eccentric person, a trickster or a dullard. The way in which minority groups use trickster anecdotes to underline their solidarity at the expense of the outsider, and how the majority has utilized the 'stupid' immigrant as a favourite dullard stereotype has been noted previously. Other dullard stories avoid ethnic generalization and use some local character, for instance, whose stupidity becomes a legend.

The people of the frontiers, and of the backwoods in general, had a parochial dislike for the stranger, and out of this came the cycle of 'clever Yankee' stories, in which the shrewd rural New Englander may appear to be a yokel but always thwarts the city slicker. There are similar Western anecdotes in which an old-timer, or even an Indian, is the trickster. Sometimes no real trick is involved, but merely a crushing retort – another favourite form of American humour. There is the story of how a tourist was trying to get directions from a Yankee farmer. The farmer knows nothing about the highways or towns that the tourist is seeking, and the visitor calls him a know-nothing yokel. The farmer squelches him with, 'Mebbe so, but I ain't lost'.

A slightly longer story is often called a 'yarn', and may be a straightforward account of an experience of the narrator,

Victoria & Albert Museum

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Harriet Beecher Stowe created an idealistic portrait of a faithful Negro slave, whose acceptance of white beliefs and customs was complete; in fact, during the time of slavery, and afterwards, the Negro created his own tradition from the white materials accessible to him, and has enriched the whole of American folklore by feeding back into it this altered material: illustration to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

or someone known to him. Old-timers who had had long and eventful lives were supposed to be great tellers of yarns, whether they had been sailors, buffalo hunters or gold miners. But a well-told yarn may often acquire a little extra dramatic effect and audience interest by exaggeration and elaboration; if it does it may become a 'windy' or 'tall tale', an American speciality.

The story of the 'wonderful hunt' is such a tale. Others, which are usually devoted to natural marvels, are said to have arisen out of lying contests, good-natured rivalry among people from different localities. So, 'down our way', horse-flies grow so big they don't bite horses, they carry them off. Down our way the ground is so fertile that corn grows visibly; one time a farmer got caught on a stalk and whisked skyward so fast he would have starved to death if people hadn't shot food up to him from guns.

There are also miraculous animals, including the evergreen tale of a dog that was split in two by a buzzsaw, or as a result of some similar accident. Its owner stuck the two halves together in such a hurry that two feet were upwards and two were downwards. The dog is now twice as good a hunter as it was, for it runs on one pair of legs until they are tired, then runs on the other pair.

Land of Heroes

Of course there are stories of miraculous human beings. And at this point the tall tale becomes that other American folklore favourite, the hero legend. America is a land of heroes, perhaps because in pioneer days individual strength and courage and other heroic attributes were at a premium, or perhaps because of a rose-coloured nostalgia for those days. Certainly there is an emphasis on brute strength and aggression, brawn before brain, in the American folk hero; men like Paul Bunyan and Mike Fink, for instance, are not merely skilled in their occupations but are physical giants, a characteristic that is the sole basis for many of their legendary exploits.

Folklore tends to resist categories, and American folk heroes resist them especially. Davy Crockett is a good example. A real person, many tales told about him are mainly biographical: Davy as the shrewd yokel showing up affected city folk, Davy the honest man of the people thwarting clever or crooked politicians, Davy the skilled hunter and woodsman fighting grizzly bears, Davy the patriot dying gloriously at the Alamo. But in other stories he becomes a fictional demigod, a mythical being; his terrible grin kills bears and cougars, he rides on the moon after a tiring hunt, he saves the world by greasing its axis to restore its spin.

Many American heroes combine this sort of honest biography with myth. The New England giant named Barney Beal, a real person whose feats of strength are recorded by Dorson, acquired a legendary reputation after his death: so did such other 'real-life' characters as 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, Kit Carson, Daniel Webster, and even Abraham Lincoln. Sometimes there is something more than physical prowess in these men, as there is in the legend of Johnny Appleseed, who is depicted as a gentle and primitive mystic scattering seeds through the wilderness, unharmed by wild beast or Indian. In fact the prototype, John Chapman, was a fairly rugged frontiersman who set up orchards on a businesslike basis.

America also specializes in the good criminal, the Robin Hood, the anti-villain, as it were. One aspect of the basic pattern of the hero myth is the character's individualism, his indifference to staid authority and restrictive rules. American lore takes this notion of the devil-may-care rebel who defeats the stodgy and the conventional, a step or two further. Robin Hood was an outlaw only in the eyes of a corrupted and evil law; but Billy the Kid was a vicious killer and thief in terms of any kind of law. Yet it is Billy, not Pat Garrett, the indomitable lawman who tracks him down, who gallops heroically through American folklore, along with Jesse James, Pretty Boy Floyd and countless similar villains. All of them have had their villainy whitewashed and any number of heroic and legendary deeds are ascribed to them. The few lawmen, such as Wyatt Earp, who have been similarly immortalized are outnumbered and overshadowed by criminal heroes.

The abundance of 'supermen', the overall American penchant for heroes, hints at what is perhaps the most important single characteristic of United States folklore. Other nations have only recently grown self-conscious about their traditions, as collections and analyses grew and overlapped. But, because her folklore developed and merged in an age of print, and later of more sophisticated media, America has always been self-conscious about her lore. The bright lights of America's skills at self-examination, publicity and salesmanship were turned on its oral traditions almost from their inception.

The fact of this observation affected that which was being observed. To over-simplify a complicated system of inter-relationships, it seems that the publicizers picked up various aspects of the oral tradition, put them together in different garb, smoothing the language, for instance, or clarifying the regional references, and published them in forms ranging from stiff novels to cheap thrillers and semi-comic insertions in farmers' almanacs. Eventually this material filtered back to the 'folk', sometimes even

Culver Pictures

Thanksgiving Day, first celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1621, was originally an American version of the European harvest festival; a national holiday, it has gradually taken on more secular and patriotic associations: *The First Thanksgiving*

replacing the oral original, as with the whitewashing of Western outlaws.

The professional folklorist has difficulties enough trying to unravel the processes by which folk materials diffuse from one region or community or culture to another. But in America the influence of the media complicates the problem of diffusion even further. Looked at from one angle, American lore can be divided into categories such as regionalism, ethnic grouping, sectarianism, and occupational grouping. From another viewpoint, however, the media have spread much of that lore throughout the nation, so that it is not only thoroughly diffused, it has also become standardized.

At the same time, and as a result of the same process, the original folk materials were often expanded or entirely transmuted by the media into 'fakelore', to borrow Dorson's splendid term. The process can be seen in action by a look at the body of material that deals with the Wild West.

More than a century of Western history has been mined for every scrap of excitement, colour and heroic drama, which has then been put through the media mill. The cowboy has become a myth, and the traditional folklore of his occupation has been buried under mountains of gunfights, saloon brawls, chases and other fakelore.

Unavoidably, the media have created much of what is now American folklore. They created Davy Crockett, not in the Crockett fad of the 1950s, but in the 'almanacs' and spurious adventure tales of the 1830s and afterwards. Similarly, commercial writers created most of the Western heroes and villains. In this century, books, films and cartoons have often made 'folk' heroes – out of virtually nothing. Paul Bunyan's legend rests on a few sparse fragments of true lumberjack lore, and a great deal of commercial imagination. Pecos Bill, the Texas demigod hero who pulled rivers straight and lassoed clouds to overcome drought, was mostly invented by a magazine writer. These are manufactured heroes; they are no more outgrowths of an oral tradition than are the 'folk songs' written last week for a pop group's latest album, yet they seem to answer much of the same need, for the mass of the 'folk', as did the pure original material. As the folklorist John Greenway has put it, 'the folk nowhere make the niggling distinctions between "genuine" and "factitious" that folklorists do, so long as the article feels right in their culture'. If people get what 'feels right' from mass-media fakelore, it may simply be a recognition that those media are with us now, and that no living oral tradition is going to remain untouched by them.

American folklore is still developing. As fast as pop culture absorbs folk elements, more is churned out. Some of it is naturally adapted from old motifs; superstitions that were once ascribed to horses and carriages, for instance, now recur in terms of cars, and there are even tales of phantom automobiles. A ghost story involving a real car is told, with innumerable variations, all across the United States. The story is of a young man who picks up a pretty girl hitchhiker. She directs him to her home, but on the way there she disappears from the car. The driver visits the house, describes the girl, and is told that she was the householder's daughter who died years before. This plot occurs in folktales all over the world, and the modern American versions owe nothing to mass culture.

Equally authentic is the mass of folklore found among modern servicemen. This includes hero tales told among the Marines, and stories of phantom ships like the one detected off the West Coast by naval radar. All the old taboos and omens arise again in modern dress. These examples are as much tributaries to the American mainstream as are any of the strands discussed earlier. They show that the mainstream is still flowing; that, in Richard Dorson's words, the 'idea that folklore is dying out is itself a kind of folklore'.

(See also NEGROES.)

DOUGLAS HILL

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The rain that fertilizes the earth is sometimes represented as the seed of the Greek god Uranus, whose name means sky or heaven; in astrology the planet called after him is a harbinger of violence, revolution and upheaval

URANUS

URANUS is the Greek name for sky or heaven, whether as a common noun or personified as a god. In the earliest Greek literature the sky is imagined as a solid roof to the world, made of bronze or iron and garlanded with stars. (For the ancients there was nothing humdrum about metal; it comes from the womb of earth, and there is an air of magic about the working of it.) Nothing is said about its shape. The sun 'goes up into' it and 'comes down from' it. It is supported by Atlas, or by pillars. It is the seat of the gods, for the peaks of Mt Olympus, where they have their houses, reach up to it.

Considered as a god himself, Uranus is the consort of Ge, Earth. The rain that fertilizes the earth and makes things grow is sometimes (from the 5th century BC on) represented as his seed, though this may be a rationalistic interpretation of the mythical marriage rather than its basic meaning. The mythical offspring were not, for example, vegetation spirits, but Titans, Cyclopes, and ogres with 100 hands, none of whom has any place in our present world. At their birth Uranus kept them pressed down inside Earth. In her discomfort she consulted with them, and Cronus (see CRONUS) was emboldened to take an adamantine sickle and castrate his father when he came at night to resume intercourse with Ge. Various divine or semi-divine beings sprang up from where the drops of blood fell on the earth. Cronus threw the severed genitals in the sea, and in the foam that formed round them Aphrodite was born. (Her name suggested 'foam'.) Cronus now became king of the gods, and Uranus played no further part in the divine history.

The episode represents a combination of two myths. One is about the separation of heaven and earth. Many peoples tell how the sky originally lay on the earth and later rose or was pushed to its present position. Sometimes a physical link such as a tree or navel-cord has to be severed; in Polynesian myth, heaven and earth were an embracing couple, Rangi and Papa, and Rangi's arms were cut through. Secondly, we have an Asiatic myth: in the Hittite version, Heaven is king of the gods for nine years and is then castrated; gods are born from his severed members. In the Babylonian version he is less prominent. The motif of children hated by their father and confined within their mother is there, and it is a son of Heaven who overthrows the father, but the primeval parents here are Apsu and Tiamat, the subterranean waters and those of the sea (see MESOPOTAMIA).

The personified Uranus owes his existence to these oriental models. He has no other significance in myth or cult. Indian evidence proves that Zeus was the original Father Sky and consort of Mother Earth; and he remained the real Greek sky god.

M. L. WEST

Uranus in Astrology

In 1781 Sir William Herschel identified a new planet, which was named first for King George III, then for Herschel himself and finally for the Greek sky god Uranus. The discovery of Uranus, and later of Neptune and Pluto, wrecked the traditional astrological picture of the order of the universe, in which the seven planets of antiquity corresponded to numerous other groups of seven, and round which so many religious, mystical and magical ideas had gathered (see CORRESPONDENCES; SEVEN). In the circumstances, it is not surprising that 'change' is the key notion which astrologers have come to associate with Uranus, especially change of a sudden, disruptive and revolutionary sort.

Astrologers say that it is only when a new planet is recognized that human beings seem to respond to its influence, even though the planet has been in existence, unrecognized, all along. They see the influence of Uranus behind all the violent and revolutionary upheavals of the modern world, from the French Revolution onwards, behind the accelerated pace of change, new inventions and discoveries, and progress in science and technology, especially in the fields of electricity and magnetism. Someone strongly influenced by Uranus is likely to be highly original and inventive, free-thinking and rebellious, independent, wilful, unconventional, wild and unorthodox, impatient of old systems and accepted ideas.

Some see the planet casting its shadow before it, as it were, in the American Revolution of 1776, and Uranus is believed to have played an important role in American history. It was in the ascendant sign, Gemini, when the Declaration of Independence was signed. It returned to Gemini, in an ominous conjunction with the two baleful planets Saturn and Mars, in 1860, the year before the outbreak of the Civil War. It was again in Gemini, and again in conjunction with Mars, in 1942, when the United States was again at war.

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Mansell Collection

As a god Uranus is the consort of Ge, Earth; their mythical offspring were Titans, Cyclopes and ogres with 100 hands. He was castrated by his son Cronus, who became king of the gods, and divine or semi-divine beings sprang up where his blood fell on the earth: statuette from Tanagra in Greece

Mary Evans Picture Library

Urine

With other bodily secretions and excretions, valued in magic and alchemy because it was thought to retain some of the vital energy of the body from which it came and to provide a magical link with that body: a witch bottle was a device for turning a witch's spell or poison against her by boiling some of the victim's urine in a bottle; a persun's urine was also bottled because its condition would reveal whether he was well or ill, safe or in danger, while away from home.

Valhalla

The hall of the slain, the paradise ruled by Odin in Norse mythology, to which heroes and distinguished warriors went after death, conducted there by the Valkyries, Odin's battle-maidens; there they fought all day and those who fell were restored again in the evening, to feast on pork and mead.
See ODIN.

VAMPIRE

TOGETHER with the golem in his guise as Frankenstein's monster, the vampire has become the world's best-known supernatural monster, the result of decades of horror films capitalizing on the imagination and researches of an Irish author named Bram Stoker. Before Stoker, the vampire legend had attracted attention, and had even become something of a fad in Europe, but it was jumbled, tangled, overgrown. Stoker pruned it, performed some judicious grafting, dressed it up in a richly purple prose, and added *Dracula* to the list of classic horror stories.

The name of his vampire was borrowed from the name of a 15th century Balkan nobleman whose sadistic cruelties justified his name; *dracul* means 'devil' in Rumanian. It was not difficult for Stoker to project the vampire evil onto the ugly actuality of the true story. And he did it so successfully that folklorists are sometimes surprised to find how often he has affected the more modern concepts of vampires.

The vampire in this 19th century engraving of a 'vampire kiss' has bat's wings, a comparatively modern addition to the legend, dating from the discovery of the 'vampire bat' of South America. The Victorians generally played down the strong sexual element in the vampire tradition, preferring to regard vampire legends as good gory horror stories, grown out of primitive beliefs about the dead

Rumanian Vampire Beliefs

In the district of Teleorman, on the third day after a death, when people go to the house of mourning in order to burn incense they carry with them nine spindles, and these they thrust deep into the grave. Should the vampire rise he would be pierced by their sharp points. Another method is to take tow, to scatter it upon the grave, and to set fire to it there, for it is believed that the occupant will scarce venture through the flames. Sometimes the anathema of a priest will confine the vampire in his tomb.

In the Romanati district the vampire is stripped and the naked carrion thrust into a stout bag. The clothes and cerements are sprinkled with holy water, replaced in the coffin which is secured and again buried in the grave. The body is taken away to the forest. The heart is first cut out, and then it is hacked piecemeal limb from limb and each gobbet burned in a great fire. Last of all the heart is flung into the flames and those who have assisted come near so that they shall be fumigated with the smoke. But all must be consumed, every shred of flesh, every bone. The veriest scrap if left would be enough to enable the vampire again to materialize. Occasionally the ashes of the heart are collected, mingled with water and given to sick people as a powerful potion.

At Zarnesti after a female vampire had been exhumed great iron forks were driven through the heart, eyes, and breast after which the body was buried at a considerable depth, face downwards . . .

It is held to be imperative that the vampire should be traced to his lair and destroyed at the very first opportunity. If he is sufficiently cunning to avoid detection so long at the end of seven years he will become a man again, and then he will be able to pass into another country, or at any rate to a new district, where another language is spoken. He will marry and have children, and these after they die will all go to swell the vampire host.

Montague Summers *The Vampire in Europe*

It is also surprising, considering the wide fame of the vampire motif, to realize that the legend is comparatively young and that it was for a long time highly localized. Corollaries and ancestors of the vampire, several times removed, are fairly plentiful. Evil bloodsucking demons or witches and blood-hungry ghosts abound in primitive belief. And the ancient world also offers antecedents in the blood-consuming ghosts in the *Odyssey*, in Ovid and elsewhere. There is also the demonic Lilith of ancient Hebrew legend, who had many vampire traits, and the Romans conceived of the lamia, a near relation of the vampire, who enticed men sexually and then feasted on their blood (see INCUBUS; LILITH). The Arabs believed in blood-eating spirits, and the ancient Irish told of a comparable demon. But none of these creatures was a vampire, as it is now defined, although such legends probably blended and crystallized to give rise to the concept. Almost exclusively a creature of the Slavic regions and Balkan states of eastern Europe, the vampire first made its appearance in its present form in the 16th century.

The word 'vampire' comes from various eastern European terms, including the Magyar *vampir*. By the 17th century, the word was on a great many lips; vampire activity seems to have burgeoned rapidly in the Balkans, and to have occurred as far afield as Greece, where fearsome tales of the *vrykolakas* spread from town to town. Balkan clergy reported the spread of such tales, and their superiors spoke of a new offensive by the Enemy. Then in the 17th century a Greek writer named Leone Allacci separated the concept of the vampire from standard Christian demonology.

Travellers began to pick up hints of the new horror, and patched them together in their writings for the rest of Europe. The first stage of the legend's spread was completed in 1746 when a French monk named Dom Augustin Calmet published a learned treatise on vampires.

Late 18th century romanticism had fallen in love with the Gothic, and vampires suited the fashion nicely. Goethe wrote some vampire verses and in the following years so did Byron and Southey, Gautier and Baudelaire.

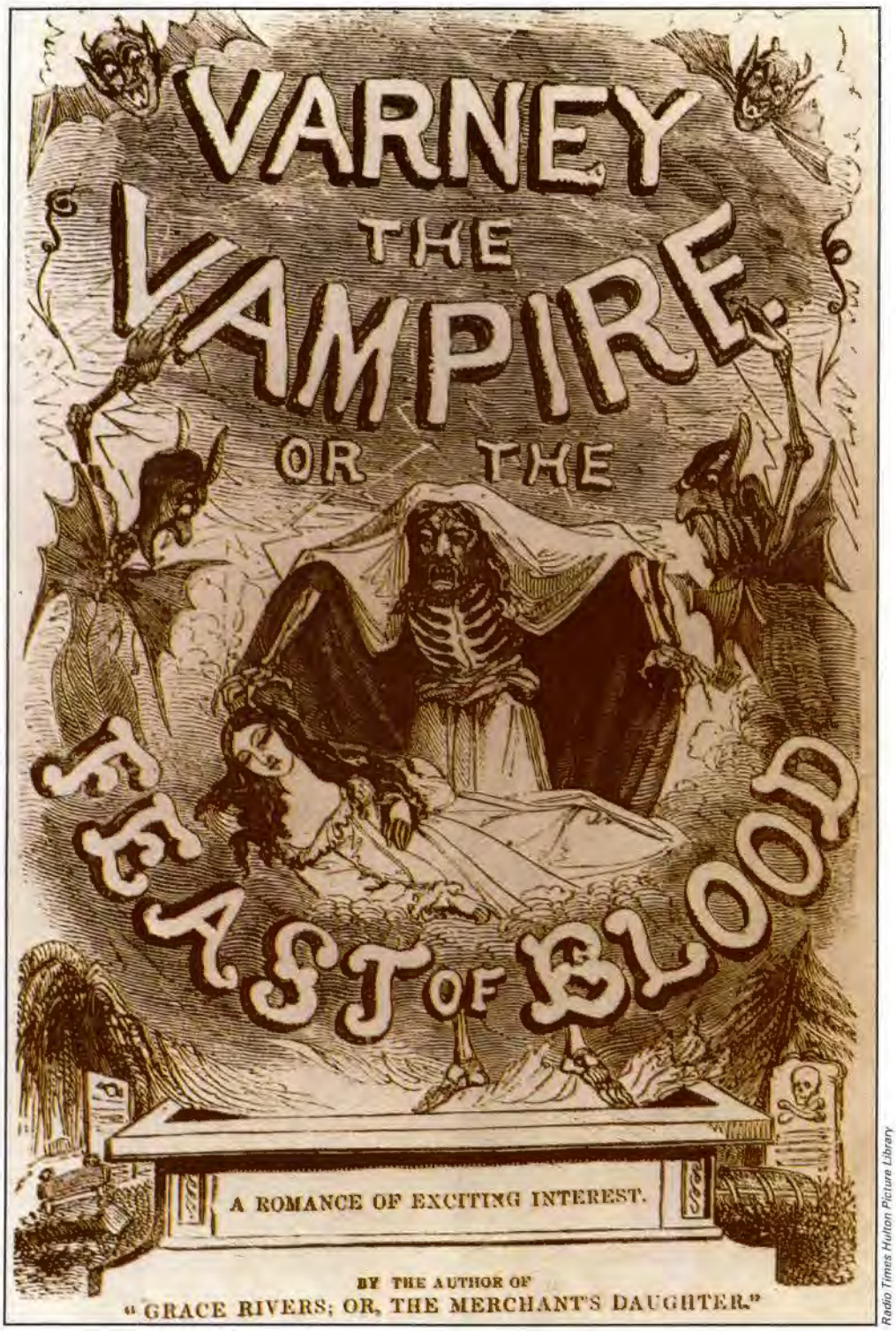
The vampire soon reached the theatre; a successful play in Paris in the 1820s spawned imitators, and as the years passed hardly a stage in Europe lacked its vampire. A singing vampire entertained German opera audiences in 1828; Alexander Dumas wrote a successful stage play on this theme in the 1850s; the London stage also presented vampires, and was in fact still doing so in 1925 with a dramatization of *Dracula*. In 1931 the cinema took over, and assured the immortality of Bela Lugosi who played Count Dracula (see FILMS). But long before that the fashion for vampires had reached a new height in prose fiction, with the publication in 1847 of a story called *Varney the Vampire*, some 800 pages of horrification, gory action and nauseous over-writing. It was an instant bestseller; but it was eclipsed at the end of the century when Bram Stoker published his classic blend of folklore and fantasy.

From then on, the vampire's world-wide notoriety was assured. And although other great vampire stories exist, the creature as he is now known is almost indistinguishable from his incarnation as Count Dracula. In studying the folklore vampire it is never possible to get very far away from the evil Transylvanian aristocrat.

It must be remembered that the vampire is a resuscitated corpse, not an immaterial spirit. Primitive people often fail to draw our distinction between the body of someone who has died and the spirit; they may feed the corpse in order to placate the ghost. And it is rarely clear whether tribesmen think of the dead as returning in bodily form or as insubstantial apparitions. This confusion is found to some degree in vampire lore. But basically the vampire is a walking corpse with some of the powers and functions of a non-corporeal spirit.

As a cadaver, the vampire looks cadaverous: lean, pale with the pallor of death, icy cold to the touch. Some tales describe him as skeletal and withered, like an Egyptian mummy, and he may be clothed in a shroud. But more usually he is said to be merely gaunt to an extreme, and to wear

The vampire theme was well suited to the late 18th century with its love of the Gothic, and Goethe and Byron were among the poets who wrote verses on the subject. In the 19th century the vampire fashion reached new heights in prose fiction with the publication of *Varney the Vampire* (1847)



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

normal clothing with perhaps a touch of the theatrical, like Dracula's entirely black costume. His thinness may vanish, in some cases, when he is well fed; when, like a leech, he is horribly swollen with engorged blood. At these times he may be decidedly hot to the touch. But more usually the only sign of life about his face will be the thick ruddiness of his lips, which are frequently drawn back to display long, pointed canine teeth.

The vampire's eyes gleam, and sometimes flash redly, and his ears may be pointed, as were Dracula's. These features seem to be borrowings from the older tradition of the werewolf (see WEREWOLF); similarly, the vampire will have sharp curved finger nails, eyebrows that meet above the nose, and he will be extremely hairy, with hair on the palms of his hands. His limited diet gives him foul breath but also makes him preternaturally strong despite his thinness.

A few isolated groups of tales add some special features, for extra horror effects. There is the Bulgarian suggestion that a vampire has only one nostril, or the old Polish idea that his tongue has a sharp point or barb. Vampire tales from Greece described the creature as having blue eyes; but this was merely a way of saying that blue-eyed people, rare creatures in Greece, were probably vampires. Anyone who is 'different' in some way has always been a convenient victim when the conforming majority is looking for enemies of the *status quo*. People with hare-lips, or red hair, or odd birthmarks, and children born with teeth, have all been persecuted for alleged vampirism.

These victims may well have wished that they *were* vampires, for folklore endows the creature with some impressive supernatural powers. The old eastern European legends underline its character as one of the 'walking dead' by stating that it can get in and out of its grave through six feet of soil. According to some Balkan stories, the grave of a vampire is punctuated by numerous small holes, which are channels down to the coffin through which the creature filters up to the surface. This is one of the main examples of the lack of distinction between corpse and ghost: the vampire is a material body with some of the abilities of an immaterial spirit. Hungarian tales overcome the problem by giving vampires the magical ability of changing into clouds of mist, a trick that Bram Stoker borrowed for Dracula; the Count could slip into locked and sealed rooms through the space under a door, or the keyhole, to reach a victim.

The shape-changing powers of the vampire also enable it to turn into various animals, usually noxious or nocturnal creatures with long-standing supernatural associations. And the vampire will sometimes have such animals at its beck and call, as aides in its evil-doing. Dracula had a pack of wolves under his control to terrify travellers; and the old tales similarly include wolves, or werewolves, among the vampire's animal companions, along with cats, owls, rats, and sometimes even flies. The vampire sometimes changed itself into animals such as these, most often a wolf or a cat. Dracula for instance was able to change into wolf form. And of course he also turned himself into a bat, a metamorphosis that has been emphasized in films. Stoker, however, used the bat sparingly. The old vampire tales of eastern Europe almost never depict the creature assuming this last form.

When the 19th century globe-trotting urge sent Europeans as far afield as South America, their travellers' tales sometimes told of the curious fauna of the continent, including a strange bat which fed solely and exclusively on the blood of animals or people. The world reached into folklore to give it its popular name – the vampire bat; and folklore and fiction incorporated it in the supernatural vampire tradition.

One further special power attributed to the vampire, apart from filtering out of a grave or tomb, and shape-changing, is its ability to hypnotize its victims, preventing them from struggling while it feasts, and also from remembering their fearful visitor the next morning. The vampire can therefore return again and again to the same victim, who will complain merely of having had shadowy nightmares and feeling anaemic.

A Stake Through the Heart

According to tradition, if people become aware of the presence of a vampire there is a battery of defences and reprisals that can be brought into action against it. The creature is bound up in a more extensive array of 'rules', within which it must operate, than any other folklore horror; and these rules contain defences against the vampire. It must of course be active only at night; but because it is a walking corpse, it must not only rest by day but must rest in its own grave or tomb. A few Balkan tales describe vampires moving freely around during the day, but this is generally thought to be cheating. On the other hand, the old tales do not say that sunlight is actively harmful to the vampire; this idea is a contribution of horror fiction, and films.

In fact many things can hurt, or at least ward off, a vampire. It shuns silver, as evil creatures have done since antiquity, and also hates garlic, and the plant's pungent flowers are useful to have at the window, or around the neck, if vampires are about. Since Christian times, the creature has actively feared the crucifix in any form, an idea that is partly the result of belief that all evil is in some way derived from Satan, the Enemy, and that the symbol of Christ will therefore oppose it. But older tales, from a Devil-oriented age, are sometimes more explicit: theories by European churchmen of the 17th century suggested that the corpse

Left **John Haigh as a choirboy; accused of murdering nine people, whose blood he was said to have drunk, he has been called the 'vampire of London'. Isolated cases of people who suffer from a mania for consuming blood may have provided a factual basis for some legends of vampirism *Right* A fairground 'vampire' in Sydney, Australia; the embodiment of repressed sexual wishes, and guilts that come 'from the unconscious world of infantile sexuality', the vampire is one of the most popular of supernatural monsters**

Jeffrey Craig

which became a vampire was in fact activated, or powered, by a demon from hell, and not by its original soul. Therefore it would especially fear the cross.

Silver, garlic and the cross are forms of protective magic; but vampire lore also specifies preventive magic which is widely used in lands riddled with the vampire fear. In these regions it seems that every deceased person would be ringed round with charms to bind him into his grave. These often resemble primitive methods for keeping the dead from rising. The Chiriguono tribe of South America, for instance, fastened a corpse into its grave with pegs, which also kept the ghost down, and some old Slavonic tales suggest thrusting iron skewers through the earth over a grave, so that the corpse would be magically pinned down. The iron works the magic: evil things shun cold iron almost as much as silver. Many European people simply placed a lump of iron in a dead man's coffin, to keep him in his grave. Other methods of ensuring this included putting a branch of hawthorn or some similar sacred tree, or a wreath of garlic flowers, on the coffin.

There are also all the practices by which, in European lore, any ghost is kept down when there is cause to believe that he may walk – this applies to suicides, executed criminals and so on. They are buried under running water, or at crossroads, or the corpse has a stake driven through its heart. In lands where belief in vampires took precedence even over ghosts, these techniques became charms against vampires.

However, if neither preventive nor protective magic is effective, there are still ways in which the monster can be destroyed. First, though, the vampire must be captured. Few vampires are as gregarious as Dracula, who invited people to stay at his castle, where the truth about him was revealed in several ways: his appearance, his absence by day, or the fact that he had no reflection in a mirror.

If vampire activity broke out in a particular region the locals would repair to the cemetery and examine the graves. Hopefully, they might find one with the small telltale perforations through which the monster filtered up from its coffin. Or they might borrow an old Hungarian test for vampirism. In this a white stallion that has never stumbled and never been to stud is taken to the cemetery; the horse will refuse to walk on a vampire's grave.

If there were no indications above the ground of vampire activity, the hunters would have to open the graves, and look for a corpse that had not decomposed. These trials could take place with perfect safety during the day while the vampire was dormant, but the searchers had to give themselves time to get back indoors before sunset. The uncorrupted corpse would bear additional signs of vampirism: the typical facial appearance, and traces of blood on mouth and face.

Once a vampire has been caught, it can be easily destroyed. For that matter, the monster could be shot with a silver bullet at night, while it was active, provided the hunter could avoid the creature's hypnotic eyes for long enough. Ideally the bullet should be made from a melted-down crucifix, or at least blessed by a priest. A safer method is to find the vampire in its coffin and to employ some homely magic to keep it there. The main technique is to drive a short, sharp stake into its heart.

The tales recommend using sacred wood for the stake, perhaps the thorn, or aspen. According to some traditions only one blow must be used to drive it home, or the 'pinning' magic will not work. Albanian tales suggest using a consecrated dagger, in the shape of the cross, instead of a stake. Other legends recommend that the monster be decapitated as well as staked; and specify that the beheading must be done with the sexton's spade. Sometimes the beheaded and staked vampire is then conclusively destroyed by the purification of fire.

These powerful defensive and offensive rituals and charms seem to give the living an advantage over the vampire, who at night can be balked by garlic or the cross, and who is wholly at the hunter's mercy during the day. But the vampire has one magical power not mentioned so far. He can recruit his victims into the ranks of vampirism. According to some tales, anyone who dies from loss of blood as the result of a vampire's continued attacks will instantly rise again as a new vampire. Other traditions suggest tbat even one or two non-fatal attacks by a vampire will cause the victim eventually to rise again after his or her natural death. For every vampire staked and destroyed,

British Film Institute

Dracula, the most famous of all vampires, was created at the end of the 19th century by Bram Stoker, so effectively that the character has passed into modern folklore: scenes from the 1931 film with Bela Lugosi as Count Dracula *(left)* and from the 1958 film in which the part of the vampire count was played by Christopher Lee *(right)*

several new ones will have been created.

Nor is this recruitment the only way in which vampires can come into existence. The lands most rife with vampire lore associated many supernatural traditions that are elsewhere ascribed to ghosts with these creatures. In the Balkans, anyone dying in a state of sin, without the Church's blessing, would rise again as a vampire; this category would especially include suicides and excommunicants. Perjurers and people cursed by their parents, in fact any exceedingly wicked person, might also walk as vampires after their deaths, as would anyone who dabbled in black magic.

According to western European folklore, such evil-doers must come back after death as insubstantial haunts, punished with eternal restlessness for their evil ways, and bound to this earth in a dreadful shadowy immortality. Western European tales also insist that the victims of evil return as haunts; and similarly, in eastern Europe, such victims return, through no fault of their own, as vampires. A murdered man whose death goes unavenged becomes a vampire (especially in Greek tales); so does a child who dies unbaptized, or a man whose corpse does not receive a Christian burial.

In addition to these borrowings from the older ghost traditions, vampire lore has produced some original ideas about the creation of the monsters. In Rumania, for instance, men who are werewolves reappear after death as vampires. Greek legends assert that anyone born on Christmas Day runs the risk of becoming a vampire; and other tales suggest that a seventh son, or a child born with a 'caul', might rise as a vampire after death. According to Rumanian tradition, if a vampire stares at a pregnant woman she will give birth to a potential vampire, unless a priest's blessing can cancel out the evil.

Hungry for Blood

The weird assortment of ways in which vampires are bred do not reflect the purpose for which the creature arises. Unlike ghosts, witches and demons, the vampire is not impelled by any of the familiar evil urges or intentions such as revenge, terrorizing or tempting souls from the righteous path. The vampire is merely obsessively hungry. He seeks blood to give him the pseudo-life he needs to seek more blood.

Folklore contains many instances of the animation of the dead by blood. In the *Odyssey* shadowy phantoms regain substance and the power of speech after drinking blood; witches fed their familiars on their own blood. And there is the story of a 19th century French doctor who pumped blood into the severed head of a guillotined prisoner, and was convinced that the head came briefly to life and took on a 'puzzled' expression.

The fascination of the vampire legend may be explained, to some extent, by the few nuggets of reality that lurk within the folklore. Some writers, for instance, make much of the parallel between vampires rising from the grave and the prevalence in past centuries of premature burial. Inadequate medical knowledge meant that people were sometimes buried before they were dead; and folklorists find some possible explanation for the 'uncorrupted corpse' aspect of the legend in this fact.

In the 16th and 17th centuries it was not uncommon for a number of people in a village to die, apparently inexplicably, from what were then unknown diseases. If a number of graves were later opened, and it was found that one of the recently buried corpses had not yet started to decompose, seemed to have changed position, and had a frightful expression on its face and blood on its hands, vampirism seemed to be the obvious explanation. In fact, the corpse would have been that of a person buried prematurely who had awoken in the grave and died horribly, trying to claw his way out.

There are also numerous cases of long-dead corpses remaining intact; examples may be found especially in accounts of Christian saints. There is also a supposedly true story from Italy which tells how the body of a woman buried in 1820 was exhumed 30 years later and found to be wholly uncorrupted. One of the exhumers accidentally cut the corpse's leg with a

A cross bearing the inscription in Rumanian, 'My God, save me from Dracula': *dracul* means 'devil' in Rumanian and Bram Stoker gave his vampire the name of a 15th century nobleman, noted for his sadistic cruelties. Vampires are said to fear the cross of Christ, which can be used as a weapon against them

spade, and blood gushed from the wound, as blood is supposed to flow from a vampire when it is staked, after which decomposition set in rapidly. In a superstitious age incidents such as these might well have given rise to a number of 'vampire' tales.

Finally, we must look behind a curtain drawn over the vampire theme by the moralizers of the 19th century. In Victorian times explicit accounts of brutality and violence were perfectly proper for widespread dissemination, but anything containing more than a hint of sexuality required censorship. This attitude produced the view that vampire legends are just good gory horror stories, grown out of primitive superstitions about the dead. In fact, vampirism is a blatantly sexual motif, riddled with oral eroticism and sado-masochism.

The old Balkan tales rarely omitted the sexual side of vampirism: married vampires arose from the grave to bestow their terrible attentions on their marriage partners, while those who were unmarried visited attractive young persons of the opposite sex. And it was not solely blood lust that impelled them. But in later tales, and in fiction, the sexual angle was more oblique.

The vampire bites his victims; and anyone with the slightest knowledge of Freud knows that a bite is a sado-erotic kiss; in *Dracula* the female vampires around Jonathan Harker's bed comment that his health and strength mean 'kisses for us all'. Even the creature's appearance, his thick red lips and unusual hairiness, corresponds to widely-held folk beliefs about excessively sex-oriented people.

Blood is profoundly involved with sexuality in man's psyche, a belief that is reflected in the widespread taboos placed on menstruating women. And modern psychology has shown the predominance of blood and blood-letting in the erotic fantasies of many psychiatric patients.

The British author Maurice Richardson has described the vampire legend as 'a kind of incestuous, necrophilous, oral-anal-sadistic all-in wrestling match'. The vampire embodies repressed sexual wishes and guilts which come 'from the unconscious world of infantile sexuality'. This view may unsettle some people who have enjoyed reading fictions like *Dracula*, or Sheridan Le Fanu's story *Carmilla* (1872), which has an unmistakable theme of lesbianism. But it is these undercurrents which are the main reason for the vampire's staying power, in the forefront of our favourite supernatural horrors.

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FURTHER READING: David Bischoff. *Vampires of the Night World* (Ballantine, 1981); R. McNally and V. R. Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (New York Graphic Society, 1972); Montague Summers, *Vampire in Europe*.

VEDANTA

Robert Skelton

Vedanta is not a cult, but a philosophy which can be used to describe and interpret any of the great religions of the world *Previous page* A London group receive instruction in Vedanta; they are affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission (*inset*), named after the modern Hindu saint who taught that all religions are true
The various methods of achieving union with the Atman are suited to different temperaments: bhakti yoga works through worship, prayer and concentration on a divine personality, while jnana yoga offers to its disciples salvation through intellectual effort
Above A rajah, holding a rosary as he makes *japam*, worships the god Rama, his wife and brother *Above right* Rama and his brother visit four hermits, who have withdrawn to the forest to devote themselves to meditation

Vedanta begins with the proposition that there is an eternal all-pervading Reality which remains unchanged amidst changing appearances

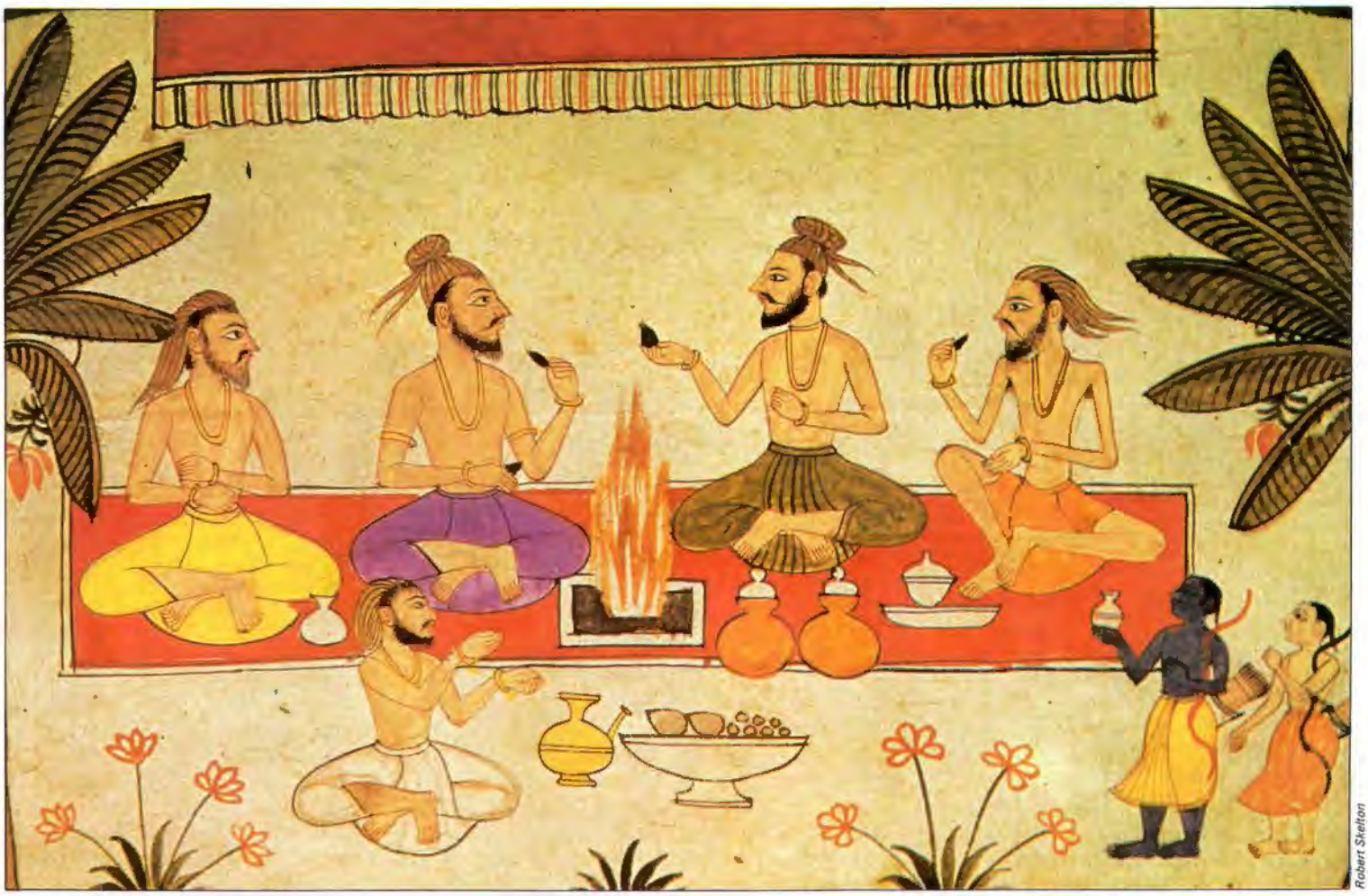
According to Vedanta, the meaning and purpose of life for every person on earth is to know Brahman-Atman, the all-pervading Reality: four main paths lead to this ultimate union – the way of devotion, the way of knowledge, the way of action and the way of meditation

VEDANTA is a Sanskrit word which means 'the end of the *Vedas*', the scriptures which form the basis of the Hindu religion. There are four of them; the *Rig*, the *Sama*, the *Yajur* and the *Atharva*. The traditional Hindu belief is that they were composed by seers at the very beginning of human history. In any case their origin is obscure and exceedingly ancient.

The Hindus regard the *Vedas* as being divine truth – truth known by men through experience of union with the divine in man – but their attitude toward them is not the same as that of the devotees of other religions toward their own sacred books. The Hindus do not demand that the *Vedas* shall be approached in a spirit of uncritical faith. On the contrary, they insist that each individual must verify the truths taught by the *Vedas* through his own effort and practice, in his own life.

The content of the *Vedas* is varied, and scholars have divided it into two categories which they call the Work Portion and the Knowledge Portion respectively. Each of the four *Vedas* contains both a Work and a Knowledge portion. The Work Portion includes prayers, hymns, rules of conduct, instructions for the performance of sacrificial rites and religious duties. The Knowledge Portion consists of the *Upanishads*.

The word *Upanishad* means 'sitting near one's spiritual teacher (guru) in a mood of devotion'. Its further meaning is 'the secret teaching', in other words, the teaching which may be imparted only to those disciples who are fit to receive it. Of the 108 *Upanishads* included in the *Vedas*, ten are regarded as being of major importance. Some of them are direct expositions of spiritual truth; others are set forth as dialogues between a teacher and one or more disciples. Their teaching may be conveyed in the form of a story; for example, the story of the boy Nachiketa's visit to the house of the King of Death, in the *Katha*



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Upanishad. Or it may be contained in a poetic image, as when, in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the noise of the thunder, *Da*, is interpreted by three different classes of pupils to mean three different things: *damayata* 'be self-controlled', *datta* 'be charitable', *dayadhwam* 'be compassionate'.

Vedanta means 'the end of the *Vedas*' in two senses. First, the Knowledge Portion does in fact come after the Work Portion in each *Veda*. Second, the word *anta*, like 'end' in English, also means goal or purpose. Vedanta is therefore the purpose of the *Vedas*, the reason for their existence; that is, their teaching. And since the teaching of the *Vedas* has been restated and explained by many commentators in many books, the word Vedanta may also be used to describe this vast literature, which is still being added to today.

Unchanging Brahman

Vedanta is sometimes used as a synonym for the Hindu religion, but this is inaccurate. In one sense, the Hindu religion is something more than Vedanta, since it includes the cults of numerous aspects of God and of divine incarnations – Rama, Krishna, Durga, Kali, Vishnu, Shiva, Ramakrishna, to name only a few. In another sense, Vedanta is something more than the Hindu religion, since it is not a cult but a philosophy and as such can be used to describe and interpret any of the great religions of the world. One could, for example, be simultaneously a Christian and a Vedantist – always provided that one was ready to agree that Jesus was not the only divine incarnation. Vedanta, by the terms of its own philosophy, must be universal.

Vedanta begins with the proposition that there is an eternal all-pervading Reality, without characteristics or attributes, which remains unchanged amidst the changing appearances of our universe. When spoken of as external, or transcendent, this Reality is called Brahman; when spoken of as internal, or immanent, it is called the Atman (see BRAHMAN). But, since the Reality is both external and internal, these names imply absolutely no difference in essence, only in one's subjective viewpoint. The Brahman around us *is* the Atman within us.

Brahman-Atman is described as being *Sat-chit-ananda*, absolute existence, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss, but these are not to be thought of as attributes. Brahman *is* existence, *is* consciousness, *is* bliss. It is the existence through which all else exists, the consciousness which contains all knowledge, the bliss which is beyond all desire and fear and is therefore absolute peace.

There are those who mistakenly describe Vedanta as pantheistic. (Pantheism, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, is the doctrine that the universe, taken as a whole, is God.) But Vedanta makes a clear distinction between Brahman and the universe, although it sees them as intimately related. The universe is called an effect of Brahman, inseparable from Brahman in the same sense that heat is an effect of fire and inseparable from fire. Nevertheless, heat is not identical with fire and Brahman is not identical with the universe. The universe changes; Brahman does not change.

In the *Upanishads* one finds nothing which can be described as pantheism. But there are two interpretations of the Brahman-universe relationship which at first sight seem contradictory. In certain passages it is stated that nothing but Brahman exists; in others, that Brahman and universe coexist eternally. This seeming contradiction arises because two different levels of mystic perception are being described. The seer who has experienced the reality of Brahman and who then returns to normal consciousness may declare that the universe he sees around him has no substance and that there is in truth nothing but Brahman. But this same seer, if he is on the level of mystic perception which is between the normal and the supernormal, may declare that he sees both Brahman and the universe, both inner and outer, simultaneously.

Vedanta's second proposition is that Brahman-Atman, being the true nature of man, as of all creatures and objects, can be known by man. To know yourself, according to Vedanta, is to know the Atman within you, not the ego-personality, labelled Mr Smith or Mrs Brown, with which you ordinarily identify yourself. Indeed, this ego-personality can never be fully known, since it is subject to continual change and since it is like an onion: when you have removed all of its skins there is nothing left. The process of knowing the Atman is therefore a process of ceasing to identify yourself with the ego-personality. The ego's fundamental claim is

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that it is separate from and other than its neighbours and surroundings. But the seer who knows the Atman within him knows in the same instant that he is essentially one with his neighbours and surroundings, since their true nature is also Brahman-Atman.

Vedanta's third proposition is that the meaning and purpose of life for every individual on earth is to know Brahman-Atman, and that all his activity should be directed toward that goal. If you accept Vedanta's first two propositions it would seem that you are forced to accept this one, at least in theory. Surely, if Brahman is *Sat-chit-ananda*, everyone must wish to be united with it and find safety? Surely, if Brahman is the true Fact of Life, then to refuse to accept it is to turn one's back on sanity and prefer to inhabit a world of madness? This is what mystics of all ages and races and faiths have held to be self-evident, and this is why they have devoted their lives to the search for union with the Eternal within themselves. Why do the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the earth fail to follow their example?

No Absolute Good and Evil

Even though you have accepted Vedanta's first two propositions, you may still not put the third one into practice, because you are bewildered by *Maya*. Maya is the basis of mind and matter and therefore the stuff of the universe, the effect of which Brahman is the cause. As individuals we exist and perceive and think and act within Maya. Within Maya we are Mr Smith or Mrs Brown. As long as we believe in the absolute reality of our perceptions within Maya, we cannot know the Atman. Maya is multiplicity, Brahman-Atman is one.

If Maya makes us ignorant of our true nature, and if Maya is an effect of Brahman, then is not Brahman evil? Vedanta says that such a statement cannot be made, because evil and good are merely relative concepts, existing within Maya. The question 'Why does God permit evil?' is as meaningless in an absolute sense as 'Why does God permit good?', since it is we who are defining what is good and what is evil. This universe is a place of mixed and changing values, of interaction and evolution. The greatest mystics, such as Ramakrishna (see RAMAKRISHNA), have likened it to a game and laughed at it, not because they were callous toward mankind's suffering or indifferent to its well-being but because they saw the Reality behind the shadow-show. When we ask, 'Why does this ignorance exist, why have we lost awareness of our true nature?', that question cannot be answered either, since it is asked from a standpoint within Maya and the answer lies outside Maya. The mystics who transcended Maya assure us that all is ultimately well; each individual, sooner or later, will free himself from Maya and know his identity with the Atman, and in doing so will realize that his ignorant flounderings in illusion were a necessary part of the game.

How is Brahman-Atman to be known? This has been the main theme of the literature of Vedanta. The principles set forth in the *Vedas* themselves have been elaborated by hundreds of later writers. Among the major classics of Vedanta are the *Bhagavad Gita* (see BHAGAVAD GITA), Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, Shankara's *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination* and the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. What follows is a digest based upon these four books and several others.

There are four distinct methods or disciplines by which union with the Atman may be achieved. They are called yogas. Yoga is the Sanskrit ancestor of the English word 'yoke', and it means both the act and the method of uniting. A man who practises yoga is called a yogi or a yogin; a woman who does so is called a yogini. The four principal yogas are bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, karma yoga and raja yoga.

Four Ways to Unity

Bhakti yoga is the method of union with the Atman through devotion. It is followed by means of ritual worship, prayer and *japam*. To make japam is to keep repeating one of the names of God – usually one's own mantra (see MANTRA), the name of one's chosen ideal. A rosary is often used in combination with making japam, in order to count out a prescribed number of repetitions. The object of devotional worship is, generally speaking, one of the many aspects of God with attributes, a divine personality or a divine incarnation (avatar). This kind of spiritual exercise is said to be easier than any other, since it only demands that the worshipper shall sublimate his natural urge to love and fix it upon the divine. The vast majority of believers in any religion are fundamentally bhakti yogis.

Bhakti yoga leads to ultimate union with the Atman but it does so indirectly, so to speak, achieving non-dualism by a dualistic approach. The devotee may theoretically accept the idea that he is essentially the Atman and yet find it impossible to believe this at first. Looking inward, he can see no farther than his own ego-personality and its defects. Bhakti yoga teaches him, therefore, to look outward and choose some other personality which is more evidently god-like than his own. (The importance of making a definite choice and keeping to it is stressed

Surely, if Brahman is the true Fact of Life, to refuse to accept it is to turn one's back on sanity and prefer to inhabit a world of madness

because the emotions need an unchanging focus. To worship at every shrine is to disperse the emotional powers.) As the worshipper's devotion increases, he begins to understand that the object of his worship is the Atman within himself and one with Brahman; so in the perfected state of yoga, worshipper and worshipped become one.

The bhakti yogi (also called a bhakta) may choose not only the object of his worship but also the particular relationship which he wishes to establish between it and himself. For example, he may take the attitude of servant toward Master, of child toward Father or Mother, of parent toward Child, of friend toward Friend, or of lover toward Beloved. Exponents of all these relationships may also be found among the mystics of the Christian tradition.

Jnana yoga is the method of union through intellectual discrimination, often called the Path of Knowledge. The jnani is non-dualistic: he seeks to reach Brahman-Atman by constant and rigorous analysis of the nature of all phenomena. Instead of using the approach of dualism within Maya in order to transcend Maya, he denies the essential reality of Maya from the outset. His watchwords are 'not this, not this', as he continually reminds himself that the apparent universe is other than Brahman-Atman. The jnani hopes to discover the Reality by a process of elimination. He makes use of the intellect just as the bhakti makes use of the emotions. This explains why bahkti yoga is for the many and jnana yoga for the few. The pursuit of jnana yoga calls for tremendous willpower and mental clarity. The jnani, by dispensing with devotion and the aid of a chosen ideal, makes his path much harder for himself. Yet there are those who are temperamentally suited to jnana and who might otherwise not embrace religion in any form. The path of jnana

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Above left **Worshippers at a shrine sacred to Krishna; in the foreground musicians are singing devotional songs. Bhakti yoga is said to be the easiest kind of spiritual exercise, 'since it only demands that the worshipper shall sublimate his natural urge to love and fix it upon the divine' *Right* Yoga, particularly raja yoga, includes physical as well as mental disciplines: an ascetic performs his devotions by the banks of a river, seated in the lotus position – a technique of yoga**

What is Joy?

What is joy?

Think of a young man, well read, ambitious, firm, strong, noble: give him all the wealth of the world, call him one unit of human joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of those brought to the celestial choir by their good deeds. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of choir-born spirits. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of the fathers, living in their eternal paradise. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of heaven-born gods. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of gods brought to godhead by their good deeds. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of ruling gods. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy.

Multiply that joy a hundred times, and call it one unit of the joy of Indra, god of Power. A man full of revelation, but without desire, has equal joy . . .

He who lives in man, He who lives in the sun, are one.

He who knows this, cries goodbye to the world: goes beyond elemental Self, living Self, thinking Self, knowing Self, joyous Self. Here is my authority:

'He who knows the spiritual joy mind cannot grasp nor tongue speak, fears nothing.'

The Ten Principal Upanishads

trans. Shree Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats

yoga appeals to the intellectual agnostic.

Karma yoga is the method of union through selfless work. Karma means a mental or a physical act, and also the consequences of that act (see KARMA). In a long-term sense, it means the sum of the consequences of all the acts performed by an individual in this and in previous lives. An individual's karma is made up of his *samskaras*, the tendencies or potentialities which are created in his mind by his actions and thoughts. Thus one karma motivates another, bringing with it happiness or unhappiness or a mixture of both. The samskaras make up what, at any given moment, we call the 'character' of an individual, but no one is helplessly in their power. An individual can always begin to modify them by performing acts and thinking thoughts which are contrary to their tendency. Thus a man's karma can be changed, for better or for worse.

According to Vedanta, it is karma which drives the individual soul, after death, to seek rebirth in a new body. The theory of reincarnation is therefore inseparable from the theory of karma. But the individual can free himself from this cycle of birth-death-rebirth through realization of his oneness with the Atman. When the Atman is known, the law of karma ceases to operate.

Work for Work's Sake

To work selflessly is to work sacramentally, offering every action and its results to God. This means in practice that every action must be performed to the very best of one's ability, since it is an offering to God; and that the doer must have no desire for any resulting fame or other material advantage and no fear of unpleasant consequences. He works, as the *Gita* says, 'for the work's sake only and not for the fruits of work', without fear and without desire.

Properly speaking, the karma yogi must perform every action according to this principle, even when the act is performed in solitude and without reference to other people. For the karma yogi must regard himself as the witness of his actions and not as the doer. He identifies himself with the Atman, and not with the physical and psychological drives which cause the action. But in general, the path of karma yoga is followed by rendering service to mankind through education, medical care or some other type of social work. The karma yogi is reminded, however, that he is not really benefiting mankind by his service: to believe that he is doing so is to lapse into delusion and vanity. All action is really symbolic, for how can Brahman-Atman help, heal or harm Brahman-Atman? The yogi who seemingly helps others is actually helping himself, for his efforts are bringing him nearer to union with the Atman. Therefore he is told to bow down in gratitude to those who accept his service.

To speak of an action creating 'good' or 'bad' karma is to raise the question: in what manner does the law of karma relate to ethics? One may say that the Christian concept of sin is generally dualistic. The Christian thinks of himself in relation to a personal Father-God. A sin is an act of disobedience and ingratitude toward this Father. If the Father punishes it, that is only right and proper. Meanwhile the sinner begs his forgiveness and tries to feel sincere contrition. The Vedantist, being a non-dualist, is taught to regard sins as obstacles which he himself has placed in the way of his own enlightenment. He has not offended a divine Father; he has done himself an injury. He is not expected to feel contrition and beg for forgiveness; he is expected to resolve not to make the same mistake again. The danger of the Christian approach is that it may lead to exaggerated self-loathing and hence to weakness and despair. The danger of the Vedantist approach is that it may lead to a self-indulgent permissiveness.

Each one of us, considered as an individual within Maya, has different virtues and weaknesses; each has varying duties according to the way of life he has chosen. This natural duty is called *dharma*. The *Gita* warns us never to undertake the dharma of another person but to prefer to die doing our own duty. The dharma of the individual determines what is 'right' or 'wrong' for him at that particular stage in his growth. What is right for him at one period in his life may be wrong for him at another. Acts of desire and fear must be harmful because they put a man into greater bondage. But problems of conduct are seldom easy. No act in itself can be regarded as absolutely right or wrong, under all circumstances, for all individuals. The act can only be evaluated in relation to the search for union with the Atman.

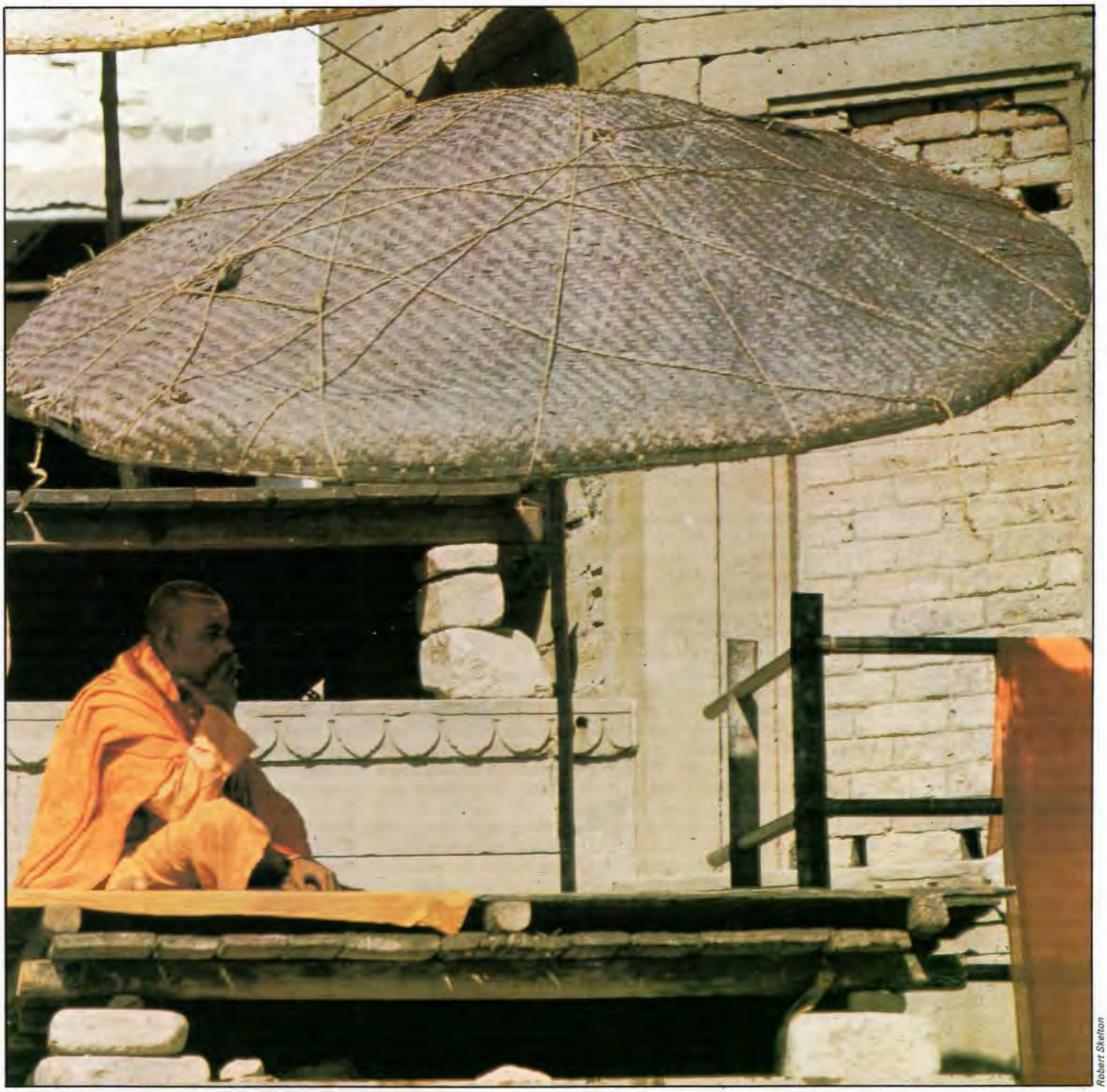
Royal Yoga

Raja yoga, meaning literally royal yoga, is the method of union through the practice of meditation. It is followed by a systematic training and controlling of the mind, concentrating it one-pointedly on the Atman until complete absorption is achieved.

Raja yoga is also concerned with the study of the human body as a vehicle of spiritual energy. According to Patanjali, whose *Aphorisms* is the classic textbook on the yogas, there is an immense reserve of this energy situated at the base of the spine. It is called the *kundalini*, meaning 'that which is coiled up' (see KUNDALINI); hence it is sometimes referred to as 'the serpent power'. In normally unspiritual people, the kundalini is seldom and only partially aroused. The aim of raja yoga is to arouse it fully. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, which is a record of his teachings, Ramakrishna explains that the mind dwells only in the lower centres of consciousness as long as it remains attached to the objects of worldly desire. When, through the practice of yoga, the kundalini is aroused and has moved up the spine to the centre of the heart, man experiences his first spiritual awakening. If the kundalini can be made to ascend farther, to the centres of the throat, the forehead and the top of the head, man becomes enlightened.

It may be admitted that raja yoga is primarily for those who are prepared to lead predominantly contemplative lives; its techniques are too exact and thorough to be practised amidst the distractions of a busy life in the world. But its description of human physiology has great significance for us all. It teaches that there is no sharp division between mind and matter; the two are interrelated within a process which may be thought of as a series of superimposed coverings, the outermost increasingly material, the innermost increasingly mental or subtle. Furthermore – and this is a most important lesson for the puritan – there is no sharp division between pure and impure, between spirit and flesh. The same energy, the power of the kundalini, is expressed in physical appetite, sexual desire, artistic creation, compassion for others, the longing for God and finally the highest spiritual experience.

The disciplines, usually known as the 'eight limbs', of raja yoga are: *yama*, the



Robert Skelton

'The process of knowing the Atman is . . . a process of ceasing to identify yourself with the ego-personality': to this end the sannyasin, meditating by the river in the holy city of Benares, has renounced all material possessions

practice of truthfulness, continence, abstention from greed and the exploitation of others for one's own gain; *niyama*, mental and physical purity, contented acceptance of one's lot in life, performance of ritual worship, practice of japam, devotion to God, study of the scriptures; *asana*, choice of a suitable place and a correct posture for meditation; *pranayama*, control of the vital energy through the practice of breathing exercises; *pratyahara*, withdrawal of the mind from sense-objects; *dharana*, holding the mind within a centre of spiritual consciousness inside the body or fixing it upon a divine form; *dhyana*, an unbroken flow of thought toward the object of concentration (this is often compared to pouring oil from one vessel to another in an unbroken stream); *samadhi*, the superconscious state in which man experiences his identity with the Atman.

Samadhi is the goal of the Vedantist and of many other practising mystics; Buddhists call it Nirvana and Christians the Mystic Union (see MYSTICISM). There are degrees of samadhi – in the lower samadhi, some sense of duality still remains – but samadhi is always a state of superconsciousness in which, to quote Patanjali, 'the true nature of the object shines forth, not distorted by the mind of the perceiver'.

For convenience, the yogas have to be described one by one, but of course they are not to be thought of as mutually exclusive. Indeed nobody can practise any one yoga to the absolute exclusion of the others. To call oneself a bhakti, a jnani, a karma or a raja yogi is merely to define one's general approach to yoga. But discrimination without devotion is ultimately sterile, devotion without discrimination must degenerate into shallow emotionalism, some meditation is necessary even for the most active, and no human being can avoid action altogether. A classical simile likens man's character to a bird in flight: love and knowledge are its two wings, meditation is its tail.

(See also BREATH; HINDUISM; YOGA.)

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

Vedas
Hindu sacred texts, consisting primarily of the *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*; incorporating three main strata, in order of date, the *Samhitas* (hymns), the *Brahmanas* (manuals of ritual and prayer) and the *Upanishads* (philosophical treatises); the language of the Vedas is Vedic, a form of Sanskrit; the word *veda* means 'wisdom' or 'knowledge'.
See HINDUISM; INDIA: VEDANTA.

VEDDAS

THE VEDDAS, a primitive forest tribe of Ceylon, and the numerous ethnic groups of similar physical appearance represent one of the most archaic surviving racial types of Asia. They are of slight build and small stature, with dark brown skin colour and wavy or curly black hair. The forehead is low, the eyes are deep set under heavy ridges, the nose is short and broad and often depressed at the root, the lips are full and the chin tends to be receding. Some of the jungle tribes of Southern India closely resemble the Veddas, and it can be safely assumed that all these populations are remnants of an ethnic stratum which during the late Stone Age extended over large parts of Asia.

When at the end of the 19th century the Veddas were first studied by Western scholars, they were found to live solely by hunting and collecting, dwelling in caves surrounded by jungle. Excavations proved that these caves had been inhabited by people of the late Stone Age, and much points to the assumption that the Veddas are the direct descendants of the Stone Age cave-dwellers whose roughly flaked stone implements lie only a few inches below the surface. The cultural evidence from these cave deposits coincides largely with what is known about the style of life of the modern Veddas, and this too suggests that in the wooded highlands of Ceylon there was an unbroken cultural sequence from the Stone Age to the present time.

The traditional style of Vedda life persisted until the first quarter of the 20th century, when the British anthropologist C. G. Seligman undertook a study of this ancient people. The majority of Veddas had already been partly assimilated to the Sinhalese peasantry, but there were still groups of Veddas who led a semi-nomadic life in the forest and used rock shelters as habitations. The average Vedda community consisted then of about five families, who shared the rights of hunting over a tract of land within which they gathered honey, edible roots and tubers, fished in streams and used natural rock shelters. But the whole of the community did not commonly move about its territory as one band.

Each group exercised property rights over a clearly defined territory, and there was a tradition that in the old times an intruder entering the land of another group without the owners' permission would have faced death. Membership of a group descended through the female line, and it was customary for a man to join his wife's group on marriage and live in their territory. As the membership and size of a group changed from generation to generation territorial boundaries also changed, and the whole system of land holding was extremely elastic.

As the inroads of peasant cultivators restricted the hunting grounds of the Veddas, many of them had to seek new means of subsistence. Most took to a simple form of shifting cultivation, clearing small patches in the forest and planting millet, maize and various vegetable crops. They also acquired some cattle, and gradually adapted themselves to the way of life of small-scale cultivators. Today there are no true forest Veddas left, and the Ceylonese government has provided facilities to aid the process of transition from semi-nomadic hunting and food-gathering to settled agriculture. But although there is no longer an essential difference between the economies of the Veddas and other backward rural communities, the Veddas remain culturally outside the society of the Buddhist Sinhalese.

Corpses Left in Caves

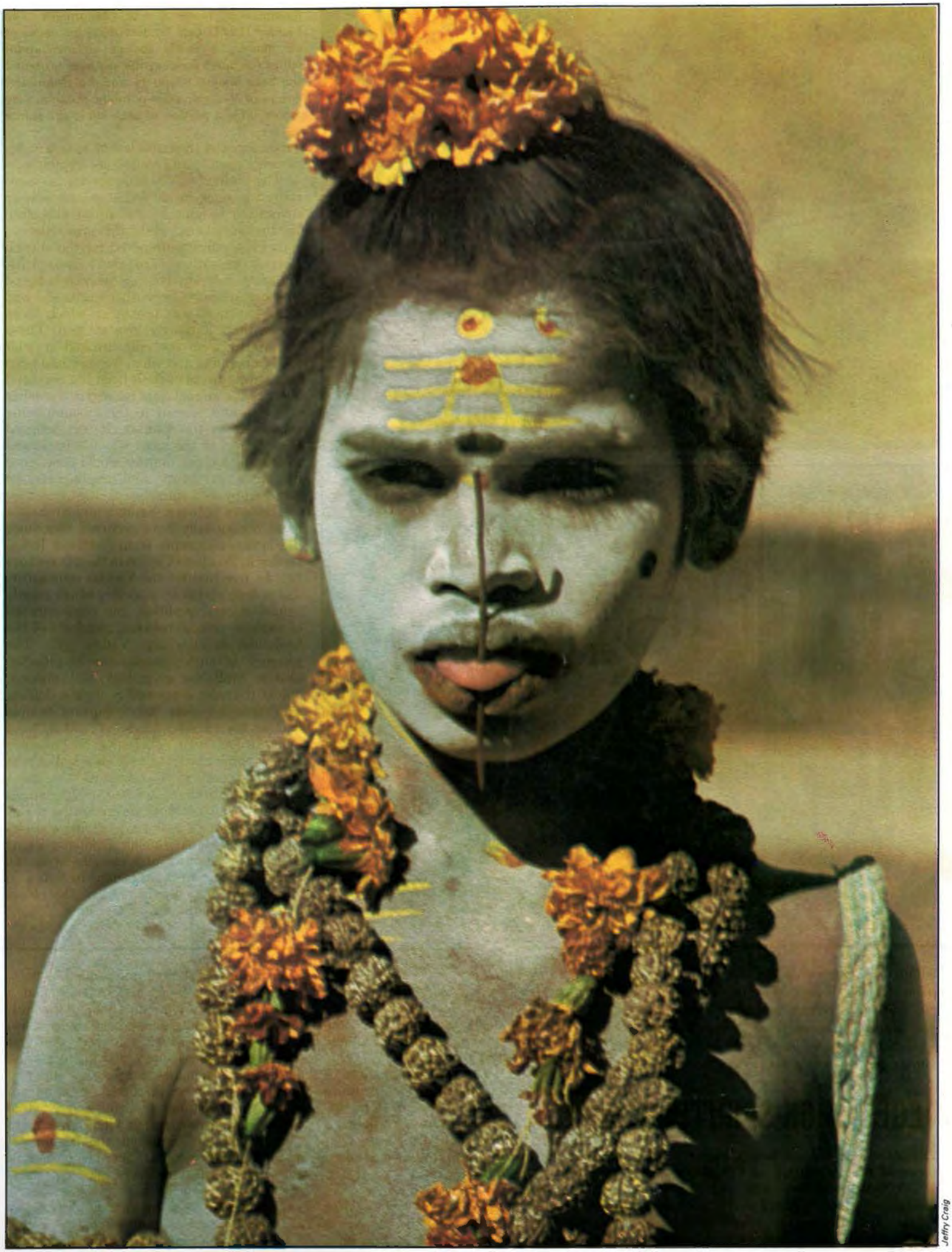
When they were first studied, more than half a century ago, the religious practices and beliefs of the various groups of Veddas proved to be of great complexity. It was impossible to isolate any body of beliefs which could be regarded as the original Vedda religion: while the material aspects of Vedda life seemed to reflect a fairly accurate picture of conditions among South Asian food-gatherers of the Stone Age, the same could hardly be claimed of the religious phenomena met among the Veddas. Some customs, however, are certainly of considerable antiquity. For instance, the funeral practices of the forest Veddas present a striking contrast to Sinhalese practice. When a man or woman died from natural causes the body was left in the cave or rock shelter where the death occurred, and was covered with leaves and branches. The cave was then abandoned for some time but could be reoccupied later, when the remaining bones were thrown out unceremoniously. An alternative method of disposal of corpses was burial in a simple grave dug by the brothers or other close kinsmen of the deceased. While most graves were not marked and no objects of any kind were buried with the departed, the spirits of the dead were treated with great respect and were given offerings of food.

There is a belief, still current among Veddas, that for a short time the spirit of a dead man remains near the site where he died, but later on joins the company of the ancestor spirits. These spirits are known as *yakku*, the same term which the Sinhalese employ for demons. The Veddas believe that life in the realm of the yakku remains the same for all time: that is, they are not reborn in a different shape. Although there are male and female spirits they are 'like the wind' and do not have sexual relations. Some Veddas say that all yakku lead a more or less similar life, but others believe that even among the yakku 'good people' occupy a higher and 'bad people' a lower position. The good yakku are helpful towards the living, while bad yakku are liable to harm their surviving kinsmen. Acts of violence, even the harsh treatment of a dog, annoy the ancestor spirits and endanger those who have aroused their wrath.

Distinct from the ancestor spirits are spiritual beings also described as yakku but named according to localities. These yakku have the character of local deities and are associated with certain features of the landscape. Some of them are believed to control wild animals; when Veddas were still mainly hunters, they used to cut off the head of whatever game they had killed and leave it in the forest as an offering to the gods of the chase.

In most Vedda communities there is one man who has the power and the knowledge to establish contact with the ancestor spirits and the nature deities. At ceremonies when the spirits of the dead are given offerings of food, one of them may possess this priest and, speaking through his mouth in hoarse guttural accents, declare that he approves the offerings and that he will assist his kinsmen in hunting, often stating the direction in which a hunting party should go. Each priest trains his

The Veddas are one of the oldest surviving racial types of Asia, preserving elements of the culture of their cave-dwelling ancestors



Jeffry Craig

Seligman: The Veddas, 1911

Seligman: The Veddas, 1911

Illustrations from C. G. Seligman's *The Veddas* (1911) *Left* To determine the cause of an illness, a Vedda recites an invocation: when the spirit causing the sickness is named the bow should swing to and fro *Below left* Group of Veddas: semi-nomadic hunters, they would offer a portion of each kill to the spirits

successor, and the pupil learns to repeat the invocations of spirits recited at ceremonies.

The method of invoking spirits is essentially the same in all Vedda ceremonies: an invocation is sung by the priest and often by the onlookers, while the priest dances round the offering prepared for the spirits. Special veneration is accorded to two spirits, known by individual names, who are believed to exercise control over other spirits and who must sanction any assistance which those under their authority give to men. These two spirits were specially invoked in order to obtain game, and when hunters had been successful, pieces of flesh from the neck and chest of the animal were roasted in the ashes of a fire and offered to them before being consumed by the Veddas. It was believed that if part of the meat was not presented to the spirits, the hunters would experience bad luck in future and might even be attacked by wild animals.

Contacts between Veddas and Sinhalese must occasionally have occurred ever since the latter, emigrants from Northern India, settled in Southern Ceylon in the 6th century BC. As free hunters the Veddas were accorded a high status by a society which greatly valued martial qualities, and traditions tell of various unions between members of the Sinhalese nobility and Vedda girls. The memory of such associations is reflected also in Sinhalese mythology. Kataragama, one of the most renowned Sinhalese deities, who presides over an important temple and centre of pilgrimage, is said to have fallen in love with Valliamma, the daughter of a Vedda chief; to this day Valliamma is worshipped as Kataragama's mistress and has a shrine of her own in the temple grounds, which is not inferior to the shrine of Kataragama's legitimate divine consort. Thus the Veddas, though gradually losing their tribal identity and merging with the Sinhalese peasantry, continue to figure in folk beliefs and mythology as the oldest indigenous inhabitants of the island.

C. VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

Within the darkness of the pharaohs' tombs, 'mummies' filled with Nile mud and planted with corn sprouted with new life: the decay and resurrection of the seed-corn, personified in a vegetation god, was invested by ancient man with a deep religious significance

VEGETATION SPIRITS

THE EARLIEST human beings known to us, those of the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age (c 30,000 to 10,000 BC), are generally designated 'food gatherers' by anthropologists; for they either found their food in the form of nuts, berries and roots, or they hunted animals for it. During the succeeding Neolithic or New Stone Age a great transformation of economic activity occurred, which has aptly been called the 'Neolithic Revolution'. Man gradually changed from being a 'food gatherer' to being a 'food producer'. The two basic factors in this change were the invention of agriculture and the domestication of animals. The origins of agriculture have been much debated by scholars; but no generally agreed conclusions have yet been established about how and where this momentous change in human economy was first achieved. We can only speculate about the likely places (for example, the ancient Near East), where wild corn-bearing grasses might first have been purposely planted and tended by man.

This revolution in his economy had a profound effect upon man's life and thought. It led to the establishment of settled communities, from which emerged the first towns and cities; it prompted the formation of the first calendars, since seed-time and harvest had to be predicted; and it promoted the invention of writing and a scribal class, as agrarian transactions grew more complicated and required the keeping of accounts and records. The beginnings of all these institutions have been discerned in the ancient Near East.

But the change to an agrarian way of life also deeply affected man's religious ideas. As an agriculturist, he became intimately

involved with the annual cycle of Nature's life. He realized that his existence and well-being depended upon the yearly miracle of the germination of the seed-corn, upon its steady growth and the increase of its fruits until harvest. The process of the seasons took on a new significance for him. He saw it as an annual drama of life and death. For in the Near Eastern lands the cycle of Nature's year has the aspect of a dramatic contest between the forces of life and death. Spring comes quickly, clothing the landscape in verdant green, bedecked by flowers. Under the increasing power of the sun the corn quickly ripens to harvest. But as summer advances and no rain falls, vegetation withers and dies, and the ground seems cursed with sterility and death. Yet from this seeming death, vegetation awakens again next spring to a new life, and the miracle of Nature's resurrection provides mankind once more with food.

Son and Lover

But the early peoples of this area saw in the annual rebirth of vegetation a significance deeper than that of the assurance of their food. For them the truth it intimated was twofold, and inevitably they interpreted it in mythic imagery. The idea of a 'Great Goddess', who was the source of all living things, seems already to have found expression in the Paleolithic era in the many carvings of the female form, showing the maternal attributes grossly exaggerated while the facial features were undelineated (see EARTH; FACELESS GODDESSES; MOTHER GODDESS). This primitive conception of the 'Great Goddess' was naturally associated with the earth, from which all forms of vegetation grew and within which the dead were laid. The vegetation was thus the offspring of the Earth Mother, and it was easily personified as a divine spirit that manifested itself in the trees and grass, and in the corn.

Hence developed the idea of a divine couple who embodied the fecundity of the earth and the crops which it bore, and upon which man's life depended. But the imagery of mother and son did not completely portray the whole complex of Nature's annual cycle. To give birth to vegetation, the Earth Mother had to be impregnated. A variety of imagery suggested itself: the plunging blade of the plough or the fall of rain. Some lines from the *Danaids* of the Athenian dramatist Aeschylus (c 499–458 BC) significantly portray the anthropomorphic images in which the ancient Greeks envisaged the process: 'Love moves the pure Heaven to wed the Earth; and Love (*Eros*) takes hold on Earth to join in marriage. And the rain, dropping from the husband Heaven, impregnates Earth, and she brings forth for men pasture for flocks and corn, the life of men.'

From such sexual imagery emerged the concept of a virile god who impregnated the Earth Mother with his seed. The form of this deity could vary between the animal and the human. The bull provided an obvious type-figure, and at Catal Hüyük, the oldest known sanctuary (c 6000 BC) of the Great Goddess, frescoes of bulls and bulls' horns signified the incorporation into her cult of the principle of male virility. In Greek mythology Zeus, in the form of a bull, carried off Europa, and the Minotaur (half-man and half-bull) was the offspring of the Queen of Crete, Pasiphae, and a divine bull. In these 'faded myths' were probably preserved folk-memories of the associated cults of 'Great Goddesses' and sacred bulls. (See BULL.)

Mythic thought is characteristically imprecise, and it easily embraces ambivalent or contradictory ideas. So it is not surprising to find, in many myths of the ancient Near East, a male deity who is both the son and the lover of a fertility goddess. An example of such complex imagery is succinctly expressed in a title of the Egyptian god Amun-Re, descriptive of his relation to the goddess Nut. 'Bull of his Mother, the first on his field', he impregnated the goddess who gave him birth.

In his role of vegetation god, the offspring of the Earth Mother, this ambivalent male deity was also a 'dying and rising god' (see DYING GOD). For he personified the annual death of vegetation in the fierce summer heat and drought of the Near Eastern lands, and its resurrection in the spring. As such he became the subject of a complex of myth and ritual. Lamentations commemorated his death as the vegetation withered and died; ceremonies were performed to ensure his return from death; and joyous festivals acclaimed his resurrection as the new green of reviving vegetation appeared in the spring. From this basic drama of death and resurrection, manifest in Nature each year, there stemmed a rich tradition of idea and fantasy which embodied some of the deepest of human emotions – the instinct for life and the fear of death, sexual love and motherhood, the pathos of early death, aversion from the withering touch of time, aspiration for the assurance of immortality.

Life in the Tomb

The ancient Egyptian god Osiris (see OSIRIS) has been regarded by some scholars, most notably by Sir J. G. Frazer, as the classic example of the dying and rising god of vegetation. Subsequent research has not endorsed the view that this was the original character of Osiris; but the deity certainly became closely associated with fertility and the death and resurrection of the corn. This association was graphically portrayed in Egyptian art and ritual. The dead Osiris was frequently depicted lying supine, with phallus erect and plants sprouting from his body. A similar idea inspired other scenes representing the goddess Isis, in the form of a falcon, impregnating herself on the phallus of the dead Osiris. The meaning of such depictions seems clear: Osiris, as the deification of Nature's life-cycle, retained his fertility even in death, from which he triumphantly rose again.

A more spiritually significant idea motivated the making of 'corn-mummies', which were placed in tombs. The specimen found in the tomb of Tutankhamen consisted of an image of Osiris, constructed of wood and linen, which had been filled with mud from the Nile and planted with corn. It was bandaged like a mummy and placed in a wooden

Ronals Sheridan

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The 'foliate heads' in many medieval churches, depicting a human head covered with foliage, or with leaves and tendrils sprouting from the mouth and ears, are evidence of our ancestors' concern for the spirit of vegetation. 'No inscriptions explain their meaning; doubtless they needed none for people whose lives were so closely bound up with the fields and woods': painted roof bosses from Canterbury Cathedral

box. Enclosed in bandages and coffin, the seeds in this particular example could not have germinated as they did in less elaborate versions, which sprouted with corn in the warm darkness of the tomb, symbolizing the renewal of life after death. But it is probable that they were intended also to assist, by means of imitative magic, in achieving the resurrection of the dead person, buried in the tomb, to a new life.

The significance which the death and rebirth of the seed-corn, personified in a vegetation god, had for man's hope for immortality, invested the annual drama of the alternation of life and death in Nature with a deep emotive significance. The hope which the corn-mummies signified to the ancient Egyptians was presented anew for Christians in the well-known words of St Paul: 'But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? with what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain . . . So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable . . . It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body' (1 Corinthians, chapter 15).

Baal Avenged

The mystique of the annual death and resurrection of vegetation is seen in its clearest and most dramatic form in the cult of Osiris. But the mythologies of other ancient Near Eastern dying and rising gods better illustrate the connection between the god of vegetation and the fertility goddess: those of Adonis (see APHRODITE), Tammuz (see TAMMUZ), Baal and Attis.

'Baal' was a title meaning, in Hebrew, 'possessor' or 'lord' of the land (see BAAL). It was used to designate the Amorite god Hadad ('the thunderer'), who personified the winter rains and their accompanying storms. Since the rain was recognized by the Canaanites as an essential factor in the fertility of the fields and the growth of vegetation, Baal was identified with vegetation in its annual cycle of life and death. The mythology of Baal has become known through the discovery of texts, inscribed on clay tablets, at the site of the ancient city of Ugarit, on the Syrian coast north of Beirut. In these texts, which date from the latter half of the second millennium BC, a triad of deities is concerned in the drama of Nature's year. Baal's sister and lover is the fertility goddess Anat, who is generally depicted nude, with the sexual attributes emphasized. The enemy of Baal is Mot, who is the

The worship of the god of vegetation was associated in many agricultural communities with that of the goddess of fertility or Earth Mother; the god might be thought of as both her son and lover, issuing from her womb, to die and rise again in due season *Left* Aztec Earth Goddess, Coatlicue *Right* Head of an Aztec maize god, the 'flayed god' Xipe Totec, a form of Tezcatlipoca, who died by being skinned alive so that men might receive the maize; his priests wore the flayed skins of their victims to symbolize the rebirth of the crops

Michael Holford

personification of drought and sterility, and hence of death.

Owing to the fragmentary state of the tablets, it is difficult to reconstruct with certainty the myth which described the relations of these deities. It would seem that Baal, for some obscure reason, had to descend into the realm of Mot. Before departing, he had intercourse with a heifer, from which a bull-calf was born: this bestial act may perhaps relate to the association of a bull cult with Baal, which was a feature of the fertility rites of the Great Goddess, already noted.

The disappearance of Baal caused sterility: 'the furrows in the fields are cracked with drought'. Anat took vengeance on Mot for the death of her lover. Seizing Mot, she 'ripped him open with a sword, winnowed him in a sieve, burnt him in the fire, ground him with two mill-stones, sowed him in a field'. This punishment inflicted on Mot has a curious significance; for it parallels the fate of the corn – some being ground into flour for bread; some being sown as seed. What the action signified in the myth is uncertain; but consequent on it, Baal returns to life. It is possible that since Mot had apparently devoured Baal, the sowing of fragments of Mot, intermixed with Baal, caused the resurrection of the dead god of vegetation. The revival of Baal is symbolized in the myth by poetic imagery: 'the heavens rained oil, the ravines ran with honey'. These myths probably served as a kind of libretto to fertility rites, performed each year to assist the germination of the seed-corn and ensure a good harvest. The licentious nature of such Canaanite rites, involving as they did sacred prostitution, was vehemently denounced by the Hebrew prophets.

Youthful Lover

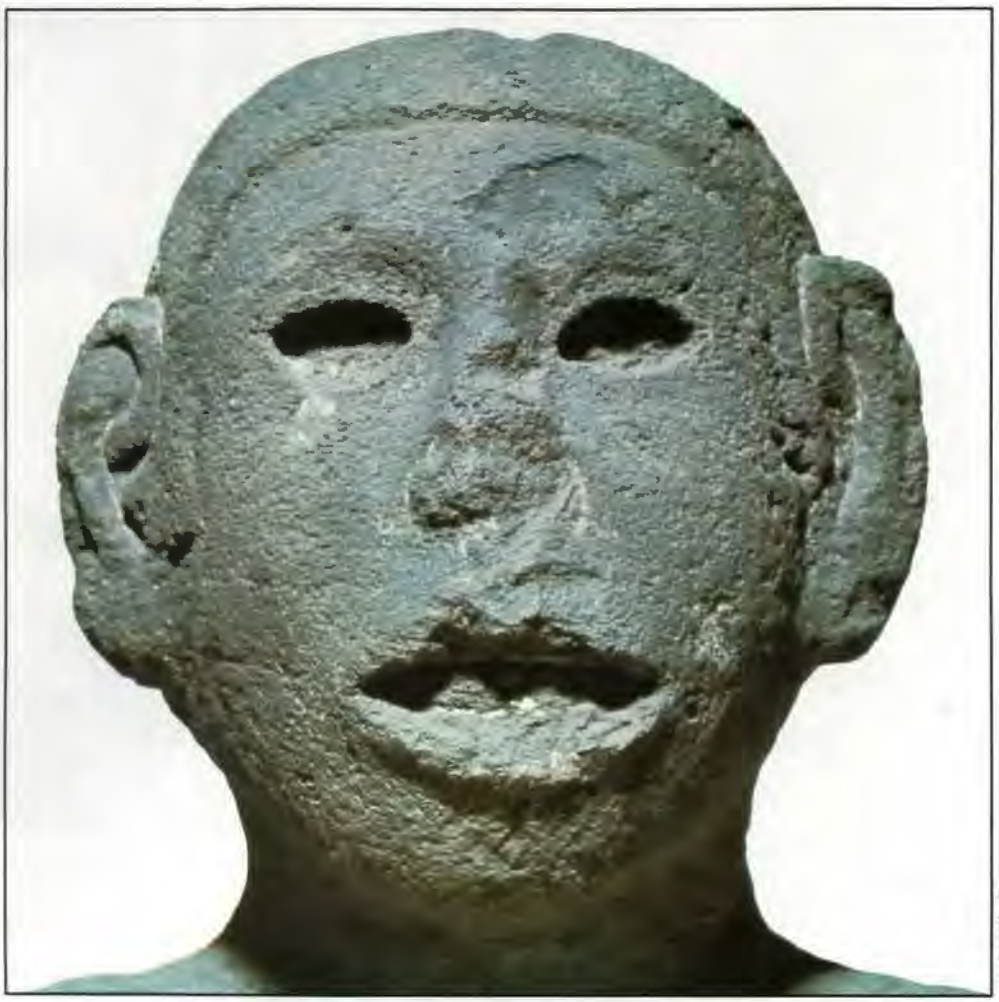
Attis was the youthful lover of Cybele, the great mother goddess of ancient Phrygia (see CYBELE). The spring festival of the goddess was mainly a ritual commemoration of the death and resurrection of Attis. There are variant versions of the myth accounting for his death, which seems to have resulted from self-castration. It is difficult to make out a coherent myth and ritual complex from these versions and the rites associated with the cult of Cybele and Attis. The fact that the pine was sacred to the young god might indicate that originally he was a tree spirit; it is interesting in this connection to note that an episode in the legend of Osiris concerns a marvellous tree that quickly grew and enshrined his body. Cybele was served by eunuch priests called *galli*, who were reported to have buried their severed parts in the earth, perhaps to promote the fertility of the Earth Mother. Similarly suggestive are the repulsive rites of the *criobolium* and the *taurobolium*, in which a ram and bull, symbols of male virility, were sacrificed, their blood providing a regenerating baptism for initiates into the mysteries of the goddess (see BAPTISM).

Some scholars have claimed to find in many religions of the ancient Near East a definite 'myth and ritual' pattern connected with the life-and-death cycle of vegetation. According to them, the king represented the vegetation god at the New Year festival, in which the death and resurrection of the deity was ritually enacted in a series of related episodes. These comprised, besides a dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god of vegetation, the recitation or symbolic representation of the myth of creation; a ritual combat, in which the triumph of the god over his enemies was portrayed; a sacred marriage; and a triumphant procession, with the king playing the part of the god, followed by a train of lesser gods.

This 'myth-and-ritual' complex, so it is explained, originated from a primitive custom of killing the king when his physical vigour began to diminish; for, since the fertility of the land was magically connected with his virility, it would be disastrous to have an aged impotent monarch. His youthful successor ensured the continuance of the fecundity of the soil by his marriage with the queen or high priestess. These barbaric rites, it is argued, had been gradually transformed into a ritual death and resurrection of the king, which was celebrated each year. In the subsequent sacred marriage, the queen or priestess represented the fertility goddess. The case for the existence of this 'myth and ritual' pattern has not been generally accepted by scholars as proven. But much evidence concerning the reaction of the ancient peoples of the Near East to the death and rebirth of vegetation does suggest that their kings were deeply involved in the annual fertility rites.

Return of the Corn Maiden

In ancient Greece, the famous Mystery cult of Eleusis witnesses to the mystic significance that men there found in the annual drama of the seed-corn (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS). The two deities connected with this cult differed notably, however, from those of the Near Eastern cults. Instead of a naturally interdependent pair of fertility goddess and vegetation god, the Eleusinian divinities were related as mother and daughter. Demeter, the corn goddess, was the mother of Persephone, the corn maiden. The myth of the abduction of Persephone by Plouton, the lord of the underworld, provided the rationale or explanation of the secret rites performed at Eleusis (see PERSEPHONE; PLUTO). Distracted by the loss of her daughter, Demeter forgot her task as the corn goddess. So the ground grew sterile and famine afflicted the race of men, until the supreme god Zeus was obliged to intervene and bid Plouton restore the corn maiden to her mother. But the restoration could not be complete, because Persephone had tasted a morsel of food in the underworld. Zeus ruled, in consequence, that Persephone should spend two parts of the year above ground with Demeter and one part in Hades with Plouton. The return of Persephone brought fruitfulness again to the fields, which soon waved 'with long ears of corn, and its rich furrows were loaded with grain'. There has been much speculation as to the exact significance of this division of the year between Persephone's stay with her mother and with Plouton,



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but it is generally agreed that the division relates to the life cycle of the seed-corn – perhaps to the time the seed lies buried in the ground until its emergence in the fresh vigorous upsurge of life in the following spring.

In the Eleusinian Mysteries the death and resurrection of the seed-corn was undoubtedly interpreted as presaging a rebirth to a new and immortal life for those who were initiated. Very little is known of the rites which were performed in the great Telesterion or Hall of the Mysteries at Eleusis; but there is evidence that the culminating revelation made to the initiate, who had been subjected to experiences simulating death, was that of 'a reaped cornstalk'. The meaning of the symbol must surely have then been apparent to him, and perhaps that meaning implied an insight similar to that ascribed to Christ in St John's gospel (12.24): 'unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit'. However that may be, the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, which records the Eleusinian myth, ends with the assurance: 'Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries; but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them, never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom.'

It was Sir James George Frazer who first showed, in *The Golden Bough*, the enormous influence that agriculture has had upon religion. The titles of some of the volumes that make up the work significantly indicate aspects of the theme: *The Dying God; Adonis, Attis, Osiris; Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*. In the first volume of the series, *The Magic Art*, Frazer evokes, in a masterly passage, the memory of the mysterious priest-king who served the goddess Diana in her sacred grove at Nemi (see KING). This sinister being bore the title *Rex Nemorensis*, the 'King of the Wood'. Whoever was bold or desperate enough to challenge the 'ghastly priest', proclaimed his challenge by breaking off a bough of the sacred tree – the 'golden bough', according to certain ancient writers.

The Green One

Frazer set himself the task of explaining this strange institution. After a long and involved investigation of ancient literature and folklore, he conclude that 'at Nemi the King of the Wood personated the oak-god Jupiter and mated with the oak-goddess Diana in the sacred grove'. Originally this priest-king was named Virbius, which Frazer translated as 'the Green One'. The sacred union of Virbius and Diana, or the priestess who impersonated the goddess, was intended 'to make the earth gay with the blossoms of spring and the fruits of autumn, and to gladden the hearts of men and women with healthful offspring'. Frazer identified the mystic Golden Bough with the mistletoe which, growing on the oak, was believed by ancient peoples to be the life or soul of the tree (see MISTLETOE).

In his quest for the origins of the priest-king of Nemi, Frazer was led to investigate a widespread cult of tree spirits which has been practised in northern lands to make the corn grow. The custom of the Harvest May, observed by various peasant peoples of Europe, is particularly notable. A large branch of may or hawthorn was brought home with the last load of harvest, and decorated with ears of corn. Sometimes it was fastened to the roof of the farmhouse, remaining there for a year, or planted in the cornfield, with the last sheaf tied to it. To those who made it, the Harvest May evidently embodied or represented the spirit of vegetation, upon whose fructifying influence next year's harvest depended.

It was from this primitive belief in vegetation spirits that the custom of the maypole took its origins. The maypole, which the Puritan writer Phillip Stubbes perceptively, if humourlessly, condemned as a 'stinking idol', was the symbol of the vegetation god. The institution of the May Queen, so essentially associated with the maypole, preserves an ancient folk-memory of the sacred marriage to promote the fertility of the herds and fields. In the May Day customs the spirit of vegetation was also represented by the Green Man or Jack in the Green. At Knutsford in Cheshire, the Green Man still leads the annual procession of the May Queen –

The growth of vegetation was often interpreted in human terms, as the result of a cosmic sexual act: human fertility continues to be associated with the fertility of Nature, in a modern Chinese poster showing the prosperity to be expected under Communism

Pearl Binder

a strange and somewhat eerie figure, completely enveloped in greenery (see GREEN; MAY DAY).

Frazer collected a mass of evidence from the folklore of many lands expressive of a sense of tragedy at the time of harvest. Sometimes the last sheaf of corn has been ritually threshed and treated as a sacrificial victim, recalling perhaps a human sacrifice that was once made on the harvest field to the god of vegetation. The fate of the corn in its transformation to bread has also been seen as the passion of the Corn Spirit. A Danish folktale describes the sufferings of the rye: 'In the autumn you will be sown, deeply buried in earth; in the spring you will rise; in the summer you will be parched in the sun, drenched in the rain, then cut and dried, carted to the barn and threshed; then, carted to the mill and ground.'

Today in many medieval churches the so-called 'foliate heads' still witness to our ancestors' concern for the spirit of vegetation. These strange emblems, carved in wood or stone, depict a human head with leaves and tendrils sprouting from the mouth and ears.

There are no inscriptions to explain their meaning; doubtless they needed none for people whose lives were so closely bound up with the fields and woods. A faint memory of these old beliefs lingers on in the 'corn dollies' made for harvest festivals (see HARVEST). They are the last relics of a tradition that reaches far back to the dying and rising gods of the ancient Near East.

(See also FERTILITY; TREES.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

FURTHER READING: J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (St Martin's Press, 1980 reprint); E. O. James, *The Cult of the Mother Goddess: Seasonal Feasts and Festivals* (Barnes and Noble, 1959 and 1963 respectively); E. O. James, *The Tree of Life* (Brill, Leiden, 1966); S. H. Hooke ed., *Myth Ritual and Kingship* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1958); John C. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (Attic Press, 1978); G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1961); Findhorn Foundation, *Findhorn Garden* (Harper & Row, 1975).

VENUS

C. M. Dixon

The Italian Venus was identified with the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, who was the mother of Aeneas and so an ancestress of the Roman people: the 'Venus of Rhodes', Greek sculpture of the 1st century BC

THE WORD *Venus* is related to English 'wish' and, more remotely, 'win'. The Latin common noun means 'charm', 'attraction', 'delight'. Its derivative verb *venerari*, which in antiquity also meant 'venerate', primitively signified the sacral act of alluring or enticing something from beyond mankind's power. Thus a famous literary echo of an old prayer reports the formal enticement of willingness from the god Quirinus (*veneror horam Quirini*). The goddess who sprang from the abstract *venus* forever kept the skill of wheedling.

Rome's foremost expert in religious history, Varro, was struck by the absence of Venus's name in the oldest records. Indeed Venus could not boast an old priesthood or festival or shrine at Rome. Further, Venus was unique in Italy. Etruscans spoke of Turan, 'Lady'. In the Oscan dialect the comparable goddess was Herentas, very similar in concept because the name is related to the aforementioned Latin 'willingness' and to English 'yearn'. There is reason to believe that Venus had not even been universal to the Latins of central Italy. She seems especially Roman and thus contrasts with Jupiter whom all the Indo-European speakers knew, or with Mars who, though native to Italy, was shared by all peninsular inhabitants (see JUPITER; MARS).

Most of Venus's cult remains unknown to us. Some Romans insisted that the month of April was named after Aphrodite, her Greek equivalent. However, this folk etymology was based on the cult of Venus on behalf of vegetable gardens. As early as the late 3rd century her name signified the garden produce itself. The Romans consecrated gardens to Venus on 19 August, and vegetable gardeners kept the day holy.

There is no certain answer as to why Venus was related to the Vinalia, two wine ceremonies in the civil calendar on 23 April and 19 August. These festivals belonged to the sky god Jupiter. Aside from the coincidence of their worship on days of the Roman Vinalia, there is some Campanian evidence of a state cult of Venus Jovia. This worship can be construed in one of two ways. Either Venus is already identified as Aphrodite whom Zeus (Jupiter) fathered according to one Greek myth (see APHRODITE), or the goddess originated as the sky god's *venus* or, to use the local term, *herentas*. Of course, vineyards do not greatly differ from gardens. Also, in a sense, all plants need to be coaxed or wheedled to put forth their fruits. Such coaxing may be enacted by sexual representation. Be that as it may, no clear and direct evidence of such religious practice emerges from the ancient evidence on Venus.

Produce and Prostitution

At least as early as 290 BC, Venus was somehow associated with the August Vinalia because her first temple was dedicated on that day by a patrician, Fabius, who had built it with fines exacted for ladies' debauchery. Although it stood at least 600 years, this temple's activities are rarely mentioned. Venus's epithet Obsequens, 'compliant', and the source of the building funds point to an already existing identification of the goddess with the Greek Aphrodite and the Etruscan Turan, who were definitely goddesses of female sexuality. Despite the sexual aspects of both the cult title and the ladies' misbehaviour, Fabius had a personal reason for the choice of his piety. He claimed that Venus had submitted to the wishes (*obsequi*) of his father and himself. The two Fabii had fought together in several campaigns against the Samnites and after the last Samnite war Venus Obsequens received her temple. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the Samnite Venus was worth conciliating in war.

Venus perhaps exercised some political sway among the Latins, for there existed two large precincts a few miles south-west of Rome where Aphrodite or Frutis, sometimes called Venus, were annually worshipped by all the Latins. One or both shrines, purportedly of great age, may have actually been related in cult to the widely renowned goddess of Mt Eryx on the western tip of Sicily. The Erycine sexual goddess was variously identified with Aphrodite and the Phoenician Ishtar (see ISHTAR). The Latin Frutis was said to have received her cult statue from Erycina.

One tradition explicitly equated Venus Erycina to the Aphrodite who bore Aeneas. Accordingly, the Trojan hero gratefully transported her cult to Cyprus, to Sicily and to Latium. Aphrodite occasionally had the epithet *Aineia*, which was interpreted to commemorate her maternity. The maritime route of Aeneas's legendary wanderings can be traced from one to another of Aphrodite's shrines. Some place-names of the western Italian coast preserved indications of Aphrodite in her role as protector of seafarers. Venus inherited these places as Roman rule spread.

After successive humiliations from Carthage's great general Hannibal, a direct descendant of the two Fabii observed what seems a family tradition and dedicated a temple to the true Venus Erycina in 215 BC. By this gift Fabius and the Romans placated a deity who had protected Carthage during the earlier Punic war and who was also an ancestress of the Roman people, through Aeneas who came to Latium and founded Romulus's line (see FOUNDING OF ROME). Venus Obsequens had received her temple at roughly the same time as the Romans first reared a statue group of

Pearl Binder

Ronald Sheridan

Left **Gold votive figure of a Mycenean love goddess, with birds; doves were sacred to Venus** ***Right*** **A goddess of gardens and pot-vegetables, Venus became the embodiment of female allure and sexuality:** ***Venus*** **by Titian**

Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf. Venus Erycina had been integrated into the Roman tradition of their non-Italian ancestry. Consequently Rome's Capitoline Hill, reserved for truly Roman gods, allowed a site for Venus of Eryx.

Venus is certainly connected with the month of April by the dedication in 181 BC of a third temple on the earlier Vinalia of 23 April. This Venus, another Erycina, had been promised a temple during a war with the Ligurians of northern Italy, whom the Romans reckoned distant relatives of the Sicilians. Situated just outside the city, the new shrine reproduced the very temple on Mt Eryx where temple prostitution still thrived. Rome's Erycine precinct attracted the city's less savoury residents. On 23 and 25 April prostitutes and the offspring of prostitution and pimping kept their holy days here. Late April and early May had become holidays given over to sexual promiscuity and stage plays. Since the 3rd century such rites, introduced under the influence of the Greek Sibylline Books, had been consecrated to Flora, spirit of blossoming. They had their likely model in the cult of Aphrodite Antheia (Flora in Latin). For centuries the Floral Games provided notorious spectacles of sexual licence. Venus herself was not directly worshipped with Flora; nevertheless as divinity of produce and prostitution Venus belongs to the same kind of religious mentality.

The Sibylline Books reinforced the association in 114 BC, when the Romans were prompted to dedicate a temple to Venus Verticordia, 'Turner of Hearts'. Her name was intended to commemorate the acquittal of two Vestal Virgins charged with breaking their vows. Whatever the intent of the title, which is supposed to suggest the conversion from lust to chastity, Venus clearly retained her latent power of coaxing.

Political Promotion

Through Cornelius Sulla, who briefly engrossed the Republican government by his dictatorship of 82–79 BC, Venus entered the realm of personal politics. Sulla, also her devotee in other ways, adopted the style *Epaphroditos*, 'Aphrodite's darling', which he rendered *Felix* in Latin. The latter style, which he may also have applied to a Roman Venus, comprised all notions of fertility, prosperity, success and good luck. At Pompeii a coastal colony of Sulla's veterans accorded Venus unusual prominence. The Pompeian cult perhaps combined Sulla's patroness with the town's continuing adoration of Venus Physica, Venus of Nature (*physis*), which preserved the Greek idea of growth.

In 55 BC Pompey the Great dedicated a temple to Venus Victrix 'the Winner', atop his theatre, which was the first permanent theatre in Rome. Opposition to its construction was probably blunted by the consecration to Venus. At about the same time, Rome's great poet Lucretius published his philosophical poem on Nature, in which he invoked for poetic inspiration Venus, ancestress of the Aenead race, and which he dedicated to Memmius whose clan corporately worshipped Venus.

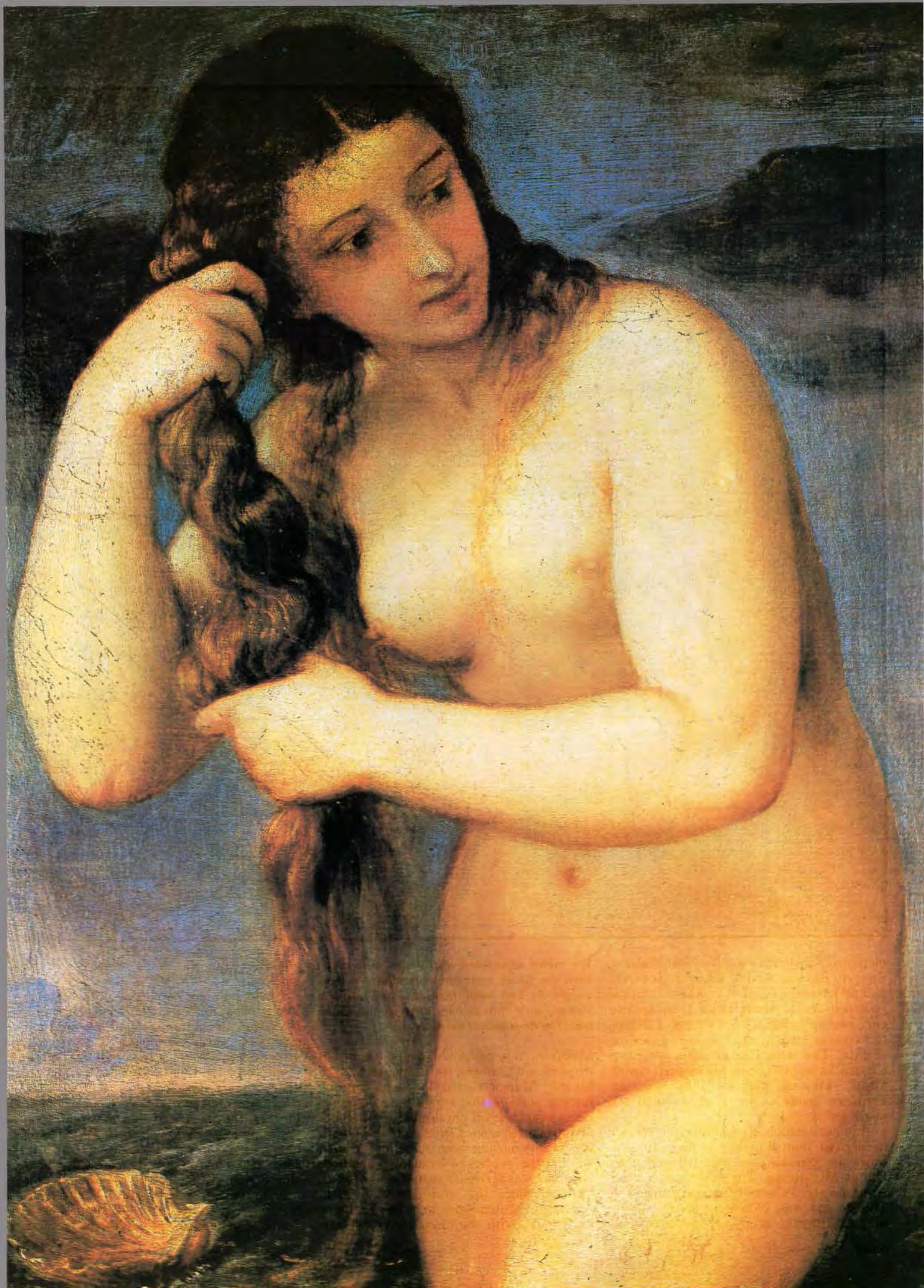
The patrician clan of Julii asserted even stronger proprietary rights of ancestral cult for Venus since they claimed direct descent from Iulus, the Trojan son of Aeneas. Julius Caesar surprised no one by emphasizing his clan's rise to power in his own person by vowing a temple to Venus Genetrix during the battle of Pharsalus, at which Pompey was defeated. Caesar raised the temple (perhaps the first built entirely of marble at Rome) in his new forum and dedicated it in 46 BC, although his adopted son Augustus completed the work. Beside the statue of his ancestress Caesar set a golden statue of Cleopatra.

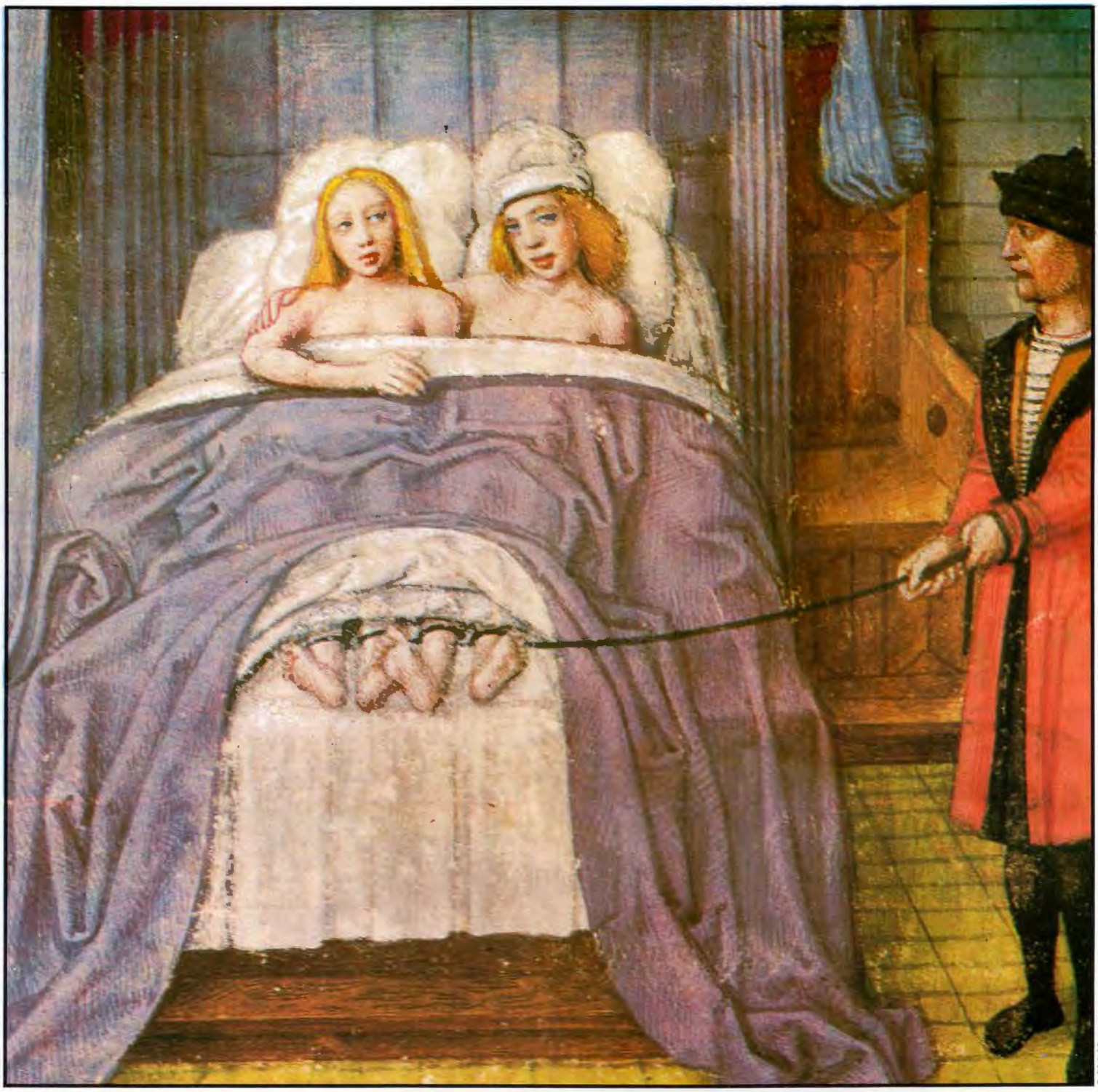
In the Greek East subject provincials joined Aphrodite with deified Rome in a religious demonstration of loyalty to the Empire and to the imperial house which Caesar had generated. Ultimate expression of the catholic loyalty of the Empire is met during the reign of Hadrian (117–128 AD). This emperor of Spanish birth devoted himself to the adornment of Rome, Italy and the Empire, whose ideal he generously cultivated with lovely and magnificent buildings. Hadrian did much to accord the provincials a sense of merit for their role in the Empire's government. To amplify his notion of imperial unity Hadrian built Rome's largest and handsomest temple to Venus and Roma, which he situated beside the Colosseum. Adoration of Roma, a provincial concept, remained unique to this temple. Each goddess had her own precinct, placed back to back. By universal usage this double temple was referred to as the City's Shrine. Hadrian chose to dedicate the temple on 21 April, the feast of Parilia, in order to honour Venus in her month and Roma on her birthday in the city's 888th year.

At Rome Venus was worshipped under other cult names. Most of these are easily understandable; Placida, 'pleasing'; Alma, 'nurturing'; Pudica, 'demure'. A few are most obscure, for instance Calva, 'bald'. The goddess's popularity extended throughout Italy and the Latin-speaking western Empire. She invited identification with lesser local divinities and found herself acquainted with universal notions. Thus she provides other examples of the Roman capacity to enlarge the concept and identity of their gods.

The Dead and the Sewers

Near the great cemetery on the Esquiline Hill once stood a holy grove called Libitina where corpses were prepared for burial. The profession of undertaker was also *libitina*. Cult for and in groves was quite common but a grove cult for the dead was extraordinary. By the Imperial age the Grove of Libitina was no more than an address, and very probably just the name of a street. From the name of the grove, or from that of its tutelary deity, the Romans thought up a goddess Libitina. At some later point they could not intellectually tolerate the





British Museum

The myths associated with Venus were taken from the Greek myths of Aphrodite: Venus is caught in bed with Mars by her husband Vulcan, in a 15th century Flemish illustration from *The Romance of the Rose*

plethora of insignificant divinities. Perhaps the very distaste for the subject of funerals had prepared the Romans to believe Libitina governed sexual desire (*libido*); thence the easy next step carried them to apply Libitina to Venus and to rear a temple to this goddess of lust. The word Libitina seems to have entered Latin from Etruscan, where it meant 'dead'. Libitina was not necessarily an Etruscan goddess, but a euphemism for death and its sequel.

Another example of a latterday Venus can be derived from a known locality. In early times the Romans knew the Little Aventine Hill as Mt Murcus. The valley between the Aventine and Palatine Hills was named the Murcia and was ultimately given over to the construction of the enormous Circus Maximus; this embraced a number of old religious sites, among which was an altar to Murcia. Murcia shared her name with the turning posts at that end of the racecourse. Being overwhelmed physically by the affairs and structures of the Circus and her link with the locality having been forgotten, Murcia became the subject of learned speculation. Her name was derived from the Greek *myrtea*, 'myrtle'. Since this shrub was sacred to Aphrodite, Murcia came to be another name for Venus. With the discovery of her new identity Murcia's cult seems to have perished.

Next and more perplexing is the case of Venus Cloacina. *Cloaca* is the Latin word for sewer. In uniformity with the need for a deity to oversee every place and structure, a shrine to Cloacina was put up in the Forum over the Cloaca Maxima, the town's main sewer. The Romans fancied that cloaca was derived from a verb of cleansing. Further, they supposed that the goddess of cleansing must be Venus, because the local plant used for sacral cleansing was the same as the myrtle. Finally, both Cloacina's shrine and Murcia's altar were situated over running water. This Venus was humanly represented and her statue held a flower of some kind. By involutions peculiar

to the ancient mind Venus became mistress of funerals, racecourse turning posts and sewers.

A last instance of Venus's acquisition of alien functions illustrates another Roman religious peculiarity. When the Romans entered Carthaginian Africa, they readily acknowledged the native goddess Venus Caelestis, 'heavenly' Venus. The existence of an obscure Greek deity, Aphrodite Ourania, perhaps promoted the Romans' acceptance of Caelestis. At any rate the ground was soon prepared for the introduction of the planetary week and the convictions of astrology. In the wake of these innovations Venus lent her name to the sixth day of the new week which still keeps alive Mesopotamian astrology in Italy, France and Spain, where Ishtar's planet is commemorated in Venus's day. Our own Friday is just a further step in the equation. 'Friday's child is loving and giving!'

The Roman Venus exhibits different modes of divinity. From first to last her state cult contributed to the grandeur of the Empire and the glory of certain élite clans. Venus goddess of pot-vegetables gave way to the Venus of female sexuality, whose myth and cult are based upon Greek and oriental precedents that became peculiarly Roman only insofar as they included accounts of Aphrodite as the mother of Aeneas. Whatever else the cult of the abstract *venus* had once contained, the aspect of charm and allure was transferred to a female goddess of procreation.

R. E. A. PALMER

Venus the Planet

The Babylonians connected the morning and evening star with the goddess of love, and so did the Greeks and Romans, possibly because its appearances mark the limits of night, the time of love-making. Venus is the only planet named for a female deity and its astrological symbol is widely used outside astrology as a symbol of the female, the corresponding male symbol being that of Mars, the god who was the lover of Venus in classical mythology.

In astrology Venus is traditionally the ruler of love and desire, beauty and relationships – not confined to sexual partnerships but extending to relationships with friends and in business. It is also considered essentially beneficent, a force making for harmony, reconciliation, peace, affection, love of beautiful things, physical attractiveness. The position of Venus in your birth chart is thought to affect all these matters, but especially your ability to enter into relationships with other people and your attitudes to beauty, the arts, and the pleasures of life. If Venus is fortunately placed, it should tend to produce a warm, gentle, sympathetic, graceful and artistic person, contented, tactful and probably rather sentimental. The planet is particularly associated with music and is said to produce composers and musicians.

If not so fortunately placed, the influence of Venus may be less harmonious. The old belief was that Venus in conjunction with Saturn and Mercury in a horoscope threatened death by the treachery of a woman or by poison, traditionally the woman's weapon, but this has been reinterpreted by at least one modern authority to mean the threat of being dominated by a woman, or women, in life. It is often said that a man born when Venus is close to the Sun in the zodiac is likely to be effeminate, his character (Sun) being unduly influenced by the feminine planet. Saturn square to Venus, as in Hitler's horoscope, is supposed to indicate selfishness and egotism.

The influence of Venus on love-life varies with its placing in the zodiac. According to Margaret Hone's *Modern Text Book of Astrology*, a person who has Venus in Taurus will be 'steadfast in love, but possessive' and 'slow to make partnership but reliable when once settled'. Venus in Gemini, however, means that 'affection is changeable and often for more than one at a time', and if Venus is in Scorpio 'love tends to be more intense, more sexual, more secretive and passionate'. Venus in the eighth house, incidentally, is a good sign, traditionally foretelling an easy death.

In magic the force of Venus is connected primarily with love and sex, and with fertility and the teeming life of Nature. Copper, as the metal of Venus, is useful in love charms, and operations of love, lust, pleasure and friendship should be timed in the hour and day of Venus (see CORRESPONDENCES; DAYS; FORCES).

FURTHER READING: For the Roman goddess, see G. K. Galinsky, *Aeneas, Sicily and Rome* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1969).

In 1901, visiting the Petit Trianon – a building in which the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, had lived before the French Revolution – Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain apparently stepped back in time to the year 1770

VERSAILLES ADVENTURE

THE STORY published under the title *An Adventure* in 1911 has been described by one of its critics as 'the arch ghost story of all time'. It is the account of the experiences of two English women, Miss C. A. E. Moberly and Miss E. M. Jourdain, who were both of academic standing and unimpeachable integrity.

The story began in 1901. While they were staying together in Paris for a short visit, they went on 10 August to see, for the first time, the Petit Trianon at Versailles. They knew very little about the place, beyond the fact that Marie Antoinette had lived there for some years before 1789. They came away that afternoon having seen in the garden persons and features, seemingly real at the time, but afterwards found to have been inappropriate to the circumstances of 1901.

They did not discuss the matter until a week had elapsed, when they came to the conclusion that the place was haunted. Three months later they discovered, on talking over the events of the August visit, that their recollections did not in all respects agree with one another. They accordingly decided to write independent accounts and these, with minor alterations and additions, constitute the main narratives of *An Adventure*. Both accounts are commendably brief, occupying only some five pages and four and a half pages respectively.

About the same time, November 1901, Miss Jourdain heard from a French friend that Marie Antoinette was regularly seen on a certain day in August sitting outside the garden front of the Petit Trianon. The conclusion was quickly reached that the haunting had to do with Marie Antoinette, and all later researches and visits were directed to the task of reconciling their recollections of the 1901 visit with what was known of the background of Marie Antoinette's time.

There have been five editions of *An Adventure*, and each one has elicited from reviewers and others fresh solutions of the mystery. For instance, it has been suggested that the two visitors on 10 August 1901 failed to take in their surroundings at all accurately, because they were too much engrossed in conversation, or overcome by unaccustomed French food and wine. They may have seen men in long coats of old-fashioned appearance, who were really Robert de Montesquiou and his friends, who were alive in 1901, holding a costume party in the garden of the Petit Trianon, and have mistaken them for 18th century gardeners.

One critic expressed surprise that people still paid any attention to the story, considering that Miss Moberly had confessed on her death-bed that it was a hoax. But this allegation was never substantiated and Dr Joan Evans, who knew both the ladies well, denied that any such confession had been made.

Time Out of Joint

Whatever influences may have been at work to bemuse or mislead the two visitors on 10 August 1901, the fact remains that their descriptions of what they saw on that afternoon cannot, without making extravagant assumptions, be reconciled with the surroundings as they were either in 1901, or in the time of Marie Antoinette. Their descriptions may, of course, have been pure fantasy. But it is a curious fact that the visitors, apparently without realizing the significance of what they saw, described some garden features characteristic of the period of the 'Anglo-Chinese garden', a fashion which was at its height in the early 1770s. A first attempt by the present writer to date the visions from internal evidence put the year at 1774, but later research by A. O. and M. E. Gibbons pointed to an earlier date for them, 1770.

Briefly, the visitors, in the course of a walk of a few hundred yards, saw and described eight features which were manifestly 'wrong' for 1901, and can be shown by pictures and plans to have been 'wrong'

What They Saw

From Miss Jourdain's description:

'We walked for some distance down a wooded alley, and then came upon the buildings of the Grand Trianon, before which we did not delay. We went on in the direction of the Petit Trianon, but just before reaching what we knew afterwards to be the main entrance I saw a gate leading to a path cut deep below the level of the ground above, and as the way was open and had the look of an entrance that was used, I said, "Shall we try this path? it must lead to the house," and we followed it . . .

'. . . there was a feeling of depression and loneliness about the place. I began to feel as if I were walking in my sleep; the heavy dreaminess was oppressive. At last we came upon a path crossing ours, and saw in front of us a building consisting of some columns roofed in, and set back in the trees. Seated on the steps was a man with a heavy black cloak round his shoulders, and wearing a slouch hat. At that moment the eerie feeling which had begun in the garden culminated in a definite impression of something uncanny and fear inspiring. The man slowly turned his face, which was marked by smallpox, his complexion was very dark. The expression was very evil and though I did not feel he was looking particularly at us, I felt a repugnance to going past him.'

Earlier, Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain had asked the way from two men in greenish clothes and three-cornered hats. They saw a cottage with stone steps, a woman and a little girl. They saw the man in the dark cloak, his face marked with smallpox. Then a man with long dark hair directed them to another path and they crossed a stream by a rustic bridge. When they reached the Petit Trianon, Miss Moberly saw a woman in a large shady white hat with sketching paper.

for 1789. All eight features, as shown by garden plans and documents, make sense in relation to the surroundings of the year 1770.

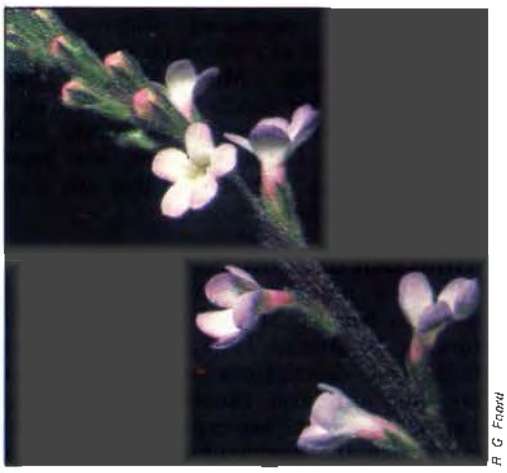
The idea that the two visitors may have had a 'glimpse of the historic past' does not rest solely upon the *Adventure* story. There are a few stories of a similar kind which have so far defied attempts to explain them away. Each story, taken separately, can be criticized on grounds of deferred reporting, poor documentation and lapses of memory. But if, as here, the person who has had the experience has thereby acquired knowledge about the past which could only have been acquired normally by research, it is unreasonable to assume that research had been previously carried out but had been forgotten.

The alternative hypothesis, that the correspondences between vision and fact were due entirely to chance, seems implausible in a case where there were so many 'hits' on the target and no manifest 'misses'.

It is disappointing that so little is known about the day-to-day life at the Petit Trianon in the years 1770–74, and there is no certain clue to the identity of any of the persons who were seen on that August afternoon. But to the lover of beautiful buildings there is some compensation in the thought that the two visitors may have seen the Petit Trianon in its perfection, as it came from the hand of the architect, before its surroundings had been marred by the demands and whims of a later generation. The reader's verdict, however, should be founded not on sentiment but on the evidence of the visions themselves, examined against the recorded history of the house and garden.

G. W. LAMBERT

FURTHER READING: The 5th edition of *An Adventure* was published by Faber & Faber in 1955, with a useful preface by Dr Joan Evans. For the 'dating', see A. O. Gibbons ed, *The Trianon Adventure* (Museum Press, 1958). See also Lucille Iremonger, *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Faber & Faber, 1957); Andrew Mackenzie, *The Unexplained* (Arthur Barker, 1966).



R. G. Foord

VERVAIN

WHAT WE CALL vervain today is *Verbena officinalis*, an insignificant plant. But vervain is also identified with a plant, now unknown, which was important in classical times. Pliny called it *sacra herba*, the sacred herb, and other classical names applied to 'verbena' included Cerealis, Demetria, Persephonion, Mercury's Blood, Tears of Juno or of Isis, all of which suggest a close link with fertility ceremonies. Besides using it in religious rites, the Romans kept evil spirits from their homes with it, and made it into charms to ward off bodily harm. Ambassadors and heralds parleyed with enemies wearing a 'verbena' crown. Roman witches employed it too, as the poet Virgil notes.

In ancient Persia 'vervain' branches were carried in rites associated with sun worship, while its juice was used by magicians: smeared on the body, it enabled one to gain the affection even of an enemy. Cutting of vervain was done when neither sun nor moon were visible, and honey was poured on the ground as an offering in exchange. Similar observances are recorded of the Druids, who made special use of the plant in prophecy. During the 18th century revival of interest in Druids, the finding of vervain anywhere near a stone circle convinced antiquarians of the monument's druidical past.

In medieval times, when *Verbena officinalis* took over from the unknown classical plant, its religious importance diminished in relation to its use by herbalists and sorcerers. Charms of all kinds, including love potions, were made with vervain. It was something of a cure-all, used as an amulet, especially against snake-bite and accident, and recommended for dozens of different ailments from cancer to plague, the 'bloody flux' to piles. Tumours could be dealt with by cutting a vervain root in two, hanging one round the sufferer's neck and smoking the other over a fire. As this shrivelled the tumour was supposed to do likewise. If the smoke-shrivelled part was retained by an ill-disposed person and placed in water, the tumour would return as the root swelled up.

Vervain kept away witches and their works, as many authors testify, and was frequently used in conjunction with dill, and also rue. This did not stop witches from themselves making use of vervain, so much so that it was called the Enchanter's Plant. It was one of the plants supposed to open locks magically: a thief would embed a fragment of the leaf in a cut made in his hand, and would then only have to touch a locked or bolted door or chest to open it.

Vervain was associated with St John's Eve, 23 June (see ST JOHN'S WORT), when bonfires were lit while, to quote a contemporary poem,

> . . . young men round about with maids
> do dance in every street,
> With garlands wrought of Mother-wort,
> or else with Vervain sweet.

Frazer relates how in Germany, in the 16th century, the chaplets of mother-wort (mugwort) and vervain were finally thrown onto the St John's Eve bonfires. On this night also, protective garlands of vervain, often mixed with flax, were hung in houses.

The use of vervain as a love philtre and securer of affection has been recorded within the last century, together with its use against illness. In Germany a wreath or hat of vervain was placed on a bride's head, harking back to classical times when the plant was sacred to Venus and the bridal wreath was picked by the bride herself. In the Victorian language of flowers, vervain stands appropriately enough for enchantment.

Vesta
Roman goddess of the hearth, equivalent of the Greek Hestia: worshipped at home as the deity of the family hearth, her public cult was conducted in a circular shrine, the 'hearth' of the community, where a perpetual fire burned, tended by the Vestal Virgins; her favourite animal was the ass.
See HEARTH.

Vestal Virgins
Priestesses of the sacred fire of Vesta in Rome; probably the successors of the King's daughters who originally tended the fire on the royal hearth; if they let the fire go out, they were beaten; chosen as small girls, they served for 30 years, during which time they had to remain chaste.
See FOUNDING OF ROME: HEARTH.

That our lives are influenced by mysterious universal vibrations has become a common notion, largely based on the taking over into occultism and astrology of theories drawn from 19th century science

VIBRATION

IN THE PAST a few rationalists have gone so far as to allege that all those who claimed to have experienced 'occult phenomena' were, quite literally, mad. Today, few would openly admit to such an extreme point of view, but it is true that occultists and schizophrenics have always shared a tendency to attempt to explain the interior experiences they have undergone in terms of the generally accepted beliefs of the societies in which they lived. Thus in the 17th and 18th centuries a schizophrenic would usually attribute his peculiar mental state either to the activities of spirits and witches or to the punishment of a jealous Calvinistic deity.

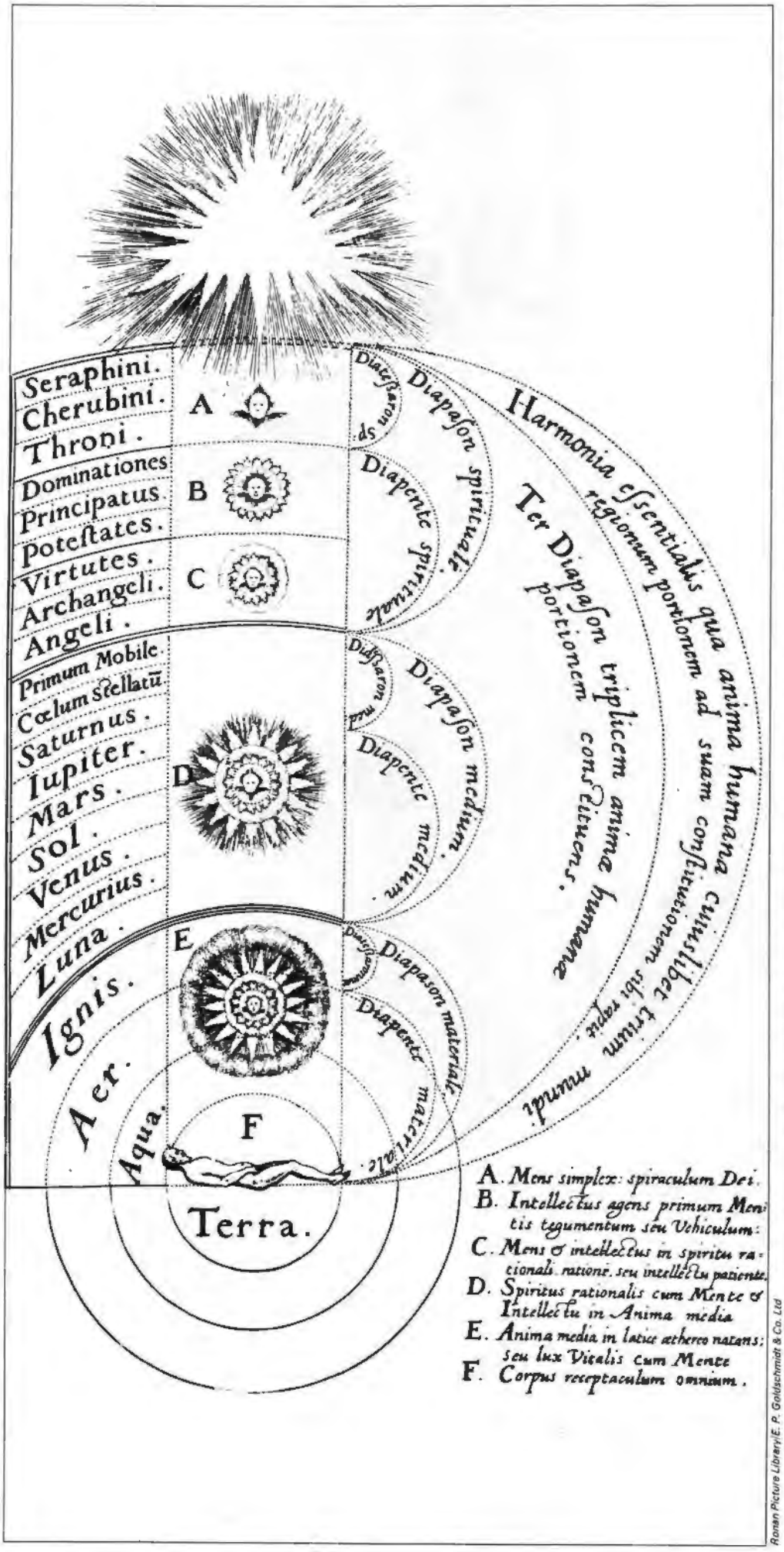
With the decline of popular belief in witchcraft such rationalizations were replaced by others of a more 'scientific' type, and the schizophrenic tended to blame his condition on the activities of evilly disposed individuals broadcasting 'death rays' or mysterious 'telepathic radiations'. The recent occult revival has brought signs of a reversion to earlier modes of explanation and a surprisingly large number of seriously disturbed patients in mental hospitals claim to be the victims of either black magic or 'astral attacks'.

'The universe visible to man can be likened to a web of tiny interlacing octaves of vibrations': one source of this analogy is the old Pythagorean theory of the 'music of the spheres', that the motions of the heavenly bodies create a harmony of musical sounds; 17th century diagram of the planetary spheres

Like the schizophrenic, the occultist of the last century attempted to explain his beliefs and experiences in the light of the science of his own day; the astral light of Eliphas Levi, for example, showed much more resemblance to the luminiferous ether of 19th century physics than to the astral light of Paracelsus. Similarly, the prominence which the concept of vibration assumed in the occult theorizing of the last quarter of the 19th century owed much to the importance of vibrational frequency in the wave theory of light. Spiritualists took over the idea and explained the invisibility of the spirit world (supposed to interpenetrate the ordinary world of matter) to ordinary individuals as being the result of varying 'rates of vibration'. Mediums, so it was claimed, were those who were able partially to adjust their vibrational rates to those of the spirit world.

Madame Blavatsky and her theosophical following were particularly prone to use vibration as an explanation of supernormal events; indeed they seem to have seen it as the bridge which would eventually link up the dogmas of the physicists with their own syncretistic brand of oriental occultism (see BLAVATSKY; THEOSOPHY). They held that there existed a mysterious 'inter-etheric force' which could be controlled by the use of the vibrations of sound and would ultimately provide mankind with a free source of energy, enabling a complete control over its physical environment.

The theosophists seem to have derived this idea from a charlatan named John Worrell Keely, 'inventor' of the notorious Keely motor, of which its creator wrote: 'In the conception of any machine heretofore constructed, the medium for inducing a neutral centre has never been found. If it had, the difficulties of perpetual-motion seekers would have ended, and this problem would have become an established and operating fact. It would only require an introductory



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impulse of a few pounds, on such a device, to cause it to run for centuries. In the conception of my vibratory engine, I did not seek to attain perpetual motion but a circuit is formed that actually has a neutral centre, which is in a condition to be vivified by my vibratory ether, and, while under operation by said substance, is really a machine that is virtually independent of the mass (or globe), and it is the wonderful velocity of the vibratory circuit which makes it so. Still, with all its perfection, it requires to be fed with the vibratory ether to make it an independent motor . . .'

Madame Blavatsky appears to have been much impressed by Keely. In the *Secret Doctrine* she referred to him as 'a natural-born magician' and quoted with approval a description of him as being 'great . . . in soul, wise . . . in mind, and sublime . . . in courage . . . the greatest discoverer and inventor in the world . . .' He was, in reality, a fraud who managed for many years to enjoy a comfortable existence on the money he had extracted from those gullible enough to invest in his 'Vibrational Self-Motor'. After his death it was discovered that the working model of his motor which, seemingly set in motion by the vibration of a violin string, had so impressed visitors to his laboratory was in reality powered by a secret supply of compressed air. In spite of this fiasco theosophists and other occultists continued to attach great importance to 'vibrational energy', and to the Keely motor; even today there are those who defend Keely as a great occultist and physicist.

Music of the Universe

In the present century vibration has ceased to occupy an important place in the theoretical framework of most occult systems and its place has been taken by other, more fashionable, scientific (or pseudo-scientific) concepts. Thus some 19th century astrologers attempted to provide a rationale for their art by arguing that each planet had its own vibrational frequency which, transmitted by radiation through the ether, blended with the vibrations of the other planets to influence the child at birth; today such theories have been largely abandoned by astrologers in favour of Jungian 'synchronicity' – the belief that everything done at a certain moment of time has the qualities of that moment of time.

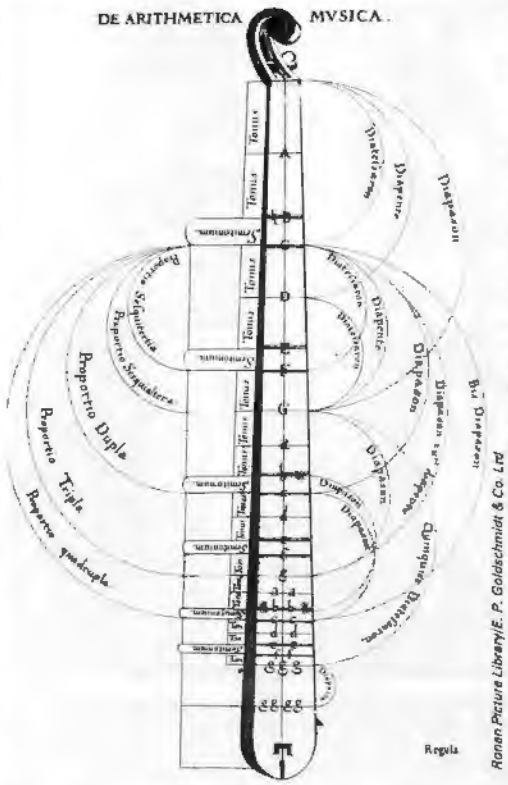
Nevertheless, vibrational theories have survived, and indeed have been developed much further in attempts to provide a semi-physical explanation for the phenomena of dowsing and radiesthesia (see DOWSING; RADIESTHESIA). Such explanations often involve a belief that the vibrational frequencies of the ordinary musical scale have an occult significance of cosmic importance. Dr H. Tomlinson, an Australian radiesthetic and homoeopathic practitioner, has claimed that: '. . . the notes of the tonic sol-fa system are a universal constant . . . The universe visible to man can be likened to a web of tiny interlacing octaves of vibrations. These octaves are of two sorts, ascending and descending. A descending octave is progress from matter of higher vibrating rate to matter of lower vibratory

rate . . . An ascending octave is progress from denser matter to more spiritual matter . . . The diviner . . . is operating in a web of interlacing celestial octaves . . . Every substance, when tested by radiesthetic methods, can be found to react to one of the notes of the octave . . .'

On the whole, those who follow what has sometimes been called the Western Esoteric Tradition – largely MacGregor Mathers's personal synthesis of the Christian Cabala, occidental ritual magic and certain elements derived from Madame Blavatsky's theosophy – are not particularly concerned with such semi-physical, semi-spiritual theories of vibration, for in the Cabalistic doctrines regarding emanation they have available to them a much more sophisticated conceptual framework (see CABALA; GOLDEN DAWN). Western occultists have, however, been concerned with vibration as a mode of pronunciation, used as a means of inducing religious ecstasy. In an unpublished Golden Dawn document written by Wynn Westcott *c* 1893 four modes of spiritual development are described; one of these is 'the procuring of the influence of Divine Powers through the peculiar modes taught in our Order of Vibrating the Divine Names'.

This method of vibration was described in detail in the second part of another Golden Dawn document, *Flying Roll XII*:

> In vibrating the Divine Names the Operator should first of all rise as high as possible towards the idea of the Divine White Brilliance, keeping the mind raised to the plane of the loftiest spiritual aspiration. Unless this is done, it is dangerous to vibrate only with the astral forces, because the vibration attracts a certain force to the operator, and the nature of the force attracted rests largely on the condition of mind in which the operator is.
>
> The ordinary mode of vibrating is as follows: Take a deep and full inspiratiou and concentrate your consciousness in your heart, which answers to Tiphareth. (Having first, as already said, ascended to your Kether, you should endeavour to bring down the white Brilliance into you heart, prior to centering your consciousness there).
>
> Then formulate the letters of the Name required in your heart, in white, and feel them written there. Be sure to formulate the letters in brilliant white light, not merely in dull whiteness as the colour of the Apas Tattwa. Then, emitting the breath, slowly pronounce the Letters so that the sound vibrates within you, and imagine that the breath, while quitting the body, swells you so as to fill up space. Pronounce the Name as if you were vibrating it through the whole Universe, and as if it did not stop until it reached the further limits.
>
> All practical work which is of any use, tires the operator or withdraws some magnetism, and therefore, if you wish to do anything that is at all important, you must be in perfect magnetic and nervous condition, or else you will do evil instead of good.
>
> When you are using a Name and drawing a Sigil from the Rose, you must remember that the Sephira to which the Rose and the Cross are referred, is Tiphareth, whose position answers to the position of the heart, as if the Rose were therein. It is not always necessary to formulate before you in space the telesmatic angelic figure of the Name. As a general rule, pronounce the Names as many times as there are letters in it.



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Two diagrams from *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* by Robert Fludd, concerned with the universe as a harmony of musical vibrations
Left **The relationship of the harmonies and notes of a monochord** ***Above*** **The different spheres which make up the macrocosm are shown to produce a universal harmony**

From this brief instruction it is not clear whether the magicians of the early Golden Dawn regarded the vibrations they created as physical, mental or spiritual. Probably they were supposed to partake of all three. In any case it seems likely that each practitioner had his or her own private interpretation of the vibratory process.

Trembling With Energy

Certainly at the present day, those occultists who are devotees of either the original Golden Dawn magical system or of one or other of its many derivatives – mostly greatly inferior to the original – give widely varying descriptions of both what is actually done and what is subjectively experienced when a Divine Name is vibrated. The best descriptions – which ultimately seem to derive from Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) – take it for granted that the experiences undergone are subjective in nature but that, nevertheless, a *psychologically* real vibration is felt. One occultist has described himself as having his consciousness so filled with the spiritual essence of the Divine Name he is vibrating that not only his body but 'the universe itself seems to be shaking, trembling and vibrating with the energy of the God-name invoked'.

In the sense that the word vibration is interpreted by contemporary Western magicians its use is likely to continue. It seems at least possible, however, that the semi-physical theories of vibration associated with radiesthesia will slowly die out and that practitioners of radionics will turn towards a more traditional terminology and philosophy in future attempts to explain their science.

(See also NAMES.)

FRANCIS KING

FURTHER READING: H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (Theosophical Publishing House, 1980); S. L. MacGregor Mathers, *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic and Alchemy* (Spearman, London, 1971).

Tate Gallery

Vigil

A watch by night: in early Christianity, a service celebrated during the night before a festival, surviving in the midnight Mass on Christmas Eve; later, the eve of a festival; a candidate for knighthood would keep a night's vigil of prayer and dedication in a church before being initiated.

Mansell Collection

Villa of the Mysteries

Cult centre of Dionysus at Pompeii, the town which was overwhelmed by eruptions of Vesuvius in 63 and 79 AD; murals depict the rituals of the cult.

See DIONYSUS.

Vine

Through its connection with intoxicating wine, often linked with life-energy and a state of closeness to the divine: plant of Dionysus as god of wine; in the Old Testament God's people are the vine which he brought out of Egypt and tended (Psalm 80, Isaiah, chapter 5); Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser . . . I am the vine, you are the branches' (John, chapter 15).

See DIONYSUS; SYMBOLISM.

Virgil

Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19 BC), author of the *Aeneid*, the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*; in the Middle Ages his fourth eclogue, predicting the birth of a child who would usher in a new Golden Age, was taken to refer to Christ, and in legend he became a master magician; he guides Dante through the afterworld in the *Divine Comedy*.

British Museum

'Divine parentage was claimed for famous men, well into historical times': Alexander the Great was said to have been born to Olympias, Philip of Macedon's wife, after Zeus embraced her in the form of a serpent; 14th century miniature of Alexander with his horse Bucephalus

'There are not many pre-Christian stories of virgin births, and there are perhaps none in which virginity is the main point'

VIRGIN BIRTHS

WHEREVER CHRISTIANITY is the official religion, the phrase 'virgin birth' carries a special meaning. It does not refer to a theme of myth or folklore, or to a biological hypothesis, but to a single, unique event: the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary. Jesus's miraculous origin, setting him apart from the rest of mankind, has seldom been publicly questioned by professed Christians until fairly recent years.

Of the four canonical gospels, only Matthew and Luke contain a birth narrative; no clear allusions to any such narrative occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The scriptural basis of the Virgin Birth doctrine is confined to Matthew 1. 18–25 and Luke 1. 26–38. Other accounts are given in apocryphal writings, but the Church rejected these as devoid of authority.

Matthew relates that Mary, when engaged to her future husband Joseph, was found to be pregnant. Joseph planned to proceed with the marriage and divorce her quietly afterwards. But an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him to keep her as his wife. Her child was not due to any sexual union, but to divine action, immaterial and mysterious: 'that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'. Luke gives Mary's side of the story. Before the events recorded in Matthew, the angel Gabriel came to her at Nazareth and prophesied that she would bear the promised Messiah. She protested that she was a virgin. Gabriel replied that God alone was responsible for what would happen and Mary consented to her destiny.

Virgin birth is often alleged to be a recurrent theme in mythology, so that material for comparison should be plentiful. Objective study, however, has been rare. Most

C. M. Dixon

Other religious leaders besides Christ have been credited with miraculous births. The conception of the Buddha was immaculate, although his mother was not a virgin but a married woman: Queen Maya dreams that the Buddha enters her womb as a little white elephant

writers who accept the Christian dogma discuss it in isolation. Conversely, writers on comparative religion tend to hunt out 'parallels' that are not parallel, and distort the facts in the process.

Actually there are not many pre-Christian stories of virgin births, and there are perhaps none in which virginity is the main point. Goddesses occasionally conceive without male assistance. The Great Mother of the ancient Mediterranean world may have initiated life in this way. Certainly Neith, an Egyptian form of the Great Mother, gives birth to the sun god Re by her own power. In a much later age the divine Sophia (Wisdom) of Gnosticism was regarded, by some, as a virgin-mother. One gnostic sect even gave her a child named Jesus. But here Christian influence is apparent, and in any case this 'Jesus' is another spiritual entity, not a human one; the birth does not take place in the world we know.

Impregnation by a Flower

When we descend to that world, we do not find a distinct 'virgin birth' motif before Christianity. What we do find is an 'abnormal impregnation' motif. A woman is said to have achieved motherhood in some extraordinary way. She may or may not have been a virgin, usually not, but it is seldom of any consequence to the story.

Such legends fall into two classes. The first is the more important – the 'divine begetting' type of legend, which confers honour on a hero by making out that his father was a god. Sometimes the deity appears to the future mother in his own person, taking a shape, generally but not always human, which permits sexual intercourse. This is a popular Hindu theme. Several heroes in the epic *Mahabharata* are the sons of gods who came to their mothers undisguised. Or the god may impersonate a mortal – the woman's husband, for instance, as when Zeus fathers Hercules by assuming the likeness of Amphitryon (see HERCULES). Or the god may cause pregnancy by a means which is not frankly sexual but remains material, as when Zeus enters Danae in a shower of gold.

Divine parentage was claimed for famous men well into historical times. Pythagoras and Plato were allegedly sons of Apollo. Alexander the Great was born to Olympias, Philip of Macedon's wife, after Zeus embraced her in the form of a serpent. An Indian legend tells more cryptically how Buddha projected himself into the womb of Maya, his chosen earthly mother, and she dreamed that she conceived a white elephant (see GAUTAMA). The story exists in several versions, some of which add fantastic details, but there is no claim that Maya was a virgin. Like the mothers of most of the other famous men, she lived as a married woman in normal relations with a husband.

The second, more primitive type of legend concerns pregnancies induced by magic. Here the father is apt to be secondary, or wholly absent, and the stress is on the magic. The remote inspiration of all such tales is to be sought in an early phase of society when conception was imperfectly understood, and the sexual act was not recognized as the cause, or as the sole cause. Generation might be ascribed to the wind, to certain foods, to unseen spirits. Even when the process was better grasped, magical objects or substances might still be used to make women bear children.

Stories reflecting this naive state of mind are numerous. Sometimes the heroine conceives when a man looks at her. More often she does it alone, through swallowing a pebble, a blade of grass or some other potent object. Fo-hi, the legendary founder of the Chinese Empire, was conceived by a girl who ate a flower which clung to her garment as she bathed. In such tales there is no working of divine power, no miracle in the religious sense. Impregnation occurs by material means; only the means are non-sexual, and probably suggested by ancient misinformation. Virginity, even when it is part of the story (as it is with Fo-hi), is incidental.

The orthodox Christian statement is that Jesus, an historical person, was conceived through a divinely-ordained exception to the laws of Nature. God's Holy Spirit caused an embryo to exist in Mary's womb. The gospels – though, unavoidably, they use sexual metaphors – do not describe a physical

act or a material means; and the virginity is crucial. To equate what happens with the various 'divine begettings' is to obscure a profound difference of idea.

Christ's Family Tree

Nor are the origins of the story at all obvious. Theories of a gradual growth of legend, long after everyone who knew the truth was dead, are hard to sustain. The gospels of Matthew and Luke were composed within the lifetime of many of Christ's younger contemporaries. The two narratives are different, but not contradictory. Both seem to reflect an early and widespread belief.

Biblical scholars have claimed to detect a contrast in style between the opening passages of Luke and the rest. This could suggest interpolation, but it could also suggest that the author incorporated a memoir by someone close to Mary herself.

The strongest counter-argument is that the two genealogies, Matthew 1. 1–16, and Luke 3. 23–38, tracing Jesus's descent from David through Joseph, his nominal father, would be pointless if Joseph were not his true father; so that their Christian compilers must have thought he was. But this does not follow. The relations with Joseph would have established the legal Davidic lineage which was a mark of the Messiah, even if it were only adoptive. Here for once a pre-Christian case is helpful: Alexander's being the son of Zeus did not prevent his being counted also as a descendant of Hercules through Philip. Joseph's status as an adoptive parent is likewise enough to account for the references to him in the gospels as the father of Jesus.

The Virgin Birth seems, then, to have been a Christian tenet well before the close of the 1st century AD. There is no reliable trace of its being challenged as an innovation, except by one sect, the Ebionites (see EBIONITES). Nor is there any trace of

Divine parentage was claimed for many heroes of legend. Perseus was the son of the supreme god Zeus, who visited his mother Danae in the form of a shower of gold: painting by Charles Natoire (*right*). It was prophesied that the child would kill his grandfather, so Danae and the young Perseus were put into a chest and cast adrift: drawing by Arthur Rackham (*below*)

Chris Barker

Giraudon

C. M. Dixon

Ikon illustrating the story of Christ's nativity, from the Church of the Virgin at Potamies, Crete. The belief that Jesus was born of a virgin as a result of divine action was accepted by the Church well before the end of the 1st century AD; earlier, non-Christian accounts of divine births generally do not claim that the mother was a virgin

a rival tradition outside the Church. Jews said that Jesus was conceived through Mary's misconduct; but since they gave her seducer's name as Pantheros – which is variously spelt and corrupted, but originally merely an anagram of *parthenos*, 'virgin' – the rumour is a scandal without historical substance (see JESUS).

Catholic tradition adds that Mary stayed a virgin always, with Joseph living in voluntary celibacy, accepting that she belonged to no man. If she did, several references to Jesus's 'brothers' in the Bible and in the historian Josephus have to be explained away. The vagueness of relation-words among Jews at that time would allow the 'brothers' to be cousins. But an established Christian belief in Mary's perpetual virginity is hard to trace in the early centuries, though several Fathers of the Church endorse it. Misunderstanding of the further dogma of the Immaculate Conception (which states that Mary was conceived sinless, as the chosen and predestined vessel) has fostered a mistaken notion that she too, in Catholic belief, was born of a virgin. This is an error.

Queries have been raised as to whether the Virgin Birth might have happened without a miracle. Parthenogenesis in mammals is not impossible. It has been induced in rabbits, though all the offspring were female. Cases are cited of women conceiving after bathing in the same water as a man; and of a twin being 'born' as an embryo inside the other twin and eventually expelled. If a rationalization of the Christian story is wanted, it could be argued that Jesus was the child of an abnormal pregnancy sincerely regarded as miraculous, and that this helped to invest him with a supernatural aura. But such a theory cannot be more than speculative.

(See also MARY.)

GEOFFREY ASHE

FURTHER READING: Thomas Boslooper, *The Virgin Birth* (S.C.M. Press, 1962).

Virginity

State valued in various religious and magical traditions, because it implies innocence, or concentration on spiritual things, or because it implies a reservoir of untapped force; the taking of a woman's virginity is frequently hedged about with taboos; in legend, only a virgin can tame a unicorn; objects used in ritual magic are required to be 'virgin'.

See RITUAL MAGIC; SELF-DENIAL; SEX; UNICORN; WOMAN.

Virgin Mary

The mother of Jesus; numerous legends grew up about her, and in popular Christian belief she was elevated to the level of a goddess; her cult demonstrates 'the importance of the female in the thought and feelings of ordinary people when expressed in religious faith and practice'.

See MARY; VIRGIN BIRTHS.

VIRGO

THIS is one of the 'mutable' signs in traditional astrology (the others being Gemini, Sagittarius and Pisces), so termed because the Sun is 'in' them at times of the year when one season is changing into another. In Virgo's case the dates are 23 August to 22 September, when summer gives way to autumn, and the effect on you, if Virgo is important in your birth chart, is to give you a strong impulse to be of service to others, as a parallel to the way in which the old season is making way for the new to further the progress of the year. Astrologers also say that you will be changeable and adaptable, but this is modified by the fact that Virgo is associated with the element of earth, which in terms of personality analysis is translated into 'keeping one's feet on the ground'.

Those born under the sign of the Virgin do not, of course, necessarily have defective love-lives as a result, but they are expected to be quiet and undemonstrative in affairs of the heart. They may be genuinely affectionate but not fully involved with their partners, and in general they tend to keep themselves to themselves and to shrink away from very close relationships with other people. Unassuming and retiring, they are modest, prudent, and possessed of considerable cool charm. Strong Virgo influence is said to produce a personality that is spinsterish in the bad sense.

The influence of Mercury, the sign's ruling planet, brings intelligence, excellent communicative abilities, possibly a knack for languages. The Virgo person is likely to be logical and tidy-minded, suspicious of abstract ideas and emotional attitudes, fond of exactitude, perhaps pedantic.

Sensible, reliable, busy, cautious, careful with money, the Virgo person's preference for practical concerns is not a mark of materialism but is harnessed to his genuine and idealistic bent for service. Natives of Virgo are said to make good doctors, teachers, accountants and secretaries.

'The Virgo person's preference for practical concerns is not a mark of materialism but is harnessed to his genuine and idealistic bent for service': 15th century astrological treatise

British Museum

In early Hindu mythology Vishnu was relatively unimportant, but through coalescing with other gods he achieved – with Shiva – a supreme place in the Hindu pantheon

VISHNU

THE HINDUS are not monotheists, strictly speaking, but they all agree that there is one supreme and eternal Principle, one abiding reality behind the whole phenomenal universe which is in a state of perpetual flux. This belief is central to Hinduism and because neither the Buddhists nor the Jains (see JAINS) believe in such a Principle, the Hindus call them *nastikas*, 'heretics', or more literally, 'people who do not believe in Being', that is to say in immutable Being beyond all becoming. This 'Being' is the Absolute, and in theology it is called Brahman or simply the 'Self' (see BRAHMAN). Brahman is beyond all attributes and all characterization: but if you conceive of it as possessing attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and sovereignty, then it is God.

Hinduism, however, started as a polytheistic religion and only gradually came to an awareness of Brahman as the eternal ground of all existence. Later still it arrived at the idea that the ground of existence is also the Lord of existence – is God. In an early hymn the question is asked: '*What* god shall we revere with the oblation?' The answer is 'Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures.' But this solution was really no solution at all, for it implies the further question, 'Which of the many gods mentioned in the early scriptures is the Lord of Creation? Which of the many gods is the one true God?' For a time Prajapati enjoyed this honour, but Prajapati came to be identified with the sacrifice, both sacrifice as it is performed in ritual and with the cosmic sacrifice of Prajapati himself which was said to have resulted in the manifestation of this multiple world out of an original unity. At about the same period we find Vishnu too being identified with the sacrifice and therefore with Prajapati, 'the Lord of Creatures'.

In the earliest Hindu scripture, the *Rig-Veda*, Vishnu turns up from time to time but he is quite unimportant. He is the faithful companion of Indra who, during the period of the *Rig-Veda*, was the greatest of the gods, the patron of the Aryans as they swept into India and the chastizer of the aboriginal inhabitants, the god of the storm and of war (see INDIA). The only action attributed separately to Vishnu is his striding out three paces:

> I will proclaim the manly powers of Vishnu
> Who measured out earth's broad expanses,
> Propped up the highest place of meeting:
> Three steps he paced, the widely striding!
>
> Though one, in threefold wise he has propped up Heaven and earth, all beings and all worlds . . .
>
> There indeed the widely striding Bull's
> Highest footstep, copious, downward shines.

From this hymn it is clear that Vishnu's three paces represent the 'measuring out', that is, the creation of the universe; and his highest step seems to be the sky. Later it was to be identified with Being itself, that is, Brahman or the Absolute.

Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer

The seed from which Vishnu developed to his full stature as the supreme deity is already here; but it is a very small seed from which so immense a tree should have grown. It was, however, not the only seed, for the full-fledged Vishnu is clearly the result of the coalescence of many gods, none of which belong to the oldest mythology of the *Veda*. In the course of time he coalesced with Narayana, who appears in a rather later Vedic text as a divine sage who offers sacrifice and 'becomes this whole universe'. In the Great Epic, the *Mahabharata*, Narayana dwells, though invisible himself, in a mythical 'White Island' where he is surrounded by his devotees – strange beings by any standards, since their heads are like umbrellas and they each have four testicles – who revere him alone as the one God and thereby partake of his eternal essence. The cult of Narayana in conjunction with

Vishnu is made real to his worshippers through his ten incarnations *Right* Vishnu in his aspect as man-lion *Below left* Vishnu as Rama, hero of the Rama Yana who was cheated of his throne *Below right* Vishnu as Krishna, the youth whose affairs with the cowherd's daughters are held to be an analogy of the love affair between God and the soul

William MacQuitty

William MacQuitty

'For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers . . . I come into being age after age': Vishnu, in carvings from the magnificent rock temple of Mahabalipuram, south India, 7th century AD

Vasudeva is attested by an inscription from the 2nd century BC.

But who was Vasudeva? In the Epic and the *Puranas* (300 BC – 1000 AD) Vasudeva is the patronymic of Krishna (see KRISHNA) whose father was Vasudeva; and this adds a new complication, for the origins of the Krishna cult are even more obscure than the cult of Vishnu himself. By the time of the Epic in which the man Krishna plays a leading part, he is already identified with Vishnu and is his incarnation on earth. As such he delivers the most celebrated of all the Hindu scriptures, the *Bhagavad Gita* (see BHAGAVAD GITA), in which he explains his own nature as God, reveals himself in a quite terrifying vision as all-consuming Time, shows how he is not only identical with Brahman, the Absolute, but actually transcends it, explains the supreme merit and efficacy of loving devotion to the one God, and also explains the purpose of God's incarnation as man. 'Whenever the law of righteousness withers away,' he says, 'and lawlessness arises, then do I generate myself on earth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the setting up of the law of righteousness I come into being age after age.'

In the Great Epic, Krishna is Vishnu incarnate, but Vishnu himself, though he appears in most of this enormous poem as the supreme deity, is not undisputedly so. He is Bhagavan, 'the Lord', but in the background there lurks disconcertingly Mahadeva, the 'Great God' Shiva (see SHIVA), whose supremacy Krishna himself acclaims on occasion. The two gods are still clearly rivals, but a compromise is reached whereby the one true God is invoked as Hari-Hara, *hari*, the 'tawny' or 'he who takes away (sin)', being one of the stock epithets of Vishnu, and *hara* the 'seizer' being one of Shiva's. For from the time of the Great Epic until today God has been worshipped by the Hindus either in the form of Vishnu or of Shiva: for the worshippers of Vishnu, Vishnu (and his incarnations) alone is God, for the worshippers of Shiva the same is true of Shiva. In the so-called Hindu Trinity (the Trimurti or 'three-form' of God, consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) Brahma is associated with creation, Vishnu with sustaining, and Shiva with destruction, just as in Christianity, the Father came to be associated with creation, the Son with redemption, and the Holy Spirit with sanctification. This, however, is a purely theological device and in no way influenced the actual practice of the two dominant trends of Hinduism for which either Vishnu or Shiva is the one God who creates, sustains, and destroys the universe in unending cycles of ever-revolving time.

The Creation myth associated with Vishnu is rather naive. At the end of each cosmic cycle Vishnu falls asleep on the cosmic serpent Shesha. When he wakes up, a lotus grows out of his navel and in the middle of the flower Brahma is seated, and Brahma then proceeds with the creation of the universe. Meanwhile the wrathful Shiva emerges from his forehead ready to destroy all that Brahma has created.

Among the followers of Shiva, Shiva is worshipped directly or in the form of his erect phallus; but for the devotees of Vishnu, Vishnu is made real to them through his incarnations or avatars, as they are called in most Indian languages (from the Sanskrit *avatara* meaning a 'descent'). These avatars are either a full incarnation of the supreme God or a partial one. The number of incarnations varies but the generally accepted number is ten. These are incarnations as fish, as tortoise, as boar, as man-lion, as dwarf, as Parashurama ('Rama with the axe'), as Rama-candra, as Krishna, as the Buddha, and as Kalkin who is yet to come.

Heroic Incarnations

The first four incarnations need not detain us although some of them have a respectable antiquity. Vishnu became incarnate as Rama 'with the axe' in order to extirpate the warrior class who had come to challenge the supremacy of the Brahmins, but this Rama is a purely literary character with no cultic significance. Vishnu's incarnation as the Buddha, however, is very surprising and the orthodox explanation that the Buddha's function was to lead astray many from the true faith as formulated in the Vedas is even more surprising. In actual practice Vishnu is worshipped either in his incarnation as Krishna or as Rama(candra), the heroes of the *Mahabharata* and the *Rama Yana* respectively. Of the two cults, that of Krishna is the more emotional, for the object of worship is not so much the Krishna of the *Mahabharata* or the *Bhagavad Gita* as of the youthful and wayward Krishna of the *Puranas* whose love affairs with the cowherds' daughters in Vrindavan are held to be an analogy of the love affair between God and the soul.

The history of the elevation of Rama-(candra) to the rank of an incarnation of Vishnu is no less obscure. In the *Rama Yana* (except in the first and last books which are generally regarded as being a later addition) Rama is simply the virtuous hero, the heir-apparent cheated of his throne by a vindictive queen, the faithful husband, and the just destroyer of the demon king who had carried off his wife. But by the time that the *Rama Yana* was refashioned in Hindi by the 17th century poet Tulsi Das, Rama had for long been accepted as an incarnation of Vishnu, and his earthly life (almost entirely mythical) was held up as a model for the ordinary man to follow. Rama had become quite as much an incarnation of Vishnu as had Krishna, and the Hindi form of his name, Ram, had come to mean God. And so it was that Mahatma Gandhi, assassinated by an 'orthodox' Hindu fanatic, died with the name 'Ram' on his lips.

(See also HINDUISM.)

R. C. ZAEHNER

FURTHER READING: Alain Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism* (Routledge, 1964).

At Limpias in Spain, in 1919, a girl said that she had seen the figure of Christ in the parish church perspire visibly and move its eyes, and between 1930 and 1950 the Roman Catholic Church investigated 300 cases of apparitions to children and 30 sets of appearances of the Virgin Mary: but 'the wisdom of the Church and the teaching of its greatest intellects and holiest saints has made it circumspect'

VISIONS

THE WORD vision is used in the religious sphere to mean what elsewhere is called an apparition. The percipient of an apparition has the experience of 'seeing' (in some sense or other) something which is not present in the same way as ordinary physical objects are. Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911), in his researches into human faculties, encountered a perfect example of an apparition. A lady novelist assured him that she once saw the principal character of one of her novels come through the door and glide towards her. As the character was fictional there was no possibility that the apparition corresponded to any external cause. The experience thus originated within the lady's mind and can be described as *endogenic* (caused from within).

Apparitions are sometimes loosely called hallucinations (from Latin *hallucinatio* – I dream) bearing the implication that they are endogenic. This is because apparitions commonly result from drugs, fever, exhaustion or mental illness. The present writer prefers to reserve the term hallucination for endogenic hallucinations, and to use the word apparition or vision for an appearance whose cause may be internal or external.

Are there in fact any apparitions which are *exogenic* (with an external cause)? Religious visions are difficult to interpret but psychical research provides good evidence of exogenic apparitions (see GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES). Occasionally, at a time of death or crisis the likeness of the person concerned appears in recognizable form to a friend or relative, perhaps on the other side of the world. The apparitions are sometimes clearly unreal, being transparent or appearing in a 'pool of light' or in a 'picture frame', but quite often they are natural enough to be mistaken for the actual person. Theories differ as to how these crisis apparitions come about. Some writers claim that the person whose apparition is seen has an 'astral body' which is a duplicate of his physical body (including clothes) and is 'projected' to the vicinity of the percipient (see ASTRAL BODY). I prefer an explanation by telepathy or 'thought-transference'; a violent 'thought wave' impinges on some level of the percipient's mind and is translated into a picture of the person in crisis.

The Vision of Father Simon **by Francesca Ribalta: Simon was a 16th century Italian aesthete who walked the streets at night meditating on the Road to Calvary; one night he heard trumpets and saw Christ, carrying the cross, turn to look at him**

National Gallery

About 1899 the Society for Psychical Research carried out a census of apparitions and obtained 17,000 replies to their questionnaire. It appeared that about one person in 16 sees an apparition about once in the course of a lifetime. About a third of all apparitions are of animals, lights, indefinite or inanimate objects, but the remaining two-thirds are of realistically human figures. More than half of these human apparitions are of persons living or dead and known to the percipient. It was found also that about one in 30 of all apparitions are of a religious, exalted or highly poetic nature. In mentally normal persons only a very small proportion of apparitions are grotesque or horrible. Even if an apparition is not frightening in itself it may puzzle the percipient who often fears that his reason is failing, but this alarm is unnecessary, because the statistics quoted refer mainly to people in normal physical and mental health.

A large proportion of apparitions are *hypnagogic* hallucinations (from Greek *hypnos* – sleep) and occur on the borderline between sleeping and waking, being very akin to dreams. Like dreams, these apparitions are mainly endogenic but some may, like crisis apparitions, have an external cause, because there is evidence of telepathic or clairvoyant effects both in dreams and in the hypnagogic state.

All the same, many interesting visionary experiences cannot be reliably distinguished from dreams. In a classic case, a Dr Wittse seemed (in his own recollection) to leave his body, observe his own corpse and the physicians standing by, and travel through a mysterious landscape; but we cannot confidently accept that this adventure was not illusory. All endogenic hallucinations are likely to have features in common with dreams. They contain revived memories, but in new combinations. If the Jungian and Freudian psychologies are true, hallucinations may also contain symbolic representations of unconscious urges, aspirations or anxieties. This is true of normal people and especially true of the hallucinations of the insane.

Modern brain surgery has given some insight into the causes of some hallucinations (though less than is sometimes claimed). If the normal functioning of a part of the brain concerned in ocular perception is prevented, the person may have *compensatory hallucinations*. Thus a patient with a tumour in the right temporal lobe had consequently no normal vision of things on the left. But while in darkness he 'saw' a non-existent man to his left sitting at a non-existent fireside. Visions of this sort consist of re-activated memories; men blind from birth have no visual hallucinations, although they can have auditory ones. Occasionally, sane and intelligent persons have spontaneous electrical discharges in the brain which, besides producing involuntary movements of the limbs, engender remarkably vivid hallucinations often identifiable as revived memories. When in the course of remedial brain surgery certain areas of the cerebral cortex are stimulated mildly with an electrode, *sensory hallucinations* result – effects of dispersed light or shade, coloured lights, stars, wheels. Stimulation of the temporal lobe and the posterior parietal cortex produce more elaborate hallucinations. Some neurologists tend therefore to refer all apparitions to random electrical flickers in the brain, but on the evidence of crisis apparitions I would deny this.

Emotion certainly is productive of visions. Carl Jung (see JUNG) speaks of a spontaneous vision experienced as a child while in a choking fit. He saw above him a glowing blue circle about the size of the full moon. Within it there moved golden figures which he took to be angels. Once, when my own father, a sea-captain, was trying to extricate his vessel from a whirlpool and debating whether to change course, my mother's apparition appeared before him on the ship's bridge and told him, with emphasis, 'You *will* get out if you change course!'; as in fact he did.

A Wavering Rose

Many hallucinations are extremely vivid and lifelike so that, as with some crisis apparitions, the percipient may think he is actually seeing in the ordinary way. But with many visions, particularly in the religious sphere, it is hard to decide from the visionary's words exactly in what sense the vision was 'seen'. Roman Catholic theorists such as St Thomas Aquinas (1226–74) recognized three types of vision; the intellectual vision, the imaginative vision and the corporeal vision. The theory of the corporeal vision was akin to the modern astral body explanation of crisis apparitions. If one had a vision of Jesus, it *might* be a corporeal vision; one was actually seeing either the resurrection body of the Christ or alternatively a kind of wraith fashioned by the angels, the handymen of heaven. On the other hand, it might be that the percipient received only an imaginative vision – a purely mental image, though a vivid one and induced by the action of God. St Thomas, of course, like all reputable theologians, reserved the possibility of a vision being an endogenic hallucination not divinely caused.

The 'intellectual vision' of the theologians corresponds to ordinary mental imagery. If the average person thinks of an object, say, a duck, he will form a mental image; he 'sees' it in the mind's eye. His mental picture will be somewhat generalized and lacking in detail (unless he is a zoologist or a farmer), as he discovers if he tries to draw it. An artist will do better because, both by nature and training, he has a capacity for more vivid mental imagery. The lack of sharp detail in the average mental image is shown by the effort which a hypnotist has to make when establishing a hallucination in a person under hypnosis. The hypnotist has to suggest in a persuasive manner the characteristics of the figure that he wishes the hypnotized person to 'see', and to catalogue the hat, the hairstyle, the blue eyes, the jewellery and so on.

Some people, however, have a remarkable power of mental visualization, so that what they 'see in the mind's eye' can be as vivid as things actually seen. Such exceptionally clear imagery is described as *eidetic* (from Greek *eidos* – form), and is sometimes aided by looking at a plain or dark background. When Goethe shut his eyes and thought of a rose he would clearly see a rosette for as long as he wished, though it wavered a little and moved its petals. The Rev George Henslow, a friend of Francis Galton, had a similar faculty and attempted with partial success to control the form of the objects he 'saw'. When he thought of a gun he saw only the stock; the vision then drifted into the form of a tuning fork. By mental effort he recovered the gun in the form of a flint-lock: a type of fire-arm he had not consciously intended.

Galton came across a few visionaries who said that they received their visions in two entirely distinct ways. Thus one informant could experience eidetic images at conscious command but these were vague and shadowy in comparison with his spontaneous visions, which occurred unexpectedly and quite outside his mental control. These visions were of landscapes more strange and beautiful than any he had ever seen in the ordinary way. Such visions which arise, as it were, of their own motion can be called autonomous, but they are not necessarily exogenic. Not all autonomous visions are idyllic or romantic. A visionary who bought a Dutch cheese at a shop in Tottenham Court Road, London, saw the shopkeeper roll it on the counter. He told Galton that chancing to close his eyes the next day, he saw a bodiless head rolling on a white surface. Its face was that of the cheesemonger. Such visions resemble the more trivial type of dream which is a patchwork of recent experiences and jumbled recollections, but the visions of people with a poetic or literary bent, like their dreams, have an intellectual and idyllic content. In 1944 Jung, who was recovering after a heart attack, would awake at midnight and would spend an hour or so in 'an utterly transformed state' as if 'in ecstasy'. He saw unfolding before him various mythical occurrences such as the wedding of the cabalistic heings Malkhuth and Tifereth in the 'garden of pomegranates' or the sacred marriage of Zeus and Hera in a classical amphitheatre.

Ecstasy is a peculiar state which is sometimes entered spontaneously or in the course of prayer ur meditation on sublime themes (see ECSTASY). During it the ecstatic person consciously experiences any or all of a variety of thoughts and feelings. Visions are common but there can be also a sense of bliss or of union with the deity or a henign cosmic power. Contact with the surroundings is not always completely lost. Jung could eat his supper and comment to the night nurse on his visions.

One of the most remarkable visionaries of all time, Emanuel Swedenborg (see SWEDENBORG), spoke of three distinct kinds of 'spiritual sight' (apart from dreams). There was vision 'with the eyes closed, which is as vivid as with the eyes open'. At other times, when wide awake and walking in the city streets, Swedenborg would be 'in vision, seeing groves, rivers, palaces and men'. He described his third type of experience as differing entirely from 'the common imagination of men' and as a state 'when those

things which are in heaven, such as spirits and other objects, are represented'. Swedenborg believed that he had some kind of direct sight of actual spirits and divine beings in these latter visions which, he said, came to him only when in ecstasy or 'trance'.

The English poet and painter William Blake (see BLAKE), was erroneously regarded by some as mad because of his visions which he described in poems and epics. Chastized by his mother for seeing the prophet Ezekiel in the garden, at the age of eight he saw 'a tree filled with angels; bright angelic wings bespangled every bough like stars'. It is likely that children experience eidetic imagery and autonomous visions more commonly than adults realize. In Blake's case his visionary faculty expanded to cosmic proportions in adulthood. Once by the seashore, everything in the world appeared as 'men seen afar'. Eventually all objects fused and combined into 'One Man, the Christ' on whose bosom Blake reposed. When asked about the reality of his visions he replied that he saw them 'in imagination' and pointing to his forehead said that he saw them 'in here'. The visions reported by prophets and saints were, he believed, merely poetic.

Numerous visions of divinity have been described by their recipients as ineffable and incapable of expression in words. The German mystic John Tauler (1300–61) said that, 'sometimes the grace is so manifest that it is impossible to doubt that God has actually shown Himself', but '. . . no (distinct) idea of what has been seen is retained. We cannot understand what it was. Only we know with certainty that we cannot analyse it.' Tauler's comment suggests not only ineffability but, with visions as with dreams, a tendency to forget them. We may suppose also that some visions, like dreams, are subject to the process of 'secondary elaboration' by which they are modified in the recollection. This is to be suspected in the case of such rhapsodical visionaries as Venerable Marina of Escobar (1554–1633) who found herself before the heavenly Jerusalem, which was encircled by an exceedingly vast river. When interrogated by her confessor Marina declared that her clearness of perception was not much inferior to St Paul's.

Moving Statues

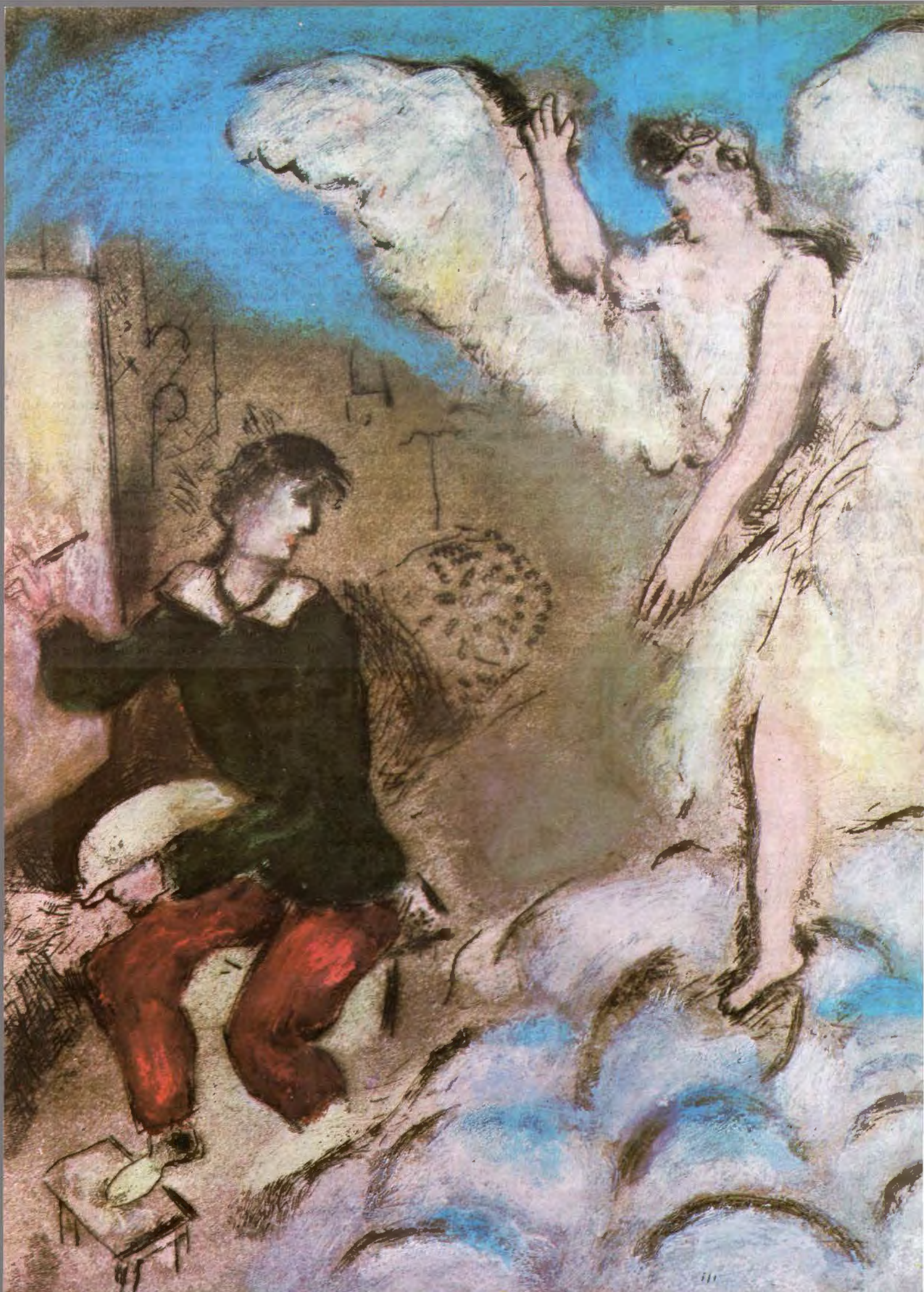
Other mystics have described their experiences in rather different terms. Blessed Angela of Foligno (1248–1309) said that, 'when the most high God comes into the rational soul . . . and she (the soul) seeth Him within her, without any bodily form . . . , the eyes of the soul behold a fulness, spiritual not bodily'. Such visions seem to be essentially cases of seeing with 'the mind's eye'. However, St Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), founder of the Jesuits, whose description of his visions can be relied on, perceived 'the Divine Being, not obscurely but in a vivid and highly luminous brightness'.

Loyola distinguished between visions of this compelling sort and 'intellectual perceptions' (that is, mental imagery) which he also had, particularly when gazing into running water. This recalls the German mystic Jacob Boehme (see BOEHME), who once saw a vision in a shining pewter dish, and also the phenomenon of crystal-gazing or 'scrying' (see SCRYING). It is estimated that about one person in 20, if gazing at a crystal ball or similar surface, will see some picture in it. Scrying is often spoken of as a kind of auto-hypnosis. Be this as it may, an element of auto-suggestion doubtless comes into play. If the scryer has been told that he is likely to see a certain picture in the crystal, then often he will see it with striking vividness. This accords with research on eidetic imagery in children which indicates that the more suggestible personalities tend to be the best 'eidetikers'.

The factors that seem to be operative in scrying – suggestibility, expectancy and narrowing of attention onto a single object – are perhaps adequate to explain some of the famous cases in which numerous observers have seen statues move or weep. In 1919 at Limpias near Santander in Spain, a girl of 12 said that during the sermon she had seen the figure of Christ on the altar of the parish church perspire visibly and move its eyes. Before long the number of daily pilgrims rose to 4,000. The majority saw nothing, but some visitors saw tears in the Saviour's

The Angels of Mons were the creation of an English journalist, but many British soldiers came to believe that they had actually seen the heavenly warriors hold back the might of the German army at Mons in 1914: French painting of the event, 1920

Photolensens



eyes, others saw blood on the brow, and yet others saw the head turning. Significantly most of these prodigies occurred only after the percipients had stared for long hours at the altar.

The Accuracy of Visions

Literary problems arise with the very extensive writings in which a long series of mystical ladies have reported their revelations received during ecstasies. St Bridget (1302–73), patron saint of Sweden, said that our Lord remarked to her that she retouched her visions through not having properly understood them; but he approved her secretaries for adding 'colour and ornamentation'. St Bridget often saw heaven, earth and hell simultaneously, as did St Lidwine of Schiedam (1330–1433) every night for 28 years. The vision of hell had been, of course, a common literary theme ever since Plato wrote the *Phaedo*. Visionaries, one suspects, are somewhat at the mercy of what they have read.

St Hildegard, Abbess of Rupertsberg in the Rhineland (see HILDEGARD), received her scientific knowledge from a 'divine light' experienced in ecstasies from the age of four. Her numerous treatises are, unfortunately, replete with just those factual errors prevalent in the 12th century. Confidence in her treatment of the sapphire or the lodestone evaporates on encountering her scientific explanation of the griffin and the unicorn. St Frances of Rome (1384–1440) failed in astronomy. When she visited the celestial regions in her visions she distinctly saw the sky as a hollow sphere of blue crystal; an admissible idea in the 15th century, but tending to be outmoded even in Spain when Blessed Maria of Agreda repeated the same error in her *Mystical City of God*. Maria, a woman of intellect and good sense, actually doubted the accuracy of her visions, until her faith became absolute after a visit to the throne of God. The Eternal Father produced a richly decorated book which the Blessed Virgin certified to be her own true history. Maria was gratified to find the text in perfect agreement with her own *Life of the Virgin*. However, the biographical details appear to have been revealed in two earlier books, a *Nativity of the Blessed Virgin* and the *Raptures of Blessed Amadeus*.

To conflict with edicts of the Church is less serious than to contradict scripture, because the Church can revise its own judgements, as in the case of Joan of Arc. But some embarrassment was felt at the beatification process of St Catharine of Ricci (1522–90), in whose visions Savonarola (burnt as a heretic at Florence in 1498) appeared in the role of saint and martyr. However, Pope Benedict XIII cut the Gordian knot by decreeing that the saint's virtues had to be considered separately from her visions. Much controversy attached to the recommendation of the Carmelite scapular which the Blessed Virgin was supposed to have made to St Simon Stock at Cambridge, England, in the 13th century. It was decided that the assurance that anyone who died wearing the scapular would certainly be saved ought not to be taken literally. This decision was probably a wise one because no contemporary memoir of Simon was written. (It was said of this saint, a strict vegetarian, that when offered a fried fish, he ordered it to be put back in the river whereupon it swam cheerfully away.)

The greatest of the mystical doctors of the Church, St Francis of Sales (see FRANCIS) and St John of the Cross (see JOHN) were profoundly suspicious of the accuracy of visions. St John used to quote with some relish the posthumous appearance of St Teresa of Avila (see TERESA) to a Carmelite nun. The great foundress and mystic warned the visionary that the vast majority of visions were untrustworthy. Whether the saint actually returned from paradise is uncertain, but her advice was in character. In his old age Loyola doubted the validity of his own youthful visions.

The wisdom of the Church and the teaching of its greatest intellects and holiest saints has made it circumspect. In the 17th century it denounced more than a score of false visionaries. When it specifically approves an apparition or revelation, it does so in terms of a formula laid down by the learned Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758). Even approved revelations are accorded only the probability of being true, and have at most the credibility 'of human faith according to the rules of prudence', and any Catholic is at liberty to reject or criticize. Discretion is certainly justified because in Western Europe between 1930 and 1950 the Church investigated 30 series of apparitions of the Virgin Mary alone, and 300 cases of individual apparitioos to children. Only three apparitions have been recognized in the present century: Fátima, Beauraing and Banneux, though the Church sometimes authorizes shrines without officially endorsing the visions which have led to their foundation.

It is clear that visionaries often make gross errors in matters of ascertainable fact. And in questions where the truth is not verifiable they are apt to conflict with the Church, or with scripture or with one another. Are they ever right? It is easy to satirize the poor visionaries. But occasionally, it must be admitted, they gather information by other than normal means. While in prayer on 26 July 1570, St Teresa found herself, as it were, present in spirit on the high seas and witnessed the massacre by pirates of 40 priests and novices on the way to Brazil, among them her cousin Francis Godoi. She immediately told her confessor. News of the tragedy reached Spain a month later. Among the reams of unverifiable material that Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824) dictated concerning the life of Jesus are many accurate topographical details concerning the Holy Land, including place names. In view of the limited knowledge of Palestine available in Europe in her day, it is hard to see how she could have acquired this information by normal means. St Teresa's experience, apart from its religious setting, could be interpreted as a simple case of a crisis apparition. Catherine's archeological knowledge presents a more elaborate problem. It might be the case that divine agency was operative in both instances. On the other hand, such phenomena occurring in a secular context are not nowadays judged supernatural but 'paranormal' or 'parapsychological'. The modern view tends to ascribe such experiences to rare natural occurrences – telepathy, clairvoyance, and the rest. Thus verifiable revelations of secular facts do not constitute rigorous evidence for divine intervention.

But what of the apparitions of Jesus, or the Eternal Father or the Holy Virgin? Do they represent communications from God or from Mary? From theology we know that the visionary cannot be receiving a direct view of God in the same sense that he sees Mr Jones who lives down the road, because God is unlimited and immaterial. The visionary is therefore either seeing a wraith fashioned by the angels or is experiencing a mental image. In the first case the agency would be supernatural, but there is no real evidence that any visions are 'corporeal ones' in the sense of Aquinas. In the second case the image *may* be purely endogenic. But this cannot be logically proved to be so.

We would be helped in this enquiry if we really knew what value to put on mystic experience in general. The mystic feels a sense of certainty as to the 'truth' of his experiences and a feeling of union with the ultimate power in the universe. These are certainly weights to be thrown into the scales of judgement, but it is difficult to know just what weight to give them. St Teresa, describing some of her feelings of spiritual comfort and assurance while in ecstasy, compared the soul to the silkworm in the cocoon it has spun for itself. And many scholars have wondered if mystical experience is not just this, a comforting illusion which the mind in spiritual or other travail spins for itself.

It cannot be denied that there are 'fashions' in visions. In the Middle Ages visionaries saw saints and martyrs and, in certain limited circles, apparitions of the child Jesus were extemely frequent. Later, visions of the suffering and wounded Jesus or of his Sacred Heart were favoured. In recent times the Virgin Mary has almost monopolized the field. Since Lourdes (see LOURDES) there have been definite series of apparitions occurring at dates announced in advance by the Virgin to her visionaries. On a sceptical view, this conformity of visions to fashion points rather to their being the products of auto-suggestion in harmony with the prevailing climate of religious devotion. But it needs to be said that this argument is something of a two-edged sword if we accept the possibility that a mental impulse, actuated from on high, may be elaborated into a vision from such materials as are available in the mental storehouse of the recipient. Religious psychology is no less replete with subtleties than ordinary psychology, and the present writer would consider it foolish to hasten to a final conclusion concerning the presence or absence of the supernatural in religious visions.

The Vision, by Chagall: a census in 1899 suggested that approximately one person in 16 sees an apparition once in the course of a lifetime, and that about one in 30 of these is of a religious, exalted or highly poetic nature

John Webb

National Gallery

Despite the evidence of numerous saints and holy persons who have experienced visions, the Roman Catholic Church has remained circumspect, and even approved revelations are accorded only the probability of being true: *The Vision of the Blessed Gabriele*, by Crivelli

It is sometimes argued that the divine origin of apparitions can be inferred from other strange phenomena attendant on the visionary such as the presence of the stigmata (see STIGMATA) or levitation. But this is unsound because a strong case can be made for regarding stigmata as having a natural cause. Levitation, though an obscure happening, may well prove eventually to be a natural (though paranormal) one. Be this as it may, it is already an axiom of the Church that such additional phenomena do not constitute an adequate proof.

A. R. G. OWEN

FURTHER READING: H. Evans, *Visions, Apparitions, Alien Visitors* (Aquarian Press, 1984); A. Huxley, *Doors of Perception* (Harper & Row, 1970); C. C. Martindale, *The Message of Fatima* (Burns & Oates, 1950).

VON DANIKEN, ERICH

BORN IN SWITZERLAND, in 1935, Erich Von Däniken is one of the best known writers on the theory that space voyagers visited earth thousands of years ago, and his books have sold in millions. He claims that the voyagers from space 'created' man by careful selection and genetic breeding. Von Däniken culls evidence from all over the world in support of his ideas – he wrote that epics in the Indian Mahabarata texts actually tell of wars between the gods, and contain descriptions of weapons similar to ray-guns and advanced atomic devices. Another claim he puts forward is that the massive Easter Island statues could not have been carved by the islanders, and must have been made by the spacemen, who used them to signal to each other. He also said that a 16th century map called the Piri Reis map shows the Atlantic coastlines as they would appear from an orbiting satellite. One of his other famous interpretations is his claim that a relief carving in a Mexican Mayan temple shows an astronaut wearing a space helmet, seated at the controls of his space rocket. Archaeologists say that the hieroglyphics on the relief clearly identify the grave of an important Mayan priest. In fact, all of Von Däniken's theories turn out to have perfectly reasonable explanations supplied by respected archaeologists. It is evident that Von Däniken has discovered a great *need* to believe in his ideas, as the sales of his books prove. However, the fact that he so completely disregards the cautious work of archaeologists and scholars undermines his fascinating premise: that the gods of ancient civilizations were astronauts who came to Earth in sophisticated space craft.

FURTHER READING: Von Däniken's books are: *Chariots of the Gods?* (pap) (Berkley Pub., 1980); *Miracles of the Gods* (pap) (Dell, 1976); *Signs of the Gods* (Berkley Pub.).

Herbert List

VOODOO

Dissociation, possession by and marriage to the gods are the central facts around which the ceremonies and superstitions of Voodoo are organized; Voodoo treats the 'Invisibles' as enemies to be won over and powers to be used, and the supernatural as a disease to be turned to good account

THE WORD VOODOO comes from *vodun*, meaning god, spirit or sacred object in the Fon language of West Africa. It is applied especially to the beliefs and practices found in Haiti, whose inhabitants are, for the most part, descendants of slaves imported from many parts of Africa, and by extension to similar practices in other Caribbean islands, in the Southern states of America, and in Brazil, where plantation slavery was also customary.

To Westerners, the word usually denotes black magic and uncouth superstition, such as sticking pins into dolls, casting spells, lighting black candles in cemeteries to Baron Samedi, the lord of the underworld and patron of all black magic, calling up the dead and being familiar with monsters, spirits and zombies. In Jamaica such activities are known as *obeah*, and certainly Haitians are quite familiar with them. However, Voodoo also refers to a systematic religion in which the gods descend and possess their worshippers, and in which the ancestral spirits are invoked to give oracles and be a power in the household.

These two aspects of Voodoo make a whole, and it is not always easy to distinguish them because the superstitions of Voodoo provide a forcing ground for the religion, which in turn supports and develops their meaning. From the start, children are brought up to be good by being made afraid of the supernatural, and this leaves an indelible imprint on the minds even of highly educated people. They are taught not to get their heads wet, especially with dew, because

Pocomania ceremonies in Jamaica parallel Haitian Voodoo, involving drumming, chanting and dancing which may continue for days on end. The initiates collapse in trances in which they have experiences in the world of spirits. Voodoo and similar West Indian and South American cults are based on African religions

There are bogies who can get through the thatch: the loupgarous or witches who like sucking children's blood, and who are sometimes seen whizzing through the night like fireworks

water is both a solvent and a magnet for spirits, and a man's spirit lives in his head. At night, besides, there are bogies about, and doors and windows are carefully closed to keep them at bay. There are some who can get through the thatch: these are the loupgarous or witches who like sucking children's blood, and who are sometimes seen whizzing through the night like fireworks. Midday is another dangerous time, for then no man casts a shadow; which is as much as to say that his soul has temporarily disappeared, soul and shadow being equated, and that the air is full of invisible spirits looking for an abode. Children are forbidden to play with their shadows by candlelight lest they tie them in knots or mislay them. And there is always the *tonton macoute*, the travelling magician with a satchel over his shoulder in which he has magical and medicinal plants, dried bits of wild cat, black candles, and other paraphernalia. Mothers threaten children that if they are not good, the tonton will make off with them: it is fitting that the name was given to the bully-boys of the Duvalier regime, who carried out this threat upon their political rivals.

In such an atmosphere, 'obeah' is used either to counter such hobgoblins of the mind or to make use of them, and its practitioners are medicine-men. A medicine in this sense is something with either magical or pharmacological properties, sometimes both. Consider, for example, the treatment given to a child suffering from the attacks of a loupgarou. It is pale, fretful, wasted, and sometimes goes into convulsions; its mother is anxious, suspecting foul play, and her anxiety makes the child worse. The medicine-man – he may be a *tonton macoute*, a *bokor*, sorcerer, or *houngan*, Voodoo priest – has thus to kill one bird, and he does it with two stones. He discovers who the witch is – usually a relative or a neighbour who is jealous and resentful of the mother – and works a magic to protect the child and send the magic back to its creator. But he also doses the child with castor oil, because intestinal worms can produce convulsions in young children. The child gets better, the mother is relieved, the witch confesses, and the poisonous atmosphere is dissipated.

Picturepoint, London

***Left* and *right* Scenes from Voodoo ceremonies, photographed at Port au Prince in Haiti: in Voodoo belief, magic and superstition are inextricably enmeshed with 'a systematic religion in which the gods descend and possess their worshippers, and in which the ancestral spirits are invoked to give oracles and be a power in the household'**

The Large Good Angel

The object of magic is to affect the soul either of the victim or of the persecutor. The soul is called the *gros bon ange*, the large good angel, and is manifested in the shadow and the breath. It coexists with the *'ti bon ange*, the little good angel, which is equated with the penumbra, the spirit, the conscience – it is sometimes also called the zombie. Both inhabit the *corps cadavre* or corpse body. The weak element in this ensemble is the gros bon ange, without which the other two elements lose contact. It is easily infected by emotions, especially those of suspicion, resentment, envy, anger and lust, by sudden shocks such as a death in the family, a failure in business or being jilted. It can also be stimulated magically by the casting of spells, the use of magical powders or of complicated pieces of apparatus called *wanga*. For instance, a girl being courted will try to 'hook' her man by serving him dishes in which she has put a piece of bacon she has worn in her shoe for three days running, or her nail and hair clippings, even her menstrual blood. If she is cold towards him, he may discreetly blow on her a powder composed of dried humming-bird flesh and a large number of potent herbs. If she is living with another man, however, he will

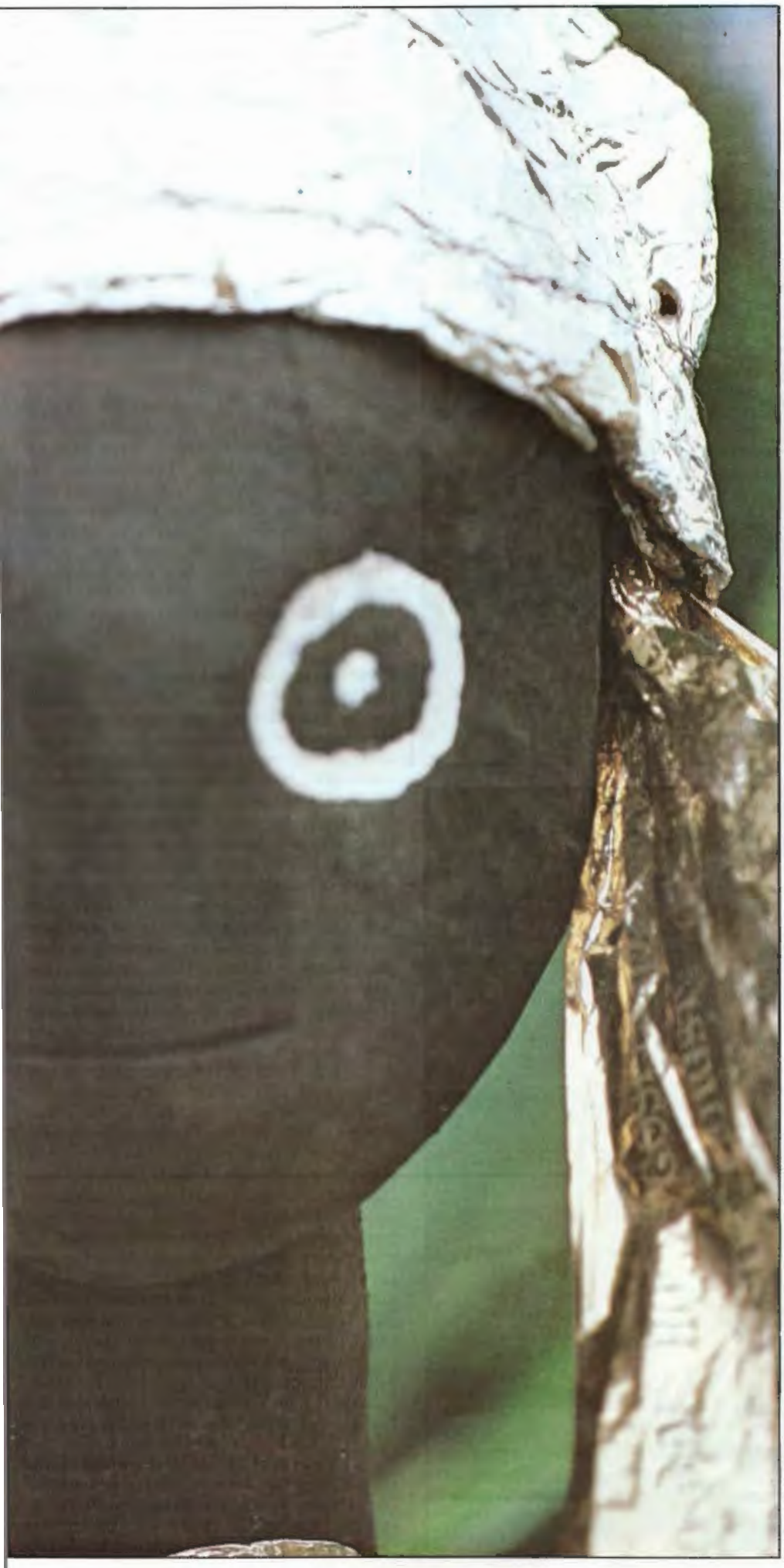
Right **African fertility doll: the pervasive fear of the supernatural in Haiti means that nearly everyone expects to be the victim of magical attack and seeks to protect himself and promote his own well-being through magic** ***Far right*** **Baron Samedi, the greedy and lascivious king of the Voodoo cemetery spirits, who is dominant on All Souls' Day when he possesses women who flock to the graveyards**

first use a powder called 'break the household', which causes quarrels. To defeat an enemy he can have recourse to another kind of leaf powder, often containing dead men's bones and cemetery earth, and held to cause paralysis, blindness, impotence or death. Smearing the door of an enemy's house with human dung causes much anxiety; to dig up the bones of his father's corpse (as happened to the late President Duvalier) is even worse, for highly sophisticated kinds of black magic and necromancy can be performed with them.

Magic is nothing less than an underhand intention given symbolic form and used to create an expectation in its victim. Given the atmosphere in Haiti, nearly everyone expects the worst from some of his neighbours and hopes for the best for himself. There are two dangers in using magic, however. If improperly used, or sent back by a strong magician onto its perpetrator, it can cause what is called a 'shock in return', which is difficult to cope with. On the other hand, it may be so powerful that it needs constant attention. The entity embodying this kind of magic is called a *baka*, and the owner of this supernatural monster must be prepared to offer it the life of one of his relatives every year unless he is to be devoured by it himself. Bakas are greedy, and are used by greedy men to gain power and money: the service they require shows that paranoia is not far in the offing.

The Invisibles

Paranoia is defined as a form of insanity marked by fixed delusions, especially those of grandeur, pride and persecution. On one level it can be said that its most innocuous form is the common sulk, or what Haitians call *mauvais sang*, bad blood, caused by a failure of expectation and authority, and with a plentiful admixture of suspicious resentment. Mauvais sang sometimes becomes so involuted that a *saisissement* or seizure results, whereupon a magician or Voodoo priest is called in to diagnose and treat the disorder. The diagnosis is usually straightforward, and the main treatment is to wash the patient's head with water in which seven or 21 leaves of different plants have been shredded. This cools the head and brings the gros bon ange back to its proper place; a counter-magic is employed to influence the person the sulker is involved with.



William MacQuitty

Popperfoto

But sometimes the diagnosis and treatment are both at fault, and the victim is left to his mania until, if he is lucky – which he frequently is – he has a vision in which his malady is personified as a spirit. The spirit prescribes a remedy for the illness, such as a diet of charred maize and water, but remains with the patient even when the cure is completed. For it also gives a formula by which it can be invoked in the future, such as looking at a candle flame, or reciting the *Pater Noster* backwards seven times: and this allows the patient to set up as a small-time oracular priest or priestess, diagnosing and treating illness, giving advice, and doing black and white magic for a fee.

The case histories of these Voodooists show that disordered emotions of long standing can be precipitated by an apparently trivial incident. A man may smoke a cigarette or drink a cup of coffee given him by a neighbour he has long mistrusted and who has given him a meaningful glance: he goes off in agitation, becomes hysterically dissociated and vomits up such unlikely emblems of his discomfort as lizards, pieces of bark, or a large and poisonous centipede. This is equivalent to a possession, and the vomiting brings him back to himself. He then puts what he has vomited in a bottle and tops it up with rum. It becomes his guardian spirit and oracle, while the liquor can be used as a universal medicine for those in need of treatment. Other sufferers vomit up needles, which they later use in their magical practice, swallowing them when the

Peter Larsen

Peter Larsen

Voodoo has its origins in the spirit possession cults of the old Slave Coast of West Africa ***Left*** **Figures of spirits on sale in a Dahomey market** ***Below left*** **Pupils emerge from a school of instruction in tribal customs and religions, again in Dahomey**

spirit leaves them in readiness for the next occasion. Still others go sleepwalking and pick up interestingly shaped stones to which the spirit leads them. These stones are placed in saucers, hot rum is poured over them and set aflame, and the liquor again used as a medicine – usually an embrocation. What happens in these and similar cases is that the gros bon ange has externalized its infection, which is then used homoeopathically to treat the infections of other sufferers.

Possession by the Loa

Initiation into Voodoo follows a parallel course under the guidance of a priest and in the context of a traditional rite. There are several reasons for being initiated. The novice may be suffering from a saisissement, or from a series of calamities in his daily life, which the priest diagnoses as coming from the *loa* (gods), if he has failed to observe his religious duties. Equally, the illness or calamity may be sent on him by his dead parents, whose souls have been 'living in the waters of penitence' and have finished their term there: the duty of their descendant is to bring them up out of the waters and install them upon the family altar. His persecutors are now not the living, who can be countered by black magic, but the dead and the loa: the Invisibles, in fact, who are the principles of grandeur, pride and power, and who are only propitiated by a man changing his own attitude to life. Freud noted a similar course of events in Europeans who make a pact with the Devil: typically after their fathers had died. He saw it as a consequence of guilt and despair which transforms the object of mourning into a source of comfort and power. (Interestingly enough, he made these observations soon after his own father had died.) If the Invisibles plague men, therefore, they do so because they also represent the unused faculties and energies which exist in everyone behind the bars of repression, and which make themselves felt when the agent of this repression has died. Initiation into Voodoo not only placates the Invisibles, but transforms them from repressors of desire into helpers for action.

The process of initiation the world over is the undergoing of a mock death followed by the experience of a rebirth (see INITIATION). It is the same in Haiti, where a not uncommon rider is added, that the death is preceded by

Initiation by Fire

The novices were brought in. There was a turmoil at the door of the seclusion hut, as the hounsis struggled to get through the crowd – for each novice is hidden under a white sheet and has to be carried on the back of a hounsi, as limp as a corpse . . .

Idem attended to them in turn. She smeared her hands with cold oil, took the novice's left hand from beneath the sheet and smeared that too. Scooping a handful of the now seething mixture from the zin she pressed it into the novice's hand and closed the fingers over it, for four or five seconds. The père savanne peered anxiously over Idem's shoulder, his candle still alight. This is the central moment of initiation, when the novice is made to grasp heat without flinching – a heat which will sear the flesh only if the loa are displeased through some lapse on the novice's part. For the nature of the loa themselves is fire, and it requires much courage and preparation to support them.

From one to another of these crouching figures Idem moved, lit by the small fires till all was finished and the novices were humped back through the crowd like unwilling dragons. The pots were now emptied and a mixture of rum and oil brushed onto them, inside and out. Oil was poured into the fires below till ribbons of flame towered into the air, each pot a crucible for some gros-bon-ange. Back the novices were called, still carried by the hounsis, their arms and legs seized and passed through the blaze . . .

A hounsi called Zett became possessed. Sobgwe, a thunder loa, took her, and she whirled, radiantly good-natured, about the centre post. Idem became possessed: now peering round with staring eyes and nostrils, as Ogoun; now with eyes shut and eyebrows raised, one hand touched the thatch above, as Louis André, the spirit of her grandfather; now as Brave Tonerre Crasé, with hunched shoulders and a lengthened jaw working lugubriously under a hollowed face; or as the Baron, an intimate, self-satisfied death.

Francis Huxley *The Invisibles*

an illness, and the rehirth is seen as a cure.

The state and future of the novice is diagnosed in terms of the entity which is plaguing him. If his ancestors are calling upon him to serve them, he can only do so if he serves the loa also. The prohlem then is which loa he is to serve. There are for a start several nations of loa, su called because they originated as gods of the varioos African tribes whose members came to Haiti. Slavery mixed these tribes so well that their descendants all came to be Haitian, and only the gods retained their nationalities. These nations are called Rada from Dahomey, Wangol from Angola, Siniga from Senegal, Congò, Ibo and Naga: there is also an indigenous nation, the revengefnl Petro loa, who appear to stem both from the aboriginal Indian popnlation of the island and from the slave population. Families tend to serve the same nation of gods, each of which is a pantheon. The novice may already know which loa destiny has devoted him to, or the priest may have to diagnose it by examining the novice's disorder and matching it to the known character of a suitable loa. The loa are in fact character patterns which can be seen working both in man and in Nature: Ogoun the blacksmith god, for instance, is a martial demiurge whose hammer is a thunderbolt, and who controls the head of those who are strong-minded. But he may alsu patronize those who strongly resent strong-mindedness in otbers, according to the adage: 'The character of the loa is that of his mount.' In either case the loa is invoked to settle a disorder and to lay the foundation for future development, for an initiate may become possessed by many loa during the course of his life.

Once accepted for initiation, the novice has to bùy tbe magical and ritual apparatus for the ceremony, and during one week he goes nightly to the preparatory rites. During these, songs and prayers are intoned which speak of the time of misery which is passing, of the spirit unsheathing itself from the body, of the novices as patients whose cure will benefit the dead, and of the mapou tree, haunt of evil spirits, being felled by the blows of the rite; and interspersed with these songs and prayers is the frequent exclamation: 'There is malice, oh!' On the last evening their heads are washed, and on the Saturday morning they are formally inducted into a room where they will be secluded for another week. The songs at this time speak of the novices being saddled ready for the loa, like a horse for its rider, the usual phrase describing a possession. Strips of palm leaves are shredded to protect and master the novices: these strips are called *aizan* after a female loa said to be a traitor and a cannibal. A song and a rite to *Grand Bois*, Great Tree, is performed, the novices are turned brusquely till they are giddy and then thrust into their chamber.

Inside, they lie upon their left sides eating white foods such as are offered to the dead; they learn more passwords and secret gestures, songs and prayers, their heads are again washed with leaves, and everything is done to prepare them for a possession by the loa on whose 'point' they are lying. The next Saturday, fowls are sacrificed and parts of them placed in a *govi* or ritual pot together with the novice's hair and nail clippings, and his gros bon ange is transferred into the govi. In the temple, cauldrons are set up over small fires and a mixture of flour and oil boiled inside them. The novices are carried out swathed in white sheets, a lump of the boiling mixture is pressed into their hands, and their arms and legs are passed through the flames. They return to their seclusion until the Sunday morning when they come out barefoot, dressed in white, collars of beads about their necks representing the loa, and hats on their heads to protect them from erring spirits; they are seated at a table under a white sheet, are baptized with a leaf dipped into water and given their new names in Voodoo. The drums strike up, they dance, and the loa possess their new servants.

Aftër 40 days, during which they are forbidden to wash or change their clothes in order to absorb the force of the ritual, they and the priest go into a dark room where he calls up the spirits of those ancestors they wish to serve. Curious flapping sounds are heard as he draws these souls out of the waters of death, and they are made to speak through the ventriloquial medium of the priest: then they are placed in the govis reserved for them, which are also passed through the flames of a tire to heat them and give them life. These govis, together with the one containing the gros bon ange, can either be kept by the initiate or given into the safe keeping of the priest. The novice is now called a *hounsi canzo*, literally, the initiated spoose of the god.

These rites accomplish a number of different things. They emphasize the misery and malice of the world and the sickness of the novice. Seclusion allows this sickness to be incubated, and to hatch out as a loa which becomes the master of the novice's head. His gros bon ange is separated from him and placed in a govi, and so are the spirits of the dead, much as a centipede is put into a bottle of rum: this means that he is protected from further infection and can make use of the spiritual principles involved through ritual forms. He becomes familiar with the complicated rites of Voodoo and becomes one of a congregation. Finally he learns how to endure the fear of dissociation and the pain of possession.

The rites in fact spell out a number of images which carry him through this process. Dissociation at first is not a pleasant experience, being heralded by giddiness, the unstringing of the limbs and the mounting to the head of a nauseating darkness. It can be brought on in an uninitiated person by the atmosphere of a ceremony, and he will stagger about as though in the throes of a saisissement without being fully possessed by a loa. This state is often personified by the loa Grand Bois, a violent and speechless entity who can only grunt and gibber, and is referred to in the song about the felling of the mapou tree with its cargo of evil spirits. In the initiation of priests, the novice is made to stand with his back against the central post of the temple, down which the loa are held to come when they are invoked. This post is sacred to Legba, guardian of the passage between this world and the other, and he is sometimes called Legba Grand Bois Chemin, Legba the Path of the Great Tree. This tree is also equated with the backbone. But for the loa to come down this tree, its guardian, the gros bon ange, must be displaced. In ritual terms it occupies the nape of the neck, and physiologically it is represented by a large number of postural reflexes which affect the eyes, the neck, the spinal column and the heartbeat. Subvert these reflexes by suggestion, theatricality, rhythm, dancing, drumming and strong emotions, and dissociation sets in: the body falling like a felled tree. But after training, the dormant energies represented by the loa can inhabit the place the gros bon ange has vacated, and the body is held upright around the central post sacred to

It is not unknown for a man to be overwhelmed by the sexual advances of the woman dancing with him so that he falls to the floor in orgasmic dissociation

Legba. This is to be possessed by a loa, who though they live in water are fiery by nature: and to test the novice's ability to contain this influx of energy without going mad, he is made to grasp a boiling paste and to have his limbs washed by flame.

Spouse of the God

The term *hounsi*, spouse of the god, is also significant. In Haiti, lack of social organization starts in the family; women long to be married properly but all they usually achieve is the status of a common law wife, or *plaçée*. At regular marriages the bride is received at her husband's home by a group of young girls singing Catholic verses against Voodoo and plaçage whose refrain goes: 'pas plaçée, pas plaçée!' – meaning properly married. Some women do not even become plaçée but turn *jeunesses*, good-time girls who have a financial understanding with their lovers, or even *bousins*, prostitutes, and they will often turn to Voodoo to keep their suitors' ardours aflame, to procure abortions, or just to maintain a clientele. They, and womanizing men, excuse their behaviour by saying it is the loa who make them do it, who prevent them from marrying or from keeping a partner more than a week or so. Many of them are overtaken during sleep by erotic dreams in which the loa possess them sexually, with such sweetness that they will have nothing to do with love-making for days afterwards. Curiously enough, women are often made love to by Erzulie, the goddess of love, who comes to them in masculine form; thus it is not surprising to find that many of them indulge in homosexual play as well.

The sexuality of the loa produce saisissements of a particular kind. At ordinary dances, for instance, it is not unknown for a man to be overwhelmed by the sexual advances of the woman dancing with him so that he falls to the floor in an orgasmic dissociation. The proper treatment for this, as for nocturnal visits by the loa, is to set one or two nights apart for them every week, when the sufferer sleeps alone. If he or she is married and the spouse objects to such an interruption of his pleasures, a full-blown saisissement may well erupt with disastrous results. But even if this does not happen the loa may be so pressing in its attentions that it demands to be married in proper style. This occurs at a Voodoo temple where the loa is invoked to possess an attendant, the marriage ceremony is performed with the human spouse, rings are exchanged, a document drawn up and attested.

These marriages do not always stop the lecherous behaviour of the human spouses – sometimes, indeed, it seems they encourage it, by giving it a religious justification. Priests are certainly not above using sexual magic for their own advantage, for instance by always lying on their backs when they make love in order to be possessed in the act of possession. It is also said that they sleep with their novices during the initiation rites, though this is probably pure slander. What does often occur is that the priest uses his position to sleep with the women of his congregation, who are by no means averse to his attentions, and that priestesses, who often started in life as jeunesses, use their old arts to enlarge the circle of their faithful. In addition, the hounsis, who have made the temple the centre of their life and attend all the rites as singers and dancers, frequently act as temple prostitutes and indulge in small perversions amongst themselves. This is logical enough if the hounsi is a spouse of the god, and if the temple is the god's house. A consequence very much to the advantage of the priest is that he can bring various pressures to bear on those with

Foto Hetzel/C. Waterson

Like Voodoo, Brazil's Umbanda cult involves possession by spirits, drum beats, candles and healing: Umbanda worshippers (*left* and *right*) at Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro on New Year's Eve

Voodoo has had a profound influence on the surrealist, otherworldly quality of Haitian art: *The Inauguration of La Citadelle*, by J. R. Cléry, from the Morland Lee Collection

whom his hounsis sleep, who also provide him with a great deal of interesting gossip which he can turn to good advantage when he has to diagnose an illness.

The loa most often concerned in these marriages are perhaps Ogoun and Erzulie. But underlying all these matters is Guédé, a collective title for the cemetery spirits whose king is Baron Samedi. The Baron is the first person to be buried in a churchyard – his female counterpart is called Maman Brigit – and Guédé was the first soul to be drawn up out of the waters of death by Legba. Though he can and does appear at any ceremony, being a greedy and tricky spirit whose prerogative is to devour the offerings made to any loa before they get at it, he is dominant on All Souls' Day, when he possesses a large number of women who go flocking to the cemeteries in his honour. They dress in black and purple, sing coldly lascivious songs and, using a stick as a mock penis, dance the *banda*. This dance is highly suggestive and combines sexual fascination with a scorn for pleasure and wilful contempt of love.

That women are the especial mounts for the Guédés at this moment suggests that they are getting their own back against the men who usually dominate them. It also shows the close and universal connection between death, magic and sexuality. It is one of the priest's duties to control this power, and he does it by means of the asson, a gourd rattle filled with pebbles, snake bones, earth from a cemetery and magical powders, and circled by a network of coloured beads and snake vertebrae. With this instrument he can command the dead and bring them out of the waters, he can inflame and control the Guédés, and he can master the living by beating out the rhythms which the drums then pick up and to which the attendants dance.

In theory, the use of the asson should go together with the gift of a spiritual power known as *la prise des yeux*, the taking hold of the eyes. This allows the priest to remain conscious while the loa possess themselves of his being, unlike minor initiates who black out when they are ridden and who have no memory of what they did when possessed. The state is marked by a sensation of weight on the neck or shoulders, and a feeling of enormous power: the priest can hear the loa whispering in his ear, and he is endowed with second sight and other paranormal powers. So, at least, say those who have undergone la prise des yeux and those who have witnessed its effects, and it may well be that their claims are sometimes justified.

Dissociation, possession, marriage to the gods and la prise des yeux: these are the central facts around which the many and diverse ceremonies of Voodoo are organized, and the superstitions also.

Voodoo treats the Invisibles as enemies to be made friends of and powers to be used, and the supernatural as a disease to be turned to good account. To do so the priest must use his left hand as well as his right, that is, he must know as much about black as about white magic, and keep both in the context of the religion. What he does is sometimes cruel and often alarming, besides being mystifying in the good and bad senses of the word. But then the gods that the magician serves are jealous as well as powerful, and those who enter their mysteries must expect to pay the price.

(See also DAHOMEY; POSSESSION; SOUTH AMERICA: TRANCE; ZOMBIES.)

FRANCIS HUXLEY

FURTHER READING: Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen* (Dell Publishing, 1972); F. Huxley, *The Invisibles* (Humanities, 1966); A. Metraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (Schocken, 1972).

Wagner's operas have exerted a powerful influence on occultists, who have regarded him as a 'natural magician' and a 'Gnostic saint'. He has been credited with an intuitive grasp of the principles of sexual magic, and one enthusiast translated the names of Wagner's characters into Hebrew to find important numerological formulas.

WAGNER

'LORD OF LIFE and Joy . . . . . though adored of us upon heaths and in woods, on mountains and in caves, openly in the marketplaces and secretly in the chambers of our houses . . . we worthily commemorate them worthy that did of old adore thee and manifest thy glory unto men, Lao-tze and Siddartha and Krishna and Tahuti . . . and these also . . . Thomas Vaughan, Elias Ashmole, Molinos, Adam Weishaupt, Wolfgang von Goethe, Ludovicus Rex Bavariae, Richard Wagner . . .'

So reads the Collect for the Saints in the Gnostic Catholic Mass written by Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) for his followers. At first sight it may seem surprising that Crowley included Richard Wagner in his rag-bag collection of Gnostic 'saints' – others were the Borgia pope, Alexander VI, and a syphilitic and eccentric 15th century Lutheran named Ulrich von Hutten – but Wagner's indebtedness to Nordic myth, legend and mystical interpretations of Christianity has convinced many occultists that the great composer was one of their own number. Sar Péladan, the French magician, novelist and poet, who broke away from the Kabalistic Rose-Croix of Stanislas de Guaita to found his own Catholic Rose-Croix of the Temple and the Grail (see BATTLE OF BEWITCHMENT; ROSICRUCIANS), made a pilgrimage to the Wagner festival at Bayreuth and was so deeply affected by his attendance at a performance of *Parsifal* that thereafter he not only claimed that Wagner had possessed 'the soul of a natural magician' but insisted that from now on his own novels must be referred to, not as novels, but as *wagneriennes*. Other occultists have made even more extravagant claims. Aleister Crowley's disciple Frater Achad (Charles Stansfeld Jones) wrote that: '. . . Wagner himself had received Instruction in the great Principles of the Holy Order from certain of the Secret Chiefs and this accounts for the great harmony between his Work and that of other members of the Great Brotherhood.'

Wagner was born at Leipzig in 1813: officially, he was the son of Karl Wagner, a petty bureaucrat who had risen to the command of the Leipzig police. There is some reason to suppose, however, that he was in reality the offspring of an illicit liaison between his mother and Ludwig Geyer, a portrait painter, actor and dramatist who had for some time been a guest in the Wagner household. Karl Wagner died of typhoid six months after the child's birth, and in the following year his widow married Geyer – significantly enough, she gave birth to a daughter only six months later. The young Richard was brought up in Dresden as Geyer's son and did not adopt the surname of Wagner until his confirmation at the age of 14.

As a boy, Wagner seemed more interested in the theatre than he did in music and it was not until 1828 that he began the serious study of composition; just two years later his work achieved its first public performance – a fiasco – when an overture composed by him was played in the Leipzig Hoftheater. This work has not survived, but its most notable characteristic, apart from the unusual physical appearance of the score – brass appeared in black, strings in red and woodwind in green – seems to have been a ludicrously *fortissimo* drumbeat every fourth bar, productive of intense and, at every repetition, increasingly hysterical laughter from the audience.

Harshness and Compassion

If so many contrary emotions can be brought so intimately into relationship by the music, the implication is that the grievousness and the resignation, the harshness and the compassion, belong to one another. Evil is not a foreign body which some clever surgeon of morals can neatly excise; it is a part of ourselves which we have to learn to live with. Grief is not a poison we can vomit out of the system; it is an ingredient in human experience which we have to assimilate. We can accept all this, and still be in love with life, which we cannot really be if we merely repudiate the darker side of it.

Robert Donington *Wagner's 'Ring' and Its Symbols*

Politics and Exile

Throughout his life Wagner enjoyed melodramatic fiction and as a young man fell under the spell of English Gothic novels in German translation; even in his last years he re-read with enjoyment the occult thrillers of the English novelist and occultist Bulwer Lytton (see LYTTON). According to Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Wagner was particularly fond of *Zanoni* and *A Strange Story*. It was with *Rienzi*, an opera derived from Lytton's novel of the same name, that Wagner achieved, in 1842, the public acclaim that had eluded him 12 years before. *Rienzi* was followed by *The Flying Dutchman*, first produced in 1843 and found perplexing by its audience, and in the same year its composer achieved a temporary financial security as Director of the Dresden Opera.

Wagner, who is sometimes seen, probably incorrectly, as an arch-reactionary and an important formative influence on the ideology of Nazism, was deeply involved in the German revolutionary-democratic movement of 1848–49 in spite of the fact that he was, as Director of the Opera, an official of the Royal Court of Saxony. Wagner's relationship with the Court had become strained in 1847 when he had submitted to the Intendant of the Opera – an amiable aristocratic bureaucrat who had previously been in charge of the Department of Woods and Forests – a memorandum calling for a radical reform of all aspects of Saxon musical life. The memorandum was pigeon-holed for a year and then rejected; simultaneously Wagner was informed that as a mark of royal displeasure the first performance of his new opera *Lohengrin* was to be indefinitely postponed. Wagner, annoyed that his suggestions should be disregarded, rewrote his memorandum in stronger form, demanded the abolition of the office of Intendant and, in May 1848, joined the *Vaterlandsverein*, a society whose objects included universal suffrage, a united Germany and the abolition of the Saxon monarchy. Wagner was an enthusiastic advocate of this programme and read a paper to the society, later published in its official journal, calling for a republican Saxony.

In May 1849 civil war broke out; Wagner fought (briefly) on the barricades and a provisional government was declared, but enjoyed only a brief existence before it was snuffed out by the combined efforts of Saxon and Prussian troops. Evidence of Wagner's involvement in (as distinct from his sympathy with) treasonable activities was scanty and it was not until May 1850 that he fled Saxony after a warrant had been issued for his arrest.

For the next 11 years Wagner was an exile, living at various times in Paris, London and Zurich, usually in poverty – for while he earned considerable sums his expenditure always exceeded his income – suffering from violent headaches and the eczema that had plagued him since childhood, and always longing for a return to his beloved Germany. But these unhappy years of exile were also years of great artistic achievement. *Das Rheingold*, the first part of *The Ring*, was completed in 1854; *Die Walküre* in 1856; and *Tristan und Isolde* in 1859.

Wagner's exile ended in 1861 but, dogged by creditors and unpaid debts, his life was still far from happy. He was actually in hiding from debt collectors when, in 1864, he was summoned to Munich by Ludwig II, then aged 19, the spendthrift, homosexual and half-mad king of Bavaria – another 'saint' of the Gnostic Catholic Church. Within six weeks of his arrival at Munich Wagner was one of the young monarch's principal advisers: '. . . the young King', wrote Wagner, '. . . resolves to give me all that I require in this life; I in return do nothing but compose and advise him. He calls me two and even three times in one day; talks to me for hours, and is . . . devoted heart and soul to me.'

From 1864 until 1876 Wagner received considerable, although often erratic, material support from Ludwig II. The first two parts of *The Ring* were performed at Munich in 1869 and 1870, and the score of the third part *(Siegfried)* was completed by the beginning of 1871. By the end of that year Wagner had decided that no existing German theatre was really suitable for the staging of *The Ring* and that he would himself build one at Bayreuth.

By almost superhuman exertions, supplemented by a loan from Ludwig II, Wagner managed to build his theatre and to stage, in August 1876, all four parts of *The Ring*: the last part, *Götterdämmerung*, had been completed in the previous year. In spite of the fact that this performance, the first Bayreuth festival, resulted in a loss, a second festival took place in 1882, and in July and August of that year there were 16 performances of *Parsifal*, Wagner's last opera, at Bayreuth. Wagner died, of heart failure, in 1883.

Blind Forces

It has been said of Wagner that 'he invented little but adapted much'. Certainly this was true of his plots, and it is his reliance on traditional 'supernatural' material that, coupled with the emotional appeal of his music, largely accounts for the esteem in which he has been held by occultists. Significantly enough, it has been those works in

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Richard Wagner at Triebschen, in 1868: the operas in which he drew most heavily on myth and legend are those which have particularly fascinated occultists

which Wagner drew most heavily from myth and legend – the cycle of *The Ring*, *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal* – that have held the most fascination for occultists and even a brief examination of them gives some indication of the way in which Wagner managed to transmute unpromising material into great art, and to select those incidents in a story that should be left out in its re-telling.

Jessie Weston has summed up this selective aspect of Wagner's genius: 'the original stories . . . were too full, too complicated, for dramatic representation . . . Wagner selected those incidents which would tell most effectively on the stage, re-combined them so as to preserve (in some cases restore) the original simplicity of the story, developed the characters, and grasped with unerring instinct hints of his predecessors which, superfluous for the epic, were big with possibilities for the dramatic form . . .'

Wagner took the story of *The Ring* from a Scandinavian source, the older and so-called 'poetic' Edda. The German version, the *Nibelungenlied*, is a 13th century compilation derived from material of much earlier date and bearing much the same relationship to subsequent German poetry as the *Iliad* bore to the literature of classical Greece (see NIBELUNGENLIED). It is odd that Wagner, that most German of musicians, relied principally upon the Icelandic source, making very little use of the *Nibelungenlied* except in *The Twilight of the Gods*, the last part of *The Ring*.

The world of *The Ring* is the world of the Nordic gods, not the world of Christianity; we are in a doom-laden universe, completely lacking in free will, moving inevitably towards the predestined collapse of order and the triumph of chaos – the veritable Doom of the Gods (see SCANDINAVIA). The primitive feeling that all living things are subject to the mindless play of blind forces is terrifyingly re-created.

The Budding Staff

While *Tannhäuser* is a much earlier work than *The Ring*, historically and theologically it comes between *The Ring* and *Parsifal*; in the former we are in the world of the old Teutonic gods, in the latter we are in the world of mystical Christianity, and in *Tannhäuser* we see the conflict between the old faith and the new. There are many surviving medieval ballads of Tannhäuser, and their basic plot is simple enough. Tannhäuser spends a year with Venus in her pleasure-gardens beneath the mountain known as the Venusberg; repents, leaves, goes to confession and is told that only the Pope can absolve him. He travels to Rome on pilgrimage and is told by the Pope that God will not forgive him until his dry pilgrim's staff bursts into leaf; immediately it puts forth buds, leaves and flowers – moral, the forgiveness of God is infinite.

Wagner transformed this simple and trite story into a conflict between earthly love and paganism on the one hand (represented by Venus) and heavenly love and Christianity on the other (represented by Tannhäuser's sweetheart Elizabeth). Only when Tannhäuser, rejected by heaven and earth alike, chooses the dead body of Elizabeth in preference to the delights of Venus does the staff burst into flower – forgiveness is achieved through love and death.

There are many versions of the story of Parsifal, but Wagner relied exclusively on that of Wolfram von Eschenbach (see PARSIFAL) and retold the latter's version of the knight's quest for the Spear and the Grail with great fidelity. *Parsifal* bears more resemblance to a mystery play, a religious rite, than it does to a conventional opera, and Wagner regarded it as such, refusing to let it be performed except at Bayreuth.

The Swan of Ecstasy

Throughout the present century, Wagner's operas and writings have exerted a considerable, although sometimes hidden, influence on many of the more intellectual occultists. While a few of them have been attracted by the more repellent aspects of Wagner's personal philosophy – the followers of the German mystagogue Lanz von Liebenfels (see NEW TEMPLARS) elevated Wagner to the status of a Teutonic guru and folk-hero, not because of his music but because of his antisemitism – most have found Waguer's use of myth and legend attractive in itself and also surprisingly compatible with their own interpretations of occidental esotericism. Theodor Reuss, a practitioner of sex-magic (he was Crowley's predecessor as chief of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*) and an ardent Wagnerian, looked upon Wagner as a sort of intuitive sex-magician and attached a sexual symbolism to the Spear and the Grail of *Parsifal*.

Crowley himself also found much of occult significance in *Parsifal* and, to give only one example, regarded the swan shot by Parsifal as symbolizing that ecstasy which is the ultimate goal of the magician. He wrote: 'There is a Swan whose name is Ecstasy . . . In all the Universe it alone is motionless . . . Motion is relative: there is Nothing that is

still. Against this Swan I shot an arrow; the white breast poured forth blood. Men smote me; then perceiving that I was Pure Fool, they let me pass. Thus and not otherwise I came to the Temple of the Grail.'

Link With the Cabala

The fascination of *Parsifal* for occultists has been a perennial one: at least one follower of Rudolf Steiner (see STEINER) looks upon it as a brilliant exposition of the doctrines of anthroposophy. But the most ingenious and perhaps the maddest occult exegisis of it was made by C. S. Jones, in his book *Chalice of Ecstasy*, published in Chicago in 1923. His basic thesis was that Wagner had been either a great cabalist or, quite literally, inspired. In any case the important thing was that *Parsifal* was a vehicle conveying important cabalistic secrets. When the names of the principal characters were turned into Hebrew (each Hebrew letter has its own numerical value), they added up into important numerical formulas. Thus the name of the evil magician Klingsor added up to 333, the number of 'that mighty devil' Choronzon, whom Aleister Crowley had evoked to visible appearance in the Sahara Desert. Even more important, Monsalvat, the mountain of Salvation, added up to 666 – clear proof of Wagner's inspiration and Aleister Crowley's divine mission. These were only two of Jones's cabalistic discoveries; there were many more, and those who care to read *The Chalice of Ecstasy* will find out for themselves the answers to such recondite problems as the occult significance of the destruction of Klingsor's garden, and the reason why the flask from which oil is poured on Parsifal's feet should be shaped like a female breast and stoppered with a ruby.
(See also TRISTAN.)

FRANCIS KING

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A. E. WAITE

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A SELF-PROCLAIMED MYSTIC whose theories have become accepted occult doctrine, Arthur Edward Waite was born in 1857 in the unromantic Brooklyn area of New York. Soon after his birth his mother returned with him to England, where she became a Roman Catholic; and Waite was to remain under the influence of Church ceremony all his life. He considered himself to be a late developer, not having reached 'intellectual puberty' at 21; and he passed through a succession of enthusiasms before arriving at the occult by way of Spiritualism and Mme Blavatsky's book *Isis Unveiled* (see BLAVATSKY).

In 1881 Waite discovered the writings of the French magus Eliphas Levi (see LEVI), and his first 'occult' work (1885) was a digest and codification of Levi's teaching. The year before had seen the publication of A. P. Sinnett's *Occult World*, with its account of the miraculous phenomena produced by Mme Blavatsky. Waite joined her Theosophical Society at a time of great fluttering in the occult dovecots and when the newly-converted Annie Besant was in the first flush of her theosophical enthusiasm (see BESANT; THEOSOPHY). In theosophical circles Waite met other prominent occultists, including Edward Maitland of the Hermetic Society, W. B. Yeats, and the writer Arthur Machen who remained a lifelong friend. With the theosophists, Waite's connections became increasingly tenuous until he finally refused the post of Librarian at the Society, because of his inability to accept the existence of Mahatmas (see MAHATMAS; MASTERS).

It is not with Theosophy that Waite's name is chiefly linked, but with ritual magic as practised in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn under the direction of S. L. Macgregor Mathers and Wynn Westcott (see GOLDEN DAWN). Waite made two ventures into ritual magic, but it was not his true vocation. The first time he entered the Golden Dawn he passed through the grades of the First Order, but resigned on the suspicion of questionable legal practice on the part of his superiors. Some years later he rejoined the Order in a period of dissension among its members, and contrived to gain control of the Golden Dawn's Isis-Urania temple (mother-lodge in London), whose ceremonies he entirely rewrote from the point of view of Christian mysticism.

From his encounter with cabalistic magic, Waite derived one lasting source of inspiration: the idea of the soul ascending the Tree of Life towards the Godhead (see CABALA). But he came more and more to distrust 'occult' practices, and there was little love lost between him and the posturing Mathers, who claimed to admire Waite's poetry, but proved most suspicious of any attempt to encroach on his personal province of the mystical. Waite's chief concerns became Freemasonry and the charting of a 'Secret Tradition' underlying alchemy, masonry and the Cabala, expressed in the 'Hidden Church of the Holy Grail', a mystical body of the elect contained in and concealed by the Christian Church. Whereas his early belief – recorded in 1891 – was that magic could provide the solution to the problems of 'the origin and destiny of Man', his mature conviction of some 20 years later was that the place of the Seeker was within the Church, 'that body in which the work of regeneration takes place'. His poetry is forgotten, his vaunted scholarship seems both tedious and defective, and his chief legacy is his conception of an all-pervasive secret tradition.

JAMES WEBB

For centuries ferociously persecuted by Church and state for their unorthodox interpretation of the Bible, the Waldenses have survived into the 20th century by sheer faith and courage

WALDENSES

A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY which has had its focus in the Cottian Alps on the borders of France and Italy for nearly 800 years, the Waldenses (also Valdenses, Valdesi, Vaudois) have been given various labels. They have been thought of as the forerunners of St Francis because they were originally mendicant preachers; as the forerunners of the Baptists because of their views on infant baptism; as the forerunners of the Bible-Reading Movement because their founder had the New Testament translated into the vernacular; and as the forerunners of the Reformation because they emphasized the authority of the Bible and vigorously opposed the worldliness of the Roman Church and many of its practices. That they have survived the centuries can be largely attributed to the nature of the territory in which they settled: the mountain valleys which debouch into the plain of Piedmont about 30 miles west of Turin are inhospitable and isolated; thus the region afforded seclusion, assisted flight and hindered attack.

Claiming a geographical derivation *(valles densae)* for the name of the sect, some historians asserted that the community was founded by St Paul during a pause in a journey from Rome to Spain (see Romans 15.28). This theory was discredited in the middle of the 19th century after critical examination of the available manuscript evidence.

Renouncing a Worldly Life

It is now generally thought that the community was founded towards the end of the 12th century by Peter Waldo, a wealthy Lyonnaise merchant, businessman and money-lender, who was abruptly converted to religion. By one account, he was startled

The Waldensian pastor of Prali walks to church before dawn; Prali is a village high in the Italian Alps and the spiritual capital of the Italian Waldenses, who after suffering some 500 years of persecution are now able to practise their faith in peace

into appreciating the uncertainty of life by the sudden death of a friend; by another, the spiritual richness of evangelical poverty was thrust upon his notice by the chance hearing of the legend of St Alexis sung by a wandering minstrel. The son of wealthy Roman parents, St Alexis parted from his wife during the post-nuptial festivities, forwent his inheritance and thereafter lived a life of great piety and extreme asceticism.

Whatever the truth, Peter Waldo asked a pious scholar the surest way to God. He received the answer given by Jesus to the rich young man: 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor . . .' Waldo, too, had great possessions; but he was neither sad nor went away grieved. Only setting aside sufficient money to pay for a translation of the New Testament and other theological writings into the Provençal dialect, he paid his creditors, provided for his wife, portioned his daughters and placed them in the care of the Abbess of Fontevrault, and spent the last of his money buying food for the starving poor of Lyons. Thereafter, dressed in the manner of the Apostles, he tramped the countryside, preaching wherever he went and begging his daily bread. He studied the New Testament intensively, interpreting it in the light of his private judgement.

Waldo soon attracted followers, who copied his example of penury and evangelism. The literate read the gospels regularly; the illiterate learnt them by heart, sentence by sentence, chapter by chapter, book by book. As their numbers increased Waldo sent them out as wandering preachers, two by two, men and women alike. From their profession of poverty and city of origin they became known as the 'Poor Men of Lyons', and from their custom of wearing sandals, 'Sandaliati', 'Insabbatati', 'Sabbatati' or 'Sabotiers'.

At that time the Church forbade all private translations of the Bible as well as preaching without licence. Inevitably, the Archbishop of Lyons prohibited the activities of the Poor Men of Lyons; whereupon Waldo decided to carry the matter to Rome. The Pope, Alexander III, wavered. At first he received Waldo as a favourite son and gave him a solemn embrace; then he refused to licence him; and finally, in 1179, approving the Waldensian vows of poverty, gave permission to preach, subject to the approval of the archbishop. That approval was withheld, whereupon the Poor Men, declaring proudly that they ought to obey God rather than man, ignored the papal injunction and continued as if nothing had happened. The Church replied with excommunication and in 1184 the Waldenses were anathematized by Pope Lucius III in a decree issued from Verona.

The Waldenses dispersed. Colonies and small cells were established throughout Europe, but the main body of the heretics, as they now were, took refuge in an isolated corner of the Alps. There they found other sects, reported to number 17, who were also opposed to Rome. In 1212 the Waldenses made a second approach to the papacy. It was ineffectual. In 1218 a conference of all the demonimations lurking in the valleys was held at Bergamo, and from it emerged the Valdesian Society or Associates of Valdes. The Waldenses now became known in French as the Vaudois and in Italian as the Valdesi.

Barbarous Cruelty

In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council decreed the extermination of the Waldenses, together with the Cathars (see CATHARS). In 1230, although thousands of heretics had by then been butchered, Pope Gregory IX initiated a decade of fierce armed attack against the settlements. In 1233, he instituted the Inquisition to destroy the remnants of heresy and appointed the Dominicans as the official Inquisitors for the south of France. Relentless and ruthless, the 'Hounds of God' besmirched their early history by their cruelties.

In the following centuries the persecution of the Waldenses, alternately by the Church, the king of France and the duke of Savoy (the last two urged on by the pope) was in no way abated. Thousands of martyrs were burnt at the stake; French and Irish mercenaries marched into the valleys and slaughtered many hundreds of men, women, and children.

In the 17th century the barbarities reached such a height that international concern was roused and voiced. Cromwell sent letters, written in Latin by Milton who also composed a sonnet *On the late Massacre in the Piedmont*, to the Duke of Savoy, and sent a special commissioner, Sir Samuel Morland, to investigate the 'Bloudy Massacre, 1655' and 'the barbarous and horrid cruelties'. Despite this, the valleys were depopulated when in 1686 Louis XIV, following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, ordered the Duke of Savoy to compel the Waldenses to adopt Roman Catholicism. Thousands were carried away and imprisoned in Turin, all their property being confiscated and handed over to Roman Catholics. Four years later a mere handful, under the command of the heroic Henri Arnaud, pastor and historian, struggled back to their homeland.

In the 18th century life in the valleys became easier as physical persecution waned, though spiritual liberty was still all but denied. The kings of England joined with other European monarchs in granting annuities for the support of the pastors and the maintenance of schools. From 1816 onwards gradual concessions were made until 1848, when Charles Albert, King of Piedmont, gave them political and religious rights equal to those of their Roman Catholic fellow subjects.

Rejecting the House of Lies

From the beginning the Waldenses were a missionary society, though with increasing numbers it became impossible for all to preach. They became divided into two classes, on the same pattern as the Cathars, the laity known as the *amici* or *credentes*, and the pastorate known as the *perfecti*. The pastors were all expected to undertake missionary work and, still travelling two by two, they made long journeys, undeterred by the likelihood of martyrdom. Italy was their main, though far from only, field. Congregations were established in all the principal towns and elsewhere in the peninsula, and those in Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice numbered several thousand each. There are thought to have been approximately 40,000 Waldenses in the valleys and Piedmont alone in the middle of the 16th century.

The Waldenses held that the authority of the Bible is supreme, and that anything not authorized by it is fabulous. They further said that the Bible should be understood according to its exact wording and not according to any doctrine or tradition of the Church of Rome or to the glosses of popish scholars.

They maintained the vital doctrine of justification through grace, holding that God bestowed grace because of his nature irrespective of the worthiness of the recipient. Infant baptism they declared to be of no avail. They held that matrimony is freely open to all: for nowhere in the New Testament is it forbidden – some of the Apostles were married – and God has left it to each man's discretion. Some of the pastors married in order to show approval of matrimony; but the greater number remained single because of the hazardous nature of their calling.

They threw off the authority of the Pope and the bishops generally, though good bishops (that is, bishops who modelled their lives on the Apostles) were to be obeyed. They argued that the Church, admittedly originally the true Church, had been seduced by the Donation of Constantine (a document transferring temporal power from the Emperor Constantine to the papacy, which was in the 15th century proved a forgery) and was now corrupt and a house of lies, with the Pope as the 'Head of Error'.

They denied the power of unworthy priests either to consecrate or absolve, holding that in each case the ability to do so lay in the merits, not in the ordination, of the ministrant. They held that a pious layman or laywoman could in the case of necessity administer the sacraments or hear confessions, and that the sacraments could be consecrated in the vulgar tongue since sanctification has the same effect in the vernacular as in Latin.

The Mass, beyond the words of consecration, they thought to be worth nothing because neither Christ nor the Apostles ever

Federico Patellani

The Waldenses held that the authority of the Bible is supreme, and that it should be 'understood according to its exact wording and not according to any doctrine or tradition of the Church of Rome or to the glosses of popish scholars': Waldensian service at Prali

sang any liturgy in celebration of the Lord's Supper. They declared that the plainsong of the Church was no more than the barking of dogs and that any merit lay in the words rather than the melody. One Lord's Prayer, they said was of greater efficacy than many Masses.

They abominated all those matters that venal priests turned to personal profit, such as the granting of indulgences, the invocation of the saints, alms, Masses and prayers for the dead. They thought the doctrine of purgatory (see PURGATORY) to be without warrant, saying that after death there were but two roads for the disembodied soul – either heaven or hell. They reprobated all practices not expressly approved by the New Testament, believing the use of crosses and ornaments in churches and the adoration of images to be idolatrous; benedictions, dedications and pilgrimages to be vain and superfluous; and holy water ridiculous. They denied the lawfulness of capital punishment, oaths and the bearing of arms; though on the latter points their views had to be modified later in order to prevent the total destruction of the sect. Some of the Waldenses refused to worship in churches, deriding them as mere heaps of stones, and quoting Acts 18.24: 'God . . . does not live in shrines made by men.'

At the Reformation the Waldenses gravitated towards Calvinism. Their great synod held in 1532 at Chanforans, above the Angrogne valley, at which they decided to join the Reformation and the family of Reformed Churches, was attended by Guillaume Farel, preacher in Geneva and subsequently friend of, and assistant to, Calvin. Also present was the scholar Olivetan, who three years later produced for the Waldenses a second translation of the Bible, this time in French. At a council held in 1559 the Waldenses adopted a new Confession of Faith, of a Calvinistic type.

Today the Waldensian Church is a member of the Reformed and Presbyterian Alliance and the Federal Council of Protestants. It is flourishing, and there are Waldenses in the valleys, throughout Italy (where in 1965 there were about 35,000 members with 115 churches). Switzerland and the south of France, whilst emigrants have carried the faith throughout the world. There are ten overseas congregations, five in Uruguay and two in Argentina with about 20,000 communicants between them, and one each in the states of Texas, Carolina and Missouri. The Church is governed by a synod, and the moderator, who presides over the executive committee, is elected for one year only (though he may be re-elected annually for a maximum term of seven years).

The miracle of the Waldensian survival was undoubtedly grounded in glowing faith and immense physical courage. Ingenuity may have helped. It was argued by Harold Bayley (in *A New Light on the Renaissance*) that they, with one or two other pre-Reformation Protestant sects, derived great encouragement and strength from their ability to keep in touch with one another without the knowledge of the Inquisition. He maintained that the watermarks in paper were often emblems of religious faith and were used to 'flash signals of hope and encouragement to exiles in far distant countries . . .'

If watermarks were so used, why not other symbols? One tradition suggests that the Waldenses were the originators of the Tarot (see TAROT), the pack of cards with 22 trumps of mysterious design used for fortune telling by many and the game of *tarocchi* by a few. Whilst its origins are not certainly known, it is worth noticing that the earliest documentary evidence of the Tarot is dated c 1450, that is to say at the very same time when pressure on the Waldenses was at its height. Speculation suggests that these trumps were used by the pastors as visual teaching aids, that they were carried as part of the full pack and in consequence were easily explainable to the Inquisition, and at safe times were brought out as texts for sermons and reminders of points of faith.

ROGER TILLEY

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Below left **Pope Gregory IX (1227–41), the father of the Inquisition, initiated a decade of fierce attack against Waldensian settlements** ***Below right*** **Pope Alexander III, who at first welcomed the Waldensian movement and approved their vows of poverty**

WALSINGHAM

THE QUIET VILLAGE of Walsingham in the Vale of Stiffkey, in Norfolk, England, was a notable place of pilgrimage in honour of the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages. From the 11th century until the Reformation, its fame throughout England and even throughout Christendom rivalled that of Canterbury and some of the ancient European shrines; and it is now, once more, among both Anglicans and Roman Catholics, one of Britain's principal centres of the cult of Mary.

Some years before the Norman conquest, a Norman family named de Faverches had settled in this remote Saxon hamlet and become lords of its manor. In 1061 Lady Richeldis, the young and intensely pious wife of the lord of the manor, had a vision which has much in common with those recorded as the inspiration of other celebrated shrines, such as the much later ones at Lourdes (see LOURDES) and Fátima. The Virgin Mary, she said, had appeared to her, taken her in spirit to the house at Nazareth in which the Holy Family had lived, and commanded her to build an exact replica of it at Walsingham.

Richeldis obeyed, and set her ample estate staff to prepare the work. As at other such places, water had welled copiously from the ground at the scene of the apparition; and one morning, after a heavy dew, Richeldis noted two dry patches, and chose one of these for the site of the Holy House, as it was to be called. Everything went wrong with the work; and Richeldis spent a night in prayer asking for the Virgin's guidance. In the morning she found the house correctly completed – and moved, apparently by supernatural means, to a site 200 feet away.

Such was the legend of the founding of the Walsingham shrine, which soon became famous. Many kings – Richard Coeur de Lion, Edward the Confessor, and even Henry VIII among them – made this pilgrimage; so, with equal devotion, did Erasmus. Healing miracles were claimed. The Franciscans opened a friary in the village. Augustinian canons built a great priory church, now in ruins. Medieval pilgrims carried away water from the holy well in small leaden flasks, marked with a crowned 'W'.

With the Reformation, almost all that had made Walsingham famous was destroyed. The image of the Virgin, on which the pilgrims' devotion had concentrated, was burned at Chelsea. Of the ballads that survive, one is especially poignant:

> Bitter, bitter oh! to behould,
> The grasse to growe
> Where the walles of Walsingam
> So statly did shewe . .
> Level, level with the ground
> The towers do lye . . .

So Walsingham slept until – after only a few modest signs of homage to its past – in 1921 a new vicar, Alfred Hope Patten, was appointed to the living of Walsingham. He was 36 years old and had a very small stipend, three churches to serve and a large vicarage to keep up. But he was a man of extraordinary determination and powerful personality: within a few years he had revived the medieval devotion to Mary and the pilgrimage – at first in the parish church of Little Walsingham, then in a separate shrine church, which he had built and adorned in the most flamboyant Italianate style. The replica of the Holy House was built within this church; the seated image of the Virgin was copied from a medieval seal.

The difficulties Fr Hope Patten had to contend with were many. One may have been paranormal. He always said that, when he first came there, the parish church was 'full of evil spirits'. He had 'some very unpleasant experiences' when alone in it. The moment he began the *Asperges*, the sprinkling of the congregation with holy water which precedes the Western Mass, the spirits 'almost visibly retreated'. Then, too, he had to convert the villagers, from whom conservative opposition might have been expected. He faced, and gradually overcame, the strong disapproval of his diocesan bishop, Bertram Pollock of Norwich.

Spectrum Colour Library

Interior of the Anglican shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: the original shrine was said to have been built as a replica of the house at Nazareth in which Joseph, Mary and Jesus had lived; it was a major centre of pilgrimage, its fame rivalling that of Canterbury, until its destruction during the Reformation. The new shrine church was built in 1931

When the new shrine church was built in 1931, Patten put on the foundation-stone an inscription in Latin recording that it had been built in the pontificate of Pope Pius XI and the episcopate of Bertram of Norwich. The Bishop insisted on the removal of his name and, when he visited Walsingham, exclaimed: 'It is far worse than I expected . . . All these things which you have put in must be cleared away.'

They were not. Walsingham remains the most extreme latter-day expression of the doctrine and forms of worship rediscovered by the Oxford pioneers of the 19th century Catholic revival in the Church of England. A century ago such Anglican priests as Fr Tooth of Hatcham were sent to prison for introducing such practices.

While Fr Patten was alive, there was a certain sense of rivalry between his flock and the Roman Catholics – as he called them, 'our fellow-Catholics who are not in communion with Canterbury'. The Roman Catholics have a far smaller shrine a mile away, in the Slipper Chapel, so called because medieval pilgrims took off their shoes here and walked barefoot for the last stage of the journey. Now all such differences are melting in ecumenical charity: many Roman Catholics were among the 7000 who attended the Anglican national pilgrimage on Whit Monday, 1971.

On such an occasion as this, and on most major festivals, the churches and streets of the village are crowded with visitors. In the afternoon Mass is sung in the shrine church (usually, now, with a number of priests concelebrating). Then the priests, carrying the image of the Virgin, lead a long procession of pilgrims round the village. As they walk, they sing the 37-verse pilgrimage hymn, which retells in simple form the history of the shrine and is sung to the same tune as the Lourdes hymn. As they return, the service of Benediction is already beginning. Afterwards they queue at the holy well, also within the shrine church, to drink of its water and be sprinkled with it. It is a phenomenon the speed of whose triumphant revival can hardly be equalled elsewhere in the Anglican communion – and the founder, Fr Hope Patten, saw its climax before his death in 1958.

TOM DRIBERG.

Told by Christ to be his divine messenger, Mary Anne Girling preached the communal sharing of goods and celibacy to her disciples

WALWORTH JUMPERS

THE SECT of Walworth Jumpers, also known as the Girlingites, Bible Christians, Children of God, or English Shakers, first met in Suffolk and later in London. Around 1870 they held religious services of an unorthodox order under a converted railway arch in Sutherland Street, Walworth Road, South London. Here large crowds of poor people assembled to listen to the preaching of the founder and leader of the sect, a tall, thin, Suffolk woman with high cheek-bones and dark piercing eyes whose name was Mary Anne Girling.

Mrs Girling, whose maiden name was Claughton, was illiterate. She married a sailor who died young, and for some months after her husband's death she was overcome by grief; it was then that she proclaimed that she had seen visions. While praying in her room, she said, she saw Christ standing before her, telling her she was to be his divine messenger. She claimed to have had two further visions, and in 1868 she gave her first sermon outside the Wesleyan chapel in Suffolk where she worshipped.

The main belief of the sect was that if its members stayed celibate they would never die. From the date of their full conversion, they considered themselves immortal. A characteristic feature of the Girlingite services was the dancing and jumping of the believers, who often fell down on the floor in fits, made trance utterings, and screamed in religious fervour.

From the noisy railway arch Mrs Girling moved with her loyal followers to a small chapel in College Place, Chelsea, where a charge of threepence was demanded from all non-Jumpers attending. Among the new disciples was a wealthy woman named Mrs Julia Wood, who was persuaded to buy a large house in Battersea in South London as a home for the sect. Here Mrs Girling had another vision, that 'God had given her New Forest Lodge at Hordle in Hampshire', as a country headquarters. She said she had no idea where it was, but God would direct her to it. Sure enough, the house and estate were soon revealed, and the faithful Mrs Wood went to her bank and bought the property for Mrs Girling.

All the Children of God, with their spiritual Mother leading them, now moved to the New Forest, where they were joined by several farmers and labourers; and by 1874 there were 164 members living in the house surrounded by grounds which could not adequately support them. Everyone led a communal life, handing over all they possessed when they entered the colony, but as Mrs Girling forbade all working for profit, or trading with the outside world, her followers were soon in debt; they were dispossessed of the house and forced to live in tents in a field near the hamlet of Tiptoe, also in Hampshire.

A correspondent of *The Times*, visiting Mrs Girling in February 1875, reported how after a few sentences of prayer she began leaping rhythmically from foot to foot, waving her arms with a beckoning motion, while repeating short sentences of religious exhortation. A young woman on a front seat joined in, starting a strange dance with springy, elastic movements and considerable waving of her arms. Three-quarters of the disciples at this time were women, some had been servants, one had been a Wesleyan school-teacher, and there was also a blacksmith, a shoemaker and a tailor. But most were farm labourers, and all were at that time unemployed.

Mary Anne Girling, who styled herself the 'Bride of Christ', was the leader of an ecstatic sect known as the Walworth Jumpers because they jumped and danced up and down at their meetings held under a Walworth arch

MARY ANN GIRLING.

John Montgomery

The Bride of Christ

Mrs Girling rejected the title given to her followers of English Shakers, preferring to call them Bible Christians. She pointed out that the American Shakers believed in Christ only as a prophet, whereas her followers believed in Christ as God-Man. But celibacy and the communal sharing of goods were common to both sects (see SHAKERS).

Men and women leaving the colony had spread rumours in the district that the dancers took off their clothes, but Mrs Girling denied this was ever done under direction, although it sometimes happened when the worshippers became over-excited.

Cold weather, the hostility and curiosity of neighbours, and lack of money, contributed to the collapse of the colony. Several members died of consumption, due to undernourishment. In about 1878, Mrs Girling announced that she was greater than the Holy Ghost, and henceforth was to be known as the God-Mother, the Bride of Christ. To prove her claim, she displayed the nail marks of the Crucifixion on her feet and hands. A few months later she announced that she was the reincarnation of Jesus, saying, 'It was prophesied that false Christs should come and all others are false, for besides me there is none other.'

In 1885 Mrs Girling was taken ill with a sore throat, which confined her to bed. Malignant cancer was diagnosed and, after suffering excruciating pain, she arose from her sick bed to declare that she would never die. Her followers believed her, and she lingered on, the colony being sadly reduced to a few ardent disciples. Finally on 18 September 1886, she died, and was buried next to those of her sect who had preceded her, in Hordle churchyard, near Lymington, Hampshire, where the curious may still see the graves of the Mother and some of her disciples.

JOHN MONTGOMERY

The royal sceptre, the Lord Chancellor's staff, the sergeant major's swagger stick and the conductor's batan are all derived from the magic wands of kings and priests

WAND

AS SYMBOLS of authority, the wand and the rod can be traced back to the staffs of the priest kings and magician healers of antiquity. The sceptre is an old symbol of kingship. A herald, the inviolable emissary of a king, carried a staff of office and the caduceus of the Greek god Hermes (see HERMES) was his herald's wand. The shepherd's crook was an emblem of royal authority in Egypt. Medieval physicians inherited the custom of carrying wands from their priestly predecessors. Red Indian chieftains bore carved wands as their badges of office.

In its simplest form, as a stick or staff, the wand must have been one of man's earliest weapons, enabling him to subjugate wild animals and human enemies alike. It has also long been recognized as a phallic symbol. It is a sign of power and virility, supernatural and physical (and consequently, clerical or secular) in a wide variety of forms.

In its supernatural context, the wand is an agent of transformation, a well-known example being the fairy wand, which is supposed to draw its power from the sun, represented by the star at its tip. The wand is also a means of aiming power at a given object; like the pointing finger or the pointing bone, it was once regarded as the agency of intense psychic power.

The construction of a wand was carried out in great secrecy and accompanied by mystical ceremonies. The wand of the wizard was usually of hazel-wood (see HAZEL) cut from the tree at sunrise, in order to draw upon the untouched solar energy; the knife used in the operation would be baptized in blood. At the same time special prayers were addressed to the high gods imploring

The rods of Moses and Aaron are the most famous examples of magic wands: Moses striking water from a rock as the Israelites cross the wilderness: 14th century French Bible

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Mander & Mitchenson Collection

Above **The conjuror's wand is a descendant of the wand of power of the magician** ***Below*** **Leader of a British witch coven dressed to represent the jackal-headed Egyptian god Anubis: in one hand he holds a wand topped by an ankh, the symbol of life, and in the other a sistrum or ceremonial rattle: the magic wand probably goes back to the early use of sticks and staffs as natural weapons against human and animal enemies**

their help in endowing the wand with power and authority. The wands of the English and Welsh Druids were usually constructed of yew, and those of the Irish Druids of yew, hawthorn or rowan, all of these being sacred trees. The medieval magician would often fix a magnetized steel cap to the end and tip of his wand with the object of projecting an extremely powerful magnetic force. He would use it sparingly, reserving it for important acts of magic and concealing it from view within his voluminous sleeve.

In ancient grimoires and annals of sorcery there are many curious references to the employment of special types of wands for the various magical rites. Those who sought to communicate with Satan used wands of cypress wood – the cypress being well-known as a tree of death – and with this inscribed a magical circle at a crossroads at midnight. When attempting to communicate with the spirit of a suicide, the magician would touch the corpse nine times and then order it to answer his questions, under threat of torment. The use of a sword, in place of a wand, occurs in the records of English witchcraft past and present.

References to a special type of wand used by witches can be found in an anonymous 15th century work, *Errores Gazariorum*, which states that the witch received a special stick at the time of her initiation. In the early 17th century, the demonologist Henri Boguet declared that witches travelled through the air on white staffs, and this statement confirms that of Lambert Daneau, who had said in his work *Les Sorciers* (1564) that the witch received from the Devil a staff or rod which she used for flying (see also BROOMSTICK; FLYING OINTMENT). Modern witches use wands and staffs for purposes of divination; their riding staff is in fact a phallic emblem.

Wands were used by sorcerers for the detection of hidden treasures and other valuables. This is referred to in one of Sheppard's epigrams, dated 1651:

> Some sorcerers do boast they have a rod
> Gathered with Vowes and Sacrifice
> And (borne about) will strangely nod
> To hidden treasure where it lies.

The wand of divination has close affinities with the forked hazel twig of the ancient miners and water diviners (see DOWSING) which, like the wand, had to be cut at either sunrise or sunset, with the sun's rays shining through the forks of the twig at the time.

There are references in some old works to the use of the wand in tests of chastity. In a tale in the *Mabinogion* (see MABINOGION), the wand of the wizard Math is used to determine whether or not the Lady Arianrhod has remained a virgin. Probably the old belief that walking over a magic wand served as a test of virginity was the origin of a Welsh wedding custom, in which the couple solemnized their union by stepping over a broomstick. Wands were also employed for the detection of thieves and murderers.

Rural wise men were often credited with the power to capture hares and other small game by waving or pointing their walking sticks in their direction; a practice which continued until the middle of the 19th century. On some farms men known as 'goose-charmers' were called in to bless the flocks, and would reinforce their incantations by waving a short stick.

John Moss

As the instrument of transformation, the wand occurs in the Celtic legend of Diarmaid and Grainne, in which the sorcerer transforms his own son into 'a cropped pig having neither ears nor tail'. In another Celtic legend a fairy woman strikes her rival with a wand and she becomes a beautiful wolfhound. In the *Odyssey*, the enchantress Circe strikes Odysseus's men with her wand, turning them into swine (see CIRCE).

To the physician priests of antiquity, the wand conferred not only the divine authority of the healer, but also the power to detect diseases. Medieval physicians were immediately recognizable by the wands which they bore. It was the custom for physicians to carry a walking stick down into the 18th century; the last of the line of 'wand carriers' being apparently the famous London physician, Dr John Radcliffe, whose gold-headed cane is preserved by the Royal College of Physicians. Charm-wands were still in use by rustic healers for the treatment of ague in the East Anglia marshlands up to about 150 years ago.

Aaron's Rod

Perhaps the most famous examples of wands used for supernatural purposes were the rods of Moses and Aaron, which were employed to divide the waters of the Red Sea, to cause water to gush forth from a rock in the desert, and to confound the enchantment of Pharaoh's magicians. According to an old Mohammedan legend, after the wand had been transformed into a serpent before Pharoah (Exodus, chapter 7) it suddenly grasped his throne and, suspending it in the air for a moment, announced: 'If it please Allah, I could swallow up not only the throne with thee and all that are here present but even thy palace and all that it contains without anyone seeing the slightest change in me.'

In a curious Jewish legend, Aaron's rod is described as having been created on the sixth day of Creation, and then taken by Adam out of Eden, and subsequently handed down through a succession of patriarchs. An early

Christian tradition relates how this miraculous rod had originally been cut from the Tree of Knowledge in Eden. It finally came into the hands of Judas, and provided the beam of the cross upon which Christ was crucified. In one of the earliest portraits of Christ, incidentally, discovered in a catacomb in the 3rd century, the Saviour is depicted with a wand in his hands.

In the form of the sceptre, the wand is the emblem of temporal power. In Britain, the royal sceptre which is placed in the monarch's right hand at his coronation endows him with his kingly authority, while his other sceptres symbolize mercy and justice. The Ivory Rod, which is over three feet long, is another royal wand of office which expresses the supernatural authority vested in an anointed king. It has been suggested that the monarch's sceptre is derived from the sacred spear upon which the war chief leaned when delivering judgement; yet another example of the magic wand.

The great officers of state are presented with special wands at the time of their appointment, to endow them with part of the royal authority. The white staff carried by the Lord Chancellor signifies not only that he acts on the monarch's behalf but that his duties will be carried out with uprightness and purity. At one time the Earl Marshal would be presented with a wooden staff, but from the reign of Richard II onwards the holder of this office has been entitled to a gold staff bearing both the king's arms and his own as the symbol of his authority. The swagger stick carried by army officers provides yet a further example of the wand of power, and similarly, the baton of the conductor of an orchestra.

The modern conjuror's wand is traceable to the magician's wand of medieval days, if not to the staffs carried by court jesters. In the past, the conjuror was regarded as identical with the sorcerer, the two terms being interchangeable. As members of the Magic Circle are well aware, a magician without his wand is as ineffective as a soldier without his gun. Any appearance on stage without this ancient symbol of psychic powers dissipates both the magician's authority as a worker of wonders and his power of command over his audience.

ERIC MAPLE

Thorns in the flesh of the major Christian Churches, these eccentric and sometimes disreputable ecclesiastics can nevertheless claim apostolic succession and a valid, if irregular, consecration

WANDERING BISHOPS

IN THE LATE 1950s, the staider inhabitants of Brittany began to be both scandalized and alarmed by the unusual ecclesiastical activities of His Whiteness the Humble (Sa Blancheur L'Humble) Tugdual I, Archbishop of Dol, Primate of the Holy Celtic Church in Brittany, Abbot of St Dolay, Kayermo, and Keroussek. It was not so much the Archbishop's custom of administering the sacrament of baptism on the seashore at midnight that gave offence – although in such a traditionally Catholic area as rural Brittany it was naturally the cause of some surprise – but the fact that, save for his headgear (an imposing mitre of vaguely Gothic Revival pattern), it was alleged that he wore nothing at all while conducting this simple, but no doubt reverent, ceremony. Even the Archbishop's worst enemies, however, were forced to agree that, whatever his dress, he never failed to carry his crozier while performing his archiepiscopal duties.

Like most of the smaller Churches of Christendom, the Holy Celtic Church founded by Archbishop Tugdual suffers from 'too many Chiefs and not enough Indians'. Indeed, in the year 1970 it had no less than 14 bishops to administer to the spiritual needs of its nine lay members and to achieve its aim of reviving the Celtic invocation of 'Hum-Hum-Hum' (mysteriously spelt Oiv-Oiv-Oiv). Odd as this Church undoubtedly is, the oddest thing about it is that its bishops have the authentic apostolic succession (see PRIESTS) and that they have been validly, although highly irregularly, consecrated. For these unusual ecclesiastics are some of the *episcopi vagantes*, wandering bishops, whose existence and increasing numbers have been a cause of annoyance to the Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches since the beginning of this century.

One authority has estimated that there are something like 800 of these wandering bishops, most of them still active, though some have retired into private life. Some of them teach a syncretistic neo-gnosticism and practise faith healing, occultism and magic; others preach the historic creeds of Christianity, although these are divided on certain points of doctrine. Some are unquestionably rogues, and one or two of them have suffered long terms of imprisonment. Others live lives of great holiness – the present writer has met at least one who could be described as a saintly eccentric. Most of them are in schism from one another, but divided as they are, almost all of them have three things in common: a disregard of, and contempt for, the ecclesiastical disciplines of Rome, Constantinople and Canterbury; an almost magical belief in the importance of a valid apostolic succession; and an episcopal status ultimately derived from the Dutch Old Catholic (Jansenist) Church through either the Polish Mariavite Church or one or other of the successors of Archbishop Mathew, an eccentric Englishman who died in 1919.

Live Tiger in the Pulpit

Archbishop Mathew was a most erratic and unstable character. Born in 1852, of a Roman Catholic father and an Anglican mother, he underwent baptism in both Churches. Perhaps this early influence was the cause of the religious indecision that made him first an Anglican theological student, then a Roman priest – at this period his lifelong love of animals was responsible for his terrorizing the faithful of St Mary's, Bath, by introducing a live tiger into his pulpit – then a Unitarian, then a curate of the Church of England, then a Catholic layman, and finally an Old Catholic Archbishop. Even this last period was marked by one submission to Rome, one recantation of this submission, and a brief spiritual flirtation with Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society.

Mathew was consecrated a Bishop on 28 April 1908 by Archbishop Gul of Utrecht. On historical grounds the validity of his consecration seems unquestionable, for although the Dutch Old Catholic Church had been in schism from Rome since 1739 its episcopal line of succession could be traced back in an unbroken line to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII. Nevertheless, the consecration was clearly obtained by fraud, for while both the Old Catholic bishops, and Mathew himself, were sincerely convinced that the latter represented a large and growing body of English Catholics who desired independence from Rome, the reality was very different. For Mathew was no more than the innocent tool of a tiny body of disgruntled, excommunicated, and possibly financially dishonest Catholic priests.

These were led by two Monsignori, Herbert Beale and Arthur Howarth, who had at one time been in charge of parishes in the diocese of Nottingham. Both had been on good terms with Bishop Bagshawe, who had been Bishop of Nottingham until his forcible retirement in 1901. Bagshawe has been described as saintly, in spite of occasional flashes of bad temper – on one occasion he excommunicated the entire membership of that High Tory body, the Primrose League – and he was usually prepared to turn a blind eye on the behaviour of his clergy, however outrageous, and to appoint to responsible positions priests who had been sacked from other dioceses. So great was Bagshawe's tolerance that his diocese became known as *refugium peccatorum*, the refuge of sinners. Bishop Brindle, Bagshawe's successor, was a man of quite a different type and engaged in a general clean-up – he sacked Beale and Howarth for various alleged financial irregularities. These two seem to have had no other motive for getting Mathew to establish an English branch of the Old Catholic Church than a desire to annoy their lawful ecclesiastical superiors, Bishop Brindle and Cardinal Bourne.

On his return from Holland, poor Mathew soon realized that he had been the victim of fraud, that the 'seventeen priests' and 'eight parishes' who had supposedly chosen him to be consecrated as their bishop existed solely in the imaginations of Beale and Howarth. For the rest of his life he devoted his efforts to holding together his tiny personal following, usually numbering no more than three or four, consoling himself for his lonely life by writing lengthy essays designed to prove the Baconian authorship of Shakespeare, and dreaming of a National Catholic Church under his own leadership. Unfortunately Mathew attempted to put

Faber & Faber

Faber & Faber

The wandering bishops have 'an almost magical belief in the importance of a valid apostolic succession' *Left* His Whiteness the Humble Tugdual I, Archbishop of Dol, Primate of the Holy Celtic Church in Brittany, Abbot of St Dolay, Kayermo, and Keroussek: a fondness for resounding titles is characteristic of the wandering bishops, who have been a cause of annoyance to the more orthodox Churches all this century *Right* Joseph Rene Villate derived his episcopal status ultimately from the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, and bishops of the African Orthodox Churches in turn derive their succession from him

his dreams into practice and consecrated a number of bishops; he was a poor judge of character and many of those he consecrated were clearly quite unsuitable candidates for any ecclesiastical position.

Mathew performed comparatively few consecrations but there were some bishops who were prepared to confer the episcopate on anyone who could pay a sufficiently large fee. It is through such fee-snatching activities that the lines of succession of many of the wandering bishops of the present day are derived.

The Archbishop of Utrecht, 18 months after his consecration of Mathew, obligingly supplied the Polish Mariavites with their first bishop, a certain Michael Kowalski. The Mariavite Church had approximately 20,000 members and had come into existence as a result of the mystical experiences of a woman named Maria Kozlowska. Maria, who had started her adult life as a poverty-stricken sewing-woman, had founded, in 1887, a community of Franciscan Tertiaries (lay members of a monastic order), all female. The Virgin, said Maria, had instructed her to found a mixed religious community dedicated to the life of Mary. This organization, the Mariavite (Life of Mary) Union, was duly established and met with considerable success, for it appealed strongly to the messianic elements in Polish Catholicism. Maria began to be known as 'Little Mother', was venerated as a living saint, and continued to have further revelations.

By 1904 the Polish hierarchy had become alarmed by the growing strength of the Mariavite Union and by rumours of immoral activities in its mixed monasteries. An investigation was undertaken and a report sent to Rome. The Holy See, always suspicious of saints, declared that Maria's revelations were spurious, that her visions were hallucinations, and ordered the dissolution of the Mariavite Union and its communities. The Mariavites disregarded the Pope's ruling and were excommunicated.

Marriage in a Monastery

With Kowalski as its presiding Archbishop the Mariavite Church became ever more eccentric. Monks and nuns entered into 'spiritual marriages' – and sometimes carnal relations – with one another, women were ordained, and idolization of the Virgin Mary was encouraged. By 1930 Kowalski had actually consecrated his spiritual directress, a nun named Sister Isabella, as a female bishop and concluded that both he and she were infallible and impeccable.

Kowalski seems to have enjoyed nothing more than manufacturing bishops and carried out many consecrations; Sister Isabella was just as keen to make female bishops, and in just two months she consecrated 11 of them. In their turn Kowalski's bishops made more bishops, and today most of the episcopi vagantes who are not in the Mathew succession derive their status from the Mariavite line – although, of course, many have both lines of succession, for the conditional reconsecration of one another is a favourite recreation of the wandering bishops.

Two other lines of episcopal succession were created as a result of the activities of Joseph Rene Villate (d. 1929) and Julius Ferrete (d. 1904). Both these prelates ultimately derived their episcopal status from Peter the Humble, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. There is some doubt as to the validity of the consecrations of both Villate and Ferrete, but because of cross-consecrations almost all the wandering bishops can claim an undoubted line of descent from Mathew or the Mariavites.

Aleister Crowley – Bishop

Many of the wandering bishops have chosen to involve themselves in faith healing, magic and occultism. On the other hand, quite a few magicians have sought the episcopate for their own purposes. Thus Julius Hussay, who became a bishop of the Villate line in 1904, seems to have acquired his episcopal status only because he believed that it would greatly enhance his magical powers. Hussay, who wrote several extremely boring books on magic, conditionally consecrated a number of bishops of the Gnostic Catholic Church, a mysterious body which still survives in several offshoots, each claiming the only orthodoxy. The consecrations were conditional because these French Gnostic bishops had already had the episcopate conferred upon them by A. Doinel, who himself claimed to have been 'twice spiritually consecrated a Bishop'; on the first occasion by Jesus Christ who had, so Doinel said, made one of his rare personal appearances, and on the second by the ghosts of two medieval Cathar bishops who had chosen to manifest themselves at a Spiritualist seance. Hussay also consecrated an ex-Trappist monk named Giraud, and he in turn, consecrated as a Gnostic bishop Joanny Bricaud, a prolific writer on magic.

At about the same time Dr Encausse, who wrote on occultism under the name of Papus (see PAPUS) and was a Gnostic bishop, had various masonic dignities conferred upon him by Theodor Reuss, as head of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, an organization specializing in sexual magic (see CROWLEY). Dr Encausse returned the compliment by consecrating Reuss, an action which seems to have led to Aleister Crowley becoming a bishop! For when Crowley visited Reuss in Berlin and had conferred upon himself the chieftainship of the British section of the O.T.O., he was also consecrated as a Gnostic Catholic bishop – or so Reuss claimed. Crowley,

however, does not appear to have been aware of his new status; certainly he never made any attempt to exercise his ecclesiastical functions, although, it is true, he did write a special Mass for the Gnostic Church.

Of all the hundreds of independent Churches spanned by the wandering Bishops, only two groups have shown any real capacity for survival and growth. The first of these groups is that of the African Orthodox Churches which, in spite of numerous schisms, have made considerable inroads amongst the membership of those African Churches which are still, to some extent, under the control of the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the former colonial powers. The second group consists of those Churches deriving from the Theosophical followers of Archbishop Mathew.

The African Orthodox Churches derive their episcopal succession from Villate who, in 1921, consecrated George Alexander McGuire, a former Episcopalian missionary in the West Indies, as 'Patriarch Alexander of the African Orthodox Church of the World'. Within a short time this new Church achieved a sizeable membership among the Negro population of the United States, almost certainly because of its appeal to black nationalism; it is significant that *The Negro Churchman*, the newspaper of the new Church, described McGuire's consecration as being 'the germ of a Racial Church'.

Throughout the years of the Depression the Church continued to grow, but after McGuire's death in 1935 various schisms occurred and there was a consequent decline in membership. At the present time, however, there are at least four Churches active in the United States and the West Indies deriving from the McGuire organization.

Saviour of African Christianity

It is in Africa itself that the African Orthodox Church has met with its greatest successes and has in certain areas become a powerful rival to the missionary-led Churches in general and to the Anglican Church in particular.

McGuire extended his influence to Africa in 1928, when Daniel William Alexander, the son of an American father and a coloured South African mother, returned to South Africa after his consecration by McGuire in the previous year. Alexander established his cathedral in Kimberley and, significantly, dedicated it to an African saint, Augustine of Hippo. He soon made converts and within a few years had a considerable following in Kenya, in Uganda and in South Africa. Bishop Alexander was a man of intellectual ability, charm, and even holiness, being held in high regard by Anglicans.

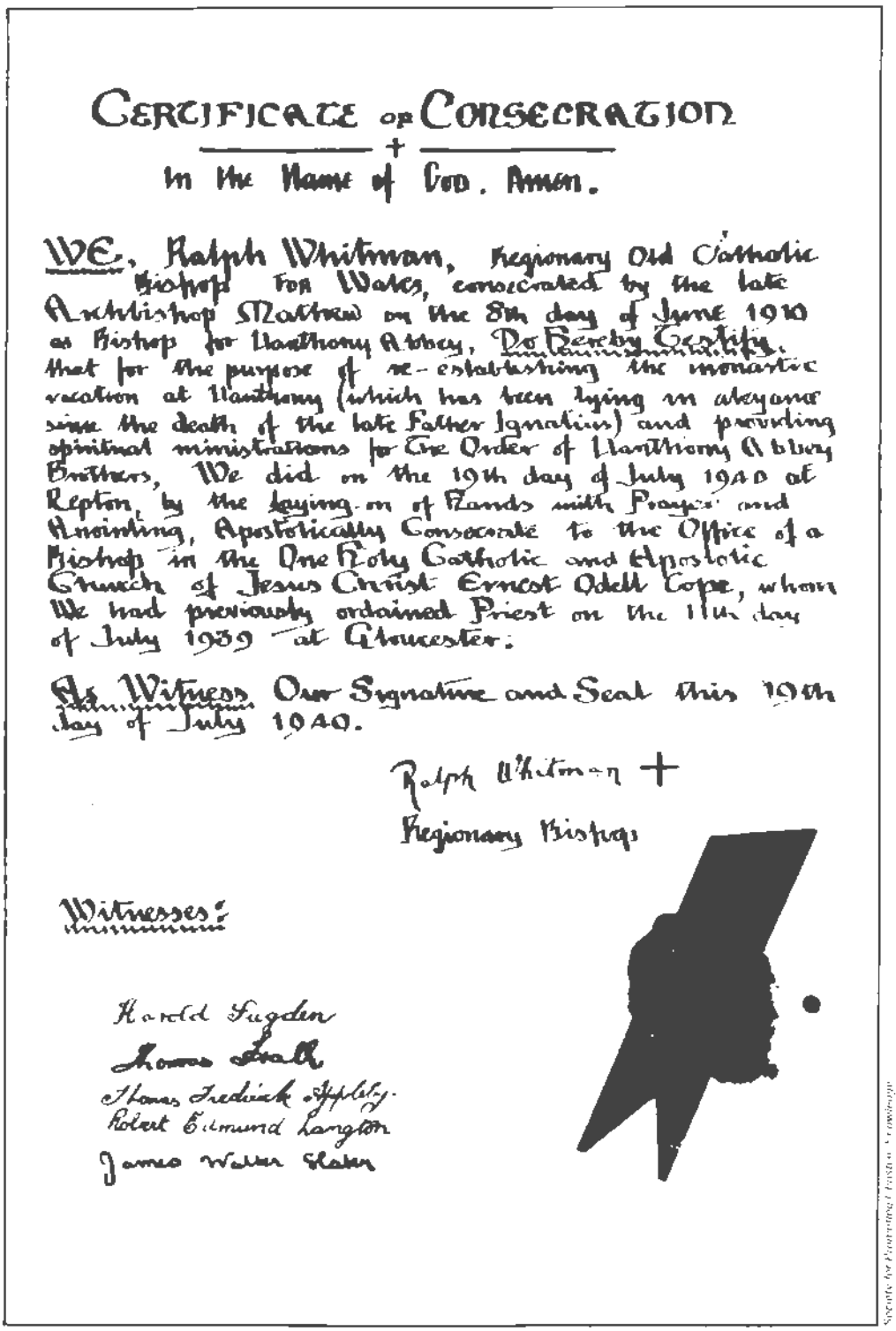
In Buganda – now part of the Republic of Uganda – a schismatic section of the African Orthodox Church has actually been brought into full communion with one of the ancient Patriarchates of Eastern Christendom. This, the African Greek Orthodox Church, came into existence as a result of the activities of a certain Reuben Spartas, a young African Christian who had rebelled against the theology of Anglican evangelicism.

The internal theological disputes of the world-wide Anglican communion have been reflected in the missionary activities of the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Thus, in Africa, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa has occupied the extreme Anglo-Catholic position, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has been in the middle of the road, and the Church Missionary Society has represented the evangelical viewpoint.

Reuben Spartas had been brought up by the Christian Missionary Society as an evangelical and had become the cook of a missionary archdeacon. He soon rebelled against both Low Church theology and the white colonialism which he believed it represented, writing to Cosmo Gordon Lang, then Archbishop of Canterbury, to tell him that the Church of England had 'no Catholic faith, Doctrine and Real Principles' and to McGuire that he had resolved 'to go to hell, gaol, or die for the redemption of Africa'.

Spartas was consecrated by Alexander in 1932 and rapidly gained converts, establishing schools and churches throughout Buganda. In 1934 he broke away from Alexander, and his African Greek Orthodox Church was finally admitted into full communion with the Patriarchate of Alexandria

Certificate of the consecration of Ernest Odell Cope by Ralph Whitman, Regionary Old Catholic Bishop of Wales, who himself had been consecrated by Archbishop Mathew, an eccentric Englishman from whom many wandering bishops are 'apostolically' descended



CERTIFICATE OF CONSECRATION

+

In the Name of God. Amen.

WE, Ralph Whitman, Regionary Old Catholic Bishop for Wales, consecrated by the late Archbishop Mathew on the 8th day of June 1930 as Bishop for Glastonbury Abbey, Do Hereby Certify, that for the purpose of re-establishing the monastic vocation at Glastonbury (which has been lying in abeyance since the death of the late Father Ignatius) and providing spiritual ministrations for the Order of Glastonbury Abbey Brothers, We did on the 19th day of July 1940 at Repton, by the laying on of Hands with Prayer and Anointing, Apostolically Consecrate to the Office of a Bishop in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ Ernest Odell Cope, whom We had previously ordained Priest on the 11th day of July 1939 at Gloucester.

In Witness Our Signature and Seal this 19th day of July 1940.

Ralph Whitman +
Regionary Bishop

Witnesses:

Harold Fugden
Thomas Hall
Thomas Frederick Appleby
Robert Edmund Langton
James Walter Slater

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

in 1946; today there is not only a Metropolitan for East Africa, appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria, but the African Greek Orthodox Church uses the full liturgy of St John Chrysostom, translated into Luganda by Spartas himself.

It seems at least possible that such independent African Churches as that of Spartas offer the best hope for the survival of Christianity in Black Africa. More and more those Churches which, rightly or wrongly, are associated with the former colonial powers are falling into disfavour with newly-independent governments. It is an odd thought that the activities of such an ecclesiastical clown as Villate may ultimately prove to have been the salvation of African Christianity.

Liberal Catholicism

The theosophically-inclined Liberal Catholic Church came into existence when most of Archbishop Mathew's clerical and lay followers went into schism as a result of Mathew declaring that membership of the Theosophical Society was incompatible with membership of his own organization. The schismatics chose James Wedgwood, a member of the famous pottery family, as their leader and he was duly consecrated. The leadership of the Liberal Catholic Church, in practice if not in theory, passed tn C. W. Leadbeater, a former Anglican curate and theosophist, who held this position until his death in the 1930s. He developed a strange neo-gnostic interpretation of Catholic Christianity and wrote *The Science of the Sacraments*, putting forward his ideas. The growth of Liberal Catholicism has not been spectacular but has nevertheless continued at a steady rate: today there are around 50,000 members of the Church.

The Churches founded by the wandering bishops are peculiar in every sense of the word. It is unlikely that we shall hear the last of them for many years to come.

FRANCIS KING

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WANDERING JEW

The Wandering Jew, from a 17th century engraving: the name by which he was known, Ahasuerus, probably comes from King Ahasuerus, the villain and laughing-stock of the Old Testament book of Esther

AHASUERUS, the unwilling immortal, has been a well-known figure of European legend since 1602, when he was introduced to the public in a German pamphlet. It declared that Paulus von Eizen, the late Lutheran Bishop of Schleswig, had once met a Jew in Hamburg and learnt that he was more than 15 centuries old. This man had been a cobbler in Jerusalem in the time of Christ, one of the crowd that shouted 'Crucify him'. When Jesus, carrying the cross, tried to rest on his doorstep, the Jew pushed him away saying, 'Go where you belong.' Jesus looked at him sternly and replied, 'I will stand here and rest, but you shall go on till I return.' Ever since – Bishop von Eizen gathered – Ahasuerus had been wandering from country to country awaiting the Second Coming.

The pamphlet of 1602 appeared anonymously. Even its alleged place of printing, Leiden, is very doubtful. A later edition gives the author as Chrysostomus Dudulaeus of Westphalia, otherwise unknown. Whatever its origin the legend became popular at once, partly, perhaps, because of anti-semitic prophecies about the advent of Antichrist with Jewish support; partly also because this discovery of an eyewitness confirmed the Christian narrative. Besides many German editions of the pamphlet, there were soon eight in Dutch and Flemish, and others in French, Danish and Swedish, besides an English parody. The story grew as it spread.

The Immortal

Ahasuerus's title varies. In German-speaking countries, he is the 'immortal' or 'eternal' Jew. The epithet 'wandering' has its source in the French version, which made him 'le juif errant', from which the English title was derived. With other nationalities he has acquired different names: in Spain he is Juan Espera-en-Dios ('trust in God') and in Belgium, Isaac Laquedem. Some versions stress the mystery of his immortality, some stress the curse of wandering, some make him symbolic of his race. The French account portrays him as a rebel against his doom, constantly seeking death in vain.

About 20 recognitions of the Wandering Jew are on record. Besides his Hamburg appearance in 1542 or 1547, he is said to have been seen and known in Spain in 1575, Vienna in 1599, Ypres in 1623, Brussels in 1640 and Paris in 1644; and at various other places, mostly in Central Europe, at various other dates in the 17th century.

Some of the reports may be due to impostors having played the part. Later appearances are rarer, although they include one in Newcastle in 1790, and one in Salt Lake City in 1868, when the wanderer met a Mormon named O'Grady – an event duly reported in the *Deseret News*.

While Ahasuerus cannot be documented before 1602, he has older antecedents. The notion does go back to a saying of Jesus, though a canonical one: 'Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' (Matthew 16.28). The obvious meaning is that the Second Coming will occur soon, in the lifetime of contemporaries. Its failure to do so has made this prophecy a problem for Christians – among them the famous missionary and doctor, Albert Schweitzer, who inferred from it that Christ could be wrong, a conclusion with immense implications.

For the early Christians, Schweitzer's view was ruled out. Instead, as the years passed, they began to speculate that somebody would be kept alive by divine favour till Christ did return. Such hopes centred for a while on John, the beloved disciple, to whom Jesus had made a rather similar cryptic remark about 'remaining until I come' (John 21. 20–23). But John died, and the rumour died with him.

Then, at an unknown period, the same story was revived in the Middle East with new characters. The historian Roger of Wendover says that in 1228 an Armenian archbishop visited England, and told the monks of St Albans that he had seen a man called Cartaphilus who was a witness of the Crucifixion. When Jesus had passed him bearing the cross, he shouted, 'Go on faster', and Jesus answered, 'I go; but you shall wait till I come.'

Cartaphilus (a door-keeper in Pilate's house, therefore a Roman, not a Jew) was afterwards baptized by Ananias and given the Christian name Joseph; 12 centuries later he was living a quiet, penitential life, cheifly as a guest of religious communities. He would age till he appeared to be 100 years old and would then be miraculously restored to 30. Travelling Armenian priests seem to have made much of this tale, not only at St Albans – more than once – but at Tournai in Flanders in 1243. It is repeated in the chronicle of Matthew Paris, as a proof of Christianity.

Medieval accounts of the Holy Land hint

at a second figure of the same type. In 1250 a French author, returned from residence in Jerusalem, speaks of 'Jehan Boute Dieu' as proverbially long-lived. In Italian legend the same person becomes John Bottadio, 'God-smiter'. He is stated to have been the ufficer who struck Christ before the high priest, sometimes further identified with Malchus (John 18. 10, 22). Bottadio is mentioned by Guido Bonnati, an astrologer known to Dante. There are reports of his being seen in Italy early in the 15th century.

The names given to these two immortals, Cartaphilus ('most beloved') and John, imply that the ultimate source of inspiration is the far earlier belief about the apostle. But at some stage, divine favour has been turned into punishment. The motif occurs in Buddhist legend: Pindola, an unworthy follower of Buddha, was condemned to be unable to die.

Villain and Laughing-Stock

No direct links of influence have been traced, either between Pindola and the two medieval immortals, or between them and Ahasuerus. But the inventor of the Jew must have known something of the older stories. He repeats the tale of the insult to Christ. He takes up and strengthens the idea of a curse. The name Ahasuerus suggests an acquaintance with Jewish plays that were acted at the feast of Purim. These were based on the book of Esther, and brought in King Ahasuerus as a villain and laughing-stock.

The Wandering Jew has inspired many works of literature and art. There is a ballad in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Goethe and Shelley were attracted to the theme, Shelley more than once.

William Godwin introduced it into his novel *St Leon* (1799). Eugène Sue's romance *Le Juif Errant* (1844) is the most famous of several French treatments, which include a pictorial series by Gustav Doré. A Jewish dramatist, David Pinski, has given the legend a Jewish form, portraying the wanderer as searching for the Messiah. The most recent literary addition is an episode in Evelyn Waugh's novel *Helena* (1950).

GEOFFREY ASHE

Some of the bloodiest wars in history have been waged in the name of God; even those religions which exalt mercy and peace have put the need to stamp out unorthodoxy before humanitarian considerations

WAR

HISTORY RECORDS few instances of aggressive wars in which the antagonists have not professed some high or altruistic motive. There seems to be an innate reluctance on the part of rulers and governments to admit, even to themselves, to waging war for material gain or self-aggrandizement. Generally it has been left to individuals such as the Italian *condottieri* and other mercenaries, to use their swords unabashedly for gain. This moral or psychological need to justify resort to war, which has been shown even by cynical statesmen, probably operated in earlier ages to produce the idea of a holy war, waged in obedience to divine command. Such professedly holy wars were doubtless motivated often by secular aims or inspired by personal ambition. However, the idea of war as a sacred task has been a powerful factor in earlier societies, and there are some notable examples that repay study for the insight they give into human nature.

The two earliest civilizations, of which we have written records, provide evidence of the waging of holy wars as far back as the third millennium BC. The most remarkable document, both for its antiquity and vivid depiction, is a ceremonial slate palette which commemorates the victorious wars of the Egyptian Pharaoh Narmer (c 3000 BC). On one side of the palette the commanding figure of the pharaoh is portrayed striking down an enemy with his mace. The sacred character of the conflict is symbolized by a curious group of figures close to the pharaoh's right. A hawk is shown holding, by a human hand, a short cable which is hooked into the nose of a man's head, which has features similar to those of the man struck down by Narmer. This head protrudes from a rectangular object, from

Peter Clayton

The hawk god Horus assists the Egyptian Pharaoh Narmer in his victorious wars: the palette of Narmer

C. M. Dixon

Left **Christ as a warrior, holding a book which reads, 'I am the way, the truth and the life': mosaic from Ravenna** ***Right*** **15th century view of Jerusalem, the heart of centuries of holy war between Islam and Christianity**

which six papyrus plants are growing. The significance of the imagery seems clear, although there is no explanatory inscription. The hawk doubtless represents the hawk god Horus (see HORUS), the divine patron of the early kings of Egypt. It is shown as assisting the king in subduing his enemies, who probably dwelt in the marshlands of the Delta, signified by the papyrus plants. On the other side of the palette, the victorious pharaoh, preceded by the standards of his gods, goes to view the decapitated bodies of his enemies. Over both scenes the twin heads of the cow goddess Hathor preside. Thus, by this quaint but graphic imagery the victory of Narmer is recorded as the triumphant outcome of a war sanctified and assisted by the gods.

Of similar significance is the memorial set up by Eannatum, ruler of the Sumerian city of Lagash, to record his victory over the neighbouring city of Umma. The memorial, of which only fragments exist today, depicted the war as seen in its practical and its religious aspects. Thus, on one side, Eannatum is depicted advancing on foot at the head of his troops over the prostrate bodies of the foe, and also in his war chariot. Fragments of other scenes show the corpses of the slain being devoured by lions and vultures or ceremonially buried. These realistic scenes of war are paired by a representation, on a gigantic scale, of the god Ningirsu holding within a net the bodies of the men of Umma. This scene is surely intended to signify that it was the god who had really secured the victory for his faithful deputy, Eannatum. The memorial thus attests that in ancient Sumer, about 2500 BC, men also invested war with a sacred character, as they did in Egypt, believing that they served their god and that he helped them to victory.

When Egypt became an imperial power during the New Kingdom period (1567–1085 BC), its pharaohs claimed that their wars of conquest were ordained by their gods, pre-eminently by Amun. The army which Rameses II (c 1300–1234 BC) led against the Hittites mustered in four divisions, significantly named after four Egyptian gods: Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth. In the critical battle of Kadesh, Rameses tells how Amun succoured and inspired him: 'Amun hearkeneth unto me and cometh, when I cry to him. He stretcheth out his hand to me, and I rejoice; he calleth out behind me: "Forward, forward! I am with thee, I thy father"'. In like manner the kings of Babylon and Assyria claimed that they had fought at the command and with the aid of their respective gods.

Fighting for Yahweh

Examples such as these of royal claims to divine authority for wars of conquest could be multiplied; but more notable, and of far greater consequence, has been the Jewish idea of the holy war. The idea was basic to the peculiar covenant relationship that existed between Israel and its god Yahweh (see YAHWEH). It first finds expression in the belief that Yahweh had promised the land of Canaan (that is, Palestine) to Abraham, the progenitor of Israel: 'on that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates' (Genesis, 15,18). The translation of this promise into reality required a war of conquest, to wrest the land from its inhabitants and exterminate them in the process. In the Hebrew Bible this war is described in the book of Joshua. That it was essentially a holy war is dramatically portrayed in the instructions given by Joshua to the Israelite tribes as they emerged from the desert and prepared to cross the river Jordan into Canaan. The priests are told to bear the Ark of the Covenant, the mysterious portable shrine of Yahweh, to the brink of the Jordan and halt there. Then Joshua exhorted the people: 'Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, and the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is to pass over before you into the Jordan' (Joshua 3. 10–11). According to the account, Yahweh then signified his presence by stopping the flow of the Jordan so that the Israelites passed over the river dry-shod.

The Israelite warriors then prepared for the holy war by circumcising themselves (Joshua 5. 2–9). After recovering from the operation, the army's first objective was Jericho. The city was taken by a combination of military tactics and ritual magic (see SEVEN); its inhabitants were slaughtered, with the exception of the harlot Rahab and her household, who had sheltered Israelite spies. All the booty was devoted to Yahweh. But the breaking of this 'war ban' by one Israelite soldier named Achan resulted in an Israelite defeat when the Canaanite city of Ai was next attacked. Joshua was then told by the affronted Yahweh that Israel would suffer further defeat unless expiation was made. This took the form of stoning Achan and all his family and animals, and the burning of their bodies and all their goods, together with the tabooed articles retained by Achan (Joshua 8. 24–6). With Yahweh thus appeased, the holy war could continue with his blessing and cooperation.

After their initial establishment in Canaan, the Israelites continued to be involved in wars with neighbouring peoples. These struggles usually were regarded as holy wars. A notable example of their fanatical character is recorded in 1. Samuel (chapter 15). The prophet Samuel informs Saul, Israel's first king: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts . . . "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."' Saul carried out his orders, but spared the Amalekite king, Agag, and the best of the cattle in order to sacrifice them

to Yahweh. But because he had not exactly done as he was commanded, Yahweh withdrew his favour from Saul as king. After informing Saul of Yahweh's anger, Samuel himself 'hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal'.

Owing to the passionate attachment of the Jews to their land, which was for them the Holy Land of Yahweh's ancient promise, all their struggles against foreign invaders assumed the character of holy wars. Thus the Maccabaean War (166–157 BC) was not only a patriotic struggle for freedom from the oppressive foreign government of the Seleucid kings of Syria; it was a fierce reaction against the Seleucid attempt to impose pagan Greek customs on the people of Yahweh. Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabaeus, clearly proclaimed the nature of the war at its start: 'Whosoever is zealous for the Law, and maintaineth the Covenant, let him come forth after me' (I Maccabees 2.27). The same motive inspired Jewish resistance to the domination of heathen Rome in the 1st century AD. It found apocalyptic expression in the Dead Sea Scroll known as *The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*. And it moved the Zealots (see ZEALOTS) to precipitate the fatal war against Rome that destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, and ended Israel's national life for nearly 19 centuries.

Islam has also been characterized by its attachment to the idea of the holy war. The *jihad* ('striving') has been reckoned by many Moslems among the 'five pillars' of practical religion. Authority for this belief is found in various parts of the Koran. Thus in sura 9.29: 'Fight against those who believe not Allah nor in the Last Day, who do not prohibit what Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, and do not practise the True Faith of those who have received the Book, until they submit and pay the *jizya* (tribute).' Those Moslems who died fighting in the jihad are accounted martyrs and assured of eternal bliss with Allah. Mohammed resorted to arms to suppress his idolatrous opponents in Mecca and Jewish tribes in Arabia (see MOHAMMED). After his death, the armies of Islam launched successful campaigns, with a sense of divine mission, against the Eastern Roman and the Persian Empires. Within a century of Mohammed's death, the religion of Islam had been established throughout the Middle East, Egypt, North Africa and Spain, and its spread into Europe was only halted by the Franks under Charles Martel at the battle of Tours in 732. Later Moslem rulers often proclaimed jihads, and there have been attempts to present the current struggle of the Arab states against the state of Israel as a jihad.

Against the Infidel

The classic example of the holy war in Western Christianity has been the Crusades. Several factors combined to launch the first of the crusading armies against the Moslems in the latter years of the 11th century. Medieval society was organized mainly in the interests of a military aristocracy and the Church. The institution of knighthood represented the Church's attempt to Christianize the warlike instincts and ideas of this aristocracy. In the 11th century the struggle against the Moslem powers in Spain had assumed the character of a holy war, and in 1073 Pope Gregory VII had urged Christian princes and knights to help there in subduing the infidel. But events in Palestine were soon to present militant Christendom with a new cause. The Moslem conquest of Palestine in the 7th century had resulted in the holy places of Christianity passing under Moslem control, though Christian pilgrims still continued to have access to them. But the situation changed in 1071 when the Seljuk Turks, who were Moslems, captured Jerusalem. Moved by reports of the sufferings of pilgrims at their hands, Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095 called on the faithful, rich and poor, to free the holy places of their faith. The response was instant and fervent. The Pope's passionate exhortation evoked cries of 'Deus le volt' ('God wills it'). Remission from temporal penalties for sins was promised to all who went. Their dedication to the holy war was symbolized by the wearing of a red cross on their surcoats. Urban's exhortations were assisted and exceeded by those of Peter the Hermit, an itinerant monk. Without waiting for the expedition organized by the princes, Peter led a People's Crusade as far as Anatolia, where its unruly host perished at the hands of the Turks.

The First Crusade, led by Godfrey de Bouillon and other lords, was surprisingly

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Siege of Jerusalem, from a Flemish manuscript, late 15th century: the capture of the city by the Seljuk Turks in 1071 precipitated the Crusades

successful. Jerusalem was captured in 1099; the Christian victory being sullied by the massacre of the city's Moslem and Jewish inhabitants. A Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was set up; but the city was recaptured by Moslem forces under Saladin in 1187. Further crusades were organized to succour the Christian forces in Palestine and win back Jerusalem. But all these efforts failed, and the last significant Christian stronghold at Acre was lost in 1291. The Fourth Crusade, in 1202, was a shameful affair; instead of attacking the Moslems, it stormed and pillaged the city of Constantinople, the great Christian bulwark in eastern Europe against the Turks. Constantinople never recovered from this blow, and when it was besieged by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Pope Pius failed in his effort to organize a crusade to save it.

The Crusades produced two remarkable orders of military monks who epitomized the medieval Christian conception of the holy war: they were the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller – the former were destined ultimately to sordid destruction at the hands of fellow Christians (see KNIGHTS TEMPLAR); the latter to stop the Turkish advance into the Mediterranean by their heroic defence of Malta in 1565.

Against the Heretic

The history of the Christian Church records many other wars regarded as 'holy' by the participants. These were waged not against the infidel, but against heretics. Thus Pope Innocent III ordered a crusade, under Simon de Montfort, against the Albigenses, a heretical sect of Languedoc, in southern France (see CATHARS). The war, which was conducted with great cruelty, included a massacre at Béziers in 1209. The Reformation caused a series of wars between Catholic and Protestants, which were often fought with great ferocity, and marked by such atrocities as the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day (1572), when between 5000 and 10,000 French Protestants were killed.

In these wars political motives were usually compounded with religious aims; but the religious issue was the original cause of the conflict and it remained basic. That Christianity, which exalts the virtues of love, mercy and peace, should have generated such wars is not surprising on analysis. The belief that Christianity embodies God's plan for mankind's salvation has caused its adherents to lay absolute emphasis upon holding the correct form of the faith, and to be intolerant towards any deviation from what they regard as orthodoxy. Hence the extirpation of heresy or false doctrine has been deemed a sacred duty that transcended humanitarian considerations. It is significant that with the secularization of European society from the 18th century, religious wars ceased.

The idea of the holy war has found its most notable instances in the prophetically inspired religions of Judaism, Christianity and

Islam. But the idea has occurred elsewhere, as we have seen. Ancient Greece knew of three sacred wars, which were so declared by the Delphic Amphictyony, a league of states under the patronage of Apollo of Delphi. A sacred war was declared by the league on any member state deemed to have committed sacrilege against Apollo by such acts as levying tolls on pilgrims or seizing control of the Delphic sanctuary and its famous oracle. However, the real causes of these wars, and indeed the underlying purpose of the Amphictyony itself, were political. War was a sacred necessity for the Aztecs of ancient Mexico, in order to maintain a supply of human victims for sacrifice to their gods. Headhunting, which has been practised by various primitive peoples, may also be regarded as a form of holy war, since the heads were required for fertility rites to promote good harvests (see HEAD).

The sacred character that war has had for many peoples is evident in their customs. For example in Rome, at the start of a war, the general commanding shook the sacred spears of Mars. The standards carried by troops have often borne sacred emblems – the Roman legionaries offered sacrifices to theirs. The triumph decreed by the Roman Senate to a successful general was essentially a religious ceremony which ended with sacrifice offered to Jupiter Capitolinus by the victor, while the enemy leader was executed in the adjacent Mamertine prison. Prisoners have often been sacrificed to war gods – the *Orkneyinga Saga* records a particularly grim example. Torf-Einar, Jarl of Orkney, cut the ribs from the back of a rebel chief, symbolizing the 'blood-eagle', and 'gave' him to Odin.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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Pope Urban II preaching the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont: the response was passionate cries of 'God wills it': 15th century manuscript

WATER

Water of life, water of chaos, water of destruction – these three principal elements flow and mingle in shifting patterns in the symbolism of water

THE SPANISH conquistador Ponce de Leon, governor of Puerto Rico in the early 16th century, set out with three ships in search of the land of Bimini, where he hoped to find the fountain of youth. What he actually discovered was Florida and, by a curious irony, near the site where he landed in 1513 there now stands the city of St Augustine, a famous last retreat for the old, who wait there in the sunshine for death.

The theme of the fountain of youth, the spring of living water, the well at the world's end, the water of life, is old and widespread. In numerous folktales and fairy tales there is a magic liquid which cures all diseases, brings the dead to life and makes anyone who drinks it immortal. Alexander the Great, it was said, went to the world's end to find the water of immortality. Cranach's painting of *The Fountain of Youth* shows old women entering the water which transforms them into young girls, and in Bosch's *Garden of Terrestrial Delights* a fountain of curious and alarming design is the source of the river of life which waters Eden (see ALEXANDER THE GREAT; ELIXIR OF LIFE; FOUNTAIN). Correspondingly, lack of water is associated with death, not only in this world but in the next. In Near Eastern and Christian traditions the dead thirst for cool water, because they exist in dry, dusty places or in burning hot ones, where the water of refreshment and life is missing (see REFRIGERIUM).

Water is naturally linked with life because living things cannot survive without it, and liquids in general are regarded as life-giving. Rain makes the plants grow, babies are generated by sperm and nourished on milk, the chick forms in the liquid of the egg, the child in the womb is lapped in waters which break at its coming, the sap is the life of the tree, and blood is the life of men and animals for when they lose it they weaken and die. Intoxicating liquids are connected with life because they make people 'lively', and this

Father and Mother Nile, from an Egyptian tomb of the 19th Dynasty: one of the principal strands in the symbolism of water is its connection with life – the rain which fertilizes the soil, the river which irrigates it

Grecht

We wash away physical dirt with water, and so we wash away spiritual dirt with it too and this may be an essential pre-requisite for approaching the divine

is reflected in the words for alcohol in various languages – *aqua vitae*, *eau de vie*, *lebenswasser*, all meaning 'water of life' – and in the term 'spirit', referring to the principle which vivifies matter. Liquids are also life-giving because they flow, they move about while lifeless things stay still. Mercury was called quicksilver, 'living silver', because it is mobile, which was the basis of its importance as the 'spirit' in alchemy, and one of the processes in the alchemical work was the 'bath of rebirth' (see ALCHEMY: MERCURY).

The Spring of Eternal Life

The life-giving divine spirit and the life-giving rain are linked in Isaiah (chapter 44), when God says to Israel: 'For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring', and that God 'pours' his material and spiritual blessings on man, as rain pours from the sky, has become a common figure of speech. In Jeremiah (2.13) God is called 'the fountain of living waters'. In Ezekiel (chapter 47), the river of life flows out from Jerusalem to irrigate the desert, to freshen the waters of the Dead Sea and make it swarm with fish. The book of Zechariah (chapter 14), describing the coming 'day of the Lord' when God will become king over the whole earth, says that he will stand on the Mount of Olives and 'living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem . . . it shall continue in summer as in winter'. And the people will go up to Jerusalem every year to worship God and to keep the Feast of Booths. If any fail to go up, 'there will be no rain upon them' (except for the Egyptians, who did not depend directly on rainfall and so are threatened with plague).

This prophecy links the river of life and the rain with the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, a harvest festival during which the people lived outdoors in arbours covered with foliage, in memory of the passage of their ancestors through the wilderness, when God had miraculously supplied them with water and had 'rained' manna from heaven for them to eat (Exodus 16.4). The green arbours recall the garden of Eden, which was watered by a river that divided into four rivers (Genesis, chapter 2). The new Jerusalem, the heavenly paradise of the book of Revelation (chapter 22) contains 'the river of the water of life, bright as crystal', which is the river of Eden, and the tree of life which stood in Eden.

It was during the Feast of Booths, apparently as the libation of water was being poured out, that Jesus said, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink' (John, chapter 7), and earlier he had told the woman by the well in Samaria: 'Everyone who drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life' (John, chapter 4). In Christian symbolism the four rivers of Eden were identified with the four gospels which brought the life-giving message of Christ, and the living water with the water which flowed from Christ's side on the cross.

Clean Hands and Pure Heart

'Cleanliness is next to godliness', the proverb says, and in many societies washing in water or being sprinkled with it cleans away pollution, the contamination which may arise from many sources, including blood, childbirth, sex, the dead, a sin or a breach of custom (though water is by no means the only purifying agent – fire, blood, sand and other substances have also been used). We wash away physical dirt with water, and so we wash away spiritual dirt with it too, and this may be an essential pre-requisite for approaching the divine. In Islam the faithful must wash before each of the five daily sayings of prayer, and tanks or wells are provided at mosques for the worshippers' ablutions. The priests of ancient Egypt shaved their entire bodies every three days and washed themselves in cold water twice each day and twice each night. In Hinduism a ritual bath, which achieves both physical and spiritual cleanliness, is most effectively taken in a river or a sacred pool or a tank provided at a temple. The 'ghats' or sites of ritual bathing are regarded as spiritual 'centres' at which the bather is linked with both earth and heaven. The European magical textbooks put a high value on cleanliness, to rid the magician of impurities on which a spirit might fasten and as a sign of dedication to the work in hand (see RITUAL MAGIC).

Below **Physical dirt is washed away with water, and so symbolically is spiritual dirt and guilt: Pilate 'washing his hands' of Jesus, a stained glass window in Lincoln Cathedral**
Right **Detail from Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*, where Jesus turned water into wine: liquids, especially intoxicating liquids which make people 'lively', are generally connected with life in symbolism**

Sonia Halliday

There are numerous references in the Old Testament to ritual purification with water. In Exodus (chapter 30), priests are instructed on pain of death to wash their hands and feet before approaching the altar. Anyone who touched the bed of a menstruating woman was required to wash himself and his clothes in water (Leviticus, chapter 15), and people and things which had been in contact with the dead had to be sprinkled with water or washed in it (Numbers, chapter 19). In Psalms 18 and 24 clean hands are equated with 'righteousness' and 'a pure heart'. In strict Jewish households the hands must be washed before saying prayers and before any meal which includes bread. Jewish families which do not keep a separate set of dishes and glasses for the Passover meal may purify their ordinary tableware by dipping it in boiling water.

Roman Catholic priests wash their hands in a basin called a lavabo before saying Mass. 'Holy water', specially blessed by a priest, is provided at the doors of churches so that worshippers can sprinkle themselves with it before going in. It is also sprinkled on the congregation at Mass on Sundays, and it has long been regarded as a powerful defence against evil forces.

In Christian baptism, as in ancient Egyptian mortuary ritual, the two ideas of the

ECCE

God of Waters

By dread deeds thou dost answer us with
deliverance,
O God of our salvation,
who art the hope of all the ends of the earth,
and of the farthest seas;
who by thy strength hast established the
mountains,
being girded with might;
who dost still the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples;
so that those who dwell at earth's farthest
bounds
are afraid at thy signs;
thou makest the outgoings of the morning
and the evening
to shout for joy.

Thou visitest the earth and waterest it,
thou greatly enrichest it;
the river of God is full of water;
thou providest their grain,
for so thou hast prepared it.
Thou waterest its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
Thou crownest the year with thy bounty;
the tracks of thy chariot drip with
fatness.
The pastures of the wilderness drip,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

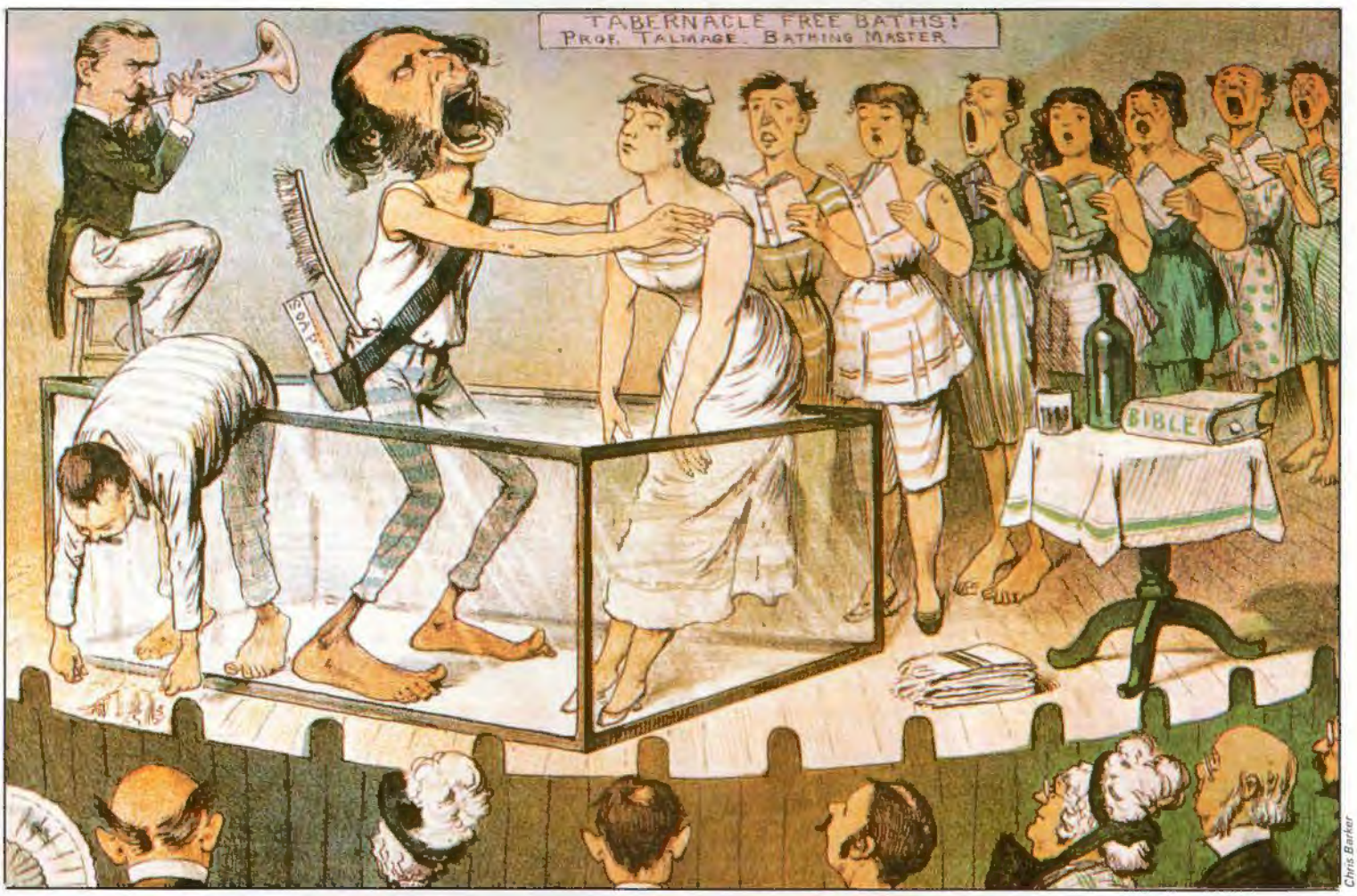
Psalm 65. 5-13

water of life and the water of cleanliness were brought together. The water which washes away dirt and corruption became also the water of life, effecting a spiritual rebirth. In Romans (chapter 6) St Paul presented baptism as 'a ritual death and rebirth, which simulates the death and resurrection of Christ' (see BAPTISM).

In the background of this view of baptism is the notion of water as *fons et origo*, the fount and origin of all forms of life. In some creation myths, there existed in the beginning a chaos of water, from which the world or the god who made the world emerged (see CREATION MYTHS). But though water is sometimes regarded as the vital principle – the rain which fertilizes the soil, the river which irrigates it – the vital principle may alternatively be air, breath or spirit (see BREATH), which injects vitality into the formless waters of chaos and creates forms – the structures and bodies of the phenomena of our world. Mircea Eliade comments on the symbolism of baptism and initiation by water in this light: 'Immersion in water symbolizes a return to the pre-formal, a total regeneration, a new birth, for immersion means a dissolution of forms, a reintegration into the formlessness of pre-existence; and emerging from the water is a repetition of the act of creation in which form was first expressed.' This brings to mind the parallel, which the alchemists drew, between the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism in the waters of Jordan and the Spirit of God moving over the primeval waters in Genesis.

The writer of 2 Peter (chapter 3) observed that God made the world out of the water of chaos and through this same water destroyed the world again in the Flood. Later writers saw a parallel between the waters of the Flood and the water of baptism, and saw Noah's ark, riding out the Flood, as a foreshadowing of salvation through Christ. 'Christ the firstborn of every creature,' said Justin Martyr (2nd century AD), 'has become

Left **In Christian baptism the two ideas of the water of life and the water of purification are brought together: *Jesus baptized in Jordan*, by Verrocchio and Leonardo *Below* Satirical view of baptisms at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, New York, from *Puck***



Chris Barker

Victoria and Albert Museum/Mark Gerson

Illustration by W. Heath Robinson to Charles Kingsley's children's book *The Water Babies* (1863): small beings in human form were believed by many American Indian peoples to live in lakes, springs and streams, and were usually feared as uncanny

in a new sense the head of another race, of those whom he has brought to birth by water, faith and the wood that holds the mystery of the Cross, just as Noah was saved in the wood of the Ark.' Noah's ark is related to the symbolism of the Church as a ship, in which the faithful ride out the storms and perils of this world (see SHIP), and baptism was also taken to have been prefigured in the crossing of the Red Sea, the triumphant and miraculous passage through water in which the Israelites escaped from bondage in Egypt, as the Christian in baptism escaped from slavery to the Devil.

The story of the Flood, with its parallels in other traditions (see END OF THE WORLD; FLOOD), is an example of yet another aspect of water symbolism, which stems from the fact that too much water is as harmful to life as too little: you can drown in it. There is in water, especially in the sea, a power of violence, turbulence and destruction which threatens life and good order. In Babylonian mythology the monstrous sea, Tiamat, whose 'eyes' were the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, threatened to overthrow the gods. In Canaan, Baal conquered Yam, the god of seas and rivers and waters underground, and there are passages in the Old Testament referring to Yahweh's conquest of a sea monster, the ancestor of the Great Beast of Revelation (see GREAT BEAST) and more distantly of the threatening monsters which in science fiction come up out of the depths to destroy the world as incarnations of primeval chaos.

But the waters of chaos are also the waters of potential life. Many alchemists regarded their processes as a repetition, in miniature, of the process of creation described in Genesis. 'Perform no operation till all be made water,' they said, meaning that the material in the vessel, or spiritually the alchemist himself, must be reduced to the state of watery primeval chaos before 'philosophical mercury', the divine spirit of life, could move over the waters to create a new material or a new condition.

The Mind's Depths

As the fount and origin of life water may naturally be connected with woman. Aphrodite, the Greek love goddess, was born of the sea, the fountain is one of the emblems of the Virgin Mary, and in the Cabala the Sefirah Binah (see CABALA) is called the Mother, the Throne, the Great Sea. In modern magical systems it is linked with the waters of chaos in Genesis and with female symbols, the cup, circle, oval and diamond. Water is also linked with the moon, which 'flows' in the sense that it constantly changes shape, and which is connected with the flow of the tides and the ebbing and flowing of all the rhythms of life (see MOON).

Both water and the moon are connected by many modern interpreters of symbolism and mythology with the 'depths' of the mind, the unconscious, the swirling currents of the inner self. According to C. G. Jung, the sea or any large expanse of water appearing in dreams and fantasies is an image of the unconscious. Here again, the depths of the self are chaotic, formless, and pregnant with violence and destruction, but are also the wellsprings of the life of the conscious mind. 'If attention is directed to the unconscious,' Jung said, 'the unconscious will yield up its contents, and these in turn will fructify the conscious like a fountain of living water.'

(See also BRIDGES; DRAGON; ELEMENTS; FISH; GANGES; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; MERMAIDS; MIRROR; NYMPHS; SEA; SPRINGS AND WELLS.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (Verry, Lawrence, 1963); R. Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Serapis* (E. J. Brill, 1981).

Many apparently magical methods of forecasting the weather have proved to have a scientific basis; but whether medicine-men and witches have been able to influence the elements, and if so how, has not been properly explored

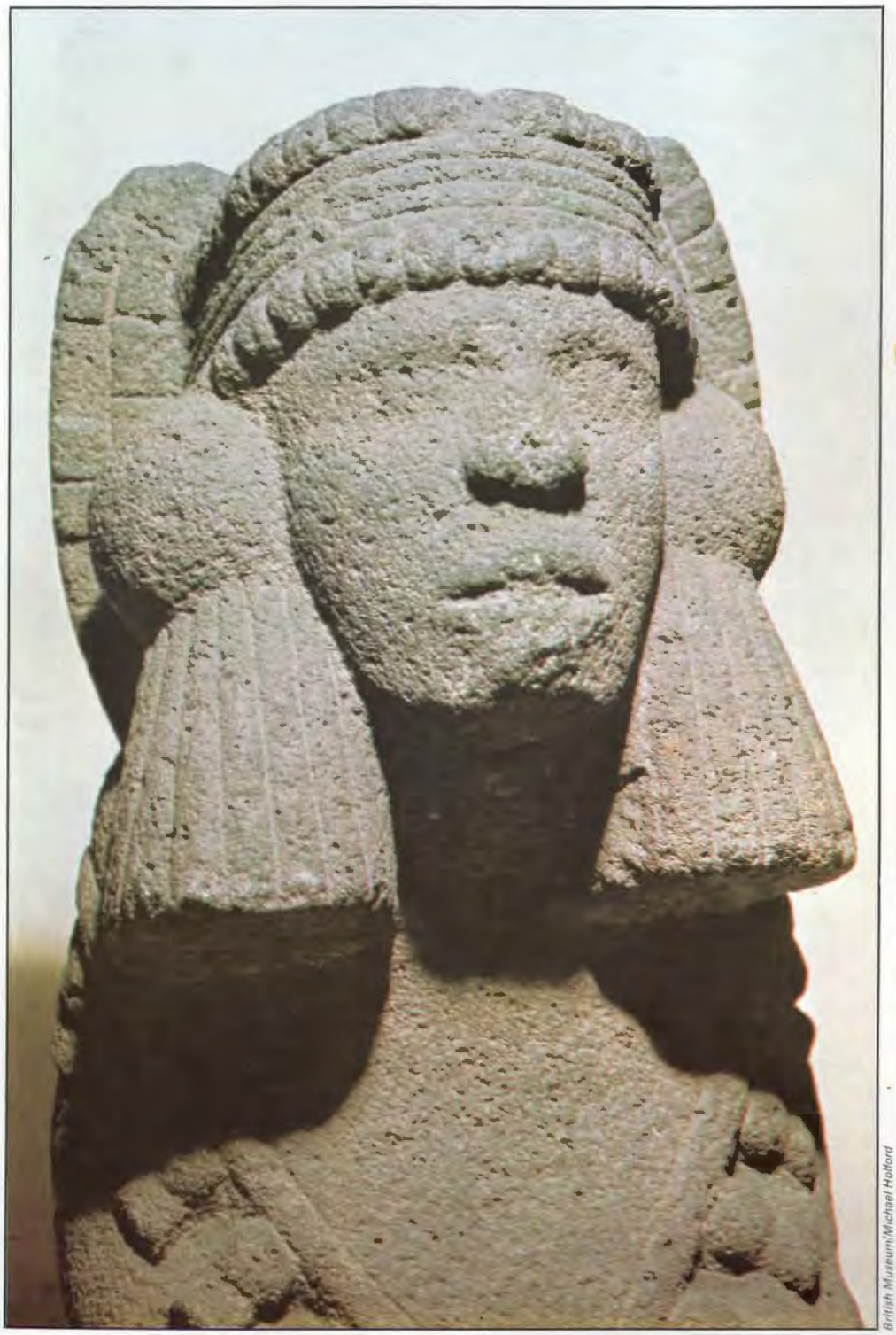
WEATHER MAGIC

THERE HAS BEEN no time in human history when people have not needed to know something about the weather. Probably under modern conditions we have less knowledge of the weather than ever before. In the great civilized countries of the world, the red sky at night is no longer a warning that the cloud will disappear and fine weather will come on the morrow, but it tells us of the glare of neon signs in peace and of the burning of cities in time of war. We fill our world with artificial light so that it is only in the more remote areas that one can take a walk at night to admire the moon and the stars. Within the great city the moon is less brilliant than the street lights.

To our unsophisticated ancestors the world was a place full of magic, and most important of all the phenomena of Nature were the coming and going of rain and snow, which determined the growth of the food crops for the primitive farmer; and for the hunters the rainfall determined the amount of fresh grass available for the migrating herds of deer and bison. Sometimes quite alarming falls of coloured dust of unknown origin caused red rains, white rains and black rains which were carefully noted in the historical annals of past times. Hail storms occurred with sudden changes of temperature, sometimes blighting new crops by a layer of thin frozen ice, but more often actively destroying crops through the massive battering of larger hailstones crashing to the ground and beating everything flat beneath them.

Demons of the Desert

Then there were the winds; to most of us the winds have simply come from the four directions of north, south, east and west. We, who live in the great cities of the world just notice whether a day is windy or not, but to the seaman and the farmer each wind still has its own character, bringing its specific blessing or danger to the crops and animals. In addition to the normal winds there are the sudden and more violent winds, the waterspouts and the hurricanes; terrible things which cause tremendous damage as they sweep across the country. Sometimes, after a waterspout has passed, the ground is seen to be covered with small frogs or even fishes. Sometimes leaves of trees from far distant places are cast down as the storm passes. To primitive man all these phenomena are not only beyond his control, as indeed they are today, but also totally



British Museum/Michael Holford

Axel Poignant

'To our unsophisticated ancestors the world was a place full of magic', and weather phenomena were linked with gods and spirits ***Left*** **Head of a basalt figure of the Aztec goddess Chalchihuitlicue, consort of the rain god: she was the spring rains, the whirlwinds, the whirlpools in the water and all young growing plants** ***Above*** **Australian aboriginal lightning spirit**

beyond his rational understanding. The frogs from the waterspout are sent by the gods, to convey a warning to the local population. The dust storms running along the edge of the deserts are inhabited by terrifying jinn, dangerous whirling spirits who, if they come your way, must not be looked upon. You take cover and wrap your face in a cloth so as to avoid breathing in the hot burning sand which comes with them.

All around the skies of the world lightning plays from time to time. To the North American Indians this is the flashing beak of the great thunder-bird as she flies through the storm. To the classical Europeans these were the thunderbolts cast, by the king of the gods. Even in far Tibet the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism involves the use of the metal *Dorje*, which represents a thunderbolt, in the temple services. It is a symbol of destruction, even to the point of annihilation. In some circumstances it is the symbol of terror, but in others those who possess the secret inner knowledge see it as a symbol of an ultimate blessing when a soul is set entirely free from the wishes and dislikes of normal existence; the past chains of earthly existence are broken and the soul moves through to a state of unbeing. However, few people have the philosophic detachment of a highly trained lama in his mountain monastery. Nevertheless, what happens with the weather has always been of great importance, not only for the practice of hunting and agriculture, but also as a means of divination of the quality of great events.

Winds in a Bag

Among the world's greatest weather watchers in ancient times were the Etruscans of northern Italy (see ETRUSCANS). Their diviners, who cast prophecies from the state of the sky, achieved great fame and it was customary in the early days of Rome for the Senate to send deputations to Etruscan cities to ask for advice when their own oracles seemed doubtful. The Etruscan soothsayers preferred to work from a high clear mountain with an even view of the sky in all directions; if it was situated above oak woods, so much the better. The oak (see OAK) was a sacred magical tree with tremendous strength and so it had a relationship with the strength of the thunderbolt-throwing god Tinia, who was the Etruscan

equivalent of Jupiter. They divided the sky not only into four directions, but each of these were again divided into four, so that there were 16 wind directions to be regarded. Particularly in thundery weather, the observers would wait on the hilltops, marking the direction of lightning flashes exactly, taking note of their brilliance and of the places where they appeared to strike. From this study they calculated the incidence of danger, and of blessings coming from the different directions. The augurs then assessed their particular meanings for the person or city on whose behalf they were consulting the elements.

By no means all people had the skill of the Etruscans in observing the weather. But there is no known group who do not take notice of the quality of the sky and of what it forebodes to them in the way of success or failure in hunting and agriculture.

For most people, knowledge of the sky sufficient to give a clue to tomorrow's weather is quite enough. But quite often a much fuller knowledge is demanded, even in primitive society, and this is expected from the weather specialists, the shamans (see SHAMAN) who have watched the skies sufficiently long and thoroughly to form judgements. They make their estimates from wind, cloud, the flight of birds and the colour of the sky, particularly at sunrise and sunset.

Such specialists included the magicians of Northern Europe, who were said to have the power to tie the winds in a length of rope. This power might be used for evil magic, by pulling the knots tight, when it was believed that the winds would be stopped and ships becalmed, with consequent loss of business and even health, if the calm lasted for a long time. The way in which the knots were used to tie up the bag in which the wind was symbolically trapped is reminiscent of Greek mythology. The magician would have his wind bag, which he would use like the bellows of a bagpipe for sympathetic magic, thus inducing the real winds to follow the example of the air

'Red sky at night, shepherd's delight': chimney-pots silhouetted against the sunset in London. Many simple methods of weather forecasting have survived into modern times and have proved to have some scientific basis

Picturepoint

being expelled. Such men were powerful far back into history.

The Viking navigators were naturally deeply interested in this form of magic. And among their crews there were people who knew the weather sufficiently well in summer, which was the period when the great voyages were undertaken, to navigate the North Atlantic from Oslo fjord right across to Iceland and on to Greenland. In the Vinland Sagas we hear of the noble Thorfinn Karlsefni, who was so sure of the navigation of the ocean that long before the discovery of the mariner's compass he left Norway with the intention of missing Iceland and making his landfall at Brattahlid in Greenland. He succeeded in the adventure, and as he landed, saw a beautiful lady sitting spinning wool beside her father's house. And that led to a romance which in turn led to the first white settlement in North America. But weather magic on the scale necessary to the great northern voyages was by no means common in the world.

Continual Rain in Paradise

Perhaps the most difficult of all forecasting performed by people living the simple life was that of predicting the coming of rain in semi-desert areas. Some successful meteorological observers probably possessed clairvoyant powers; in Africa, Masai shamans would sit on the hilltops near Mt Kenya and look at the sky, knowing from the position of the stars what season of the year it was. By the colour of the sky, by the appearance of little drifts of clouds forming near the snowcap of the mountain, they would estimate whether the rains would be early or late, in order to give the farmers a few days' warning of the coming rain, so that the planting could be achieved in time. When the forecasts proved wrong the rain-maker would be considered to have been abandoned by his spiritual helpers and therefore of no further importance. He might be lucky if he escaped simply with insults and a beating. Usually each of the older forecasters would have an apprentice who was learning the mysteries of the sky, and so other rain-makers would be able to assume their duties when necessary.

Among the Pueblo Indians of Arizona (see PUEBLO INDIANS) there were also many wise shamans who observed the weather. In this semi-desert country, where the water supply was dependent largely on seasonal thunderstorms, it was important to know whether the storms were likely to be light or heavy, early or late. All good observers in the hilltop villages could detect at a glance which way a storm-cloud was moving, and by looking at the shadows of rain or hail falling from its base, they would be able to estimate any possible danger to their crops either by flooding or battering of hail.

In central Mexico (see AZTECS; MEXICO) the weather gods were very important. Tlaloc, the lord of the rain and master of thunder, was a great spirit who controlled the four kinds of rain and brought life and fertility to the earth. His importance was so great that the high priest of the Aztecs was called the Tlaloc Tlamacazqui. He was a sacrificing priest who brought life and

Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Witches working magic to create a hailstorm, a 15th century woodcut: witches were widely believed to be able to affect the weather, and methods of applying electrical and heat energy to weather magic are still being used by modern witches

fertility to the land, although most of his sacrifices were made to the more brutal sun god. The consort of the rain god was the beautiful princess Chalchihuitlicue, who was the spring rains, the whirlwinds, the whirlpools in the water and all young growing plants. Between them they looked after the fertility of the material earth. People who had been struck by lightning or drowned were believed to have been claimed by these deities, and their souls would live in the wonderful paradise where flowers bloomed continually, there were myriads of butterflies, and thin rain fell constantly amid the rainbows. To the Mexicans of the semi-desert highland, this indeed was the most beautiful place which could exist.

Scientific Magic

The importance of thunder gods seems to have been greatest in countries with similarly arid types of climate. The Palestinian god Hadad, lord of the storms and thunder, was worshipped under slight variants of his name far into Babylonia and up into the Persian highlands (see BAAL; SYRIA). Even in the early days of the Jewish faith, Yahweh is often described as the wielder of thunderbolts and storms. There was a natural relationship between the tremendous power which gave life to all plants, and its other destructive manifestation in the lightning and thunder which were so intimately connected with the rain. This, of course, is part of a universal tradition, wherever man lives in civilized town states which depend to a great extent on agriculture.

There are many simple ways of forecasting weather which have survived into modern times; the old saying 'Red sky at morning, shepherd's warning; red sky at night, shepherd's delight', belongs to the weather of the Northern Hemisphere, and has some scientific basis.

One can tell a great deal from the flight of birds because many birds sweep through the air almost like gliders and naturally the height of their flight depends upon the pressure of the air; the higher the pressure, the higher the birds can float into the sky. In the advent of stormy conditions, ripples and whirlpools in the atmosphere in advance of the depression cause the birds to fly in little clusters, where normally they would fly in large groups. So there is some justification for observing the birds flying home at sunset in order to predict the next day's weather.

One of the most solidly based methods of forecasting, traditionally used by farmers and shepherds and surviving into modern times, was demonstrated to me recently by a farmer in south Wiltshire. Every morning he would consult his well about the weather outlook for that day. He would look down the well at the surface of the water, and decide whether it was curved slightly upwards at the edges or slightly downwards; this was an indication of air pressure, the water acting as an Aneroid barometer. He would also observe the height of the dampness on the sides of the well. If the damp was at the top of the well and running downwards, he would expect rain, if there was moisture from the surface of the water rising upwards a little, he would expect the weather to remain cold. There were many observations possible in this way, dependent on the state of humidity in the air. His own practical knowledge of the run of seasonal weather, linked with the detailed observations, were sufficient to give him a very good estimate of the weather for the next 24 hours. In this case we were able to check his observations with our own meteorological studies and both sides found a great deal of interest in observing the skill involved in the other's way of forecasting.

A good deal of information about forthcoming weather can also be gleaned from the behaviour of flowers, the way animals turn their backs to the wind, how cows in a field will take shelter from expected rain before its arrival, and so on. Much of the sensitivity of animals with regard to rain is now known to be due to increasing atmospheric humidity causing the hair of their coats to expand and irritate them.

In the busy life of a farming community, day-to-day weather observation was everybody's concern because it was so important. However, in doubtful situations the specialist, with his greater knowledge and experience, would be consulted. He would be asked to predict a date for the end of a spell of dreary wet weather which had made it impossible to plough the ground or plant the seeds, or when a drought would end. The weather-wise seer was looked upon with special respect. He may have observed that spells of fine weather usually go in units

of four days, but that in wintertime this would apply to spells of quiet, grey weather. In other words, in the middle latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, areas of high pressure usually circulate for four days and then either move away or reform. Such knowledge for the primitive observer without written records depends upon personal observation.

The Celtic Druids were skilled in weather magic. Their very name means 'men of the oak-tree' and associates them with ideas of the knowledge of trees and of the inner life of trees. This was magically expressed for them by the appearance of mistletoe on oak trees (see DRUIDS; MISTLETOE), showing that the god had fertilized the earth and was giving new strength and power. Their traditional knowledge has been preserved for us in many little nursery rhymes and riddles which refer to the wind and the sky. Like all people concerned with the natural growth of crops, the Druids realized that the power behind the weather had spiritual connotations, that the life of man was closely linked with the movements of wind and rain.

Splitting a Cloud

At all times magicians, witches and ecstatics of various kinds have been credited with influencing the weather; not only the shaman tying knots in his rope, but also the witches in their magical rituals, flying through the air on their broomsticks. They swept along among the clouds, they brought mists, they threw the hail, they were able to charm the winds on the ocean so that they could float to sea in a sieve.

Even under modern civilized conditions, there are various curious phenomena to be found in the experience of witchcraft. In periods when the atmosphere is highly charged with electricity and the skin is dry, a group of naked dancers in a circle may find themselves producing sudden little flashes of fire all over their bodies. This is due entirely to the electrical static discharge between the atmosphere and their skins. These discharges may often be very beautiful in the dark, like veils of flashing pale blue diamonds appearing all over the dancer. Such things in the past must indeed have seemed magical and mysterious, although to a modern mind they are simply curious and rather beautiful. There is also the possibility of a group dancing in a circle producing electrical or even heat energy of a mild form. When the atmosphere is unstable, this may be sufficient to cause some change in the structure of cloud.

Although nothing has been reported in recent years to compare with the storm-raising powers credited to medieval witches, or with the bringing of thunder and lightning from the heavens which was attributed to priests and magicians in classical times, in practice it has been found possible to split a small cloud in unstable weather conditions. A few years ago, three friends walking along a path in thundery weather observed a small cloud blowing up directly towards them. By looking towards it and assuming that the cloud would divide, they witnessed the actual splitting of the cloud into two portions as it approached and then passed in its separate halves overhead.

This one experiment is by no means proof of the power of projected energy, but it was suggestive in that the projection of thought in this emotional state is accompanied by a slight increase in heat energy; and it may just have been possible that this was directed at, and helped to disperse, some of the water droplets at the front of the approaching cloud and so set up conditions under which it would divide. In this case the people concerned were totally naked, and therefore energy was reflected from the surface of their bodies.

Unimpressive as this little experiment may seem, it did give a clue to the possibility that people much more devoted to such activity, and with a deeper occult knowledge than is available in these days, were able to cause clouds to disperse.

However, the whole of this field of weather control by magic is insufficiently explored in modern times, and a good deal more research is necessary in order to lay down any sound principles. The main importance of weather magic today is that without the scientific work of a professional meteorologist, it is possible for ordinary people to look at the sky and say what tomorrow's weather will be. That in itself is a phenomenon worth noting and an achievement of the human personality.

(See also SKY.)

C. A. BURLAND

Wedding Customs

The giving of gifts is usually an important part of a marriage ceremony, and so is the eating of food, certain items being essentially symbolic; new clothes are often required, and the couple may be showered with rice, sweets or other symbols of fertility; the wedding ring stands for marital union and constancy; many wedding customs reflect the fact that marriage means the transfer of one of the couple to a different kin group.

See MARRIAGE AND BETROTHAL; RING; THRESHOLD.

Weighing of the Soul

Motif in the judgement of the dead; in ancient Egyptian accounts the dead person's heart is weighed in the balance against a feather, the symbol of truth; in medieval Christian representations of the Last Judgement the Archangel Michael weighs the souls of the dead.

See JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD.

THOMAS WEIR

IT WAS the curious fate of Thomas Weir to enjoy during his lifetime a reputation for extreme religious zeal and piety, and to be remembered after his death as one of Scotland's most notorious witches. He was born in Lanark about 1600, the son of a family of some standing in Clydesdale, and was executed in Edinburgh in 1670 for crimes of which he had never been suspected until he suddenly and quite spontaneously confessed to them. In between these two dates, he had been well known as an ardent Covenanter, one of the promoters of the Western Remonstrance in 1650, a violent anti-royalist during the Civil Wars, and a fanatical opponent at all times of the Established Church.

In 1641 Weir served as a lieutenant in the army sent by the Covenanting Estates into Ireland, and in 1649 and 1650 he was a commander in the City Guard of Edinburgh. He was then a major, and he was known by that title for the rest of his life. He is said to have shown great severity and cruelty to any Royalists who fell into his hands, and to have gone out of his way to insult and humiliate his wretched prisoners. In his later years, when he was a member of an extreme Presbyterian sect, sometimes called the Bowhead Saints, he was renowned throughout Edinburgh for his remarkable gifts of extemporary prayer and exhortation. Many flocked to his house to hear him pray, and he was constantly called upon to take part in private meetings, to bless the families of the faithful, and to offer up prayers by the bedsides of the sick. He always carried a black staff with a thorn-wood head, and leant upon it while he prayed; and it was noticed that if he became separated from it for any reason, his power and fluency seemed to desert him.

In 1670, this respected mao suddenly confessed to a number of abominable crimes, secretly committed over many years. He told the appalled and incredulous members of his own sect that he had been guilty of adultery with 'several and diverse persons', and of

long-continued fornication with his maid-servant; of incest with his stepdaughter, and also with his sister, Jean, from the time she was 16 till she was 50 years old; and of bestiality with animals, particularly one of his own riding-mares. His horrified co-religionists at first refused to believe these wild statements and then, for fear of being involved in the inevitable scandal, tried to conceal them. Eventually, however, the Provost of Edinburgh was informed. He not unnaturally concluded that the Major was demented, and sent doctors to examine him. They reported that he was quite sane, and suffering only from an outraged conscience. Some ministers subsequently sent by the Provost also declared that he was not mad, but driven by 'the terrors of God that were upon his soul'. He was therefore arrested, and with him, the sister he had implicated in part of his confession.

Notwithstanding his posthumous reputation, Weir was never indicted for witchcraft, nor does he seem to have acknowledged that offence in so many words, though it formed part of the evidence at the trial. His sister, however, was accused of sorcery as well as incest, and confessed to both. One of the charges brought against her was that she had a familiar spirit which kept her constantly supplied with quantities of good yarn. In fact, there is no evidence that she ever kept a familiar spirit in the usual sense of that phrase; but she admitted that, many years before, when she lived in Dalkeith, she had trafficked with messengers from the 'Queen of Farie', and with one of these she had gone through a ritual equivalent to the renunciation of her baptism. From then on, she was never without yarn 'ready for her upon the spindle, whatever business she had been about'.

She also said that, in 1648, she and her brother had been transported in a coach 'which seemed all of fire' to Musselburgh, and there the Major heard from the Devil news of the battle of Preston which did not reach Scotland by normal means for several days afterwards. As soon as they were both arrested, she drew the guards' attention to his staff, saying that it had magical powers, and that he had received it from the Devil himself. It was perhaps after this that so many people remembered that he could not pray without it.

'Nothing But Darkness'

While he was in prison, Weir was visited by several well-intentioned ministers, who urged him to repent and ask God's pardon for his sins. He would not listen to any of them. He said he knew he was already damned beyond hope, and that no prayers or exhortations could save him. 'I find nothing within me,' he declared on one occasion, 'but blackness and darkness, brimstone, and burning to the bottom of Hell.' In that despairing state he continued until the end.

The evidence against both the Weirs depended almost entirely upon their own confessions. Several witnesses at the trial testified to statements made earlier in their presence, including one man who said he had asked Thomas if he had seen the Devil, and had been told only that 'any feeling he ever had of him was in the dark'. His sister-in-law stated that once she had surprised him in the act of incest with his sister and heard scandalous talk between them. Another woman said she had seen him committing bestiality with a mare, and had complained to the minister of the parish; but because she could not prove the charge, she had been publicly whipped for slandering 'such an eminent holy man'.

Except for the evidence of these witnesses, there were only the confessions, reiterated and steadily persisted in with a fervour that suggests the Provost's original suspicions may have been right. Both prisoners were convicted. The Major was strangled and then burnt on 11 April 1670, his staff being burnt with him, and on the following day his sister was hanged.

Weir's house in the West Bow survived him for about 150 years. It was said to be haunted by his ghost, who was sometimes seen issuing from it on foot, or on horseback, or driving away from it in a spectral coach in the small hours of the morning. Neighbours and passers-by often heard sounds as of howling, and dancing, and the hum of a spinning-wheel. No one had the hardihood to live in it, or pass a night there; it was finally pulled down in the 1830s, and no trace now remains of this dwelling of evil memory.

CHRISTINA HOLE

Stories of men having the power to change themselves into ravening beasts have gained currency in almost every part of the world; a universality which suggests that the underlying idea emanates from deep within man's own mind

WEREWOLF

IN LEGEND, the werewolf is a living person who has the magical power to change his or her shape. In its bestial form it is a terrorizer, a killer, an eater of human flesh. These two elements – metamorphosis and murder – form the basis, and much of the substance, of the legend. But the werewolf's family tree is ancient, vast and has many spreading branches. Some branches lead to the realm of revenants (those who have returned from the dead), where ghosts and vampires walk; others lead to evil sorcery, witchcraft and diabolism.

The idea of the werewolf is based on the acknowledgement of 'the beast in man' – our dual nature, which was no doubt as much of a commonplace in the Stone Age as in our Age of Psychoanalysis. Primitive mythology, naturally, makes much of the concept. Sometimes we are said to be descended from original, semi-divine animals, and sometimes the primitive feels a mystical and total identity with an animal, in the religious belief called 'totemism' (see TOTEM). In folktale, the culture heroes appear in indeterminate, human or animal form, like Coyote and the other tricksters of American Indian myth (see TRICKSTER). And there are numerous tales of intermarriage, when a humanized animal takes a human mate, perhaps producing offspring with the power of shape-shifting. These and other elements of primitive myth establish the widespread belief in metamorphosis (see SHAPE-SHIFTING). When the assumed shape was that of a dangerous animal, a carnivorous enemy of man, the element of murder enters the picture as well, and the werewolf idea begins to emerge.

But not only the werewolf emerges. The world's folklore is full of other were-animals. ('Were' may come from the Old English word for 'man', and the corresponding terms in other languages are mostly similar compounds meaning 'man-wolf'.) Even those lands where the wolf is or was native have tales of other were-creatures: were-bears in Russia and Scandinavia, for instance. Lands without wolves have tales of were-hyenas, were-lions, were-crocodiles, were-jackals. In 1933 a respectable British doctor reported that he had seen two Africans turn themselves into jackals during a ceremony (see ATAVISM). But the were-leopard dominates the African tradition, assisted by sensationalized tales of the secret cult of the Leopard Men (see AFRICA), which gained much attention earlier in this century.

Similarly, were-tigers have been noted in the supernatural lore of India and other Asian lands; were-jaguars and sometimes were-snakes terrorize South American tribesmen. And though occasionally the were-animal is not of the most ferocious species (the Chinese have tales of were-foxes, for instance, rather like the cats or hares that witches are said to become, in European tales), in general the metamorphosis and murder theme predominates.

The Beast in Man

Ancient civilizations provide a number of antecedents for the werewolf. The maenads of ancient Greece (see DIONYSUS) flaunted the 'beast in man' in their ecstasies, and apparently sometimes wore wolf masks during their hunts through the forests. Also from Greece comes the legend of Lycaeon, a man who became over-zealous in his worship of Zeus and sacrificed a child to the god, making an offering of the child's flesh. Zeus changed him into a wolf, as punishment. But later there grew up an ecstatic cult of the worship of Zeus Lycaeus, in which the participants wore wolf masks.

Several notable Greek writers, including Herodotus and Plato, gave credence, or at least currency, to the werewolf idea, and so helped its spread into Europe in later centuries. In ancient Rome, Pliny discussed the idea seriously, Petronius mocked it in the *Satyricon*, and Ovid drew the Lycaeon story into the *Metamorphoses*.

Perhaps all the beast-men and wild men, found in folklore all over the world, are also distant kindred of the werewolf: the satyrs and centaurs of Greece, the Abominable Snowman, human children fostered by animals, as in Kipling's story of Mowgli.

But the metamorphosis and murder is absent, or of minor importance, in such tales. Mowgli is not a werewolf, nor Tarzan a were-ape. More explicitly and directly behind our idea of the werewolf are two strands of folklore from the chillier regions of Europe. Northern peoples generally seem to have viewed the wolf with a fear and hate bordering on hysteria – the kind usually reserved for the worst supernatural monsters (see WOLF). Of course, the wolf was always a dangerous predator that cared little whether its dinner was a prize sheep or the shepherd. But there is more to the fear of the wolf than a mere antipathy to a beast of prey. The wolf seems to be regarded by Europeans as somehow in itself demonic. Wolves are semi-nocturnal, usually greyish in colour, and move in an almost ghostly silence. They have slanting eyes that glow yellow-green in moonlight, red in reflected firelight. And their chilling, banshee-like howl completes the eerie picture.

So the wolf unsettles us, on some deep atavistic level. Which may explain why even today men seek to exterminate this beast, while intending only to control other predators. The wolf has vanished from America (except Alaska), Britain, Germany, Switzerland and France. The French suffered terribly from wolves in the past, which explains the abundance of werewolf (*loup-garou*) tales from that country. In 1963 it was thought that a small pack of wolves had been sighted in France; and though some people believed it was just a pack of half-wild dogs, the mere thought of wolves returning to France made international headlines.

Wolves are still said to roam in eastern Europe, in Russia, and in Spain and Portugal. They exist also in Canada (a man was attacked by wolves in Ontario in 1963), but probably not for long. The hysterical urge to exterminate wolves is well described by the Canadian writer Farley Mowat, in *Cry Wolf*, a book that offers facts about the animal which counter its traditional type-casting as an evil, voracious monster.

No doubt that view will persist, and will pursue the wolf into extinction. Our responses have been conditioned by centuries of horror stories about wolves. Invariably these stories concern the wolf's cruel ferocity and murderousness, and his insatiable hunger. The Bible compares false prophets to 'ravening wolves' in sheep's clothing. A comparable disguise was used by the wolf in the tale of Little Red Riding Hood, which is part of the furniture of the mind of nearly every Western European and North American child. There are a number of old wives' tales of hunters caught out in the northern woods as darkness falls, hearing that echoing howl in the distance, approaching; or of that famous Russian sled, from which members of a family are thrown one at a time in vain sacrifices to a pursuing pack. In common catchphrases, villains grin wolfishly, and gluttons wolf down their food. Above all, there is the Fenris wolf, the most terrible monster of Northern mythology, and the eventual killer of Odin himself (END OF THE WORLD; SCANDINAVIA).

The Fenris wolf points to the second strand of folklore that has contributed directly to the werewolf legend. Scandinavian and Teutonic myth and folklore are full of the combination of metamorphosis and murder. The Norse gods took animal form even more often, it seems, than those of the Greeks. Scandinavian heroes are also often shape-shifters: one Bodvar Bjarhi took the shape of a bear to fight in a great battle in Denmark, recounted in the Norse sagas, and a bear motif appears in the tales of many other heroes (see BEAR; BEOWULF). Clearly there is a link here with the 'berserkers' of Scandinavian legend – the warriors who fell into a battle madness that made them preternaturally powerful, causing them to roar like beasts and foam at the mouth. We use 'berserk' to mean that kind of maniacal fury, but it is said to derive from the Old Norse for 'bear-shirt', referring to the fur garments of these warriors. It was not much of an imaginative step (for their victims especially) to believe that the berserkers not only released the 'beast within' but actually transformed themselves into wild beasts.

The werewolf's impressive European ancestry became focused in the Christian era's dark centuries of superstition and witch hunting. The old horror tales of those

National Film Archive

Man into ravening beast, a film still from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: Robert Louis Stevenson's book used the theme of 'the beast within' which lies behind the stories of werewolves and other were-animals

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Chris Barker

'Northern peoples generally seem to have viewed the wolf with a fear and hate bordering on hysteria', and the human being who turns into a wolf and prowls in search of human victims is a persistent figure of folklore and fantasy
***Top* and *centre* The werewolf of Eschenbach, Germany, 1685, said to have preyed on children *Below* Werewolf attacking a man, from a 15th century German work *Facing page* The Wild Beast of Gévaudan, France, 1765, said to have devoured more than 100 people and to have a particular liking for the flesh of girls**

centuries showed the witches in possession of the shape-shifting power, conferred on them by Satan. The witches were believed to change into cats, hares, toads, and the like. But the ancient wolf fear rose up too, became projected onto Satan's minions, and led to the idea that werewolves were witches who chose to take wolf form, ravaging the countryside as part of their diabolic duties. So the Renaissance witch trials recorded many gory accounts of werewolfism, especially in France and Germany. Often the 'confessions' of witches asserted that whole sabbaths changed into wolf packs; one old Latvian tale described a 12 day march at Christmastide of thousands of demonic werewolves, led by Satan himself in wolf form.

Sometimes the demonologists argued that werewolves were actual demons or imps, rather than metamorphosed human witches. But a few clearer minds, like that of Reginald Scot, author of *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), suggested that shape-shifting was unlikely, that certain kinds of insanity might lead people to imagine that they became wolves. Usually such insanity was ascribed to demonic possession and so although the mental illness known as lycanthropy was recognized quite early, the recognition had little effect on the superstition.

A Belt of Wolfskin

Out of the 16th century obsession with witches and like horrors come some of the world's most famous documented accounts of 'werewolves'. In 1573 a French village was terrorized by a monster that had killed and partially eaten several children. Then a group of villagers rescued another child from an attack by a huge wolf which, they swore, had the face of a local recluse named Gilles Garnier. Garnier was duly induced, by the usual means, to 'confess' to being a werewolf. The authorities, who seemed especially incensed that he had engaged in some of his gruesome feasts on meatless Fridays, ordered him to be burned alive.

Even more fearful was the punishment meted out to Peter Stubb, or Stump, in Germany in 1589. Stubb's 'confession' revealed him explicitly as a diabolist werewolf: he shifted his shape by means of a magical 'girdle' or belt of wolfskin, given to him by the Devil. And as a wolf, Stubb went forth on the Devil's work, to wreak 'his malice on men, women and children'. Apparently he had been doing so for some 25 years before he was caught. He sometimes killed livestock, and occasionally men whom he disliked; but he principally preyed on women and girl children, whom (he claimed) he raped, killed and ate. As a sideline he committed a good deal of ordinary if sinful fornication, as well as incest with his sister and his daughter, and capped his crimes, as the story goes, by killing and eating his own son. Finally he was captured, but the wolfskin belt was not found, which seems to have proved its diabolic origin to the witch-hunters' satisfaction: clearly the Devil had taken it back. Stubb died fearfully, under the most terrible tortures and mutilations.

Somewhat less ugly was the story of Jean

Grenier (see GRENIER), a clearly mentally defective youth accused of being a werewolf in southwest France in 1603. He brought it on himself, boasting of having killed and eaten many girls; and since several children had been killed in the area, he was believed and brought to trial. He claimed that he shifted his shape by means of a magic ointment and a wolfskin cloak given to him by a 'black man', whom he called 'Maître de la Forêt'. The judges sensibly decided that Grenier was suffering from the mental illness of lycanthropy, though they added that it was caused by demonic possession. Grenier was merely imprisoned for life, in a monastery.

Tell-Tale Signs

Since the days of medieval superstition and demonology, the werewolf legend – like so many others – has become a tangled web of older semi-pagan folklore and Christian strands of belief. But out of the tangle can be extracted a fairly clear picture of the werewolf's nature and habits, as he is known in modern European and American lore, and in those Hollywood films in which Lon Chaney Jr created the Wolfman.

The creature's appearance is fairly standardized, in the legends. When there are any visual clues that a man is a werewolf, they include extreme hairiness, straight eyebrows meeting over the nose, strong and claw-like fingernails, small flat ears, or sometimes pointed ears, and the third finger on each hand at least as long as the second.

In wolf form, the werewolf tends generally to be merely an extra large and ferocious wolf. But in some traditions (including the French) the shape-shifting is not complete, which adds to the werewolf's detectability. Gilles Garnier was said to have retained his human features while in wolf form; other tales speak of werewolves with human hands or feet. In the early 20th century, according to the French folklorist Claude Seignolle, a French farmer told of seeing two great wolves who conversed in human voices and who took snuff from a box produced from under the tail of one of them.

But it is rare for a werewolf, after the transformation, to be mainly humanoid – as is the Hollywood Wolfman, who after shape-shifting is simply a man with extra hair, teeth and agility. Even in the Middle Ages, when a hairy man began howling and saying he was a wolf, the experts generally agreed that he was mentally ill, suffering from lycanthropy. If he was a werewolf, those experts knew, he would be able to change into a wolf. Still, controversy often arose over occasional lycanthropes who claimed that they did change into wolves, but wore their hair on the inside. In northern Italy in 1541, one such claimant died under the knives of officials probing for proof of his statement.

These were the same kind of officials who generally agreed that werewolves had made a pact with Satan, who then bestowed upon them the power of metamorphosis. But it is clear that the Christian authorities were trying to patch much older werewolf beliefs onto their systematized accounts of devils. They did not succeed entirely: the seams show. For it is obviously odd and inconsistent that a would-be servant of Satan, who signed that pact, should ask only for the power of shape-shifting. One would have to be a Satanist of very limited ambition to want to be merely a werewolf; after all, any rank-and-file witch could change her shape – as the accounts of 16th century witch trials tell us – and a witch could also raise storms, wither crops, fly on a broomstick or other conveyance and cast a multitude of useful spells.

Of course, much laborious medieval argument arose over whether an actual metamorphosis took place, whether Satan placed the minion's soul in the 'effigy' of a wolf, or whatever. More rewarding, however, are the older, non-Christian ideas about how a werewolf becomes one in the first place. Several of these seem to involve the summoning of a demon to confer the power, but the being who is summoned is quite often obviously an elemental, a pagan spirit (like Jean Grenier's Maître de la Forêt).

How to Become a Werewolf

This conjuring up of an evil spirit is done by a complex ceremony, involving a magic circle, a fire, an incantation or two, application of magical ointment (like the witches' flying ointment) to the nude body, and final donning of a wolfskin cloak or belt. But the shape-shifting power can, in other traditions, come more easily. Sometimes it can come whether you want it or not – if you infringe some taboo. Italian folklore says that if you were conceived at the time of the new moon or if you sleep outdoors on a Friday under a full moon – you will become a werewolf. An obscure flower will, if eaten, confer the power of metamorphosis, according to Balkan legend; so will drinking from a stream where a wolf pack has drunk. Drinking water from a wolf's paw-print, eating a wolf's brains, or eating the flesh of a rabid wolf are the simple do-it-yourself magic for the would-be shape-shifter.

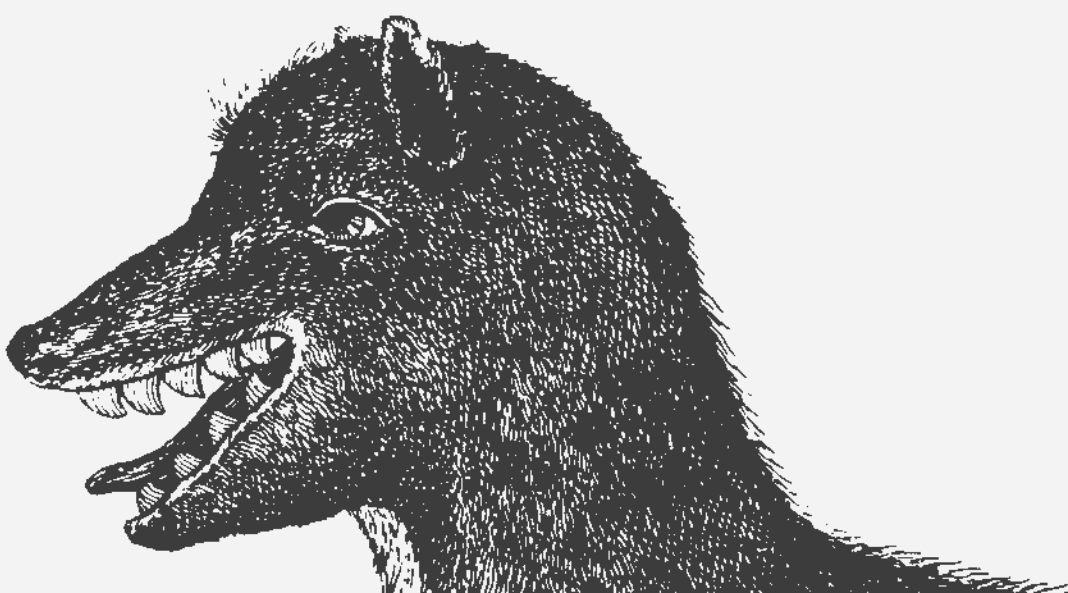
A few ancient writers thought that the power might be hereditary, while others thought that it might grow within a person who lived an especially evil life. An old French tradition tells of priests putting curses on criminals that forced them to be werewolves for seven years. And Paracelsus wrote that particularly evil, bestial men might return after death as werewolves.

The ghost werewolf occurs in a few other places. England's cruel King John was said to have risen after death as a werewolf. And several ghost wolves seen in Britain during the 19th century had human features, which identified them as belonging to this species. It seems that this minor aspect of the legend affected Hollywood: the Wolfman was a resurrected corpse, turned into a werewolf by an accidental combining of magical elements like the plant wolf's-bane and a full moon. But the living men with shape-shifting powers vastly outnumber the revenants, in werewolf traditions.

The technique by which the metamorphosis is accomplished is often the same as that by which the power has been acquired: so many legends say that the change requires, each time, the full ritual and summoning of the evil spirit mentioned before. But as always, folklore likes its simple magics too. Often the mere act of putting on the wolfskin belt will cause the change. In a few gruesome variants, the belt is supposed to be of human skin, preferably from a criminal executed on the gibbet. Some French tales say the werewolf must immerse himself in water, besides putting on the belt, in order to change – though elsewhere in Europe, the werewolf is supposed to exhibit a fear of water, a clear transference from the 'hydrophobia' idea of rabies.

Quite often the werewolf changes by stripping himself under a full moon and urinating in a circle on the earth, a technique used by Guy Endore for the hero of his excellent novel *Werewolf of Paris*, as definitive a work for this body of legend as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is for the vampire. In a few tales, and in Hollywood's films, the full moon alone may effect the change; in a few others, though not as yet in films, stripping nude and rolling about on the ground may do the trick.

Changing back to human form may require the repetition of certain of these actions, like the rolling about or the immersion in water. Some legends say that the werewolf changes back automatically, at dayhreak. Most tales agree that the creature instantly changes back to human form if it is injured or killed. From this idea come all those stories in which a hunter shoots and wounds a marauding wolf, later to learn that some local person has suffered an injury to the same part of the anatomy.



Les Lupins by Maurice Sand: these werewolves of Normandy were believed to steal into cemeteries and dig up corpses to violate and devour

The legends disagree widely on how a werewolf may be injured or killed. In many European tales, it can be caught or destroyed by the same means that would be used against an ordinary wolf. Peter Stubb, for instance, was pursued by men and dogs, and captured when he changed to human form in an attempt to outwit the pursuers. No one seemed surprised that he was as easily killed as any man; many other werewolves in European tales have been simply shot, clubbed or stabbed to death.

In other traditions, however, it seems that the power of the creature must be opposed by some kind of magic. In those traditions where werewolves are believed to be possessed by demons, the holy magic of the Church goes into action, to exorcize them. So a Catholic priest in French Canada is said, in an old tale, to have rescued a man from a loup-garou by magically changing it into its human form. And an old legend from colonial New England mentions a simpler exorcism, when a colonist drove off a pack of werewolves simply by speaking the name of Jesus.

Otherwise, rather more pagan magic is mingled with Christian elements in the werewolf antidotes. In England, Scotland and parts of France the creature is said to be immune to ordinary bullets; although, like vampires and witches, he can be killed by a silver bullet, especially if it is first consecrated in a church. In some instances a cure will be effected if the werewolf is called by his human name, or if he is called three times by his Christian name. French lore says that you may cure the loup-garou by taking three drops of blood from him, or merely pricking him to bleeding point, when he is in wolf form; it is not clear how you get close enough to him, in safety. And those who become werewolves involuntarily can cure themselves, it is said, if they have the strength of character to abstain from human flesh for nine years.

Monster From the Mind's Deeps

A fragment of fact, is to be found at the roots of the werewolf tradition. It has long been recognized that the mental illness known as lycanthropy is associated with a pathological condition in which the sufferer believes himself to be a wild beast and, as the old case histories show, develops a taste for raw or putrid meat, a desire to howl and run naked through the woods, and sometimes a wish to kill, rape and eat young girls. Although it is a rare malady, it may not have been so rare in past centuries; or perhaps other, more common types of sex murderers and child rapists of the past were assumed to be lycanthropes, the more so because such killings often involve an element of mutilation which might make Europeans think of wolves. Assuredly the werewolf is just as sexual a figure as the vampire (see VAMPIRE). But he lacks the sado-erotic subtlety of the vampire: werewolves are crude rapists and murderers, with a few ghoulish or cannibalistic overtones.

Despite this basis of fact, the werewolf belongs rather in the realm of sado-masochistic fantasies. Robert Eisler has thrown some interesting light on these connections, in a theory based firmly on Jungian ideas. Eisler tries to trace the idea of the werewolf back to prehistory, seeing its origin in a primeval clash of cultures between peaceable, vegetarian early man and the brutal, fur-wearing, carnivorous creature that he was forced (by, say, an Ice Age) to become. The clash left scars on the collective unconscious that have still not healed.

Even in this over-simplified form of Eisler's theory, the argument cannot be easily dismissed. The werewolf *is* a monster of the unconscious, one to which folklore and superstition formerly gave fleshly reality and occasionally still do, in modern times: a French farmer in 1930 was accused of changing into a wolf at night; and in 1946 in America a Navaho Indian reservation was terrorized by a murderous beast which was widely reported as a werewolf. (Both Navaho and French traditions are rich in werewolf tales.)

But today the legend has generally retreated to a more subjective reality, without losing any of its horror. Nandor Fodor, the American psychologist and psychical researcher, has collected a number of dreams reported by people under psychoanalysis in which the werewolf theme – metamorphosis and murder – was brutally explicit. 'The old, savage lycanthropic beliefs have been relegated to our dream life where they are still active . . .' Fodor comments, 'the transformation is used symbolically as self-denunciation for secret deeds, fantasies or desires.'

Coming full circle, these psychological insights merely confirm that age-old and universal truth about the inner duality of man, the ravening beast within each of us. As Lord Byron put it:

Lycanthropy
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

History as well as folklore shows that many of us are more than likely to let the beast take over, in an inner 'shape-shifting'.

(See also BERTRAND.) DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: B. Copper, *The Werewolf: in Legend, Fact and Art* (Hale, 1977); Robert Eisler, *Man Into Wolf* (Ross-Erikson, 1978); Montague Summers, *The Werewolf* (Citadel Press, 1973); I. Woodward, *The Werewolf Delusion* (Paddington).

The Lupins

In many parts of France, but more especially perhaps in Britanny, *Le Meneur des Loups* is a well-known figure. He is generally considered to be a wizard, who when the werewolves of the district have met and sit in a hideous circle round a fire kindled in the heart of some forest, leads forth the howling pack and looses them on to their horrid chase. Sometimes he himself assumes the form of a wolf, but speaks with human voice. Gathering his flock around him he gives them directions, telling them what farm-towns are ill-guarded that night, what flocks, what herds, are negligently kept, which path the lonely wayfarer setting out from the inn is taking . . .

In Normandy tradition tells of certain fantastic beings known as *lupins* or *lubins*. They pass the night chattering together and twattling in an unknown tongue. They take their stand by the walls of country cemeteries, and howl dismally at the moon. Timorous and fearful of man they will flee away scared at a footstep or distant voice. In some districts, however, they are fierce and of the werewolf race, since they are said to scratch up the graves with their hands, and gnaw the poor dead bones.

Montague Summers *The Werewolf*

WHALE

THE ANCESTORS of the whale were probably land mammals, whose structure became adapted to living in the sea. Because of its immense size and energy, the whale has attracted a wealth of superstition and folklore. In medieval times, for instance, it was regarded as an aggressive creature armed with huge tusks, a misconception that probably arose from a confusion between the whale and the walrus.

The whale is called 'Fastitocalon' in an Anglo-Saxon bestiary and is described as a deceptive floater on ocean streams, upon which men build a fire and sink to the hall of death; in other words, when the immense bulk of a whale was at rest on the ocean's surface it would occasionally be mistaken for an island by naïve sailors who, in attempting to land upon it, would be suddenly plunged to a watery grave. A similar story is told about the kraken (see KRAKEN). Perhaps because ambergris was an ingredient in perfume the whale was said to have so sweet a breath that fish were lured into its wide-open jaws. As a result of this mistaken belief the creature became the symbol of deceitfulness. It also stood for unintelligent immensity, violent passion and lust.

The whale was worshipped as Mamacocha, or 'Mother Sea', among the Indians on the east coast of Central America. The Arabians believed that a fabulous whale, Bahamut, provided the base upon which the whole world rested, and that earthquakes were the result of its movements. (The beast referred to in Job 40.15, by the similar name of Behemoth, is now considered to have been the hippopotamus.) The whale that swallowed Jonah (see JONAH), and in whose belly the prophet spent three days and three nights, is one of the ten animals that have been allowed to enter paradise, according to Mohammedan legend.

In Christian thought the whale became

According to Mohammedan legend, the whale that swallowed Jonah, and in whose belly the prophet spent three days and three nights, is one of the ten animals allowed to enter paradise: *Jonah and the Whale* by David Jones

Pearl Binder

An allegory of evil in Christian thought, the whale was the emblem of the Devil; its mouth has been regarded as the gateway to the otherworld, while its belly symbolized the infernal regions: a demonic whale threatens a fisherman, illustration from Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal* (1863)

an allegory of evil, the emblem of the Devil, the archetypal snare, baited with sweet aromas, which lured the unwary to eternal damnation. The whale's mouth has often been depicted as the gateway to the otherworld, while its belly has been said to symbolize the infernal regions.

Among some Indian tribes on the western coast of America, the whale was regarded as a totem animal, and was thought to have the power to sink enemy canoes. Whales' teeth and whalebone are both supposed to be extremely effective as amulets; in fact, the teeth have been used for that purpose since Neolithic times. Chieftains of Tonga, Soma and Fiji wore necklaces of whales' teeth, shaped like curved claws, as signs of high rank. Pieces of whalebone were highly valued as charms since they were supposed to confer some of the physical powers of the whale upon the owners.

Ambergris, a grey waxy substance found in the intestines of the sperm-whale, is supposed to be a powerful aphrodisiac. According to Boswell, the biographer of Dr Johnson, it produces 'a greater activity in the intellectual faculties, a disposition to cheerfulness, and venereal desires'.

Primitive whale hunts were associated with a number of specially devised magic rituals which were thought to be necessary because of the dangers involved in hunting. Among the Eskimo, the hereditary role of whaler verged on shamanism, and the whaler was skilled in the art of psychic mimicry and the imposition of taboos. Ritual purity was essential among Greenland hunters if the chase was to be successful, and anyone who wore soiled garments, or who had been in physical contact with a corpse, was excluded from the party. Chastity on the part of the tribal chief was obligatory in many communities. Siberian whale-hunters sought to pacify the mother whale, whose offspring they proposed to kill, with prayers for forgiveness.

Among the Indians of the Bering Straits all work was suspended for four days after a whale had been slaughtered, in the belief that its ghost lingered in the vicinity of its body for this length of time. The Annamese, of what is now Vietnam, regarded even a dead whale washed up on the beach with considerable awe, and always buried the body with elaborate ceremonies which included burning incense and firing crackers.

Shape-shifting between the whale and other creatures of land and sea was not unknown. An Icelandic myth tells of a godless youth who was condemned to assume the shape of a whale as a punishment, and who was killed when he attempted to swim up a waterfall. North American Indians have legends of a terrible killer whale which approaches the shore and assumes the shape of a ravening wolf. In 887 AD a snow-white mermaid, 190 feet long, was reported and was said to be the metamorphosis of a white whale.

The whale represents one of the great cosmic forces of the universe. This symbolism is found in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which tells how Captain Ahab pursues, and finally destroys, the great white whale. This has been interpreted as the eternal conflict between good (Ahab) and evil (the whale), as the war in heaven which led to the downfall of Lucifer. On the other hand, some have maintained that the white whale is the spirit of absolute goodness, while the proud Ahab is evil.

WHEEL

THE WHEEL ranks with money and writing as one of the greatest single contributions to human progress and, like them, it evolved (and is still evolving) rather than coming into existence as the result of a unique act of invention. No one will ever know for certain where, when and how the decisive stages in this evolution were achieved, but present archeological evidence suggests that the first object we should recognize as a wheel was used under a kind of sledge in Mesopotamia, c 3500 BC. This early wheel was solid, and the axle was an integral part of it. It may have been another five centuries before a wheel which revolved about its axle was invented. The connection between this primitive cartwheel and the potter's wheel is not known, but some archeologists believe that the two kinds of wheel came into existence at about the same period.

At an early stage in its evolution, the wheel became a cult object, with religious, mythological and magic attributes. Here again, the actual process by which these attributes were acquired is lost in the mists of prehistory, but the wheel became associated with the sun, which Stone Age man had already represented as a disc in rock carvings, before the wheel as such was known. The association, being very ancient, is widespread. In Scandinavian myths, elves call the sun 'fair wheel', and in the far away Java Sea, the Balinese fire god is always represented as dancing on a fiery wheel, the symbol of the sun. The ancient Egyptians used to place a winged solar disc over the gateway of every temple forecourt. The stages by which this disc evolved into a spoked wheel can be traced in places as far apart as Greece and Japan.

Wheel of Time

Connected with the sun wheel is the wheel as a symbol of the year, and also of time, which is found in various Indian myths. In the belief of one Indian sect, the Jains (see JAINS), time is endless, and is pictured as a wheel of 12 spokes. The spokes are divided into two sets of six, one representing a 'descending' phase, in which good things gradually give place to bad, and the other an 'ascending' phase, which shows the opposite

tendency. According to the Jains, we are living now in the fifth 'spoke' of the descending phase.

A similar notion of descending and ascending phases is symbolized in the Wheel of Fortune of the Tarot cards, and there may be a link with ancient ideas about good and evil, or constructive and destructive forces in the universe. Thus, in the characteristically dualist system of Manichean beliefs, the Creator builds a cosmic wheel, also representing the two opposed forces. The 12 spokes of the Jain wheel of time are obviously linked with the 12 equal parts of the zodiac. The Manichean cosmic wheel also contains 12 buckets for the raising of souls, another reference to zodiacal ideas.

In magic and religion, however, the symbolic wheel has four spokes more often than 12. In Greek mythology, Ixion is bound to an eternally revolving four-spoked wheel as a punishment for trying to seduce Hera, the queen of heaven. In his great work on Zeus, A. B. Cook argued that Ixion represents a long line of human beings who were sacrificed in bygone ages 'as effete embodiments of the sun-god'. Cook also believed that a sun wheel like Ixion's was represented in the love charm which Aphrodite devised to enable Jason to win the love of Medea. A bird, the wryneck, itself the nymph Iynx transformed by Hera as a punishment for seducing Zeus, was fastened to a magic wheel, which also had four spokes. In later Greek love magic, the bird was largely forgotten, and the charm was merely a simple wheel, pierced with two holes and threaded with string, which was made to rotate by pulling the string. This magic wheel, sometimes with jagged edges representing the rays of the sun, and often with four spokes, occurs frequently as a motif on certain types of ancient Greek pottery. The same wheel was hung on the gables of a temple at Delphi, and an ancient Babylonian tablet, depicting an event which took place c 870 BC, shows a sun disc with two sets of four spokes suspended on ropes held in the hands of two divine beings poised on the roof of a shrine. The prayer wheel of Tibetan monks comes to mind in this connection, and here also there is an essential link with sun worship.

Temple wheels and prayer wheels, found in India, Tibet, ancient Egypt and Gaul, Greece and Japan, have a long ancestry, going back, as with many widespread ideas and objects, to the Babylonians. Worshippers were supposed to turn them in paying adoration to the gods, either imitating the rotatory movement of the heavens, or turning from one god to another. Some bronze wheels suspended on the doorposts of Egyptian sanctuaries emitted water, so that worshippers could sprinkle themselves. In medieval churches in Europe, the Wheel of Fortune hung up to the roof was a common sight. It was worked with a rope, and regarded as an oracle. The ancient Roman goddess Fortuna was depicted in statuettes and on coins seated on a wheel, and Roman writers from Cicero onwards frequently mention Fortuna's wheel. Fortuna is not the only ancient goddess to be represented with a wheel: so are Nemesis and Isis. Perhaps the inevitability and randomness, which can both easily be associated with the turn of a wheel, are present here, but the original connection may well have been with the worship of the sun. Scholars have drawn attention to the fact that one of Fortuna's temples (associated with her interest in farms and gardens) was dedicated on the summer solstice.

The summer solstice, or Midsummer Day (see MIDSUMMER EVE), was certainly associated with magic wheels (relics of sun worship) in medieval Europe. There is a possible link with Druidic worship in the custom at Douai, in northern France, of carrying a large Wheel of Fortune in procession before a wickerwork giant. But more commonly, a blazing wheel was rolled down hill, burning discs or wheels were flung into the air, or fresh fire was kindled by rotating a wheel on a wooden axle. Another custom was to set fire to a tar barrel and swing it round a pole. There is a possible reference to such customs in connection with the celebration of St John the Baptist's

William MacQuitty

C. Nelson Stewart

Below **Prayer wheels in the Golden Temple, Tibet; they convey a blessing when turned to the right, the side of good, but a curse when the movement is to the left, the side of evil** ***Bottom*** **The belief that all men are shackled to the 'wheel of life', and that they must be reborn on earth until all karma is expended, is a basic concept in Hinduism and Buddhism: Tibetan 'wheel of life'**

day as early as the 7th century. An 11th century writer describes quite clearly a wheel set alight and brandished in the air. An edict issued in a German principality in 1566 expressly forbids the use of fire wheels on St John the Baptist's day, which it lumps with 'other heathen and superstitious practices'. The wheel in question certainly was a relic of pagan sun worship and of imitative magic intended to ensure good weather for the harvest, but the connection with St John the Baptist was rationalized by referring to him as a 'burning and shining light' who was the forerunner of the true light.

The rolling of the wheel was taken to signify the rising of the sun to the highest part of its orbit before it must descend, which was again analogous to the role of the Baptist, who says of Christ (John 3.30), 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' The wheel, by a not entirely coincidental analogy, is also a symbol of contraction and expansion as well as of ascent and descent. But here, one cannot tell which idea came first, for the celebration of St John's day at the summer solstice, as the turning point of the year, must surely be connected with his prophecy about increase and decrease.

Ezekiel's Vision

More trivial magic was also associated with wheels in the Middle Ages, all of it no doubt deriving ultimately from the sun magic. For example, before the spring sowing, peas were allowed to trickle through the spokes of a cartwheel in some parts of central Europe. In the Tyrol it was believed that some kinds of swelling could be cured by rubbing against a cartwheel, and magic powers of marksmanship were believed to be conferred by mixing part of a molten spoke from a wheel on which a miscreant had been broken in the manufacture of shot. In folktales in many parts of the world, magic wheels or wheel tracks guide the hero or heroine on the right way.

The wheel also has other more mysterious magical and religious connotations, going beyond its association with the sun. The famous wheels seen by the prophet Ezekiel in his vision (Ezekiel, chapter 1) are susceptible of many interpretations: the 17th century mystic Jacob Boehme, for example,

The association between the sun and the wheel is widespread; in Scandinavian mythology elves call the sun 'fair wheel', while the Balinese fire god is represented dancing on a fiery wheel symbolizing the sun *Facing page* Although the Wheel of Fortune is generally accepted as being a symbol of the inevitability of fate, it may originally have been connected with sun worship; one of the temples of the Roman goddess Fortuna, who was depicted with a wheel in statuettes and on coins, was dedicated on the summer solstice: Fortune with her wheel, from a 15th century French manuscript *Right* Detail from the Gundestrup cauldron; a Celtic deity who is thought to be Taranis, 'the thunderer', is shown holding a spoked wheel which may possibly be a symbol of the sun

C. M. Dixon

took them to be symbols of the spiritual and the natural life. Because a wheel is most simply represented by four spokes making a cross, and because four is a natural number of wheels for a vehicle, there is a link between the wheel and the four elements of alchemy. But the symbolism can become so diffuse as to cease to be specific. So Jung reads a 'symbol of the self' into Ezekiel's wheels, and through the four faces of the creatures associated with the wheels he traces a link with the four elements, thus connecting alchemy with his own version of psychoanalysis. As Ezekiel remarked, there are wheels within wheels, and the subject is a much larger one than most people in this wheel-crazed era of history would guess.

DAVID PHILLIPS

WHITE

WHITE has both positive and negative qualities. It symbolizes good, light, purity, peace, modesty and innocence, gaiety and happiness; but it is also traditionally the colour of weakness, delicacy, infirmity and cowardice. The more dominant associations of white are derived from its link with the light-giving sun and the other heavenly bodies, including the silver moon. Romans wore white robes when they sacrificed white cattle in honour of Jupiter, and the priests of the Egyptian god Osiris were also robed in white.

In northern Europe the Druids sacrificed white cattle in their sacred groves, and in general white sacrificial animals are regarded as unblemished and so suitable as offerings to the gods. Zeus was said to take the shape of a white bull, representing the twin forces of solar light and creative energy, and the sacred steed of the sun in antiquity was a white horse. In Teutonic mythology the god Odin is sometimes depicted riding on a white horse, and even today to dream of a white horse promises success.

The Vestal Virgins, who tended the sacred fire brought to Rome from Troy by Aeneas, were clothed in white, to represent virginity and innocence. The same qualities belong to white in Christian symbolism, and a bride wears white as a mark of virginity.

In Christian art, Jesus is generally shown robed in white after the Resurrection, and angels and the righteous dead are shown in white robes in heaven. Churches are hung in white at the festivals of all saints except martyrs. The white lily is an emblem of Easter Sunday, and processions of newly-baptized worshippers, garbed in white, gave Whit Sunday its present name. Curiously enough, in early 19th century England, the hallmark of a Radical was a white top hat, which was no douht worn as a token of impeccable political principles.

White draws its negative symbolism from the fact that paleness has always been equated with bloodlessness and lack of vigour. The white feather is the badge of the coward and the white flag the banner of defeat. White could also be imposed as a badge of shame and repentance, as girls in the 17th century, who had loved not wisely but too well, found to their cost; they were made to stand in front of the congregation in church, dressed in white sheets.

In magic white was associated with the good magician and black with his opposite, the Devil's agent. Although the former were generally immune from charges of heresy, and the latter were the main targets of

White is connected with death, innocence, purity and the radiant light of the heavenly bodies, and in Christian art the angels and the righteous dead are shown in white robes in heaven: *Jesus Ministered to by the Angels*, a painting by James Tissot

Sonia Halliday

witch-hunters, white magicians were frequently sent to the stake during outbursts of witch mania, particularly in Scotland and on the mainland of Europe, under suspicion of working for the Devil.

The White Lady

There is a close association between white and death. Small white pebbles have been found in prehistoric graves, and until the late medieval period white was the colour of mourning in England, as it is today in China. The departing soul was commonly thought to take the shape of a white bird, usually a dove and occasionally a sea bird. Moslems believe that the souls of the just assume the forms of white birds, and wait beneath the throne of God for the resurrection. The belief that all ghosts materialize in white windingsheets is widespread, and spectres have been described as emitting a curious white light.

Fairy lore contains many curious allusions to a mysterious being, called 'the white lady', who is sometimes seen in the vicinity of bridges and is an omen of death. In Wales and on the Welsh borders she carries a torch with a vivid white flame. More recently she has begun to haunt motorways in Britain.

White animals and birds are often regarded with awe because of their rarity. American Indians classed albino animals as sacred and, in the past, sacrificed the white buffalo and the white dog. The Chinese consider the white tiger to be the king of beasts, while a white fox with nine tails is regarded as an omen of good luck in many Eastern countries. In Scotland it was customary to give young children necklaces of white nuts in the belief that they would turn black at the first sign of threatening evil.

The racial problems of the 20th century have been exacerbated by the Caucasian superstition that white is inherently superior to black, which is in some mysterious manner devilish and debased (see RACE MYTHS). This is in spite of the fact that a pallid skin is symptomatic of weakness and ill-health and that the sign of physical vitality and virility in a 'white' man is usually a ruddy glow or a deep suntan.

(See also COLOURS; CORRESPONDENCES.)

The white magician of the past, like the psychiatrist of today, was basically a healer, and the complaints treated and the methods used were similar: whether we attribute our ills to devils or neuroses, the result is anxiety – and 'where anxiety exists, measures will always be taken to allay it'

WHITE MAGIC

DESCRIBED as an 'ancestral science' and also as 'the art of compulsion of the supernatural', magic is in practice a human technique designed to control the environment. It is based on the belief that the forces of Nature can be recruited to serve man's interests. In many primitive societies the control of these forces was one of the most important functions of priesthood, and it is only comparatively recently that magic has become divorced from religion.

The battle between good and evil or light and darkness, between white magic and black, may have existed only in the imagination, but it has always been conducted by dedicated individuals who were assumed to have access to psychic powers. The practitioner of white magic may have been a priest, magician or psychically endowed layman, but he always insisted that his supernatural operations were dedicated to the service of man, a claim that led to a great deal of contention. Both priests and magicians tend to insist that they and they alone have the qualifications to perform their vital role. This is why the clergy so often attacked magicians as agents of the Devil.

Magic has its positive and negative aspects, its active and passive principles. Similarly, magical practitioners may be divided into two basic personality types. One is the seeker after power, who strives to overcome his personal deficiencies by dominating others. The other is the seeker after wisdom who, driven by the same unconscious impulses, attempts to find the key to the hidden treasures of truth. The white magician, traditionally, calls upon God, angels and elemental spirits to supply the power he needs for his operations. The black magician is supposed to derive his particular powers from devils, and to have ghouls and other night monsters as his agents. Black magic should not be written off for it can implant a degree of terror in a victim that may seriously harm him (see CURSE).

The history of the conflict between black magic and white suggests that in the main it is not the highly specialized magician who is held responsible for psychic attacks, but ordinary individuals, usually neighbours, who are thought to have the Evil Eye (see EYE) or 'evil mouth', and to be involuntary agents of evil. Among people who believe in bewitchment, the fear of being caught by it, unprotected, is ever present; drowsiness, for example, is supposed to be a vulnerable state which must be avoided at all costs unless one has taken steps to protect oneself by white magic, such as by wearing an amulet. The gospel of St John hung on a cord around the neck was thought to be effective for this purpose, as was the Lord's Prayer inscribed on a piece of paper and kept in one's shoe. The charm bracelet, which has become universally popular as a luck-bringer since its introduction about 100 years ago, is probably the last of the traditional protective devices, but many people observe eccentric rites to which they resort when agitated. An unexpected example which I came across recently was the wearing of a violin 'D' string around the waist in order to benefit from its favourable vibrations. In the past, whenever personal systems of protection failed to put the mind at ease, a white magician was called in, in much the same way that a psychiatrist is consulted today.

In the country the white magician used to be a kind of general practitioner, the village Cunning Man or conjuror, while his urban counterpart, particularly in the upper ranks of society, tended to specialize in one particular art, such as astrology. In fact, the role of white magician will always remain important in a community that fears magic, or in one that has been convinced by its clergy of the presence of devils.

Doctor, Vet and Detective

It is not generally realized that in its heyday white magic involved a wide variety of socially useful activities which are not readily associated with sorcery. The country magician was likely also to be the local veterinary surgeon, treating sick animals with a combination of muttered spells and a sound knowledge of animal diseases. The name of God was frequently on his lips when he supplied his human patients with simples or ointments, or exorcized their ghosts and devils. When cross-examining someone who had asked him to divine the whereabouts of a lost object, he would combine incantations with painstaking interrogation. The white magician's status was sustained by the awe with which he was regarded in his community and, unless he was driven underground by persecution, he survived for just as long as people had need of his services, and while they accepted his peculiar version of reality.

An inveterate enemy of the clergy, whom

Spectrum Colour Library

Corn dolly in Wales: made from the last sheaf of the harvest, which was thought to contain the spirit of the corn, dollies were kept until the beginning of the next season's ploughing to ensure continuity; this old custom, which was widespread throughout Europe, reflects the belief, a basic concept of magic, that the forces of Nature can be controlled and used for the benefit of man

he tended to regard as presumptuous interlopers, the white wizard in Europe assumed a semi-divine authority, comparable with that of the African witch-doctor. This might be conferred upon him during his initiation, or it might be based upon some unusual circumstance of birth – in England, for instance, he might be the seventh son of a seventh son – or on an inherited power.

In medieval Germany and 19th century North America the charmer whispered or sang his patient back to health. At Castelmellano in southern Italy, a small village which is regarded as a centre of witchcraft by people for many miles around, the *maciara* or sorceress treats her emotionally disturbed clients by tying knots in a length of string which is buried in a cemetery at the conclusion of the ceremony. The spirit of evil is destroyed by this ritual 'killing'. In 19th century England a wizard of Amersham in Buckinghamshire was reputed to have cured a sick child by instructing its parents to 'take the length of the child with a stick, measure so much ground in the church-yard, and there dig and bury the stick'.

The Spanish village of Mojacar, famous for its witches, was the home of a celebrated Almerian wise woman Tia Carrica, until about 20 years ago. She achieved some remarkable cures by tracing a cross with a finger on the foreheads of sick clients. She would then enter into a trance state during the course of which the sickness passed from her client's body into her own. She often recited the following spell over individuals suffering from the Evil Eye:

> Three have done evil to you.
> Three have to be taken away.
> Who are the three persons of the Holy Trinity?
> Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
> Shepherd who came to the fountain
> And came from the fountain,
> Take away the Evil Eye
> From whom you put it on.

The white magician in medieval England confronted with the same type of case used a very similar technique and recited:

> Three hiters hast thou bitten
> The hart, ill eye, ill tongue.
> Three biters shall be thy Boote,
> Father, Sonne and Holy Ghost or God's name.
> In worship of the five wounds of our Lorde.

Magic as a force can probably best be defined as the interaction of one mind upon another, with suggestion as its primary mechanism; psychic power is nothing more nor less than a peculiarly effective type of thinking. In Africa the witch-doctor is believed to possess an indwelling power which enables him not only to heal the sick but also to identify witches in the community (see FINDING OF WITCHES). This consciousness of an inner force is common to most psychic healers and white magicians, and they usually believe that it can be preserved only if they observe an extremely strict code of conduct. If the witch-doctor submits to the temptation to practise magic for illicit ends his power will leave him, or he will become a witch himself.

Colorific

Charms, amulets and talismans of various kinds play their part in white magic: in Mauritius fishermen attached images of fish to a tree; a form of imitative magic, this is thought to ensure a plentiful supply of fish

English folklorists report a similar moral code among the Cunning Men of the past (see EAST ANGLIAN AND ESSEX WITCHES). It seems that they always refused to work for reward since they believed that this would result in a subconscious pandering to the client's wishes, and that they would tell him what he wanted to hear rather than what he needed to know. Such insight, though rare, is not uncommon among white magicians.

The practitioner of white magic is compelled to be rigidly disciplined in his attitudes to day-to-day affairs, as he may otherwise fall from grace and his spells may fail to work. This leads to a permanent state of tension, which is in itself a sign of instability, a measure of the emotional disturbance common to 'possessed' people (see POSSESSION). It is a widely-held view today that the witches of the past were often people who would nowadays be classed as suffering from some form of mental illness (see HYSTERICAL POSSESSION; OLD AGE; WITCHCRAFT), and the same could be said of witch-doctors. The Siberian shaman became frenzied as he entered the trance state (see SHAMAN), and it is well known that many white magicians have been emotionally disturbed.

Whether the practitioner of white magic was a priest, magician or psychically endowed layman, he always insisted that his supernatural powers were dedicated to the service of man; the most important of his roles was that of healer, in emulation of Jesus whose aid he often called upon when carrying out his healing operations: *Jesus Raising Lazarus from the Dead,* wall painting in Cyprus

The social value of the white magician was to some extent counterbalanced by the dangers inherent in his methods of treatment. In his extremely informative book *Scared to Death*, Dr J. C. Barker devotes considerable attention to this problem. There are cases in which fortune tellers have implanted troublesome thoughts and eroding fears in the minds of clients, with disastrous results. It is a curious situation when the sick are treated by the sick, and when the rustic psychiatrist who sets up shop to abreact the community's traumas could be said to be in need of treatment himself.

Another aspect of witch-doctor practice, and one which led to many tragedies, was the hunting down and execution of so-called black witches at the instigation of white ones. Isolated examples have occurred in the 20th century. Some 40 years ago, for instance, the Pow Wow men of Pennsylvania were indirectly responsible for the murders of a number of innocent victims of popular prejudice. More recently similar cases have been reported from West Germany, where the belief in magic is today, if anything, even stronger than in pre-war years.

Aura of Responsibility

Although the definitive history of white magic in the British Isles has yet to be written, it is clear that much of it is of Germanic origin. The white magicians and healers of Anglo-Saxon times treated their patients with a combination of prayer, magical incantations and herbal medicines, based on the Doctrine of Signatures, the principle that 'like cures like' (see DISEASE). They healed by touch, breath, and suggestion, and this in their day was probably the best type of medicine available. Medieval healing charms were often supplemented by a type of amulet that goes back to prehistoric times, and which is still used today to bring luck. This is the flint arrowhead or the holed stone, sometimes called a fairy stone, which protected both the byre and the bedroom from demonic attacks. The consecration of a fairy stone was an elaborate affair, and included the following incantation:

> I conjure thee, by all Hosts of Heaven,
> By the Living God, the True God,
> By the Blessed and Omnipotent God . . .

At the conclusion of the ceremony the magician cried out: 'May it protect you against all evil forces and curses, Amen.'

Such a blasphemous combination of paganism and Christianity was a constant affront to many Christians and gave offence to the ecclesiastical authorities, but there seems to have been very little they could do about it. Basically there appears to have been little difference between the magicians' claims that sickness was the work of evil spirits, and the Church's belief that Satan was responsible.

White magic was apparently sanctioned, if not sanctified, because it was socially necessary. Given the choice between the faith healing of the Church and that of the more skilful wizard, the outcome was generally predictable. Love magic (see LOVE MAGIC), a primitive type of marriage guidance, was in constant demand by all classes in spite of the fulminations of the bishops. Geomancy and many other divinatory arts had the same meaning for medieval man as the newspaper astrologer has for his 20th century counterpart. Where anxiety exists, measures will always be taken to allay it. The law of supply and demand applies to every type of human need.

The white magician of medieval days competed successfully with the clergy for the exorcism of ghosts and devils, transferred the evils of sickness from the living sufferer to inanimate objects which were then ritually buried, and at the same time maintained his aura of respectability by insisting that God, Christ and the 12 Apostles were on his side. This is probably the reason why English white magicians were allowed to operate relatively unimpeded.

From a study of modern white magic it is possible to reconstruct some of the techniques used by healers until well into the 19th century. Magic circles with cabalistic symbols were drawn in order to conjure up what would now be described as psychic energy. Modern witches call this process

creating the 'cone of power', and insist that it be directed to social ends. A variety of spells were used to combat black witchcraft, the most remarkable being the witch bottle (see BLOOD; IRON; MURRELL), which was used when the identity of a witch was unknown to her victim. A bottle which was often made of glass but sometimes of welded iron, and which contained blood, hair, nail parings, urine and excreta from the bewitched person, was heated on the hearth fire at midnight; at the same time the assembled company intoned the Lord's Prayer backwards. The witch was presumed to be undergoing excruciating agonies while the contents of the bottle boiled, with all the blood in her body afire, and this pain continued until she had removed her spell. If the bottle exploded she was expected to die. Witch bottles are not unknown, even today. It is possible that a few hysterics may have been cured by this bizarre rite, but it is doubtful that it could have had much effect upon organic diseases.

From White Magic to Black Box

The state's attitude towards semi-heretical magicians began to harden after the Reformation, despite the sympathy directed towards white magicians by the community generally. A few eminent European jurists, such as Paulus Grillandus, a 16th century writer on witchcraft who was a papal judge in the witch trials in Rome, were even prepared to tolerate white magic, at a time when witches generally were being persecuted, provided it was socially useful. However, strict adherence to the law of God, particularly to the command in Exodus 22.18, which is translated in the Authorised Version of the Bible as 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live', made it imperative that every kind of witch should be eliminated. The Bible also decreed that 'There shall not be found among you anyone who . . . practises divination, or a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord' (Deuteronomy 18.10-12).

Religious purists instituted witch-hunts to eliminate both black and white sorcerers. The Scots tortured and burned both classes indiscriminately, but elsewhere in the British Isles white magicians were awarded minor punishments unless it could be proved that they were heretics. These prosecutions were at their fiercest during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and gradually died down during the following century. As late as 1651 John Lock of Colchester was placed in the pillory for setting up as a diviner of lost and stolen property, and many other white magicians were sent to prison. Jane Wenham, the last woman in England to be found guilty of witchcraft, who was tried and pardoned in 1712, was a former white magician whose clientele had turned against her.

Although the Witchcraft Act of 1735 abolished the death penalty for witchcraft, practitioners of white magic were theoretically liable to be put in the pillory and sent to prison. However, there is no evidence that legal proceedings were ever taken against white magicians.

The traditional type of white magic is still dispensed in the Channel Islands by bone-setters and healers, who often claim to be seventh sons of seventh sons. On the mainland the older type of magician had almost disappeared by the beginning of the 20th century, although a report published by the British Medical Association just before the First World War revealed that a few healing witches still survived in remote places.

Tibetan exorcizing dagger: the belief that sickness is the work of evil spirits is found in many cultures; in England the white magician competed successfully with the clergy for the exorcism of ghosts and devils, and maintained his aura of respectability, at the same time, by insisting that God, Christ and the 12 Apostles were on his side

Victoria & Albert Museum

Today the successors of the white magician may be found in the sphere of unorthodox or 'fringe' medicine. The 'Black Box', for instance (see RADIESTHESIA), which it is claimed can diagnose disease in the absence of the patient, so that it can be treated on homoeopathic principles going back to Paracelsus, has become a vogue in the present century; and there are even radionic instruments which are said to be able to 'broadcast' treatment from a distance. Healing by the laying on of hands – by ordinary men and women rather than priests – is as popular today as it was in the Middle Ages. Astrologers and diviners of every kind dispense their psychic powers in cities and towns, while in the countryside wart charmers and rustic healers have their following. Yet another manifestation of white magic in Britain is in the form of witch covens which flourish in some cities (see MODERN WITCHCRAFT). Modern witches insist that they are the only true heirs of the old magical healers. Needless to say, the Church looks on their activities with a jaundiced eye.

There is a certain similarity between the methods used by modern psychiatrists and those of the old magicians, and in recent years psychiatry has begun to examine sympathetically the functions of witch-doctors, medicine-men and shamans. If white magic may be defined as the power of the imagination to effect changes in mental states by helping the sufferer to relive his past experiences, and by this means externalize his problems and reduce them to manageable proportions, the comparison becomes obvious.

The Evil Eye may have ceased to trouble civilized man, but the 'evil mouth' in the shape of adverse news continues to assault his peace of mind and to require the ministrations of the healer. Although white magic can have no effect on the objective world, it profoundly influences the way in which it is seen. In an age of anxiety the white magician in one form or another can still perform a useful role; for this reason, white magic is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: G. Knight, *A History of White Magic* (Mowbrays, 1978); David G. Phillips, *White Magic* (Scholarly, 1981); E. Maple, *Magic, Medicine and Quackery* (A. S. Barnes, 1968).

Whitsun

The season of Pentecost, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit to the apostles of Jesus (Acts, chapter 2): Whit Sunday is literally 'white Sunday', probably because newly baptized Christians wore white robes on that day; still a holiday season in Britain, it used to be celebrated with feasting, games and processions.

See PENTECOSTALIST MOVEMENT; SPEAKING IN TONGUES.

Widdershins

Or withershins, the direction contrary to the sun's apparent course, to the left, or anticlockwise; deliberate movement in this direction is sinister, associated with witches and worshippers of the Devil, because it reverses the normal and proper order of things.

Men fled to their homes when they heard the Wild Hunt approaching and took care not to look out of their windows; the leader was sometimes said to be the Devil, and his hounds were demon dogs, or the spirits of unbaptized children

WILD HUNT

A TERRIFYING BAND of spectral riders and hounds led by some divine, or demonic, or ghostly leader, the Wild Hunt could be heard on dark and stormy nights of midwinter (and sometimes at other seasons also), rushing through the air with a great clamour of shouts and horn-blowing and the baying of hounds.

Belief in its existence was at one time widespread all over northern Europe, Germany, France, and Great Britain, and traces of that belief are still to be found in the folk traditions of all these lands. It has been known by various names in various regions: the Yule Host in Iceland, the Raging or Furious Host in Germany, the *Chasse Maccabei*, or *Chasse Artu*, or *Mesnie Hellequin* in different parts of France, and numerous others elsewhere. In the West of England, it was the Yeth Hounds or Wish Hounds, in Durham and north Yorkshire the Gabriel Hounds or Gabble Ratchets. This last name literally means 'corpse hounds', from the medieval *gabares*, a corpse, and *rache*, a hound that hunts by scent and gives tongue. In some north-country dialects, it is also a term used for night-flying wild geese, whose cries, heard in darkness, so strikingly suggest the noise of an invisible pack of hounds passing far overhead.

It was commonly believed that to see the Wild Hunt as it swept by was dangerous. Men fled to their homes when they heard it approaching and took care not to look out of their windows. One version of the legend says that any person who could not find shelter in time was liable to be seized, carried away over long distances, and finally abandoned in some unknown region far from his home. He could save himself only by falling face downwards on the ground so that he could see nothing, and holding fast to any available plant or tuft of grass until the dark company had passed. To look deliberately at the riders, or to speak to their leader, was to court instant death or madness, or at best, some dreadful personal misfortune.

Odin, god of the dead, or Woden, his Germanic counterpart (see GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY; ODIN), is generally thought to have been the original leader of the Wild Hunt. Later on, when Christianity had dimmed the memory of the ancient deities in the minds of men, his place was often filled by the Devil. He too rode with a great company who were sometimes fiends like himself and sometimes the souls of the lost dead. His hounds were demon dogs, or the spirits of unbaptized children. The unnamed spectral huntsman who is sometimes encountered on Dartmoor and in other lonely places, riding without followers but with a pack of jet-black hounds, is almost certainly a direct descendant of the Devil as leader of the Wild Hunt. So also is the anonymous being who, in later legends, drives a sinister black coach in which the souls of dying sinners are fetched from the death chamber and driven away to hell.

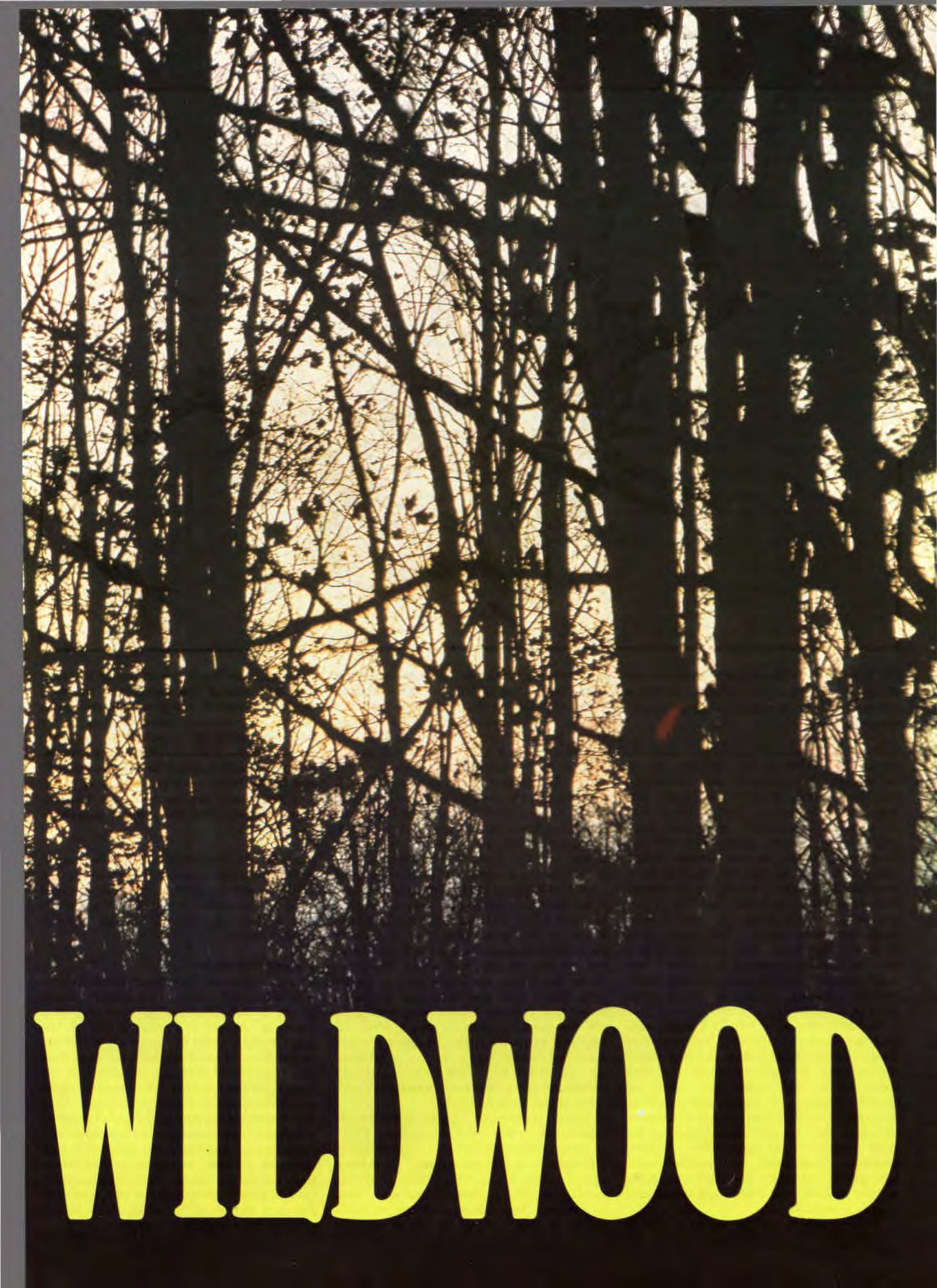
The Night Hounds

In the Middle Ages, the leader was frequently neither god nor devil, but some human individual of heroic stature, renowned, locally or nationally, for the splendour of his former deeds or, quite as often, for the magnitude of his sins or his misfortunes. Dietrich von Bern (the legendary name of Theodoric the Great) was one of these; so was Charlemagne, and King Wenzel (or Wenceslas) of Bohemia, and Duke Abel, the fratricide. In one district of France, it was Hugh Capet, King of France in the 10th century, who led the host, in another, King Herod, the murderer of the Innocents. Gervase of Tilbury, writing in the 13th century, refers to a belief that Arthur hunted in the forests of England and Brittany, and that companies of his knights, with their hounds, had been seen there by foresters, at midday, or on nights of the full moon. At Cadbury Fort in Somerset (see CAMELOT), which is one of the places where Arthur is said to abide until the day when he will come again, local tradition asserts that he and his men rode round the hill when the moon was full, and watered their horses at a nearby spring. So too, on wild winter nights, he went hunting down an ancient trackway running from Cadbury towards Glastonbury, which is still known as King Arthur's Causeway. No one saw him then, but those who lived near the old track sometimes heard his hounds and his horses rushing by in the windy darkness.

In Shropshire, Wild Edric, the resistance hero who held out against William the Conqueror for nearly three years and was never defeated or captured, appeared before a war, riding furiously with his followers in the direction of the enemy country. Whoever encountered them had to cover his eyes immediately and keep silent until the cavalcade had passed. If he failed to do so, he would be smitten with madness. A rather uncertain tradition says that Sir Francis Drake used to drive over Dartmoor in a black coach, drawn by headless horses and followed by a pack of hounds whose baying killed every earthly dog that heard it. In this late tale we see a transitional stage between the ancient Wild Hunt and the spectral coach which eventually took its place in folk tradition. Here is the human leader who was once a god, and here are the hounds; but the hero does not ride, and the perils of his passage fall, not upon men, but upon dogs.

A faint memory of the legend lingered until fairly recently in the Meon Hills of south Warwickshire. On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, a solitary huntsman was often seen with a pack of hounds whose cries could be heard a long way off, and who were locally known as Hell Hounds, or Night Hounds, or Hooter. No one knew who he was; some said he was a master of foxhounds who hunted on the Sabbath and was consequently condemned to hunt until the Day of Judgement. Others said he was a man who had been torn to pieces by his own hounds. In one version of the tale he hunted a phantom fox through the countryside; but in another, he rode quietly with his hounds round him, as though returning from a day's sport. If he encountered any night wayfarer, he often asked the man to open a gate for him, or do some other little thing that a horseman might reasonably ask of a man on foot. But to grant these requests was dangerous. Whoever did so ran the risk, like his pagan ancestor long ago, of being suddenly swept away, not to be seen again in his home for a very long time, and perhaps never.

CHRISTINA HOLE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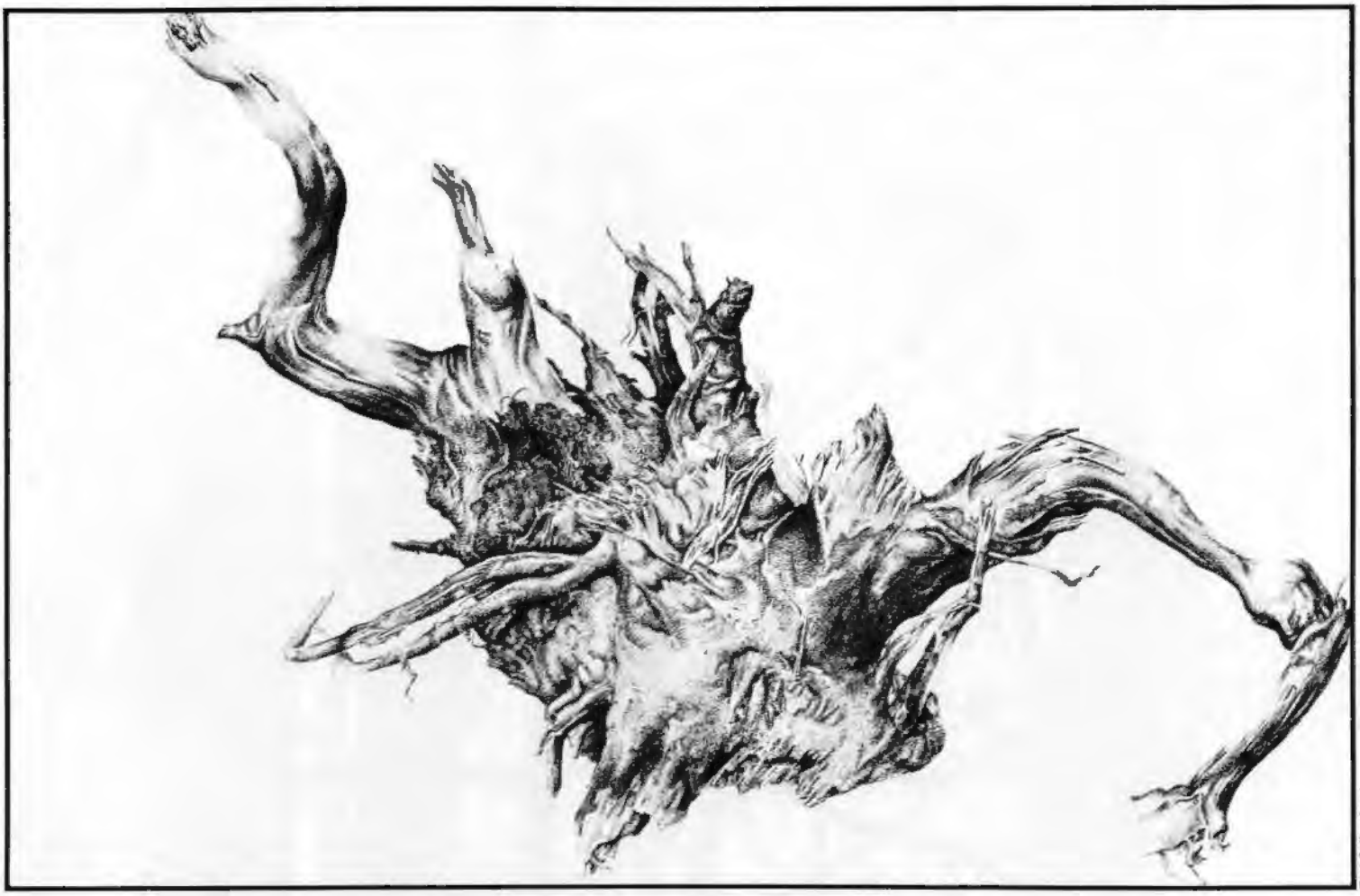

Tate Gallery London

The forest of legend and folklore is often strange and eerie, an otherworld, the realm of Nature untamed by man, of unearthly and potentially dangerous beings

THE MOLE, in Kenneth Grahame's children's classic *The Wind in the Willows*, set off by himself one winter's day to explore the Wild Wood. It stretched before him 'low and threatening, like a black reef in some still southern sea', and once inside it he became increasingly uneasy. Growths of fungus on tree stumps looked like faces, and he thought he saw faces watching him from the holes in the banks. Nervously plunging away into the trackless depths of the wood, he heard a faint shrill whistling sound that came first from one direction, then another. There was the rustling patter of feet. 'The whole wood seemed running now, running hard, hunting, chasing, closing in round something or – somebody?'

Suddenly the Mole was in a panic, running aimlessly to and fro, bumping into things, falling over things, dodging round things, until he took refuge in the dark hollow of an old beech tree, where he covered himself with leaves and hoped he was safe. The Rat, who came to his rescue, told him that no one should walk in the Wild Wood without protection: 'I mean passwords, and signs, and sayings which have power and effect, and plants you carry in your pocket, and verses you repeat and tricks you practise.'

The uncanny quality of woods is part of the lore of childhood. In the forest you are far from home, from fireside warmth and kindliness and the settled accustomed order of things. In the forest you are lost. In the forest the trees put out roots to trip you, and reach out for you with crooked, skinny fingers. In the forest, very often, lives the witch. In the story of Hansel and Gretel, for instance, the two children are abandoned in the woods, where they become hopelessly lost. They find a little house made of gingerbread and sugar, and break off pieces of it to eat, but it is a treacherous sanctuary, for it belongs to a cannibal witch, who puts Hansel in a cage to fatten him up for cooking.

In another, peculiarly nasty, German fairy tale a little girl goes to the house of Frau Trude in the forest. She looks in through the window and sees no sign of Frau Trude, but she does see the Devil with a fiery head. When she tells Frau Trude this, the latter says, 'Oho, then you have seen the witch in her true colours: I have been waiting for you for years, longing for you to shine for me.' She turns the little girl into a block of wood and throws her on the fire. 'And when she was in full flame, Frau Trude sat down beside the blaze, warmed herself and said, "Now at last it shines bright."'

There is another highly disagreeable forest witch in Russian folklore, Baba Yaga, an ogress who cooks and eats small children. She lives in a hut, surrounded by a fence topped with skulls, in a clearing in the woods, and the hut spins round and round on chickens' legs. She is evidently an incarnation of wild Nature, for she guards the fountain of the water of life, her teeth are of stone, she rides through the air in an iron kettle to stir up storms, and she is served by three horsemen, a bright one, a red one and a dark one, who are her day, her sun and her night.

Previous page **The forest of legend and folklore is a strange and eerie place, an otherworld of unearthly and potentially dangerous beings; in modern interpretations it is frequently taken as a symbol of the dark, tangled depths of the mind *Above* 'The uncanny quality of woods is part of the lore of childhood', and in the forest trees put out roots to trip you and reach out for you with crooked, skinny fingers: *Jo's Wild Wood*, a drawing by Anne Said**

Forest Primeval

Groves and woods have many symbolic connotations and are by no means always places of evil (see TREES). They may be a place of retreat from the hustle of the noisy human world to the peace of Nature, or the scene of amorous dalliance away from the neighbours' eyes, or the arena of the hunting of boar or stag. The forest of legend and folklore is not always what Edgar Allan Poe characteristically called 'ghoul-haunted woodland', but it does tend to be strange and eerie. It is an otherworld, the realm of Nature untamed by man, of unearthly and potentially dangerous beings. In modern interpretations it is frequently taken as a symbol of the dark depths of the mind, the wild and tangled growths of the unconscious.

In the forest you are lost. In the forest the trees put out roots to trip you up, and reach out for you with crooked, skinny fingers. In the forest, very often, lives the witch

In the *Odyssey*, the house of Circe, the enchantress (see CIRCE), is in a forest clearing. Dante's *Inferno* begins in a gloomy wood and in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* a wood is the setting for Oberon, Titania, Puck and the fairies. There is an old uneasy saying that 'woods have ears', and when we are still caught in some entangling thicket of difficulties we say we are not yet out of the wood.

One strand in the theme of the wildwood is the feeling of its immense antiquity, 'the forest primeval' of Longfellow's famous lines in *Evangeline*, where the murmuring pines and the hemlocks 'stand like Druids of old'. The Druids worshipped in woodland sanctuaries (see DRUIDS), and the Celtic and Germanic reverence for sacred trees and groves contributes to the haunted, numinous quality attributed to woods in northern Europe.

Another strand is the terror that the trees might move. In a frightening passage early in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* the heroes traverse the Old Forest, where the trees do not like strangers. At night they seem to be whispering to each other, passing news and plots along in an unintelligible language, and the branches sway and grope even when there is no wind. 'They do say the trees do actually move, and can surround strangers and hem them in.' One of the hobbits is trapped by a great grey willow tree, and Old Man Willow has an old and peculiarly sinister reputation among trees, as does the elder (see ELDER; WILLOW). Oak coppices, where the trees have been felled, are also dangerous places in which to walk at night, for the stumps hunger for revenge and swiftly grow new shoots which reach out for passers-by.

The Questing Beast

In Arthurian legend, the wild forest is frequently the scene of enchantments and encounters with supernatural beings and wonders, or the way to these beings and wonders lies through the forest. The Forest Perilous, located in North Wales in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, was the home of an enchantress who lured King Arthur there to seduce him, and he would have died there if he had not been rescued by Sir Tristram. It was deep in a forest that Arthur saw the Questing Beast, a most extraordinary creature (with which T. H. White had great fun in *The Once and Future King*). It had the head of a serpent, the body of a leopard, a lion's hindquarters and the feet of a stag, and from its belly came the noise of 30 couple of hounds baying.

In *Perlesvaus*, a French romance of the 13th century, the Questing Beast is a white animal which has 12 barking hounds in her womb. When she gives birth to these hounds, they tear her to pieces but cannot eat her flesh. The author explains that the beast is a figure of Christ and the hounds are the Jews, who sacrificed Christ but cannot consume his body in the sacrament of the Mass.

In the *Didot Perceval*, of the same period, a young knight enters the land of Avalon and in an enchanted forest meets a beautiful maiden sitting by a fountain. They wander lovingly through the woodland till they come to a green meadow where the knight becomes unaccountably drowsy. He falls asleep, and when he wakes up finds himself the maiden's prisoner in an invisible castle. A similar story was told of Merlin, who was tricked and made prisoner by an enchantress (see MERLIN), a scene sometimes set in the Forest Perilous.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (see GAWAIN) describes how the hero, riding north to seek out the Green Knight, travels through the Wilderness of Wirral, on the borders of Cheshire and Lancashire, which in the 14th century was so infested with dangerous outlaws and outcasts that in 1376, at the request of the citizens of Chester, Edward III ordered it to be deforested. Pressing on through unknown country, he fights dragons to the death and battles with wolves, woodwouses (wild men of the woods), bulls, bears, boars, and ogres on the high fells. Cleaving his way through all these perils, he reaches 'a wondrously wild wood', a forest of oak, hazel and hawthorn (all of them magical trees), and when he comes to the Green Knight's castle he sees it shimmering through the oaks which hem it in.

Among his other adventures, Gawain reached the hall of the Grail after riding through a forest, and the causeway which led to the hall was roofed by trees which grew on either side, making it dark and eerie. Another Grail hero, Perceval (see GRAIL: PARSIFAL), was brought up in the forested wilds of Wales. Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz (in *The Grail Legend*) see in this an image of both the mother and the unconscious. The forest in which Perceval grows up is Nature in her maternal role as nourisher and protector, and: 'with its plant and animal life, its twilight and its restricted horizon, the forest aptly illustrates the as yet barely conscious condition of the child . . .' They also suggest that in general when the forest is the starting point of a hero's adventures, it 'represents the emergence from a relatively unconscious situation into a far more conscious one'.

The Wild Man

One of the alarming creatures to be found in the forest of legend, and in the old days in the forest of reality, is a woodwouse (spelt in various ways, including woodwose and woodhouse), a wild man of the woods. Perceval is something of a wild man himself, in the sense of a 'natural man' or 'noble savage', brought up close to Nature and far from civilization, so ignorant of the ways of the world that when he first sees mailed knights of Arthur's court he takes them for angels.

A more orthodox woodwouse, is the hero of *Sir Orfeo*, a medieval English poem based on the Greek legend of Orpheus, the great singer (see ORPHEUS). Sir Orfeo takes to the forest when his beloved wife is snatched away by the fairies. In his desperate grief he decides never to look at a woman again but to go to the wilderness, to live with wild beasts in the ancient woods. There he sleeps on the ground, gathering fruit and berries in the summer and in the winter reduced to grubbing up roots and gnawing on grass and bark. He grows cruelly thin, his beard long and shaggy, but on bright clear days he plays his harp. All the beasts of the forest gather round and the birds cluster on the branches to hear the sweetness of his harping.

In the woods Sir Orfeo sees the King of Fairyland at his hunting, with the sounding of horns and baying of hounds. He sees armed fairy knights riding with swords drawn and banners unfurled, and knights and ladies dancing in the glades. One day he recognizes one of the ladies as his lost love and unlike his Greek original, is able to win her back.

It was said that Merlin had been driven mad and sent wandering through the woods as a punishment for causing war. There was a Scottish legend of a forest wild man, said to have been encountered by St Kentigern.

British Museum

He was naked and hairy, his name was Lailoken, and he had been punished for his sins by being made to live apart from humanity with only wild beasts for company: some said he was Merlin. In Irish legend, Suibne Gelt, King of Dal nAraide, was said to have gone mad after the battle of Moira in 673. He fled to the woods where, since he could fly like a bird, he spent much of his time roosting in the tops of trees.

The fact that the coat of arms of the Earls of Atholl in Scotland had a wild man in fetters as a supporter was explained by the story that a wild man had lived among the rocks at Craigiebarns, ravaging the countryside and terrifying everyone. After several attempts to catch him had failed, a man named Murray trapped him by filling the pool from which the wild man drank with Atholl brose – whisky and honey – and so putting him into a sound sleep. As a reward the Earl of Atholl gave Murray the hand of his daughter in marriage, and Murray eventually succeeded to the earldom. (In fact, the Murrays did succeed to the title through a marriage with the heiress of Atholl in the 17th century.)

A celebrated wild man of modern fiction is Ben Gunn, in *Treasure Island*. He has been marooned on the island and has survived there alone for three years, living on goats, berries and oysters, and wistfully longing for toasted cheese. Shaggy, black with sunburn, dressed in rags and tatters, he is almost as timid as an animal, desperately anxious for human company and

Previous page **In Arthurian legend, the wild forest is frequently the scene of enchantments, wonders and supernatural beings, or the way to them is through the forest: Sir Lancelot in the enchanted forest, from a French 14th century MS**

Above **In its beneficent aspects the forest has been described as representing Nature in her maternal role, nourishing and protecting, a concept reflected in the story of the 'Babes in the Wood' in which two lost children are fed and cared for by the animals of the forest: *Babes in the Wood* by Ralph Caldecott**

Far right **Robin Hood, the most famous of all forest outlaws, feasting in the Greenwood: in the outlaw legends the forest is a place of refuge and freedom from the demands of conventional society**

The Mole in the Wild Wood

There was nothing to alarm him at first entry. Twigs crackled under his feet, logs tripped him, funguses on stumps resembled caricatures, and startled him for a moment by their likeness to something familiar and far away; but that was all fun and exciting. It led him on, and he penetrated to where the light was less, and trees crouched nearer and nearer, and holes made ugly mouths at him on either side.

Everything was very still now. The dusk advanced on him steadily, rapidly, gathering in behind and before; and the light seemed to be draining away like flood-water.

Then the faces began.

It was over his shoulder, and indistinctly, that he first thought he saw a face, a little, evil, wedge-shaped face, looking out at him from a hole. When he turned and confronted it, the thing had vanished.

He quickened his pace, telling himself cheerfully not to begin imagining things or there would be simply no end to it. He passed another hole, and another, and another; and then – yes! – no! – yes! certainly a little narrow face, with hard eyes, had flashed up for an instant from a hole, and was gone. He hesitated – braced himself up for an effort and strode on . . .

If he could only get away from the holes in the banks, he thought, there would be no more faces. He swung off the path and plunged into the untrodden places of the wood.

Then the whistling began.

Kenneth Grahame *The Wind in the Willows*

yet scared of it. Robinson Crusoe, the Swiss Family Robinson, Tarzan of the apes, and Kipling's Mowgli are other fictional explorations of the same basic theme.

Outlaws of the Greenwood

The wild man of legend has his prototypes in real madmen who took to the woods to escape from the hostility of the sane, but his closeness to Nature connects him with two other figures, the Green Man who personifies the life of vegetation (see GREEN; VEGETATION SPIRITS), and the unearthly woodman who is the keeper of the forest and its creatures (Tom Bombadil in *The Lord of the Rings*). In 'The Lady of the Fountain', one of the stories in the *Mabinogion* (see MABINOGION), Cynon rides through the forest and comes to a clearing with a mound in the middle of it. On the mound sits a huge black man who has one foot, one eye in the centre of his forehead, and a massive iron club. He is the woodman, ugly to look at but not ugly in disposition, and he has power over animals. He demonstrates this to Cynon, who describes the scene. 'He took the club in his hand and with it struck a stag a mighty blow till it gave a mighty belling, and in answer to its belling wild animals came till they were as numerous as stars in the firmament . . . And he looked on them and bade them go graze. And then they bowed down their heads and did him obeisance, even as humble subjects would do to their lord.'

A giant guards the cedar forest in the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (see GILGAMESH) and in some of his aspects seems to personify a forest fire. His roaring is like the storm, his mouth is fire, his breath is death. Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu, another 'natural man', penetrate the forest through an enchanted gate, which paralyses Enkidu's hand when he touches it. They come to the mountain which is the home of the gods, and the sacred cedar which Gilgamesh fells with an axe. When the giant, Humbaba or Huwawa, appears, the sight terrifies even the valorous Gilgamesh, but the sun god sends eight great winds which hold Humbaba fast, and Gilgamesh cuts off his head.

Another variety of forest wild man is the outlaw, wild because he has been placed outside the pale of society and outside the protection of the law, and wild in the sense that, as Maurice Keen says, he is 'a desperate man and he has recourse to desperate and violent remedies' and 'a cold and callous brutality'. The forests of medieval England sheltered thieves, vagabonds, fugitives from justice, men who had been turned off their land, rebels and misfits of all sorts. The poor, themselves suffering in a hard, rigidly stratified society, romanticized them and credited them with superhuman abilities. There grew up the picture of the merry outlaw in the greenwood, free as a bird, roistering on good ale and forbidden venison, robbing the rich and giving to the poor, the enemy of pomp, privilege and tyranny. Far the most famous of them is Robin Hood who, dressed in Lincoln green, has a connection with the Green Man and the May Day ceremonies (see ROBIN HOOD).

Mansell Collection

The forest is now a sanctuary and the wild man or natural man a proud, heroic figure, admired because he is free of the chains and shackles of society. The same aura surrounds highwaymen, and romantic wanderers and free spirits, nomadic motor cyclists, tramps and hippies, but here the lure of the wildwood has turned into the longing for the open road.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: *The Mabinogion*, trans. G. and T. Jones (Biblio Dist., 1976); *Sir Orfeo*, trans. by Brian Stone in *Medieval English Verse* (Penguin, 1964). See also E. Jung and M. L. von Franz, *The Grail Legend* (Sigo Press); M. Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1961); A. Porteous, *Forest Folklore*, (Gale, 1968. c1928).

In many respects a typical member of Victorian society, 'Mrs Willett' was also a non-professional medium who played an essential part in the 'cross-correspondences', communications which purported to come from the spirit world

MRS WILLETT

UNTIL AFTER her death on 31 August 1956, Mrs Charles Coombe Tennant was known in the literature of psychical research as 'Mrs Willett'. She was a most remarkable non-professional medium.

Born on 1 November 1874, and christened Winifred Margaret, she was the only child of George Edward Pearce-Serocold (1828–1912) by his second wife, Mary Richardson of Derwen Fawr, near Swansea. Her paternal ancestors had been closely connected since the middle of the 18th century with the University of Cambridge and with the vicarage of the neighbouring village of Cherryhinton.

On 12 December 1895, in her 22nd year, she married Charles Coombe Tennant (1852–1928) of Cadoxton Lodge, Glamorganshire. He was the head of a wealthy and able family, originally of industrialists, who had sprung from northern England and had in the 18th century settled in Glamorganshire and acquired and developed property there. One of his sisters, Eveleen, had married F. W. H. Myers (see MYERS), one of the pioneers of psychical research in England. Mrs Coombe Tennant, thus related by marriage to him, came to like and admire him greatly; but she actively disliked his wife Eveleen, and she had no very friendly feelings for the latter's sister Dorothy, who married the explorer H. M. Stanley and eventually wrote his biography.

The Coombe Tennants had four children. The eldest son, George Christopher, and the only daughter, Daphne, died in youth. Daphne, who was born in 1907, lived only one year and seven months, but exhibited during that short period a most remarkable personality. Christopher, a young man of brilliant promise who became an officer in the Welsh Guards, was killed in Flanders in 1917 in his 20th year. Naturally, these early deaths of two very remarkable children had a profound effect on their mother. In August 1908 she wrote, and had privately printed, a memoir of Daphne. And she contributed a memoir of her eldest son to the book, entitled *Christopher*, containing many of his letters, which was compiled by Sir Oliver Lodge and published in 1918.

Mrs Coombe Tennant combined marked practical interests and abilities with outstanding gifts of mediumship. She was in many aspects a typical Victorian society lady, but she combined this with strong, and rather unusually radical, social and political interests. She was an early and enthusiastic supporter of women's suffrage. In politics she was a strong Liberal, and for a time a great admirer of Lloyd George. She took an active part in local administration in Glamorganshire, and was one of the first women JPs on the bench there. After the end of the First World War the British Government appointed her a delegate to the Assembly of the newly founded League of Nations. Of Welsh descent on her mother's side, she became a keen Welsh nationalist; played an active part and held high office in the National Eisteddfod; and was a discriminating patron of Welsh painting. Beside this, she made for herself a fine collection of modern French pictures.

It was probably through her brother-in-law, F. W. H. Myers, that she first became aware of the Society for Psychical Research and met some of its prominent Cambridge members, such as Mrs Sidgwick, Mrs Verrall, and the latter's daughter Helen (afterwards Mrs W. H. Salter). But it was not until after the death of her daughter Daphne that her interest in psychical research became strong and her own very distinctive type of mediumship developed. Its nature, and the course of its development, are thoroughly described in Gerald Balfour's 'Study of the Psychological Aspects of Mrs. Willett's Mediumship', which he contributed to the S.P.R. *Proceedings* in 1935.

The 'Palm Sunday' Case

The salient points are as follows. She had attempted automatic writing in the summer of 1908, after Daphne's death, and had obtained messages purporting to come from Myers, who had died in 1901. She had not been much impressed with these, but had nevertheless continued. Then, early in January 1909, came a sudden development. In a script, ostensibly coming from Myers, she received an order to stop writing, and to try to apprehend the ideas which would be put into her head, and to record them in ordinary writing as soon afterwards as possible. It was stated in the scripts that Edmund Gurney (see GURNEY), who had died in 1888, was involved with Myers in a special experiment which they were to make 'from the other side' with her help.

The next stage was that the 'Myers-persona' and the 'Gurney-persona', as we may call them, expressed and reiterated in the scripts the wish that she should give sittings in the presence of Sir Oliver Lodge, who had been a friend and collaborator of theirs in their lifetimes, and should dictate to him the impressions which she would receive from them. After considerable resistance she consented to approach Lodge, who was then a complete stranger to her. They first met on 17 May 1909 and she afterwards had many sittings in his presence, with him as note-taker.

Next, the Gurney-persona insisted that Gerald Balfour (later the second Earl of Balfour) should be introduced as a sitter and note-taker. He had been a close friend of Gurney's, had co-operated with him in psychical research, and was deeply read in philosophy. Mrs Coombe Tennant, who had never met him, resisted the suggestion, but eventually consented to approach him. The first sitting was on 4 June 1911. Thereafter he became almost the only sitter with her, and during the next 20 years hundreds of sittings were held, sometimes at Cadoxton and sometimes at the Balfours' home at Fisher's Hill, Woking, in Surrey.

These sittings largely took the form of elaborate conversations, with questions and answers, between the sitter and the ostensible communicators. The latter, purporting to be the surviving spirits of Myers and Gurney, explained the use which they claimed to be making deliberately of Mrs Coombe Tennant, the methods which they employed and the difficulties which they met in attempting various kinds of communication through her. Whatever their origin, these communications are on a high intellectual level. They are some of the most impressive recorded products of trance-mediumship.

Long before Balfour's study was published, two papers, one by Sir Oliver Lodge and the other by Mrs Verrall, appeared in 1911 in the S.P.R. *Proceedings* concerning the 'cross correspondences' in which 'Mrs Willett' played an essential part (see CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES). Balfour himself published two papers on the same subject, in 1914 and 1917. These four papers have become classics in the literature of psychical research. Between them they make it plain in detail that in her scripts 'Mrs Willett' showed a knowledge of particular facts and incidents and of highly recondite classical lore, which cannot plausibly be assigned to any source normally available to Mrs Coombe Tennant. These are, moreover, highly characteristic of the interests, the learning, and the idiosyncrasies of the deceased scholars, in particular Myers, Verrall, and Butcher, who were ostensibly communicating through her.

In 1960 Joan Balfour, daughter-in-law of Gerald, published in the S.P.R. *Proceedings* a long paper on the 'Palm Sunday' case. This describes how 'Mrs Willett', in a long series of automatic scripts and trance-utterances, between 1912 and 1929, seems to be referring cryptically, but unmistakably, to a certain very private and personal matter in the early life of Gerald's elder brother, the Conservative statesman Arthur Balfour (1848–1930). This was his love for Catherine Mary Lyttelton and her tragic death from typhus on Palm Sunday 1875, before he had declared himself. A sitting between Balfour and 'Mrs Willett' in 1916 is referred to and certain incidents in his last illness are described, when he was a very old man in 1929, in which 'Mrs Willett', who was staying in the house, seemed to be aware of the presence and intervention of Catherine Lyttelton's surviving spirit.

Mrs Coombe Tennant died in 1956 in her 82nd year, but on the face of it this was by no means the end of her psychic activities. For from 7 August 1957 to 6 March 1960, Miss Geraldine Cummins, who had been unknown to her personally, obtained a series of 40 automatic scripts purporting to come from her surviving spirit. They were published in 1965 under the title *Swan on a Black Sea*, and they have been the subject of much discussion since. Whatever may be their ultimate origin, they seem to be redolent of Mrs Coombe Tennant's personality, and to contain bits of highly individual information about her doings and feelings throughout her earthly life.

(See also AUTOMATIC ART.)

C. D. BROAD

WILL-O-THE-WISP

MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS seen hovering or moving about in an eerie manner, especially over fens and marshes or in churchyards, have acquired a grim reputation in Europe under a great variety of names: including will-o-the-wisp, jack-o-lantern, fox fire, fairy fire, *ignis fatuus* ('foolish fire', because only a fool follows it), elf light, friar's lantern, corpse light, corpse candle, William with the little flame, Jack of the bright light, fetch candle or fetch light, a 'fetch' being a person's shadowy counterpart or double (see DOUBLE). The lights may be caused by atmospheric conditions or possibly by ignition of gases emanating from decaying plant or animal matter. They look like small, glowing balls of fire or like candle flames and are generally associated with the souls of the dead (see CANDLE). In northern Europe spectral fires were seen on burial mounds and were believed to be the souls of dead warriors, guarding the treasure which had been buried with them.

A will-o-the-wisp, jack-o-lantern or ignis fatuus, sometimes believed to be a wandering soul which cannot find refuge in heaven or hell, or sometimes a malignant imp, wanders about in an erratic way and, if you follow it, it is likely at best to get you hopelessly lost and at worst to lead you to your death in a bog or pool, though there are a few reports of the light being helpful and leading people out of danger. There are also stories of the will-o-the-wisp chasing a terrified victim through mud and brambles until he is confused and then leaving him with the sound of mocking laughter.

In German folklore, the light is thought to be the soul of someone who in life moved or disregarded a boundary marker, a way of stealing part of a neighbour's land which has been a particularly detested crime in many societies. The Finnish *liekkio*, 'flaming one', is the soul of a child who has been buried in the forest.

A corpse candle or fetch light, like a small flame moving through the air in the dark, may be a warning of your own imminent death if it hovers before you, or of the death of someone you love. Or it may hover at a place which will soon he the scene of a death. It may cross your line of vision between your home and the grave which waits for you in the churchyard. More often, it is seen going from the churchyard to the house of a person who is near death, in which case it is tracing in reverse the route which the funeral will take, or lingering on the roof of a house in which a death will follow.

The sea-going equivalent of the corpse candle is a glowing light called St Elmo's Fire, which is caused by electrical discharges during thunderstorms and is accompanied by a crackling sound, like the noise of twigs burning. It is seen on the masts and yards of ships and is generally interpreted, correctly, as a sign that the worst of the storm is over. However, if it comes down onto the deck, this is an ominous sign, and if it is seen glowing round a sailor's head, his death is very close to him.

An alternative name, corposant, is derived from Portuguese *corpo santo*, 'holy body', the body being that of St Elmo himself, the patron saint of Mediterranean seamen. His name is probably a corruption of Erasmus, the name of a martyr of the early 4th century who was said to have died at sea during a storm, after promising the crew that if they were not fated to die in the storm, he would come back and show himself to them. They waited anxiously and presently a glowing light appeared at the masthead.

Tate Gallery London

A glowing ball of fire, the will-o-the-wisp, jack-o-lantern or *ignis fatuus*, has been known to lead men to their deaths: *Ignis Fatuus*, an imaginative 19th century relief by Henry Alfred Pegram

WILLOW

A TRADITIONAL EMBLEM of grief and melancholy, the willow is also a symbol of forsaken love, and it was once customary for the jilted to wear a willow garland. In *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare describes the forsaken Queen of Carthage:

> In such a night
> Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
> Upon the wild sea-banks. . . .

Ophelia hangs her symbolic bunch of wild flowers upon a willow that 'grows aslant a brook', and Desdemona sings 'a song of "willow"' about a jilted girl, which ends 'Sing all a green willow must be my garland'. Unkind people would even send a willow garland to someone who had been jilted, often on the occasion of the unfaithful lover's marriage to another. In Wales the willow wreath was replaced by a peeled hazel wand.

It was not only the jilted but the bereaved who should wear the willow. In *Henry IV* (Part 3) when Bona, sister of the Queen of France, hears of Edward IV's marriage with Elizabeth Grey, she says: 'Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly, I'll wear the willow-garland for his sake.'

The association with grief dates only from the late Middle Ages; there is little doubt that the biblical 'willows' upon which the exiled Jews hung their harps as they wept by the rivers of Babylon were the Euphrates aspen, a kind of poplar. Even the 18th century Swedish botanist Linnaeus was misled by the Bible into christening the weeping willow, which actually comes from China, *Salix babylonica*.

There is, however, an ancient association between the willow and death. In the 2nd century AD Pausanias, the Greek historian, wrote of a grove sacred to Persephone, queen of the underworld, where willow and poplars grew, and also describes Orpheus holding a willow branch in the underworld. On the island of the enchantress Circe there was said to be a grove of willows, from which corpses hung. In China coffins were covered

Tate Gallery London

Associated with death by the ancient Greeks, the willow is traditionally an emblem of forsaken love; in *Hamlet* Ophelia hangs her wild flowers on a 'willow aslant a brook' before drowning herself: painting by Millais

with willow boughs, and the trees were planted in cemeteries to suggest immortality. The Chinese also considered the tree to be magical and capable of averting harm and illness, a belief that is also found in Ireland, where the pussy willow, one of the 'seven noble trees of the land', was a charm against enchantment.

Because of its ancient sacredness the willow is one of the trees that should be invoked when a person 'touches wood'. The pussy willow provided the English substitute for palm branches on Palm Sunday (see PALM). It is sometimes thought to be unlucky to take the catkins or 'pussies' indoors, but more often this is said to bring good luck, especially if they are brought into the house on May Day.

In certain places the willow was associated with festivals held on St John's Eve, 23 June. In the Ile de France a figure made from pliable willow wands was ceremoniously burnt and at Luchon, in southern France, a representation of an actual willow tree was made from the wands. Snakes were thrown upon it and it was then set alight. The background to these two extraordinary rites is obscure.

As with hazel, wands of willow were important in various magical operations, especially divination. In northern England, a girl who wanted to know whom she would marry could perform an alarming ritual. With her willow wand in her left hand, she had to leave the house secretly and run three times around it, saying, 'He that's to be my gude man come and grip the end of it'. On the third time round a likeness of her future husband would grasp the other end.

Because willow trees are often hollow, and decay easily, it was believed that a child beaten with a willow rod would be stunted, while an animal so beaten would suffer internal pains. However, willow trees were sometimes used in an ancient cure for children's ailments, notably rupture. The child was passed through a natural hole or artificial cleft in the tree, which was then bound or closed up with willow twigs.

Willow is one of the few cases where the Doctrine of Signatures, the theory that 'like cures like' (see DISEASE), has proved to have a scientific basis. Because the tree grows in wet places it was believed to be a remedy for rheumatism, which can be caused by damp. A magical method recorded in the Netherlands was for the afflicted person to make three knots in a branch on an old tree, saying 'Good morning, Old One, I give thee the cold.' Later, according to Gerard, the 16th century herbalist, branches of osier, a kind of willow, would be brought into the sick-room; but the country remedy was to take an infusion of the bark. During the 19th century this remedy was investigated and willow (*salix*) was found to contain salicylic acid, which is now used in the treatment of rheumatism.

In the language of flowers, the weeping willow is not surprisingly the code for mourning, but the water willow represents freedom.

A. J. HUXLEY

'O for the wings of a dove': the human longing for wings and flight has been accomplished in one sense, for man can and does fly in his dreams

WINGS

PERHAPS BECAUSE man's body, wingless and earth-bound, has never normally been able to levitate, let alone fly, the ability to take off and soar freely away from terra firma, as demonstrated by birds, has aroused man's awe and longing. Ancient man peopled the mysterious upper and lower regions of his world with imagined creatures of unhampered mobility, often with winged appendages, whether for flight or not, as a symbol of extra-terrestrial power.

In some ancient myths, the sky itself was depicted as a winged vulture, and the Egyptian sun god Re, when he was disenchanted with human beings, was advised to mount the Heavenly Cow, rise up and become the sky itself. The Mesopotamian god Anum created a winged bull, called the Bull of Heaven, and sent it to earth to redress a slight to his daughter Ishtar (the wings, however, did not prevent the bull from being slain).

In Greek myths Hermes (see HERMES), messenger of the god Zeus, wore winged sandals and a winged hat to make him iovincibly swift and mobile. Eros, a beautiful winged youth, sped where he willed to shoot his victims with arrows of love (see EROS). The Sphinx, a woman-fronted lion with an impressive wing-spread, killed people who could not answer her riddles, epitomizing the evil use of supernatural flight.

The Fall of Icarus

Of several winged horses in ancient myth, Pegasus, steadfast and courageous, travelled the air faster than the wind, attained the heights of Olympus and drew the thunder-chariots of Zeus across the heavens. Al Borak ('Lightning'), milk-white and with the wings of an eagle, carried Mohammed to the seventh heaven.

Less appealing, the winged Harpies,

which were partly women but had eagle's claws and beaks, swooped down viciously to seize man's food and depart, leaving a terrible stench (see HARPY). The griffin (or gryphon) had the head, wings and feet of an eagle and the hind-part of a lion. Only the female was winged; the male counterpart had protruding spikes instead. Aeschylus called griffins 'the hounds of Zeus, who never bark, with beaks like birds', and they were considered fierce guardians against theft. Nemesis, avenger of wrongdoing, was a winged woman carrying a sword or whip, who travelled the air in a griffin-drawn chariot. The hippogriff was a variant of the griffin, with the body of a horse, the forefront of a griffin and an eagle's wings and claws.

The terrifying dragons that appear in many legends are a compound of many creatures, including serpent, lion, antelope, fish and eagle. Although some alternately ran and flew, many seem to have been able to fly a considerable distance, and most were depicted with wings, signifying the ultimate in supernatural endowment (see DRAGON). The wings of the Roc (or Rukh), according to Marco Polo, who had heard of it from many sources, had a span of '30 paces', and the wing feathers were '12 paces long'. It could rise to great heights, swoop down on an elephant, bear it far up, then drop it and smash it, and, of course, descend to eat it (see ROC).

A moral lay in the experience of Daedalus, architect of the labyrinth for the Minotaur in Crete. Daedalus did not have wings at all, but when King Minos imprisoned him and his son Icarus in the labyrinth, Daedalus fashioned some with wax and glue, and he and Icarus took to the one available escape route, the air. Icarus, however, intoxicated by his new-found freedom and power, did not heed his father's warning to fly a middle course between the sun and the sea. He flew too near the sun and his beautiful wings melted. He fell into the sea and drowned. His sorrowful father flew safely on to Sicily.

Peter Pan

In later folklore (and theology), both angels and devils had the power of flight, and angels were generally illustrated with feathered wings, which they apparently did not need to flap to encompass distance; angels' thoughts and desires sped them without this effort.

By the 17th century, it was generally believed that angels ruled all spheres above the moon, and devils all below. The seraphim, highest order of angels, had no less than six wings. The main business of angels was the salvation of men's souls, and of devils the damnation of them. By purity of character, men might themselves become angels when they died, thus finally acquiring the supremacy of wings.

Fairies were considered nearer to devils than angels. Supposedly composed of condensed or congealed air, they took countless shapes, and were more often earth-oriented than celestial, though some were said to have been descended from gods. How, when and why they first acquired wings, is uncertain, though probably the form of angels was an influence.

Though fairies are frequently without them, their ability to become invisible in one place and visible in another, to steal in and out of shapes and sizes, has the same supernatural freedom of movement. In Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Oberon has just arrived from India, and Puck takes but a few minutes to travel from England to Athens and back. Oberon summarizes the fairies' eerie form of flight when he says to Titania:

> Then my queen in silence sad,
> Trip we after the night's shade;
> We the globe can compass soon,
> Swifter than the wandering moon.

The human child's longing for wings, or their equivalent for flight, is never more vividly portrayed or more happily fulfilled than in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Peter, the boy who refused to grow up, knew how to fly. He taught the Darling children how to do it by simply believing they could, and then taking a huge jump from their beds into the air. Suddenly, as if wing-borne, they lifted up and followed him out of the window, gliding with speed and exhilarating ease to

Jeffrey Craig

Although angels were generally depicted as having feathered wings in medieval art, they apparently did not need to flap them to encompass distance; it was believed that their thoughts and desires alone were able to move them: winged cherubs surrounding a statue, in Sicily

Michael Holford

'Never-Never Land'. That their escape from adulthood had sad repercussions did not linger in children's minds as much as the identification with Peter's magic ability.

The art of flying, with or without wings, has been accomplished in one sense – man can and does fly in his dreams. In dreams man may have the pleasure of being conscious that he has risen out of his body's limited sphere. He may ascend only a short way, looking down at his still reclining and inert body, or rise high into the sky and fly across an ocean. Techniques range from a rapid flapping with the elbows, a forward thrust and outspread of arms that now act as wings, to a controlled tilting and angling of the body to balance it in relation to the air. Flying dreams of any kind are primarily satisfying and delightful; whether man merely rises above his normal confinement, or right out of it, the added dimension of levitation and flight removes frustrating barriers to the supernatural.

Above **Symbols of extra-terrestrial power, wings were the attributes of many deities of the ancient world: winged sun disc, detail from painting on the coffin of a priestess of the Egyptian god Amen-Re** ***Below*** **Although fairies are more often earth-orientated than celestial beings, they are frequently depicted with wings**

Scientists are not sure how real wings were evolved, and it is now believed that they may not be appendages at all, but the extension of the *chitin*, the outer integument or body wall. In any case, the outstretched human arm is just similar enough to the wing structure of birds to tantalize man with the possibility of developing flight power. Man has spent untold amounts of time strengthening appropriate muscles and appending strange devices to his person, to no avail. In vicarious achievement of his desire, he has flown kites and balloons, invented metal wings and even rocket propulsion. He has become airborne, but still cannot elevate himself more than a few feet off the earth, and this for but a fleet moment. Until he can do so, man will continue to be fascinated with the supernatural connotations of wings and flight.

(See also ANGELS; BAT; BIRDS; FAIRIES; SKY.)

NONA COXHEAD

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WINTER

'There is food everywhere, heavy, rich food. And laughter. A positive urge to spend seizes on everyone . . .' What sounds like our modern Christmas is in fact an account of a pagan winter festival in the 4th century AD

IN NORTHERN LANDS the season of cold, wet and darkness has also traditionally been the time when the freest rein is given to fantasy. It was in winter that whole families in bygone ages huddled together in smoky huts listening, as the storms raged outside, to sagas and folktales. In winter, more than any other season, ghosts stalk abroad, and in the countryside a solitary light, glimpsed in the distance by a lone wayfarer, can flood the soul with emotion. Winter has always been, too, a time for feasting and celebrating. When harsh weather made warfare and even trivial disputes between neighbours impossible, and the concerted hostility of the elements made men mindful of their own essential brotherhood, it was natural to think of winter as the season of goodwill. There was also the gloom and tedium of long nights crying out for relief, and when the days began at last to lengthen, however imperceptibly, men looked upon it as the rebirth of the sun, and celebrated the nativity of a god.

The earliest of these winter festivals about which we know anything was the Sacaea in Babylon, a celebration of the New Year, lasting several days. From the third millennium down to the very end of Mesopotamian civilization, a few centuries before the Christian era, mock battles were held every year, in which the king impersonated the god Marduk, who had won a mighty victory over Tiamat, the watery goddess of chaos, on the very first New Year's day, when the world had been created (see CREATION MYTHS; MARDUK). In Babylonia new temples were inaugurated only on New Year's day, and from this day a king officially dated the beginning of his reign. According to later Greek writers, the Babylonian Sacaea was a time of sexual licence, feasting and disguising. Slaves gave orders to their masters during the days of the festival, and a criminal was chosen to have royal rights conferred upon him, only to be executed at the end of the celebrations. Whether these Greeks are reading contemporary practices in the Roman world into the Babylonian setting it is impossible to say, but if their reports are accurate, then the Babylonian festival must have been the ancestor of a number of similar celebrations in the ancient world.

The Roman Saturnalia, celebrated at the end of December, was a festival of merry-making and exchanging gifts which left its mark on our own Christmas celebrations. All work and business was suspended, originally for three days, but eventually for seven, and slaves were free to say and do what they liked. Gambling, usually punishable with a fine fixed at four times the value of the stakes, was officially permitted on these 'best of days', as the Roman poet Catullus calls the Saturnalia. Rich men gave their 'clients' presents of silverware, and children received little wax dolls.

A Greek writer of the 4th century AD, the sophist Libanius, has left a description of the winter festival as it was celebrated in his own city of Antioch: 'There is food everywhere, heavy, rich food. And laughter. A positive urge to spend seizes on everyone, so that people who have taken pleasure in saving up the whole year, now think it's a good idea to squander. The streets are full of people and coaches, staggering under the load of gifts. Children are free of the dread of their teachers, and for slaves the festival is as good as a holiday. Another good thing about it – it teaches people not to be too fond of money, but to let it circulate from hand to hand.'

Libanius was an early opponent of Christianity who nevertheless had Christians among his pupils, one of them St John Chrysostom. He is here describing pagan festivities in general, though he seems to have had the Saturnalia particularly in mind. The corresponding Greek festival, the Kronia, was celebrated at harvest time, but the Greeks had winter festivals, including the rustic Dionysia, held in December, and celebrated in villages with a burlesque procession; the Lenaea, or feast of the wine vats, celebrated in January with a procession, sacrifice and competing plays; and the Anthesteria, held during three days about the time that we call February, when the casks were opened and the new wine was tasted.

All the winter festivals were connected in some way with Dionysus, the god of wine (see DIONYSUS), and the Greeks in fact divided the cult-year into two halves, the Dionysiac and the Apollonian, corresponding to winter and summer. A similar division was made by the ancient Hindus, for whom winter was the time for ancestor worship and summer for the gods of Nature. In other parts of the world, too, winter is the time for appeasing the spirits of the dead. On the third day of the Anthesteria, the celebrations were held within the family circle, with rites in appeasement of ancestors. This festival came at the end of winter in Greece – indeed, it was to celebrate the end of winter marked by the appearance of the year's first flowers – but in northern Europe the cult of the dead was celebrated either in autumn, as among the Saxons, or in early or midwinter, as among the Scandinavians and Celts. In these pre-Christian festivals, bonfires were lighted to represent the waning and waxing sun. The rites were absorbed into Christianity in the guise of All Saints' day on 1 November and All Souls' on 2 November. Winter festivals in commemoration of the dead were also celebrated in China until comparatively recent times.

The Last Winter

Connected perhaps with the cult of dead souls, but also with the general harshness of winter, is the widespread notion that the world will come to an end in the middle of a terrible winter. This is the *fimbul-vetr* of the Icelandic sagas. In one of these poems, Odin, the god of the dead (see ODIN), asks the wise giant Vafthrudnir which of mankind will survive the mighty winter, and is told Lif and Lifthrasir, hidden in Hoddmimir's wood. In a prose saga of the 13th century, it is prophesied that winter will precede the great Doom (see SCANDINAVIA). Snow will drive from all quarters, with sharp frost and cruel wind. The sun will have no power. Three such winters will follow in succession, without an intervening summer. There will be fighting all over the earth, with brother slaying brother.

In Iranian mythology, the rain of Malkosh devastates the earth, and snow and ice cause most of mankind to die of cold and famine. The only men and animals saved from this destructive winter are those who are herded together by one of the gods in a great enclosure. There is a related idea in St Mark's gospel (13.18), when Christ, in prophesying the misery and destruction

Musée Condé, Chantilly/Giraudon

There is a widespread notion that the world will come to an end in the middle of a terrible winter

which will precede the Second Coming, urges his disciples to 'pray that it may not happen in winter'. Other verses in the same chapter may have inspired the passage in the Eddic saga about brother slaying brother, but whether the Iranian myth shows Christian influence, or whether even older notions connecting the end of the world with winter underlie both the myth and the gospel prophecy, is impossible to determine.

The Sleep of God

In astronomical terms, winter begins at the solstice on 21 or 22 December, and ends at the vernal equinox, on 20 March, but in northern latitudes winter begins, in popular estimation, much earlier. In many villages in the Upper Styria region of Austria, it was the custom to 'ring in' the winter as early as 24 August, the purpose of the ceremony being to frighten away the malevolent spirits of winter by making a loud noise. According to a saying current at one time in Aachen, Charlemagne goes to his winter quarters on St Giles's day (1 September) and leaves them on Ascension Day, a reference to the army of ghosts stationed in a magic mountain that Charlemagne still commands. In other parts of northern Europe, winter begins on 28 October, 1 November, or 11 November – St Martin's day, the saint riding on a white horse as the harbinger of snow. Colder weather is supposed to set in on St Catherine's day (25 November), but in a warm year when winter is late, St Andrew's day (30 November) finally marks the real onset of winter.

The day most commonly taken as mid-winter is that of the conversion of St Paul (25 January). In more southerly climates, January and February are regarded as the true winter months. But it is curious that

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Left **Illustration depicting the month of February, from the *Très Riches Heures*; probably as a result of the general harshness of the season, there is a widespread belief that the world will come to an end in the middle of a terrible winter *Above right* Christmas mummers and (*right*) the 'Wassail Bowl'; winter has always been a time for feasting and celebration, when the hostility of the elements made men conscious of their essential brotherhood; these traditional Christmas scenes reflect the pagan elements that are still an essential part of the Christian festival**

Victoria & Albert Museum

In myth and folklore winter may be personified as a storm god or in the form of frost, ice or snow spirits *Left* Probably because of its beautiful, sparkling quality, frost seems to have stimulated man's myth-making faculty more than either snow or ice: *Jack Frost*, illustration by Arthur Rackham *Far right* Ice is the original stuff out of which the world is made in the myths of some Northern peoples: *Ice Fairy*, statuette by J. Ceusse

the Greek and Latin words for 'winter' (*kheimon, hiems*) are related to words in prehistoric languages meaning 'snow': the name Himalaya is cognate. In northern European languages, on the other hand, the words denoting winter are cognate with words meaning 'water' and 'wet'. The Greeks probably brought their word with them when they migrated in prehistoric times into their present country. In literature, at any rate, one can find as many references to rain as to snow and ice: 'The winter is past, the rain is over', says the Song of Solomon (2.11), words which Chaucer echoes: 'The winter is goon, with alle his reynes wete.'

In myth and folktale, winter is personified, either in himself, as a storm god (Kari in Nordic legend), or through frost, ice and snow spirits of one kind or another. There are traces in prehistoric myths of a single god or goddess wielding power over both winter and summer. The Asiatic Nature goddess known to the Greeks as Kubele (see CYBELE) held the keys of the earth, which she opened in summer and shut in winter. The Teutonic lunar goddess Holda (the Frau Holle or White Woman of German folklore) holds summer captive in her underworld kingdom during winter. When she shakes her bedclothes, it snows.

The idea that Nature is asleep in winter is an ancient one, and the Phrygians believed that the Deity himself was asleep in winter. In primitive belief, winter and death are often equated, a notion strikingly summed up in an oracle quoted by a Latin author about the time of the birth of Christ: 'The highest God is called Hades in winter.' Here again, there is a link with the winter cults of the dead already mentioned, and with ghosts, which are especially active in winter. In Nordic myths, winter is the time of the wanderings of Odin, or Wotan, the god of the dead.

The belief that dead ancestors are present in winter explains the practice of the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia who change their names at the beginning of winter, when the ghosts arrive, and adopt the names of their ancestors. They also form secret societies in winter, in place of their ordinary summer family life. The practice of exorcizing evil and evil spirits at either the beginning or end of winter is widespread among primitive peoples.

Probably owing to its beautiful, sparkling quality, frost seems to have stimulated the myth-making faculty of man more than either snow or ice. Jack Frost is our own personification of frost, and he seems quite a friendly figure compared with the evil frost giants of the Eddic sagas. These giants, the Hrimthursar, represent snow and ice as well as frost, and were descended from the giant Ymir, who was himself created out of ice. They had been driven out of their ancestral home by Odin and his band of Aesir, and dwelt in Utgard, the outlying world.

Porridge for the Frost Man

Frost is personified in Finnish magic songs, and Frost man appears as the brother of Mist man in a charming Japanese legend. But the frost spirits were taken most seriously by the Finnish tribes of Russia and Siberia, the Votiaks, the Cheremiss, the Mordvins and the Ostiaks. There was a 'Frost woman' as well as a 'Frost man' to whom sacrifices were made. It was the custom among the Mordvins (who live in the district lying between Nizhni Novgorod and Saratov, and who in Byzantine times scored many victories over the Russians) to place porridge for the 'Frost man' in the smoke outlet of their huts on the Thursday before Easter, in order to protect the spring sowings, for although the Mordvins had accepted baptism, they still clung to their ancient mythology and to many pagan beliefs and practices. The Lapps also paid

In central Europe, ice in winter was connected with good crops the following year

great respect to the 'Frost man', who was more like a god than a man, as he was believed to govern the weather, the snow and the ice, and sacrifices were offered to him so that 'the ice should not harm the reindeer and that the blizzard should cease'.

But frost is not the monopoly of the northern hemisphere. A tribe of Australian aborigines have the following myth about the origin of frost. The seven Pleiades (called by them the Meamei) once lived on earth as seven sisters, whose bodies sparkled with beautiful icicles. Several brothers followed the girls about and tried to seduce them with gifts, but without success. A man stole two of the girls, but could not manage to thaw off the icicles. These two girls flew up to the sky, where they found their five sisters already waiting. Once every year, the sisters break off ice from themselves and throw it down to earth. Then members of this Australian tribe say, 'The Meamei have not forgotten us.'

Snow Maiden

In the mythology of sub-arctic peoples, ice is the original stuff out of which the world is made. Ymir the ice giant has been mentioned already. He is one of many such giants, the personification, perhaps, of icebergs. In the Eddas, the god Buri, grandfather of Odin, was licked into life from a block of ice by the magic cow Audhumla. A legend of the ice sea was recounted even in the western mountains of Czechoslovakia, which told of twelve ice giants, enemies of the sun. It is these giants, says the legend, that cause eclipses of the sun. The ice wolf, who threatens both sun and moon with his baying, lives with these giants on an island in the ice sea.

In central Europe, ice in winter was connected with good crops the following year, if it came in the period between Christmas and Twelfth Night. Smooth ice in March was taken as a sign that fruit would be plentiful in some places, while elsewhere it was taken to mean the opposite. Long icicles indicated that the flax would grow long in the following year, and again, their appearance in the days following Christmas was especially important. Sometimes the appearance and the time of formation of icicles was taken as a guide as to the best time to sow. If icicles were forked, the flax would also be forked.

Snow is personified in the myths and folktales of many peoples. In Japanese lore, Yuki-onne, the snow woman, is a young woman with a ghastly white complexion, with a slim figure, and a gentle and alluring manner. She appears to any wayfarer caught in a snowstorm and exhausted in the struggle. She soothes him and lulls him to sleep, until he loses consciousness and dies. Sometimes, it is said, she incarnates herself as a beautiful woman and marries a mortal, but she kills her unlucky husband.

Other people picture snow, in personified form, as a man. In Nordic mythology, Snow is an aged king of cold Finland, with the name Snaer, 'the old man'. His father is Iceberg or Frost, and his three daughters are Thick Snow, Snowstorm and Fine Snow. Snaer is 300 years old, and when people wish one another a long life, they say, 'May you live as long as Snaer.'

Snow is not always personified as a powerful or fearful figure. A Russian folk song tells of an elderly childless couple who made a snow doll in their garden, which a passing stranger blessed, whereupon it became a living child. The blue-eyed, golden-haired little girl was very precocious – she was like a child of 14 by the time winter had passed. As the snow melted from the fields in spring, little Snow child avoided the sun, in which she wilted, and sought out the shade of the willow trees. Most of all, she liked heavy showers, and if there was a hailstorm she was as gay as if she had found a treasure trove. But on St John the Baptist's day (24 June) her friends took her on an outing. They were careful to keep her in the shade of the forest, but when night came, they lit a bonfire and leapt back and forth across it. Suddenly they heard a dreadful noise behind them. They could see nothing when they turned to look, but Snow child had disappeared, and though they looked for her for several days, combing the forest tree by tree, they could find no trace of their little pale companion. The old couple were inconsolable, and imagined that a cruel beast had carried Snow child off. But, says the song, it was not a beast. When Snow child followed her friends over the glowing embers, she turned into fine vapour, and rose as a cloudlet to heaven.

It would be possible to read a symbolic meaning into this apparently very simple story. The Snow child, sweet and innocent

Private Collection/Hamlyn Group Library

Erich Lessing/Magnum

A feature of Greek and Roman winter festivals, the custom of giving gifts has been perpetuated in the Christian counterpart of these celebrations; according to legend, the Three Magi brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus. Village schoolchildren dressed as the Magi walk through a snow laden forest in Austria to announce the birth of Christ to people living on nearby farms

as she is, represents the cruel winter, but for all the care she takes to avoid the sun, she is vanquished in the end. It is interesting that it is not the sun itself which melts her, but the bonfire which in pagan times was lit to celebrate the sun god at the height of his power, about the time of the summer solstice. With the triumph of Christianity, these pagan rites were transferred to the celebration of St John the Baptist (see also WHEEL), and in this Russian tale there may also be a barely conscious reference to the triumph of the Son over the powers of darkness, symbolized by the wintry phenomenon of snow.

(See also ALL HALLOWS' EVE; CHRISTMAS; NEW YEAR.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

Wisdom Literature

General term for writings of the ancient East concerned with practical rules of conduct or with philosophical wisdom; including the books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, and the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha; in Proverbs, chapters 1 to 9, Wisdom is a personified female aspect of God.

Wish

Among numerous traditional occasions for making a wish which will come true are on seeing a chimney-sweep, a white horse, a loaded hay-wain coming towards you, or a horseshoe in the road, provided you spit; when putting on new clothes for the first time; on seeing a hare or the first star of evening; or on seeing the new moon, provided you turn your apron back to front.

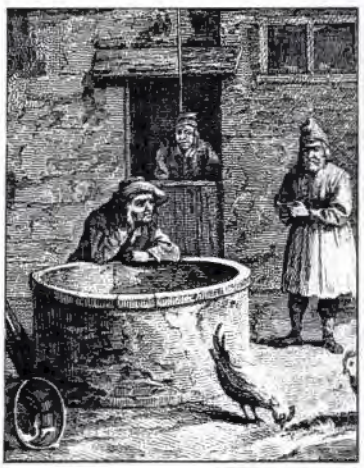
Wish-Bone

Or merrythought, the forked bone between a fowl's neck and breast; two people grip the bone and pull, while wishing, and the wish of the one who breaks off the larger piece will come true, provided he does not speak or laugh while the contest is going on, or reveal his wish.

Wishing-Well

A well at which you formulate an unspoken wish, dropping a coin, a pin or perhaps a pebble into the well as an offering; the belief that the wish will come true is part of the old lore of wells as the dwelling-places of powerful spirits.

See SPRINGS AND WELLS.



John Moss

Although people who practise witchcraft are generally regarded as being agents of misfortune, an exception is made for 'white' witches, who use their powers for the benefit of man; modern witches usually emphasize that they are concerned only with white magic: witches' wedding

'Although the epidemic character and the religious entanglement of European witch-beliefs make them different from the beliefs anthropologists have discovered among existing nonliterate tribes, there are still many points of parallel'

WITCHCRAFT

IN MOST ENGLISH dictionaries 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' are roughly synonymous. In anthropological usage they have acquired distinct meanings because an African tribe, the Azande (see AZANDE), are more precise in their categories of the supernatural than we are; and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, the anthropologist who studied them and wrote what has become a classic on the ethnography of witchcraft and similar belief systems, found the existence in English of these two words a useful means of translating the Zande distinction. Witchcraft and sorcery are words referring to systems of belief centred on the idea that certain human beings in a community may harm their fellow men by supernatural means. According to the Zande usage now adopted by most of the anthropological profession, both witches and sorcerers are believed illegitimately to kill others or make them ill, to cause them to fall victim to accident or other misfortune, or to destroy their property. 'Both alike are enemies of men,' as Evans-Pritchard puts it.

They differ, however, in method and motivation. The techniques of the witch are 'more supernatural' than those of the sorcerer in that they are beyond the comprehension of ordinary folk, whereas those of the sorcerer are acts of destructive magic that are well known and reasonably accessible to most adult members of the community. As to motive, witches are believed to be slaves of aberration and addiction;

Colorific!

thus considered, they are weird, sometimes tragic characters. Sorcerers, on the other hand, are considered to be ordinary people driven by understandable, if disapproved, urges such as malice, envy or revenge, which are part of everyone's experience.

The propensity to be a witch is usually attributed to heredity or at least is considered constitutional, in the sense of having been implanted at an early age through mother's milk or, as among the Cewa of Central Africa, through a child's having been magically inoculated by a senior relative against the dermatitis believed to result from eating human flesh, an activity attributed to Cewa witches. Sorcery, on the other hand, usually demands no special personal attributes and is believed to be practised by anyone who can acquire the necessary magical substances (in Africa) or spells (in Oceania).

Most anthropologists see the advantage of agreement on the meanings of these terms as outlined; but there are some, particularly those writing on Oceania, who treat the term 'sorcery' as socially or morally neutral, using it for all forms of destructive magic regardless of whether it is socially approved – as it may be in property protection for instance – or considered illicit. Similarly, and this applies to historical studies of European witchcraft, the term 'witch' does not invariably have a sinister or evil connotation, especially if it is qualified by the adjective 'white', in which case it may be used in reference to those who cure people rather than kill them, or who help to find lost possessions rather than destroy them (see WHITE MAGIC). However, in most societies, more often than not, witches, like sorcerers, are believed to be agents of evil and misfortune.

The self-styled witches of modern society usually emphasize that they are not involved in antisocial practices such as black magic. This makes doubtful their inclusion in the anthropologist's definition of either sorcerer or witch. Their continued existence is as much a tribute to the inventive genius of Margaret Murray or of Gerald Gardner as it is to the strength of any continuing tradition (see MODERN WITCHCRAFT).

Eric Cross

The Universal Witch

Beliefs in witchcraft (which from this point will be used in a generic sense to include sorcery) have been so widely observed that it has been suggested that the more important elements were probably common to Paleolithic man and spread with him to most of the presently inhabited parts of the world. There are certainly close resemblances between the beliefs in witchcraft revealed by the studies of modern anthropologists and those shown by historical and literary sources to have been characteristic of classical and medieval Europe. As Philip Mayer remarks, 'Shakespeare writing in 17th century England about mediaeval Scottish witches makes them recite a list of creatures that would be just as appropriate to witches in primitive Africa. Or again: the Pueblo Indians in Mexico say that witches go round at night carrying lights that alternately flare up and die down; exactly the same thing was said to me in Western Kenya by the Bantu tribe among whom I worked.' One might add that these widely dispersed elements would also have been familiar to Lucius Apuleius, author of *The Golden Ass*, a useful source for witch-beliefs in classical times.

Many of the works on European witchcraft, dealing with the early modern period, are concerned with a phenomenon very different from the witch-beliefs of surviving primitive societies or those of classical or medieval Europe. In the Dark Age, as Trevor-Roper puts it, 'there were witch-beliefs, of course – a scattered folklore of peasant superstitions, the casting of spells, the making of storms, converse with spirits, sympathetic magic . . . but on the whole

the mediaeval Church succeeded in containing them.' But the 16th and 17th centuries saw so great an upsurge in Europeans' preoccupation with witch-beliefs, with the craze encouraged 'by the cultivated Popes of the Renaissance, by the great Protestant Reformers, by the saints of the Counter-Reformation, by the scholars, lawyers and churchmen of an enlightened age', that Trevor-Roper is led to summarize: 'If these two centuries were the age of light, we have to admit that, in one respect at least, the Dark Age was more civilized.'

Servants of Satan

This means that the witch-beliefs of primitive peoples and those of early modern Europeans are in many ways not comparable. The first represent a chronic state, active but kept unremarkable by a society's normal mechanisms of tension management. The second reflect times of profound change when witch-beliefs, as sensitive symptoms of social strain, became intertwined with the religious, political and economic conflicts that punctuated the relatively sudden emergence of modern European society from feudalism. For this reason the events relating to witchcraft in early modern Europe might more appropriately be compared with the cult movements which, since the second half of the 19th century, have been reported from virtually every part of the world where native peoples have had to adjust themselves suddenly to the advent of Western ways of life. Just as the cargo cults of Melanesia, the ghost dance and peyote movements of North America and the anti-witchcraft crazes of Central Africa represent, as Worsley has put it, 'desperate searchings for more and more effective ways of understanding and modifying' a confused environment, so may the witch-scares of Europe and of Old and New England have played a similar role in blasting away the creaking and groaning remnants of an outdated social structure (see CARGO CULTS; GHOST DANCE; NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS; PEYOTE CULTS).

The most important respect in which the epidemic character of European witch-beliefs made them differ from those of non-literate societies was the fact that they were taken up in the conflicts of the late medieval Church, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. An early mistaken identification of witches and heretics had the effect of marshalling a pre-Christian moral indignation against those who failed to conform with official Christianity. This fact probably prompted Margaret Murray's now discredited theory that European witches were the lingering adherents of a pagan religion. However, it also accounts for the fact that, whereas in all societies witches personify evil, in the society of early modern Europe they did this in a very specific way, being regarded as the earthly representatives of the Prince of Evil. In the course of time the chief criterion for identifying a witch in Europe or New England came to be whether he or she had made a compact with the Devil. Evidence of such a compact included the presence of a 'Devil's mark' on his or her body (see PACT; PRICKING).

Witches were often accused of appearing in spectral form to tempt and torment their believed victims. In the Salem trials in New England in 1692, the screaming teenage girls, who were the main witnesses for the prosecution, regularly claimed to see – in the very courtroom – the spectres of the accused (see SALEM WITCHES). The idea that the Devil could not use the spectral counterparts of people without their connivance was an important principle in establishing the guilt of the accused. It was sufficient for an accuser to state that he had seen the accused witch's spectre; and it was only when theological opinion questioned this principle that the rate of conviction by the courts declined.

British Museum

Some of the witchcraft beliefs found in classical and medieval Europe still exist today ***Facing page*** **The custom of using a doll to kill or injure the person it represents was known in Greece and Rome, and is still widespread** ***Above right*** **A doll in a coffin, found recently by firemen in a house in London to which they were called** ***Above left*** **The figure of a naked woman, and a sheep's heart, both pierced by slivers of hawthorn, found at a castle in Norfolk in 1964**

Left **In primitive rituals curses are directed at an effigy of the intended victim** ***Right*** **A witch with her familiars; animals and insects associated with witches include hyenas, owls and red ants in Africa, as well as the creatures which are generally associated with European witchcraft**

The Hoot of an Owl

Although the epidemic character and the religious entanglement of European witch-beliefs make them different from the beliefs anthropologists have discovered among existing non-literate tribes, there are still many points of parallel. The ethnography of witchcraft, the systematic description of this complex of beliefs in relation to the total way of life of the people or the period, has shown many similarities between societies separated in space and time.

Wherever beliefs in them are found, witches are conceived as having supernatural powers, antisocial tendencies and disgusting practices. They are believed to travel around at night by flying through the air on broomsticks (in Europe) or in saucer-shaped winnowing baskets (in Central Africa), or to move over the ground by riding on the backs of animal familiars such as baboons (in southern Africa). The range of animals and insects they are believed to induce to run their evil errands for them is wide, and includes dogs and cats in Europe and hyenas, owls, night-jars and red ants in Africa. In the Cewa language an owl's hoot is heard, not as a meaningless inanity such as 'To wit-to woo!', but as a clear and sinister *Muphe! Muphe! Nimkukute!* (Kill him! Kill him! That I may munch him!), and this inevitably links this weird bird with the necrophagous sorcerers who, the Cewa believe, bring them a large share of their misfortunes, such as illness, death and accident. Witches are usually credited with extra-sensory powers approaching omniscience, knowing by a sixth sense where a death has occurred and consequently where the next ghoulish feast will be held.

European beliefs reflect the medieval concern over sins of the flesh; for witches appeared to men as voluptuous succubi and to women as seducing incubi (see INCUBUS). A somewhat similar treatment of illicit sexual relationships occurs in the beliefs of the Pondo of south-eastern Africa: their beliefs seem to be related to the fact that custom excludes large categories of individuals living in the same neighbourhood from marrying or flirting with one another, and that the modern South African colour-caste system forbids sexual relationships between persons of different race. The less sex-ridden but more food-conscious Nyakyusa of south-western Tanzania, on the other hand, consider them as motivated by greed rather than lust.

From one society to another, ideas vary regarding the relationships between witches and their familiars, whether these be spirits, mythical creatures or animals. Among the south-eastern Bantu-speaking tribes of Africa, including the Pondo, witches are believed to have sexual relationships with their familiars, particularly with a dwarf-like creature called *tokoloshe* or *tikoloshe*. Although familiars are usually regarded as the servants or the messengers of witches, they are sometimes believed to urge their masters and mistresses on, giving their aberrant addiction a more feasible, comprehensible and somewhat tragic character. Even where no sexual relationship is postulated between witch and familiar, some kind of mystical link may be claimed. It was said of a reputed sorcerer among the Cewa that, when he had imbibed heavily, drunken hyenas were to be found in his house and that, when he died, his hyena-familiars died with him.

Attributed with special powers, witches are believed to be particularly difficult to bring to terms. Eternal vigilance and protective medicines have to be employed while they are at large and, once they have been caught, special methods of killing them have to be followed, such as burning them alive or driving stakes, pegs or nails into various parts of their bodies. Such practices, of widespread occurrence, are probably related to the belief that witches have special spirit-helpers or that they possess elusive souls, though not all those who follow these procedures are explicit about their reasons for carrying them out.

Supernatural Terrorists

Owing to their supposed deviant and often revolting practices, witches are everywhere looked upon as beyond the pale of decent living. They provide moralists with shorthand concrete descriptions of evil and parents with effective bogymen. To accuse anyone of witchcraft is a condensed way of charging him with a long list of the foullest crimes, and this action throws into sharper relief the moral precepts of the society to which he belongs. The fact that the witch is used for making children more circumspect about their conduct is no doubt related to the tendency in many societies for beliefs in witchcraft to provide plausible points of backward reference in the explanation of misfortune. If someone falls ill or has an accident, both he and his fellow men can usually find some incident in his prior social interaction which will explain why someone had reason to have a grudge against him and why he should now be the victim of witchcraft. He may have quarrelled with someone of dubious reputation, or he may have failed to discharge an obligation towards someone who, though in a superior moral position, is now believed to have resorted to an immoral form of retribution.

This leads to the paradox that, though witches provide mainly negative instances of conduct, they may also play positive moral roles in being the points of retrospective projection for the 'victim's' feelings of guilt resulting from acts of foolishness and meanness. This moral import of beliefs in witchcraft can be illustrated from all those societies, contemporary and historical, on which data on such beliefs exist, and this represents an important convergence of the findings of historians and anthropologists. Witches are unmitigated supernatural terrorists in all societies in which beliefs in them occur; and sufferers of misfortune find in the witches' supposed actions the means of expressing their feelings of guilt.

Another anthropological finding has been more difficult to substantiate from historical materials. It has been found that, in contemporary non-literate societies, accusations of witchcraft and believed instances of attack by witches occur typically between persons whom the social structure throws into uncontrolled competition and tension, for instance, rivals in love or in politics. Accusations, which represent crises in the relationship between the alleged witch and the accuser, may thus be regarded as 'social strain-gauges', indicating where the tensions and role conflicts in the social structure lie. Believed instances of attack, involving the relationship between alleged witch and believed victim, have a similar significance but, since all witchcraft and most sorcery exist in the uneasy minds of their believed victims, they are on a different plane of reality and illuminate the society's own model of strained social relationships rather than the anthropologist's.

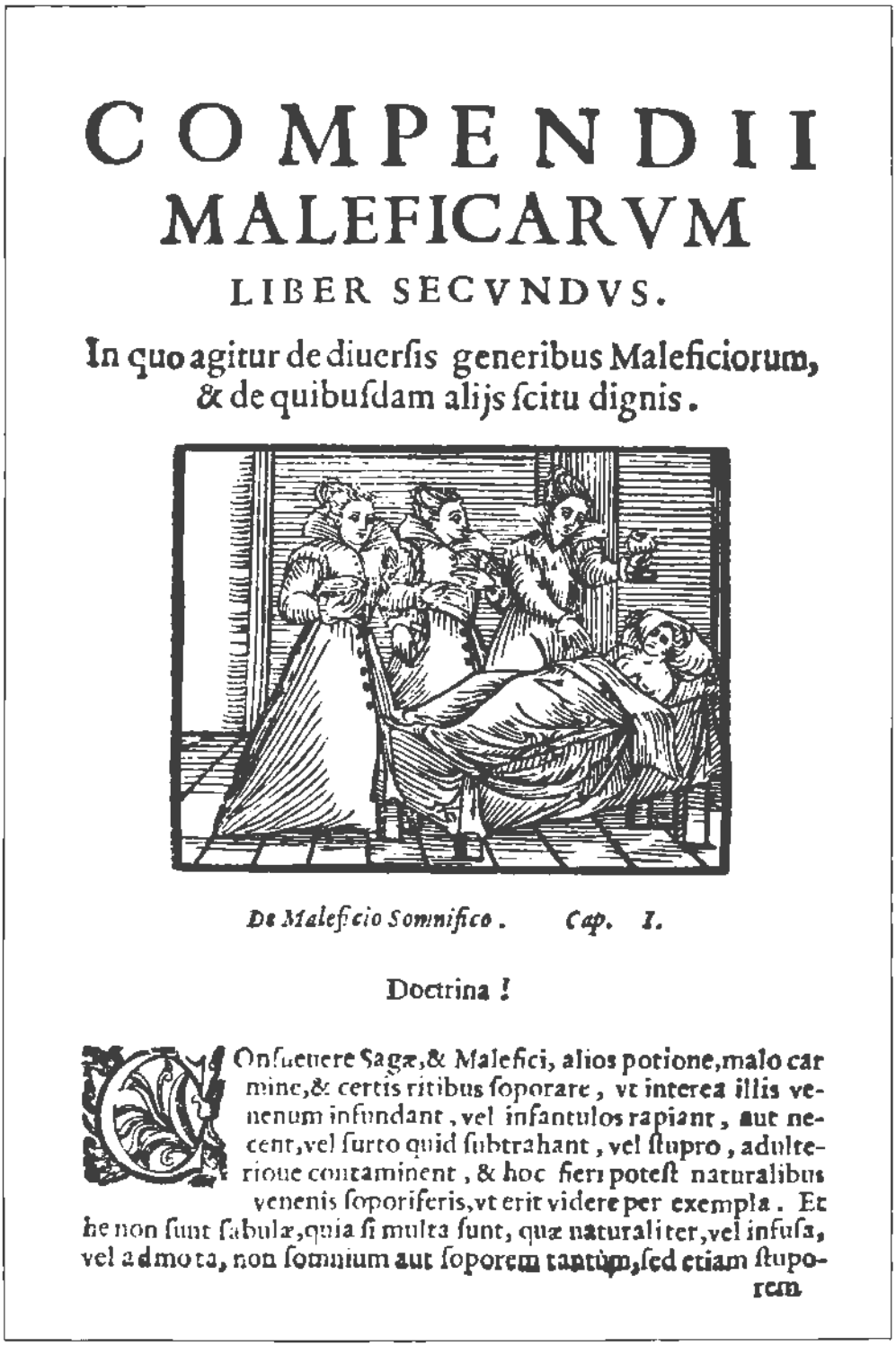
Closed Circle

These two models often differ from each other and either may differ from the accepted picture. For instance, people in most societies where beliefs in witchcraft exist usually claim that witches are almost iovariably women; yet, if the anthropologist keeps a tally of actual instances of accusation or of believed attack, he is likely to discover that men, who are generally more socially involved and more in competition for positions of leadership, form a much higher proportion of those accused or suspected than informants' general statements would suggest. In our society, statements about women drivers are a parallel case.

Until recently the nature of the historical

Keystone

Facing page **While witches are believed to be slaves to aberration and addiction, other practitioners of magic may be ordinary people driven by urges such as malice or envy: illustration of a wizard by Arthur Rackham *Right* South African witch-doctor; like his European counterparts he uses his powers mainly to cure disease**



COMPENDII
MALEFICARVM
LIBER SECVNDVS.

In quo agitur de diuerſis generibus Maleficiorum, & de quibuſdam alijs ſcitu dignis.

De Maleficio Somnifico. Cap. I.

Doctrina !

CONſueuere Sagæ,& Malefici, alios potione,malo carmine,& certis ritibus ſoporare, vt interea illis venenum infundant, vel infantulos rapiant, aut necent,vel furto quid ſubtrahant, vel ſtupro, adulterioue contaminent, & hoc fieri poteſt naturalibus venenis ſoporiferis,vt erit videre per exempla. Et he non ſunt fabulæ,quia ſi multa ſunt, quæ naturaliter,vel infuſa, vel admota, non ſomnium aut ſoporem tantùm,ſed etiam ſtupo-

rem

Symptoms of social strain, the witch-beliefs of 16th and 17th century Europe reflected a period of profound change, and became intertwined with the religious, economic and political conflicts that arose during the emergence of modern European society from feudalism; an early mistaken identification of witches and heretics resulted in the belief that witches are the earthly representatives of the Devil: title page of *Compendium Maleficarum*, a late 15th century treatise on witchcraft

materials made it difficult to apply the 'social strain-gauge' hypothesis to European data. The historical sources that have been analysed have often not revealed enough specific information about the relationships between the important triad of accuser, accused witch and believed victim; nor have they always thrown light on the nature of the issues between them. However, with Macfarlane's recent meticulous combination of the latest techniques of English local history and the theoretical orientations of social anthropology in his study of witchcraft in Essex between 1560 and 1680, an ever closer convergence in this field is promised.

In any society that uses witchcraft as a regular explanatory principle, two features may be expected to be prominent. Firstly, there will be practices such as consulting diviners and oracles, and submitting suspects to ordeals (see FINDING OF WITCHES). Secondly, prevailing thought processes will be closed, in the sense that misfortunes, witch-beliefs and the techniques of witch-finding form a circular sequence in which each case of misfortune that is attributed to witchcraft reinforces the belief in witchcraft and renders a sceptical escape from the sequence unlikely.

As yet we have no satisfactory explanation of how some societies, including our own, have broken from this closed circle and abandoned beliefs in witchcraft. Part of the answer seems to lie in the larger scale of modern societies with their related tendency to specialization, not only in economic processes, but also in human relationships, with some of the latter personal and others impersonal. Instead of having everyone in the community breathing intimately down our necks, we manage in our modern way of life to escape, even if momentarily, the prison of personal relationships with their high potential for influence and control of our conduct, for love and hate, and, in general, for the ingredients of those delusions which in the right social setting become standardized and infuse the world with fellow humans wielding supernatural power. It is significant that, in most reports of accusations and believed instances of witchcraft, the main characters, like most of those involved in crimes of violence in even our impersonal society, have been intimately acquainted with one another.

An Open Society

Though modern man may have given up the more specific beliefs in witchcraft, he has retained many of its associated tendencies. He has not yet completely escaped from the charmed circle of taboos and magical beings that confines primitive man, and moved into an open society in which he has no qualms about adjusting his social institutions in the light of rational analysis. Some 20th century movements have many of the characteristics of a 16th century European or a contemporary primitive witch-scare. An accusation of political deviance may, like an accusation of witchcraft, prove an infallible means of destroying a reputation or a career. Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, which attacked Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist cult in the idiom of 17th century Salem, brought out this parallel with brilliant insight.

(See also FAMILIARS; OLD AGE; SORCERY; and articles on European Witchcraft.)

M. G. MARWICK

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WOLF

FEW EUROPEAN MAMMALS equal or surpass the wolf in the richness of its folklore, though in the British Isles wolf lore is much scantier than on the Continent, where in some mountainous forested regions the animals are still to be found. By the mid-13th century there can have been few wolves left in England but not until the 18th were the last wolves killed in Ireland and Scotland.

Much European wolf lore is pervaded by a fearsome awe, less apparent in North American wolf traditions. But although fear of wolves is a natural human reaction, the friendly wolf appears fairly frequently in myths and legends, indicating that the animal awakens ambivalent responses. The *Rig-Veda* tells of Rijrasva, whom his father blinded because with misplaced generosity he gave 101 sheep to a bitch wolf: the wolf prayed for her benefactor, to the Asvins, benevolent deities, and they restored his sight. On the other hand, according to ancient Iranian doctrines the wolf was created by the evil spirit Ahriman (see AHRIMAN). A similar belief is still current among the Voguls of Siberia.

The associations of Greek gods and goddesses with wolves hint at older traditions beneath the mythology of the anthropomorphic divinities. It was said that the priest of Zeus could take the form of a wolf. Hecate could also take wolf shape (see HECATE). Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis, appeared as a she-wolf and a wolf was emblazoned on the shield of Artemis, the huntress. Apollo (see APOLLO) was said to have expelled wolves from Athens and any citizen who killed one had to bury it by public subscription. Sophocles called Apollo 'the wolf-slayer', yet a number of myths describe how his children by mortal girls were fostered by wolves. This motif of children tended by a she-wolf reappears in the story of Romulus and Remus (see FOUNDING OF ROME) and in later legends. Despite this myth of the kindly wolf the Romans associated the animal with Mars, the god of war.

In Scandinavian mythology the Fenris wolf is one of the three children of Loki, the others being the Midgard serpent and Hel (Death). Fenris, whose jaws stretched from heaven to earth, created much trouble among the gods until they managed to bind him with a magic cord. However, as the representative of Fate he bides his time, until at the end of the world he swallows up the sun (see SCANDINAVIA).

Victoria and Albert Museum/Mark Gerson

National Gallery

'The friendly wolf appears fairly frequently in myths and legends, indicating that the animal awakens ambivalent responses' *Above right* **Kipling draws on legends of human children reared by wolves, in his stories about an Indian boy who becomes a member of a wolf pack: illustration to the *Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling *Right*** **A famous legend tells how St Francis of Assisi tamed the ferocious wolf of Gubbio: a painting by Sassetta shows the saint arbitrating between the citizens of Gubbio and the wolf**

Hier giötra ÆSIR Fenris:
Ulfinn: Týr misser Hyna adra
Hönd: en þr Aristera Ulfinn til ha-
gna Röckurs: sosm XXIX Eddu
Dæmisaga Utvýsar.

The wolf was feared as an uncanny and evil creature, and credited with preternatural cunning *Left* in Scandinavian legend the Fenris wolf is a force of terror and destruction, brother to death and the World Serpent: the god Tyr sacrifices his hand in order to bind the Fenris Wolf, in an illustration from an *Edda* MS *Right* The wolf seizes Little Red Riding Hood, after tricking her into climbing into bed with him: illustration from a 19th century children's book

Victoria & Albert Museum/Mark Gerson

The wolf has innumerable associations with the Devil, especially in Germany. According to one saying the Devil squats between the beast's eyes, according to another he appears as a black wolf. A legend relates that the Devil made the wolf out of mixed constituents – his head from a stump of wood, his heart from stone, his breast from roots, and so forth. The Devil of the witches sometimes took wolf shape. The cross drives away all such diabolical lupine apparitions, and although great ferocity is attributed to the animal it is said to have been cowardly ever since Christ struck it with his staff.

Because wolves were seen on battlefields feeding on corpses, the animals were transformed by imagination into sinister supernatural creatures. They were thought of as corpse demons, connected with Odin (see ODIN) and the fierce Norns or Fates. In Normandy horrible spirits disguised as wolves were said to haunt cemeteries in order to devour corpses. In Finland it was said that unbaptized children wandered around in the shape of wolves.

In Sheep's Clothing

Wolves have ancient associations with witchcraft. The Latin term of opprobrium *lupula* (little wolf) signifies 'witch'. Thessalian witches were said to howl like wolves and to use portions of the animals in their charms, as Shakespeare recalled when he included a wolf's tooth in the witches' brew in *Macbeth*. On the Continent gypsies would say on hearing a wolf howling, 'Take care, it may be a witch.' In Germany witches were said to ride wolves and in Lorraine the 'witch-master' turned into a wolf to go to the witches' sabbath. It was also thought that witches could transform themselves and other people into wolves. A priest who was turned into a wolf remained identifiable by his white collar. In the 17th century men and women were hanged for ravages believed to have been committed by them as wolves, although a century earlier Reginald Scot in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* had ridiculed such ideas. The Navaho and other American Indians believe that a man disguised as a wolf goes around practising witchcraft.

The New Testament reference to false prophets as wolves dressed up in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7.15) embodies the belief that wolves are crafty as well as malicious, and the allusion served to perpetuate these ideas. In a beast fable the crafty wolf sings Psalm 23, the Shepherd Psalm.

On the principle that evil combats evil and what frightens a man also terrifies evil spirits, parts of wolves were used to scare such beings. A pierced wolf's tooth was sometimes worn as a protective charm, and a tooth placed under a pillow was thought to enable the dreamer to identify a robber. In Spain and Sicily a scrap of the animal's skin was believed to avert the Evil Eye, and in some localities was even thought to be effective in keeping flies out of the house. A wolf's hair placed in the rafters was a protection against fire and a wolf-bite made a person immune to witchcraft. According to an ancient tradition if a man came on a wolf and the wolf saw him first he would be struck dumb.

So prominent a place in the imagination of the people was occupied by the wolf that it entered into expressions describing the time of day and the weather. In France dusk is commonly described poetically as 'between the dog and the wolf' – the one being thought of as a creature of the day, the other as nocturnal. Elsewhere, when the wind whistles, 'the wolf sharpens his teeth', and a strong, destructive wind is 'the wolf'. If the sun shines when it is raining, it is 'the wolves' wedding'. Around Düsseldorf, when the sky is filled with woolly clouds they say, 'today little sheep, tomorrow wolves'.

The Wolf of Gubbio

The tradition of the kindly wolf appears in a number of Christian legends. Sculptures in some churches illustrate the benevolent beast which kept guard over the head of the martyred St Edmund. Probably the best known of such legends is the story of St Francis of Assisi and the wolf of Gubbio. The animal was so fierce that the citizens were afraid to venture forth from the little town. The saint reproved him and, bowing his head, he indicated that he would abandon his evil ways. He accompanied St Francis into Gubbio and henceforth lived amicably among the citizens. This legend is a version of a much older story. Friendships developed between Irish saints and wolves. St Maedoc provided a feast for a pack, while the blind St Hervé was led around by a wolf. In other tales we hear of a wolf killing an animal drawing a plough or waggon and being compelled by a saint to take the place of the dead beast. Thus the wolf legends in which saints are involved embody the ambivalence characteristic of much wolf folklore. The fierceness and the friendliness of the animal both tend to be exaggerated.

From the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* to medieval tales of wolves invading monasteries and devouring heretical monks, the wolf has been represented as much more dangerous to man than it is. It was, and still is, a menace to domestic animals, but there are hardly any authenticated accounts of a wolf attacking an able-bodied man. It is possible that during times of famine in the Middle Ages wolves broke into flimsy dwellings and seized children or invalids, but stories of packs pursuing travellers on sledges in Russian forests do not deserve credence. They are the inventions of myth-makers in comparatively recent times.

(See also WEREWOLF.)

E. A. ARMSTRONG

WOMAN

'Through women doth the Enemy lay siege to mortal men': the myth of the evilness and inferiority of woman has grown out of social conditions, which in turn it has powerfully influenced

GODDESS, VICTIM, idol, plaything, mother, virgin, harlot, ministering angel, slut, enchantress, hag, 'better half' or 'weaker vessel' – woman plays all these roles in supernatural contexts, partly in reflection of man's frequently professed inability to understand her. Women, in male eyes, are supposed to be contrary and mysterious creatures, bewilderingly combining all sorts of opposite characteristics, as changeable as chameleons, and yet somehow vexingly in touch with reality through intuition, through a secret sympathy with the heart of things.

Among the most powerful strands in the web of the mythical female are that she is man's inferior and that she is essentially evil. In the Jewish, Christian and classical traditions, evil came into the world through woman. In many societies, including our own, women's bodies are hung about with a miasma of impurity and pollution which does not cling to men. In many parts of the world women do not eat with men, they walk a few paces behind their husbands as a sign of their inferiority, and they are often excluded altogether from important masculine activities, including religion.

Orthodox Hindus believe that women cannot attain salvation as women, but only through being reborn as men. Women are evil and unclean, and the virtuous Hindu woman, who must treat her husband as if he was a god, is considered inferior to the worst of men. In the West the more important religious roles are still reserved for men and denied to women, and it is only in the face of stubborn resistance that women have begun to invade male preserves. In religious and magical traditions which classify phenomena in terms of opposites, male is generally classed with good, positive, active, and female with evil, negative, passive. It is characteristic that one of the dictionary meanings of the word 'female' is 'epithet of various material and immaterial things, denoting simplicity, inferiority, weakness, or the like'.

In male eyes, women are supposed to be contrary and mysterious creatures, as changeable as chameleons, and yet somehow in touch with reality through a secret sympathy with the heart of things

The Terrible Mother

All this has the weight of hundreds of years of tradition and custom behind it: some women welcome it, many accept it, and almost all are brought up to behave in accordance with it and so perpetuate it. But how it began, how hatred, fear and contempt came to be injected into the image of woman – remembering that a child's first love is his mother, that men and women do fall in love and live happily together, and that what may be the oldest known representation of a deity is a figure of a woman – is a question to which there is no certain answer. Psychoanalysts in search of an answer have created new myths of their own, including those of penis envy and the castration complex. Stated in a very brief and over-simplified way, the theory is that the little girl, lacking a penis, feels a sense of inferiority to males which lasts her the rest of her life: and that the little boy fears losing his penis when he sees that little girls have none, and fears that his father will castrate him because he is a rival for the affections of the mother, these fears mingling with desire in his attitude to women, who become both love-objects and hate-objects.

It is true that the theme of castration occurs in mythology and religious practice (in the worship of Cybele, for instance – see CYBELE; MUTILATION), and the motif of woman as castrator has enjoyed some literary popularity in the wake of Freud, but it seems unlikely that fear of castration is really a crucial element in the myth of woman's evilness. A simpler approach sees the source of this myth in the difference between the sexes itself. Women are different from men, and tolerance of what is different is not a marked feature of human societies. When what is different and 'other' is also desired, it may be resented, hated and feared, as well as loved and idealized.

The fact that it is woman who bears and rears children means that it is first and foremost a child's mother who not only loves and protects him but also thwarts and punishes him. The twin experiences of mother's love and mother's rage seem to implant an ambivalent attitude to women in general, which is reflected in beliefs about the supernatural. For example, Spartan boys were flogged, or ritually 'punished', on the altar of Artemis Orthia, which had a fondness for human blood. In the Cabala the sefirah Din or Geburah, which represents the punishing judgement of God, is on the female pillar of the Tree of Life (see CABALA). In the Near East mother goddesses and love goddesses were also wrathful war goddesses. Kali, the goddess of terror in Hinduism, significantly presides over undeserved retribution as 'the Mother who nourishes but also punishes'. She typifies 'the deep-seated dread aroused by the unpredictable hazards of man's existence', which in terms of childish experience starts with the bewildering terror of the mother's anger. The age-old assertion that woman is fickle and changeable may have the same root.

William MacQuitty

Woman's inferiority to man is one of the most powerful strands in the web of the mythical female; the legend of Eve's subordination to Adam, and the numerous representations of her in art as the acme of physical desirability, have contributed to a stereotype described by Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch* as being 'more body than soul, more soul than mind . . . the Sexual Object sought by all men, and by all women'

Facing page, left to right **Raquel Welch, Marilyn Monroe and Mae West, three 20th century examples of 'the perfect woman' *Right*** **The concept of woman as a passive sexual object or plaything classed on a level with wine and song as a masculine diversion, is ancient and widespread: wall painting in an Egyptian tomb showing women at their toilet**

Paul Popper

Although woman has been regarded as subordinate to man in cultures throughout the world, sometimes excluded entirely from masculine activities such as religion, modern women are rebelling against this traditional concept of their role; these two contrasting aspects of woman are reflected in *The Favourite of the Harem*, a 19th century engraving by Thomas Hallom, coloured by Laura Lushington *(left)* and members of the Women's Liberation movement at a rally in New York *(above right)*

The All-Devouring Curse

The supposed inferiority of woman follows from the fact that human societies have been dominated by men, presumably because men's greater physical strength has enabled them to dominate. The theory that early societies passed through a stage of matriarchy, followed by patriarchy when men seized power from women and enslaved them, is now generally doubted (though there are myths of the reign of women – see BRAZIL) and even matrilineal societies, where descent is reckoned from the mother, are not usually woman-dominated.

Because women are physically weaker, it is concluded that they must also be inferior mentally and spiritually. A German neurologist named Paul Möbius published in 1907 a book on *The Physiological Intellectual Feebleness of Women* in which he pronounced that the regions of the brain 'necessary for spiritual life' are 'less well developed in women', and concluded that since women are mentally inferior to men lying is 'the natural and indispensable womanly weapon'. He thought it was for the best, since if woman could compete with man in masculine fields her function as a mother would suffer.

Many attempts have been made, unsuccessfully, to show that woman is biologically inferior to man, and the argument that the emancipation of women would wreck home and family life, and the female character, is old and tenacious. But the pronouncements of Möbius pale into insignificance as a condemnation of woman beside the tirade in the Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*: 'Woman is an all-devouring curse. In her body the evil cycle of life begins afresh, born out of lust engendered by blood and semen. Man emerges mixed with excrement and water, fouled with the impurities of woman. A wise man will avoid the contaminating society of women as he would the touch of bodies infested with vermin.'

This diatribe contains two themes found elsewhere. The first is that when our earthly lives and our earthly bodies are condemned as evil and dangerous, distracting the mind from spiritual things and imprisoning us in ignorance and wrong, then sexual intercourse is considered evil, and so is woman, who tempts man to sex and from whose body yet more imprisoned spirits emerge to earthly life: though in other contexts, of course, woman as mother and fount of life is deified and revered (see EARTH; FERTILITY; ICONOGRAPHY; MOTHER GODDESS).

The second theme is that women are unclean. The fact that they bleed at regular intervals has aroused fear and disgust, especially when menstrual blood is regarded as the substance which should have formed the body of a child and as charged with potent and dangerous energy. Contact with this blood and with a menstruating woman has been widely feared as contaminating, and so has contact with a pregnant woman or with childbirth. If women are unclean, then they must be kept at a distance from men's fighting and hunting activities and equipment, and from religious ceremonies, because they might pollute them.

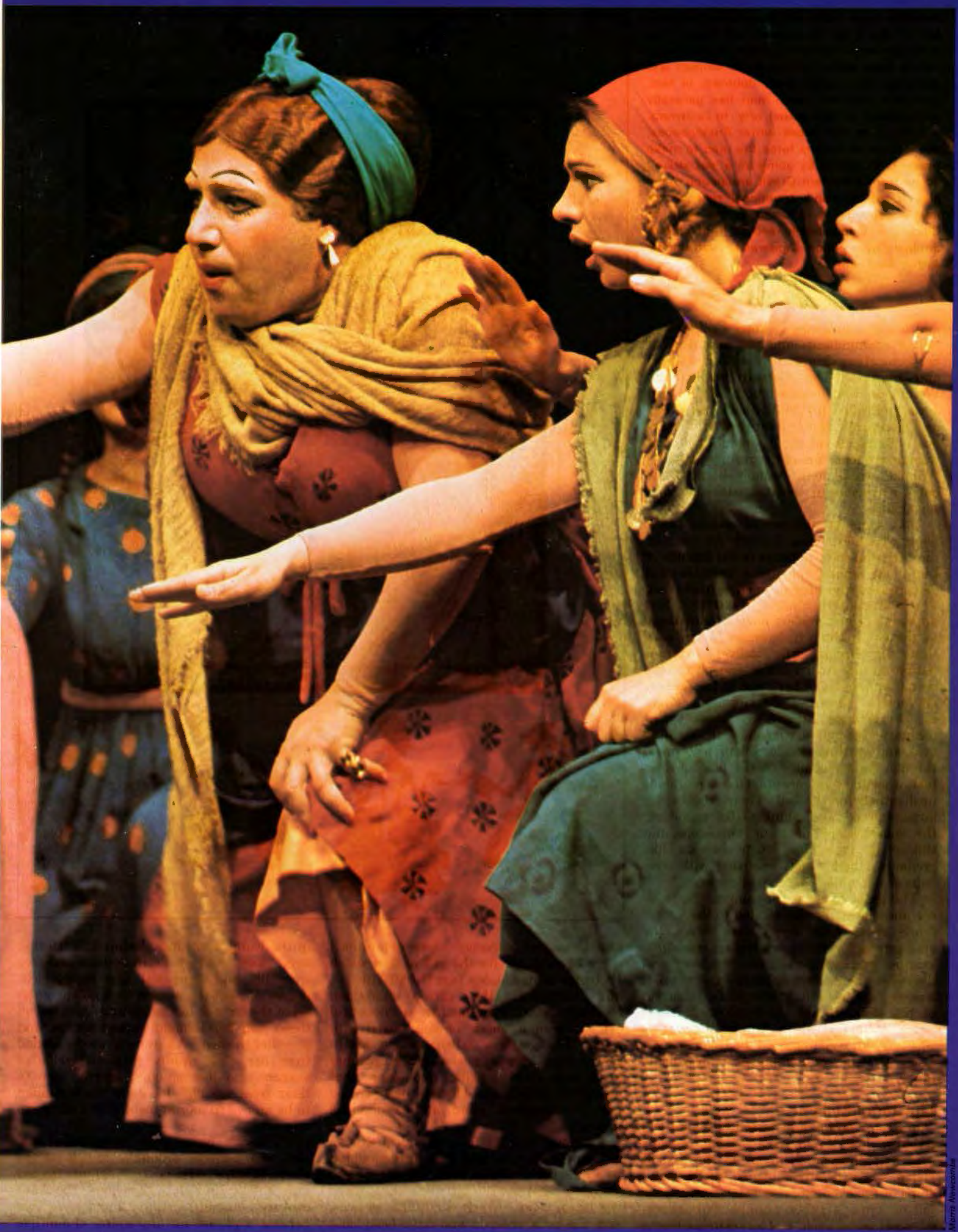
The Great Whore

Another physically-based reason for masculine fear of woman is that the male organ 'dies' in orgasm, and the emission of sperm has frequently been regarded as a loss to the male of some of his life-energy. H. R. Hays quotes an Australian aborigine as saying, 'The vagina is very hot, it is fire and each time the penis goes in, it dies.' The Roman poet Ovid used the same image in hoping to die making love: 'Let me go in the act of coming to Venus; in more senses than one let my last dying be done.' In *Paradise Lost*, when Adam and Eve make love after the Fall, Adam rises afterwards as Samson rose from Delilah's harlot lap, 'shorn of his strength'.

This motif combines with the fact that women are unlike men in being capable of sex at any time and able to go on longer, to create the myth of woman's insatiable lustfulness and to paint a picture of her as a voracious monster who ensnares a man to devour him, subjecting him to orgasmic 'deaths' until she destroys him.

Greek men were horrified by the worship of Dionysus (see DIONYSUS), partly because it took women away from their 'proper place' in the home, but also because the frenzied rites unleashed all the murderous carnality felt to be inherent in the female nature. In later centuries people were similarly horrified by the cannibalism and orgiastic excesses of witches. It was once customary to refer to women as 'the sex', as though sensuality was a peculiarly female trait.

Jean de Meung, 13th century continuator of the *Roman de la Rose*, put it succinctly: 'Every woman is a whore.' In the book of Revelation (chapter 17) the personification of lust and murder is the great harlot who sits on a scarlet beast, arrayed in purple



Mama Newsomia

Previous page **Although there are myths that tell of the reign of women, the theory that societies went through a stage of matriarchy before men seized power from women and enslaved them is generally doubted; in fact, woman's influence over man has generally been based on her sexual role. In *Lysistrata*, a comedy by the Greek writer Aristophanes, the women of Athens force the men to make peace with Sparta by going on a 'sex strike': scene from a modern Greek production of the play *Right* Woman's traditional reliance on man's goodwill is reflected in the story of Cinderella, who is finally rescued from a life of drudgery by a prince: *Cinderella*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham**

Victoria & Albert Museum/Mark Gerson

and scarlet and jewels, holding a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication, drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs. The German writer Otto Weininger, who detested both women and Jews, published in 1903 a book called *Sex and Character*, which went through numerous editions, in which he maintained that women are monsters of devouring sexuality: 'Woman wants man sexually because she only succeeds in existing through her sensuality.'

The same stereotype, of woman as a being whose existence depends on draining the life from men, appears in the legends of Lilith, the lamias, the sirens, vampires and demonesses who prey on men sexually (see INCUBUS; LILITH; SIRENS; VAMPIRE). She appears again in modern novels, for instance as the Great Bitch in Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*, who 'delivers extermination to any bucko brave enough to take carnal knowledge of her', and in the fantasy characters, described by Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch* as 'those extraordinary springing women with slanting eyes and swirling clouds of hair who prowl through thriller comics on the balls of their feet, wheeling suddenly upon the hero, talons unsheathed for the kill. Their mouths are large, curved and shining like scimitars: the musculature of their shoulders and thighs is incredible, their breasts like grenades, their waists encircled with steel belts as narrow as Cretan bull-dancers'.'

The great bitch or cat-woman, the seducer and slayer, is also related to the *femme fatale* or *la belle dame sans merci*, the enchantress for whom men feel an irresistible longing and who pitilessly enslaves and degrades them. She appears in Arthurian legends, she is Delilah, who robbed Samson of his strength and his freedom, or Cleopatra, 'who lost Mark Antony the world'. She is Wilde's Salome and the Dolores, 'Our Lady of Pain', of Swinburne's masochistic fancy.

The Jar of Evils

The *femme fatale* may herself be essentially passive: her loveliness by itself entraps men and destroys them, as in the case of Helen, whose beauty launched the thousand ships of the avenging Greeks and caused the fall of Troy. Another example is Pandora, whose story was told by Hesiod in his *Works and Days* and *Theogony*. Zeus determined to make men pay for the gift of fire, which Prometheus had stolen (see PROMETHEUS), and instructed the divine craftsman Hephaestus to manufacture a 'beautiful evil', a woman, made of soil mixed with water. The goddess Athene taught her to sew, golden Aphrodite 'shed grace upon her head and cruel longing and cares that weary the limbs', and Hermes bestowed on her 'a shameless mind and a deceitful nature'.

Pandora was, in fact, a typical woman as seen by Hesiod, and Zeus presented her to Epimetheus, Prometheus's brother, who foolishly accepted the gift. She then raised the lid of a jar, which contained all evils, and the evils escaped and have been loose in the world ever since. Before this, Hesiod says, 'men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sicknesses . . . but the woman took off the great lid of the jar with her hands and scattered all these and her thought caused sorrow and mischief to men.' All women are descended from her, 'the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble', for Zeus 'made women to be an evil to mortal men, with a nature to do evil'.

Pandora's name may mean 'all-giving' and was perhaps originally a title of the Earth Goddess. Her jar (*pithos*) was turned into a box (*pyxis*) by Erasmus, the 16th century humanist, and 'Pandora's box' became a phrase for any source of multiple

Reflections on Woman

What man has assurance enough to pretend to know thoroughly the riddle of a woman's mind, and who could ever hope to fix her mutable nature?

Cervantes

From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die

Ecclesiasticus

Women are only children of a larger growth

Lord Chesterfield

The goal of female education has invariably to be the future mother

Hitler

There's nothing sooner dry than women's tears

Webster

Nature has given women so much power that the law has very wisely given them little

Dr Johnson

Dissimulation is innate in woman

Schopenhauer

What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Gray

The female of the species is more deadly than the male

Kipling

A woman is necessarily an evil, but he that gets the most tolerable one is lucky

Menander

Thou goest to women? Don't forget thy whip!

Nietzsche

Here lies my wife: here let her lie!
Now she's at rest, and so am I

Dryden

Here's to Woman! Would we could fall into her arms without falling into her hands

Ambrose Bierce

The modern individual family is founded on the open or concealed slavery of the wife

Engels

Women have very little idea of how much men hate them

Germaine Greer

disasters. Early Christian writers likened her to Eve and the Renaissance rediscovered her, though usually not as the source of evil but as the 'all-gifted' one, on whom the gods had bestowed their treasures. However, Jean Olivier, author of *Pandora* (1541), said: 'Eve in Scripture opened the forbidden fruit by her bite, by which death invaded the world. So did Pandora open the box in defiance of a divine injunction, whereby all the evils and infinite calamities broke loose and overwhelmed the hapless murtals with countless miseries . . .'

In the late 18th century, the painter James Barry, who executed an enormous *Creation of Pandora*, called her story 'one of the most splendid of the many specimens of the Heathen manner of adumbrating and allegorizing that introduction of Evil or fall of mankind which is celebrated in Genesis'. Pandora's box was occasionally identified with her genitals, and Paul Klee's drawing of *Pandora's Box* (1920) brings in the menstruation motif, for it shows a goblet shaped like the female genitals, containing some flowers and emitting evil vapours.

The Devil's Gateway

The Jewish legend of the Watchers traces the introduction of evil into the world to the angels who descended from heaven, significantly drawn to earth by the sexual attractions of human women (see DEVIL), but the story of Adam and Eve has had a greater influence in the West in reiulorcing the belief in woman's inherent wickedness. In the account in Genesis it is the woman who succumbs to the serpent's temptation and persuades Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, the action which caused the Fall and implanted the taint of original sin in all human beings (see EVIL; FIRST MAN). In some paintings of the scene, including Michelangelo's in the Sistine Chapel, the serpent itself is female.

Genesis also stresses the inferiority of woman. She is created after Adam, and fashioned from one of his ribs, and the pangs of childbirth and the subjection of woman to man are among the penalties for the crime, so providing divine authority for the actual situation in patriarchal Hebrew society. The story in Genesis may have been influenced by the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh (see GILGAMESH), in which Enkidu, the 'noble savage' who is man in his natural primitive state, is seduced by a temple prostitute. She teaches him the delights of sex, instructs him in civilized behaviour, and finally lures him away from his peaceful life with the animals and takes him to the city, and so ultimately to his doom. When he is dying, Enkidu curses her for coaxing him away from his simple life in the wild.

Eve, who coaxed Adam into eating the forbidden fruit of sexual and civilizing knowledge, entered the Christian tradition as the supreme example of woman as both intensely desirable and intensely dangerous. Tertullian (2nd century AD), who castigated women as Eves, Devil's gateways, destroyers of man and ultimately responsible for the death of Christ, said that they ought all to wear permanent mourning as a sign of penitence for the wickedness they derived from Eve. And Eve's creation from Adam's rib was for hundreds of years one of the stock arguments against the emancipation of women. There is a story about one of the desert hermits, the holy Arsenius, who was visited by a devout woman, a virgin, who went all the way from Rome to see him. Arsenius was furious and said, 'Dost thou not know that thou art a woman, and ought not to go anywhere? And wilt thou now go to Rome and say to the other women, "I have seen Arsenius", and turn the sea into a high road of women coming to see me?' She asked him to pray for her but he said that on the contrary he would pray to God to wipe the memory of her from his mind. When she told the archbishop what had happened, he said, 'Knowest thou not that thou art a woman, and through women doth the Enemy lay siege to mortal men?'

It is not as easy to generalize about Christian attitudes to sex and woman as authors embattled in these particular lists have sometimes suggested. Few Christians went as far as a Church Council in 585 which ruled that a male corpse must not be buried beside a female corpse until the latter had decomposed. But though generally by no means as hostile to women as orthodox Hinduism or as appalled by sex as some of the European heretical sects, Christianity did contain a powerful strain of mistrust of sex and the body, as obstacles to spiritual advancement, which engendered disapproval of women as evil temptresses, and which lies behind the lauding of the virgin state as a condition closer to God than the married, the establishment of monasteries and nunneries, and the insistence on clerical celibacy.

The God of Jews and Christians is emphatically male and, unlike pagan gods, has no female consort (except in mystical imagery about the Shekhinah or Wisdom or the Sophia of the Gnostics, or the mystic himself, as God's bride). Jesus did not marry, and any suggestion that he had ever been involved in a love affair would probably strike most Christians to this day as blasphemous and deeply offensive. The nearest thing to a goddess in Christianity is a virgin, though she has clearly brought into patriarchal Christianity a feminine element which multitudes of worshippers have refused to do without (see MARY).

The fact that St Paul, in the much discussed passages of 1 Corinthians (chapters 6 and 7), keeps insisting that it is not a sin to marry suggests that the Corinthian Christians thought it was. 'It is well for a man not to touch a woman,' he says, though conceding that many men, unlike himself, cannot refrain from touching one; and so, 'it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion'. St Paul was writing at a time when Christians expected the world to come to an end at any moment, and he advised people to stay as they were if they could, single or married, slave or free, 'for the appointed time has grown very short'. Later Christian writers continued to recommend virginity, not necessarily condemning marriage but regarding it as a second best, because involvement in things of the flesh distracts attention from the things of God. Sex was necessary for the procreation of children, and the Almighty for his own inscrutable reasons had instituted it for that purpose, but it was still something of a barrier between humanity and God.

Many Christian authors have disapproved of cosmetics and other feminine adornments because they excite men's passions, and much of the element of distrust of woman in Christianity stems from the observation that sex causes man to lose his self-control. This is part of the widespread human feeling that desire is supernatural, awesome and dangerous, sweeping over human beings from outside and carrying them away in an uncontrollable tide. Both St Albertus Magnus and St Thomas Aquinas

Giraudon

Roger Wood

maintained that what is sinful in sexual intercourse is not the pleasure of the act but the fact that fallen man in his weakness cannot enjoy so intense a pleasure without losing sight of God. Earlier, St Augustine had also been horrified by the irrationality of erotic passion, the whirling away of reason and self-control in the hurricane of desire. He thought that what Adam and Eve really discovered, when their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked, was 'concupiscence' – desire which was beyond their control.

Wine, Women and Song

If at one end of the scale woman is whore, temptress, murderess, at the other she is a toy or doll, a passive sexual object and plaything, the occupant of a real or psychological harem, classed on a level with wine and song as masculine diversions. The legendary Eve's subordination to Adam, and the numerous representations of her in art as the acme of physical desirability, in styles varying with male tastes of different periods and places, have contributed to this stereotype, which is blisteringly described by Germaine Greer. 'She is more body than soul, more soul than mind . . . She is the Sexual Object sought by all men, and by all women. Her value is solely attested by the demand she excites in others. All she must contribute is her existence. She need achieve nothing, for she is the reward of achievement . . . Because she is the emblem of spending ability and the chief spender, she is also the most effective seller of this world's goods. Every survey ever held has shown that the image of an attractive woman is the most effective advertising gimmick.'

There is far more to Eve in Genesis, and to woman in supernatural contexts generally, than evil and passive inferiority, but the note of wickedness, darkness, danger and death does sound constantly. *Cherchez la femme*, men say, if there's trouble there's a woman at the bottom of it. In *Paradise Lost* Milton, whose relations with women were not of the happiest, depicts Sin sitting at the gate of hell. She is female, a beautiful woman to the waist and a foul scaly serpent below, and her womb is the kennel for demonic dogs. Many of the mother goddesses of the distant past were deities who gave life but who also gave death, and their worshippers seem to have regarded them with the same mingled emotions of love and terror, trust and fear, admiration and resentment, desire and disgust, which men have blended in their image of woman all through recorded history. (See also AMAZONS; BIRTH; HYSTERICAL POSSESSION; MENSTRUATION; OLD AGE; SELF-DENIAL; SEX; TANTRISM.)

RICHARD CAVENDISH

In legends of sirens and vampires woman is depicted as a being whose existence depends on draining the life from men; this stereotype is related to the enchantress for whom men feel an irresistible longing, a *femme fatale* who may in fact be essentially passive, and whose loveliness by itself entraps and destroys men *Above left* Helen's beauty caused the fall of Troy: *Helen on the Ramparts of Troy* by Moreau *Above right* Head of Nefertiti, wife of the heretic Pharaoh Ikhnaten *Below* Pandora, who raised the lid of a jar containing all evils and allowed them to escape to plague the world, has been described as a typical woman: *Pandora* by François Quesnel

***Facing page* Relief depicting an Egyptian queen, said to be Cleopatra who 'lost Mark Antony the world'**

Corvina, Budapest

FURTHER READING: D. S. Bailey, *The Sexual Relation in Christian Thought* (Harper and Row, 1959); H. R. Hays, *The Dangerous Sex* (Putnam, 1964); D. and E. Panofsky, *Pandora's Box* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2nd edn., 1962); B. Walker, *Hindu World* (Praeger, 1968, 2 vols). See also G. Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (McGraw-Hill, 1980).

Werner Forman

WOODPECKER

MOST WOODPECKERS assert their possession of a nesting territory not by song, but by a rattling noise or 'drumming' made by striking the bill rapidly on a branch – a distinctive drum-roll quite different from the sound made by a woodpecker when pecking at a branch to extract an insect or make a hole for its nest. This drumming was of great significance to our ancestors who, living mainly out of doors and dependent for their well-being on propitious weather, paid much attention to birds which seemed to them to be not only weather-wise but actually able to influence the weather, especially the amount of rainfall.

Listening to the woodpecker drumming in a tree high up towards the sky, they assumed that he was making miniature thunder, calling for and bringing down rain. Such a bird, in league with the higher powers, deserved respect and could teach men how to act when they needed rain for their crops. It is a widespread practice for people anxiously desiring rain to make imitation thunder by drumming, the underlying idea being that like would attract like. In Estonia, during times of drought, a man used to climb a tree in a sacred grove, carrying a small cask or kettle, and rattle a stick in it: he acted the part of a woodpecker making thunder.

It is still believed in the English countryside that the loud and frequent calling of the green woodpecker foretells rain, although observation shows that this has no foundation in fact. In Scandinavia, also, the woodpecker is considered a weather prophet. Frenchmen call the bird 'the miller's advocate', because in times of drought it is thought to plead insistently for water to turn the mill wheel.

The red crowns of European woodpeckers have also played a part in gaining them their status as thunderbirds and rainbirds. Species with conspicuous red markings tend to be associated with fire, and so the woodpecker came to be connected not only with thunder but also with the lightning which accompanies it.

Perhaps the first hint in literature that the woodpecker was considered a rainmaker and thunderbird is its name in Babylonian, meaning 'the axe of Ishtar', for Ishtar was a fertility goddess. The earliest written evidence of the bird's exalted status is a reference by Aristophanes: 'Zeus won't in a hurry the sceptre restore to the woodpecker tapping the oak.' There appears to have been a belief that the bird once occupied the throne of the High God and received reverence such as Zeus received in Aristophanes's time.

There is definite evidence that the woodpecker was consulted as an oracle, if not actually worshipped. An account survives of an oracle connected with Mars in the Apennine Mountains, where an image of a woodpecker was placed on a wooden pillar; engraved gems show a warrior consulting such an oracle. Mars was originally associated with fertility as much as with war (see MARS), which perhaps explains his association with the fertility-bringing woodpecker.

The First Ploughman

There is further evidence that the woodpecker is a bird of fertility. Greek myth relates that Celeus, whose name means 'green woodpecker', attempted to steal the honey which nourished Zeus while he was an infant. As a punishment the angry god turned Celeus into a green woodpecker. Celeus was the father of Triptolemus, the inventor of the plough – a king or chieftain instructed by Demeter, the Earth Mother, in the ritual which procured the fertility of the soil.

The significance of all this is obscure until we realize that the green woodpecker often feeds on the ground, picking up ants, and that its beak could be regarded as serving the same purpose as the primitive plough, which was not much more than a single prong drawn through the soil. The story says in effect that the green woodpecker was the first ploughman.

More recent legends confirm the woodpecker's connection with ploughing. According to a tale of the Letts, a people of the eastern Baltic, God and the Devil engaged in a ploughing match. God had a woodpecker to draw his plough, but the Devil had horses and quickly ploughed a whole field, while the woodpecker was making little progress. During the night God borrowed the horses and ploughed a field. The Devil was so impressed next day that he stupidly exchanged his horses for the woodpecker. When the bird lagged behind he angrily struck it on the head and this is why the woodpecker has a blood-coloured crown. In a veiled way this story tells of the suppression of ancient beliefs.

There are plenty of other indications of the association between the woodpecker, rain and fertility. In France, Germany, Austria and Denmark it is given names equivalent to the English local name 'rain bird'. In Italy there is a saying, 'When the woodpecker pecks, expect rain or storm.' In France the story goes that at the Creation, when God had made the earth, he called on the birds to help by hollowing out places which could be filled with water and so become seas, lakes and ponds. Only the woodpecker refused to join in. A German version says that it was because she would not dirty her fine plumage. So the bird was condemned to peck wood and to drink nothing but rain. That is why she clings to the tree trunk with beak upwards calling, 'Rain, Rain'.

It was at one time believed, or half-believed, that the mysterious herb springwort, with which doors and locks could be opened, could be obtained by blocking the woodpecker's nesting hole. The bird would fetch the herb and apply it to the blocked entrance. If a strip of red cloth was placed below the nest, the bird, mistaking it for fire, would drop the sprig on it. Another plan was to watch where the woodpecker went to fetch the plant.

The legend seems to be an Eastern tale in Western dress. A version was current in Greece but the bird concerned was the hoopoe. It had its nest in a wall, but three times the owner plastered it up and three times the bird removed the plaster by applying the springwort. The tale as told in Germany is similar to a version quoted by Pliny.

Probably it passed from Greek literature into Latin and is not, as might at first appear, the concoction of simple countryfolk. What may be an embellished and distorted version was current in a region of Germany. It was said that a princess incarcerated in the Markgrabenstein could be released by the man who went to the place at midnight on a Friday carrying a white woodpecker.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: E. A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (Dover, N.Y., 1970).

Wraith

The double or apparition of someone who is alive; its appearance is generally taken as an omen of the person's imminent death, or as a sign that he is in serious danger or trouble.

See ASTRAL BODY; DOUBLE; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

Wreath

A circle or garland of flowers or leaves, bestowed as a mark of distinction, or placed in a grave or on a coffin to honour the dead; evergreen wreaths are used as Christmas decorations; in Greece and Rome poets, athletes and other persons of note were honoured with laurel wreaths or crowns.

See BURIAL; LAUREL.

The custom of killing a wren at midwinter and parading it with elaborate ceremony through the neighbourhood, observed in parts of France and Ireland, was probably connected with ancient sun rituals

WREN

Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

ALTHOUGH IT IS nearly our smallest bird, inconspicuously coloured and unlikely to call attention to itself, except when it utters its relatively loud song, the wren is a familiar bird to most people because it is common, and besides inhabiting woods is to be seen in hedgerows and gardens. The folklore of the wren is of exceptional interest as it is the only bird associated with a fairly elaborate ritual in the British Isles, besides being represented in legends and oral traditions.

Wren ritual is performed throughout most of Ireland and to a limited extent in the Isle of Man. It seems to have disappeared in Wales, as it has in England, but scraps of evidence and local traditions indicate that it persisted until not very long ago, in one form or another, in many of the southern countries. It was never established in Ulster or Scotland.

The Wren Hunt and Procession as performed in Ireland may be briefly described. In those localities where an actual wren figures in the ceremonial it may be caught by beating the hedgerows or captured in its roost. On St Stephen's Day (26 December) a number of lads and young men form a party and visit the houses in neighbouring villages, carrying the corpse of the bird with them, or more often now a toy bird or some other object representing a wren. Girls occasionally take part, another indication that the custom has deteriorated. The 'Wren Boys' dress up for the occasion in odds and ends such as pyjama jackets and fantastic headgear. When they call at a cottage they sing a Wren Song in English or Irish, seeking a contribution from the householder. When the Wren Boys have finished their calls they hold a celebration, paid for by the collections made during the day.

French wren ceremonies were enacted in an area stretching from Marseilles northwestwards up to Brittany. They were more elaborate than in Ireland, probably indicating that the cult was carried to the British Isles from France and lost some of its characteristics on the way. At Carcassonne, the Wren Boys of the Rue St Jean assembled towards the end of the year and went into the countryside to beat the bushes and obtain a wren. The first lad to kill one was proclaimed King and to him fell the duty of carrying the bird back to town on a pole. The King proceeded through the streets on the last day of the year with all who had participated in the Hunt, accompanied by a drum and fife band and carrying torches. Here and there they would halt and a lad would chalk on a house 'Vive le Roi' and the number of the New Year. On Twelfth Day, the King arrayed himself in a blue robe and, wearing a crown and carrying a sceptre, went to High Mass at the parish church; he was preceded by a man carrying the wren fastened to the top of a pole, which was decorated with a wreath of olive leaves, oak or mistletoe cut from an oak. After the service the King, together with his retinue, paid visits to the bishop, the mayor, the magistrates and other notable citizens. Money was given to the participants, a banquet was held in the evening, and the celebrations concluded with a dance. Unfortunately this picturesque ceremony was suppressed in 1830. In some places in France and the Isle of Man the wren was solemnly buried in a churchyard.

The ceremonies are certainly very ancient and probably date from the Bronze Age. Unfortunately, documentary evidence earlier than the 19th century is practically nonexistent, so we have to piece together an interpretation from a variety of scattered clues. The geographical distribution of the ritual is significant. It would seem that the people amongst whom wren ceremonies were important reached southern France from elsewhere in the Mediterranean and carried elements of their culture northwestwards, eventually reaching the British Isles. There are grounds for believing that these same folk may have been the builders of some of the megalithic monuments which are found in areas where wren ritual was practised.

Through the Keyhole of Hell

The date of the custom provides a valuable clue to its meaning. Midwinter was for our ancestors a crucial turning-point of the year and many ceremonies performed at this time were intended to combat or chase away the powers of darkness and co-operate with the sun in restoring light, warmth and growth to the world. The wren frequents thickets and penetrates holes, crevices and other dark places, as its scientific name *Troglodytes troglodytes*, 'dweller in caves', indicates. It was therefore a suitable representative of the powers opposed to or complementary to the sun.

This view is borne out by the well-known fable of the competition between the eagle and the wren to decide which could fly highest. The wren defeated the eagle – the bird of the sun – by trickery. In many languages the wren is called 'king', suggesting that long ago it was regarded as allied with mysterious powers; these may have been the dark potencies believed to reside in the earth. An ancient Irish document refers to the wren as a bird with oracular powers.

As heat proceeds from the sun, it was natural that birds, being creatures of the sky, should be regarded as fire-bringers. Such birds were commonly identified by the red badge of fire on their plumage. The robin (see ROBIN) was one of these and in France the wren was also a fire-bringer, perhaps because when it is in its full spring plumage some of its feathers have a ruddy tinge. It was said that when the wren fetched fire from heaven most of its plumage was scorched away. The other birds compassionately donated some of their feathers, but the robin came too close and its breast feathers were burnt. Another French version relates that as the wren was flying to earth with the fire its wings burst into flame; it passed the brand to the robin, whose breast feathers also became alight. The high-flying lark then came to the rescue and brought the precious burden to mankind. The Bretons explain that the wren fetched fire, not from heaven but from hell. Her plumage became scorched as she escaped the infernal regions through the keyhole.

So closely were the robin and wren associated in folklore that they were regarded as male and female of the same species – a notion which has lingered to the present time in some localities.

> The robin redbreast and the wren
> Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

A Scots ballad refers to their marriage tiff over who ate the porridge:

> The robin redbreast and the wran
> Coost out about the parritch pan;
> And ere the robin got a spune
> The wran she had the parritch dune.

Although in many localities the wren was hunted and killed at the winter solstice, this does not imply that it was generally regarded as in any sense an evil creature. On the contrary, it wae usual for birds and beasts held in high respect to be sacrificed on some special occasion during the year. In France it was said that the crime of robbing a wren's nest would entail the destruction by fire of the culprit's house, or that his fingers would shrivel and drop off.

An indication of the affection in which the wren was held in France is provided by its appearance in legends connected with various saints. A delightful story records that St Malo, finding that a wren had built a nest in his habit, which he had laid on a bush while working in the monastery vineyard, went without the garment until the bird had reared its young. St Dol, noticing that the monks at his monastery were distracted during their devotions by the calls of the birds in the neighbouring woods, ordered the birds to depart. He made an exception of the wren, becauee its sparkling song cheered the brethren without interfering with their concentration on prayer and praise.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: E. A. Armstrong, *The Wren* (Collins, 1955).

Ironically, the lasting influence of this Polish Messianist was not in his hoped-for 'Absolute Reform of Human Knowledge' but in passing on to the famous magician Eliphas Levi, the secrets of occultism which he had so long attempted to hide

J.M.H.-WRONSKI

Polish Institute

JOSEPH MARIA HOËNE-WRONSKI was born at Wolsztyn in Poland in 1776. His career led him from misfortune to misfortune, until he died in Paris in 1853 in a condition which the intrigued observers of a man believed variously to be a fraud, a genius, a madman and a divinity, unite in calling miserable. But he left disciples, and after the First World War a 'Hoëne-Wronski Institute of Messianism' was set up in Warsaw. More recently, a lengthy bibliography of Wronskiite works was issued by the Polish Academy. To Wronski's credit must be placed the crucial influence in the life of Eliphas Levi (see LEVI), various mechanical inventions, including what seems to have been a tank, and the discovery in 1803 of 'the Absolute'.

This misplaced Renaissance figure was the son of Antoine Hoëne, the court architect (the 'Wronski' was added later). When the Poles rebelled in 1794 against the partition of their country between Russia and Prussia, Wronski distinguished himself in the fighting but was eventually captured by the Russians, with whom he took the opportunity to enlist. Eventually he left the Russian service with the rank of major, and spent the next three years studying philosophy in Germany, chiefly the system of Immanuel Kant. In 1800 his dormant sense of patriotism revived, and he set off to join the legions gathering in Italy under Dombrowski to free Poland. But the patriot succumbed to the man of science and Wronski returned to scientific researches at the Observatory of Marseilles. In 1810 he married the daughter of a well-known French astronomer: by that date he had discovered the Absolute.

The Absolute is the knowledge of truth attained through human reason. At least, Wronski always claimed he had reached this state through rational thought, but as his philosophical works are couched in mathematical terms, it is almost impossible for the layman to understand him. From the sum of his sense impressions, a man could 'create reality' in accordance with Wronski's 'Law of Creation', a mathematical expression of no meaning to those who are not mathematicians, and little enough significance to some who are. Wronski's supporters derive his theory from pure mathematics and the influence of Kant; but it is just as likely that it comes from mystical experiences and a knowledge of the Cabala (see CABALA).

Christ among Nations

The rebellion in which Wronski changed sides was one in a series of ill-starred attempts by the Poles to reassert their nationhood. Perpetually fought over and partitioned, Poland became for Romantic Europe, and for France in particular, the epitome of heroic resistance. Another rebellion, hopelessly ill-timed, took place in 1830–31 and the Tsarist regime allowed the wholesale emigration of the Polish officer corps.

About 12,000 Polish refugees were allowed to enter France, where they became national heroes. Until that time Wronski had enjoyed a monopoly of 'Messianism', the Polish national philosophy; he became most disgruntled when one of the late arrivals, the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, started lecturing at the Collège de France. Mickiewicz, when told that Wronski was accusing him of stealing his ideas, asked whether Jesus Christ had taken out a patent.

Polish Messianism compared the Polish and Jewish nations. The perpetual suffering of the Poles was seen as a counterpart to the sufferings of the dispersed tribes of Israel, forever denied the right to exist as a free nation. Nevertheless they were the chosen people: to justify the national run of bad luck it was argued that Poland was the Christ among nations. Just as Christ, by his suffering, had redeemed each individual human being, Poland, by hers, would redeem all nations.

Sage in Tatters

The apocalyptic mood of these doctrines was emphasized by two factors. The first was the existence in 18th century Poland of the very influential Jewish revivalist movement known as Hasidism (see HASIDISM). Founded by Israel Baal Shem, who died in 1760, this represented an attempt to make of the Jewish Cabala a really popular tradition. Some of this cabalistic enthusiasm was imported by the Polish immigrants into France where, transformed by the romantic imagination of Eliphas Levi, it became the basis of the later revival of ritual magic. The second current of thought was that represented by Martinism (see MARTINISTS) and other forms of occult Freemasonry, which had thoroughly penetrated the Masonic orders in Poland and Russia and were prominent in liberal and anti-Tsarist circles. Such doctrines, with their symbolic interpretation of Masonic ritual and ideas of 'Hidden Chiefs' behind the apparent superiors of the Order, were also markedly to influence the development of modern occultism (see MASTERS).

But Wronski, although he had read the German mystic Boehme, and was expert in the Cabala and familiar with the teachings of the early Gnostics, was most anxious to conceal his occult studies, according to Eliphas Levi. His teachings were supposedly strictly rationalist: he had, after all, to earn his living. He was soon forced into penury by the withdrawal of a subsidy which the French Academy had paid him when he studied at Marseilles. The publication of his first work was enough, embodying as it did the 'Supreme Law of Algorithmy'.

Wronski's devotion to his own genius was admirable. He survived by schoolmastering in Montmartre; he went about in wooden clogs; his little child died. In this state, he is hardly to be blamed for fastening onto a gullible businessman called Arson, who had made a fortune and wanted to improve himself. In 1812 Arson met Wronski through a mutual friend and was overwhelmed by the wisdom of the sage in tatters. He agreed to take a course of instruction from Wronski, and eventually financed the publication of his Messianic works, which were soon rolling off the presses in indigestible volumes. Then Arson was initiated into the secret of the Absolute. Perhaps this was less illuminating than he had expected, for the businessman decided that he wanted to go back on the bargain and published a pamphlet entitled *Materials towards a History of the World's Great Frauds*. Wronski replied, and a polemical battle began, which was continued in the courts to the total discomfiture of Arson, who had foolishly signed a binding contract. Wronski ever afterwards declared Arson to be a real incarnation of Satan.

Sum of Human Knowledge

To do Wronski justice, if he was out to exploit Arson it was solely to publish his books. This seems all he was ever interested in; but it rapidly became necessary to seek new sources of income. In the hope of claiming a reward offered by the British Board of Longitude for improvements in their system of navigation, Wronski pounced on an error in the *Nautical Almanac*, sent the Board a complex correction to their theory of refractions and followed it to London. Here he was soon reduced again to extreme poverty. The *Nautical Almanac* incorporated his correction without payment or acknowledgement; Wronski petitioned Parliament, showered Sir Humphry Davy with letters, and persuaded a clergyman to swear before the Lord Mayor as to the justice of his case. The learned bodies maintained a stony silence.

In this period of total catastrophe Wronski began yet another project, which for some

time seemed to promise not merely relief from poverty but positive riches. It was a system for steam engines which he called the 'dynamogenic system': the engine could dispense with rails, travelling on specially reinforced roads. By 1833 he had actually signed a contract with a French company which would have kept him comfortably for at least 15 years. But Wronski's soaring mind had deduced from his invention further principles of mechanics, which he conceived it his duty to publish. The company objected to Wronski's making public property of their experiments, using, moreover, the money given to him to build working models. They broke the contract and Wronski was again without support.

He was not to find a new patron till 1850; but somehow his works were still printed. Appeals to the Tsar failed to produce the expected summons to implement his political programme immediately. But at this time he met Eliphas Levi, whom he is said to have initiated into the secrets of the Cabala.

It is indeed ironic to think that the lasting influence of the Polish Messianist was not in his hoped-for 'Absolute Reform of Human Knowledge', but in passing on the secrets of occultism which he had so long attempted to hide. For this encounter gave a completely new direction to the life of the former Abbé Constant, turning Levi from the lunatic fringe of politics towards magic. Shortly afterwards he adopted his pseudonym.

One day in 1873 Eliphas Levi discovered in a junk shop Wronski's pride and joy. This was the Prognometer. Whilst the Pole had been alive, the disciple had never been allowed to touch it; now he bought the machine. Inside the central globe of this curious construction was another, inscribed with equations. By adjusting the machine, the operator could bring together on any given point the sum of human knowledge. The Prognometer contained the solution to every problem. Wronski's widow survived him, poverty-stricken, but believing herself to have been married to a god.

J. C. N. WEBB

WRYNECK

THE WRYNECK is a rather inconspicuous, slim, greyish-brown bird with mottled and streaked plumage, which lives in woodland and is related to the woodpeckers. Both its common name and its specific scientific name, *torquilla*, refer to the way in which the bird twists and turns its neck when disturbed at the nest or handled.

Today the wryneck is commoner on the Continent and attracted the attention of the Greeks in classical times. Aristotle gives an excellent description of it in his *Notural History*. Among the Greeks it had importance in ritual as well as mythology. It seems that the bird was spread out on a wheel with four spokes, which was then rotated as part of a magical procedure, probably as a love charm. In all probability this custom, in which the wryneck was associated with a revolving wheel, arose from observation of the peculiar manner in which it rotates its neck. Until recently the wheel had many magical associations (see WHEEL), arising in large part from its movement seeming to resemble the curved path of the sun and moon across the sky.

As the rotating wheel had magical power, it was assumed that the bird which rotated its head and arrived from abroad when the sun was rising higher in the sky also had magical significance. Thus it became involved with a complex of ideas – fire and fertility, sun and moon, witchcraft and love, gods and goddesses. On a Greek vase Adonis is depicted holding out a wryneck to the goddess of love, Aphrodite. On another, Cupid, winged and nude, revolves a wheel in front of Adonis while a female figure holds out a wryneck.

When the bird was commoner in England countryfolk noticed that it returned in spring about the same time as the cuckoo or a little before it; hence it was called in Norfolk 'cuckoo's leader', in Gloucestershire 'cuckoo's footman' and in East Anglia 'cuckoo's mate'. Other names are derived from peculiarities in its behaviour – 'turkey bird' because of the way it ruffles its neck feathers when disturbed, 'writhe neck' and 'snake bird' from its neck-twisting and 'tongue bird' because of its long tongne.

The god of Israel revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush with the words 'I am who I am': modern scholarship suggests an origin and development of the cult of Yahweh far different from that presented in the Bible

YAHWEH

ACCORDING TO modern academic opinion, 'Yahweh' represents the personal name of the god of Israel. In the ancient religions, gods had personal names as well as titles: thus in the Hebrew Bible the god of Israel is called Yahweh as well as 'God' (in Hebrew, *Elohim*), or 'God Almighty' (*El Shaddai*). Yahweh is actually a vocalized form of what is known as the divine Tetragrammaton, the four consonantal letters YHWH by which the personal name of Israel's god is written in the Hebrew scriptures (see NAMES).

Hebrew was originally written in a consonantal script, the vowels being supplied by the reader. But the name signified by YHWH gradually became too sacred to be pronounced, with the result that the original vowels were forgotten. Instead of pronouncing the name where it occurred in the scriptures, the Jews substituted *Adonai* (My Lord). For this reason, in English translations of the Bible YHWH has generally been rendered as 'the Lord'. Another English rendering of the name, often used in hymns, is 'Jehovah', but the form derives from a medieval usage for which there is no authority. Some scholars think that another early form of the name was 'Yahu', which could have been a primitive cultic invocation: *ya-hu*, 'oh He!'

There has been much speculation about the meaning of the name Yahweh. This speculation can even be traced far back into the Bible itself, for the Hebrew author of Exodus 3. 14, who may have written about 800 BC, tried to explain the name. The passage is very important and merits quotation. It occurs in the dramatic account of Moses and the burning bush, which was intended to explain how Yahweh first revealed his concern for the Israelites, who were then in bondage to the Egyptians.

The episode begins by telling how the attention of Moses was attracted, one day in

the desert of Horeb, by a burning bush. On going near to investigate, Moses heard a voice announcing: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' The mysterious presence then revealed his intention to deliver the people of Israel from Egypt and settle them in the land of Canaan, and that Moses should be his agent in effecting this. In reply, the astounded Moses asked: 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' The answer then given is in fact an attempt to explain the meaning of 'Yahweh'. Moses is told by the strange divinity: 'I AM WHO I AM . . . Say this to the people of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."'

In this curious statement the ancient Hebrew writer was trying to connect the name Yahweh with the verb 'to be' (*hayah*). Today scholars still debate its meaning; it has recently been suggested by a specialist of great authority that the name signifies 'he causes to be, or brings into being'.

Another passage in the book of Exodus (6.2–3) reveals that the ancient Jews were aware that Yahweh had not always been worshipped under that name by their ancestors: 'And God said to Moses, "I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty (*El Shaddai*), but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them."' This consciousness that Yahweh had become the god of Israel at some definite point in the past finds graphic expression in the account of the covenant made between Yahweh and Israel at Mt Sinai, as recorded in Exodus. This momentous event is described as having taken place shortly after Israel's marvellous deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Moses had led the Israelite tribes into the Sinai desert, to the sacred mountain of Yahweh. The mysterious god, into whose presence Moses then ascends, is represented as promising the terms of the covenant to Israel: 'Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19.5–6).

The Sacred History

Belief in this ancient covenant has conferred on the Jewish people their distinctive character and destiny in the history of mankind. Their unique achievements and awful sufferings stem from their conviction that Yahweh, whom they identify with the divine Creator of the universe, made them his Elect People (see ELECTION). The records of his dealings with their race constitute their holy scriptures, on which both their cultural and religious life have been continuously nourished. It is from these scriptures, however, that modern scholars have reconstructed a very different account of the origin and development of the cult of Yahweh.

Nearly a century of critical study of the Hexateuch (the first six books of the Bible) has shown that a single writer or a succession of writers were responsible for presenting Yahweh as the unique god of Israel. It appears that the ancient Hebrew writers who created the tradition about Yahweh were the literary representatives of a powerful group of Yahwist devotees concerned to promote the cult of Yahweh. They were obliged to do this because Yahweh was not originally the god of many of the tribes which came to form the people of Israel.

In the Hexateuch three distinct cycles of tradition about Yahweh can be discerned. The first can best be designated the 'Primeval History'. It starts at Genesis 2.4 with Yahweh's creation of Adam and ends by telling how the original unity of mankind was broken by the confusion of languages, as divine punishment for the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11.1–9). In this Primeval History, Yahweh is presented in a universalist setting as the Creator of the human race. The Jews do not figure specifically in the narrative; but a hint is given about their future settlement in the land of Canaan in the curious episode concerning Ham's offence against his father Noah, recorded in Genesis 9. 20–27. Instead of cursing Ham, Noah curses Ham's son, Canaan, and decrees that he shall be the slave of Noah's other sons, Shem and Japheth. From Shem, we are told, the Hebrews descended, and the Philistines from Japheth. Thus the Yahwist writer prepared the way for his later narrative: for the Hebrews and the Philistines were to dispossess the Canaanites of Canaan, their land.

The next cycle of Yahwist tradition can be aptly termed the 'Patriarchal Saga'; for it describes the careers of four generations of Hebrew patriarchs who are presented as the ancestors of the Israelites. They are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the sons of Jacob, the most notable being Joseph. It concludes with a series of vividly described episodes concerning the fortunes of Joseph, used by the Yahwist writer to explain how the descendants of the patriarchs came to settle in Egypt instead of Canaan.

The third cycle of Yahwist tradition begins in the first chapter of the book of Exodus. A long period has elapsed since the sons of Jacob first settled in Egypt, and their offspring have now grown into a populous nation. Their increasing numbers so alarm the Egyptians that they enslave them. It is to deliver Israel from this oppression that Yahweh appears to Moses in the burning bush, and commissions him to tell Pharaoh to release the people. The colourful account of the ten plagues that precede the exodus from Egypt, and the marvellous crossing of the Red Sea, reveal the power of Yahweh and his care for his chosen people. This cycle of tradition concludes with Israel's conquest of Canaan, fulfilling Yahweh's ancient promise to Abraham.

The Yahwist narrative is thus a most impressive demonstration of how Yahweh had guided world events from the Fall of Adam to the settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan. But, impressive though it is and influential as it has been, this sacred history is essentially a propagandist work. It was designed to show two things: that the various Israelite tribes in Canaan had a common ancestry, and that Yahweh was their ancestral god. Modern research has revealed that this version of Israel's past was composed because the real situation had been very different.

War God of the Desert

Of the three cycles of Yahwist tradition which have been outlined here, that concerning the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan is historically the most important. For it is clearly based on a firmly established memory among the Hebrews that their ancestors had escaped from servitude in Egypt and had succeeded in conquering Canaan, and that Yahweh had been essentially connected with these momentous events. There was also a memory that the cult of Yahweh had started with a covenant made at Mount Sinai, in which Moses was the mediator between Yahweh and the Israelite tribes.

After much study of the traditions concerning the exodus and the conquest of Canaan, modern scholars have reached something like the following interpretation of the historical events which lie behind them. It would appear that certain Semite tribes, possibly those known as the Joseph tribes, escaped from Egypt under a leader called Moses. These tribes believed that they owed their deliverance to a war god of the desert, whom they came to know as Yahweh. This deity, who seems to have been associated with fire and storm, may possibly have been worshipped by the Kenites, a nomadic people dwelling in the desert land of Midian. The tribes, led by Moses, united with other Semite tribes for the purpose of invading and settling in Canaan. This union was placed under the patronage of Yahweh, whose prestige as a potent war god was high. Yahweh's presence among the marching tribes was located in a portable wooden ark; this ark was sheltered in a tabernacle or tent, which formed the focus of worship when the tribes encamped.

After the tribes had established themselves in Canaan the ark of Yahweh was deposited at Shiloh, which became his cult centre. However, despite the success gained under his patronage, Yahweh's hold on the allegiance of many of the tribes was insecure. Although these tribes had accepted Yahweh as the divine patron of their federation, they still remained loyal to their ancestral gods or tended to adopt the Canaanite gods. The attraction of these latter gods was great, since they were fertility deities and their help was needed by the nomadic invaders as they settled down to an agricultural economy (see VEGETATION SPIRITS). Doubtless many reasoned that Yahweh was indeed a powerful god in the desert and in war, but how could he make the corn grow in fertile Canaan?

This desertion of Yahweh was vehemently opposed by his devotees, and they were soon able to back their exhortations to loyalty by military facts. The Israelite conquest of Canaan had not been complete, and the Canaanites began to fight back; moreover, the Philistines who had settled in

Scala

The god of Israel, Yahweh is depicted in the first part of the book of Genesis as the divine creator of the world: *Creation of the World*, 17th century painting by Fiamminga

the coastal area became aggressive. The Israelites' original success had lain in their unity; when their tribal federation broke up, they became an easy prey to their enemies. Thus the Yahwist prophets had a strong case. They could argue that when the tribes had been loyal to Yahweh, he had fulfilled his covenant and given them victory; but when they deserted him for other gods, he had punished them by defeat. The book of Judges records the pattern of Hebrew history at this time. Israel is subjugated by its enemies; a Yahwist leader then recalls them to their allegiance to Yahweh and victory follows; but later the tribes again revert to other gods and the process is repeated.

Shrine at Jerusalem

However, the persistent endeavour of the Yahwists gradually bore fruit, and under Saul and David, the first Israelite kings, the cult of Yahweh was established as the national religion. After David's capture of Jerusalem from the Jebusites (c 1000 BC), the Ark of Yahweh was brought there and placed in the Temple which David's son, Solomon, built for Yahweh on Mt Moriah. The place was reputed to be the site where Abraham had attempted to offer up Isaac, his son, as a sacrifice to Yahweh. Thus began Yahweh's association with that historic site, which is still commemorated in the celebrated Wailing Wall of the Jews.

The construction of a national shrine to Yahweh at Jerusalem was indeed a momentous event, and its consequences have been immense not only for the Jews but for a large part of mankind (see JERUSALEM). But it did not mean that the supremacy of Yahweh was yet assured, or that the Israelites had been consolidated into a single nation under the protection of Yahweh. Indeed, after Solomon's death the people split into two separate kingdoms: that of Israel with its capital at Samaria, and that of Judah with Jerusalem as its centre (see LOST TRIBES). Moreover, as the books of Kings show, there was still a deep-rooted tendency to worship the Canaanite gods, or to serve Yahweh with ritual practices appropriate to Baal, the Canaanite god (see BAAL; SYRIA AND PALESTINE).

It was to counteract these dangers that the Yahwist version of Israel's past, which is contained in the Hexateuch, was constructed. The intentions behind its three distinctive parts varied, but they all supported the major theme of the composition as a whole: to reveal the purpose and power of Yahweh. Thus the account of the exodus and the conquest of Canaan commemorated the two momentous events that marked the beginning of Israel's life as a nation, together with its covenant with Yahweh at Mt Sinai. The preceding Patriarchal Saga was designed to show that the various tribes which had settled in Canaan were really a homogeneous people, descended from common ancestors. It also taught these tribes that their possession of Canaan was the fulfilment of the promise that Yahweh had made to their ancestors. To this national history the Primeval History served as a most impressive introduction, revealing that Yahweh, the god of Israel, was the divine Creator of the world and had guided its affairs from the beginning for the good of his chosen people, Israel.

This Yahwist philosophy of history succeeded in its purpose. It established the idea of the 12 tribes of Israel forming a single nation, united in a common past and a common faith. It has subsequently been a major factor in preserving the national consciousness of the Jews during all the painful vicissitudes of their long history; and its influence on Christianity has been incalculable (see HISTORY).

The conception of Yahweh underwent much change during the course of centuries. In origin and nature Yahwism was an ethnic religion. It was essentially concerned with the relationship between Yahweh and his chosen people, Israel. Individual persons were significant only in so far as they affected, by their conduct, this relationship for good or ill. They could look forward to no life after death, for Yahweh had decreed man's fate when he sentenced Adam for his original sin: 'You are dust, and to dust you shall return' (Genesis 3.19). The most that was promised to the individual was that Yahweh would reward his pious service with a long life in this world, economic prosperity, and sons to inherit him. But at death the same grim fate awaited all persons, good

Corvina, Budapest

It was essential for the early Christians to preserve the Hebraic message of the creator god, who was active in history and who loved his world, and Yahweh was eventually transmuted into the Christian god who 'so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life (John 3.16): *God the Father* by Tiepolo

or bad. What survived the physical disintegration of death descended to Sheol, which was conceived as an immense pit, far below the foundations of the world, shrouded in dust and gloom (see HELL).

This view of human destiny became increasingly intolerable, as prophets emphasized that Yahweh was not only omnipotent, but also a just god, who required just dealing from his people. For experience showed that only too often it was the just who suffered in this world, while the unjust prospered. Consequently, because there was no hope of recompense after death, the justice of Yahweh was questioned. The book of Job illustrates the tension that built up for the faithful Israelite (see JOB).

When the book of Job was written, the problems of innocent suffering could not be solved since there could be no redress after death. But by the middle of the 2nd century BC belief in a resurrection and judgement of the dead had become established in Israel (see JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). However, although this development made Yahwism a more satisfactory personal faith, the old ethnic character of the religion remained. Indeed, it became more vehemently presented owing to the worsening of Israel's political fortunes.

The basic tenet of Yahwism was that Yahweh had settled Israel in Canaan, and had consented to dwell in the Temple built for him at Jerusalem. But Israel was a small nation, and it became a victim of the power politics of the ancient Near East. Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonian forces of Nebuchadnezzar, and the better part of the people sent in captivity into Babylonia. On the return from this exile in 538, the Temple was rebuilt on a modest scale. But the Holy Land of Yahweh continued to be controlled, except for a brief period, by foreign powers or uncongenial native rulers until its incorporation into the Roman Empire in 6 AD. One of these rulers, Herod the Great (37–4 BC), an Idumean by race and Jewish by profession, whom the Jews hated exceedingly, rebuilt the Temple on a most magnificent scale, but it failed to placate the Jews. The subjugation of Israel contradicted their ideal of it as a theocracy. This contradiction led to a fervently held belief that Yahweh would ultimately intervene, or send his Messiah, to overthrow Israel's enemies and restore its sovereignty in its Holy Land.

The belief eventually proved fatal to Israel. The yoke of heathen Rome was increasingly felt to be intolerable, and in 66 AD the people revolted (see ZEALOTS). They trusted that Yahweh would interpose with some miracle to save them. But after a bitter struggle, in 70 AD the Romans captured Jerusalem and burnt the Temple. Israel's national life in the land of Yahweh's promise ended then in awful disaster, until its restoration in 1948.

(See also HIGH GODS; JUDAISM; SKY.)

S. G. F. BRANDON

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W.B.YEATS

'I HAD NOT taken up these subjects wilfully, nor through love of strangeness, nor love of excitement, nor because I formd myself in some experimental circle, but because unaccountable things happened in my childhood, and because of an ungovernable craving. When supernatural events begin, a man first doubts his own testimony, but when they repeat themselves again and again, he doubts all human testimony. At least he knows his own bias, and may perhaps allow for it, but how trust historian and psychologist that have for some three hundred years ignored in writing the history of the world, or of the human mind, so momentous a part of human experience? What else had they ignored and distorted?'

The view current among Yeats's younger contemporaries during his lifetime was that, considering the nonsense Yeats took seriously, his verse was surprisingly good; T. S. Eliot, by contrast, was regarded as learned in all that it befitted a poet to know. Time has worked a reversal of that judgement: there is a tradition of spiritual knowledge which comprises a body of learning not taught in the schools, with its own great literature, besides its unwritten gnosis, accessible only to those who submit themselves, as Yeats did, to a spiritual discipline. Yeats was in his own field a learned, even a scholarly poet, though not in an academic sense.

The son of Anglo-Irish parents of Protestant stock, William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) did not inherit the Catholic faith of the nation for whose cause he worked as a member of the Young Ireland movement, and in whose parliament he afterwards became a Senator. His father, the portrait painter J. B. Yeats, a member of a Pre-Raphaelite community at Bedford Park, in London, felt no need for any religion beyond his own courteous humanism. Yeats's mother, a Pollexfen from Sligo, was imaginative rather than religious; and Yeats's sense of the supernatural was first aroused by the country people of Sligo, the paradise of his childhood.

As an art student in Dublin Yeats formed a friendship with a class-mate, George Russell (A. E.) a natural mystic and visionary

(see RUSSELL). Under the influence of A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* the Dublin Hermetic Society was founded. On the invitation of this society the theosophist Mohini Chatterjee (named in a poem written many years later) came to Duhlin, and from him Yeats learned the rudiments of Hindu philosophy, which remained a life-long study. (Sri Purohit Swami dedicated to Yeats on his 70th birthday his translation of the *Gita*; and the poet collahorated with the Swami in translating the *Ten Principal Upanishads*, published in 1937.) Yeats and A.E. both became members of the Theosophical Society; in *The Trembling of the Veil* Yeats has described with amusement and sympathy his impressions on meeting Mme Blavatsky (see BLAVATSKY; THEOSOPHY).

Among his father's friends was Edwin J. Ellis, a minor poet and painter interested in esoteric matters. Blake was, during the 1880s, much in vogue in Pre-Raphaelite circles and Yeats, in collahoration with Ellis, set to work on the Blake manuscripts in the possession of the Linnell family to produce the first edition of his longer poems, the three-volume Quaritch edition (1893). The commentary is based upon the authors' esoteric knowledge; they rightly surmised that Blake had access to an esoteric tradition, though they had at that time no exact knowledge of Blake's sources. Yeats may have come to Swedenborg (see SWEDENBORG) through his Blake studies.

Education in Magic

While working on Blake in the British Museum Reading Room Yeats noticed a figure who captured his imagination: S. Liddell Mathers, afterwards known as MacGregor Mathers, was copying magical manuscripts and rituals. Yeats afterwards described him as 'a learned, but not a scholarly man'. In 1887 Mathers became, with two distinguished English Rosicrucians a co-founder of the Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN). Yeats was initiated in May or June 1887 under the motto *Diabolus est Deus Inversus* (Frater D.E.D.I.). Yeats helped Mathers to write the rituals, drawing upon the Chaldean Oracles, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and (evidently Yeats's contribution) William Blake.

Yeats's fictitious figure Michael Robartes (who first appears in the early romance *Rosa Alchemica*) is no doubt based upon Mathers, 'who seemed, before I heard his name, or knew the nature of his studies, a figure of romance'. *Rosa Alchemica* describes a magical initiation, in which superhuman beings descend to dance with mortals on a marbled floor in 'an agony of trance', long afterwards recalled in the poem *Byzantium*. Michael Robartes appears again as the Initiator of *A Vision*; this work, an 'arbitrary, harsh and difficult' diagrammatic system relating historical cycles and human character to the 28 phases of the moon, resembles related systems by Eliphas Levi (see LEVI) and others, which Yeats had studied as an initiate of the Golden Dawn.

Through Yeats a number of his friends, including Florence Farr and Maud Gonne, became members of the Order. Nearly all the early members were high-minded people, including Anglo-Catholic clergymen and even for a time Evelyn Underhill, the writer on mysticism. The volumes of the ritual, since published by Israel Regardie, do not include the many essays on prayer, the Catholic sacraments, the doctrines of the Virgin Birth, Apostolic Succession and the like, circulated among adepts. The original object of the Society was, beyond the study of magical techniques of various kinds, the alchemical 'great work' of self perfection (see ALCHEMY). Subsequent quarrels arose from Mathers's dictatorial attitude and increasing interest in black magic. Yeats was the leader of the movement to throw out Mathers's pupil Aleister Crowley, who under the name and number of 'the Great Beast' of the Apocalypse openly identified himself with the Antichrist, and practised a form of sexual magic (see CROWLEY). Yeats was at no time anti-Christian, nor was sexual magic practised by the Golden Dawn.

In the troubles which followed the expulsion of Crowley, and afterwards of Mathers, other fragmentations disrupted the Order. A. E. Waite (see WAITE), author of scholarly works on the Cabala and Rosicrucianism, resigned, with a group of adherents who wished to devote themselves exclusively to spiritual development; Yeats was among those who wished to study magic. In 1901 he published a pamphlet circulated among members of the Lodge, *Is the Order of R.R. and A.C. to Remain a Magical Order?* (R.R. and A.C. stand for Rosea Rubiae and Aurea Crucis, the higher grades of the Golden Dawn). In it he urged the continuation of the strict examination system by which initiates worked their way through the degrees of adeptship. This document, written to be read by friends who shared his deepest beliefs, is perhaps Yeats's most open declaration of faith. In 1905 Yeats, Wynn Westcott and Arthur Machen resigned; the poet had been a member of the Order for nearly eight years.

Yeats's interest since boyhood in the fairy lore of Ireland, still a living tradition at the end of the 19th century, was an important element in his widespread knowledge of occult matters: *Mr W. B. Yeats presenting Mr George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies*, a caricature by Max Beerbohm

Heinemann

The Golden Dawn taught the Western esoteric tradition; the Cabala was central, and adeptship was based upon the Tree of Life and the sefiroth, to which were added the Tarot symbols, the Egyptian pantheon and other mythological equivalents (see CABALA; TAROT). Such was the real ground of all Yeats's subsequent thought: he received no formal education after leaving school; and his true education was a most thorough, serious and practical knowledge of magic and its literature, including alchemy, through the Golden Dawn, together with an introduction to the Platonic and Eastern traditions, through the Theosophical Society. In the pamphlet already mentioned he defines magic as he understood it: 'The central principle of all the Magic of power is that everything we formulate in the imagination, if we formulate it strongly enough, realizes itself in the circumstances of life, acting either through our own souls, or through the spirit of nature.'

The course of Yeats's wide and deep reading was to a great extent determined by these studies. The publications of the Theosophical Society, and publishers and authors under theosophical influence, give a good idea of the scope of his interests. The level of scholarship in this circle was high: learning remained in the hands of such scholars as G. R. S. Mead, A. E. Waite, Harold Bayley and Stephen McKenna, whose qualifications were more than academic.

Yeats also studied history, comparative mythology (the *Golden Bough* set its stamp upon a generation), works on symbolism by Harold S. Bayley and others. Among English poets he preferred the Platonists – Spenser, Shakespeare, Shelley, Blake. He was widely read in philosophy, from the Cambridge Platonists and Berkeley to Kant, Hegel, Spengler and Wittgenstein.

He was also interested in Spiritualism: he maintained a critical attitude, not from scepticism but because he understood that many explanations of the undoubted phenomena were possible. His play *The Words upon the Window Pane* is drawn from his knowledge of mediumship and seances.

A no less important tributary of Yeats's knowledge of occult matters was his interest (continuous from boyhood) in the fairy lore of Ireland, still a living tradition at the end of the 19th century. The collection of folklore by Douglas Hyde and others inspired Yeats to follow their example. *The Celtic Twilight* contains material gathered round Sligo; and he presently inspired Lady Gregory to collect similar material in Galway. In his introduction and notes to her *Visions and Beliefs* he relates folklore to the

learned tradition of the Platonists and to Swedenborg. W. Y. Evens-Wentz, since famous as the translator of the Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, dedicated to Yeats his first book, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, in which he argues that the Irish folk-beliefs are a remote memory of learned Druidism.

Yeats dreamed of establishing, with the help of Maud Gonne, a Hermetic order in Ireland, whose temple was to be in a castle on an island in Lough Key. The rituals were to be Irish in character, substituting perhaps for the Egyptian gods of the Golden Dawn, Irish gods; as he hoped to do in an epic. 'Patrick or Columcille, Oisin or Finn in Prometheus' stead; and, instead of the Caucasus, Cro-Patrick or Ben Bulben. Have not all races had their first unity from a mythology that marries them to rock or hill?'

In Byzantium, a city at once Christian and Hellenic, Yeats found a symbol which seemed to epitomize the imaginative integration of 'unity of being' within that 'unity of culture' without which no true unity of being is possible to the individual. 'I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers – though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract – spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject-matter and that the vision of a whole people.'

To restore to the Irish nation a unity of culture founded upon a mythology expressed in works of art was the ambition of the poet; who could not endure 'an international art, picking stories and symbols where it pleased'. It was his purpose as a poet so to 'deepen the political passion of the nation that all, artist and poet, craftsman and day-labourer would accept a common design. Perhaps even these images, once created and associated with river and mountain, might move of themselves and with some powerful, even turbulent life, like those painted horses that trampled the ricefields of Japan.'

'Age-long Memoried Self'

His biographer, Joseph Hone, played down Yeats's concern with occultism, which most of his academic readers and admirers also dismiss as being either discreditable or irrelevant. Others defend their poet on the grounds that he studied magic only for the sake of his poetry; quoting in support of this too facile judgement a phrase from *A Vision* in which Instructors say, 'we have come to give you metaphors for poetry'.

The evidence is rather that Yeats regarded poetry as a special kind of magic, than magic as a special kind of poetry. In a postscript to the pamphlet already quoted he makes it clear that for him symbols are agents of power whose operation upon the unconscious mind is independent of conscious intention. 'It is a first principle of our

A learned, even a scholarly, poet in his own field, Yeats's true education was a thorough and serious practical knowledge of magic and its literature; in *A Vision* he expounds a diagrammatic system which relates historical cycles and human character to the 28 phases of the moon, and which resembles related systems by Eliphas Levi and others: 'The Great Wheel' from the *Speculum Angelorum et Hominum*, one of the illustrations in *A Vision*

illumination that symbols and formulae are powers, which act in their own right, and with little consideration for our intentions.' This is because such formulae act upon 'the agelong memoried self' whose Daimons 'may move through the Great Year like individual men and women and are said to use men and women as their bodies, to gather and disperse those bodies at will'; for such reasons as this Yeats told Florence Farr that 'individuality is not as important as our age has imagined'. In his *Autobiographies* he gives instances of subjects made to see visions by symbols exhibited to them in a state of trance.

As a member of a Hermetic order Yeats was under vows of secrecy; his work was grounded in a body of knowledge which he never disclosed. The rituals of the Golden Dawn have since been published, in part by Crowley and fully by Israel Regardie; but these cannot be understood by merely reading the text.

Before Jung and long before Surrealism, and with greater learning and surer metaphysical foundations than either of these or than any psychical research since undertaken, Yeats had divined the existence of a collective mind, a source of imaginative knowledge and poetic images beyond normal consciousness. It is Henry More's *anima mundi*, the oversoul, or collective unconscious. 'I know now that revelation is not from the self but from that age-long memoried self, that shapes the elaborate shell of the mollusc and the child in the womb, that teaches the birds to make their nest; and that genius is a crisis that joins that buried self for certain moments to our trivial daily mind.'

From this collective and shared mind great poetry derives, and to that imaginative ground in each reader it addresses itself. Certain myths, images and incantations speak to the imagination with an immediacy that overlaps reason, in whoever will allow this to happen. Yeats's symbols, his incantatory speech, all his themes, are addressed to that mind; his design is to awaken recollection, in the Platonic sense of the word, by the use of symbolic images. His poetry is at once oracular and evocative. He held strong views on the declamation of verse which should be (so he held) incantatory, because rhythmic incantation also addresses itself immediately to the imagination.

Yeats believed that the evocatory power of symbols had little to do with the conscious mind. He describes how a certain diagrammatic symbol had the power of evoking visions of 'Eden', with tree, walled garden on the top of a high mountain, birds among the boughs, and from the trunk the sound of 'continual clashing of swords. Whence came that fine thought of music-making swords, that image of the garden, and many like images and thoughts? I had as yet no clear answer, but knew myself face to face with the Anima Mundi described by Platonic philosophers, and more especially in modern times by Henry More, which has a memory independent of embodied individual memories, though they constantly enrich it with their images and thoughts.'

To those who regard such symbolist art as 'inhuman' it may be replied that such is the abiding ground of our collective humanity. Symbolist art is a form of religious art; one might even say that when religious art ceases to be symbolist it is no longer religious, for it no longer joins the 'age-long memoried self' at certain moments to 'our trivial daily mind'. A demythologized religion is no longer a religion at all, since it no longer possesses the means of binding the individual self to the universal life.

Yeats is never more a symbolist than when in such occasional poems as *Parnell's Funeral* or *All Souls' Night* he relates events of national history or of personal life to that cosmic whole which alone confers upon each part its dignity and significance.

Yeats must be seen in the context of that 'revolt of soul against intellect now beginning in the world' (Yeats here uses the word 'intellect' in the sense of 'reason') of which the Theosophical Movement, Freud and Jung, the Surrealist Movement and the revival of magical studies are various aspects. Of those named it is possible that Yeats himself reached the most profound understanding, as he gave the most enduring expression, to a great reversal of the cycles of history.

KATHLEEN RAINE

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YEW

THE EVERGREEN YEW lives to an immense age for it can continue to grow with a completely hollow centre. It has been claimed that the tree can survive for over 3000 years, but this seems unlikely. However, like other conifers, it had an ancient reputation for immortality and became a symbol of life after death. Mourners carried yew branches at funerals, which were placed in the grave; and shoots of yew were sometimes put in a dead person's shroud.

As a symbol of the Resurrection, yew was often incorporated in Eastertide church decorations and used on Palm Sunday. However, it was considered unlucky to bring it into a house, and for this reason it is not used for Christmas decorations. Because of its sacred associations, in Ireland yew wood was made into croziers and shrines. While a common yew was valued at 15 pence in the Middle Ages, a consecrated yew was worth a pound.

It was most unlucky to cut down or damage a growing yew tree; this is not surprising for the yew was among the most potent of trees for protection against evil, and was therefore often planted alongside a house, or where it might form a windbreak against the invisible wind as well as against the unknown powers of evil. Doubtless its planting in churchyards was largely to prevent witchcraft and to restrain the spirits of the buried dead.

However, Robert Turner, writing in 1664, suggested that its main function in churchyards was that it 'attracts and imbibes putrefaction and gross oleaginous vapours exhaled out of the Graves by the setting Sun, and sometimes drawn into those Meteors called *Ignes Fatui*'. Its protectiveness presumably arose from its longevity, its very tough tim-

Said to be among the most potent of trees for protection against evil, the yew was probably planted in churchyards to prevent witchcraft and to restrain the spirits of the buried dead; a symbol of life after death, it had an ancient reputation for immortality, and mourners at funerals carried yew branches which were placed in the grave: yew tree in Stoke Poges churchyard

John Moss

ber, and its red 'berries'. It was, of course, also prized for making bows, although most English bows were made from imported yew, for the native variety was often too brittle and too full of knots. The most antique wooden weapons known are early Paleolithic spears made from yew.

Unrejoicing Berries

The yew cannot be called a cheerful tree, although its autumn display of what Wordsworth called 'unrejoicing berries' is spectacular. Its churchyard affinities have given it funereal associations, and it was also considered a malign tree, perhaps because its foliage is poisonous. Because of this, and because weapons were made from it, Shakespeare referred to it as 'double fatal' *(Richard II)*. It seems likely that the 'cursed ebenon' referred to by the ghost in *Hamlet* is of yew; Marlowe also mentions 'juice of hebon' in *The Jew of Malta*. Yew forms part of the witches' brew in *Macbeth*:

> Gall of goat, and slips of yew
> Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse.

'Slivered' refers to the wind breaking branches of the trees; any branch broken in this way was uulucky and dangerous to use, for the evil spirit of the storm remained within it.

There are various other intriguing pieces of folklore about the yew. In the north of England it was used in a variant of dowsing to find lost property: the seeker held a yew branch in front of him, which led him to the goods and turned in his hand when he was by them. A very odd Scottish tradition was that a chieftain could, if holding a piece of churchyard yew in his left hand, threaten or denounce his enemy without the latter hearing. Others present did hear, however, so that it could not be said that he attacked his enemy without warning.

A Herefordshire belief was that if a girl placed a sprig of yew under her pillow, which she had picked in a churchyard she had not previously visited, she would dream of her future husband.

To dream of yew presages the death of some old person which will be of benefit to the dreamer. In the Victorian language of flowers yew meant sorrow.

Yggdrasil

In Scandinavian mythology, the world ash tree; standing at the centre of the universe, it connects together the heavens, the earth and the underworld; after the doom of the gods at the end of the world the man and woman who will repopulate the earth emerge from the world tree.

See ASH; SCANDINAVIA; TREES.

Yin and Yang

In Chinese philosophy, two great opposite principles or forces, on whose interplay everything in the universe depends; Yang is male, light and positive, Yin is female, dark and negative, and all phenomena can be classified in terms of them; in Taoism, the Tao is the principle which unites and transcends the opposites.

See ACUPUNCTURE; CHINA; DUALISM; I CHING; OPPOSITES; TAOISM.

Both a form of meditation and a practical discipline, yoga is a path to liberation from the bondage of rebirth. The best known form is hatha *yoga, which charts the course towards mystical union with the Universal Soul, through the physical body, in a long series of arduous exercises*

YOGA

ESSENTIALLY yoga is a voyage of self-discovery, for it means the linking of the lesser self with the Greater Self. Paradoxically, the Greater Self is contained within the lesser, personal self, just as the farthest horizon of an undiscovered continent is contained within the ship that rides at anchor waiting the captain's word of command. Yoga charts the course, tells how to get there, and describes what will be encountered on the way.

Yoga has sometimes been defined as a religion, and there are as many kinds of yoga as there are sects and cults in any great denomination. In this general sense yoga can mean all things to all men. It has been recommended as a method of beauty culture and a means of getting rich. Its advocates have prescribed it for migraine and falling hair, for insomnia and flatulence. The great adventure has been bypassed altogether, and yoga made into a plaything.

Nonetheless, yoga has a more conservative meaning. It is a system of philosophy; one of the six recognized systems of orthodox Hinduism (see HINDUISM). The other five are concerned with logic (this is called *Nyaya*), with physical concepts like space, time, causality and matter (*Vaisheshika*), with the objects of abstract philosophical inquiry (*Samkhya*), with ritual (*Mimamsa*), and with the metaphysics of the Ultimate Principle (*Vedanta;* see VEDANTA). But yoga is not a philosophy in the ordinary sense, and a yogi is not a mere 'knower of words'. It is essentially practical, and its discipline down to earth.

The chief textbook on yoga and the first systematic presentation of its philosophy is found in the work of Patanjali, who lived in the 3rd century BC. He is not regarded as the founder, only as the codifier of a doctrine that had already been in existence in India for about 1000 years before his time. He set forth its philosophy in a series of *sutras*, aphorisms or brief sentences, which in the course of centuries, have been subject to considerable interpretation.

As yoga evolved a number of subsidiary systems were added to it, many of them taking as their starting point a verse or even a phrase or word from Patanjali's sutras, and these developed along their own specialist lines, just as modern exponents speak of the 'yoga of business efficiency' or the 'yoga of marital happiness'. But the aim of all the orthodox systems of yoga was permanent liberation from the bondage of rebirth in another incarnation, and ultimate union with the Infinite. Each of these yogas was a 'path' to that goal. The powers that one might pick up along the way, such as an enhanced mental and physical power, are regarded as of no great consequence in themselves, and a preoccupation with them is a hindrance. Anyone who takes up yoga solely for the powers it might confer is disqualified from the higher teachings.

There are about ten traditionally recognized yogas, acceptable as a path to Realization. *Bhakti* yoga is the way of devotion love and faith, usually directed to God. Yoga, like most of the orthodox Hindu systems of philosophy, was originally atheistic, and even later, when a concept of of a divine soul was introduced, did not refer to God in the ordinary sense as Creator and ruler of the universe. He was only one, albeit the chief, of a whole class of souls (according to Nyaya philosophy), or the fashioner of the world out of material elements which were already in existence (according to Vaisheshika), or an impersonal spirit, the animating principle which united with inert matter to form the universe (Samkhya). Mimamsa held that God was not necessary for salvation, which could be achieved by ritual acts. But bhakti yoga presupposes a personal creator who desires men's devotion and responds to their faith.

Dhyana yoga is the method of contemplation. It is a purely mental discipline, much of which is also embodied in the yoga of physical culture, *hatha* yoga, the yoga familiar to most people today. Dhyana yoga teaches mental discipline, concentration, and the forms of meditation leading to trance states, of which *samadhi* is the culmination.

There is a yoga of works and deeds called *karma* yoga, expressed in charitable acts, forgiveness, penance, asceticism. It is to be distinguished from *kriya* yoga, which is primarily concerned with religious action and ritualism, particularly as expounded in the Mimamsa philosophy. The yoga of knowledge, called *jnana* yoga, relates to the understanding of the sacred books, the *Vedas*, especially the *Upanishads*, where many esoteric doctrines are expounded. *Mantra* yoga deals with magical spells and mystic syllables and the verses of sacred lore, whose correct recitation is believed to confer supernatural gifts (see MANTRA).

In addition to these there are certain yogas concerned with the subtle plexuses of the etheric body, called *chakras*, of which one, called *laya* yoga, teaches their activation, with special emphasis on the *kundalini* (see KUNDALINI) lying at the base of the spine, hence also known as kundalini yoga. It is connected with the recitation of sacred mantras which stimulate the chakras.

Often regarded as the highest form of yoga is *raja* yoga, the royal path to spiritual perfection, which deals almost entirely with mental and psychic development leading to spiritual enlightenment. It is sometimes given the honorific title of *rajadhiraja* yoga, the king of kings yoga.

The Yoga of Physical Power

The best known of all the yogas, and the one whose practice is linked with all the procedures usually associated in the popular mind with Indian religious and occult practice is hatha yoga, the yoga of physical power, or the development of the physical body. It is yoga as commonly understood, the yoga of the cross-legged posture, of standing on the head, the yoga of the wonder-worker. Like the other yogas it follows a series of 'stages', working progressively from the easy to the more difficult. Like the others its aim is release from the bondage of rebirth, and attaining union with the Absolute. It has adopted several features of the other yogas and embodied them within its own discipline.

There are eight stages in hatha yoga, and so comprehensively are they formulated that they are usually taken as the prototype of all forms of yogic discipline. Starting with simple restraints it proceeds through a system of physical and mental culture until it reaches the final stage which cannot be taught but will be experienced by the yogi when he is ready for it. The whole course is long and arduous, and most practitioners are content to confine themselves to the earlier stages and opt for health and efficiency, leaving the Ultimate to the more aspiring.

Whatever spiritual goals may ultimately

Musée Guimet/Michael Holford

The yoga of physical power, hatha yoga consists of eight stages which are usually taken as the prototype of all forms of yogic discipline; the third stage teaches the asanas or bodily positions which are assumed as an exercise and during meditation: statuette of a deity sitting in the lotus position. The most common of the asanas, and the simplest for people accustomed to sitting on the ground, it obviates any danger of the student falling over during trance

underlie yogic training, it is the physical body that is the instrument through which they are achieved, and the physical body must be trained for it. We can go through life ignoring our 'soul', indeed even denying its existence, without doing ourselves apparent harm; we may neglect the intellectual side of our personalities and still savour a great deal of life without detriment to ourselves. But the physical, or gross body of flesh and blood, makes insistent demands on us. Breath is needed every few seconds; food every few hours; sleep once a day. And unless the body receives this recurrent sustenance and replenishment it will demand attention in such a manner that all other considerations will have to be subordinated until it is satisfied.

Therefore, even though the aim of yoga might reach beyond and above the range of the physical, we have to begin at the beginning, that is, on the physical plane. Our attitude to worldly and unworldly matters has to be settled and our priorities fixed and it is in the arrangement of these that hatha yoga has laid down its eight stages.

The first two preliminary stages are called *yama* and *niyama*, and are to do with external and internal control. They cover the ethical rules governing personal and social conduct, and various methods of self-discipline connected with non-injury, continence, equanimity and right thinking.

Non-injury, or *ahimsa*, implies a restraint on all aggressive emotions, such as hatred, anger, jealousy, revenge. It totally forbids physical injury to any living thing and this idea lies behind the dietary prohibition against the eating of meat. The true yogi is a vegetarian, and a pacifist. One should not 'flail one's arms about', in case one injures someone standing near by. One should not even think in violent and aggressive terms.

Ahimsa is closely connected with the idea of equanimity, which is one of the basic tenets of the Hindu ethical code. It means that a person should be tranquil in the face

Executed in combination with breathing techniques, the recitation of mantras, and mandalas or mystic diagrams, asanas are believed to draw down etheric forces from the invisible world which imbue the body of the student with power: mandala, 17th or 18th century

Sven Gahlin

of every provocation, defeat, personal and financial loss, indignity, insult. It is the mark of self-conquest, to be acquired long before the regular yogic disciplines are undertaken. It is to be learned in the school of life, as a householder or man of affairs. Anger, desire to avenge an insult or redress a personal injury, retaliation, are all marks of pride. According to the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, only the fool imagines that anger or indignation are signs of energy or of the superior man. A man given to anger is a man in chains, not a free person. Self-restraint or self-control are aimed at in the early stages, but as one advances even these fall short of the true ideal, for they imply the existence of emotions that need restraining. True equanimity is the absence even of the seeds of anger.

Another item usually included in the yama and niyama exercises is *brahmacharya* or abstinence from sex, and this is generally insisted on for those who desire to devote themselves totally to the spiritual life. But for all persons, irrespective of their occupation, moderation in sexual activity is of the highest importance. Married people are enjoined to guard against self-indulgence. Aspirants to the higher reaches must abstain altogether, for while sex has its proper place in the life of the householder, it is considered a definite hindrance to the higher life. The lawgiver Manu said, 'Irresistible power comes from chastity.'

For the man of the world yama and niyama present an eminently rational way of life. Certain things are essential, but our attitude to them must be reasonable. Food is necessary but not greed; sex but not sensuality; self-respect but not arrogance.

The Beneficial Headstand

The third stage in hatha yoga teaches the *asanas* or bodily positions, the postures assumed both as an exercise and during meditation. Patanjali said that the best posture was one that was 'firm and pleasant', that is, fit for its purpose and not uncomfortable. Yogic meditation involves long periods of motionless sitting and it is partly to accustom the student to a fixed and easy position in which he can remain longest without discomfort that the basic yogic asanas have been devised.

Many of the positions involve great bodily contortion, and though the practice of such devious attitudes is frowned upon by the adept, it is with these asanas that most people associate yoga. The exponent with his legs twisted about his neck or in some other peculiar stance is the traditional Western image of the yogi in action.

Asanas are called after their supposed resemblance to some object, plant or animal. There are asanas named after the lion, the bull, tortoise, frog, fish, scorpion, lotus, plough, wheel and sun, and many other such things. The names are bestowed on them partly to describe their appearance and also to suggest the quality they impart. The asana named after the swan gives one discrimination, for this is the chief attribute of that bird; the asana named after the frog gives one the main quality of this animal, which is strength of purpose.

In the *simhasana*, or lion pose, the yogi bends his legs till the knees touch the floor and places his hands on his knees. He protrudes his tongue as far out as it will go, stares at its tip, and then tenses the shoulders, arms and neck, making the whole frame taut so as to give the body the appearance of a fierce lion. This asana gives one leonine attributes.

The most common of yogic asanas is the well-known cross-legged pose called the *siddha* (power) asana and, in a slight variation, the *padma* (lotus) asana. This is the squatting position, with legs crossed. To people who are accustomed to sitting on the ground this is the simplest of all the asanas, although it presents some difficulty to those who have never tried it. It is a very stable posture, which enables one to keep the spine straight and obviates any danger of falling over and injuring oneself.

Another popular posture is the *shirsha* asana or 'head position', the ordinary headstand, which is done in several ways. The simplest method is to stand facing the wall, a convenient distance away from it, to bend forward till the head touches the ground, and finally to throw the legs up till they touch the wall for support. The legs are then shifted off the wall and the body straightened out. There are numerous variations on this.

The headstand pose is one of great antiquity. As an occult exercise it was known to the early Taoists of China (see TAOISM) who recommended it as a means of making certain subtle fluids descend to the head in order to 'repair the brain'. The mysterious sect of the Cabiri of Greece practised the headstand as a sacred rite, and the statue of a woman standing on her head in a Cabiri shrine aroused the uncontrollable laughter of the Persian king Cambyses II (d. 522 BC) who could not understand what the inverse attitude had to do with religion. In Europe standing on the head was long recommended as a cure for colic.

In yoga the purpose of this asana is to reverse the direction of the flow of certain fluids running in the internal channels of the body and direct them to the hidden reservoirs of the brain. The perfect execution of the headstand is said to be a profound mystery for it unites 'upper with lower', 'running with still', and 'male with female' in the 'nuptial chambers' situated in the cranium. The fluids become etherialized and then ignite, so that a state of illumination may be reached through this asana alone, if one knows the hidden art.

Many blessings attend its proper performance. In addition to the physical benefits of longevity, youthfulness and sexual vigour, and the intellectual benefits of an improved memory, great concentration and increased will-power, the spiritual blessings include the ability to perform miracles and fly through the air. This latter has been interpreted to mean that the adept can travel at will in the astral body (see ASTRAL BODY).

Associated with the asanas are certain accompanying gestures of the hand called *mudras*, which are believed to direct the latent potencies of each bodily posture by channelling them along particular paths. The hand is the focus of immense power, and certain gestures made by the hands are universally recognized as having an almost magical quality (see GESTURE). The human hand has been called the second brain and the visible part of the mind. Benedictions are bestowed by the hand. Diseases are healed and strength communicated by the laying on of hands. Gestures of anger, appeal, supplication, and command are familiar throughout the world. A hand gesture not only articulates and concentrates the internal forces and directs them outwards, it also receives power from the invisible world. It is the channel of communication between the two worlds.

Pranic Winds

In their highest form yogic asanas are executed in combination with breathing techniques, with the recitation of mantras, with mudras, and with *mandalas*, or mystic diagrams (see MANDALA). In such an asana the whole body becomes a plastic mould, as it were, a fixed symbolic pose, into which etheric forces are drawn down and poured forth from the invisible world, filling the mould represented by the asana and imbuing it with the desired power.

The fourth stage of hatha yoga is concerned with *pranayama* or breath control, which takes into account a number of factors. First, comes the simple technique of inhalation, retention and exhalation, for which a ratio has to be established. For instance, if we breathe in for the duration of six seconds, hold our breath for nine seconds and breathe out for three seconds, the ratio would be shown as 6.9.3., a ratio that is regarded as good for a specific purpose. In order to increase the efficacy of the ratio the yogi might double it to 12.18.6., and breathe with this frequency, or treble it to 18.27.9., and use this timing in his breathing. The commonest ratios are 1.4.2., or 2.5.3., or 5.4.3. Sometimes another item is added to the rhythm of inhalation, retention and exhalation, namely, retention of breath after exhalation, and we then have to add a fourth element to our ratio, thus getting 1.4.2.3., or whatever the ratio may be.

When further refinements are added to these factors, such as breathing with the mouth open or closed throughout, or with the mouth closed during inhalation and open during exhalation, or with one nostril closed with the finger, breathing shallowly or deeply, hot or cold, or inhaling and exhaling while blowing, panting, sniffing, snoring, or while making the noises of animals like barking, cooing, mooing, or roaring, the permutations are increased almost to infinity.

The full range of possibilities in pranayama has therefore never been worked out and its systems of breathing are of unending variety. The chief kinds of breathing are taught by various schools, their benefits explained in brief, and their continuance strongly advocated. As a rule the subtleties are ignored. For the important thing about breathing is not so much the manner in which it is done, as the way the breath is used, for it is believed to be a very subtle essence full of energy.

Although the ultimate aim of yoga is permanent liberation from the bondage of rebirth, the body is the physical instrument through which these goals are achieved, and its demands must therefore be disciplined and controlled before samadhi, 'final bliss', can be attained ***Above, left to right*** **Some of the bodily positions assumed in hatha yoga are called after the objects or animals they supposedly resemble: triangle pose; the 'head position' which unites 'upper with lower', 'running with still', and 'male with female' in the cranium; lotus position in the headstand; shoulder stand; the 'plough'; the 'tortoise'**
Facing page, below left **A twisting position and** ***(below right)*** **a sitting position assumed for pranayama or breath control, the fourth stage of hatha yoga**

The air breathed in is not in itself the essential element utilized by the yogi, but another far more refined ingredient which is diffused in the atmosphere all round, and impregnated with a vivifying power. The air we breathe only serves as the conductor for this subtle force. This energy is called *prana*, generally translated as 'wind', and pranayama teaches the method of absorbing it.

Several kinds of these pranic winds or airs are distinguished, each with its own function. Prana, when taken in, moves from the lungs and lodges in the heart, and from here directs the movement of the vital airs to the other parts of the bodily frame. Pranas in their various forms are responsible for the beating of the heart, for respiration, the circulation of the blood, for digestion, speech, sleep, hunger and thirst, and all the physiological processes of the body, which are continuously activated through the subtle body. Essentially, pranayama is the controlled means by which the invisible energy of the cosmos is channelled to act directly on the physical system.

The next stage, *pratyahara*, involves a deliberate procedure of abstraction and withdrawal of the senses from the turmoil of the outside world. The obvious way to do this is to retire to a quiet secluded chamber free from all disturbances; or to shut the eyes and ears and so prevent the sights and sounds from impinging on them. There is a specific way of performing this act, which involves the actual closing of the organs of sense.

Again, the instrument used is the body itself. One must 'block' the passages of the body by using the body, without recourse to external apparatus. A special mudra has been devised which shuts the gates of the body. The yogi sits in a cross-legged position, performs the prescribed breathing rituals, utters a few mantras, then raising his hands to his face he shuts his ears with his thumbs, his eyes with his index fingers, his nostrils with the middle fingers; the ring fingers press on the upper lip and the little fingers on the lower. With his heel he applies a firm pressure to the perineum, and thus effectively seals the chief orifices of his body.

But this gesture is only a symbolical rite, and is always accompanied by special mental exercises, which eventually lead to mastery of the secret of sealing the gates without the mudra. The ordinary person may take anything up to 21 years before he can perfect the technique to such an extent that his senses are totally impervious to every sensation of sound, sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Since his sensory reactions are also effectively blocked, he remains unperturbed by anything that happens around him.

Next comes the stage of *dharana* or concentration, fixing the mind on a single object to the exclusion of all else. In a small way everyone has moments of dharana – the child playing with his toys, the student cramming for his examinations, the mathematician engrossed in his problem. It is also spoken of as 'one-pointedness', and a number of yogic exercises are designed to heighten one's capacity to concentrate. The purpose of dharana is to fill the mind, already emptied by pratyahara, with the thought one wishes to hold, and then to hold that thought without any flickering of consciousness. The mind must burn steadily and purely, 'like a flame in a windless place'.

Among the many different methods used to increase the powers of concentration is one called *trataka*, or 'fixing', in which the gaze is directed without blinking and with full concentration on an external object. One might start with an object far off, such as a hilltop, or a window in a distant house, or the branch of a tree. The mind must be collected and focused on the object without wavering. In time, nearer objects may be used for the purpose, and then in the quiet of the room one can mark the wall with a small dot at eye level and, sitting about six feet away from the wall, stare at it. In the case of such exercises one must think of nothing else but the dot. But concentration being an 'inward' matter, is best achieved by exercising the mind to dwell on the body itself. Thus we have exercises concentrating on the tip of the nose, the centre of the forehead, or the navel.

The seventh stage is called dhyana, or contemplation and in it one must lose oneself. The operation is still 'mental', and mental forces are required to attain it. There is a total direction of thought on the goal sought. The range of subjects for dhyana is limitless for the higher adept, but is confined to certain specific items for the beginner.

Not all subjects are suitable for meditation. It is easy to concentrate on material things, and think of money, sex or pleasure, but the moral dangers of such objectives are very great. Similarly, symbols casually selected without taking into account one's religious, racial, family and personal background can also lead to spiritual disharmony. In India the matter is very simply decided. One can meditate on one's guru or mentor, or on a deity, but for the Western mind the unfamiliar character of such meditation will present difficulties, apart from the psychological barriers in the way of his acceptance of such objects to meditate upon.

Symbols too have a strong psychic dynamism and every religion charges its own symbols with its own current of power, which can be picked up by anyone who meditates on such a symbol with sufficient faith. The mandalas and mystic diagrams are all capable of putting one in rapport with the powers inherent in them. Great care has to be exercised before adopting a symbol for dhyana.

Attainment of Ecstasy

The eighth and final stage of hatha yoga is samadhi, which has been variously translated as trance, super-consciousness, or final bliss. This is no longer an intellectual state, for it transcends the merely mental condition of intellectual contemplation, and goes on to the state of ecstasy. The attainment of such a condition for the ordinary man is difficult in the extreme and needs long practice, for he is constantly hindered by physical and mental distractions. An

uncomfortable posture will result in the mind being diverted to the aching limbs; lack of sufficient self-discipline and training will make one aware of the pangs of hunger or the need for sleep. If one has mastered the early stages of yoga sufficiently to withstand these distractions, one is faced with the distractions of the mind and spirit as one moves along the path. It is precisely in order to remove all possible sources of distraction that the stages of yoga have to be systematically followed through.

Samadhi is the mystic union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul. The earlier stages of dharana and dhyana may be defined as concrete meditation. Samadhi may be regarded as abstract meditation on the Void. The earlier stage is active; the latter is passive. The earlier is achieving, this is receiving. One is seeking, the other absorbing and being absorbed. There is no trace of mental activity, no trace of self or the ego. The fevers of the flesh are far behind, the petty emotions that perturb the soul and shatter the peace of mind. The ego is lost, the mind transcended.

True samadhi must be clearly distinguished from certain kinds of extraordinary trance states that have on occasion been achieved by practitioners of the magical arts, and that have been attested by more than one dependable witness. Some exponents have allowed themselves to be buried alive. A well-authenticated case took place in Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1838 in the presence of the distinguished Sikh leader, Maharajah Ranjit Singh, a British general, Sir Claude Wade, and other British officers. The man was a professional magician who made a living by feats of this kind. He took a few days to get himself in readiness by fasting and meditation, and then presented himself to the distinguished gathering. He sat cross-legged on a sheet of white cloth and went into a trance, after which the corners of the cloth were drawn up and tied over his head. He was then buried still seated, in a padlocked box, in an underground pit within a garden pavilion. The doors were locked and sealed. British soldiers stood on 24-hour guard outside. He remained in the grave for 30 days, after which the pit was dug up in the presence of the Maharajah, Sir Claude Wade, Dr

John Moss

McGregor and several others, and the box lifted out intact. After the man's apparently lifeless body had been gently massaged by his assistant he recovered consciousness, and two hours later was able to speak.

This kind of performance is emphatically discouraged by the true adept. But so close is the inherited association of yoga with the magical arts of the wonder-worker that the term *jogi* (colloquial adaptation of yogi) has become synonymous with the magician, and jogis have been credited with some very bizarre feats. They are the fakirs and naked *sadhus* of the tourist. Some of them sleep on beds of nails, or remain standing in one place, often on one leg, for several months. Some remain in the same spot throughout their lives, never moving outside the confines of the area they have assigned for themselves, which may be a tiny hut, with only a short walk for the calls of nature. Others remain submerged up to the waist in a stream for weeks on end; or sit in the open in the full blaze of the midsummer sun surrounded by five fierce fires kept alive by their disciples. Some hold the face up until the neck muscles harden and they are unable to look down upon the earth again; some reverse the position and look downwards so that the sky is no more within their normal vision. Others keep the fist closed permanently until the nails grow into the flesh (see FAKIR).

But some remarkable claims have been made on behalf of the orthodox yogi too, especially concerning the control of the physiological processes of the body. Yogis are able to suspend their breathing to an abnormal extent; show different pulse rates at will on the right and left wrists; lower the respiratory rate till it is barely perceptible; become totally immunized to the effects of heat and cold; remain in trance for days at a time; go without food and water for several weeks; exert an almost supernatural control over wild animals.

Although the exercise of the powers that come to the practitioner of yoga is regarded as an obstacle in the path towards the aspirant's spiritual progress, many people practise yoga for precisely these powers, or *siddhis* as they are called, and are not greatly concerned about the non-material benefits accruing from its practice.

There are said to be eight traditional siddhis, as follows: making oneself infinitely small; infinitely large; infinitely heavy; weightless; transporting oneself anywhere instantaneously; gaining all one's desires; controlling people; achieving overlordship over all things. Patanjali's enigmatic statement that 'Perfection may arise from birth (inherited faculty), drugs, spells, austerities or concentration', has been the subject of considerable commentary and interpretation. The inclusion of drugs has divided opinion on the matter, some suggesting that the philosopher mentioned drugs as one means of emancipation from the bondage of rebirth, others contending that he merely included them to complete the catalogue of items that could be used for the purpose of reaching samadhi, but did not give drug-taking his approval.

A matter of considerable interest to researchers in the field today is the close similarity between the powers developed by yoga and the experiences of the drug-state, particularly those induced by LSD. Drugs produce the tranquillity, provide the vision, and create the illusions of power. Subjects of LSD experiments report experiences that parallel every one of the traditional siddhis, produced as a result of visual, auditory and other sensory distortion. Session records indicate that subjects have the feeling that they have shrunk to near vanishing point, while the consciousness of others expands to such an extent that they imagine themselves 'as big as a galaxy'. Some feel that they have a vastly greater or lesser density, and become extremely heavy and virtually immovable, or in some cases, almost weightless. The feeling of being transported to other places is quite common in LSD experiments. This kind of drug-induced 'travelling clairvoyance', where the subject visits distant places, is perhaps also comparable to the flying of medieval witches, who rubbed the sensitive mucous membranes of the nasal and sexual orifices with drug-impregnated ointments which induced a trance, and returned to bring back accounts of wonderful adventures at the sabbath (see FLYING OINTMENT). The power of attaining one's desires is again met with-in the hallucinogenic state where the subject, depending on his personal predispositions, projects himself into his vision and thus attains what he seeks. Likewise the power to control people and the illusion of overlordship over all things is another commonplace of psychedelic experience, and on a smaller scale is exhibited by the subject who jumps off a tall building under the delusion that he has suddenly acquired the ability to fly; or who stands in a busy thoroughfare, steps off the pavement and wills a speeding bus to come to a halt.

But many regard these resemblances as superficial. The differences between the genuine and controlled powers acquired after many years of self-culture and the erratic hallucinations produced instantaneously by drugs are so considerable that the analogy need not be pursued any further. On the other hand it is easy to exaggerate the benefits of yoga, for it is well known that many other disciplines of physical culture and mental training can bring about the same results, and are not the monopoly of any one system of spiritual development.

Yoga is said to give one a higher IQ, exceptional sexual vigour, ESP, and even a kind of earthly immortality. Yet yogis in their prime die every year like other mortals. They are not notable for their IQs. Attempts by exponents to walk on water have always come to a watery end. And extraordinary breathing feats have been recorded all over the world from China to Peru. The ascetic disciplines of the sadhus find a parallel in the Christian desert hermits of the 4th and 5th centuries. Yogis have been buried alive, but so have Moslem sufis, and Western magicians. Yogis have walked on fire, but so have natives from the South Seas, who perform the much more difficult feat of walking on red-hot stones.

Putting the whole of the miraculous element aside, it may be said that yoga is a discipline which in moderation and by the use of common sense, may be practised with benefit.

(see BREATH; MEDITATION; SELF-DENIAL.)

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Yoni

The female sex organ, as an emblem of both sexual pleasure and generation; connected with fertility, the earth, the mother goddess; worshipped in India alone or in conjunction with the male symbol, the lingam, expressing the fruitful union of opposites; sometimes symbolized by a shell, a perforated stone, a woman, lotus, cow or triangle.

See PHALLIC SYMBOLISM.

Yule

Old-fashioned term for the Christmas season, from the Norse winter fire festival over which the god Odin presided; the Yule-log should be brought into the house with ceremony on Christmas Eve and should be lighted from a piece of the previous year's log, which has been kept all year to preserve the luck of the household.

See CHRISTMAS.

When the Roman army entered the smoking ruins of the Zealot stronghold of Masada, mounds of corpses testified to the resolution of this Jewish sect to die rather than to recognize any other lord than Yahweh

ZEALOTS

THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS ordered the incorporation of Judaea into the Roman Empire in the year 6 AD. The change was to prove disastrous to the Jews because, for the first time, it brought them up against the realities of subjugation to Roman rule. Other peoples had naturally resented the imposition of Roman rule as the Empire expanded: but for the Jews such subjection was not only an affront to their national pride, it profoundly affected their religion. It touched them at their most sensitive point; for they cherished the idea of Israel as a theocracy, with Yahweh (see YAHWEH) as their supreme Lord and a godly high priest as his earthly representative.

One of the first measures taken by the Romans to implement the new decree was to order a census of the population of Judaea for the purpose of taxation. The Jews had been accustomed to pay taxes to their own kings; but to pay them to Rome challenged a fundamental tenet of their religion. For it meant giving of the resources of the Holy Land of Yahweh to the heathen emperor of Rome. As soon as the new measure was known, a rabbi called Judas of Galilee incited the people to revolt – to pay the taxes, he proclaimed was an act of apostasy toward Yahweh, and tantamount to recognizing Caesar as lord (*despotes*) instead of the god of Israel.

The revolt was suppressed, and Judas was slain. But those of his followers who survived took to the deserts of Judaea, to maintain a guerilla resistance against the Romans. They became known as the Zealots, which was a Greek translation of their Hebrew name *Kanna'im*. The name probably derived from the ancient example of Phinehas, as recorded in the book of Numbers 25.6–13. Angered by the liaison of a fellow Jew with a non-Jewish woman, Phinehas had slain both. For his action he had been praised by Yahweh, 'in that he was zealous with my zeal', and a perpetual priesthood was conferred on him and his descendants, 'because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the people of Israel'.

Phinehas was thus the divinely commended prototype of the Zealots, who served Yahweh their god with a fanatical devotion, ready to resort to violent action or suffer martyrdom in his cause. Their enemies were not only the heathen Romans, who had imposed their rule on Israel, but also those Jews who collaborated with them. Such Jewish 'quislings' were mainly members of the Sadducean aristocracy, who monopolized the chief ecclesiastical offices connected with the great Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem. From this aristocracy the high priest was chosen by the Romans, who recognized him as the head of the Jewish state for internal affairs. These sacerdotal aristocrats were not popular with the mass of their fellow-countrymen. Consequently, since their positions depended on Roman support, they co-operated with the Roman government of their land.

Suppression of the Truth

It has only been since the Second World War that the real character of the Zealot movement has been understood. There have been three main reasons for this. The excavation of the rock fortress of Masada beside the Dead Sea, and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls have provided new information about the Zealots and the background of Jewish religio-political thinking at this time (see DEAD SEA SCROLLS). Then, the 'resistance' movements in Nazi-occupied countries during the Second World War have promoted a more sympathetic insight into the Zealot 'resistance' against ancient Rome. These factors, in turn, have led to a more critical evaluation of what Josephus, the Jewish historian of the 1st century, wrote about the Zealots. Josephus is our chief informant concerning the Zealots; but it is now realized that he denigrated them for personal reasons. In the war against Rome which started in 66 AD, Josephus deserted to the Romans, and later wrote an account of the war for his Roman patron, the Emperor Vespasian. In this account, Josephus blames the Zealots for the war, representing them as evilly-disposed desperadoes who would stop at no atrocity to force their peaceably-minded countrymen to revolt against Rome. His favourite term for them was *lestai* ('brigands'), which was undoubtedly also how the Romans described them. He conceals the fact that the Zealots were patriots, and that their actions were inspired by their intense devotion to Yahweh, the god of Israel.

Owing to the apologetical character of Josephus' account of Jewish affairs during this period, it is impossible to trace out the development of the Zealot movement. However, the Christian gospels afford some significant evidence, although this is also of an enigmatical kind. Thus it is recorded that one of the apostles chosen by Jesus was 'Simon the Zealot' (Luke 6.15); but Mark tries to disguise the fact by giving only the unexplained Aramaic equivalent 'the Cananaean' for 'the Zealot' (Mark 3.18). Jesus was also implicated in some way with Barabbas, a Zealot leader of a rising against the Romans (see JESUS); and Pontius Pilate ordered Jesus to be crucified between two *lestai*, who were doubtless Zealots captured in the recent rising in which Barabbas was involved.

Like other resistance forces, the ancient Zealots adopted guerilla tactics in operating against the Romans and their Jewish collaborators from hide-outs in the desert areas of Judaea and Galilee. They probably had the sympathy and clandestine support of the mass of their own countrymen, whose social interests and antipathies they shared. It is significant that one of their first acts, on gaining control of Jerusalem in 66 AD, was to burn the public archives which contained the money-lenders' bonds – in order, so Josephus complains, to encourage the poor to rise against the rich; a sympathy showed also by Jesus.

Death Before Surrender

The Zealot movement seems to have had a dynastic leadership. After the death of Judas of Galilee, the founder, in 6 AD, his sons apparently organized the movement; for Josephus records that the Roman governor Tiberius Alexander, during his term of office in 46–8 AD, crucified Jacob and Simon, sons of Judas. At the beginning of the revolt in 66 another son, Menahem, assumed the leadership, and the last surviving Zealots at Masada were commanded by a descendant of Judas, named Eleazar.

Capture by the Romans usually meant crucifixion for a Zealot. It is probable that the warning given by Jesus of the likely consequences of joining his movement already had a Zealot currency: 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Mark 8.34). In Judaea at that time crucifixion was the Roman penalty for sedition. It is significant that Josephus also records that the Romans tortured Zealots to make them 'acknowledge Caesar as lord'.

According to Josephus, a new group of Zealots appeared when Felix was the Roman governor (52–60 AD). They were called 'Sicarii', or daggermen, from the *sica* or dagger with which they were armed. They were evidently formed as a terrorist group to carry out clandestine assassinations, particularly of notable Jewish collaborators with the Romans. Concealing their daggers in their loose garments, they struck at their victims in crowded places – thus they killed the high priest Jonathan in the Temple.

During the 60 years from 6 to 66 AD, Jewish history has the appearance of a Greek tragedy moving relentlessly to its fatal climax. Even if the Roman procurators of Judaea had been consistently wise and just in their rule, it is unlikely that the Jews would ever have settled down quietly as subjects of heathen Rome. For the fundamental tenets of their religion forbade their recognition of any other sovereign lord of Israel than Yahweh. These tenets the Zealots fanatically maintained, and their exhortations to their fellow Jews were powerfully reinforced by the evidence of Roman injustice and such outrages as the attempt of the Emperor Caligula in 39–40 to place his image, in the form of Zeus, in the very sanctuary of Yahweh at Jerusalem.

The final explosion came in 66 AD, when the lower order of the priests, who were infected by Zealotism and persecuted by the sacerdotal aristocracy, refused to offer the daily sacrifice in the Temple for the well-being of the Roman emperor and people. These sacrifices were regarded as signifying Jewish loyalty to Rome, so that their cessation was tantamount to rebellion. The aristocracy endeavoured to restore the situation by force, and fighting broke out. The rebel priests were soon reinforced by the Zealots. Opposition was wiped out, and the Roman garrisons in Jerusalem and elsewhere were massacred. Once in possession of the Temple, the Zealots elected a new high priest according to the directions of the Torah.

The first Roman attempt to suppress the revolt in 66 failed disastrously, and encouraged the Jews to believe that Yahweh would save them. It took four years of bitter fighting before the Romans could capture Jerusalem. In the final assault on the city, the Temple, which was fiercely defended by the Zealots, was burnt. The fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD was fated to mark the end of the Jewish national state in Palestine until its re-establishment in 1948. The Jewish overthrow is commemorated in the sculptured panels of the Arch of Titus in Rome, where the exultant legionaries are shown bearing the spoils of the Temple in triumph through the streets of the capital.

The final drama of Zealot resistance was, however, played out at Masada, on the shores of the Dead Sea. There a Zealot garrison, with their families, held out until 73 AD. When the Romans, by a prodigious feat of military engineering, at last succeeded in breaking the walls, the Zealots preferred suicide to surrender. The men killed their wives and children; then they drew lots for the order in which they themselves should be killed by their comrades. Finally, on that fatal night, the last remaining Zealot, having seen that all were dead, set fire to the fortress and killed himself. The next morning, when the Romans entered the smoking ruins, 960 corpses testified to Zealot resolution to recognize no other lord than Yahweh, the god of their fathers.

S. G. F. BRANDON

Sonia Halliday

St Simon, 12th century wall painting in Cappadocia; one of the apostles chosen by Jesus, he is described in St Luke's gospel as 'Simon the Zealot'

FURTHER READING: The best edition of the works of Josephus, including Greek text and English translation, is published in the Loeb Classical Library; vols 1–3 concern the Zealots. See also: S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester Univ. Press, 1967); Y. Yadin, *Masada: Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966).

ZEN

An emphasis on direct intuitive experience characterizes Zen, a conviction that penetration to the heart of life's meaning cannot be brought about by the mind alone; unexpectedly to the Western mind, its deeply serious truths are often conveyed in humour and also in seeming irreverence

ZEN is a Chinese-Japanese branch of Mahayana Buddhism. Although nowhere within the boundaries of its special teachings is there demanded faith in a God external to the universe who has created the cosmos and man, nor is there any single sacrosanct collection of revealed scriptures to be venerated like the Christian Bible or Hinduism's *Vedas*, Zen followers and teachers nevertheless consider Zen a religion. In their view, Zen's form of Buddhism is a natural, indeed inevitable development from such challenging and iconoclastic statements by the founder of this major world faith as 'Look within, *thou* art the Buddha'. Zen is concerned with teaching that all men, with disciplined individual effort, are capable of attaining the Buddha's Enlightenment, known as *satori* in the Zen vocabulary.

Zen's emphasis, in the present as well as the past, falls on specific meditative practices designed to 'see into one's nature', a descriptive phrase attributed to one of the most important figures in the annals of early Zen, the Chinese master of the 7th century, Hui-Neng (638-713; in Japanese, Eno). The late author and scholarly authority on Zen Buddhism, D. T. Suzuki, called Hui-Neng's statement 'the most significant phrase ever coined in the development of Zen'. Some 13 centuries have passed since Hui-Neng uttered these words but they remain as basic to Zen teaching as they were when he spoke them, and it is this phrase, and others similar to it, that have turned a number of Western psychoanalysts and psychiatrists – including

Although one of the characteristics of Zen is a zany sense of humour this springs from the wish to avoid self-conscious religiosity or smugness about spiritual attainment, and it has not stopped Buddhists from prostrating themselves in front of Buddha images as an act that 'horizontalizes the ego-mast': statue of Buddha in Kamakura, Japan

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The Zen belief that the Buddha nature is immanent not only in man, but in everything that exists, animate or inanimate, is reflected in the traditional culture of Japan; qualities such as tranquillity and emptiness are expressed in the design of gardens and house interiors, in plays and poetry *Above* Sand garden in Kyoto, symbolizing the sea *Above right* A temple garden, also in Kyoto

Carl Jung, Erich Fromm and Karen Horney – to a serious study of Zen methods in relation to their own interests in the attainment of self-knowledge. Existentialists, also, of the stature of Martin Heidegger, have claimed to find in ancient Zen writings some of the very ideas they have been developing in modern times.

The recent phenomenon of a steadily growing interest in Zen teachings in Europe and the United States arises, it has been suggested, in part because Zen's emphasis on 'finding out for oneself' appeals to modern people who have difficulty accepting fixed dogma or traditional religious authority in a world now in scientifie and philosophic flux. It is not only Japanese *roshis* (venerable spiritual teachers) but Westerners as well who, after training in Japanese monasteries, are today carrying to the West Zen's interpretation and extension of original Buddhist teachings. Through body-mind techniques of 'quiet sitting' as well as through the challenge of the dynamic conundrum known as the *koan*, Zen aims to establish unshaken personal faith in life's 'Is-ness', the universe seen as an indissoluble unity, a single totality of which man is but a part.

In Buddhism's slow but irresistible spread over all Asia the Mahayana branch of teaching reached China around 525 AD. From China in time it moved on to Korea and to Japan acquiring, in the usual flexible Mahayana style, certain colourations from the cultures encountered in its passage (see BUDDHISM; JAPAN). The ancient Indian mystic root, along with strong pragmatic and humanistic influences from China, the land of Confucius and Lao-Tze, are so clearly traceable in Zen's development that Zen as known today might be fairly described as a unique blend of Indian mysticism and Chinese naturalism sieved through the special mesh of the Japanese character. The very origins of its name indicate its historical genesis. Zen is the Japanese way of writing and speaking the Chinese word *ch'an*, which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *dhyana*, meaning meditation or, more fully, 'contemplation leading to a higher state of Consciousness' or 'union with Reality'.

It was in the 12th century that the special development of Buddhist philosophy known in China as ch'an was definitely established in Japan under the name of Zen. Prior to this date, however, there had been a significant exchange of Buddhist monks and teachers between the two countries; a traffic of inestimable importance not only to Japanese culture but to the history of Zen philosophy and the world's art. These religious emissaries acted, in effect, as disseminators and preservers of Chinese civilization at its brilliant height in the great Sung Dynasty. When the Sung idyll was brought to its end by an invasion of Mongols, Japan escaped the invaders and thus became the sanctuary not only for the scriptures and teachings of a new-old, India-born, Chinese-influenced philosophy but for its intimately related arts as well.

So allied with Zen philosophy is its unique aesthetic that one cannot separate the two and still have a profound comprehension of Zen's underlying precepts. This is true in particular of those swiftly-executed 'spontaneous' ink paintings which manage to express with consummate subtlety both a passionate love of Nature and a singular harmony with it. Waterfalls, mountain peaks, birds, stones, flowers, bamboo, pines in mist all speak of a hidden Unity, of the belief that the Buddha nature is immanent not alone in man but in everything that exists, animate or inanimate. The traditional culture of Japan is grounded in Zen perceptions which have been preserved, encouraged and practised in an amazingly pure stream of transmission right up to modern times. Qualities such as naturalness, simplicity, tranquillity, asymmetry, emptiness are expressed in Japanese plays and poetry, in flower arrangement (a highly regarded art in Japan), in *sumi* ink painting and calligraphy, in the subject matter and performances of the traditional theatre, in the design of gardens and house interiors. The room in which the tea ceremony is held, for example, is known as

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'the abode of vacancy' and taking tea might be fairly described as a Zen practice in unfaltering awareness and joy in simple objects. The precise disciplines of judo, archery and ceremonial swordsmanship are also rooted deep in Zen. Most importantly the stripped, evocative 17-syllable Japanese verse form known as *haiku* affords special clues to the Zen state of mind:

> The water-fowl
> Lays its beak in its breast
> And sleeps as it floats.
>
> An old pine tree preaches wisdom
> And a wild bird is crying truth.
>
> How marvellous, how miraculous
> I draw water,
> I gather fuel.

What is being said in lines like these is that one should come to rest in the great Emptiness, that in every moment of life there is chance for enlightenment and that in the very seeming commonplaceness of existence one may discover the deepest mystery and wonder.

Buddha's Truth Beyond Words

Zen claims to be the direct inheritor of principles of thought and behaviour first promulgated by the historic Buddha (see GAUTAMA BUDDHA). In the 6th century BC the Buddha preached a new doctrine of a Middle Way of Understanding. He taught that certain methods of thought and behaviour could lead a follower to freedom from attachment to objects and to the eventual release from that cramping and illusory sense of a special self or ego which, cutting off man from his fellows and from all other forms of life, gave human existence its tragic tone.

The Buddha's illuminating perception that he was, in a strictly personal sense, 'no-thing' and 'no-body', his profound realization of the indescribable, existential indivisibility or One-ness of all life, freed him forever from the fetters of *maya* (illusion) and from the necessity for rebirth or participation in the ceaseless round of 'becoming'. At this point in the spiritual history of Buddhism it is assumed that the Enlightened One might of his own volition have left the physical plane. Instead, after a period of doubt and uncertainty he accepted the sacrifice and responsibility of going forth to try to teach the unteachable; a truth that could not be described in words, that must instead be individually experienced as he had experienced it in his own moment of supreme clarity while seated under the Tree of Wisdom.

It is this act of profound selflessness on the part of the historic Buddha which has led to the development in Mahayana Buddhism of the theory of Bodhisattvas, enlightened beings who have taken the vow to postpone their own release in order to assist all other creatures in the attainment of Nirvana, a state of total inner Peace and Freedom, in other words, Buddhahood itself (see NIRVANA). Although this profoundly mystical and, in a sense, paradoxical concept of Bodhisattvas as personifications of the highest wisdom and compassion did not originate in Zen, they preside in spirit over Zen halls of instruction and meditation, and the chanting of a Bodhisattva's four vows of dedication to the Buddha's Way are a part of each day's routine in teaching centres and monasteries. Sculptured or painted forms of such great Bodhisattvas as Kuan-Yin (Japanese Kwannon), Manjusri, Maitreya (Miroku) and others, are found in the priceless art collections of Zen monasteries, and are numbered among Japan's greatest national treasures. In old Chinese and Japanese art one can even find the Buddha himself depicted as a Bodhisattva, notably in such a moving masterpiece as the 12th century Chinese painter Liang K'ai's picture of the Great Teacher leaving the mountain top of his Enlightenment preparing to descend again into the world. Shown as a worn, weary, shabby ascetic, he stares down with an expression of profound questioning into the valley below, where he must now go on his self-determined mission to carry a light into the 'darkness of the world'.

From the annals of early Indian Buddhism, Zennists pluck certain stories which to them represent the very crux and significance of Buddhist teaching. One is the Buddha's rebuke to a disciple who kept demanding intellectual answers to such questions as the nature of the First Cause, life after death and similar insoluble mysteries. To this typical sophist the Buddha

Intuitive understanding of that which 'goes beyond the Word' is basic to Zen; one of the criteria by which Noh drama, rooted in Zen, is judged is whether a performance expresses that which is 'ineffable, indescribable yet communicable and capable of being intuitively experienced': child actor in Noh drama

remarked that his demands were comparable to those of a man who refuses to leave his burning house until he has found out who set the house on fire; or like a man who, shot with a poisoned arrow, will not remove it until he has ascertained all the facts about the arrow's source. In other words, speculation can only lead to further speculation with no possibility of any final solution; individual penetration to the heart of life's meaning cannot be brought about by the mind alone.

Silent Sermon

The second story in this general style describes the Buddha's so-called Silent Sermon, to a Zennist perhaps the most eloquent of all the Buddha's discourses. On one occasion before a great gathering of followers and disciples, the Buddha sat without speaking, turning a flower quietly in his hand. Some of the versions relate that he regarded the flower with joy, that he even broke into laughter. As he, without words, turned the flower in his hand he also looked into the faces of his followers waiting for a flash of understanding. At last it came. One disciple, Kasyapa, smiled, a serene inward-turning smile of awareness which told the Buddha that he had really *seen* the flower, had grasped that 'which goes beyond the Word'. It is significant that this perceptive disciple was subsequently chosen by the Buddha as his successor in the role of teacher. It is also worth mention in passing that to this day a canon of judgment brought to bear on Japan's ancient Zen-rooted Noh drama, is whether a performance does or does not possess 'the true flower', in other words express that which is ineffable, indescribable yet communicable and capable of being intuitively experienced. This basic Zen emphasis on an understanding that lies outside verbalism has been put succinctly in a famous four-line statement:

> A special transmission outside the Scriptures;
> No dependence upon words and letters;
> Direct pointing to the soul of man;
> Seeing into one's own nature and thereby attaining Buddhahood.

These four lines, expressive of the very essence of Zen, might be said to find their original embodiment in a semi-legendary

Morris Newcombe

missionary monk from India known as Bodhidharma (in Japanese, Daruma). The date of his first appearance in Zen annals is uncertain but we are told that Buddhism was already established in China when he arrived. It is related that he came all the way from India, a journey of incredible hardship, with the purpose of restoring to Buddhism its original directness and meaningful simplicity; to teach Buddhist followers that 'the finger pointing at the moon was not the moon (Enlightenment) itself'.

Although the precise date of Bodhidharma's arrival in China is lost in the mists of time, we do know the dates (502-550) of the devout Buddhist Emperor Wu Ti who received him in private audience. It can be assumed therefore that sometime around the middle of the 6th century a most important dialogue took place between the devout emperor and his noted visitor from the sacred land of the Original Teacher. The significance of this perhaps apocryphal conversation lies in the fact that it has set the tone for many hundreds of Zen dialogues, commentaries, *mondo* ('question and answer'), and *koans*, those apparently senseless Zen conundrums which do not lend themselves to solution by ordinary thought processes, which are in fact deliberately designed by their nonsensical formulation to break down habitual mental patterns.

Vast Emptiness

The emperor began the interview with Bodhidharma by describing his personal efforts on behalf of the newly transplanted religion, Buddhism. He told of the many temples he had built, the scriptures he had ordered copied, the special privileges he was granting Buddhist monks in his kingdom. What special merit, he wished to know, had accrued to him from these activities. Without hesitation Bodhidharma bluntly replied, 'No merit whatsoever.' The astonished but not yet daunted emperor went on to inquire which among the holy teachings his learned visitor considered a first principle of Buddhism. 'Vast Emptiness,' replied the sage. Taken aback, in fact a little nettled by this second statement, the emperor then demanded, 'Who are you who thus reply to me?': to which he received the jolting answer, 'I do not

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Enlightenment may be found in every moment of life, according to Zen belief, and it is possible to discover the deepest mystery and wonder in what appears to be the commonplaceness of existence *Left* Flower arranging, a highly regarded art in Japan, reflects the Zen philosophy of joy in simplicity, and unfaltering awareness *Below right* 16th century scroll painting of a floral arrangement

know'. Then, without further words, Bodhidharma took himself off (some legends and many paintings have him journeying upright on a reed, a leaf, or a straw across the wide Yangtze river – calmly fearless because one-with-all) to take up a nine year term of deep meditation (*zazen* in the Zen vocabulary), facing a cave wall. One of Japan's most valued national treasures, a monumental painting by Sesshu, the famous 15th century artist-monk, depicts Bodhidharma in this cave with the disciple Hui-Ko (in Japanese, Eko) who has cut off a hand to indicate his invincible will to work for enlightenment.

In his part of the dialogue with the conventionally pious emperor Bodhidharma was not being merely cheeky or captious. By denying any 'merit', that is, reward or value, to formal temple worship or the copying and slavish study of approved scriptures, he was placing emphasis on the more profound and subtle, indeed the ultimate Buddhist goal of self-knowledge, the one true road to final liberation from life's anxieties and enigmas. His answer 'Vast Emptiness' to the question of the nature of Buddhism's first principle was a positive not a negative retort. His words did not imply mere emptiness in the usual sense of the term. In Zen the non-dualistic eternal Void, when truly comprehended, is seen as the rich source of all life and all wonders. Bodhidharma's third reply, 'I do not know', to the Emperor's question concerning his personal identity is a conundrum on which Zen students have been testing their powers of comprehension for centuries. It suggests the impossibility of replying in words to the immense question, 'Who are you?' Yet the question is considered answerable in non-verbal terms, for as the Buddha nature is inherent in every sentient being there can be achieved, with the right effort, a lasting realization that one's own consciousness is the very Buddha Mind itself or Absolute Reality.

The Shortcomings of Reason

Zen's unswerving centuries-old emphasis on direct intuitive experience, rather than reliance on words *about* experience, has been described in modern psychological terms as a way of connecting with the deep unconscious to the end that one becomes what one truly is, as the tree grows, the bird flies, the cloud forms. Zen holds that the so-called rational mind is incapable of solving an individual's deepest problem: his meaning to himself and life. In Zen, reason is not allowed to assume the place of mastery that it has occupied for centuries in Western philosophy, the inheritor of the Greek viewpoint. Reason, in the Zen view, is incapable of bringing lasting spiritual or psychological equilibrium for it is the very nature of the reasoning process to produce contradictory yet equally valid theories that lead on and on endlessly, arriving nowhere. Talking about water will not quench a thirst any more than speaking of food will satisfy hunger. Again and again Zen teachings stress that it is not possible to take hold of the true merely by abandoning the false, nor can one reach peace of mind or any final answer by argument or the use of logic. Final awareness and lasting freedom come only when the deepest intuitional faculties of the human being are tapped and put to use.

In reaching these perceptions and releasing these invisible energies Zen employs its own singular techniques. In the Soto school, founded by a brilliant religious genius, the Japanese Zen master Dogen (1200-1253), one finds rather more emphasis on 'quiet sitting' than in the Rinzai school with its dynamic use of the koan. Since each school, however, employs not only specific periods of meditation (walking and running, as well as sitting) along

Zen teachings stress that it is not possible to take hold of the true merely by abandoning the false, nor can one reach peace of mind or any final answer by argument or the use of logic

with the mind-boggling koan it seems safe to say that their similarities are more numerous than their differences.

The Rinzai School was founded somewhat earlier than the Soto by another brilliant spiritual genius, Eisai (1141-1215), generally accepted as the actual founder of Japanese Zen. It was Eisai who, after several visits to Chinese Zen centres, became convinced that this religious philosophy or way of life, then at its height, could be transplanted to Japan and bring about there a Buddhist awakening. Although Eisai was forced by circumstances to make concessions to types of Buddhism considered less pure, he belongs in the true Zen lineage and stands out among many names of missionary monks who brought the teaching across the sea from China to Japan. Eisai is also honoured as the father of Japanese tea culture, although tea itself had already been introduced from China some time before.

Since the Soto school teaches what is called 'sitting with a single mind', 'observing one's mind in tranquillity' or even 'sitting just to sit', it has been designated as the 'Gradual School', in contrast to the Rinzai which is popularly known as the 'Sudden School', due to its greater emphasis on the abrupt breakthrough into a new state of consciousness, of heightened awareness, by means of the dynamic thrust of the koan. The word koan comes from the Chinese term *kung-an* and originally meant a precedent-establishing formulation in the legal sense. In its origin the koan was a spontaneous expression of the exuberant enlightenment which came to the spiritual heirs of Bodhidharma during the Tang era in China; part of a general desire to get rid of religious rules, to throw away form and ritual in order to be carried 'by the storm of the spirit', as Heinrich Dumoulin has expressed it. In due course this highly original and vigorous expression of a rejuvenated Buddhism faded away and it was then deemed expedient, by certain wise teachers, to maintain some records of this first flowering to serve as guide lines in less inspired or vital periods. Thus it came about, in spite of Zen's strong emphasis on 'that which goes beyond the word', that a surprising number of koan, mondo, chronicles, dialogues

British Museum/Michael Holford

and sayings from the past are to be found in the literature of the Zen branch of the many-branched Buddhist tree.

The irrational Lewis Carroll nonsensicality of the koan has, in recent years, caught the imagination of many Westerners who find in them what Alan Watts has described as 'an itchy fascination'. The koan is deliberately designed to throw the mind off its accustomed track, to detach it from familiar habits of classification, division, comparison of this with that.

There can be no mentally worked-out answer to 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' or 'What was your original face before you were born?' Answers, when they come, come in the form of illuminating perceptions and they are found not by thinking about the koan but rather by trying to gaze at it quietly. The student is advised to become concentrated, but not in thought. To achieve this kind of perception requires total absorption day and night in the koan itself. Even when attending to the duties of everyday life it should remain firmly fixed in the unconscious mind. Zen does not believe it necessary to occupy Bodhidharma's cave in order to practise zazen; there is needed only an unshaken determination to find the Buddha's answer. Yet paradoxically, the seeker should never strive for the goal itself. He should just sit, breathe properly (very important in Soto) or concentrate single-pointedly on the koan until he perceives 'What Is'. Then he has at last grasped the truth that one's self and the everyday world in all its manifold manifestations, forever in flux and transformation, are together only an eternally changing and transforming, appearing and disappearing, expression of 'This', of 'Is-ness' or 'Such-ness'. Once this state has been reached the Zennist does not give up all action, but rather his actions rise spontaneously out of the flow of Being itself. Understanding and use of 'This-ness' or 'Is-ness' is well described in Euben Herrigel's small classic, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, which tells how, after long and arduous effort, the author at last learns to let 'it' shoot for him so that the arrow reaches its target as effortlessly, as naturally, as a fruit which is ripe falls from a tree.

Michael Halford Library

Zen teachings stress that final awareness and lasting freedom come only when man's deepest intuitional faculties are tapped, a concept that is reflected in Japanese art; in this the world was perceived intuitively from within, and the artist attempted to represent not physical space but an internally apprehended space: print by Yashima Gatutei

Two favourite characters in Zen art are the so-called 'idiots', Han-shan (Kanzan) and Shih-te (Jittoku), invariably depicted in rustic garb, often leaning on garden brooms, watching leaves fall or birds quarrel, or just standing, laughing. They are not only expressing their simple joy in life's 'Is-ness' but also sharing their amusement at the folly of man's usual way of living. The haiku that might well accompany these carefree lunatics is one which reads:

> Sitting quietly, doing nothing
> Spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

Any interpretation of these lines, however, as an argument for non-participation, idleness or lack of concern could hardly be farther off the mark. In Zen no labour is beneath one's dignity; in fact all work is considered a basic and necessary part of existence. An ancient Zen monastery rule states baldly, 'No work, no food!'

Humour: Antidote to Smugness

One of Zen's outstanding characteristics is a zany sense of humour which has found expression not only in its literature but in a coexisting art of sharp and subtle commentary. The famous roshi Hakuin (1685-1768), known in his time as 'the greatest sage in 500 years' was not only a master teacher but also a great artist in the spontaneous free style favoured by Zen painters and calligraphers. Among his astringent masterpieces there is a cartoon-like drawing of a one-eyed monster in company with a simple blind man. The grotesque creature, depicted with a single fierce headlight-eye in the centre of his forehead, is glaring at the unconcerned blind man as he exclaims, 'Hey! I am a one-eyed monster. Aren't you afraid of me?' 'I have no eyes,' replied the blind man, 'Why should I be

Described as 'a unique blend of Indian mysticism and Chinese naturalism sieved through the special mesh of the Japanese character', Zen claims to be the direct inheritor of the principles of thought and behaviour promulgated by the historic Buddha in the 6th century BC: worshippers entering the Kamigamo shrine in Kyoto

Picturepoint London

afraid of you? You should be scared of me'. A comical sketch, by another painter-monk, shows a neophyte warming his backside at a burning statue of a Bodhisattva. The accompanying anecdote tells that when caught in this irreverent act the culprit innocently replied that since there had appeared in the ashes no sign of *sarira* (a special substance found only in the remains of cremated saints) he concluded it was only a wooden statue – and it was a very cold day.

This kind of rough humour and seeming irreverence has in no way prevented Zen temples and monasteries from remaining repositories of great religious art, nor has it stopped Buddhists from prostrating themselves before Buddha images as an act which 'horizontalizes the ego-mast' as one interpreter has put it. Zen's countless humorous anecdotes spring from the wish to avoid self-conscious religiosity or pompous smugness about spiritual attainment. Satori, in Zen annals, is often accompanied by a kind of transcendental laughter, as in the story of the monk who came to his roshi for help with one of the classic questions assigned to neophytes: 'What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from India?' The master, to whom the question was put, suggested that before proceeding with the problem the inquiring monk should make him a low salaam. As he was dutifully prostrating himself the teacher administered a good swift kick. At this unexpected impact the disciple's murky irresolution was instantly resolved. Afterwards he told everyone he met, 'Since I received that kick from Ma Tsu, I haven't been able to stop laughing.'

A number of modern students of Zen feel that the koan exercise has been overstressed in Western literature about Zen, and that too much has been made of practices followed in certain Zen training centres: the swift thwack on the drowsy or irresolute student's shoulders by an attendant with a special stick (invariably accompanied, however, by low bows on the part of both the dealer of the blow and its recipient) or the loud rude shouts of disapproval and dismissal from an impatient roshi to whom a student has brought an obviously thought-out answer. There are also critics who are disturbed by the West's over-emphasis on the idea of the suddenness of the breakthrough into satori which tends to give the impression of 'instant Zen' when in truth illumination, though it may be sudden in its impact, is experienced only after prolonged effort and a number of satori-like experiences (*kensho*) prior to the Great Enlightenment in all its stunning finality.

Something of the nature of Zen may be discovered from the words of an old poem:

> When one looks at it, one cannot see it;
> When one listens for it, one cannot hear it;
> However, when one uses it, it is
> inexhaustible.

Zen claims to point a paradoxical Way, at once abstract and personal, that is markedly different from the practices of more conventional religions.

NANCY WILSON ROSS

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Olympian Zeus, lord of storms and rain, supreme in his mountain stronghold, had an earthly prototype in the Mycenean Great King: but Cretan and other influences also contributed to his nature

ZEUS

THERE IS good reason to suppose that the hierarchical organization of the Olympian deities of the Homeric poems reflects the social and political conditions of the Mycenean period, when the gods and goddesses were gathered together in a single heavenly stronghold under the monarchical hegemony of Zeus (see GREECE). Their dwellings, built by Hephaestus, surrounded the central palace of Zeus. The authority of the supreme male deity was now fairly stable but was still by no means unchallenged. The Mycenean pantheon spread its influence as the Mycenean social and economic system became dominant elsewhere. The ensuing conflict and fusion is paralleled by an increasing complexity in cult and mythology and in the composition and organization of the pantheon.

In its most dramatic form this process had assumed the character of a struggle between the older conception of an Aegean goddess and a newer conception of a dominant male god, Zeus, whose name is certainly Indo-European. Crete had been the centre of Minoan civilization and had now become part of the fringe of the Mycenean. The study of the all-pervasive cult of Zeus in Greek religion helps us to understand the means whereby, and in what diverse forms, the Minoan religion, with its prime allegiance to a Great Goddess (though already familiar with the growing power of its own Cretan male god), became reconciled with the Mycenean pantheon (see also CRETE).

Significantly, it has been claimed that the earliest representation of Zeus occurs on the Geometric lid from a tomb at Fortetsa near Cnossus. That this representation is traditionally Cretan is indicated by the presence of birds, one of them carried on the left hand of the figure traditionally supposed to be Zeus, who strides towards a tripod. There is another bird on top of the tripod. Between the figure and the tripod is yet another, larger bird with its head lifted towards the handle of the tripod. The principal figure carries in his right hand an object which consists of three wavy verticals – the thunderbolt, or at least fire, perhaps resembling the bolts depicted on Syro-Hittite reliefs. Underneath the tripod is a human bust – perhaps the Minoan goddess herself, associated with, but not yet displaced by Zeus. We could then have here represented a double epiphany or manifestation of Cretan Zeus and the older Cretan goddess, heralded by the birds of Minoan tradition.

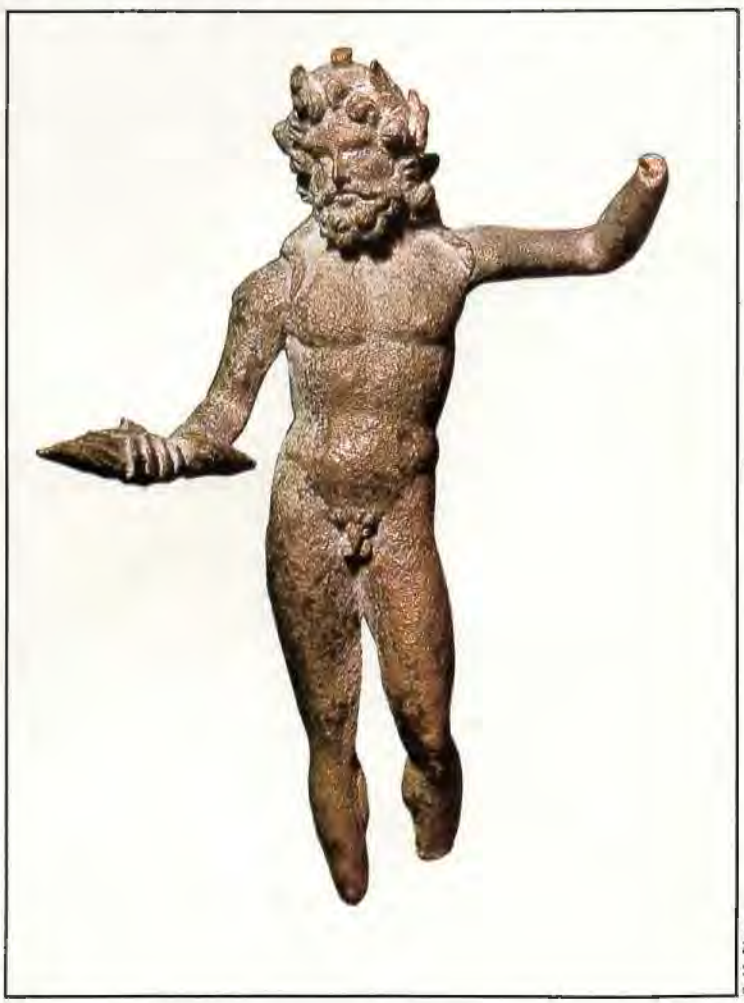
The thunderbolt of Zeus was itself traditionally regarded as a means of bringing death so that immortality might be conferred. The tripod, a three-legged cauldron to be put over a fire, goes back in its origins to the 14th century BC. Real or simulated boiling in a cauldron is a familiar prelude to rejuvenation, immortality and apotheosis. The infant Dionysus-Zagreus, for instance, was slain, his limbs cooked in a cauldron, and restored to life again. In the boiling cauldron mortality and old age are shed, perennial youth is gained, rebirth follows upon death, the initiate is born again. Thunderbolt and tripod can be accompaniments of initiation; and Cretan Zeus, pre-Olympian in origin, was an initiation god. It is tempting to imagine that the mystery of Cretan Zeus himself is celebrated in this scene on the Fortetsa lid in the form of a double epiphany, reflecting the combination of the new Dorian with the traditional Cretan background, as it were newly Hellenic yet abidingly Minoan.

Background of the Gods

However that may be, other evidence illustrates the growth of the cult of Mycenean Zeus against the old Minoan background in Crete itself. Homer and Hesiod were the first to compose theogonies, to give the gods their epithets, allot them their offices

God of the sky and of storms, Zeus is traditionally depicted carrying a thunderbolt, which was itself regarded as a means of bringing death so that immortality might be conferred *Below left* Bronze statue of Zeus, c 5th century BC *Below* Bronze cast for a statue of Jupiter, the Roman god who was identified with the Greek Zeus, 2nd century AD

C. M. Dixon



C. M. Dixon

and occupations, and describe their forms, in the tradition reported by the historian Herodotus. This means that these customary Greek theogonies derived from the epic tradition, rooted in the Mycenean period. In the Homeric Catalogue of Ships (in the *Iliad*, book 2) Crete is described as having 100 towns. Seven of these are mentioned by name, including Cnossus, Gortyna and Phaistus, all of them from central Crete, which was apparently the chief area of Achaean occupation.

Though they are by no means principal characters in the *Iliad*, it is quite clear that the Cretan captains were of some importance, consistent with the island's contribution to the Trojan expedition. For Idomeneus and Meriones had a considerable contingent of 80 ships. This number can be compared with 100 ships under the command of Agamemnon himself, 90 under Nestor, 60 under Menelaus, brother of Agamemnon, and a mere 12 under Odysseus.

Idomeneus boasts of his descent from Zeus. Like other similar leaders of the Heroic Age of Greece he had quite a short pedigree, which goes up to a god in the third generation before the Trojan War. Aerope, his first cousin, was connected by marriage with the Atreidai, the family of his allies. She married Atreus and was herself a grand-daughter of Minos. In the *Iliad*, Idomeneus kills Phaistus, son of the Maionian Boras from Tarue and the eponymous hero of this great Cretan city. There was another Phaistus in the Peloponnese, and again another in Thessalian Achaia. The opponents of Idomeneus, Oinomaos and Alkathoos, have associations with Pelops and the Peloponnese; and his father Deucalion has associations with Thessaly. The implication is that he was an intrusive northerner by extraction, a bringer of strife to Crete before he went to Troy.

Europa and the Bull

Zeus, the god ancestor of Idomeneus, the one member of the Olympian pantheon with an Indo-European name, rose to his eminence with the growing power of the Achaeans. The result was that, in Crete, the name of their sky god was attached to a Minoan deity whose original ritual and character can be discerned from the evidence of later times. It was not until after the Minoan period that this originally secondary deity, this youthful god, pushed his way to the forefront in a variety of forms and under a variety of names. The myth of the Minotaur (see BULL; MAZE; THESEUS) implies that he was identified at Cnossus with the bull; and the story of the love of Queen Pasiphae for the Minotaur may derive from a form of the sacred marriage, the male partner in the ritual being played by the king masked in the head of a bull. The sacred marriage was closely involved with the fertility of the crops. This association is clearly to be observed – as is also the association with central Crete – in the famous legend of Zeus and Europa.

An archaic kind of Europa, riding on a bull, features in the earliest (5th century BC) coins of the city of Gortyna and also of Phaistus. The type persists on the coins of Gortyna throughout the 5th century. Their pictorial character has plausibly suggested a derivation from local frescoes. This relation is even more conspicuous in the 4th century coins both of Gortyna and of Phaistus. On one type of coin from Phaistus Europa is sitting on a rock and is welcoming with her raised hand the bull who is approaching her. A coin series from contemporary Gortyna tells vividly the story of the marriage of Zeus and Europa, with Zeus changing from a bull into an eagle. Coins of Cnossus, probably struck in 220 BC, when that city was closely allied with Gortyna, are similar to the Gortynian type which features Europa; and Europa on the bull remained as one of the chief coin types of the Roman province of Crete – probably struck at Gortyna between 66 and 31 BC.

It appears to be likely that the final evolution of the male deity from a bull into an anthropomorphic Zeus, the Zeus who later became involved with Europa, must have occured in the Mycenean period. Zeus is featured as the partner of Europa not only in Hesiod, but already in the *Iliad*. Animal sacrifices continued to be conspicuous in the rituals of Zeus, the victims normally being either rams or, more frequently, oxen. Both of these animals are associated with sky gods in general and with Zeus in particular. They were the most precious victims that pastoral peoples could offer, considered to be most possessed of fertilizing power and most essential to their economic survival. Various traditions combine to associate mainland settlers at Gortyna, or its neighbourhood, with the Arcadian area where the Achaean dialect survived. It is therefore perhaps significant that Gortynian Zeus shared the title of *Hekatombaios* ('to whom hecatombs are offered') with the Arcadian Zeus.

A celestial Zeus of Gortyna called Zeus *Asterios* ('Starry Zeus') was known to Byzantine writers and he was associated with Europa by earlier writers including Hesiod and Bacchylides. After his affair with Europa, Zeus reputedly gave her in marriage to a Cretan king Asterion (or Asterios, or Asteros) who, childless himself, reared the children of Zeus and Europa; and, according to the Byzantine writer Tzetzes, Sarpedon, Minos and Rhadamanthys were sons of Zeus Asterios. The Minotaur of Cnossus was also called Asterios or Asterion. There were sacred herds of cattle of the sun god at Gortyna, a cult of a solar deity called Atymnos, brother of Europa, whose early death was mourned; and an inscription of the 5th century BC confirms the worship of the sun.

The art and the literary and numismatic evidence of historical times all indicate how the sacred marriage of Zeus and Europa combined Mycenean with Minoan and even more primitive traditions of cult. Europa often features in art on the bull, holding in one hand his fertilizing horn and in the other hand a flower, symbol of her fertility and also of earlier magical associations before the bull had been deified.

The marriage of Zeus and Europa traditionally occurred in or under a plane tree near a stream at Gortyna. Coins of Gortyna of the 5th century BC show a goddess in a tree, generally considered to be Europa, possessed by Zeus in the form of an eagle and thus identified with Hera (see HERA). A bull's head, however, is apparently often fixed to the trunk of the tree. The tree on the coins seems to be a pollard willow and not a plane tree. Yet we need not go so far as to accept the suggestion that Europa was actually a willow goddess and that Zeus, as a nursling of the willow, might naturally be mated with a willow bride. Magical plant and tree associations of this kind must have existed long before either Zeus or Europa. Such earlier connections, prior to the time when Zeus became involved with the willow at Gortyna, were indicated in the mention of the tree where the sacred marriage took place and the stream nearby, where the goddess bathed.

Putting Away Childish Things

The cult of the goddess Leto at Phaistus, not far away from Gortyna in southern Crete, is of particular interest. We have evidence to prove that Cretan youths, when they reached the last stage of initiation into manhood and citizenship, cast aside their boys' garments before assuming their warriors' costumes. The formality of this particular ritual was embedded in the festival which was known at Phaistus as the *Ekdysia* ('Casting off'), during which the youth cast off his boys' clothes. This festival was associated with the local cult of Leto and was connected with the myth of Leucippus, who was changed from a girl into a boy. According to the myth, Galatea, daughter of Eurytus and wife of Lamprus, bore a daughter; and she persuaded Leto to let the girl change sex when she grew up.

The change was commemorated in the Phaistian festival of the Ekdysia. When the Phaistians married they lay down beside the statue of Leucippus, which was presumably in the sanctuary of Leto. The festival and the mythology suggest a combination of fertility, initiation and marriage ritual. The youths of Phaistus were apparently initiated into manhood, citizenship and marriage at the same period of life. The local Leto, as her epithet *Phytia* ('Causing Growth') indicates, promoted growth and fertility in the young. When growth had been promoted, the boy died and was reborn as a man, casting away his boy's clothes and dressing like a man.

Leto Phytia and her Phaistian festival were rooted in the earliest stratum of Cretan religion. It has been suggested that, because the cock was dear to Leto (as to all women in childbirth) since he stood by to lighten her labour, Leto Phytia was somehow related to Zeus *Welkhanos* of Phaistus, whose sacred bird was the cock.

Both Zeus and Jupiter, his Roman counterpart, were renowned in mythology for their many love affairs; Semele, the mother of Dionysus, was loved by Zeus but was consumed by the fire of his thunderbolt when the god appeared to her in his divine form: *Jupiter and Semele*, painting by Gustave Moreau

Giraudon

Coins of Phaistus in the period from about 430 to 300 BC show Welkhanos as a youthful, beardless god, his right hand caressing a cock; on the reverse side there is a bull. The Cretan identification of Zeus with Welkhanos is also confirmed by lexicography.

The discovery of numerous tiles with the name of the god *Weukhanos* (Welkhanos) was made years ago at neighbouring Hagia Triada. Significantly, the temple of Zeus Welkhanos was here built upon the ruins of the old palace of Hagia Triada. An associated month name and spring festival is attested in three other towns of Crete.

A. B. Cook (author of *Zeus*) thought the meaning of Welkhanos could have been 'god of the willow-tree', confirming his idea that Zeus at Phaistus, as at Gortyna, was consort of a willow goddess. For he had a cock (instead of his usual eagle), since the cock, as the crest of the Phaistian Idomeneus, had a long-standing mythical association with the town. There was also a tradition that Idomeneus was descended from the sun, sire of Pasiphae, and that the cock was sacred to the sun. Though these associations may be true, there is no reason but to suppose that Cook's identification strained the evidence.

It is nevertheless possible to conclude, from the nature and provenance of the cult, that Zeus Welkhanos was a product of the Minoan god of fertility. There is clear similarity between the coins of Phaistus showing Welkhanos with a cock in the branches of a tree and the coins of Gortyna showing Zeus, Europa and the eagle. The cock, like the eagle, seems to signify a bird epiphany. Welkhanos must surely have been yet another male partner in a sacred marriage with the old Minoan mother goddess.

Thunderbolt and Aegis

The evidence about Zeus Welkhanos and the representation (if it be of Zeus) on the lid from Fortetsa serve alike to emphasize the difficulty of clearly distinguishing Olympian Zeus from the specifically Cretan Zeus. The weather god, lord of storms, rain, lightning and thunder, who acquired supremacy in his mountain stronghold, had an earthly prototype in the Mycenean Great King. Nevertheless, the Cretan Zeus who survived with such dominant traits of his original nature long after the Olympian pantheon became supreme in officially sponsored religion, is but one symbol – though one of outstanding importance – through which old prehistoric cult exercised its influence. The later Zeus, Olympian though he might be, exhibited himself in many forms, as is evident in those various distinguishing epithets attached to his name, which not only reveal his many-sided nature but often a pre-Olympian basis.

In eastern Crete, 'the Cretan-born Zeus' was specifically associated with Dicte by the epithet *Diktaios* (Dictean). The geographer Strabo expressly connected the temple of Dictean Zeus with the old Bronze Age population of the area. Although the Hellenic temple which stood on the site of the Minoan town of Palaicastro had been destroyed, sufficient nnmbers of votive offerings were found there in the course of archeological investigation to define its position; and the site of the alter was fixed by a bed of ashes. It was the discovery of the inscription of the famous Hymn of the Curetes (see CORYBANTES), addressed to Zeus of Dicte, which confirmed with certainty that the temple was that of Dictean Zeus. Or again, there is Zeus *Idaios* ('of Ida'), similar to Dictean Zeus, mentioned in a much-discussed fragment of *The Cretans* of Euripides, delivered by a choros of inspired devotees of Zeus.

The ancient Greeks themselves believed that the Pelasgians were the aboriginal inhabitants of Greece and they tended also to associate Pelasgians with Carians (people from south-west Asia Minor) and the Leleges of the Greek islands. The name survived in the ancient shrine of Zeus *Pelasgios* at Dodona in Epirus, in north-west Greece. Here was the most ancient oracle in Greece, the divine responses obtained from the rustling of sacred trees and from brazen vessels suspended from them (see ORACLES). The cult of Zeus *Karios* ('Carian Zeus'), centred at Mylasa, the Carian capital, was also found in Boeotia and Attica, in mainland Greece.

The eagle was associated with Zeus in mythology, and the god is said to have assumed the form of this bird when he carried Ganymede off to heaven to be his cup-bearer ***Facing page*** **Zeus abducting Ganymede, a painting by Rembrandt** ***Below*** **Statue of Ganymede astride an eagle, by Cellini**

Scala

'The portion of Zeus is the broad heaven among the clouds in the upper air,' says Homer in the *Iliad*. Hence a repeatedly recurrent Homeric epithet of Zeus is the Cloud-gatherer, sending rain, lightning, thunder. Small wonder that altars have been found in Greek houses dedicated to Zeus *Kataibates* – Zeus who descends (in thunder and lightning) – and sacrifices were made on these altars to appease him and ward off destroction from the house.

Beside the thunderbolt, the aegis (skin shield) is a peculiar attribute of Zeus. In keeping with his rise to eminence in the Heroic Age of Mycenean Greece, Zeus, as god of manly strength and prowess, was especially honoured at two of the four great athletic festivals of Greece, the Olympian and the Nemean, besides many others. From the 4th century BC onwards, Greek historians reckoned time in Olympiads, the periods corresponding to the Olympic Games, which were quadrennial and claimed uninterrupted celebration from 776 BC (see GAMES).

The sacred precinct of Zeus at Olympia, the Altis, was surrounded by a wall with several entrances. In the southern part stood the great temple of Zeus, with the famous gold and ivory statue of Zeus by Pheidias, which was classed as one of the seven wonders of the world until it perished in 462 AD, and which was more praised in antiquity than any other work of art.

Lord of the City State

Zeus was of supreme importance in the daily life of the Greek city state. As Nilsson explained, in *A History of Greek Religion:* 'Just as the father of the household is Zeus's priest, so Zeus himself in the patriarchal monarchy of earlier times is the special protector of the king and hence the supreme custodian of the social order. Thus in Homer Agamemnon is under the special protection of Zeus. The god was not dethroned with the fall of the monarchy. As Zeus *Polieus* he is the divine overlord of the city state.'

As protector and guardian of the house he was Zeus *Herkeios* ('Of the front court'). As Zeus *Ktesios* ('the Acquirer') he was similarly protector of house and property. Hence Nilsson's conclusion that where Zeus appears in the shape of a snake under such names as *Ktesios, Meilikhios* ('the Kindly One') and *Philios* ('the Friendly One'), the name of Zeus had been added to the house deity which appeared as a snake, because Zeus was also protector and guardian of the house. A deity, male in later Greece, female in the Minoan Age, developed out of a domestic snake cult.

Zeus was also protector of the fugitive suppliant, as Zeus *Hikesios*. He had a part to play in the sanctity attaching to the duties of friendly hospitality (*Ksenios*). From the beginning of the 5th century BC, there grew up, in the city of Athens and its neighbourhood, a special class of resident aliens called *metoikoi*. They were attracted by the opportunities of trade in a flourishing commercial centre, and the government encouraged them, despite the fact that, as foreigners, they were really excluded from

civic rights and from public ceremonies associated with the official religion of the state. Nevertheless, once a year, at the national festival of the Panathenaea, these resident aliens were not merely permitted to take part but were allowed special marks of honour. They also had a separate Zeus *Metoikios* as their special patron.

As the governments of the city states, like that of Athens, tended to become more democratic in form, they still continued to have allegiance in council and assembly to Zeus as, for example, to Zeus *Agoraios* ('Of the market place'). That epithet was not peculiar to Zeus, but no doubt derived from the location in the market place of a shrine or altar of the deity to whom it applied. Functional shades of meaning must have been derived from the various functions of the *agora*, the market place, chiefly as a place of assembly and also as a market place in the strict sense. Zeus Agoraios would therefore have been a special patron of those mustered in assembly at the agora. From this special association with the assembly of citizens, Zeus Agoraios could be described in literature as patron of eloquence or of public supplication.

In later antiquity, among the more sophisticated, as religious belief tended to become more monotheistic, there was a tendency for Zeus to become conceptualized as the one, single god, the beginning and the end of all things.

(See also HIGH GODS; SKY.)

R. F. WILLETTS

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Zeus rose to pre-eminence with the growing power of the Achaean Greeks, but traces of the Cretan Zeus survived in Greek mythology: according to legend, the god was born in Crete and hidden in a cave from his father Cronus, who would otherwise have devoured him: the cave of Zeus, Crete

Ronald Sheridan

Zion

Or Sion, one of the hills of the city of Jerusalem, often used in the Old Testament as an alternative name for the city itself as the spiritual centre and capital of the world; in Christian literature frequently used to mean the heavenly city of God, or the Church; Zionism is the modern movement to create a Jewish national home in Palestine, which culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel.

See JERUSALEM.

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Zodiac

In astrology, a circle in the sky through which the sun, moon and planets appear to move; divided into 12 'signs', each allotted 30 degrees; a planet's position in the zodiac is believed to affect the way in which it influences people and events on earth; the signs of the traditional 'tropical' zodiac are not identical with the actual constellations in the sky, the 'sidereal' zodiac.

See AQUARIUS; ASTROLOGY; and articles on each of the signs.

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The risk of being turned into a zombie, a soulless, automaton-like body or a disembodied soul, by poison or enchantment, is still feared and guarded against in Haiti

ZOMBIES

ONE CANNOT live long in Haiti without hearing talk of zombies, dead bodies brought back to a half-life by magic, and many stories about them have appeared in print. In 1939, for instance, Zora Hurston published a now classic account of a young girl from a well-to-do family who was discovered four years after her death working as a slavey in a shop; she was rescued by French nuns and placed in a nunnery.

The tale was still current in Haiti 20 years later, with several additions: four or five quite different towns were named as the place where she had been found, and some said that her rescuers had been Baptists. They also declared that she had been recognized on account of her bent neck, the result of her having been buried in a coffin too small for her, and by a scar on her foot made by a candle which had overturned and burnt her during the wake. But these distinguishing marks are first known in a story told to the writer Alfred Métraux in about 1950. It concerned a young woman who over-brusquely turned down the amorous advances of a *houngan*, or Voodoo priest (see VOODOO), who bewitched her in revenge, dug her up after her presumed death and used her as a zombie until the Catholic anti-superstition campaign caused him to set her loose.

Whatever the original truth of these stories, their combination has produced something approaching a myth which will probably be gaining credence 100 years from now, because of its apparently factual detail and its compact sense of the superstitions involved. It is certain anyhow that few stories told about zombies are to be taken literally.

Many of the people thought to be zombies are in fact morons or idiots, of which Haiti has its fair share. Métraux tells of one such who escaped from the house where her parents had locked her up, and whose behaviour alarmed the neighbouring peasants sufficiently to make them believe she was a zombie. Zora Hurston took a photograph of a woman zombie in a hospital who almost certainly was a mental defective. The mistake is easy enough to make, for both zombies and morons have certain things in common. The zombie, for instance, walks with a shambling gait and downcast eyes, speaks gibberish in a nasal voice if it speaks at all, does not answer when spoken to, and is bereft of the usual marks of sanity.

Equally important, Haitians delight in telling tall stories about things supernatural, which serve to amaze their audience and even to convince themselves, if only for a moment. A magistrate, for instance, told a convincing story about a Catholic priest who went blind after seeing a troupe of zombies in the hills, remarking that one shouldn't laugh at such matters. But he immediately followed up his cautionary tale with an eye-witness account of a corpse being dug out of its grave and then re-animated, which was a mere hoax: he examined the grave the following day and found a pipe leading from it to the air so that the supposed corpse – the houngan's accomplice – could breathe before his exhumation.

Few people have actually seen zombies. The following incident was said to have occurred in 1959, and was vouched for by a Catholic priest. (It must be remembered, however, that Voodoo and its superstitions are the great enemy of the Church in Haiti, and that even the most upright of men will slander his enemy in a good cause.) A zombie had come wandering into the village where he lived, entered the courtyard of a house and promptly had his hands tied together by the owner, who took him to the police station. The police wished to have nothing to do with such an ominous creature, and so he was left outside the station for some hours, chewing at his bonds, until he was given salt water to drink – the instant cure for zombification. He then found his voice again and told his name. His aunt, who was living in the

Tales of zombies, dead bodies magically brought back to half-life, proliferate in Haiti where the superstitions of Voodoo are an integral part of life; President Duvalier's private army was named after the *tontons macoute*, or magicians of Haiti, and some were believed to be zombies

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village, was sent for: she not only recognized him but declared she had seen him dead and buried four years previously.

The Catholic priest also arrived on the scene and learnt from the man that he had been one of a large number of zombies set to work by the houngan who had enchanted them. This announcement frightened the police even more, and they sent word to the houngan that he could have his zombie back for a consideration. Two days later, however, the man died, and it was generally presumed that the houngan had murdered him for having spilt the beans. He was arrested, but his wife fled into the hills with the remaining zombies.

The educated classes also tell of zombies, as in Métraux's account of a *monsieur* whose car broke down outside the house of a houngan. The houngan, assuring him that the matter was no mere accident, invited him inside and showed him a zombie, in whom the monsieur recognized a great friend, dead some six months previously. Full of pity the monsieur offered the zombie a drink, but was stopped by the houngan who warned him of terrible dangers if he did so.

Return to the Grave

Perhaps the most sensational zombie tale is the one recounted by W. B. Seabrook, about a number of zombies owned by a houngan called Joseph and looked after by his wife. One day, not realizing what she was doing, she gave them salted biscuits to eat. Awoken from their deathly trance and knowing themselves for the walking corpses they were, they made straight for the cemetery, brushing aside all who would stop them. There they hurled themselves upon their graves and tried to dig themselves back into the earth, but turned into carrion as they did so.

The most feared consequence of releasing a zombie from his bondage is that he will revenge himself physically and magically upon his owner. Those who own zombies thus make a point of treating them with great harshness – another point which they have in common with the mentally deranged, for it is normal practice in Haiti to beat lunatics and keep them frightened. The parallel is in fact recognized obliquely by all who claim knowledge of how to make a man into a zombie: there are two major ways, by poison and by enchantment. The plants usually cited as poison are manchineel, whose apple-like fruit was often used by resentful slaves in plantation days to kill their owners and their livestock, and datura, the thorn apple, which contains atropine, and belladonna or deadly nightshade. A further poison can be made from the legendary three drops which escape from the nose of a corpse hung upside down.

Besides these, houngans also prepare a number of leaf powders of different kinds with various magical and, it is said, pharmacological properties. One of these powders, containing pepper wood, is very effective in bringing on possessions by the gods. The powder seems to have no effect other than to stimulate the mucous membranes of the nose, but this is enough to trigger off a dissociation when people are highly suggestible, as they are during a ceremony. It is quite possible, therefore, that such a powder used in the right context can magically zombify a man, by entrapping his soul and leaving him with nothing but his body (called the corpse body in Haitian parlance) and his spirit, also termed the zombie.

Spider into Zombie

Initiates into Voodoo pass through a similar state but with proper safeguards. To become possessed by a god their souls must first be displaced or, as we should say, they must be dissociated. During their initiation, their souls are incubated and finally transferred into a sacred vessel called the *pot de tête*, or head-pot, where they are safe from the attacks of evil-doers and under the protection of the gods. At their death, a rite called *dessounin* is practised which sends their spirits into the waters of death and again captures their souls in a head-pot to await their spiritual resurrection. An initiate is thus a purified zombie whose activity when possessed is controlled by a god, not a magician.

Significantly enough, the dessounin rite is copied by those who want a dying man's zombie. This is done by placing a pot, containing 21 seeds of *pois congo* and a length of string knotted 21 times, under the pillow of the moribund. After his death the string turns into a spider, and the pot containing it is placed in a dark room. To turn the spider into the dead man's zombie all you need do is to knock three times at the door, taking care to stand with your back to it, and to threaten it with a whip when you give it its orders.

In southern Haiti this kind of zombie is known as a *vivi*: it is the equivalent of a jinn trapped in a bottle. Another way of making a vivi is to exchange a man's soul while he is still alive for that of a lizard, chicken, butterfly or other small animal. The man is no wiser for the substitution, but the animal which embodies his soul cannot die, and merely vanishes if an attempt is made to kill it. The word 'soul' is probably a misnomer here: a better word is 'talent', for it is men talented in law, accountancy, business or some such skill who are sought for as zombies, and for whom the dessounin rite is practised even if they are not initiates into Voodoo proper.

In any case, it is difficult to tell a vivi from a *baka*, that monster of the supernatural created by black magic to bring luck, power or wealth. Both have to be served in the proper manner or their owner is destroyed by their ungoverned force; both are best invoked in cemeteries. One kind of zombie can be made of a man long dead (by whipping his grave with sticks of pois congo) and is used in several branches of magic: for instance a tired prostitute can have her private parts inhabited by such a 'mort' or dead man, paradoxically to liven them up and make her clients come back for more.

It is to stop this kind of zombification that people enter into Voodoo, have their souls placed in head-pots and undergo the dessounin rite. But even this is not enough to stop the corpse answering the magician's voice as it lies in its grave, and being turned into a zombie. In certain parts of Haiti, therefore, the corpse is buried face down with its mouth full of earth, or its lips are sewn together; sometimes a knife is placed in its hand with which it can defend itself. In other places sesame seed is scattered in the grave so that the ghost will be eternally occupied in counting how many there are. As a last resort the corpse is strangled or shot through the head.

Zombies thus come in two major forms: as a body without a soul, and as a soul without a body. These last are not easily distinguishable from magical spells, and both from confidence tricks. The word zombie itself, however, comes from the Arawak Indian term *zemi*, a god or a spirit, which also lies at the origin of the name Baron Samedi, god of the dead: by which we may infer that a zombie is properly to be understood in religious terms, as a body resurrected by spiritual means. It is not impossible for such means to be used for profane ends, nor that a man can truly exist as a body without a soul. So far, however, this is still a moot point.

FRANCIS HUXLEY

FURTHER READING: Zora Hurston, *Tell My Horse* (Lippincott, 1938); Francis Huxley *The Invisibles* (Humanities, 1966); Alfred Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (Schocken, 1972); W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (Folcroft, 1977).

Banquet with Corpses

In the centre of the room was an elegantly set table with damask cloth, flowers, glittering silver. Four men, also in evening clothes, but badly fitting, were already seated at this table. There were two vacant chairs at its head and foot. The seated men did not arise when the girl in her bride-clothes entered on her husband's arm. They sat slumped down in their chairs and did not even turn their heads to greet her . . .

As she sat down mechanically in the chair to which Toussel led her, seating himself facing her, with the four guests ranged between them, two on either side, he said, in an unnatural strained way, the stress increasing as he spoke:

"I beg of you . . . to forgive my guests their . . . seeming rudeness. It has been a long time . . . since . . . they have . . . tasted wine . . . sat like this at table . . . with so fair a hostess . . . But, ah, presently . . . they will drink with you, yes . . . lift . . . their arms, as I lift mine . . . clink glasses with you . . . more . . . they will arise and . . . dance with you . . . more . . . they will . . ."

Near her, the black fingers of one silent guest were clutched rigidly around the fragile stem of a wine-glass, tilted, spilling. The horror pent up in her overflowed. She seized a candle, thrust it close to the slumped, bowed face, and saw the man was dead. She was sitting at a banquet table with four propped-up corpses.

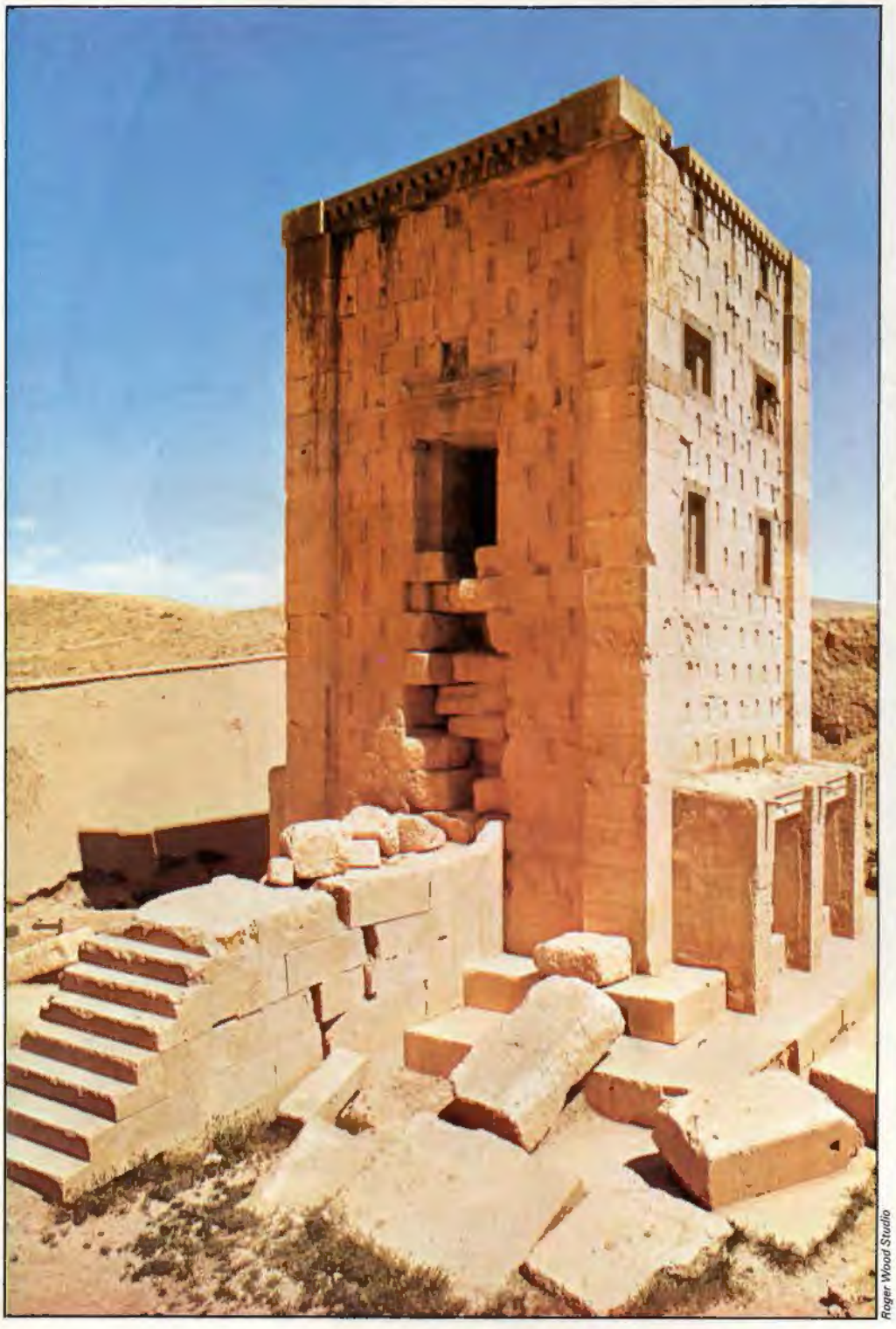
W. B. Seabrook *The Magic Island*

William MacQuitty

From a monotheistic faith with Ahura Mazdah as its supreme deity, Zoroastrianism progressed towards a dualistic concept of Ohrmazd, principle of goodness and light, and Ahriman, principle of evil and darkness; in all its phases, however, Zoroastrianism remained primarily a religion of free will

ZOROASTRIANISM

ZOROASTRIANISM is the name given to the religion founded by the Iranian prophet Zoroaster, probably in the 6th–7th centuries BC. Modern scholarship tends to accept the traditional date of the prophet, '258 years before Alexander'. For the Iranians, 'before Alexander' could only mean the final extinction of the First Persian Empire at the sack of Persepolis by Alexander the Great in 330 BC. Hence Zoroaster's 'date' would be 588 BC. But what period in his life would this refer to? It might refer to his birth, to his first revelation at the age of 30, to his conversion of the local king Vishtaspa at the age of 40, or to his death at the age of 77. Whichever date we accept, Zoroaster's life will have spanned the 7th and 6th centuries BC. This, however, like so much in Zoroastrian studies, cannot be regarded as at all certain. So too with the place in which he operated. The later tradition placed him in western Iran, in what is today Azerbaijan; but this is almost certainly not true, for the internal evidence – the dialect and the place names mentioned in the early Zoroastrian texts – points to the east, the country near the Oxus River, now in Soviet Central Asia. Modern scholarship would have it that Zoroaster's field of activity was in ancient Chorasmia, corresponding roughly to what is today the Turkmen Republic of the Soviet Union. This again is highly probable but not certain.



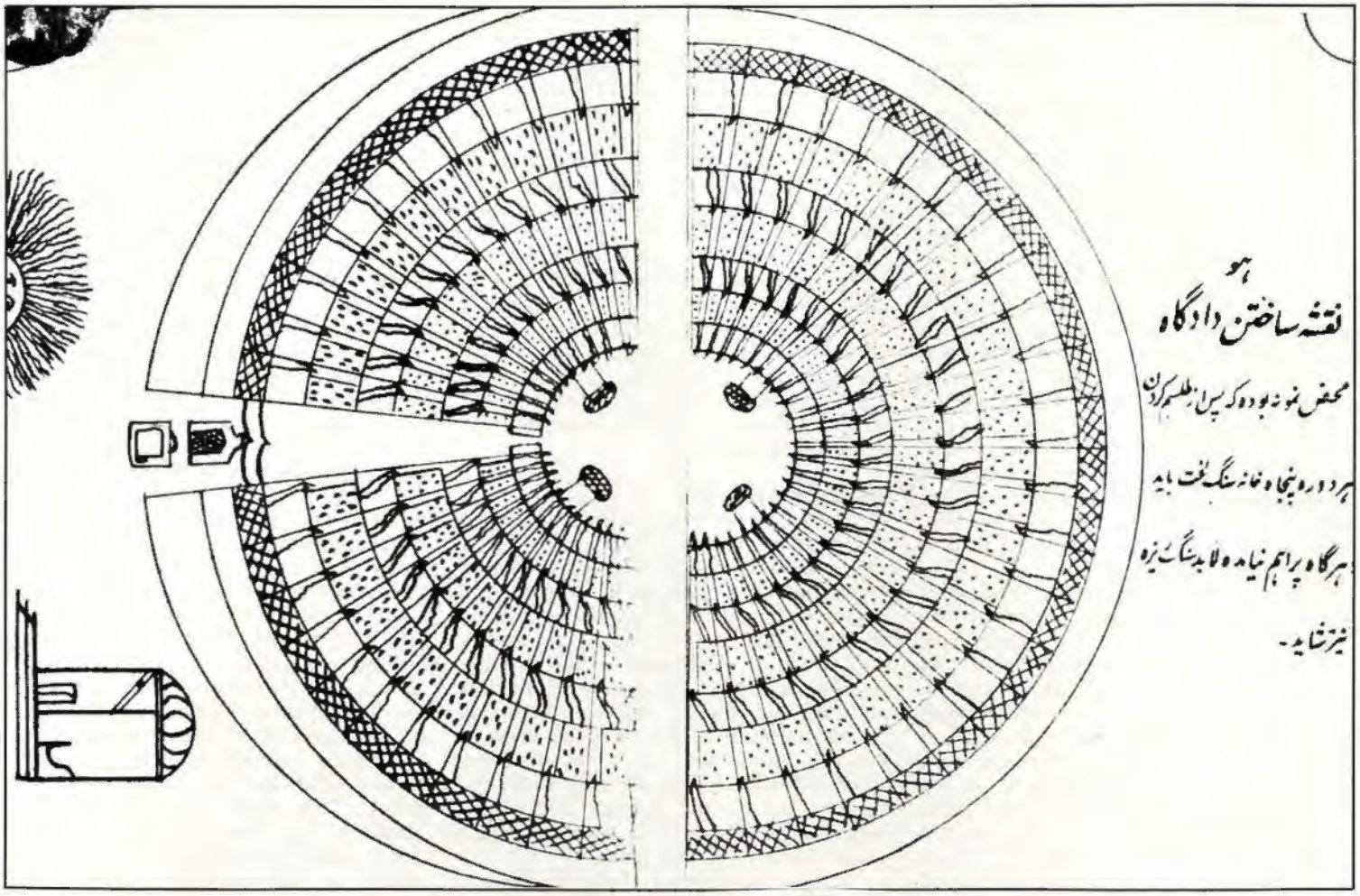
Roger Wood Studio

Gods and Demons

It must be emphasized at the outset that in practically every aspect of Zoroastrian studies uncertainty prevails, and this for a variety of reasons. The principal reason is that our main sources do not agree. The sacred text, the *Avesta*, itself only a fraction of the original scripture and handed down orally for at least 1000 years, is (as is the way of sacred scriptures) not consistent with itself, nor is it consistent with the contemporary sources – the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings and the Greek accounts of Iranian religion from Herodotus onwards. The same is true of the second period of Zoroastrian supremacy during the Second Persian Empire, the so-called Sassanian Empire, which lasted from 226–651 AD. It cannot be claimed, then, that all that will be said in this brief article is authoritative; for Zoroastrian scholars have disagreed with a vehemence of acerbity rare even among academics.

Zoroaster, or Zarathushtra, as he is called in the *Avesta*, was born some time in the 7th century BC, fled from his native land because he preached a doctrine which his fellow-countrymen refused to accept, and found asylum with a certain King Vishtaspa in eastern Iran who finally accepted his teaching. That his teaching was at variance with the traditional religion is clear. Just what that earlier religion was is less clear. One thing is certain, however: that the Aryans, the common ancestors of the 'Aryan' invaders of India (who were responsible for the earliest sacred book of the Hindus, the *Veda*) and the Iranians who inhabited the Iranian plateau, had a common religion which was polytheistic (see INDIA). The original Aryan pantheon

Previous page **Head of a Persian king: in the Teheran Museum: like other religions, Zoroastrianism developed and changed, and in its strictly dualist form as the official state religion of the Sassanian kings from the 3rd century BC to the 7th century AD, its doctrine of the great opposing principles in the universe influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam**
Left **Ruins of a fire temple at Naqsh-i-Rustam, near Persepolis: fire was called the 'son' of Ahura Mazdah, and the rite of sacrificing the plant haoma centred round the sacred fire**
Right **The Parsees, the Indian Zoroestrians, believing that neither earth nor fire should be defiled by corpses, place their dead in the 'towers of silence', where they are exposed to the sun and the vultures** ***Above right*** **Plan of a tower of silence: one side of the building is for men's bodies, the other for women's**



was, it seems, divided into two distinct groups of deities, the *asuras* (or *ahuras*) on the one hand and the *daivas* on the other. The asuras seem to have been remote gods who dwelt in the sky, while the daivas were nearer to men and more intimately associated with them. From the beginning there seems to have been tension between the two groups. In India the asuras, because they were held to possess magic powers which they were prone to use against men, finished up by becoming demons. In Iran precisely the opposite happened. The ahuras (the Iranian form of the Indian asuras) retained their divine status whereas the daivas were reduced to the status of demons. This probably happened before the appearance of Zoroaster, as the terms *ahuro-tkaesha* ('the religion of the ahuras') and *daevo-data* ('the law of the daivas') would seem to show. Already, it would appear, the ahuras were considered to be beneficent powers, the daivas maleficent.

New Message from God

Zoroastrianism has been described both as an ethical monotheism and as a classical form of dualism (see DUALISM; EVIL). How can one religion be described in two such contradictory ways? The answer is that Zoroastrianism, like any other religion, developed and changed, now emphasizing one aspect of the prophet's message, now another. In any case the Zoroastrianism of the prophet himself was very different from the Zoroastrianism

Roger Wood Studio

which became prevalent in the later stages of the First (Achaemenian) Persian Empire (550–330 BC), and this again differed considerably from the official Zoroastrianism of the Second (Sassanian) Empire (226–651 AD). The first could be called monotheism, the second modified monotheism, and the third dualism.

Zoroaster was born into a priestly family but he saw himself as a prophet, the bringer of a new message from a god called Ahura Mazdah, the 'Wise Lord', who revealed himself as the true God. This message is preserved in the oldest part of the *Avesta*, the *Gathas* or 'Songs' of Zoroaster himself. Zoroaster was a prophet every bit as much as were the Hebrew prophets who prophesied at much the same time. He was convinced that he was inspired by God and that he was charged with a message from him to man. He claimed to 'see' him and to hear his voice. Indeed, his relationship is so close that he can speak of it as one of 'friend to friend'.

The essence of Zoroaster's message is that God is One, holy, righteous, the Creator of all things, both material and spiritual, through his Holy Spirit, the living and the giver of life. He is good because he is productive and gives increase. His 'oneness', however, is a unity in diversity, for he manifests himself under various aspects: the Holy Spirit, as and through whom God creates; the Good Mind, as and through which he inspires the prophet and sanctifies man; Truth, Righteousness, or Cosmic Order (*Asha*), as and through which he shows man how to conform himself to the cosmos in accordance with righteousness; Sovereignty, as and through which he rules creation; Wholeness, which is the plenitude of his being; and Immortality, as and through which he will annihilate death.

The Bounteous Immortals

These aspects of the Wise Lord were later to be called the 'Bounteous Immortals', and in the later periods of Zoroastrianism were to be associated with various material elements: they appear as God's creatures and are thus assimilated to the archangels of other traditions. Two of them demand special notice: Truth and the Holy Spirit. Like the other Bounteous Immortals these have acknowledged opposites or 'adversaries' which thwart and restrict them. Ahura Mazdah, as Supreme Deity, has no opposite but, in so far as he is associated with Truth and the Holy Spirit, he is indirectly at variance with the 'Lie' and the 'Destructive Spirit', the later Ahriman, just as the Hebrew God is opposed to Satan in the later Judaeo-Christian scriptures. Hence it is not wholly illogical to describe the Zoroastrianism of the prophet himself as both a 'monotheism' and a 'dualism'; and in so far as Ahura Mazdah reveals himself under different aspects, it is not wholly absurd to describe it as a modified 'polytheism'.

Truth and the Lie

In the *Gathas* the basic dualism is between Truth and the Lie – Asha and Druj – which can also mean the established cosmic order and what disrupts it. This dualism remains throughout all phases of Zoroastrianism. The Lie also means the disruption of the established political order (Darius described the rebels against his authority as 'liars'), and the disruption of the truthfully spoken word, or what we normally understand by a lie. As God, Ahura Mazdah is beyond both Truth and the Lie, but as and through Truth he is inexorably opposed to its opposite, which is also the spirit of disruption.

Similarly in the case of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is irreconcilably opposed to the Destructive Spirit (see AHRIMAN) and this opposition was later to be regarded as characteristic of Zoroastrian dualism. Of these two Spirits it is written:

> In the beginning those two Spirits who are the well-endowed(?) twins were known as the one good and the other evil in thought, word and deed. . . And when these Spirits met they established in the beginning life and death that in the end the followers of the Lie should meet with the worst existence, but the followers of Truth with the Best Mind. Of these two Spirits he who was of the Lie chose to do the worst things; but the most Holy Spirit, clothed in rugged heaven, (chose) Truth as did (all) who sought with zeal to do the pleasure of the Wise Lord by (doing) good works.

Although the two Spirits choose to do good and evil, the Holy Spirit can nevertheless say to 'him who is Evil: "Neither our thoughts, nor our teachings, nor our wills, nor our choices, nor our words, nor our deeds, nor our consciences, nor yet our souls agree."'

Ahura Mazdah, the Wise Lord, is himself described as being the 'father' of the Holy Spirit (as he is of several other Bounteous Immortals), but he is also in a sense identical with him. As and through the Holy Spirit, then, he is as irreconcilably opposed to the Evil or Destructive Spirit, the author of death, as he is to the Lie, for he is both Life and Truth. But if he is the father of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Destructive Spirit's twin, does it not follow that he is the father of the Destructive Spirit too? In the later literature, the Wise Lord is roundly identified with the Holy Spirit, and once this has happened Zoroastrianism becomes a classically dualist religion (see OHRMAZD). A minority, however, remembering that the two Spirits had been spoken of as twins, insisted that they must have a common father. This could no longer be Ahura Mazdah (the later Ohrmazd), so some other entity had to be found. They finally settled on 'Infinite Time' (see ZURVAN), who thus became the supreme principle beyond good and evil.

The Two Houses

In all its phases Zoroastrianism is the religion of free will. Man is judged in accordance with the nature of the thoughts, words and deeds he has thought, spoken and done in his lifetime. The reward of the good is heaven, the 'Best Existence'; that of the wicked is hell, an 'evil existence'. At death the soul must cross the 'Bridge of the Requiter' which, in the later literature, is broad and free from danger for the righteous but becomes as narrow as a razor's edge for the wicked, who thereby fall helplessly into hell (see BRIDGES; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD). In the *Gathas* it is Zoroaster himself who guides the righteous across the awesome bridge, but when the wicked reach it 'their souls and consciences trouble them when they come to the Bridge of the Requiter, guests for all eternity in the House of the Lie'.

Heaven and hell are states rather than places – the best existence and the worst existence or, more graphically, the House of the Good Mind and the House of the Worst Mind, the House of Song and the

William MacQuitty

On New Year's Day, at the beginning of spring, a great festival was held at Persepolis under the auspices of Ahura Mazdah, supreme deity of Zoroastrianism, during which representatives of all the nations of the Persian Empire brought tributes to the king *Left* Relief at Persepolis showing a procession of Median nobles *Right* Symbol of Ahura Mazdah

William MacQuitty/Teheran Museum

House of the Lie. In the one there is 'ease and benefit', in the other discomfort and torment, 'a long age of darkness, foul food, and cries of woe'.

In addition there is a final reckoning 'at the last turning-point of existence', when there will be a Last Judgement in the form of an ordeal by fire and molten metal which will allot to the righteous and the unrighteous their final destiny of weal or woe. The Last Judgement then, merely confirms the individual judgement at death: salvation and damnation are fixed for all eternity. This 'black and white' doctrine was to enter Judaism and, through Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Zoroastrians, however, were later to modify it themselves, for in the later texts the Last Judgement (which seems unnecessary anyhow) becomes not a judgement at all but a purgation by molten metal in which the wicked are finally purged of their sins and the just suffer nothing since the molten metal has no terrors for them: they experience it as if it were warm milk.

These, then, are the basic doctrines preached by the prophet Zoroaster himself: there is one supreme God, Creator of all things, spiritual and material; aside from him there are two irreconcilable principles – Truth and the Lie, the Holy Spirit and the Destructive Spirit. Alongside these there are 'aspects' of God and also, though less markedly, 'aspects' of the Lie and the Destructive Spirit. Man must choose between the two, and in accordance with his choice he will either be blessed with eternal bliss or chastized with everlasting torment. By 'good' is meant Truth, the proper ordering of things, life, and prosperity: by evil, the Lie, disorder, death, and misery. The dualism is not one of spirit and matter but one of spirit and spirit, matter being in itself good because created by God, though later corrupted by the Devil.

The Later Avesta

Only the *Gathas* purport to be the work of the prophet Zoroaster himself. The rest of the *Avesta* (or rather what survives of it) is later and contains much material that seems to be totally at variance with the prophet's teaching. According to the

Born during the 7th century BC, Zoroaster saw himself as a prophet, the bringer of a new message from a god called Ahura Mazdah, the 'Wise Lord', who was the true God: *Zoroaster in his study,* a 15th century Flemish miniature

later tradition the 'original' *Avesta* consisted of 21 *Nasks* or 'books', a summary of which survives in the *Denkart*, a work, like all the works written in Pahlavi (Zoroastrian 'middle' Persian), that dates from after the Mohammedan conquest but which draws on much earlier material. Of these 21 Nasks only one remains in its entirety – the *Videvdat* or 'Law against the Demons', a tiresome book largely concerned with the punishments of sins, ritual purification and mythology. Apart from this there is the *Yasna*, the 'sacrifice', or ritual texts accompanying the main Zoroastrian liturgy together with minor liturgical texts, and the *Yashts* or 'hymns of praise' celebrating a whole gamut of pre-Zoroastrian deities which the prophet had certainly ignored and may even have proscribed.

The *Yasna*, or sacrificial liturgy, centres round the immolation of the sacred plant haoma (the Iranian equivalent of the Indian soma), the juice of which is considered to be the elixir of immortality. The *Yasna* is both sacrifice and sacrament: the plant god is slain by being pounded in a mortar and its juice is consumed in order to win eternal life. There seem to be references to this cult in the *Gathas* themselves, and it seems certain from these references that the prophet disapproved of it strongly, at least as practised by the 'worshippers of the daivas'. Be that as it may, the haoma cult appears very soon to have become central to Zoroastrian worship and it has remained so to this day, both among the 10,000 Zoroastrians who still survive in Iran and among the 100,000 Parsees ('Persians'), as the Zoroastrians who emigrated from Iran to India some centuries after the Mohammedan conquest are called (see PARSEES). The haoma sacrifice is the central act of the liturgy, but from beginning to end the material object around which the rite is celebrated is the sacred fire which, like haoma itself, is called the 'son' of Ahura Mazdah.

The Sacrificial Haoma

The sacrifice opens with a confession of faith in the following terms: 'I confess myself a worshipper of Mazdah, a Zoroastrian, a renouncer of the daivas, an upholder of the ahuras.' The formula helps us to see how the Zoroastrians of a later date regarded their religion. They are worshippers of (Ahûra) Mazdah, the only God, proclaimed by Zoroaster as supreme Creator and Lord: hence they are 'Zoroastrians'. But when they add that they are 'renouncers of the daivas' and 'upholders of the ahuras', they seem to be upholding a religion that probably preceded the coming of the prophet and in which there were many ahuras or gods just as there were many daivas or demons who, like Satan and his angels in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, had once themselves been gods. In any case the ahuras, now called *yazatas* or 'worshipful ones', are constantly invoked throughout the *Yasna*. They may either be material manifestations of divinity, pre-eminently fire and water, but also the winds, mountains, and so on, or they may be spiritual, invisible beings who are in fact the ancient Aryan gods, once common to Iran and India; slightly refurbished, it is true, in that they are subjected to the ultimate authority of Ahura Mazdah, the Wise Lord.

But these divinities though they are constantly invoked throughout the *Yasna*, are not essential to it. The central figure, as we have seen, is the sacrificial haoma, but next to him and the sacred fire is a 'god' who figures quite prominently in the *Gathas*, Sraosha. In the *Gathas* he is, like the Bounteous Immortals, an abstract idea. He is the faculty of 'hearing' God's word and therefore of obeying it. In the *Yasna* he is fully personified and is, in a sense, the mediator between man and God. As the spirit of obedience, he also enforces obedience among men and chastizes the wicked, as he chastizes the demons. His continued importance, his relevance, and his popularity are attested by the fact that he alone among all the Zoroastrian pantheon was later identified with a Mohammedan angel (with the angel Gabriel, so familiar to Christians too).

The second main division of the later *Avesta* is the *Yashts* and it is in some ways remarkable that they have survived;

for they are hymns of praise to deities, some of whom are quite certainly pre-Zoroastrian and others almost certainly so. In the *Yasna* these deities are always clearly subordinate to Ahura Mazdah but this is not always so in the *Yashts*, for in two cases at least Ahura Mazdah himself is represented as doing obeisance to them – to Vayu, the wind god, and to Anahita, the goddess of the waters.

The Faith of the Achaemenids

From the Achaemenian inscriptions, from proper names like Mithradates, from rock reliefs of much later date, and from the extraordinary diffusion of the cult of Mithras (see MITHRAS) throughout the Roman Empire shortly after the rise of Christianity, it is clear that the most important of these ancient deities was Mithra – like Ahura Mazdah himself originally a god of the sky and later identified with the sun.

As with everything connected with Zoroastrianism, there has been furious debate as to whether or not the Achaemenid kings were Zoroastrians. About the religion of the earliest of them, Cyrus and Cambyses, there is no evidence, but about that of Darius the Great (521–485 BC) there is plenty, for there are many inscriptions dictated by him. Ahura Mazdah is the only god the Great King invokes. He is the great god 'who created this earth, who created yonder sky, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Darius king.' This is recognizably the same god as that of Zoroaster. Similarly, when speaking of the rebels against his authority, Darius says they 'lied' in that they claimed to be kings, 'lying' thus being equivalent to the disruption of the established order – again a Zoroastrian conception. Thus, in his conception of the nature and supremacy of Ahura Mazdah and in his identification of evil with the 'Lie', Darius is at one with Zoroaster. Though it can be argued that he was not formally a 'Zoroastrian', he was certainly a 'worshipper of Mazdah'.

The case of Darius's successor Xerxes (485–466) is even clearer, for he claims to have suppressed the cult of the daivas and to have established some sort of 'Mazdean' orthodoxy: 'Where the daivas had previously been worshipped, there did I worship Ahura Mazdah in accordance with Truth and using the proper rite.' Further he refers to an afterlife in which the good will be 'blessed': 'The man who has respect for the law which Ahura Mazdah has established and who worships Ahura Mazdah in accordance with Truth and using the proper rite, may he be both happy when alive and blessed when dead.' Xerxes, then, was both a 'worshipper of Mazdah' and a 'renouncer of the daivas', and since he refers to 'the law which Ahura Mazdah established', presumably through his prophet Zoroaster, he was almost certainly a 'Zoroastrian'.

During the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–425) the Zoroastrian calendar was introduced, but in this calendar the days and months are named not only after Ahura Mazdah and the Bounteous Immortals but also after the ancient gods who now appear beside them. The Zoroastrianism of the later Achaemenian kings was that of the *Yasna* rather than that of the *Gathas*. And so we find in the rare inscriptions of Artaxerxes II and III the god Mithra and the goddess Anahita invoked together with the supreme god, Ahura Mazdah.

The Last Contest

With the collapse of the Achaemenian Empire, Zoroastrianism disappears as an organized religion until it becomes once more the state religion of the Second (Sassanian) Empire from 226 to 651 AD. To judge from rock reliefs during this period, it would appear that Mithra and Anahita still enjoyed considerable favour both with the royal house and among the people. It was, however, the policy of the new dynasty to seek to establish religious conformity throughout the empire. Now for the first time one can speak of religious orthodoxy; and this, to judge from the Pahlavi books which draw their material from this period, was a rigid dualism in which the Bounteous Immortals and the ancient gods resuscitated in the late Achaemenian period were reduced to the status of angels. The scene was now dominated by two eternal principles, Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazdah) and Ahriman, Ohrmazd being identified with all goodness and light and dwelling in the Endless Light above, Ahriman being equated with all evil and darkness and dwelling in the Endless Darkness below. The two kingdoms are totally separate and independent, but the time comes when Ahriman becomes conscious of the light of Ohrmazd, envies it, attacks it, and invades the material world which Ohrmazd had created as a bulwark against him. For 3000 years the issue of the battle is in doubt, but in the last 3000 years of the existence of this world the power of evil is slowly but relentlessly ground down until the Saviour, the Saoshyans, appears to make all things new. The souls of men, whether they be in heaven or in hell, are reunited with their bodies and are purged in a sea of molten metal. When this is done, Ahriman is expelled back into his native darkness and rendered unconscious for ever. Then the whole creation enjoys eternal bliss in the presence of Ohrmazd, the Lord.

This dualist orthodoxy, however, was questioned by a theological deviation called 'Zurvanism' which subordinated both Ohrmazd and Ahriman to a higher principle, Infinite Time or Zurvan. However, no matter what the main theological trend may have been at the time, Sassanian Zoroastrianism was so wedded to the Sassanian state that, when the latter was overthrown by the forces of the new religion, Islam, which had arisen in the Arabian desert in the 7th century AD, the Zoroastrian Church, no longer being the 'established' Church, rapidly and irreversibly declined. Iran, once the centre of two great empires of which Zoroastrianism had been the official religion, now became a Moslem country; and the Zoroastrian community, having steadily lost ground throughout the centuries, has now been reduced to a mere 10,000 souls living mainly in Yazd and Kerman in the south-east, while another 100,000 or so, descendants of refugees from persecution, survive as the rich and enlightened community of the Parsees in Bombay and other Indian cities. Such has been the fate of a religion that once ruled proudly throughout the Iranian lands.

R. C. ZAEHNER

FURTHER READING: tr. by M. Henning, *The Hymns of Zarathustra* (Hyperion, 1980); M. Boyce ed., *Zaroastrianism* (Barnes & Noble Imports, 1984); R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, (Putnam, 1961), *The teachings of the Magi* (Oxford University Press, 1976).

Men become sorcerers by their own choice, but women become witches because they are inherently evil; yet it is the female whom the ancestor spirits possess, who has the power to heal and make the crops grow. Deep-seated conflicts of this sort are reflected in Zulu social customs

ZULU

TO UNDERSTAND the religion and the magic of the Zulu, it is necessary to know something of their historical background. The Zulu kingdom existed as an independent unit in south-eastern Africa (the present province of Natal in the Republic of South Africa) in the 19th century. It was established when Shaka (or Chaka), the chief of a small tribe, conquered many of the tribes of the region between 1818 and 1824, while others either fled from him or fled under attacks from tribes driven away by his onslaught. The repercussions of these events were far-reaching, and various nations were created as a direct or indirect result of Shaka's wars.

The Boers inflicted a first major defeat on the Zulu, then under one of Shaka's brothers, in 1838, and took over part of the Zulu territory. The Zulu were finally beaten as a major military power in the region by the British in 1880: they were then ruled by Cetshwayo (or Cetewayo), son of another of Shaka's brothers. Part of the kingdom was ruled by the British, who by then had taken over Natal from the Boers, and the remainder was divided under independent chiefs, including Cetshwayo, who was left with a remnant of his kingdom. Internecine war between these chiefs led to the British establishing rule over the remainder of the kingdom. The former united nation was now organized within British (and from 1910, South African) administration; but in the 1930s there was a revival of Zulu nationalism in adherence to the head of the Royal House, then established as chief of one of the many small chiefdoms into which

Zululand was divided. In the 1960s, Zululand was established as one of the Bantustans under present South African apartheid policy, with the agreement of the legitimate successor of the Zulu kings, now Paramount Chief.

Early Zulu history has been worked out from tribal traditions, from the records of shipwrecked mariners, and from the records of white travellers, traders, missionaries and administrators, of whom some English settled among the Zulu in 1825.

Zululand is one of the pleasantest regions of Africa, the main part consisting of rolling, well-pastured hills, lying between the Indian Ocean and the Drakensberg Mountains. The soils were fertile, but are now much eroded. It has a monsoon climate, and records show that there are bad droughts only once in five years. Rain often comes in severe thunderstorms accompanied by lightning, of which the forked form is most destructive. Then the rivers come down from the hills in walls of flood. Cattle thrived, though since the early 1900s they have been plagued by various diseases. The main crops of the Zulu were sorghum and millet, and in later years maize, with gourds, pulses and pumpkins. Their houses were originally made of grass on a framework of branches, beehive-shaped, but later these were replaced by mudded cylinders with a thatched conical roof. The houses were spread in small clusters over the hillsides, each inhabited by an extended family, the core of which was an agnatic lineage, men related to one another by descent through males. The capitals of the kings, and the military barracks in which they housed their warriors and their royal women were once inhabited by thousands, and were three to four miles in circumference. They were abolished after the Anglo-Zulu War.

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A proud and warlike people, the Zulus were welded into a formidable fighting force by Shaka, the warrior chief, who organized all men within a certain age group into regiments, and housed them in royal barracks; this martial history is reflected in the ritual dances still performed by Zulus on ceremonial occasions ***Left*** **Tribal dance** ***Facing page*** **Young men prepare to take part in a war dance**

Regicide and Civil War

Records show that until late in the 18th century the region was inhabited by many small tribes, ranging in total population from 500 to perhaps 5000. The relationships between the tribes oscillated between friendly peaceable intermarriage, and short sharp skirmishes. The tribes were also split up periodically by civil wars, or sections of a tribe would move off amicably to newfound independence. This system came to an end about the end of the 18th century, when a number of stronger tribes began to extend their sway over their neighbours. The most plausible explanation for this change is that the population of both human beings and cattle (which breed quickly) increased in the well-favoured region until it exceeded the carrying capacity of the land under the prevailing methods of husbandry. A series of battles between dominant tribes ensued: Shaka, head of a very small tribe, took over the disintegrating kingdom of his overlord when the latter was killed, and in a few years built a great nation of 250,000 people. His wars solved the crisis of population; he was successful because he invented more lethal weapons and methods of fighting, as well as new tactics for battle.

Shaka administered his nation in a system almost, but not absolutely, dictated by the system of husbandry which entailed a widespread dispersal of population. It was divided into counties ruled by chiefs. Some of the counties comprised defeated tribes: they were ruled sometimes by their legitimate chiefs or their heirs, sometimes by a scion of the chiefly family who was favoured by Shaka, while occasionally he placed favoured 'strangers' over them. Other counties he constituted out of broken tribes, or by settling people in areas whose inhabitants had been killed or had fled: the chiefs appointed there were those who had helped him in his struggles.

Shaka himself had experienced an unhappy childhood, for his mother and he had been driven from their home: therefore he killed all his paternal half-brothers (the Zulu were polygamous), except for three. He did not give these surviving half-brothers counties to rule, but he gave a distant cadet of the Zulu royal family such a county. Shaka's major innovation was to organize the men of his kingdom into

regiments, consisting of all the men of a narrow age range, housing them for most of the year in royal barracks. The men were forbidden to marry until they were in their mid-30s, when they were allowed to marry a much younger regiment of women (similarly organized), who at that point would be around 23 years old.

Shaka ruled tyrannously, and 12 years after he acceded to the Zulu chieftainship, he was killed by two of his brothers, one of whom succeeded him. The successor was also a tyrant, and 12 years later another brother fled with 17,000 people to the Boers, and with their help defeated and drove out the king. The new king was the last of that generation: he was also the first Zulu king to marry, and he had many wives and sons. Seventeen years later the sons of two of the queens fought over the succession to the throne, and Cetshwayo was successful. He ruled till his defeat by the British 23 years later. Thus assassination of kings and civil war were endemic in the Zulu nation, as they had been in the earlier polity of small tribes: and this fact was reflected in certain ceremonies.

Keystone

The Maiden Goddess

The Zulu have a conception of a High God, who broke off the nations from a reed-bed, but he plays little part in their daily life and is not worshipped. Distinct from him is Heaven, a concept of a great power in the sky, barely anthropomorphized, present in storms and particularly in lightning, and manifested in the thunderbolts which are numerous because of the violence of the storms. These thunderbolts are thought to be the excreta of a thunderbird. Heaven is believed to influence certain persons who begin to get drowsy, become ill, and wander far from the habitations of men. They are then initiated as Heaven doctors, and can plant magical substances around villages to protect them from lightning, while during storms they go out on the hilltops and fight the storms with weapons and magic. Several people are killed each year by lightning, and these magicians are much respected.

These beliefs about lightning are not reconciled with the idea that dangerous forked lightning is female, while harmless sheet lightning is male, or with a belief in a goddess who is supposed to make the rain and who is associated with the rainbow, which is believed to be the rafter of her hut in the sky. This goddess is graphically described: '. . . presenting the appearance of a beautiful landscape with verdant forests on some parts of her body, grass-covered slopes on others, and cultivated slopes on others . . . robed with light as a garment . . .' The Zulu had few myths of origin or of creation, but they speak of the goddess, who is a maiden, as having come from heaven to teach people to make beer, to plant, to harvest, and all the useful arts.

The most important spiritual beings in Zulu belief are the spirits of their ancestors. These are believed to live below the earth or in the sky, or to appear in the villages in the form of particular kinds of snakes, sometimes dangerous species, but believed to behave peaceably and to be recognizable as their deceased 'inhabitants' by marks on the body. The ancestors are one of the two principal agencies in Zulu belief influencing good and ill fortune: they expect their descendants, those related to them by descent through males, to place all milk and beer in the 'great hut' of the village for them to taste and to pour it into the ground of the cattle corral round which houses are built, in periodic offerings. They also require that sacrifices of cattle be offered to them. Should their descendants neglect to make these offerings, the ancestors will send disease; and they will also do so if their descendants default in their obligations to other kinsmen. They are prayed to at ceremonies for birth, initiation and marriage, and at funerals, and also at sowing first fruits, and harvest, as well as on other occasions. The ancestors of kings and chiefs look after their political dependents.

During illness, diviners of various kinds are consulted to find which ancestor is sending the misfortune so that it can be besought to remove the disease. It is believed that male ancestors are reasonable and will remove the misfortune if it has been sent for neglect of offerings, or when the breach of obligation which provoked the affliction has been redressed. On the other hand, female ancestral spirits are capricious, and may allow the misfortune to continue even after amends have been made.

Inherently Evil Female

This belief, like the belief in the femaleness of forked lightning, reflects a deep-seated conception in Zulu belief that femininity is inherently full of threatening evil occult power. This fear appears in the many taboos that attach to menstruating women and their effluxes, which threaten all things male and all virile enterprises. The belief is marked in a distinction made between sorcerers and witches who, like the ancestral spirits, are occult agencies of good and evil. The Zulu have a very rich assortment of magical substances to treat disease in humans and livestock (50% of which achieve their intended purposes, according to pharmacological tests), to obtain fertility of women, cattle and crops, to protect themselves against thieves and lightning, to influence those in power, to reintroduce murderers into social life, and so forth. Some of these substances are also believed to be used for sorcery, for making others fall ill or even to kill them. It is believed that men, and not women, make the conscious moral decision to learn these evil arts: men are evil deliberately. But women become witches by an inherent evil in their voracious sexuality, which attracts to them sexual familiars, who then demand the lives of the close kinsmen of the husband, or of his children by his other wives. Again,

Zulu warriors and the maidens who have been given to them in marriage perform a marriage dance in the royal kraal; although women are regarded as being inherently evil, they also contain much occult power for good, and enact ceremonies to the maiden goddess when blight affects the grain, and at seedtime

there is an inherent evil in femininity, since a woman does not deliberately seek a familiar.

On the other hand, women also contain much occult power for good: the great majority of those who become possessed by ancestral spirits, which speak through them and divine the cause of illness and dictate cures, are women. Nevertheless, for a woman to become socially valuable in this way she has to pass through a very painful illness. In addition, women provide rituals of fruitfulness: pregnant women perform rites to bless the crops, and women and girls enact ceremonies to the maiden goddess at seedtime and when blight affects the grain.

Songs of Hate

These ceremonies exhibit the ritualization of social roles and relationships which is characteristic of tribal societies (see RITES OF PASSAGE; RITUAL). In supplicating at seedtime for a good harvest, the young unmarried girls would don men's garments and carry shields and spears. They drove out the cattle (normally taboo to them) to pasture and milked them. Meanwhile their mothers planted a garden far out in the veld, and poured a libation of beer to the goddess. Thereafter this garden was neglected. At various stages of the ceremonies women and girls went naked, and sang lewd songs. Men and boys hid inside their huts, and might not go near the females; if they did, they were attacked by the women.

In order to understand how this ceremony, so expressive of conflict in society, operated, it is necessary to probe deeply into the position of women. The present writer has maintained that women's position in Zulu society was highly ambivalent. A woman was expected to bear many sons to strengthen the agnatic lineage of her husband, and it was feared that if she was barren she might turn to witchcraft, and she was generally treated very harshly by others.

On the other hand, when a woman produced sons she in fact produced competitors for the limited property and social positions in the lineage, thus introducing strife into the lineage that was supposed to be strengthened. It is arguable that the occult beliefs about women concealed this deep contradiction in their social position and that in the rites previously mentioned the ambivalent emotions generated were transposed to social ends.

Similar analysis can be applied to the national ceremonies performed at festivals of the first fruits. During these ceremonies, warriors sang songs of hate and hurled insults against the king, in order to strengthen the nation through the king. Comparative research shows that such ceremonies occur where civil war and royal assassination are endemic, but where king and subjects are not cut off from one another by class barriers. The symbolic representation of deep existing conflicts seems to release emotions which become fixed positively on socially approved groups and values.

Of the many Zulu who have been converted to Christianity since 1880, the majority are women. As in European Christianity, many sects have developed and, as throughout South Africa, they are markedly influenced by the colour bar under apartheid. Some Zulu independent sects are organized as are mission churches; others are syncretistic of Zulu and Christian belief, and combine possession by the Holy Spirit, speaking with tongues, laying on of hands for healing, cults against witchcraft and sorcery (demons), with sometimes the ancestral spirits reappearing as angels.

MAX GLUCKMAN

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ZURVAN

ZOROASTRIANISM and Manicheanism are commonly regarded as being the two classical dualist religions: and this is true. But there is all the difference in the world between them, for Manicheanism is a dualism of spirit and matter, spirit being identified with good, matter with evil. Zoroastrianism, on the other hand, is a spiritual dualism of two spirits, the one good and the other evil, and they are irreconcilably opposed. Matter, however, is created by Ohrmazd, the good God, though it comes to be corrupted by Ahriman, the 'pure' spirit of evil (see AHRIMAN; DUALISM; MANICHEANS; OHRMAZD; ZOROASTRIANISM). The basic text for this dualism is to be found in the *Gathas* or 'Songs' of Zoroaster himself where the prophet is represented as saying: 'I will speak out concerning the two Spirits of whom, at the beginning of existence, the Holier thus spoke to him who is Evil: "Neither our thoughts, nor our teachings, nor our wills, nor our choices, nor our words, nor our deeds, nor our consciences, nor yet our souls agree." '

The irreducible antagonism between the two Spirits seems clear enough here. But there is another text (quoted in the article on Zoroastrianism) in which it is unambiguously stated that the two Spirits were twins; and that would imply that they had a common father.

God of Infinite Time

Now in the later *Avesta*, as the sacred book of the Zoroastrians is called, an entity with the name of *Zrvan akarena* ('Infinite Time') is sometimes mentioned. Nothing much is said about him, but at least he is infinite, whereas Ohrmazd and Ahriman, God and the Devil, had by now become independent principles, each limiting the other. A different view is quoted by Eudemus of Rhodes, a pupil of Aristotle, who lived in the 4th century BC. He is reported as having said that 'the Magi and the whole Aryan race call the whole intelligible and unitary universe either Space or Time from which a good god and an evil demon were separated out, or, according to others, light and darkness before these . . . One of these (higher principles) is ruled by Ohrmazd, the other by Ahriman.'

This is the philosophical account of the 'Zurvanite' position. Light and darkness are ruled respectively by Ohrmazd and Ahriman, God and the Devil; but the highest principle is beyond all these, and this principle is Space-Time, Zrvan akarena, who in the later language becomes *Zurvan i akanarak*, 'Infinite Zurvan-Time.'

By the time of the Sassanian Empire (226-651 AD), however, Zurvan had become a proper name and a personal god, the word for 'time' in Persian now being *zaman*, as it is to this day. During the Sassanian period, to judge from the Zoroastrian books which, though actually written as late as the 9th century AD, are generally held to represent the views of Zoroastrian orthodoxy during the last century or so of the Sassanian Empire, one would not realize that the god Zurvan was of any importance at all, let alone that he was regarded by some as being the father of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Indeed, in these so-called 'Pahlavi' books, Zoroastrianism (or the 'Good Religion' as the Zoroastrians themselves now called it) was defined as the religion of the two principles as distinct from the monotheism of the Jews and Christians. 'I must have no doubt,' a Zoroastrian catechism reads, 'but that there are two first principles, one the Creator, and the other the Destroyer. The Creator is Ohrmazd who is all goodness and all light; and the Destroyer is the accursed Ahriman who is all wickedness and full of death, a liar and a deceiver.' Nothing could be clearer than that.

There is no question that there is a principle beyond these two. In the whole corpus of the Pahlavi books there is only one mention of the theory (explicitly stated in the *Gathas* though it is) that Ohrmazd and Ahriman are twins, and in this one passage it is denounced as a doctrine thought up by a demon.

The Pahlavi books, as they now stand, reflect a doctrine that was current at the end of the Sassanian period, and we can be fairly certain that this complete dualism was official doctrine then. So too was it after the death of Shapur (Sapor) I in 271 AD as we now know from a long inscription of the high priest of that time, one Kartir. Unfortunately this agreement between the 9th century books and the 3rd century inscription is not conclusive; for if neither had survived and we had to rely exclusively on Christian, Manichean and Moslem sources, we would be inclined to think that Zurvanism was the predominant trend in the Zoroastrianism of the Sassanian period, not the neat dualism of the Pahlavi texts, and this for two principal reasons. First, when the Christians attack Zoroastrianism, they attack not the dualism we know from the Pahlavi books but the theory that Ohrmazd and Ahriman are twins. Secondly, when the Manichees started to translate their own scriptures into Persian they called their own supreme Spirit, the 'Father of Greatness' and king of the kingdom of light – not Ohrmazd but Zurvan. And this is very odd indeed since the Zoroastrian Ohrmazd who is 'all goodness and all light' corresponds as exactly as you could wish to the Manichean 'Father of Greatness'. The Zoroastrian Zurvan, on the other hand, as we know him from the Christian sources, is rather 'the whole intelligible and unitary universe, either Space or Time', of Eudemus, but now transferred onto a purely mythological plane.

The Zurvanite myth is preserved in several sources which substantially agree and must go back to a common original. In this myth (quoted in the article on Ahriman) Zurvan is the father of Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

The message of the myth is clear. In the beginning, all is One in Zurvan who, philosophically, is Time-Space. Basically he is good and light, but there is a fundamental flaw in his nature represented by his 'doubt', and this is materialized in the shape of Ahriman who is 'dark and stinking', 'a liar and a deceiver'. Unless Zurvan is to be false to his vow, he must make Ahriman king of this world for 9000 years, though Ohrmazd may be high priest in heaven above. In any case, Ahriman's power will be broken in the end, and then Ohrmazd will be 'all in all' in 'infinite time' of which Zurvan is the mythological representation.

Form of Fire

In the *Selections of Zadspram*, the only one of the Pahlavi books where Zurvan plays a prominent part, we learn a little more about his 'testament' to Ohrmazd and Ahriman and about Ahriman's 9000-year rule:

> When first creation began to move and Zurvan, for the sake of movement, brought that form, the black and ashen garment to Ahriman, he made a treaty in this wise: 'This is that implement like unto fire, blazing, harassing all creatures, that hath the very substance of Az (Greed, Lust, Concupiscence). When the period of nine thousand years comes to an end, if thou hast not perfectly fulfilled that which thou didst threaten at the beginning, that thou wouldst bring all material existence to hate Ohrmazd and to love thee, . . . then, by means of this weapon, Az will devour . . . thy creation; and she herself will starve.'

From other texts we can deduce that Zurvan gave a corresponding 'implement' or 'form' to Ohrmazd – 'a form of fire – bright, white, round, and manifest afar', which is associated with priesthood and wisdom as it is in the 'classic' Zurvanite myth.

How are we to interpret all this? The birth of Ahriman from Zurvan's doubt is a 'Fall' in the divine nature itself, the manifestation of an essential imperfection in the godhead. To compensate for this Fall Zurvan endows Ohrmazd with wisdom, the priestly virtue par excellence, but to Ahriman he gives Az who is Greed, Lust, Concupiscence, Acquisitiveness, and who is insatiable. Ultimately, then, Az is self-destructive and so in the end Ahriman's kingdom is destroyed by the very 'implement' he had accepted from Zurvan and made into his own 'selfhood'. Having supplied Ohrmazd and Ahriman with the 'implements' appropriate to each, Zurvan plays no further part in the cosmic struggle. Only at the very end does he appear to help Ohrmazd administer the *coup de grâce* to Ahriman, Az, and their evil creation. Even so, Zurvan must be seen as a God that failed.

(See also TIME.)

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